

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Tomintoul has been regarded as a settlement more because of its strategic position in the southern part of Moray rather than due to any requirement to accommodate a demand for development.

Over the years there has been little pressure from developers yet despite this the village has managed to retain its population level. Very little new house building has taken place, the largest recent development was for sheltered housing (a 14 unit complex at Tomnabat Lane) which illustrates where the demand lies. The expansion and investment at the Lecht Ski-Centre has offered the opportunity for Tomintoul to increase its all year tourism role. The Speyside Way now has a terminus in Tomintoul while the Glenlivet Estate Development Programme had implications for the village; the Clockhouse restaurant; recent proposals for chalet developments; caravan site and hotel renovations illustrate some of the tourist related activities being experienced. Visitor figures at the Tourist Information Centre and Museum indicate a 20% increase since 1987.

The Cairngorms Working Party has included Tomintoul and the surrounding areas of the Avon and Livet valleys within its remit.

CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE

There is little indigenous industry in Tomintoul. The village has its origins as a planned estate village; the large Victorian hotels reflecting its earlier importance for hunting/shooting/fishing holidays. Today Tomintoul functions as a quiet residential village still displaying its original planned layout, with the central square as its focal point. Holidaymakers and tourists still visit the village, partly because of its reputation as the first village in Britain to be cut off by winter snows each year.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To promote Tomintoul as an outdoor sports holiday location in both summer and winter.
- (ii) To retain the planned layout and improve the visual appearance.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

In addition to the site specific requirements identified below and in development briefs, all developments must meet the terms of the Implementation policies (L/IMP1-8) in Chapter 8 (relating to siting, layout and design, character impact, landscaping, drainage, environmental and traffic impact). Subject to the scale of the development having a measurable impact on local community facilities, amenities or infrastructure, funding policies L/F1 Developer Contributions and L/F2 'Commuted Payments' in Chapter 7 may also apply.

Few specific designations are shown on the proposals map, due to the likely level of demand. A settlement boundary has been drawn, which includes large areas of undeveloped ground with road frontage where, in principle, development would be acceptable. Until recently difficulties with the septic tank, which serves as the village sewage treatment works, had placed an embargo on any further development, but a new works was built in 1993 at the north end of the village, enabling further development. While the boundary is tightened by this new Local Plan, proposals for chalet development or other tourist facilities adjacent to the town boundary will be favourably considered.

Proposals for development on backland plots should, wherever possible, retain any trees that are on site. The presence of many mature and semi mature trees in the village contribute towards its character, provide shelter and reduce exposure.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The Local Plan policies for business development are contained in Chapter One 'Economic Development'.

Industrial Estates (L/ED2, L/ED3)

11 Stuart Place

This is an undeveloped site, adjacent to the refuse tip, for which planning consent was previously granted for the erection of an agricultural workshop. Industrial or commercial use would be appropriate, although given the proximity of housing, certain uses within this category may not be appropriate. Screen planting on the road side boundary should take place. A public wastewater sewer crosses the site. Separate surface water disposal will be required. Any future industrial or commercial development would have to consider the potential for excessive noise affecting residential development in the vicinity. Applicants should have regard to noise measurement criteria which are appropriate.

Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Sites are sites which have the potential for redevelopment for a range of possible uses. The governing local plan policy is L/ED6 in Chapter 1. Other policies may apply pending the nature of the redevelopment proposal.

OPP1 Cattle Mart

Given the previous commercial use, and the site's central position, just off the Square, a number of alternative uses are possible - light industrial; commercial; tourist related e.g. caravan park/chalets. The presence of the Roads Depot adjacent makes the site less desirable for residential use. Any tourist related development should include the provision of a play area which can be used by the general public. Screen planting along the north-east boundary would be required as part of any redevelopment proposals. Wastewater drainage is available although some pumping may be required. Any future industrial or commercial development would have to consider the potential for excessive noise affecting residential development in the vicinity. Applicants should have regard to noise measurement criteria which are appropriate.

OPP2 Stuart Place

The site could accommodate two dwellings, either single or one and a half storey, set on the existing building line of Main Street. Wastewater sewers are available.

OPP3 Main Street

Gap site with adjoining backland plot has obvious potential for housing. The removal of an old storage building would allow for the development of up to 5 small cottage type dwellings. Wastewater sewers are available.

TOURISM

The governing policies for Tourism are L/ED16 and 17 in Chapter 1 of the Local Plan (Tourist Facilities and Accommodation and Roadside Signs). The Economic Development policies in Chapter 1 apply where relevant and policy L/CF4 in Chapter 5 safeguards established routes for walking, cycling, trails and cross-country skiing.

The likely demand for tourist related development sites is unknown and not readily forecast. Whilst there is a supply of undeveloped land within the settlement boundary, in addition to the opportunity sites identified above, this may not be suited to a particular development proposal, which may select a site outwith the settlement boundary. As with the designation of the caravan park, the development of a site will be assessed with regard to its tourist function and relationship with Tomintoul, and these factors will be crucial in its consideration.

T1 Caravan Park

An area of rough ground at the southern edge of the village adjacent to the playing field is considered suitable for development as a caravan park or for holiday chalets. This previously tree covered site will require extensive landscaping both within it and on its boundaries to ensure that the amenity and character of the surrounding area is not adversely affected by the development. A 1.8m footpath to Delnabo Road must be completed prior to the site being brought into use.

T2 Speyside Way

The walk terminates in Tomintoul, following a route overland from Ballindalloch, via Glenlivet to the A939 just north of the village. (See the Proposals Map).

ENVIRONMENT

The policies for the maintenance and enhancement of the environment are found in Chapter 2 (Environment).

The principal policies for the local environment are L/ENV10 'Settlement Boundaries' and L/ENV18 'Public Amenity and Open Spaces' in Chapter 2, and L/IMP1 'Development in Built Up Areas' in Chapter 8.

Under the terms of policy L/ENV18 (Public Amenity and Open Spaces) a number of spaces have been identified which contribute to the environment and amenity of the town. The purpose of policy L/ENV18 is to protect the integrity of these spaces from inappropriate development and to ensure that their contribution to the amenity of the built up area is not compromised.

As in the previous Plan for Tomintoul the settlement boundary has been "generously" drawn to include large undeveloped areas outwith the immediate built-up area. It is hoped that this will provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate development which may arise from the promotion of the village as a tourist centre.

Proposals (even for individual sites) on undeveloped land adjacent to the settlement boundary, will be required to carry out screen planting as a means of enclosing the site, and enhancing the view of the village when seen from the approach roads.

ENV1 Recreation Ground

This area is reserved for recreational use.

ENV2 Bogland

This area is retained for its environmental value.

ENV3 Tomnabat Lane (South)

The retention of tree cover is a priority but there are sufficient gaps within the strip to allow access to the land beyond and without prejudicing any necessary upgrading of Tomnabat Lane.

ENV4 Tomnabat Lane (North)

A Tree Preservation Order is proposed for the small group of mature trees at the entrance to the school. Some replacement underplanting has been carried out.

ENV5 Main Street

The trees at the north west entrance to the town should be retained for their contribution to the approach to Tomintoul. They also act as a visual screen for the I1 designated site.

ENV6 Playing Field

The trees on three sides of the playing fields have been identified for their value in enclosing the playing field, providing shelter and a setting for the Highland Games and other village functions.

ENV7 The Square

As the village focal point and principal public open space, The Square will be protected. A plan for improvement works, including replanting and restoration of the fountain will be prepared in order to enhance what is a major tourist "stopping point." Information Boards and signposting will be included as part of this exercise.

There are wider environmental designations relating to areas of local, national and international scientific importance and to areas of high scenic and landscape quality which in most cases may relate to areas just beyond the settlement boundary. Where sites of scientific importance are found within settlement boundaries, these are designated as ENV in the Proposals Map.

AGLV The village is surrounded by an Area of Great Landscape Value designation.

Detailed maps of all the above are held by The Moray Council.

HOUSING

The main governing local plan policy for new housing developments is L/H3 in Chapter 3 (Servicing and Layout of new Housing Developments). Policy L/H7 in Chapter 3 (Affordable Housing provision) may also apply depending on the size and location of the development.

As at the time of the Census in 1991, of Tomintoul's 187 houses, 34 were "second" homes, and a further 20 were vacant.

In pursuance of the Objective to promote Tomintoul as a holiday centre with local tourist facilities, a generous allocation of housing sites is made, to accommodate a potential population increase.

R1 White Heather Hotel

The site of the former White Heather Hotel has lain vacant since the buildings were demolished in the mid 1980's. Part privately owned and part in Council ownership, proposals to build houses were shelved.

The site remains available for residential development. If possible, the low stone wall and iron railings on the north-east and south-east boundaries should be retained as a feature.

Nearest wastewater sewers are in the public road to the east.

R2 Backland Development Areas

Single plot or small scale housing developments will be permitted on the basis that they are within the settlement boundary, and can relate positively to the layout and character of the village. If more than four contiguous house plots are proposed for any of these sites, Tomnabat or Conglass Lanes will require to be widened to a 5.5m wide carriageway, with a footway for the whole length between adjacent lane accesses through to Main Street. Wastewater sewers are available.

House Site Survey

In an attempt to upgrade the visual appearance of Tomintoul, and as a means of encouraging development, the ownership and availability of derelict properties and land will be identified, and potential housing sites promoted.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The governing local plan policy for community facilities is L/CF1 in Chapter 5.

CF1 Bowling Club

This area is reserved for a new bowling club and pavilion.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

Significant development in Tomintoul was curtailed until a new upgraded tank became operative in 1993. Capacity is now greatly increased.

