

PORTTREE NORTH FRAMEWORK PLAN



Approved Plan
March 2003
Planning & Development Service

FRAMEWORK PLAN

Purpose & Importance

1.1 Portree's growth has been constrained for the past 20 years by a lack of infrastructure to service its main development sites. Local housing and employment needs have either failed to be met or diverted to less suitable locations. However there is now an opportunity to open-up a supply of land to the north of the village that will accommodate these needs and consolidate Portree's role as the pre-eminent settlement on the Isle of Skye.

1.2 This Plan will update and guide the implementation of the Skye & Lochalsh Local Plan and foster a public-private partnership that will achieve the orderly and planned development of this expansion area. It will also secure and co-ordinate developer contributions towards deficiencies in infrastructure, open space and community facility provision and ensure integration with existing neighbourhoods. Once approved by the Skye and Lochalsh Area Committee, the Plan will be a material planning consideration in judging relevant planning applications.



Context & Setting

1.3 The Plan area covers around 31 hectares (delineated on Map 2) and is accessed from the A87 trunk road. Although the settlement's immediate population is 2,200 it is the main administrative and service centre for the whole of Skye and Lochalsh, which supports 12,000 residents and 5,000 jobs.



1.4 The undeveloped part of the site comprises part of Portree Home Farm, rougher grazing land to the west of the River Leasgeary and made ground to the south of the Portree Industrial Estate. Existing built development is limited to office, storage and industrial uses close to Dunvegan Road. Surrounding uses include: the existing Home Farm housing area and Woodpark crofts to the south; the Kiltaraglen stock-rearing croft to the north-east; the poorer remnants of the Portree Home Farm unit to the north; and, Portree Industrial Estate and associated enterprises to the north-west.

1.5 The site is in multiple ownership but the majority is controlled by a single landowner. All of the principal landowners have indicated their willingness to release land for development.

DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Physical

2.1 Ground levels range from 50m AOD at the northern end of Storr Road to 16m AOD at the southern tip of the Plan area. Most of the site falls to the Sluggans Burn or the River Leasgeary. However the far eastern segment offers alternative drainage arrangements by sloping down to the north-eastern boundary. Significant slopes inhibit cost efficient development of parts of the Plan area especially on the river and burn sides.

2.2 Similarly the stark variation in ground conditions shape the optimum areas for development. The poorer draining areas, generally to the north and west of the site, have a deeper peat cover and therefore have higher site preparation costs. In contrast, the eastern portion of the site is the best drained and has the least development costs.

2.3 Home Farm has a generally westerly aspect whereas land west of the Leasgeary has a southerly aspect. The elevation and absence of shelter planting makes the Plan area relatively exposed to the prevailing west to south westerly winds and suggest the need for significant additional planting in the form of north-south shelter belts. Existing vegetation, although limited to stunted planting along the sides of the principal drainage ditches and the banks of the River Leasgeary, could provide the starting point for these features.

2.4 The outlook from the site is uninspiring compared to others on Skye and is restricted to the northerly arc from the wooded hillsides above Sluggans to the foothills of the Trotternish Ridge above Achachork. However the land is prominent from the A87 northerly tourist route approach to the island's 'capital' and therefore additional planting on the northern margins of the Plan area would be appropriate.

Safeguards

2.5 The site is largely free of development safeguards. The limited existing woodland carries a falling distance set-back, which because of its ditch and burn side location, will be limited to a maximum of 10m. More significantly, a 10.5m set-back from the poles of the 33 kV overhead electricity lines is required if these are not to be under-grounded or diverted. Similarly development will need to avoid a 10m corridor over the trunk water main which runs along the southern boundary of the Plan area. A more nebulous constraint exists in the form of the area's recorded archaeological interest. The possible presence of a medieval chapel and graveyard in the locality will necessitate a pre-determination survey and possible safeguarding of land from development.

Infrastructure

2.6 33kV and 11kV overhead electricity lines cross the site from west to east connecting to the electricity sub-station north of Kiltaraglen. No problems are envisaged in servicing site but the 33kV lines close to the industrial site will require undergrounding to create a suitable development site.

2.7 In terms of surface water drainage, all of the Plan area drains into the River Leasgeary, directly or via the established network of field drains, and then flows ultimately into Loch Portree. There is already some evidence of erosion to the banks of the Leasgeary and therefore SUDS design measures will be required to ensure that there is no net detriment in the rate, quality and quantity of surface water discharge into the river after development.

Community

2.8 Portree's existing foul mains drainage network does not extend into the undeveloped part of the Plan area. However there is limited capacity within the existing Home Farm neighbourhood network and also surplus capacity within new foul sewer provision on the Dunvegan and Staffin Roads. The levels of the far eastern section of the Plan area could allow gravity foul drainage to Staffin Road. Drainage to Dunvegan Road will require pumping, which will be an additional cost burden especially if the lower parts of the site are to accommodate built development. Building prior to the completion of Portree's new waste water treatment plant (programmed for 2005) will need to drain to Bayfield via existing networks. A trunk water main passes along the southern boundary of the Plan area and has adequate capacity to service the level of development envisaged.

2.9 The Trunk Roads Authority advise that the A87 trunk road junction that serves the Plan area has a capacity for at least 37,400 m² (gross floor area) Class B1 office development or 740 private dwellings or any combination of the above giving total traffic figures not exceeding either of the above. A district distributor road standard link from this junction enters the western margin of the Plan area.

2.10 However the rest of the site is deprived of vehicular access save land south-west of the Sluggans Burn which benefits from an unadopted trunk road connection. Links to the adopted road network are feasible along the southern boundary at Scalpay Place, Home Farm Road and Storr Road.

2.11 Portree presently accommodates approximately 2,200 people in around 950 houses. The settlement saw a population growth rate in excess of 25% during the 1980's but this slowed during the 1990's due to infrastructure constraints. With the 200 additional dwellings planned as part of this expansion the population will, other things being equal, rise to about 2,700.

2.12 A settlement of this size would expect to support a range of facilities such as shops, a post office, a primary school, a doctor, a hotel, a hall, business land, a nursing or care home, a church, and a small supermarket. Portree however, because of its vast hinterland, retains these facilities and more. Therefore the village's deficiencies relate more to accessibility and quality than they do to quantity. Although the Planning Authority cannot secure developer contributions towards community-wide deficiencies such as the perceived need for a general hospital, it can seek planning gain required to make this expansion area function efficiently in land use terms.

2.13 This relates not just to infrastructure requirements such as the distributor roads but also to public open space provision, improved footpath linkages, community woodland and outdoor sport facilities. It also includes the safeguarding of land for essential facilities that have already been flagged in the Adopted Local Plan such as a new fire station. Although Home Farm has been considered in the past as a possible site for an expanded High School, redevelopment of the existing site is still the preferred alternative and therefore land is not being safeguarded at Home Farm for this purpose. Portree Primary School has adequate capacity to cater for 200 additional houses at Home Farm but safe pedestrian and cycle linkages to the Blaven Road site are required.

2.14 Specifically, application of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Standards, reveals that an additional 470 persons equates to a minimum 0.8 ha. requirement for outdoor playing space for sport. A playing field and bowling green

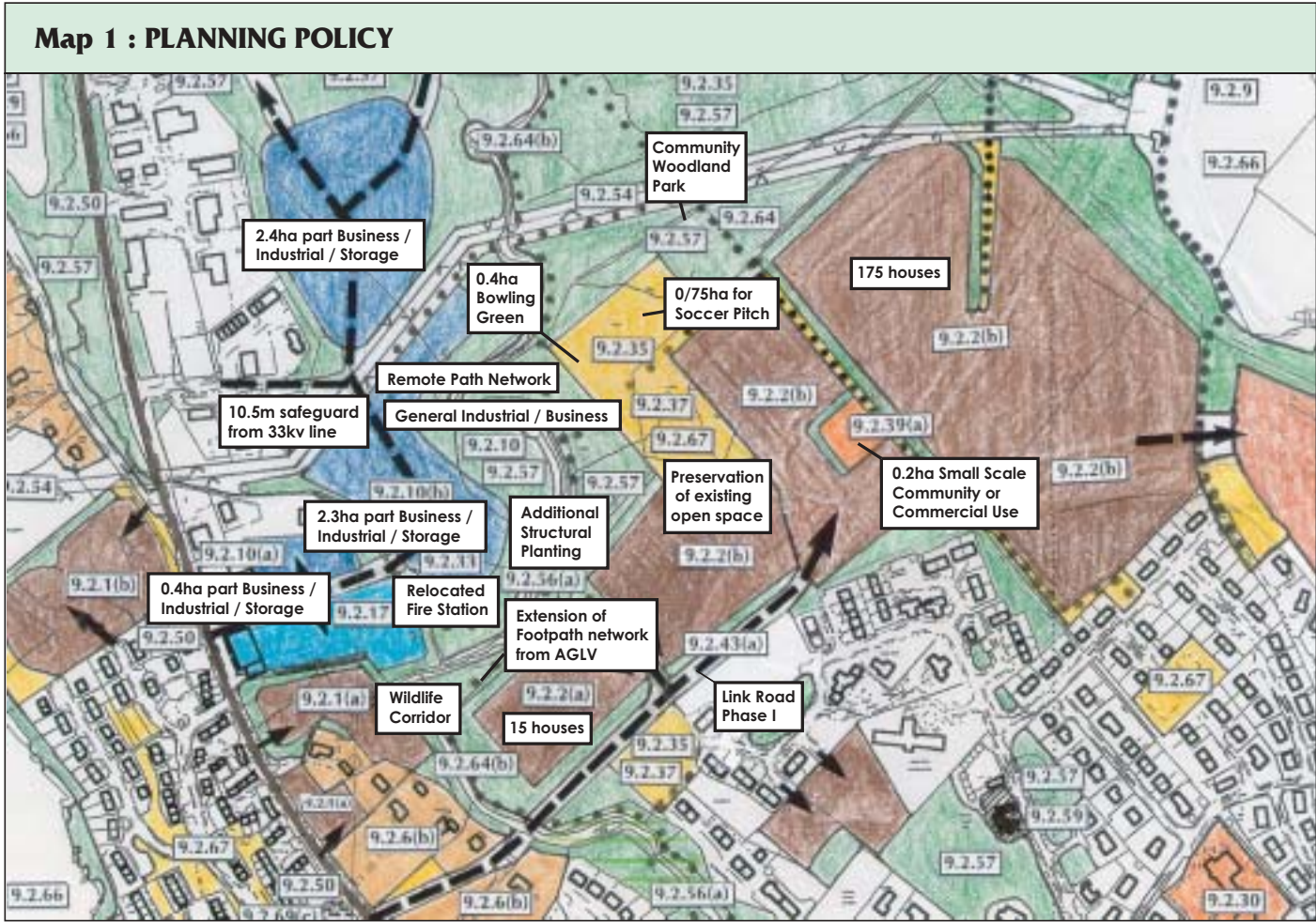
are earmarked in the Local Plan for this expansion area and would meet this requirement. NPFA standards for children's playing space suggest a minimum requirement of 0.33 ha. However Portree as a whole is poorly served, with an overall deficiency close to 1.3 ha. A minimum provision of one 0.4 ha. local equipped area for play is required as part of the Home Farm housing expansion area.

2.15 A balanced community is not only one that has sufficient support facilities but also has a range of accommodation available to its residents. There is little variety in the tenure of houses within the existing Home Farm neighbourhood and the deficiency of private owner occupied accommodation should be rectified as part of the new development.

Planning (Map 1)

2.16 Map 3 summarises the provisions of the statutory Local Plan for Skye and Lochalsh that was adopted by the Highland Council in March 1999. Essentially, land west of the Leasgeary is reserved for employment development whereas Home Farm is reserved for housing and ancillary uses. This Framework Plan will update and refine these allocations. The one notable update required is the relocation of the distributor road, which was originally intended to pass close to the existing housing at Home Farm. It is now planned as a continuation of the Co-op supermarket access road.

2.17 There are no extant and unimplemented planning consents wholly within the Plan area. However technically undetermined applications are still pending for a predominantly housing development at Home Farm, a non-food retail and business park between the Sluggans Burn and River Leasgeary and one food and one non-food retail park west of the Sluggans Burn.



INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN - HOME FARM

Principles



3.1 Developers of the housing expansion area will be expected to submit applications for planning consent that address the requirements outlined below. A developer master plan, adhering to the same framework established on Map 2, should also accompany any submission. Any departure from this Framework Plan's provisions should be clearly justified.

3.2 The master plan should show how the housing area will achieve a 'seamless' expansion of the existing Home Farm residential neighbourhood. This means making effective and appropriate linkages between the new housing and the rest of the village in terms of vehicular, cycle, pedestrian, open space and other servicing connections.

3.3 The developer master plan should also aim to create a neighbourhood 'core'. This should be at the intersection of the footpath networks and comprise the higher density housing together with ancillary community and recreational facilities.

3.4 Land east of the Leasgeary can accommodate approximately 200 additional residential units as part of an extension to the Home Farm neighbourhood. Other acceptable uses would be those ancillary to a housing area such as recreational and community facilities, and passive public open space.

Developer Requirements

3.5 The developer master plan and related application(s) will be expected to address the following requirements.

(i) Housing Tenure - at least 25% of the residential units should be for owner-occupation including a proportion of self-build accommodation to ensure a balanced neighbourhood.

(ii) Community Woodland - structural, 'wrap-around' planting should be provided on the northern margins of the Plan area (as indicated on Map 2) to function principally as a recreational asset for the community. The woodland should also be laid out to provide shelter, amenity and nature conservation value.

(iii) Other Planting - shelter belt planting on a north-south orientation in similar locations to that shown on Map 2 will also be required. In particular this should reinforce existing river and ditch side trees / shrubs.

(iv) Remote Footpaths – in addition to footways adjoining the adopted road network, developers should also provide for a network of footpaths similar to that outlined on Map 2. The proposed routes should also be compatible with the network (existing and proposed) for the whole village. The most important connections to make are links to the employment uses east of Dunvegan Road, to the new Co-op supermarket, to Portree Primary School, and between the principal housing compartments and the new neighbourhood 'core'. A footbridge crossing of the Leasgeary on the Plan area's northern boundary will also be required. A circular footpath following the top of the eastern bank of the Leasgeary, connecting to the community woodland to the north and returning via the principal drainage ditch to link to Storr Road and Home Farm Road could become an important recreational resource.

(v) Road Access - all roads and associated infrastructure should be designed to the standards set out in the Highland Council's Road Guidelines for New Developments. Developers will be expected to produce a transportation assessment that will demonstrate how the proposed development area can be accessed and how its suggested road network will impact upon cross-settlement traffic flows. An indicative road layout is set out on Map 2. In particular, developers will be required to incorporate within their masterplan a vehicular connection between the Home Farm distributor and Home Farm Road. Any suggested network should reduce or not lead to any increase in the total number of traffic movements in the centre of Portree and also spread flows as evenly as possible throughout the rest of the settlement in accordance with the existing and proposed hierarchy of routes. Specifically, the development of Home Farm is dependent upon the construction of a district class distributor road, on the alignment and phased as indicated on Map 2. Access to the allocated housing site east of the Plan area at Kiltaraglen should also be secured.

(vi) Waste Water – developers will be required to connect all new development sites to the mains foul drainage network in accordance with Scottish Water's Site Servicing Policy at the time of construction. Scottish Water have indicated that some surplus capacity exists before the new waste water treatment plant is operational. However the Planning Authority will consider applications for further development after 2005 should the new waste water treatment facility not be operational at that time.

(vii) Surface Water – drainage arrangements will be expected that result in no net detriment in the rate, quality and quantity of surface water discharge into the River Leasgeary after development. This will require attenuation/ source control measures in accordance with the principles, procedures and good practice set out in the CIRIA SUDS Design Manual.

(viii) Community Uses – developers will be asked to provide for the deficiencies in community facility provision that their proposals will generate. All facilities should be provided close to or within the neighbourhood 'core'. In terms of outdoor sport, a combined land reservation of 1.15ha should be made for the creation of a football pitch and associated facilities. Children's playspace deficiencies should be addressed by provision of two equipped play areas as indicated on Map 2. Reservation of a 0.4 ha. general community uses site (within Class 10 non-residential institutions) is also required.

(ix) Housing Density, Type & Design – as a general principle, land within or adjoining the neighbourhood 'core' should accommodate the higher density, flatted development (up to 25 dwellings per hectare). Subject to the relative, finished ground levels, massing and character of adjacent uses this land could accommodate two or three storey units. However a general tapering off of housing densities towards the northern edge of the Plan area should apply so that an overall density of around 10 dwellings per hectare is maintained. Houses outwith the 'core' should be restricted to one or one and a half storey.

(x) Archaeology – the likely existence of a significant archaeological resource necessitates a developer-funded pre-determination survey of the Home Farm area, and should this prove appropriate, excavation or safeguarding of any site(s).

(xi) Environmental Assessment – in addition to the above, an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required of developers in respect of the district distributor road component of any development.

MAP 2 : INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN

- Business (Offices)

Business / Industry / Storage

Community

Community Woodland

Distributor Road

Fire Station

Formalised Playing Space

General Access Road

Higher Density Residential
- Pedestrian Crossing Points

Minor Access Road

Remote Footpaths / Cycleways

Remote Landscape Areas

Residential

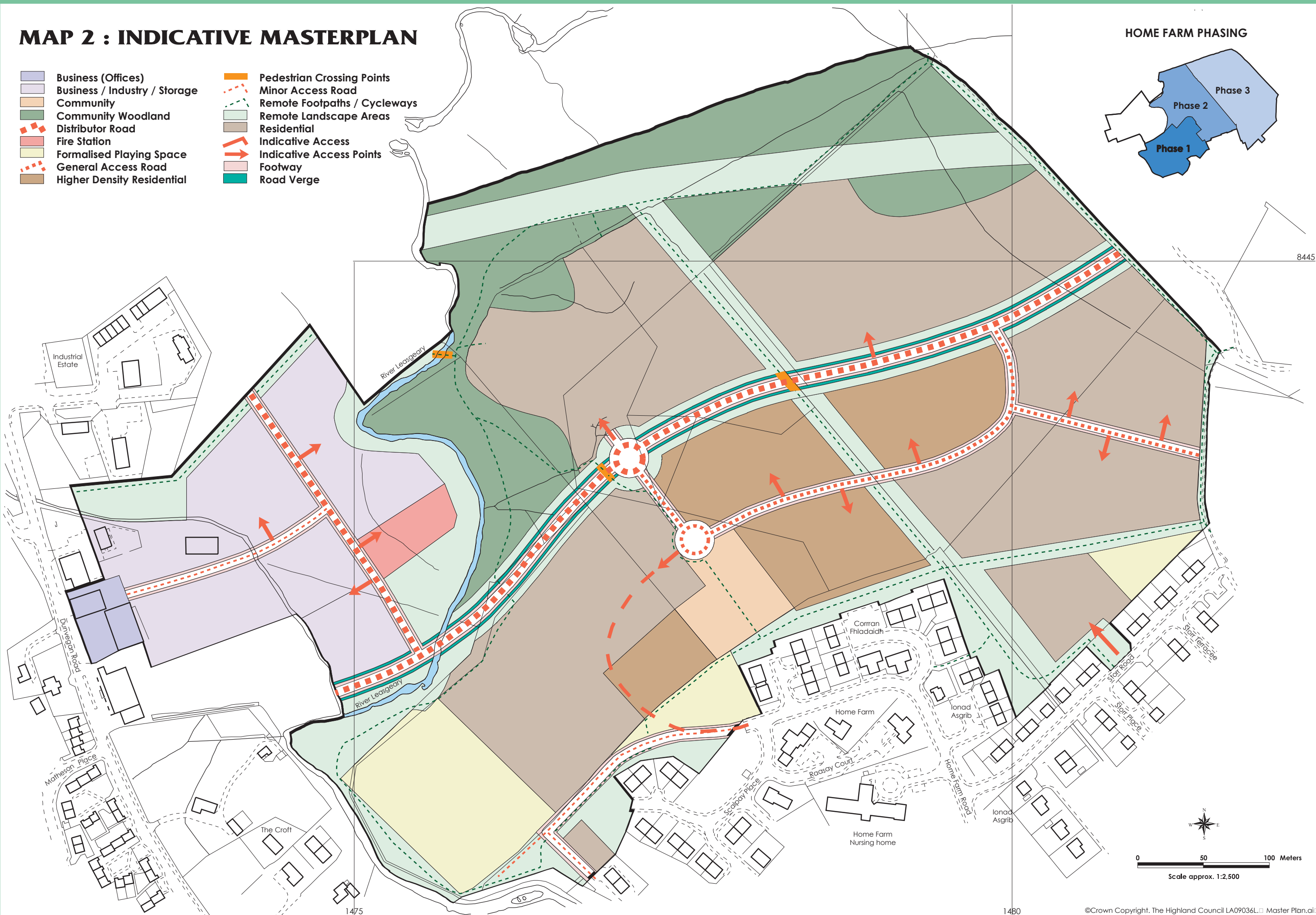
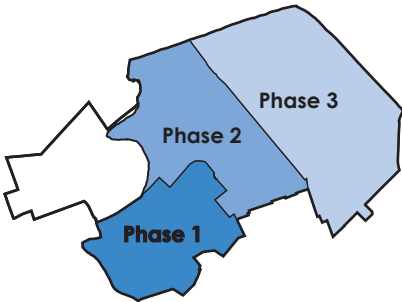
Indicative Access

Indicative Access Points

Footway

Road Verge

HOME FARM PHASING



EMPLOYMENT AREA

Principles

3.6 Developers of the employment expansion area will be expected to submit applications for planning consent that address the requirements outlined below and adhere to the same framework established on Map 2. Any departure from this Framework Plan's provisions should be clearly justified.



3.7 It is likely that the employment land within the Plan area will only be the first phase of a larger industrial estate expansion. Therefore an indicative master plan should accompany the first application to demonstrate how comprehensive layout and servicing will be achieved for the wider expansion area as a whole.

3.8 This indicative plan should also show how effective linkages can be created between the new employment area and the existing industrial estate and the rest of the village in terms of vehicular, cycle, pedestrian, and other servicing connections.

Uses

3.9 Land west of the Leasgeary should accommodate a fire station, and land for uses within Classes 4, 5 and/or 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997. However the site with immediate frontage to Dunvegan Road should be restricted to Class 4 because of its prominence from the trunk road and relative proximity to residential properties.

3.10 Developers will be required to safeguard a site for the creation of a long stay bus, coach and HGV parking area on one of the parcels of land identified for business, industry and storage on Map 2. It may be possible to combine this facility with the proposed bus depot to the west of the Sluggans Burn. The car parking element of the facility should be of a standard suitable for adoption, operation and maintenance by the Highland Council.

3.11 In particular, business or industrial workshops (500 -1000 ft²), secure storage compounds, serviced business sites, larger (2000 ft²) industrial units and Class 4 office units (1,000 - 2,000 ft²) would be acceptable uses.



Developer Requirements

3.12 Developers will be expected to address the following requirements.

(i) Fire Station – in accordance with the Adopted Local Plan, a 0.25 ha site should be safeguarded for the development of a manned fire station as indicated on Map 2.

(ii) Planting – additional mixed broadleaf/ conifer tree planting will be required as screening along the west bank of the Leasgeary.

(iii) Remote Footpath – in addition to footways adjoining the adopted road network, developers should also provide for a remote path from the Leasgeary to Dunvegan Road along the line of the overhead electricity lines. A footbridge crossing of the Leasgeary on the Plan area's northern boundary will also be required.



(iv) Road Access - all roads and associated infrastructure should be designed to the standards set out in the Highland Council's Road Guidelines for New Developments. Developers will be expected to finance a distributor road to the northern boundary of the Plan area. As a general principle this road should have no direct frontage access. Exceptions may be made for low traffic generating uses if they have adequate internal parking and turning areas. Access from Dunvegan Road is discouraged and instead all land should take access from the new employment distributor. An indicative road layout is set out on Map 2.

(v) Waste Water – developers will be required to connect all new development sites to the mains foul drainage network in accordance with Scottish Water's Site Servicing Policy at the time of construction. Scottish Water have indicated that significant development should await until the new waste water treatment plant is operational. However the Planning Authority will consider applications for further development after 2005 should the new waste water treatment facility not be operational at that time.

(vi) Surface Water – drainage arrangements will be expected that result in no net detriment in the rate, quality and quantity of surface water discharge into the Sluggans Burn and River Leasgeary after development. This will require attenuation/source control measures in accordance with the principles, procedures and good practice set out in the CIRIA SUDS Design Manual.

(vii) Bus, Coach and HGV Parking Area - a site should be safeguarded for the development of such a parking area.

Implementation & Funding

4.1 It is envisaged that the developers of both the employment and housing land will fund and implement the majority of the above requirements. However the degree of contribution should relate to how far each is necessary to make their development as a whole function efficiently in land use terms and how much each requirement is necessary to meet wider community objectives.

4.2 Subject to later negotiation with the Planning Authority on individual planning applications the following principles will apply to the funding of facility and infrastructure provision.

(i) Developers will be expected to safeguard land for: the fire station and the bus, coach and HGV parking area.

(ii) Developers will be expected to gift land for the implementation by others of: the community woodland and other remote landscaping; remote footpaths / cycleways; the football pitch and associated facilities; the bowling green and associated facilities; and, the community uses site (all areas as delineated on Map 2).

(iii) Developers will be expected to gift the land required for and finance completion of: all adopted roadways and integral footpath / cycleways, and all necessary waste and surface water infrastructure.

(iv) Developers will be expected to gift the land required for and finance the completion and future maintenance of: the playing space indicated on Map 2 and all integral landscaping.

4.3 The developer's contribution towards these requirements should be made in accordance with completion of each phase of development as defined on Map 2.



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