

RESPONSE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICE
FREAGAIRT BHO SHEIRBHEIS AN LEASACHAIDH AGUS A' BHUN-STRUCTAIR

1. Reference No.

15/00228/PREAPP

2. Case Officer and Contact Details

Mrs Susan Hadfield
Council Offices, 84 High Street, Dingwall. IV15 9QN
Email: Susan.hadfield@highland.gov.uk
Phone: 01349 868663

3. Site Address/Location

Land adjacent to Community Centre, Strathpeffer

4. Site Description

The site occupies the land between houses on Ord Terrace, Cromartie Drive, Ulladale Cresc, and Strathpeffer Primary School. The main road through Strathpeffer adjoins the site to the south. The site currently contains a children's play area, an overgrown area including a number of trees, a waterlogged and unkept area of grassland, and a maintained playing field. A footpath runs between the site and the houses.

5. Site Visit

Was a site visit required?

Yes No

Date of site visit: 10/02/15

6. Proposed Development

Formation of community garden, including access paths, games /play areas, wildlife pond, and bike track.

You are advised that the following consent(s) will be required for the proposed development:

Planning Permission	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Listed Building Consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation Area Consent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advertisement Consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prior Notification/Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

7. Planning History

n/a

8. Planning Policy

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (Adopted 2012)

Policy 28 - Sustainable Design
Policy 29 - Design Quality & Place-making
Policy 51 - Trees and Development
Policy 57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage
Policy 58 - Protected Species
Policy 61 - Landscape
Policy 64 - Flood Risk
Policy 66 - Surface Water Drainage
Policy 74 – Green Networks
Policy 75 – Open Space

Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (Adopted 2007)(as continued in force)

Amenity land. No site specific policies.

NB. This local plan is relevant only insofar as it continues in force post-adoption of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. More information at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2012/90/made>

Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (2013)

Open space allocation. No site specific policies.

The Highland Council Supplementary Guidance

Green Networks (Jan 2013)
Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)
Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

Scottish Planning Policy and Guidance

Scottish Planning Policy (The Scottish Government, June 2014)

Further Information

Copies of our local plans and supplementary guidance documents can be found at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/183/development_plans

Additional Development Advice Notes on other issues (e.g. Gaelic signage, replacement windows, badger policy notes) can be found at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/284/other_planning_guidance

Copies of the Scottish Government's national planning policies and guidance can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning>

9. Principle of Development, Siting and Design

The site forms an important area of open space / amenity land where there is a transition from rural to urban on the entrance to / exit from Strathpeffer. The retention of this area as amenity land is welcomed and conforms with policy allocation as open space / amenity land.

Communal Gardens

This comprises an area of shared garden plots, raised beds, polytunnel, and community sheds. The principle of cultivating the area will retain the open aspect. The community shed should be well designed to avoid detracting from the open nature of the area, and to reflect its function as an ancillary structure to the garden. Similarly, the polytunnel should not dominate the space, but be seen as an ancillary structure.

MUGA

It is understood that this is a surfaced outdoor sports area which will be floodlit and enclosed by a 2.5m ball stop fence. This use ties in with and complements the adjacent playing field and is an appropriate use of open space.

Flood lights will need to be carefully positioned and angled to minimise light spill and avoid a nuisance

through light pollution. The additional activities during the evenings in particular could lead to noise nuisance and disturbance to the nearby houses. The timing of the floodlights will need to be carefully controlled to guard against noise disturbance.

Play Areas / Outdoor Gym

The proposed children's play park will replace the existing play equipment, expand the play equipment available and increase the age range to be accommodated. This should improve the existing facilities, and is in keeping with the nature of the open space / amenity land allocation. It is suggested that this aspect is developed in consultation with the local primary school and that the children are engaged at an early stage in its design.

Bike Track

Again, the provision of facilities for skate boards and bikes is in keeping with the open space / amenity allocation and will expand the users of this open space. Early consultation with potential users to identify requirements and maximise its use is again suggested.

Footpaths / Meadow / Wildlife Area

The provision of additional footpaths and creation of different habitats will promote informal recreation and encourage the use of the local footpath network, and link in to the existing Core Paths in the area. The provision of an additional footpath to the Community Centre / Primary School / Medical Centre will be an asset to the area.

Policy 74 seeks to protect and enhance green networks, including enhancing wildlife corridors in and around existing developments.

Policy 75 aims to create sustainable networks of high quality open space, which are accessible by foot and linked to a wider network. Green spaces and sports facilities should support and enhance biodiversity, and improve the quality of life of residents and visitors. These proposals will help to achieve this aim.

Path upgrade for service vehicles / disabled access

The path is currently hard surfaced and lit, and runs from Ulladale Cresc along the perimeter of the playing field and the proposed community gardens to link with the housing areas. It should be retained. A spur can be taken off it to the community gardens, but it should not be diverted around the gardens as is implied by the current draft scheme. Its use by motor vehicles should be discouraged.

Future Project outwith Community Garden

These are shown as the replacement of the playing field with a synthetic turf pitch, the expansion of the school playground onto the playing field, and the formation of a car park on part of the current playing field. Since they are indicated as being outwith the current project, they are not commented on further.

Guidance on siting and design quality can be found at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/213/supplementary_guidance
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/AandP/AandPdgn>

10. Transportation and Access

Footpath links, routes, and standard of provision (widths, surfacing, etc), should be discussed with the Council's Access Officer (Philip Waite; phone 01349 868431; email: philip.waite@highland.gov.uk).

It is noted that this is intended to be a facility for local residents, and that parking (other than 2 disabled spaces) therefore does not form part of these proposals. Transport Planning will be consulted in relation to any planning application to obtain further advise on parking requirements.

You should consider whether it would be appropriate to make some of the footpaths combined footpath / cycle ways.

Cycle parking stands should be provided to encourage sustainable travel to the community gardens, MUGA, outdoor gym, and children's play areas.

More information on access and parking standards (incl. small housing developments) can be found at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/roads>

The Council encourages applicants at pre-application stage to engage with the local Disability Access Panel to consider accessibility improvements for physically disabled and sensory impaired people. The Highland Council have published a [Planning Protocol for Effective Engagement with Access Panels](#), you are encouraged to engage with would be beneficial to at this stage consult with.:

11. Drainage and Water

Much of the site is currently waterlogged. It is noted that you intend to create a wildlife pond / wetland, and attenuation ponds. You will need to be satisfied that the proposed drainage solution will function in a satisfactory manner.

Contact Scottish Water for guidance on connections to the public water/drainage network: 0845 601 8855

You can find more information on SUDS at: <http://www.ciria.com/suds>

You can view SEPA's small-scale developments guidance here: <http://www.sepa.org.uk/planning.aspx>

You can view SEPA's flood risk map here: http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/flood_risk_maps.aspx

12. Historic Environment

n/a

The Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) contains detailed information about listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeological sites in the Highland area:

<http://her.highland.gov.uk>

General advice on development affecting historic designations can be found at:

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage.htm>

13. Natural Environment

Great Crested Newts have previously been found in the Strathpeffer area. It is therefore possible that the wet areas of the site could contain Great Crested Newts and accordingly a protected species survey is recommended.

Crevices in trees can provide bat roosts. Any trees to be felled should therefore be checked for the presence of bats, and mitigation proposed if necessary.

The trees provide a valuable resource. The proposal to retain and manage the trees is welcomed.

Similarly, your proposal to retain the roadside hedge is welcomed, since this is an important characteristic of the area.

It is suggested that beech is considered for the proposed hedges, since this is widely used in the surrounding area.

More information on Scotland's protected species and areas can be found at:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-species>

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas>

The Scottish Government's woodland strategy and associated policies can be found here:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/woodlandremoval>

The Council's guidance on tree/woodland issues can be found here:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1225/countryside_farming_and_wildlife/63/trees_and_forestry/

14. Other Considerations

A long term management plan is required to ensure that effective maintenance can continue to be delivered and to minimise the risk of it falling into disrepair in the future.

Care will be required to guard against the mis-use of the facilities and space.

15. Gaelic Signage

In line with the Council's on-going commitment to promote the increased use of Gaelic in developments within the Highlands, you are encouraged to consider the use of bilingual signs - both internal and external - as part of your proposal. Our Gaelic Translation Officers are able to provide additional advice and help with translations, if required.

For further information and guidance, please contact the Council's Gaelic Translation Officer on (01463) 703679 or visit <http://www.gaidhealtachd.gov.uk>

To download a copy of the Council's 'Gaelic Signage for Private Developments' advice note, please visit: http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/284/other_planning_guidance

For details on grant funding for bilingual signage, please contact Comunn na Gàidhlig on (01463) 724287 or visit www.cnag.org.uk

16. Consultees for any future Application

The following will likely be consulted on any planning application submitted. You may wish to contact consultees for advice prior to the submission of an application. Please note that on occasion it may be necessary to involve consultees who are not listed below as an application progresses.

Internal Consultees (The Highland Council)

Transport Planning

Access Officer

Flood Management Team

Forestry Officer

Lighting

External Consultees (Government Bodies, Agencies etc.)

SNH if protected species are present

17. Additional Information Required for any future Application

Based on the information provided, you are advised to submit the following additional information with any future application for formal permission. If you choose not to follow our advice and do not submit one or more of the documents, then you should provide a clear justification for doing so.

Design Brief and/or Masterplan

Drainage Impact Assessment

Landscaping/Planting Plan

Landscape Maintenance/Management Plan

Protected Species Survey

18. Conclusions

The proposed community garden / play area/ footpath links should complement and enhance this area of open space and make a positive contribution to the area.

Case Officer:

Susan Hadfield

Signature:

Designation:

Planner

Date:

24th February 2015

Making a Formal Application

Should you wish to submit a formal application in due course, you can do so online or by downloading forms and guidance notes from: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/eplanning>

Application forms and guidance notes are also available from your local planning office.

Disclaimer

This advice is based on the information submitted and is given without prejudice to the future consideration of and decision on any application received by The Highland Council.

Pre-application case files are not publicly available but can be the subject of Freedom of Information requests.