

LOSSIEMOUTH TOWN & VILLAGE STATEMENTS

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Lossiemouth is the fourth largest town in Moray with a population currently of 7500. It has grown slowly and steadily from a population of around 6,600, 25 years ago; this has largely been due to the effect of personnel increase at RAF Lossiemouth, but also to the large amount of house building which has taken place particularly in the last 20 years.

These housing developments have concentrated in the western and south-western area of the town, effectively shifting the centre of gravity of Lossiemouth towards the Coularbank area. Coularbank has also accommodated the new secondary school, community centre, swimming pool and a supermarket.

Employment opportunities in Lossiemouth have not noticeably kept pace with house building programmes. The fishing industry has substantially declined and much of the fishing fleet does not now operate out of Lossiemouth Harbour but out of other north-east and west coast harbours. As was stated in the 1993-98 Moray Plan, Lossiemouth depends to a certain extent on Elgin for its employment opportunities and services. Previous plans aimed to consolidate the employment opportunities in the town, and an industrial estate was designated at Coularbank. This estate has now been serviced and accommodates a number of businesses.

Tourism is also regarded as an important element in the development of Lossiemouth and a number of environmental schemes particularly the rehabilitation of the station area at the harbour, have taken place. The southern approach to the town was also considerably improved by the infilling of the Sunbank Quarry (east) which had operated as the Council's domestic refuse landfill site for many years. Scope exists for promoting recreational use at this location.

CHARACTER OF THE TOWN

Lossiemouth is spread over a hilltop promontory at the mouth of the River Lossie and is contained between two fine sandy beaches. The town is characterised by its harbour and legacy of a prosperous fishing era; by its beaches and links golf courses; and by its RAF base. Lossiemouth has grown in stages, linking separate communities of varying age, with 20th century building spreading out to the south and west; it has no one clearly defined centre. The town is enclosed by forestry plantation to the east, and by the airfield to the west, but to the south, it opens out on to flat agricultural fields.

The outlook to the sea presents Lossiemouth's most valuable asset, with wide streets affording open views over the links, foreshore and promenade; the East and West beach foreshores have so far been kept free of buildings. The approach to the Town from the west enjoys these open views over the Moray Firth, while from the east, the pine plantations provide a pleasant contrast in a largely treeless town. From the south, the large expanse of playing fields, maintain an attractive and distinctive approach to the town.

The setting of the town, and its use of these open spaces and views are key characteristics to the environmental planning of Lossiemouth. Being coastal, the internal environment of the town is designed to withstand the elements and there is little in the way of parks and gardens which provide a softer landscape.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To protect the environmental characteristics of the beaches and foreshores and preserve public access to them; and to enhance the "green" landscaped areas of the town.
- (ii) To preserve and enhance the attractive approaches to the town.
- (iii) To contain the level of new housing building to that more commensurate with the population size and employment prospects of the town, once the current round of the Defence Housing Executive housing developments are complete.

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.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

With the decline of the traditional fishing fleet, fish processing, and related industries, the town has become more dependent on employment further afield. Commuting to Elgin is significant.

Population 7450

Expenditure by visitors to the town is an important part of the economy, the beaches, golf courses, and hotels being the main attractions. However, the presence of over 2,000 RAF personnel is the town's mainstay.

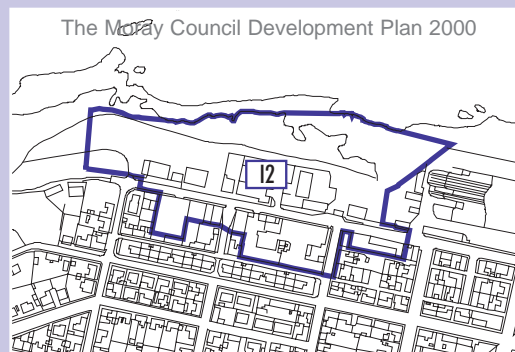
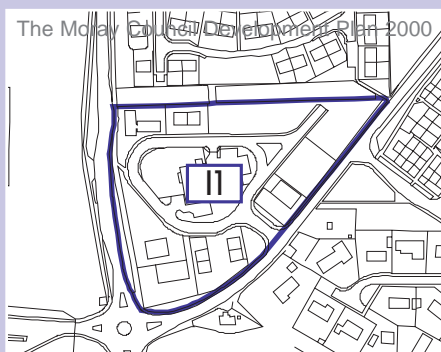
There is limited demand for new business premises. Part of the Coularbank Industrial Estate, first developed in 1985 is now occupied, but there is not sufficient available land to meet requirements over the next five years, without a further allocation being made.

The Local Plan policies for business development are contained in Chapter 1 'Economic Development'.

Industrial Estates (L/ED2, L/ED3)

I1 Coularbank Industrial Estate (2 ha)

Owned by Moray Council. A limited number of serviced new sites are available.



Established Business Areas (L/ED4)

I2 Shore Street (1 ha)

This area of harbour-related, and small business premises, is in need of environmental upgrading. There are few opportunities for new building, other than redevelopment, for which proposals will be considered favourably. New developments will be required to incorporate adequate measures to protect the site from inundation from the sea.

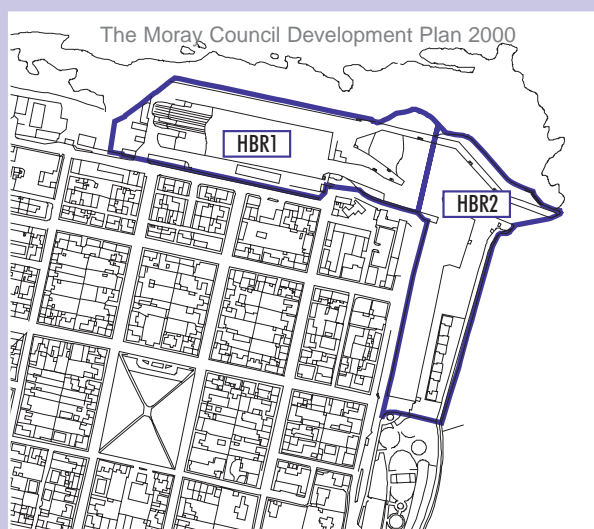
Lossiemouth Harbour (L/T6)

HBR1 Lossiemouth Harbour (West)

Has potential for increased commercial cargo handling, fishing facilities, and limited leisure development. Alternative tourism, recreational and residential proposals shall be permitted subject to servicing and environmental considerations providing that such developments do not compromise the harbour's primary use for the more traditional fishing and cargo handling activities.

HBR2 Lossiemouth Harbour (East)

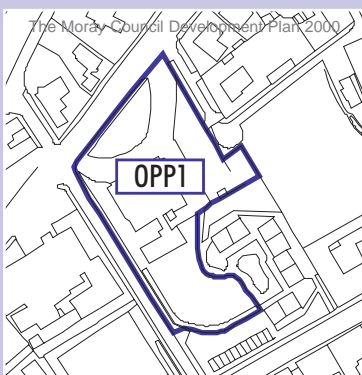
Has largely been developed for tourism, leisure and residential use for which further proposals are considered appropriate in the context of remaining opportunities. The Moray Council will investigate measures to alleviate traffic congestion particularly evident during the summer months.



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.

Opportunity Sites (L/ED6)



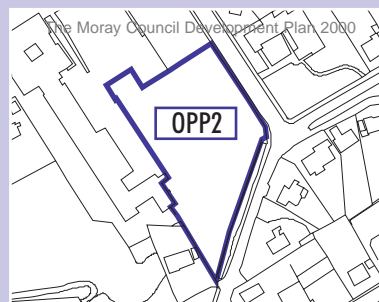
OPP1 Halliman House

This former residential home for the elderly is of considerable architectural merit particularly the north elevation. The Council will seek the restoration of the existing building and promote its re-use or redevelopment for residential accommodation such as a flatted development. Should a proposal be put forward for removal of the building and redevelopment of the site, the Council will require the existing building line along Stotfield Road to be observed. Any new development should be of a similar size, scale and form of the existing neighbouring buildings along Stotfield Road. The design quality of the new building, given the prominent corner location, will be a particularly important consideration.

OPP2 Former St Gerardines Moray College Annex

These buildings were formerly used by Moray College abut onto St Gerardines Primary School.

The site appears best suited to redevelopment for residential small business or tourist accommodation. Any proposal will require to have regard for the amenity of the adjacent school.



OPP3 Sunbank Park (5 ha)

Sunbank Park offers a unique opportunity to introduce business uses into a high quality parkland setting. The concept is to develop the park to accommodate business units linked to tourism and craft industries where both the parkland setting and new business developments combine to create a major visitor attraction facility for Lossiemouth. Development of the site shall be subject to the following:-

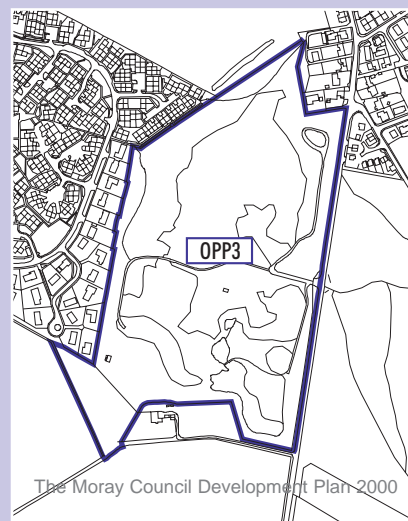
(a) A single access point shall be provided onto the A941 Elgin-Lossiemouth road and a central shared car parking facility should be provided on the elevated embankment within the site. Vehicle access to individual units within the park shall be restricted to delivery and service vehicles only using a discrete network of gravel tracks. Public access will be from the shared car park via a network of footpaths linking individual business units.

(b) Building design will be a key factor in all proposals. Low profile buildings using a range of natural materials will be sought and experimental and advanced ecological design solutions will be encouraged. Buildings should be dispersed within the park and be located on the lower contours of the site avoiding elevated areas which break the skyline. Individual units, depending upon their location may be required to supplement existing landscaping by additional new planting.

(c) All development proposals must safeguard and enhance the natural wetland habitat which characterises much of the site. Prior to the consideration of individual units the owner/developer should submit a layout and comprehensive landscaping plan for the entire park for the approval of the Council. This plan should address the following requirements:

(i) Landscaping

Existing planting along the boundary of the site with the A941 to be retained to a minimum depth of 15 metres back from the edge of the carriageway. This area shall be subject to additional consolidation planting of trees and shrubs. The embankment area along the western boundary of the site shall require to be planted with tree/shrub planting incorporating a footpath and cycleway located along the top of the embankment with linkages to the Park, and housing at Boyd Anderson Drive.



(ii) Layout and Servicing

The identification of individual sites within the park, including their proposed servicing arrangements.

The site is subject to drainage constraints due to the low lying elevation and potential developers are advised to enter into detailed discussions with NOSWA prior to submission of any planning application(s).

TOURISM

The governing policies for Tourism are L/ED16 and 17 in Chapter 1 (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, trail and cross-country skiing.

TI Caravan Park

The caravan park will be protected from development due to its importance as a tourist facility. It should remain as a holiday caravan site, and change of use to an alternative activity will not be permitted. The Council will promote the upgrading of this facility to achieve a better quality of provision.

RETAILING

Lossiemouth is recognised as a secondary shopping centre for which it is appropriate to have large grocery stores serving the catchment of the town and its hinterland.

In view of the structure of Lossiemouth's shopping facilities and its lack of a clearly identified centre, a 10,000 sq ft supermarket was built at Boyd Anderson Drive in Coulardbank. No other sites are considered necessary for identification.

The focus of future retail and business activities will be centred on the main shopping streets of Lossiemouth (Clifton Road, High Street, Pitgaveny Street, Queen Street the James Square areas), where redevelopment opportunities exist.

ENVIRONMENT

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

ENV1 "Beach Bar" Foreshore

To be retained as public open space, in which development may not impair views out to sea, nor the feeling of an open natural area. Includes the Lossiemouth Shore SSSI immediately adjacent to the town.

ENV2 Sunbank Quarry

Incorporates proposals to introduce enhanced landscaping, new trees, and footpaths in association with OPP3.

ENV3 Dean Terrace Viewpoint

To be retained as open space which contains an important viewpoint over the town.

ENV4 Spynie Canal

In need of environmental upgrading.

ENV5 Quarry Road SSSI

See Policy L/ENV1, Chapter 2. This extensive escarpment which characterises this part of Lossiemouth shall be protected from development encroachment.

ENV6 Inchbroom Road

As an important approach to the town, a belt of trees on either side of Inchbroom Road and at Elgin Road must be retained (see conditions of development for R5). Management and replanting of the trees will be subject to professional arboricultural advice.

ENV7 Hythehill Primary School
Grounds and associated open space to be retained.

ENV8 Playing Fields and Recreation Areas
Areas to be retained for recreational use and open space. Proposal to plant additional trees at periphery of Coularbank Playing Fields and create more "parkland" effect.

ENV9 Gregory Place, Square and Car Park
To be retained as formal open space.

ENV10 James Square
Where resources permit the square will be upgraded through introduction of additional planting.

ENV11 Esplanade
To be retained as public amenity area with open views out to sea.

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 will be listed above. The governing policies for the following designations are found in Chapter 2 (Environment).

AGLV The Coastline and golf links to the west of the town is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

CPZ The designated Coastal Protection Zone area includes the links to the west and river estuary to the east. The natural heritage importance of the east beach should be addressed in a management plan to be prepared by the Moray Coast Ranger Service as resources permit.

SSSI There is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest in Quarry Road. (See also ENV5).

SINS A Site of Interest to Natural Science is designated at East Beach, river mouth and eastwards, for geomorphologic and ornithological reasons. (See detailed maps held in the Moray Council Environmental Services Department offices).

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

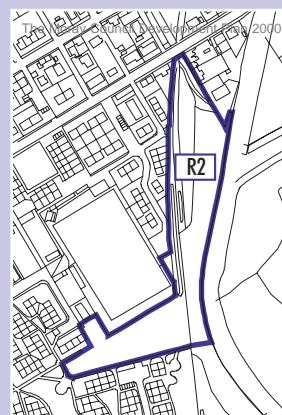
HOUSING

For a town the size of Lossiemouth (almost 3000 houses) there is estimated to be a requirement of 100 new houses to meet normal household-formation needs. The population of the town is expected to increase considerably, by reason of the anticipated increase in personnel levels at the RAF base, and overall, in the next 5 years, the plan is anticipating growth as a result of DHE housebuilding programmes on housing land allocations contained within the 1993-98 Plan. Sufficient additional land for the estimated 100 houses has in fact been designated in this plan. Windfall and gap sites over the next 5 years will inevitably add to this supply.

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 pending on the size and location of the development.

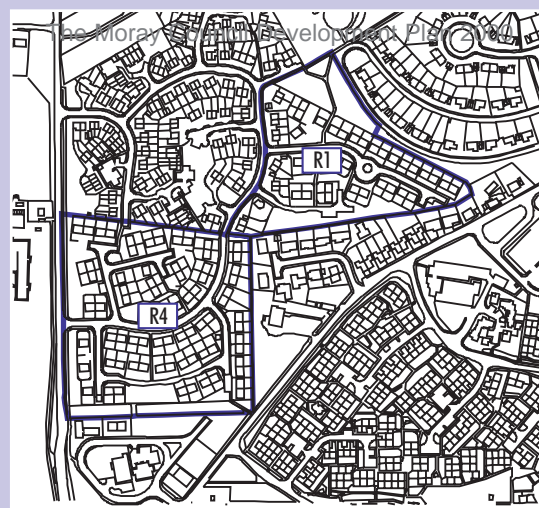
R1 Fulmar Road/South Covesea Terrace
Housing sites from the 1993-98 plan now rationalised to accommodate the DHE housing which will be the subject of a Development Brief.

R2 Canal Bank
Suitable for a small residential development subject to acceptable access arrangements. Development must incorporate landscaping of the canal bank and provide a north-south footpath. The southern edge of the site would be particularly suited to specialist housing use (e.g. housing for the elderly) due to the flat nature of the site and proximity of nearby facilities. Adequate provision will be required for the disposal of surface water to be agreed with NOSWA.



R3 Stotfield Road (0.63 ha)

Suitable for 2 storey detached dwellings, up to 5 new houses, set back from the road to match the building line of neighbouring "Dunconuisg" in garden grounds. The provision and maintenance of a landscaped area to the west of the site at the road junction will be a condition of the development. Houses on the site will require front access and lay-bys to be provided for parking. In addition land should be reserved to the west of the site to accommodate future junction improvements of the B135 and B9040. One dwelling house now complete at the eastern edge of the site.

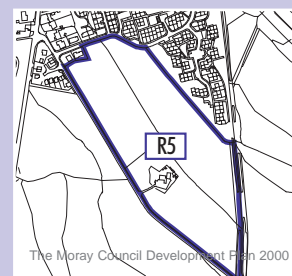


R4 Coulardbank North (3.5 ha)

As a large (3.5 ha) site, it is suited to a mix of house types, including flats. However, the southern boundary must be planted in trees to assist screening of the existing Industrial Estate, to a depth of 20 m and a grassed, landscaped area should front the B9135, from where access is to be taken. An additional access for emergency vehicles requires to be provided to the B9135, this should be taken through the open grassed area. A pedestrian link to Coulardbank Road is required. This site will now be used to provide DHE housing and will be the subject of a Development Brief.

R5 Inchbroom (7.07 ha)

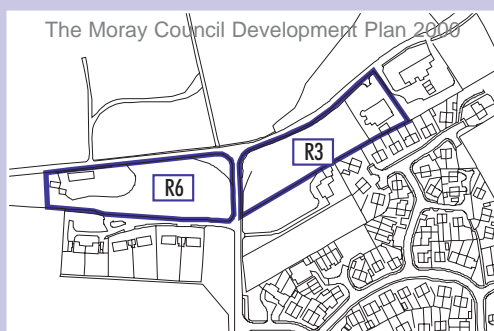
This large plantation area is proposed for low density suburban housing interspersed with trees. On both sides of Inchbroom Road a 30 m wide tree belt is to be retained (ENV3). Housing should be grouped, between stands of existing woodland (subject to professional arboricultural advice). The south end of the site should be lowest density. One access point from Inchbroom Road is adequate, but Inchbroom Road must be widened to 5.5 m from the midway site access point, westwards, with one footway.



The site should be developed in at least two phases of approximately 30 houses. The site is subject to drainage constraints due to the low lying elevation and potential developers are advised to enter into detailed discussions with NOSWA prior to submission of any planning applications.

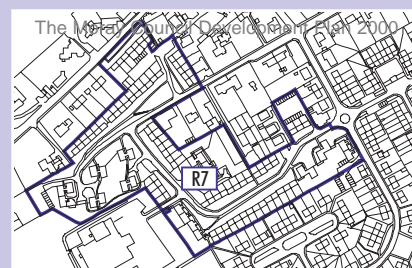
R6 Hopeman Road

The site of the former golf stores, and adjoining vacant land is suitable for a housing development similar to R3 i.e. up to 5 two-storey detached dwellings set back from the main road. Access must be gained from Muirton Crescent. Land for future road junction improvements (Hopeman Road/B9135) should be reserved. A 15m depth of landscaping must be provided by the developer at the west end of the site (in accordance with Objective ii for the town) and the northern boundaries of the plots must be demarcated either in natural stone, hedging or gorse.



R7 Hythehill

This area is currently occupied by housing which was formerly dedicated to the RAF. The site will be developed by a housing association through a combination of redevelopment and renovation measures to generally upgrade housing form and layout. A brief has been prepared for the site which sets the main development parameters.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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

CF1 Sunbank Quarry (East)

This is the former Council refuse landfill site which is suitable for low intensity recreational use such as playing fields or parkland or other sports facilities (e.g. all weather track). Planning Consent for a golf driving range was given on the northern part of the site but this has now lapsed.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

By 2000, Lossiemouth and Elgin (jointly) will require to treat sewage prior to discharge into the Moray Firth, in order to meet new EC Regulations. Both towns presently use a long sea outfall, the two systems connecting at a point on the former railway line in Oakenhead Wood.

The remaining, substandard, outfalls at the harbour and at Shore Street were recently diverted to this collection point as a matter of some urgency using a pumping system.

To meet the long term needs for Lossiemouth and Elgin, planning consent has been granted for a new Sewage Treatment Works to be located in the woods 1/2 mile east of the town just off Inchbroom Road.

