Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

PLANNING

Cairngorms National Park
Local Development Plan

POLICY 3 - SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
Non-statutory Planning Guidance

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Policy 3 – Sustainable Design
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This non-statutory Planning Guidance provides further information and detail on how to comply with **Policy 3 – Sustainable Design** in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015.

This document is available in large print on request. Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on 01479 873535. It is also available to view at **www.cairngorms.co.uk**

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Policy 3 Sustainable Design Planning Guidance

Policy Requirements	Information Required
All developments	
Minimise effects on climate change	• Details of the developments layout to demonstrate how you are taking advantage of solar gain • Details of energy efficiency measures included in the design and method of construction – including use of power and water
Sympathetic to local vernacular, local distinctive and traditional pattern and character	• Details of the existing topography and vernacular built form found in the surrounding area • Reasoned justification for your site selection to show how your proposal is sympathetic to the local vernacular/character
Use complementary materials	• Details of all construction materials to be used in all external parts of the proposal including assessment of local materials found in surrounding area
Make sustainable use of resources	• Layout details which demonstrate how the use of land has been minimised • Details of design and materials used which maximise energy efficiency – include energy, waste, water • Details of any recycled materials to be used
Facilitate recycling	• Details in layout plan to show where recycling facilities will be sited
Promote sustainable transport	• Details in layout plan of options for storing bicycles • Assessment of how your development links to the public transport network • Assessment of efforts made to reduce the need to travel for users of the development
Improve provision of open space	• Layout details of open space associated with development and information of links to public open space
Maximise opportunities to link to existing paths	• Annotated site map of existing paths surrounding the development site • Details of methods to link to these • Demonstrate compliance with the Core Paths Plan

Policy Requirements	Information Required
All developments *continued*	
Protect amenity of neighbours	• Assessment of impact of development on all neighbours • Methods of accessing the site both during construction and on completion
Provision of private amenity space	• Site plan to indicate amount of open space sufficient to meet the needs of the form of development • Details of parking arrangements for users and visitors
Enhance biodiversity	• Measures taken to enhance opportunities for wildlife and biodiversity
Replacement buildings	
Unsuitability of existing building	• Full structural survey or confirmation of method of construction
Not a listed building	• Confirmation that the building is not listed
Use of original footprint	• Site plan to indicate the part of the original footprint to be incorporated; or • Reasoned justification for alternative site
Conversions	
Existing use	• Economic justification to clarify efforts made to retain the original use
Design requirements	• Description of how your proposal reflects the design of the original building
Alterations	
Design requirements	• Description of how your proposal reflects the design of the original building
Maintenance of private amenity space	• Site plan to indicate existing and proposed open space • Details of current and proposed parking arrangements

Meeting the requirements of the policy

1. All development must adopt a sustainable approach to design in order to minimise long-term damage to the natural environment and to support the social and economic fabric of the National Park. To ensure this, a design statement must be included as part of your application which addresses the following issues.

Minimise effects on climate change

2. The changing weather, rising energy costs and a global acceptance that a more considered approach to climate change is needed, means that new development must be designed in an environmentally-conscious way. Thought needs to be given to incorporating design features that can help adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

3. To enhance energy performance, you should look to utilise natural ways of optimising energy efficiency through the design and position of your proposal. This can be done by ensuring the building takes advantage of passive heating and lighting from solar gain as well as cooling and ventilation. Keeping the main glazed orientation of the building to within 30 degrees of south will maximise the potential for the sun to heat and light the building or for example to position solar panels. Internal layout can also take advantage of solar gain – for example by placing the most used rooms on the south side of the building.

4. In addition, incorporating components of green infrastructure within a development can further support climate change adaptation and mitigation. Green infrastructure comprises woodland and individual trees, open space, parks, core paths, as well as green roofs and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) which can facilitate natural flood management, carbon sequestration, shading and cooling, improve water quality, promote active travel and enhance biodiversity.

5. Energy performance has become an increasingly important factor for property owners. Improving standards of energy efficiency can reduce carbon emissions as well as energy costs for both domestic and commercial premises. Incorporating passive designs and low carbon technologies are a significant attraction for potential purchasers, providing improved energy performance and security for the lifetime of the development.

6. All new developments must meet the minimum energy standards set out by the Building (Scotland) Regulations in the Building Standards Technical Handbook. It is mandatory for all buildings to achieve a bronze level of the sustainability labelling scheme, however opportunities to achieve bronze active and above through good design and the use of low and zero carbon generating technologies (LZCGT) are actively encouraged.

7. There are other environmental assessment methods that require higher energy performance standards in buildings. BREEAM is one of the most widely used and accreditation by the scheme demonstrates improved standards of energy efficiency and

performance which are actively encouraged. Further information can be found at: **www.breeam.org.**

8. The design, use of green infrastructure and LZCGT's need to be tailored to the individual circumstances of the building/s to optimise energy performance. Factors such as the site, topography, aspect, proposed use, scale and materials should all be taken into account. In addition, the availability of different technologies and their practical application to different scales and types of development will also influence what may be possible.

Sympathetic to local vernacular, local distinctive and traditional pattern and character

9. What we build today will still be here long after we are gone, if it is well designed and built well. This means ensuring that all new development makes a positive contribution to its location. Buildings which are responsive to context and local distinctiveness and which understand the local landscape can be designed to work with, rather than against, the natural environment.

10. Each site should be looked at as a series of spaces which relate to the existing topography and surroundings. These spaces then dictate where access, landscaping and buildings fit together within an overall framework.

11. Buildings should be sited to reflect the gradient and topography of the landscape and the scale of the landscape features. Traditionally, buildings were located within the natural contours of the landscape. Existing ground levels should be maintained wherever possible in order to avoid the development appearing intrusive and more exposed to the elements.

12. Flexibility is also important in sustainable design – buildings which are built to be adaptable to future uses will provide a good long-term financial and social investment. The way we live and work is changing, as is the way we access services and community facilities. Addressing this in the design and location of new development is essential to maintaining and enhancing the National Park's varied and distinctive communities. Buildings should therefore be fit for purpose but able to function effectively, even when our lifestyles change.

13. You should therefore demonstrate how your proposed development is sited and designed to allow for future changes to internal layout or external extensions which will result in a longer, more useful lifespan of the building. Using construction techniques which enable significant changes to be made easily to the building will help to extend the building's use – for example non-structural partitions which can be easily removed or re-positioned to create new spaces.

14. Some buildings are deliberately built for short-term use. In this case the building should be designed to enable effective re-use or recycling of its components.

15. Flexible design should also allow for home working, whether in traditional industries and supporting services or from new opportunities which are possible with the increasing range of communication technology now available.

16. Within the development site you must include information on access, egress of vehicles, amenity space and other open space.

Use complementary materials

17. New development should reflect the traditional materials and workmanship evident in the National Park, and take on board innovation, contemporary design and modern methods of construction. In choosing the materials for your development you will need to strike a balance between sourcing materials locally and bringing in specialised products which will optimise the sustainability and long-term performance of the development.

18. Whilst new developments do not need to copy past styles, the imposition of standard off-the-shelf designs (found across the country) will increasingly erode the unique characteristics for which the National Park is renowned. New development within the National Park should therefore be designed with its setting firmly in mind.

19. You should demonstrate that your development will include low impact building materials. This may include recycled or previously used materials, for example secondary aggregates, or new materials which have used minimal energy in their production and transportation to the site such as local timber.

Make sustainable use of resources

20. All new development should incorporate the most sustainable systems of energy, water and waste management to reduce pressure on the infrastructure within the National Park. Most importantly this means reducing use of resources through the design of the development, and minimising reliance on resources during the life of the building.

21. Using development land efficiently is an important part of this. You should therefore site and design your proposal in a way which does not waste the land available.

Facilitate recycling

22. Scotland's Zero Waste Plan seeks to minimise waste in general and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Developers are therefore required to provide for the segregation of waste and space should therefore be provided for the storage of appropriate waste containers. You should also consider options to carry out composting within the development site.

Promote sustainable transport

23. New development usually creates the need to travel, including the delivery of materials to a construction site or the need for residents to travel to reach services and community facilities.

24. New development should be located to allow people to use existing sustainable transport initiatives (both motorised and non-motorised initiatives), and to create new multi-use links where appropriate. Consideration should be given to local and national cycle action plans and Active Travel Audits where available (such as the HITRANS Aviemore Active travel Audit). It may also be possible to create a design which helps reduce the need to travel – for example incorporating features to allow home-working. You should also consider innovative options, for example through 'community cars' and car sharing, or making it easy for users of the development to recharge electric vehicles at convenient points.

25. When considering approaches to transport for any development, personal travel should be placed in a hierarchy which puts motorised modes of travel after walking, cycling and public transport. Your proposal should also include adequate consideration of means to store cycles, either within the building, or within the amenity space associated with it.

26. A Transport Assessment prepared in consultation with Transport Scotland will be required, where transport impacts of the development are considered significant.

27. If a new or improved made-up public road is required then the proposed development must not be occupied until the road is constructed to a standard which satisfies the relevant roads authority. It is therefore recommend that you discuss the access requirements for the proposed development at an early stage with the relevant roads authority to ensure that the appropriate design criteria are addressed in your proposal.

Improve provision of open space

28. Where your proposal impacts on existing public or other open space, you must consider how best to link to this, and take all opportunities to improve existing provision. This may include designing your proposal to allow easy access to existing space; protecting that space from adverse impacts as a result of the new development; and where possible, adding to existing provision with any land which is not required by the development.

29. In the case of residential development, a typical standard of 20 per cent of the overall site area will be required for open space. The actual types and mixtures of open space for a particular development will depend on the potential and needs of the site and the most appropriate way of complementing or improving what already exists.

30. The required open space should be carefully designed to ensure that it is integral to the overall design concept. This should include ensuring that it complements existing landscape character, is accessible and incorporates appropriate provision for children and wildlife.

Maximise opportunities to link to existing paths

31. You must demonstrate that you have considered how you will link your proposal to the existing path network. This should include an assessment of the current network, including core paths, the distance of your site to it, and the means by which users of the development would access the existing paths, including any external links from the site. Your proposal must be consistent with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and the Core Paths Plan.

Core path network

32. The Core Paths Plan identifies a network of paths which offer a wide range of high quality outdoor access opportunities.

33. In ensuring your development is consistent with the Core Paths Plan you must consider how you can contribute to its vision and objectives by:

    - taking opportunities to link and expand the existing path network to the wider countryside and help to provide safe off-road access to local services;
    - avoid moving or re-routing core paths where possible. If your proposal will affect the line of a core path you must discuss alternatives with the Access Authority prior to the submission of your planning application.

34. The Core Paths Plan can be found at: **www.cairngorms.co.uk**

Protect amenity of neighbours

35. A new building should be a good neighbor to existing buildings in two ways. Firstly, its siting should take account of and be sympathetic to the existing layout of other buildings in the area. Secondly, the new building should not detract from the setting, aspect or privacy of existing buildings. This is particularly important where housing development is proposed near to existing farm buildings which are in use because of possible problems of nuisance.

36. It is important that new development is compatible with the existing uses on and adjacent to the proposed development site.

37. You must consider the impact of the proposed development on the existing and surrounding properties particularly in terms of overlooking and loss of privacy. Whilst the majority of residential properties are overlooked to a certain degree the extent of this depends on a range of factors. You should consider these factors in your development proposal, ie the proximity, height and orientation of other properties, visibility from public spaces and the existence of boundaries and potential for screening.

38. To enable a reasonable level of privacy and amenity to be achieved you should ensure that your proposed development is located within a reasonable distance of the existing properties within a building group. The space between the new development and existing proprieties should complement and be guided by the spacing between existing properties within the group. In the case of residential development, a minimum 18m privacy zone should be maintained between windows of principle rooms when directly opposite. This distance can be reduced when the windows are at an angle to each other.

39. Where this distance cannot be met then overlooking may be reduced by the erection of screening such as walls or fences, use of obscure glazing to windows and doors, or using high level windows or roof lights.

40. These distances may also not be appropriate if your proposed development is set where dwelling frontages are already exposed to public view. Any new development in such settings should follow the established line and spacing of existing dwellings to complement its setting.

41. Overlooking and overshadowing of adjoining gardens can also impact on privacy and enjoyment of amenity. You should take this into account when deciding on the location of your proposed dwelling on the development site. Access to sunlight is an important consideration and differs according to the time of day and year. Your development proposal

should not result in a significant loss of sunlight to existing buildings at any time of year.

Provision of private amenity space

42. The amenity space associated with your development should be sufficient to meet the needs arising from the specific development proposal. It should be integral to the design of the built elements of the proposal, and should not be designed as an afterthought.

43. New houses in building groups and in infill situations must be sited and designed to provide adequate curtilages, to ensure both an appropriate 'fit' with the group and the provision and maintenance of an adequate level of residential amenity for the existing and new dwellings.

44. In the case of housing development, the amount of private outdoor space provided should reflect the size of the proposed dwelling. As a guide for a 3-bedroomed dwelling, 70-90 square metres is required; for a 2-bedroomed property 40-60 square metres will be required.

45. The design and landscaping of the amenity space can also help ensure a good fit with the landscape, and can improve shelter on exposed sites.

46. It must have a site sufficient to provide adequate parking and manoeuvering of vehicles to allow forward facing egress from the access. The amount required will be dependent on the nature of the development. You must therefore ensure that you have considered this prior to the submission of any application, and incorporated the requirement into the overall design of the site.

47. In the case of housing developments, each single house should have a minimum of two car parking spaces. A garage will not be accepted as contributing to the number of parking spaces for the development. Where access is direct on to a classified road, a turning space will also be required within the site and a lay-by may be required for visiting service vehicles where the public road might otherwise be obstructed.

48. Where an access is to serve five or more houses, the standard of access must be constructed or upgraded to that of a public road. As part of this standard, street lighting will normally be required. However, your development proposal should seek to minimise light pollution and other visual impacts from lighting infrastructure.

49. For all housing developments you must demonstrate that your design provides for amenity and neighbourliness. It must accommodate appropriate public open space and private amenity space including garden ground, space for drying clothes and storage of refuse and recycling bins. It must also include the required parking and turning areas.

Enhance biodiversity

50. There are often opportunities in, on and around a development site to enhance biodiversity. Some can be quick and simple, others more complex and require design and construction. Ideas range from the provision of a pond on site to creation of permanent nesting for bats, birds and invertebrates.

51. Your proposal must consider how best to exploit the opportunities which come as a result of the development, and what measures are to be included to further biodiversity.