

South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area

concept statement



April 2010

1. Purpose of the concept statement

The Finalised Draft North Lanarkshire Local Plan 2009 proposes planned urban expansion by means of three Community Growth Areas (CGAs) to meet anticipated housing demand post-2011; one of the Community Growth Areas is South Cumbernauld.

Masterplans, to be produced by developers and/or landowners in the CGAs, will be required to set out the nature and form of development in these areas. Masterplans will have to be submitted to, and approved by, the council.

The purpose of this Concept Statement is to set out the vision and guiding principles that will be applied to the development of the South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area. These principles will be taken forward in a Strategic Development Framework document (SDF) which will be prepared by the council to give developers further detailed information as to what will be required in their masterplan for the area.

The Concept Statement and the Strategic Development Framework will therefore be the formal guidance produced to advise developers of the council's requirements for the masterplan. It is intended that these documents will ultimately be adopted as formal Supplementary Planning Guidance, which means they will have a formal status as part of the development plan and will be material considerations when the council is dealing with planning proposals for the CGA.

The preferred option is that one masterplan will be developed containing the requirements for all of the CGA and will form the basis of an application for planning permission in principle.



Land at Mid Forest

2. Background

Community Growth Areas are locations for large scale planned urban expansion, to accommodate the demand for new housing and associated facilities that cannot be met in the established built up areas.

The need for these growth areas was identified in the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan 2006, with South Cumbernauld being one of three to be located in North Lanarkshire. The Structure Plan suggested a requirement for approximately 2000 new dwellings for the South Cumbernauld CGA, and the Finalised Draft North Lanarkshire Local Plan identified sites that would be suitable.

The CGA will include not only housing, but other facilities that may be required to support both the new and existing populations, such as shops, schools, leisure facilities and open space.

Cumbernauld viewed from Palacerigg



3. South Cumbernauld Growth Area

The South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area is located immediately south of, and adjacent to, the existing built up area of Cumbernauld.

The area is separated from the existing urban area by a local distributor road, Forest Road-Lenziemill Road, and by the Glasgow-Falkirk railway line. The site is also bounded to the east and west by Forest Wood and Luggiebank Scottish Wildlife Trust wildlife reserves respectively.

The CGA sites consist of two parcels of land, amounting to approximately 76 hectares at Lower Palacerigg/Waterside and 52 hectares at Mid Forest. The areas are physically separated by a wooded valley, part of which is a Scottish Wildlife Trust wildlife reserve, and a distance of about 700 metres.

Lower Palacerigg is located on both north and south facing aspects with the existing Palacerigg Road generally acting as the divide between the two slopes.

Mid Forest is situated on a north facing slope to the south of Forest Road. At Mid Forest topography ranges from gently sloping land near the existing woodland, around the edge of Cumbernauld, to fairly level ground in higher parts of the area.

If all sites are effective the allocated areas are sufficient to accommodate the proposed 2000 dwellings and associated amenities. It is intended that the CGA will be developed during the period from 2011 to 2020 and beyond.

Palacerigg Site from Town Centre




4. The Vision

“A Vision for an area forms the foundation and the driver for planning the area. Once a clear vision for a place has been established, the principles can be translated into a masterplan”
(Planning Advice Note 83: Masterplanning: Scottish Government 2008).

The council’s vision for the South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area is that it should:

- Be designed and built to a high quality, and integrate well with the existing communities and the local environment by creating a clear identity and contributing to local distinctiveness.
- Provide for community needs.
- Be sustainable, both environmentally and socially, in terms of protecting, enhancing and expanding environmental assets, encouraging accessibility, reducing energy and resource consumption, and being designed around people to create a well designed and safe place where people want to live.
- Provide infrastructure appropriate to the development.
- Improve Health and Wellbeing.



Palacerigg Site looking towards Greenfaulds

5. The Guiding Principles

In order to achieve the Vision, the following general principles must be applied in the masterplan.

A clear design strategy, setting out the principles to be used in terms of the scale and form of the intended developments, is required to create a distinct identity and sense of place. This will identify how new development can sensitively be integrated into the landscape and linked to the neighbouring areas of Cumbernauld.

The design strategy will take reference from successful Scottish urban forms and layouts whilst encouraging innovative design solutions. A significant change from standard suburban housing layouts is expected – in terms of overall layout, the nature of residential streets, consideration of issues such as refuse storage and collection, parking, and securing a high quality of public realm. The masterplan should include a Design Statement, to set out the basis of the design principles involved in the proposals. Masterplans will be the subject of further consultation with the local communities before they are submitted to the planning authority. Full consideration should be given to the Scottish Government policies ‘Designing Places’ and ‘Designing Streets’.

The design strategy will be required to foster sustainable communities where high quality design will not only result in an attractive environment but will also discourage crime and the fear of crime. Development should reinforce and enhance existing amenities and provision of local shopping, educational and other community facilities.

The development should contain substantial areas of high quality open space or woodland, providing formal and informal recreational opportunities, which act as focal points within the community. These should form part of a network of green spaces within the area, and should seek to connect to, and enhance, existing open spaces and woodland. Wherever practical, existing woodland and hedges should be retained or expanded and incorporated into the developments. These areas should contribute towards the aims and delivery of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network. Public art should also be provided as part of the developments, particularly at entry points and at central locations.

Land at Lower Palacerigg

New residential layouts will be designed to be well-connected to encourage walking, cycling and access to public transport, to promote good quality design and reduce the dominance of the car. In particular good pedestrian access links shall be provided to bus stops. Pedestrian routes will be designed to be safe and visible and will connect into adjacent networks.

Developers should seek to avoid the loss of sporting and leisure facilities. Where such facilities are lost, the provision of a replacement facility or the upgrading and substantial improvement of an existing facility will be sought to compensate the loss through the provision of developer contributions.

Buildings will be expected to achieve high energy efficiency levels through design - with improved insulation, airtight designs, orientation to maximise solar gain, utilising heat recovery systems and the incorporation of renewable energy technologies. Developers will be expected to use best practice and facilities for sustainable waste management, drainage and recycling techniques, including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

Developers will be expected to provide, or contribute towards the provision of infrastructure required as a direct consequence of the development, both on-site and off-site. This may include new school provision and road and junction improvements. Where appropriate, developers will be asked to enter into a legal agreement (or agreements) with the council to ensure the provision of such facilities.

The phasing of the development, and any associated infrastructure and facilities, will be addressed in the masterplan, to achieve a planned and co-ordinated development. When approved, the development will proceed in accordance with the agreed phasing.

Many areas within the central belt of Scotland including North Lanarkshire were formerly subject to heavy industrial use. Due to known historic activities within the South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area there is potential for land contamination to be present. Consequently, developers will be required to undertake a preliminary assessment to identify the likelihood of potential land contamination and which may necessitate further investigations. Developers will be required to implement identified remediation requirements as part of any development proposals.

View towards Kildrum of pylons going through Mid Forest site



6. Specific Requirements

In addition to the general principles noted above, the following specific issues require to be addressed in the masterplan. A number of issues are shown diagrammatically on the map shown on the inside back cover.

Landscape and Nature Conservation

a) Developers should identify wildlife and natural heritage interests and opportunities at an early stage in order that measures to protect and enhance natural assets may be incorporated into the masterplan. Developers should give appropriate consideration to the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, (SINCs), within and adjacent to the Community Growth Area and demonstrate that no adverse impact on them will result from the development, or that any impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated in environmental terms.

b) Developers will be required to provide sufficient buffer distances between areas of conservation value such as Palacerigg Country Park, Glencryan Wood, and the Scottish Wildlife Trust nature reserves located adjacent to the proposed development areas. Developers will also be required to provide a strong landscape framework to strengthen and protect these core habitat areas.

c) Developers should give appropriate consideration to the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan. An Environmental Impact Assessment will require to be undertaken by the developer.

d) Woodland has recently been established at the western edge of the site adjacent to Glencryan Wood. Developers should recognise the contribution this makes to the setting of the Growth Area and will retain the majority of woodland to create a structural landscape framework within which new development will take place. Developers may also be required to create new areas of woodland.

e) An Appropriate Assessment (under the Habitats Regulations) of how development may affect the Special Protection Area at the Slammanan Plateau which serves as winter habitat for Bean Geese has been carried out for the council. Further details will be provided in the SDF and developers will be required to take account of the findings of the Appropriate Assessment when preparing their masterplans.

Looking south-west from Palacerigg to Luggie Water

f) Housing densities and building heights should respect both the urban fringe and countryside nature of the location, and should acknowledge the potential visual impact of development on prominent and sloping sites.

g) An area in the Western Part of Mid Forest is recognised as having substantial nature conservation and recreational value, and will be reserved for such purposes in the SDF.

h) Development should give proper consideration to existing landscape character, key views and features. Development within the sites should respond to the underlying landform and follow contours in order to integrate successfully into the landscape with the objective of minimising the visual and landscape impact on surrounding areas. Existing structural planting, hedgerows, and mature tree copses should be retained and enhanced where practical. Mature trees and woodland should be protected to ensure attractive views are retained and new woodland considered where it might provide significant landscape benefit.

i) Heavily engineered platforms should be avoided, as these can interrupt and conflict with the flow of the landform and appear out of scale. The more visible elevated areas south of Palacerigg Road should incorporate structural planting in order to reduce visual impact. The use of appropriate colours in building materials to reduce impact should also be considered. Parts of this area should be considered for open space, leisure and recreational uses rather than residential.

j) A landscape character assessment has been undertaken on behalf of the council for the South Cumbernauld Area. Developers should undertake further Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments as part of the masterplan process in order to devise a landscape strategy for integrating into the natural and built context of the sites and mitigating measures for visual impact on surrounding settlements.

Affordable Housing

a) There is a requirement for provision of 25% affordable housing within the Community Growth Area to address housing shortfalls. Affordable housing should be integrated throughout each phase of development and should not be separate or isolated development. On-site delivery of affordable housing is the preferred option rather than payment of commuted sums. Further details of affordable housing requirements will be provided in the Strategic Development Framework document.



Access and Movement

- a) Rights of Way have been identified within the Community Growth Area. Developers will need to be mindful of these and the requirement to maintain or suitably divert the routes. An Access Audit may require to be undertaken by the developer.
- b) Developers are to acknowledge the requirements of the council's Public Access Strategy and Core Path Plan when developing masterplans and should avoid development which obstructs, encroaches or in other ways compromises Core Paths. These routes will be material considerations in planning applications.
- c) Accessibility to the national road network and to Cumbernauld and Greenfaulds railway stations are key issues, and a Transport Assessment will be required as part of the masterplan process. Developers will be required to contribute towards improvements to the wider road network that may be necessary as a consequence of the development.
- d) Vehicular access to the Mid Forest area will be from two points on Forest Road, preferably at either end of the site; the junction type(s) will be determined following the finalisation of the Transport Assessment.
- e) Pedestrian and cycling connections to Mid Forest will either be by bridge, by at-grade pedestrian crossings, or potentially by retention of the existing underpasses.
- f) Vehicular access to the Palacerigg area will require two access points, which may involve either junction alterations/layout changes in the vicinity of Lye Brae, Lenziemill Road or Jane's Brae or the widening, realignment and improvement of sections of Palacerigg Road.

- g) Pedestrian and cycling routes must ensure safe and efficient routes within and from the development and should particularly seek to provide safe and attractive links to Cumbernauld railway station and the town centre.
- h) The level of existing and the provision of new public transport must be considered as part of the masterplanning process. Developers should take appropriate measures within masterplans to allow public transport operators to access and serve the areas.
- i) An area in the Eastern portion of the Palacerigg area is located close to a site used by a local model flying club and an 'exclusion zone' for development will be identified in the SDF.



Underpass at Abronhill accessing Mid Forest Site

Community Facilities & Services

a) Developers will be required to contribute towards educational provision within the Community Growth Area based on the impact of the development on existing school and nursery facilities in the area. It is anticipated that a contribution will be required from the developer towards the expansion and refurbishment of existing primary and secondary schools in the Cumbernauld area to accommodate the additional student numbers at these schools. The development will also generate the need for a new nursery at one of the existing primary schools within Cumbernauld.

b) Developers will be required to provide new, or contribute towards the existing provision of, community facilities based on the impact of the development on the existing provision in the area. This includes recreational and health facilities. Where new facilities are required, the provision of these should be considered in conjunction with any new school facilities to be provided as part of the development.

c) The existing provision of modern grass and synthetic playing fields is limited within South Cumbernauld. As a result of the impact of development a developers' contribution will be sought for both pitches and multi-use games areas whose preferred location will be at or near community hubs such as local primary or secondary schools.



d) Developers will be required to provide financial contributions towards the provision of primary care health facilities serving the Cumbernauld area as a result of the impact of development. Facilities may include base accommodation for community health teams.

e) The increase in population may generate a need for further local shopping facilities. The scale of any new retail development (if required) will be determined by an assessment of existing shopping provision in the area, in light of the additional population which will result. The masterplan will identify locations for any new retail development.

Utilities

a) Stand-off distances will be required from the pylon lines crossing the area to allow access for operational and maintenance purposes. Developers will take advice from Scottish Power Energy Networks regarding appropriate operational distances from electricity transmission equipment.

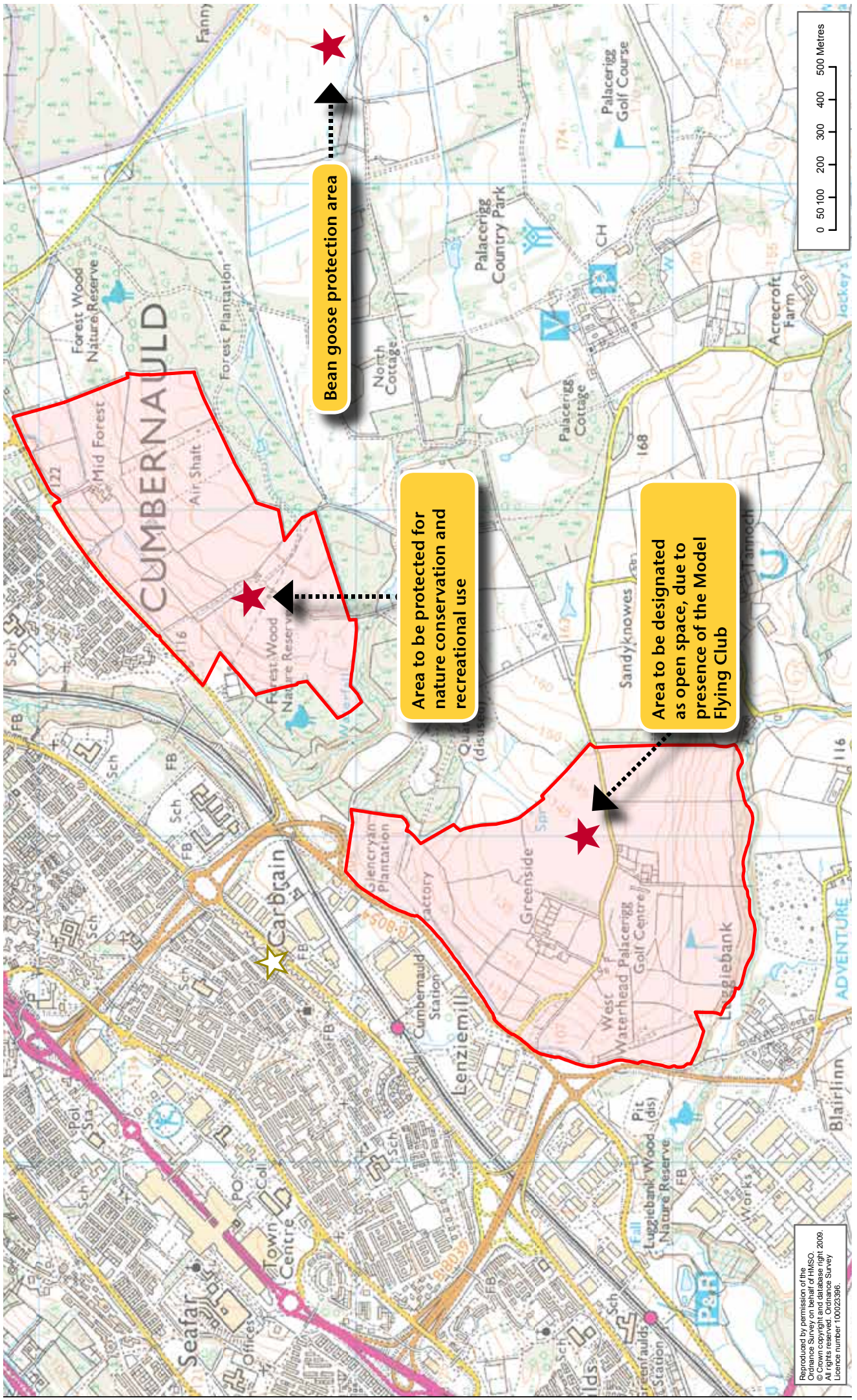


Ground Conditions and Air Quality

a) Developers will be required to investigate the mineral position fully and make provision for any remedial works, or design solutions, required.

b) Potential noise and vibration impacts should be considered from the outset of the masterplanning process in order that any mitigating measures required may be built into planning of the site layout. Relevant assessments will require to be undertaken by developers.

South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area – Issues Map



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