



# PROPOSED ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 RESPONSE FORM

As part of the production of the Local Development Plan, a 'Main Issues Report' was published in January 2019. The responses from these consultations have helped to inform the content of the Proposed Local Development Plan ("the Proposed Plan").

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan will direct decision-making on land-use planning issues and planning applications in Aberdeenshire for the 10-year period from 2021 to 2031. The Proposed Plan was agreed by Aberdeenshire Council in March 2020 as the settled view of the Council. However, the Proposed Plan will be subjected to an independent examination and is now open for public comment.

**This is your opportunity to tell us if anything should be changed in the Proposed Plan, and why.**

When writing a response to the Proposed Plan it is important to specifically state the modification(s) that you would wish to see to the Plan.

This is the only remaining opportunity to comment on the Proposed Plan. The reasons for any requested changes will be analysed and reported to Scottish Ministers. They will then appoint a person known as a Reporter to conduct a public examination of the Proposed Plan, focusing particularly on any unresolved issues and the changes sought.

Ministers expect representations (or responses) to be concise (no more than 2000 words) and accompanied by limited supporting documents. It is important to ensure that all of the information that you wish to be considered is submitted during this consultation period as there is no further opportunity to provide information, unless specifically asked.

Please email comments to [ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or send this form to reach us by 31 July 2020\*.

We recommend that you keep a copy of your representation for your own records.

*\*UPDATE 16 June 2020: Consultation period was extended from 17 July 2020 for a further two-week period.*



Please use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020. If you are making comments about more than one topic it would be very helpful if you could fill in a **separate response form for each issue you wish to raise.**

Please email or send the form to reach us by 31 July 2020 at the following address:

Post: Planning Policy Team, Infrastructures Services  
Aberdeenshire Council, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB

Email: [ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

Please refer to our **Privacy Notice** at the end of this form for details of your rights under the Data Protection Act.

## YOUR DETAILS

Title:	Mr
First Name:	Ian A
Surname:	Downie
Date:	31st July 2020
Postal Address:	c a s e CONSULTING Limited [REDACTED]
Postcode:	[REDACTED]
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]

Are you happy to receive future correspondence only by email? Yes  No

Are you responding on behalf of another person? Yes  No

If yes who are you representing?

Various developers and landowners

Tick the box if you would like to subscribe to the Aberdeenshire LDP eNewsletter:

*An acknowledgement will be sent to this address soon after the close of consultation.*

# YOUR COMMENTS

Please provide us with your comments below. We will summarise comments and in our analysis will consider every point that is made. Once we have done this we will write back to you with Aberdeenshire Council's views on the submissions made. We will publish your name as the author of the comment, but will not make your address public.

**Modification that you wish to see** (please make specific reference to the section of the Proposed Plan you wish to see modified if possible, for example Section 9, paragraph E1.1):

Include bid site FR022 (West Balmedie) in the LDP to accommodate around 400 houses, site for a primary school and community facilities and mixed employment uses.

**Reason for change:**

This representation adopts the Primary Representation by ~~case~~ CONSULTING Limited in respect of housing land supply in the Aberdeenshire part of the Aberdeen Housing Market Area. That representation identifies a need to augment the allocations by 3,709 houses if an allowance is made for 2019 or 3,172 houses if the allowance for 2019 is to be ignored to satisfy the provisions of paragraph 110 of SPP.

In addition, there are a very substantial number of allocations that have wrongly been scored as contributing to meeting the strategic allowances despite being constrained and, with particular reference to the Rural Housing Market Area, long term constrained. These constrained allocations will have to be replaced by new effective allocations either in the Rural HMA or the Aberdeen HMA. In the Rural HMA there is already a high prevalence of marketability constrained allocations (31% of the identified established land supply in the 2019 housing land audit) and an additional requirement to allocate between 2,167 - 3,153 houses to satisfy the provision of paragraph 110 of SPP (See Primary Representation of Housing Land Supply - Rural Housing Market Area).

It is against this background that additional allocations have to be identified if planning by appeal is to be avoided by the Planning Authority. While the spatial strategy that has resulted in such an extreme mismatch between demand and supply in Aberdeenshire there are principles that are still relevant in any locational search for suitable candidate sites. Preference should be given to the Strategic Growth Areas because these represent the main transportation corridors in Aberdeenshire.

In the post Covid-19 period even greater Government emphasis will no doubt be placed on maximising the utilisation of existing infrastructure.

The FR022 bid site known as West Balmedie is unique in that it is served by an existing and direct access from the existing grade separated junction on the A90(t) road. An existing trunk sewer crosses at the underpass of the grade separated junction to feed into the Balmedie Waste Water Treatment Plant and Scottish Water has recently surveyed the route for a new trunk water main which will pass along the existing road in West Balmedie to serve existing development allocations. The FR022 bid sites has none of the substantial and inherent constraints so obviously associated with the two proposed allocations in Potterton. Development of this bid site can be undertaken with very limited vehicular impact because of the direct access to the grade separated junction and the primary transportation route to Aberdeen and Dyce.

There is already an embryonic settlement in the West Balmedie location including a school, a number of small businesses and residential properties.

The settlement statement for Balmedie recognises that the local community are concerned about the need to identify a site for the provision of a primary school. These concerns have been expressed to the Planning Authority in two previous local development plan consultations by the local community and, indeed, by Local Councillors. The Planning Service has persistently resisted the need to identify a site despite the fact that the existing school is nearing the end of its lifecycle and increasing in need of maintenance interventions. More importantly, Existing allocations within the catchment area of Balmedie Primary School its core capacity has been exceeded now for some years. There is no possibility of extending the school further due to access constraints on Forsyth Drive and Forsyth Road which make it extremely difficult for school buses to safely reach the primary school bust stances.

Allocations within the Balmedie catchment area total over 1200 houses the majority of which will be completed during the plan period. These allocation are anticipated to produce around 480 - 500 pupils. It takes the Education Authority at least five years to deliver a primary school once a site has been identified. There is a need to respond to this urgent requirement within this local development plan.

The FR022 bid site has the obvious and substantial benefit of providing direct vehicular access for pupils throughout the catchment area including Blackdog, Belhelvie and the landward area without any movement constraints. Pedestrian and cycle links already in place in respect of Balmedie via the grade separated junction underpass and from Blackdog via an existing underpass at the southern end of the site. Further links to Potterton and Belhelvie could be formed without any insurmountable difficulty.

SPP, at paragraph 28, stipulates that *The planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places by enabling development that balances the costs and benefits of a proposal over the longer term. The aim is to achieve the right development in the right place: it is not to allow development at any cost.*

Paragraph 29 of SPP further advises that policies and decisions should be guided by a set of specified principles which the FR022 bid site is fully compliant with. There are no protected designations that apply to any part of the site and masterplanning for the development is already well underway to ensure early delivery of the development. Public consultation has also taken place following the submission of a Proposal of Application Notice. Regrettably, progress has been much slower than anticipated due to the reticence of the Planning Service to assist in the process. Indeed, the advice received is that there is no mechanism to consider or approve a masterplan. There have been other bids in respect of sites in and around Balmedie but none of these have the immediate degree of connectivity to the A90(T) or the ability to bring forward development without unacceptable traffic impacts on the existing road network in the settlement. The environmental assessments of these other bid sites failed in many instances to apply criteria consistently to all sites including the FR022 bid site. When this bid site is compared to the two proposed allocations in Potterton it is difficult to discern whether any competent assessment of the deliverability of bid sites has been undertaken.

A copy of the masterplan documentation is enclosed with this representation.

# 1 WEST BALMEDIE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Have your say in shaping your future community

WEST BALMEDIE ESTATE

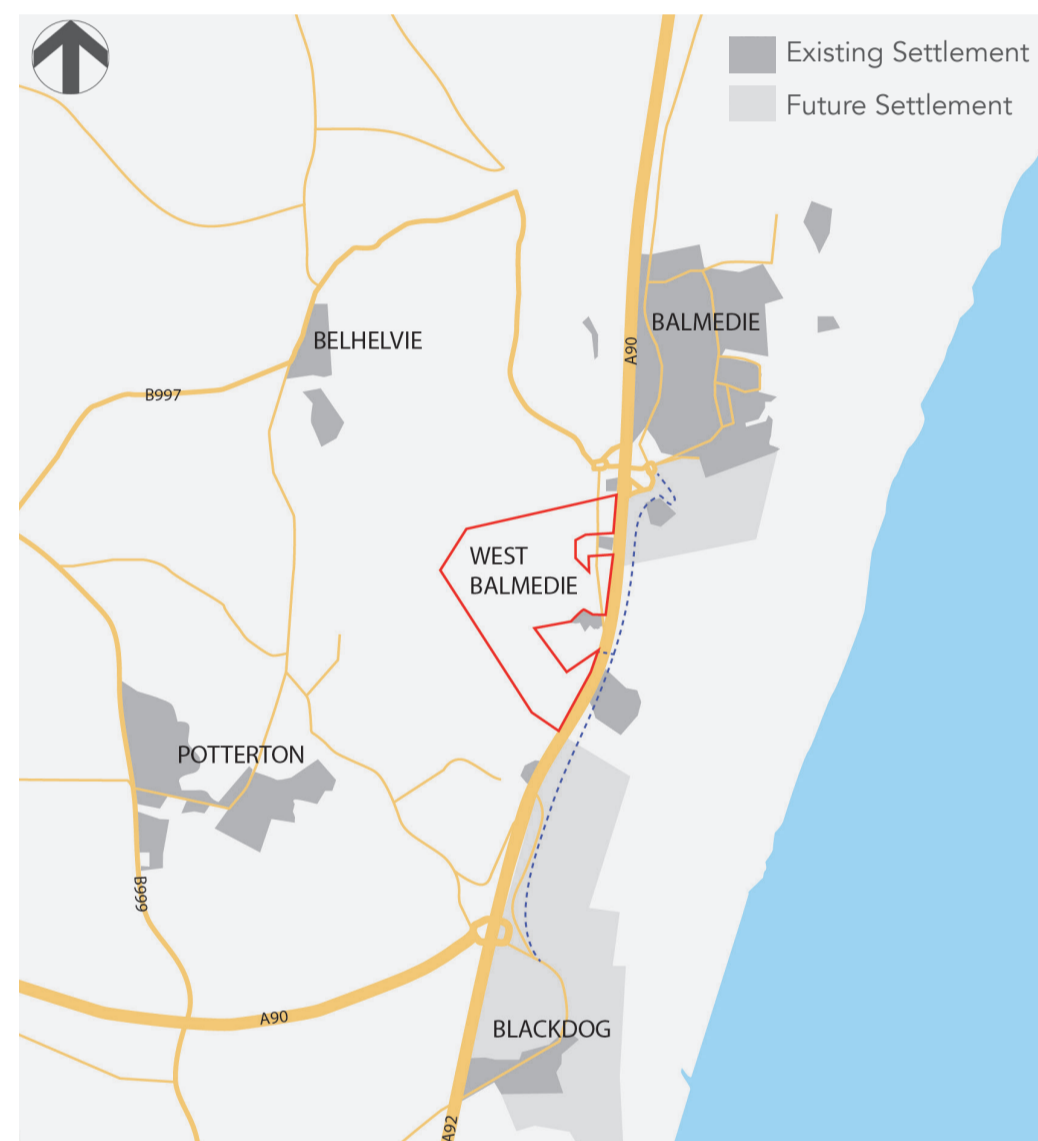


## INTRODUCTION

Balmedie is recognised as a major settlement in the strategic growth area between Blackdog and Ellon and as such it is the focus for further development because of its excellent road links and proximity to Aberdeen.

This public consultation event seeks to present the West Balmedie Development Proposal for a mixed use development to augment and enhance the amenities already available in Balmedie.

Opportunities to express your views on any aspect of this presentation are an essential part of the process of designing a settlement expansion that is fit for purpose and meets the aspirations and needs of the local population.



A leaflet containing information on the development was hand-delivered to the residents of Balmedie and the surrounding areas. This contained the background to the proposal, as well as a draft masterplan zoning diagram, shown below, outlining indicative land uses. This has now been developed further into the proposals presented across these boards.

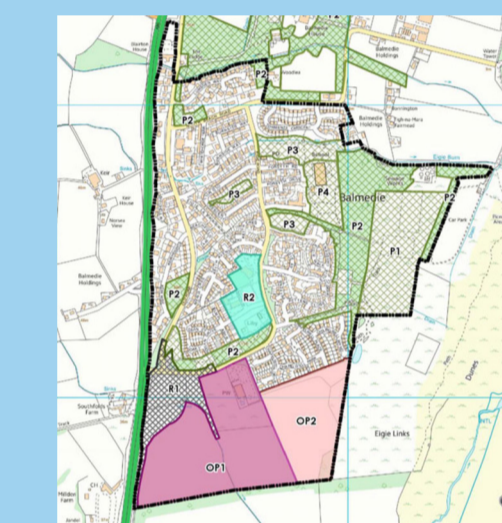


LOCATION PLAN

## WHY DEVELOP WEST BALMEDIE?

The West Balmedie development site is in close proximity to the new grade separated junction, shown in these photos opposite, meaning it is well placed to service Balmedie and the wider area without impacting on existing traffic flows through the village.

A new urgently needed primary school location, as well as other proposed services and amenities, will be easily accessible from both Balmedie and other settlements within the catchment area. Dedicated footpath and cycle links to Balmedie and to Blackdog already exist and consideration is being given to how it might be possible to provide additional pedestrian / cycle links to Belhelvie and Potterton to further enhance this site's strategic position within the area.



The site is in the most logical and immediately deliverable location and mirrors the existing commitment within the current Local Development Plan, shown left, to expand Balmedie in a southerly direction, making maximum use of the new grade separated junction that allows easy access to the A 90 Trunk road.

## THE MASTERPLAN PROCESS

Currently, work is underway to determine how Balmedie might expand over the period to 2032 through the Local Development Plan. The fullest local public engagement in the process is strongly supported by the Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council in ensuring that community's views are sought and heard in the preparation of the detailed masterplan for the development.

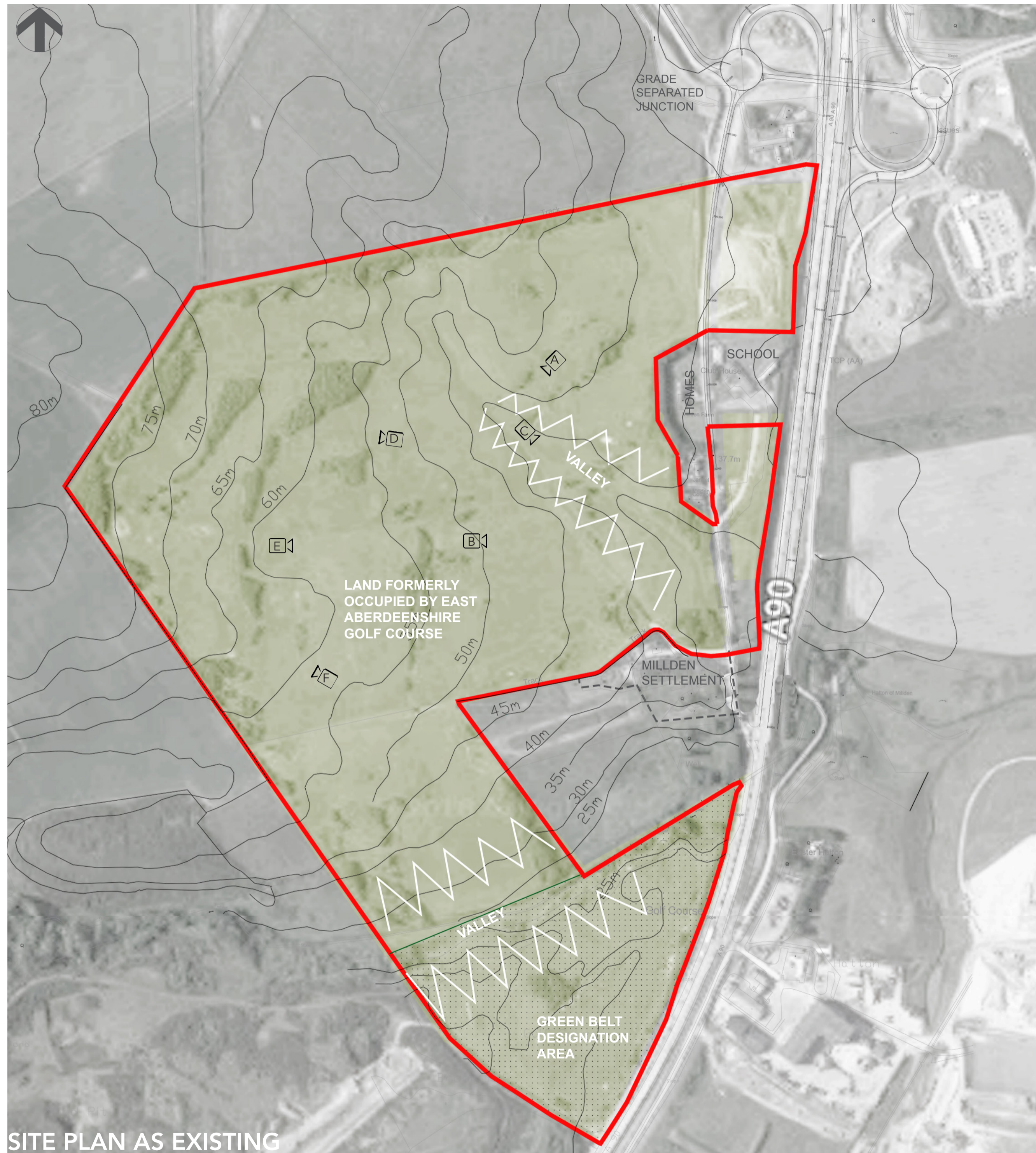
To aid this initial stage of the process this DRAFT masterplan has been prepared by a multidisciplinary professional team. It represents what might be possible and, more importantly, is designed to stimulate local comment on what might and might not be desirable. The masterplan will continue to evolve as it addresses relevant issues raised during this consultation process.



# 2 WEST BALMEDI DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Have your say in shaping your future community

## WEST BALMEDI ESTATE SITE ANALYSIS



SITE PLAN AS EXISTING



**Ecology / Nature Conservation** – The site is of no particular ecological sensitivity as a result of past and current land uses, however there is an opportunity for enhancing greenspace by promoting a network of woodland and open corridors through the site, both linking the proposed areas of development and connecting beyond the site. Ecological assessment has informed the masterplan and will be further developed through detailed design.

There is no flood risk associated with the areas of site proposed for built development, and a manageable risk of very limited flooding in the bottom of the southern valley

### CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

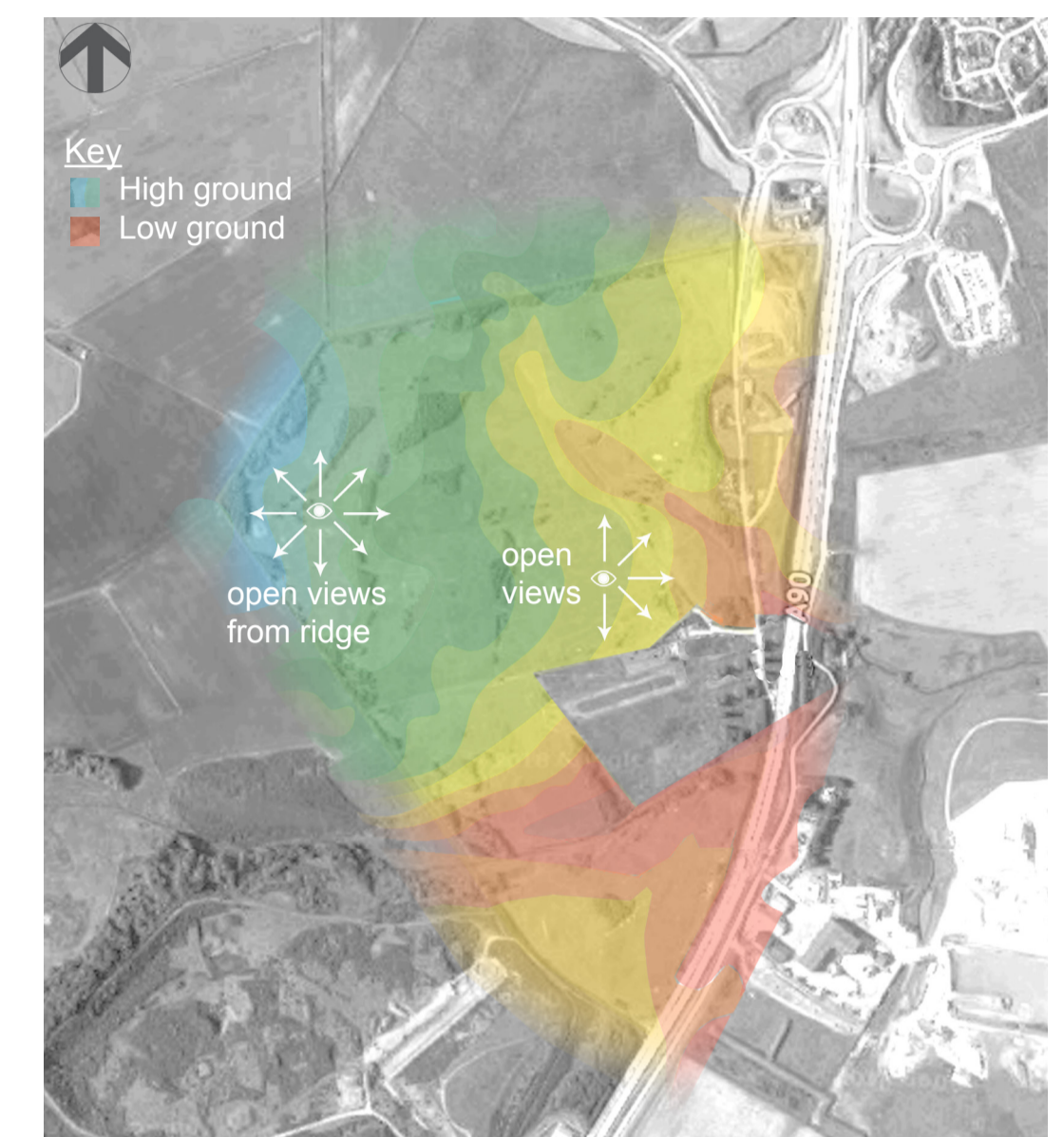


**Existing Roads and Connections** – Existing roads adjacent to the site should be considered within the whole context of the proposed new development. Design solutions should aim to improve road safety and reduce traffic speeds, especially to the main access road from the grade separated junction serving the site, as this also serves an existing school.

Existing connections to and from the site should be exploited to ensure good connectivity into the wider area. The new grade separated junction provides excellent access to the site from the existing Balmedie settlement, and an underpass further south below the A90 provides a dedicated pedestrian / cycle link to Balmedie and Blackdog. Opportunities for providing additional pedestrian / cycle links to Belhevie and Potterton will be considered.

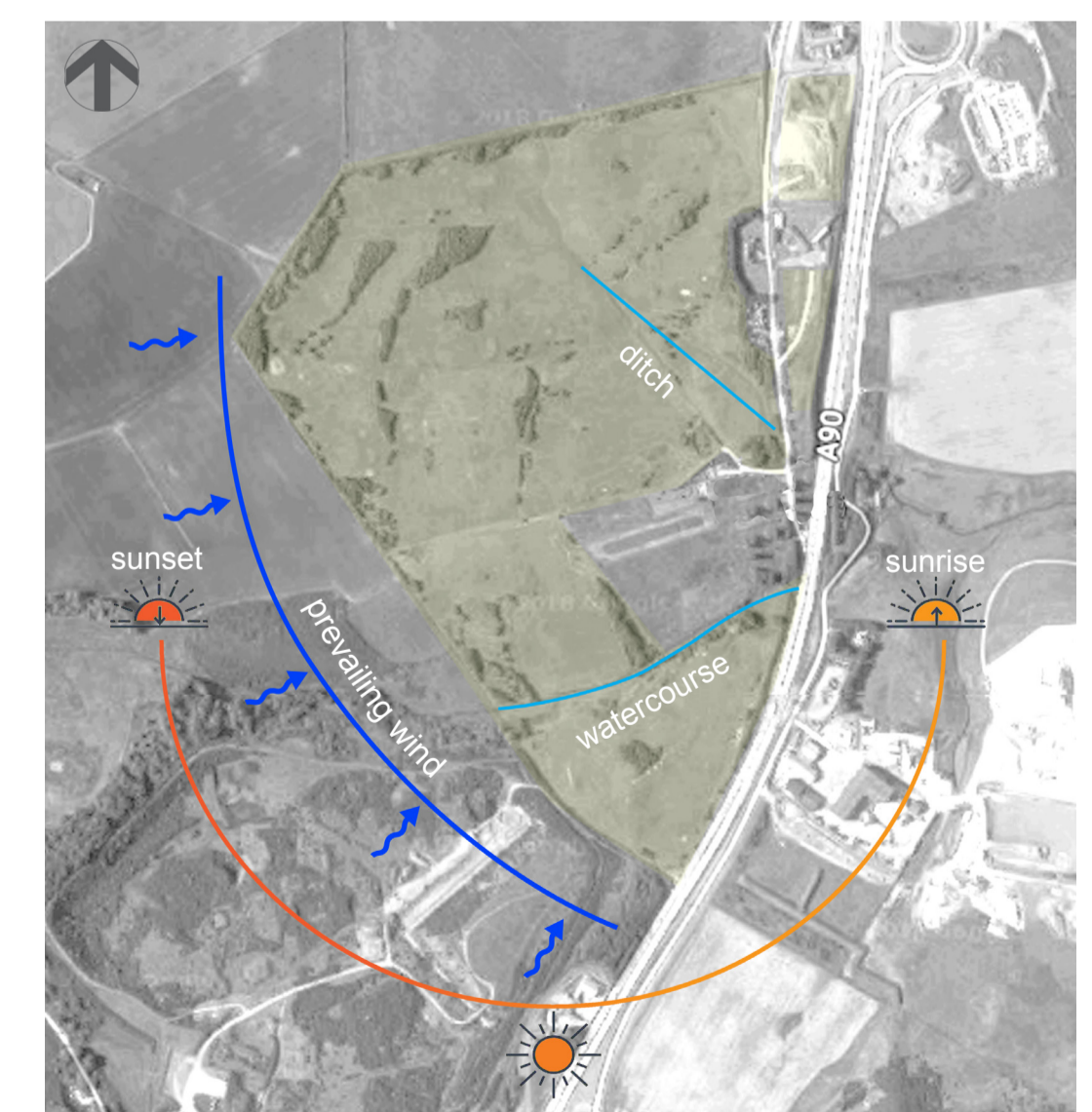


**Existing Trees and Woodland** – The existing trees are a significant feature of the site, recalling its previous existence as a golf course. It is intended that the majority of these tree belts are retained and augmented, and incorporated within the proposed site layout providing an important ecological, landscaping and recreational resource. There is an area of green belt designated land to the southern tip of the site which will remain protected.



**Slopes and Topography** – The site generally slopes upwards to the west which allows opportunities for development to benefit from views out to the north, east and south over the North Sea. A steep valley bisects the site, running from north to south and this has the opportunity to provide generous visual amenity and open parkland area, as well as natural drainage and biodiversity benefits.

The masterplan will be set out to minimise the requirement for major earthworks, avoiding the steepest slopes and aligning roads and development areas to take account of the landform. Within the development, taller buildings should be located on areas of lower ground located at the centre of the site.



**Existing Watercourses and Ditches** – The existing natural watercourses / drainage ditches will be incorporated in the overall drainage solution. Any stretches of watercourse that have existing good banks should be preserved to avoid disturbance. The valley floor provides excellent natural drainage opportunities, and SUDS will be incorporated in line with the overall drainage strategy.

# 3 WEST BALMEDIÉ DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

## Have your say in shaping your future community

# WEST BALMEDIÉ ESTATE

## CONCEPT

### Landscaping



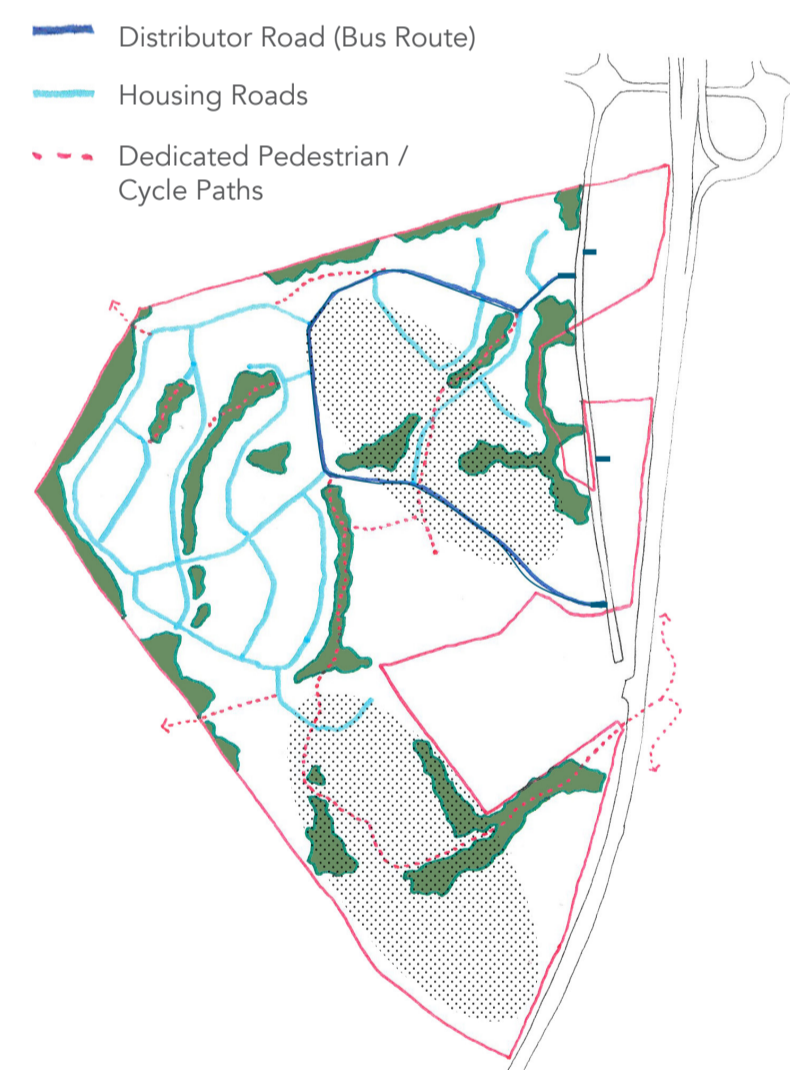
### Landscape Setting

A key aim of the development is to retain and augment existing areas of woodland through the creation of landscape corridors. These are either areas of open space or woodland planting, and will include parts of the core path and drainage network. They will contribute to the landscape setting, visually containing the development, and provide enhancement of the ecological and recreational networks in the area.

A central amenity parkland area is proposed to be created as a green 'heart' to the development, making good use of the northern part of the valley. This open amenity space will be linked to the mixed use centre, and all access routes in and out of the site will engage closely with this central landscape feature. The southern part of the valley will also remain open space, and will incorporate amenity walkways and potential green leisure opportunities such as an equestrian facility.

The area of green belt to the very southern tip of the site will remain undeveloped, other than amenity walkways which are wholly compatible with its green belt status.

### Connectivity



### Connectivity

Distributor and Housing roads have been developed to address the site topography and limit the requirement for extensive earthworks. Dedicated pedestrian and cycle networks will complement the road layout throughout the site and beyond, creating a high level of recreational amenity for residents.

All streets will be designed to reflect the relative importance of the routes, creating a legible hierarchy within the development. Streets will be designed firstly as places, creating a pedestrian friendly environment that is easy and safe to move around in.

A bus route will be created to serve the new development which will connect to Balmedie and beyond, via the proposed new distributor road. All residential areas will all be located within 400m of the new bus route.

### Mixed Use Centre



It is proposed West Balmedie will be a 'destination' and not simply a place to reside or pass through. The centre of the development is proposed to be the core of the community containing the primary civic, commercial and community facilities, thus creating a focus.

The centre will augment the existing facilities already located within Balmedie, and help meet the needs and aspirations of the local community as a whole.



THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN

West Balmedie is focused around the development of a mixed use core, and distinct neighbourhoods to the north, west and south of this. The mixed use core is located at the centre of the new community, accessible to all, and will contain some housing, a primary school, small scale facilities such as local shops, a possible health centre as well as opportunities for some commercial development. A pedestrian plaza will enhance the civic nature of the centre, which will look out over and be closely connected to the central parkland amenity space.

The residential neighbourhoods will have distinct characters, drawn from their location and setting. To the centre, density and scale will be higher – however sited on relatively lower ground, the visual impact of these potentially higher buildings will be minimised, and they will benefit from views out over the central parkland and beyond to the sea.

To the north-east and west of the centre, the homes will be of lower scale and density, as the residential development areas climb the gently sloping contours of the site. Such topography will allow for maximising opportunities for panoramic views, creating a high standard of residential amenity. A connection to woodland will also be a defining characteristic of these areas, with the road and footpath networks interacting extensively with the existing trees and open space, meaning that both residents and visitors alike will maximise a connection to nature.

To the east of the main access road that serves the site from the grade separated junction, lie sites that can create employment opportunities in the form of business or retail development. These proposed sites mirror the employment land opportunities already allocated within Balmedie on the eastern side of the A90 directly opposite, thus consolidating employment land in one distinct easily accessible and well-connected area. Such commercial activity will be separated from the proposed new housing by the access road and a landscape strip acting as a buffer between the land uses.

Completing the masterplan, there will be a leisure development opportunity to the south west, taking advantage of the wide open green space that forms the valley side.

