

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**SOUTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
16 August 2016**

Agenda Item	6.1
Report No	PLS 047/16

**15/03384/MSC: Robertson Homes Ltd
Craig Dunain, Inverness**

Report by Area Planning Manager - South / Major Developments

SUMMARY

Description: Satisfaction of Condition 2

Recommendation: **AGREE** that the condition is satisfied

Ward: 14 – Inverness West

Development category: Local Development

Pre-determination hearing: None

Reason referred to Committee: Requested by Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its meeting on 17 May 2016, Committee approved the matters specified in conditions application relating to the siting and design of housing on Sites 5 and 11 at Westerbraigs subject to conditions.

1.2 One of those conditions, Condition 2, stated that:

No development shall commence on site until a scheme for the provision of play facilities (including specifications, protection measures, boundary treatments and timescales for implementation) on site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. Thereafter, the approved scheme shall be implemented in full and in accordance with the timescales contained therein.

Reason: *In order to secure high-quality open spaces in compliance with Council Supplementary Guidelines*

1.3 Members requested that any submission in respect of satisfying this condition should be reported back to Committee for approval.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The applicant has considered this matter within the wider context of the Westercraigs development. This is a reflection of the application that Committee was minded to grant, at its meeting on 01 March 2016, for changes to a number of conditions on the original planning permission 03/00676/OUTIN granted in May 2005 (12/01832/S42). It was agreed that the permission should be conditional on the need to strengthen the position with regard to open space/play space as a whole. The proposed condition states:

No development shall commence on Site 11 until a plan to promote the development of open space, recreation and the natural heritage of the site has been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Planning Authority. In particular, the Plan shall detail measures to establish active recreational areas taking into account the Council's 'Open Space' Supplementary Guidance (Jan 2013). The Plan shall also detail measures to establish and maintain recreational areas, and other associated open spaces and recreational footpaths.

***Reason:** In order to achieve quality open spaces in compliance with Council Policy.*

- 2.2 The applicant's submission, prepared by its consultant Barton Wilmore, titled Open Space Strategy Review - July 2016 is contained within **Appendix 1**. The proposals can be summarised as:

- MUGA within Park Setting - last occupation of Site 4/April 2017
- Adventure Play Park above Site 8 - last occupation of Site 5/June 2019
- Lease agreed with Dunain Community Woodland - early 2017
- Local equipped play area on Site 7/8 - provided as part of the development
- Provision of active and green corridor linking Sites 7/8 to Site 4
- Commuted sum towards sports facilities (Rugby pitch)
- Opportunities for play (i.e. landscaping) provided within amenity space

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 3.1 Committee agreed that as part of the process in finalising plans for the provision of open space and play areas within the development that the applicant should liaise with the community.
- 3.2 The applicant's consultant wrote to 322 occupied properties in Westercraigs and contacted Ward Councillors, Dunain Community Woodland and the chair of Inverness West Community Council inviting them all to a public meeting to be held in Kinmylies Church on 19 July 2016. All were provided with the opportunity to receive a consultation draft of the Open Space Strategy Review. Thirty took up this offer. Ten people attended the meeting itself. Four made written comments.
- 3.3 A note of the meeting is contained within **Appendix 2**. A summary of the feedback from the community is set out within Page 25 of the Open Space Strategy Review contained within Appendix 1.

4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the submission:

4.1 Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

Policy 28	Sustainable Design
Policy 75	Open Space

4.2 Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015

IN20 - Westercraigs (Development in accordance with 03/00676/OUTIN)

5. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

Open Space in New Residential Development

6. PLANNING APPRAISAL

6.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires decisions relating to planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 This means that the proposal requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.

6.3 The condition on the matters specified approval relates to provision of play facilities within Sites 5 and 11. In considering that application a key issue raised by some in the community was the desire for the larger part of Site 11 to remain as open space. This remains the view of some, as reflected in Appendix 2. However, approval has now been given for this site to be developed in line with the outline planning permission for Westercraigs. There will be amenity space within Site 11 but it is not considered that this is suitable for a formal play area.

6.4 There is also amenity space to the south and south-west of Site 5. This location has not been considered appropriate for a Local Equipped Play Area (LEPA) by the applicant. The discussion at the public meeting seems to confirm the benefit for a LEPA to be properly planned into development on the north-east side of the Westercraigs site where it can provide an opportunity to link to the MUGA and proposed Adventure Play Park via a green corridor.

6.5 Notwithstanding the 33.7ha of Community Woodland, the Open Space Strategy Review submitted by the applicant identifies that open space and play provision proposed within the Masterplan area will exceed the requirements of the Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance.

6.6 The Open Space Strategy Review also highlights that amenity space, as outlined with the Council's Policy, should be *'designed to stimulate children's imagination and therefore incorporate places to hide, climb, run around and see birds and animals.'* It is the applicant's intention to do this with an area for informal natural play being incorporated into the triangular area of amenity space located in the southern part of Site 5. This will comprise of the retention of tree trunk stubs with any large boulders from the area focused into the informal landscaping of this area. In the context of the delivery of open space and play facilities within the wider site as set out within the Strategy, it is considered that this is an appropriate approach to play within these individual sites as opposed to provision of formal play equipment.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The applicant has provided a Strategy, informed by liaison with the community, for the provision of open space and play facilities across the Westercraigs Masterplan area that will exceed what is required by Policy. The majority of this will keep step with the future development within the site. The approach to play facilities within Sites 5 and 11 is to be informal. Given the wider context this is considered appropriate and is sufficient to address the condition.

7.2 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee **AGREE** that the condition is satisfied.

Signature: Nicola Drummond

Designation: Area Planning Manager – South / Major Developments

Author: David Mudie - Team Leader

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Site plan



WESTERCRAIGS INVERNESS

Open Space Strategy Review
AUGUST 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

Robertson Homes Ltd has been driving forward an ambitious vision for the residential redevelopment of the Westercraigs site, on the south west edge of Inverness for over fourteen years. An outline planning application was submitted for the Westercraigs Masterplan proposals in June 2003 with outline planning permission secured in May 2005.

Of the 550 new homes proposed on the site, 322 have already been delivered, including the provision of affordable housing.

Work has commenced on the redevelopment of the listed former hospital building, Gleann Mor House with a number of dwellings within it now occupied. Work to deliver the remaining dwellings within this historic asset is now due to commence in Autumn 2016.

The overall masterplan for Westercraigs includes for the provision of over **71.8 ha** of open space compared to a policy requirement of 4.9 ha (c. **15 times** the provision) seeking to maximise the benefit of its natural setting and woodlands. The Masterplan includes for the provision of a community woodland to be retained for the benefit of the local community.

The Vision for Westercraigs

From the preparation of the initial Westercraigs Masterplan in 2003, Robertson Homes Ltd's vision for Westercraigs has been to redevelop this extensive site of the former Craig Dunain Hospital to create a high quality and sustainable new neighbourhood that makes full benefit of its attractive green setting and adjacent woodland.

Delivery of this vision, and the redevelopment of Gleann Mor House, is ongoing. Following the approval of recent planning permissions, Robertson Homes Ltd (RHL) aim to commence the delivery of 107 homes over Sites 5, 11 and phase 2 of Gleann Mor House from Autumn 2016.

Planning conditions have been attached to the permission for Sites 5 and 11 (reference: 15/03384/MSC) and to the Section 42 application (12/01832/S42) require an updated plan or strategy to be provided to demonstrate how the Masterplan promotes appropriate levels of open space, recreational space and the natural heritage of the site.

RHL's focus on delivery through evolving and challenging economic circumstances has been about maintaining original expectations on quality and placemaking.

It is, therefore, an appropriate time to restate the overall vision for Westercraigs and to detail measures to establish and maintain open spaces as part of the regeneration of the site's physical assets and the provision of an attractive residential environment.

Westercraigs Open Space Strategy Review

Barton Willmore has been commissioned by RHL to undertake this independent review of the open space strategy for the Westercraigs Masterplan.

The purpose of this document is to detail the process that has been undertaken for this review, identifying the amount and type of open space provision that has been provided so far and what is still to be provided to deliver the Masterplan vision. This review assesses the level of provision in the context of The Highland Council's Supplementary Guidance on Open Space in Residential Areas, adopted in January 2013.

This Review has been finalised following a public meeting and a consultation period to seek feedback on its suggestions, with a summary of that contained within this document. It is to be considered as a working document that may evolve as further phases of Westercraigs progress.

The following sections of this review document indicate the existing and future levels of open space, across the Council's defined categories. As a summary, the overall Westercraigs Masterplan provides for:

- Regeneration of the listed former hospital building;
- A new community of circa 550 new homes;
- 71.8 ha of open space provision, including 34 ha to form a community woodland for the wider area;
- Formal play areas (including at Site 2b and Sites 7/8);
- Financial contributions towards the provision of a full sized rugby pitch and changing facilities on the west side of the canal;
- Focus on an accessible green corridor between the two main parts on Westercraigs, linking a new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with a new adventure play area, via a new path link.



Figure 1: Visualised Proposal (Former Craig Dunain Hospital)

-  Adventure Play
-  MUGA
-  LEPA
-  Potential LEPA site to support future development to east
-  Informal Natural Play



Figure 2: Overall Masterplan - Highlighted Play Areas



Great Glen Way

Planning History & Context

There have been a number of planning applications progressed for Westercraigs over the last 13 years, from the original outline planning application and masterplan in June 2003 to the recent approval of permission for Sites 5, 11 and 3. This has been important to allow the vision for Westercraigs to be progressed through changing economic circumstances, while retaining the focus on delivering a high quality residential development.

A brief summary of planning permissions secured by RHL in respect of the Westercraigs proposal is set out below:

- 09.08.05 - Outline planning permission for residential development and associated infrastructure based upon submitted masterplan (as amended) (550 houses) granted (03/00676/OUTIN);
- 04.05.06 – Matters Specified in Conditions application for 107 houses (Site 2A and Site 2B) approved (05/00645/REMIN);
- 09.06.06 – Matters Specified in Conditions application for redevelopment of listed building to form 118 flats approved (05/00879/REMIN);
- 09.06.06 – Listed Building Consent for redevelopment of listed building to form 118 flats granted (05/00891/LBCIN);
- 06.05.08 – Planning permission and listed building consent for refurbishment of former hospital to form 32 apartments (phase 1) granted (07/01169/FULIN and 07/01172/LBCIN)
- 05.08.08 – Planning permission for 181 houses (Site 4) granted (07/01060/FULIN)
- 22.07.09 – Application for non compliance with Condition 14 of 03/00676/OUTIN granted (08/00657/FULIN)
- 22.01.09 - planning permission and listed building consent for refurbishment of former hospital to form 54 apartments (phase 2) granted (08/00670/FULIN and 08/00671/LBCIN)
- 28.06.13 – planning permission for 94 semi-detached, terraced and flatted dwellings (Site 2b) granted (13/01297/FUL)
- 05.05.16 - both planning permission and listed building consent for change of use and renovation of former hospital to form 56 residential units (Site 3) granted (15/03910/MSC and 15/03911/LBC)
- 27.05.16 - planning permission for erection of 51 houses and associated works (Sites 5 and 11) granted (15/03384/MSC)

RHL also recently sought permission from the Council's Planning Committee (ref: 12/01832/S42) to extend the period of planning conditions governing the timescale for upgrading the 'estate road' and work on the listed former hospital building, Gleann Mor House.

RHL recently received the planning permission and listed building consents required to redevelop the undeveloped part of the Craig Dunain listed building (Site 3) to form 56 housing units. 12 flats have already been completed and the proposal is now to develop the building for a total of 68 flats, a substantial reduction on the 118 originally envisaged. Work on this is due to commence in Autumn 2016.

The Council's Planning Committee also recently approved the application for matters specified in conditions (ref:15/03384/MSC) relating to the development of 51 units on two sites within the Masterplan area (Sites 5 and 11).

RHL has an obligation to deliver the Westercraigs Masterplan as agreed by the NHS / Scottish Ministers and approval of this application helped to keep development in line with the overall Masterplan. However, debate on the ongoing level of open space across the Masterplan area led to the inclusion of a planning condition on planning permission 15/03384/MSC in order to further detail and agree provision across the site.

The wording of the condition that the decision notice for application 15/03384/MSC included in relation to open space is:

"No development shall commence on site until a scheme for the provision of play facilities (including specifications, protection measures, boundary treatments and timescales for implementation) on the site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. Thereafter, the approved scheme shall be implemented in full and in accordance with the timescales contained therein."

In light of the above, Barton Willmore has been instructed to prepare this review of open space and to agree an updated plan in consultation with the community and with the approval of the Council. This will allow sites 5 and 11 and the continued redevelopment of the listed Gleann Mor House to be delivered which will maintain progress on the overall Masterplan vision for the site.

The Masterplan proposals have evolved over time but the overall vision and the extent of development parcels as per Figure 3 has not changed despite the varied economic circumstances. Importantly, the permission issued in 2005 has continued to be considered as committed development and included in successive development plans including the most recently adopted LDP.

For ease of reference, Figures 3 and 4 on the adjacent page identifies the original approved Westercraigs Masterplan and the various development phases forming part of it.

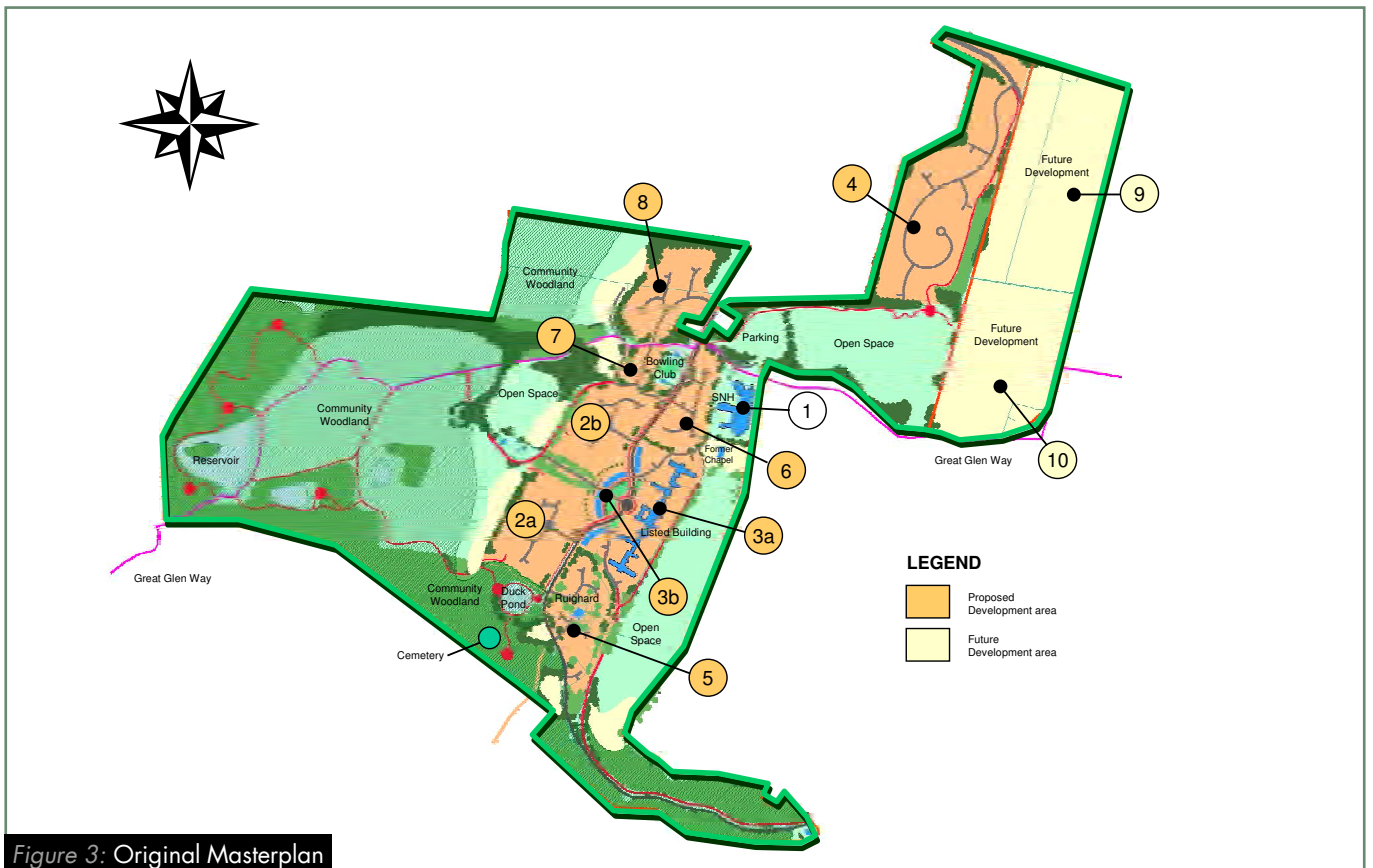


Figure 3: Original Masterplan

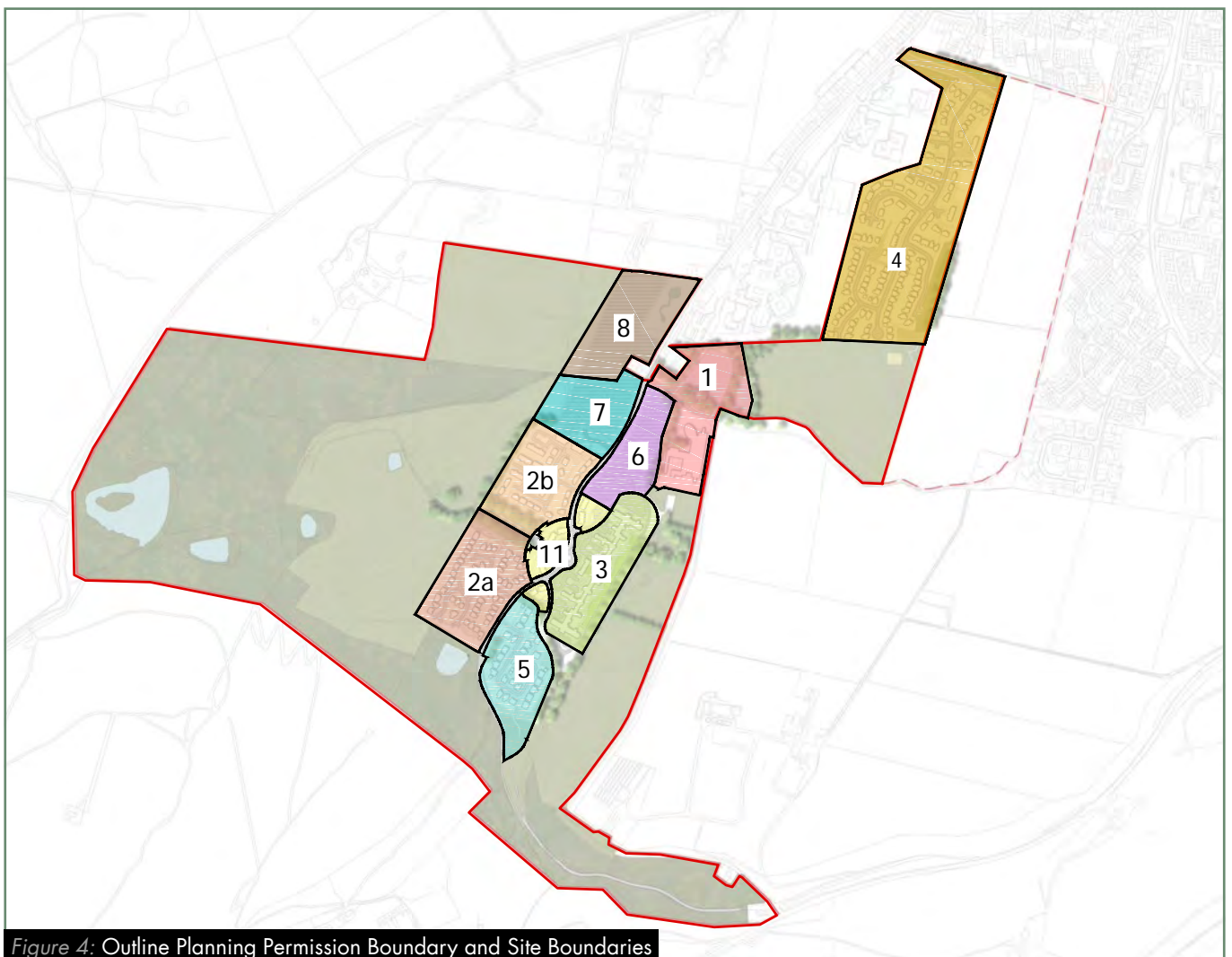


Figure 4: Outline Planning Permission Boundary and Site Boundaries

2. PROVISION STANDARDS

Policy Requirements

Open Space provision is referenced in Policy 75 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The Council subsequently produced Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Open Space in New Residential Development in January 2013 as additional information to the LDP policy. It has the same status as policy in the LDP and will be taken into account as a material consideration by the Council when determining applications.

The SG advises that the Council will use these standards as its starting point when determining the provision required by proposed developments. Importantly, the SG also comments that ***"...the Council will be willing to interpret them with some degree of flexibility when the context within which a development is set makes this sensible."***

The SG applies to all applications for planning permission validated by the Council which would result in four or more dwellings. It is applicable to developments for which the Highland Council granted permission on or after 13 December 2012.

Although application reference 15/03384/MSC for Sites 5 and 11 is for an approval of matters specified in conditions to outline planning permission 03/00676/OUTIN, this open space review has been undertaken at this stage to help refresh the masterplan's strategy in this regard and to demonstrate compliance with the intentions of the SG. It will also address the planning condition that will be included to planning permission 12/01832/S42 once a decision notice has been issued.

The SG defines 6 key open space categories:

- **Amenity green space;**
- **Equipped play areas for children /Equipped teenage play facilities;**
- **Natural green spaces;**
- **Parks and gardens;**
- **Pitches and other outdoor sports facilities; and**
- **Other functional green space, such as allotments.**

The Council sets out the provision standards in the SG (Table 1, Page 9 of the SG) which are to apply to all new residential developments and which result in a net gain of four or more dwellings, including dwellings created by the subdivision of an existing building. The standards are based on a total of 40 sq m of green space provision per person in the regional, sub regional and local centres and 25 sq m per person in all other centres.

According to the SG, the green space needs generated by new residential developments will depend largely on the number of and types of dwellings proposed. The SG (Table 2, Page 10) sets out the forms of provision required by different types of residential accommodation.

The Council has prepared an Open Space Calculator for use by developers so that they can gauge what the Council's requirements for open space provision may be. We have used this to undertake the assessment of requirements and provision within the Westercraig Masterplan area.

Delivery to Date

322 new homes have been delivered so far across the Westercraigs Masterplan area. Sites 2a and 2b are complete; work on Site 3 has commenced with 12 new homes occupied; development of Site 4 is currently ongoing and is nearing completion.

Sites 5 and 11 have planning permission for the delivery of 51 homes. Sites 6, 7 and 8 are yet to come forward and are not yet at the detailed design stage.

With regards to open space provision, the focus to date has been on recreational / informal open space provision. The subsequent focus will be towards active / formal play provision. Future opportunities for open space provision may also come forward as detailed design layouts for sites 6, 7 and 8 are developed.

Open Space Calculation Considerations

The Council’s SG applies occupancy levels using census data for eight geographical areas that make up the Council area. The Open Space Calculator sets an occupancy rate of 2.33 occupants per dwelling in this area. Table A, below, applies the occupancy rate by site to provide an overall total by which to base the open space provision requirements upon. This includes estimated figures for Sites 6, 7 and 8 to reflect that these are still to be subject to detailed design.

The development at Westercraigs provides for both ‘open market dwellings’ and ‘affordable housing’. Both types require provision for all open space types, as shown in Table B below.

Table A: Dwellings and Population per Site

Site	Status	Homes	Persons
1	Complete	0	0
2a	Complete	60	134
2b	Complete	94	210
3	Started	68	152
4	Started	181	404
5	Yet to Start	29	65
6	Yet to Start	30*	67*
7	Yet to Start	21*	46*
8	Yet to Start	45*	100*
11	Yet to Start	22	49
Total		550	1227

*Sites 6, 7 and 8 are yet to be designed in detail. Therefore, the figures used are estimates at present and may be increased or decreased. The open space strategy may be amended in the future to reflect future detailed designs for these sites.

Assessment of Provision & Proposals

Using the predicted final population levels, we have considered open space requirements and open space provision for the overall Westercraigs Masterplan development as per the Council’s SG. This is set out in Table C.

Our assessment identifies an overall requirement of approximately 4.9 ha of open space to be provided by the Westercraigs development. The Masterplan sets out provision that will provide 71.9 ha of open space, an over-provision of 67 ha. To date more than 65.6 ha of open space above the overall requirement is in place. However, the Council’s SG requires provision to also be considered as per individual typologies of open space.

The following sections of this review set out the level of provision for each of these typologies in further detail, highlighting the situation at present and what is still to be delivered as part of the Masterplan.

In terms of application of the SG, we consider the Westercraigs Masterplan site to be quite unique due to its initial vision to maximise the benefit of the extensive grounds of Craig Dunain. Indeed, the Council’s committee report for the ongoing Section 42 planning application (12/01832/S42) states that “it was never envisaged that there would be a need for formal open space as part of the development site since the site is surrounded by informal recreation opportunities” when considering whether to have on-site rugby pitch provision.

Table B: Type of Development

Type of development	Parks and Gardens	Amenity Green Space	Natural Green Space	Allotment Gardens	Equipped play and Teenage Areas	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Open Market Dwellings	y	y	y	y	y	y
Affordable Housing	y	y	y	y	y	y
Sheltered Housing	y	y	y	y	x	x
Hostels and Special Needs Housing	y	y	y	y	y	y
One for One replacement Dwellings	x	x	x	x	x	x
Extensions to Dwellings	x	x	x	x	x	x

y = Provision normally required
 x = Provision normally not required

The final column of Table C details the final level of compliance once the Masterplan provisions have been delivered in full.

A significant proportion of the Masterplan's final open space provision will be through the creation of 33.7 ha of community woodland, managed by the Dunain Community Woodland charity group. As a type of open space unique to the opportunities of Westerbraigs, this has been included as part of the Public Parks and Gardens open space typology.

The community woodland will be leased to the Dunain Community Woodland (Scottish Charity No SC036203, A Charity Company Limited by Guarantee Company No 272012) with the initial lease for a period of 15 years. Details of a woodland management plan and terms of the lease are being worked out at the moment. The Community Woodland involvement is enabling upgrades to existing informal pathways and around the Great Glen Way through funding proposals to Paths For All, while improved signposting / interpretative panels have been provided.

There will be focus on an active central 'corridor' of play facilities, accessible to all in Westerbraigs. A new adventure play area will be provided close to the community woodland. Details on layout, size and location are still to be confirmed through future discussions.

A new play area / LEPA is to be incorporated into future designs for Sites 7 or 8. A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) will be provided, included under the typology for formal play space for teens. This will link to the 'corridor' of play / open space through a new hardcore path linking the MUGA to the Great Glen Way. Levels of contribution for outdoor sports provision is being agreed with the Council to assist provision of a rugby pitch and changing facilities to the west side of the canal.

In summary, the Masterplan proposals are providing:

- **33.7 ha of community woodland to act as public park provision;**
- **Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in a park setting south of Site 4;**
- **Adventure play area built by InsideOut;**
- **Focus on a central active corridor connecting the MUGA (via a new path link) and adventure play with new Site 7/8 play area;**
- **A commuted sum for the provision of a full sized rugby pitch and changing facilities; and**
- **Regeneration of the former hospital building.**

Section Four of this document provides more detailed analysis of open space provision across the Masterplan area based on the specific open space typology.

Table C: Assessment of Open Space Requirement and Provision - Overall

Type	Overall Requirement (sq m)	SG Typology Minimum Sizes (sq m)	Equal to our Above minimum size and therefore Acceptable	Overall Provision within Masterplan	Delivered to date (sq m)	Ongoing Action	Future, Final Compliance Above Requirement (sq m)
A - Amenity Space	9,812	500	Yes	18,901	11,919	Delivery of amenity space in approved sites	+ 9,089
B - Play	LEPA	1,500	Yes	650	150	Delivery of MUGA	+797
	MUGA			(1400)		Delivery of Adventure Play area	
	Adven. Play			(1200 est)			
C - Public Parks and Gardens	9,812	5,000	Yes	(341,227)	0	Creation of formal, public Community Woodland	+ 331,415
D - Outdoor Sport	14,718	6,426	Yes	0*	0	Off Site contributions to be agreed with the Council	To equal req.
E - Allotments	1,227	1,000	Yes	0*	0	Seeking discussions on delivery options	tbc
F - Natural Green space	11,039	1,000	Yes	355,375	692,952	None	+ 344,336
Total	49,060			718,753	+ 655,961		+ 685,637
Total/Person	40 pp			586 pp	+ 536 pp		

* Potential to negotiate off-site contributions. Figures in () represent facilities to be provided as part of phased masterplan delivery

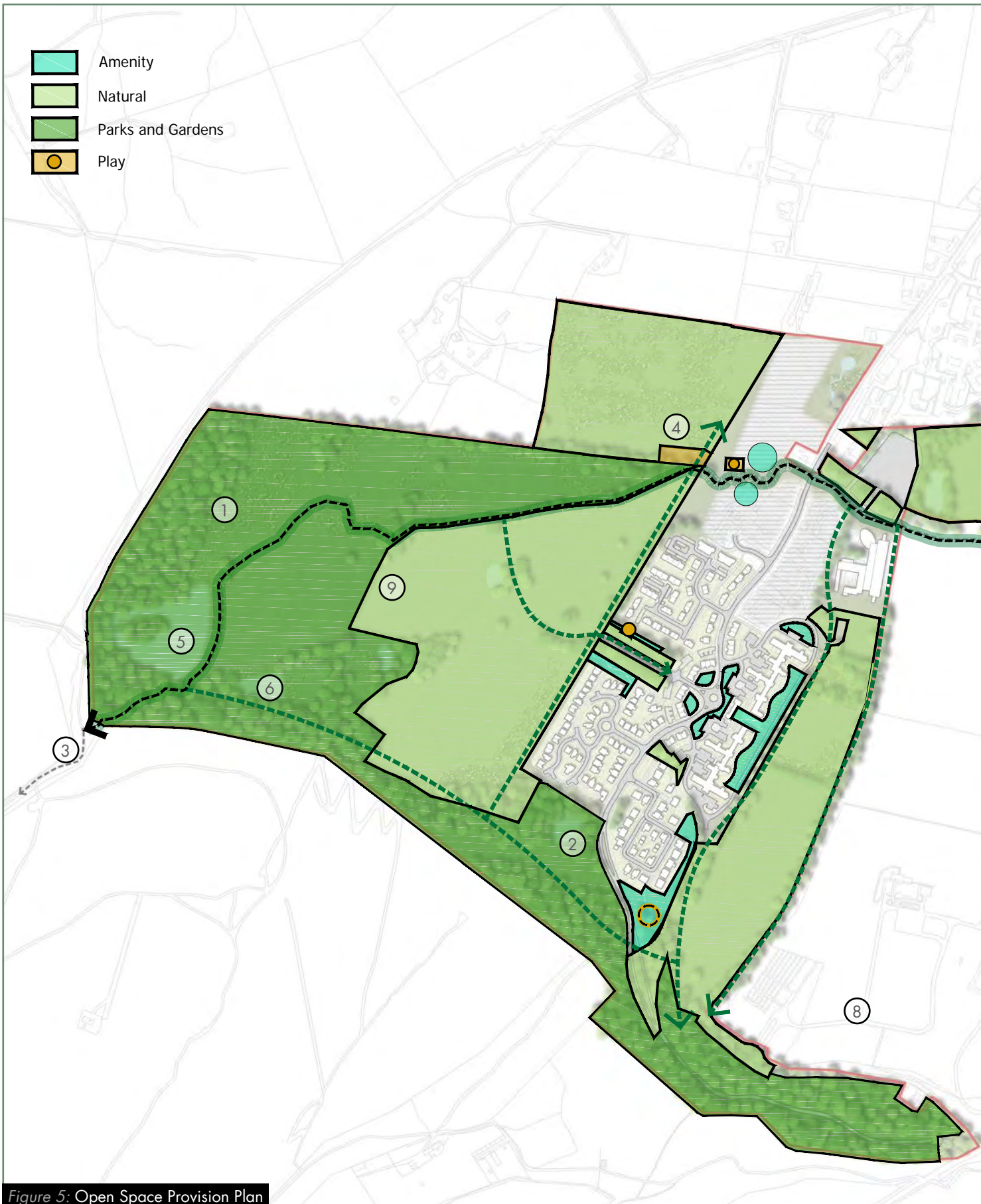
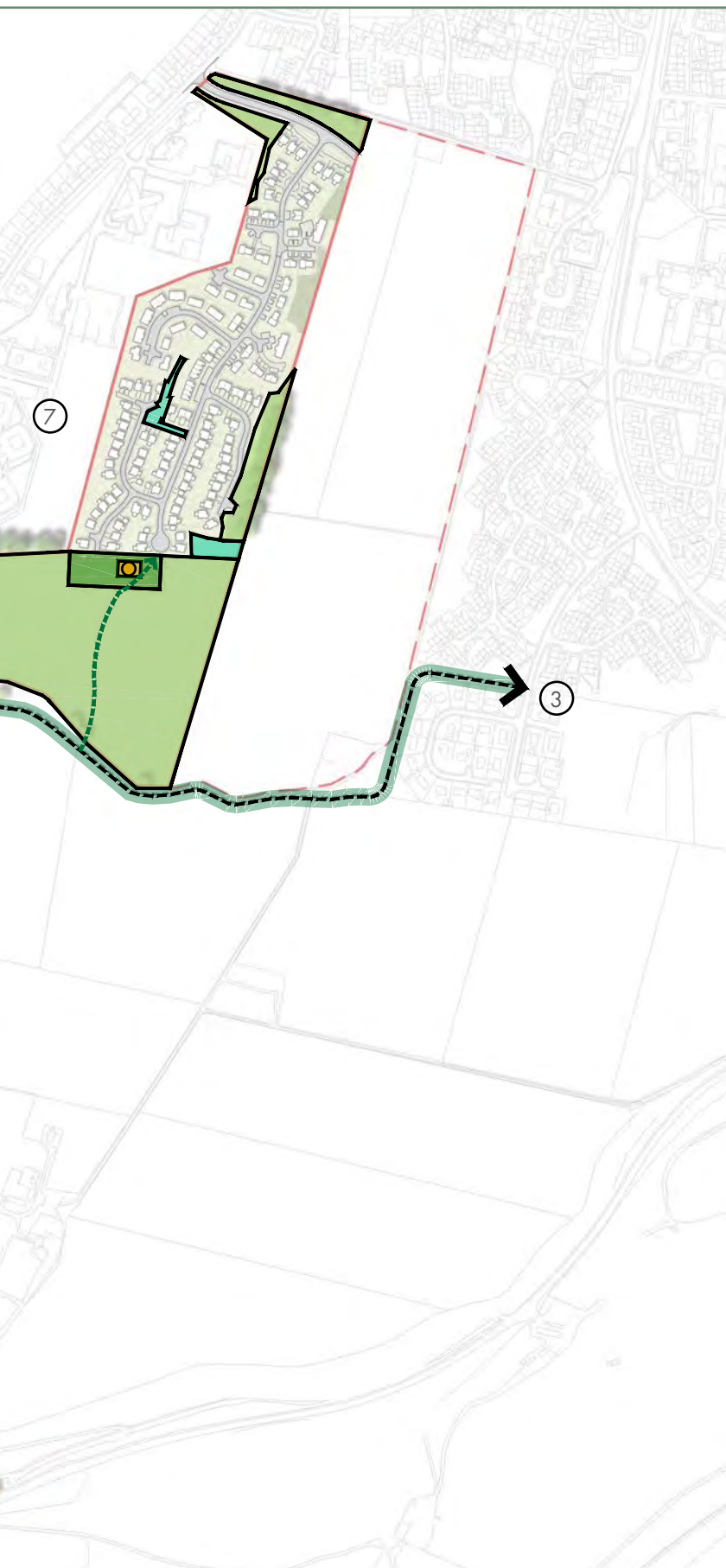


Figure 5: Open Space Provision Plan



1. Community Woodland
2. Duck Pond
3. Great Glen Way
4. Indicative Area for Adventure Play
5. Reservoir
6. MacGruer's Pond
7. New Craigs Hospital
8. Kilvean Cemetery
9. Scottish Water Compound

3. ASSESSMENT BY TYPOLOGY

3.1. AMENITY

Definition of Typology

The definition of this typology, as stated within the Council's SG, is for landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons and used for a variety of informal or social activities. It adds that, when located in housing areas, they should be designed to stimulate children's imagination and therefore incorporate places to hide, climb, run around and see birds and animals.

- 8 sq m per person
- 5 minutes walk (300 m straight-line distance)
- 500 sq m (0.05 ha) Minimum

Assessment

Overall requirement of Amenity Space:
9,812 sq m

Amount provided/ proposed:
18,901 sq m

Summary

The Masterplan will deliver over 9,000 sq m of amenity space more than required by the SG. Further provision is likely to be included through the final layout design of Sites 6, 7 and 8 (indicated by circles in the plan below), although this figure has not been included in the above total.

An area for informal natural play will be incorporated into the triangular area of amenity space located in the southern part of Site 5. This will comprise of the retention of tree trunk stubs with any large boulders from the area focused into the informal landscaping of this area. Robertson Homes will seek to retain some felled tree trunks, if this can be arranged in an appropriate and safe manner, to help create informal play in this amenity greenspace.



Figure 6: Amenity Provision

3.2. PROVISION FOR PLAY

Definition of Typology

Spaces and facilities designed for active and imaginative play by children and young people consisting of: green spaces in housing areas offering reasonably safe & accessible informal play opportunities for children & young people and a hierarchy of equipped play facilities (see below)

- 2 sq m per person
- Typically with at least a dozen items of equipment.

LEPA/SEPA:

- 10/20 minutes walk (600/1200 m straight-line distance)
- 1500/2500 sq m (0.15/0.25 hectare) minimum

Assessment

Requirement: 2,453 sq m

Provided: 150 sq m LEPA

Planned: Circa 500 sqm of LEPA at Sites 7/8. Also a 1400 sq m MUGA pitch to be built following completion of Site 4 to offer play space for teenagers.

The MUGA area will include a fenced 13 x 22.5m ballcourt / hardstanding play area that incorporates football goals, basketball posts and backboards.

Circa 1200 sq m of adventure play area to the west of Sites 7 and 8. The exact size and location is still to be agreed but we have estimated 1,200 sq m area to assess in policy terms.

The adventure play area has been scoped to include: a mini zip wire; a timber ladder; a 'wobbly walk'; tarzan swing and platform islands; monkey bars; a tree clamber / climbing board; zig zag balance walkways; a 'Burma' rope bridge; and a 'postman's walk' rope bridge. This could be either within or adjacent to the community woodland.

Summary

There is existing LEPA provision in Site 2b. A new LEPA at Sites 7/8, a MUGA south of Site 4 and an adventure play area (estimated to be c. 1,200 sq m) are all to be provided. These will provide a range of formal play options.



Figure 7: Play Provision

3.3. PUBLIC PARKS AND GARDENS

Definition of Typology

Areas of land, normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden. Well defined boundaries or perimeter, preferably enclosed with railings or walls.

- 8 sq m per person
- 15 minutes walk (900 m straight-line distance)
- 5000 sq m (0.5 hectare) Minimum

Assessment

Requirement: 9,812 sq m

Provided/Planned: 337,577 sq m Community Woodland and 3,650 sq m parkland area to south of Site 4.

Summary

A significant area of public community woodland is to be established as part of the Westercraigs Masterplan. Although not a park in the traditional sense, the provision of this land and ongoing investment will establish the community woodland as a key public space and benefit that is appropriate to the setting and vision of the Westercraigs development.

RHL are currently in the process of arranging an initial lease period of 15 years with Dunain Community Woodland.

An area of parkland is proposed to the south of Site 4. This will assist the setting of the MUGA, acting as a gateway to the wider natural greenspace from the bottom of Stornoway Drive, potentially encouraging use of surrounding informal open space for play or kickabouts.

There may be scope to alter this area of parkland or use it for a LEPA to support future adjacent development to the east if required.



Figure 8: Parks and Gardens Provision

3.4. NATURAL GREEN SPACE

Definition of Typology

Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas

- 9 sq m per person
- 10 minutes walk (600 m straight-line distance)
- 1000 sq m (0.1 hectare) Minimum

Assessment

Requirement: 11,039 sq m

Provided/Planned: 355,375 sq m

Summary

There is currently over 69 ha of natural green space across the Westercraigs Masterplan site. Even when a large proportion of this is formally transferred to act as a community woodland there will be an over-provision of 35 ha (the equivalent to 50 full size football pitches).



Figure 9: Natural Provision

3.5. OUTDOOR SPORTS

Definition of Typology

Large and generally flat areas of grass land or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports and including grass pitches for football, cricket, rugby and shinty; artificial turf pitches for football, hockey and rugby; bowling greens; and tennis and multi-sport courts

- 12 sq m per person
- 15 minutes walk (900 m straight-line distance)

Assessment

Requirement: 14,718 sq m

Provided/Planned: Off - Site Contribution

Summary

Previous discussions with the Council has confirmed that it considers that formal, managed outdoor sports is more appropriately provided in a centralised location in Inverness where it can form part of a facility that offers benefit to the wider community.

Discussions are ongoing with Dunain Rugby Club towards agreeing a financial contribution towards rugby pitch and changing facilities to be provided to the west side of the canal.



Figure 10: Outdoor Sports Provision

3.6. ALLOTMENTS

Definition of Typology

Land laid out and managed as allotments

- 1 sq m per person
- 15 minutes walk (900 m straight-line distance)
- 1500 sq m (0.15 hectare) Minimum

Assessment

Requirement: 1,227 sq m

Provided/Planned: 0 sq m

Summary

Currently there is no provision identified for allotments within the Masterplan area.

RHL is seeking discussions with all stakeholders, including the Council to examine options on whether this is sought, and whether this would be via financial contributions or provision.



Figure 11: Allotments Typology

3.7. GREEN CORRIDORS

Definition of Typology

Routes including (but not limited to) canals, watercourse corridors and disused railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. Green corridors should link different green spaces or settlements.

Assessment

The Masterplan provides a number of formal and informal green corridors

Dunain Community Woodland have been active in seeking ways to deliver path improvements on land that will be leased to them as community woodland.

The route of the Great Glen Way runs through the Westercraigs site. Part of the route will form the basis of an active 'corridor' linkage between the adventure play area and MUGA. This will be enabled through a new hardcore path link from the south of Site 4 and help make open space / play facilities equally accessible to all residents of Westercraigs, increasing activity along the Great Glen Way.

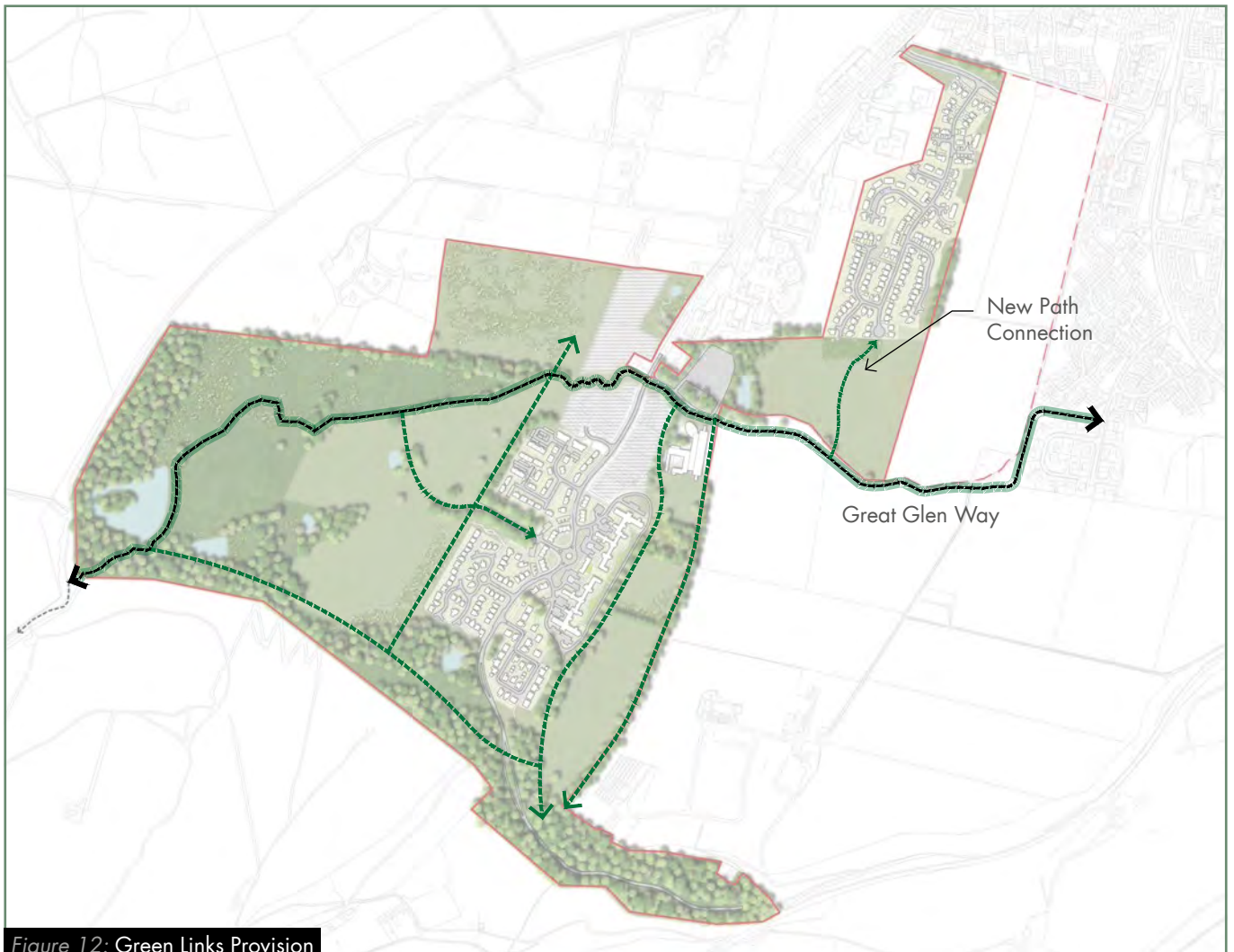


Figure 12: Green Links Provision

4. DELIVERY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Consultation Feedback

Barton Willmore consulted on a draft version of this Open Space Strategy Review with residents of Westercraigs and local stakeholders. The original expectation was to discuss proposals with a Westercraigs Community Liaison Group. However, it became apparent that a formal Community Liaison Group has not been established for the entire Westercraigs development.

Therefore, we wrote to all 322 currently occupied properties within Westercraigs to inform them of the Open Space Strategy Review and to invite them to a public meeting on the afternoon of 19 July 2016. It was considered that writing to all residents may increase awareness to assist the formation of a Community Liaison Group for future discussions on the delivery of Westercraigs.

Ward councillors, Dunain Community Woodland and the Chair of Inverness West Community Council were also invited to the public meeting.

All those contacted were given opportunity to provide Robertson Homes their email address so that an electronic copy of the draft Westercraigs Open Space Strategy Review could be provided to them in advance of the meeting. All were informed that comments on the draft document could be sent in for consideration, with a deadline of 5pm on Friday 22 July.

Around 30 people requested and received electronic copies of the consultation document. Four written representations to the consultation were received.

Comments from written representations are summarised below with an indication given on how many people raised each point.

- An amenity space or formal play area should be provided on land at Site 11 rather than be developed as per the recent planning permission. (x2)
- Welcomes the proposed provision of the adventure play area. (x1)
- Would like adventure play area located on an area of cleared woodland to the west of the duck pond following works by Dunain Community Woodland. Feels the suggested adventure play area location would make the area less attractive for parents and children and would have minimal supervision / surveillance levels. (x1)
- The existing play area at Polvanie View is unsuitable, not accessible and is overshadowed. (x1)
- The open space proposals in the consultation document are all at the edge of developments, when they should be in the centre of communities. (x1)
- Looking for Robertson Homes to get on with redeveloping the listed building as soon as possible. (x1)
- Feels that retained internal amenity ground is disparate and small, not suitable for any amenity use by residents. (x1)

Ten people attended the public meeting, including two ward councillors.

Some attendees at the public meeting stated that although they felt that the consultation draft Open Space Strategy Review met the numbers and requirements of the Council's Supplementary Guidance (SG) requirement, it still missed out on the spirit of open space delivery. More play provision, overlooked and better connected to housing, was felt to be needed.

The provision of the MUGA and adventure play area were welcomed. However, it was felt that there were access issues to the MUGA from the southern extent of Westercraigs, currently meaning a long route for those at Sites 2a and 2b.

Attendees felt that the existing LEPA at Site 2b was insufficient and that further play for small children should be provided.

One party also raised the potential for looking at improvements to the east of the listed building, such as the old drovers path, orchard and collapsed steps.

There was discussion on the scope and potential location of new adventure play park. One party considered that it should be located to the south of the Westercraigs development, near the Duck Pond. However, there was general agreement on the benefit on it being focused around Great Glen Way (GGW) location near Site 7 to allow creation of an open space 'corridor' between the northern and southern parts of Westercraigs via a new path link and a new LEPA at Sites 7/8.

In summary, Robertson Homes identified the following key suggestions from the consultation process to examine further as part of its Westercraigs Open Space Strategy Review:

- **Look to create a centrally located open space / play corridor from adventure play adjacent to GGW, through sites 6, 7 and 8 and linking to MUGA with a path through open space to south of Site 4 via the route of the Great Glen Way.**
- **The existing play area at Site 2B is not seen as sufficient as a formal play area for the overall development with land at sites 6, 7, 8 to be investigated for delivering greater play areas / better linkage with adventure play area as part of future design work.**
- **Provide adventure play around suggested area, subject to specific siting to be agreed between Robertson Homes, InsideOut, Dunain Community Woodland, community representatives and the Highland Council.**
- **Consider potential or community interest for improving land around and access to former orchard area.**



Site No.4, Wester Craigs, Inverness
Robertson Homes

Quote No. 7411 Dwn AG 9.7.09
Figure 13: MUGA Specification
EPCW 01X E play@theplaypractice.co.uk



Figure 14: Example Equipment for LEPA in Sites 7 / 8

Delivery Conclusions & Implementation

Robertson Homes has considered the feedback received from the consultative draft Open Space Strategy Review and has incorporated changes into this finalised version.

A key part of overall considerations has been on how and where to deliver increased play provision in locations that will be attractive and accessible to all in Westercraigs.

The formation of a central 'corridor', running west - east between the recent developments at Site 2a/2b and Site 4, is considered to offer the most appropriate solution through to the completion of the overall Westercraigs development.

Importantly, it will highlight the importance of the community woodland and the GGW to the provision and character of the local area, meeting the original aims and vision of the Westercraigs masterplan.

The specific details of the location and layout of the new adventure play area will be determined in due course, through discussion with stakeholders and to ensure that it maximises the benefits of increasing use and activity of the community woodland. The types of play features that will be provided have been established although there are still options available of how they may be arranged. The potential for this to require planning permission will be investigated.

The specifications of the MUGA to the south of Site 4 have generally been set, as highlighted in Figure 13. The arrangement of it, its parkland setting and a new hardcore path link to the GGW will be discussed with the Highland Council planning department and stakeholders.

The location and specification of the new LEPA within Sites 7 or 8 will be set once the detailed design stage is commenced for Sites 6, 7 and 8. This will ensure that the play provision is designed into a suitable location of the new neighbourhood. The aim will be for this to be visible and easily accessible from the GGW. The types of play equipment and boundary treatments of this LEPA are expected to be similar to those provided in the existing play area at Site 2b.

An area of informal natural play will be facilitated in amenity space south of Site 5. This will comprise of the retention of tree trunk stubs with any large boulders from the area focused into the informal landscaping of this area. Robertson Homes will seek to retain some felled tree trunks, if this can be arranged in an appropriate and safe manner, to help create informal play in this amenity greenspace.

The public meeting held on 19 July 2016 identified interest in future Community Liaison Group meetings to be established with Robertson Homes. This will help inform decisions on the scale and delivery of the open space / play proposals.

The meeting identified that Dunain Community Woodland intend to undertake clearing of woodland near to the duck pond south of Site 2a. Although this does not form part of the key outcomes of this Strategy Review, there may be potential for informal open space in this area. This will be discussed as part of any ongoing liaison with the community.

Robertson Homes is continuing to deliver development in line with the overall vision of the Westercraigs masterplan. The area already benefits from the significant amount of surrounding open space under control of Robertson Homes and it is considered that the proposed improvements and establishment of the community woodland will ensure that these benefits are improved further through to completion of the masterplan and beyond.

Estimated timescales for each of the key open space delivery proposals are set out in the table below.

Provision Type	Estimated Delivery Programme
MUGA & park setting	By last occupation of Site 4 / by April 2017 (whichever earliest)
Hardcore path between MUGA and GGW	By last occupation of Site 4 / by April 2017 (whichever earliest)
Adventure Play Park	By last occupation of Site 5 / by June 2019 (whichever earliest)
Lease of land to Dunain Community Woodland	Expected by early 2017
New LEPA at Sites 7/8	TBC - with delivery of Sites 7 & 8
Contributions to rugby facilities	To be agreed with the Highland Council

The redevelopment of the remainder of the listed building will commence at the same time as development can start on Site 11 and 5.

A management factor will be instructed by Robertson Homes to take care of the maintenance of formalised open spaces and play facilities.

5. SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Barton Willmore have undertaken this review of the open space strategy for the Westercraigs Masterplan, on behalf of Robertson Homes Ltd (RHL), in order to identify open space provision to date and what is currently being delivered and to consider this in the context of The Highland Council's Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Open Space in Residential Areas.

The Council advises that it will use the provision standards contained within the SG as its starting point when determining the open space provision required by proposed developments. Importantly, the SG also comments that "*...the Council will be willing to interpret them with some degree of flexibility when the context within which a development is set makes this sensible.*"

An outline planning application for the Westercraigs Site was submitted to the Council back in 2003 and planning permission secured in 2005 for the principle of 550 houses on the site. The Council have acknowledged that it was never envisaged that there would be a need for formal open space as part of the development since the site is surrounded by informal recreation opportunities.

With the particular setting of this area, the overall vision for the land within the Westercraigs Masterplan has always been to make most benefit of the natural greenspaces and woodland that surround the new residential areas, supported with areas for formal and informal play.

This review of the Masterplan proposals against the SG identifies that there is a substantial over-provision of open space, mostly in terms of natural green space, amenity space and the emerging community woodland. This fits with the original vision for the Masterplan.

Discussions are also ongoing with Dunain Rugby Club and the Council to provide commuted sums towards outdoor sports provision (specifically rugby pitch and changing room facilities).

This Open Space Strategy Review identifies that additional provision is required in terms of play provision. This will be provided through the creation of an adventure play area, delivery of the committed Mixed Use Games Area and the provision of a new play area in Sites 7/8. A new path connection between Site 4 and the Great Glen Way (GGW) will provide a key open space / play 'corridor' accessible to all in Westercraigs. This will also help to maximise access and use of the GGW and the community woodland

The size and location of the adventure play area is open to be agreed through the consultation and further discussions with the Council, Dunain Community Woodland and the community.

The route of the Great Glen Way is protected as part of the Masterplan area and its integration with the committed establishment of public community woodland will all work towards helping to deliver the vision for a high quality and sustainable new neighbourhood at Westercraigs that makes the most of its ability to integrate with its unique natural setting.

This Open Space Strategy Review may be revised through the ongoing consultation to reflect on how proposals can best be delivered. A management factor will be instructed to take care of the maintenance of formalised open spaces.

RHL consider it important for this Open Space Strategy to act as a working document and to be open to evolution in the future - to allow any opportunities for further open space enhancement to be investigated and incorporated as they come along.

As highlighted in the original Masterplan, land outside but adjacent to the north eastern edge of Westercraigs (at Charleston Fields) is likely to be developed in the future. RHL has control of this land and could look to incorporate open space requirements for this development into enhanced, shared provision to the south of Site 4 in the Masterplan area.

RHL is making significant investment to exceed required levels of open space provision across Westercraigs, with the leasing of substantial areas of land to form community woodland and investment to local play areas and to nearby rugby pitch provision. This is combined with the key commitment towards delivering the restoration of the listed Gleann Mor House.

Due to the large amount of open space under RHL's control at Westercraigs then there is potential for more of the natural green spaces to be subject to further open space enhancements, such as additional play areas, managed parklands or recreational activities. However, such significant increases in open space investment would be dependent on the potential for further development areas within Westercraigs in order to fund this, such as west of Sites 7/8 or on land to the south of Site 4 for example. That would need to be subject to separate planning permission and the views of the community but such considerations raise what may be required to deliver even greater levels of open space enhancement.

Overall, this Open Space Strategy Review demonstrates the steps that have been taken and that are proposed through ongoing delivery of the Westercraigs Masterplan to complement significant over-provision of natural greenspace and community woodland with appropriate levels of play provision that fits the natural setting of Westercraigs.

RHL is committed to continued partnership working with the community, Dunain Community Woodland and the Highland Council to best deliver the benefit from these open spaces.



Figure 15: Site Aerial - Construction in Progress



NOTE OF WESTERCRAIGS COMMUNITY MEETING - 19 JULY 2016 ON RHL DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY REVIEW

Date / Time: 1.30pm on Tuesday 19 July 2016

Venue: Back Hall, Kinmylies Church of Scotland, Kinmylies Way, Inverness IV3 8TP

10 members / representatives of the community present. Included Cllr Ross, Cllr Graham, Mr Hawco (Chair of Inverness West Community Council) and Alastair Cunningham (Dunain Community Woodland).

Attendees also included Ken McCorquodale of the Highland Council, Colin Souter of Robertson Homes, Stephen Tucker of Barton Willmore and Iain Hynd of Barton Willmore.

Invitations were sent out to the 322 occupied properties within Westercraigs, with email invitations also sent to Chair of Inverness West Community Council, Dunain Community Woodland, Cllr Ross, Cllr Graham and Cllr Duffy. All those contacted were given opportunity to provide Robertson Homes their email address so that an electronic copy of the draft Westercraigs Open Space Strategy Review could be provided to them in advance of the meeting. All were informed that comments on the draft document could be sent in for consideration, with a deadline of 5pm on Friday 22 July.

17 people had initially confirmed intent to attend via email and had been provided electronic copies of the document in advance. The document was also emailed out to a further 14 people who could not attend but requested a copy.

1. Introductions

- 1.1 Stephen Tucker (ST) opens meeting with round of introductions and context to the purpose and aims of the meeting.
- 1.2 Some attendees felt that the views of residents have not been listened to in the past, with no debate or discussion where new houses should be built. It was also felt that the renovation of the listed building of the former hospital should have commenced earlier in the masterplan delivery.
- 1.3 Comments that public consultation should have been held at a more appropriate time, with an evening meeting. It was highlighted that a previous public meeting had 50 attendees.

2. Westercraigs Open Space Considerations on Provision to Date

- 2.1 There was discussion from attendees on the area of open grassland at Site 11 being a valuable area of amenity grassland for existing residents and disappointment that Robertson Homes will follow the recent planning permission to provide houses on this land. It was highlighted that children currently use this area as a kickabout area.
- 2.2 Comments were raised that there should be scope in amending the original approved masterplan to leave this area as open space and provide these houses elsewhere in the site, with the view that the delivery of the masterplan has been flexible in other aspects, such as the density of sites being altered.
- 2.3 The Project Team / Robertson Homes explained that although there have been changes to the masterplan, such as for densities and programming, there have been no changes to the location and size of development parcels. The area at Site 11 was identified for development in the original masterplan and the agreement with the NHS requires Robertson Homes to ensure its delivery.
- 2.4 Cllr Graham felt that the siting and design of the existing play area at Site 2B was completely unacceptable to serve the local community.
- 2.5 It was highlighted by the Project Team that the Site 2B play area was subject to much discussion and agreed with the Highland Council at the time. It was originally envisioned that there would be no formal play area due to the scale of surrounding open spaces although it was later decided one should be provided in that location.

3. Westercraigs Open Space Strategy Review

- 3.1 Cllr Ross felt that the Open Space Strategy Review document covers the Council's Supplementary Guidance (SG) requirements but misses out on the spirit of open space delivery.
- 3.2 Some attendees felt that a key aspect of play areas is that they should be overlooked by housing.
- 3.3 Discussion was held on the form and offer of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and on the park setting around it also having potential to be enhanced further with any future development at Charleston Fields. It was felt that there were access issues to the MUGA from the southern extent of Westercraigs, meaning that this facility was too far away to get access to.
- 3.4 Discussion held on the scope and potential location of new adventure play park. General agreement on benefits on it being focused around Great Glen Way (GGW) location near Site 7. One comment that this may be too remote from existing housing at sites 2A and 2B and not sufficiently overlooked.
- 3.5 Benefits agreed with attendees on potential for strong linkage between adventure play in that location and the MUGA area to the south of Site 4, offering a major facility in each part of

Westercraigs and with potential for additional play in Sites 7/8 when being designed. Requires footpath connection through open space south of Site 4 to create a strong link.

- 3.6 Further formal children's play areas as part of the design of sites 6, 7 and 8 will be investigated by Robertson Homes. It was confirmed that the former bowling green area is to be redeveloped for housing.
- 3.7 A representative from Dunain Community Woodland highlighted their intention to do significant amounts of pathway improvements as part of the community woodland. They also intend to clear an area of woodland near the duck pond to the south of Site 2A and adjacent to Site 5, which was highlighted could accommodate an informal play area.
- 3.8 Cllr Ross highlights the significant level of contribution that Robertson Homes is committing to facilities of the rugby club.
- 3.9 Discussion on the merits / potential for a play area on the grassland to the west of Site 2B. One attendee was concerned that this would create a precedent for housing development adjacent to site 2A.
- 3.10 Discussion was held on the potential for looking at improvements to the east of the listed building, such as the old drovers path, orchard and collapsed steps.

4. Future Community Liaison

- 4.1 Robertson Homes stated intention for future community liaison meetings to discuss wider issues at Westercraigs as well as the continuing delivery of open space provision. These will include: construction routes; development programming; fencing removals and installations; progress on removal of redundant buildings; and other considerations that form part of Robertson Homes involvement in the Considerate Constructors scheme.
- 4.2 Robertson Homes / Barton Willmore asked for considerations to be made of a focused group to be assembled to represent the community to allow for future meetings to be a representative but manageable size.

5. Other Considerations Relating to Westercraigs Development

- 5.1 There was discussion on the future of remaining redundant buildings and of remaining areas of fencing around the development. Robertson Homes confirmed that they had a meeting on Thursday and that they will discuss / look to remove the Heras fencing around Site 2B.
- 5.2 Queries raised on future plans for sloping open space to the west of sites 2A and 2B. Robertson Homes confirm there are no plans being discussed for development on these areas at the moment and that this is not within the original masterplan permission.

Summary of Key Suggestions for Changes to Westercraigs Open Space Strategy Review Document

- Look to create a centrally located open space / play corridor from adventure play adjacent to GGW, through sites 6, 7 and 8 and linking to MUGA with a path through open space to south of Site 4 via the route of the Great Glen Way.
- The existing play area at Site 2B is not seen as sufficient as a formal play area for the overall development with land at sites 6, 7, 8 to be investigated for delivering greater play areas / better linkage with adventure play area as part of future design work.
- Provide adventure play around suggested area, subject to specific siting to be agreed between Robertson Homes, InsideOut, Dunain Community Woodland, community representatives and the Highland Council.
- Look at options / interest for improving land around and access to former orchard.

