
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE: GLENTRESS MASTERPLAN

Report by Service Director Regulatory Services

PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3 AUGUST 2015

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement for the Draft Supplementary Guidance: Glentress Masterplan (in Appendix A) to be used as a basis for public consultation for a period of 12 weeks.**
- 1.2 The purpose of the Supplementary Guidance (SG) is to guide the future sustainable development of the Glentress forest visitor attraction located in the Tweed valley between Peebles and Innerleithen. The Masterplan presents a strategic context for this part of the valley and sets out proposals for development to enhance the visitor attraction through a master planning approach. The Masterplan includes indicative proposals for an enhanced centre, a new site or cabins and parking. The SG has been developed in partnership with Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) and is set out in **Appendix A**.
- 1.3 It is proposed that the Draft SG is subject to public consultation for a period of 12 weeks. Following consultation, it is intended that a report will be brought back to Planning and Building Standards committee to seek final agreement.
- 1.4 A new Local Development Plan is in the process of being adopted; as a result the Glentress Masterplan will initially be Supplementary Planning Guidance in determination of planning applications. Once the Local Development Plan is adopted the Masterplan will be formal Supplementary Guidance and part of the Local Development Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Planning and Building Standards Committee:**
 - a) approves the Draft Supplementary Guidance: Glentress Masterplan as a basis for public consultation.**
 - b) notes the Environmental Report as set out in Appendix B.**
 - c) agrees to receive a further report following consultation for formal agreement of the guidance.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Glentress Forest is one of eight forests within the Tweed Valley Forest Park and is recognised as a high quality environment for outdoor activities. The forest currently forms a key attraction for tourism in the Scottish Borders and attracts over 300,000 visitors per year. Furthermore, over the last 15 years, Glentress has grown to become one of the UK's premier mountain biking destinations, acting as the flagship 7stanes venue. Glentress, in addition to continuing as an operational forest, also provides the setting for other activities such as: walking, horse riding, sightseeing, tree top adventures, wildlife and nature observation; as well as education and learning.
- 3.2 The Supplementary Guidance: (SG) Glentress Masterplan (as set out in Appendix A) has come about through partnership working between officers of the Council and Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES). The Masterplan has been guided by earlier work carried out by FES in association with Barton Willmore – Planning and Design Consultants. That work focused on the area surrounding Glentress and included public consultation.
- 3.3 Whilst the area covered by the Glentress Masterplan is not allocated within the Proposed Local Development Plan as a development site; the Proposed Plan sets out, within both the Cardrona and the Peebles Settlement Profiles, that the Council will support the development of a Masterplan as SG in partnership with the Forestry Commission.

4 THE SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

- 4.1 The Draft SG: Glentress Masterplan, has been prepared to set out the opportunities and constraints within the Glentress Forest, the document also sets out the development vision for the area as well as design and development guidance and aims to lead to a high quality development. As the site is located within a high quality landscape and countryside on the renowned river Tweed, it is important to ensure that any development that takes place fits into its surroundings.
- 4.2 The Glentress Masterplan proposes two key areas for built development, an enhanced centre and a potential cabin site. The enhanced centre which is referred to within the document as 'Glentress Peel' is intended to support the existing investment and could potentially include an arrival building as well as an indoor activity building, there is also the scope for other complementary uses to be introduced. Enhanced parking provision is also proposed within this area. A number of activity areas are also proposed in the vicinity of Glentress Peel and these include: an area for public art and short circular walks; an area for a standalone bike skills and pump park for novice mountain bikers; and a third area which would be the location for free ride and mountain bike activities for the more advanced mountain bikers.
- 4.3 The second key area for development is located at Kittlegairy Hill close to the area known as the Buzzards Nest. Within this area potential cabin accommodation is proposed for approximately 65 units. There is also potential for a reception/ancillary building within this area.

- 4.4 The Masterplan also includes a section on 'Design and Development Guidance', the aim of which is to ensure that any development that does take place at Glentress is high quality in design, siting and layout. The guidance has been set out in terms of the design of the Glentress Peel development, and the siting and design of the cabin accommodation. In relation to the cabin accommodation, further guidance has also been included in terms of the sustainable management of the woodland site. In that respect it should be noted that Glentress Forest has since the 1950s been managed as a continuous cover forest and this is a key consideration in the introduction of any cabin proposal on the site.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Draft SG is subject to public consultation for a period of 12 weeks. Following consultation, it is intended that if substantive comments are received a report will be brought back to Planning and Building Standards committee to seek final agreement.
- 4.6 An Environmental Report (Appendix B) has been prepared alongside the Draft SG and an Equalities Impact Assessment has also been undertaken.
- 4.7 A new Local Development Plan is in the process of being adopted; as a result the Glentress Masterplan will initially be Supplementary Planning Guidance in determination of planning applications as a part of the Consolidated Local Plan. Once the Local Development Plan is adopted the Masterplan will be formal Supplementary Guidance and part of the Local Development Plan.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no substantive cost implications arising for the Council. There is budget to cover the necessary consultation elements.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The key risks are considered to be:

Risk of not providing guidance

- (i) The lack of guidance would cause uncertainty to the developers and the public and be a barrier to effective decision making by the Council. This could result in an ad hoc and inconsistent decision making with the policies in the Local Plan not being taken fully into account.
- (ii) Failure to produce the SG would reflect badly on the Council's commitment to improve the design of new development through a placemaking approach.
- (iii) It is considered that the failure to approve the Draft SG for public consultation would have resource impacts in the Development Management Section, potentially resulting in delays processing planning applications. In addition, it may ultimately have both a negative impact on the development and on the thorough assessment of the environmental impact of development.

Risk of providing guidance

There are no perceived risks related to the adoption of the guidance by the Council.

5.3 **Equalities**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

The Gentress Masterplan process has been subject to environmental appraisal under the terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. An Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared alongside the Masterplan see Appendix B. The Environmental Report sets out a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals within the Masterplan, and puts forward any necessary mitigation requirements.

5.5 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy & Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer Human Resources and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated in the final report.

Approved by

Service Director, Regulatory Services **Signature**

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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