

Answers to questions raised by the Community at the Drop-In Event held in Rafford Village Hall on 19th Nov 2022.

A big thank you to everyone who came along to our recent drop-in event held at Rafford Village Hall to learn more and discuss the Brockloch Affordable Housing Development at Rafford with FDT voluntary directors, members of staff, and representatives of Communities Housing Trust (CHT).

We have collated all feedback forms received together with all comments raised on the 'non-housing elements' post-It board and would like to summarise our findings below with answers to the varied points raised.

The 'non-housing elements' post-it board at our drop-in event was a way to begin to gather your ideas as to what you would like the non-housing elements to be on the land at Brockloch. This will be followed up by a full community consultation on this specific topic in due course.

Main Themes of the comments received.

1. Road and Traffic concerns:

- a. how will the development influence existing traffic?
- b. Can the design of the development assist in reducing traffic speeds and improving pedestrian safety?
- c. Existing condition of the road.
- d. 20mph speed signs? In villages, 40mph between Lower and Upper Rafford?
- e. Re-route lorry routes?
- f. Would FDT get involved in an Active Travel route from Rafford to Forres?
- g. Consideration to a mini roundabout at the site entrance and or other traffic calming measures.

2. Transport

- a. No public transport?

3. Drainage:

- a. how both the surface water and sewage from the site will be managed, given Rafford's history of a high-water table and current issues with septic tanks within the village?
- b. Have SEPA been consulted?

4. Renewable energy

- a. Ground Source district heating system, can this be extended to include the wider village beyond the new properties in Brockloch?
- b. Solar?

5. Parking?

- a. How will it be managed on the new housing in relation to hall visits?

6. Footpath to Forres?

- a. Will there be a new footpath/cycle path or improvement of the Dava way to provide an off-road access from Rafford to Forres?

7. Non-housing elements (Including Post-It notes)

- a. Positive comments regarding the possibility of allotments, polytunnels
Positive response to public car share and electric vehicle charge points.
Positive comments on shared workspace.
- b. **Post-It notes** received relating to non-housing elements within the site.
- c. **Post-it notes** other comments.

8. Construction and aesthetics of the new houses?

- a. Insulation standard of the new properties?
- b. Will the houses be to a passive Haus standard?
- c. What will they look like? Wood, metal, roofs, and colours?

9. What scope is there to create a farmers market /community shop?

10. Will there be any public art funding?

11. What considerations will be taken towards biodiversity?

- a. Pond/wildlife/insects?

12. Size and location of the new houses

- a. Can there be more three bed houses for families?
- b. Can houses be located away from shaded areas of the site?

13. Integration with Rafford Village Hall

- a. Improve playpark by the hall.
- b. Co-worker provision as an extension of the hall.

14. Maintenance of any proposed open spaces

- a. E.g., village green.

15. Advertising future events

- a. RVH Facebook page.
- b. Leaflet drop for each house in Finderne.
- c. Announced in village hall meetings

16. Future events

- a. Will there be regular public meetings that are informing and discussion?
- b. Improve communication between FDT and Rafford residents.

17. Timeline of the project with key milestones

18. Purchase or renting a property

- a. Will housing that is rented ever be sold to the occupants?

19. Why Rafford for the new houses

- a. Why not Logie?
- b. 59 or 60% of people in Upper Rafford are against this development.

20. Self-build plots.

- a. Will the self-build plot developers be required to pay the Developers Obligations fee to Moray Council?
- b. Will there be restrictions on construction methods, for example straw bale construction working with Ecology Building Society?

Detailed responses to the themes listed above.

1. Road and Traffic concerns:

- a. how will the development influence existing traffic?

Answer

Any new development access road to an existing road must be approved by the Moray Council Transportation Team in conjunction with Moray Council planning to ensure that safety is maintained for other road users and pedestrians. Moray council planners and Moray Council Transport Team will have taken these issues into account when zoning the area for housing in 2015 and again in 2020.

- b. Can the design of the development assist in reducing traffic speeds and improving pedestrian safety?

Answer

At this stage we do not know the exact requirements, however certain criteria are laid out for consideration in the pre-planning application response from Moray council. This may include a bay for the school bus to pull into adjacent to the site entrance.

Once we have the architect onboard, we will hold a consultation with the community where FDT can further discuss possible measures such as traffic calming which could be carried out in conjunction with the Moray Council Transportation Team and Moray Council planning officers.

FCC have already initiated footpath improvements in Upper Rafford in conjunction with Moray Council.

- c. Existing condition of the road.

Answer

FDT can only deal with the aspects of the road which directly come out of the project. The raising of issues about the existing road infrastructure condition is one of the areas that the Community Council deal with. FDT would be happy to add support to this, but it needs to be led by FCC as the statutory consultee.

- d. 20mph speed signs? In villages, 40mph between Lower and Upper Rafford?

Answer

FDT don't have any direct control over this other than the works FDT will be required to carry out as part of the project.

From experience FCC are aware that its extremely difficult to gain permission from Moray council to change speed limits.

FDT can add support to any FCC led initiative on this matter.

You may be aware that the FCC have been in discussions with Moray Council regarding the installation of 4 electronic speed signs at either side of Upper and Lower Rafford. Moray Council have indicated that they are not willing to fund the cost of these and so the FDT has provided funds so that the FCC can progress this road safety initiative.

- e. Re-route lorry routes?

Answer

Unfortunately, this is another traffic issue that FDT do not have any direct influence on but could add support to an FCC led initiative, proposed to the Moray Council Transportation Team.

- f. Would FDT get involved in an Active Travel route from Rafford to Forres?

Answer

It is too early to say whether this is something that could be incorporated into this project.

- g. Consideration to a mini roundabout at the site entrance and or other traffic calming measures.

Answer

As noted in the answer to point b, a number of possible traffic calming measures can be discussed with the Moray Council Transportation Team during the planning stage with Moray Council planning officers. Although a roundabout would slow vehicles down it could also present a number of challenges; maintenance, space required to travel around it, braking and accelerating noises etc. This and other traffic calming options can be discussed.

2.Transport

a. No public transport?

Answer. There is currently a school bus that travels from Rafford Forres and provisions for taking children from the new development will be included in the construction, such as a bus layby.

One of FDT's current project areas is to investigate community transport within Finderne, which will include supporting existing provisions such as Dial M for Moray and the Forres Osprey bus and working with any proposed future provisions to try and improve the current situation. FDT are currently funding the Edinkillie Community Association, to operate a free community bus trial from October to December 2022, for those living in the Edinkillie community, including Logie, Dunphail, Relugas and Altyre.

If there is sufficient demand FDT could consider a similar trial scheme for Rafford in the future.

3.Drainage:

a. How both the surface water and sewage from the site will be managed, given Rafford's history of a high-water table and current issues with septic tanks within the village.

Answer. Surface water will be managed by a SUDS (sustainable drainage system) system.

SUDS are a green solution designed to manage stormwater locally to mimic natural drainage and encourage infiltration, attenuation, and passive treatment.

This will be developed by the design team in conjunction with Moray council guidelines, SEPA and the Building Warrant.

Wastewater will be managed wholly on the site using a designed waste management system in conjunction with SEPA and all other appropriate regulations and legislation.

b. Have SEPA been consulted?

Answer. SEPA are a statutory consultee for all building developments and will be contacted by the design team once appointed and Moray Council during the planning stage. A Drainage Impact Assessment and further development of the Flood risk assessment will be carried out, as required in the pre-planning application information received from Moray council. This will include guidance from SEPA. As the design develops the team will ensure all requirements for a functional drainage system are met.

SEPA confirmed to FCC at a recent November 2022 Resilience Planning meeting attended by the FCC that there are no flood risks concerning Rafford.

4. Renewable energy

- a. Ground Source district heating system. Can this be extended to include the wider village beyond the new properties in Brockloch?

Answer. There are a number of possible variations for the heating that can be defined in more detail once a site layout of the housing has been agreed. In broad principles as the shown in the recent drop in event on the 19th of November there are three fundamental options.

1. Air source heat pump (ASHP) per property
2. Use of a ground source heat system either in the site and/ or in the recreation field using either a flat grid or deep bore holes to supply the new properties
3. As 2 but extended to potentially supply the village hall and other properties subject to suitability and desire.

- b. Solar?

Answer

Solar will be considered as part of the overall design by the design team once appointed.

5. Parking?

- a. How will parking be managed on the new housing in relation to people coming to visit the village hall?

Answer. Parking requirements are detailed in the pre-planning conditions and will form an important part of the architect's design proposals. It is recognised that it's important to distinguish the need for parking for the village hall, residents parking and shared parking plus possible parking for village hall events. All of these points will be considered in the design process and public consultation.

6. Footpath to Forres?

- a. Will there be a new footpath/cycle way or improvement of the Dava way to provide an off-road access from Rafford to Forres?

Answer FDT has no immediate plans to develop a project of this nature.

7. non-housing elements

- a. Positive comments regarding the possibility of allotments, polytunnels, public car share, electric vehicle charge points, playground, farm produce vending machine and shared workspace.

Answer. Development of the non-housing elements will form a second phase of this project which may overlap the construction of the housing. At this stage FDT are keen to gauge the scope of suggestions that the space might be used for. There will be further detailed community consultation on this issue to determine the best way forward.

b. Post-It Notes received relating to the possible non housing elements on the site.

Answer

- a. E-bike share scheme
- b. E-car share scheme
- c. Community polytunnel
- d. Community garden
- e. Community orchard
- f. Community allotments
- g. Community wildflower meadow
- h. Locally produce vending machine, small shop, honesty box
- i. Bike shed
- j. Pond area
- k. Playground
- l. Link to paths in Blervie Wood?
- m. Chickens
- n. Shared workspace
- o. Community fire pit, outdoor shelter, gathering space.

c. Other Post-It notes received

a. Why not enhance the village hall with a new co-working space.

Answer. This does not come under the remit of FDT but could be something Rafford Village Hall propose in the future.

b. Safe exits and entrances for housing and village hall.

Answer. All the housing will be designed with safe access and egress. Rafford Village Hall will ensure their access and egress is safe.

c. Zebra crossing from site to hall.

Answer. This would from part of the discussion around traffic calming with the Moray Council Transportation Team, as noted in section 1.f.

d. Bus stop, bus service.

Answer. See Q2.a.

e. 20mph.

Answer. See section 1.c.

f. SEPA involvement.

Answer. See section 3.b.

g. Streetlight?

Answer. This would from part of the discussion around traffic safety with the Moray Council Transportation Team, as noted in section 1.f.

h. Will pedestrian access be improved?

Answer. Pedestrian access will be included within the site boundary. FCC have been liaising with Moray Council over the creation of some additional pavement/footpaths in Upper Rafford, with the proposed work scheduled to be carried out in the new year.

i. Pathways to Forres cycle/walk

Answer FDT has no immediate plans to develop a project of this nature.

j. Safe walkway for children catching school bus.

Answer See Q2.a.

k. Forester's cottage soakaway, right to access.

Answer Access to this soakaway will be maintained.

l. The hall will lose its summer fair car park

Answer This will have to be discussed with Rafford Village Hall. In the past RVH have been able to arrange parking for events around the side of the recreation field. It could also be possible to have some parking available on the Brockloch site occasionally by agreement; this will need to be investigated further.

8. Construction and aesthetics of the new houses?

a. Insulation standard of the new properties?

Answer. The insulation will form part of the initial fabric design of the building in conjunction with the renewable heating. Further information on this will be available at future drop-in events.

b. Will the houses be to a Passive Haus standard?

Answer. It is not the intention for the houses to be Passive Haus standard due to the need to balance efficiency with affordability, however they will be to high standard of energy efficiency just below Passive Haus levels.

c. What will they look like? Wood, metal, rooves, and colours?

Answer. The housing will be designed in accordance with their rural setting, planning regulations-and consultation with the architect and the public at the next drop-in meeting.

9.What scope is there to create a farmers market /community shop

Answer. Whilst there is probably not enough demand for a shop, there is the option to involve local farms in some kind of local produce vending machine as one of the non-housing options in the future.

10. Will there be any public art funding?

Answer. This is a great idea that we can look into.

11. What considerations will be taken towards biodiversity?

a. Pond/wildlife/insects/

Answer. Biodiversity and consideration to wildlife are important aspects of any scheme, particularly in a rural setting. As part of the design process the appointed architects will ensure that there is a positive link between the properties and nature. This can be discussed

further at the next drop-in event as the scheme is developed incorporating the housing, landscape, and rural setting.

12. Size and location of the new houses

- a. . Can there be more three bed houses for families.

Answer. The final layout is not decided yet, it may be possible to change the spread of housing sizes to attract new families.

- b. . Can houses be kept away from shaded areas of the site?

Answer. The final location of the housing has not yet been agreed but issues of shade and light will be considered by the appointed architects. This will form part of the consultation with the architect at the next drop-in meeting.

13. Integration with Rafford Village Hall.

- a. Improve playpark by the hall.

Answer. This can be discussed and considered as part of the non-housing element works as to whether a new playground can be added to the Brockloch site or the existing playground on the recreation field improved.

- b. Co-worker provision as an extension of the hall.

Answer. Some form of co-working space on the Brockloch site can be considered if there is sufficient demand for it and suitable funding can be obtained. Additionally in the future, as a separate project, FDT is happy to explore the possibilities of an extension to the existing hall.

14. Maintenance of any proposed open spaces

- a. E.g., village green.

Answer. The management and use of the open spaces would have to be carefully considered, the full scope of this and how it will be managed will evolve with the project, with responsibilities clearly defined.

15. Advertising future events

- a. RVH Facebook page.

Answer. We will ensure this is included for advertising future events.

- b. Leaflet drop for each house in Rafford

Answer. This is an interesting suggestion. We will consider seeing if it would be possible to set up a volunteer leaflet drop to each house in Finderne in the future. Postal leaflet drops are too expensive to arrange on an ongoing basis but could also be used occasionally.

- c. Announced in village hall meetings.

Answer. This will also be done, spreading the word is vital to ensure we reach as many people as possible in the community.

16. Future events

- a. Will there be regular public meetings that include discussion and not just informing?

Answer. Yes, the intention at these meetings is to start discussions. Once an architect has been appointed, we will arrange a community engagement event with the design team to discuss the great points raised in the above sections as well as other general design areas.

- b. Improve communication between FDT and Rafford residents.

Answer. Yes, the intention is to achieve this, as noted in both section 15 and 16.

17. Timeline of the project with key milestones.

Answer. At this stage it is difficult to give an exact time frame. The intention is to start building towards the end of 2023 to complete towards the end of 2024, but this is subject to planning, funding and available contractors to complete the works. Timelines will be updated in regular updates.

18. Purchase or renting a property.

- a. Will housing that is rented ever be sold to the occupants?

Answer. It is FDT's intention is to retain these houses for affordable rent in perpetuity.

19. Why Rafford for the new houses

- a. Why not Logie?

Answer. It is the intension of FDT to explore other options to build future developments throughout the Finnerne area in the future.

Brockloch was first allocated for housing by Moray Council within the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) in 2015. It was again identified as being allocated for housing in the 2020 MLDP.

Dallas Estates intended to put the land at Brockloch for sale on the open market but wanted to ensure that the chosen developer would be sympathetic to the community's needs.

Dallas Estates contacted FDT and after discussion they agreed to hold off selling the land until FDT could secure funding for the land from the Scottish Land Fund.

- b. 59 or 60% of people in Upper Rafford are against this development.

Answer. The Brockloch site was identified and zoned for residential development in both the 2015 and 2020 Moray Council Local

Development Plans and no objections were raised. As previously mentioned, the land was up for sale and there had been some interest from a commercial developer. The landowner preferred to see the land used for community housing and they provided important support whilst the FDT engaged experts to conduct a Housing Needs Survey & Analysis. This piece of work clearly indicated that additional housing, for both rent and purchase, was supported by the existing Finderne Community, people who wished to move to Finderne and local companies that want to develop their business in Finderne.

It was inevitable that the land at Brockloch would be developed for housing and the FDTs involvement means that it will be developed with the communities needs taken into account.

20. Self-build plots.

- a. Will the self-build plot developers be required to pay the Developers Obligations fee to Moray Council?

Answer

This will require further discussion with Moray Council, but the likelihood is that it will be greatly reduced. FDT will update you in due course as we gather more information.

- b. Will there be restrictions on construction methods, for example straw bale construction working with Ecology Building Society?

Answer. Any restrictions on proposed construction method will be enforced by either the lender (e.g., Ecology, who often lend on ‘non-standard construction’) or Moray Council’s Building Control department who will input onto the safety aspect of the build.

The self-builds will still need to get full planning and building warrant, and it is *very likely* that Moray Council will insist that the plots are in keeping with the other homes visually. FDT may also decide to put extra conditions in the final legal deed of conditions of sale, and/ or ask the owners of the plots to sign a covenant agreeing that the proposed design for the self-build is in keeping with the other homes visually; the final detail of this has yet to be agreed.