

Glebe Development Design Work – Feedback Report

Updated to include 1st November event Phase 1 Detailed Designs Feedback

A public drop-in event was held on 25th April 2023, where representatives of the Design Team led by Oberlanders Architects, and Communities Housing Trust and Assynt Development Trust were present to answer questions about the presented initial design displays. Around 30 people attended on the day, and 14 people completed feedback forms available on the day. The results of those are below. Following on from the drop-in event, an online survey was also launched, with links to it put on the the local assynt activity facebook page and sent out by email.

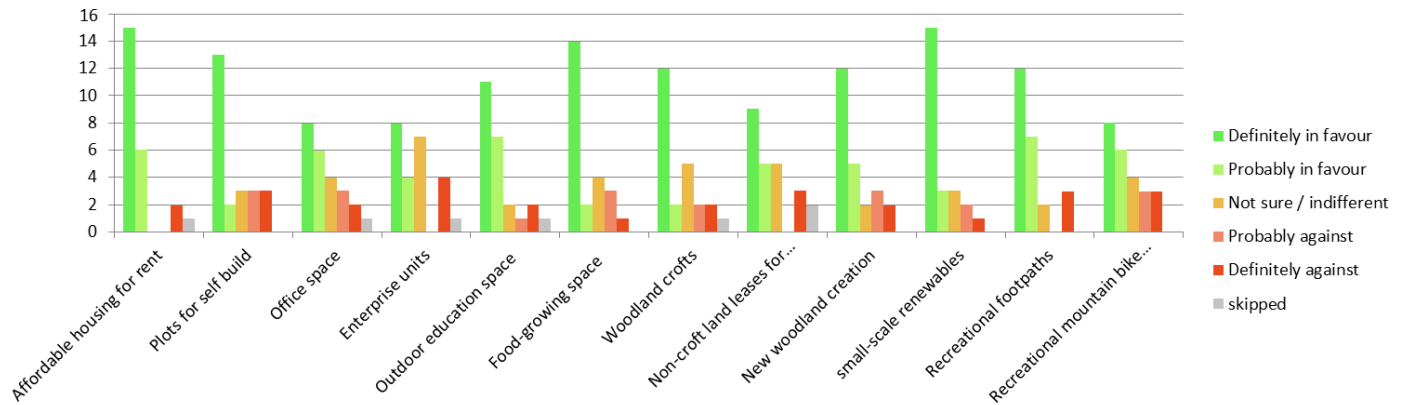
A further public drop-in event was held on 1st November 2023, with representatives from the same groups attending to talk and answer questions, and with architects drawings and plans as proposed for the coming full planning application for phase 1. Given seasonal weather conditions, attendance was lower to this event (around 12 people). Some informal feedback from some non-attendees who had attended the earlier event was that they felt informed enough and happy with the process, so didn't feel a need to attend the second event, having seen and liked the drawings of detailed designs in the publicity for event.

Initial Designs Feedback (25/4/23 – 20/06/23)

Online Survey results and associated

The following is from the 24 responses to the online survey as at 20th June 2023, following notification of the survey drawing to a close.

Question 1 – opinions on different developments



Comments:

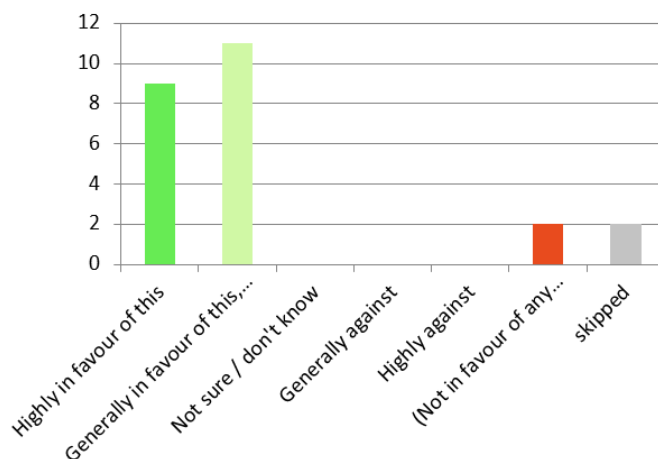
- Would be keen to see a library / chill out space, keen to rent a unit for my yoga / massage therapy business. Would be great for crafts people needing to hire small workshops, general purpose meeting room? etc
- Emphasis must be on provision for "local people" who are enterprising and pay their way. Anyone from outside the area allocated this housing must be coming to fill an employment position that will enhance local services, e.g. nurses, teachers.
- Fantastic space to enhance our community. New housing and other developments will certainly drive more people to the area. This is a very exciting project!
- With new right to buy laws, I'm no longer in favour of affordable housing
- I'm concerned about the wildlife habitat here, especially as it is one of the few natural woodland areas. I would prefer this land to be utilised for lower-intrusive things (if at all) or protection of habitat. I think there are other areas in Lochinver more suitable for local housing that won't be as detrimental to nature. At the very least, please avoid placing houses where trees are going to have to be removed.
- Not right location for housing. Affordable housing is needed for rent and it should be right in the village
- There is a huge need for low cost housing within Lochinver itself. There is already a walled garden at Glencanisp which has been offered multiple times for local food growing and nobody has really engaged.

Question 2 – Opinions on Housing Mix

The proposed housing mix is for mainly 2- and 3-bedroom units, but with a wider variety of sizes in the later phases. The specific mix suggested, as a starting-point, which will be changeable due to constraints of the site, is:

- Phase 1 - 6 x 2-bedroom units
- 4 x 3-bedroom units
- later phases - 12 x 2-bedroom units
- 8 x 3-bedroom units
- 2 x 4-bedroom units
- 4 x 1-bedroom units
- 4 x self-build affordable plots
- (+ possible further self-build housing on any woodland crofts created)

What are your thoughts on this, as a general approach?



Comments:

- The aim for a varied housing mix is great. The proposed number for the later phase feels too high.
- Certainly support the self-build option, because this shows a commitment to the area by those prepared to take on such a project - with some commitment to live in the house for a given number of years as a safeguard. No doubt there is a rationale for the proportion of 2 vs 3 bedroomed houses, though I would have expected 3-bedroom houses to be more attractive to young people with a growing family, and so more 3-bedroom than 2-bedroom houses - though maybe your research comes to a different conclusion.
- The expense of a new road. Easier access will encourage more littering and wildfires.
- Would prefer to see small houses, discrete and natural (timber, turf roof) in style. Also, 1 bedroom units could also be useful, especially if designed so that an extension could be added easily at a later date.
- More 3/4 bedroom units are needed if we're ever going to attract more young families
- See previous comment. (about wildlife/nature concerns)
- Should be in the village near the old post office

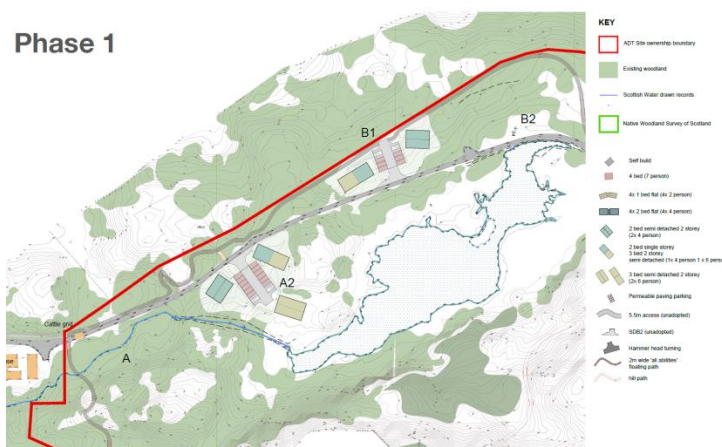
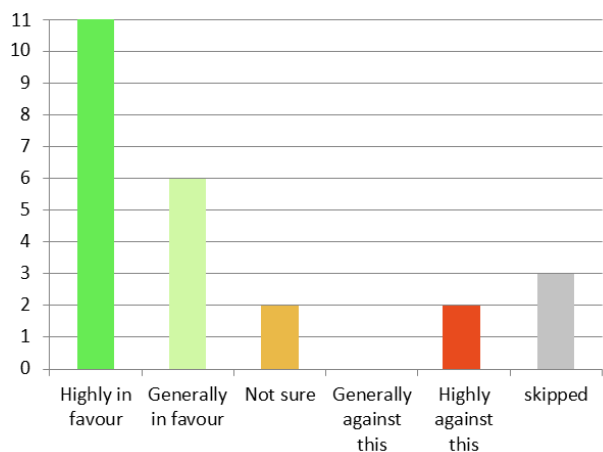
Question 3 - Phase 1 housing areas opinions

Currently planned as:

A2 = cluster of 3 x 2-bedroom units and 3 x 3-bedroom units (all within 3 semi-detached blocks)

B1 = cluster of 3 x 2-bedroom units and 1 x 3 bedroom unit (all within 2 semi-detached blocks)

What are your thoughts about this proposed phase 1 development?



Comments:

- The cluster layout feels rather urban in a very rural environment.
- Near enough the village for refuse service and school etc.
- I support affordable low impact housing and at the same time am concerned about impact on wildlife as this is a quiet wetland/woodland site where herons feed, birds breed etc. Any considerations to minimise ground works/disturbance and retain trees, wetland habitat are important to me.

Question 4 - Phase 2 housing areas opinions

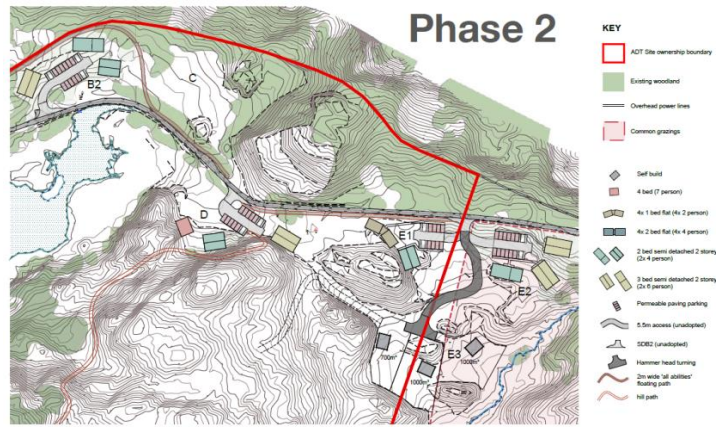
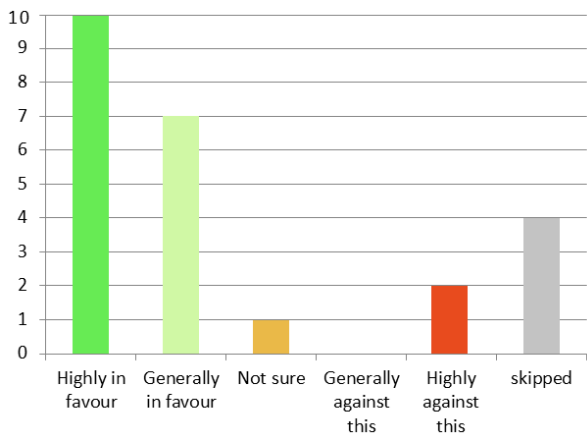
Currently planned as:

B2 - cluster of 4 x 2-bedroom units (as 2 semi-detached blocks) and 2 x 3-bedroom units (as 1 semi-detached block)

D - cluster of 2 x 2-bedroom units (as 1 semi-detached block), 2 x 3-bedroom units (as 1 semi-detached block), and 1 x 4-bedroom detached unit

E1, E2 & E3 - clusters totalling 4 x 2-bedroom units (as 2 semi-detached blocks), 4 x 3-bedroom units (as 2 semi-detached blocks), 4 x 1-bedroom flats, and 3 self-build plots.

What are your thoughts about this proposed phase 2 development?



Comments:

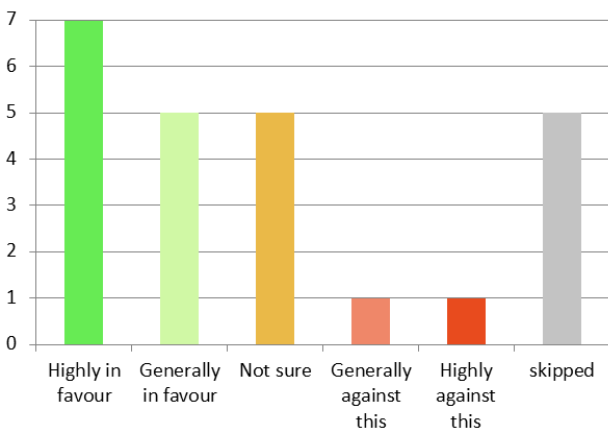
- As above the number of units begins to feel high and the layout seems like a dull standard urban layout plomped in a rural setting.
- Self build only
- As previous answer (about supporting low-impact housing but concern about wildlife and quiet woodland & wetland areas)
- Wrong location

Question 5 - Phase 3 housing area opinions

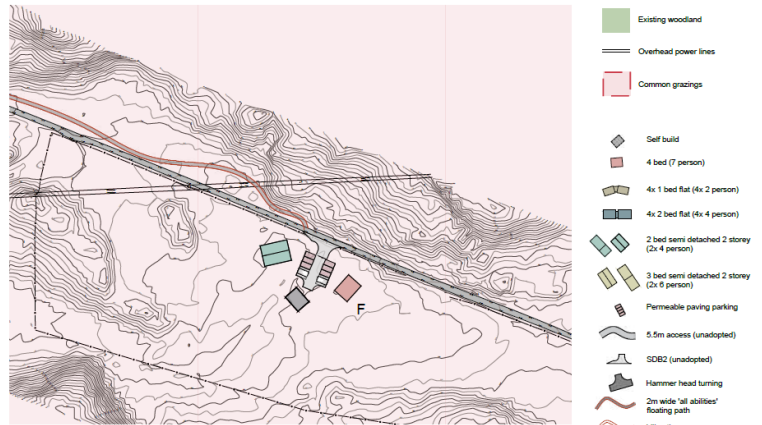
Currently planned as:

F - 2 x 2-bedroom units (as 1 semi-detached block), 1 x 4-bedroom detached unit, and 1 self-build plot.

What are your thoughts on this proposed phase 3 development?



Phase 3



Comments:

- Would need HC to adopt and add a bus stop
- Not sure the plot is necessary. (referring to the one self-build plot proposed on phase 3 area)
- All wrong location

Question 6 - personal interest in opportunities

Are you personally interested in taking on housing or other use of the Glebe (including adjacent Glencanisp areas)?

(This is to give us an idea of current levels of demand for different things - there will be plenty of other opportunity to register an interest in Glebe housing or other development at a later stage.)

Personal interest	Housing Interest	Woodland Croft Interest	Other opportunities Interest
Definitely	7	5	6
Probably	1	3	3
maybe	1	2	5
Probably not	4	2	3
Definitely not	10	11	5
skipped	1	1	2

Comments:

Regarding housing:

- I would be interested in three bed or two bed with workspace

Regarding other opportunities:

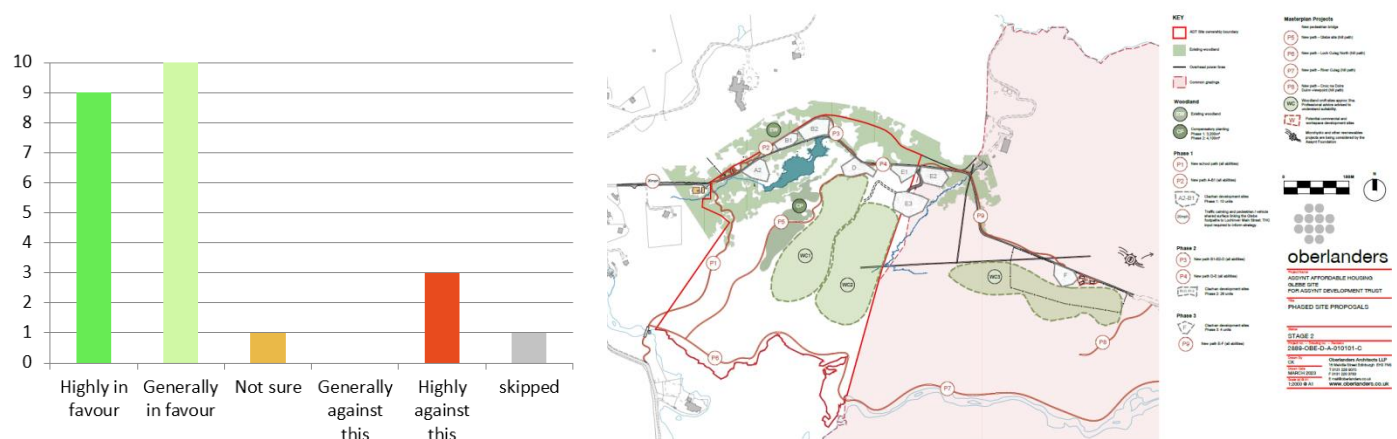
- Yoga room , massage therapy business location , treatment room for beauty therapies and reiki etc
- Possibly looking for site for a workshop to run wood carving and bushcraft courses with coppice woodland too.
- Business/enterprise unit would be greatly appreciated, along with community spaces
- People need housing in the village [as opposed to further out, on the glebe, is the assumed meaning]

(nb. The evidence of demand shown above clearly is not intended as a gauge of total demand. The Housing Needs Assessment conducted by Communities Housing Trust in 2019 was a more accurate gauge of overall demand, although clearly now somewhat outdated.)

(The question was also used to ask whether people currently lived or worked locally or had some other local connection, though the sliding scale of answers, rather than yes/no, made those results unclear. It is assumed from those results that at least 18 of the 24 respondents currently live in Assynt, at least 18 of them work in Assynt, and of those not living or working in Assynt, at least 1 had some other connection to Assynt.)

Question 6 - Overall Plans

The below indicative masterplan image shows an early-stage idea of some different types of development and how they could be located on the site. What are your overall thoughts on this?



Comments:

- Would the whole area be deer fenced? Could be useful

Question 7 - Anything else you want to say?

Comments:

- Key is keep momentum going. Use only quality materials on the housing with little or no maintenance required. Must be energy efficient and within budget.
- We are very much in favour of this development and hope that as young locals working in and running a business in the local area, we will feel the benefits of this project.
- well done and thank you!
- I don't like being negative about this, but I am really concerned the impact on the wildlife and a beautiful area of woodland. If there is a way of avoiding that impact I would be more happy. From the plans it looks like a lot of intrusive work though, although difficult to see for sure. I appreciate there is an issue around affordable housing in the area, and I understand the positive and helpful thing being sought for the local community. I just would like to see opportunities that won't impact fragile habitat, and are sited on land that has already been impacted by people (e.g. the land behind Cruamer).
- Not right site
- I think it is important to look for sites for affordable housing but this is not the place

Further related comments on facebook or to ADT by facebook messenger or email:

- Fully supportive and behind you for affordable housing ... but worried about streetlights ... please protect the dark skies!!
- Thank you, contributed to survey and terrific opportunities ahead for so many

Feedback received at the Drop-in Event

14 of the approx. 30 attendees at the drop-in event on 25th April 2023 completed feedback sheets. The sheets were designed to be shorter and simpler than the online survey so have not been combined with above survey responses and instead are given below:

Question 1 – Support for continuing to progress phase 1

Do you support the proposal for ADT to develop phase 1 proposals, to secure planning consent for the development of affordable housing on this community-owned site?

Yes: 13 **No: 0** **Skipped: 1** (but the one who skipped was clearly against)

Comments:

- *But worried about the land proposed. Native wood, bog*
- *Vital development helping to connect Glencanisps to Lochinver and provide real local benefits on our land.*
- *There is a need for housing in Assynt and plenty of jobs.*
- *Crucial to the viability of the community*
- *absolutely!*
- *Absolutely essential to the future of Lochinver*
- *It's a brilliant and much needed project.*
- *Awesome*
- *You have to jump in before you can swim!*
- *Housing is definitely needed but there are questions about the site. Boggy.*

Question 2 – Support for future phases

Do you support the provision of future phasing of affordable housing and mixed community uses of the site?

Yes: 13 **No: 0** **Skipped: 1** (but the one who skipped was clearly against)

Comments:

- *Provided community survey support and there is demand.*
- *Mixtures and diversity are a good thing. Some self-build, some business development, some affordable housing.*
- *The village needs the housing so population can be sustainable.*
- *Yes, I'm particularly interested in the other types of buildings that could be used as office space, workshops, storage, etc.*
- *Needs to be genuinely affordable with access for tenants to support and employment opportunities*
- *The need for housing is great but it must build the local community and maintain the landscape and beauty*
- *Absolutely!*
- *My concern is that there are sufficient constraints in place to keep the housing for the intended clients and it does not evolve to become housing for long-stay older families.*
- *Particularly interested in the development of woodland crofts*

Question 3 – Other general comments

Do you have any general observations or comments on the project?

Comments:

- *I don't think it's a good idea at all. We absolutely need affordable housing but it's the wrong site, for ecological reasons*
- *Support need for low cost housing for people who live and work in area. There is a shortage of people for many types of job in the area.*
- *Also demographic shift to elderly needs to be balanced.*
- *Please make the houses as Passiv as poss! Is there scope for lots of renewable energy developments? Great to see woodland crofts being taken forward - and it would be great to pick up on earlier plans for crofts at Cnocnaneach, including a common grazing/woodland, and incorporate these 3 new crofts into a new township. Happy to help with this. [contact details given]*
- *Just that there is a huge need for affordable housing*
- *Site is close to village generally - as with other residents good public transport links necessary - albeit increasing population makes public transport viable.*
- *Woodland crofts is a good idea, to get a bit of ground for people to have a livelihood and link them to the land - very encouraging!*

- The road to the site is very narrow and some way of widening it may help enable the project. We need to find a way of encouraging younger people to live and work in the area as well as attracting ***?*** so essential to the area such as electricians, ***?***, plumbers etc.
 - Many, and it's been great to talk to ADT and the architects today. I hope in addition to the access to housing, you'll secure mobile and broadband for the residents.
 - This is a fabulous project, that has considered the community and will help it thrive. Absolutely delighted!
 - Amazing work - well worth supporting. Keep up the good work!
 - Worthwhile. A young population will sustain the Primary School and encourage young adults to stay local and build the population. BUT is there employment to keep them? ROAD! Needs to be adopted by the council EARLY. STREETLIGHTING must be sensitive to 'dark skies' thinking. Create a "devil's advocate" committee to explore the range of unintended consequences that might evolve incrementally over time. The NC500 effect - seek out far-sighted negative thinkers to balance the starry-eyed optimists. In no circumstances should this housing be added to holiday rentals.
 - Good luck! Very important that housing remains affordable and available for local people.
- [***?*** = hard to read handwriting]

Phase 1 Detailed Designs Feedback (01/11/23)

Specific comments on feedback forms:

Question 1 – Support for continuing to progress phase 1

- I am very supportive – housing is very much needed to keep folks living here to attract new residents

Question 2 – Support for future phases

- To develop the site in the future is very exciting – the community can help to shape the future uses of the site

Question 3 – Other general comments

- Appropriate development can only be a positive thing for fragile communities like this. Sustainable, affordable housing which is comfortable is good for people, the planet and the local economy – this is very positive for the local area.
- Very exciting!!

Two individuals also ticked a box to express interest in joining the local steering group / advisory subgroup.

Assynt Development Trust, 12/11/23