

**Proposal for the
Former Mackinnon Memorial Hospital Site,
Broadford, Isle of Skye.**



Photo credit: Radio Skye

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pressing need for novel health care staff accommodation for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross has been highlighted and well documented nationally and locally but remains the primary barrier to the recruitment and retention of health care workers.

There is a tremendous opportunity for collaborative and imaginative working amongst our statutory and voluntary organisations to make a real difference with novel housing and health care purposes at the Mackinnon Memorial Hospital site in Broadford, Isle of Skye. The site has been recently transferred by NHS Highland to The Highland Council who are working with the community on the development of the site.

An initial site layout proposal has been tabled by The Highland Council to stimulate thoughts and debate on how to achieve the best health and care outcomes on the site as part of a larger Health Village vision in the short, medium and longer terms.

This Proposal document, prepared by the local Mackinnon Memorial Hospital (MMH) Group, sets out the national and local contexts, the current position and vision of the Group for discussion amongst the Stakeholders to try and achieve the best workable arrangements and solutions for the people and communities of Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross.

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West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/11991/west_highland_and_islands_local_development_plan_map

Broadford and Strath Local Place Plan 2024 - 2034:

<https://broadfordandstrathcommunitycouncil.org/broadford-and-strath-local-place-plan/>

1. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Sir Lewis Ritchie Report

Sir Lewis D Ritchie produced a Report on the sustainability of Out of Hours NHS services in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross in May 2018. Several recommendations were made in the report, one of which concentrated on Housing Solutions:

“We heard clear and recurring concerns and recognition by healthcare staff, the public representatives of refractory accommodation issues. Accommodation constraints undermine recruitment and retention of staff.

We recommend that:

Novel staff accommodation solutions should be sought with Highland Council (lead agency for housing), public representatives, housing associations, the independent sector and local communities.

This is a pressing matter, which should also take account of temporary accommodation for undergraduate and postgraduate health care worker training, which requires flexibility. Such training accommodation, when not in use for training purposes, might be re-deployed to give temporary accommodation to growing numbers of visitors and tourist, particularly in Skye. These accommodation solutions are also relevant for the resilience of other public sector organisations and should be pursued in common endeavour”.

Sir Lewis Ritchie’s recommendations of May 2018 are reinforced by Sarah Compton-Bishop, Chairwoman of NHS Highland, who has stated in November 2025 that staffing challenges are a major issue and revealed that successful applicants for roles are wary to take jobs in the region as they are unable to find somewhere to live.

National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care

The National Centre supports improved sustainability, capacity and capability of health care services in Scotland’s remote, rural and island communities. The National Centre is funded by Scottish Government and is part of NHS Education for Scotland. One of the key priority areas for the Centre to address is attracting and keeping health and care staff in these remote, rural and island communities. Through partnership working, research and practical project support, the Centre’s remit aligns closely with initiatives such as the Broadford redevelopment proposal which aims to address workforce accommodation and enabling infrastructure challenges in a remote and rural setting.

2. LOCAL CONTEXT

The adopted West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 refers to the Mackinnon Memorial Hospital site as a mixed-use site (Housing, Community) with an indicative housing capacity of 10 units.

The Broadford & Strath Local Place Plan 2024 – 2034 includes the old hospital site and helipad suggesting change to Community Use and states that it is “Essential this asset is used to further health and social provision for the community of Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross”.

The former Mackinnon Memorial Hospital (MMH) was opened in 1914 on land donated to the community by Lord MacDonald for health, social and wellbeing purposes. A substantial renovation and expansion was later completed in 1963. The Mackinnon Memorial Hospital closed in March 2022 when the new adjacent Broadford Hospital was completed. In addition to the clinical uses within the old hospital, there were seven upstairs bedrooms compared to the new hospital provision of just one room with a fold down bed and toilet across a public hallway. Doctors and other on-call staff therefore have to sleep/take naps in their cars in the car park where they are contacted when needed. This arrangement is not conducive to good sleep hygiene as those on duty, due to shift patterns, must work later the following day. Poor sleep hygiene and shift work has been well researched and is linked to metabolic syndrome, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and increase the risk of errors, cognitive impairment and metabolic dysregulation.

Formation of the Dedicated Group October 2022

In October 2022, a dedicated group, the Mackinnon Memorial Hospital Working Group (MMH Group), was established with the specific aim of examining the feasibility and potential benefits of creating a health and social care campus including the former hospital site and adjacent defunct helipad site (Appendix 1 Site Plan). The creation of this group signified the beginning of a targeted initiative to explore how such a campus could support integrated services and enhance outcomes within the local community.

A broad and diverse range of service providers joined the effort, including the Broadford and Strath Community Council, the Broadford and Strath Community Company (BSCC), The Highland Council (THC), NHS Highland (NHSH), Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association (LSHA) as well as several other organisations. This collaborative approach ensured that the perspectives and expertise of all key stakeholders were incorporated into the planning process.

It was agreed that the group would work in partnership to establish the best possible health and social care “village” on the site adjacent to the existing health and community facilities. There are several existing health and social care uses in close proximity to the MMH site comprising An Acarsaid, a ten bed Care Home at Liveras Park; Broadford Medical Centre and Broadford Hospital on the High Road leading from the A87 trunk road via Kyleakin/Broadford/Portree and terminating at Uig ferry port in the north of the Isle of Skye.

The Chemist Shop is located diagonally opposite the junction of the A87 and the High Road.

All of these services are located along the access route to the old hospital site. This vision reflects a commitment to creating an integrated and accessible hub for health and social care services within the community.

A stakeholder meeting held in October 2022 with partners including: THC, NHSH, LSHA, Broadford and Strath Community Council and BSCC, reached the following consensus:

- The community group would go away and discuss the issues raised and feedback their opinion to the wider group.
- Before HC take any steps to purchase the land from the NHSH they are to formally confirm to the community group that they will go on to include legal conditions which will ensure ongoing community involvement and an equal community say over the future of the site and developments on the site.
- To help achieve the community involvement discussed, NHSH agreed that any sale to HC will include a legally binding condition restricting use of the land to support health and social care service delivery agreed with the community and they also advised the sale would include a condition prohibiting open market disposal and/or disposal which was not agreed with the community, plus a clawback clause in favour of NHSH.
- After these terms are formalised the Community Company will withdraw the community Expression of Interest and HC will proceed with a purchase from NHS.
- **Most of the land is likely to be left as a cleared site by HC for some years, although in the short-term options are to be investigated regarding the possibility of the construction of a hostel type building to support Health and Social Care staff accommodation on the land nearest the new hospital, in consultation with the community.**
- It was agreed the community group will consider the options and suggestions discussed and respond.

The MMH Group were clear that any tenancies which may be created for accommodation on the site must not be long term tenancies. This is to prevent any loss of health and social care uses and support within premises accommodation built on the site.

3. SITE PROPOSAL AND CURRENT POSITION

The Highland Council advised at a meeting with the MMH Group on 19th November 2025 that the proposal to construct 20 affordable housing units (Appendix 2 and Phase 1) was not set in stone and a starting point for discussion with the MMH Group. Consideration as to the timing and number of units on Phase 1 would be subject to a demand/needs assessment of uses and agreement with Highland Council and NHS Highland.

The initial proposal to demolish the former hospital building and redevelop the MMH site for 20 affordable housing units comprises:

- 16 x 1 Bed 2 Person Flats
- 2 x 1 Bed 2 Person Wheelchair Flats
- 2 x 2 Bed 4 Person Flats

This proposal is subject to Planning Permission, other statutory permissions and further discussion with the community.

The Helipad site, Phase 2, is available for future expansion of the hospital, currently operating at full capacity, and to complement the current housing proposal on the adjacent Phase 1.

It is the MMH Group's wish to investigate the possibility of managing the completed Phase 1 units on behalf of the community in partnership with NHS Highland and The Highland Council. It should be noted that discussions are ongoing between NHS Highland and Highland Council about the current lead agency model of integration which may result in Adult Social Care being transferred to The Highland Council.

The MMH Group is arranging the initial in person/remote stakeholders' meeting in Broadford with the following individuals from their respective organisations:

Helen Cameron (The Highland Council)
Richard MacDonald (NHSH Head of Estates)
James Swinnerton (Lochalsh and Skye Housing Development)
Morven Taylor (Communities Housing Trust)
Steven Paterson (More Homes Division, Scottish Government)
Stuart MacPherson (SSEN)
Ian Philp (HIE)

Supported by:

Dr Pam Nicoll (Interim Director, National Care Centre for Remote and Rural Health Care)
Dr Carrie Walton (Senior Specialist, National Care Centre for Remote and Rural Health Care)

The purpose of the Stakeholders' meeting is to:

- Help determine how to meet the current and future Health and Social Care needs for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross
- Seek advice on the viability and sustainability of the MMH Group's desire to manage the completed properties in Phase 1
- How to progress a development on the Phase 2 site
- Take advice from the National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care
- Meet and exceed NHS Scotland's Shifting the Balance of Care agenda

This will require ongoing collaboration with stakeholders. Councillors and other individuals or organisations with expertise may be invited from time to time.

4. COMMISSIONING PARTY

Broadford and Strath Community Company could, subject to funding being identified and awarded, facilitate the early appointment post of a development officer. The development officer will work with stakeholders and establish the best way forward for the community and the project. It is expected in the longer term that a new legal entity will be set up to develop and run any developments. It is also anticipated that membership of this new legal entity would be open to those in Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross. The new entity will be responsible for raising any funding, development and ongoing management of the facility. Legal advice will be required for the new entity to ensure the correct structure is applied. It is anticipated that this structure may be a SCIO or CIC.

5. FUTURE VISION

The existing uses identified at Section 2 form part of the vision to create a Health Village in Broadford with the inclusion of the redeveloped MMH site at the top of the High Road.

The priority elements for the redevelopment include:

Short term accommodation units for:

- On-call staff
- Visiting Consultants
- Bank and Locum Staff
- Students
- New Recruits
- Step up/Step down care to prevent delayed discharges/bed blocking

Family accommodation, particularly for families of patients requiring palliative care, recognising that visitors may need to travel long distances.

Other uses, which may be incorporated, comprise:

- Creche / Nursery provision to support the Health and Social Care workforce
- Centre of Excellence to provide knowledge, expertise and resources to support user groups including training and education services
- Coffee shop/meeting space for Health & Social Care practitioners
- Horticultural therapy garden
- Memorial Garden
- Any other compatible uses which may be identified during the stakeholder process

Many of the priority elements may be accommodated within the proposed housing development of Phase 1 in agreement with The Highland Council and NHS Highland and other elements considered within the Helipad site, Phase 2.

6. ELEMENTS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AND BUSINESS CASE

Need/Demand

The need for novel staff and patient accommodation has been outlined in the introduction above and reported in local and national press. Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association (LSHA) has leased properties in Broadford and two houses in Raasay to NHS Highland and has previously leased a property in Portree to the Scottish Ambulance Service to assist both organisations in securing accommodation for their staff. It should be noted that LSHA do not manage the occupation of the leased properties to NHS Highland. It is MMH Group's desire to take this to the next level whereby Highland Council leases the properties to NHS Highland on a similar basis to LSHA, but a local body manages the properties on NHS Highland's behalf. The National Care Centre for Remote and Rural Health Care has shared information with the MMR Group on novel and successful examples of this in Scotland, in particular Arran and Shetland.

It is the requirement of a future Feasibility and Business Case to identify the demand for short term accommodation units for on-call staff, students, new recruits and for step up/step down care to assist The Highland Council with their current proposals for Phase 1 and the other uses already noted for the potential Phase 2 development.

Accommodation Requirements

The type and size of accommodation have been identified by the Highland Council for Phase 1 comprising five Four-in-a-Block flats for affordable rent. Discussions will be ongoing at the Stakeholder meetings about the type of lease/tenancy agreements including a Memorandum of Understanding to be entered into and by whom and by what organisations.

The Phase 2 development site will be part of future stakeholder meetings with the aim of seeking out what size, type and tenure any property and/or uses are identified through the need/demand assessment process.

Capital Costs

The current Phase 1 proposal will be appraised by The Highland Council and will identify the costs of land acquisition, demolition, construction and fees including consultant / professional fees and statutory consent fees.

The Phase 2 proposal, once demand, accommodation and other possible uses have been identified and agreed by the Stakeholders will be subject to a similar appraisal process as above.

However, it is critical to the progression of Phase 2 that initial feasibility funding is identified to enable the instruction of a professional, for example an architect, to prepare a draft/outline proposal for the site for consideration by the group and the Highland Council Planners.

Funding

Phase 1 capital costs will be funded by The Highland Council through a mix of the Scottish Government's More Homes Division's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) and borrowing against its Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

However, Phase 2 capital costs, when identified, will be subject to stakeholder discussions as to which organisation will fund and therefore ultimately own any buildings on the site, all subject to The Highland Council's agreement as the site owner.

If the wider community wish to progress ownership/tenancy of any property on Phase 2, a separate and detailed Business Plan will be required to identify, for example, operational costs and income in addition to any potential capital costs.

Operational Costs and Income

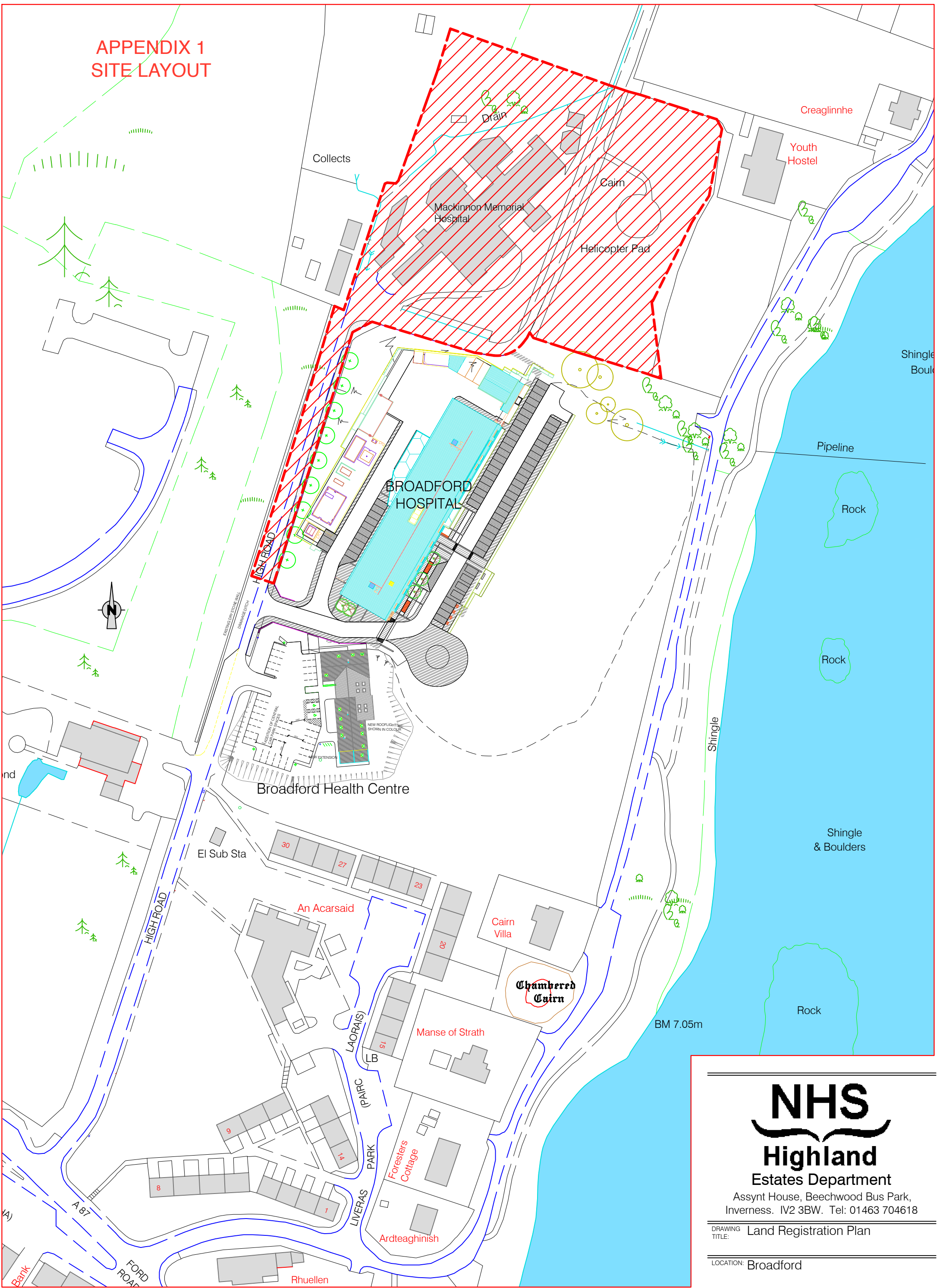
A completed residence requires to be viable/sustainable in terms of income – through rent / service charges and occupancy levels and also costs – for the future management and maintenance of the building including staff costs. Should a local community organisation manage a completed building, advice on the forms of tenancy/occupancy agreements, management, marketing, booking, contracts, return on investment and risk management, for example, would be required as part of a draft Business Plan for the running of the building post completion. Consideration would be required as to whether a subsidiary of B&SCC would be necessary in terms of ownership/type of agreement with the parent organisation and treatment of surplus funds, for example.

7. OTHER COMPATIBLE OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the MMH sites, further consideration is required by the stakeholders to identify other novel housing opportunities and solutions for Key Workers as suggested by Sir Lewis Ritchie which would support recruitment and retention of staff.

This may comprise any combination of tenures including, for example, affordable rent, Mid Market Rent, Rent to Buy and Shared Equity accommodation by the appropriate affordable housing providers.

APPENDIX 1
SITE LAYOUT



NHS
Highland
Estates Department

Assynt House, Beechwood Bus Park,
Inverness. IV2 3BW. Tel: 01463 704618

DRAWING TITLE: Land Registration Plan

LOCATION: Broadford

SCALE: 1:1250	DRAWN BY: RN	PAPER: A3	DATE: 09.06.22
DWG NO.: SLSWR/CLO/01	REV.: C		



APPENDIX 2 PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

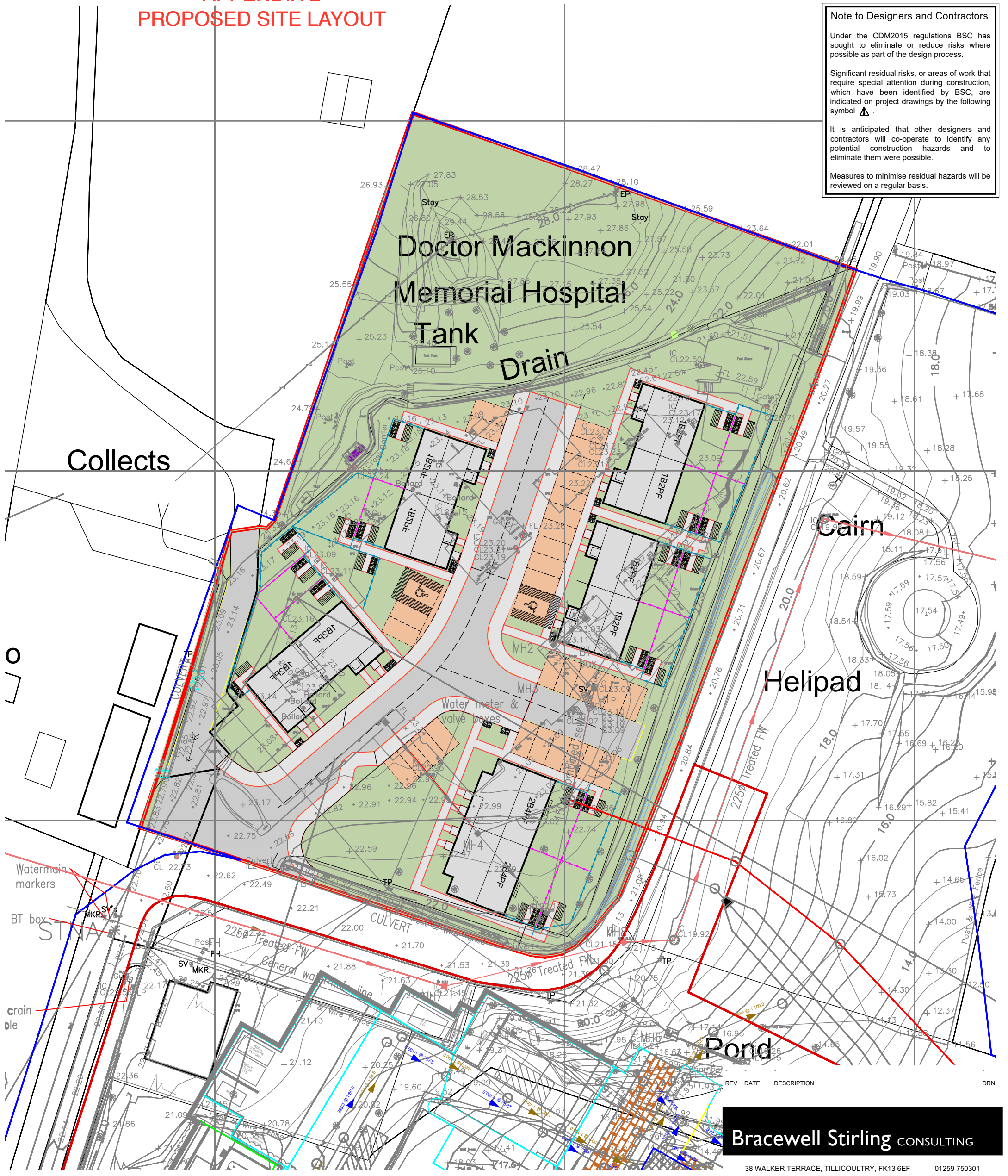
Note to Designers and Contractors

Under the CDM2015 regulations BSC has sought to eliminate or reduce risks where possible as part of the design process.

Significant residual risks, or areas of work that require special attention during construction, which have been identified by BSC, are indicated on project drawings by the following symbol **▲**.

It is anticipated that other designers and contractors will co-operate to identify any potential construction hazards and to eliminate them where possible.

Measures to minimise residual hazards will be reviewed on a regular basis.



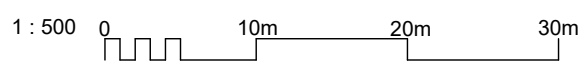
Bracewell Stirling CONSULTING

38 WALKER TERRACE, TILlicOUNTRY, FK13 6EF 01259 750301
 5 NESS BANK, INVERNESS, IV2 4SF 01463 233760
 15 LOCHSIDE STREET, OBAN, PA34 4HP 01631 359054

- 16 x 1 Bed 2 Person Flat
- 2 x 1 Bed 2 Person WC Flat
- 2 x 2 Bed 4 Person Flat

TOTAL - 20 units

- 2 - accessible parking spaces
- 30 - common parking spaces
- 32 - PARKING TOTAL**



**AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
 BROADFORD HOSPITAL SITE, SKYE
 HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

SITE LAYOUT - OPTION 2

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SCALE:	1 : 500	DRAWN:	LJ
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