

Edzell Woods could grow by 300 households

by Steve Mitchell

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EDZELL Woods could be set to grow by 300 households over the next 12 years, as part of an Aberdeenshire Council plan which would result in 1000 new homes being built across the Mearns.

Significantly, the good news for residents of Edzell Woods is that, if the plans get backing from "The Shire", it will save them being out of pocket in the long run.

For, the erection of 50 more properties on the site would enable legislation which would ensure that Scottish Water and not the residents of Edzell Woods themselves are responsible for a new sewage plant - a potential saving of £1 million to the local residents.

The proposal put forward as part of Aberdeenshire Council's draft plan, would also see 900 new homes built in Laurencekirk.

Planning policy team leader Piers Blaxter, told councillors that developers would pay a high price for building in the south areas of the Mearns.

Mearns Councillor George Carr said there were major infrastructure problems facing residents at Edzell Woods which needed addressing "urgently".

Residents are currently faced with a £1 million bill to replace the sewage treatment plant, but the installation of just another 50 homes would result in Scottish Water having to install the facility free of charge.

It is hoped the large-scale expansion of 300 homes will play a significant factor in the development of services currently avail-



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able to residents on what was the former site housing personnel from the former RAF Edzell military base.

Aberdeenshire councillors also heard the airbase is being considered by Historic Scotland as a potential listed site.

If the site becomes listed it's highly likely Historic Scotland would raise "substantial objections" to any subsequent developments.

A report to the committee stated: "Edzell Woods was a new settlement built to service the Edzell Airbase, which ceased operation

in 1996.

"It is located on flat agricultural land with the Grampian mountains to the north. The settlement is not obvious, as it is screened by airbase buildings and also trees.

"The existing development consists of one and a half storey semi-detached modern styled houses, set in suburban layouts. They are white/cream in colour and set back from the road, with ample green space areas between buildings.

"Some Airbase facilities are falling into dilapidation. The settlement requires reinstatement of services, and development of the airbase would be beneficial, as it currently overshadows the village.

"Edzell Woods requires development to sustain local services and so support the community. The proposal for a new community of 1100 houses would not fit with the finalised Structure Plan strategy, but is technically possible.

"It is proposed that a development of 45 houses adjacent to the existing settlement would provide the village with critical mass to attract services."

A spokesman for Aberdeenshire Council said: "It should be stressed that the Edzell Woods, like various other potential developments in the local plan for the area, are at a very early juncture in the planning process.

"A great deal more work has to be undertaken before any planning permissions are lodged.

"The council is, however, aware of the need for investment in the local infrastructure and will be considering this in its future deliberations."