

## **PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM**

ABERDEEN, 18 August 2016. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM. Present:- Councillor Milne, Convener; Councillor Finlayson, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cooney, Corall, Cormie, Crockett, Donnelly, Greig, Hutchison, Jaffrey, Lawrence, Malik, Jean Morrison MBE, Nicoll and Sandy Stuart.

**The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found at:-**  
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=511&MI d=3849&Ver=4>

**Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.**

### **INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURE NOTE**

1. The Forum had before it the procedure note and guidance for members on the operation of Forum meetings.

**The Forum resolved:-**

to note the procedure note and guidance for members.

### **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 16 JUNE 2016**

2. The Forum had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 16 June, 2016 for approval.

**The Forum resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record.

### **92-130 JOHN STREET, ABERDEEN - 160879**

3. The Forum had before it a report by the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on a submission of a Proposal of Application Notice by Downing Students (Aberdeen) Limited Partnership Incorporated, for a proposed redevelopment of a site for purpose built student accommodation, ancillary facilities and associated infrastructure works at 92-130 John Street, Aberdeen.

The report advised that the site comprises a largely vacant plot of land on John Street adjacent to the Woolmanhill Halls of Residence of Robert Gordon University. The site includes the Lumsden Security Locksmith premises and areas previously occupied by now demolished tenement buildings, with commercial uses at ground floor and the former Ambassador Snooker Club. The surrounding area contains a mix of uses, with

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residential flats of mainly four stories in height to the north and east, Woolmanhill Halls of Residence to the west and the vacant Robert Gordon University building to the south.

The Forum heard from Callum Fraser (Holder Planning, Planning Agents), George Tyson (Downing Group, Applicant) and Paul Harkin (Fletcher Joseph Associates, Architect), who outlined the proposal in detail and responded to questions from members. They explained that the proposed development was on a vacant brownfield site, approximately 24 minutes' walk to the university campus which has bus links to RGU campus at Garthdee. The site was close to transport hubs, attractions and local amenities. Reference was made to a previous application for an international style 182 bedroom hotel which was approved by Committee in 2013. Paul Harken advised that the key considerations were as follows:-

- High quality development;
- Fill gap site currently left derelict and reinforces John Street frontage;
- Encourages footfall along John Street;
- Introduction of public realm and sheltered courtyard providing green haven in city;
- Feature landmark tower which responds to the visible location whilst avoiding impact on the view to the Bastille;
- Terminates vista from Union Street, signals start of John Street and frames view to the Bastille;
- Responds to the scale and height of adjacent residential properties; and
- Contemporary but sensitive material palette.

Mr Andrew Miller, the case officer, addressed the Forum and provided more details regarding the planning aspects of the application and responded to questions from members. Mr Miller explained that the proposal at this stage has no specific number of units proposed, although the threshold for 'Major' scale development within which such a proposal would fall is 5,000m<sup>2</sup> or more of floor space created, given that the site is less than 2ha in size. He indicated that pre-application discussions have been ongoing between planning officers and the applicant/agents. The proposal will need to demonstrate compliance with relevant policies within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Any parking provision needed to be in accordance with standards set out in the Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Guidance, though consideration should also be given to low/zero car development where the development is in close proximity to public transport links.

Mr Miller advised that the applicant proposed to carry out a public consultation event at Aberdeen Central Library on 17 August 2016, with publicity in the Evening Express a week prior, posters in proximity of the site and a mail drop to properties close to the site would be undertaken. Consultation would also be undertaken with George Street, City Centre and Rosemount and Mile End Community Councils.

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Following questions from members, it was noted that the proposal due to its proximity to public transport links would have no need for parking spaces, although it was anticipated that there would be two bays for disabled badge holders and there would be access for service vehicles and drop-offs in the central courtyard area.

Mr Harkin indicated that the student occupation of the development would be approximately 350 to 375.

It was noted that the massing of the building (8 storeys) would be appropriate to the street frontage, similar to that of the RGU building, with sufficient daylight getting in to the development. Flood and drainage system details would follow in due course.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Forum -

- (a) note the key issues identified at this stage;
- (b) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and
- (c) identify relevant issues which members would like the applicants to consider and address in any future applications.

### **The Forum resolved:-**

- (i) to request that aspects relating to the historical ownership of the site be incorporated within the development;
- (ii) to request that disabled spaces be included within the development; and
- (iii) to thank Callum Fraser, George Tyson and Paul Harkin for their presentation.

## **LAND AT WEST KINGSFORD - COMMUNITY AND SPORTS CAMPUS, FOOTBALL ACADEMY AND STADIUM - 160853**

4. The Forum had before it a report by the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on a submission of a Proposal of Application Notice by Aberdeen Football Club for a proposed major development incorporating a community and sport campus, football academy and stadium (circa 20,000 capacity), formation of access and all associated parking, landscaping and engineering works at land at West Kingsford, Aberdeen.

The report advised that the site is located on land designated as green belt, on the north side of the A944 dual carriageway, some 500m to the east of Westhill and approximately 1km to the west of the Prime Four Business Park at Kingswells.

The Forum heard from Stewart Milne and George Yule, Aberdeen Football Club and David and Michael Halliday, Halliday Fraser Munro who outlined the proposal in detail and responded to questions from members. Mr Milne indicated that the project sat alongside other key developments which were ongoing including the new Aberdeen

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Exhibition and Conference Centre and new Harbour and was vital for the club which will see radical changes in the domestic and European game. He advised that it was important for the city to be in a strong position to capitalise on any changes and it was essential for the club, its professional squad and youth players to have top class facilities. He made reference to the Aberdeen FC Community Trust, one of the leading trusts in the country which develops services for the wider community.

Mr Yule explained that there was a need to relocate the club to a new site. He indicated that the club was playing its football in a 20th century stadium which does not meet the current European football criteria. He advised that they were shuttling the professional and youth academy players around the city in a bus using borrowed third party football pitches which was not a good platform to develop talent. He explained that the social match day experience for families in a safe and comfortable environment was the way forward, but the current facilities were outdated.

Mr David Halliday provided details in terms of the location of the proposed project, advising that the site is close to the A944 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. He indicated that the park and ride sites located at Dyce, Bridge of Don and a proposed south of the city park and ride would form part of the transport strategy linking them to the Kingswells park and ride, which was within walking distance of the development. He advised that the proposed stadium had been positioned in a safe zone between the two gas pipes for health and safety reasons and that the stadium design had not been finalised. The professional facilities would include 3 football pitches and the community and youth development facilities would include an academy, gym, changing rooms and 3G pitches and there are plans to look at another sporting facility on site. It was also anticipated that there would be a fan zone and memorial garden very near to the stadium to encourage a family day out as part of the match day experience. Parking in the north of the site would be available for pre-bookings. Parking at the south west of the site would be allocated for away travelling fans cars and buses. There would be three access points to the site and the club would work closely with Police Scotland in terms of segregation and access. The design of the stadium is at an early stage, although it is anticipated that there would ultimately be four stands within a wraparound outer shell. He concluded by stating that the development encompasses a vast amount of green space.

Mr Michael Halliday made reference to the consultation process, advising that there was to be four public events and three pop-up exhibitions, a letter drop to 506 residents and businesses in Kingsford, Kingswells and Westhill. He indicated that there have been meetings with the community councils, MPs and MSPs, letters have been issued to councillors and there has been extensive media coverage in newspapers, online, TV and radio as well as the club's website and social media. He indicated that the events had been well attended (approx. 700 at Westhill, 300 at Kingswells and 140 at Pittodrie). Over 400 comments had been received and the main topics raised were transportation, noise and light pollution, parking management issues, parking in the

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local community and green belt loss. A further feedback event is proposed, although the date has still to be confirmed.

Mr Yule indicated that the club does not want to fall behind others in terms of its facilities, and there is a need to complement other sporting developments such as the Aquatic Centre and Sports Village. It was essential that the club provides its athletes and the Trust with proper facilities in order that they can do their jobs. He made reference to an independent survey conducted by the Chamber of Commerce which looked at the club's contribution to the wider community which outlined that 180 people are working on match days and the club currently contributes £12m to the local economy which will increase to £20m annually.

Mr Garfield Prentice, the case officer, addressed the Forum and provided more details regarding the planning aspects of the application and responded to questions from members. He advised that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required to be submitted alongside any future planning application. Regard would be given to the suitability and sustainability of the location of the site, especially given its green belt designation. Any public safety issues arising from the close proximity of the stadium to two major pipelines (Shell Gas and BP Forties) would require to be assessed as part of any planning application. Advice would be sought from the Health and Safety Executive. Regard would also be required to be given to any potential contamination on the site, reflecting a history of landfill.

Mr Prentice explained that the proposed stadium would be of a substantial size and massing, therefore consideration would need to be given to the potential significant effect there would be on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area. Regards would need to be given to the potential impacts of the proposal in relation to light pollution and/or nuisance, noise from traffic and other sources and higher emissions from the large number of vehicles being driven to the site when operational. The potential use of large volumes of water for watering pitches, high levels of electricity used, especially for lighting and the production of municipal waste, construction waste and sewage are also considerations.

Mr Prentice advised that the layout/scale of the stadium and associated ancillary buildings, extent of car parking, landscaping and traffic impact would be determined at application stage. Traffic Management and access to and from the site would also be examined, together with the linkages to public transportation. A suitable level of car, cycle and motorcycle parking would need to be agreed and the proposals would be expected to accord with transportation policies within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, and the Council's Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility.

Mr Prentice indicated that due regard would need to be given to access the facility by the general public, in addition to that of the Football Club. As such, there is the potential for benefits to not only the local community, but also to the wider population within the city. Consideration would also have to be given to the potential benefits of a

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new, modern and major sports facility for the city and region, including potential economic benefits.

Mr Prentice explained that although located in a largely rural and green belt location, there are a small number of houses close to the site and Westhill which is 500m away. Careful impact will need to be given to any impact on residential amenity that may rise from the use of the proposed facilities, from traffic going to and from the site and from large volumes of people who would visit the site on match/event days.

Mr Prentice indicated that a Drainage Impact Assessment would be required in order to demonstrate that the development could be adequately drained.

Finally, Mr Prentice provided details of the process and advised that an Environmental Impact Assessment would need to be submitted prior to organising a Pre-Determination Hearing where members of the public who had submitted letters of representation would be able to put across their views, following which the planning application would be submitted to Full Council for determination.

A number of questions were put to the applicant by members and the following was noted:-

- there were real concerns in the local area regarding the traffic and environmental impact the development may have;
- the stadium being illuminated in red at nights would have a negative impact on the community;
- in the last three years there has been a total of 24 games per season at Pittodrie;
- the AFC Community Trust were currently based at Pittodrie and the proposed new facility would allow the club to present outdoor and indoor activities which could be extended into the local community, schools and internationally;
- there was a real desire by the club to consult as broadly as possible;
- the club had met with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency in relation to the location, specifically regarding its previous use as a landfill site;
- detailed work would be done in terms of access and egress of the stadium;
- that the historical bad image of football supporters had changed and there was more of a push towards a family friendly experience on match days;
- statistics show that the level of ejections/arrests within Pittodrie Stadium has diminished, with the average being one per game;
- that a combined ticket and public transport package would be considered by the club;
- that a city centre location would be considered for selling tickets and merchandise;
- AFC would work with Council officers to create appropriate landscaping;
- there was no intention of creating a multi-sport stadium and running track as the supporters would be too far away from the pitch and it would increase costs, however discussions would be held with Scotland Rugby Union to determine

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whether they would be interested in hosting rugby games as they have done previously at Pittodrie; and

- that there was no requirement for commercial development on the site.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Forum -

- (a) note the key issues identified;
- (b) if necessary seek clarification on any particular matters; and
- (c) identify relevant issues which members would like the applicants to consider and address in any future applications.

**The Forum resolved:-**

- (i) to request that there should be no red light illuminating of the stadium when it's not in use for football matches or events as this would have a negative impact on the community;
- (ii) to request that consideration be given to the development of street sport and to push the health agenda in schools;
- (iii) to request that bio mass energy be considered for the development;
- (iv) to request that drop off points for service buses carrying supporters to the city centre and park and ride sites be explored further;
- (v) to thank Stewart Milne, George Yule, David Halliday and Michael Halliday for their presentation.

**- COUNCILLOR RAMSAY MILNE, Convener.**

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