

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE DETERMINATION HEARING

ABERDEEN, 15 January 2020. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE DETERMINATION HEARING. Present:- Councillor Boulton, Convener; Councillor , Vice Convener; ; and Councillors Allan, Copland, Cormie, Greig and Avril MacKenzie.

Also in attendance: Councillors Alphonse, Bell, Delaney, Jackie Dunbar, Grant, Henrickson, Hutchison, Macdonald, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Alex Nicoll and Wheeler.

SITE VISIT

1. The Committee conducted a site visit prior to the Hearing. The Committee was addressed by Mr Gavin Evans, Senior Planner and summarised the proposal for the overall site.

The Convener explained that the Committee would return to the Town House to commence the Hearing.

ERECTION OF RESIDENTIAL LED, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 550 HOMES, COMMUNITY AND SPORTS FACILITIES, RETAIL (CLASSES 1, 2, 3 AND SUI GENERIS) WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, OPEN SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE AT LAND EAST OF A92 ELLON ROAD AT CLOVERHILL, MURCAR, BRIDGE OF DON ABERDEEN - 191171

2. The Committee heard from the Convener who opened up the hearing by welcoming those present and providing information on the running order of the hearing. She explained that the first person to address the hearing would be Mr Gavin Evans, and asked that speakers adhere to their allocated time in order for the hearing to run smoothly and in a timely manner.

The Committee then heard from **Mr Gavin Evans**, Senior Planner, who addressed the Committee in the following terms:-

Mr Evans explained that members should note that the report prepared for today's meeting contained full details relating to this case, and that his presentation was a very brief overview of the report.

Mr Evans explained that the site extended to 22.5 hectares and was located at Cloverhill, Bridge of Don, on the east side of the A92 / Ellon Road dual carriageway (formerly the A90 Trunk Road until its de-trunking last year) on the section between the Murcar Roundabout (to the north) and the AECC Roundabout (to the south).

Mr Evans advised that the Silver Burn crossed under the A92 and entered the western edge of the site, before heading south towards the southern tip of the site.

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He explained that an existing property, Ironfield House, was located just outwith the eastern boundary of the site but was presently accessed via a rutted track which ran east-west across the site and connected with the A92. An existing culvert ran from east to west across the site, roughly following the route of the track, before discharging to an open channel beyond the eastern boundary.

Mr Evans advised that the interior of the site comprised of open agricultural fields, subdivided by existing dry stone walls, fences and hedgerows. There were few existing trees to the interior of the site, with the exception of a small cluster where field boundaries met in the southern portion of the site. Mr Evans noted that for the most part, any mature trees were located along the boundaries of the site, which included at its northern edge and north-eastern corner, as well as along the northern portion of the Silver Burn. He had also highlighted that dense belts of planting, which enclosed existing residential properties at Ironfield House and in localised pockets along the eastern boundary, were also evident.

Mr Evans indicated that the site was zoned as Business and Industrial land in the Local Development Plan.

In terms of the surrounding land use context, Mr Evans explained that the site sat to the north of the Aberdeen Energy Park, with the former Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre site further south, on the other side of the Parkway East/Exploration Drive. To the east of the site was land identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan for business and industrial development, but as yet undeveloped. Beyond this, approximately 600m east, lay the Royal Aberdeen golf course, with Murcar Golf Course immediately to the north of that.

Mr Evans also highlighted that on the opposite side of the A92, to the west, was the Bridge of Don Retail Park and further office and industrial development contained within the Denmore, Murcar and Bridge of Don Industrial Estates. Further to the east was the established residential areas within Bridge of Don. Development on this site would be within the catchments for Scotstown Primary School and Bridge of Don Academy, both of which lie on the western side of the A92.

Mr Evans explained that in regards to the Local Development Plan:

- The application site formed some part of OP2, an opportunity site for development of office, business and industrial uses, compatible with its Business and Industrial Zoning and the associated B1 policy. The remainder of OP2 lay to the east and north east;
- Land to the south-east was OP3, earmarked for the expansion of the Aberdeen Energy Park, with policy B2 (Specialist Employment) seeking to promote class development in classes 4, 5 and 6, allowing for office, industrial and storage/distribution/warehouse use; and
- To the north, the OP1 Murcar site provided employment land for future needs, and was safeguarded for that purpose rather than meeting current need.

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Mr Evans advised that as the application sought permission in principle, the layout plans provided should be treated as an indicative representation of how any final scheme could look, rather than a settled proposal. Full details of design, architectural treatment and various other matters would be established through the planning authority's consideration of future applications for the 'approval of matters specified in conditions', which would be subject to the relevant neighbour notification, consultation, and reporting processes at that time, which would provide further opportunity for members of the public to make representation.

A Design and Access Statement had been provided in support of the proposal, which sought to present a contextual analysis of the site and establish key design principles against which subsequent applications would be considered. Mr Evans highlighted that this document referred to a mix of houses and flats, which included detached, semi-detached, terraced, bungalow and assisted living units. Mr Evans also indicated that other potential uses noted included nursery, community or event space, care home/sheltered accommodation and retail/commercial space, along with a new all-weather sports pitch to the southern end of the site.

The indicative layout showed the site being accessed from two key points on the A92. A main central access, which would be controlled by a new signalised junction, and a secondary access further south, which would operate on a 'left-in, left-out' basis. This junction would incorporate a pedestrian crossing point on the A92, facilitating access to the shops and amenities to the west.

The indicative Masterplan also showed potential for existing houses, which were currently accessed directly from the A92, to gain access to the internal street layout, as well as potential future access points for the internal street layout to connect to land to the north and east.

Mr Evans also explained that the sports pitch shown towards the southern end of the site would be served by the secondary access from the A92, with potential for a clubhouse/pavilion and associated car parking adjacent.

Mr Evans also indicated that the higher density flatted block(s) were indicatively shown to the north of the main access, along with a main square, intended to act as a central focal point for the development and offering a potential location for retail or community uses.

Mr Evans also gave details on the indicative building types and noted the proposal included, a mix of detached, semi-detached, terraced and 'cottage flat' units, bungalow locations not shown on this indicative layout, but intention to include and community/mixed use/retail elements of the proposal located at central access point, focused around 'main square' and the linear park.

Mr Evans also advised that the supporting Design and Access Statement highlighted that the proposal included the Aberdeen Hydrogen First initiative, which proposed to integrate micro-CHP (Combined Heat and Power) fuel cell technology into 30 homes

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within the first phase of development as a pilot scheme. The applicants had also indicated that 'up to' 30% of the total units would be delivered as affordable housing, with the aim of delivering around 145 affordable units within the first phase of development.

Mr Evans also provided details on relevant planning policies. He explained that as this site was not allocated or zoned in the Development Plan for housing development, the starting point was to highlight that this proposal represents a significant departure from the approved Development Plan, which had necessitated this hearing.

Scottish Planning Policy was of relevance in setting out national planning policy, including the overarching aims and desired outcomes for the planning system in Scotland.

Local Development Plan policies which related to various matters such as developer obligations, transport impact, housing mix and open space provision were all of relevance, however these matters were largely secondary to establishing whether the principle of residential development in this location was acceptable. The development plan does not currently allow for it, and Scotland operates a plan-led system, where decision making should first and foremost establish whether a proposal accords with the Development Plan, and thereafter consider whether there were any particular considerations that are of such significance they warrant setting aside the Development Plan in this instance.

Mr Evans also indicated that the 2019 Housing Land Audit would be of relevance in offering the most recent picture of the available supply of housing land across the city.

In regard to representations, Mr Evans noted that a total of 128 valid and timeously made representations were received in relation to this application. Of these representations, 123 were in support of the proposal, 3 stated objection, and 2 were neutral in content.

The Convener then invited **Mr Scott Lynch**, Senior Engineer, to address the Committee.

Mr Lynch explained that they had assessed the principles of the development at this point and not the specifics. He advised that a range of facilities were in walking distance to the development and also how the Council promoted new cycling facilities. Mr Lynch highlighted that there were bus stops along the A92 and the nearest bus stops to the site were 120m to the north of the site, and the Bridge of Don park and ride was 850m to the south of the site.

Mr Lynch also explained that the applicant had intimated that full details of the parking provision would be submitted for the detailed planning applications for each development phase in accordance with the Councils standards and this was acceptable. Mr Lynch also noted that the applicant had stated that, in-keeping with the policies outlined in designing streets, they had aimed to consider place before

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movement, with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users considered ahead of motor vehicles and this was a requirement of Council policy.

Mr Lynch also advised that access to all schools would require the crossing of the A92 dual carriageway via the proposed Toucan crossing at the site access junction. In order to facilitate this, the applicant proposed a temporary 20mph speed limit during school travel-times. He noted that all safe routes to schools proposed were adequate and safe, and comprised of signalised crossings / zebra crossings / well-lit sections of footway, etc. Mr Lynch also noted that the applicant was correct in asserting that if the aspirational core path between the A92 and Denmore Road was implemented, this would significantly reduce pedestrian journey times between the site and Greenbrae Primary School.

Members then asked questions of Mr Evans and Mr Lynch and the following information was noted:

- The adoption of roads would be addressed at a later stage;
- Developer obligations would be required for both primary and secondary education;
- Greenbrae Primary was the nearest primary school however the development was zoned as Scotstown Primary due to the core path route to school and safety matters. It was confirmed that Scotstown Primary was within the 2 mile walking distance limit before the Council would be required to provide transport to school;
- Contributions would be sought towards Scotstown Medical Practice;
- There would be a condition in regards to the crossing of the A92, which would include a toucan crossing and signalised lighting;
- There would be a shared path for pedestrian and cycle usage and this would be 3m in width; and
- The location of the affordable housing was still to be determined;

The Convener then invited the applicant to address the Committee, and the speakers consisted of Richard Campbell, Cognito Oak and Elaine Farquharson-Black, Brodies.

Mr Campbell commenced the presentation for the applicant and explained their vision for Cloverhill was to create a new sustainable community, which would sit between Bridge of Don and Aberdeen beach, and would provide a high quality, sustainable and healthy lifestyle for its residents, businesses and the wider community. Mr Campbell indicated that they had included a number of suggestions from early meetings with the Community Council, which included bungalows, local shops, a community hall and play areas, as well as a sports pitch.

Mr Campbell highlighted that the proposals helped address a need and demand for new affordable, Council and accessible housing and community facilities in the Bridge of Don area, which was evidenced by over 120 expressions of support from third parties. He explained that a significant element of the support came from people who

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wished to live in Bridge of Don but could not get suitable housing. In addition, Mr Campbell highlighted the Aberdeen Hydrogen First Initiative had attracted national interest and noted that they would be taking a bold step towards addressing climate change with the Hydrogen Initiative, which would be a first in the UK.

The Committee was then addressed by Elaine Farquharson-Black, who explained that at a local level, 165 affordable homes would be delivered in partnership with the Council as part of the first phase of the development, together with 100 market houses. There would be a mix of size and type of units, which would include bungalows and accessible housing as requested in the public consultation. Alongside these homes, the applicants would deliver a 3G sports pitch which would become the home of Bridge of Don Thistle Football Club, but would be managed by a local community trust and available for wider community use. Also within the first phase, Ms Farquharson-Black indicated there would be a central linear park, two new junctions and a new pedestrian crossing on the A92, which would connect the existing Bridge of Don community with the coast and would provide a key part of the Council's aspirational Core Path Number 1.

Ms Farquharson-Black advised that the second phase of the development would include in the region of 255 dwellings, of different sizes, the neighbourhood centre with shops and community facilities, such as a Men's Shed, and additional open space. The third phase would complete the housing. All of the community facilities were being provided in the first two phases and the timing of their provision would be secured through a legal agreement. Ms Farquharson-Black indicated that the Community Council's concern that there would be housing without facilities had therefore been addressed.

Ms Farquharson-Black also highlighted that the applicants were investing £500,000 to fit 30 homes with energy efficient micro-CHP fuel cells which convert natural gas to hydrogen. This would be the first project in Scotland to evaluate the technology in practice and at scale and they would work in partnership with Panasonic, who were market leaders in this area, and the project had the support of InvestAberdeen and the Chamber of Commerce.

Ms Farquharson-Black explained that the Development Plan position was a little different and they were in an unusual position, one that she believed supported the grant of consent for this development. She highlighted that the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Plan 2014 was now almost 6 years old. Scottish Government planning policy dictated that where a development plan was more than 5 years old, it must be considered to be out of date and the presumption in favour of development which contributes to sustainable development would be a significant material consideration in the determination of any planning application. Case law from the Supreme Court had established that this means that the balance was tilted in favour of the grant of permission, except where the benefits were "*significantly and demonstrably*" outweighed by any adverse effects.

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Ms Farquharson-Black indicated there were no adverse effects which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the considerable benefits which would arise from approving this development.

Ms Farquharson-Black advised that the application was classed as a significant departure from the current Development Plan and she noted that in correspondence, officers had suggested that building homes on the application site would be contrary to the Vision and Spatial strategy of the 2017 Local Development Plan. They had also suggested that approving this application might prejudice the delivery of development on sites which had been allocated for residential development elsewhere in the city. However Ms Farquharson-Black advised she found these statements both surprising and unfounded. She highlighted that this was a development which would provide a high quality of life while leading the way in sustainable development and piloting a solution which dealt with climate change. It was therefore consistent with the Council's Vision.

The spatial strategy promoted the city centre as the commercial, economic, social, civic and cultural heart of Aberdeen. This development would not compete with the city centre. The spatial strategy proposed planned expansion on brown and green field sites around existing suburban communities, to deliver opportunities for people to enjoy a high quality of life within an attractive and safe environment which encompasses natural open landscapes. She indicated that 40% of this site would become parkland and open space, which would include a 3G sports pitch for community use. This was in line with the Council's spatial strategy and Green Space Network.

The spatial strategy also identified 6 directions for growth, one of which was Bridge of Don where the AWPR, Third Don Crossing and Haudagain roundabout upgrades were highlighted as improvements which would benefit the area. This was linked to the identification of the Energetica Corridor which ran from Aberdeen to Peterhead and which looked to transform the area into a high quality lifestyle, leisure a global business location showcasing the latest energy and low carbon technology.

MS Farquharson-Black explained that Opportunity North East was leading the drive towards energy transition and the creation of a globally active energy supply chain and regional energy cluster. She believed this development provided a great opportunity for Aberdeen to take the lead in the decarbonisation of domestic heating, supported by Panasonic, a multi-national company with a track record in hydrogen fuel cells.

Ms Farquharson-Black indicated that the only policy with which this development conflicted with was Policy B1, Business and Industrial Land, as the land had been allocated for employment uses, however she felt that the current employment allocation shouldn't be seen as a barrier to residential led development at Cloverhill and to look at the development plan as a whole. Furthermore, she highlighted how the Council was reviewing the 2017 Local Development Plan allocations, which were based on the out of date 2014 strategic plan. The application site had been allocated for employment uses in successive plans for more than a decade without any interest being shown in its development for employment purposes. The Development Plan required 60 hectares of employment land to be available at all times and there were currently 223 hectares of

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effective employment land available in the city and another 60 or so hectares in the established supply. Ms Farquharson-Black intimated that the 10 year average annual take up of employment land in the city had been around 8 hectares, which meant that we currently had a 28 year supply of employment land in the city.

Ms Farquharson-Black explained that in monetary terms, this was a £100M development, which would create 115 construction jobs and 175 supply chain jobs per annum and would add £12.8M GVA per annum during construction. Once completed, it was anticipated that there would be 35 direct jobs and 15 supply chain jobs within the neighbourhood centre and 175 supported jobs from increased expenditure in the area. There would be £2.4M additional GVA per annum. Given the current economic climate, Ms Farquharson-Black advised that none of these benefits, physical or monetary, would materialise if the site remained zoned and undeveloped for business use for the next decade.

In regard to the proposed new junction, Ms Farquharson-Black explained that the attributes which led the Council to consider the site suitable for employment uses, made it suitable for housing. It was close to the strategic road network, which had been improved to allow more development to take place in the corridor. Further improvements would be brought forward to relevant junctions and the speed limit on the Ellon Road would be lowered to 40 miles per hour. A new pedestrian crossing would be installed at the entrance to the site. The site was well served by public transport into the city centre, there would be new stops on the Ellon Road at the access. Connections could be made via the railway and bus station to locations further afield.

Ms Farquharson-Black also explained that children from the development could be accommodated within the nearby schools, and there were safe walking routes available via the existing and proposed crossings. The entire site was within acceptable walking distance. During school crossing times, the speed limit would be further reduced to 20 mph, consistent with what happened near schools across the city.

In conclusion, Ms Farquharson-Black highlighted that this development accorded with the sustainable principles in Scottish Planning Policy in that it showed good design and the 6 qualities of successful places. It would deliver accessible housing, retail and leisure, which would include community and sports facilities which provide opportunities for health and wellbeing, social interaction, physical activity and access to the environment. There was also the necessary supporting infrastructure. It had considerable economic benefits and it supported climate change mitigation. Ms Farquharson-Black noted that she could think of no adverse effects which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of this development. The legal position was therefore that the balance was tilted in favour of departing from the current employment allocation and granting consent for this sustainable community of new homes, retail, sports and community facilities. It would be a development which fits with the Vision and Strategy of this Council, it fitted with the aims and objectives of Energetica, the Regional Economic Strategy and Opportunity North East. Finally it would position the

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city at the forefront of innovation in domestic energy supply, consistent with the region's diversification strategy and transition from oil and gas.

Members then asked questions of the applicant and the presenters and the following information was noted:-

- There had been tentative interest in the retail units;
- Electric vehicle charging point would be included in the site;
- There had been positive dialogues with First Bus in regards to buses going through the site;
- 5% of the housing would now be bungalow style following consultation comments; and
- A package of roads measures were proposed, with new bus stops on the A92 as part of the initial improvement.

The Committee was then addressed by **Mr Nick Glover**, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Aberdeeny City Council, who provided details on various aspects of the proposal and the noise impact. In relation to the wind turbines, Mr Glover advised that for the Vattenfall offshore wind development consent, an interim report had been received and suggested no negative noise impact was likely and therefore no noise impact assessment would be required for these wind turbines.

Mr Glover also explained that it was noted that in order to mitigate noise from the road traffic noise on the A92 to acceptable levels it was proposed that an acoustic barrier be installed.

The Committee was then addressed by **Mr Andrew Win**, Invest Aberdeen, who explained that Invest Aberdeen was the inward investment hub for Aberdeen City and Shire and it provided business support and guidance and was the point of contact for businesses, investors and developers seeking to invest in the North East of Scotland.

He advised that its key role was to support the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and Invest Aberdeen focuses on several key sectors, which include oil and gas, technology, digital, life sciences, food and drink and renewable and alternative energy.

Mr Win indicated that 51,000 of Scotland's energy jobs were based in Aberdeen city region and many of these were highly skilled jobs that formed part of global supply chains with the energy sector a major contributor to Scotland's and the UK economy.

Mr Win explained that in May 2019, the Committee on Climate Change recommended that the UK should aim to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and 2045 in Scotland. The energy industry could play a major role in delivering the UK's net-zero future, given the recognition by the Committee on Climate Change of the importance of oil and gas as part of a diverse energy mix in 2050 and beyond.

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Mr Win also highlighted that in 2015, the Regional Economic Strategy was published and it provided a vision and strategy for the future of the North East of Scotland's economy. It acted jointly as an economic strategy for the region and to ensure a long-term commitment to a range of priorities and objectives across partner organisations to maintain and grow the economy. He also indicated that in 2019, the Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report recognised the emerging opportunity and threat that net zero transition presented to the city region and recommended that the city developed a strategy that distinguished itself from other cities.

Mr Win also highlighted that as a City, Aberdeen had been investing in and delivering on diversification and energy transition for many years. The European Offshore Windfarm Demonstration Project was a joint venture between Aberdeen City Council and Vattenfall that generated enough power for 80,000 homes. The City also had its own hydrogen fuelled waste trucks, road sweepers, additional cars and vans which complement an existing fleet of 65 vehicles and supported refuelling infrastructure.

In relation to the Cloverhill application, Mr Win noted that the development sought to incorporate a new energy efficient, low carbon heating solution into a residential development through the Aberdeen Hydrogen First initiative. Invest Aberdeen was therefore supportive of this application, as the proposals sought to make investments in line with the Regional Economic Strategy which sought to grow and diversify the key energy sector, particularly the use of hydrogen for residential heating.

Mr Win advised that it was acknowledged that the micro-CHP fuel cell technology would utilise natural gas from the grid but would do so in a more energy efficient way than a conventional boiler and would introduce a new technology solution to Aberdeen and Scotland. This was seen as a step towards a full hydrogen fuel cell residential heating scheme and the pilot in Aberdeen would provide valuable data of how this technology works in the Scottish climate and what the "real world" energy efficiencies were and how they could be improved upon.

Mr Win concluded that it was anticipated that the project would also demonstrate opportunity for retrofitting to existing building stock and how it could also grow new training and apprenticeship opportunities for the installation, operation, monitoring and maintenance of the technology. He also noted it was particularly positive to see the integration of fuel cell technology into the first phase homes rather than this being later and demonstrated a willingness of the developer to deliver the pilot project, contributing to the wider objectives by supporting and delivering local solutions to meet local needs, linking local generation and use.

The Committee was then addressed from **Mr Laith Samarai**, Bridge of Don Community Council who explained that the Local Development Plan, approved by Council in 2017, was the result of consultation with a wide spectrum of stake holders, organisations and communities who all invested in this substantial process. The LDP already had allocated large areas for housing development, for example, the 7000 homes at Grandhome, the 400 homes at Woodside, 500 homes still to be constructed at Mugiemoor and in addition there were possibly up to another 810 at other locations in

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the Bridge of Don area. He also explained that there were plans in neighbouring Aberdeenshire for up an additional 500 at Blackdog/ Balmedie. He noted that it was their view that these developments and ongoing building programmes would see more than enough homes being built in or adjacent to the Bridge of Don area. Mr Samarai highlighted that the approved 2017 Local Development Plan would likely provide an adequate if not surplus of housing in the Bridge of Don area.

Mr Samarai went on to advise that in addition, the Community Council had a number of substantial reasons as to why the proposed development should be rejected and the concerns included, schools and safe routes to and from schools, public transport, provision of health facilities and services, roads and congestion and community facilities.

Mr Samarai highlighted that the Community Council did not feel reassured, that any of the Community facilities proposed as part of the development would actually be delivered.

In conclusion Mr Samarai indicated that the Community strongly objected to this application and believed that the existing use in terms of the approved Local Development Plan should remain, that being Business and Industrial Use.

The Committee then heard from **Mr David Windmill**, a local resident, who explained he and his wife along with their close neighbours, were likely to be the most directly affected by the proposed development as it surrounded their properties. He explained that they felt this development was a fantastic opportunity not just for them but for all of the Bridge of Don. He noted that currently the area lacked a lot of facilities, which had improved recently with the redevelopment of the local Murcar estate to add local shopping, however the lack of facilities ran far beyond a few shops.

Mr Windmill noted that their properties were on the boundary between town and country and their buildings, dated back a century. He advised that while this brought a sense of cultural heritage it also meant that they were cut off from many amenities. The developer, sought to not only update the area but to maintain the cultural identity and heritage of the existing area.

Mr Windmill explained that the addition of not only green spaces but community accessible sports facilities such as a playing pitch would give local children and groups places where they could exercise safely and improve their health. He also indicated that a community hall was needed to give the local community a place where they could come together and bond. The additional people along with the proposed shops would give a chance for small independent businesses to set up and to synergistically benefit from the larger chains nearby. The mixture of residential and local shopping was more in keeping with the tone of the area than the creation of further industrial units.

Mr Windmill also highlighted that the dual carriageway was being moved from Bear to Aberdeen Council jurisdiction and as part of that it would be getting a speed restriction. He advised that for the people who use the walking and cycling paths next to it this

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would be a great safety benefit and also meant that a development adjacent to it would not be affecting the traffic unduly.

He also indicated that the development proposed to create easier access not just for the development but also for the larger community area. Mr Windmill also advised that through local media they heard that the Bridge of Don community Council was opposed to the development however they had not consulted him, however the developer had been extremely responsive and proactive in involving them to ensure that their views were heard, represented and that they felt included and part of the community opportunity.

In conclusion, Mr Windmill advised that overall they felt this project would connect the community, bring green space, physical and mental health opportunities, bring more amenities and ensure that Bridge of Don continues to be a great place to live for the future.

The Committee was then addressed by **Mr Barry Park**, President of Bridge of Don Thistle Junior Football Club who explained that he was in full support of the application.

Mr Park advised that Bridge of Don Thistle Junior FC had never had a permanent home in its long history and in the last year they had doubled the number of young adults they worked with and could do so much more with their own bespoke facilities.

Mr Park explained how he attended a public consultation event and was pleasantly surprised and incredibly pleased by the reception they got from the developers, who he said could not have been more accommodating. The developers agreed to change their plans to include a proposed UEFA standard pitch and ancillary facilities within their development.

Mr Park advised that the proposed developer contributions of £660,000 would enable the club to build the pitches and further develop their grassroots approach to sport, help prosper and grow and widen their reach. He intimated that this money would allow them to apply for matched funding in the form of grants and sponsorships to develop a sports pavilion and other related features.

Mr Park also explained that the pitch would be available around 94% of the time, for the wider public to use, which would help to boost individual's activity levels, fitness and well-being.

Mr Park advises that the facilities would be a turning point for the club, which would help them to work with an even greater number of young people and engage with the wider community.

In conclusion Mr Park urged members to approve the application so that the club could get its long-awaited home and continue to grow and prosper, which would attract more young people to the club and provide local sports facilities which were sadly lacking the Bridge of Don area.

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The Committee was then addressed by **Mr John Smith**, Chairman of the Bridge of Don and District Men's Shed. Mr Smith explained that research had shown the negative impact of loneliness and isolation on a person's health and wellbeing and research showed that men typically found it more difficult to build social connections than women.

Mr Smith advised that the shed was about meeting like-minded people and having someone to share your worries with. They were about having fun, sharing skills and knowledge with like-minded people and gaining a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

Mr Smith gave examples of the good work they had undertaken, however noted that they were without a permanent home since its incorporation in 2017 and through early discussions with the developer, they had been offered the chance of a permanent base at Cloverhill. Mr Smith highlighted this as a fantastic opportunity for the Men's Shed.

Mr Smith also noted that through discussions with Bridge of Don Thistle Junior Football Club, he believed there were significant opportunities to expand the Shed's impact through joint endeavours with the club, which would give them the chance to involve younger people in shed activities and really enhance both organisations' positive impact on the local community.

In conclusion, Mr Smith highlighted they had searched for more than 2 years for a suitable permanent home and whilst he was not in a position to comment on the rights and wrongs of the planning application, he wanted to stress that the opportunity of a permanent home at Cloverhill would be massively beneficial and would really help them to be an asset to the Bridge of Don.

The Committee was then addressed by **Mr Rhys Gilson**, Panasonic, who explained that Panasonic not only manufactured day to day electrical items but also produced a hydrogen fuel cell which was the key component in micro CHP technology that could be used to power and heat homes. Mr Gilson advised that the product could lower household CO2 emissions by up to 30%, lower fossil fuel consumption by up to 40% and could save an average household up to £378 per year. The product was used extensively in Japan, with over 160,000 units installed and there were over 2,700 units in use across Europe with the major markets being Germany and Holland.

Mr Gilson advised that they saw the UK as a key market for this product and they had been actively promoting it in Aberdeen, which they saw as the ideal city to pilot this technology at scale, given its historic role as the Oil and Gas capital of Europe and its aspirations to be considered a centre of excellence in the Energy renewables field.

In addition, Mr Gilson also indicated that Aberdeen's early uptake of hydrogen technology, in terms of its hydrogen bus fleet and the combined heat and power plant at TECA, showed a willingness to adapt to the challenges of a changing energy market and to embrace the opportunities that brings.

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Mr Gilson indicated that the developers of Cloverhill were very enthusiastic about their product and once they explained their site's location in the Energetica corridor, he advised that it was clear that Cloverhill was the ideal location to run a pilot scheme to prove the technology in the UK.

In addition, Mr Gilson indicated that the developers of Cloverhill had offered business space to Panasonic, on a no-cost basis, to locate a fuel cell service centre at Cloverhill, and he confirmed that this opportunity had been discussed at board-level at Panasonic in Japan, with discussions on-going in that respect.

Mr Gilson advised that given Aberdeen's impressive track record in the energy industry, they saw it as the perfect city to introduce the product, at scale, to the UK. As a business, he highlighted they were looking for opportunities to sell their product, but they genuinely believed that there were many great benefits to be gained by Aberdeen, from being a trailblazer in the renewables market and further demonstrating its commitment to combat climate change and play a key role in the energy transition.

In conclusion Mr Gilson indicated that they would love to see Aberdeen grasp the opportunity to enhance its place in the renewables sector and be the first city in the UK to adopt this technology and he hoped that members would support the Cloverhill application.

The Committee then heard from **Mr Hamish Peterson**, who explained that he was the owner of Ironfield which was in the middle of the development area and he wished to confirm his support for the proposed development. He advised that when he purchased his property 40 years ago it was in a quiet rural setting and he considered then that as it was close to Aberdeen one day the city would expand and encroach the house with the loss of the rural setting.

Mr Peterson explained that he was very disappointed when the rezoning classified the area for commercial use meaning the house would be in an industrial estate. This event occurred at the same time as he was planning a major upgrade to the house and as a result he cancelled the upgrade and waited to see what would happen. Mr Peterson also indicated that the banking crises and other events had delayed any development and now post oil boom, he could not see the need for more industrial facilities and did not feel they would be required as the existing commercial properties throughout the city lay vacant or were being demolished.

Mr Peterson indicated that when he learned of the current proposal to develop the area for housing, he was excited and saw a better future for the area. Also, he explained that it addressed the demand for housing in the Bridge of Don area, which he felt outstripped the demand for commercial development. The proposed development was very well considered and had many very positive features, which included community facilities, affordable housing and open spaces. He advised that he felt it would be a very desirable place to live and this development would add to the quality of life in the area.

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Finally Mr Peterson indicated that he heard of objections on the grounds of increased traffic on the A92, however he found this notion fanciful as the A92 was probably the least congested of any of the Aberdeen access routes and the Cloverhill development would not in his view have a significant impact.

The Committee then heard from **Mr Lewis Kidd** who explained that until recently he had lived all of his life in Bridge of Don, however was unable to find a suitable property in the area and had been forced to move into the city centre. He advised that this was not ideal for him as he had to commute to work and to meet up with friends and family, as well as take part in sport in Bridge of Don.

Mr Kidd intimated that many of his friends, who also wished to live in Bridge of Don were being forced to look elsewhere for suitable homes. Mr Kidd was unsure why the local community council was against this development as he felt it was clear that there was a distinct lack of available and affordable homes in the area.

Mr Kidd outlined that Cloverhill presented an opportunity to add a range of house types and prices that would meet local demand, as well as offering new and much-needed community facilities. He noted that at present, the site was for business use but, with the many businesses already sited around the industrial parts of the Bridge of Don, it would make more sense to have this scenic, coastal pocket of land for new homes so that people who want to remain in the Bridge of Don could do so. Mr Kidd urged Councillors to consider what was best for residents and the overall community at the Bridge of Don and approve the application.

The Convener thanked all those who attended the hearing, specifically those who had presented their case, submitted representations and provided information. She advised that the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning would prepare a report for submission to a special meeting of Full Council for subsequent consideration and determination.

COUNCILLOR MARIE BOULTON, Convener

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