

## **LOCAL REVIEW BODY OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

ABERDEEN, 9 July 2025. Minute of Meeting of the LOCAL REVIEW BODY OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL. Present:- Councillor McRae, Chairperson; and Councillors Clark, Cooke and Copland.

The agenda, reports and recording associated with this meeting can be viewed [here](#).

### **SCOTSTOWN MOOR BASE, SHIELHILL ROAD ABERDEEN - 230969**

1. The Local Review Body (LRB) of Aberdeen City Council met on this day to consider a review of the decision taken by an appointed officer under the Council's Scheme of Delegation for the refusal of the application for Detailed Planning Permission for the redevelopment of vacant industrial site, including erection of four detached houses, associated garaging/ car parking, pedestrian access paths, infrastructure and open space at Scotstown Moor Base, Shielhill Road Aberdeen, planning reference number 230969.

Councillor McRae as Chair for the meeting, gave a brief outline of the business to be undertaken, advising that the LRB would be addressed by the Assistant Clerk, Mrs Lynsey McBain with regards to the procedure to be followed and thereafter, by Ms Lucy Greene who would be acting as the Planning Adviser to the Body in the following case under consideration this day.

The Chairperson stated that although the Planning Adviser was employed by the planning authority, she had not been involved in any way with the consideration or determination of the application under review and was present to provide factual information and guidance to the Body only. He emphasised that the officer would not be asked to express any view on the proposed application.

The Local Review Body was then addressed by Mrs McBain, Assistant Clerk in regard to the procedure to be followed, at which time reference was made to the procedure note circulated with the papers calling the meeting and to more general aspects relating to the procedure.

In relation to the application, the LRB had before it (1) a delegated report by the Appointed Officer, Aberdeen City Council; (2) an application dated 7 August 2023; (3) the decision notice dated 13 February 2025, (4) links to the plans showing the proposal and planning policies referred to in the draft delegated report; (5) the Notice of Review submitted by the applicant/agent; and (6) consultee correspondence from various consultees.

Ms Greene then described the site and outlined the appellant's proposal for detailed planning permission.

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Ms Greene advised that the site comprised a vacant warehouse /storage site located to the west of the Dubford residential development site. It contained two shed-like buildings of industrial appearance and associated single storey office building. The open storage yard area was surfaced with concrete and hardcore and was enclosed by chain-link fencing. The site was accessed from Shielhill Road. There were a number of young trees and scrub areas at the fringes of the site. There was a change in levels of around 5.5m across the site with ground levels rising up to the east and south. The south-west corner of the site and adjacent land to the west and south was designated as Scotstown Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS). This was a varied area largely comprising open moorland / rough grassland and limited woodland. The burn of Mundurno and associated marshland lay to the west of the site, across Shielhill Road. The land to the east was formed by an embankment and mounded area which formed part of the open space area of the adjacent Dubford housing development. The site lay in the catchment area of Greenbrae Primary School and Oldmachar Academy.

In term of the proposal, Ms Greene indicated that a total of 4 detached houses were proposed with associated garden ground, garaging, parking, access and landscape areas. The southern and eastern parts of the site would be excavated to form level garden ground, with gabion retaining walls formed to retain the adjacent sloping ground within the site. The houses would be largely 1½ storeys in height with the upper floor contained within the pitched roof slopes and lit by Velux windows. The larger houses would include pitched roofed gable projections. Ancillary toilet / utility areas would be incorporated in single storey flat roofed projections, including sedum roofs. Air source heat pumps and water butts would also be provided.

The pitched roofs would incorporate solar panels and the houses would include substantial glazing to public rooms on the south and west elevations. Materials would comprise a mix of natural stone basecourse, off white render and timber clad walls and slate clad roofs. They would have 4 or 5 bedrooms, study area and open plan lounge / kitchen / dining area. A 2m high acoustic fence is proposed between the housing and the public road. A public footpath was proposed extending along parts of the west edge of the site. A remote footpath with steps was shown extending outwith the north end of the site to link to an unadopted access path which lay within the Dubford housing development. A footpath link onto the Scotstown Moor path network to the south of the site was also shown.

Ms Greene indicated that the appointed officer's reasons for refusal was as follows:-

**01.Ecology Impact**

Due to the presence of protected species on and adjacent to the site, the nature of development and extent of groundworks / excavation, in the absence of a suitable survey and acceptable mitigation details or measures to avoid disturbance to protected species resulting from the development, the proposal was anticipated to have direct adverse effects on a Protected Species. Thus it had not been demonstrated that the development would accord with Policy 4 (Natural Places) part f) within National

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Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and Policy NE3 (Our Natural Heritage) within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP).

**02.Design / Overdevelopment**

As the proposed development would not relate well to the semi-rural context and its poor relationship to the public road, by reason of the proximity and orientation of the proposed detached buildings, the arrangement, positions and sizes of the houses, the prominence of proposed fencing and the location of the private gardens for Plots 1 and 4 next to Shielhill Road, it conflicted with the design quality aspirations of NPF4 Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) and ALDP Policies D1 (Quality Placemaking) and D4 (Landscape).

Ms Greene outlined the key points from the appellant's Notice of Review as follows:-

- The proposal reused a brownfield site as supported by Policy 9;
- The proposal would deliver housing in accordance with Policy 16 and LR1;
- It complied with the Housing Land Audit, which identified the site with capacity for 20 units;
- All development would be located on area zoned for housing, with no development in Green Belt;
- The species survey aligned with the guidelines and there was no need for further monitoring;
- Permission could be conditional on Species Protection Plan;
- The site was characterised by proximity to Dubford and the site was designed with vernacular approach.

In terms of Consultation response, Ms Greene advised that Environmental Health Team had no objection but suggested conditions be attached to any approval. Roads Development Management, SEPA and Scottish Water had no objection and no response was received from the local Community Council. The Environmental Policy Team noted the presence of protected species on and adjacent to the site, and indicated that the proposal was likely to have adverse effects on a European Protected Species and felt the proposed mitigation measures were unlikely to be effective.

In terms of procedure by which the review would be conducted, Ms Greene advised that the applicant had expressed the view that a site visit should take place before determination.

The Chairperson and Councillors Cooke, Copland and Clark, and all indicated in turn that they each had enough information before them and therefore agreed that the review under consideration should be determined without any further procedure.

In terms of relevant policy considerations, Ms Greene referred to the National Planning Framework 4 and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023.

Ms Greene responded to various questions from Members.

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Members each advised in turn and unanimously agreed to defer consideration of the application until such time that they receive a Species Protection Plan for badgers, that would be in line with NatureScot guidance.

- **COUNCILLOR MCRAE, Chairperson**