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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	13 September 2011
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	OP40 Kingswells Development Framework and Phase One Masterplan.
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/11/22

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Kingswells Business Park Development Framework and Phase One Masterplan, prepared as a guide for the future development of land identified as Opportunity Site OP40 in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP).
- 1.2 The OP40 Kingswells Development Framework and Phase One Masterplan (September 2011) is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link: [http://thezone/PI/SL\\_stratlead\\_reports.asp](http://thezone/PI/SL_stratlead_reports.asp)
- 1.3 A summary of the Development Framework is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. A hard copy of the Development Framework is available in the Members' Lounge or at the Main Reception of Marischal College.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- 2.2 Adopt the OP40 Kingswells Development Framework and Phase One Masterplan as interim planning advice and, pending Council approval for adoption of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, agree for officers to implement the process to ratify the framework as Supplementary Guidance by the Scottish Government.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report outwith normal officer time to evaluate the Development Framework and Masterplan. The developers have met the cost of preparation of the Development Framework and Masterplan including all consultation and engagement. The proposals will result in efficiencies in the determination of future planning applications related to the development framework and masterplan, leading to a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no known property, legal or equipment implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 The Development Framework and Masterplan reduce the risk of piecemeal and inappropriate development in the site area. Mixed use development and the efficient use of land will contribute towards the Council's aim of promoting sustainable development.
- 4.3 Approving the Development Framework will contribute to efficiencies in determining future planning applications. By encouraging acceptable forms and uses of new development to be agreed publicly, it allows more informed decision making to be made earlier, saving time and resources for staff, applicants and the public.
- 4.4 In accordance with the Proposed Local Development Plan, Appendix 4, The Proposed Action Programme and the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual, the Development Framework and Masterplan explicitly references how the development will address requirements for cumulative and local transport infrastructure; public transport along with walking and cycling.
- 4.5 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken on the Kingswells business park site as part of the preparation for the proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- 4.6 Proposal of application notices have been submitted for plots 1 and 2 of the Development Framework area. This has focused the consultation and helps to make the planning process transparent. Combining the consultation exercises for masterplanning and pre-application ensures that there is a joined up approach and consistency in the process.
- 4.7 Screening opinions for plots 1 and 2 have been submitted and it has been confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for either of the sites.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

### 5.1 Site Description

5.1.1 The site is located to the West of Kingswells on an area that has been identified within the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan, proposed plan as OP40 for 50ha of high quality business land suitable for company headquarters.

5.1.2 The Kingswells Park and Ride is located immediately to the east of the site and the A944 to the south. The proposed route of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route runs to the west of the site with one junction adjacent to the site and the other on the North of Kingswells.

5.1.3 Drum Property Group Ltd has assembled a multi-disciplinary design team to produce a Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan for OP40 Kingswells Business Park site.

### 5.2 Policy

5.2.1 The Kingswells Business Park Framework and Masterplan is intended to act as interim planning advice, pending Council approval for adoption of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5.2.2 The Development Framework and Masterplan has been prepared following the Council's adopted Aberdeen Masterplanning Process and contributes to the Scottish Government and Aberdeen Local Development Plan policy aims of raising design quality in new development, through the 6 key qualities of creating successful places, namely – distinctive, welcoming, safe and pleasant, adaptable, easy to get to and move around, and resource efficient.

5.2.3 The site is designated for development over the first two periods of the Proposed Local Development Plan (2007-2016 and 2017-2023). Two hundred and ninety seven representations related to this site have been received by the Council as part of the Local Development Plan consultation process. The largest number of comments received agree with the provision of employment land but raised concerns that the site is too large and disproportionate to the size of Kingswells. Other comments included support for the site, concern over impact of development on the consumption dyke, concern that the site is too sensitive for development, a suggested alternative boundary and the need to produce a development framework to inform the future planning of the site.

### Key Issues

### 5.3 Design Principles

5.3.1 The Development Framework sets out a clear vision for the business park: to “create a business park with an exemplary working environment where quality architecture is set in a landscape which both enhances the buildings themselves and provides the highest levels of amenity for all” and “to provide a sustainable, well integrated extension to Kingswells which includes essential high quality business accommodation and employment opportunities to enhance the economic growth of the wider City Region.”

5.3.2 The key objectives for the Development Framework are to:

- Create a landscape which reflects the rural character of this area of Aberdeen; relates to the surrounding area and takes its references from the natural heritage;
- Create settings for buildings which are sympathetic, balanced and mitigate their visual impact on the landscape;
- Create external environments which enhance the daily living experience;
- Create a high quality environment by the considered design of external features such as footpaths, street furniture, woodland belts and boundary walls;
- Provide multiple connections and maximum choices for people to use sustainable travel modes to travel to work, e.g. walk, cycle, or bus.

#### 5.4 Response to the Historic Environment

5.4.1 Full consideration has been given to the existing historic features on and adjacent to the site – Kingswells House - B listed building, Kingswells Consumption Dyke - Scheduled Ancient Monument and B listed building and the Ancient Woodland.

5.4.2 The character and setting of Kingswells house has been protected and the habitat connectivity afforded by the Ancient Woodland has been preserved and enhanced within the framework.

#### 5.5 Consumption Dyke

5.5.1 One of the main issues relating to the site is the outstanding objection from Historic Scotland to the Local Development Plan relating to the Consumption Dyke. The Development Framework has carefully considered the relationship of proposed development and the setting of the Consumption Dyke. On page 33 the Framework highlights that it is paramount the monument and its physical context is protected. An open space provision of approximately 120m has been safeguarded between the dyke and development to provide, protect and enhance its setting. This area will be preserved and may take the form of wild grasses with informal access. Building orientation perpendicular to the dyke, material selection and heights of buildings will also help mitigate

against any visual impact. The field boundaries are to be retained and enhanced with landscaping.

5.5.2 Although the results of the examination of the ALDP are as yet unknown, the development framework has been prepared to minimise the effect of development on the consumption dyke should the reporters be minded to support allocation of the OP40 site in full. Should the objection from Historic Scotland be upheld, the Phase One Masterplan has been designed to be capable of a “standalone” development, thereby reducing the risk of an undeliverable site.

## 5.6 Development and landscape strategy and framework

5.6.1 The site has been divided into 3 distinctive zones to enable integration with the surrounding landscape; these are the southern, central and northern zones. (p 26)

### 5.6.2 Southern Zone

The ALDP states that the OP40 site is suitable for company headquarters. The southern zone (adjacent to A944 and Park and Ride access) creates an opportunity for the development of a significant gateway building of this nature, particularly with its backdrop of mature trees and adjacent green space network. The extension of the mature landscaping will result in the formation of external rooms.

### 5.6.3 Central Zone

Existing development in this area includes Kingswells House and the Kingswells Park and Ride. Tree planting around these existing features contributes significantly to the landscape setting of the site. The proposal is to contain new buildings in this central zone in a similar way, producing development within tree lined ‘rooms’. This will ensure that new buildings and carparking are integrated within the landscape.

### 5.6.4 Northern Zone

Development in this zone must respect the consumption dyke and minimise any visual impact, given that this area is the highest part of the site. Orientation and heights of the buildings will be controlled and boundary treatments will be shelter planting along existing field boundaries with reintroduction of dry stone dykes. This will give the northern aspect a more rural feel and ensure a more successful integration with the surrounding fields.

## 5.7 Integration

5.7.1 Detailed consideration has been given to integrating the individual buildings and the overall development into the landscape. An extensive landscape framework has been developed complementing and enhancing existing landscaping. Development ‘rooms’ will be within the southern part of the site reflecting the existing structure around

Kingswells House. The area to the North of the site will reflect and enhance the existing field boundaries.

## 5.8 Connectivity and Circulation

5.8.1 The site is located adjacent to the Kingswells Park and Ride and offers strong sustainable transport links to the city centre and Bridge of Don. The site is located on the cycle network with a core path close by at Kingswells. The development considers it important to have a dedicated network of pedestrian and cycle routes through and to the site. (see p 36)

5.8.2 The site is also located adjacent to two junctions onto the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, making it easily accessible to other parts of the North East and beyond, one of the junctions is adjacent to the site and the other on the North of Kingswells.

5.8.3 Details of the Junction Strategy will be assessed and addressed through the Transport Assessment currently being produced, but two potential accesses have been indicated, one from the A944, combining the P+R access and the other from the Kingswells by-pass. The primary street within the site will run east / west and will be of a rural character. The secondary streets will provide access to and from the individual buildings plots (p37). Parking will be allocated to the rear and sides of the buildings to reduce any potentially adverse visual impact and encourage pedestrian activity between buildings.

## 5.9 Public spaces

5.9.1 The agricultural setting of the Kingswells Consumption Dyke will be retained and restored with public access to it. The pedestrian/cycle network through the site will take the form of linear parks and linkages. Two main public squares are proposed at the hub (east) and west of the site. Significant landscaping around individual buildings is also planned to help with integration and ensure a high quality environment across the whole site. Further details on these points can be seen on page 39 of the Framework.

## 5.9.2 Development rooms and development clusters

The layout, derived from existing features, shows development “rooms” of varying size contained within the original field patterns and woodland planting. These “rooms” vary in terms of building sizes and heights depending on their location within the overall site. Buildings within the southern and central zones will be contained in a setting of existing mature woodland below the level of the highest part of the site. (see p40)

5.9.3 By designing development clusters, as shown on page 41, external spaces can be maximised and the opportunities for creative rural landscaping enhanced.

#### 5.10 Building height

The Framework highlights the fact that the varying topography of the site needs to be reflected in the varying heights of the proposed buildings. The southern section (Adjacent to A944) could accommodate a 4 storey building of approximately 16metres, the central area occupying the southern slope could accommodate 3 storey buildings of approximately 12 metres and the Northern area should be limited to 2 storey buildings of approximately 8 metres in height. This will ensure the buildings are sensitive to their surroundings. These heights can clearly be seen on page 42 of the Framework.

#### 5.11 Opportunities

The development framework identifies a number of issues that will be addressed:

- Existing and historic field pattern delineated with drystone walling;
- Existing tree structure;
- Proximity to the park and ride;
- Positive connections to Kingswells in the wider footpath and cycle route;
- Existing cycle route adjacent to the site;
- Future AWPR junctions;
- Encourage a better understanding of the history of Kingswells Consumption dyke.

The overhead power lines, proximity to the scheduled consumption dyke and B listed building, location of the Den Burn and Green Space Network and the sloping nature of the site were all identified as constraints, however it is noted that many of these once analysed also offer opportunities.

#### 5.12 Phase One

The plot adjacent to the A944, if developed for a single building, can accommodate a four storey structure. The building should however be located toward the western end of the site where the existing mature tree belts will provide an appropriately scaled setting. Other sites within Phase One should be limited to three-storey. The section of the framework covering phase one (from p46) includes details of layout, parking, foyer spaces, pathways, roads, along with building form and materials.

#### 5.13 Sustainability

A number of sustainability measures have been incorporated into the

buildings and landscaping in terms of energy management, waste management, communities and ecology and biodiversity.

#### 5.14 Community Consultation

The masterplan process has involved local people and stakeholders in the design and development process. The consultation has been carried out following best practice guidance as set out in Planning Advice Note 81, Community Engagement and Aberdeen City Council's Guidelines for Community Engagement.

A number of meetings and events were held:

- 24 November 2009 and then 10 May 2010 previous owner gauged opinion on the views on developing the site in principle.
- 5 August 2010 meeting to update progress to community council
- 10 August 2010 site meeting to walk the line of the consumption dyke with the community council, discuss how dyke can be protected
- 25 October 2010 update presentation and meeting with the community council
- 1 November 2010 meeting to discuss previous points raised with community council
- 16 November 2010 meeting to discuss approach to the representation to the Local Development Plan with community council
- 1 June 2011 meeting to discuss with community council the approach to the Development Framework and agree the publicity for the public event
- 30 June 2011 Public event 16:30 – 20:30 Kingswells primary school – Involve the local community in developing detailed proposals for Phase one register shows 35 attendees
- 18 July 2011 meeting with Community Council to discuss comments received at the public event
- Website – A public website was launched from 20 July – 15 August 2011, 7 online responses were received and focused mainly on those issues raised at the event on 30 June 2011.

<b>Key points raised</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<p>Accessibility and Traffic</p> <p>Concern about the ability of the local road to accommodate the development (Particularly A944)</p> <p>AWPR positive to the potential impact</p> <p>Park and ride should be</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that there is likely to be an increase to traffic and congestion and as such the details need to be considered via a transport assessment. It is also acknowledged that the AWPR should be in place prior to implementation of any of the later phases of the business park.</p>



promoted by the businesses.	Studies have been undertaken at local level to identify improvements to the area to mitigate any immediate impacts from Phase One. A green travel plan will be produced to ensure future employees utilise sustainable transport.
Community Facilities  Lack of local facilities at present, these could be provided in the hub area – 75% of respondents agree that the development could provide facilities. Not too far to travel to the Westhill facilities.	It is considered that providing a hub of this type would link the Business Park development to Kingswells and provide the benefits that are lacking for the existing community. The hub would be located to the east of the site, in close proximity to existing development.
Design Approach  Pleased with the proposed high quality design but the standards must remain high and encouraged by the masterplanning process. Consider renewable heat and power provision.	Ensuring that the high quality design continues throughout the whole site is essential and one of the main objectives of the Framework.
Other	
Concerns were raised about the scale, traffic, potential for the industrial nature of the site and the potential visual impact.	The Transport Strategy is to be further evolved to ensure these concerns are alleviated.
Reiterate the importance of visual impact and the desire for greater access to the consumption dyke and woodland.	This point was agreed and has been considered within the Framework.
Integration with Park and Ride and links to Kingswells identified as important.	Acknowledged that this is an important feature.
Query about the retention of pylons and note the ecological potential of the site.	The developer proposes to underground the pylons within the site. .

## 5.15 Phasing

Page 67 of the Development Framework demonstrates phasing of the site. It is important to note that phase 2 will include the community hub area. Infrastructure Delivery is covered on page 68 of the Development Framework and gives detail on how the proposed

Aberdeen Local Development Plan emerging policies, Supplementary Guidance and Action Programme will be addressed.

## 6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The framework includes improved access to cycle and walking provision, links through to Kingswells and the Park and Ride to provide more sustainable travel options in line with Community Planning aspirations.
- 6.2 The framework contributes to the following Single Outcome Priorities: 1 – We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe; 2. we realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people; 10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need; 12 – We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations.
- 6.3 The proposal contributes to the 5 year Business Plan in terms of working with our partners to attract visitors, workers and investment to protect the economic future of the city, encouraging the growth of local businesses through support of existing business sectors and development of new sectors and facilitating new development projects to improve Aberdeen's living and working environment.
- 6.4 The proposal is consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan in particular delivering high levels of design from all development, maintaining an up-to-date planning framework, sustainable development and open space provision.
- 6.5 The proposal is consistent with the Planning and Sustainable Development Service plan, in particular engaging the community in the planning process, and the delivery of masterplans/development frameworks in line with the Aberdeen Masterplanning Process.
- 6.6 An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been prepared. In summary, many of the aims of the proposal will have positive benefits, including;
- General – improved access to the development site via new footpaths, cycleways and adjacent park and ride and would be integrated into the existing community of Kingswells.
  - Disability – disabled access and parking will be provided throughout the development.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 **OP40 – Kingswells** Development Framework and Phase One Masterplan Report  
[http://thezone/PI/SL\\_stratlead\\_reports.asp](http://thezone/PI/SL_stratlead_reports.asp)
- 7.2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan September 2010  
[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla\\_local\\_development\\_plan.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla_local_development_plan.asp)
- 7.3 Aberdeen Local Plan: June 2008  
[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla\\_LocalPlan\\_home.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_LocalPlan_home.asp)
- 7.4 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process 2008 (article 22, Planning Committee Minute, 6/11/08)  
[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla\\_planningbriefs.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_planningbriefs.asp)

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