

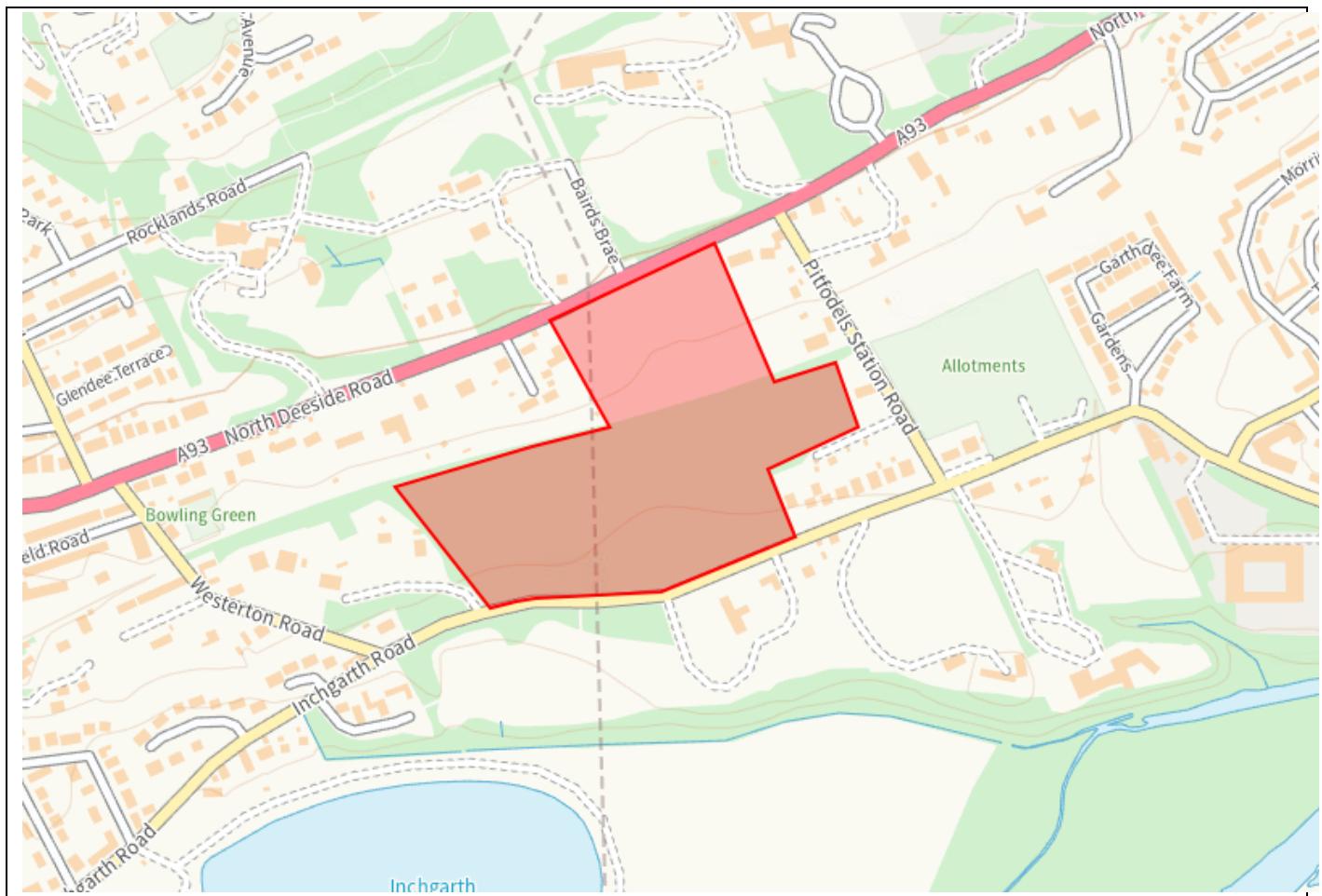


## Planning Development Management Committee

Report by Development Management Manager

**Committee Date:** 12 February 2026

<b>Site Address:</b>	Land At Inchgarth Road, Pitfodels, Cults, Aberdeen
<b>Application Description:</b>	Residential development of 103 units, including development of link road and road bridge, engineering works, associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping
<b>Application Ref:</b>	251313/DPP
<b>Application Type</b>	Detailed Planning Permission
<b>Application Date:</b>	4 December 2025
<b>Applicant:</b>	Cala Management Ltd
<b>Ward:</b>	Lower Deeside
<b>Community Council:</b>	Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber



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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report considers if the application for detailed planning permission 251313/DPP should have its statutory pre-determination hearing held at:

- A special meeting of the Planning Development Management Committee and the application thereafter be determined by the Planning Development Management Committee on a future date within the committee schedule; or
- A Full Council meeting and the application thereafter be determined at Full Council on a future date.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee:

- Note the contents of the report; and
- Agree that the application be the subject of a statutory pre-determination hearing by a special meeting of the Planning Development Management Committee and that the application is then determined at a subsequent scheduled Planning Development Management Committee meeting.

## **BACKGROUND**

A report to the meeting of the Planning Development Management Committee (PDMC) on 30 April 2020 (Report no. GOV/20/087) set out the process to be followed for reporting to this Committee and referral to Full Council where the relevant criteria for Pre-Determination Hearings are triggered. The recommendations of that report were agreed by the Committee.

## **APPLICATION BACKGROUND**

### **Site Description**

The site subject to this proposal comprises an area of 10.6 hectares within the green belt and the Pitfodels Conservation Area, broadly separating the established residential areas of Garthdee and Cults.

The site is on the northern side of the Lower Deeside Dee valley and slopes down from north to south towards the River Dee, which is located approximately 500m to the south. It is bisected by the Deeside Old Railway Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) and the Deeside Way (Core Path Number 66). The defined boundary of the River Dee Special Area of Conservation is, at its closest, approximately 300m to the southeast. The River Dee Corridor LNCS is approximately 130m to the south. North Deeside Road (A93) and Inchgarth Road bound the northern and southern extremities of the site respectively. The residential curtilage of low-density detached dwelling-houses within large residential plots bound the site to the west and east.

The site mainly consists of former fields that have largely become self-seeded with plants and woodland and is primarily identified as open space in the Open Space Audit 2024. The site represents a significant proportion of the green belt in this part of Aberdeen City.

A large proportion of the open space within the site is also included in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 as Green Space Network, primarily as undeveloped natural / semi-natural open space of open ground and woodland. There are several informal recreational paths within the open spaces and historic granite boundary walls. An overhead power line crosses the site from the north to the south, and a pylon is located at the western edge of the site near the Deeside Way. There are mature trees throughout the site visible from a range of public areas within and around the site. All these trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) 8, 21 and 237. An area to the south of the site is included within the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The nearest listed buildings are the category C listed (former) Pitfodels Station Building, which is approximately 20m outside the application boundary on the northern side of the Deeside Way. The boundary walls of the category C listed Inchgarth House lie to the south of the site, on the opposite side of Inchgarth Road. The entire application site is located within the Pitfodels Conservation Area. The following historic assets lie within the site boundary: part of the former Pitfodels Railway Station infrastructure (Historic Environment Record Reference (HER) NJ90SW0075); boundary stone (HER NJ90SW0171); milestone (HER NJ90SW0135), and war memorial (HER NJ90SW0891). The Pitfodels Castle Motte (HER NJ90SW1) is approximately 300 m to the south-east.

## Relevant Planning History

- 181224/PPP – Planning permission in principle for a residential led development for the retired/elderly (including affordable housing), a 50-bedroom care home and approximately 500sqm of ancillary retail/community use, together with public open space and associated infrastructure including a link road was approved by the PDMC on 30 April 2020, subject to a legal agreement. The legal agreement places a restriction that the housing units can only be occupied by persons aged fifty-five or older; that no housing units can be occupied unless the link road, open space and community facilities are first completed and are capable of use by the community, and contains other planning obligations. The legal agreement was subsequently signed, and the decision notice was issued on 24 March 2023. The planning permission has not been implemented but remains valid until 23 March 2028. No matters specified in conditions applications pursuant to this planning permission in principle have been received.
- 241327/TPO – An application to carry out work to protected trees on the site within 5 m of the Craigton Road to Baird's Brae overhead power line that runs through the site was granted consent under delegated powers on 2 December 2024. The consented works to the trees on the site solely concerned the reduction in heights of trees, and no felling.
- 250723/PAN – A proposal of application notice was received for a major residential development with associated open space, landscaping, infrastructure including link road and engineering works (pre-empting the submission of application reference 251313/DPP) on 8 July 2025. The planning authority issued its response regarding the further consultation required on 23 July 2025. Further information regarding its statutory pre-application consultation is set out in this report under the Pre-Application Consultation heading.
- 250744/ESC – A request was made to the planning authority to adopt a screening opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 to determine whether the proposed development (that is now the subject of application reference 251313/DPP) required an environmental impact assessment (known as an EIA Development). A screening opinion was adopted by the planning authority under delegated powers on 30 July 2025, which confirmed that the development is an EIA Development.

- 250936/ESP – A request was made to the planning authority on 29 August 2025 to adopt a scoping opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (regarding the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in the EIA report). A scoping opinion was adopted by the planning authority under delegated powers on 9 October 2025. The scoping opinion requires the EIA for this development (that is now the subject of application reference 251313/DPP) to include a study of reasonable alternatives to this specific residential development; and chapters on climate and lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions; population and human health; biodiversity, protected species and habitats, trees, cultural heritage and landscape and visual impact.

## **APPLICATION DESCRIPTION**

### **Description of Proposal**

Detailed Planning Permission is sought for a residential development of 103 units, including development of link road and road bridge, engineering works, associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping.

The development is categorised as a major development. It is also an EIA Development, and an EIA has been submitted with the application as required by scoping opinion 250936/ESP.

The proposed link road would run north-south through the site connecting Inchgarth Road and North Deeside Road. Due to the slope of the site, engineering works would involve land cutting and filling to create suitable levels for development. A road bridge would be constructed over the Deeside Way. A car park and path connection to the Deeside Way is proposed to the west of the proposed link road.

All residential streets and dwellings would be located to the east of the proposed link road. The proposed residential streets would be divided by the Deeside Way. There would be a residential street to the north of the Deeside Way accessed from the link road. The remainder of the residential streets would be to the south of the Deeside Way, all of which would be accessed by the link road apart from a row of dwellings, which would front Inchgarth Road to the south.

The majority of the dwellinghouses proposed are two storey detached properties, although 14 comprise semi-detached or terraced properties. 26 units of the total housing proposed is to be affordable, in the form of terraced houses and cottage flats. Drainage basins would be located at the south of the site and a significant number of the protected trees on the site would be felled for the development. Woodland and open space in the western part of the site and the SSEN transmission power line would remain.

### **Supporting Documents**

All drawings and supporting documents listed below can be viewed on the Council's website at:

<https://publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=T6G4KKBZH5Q00>

- Cover Letter
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Design and Access Statement Part 1

- Design and Access Statement Part 2
- Development Accommodation Schedule
- Drainage Assessment
- Environmental Impact Assessment
  - Chapters 1-4 – Introduction - Site and Location - Proposal - Legislative Context
  - Chapters 5-7 – Screening and Scoping - Consultation - Policy Context
  - Chapter 8 – Assessment of Visual Receptors
  - Chapter 9
    - Appendix 9.1 Tree Assessment Survey
    - Appendix 9.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report
    - Appendix 9.7 Tree Survey
    - Appendix 9.8 Biodiversity Action Plan
  - Chapter 10 – Cultural Heritage
    - Appendix 10.1 Extract from Previous Environmental Report
  - Chapter 11 – Climate Change
    - Appendix 11.1 Whole Life Carbon Assessment
  - Chapter 12 – Population and Health (Health Impact Assessment)
  - Chapter 13 – Summary and Conclusion
- Environmental Impact Assessment Non-Technical Summary
- Housetype Schedule
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Planning Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
  - Appendix 1-9
  - Appendix 10-12
- Transport Assessment
- Written Scheme of Investigation (Archaeological Evaluation)

## Pre-Application Consultation

As required by the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021, the applicant undertook statutory pre-application consultation which included two public exhibitions. These were held on 5 August 2025 and 1 September 2025 at the Marcliffe at Pitfodels Hotel between 3pm and 7pm. Information on the proposed development and associated public consultation events were advertised in the Press and Journal seven days in advance. A copy of the Proposal of Application Notice was sent to Cults Community Council, Garthdee Community Council and Braeside and Mannofield Community Council and councillors of the Lower Deeside Ward. These parties were also notified of the public consultation events. A website was created which included [details of the proposed development](#) and the consultation events. As agreed with the planning authority, targeted mailshot was also undertaken with the residential properties in the surrounding area based on the specific postcodes and street addresses surrounding the site; direct electronic communication was issued which encouraged feedback with Garthdee Field Allotments Association, Robert Gordon University, Scottish Water, Sustrans and Aberdeen Cycle Forum. A poster drop regarding the public exhibitions and details of the website was also undertaken in businesses and community facilities in the wider area.

The applicant presented to the Council's Pre-Application Forum on 25 September 2025.

This application is accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation Report, which is a requirement of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 for all applications for major development.

## **Requirement for a Pre-Determination Hearing**

The proposed development is categorised as a major development in The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Development) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The proposal is considered to be a significant departure from the development plan by virtue of it being a major residential development within the green belt (zoned as such as Policy NE1 (Green Belt) in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023) and green space network (zoned as such as Policy NE2 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023).

Policy NE1 (Green Belt) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 has a general presumption against new residential development apart from one-for-one replacement dwellings. The development does not fall within any of the categories of development types listed in Policy 8 (Green Belts) of National Planning Framework 4 as being acceptable in the green belt. Therefore, the proposal for a major development of 103 residential units is significantly contrary to Policy NE1 (Green Belt) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. The proposed development would also erode the character and function of an area of Green Space Network, contrary to Policy NE2 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) of the ALDP.

Under Regulation 27 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 there is a requirement to hold a Pre-determination Hearing before such applications may be determined. The purpose of pre-determination hearings is to allow the views of applicants and those who have made representations to be heard before a planning decision is taken.

An agreed report to the meeting of the PDMC on 30 April 2020 (Report no. GOV/20/087) set out the process to be followed for reporting to this Committee and referral to Full Council where the relevant criteria for pre-determination hearings are triggered. It is therefore for the PDMC to decide whether the hearing and subsequent determination of this application are conducted in front of PDMC, or whether there are any particular issues that would warrant referral to Full Council in this instance.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

A full list of consultations and their responses will be outlined in the subsequent Pre-Determination Hearing Report and Committee/Full Council Report.

### **Aberdeen City Council (ACC) Internal Consultees**

- ACC - Developer Obligations Team
- ACC - Environmental Health
- ACC - Environmental Services
- ACC - Housing Strategy
- ACC - Land and Property Assets
- ACC - Local Development Plan Team
- ACC - Masterplan, Design and Conservation Team
- ACC - Climate and Environment Policy Service
- ACC - Roads Development Management Team
- ACC - Schools Estates Team
- ACC - Structures, Flooding and Coastal Engineering
- ACC - Waste and Recycling
- Archaeology Service (Aberdeenshire Council)

## **External Consultees**

- Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council
- Braeside and Mannofield Community Council (adjacent ward)
- Garthdee Community Council (adjacent ward)
- Disability Equity Partnership
- Dee District Salmon Fishery Board
- Health And Safety Executive
- Historic Environment Scotland
- NatureScot
- NHS Grampian
- North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
- Police Scotland
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland
- Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Water

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

The period for receiving timeous representations for this planning application ended on 19 January 2026 and details of all comments received will be outlined in the subsequent Pre-Determination Hearing Report and Committee/Full Council Report. However, 2181 representations have been received (1669 objections, 505 in support and 7 neutral).

## **MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Legislative Requirements**

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that where making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the development plan; and, that any determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 requires the planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### **Development Plan**

#### National Planning Framework 4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the long-term spatial strategy for Scotland and contains a comprehensive set of national planning policies that form part of the statutory development plan.

- Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises)
- Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation)
- Policy 3 (Biodiversity)
- Policy 4 (Natural Places)
- Policy 5 (Soils)
- Policy 6 (Forestry, Woodland and Trees)
- Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places)
- Policy 8 (Green Belts)
- Policy 11 (Energy)
- Policy 12 (Zero Waste)
- Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport)
- Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place)
- Policy 15 (Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods)
- Policy 16 (Quality Homes)
- Policy 18 (Infrastructure First)
- Policy 20 (Blue and Green Infrastructure)
- Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport)
- Policy 22 (Flood Risk and Water Management)
- Policy 23 (Health and Safety)
- Policy 24 (Digital Infrastructure)

### Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

- Policy C11 (Digital Infrastructure)
- Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking)
- Policy D2 (Amenity)
- Policy D3 (Density)
- Policy D4 (Landscape)
- Policy D5 (Landscape Design)
- Policy D6 (Historic Environment)
- Policy D7 (Our Granite Heritage)
- Policy H3 (Density)
- Policy H4 (Housing Mix and Need)
- Policy H5 (Affordable Housing)
- Policy I1 (Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations)
- Policy NE1 (Green Belt)
- Policy NE2 (Green and Blue Infrastructure)
- Policy NE3 (Our Natural Heritage)
- Policy NE4 (Our Water Environment)
- Policy NE5 (Trees and Woodland)
- Policy R2 (Degraded and Contaminated Land)
- Policy R5 (Waste Management Requirements for New Developments)
- Policy R6 (Low and Zero Carbon Buildings and Water Efficiency)
- Policy T2 (Sustainable Transport)
- Policy T3 (Parking)
- Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments)
- Policy WB2 (Air Quality)

- Policy WB3 (Noise)

## **Aberdeen Planning Guidance**

- Affordable and Specialist Housing
- Air Quality
- Amenity and Space Standards
- Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality
- Materials
- Natural Heritage
- Noise
- Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- Outdoor Access
- Planning Obligations
- Resources for New Development
- Transport and Accessibility
- Trees and Woodlands
- Waste Management Requirements for New Development

## **Other National Policy and Guidance**

- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland
- NPF4 Planning Guidance: Policy 2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

## **Other Material Considerations**

- Pitfodels Conservation Area Character Appraisal

## **DISCUSSION**

The PDMC can opt to determine the application itself, or to refer the matter to Full Council. The agreed procedures require this report to make a recommendation. It is suggested that the relevant factors for consideration are whether the development proposal would have city wide impacts, taking into account:

- The level of representation attracted by the application;
- The scale of development proposed;
- The nature and extent of the resultant departure from the development plan.

In terms of the number of representations, the application has been the subject of 2181 representations, 1669 (c.76.5%) of which are objections and 505 (c.23.2%) of which are in support. The level of representation is considered to be exceptionally high for a development of this scale. A very large majority of the representations that have been received are objections.

The three local community councils within close proximity of this site have objected to this application. This includes Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council (which covers the area within which this site falls), Braeside and Mannofield Community Council (the boundary of which bounds the site to the north and east) and the Garthdee Community Council (the boundary of which bounds the site to the east and south).

With regard to the nature of the departure from the development plan, the proposed development is a significant departure from the development plan in that it would be a major development of 103 dwellings within the green belt (zoned as such as Policy NE1 (Green Belt) in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023) and green space network (zoned as such as Policy NE2 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. The site performs an important role in maintaining a separation of the settlements of Cults, Braeside and Mannofield and Garthdee. The site covers a substantial area centrally within the Pitfodels Conservation area. All trees on the site are protected. As such, the development of 103 dwellings on this site would be a significant departure from the development plan, with the scale of development in this local context being such that it would contribute to the coalescence of the surrounding settlements as well as changing the character and appearance of the Pitfodels Conservation Area.

In terms of the scale of the proposal, at 103 units, the application is a major development in terms of The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 as it exceeds 50 units. However, the number is not high enough to have a strategic impact on city or regional-wide housing need and demand by any significant degree. The proposed link road and bridge over the Deeside Way does not form part of any adopted or proposed regional or local transport strategy. The development would be a significant departure from the development plan and the application has been the subject of a high number of public representation, including objections from three local Community Councils. It is however considered that the significant impacts resulting from the development would be localised and would not have a strategic regional or city-wide impact.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Taking into account the foregoing, the recommendation is that the Planning Development Management Committee is equipped to provide the necessary public scrutiny via a statutory Pre-Determination Hearing and determination of the application thereafter, and that referral to Full Council would not be necessary in this instance.

## **NEXT STEPS**

A hearing will be arranged in accordance with the Committee's instructions, subject to there being interest in attending from those who have made representation in relation to the application. Following any hearing, a report will be prepared by officers for Full Council or Planning Development Management Committee (in accordance with the Committee's instruction). This will include an assessment of the proposed development and make a recommendation to members regarding the determination of the application.