

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	31 January 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Dubford Development Framework
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/012

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Dubford Development Framework, prepared as a guide for the future development of land identified as Opportunity Site OP25 in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP).
- 1.2 The Development Framework has been produced by Michael Gilmore Associates and Urban Design Associates on behalf of Scotia Homes and aims to produce a mixed tenure sustainable urban community, featuring a mix of house types and including some local retail and community uses, to the north of Denmore (Bridge of Don).
- 1.3 A summary document of the Development Framework is attached to this Committee Report. The full Development Framework for Dubford (January 2012) is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning
- 1.4 A hard copy of the Development Framework is available in the Members' Library or within the Planning and Sustainable Development department at Ground Floor North, Marischal College.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Approve the Dubford Development Framework 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. The developers have met the cost of preparation of the Development Framework including all consultation and engagement work. 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.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no known property, legal or equipment implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 The Development Framework reduces 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 The Development Framework seeks to contribute towards a higher rate of new house building in the City, including 25% affordable housing provision in accordance with the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- 4.5 In accordance with the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, Appendix 4, the Proposed Action Programme and the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual, the Development Framework references how the development will seek to address requirements for cumulative and local transport infrastructure; public transport along with walking and cycling.
- 4.6 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken on the Dubford site as part of the preparation for the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

Site Description

- 5.1 The site is located in the North of the city; north to the Denmore neighbourhood (Bridge of Don). The site slopes from west down to the east, and exhibits some steep areas which have been identified as unsuitable for development and to remain as open space. The site is

bounded to the west by Perwinnes Moss/Scotstown Moor, to the east by Denmore/Murcar Industrial Estate, to the south by housing of Denmore community, and to the north by Shielhill Road.

- 5.2 Scotia Homes have appointed a multi disciplinary team to produce a development framework for the Dubford site, including the following:

UDA – Architects and Urban Designers

Michael Gilmour Associates – Architects and Project Managers

La Quatra Bonci Associates – Landscape Architects

Cameron & Ross – Civil and Structural Engineers

WSP - Transportation

Northern Ecological Services – Ecological Consultants

David Wilson Associates – Landscape and Visual Impact Consultants

Policy Summary

- 5.3 The development framework has been prepared following the Council's adopted Aberdeen Masterplanning Process and contributes towards the Scottish Government policy aims of raising design quality 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.
- 5.4 The Dubford site is allocated in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan as Opportunity Site OP25 for 550 homes; it states that the site should be masterplanned with possible provision for a new secondary school/capacity, and health provision. The site covers 42.3ha.
- 5.5 This proposal helps bring forward land for development in the early phases of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and help meet the targets and objectives in the Structure Plan, including that development should generally be no less than 30 dwellings per hectare as an average across the whole site.
- 5.6 The Dubford Development Framework is intended to act as interim planning advice, pending formal adoption of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Key Issues

- 5.7 **Housing** – the proposals for Dubford include a full range of housing types and sizes. Scotia Homes will work with the Council and the registered social landlords to provide the required level of **affordable housing** in accordance with the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan – being no less than 25% of the total number of units.

- 5.8 **Community Facilities** – development at Dubford aims to create a mix of uses, including where possible providing appropriate shopping, services, and employment uses with each phase of development. The detail of any potential uses will be confirmed during the planning application, but will be appropriate for the site.
- 5.9 **Education provision** – the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Proposed Action Programme indicates that with some rezoning Scotstown and Greenbrae Primary Schools should be able to accommodate new development. However, any specific requirements must be considered alongside other development options in the Bridge of Don, and through detailed discussions with the Council’s Education Department and Planning Gain Officer.
- 5.10 **Transportation** – A Transportation Assessment (TA) is required to support any future planning application which examines the current and future transport matters associated with the proposed development. This TA is currently being carried out by WSP in consultation with the Roads Authority and Transport Scotland. Through these discussions so far, the following has been requested:-
- The development must comply with ‘Designing Streets’.
 - A minimum of 2 access points should be provided onto Sheilhill Road.
 - If access is to be provided onto the B999 through the adjoining land, only one access will be permitted.
 - The junction at Sheilhill Road and B999 requires to be upgraded. A financial contribution will be made for the creation of new intersection at junction, and through agreement with the Roads Authority.
 - Access and connection to Dubford Road requires to be restricted to public transport, refuse vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians only. Vehicular access would be prohibited through the use of electric bollards/bus gate or similar form of barrier system as agreed by the Council.
 - The development will be designed to accommodate an extension of the bus facility which is currently located at Dubford Road, via a looped system. This agrees with the ALDP: Proposed Action Plan Infrastructure Requirements, which states that a bus route from OP25 Dubford through Denmore with frequent public transport to serve the whole area, which may include extensions to existing services.
- 5.11 **Health care provision** – the Dubford site is within Masterplan Zone 1, where the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan indicates that specific health provision will be required (below). The developer will undertake discussions with NHS Grampian to assess the impact of the development and to agree appropriate mitigation measures required.

- Extension to Oldmachar Medical Practice at Jesmond Road by 2 GP's to support the General Medical Services.
- Extension at Bridge of Don Clinic at Cairnfold Road to support General Dental Services of 1 additional dental chair.
- Additional Community Pharmacy (including land) to support the additional patients.

5.12 **Environmental** – an Environmental Screening Opinion was issued on 10 November 2011 (Ref: P111564) which stated that the proposed development does not require a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). However, the development would need to provide a series of additional technical reports/studies to support any future planning application – see section 5.17 below.

Protected species surveys will be carried out in support of any future planning application to establish the status of otters, bats, badgers, water vole and red squirrels on the site, and provide a sound basis for any for any appropriate mitigation or enhancement measures.

5.13 **Open Space** – the development at Dubford proposes to enhance and preserve existing natural features to provide buffers, and wedges of green throughout the development. It aims to create community parks, play areas, cycle and pedestrian routes, a 'village green' area, provide for allotment gardens, and, use slopes to provide terraces/overlooks and view corridors. All proposals shall be in accordance with Policy NE4: Open Space Provision in New Development, of the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan. This states the requirement of at least 2.8 hectares per 1,000 people of meaningful open space.

5.14 **Drainage and Flooding** – the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency has raised concerns over some portions of the site with regard to flooding. This is identified on the 'Concept Development Framework Plan' in the summary document and on page 49/Appendix 06 in the full Framework. A **Flood Risk Assessment** will be required to support any future planning application for development at Dubford. The developers will work with SEPA with regard to flooding mitigation, and where possible opportunities to protect and improve the water environment.

The Development Framework integrates passive storm water management techniques by restoring burns, creating dedicated waterways and enhancing wetlands where possible. The specific design of **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems** (SUDS) measures will form an integral part of any future planning application's site layout and design to encourage biodiversity.

5.15 **Contamination** – it has been established through investigation into the history of the site that some quarrying work has taken place at various locations on the site. In addition an area to the North has been used for disposal of drill cuttings in landfill sites. Intrusive investigation of the ground conditions in these areas will require to be carried out and

according to best practice as detailed in BS10175, 'Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – A Code of Practice'. Contact and discussions will be made and ongoing with the Aberdeen City Council Contamination Land Unit regarding any conclusions and recommendations for the site.

5.16 Technical Reports and Surveys required to support planning application:

- Planning Statement
- Pre-application Consultation Report
- Design and Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Archaeological / Cultural Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Water Infrastructure Assessment
- Access / Transportation Assessment
- Air Quality Impact Assessment
- Sustainability Impact Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Contamination Site Investigation and Risk Assessment
- Education Impact Assessment
- Retail Impact Assessment

Design Principles

5.17 As stated in the policy summary (5.4 above) the Dubford Development Framework follows the key principles outlined in the Aberdeen Masterplanning Process. The framework promotes the principles of good urban design – including, a clear layout, maximising access opportunities, walkable communities, and defining key buildings/spaces.

5.18 There are 3 key **design principles** underlying the development framework for Dubford:

- 1 Responding to the land** – identifying site constraints leads to the creation of an open space framework where natural features, waterways and steep slopes are maintained and formalised into a connected network of parks and open space accessible by foot and cycle.
- 2 Connecting Communities** – after identifying developable land 'pockets' within the site, key connections are identified and strengthened, with pedestrian, cycle and public transport integral to the community. The street network is based on blocks that provide access and a range of servicing/parking uses.
- 3 Building Variety** – a variety of building types to attract a diverse community, which is more self-sustaining over time. This

includes a mix of uses such as recreation and local shopping opportunities to a full range of housing types.

Public Involvement

- 5.19 The Development Framework at Dubford has involved local people and stakeholders in the design and development processes. The consultation followed a predominantly 'Charrette' style format. A Design Charrette is an intensive, hands-on workshop that brings people from different disciplines and backgrounds together to explore design options for a particular area or site¹.
- 5.20 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.
- 5.21 Consultation on the potential of development at Dubford started in June 2009, and further consultation is planned as part of the planning application process.
- 5.22 The design team and developer have scheduled a **forthcoming public meeting**, with a provisional date of 8 February 2012 (venue and time still to be confirmed). The aim of this meeting is to engage with the local community and provide an opportunity for meaningful discussion on details of the site layout to inform future planning application stages.
- 5.23 The table below summaries the **public engagement events** to date:

Event/Date	Description
Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Development Options – Bridge of Don Open Evening <i>2 June 2009</i>	45 people attended including Community Council, Grampian Police, and Energetica representatives, and members of the public. Comments were provided on the various development options put forward for consideration in the Main Issues Report.
Design Team Stakeholders Consultation <i>June 2009</i>	Initial meetings held with members of the Community Council and Aberdeen City Council staff to collect data and discuss the key issues.
Masterplan Concept Charrette <i>September 2009</i>	Began with focus group meetings and an evening community meeting. A series of concepts and suggestions for the future development of the area were developed in response to the issues raised. A public open house was held to review ideas and a final

¹ Definition from People and Participation website – www.peopleandparticipation.net

	community meeting briefed participants on the plan recommendations and asked them to evaluate and give comment on the concepts and recommendations.
Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report Consultation <i>16 October – 11 December 2009</i>	Formal comments and representations made to Aberdeen City Council on the contents and preferred sites within the Main Issues Report.
Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan Consultation <i>24 September – 17 December 2010</i>	Formal consultation on the content, site allocations and policies within the ALDP: Proposed Plan.
Design Team Stakeholders Consultation <i>September 2011</i>	Meeting held with members of the Community Council and Aberdeen City Council staff to collect data and discuss the key issues.
Public Meetings and Workshops <i>14-17 November 2011</i>	Focus groups conducted with Energetica, First Bus, and various Aberdeen City Council departments. An 'Open House' public meeting on the 15 th November and various meetings with the Community Council.
Public Meeting on Interim Proposals <i>Expected February 2012</i>	Upcoming consultation event
Public Presentation of Final Proposals <i>Expected April 2012</i>	Upcoming consultation event

5.24 The following table provides a summary of the main comments which were received as part of the consultation process to date (as detailed above). Further detail can be found in the Dubford Development Framework document itself, and within a future Pre-Application Consultation Report which will form part of any future planning application.

Issue	Outcomes
ALDP Consultation Process	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads and traffic capacity concerns Education and school capacity concerns Flood risk concerns and any masterplan should take account of existing water features Developer contributions and infrastructure requirement concerns – should be 'ring-fenced' to provide for local issues. 	<p>Response from Planning Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure Plan sets new housing allowances and a review of the green belt boundaries. Site emerged as desirable as the site is well related to the existing settlement area and can be accommodated in terms of landscape and transport. Scottish Government are committed to building the AWPR

	<p>and 3rd Don Crossing is a committed Council project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport infrastructure requirements are detailed in the Action Programme and the Developer Contributions Manual, and used in the delivery of development sites. It will be incumbent on the developer to mitigate any net detriment impact on the transport network. • Requirement for a flood risk assessment is accepted. The inclusion regarding existing water features is accepted, and related to the Action Programme.
Masterplan Concept Charrette – September 2009	
<p>Comments on existing issues of site/area</p> <p>Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space • Community environment • Existing amenities • Views <p>Negatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood roads used as alternate routes and rat-runs • Bottlenecks and problem junctions, such as Scotstown and B997 • Poor bus service • Lack of community centre, parks, local shops • Proximity of housing to industrial uses • Bridge of Don is too dense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements necessary to reduce congestion as the development proceeds. • Potential for improved bus service and more local facilities. • Need to provide a good mix of housing. • Need to provide improved pedestrian and cycle facilities. • Requirement for open space, parks and play facilities.
Masterplan Concept Charrette – September 2009	
<p>Comments on draft masterplan</p> <p>Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-use development, proposed improvements to public transport • Framework of public open space, protection of on-site natural features, path and cycle opportunities • Local shops and facilities • Mix of housing types <p>Negatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too dense • Open space buffer is too small • Lack of improvements to Sheilhill Road, B999 and B997 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of improved bus service, and support to strategic infrastructure projects • Widen buffer between new and existing housing • Link green area between the shops to the south • Improve local junctions • Provide local facilities • Follow local architectural tradition

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern shops and steading conversion not commercially viable • Architectural character not local, red roofs more from Fife 	
<p>Public Meeting and Workshop November 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents continue to be concerned about traffic congestion in the Bridge of Don and feel that there have minimal improvements that could justify additional development • Concern that schools have limited capacity and cannot handle additional students. Request that the city undergo a study to better understand capacity. • Meetings with Environmental revealed a desire to enhance the greenway along the existing path through the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request that the connection to Dubford Road only allow buses in order to prevent cut through traffic in the neighbourhood • A flood risk assessment will be completed to ensure minimal impact on the land and watercourses. • It was agreed that the connection to Dubford Road will only permit access for buses and pedestrian only. Scotia will look into methods to ensure that access will be limited to any other vehicles. • Sight lines along Sheilhill Road were studied and two preferred access points were selected • Studies by traffic engineers determined a vehicular entrance at the existing Steading is not recommended. • Design team met with First Bus in order to discuss improved access and service through this area and the desired route.

6 IMPACT

- 6.1 The site includes enhanced walking and cycling opportunities, as well as access to facilities in the wider area.
- 6.2 The Development Framework contributes to the Scottish Government Priorities, in particular safer and stronger – improved opportunities and quality of life, and greener – improving the built environment and sustainable use of our natural resources.
- 6.3 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.



- 6.4 The proposal contributes to the 5 Year Business Plan in terms of objective – Communication and Community Engagement; sharing our plans and aspirations for the city, – delivering an up-to-date plan, – facilitating new development projects to improve Aberdeen’s living environment and, – support open space initiatives.
- 6.5 The proposal is consistent with the Council’s Corporate Plan in particular with regard to delivering high levels of design from all development, maintaining an up-to-date planning framework, sustainable development and open space provision.
- 6.6 The proposal is consistent with the Planning and Sustainable 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.
- 6.7 An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been prepared. In summary, many of the aims of the proposal will have positive benefits, including;
- Housing – greater provision of affordable and family housing in Aberdeen as a result of development.
 - Health – improved access useable open spaces for leisure pursuits and opportunities for walking/cycling/exercise.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The Dubford Development Framework (January 2012) is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link:
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning
- 7.2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan September 2010
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla_local_development_plan.asp
- 7.3 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process 2008 (article 22, Planning Committee Minute, 6/11/08)
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_planningbriefs.asp

8 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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