

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	31 January 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Oldfold Farm Development Framework
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/014

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### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Oldfold Farm Development Framework, prepared as a guide for the future development of land identified as Opportunity Site OP62 in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP).
- 1.2 The Development Framework has been produced by Optimised Environments (OPEN) on behalf of CALA Homes (East) and The Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen Trade Widow's Fund and aims to produce a high quality and deliverable urban expansion to the east of Milltimber.
- 1.3 A summary document of the Oldfold Farm Development Framework and Masterplan has been appended to this Committee Report. The Oldfold Farm Development Framework for site OP62 (December 2011) is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link:  
  
[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning)
- 1.4 A hard copy of the Development Framework is available in the Member's Library or within the Planning and Sustainable Development service at Ground Floor North, Marischal College.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- 2.2 (a) Adopt the Oldfold Farm Development Framework as interim planning advice, subject to the document being amended to accord with the adopted Core Path Plan in relation to Aspirational Path 10 (AP10).  
  
(b) 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. This will include results of an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, and the addition of any necessary mitigation measures

### 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 and Masterplan 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 Oldfold Farm site as part of the preparation for the proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- 4.6 According to Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) any formally adopted Supplementary Guidance which would be likely to have a significant effect on an identified European Site shall be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications, also known as a Habitats Regulations Appraisal. The River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is identified as a European Site. A screening assessment for this process is currently being carried out.

## 5 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

### Site Description

- 5.1 The site is located to the north of the A93, North Deeside Road. The site is relatively flat and bounded to the west by the Tor-Na-Dee Care Home and Binghill Road and to the East by Murtle Den Road and the Den of Murtle District Wildlife Site. The land does slope up slightly to the north.
- 5.2 A multi disciplinary team has been assembled to produce a Development Framework for the whole site including OPEN (Optimised Environments Ltd), Keppie Planning, WA Fairhursts and ENVIRON.

### Policy

- 5.3 The Oldfold Development Framework and Masterplan are intended to act as interim planning advice, pending Council approval for adoption of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- 5.4 The Development Framework and Masterplan document 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.
- 5.5 The site is allocated for 550 houses and 5 hectares of employment land in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan. The development is proposed for two phases 400 units in the period 2007-2016 and 150 units in the period 2017-2026. A contribution of 25% affordable housing is also required within this site.

### Key Issues

### Design Principles

- 5.6 The Development Framework and Masterplan sets out a clear vision for the site as being an expansion to Milltimber that reflects the quality associated with North Deeside, both in quality of homes provided and the quality of the environment. Oldfold will be a place in which the houses, streets and outdoor spaces all combine to reflect the high standards and aspirations of not only CALA but also the Council and the existing residents of Milltimber.
- 5.7 Oldfold Development Framework and Masterplan establishes a clear vision for the site, provides a clear and comprehensive spatial

framework, describes and integrates the landuse, landscape and transport proposals and sets out a clear phasing scheme.

- 5.8 The site analysis within the Development Framework and Masterplan considers City, Deeside and local contexts. It considers the urban form of the surrounding area and concludes that their privacy and character is essential for this site to be successful. Detailed density studies of the surrounding area have also been carried out for this site, concluding that the average net density is 17 dwellings per hectare in Milltimber.
- 5.9 The approach to development at Oldfold is based on four key issues:
- Respect the setting
  - Be part of Milltimber
  - Create a community
  - Protect and integrate the surrounding landscape.
- 5.10 The topography of the site is key to shaping the design and layout of the development and defining the character areas. The location and shape of the site play an important role in the form, design and character of the development.

### **Character Areas**

The Southern Boundary, A93

- 5.11 This is the only part of the site directly linked to the A93 and the treatment of this boundary has been carefully considered. A gateway will be designed to announce arrival in Milltimber, while continuing the high quality, low density development of the area.

The Western Boundary, Binghill Road

- 5.12 This boundary offers the opportunity to successfully link the new development into the existing community. Opportunities to maximise the pedestrian and vehicular linkages between the existing and proposed developments are very important while also protecting setting and privacy. The existing landscape features along Binghill Road will be retained as a buffer and help integration. New buildings will front the street where possible and connections will be maximised. Tor-Na-Dee will be carefully respected due to its sensitive nature.

The Northern Boundary, Den of Murtle

- 5.13 Due to the height and visual aspect of this part of the site some sections should remain clear of development. Other areas that are less exposed should be handled sensitively.

The Eastern Boundary, Murtle Den.

- 5.14 It is important to protect the character of the residential area of Murtle Den; this will be done either with a buffer or through the design of the development. Areas of development should reflect the existing Murtle Den to create areas of high quality low density development.

### **Key Principles**

- 5.15 **A sense of place** – The Development Framework and Masterplan confirms a number of existing environmental, historical and cultural features will be retained, to help create a sense of place. Development will also respond to its surroundings and local character. Development will create a series of distinct areas connected by an integrated network of streets, paths and spaces.
- 5.16 **Housing** - CALA aim to provide a high quality living environment that will meet housing need and demand, providing a mix of house types and community facilities.
- 5.17 25% affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Affordable housing will be integrated with private development areas and will reflect housing need.
- 5.18 **Sustainable Development** – CALA is committed to sustainable house design and has developed new house type which maximises energy efficiency through modern insulation, glazing, appliances, and sustainable construction methods. Consideration will also be given to aspect, orientation and maximising solar gain.
- 5.19 **The existing landscape** – this provides an attractive setting for the proposed community. Advantage will be taken of these opportunities including working with the landforms, maximising natural drainage and SUDs and enhancing existing habitats.
- 5.20 **Improved community facilities** – A mixed use local centre will be created to provide a focus to the community while complementing existing facilities.
- 5.21 **A sustainable expansion** – Oldfold will provide an opportunity for people to live and work without relying on private transport, by providing everything within a walkable neighbourhood. For the facilities that are not provided within walking distance the site's proximity to Aberdeen will be supported by a well connected public transport and cycle network.
- 5.22 **Delivering Oldfold** – To ensure longevity, the design, development and delivery of Oldfold will be flexible and adaptable to change. The developer is committed to continuing community engagement

throughout the development and construction process, providing the community with a sense of governance and ownership.

### **Access and Connectivity**

- 5.23 The site will be integrated with the existing urban fabric on Milltimber. The A93 and Binghill Road already have good pedestrian connection making it possible to continue this into the site. The alignment of Core Path AP10 connecting Milltimber and Cults will be included within the site, this is indicated on page 48 of the Framework, the exact siting will be determined through the planning application process. Recommendation (a) of this report requests amendments to the Development Framework and Masterplan to more clearly accord with the adopted Core Path Plan in relation to AP10. Provision should also be made for connection to the Deeside Way which is part of the National Cycle Route 195.
- 5.24 The pedestrian access has been designed to actively encourage walking to the primary school and development core. Maximum connectivity is also proposed between the site and Milltimber. There will be further permeability through the site once development blocks begin to develop. The Framework provides the aspirational Core Path 10 as part of the wider network.
- 5.25 Connections to the existing cycle network along the A93 and Deeside Railway Path are also provided.
- 5.26 The Development Framework and Masterplan at all times considers the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users before vehicles. The primary street through the site creates a new link improving the overall access to Milltimber and provides a sense of arrival to the site. This road will be designed with the potential to include a bus route through the site.
- 5.27 The development will be made up of a strong street hierarchy with a primary street, green links, secondary streets and two types of minor streets. Examples of how these may look can be found on pages 51 and 52 of the Development Framework and Masterplan document.

### **Landscape Framework**

- 5.28 The strategy is to create a linked sequence of green spaces that develop a landscape framework encompassing amenity and active space as well as significant woodland planting. Five key spaces have been designed throughout the site ranging from the Den of Murtle hilltop park to the Murtle Park. Locations and details for these parks can be found on pages 53 and 54 of the document.

- 5.29 These core spaces will all be connected with green links. The green links will be made up of avenues of trees, large verges and stone walls to help provide legibility and also provide ecological benefit.

### **Development Blocks**

- 5.30 The site has been split into 17 development blocks with a variety of densities and residential mixes across the site. The higher density areas are located at the core of the development, with the lower density on the edges, linking the site to wider countryside and existing community. The lower densities are up to 15 dwellings per hectare with the higher density being 20 + dwellings per hectare.
- 5.31 Although these densities are lower than the Structure Plan policy, they are consistent with the context of the surrounding area. The Development Framework and Masterplan demonstrate that the full housing allocation can be delivered at these densities within the site.
- 5.32 The mix of house types will include terraced, semi detached and detached properties. Density mixes can be found on page 56 of the Development Framework and Masterplan document.

### **Drainage**

- 5.33 The Development Framework and Masterplan confirms that new foul drainage provision would be provided within the site and that a new pumping station and rising main will be required to the drain part of the development.
- 5.34 Run-off from the roads, areas of open ground and houses will be provided via new surface water drains. The new sewers will discharge to grass conveyance swales.

### **Infrastructure Requirements**

- 5.35 Health – the Development Framework and Masterplan acknowledges that there is a requirement for financial contributions to provide one additional GP, two additional dental chairs and one new community pharmacy, this will be agreed through planning gain and a Section 75 legal agreement.
- 5.36 Transport – The road access strategy for Oldfold requires to consider direct access onto the A93 and interconnectivity to the existing community. A traffic light controlled T-junction with pedestrian phase and a right hand turn lane is provided on the west bound carriageway. The access and main spine road leading to the junction will be created within the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of development to ensure that the existing community is not inconvenienced by construction traffic.

5.37 Education – A primary school is proposed to the west of the site, in the local centre. This location means that the building can serve both the proposed and existing communities of Milltimber, whilst also in close proximity to open space provision.

### **Public consultation**

5.38 Throughout the process the project team have worked with the local authority, statutory consultees and the local community.

5.39 The community consultation and engagement approach aims to:

- Ensure awareness of the aspirations for the site,
- Ensure events are well published,
- Ensure engaging, inspiring, clear and concise consultation documents,
- Ensure that members of the design team are available at consultations,
- Provide opportunity for comment and involvement,
- Keep people informed,
- Give confidence and assurance that comments are being heard and listened to.

5.40 Design for the site has evolved with continued input from the community and key stakeholders. The input from the existing community has been fundamental in shaping the proposals ensuring that they meet the aspirations for a Milltimber expansion. Events took place during the Masterplanning Process:

- Pre application consultation 2 day event – June 2011 – 163 attendees, along with community councils reps.
- Community exhibition – June 2011
- Stakeholder Workshop – September 2011,
- Stakeholder workshop and community exhibition – November 2011.

5.41 The June and September 2011 events focussed on five key themes:

- Site and context, access and movement, housing, education and employment land.

5.42 This consultation process informed both large scale changes to layout and small scale matters of detail. The key changes that took place in the masterplan as a result of the consultation were:

- The location of the A93 junction
- The alignment of the primary street
- The location of the primary school
- The location and nature of employment land
- The interface with Bingham Road and



- The interface with Murtle Den.

5.43 79 responses were received and they represented 70 addresses, the majority (59) were from Milltimber addresses. Some of the comments highlighted support for the open space, new school, quality of place and design. Comments raising opposition are summarised below with associated outcomes:

<b>Key Points Raised</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Greatest concern is the transportation issues – North Deeside Road cannot cope with further traffic, no further development within this corridor until the AWPR has been operational for 6months, doubt over traffic surveys etc.	The Transport Assessment is a technical documents that will consider traffic issues along the corridor. CALA have confirmed that the community can study this once it is available.
Location of access to site on southern boundary and the localised objection to the existing Murtle Den road being diverted onto this road.	The junction was located further west and Murtle Den will remain unaffected, this location has significant road safety benefits.
Local bus service created on the local link road has attracted criticism.	It was agreed that the streets within the development should be designed to be able to accommodate buses to avoid problems that are existing in the area.
There is little direct objection to the ALDP allocation itself, it is the allocation and the density that are of concern.	The Development Framework and Masterplan illustrates the total allocated number can be accommodated within the site at a density more appropriate to the Milltimber context.
The alignment of the primary street.	The primary street has also been relocated as a result of the new junction location. It now takes advantage of the topography and reduces cut and fill.
The Primary School should be on the same site – extended/rebuilt unless this is logistically impossible. Contested the need and location of the proposed school. Concerns raised on insufficient school capacity.	The school is proposed at the north end of Binghill Road. This is central location easily accessible for both the proposed and existing community.
Opposition to the neighbourhood centre	Two local employment

shown- largely because they do not require additional shopping facilities and not in the location proposed. No need for further community hall.	options proposed, local mixed use centre east of Binghill Road or redevelopment of farm steading for local commercial/office uses.
Manufacturing would not be an appropriate employment use.	CALA confirmed that they only propose Class 4 or 5 and possibly 6 not manufacturing.
The 25% affordable housing requirement is opposed, there was support for smaller houses for sale for those that wish to downsize or for young people who wish to stay in the community. No wish to have a formulaic percentage of affordable social housing imposed on them; this does not match the existing character of the existing settlement.	The site will comprise a mix of types and tenures and deliver a 25% affordable housing contribution.
Interface with Binghill Road and Murtle Den.	Increased area of open space at Binghill Road and additional planting along the Murtle Den boundary along with revised junction location, ensures privacy of existing properties.
Sewerage and other infrastructure provision were also concern for a few residents, the SUDs scheme safety and the location of the development in relation to the Tor-Na-Dee care home.	A surface water management strategy has been undertaken and a drainage strategy is included on page 58 of the Framework.
Location of employment land.	The Development Framework and Masterplan provides two options of where the employment land could be located either at a local mixed use centre beside Binghill Road or through the redevelopment of the farm steading.

5.44 The 24 November 2011 workshop raised similar issues as that of the first. Five key changes were made to the document as a result of the first consultation:

- Location of junction onto A93,
- alignment of primary street,

- relocation of the primary school,
- inclusion of employment land close to the school with the aim to create a core area and
- layout arising from Designing Streets changes.

5.45 Details of the consultation are summarised on pages 7 - 8 and detailed on pages 89-98 of the Development Framework and Masterplan.

#### Studies

5.46 A number of key surveys and studies have already been carried out across the site including a habitat survey, bat survey and badger survey. A detailed site analysis has informed the design of the framework and the detailed masterplanning phases. Diagrammatic representation of the surveys can be found on page 28 of the document.

5.47 A transport assessment is currently being produced and will be submitted to support an application for Planning Permission in Principle.

#### Key Issues

### 6 IMPACT

6.1 The Framework and Masterplan promotes access to walking and cycling networks.

6.2 The Development Framework and Masterplan 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;

Housing – greater provision of affordable and family housing in Aberdeen as a result of development.

Health – Improved walking and cycling access and play areas for children.

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The Oldfold Development Framework (December 2011 issue) 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)
- 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 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)

## 8 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Laura Robertson  
Senior Planner  
[Larobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:Larobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk)  
01224 522246