



# Friarsfield Development Framework

## **SUMMARY**

January 2012

## 1.1 Introduction

The site at Friarsfield is located to the west of the City of Aberdeen on the northern edge of Cults. The Development Framework boundary covers an area of approximately 29.6 hectares, although this differs slightly from the Local Development Plan allocation due to the requirement to provide access to the site.

The land is in various ownerships, with developer involvement by CALA Management Ltd and Stewart Milne Homes.

A further area of land, under the control of Scotia Homes now has planning consent for 10 dwellings (Ref. P110559).

## 1.2 Vision

The Friarsfield Development Framework is a step towards the development of a new, attractive, high quality and sustainable residential development that will be well integrated with the surrounding area. Approximately 280 homes are planned for the site, in addition to roads, drainage infrastructure and open space.

The Development Framework aims to achieve the following:

- A high quality residential environment that meets a variety of housing needs while giving due consideration to the infrastructure and safety issues.
- Successful integration of the site with the surrounding area, ensuring new development fits well in the landscape as well as providing links from the site to the wider area.
- Attractive open space and opportunities for continued recreation on the site while retaining and enhancing access to the Core Path Network.
- Safeguard existing site features, enhance green space provision and includes proposed strategic landscaping, efficient connections to pedestrian and cycle path linkages, public transport and city road networks.

The Development Framework will be used to guide future detailed planning applications for the site.

### 1.3 Planning Context

The site was included in the 2008 Local Plan as OP5, with an allocation of 280 houses. It was subsequently identified as OP51, again for 280 houses in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

The examination into the Local Development Plan is now complete and the Council is aiming to have the plan adopted by the end of February 2012. Planning applications for the site will require to comply with the development plan.

### 1.4 Consultation

Three Proposal of Application Notices have been submitted for the site (Ref P111065, P111066 and P111179). Public consultation for both the Development Framework and planning applications has been run in tandem to minimize confusion.

Two public consultation events were held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 at the Cults Hotel, Aberdeen. Adverts were placed in the press and posters displayed in the local area. Letters inviting neighbours were hand delivered and issued to local Councillors and Community Councillors. Display boards were issued by email to those that requested them and copies of all exhibition material placed in the library.

The main issues of concern raised at the events were a general concern over the impact of the development on existing infrastructure, including roads, schools and facilities. Concern was raised in relation to road safety in relation to cars and the impact on pedestrians and the adequacy of the existing road network, to cope with development. Schools were considered to be at capacity. The general loss of the site for recreational purposes was an issue.

Important links were highlighted, including access to forestry commission land in the vicinity, Hazlehead, the Cults Burn and the use of the path network through the site.

### 1.5 Site Features

The site contains a number of features which have been taken into consideration in this Development Framework, both natural and man made.

Natural features include the topography of the site and its southerly aspect; the Cults Burn; a few groups of mature trees. Man made features include the existing walls on the site, the electricity substation, the former nursery buildings which now lie derelict and existing buildings and paths on the site.

## 1.6 Design

The Cults Burn and mature trees will be retained on the site and the design of the development evolved from these features. The site has the potential to offer an attractive residential environment due to the topography of the site and the southerly aspect it enjoys. The layout will work with the natural topography of the site and development will sit well in the landscape. There is a requirement to provide a link road and the only realistic location for this, due to topography of the site, was to the north of the site, then linking to Kirk Brae at the south east.

The location of the Cults Burn to the south east of the site provides an opportunity to encourage existing residents of Cults into the site as well as a focal point for new residents and a significant area of open space was provided around this feature. Existing vegetation will be retained and enhanced to maximize biodiversity. A natural open space will be provided, consisting of paths and landscaping to create a woodland habitat link between Foggieton and the Den of Cults and will provide an enhanced Green Space Network along this corridor. A Flood Risk Assessment will be provided at the planning application stage.

Grouping of mature trees are also retained on the site, most significantly the largest tree knoll, which has created another focal point. New strategic landscaping will be provided along the boundary of the site, around the existing building of Craigbank to mitigate the impact of development and around the electricity substation to screen it.

Other details of the site have evolved through the consultation process, which initially began when the site was first identified for development in the Local Plan, through to public consultation with the local community throughout 2011. This includes changes to the junction on Kirk Brae and the existing private access to Craigbank. The layout aims to minimize the impact on this.

The site will be integrated with the surrounding area by linking it to the most direct, attractive, safe and secure pedestrian links. The site has excellent opportunities for connectivity, which will be provided through the retention of the core paths on the site and the provision of new footpaths to link this site with the wider area. This will link areas within the site and with areas of interest outwith the site, ensuring a range of recreational opportunities on the site while maintaining access to areas in the locality which were considered important through the consultation process.

In terms of public transport, footpaths on the site will link to the existing path network off the site to provide pedestrian routes to bus stops on North Deeside Road and Kirk Brae. The Development Framework has considered the 800m (10 minute walk) and 400m (5 minute walk) isochrones which demonstrate that the



## 1.7 Infrastructure

An initial assessment of transport in the area has demonstrated that there is capacity in the roads system for this development. However, as this is a major concern for the local residents, revised traffic counts have been undertaken which support the initial findings. A full Transport Assessment will be submitted as part of the application process and this will determine whether any infrastructure or service improvements are required to support development and mitigate the existing environment.

In terms of education provision, as the site was included in the 2008 Local Plan, capacity was considered at that time. It is therefore understood that pupil numbers generated by this development can be accommodated. However, a schools review is being undertaken by the Council and the impact of a phased development will be assessed following the submission of planning application(s) for the site.

A Drainage Impact Assessment and SUDs Strategy will be submitted with any planning application(s) for the site. A Water Impact Assessment will determine whether upgrades are required.

Aberdeen City Council identified the infrastructure requirements for the site during the Local Development Plan process. The amount and type of contributions will be commensurate with the scale and impact of development and will be negotiated and agreed at the time that a planning application is made. Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the development plan.

## 1.8 Phasing

The first phase of development includes access arrangements, the commencement of the link road, transport works, SUDs and service upgrades. An application is expected early in 2012 with Spring 2013 anticipated for a site start.

Phase 2 relates to the building and selling of homes within the development to a level able to be accommodated within the capacity of the road network pre-link completion. This includes the provision of around 160 houses, developed in two stages of approximately 80 units each. It also allows for the completion of the link road within the confines of the initial area of development and planning gain if applicable.

Phase 3 envisages the completion of the link road to the top of Jacob's Ladder and development of the balance of housing, including around 120 units. Again, planning gain if required, will be payable at this time.