

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	6 November 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen Masterplanning Process
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/231

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the principles, and clarifies administrative aspects, of the Aberdeen Masterplanning Process, adopted as supplementary guidance to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The Process gives direction as to how masterplans will be prepared to guide future development. The Aberdeen Masterplan Process can be viewed at:
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31782&SID=14394>

Members please note that the report will be accompanied by a presentation at the committee meeting.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (a) retain the adopted Aberdeen Masterplanning Process;
 - (b) note the administrative changes to the community engagement in the process namely:
 - (i) Action Note to be circulated immediately following public meetings;
 - (ii) Community councils to be given advance copy of draft masterplans a minimum 14 days prior to the relevant Committee meeting;
 - (iii) Written response from statutory consultees, including community councils, to be appended to Committee reports following public consultation.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Generally developers will meet the cost of preparation of masterplans including all consultation and engagement. On average, the cost of preparing a masterplan or development framework for a large area is approximately £250,000. This will vary depending on the complexity and scale of the site and generally includes input from design,

planning, transportation, engineering, environmental assessment and public relations. Given the number of masterplans highlighted in the Appendix to this report, this represents a potential saving to the City Council in excess of £3 million. This figure could be much higher depending on the number of phased masterplans required to support development.

- 3.2 The Masterplanning Process generates proposals that will result in efficiencies in the determination of future planning applications related to development frameworks and masterplans, 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 Masterplanning reduces the risk of piecemeal and inappropriate development in the City. Mixed use development and the efficient use of land will contribute towards the Council's aim of promoting sustainable development.
- 4.3 Masterplanning contributes 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 Local Development Plan, Appendix 4, The Action Programme and the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual, masterplans explicitly reference how development will address requirements for cumulative and local transport infrastructure, public transport routes and walking and cycle paths as far as they are known at the early stages of planning.
- 4.5 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken on all masterplan sites as identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan as part of the preparation for the proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Aberdeen Masterplanning Process has been prepared as a guide to developing and delivering masterplans in Aberdeen City. The adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan emphasises the need to masterplan all major sites and identifies 11 Masterplan Zones in the City. Developers are expected to prepare Masterplans for each zone and coordinate the planning and delivery of associated infrastructure requirements. Reflecting current national design guidance, the Process seeks to enable the delivery of sustainable places.

5.2 The Masterplan Process identifies the need to consider an integrated approach to site planning, urban design, sustainable transport, ecology, landscaping and community involvement. There is also a recognised need to ensure quality of design for new developments in Aberdeen, from the largest and most significant areas of change to smaller individual sites. The Process identifies 3 main types of supplementary guidance: Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Planning Briefs

- **Development Frameworks** set out a baseline, or two dimensional, spatial framework for the way in which large areas, or areas in multiple ownership, are to be developed.
- **Masterplans** present detailed guidance, in three dimensions, on design matters, specific topics, or land uses for sites in single ownership, or for buildings or external spaces within a larger development framework.
- **Planning Briefs** concentrate on site specific guidance highlighting planning policies, constraints and opportunities. A planning brief informs any planning application made for the site. Planning Briefs can range from small sites in conservation areas up to the scale of a masterplan.

5.3 For some sites a basic development framework may require to be developed into a more detailed three dimensional Masterplan, describing and illustrating the proposed urban form for each phase of development. The initial sites where this is expected are identified by the Local Development Plan. Masterplans may include design codes and will include an estimated timeline for delivery as well as a response to the ALDP Action Programme and Infrastructure Requirements.

5.4 All Development Frameworks and Masterplans are expected to be adopted as supplementary guidance to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5.5 Each Development Framework, Masterplan and Planning Brief must address the following 4 key themes, although the level of detail will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the proposed development site.

- **Context**

This includes a detailed description and appraisal of the site and surrounding area, planning policy review and options appraisal combined with a vision statement outlining the aims and objectives of what the supplementary guidance will achieve.

- **Identity**

This details the design principles of the masterplan that will be used to inform the more detailed design stages including settlement

pattern, street layout, open spaces, landscape, building scale and massing, infrastructure and services.

- **Connection**

This includes accessibility within the site, concentrating on pedestrian, cycle, public transport and general access, external links and the infrastructure necessary to support these connections.

- **Communication**

It is essential that a communication and engagement plan is developed and agreed at inception to ensure appropriate levels of community involvement can be maintained throughout masterplan preparation.

- 5.6 All development frameworks and masterplans are required to include a Delivery Strategy, to which all applicants will have to comply, specifying how the key strategic elements of infrastructure will be delivered for the entire development framework or masterplan site. These elements will be site specific but would normally include transportation infrastructure (footpaths, cycle ways, roads), public transport provision, education provision, community facilities, strategic open space etc.

The strategy will be expected to link infrastructure provision to a Phasing Plan for the entire site and to clearly identify and justify thresholds and trigger points for the delivery of these key strategic facilities (based, for instance, on the capacity of the road network identified in an agreed transportation assessment or the capacity of local schools based on advice from the Council's education service)

Where sites are in multiple ownership it will obviously be essential that evidence is provided to show that all landowners and prospective developers work together to agree the Delivery Strategy.

- 5.7 In order to prevent piecemeal development and problems with delivery of key infrastructure for development framework or masterplan sites it is expected that an application for planning permission in principle or detailed planning permission for the entire site based on the development framework or masterplan will be submitted in advance of any other applications for development of the site. This application and its associated legal agreement will be the mechanism for controlling development and infrastructure delivery for the site as a whole.

- 5.8 All planning applications for national or major development must comply with the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process outlined in the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006. If PAC is required, applicants must submit a Proposal of Application Notice at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of the planning application. As there is no upper time limit for consultation, it is recommended that Notice be submitted early to coincide with the masterplanning process to enable all engagement to contribute to the consultation process and avoid duplication.

5.9 Methods of engagement will vary according to the scale, complexity and nature of the proposed development. The engagement process will include, but not be exclusive to, the following:

Elected Members

Elected Members represent constituents in the community, have detailed knowledge of issues affecting their wards and should be involved in the Process. This need not continue beyond information gathering and should not prejudice any Member’s position in determining future planning applications.

Transport

Roads authorities, public transport operators (including bus and rail), NESTRANS and Transport Scotland must be involved as necessary throughout the development of the proposal.

Agencies

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage or other statutory or relevant consultees as appropriate will be involved in the early stages of planning to determine key issues. In addition, utilities, NHS Grampian, Grampian Police Architectural Liaison Officer, emergency and other services, should also be consulted.

Community

Local communities, community councils and other groups must be actively engaged throughout the Masterplan process.

Other

Planning Obligations Officer.
Landowners and tenants affected by proposals.

5.10 The minimum administration of the masterplanning process itself can be summarised as follows:

Task	Responsibility
Identify and allocate sites to be masterplanned through the Local Development Plan	ACC
Scope of work for masterplan	Developer/ACC
Engagement at inception to establish background information and identify issues;	Developer
Public meeting, presentation, workshop or exhibition as appropriate to confirm issues and review initial design options and concepts;	Developer
Develop initial design concepts with Masterplan team	Developer/ACC
Second public meeting, presentation, workshop or exhibition as appropriate to confirm design concepts;	Developer
Review and update draft masterplan This includes detailed scrutiny and analysis of proposals by officers, co-ordinated by the	ACC/Developer

Masterplan team.	
Informal submission of final draft masterplan to community councils a minimum of 14 days prior to the Committee meeting;	ACC
Report to Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee for development frameworks and single masterplans (as strategic documents), or Report to Development Management Sub-Committee for masterplan phases as identified in an approved development framework and planning briefs (as technical documents); All documents to act as interim planning advice (see definitions below)	ACC
Public consultation on final draft as interim planning advice approved by the relevant Committee	ACC
Report to relevant committee on the results of that public consultation	ACC
Submission to Scottish Ministers for approval to adopt as supplementary guidance (see definition below) to the development plan	ACC

5.11 Definitions

'Interim Planning Advice' – this specifies that the Development Framework, Masterplan or Planning Brief is in the public domain and available for the purposes of a formal City-wide consultation. As such it becomes a material consideration in the determination of any planning application. The duration of consultation will typically be 4 weeks, given that public engagement has taken place throughout the preparation of the proposals. This allows responses to be collated and reported back in the next committee cycle.

- 5.12 **'Supplementary Guidance'** (SG) – this is adopted and issued by a planning authority in connection with a Local Development Plan, as a result any such guidance will form part of the Development Plan. Any masterplan seeking adoption as supplementary guidance to the development plan, which applies to all of those in Aberdeen City, must accord with the requirements of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. In essence all development frameworks, masterplans and planning briefs must be subject to a formal consultation period pending committee approval and prior to submission to the Scottish Government for consideration to adopt as supplementary guidance to the development plan. Before adoption, the SG must be publicised and a period for representations to be made specified, this includes the targeting of key consultees and stakeholders who may want the opportunity to comment. Following the specified consultation period and as a result of comments received, relevant changes will be made to the final document before reporting back to committee and subsequent submission to Scottish Ministers. After 28 days have

elapsed, the authority may then adopt the guidance unless Scottish Ministers direct otherwise.

- 5.13 Throughout each stage detailed in section 5.8 above, the developer and their agents are expected to work with input from appropriate officers in the City Council and the Planning Obligations Officer, co-ordinated by the Masterplanning Design and Conservation Team.
- 5.14 Appendix 1 to this report highlights the development frameworks and masterplans and their status as supplementary guidance for information. Appendix 2 to this report outlines the Actions and expected level of detail from supplementary guidance in the context of the whole planning process.
- 5.15 We place high value on early engagement in the planning process. As such, it is much more constructive to engage with communities early on and ensure that issues are addressed prior to completion of masterplans. As part of the actual masterplanning process, an Action Note will be published by the developer or their agents following every public meeting and circulated between the developer, community council and City Council to ensure consistency of message and reduce the chance of any misunderstanding between parties.
- 5.16 Although there is no statutory obligation to consult with community councils prior to committee reporting, it is current practice to circulate masterplans to community councils prior to the relevant Committee meeting for information on what will be made public during the consultation process. This ensures awareness and understanding of the content of the finalised draft document. Given that community councils and other stakeholders views have been considered and addressed where appropriate during the preparation of the masterplan, this will be formalised to a minimum 14 day period prior to the committee meeting to ensure consistency in all masterplans. It does not supersede the statutory public consultation, during which the community councils' formal views, along with other stakeholders will be considered.
- 5.17 Following statutory consultation, in the second report to Committee, we will include written responses to the consultation, including those from community councils, with the report, in addition to a summary of general issues and our responses to them.

6 IMPACT

- 6.1 The proposal 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.

- 6.2 The proposal 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 report 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.
- 6.4 The report contributes towards the Aberdeen City Council Administrations vision for Aberdeen – The Smarter City: 2012 – 2017, particularly creating a City which is a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit. It specifically contributes to the follows objectives: Governance – encouraging citizens to participate in design and development; Living – improving opportunities for physical activity; Environment – energy efficient design and construction, attractive streetscapes and access to green space; Economy – improve access to range of affordable housing; Mobility – encourage cycling, walking and promoting a sustainable transport system which reduce carbon emissions.
- 6.5 The report 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 report 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:
- encouraging effective public engagement at the earliest opportunity in the planning process;
 - ensuring that this engagement continues throughout;
 - detailing infrastructure provision where appropriate including transportation, education, utilities, affordable housing; and
 - encouraging walkable neighbourhoods and access to open space which will have long term health benefits.


7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla_local_development_plan.asp
- 7.2 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31782&SID=14394>

8 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Sandy Beattie

Team Leader – Masterplanning, Design and Conservation

 01224 (52) 2155

 sbeattie@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Appendix 1
Masterplans

Site/Area	Type	Status
Masterplan Zone 1: Dubford and Murcar		
(OP2) Murcar	Development Framework (requires an update)	approved
(OP25) Dubford	Development Framework	approved*
Masterplan Zone 2: Grandhome		
(OP12) Grandhome	Development Framework (further phased Masterplans to follow)	ongoing
Masterplan Zone 3: Stoneywood		
(OP24) Stoneywood	Development Framework and Masterplan	approved+
Masterplan Zone 4: Newhills Expansion and Dyce Drive		
(OP26) Craibstone North	Development Framework (further phased Masterplans to follow)	ongoing
(OP28) Rowett North		
(OP29) Craibstone South		
(OP30) Rowett South		
(OP31) Greenferns Landward		
Masterplan Zone 5: Greenferns		
(OP45) Greenferns	Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (further phased Masterplans to follow)	approved*
Masterplan Zone 6: Maidencraig		
(OP43) Maidencraig South East	Masterplan	pending
(OP44) Maidencraig North East		
Masterplan Zone 7: Kingswells		
(OP40) West Hatton and Home Farm (Prime 4)	Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan	approved*
(OP40) Phase 2 and 3	Masterplan (further phased Masterplans to follow)	approved*
(OP42) West Huxterstone		pending
Masterplan Zone 8: Countesswells		
(OP58) Countesswells	Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (further phased Masterplans to follow)	pending

	follow)	
Masterplan Zone 9: Friarsfield		
(OP51) Friarsfield	Development Framework	approved+
Masterplan Zone 10: Oldfold Farm		
(OP62) Oldfold Farm	Masterplan	approved+
Masterplan Zone 11: Loirston		
(OP77) Loirston	Development Framework	pending
(OP78) Charleston	(phased Masterplans to follow)	
Other Masterplans		
Aberdeen City Centre	Development Framework	adopted
Aberdeen Harbour	Development Framework	approved*
Bon Accord Quarter	Masterplan	adopted
Cove	Masterplan	approved*
Former Davidson's Mill, Bucksburn	Development Framework	approved+
	Phase 1 Masterplan	approved+
	(further phased Masterplans to follow)	
Friarsfield	Development Framework	approved+
Foresterhill	Development Framework	approved*
North Garthdee Farm (land at)	Planning Brief	approved+
RGU Garthdee	Development Framework	approved+
RGU City Centre Campus	Planning Brief	approved+
Future Masterplans		
AECC/Murcar		
North Dee/South Dee		

- Approved: interim planning advice awaiting adoption
* indicates subject to Committee approval to submit to Scottish Ministers
+ indicates screening results to be submitted prior to submission to Scottish Ministers
- Adopted: endorsed by the Scottish Government and adopted as supplementary guidance
- Pending: awaiting decision from the 6 November EP+I Committee

Appendix 2: Actions and expected level of detail

	Development Plan		Supplementary Guidance		Applications	
<i>stage</i>	Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan (to be Strategic Development Plan)	Aberdeen Local Development Plan	Development Framework	Masterplan	Planning Permission in Principle	Detailed Planning Application or Matters Specified in Conditions
<i>consultation</i>	11 weeks for finalised draft plan	8 weeks for Main Issues Report, 16 weeks for Proposed Plan.	Engagement as detailed in 5.10 in the main report above, ongoing throughout masterplan process, and formal 4 week statutory consultation.		28 days or as otherwise agreed in any processing agreement for statutory consultees 21 days neighbour notification	
<i>level of information</i>	Housing and employment land allocation	Site analysis, identification and allocation in accordance with Structure Plan	Design layout principles, landscape and visual impact assessment, use mix identified.	Detailed design layout including 3 dimensions Landscape and visual impact assessment. Ecological impact as necessary.	Supported by development framework and/or masterplan	Further detailed building design, development layout, landscape proposals etc.
<i>transport study</i>	Cumulative Impact Assessment Strategic Transport Fund (STF) arising from that	Accessibility criteria to inform allocations Action Plan – Indicative local mitigation for each masterplan area Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual (including STF)	High level transport assessment Reference to STF contribution Delivery response to Action Plan and Infrastructure + Developer Contributions Manual Indicative phasing and trigger points		Formal detailed statutory Transport Assessment Roads Construction Consent Section 75 Legal Agreement including Planning Obligations such as transport, affordable housing, community facilities, education, core path etc	
<i>level of information</i>	Major infrastructure requirements identified.	Major and Local infrastructure requirements identified.	Principles of junction strategy, indicative layout street layout, development block structure, key external connections.	Building layout, details of street and principles of junction strategy, transport solutions for all modes, street types, junction location.	Supported by development framework and/or masterplan. Significant level of detail to define impact mitigation and movement within and outwith the area.	
<i>environment</i>	Strategic Environmental Assessment		Environmental assessment screening and/or scoping opinion		Environmental Assessment if required	
<i>note</i>	The above is indicative only and can be supplemented with Drainage, Flood Risk Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment, or any other assessments as necessary depending on the site characteristics or location. For Supplementary Guidance, an agreed scope of work will be prepared between ACC and the developer. For major applications processing agreement is undertaken between ACC, the developer and statutory consultees.					