



Summary Document

OP42: West Huxterstone Masterplan

Planning and Sustainable Development
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Introduction to Masterplan

This document has been produced to provide a summary of the Huxterstone Masterplan document. It aims to highlight the key information and guidance contained in the document, however, for a more comprehensive understanding of the site, the process and the aims and outcomes of the Masterplan the main document is the main point of reference.

The site, identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, lies approximately 4 miles to the west of Aberdeen City on the A944, an arterial route into the City. The land is in various ownerships, and extends to approximately 6 hectares (15 acres). It lies to the east and north of the old village of Kingswells which centred around Old Skene Road.

The Masterplan follows on from the Kingswells Development Framework, which was prepared by the Council in 2008. It explains how a residential development of around 120 units can be developed as an extension to Kingswells.

It is intended that the document will form the basis of Supplementary Guidance (SG) to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

The design team has worked closely together to provide a well thought out response to the site. The Masterplan has been informed by a series of reports and technical studies. It has also benefited from community consultation and regular meetings with Aberdeen City Council.

The Masterplan document is set out in eleven sections, including:

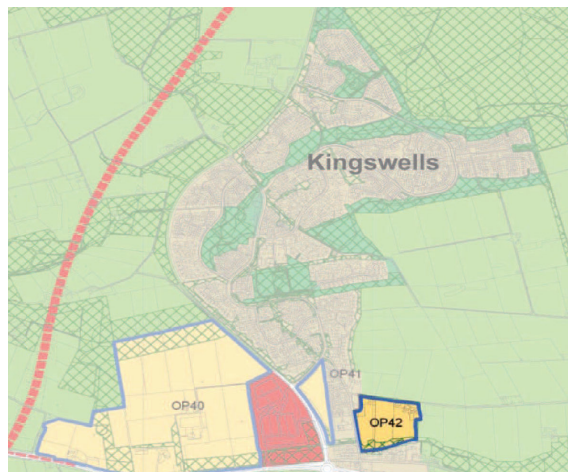
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This document gives a brief description of the key information.

Figure1: Kingswells Location Plan



Figure 2: Local Development Plan extract



Context

The Masterplan is a step towards the delivery of approximately 120 new homes in the village. Roads, drainage infrastructure and open space will also be provided to create a high quality residential environment.

The Masterplan aims to achieve the following:

- A high quality village extension that will create a unique environment that complements the existing character of the local area.
- Integration of the site with the existing neighbourhoods, which are all linked by a successful strategic landscape framework.
- The avoidance of skyline development by ensuring that buildings fit within a detailed landscape framework.

- The safeguarding and enhancement of the ecological habitat of the Den Burn.
- The connectivity of the site in terms of pedestrian and vehicular traffic with new pathways connecting the housing with recreational areas along the burn.

The masterplan considers the surrounding context, site features, existing landscape context, existing open space and the visibility of the site in determining the most appropriate means of developing the site for residential purposes.

There are a range of house types and styles in the area and there are no landscape features of any significant importance within the site. Stone dykes separate the fields and there are dykes to the north and east. Stone walls will be retained where appropriate and stone will be reused to build new stone walls throughout the development.

Figure 3: Topography

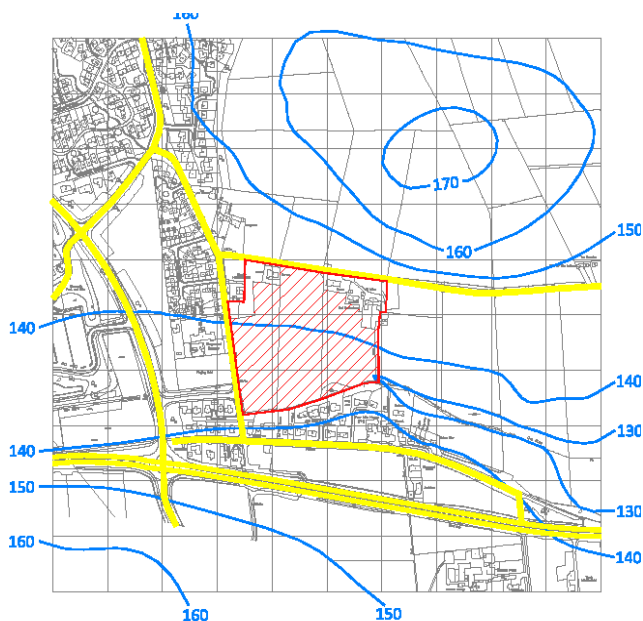
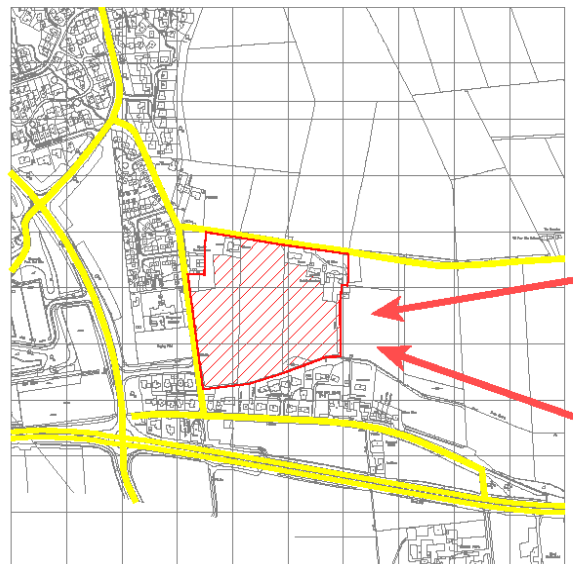


Figure 4: Site Visibility



The Den Burn lies to the south and south east and is an important natural feature what has been given due consideration in the design process, both in the landscaping proposals and in relation to the location of development.

The Den Burn corridor adjacent to the site will be retained and improved where appropriate. The introduction of landscaping and the SUDs basins will help to create open space which will enhance the wetland habitat. Footpaths will be provided to link the Den Burn to the surrounding area to improve access for all.

An Archaeology walk over study has been completed which concluded that there is no evidence of any Huxter Stones on the site, which was suggested in the Kingswells Development Framework. A further evaluation will be undertaken before development to ensure this is the case.

An Ecological Assessment was also undertaken which confirmed the site does not lie within any designed sites of interest. It is not listed under any statutory nature conservation, nor is it within any Council landscape or wildlife designation. The Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve is located approximately 1km downstream of the masterplan site.

The Den Burn is identified as being of ecological interest. The land surrounding the burn will be retained and enhanced so that it is

inkeeping with the important linear habitat of the burn.

Environmental enhancements are proposed throughout the site, including the creation of new wooded areas and the improvement of the burn area, which is compliant with national and local plan policies. Net gains in biodiversity will arise as a result of these improvements, to the benefit of the wider area.

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal was also carried out which has informed the masterplan.

Communication and Engagement

A range of consultation exercises have been carried out in the development of the Masterplan.

This included a meeting with the Community Council; Two public consultation events, including a community council and councillor briefing prior to the public event; and a meeting with the adjacent landowner.

Issues highlighted at these events have been summarised and a response to each is contained in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Masterplan document.

Where possible, the wishes of the local community have been taken on board and incorporated into the design of the residential development. An explanation has been provided where this has not been possible.

Identity

Through the site analysis and public consultation, proposals were developed. A number of principles guided the Masterplan, consisting of the following:

- Traditional villages are successful due to their use of both green and “urban” spaces. Such spaces assist the legibility of their community due to the association of streets with a sense of place.
- The development of the site will be based on a series of green spaces which will be linked by a network of landscaping. The southern edge will enjoy clusters or strands of trees to create a more open “parkland” environment, whilst denser shelter belt planting will be utilised around the eastern perimeter of the site.
- Landscaping and open space requirements will be accommodated in the overall layout, within which the general philosophy will be to create “streets” and “places” rather than roads.
- The “streets” and “places” created will be aligned with groups of housing. Building lines are an important consideration in the designing of successful development and will ensure the creation of a “street”.

First Thoughts

From these principles emerged some first thoughts which were considered important in the development of the site, including:

- Retention of the Den Burn and Green Space Network.
- Creation of a new shelter belt to the east to provide screening and to soften the development.
- Enhancement of the buffers to the east.
- Provision of an appropriate density of housing whilst retaining quality public green space.
- A series of linked public spaces to allow green space to flow through the heart of the site.
- Easily accessible public green space to the south
- Principal vehicular access from Fairley Road with secondary access from the Land Stracht.
- Integration of the site within the context of Kingswells by reinforcing the building lines within the surrounding developments along the Lang Stracht. Development to face outwards at these points.
- Reinforcement of the rural character.
- Appropriately scaled and designed house types created using the established pattern of field boundaries

Transport and Accessibility

The Masterplan considers the existing access routes in the area in relation to the site, including pedestrian and cycle routes and core paths; public transport connections; road connections; and the connectivity of the site with the surrounding area.

The site will be fully connected with the surrounding area and this is crucial to the success of the site.

Two points of access are proposed in accordance with Council guidelines. The main access is from Fairley Road, with a secondary access from the Lang Stracht. Two points of access from Fairley Road were investigated, however, due to visibility requirements, junction spacing and configuration requirements, this was not possible. Access from the Lang Stracht will be a right in and left out configuration to minimise

movements eastwards along the Lang Stracht beyond the development access.

The access from Fairley Road continues into the site providing an opportunity for an east-west spine from which an arrangement of meandering secondary minor access roads run northwards designed to minimise gradients and cut and fill as much as possible.

Development will be supported by the infrastructure required to sustain the development identified as necessary through a Transport Assessment (TA). This will identify a Travel Plan Framework to allow the preparation of a Residential Travel Pack for approval by Aberdeen City Council prior to first occupancy of the site.

STF policy will apply. Details will be worked out at the planning application stage in addition to site specific transport mitigation.

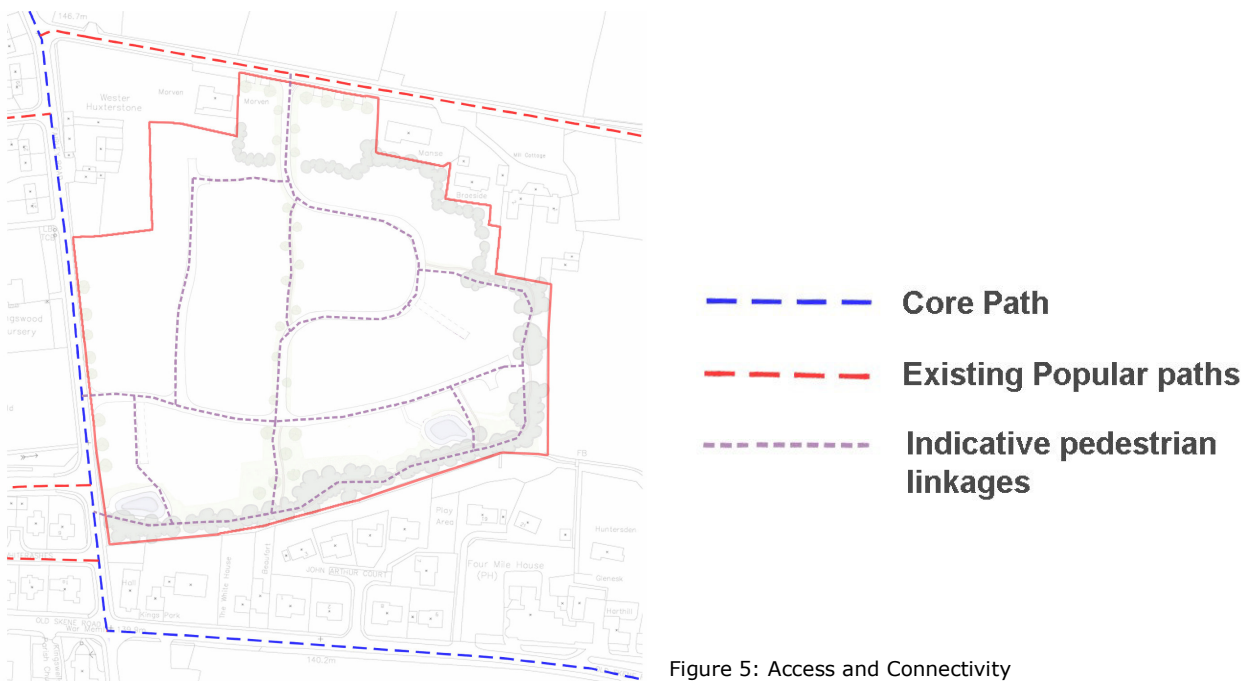


Figure 5: Access and Connectivity

Planning and Design Principles

The masterplan provides a context for development and outlines the planning and design principles that should be followed in any planning applications for the site.

The main issues considered were the Den Burn, the Green Space Network, topography of the site, existing properties to the north and existing stone walls.

One of the main aims was to integrate the site within the existing neighbourhoods through a successful strategic landscape network. This provides an attractive landscape setting, within which housing will be located, so that the site fits with the character of the wider area.

Given the visibility of the site from the east, a sensitive design solution, offering suitably located development and enhancement of strategic landscaping is proposed. Landscape wedges will cut into the site at a variety of points allowing pedestrian access from the site to land beyond. These spaces are complemented by pathways to create a recreational framework.

A new shelter belt is to be planted along the eastern boundary to soften views of the development when viewed from the east. Landscaping adjacent to existing properties to the north will ensure their amenity is protected.

The Green Space Network to the south is an important feature which will be protected and enhanced.

Areas of open space will be concentrated principally along the burn, which will maintain the local character of the area. Open space will be linked by a network of footpaths which will ensure the integration of the site with the wider Kingswells area.

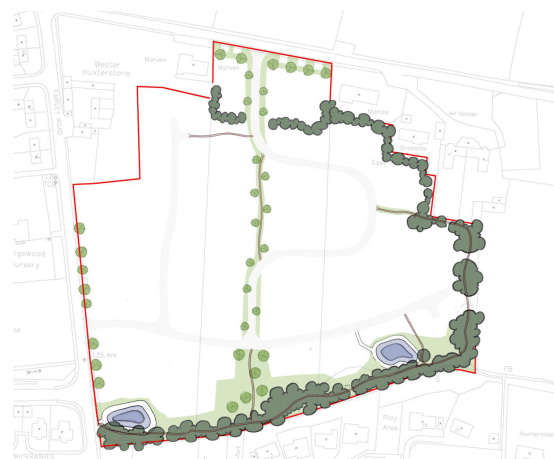
Street trees will soften the street scene and provide visual interest within the development.

The design and layout of the development will fit within the landscape framework and network of open space on the site and will avoid skyline development.

Housing will sit away from the Den Burn and Green Space Network to ensure their protection. Housing will follow the established pattern of field boundaries.

The Masterplan and Landscape Appraisal provide further details of the landscaping and open spaces proposed. A Design Statement will be submitted with any planning application(s) for the site to explain how the design and layout of the external spaces will contribute to a quality environment.

Figure 6: Landscaping



Design and Layout

The rising topography of the site will allow for the development to fit naturally into the landscape, avoiding housing intruding into the skyline.

Steps will also be taken, wherever possible, to minimise the extent of tabling. Each house will sit at its own appropriate level, which will enhance connectivity and create a more cohesive layout.

Development will consider Scottish Government Policy 'Designing Streets' and 'Designing Places'. Surfaces will be shared to promote pedestrian priority by reducing vehicle speeds.

The orientation of properties will be maximised to take advantage of available views. Housing on the perimeter will face the surrounding streets while housing in the heart will generally face south. Development will not turn its back on the Lang Stracht as required by the Kingswells Development Framework.

Development will therefore face outwards at these points to engender them with the architectural merits of a 'street'. This follows best practice, so that proposals engage with their surroundings, offering visual and physical connectivity to the existing village.

Four character areas are identified in the Masterplan, including:

- Rural Lang Stracht Character Area
- The Den Burn Character Area
- Central Character Area
- Fairley Road Character Area

The character areas are determined by the architectural styles of the different developers, although a palette of similar materials and finishes will be provide unity and coherence throughout the development.

The Masterplan provides full details of the character areas.

Figure 7: Character Areas



The Rural Lang Stracht Character Area

This area will be characterised by buildings of a similar footprint to those already found either side of the site on the Lang Stracht. Split level housing will be located in this area which will reduce roof heights and be in keeping with existing houses in the area.

Figure 8: Lang Stracht Perspective



The Central Character Area

This area is characterised by the pedestrian landscape link running north south through the centre of the site, the function of which is to provide a link from the Green Space Network to the south to the rest of the site and the settlement of Kingswells.

Figure 9: Landscape Link Perspective



It also provides recreational opportunities in the form of a walking route through the site. The wedge provides visual continuity from the Den Burn Character Area by continuing the green link. Dwellings overlook this area to increase visual supervision and safety.

The Denburn Character Area

This area is dominated by the Green Space Network to the south which provides the main focal point of the site in the form of open space along the Burn. The function of this space is to provide recreational opportunities in the form of footpaths along the burn, linking to footpaths around the site.

New landscaping will enhance this area and a play park will provide opportunities for children to enjoy this area.

Figure 10: Eastern Courtyard Perspective



Shared surfaces will reduce vehicle speeds and encourage pedestrian activity in the area. Houses to the east will be grouped around a courtyard.

Fairley Road Character Area

The houses facing Fairley Road will be of a similar typology of those found elsewhere along the street. They will formally face the street and will utilise a simple palette of materials and detailing complemented, where practical, by drystone dykes and formal tree planting forming their front gardens. The houses either side of the entrance will be selected to respond to 'gateway' opportunity.

The layout will make efficient use of the land and housing will range in floorspace from 44 square metres to 140 square metres offering a variety of accommodation and styles, ranging from one to five bedroom properties.

Materials will vary and include smooth render, dry dash render and stonework. Roofs will consist of concrete tiles or slate effect tiles in differing colours.

The developers promote a "fabric first" approach which looks at how the construction of the properties can create less need for energy consumption before adding any energy generating technologies. This primarily focuses on increased levels of insulation, air tightness and building orientation to maximise solar gain.

The buildings will meet current standards of sustainability promoted by Aberdeen City Council.

Figure 11: Fairley Road Perspective



An indicative design concept is contained in the masterplan as indicated below.

Figure 12: Indicative Design Concept



The indicative design concept is taken a step further in the preparation of an indicative block layout for the site.

Shared surfaces will reduce traffic speed and encourage pedestrian priority. The site is linked by a network of open space and footpaths and a play area is located within the open space to the south. This is explained further in the Masterplan document.

Figure 13: Indicative Block Layout



Infrastructure

A Drainage Impact Assessment and Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SUDs) will be submitted with any planning application(s) for the site. A construction method statement will also be submitted in

relation to development activity on the site.

The Masterplan provides details of foul and surface water infrastructure for the site. Sewers will be designed and installed in accordance with best practice advice.

Developer Contributions

Aberdeen City Council through their Action Programme indicates the infrastructure requirements for the site. Details are provided in the Masterplan.

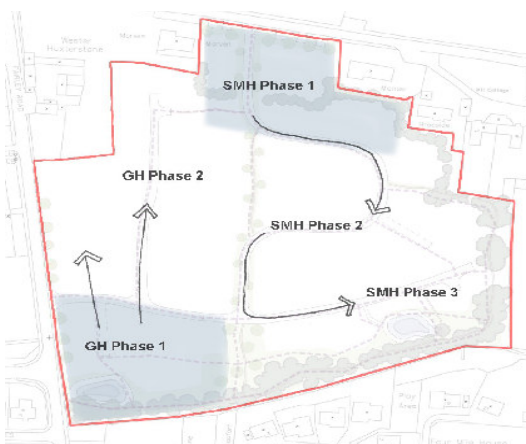
The amount and type of contributions will be commensurate with the scale and impact of development as required by Scottish Government Circular 1/2012: Planning Agreements.

The precise levels of infrastructure provision and developer contributions required for the development will be agreed with Aberdeen City Council via the planning gain officer in consultation with other statutory agencies.

Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the approved Local Development Plan and will be integrated throughout the development.

Phasing and Delivery

Development will be provided in a number of phases and the Masterplan provides an indication of when they will be delivered.



Planning application(s) for the site will be accompanied by a Delivery Statement providing further details of how the proposed development and supporting infrastructure will be provided.

Development Process

Subject to approval, the Masterplan will become Supplementary Guidance and a material planning consideration in the determination of planning application(s) within the area covered by the Masterplan.

All planning applications will comply with the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments)(Scotland) Regulations 2009 and where appropriate the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process outlined in the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

Planning applications, where required will be submitted with a PAC report detailing the public consultation carried out. This will provide evidence that there has been appropriate input from stakeholders, landowners, the local community and other community representatives in the preparation of the proposals. Where disagreement may have arisen which has not been resolved, this will be made clear.

Figure 14: Phasing

Further Information

For further information contact:

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The Masterplan was prepared in
association with Aberdeen City
Council by

Ryden

The logo for Ryden, featuring the word "Ryden" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Nicol
Studios

Russell



Fairhurst

The logo for Fairhurst, featuring the word "FAIRHURST" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with a red horizontal line underneath.