

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	6 November 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Maidencraig Masterplan
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/198

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Maidencraig Masterplan, prepared as a guide for the future development of land identified as Opportunity Sites OP43 Maidencraig South East and OP44 Maidencraig North East in the adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP).
- 1.2 A summary document of the Maidencraig Masterplan is appended to this Committee Report. The full Maidencraig Masterplan for sites OP43 and OP44 (September 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
- 1.3 A hard copy of the Masterplan is available in the Member's Library or within the Planning and Sustainable Development service at Ground Floor North, Marischal College, or by contacting the Masterplanning, Design and Conservation team.
- 1.4 The Masterplan has been made available to the Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill and Kingswells community councils for information prior to this report being considered for public consultation.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (a) Approve the Maidencraig Masterplan as interim planning advice; and
 - (b) Agree for officers to implement the process to ratify the Masterplan as Supplementary Guidance. This will include a 4 week public consultation with results reported to committee prior to submission to Scottish Government.

2.2 Definitions

'Interim Planning Advice' – this specifies that the Masterplan 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 Framework. This allows responses to be collated and reported back in the next committee cycle.

'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. 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 have directed otherwise.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council owns an area of land to the north of the site identified in fig 74 on page 54 of the Masterplan. As such the Council has a financial interest in the planning designation and future development of the site.
- 3.2 The developers have met the cost of preparation of the Masterplan including all consultation and engagement. The proposals will result in efficiencies in the determination of future planning applications related to the Masterplan, leading to a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Masterplan will 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.
- 4.2 Approving the 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.
- 4.3 In accordance with the Local Development Plan, Appendix 4, The Action Programme and the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

Manual, the Masterplan explicitly references how the development will address requirements for cumulative and local transport infrastructure; public transport along with walking and cycling.

- 4.4 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken on both Maidencraig sites as part of the preparation for the proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Maidencraig Masterplan has been produced by Bancon Developments and aims to create a vibrant, welcoming, attractive and sustainable community which is safe and easy to move around in. A multi disciplinary team has been assembled to produce the Masterplan including Bancon (planning and development), Archial (design and architecture) and David Wilson Associates (landscape).

Site Description

- 5.2 Maidencraig North East (OP44) and Maidencraig South East (OP43) are located to the north and south of the Lang Stracht (A944) respectively. Situated adjacent to Sheddocksley on the western edge of the City, OP44 has a gradual slope from the north of the site down to the A944. The southern site (OP43) is next to Summerhill and is much more undulating in nature with the land dropping steeply at the south into Den of Maidencraig.

Policy

- 5.3 The Masterplan 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.
- 5.4 The sites are allocated for 450 homes on OP43 and 300 homes on OP44 in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan - a total of 750 homes. There is no specific employment allocation associated with either site. Both sites are proposed within the first period of the plan, 2007-2016. A contribution of 25% affordable housing is required within this site and discussions will take place between the Councils housing service and other appropriate bodies. Discussions are ongoing with Registered Social Landlords.

Design Principles

- 5.5 The Maidencraig Masterplan establishes a vision for the site, providing a comprehensive spatial framework, integrating landuse, housing,

landscape and transport proposals and setting out a clear phasing scheme.

- 5.6 The Masterplan aims to create a sense of place, confirming a number of existing environmental, historical and cultural features will be retained. Development will also respond to its surroundings and the local identity, creating a series of distinct character areas connected by an integrated network of streets, paths and spaces.
- 5.7 The topography of the site is key to shaping the design and layout of the development and defining the character areas. This is particularly apparent in the sections that provide detail on how the development will relate to the Den of Maidenraig, the woodland to the north, the existing communities to the east and Dobbies to the west. The location and shape of the site play an important role in the form, design and character of the development.

Character Areas

The masterplan promotes three distinct character areas –

- 5.8 **Area A** (page 39 of the Masterplan document)
Maidenraig North East, bounded by Sheddocksley, woodland to the north, Dobbies Garden Centre and the Lang Stracht. This area is made up of a variety of house types, including a large provision of affordable housing to the eastern edge of the site. A commercial zone with uses complementary to a residential area has been included with the potential for offices, small shop units etc below flats. There will be pedestrian and cycle connections and the bus route loops through this part of the site. Details on Area A can be found on pages 39-44 of the Masterplan.
- 5.9 **Area B** (page 45 of the Masterplan document)
The western section of OP43 bounded to the north by the Lang Stracht, the west by the switch back, south by the Den of Maidenraig and the east by a group of existing properties and a landscaped gully. This area is lower density in response to the landscape, containing mainly semi detached and detached properties, 1 – 2 storeys in height. Courtyards and areas of open space help to draw the landscaping into the site to soften the edge of the development and integrate it into the landscape. Details on Area B can be found on pages 45 and 46 of the Masterplan.
- 5.10 **Area C** (page 47 of the Masterplan document)
Area C is bounded by the gully to the west, to the south by the Den of Maidenraig, to the east open space between the site and Summerhill and the Lang Stracht to the north. This area has a number of existing properties within it that have been incorporated in the proposed layout of the site with a mix of house types. There is also a small area of commercial development located on the ground floor of two of the units in the flatted development. This area has a number of courtyards that

open up onto the Den of Maidencraig, bringing the landscape into the development and softening the southern boundary of the site. Details on Area C can be found on pages 47 to 51 of the Masterplan.

- 5.11 Within the masterplan density has also been carefully considered. Higher density development is located around the bus routes and core areas. Lower density development is located closer to the periphery providing a more sensitive approach adjacent to the rural edges of the site.

Environment and Open Space

- 5.12 The vision for the site is a successfully integrated green network through the site which brings the surrounding landscape into it. The key principles for the site can be viewed on page 18 concept plan in the Masterplan (fig 17). The north - south green connections linking the Den of Maidencraig with the woodland and core paths to the north are very important and figure prominently in the masterplan.
- 5.13 The Masterplan has carefully considered the landscape network around the two Maidencraig sites and how they can be linked to produce a strong green space network. A representation of the Masterplan's proposed green space network can be viewed on pages 27 and 28 of the document. This shows that there will be a greater amount and better connected spaces than the Local Development Plan proposed.
- 5.14 The majority of existing trees and hedges on the site have been incorporated into the proposed masterplan. Detailed surveys and landscape plans will be required as part of the planning application process.
- 5.15 Open space provision will also be included within the site as part of the requirement of the Local Development Plan. Details of this can be found on page 29 of the Masterplan document.

Housing

- 5.16 The developer aims to provide a high quality living environment that will meet housing need and demand, providing a mix of house sizes types and tenures.
- 5.17 The Masterplan promotes 25% affordable housing in accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Work is ongoing with the council and affordable housing providers to deliver the right product. The affordable housing will be integrated with private development areas and will be of a design that does not differentiate them. Affordable housing provision is included within the first phase of development and in particular phase 1b is 100% affordable housing.

- 5.18 The developer is committed to sustainable house design having developed house types that utilise the best timber frame technology to minimise energy consumption. Consideration has also been given to aspect, orientation and maximising solar gain. The courtyards at the end of the streets allow light to permeate into the streets. The housing layout has also been considered to avoid overshadowing.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.19 The Masterplan considers in detail the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as well as cars.
- 5.20 There are a number of core paths throughout both the sites. Core Path AP45 to the north connects the site to Sheddocksley. Details of the footpaths and core paths are indicated on pages 20 and 21 of the Masterplan. These support maximum permeability for the site in accordance with Designing Streets.
- 5.21 Concerns were raised by members of the community in relation to further connections to Sheddocksley. Pedestrian connections are essential for the connectivity and permeability of the site, including access to school, particularly through the proposed woodland belt on the east of the northern site. The exact details of these pedestrian connections will be a matter for detailed assessment as part of the planning application process, but the requirement has been included in the Masterplan.
- 5.22 Connections to the existing cycle network along the A944 are provided.
- 5.23 The two sites are fragmented by the Lang Stracht (A944). Careful consideration has been given to ensuring they are as successfully connected to each other as possible. The central core area provides a strong framework to encourage north-south movement of people. This junction will be fully signalised and will incorporate pedestrian crossings. Consideration has also been given to the entrance to both sites to provide a sense of arrival and welcome. Two further junctions are proposed to access the sites, one to the east and one to the west adjacent to the bus gate. These junctions will be left in - left out only.
- 5.24 The primary street through the site provides a bus route serving the site. The bus route can be seen in detail on page 21 of the Masterplan. This will be an extension to the number 23 service with a left in to the southern half of the site and a left out to the northern part creating a new loop link.
- 5.25 The development will be made up of a strong street hierarchy with a primary street including a bus route, green links, secondary streets and minor streets. Examples of how these may look can be found on pages 32- 35 of the Masterplan document.

Infrastructure

- 5.26 Health – Off site contribution proposed by the Infrastructure Requirements. The developers have noted the concerns of the community about provision and have begun discussions with NHS Grampian. The masterplan is flexible enough to provide onsite facilities should this be NHS Grampians preferred option.
- 5.27 Transport – The road access strategy for Maidencraig requires three accessed off the Lang Stracht (A944). The eastern and western junctions will both be left in- left out and the central junction at Dobbies will be fully signalised including a pedestrian crossing.
- 5.28 Education – Discussions need to take place with education and no school is required on site under the infrastructure requirements. If once the school review has taken place a school is required on the site there is enough flexibility within the masterplan to provide a school in later phases of the development. The developer will continue discussions with Education in relation to this issue.
- 5.29 A detailed break down of the Infrastructure Requirements for the site can be found on pages 56 and 57 of the Masterplan.

Phasing

- 5.30 The sites are both allocated within the first period for development (2007-2016) as set out within the Local Development Plan. Details of phasing can be seen on the diagram on page 54 of the Masterplan.

Public consultation

- 5.31 Design for the site has evolved with continued input from the community. Their input has been fundamental in shaping the proposals ensuring that they meet the aspirations for the site. Events that took place during the masterplanning process for the sites include:

- Presentation to Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill Community Council early 2009.
- LDP development bids exhibition 4 June 2009
- End June 2009 Kingswells Community discussions.
- Meeting with Mastrick and Sheddocksley and Summerhill Community Councils to discuss 8th February 2012.
- Community exhibition – 29 March 2012 – 30 March 2012.

- 5.32 The main issues arising from consultation so far include:

- Traffic concerns,

Concerns were raised about the impact on the road network from the traffic generated by 750 houses. The developer confirmed that

they will carry out a detailed Transport Assessment as part of the planning application process. The Masterplan also includes good pedestrian and cycle connections as well as a bus route to provide options other than the car.

- Education,

Concern was raised by the community on the distances pupils would have to travel to school. The Masterplan that is adaptable so that if a school is required onsite it could be accommodated in either OP43 or OP44.

- Impact on wildlife,

Concern was raised about the potential impact the development could have on the wildlife within the site. The masterplan ensures connection of habitats through two north - south corridors. There will also be significant landscaping throughout the site. A phase 1 habitats survey will be carried out in support of any planning application.

- Provision of community facilities/health care/ nurseries.

The requirement for the a contribution to health care facilities in Kingswells raised concerns with the local community, due to limited public transport access. The developer is currently in discussion with NHS Grampian and the Masterplan has capacity to accommodate healthcare facilities onsite should this be the best solution.

Full details of the comments received for the engagement process and the responses made can be found in Appendix 6.1 of the Masterplan.

5.33 Pending approval of this report, the Maidencraig Masterplan will be the subject of statutory consultation. The following list highlights those expected to be consulted. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill Community Council
- Kingswells Community Council
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Scottish Water
- SEPA
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Historic Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise Grampian
- Transport Scotland

- NHS Grampian
- NESTRANS
- Planning Gain

- 5.34 The results of the statutory consultation will be reported to the Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee in due course, including any recommended amendments to the masterplan.
- 5.35 It is important to note that engagement will continue throughout the development process and any subsequent planning applications.
- 5.36 Discussions will take place between the developer and other relevant bodies, including NHS, education and bus providers prior to the submission of a planning application.
- 5.37 A transport assessment is currently being produced and will be submitted to support an application for Planning Permission in Principle.

6 IMPACT

- 6.1 The 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 The proposal contributes towards the Aberdeen City Council Administrations vision for Aberdeen: 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 systems which reduce carbon emissions.
- 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 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;
- Older – smaller house types including bungalows are included in proposals, and the design team have also expressed a willingness to consider other options to suit older people with the Council's housing team.
 - Younger – the proposals include the provision of Play Spaces for children.
 - Other (Housing) – greater provision of affordable and family housing in Aberdeen as a result of development.
 - Other (Health) – improved access useable open spaces for leisure pursuits and opportunities for walking/cycling/exercise.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The Maidencraig Masterplan (September 2012) 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
- 7.2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla_local_development_plan.asp
- 7.3 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31782&slD=14394>

8 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Laura Robertson
Senior Planner – Masterplanning, Design and Conservation

 01224 (52) 2246

 larobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk