

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	19 March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Grandhome Development Framework
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/025

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Grandhome Development Framework, prepared as a strategy for the future development of land identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) as OP12.
- 1.2 A summary document of the Development Framework is appended to this Committee Report. The full Development Framework for Grandhome 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 full Development Framework is available in the Members' Library (Town House), 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 Development Framework has been made available to the Bridge of Don Community Council for information prior to this report being considered for public consultation in accordance with the Council's approved Aberdeen Masterplanning Process.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (a) Approve the Grandhome Development Framework as interim planning advice; and
 - (b) Agree for officers to implement the process to ratify the Development Framework 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 Development Framework 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 targeting 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 The Landowner has met the cost of preparation of the Development Framework including all consultation and engagement. The proposals will result in efficiencies in the determination of future planning applications related to the Development Framework, leading to a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Development Framework reduces 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 economic development.
- 4.2 Approving the Development Framework will contribute to efficiencies in determining future planning applications and a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals. 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 The Development Framework contributes towards a higher rate of new house building in the City, including 25% affordable housing provision in accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012).

- 4.4 In accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Action Programme and the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual, the Development Framework references how the development will seek to 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 Grandhome site as part of the preparation for the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Development Framework has been produced by Turnberry Planning on behalf of The Grandhome Trust and aims to create a mixed use urban expansion to the north of the city. A multi disciplinary project team has contributed to the preparation of the Framework, consisting of:

The Grandhome Trust – Landowners
Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ) – Masterplanning consultants
Janet Benton – Landscape Designer
Fairhurst Ltd. – Engineering Consultants
Turnberry Planning Ltd. – Planning Consultants

Site Description

- 5.2 The Grandhome site (OP12) is located to the North of Aberdeen. It is situated between the Bridge of Don and the River Don and Dyce. The site is bounded to the south by the Parkway. The site is currently largely in agricultural use.
- 5.3 The site is undulating with levels varying from 30m at the south to 90m at the highest point of the site. The slope rises up from the Parkway to Whitestripes Road then back down again to the north. There are a number of tree belts, woodland blocks and existing buildings that will be retained on the site.
- 5.4 The site falls entirely within the Bridge of Don Community Council catchment.

Policy Summary

- 5.5 The Development Framework has been prepared following the Council's adopted Aberdeen Masterplanning Process and contributes towards the Scottish Government and Aberdeen Local Development Plan policy aims of raising design quality 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.

- 5.6 The Grandhome site is identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012) as Opportunity Site (OP12) for 7000 homes and 5 hectares of employment land. The housing provision is split into three land release phases, 2,600 homes proposed for the period up to 2016, 2,100 homes up to 2023 and 2,300 beyond 2024. 5 hectares of employment land (class 4) will also be developed prior to 2024.
- 5.7 A contribution of 25% affordable housing is required within this site, part of which will include a Gypsy and Traveller site in accordance with policy H7 of the Local Development Plan.
- 5.8 This proposal helps bring forward land for development in the early phases of the Local Development Plan and helps meet the targets and objectives in the Structure Plan, including that development should generally be no less than 30 dwellings per hectare as an average across the whole site.

Opportunity and Vision

- 5.9 The vision for Grandhome is to create a high quality mixed-use urban expansion of Aberdeen, adhering to the principles of creating a successful place and responding to the traditional vernacular of the region. A successful place must have an identity and be safe and pleasant, easy to move around, welcoming, adaptable and ensure a good use of resources.
- 5.10 The vision for Grandhome is based around 6 core principles:
1. Strong sense of place
 2. Sustainable and walkable neighbourhoods
 3. A well - balanced mixed community
 4. Green spaces
 5. Well connected streets
 6. A new centre for the Bridge of Don

Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI)

- 5.11 The site is part of the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI) project launched in March 2010. The SSCI was set up by the Scottish Government in 2009 with the aim to create developments of high quality design which are distinctive, innovative and create outstanding communities which, once developed, can be used as best practise examples.
- 5.12 Of the 68 SSCI submissions received by the Scottish Government, 11 were awarded recognition; one of these successful projects was Grandhome. The main focus of the Initiative is developing proposals via partnership between public and private sectors.

- 5.13 Due to the scale of the project and early stage in the process, the Grandhome proposal benefited from a national Charrette. The Charrette concept is an interactive public design workshop which creates draft Masterplan options for the site through new public engagement and design techniques. The Charrette took place in March 2010 and consisted of an 8 day design exercise involving the community which translated ideas into plans and drawings and tested the Masterplan as it developed. A number of participative workshops took place, involving members of the public and stakeholders alike.
- 5.14 The design and layout have evolved since the Charrette to reflect the Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies and Supplementary Guidance which has been adopted since. In addition, further workshops and meetings have taken place involving the community and other stakeholders, ACC staff and site visits by the Grandhome Design team.
- 5.15 Details of the evolution of the design from Charrette to current proposed layout can be viewed on pages 26 and 27 of the Development Framework.

Transect Based Approach

- 5.16 The Development Framework takes on the approach of a transect based design. The transect approach measures the character of an environment from Rural to Urban. For the purpose of this Development Framework, the transects relating to Grandhome have been modelled on existing examples within Aberdeen have been used to inform the basic principles. Details of this can be found on page 34 of the document.
- 5.17 The transect zones that cover Grandhome include:
- transect 3 (sub-urban zone) modelled on Rubislaw Den North
 - transect 4 (general urban zone) modelled on Victoria Street
 - transect 5 (urban centre zone) modelled on Rosemount Place
- 5.18 A number of streets in Old Aberdeen have also been considered via the transect approach. This approach has identified that the density, mix of uses, proportions and high quality of design of the High Street and Wrights' and Coopers' Place in Old Aberdeen are deemed appropriate principles to be applied to different street types within the Grandhome development. This transect analysis has helped to set the basic principles for the different zones and character types within Grandhome.
- 5.19 Details of the analysis and examples of the transects can be found on pages 34-41 of the Development Framework.

- 5.20 Beyond the study of street composition, the proportions of buildings are also examined. Old Aberdeen is identified as an exemplar of the type of local character to be celebrated in the future development of the Grandhome estate. The focus of this exercise is Old Aberdeen's proportions, architectural typologies and materials. This study will inform the design of the houses which will include a range of sizes, costs and styles. The proportions can be used in both traditional and contemporary designs to ensure that groups of buildings fit well together making a positive and consistently high quality streetscape. The typologies can be found on pages 68 – 71 of the Development Framework.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.21 The Development Framework aims to ensure a high degree of pedestrian connectivity through and beyond neighbourhoods. It is anticipated that residents will live within 5 minute walking distance of one of the neighbourhood centres. There will be a number of paths within and through the site which will also connect into the wider core path and cycle network around the site.
- 5.22 A pedestrian/cycle bridge is shown connecting the site to the south of the river, linking into another development site with an adopted Masterplan (Davidson's Mill). The movement strategy can be seen on page 47 of the Development Framework. The Framework also considers the different types of paths that would be appropriate within the site.
- 5.23 A Transport Assessment (TA) is currently being prepared and will determine the level of development that can be accommodated on the road network prior to the AWPR or the Third Don Crossing being in place. The TA will also determine road and junction requirements for the development and will help to inform the requirements for each phase of development.
- 5.24 Public transport provision has been demonstrate throughout the site and will be implemented on a phased basis. Ultimately the whole site will be designed to have a bus stop within 400m of every residence.

Mixed Use Development

- 5.25 The Development Framework shows a mixed community, with a number of mixed use neighbourhood centres. These centres are shown on the plan on page 45 and will likely include uses such as retail, café, and office on ground floor with flatted properties above. Within the high street at the south east of the site uses could include a local supermarket, a hotel, health centre, and the potential for a cinema. The site will also include a number of civic buildings such as a religious building, covered market and sites for community uses.

- 5.26 Schools will be located at the heart of these mixed use areas and at the centre of the communities.

Streets

- 5.27 The street hierarchy of Grandhome aims to be permeable with a clear hierarchical network. This includes a main street and high street (which could accommodate buses), minor streets, lanes, courtyards and paths. The permeability of the site and the indicative street types are shown on pages 50-57 of the Development Framework. Street design is a fundamental part of the character of the different areas and the development of Grandhome as a whole.

Environment, ecology and Open Space

- 5.28 The provision and integration of appropriate open space is fundamental to the design and layout. The vision is to create a community with access to high quality open space, accommodating a full range of uses from formal to informal recreation. An electricity pylon line runs north-south through the site, this has a no build exclusion zone and has been designed as open space. There is also a large east—west park on the elevated ground to allow views over the valley and City beyond. The total open space provision is over 80ha and will include allotments, village greens, outdoor sports pitches and civic squares.
- 5.29 The Framework has been designed with reference to ACC’s Open Space Supplementary Guidance (March 2012). Section 5.7.4 of the Framework details how the key open spaces and their functions will be accommodated throughout the site. This includes:

Major Town Park	Located at the centre of the site: every house would be within 20 minutes walk of this
Neighbourhood Open Space	3 to be provided and located within 10 minute walk of all residences
Play Areas	There will be sufficient number within a 5 minute walking distance of all residences

- 5.30 It should be noted that due to their scale, some of the open spaces within the site will be multifunctional and have more than one open space use. The final design, detail and maintenance of these open spaces will be addressed through detailed Masterplanning exercises for each phase of the site. The phasing is shown on page 78 of the Development Framework.
- 5.31 A number of ecological surveys have been carried out to inform the evolution of the Development Framework, these include otter and water vole surveys, phase 1 habitat survey, bat surveys and a red squirrel survey. The Framework and subsequent Masterplans aim to enhance biodiversity and improve ecology within the site. There will also be the

requirement to carry out further ecological studies to inform and further develop the detailed phased mastepans.

Housing

- 5.32 The proposals for Grandhome include a mix of house types, densities and uses. The majority of development will be 2-3 storeys in height with occasional single storey properties in limited locations.
- 5.33 The density of the site will be approximately 30 dwellings per hectare in accordance with both Structure Plan and Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies. The higher density will be in mixed use cores with lower density towards the neighbourhood edges. The diagram explaining density is on page 42 of the Framework document.
- 5.34 The house types, sizes and design will vary across the site but the indicative composition may include:
- 10-15% one bedroom
 - 20-25% two bedroom
 - 30-40% three bedroom
 - 25-30% four bedroom
 - 5% five plus bedrooms.
- 5.35 There is a requirement for the site to deliver 25% affordable housing in accordance with Policy H5 – Affordable Housing of the Local Development Plan. The affordable housing provision will be tenure blind and spread throughout the whole site. The table on page 7 of the Framework shows that there will be 25% provided as part of each Local Development Plan phase. The affordable housing provision includes a site for Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with policy H7 of the Local Development Plan. Please refer to page 67 of the Framework document for further detail on affordable housing provision within the site.

Employment Provision

- 5.36 There is the requirement to provide 5ha of employment land within the Grandhome site. This has been identified at the south east corner, adjacent to the parkway. This will link in with the principles of Energetica and be a gateway to the development. High quality design is fundamental at this part of the site due to its public visibility. The principles and further detail of the employment provision will be determined through the detailed Masterplan process for the employment site which will be developed in phase 3A of the development.

Infrastructure

- 5.37 A detailed break down of the Infrastructure Requirements for the site can be found on pages 79 - 83 of the Development Framework.
- 5.38 Education provision – the ALDP Action Programme details the requirement to provide three to four primary schools and one new Secondary School with community facilities. Any new secondary school will have to include community learning hub. The project team have had discussions with the Council’s Education Service and have provided sites for the three Primaries and one Secondary School in the Framework, with one of the primary schools on a joint campus with the secondary. These can be seen on page 45 of the Framework and detailed text on page 81.
- 5.39 The requirement to provide safe routes to school has been identified within the Framework and routes will be provided within the detailed Masterplans for each phase.
- 5.40 It is noted within the document that school provision initially will be accommodated within existing school capacity until a time where appropriate pupil numbers have been generated to require construction of new schools. The detail and exact phasing of the school requirements for Grandhome will be identified in later Masterplans, however the first new primary school is envisaged to be required as part of phase 2.
- 5.41 Health care provision – the ALDP Action Programme details the requirement for a new GP practice along with dental and community pharmacy facilities. The new 16 GP Health Centre needs to accommodate the existing four GP Practice and an additional 12 GPs, two new six dental chair surgeries and four new community pharmacies. The health centre is shown on page 45 of the Framework, within the Town Centre, the site could be delivered early in the development if it was deemed necessary. The smaller health care facilities including the pharmacies will be accommodated within the neighbourhoods to allow provision to be spread across the site.
- 5.42 Water and drainage – a full list of requirements will be identified following completion of a detailed Drainage Impact Assessment and Scottish Water Development Impact Assessment which Hermiston Securities will commission. A Drainage Strategy will also be prepared and submitted as part of the application for Planning Permission in Principle.
- 5.43 There will be no connections onto the Parkway until such a time as it has been de-trunked. The first access into the site will be taken from Whitestripes Avenue. A Transport Assessment will be carried out to inform the design of the streets network, access, junctions and any required improvements. Detailed Masterplans for each phase of the

development will be produced to provide more detail on all of the infrastructure requirements and their phasing.

- 5.44 The Development Framework references the requirement for the development to contribute towards the Strategic Transport Fund.

Phasing

- 5.45 An indicative phasing strategy has been developed which details the delivery of the allocation in accordance with the ALDP 2012.

	Approximate house numbers
Phase 1	450
Phase 2	1800
Phase 3	500
Phase 4	1200
Phase 5	950
Phase 6	1100
Phase 7	1000

- 5.46 The phasing strategy amounts to approximately 7000 units as identified in the Local Development Plan allocation. The phasing plan also includes the relevant associated open space and the employment site at the south east corner. The phasing plan can be viewed on page 78 of the Development Framework.

Public Consultation and Involvement

- 5.47 Throughout the design process for Grandhome, the project team have involved the local community and stakeholders in the proposals.
- 5.48 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:
- Local Development Plan: Development Options Consultation Event – June 2009
 - Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report Consultation Event – November 2009
 - Visioning workshops in February 2010
 - SSCI Charrette Series 8 day workshop March 2010 – (Resulting report produced by Scottish Government Oct 2010)
 - Early 2012 workshop
 - Community Presentation – March 2012
 - Architecture and Design Scotland Design Review April 2012
 - Public exhibition October 2012
 - Architecture and Design Scotland Design Forum January 2013

5.49 The main issues arising from consultation during the preparation of the Development Framework include:

- **Current Infrastructure**

Concern was raised about the perceived lack of infrastructure in place to accommodate the development particularly prior to AWPR and 3rd Don Crossing, this includes road capacity and public transport service.

Detailed Transport Assessments will determine the level of development that could be accommodated prior to the strategic infrastructure being in place. The TA will also determine the level of improvement required to the current road network including both Whitestripes Road and Avenue.

Detailed discussions will take place with the bus operators to ensure that the site is well serviced by public transport. Once the Third Don crossing has been built there will be potential for new bus routes to connect the site to the city centre. The main and high street within the site will have the capacity to accommodate public transport.

- **Community Facilities, services and retail provision**

There is a strong desire for new facilities in the site. Particular reference was made to a community cinema and community hall. There was however concern raised by some attendees about viability and security of uses such as a cinema and shops.

Each small district centre will have retail provision and amenities and will ensure where possible good connections to the existing communities. The Framework also ensures that the commercial facilities are located in sustainable locations with good footfall and natural surveillance. The town centre will be located at the south east of the site to allow existing residents easy access as well as attracting passing trade.

- **Environment and open space**

The consultation raised the desire for more green space for the wider Bridge of Don. Concern was also raised that water bodies within the site need to be addressed and maintained appropriately to avoid any issues for home owners.

Consideration has been given to the green space network to ensure it connects with the green belt and offers desirable amenities. Over 80 hectares of open space are provided within the site, including parks, play areas and allotments. Landscape provision has been considered fundamental from the outset and further detail provided at the relevant Masterplanning stage.

- **Housing**

The Community highlighted the need for a mix of housing across the site including detached bungalows. There is also the need for appropriate car parking associated with the houses and flats.

Each neighbourhood within Grandhome will include a mix of housing tenure, size and type. There will be the provision of 25% affordable housing across the site. The detailed phased Masterplans will provide more detail on the mix and location of the different types of houses.

5.50 Details of the comments received throughout the preparation of the Framework, the engagement process and responses can be found on Pages 22-25 of the Development Framework and in appendices 1 and 2 (pages 84-86).

5.51 Pending approval of this report, the Grandhome Development Framework will be the subject of a 4 week statutory consultation beginning on Monday 25 March 2013. The following list highlights those that will be consulted. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- Bridge of Don Community Council
- Dyce and Stoneywood Community Council (as neighbouring cc)
- Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council (as neighbouring cc)
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic 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

5.52 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 Framework.

5.53 It is important to note that engagement will continue throughout the development process, during detailed Masterplan stages and any subsequent planning applications.

6 IMPACT



- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 The proposal 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.
- 6.3 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 with regard to delivering high levels of design from all development, maintaining an up-to-date planning framework, sustainable development and open space provision.
- 6.5 The proposal 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.
- 6.6 An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been prepared. In summary:

Race	the proposals include the provision of a Gypsy Traveller site to improve access to facilities.
Younger	the proposals include the provision of education facilities and recreational Play Spaces for children. In addition there will be opportunities for nursery development within the proposed mixed-use centres.
Other Housing	greater provision of housing to meet the housing demand, affordable housing to meeting housing needs, and a range of housing types to suit differing needs and as a result of demographic change.
Health	improved access to useable open spaces for leisure pursuits and opportunities for walking/cycling/exercise.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The Grandhome Development Framework March 2013 is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link:
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning
- 7.2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=42278&slD=9484>
- 7.3 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process 2008 (article 22, Planning Committee Minute, 6/11/08)
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_planningbriefs.asp
- 7.4 SSCI Charrette Series Report
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/AandP/Projects/SSCI/SSCICharretteSeries/Charrette>

8 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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