

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	12 November 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Persley Den (Woodside) Masterplan OP135
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/207

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### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the draft Persley Den (Woodside) Masterplan, prepared as a strategy for the future development of land identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) as OP135.
- 1.2 The proposed strategy and masterplan varies to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 OP135 site allocation, for the following two reasons:
1. An increase in the overall number of housing units, from the OP135 allocated 300, up to 400 units.
  2. The masterplan proposes to deliver a fixed number of 150 affordable housing units which equates to 37.5% which varies from the 50% as specified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- Further details on the above points can be found in Sections 5.10 and 5.11 of this Report.
- 1.3 A summary document of the Masterplan is appended to this Committee Report. The full Masterplan for Persley Den (Woodside) (November 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](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning)
- 1.4 A hard copy of the full Masterplan 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.
- 1.5 The Masterplan has been made available to the Bucksburn & Newhills, Northfield, Bridge of Don, and Tillydrone community councils for information prior to this Report being considered by Committee.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) Approve the Persley Den (Woodside) Masterplan as interim planning advice; and
- (b) Agree for officers to implement the process to ratify the Masterplan as Supplementary Guidance, which includes a 4 week public consultation period. The results of the consultation, including any necessary amendments, will be reported back 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 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 The Woodside site is in multiple ownership, being jointly owned by GSS Developments (Aberdeen) Ltd, Aberdeen Lads Club and Aberdeen City Council. The three respective landowners have worked together throughout the masterplanning process. A plan of the site ownership is shown in Section 1.6 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 preparing the Masterplan including all consultation and engagement events held to date.

## **4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Masterplan reduces the risk of piecemeal 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 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 The Masterplan contributes towards a higher rate of new house building in the City, including affordable housing provision of 37.5%.
- 4.4 In accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Action Programme and the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual, the Masterplan references how the development will seek to contribute towards requirements for wider infrastructure needs.
- 4.5 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken on the Woodside site as part of the preparation for the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. An individual SEA Screening Report has also been undertaken on the Persley Den (Woodside) Masterplan document. This Screening Report concludes there is unlikely to be any significant environmental effects from the proposed development. The Screening Report is currently with the three statutory consultation agencies for determination and agreement.

## **5 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 5.1 The Masterplan has been produced by Halliday Fraser Munro on behalf of GSS Developments (Aberdeen) Ltd, Aberdeen Lads Club and Aberdeen City Council (Asset Management). The Masterplan aims to produce a new sustainable residential community to the north of the City on land adjacent to the River Don. A multi-disciplinary project team has contributed to the preparation of the Masterplan, consisting of:

Halliday Fraser Munro – Architects and Planning Consultants  
Ironsides Farrar – Environmental Consultants  
Fairhurst Ltd. – Structural and Civil Engineers  
Struan Dalgleish Arboriculture – Tree and Woodland Consultants  
Wallace Whittle – Mechanical and Electrical Engineers  
Northern Ecological Services – Ecologists

## Site Description

- 5.2 The OP135 Persley Den site lies within the Woodside suburb of Aberdeen that runs in a linear strip west to east along the banks of the River Don between Old Aberdeen and Bucksburn. The site is presently accessed via the former Woodside Estate road from a junction on Mugiemoor Road. Across the river is a large Tesco superstore, Bannatyne's Gym and waste water treatment works.

The OP135 site extends to 19.1 hectares and the residential Land Release portion of the site covers approximately 12 hectares. The site currently consists of sports pitches, tree belts, sports changing facilities, access tracks, national cycle network, green belt and green space networks.

## Policy Summary

- 5.3 The Masterplan 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.
- 5.4 The Persley Den (Woodside) site is identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012) as Opportunity Site (OP135) capable of accommodating up to 300 homes, 50% to be affordable housing as per Masterplan for Woodside Sports Park and Village. Parts of the site may have risk of flooding and development will have to be avoided in those areas. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required to support any development proposals for the site.
- 5.5 The Reporter's conclusions from the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Examination noted that the indicative masterplan ("Masterplan for Woodside Sports Park and Village") included with the developer bid for the site proposed that no sports pitches would be lost in the development of the site and that new, improved pitches together with changing and viewing facilities would be provided. As a result, the Reporter recommended a text addition to the Local Development Plan to reflect this, along with flood risk assessment requirements.
- 5.6 This proposal at Woodside helps bring forward land for development in the early phases of the Local Development Plan and help meet the targets and objectives in the Structure Plan, including that development should generally be no less than 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) as an average across the whole site. On average, development proposed at Persley Den (Woodside) is 37dph.

## Concept and Vision

- 5.7 The vision is to create a new Donside village continuing and reinterpreting the established pattern of small settlements along Aberdeen's lower River Don valley. The Masterplan has been informed by both its surrounding context and on-site constraints. With the aim of creating a unique and sustainable new residential community for Aberdeen, the development at Persley Den will be permeable and easy to move around, have a clear street hierarchy and further enhance the landscape benefits of its riverside setting.

## Design Principles

- 5.8 The Masterplan sets out a number of key **design principles**, which have in turn informed the detailed proposals for the site and its defined character areas.
- Capture and reinterpret the spatial qualities of Old Aberdeen and Brig O' Balgownie;
  - Create a village development layout with a clear hierarchy of recognisable spaces, whether streets, parks or courtyards;
  - Create a development contained by the established topography and landscape elements of tree belts, green open space, steep slopes and the riverside;
  - Create a development that is complimentary to and inclusive regarding the existing residential cluster at Hutcheon Low;
  - Deliver consolidated and improved sports facilities at Woodside;
  - Deliver an improved, safer access onto Mugiemoss Road.

## Character Areas

- 5.9 The Masterplan identifies 4 'character areas', as named below. Within Section 7 of the Masterplan document each area has a detailed description including materials, massing & density, parking, architecture and landscape design.

Character Area	Description
The Village Centre	This is the formal urban heart of the village and will include formal recreational space, overlooked by housing. This will also be the appropriate area for small-scale retail provision if there was a demand. Good connections to the rest of the site will help ensure the success of the area, and encourage social integration.
The Lanes	The lanes are a semi-private and more intimate area than the village square. The houses will in the main face to the outside of the blocks addressing the street whilst behind a shared surface courtyard area will be created. Within the courtyard there will also be housing fronting lanes.

The Persley Brae	The area here enjoys an elevated position on the site and will benefit from great views across the site. There is a mix of buildings types here including, terraces, semi-detached, detached and apartment blocks.
Parkside	This area is soft and informal; all housing has been orientated to look out over the parkland. This area will provide an attractive and appropriate edge to the development when viewed from the riverside and wider amenity areas.

## Affordable Housing

- 5.10 The proposals for Persley Den (Woodside) include a range of housing types and sizes including: flats, terraces, semi-detached and detached dwellings. All respective developers will work with the Council and the registered social landlords to provide the proposed 37.5% level of affordable housing. It should be noted that due to the corresponding proposed increase in overall units on the site to 400, this affordable housing percentage varies from the 50% specified for the OP135 site allocation in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012.
- 5.11 Despite the rise in overall units, Section 6.2 of the Masterplan demonstrates that 400 units can be accommodated on the site with regard to density, site constraints and the character of the surrounding area.
- 5.12 The Persley Den (Woodside) site proposes to deliver a fixed number of 150 affordable units on the site. This level does still deliver 50% of the original ALDP allocation (50% of 300 = 150 units). Further details can be found in Section 6.1 of the Masterplan, however proposals specify three key objectives with regard to affordable housing delivery:
- Delivery of 150 affordable homes;
  - Integration of affordable homes within the overall development in terms of design and operation; and
  - Contribution to the Council's affordable housing strategy.

## Open Space and Sports Pitch Provision

- 5.13 A variety of open spaces are proposed within this development, including opportunities to enhance access to the surrounding recreational open spaces. These spaces will encourage pedestrian movement, enhance setting and amenity and help foster a feeling of neighbourhood.
- 5.14 The Masterplan has been designed with reference to Aberdeen City Council's Open Space Supplementary Guidance (March 2012). Section 6.5 of the Masterplan details how the key open spaces and their

functions will be accommodated throughout the site. The provision is summarised in the following table:

<b>Open Space</b>	<b>Typology</b>
Entrance Avenue & Persley Brae	Green corridor, natural/semi-natural, local open space
Village Square	Civic / neighbourhood open space
Village Green	Local public park, playspace for children
Sports	Outdoor sports area
Riverside	Green corridor, natural/semi-natural, major open space

- 5.15 Leisure provision is a key element of the history of the site and the Persley Den Masterplan concept. The existing pitch provision on the site is detailed in Section 4.9 of the Masterplan and these have been thoroughly assessed through consultation with Sport Scotland and other key stakeholders.
- 5.16 This assessment has resulted in a package of upgrading / replacement and financial contributions which has been agreed in principle with Sport Scotland. The resulting sport pitch provision proposed as part of this development is illustrated in detail in Section 6.6 of the Masterplan. In addition to the proposed upgrading of the two pitches on site, an off site financial contribution will be agreed and controlled through a legal agreement as part of any future formal planning application process. As a result, the development of OP135 would result in no net loss of sports pitches, which is in line with Scottish Planning Policy, the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the original Masterplan concept (“Masterplan for Woodside Sports Park and Village”).

## **Flooding**

- 5.17 A detailed flood risk assessment has informed the production of the Masterplan. This is in accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan with reference to the SEPA Flood Map. The development layout has been refined to respond to and address the results of the flood risk assessment and conclude that no part of the developed site is at risk of flooding. Further details, including a flood inundation plan, can be found in Section 4.8 of the Masterplan.

## **Infrastructure**

- 5.18 Education provision – the ALDP Action Programme details the site is zoned to Woodside Primary School which is forecast to have some spare capacity to accommodate pupils generated up until 2020, however an extension or temporary accommodation may be required and developer contributions will be sought. This should also refer to Secondary school capacity. The site is zoned to St Machar Academy, which has some spare capacity to accommodate pupils generated up

until 2019, however an extension or temporary accommodation may be required and developer contributions will be sought.

- 5.19 Health care provision – the ALDP Action Programme and Masterplan details the requirement that the site will be required to make a proportionate developer contribution towards the provision of additional health facilities in the area. Detailed phasing and delivery of requirements will be agreed with NHS Grampian as part of any planning application for the Persley Den (Woodside) site.
- 5.20 Water and drainage – a full list of requirements will be identified following completion of a detailed Drainage Impact Assessment and submitted as part of any planning application for the Persley Den (Woodside) site.
- 5.21 A detailed break down of the Infrastructure Requirements for the site can be found in Section 12 of the Masterplan document.

### Phasing

- 5.22 An indicative phasing strategy has been developed which details the delivery of the Persley Den (Woodside) site.

January 2014	Masterplan Adopted as Supplementary Guidance
Spring 2014	Planning Permission in Principle Approved
Autumn 2014	Matters Specified in Conditions Approved
End 2014	Building Warrants and other Statutory Consents Approved
Spring 2015	Commencement of Development
End 2015	Enabling Infrastructure Works (Roads, Drainage, site works)
Throughout 2016	Construction and completion of phase 1 75 units at Persley Brae west; Construction and completion of phase 1 70 units at Village Centre
Throughout 2017	Construction and completion of phase 2 75 units at Persley Brae east; Construction and completion of 70 units at The Lanes
Throughout 2018	Construction and completion of 110 units at The Lanes and Parkside

### Public Consultation and Involvement

- 5.23 Throughout the design process for Persley Den (Woodside) site, the project team have involved local people and stakeholders in the



proposals. The public consultation for both the Masterplan and an application for Planning Permission in Principle have been run in tandem to avoid duplication and confusion. Two public consultation events have taken place on 27 June 2013 and 29 August 2013. It is estimated that over 100 people attended the first event and around 30 the second, with the majority of attendees being neighbouring residents.

- 5.24 A website was also set up to assist with public consultation. This went live on 28 June 2013, the day after the first consultation event.  
[www.persleyden.co.uk](http://www.persleyden.co.uk)
- 5.25 The public have also had the opportunity to get involved in, and influence, the Aberdeen Local Development Plan preparation process. The Persley Den (Woodside) site was included in the Proposed Local Development Plan as a potential future development allocation.
- 5.26 The main issues arising from consultation so far include:
- Development should be sympathetic to landscape, trees and wildlife
  - Need replacement sports facilities
  - Development has potential to bring benefits to Hutcheon Low, through the upgrading of access
  - Concerns regarding flooding
  - Concerns regarding traffic impact on Mugiemoor Road and Haudagain
  - Supportive of green space, play areas and community spaces
  - Access roads should be kept separate
  - Riverside paths should be upgraded
  - Supportive of idea of new village
  - Need buildings with character
  - Concerns about conflict between sports pitches and public open space and housing
  - Development should only be on the higher ground
  - Development should not happen until Third Don Crossing
  - Private and social housing should be mixed
- 5.27 Full details of the comments received for the engagement process and the responses made can be found in Section 2 of the Masterplan.
- 5.28 The design for the site has evolved with regard to comments raised at these public consultation events. Comments raised have been key in the preparation of the Masterplan and have been further explored as the project has progressed. The updated Masterplan has taken account of comments received through the consultation process and also through the on-going dialogue with Aberdeen City Council and statutory consultees such as Transport Scotland and Sport Scotland.

5.29 The following changes have been made to the Masterplan as a result of public consultation comments received so far:

- Development pulled back from Woodside House to lessen impact and allow for enhanced sports facilities
- Development removed from NW area – this will now be an amenity area
- Creation of a wildlife corridor along the eastern boundary and SUDS areas
- Enhanced riverside footpaths and pedestrian linkages to Great Northern Road
- Further consideration of sports provision
- Further consideration of access
- Flexibility over the adaptability of some units to be used as community / commercial / retail space
- Further consideration of housing numbers and formats.

5.30 Pending approval of this Report, the Persley Den (Woodside) Masterplan will be the subject of statutory consultation. The following list highlights those that will be consulted. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- Northfield Community Council
- Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council
- Tillydrone Community Council
- Bridge of Don Community Council
- Aberdeen City Council services
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Authority
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Aberdeen Cycle Forum
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise Grampian
- SEPA
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Water
- Sustainable Urban Fringes Aberdeen project (River Don Corridor)
- Historic Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- NHS Grampian
- NESTRANS
- Planning Gain
- Sport Scotland

5.31 The results of the statutory consultation will be reported to the Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee in due course, including any recommended amendments to the Masterplan.

5.32 It is important to note that opportunities for public engagement will continue throughout the development process and any subsequent planning applications for the site.

## **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, many of the aims of the proposal will have positive benefits, including;

- Younger – the proposals include the provision of Play Space for children.
- Housing – greater provision of housing to meet the housing demand and affordable housing to meeting range of housing needs.

- Health – improved access useable open spaces for leisure pursuits and opportunities for walking/cycling/exercise.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 The Persley Den (Woodside) Masterplan (November 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](http://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\\_environment/planning/planning\\_sustainable\\_development/pla\\_masterplan\\_process.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_masterplan_process.asp)
- 7.4 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process: Update Report EPI/12/231 (agenda item 1.1, article 4, Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee, 6/11/12)  
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=2523&Ver=4>

## **8 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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