



COUNTESSWELLS

Development Framework and Masterplan
February 2014

SUMMARY

Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan: Summary

Introduction

This document has been produced to provide a brief summary of the Countesswells, Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan document. This summary aims to highlight the key information and guidance contained within the document however for a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the process, aims and outcomes of the Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan the main document should be referred to.

The Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan document has been produced to fulfil the Aberdeen Local Development Plan requirement for the production of a Masterplan for the land at Countesswells, site OP58, aiming to coordinate the planning and delivery of both the development and its associated infrastructure requirements. It is intended that this Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan will be adopted by Aberdeen City Council as formal Supplementary Guidance to the Local Development Plan.

The Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan has been produced by a multi-disciplinary team assembled by The Countesswells Consortium. The Consortium comprises Heron Property, Stewart Milne Homes and Ian Suttie. The team have worked closely together to provide a well considered and appropriate masterplan response to the site. The Development Framework and Masterplan has been informed and supported by a series of technical studies and reports.

Throughout the evolution of the Development Framework and Masterplan the design has benefitted from both community consultation and also regular meetings with Aberdeen City Council.

The document is set out in seven sections, these are:

1. Introduction
2. Planning Context and Masterplan Process
3. Site Analysis
4. The Opportunity and Vision
5. The Development Framework
6. Phase 1 Masterplan
7. Delivery statement

The following pages give a brief description of the key information contained within these sections.



fig. 01: Countesswells site location.

Section 1: introduction

The Countesswells site is located approximately 7km to the west of Aberdeen city centre. The site OP58 as included within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan covers an area of approximately 165.9 hectares (410acres).

Supporting information

A number of technical studies and surveys have been produced to support the production of the Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan. These include:

- Planning Statement
- Consultation Report
- Environmental Statement
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Education Strategy
- Outline tree survey

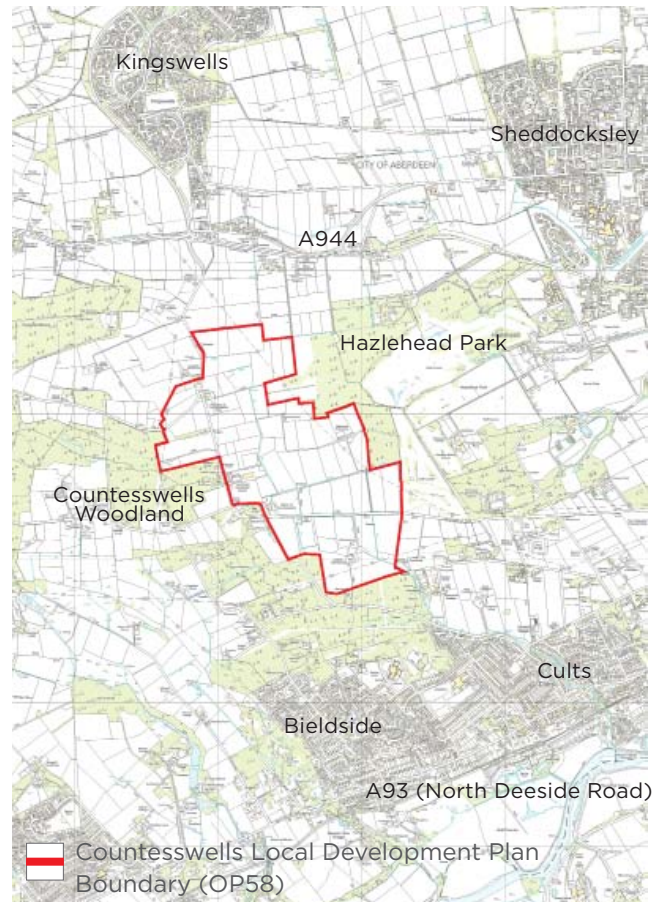


fig. 02: Countesswells (OP58) site boundary

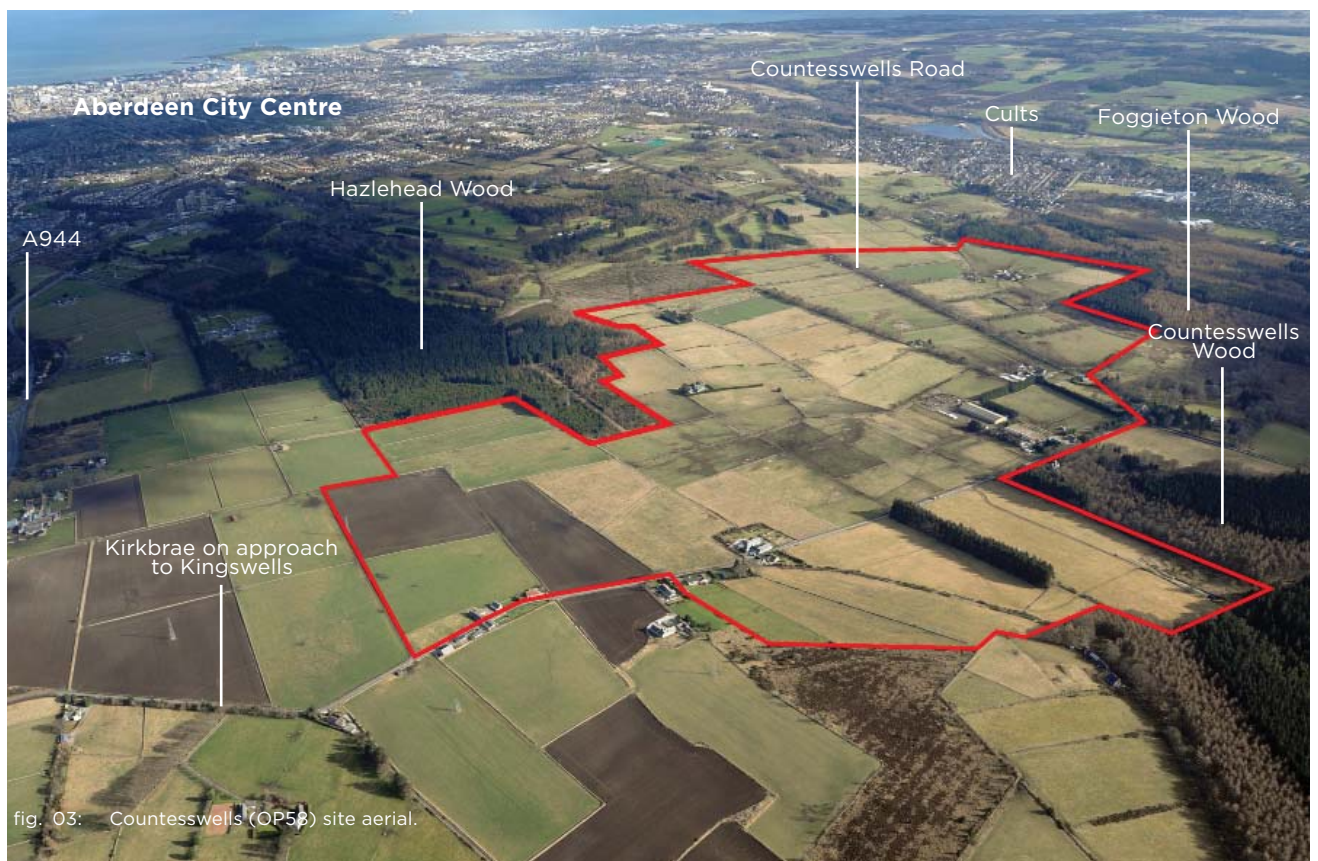


fig. 03: Countesswells (OP58) site aerial.

Section 2: Planning Context and Masterplan process

This section describes the relevant planning background of the site. Countesswells has been identified by the Aberdeen Local Development Plan as an opportunity site for the development of 3,000 homes and 10 hectares of employment land. It is a key element of the Plan's spatial strategy to address the housing requirements of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan approved in August 2009. The Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan has been prepared having regard to guidance from a wide variety of sources.

The Development Framework and Masterplan have been developed following the Masterplanning Process 2012 as well as with reference to other national and local policies. The masterplanning approach taken has been particularly important to ensure the site realises the wider opportunities to create efficient and effective environmental and community connections that integrate the site both internally, and with its surroundings.

This section goes on to explain the Consortiums aspiration (following approval of the Development Framework and Masterplan document as interim planning advice by Aberdeen City Council and completion of the necessary supporting studies) to make an application for Planning Permission in Principle. The application will comply with the guidance set down in the interim planning advice.

The Consortium will then bring forward individual detailed planning applications for parts of the site identified as the first phases of the development.

This section also describes the consultation process undertaken to date. In preparing the Development Framework and Masterplan the Consortium has been committed to involving the local community, the wider public, local Councillors and the Community Councils within or adjacent to the proposal site. At the outset, the Consortium took the decision to hold a minimum of two public consultation events in each of the three Community Council areas. This was to be complemented by meetings with the respective Community Councils, locally elected Members, Members of the Scottish Parliament and Members of Parliament within whose area the site fell. A specific Liaison Group was established comprising members of the Community Councils, a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament and nominated residents within and adjoining the site, in order to facilitate discussion and an ongoing involvement in the preparation of the Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan. A number of residents workshops have also been held and a website was also established, www.countesswells.com in an effort to disseminate information and gather as much feedback as possible. A full record of the consultation process, including all comments and how it has informed the Development Framework and Masterplan is documented in the Consultation Report.

Section 3: Site Analysis

This section describes the site, historic development and site analysis. A brief outline of the EIA process is also presented. The site is currently in agriculture use, predominantly for grazing and includes some individual dwellings and farmhouses. All existing properties within the site area (ALDP boundary) are proposed to be retained.

The proposed development site does not contain any sites statutorily designated for nature conservation.



fig. 04: Site photo, looking north west.

Section 4: The Opportunity and Vision

The site at Countesswells offers a unique opportunity within Aberdeen City for the creation of a new settlement in an attractive and well contained landscape setting, close to the city centre. The quantum of proposed development allows the creation of a deliverable mixed use community complete with supporting infrastructure and increased opportunities for sustainable solutions.

Countesswells is a rural site in one of the most accessible parts of the City area. It has the capacity to create a development that fits within the attractive landscape setting in a way that will make it one of the pre-eminent places to live in the City region and provide new opportunities for employment, education and recreation.



fig. 05: Site concept.

Section 5: The Development Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to set out a Development Framework which will describe the concept for the site and how the main aims will be realised through site wide design principles.

In line with the Aberdeen City Council 'Masterplanning Process' the Development Framework sets out a vision and a spatial framework for the way in which the Countesswells area will be developed. It creates a co-ordinating structure which sets a robust and viable vision for Countesswells from which more detailed design can follow.

It aims to:

- Establish a clear and exciting future vision for Countesswells;
- Describe and explain the integrated land-use, landscape and transport proposals; and
- Set out a clear phasing strategy.

Layers of the Development Framework

The Countesswells Development Framework illustrated opposite is described in detail through its component layers in the next section of this document.

The key layers of the Development Framework described are:

- Landscape strategy
- Drainage strategy
- Access and connectivity strategy
- Land use strategy
- Phasing strategy
- Character areas

Land use

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan allocates Countesswells for 3000 houses and 10 hectares of employment land plus appropriate community facilities. It is anticipated these community facilities will include a Secondary School and two triple stream primary schools. The Development Framework is designed to be flexible and responsive to change in market conditions and as such provides what is considered the maximum potential developable land take to provide the appropriate scale of uses in relation to what is identified within the ALDP.

Access

Vehicular access to the north will be to the A944 via a public transport only connection to Kingswells junction and a link to a new junction at Jessiefield. Connections will also be made with Countesswells Road, Kirk Brae (C189) on approach to Cults and Blacktop Road to integrate the proposed development street structure with the surrounding existing network. Connection to the North Deeside Road (A93) will be provided via Kirk Brae (C189) on approach to Cults. The TA has investigated the likely impact of the development traffic on these extended links and suggest mitigation where necessary.

The ability for pedestrians and cyclists to move through Countesswells using a permeable network of paths, including Core Path 57 is at the core of the design of the Development Framework.



fig. 06: Development Framework

Section 6: Phase 1 Masterplan

This section provides specific design guidance for the Phase 1 Masterplan Area, which expands upon the general principles set out for the Development Framework. Masterplan guidance for the remainder of the Development Framework area will be produced at the appropriate time.

The Phase 1 Masterplan area identified on the plan below is approximately 48ha. The area represents the first phase of development, around 1,000 homes, mixed use and employment areas as identified in the Development Framework.

Design Guidance for the phase 1 Masterplan is provided in this section and has been prepared, working within the parameters set out in the Development Framework.

The guidance will therefore assist developers and their designers, in preparing future detailed applications at later stages in the development process.

The guidance is written to focus on the key generators of character, which include key routes, corners, buildings, edges, spaces, uses, and articulate the main design intent.

Masterplan Guidance

The following sections provide specific design guidance for the Masterplan area, which expands upon the general principles set out for the Development Framework.

01 The Illustrative Masterplan

02 Layers of the Masterplan

03 Design Principles



fig. 07: Countesswells Masterplan boundary.



fig. 08: Diagram of Cults Burn Corridor.



fig. 09: Countesswells illustrative Masterplan.

01 The illustrative Masterplan

The illustrative masterplan has been produced to describe in more detail key design principles for the ‘Development blocks’ and ‘Core landscape areas’ previously set out. The guidance aims to ensure that these are developed with a strong identity that responds to both their context and setting and also to their relationship with the wider site.

Some of the key areas and elements of the Phase 1 Masterplan are listed below and labelled on the plan opposite.

1. Countesswells woodland.
2. Hazlehead woodland.
3. Kirk Brae (C189) on approach to Kingswells
4. Blacktop Road.
5. Primary Street - Connection to A944 at Jessiefield.
6. Countesswells Core Area (mixed use area).
7. Countesswells Academy (Community campus).
8. Countesswells Primary School (first primary school).
9. Central Park.
10. Cults Burn Corridor (realigned water course).
11. Core Path 57 - proposed alignment of path through Countesswells.

02 Layers of the Masterplan

The aims and parameters of the Masterplan are described through the following layers in this section.

- The street network
- Pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian connections
- Public transport
- Car parking
- Built form and land use
- Building heights
- Key frontages
- Key buildings
- Open space

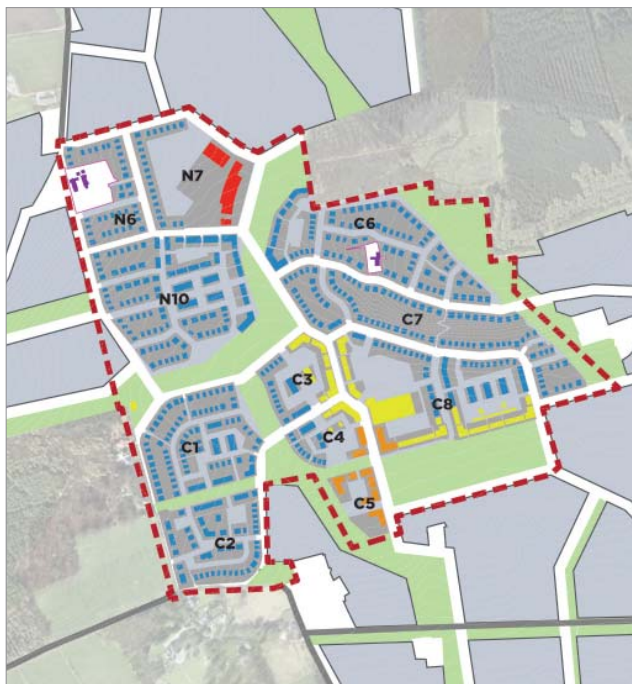


fig. 10: Layers of the Masterplan, built form and land use.

03 Design Principles

The Masterplan describes principles which are generic across the development blocks and relate to urban design, architecture and place making. Viewed as a whole Countesswells will have a cohesive identity and structure. There will however be considerable variation between development blocks in response to their location, proposed land use and existing context. To this end the document describes in more detail the design principles for each individual development block. The principles aim to ensure that each block is rich in character and creates an urban form with a strong sense of place. The document describes how the design of access and connectivity, buildings, spaces, spatial definition, parking and servicing should be approached for each block and includes guidance on building typology, height and architectural style. The Masterplan then sets out the function and design principles of the core public spaces which were identified within the Phase 1 area, aiming to ensure that these integrate with development well, benefit from natural surveillance and are pleasant and safe places to be.



fig. 11: Illustration of Central Park frontage.



fig. 12: Illustration of Cults Burn Corridor.



fig. 13: Diagram highlighting locations of core spaces within Countesswells.

Section 7: Delivery statement

The last section of the document includes a matrix describing an outline delivery strategy that identifies the key infrastructure requirements and the parties to be involved in their delivery at later stages. This section explains how the development will provide 25% affordable housing, which requirements will be provided on site by the developers and which will be supported by developer contributions.

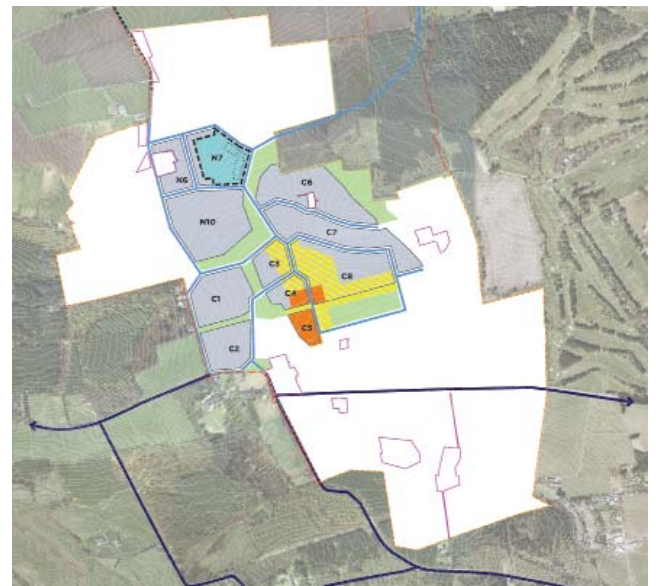


fig. 14: Countesswells, phase 1.

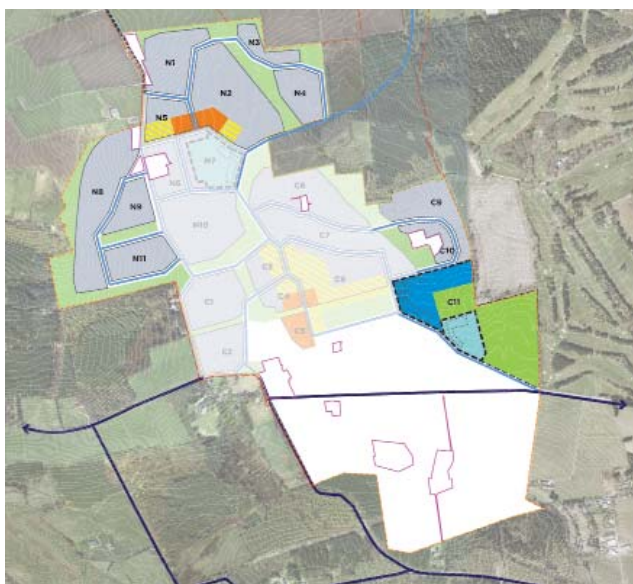


fig. 15: Countesswells, phase 2.



fig. 16: Countesswells, phase 3.

