

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	3 June 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Adoption of Supplementary Guidance in support of the Local Development Plan - Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/14/127
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the results of the Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan consultation, present a summary of the representations received, officers' responses to these representations and to detail any resulting action from this. A summary of this information is attached at Appendix 1 of this report. Full, un-summarised copies of representations are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Note the representations received on the draft Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan Supplementary Guidance document;
 - b) Approve Appendix 1, which includes officers' responses to representations received and any necessary actions; and
 - c) Agree for officers to send the requested finalised Supplementary Guidance document to be ratified by the Scottish Government
- 2.2 Definitions
- '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 There are no direct financial implications resulting from this committee report.
- 3.2 The Countesswells Consortium has met the cost of preparation of the Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan 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 and Phase 1 Masterplan 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 economic development.
- 4.2 Approving the Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan 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 and Phase 1 Masterplan contribute towards a higher rate of new house building in the City, including 25% on site 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 and Phase 1 Masterplan 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 Countesswells site as part of the preparation for the Aberdeen Local

Development Plan. An individual SEA Screening Report has also been undertaken on the Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan document. This Screening Report concludes there is unlikely to be any significant environmental effects from the proposed development. It has been confirmed by the SEA Gateway that an SEA is not required.

5 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan has been produced by Optimised Environments on behalf of The Countesswells Consortium (Stewart Milne Homes, Heron Property and Ian Suttie) and aims to create a new settlement in an attractive, well contained landscape setting. The development will deliver a mixed use community, complete with supporting infrastructure and increased opportunity for sustainable solutions. A multi disciplinary project team has contributed to the preparation of the Framework, consisting of:

Developers - The Countesswells Consortium
Masterplanners - OPEN (Optimised Environments Ltd)
Planning Consultant- Ryden
Engineering and Transportation Consultants – Fairhurst
Environmental Consultants – Ironside Farrar
Education Consultants – TPS
Public Relation Consultants – Orbit Communications

- 5.2 The full Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan for Countesswells is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning

- 5.3 A hard copy of the full Development Framework is available in the Members' Library (Town House), the Planning and Sustainable Development Service at Ground Floor North, Marischal College, or by contacting the Masterplanning, Design and Conservation team.
- 5.4 The Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan was presented to the Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 13 March 2014 (item 7.2) where the committee resolved to:
- (i) to approve recommendation (b) above - (b) agree for officers to implement the process to ratify the Development Framework as Supplementary Guidance. This would include a 6 week public consultation with results reported to the Committee prior to submission to the Scottish Government.);
 - (ii) to approve the Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan as interim planning advice, reserving the

position to review the proposed road infrastructure once the Transport Assessment has been carried out;

- (iii) to note that the capacity of development on site prior to the delivery of the AWPR will be determined through the Transport Assessment process. Further detail on this, including a phasing plan, will be provided within the consultation outcome report due to be presented to the Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 3 June 2014; and
- (iv) to note that the issues raised by Cllr Delaney (these being (1) around a potential dualling of the Lang Stracht and (2) the management of open space within the area to ensure that agreements were adhered to, would respectively (1) be taken into account by the changes to the recommendation at (ii) above; and (2) be examined by officers as a wider issue in due course.

Consultation Process

- 5.5 The public consultation ran for a 6 week period (an additional 2 weeks were added to take account of the school holidays) from Monday 17 March until Tuesday 29 April inclusive and was carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Masterplanning Process which was approved by the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee at their meeting on 6 November 2012.
- 5.6 The Cults, Bielside and Milltimber, Kingswells and Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Councils were given advance notification of the consultation 2 weeks before the 13 March 2014 committee. The draft document was available online prior to the committee and hard copies were sent to all three Community Councils at the start of the consultation period.
- 5.7 Statutory consultees were advised of the public consultation prior to the start date. The following list highlights those that were consulted:

Cults, Bielside and Milltimber Community Council	Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council
Kingswells 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	

- 5.8 Consultation letters were also sent to the Countesswells Liaison Group along with anyone else who had requested being kept in contact.
- 5.9 The Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan was available for viewing via the following methods:
- Publication of document on Aberdeen City Council Website 'Current Consultations' page
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/consultations>
 - Publication of document on Aberdeen City Council Website 'Masterplanning' page
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning>
 - Hard copy of document available for viewing at Marischal College between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, by contacting the Planning and Sustainable Development Reception. Relevant planning officers were also identified to be available to help answer queries from members of the public who visited the Planning Reception regarding the Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan.
 - Hard Copies were available in the Central, Cults and Airyhall Libraries during their opening times.
 - A Press Release from Aberdeen City Council was issued on 25 March 2014.

Consultation results

- 5.10 Representations to the Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan could be submitted by email or post. A total of 21 representations were received during the consultation from the following:
- Scottish Water
 - NESTRANS
 - Historic Scotland
 - Sportscotland
 - Transport Scotland
 - SNH
 - SEPA
 - Drum Properties
 - SDPA
 - Kingswells Community Council
 - Craigiebuckler and Seafeld Community Council
 - Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council
 - 9 members of the public

5.11 It should be noted that all comments received as part of the consultation are shared with the developers, their design team, relevant Planning Officers, and relevant Roads Officers for consideration during the planning application process.

5.12 The main areas of concern covered within the representations were:

- Increased traffic and lack of Infrastructure in place.
- Energy efficiency/ sustainability options
- Greenspace maintenance
- Public transport provision
- Education

Increased Traffic/ insufficient infrastructure

Concern has been raised by a number of consultees in relation to the increase in traffic, the lack of infrastructure in place to enable this development and the impact it will have on existing roads within and surrounding the site.

The street layout and access arrangements for the site aim to remove the issues of rat-running and reduce the traffic speed. The transport assessment is currently being considered by the Council's Roads team and further information will be provided once this has been fully carried out. The TA will determine what roads, junction and upgrades are required and when.

An initial table of proposed Roads Infrastructure requirements was submitted by the applicant along with the Transport Assessment. This can be viewed below, please note that the table is subject to further discussion and agreement with the Council's Roads Officers. It is also not an exhaustive list and further upgrades and improvements may be required. Please note that an update on the current position will be provided to Committee on the day.

Year (estimate)	Number Units	Infrastructure				
		Jessiefield	PT Link	Kirk Brae	Kirk Brae / Friarsfld	AWPR
2017	Up to 400	x	x	x	x	x
2020	400 +	✓	✓	✓	x	x
2022	1000 +	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key

Jessiefield – Jessiefield Roundabout; upgrade roundabout to signalised crossroads

PT Link – Creation of public transport only link to Kingswells Roundabout; southern arm closed to general traffic

Kirk Brae* – Kirk Brae (north); localised improvements

Kirk Brae / Friarsfield – Kirk Brae / Friarsfield Road junction; upgrade to signalised junction

AWPR – Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route – opening required.

* Improvements to Kirk Brae are likely to be carried out off its existing alignment and will be opened once complete, resulting in minimal requirement to close Kirk Brae for significant lengths of time.

Energy Efficiency/ sustainability options

A number of representations highlighted issues such as:

- use of water saving technologies,
- the roll out of a common wheels scheme across the site including the provision of parking bays,
- consideration should be given to CHP in accordance with the Strategic Development Plan,
- onsite recycling and waste provision.

Given the site's proximity to the River Dee and with water abstraction being an issue, the use of water saving technologies is important. A number of the other suggestions including those highlighted above should be considered for a site of this scale. Additional text will be added to ensure that these ideas and schemes are considered in more detail as part of the planning application process.

Greenspace maintenance

Maintenance of green space was highlighted by a number of consultees. It was also recommended that wild areas would be appropriate to help increase biodiversity and encourage wildlife.

It is agreed that the issues of management of green/open spaces is key for the development. Paragraph 5.2.6 states "Due to the wide variety of spaces of varying scale proposed within Countesswells different forms and levels of management are likely to be required including private management companies or other such arrangement documented through the S75 agreement which will be established by the developers on behalf of residents. Water courses and SUDs will be adopted by the relevant authorities where possible." This adequately confirms the requirement for a management plan for the whole site which will be legally tied into the S75.

Public transport provision/ Bus only route.

A number of representations have highlighted that in order to influence the travel patterns and maximise the benefits of the bus gate, public

transport options need to be present from a very early stage. A paragraph should be added to confirm that this will be further investigated and implemented as early as possible through the development process.

The feedback on bus only access was generally positive. The Kingswells Community Council supports the bus gate and the reduced impact it will have on the traffic at the Kingswells Roundabout. The main concern was its implementation and getting a bus route that services the whole site.

It should be noted that access will be retained for properties within the bus gate.

Education

Concern was raised with the location of the school under power lines. The buildings themselves are adjacent to the power lines rather than under.

There is no clear national or local guidance available for locating play or sports pitches close to power lines. The design team were advised by Fairhursts that having the pylon pass over areas of playing fields would be acceptable. The layout follows the guidance provided, with 15m wayleave either side of the power line across the site, generally used for circulation space and informal areas of public open space. Through the school site, C11, it is anticipated that parking, circulation space and informal sports areas would be located within the wayleave with formal pitches located out with the wayleave corridor.

Any activity under the lines would be determined on the height difference from ground to the underside of the wires. A health and safety assessment would be required and this will involve the transmission company requirements. It is not unusual for playing grounds to be near pylons but generally on the perimeter of the play zone.

Comments also related to the fact that the document does not set out firm dates for the primary and secondary schools delivery. One comment goes on to state that this should be agreed via the legal agreement. It is noted that the S75 process is the best mechanism to ensure timely delivery of the school. The Framework confirms the school provision and which phases they are likely to be required. The Framework is also flexible enough to allow for the second school to be a 3 stream school if it is required.

5.13 Other comments included:

- Proposals for the maintenance and enhancement of the Core Path network and reference to shared paths throughout the site are welcomed,

- Ensure suitable crossings for cyclists are provided, including at the A944,
- Provision of housing for the elderly onsite,
- 25% affordable housing,
- Welcome recognition of the requirements of the STF,
- Adjoining properties are clearly effected by the development,
- We request that the wetland areas to the south west of the site, block S9, are preserved and turned into an amenity area,
- Concern about the lengthy closure of kirk brae for development,
- Further detail on some of the open space areas and the sports provision required, including phasing,
- Access road through Garden of Remembrance,
- Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement particularly in the Cults Burn Corridor,
- Ensure pedestrian and cycle connections are strong and meet the needs of the users,
- Comment on the areas of land outside the allocation (access),
- Level of detail is too great in relation to the infrastructure,
- Concern about the process that has taken place,
- Support for central park and focus,
- Fibre optics should be provided within this site,
- Burden on existing health care provision until provided onsite,
- Importance of high quality design,
- Appropriate density,
- Site should not be biased towards the inclusion of major convenience retail uses,
- Use of water saving technologies to avoid impact on the River Dee.

5.14 Following analysis of the representations, the Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan is now proposed for adoption as Supplementary Guidance to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. A summary is shown in Appendix 1 this includes changes resulting from representations received during the statutory consultation as well as by officers to provide greater clarity. Full representations can be found in Appendix 2.

5.15 There are also a small number of changes required to the document as a result of the internal consultation including trees, open space and some minor wording amendments.

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 contributes to one of the key goals on the Strategic Infrastructure Plan – A step change in the supply of housing. In particular Countesswells relates to the project: *Delivery of the Housing Element of the Strategic Development Plan* and is the pilot project highlighted in paragraph two “The Council is in on-going discussions with HM Treasury and in particular its infrastructure development arm – Infrastructure UK – to investigate options to help release funds to enable investment in the infrastructure for such developments to take place. A pilot project to use the Governments Guarantee Scheme is currently being progressed with a developer and Infrastructure UK with the guarantee being sought amounting to £30-40 million.”
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment was been prepared and submitted as part of the previous report for 13 March 2014.

7 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 7.1 Development Frameworks and Masterplans contribute to efficiencies in determining future planning applications and a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals.
- 7.2 If the recommendations are accepted the Council will have to manage the planning application process for the development of the site in line with the Development Framework
- 7.3 If the recommendation is not accepted the risk is that no development will take place on the site. There is a risk that the Strategic Infrastructure Plan project: *Delivery of the Housing Element of the Strategic Development Plan* will not be achieved. Countesswells is the pilot project highlighted in paragraph two (see 6.5 above). There is also a risk that the housing allocations identified in the Structure Plan and the adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan will not be met.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 The Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan February 2014 is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by accessing the following link:
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning
- 8.2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=42278&slD=9484>
- 8.3 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process 2008 (article 22, Planning Committee Minute, 6/11/08)
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_planningbriefs.asp

9 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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