

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee

DATE

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LEAD HEAD OF SERVICE

Dr Margaret Bochel

DIRECTOR

Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT

Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan

REPORT NUMBER

EPI/10/011

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the new Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan, prepared as a guide for the future development on an area of Council owned land.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Approve the Greenferns Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance for the site identified as Opportunity site OP2 in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008.
- 2.2 Approve the Greenferns Development Framework as Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Strategic Housing Land Reserve (SHLR) identified in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008, to be considered in the forthcoming Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The site is predominantly owned by Aberdeen City Council, the majority of which is held on the Common Good Account. As such the Council has a financial interest in the Planning designation and future development of the site.
- 3.2 The current Aberdeen Local Plan, adopted in June 2008, indicates that the Greenferns site could accommodate around 800 houses (120 in the OP2 site and 680 in the SHLR site) However the Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan proposes between 1177-1458 units depending on the desired density range (around 270 units on the OP2 site), which would have a positive impact in terms of finance relating to a potentially larger land value receipt.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 4.1 The Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan support the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan policies and targets for housing allocations in the North East until 2030.
- 4.2 The Development Framework and Masterplan seek to contribute towards a higher rate of new house building in the City, including significant affordable housing provision. The Structure Plan indicates that the required level of affordable housing is likely to be in the range of 20-30% although this will only be confirmed when the Aberdeen City and Shire Housing Need and Demand Assessment is completed in 2010.
- 4.3 The Development Framework and Masterplan indicate a mix of uses, including business, education, leisure, retail, recycling centre and healthcare. This will aid in regeneration and improved quality of life for the adjacent neighbourhoods through the enhanced provision and access to community facilities. The Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan follow national design guidance and aim to create a successful place with a sense of identity.
- 4.4 In accordance with Policy 83 of the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008, Developer Contributions will be sought. Including, but not limited to, education, community facilities, drainage, recreational and amenity open space, sports facilities and providing for a choice of transport modes.
- 4.5 An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been prepared, the results of which are included as an appendix to this report and the development framework.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no property, legal and equipment implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 The Development Framework and Masterplan reduce the risk of piecemeal and inappropriate development in the area. The efficient use of land will contribute towards the Council's aim of promoting sustainable development.
- 5.3 Approving the Development Framework and Masterplan will contribute to efficiencies in determining future planning applications and the provision of new affordable housing. 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.
- 5.4 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken on the Greenferns site as part of the preparation for the forthcoming Aberdeen Local Development Plan (see Section 9.4 for reference).

6. REPORT

- 6.1 EDAW and its Design Team were appointed by Aberdeen City Council in April 2009 to produce a Development Framework, Masterplan and Impact Assessments for Greenferns.
- 6.2 EDAW's Design Team has subsequently met with Aberdeen City Council on a monthly basis, to present and discuss the development of the framework and receive client feedback. The Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan is the product of this process.

Policy Considerations

- 6.3 The Development Framework has been prepared following the Aberdeen Masterplanning Process, approved in November 2008, and contributes significantly to the Aberdeen City Council Design Campaign's aims of raising design quality in new development (see Section 9 for references).
- 6.4 The Public Local Inquiry Report into Unresolved Objections to the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan made a number of recommendations which the Development Framework has taken into consideration resolved most notably the extensive masterplanning work and the completion of a Noise Impact Assessment.
- 6.5 Part of the Greenferns site is zoned in the current Aberdeen Local Plan as Opportunity Site 2 (OP2) while the larger part is zoned as Strategic Housing Land Reserve (for an indicative number of 120 and 680 houses respectively). The new Heathryburn School, which opened in April 2009, is within the OP2 site but the remainder is undeveloped.
- 6.6 The City Council adopted Housing Land Release Supplementary Planning Guidance in October 2008 (article 11, Policy and Strategy Committee Minutes, 11/10/08), which allows the OP2 site to be released for development subject to planning approval and masterplan preparation.
- 6.7 The larger part of the Greenferns Site, identified as Strategic Housing Land Reserve, is covered by Policy 30 of the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008 which states that such sites are to be treated as areas of search for future housing land, the precise boundaries of which will be the subject of comprehensive assessment as part of the future development plan and masterplanning processes.
- 6.8 The Strategic Housing Land Reserve part of Greenferns is now being considered as part of the work being undertaken to prepare the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The site was identified as a possible development option and was subsequently included in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (published in October 2009) as a desirable option. The Main Issues Report was made available for public consultation between 16th October and 11th December 2009. It suggests

that Greenferns could accommodate 750 homes in Phase 1 (2007-2016), 350 homes in Phase 2 (2017-2023) and 400 homes in phase 3 (2024-2030). Members will have to consider all responses to the Main Issues Report before finalising the Proposed Plan which is expected to be published in September 2010.

6.9 The proposals for Greenferns will respond to the landscape to create a clear and identifiable place which can grow and evolve as an integrated part of the City and not act as a sub-urban 'bolt on' estate.

6.10 Greenferns will:-

Create Identity – create a new community on the edge of Aberdeen, featuring a range of land-use, density and house types. Existing landscape features are used to create a distinctive character and generate a sense of place with strong identity.

Create a Community – create a neighbourhood to encourage a community to develop. Streets and spaces will be surrounded by appropriately scaled and positioned buildings to create a strong and attractive urban form.

Achieve Sustainability – integrated bus routes and a variety of paths will create walkable neighbourhoods and encourage more sustainable movement. Sustainable design and construction practices will be used.

Grow Appropriately – clear phasing strategy that is flexible enough to respond to changing market demands.

Integrate – tied into the urban fabric of the existing settlement, with wider connections to shared facilities for existing neighbourhoods.

Aid Regeneration – work with other planning objectives to help regenerate the surrounding area.

The Development Framework

6.11 The Development Framework sets out a baseline or 2-dimensional spatial framework, for the way in which Greenferns should be developed. The Development Framework appraises local context and creates a vision for a new place. The Development Framework indicates a street hierarchy, indicative block planning, and range of uses.

6.12 The Development Framework is Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Strategic Housing Land Reserve (SHLR) identified in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008, to be considered in the forthcoming Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Whether or no the SHLR site is to be included in the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan will become clearer when the Council publishes its Proposed Plan in September 2010.

The Masterplan

6.13 The Masterplan forms detailed 3-dimensional design guidance for the opportunity site OP2 as identified in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008. The

guidance has been developed for the OP2 Area, with the intention that it be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

- 6.14 The Masterplan ensures integration with the surrounding communities, illustrates what will be expected in future detailed design guidance, establishes an illustrative layout and ensures that future development of the OP2 area will have a clear identity.
- 6.15 A Transport and Access Assessment has been carried out to support the Development Framework and Masterplan. An expanded and more detailed Transport Assessment will be required at the time of any future planning applications, and supporting infrastructure measures will need to be designed in more detail.

Public Consultation

- 6.16 The sections below offer a summary of public comments and responses to the Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan. Details are contained within Section 6 of the Greenferns Development Framework document.
- 6.17 A consultation event was held on 10 September 2009 at Heathryburn School, Northfield. Attendees were encouraged to submit comments, and members of the EDAW Design Team were on hand to answer questions. The event was attended by 44 visitors during the course of the evening (signed into the visitor book). The event was advertised in the Press and Journal and Evening Express newspapers on 26 August 2009.
- 6.18 People were given the opportunity to comment on land use proposals at the Local Development Plan Developer Options Consultation Event on the 8 July 2009. Subsequently, comments were invited on the Draft Development Framework and Masterplan at the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report Consultation Event on 1 December 2009, held at Mastrick Community Centre.
- 6.19 Further consultation opportunities will be available as part of the statutory Pre-Application Consultation Process for Major Developments, under the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.
- 6.20 The City Council's view on whether to include the Greenferns Strategic Housing Land Reserve site in the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan will become clearer when the Proposed Plan is published in September 2010.

Summary of comments from public consultation

Comment	Response
Lack of communication on the proposals or Local Plan proposals to date.	Sections 6.1 – 6.14 above detail the public consultation that has been undertaken to date on the Greenferns

	<p>site and proposals. The site was also discussed at the Public Local Inquiry into Unresolved Objections to the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan.</p>
<p>Residents did not agree with the principle of development in the area. Believed the land was designated as greenbelt.</p>	<p>The site is currently zoned in the Aberdeen Local Plan as Opportunity Site 2 (OP2) and Strategic Housing Land Reserve. Whether or no the SHLR site is to be included in the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan will become clearer when the Council publishes its Proposed Plan in September 2010.</p>
<p>Residents of the area were concerned with the capacity of the existing roads and believed there was not capacity for future development. However, the proposal for a new distributor road from Provost Rust to Provost Fraser Drive was welcomed, along with improved public transport links. Road safety was also identified as an issue.</p>	<p>A Transport and Accessibility Assessment has been completed and forms part of the supporting detailed information for the development framework and masterplan. Further detailed Transport Assessments will be required as part of any future planning applications.</p>
<p>Coalescence with Kingswells and further growth to the west was not supported as an idea.</p>	<p>Options for the future direction of growth for the city are being examined as part of the process of preparing a new Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Development Options in this area were proposed in the ALDP Main Issues Report which was made available for public consultation between 16 October and 11 December 2009. The Proposed Plan will be published in September 2010.</p>
<p>The importance of a mixed use development with community facilities provided was raised. Residents felt that youth facilities, education, retail and a health centre provision were essential, including high quality recycling facilities.</p>	<p>The development framework proposes a mixed use high density core, featuring a range of community facilities including a primary school, recycling centre, health centre and local retail.</p>
<p>High proportion of affordable family housing, as opposed to flatted developments, was an important issue.</p>	<p>The development framework proposes that affordable housing should be mixed throughout the development and included within every development phase (see also section 4.2)</p>

<p>Residents felt that the land offered a good ecological and recreational resource and should be protected. Specific mention was made to the protection of Sheddocksley Playing Fields, key countryside walks and the continued use of Auchmill Golf Course during the realignment of the 2 golf holes.</p>	<p>The development framework and masterplan provide a variety of open spaces and types, linking to important existing features such as the Bucksburn and Sheddocksley playing fields.</p> <p>Based on Policy 39 of the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008 the site would be required to provide 8.23-10.20 hectares of green space. However, the development framework includes 15.04 hectares. This over provision is deliberate and responds to the city edge position and ecological importance of the site.</p>
<p>Residents preferred that new development should be set back to allow the creation of a narrow open space incorporating the existing hedgerow and wall.</p>	<p>The masterplan has taken on board these views and proposes that the development is set back from Davidson Drive to create an area of public space. The existing wall, hedge and mature trees are retained where possible, and the buildings should either be set back or face the street with their gable end.</p>
<p>The development framework and masterplan was seen to show best way to go forward, but that development should not begin prior to the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan adoption.</p>	<p>As detailed in section 6.6 above, favourable consideration will be given to planning applications on the OP2 site, compliant with the Masterplan. Any future allocation of the SHLR section of the Greenferns site will be considered through the forthcoming Aberdeen Local Development Plan and development would not commence before the Plan is adopted.</p>
<p>Concern with reference to 'special density'.</p>	<p>This term has been removed in the final draft of the development framework and masterplan. The Greenferns site meets Structure Plan targets for density.</p>
<p>Roads and open spaces should be adopted by the Council to ensure maintenance.</p>	<p>Streets and open spaces should be constructed to an adoptable standard. Specific details of adoption will require to be agreed during any future planning applications.</p>

7. AUTHORISED SIGNATURE

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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Greenferns OP2 Masterplan: October 2009
- 9.2 Greenferns Development Framework: October 2009
- 9.3 Aberdeen Local Plan 2008
- 9.4 Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Interim Environmental Report October 2009
- 9.5 Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009
- 9.6 Housing Land Release (2006-2010) Supplementary Planning Guidance (October 2008).
- 9.7 Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report. Appendix 6: Environmental Report (Appendix 8.5: Assessment of Sites in the Growth Areas). Agenda Item 6 (d) Council Committee Agenda, 30/09/09.
- 9.8 Report of Public Local Inquiry (2006)
 - Site-Specific Issues, Dyce, Bucksburn, and North-West of City
 - Assessment of Greenfield Housing: Issue 56 Greenferns OP2
- 9.9 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process November 2008 (article 22, Planning Committee Minute, 6/11/08).
- 9.10 Aberdeen City Design Campaign (article 20, Planning Committee Minute, 10/07/08).