

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE | Communities, Housing and Infrastructure |
| DATE | 19 May 2015 |
| DIRECTOR | Pete Leonard |
| TITLE OF REPORT | AECC site, Bridge of Don Development Framework |
| REPORT NUMBER: | CHI/14/055 |
| CHECKLIST RECEIVED | Yes |

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the AECC site, Bridge of Don, Development Framework, prepared as a strategy for the future development of land identified in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) as Opportunity Site 13 (OP13).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Draft AECC Site, Bridge of Don, Development Framework to be issued for public consultation over a 6 -week period; and
- 1.3 For the Director of Communities, Housing and Infrastructure to be instructed to report to a subsequent Committee with the findings and any revisions proposed as a result of the public consultation.
- 1.4 The Draft Development Framework forms the appendix to this report and can be viewed by accessing the following link: -
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning
- 1.5 A hard copy of the Draft Development Framework is available in the Members' Library (Town House) and within the Planning and Sustainable Development Service at Ground Floor North, Marischal College.
- 1.6 Approval of this Development Framework is without prejudice to the determination of the planning application for the new AECC at Rowett North.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) Approves the Draft AECC Site, Bridge of Don, Development Framework for public consultation over a four week period, and;
- (b) Instructs the Director of Communities, Housing and Infrastructure to report the results of the public consultation and any proposed revisions to the Draft Development Framework to a subsequent meeting of this Committee.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The land is in the ownership of Aberdeen City Council and redevelopment of this site is part of the wider proposal for the new Conference Centre on the Rowett North site. As such the Council has a financial interest in the planning designation and future development of the site.
- 3.2 The design team have met the cost for the 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.
- 3.3 The costs associated with the proposed 6 week statutory consultation exercise will be met within existing budgets.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Development Framework reduces the risk of piecemeal and inappropriate development and ensures that the development will be fully integrated into its surroundings. Mixed use development, placemaking and the efficient use of land will contribute towards the Council's aim of promoting sustainable economic development.
- 4.2 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 meeting housing demand in the City, including 25% affordable housing provision across the site in accordance with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012). The proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) also retains the requirement for 25% Affordable Housing provision.
- 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 address requirements for cumulative and local transport infrastructure; public transport along with walking and cycling.

- 4.5 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken on OP13 as part of the preparation of the proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan. An individual SEA Screening Report is currently being undertaken with the results being reported back to the Committee at the same time as the consultation responses.

5 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The full Development Framework is a large document containing a lot of illustrative material and can be viewed by via the following link:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning

- 5.2 The Development Framework has been made available to the Bridge of Don Community Council for information 2 weeks prior to this report being considered in accordance with the Council's approved Aberdeen Masterplanning Process.

- 5.3 The Development Framework has been produced by Cooper Cormar on behalf of Henry Boot Developments. The Development Framework aims to create a residential-led, mixed use development to the north of the City. A multi-disciplinary team has contributed to the preparation of the Framework, consisting of:

- Architect/Masterplanner – Cooper Cormar
- Landscape Architect and ecology – Hirst Landscape Architects
- Planning Consultant – Ryden
- Transport Consultant – AECOM
- M&E Services Engineer – DSSR
- Civil and Structural Engineer – Goodson Associates
- Project Manager – Turner and Townsend
- Community Engagement – Streets UK
- Communication Consultant - Perceptive Communicators
- Cost Consultants – Thomas and Adamson

Site Description

- 5.4 The Existing AECC site is identified in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) as Opportunity Site 13 (OP13) and located to the north of Aberdeen in the Bridge of Don. It is situated between the Ellon Road (west), the Murcar Links Golf Course (east), the Aberdeen Science and Energy Park (north) and existing housing (south).
- 5.5 The site currently accommodates the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) and associated car parking. There is a Park and Ride facility on the site accommodating 600 parking spaces.

- 5.6 There is a tree belt to the east of the site, adjacent to the Golf Course. The remainder of the site is largely car parking and hard standing. A radar station currently accommodates the southern corner but notice has been served to vacate the premises.

Process and site requirements

- 5.7 The proposed development has resulted from the necessity to replace the current AECC because of its age and lack of ability to keep up with the high demand on the venue. The Council entered into a procurement process to select a development partner which required a fully-costed and viable detailed scheme either onsite or offsite.
- 5.8 Henry Boot Developments were named as the preferred bidder. The proposed new AECC is offsite at Rowett North in Bucksburn. Details of this proposal can be found in the committee report CHI.14.056 which is also being presented to this Committee. Development would not take place on the Bridge of Don site until the completion of the new AECC development at Rowett North.
- 5.9 The brief for this site highlighted the requirement to include an increased park and choose facility of 999 spaces within the development.

Policy Summary

- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 The site is identified for mixed use in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) as Opportunity Site 13 (OP13).
- 5.12 This proposal helps bring forward land for development in the early phases of the Proposed Local Development Plan (2017-2026) and helps meet the targets and objectives of the Strategic Development Plan, including that development should generally be no less than 30 dwellings per hectare as an average across the whole site.
- 5.13 The Development Framework identifies the requirement to provide 25% Affordable Housing on-site. Financial contributions will also be required towards Education, Health and the Strategic Transport Fund.

Opportunity and vision

- 5.14 The potential relocation of the AECC to Bucksburn has presented the opportunity to redevelop the existing site at the Bridge of Don. The vision is to create a place which is safe, pleasant, easy to move around, welcoming to visitors and which considers place before movement.
- 5.15 Green Spaces – the requirement for the recreational provision was highlighted through the consultation process. A network of new local and neighbourhood open spaces are proposed, accommodating a range of uses.
- 5.16 Green Streets – the movement of pedestrians and cyclists has been considered as a priority from the outset. The aim is to create a well-connected sustainable place, both internally and externally.
- 5.17 Core density –A variety of house types and densities is appropriate for the site including flats and terraced properties to ensure the required density is met.
- 5.18 Distinctive character –current features on the site are relatively limited. The development should have a distinct character while fitting in with the site and its surroundings.
- 5.19 Sustainable place – the redevelopment will seek to reduce the demand for energy, use energy more effectively and provide low and zero carbon technologies on site.

Masterplan evolution

- 5.20 A detailed site analysis was undertaken and the adjacent uses considered. The current site is relatively open and largely covered by hard standing with limited design or ecological value. Options are available onsite to open up existing culverted watercourses.
- 5.21 The site has been tested to determine its capacity including the requirement for a 999 space park and choose site, housing, commercial and an additional option of a household waste recycling facility to replace the facility at Scotstown Road. It is appropriate to show options for the site within a Development Framework to provide greater flexibility for a final solution that would still meet the aims and objectives of the document. The different densities across the site have been tested resulting in final housing numbers for the site being in the region of 500 units. A detailed Masterplan(s) will be required as part of the planning application process.

Options for the site.

- 5.22 There are a number of land use options for the site which can be seen on page 41 of the Framework. The 999 space park and choose site must be accommodated within the site. The location adjacent to the

Ellon Road has been deemed the most suitable for this. Given the level changes on the site it is possible the spaces could be accommodated over two levels to reduce the footprint of the structure. All of the site options include the 999 space park and choose site.

- 5.23 During the Masterplanning Process a household waste recycling centre was highlighted as a potential use for part of the site. Details have yet to be fully considered but the potential locations have been shown on page 41 of the Framework document in options 2 and 3.
- 5.24 The Framework also highlights the desirability of accommodating a commercial element within the site on the Ellon Road frontage. The visibility of this area would benefit from an anchor building(s). Such a use would also relate well to the adjacent hotel. The commercial aspect is considered under options 1 and 3 on page 41.
- 5.25 Within the site there is also the potential provision of a neighbourhood centre to include the small units that will service the local community, i.e. local retail.

Access and connectivity

- 5.26 Pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the east is difficult to achieve given the Golf Course. Connections have been identified into the existing network on the west, the existing houses to the south and into the Energy Park to the north. Safe routes to school are identified on page 49 of the Framework. There is a cycle route on the Ellon road that connects into the city centre. Improved pedestrian and cycle connections are required, with the exact extent and nature being determined through a Transport Assessment as part of the planning application process.
- 5.27 The park and ride facility onsite and the regular bus services on the Ellon Road ensure that this site is well serviced by public transport. Consideration and commitment has also been given to the use of travel plans and the potential to roll out the co-wheels car club on this site. Given that this is a Development Framework these options will be further considered within any detailed Masterplan(s) for the site.
- 5.28 The main point of access into the site is off the Exploration Drive roundabout. A second access is available further along Exploration Drive to the east. A detailed Transport Assessment is being carried out to determine the final junction arrangement and necessary upgrades. This Transport Assessment will inform subsequent Masterplan(s)/ planning applications for the site
- 5.29 A hierarchy of streets is proposed within the site. Examples of this can be seen on page 53 of the Framework. Access and connectivity is covered in section 4 of the document.

Design principles

- 5.30 The Development Framework sets out broad design principles for the site. This includes principles for the street elevations, building proportions and finishing materials. It also identifies key character areas and their principles. The Character Areas are identified as:
- Arrival zone
 - Exploration drive
 - Golf Course edge
 - Mid Square
 - Woodland Zone
 - Ellon Road Frontage
- 5.31 The character of each area is identified in section 6 of the Framework, including building height, density, movement, characteristics and landscape. Illustrative sketches have been included in the document.
- 5.32 The Development Framework shows the de-culverting of water courses across the site. This provides an area of interest and biodiversity enhancement while meeting the aspirations of SEPA.

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 Council's 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 will assist in the delivery of the Council's Strategic Infrastructure Plan by helping to achieve the key goal of 'A Step Change in the Supply of Housing' by contributing to key projects such as enabling the delivery of affordable housing and delivering the housing element of the Strategic Development Plan.
- 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 The Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment will be included as part of the next stage of the process and will be reported to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee along with the consultation responses.

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 also a risk that the housing allocations identified in the Strategic Development Plan and the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2016) will not be met.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Draft AECC Site, Bridge of Don Development Framework

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning/>

- Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015


http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_2016_proposed_plan.asp

- Aberdeen Masterplanning Process 2008 (article 22, Planning Committee Minute, 6/11/08)
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_planningbriefs.asp
- 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>
- Proposed ALDP link

7 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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