

# Planning Development Management Committee

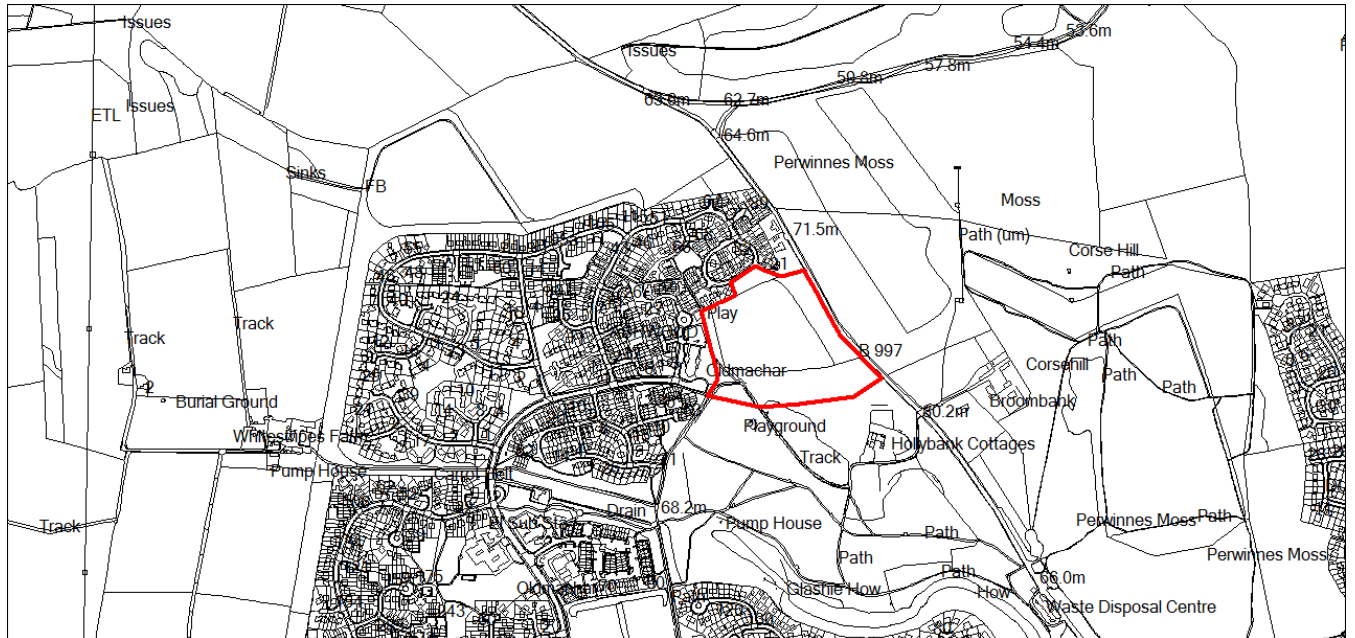
HOME FARM (LAND AT), SCOTSTOWN ROAD  
(EAST WOODCROFT), BRIDGE OF DON

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
COMPRISING OF 56 RESIDENTIAL UNITS,  
ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
LANDSCAPING WORKS.

For: Aberdeen City Council

Application Type : Planning Permission in  
Principle  
Application Ref. : P151034  
Application Date: 02/07/2015  
Officer: Gavin Evans  
Ward : Bridge of Don (M Jaffrey/J Reynolds/S  
Stuart/W Young)

Advert : Can't notify neighbour(s)  
Advertised on: 26/08/2015  
Committee Date:  
Community Council :



**RECOMMENDATION: Defer no hearing**

## **DESCRIPTION**

The application site extends to approximately 4.75ha, which incorporates the allocated East Woodcroft housing site (OP10) and areas of landscaped open space around its boundaries. It is located towards the northern edge of the city, in a predominantly residential area, and is bounded respectively by: Scotstown Road to the east; Ashwood Circle to the north; Oldmachar Church and a bus turning circle on Jesmond Drive to the west; and woodlands/open space to the south.

The site is an open greenfield site, bounded by trees and landscaped areas on three sides, with an open aspect to Ashwood Circle, to the north. The site slopes gently to the south east.

## **PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION**

The proposed development has been the subject of pre-application consultation, as required for applications falling within the category of 'major developments', defined in the relevant 'Hierarchy of Development' Regulations. The consultation undertaken has exceeded the minimum statutory requirements, and has included the following;

- An initial staffed public event, held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Oldmachar Church between 2pm and 7pm.
- A second public event at Oldmachar Church, held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 between 2pm and 7pm.
- Advertisement in local press 2 weeks in advance of the public event. Bridge of Don Community Council invited to the event and provided with a copy of the Proposal of Application Notice. Invitations also sent to other local stakeholders/consultees.
- Properties within 50m of the site were issued with a notice of the initial event.
- Those who attended or responded to the initial consultation were invited. A press release was issued, and a further leaflet drop to around 100 properties surrounding the site was undertaken.
- A presentation was also given to members of the Planning Development Management Committee at the Council's Pre-Application Forum, held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

## **PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the development of the site for circa 55 residential units, along with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

The development will comprise a mix of 4 no. one bedroom flats, 4 no. two bed terraced houses, 4 no. three bed terraced houses, 10 no. three bed semi-detached houses, 23 no. three bed detached houses and 11 no. four bed detached houses.

14 of the units will be delivered as affordable housing. The affordable units are located on plot numbers 28 to 41. These properties comprise a mix of one bed room flats and two and three bedroom houses. The affordable units will be developed for low cost sale.

The site will take vehicular access from Ashwood Circle and will also have the benefit of a new emergency vehicle access to the B997. The proposal includes provision for new footpaths linking with existing walking and cycling routes.

The lowest point of the site is to the north and a SUDS basin is proposed on the amenity ground between the site and Ashwood Circle. The SUDS basin would remain an open, unfenced area.

### **Supporting Documents**

All drawings and the supporting documents listed below relating to this application can be viewed on the Council's website at

<http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/PlanningDetail.asp?ref=151034>

- Transport Statement
- Drainage Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement

On accepting the disclaimer, enter the application reference quoted on the first page of this report.

### **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

The application has been referred to the Planning Development Management Committee because it has both been the subject of more than 20 objections, and is a development in which the Council has a financial interest, due to its ownership of the application site. The combination of these factors triggers the requirement for a report to Committee in order to seek a decision on whether or not a public hearing should be held.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

**Roads Development Management** – No objection. Some minor issues requiring further attention are highlighted.

- Good walking and cycling links are noted. These will allow for access to local facilities and services, including schools, public transport and shops.

- Notes that pedestrian access to the B997 should be discouraged due to the absence of pedestrian footway, high vehicle speed, restricted sightlines and rural nature of the road.
- The site is well served by public transport (within 400m).
- Parking is in accordance with ACC's 'Transport and Accessibility' supplementary guidance.
- The main site access from Ashwood Circle is noted. Visibility is considered appropriate at that access point.
- An Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA), taken off the B997, is also noted. Use of the EVA for construction traffic is feasible, and would serve to reduce disruption caused during the construction phase. Notes that a temporary speed limit would be required on the B997 if used for this purpose.
- Notes the use of traffic calming measures in the internal road layout. This layout is considered generally acceptable. Localised areas of conflict between driveways and junctions/crossing points are identified.
- The internal layout appears to be adequate to support bin collection services.
- Clarification of refuse vehicle movements in the south-east corner will need to be clarified.
- Transport Assessment forecasts a maximum of 38 two-way trips in the AM peak (8-9am) and 35 two-way trips in the PM peak (5-6pm). The local road network is considered to be capable of accommodating additional traffic generated by the development.
- Residential Travel Packs should be provided to the first owner/occupier of each dwelling, to promote sustainable travel.
- Notes that the site will be drained by a SUDS pond located at the north end of the site, and that this has been agreed in principle with Scottish Water.
- Notes that the site is exempt from contributions to the Strategic Transport Fund (STF), on the basis that the site was not newly allocated in the 2012 Local Development Plan, but was carried forward from the earlier 2008 Local Plan.

**Environmental Health** – No objection. Recommends that conditions are attached to any consent in order to secure submission of (i) a noise assessment and implementation of any recommended mitigation measures; (ii) details of provision for waste storage, including recycling. An informative note, recommending that construction works be limited to certain specified hours, is advised.

**Developer Contributions Team** – Awaiting response.

**Communities, Housing and Infrastructure (Flooding)** – No observations.

**Education, Culture & Sport (Archaeology)** – Awaiting response.

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency** – Awaiting response.

**Scottish Water** – Awaiting response.

**Community Council** – Do not object to the principle of the development or its location, but object strongly to the means of access. Request that further investigation of the perceived 'ransom strip' situation is carried out.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

40 letters of representation have been received. The objections raised relate to the following matters –

- Volume of traffic;
- Speed of traffic – vehicles currently exceed speed limits on these streets. How will this be controlled;
- Associated risk of injury to children from speeding vehicles and increased traffic volume;
- Contribution to wider congestion in BoD;
- Complaints over existing congestion in BoD;
- Loss of an area of woodland, currently used by fox, deer etc;
- Development should take place in an alternative location;
- Alternative means of access (not via Ashwood Circle) should be used;
- This proposal by ACC is motivated by money;
- Too many houses are being built in this area (reference to other development proposals);
- Schools do not have capacity to support increased numbers;
- Putting SUDS system on a slope in front of homes will risk damage if overflows;
- Existing trees would be lost to accommodate SUDS pond;
- Queries whether there is a 'need' for any more homes in Bridge of Don;
- Perception that recent housing developments have not been accompanied by improvements in surrounding road network;
- Devaluation of existing properties (due to traffic issues)
- This proposal should have been better publicised. The entire Ashwood/Woodcroft area should have been leafleted.

In addition to the points noted above, one representation supported the construction of new homes in the city.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

### **National Policy and Guidance**

#### Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

SPP is the statement of Scottish Government policy on land use planning, and includes the Government's core principles for the operation of the planning system and concise subject planning policies. The principal policies relating to sustainable development and placemaking are relevant to assessment of this proposal, along with subject policies relating to Enabling Delivery of New Homes; Valuing the Natural Environment; and Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel.

#### Creating Places

Scotland's policy statement on architecture and place sets out the comprehensive value which good design can deliver. Advising that successful places can unlock opportunities, build vibrant communities and contribute to a flourishing economy.

The six qualities of successful places are set out as:

- distinctive;
- safe and pleasant;
- easy to move around;
- welcoming;
- adaptable; and
- resource efficient.

These guiding principles continue to underpin the Scottish Government's approach to delivering good places.

### Designing Streets

Designing Streets is the first policy statement in Scotland for street design and marks a change in the emphasis of guidance on street design towards place-making and away from a system focused upon the dominance of motor vehicles. It has been created to support the Scottish Government's place-making agenda and is intended to sit alongside Designing Places.

### **Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014**

The SDP sets out the following key objectives for the growth of the City and Aberdeenshire:

Population growth – To increase the population of the city region and achieve a balanced age range to help maintain and improve people's quality of life.

Quality of the environment - To make sure new development maintains and improves the region's important built, natural and cultural assets.

Sustainable mixed communities - To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.

Accessibility - To make sure that all new development contributes towards reducing the need to travel and encourages people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices.

### **Aberdeen Local Development Plan**

#### Policy I1: Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions

Development must be accompanied by the infrastructure, services and facilities required to support new or expanded communities and the scale and type of developments proposed. Where development either individually or cumulatively will place additional demands on community facilities or infrastructure that would

necessitate new facilities or exacerbate deficiencies in existing provision, the Council will require the developer to meet or contribute to the cost of providing or improving such infrastructure or facilities.

#### Policy T2: Managing the Transport Impact of Development

New developments will need to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise the traffic generated. Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required for developments which exceed the thresholds set out in the Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Guidance. Planning conditions and/or legal agreements may be imposed to bind the targets set out in the Travel Plan and set the arrangements for monitoring, enforcement and review. Maximum car parking standards are set out in Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility and detail the standards that different types of development should provide.

#### Policy D1: Architecture and Placemaking

To ensure high standards of design, new development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. Factors such as siting, scale, massing, colour, materials, orientation, details, the proportions of building elements, together with the spaces around buildings, including streets, squares, open space, landscaping and boundary treatments, will be considered in assessing that contribution.

#### Policy D2: Design and Amenity

In order to ensure the provision of appropriate levels of amenity certain principles will be applied, including the following: Privacy shall be designed into higher density housing. Residential development shall have a public face to a street and a private face to an enclosed garden or court. All residents shall have access to sitting-out areas. This can be provided by balconies, private gardens, terraces, communal gardens or other means acceptable to the Council. Individual houses within a development shall be designed to make the most of opportunities offered by the site for view and sunlight. Development proposals shall include measures to design out crime and design in safety. External lighting shall take into account residential amenity and minimise light spillage into adjoining areas and the sky.

#### Policy D3: Sustainable and Active Travel

New development will be designed in order to minimise travel by private car, improve access to services and promote access to services and promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging active travel. Development will maintain and enhance permeability, ensuring that opportunities for sustainable and active travel are both protected and improved. Access to, and movement within and between, new and existing developments will prioritise transport modes in the following order – walking, cycling, public transport, car and other motorised vehicles.

Street layouts will reflect the principles of Designing Streets and will meet the minimum distances to services as set out in Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility, helping to achieve maximum levels of accessibility for communities to employment, essential services and areas of recreation. Existing access rights, including core paths, rights of way and paths within the

wider network will be protected and enhanced. Where development proposals impact on the access network, the principle of the access must be maintained through the provision of suitable alternative routes.

#### D6: Landscape

Development will not be acceptable unless it avoids significantly adversely affecting landscape character and elements which contribute to, or provide, a distinct 'sense of place' which point to being either in or around Aberdeen or a particular part of it.

#### Policy H3 (Density)

An appropriate density of development is sought on all housing allocations and on developments of over one hectare must meet a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare, have consideration of the site's characteristics and those of the surrounding area, create an attractive residential environment and safeguard living conditions within the development.

#### Policy H4 (Housing Mix)

Housing developments of larger than 50 units are required to achieve an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, in line with a masterplan, reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular families and older people. This mix is in addition to affordable housing contributions.

#### Policy H5 (Affordable Housing)

Housing developments of 5 or more units are required to contribute no less than 25% of the total units as affordable housing.

#### Policy NE4 (Open Space Provision in New Development)

The City Council will require the provision of at least 2.8 hectares per 1000 people of meaningful and useful public open space in new residential development. Communal or public open space should be provided in all residential developments, including those on brownfield sites.

#### Policy NE5 (Trees and Woodlands)

There is a presumption against all activities and development that will result in the loss of or damage to established trees and woodlands that contribute significantly to nature conservation, landscape character or local amenity, including ancient and semi-natural woodland which is irreplaceable.

#### Policy NE6 (Flooding and Drainage)

Development will not be permitted if:

1. it would increase the risk of flooding:-
  - By reducing the ability of the functional flood plain to store and convey water;
  - Through the discharge of additional surface water; or
  - By harming flood defences.
2. it would be at risk itself from flooding;
3. adequate provision is not made for access to waterbodies for maintenance; or



4. it would result in the construction of new or strengthened flood defences that would have a significantly damaging effect on the natural heritage interests within or adjacent to a watercourse.

Where more than 10 homes or greater than 100m<sup>2</sup> floorspace is proposed, the developer will be required to submit a Drainage Impact Assessment (see Supplementary Guidance on Drainage Impact Assessments). Surface water drainage associated with development must:

- be the best available in terms of SUDS; and
- avoid flooding and pollution both during and after construction.

Connection to the public sewer will be a pre-requisite of all development where this is not already provided. Private wastewater treatment systems in sewered areas will not be permitted. In areas not served by the public sewer, a private sewer treatment system for individual properties will be permitted provided that the developer demonstrates that there will be no adverse effects on the environment, amenity and public health.

#### NE8 (Natural Heritage)

1. Applicants should submit supporting evidence for any development that may have an adverse effect on a protected species demonstrating both the need for the development and that a full range of possible alternative courses of action has been properly examined and none found to acceptably meet the need identified.
2. An ecological assessment will be required for a development proposal on or likely to affect a nearby designated site or where there is evidence to suggest that a habitat or species of importance (including those identified in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans) exists on the site.
3. No development will be permitted unless steps are taken to mitigate negative development impacts. All proposals that are likely to have a significant effect on the River Dee SAC will require an appropriate assessment which will include the assessment of a detailed construction method statement addressing possible impacts on Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Otter. Development proposals will only be approved where the appropriate assessment demonstrates that there will be no adverse affect on site integrity, except in situations of overriding public interest.
4. Natural heritage beyond the confines of designated sites should be protected and enhanced.
5. Where feasible, steps to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats must be sought and opportunities to restore links which have been broken will be taken.

6. Measures will be taken, in proportion to the opportunities available, to enhance biodiversity through the creation and restoration of habitats and, where possible, incorporating existing habitats.
7. There will be a presumption against excessive engineering and culverting; natural treatments of floodplains and other water storage features will be preferred wherever possible; there will be a requirement to restore existing culverted or canalised water bodies where this is possible; and the inclusion of SUDS. Natural buffer strips will be created for the protection and enhancement of water bodies, including lochs, ponds, wetlands, rivers, tributaries, estuaries and the sea. Supplementary Guidance will be developed on buffer strips.

#### Policy NE9 (Access and Informal Recreation)

Wherever appropriate, developments should include new or improved provision for public access, permeability and/or links to green space for recreation and active travel.

#### Policy R6: Waste Management Requirements for New Development

Housing developments should have sufficient space for the storage of residual, recyclable and compostable wasters. Flatted developments will require communal facilities that allow for the separate storage and collection of these materials. Details of storage facilities and means of collection must be included as part of any planning application for development which would generate waste. Further details are set out in Supplementary Guidance on Waste Management.

#### Policy R7 (Low and Zero Carbon Buildings)

States that all new buildings, in order to meet with building regulations energy requirements, must install low and zero-carbon generating technology to reduce the predicted carbon dioxide emissions by at least 15% below 2007 building standards.

### **Supplementary Guidance**

The following supplementary guidance (SG) documents are of relevance to assessment of this application:

- Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Manual
- Waste Management
- Transport and Accessibility
- Low and Zero Carbon Buildings

### **Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan**

The following policies substantively reiterate policies in the adopted local development plan as summarised above:

- Policy D1: Quality Placemaking by Design

- Policy D2: Landscape
- Policy I1: Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Obligations
- Policy T2: Managing the Transport Impact of Development
- Policy T3: Sustainable and Active Travel
- Policy H3: Density
- Policy H4: Housing Mix
- Policy H5: Affordable Housing
- Policy NE4: Open Space Provision in New Development
- Policy NE5: Trees and Woodland
- Policy NE6: Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality
- Policy NE8: Natural Heritage
- Policy R6: Waste Management Requirements for New Developments
- Policy R7: Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency
- Policy C1 – Digital Infrastructure

## **EVALUATION**

### **Hearing Guidelines**

Under 38A (4) of the Planning Act, the planning authority may decide to hold a hearing for any development not covered by the mandatory requirements and to give the applicant and any other person an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by the committee.

In June 2010 the Council agreed guidelines on 'When to hold public hearings in relation to planning applications'. The circumstances in which it is appropriate to hold a public hearing prior to determination of a planning application (where a pre-determination hearing is not a statutory requirement) are: (i) where the application has been the subject of more than 20 objections; and (ii) the Council has a financial interest; and / or (iii) the application is a departure from the development plan.

#### **(i) Level of Representation**

This proposal has attracted a total of 40 objections, and therefore clearly exceeds the threshold stated in the first of these criteria.

#### **(ii) Ownership/Financial Interest**

The application site is owned by the Council and therefore ACC has a direct financial interest in the outcome of the application.

The combination of these two factors alone is sufficient to trigger a requirement for this report, the purpose of which is to establish whether officers consider a public hearing should be held and to make a recommendation to members accordingly. No recommendation is being made at this time in respect of the determination of the application. A later report will be presented to a future committee making such a recommendation.

Turning to consideration of whether the proposal represents a departure from the Development Plan, it is recognised that the site is identified as an 'Opportunity Site' in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Its designation in the plan, OP10 (East Woodcroft), identifies the site as providing an opportunity for a development of around 60 homes.

The site boundary shown on the submitted plan incorporates the allocated OP10 East Woodcroft site, along with areas of woodland and green space around its boundaries. Within allocated housing sites, Policy LR1 (Land Release) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) will apply. This policy states that housing development on sites allocated within phase 1 of the ALDP (2007-2016) will be approved in principle within areas designated for those purposes, however any development on an allocated site which would jeopardise the full provision of the allocation will be refused. The East Woodcroft site is included in phase 2 of the ALDP's allocations.

The emerging Local Development Plan, which represents a material consideration in assessing planning proposals, retains the East Woodcroft site's residential allocation within the first phase of the plan (OP8 in the proposed plan). Policy LR1 also remains unchanged insofar as it relates to this site. On that basis, no material change in the site's policy context is anticipated.

Taking these matters into account, it is concluded that the proposal does not represent a departure from the Development Plan in principle, having had regard to its zoning and the nature of the proposed development, and that detailed assessment of the finer details will establish whether there are any areas of conflict with policy. For the purposes of this report, the proposal is not considered to represent a departure from the Development Plan.

The Council's established hearing guidelines state that the issues which require to be addressed in determining whether a hearing should be held will *include 'whether the development plan policy is up to date and relevant to the matters raised, and whether these matters are material planning considerations.'*

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan, adopted in February of 2012, and the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan, which came into effect on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014, collectively constitute the development plan against which applications for planning permission will be considered. At this time the development plan is considered to provide an up-to-date and relevant policy framework for the determination of this planning application.

The representations received generally raise a narrow range of concerns, principally relating to the proposed means of access to the site and associated issues relating to traffic volume, traffic speed and road safety. These are relevant planning considerations and relate to issues which are covered by the development plan, however it is felt that these can be assessed adequately on the basis of the representations received and via discussion at a meeting of the Planning Development Management Committee. Extensive pre-application consultation has ensured that there is a good level of awareness about the

proposed development in the local community, and it is not felt that the concerns raised indicate a wider public interest outwith the local area. On the basis of these factors, it is not considered that a public hearing would be warranted in this instance, and it is recommended that members defer consideration of this application to a later meeting of this committee, where a report on the merits of the proposal can be presented and discussed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Defer no Hearing**

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This application relates to land currently owned by Aberdeen City Council, and has attracted a significant level of representation from within the local community, however the proposal does not represent a departure from the Development Plan, and the issues raised are primarily of local interest. It is not considered that a non-statutory public hearing would be warranted in this instance.