

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	17 May 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Draft: Site OP63, Prime Four Business Park Development Framework
REPORT NUMBER:	CHI/16/083
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Site OP63, Prime Four Business Park Development Framework, prepared as a strategy for the future development of land identified in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) as Opportunity Site 63 (OP63).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Site OP63, Prime Four Business Park, Development Framework to be issued for public consultation over a six 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.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (a) Approves the Draft Prime Four (OP63), Development Framework for public consultation over a six 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 design team have met the cost for the preparation of the Development Framework including all consultation and engagement to

date. 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.

- 3.2 The costs associated with the proposed six 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. 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 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 in accordance with the Local Transport Strategy 2016.
- 4.4 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken on OP63 as part of the preparation of the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

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 Kingswells Community Council for information prior to this report being considered.
- 5.3 The Development Framework has been produced by Halliday Fraser Munro on behalf of Drum properties. The Development Framework aims to create an extension to an existing high quality business park to the west of the City.

Site Description

- 5.4 The site is currently an agricultural site to the west of the existing Prime Four Business Park and Kingswells. The AWPR will be located immediately to the west of the site.
- 5.5 The site is 12.7 hectares in size and is currently eight varied sized fields, largely set out for pasture with dry stone boundary walls. The site also includes a number of tree belts and the Ancient Woodland, located immediately to the east. Finally within the site the Friends Burial Ground is located to the south west.

Policy Summary

- 5.6 The site is identified in the proposed Local Development Plan 2015 as Opportunity Site 63 (OP63) for Specialist Employment. The Local Development Plan identifies the need for a Masterplan for the site along with a Transport Impact Assessment. The proposed plan also confirms the requirement of an adequate buffer to be identified in the Masterplan for the Quaker Burial Ground and the ancient woodland.
- 5.7 The proposed Local Development Plan is going through an examination at present. Three representations for OP63 are currently with the reporter for consideration. It is expected that the reporter's recommendations will be submitted to the Council by 10 August 2016.
- 5.8 The additional area of land has been allocated in the Proposed Local Development Plan and a schedule 4 has been submitted to the reporter. The schedule 4 confirms that: "The south west corner of the existing prime four business park is constrained and undevelopable at present due to access issues. The Prime Four Business Park has been exceptionally successful, bringing a significant positive economic impact to Aberdeen over the last 3 years. The developable land has been built out and demand for plots is continuing. There is therefore a strong argument for allocating more land for the Prime Four Extension now to allow for the continued growth and success of the site in order to capture this current demand."

Development Framework

- 5.9 The Development Framework covers a site that is an extension to the existing Prime Business Park. The broad principles and the quality of the development will be carried through from the existing site to this proposed extension.
- 5.10 The document provides an update on the previous phases of the Prime Four development and how the site has been developed. Updates on circulation around the site, the development zones and the previous Development Framework are shown on pages 6 to 12. It is important within this new Framework to confirm the links and existing roads to

ensure that the appropriate connections between the different phases are made.

Key Objectives

5.11 The Development Framework sets a number of key objectives for the site. These objectives cover the topics of:

- **Distinctive** – landscape strategy utilising existing natural features while creating a sense of identity.
- **Movement** – clear orientation around the site, development will provide visual markers and strong pedestrian links to existing facilities.
- **Safe and pleasant** – creation of frontages to streets, activity at all times of day and well-designed public spaces.
- **Adaptable** - provide a range of plot sizes and the flexibility to adapt to market changes.
- **Easy to get to and move around** - pedestrian and cycle friendly streets, good access to public transport, well integrated car-parking and opportunities to incorporate enhancements to biodiversity.
- **Resource efficient** – improving habitats and increasing building performance.

The key objectives can be read in full on page 30 of the Framework document.

Response to Historic Environment

5.12 The friends burial ground is a C listed building located to the south west of the site. The Framework identifies a 20 metre buffer around the burial ground to prevent direct impact on the listed building. Consideration will also be given to the surrounding context and how best to integrate it into the site. It is noted in the Framework that the main setting for the Burial Ground is to the south and this setting should be protected. The proposals can be viewed on page 31 of the draft document.

5.13 Page 32 of the Framework shows sections through this site and how buildings and roads could fit within the site and relate to the existing landscape features.

5.14 The ancient woodland is located outwith the allocated site but has been included within the site boundary for the purpose of this document. The woodland is also in the ownership of the applicant so can be managed or enhanced as deemed appropriate. A minimum 10m buffer around the ancient woodland has been identified and in some location

this will be increase to allow greater protection, increased open space and the opportunity for enhancement. Page 33 shows the potential areas for additional buffers.

Landscape

- 5.15 The landscape framework builds on the existing tree belts, field patterns and boundary walls. Retention of these features is a key element of the document and it is proposed that these are retained wherever possible. A landscape framework has been shown on page 35 of the Framework document.
- 5.16 Key views to and from the site have been identified and are shown on page 37 of the document.
- 5.17 The SUDs scheme for the site will be divided into two catchments due to the topography of the site. This can be seen on page 48 of the Framework.

Connectivity and circulation

- 5.18 This section highlights the need for a cohesive cycle/ pedestrian network. The Framework also identifies the need for a Transport Assessment to include the potential cycle improvements to the A944 cycle lane.
- 5.19 Public transport will access this area of the site to discourage the use of cars and encourage more sustainable modes of transport. Discussions are currently ongoing with bus operators.
- 5.20 Parking will be discreet and where possible to the rear of the buildings and integrated into the site using landforms. Surface parking should be carefully considered and dealt with in a sympathetic manner. The themes introduced in the earlier phases of development such as appropriate landscaping and enhanced surface drop off areas will be carried forward into this site. The plan on page 40 identifies where decked structures may be possible given the topography.
- 5.21 The initial access into the site will be via the existing road from the east. A Transport Impact Assessment is required to determine whether an additional access could be accommodated onto the A944.

Buildings

- 5.22 The approach to the earlier phases will be carried forward into this site. The previous development has accommodated large buildings with appropriate amenity space. A further hub is proposed within the new site, though at this time no uses are confirmed, these could include uses such as eateries or a convenience unit. The two hubs would be

linked with a strong tree lined boulevard providing a highly legible layout.

- 5.23 The proposal is to cluster buildings together and ensure pedestrian connections to encourage interaction.
- 5.24 Massing of the buildings is an important consideration in particular given the topographical differences and the landscape context. On the plateau careful consideration will be required to buildings in proximity to the friends burial ground and the visual prominence of this area. The central zone will also require sensitive design and consideration and possible breaking up of the massing of some of the buildings to provide variety in design and scale. Page 42 of the framework identifies where the different heights of buildings could be located. Sections through the site and the AWPR and are shown on page 43.

Phasing

- 5.25 The phasing for the whole of Prime Four (including the adjacent existing site) is shown on page 46 of the document. Phases 1-3 have largely been constructed and are occupied. The area that was identified as phase 4 within the OP40 – Kingswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan has now been moved to phase 5 due to access issues and the new site OP63 is to be phase 4 of the Prime Four development.

6 IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience - The Development Framework sets out principles and options for OP63, Prime Four Business Park Development Framework site. It also highlights what further surveys and detailed information will be required as part of any planning application. In doing so the Framework provides certainty for the public, agencies and development industry.

Improving Staff Experience - The Development Framework will contribute to efficiencies in determining future planning applications and a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals.

Improving our use of Resources - By demonstrating acceptable forms, siting and uses of new development on the site, it allows more informed decision making to be made earlier, saving time and resources for staff, applicants and the public. The Development Framework also highlights the expected improvements required to infrastructure, services and resources as a result of the proposed development.

Corporate - The proposal contributes to the following Single Outcome Priorities: 1 – People feel safe throughout Aberdeen’s communities; 2 –

economic growth – the city is recognised as a good place to invest, live, work, visit and export from; 3 – Health and wellbeing – reduced inequalities in healthy life expectancy and improved physical and mental health through increased physical activity.

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.

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.

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.

The proposal will assist in the delivery of the Council's Strategic Infrastructure Plan by helping to achieve the key goal of 'The skills and labour that Aberdeen needs to thrive'

Securing the Future of the North East Economy – A 20 Year Vision for the Well-being of the Place & Our People" was approved by the Council in December 2015. A key objective of the Investment in Infrastructure Programme is to enable the city to realise the development opportunities in the City Centre Masterplan. These proposals and development of a 21st Century public realm are a vital component of the 'development mix'. High value jobs and skills are globally mobile, and competing for these high value 'clusters' of activity is a key part of the Strategy, and the Council's inward investment plans. In doing so, it becomes easier for Aberdeen to maintain and attract world class talent and business, which in turn delivers positive indirect and induced impacts across the city economy as spend supports jobs in retail, tourism, leisure and other services. However to remain globally competitive, the quality of the 'place', the commercial space and the public realm around it all have a role. Developers and subsequent occupants/ employers base their location decisions on being able to attract the best talent and skills to work in their businesses, and they recognise the positive correlation between their business competitiveness and the quality of the public realm.

The proposal is consistent with the Planning and Sustainable Development 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.

Public – An EHRIA will be carried out for the Development Framework once the consultation exercise has taken place.

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. Going out to consultation ahead of the reporters decision on the Local Development Plan is a risk because there is no certainty that the site will be included in the land allocation.
- 7.3 If the recommendation is not accepted the risk is that no development will take place on the site. There are strong benefits in early engagement with the community; there is a risk that this will not be the case if the recommendation is not accepted. There is also a risk that the employment allocations in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2016) will not be met. There would also be no clear parameters set for the site resulting in the potential of piecemeal development on the site.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Draft Site OP63, Prime Four Business Park 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 Aberdeen Local Development Plan:
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_2016_proposed_plan.asp

7 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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