

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Planning Development Management Committee

DATE: 27 October 2016

DIRECTOR: Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT: Countesswells Phase 1b Masterplan

REPORT NUMBER: CHI/16/256

CHECKLIST RECEIVED: Yes

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Countesswells Phase 1b Masterplan, prepared as a strategy for the future development of land identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 and the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (a) Approve the Draft Countesswells Phase 1b Masterplan as Interim Planning Advice; and
 - (b) Agree for officers to implement the process to ratify the Masterplan as Supplementary Guidance. This will include a minimum 4 week public consultation with results reported back to Committee prior to submission to Scottish Government.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The design team have met the cost for the preparation of the Countesswells Phase 1b Masterplan including all consultation and engagement to date. The proposals will result in efficiencies in the determination of future planning applications, leading to a reduction in Council staff time to assess future detailed proposals.
- 3.2 The costs associated with the proposed statutory consultation exercise will be met within existing budgets.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Masterplan 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 Masterplan will contribute to efficiencies in determining future planning applications. By agreeing acceptable forms and uses of new development 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 Masterplan 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) was undertaken on Countesswells as part of the preparation of the Existing and the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

5 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Masterplan 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 Masterplan has been made available to the Cults, Bielside and Milltimber and Kingswells Community Councils for information prior to this report being considered.
- 5.3 The site is allocated as OP58 in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012) and OP38 in the Proposed Local Development Plan 2015. The existing Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan for this site were adopted as Supplementary Guidance in July 2014. Phase 1b will sit alongside the already approved documents.
- 5.4 Planning Permission in Principle was submitted for the residential led development at Countesswells in March 2014. A willingness to approve the application (subject to legal conditions) was agreed in August 2014. The section 75 legal agreement was signed in April 2016. The first phases of residential development have now been approved along with some infrastructure and landscaping works. The new road connection to the Kingswells Roundabout was granted Planning Permission in Principle in September 2015.

- 5.5 The draft Masterplan document has been produced by Optimised Environments on behalf of Countesswells Development Ltd.

Site Description

- 5.6 The Countesswells site is located to the West of Aberdeen. It is situated between Bielside to the south and Kingswells to the north. The site is bounded to the east by Hazelhead Woods, Park and Golf Course and to the west by Foggieton and Countesswells Wood. The site is currently largely in agricultural use and measures approximately 165.9 hectares.
- 5.7 Phase 1b is located at the north of the allocated site. The phase location can be viewed on page 19 of the draft Masterplan.

Masterplan Content

- 5.8 Phase 1b includes blocks N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N7, N12 and N13. Uses include residential development (mix of size and type), a mixed use local centre, the first primary school, an employment area and areas of open space. A plan showing the mix of uses can be viewed on page 23, fig 17 of the Draft Masterplan.
- 5.9 There are three main reasons for the production of the Phase 1b Masterplan at this stage. These have resulted from necessary revisions in the phasing of the development. These changes are as a result of 3 main factors:

1. Provision of a new link road connecting the primary street to the A944 at the Kingswells Roundabout. (following the alignment of the Approved PPIp for the new road).

The Development Framework shows an all vehicle road connecting into the Jessiefield Junction and a bus route to the Kingswells Roundabout. The road requirements have changed and now, all vehicle road connections are to be provided onto the A944, one at Jessiefield and one at the Kingswells Roundabout. Both routes can accommodate buses. Planning Permission in Principle was granted for the road connection to the Kingswells Roundabout in September 2015 as highlighted in paragraph 5.4. Further detail on this topic can be seen on pages 10 and 11 of the draft Masterplan.

2. The refinement and design of the mixed use neighbourhood centre.

The neighbourhood centre will be located adjacent to the first primary school, forming a civic square as a focal point of this community. The density of the residential properties is higher adjacent to the civic square and reduces as the development moves north.

The land take requirements for the primary school have been updated as a result of discussions with the Council's Education Service. Further details on the civic square and the primary school can be seen on pages 42 and 43 of the Masterplan.

3. Various changes to Development blocks to reflect refinement of street alignments in accordance with points 1 and 2 above.

As a result of the changes to the road layout the block structure has been altered. The revised layout, details and principles of the blocks are explained further within the Phase 1b Masterplan. The layout complies with the parameters and principles set out within the Development Framework. The layout provides well connected streets, access to public open space and a well-defined civic space at the centre of the phase. Page 12 of the Draft Masterplan explains the changes to the blocks further, including density and proposed numbers.

Phasing

- 5.10 The phasing plan has been updated to reflect the changes highlighted above.
- 5.11 The neighbourhood centre is included within Phase 1b along with the site for the first primary school which is required on site prior to the occupation of the 500th unit. The revised phasing plan can be viewed on pages 14 -17 of the Draft Masterplan.
- 5.12 The final numbers for the site do not alter as a result of the proposed changes to the layout and are consistent with those set out in the Local Development Plan and the approved Supplementary Guidance Document.

6 IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience – The Masterplan sets out principles and options for the Countesswells Opportunity site. It also highlights what further surveys and detailed information will be required as part of any planning application. In doing so the Masterplan provides certainty for the public, agencies and development industry.

Improving Staff Experience - The Masterplan 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 Masterplan 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 Masterplan 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.

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 ‘A step change in the supply of housing’.

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 was carried out for the Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan. This will be updated and reported back to committee with the results of the proposed consultation.

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 Masterplan.
- 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 Housing allocations in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2016) will not be met. There would also be no clear parameters set for this phase of the site resulting in the potential of piecemeal development.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Countesswells Phase 1b Masterplan

<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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