

REPORT TO FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE – 23 JANUARY 2024

ENQ/2023/1525 - NEWBURGH (SITE OP3) MASTERPLAN

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 The preparation of a Masterplan is a requirement under Policy P1 Layout, Siting and Design of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP 2023). Policy P1 requires that all major housing developments (over 50 homes) are required to prepare a Masterplan, which has been subject to public consultation, and agreed by the Local Area Committee. The Masterplan requires to be agreed in advance of the submission of a planning application, which should then adhere to the agreed Masterplan. The aim of the masterplanning process is to promote good place-making, and ensure future developments are designed to the highest standard, encompassing social, environmental, and economic requirements to create the sustainable communities of the future. Once agreed a Masterplan shall remain valid for a period of 5 years, unless planning permission for the development has been granted and implemented.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Agree the Masterplan for Site OP3 Newburgh as the context for the general layout and approach for subsequent planning applications, and

1.2.2 Agree the Masterplan for Site OP3 Newburgh to be used as a material consideration in the determination of any subsequent planning applications.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 Masterplans are to be considered by the relevant Area Committee under terms of Section B.8.1 of Part 2A List of Committee Powers and Section C.5.3 of Part 2C Planning Delegations of the Scheme of Governance. The Masterplan is directly linked to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP 2023) as a requirement stipulated through the Newburgh Settlement Statement contained within Appendix 7C Settlement Statements - Formartine.

3 Discussion

Background

3.1 This report provides an overview of the Masterplan which has been prepared for site OP3 in Newburgh. The Masterplan site plan is appended to this report as **Appendix 1** and the whole document is appended to this report as **Appendix 2**. The purpose of the Masterplan document is to set out a clear idea for the future, and demonstrate an integrated approach to community

participation, site planning, transport, servicing, community facilities, design, ecology and landscaping. The exact content of a Masterplan will vary on a site by site basis, but broadly they are intended to be succinct documents to convey key principles that future development will need to incorporate. That is not to say they should not be supported by detailed supporting information, but that information should sit in the background and inform.

- 3.2 The proposed Masterplan includes a triangle of land to the north which is outwith site OP3 as allocated in the ALDP 2023. For the purposes of masterplanning, the Planning Service have agreed that it is suitable to include this area of land. Due to ground conditions, the triangle of land to the north is the most suitable for the suds basin, as discussed on page 21 of the document. It is considered that the masterplanning of the site can benefit from consideration of an extended site in this case. There is no uplift in the number of dwellinghouses proposed and no housing development is located in the northern triangle. It is however acknowledged that should an application come forward on this section of the site it would be a departure to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023.
- 3.3 The requirement for a Masterplan for site OP3 is outlined within the settlement statement for Newburgh and Policy P1 Layout, Siting and Design of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP 23). The form of the Masterplan is guided by Planning Advice PA2023-09 'Masterplanning'. Masterplans should also be developed in accordance with Planning Advice Note 83: Masterplanning and Designing Streets. NPF4 Policies 14 (Design, quality and place) and 15 (Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods) are relevant to design, but do not specifically require masterplans to be prepared. Masterplans should be prepared in line with the principles of the six qualities of successful places, and 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- 3.4 Site OP3 is allocated in the ALDP 2023 for 160 homes. The allocated site statement for OP3 outlines requirements, including;
- A Masterplan, to include placemaking requirements and provision of a "primary street"
 - Sustainable drainage system
 - Investment in education facilities
 - Incorporate first section of a vehicular link between the B9000 and A975 - a 'primary street'
 - Connectivity to OP2
 - New footway provision on B9000
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Buffer strip along watercourse
 - Contribution towards affordable housing to be delivered in early phases.

Process

- 3.5 In relation to the approach to the Masterplan, the applicant has followed the approach set out in Masterplanning Planning Advice. The applicant engaged early with the Planning Service, and discussion has taken place with consultees in relation to technical requirements. The applicant has also undertaken public engagement on the proposed Masterplan. This is covered in more detail in paragraphs 3.9-3.10 below.
- 3.6 The Masterplanning Advice outlines a suggested content masterplans should follow, which this Masterplan generally adheres to. The Masterplan document is split into four sections, 1 - Background, 2 - Site and Area Analysis; 3 - Proposed Development; and 4 - Summary of Commitments and Key Design Principles. Section 2 on Analysis covers community engagement.

Site Context

- 3.7 Site OP3 is located to the west of Newburgh, bounded to the south by the B9000, to the east by housing development at St Clair and to the north and west by agricultural land. The ground is undulating, and currently in agricultural use. There is a watercourse to the north of the site (outwith the site boundary).
- 3.8 The Masterplan document covers 'Site Analysis' from pages 5-18. This is a comprehensive planning context which considers the existing context of the site, including consideration of the character and identity of the settlement, and technical matters and constraints. This section also includes community consultation, which is discussed below. In summary, this section demonstrates that the developer has fully considered the site context and how the site would relate to the existing settlement.

Community Engagement

- 3.9 Policy P1 of the ALDP 2023 outlines that a Masterplan must be subject to public consultation. The responsibility to undertake public consultation lies with the applicant/developer. Section 2 of the document (pages 16-18) summarises the public consultation undertaken. The developer/applicant has held two public consultation events to discuss the Masterplan, and design evolution. The first event was held on 7 December 2022, and the second event on 22 February 2023. Events have been well attended, and pages 17-18 of the document provides commentary on the consultation. It is noted that some of the issues raised are outwith the remit of the Masterplan.
- 3.10 The service is of the view that through the Masterplan process, the views of the community have been sought, and taken on board. The public engagement carried out with the community on the Masterplan meets the requirements of Policy P1.

Proposed Masterplan

- 3.11 The Masterplan site plan (enclosed as **Appendix 1** or also shown on page 28 of the Masterplan) illustrates the key principles of the site. These are primarily:
- New primary street route (the first section of a potential future link road to the A975;
 - A network of open space;
 - Buffer strip along watercourse
 - New suds feature with open space to the western side of site OP1;
 - Landscape buffer between existing development at St Clair and the proposed housing;
 - Pedestrian connectivity to existing settlement with new footway along B9000.
 - Potential for future pedestrian connectivity between the site OP2.
- 3.12 The document notes that the proposal is for around 160 new homes, but the site capacity is indicative at this stage. The report also notes that a mix of dwelling sizes and styles will be provided including detached, semi-detached and terraces. It is noted that 25% of the total number of homes will be affordable, and they will be integrated into the development.
- 3.13 In relation to landscape strategy and strategic greenspace, approximately 46% of the site is designated as green space, in line with policy requirements of the ALDP 23. This does include the additional triangle of land to the north. There are two main areas of open space proposed, to the north and west, supplemented, and linked through smaller areas. The suds basin to the north also provides opportunity for new habitats. The site will contribute to enhancement of biodiversity. The justification for the siting of the SuDs basin outwith the OP3 site is considered acceptable.
- 3.14 Turning to connectivity, there is a clear street hierarchy, in line with Designing Streets. Connectivity to the centre of Newburgh, bus stops, recreation areas and play parks is provided in line with Policy 15 (Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods) of NPF4. There is enhanced pedestrian connectivity into the existing settlement with the provision of a 3m wide footpath/cycleway to the south of the site along the B9000. There is an indicative pedestrian route provided to the north of the site, but pedestrian connectivity to site OP2 is outwith the land control of the developer. The proposed primary street provides the potential for a future vehicular link around the west of the settlement.
- 3.15 The Masterplan notes that the development of the site will be over three phases, with forty to sixty dwellings delivered per phase (subject to sales rates). The phasing plan shows the build out over the site, with key infrastructure and Suds provided in phase 1.

Consultees

- 3.16 The Masterplan has been subject to discussion with internal Council services, and also external services such as SEPA and Scottish Water. The final draft Masterplan was circulated to consultees for comments, in the main consultees raised no substantive comments in relation to the proposed Masterplan. The Council's Flood Risk and Coast Protection Team and SEPA have noted that additional detail will be required in a Flood Risk Assessment to support future planning application(s). Roads development noted some technical requirements relating to future planning application(s). As the development moves forward from the Masterplan to planning application stage, further discussions with consultees will continue to take place to shape the final design and layout as well as finalising Developer Obligations.
- 3.17 A Design Quality Audit has not been carried out at this stage, as it is considered that it would hold more value with a more detailed layout.

Summary

- 3.18 In conclusion, the Planning Service is satisfied with the structure, detail and content of the Masterplan. The Masterplan has followed due process, and the public engagement carried out meets the expectations of the Service. The Masterplan provides a suitable context for the progression of site OP3. Masterplans should set the overall context and not go into too much detail. As future planning application(s) come forward, they will be required to comply with the principles set out in the Masterplan, in order to accord with Policy P1 of the ALDP 2023.
- 3.19 As outlined in paragraph 3.2 above, the SUDS basin and associated open space on the land outwith OP3 would be a departure to the ALDP 2023, and would require to go through relevant departure procedures. However, it is the view of the service that suitable justification has been made for the Suds in this location.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The Masterplan will help to deliver an allocated site in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023, which will ultimately help to deliver the Strategic Priorities 'Our Environment' in contributing to resilient communities, and 'Our Economy' in contributing to Economic Growth.
- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X

Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

- 4.3 The financial and staffing implications in assessing masterplans are covered within the existing Planning and Economy budget. No risks or implications are anticipated as no exceptional cost are anticipated.
- 4.4 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is not required. The Masterplan is simply setting out the context for future development proposals on this site and will not itself have a differential impact on those with protected characteristics.
- 4.5 There are no risks identified in respect of this matter in terms of the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers as the Committee is considering the Masterplan as the Planning Authority in a quasi-judicial role as the Masterplan has been identified as a requirement through the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section B.8.1 of Part 2A List of Committee Powers and Section C.5.3 of Part 2C Planning Delegations of the Scheme of Governance.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment & Infrastructure Services
Author of Report: Sarah Graham
Report Date: 4 January 2024

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Masterplan Site Plan
Appendix 2 – Masterplan Report