

REPORT TO KINCARDINE AND MEARN'S AREA COMMITTEE – 22 AUGUST 2017

Reference No: ENQ/2017/1004

Masterplan for Residential Development at Site OP1, Land Between Park Place and Cairnhill Drive, Newtonhill

1. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Agree the Newtonhill South Masterplan as planning advice to be used as a material consideration in the determination of any future planning application on this site.

2. Background / Discussion

- 2.1 This report outlines the Newtonhill Masterplan, prepared as a guide for the future development of land in Newtonhill identified as OP1 in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2017) (LDP). The purpose of this document is to set out the overall principles for the site in terms of design, layout, access and infrastructure.
- 2.2 The Masterplan and addendum are appended to this report and have been circulated via Members' Ward Pages.
- 2.3 The Newtonhill South Masterplan has been Prepared by Halliday Fraser Munro on behalf of Barratt North Scotland and Polmuir Properties (Newtonhill) Limited.

Site Description

- 2.4 The site is located on the southern settlement edge of Newtonhill and is characterised by farmland and scrub, largely consisting of gorse, on a south-facing slope. The site extends to approximately 7.3 hectares and is bounded to the north by existing residential development, a paddock, public open space and allotments; existing residential development to the west; and the railway line to the east. The site is bounded by designated Greenbelt to the south. This land to the south is a mix of farm land, open space and gorse.

Policy

- 2.5 The Masterplan has been prepared following the Council's masterplanning process and has been formed through the policies of the Scottish Government

and Aberdeenshire Council. The key aims of national policy set out in "Creating Places" and "Designing Streets" have been incorporated in the development through this process in terms of design and layout. The draft Masterplan has evolved over a period of time.

- 2.6 The aim of the masterplanning process is to ensure future developments are designed to the highest standard, encompassing social, environment and economic requirements to create sustainable communities of the future. The submission of Masterplans for Major Developments is required by LDP Policy P1 which states *'sites will be developed in accordance with a previously agreed statement'*.
- 2.7 The Newtonhill Settlement Statement allocation OP1 states that the site is envisaged to be developed for 70 homes. The Settlement Statement states *'future development should ensure that the site has two points of access due to the scale of the development and these can be taken from Cairnhill Drive and Park Place. This would then allow a link to be made connecting these two areas'*.
- 2.8 Further, *'When developing this site it is important that consideration is also given at the same time to ensuring that the protected P4 buffer along the southern boundary strip is developed in a manner that would provide the required screening between this development and Muchalls. A core path also runs along the northern boundary before passing south through the site and connections should be made to link up with the network'*.
- 2.9 The settlement statement also indicates the essential infrastructure works that all developments need to contribute to, such as education, strategic road network improvements, road linkages, waste, health, open space and drainage.
- 2.10 A contribution of 25% affordable housing is required within the site
- 2.11 LDP Policy H1 states: *'We will support the development of housing on sites allocated for that purpose within the local development plan and as shown in the Settlement statements. Capacities of sites shown in appendix 5 of this plan and the settlement statements are indicative at this stage. Higher densities would only be considered where any associated negative impacts on infrastructure, open space and residential amenity can be addressed and where justified through an approved masterplan or design statement that has been subject to appropriate public consultation'*.
- 2.12 Numerous issues have been raised by consultees through this masterplanning process. The main issues related to access and connectivity, housing, education and the natural environment. In broad terms the main issues however have been resolved through additional information and discussion between the developer and Planning Service. It should be noted

that a masterplan is indicative and specific development details will be dealt with under any future planning application.

Design Principles

- 2.13 The Masterplan establishes a vision for the site, The vision of the Masterplan is: *'To create a high quality sustainable residential neighbourhood to the south of Newtonhill, contained within an attractive open space and landscape setting. The development will be characterised by an identifiable neighbourhood settlement pattern, ensuring a unique sense of place. Overall legibility and townscape cohesion will be achieved through applying core design principles throughout the whole development area. Located on the edge of Newtonhill, the vision for the developments expansion would also seek to ensure a link between Newtonhill and the new development through physical accessibility and the design and layout of the new houses, open spaces, footpaths and streets.'*
- 2.14 Site OP1 includes the paddocks to the northwest but this area is in separate ownership and is not included in the current masterplan.
- 2.15 A comprehensive site analysis in Section 3 focuses on the proposed site with consideration of the potential opportunities, constraints and topography and how this influences the form of the proposed development. The topography of the site will form a major element of the design and layout, access and SUDs scheme.

Environment and Open Space

- 2.16 The masterplan elements include a landscape framework with over 40% of the site dedicated to providing both hard and soft landscaping and a hierarchy of open space and series of green spaces that provide amenity, informal play areas for residents, improved biodiversity, new footpaths and cycle paths, SUDS and landscape buffers.
- 2.17 The Masterplan has incorporated the area of land protected in the Local Development Plan as P4 –'landscape buffer' within the proposed development site boundary with a view to developing a natural landscape buffer integrating with the open space to the south and maintaining a buffer between Muchalls Village and Newtonhill. Rather than a continuous 25m deep tree belt the Masterplan proposes groups of trees and hedgerows. The site layout in the Masterplan shows development, including a turning area, sections of roads and areas of domestic curtilage within the buffer strip. The Planning Service raised concerns regarding development within the buffer strip and also the route of the core path through the site. The applicant has subsequently amended the site layout to minimise development within the buffer strip and clearly identify the core path and other pedestrian links through and round the site.

- 2.18 The site sits to the west of the railway line and is well separated from the Coastal Zone Local Conservation Site to the east of the railway. There are no natural heritage designations within the development site.

Housing

- 2.19 The developer intends to provide a range of house types from large detached family homes to smaller semi-detached and terraced houses and flats. The aim is that every house would be designed and constructed to the highest specification in order to deliver low energy usage and low energy bills for the future occupants, with the use of sustainable energy generation incorporated into the house design. The houses would be orientated to maximise the southern aspect ensuring maximum solar gain.
- 2.20 All housing areas have been set out in a simple and easily understood block pattern. In most instances the houses would be designed to face out on to the development's roads and/or open spaces which will help ensure passive surveillance throughout the site, encouraging safe active use of the whole development.
- 2.21 It has also been confirmed that any future proposal would provide the required 25% affordable housing provision in accordance with Scottish Government and the LDP policy.

Access and Connectivity

- 2.22 The Masterplan considers the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as well as cars.
- 2.23 An accessibility plan illustrated in diagrams 15 and 16 of the Masterplan, identify the main linkages and transport routes in relation to the site. A feature of the Masterplan is to ensure the site is permeable to all modes of transport with particular care to ensure easy movement of pedestrians and cyclists through the development. The core path link would be maintained through the site from Park Place through the development then to the south as currently exists. As previously stated the proposed route of the core path has been amended to provide an improved route through the site.
- 2.24 The development would have a clear hierarchy, with a principle street, secondary streets and formal footpaths. The streets would be designed to encourage slow speeds with a permeable network throughout the scheme.

Infrastructure

- 2.25 The Masterplan ensures that the site would provide the required two points of access and are taken from Cairnhill Drive via Cairnhill Way and Park Place. This would then allow a link to be made connecting these two areas to the west and north. The final specification and details would be agreed with the Council's Roads Development and Transportation services.

Public Consultation

- 2.26 As stated in paragraph 1.6 of the masterplan, and expanded upon in section 4, the evolution of the masterplan has followed a clear process, taking into account the comments of the community. Barratt North Scotland attended a Community Council meeting on the 21st of September 2016 to introduce Barratt Homes and to announce that two public consultation events which were subsequently held on 28th September 2016 and on 26th October 2016 respectively. Thereafter, a follow-up meeting was held with community council representatives on the 17th January 2017.

Conclusion

- 2.27 The Planning Service is satisfied with the detail and structure of the Masterplan, and that the correct process and public engagement have taken place. Whilst it is acknowledged that the indicative layout shown within the submitted Masterplan shows an increase in dwelling numbers over and above the 70 indicated within the site allocation, the impact of any increase in housing numbers on services and amenities of the existing area is not being assessed as part of the current Masterplan submission and will be addressed as part of any subsequent planning application.
- 2.28 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.

3. Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.9.1 of Part 2A List of Committee Powers and Section C.2.1 of Planning Delegations of the Scheme of Governance as the application is an application for major development.

4. Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. The Masterplan is simply setting out the context for future development proposals on this site, and will not have a differential impact on those with protected characteristics.
- 4.2 There are no staffing or financial implications arising from this report.

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Report Date: 8 August 2017