

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2009

SUBJECT: FINALISED DEVELOPMENT BRIEF
DUBTON FARM, BRECHIN

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Abstract: This report outlines and comments on the responses to consultation on the draft development brief and finalises the planning requirements that will guide the development of the site B1: Housing – Dubton Farm which is allocated in the Angus Local Plan Review (as modified) for residential development.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee –

1. note the response to the consultation draft brief set out in [Table1](#);
2. agree the finalised development brief as detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Infrastructure Services Committee at their meeting of 25 November 2008 approved a draft development brief for Dubton Farm, Brechin as a basis for consultation (report 1147/08 refers).
- 2.2 The draft development brief was circulated to a range of organisations including Brechin Community Council, the landowners, Scottish Natural Heritage, Brechin Business Association and service providers. Comments on the draft brief were requested by 14 January 2009. The list of organisations circulated and a summary of their responses is outlined in Table 1. A full set of responses is available for reference in the Members' Lounge.
- 2.3 This report summarises and discusses main points arising from the responses and sets out a finalised development brief that will guide development of the site.

3 RESPONSES TO DRAFT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

- 3.1 Ten consultees responded to the draft development brief including Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), City of Brechin & District Community Council, three separate landowners (Dalhousie Estates, Scotia Homes and Church of Scotland), Michael Gilmour Associates, Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service, the Health and Safety Executive and Angus Council's Environmental & Consumer Protection Division. Comments were also received from a Brechin resident however, these relate to Scotia Homes detailed development proposals and the Community Engagement Exercise rather than the content of the Draft Development Brief. Although consulted no comments have been received from

the Brechin Business Association, Scottish Water, BEAR Scotland Ltd or Tayside Police Crime Reduction Officer.

- 3.2 As indicated in the November 2008 Committee Report (report 1147/08 refers), Members will recall that a full planning application has been received for a mixed use development on the northern portion of the Dubton Farm site comprising 201 residential units and 1050 sq m of retail/commercial units. A Design Statement and Masterplan have been submitted as part of the planning application. The comments received from Scotia Homes, their agents Michael Gilmour Associates, Dalhousie Estates and the Community Council largely focus on those aspects of the brief which conflict with the development proposals and master plan as submitted and prepared by Scotia Homes and their agents. The comments highlight that the proposals were developed in conjunction with representatives of the Brechin Community and as such have some local support. Consequently Scotia Homes in particular are seeking significant changes to the Brief in relation to the following interrelated matters - Density, Mix and Form of Development; Location of Phase 1; Treatment of the Ridgeline and Relationship with the Business Park. These matters are further discussed below.

Density, Mix and Form of Development

- 3.3 The design approach put forward by Scotia Homes is for a high density urban style development which includes a mixture of housing, employment, commercial, and retail use. This seeks to provide a higher density form of development, break away from the uniformity of other suburban developments, and draws on aspects of Brechin town centre. The comments consider that the brief is seeking a conventional suburban type of development at Dubton Farm and wish to see the Brief amended to allow for a more urban form of development. The comments also seek amendments to allow more scope for a mixed use development including employment/office/retail/commercial uses.
- 3.4 The published Draft Development Brief seeks a range of house types, tenures and affordability including detached, semi detached, terraced and flatted properties to create diversity in terms of density, townscape and layout. It also allows for some mixed use on the site to enhance sustainability and provide diversity. As a consequence, density across the site will not be uniform as the comments suggest but will vary. On this basis the Brief as it currently stands would allow for and is seeking a range of density. Notwithstanding in order to clarify the Council's position on this aspect of the Development Brief and to reassure the consultees, the Brief has been amended to highlight there is scope for varying density across the site where appropriate.
- 3.5 The scale and nature of mixed use promoted by the Brief appears to be an area of contention. In this respect it is considered that there is no justification for amending the Brief to allow for anything other than small scale mixed uses given the accessibility of the Dubton site to the majority of services in Brechin and the Council's development strategy to support the regeneration of Brechin town centre.

Location of Phase 1

- 3.6 In terms of phasing, the comments seek amendments to the Brief to allow Phase 1 to start at the north of the site rather than the south. The comments consider this to be

the best option in terms of construction traffic, the establishment of a mixed use centre and the link to the school.

- 3.7 It is relevant to note that the Local Plan Review allows for an initial phase of 100 units in the period to 2011. The potential for further land release beyond 2011 will be determined by a future Local Plan. This will consider options and sites across the whole HMA in the context of revised strategic guidance for the period beyond 2011. Consequently subsequent phases of development beyond Phase 1 may not take place for potentially many years and it is important to consider the location of Phase 1 in that context.
- 3.8 The impact of development in landscape and visual terms as well as impact on the local road network were key considerations in defining the location of Phase 1 in the Development Brief. In this respect the Angus Landscape Capacity Study undertaken by Angus Council in 2002 and the views of Angus Council's Roads Division were taken into account. In landscape and visual terms, locating Phase 1 within the southern portion of the site will consolidate the urban pattern of development and produce a coherent entrance to Brechin. In terms of impact on the road network, it was considered that locating the first phase in the southern part of the site with a principal access from the A935 would provide a direct convenient link from the development to the nearby A90(T) trunk road for both; north and southbound regional/national roads traffic. Consequently this option would have no detrimental impact on the local roads in and around Brechin town centre.
- 3.9 Locating Phase 1 at the north of the site including the provision of an access road for construction traffic from the A935 as suggested by the consultees is undesirable in landscape and visual terms. This would require access for construction traffic to be taken via a new road constructed across the undeveloped agricultural land which is the southern part of the site. It is noted from the comments that this road whilst used initially for construction traffic only, would in the fullness of time become a street through the development and opened up for general use. As highlighted above, subsequent phases of developed may not take place for several years and, unless the access road was removed following the development of phase 1, it would lead to the southern part of the site having an appearance of an incomplete development site for potentially several years.
- 3.10 In addition, locating Phase 1 to the north with access from Pittendriech Road would be undesirable in that traffic travelling to and from the A90(T) trunk road would have a significant impact on the existing local road network, particularly North Latch Road, Latch Road and Airlie Street. Furthermore, until the link with the A935 was provided, there is potential for some southbound regional traffic emerging from Pittendriech Road to choose the classified Barrelwell and Menmuir roads in order to access the A90(T) trunk road at the 'at grade' junction at Balnabreich. This would involve crossing the northbound carriageway of the trunk road which is clearly less safe than the direct access from the A935 at the grade separated St. Ann's junction. To overcome this issue the comments seek amendments to the Draft Brief to allow vehicular access through the Business Park to the west of the site. However such a proposal is not favoured in terms of potential impact on road traffic safety and is not supported by Angus Council's Roads and Economic Development Divisions. Further discussion on this matter is set out in paragraph 3.16 below.

- 3.11 Given the above, it is desirable that Phase 1 should be located within the southern portion of the site and on this basis there should be no amendment to the Development Brief in this respect.

Treatment of the Ridgeline

- 3.12 Comments received also seek amendment to the Brief to provide flexibility in how the ridge is treated in terms of buildings and trees and to allow for building heights of more than 1½ storeys on the ridge line.
- 3.13 The treatment of the ridge and how development will be viewed is important. The Brief attempts to ensure that the development reflects the relationship with the landscape within which it sits and avoid the image of development 'marching over the hill'. It is considered that the restriction of building heights in the vicinity of the ridgeline is important in meeting the aims of the Brief in this respect. Consequently no amendment to the Brief is made regarding the treatment of the ridgeline.

Relationship with the Business Park

- 3.14 The comments seek amendment to the Brief to remove/reduce the landscaping and open space requirements along the western boundary (adjacent to the Business Park) as it encourages a forced separation between the two uses. The comments suggest that a better solution would be to integrate the two sites as much as possible through good design and that the need for additional separation or landscaped buffers should be based on a noise survey. The comments also seek amendments to the Brief to allow for vehicular access through the Business Park.
- 3.15 The landscaping requirements along the western boundary as set out in the Draft Brief seek to integrate the new development with the surrounding area. These are viewed as forming part of a wider landscape/open space network across the whole site which seeks to do more than provide noise attenuation. Structural landscaping along this boundary also seeks to increase the physical and psychological separation between the Business Park and housing. Such landscaping is considered desirable in seeking to protect the amenity of new housing and to ensure that existing or future uses on the Business Park are not compromised. On this basis it is not considered appropriate to amend the Brief in this respect.
- 3.16 In terms of connectivity, the access requirements set out in the Draft Brief including the exclusion of vehicular access through the Business Park take into account the views of Angus Council's Roads and Economic Development Divisions. The Business Park was designed from the outset as a self contained site. As such the layout and access roads were designed to accommodate the needs of employment/industrial uses within the site although provision was made for footpath /cycle linkages to the proposed development site at Dubton Farm and housing areas to the east. The nature of industrial traffic within the Business Park is likely to involve large vehicles loading/unloading. Consequently in seeking to avoid potential conflict between industrial vehicles and cars to from the development, the Brief states that vehicular access between the Business Park and the site will not be permitted. This is in the interest of road traffic safety as well as seeking to ensure that existing and future uses on the Business Park are not compromised. Consequently there is no amendment to the Brief in this respect.

- 3.17 Responses to the Draft Brief from various other consultees are set out below:
- 3.18 Comments from CKD Galbraith on behalf of the Church of Scotland who own the Glebe located in the south east area of the overall Dubton site, seek amendment to the Brief to remove its 'designation' as open space on the basis that large parts of the area have development potential.
- 3.19 The purpose of identifying the Glebe principally as open space takes into account the landscape character and context of the site, the desire to create/maintain an attractive site frontage and provide an appropriate transition into the urban area. The Glebe forms part of the larger Dubton Farm development site and is considered within that context rather than isolation. Whilst the northern part of the Glebe extending into Dubton Farm may be flatter and suitable for development, it is considered that the Brief should continue to require that the majority of the Glebe particularly the undulating topography immediately north of the Skinners Burn should remain open. However the Brief has been slightly amended to clarify that there may be scope for limited development on the northern part of the Glebe.
- 3.20 In terms of other comments, the Brief has been amended in response to SNH requirements for an ecological survey to establish the presence of Bats which are European Protected Species and other natural heritage interests on the site. As a result of comments from SEPA and SNH, other amendments to the Brief include the requirement for developers to provide a Construction Method Statement to ensure no significant effect on the River South Esk Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is a European Heritage Designation. The requirement for a mini recycling facility has been deleted from the Brief in response to comments from Angus Council's Environmental and Consumer Protection Division.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human rights implications arising directly from this report and should any implications arise from the development brief itself these will be dealt with through the development control process in consideration of the relevant applications for planning permission.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

7 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 7.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need

- Good quality housing is available throughout Angus.

12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

- The importance and benefits to society of the environment is recognised.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Law & Administration and Director of Neighbourhood Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The finalising of the development brief for Dubton Farm, Brechin will assist in the implementation of the Angus Local Plan Review proposal and also guide developers towards a successful planning submission. This will require continued dialogue with both landowners and prospective developers to ensure co-ordination and progression of the whole site requirements that will be necessary to enable all aspects of the Brief to be delivered and the comprehensive development of the site.

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NOTE

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report.

- Report 1147/08, Angus Council Infrastructure Services Committee, 25 November 2008
- Angus Local Plan Review (2009)
- Report 102/01, Angus Council, Planning & Transport Policy Committee, January 2001
- Dubton Farm, Brechin - Masterplan Report 2005, Mark Turnbull Landscape Architect
- Angus Landscape Capacity Study, March 2003, Angus Council
- Scottish Planning Policy 17: Planning for Transport, Scottish Government, August 2005
- Planning Advice Note 44: Fitting New Development into the Landscape, Scottish Government, March 1994
- Planning Advice Note 67: Housing Quality, Scottish Government, February 2003
- Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport, Scottish Government, August 2005
- Planning Advice Note 76: New Residential Streets, Scottish Government, November 2005
- Transport Assessment and Implementation: A Guide, Scottish Government, July 2005

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