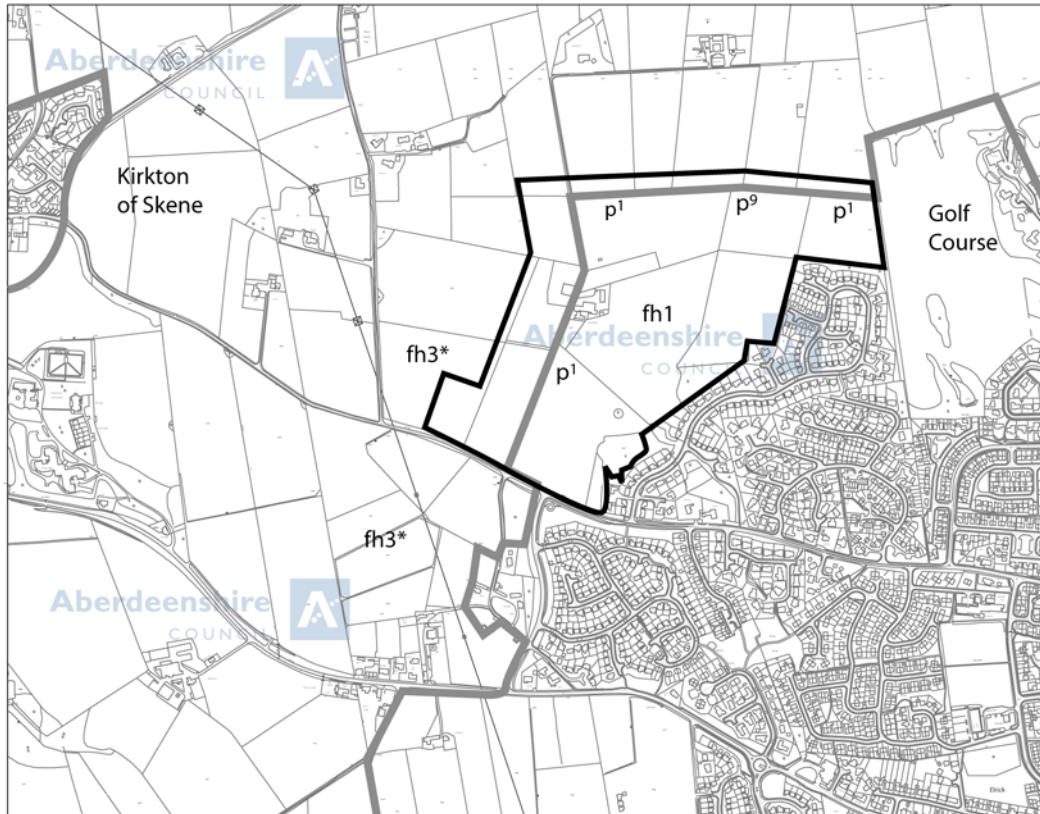


# DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR HOUSING AND CHURCH AT SITE fh1 BROADSHADE, WESTHILL

Fig 1: Location Plan



Based on Ordnance Survey mapping. © Crown copyright reserved. Aberdeenshire Council, 0100020767 (2007).

**APRIL 2007**

Developers must have regard to the contents of this Brief in preparing their scheme. Where differences do occur, justification by the developer is required.

# 1 Purpose

## 1.1 Type of development preferred

- This brief is for residential (including affordable housing) and associated development at Broadshade, Westhill for 250 units.
- The site comprises Site fh1, as allocated in the settlement map for Westhill in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP) plus an area of additional land to the north and west of Site fh1 (refer to Fig. 1 Location Plan). Site fh1 is allocated as future housing land, 250 units indicated.
- This brief seeks to achieve a high level of strategic landscaping and open space and landscaping provision, as required by ALP and indicated as project areas P1 and P9 on Site fh1.
- This brief seeks to ensure that the development of this site is well structured, appropriate to its surroundings and makes a positive contribution to the area.

## 1.2 The planning history of the site is as follows:

- A larger, future-housing site, Site (i), at Broadshade, designated in the draft ALP.
- A larger site still, allocated as Site fh1 at Broadshade, 430 units indicated, as well as Site fh3\* - area of search for future housing land – immediately to the west, in the finalised ALP.
- Following the Local Plan Inquiry, the Reporter's recommendations for Westhill included: Deletion of Site fh1 at Broadshade and its replacement by an extended Site fh3\*; Allocation of a new site at Broadstraik, for 250 units; Allocation of a new site at Kirkton of Skene for 250 units.
- The Council's response to the above recommendations were: To retain the allocation of a reduced site at Broadshade, for 250 units; Accept the allocation of a new site at Broadstraik, for 250 units; Do not accept a new site at Kirkton of Skene.
- Post Inquiry proposed modifications for Westhill included: Reducing Site fh1 at Broadshade, to a smaller site, for 250 units, and extension of Site fh3\*, by the same amount; Allocation of a new site at Broadstraik for 250 units.
- Objections to the post Inquiry proposed modifications, for Westhill, included: From Stewart Milne Homes, requesting extension to Site

fh1 (as proposed to be modified) at Broadshade in order to accommodate 250 units, because of the pipeline safeguarding.

- The Council's response to the above objection was: Do not accept, for the reasons that the site was expected to be adequate for the number of houses it required to accommodate and details regarding areas for strategic landscaping and any minor adjustments to site boundaries will be addressed in the consideration of a planning application.
- 1.3 The presence of a major pipeline safeguarding on the site poses a major challenge for the successful design of this development. Since the allocation of Site fh1 in the Finalised ALP, Barton Willmore Patnrnership, on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes and in consultation with officers, have been engaged in drawing up a masterplan for the development of the site. The treatment of the safeguarded area has been the major focus of this work.
  - 1.4 Most of Site fh1 is covered by the pipeline safeguarding, which comprises inner, middle and outer consultation zones. No residential development is allowed in the inner zone, but and roads are permissible. There is no restriction on residential development in the outer zone. In the middle zone residential development is subject to restrictions (no more than 10% of the overall development area is allowed in the middle zone) and it is the treatment of the area within this zone that is problematic. It is only through a planning application that consultation with the Health & Safety Executive and the appropriate testing of a proposal can be carried out.
  - 1.5 The detailed investigation, though the outline planning application, of the development potential of Site fh1 has demonstrated that due to the implications of the pipeline safeguarding an extended site area (as illustrated in Fig. 1, Location plan) will be required in order to accommodate the scale of the development indicated in ALP.
  - 1.6 At the time of the post Inquiry modifications, it was envisaged that more residential development would be possible on the east side of Site fh1 and within the middle zone, than has proved to be the case. Without the extended area, only a number significantly less than the 250 units indicated could be developed. Allocated sites are normally developed for "around" the number of units indicated and the exact number will be determined by the design considerations applicable for the particular site. In most cases the development will yield more than the estimate, but in some cases less. ALP is required to deliver a set minimum number of residential units for the land supply and so there is an onus to ensure that realistic allocations are set for sites, particularly for those larger sites in the settlements named in the Structure Plan. In this particular case a yield significantly less than 250 units would be significant in terms of the housing land supply for Westhill and could be

significant in terms of the viability of the development. An important consideration is the separation effect of the pipeline safeguarding: the new development needs to be of sufficient size to tie in with the existing development and significantly fewer than 250 units would make that objective difficult to achieve.

1.7 The developer will be required to demonstrate that using the principles of resource efficiency through higher density in addition to good design, that the development is accommodated on the minimum area of land required to accommodate the 250 units indicated in the Plan.

1.8 Constraints and limitations

- The site is significantly affected by a major gas pipeline safeguarding corridor, which, as referred to in para 1.7 above, poses a challenge to designing the successful integration of the development with the settlement. .
- Steep gradients to the northern part of the site will also be a constraint in the design of the layout.

1.9 Relevant development plan policies and proposals and guidance.

- **NEST**
  - Policy 9: Housing Allocations 2006 – 2010
  - Policy 10: Indicative Housing Allocations: 2011 – 2015
  - Policy 11: General Housing Considerations
  - Policy 12: House Building in the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt
  - Policy 13: Developer Contributions
  - Policy 14: Affordable and Special Needs Housing
  - Policy 16: Sport and Recreation Facilities
  - Policy 17: Countryside and Open Space Access
  - Policy 19: Wildlife, Landscape and Land Resources
  - Policy 21: Design
  - Policy 22: Water Management
  - Policy 31: Connecting Communities within the North East
  - Policy 33: Sharing Responsibility for Transport
- **ALP**
  - Policy Hou\2: Future Housing Land 2006 – 2015
  - Policy Hou\4: New Housing in the Countryside including the Aberdeenshire part of the Cairngorms National Park
  - Policy Hou\8: Affordable Housing
  - Policy Hou\13: Public Open Space for Housing
  - Policy Env\4: Biodiversity
  - Policy Env\16: Water Catchment Areas
  - Policy Inf\1: Roads and Accesses
  - Policy Inf\2: Parking, Servicing and Accessibility

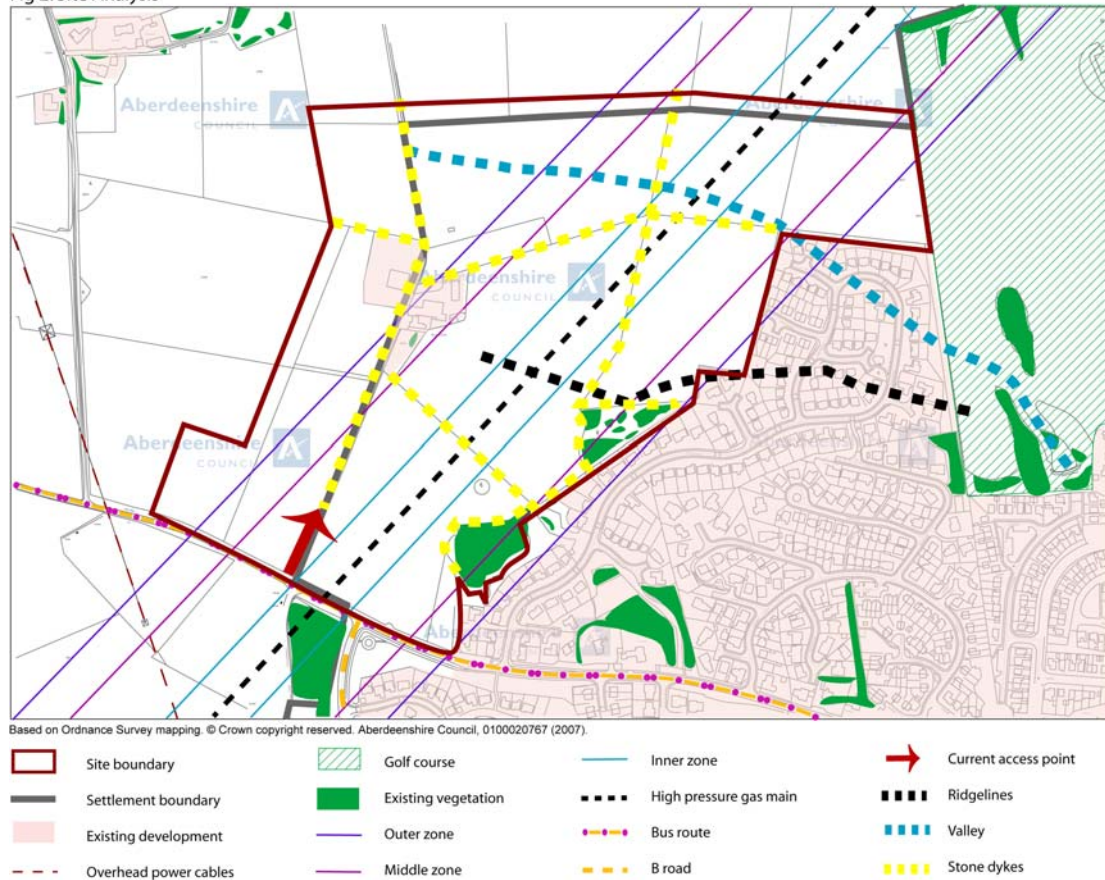
Policy Inf\3: Access for the Less Mobile  
 Policy Inf\4A: Foul Drainage Standards  
 Policy Inf\4B: Surface Water Drainage Systems:  
 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)  
 Policy Inf\5: Water Supply  
 Policy Inf\6B: Waste Management Requirements  
 for New Development  
 Policy Inf\8: Other Renewable Energy Sources  
 Policy Gen\1: Sustainability Principles  
 Policy Gen\2: The Layout, Siting and Design of  
 New Development  
 Policy Gen\3: Developer Contributions  
 Policy Gen\5: Landscaping Standards  
 Policy Gen\6: Hazardous Developments  
 Policy Gen\12: Project Areas  
 Appendix 1: The Design of New Development in  
 Aberdeenshire  
 Appendix 5: Landscape Design Guidance  
 Appendix 6: Provision of Public Open Space  
 Appendix 7: Affordable Housing Provision  
 Appendix 8: Developer Contributions

- **Guidance** A Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Places  
 Scottish Planning Policy 1: The Planning System  
 Scottish Planning Policy 3: Housing  
 Scottish Planning Policy 7: Planning and Flooding  
 Scottish Planning Policy 17: Planning for Transport  
 NPPG11 Sport, Recreation and Open Space  
 PAN 44 Fitting New Housing into the Landscape  
 PAN 51 Planning and Environmental Protection  
 PAN 61: Sustainable Urban Drainage  
 PAN 65 Planning and Open Space  
 PAN 67: Housing Quality  
 PAN 72 Housing in the Countryside  
 PAN 75 Housing in the Countryside  
 PAN 77 Designing Safer Places  
 PAN 76 New Residential Streets  
 Aberdeenshire Council Housing Land Release  
 2006 –2010  
 Aberdeenshire Council Micro-renewable Energy  
 Developments
- **Circulars** 12/1996: Planning Agreements
- PADHI – Health and Safety Executive's Land Use Planning Methodology
- Site fh1 in ALP is considered suitable for development.
- Site fh3\* (an area of future search for development) is to the immediate west of the site.

## 2 Site Analysis

Refer to Fig 2. Site Analysis

Fig 2: Site Analysis



### 2.1 Location and Landscape Context

The following is not an exhaustive site description, but a list of the key issues that lead to the site requirements in the next section.

- The site of approximately 29.5 ha is located at the north-western edge of Westhill and forms part of an area of agricultural land. The site is located on south facing, sloping land. From a high point close to Berryhill Farm and its north west corner, the land slopes perceptibly south-westwards to the south-western corner of the site.
- The Old Skene Road runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and accommodates a bus route. Neighbouring land uses include residential, recreational and agricultural.
- A high pressure gas pipeline traverses the site in a south-west to north-east direction.

- A valley feature runs east-west through the site and corresponds with the area of flattest topography, which is also considered to have the best visual containment. A localised ridgeline running in an east-west direction provides a visual watershed between the north-eastern part and the southern part of the site.
- Some of the historic field boundaries on the site are defined by dry stone dykes. Areas of existing vegetation are predominantly located in the south eastern areas of the site.
- The Westhill Golf Course is to the eastern boundary of the site.
- The site is bounded by residential development to the east and south and, to the north and west by agricultural land. The western site boundary is marked by a drystone dyke.
- An ALP project area (P9 – extensive open space and landscaping provisions) runs over the pipeline corridor.
- There are attractive views from the site to the south and west.
- The site is prominent within the Westhill settlement.
- The site generally enjoys a southerly aspect.

## 2.2 Climatic Considerations

- The site is located well inland from the North Sea.
- The site generally benefits from the exposed aspect to the south that affords the opportunity to capitalise on the maximum sun exposure.

## 2.3 Potential Hazards

- The present and historical use of the site has been agricultural. Therefore, contamination is extremely unlikely on site and this has been confirmed by site investigations. However, as there is a farm situated near the proposed development, there may be nuisance from agricultural odours.
- A high pressure Transco pipeline traverses the site and the HSE require to be consulted on any proposals. HSE's Land Use Planning Methodology (PADHI) must be followed in the distribution of land-uses within the area. This guidance recommends that there should be no residential development within the inner zone and minimal residential development within the middle zone, equating to a maximum of 10% of the overall development. To ensure that the proposed development meets with the current requirements of the

health and safety executive and to prevent hazards by overpopulating the potentially hazardous areas, the developer will be required to submit detailed plans which demonstrate the overall layout and numbers of housing units proposed for the overall development and within the middle zone. As the houses proposed in the middle zone are to be located adjacent to the landscaped areas of open space with attractive outlooks over the settlement, larger houses on larger plots are most appropriate. These houses should be carefully designed so as to create a strong 'sense of place', as viewed moving through the open space and from the access roads to the development.

- Scotland Gas Networks require the pipeline to be diverted in a heavy walled pipe for this development to proceed. The developer should consult Scotland Gas Networks on any works which will take place on this site.

## 2.4 Ecological Considerations

- The site presently comprises vacant agricultural land. The existing trees and shrubs within the site should be retained where possible.
- There are no natural heritage designations applied to this site. An ecological study has been submitted in support of the outline planning application and shows no ecological constraints to development.
- The site falls within the River Dee and River Leuchar Catchment Area which is a Special Area of Conservation, designated as such under EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna Register for important populations of Atlantic salmon, otter and freshwater pearl mussels. In view of this it is expected that an "appropriate assessment" will be required for any proposal for the site's development. For more information on appropriate assessment, see **Annex 1**.
- There is a requirement for extensive strategic planting to the north and west boundaries of the site. This is to ensure visual containment of the development and to assist with integration with the existing settlement. This will provide also an attractive backdrop to the development and shelter to the site.
- There is scope to provide extensive planting throughout the site to encourage biodiversity.
- There is scope to integrate this development with open areas in adjoining areas of the settlement.

## 2.5

### Urban Context

- The site currently represents the western limit of Westhill.
- The original development of the modern day Westhill is characterised by medium density, fine grained residential development in cells, well connected by pedestrian links and open spaces, which together facilitate easy and safe movement, particularly for the young and the old.
- The built form of the town mainly consists of a range of modern buildings of varying design and storey heights. However there are also examples of traditional buildings, which are characteristic of the buildings in this area of the north-east, normally granite buildings with a slate roof and timber windows. Dwellings in the surrounding area are a range of detached and semi-detached and situated in reasonable sized feus. The density in the vicinity is medium.
- A considerable number of field dykes have been lost in the area due to development and the remainder are an important part of the archaeological heritage. Similarly, there is an important circular tree roundel on the site. In a field immediately to the North of the site crop marks of ring ditches have been recorded, which suggest a possible prehistoric settlement.
- The landscape character of the site is rolling agricultural countryside.
- Westhill is a well established settlement with a wide range of facilities and attractions. There is a shopping centre with a variety of shops as well as retailing facilities and a medical centre at Arnhall Business Park. There are several large employers also located within Westhill.
- The site represents an important gateway into Westhill. The development of this site must therefore be sensitive and provide an attractive approach into the settlement.
- Community facilities. There is a range of community facilities in Westhill at present, including a community centre and swimming pool, however there is a requirement for more recreational community facilities required in Westhill.
- Library facilities. Westhill also benefits from a library, which is located within Westhill Academy. It is open daily except Sunday.

- Other facilities. There are a wide range of facilities within Westhill including shops, hotels, restaurants, solicitors and golf club. There are also a significant number of workplaces.

## 2.6 Access

- Access to the site is currently from Old Skene Road to Broadshade Farmhouse. Old Skene Road runs between the site and the main centre of the settlement.
- Bus services 215, 216, 217 run from the southern site boundary through Westhill and onto Aberdeen in the east and Alford in the west.
- There are currently no formal rights of way across the site.

## 2.7 Utilities and Other Services

- There is a requirement to upgrade the mains sewers in Westhill. The design of this has been submitted to Scottish Water and works on this should commence in the near future.
- A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required to support the proposed drainage proposals for the site and Aberdeenshire Council's Flood Prevention and Coastal Protection Service, SEPA and Scottish Natural Heritage will be consulted on the proposal.
- Surface water should be dealt with by means of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS), in accordance with good practice. Any SUDS system for residential development will be designed in accordance with "Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems – Design Manual for Scotland and Northern Ireland" published by CIRIA, 2000 and PAN61. These require a single level of treatment prior to discharge to a receiving watercourse or existing network. This will require to be designed to the satisfaction of SEPA and SW and will minimise the impact on the water quality and quantity of the receiving watercourse. Adoption of the SUDS measures will be required by SW or by Aberdeenshire Council, in which case a capitalised maintenance charge will be required. However, the Council will not adopt the SUDS provisions in isolation from the public open space.
- There are no problems with the supply of gas or electricity to the site.
- It is understood that Broadband and Satellite Broadband is available in Westhill.
- The nearest services are located in the town centre of Westhill, which is 1.75 km from the site.

## 2.8 Other Considerations

- The site is presently in the ownership of two landowners, and under option to Stewart Milne Group Ltd. It can be developed subject to the necessary planning permission.

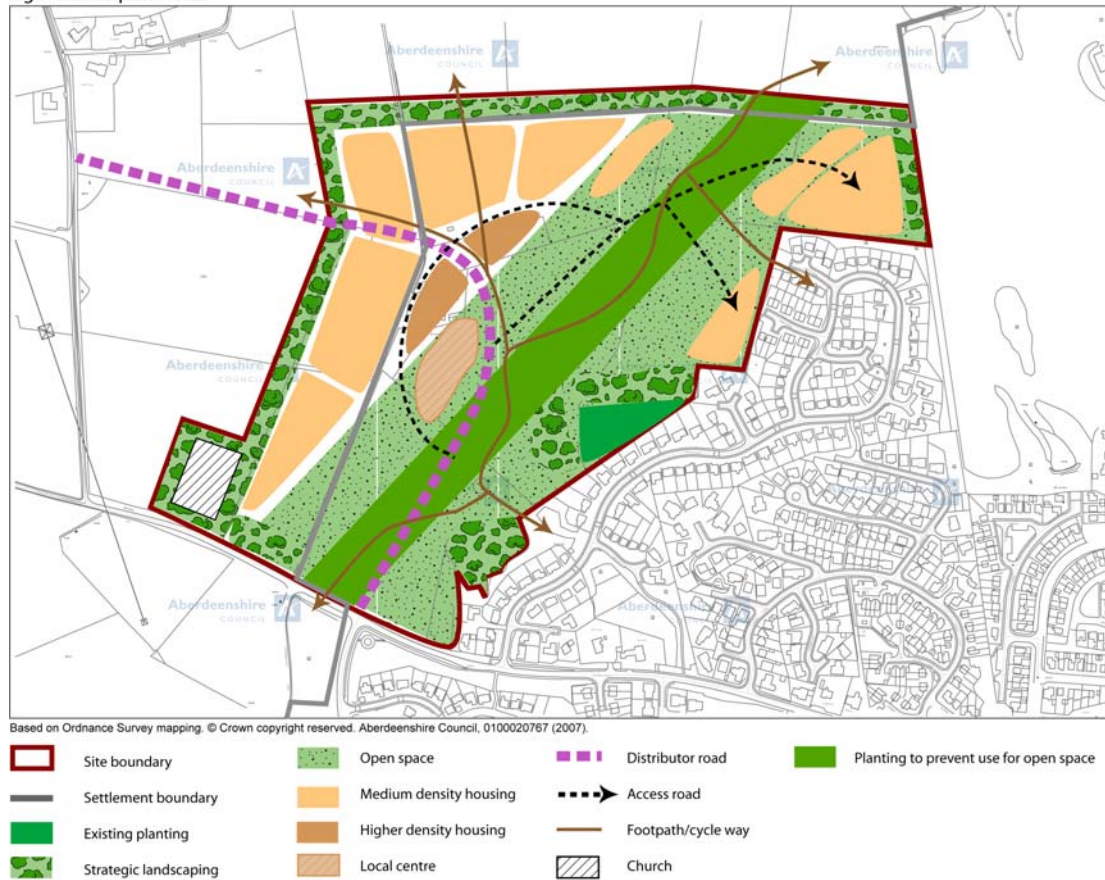
## 2.9 Conclusions

- Due to the gap, which will be potentially created from reducing the density over the location of the pipeline, there must be a clearly structured layout and landscape solution to prevent the area being perceived as separate from the Westhill settlement. The developer will be required to demonstrate how appropriate non-motorised connections, landscaping, public art and lighting will contribute to the solution. Sentinel properties of one off designs at key points, such as adjacent to the paths connecting the south side of the site to the north side, should also help to integrate the development. These will “supervise” the key pedestrian/cycling routes as well as help to create an overall sense of place through landmarking the site.
- The site will create a new western approach and an important gateway into Westhill, and a high standard of design is expected. Care should be taken to ensure that development fits with the character of Westhill, particularly the character of the early modern day Westhill and traditional Aberdeenshire. Development of this site provides an opportunity to improve the standard of new development in the settlement.
- Due to the sensitive location of the site an extensive level of strategic landscaping will be required to ensure that the proposed development is integrated into Westhill. Additionally, structure planting will provide a clear and definable boundary to the Westhill settlement.

### 3 Site Requirements

Refer to Fig 3. Site Requirements

Fig 3: Site Requirements



#### 3.1 General Approach

- Development of the site's layout should reflect the approach set by the 5 indicators listed in "Index 21". Index 21 is a method of assessment that essentially does two things: it identifies a set of key issues that affect the "environment-friendliness" of housing layouts; and integrates them in a framework that gives each element its proper status. It is based on the assessment of five indicators: climate, energy, resources, biodiversity and social aspects. Crucially, it has developed as a process by which the quality of layouts can be assessed rather than as a prescriptive guide to good and bad ones. However, this development brief also identifies some aspects from Index 21 that will be important for this particular site. Further information can be obtained from Lynne Reid, the Index 21 Project Manager at the Scott Sutherland School, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen, or by visiting [www.index21.org.uk](http://www.index21.org.uk)

#### 3.2 Layout

- Solar considerations. The majority of the site generally occupies a south facing aspect and can therefore take advantage of available

solar radiation in the proposed buildings. The buildings should therefore be designed to take advantage of available solar radiation to maximise heating gain.

- Wind considerations. The presence or absence of wind may have a greater impact than solar gain in the heating of buildings, particularly during colder months. The use of strategic planting, embankments and lowering buildings into the site is an effective method of reducing the impact of wind blowing across the site, therefore reducing the amount of heat loss.
- Energy. A substantial amount of everyday energy use should be derived from micro renewables and buildings should meet a high energy efficiency standard. The Scottish Ministers have set a target of generating 40% of Scotland's electricity from renewable sources by 2020 (SPP6: Consultation Draft) and these reductions are not unrealistic. It is accepted that a like split would be unrealistic in terms of the average household and today's sustainable options, but it is not as unrealistic as might be supposed, given the continuing improvement in insulating materials and building techniques. As of this moment, however, it remains aspirational. A statement on renewable energy technologies considered must be submitted with the proposals and justifiable reasons given for any rejected. A series of flow-charts is attached to aid this consideration (Annex 2). The advice of 'SCARF' may also be useful in this respect and any available grants can be discussed with them. However, the methods proposed will be expected to include insulation appropriate to a zero energy house and some form of district heating. The investigation must take account of the fact that suitability of different renewable energy technologies may vary across the site, and more than one form of renewable energy provision may be appropriate. It is essential that a particular technology should not be rejected because some of the dwellings may not be suitable for its adoption. On the contrary, any part of the site, which is suitable for a particular technology, should be entered into the scheme in question.
- Resource efficiency. Scottish Planning Policy 3: Housing highlights that the efficient use of land is an important planning aim. High density development can be achieved through good design without overcrowding, congestion or loss of residential amenity. This is supported through NEST Policy 11: General Housing Considerations which outlines that the Local Plans must ensure that housing developments make a positive contribution to sustaining the community in which they are located through the use of appropriate densities. The developer will be required to demonstrate that using such principles of higher density in addition to good design, that the development is accommodated on the minimum area of land required to accommodate the 250 units indicated in the Plan.

- The existing drystone dykes and tree roundel located on the site, will provide attractive boundaries and features within the site and should be retained. The character of the area should build upon the existing drystone dykes and should provide additional stone dykes on the main routes through the development. The valuable components of the farmstead of Broadshade should be retained in order to contribute to the 'sense of place'. Before conversion of any of the buildings, a full photographic record will be required. If however, any part of the farmhouse and steading is to be demolished, a standing building survey must be undertaken. Given the size of the site and the close proximity of the crop circle an archaeological evaluation of the site will be required.
- The use of energy efficient, low maintenance and sustainable materials will be encouraged whenever practicable. All surface water will be disposed of using SUDS.
- Biodiversity. As part of the development, properly and sympathetically designed open space and strategic landscaping will be required. This will provide further opportunities for an increased variety of flora and fauna, which will enhance the site once developed. The planting of species in scale with the development is an important consideration and generally plant species should be native. All main structure planting strips should include a proportion of evergreen planting to maintain shelter and colour throughout the year. Further advice for landscape design guidance is provided in Appendix 5 of ALP.
- The required 'sense of place' could be produced by utilising certain areas of the pipeline safeguard zone as a focal point for the layout of the development. The site's dry stone walling should be retained where possible. The quality of this walling should be reflected in terms of material choice and character of new features. The sense of place should also reflect the best of vernacular layout patterns in the Garioch Area of Aberdeenshire. The development must refrain from a continuation of standard housing developments, which, in the past have resulted in the erosion of many of the Aberdeenshire towns. All new developments are expected to comply with Gen\2 The Layout, Siting and Design of New Development and Appendix 1 The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire, as contained in ALP. Additionally new developments should also take into account all new guidance published by the Scottish Executive, which relates to residential streets, housing, design, as well as designing for security and safer more inclusive environments.
- A design statement will be required to accompany the development. It must clearly demonstrate how the development has taken account of the approved development brief and should explain how the specific design has been created for this development. The statement should demonstrate how the overall design reflects the

best of the urban form of Westhill (refer to Section 2.5 above) as well as nearby traditional and innovative designs in the Garioch Area. Details regarding the proposals relating to the % for art should be discussed in the submitted statement.

- The developer should submit one planning application for the entire site in order that all Health and Safety issues are dealt with together.

### 3.3 Distribution of land uses

- The key land uses expected as part of this development are housing, open space and strategic landscaping. The correct mix and layout of these uses will significantly determine the success or otherwise of this development. There may be an opportunity to provide a local centre or local node, provided it is clearly demonstrated that the size of facility will not be detrimental to existing shopping facilities in Westhill or Elrick and it is required to service the residential development of the area.
- The open space shall provide appropriate play facilities in accordance with Appendix 6 of ALP. The provision of open space and play area(s) must take account of existing neighbouring provision. Such play area(s) should be overlooked and located within areas that are well lit and set back from any hazards such as busy roads. Play area(s) should be easily accessible to all residential properties in the proposed development. Details of the landscaping should encourage biodiversity and offer appropriate links through the development from the existing development in Westhill. Boulevard planting should be proposed along the main walking/cycling routes, which should be fully incorporated in the development.
- Open Space. It is important that the open space has a clear overall purpose and function, and it is not simply left over space after the housing has been designed. Appendix 6 of ALP provides further guidance on the provision of public space in new developments. The area of the pipeline safeguarding should be an attractive feature of the site.
- To satisfy Health and Safety Executive strategic planting on the inner consultation zone is required, as shown by Fig. 3 Key Requirements, in order to deter people from using this area for public open space.
- Strategic planting of 15 Metres should be implemented on the Eastern boundary where the site runs parallel with the 5<sup>th</sup> hole on the golf course. This is to address the issue of safety from the golf course, due to the elevated height of the golf tee adjacent to the site

and the possibility of misdirected shots falling in the development area.

- Linear Park. A linear park will run through the site within the buffer zone of the pipeline excluding the inner zone. It will be a significant feature of the site. Buildings along the edge of the park should not be uniform in layout. All housing adjacent to the public park should face on to the park, not least in order to provide natural policing of the area. Consideration will be given to houses that are orientated to face the park, but are accessed at the rear.
- Areas of formal and informal open space, including any recreation facilities, shall be provided in accordance with the Council's standards.
- Landscaping. A carefully designed landscaping scheme for the site will be required.
- Private Open Space. Garden dimensions will be determined by considerations including the density of development, design objectives and the need to provide a complementary range of house types.
- Housing. The layout of housing within the site requires to contribute to achieving the sense of place described in Section 3.2 above. A full range of dwellinghouse types, including bungalows, terraced, semi-detached, mixed storey heights and flatted developments, as well as a good mixture of floor areas, will ensure that a sustainable density of dwellings per hectare is achieved.
- Appropriate Housing Mix. The residential development must provide for every market sector. Within Westhill there is a clear demand for a wide range of housing types and sizes. The following mix will provide an appropriate range for housing development in the settlement:

- 2 to 3 Apartment Homes	18%
- 4 Apartment Homes	18%
- 5 Apartment Homes	24%
- 6 Apartment Homes	28%
- 7 Apartment Homes	8%
- 8 Apartment Homes	4%

This mixture should be achieved through a clear mix in house types and properties available, which should range from bungalow, detached, semi-detached, terraced and flatted types (1, 1½ or 2 storey properties, or higher, if it can be demonstrated as acceptable within the landscape).
- Affordable housing is required and the details of the provision should be agreed with the Council's Planning Gain Co-ordinator at an early stage. Affordable housing is in high demand within the

area and a large contribution is expected from this site. As a minimum the Council would expect a 30% level and a higher level, up to the 35% stated in ALP, could be justified. The affordable housing will be required on site and should not be developed as separate large pockets within the development, but rather should be integrated throughout the development. Locations of the proposed affordable housing should be indicated within the planning applications for the development of this site. The affordable housing will be provided by a range of housing types and not just through flatted accommodation.

- Local Node Point. A local centre to service the development would be acceptable, subject to it being demonstrated that the centre will not impact on the existing facilities in Westhill or the surrounding area. The location should ensure that it is a sustainable walking distance from the surrounding residential development. It should be designed to a high standard and should take into account best practice in terms of designing out crime. It could include a convenience shop, some small retail units, and other local facilities where appropriate, such as a children's nursery.
- An area of land has been allocated for a church, which will help address the need for community facilities in Westhill and allow the Westhill Episcopal Church to expand.
- A Transport Assessment will be required and this must show the suitability of the site to accommodate the development proposed. Infrastructure improvement requirements will also require to be established prior to this development framework being brought forward. This information is currently being assessed by Transportation and Infrastructure.

### 3.4 Access

- It is important that any development on this site creates a safe addition to the town, while being accessible by all forms of transport, in particular pedestrians and cyclists.
- Footpath creation into and through the site is a key requirement to make the site as accessible as possible and to encourage the use of modes of transport other than the private car. The landscape structure of the site creates an opportunity for footpaths and cycle ways to be developed in the area.
- Footpath links should be provided to create permeability through the site and with the wider area. Access links for pedestrians should link the network of public spaces and play area(s) created throughout the scheme. These should include both formally adopted routes and informal walks through the site. Additionally careful consideration should be given to how the links through the

site will connect into existing routes from existing developments adjacent to the site. Access into the countryside through the proposed Core Paths initiative should be integrated into the design of the infrastructure.

- All footpaths and cycle ways should be designed to have a predominately open character for security reasons and shrubs, other than ground cover should not be planted immediately adjacent to footpaths and cycle ways. Paths should be well lit at night, especially those routes which link the housing areas with the settlement centre. Key routes should be suitably landscaped to provide attractive routes, which will encourage walking and cycling.
- All emergency and service accesses will be accommodated by the internal access roads to be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Officer and the Roads Authority.
- Every effort should be made to make the site as accessible as possible to a wide range of potential users, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- Car parking must accord with the Council's adopted 'Car Parking Standards for Development Control'.
- A full standard distributor road will be required to directly link site access on Old Skene Road with the northwest boundary of the site, through a road connection to the B979 via Hill of Keir farm.
- There are significant concerns about the capacity of the roads network at the East end of the settlement, particularly at the A944 / B9119 Six Mile Fork and A944 Arnhall roundabouts, and development of the site will exacerbate these concerns.

### 3.5 Infrastructure and other services

- Drainage. Upgrading works to the sewerage system are required prior to the development of the housing. Separate SUDS will be required to serve the development.
- Scotland Gas Networks require the pipeline to be diverted in a heavy walled pipe for this development to proceed.
- Supply and distribution of water. Any development of the site may have an impact on the water network infrastructure in the area. This will have to be investigated prior to any development of the site.

- Electricity and gas. This will be supplied from the nearest connection and the developer should check with the service provider.
- Lighting. The provision of street lighting will be necessary due to the development of this site. An element of low-level lighting may be necessary in some areas of public open space. The main routes through the development should be well lit to ensure safety.
- Education facilities. It is likely that Developer Contributions in accordance with circular 12/96 will be required to be made in respect of Education provision.
- Community facilities. Prior to any development on the site, discussions should be held with Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Gain Co-ordinator, to ascertain the level of developer contributions required.
- Maintenance. The creation of public open space within the development will result in these areas requiring adoption by the Landscape Services section of Aberdeenshire Council, which will be subject to a S75 agreement. Evidence of the arrangements made for the long-term maintenance of any paths, landscaped areas and open space will be required.

### 3.6 Design

- Design. Every care must be taken to ensure that both the layout and design of the development are of the highest standards and quality materials are used throughout. A detailed Design Statement explaining the design principles of the development and how these have emerged in relation to the site and its wider context will be required. Detailed statements must be included to support any planning application and should incorporate examples of design used to influence the development proposal.
- It is important that change is planned and managed so that positive aspects are encouraged and good qualities are retained and enhanced. The development of this site shall be to high standards of siting and architectural design to reflect the character of layout, built form and materials, which is typical to the vernacular of the Westhill and of the wider Garioch Area, alternatively truly innovative design will also be considered. This is crucial to help minimise landscape conflict and allow the development to 'fit' with the landscape. The design will 'fit' further into the landscape through the provision of appropriate strategic landscaping and boundary treatments, which should be given individual consideration. To prevent views of rear fences the following principle should be adopted – "public face to public areas, private areas face private areas. In this way, private gardens will not back on to public

spaces, paths or roads, but rather the front of the property (or public face) will face on to the public area. This is an established requirement throughout new development in Aberdeenshire and can be observed in the most recent housing developments in Westhill.

- Building heights. Housing should be designed to and located to fit well within the site, respect the character of the surrounding area and minimise intrusion on neighbouring properties to the east. Up to 2 storeys will be acceptable, unless the design statement can demonstrate that exceeding this height can be accommodated without detriment to the outlook and overall appearance of the development.
- Housing and space standards. Housing on the site must meet the current requirements, such as plot ratio, private usable garden space and privacy distances as well as preventing overshadowing to adjoining areas, as set out in ALP, specifically Appendix 1 (The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire) and Appendix 6 (Provision of Public Open Space).
- Guidance on the design of new developments can be found in ALP, under Policy Gen\2: The Layout, Siting and Design of New Development, and Appendix 1: The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire. Further guidance on this can be found in PAN 67: Housing Quality and A Planning Policy Statement for Scotland: Designing Places. Of critical importance to this type of development is PAN 76: New Residential Streets, which should be observed in the formation of an appropriate design solution. Consultation with the Council's Development Control service is recommended on this matter.

### 3.7 Other Considerations

- Circular 12/1996: Planning Agreements states that planning agreements should be related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Developers may, for example, reasonably be expected to pay for or contribute to the cost of infrastructure which would not have been necessary but for the development. The effect of such infrastructure investment may be to confer some wider benefit but payments should be consistent with the scale of the proposed development.
- The subject of developer contributions should be discussed with the Council's Planning Gain Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity. The agreement may contain contributions in cash or kind in line with Policy requirements.

## Further Information

Developers are encouraged to contact the Planning Service of Aberdeenshire Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss details of any application. Any application will be dealt with primarily by the Garioch Area Development Control Team, based at the following address:

Planning and Building Control  
Gordon House  
Blackhall Road  
Inverurie  
Aberdeenshire  
AB51 3WA  
Tel: 01467 620981  
Fax: 01467 628469

Other useful numbers:

Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Gain Co-ordinator	01330 825518
Transportation and Infrastructure	01467 620981
Scottish Water	01224 675000
SEPA	01224 248338

## Annex 1: Appropriate Assessment

The River Dee is identified as a Special Area of Conservation which forms part of the internationally important Natura network of sites. Local Authorities have a duty under UK and European Law to prevent operations or proposals that would damage the integrity of Natura Sites. This places constraints on developments that are likely to have a significant impact on a Natura Site. Residential developments outside or adjacent to these sites may still have adverse impacts on the qualifying interests through elements such as water abstraction and sewage disposal. If a likely significant effect is identified by Scottish Natural Heritage, an Appropriate Assessment will be required and conducted by the Planning Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage. This will result in one of three outcomes. Either;

- The proposal is incapable of being mitigated against and a formal objection will be raised by SNH. This will usually result a recommendation of refusal;
- The proposal has no adverse impact "with mitigation or modification". SNH maintains objection until mitigating conditions or amendments are agreed that will remove the threat of adverse impact;
- There is no adverse impact with and no mitigation or modification being required with regards to the Natura Site.

Specific concerns for the River Dee is the increase in water abstraction, increase in sedimentation and nutrient enrichment during the construction and use of any development. This would have an effect on the qualifying interest of the SAC (Freshwater Pearl Mussels, Atlantic Salmon and Otters).

All housing developments will need meet the relevant policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as well as adhering to the recommendation set out in this brief and the conditions below.

- The developer provides a statement of sustainable water use demonstrating that minimal abstracted water will be required.
- The developer provides a method statement for construction identifying which pollution prevention measures will be required. Developers should have respect to the Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG) published by SEPA and in particular PPG 6 'Working at Construction and Demolition Sites'.
- Evidence that sewage will be treated to a standard resulting in no additional loading of the catchment
- Demonstration that the development will not result in the disturbance of the qualifying interest of the River Dee SAC.

Compliance with this brief and the relevant Local Plan policies should help ensure that most developments provide satisfactory measures to

prevent adverse impacts on a Natura Site as determined by an Appropriate Assessment.

## Annex 2

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The flowchart below has been designed to lead you through various types of renewable energy technologies. By answering these questions, potentially suitable sources of renewable energy will be identified.
2. Start at the top left corner ('START') and answer the questions as 'yes' or 'no' and follow the appropriate arrow.
3. The columns on the right should be used for your reference to highlight technologies that should be examined further.
4. The first page highlights energy sources that are relevant to houses, flats and other developments, such as retail or industrial and should always be completed.
5. The second page is split between domestic and non-domestic i.e. houses/flats and other developments. You may need to consider the charts more than once depending on your proposal (e.g. a mixed-use development of houses, flats and retail will need to consider the charts for each use
6. These energy sources should then be discussed in a statement submitted as part of the proposal outlining which sources are to be incorporated in a development, or why they have been rejected.

