

G-S/383/LD

Local Plan Submission

Land at Middleton, Blackdog, Aberdeenshire

New Aberdeenshire Local Plan

Proposed Allocation of Land at Middleton, Blackdog Site as an Employment Opportunity Site

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1. Background

Graham and Sibbald act as land use planning advisors to Leith Properties (Aberdeen) Ltd, who is the owner of land to the west of the A90, Blackdog, Aberdeenshire. This submission, in advance of the Proposed Local Development Plan, expands upon a previous Structure Plan submission to the Council. The submission seeks the allocation of the above mentioned land as an employment/commercial development opportunity. It is our intention to prepare a further detailed submission after the publication of the Proposed Local Development Plan, and with ongoing dialogue with the Council.

We will also, separately, complete a site paper to submit as part of the Council's Issues and Options stage of the Plan.

As stated in previous correspondence, this work is being undertaken at present primarily to protect the future options for this land owned by Leith Properties (Aberdeen) Ltd.

2. Objective of this Submission

This representation is being lodged to seek the allocation of the land to the west of the A90, opposite the Blackdog Industrial Estate, as an employment/commercial development opportunity site. The site is shown on the plan enclosed as Annex 1 to this submission. It is considered that the land to the south east of the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) could accommodate a series of employment and commercial uses including a business park, hotel/motel, roadside services and related retail uses. Photographs of the site are included as Annex 2.

3. Contents of this Submission

This submission:

- describes the site and its planning history
- considers future development prospects for the site
- addresses access and infrastructure issues
- addresses the relevant local planning and development issues
- sets out the terms of the submission
- describes the allocation that is sought in the Plan
- outlines the envisaged next stages

4. Description of the Site and its Planning History

The site, as shown on the enclosed plan, is located on the western edge of the village of Blackdog, approximately 11 miles from Ellon and 6 miles from Aberdeen. The site currently comprises of a number of fields, estimated to be approximately 69 acres (28.2 hectares) in total. The land is undulating, rising up to the west, where the site sits slightly higher than the remaining ground. To the north west of the proposed development site is the proposed Aberdeen Western Periphery Route (AWPR) which will dissect our client's land to the north west – it is considered that this land will remain undeveloped. The site lies immediately to the

west of the A90 and Blackdog Industrial Estate. The land is currently accessed by an un-named track off the A90.

Surrounding land use comprises industrial and residential to the east and agricultural to the north, west and south.

We are not aware of any recent or live planning applications which would affect the Council's consideration of the future allocation of this site.

5. Future Development Prospects

At this early stage, no firm development proposals have been drawn up, and it is stressed that the requested allocation of the site as an employment development opportunity is simply to protect our client's future options for the land. The site is located in a predominantly 'commuter corridor' area. Due to the future Aberdeen Western Periphery Route at this location, it is considered that redevelopment of the site for the suggested uses (Business Park, roadside use, hotel etc) would be of great benefit to the area and not be detrimental to surrounding land uses. It is envisaged that a scheme similar to that of the Broxden Park, Perth could be achievable in this location. This type of development would compliment the proposed 'Energetica Corridor' as set out by the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum in February 2008.

6. Access and Infrastructure Issues

It is recognised that, although no particular detailed development proposals are being brought forward at this time, it is still appropriate to briefly address the infrastructure issues. These will be considered more fully, and can be addresses in preliminary assessments and design solutions, as part of any subsequent detailed discussions, development briefs or planning applications.

- Access

As noted previously, there is an existing access from an un-named track via the A90. Obviously this access will be removed should the development go ahead. It is considered that a slip road from the A90 and the AWPR could be created to create an 'in' and 'out' loop system. However, at a later stage, this matter can be discussed in greater detail with the Council's Transportation Service

- Services

No service checks have yet been undertaken. However, given the surrounding agricultural and industrial uses, it is considered that use of existing services, with upgrades as required, should be feasible.

7. National Planning Framework

The Scottish Government's vision set out in the *Framework for Economic Development in Scotland*, is that "economic development should raise the quality of life of the Scottish people through increasing economic opportunities for all, on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis." National Policy on economic development is set out in **SPP2 – Economic Development** (2002). The key objectives in this policy guidance are:

- To provide strong support for economic development, both new and expanding businesses, where it is consistent with other national and local policies.
- Provide for special sites, particularly those of national significance and those which support the knowledge-based economy.
- Encourage a positive culture of engagement with business interests by promoting dialogue between all those involved with business development, the Enterprise Networks and Local Economic Forums.
- Safeguard and enhance the environment, by requiring that new development is of a high design quality and protecting the natural and built heritage.

In relation to these key requirements:

- The development of the site would support existing and new businesses.

- The participation, by the site owners, in the planning system, from the pre-development plan stage, will enable the planning system to facilitate the construction of well designed, good quality development in a sustainable location
- Provision can be made for research and development units on the site;
- There would be a commitment, on the part of the landowner, to bringing the site forward for development in early course
- There is a clear opportunity, by taking a planned approach to the development of this site, to create a high quality place which supports the economic development of surrounding communities.
- The site is well connected by the A90 and will be even more so after the creation of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

Therefore, it is considered that the allocation of this site as an employment/commercial development opportunity would be in full accord with the key requirements of SPP2.

8. Local Planning and Development Issues

- *Adopted Local Plan*

The existing Local Plan which covers Blackdog is the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, Adopted June 2006. For completeness a list of the Local Plan policies relevant to the potential redevelopment of this site for employment purposes has been attached in Annexe 3.

It is considered that, based upon the Adopted Local Plan policies, at present, a planning application for residential of the site may be expected to be refused. However, it is not our client's intention to progress any development in the short term, and it is considered that seeking an explicit employment opportunity allocation through the Local Plan process is in the best interests of land use planning for the surrounding area.

9. Basis of Submission

The land that is the subject of this submission is considered to be appropriate for employment uses, such as, a business park, roadside services, hotel/motel and related retail uses, on the basis of issues addressed throughout this report and summarised below:

- The site is flanked by agricultural land and its development would broadly accord with the vision of the Aberdeen City and Shire Energetica Masterplan, creating a cohesive group of employment developments which would enhance the proposed future development;
- Some form of employment generating development would complement surrounding land uses;
- The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will increase traffic to the area, which would benefit from the proposed development.

10. Requested Changes to the Local Plan

As indicated at several points, there are currently no firm development proposals for the site, and this submission seeks to protect our client's interests in the short to medium term. Therefore, it is requested that land at Middleton, Blackdog is allocated in the forthcoming Aberdeenshire Local Plan as an employment/commercial opportunity site.

11. Next Stages

Following the publication of the Council's timetable, and then the Proposed Local Development Plan, it is our intention to submit a questionnaire response for this site, and it is hoped that there can be discussion and negotiation with the Council's planning officers in due course.

Ian Kelly MRTPI
Head of Planning
Graham and Sibbald
September 2008

Annexe 1: Location Plan



Annex 2: Site Photographs







Annexe 3: Adopted Local Plan Policies

In terms of the current **Adopted Aberdeenshire Area Local Plan** the site lies outwith the settlement boundary and in the Green Belt, therefore, the below noted policies apply to the site:

Policy EMP2: Employment Development in the Green Belt

New employment development in the Green Belt will be refused unless:

- a) it is for a non-residential building related to a primary industry, or which otherwise conforms with Policy Gen\13 (Green Belt); OR
- b) it is for new mineral or landfill workings that conform to Policy Env\13 (Mineral Extraction) or Inf\6 (Waste Management Facilities.)

The expansion or intensification of an existing business in the Green Belt will be approved, in principle, if the use conforms with Policy Gen\13 (Green Belt).

All new employment development located in the Green Belt should be of the highest quality in terms of siting, scale, design and materials to be used. It should be in accordance with the guidance set out in Appendices 1 and 5.

Policy GEN13: Green Belt

Within the Green Belt, as shown in Appendix 13 and on the Main Proposals Maps, there is a presumption against development unless:

- a) it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, informal countryside recreation, or mineral or landfill workings;

OR

- b) its uses are directly related to nature conservation; AND IN ANY OF THESE CASES
- c) it conforms to Appendix 1.