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Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2008

Proposal for a site to be included in the Main Issues Report

Please use this form to provide details of the site that you would wish to have included in the Main Issues Report for consideration as a proposal for the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

One of the purposes of this form is to inform a public debate on the merits of the different sites being proposed. All information submitted will therefore be made available to the public to promote a transparent and open process.

Please feel free to provide any further information you feel appropriate to support your submission. Please ensure your proposal is with us by 6 November 2008.

Name of proposer: Bancon Developments Ltd

Date: 27/10/08

Postal Address: Banchory Business Centre, Burn O' Bennie Road, Banchory AB31 5ZU

Name of landowner (if known) [REDACTED]

Postal address of landowner [REDACTED]

To comply with the data protection Act 1998 this information will not be made public

The site and your proposals

Under what name would you like the site to be identified? Brodiach

Have you any information on the internet which promotes your aspirations for the site? If so please provide the URL :

The site name could be descriptive ("Site north of") or an address (Site at Westburn Road , Aberdeen)

Have you provided a map showing the exact boundaries of the site you would like considered?

Yes No

Please provide the National Grid reference of the site

NJ842069

What is the current use of the site? Agricultural and residential

Has the land been built upon before (Brownfield Land)? Yes No

Is there any suspicion that the land is contaminated? Yes No

If yes Please provide a statement of the nature and extent of the contamination suspected
Statement attached

What use(s) do you propose for your site? Residential use

If you are proposing a mix of uses on your site please ensure that the area of each is noted on the site plan

Are you proposing to phase your development? Yes No

If you are proposing phasing your development please provide additional details of what is anticipated to be built, and when.

Development will be phased in accordance with market demand, but separated into clearly separate phases to allow the site to operate effectively if health and safety constraints should dictate that development has reached the safe limit in proximity to the BP Forties pipeline.

If you are proposing housing on the site please provide us with details of what you think would be appropriate, both in terms of the number of dwellings, and their form (Flats, detached houses etc).

The site is appropriate for around 130 houses, in a mix of affordable units (most likely terraced or semi-detached dwellings) and a mix of mainstream terraced townhouses, along with detached and semi-detached dwellings. It is unlikely that flats will be proposed, although market demand may dictate otherwise at the time.

If you have a design statement or other details about what you would like to see on the site, please include it.

If you are proposing business land please provide us with details of what you would market the land for?

Businesses and offices (Use class 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
General industrial land (Use Class 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Storage and distribution (Use Class 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have a specific occupier in mind for the site?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Please make sure the area of land proposed for business use shown on the site plan.

If you are proposing uses other than housing or business please provide us with as much detail as possible on what you propose.

Please continue on additional sheets as required.

The wider area

Please provide a statement on the siting and design of your proposal (how will the development fit in with the wider landscape, or complement the urban design of the area?)

Please see the supporting information.

If you have a landscape statement, a design statement or other details about what you would like to see on the site, please include it. *Statement attached*

If you have prepared any frameworks or masterplans showing a possible layout for the site, please include it with this form. *Framework attached*

Have you applied principles of sustainable siting and design to your site? Yes
No

If you have undertaken a site assessment please provide details

Statement attached

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Effect on the community

Has there been any opportunity for local people to influence what you propose through local engagement?

Yes

No

Not Yet

If you have undertaken any community consultation please provide details of the ways in which engagement was conducted, its effectiveness and the way in which it has influenced your proposals. Please provide details of any engagement you may propose to undertake.

At least 25% of all housing is likely to be required to be affordable. If applicable, are you considering providing more or less than this?	More	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	25% or Less	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

What community benefits arise from your proposals? What would the nature of these be, and how would they be delivered?

The development of this site would create an improved level of residential choice and affordability, and support the Westhill Primary School. In addition to this, the planning gain contributions generated would provide local benefits.

Community benefits may be material, such as community facilities, or intangible, such as affordable housing or the ability to live locally. Include elements which you anticipate may be required as developer contributions from the development (although specifics will have to be negotiated with the Council on the basis of the development proposed)

How easy is it for people using or living in the development you propose to access services? Are the following facilities within:

	400m	400m-1k	>1km
Local Shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community facilities (eg Hall)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports facilities (eg playing fields)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transport networks	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>

The site is also around 600m from the nearest school.

If you propose to provide any of these as a component of the development itself then please answer "yes". NA=Not Applicable

Servicing the site

Have you undertaken any of the following studies to determine whether your site is capable of being developed, or what might be required by you to make it developable?

Flood Risk Assessment	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic Impact Assessment	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drainage Impact Assessment	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habitat / biodiversity Assessment	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other as applicable (eg noise, dust, smell Retail impact etc)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rather than full studies it may be appropriate to undertake initial assessments to identify the scale of any works that might be required, as this will impact on the deliverability of the proposal. This assessment may be no more than an exchange of letters with appropriate

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agencies. Information on water and sewage capacity is available online at :
http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SWE_PGP_CONNECTIONS/SWE_CORP_CONNECTIONS/ASSET_CAPACITY_SEARCH

What are the access arrangements you propose for the site. Does your site plan clearly show where you propose to access the road network? Yes No

Other information

What other information would you like to be considered in support of your proposal? In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 please do not include any personal information

Bancon have consulted with the relevant flooding information provided by SEPA, and are in the process of preparing a Drainage Impact Assessment for the site. The information gathered has been utilised in the attached supporting statement and indicative site layout plan.

Please return the completed form to the Policy Planning Team, Planning Policy and Environment Service , Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB or e-mail to ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Bridiach, Westhill Local Development Plan Bid

1. Westhill

Westhill is a settlement located within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, and is the only planned new town in the shire, being developed at the end of the 1960s. It has grown rapidly since then, with a population increase from 470 in 1971 to over 10,000 at the present time. Much of this growth is due to its success as a commuter town to Aberdeen City.. As Westhill also offers considerable employment land and opportunities, the town has grown as a consequence of the boom in the Gas and Oil industries.

Growth in the town has been rapid and consistent, and significant new land allocations were identified in the previous Structure Plan (North East Scotland Together). These have largely been taken up, and indeed the settlement has stretched further to the west in particular by virtue of a recent planning approval. The stretch to the west has been necessary to 'jump' a pipeline which is a significant constraint on developable land. There is a real risk, however, that further development to the west will create a visual and then a physical coalescence with Kirkton of Skene. This has in fact been promoted by developers as the logical progression for the town, but would have an unfortunate impact on the village of Kirkton of Skene. This was reflected in a refusal of planning permission for the land at an appeal.

Westhill benefits from very good transportlinks with the western part of Aberdeen by dual carriageway, and has become a popular place for businesses locating outwith the city boundary. Large areas of business and industrial land have therefore proved popular, and the most recent developments have been large offshore oil and gas companies developments, creating many jobs for the town. A further benefit will be the proximity and accessibility of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, which will improve access from Westhill to the north and south of the city as well as the west. This will further boost the location of Westhill as a prime location for businesses and industry.

A capacity study has been commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council, to consider the potential for future growth, based upon the possible maximum of 50% growth. Attached to this bid are three plans, identifying key constraints, potential development areas and the indicative proposals from that study, for ease of reference when considering this bid. The proposed site falls within area 2 in that document.

2. Draft Structure Plan

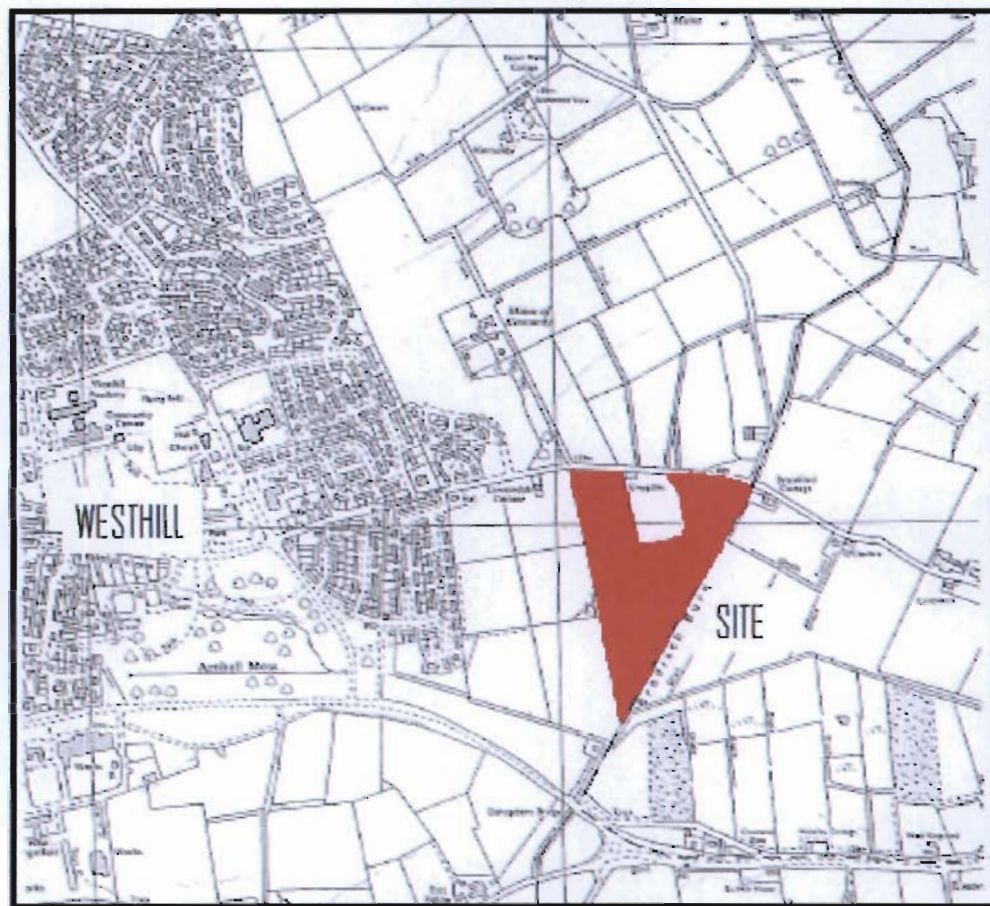
The draft structure plan is a significant material consideration in preparing bids for the Local Development Plan. Westhill falls within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, but outwith any of the identified Strategic Growth Areas. It is

somewhat disappointing that the town has been considered in this way, as it is a popular place to live, and expansion will certainly contribute to the Aberdeen City and Shire's ambitious targets of expansion. Within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, the current draft plan indicates an allowance of 1,700 houses to 2016, a further 1,500 from 2017 to 2023, and 1,500 thereafter until 2030, giving a total of 4,700 units. It is difficult to translate these numbers into a Local Development Plan bid specifically for Westhill, but the capacity study helps to identify possible sites (although the level of growth considered in that study is beyond the numbers suggested in the draft Structure Plan).

The draft structure plan does not provide detailed housing allocations like previous plans have, but rather concentrates on the bigger picture, and identifying specific aims to shape the development in Aberdeen City and Shire. The main aims are to provide a strong framework to facilitate population and economic growth, whilst also taking on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change. The additional aims include the need to create sustainable mixed communities with associated infrastructure, to make the most of the transport network, and reducing the need for people to travel.

3. Landscape and Visual Assessment

The proposed development site is located to the east of the existing town of Westhill. An existing public road bounds the site to the north, and the site is gently southward sloping towards the Brodiach Burn along the south eastern boundary (that forms the Aberdeenshire/City boundary) The map below shows the relationship of the site to the existing town.



The area of land promoted for development is currently agricultural. To the south of the site, there is a belt of trees that screens the site from the main approach to the town from the east. To the south of the site, there is scope for additional planting and landscaping, as the tapering shape of the site does not lend itself to development in any case. To the east, the Brodiach Burn forms a clear site boundary, and additional planting along this boundary will help to establish a defensible boundary. As the size of the site and pipeline constraints may dictate that development is phased, and separated into sections, there is increased scope for developing planting and landscaping throughout the site to improve the visual impact.

The site is effectively surrounded by agricultural land, although it is well contained within that landscape, without significant views into the site from any

particular area. Additional boundary planting will also enhance this containment. Effectively, although there will be a buffer between, along the line of the pipeline, the development of the site will form a natural expansion of the town. There is no threat of coalescence with neighbouring settlements.

4. Accessibility

Accessibility is very good, from Westhill Road, which is identified in the Westhill Capacity Study as a suitable route for accessing further development. This gives easy access to the local services, including shops, schools and community uses, by a range of transport types. The town is very close to the western edge of Aberdeen, and as such wider transport links are readily available. The close proximity of the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will also increase connectivity by road to the north and south of Aberdeen as well.

There are currently three bus services running daily to link Westhill to Aberdeen, and also a rural and a local town service. There is also a Park and Ride service running from Kingswells, less than 3km from the site. It is important to ensure that the site is easily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, and the detailed design will ensure that links with the existing network are provided, and accessibility to services is enhanced wherever possible.

5. Constraints

The site has two primary constraints. Firstly, it is located within the greenbelt, but it is apparent that the greenbelt must be reviewed to allow for the numbers of new houses identified in the draft Structure Plan. Given that there is a very limited amount of land available at the east of Westhill due to other constraints, and that the population balance is moving west (thereby impacting upon schools and facilities to the east of the town) then it would seem prudent to utilise land to the east of the town to create a better balance to the expansion. The green belt boundary would then become the Brodiach Burn, which is both the City boundary and a more recognisable, defensible boundary.

The second constraint is the BP Forties pipeline, which runs north to south down the eastern edge of the town and to the west of the site. This is identified in the capacity study document, but the potential constraints on development within the protection zones is not clear. There may be a limit to both the numbers and the density that can be developed on this site. However, it is also very likely that solutions can be found to reduce health and safety risks and therefore maximise the developable potential of the site. For the purpose this bid, Bancon have assumed that the majority of the site can be developed as normal, albeit phased appropriately. However, it is important that the various phases of the site could have an identifiable boundary, so that the development does not appear unfinished if health and safety constraints should result in the refusal of planning permission at any stage.

6. Education Infrastructure

Westhill is a town that has grown at a very rapid rate over the last 40 years, and as such there has been more success in providing the necessary infrastructure through the planning system than has been achieved elsewhere. The town has three primary schools, and one secondary school. Development in recent years has been focussed on the south west and north west of the town, with business and industrial land primarily to the south. The effect that this has had on education infrastructure is clear, with a falling school roll at Westhill primary school, and rapidly growing rolls at Crombie and Elrick primary schools. The rolls are due to exceed capacity at both in the near future. The proposed development site is east of the existing town, and therefore would be supported by Westhill primary which is currently more than 100 pupils below capacity. Even at the maximum of 130 new houses, the additional primary school pupils would be 46, which can be accommodated easily within the school capacity. Indeed, this will support the school in the town that has suffered dwindling numbers recently.

Westhill Academy is currently just under capacity, but with additional developments at Elrick and North West Westhill, there is likely to be pressure on this in coming years. Based on 0.15 pupils per house, the proposed development would create a maximum of 20 new secondary pupils, which will clearly add to the pressure, but only as a small part of the bigger picture. Without any development in the town, the school roll would fall immediately, dropping to around 90% of capacity by 1012.

The Westhill capacity study identifies the possibility of relocating playing fields to allow for expansion of the secondary school on its current site. This would seem a prudent option, given the fact that pipeline constraints will dictate that significant areas of undeveloped land must be left on the existing east and west extremities of the town. These areas may well lend themselves to use as replacement playing fields for the academy and thereby maximise the use of the land.

In conclusion therefore, the proposed development will be of benefit to primary school rolls, and not a major concern for secondary school rolls. However, there will need to be some qualitative improvement to infrastructure in coming years if Westhill is to continue to absorb development.

7. Development Proposals

Bancon promote the site for the development of around 130 dwellinghouses, with a mix of terraced townhouses, semi-detached and detached houses being the suggested built form. The provision of affordable housing on the site is anticipated, in line with the requirements sought by Aberdeenshire Council. The site would be developed on a phased basis, as dictated by the shape of the site,

and also the pipeline health and safety issues. It is important, however, that if the site is to be developed in sections, that there is continuity and connectivity built into the design. Bancon would be happy, therefore, to consider a development brief type approach to the overall development (which would be prepared as a supplement to a first phase of development). The attached indicative layout plan demonstrates how 128 houses could be accommodated onto the site, clearly separated into separate phases, each designed in such a way that development can pause at the end of any phase whilst pipeline constraints are considered, without being problematic in terms of the operation of the built layout.

At the current time, the local infrastructure is capable of supporting this level of growth, without significant improvements. In fact, the development may be beneficial for the Westhill Primary School roll.

Bancon is keen to promote sustainable development, and to tackle the drive towards low and zero carbon housing and developments. Wherever possible Bancon seek to use district heat and power systems, and other renewable energy sources. It is also our policy to assess all of our development proposals against the principles of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which provides an excellent checklist for ensuring the most environmentally sensitive solution can be achieved.

8. Community Engagement

At the time of preparing this bid, no consultation with the local community has been carried out. However, as matters progress, Bancon are fully supportive of the Scottish Government's approach to involving the local community in planning matters. It has been our practice to deal with Community Councils in the first instance, and then approach the wider community as appropriate.