



**THE DICKINSON TRUST LTD,
TRUSTEE FOR THE
DUNNOTTAR TRUST
(DUNECHT ESTATES)**

**Development Bid for Land at
Whitestone, Westhill.**

November 2008

**Ryden Property Consultants
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1YL
Tel; 01224 588866
Fax; 01224 589669**

Contents

- 0.0 Development Bid Form**
- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Context and Description of Site**
- 3.0 Local Service Provision**
- 4.0 Scottish Planning Policy**
- 5.0 Development Plan Considerations**
- 6.0 Westhill Capacity Study**
- 7.0 Indicative Proposals**
- 8.0 Justification**
- 9.0 Conclusions**

- Appendix A Development Bid Site**

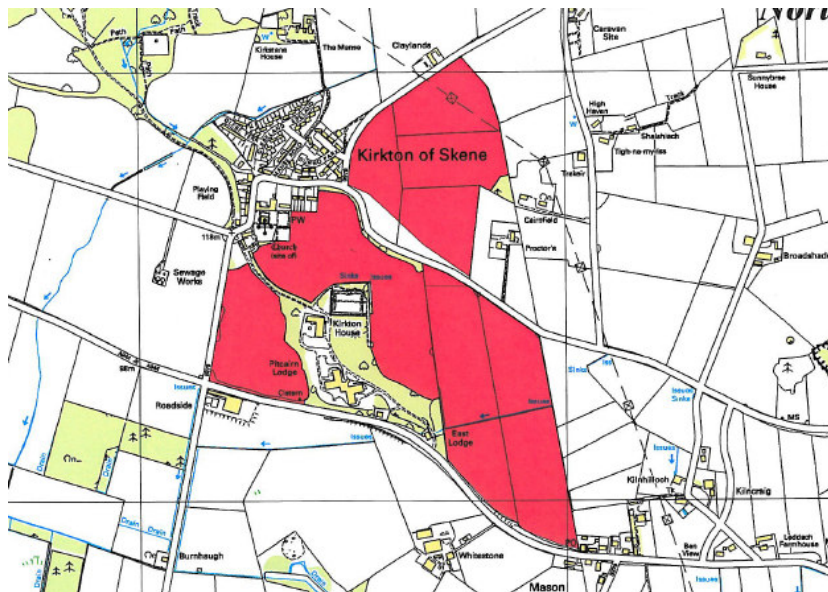
1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of The Dickinson Trust Ltd, Trustee for The Dunnottar Trust as land owner.
- 1.2 The Dickinson Trust Ltd, Trustee for The Dunnottar Trust forms part of Dunecht Estates, a major landowner in the North East of Scotland with in excess of 53,000 acres of land and associated properties. Their main interests are in farming and forestry, but they are also a major provider of affordable rented housing in the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Housing Market Areas. In recent years they have demonstrated their willingness to release land for development and seek to work with communities to ensure that development is sympathetically designed, sustainable, integrated with existing settlements and provides a lasting benefit for those communities.
- 1.3 This development bid requires to be considered in the context of the bid submitted by Barratt East Scotland Limited and Dunecht Estates for the land immediately abutting the settlement boundary at Kirkton of Skene. That bid, proposes an initial phase of expansion at Kirkton of Skene comprising around 400 houses with associated community facilities and strategic landscaping and open space provision. Specifically, it proposes a site for a new primary school to service new residential development and the provision of a relief road running between the B979 to the north of the village and the A944 to the south. Lying to the east of the village this road would remove through traffic from Kirkton of Skene and enable the closure of the B979 / A944 crossroads which is presently an accident black spot.
- 1.4 The land which is the subject of this development bid lies to the south of that “core” area beyond the A944. Extending to approximately 21.8 hectares or thereby, it has been planned as a natural expansion of the core area promoted by Barratt and the Estate. It is considered capable of longer term development in the second or subsequent phases of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and would satisfy the longer term housing needs of the Westhill / Kirkton of Skene area.
- 1.5 It is considered that this area is well placed to provide an appropriate contribution to the future housing land supply requirements within the area and would maximise the investment in infrastructure required to develop the core area. The Dickinson Trust Ltd, Trustee for The Dunnottar Trust respectfully request therefore, that this land be identified for development in the second or subsequent Local Plan periods following development of the core area.

2.0 CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 2.1 Kirkton of Skene lies approximately 1km to the west of Westhill with good road and pedestrian links to Westhill. The village is well served by community facilities in comparison with other villages of its size although it does rely to a significant degree on Westhill as the provider of a greater range of services and facilities. The village has a shop, a pub, community hall and Skene Parish Church. These are mainly focussed around the central car park essentially acting as a village square. The square also contains a recycling facility and a telephone box and it adjacent to a small local park containing play equipment.
- 2.2 An existing playing field is located on land within private ownership to the west of the settlement, near the existing bus stop. There are no formal changing facilities. It is currently served by Skene School, which is located to the west close to the junction with the B9126. It has the capacity for around 71 pupils.
- 2.3 The core area promoted by Barratt extends to around 38.6 hectares or thereby as highlighted in Figure 1. It comprises two distinct areas; the land lying between the A944 and Old Skene Road and the land to the north of Old Skene Road between it and the B979 leading to the Tyrebagger. The longer term development opportunities promoted by this bid lie to the south of the A944.

Fig 1: Core Development Area



2.4 This bid site to the south at Whitestone, as highlighted in Appendix A, extends to approximately 21.8 hectares. Part of this land is in the ownership of a third party and Aberdeen City Council. The land owned by the City Council is understood to form part of a bid submitted by them. The land is bound to the north by the A944 and extends westwards from Mason Lodge to Whitestone Farm. The eastern boundary is formed by the B979, Westhill to Peterculter Road. Housing is presently under construction on the land beyond this. The southern and western boundaries are formed by well defined field boundaries. The southern boundary stops short of a notable high point on the land to the south. A farm track traverses the site from east to west providing access to Burnside Farm. A further residential property lies within the site in the area owned by Aberdeen City Council. As well as the new residential development at Burnland, there are a number of residential properties to the north east of the site at Mason Lodge and around Whitestone Farm to the north west.

2.5 The land is currently in active agricultural use with field boundaries dominated by dry stone dykes and post and wire fences. There are no notable water features or woodlands within either area. The land lies in a natural landscape bowl falling from the 105m contour to the north adjacent to the A944 towards the 100m contour to the south west of Whitestone Farm before rising to the south to around the 115m contour.

3.0 LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION

3.1 The primary school serving Kirkton of Skene is currently below capacity but the roll is forecast to increase. The proposals by Barratt for the core area identify a site for a new primary school. This would be capable of accommodating the pupils arising from the development of the core area and would be able to accommodate the phased expansion into this area.

3.2 It is understood that waste water drainage capacity is available to accommodate the longer term expansion of Westhill. The infrastructure installed to accommodate the core development area would be sized to allow future development. Mains water provision serving that development would also be capable of extension to serve the longer term development needs of the area.

4.0 SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Scottish Planning Policy 1: The Planning System, advises that the aim of the system is to ensure that development and changes in land use occur in suitable locations and are sustainable. Further to this, the planning system should

feature as an integrated approach to social justice by giving a high priority to accessibility when considering locations for jobs, homes, shops, leisure and other community facilities.

- 4.2 SPP3: Planning for Homes was revised in 2008 to take account of the difficulties in delivering housing land in Scotland. It states that a range of factors have contributed to house price inflation and growing divergence between incomes and house prices and there has been no corresponding increase in the supply of new housing in response to increases in both demand and cost. Difficulties in bringing forward sufficient land for new housing was identified as one of the most significant obstacles to the delivery of new housing. To combat this, the Scottish Government is committed to the goal of raising the rate of house building to 35,000 new houses a year by the middle of the next decade. Planning has a central role in meeting this goal through the identification of sufficient land to support an increased supply of the right homes in the right places.
- 4.3 Where brownfield and infill sites cannot meet the full range of housing requirements, it may be necessary to release greenfield land next to built up areas. Meeting housing requirements through extensions to existing towns and villages has a number of advantages, including the reduction of servicing costs. New housing can also benefit existing communities by helping to sustain local schools, shops and services.
- 4.4 SPP17: Planning for Transport highlights that the aim of the planning system is to support and accommodate new investment and development in locations accessible by a range of means of transport and which seek to minimise the impact on existing transport networks and the environment. SPP17 seeks to ensure that new developments of significant travel generating uses are located in areas where access to infrastructure is found within 400m by walking. Planning Advice Note 75 highlights that community facilities and services should lie within a threshold walking or cycling distance of 1,600m.
- 4.5 The need for affordable housing is an important consideration and Planning Advice Note 74 suggests that all new development should provide around 25% affordable homes within the housing mix. This, however, requires to be justified by respective Councils through their housing needs assessments.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The extant Structure Plan approved by Scottish Ministers in 2001, defines a settlement hierarchy with Aberdeen City as the main focal point and driver of the regional economy. Kirkton of Skene is identified as a rural service centre that may provide opportunities to absorb small scale local development needs. Westhill is identified as an edge of city community and falls second in the hierarchy behind Aberdeen. It is considered a suburban centre with a balance of services, population and employment, that accommodates strategic growth of the city.
- 5.2 The replacement draft Structure Plan for the City and Shire area identifies a requirement for around 72,000 dwellings within the structure Plan area over the next 20-25 year period. It identifies Kirkton of Skene and Westhill as both falling within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and in terms of the spatial strategy are capable of accommodating local growth and diversification. The draft plan allocates 4,700 houses to that area in 3 phases. This comprises 1,700 houses in the period 2007-2016, 1,500 houses in the period between 2017 and 2023, and a further 1,500 between 2024 and 2030.
- 5.3 Representations submitted on behalf of Dunecht Estates to the draft Structure Plan offered general support but expressed concern at its failure to recognise the strategic importance of Westhill. The representations argued that there should be a greater allocation of housing to the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and Westhill in particular should benefit from this or, more preferably, be identified as falling within an expanded City Strategic Growth Area. This would encompass the Western Peripheral Route and offer the opportunity to achieve improved linkages between Westhill, the City and the wider area in terms of road access and enhanced public transport.

6.0 WESTHILL CAPACITY STUDY

- 6.1 The suitability of the land lying to the west of Westhill, around Kirkton of Skene, to accommodate strategic growth is confirmed by the findings of the Westhill Capacity Study carried out by independent consultants on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council. The Goal Achievement Matrix developed by the Council and used by the consultants to assess each of the areas identified, favoured the western expansion of Westhill particularly the land identified as Area 10 around Kirkton of Skene. The development bid submitted by Barratt in conjunction with Dunecht Estates lies within the preferred expansion area.

- 6.2 Area 8 identified by the Capacity Study encompasses all of the land comprising this bid site. Its Goal Achievement Matrix score considered it as a “suitable” site for development. Area 8, as identified in the Capacity Study, was subdivided by a gas pipeline corridor running from the north east to the south west in the vicinity of Whitestone Farm. However, the area which is the subject of this development bid relates only to the land lying to the south east of the pipeline corridor.

7.0 INDICATIVE PROPOSALS

- 7.1 The bid site lying to the south of the A944 and extending to circa 21.8 hectares would be capable of accommodating residential development with associated community facilities and open space provision. Strategic landscaping, as highlighted in Appendix A, would be provided to the south and west of the development in order to strengthen those existing boundaries and contain the development in landscape terms. The strategic landscaping to the south would be seen as an extension to Carnie Woods which lies to the east of the B979. This would enable footpath linkages to Carnie Woods which is presently an amenity enjoyed by the residents of the wider area.
- 7.2 The allocation of this land for development would secure the continuation of the link road southwards of the A944 to link with the B979 to the south of Mason Lodge. There would be a significant traffic safety benefit in the closure of the existing Mason Road junction and traffic flows would be greatly improved by the provision of a roundabout on the A944. Two distributor roads would access the sites from two points on that realigned road.
- 7.3 The development of this land would be a natural progression of the existing Broadstrak development to the east. It would form part of Westhill and be detached from Kirkton of Skene by the landscaping proposed as part of the core development proposals.

8.0 JUSTIFICATION

- 8.1 Westhill is one of the largest and most successful towns in Aberdeenshire and its strategic importance is recognised in the extant Structure Plan. Its status has secured significant investment in housing and business and industrial development in recent years. The current proposal to reduce its status through the replacement Structure Plan is regrettable. It is a sustainable community

which, despite its proximity to Aberdeen, retains 26% of its residents in employment in Westhill rather than commuting to the wider area. Further employment and residential development in Westhill would substantially increase that figure. It also lies on a main arterial route into the City of Aberdeen and lies in close proximity to a major interchange with the proposed Western Peripheral Route. These enhanced road links and the major investment in a park and ride facility at Kingswells will further increase the attraction of Westhill as a location for employment and residential development.

- 8.2 Representations submitted on the draft Structure Plan seek to elevate the status of Westhill and secure a substantial allocation of housing to the town. This, and the development bid by Barratt for the core area demonstrate the capability of the land around Kirkton of Skene to accommodate major growth. The core development proposals for Kirkton of Skene specifically seek to avoid coalescence with Westhill. The provision of the link road to the east of Kirkton of Skene, with associated landscaping provides an opportunity to contain the village and maintain separation between it and Westhill whilst still enabling access to the services and community facilities provided by Westhill.
- 8.3 Rather than 'piece meal' extensions to existing towns and villages, as has occurred in the past, the approach of Aberdeenshire Council to ensure the proper planned growth of settlements is to be welcomed. The core area, promoted by Barratt, and capable of accommodating around 400 houses with a new primary school and associated facilities, is designed as a phase one development. Considerable effort has been made to ensure that that core area can be expanded through further carefully sited development which would benefit both Kirkton of Skene and Westhill.
- 8.4 Longer term development of this bid site would maximise the benefit of investment in infrastructure provided as part of the core development. The identification of this area within the Local Development Plan for longer term development would ensure that sufficient capacity was built into infrastructure to allow for the future development of the area. Such an approach, concentrating on one area of expansion, should be preferred to development scattered around Westhill. Scattered development would simply repeat the mistakes of the past.
- 8.5 As well as providing community facilities commensurate with the scale of development proposed, there would be new investment in road infrastructure for the benefit of the wider community and existing residents of Kirkton of Skene in particular. The scale of development proposed as part of the core development

would enable investment in public transport which could then be expanded to serve the longer term growth in the same location. This would not be feasible with development scattered around Westhill.

- 8.6 Planning policy seeks to maximise these existing facilities and infrastructure with a view to increasing the overall supply of new homes. SPP3 specifically recognises that where brownfield and infill sites cannot meet the full range of housing requirements, it may be necessary to release Greenfield land next to built up areas. It further acknowledges that meeting housing requirements through extensions to existing towns and villages has a number of advantages, including the reduction in servicing costs. The Scottish Government has also set a target of 35,000 houses per annum by 2015. The draft Structure Plan recognises this and highlights the requirement for 72,000 new homes in the period to 2030. To address this will require substantial land release and Westhill is considered a suitable location to contribute to this.
- 8.7 The most recent 2008 Housing Land Audit demonstrates a considerable short fall in the 5 year housing land supply when that supply is measured against the three most relevant requirements including the 2007 Strategic Forecasts, comparison with Table 3 of NEST and past completion rates. When measured against Structure Plan Table 3, the maximum supply is 4.8 years whereas if measured against the 2007 Strategic Forecasts the supply drops very significantly to 2.7 years. This, taken together with the Scottish Governments objective of increasing the supply of new housing would dictate the need for a substantial and early release of land with a continuing supply thereafter.
- 8.8 The availability of a range of services locally, and certainly within walking and cycling distance, is a major factor in identifying land for development. The identification of this site for longer term development within Westhill would address the criteria specified within SPP17 with regard to discouraging the use of the private car. Importantly, the sites would lie within 400m walking distance of public transport provision and within 1600m of community facilities and services.
- 8.9 The bid site would be seen in the context of an expansion of Westhill and in particular the westward progression of the existing development at Broadstraik. The land is relatively low lying and development within that area would have a minimal impact on the landscape setting of Westhill. Furthermore, due to the topography of the surrounding area it would only have a very localised impact. This would be mitigated further by strategic landscaping on the southern and

eastern boundaries. There would be no technical impediment to the development of this area and it would bring significant improvements in terms of the realignment of the B979 enabling the closure of the existing substandard junction at Mason Lodge.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 It is considered that the core area proposed for development by Barratt is a logical expansion of Kirkton of Skene which brings community benefits and avoids coalescence of the village with Westhill.
- 9.2 Westhill is a popular town and, historically, a strategic growth location. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that demand for housing will continue in the town and as such the core area has been specifically planned to enable future expansion.
- 9.3 This bid site lying to the south of the A944 is well contained in the landscape and would be seen as a natural progression of the Broadstraik development. Development would provide improved road links and as such should be identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan for the longer term growth of Westhill.

Appendix A: Development Bid Site

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.

N1 Name of proposer: The Dickinson Trust, Trustee for The Dunnottar Trust
Date:06/11/08

Postal Address: c/o Ryden
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1YL

N2 Name of landowner (if known): [REDACTED]
Postal address of landowner [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To comply with the data protection Act1998 this information will not be made public

The site and your proposals

S1 Under what name would you like the site to be identified? Whitestone, Westhill

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)

S2	Have you provided a map showing the exact boundaries of the site you would like considered?	Please provide the National Grid reference of the site
S3	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	NJ 808 068

S4 What is the current use of the site? Agriculture

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

S5 What use(s) do you propose for your site? Residential & associated open space

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

S6 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.

The development would meet the longer term growth of Westhill during the second or subsequent Local Plan periods. It would form a planned expansion of the Barratt proposals for Kirkton of Skene.

S7 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).

Yet to be determined but would include an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures.

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

S8 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)

General industrial land (Use Class 5)

Storage and distribution (Use Class 6)

Do you have a specific occupier in mind for the site? Yes No

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

S9

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

N/A

Please continue on additional sheets as required.

The wider area

A1

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 refer to attached development bid statement.

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



A2

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

Framework attached



A3

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



The Code for Sustainable homes or WWW.index21.org.uk provides guidance on this issue

Effect on the community

C1

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.

C2 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
25% or Less

C3 What community benefits arise from your proposals? What would the nature of these be, and how would they be delivered?

Please refer to attached development bid statement.

B979 would be realigned to a new junction with the A944 removing a sub-standard junction and improving traffic flows. This would connect with the Kirkton of Skene relief road to be provided as part of the Barratt proposals for Kirkton of Skene.

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)

C4 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
	<small>Please tick appropriate box</small>		
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transport networks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	NA

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

C5 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 type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	NA <input checked="" 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 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_SE ARCH

C6 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

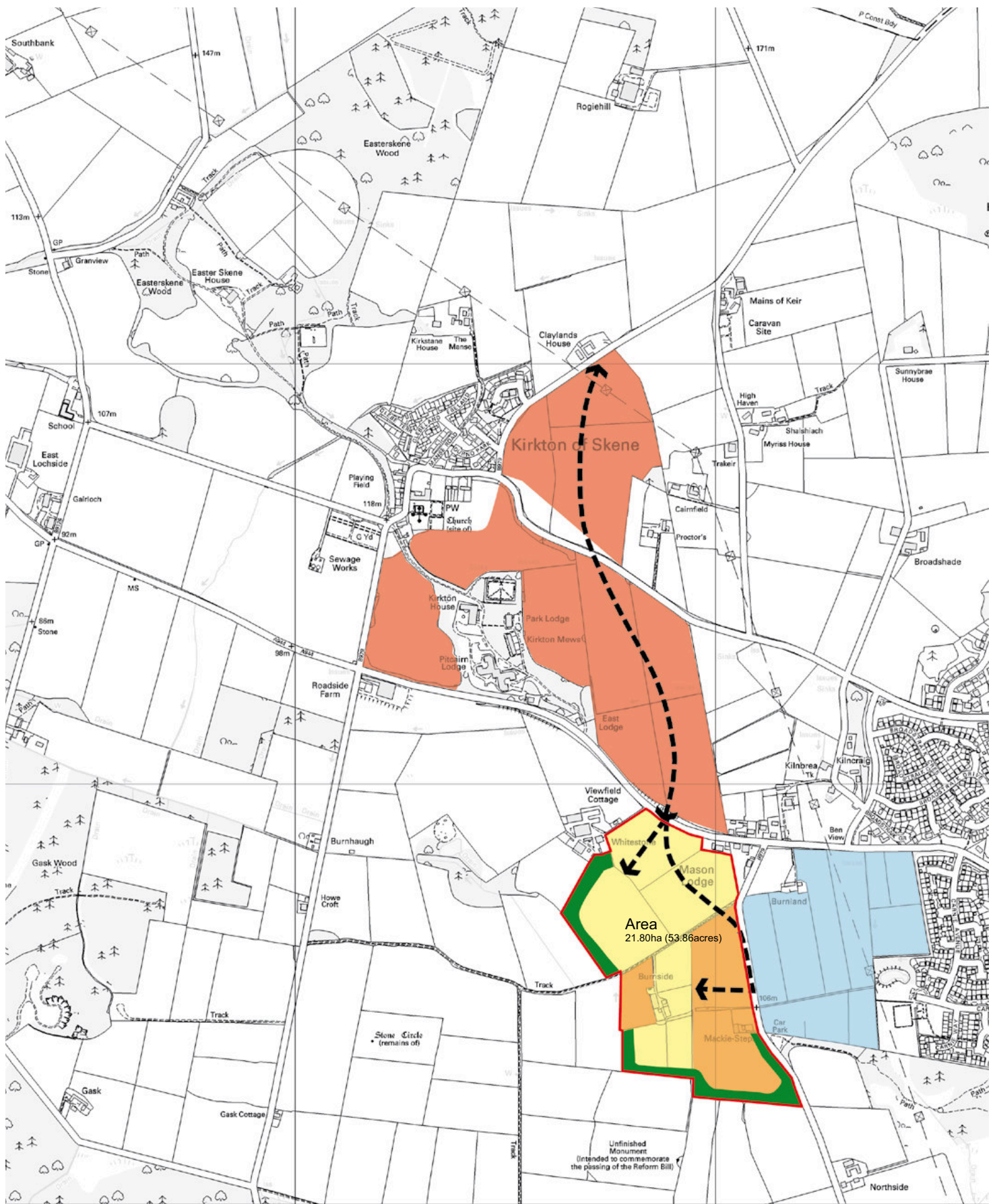
O1 What other information would you like to be considered in support of your proposal? In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 please do not include any personal information

Please refer to attached development bid statement.

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.

Fair Processing Notice

- The Data Controller for this information is Aberdeenshire Council.
 - The data will be used for the following purposes:
 - 1) to inform a public debate on the merits of the different sites being proposed,
 - 2) to evaluate submitted bids
 - This data will potentially be disclosed worldwide (via publication on Internet)
- By completing and submitting this form, you are consenting to the above processing.



Dunecht Estates - Kirkton of Skene Wider Area Framework

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
|  | Existing housing area under construction. |  | Land owned by Dunecht Estates with capacity to accommodate settlement expansion |
|  | Kirkton of Skene - Barratt Proposed Development Bid Area |  | Potential areas for structure planting |
|  | Proposed alignment of new road |  | Land within Bid Area in other ownership |