

Appendix A: Initial Development Bid Dated 11 February 2008

Mr Robert Gray
Head of Planning Policy
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House, Westburn Road
ABERDEEN
AB16 5GB

11 February 2008

Our Ref: 03A80035

DDI: 01224 569675

Email: paul.williamson@ryden.co.uk

Dear Mr Gray

POTENTIAL FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – NETHERLEY HOUSE, NETHERLEY, ABERDEENSHIRE

I represent Balgranach Properties Ltd, who own land to the east of the existing grouping of dwellings at Netherley as highlighted on the attached location plan. The whole site extends to approximately 2 acres, with a right of access along the road leading from the B979. From the information provided below it is our contention that the land could accommodate a modest residential development following the formal allocation of Netherley as a settlement, in its own right. Therefore, my client would wish to see Netherley formally identified as a settlement/rural service centre, with some potential for residential development through the forthcoming development plan review.

Description of Site

The site is predominantly scrub land at present located to the east of the existing grouping of dwellings around Netherley House. At present the grouping is not allocated as a settlement within the Adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan, although it does comprise in the region of 15 dwellings. In terms of the topography, site levels are between approximately 130 and 145 metres AOD. The land rises gradually to the west towards the Gardeners Cottage, while the land falls away to the east towards the B979 which is at approximately 125 metres AOD. The Burn of Monquich flows eastwards along the southern edge of the identified land. The land is also characterised by being among sizeable mature woodland, which obscures views of the existing dwellings from the B979. These trees appear to be up to 15 - 20 metres.

Edinburgh
0131 225 6612

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0141 204 3838

Leeds
0113 243 6777

Dundee
01382 227900

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01463 717202

In terms of the existing buildings on site, Netherley House, which has been split into three dwellings, is Category B-listed. The majority of the remaining properties are more modern detached properties, although a mews development of 3 units has taken place to the west of the house more recently. The bridge over the Monquich Burn is listed Category C(S).

Physical Capability of Site to Accommodate Development

The opportunity to accommodate housing within the existing countryside without having detriment to the existing character or visual amenity is diminishing. In light of the topography, and site characteristics, it is considered that the identified land is physically capable of development as shall be outlined below.

A modest residential development could be accommodated towards the east of the existing grouping thus allowing the setting of the Category B Listed Netherley House to be retained. This could be achieved through allowing adequate distance between any proposed development, and the slight change in levels which would not interfere with any of the main views of the Listed building. Furthermore, this development could help fund an upgrade to the existing access road through the implementation of passing places, which would help the free flow of traffic as well as access for refuse and emergency vehicles.

In terms of accessibility, the site is also well connected to the north towards Maryculter and Peterculter, as well as to the south to Stonehaven via the B979. Existing linkages to Portlethen shall be maintained after the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) via an underpass to the east of Cookney. Accordingly, Netherley is considered to be well located in respect of several of the main service centres within the Kincardine and Mearns area, as well as being within commuting distance of Aberdeen City.

The site provides the opportunity to create a well defined and defensible boundary utilising the existing topography and physical landscape/screening. The site would also allow the creation of enhanced landscaped buffers to ensure that the visual impact of development would be negligible.

Development Plan Considerations

With regard to Policy 9 of the Approved Structure Plan, 500 houses are required within Aberdeenshire settlements located in the AHMA in the period between January 2006 and December 2010. Allocations between 2011 and 2015 are likely to be in the same broad proportions to those between 2006 – 2010.

Consideration must also be given to the development approach taken forward as part of the Structure Plan review. As you are aware, a review of the Structure Plan was embarked upon last year. The provisional strategy for the replacement Structure Plan includes most development around Aberdeen City itself, with significant growth along the transportation corridors including the A90, A96 and the

railway. Furthermore, a strand of the strategy seeks to identify additional development opportunities outwith the strategic growth areas for business and housing land to meet local needs. This would meet local aspiration in rural areas which would benefit from increased land allocations. Accordingly, it is considered that Netherley offers an opportunity to accommodate additional residential development on a modest scale without causing detriment to the wider character of the area.

The existing grouping of dwellings at Netherley is considered to be much larger than some of the other Rural Service Centres within the Adopted Local Plan such as Cookney, which currently comprises around 8 dwellings with a development site allocated which could accommodate a further 10 dwellings. Accordingly, we consider there merit in requesting that Netherley be formally identified as a settlement/rural service centre capable of accommodating some modest development in future years. The definition of Rural Service Centres is that they should contain at least some viable services and provide opportunities to absorb some small scale local development needs, as is considered to be the case in this instance.

Education

The School Roll Forecasts (2006 based) published by Aberdeenshire Council, show that Lairhillock Primary (which opened in Easter 2007) has a capacity of 120 pupils, while the roll is estimated to decrease in the period between 2008 to 2016, from 91 to 67 respectively therefore being at 56% capacity. Meanwhile, Mackie Academy is shown to have a capacity of 940 pupils. The forecast by the Council is shown to decrease from 1234 in 2007 to 1018 in 2016. This trend renders the Academy under capacity (only 89%) in years to come. As such the development of the site for residential development would help sustain the existing schools.

Furthermore, it should be noted that my clients land at Netherley is located only 0.9 miles from the existing Primary School, therefore given the broad catchment area, would be located in close proximity to an existing service.

Summary

It is considered that the site represents a clear opportunity to provide a modest residential development following the formal identification of Netherley as a settlement/rural service centre. The site is suitable to accommodate further residential development to meet local needs given the topography and natural screening afforded in this area of the countryside, and alongside a number of existing dwellings. Furthermore, Netherley is also considered to have excellent linkages into the City of Aberdeen, and the main service centres of Portlethen and Stonehaven, where most of the local services and jobs are located.

On the basis of the above, we would be grateful if consideration could be given to the identification of Netherley as a settlement/rural service centre, and a further

small scale allocation of additional housing land as part of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan Review, following the completion of the replacement Structure Plan.

I look forward to receiving a response at your earliest convenience. In the meantime, should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Williamson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Paul Williamson
Senior Planning Consultant

Enc

cc: Martin Gilbert, Balgranach Properties Ltd

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:	BALGRANNACH PROPERTIES LIMITED	Date:	05-11-08
Postal Address:	C / O RYDEN LLP 25 ALBYN PLACE ABERDEEN AB10 1YL		

N2

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

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

The site and your proposals

S1

Under what name would you like the site to be identified?	'NETHERLEY HOUSE'
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?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

S3

Please provide the National Grid reference of the site
NO 846 938 GB

S4 What is the current use of the site? SCRUB LAND ADJACENT TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

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 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

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.

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).

IT IS CONSIDERED THE SITE WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR APPROXIMATELY FOUR DETACHED DWELLINGS IN LINE WITH THE SCALE AND DENSITY OF EXISTING ADJACENT PROPERTIES

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) N / A

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?)

THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD INTEGRATE INTO THE LANDSCAPE THROUGH ITS SITING BESIDE AN EXISTING GROUPING OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND AMONGST A MATURE WOODLAND SETTING. THE SCALE AND DESIGN OF PROPERTIES WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE ADJACENT CHARACTER

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
THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE WOULD BE LOCATED ADJACENT TO AN EXISTING GROUPING OF AROUND 15 DWELLINGS, WITH GOOD LINKAGES TO THE SURROUNDING TOWNS, PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT 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?
 THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS THAT WOULD ARISE FROM THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE THE PROVISION OF CHOICE FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THOSE SEEKING TO RESIDE IN A RURAL LOCATION WHICH MAY ALSO OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOME WORKING. THE PROPOSAL WOULD ALSO HELP TO SUSTAIN BOTH THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHICH ARE BOTH EXPECTED TO SUFFER FROM A FALLING SCHOOL ROLL.

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

Please tick appropriate box

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

SEE 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)



Balgrannach Properties Ltd

Development Bid for Land at
Netherley House, Netherley,
Aberdeenshire

November 2008



Ryden LLP
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
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Tel; 01224 588866
Fax; 01224 589669

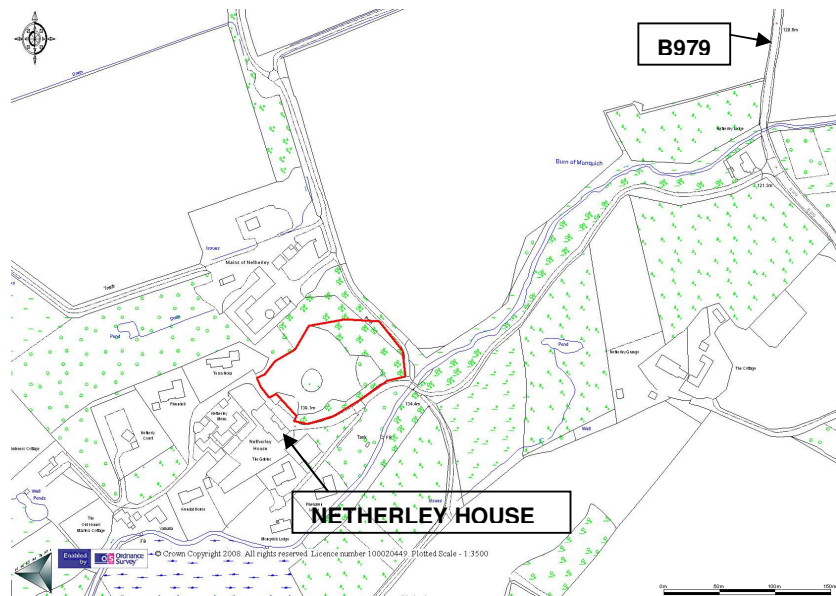
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Appendix A:	Initial Development Bid Dated 11 February 2008
Appendix B:	Location Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An initial development bid was submitted on behalf of Balgrannach Properties Limited on 11 February 2008, a copy of which is attached. Accordingly this revised submission takes account of the requirements highlighted by Aberdeenshire Council following their letter dated 4 September 2008. The landholding which extends to approximately 2 acres, is located just off the B979 Stonehaven to Milltimber road. This land is identified in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 1.2 The land, which is located 6 miles north of Stonehaven, is also 7 miles to the south west of Portlethen, and approximately 12 miles south of Aberdeen. Netherley is served by a public transport service which operates 6 days a week.
- 1.3 Within the extant Local Plan, the land is identified as falling within the countryside of the Kincardine and Mearns area of Aberdeenshire.
- 1.4 The site lies within an area identified for 'Local growth and Diversification' in the Draft Structure Plan.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 2.1 The site, of approximately 0.8 hectares, is predominantly scrub land at present located to the east of the existing grouping of buildings around Netherley House. At present the grouping is not identified as being a settlement within the Adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan, although it is considered to meet the criteria defining rural service centres within Chapter 8 of the Local Plan given that it comprises approximately 15 houses and would provide opportunities for development which would meet with development plan policies.
- 2.2 In terms of the topography, site levels are between approximately 130 and 145 metres AOD. The land rises gradually to the west towards the Gardners Cottage, while land falls away to the east towards the B979 which is at approximately 125 metres AOD. The Burn of Monquich flows eastwards along the southern edge of the identified land. The land is also characterised by being adjacent to a sizeable mature woodland, which obscures views of the existing dwellings from the B979. These trees appear to be up to 15-20 metres in height. An aerial photograph is shown at Figure 2 below.

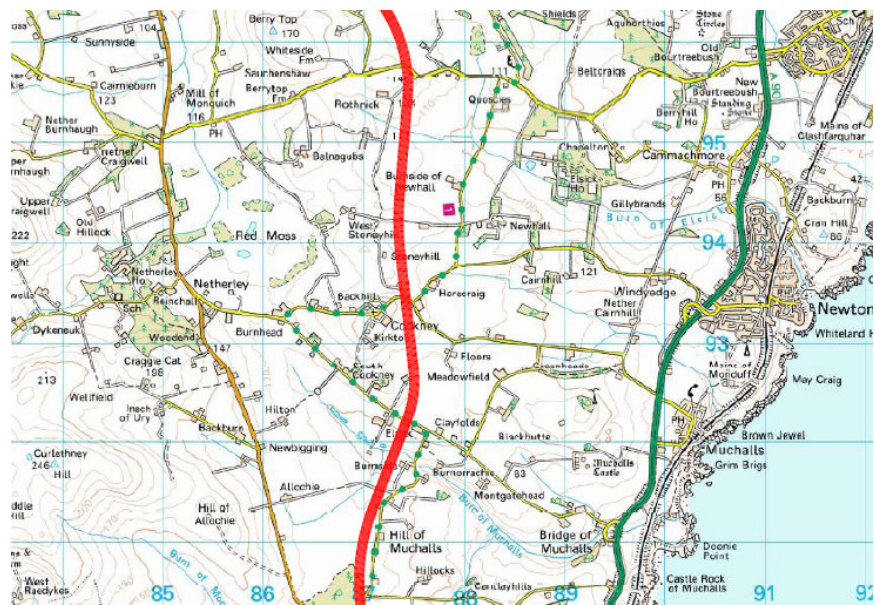
Figure 2: Aerial Photograph



- 2.3 In terms of the existing buildings on site, Netherley House, which has been split into three dwellings, is Category B-listed. The majority of the remaining properties are more modern detached properties, although a mews development of 3 units has taken place to the west of the house more recently. The bridge over the Burn of Monquich is Category C(s) listed.

2.4 As part of the AWPR proposals, a 'Fast-link' road from Stonehaven would link in to the the AWPR to the south of the River Dee at Milltimber. This road would lie approximately 2 kilometres to the east of Netherley House, albeit it may result in a decrease in the amount of traffic using the existing B979. The alignment of this section of road is shown on Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Proposed Alignment of AWPR fast link from Stonehaven



2.5 In terms of accessibility to public transportation, Service 103 which operates between Aberdeen, Netherley, Stonehaven and Laurencekirk; operates six days a week. It is available at the junction of the access road with the B979, which is approximately 425 metres from the identified land.

3.0 PROPOSALS

3.1 The opportunity to accommodate housing within the existing countryside without having detriment to the existing character or visual amenity is diminishing. In light of the strategy of the emerging structure plan, the topography, and the site characteristics, it is considered that the identified land is physically capable of development as shall be outlined below.

- 3.2 A modest residential development of approximately four dwellings could be accommodated towards the east of the existing grouping thus allowing the setting of the Category B listed Netherley House to be retained. This could be achieved through allowing adequate distance between any proposed development, and the slight change in levels which would not interfere with any of the main views of the Listed Building. Furthermore, this development could help fund an upgrade to the existing access road through the implementation of passing places, which would help the free flow of traffic as well as access for refuse and emergency vehicles.
- 3.3 In terms of accessibility, the site is well connected to the north towards Maryculter and Peterculter, as well as to the south to Stonehaven via the B979. Existing linkages to Portlethen shall be maintained after the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) via an underpass to the east of Cookney. Accordingly, Netherley is considered to be well located in respect of several of the main service centres within the Kincardine and Mearns area, as well as being within commuting distance of Aberdeen City.
- 3.4 The site also provides the opportunity to create a well defined and defensible boundary utilising the existing topography and physical landscape/setting. The site would also allow the creation of enhanced landscaped buffers to ensure that the visual impact of development would be negligible.

4.0 SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Scottish Planning Policy 1 (The Planning System) indicates that the purpose of the planning system is to “guide the future development and use of land in cities, towns and rural areas in the long term public interest. The aim is to ensure that development and changes in land use occur in suitable locations and are sustainable” (Paragraph 4). Paragraph 7 highlights that “Planning decisions should favour the most sustainable option, promoting development that safeguards and enhances the long-term needs of the economy, society and the environment”. Local Plans must identify effective opportunities for development and encourage investment in an area, with the aim to “exert a positive influence over land use decisions”. They should also “be responsive to local needs and promote change in the wider community interest” (Paragraph 37).
- 4.2 Scottish Planning Policy 3 (Planning for Homes – Revised 2008) identifies that housing is an important factor in sustainable economic growth. Paragraph 5 states that the Scottish Government is committed to the goal of raising the rate of housebuilding to 35,000 new houses a year by the middle of the next decade.

Accordingly “the allocation of an appropriate supply of land for housing is one of the key factors in ensuring continued opportunities for housebuilding and influencing the delivery of housing” (Paragraph 9).

- 4.3 SPP3 also outlines that successful developments can be achieved through appropriate location, as well as links to transport networks and other settlements. Paragraph 16 outlines the key objectives as including: the use of the planning system to facilitate the construction of well designed, good quality housing in sustainable locations; and, allocation of a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures. The creation of high quality places, which support the development of sustainable communities.
- 4.4 Local authorities must ensure that sufficient land is available to meet the housing requirement for each housing market area in full through local development plans. The requirement for local authorities to prepare a sustainable settlement strategy must include the following considerations: the efficient use of land and buildings; accessibility by a range of transport options to jobs and services; co-ordination of housing land provision with improvements in infrastructure; and, the protection and enhancement of landscapes (Paragraph 56). SPP3 also highlights that in some areas stand alone settlements may contribute towards meeting housing requirements as part of a long term strategy where: it forms part of the strategy for promoting rural development and renewal; it could assist in reducing pressure on areas of attractive countryside; it can be readily served by public transport; and, it will not result in significant environmental disbenefits.
- 4.5 In respect of affordable housing, paragraph 94 states that “the benchmark figure is that each site should contribute 25% of the total number of housing units as affordable housing”. This is reiterated within PAN 74 (Affordable Housing) where reference is also made to the requirement for the percentage contribution of affordable housing on private housing sites having to be justified as part of a housing needs assessment (Paragraph 31).
- 4.6 Scottish Planning Policy 15 (Planning for Rural Development) states that planning’s role is to “enable and help create opportunities for development in sustainable locations wherever appropriate e.g. where infrastructure capacity and good access exist, or can be provided at reasonable cost, or to meet justifiable social and economic objectives” (Paragraph 9).
- 4.7 Scottish Planning Policy 17 (Planning for Transport) states that in respect of rural areas “Most additional housing, employment, retail, leisure and other services should

be located where there is access from an existing road or footpath to a rail station or bus route, and there is proximity to local services ideally within walking distance” (Paragraph 11).

5.0 DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN

- 5.1 The spatial strategy of the Draft Structure Plan promotes development in places that meets the needs of business and, at the same time, are sustainable. It also provides flexibility to meet the needs of local communities. In areas of ‘Local Growth and Diversification’, levels of growth in individual settlements should relate to local needs, although the scale of this growth will vary from place to place. While it acknowledges that there will continue to be pressure for housing in the countryside, it states that in line with Scottish Planning Policy, new housing should be focused in, or as an extension to, existing settlements. Furthermore, there is an identified need for diversification and growth in the economy in this area to meet local needs, with tourist-related developments having a role to play.
- 5.2 One of the objectives of the Draft Structure Plan is to increase the population of the City Region by 9% to 480,000 by 2030, and to build at least 2,500 new homes each year by 2014 (and 3,000 per year by 2020). The Draft Structure Plan also advocates the creation of sustainable mixed communities to make sure that development meets the needs of the whole community and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.
- 5.3 In terms of proposed housing, the following allowances are made for ‘Local Growth’ areas in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area across Aberdeenshire: 2007 – 2016: 1,700 units; 2017 – 2023: 1,500 units; and, 2024 – 2030: 1,500 units.

6.0 SERVICES

- 6.1 In respect of drainage, the Glendye Water Treatment Works has sufficient capacity to service any development. Waste Water would be dealt with by means of appropriately sited septic tanks. Reference to SEPA’s Flood Risk Map highlights that the site is located outwith any area known to flood.
- 6.2 In respect of education, the 2006 Based School Roll Forecasts indicates that the roll at Lairhillock Primary (which opened in Easter 2007) has a capacity of 120 pupils, while the roll is expected to decrease in the period between 2008 to 2016, from 91 to 67 respectively therefore being at 56% capacity. Meanwhile, Mackie Academy is shown to have a capacity of 1145 pupils. The forecast by the council is shown to

decrease from 1234 in 2007 to 1018 in 2016. This trend renders the Academy under capacity (only 89%) in years to come.

7.0 JUSTIFICATION

- 7.1 Given the strategy of the emerging Structure Plan, consideration should be given to identifying the properties around Netherley House as a settlement, and furthermore it could also help to justify modest growth through the provision of new residential properties. The Adopted Local Plan states that a 'Rural Service Centre' includes villages of a very compact grouping of at least 6 houses and some viable services, which may provide opportunities to absorb small-scale local development needs. Accordingly, given the potential to provide further development opportunities, perhaps with home-working elements, it is considered that the land adjacent to Netherley House has potential to accommodate additional sustainable growth. As such the development of the site for residential development would help sustain the existing schools. Furthermore, it should be noted that the identified land at Netherley is located only 0.9 miles from the existing Primary School, therefore given the broad catchment area, would be located in close proximity to an existing service. This would also be in accordance with the objectives of Scottish Planning Policies 1, 3 and 15 in that it would direct development to a sustainable location which would encourage investment in a rural area thus meeting local needs.
- 7.2 There would be no adverse environmental impact on the surrounding area from the identification of this land for a residential development. The boundaries of the land are well defined and development of the site would prevent the need for development in more exposed areas, where the landscape cannot accommodate development without harming its character, which would meet with the aim of SPP3 to reduce pressure for development on attractive areas of the countryside.
- 7.3 The proximity of Netherley to Aberdeen and some of the surrounding towns makes it an ideal location to absorb some of the requirements of the Draft Structure Plan for local growth and diversification. This would also be in accordance with the principles of the Scottish Planning Policies above which aim to be responsive to local needs and promote change in the wider community interest. As highlighted above, the land is already served by a bus service which connects the existing dwellings to Aberdeen, Stonehaven and Laurencekirk, therefore ensuring that the land is connected by public transportation to the wider area. This service is available within a short walking distance of the identified land.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 The bid land is a sustainable site located immediately adjacent to an existing grouping of approximately 15 dwellings, and is within an area identified for local growth and diversification within the Draft Structure Plan. The site can be accessed easily and has access to public transportation services on the B979. The location amongst existing properties, a mature woodland setting and the topography would ensure that a modest development can be accommodated into the landscape without harming its character, or that of the adjacent listed building.
- 8.2 Further to this, Netherley House and its surrounding properties are conveniently located within commuting distance of Aberdeen, Stonehaven and Portlethen. The provision of a modest housing development would accommodate some of the land requirements anticipated for the area, and help to provide development at a variety of locations through the use of a rural site, with good linkages onto the transportation network. This would meet the objectives of Scottish Planning Policy. In addition, the expansion of an existing grouping which is considered to meet the criteria for a 'Rural Service Centre' would contribute towards the Draft Structure Plan strategy for local growth and diversification in the countryside areas of Aberdeenshire. Furthermore, the proposal would also contribute to sustaining the local primary and secondary schools.
- 8.3 It is therefore considered that this site should be identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan for a residential development, and that Netherley/Netherley House should be identified as a settlement thereafter.

November 2008

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