

Date 5 November 2008  
Your Ref  
Our Ref GOR/1/426/GBS/SKW  
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Planning Policy Team  
Planning and Environmental Services  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Woodhill House  
Westburn Road  
Aberdeen  
AB16 5GB

Dear Sirs

### **Aberdeenshire Local Plan Representations**

We enclose the representations made on behalf of our client, The Robert Gordon University in relation to their bid site at Waterside.

Yours faithfully



*Partners*

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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: Robert Gordon University  
Date: 6 November 2008

Postal Address: c/o Sarah Watt  
Paull & Williamsons, Union Plaza, Union Wynd, AB10 1DQ

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? Waterside Site

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

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

What is the current use of the site? Agricultural/ Greenbelt Land

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? Educational, Research, Recreational and other uses incidental to the operation of the University.

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. see paper apart

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). n/a

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)

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.

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

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?) see paper apart

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*

The Code for Sustainable homes or [WWW.index21.org.uk](http://WWW.index21.org.uk) provides guidance on this issue

### 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   
25% or Less

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

see paper apart

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
	Please tick appropriate box		
Local Shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community facilities (eg Hall)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports facilities (eg playing fields)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>

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 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 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 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](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SWE_PGP_CONNECTIONS/SWE_CORP_CONNECTIONS/ASSET_CAPACITY_SE)  
 ARCH

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

see paper apart

**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](mailto: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.

**Supporting Statement for Development Bid for Robert Gordon University Waterside Farm Site  
in new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of Robert Gordon University (“RGU”) in support of the submission that their site at Waterside Farm be zoned for educational, research, recreational and other uses incidental to the operation of the University within the emerging Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. It should be read together with the completed questionnaire.
- 1.2 RGU recently acquired the 50 acre site which lies within Aberdeenshire to the south of the River Dee as shown on the plan attached (“the Waterside site”). The site is currently vacant agricultural land. This submission in respect of the site requires to be considered within the wider context of the RGU Garthdee Campus which lies to the north of the River Dee and within Aberdeen City.
- 1.3 Over the last few years RGU have made major investments in developing the Garthdee Campus and they are currently developing a revised masterplan for further development there. The Garthdee Campus provides modern university facilities and will continue to do so in the future. RGU are committed to the promotion and development of the University.
- 1.4 When acquiring the Waterside site RGU recognised that its development potential is limited by the flood plain of the River Dee. However, it was an important acquisition as it provided them with breathing space, matched the important river frontage they already have on the north side and provided an opportunity in due course for recreational and other uses. The Mission Statement aspiration of RGU is ‘to be the best riverside campus in Europe’.
- 1.5 At present RGU are concentrating on developing and implementing their masterplan for their site on the north side of the River Dee but envisage in the longer term use of the proposed site for recreational facilities and other educational uses complimentary to the long term development of the University.
- 1.6 In these circumstances it is submitted that the Waterside site be zoned for educational, research, recreational and other uses incidental to the operation of the University.

**2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The following narrative highlights those aspects of national and strategic planning policy, guidance and advice which are considered to be relevant to this proposal.

## **Draft Structure Plan**

- 3.2 The Local Plan will require to conform to the emerging Aberdeen City and Shire draft Structure Plan.
- 3.3 One of the key objectives of the draft Structure Plan is Economic Growth. The plan states the objective to be *“to provide opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment in a range of areas that are both appropriate for and attractive to the needs of differing industries, while at the same time improving the essential strategic infrastructure necessary to allow the economy to grow over the long term.”*
- 3.4 The important role universities have to play in meeting this objective is highlighted by the draft Structure Plan which states a central part of promoting a diverse local economy *“will involve putting into practice new ideas (including those from our universities and research organisations).”*
- 3.5 The draft Structure Plan recognises that a fundamental part in meeting the objective is that sufficient land is made available for development.
- 3.6 One of the ways in which the draft Structure Plan envisages the targets and objectives for economic growth being met is *“working in partnership with Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen (and other appropriate research organisations) to help them make as positive a contribution as possible to the area”*.
- 3.7 The draft structure plan spatial strategy identifies Aberdeen City as one of the strategic growth areas and recognises that the scale of growth anticipated will mean that more than half of the development will need to take place on Greenfield sites.
- 3.8 RGU’s proposals would assist in meeting the key objective of economic growth as set out in the draft Structure Plan. It is specifically recognised that land is required to be made available for development to meet the economic growth objective and that some development will require to take place on Greenfield sites. There is also explicit recognition of the important role universities will play in achieving this objective by providing new ideas and working in close partnership with the Council. Considering RGU’s proposals in the context of their whole Garthdee Campus and in light of these objectives and targets in the draft Structure Plan it is submitted that the Waterside site should be zoned for educational, research, recreational and other uses incidental to the operation of the University.

## **National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 Discussion Draft (NFP2)**

- 3.9 This draft document sets out Scotland’s strategy for development to 2030. One of the key aims set out in the NFP2 is *“to contribute to a wealthier and fairer Scotland by supporting sustainable economic growth and improved competitiveness and connectivity.”* The NFP2 notes that *“the aim is to create a knowledge-driven economy”* and that *“Scotland’s universities, higher education institutions and further education colleges lie at the core of the strategy for developing the skills base necessary to support a knowledge driven economy.”*

- 3.10 The first National Planning Framework “*identified the East Coast corridor between Aberdeen and Newcastle as offering opportunities to develop knowledge economy links based on the expertise associated with the energy and offshore industries and the universities*”. NPF2 states that “*measures to strengthen the East Coast Corridor will be taken forward in the strategic development plans*”.
- 3.11 It is clear that at a national level the importance universities have in furthering the economy is recognised and that more specifically Aberdeen and the universities within Aberdeen are targeted as being an area in which development for the knowledge economy is required. It is therefore submitted that RGU’s objectives and the role the Waterside site has in these are supported by NFP2.

### **National Planning Policy**

- 3.12 SPP1 “*The Planning System*” outlines the purpose of the system and suggests how planning can contribute to the Executive’s wider objectives. In relation to economic competitiveness paragraph 9 provides that “*the Executive seeks to promote a strong, diverse and competitive economy that can create the employment and incomes that will enable people to enjoy a good quality of life. The planning system supports Scotland’s prosperity by identifying land of a suitable quantity and quality in the right locations to meet the need for economic development.*”
- 3.13 It is submitted that RGU’s proposals are also in accordance with national planning policy. The provision of further educational and research facilities within Aberdeen is required in order to promote a competitive economy within Aberdeen. When considered in context with the Garthdee Campus the Waterside site has a role to play in achieving these objectives.

## **4 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The future detailed use of the Waterside site will be addressed in due course and will be subject to local policies. The Waterside site is not intended as a site for development on its own but as an extension as part of the Garthdee Campus it will have an important role. RGU submit that zoning the proposed site for educational, research, recreational and other uses incidental to the operation of the University is appropriate for the reasons given and would accord with planning objectives at both a national and local level.
- 4.2 The proposed site should be identified for educational, research, recreational and other uses incidental to the operation of the University in the emerging Aberdeenshire Local Plan. We would welcome further discussions with the Council in respect of the proposals.



Garthie

The Bluffie

Shaw Pot

Tolliphill Wood

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