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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: 24/10/08

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? North West Banchory

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

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What is the current use of the site? Woodland, Agriculture, Rough Grazing 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? Housing

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.

The development of the area would logically develop from east to west, from the existing zoned land where services are located. However, the allocation should allow flexibility in this process, to allow the sites to be linked to provide a genuine connectivity and ease of pedestrian movement, rather than very separate insular schemes occurring as small sites are allocated in different local plans

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 entire identified area to the west of Raemoir Road could potentially support around 200-250 houses with densities in line with existing developments in the area (the recent Upper Lochton Scheme is around 8 houses per hectare, and Cairds Wynd is around 13.5 houses per hectare). Bancon consider that the sites would be suitable for a mix of detached and semi detached housing, with perhaps some terraced housing if a higher density is insisted upon to meet the draft Structure Plan targets. No flats are proposed.

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

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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.

N/A

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 supporting statement, and Landscape Capacity Study.

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

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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

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.

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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 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?

See supporting statement

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Schools - Primary and Secondary around 800m distant.			

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

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 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

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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

Various assessments are currently underway to look at the development of the site in more detail. SEPA's flood maps have been consulted, and drainage tests have begun to inform a drainage impact assessment. Certain issues, such as traffic assessments are a continuation of work already carried out, and the possible expansion of this part of Banchory has been borne in mind in the design and assessment of previous sites.

Please see the supporting statement for additional detail on the proposed development.

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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.

North West Banchory Local Development Plan Bid

1. Site Description

North West Banchory incorporates the area to the west of Raemoir Road (A980) and north of Sunset Seat. The area is made up of a number of fields and areas of commercial woodland, with fragmented ownership, in which a number of developments have taken place since the 1980s.

Banchory is a settlement on the north side of the river Dee, with a main town centre around the river crossing, and a secondary centre around the former railway station. Early growth followed a traditional pattern up the south facing slopes, with houses generally having large south facing gardens. Rapid growth in line with the strong economy in the latter part of the 20th century saw development to the east, and the town took on a new character of a commuter settlement serving Aberdeen City. Towards the end of the 20th century, development breached the ridge at the north of the town, and development has since spread further north towards Upper Lochton, a single row of older houses.

To the east of Raemoir Road is Hill of Banchory, a development of housing, a primary school, a business park, and proposed community uses. Hill of Banchory has been under development for a number of years, and currently totals around 400 houses, with a further 150-200 planned in the current development plan. A separate bid seeks allocation of further land at Hill of Banchory North for housing, business and a site for a new Academy.

The area to which this bid relates is currently countryside, but lies immediately west of the village envelope. A site to the west of Caird's Wynd, known as Ramayana (the name of a large house existing on the site) has been identified as a constrained housing site, due to difficulties in accessing the land appropriately. This forms the southern boundary of the site. Other sites in the area, including Upper Arbeadie and smaller sites accessed directly from Raemoir Road have proved problematic, primarily because of access constraints due to the uncoordinated nature of the development of the area to date.

Many sites have been developed in a typical late 20th century insular style, with cul-de-sac roads and fortress type boundaries. Many of the boundaries in the areas are bolstered by ransom strips, removing the feasibility of access between sites. As well as restricting the developability of parcels of land, the pattern of development also makes pedestrian movements awkward and contrived.

This pattern of growth has been an unfortunate result of the apparent reluctance to allocate significant areas of land, and the granting of permission on small areas of land, often at appeal. Bancon consider that the allocation of the remaining land in the area for suitable densities of further housing will enable some degree of 'joining up' of the residential areas, to allow improved traffic and

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pedestrian movements through and between areas, particularly from South to North, thus improving access to the Highfield area

The Crows Nest landfill site (which also includes a civic amenity/recycling site) sits to the north of the identified area, and a new road was constructed some years ago to serve this. It is feasible that the access road serving this site could form the start of a relief road that could link back to the A93 to the west of Banchory, thereby both relieving to town centre of by-passing traffic, and also increasing the accessibility of the land to which this bid relates (and possibly future developable land currently controlled by the Forestry Commission). For the purpose of this bid, the potential route of such a relief road has been shown. This road would meet the Raemoir Road at a roundabout junction linking to the proposed Hill of Banchory Northern spine road, also shown on the plan, and described in detail in a separate bid for that area.

2. Draft Structure Plan

The draft structure plan is a pivotal issue to consider in preparing bids for the Local Development Plan. Banchory falls within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, but outwith any of the identified Strategic Growth Areas. It is disappointing that the town is 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. 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. It is difficult to translate these numbers into a Local Development Plan bid that seeks a 5 year housing land supply, but the overall assessment is that they are actually quite low considering the capacity of the area involved. It is therefore important that the development of housing within this area is directed towards the areas where it can be achieved in the most sustainable manner possible. For completeness, and ease of comparing numbers, this report considers the growth of Banchory over the term of the draft Structure Plan.

The draft structure plan does not provide a detailed housing allocation for Banchory 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 for investment decisions, and taking on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change. The additional aims include the need to create sustainable mixed communities, and associated infrastructure, and to make the most of the transport network, and reducing the need for people to travel.

3. Landscape and Visual Assessment

Banchory have commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment, carried out by David Wilson Associates. A copy of this document is attached for completeness, but the report identifies the area to the west of Raemoir Road as the least visually intrusive potential development area in the town. The biggest impact will be on existing woodland, but some of this has already been felled, and the forestry commission has ongoing proposals for further felling and replanting. An attached plan identifies this position.

The large part of the proposed area is north facing, but it is a gentle slope towards the existing houses at Upper Lochton, where the lowest point of the valley is. To the north of the site, the proposal plans identify a possible country park, beyond the existing landfill site known as the Crows Nest. The area of land to the north of Upper Lochton is slightly south facing, as it rises back up from the shallow valley that is currently being developed for housing. The area currently has the road serving the Crows Nest, which could form part of the future relief road. The development of this northernmost area could be aimed at the latter end of the Local or Structure Plan periods, after the remainder of the area to which this bid relates has been developed.

The Landscape Capacity Study identifies the limited visual impact of the area, due to the established woodland that surrounds it. It also identifies, however, that the approach to the town from the north is somewhat disappointing, being characterised by the access to the Crows Nest and some untidy sheds and buildings on the road edge. The development of this area in an appropriate manner would significantly improve visual amenity on the approach to the town.

4. Accessibility

Banchory is well placed to provide access to Aberdeen by road. The A93 links directly with the city, with easy access to alternative routes along the A944 and the B9077 also available. Currently, there are a number of bus services that provide access to Aberdeen, and in fact a number of people utilise the existing car parking facilities as an informal park and ride service. A formal park and ride service is proposed, and negotiations are ongoing between various parties to facilitate its creation as quickly as possible. This is likely to be well used, and will increase the ability of Banchory to be a sustainable location in terms of links with the city.

Although this bid mentions the possibility of a future relief road around the north of Banchory, the development of the area identified in this bid is not dependant on the completion of that road. The inclusion of traffic lights at the foot of Raemoir Road improve the connectivity of the site with the town centre. In addition, the Hill of Banchory Road, and future relief road to the east of Raemoir Road (identified in ALP, and also in the separate bid for Hill of Banchory North)

will provide a clear route from the area to the A93 east of Banchory, without the necessity to travel through the town centre.

5. Environment

Within the proposed expansion area, there is a mix of woodland and agricultural ground. The agricultural ground is of mostly class 3(2) quality, or capable of producing only a moderate range of crops, and the woodlands are mostly monoculture coniferous plantations. Areas of woodland within the area are controlled currently by the Forestry Commission, but much of the area is open grazing land, with occasional houses (former farmhouses perhaps).

The area has some wildlife interests, but perhaps less so than the heavily wooded areas. Nevertheless, Bancon are keen to promote useful open space, which can provide suitable wildlife habitats and corridors, rather than leaving the least suitable housing land left over for open space. This is far easier to achieve when planning for an area of this size, rather than the piecemeal approach of previous plans.

6. Education

The opening of Hill of Banchory Primary School in 2005 saw a significant improvement to the facilities in the town, with the new community school proving a great success. As a result, the school roll at the existing primary has fallen, creating additional capacity for future development. The identified site is geographically closer to the Banchory Primary School, and as such Bancon see the creation and enhancement of pedestrian connectivity as paramount to the success of expansion in this area. It is hoped that a cohesive development of this area will provide improvements to pedestrian access from existing housing areas as well as new.

The Academy is currently around 120% capacity, but the school roll is falling almost in direct correlation with the new pupils created by the development of new housing, should this continue at current rates (approx 60-70 completions per annum in the town – 12-14 pupils per year). The facilities at the existing Academy are under pressure, however, and expansion space is non-existent. Bancon acknowledge that there will be increasing pressure for a new Academy, and as such have incorporated this need into the development proposals for the coming years within the Hill of Banchory North Local Development Plan bid. The suggested location would be readily accessible from the proposed development area identified in this bid.

7. Development Proposals

Bancon propose that the area in question be developed entirely for housing, with a mix of housing types limited primarily to detached and semi-detached. The densities of development across the area are likely to change however, as the settlement reaches what is likely to be a fairly long term boundary to the north (dictated by the landfill site and woodland areas). It would be appropriate for the density to be lower in the northernmost part of the site, to the north of the existing houses at Upper Lochton. A density of around 8-10 houses per hectare might be appropriate for this area, which would result in around 60-80 houses with associated landscaping, planting and open space, and providing appropriate space for the road to be utilised as a relief road in the future.

Prior to this area being developed, however, Bancon considers that there should be some infilling of the area to the south of Upper Lochton. The benefits of developing this area are the limited visual impact (as highlighted in the report by David Wilson Associates), and the potential to improve the current limitations in cohesiveness, as well as maintain a spread of development across the town that will allow for the balancing of rolls between the two primary schools.

On a general planning level, the previous development and allocation of piecemeal sites in this area has detached this area from the surrounding countryside. There is a western boundary set by the Forestry Commission land, which has a certain lifespan as woodland, but on other sides it is landlocked by housing developments, diminishing its use for agriculture.

Due to the immediately adjacent development sites, it would be appropriate for a higher density of development in this location to the northern part of the bid site. Between 12 and 16 houses per hectare would provide between 150 and 200 houses in this location, phased in sequence from south east to north west.

Bancon are keen to promote a more joined-up way of designing housing layouts, utilising guidance from the English Manual for Streets (a Scottish version of which is anticipated soon), which seeks to create spaces suitable for pedestrians as well as cars, which are safe, resource efficient, and help to promote better connectivity and a sense of place. This is an approach which is important to the success of this area, given the constraints of existing developments.

The allocation of a significant area of land as suggested in this bid provides the necessary confidence to plan and phase a development over a number of years that can incorporate modern technologies, such as district heating, and also make the most of the best areas for open space, providing a constructive contribution to the open space network, rather than a small play area for every field that is promoted separately.

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8. Community Engagement

Bancon are keen to promote and benefit from community involvement at various stages of the planning process. Banchory has an active and attentive community council, who are well versed on the complexities of the planning process. Currently, a Planning For Real exercise is under way ('Making it Real'), and Bancon have actively supported this process, presenting our plans and utilising feedback received to adapt our draft masterplan into something that seeks the best solution for Banchory, not just Bancon as a developer. Our company is based in Banchory, and we see our role as much more than a house builder, but as an important player in shaping the future of the town and ensuring its success in terms of sustainability and an attractive place to live and work.

Community meetings to date have involved Church groups, youth organisations, school groups and the business community. The Making it Real programme moves to a public exhibition on the 21st November, at which Bancon will be displaying details of the proposed developments, and ongoing projects.