

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Content of Development Bid

2. Site Characteristics and Background

2.1 Location

2.2 Context

2.3 Infrastructure

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 Current Planning Context

3.2 Emerging Planning Context

4. Development Bid

4.1 Key Elements

4.2 Access and Connectivity

4.3 Services

4.4 Implementation

5. Consultation

5.1 Consultation with Council Officers and Other Agencies

5.2 Public Consultation

6. Conclusions

6.1 Justification

List of Figures

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Extract from Aberdeenshire Local Plan

Figure 3: Extract from Draft Structure Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire

Appendices

Appendix 1: Scoring Sheet

Supporting Documents

1. Proposed Layout Plan
2. Supporting Planning Statement for Pre-Application Meeting
3. Community Consultation Report (to follow)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Content of Development Bid

- 1.1.1 Knight Frank LLP, on behalf of our client Kirkwood Homes Limited, submit the following Development Bid in support of land at Wellheads, Alford currently allocated for employment use in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan being re-allocated for mixed use.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out the planning justification for the identification of the land in question as being suitable for future residential and employment development and inclusion in the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

2. Site Characteristics and Background

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 Alford is located 26 miles to the west of Aberdeen on the A944 Road.

Figure 1: Location Plan



2.1.2 The Wellheads site is located at the south eastern end of Alford, to the south of the A944 Road (Main Street). The site is separated from Main Street by a row of houses and can be accessed from Mart Road to the West and Castle Road to the east. The site is flat and in the ownership of Kirkwood Homes. The site which was part of Wellheads Farm is currently used as rough grassland. The site subject of the development bid is identified in Figure 1 above.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 In 2006, Alford had a population of around 2,100 and this figure is forecast to rise above 2600 by 2016. Since 2003 almost 80 new houses have been built in Alford, including Kirkwood's site beside Castle Road. The current Local Plan proposes additional development (150 houses) on three sites on the western edge of Alford (Sites fh1, C, and fh2). Outline planning permission has been granted for the erection of a residential development on these sites. There are however some difficulties with delivering a suitable access to these sites and investigations are ongoing to try to resolve the issue of access. A further site fh3* on the north eastern edge of Alford has been identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as future housing land.

2.2.2 Alford is located within the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market Area and falls within the Aberdeenshire Council Administrative Area of Marr. Current figures indicate that there are 7 people on the waiting list in Alford in relation to any property becoming vacant for re-let.

2.3 Infrastructure

2.3.1 Alford is served by the A944, a main distributor road that runs from Aberdeen to Strathdon. Bus services are operated by Stagecoach along this route.

2.3.2 There is one primary school in Alford, which is located at the south western end of Alford. The school has a current roll of between 280 and 290 and is forecast to stay at the same level over the next 10 years. The capacity of the school is currently 145. The primary school is zoned to Alford Academy, located beside the primary school. The current roll of the academy is about 560 and is forecast to rise by a further 100 by 2013. The capacity of the school is 520. The funding for the construction of a new secondary, primary and community complex, including a swimming pool at Alford has been approved by Aberdeenshire Council. Investigations are ongoing to identify a suitable site in Alford for the replacement school complex.

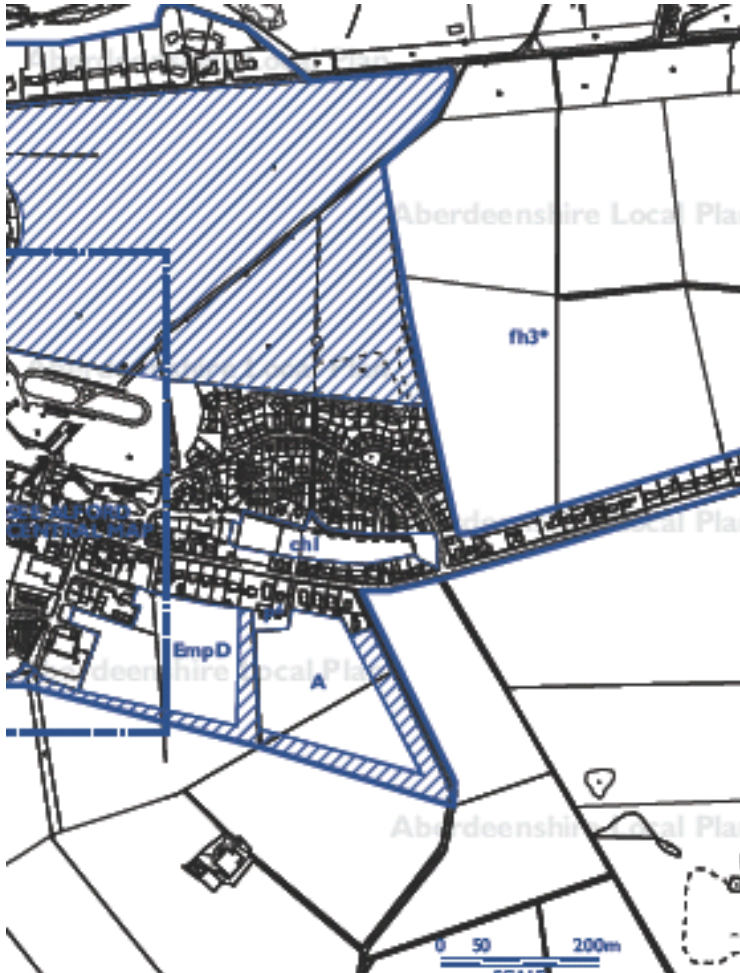
2.3.3 Alford has a good range and mix of services and facilities, recognition of its role as a major service centre in the Marr area. Further population growth in Alford will help sustain existing services and provide financial support through planning gain to improve and provide new facilities.

3. Planning Context

3.1 Current Planning Context

- 3.1.1 The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan ‘North East Scotland Together’ (NEST) was approved in 2001. NEST promoted a strategy which aimed to create a long-term sustainable framework of settlements in a hierarchy which focused major development into the main settlements in the North East. NEST will soon be replaced by the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan, which is currently under preparation and is referred to below.
- 3.1.2 The Wellheads site lies inside the settlement boundary for Alford as defined in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. The site is currently identified as Site EmpD (suitable for appropriate employment uses).

Figure 2: Extract from Aberdeenshire Local Plan



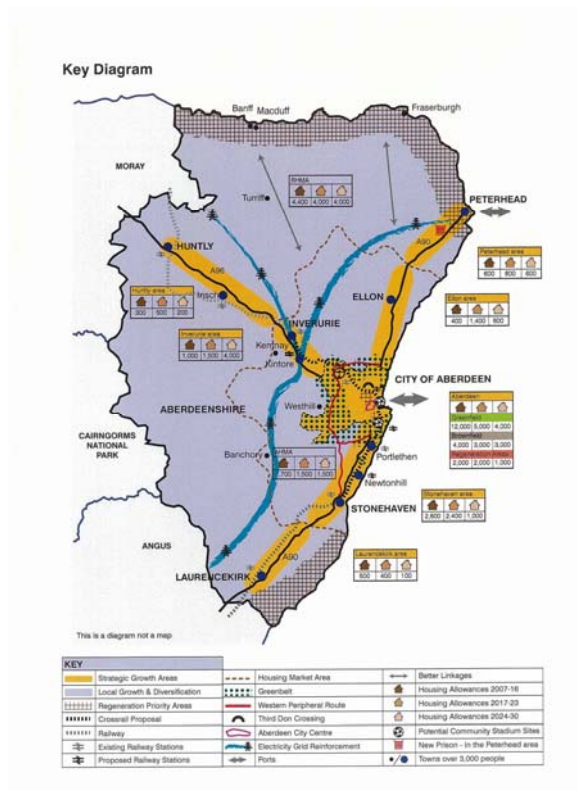
- Site ch1** is suitable for around 10 houses (not started)
- Site A** is suitable for around 55 houses (completed)
- Site EmpD** suitable for appropriate employment uses (not started)
- Site fh3*** Future Housing Land

3.2 Emerging Planning Context

3.2.1 The draft Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was published for consultation in June 2008. This advocates a higher rate of growth for the North East and is also promoting a spatial strategy which focuses future development into three Strategic Growth Areas. These three areas are the Huntly to Laurencekirk road to rail corridor, Aberdeen City, and the

Aberdeen to Peterhead corridor. These areas are expected to take on board the majority of growth (75%) in the region. Figure 3 below illustrates the spatial strategy of the draft Structure Plan.

Figure 3: Extract from Draft Structure Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire



3.2.2 We welcome that the Structure Plan does not merely plan for what can be forecasted but instead is aspirational in its approach and seeks to promote economic growth for the region, to retain and build on the key industries we already have in the north east and use this to our competitive advantage. In principle, we support the spatial strategy of identifying 3 Strategic Growth Areas (SGA) along the main transport and economic corridors of the North East. We would suggest, however, that greater emphasis needs to be given in the Structure Plan to the role of settlements in Aberdeenshire that lie outwith the Strategic Growth Areas, in particular the market towns and major service centres such as Alford, whose continued growth and vibrancy are vital to the future economic prosperity of the region. The town will also become more accessible when the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is built.

3.2.3 We think there is a strong case for the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan to allocate a reasonable number of the 12,400 houses proposed by the structure plan in the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market

Area (that lies outwith the SGA's) for local growth for Alford for the period up to 2030. The justification for this is given in the section below and will be supplemented by supporting documents over the next few months.

4. Development Bid

4.1 Key Elements

- 4.1.1 Kirkwood entered Aberdeenshire Council's major application process for their proposals for the promotion of a mixed use development at Wellheads earlier in 2008. The proposals were discussed at a Pre-Application Meeting on 4 June 2008 and a completed Pre-Application Assessment Form was issued by the Council on 11 June 2008. Since then Kirkwood have been in negotiation with the Council's Estates section regarding a joint venture to deliver new starter technology units at Wellheads. These discussions have been very positive. Kirkwood have also undertaken public consultation on their proposals for a mixed use development at Wellheads. This was held on 23 October 2008 and a report of the public consultation is being prepared and will be submitted as a supporting document for this development bid in due course. The feedback from the public on the mixed use proposals has generally been favourable. The proposals promoted at the public consultation event were for a 60-90 bedroom nursing home, which will provided 60-90 new jobs, serviced employment land, a new site for the Alford recycling centre (existing one currently very unsightly), a site for a children's nursery, around 50 new houses including 25% affordable, open space and footpath links. Three new advanced technology business units would be built on adjoining Council land to Aberdeenshire Council's specification (for local or incoming businesses).
- 4.1.2 Whilst Kirkwood intend to continue to pursue a planning application for a mixed use development at Wellheads they have been advised by officials that any change of use in zoning would carry more weight if supported by a development bid to the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, which seeks to change the zoning from employment use to mixed use.
- 4.1.3 Unlike bids on most greenfield sites, the change in use in zoning of the Wellheads site does not raise issues of loss of countryside as the site is already allocated for development. Kirkwood Homes support Aberdeenshire Council's aspirations to provide employment opportunities in Alford as set down in the Marr Area Action Plan and consider that the provision of new employment at Alford can best be achieved by a more pragmatic development approach, carried out in partnership with the Council. The

amount of land allocated for employment use at the Wellheads site is considered by Kirkwood to be unrealistic and is unlikely to be developed out in the next 10-20 years. Demand for employment land in Alford is very low and specialist in nature. If Kirkwood are permitted to develop part of their site at Wellheads for housing, planning gain generated from the housing can be used to help finance the servicing and provision of starter/business units and serviced land in partnership with the Council. As stated above Kirkwood's agents are currently in discussions with Aberdeenshire Council's Estates Section regarding a joint venture to provide 3 new business units. Other parts of the site as indicated above will also be reserved for employment uses.

- 4.1.4 A mixed use allocation of the Wellheads site would allow flexibility to permit employment uses such as a nursing home on site. It would also allow housing, which in effect will cross subsidise the development of the employment uses at Wellheads, thus delivering new jobs in Alford and helping facilitate future employment. Early consideration of Kirkwood's proposed planning for Wellheads can help guarantee the cross subsidy, through planning conditions and a legal agreement linked to a planning consent.
- 4.1.5 Kirkwood consider that the Wellheads site is appropriate for housing use. It is accessible to services and facilities in Alford. The design and layout of houses would be in accordance with sustainable design requirements. The orientation of houses on the site, which is flat, will be located to maximise solar gain. A mix of housing sizes and types, including higher density housing development would be provided focusing on providing smaller homes to buy or rent and of which at least 25% will be affordable units.
- 4.1.6 Further justification for Kirkwood's proposals for Wellheads can be found in the supporting planning statement issued to the Council for the Pre-Application Meeting held in June 2008. This has been attached as a supporting document to this development bid.

4.2 Access and Connectivity

Accesses

- 4.2.1 A major factor in favour of allowing housing at Wellheads is the availability of good access to the site from the main road and the avoidance of narrow and congested roads being required to gain access to the site. The site is

accessible by all modes of transport and located close to Alford town centre. The site also lies within 400 metres of a regular bus service.

Internal Road Layout and Parking

4.2.4 The internal road layout of the site will be designed taking cognisance of the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Design will be based on the guidance contained in the Manual for Streets. In terms of roads the result is a safe environment for all road users, encouraging pedestrians and cyclists, welcoming them to the roads environment to be equal with the motor car. All parking associated with the proposed development will be accommodated within the curtilage of the site and will be in accordance with Aberdeenshire's parking guidelines.

4.3 Services

4.3.1 Provision for all service requirements has already been allowed for through development of Kirkwood's adjacent housing development at Wellheads.

4.4 Implementation

4.4.1 With a mixed use development of the Wellheads site, the community of Alford can start to realise the creation of new employment opportunities in the town and much needed affordable housing.

5. Public Consultation

5.1 Consultation with Council Officers and Other Agencies

5.1.1 Consultation on the proposals at this stage has been extensive, especially as Kirkwood have entered into Aberdeenshire Council's major applications process for their proposals. It has involved consultation and discussions with a wide range of Council officers and the major service providers regarding the site, including Scottish Water and SEPA.

5.1 Public Consultation

5.2.1 A community consultation event on the proposals and other proposals at Wellhead, subject of a second Development Bid by Kirkwood, was held in Alford on 23 October 2008. The event was structured around a drop-in session and exhibition at the local hall. A Community Consultation report of

the event is being prepared and will be submitted as a supporting document before the end of November.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Justification

6.1.1 Aberdeenshire Council are now formally inviting Development Bids for consideration as part of the process of preparing the new Local Development Plan for Aberdeenshire. We consider that the Wellheads site at Alford shown on the attached Proposed Layout Plan should be included in the new Local Development Plan as a mixed use development site. The allocation of the site for mixed use would:

- Fit with the strategic development framework by providing homes and employment land within a key settlement and service centre within the Marr area of Aberdeenshire, which will become more accessible on completion of the AWPR;
- Be deliverable as it is in one ownership and has firm commitment from Kirkwood who are the landowner. The proposals have also been formulated following consultation with Aberdeenshire Council officials and the local community;
- Support Aberdeenshire Council's aspirations to provide employment opportunities in Alford through use of a pragmatic development approach, carried out in partnership with the Council;
- Promote sustainable travel patterns by providing new housing land which is highly accessible to the town centre, employment land and other facilities and promoting walking, cycling and use of public transport;
- Provide much needed affordable housing and help support local services and keep the settlement and community viable; and
- Be a logical provision of additional housing in Alford, which will place a minimal impact on existing infrastructure.

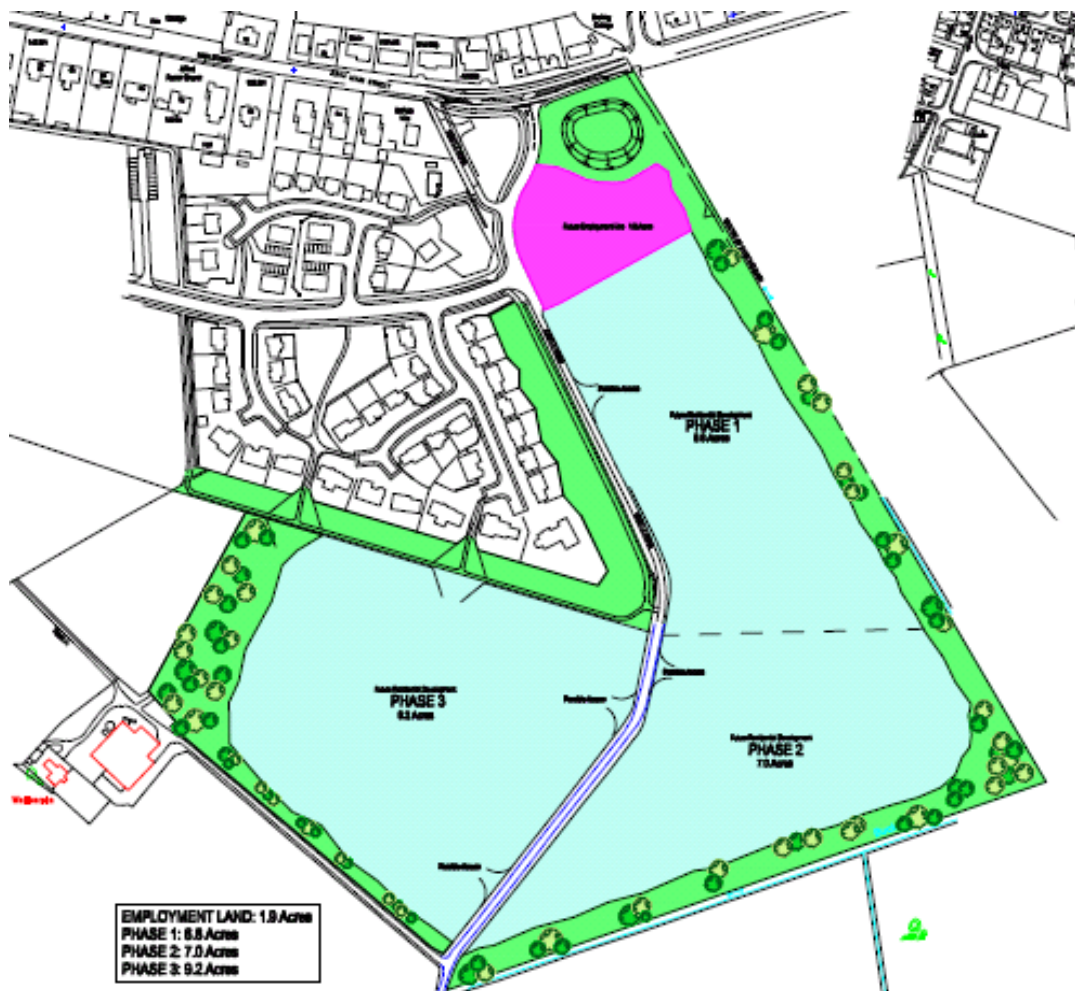
Appendix 1 – Scoring Sheet

	Criteria	Mixed Use Allocation of Land at Wellheads, Alford	Score
Sustainable Economic Development	Accessibility of existing centres of employment	The site is less than 400m from the nearest employment centre.	+1
	Provision of business land	Development of the site could help to generate some opportunities for new employment.	+1
	Distance to key services	The site is located less than 400m from the centre of Alford.	+1
	Pedestrian/cycle links to key services, employment land and surrounding developments	Opportunities exist to provide pedestrian and cycle links to key services and nearby employment land uses.	+1
Encourage and Support Regeneration	Brownfield development	The development would make use of a site that is allocated for development.	0
	Enhancement of heritage	There would be no detrimental impact on the built and/or cultural heritage arising from the proposed development.	0
	Supporting quality of services including primary schools	The development would help to sustain existing services and there would be a requirement for contributions to primary and secondary education.	0

	Resolves issues of contamination.	No remediation of land required (land not known to be contaminated).	0
Maintain and enhance Quality of the Natural Heritage and Built Environment	Quality of agricultural land lost	Class 4 or above.	+1
	Degree of loss of biodiversity	It is not anticipated that there would be a negative impact on the biodiversity of the site.	0
	Setting of historic buildings affected	No detrimental impact on Historic Building(s) or Scheduled Ancient Monuments.	0
	Archaeology affected	There is not thought to be any archaeology on site (will require evaluation at application stage).	0
Landscape	Shelter from cold winds	The site is sheltered from prevailing winds by the topography. Shelter will be improved by new planting and landscaping.	0
	Potential for passive solar gain	The site is flat so can achieve benefits from solar gain.	0
	Visual considerations	The site would fit in with the landscape.	0
	Designed landscapes affected	The proposed development would have no impact on any designed landscapes.	+1

Technical Issues	Availability of water supply	Some cost to providing water.	0
	Ease of providing drainage	Few constraints and costs to providing drainage.	0
	Costs of providing access	It is anticipated that there would be minimal cost of providing access to the site.	+1
	Provision of new community services required.	Some contributions towards provision of new facilities.	0
	Total Score		+7

Land for Future Development Wellheads Farm, Alford



Prepared by Knight Frank LLP
On behalf of Kirkwood Homes Limited

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
 - 1.1 Purpose and Content of Development Bid

- 2. Site Characteristics and Background**
 - 2.1 Location
 - 2.2 Context
 - 2.3 Infrastructure

- 3. Planning Policy Context**
 - 3.1 Current Planning Context
 - 3.2 Emerging Planning Context

- 4. Development Bid**
 - 4.1 Key Elements
 - 4.2 Access and Connectivity
 - 4.3 Services
 - 4.4 Implementation

- 5. Consultation**
 - 5.1 Consultation with Council Officers and Other Agencies
 - 5.2 Public Consultation

- 6. Conclusions**
 - 6.1 Justification

List of Figures

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Extract from Aberdeenshire Local Plan

Figure 3: Extract from Draft Structure Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire

Appendices

Appendix 1: Scoring Sheet

Supporting Documents

1. Proposed Layout Plan
2. Community Consultation Report (to follow)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Content of Development Bid

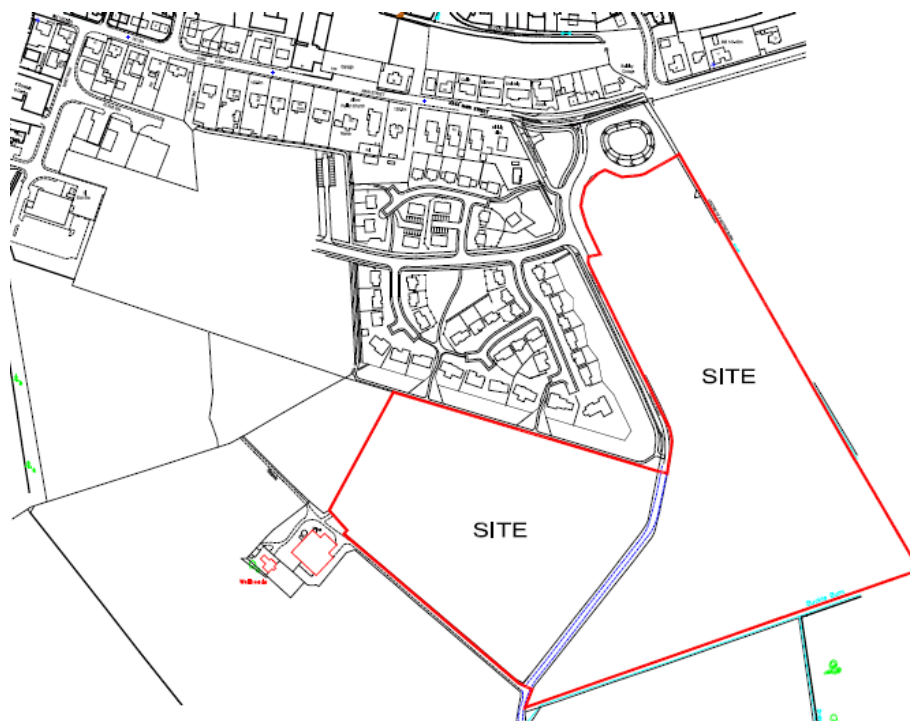
- 1.1.1 Knight Frank LLP, on behalf of our client Kirkwood Homes Limited, submit the following Development Bid in support of land being allocated for a mixed use development at Wellheads Farm, Alford.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out the planning justification for the identification of the land in question as being suitable for future residential and employment development and inclusion in the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

2. Site Characteristics and Background

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 Alford is located 26 miles to the west of Aberdeen on the A944 Road.

Figure 1: Location Plan



2.1.2 The Wellheads Farm site is located on the south eastern edge of Alford, immediately to the south of the A944 Road and the site is divided by Castle Road. Much of the site is fairly level though the site does slope upwards to the Wellheads farm buildings located at the south western corner. The site is all in the ownership of Kirkwood Homes and the site is currently still in agricultural use. The site subject of the development bid is identified in Figure 1 above.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 In 2006, Alford had a population of around 2,100 and this figure is forecast to rise above 2600 by 2016. Since 2003 almost 80 new houses have been built in Alford, including Kirkwood's site beside Castle Road. The current Local Plan proposes additional development (150 houses) on three sites on the western edge of Alford (Sites fh1, C, and fh2). Outline planning permission has been granted for the erection of a residential development on these sites. There are however some difficulties with delivering a suitable access to these sites and investigations are ongoing to try to resolve the issue of access. A further site fh3* on the north eastern edge of Alford has been identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as future housing land.

2.2.2 Alford is located within the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market Area and falls within the Aberdeenshire Council Administrative Area of Marr. Current figures indicate that there are 7 people on the waiting list in Alford in relation to any property becoming vacant for re-let.

2.3 Infrastructure

2.3.1 Alford is served by the A944, a main distributor road that runs from Aberdeen to Strathdon. Bus services are operated by Stagecoach along this route.

2.3.2 There is one primary school in Alford, which is located at the south western end of Alford. The school has a current roll of between 280 and 290 and is forecast to stay at the same level over the next 10 years. The capacity of the school is currently 145. The primary school is zoned to Alford Academy, located beside the primary school. The current roll of the academy is about 560 and is forecast to rise by a further 100 by 2013. The capacity of the school is 520. The funding for the construction of a new secondary, primary and community complex, including a swimming pool at Alford has been approved by Aberdeenshire Council. Investigations are ongoing to identify a suitable site in Alford for the replacement school complex.

2.3.3 Alford has a good range and mix of services and facilities, recognition of its role as a major service centre in the Marr area. Further population growth in Alford will help sustain existing services and provide financial support through planning gain to improve and provide new facilities.

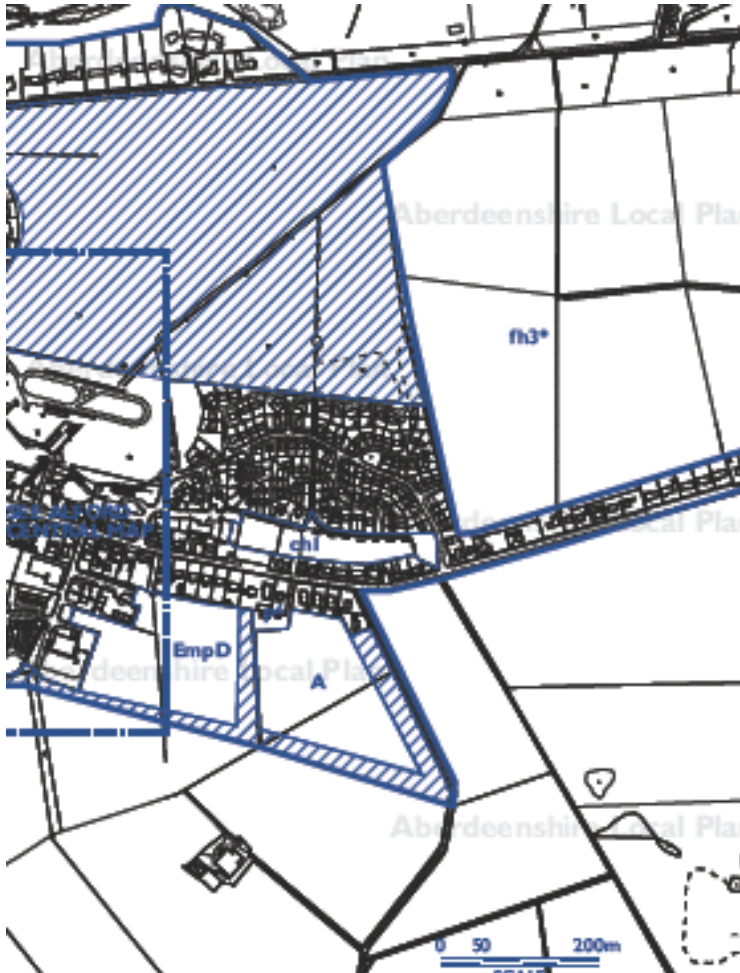
3. Planning Context

3.1 Current Planning Context

3.1.1 The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 'North East Scotland Together' (NEST) was approved in 2001. NEST promoted a strategy which aimed to create a long-term sustainable framework of settlements in a hierarchy which focused major development into the main settlements in the North East. NEST will soon be replaced by the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan, which is currently under preparation and is referred to below.

3.1.2 The Wellheads Farm site lies immediately outside the settlement boundary for Alford as defined in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. The site is therefore currently identified as countryside.

Figure 2: Extract from Aberdeenshire Local Plan



Site ch1 is suitable for around 10 houses (not started)

Site A is suitable for around 55 houses (completed)

Site EmpD suitable for appropriate employment uses (not started)

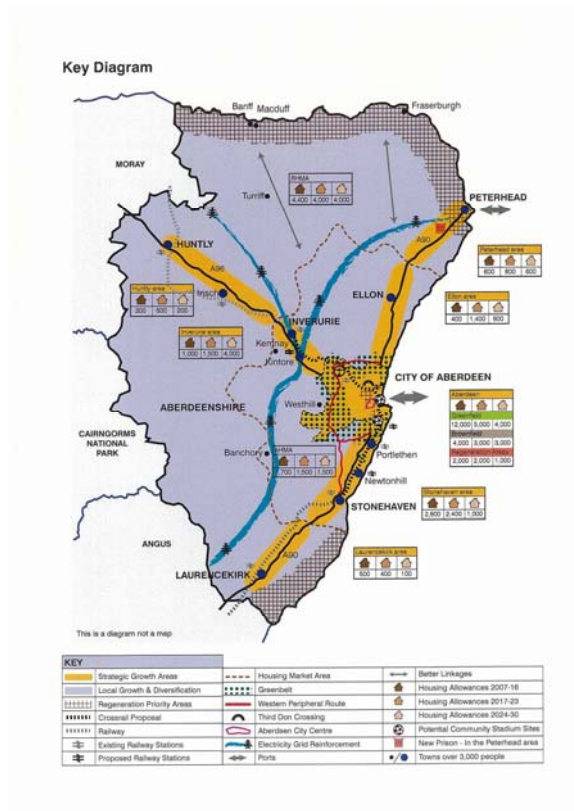
Site fh3* Future Housing Land

3.2 Emerging Planning Context

3.2.1 The draft Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was published for consultation in June 2008. This advocates a higher rate of growth for the North East and is also promoting a spatial strategy which focuses future development into three Strategic Growth Areas. These three areas are the Huntly to Laurencekirk road to rail corridor, Aberdeen City, and the Aberdeen to Peterhead corridor. These areas are expected to take on board

the majority of growth (75%) in the region. Figure 3 below illustrates the spatial strategy of the draft Structure Plan.

Figure 3: Extract from Draft Structure Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire



3.2.2 We welcome that the Structure Plan does not merely plan for what can be forecasted but instead is aspirational in its approach and seeks to promote economic growth for the region, to retain and build on the key industries we already have in the north east and use this to our competitive advantage. In principle, we support the spatial strategy of identifying 3 Strategic Growth Areas (SGA) along the main transport and economic corridors of the North East. We would suggest, however, that greater emphasis needs to be given in the Structure Plan to the role of settlements in Aberdeenshire that lie outwith the Strategic Growth Areas, in particular the market towns and major service centres such as Alford, whose continued growth and vibrancy are vital to the future economic prosperity of the region. The town will also become more accessible when the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is built.

3.2.3 We think there is a strong case for the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan to allocate a reasonable number of the 12,400 houses proposed by the structure plan in the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market Area (that lies outwith the SGA's) for local growth for Alford for the period

up to 2030. The justification for this is given in the section below and will be supplemented by supporting documents over the next few months.

4. Development Bid

4.1 Key Elements

- 4.1.1 The development of Kirkwood's proposals for a modest mixed use expansion of Alford are still at an early stage. It is recognised that this proposal will require investment in some new infrastructure and consequently the development would be developed in three phases, possibly over the whole time period of the structure plan. Whilst the proposals have still to be further tested and masterplanned, we believe that there is scope to accommodate more new development at Alford, phased over a 10-15 year time period.
- 4.1.2 The Wellheads Farm site is contained within the landscape and its setting can be further improved by the planting of major strategic landscaping belts, particularly along the eastern boundary of the site, which faces onto the main approach to Alford from Aberdeen. The rising ground at the south westernmost end of the site is also sensitive in landscape terms and development there should be kept well back from the ridgeline. The potential size of the site is some 10 hectares, which is capable of accommodating up to 200 new houses in addition to a prestigious location capable of accommodating a new business centre for Alford, open space and contributions to community and neighbourhood facilities. The design and layout of houses would be in accordance with sustainable design requirements. The orientation of houses on the site, which in the main is fairly flat, will be located to maximise solar gain. A mix of housing sizes and types, including higher density housing development would be provided focusing on providing smaller homes to buy or rent and of which at least 25% will be affordable units.
- 4.1.3 Other factors which will influence the layout of a future masterplan for the site will be the need to for shelter belt planting and the provision of good pedestrian and cycle linkages to Alford. If this development is to be taken forward it is recognised that a landscape and visual assessment will require to be undertaken for the site.
- 4.1.4 In the draft version of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan part of this site was originally allocated for housing. Whilst this was subsequently taken out of the Local Plan by the Inquiry Reporters, on grounds of the sensitivity of the site

in relation to the eastern approach to Alford and the setting of Balflueig Castle, we believe that its impact can be mitigated by landscaping and design and that the previous reasons for rejection were overstated. There is also merit in having a high quality designed business centre at the main approach to Alford.

4.2 Access and Connectivity

Accesses

- 4.2.1 A major factor in favour of allocating the Wellheads Farm site for development is the availability of good access to the site from the main road and the avoidance of narrow and congested roads being required to gain access to the site. The site is within easy cycling and walking distance from Alford town centre. The site also lies within 400 metres of a regular bus service. If this development is taken forward it is recognised that a Transport Assessment will require to be undertaken for the site to demonstrate how the site will work and what mitigation works might be required.

Internal Road Layout and Parking

- 4.2.4 The internal road layout of the site will be designed taking cognisance of the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Design will be based on the guidance contained in the Manual for Streets. In terms of roads the result is a safe environment for all road users, encouraging pedestrians and cyclists, welcoming them to the roads environment to be equal with the motor car. All parking associated with the proposed development will be accommodated within the curtilage of the site and will be in accordance with Aberdeenshire's parking guidelines. Full details will be provided within the final Transportation Assessment document.

4.3 Services

- 4.3.1 A full investigation of major services for the area will require to be undertaken to ascertain what improvements are likely to be required to upgrading water and sewerage capacity, the provision of SUDs, etc.

4.4 Implementation

- 4.4.1 Kirkwood believe that they will be able to demonstrate the deliverability of their development proposals for an extension to Alford across the whole time period of the structure plan.

5. Public Consultation

5.1 Consultation with Council Officers and Other Agencies

5.1.1 Consultation on the proposals at this stage has been limited, involving informal discussions with Aberdeenshire's Local Development Plan Policy Manger. Further discussions with officials will be necessary to work up more detailed proposals for the current outline development bid

5.1.2 Consultations will also require to be undertaken with the major service providers regarding the site. These will include BT, Scottish Water, Scottish and Southern Energy, Transco and other operators.

5.2 Public Consultation

5.2.1 A community consultation event on the proposals and other proposals at Wellhead, subject of a second Development Bid by Kirkwood, was held in Alford on 23 October 2008. The event was structured around a drop-in session and exhibition at the local hall. A Community Consultation report of the event is being prepared and will be submitted as a supporting document before the end of November.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Justification

6.1.1 Aberdeenshire Council are now formally inviting Development Bids for consideration as part of the process of preparing the new Local Development Plan for Aberdeenshire. We consider that the Wellheads Farm site at Alford shown on the attached Proposed Layout Plan should be included in the new Local Development Plan as a mixed use development site. The development of the site would:

- Fit with the strategic development framework by providing homes and employment land within a key settlement and service centre within the Marr area of Aberdeenshire, which will become more accessible on completion of the AWPR;
- Be deliverable as it is in one ownership and has firm commitment from Kirkwood who are the landowner. Preliminary testing has been carried out in terms of landscape, design, sustainability, marketability, services and infrastructure. The proposals have also been formulated following consultation with Aberdeenshire Council officials and the local community;

- Respect and enhance the landscape by ensuring that the proposed development would not be obtrusive and fits with the topography of the site;
- Promote sustainable travel patterns by providing new housing land which is highly accessible to the town centre, employment land and other facilities and promoting walking, cycling and use of public transport;
- Provide much needed affordable housing and help support local services and keep the settlement and community viable; and
- Be a logical extension to the town, which will place a minimal impact on existing infrastructure.

Appendix 1 – Scoring Sheet

	Criteria	Land at Wellheads Farm, Alford	Score
Sustainable Economic Development	Accessibility of existing centres of employment	The site is less than 400m from the nearest employment centre.	+1
	Provision of business land	Development of the site could help to generate some opportunities for new employment.	+1
	Distance to key services	The site is located less than 400m from the centre of Alford.	+1
	Pedestrian/cycle links to key services, employment land and surrounding developments	Opportunities exist to provide pedestrian and cycle links to key services and nearby employment land uses.	+1
Encourage and Support Regeneration	Brownfield development	The development would make no use of brownfield land and/or existing buildings.	-1
	Enhancement of heritage	There would be no detrimental impact on the built and/or cultural heritage arising from the proposed development.	0
	Supporting quality of services including primary schools	The development would help to sustain existing services and there would be a requirement for new education facilities for both primary and secondary education.	0

	Resolves issues of contamination.	No remediation of land required (land not known to be contaminated).	0
Maintain and enhance Quality of the Natural Heritage and Built Environment	Quality of agricultural land lost	Class 3.2 land and above.	0
	Degree of loss of biodiversity	It is not anticipated that there would be a negative impact on the biodiversity of the site.	0
	Setting of historic buildings affected	No detrimental impact on Historic Building(s) or Scheduled Ancient Monuments.	0
	Archaeology affected	There is not thought to be any archaeology on site (will require evaluation at application stage).	0
Landscape	Shelter from cold winds	The site is sheltered from prevailing winds by the topography. Shelter will be improved by new planting and landscaping.	0
	Potential for passive solar gain	The site is mainly flat so can achieve benefits from solar gain.	+1
	Visual considerations	The site would fit in with the landscape.	0
	Designed landscapes affected	The proposed development would have no impact on any designed landscapes.	+1

Technical Issues	Availability of water supply	These costs are not currently known.	0
	Ease of providing drainage	Some constraints and costs to providing drainage.	0
	Costs of providing access	It is anticipated that there would be minimal cost of providing access to the site.	+1
	Provision of new community services required.	Some new build likely to be required or contributions towards provision of new facilities.	0
	Total Score		+6

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: Kirkwood Homes Limited c/o Knight Frank LLP
Date: 6 November 2008
Postal Address: 3 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, AB10 1XE

N2

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

S1

Under what name would you like the site to be identified? Wellheads, Alford - Development Bid 1

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)

S2

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

S3

Yes No

Please provide the National Grid reference of the site

NJ 579 157

S4 What is the current use of the site? Agricultural land (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

S5 What use(s) do you propose for your site? Mixed use development comprising new starter units, serviced employment land, a site for a children's nurse, a site for the relocation of the Alford recycling centre, a 60-90 bedroom nursing home, new houses and 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.

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). The site has the capacity to accommodate around 50 houses. A mix of housing types will be provided to cater for need and demand in the Alford area. At the current time Aberdeenshire Council have advised us that there is a particular need for 1 bedroom units, which will cater for first time buyers and address the need in the area for smaller homes. The site is allocated in the current Aberdeenshire Local Plan as Site EmpD (suitable for appropriate employment uses).

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

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. We are looking to provide a 60-90 bedroom nursing home (which is essentially an employment use) and public open space.

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?) See attached Planning 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?

In addition to affordable housing the proposals will provide a mechanism which will deliver jobs for Alford in part through the provision of new starter business units onsite at the start of the development. These will be built by Kirkwood and then leased back to the Council for them to sub lease to prospective businesses. A dedicated site will also be provided for the relocation of the adjacent Alford recycling centre, the condition and operation of which is a cause for concern with the local community. Planning gain monies can contribute to improvements to schools in Alford and other identified requirements. New footpaths will also be provided.

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
	Please tick appropriate box		
Local Shops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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

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 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.

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 Supporting Planning Statement and other supporting documents.

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.

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: Kirkwood Homes Limited c/o Knight Frank LLP
Date:6 November 2008
Postal Address:3 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, AB10 1XE

N2

Name of landowner (if known) Kirkwood Homes Limited
Postal address of landowner Woodside, Sauchen, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 7LP

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? Wellheads, Alford -
Development Bid 2

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)

S2

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

S3

Yes No

Please provide the National Grid reference of the site

NJ 584 156

S4 What is the current use of the site? Agricultural 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

S5 What use(s) do you propose for your site? Mixed use development comprising employment land and housing land.

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. Employment land and some housing development will form the first phase of development. The second and third phases will include further housing development.

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 estimated that the site which comprises 10 hectares has the capacity to accommodate between 100 -200 houses along with strategic landscaping and open space. A mix of housing types will be provided to cater for need and demand in the Alford area. At the current time Aberdeenshire Council have advised us that there is a particular need for 1 bedroom units, which will cater for first time buyers and address the need in the area for smaller homes. The site is allocated in the current Aberdeenshire Local Plan as Countryside.

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

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. Public open space, SUDs Area, and footpath links through the site connecting to Alford.

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?) See attached Planning 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?

In addition to affordable housing the proposals will provide employment land with the potential to create new employment in Alford. Planning gain monies can contribute to improvements to schools in Alford and other identified requirements. New footpaths will also be provided.

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
	Please tick appropriate box		
Local Shops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" 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

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 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.

- 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

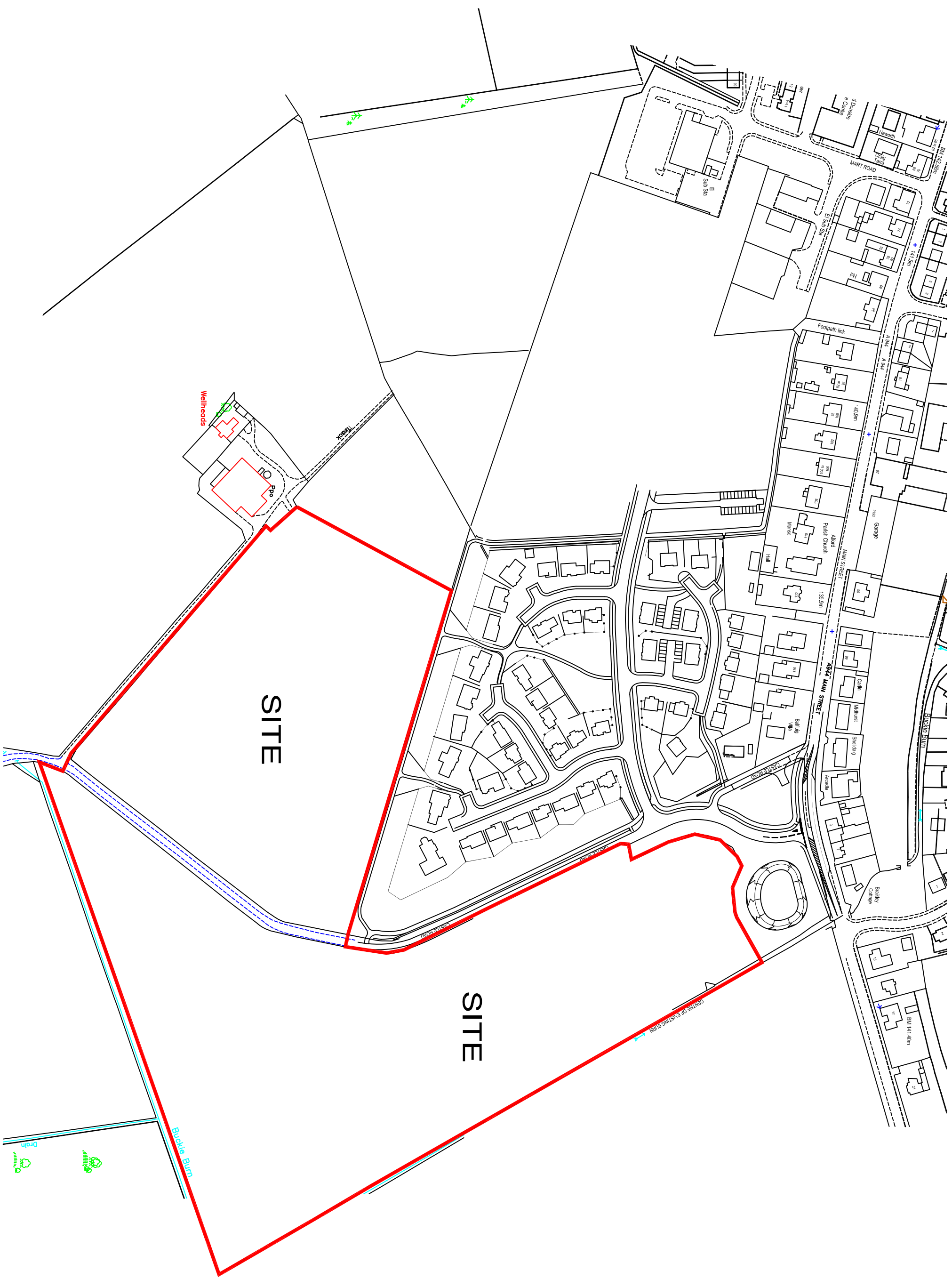
See Supporting Planning Statement. Community Consultation report to follow later.

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.



Location Plan 1:2500



**Supporting Planning Statement
Wellheads, Alford
Kirkwood Homes Limited**



1. Background

- 1.1 Kirkwood Homes Limited is looking to promote a site in their ownership at Wellheads, Alford for a mixed use development comprising employment use, a 60-90 bedroom Nursing Home and residential use.
- 1.2 Kirkwood has entered into the pre-application process for Major Applications for their proposed development. A pre-application form was completed and submitted to Aberdeenshire Council. This has been logged by Council officials and the proposed development is to be discussed at the Major Planning Applications pre-application meeting on 4 June 2008. It is understood that the Case Officer for the proposal is Neil Mair.
- 1.3 The purpose of this supporting planning statement is to set down the planning policy background and other material planning considerations against which Kirkwood's development proposal has been assessed and the justification as to why it would be appropriate and beneficial to progress the proposal firstly through an outline planning application and then subsequent reserved matters planning applications.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site, which measures some 3.9 hectares, is a greenfield site and is currently used as rough grassland, though was formally part of Wellheads Farm. The site is located in the Aberdeenshire town of Alford, within the Marr administrative area. Alford has a population of circa 2200 and lies 26 miles to the west of Aberdeen and is located on the A944 Road. The site lies to the south of Main Street and is separated from Main Street by a row of houses. The site can be accessed from Mart Road to the west and the new Kirkwood housing development to the east.

3. Kirkwood's Proposal

- 3.1 Kirkwood Homes Limited as stated above own the site at Wellheads, Alford, which was acquired as part of the purchase of Wellheads Farm. The site is currently allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as Site EmpD, which is identified as being suitable for appropriate employment uses. Kirkwood is currently in the negotiations with a nursing home provider regarding the provision of a 60-90 bedroom nursing home on the site. The nursing home would require a site of 1.26 acres, which would cover approximately 15% of the total area of Site EmpD. The nursing home would create between 60 and 90 jobs. Whilst not a typical industrial/business employment use, a nursing home will generate considerably more jobs than most traditional employment land uses and as will be demonstrated later is a more realistic prospect for employment creation in Alford and a better neighbour for adjacent residential properties.
- 3.2 Site EmpD has been allocated for employment use for some considerable time (it was originally allocated in the former Consolidated Aberdeenshire Local Plan) and outline planning permission for a business park on the site was granted in 1997 but lapsed. Despite Council aspirations to create more

employment locally, Alford has traditionally been an area of low demand for new employment uses. This can be seen from an inspection of land take up at Alford over the past 10 years in Aberdeenshire Council's Industrial Schedules and Employment Land Audits (0.7 acres since 2001). Kirkwood considers therefore that the area of employment land currently allocated at Alford is out of proportion to any realistic demand that may or may not arise in the foreseeable future. They would suggest, therefore, that in addition to the nursing home, site EmpD be considered for a mixed use development incorporating employment and residential use. Though not an industrial developer, Kirkwood would be prepared to assist Aberdeenshire Council in the delivery of serviced industrial land and the provision of starter/business units on an area of land beside the existing industrial uses amounting to 1.5 acres. This would be carried out at an early stage in the development of the larger site and the long-term use of the area as employment land safeguarded. This could be covered through planning conditions attached to a planning approval or through use of a Section 75 Legal Agreement. The residential element of Kirkwood's proposal would be located beside Kirkwood's current housing development at Wellheads and include provision of affordable housing (See Appendix 1 - Wellheads Site Layout Plan). More detailed explanation and justification for Kirkwood's proposal are given in Section 7 of this statement.

4. Development Plan

- 4.1 Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that planning decisions be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This provision has been retained in the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. The Development Plan is therefore the starting point for consideration of Kirkwood's development proposal. The relevant structure plan is the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan (NEST), which was approved in December 2001. The relevant local plan is the Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP), which was adopted by Aberdeenshire Council in June 2006.
- 4.2 A new Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan is emerging and a draft structure plan is to put out for public consultation later in June 2008. Work is expected to start in earnest on the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, following approval of the new Development Planning Regulations by the Scottish Government in January 2009.

NEST Policies

- 4.3 The key structure plan policies, which are relevant to Kirkwood's development proposals, are Policies 1, 2, 7, 11, 13 and 14. Kirkwood recognise that a mixed use development of Site EmpD will be treated as a departure from the structure plan and as such special justification will be required for departing from the provisions of that plan.
- 4.4 Policy 1 Employment Land refers to local plans maintaining a marketable supply of business and industrial land throughout the plan period in deliverable, attractive and sustainable locations. In the 2008 Aberdeen City

and Shire Employment Land Audit only 2.2 acres (31%) of the 7.2 acre Wellheads site are considered marketable. Policy 1 goes on to state that sites that stand little chance of development shall be critically examined and may be allocated for suitable alternative uses or de-zoned.

- 4.5 The relevant section of Policy 2 Employment Land Distribution for Alford is the part, which states that any other settlement (in Aberdeenshire) may accommodate up to 5 hectares of marketable land at any one time. The allocation of the Wellheads site at Alford is in accordance with this policy, however there is no specific requirement by Policy 2 for 5 hectares or indeed any employment land to be accommodated at Alford.
- 4.6 Policy 7 of the structure plan "A Five Year Effective Housing Land Supply" states that Councils shall seek, through the development plan, to maintain at all times a minimum five year supply of effective housing land or land that is capable of becoming effective. Currently the effective housing land supply in the Rural Housing Market Area in which Alford is located is in excess of the five-year requirement. Approval of additional housing at Alford can help ensure that the effective supply remains at a healthy level. The nursing home accommodation is not classed as housing and therefore does not contribute to the housing land supply.
- 4.7 Policy 11 of NEST relates to general housing considerations. In accordance with this policy Kirkwood's development proposals will make a positive contribution to sustaining the community of Alford. It will provide a mix of different house types and sizes, which are well designed and it will take account of the availability of infrastructure, services and facilities through the provision of a planning gain infrastructure package. This will require to be negotiated with Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Gain Officer. This will ensure compliance with Structure Plan Policy 13 Developer Contributions and also Local Plan Policy Gen\3 Developer Contributions. The Planning Gain package will also lever contributions from the nursing home and employment land elements of Kirkwood's proposal.
- 4.8 The provision of affordable housing is a key policy of Aberdeenshire Council and the support for it is found in Structure Plan Policy 14: Affordable and Special Needs Housing and Local Plan Policy Hou\8 Affordable Housing. Kirkwood's development will provide affordable housing on site. The extent of the provision will be subject of negotiation and will factor in the provision of a nursing home on site.

Aberdeenshire Local Plan

- 4.9 The site as stated earlier in the statement is allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as EmpD, which is suitable for appropriate employment uses. Kirkwood's proposal is only partly in accordance with the local plan zoning and therefore will be treated as a development plan departure. Policy Emp\1 Allocated and Existing Employment Land states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining existing sites (greenfield and brownfield) for industrial and business use. Development for non-employment uses will be refused unless it can meet certain criteria. The first of these criteria is that

non-employment use does not prejudice the strategic employment land requirement. The second is that there is a constraint on the site whereby there is no reasonable prospect of the land ever becoming marketable for employment development. Justification as to why it is considered that Kirkwood's proposal meets these criteria is given in Section 5 of this statement. The third criteria relates to the location of employment land and compatibility with adjoining land uses. Whilst the Wellheads site is not poorly located for employment purposes, Kirkwood's proposed mixed use development of the site would be to the benefit of the adjoining residential land uses in terms of reducing potential noise and other nuisance. Kirkwood's proposal will respect the character and amenity of the surrounding area and structural landscaping will be provided along the western and southern boundaries of the site. Bad neighbour employment uses will not be permitted on the employment land.

- 4.10 The layout and design of roads for Kirkwood's proposals will require to be drawn up in accordance with ALP Policies Inf\1 Roads and Accesses and Inf\2 Parking, Servicing and Accessibility, following consultations with Aberdeenshire Council officials. It is anticipated that a Transport Assessment will be required which will identify a list of mitigation measures to address transport impacts of the development.
- 4.11 Issues relating to water and drainage will be dealt with in a Drainage Impact Assessment and SUDS documents which will require to be submitted in support of a planning application. They will address the requirements set down in ALP Policies Inf\4A Foul Drainage Standards, Inf\4B SUDS, Inf\5 Water Supply and Gen\1 Sustainability Principles.
- 4.12 The provision of public open space, both for recreation and amenity use will be provided in accordance with ALP Policy Hou\13 Public Open Space for Housing. The design and layout of Kirkwood's development will be drawn up to take account of Policy Gen\2 The Layout, Siting, and Design of New Development. In terms of clause (g) of that policy Kirkwood's proposal can be considered to be a bona fide mixed use development.
- 4.13 Reference to the Local Plan policies on affordable housing and developer contributions is made in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 above.

5. Other Material Considerations

- 5.1 Support for Kirkwood's approach at Wellheads can be found in Scottish Planning Policy 1 The Planning System. Under Integrated Transport it suggests that more sustainable travel patterns can be encouraged through a range of initiatives including supporting mixed use. In Scottish Planning Policy 2 Economic Development, Local Authorities are asked to identify key sites, which are locations with a high density of mixed uses, which are highly accessible or could be made highly accessible by public transport. In particular, development plan policies should recognise the opportunities for start-up businesses, home-working, and mixed-use developments where low-impact industry, business and service uses can co-exist with housing.

- 5.2 Scottish Planning Policy 3 Planning for Housing states that development plan policies should support opportunities for mixed-use proposals on appropriate sites.
- 5.3 The Aberdeenshire Council Marr Area Plan 2007-2010 identified under Jobs and Economy Actions and Projects the need for the development of starter units in Alford. The Draft Marr Community Plan 2008 – 2012, which was considered by the Marr Area Committee on 27 May 2008 and endorsed along with the Community Plans of the other five areas in Aberdeenshire at the Community Planning Board on 4 June 2008 has reiterated that action. Kirkwood's proposal as will be demonstrated below could lead to the early provision of starter units.
- 5.4 The defined Alford Town Centre lies adjacent to the western boundary of Site EmpD. The 2004 Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Retail Study has identified the need to protect the vitality and viability of the town centre, set against a forecast decline in the turnover of the centre. Consideration could be given to the mixed use of Site EmpD including retail use.
- 5.5 The appropriateness of the allocation of the Wellheads site for development in ALP is confirmed by its accessibility. With regard to the guidance set down in Scottish Planning Policy 17 Planning for Transport, the site scores highly in terms of its accessibility by a range of travel modes and is a "sustainable location" for a mixed use development. The site is accessible by walking and cycling to the town centre, community facilities, Alford Academy and Alford Primary School. The site is well located in relation to public transport, including bus services on Main Street

6. Demand for Employment Land in Alford

- 6.1 Twenty years ago, Alford was a traditional minor agricultural/service centre for mid Donside. The settlement has subsequently become more of a dormitory town. New residents have migrated into Alford to enjoy the more rural lifestyle while working in the Aberdeen area. The agricultural sector has diminished and its' servicing is being carried out by fewer, larger and more centralised facilities in other towns. There has not been much interest from employers wishing to set up in Alford; despite there being land and buildings available. Mart Industrial Estate and Alford Business Park were established by the public sector in the 1980's and 1990's. There has only been public sector construction at both locations with advance factories being constructed. The majority of occupants of these factories have been tenants for over 5 years and some for around 15 years. Even when there were vacancies, the units took a considerable time to be let. To date there is still a small industrial site at Mart Industrial Estate, which has been available for about 20 years. There has been a very low demand for employment land/buildings in Alford, which was reinforced by the comments in Employment Land Audit reports.

6.2 In 2005, Donside Community Council expressed a desire for more employment in Alford and suggested to Aberdeenshire Council that they consider the provision of a small business centre in the village. In response to this request, the Council commissioned a market demand study to identify existing and potential demand for a Business Centre, incorporating office space and light industrial space in Alford from Business Development Advice Limited of Ellon. The study concluded that there was limited demand for such facilities and that tourist related business opportunities would be the most likely to occur in the Alford area. The study confirmed the Council officials' view that further investment in Alford would not necessarily result in new business growth. Leisure related activities have been the focus of new employment in Alford with the village priding itself on being an important local and national tourist destination and the area is the home of the world famous Aberdeen Angus breed of cattle. The leisure attractions to be found in Alford include an 18 hole golf course, Alford Transport Museum, Alford Railway, Alford and Donside Heritage Centre, an artificial ski slope, a caravan park, Haughton Country Park and a swimming pool. None of the above attractions require secondary accommodation within an industrial estate environment.

7. Justification and Benefits of Mixed Use Approach

7.1 In the light of the foregoing Kirkwood consider that permitting a mixed use development of Site EmpD would not prejudice the strategic employment land requirement for Alford, the first criteria listed in ALP Policy Emp\1. With regard to the second criteria of that policy it has been demonstrated that there is little prospect of much of the site becoming marketable in the foreseeable future due to low demand. In support of this stance structure plan Policy 1 Employment Land states that sites that stand little chance of development shall be critically examined and may be allocated for suitable alternative uses or de-zoned.

7.2 Kirkwood believe that the use of employment land for the erection of a nursing home in this instance is appropriate as it is a bona fide employment generator and one that will sit better from an amenity standpoint with the adjoining residential properties, existing and proposed. The nursing home will be a high employment generator, providing people with the opportunity to work locally and reducing the need to travel, in addition to providing the area with new care facilities.

7.3 Approval of housing on part of Site EmpD would help meet demand for housing in Alford and boost the effective housing land supply in support of structure plan Policy 7 A Five Year Effective Housing Land Supply. In addition paragraph 3.10 of the structure plan states that windfall opportunities in brownfield locations and within settlements will contribute to the housing requirement. That is in addition to the structure plan housing land allocations. The impact of that housing on local infrastructure and facilities will require to be taken account of in any planning gain negotiations.

7.4 Kirkwood Homes support Aberdeenshire Council's aspirations to provide employment opportunities in Alford and indeed are a major employer in the area. Their main headquarters, which have recently been substantially

expanded, are located nearby at Sauchen. Kirkwood consider that the provision of new employment at Alford can best be achieved by a more pragmatic development approach, which if appropriate could be carried out in partnership with the Council. As stated earlier in this statement the amount of land allocated for employment use at the Wellheads site is considered by Kirkwood to be unrealistic and is unlikely to be developed out in the next 10-20 years. Demand for employment land in Alford is very low and specialist in nature as demonstrated above and accommodation will require to be provided if the demand is to be catered for. If Kirkwood are permitted to develop part of their site at Wellheads for housing, planning gain generated from the housing can be used to help finance the servicing and provision of starter/business units on part of the site and serviced land in partnership with the Council. Kirkwood's agents have already had exploratory talks with Aberdeenshire Council's Estates Manager to investigate delivery mechanisms and have been asked to draft a proposal for the manager's consideration. In this respect it may also be worth consulting and involving the local office of Scottish Enterprise and the local enterprise trust, Enterprise North East Trust. Consideration could also be given to the provision onsite of some Live/Work units to see if this might be a possibility .

- 7.5 In the longer term consideration could be given to the identification of some replacement employment land at Alford as part of the preparation of the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. Kirkwood owns land on the south side of the A944 as you enter Alford from the east. This land was identified for development in the finalised version of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, but taken out of the plan following the Local Plan Public Local Inquiry. Consideration could again be given to allocating this land for development, this time for residential, employment and possibly commercial use. Robust strategic landscaping would be required on the eastern boundary of this land.

8. Pre-Application Community Consultation

- 8.1 If given a favourable reaction to their proposals at the meeting on 4 June 2008, Kirkwood would propose to undertake pre-application consultation with the local community at Alford. This would take the form of a public drop-in session to be held in a venue in Alford. A report on the public consultation would then be submitted along with a subsequent planning application for development of the Wellheads site.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Kirkwood's proposals for a mixed use development at Wellheads, Alford offer a positive option to realise local Councillors and the community's aspirations to help stimulate opportunities for local economic development at Alford, through the provision of starter/business units and new employment opportunities via the nursing home. The housing in the scheme will also provide much needed affordable housing, in addition to boosting the effective housing land supply. The proposals put forward are deliverable now as the land is in the control of Kirkwood. The Council also own land adjacent to assist in a partnership approach to economic development.

- 9.2 It is submitted for the reasons given above that favourable consideration be given to Kirkwood Homes Limited for their proposed mixed use development of at a site at Wellheads, Alford.

Malcolm Campbell
Associate
Knight Frank LLP
2 June 2008

Appendix 1 - Wellheads Site Layout Plan

