

A Development Brief for Millbank



Planning and Environmental Services
January 2006

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



1. Purpose and Proposals

- 1.1 The purpose of this development brief is to provide guidance on the sustainable regeneration of Millbank in support of the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan allocations for development. The brief seeks to promote the first phase of the long-term vision to create a sustainable community at Millbank.
- 1.2 The development brief has been prepared following public consultation based on the 'Millbank Redevelopment – Design Guide' which includes a masterplan showing the long-term vision for the settlement. The Design Guide was prepared by a design team led by Eric Parry Architects Ltd for Cluny Estate. This development brief shares the aims of the Design Guide by adopting its design principles, environmental principles and outline layouts but only in support of those areas and housing numbers allocated for development through the Local Plan. It is envisaged that the next phases of the masterplan will form the basis of future development briefs, as these are promoted through allocations in future Local Plans.
- 1.3 The development brief promotes a mixed-use development comprising a flexible range of business units/retail spaces and the refurbishment of the existing cluster of buildings to the south of the A944, the development of two 'Home Zones', the development of a community green with a row of cottages on the west side and village houses on the south side, two larger detached houses and a health centre. The development brief also supports the extension of the village hall and development of land in the ownership of the Nicols. The development brief incorporates infrastructure and landscaping promoted through the Design Guide to support the first phase of the development.

2. Planning context

Scottish Planning Policy and National Guidelines

- 2.1 The Millbank Design Guide and masterplan was prepared with reference to a number of guidance documents and legislation. SPP1 (The Planning System) sets out how the planning system should encourage sustainable development. The principles outlined in SPP1 have been central to the preparation of the masterplan. It has included consideration of social cohesion and inclusion, protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and economic growth and development. The proposals contained in the masterplan, and therefore the proposals brought forward through this development brief, reflect these considerations.

Other planning policy and guidance documents which the masterplan, and this development brief, respond to include:

SPP2 – Economic Development
SPP3 – Planning for Housing
SPP15 – Planning for Rural Development
PAN72 – Housing in the Countryside

Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan

- 2.2 The Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan was prepared to conform to the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan (NEST).
- 2.3 Millbank lies within the Garioch Area of Aberdeenshire and is within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area. It is defined in the Local Plan as a Rural Service Centre with two areas allocated for development. Emp A is allocated as being suitable for employment uses and it is noted in the Local Plan that this allocation “may accommodate mixed use, including community facilities and housing (up to 15 units), subject to a development brief”. Following an objection to the Finalised Local Plan, the number of houses to be included in the mixed use allocation is to be increased to 20 units largely to reflect the redevelopment opportunities that exist within the settlement, including the site in the Nicols’ ownership.
- 2.4 An allocation is also made for future housing (15 units) in the period 2006-2010 in the settlement. This is complemented by an allocation of future employment land reflecting the intention that this phase of the development will also promote a mix of uses.
- 2.5 An objection to the Finalised Local Plan sought flexibility in these allocations and the settlement boundary to better reflect the form and layout required to achieve a balanced redevelopment of the settlement. The Council has accepted this objection and proposed modifications to the Finalised Local Plan have been advertised to reflect this. They largely involve the relocation of the future employment and future housing allocation (fe1/fh1) to the south and west of EmpA, and part of the former fe1/fh1 being reallocated EmpA. EmpA is also to be extended further east but reduced to the south.
- 2.6 The development brief includes areas allocated for development in the proposed modifications to the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan. In the meantime, however, no planning applications can be determined on any ‘new’ areas included in the allocations, as these require exposure through public consultation and consideration of any responses. The development brief will be used as a material consideration in the determination of any planning application in these areas should they be confirmed through the public consultation process of the Local Plan modification.

3. Site Description

- 3.1 Millbank is a rural settlement located 25 miles west of Aberdeen. The nearest main settlements are Alford (7 miles), Westhill (11 miles), Banchory (15 miles) and Inverurie (16 miles). It is located at the junction of the A944, a key corridor into Aberdeen from Alford, and the B933 to Torphins.
- 3.2 The sites included in this development brief lie to the north-west of the A944-B933 junction, and to the south-west and south-east of the junction.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 This development brief adopts the proposals included in the Millbank masterplan, in so far as they are supported by allocations in the Local Plan.

Landscaping

- 4.2 This development brief supports the landscape and planting strategies that have been identified in the Design Guide. The Design Guide is appended to this brief and should be used to prepare detailed proposals. The key aim of the Design Guide landscape strategy is that it responds to the setting and establishes a framework for creating a place in which people want to work and live.
- 4.3 This development brief seeks to ensure the delivery of the following key features of the first phase of the masterplan implementation:
- The Green
 - Community Square
 - Parking groves
 - The buffer zone
 - Windbreaks, hedges and landscaping within development areas

Infrastructure

- 4.4 The management of water (run-off and sewage) will be dealt with on-site as much as possible. The masterplan promotes a number of methods to deal with surface water management which support this approach. A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required to be undertaken in preparation of a detailed proposal.
- 4.5 The ambition of the masterplan is to utilise a system of onsite collection and treatment for sewage and waste water which includes filtration

tanks and reed beds. SEPA and Scottish Water have accepted this approach in principle subject to the consideration of a detailed design

- 4.6 The masterplan promotes a highways and movement strategy for Millbank. The movement strategy has two elements: offsite and onsite. Both attempt to establish a priority for pedestrians creating a permeable site with good connections to all areas and safe access to public transport. A parking strategy is included in the Design Guide for residential, employment and community facility areas. The development should not exacerbate any existing problems within the road network at Millbank. Improvements made to existing roads through the development should give consideration to any existing problems and seek to address these, where it is considered appropriate, through engineering solutions. A Traffic Assessment will be required to identify any necessary improvements, which will also be subject to Roads Construction Consent. Consultation with the Transportation & Infrastructure (Roads) Service at an early date is recommended.

Residential proposals

- 4.7 This development brief supports the first phase of the masterplan which would see two 'Home Zones' developed. These group houses into manageable neighbourhoods where pedestrians are prioritised. The homezones are predominately north-south orientated giving the dwellings an east-west orientation which seeks to maximise solar gain inside buildings and to the spaces between them. Windbreaks to the east and west will protect the dwellings from predominant winds. The masterplan indicates that each homezone will include 10 houses. Landscape features, lighting, waste management and materials to be utilised in the development are specified in the Masterplan. The precise location of access points and new dwellings is a matter to be considered through planning applications.
- 4.8 In addition to the two Home Zones, the development brief supports the development of a row of six cottages on the west side of the Green, a row of seven village houses on the south side of the Green and two larger houses to the south of the south square. The masterplan promotes a mix of home sizes and tenure types. Affordable housing should not be obviously distinct from the market housing either in design, finishes or location.

Employment proposals

- 4.9 Employment activities are to be located within the edges of the site, either side of the A944. This will facilitate access to transport connections whilst minimising the impact of work activities on the amenity of residents. Existing workplaces will also be utilised and refurbished for commercial uses. Amongst these existing buildings is the Category C(S) listed Millbank Cottage. Any proposal for its

refurbishment and possible change of use will require consultations with the Built and Cultural Heritage Team of the Council.

- 4.10 A single storey block of workshops and studios is proposed with access off the 'main residential street' not the A944. This building should be flexible in its design to allow for a range of organisations to be accommodated.
- 4.11 The Local Plan allocation (EmpA) is for employment uses, albeit accommodating mixed use, and any proposal brought forward to the planning application stage should substantively reflect this allocation. This will include road layouts and servicing of employment uses in conjunction with any housing proposals. This brief supports the flexible range of employment uses that could be accommodated through the masterplan.

Community facilities

- 4.12 The development brief supports the redevelopment of the village hall, the creation of several public open spaces including the Green, Community Square and South Square.
- 4.13 The proposals also include the development of a health centre with sheltered accommodation and respite facilities. Provision of such facilities will support the ambition for Millbank to provide dwellings for all age groups.

Energy efficiency and sustainable design

- 4.14 The Design Guide provides details of performance and specifications for materials which promote energy efficiency and will support a sustainable development at Millbank. This development brief adopts this approach and section 6.0 of the Design Guide should be used to develop detailed proposals in this regard.

Biodiversity

- 4.15 Enhancing the local habitat and ecology should be a major consideration for preparation of the detailed proposals in response to this development brief, as this has been a major consideration in the preparation of the masterplan. A full ecological survey will be required prior to any development.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 This development brief adopts the principles of the 'Millbank Redevelopment: Design Guide', in particular its ambition to develop a sustainable community at Millbank. The Local Plan supports the development of 20 houses as part of a mixed-use allocation and

allocates a further 15 houses in the period 2006-2010. This development brief will ensure that this first phase of the masterplan can be implemented in keeping with the principles of the Design Guide. The Design Guide will be amended in terms of this brief, but otherwise will be used in the assessment of detailed proposals. Plan 1 of this brief shows the areas for which detailed proposals should be prepared.

6 Further advice

- 6.1 Developers are encouraged to contact the Planning Service of Aberdeenshire Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss the details of any application. Any application will be dealt with primarily by the Garioch Area Development Control Team, based at the following address:

Planning and Building Standards
Gordon House
Blackhall Road
INVERURIE
AB51 3WA
Tel: 01 467 620981
Fax: 01 467 628469

Other useful numbers:

Environment Planner (Built & Cultural Heritage)	01 467 628632
Transportation & Infrastructure Services	01 467 628087
Planning Gain Co-ordinator	01 330 825518

Plan 1



COMMITTEE RESPONSE JANUARY 2006

MILLBANK DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

As previously indicated Councillor Leitch declared an interest but continued to take a full part in the determination of this item.

A report by the Head of Planning Policy and Environment was circulated asking the Committee to consider the representations made in relation to the Millbank Development Brief and seeking approval for the Development Brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of the Local Plan allocations for development of the settlement.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the Development Brief as proposed as Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of Local Plan allocations for development at Millbank.