



## Aberdeen Local Development Plan Review

### Main Issues Report Consultation Response

#### Question 3 – Brownfield and other Opportunity Sites

**Are there any further brownfield or other opportunity sites which would be suitable for re-development?**

**Yes, bid reference: B0307 – Land adjacent to Ardene House**

Our client, CAF Properties Limited, wishes to promote bid reference B0307 – Land adjacent to Ardene House as an opportunity site to be allocated for Class 3 (Food and drink) development, including drive thru facilities (sui generis), and contests the officers' conclusion that it is undesirable for allocation in the review of the ALDP.

In considering this, particular regard should be given to the Planning Development Management Committee's decision of 18 April 2019 on planning application reference 181336/DPP for the erection of three Class 3 units (including two with drive-thru facilities) on the site to which bid reference B0307 relates. The Committee expressed a willingness to approve that application subject to the satisfactory conclusion of a legal agreement to secure contributions towards the adjacent core path as identified in the Developer Obligations report. A formal letter from the Council confirming this is attached as Appendix One.

In reaching that decision, the Planning Development Management Committee took into account all relevant material planning considerations before reaching the conclusion that the proposed use is suitable for this site. Given the Committee's decision, it is untenable to maintain that the proposed allocation is undesirable. As the expressed willingness to approve planning application reference 181336/DPP establishes the principle of food and drink related development on this site (including drive-thru facilities), that principle should be reflected in the emerging ALDP.

The following factors should also be noted in relation to the officers' assessment of the site:

**Exposure** – the site scores well in terms of exposure with the officers' assessment recognising that there is good shelter provided by the mature tree belt to the north. The officers' assessment also makes reference to a mature tree belt to the west, although this is in fact to



the east, adjoining the Ardene Veterinary Hospital, with another small tree belt on the south west corner of the site, just off the A944.

**Aspect** – the assessment scores this as 2 on the basis that the site is east facing. It is, however, south facing and as such should be scored as 3.

**Flood risk** – it is not clear why the site scores only 2 for flood risk given that the assessment states that “*According to SEPA Flood Risk Map, there is little risk of flooding on the site. There have been no flooding incidents recorded on site.*” On that basis, it would be expected that the site should score 3. That is particularly so given the history of the site and that drainage and field drains have already been installed. In addition, no issues relating to potential flooding were raised during the assessment of the previously consented office development nor planning application reference 181336/DPP.

**Natural conservation** – this suggests that part of the site may constitute potential bat habitat and that a tree survey may be required. This is not an issue which has been raised at any point in the planning application process and, as such, should not be deemed as a reason not to support the allocation of the site in the ALDP.

**Landscape features** – the site is scored as a 2 in terms of this criteria with reference being made to the fact that the site has open views across to Kingshill Woods and that it is currently classified as open farmland in the Landscape Character Assessment. It should, however, be stressed that the site is already allocated in the extant ALDP, that it has previously had consent for a much larger office development and now benefits from a willingness to approve for the use proposed by way of this submission. Any impact of development on the landscape features of the site has therefore already been accepted in principle. The proposed reallocation and form of development approved in principle for planning application 181336/DPP will be less intrusive on those features than that previously consented. Again, it should be noted that the existing mature trees are to the north, east and south west of the site.

**Landscape fit** – the assessment of the site in relation to this criteria scores only 1. However, again it must be stressed that development of the site has already been established by its current allocation for employment use, as well as by the previous office consent, and now the willingness to approve the two drive thru and one class 3 unit. The office consent was significantly bigger in terms of both footprint and height than what is now proposed, the office consent having been for a 17,129m<sup>2</sup>, three-storey building. It is therefore difficult to understand how the proposed alternative use could be deemed by officers as intruding any more into the surrounding landscape than that which has already been deemed to be acceptable, particularly since it is on a site allocated for development. That is particularly so



since the assessment acknowledges that the site's landscape context will change as Prime Four continues to develop, a factor now confirmed with the willingness to approve planning application reference 181336/DPP.

**Relationship to existing settlement** – it is not clear why the assessment states that the proposed development is not likely to be well related to the existing Veterinary Hospital or Prime Four, or that drive thrus would be out of place in this location. The assessment scores the site as 3 in terms of direct footpath/cycle connectivity to community and recreation facilities, as well as 3 in terms of proximity of employment opportunities. It is difficult to then understand how it can score so well in terms of these elements and yet it be concluded that it is not well related to the existing settlement.

**Contamination** – the site scores 2 in terms of this criteria being classed as potentially contaminated land (Kingswells Landfill/Brae's of Blackhill Quarry). However, no issues relating to any potential contamination have been raised in relation to planning consents for the Veterinary Hospital, the office or the drive thru and Class 3 units. As such, the score for this should again be 3.

**Other constraints** – the assessment correctly states that the site is currently zoned as a specialist employment use. However, the purpose of the call for bids and the MIR is to determine the future use of land and, as such, is an opportunity to assess whether or not existing allocations are still the most appropriate in the current circumstances. In this case, as has been clearly set out in previous reports submitted by our client in relation to planning application reference 181336/DPP, there is no longer a demand for this site to be developed for employment use in the short to medium term, hence the reason that the previous office consent has not been implemented. Given the relatively small scale of the site and the proposed allocation, along with the very significant level of employment land that will remain as allocated (including 52 hectares at Prime Four), the reallocation of this site for a use which will complement existing and future uses at Prime Four and the new Kingsford Stadium will have no material impact on the availability of employment land in the City. Indeed the 2017/2018 Employment Land Audit confirms that considerably more employment land is available than is required to meet the targets set out in the Strategic Development Plan. The reallocation of the site would also be entirely consistent with Scottish Planning Policy's requirement for planning authorities to be flexible in responding to changing economic circumstances, and to allow the realisation of new business and employment opportunities. Indeed, SPP expressly allows for the reallocation of underused business sites to enable a wider range of viable business for alternative use.



For the reasons set out above, as well as those given in our client's initial response to the call for sites, it is submitted that the land to which bid reference B0307 relates should be re-allocated for Class 3 development (including drive thru facilities) in the emerging ALDP.

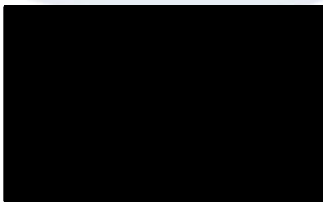


**Appendix One: Letter confirming willingness to approve planning application reference  
181336/DPP**

Our Ref: 181336/DPP  
Your Ref  
Contact Matthew Easton  
Email measton@aberdeencity.gov.uk  
Direct Dial 01224 522017



23 April 2019



**Strategic Place Planning**  
Aberdeen City Council  
Business Hub 4  
Ground Floor North  
Marischal College  
Broad Street  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1AB

Tel: 01224 523470  
Fax: 01224 523180  
Minicom: 01224 522381  
DX 529452, Aberdeen 9  
[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Dear Pippa

**The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997  
Land Adjacent To Veterinary Hospital, Kingswells  
Erection of three class 3 (food and drink) units including two with drive-thru  
facilities  
Application Ref: 181336/DPP**

I refer to your application validly received on 31 July 2018 and can advise that the planning authority are now in a position to express a willingness to approve the proposal subject to the satisfactory conclusion of a legal agreement to secure contributions towards the adjacent core path as identified in the Developer Obligations report.

On completion of the agreement the planning permission will be released.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Matthew Easton on 01224 522017 or email measton@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



**Daniel Lewis**  
Development Management Manager

GALE BEATTIE  
CHIEF OFFICER STRATEGIC PLACE PLANNING

