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AB10 1AB

10 June 2013

Ref: gp740/320988

Dear Sir/Madam

**Aberdeen Local Development Plan Review 2013 – Land at Murtle Den Road, Milltimber**

Please find enclosed a completed form and supporting statement in relation to my client's land at Murtle Den Road in Milltimber which we wish to be considered for future development as part of the Aberdeen Local Plan review.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Gary Purves  
Senior Planner




T 

M 

Cc – Mr McDonald

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Planning & Sustainable Development |         |
| Mail ID                            |         |
| RECEIVED 11 JUN 2013               |         |
| REPLY / /                          |         |
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Murtle Den Road  
Milltimber  
Aberdeen

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Development Bid

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Mr McDonald

June 2013

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## Contents

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 1.0 | Introduction and Vision .....             | 3 |
| 2.0 | Site Characteristics and Background ..... | 4 |
| 3.0 | Planning Context .....                    | 5 |
| 4.0 | Site Analysis and Appraisal .....         | 6 |
| 5.0 | Development Bid .....                     | 8 |
| 6.0 | Conclusions .....                         | 9 |

## Figures

- Figure 1 - Site Plan
- Figure 2 – Location Plan
- Figure 3 – Extract from the adopted Aberdeen LDP 2012
- Figure 4 – Extract from the adopted Aberdeen LDP 2012
- Figure 5 – SEPA Flood Map
- Figure 6 – Oldfold Farm Masterplan
- Figure 7 – Indicative Site Layout Plan



Aerial Photograph of the Site



## 1.0 Introduction and Vision

- 1.1 Knight Frank LLP, on behalf of our client Mr McDonald, are submitting this development bid for land at Murtle Den Road, Milltimber (see Figure 1) as an expression of interest to be included in the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016. As a first step we would ask that the site be included in the Main Issues Report as a preferred site when it is published in early 2014.
- 1.2 This supporting statement sets out the detailed justification for why we consider our client's land at Murtle Den Road should be identified for development in the new LDP. The land is suitable for a small and logical extension to Milltimber. This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying development bid application form.



Figure 1 – Site Plan





## 2.0 Site Characteristics and Background

- 2.1 Milltimber is a suburb located to the west of Aberdeen (see Figure 2). It is situated approximately 6 miles to the west of Aberdeen city centre along the North Deeside Road corridor. The settlement has primarily a commuter role with people working in and around Aberdeen. Facilities in Milltimber are somewhat lacking at present, with the nearest shop situated in neighbouring Bieldside. Milltimber is, however, home to a primary school, a Church, and a community building which is used for private functions.
- 2.2 The land subject of the development bid is in the sole ownership of Mr McDonald and does not form part of any agricultural unit. The site subject of the development bid measures X hectares.
- 2.3 In terms of infrastructure, Milltimber is served by North Deeside Road (A93), a main distributor road that runs from Aberdeen to Peterculter and leading on to Banchory in Aberdeenshire. Regular bus services are operated by Stagecoach and First Bus along this route.

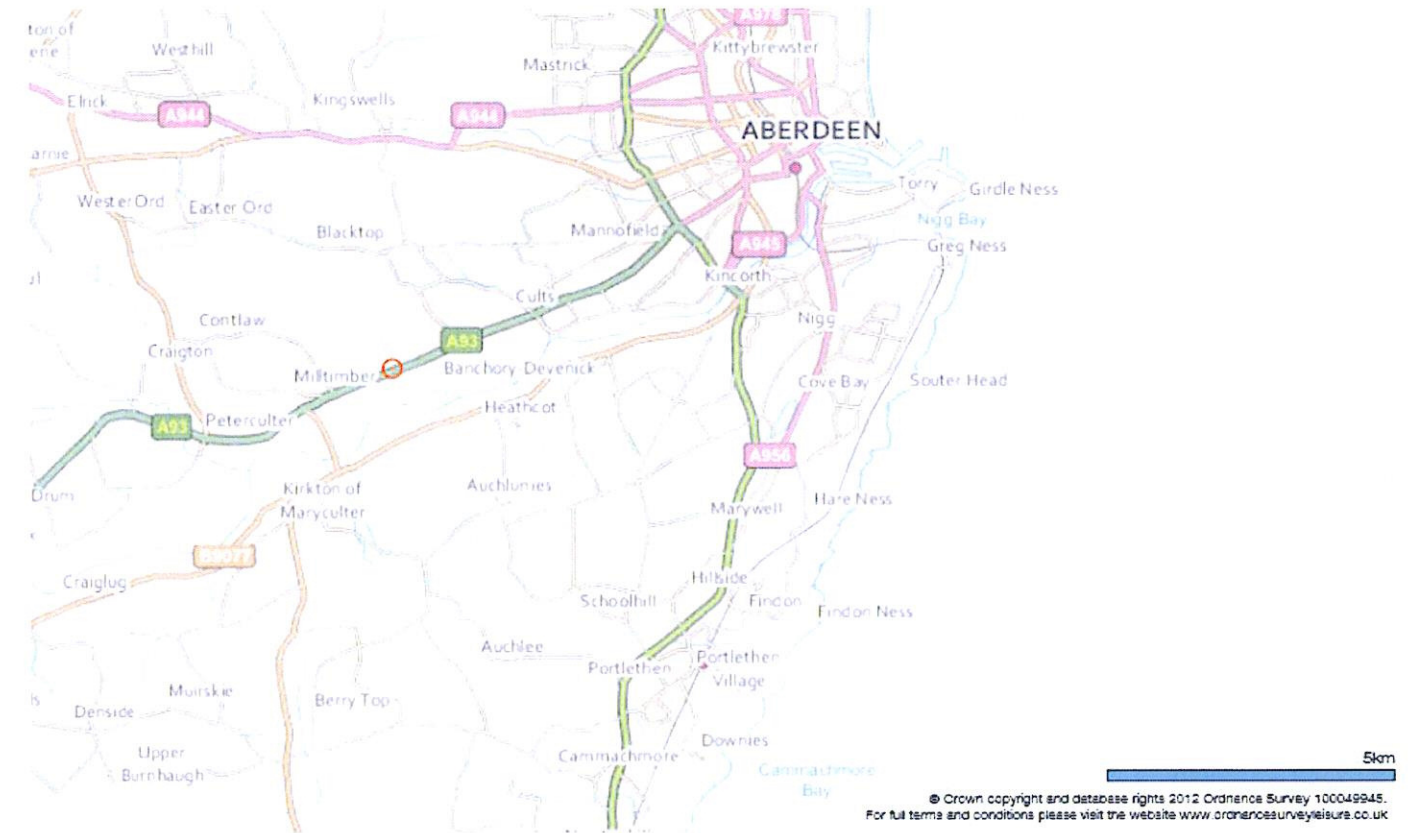


Figure 2 - Location Plan





### 3.0 Planning Context

3.1 The site is located immediately outwith the current 'Residential Area' for Milltimber as defined by the LDP (see Figure 3) and the Green-Belt and Green Space Network policies apply. The site sits immediately adjacent to site OP62 (Oldfold Farm) which is identified for up to 550 houses, 5ha of employment land and community facilities.

#### ***Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan (2009)***

3.2 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved in 2009. The plan advocates a high rate of growth for the North East and is also promoting a spatial strategy which focuses future development into three Strategic Growth Areas, one of which is the administrative area of Aberdeen City is one.

#### ***Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2013)***

3.3 The proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) was published for consultation in February 2013 and it does not propose to change the current Structure Plan vision and spatial strategy. Greater emphasis needs to be given in the new SDP on the need for new LDPs to prioritise the release of deliverable sites in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and to support settlements which are conveniently located and can provide new housing in areas which are popular with the development industry.

#### ***Aberdeen Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance (2012)***

3.4 The LDP makes several housing land allocations for Milltimber including a major expansion to the west of the settlement at Oldfold Farm (site OP62) in the form of 550 houses plus associated employment land. Two other, small-scale sites are also allocated, the aforementioned sites at Culter House Road immediately adjacent to the development bid sites OP60 and OP61 which are both identified for 5 houses each.

3.5 The development bid site was subject of a previous bid in 2009. Ultimately, the site was not included in the LDP on the basis that the Scottish Government Reporters felt that development on the site would be prominent when seen from North Deeside Road, particularly when travelling west. This rationale is not accepted by the landowner, and is discussed further in section 6 of this supporting statement.

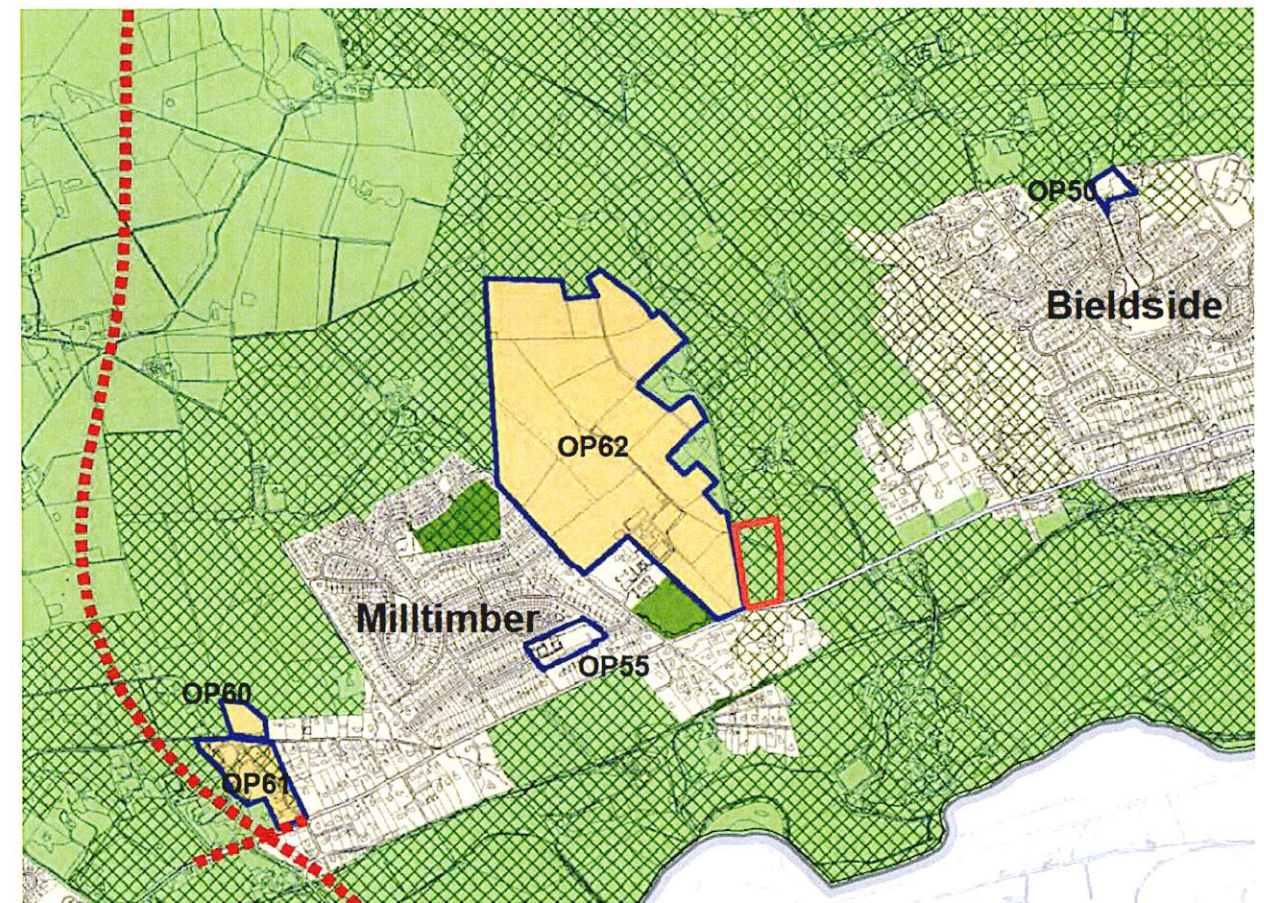


Figure 3 – Extract from the adopted Aberdeen LDP 2012



## 4.0 Site Analysis and Appraisal

4.1 The entire site is within the ownership of Mr McDonald. The majority of the site, the southern-most portion, is in the form of non-productive grassland. The smaller and northern-most portion of the site forms part of the private garden ground of Mr McDonald's dwelling named 'Brookfield'. It is the landowner's intention to redevelop the entire site, including the ground where his property and garden area is situated, for up to 8no. dwellings through the LDP process.

### *Landscape and Climate*

4.2 The site is located to the east of the existing settlement of Milltimber, to the north of North Deeside Road, and immediately to the east of Murtle Den Road. An existing access road from North Deeside Road serves Brookfield and the other dwellings on Murtle Den Road. The site has a gentle south-facing slope down towards North Deeside Road.

### *Ecology*

4.3 The site is not covered by any nature conservation designations. A mature belt of trees runs through the site and it is proposed to retain these as an integral landscape and wildlife habitat feature as part of the development of the 8no. dwellings.

### *History and Archaeology*

4.4 It is not considered that the site is important in historical or archaeological terms, however an appropriate planning condition attached to the granting of any planning consent for development of the site covering archaeology would ensure that these matters are considered and investigated during the course of development.

### *Drainage and Services*

4.5 The site drains naturally to the south-west corner where the field adjoins North Deeside Road; this is where new SUDS will be incorporated. There are no capacity issues with the sewage treatment works at Cults.

4.6 Primary school education is provided at Milltimber Primary which is within walking distance of the development bid site. A new primary school will be provided as part of the Oldfold Farm development which will be even closer to the development bid site. Secondary school education is provided at Cults Academy.

4.7 Milltimber is an important commuter suburb of Aberdeen; however it currently lacks much in the way of community facilities. Further population growth will help to provide a critical mass of people to attract new amenities to the area. In addition, the development at Oldfold Farm will deliver much-needed community facilities such as local shops and recreational uses which will be within walking distance of the future residents at Murtle Den Road.

4.8 The development bid site is within walking distance to regular bus services provided by both Stagecoach and First Bus operate along North Deeside Road. There is a bus stop immediately adjoining the bid site on North Deeside Road – you could not get a more conveniently located site for access to public transport. There is street lighting and pavements along the length of North Deeside Road providing safe and well-lit access routes for pedestrians. There is also a formal cycleway along North Deeside Road ensuring that the development bid site ticks every box on sustainable transport criteria.

### *Constraints*

4.9 There are no physical constraints affecting the development of the site. The Den of Murtle District Wildlife Site (shaded blue in Figure 4) is situated to the north-east of the site, however this is far enough away so that it will not be impacted upon by the development. An integral feature of the development will be a significant row of trees being planted along the eastern boundary of the site which will not only screen the visual impact of the development when viewed from North Deeside Road but will also act as a physical buffer between the site and the nature conservation feature. The SEPA flood map (Figure 5) has been reviewed and from their guidance this confirms that no flood risk is associated with the site.



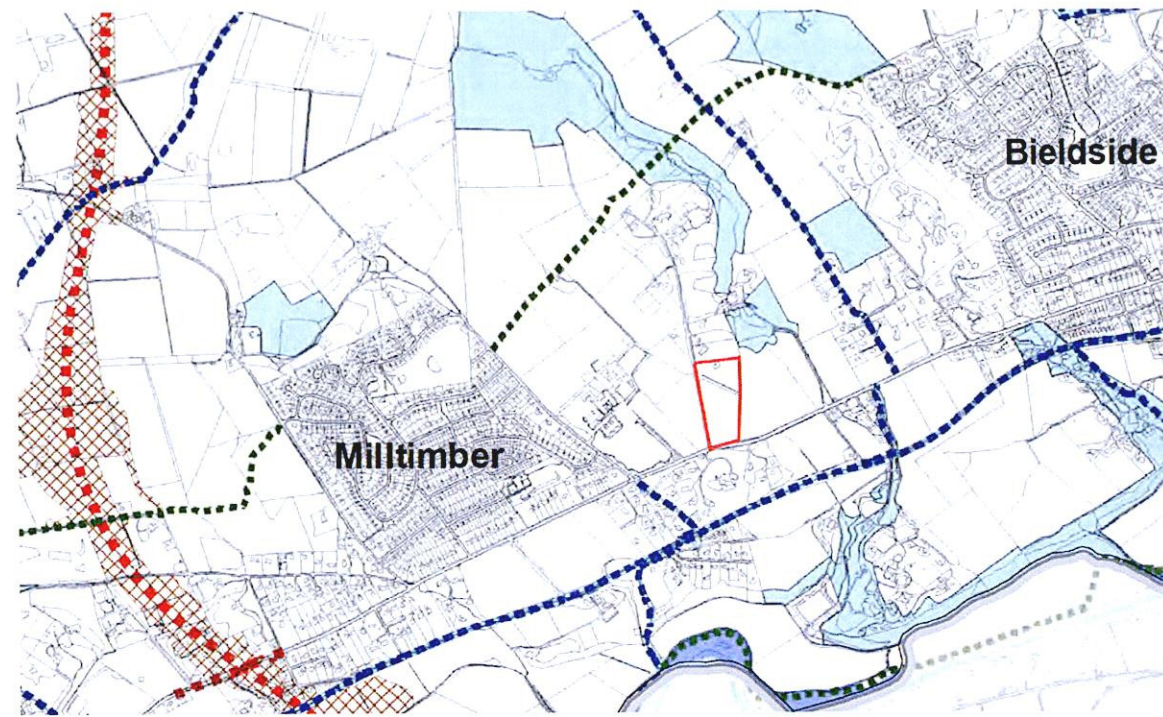


Figure 4 – Extract from the adopted Aberdeen LDP 2012

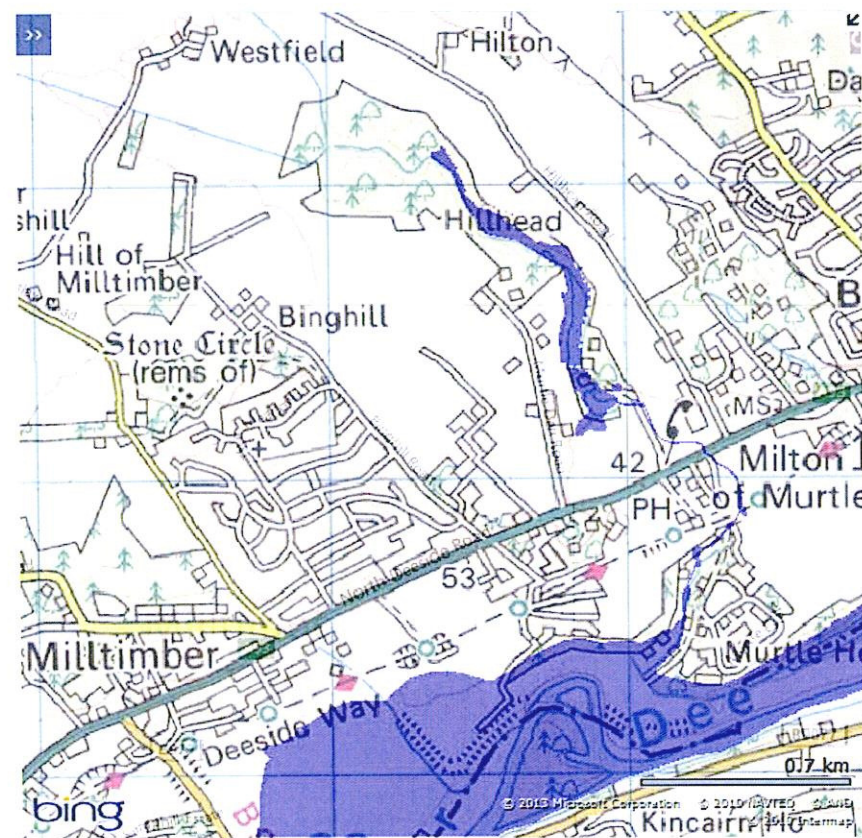


Figure 5 – SEPA Flood Map

#### Oldfold Farm, Milltimber (site OP62)

- 4.10 The land immediately to the east of the development bid site is allocated for 550 houses as part of the Oldfold Farm development (site OP62). This site also includes the provision of employment land and community facilities. A major housebuilder has taken this forward to the stage where a Masterplan has been approved and it is anticipated that development will commence on the ground in the near future. This development will drastically alter the physical appearance of the area, particularly when travelling along North Deeside Road. The scheme will also provide the critical mass of people to bring much-needed employment and community facilities to the Milltimber area.
- 4.11 The Oldfold Farm site proposed several phases of development (see Figure 6). The development bid site sits immediately adjacent to the main new access point into Oldfold from North Deeside Road. It is also located adjacent to development blocks A, B and C which are planned for the first phases of the development.

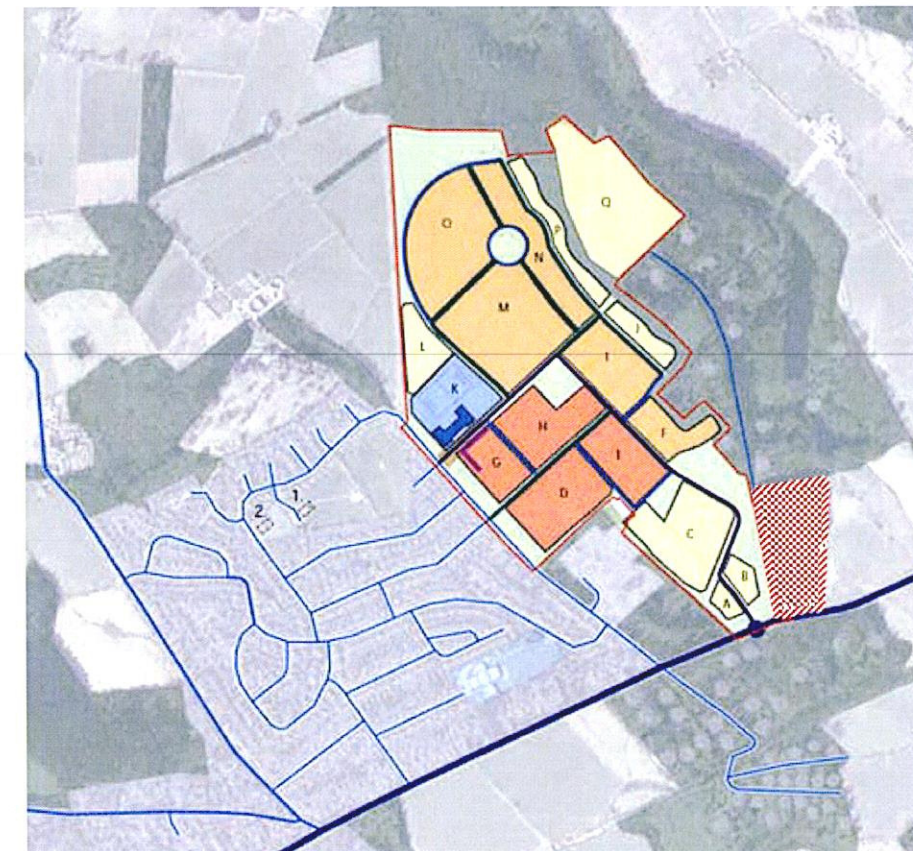


Figure 6 – Oldfold Farm Masterplan



## 5.0 Development Bid

- 5.1 In accordance with masterplanning principles, the core design aims of the development bid are to provide a “place” which is not seen as a stand-alone development, but instead one which will integrate fully with both the Oldfold development and the existing built form of Milltimber. In this regard, the development maximise linkages from the site into the Oldfold development and beyond into Milltimber, as well making the most of the connections to the public transport routes on North Deeside Road and the wider Core Path Network.
- 5.2 The landowner has also sought to create a development that will respect the landscape in which it sits and will not have an adverse visual impact when viewed from North Deeside Road. In this regard, the development will incorporate substantial new landscape buffers along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the main public viewpoints.

### ***Development Bid Objectives***

- 5.3 The proposed development is seeking to achieve the following objectives:
- Provide new housing to satisfy demand for detached family housing;
  - Provide an exemplar design approach to create a unique sense of place;
  - Provides new housing that will bring additional people into the area which will support new amenities in Milltimber;
  - The creation of a development that incorporates substantial new landscaping thus softening the built-edge of Milltimber when viewed from North Deeside Road; and
  - The creation of a development which maximises existing bus, pedestrian and cycle connections along North Deeside Road to create sustainable transport links for residents.

### ***Access and Connectivity***

- 5.4 Access to the site will be taken from two access points on Murtle Den Road. The first, southern-most access point will provide access to the 5no. dwellings situated to the south of the existing mature tree belt within the site. The second, northern-most access point will provide access to the 2no. dwellings which will replace where the house called Brookfield is located at present. The development bid site is conveniently located for access to the bus stop, pedestrian pavements and cycleways which abut the site on North Deeside Road.

### ***Land Use***

- 5.5 The proposed land use for the development bid will comprise a residential development of 8no. dwellings as well as private garden ground and substantial landscaping to screen the site when looking from North Deeside Road. The site could not be better located to take advantage of the walking, cycling and public transport connections on North Deeside Road.

### ***Street Layout and Servicing***

- 5.6 The indicative site layout has been designed in accordance with the principles advocated by “Designing Streets”. The layout has been designed to create maximise linkages to the Oldfold development as well as the existing facilities in Milltimber and sustainable transport links along North Deeside Road. Street and footpath lighting will be designed to be energy efficient and to minimise light pollution in accordance with Aberdeen City Council standards.
- 5.7 The other main factor that has influenced the indicative site layout plan has been the need to retain and enhance the existing landscaping along the boundaries of the site, particularly along the southern and eastern frontages of the site, to ensure that the visual impact of the development is minimised when viewed from North Deeside Road.

### ***Open Space and Landscaping***

- 5.8 The site already has an established landscape structure which will be reinforced with new planting particularly along the southern and eastern boundaries which will completely screen the new development when viewed from North Deeside Road.





## 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The reasons for rejecting this site as part of the 2012 LDP process are not accepted by the landowner. The Scottish Government Reporters deemed the site to be prominent when viewed from North Deeside Road, and that development here may cause coalescence between Milltimber and Bielside. Dealing with each of these two points in turn, the site may be visible when viewed from North Deeside Road to the east and to the south. However, the site is situated immediately adjacent to the development of 550 houses plus employment land and community facilities at Oldfold. The landscape character of this area will therefore change drastically from a semi-rural appearance to the edge of the built-up area to Milltimber. In addition, the indicative site layout plan (see Figure 7) incorporates a substantial belt of new trees to be planted along the southern and eastern boundaries to ensure that the new development will not be visible from the main public vantage points.
- 6.2 The development of the site will not cause coalescence between Milltimber and Bielside; quite the contrary. The development of this site, with the inclusion of new strategic landscaping along the eastern boundary, will help to provide a defensible green belt boundary to Milltimber and it will help to soften the urban edge of the settlement when travelling westwards along North Deeside Road thus having a positive visual impact.
- 6.3 The site is within the sole ownership of Mr McDonald who has chosen not to run with a housebuilder at this stage in order to exercise more control over what is built on the site and that it matches his aspirations for an exemplar development of exceptionally high quality in keeping with the bespoke nature of many of the buildings in the Deeside area. There are no constraints or impediments to development affecting the site and it is immediately deliverable without the need for any major up-front infrastructure.
- 6.4 The site could not be better placed from a sustainable transport perspective in terms of utilising existing public transport services and cycleways along North Deeside Road, and it is also within walking distance of the existing amenities in Milltimber and even closer to those proposed as part of the Oldfold development. The site offers an ideal opportunity to deliver much needed family housing in the Deeside area, and on behalf of Mr McDonald we respectfully request that the site is identified for 8no. dwellinghouses as part of the LDP review.







Figure 7 – Indicative Site Layout Plan