



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
13 NOVEMBER 2018**

**SUBJECT: FINAL BILBOHALL MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY
GUIDANCE**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to agree the responses to representations received following consultation on the draft Bilbohall Masterplan and approve the final Bilbohall Masterplan as Supplementary Guidance to the Moray Local Development Plan 2015 (LDP2015).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Review and Preparation of Strategic and Local Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the public consultation undertaken on the draft Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance;**
- (ii) agrees the responses to representations on the draft Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance in Appendix 2;**
- (iii) approves the final Bilbohall Masterplan and associated appendices as Supplementary Guidance to the Moray Local Development Plan 2015 (LDP 2015) in Appendix 1; and**
- (iv) agrees that the final Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications pertaining to Elgin settlement sites R3, R4, R12, CF2 and OPP7 of the LDP 2015.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Bilbohall Masterplan includes sites R3 Bilbohall South, R4 South West of Elgin High School, R12 Knockmasting Wood, OPP7 Bilbohall and CF2 Edgar Road of the LDP 2015. These sites are collectively referred to as 'Bilbohall'. A Masterplan is a requirement of the LDP2015 for sites R4 and R12 and a detailed design brief for site R3. Given the benefits of strategic planning in terms of infrastructure co-ordination and placemaking, and the inter-linked relationship of R3, R4, R12, CF2 and OPP7 a Masterplan has been prepared covering all of these sites. The sites are proposed to be carried forward as residential allocations in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 (LDP 2020) currently under preparation, and following adoption the Bilbohall Masterplan would be updated accordingly.
- 3.2 The Masterplan has been prepared by the Bilbohall Consortium, which comprises the landowners – Scotia Homes (R12 with an option to purchase R4 from the current landowner), Grampian Housing Association (R3) and Moray Council (CF2 and OPP7). The Consortium appointed consultants Optimised Environments (OPEN) to prepare the Masterplan on their behalf. The final Masterplan Supplementary Guidance (SG), provided in **Appendix 1**, has been made available to view on the Members Portal and Members Lounge with associated appendices (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Drainage Strategy, and Strategic Transport Modelling Report), and the Elgin North and South Ward Members along with the Chair and Depute Chair of this Committee and Chair and Depute Chair of the Communities Committee have been briefed prior to this meeting.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 27 February 2018 (para.10 of minute refers) the Committee agreed that public consultation on the draft Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance be undertaken and that responses be reported to a future meeting of this Committee along with the final Masterplan for approval as Supplementary Guidance. The 8-week consultation period commenced on 5th March and ended on 27th April 2018. There were 36 public representations received (including Elgin Community Council and Fairfield Residents Association), with the majority of respondents residing in Fairfield Avenue and the immediate vicinity. 8 representations were received from key agencies and other external stakeholders. A copy of the representations received has been made available to view on the Members Portal and a summary and the response proposed is included in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 The public consultation was advertised in local newspapers, on the Council's website, via social media, and featured as a news article on Moray Firth radio. During the public consultation, an exhibition was held in tandem with the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 Main Issues Report, on Saturday 17th March 2018 from 9.30am-4pm at the St Giles Church, Elgin where officers from Housing, Transportation and Development Plans were available to deal with queries. Approximately 120 people attended the exhibition.

4.3 Prior to the public consultation on the draft Masterplan, public consultation had been undertaken by the Consortium's masterplan consultants to inform the emerging draft Masterplan during which a drop-in exhibition was held and a presentation made to Elgin Community Council. A summary of the responses received to both public consultations is included in Section 1 of the final Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance.

4.4 The main issues raised through the public consultation on the draft Bilbohall Masterplan are similar to those raised previously and an overview is provided below:

- **Intrusion on privacy:** The height of properties within Block E was reduced to single storey and the length of rear gardens decreased to enlarge the buffer strip, which will be planted with trees, in the draft Masterplan to reflect concerns raised during the initial consultation on the preferred option for the draft Masterplan. The final Masterplan includes further detail on the minimum distance between the rear elevations of properties within Block E and Fairfield Avenue, which is twice the distance at 40m of that between the front elevations of existing properties on Fairfield Avenue at 20m, a minimum 15m wide buffer strip of planting adjacent to the existing 10m buffer strip, and details on tree species to ensure an overall mature height of 10-12m, year-round foliage and coverage at understory level.
- **Level of affordable homes:** The provision of affordable housing is a key priority of Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future, the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and the Moray Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2016-19. The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2017 which has been afforded 'robust and credible' status by the Scottish Government identifies the Elgin Housing Market Area (HMA) as having the greatest need for affordable housing with approximately 63% of development requiring to be affordable over the period 2018-22. The level of affordable housing proposed (62% of the total development) through the Bilbohall Masterplan is therefore more akin to the actual need than the 25% requirement stipulated in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). The sites being developed for affordable and private housing are determined to a large extent by land ownership. The sites owned by the Council and Grampian Housing Association are identified as key priorities for investment in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). The affordable housing will be provided in the form of social rented housing and low cost home ownership and the mix will include specially adapted accommodation for older and disabled people as well as mainstream family housing.
- **Flooding and Drainage Issues:** Additional technical studies have been carried out as part of the preliminary Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment to assess pre-development and post-development run-off rates and ensure that adequate storage is provided in order that a 1 in 200 year event plus climate change can be contained and managed on-site. This has included an analysis of catchments, discharge rates and volumes. The Flood Team are satisfied that surface water from the development can be adequately discharged without causing flooding problems in the immediate vicinity or further downstream. Detailed Drainage Designs and Flood Risk Assessments are a requirement of subsequent planning applications.

- **Increase in traffic volume:** The Strategic Traffic Modelling undertaken in the preparation of the Masterplan shows that the link capacity of the roads in the vicinity of the development can generally accommodate the increase in the volume of traffic associated with the Bilbohall development. Improvements will be required to the existing bridge over the rail line at Bilbohall Road. Options for improvement which have been assessed include the removal of the footway on the eastern side of the existing rail bridge to provide a southern carriageway to allow two-way traffic over the bridge, and provision of a separate active travel bridge across the rail line and the retention of the bridge in its current form with the signalisation of Bilbohall Road/Mayne Road/Wards Road/Fleurs Road junction. Initial analysis of junction options has been explored for the final Masterplan and further detailed transport modelling and design will be required as part of planning applications. Transport Assessments will accompany subsequent planning applications which will set out detailed proposals for the necessary mitigation measures on the local transport network, which will include the signalisation of the Edgar Road/The Wards/Glen Moray Drive junction.
- **Public Transport:** Following further dialogue with the bus operating company the final Masterplan reflects the likely bus route and future proofs for additional services whilst ensuring that a balance is struck between facilitating bus access and the Masterplan's design principles including the discouragement of traffic between the west and south of Elgin.
- **Traffic Calming:** The Bilbohall road network has been designed to discourage through traffic travelling between the south and west of Elgin through a combination of measures which respond to the location rather than apply rigid standards, regardless of context, and prioritises pedestrians over motor vehicles. This is in accord with Scottish Government policy 'Designing Streets', the National Roads Development Guide 2014 (NRDG) and the Council's Supplementary Guidance on Urban Design which promotes good placemaking in which designing natural traffic calming into the development and creating attractive, safe streets is a key component. Examples of such traffic calming measures are illustrated in the final Masterplan.
- **Impact on Wildlife/Biodiversity:** An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been undertaken during the preparation of the Masterplan which identified that the predominant grasslands are typically low value to biodiversity and recommends that further surveys for bats, badgers and nesting birds are undertaken at planning application stage. SNH have been involved in the preparation of the Masterplan from the outset and the wildlife corridor proposed has been incorporated into the Masterplan. Wildlife friendly measures suggested by the RSPB have been incorporated into the final Masterplan. At the planning application stage additional, more detailed measures will be required to accord with the new Biodiversity policy in the Proposed Moray LDP 2020.
- **Health and Education Facilities:** Developer obligations will be sought from developers to mitigate any adverse impact the proposed development may have on education, health and transport infrastructure at the time of a planning application. The Bilbohall development is currently zoned to the Greenwards Primary School and Elgin High School. Greenwards Primary School is currently operating

at capacity, and developer obligations will be sought from developers towards a new primary school planned as part of the recently consented Elgin South development. Elgin High School is currently operating at 68% capacity (School Roll Forecast, 2017) and has capacity to accommodate the majority of pupils generated by the Bilbohall development. Developer obligations will be sought towards an extension to the High School when this capacity reaches 90%. NHS Grampian have advised that healthcare facilities are currently operating at capacity, and developer obligations will be sought towards new healthcare facilities planned as part of the recently consented Elgin South development, dental chairs and a community pharmacy.

- 4.5 During the preparation of the Masterplan, the Consortium's consultants have worked closely with officers in the Council's Development Planning, Housing, Transportation, and Flood teams. Dialogue with other Services has also taken place to discuss detailed matters, where necessary. Internal stakeholders and key agencies have been consulted throughout and are supportive of the final Masterplan Supplementary Guidance. Further actions identified at the draft Masterplan stage of Noise Impact and Air Quality Assessments have been carried out. The Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) predicts that a small number of dwellings (8 properties) along the western extent of Edgar Road will marginally enter into the major noise impact category as the change from a cul-de-sac to a through route is anticipated to increase the road traffic noise associated with the development by around 5.4db which is 0.4db above the 'major' threshold. Detailed noise assessments will accompany future planning applications and identify any necessary mitigation measures. Further technical studies to inform the Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Drainage Strategy have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Flood Team who has no objections to the final Masterplan on these grounds.

5. SUMMARY OF THE FINAL BILBOHALL MASTERPLAN

- 5.1 Bilbohall is a landscape-led Masterplan that addresses the unique topography and mature landscape setting of the area. The area encompasses a series of distinctive and well-contained parcels of land to the west of Elgin. The final Bilbohall Masterplan incorporates the following elements:
- A variety of housing types and tenures set within a high quality landscape setting. The development will comprise of 239 affordable and 143 private houses and offer a choice of housing for the elderly, disabled and families;
 - A Designing Streets approach that prioritises pedestrians and reduces vehicle speeds and influences driver behaviour by incorporating traffic calming measures into the street design, rather than through the rigid application of standards;
 - New sustainable multi-functional open space including a neighbourhood park, pocket park and blue-green infrastructure;
 - Enhanced and extended existing pedestrian and cycle routes;
 - New woodland areas which will offer both more habitat areas and amenity spaces for residents and visitors;

- A blue-green corridor enhancing biodiversity, tranquillity and the natural aesthetic of buildings, places and landscapes increasing resilience to climate change;
- A new street network which will be permeable and connected, designed to work with the existing topography to ensure that the impact on existing landscape features such as knolls is integrated into the landscape and impacts mitigated through design;
- Additional structure planting on slopes to further contain the site and reinforce the existing character of wooded knolls;
- Street trees and hedgerows along key routes, creating green corridors; and,
- New building elements with a residential density that reflects the existing slopes and elements.

5.2 The main changes incorporated into the final Masterplan include:

- Design code - Further detail is provided in the design code for the 6 character areas to ensure distinct pockets of development are created helping people to identify and find their way around the development
- Relocation of pocket park – The pocket park within site R4 has been relocated from the western edge to a central open space between blocks O and P to encourage sharing of facilities;
- Site OPP7 - The indicative capacity of site OPP7 has been increased from 4 to 10 units to allow for a range of redevelopment options such as cottage style flats. The height of properties within site OPP7 has also been reduced from 3 to 2 storey to reflect privacy concerns;
- Site R3, Block E - Further detail on the planting provisions and property separation distances between new and existing properties within and adjacent site R3;
- Drainage and Flood Risk - Additional information pertaining to drainage and flood risk in terms of a Surface Water Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate the proposed development will not increase the flood risk to the Tyock Burn catchment; and,
- Transport Network - Further detail on the road network in terms of traffic calming measures and junction options at Bilbohall Road/Wards Road/Fleurs Road/Mayne Road to the north of the site.

6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Bilbohall Masterplan will assist in delivering the 5 priorities for the Council's and Community Planning Partners of Moray 2026 and help deliver affordable housing, a key priority for Moray Council, as reflected in Moray 2026 and the Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

(b) **Policy and Legal**

A Masterplan and detailed design brief is a requirement for sites R4, R12 and R3 of the LDP 2015, respectively. Should the final Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance be approved it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications pertaining to sites R3, R4, R12, CF2 and OPP7 of the LDP 2015.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from the Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk of delay in progressing proposals for affordable housing provision if the final Masterplan is not approved as Supplementary Guidance to the LDP2015.

(e) Staffing Implications

Work on the Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance has been carried out within the existing staff workloads of Planning, Transportation, Consultancy and Housing Services.

(f) Property

Sites CF2 and OPP7 are within Council ownership. Under the terms of a purchase agreement the Council has an option to buy back site R3 from Grampian Housing Association. The backstop date for the exercise of this option is currently March 2019. It is possible that this date may be extended subject to agreement with the Scottish Government, Grampian Housing Association and the Council.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment has identified the need for accessible housing to meet the needs of elderly and disabled people in Moray, and that the greatest need for affordable housing is in the Elgin Housing Market Area (HMA).

(h) Consultations

The Corporate Director (Economic Development Planning & Infrastructure), the Head of Development Services, Paul Connor (Principal Accountant), the Legal Services Manager (Property & Contracts), the Consultancy Manager, the Senior Engineer Transport Development, Senior Engineer Traffic, the Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, Douglas Caldwell (Environmental Health Officer), Russell Anderson (Environmental Health Officer), Equalities Officer, Moray Access Manager, Land and Parks Officer, Environmental Protection Manager, Waste Management Officer and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) have been consulted and comments incorporated into this report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The final Bilbohall Masterplan seeks to ensure that a high quality development is implemented on the ground and that a strategic approach is taken to the delivery of infrastructure. This will help to achieve the outcomes of Moray 2026 and deliver a significant level of affordable housing which is a key priority for Moray Council as set out in

the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). A significant level of engagement with the public and internal and external stakeholders has taken place through two consultations and comments have been reflected in the final Bilbohall Masterplan Supplementary Guidance.

Author of Report: Eily Webster, Senior Planning Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: