



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
15 AUGUST 2023**

SUBJECT: FINDRASSIE MASTERPLAN UPDATE 2023

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to agree the draft Findrassie Masterplan Update for public consultation.
- 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 Local Development Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee;

- (i) agree the draft Findrassie Masterplan Update for public consultation for a 12-week period;**
- (ii) agree that the comments received to the consultation and the Council's response to these, along with the final Masterplan will be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee for approval; and**
- (iii) agree that the draft Findrassie Masterplan Update is used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Findrassie is a major land release to the north of Elgin and provides a strategic long term planned growth area for housing and employment. The Findrassie Masterplan was approved on 1 December 2015 as statutory Supplementary Guidance forming part of the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 (para 7 of minute refers). A report to this Committee on 15 September 2020 (para 16 of minute refers) highlighted the need to review and update a number of Supplementary Guidance documents to ensure compliance with the new MLDP 2020.

- 3.2 In addition to the need to review the Masterplan to ensure compliance with the MLDP2020, there were other factors which influenced the update:
- The R12 and MU2 sites were newly designated in MLDP2020 and are contiguous with the masterplan area.
 - Pitch provision within open space.
 - Updated retail requirements from the Moray Retail Study completed in 2021 which was agreed as a material consideration at a meeting of this Committee on 4 April 2022 (para 8 of minute refers)
 - Experience of using the masterplan for the E1 and E2 phase applications.
- 3.3 The draft updated masterplan has been prepared by the Strategic Planning and Development team and has been subject to internal consultation with Transportation, Development Management, Consultancy (Flooding) and Education Resources and Communities. The landowners and developers to date have also been consulted. The draft updated masterplan is provided as **Appendix 1**.

4. DRAFT FINDRASSIE MASTERPLAN UPDATE

- 4.1 The draft masterplan has been revised and updated to reflect the issues outlined above. A summary of the main changes is set out below:
- Adding R12 and MU2 to the masterplan with new connections and design guidance provided. These sites are contiguous with the masterplan area and connections are required through the R11 and I8 sites which are part of the original masterplan to these. Their location means they logically form part of the Findrassie neighbourhood. The addition of these sites to the masterplan has knock on impacts on some of the design details, for example the location of gateway features and potential locations for public art.
 - Reflecting the retail and commercial requirements within the Moray Retail Study 2021 within the document including setting out the floor area requirements and potential phasing.
 - Pitch requirements associated with the proposal include provision of fenced pitches which allow for competitive games to be played. The fencing would impact on the attractiveness of and access across the central open space if these were located within this. Indicative locations within the I8 business site have been identified for pitch provision to minimise the impact on the central open space. Further investigation as to which of these potential locations will be suitable to accommodate the pitch provision is required.
 - More detail has been provided on the level of allotment provision and this is now required within each phase of development.
 - A change to the location of self-build opportunities to later phases and within clear development blocks has been made. Previously the masterplan had shown self-build opportunities across partial blocks. This is considered to be impractical for delivery.
 - The parking strategy has been amended to reflect MLDP2020 policy.

- The masterplan has been updated to provide opportunities for increased heights of up to 3 storeys at key locations, particularly where there are commercial uses on the ground floor.
- The Design Code has been restructured to make this more user friendly and consolidating the information for each character zone into one section.
- Sections have been removed that repeated MLDP policy with a general review to remove unnecessary text to allow for a more user friendly document.
- New text in respect of sustainable travel, sustainable development, green infrastructure, Biodiversity and community wealth building to bring the masterplan in line with the overarching principles of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Given the previous engagement and views gathered during the consultation on the original masterplan it is recommended that a virtual online 12 week consultation period is undertaken for the draft masterplan with the opportunity for bookable 1-2-1 sessions to be held. In person meetings will be offered to the Community Council and other groups. The 12 week consultation period will commence on 16 August and end on 8 November 2023. The draft masterplan consultation will be advertised via social media, press release, letters and emails.
- 5.2 Following the consultation, responses will be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee to consider, along with the final Masterplan for approval. The masterplan will be a material consideration for development management purposes and will be embedded into the new Local Development Plan 2027.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The draft Findrassie Masterplan update provides a long term vision for the growth of the north of Elgin including infrastructure, employment and affordable housing which are priorities for the Council. The updated masterplan will be embedded into the new Local Development Plan 2027.

(b) Policy and Legal

Once approved the Masterplan will become Supplementary Guidance forming part of the statutory Local Development Plan which planning applications will be determined against.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

Work on the updated Findrassie Masterplan has been carried out within existing staff workloads of the Strategic Planning and Development section with input and review of draft documents by Transportation, Education Resources and Communities, Consultancy (Flooding) and Development Management.

(f) Property

The masterplan includes the location for a proposed Primary School.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None at this stage.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The NPF4, specifically policy 1 (Tackling the climate and nature crises) gives significant weight to the global climate and nature crises in the determination of planning applications. NPF4 Policy 2 (Climate mitigation and adaption) states that all proposals should be designed to minimise emissions over their lifecycle and development is to be sited and designed to adapt to current and future risk from climate change. Similarly, policy 3 (Biodiversity) requires development to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity. Whilst policy 15 (Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods) supports the principle of Local Living.

The draft Findrassie Masterplan Update seeks to achieve the aspirations of NPF4 in terms of providing opportunities for local services and active travel connections to support Local Living. Future applications will be assessed against NPF4 policies

(i) Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive Economy, Environment and Finance, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Head of Housing and Property, the Legal Services Manager, the Senior Engineer Transportation, the Principal Climate Change Officer, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Development Management and Building Standards Manager, Chief Financial Officer and Democratic Services Manager and their comments incorporated into the report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The Findrassie Masterplan has be updated to bring this in line with MLDP2020, to reflect NPF4 and address other factors.

7.2 The draft masterplan will be subject to public consultation using virtual methods. The responses will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration along with the final Masterplan for approval. The updated masterplan will be a material consideration for development management purposes and will be embedded into the new Local Development Plan 2027.

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Background Papers:

Ref: