

## Blackdog Masterplan

Blackdog, Aberdeenshire

Prepared on behalf of Colin and Esther Tawse

November 2012

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# 1 Introduction and Vision

1.1 Knight Frank LLP and Willie Lippe Architects Limited were appointed by Colin and Esther Tawse to prepare a Masterplan for a mixed use development for some 62 hectares of land at Blackdog, Aberdeenshire. The land, which is primarily in the ownership of Colin and Esther Tawse, has been identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan for a major extension to the community of Blackdog for 600 houses, 11 hectares of employment land, a specialist retail facility and a new primary school. Our client's vision for the site is to create a high quality sustainable expansion to Blackdog which maximises the site's potential and helps deliver the strategy for growth and economic diversification set down in the Structure Plan and as articulated through the Energetica initiative.

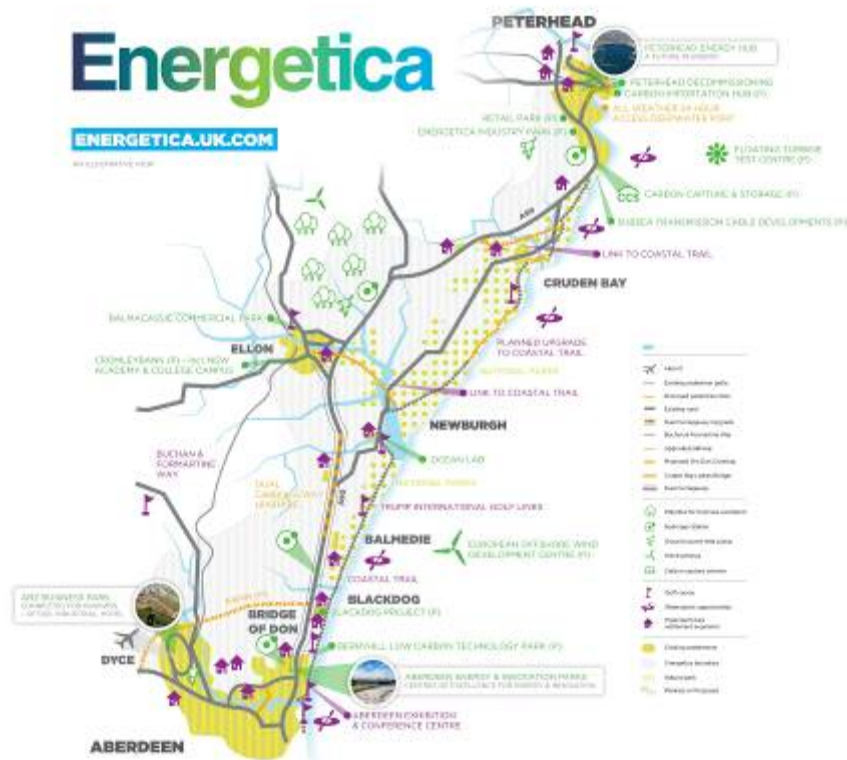


(Location Plan – OS Map)

1.2 The Masterplan has been prepared by a multi disciplinary Design Team comprising the following:

- Knight Frank LLP – Planning Consultants;
- William Lippe – Architects;
- AECOM – Transportation Engineers;
- Cameron and Ross – Drainage Engineers;
- Nick Charleton Smith – Noise Consultant;
- Ian White Associates – Landscape Consultants;
- SK Environmental Solutions – Environmental Consultants.

- 1.3 The team have worked together on the project over the past 2 years and have an in depth knowledge of the site and its characteristics and have worked with the local community to develop the masterplan. Design input to the development of the masterplan was also provided at an earlier stage in the project by architects and masterplanners Page and Park.
- 1.4 The masterplan has been subject to extensive consultation with Council officers, key stakeholders, Belhelvie Community Council and the local community at Blackdog. Full details of the consultation undertaken are set down in Section 3 Community Consultation in the masterplan.
- 1.5 The masterplan for Blackdog will be approved as the context for future planning applications that come forward for Blackdog and will provide planning guidance for the assessment and consideration of planning applications.
- 1.6 As part of this masterplan's preparation we have had regard to the following guidance:
- Planning Advice 7/2012 – Implementation of Policy SG LSD1: Masterplanning;
  - Planning Advice 6/2012 – Implementation of Policy SG LSD2: Layout, Siting and Design of New Development;
  - PAN 83: Master Planning;
  - Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (June 2012);
  - Aberdeenshire LDP Supplementary Guidance for Blackdog (June 2012);
  - Aberdeenshire LDP Supplementary Guidance – Policies (June 2012); and
  - Energetica Design Guidance.



- 1.7 As a blank canvas, Blackdog presents a tremendous opportunity to create a community on a human scale. Sitting on the edge of one of the country's finest beaches, with the housing nestling in a shallow protective valley a village, where people have priority, where the houses are individual and distinctive, set in an imaginative and quality landscape, with excellent transport links, Blackdog aims to become an exemplar for the future.
- 1.8 On a high profile, high visibility site on the A90, there is almost a requirement for a significant piece of public art of a scale to rival Newcastle's "Angel of the North" to put our area on the map. It is easy to criticise what had gone before, but never before has a local planning authority taken the view to embrace the future, with the result we have previously had developments of the standard house types of major developers that are the same from Penzance to Peterhead, tacked onto settlements to satisfy each Local Plan Period. Without doubt efficient but leaving very little for the generations to come.
- 1.9 It should be recognised however, particularly just now when the financial environment is so hostile to development, that the market drives what the developers build and any radical shift in design and layout carries with it substantial risk, risk the builders simply cannot and will not take unless and until the market is proven. It must be a case of evolution rather than revolution.
- 1.10 Blackdog intends to show how the standard house type can create a sense of place by stirring up the wall finishes between dry/wet dash, smooth render, textured render with colours subtly changing to create individuality. Uniform rooflines, unless justified by design, will be discouraged as will synthetic stone. Different roof lines and pitches of different tiles of varied colours, can individualise a house and settlement, and bring back the variety common when houses were built individually and not as estates. Simply changing the dimensions and proportions of windows and doors can provide a completely different aesthetic to a house.
- 1.11 The street layout is a fundamental, not only in terms of creating a sense of community but also in terms of the marketability of what is built. If we take, as an illustration, a mother with a two year old and a four year old; it is not practical, feasible or desirable for Mum to park anywhere other than in her drive, remote parking is not an option. The same Mum would prefer if her children could play safely outside the house without damaging the neighbours cars. This is the conundrum that must be solved to achieve the Blackdog ambition. Blocks of remote garaging will be kept to a minimum as there are existing examples where they become the target of vandalism, but streets should be kept as safe places for fun.
- 1.12 The street layout of previous developments provided large expanses of open ground, largely put down to grass and largely unused and expensive to maintain. Blackdog intends to provide surprising small areas of green within the development but retain a large area of woodland with tracks through where the older children can play and build "hutties" and have a place of their own. The woodland area will be augmented by birds and invertebrates, friendly flowering trees and shrubs along with outdoor fitness equipment on the fitness trail.

## **2 Planning Context**

### **National Policy Guidance**

- 2.1 In preparing the masterplan for Blackdog regard has been made to comply with national policy guidance in particular with:
- Scottish Planning Policy;
  - Designing Places and Designing Streets;
  - Planning Advice Note 3/2010 - Community Engagement; and
  - Planning Advice Note 83 – Masterplanning.





employment land are allocated for Site M1 for the period 2007-2023 and 7 hectares of employment land strategic reserve for the period 2024-2030. The provision of a Park and Ride site and specialist retail facility are permitted within the Blackdog allocation. The Blackdog proposals are a key part of the growth proposed for the Aberdeen to Peterhead Strategic Growth Area and can also be considered to be integral to the promotion of the Energetica Framework.

- 2.5 The Local Development Plan identifies in Schedule 3 the strategic elements of infrastructure which will be required as a result of new development at Blackdog including contributions to transportation, recycling and affordable housing.

## **Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance (June 2012)**

- 2.6 The adopted Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance for Blackdog confirms the allocation for Blackdog identified in the Local Development Plan and the need to provide improved local facilities and development of a village centre. The SG identifies land at Blackdog that is safeguarded for the AWPR Blackdog junction. This needs to be taken account of in the masterplan which is required for Blackdog. The SG also identifies requirements for a new primary school, health centre and gypsy/traveller transit site to be provided at Blackdog as part of the development proposals.
- 2.7 It is stated in the SG that the site at Blackdog should not be delivered before completion of the AWPR. It is believed however that there is an opportunity to release a limited amount of housing development in advance of the AWPR in support of Energetica. Full justification for an early release is considered under phasing and delivery in Section 7 of the masterplan.
- 2.8 In finalising the masterplan regard has been taken of the range of Supplementary Guidance policies and advice available from Aberdeenshire Council and the masterplan has been checked to ensure that it is in compliance with the guidance in the following two documents:
- Planning Advice 6/2012 - Implementation of Policy SG LSD2: Layout, Siting and Design of New Development; and
  - Planning Advice 7/2012 - Implementation of Policy SG LSD1: Masterplanning.

### **Proposal of Application Notice**

- 2.9 A Proposal of Application Notice was previously submitted for the Blackdog site in December 2009 by Knight Frank on behalf of Colin Tawse. This was for a Regional Food Market and Mixed Use Development and public consultation was undertaken in respect of this in 2010 (see Section 3 Community Consultation). The Proposal of Application Notice allows for a major application to be submitted for Blackdog based on the original notice. A major application however will not be submitted until the masterplan has been approved.

## **3 Community Consultation**

### **Process and Summary of Earlier Consultation Events**

- 3.1 An important part of taking forward major development proposals is recognising that engagement with the local community and gaining the support of consultees is essential for the successful delivery of new developments. This is recognised by our clients and public consultation has been undertaken at all stages in the Blackdog proposals. Consultation has been undertaken following the best practice



guidelines as set out in Planning Advice Note 3/2010 - Community Engagement. In this respect the following meetings have been held with stakeholders and the local community.

**Inception Meeting** – This took place in mid October 2008 with approximately 50 members of the local community. The development vision was presented through the use of concept masterplans at this meeting.

**Focus Group Meetings** – These took place with the local farmer market producers and the Grampian Food Forum in March and June 2008 in respect of the Good Food Market element of the proposals. The meetings were very positive in terms of the support expressed by the stakeholders. Following on from this work, a series of meetings were held to ascertain commercial interest and to gauge opinion from key stakeholder groups such as Scottish Enterprise, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and Aberdeenshire Council (Energetica & Economic Development). The results of these discussions indicated a high degree of support in principle for the proposals.

**Public Exhibition** – Building on the initial community meetings, the Blackdog proposals were presented at a mobile exhibition held in Blackdog from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The consultation approach was widely welcomed by the local community and was felt to have given members of the public a genuine opportunity to discuss their ideas/concerns with the project team at this stage of the project. Overall there was overriding community support for the proposals at this stage, with the vast majority of the comments received sitting comfortably with the proposed Masterplan.

**Follow Up Public Exhibition** – As part of the ongoing process of consultation with the local community a public meeting was held at the White Horse Inn, Balmedie on 5 October 2009. The revised Masterplan and Development Framework for the site were presented along with information on the wider strategic economic and development context for the project. From 11 responses received to the proposals at this event, 6 respondents supported the plans, 4 did not and one was undecided.

**Public Meeting** – A follow up public meeting with the local community organised in conjunction with Belhelvie Community Council was held on 22 February 2010. This was to present back to the local community the findings of the public consultation undertaken to date. This also provided an opportunity to update the community on the Blackdog Masterplan proposals and the technical work that has been completed and highlight the programme for future planning applications.

### **Consultation Event held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

- 3.2 The most recent public consultation event was held on 15 March 2012 at the White Horse Inn, Balmedie which ran from 2pm until 8pm. This consultation considered the latest version of the Blackdog Masterplan, which had been updated following feedback received from earlier public consultations, the emerging Energetica Design Guidance and a masterplan design now in compliance with the access proposals for the approved AWPR Blackdog junction.



(Public Consultation Photographs)

## Publicity Measures

- 3.3 The following publicity measures were undertaken to ensure that the local community and relevant stakeholders were aware of the consultation event and afford everyone an opportunity to comment on the latest proposals.
- A public notice advertising the event was placed in the Ellon Times 2 weeks prior to the event taking place.
  - Over 45 invites were sent out to individuals, organisations and the local community prior to the event taking place. These included Belhelvie Community Council, Formartine Area Councillors, Council officers and other relevant stakeholders. Invites were also delivered to individual households in Blackdog.
  - Posters advertising the event were displayed in prominent locations in Blackdog.
  - A press release was circulated to the local media publicising the event and articles appeared in the Aberdeen Evening Express, Aberdeen Press and Journal, Ellon Times and Scottish Television's web site.
- 3.4 Plans and exhibition boards highlighting the emerging proposals with key information on the scheme content and proposed programme for delivery were made available for people attending the exhibition and members of the Design Team and the landowner, Colin Tawse were in attendance to provide information and discuss the emerging ideas for the future development of the site. Comments forms were also provided and those attending the events were encouraged to complete the forms at the event or post or email them back to Knight Frank. The forms for the event sought feedback on the emerging masterplan and development proposals for Blackdog. People were advised that their comments would be considered and incorporated where appropriate into the masterplan and the pre-application consultation report to be submitted with the future application for planning permission in principle for the site. It was made clear on the comments forms that any comments received were not representations to the Planning Authority and that there would be an opportunity to make representations on any future planning application when it is submitted.

## Analysis of Public Consultation Responses

3.5 It is estimated that around 70 people attended the public consultation event at the White Horse Inn. Forty four responses were received in response to the consultation. A summary of the comments received is provided below:

### ***Travellers Site***

- All those who sent in responses to the consultation and most of whom attended the event objected to a travellers site being located at Blackdog. The reasons given for this were, increased crime, the site would become an eyesore, falling house prices, etc.

### ***Support for Proposals***

- There was a general welcome by most people to the mixed use proposals for more houses, a school, employment land and amenities including recreational land.
- Support was also expressed for local shops, the farmers market and a pub.

### ***Opposition to Proposals***

- Concern was expressed about the type of houses to be provided and the impact on existing property values.
- Concern was expressed about impact the development proposals will have on wildlife in the area.
- Four responses wished to see Blackdog retained as it is.

### ***Access and Traffic***

- Concerns were expressed regarding the traffic impacts generated by the development on the wider road network, in particular the connections to Aberdeen.
- It was considered that one access would not be sufficient to cope with the level of development proposed.
- Proposals need to consider the location of bus stops to serve the development.
- There was support for the park and ride but concern about a reduction in the quality of the existing bus service when the AWPR is built.
- Concerns were expressed by several residents about the traffic impact of proposals on houses on Hareburn Road and the existing nursery (it will become a rat run and there will be increased noise and road safety impacts).

### ***Design Concerns***

- It was considered that the development proposals needs to be sympathetic to the existing Blackdog village and that proposed housing densities are too high in some parts.
- Care needs to be taken with building heights and the proximity of buildings to existing houses on Hareburn Terrace.
- Light pollution needs to be controlled.
- Opposition was expressed to the use of home zones in the masterplan as they are not considered safe for pedestrians and lead to town cramming.

### ***Suggestions***

- A walking/cycle route should be provided between Blackdog and Balmedie.
- Access to the proposed school should be improved for pedestrians and vehicles.
- The school should also be used for community uses.
- Re-mark and re-design paths in the wood to the south of Hareburn Terrace.

- There is a need to look at security issues in the masterplan design. Some footpaths are too close to rear gardens and some parking and/or garage areas are not close enough to houses.
- Include a secondary school at Blackdog.

#### ***Miscellaneous***

- What happened to the football pitch that was promised.
- Concern was expressed about drainage issues on Hareburn Road, though these were not specified.
- Concern was expressed about building in an area with a high number of landfill sites.
- Concern was expressed about the impact of windmills on the health of the community.

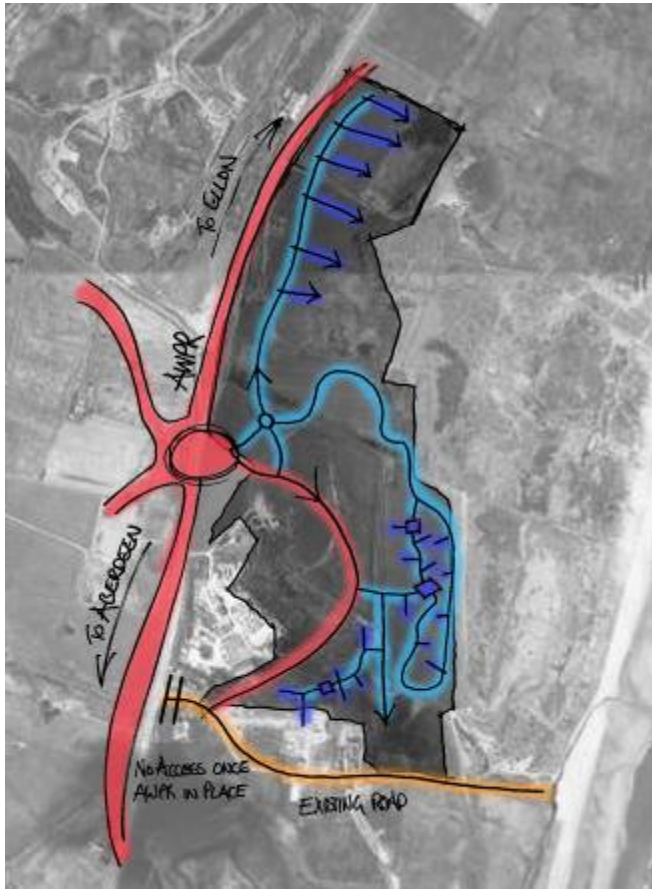
### **Response to Feedback from Public Consultation Events**

- 3.6 This report has highlighted the community reaction to the Blackdog Masterplan which were presented at the recent exhibition and previous community consultation events. The land owner, Colin Tawse and the Blackdog Design Team are encouraged by the support expressed for the proposals and the masterplanning approach being taken to the development. We note the concerns expressed on certain aspects of the proposals in particular those relating to traffic, site access and the travellers site. Opposition to the principle of development per se is noted, however this is no longer relevant given the allocation for a major mixed use development at Blackdog in the Local Development Plan. In responding to the key issues/concerns raised by the community we would advise as follows.

#### ***Access and Traffic***

In terms of traffic, it is maintained that the AWPR Blackdog Interchange, as proposed, will ensure that the current road traffic concerns are alleviated and that a suitable access is provided for Blackdog. The proposed park and ride provides an opportunity to improve public transport provision for the existing and new community. As it currently stands the Blackdog proposals are second phase and essentially are dependent on the AWPR being in place before development starts. Work, however, has been undertaken for the landowner which demonstrates that it is possible in terms of transport and other infrastructure constraints to bring forward a limited development at Blackdog in advance of the AWPR and the benefits of an early release of development is considered in more detail in the phasing section of this document. An early release of development would be promoted on land immediately to the north of the existing houses on Hareburn Road. The design of development will require to give careful consideration to the impact of additional traffic on Hareburn Road and Terrace and every effort will be made to ensure that these roads will not be used to provide access for construction traffic. A future Transportation Assessment will address pedestrian access issues for the overall masterplan site and ensure that adequate pathways/cycleways are put in place to address community concerns. It is not considered that any additional footpath/cycleway links are needed between Blackdog and Balmedie as the two communities are already connected by the existing core path that runs along the coast.

The access and movement framework for the site has been drawn up in accordance with the principles and philosophy set down in “Designing Streets” which gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles and the use of appropriately designed Home Zones is essential to delivering the vision advocated by the government and designers.



(Roads Concept Layout)  
**Feasibility of Good Food Market**

This was an issue raised at earlier consultations and reports have been prepared and surveys undertaken to demonstrate the commercial interest in and viability of the Good Food Market and the economic benefits it will deliver for the area and the Energetica vision. A Retail Impact Assessment has also been prepared which demonstrates retail capacity in both quantitative and qualitative terms for this element of the Blackdog proposals.

***Pollution from the Adjacent Landfill Sites***

A geo-environmental ground investigation and associated gas monitoring programme has been undertaken at the site. This and further investigations have demonstrated that there are no identified contamination problems (in terms of groundwater results, soil analysis or gas monitoring) which should preclude development at this location.

***Protection of Natural Heritage***

An Ecological Assessment of the site and its immediate surrounds was undertaken in late 2007 and was updated at the end of 2011. In this respect, there are no predicted problems in terms of protected sites, habitats or species. Some woodland will be lost as a result of the development and this will be replaced through woodland planting along the site boundaries. This will aid the movement of animals around the site and increase connectivity with the wider countryside. Additionally coniferous woodland which is to be planted will be of higher species diversity than that which will be lost.



### ***Conservation of Important Views***

The current masterplan highlights key visual links within the site. This is supported by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which has been undertaken to further inform the development proposals, examining the site in greater depth. This has allowed for the development of a quality layout which respects the landform/context of the area.

### ***Design***

When the Blackdog proposals were first being formulated, ensuring a high quality of design and layout appropriate to the site has been fundamental to their preparation. There is clear recognition of the need to create a landmark development of quality, worthy of its gateway positioning, which is set within a 'village type' layout and not one of a generic suburban housing estate. It is also necessary however to achieve the housing numbers allocated to the site and the provision of affordable housing required to consider higher densities on parts of the site. The design philosophy for the development is articulated later in this document and the proposals will draw on the best of traditional/local building forms and materials, whilst allowing for more 'contemporary' building forms to come forward at appropriate locations. Issues of building heights, lighting, security and other detailed design issues are considered in Section 6 Masterplan Principles.

### ***Travellers Site***

The reservation of land at Blackdog for a gypsy/traveller transit site is a requirement set down in the Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance for Blackdog. A site has been identified for this requirement at the north end of the Blackdog Masterplan. Of all the issues raised at the most recent public consultation event, this was the one which generated the greatest response. Local residents gave a 100% negative response to the travellers site being located anywhere at Blackdog and indicated they would seek to resist this aspect of the Blackdog proposals. The landowner, Colin Tawse has also had feedback from developers/housebuilders interested in the Blackdog site, which indicates the travellers site would have a negative impact in terms of attracting new residents and new businesses to Blackdog. Furthermore the inclusion of a travellers site within the Blackdog Masterplan does not sit well with the core aim of Energetica to encourage the retention of existing businesses and attract inward investment to the region by developing an innovative, world class business and recreational destination that will be an attractive place to live and work.

In terms of dealing with this issue, if we are to listen to the local community concerns and the development industry's views regarding the delivery and viability of the Blackdog proposals we should remove the travellers site from the masterplan, though this would not be in compliance with the LDP Supplementary Guidance. We would recommend that discussions continue with the Council on this issue and that further investigations are undertaken by the Council regarding suitable locations for transit sites for travellers within the general area such as Balmedie Country Park.

### ***Other***

The provision of a football pitch will be delivered through the masterplan proposals. It is possible it could be provided at an early date as part of the planning gain package for an early release of some housing at Blackdog. It is envisaged that the primary school to be provided at Blackdog will also act as a community facility for the new community. There is no requirement for a new secondary school to be provided at Blackdog and secondary education will be delivered at Bridge of Don Academy in Aberdeen. Drainage issues have been investigated as part of the site analysis for the masterplan. A slight impact on hydrological features and moderate impacts on flood risk and water quality were

identified as a result of the proposed development. However, following the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the residual impacts are not considered significant. The masterplan has not proposed the location of any windmills on site. Windmills however could come forward at a later date in connection with the industrial and business uses to the north and planning applications for them would be assessed on an individual basis.

- 3.7 The finalised masterplan has been amended as appropriate to take on board the recommendations above. A further chance to comment on and influence the proposals will also be given when planning applications come forward for the site. Community engagement is an ongoing process, whereby further consultations will inform more specific, detailed elements of the proposals.

### **Design Review Panel**

- 3.8 The masterplan proposals were presented to the Design Review Panel (DRP) at their meeting on 6 August 2012. The panel commended the masterplan approach the team had taken in producing a very legible plan. They considered that the masterplan featured good separation between uses and the panel liked the concept of two 'nodes' with connections through the development and to the existing village. In addition the panel felt there was great potential for the areas of open space, especially the public park area at the water/burn edge. They also commended the layout with specific regard to pedestrian routes and focal points. It was agreed, given the iterative nature of masterplanning, further consultation with the Design Review Panel would be arranged in some two years' time. Some minor changes have been made to the finalised masterplan following the comments of the DRP including the removal of the 6 houses in the centre of the site between the burn and the new spine road. A 3D response will also begin to be worked up for the site to illustrate how the layout and spaces will work in practice.

### **Masterplan Meeting with Council Officers**

- 3.9 The draft masterplan was presented to a special meeting of Council officers on 20 September 2012, where feedback was given on the proposals. The main points and actions arising from the meeting were as follows:
- The applicant should be commended for work and effort that has went in so far to the masterplan and support was given to the comments of the Design Review Panel regarding the good separation between uses and the great potential for the creation of open space;
  - Landscaping is fundamental to the overall scheme and should not be an afterthought. The layout siting and design of the development should be to highest standards in line with overarching LDP and Energetica policies and there requires to be good connectivity and access between different elements of the site;
  - The concerns raised by the Design Review Panel regarding the 6 houses in the centre of the site were echoed at the meeting;
  - The location of the school to the south of the site and the proximity to the potential off-shore substation on land to the south, will need further discussion with Environmental Health;
  - The overall deliverability of the Blackdog proposals are dependent on the AWPR and as a result the development forms part of the second phase of the LDP for the period 2017-2023. An early release of land for housing in first phase would be a departure and require Infrastructure Services Committee referral if the proposals were recommended for approval. Any such application would

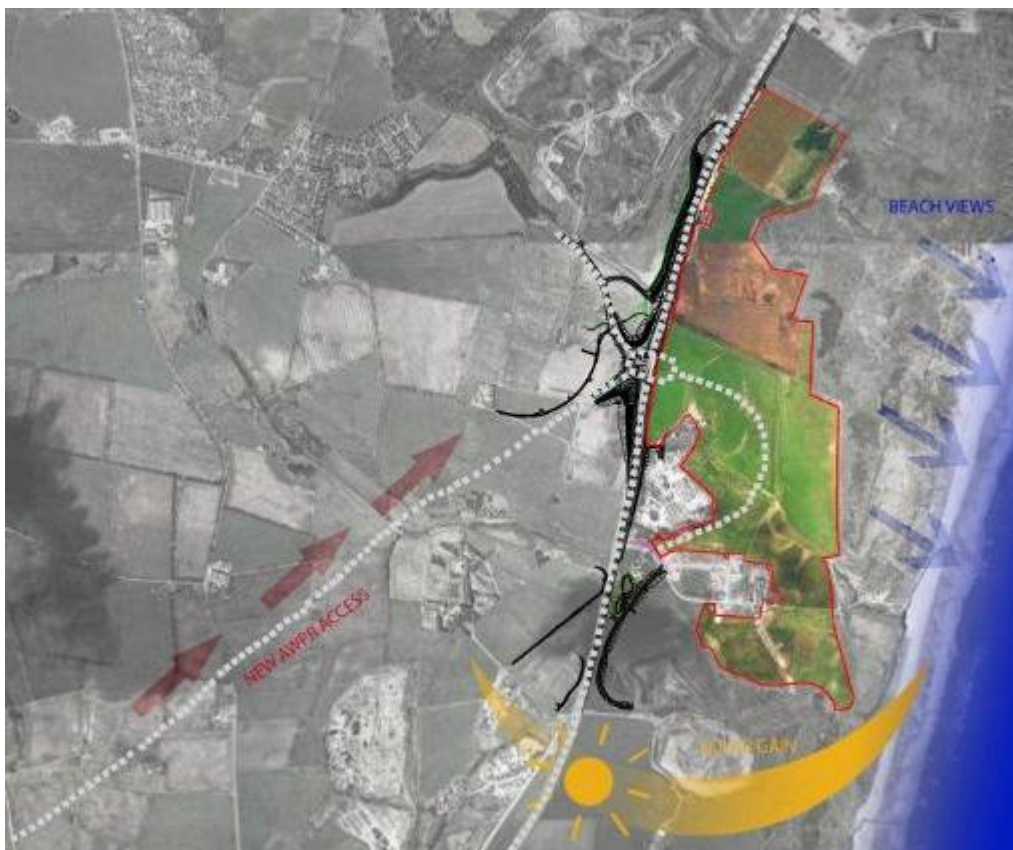
require robust justification on deliverability, connectivity, access and education capacity. A design brief would also require to be prepared in support on application.

As stated earlier the 6 houses in the centre of the site have been removed from the finalised masterplan in the light of the DRP comments. The points regarding landscaping and connectivity are embedded into the masterplan and will be given high priority when planning application submissions are prepared. The issues and justification around early release of a small part of the site are considered under phasing and delivery in Section 7 of the masterplan.

## 4 Site Analysis

### Site Description and History

- 4.1 The subject lands, extending to approximately 62 hectares in total, are located to the north of Aberdeen at Blackdog and are framed by the A90 to the west and the coast / beach to the east. Blackdog benefits from excellent transport connections with direct access onto the A90 and the future Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) from the proposed adjacent interchange. The site is characterised by an undulating landform with areas of tree cover to the south. The surrounding land features different fragmented land uses, including residential and business, and has a history of disturbance and degradation of landscape quality caused primarily by landfill sites. The proposed development site is currently in agricultural use with an area of community woodland (coniferous with a broad-leaf edge). To the east is a former Blackdog Farm landfill site (Shanks and McEwan) which forms part of the dune landscape. To the north is Blackdog Rifle Range. To the south is the village of Blackdog and to the west the site is bounded by Fife Hill and has open views to the A90 Trunk Road.



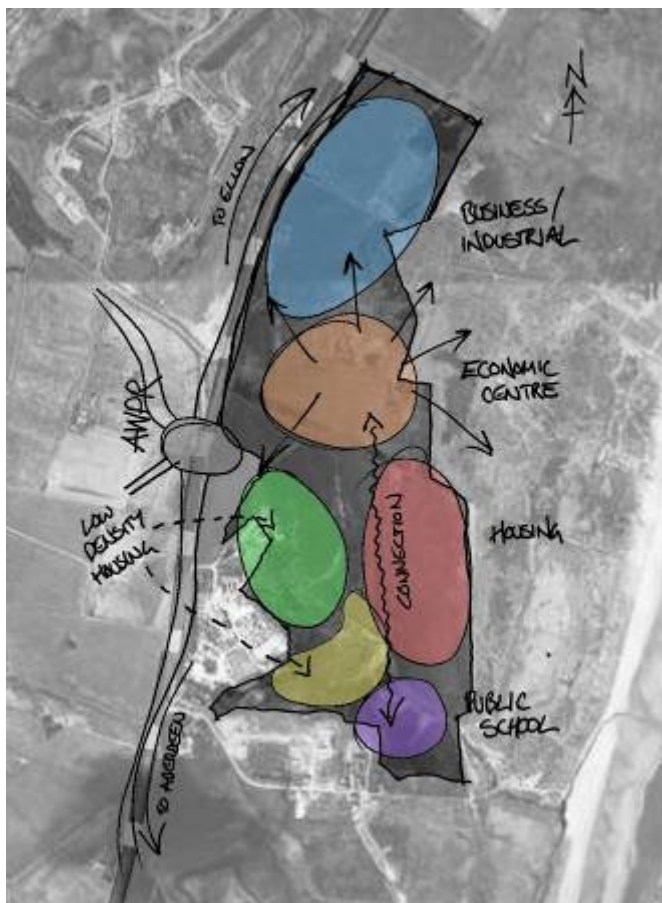
(Site Analysis Plan)

4.2 The proposed development is located in and around Blackdog, a hamlet that has grown up around the Blackdog Farm; a farm depicted on cartographic evidence from at least 1867. The Blackdog Farm changed little between the publication of the 1st Edition OS map (1884) and 2nd Edition OS Maps (1896), the farm comprising three adjoining buildings, accessed by a farm track. A single dwelling, Blackdog Croft was identified by the immediate east of the main road. The intervening years between the publication of the 2nd and 3rd Edition OS Maps witnessed the development of Blackdog through the foundation and construction of the Seaton Tile and Brick Works (NMRS: NJ91SE9) to the immediate south of the farm complex. The works operated between on the site 1898 and the 1920s, taking advantage of the local clay sources. The works itself comprised several buildings including two Hoffman kilns and an associated railway. By this stage a more substantial road had also been constructed to the site and farm. The actual land usage within the proposed development itself changed little over this period, remaining agricultural land throughout.

### Contextual Setting for Masterplan

4.3 The plan proposed for the Blackdog development is one part of the wider Energetica Framework along eastern Aberdeenshire as outlined in the Local Development Plan and identified as Site M1. When considering the detail of the Blackdog masterplan, it was essential to first consider the LDP strategy into which it would sit to ensure that the proposals would facilitate and co-ordinate with future development rather than obstruct or undermine them. A contextual analysis and sketch plan was

therefore developed for the wider area to place the outline proposals into a considered context. This identifies a broad landscape strategy for the area, as well as strategy for key linkages and connections. These proposals are outlined below.



(Concept Sketch)

**Economic Centre**

4.4 The Blackdog proposal builds on the LDP's objectives of providing employment opportunities in the Aberdeen to Peterhead Strategic Growth Area and supporting the Energetica Framework. The proposed Landmark Building will incorporate a regional food hall, hotel and retail units with direct access off the proposed A90 / A96 AWPR Blackdog junction. The Economic Centre will also provide space for a waiting room for the Park and Ride and a medical centre if required. This building is set within the main landscape feature which incorporates a water feature. It forms a central 'hinge' from which the rest of the development is accessed.  
Village Centre

4.5 To the south of the Economic Centre, a new primary school together with public amenities and other facilities including local shops are proposed. This is integrated with the existing Blackdog settlement at Hareburn Road and Hareburn Terrace, giving it a 'village centre' and defined 'heart' which it currently lacks.

**Business Park**

4.6 A new Business Park is proposed to the north west of the Landmark building and forms part of the Economic Centre.

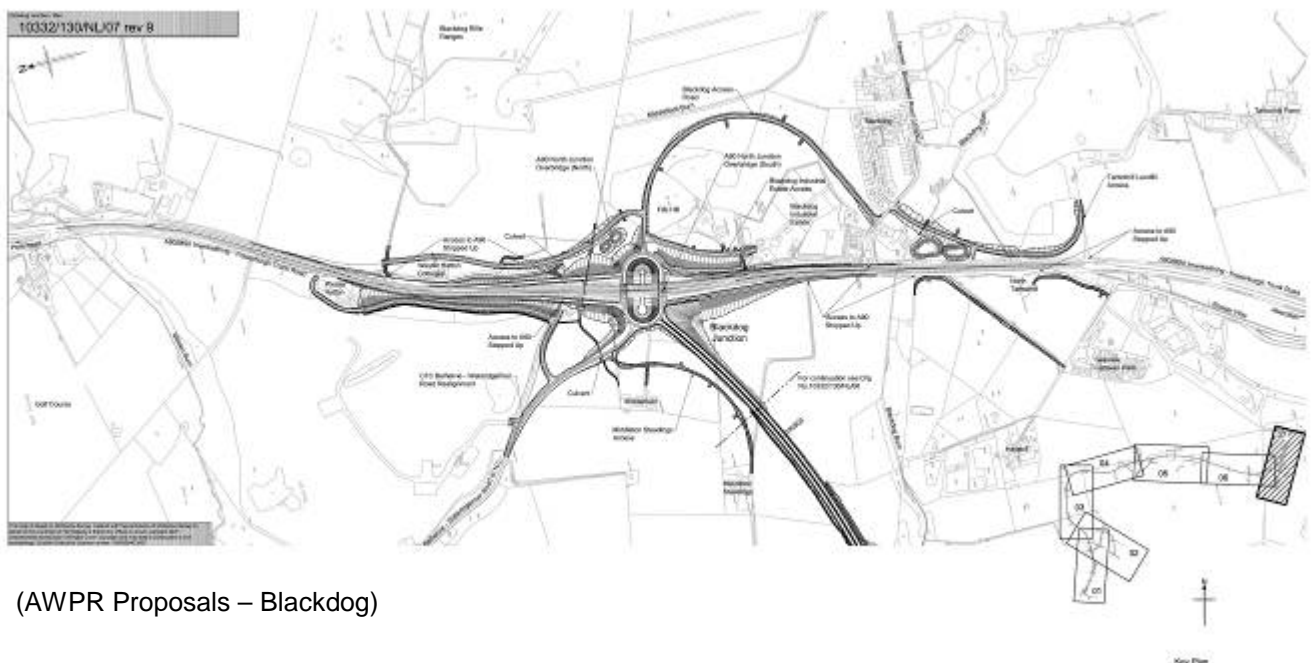
**Light Industrial Park**

4.7 Furthest north of the site and a later phase of the development, a Light Industrial Park is proposed to accommodate light industrial units.

**Key Linkages & Connections**

4.8 From the analysis of the LDP, a key consideration taken through into the proposed Blackdog masterplan is the route and strategy for the AWPR. The main access road into the development follows the approved AWPR Blackdog junction proposals. From the A90/AWPR interchange, the primary route into the site splits southwards and northwards, with the Economic Centre forming the gateway into the site.

4.9 The northward primary route links to the Business Park and Light Industrial Park beyond. This route will run parallel to the A90. The existing access route from the A90 to the rifle range will still be retained. From the interchange, the Economic Centre is accessed via a roundabout allowing access to smaller Business Park units and car park for the Park & Ride, regional foodhall, hotel and retail facilities serving the Landmark Building.



(AWPR Proposals – Blackdog)



- 4.10 The southward primary route connects the Economic Centre to the Village Centre. From this main route east-west connections are then established to the residential areas by way of secondary routes. The primary route connects with Hareburn Terrace.
- 4.11 Moving westwards from the main route will be lower density family housing for future development. The existing settlement will be connected to the proposed development by connecting the secondary route with Hareburn Road. The eastern half of the development is accessed via two links bridging the water feature, leading to a mixture of housing densities, including some flatted development, designed in a series of squares and following the design principles set down in “Designing Streets”.

## Contextual Landscape Analysis and Strategy

- 4.12 The site lies within the landscape character types 4 and 5 (coastal strip and agricultural heartlands) as defined by the SNH Aberdeen LCA Review 1998: the Local Character Areas are Formartine Links Landscape Character (Area 1) and to the west of the site Formartine Lowlands Landscape Character (Area 11).

### **Key Characteristics of Area 1**

- Sandy fringed shoreline with scrub cover of gorse and rough grassland.
- Wind swept open nature interrupted occasionally by woodland or shelterbelts.
- Isolated buildings with associated tree cover.
- Encroachment by farmland into sandy coastal fringe.
- Settlement concentrated in Balmedie.
- Long expansive views along the beach and across the sea.
- Long expansive views along the beach and across the sea.

### **Key Characteristics of Area 11**

- Gently undulating lowland plateau.
- Low-lying hollows of poorly drained, scrubby, rushy rough pasture.
- Large farms with modern buildings and diverse styles.
- Prominent lines of trees and estate woodlands giving local variations in character.
- Extensive areas of open farm land with large fields enclosed by post and wire fencing.

- 4.13 The site is mainly agricultural grassland except for the Community Wood in the southwest which separates the site from housing and the Industrial Estate at Blackdog. Planted some 15 years ago this dense plantation is predominantly Sitka Spruce but with a broadleaf woodland edge (sycamore, rowan, ash) on the southern edge. This is the only significant tree planting on the site. The coniferous core planting is in need of thinning.
- 4.14 The main landscape features within the site are:
- The unnamed burn running through the centre of the site; and
  - The Community Woodland.
- 4.15 The main landscape features surrounding the site are:
- The sand dunes including the Blackdog Rifle Range;
  - The A90 Trunk Road;
  - Landfill sites at Tarbothill, Hill of Tramaud, Wester Hatton and Easter Hatton;
  - Fife Hill (including tree planting); and
  - Industrial buildings at Easter Hatton landfill site.

### **Access Roads and Public Footpaths**

- 4.16 Formal public footpath access is limited to paths associated with the Community Woodland and the car park at the south east corner of the site. A private road crosses the site to link the Blackdog Rifle Range with the A90 as well as providing access to Wester Hatton Cottages. Future access to the site will be provided via a new grade separated junction where the A90 meets the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

## **Adjacent Uses and Character Appraisal**

- 4.17 The Blackdog Masterplan lies within the Formartine Links and Dunes Landscape Character Area (LCA) and prior to adoption of the Local Development was part of the Green Belt. The land is predominantly semi-improved grassland with patches of tall herbicious plants and scattered scrub and bracken.
- 4.18 As mentioned previously, it is bounded by the A90 and the proposed AWPR to the west with the shoreline and beaches to the east. Also, the Blackdog rifle ranges bound the site to the north. The south edge of the site bounds the existing residential settlement. This residential area is clustered around two access roads off Hareburn Terrace linking to the A90. This area currently lacks any public amenities and clear definition of a centre.
- 4.19 Adjacent to this is the Blackdog Industrial Estate which consists of industrial and warehousing buildings and areas of open storage. A mound of open green space separates the residential area and the Industrial Estate. This results in a distinct and noticeable parcelling of development areas and lack of active and safe open spaces. In effect, the residential area lacks a clear sense of place and as a settlement, feels dislocated.

## **Site Constraints and Opportunities**

### **Constraints - Existing Utilities**

- 4.20 A comprehensive desktop study of the site has been undertaken by engineers, Cameron and Ross. Their findings and conclusions can be summarised as follows:

#### **Water**

The only water main in the immediate vicinity is a 100 diameter main which while sufficient to serve a development of up to 40 houses is not adequate to serve the wider development. There is an existing trunk main about 1.5 Km to the west of the site and Scottish Water believes it would be sufficient to supply the site. A new 200 mm diameter main would be required and Scottish Water can obtain the necessary wayleaves for crossing any private land.

#### **Sewerage**

There is a small Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) serving housing developments at Hareburn Terrace to the South. The WWTW is owned and maintained by Scottish Water but is not of a sufficient size to deal with the whole of proposed development. However there is a current capacity for circa 140 Houses which could accommodate an early release of a limited housing development before any upgrade is required. Scottish Water is funded for growth where Local Planning Authorities grant planning for a development. There are two options available to accommodate the level of development proposed at Blackdog, namely building a completely new WWTW or pumping all the sewage from this area (including existing) to Bridge of Don. Scottish Water's preferred option is to pump the sewage to Bridge of Don and they would pay for the cost of the pumping station and mains.

### **Electricity, Gas and Telephones**

There are high voltage 11 KVA cables on the West side of the A90 which while sufficient to serve a development of up to 140 houses are not sufficient to supply the wider development. There are three Primary supplies around the site but none are particularly close. There are two at Bridge of Don (Whitestripes and Westfield Park) and the third is at Balmedie about 4 KM to the North. The preferred solution would be a dedicated 6 MVA cable from Balmedie to the site. There is a 250 medium pressure gas main on the East side of the A90 and adjacent to the site. It is likely that this main will be sufficient to supply the development. There are telephone cables, both underground and overhead, in the vicinity including fibre optic cables.

#### **Constraints - New A90 AWPR**

- 4.21 As identified in the LDP, a new A90 AWPR link road will be constructed and link with the existing A90 at Blackdog. The AWPR will be dualled. This is a constraint on the site and also an opportunity that has been fully recognised and planned for in the masterplan evolution and design. The final route, form and junction arrangements for the A90 AWPR link forming the entry point into the site are subject of ongoing discussions with Council Roads officers and Transport Scotland.

#### **Constraints - Geotechnical**

- 4.22 AECOM Limited have undertaken qualitative risk assessments for landfills sites within the vicinity of the proposed masterplan site and contaminated land assessments at the site. This has confirmed that there are no identified contamination problems (in terms of groundwater results, soil analysis or gas monitoring) which should preclude development at this location.

#### **Constraints - Flooding**

- 4.23 A comprehensive desktop study of the site was undertaken by engineers, Cameron and Ross. To the South of the site is the Blackdog Burn which flows West to East to the North Sea. The Blackdog Burn has a catchment area of 7.95 Km<sup>2</sup> and has a 2 year return period flow of 1.61 m<sup>3</sup>/sec and a 1 in 100 years return period flow of 4.68m<sup>3</sup> /sec. About 55 m to the North of the Blackdog Burn there is a much smaller burn culverted under the A90. This burn flows through the development site in an East to West direction for 280m from the A90 before turning South. This burn drains a catchment area of 1.36 Km<sup>2</sup> and has a 1-2 year return period flow of 0.23m<sup>3</sup>/sec. Neither burn poses a flood risk to the development. There are proposals to form water features within the site and these will take water from and discharge to the burn which flows through the proposed development. The inlets and outlets to the water features will be carefully designed to ensure that the flow in the burn is not affected.

#### **Constraints – Cultural Heritage**

- 4.24 No scheduled ancient monuments and no listed buildings or buildings of historic interest have been identified within the study area. There are also no gardens and designated historic landscapes within the study area. The proposed development site is in an area of potential archaeological value. Following a Phase 1 Archaeological Evaluation in two fields in the centre of the proposed development, a number of archaeological features and possible structures were identified during the evaluation works and assessed by the AOC Archaeology Group as ‘very significant’. The features will need to be excavated and recorded in order to be preserved by archaeological record.

#### **Opportunities - Views**

- 4.25 One of the most notable features of the site resulting from its location and natural topography is the spectacular easterly views out across the North Sea. This is an asset integral to the site that has been observed and carefully considered in the development of the masterplan and indeed forms a defining reasoning behind a large number of the core concepts.

## Landscape and Environmental Appraisals

### **Landform**

- 4.26 The landform of the proposed development site is in three distinct sections. To the south is the shallow valley of the unnamed burn. In the centre there is a shallow ridge at 22m AOD. To the north of the access road to the Blackdog Rifle Range is a shallow valley leading towards Millden Links. The landform surrounding the proposed development site forms a strong enclosure (i.e. Fife Hill, Blackdog Rifle Range and the former Shanks McEwan Landfill site) except to the northwest where the view is open to the A90.

### **Pattern and Scale of the Landscape**

- 4.27 The landscape is generally open and is dominated by the landforms of major landfill sites at Tarbothill, Hill of Tramaud, Wester and Easter Hatton. The settlements at Blackdog and Balmedie in particular have expanded in the last 10-15 years and consist of modern low-rise housing of sub-urban character and scale. Neither village has a strong form to create a unique sense of place and neither is particularly well integrated with the surrounding landscape. As a result the urban edges of the villages are a prominent feature in the landscape. The impact of large-scale industrial buildings at Blackdog Industrial Estate e.g. Burdens is slightly reduced by coniferous woodland but, because of their location on high ground, are prominent landscape features. The landscape to the south of Blackdog is open and almost tree-less. To the west of the A90 the rolling farmland has woodland associated with watercourses, building groupings and a few roadside avenues. The southern section of this landscape i.e. south of Harehill is of a lesser quality and fragmented due to various light industrial and service premises.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.28 The general condition of the landscape of the site and its surroundings is not good mainly due to the existence of the major landfill sites. The impact of these site in operational phase is strong e.g. temporary enclosure structures, uncapped cells and the impact on completion is equally strong e.g. shape, unplanted slopes, vent pipes, slow plant growth etc. The appearance of the A90 road corridor is not good, the style of planting is not consistent and is poorly maintained. Areas where the condition of the landscape is improved include the Community Woodland at Fife Hill and the land that formed part of the former East Aberdeenshire Golf Course.
- 4.29 Although the site is close to the Country Park at Balmedie it has very limited public access and therefore at the most is of moderate to low value for recreational use. The site has potential for improvement by:
- Improving views from the A90 and creating a consistent edge to the road corridor.
  - Integrating Blackdog into the surrounding landscape and improving the setting of the village.
  - Improving and controlling public access to the coastal dune landscape.
  - Creating a high quality gateway to the "Energetica" growth corridor.

## Existing Access, Connections and Movement Patterns

### **Vehicles**

- 4.30 Currently the development site is accessed at Hareburn Terrace from the A90, which is dualled at Blackdog. There is a dedicated right turn stacking lane on the A90 to facilitate access from both directions. A PICADY analysis of the capacity of the existing junction carried out by AECOM has confirmed that the existing junction could continue to operate within capacity and without significant delay and without the AWPR for up to a further 200 residential units at Blackdog. Additional safety improvements for pedestrians crossing the A90 would require to be put in place if considerations are to be given to an early release of housing at Blackdog in advance of the AWPR being constructed.

### ***Existing Pedestrian and Cycles***

- 4.31 There exists an existing Core Path along the western edge of the site passing Skelly Rock and Blackdog Rock. There also exists a Wider Network within the centre of the site and this is taken into account within the masterplan.

### ***Public Transport***

- 4.32 Blackdog benefits from the regular bus services that run between Aberdeen and the settlements of Ellon, Newburgh and Peterhead. The safety issues for pedestrians crossing the A90 dual carriageway to access the bus stop on the western side will in part be resolved with the completion of the AWPR and the new Blackdog junction. Safety issues could also be improved if new safety improvements are brought forward to help facilitate an early release of housing at Blackdog.



(Photos of Existing Junction and Roads)

### **Technical Studies**

- 4.33 A range of technical studies have been undertaken to support and inform the promotion of the Blackdog development proposals and Masterplan. A summary of the studies is given below.

#### ***Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)***

- 4.34 An EIA was prepared in 2010 in support of the Blackdog Local Development Plan allocation and a draft EIA submitted with representations to the Council on the Finalised LDP. The EIA considered the following topics:

- Land Use and Recreation;



- Air Quality;
  - Noise and Vibration;
  - Traffic and Transport;
  - Socio-Economic Factors;
  - Aviation and Bird Strike;
  - Ecology and Nature Conservation (updated in 2011);
  - Ground Conditions, Contaminated Land and Hydrogeology;
  - Hydrology, Flood Risk and Services;
  - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; and
  - Cultural Heritage.
- 4.35 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the proposed development was prepared by AOC Archaeology Group in May 2009 and agreed by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. Following this, an Phase 1 Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken by the AOC Archaeology Group in two fields located to the centre of the proposed development in the proposed locations of the Good Food Market and associated car park area. The works consisted of a 7% sample intrusive evaluation in the two fields with trenching amounting to a total of approximately 7,840 m<sup>2</sup> in well-drained soils.

***Other Studies***

- 4.36 Other studies carried out in support of the economic impact of the proposals included the following:
- **The Good Food Market – Business Case and Community Perspective Report:** This was prepared by SAOS Limited in August 2007. The purpose of this study was to evaluate in detail how the Good Food Market/Regional Food Hall development would positively engage with the various potential stakeholders in both Aberdeen City and Shire;
  - **Good Food Market, Blackdog – Strategic Economic Development Consultation:** This was prepared in March 2009 by Knight Frank LLP who undertook strategic economic development and retail operator consultations in support of the development;
  - **Good Food Market: Economic Impact Appraisal – Part 1:** This was prepared by EKOS Limited in July 2009. The purpose of the study was to undertake the economic impact appraisal of the Good Food Market (convenience retail space) and a Park and Ride facility. This was in order to quantify the potential jobs created at the local and national levels, the potential Gross Value Added (GVA) to the local and national economies, the construction impacts from the associated Masterplan development and displacement effects;
  - **Good Food Market/Regional Food Hall: Economic Impact Appraisal – Part 2:** This was prepared by EKOS Limited in July 2009. The purpose of the study was to undertake the economic impact appraisal of a mixed use development including residential, education office and light industrial elements; and
  - **Proposed Regional Food Hall/Good Food Market – Retail Impact Assessment:** This was prepared in March 2010 by Knight Frank LLP. The Retail Impact Assessment was prepared to support future planning applications for a Good Food Market/Regional Food Hall on land at Blackdog, Aberdeenshire.
- 4.37 The proposed development has significant potential to contribute towards the future economic well-being of Aberdeen City and Shire and help deliver the economic growth as set down in the approved

Structure Plan and ASCEF's Economic Action Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire. In particular the proposed development has the potential to act as a catalyst and driver for strategic economic development initiatives such as the Energetica Corridor Project by the creation of a landmark economic and lifestyle development opportunity, which will provide a viable, food retail and showcase facility for the Region's producers and maximise the potential created by the proposed development site's key location at the northern end of the AWPR and close to the Trump International Golf Resort.

- 4.38 The Economic Impact Appraisal of the proposed development that was undertaken by EKOS Limited in 2009 concluded that the potential benefits arising for the local and national economy from the proposed development were substantial and that the Regional Food Hall/Good Food Market and Park and Ride would create 328 new jobs at the local level and 276 at the national level and have the potential to generate £18.2m additional Gross Value Added (GVA) per annum to the Regional Economy and £17.5m additional GVA at the Scottish level. The office, light industrial and residential elements of the proposed development will create 743 new jobs at the local level and 653 new jobs at the national level and have the potential to generate £39.69m GVA at the local level and £39.65m at the national level.

## **5 Masterplan Vision and Core Aims**

### **Core Aim - Distinctive Placemaking**

- 5.1 The masterplan is based on the creation of a new village centre for Blackdog with local facilities located within pleasant walkable distances along carefully designed routes. Through a series of focal points creating town squares and pedestrian areas, the housing radiates from these centres in carefully designed walking routes, marking the progression of the development and linking the different phases. A mixture of high quality soft and hard landscaping is proposed around cascading pools of water which will provide a focus for the new village. This landscape feature will create an attractive environment for those living and working in Blackdog. The feature landscape will also assist in providing a sustainable drainage strategy for the area. Blackdog's location at the junction of the new AWPR and the A90 Trunk Road and the establishment of a landmark building (Regional Food Market) within the feature landscape will also help make Blackdog a "destination" for visitors from across the north east. The location of the development proposals is a key component to help deliver the Energetica Initiative and assist in building the future economic prosperity of the region. It is also proposed to signpost the development and Blackdog as a destination through the erection of a major piece of public art beside the entrance to the site. The design of a possible sculpture is currently being investigated by the landowner and the Blackdog Design Team.

### **Core Aim - Connection & Integration**

- 5.2 The masterplan is not seen as a stand-alone development, isolated and disconnected from its surroundings. Another core aim is that the development is connected to the surrounding built form as well as the landscape. The existing Blackdog settlement will connect to the proposed village extension via key routes, most notably connecting Hareburn Terrace and the western development. Footpaths and cycleways connect the development to the surrounding landscape especially the eastern part to the coastline. The development will also integrate and strengthen the existing community through the creation of the new village centre, located at the heart of the existing community. This forms a southern anchor and will integrate the new development with the existing settlement. The design of the proposals has been based on national and local guidance including Designing Places, Designing Streets and Energetica Design Guidance.

## **Core Aim - Sustainable Development**

- 5.3 Blackdog is seen as a sustainable development which will nurture a sustainable community. This core aim is seen as a crucial part to the success of the development for those living and working in Blackdog. It will be an exemplar development, setting the standard for future sustainable developments around the area. Walkable distances to areas within the development, pleasant footpath and cycleways as well as the proposed park and ride will help reduce reliance on the car. The landscape feature will encourage biodiversity as well as acting as a sustainable drainage strategy for the area. The Regional Food Market, Business and Light Industrial Parks, Hotel and Community Buildings will provide economic development opportunities and employment for the area. The proposed housing will use high levels of insulation and modern timber kit construction to the highest specifications to deliver low energy usage and low energy bills for the future occupants, a key consideration for developments in the Energetica Corridor. A new central heating strategy for the economic centre is proposed incorporating a biomass energy centre. Together, these factors will create a new sustainable development at Blackdog.

## **6 Masterplan Principles**

### **Making a New Settlement**

- 6.1 The proposed Blackdog development incorporates a variety of mixed uses that promotes sustainability and richness of living. Around 600 new residential units are proposed in accordance with the LDP allocation, with a variety of typologies ranging from flats to villa type houses to the east and west of the water feature.

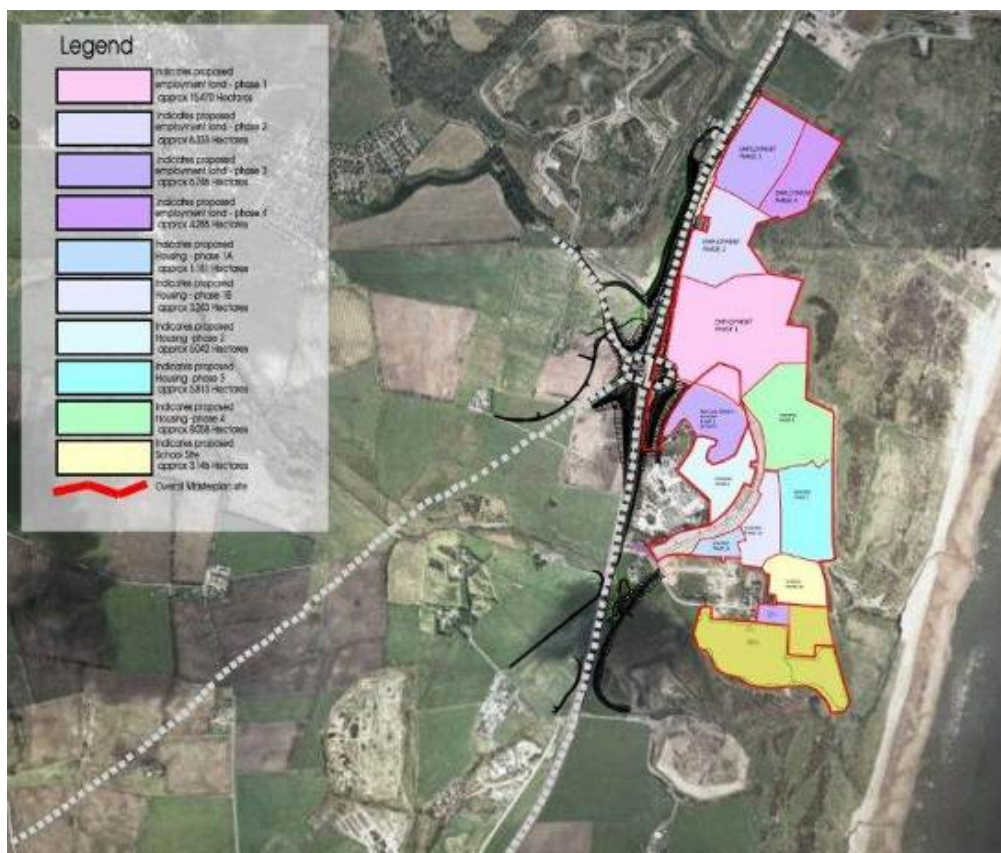


(Aerial Site Photo)

- 6.2 A range of community and educational facilities are proposed to form a new village centre. This southerly location has been chosen for its proximity to the existing residential area and to promote use by both new and existing residential areas and communities. These facilities include a new primary school. Centrally located and forming a gateway into the site, a Landmark Building is set within the quality landscaping and fronts the water feature. It will incorporate a Regional Food Hall with an anchor retailer, a hotel with leisure, conference and catering facilities, medium sized retail facilities as well as a park and ride facility. As mentioned previously, a biomass boiler is also proposed which will provide heat and power for the Economic Centre.
- 6.3 West of the Landmark building, offices and medium sized retail units together form a Business Park for the Blackdog development. The Business Park is also set within high quality landscaping fronting the water feature. North of the development, a new Light Industrial Park is proposed for future development providing a different range of business types within Blackdog.

### Linking to the Existing Village

- 6.4 Vehicular access to the existing community at Blackdog will be provided via Hareburn Terrace and Hareburn Road. Pedestrian and cycle linkages will be provided in a number of locations off Hareburn Terrace and Hareburn Road to provide connections through the new streets created within the development proposals and through amenity open space areas on either side of the proposed primary school. A direct link to the Landmark building with its commercial/business uses will run along the water feature northwards from the primary school which is located immediately adjacent to the existing community.



(Phasing Plan)



## New Housing Areas

- 6.5 In accordance with the policies of the LDP, the Blackdog Masterplan proposes a mixture of house types and sizes to meet housing need in terms of affordable housing and market demand. Affordable housing provision will be provided in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council standards and may include some off site provision and/or commuted payments depending on identified requirements. As stated earlier in this document this may include an element of higher density flatted development, though the height of the flats will be limited to 3-4 stories. Lower density family housing will be provided on the higher and more steeply sloping ground to the west of the new AWPR access road into Blackdog. New housing areas are organised into distinct urban blocks set into a structured hierarchy of primary and secondary streets anchored by public open spaces and designed in accordance with the principles set down in Designing Streets. The new housing will be integrated carefully with the existing housing on Hareburn Terrace and Hareburn Road.
- 6.6 Development at Blackdog aims to meet the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan target of 30 dwellings per hectare or above, as an average across the housing areas of the site. Some areas, such as the lower density family housing development plots will be lower than the 30 dwellings per hectare target and the range of housing densities achievable on the different housing areas is shown in the phasing plan. It is considered that the 600 houses allocated in the Local Development Plan are achievable.

### **Homezones**

- 6.7 A Home Zone approach is proposed for the new housing areas to the east of the AWPR access road. This gives priority to the design quality of public space and the amount of it for community use. The careful positioning of buildings in relation to each other provides the framework for creating such people orientated public spaces, and also helps control traffic movement and speed within them. Building layout will be prioritised so roads do not dictate the form of the built environment and vehicles do not dominate the appearance, function or use of the space between buildings. Home Zone roads should complement building layout by using the minimum design requirements necessary to provide satisfactory access and slow vehicle speed. Home Zones will help promote social inclusion, encourage sustainable urban living and improve the quality of the urban environment at Blackdog.



(Master Plan Conceptual 3D Sketches)



## **Landmark Building and Business and Industrial Park**

### ***Landmark Building***

- 6.8 In considering the Economic Centre for Blackdog, it was an important design as well as planning criteria that the built element forming the centre would not only act as a gateway for the site, but also meet the economic and social requirements for the area. The building will have to balance the need to be a landmark yet be considerate to the surrounding views and landscape. It will also need to meet the economic demand and capacity to sustain as a key feature in the development.
- 6.9 The Landmark Building is laid out in a circular form with soft and hard landscaping (forming the external parking) radiating from the building. This form identifies the central significance of the building within the overall Blackdog development.
- 6.10 The Landmark Building will form the main gateway into the overall development and be the Economic Centre for Blackdog. The building will incorporate a regional food hall (circa 10,000sqm) incorporating retail units. A hotel (100-150 bedrooms) is also associated with the building and it will incorporate leisure, function and catering facilities. Although parking facilities are provided both basement and surface parking, park and ride facilities are also incorporated with the Landmark Building. This forms part of the overall sustainable thinking for the development encouraging less reliance on cars in getting to and from the area. To the north of the Landmark Building, a biomass facility forms the energy and heating strategy for the Economic Centre. As mentioned previously, this in conjunction with other strategies for the development, will help create a sustainable community for Blackdog.

### ***Business Park***

- 6.11 To further strengthen the Economic Centre of Blackdog, a Business Park is proposed to the north of the Landmark Building. This area will provide retail and office floorspace and attract business investments as well as provide job opportunities within the development and to serve the wider Energetica Initiative.
- 6.12 As mentioned previously, the Business Park will incorporate mainly office space totalling approximately 10,000 sqm of floorspace, within 2-4 storey buildings. The proposed 4 storey building will form the key or flagship building for the Business Park.
- 6.13 The built element is set within quality soft and hard landscaping and the buildings arranged so as to provide key views out to sea. This will reduce the visual impact of the built element as well as maintain the visual significance of the surrounding landscape.

### ***Light Industrial Park***

- 6.14 Although planned for a later phase of the development, the area north of Blackdog within the proposed masterplan has been earmarked for light industrial units. The Light Industrial Park is anticipated for 1 storey units totalling approximately 11,000 sqm could be provided.

- 6.15 The landscape feature which runs through Blackdog forms the central element of this area. In considering the main asset of the site, the plots themselves are orientated east/west so as to emphasise key views out to the sea. Parking arrangements for the plots are also to be designed to incorporate the landscape, such that key linkages and access by foot and cycle can be attained to and from the central landscape feature.

## **Access and Connectivity**

- 6.16 The access and connectivity framework for the Blackdog Masterplan sets out a well integrated network of streets, footpaths and cycleways, where a high priority is given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. The framework as stated earlier follows the design principles set down in government guidance, in particular Designing Streets and Designing Places. It also seeks to take account of the needs of existing residents and proposed new residents and business users. Vehicular access to the site is dictated by the design of the access road from the AWPR Blackdog junction.

### ***Pedestrians and Cyclists***

- 6.17 The pedestrian/cycle framework for the Blackdog proposals has been designed to facilitate ease of movement on foot and by cycling across the site and provide connections between housing and the employment area and housing and the new primary school. Connections are also provided to the wider core path network. Two crossings are provided over the proposed water feature.

### ***Public Transport and Park and Ride***

- 6.18 It is envisaged that the bus services that currently serve Blackdog will now come right into the expanded settlement thus addressing the safety issue that currently exists with pedestrians crossing the dual carriageway to access the bus stops on the western side of the A90T. Discussions will require to be held with the bus operator Stagecoach regarding the arrangements to serve Blackdog, however it is envisaged that bus stops will be provided at the proposed Park and Ride site and beside the new access road from the AWPR junction into Blackdog. With the opening of the AWPR there is the potential for additional routes to be created which would serve Blackdog and for other operators to become involved. Consideration will also require to be given to the need to improve the capacity of the AWPR junction to properly service a major Park and Ride site at Blackdog, which may be eligible for funding from the Strategic Transport Fund.

### ***Street Structure***

- 6.19 The street structure has been designed as specific response to the elongated shape of the site and the division between the economic, business and industrial centre and the residential, community and village centre components. A primary service access road is required to take industrial and commercial vehicles safely into the economic, business and industrial centre. Within the business and industrial areas the street structure is more informal whilst still needing to meet the commercial requirements of potential occupiers. As stated earlier pedestrian and cycle links are provided through the landscape feature connecting the economic, business and industrial centre with the residential areas.
- 6.20 The residential areas that lie to the east of the new access road into Blackdog and on either side of the water feature are designed so that the streets are structured around a compact and walkable layout. This area also includes the new primary school and village centre. This area integrates with the existing housing at Blackdog principally through pedestrian and cycle links but also through Hareburn Road. The proposed new residential area that is located on the western side of the new access road

into Blackdog is laid out in a more traditional street pattern principally because of the site topography with steep gradients. This part of the site will be developed at a lower density to address market demand for larger family housing.

- 6.21 The street structure seeks to take advantage of the southerly orientation of the site, views across the dunes towards the North Sea and to provide natural surveillance, particularly of open space and the public realm.

### **Access**

- 6.22 The main access into the site is provided from the new roundabout junction to be formed where the AWPR meets the A90 dual carriageway. Two access points are taken of the new access road to serve the economic, business and industrial centre and the residential, community and village centre components. The existing industrial area at Blackdog is served from the new access road and the existing housing is served where the new access road joins Hareburn Terrace. No frontage access will be permitted onto the new access road. The phasing of the future development proposed for Blackdog is currently allocated to the second phase of the Local Development Plan because of the need for the AWPR Blackdog junction and access road to be in place. The findings of traffic modelling studies undertaken by AECOM on behalf of Colin Tawse, however, confirm that in terms of capacity, the existing Blackdog/A90 junction would technically be capable of accommodating up to 600 residential units. However, when considering the safety issues associated with this junction, it is unlikely that development of that scale would be acceptable. As stated earlier the release of 200 units would be technically feasible subject to the installation of safety measures for pedestrians crossing the A90 and provision made for a second point of access for emergency use. The limited release of housing in advance of the AWPR would potentially assist in helping meet forecast shortages in the housing land supply and is considered under phasing and delivery in Section 7 of the masterplan.

### **Landscape Framework**

- 6.23 The key aims of the Landscape Strategy are to create a high quality setting for the proposed development, improve the amenity of the existing settlement, increase biodiversity and fully integrate with nature conservation and the recreation features of the existing landscape. The strategy aims to create a strong and unique sense of place.
- 6.24 The Landscape Strategy is intended to meet the following basic objectives:
- to reflect the character of the surrounding landscape and to integrate with it, as well as contributing to the long-term renewal of the landscape resource;
  - to make effective connections throughout the proposed development with the existing settlement as well as the surrounding countryside for recreation and nature conservation reasons; and
  - to create signature spaces which express the unique character and potential of the area to provide a high quality place to live and work
- 6.25 The landscape framework for the development consists of parallel north/south belts of woodland which define the edges of the development and a central amenity space which includes a water feature. This framework helps to improve the A90 road corridor and protect the open dune landscape to the east. It will also improve the quality of the setting of Blackdog, increase the biodiversity of the site as well as providing recreational opportunities for the expanded community.



6.26 Woodland in general it will consist of 60% deciduous species including oak and ash and 40% coniferous species including Scots pine as the main mix with an edge mix which will include alder, birch, proportion of sycamore. Opportunities will also be taken to introduce appropriate species which reflect the international component of the north east economy and to reflect the uniqueness of the Energetica Initiative. The form and management of the woodland will take into account the need to control bird populations.

6.27 The proposed water features provide a central amenity feature for the phased development. The source of the water will be managed roof water from the Good Food Market/ Hotel building and the water will be circulated by pump system. Water levels will create a series of attractive features including waterfalls and weirs.

(Landscaping and Water Feature Ideas)

6.28 The central amenity space will be managed as a wild flower meadow with a network of mown grass paths. It will also contain groups of parkland trees, viewing points and incidental play areas. Avenue or boulevard planting is proposed to reflect the new road hierarchy and will also be a major feature in the large area of car parking surrounding the Good Food Market/Hotel building. Formal tree planting in this area will reduce the visual impact of parked cars as well as providing attractive sheltered routes to the main building.

6.29 The level of open space to be provided throughout the site is generous particularly the core spaces to the north of the landmark building, the central water feature and the areas to the south and east of the new primary school. The core spaces will be supplemented by playing field provision, areas of local open space, civic spaces within the new residential areas and children’s play areas. The site also benefits from having excellent access to the amenity areas of the beach and sand dunes.

**Drainage and SUDS Strategy**

6.30 The sub-soil at Blackdog is predominately sand and gravel and is therefore reasonably porous. It is considered therefore that use could be made of soakaways to dispose of surface water. In the housing areas, road water will have two levels of treatment and roof water will have one level of treatment before disposal to either soakaways or the burn. If being discharged to the burn all surface water will be attenuated to pre-development run-off. The industrial, business and economic areas will have two levels of treatment or three levels where used by heavy goods vehicles. In these areas the first and second levels of treatment will be by porous finishes and filter trenches while the third level would be a



dry detention basin at the North end of the site. The SUDS devices would be designed in accordance with the CIRIA guidelines and to Scottish Water adoptable standards.



(Commissioned Community Art Project)

6.31 Scottish Water are funded for growth and when the spare capacity of the existing WWTW has been utilized, the existing WWTW can be extended or the sewerage can be pumped to Bridge of Don. There may have to be capacity checks to some legs of the existing sewers, but this will be confirmed by a Drainage Impact Assessment which will be carried out by Scottish Water at the appropriate time.

### Heights and Massing

6.32 When considering scale and massing for the 2 development, sectional studies were carried out to consider and set appropriate scales for both building heights and adjacent spaces defined by the buildings.

6.33 Definition of the core landscape feature was a key consideration when modelling the appropriate scales or the development and defining the Landmark Building. The Water Feature anchors the development together and creates a north/south and east/west axis and the building heights respond to this relationship.

6.34 To the west of the Water Feature, a maximum of 3 stories was considered an appropriate scale. The scale rises to 4 stories to the east taking advantage of the views out to North Sea. The Landmark Building itself is comprised of a 3 storey podium, housing the Regional Food Market and conference facilities for the hotel. The hotel itself rises to 4 stories which defines its central location in the development.

6.35 The Business Park area sees building heights ranging between 2 and 3 stories. This rises to 4 stories at the key building at the heart of the Business Park. To the north of the development, building heights are kept low with plots for industrial units of 1 stories being proposed. This will form the final phases of the development.

## Urban Design and Character

### *The Blackdog Masterplan*

- 6.36 A key design principle of the development proposals is to expand the existing community while providing the development with a character of its own. The design has moved away from a scheme dominated by the access road from the AWPR. Careful consideration has been given to how the spaces and streets would be made up and to discard a uniform approach. The different phases of the development will be made up of integrated squares and streetscapes which control traffic while providing an attractive setting. The concept has been to break down householders idea of 'mine; and create the mentality of 'ours' giving a neighbourhood sense of pride and local community spirit.
- 6.37 To give the scheme character it will be important to maintain a high consistency of design. At an early stage it will be important to consider the requirements for providing sustainable buildings and to provide continuity of design. House types will be developed to draw on traditional scale and proportions, but with high building envelope specification and modern materials. A mix of house types and roofscapes will make best use of views and landscape features out of the site while maximising interesting vistas within the site.
- 6.38 Along with a sense of connection between the houses we have promoted the connection between the primary school building and the economic centre. The water feature allows for direct views between the 2 focal points to be maintained, defining orientation and giving a sense of place. The definition of these key buildings, gateways and squares promotes a hierarchy of space and legibility.
- 6.39 It will important to ensure the use of a variety of different textures and colours in materials particularly for renders, roof tiles, street surface treatments. It will also be important to provide variety through the use of different roof heights and pitches.

## Energetica Design Guidance and Sustainability

- 6.40 Blackdog is a key employment and lifestyle location within the Energetica corridor. Energetica offers a unique environment, based on the principles of low carbon dependency, while drawing on the dynamism and innovation of the energy industry. It is a place where living, working and recreation will merge seamlessly to create the definitive model of 21st century lifestyle in an attractive, high quality and sustainable environment. Energetica Placemaking Supplementary Guidance has been produced by the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future and adopted by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils to translate the vision for Energetica into clear, concise planning guidance that will be challenging to developers while still being commercially viable. The guidance aims to assist in transforming the Energetica corridor into a high class lifestyle, leisure and business location. It provides clear guidance to all developers on the desired standards that should be adopted when planning new developments such as Blackdog within Energetica. In particular developments in the Energetica corridor will require to have regard to the following 6 criteria:

***1. It is demonstrated, through a range of mixes and uses, and design of structures, that innovation and experimentation have been employed in the pursuit of the highest levels of economic, social, and environmental sustainability; and***



**2. It is demonstrated that the energy performance has been carefully considered in the design process to result in buildings and layouts which have exemplary energy performance or introduce innovation in this regard; and**

**3. Buildings demonstrate future-proofing through flexibility in their design to allow for easy extension or conversion to other uses over the full life-span of the building; and**

**4. It is demonstrated that the layout and design of buildings promotes the creation of social hubs, civic spaces, streets as places, and active frontages within developments; and**

**5. It is demonstrated that the implementation of open space requirements emphasise the aspiration for active lifestyles within the corridor; and**

**6. There is a commitment to the provision of high quality landscaping which contributes to a unified sense of place within the framework area.**

6.41 Regard has been taken of the above guidance and that contained in the Energetica Placemaking Supplementary Guidance in drawing up the masterplan for Blackdog. When detailed designs are brought forward as planning applications justification will be provided in Design and Access statements and Design Statements submitted with planning applications, where appropriate.

6.42 Energetica aspires to be a truly sustainable area providing a model of development for the rest of Scotland and the UK. A key aim is to deliver a quality of place that will attract and retain potentially mobile businesses and the highly skilled staff they require. To achieve this, the guidance is adopting two overarching strategic targets relating to carbon emissions reductions and ecological footprint reductions in the Energetica corridor:

- a carbon emissions reduction of 80% by 2050 (and an interim target of 42% by 2020). This is already a legally binding target of both the Scottish and UK Governments, introduced in response to the threat that climate change presents to the future wellbeing of our society. However, as yet, very few development projects have adopted these targets as a core aim
- an ecological impact reduction target of 66% for new developments. Different countries consume at different rates, but ecological footprinting analysis suggests that, in the UK, we need to reduce our ecological impact by around 66%, if we are to play our part in keeping global impacts within tolerable levels.

6.43 Discussions are at an advanced stage with major housebuilders, a housing association and Robert Gordon University (RGU) to promote a pilot development of 40 houses at Blackdog which will monitor sustainability criteria for building fabric and other low carbon technology as part of the Energetica Initiative. This will be an exemplar project in terms of sustainability and design with the focus being on a fabric solution which maximises thermal performance and the airtightness of buildings and will provide an early impetus to showcase Energetica.

## 7 Phasing and Delivery

7.1 As a major mixed use proposal located within the Energetica corridor the expansion of the existing settlement at Blackdog will require a phasing strategy to ensure the successful delivery of the project. The proposed strategy sets out the key principles for phasing and the direction for development and infrastructure provision. The phasing which is set out in four broad phases is indicative only and flexibility will be required to be maintained within each phase to respond to changing circumstances and ensure successful delivery. The timing and the detail of each phase should be considered at the appropriate stage, however the principles set down here should be used to guide the form and direction of growth ensuring the aims and objectives of the masterplan are realised.

### Phase One

7.2 The initial phase of works will involve the laying out of the new AWPR infrastructure. This will provide necessary access into the site from the A90 as well as connections to the north and south of the site. It will also provide better access to the existing Blackdog Industrial Area and the community to the south. Phase One includes a start on the residential element of the Blackdog proposals at the south western end of the site and sees the building out of the Landmark Building establishing the Economic Centre of the site. Together with this, the southern half of the overall landscape feature will be created involving the water feature, soft landscaping and woodland areas to the east.



(Phase 1)



(Phase 2)

## **Phase One Early Release**

- 7.3 References were made earlier in the document to the possibility of delivering a limited amount of housing in advance of the AWPR infrastructure being in place. There is some capacity in the existing service infrastructure and this provides an opportunity for an early release of at least 40 houses at Blackdog which could be used to showcase the sustainability and design principles being promoted by Energetica. Blackdog is a key site in delivering new employment and housing in the Energetica corridor. The early release of houses at Blackdog would also address a shortage in the housing land supply and provide housing choice in the Ellon/Blackdog Structure Plan Development Corridor in the first period of the plan. At the moment the vast majority of houses allocated in that corridor to the period 2007-2016 are allocated to Ellon.

## **Phase Two**

- 7.4 Phase Two sees the build out of the residential element to the south of the landmark building on the western side of the new access road into Blackdog. This incorporates principally lower density family housing. This phase also sees the establishment of the south western woodland as well as general soft and hard landscaping around the residential areas.
- 7.5 This phase also sees the initial setting up of the village centre and anchoring the development to the south. The sequence and amount of build will depend on market demand. Phase Two will see a start on the business park at the northern end of the Blackdog proposals. This will include soft and hard landscaping as well as woodland.

## **Phase Three**

- 7.6 The third phase sees the establishment of the school once a capacity for its provision has been reached. The school will have an associated playing field and there will be possible shared facilities. This phase is also seen as part of the establishment of the village centre.
- 7.7 This phase also includes the development of housing along the eastern boundary of the site moving northwards from the primary school. Further build out of the business park including office space is programmed to take place in this phase.

## **Phase Four**

- 7.8 The fourth phase will see completion of the housing development along the eastern boundary and the build out of the light industrial park at the northern end of the site. At the beginning of this phase the landscape feature for the light industrial park will be established including soft and hard landscaping and woodland areas.



(Phase 3)



(Phase 4)

## Landscape Implementation

### *Phasing*

7.9

It is intended to carry out land-shaping, woodland planting in advance of each phase of development in order to create a background setting for development as quickly as possible. Avenue/boulevard planting will be carried out as part of the road infrastructure works as will sections of the central water feature. Timeous completion of landscape works will be an important means of establishing the quality of the proposed development.

### ***Bird Control***

- 7.10 The site is located on a flight path used by helicopters and in order to reduce the risk of bird strike a Bird Management Plan will be prepared in consultation with the airport and CAA. The objectives of the Bird Management Plan will be:
- to deter birds of target groups from the water feature.
  - to control the number of other less hazardous groups and exclude them where possible.
  - to conduct further bird management operations as required.
  - to review and amend the strategy at regular intervals.

### ***Management***

- 7.11 It is intended that the landscape features and open spaces within the development will be owned and managed by a management company which will be controlled by the developers, occupiers and residents. It will be financed by service charges. The management details of each area will vary, however the following schedule indicates the general standard of amenity maintenance which will be carried out to ensure adequate management for plant establishment and sustained growth as well as to ensure that landscape works within development plots are maintained to approved standards.
- 7.12 Developers shall make provision for plant replacement at appropriate times during the planting season so that the original intentions of the design are fulfilled. Any debris or material arising from maintenance operations shall be removed off site.

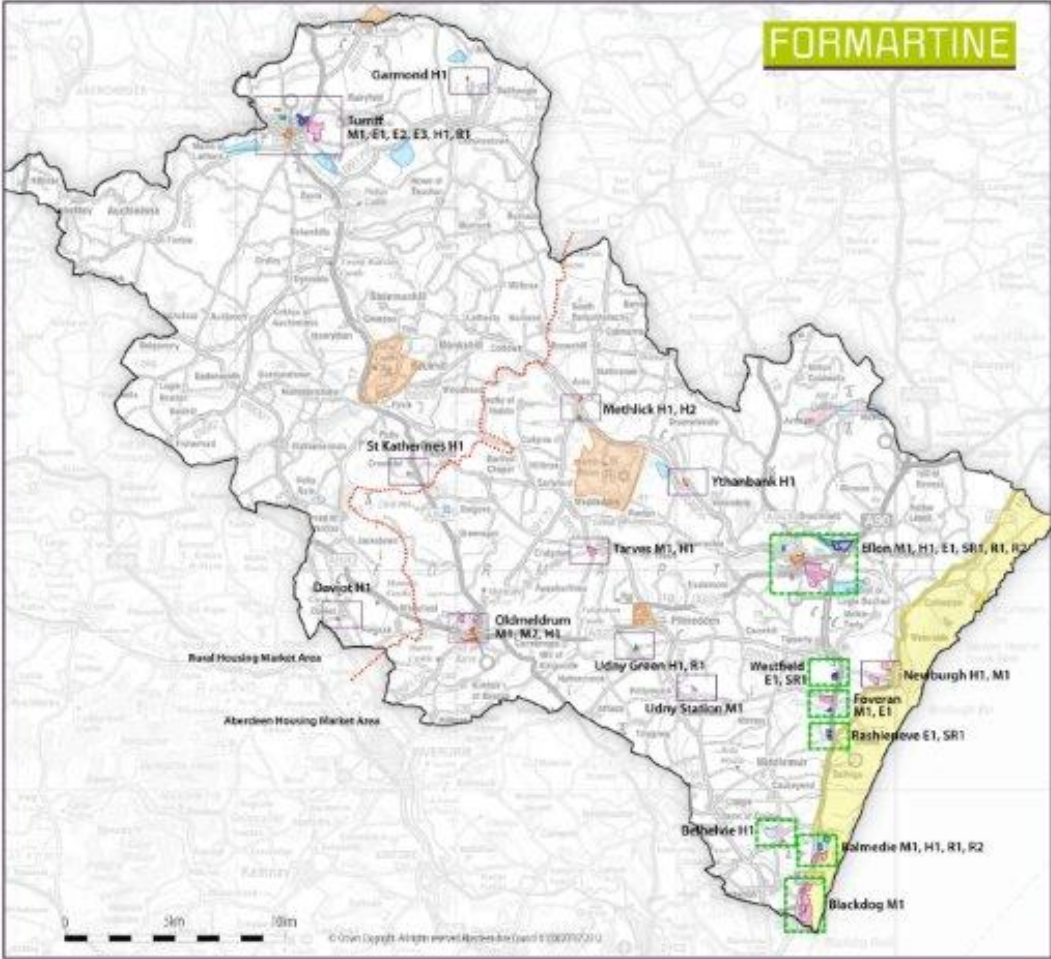
## 8 Appendices



## Appendix 1 - Key Milestones for Blackdog Masterplan



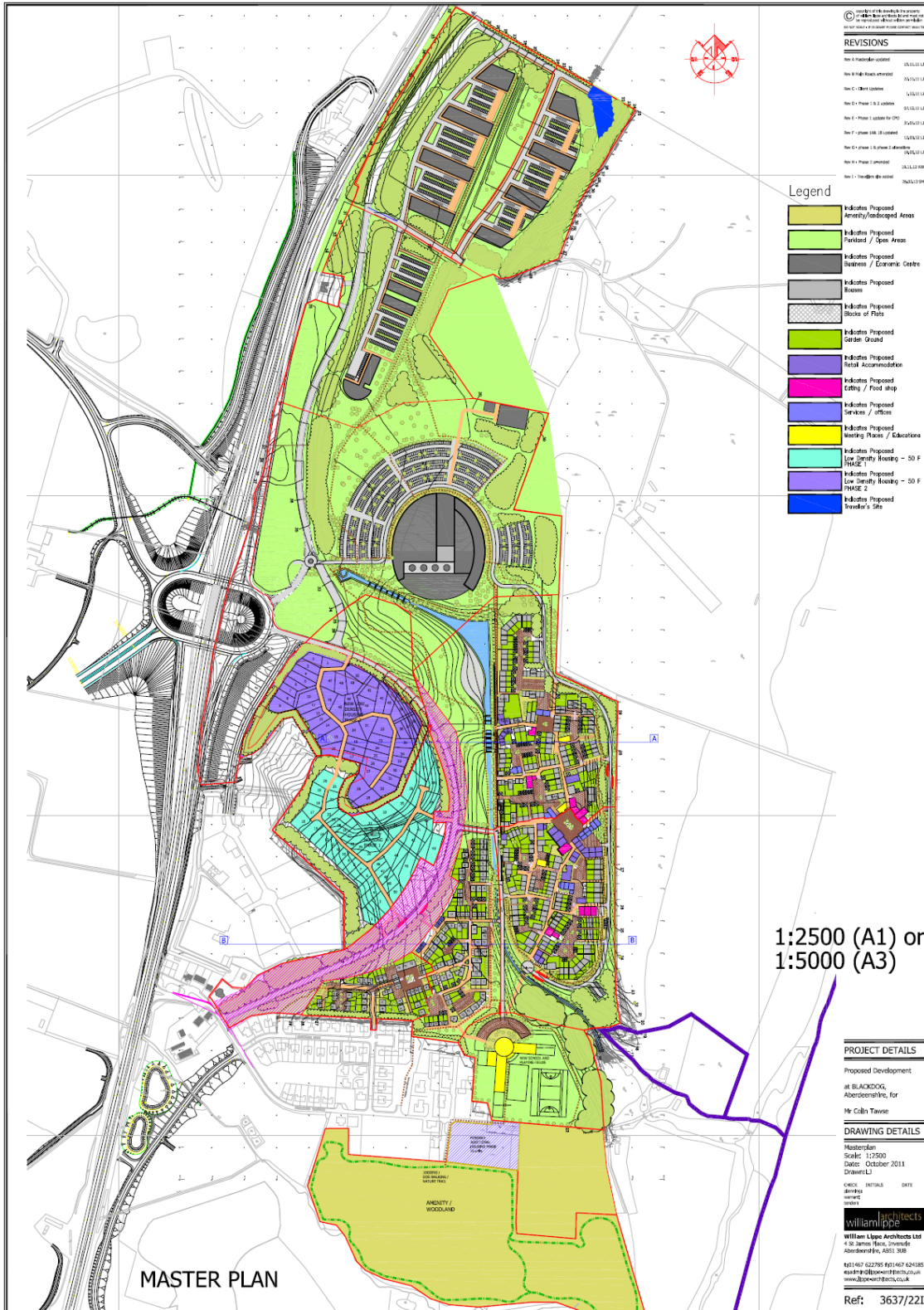
# Appendix 2 – Formartine ALDP



Key			
.....	Housing market rural area boundary (Policies 3 & 10)	■	Mixed use development areas
■	Area safeguarded for minerals (Policy 3)	■	Immediate new housing areas (Policy 5)
■	Area of search for minerals (Policy 14)	■	Housing areas after 2016 (Policy 5)
■	Coastal zone (Policy 4)	■	Reserve housing land after 2016
■	Green belt (Policy 4)	■	Employment land allocation (Policy 1)
■	Designed landscape (Policy 13)	■	Strategic employment land reserve (Policy 1)
■	Regeneration priority area (Policies 1 & 10)	■	Land reserved for community use (Policy 8)
		■	Retail Centres (Policy 2)
		■	Settlements within strategic growth area

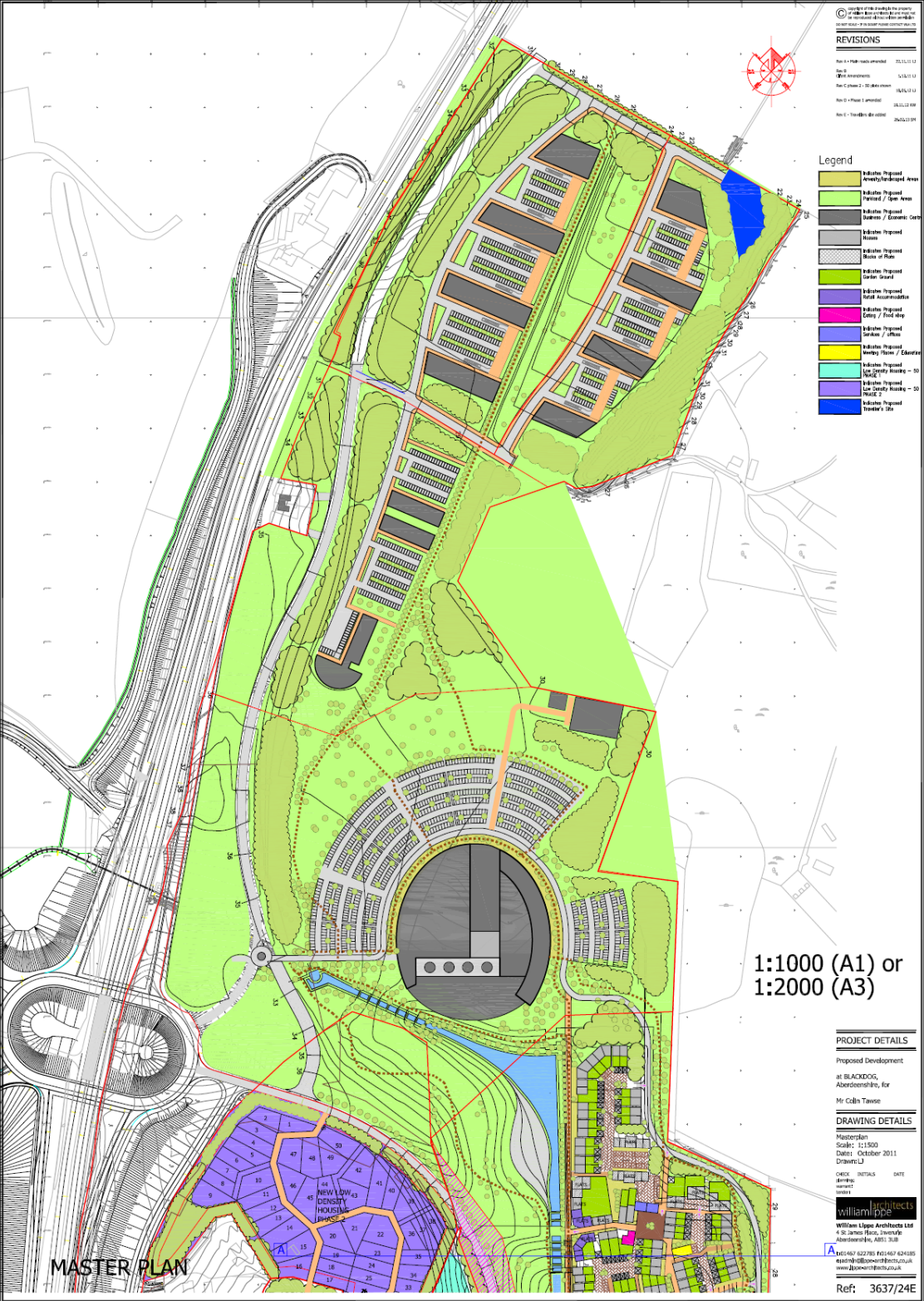
For detailed site boundaries see the settlement statements published separately

# Appendix 3 – Overall Masterplan

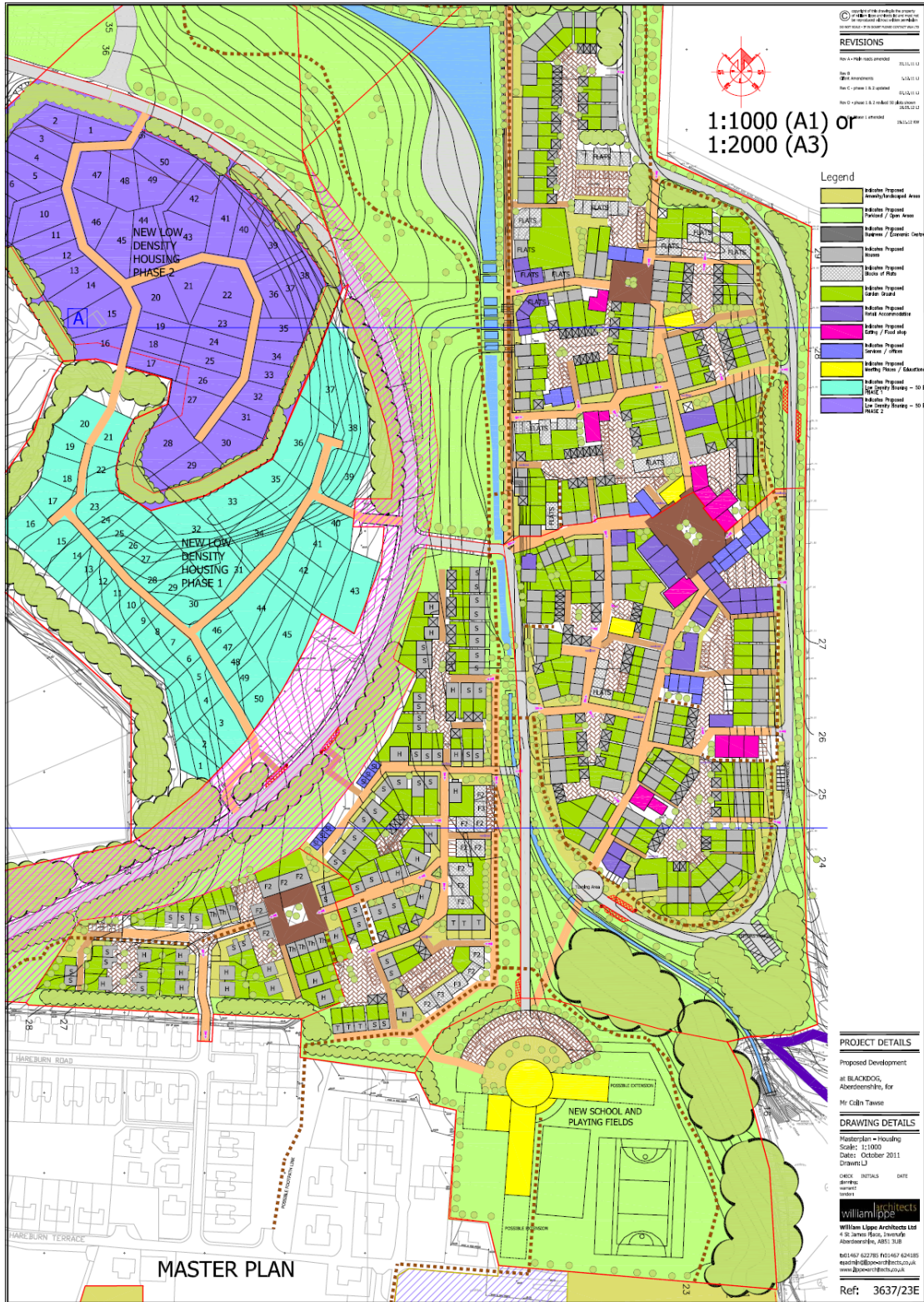




# Appendix 4 – Masterplan – Business Land



# Appendix 5 – Masterplan – Residential Development Land





# Appendix 6 – Masterplan – Residential Development Phase 1

