

ANGUS COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 17 OCTOBER 2023

PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE
LETHAM GRANGE DEVELOPMENT COTTON'S CORNER
LETHAM GRANGE ARBROATH

GRID REF: 362564 : 745709

REPORT BY MANAGER – DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Abstract: This report advises committee that a proposal of application notice (PAN) (ref. [23/00599/PAN](#)) has been submitted on behalf of Smartwill Investment Limited for a major development comprising a hotel and spa, holiday accommodation, reconfiguration of golf course, golf clubhouse, restaurant, leisure uses, residential development, business enterprises, retail, community facilities & spaces, biodiversity enhancement and associated development on land at Letham Grange, Arbroath. Committee is invited to identify issues which it would like to see addressed in the planning application.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that committee notes the key issues identified at this stage and advises of any other issues it considers should be addressed in any planning application that is subsequently submitted.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 19 June 2014, council approved a guidance note on the role of Councillors in pre-application procedures in respect of national and major planning applications (Report 275/14 refers). A key element of that guidance requires officers to present a report to committee when a PAN is submitted. Such a report will identify the anticipated key considerations in the determination of any subsequent planning application and will allow Members opportunity to identify any additional issues that should be addressed when a planning application is submitted.
- 2.2 A PAN (ref. 23/00599/PAN) has been received. It indicates that an application for planning permission is to be submitted for major development at Letham Grange, Arbroath which may include a hotel and spa, holiday accommodation, reconfiguration of golf course, golf clubhouse, restaurant, leisure uses, residential development, business enterprises, retail, community facilities & spaces, biodiversity enhancement and associated development. A plan showing the location of the site has been submitted and is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The submitted PAN sets out the proposed pre-application consultation (PAC) activity that the applicant intends to undertake with the local community. This is indicated to involve two public exhibitions, the first at Colliston Village Hall on 3 October 2023 with the second at Arbroath Old and Abbey Church, Arbroath on 7 November 2023.
- 2.4 A planning application cannot be submitted within the period of 12 weeks from the submission of a valid PAN.
- 2.5 The results of the community consultation will be submitted with any subsequent major planning application in the form of a PAC Report as required by Development

Management Regulations.

- 2.6 A PAN (ref: [21/00360/PAN](#)) for a proposed major development comprising a residential led development with hotel and commercial facilities and the reconfiguration of existing golf courses at this location was considered by committee at its meeting on 15 June 2021 (report [204/21](#) refers). It is understood that the proposed consultation activity was not progressed at that time.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Committee is aware that planning legislation requires decisions in respect of planning applications to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this respect a number of policies in [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) and in the [Angus Local Development Plan \(ALDP\)](#) will be relevant to the proposal.
- 3.2 NPF4 indicates that we will plan our future places in line with six overarching spatial principles that relate to Just transition; Conserving and recycling assets; Local living; Compact urban growth; Rebalanced development; and Rural revitalisation. It is indicated that applying these spatial principles will support sustainable places; liveable place; and productive places. This is underpinned by national planning policies that deal with a range of topic areas that would be relevant to consideration of any future planning application at this location.
- 3.3 The Angus Local Development Plan (ALDP) identifies the council's development strategy. It seeks to: -
- guide the majority of development, including local housing and employment opportunities, to locations within the towns that have the capacity to accommodate new development well integrated with existing infrastructure, and which serve as locally accessible centres serving a diverse rural hinterland;
 - maintain and protect the diversity and quality of the rural area and encourage local development which supports the population and services of local communities;
 - provide opportunities for appropriate diversification of the rural economy; and
 - maintain the quality of valued landscapes, the natural, built and historic environment, and biodiversity.
- 3.4 The ALDP also indicates that development in the rural area will be focused on the rural service centres (Edzell, Friockheim, Letham and Newtyle) which have the most significant number and range of services. It indicates that provision is made for small-scale residential development of around 50 dwellings at each location over the period of the plan. The plan recognises that there are several locations in Angus where residential development has taken place in association with golf course, leisure and tourist based activity. It indicates that these stand-alone developments include no community infrastructure (e.g. shops, primary school, health care facilities) requiring residents to travel for virtually all their needs. At Letham Grange it is indicated that additional housing development will only be considered where it is required to cross-subsidise tourism and recreation development.
- 3.5 The land subject of the PAN is located within the Letham Grange estate which is identified in the ALDP as an existing settlement. The Development Strategy for Letham Grange indicates support for proposals which provide for the long-term viability of the tourism and recreation facilities; protecting and enhancing existing residential amenity and environmental quality of the area; supporting proposals to reuse the listed buildings and associated buildings; and additional housing development only being considered where it is required to cross subsidise tourism and recreation development. The ALDP states proposals that support or enhance the recreational potential of Letham Grange will be supported where they are compatible

with existing uses and do not adversely impact on the amenity and environment of the area. Development proposals at Letham Grange require to be assessed in the context of Policy LG1 in the ALDP which states: -

LG1: Letham Grange

Proposals which enhance or expand the tourism and recreation potential of the Letham Grange complex will be supported where:

- *they are compatible with the existing land uses/activities and are not detrimental to the area's unique environment;*
- *they are compatible with the protection of the amenity of existing residential areas;*
- *they support the restoration of Listed Buildings and their setting;*
- *any reduction of the existing golf course provision is demonstrated to be necessary and that the remaining provision is viable; and*
- *links are made to the existing path/cycle network.*

Limited housing development outwith the existing residential areas will only be considered where it is necessary to cross-subsidise development of tourism and recreation facilities within the complex.

Development proposals must be accompanied by supporting information including a Drainage Impact Assessment, Sustainable Drainage and Surface Water Management Plan, Flood Risk Assessment, Conservation Plan for the Listed Buildings and Transport Assessment as appropriate.

A TPO applies to part of the site and Tree and Bat surveys may be required to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site and its contribution to the green network.

- 3.6 Other policies in the development plan will be relevant, including those that deal specifically with tourism, residential, leisure, business, retail and community facility development; tackling the climate emergency, accessibility, and local living; design quality; protection of amenity; safeguarding and provision of open space; natural and built environment protection and enhancement; infrastructure capacity; and developer contributions.
- 3.7 Letham Grange was developed over a number of years as a recreational and residential area comprising a hotel and leisure complex, two golf courses and sites for 140 houses located in dispersed groups throughout the estate. It operated successfully for several years, but the hotel and golf courses subsequently closed. The listed building that accommodated the hotel is now in a deteriorating condition and the golf courses have not been maintained for some time.
- 3.8 In these circumstances it is considered that the key issues in relation to the determination of a subsequent planning application will be whether the proposal complies with development plan policy or whether there are other material considerations that justify a departure from that policy. In this respect the main considerations are likely to be the compatibility of the proposal with development plan policy and associated guidance having particular regard to the following matters: -
- Acceptability of the mix of land uses and location of development taking account of relevant development plan policies, including issues related to the tourism and recreation potential of the area, impact on character and amenity, and the town centres-first and local living principles.
 - Acceptability of the proposed and resultant scale of development at this location having regard to the intent and strategy of the development plan, including the overarching aim of tackling the climate and nature crises, and the ALDP strategy

to guide the majority of residential development to locations within towns that have the capacity to accommodate new development well integrated with existing infrastructure, and which serve as locally accessible centres serving a diverse rural hinterland.

- Acceptability of the proposed access arrangements for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles, and the suitability of access and transportation provision in the area generally having regard to location and accessibility of local services.
- Impact of additional large-scale residential development on the wider housing market area, housing land requirements, and the development plan strategy.
- Provision of affordable housing having regard to the council's approved [Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions and affordable housing](#) and whether this is a good location for a sizeable affordable housing development having regard to issues of accessibility.
- Suitability of the residential environment that would be created for occupants of the proposed residential units.
- The acceptability of impacts on occupants of existing properties and neighbouring land uses.
- Built environment considerations, including the acceptability of the proposed layout and design of buildings and open space as assessed in the context of the council's approved [Supplementary Guidance on design quality and placemaking](#), and impact of development on built heritage interests, in particular listed buildings.
- Natural environment considerations, including the impact on habitats and species, protected trees, and existing open space areas, biodiversity enhancement, and the acceptability of open space and landscaping provision, including subsequent maintenance.
- Impact of development on existing infrastructure, in particular impacts on the local road and drainage networks, the education estate, and health infrastructure capacity having regard to the council's approved [Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions and affordable housing](#).
- Impact on the water environment, including drainage, flood risk and associated mitigation.
- Justification to support the nature and scale of development proposed, in particular issues regarding economic impact, and the provision of residential development to enable repair and reuse of listed buildings and to facilitate golf course works, and whether those benefits outweigh any conflict with development plan policy.
- Planning history and previous development approved to support the leisure and tourism operation.
- Any opinions expressed on the proposal by statutory and non-statutory consultation bodies.
- Any third-party representations that raise material planning issues.

3.9 Other issues may emerge through publicity of the proposal and through the pre application consultation process associated with any resulting planning application. The above matters are considered to represent the key issues at this pre-application stage that are likely to be determining factors for any subsequent planning application. However, Committee is invited to identify any additional material planning considerations that it would wish to see addressed in a planning application for residential development at the site.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The human rights implications associated with the proposal will be considered in the determination of any subsequent application for planning permission.

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

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APPENDIX 1: LOCATION PLAN