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<b>Which document(s) are you commenting on?</b>	Main Issues Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Draft Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Environmental Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Your comments

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED REPORT (RELATING TO FOVERAN NORTH FR142, FR143, FR117)

**Your comments (continued)**

**ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
RESPONSE TO MAIN ISSUES REPORT  
FOVERAN NORTH  
FR142, FR143, FR117**

**APRIL 2019**

On behalf of  
Harper & Cochrane Ltd



HALLIDAY FRASER MUNRO  
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS & PLANNING CONSULTANTS



**HALLIDAY FRASER MUNRO**

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS & PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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# HALLIDAY FRASER MUNRO

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Halliday Fraser Munro, Chartered Architects and Town Planning Consultants, on behalf of Harper & Cochrane Ltd. It is written in response to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2019 (MIR).
- 1.2. At the 'Call for Sites' stage in March 2018, three development bids were lodged for the land at Foveran North:
  - **FR142** – Foveran North phase 1 - village centre, commercial uses, up to 150 houses;
  - **FR143** – Foveran North phase 2 – up to 140 houses, public park / open space;
  - **FR117** – Enerfield Business Park West – 11.9ha of business / employment land opportunities.
- 1.3. Our client has a proven history of delivering development in Foveran, being responsible for the promotion, allocation, masterplanning and phased delivery of the Foveran 2017 Local Development Plan allocations at Westfield OP1 and Ardgill OP2.
- 1.4. The original Masterplan vision for Foveran was:

*“For many years the residents of Foveran have been left frustrated by poor connectivity, sub-standard amenities, inadequate drainage and constrained school facilities.*

*We believe that this development has the potential to overcome many of these issues and make Foveran a destination for modern living.*

*Foveran sits in the heart of the new Energetica and Strategic Growth Corridors, therefore is ideally located for investment and development. We would like to assist in bringing this disjointed community together to create a village with new employment opportunities, modern amenities and a school with updated facilities.*

*A community that residents and future generations can enjoy in making Foveran a community for all.”*



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1.5. The Foveran North bids presented seek to further develop and enhance the vision expressed through the Westfield and Ardgill Masterplan back in 2013. Following its approval, much has taken place in and around Foveran to deliver the vision. This includes:

- Allocation of the land at Westfield and Ardgill for residential and employment use;
- Creation of a mixed - use employment hub at Westfield;
- Delivery of mixed tenure housing at Westfield;
- Delivery of commercial development at Enerfield;
- Delivery of Anaerobic Digester Plant north of Enerfield;
- Detrunking of the A90;
- Qualification for the Scottish Water Growth Funding Project;
- Improved / safer paths to Foveran primary school and bus stop.

1.6. The original masterplan is delivering the foundations of a real community. The bids and vision for Foveran North offer the potential to enhance the settlement's role as a service centre and create a well - connected, mixed-use focal heart to the village that is currently lacking.

1.7. Foveran is one of the key locations within the Energetica Corridor. To date, the landowner is one of the few people that is actually delivering on its development strategy, in line with Energetica. This includes new, sustainable housing (at Westfield OP1), new mixed-use employment opportunities (at Westfield and at Enerfield), and the creation of an anaerobic digester producing enough green power for 6,000 houses (at West Pitmillan). Work is also starting on a new multi-million-pound gluten free Oat Plan, that will employ five people, one of the first of its kind in the UK. The land also lies within the Aberdeen - Peterhead Strategic Growth Area (SGA) identified in the Strategic Development Plan.

1.8. Westfield and Enerfield presently comprises:

- The Barn (formerly known as The Store) coffee shop employs 15 people;
- Homes Systems Scotland office and warehouse employs five people;
- Hairdresser / Savock Farm Office employs eight people;
- West Pitmillan anaerobic digester employs four people;
- Enerfield (Euronet) office and warehouse facilities employ seven people.

1.9. Foveran North creates the natural link that is currently missing in Foveran, linking Enerfield to Foveran village and using the existing mixed use employment and retail facilities at Westfield as the centre of the settlement. It is important to realise that Foveran North is not just a housing development, the vision is to create a sustainable village.

1.10. The Proposed Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Plan states that SGAs will accommodate 75% of all new development in the Region. Within the Draft Proposed Local Development Plan, The Aberdeenshire part of the Aberdeen Housing Market Area is however anticipated to accommodate only 2,501 houses through new allocations. We consider this is an





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extremely low estimate and requires to be increased through additional sites in appropriate, sustainable locations in identified growth areas being added to the Proposed LDP, such as those proposed at Foveran through bids FR142 and FR143. Many allocations in the SGAs are failing to deliver the envisaged number of houses in the current LDP, however Foveran is.

### 2. Bid and MIR Summary

- 2.1. Bid **FR142**, Foveran North phase 1 sets out proposals for the next phase of development in Foveran following the completion of the build out on currently allocated sites OP1 and OP2 that is currently well underway. The site is partially brownfield, already supporting housing and commercial uses centred around Westfield. Foveran North Phase 1 is considered suitable for 150 houses, village centre (retail / nursery) and community uses (potential school relocation / sports centre / playing fields). The existing retail offer at Westfield provides the ideal centre and catalyst through which to create a real mixed use, diversified village centre that can serve the existing and future Foveran Community. This proposal offers the opportunity to further expand and diversify the range of facilities and services within Foveran to meet the aim of it becoming a 'proper' connected village with a mix of uses and associated community benefits. Foveran's location within the Aberdeen – Peterhead Strategic Growth Area and Energetic Corridor makes it ideally placed to accommodate such development, in line with the strategy of the Proposed SDP and Main Issues Report.
- 2.2. Bid FR142 is not currently a 'preferred' development option. The Main Issues Report (officer's summary and assessment of bid) states:

*'150 homes.*  
*The scale of the proposed development (when viewed in conjunction with current development in Foveran and a future related phase of development included as separate bid) would create an unnatural extension to the north which would erode all the character of the original form of the settlement.*

*Furthermore the entire site is identified as prime agricultural land and could have a potential implication on the existing road network whilst approximately half of the site is within a waste water hotspot. This site (and associated phase 2 bid) are considered to be unsuitable for development.'*
- 2.3. The Officers' view and associated issues will be examined in more detail below, however it is clear that the principle issue is that of the scale of development. In the interests of delivering a viable mixed-use village extension, 150 houses and commercial uses across an area of 13.8ha is sensible and in line with policy set out in the MIR on housing density. We note the MIR assessment fails to mention and assess the proposed community and commercial uses that form part of the LDP bid. These are essential elements that will help to deliver the "Character" that is currently absent from the village.
- 2.4. FR142 extends to 13.8ha. in terms of considering development areas and densities, 3.8ha can be subtracted for commercial and community uses, leaving 10ha for residential use. 40% of this should be given over to open space within the development in line with existing and proposed policy. This



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leaves a residential developable area of 6ha. Applying the proposed average housing density of 25 homes per hectare set out in the MIR (Main Issues Report 10 – Housing Numbers on Sites) gives an acceptable number of 150 house on bid site FR142. The boundaries of the FR142 bid site are based on existing physical field boundaries.

- 2.5. In the 2017 Local Development Plan, Foveran benefits from land allocated for 100 houses and 5ha of employment land (OP1), 75 houses (OP2) and 1.5ha of employment land (OP3). The original village (Pre OP1 development) comprises around 75 houses. We do not therefore consider that a further 150 houses delivered as part of a mixed-use development as the next development phase, to a settlement of what will ultimately comprise at least 250 houses is out of scale, particularly given its location within the Energetica Corridor and Strategic Growth Area.
- 2.6. Bid **FR143** is not currently a ‘preferred’ development option. The Main Issues Report (officer’s summary and assessment of bid) states:

*‘Housing (mixed) (estimated **410** homes)*

*The scale of the proposed development (when viewed in conjunction with current development in Foveran and a future related phase of development included as a separate bid) would create an unnatural extension to the north which would erode all the character of the original form of the settlement.*

*Furthermore the entire site is identified as prime agricultural land and could have a potential implication on the existing road network whilst approximately half of the site is within waste water hotspots. This site (and associated phase 1 bid) are considered to be unsuitable for development.’*

- 2.7. It is clear that the same text has been used in assessing bids FR142 and FR143, however they are for different proposals and uses. We wish to clarify that the scale of residential development promoted through bid FR143 was circa **140** homes, not **410** as referenced in the MIR, which is a massively different scale of development.
- 2.8. FR142 is presented as a sensible, deliverable mixed-use next phase of development immediately opposite the under construction OP1 Westfield site and centred around the existing employment uses at Westfield. FR143 can be considered as a potential second phase, strategic reserve housing site that would take the form of infill development between FR142 and existing commercial development at Enerfield (OP1 / BUS). The allocation of this land as a second phase reserved residential site will safeguard the delivery of the overall vision for Foveran.
- 2.9. Bid **FR117** for employment uses is supported by Officers as a ‘Reserved’ longer term employment allocation. This is supported by our clients, the site proposers. There is reference to access being a potential development constraint. This is not the case as access through the existing West Pitmillan site is also owned by our clients. In summary our clients support the proposals for FR117 as outlined in the MIR. We note the retention of site FR118 and support this. The FR117 and FR118 sites are



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complimentary to the Foveran North bids, relative to the vision of a connected, mixed-use community.

### 3. Main Issues Report Comments on FR142 and FR143

- 3.1. In this section we will review and comment on the Officer's views on both bid sites FR142 and FR143 in the MIR. The text is identical for both bids, although they are for different proposals.
- 3.2. ***'The scale of the proposed development (when viewed in conjunction with current development in Foveran and a future related phase of development included as a separate bid) would create an unnatural extension to the north which would erode all the character of the original form of the settlement.'***
- 3.3. The suggestion that the development would 'create an unnatural extension to the north' is unfounded. Development already exists north of the Cultercullen Road at Westfield and the group of houses to the east. There is already an existing commercial hub at Westfield, and the FR142 bid proposes to give this a more central, diversified role by creating a mixed-use village centre. We note that Officers' 'preferred' bid site FR082 is also north of the Cultercullen Road and is directly adjacent to and parallel with the FR142 site. FR082 is described in the MIR as '*well located in relation to the settlement*'.
- 3.4. As discussed above, development has been proposed at a density in line with the housing policy in the Draft Proposed LDP and also includes provision of public open space in excess of that required by policy. The land take is considered entirely reasonable and the site boundaries are defined by existing field boundaries.
- 3.5. In terms of considering the character of Foveran, the settlement does not have distinct character as such. Foveran has grown up as a disjointed collection of houses west of the former A90 and north and south of the Foveran Burn. The buildings do not benefit from a coherent character, they are of a variety of styles and ages. The development proposed through the OP1 and OP2 allocations, and that proposed in the future through FR142 and FR143 seeks to redress this by linking the north and south elements of the village, providing a range and mix of uses, and improving connectivity and permeability through and around the settlement and creating and delivering the mixed-use heart of the village. We do not therefore see how the proposals would 'erode all the character of the original form of the settlement'.
- 3.6. ***'Furthermore the entire site is identified as prime agricultural land and could have a potential implication on the existing road network whilst approximately half of the site is within waste water hotspots. This site (and associated phase 1 bid) are considered to be unsuitable for development.'***
- 3.7. Dealing firstly with the issue of 'Prime Agricultural Land' (PAL), one of the key purposes of the LDP process is to allocate suitable land for future development in and around existing settlements. This process will undoubtedly result in agricultural land on the edge of settlements, some of it prime,



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being lost to development. Existing Foveran allocations at OP1 and OP2 are on PAL. The 'preferred' Foveran allocations at FR067, FR065/66 are on PAL. Of most relevance to the FR142 and FR143 bids is the 'preferred' allocation of 14 homes at FR082, directly adjacent to FR142. In terms of FR082, it is stated in the MIR that *'the proposed site is well located in relation to the settlement. Loss of prime agricultural land in the western section of the site is justified to allow growth in this part of Foveran and the wider Energetica corridor.'* We do not see what the difference is between FR082 and FR142 in terms of the principle and location of development. Both sites are well-related to Foveran and the measured loss of PAL can be justified.

- 3.8. The MIR states that development on FR142 and FR143 could have a 'potential implication' on the existing road network. Having been involved in land promotion at Foveran for over ten years, we can confirm that the existing local road network has been significantly improved following the opening of the Balmedie – Tipperty dual carriageway (A90) as part of the AWPR works. Previously the A90 trunk road ran adjacent to Foveran Primary School and housing. This created a risk for schoolchildren and other pedestrians. The detrunking of this road has removed this risk and greatly improved pedestrian circulation opportunities around the settlement. Through traffic has been completely removed from Foveran as a result.
- 3.9. The adjacent detrunked former A90 now provides a safe, low trafficked road with safe linkages onto the A90 dual carriageway. The new A90 obviously has much greater traffic capacity than the previous A90. The new road also allows school children in Foveran to safely walk between the school and the playing fields. We cannot therefore see how the development proposals at FR142 and FR143 would have a 'potential implication' for the existing road network. Greater, safer capacity now exists.
- 3.10. The MIR suggests that part of the site is within 'waste water hotspots'. We are aware that a programme of First Time Provision public foul drainage to serve existing and allocated development in Foveran has been initiated by Scottish Water through a Growth Funding Project. Similar to the road upgrades, this has been a proposal that has been on the table for a number of years but is now coming to fruition and is due to be in place by 2022. A treatment plant is proposed at Foveran that will then pump to the existing mains sewer system at Newburgh. We do not consider that foul drainage provision therefore represents a constraint to development. Future development can be taken into account through the LDP preparation process, as would typically be the case.
- 3.11. A review of the Strategic Environmental Assessment undertaken for the FR142 and FR143 bids highlights some relevant aspects. It is noted that the sites have access to a busy bus route, reducing the need to use the private car. We agree with this assertion. There is reference to a visual impact assessment being required if the sites were to be allocated. This can be provided in support of any planning application proposals. Although the development proposal will alter the current character of the farmland, the landscape around Foveran has the capacity to accept an appropriately laid out large scale development.



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3.12. In summary, the issues raised in the Officers' overview of FR142 and FR143 bid sites in the MIR do not represent a constraint to development.

### 4. Housing Strategy

- 4.1. The housing strategy contained within the Main Issues Report relies heavily on existing allocated sites, a generic densification across sites within the AHMA and some limited small-scale allocations across the area to meet Strategic Development Plan (SDP) housing requirement. This approach raises serious concerns on the range and scale of housing that can be delivered on the back of that do-minimum strategy, the practicality of delivering significantly increased density on certain sites preferred in the MIR, and the relationship between that strategy, the SDP in its final form when approved later in 2019 and national policy on delivering more housing and a range of housing more effectively.
- 4.2. Additional allocations, in suitable locations are required to deliver the SDP's housing requirement. Bid sites FR142 and FR143 at Foveran North present such an opportunity. The sites lie with the SGA, are based around an existing but disjointed settlement and benefit from good transport links, pre-existing infrastructure, existing and offer the potential to create a real mixed-use settlement with a range of services and facilities based around the existing Westfield Hub.
- 4.3. We would respectfully request that FR142 is allocated for up to 150 houses, commercial and community use in the first phase of the LDP with FR143 allocated as a Reserved site for up to 140 houses.

### 5. Conclusion

5.1 As set out in the preceding sections, the proposed mixed-use, phased development proposed through bid sites FR142 and FR143 at Foveran North represent a measured future expansion of Foveran. FR142 should be allocated in the first LDP plan period, FR143 should be reserved for the latter plan period. FR117 should be allocated in the Proposed LDP as set out in the MIR. We believe there are no constraints to development, and the land should be considered an appropriate, effective opportunity in the 2021 Local Development Plan for the following reasons:

- **The scale of development proposed is in line with densities sought through the MIR;**
- **The proposals will bring a mix of uses and diversity not currently present in Foveran;**
- **The location and direction of growth promoted is perfectly reasonable and sensible;**
- **The sites lie within the Strategic Growth Area;**
- **The local road network is safer and has increased capacity following the opening of the Balmedie – Tipperty dual carriageway;**
- **Prime Agricultural Land should not be viewed as a constraint in this context – existing allocations and preferred bids around Foveran are on Prime Agricultural Land;**
- **A WWTP growth project has been initiated by Scottish Water.**



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***The development will deliver:***

- **Village centre / heart with a mix of uses;**
- **Landscaped corridor throughout;**
- **Footpath networks;**
- **Connectivity to Enerfield;**
- **Increased public access and permeability for the public into green space and Countryside;**
- **Enhancing a small group of houses in the countryside to form a sustainable village unit;**
- **Based on the characteristics of a traditional Aberdeenshire village;**
- **Linking the existing school with the existing houses in a safe manner;**
- **Land for a relocated primary school / community hub;**
- **Forming connections for pedestrians, cycles and cars with a fully linked movement network throughout the settlement;**
- **Sustainability at all levels, a self-sufficient balanced community with employment, commercial, community and home working units, to the reduction of CO2 emissions through energy efficient design and energy from the new anaerobic digester;**
- **Creation of a Community for all.**

**Foveran sits in the heart of the Energetica Corridor and Strategic Growth Area, therefore is ideally located for investment and development. We would like to assist in bringing this disjointed community together to create a village with new employment opportunities, modern amenities and a school with updated facilities.**