



PRE - APPLICATION REPORT REGARDING PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT REDHEUGH WEST, GOREBRIDGE (20/00446/PAC)

Report by Chief Officer Place

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a pre application consultation submitted regarding proposed residential development with associated infrastructure at land at Redheugh West, Gorebridge. The site is allocated for housing (under Policy STRAT 3 – Housing Site Hs7) in the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP). The allocation excludes an extremely narrow parcel of land comprising the existing track/road (Povert Road) which is also included within the site boundary.
- 1.2 The pre-application consultation is reported to Committee to enable Councillors to express a provisional view on the proposed major development. The report outlines the proposal, identifies the key development plan policies and material considerations and states a provisional without prejudice planning view regarding the principle of development.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Guidance on the role of Councillors in the pre-application process, published by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, was reported to the Committee at its meeting of 6 June 2017. The guidance clarifies the position with regard to Councillors stating a provisional view on proposals at pre-application stage.
- 2.2 The pre-application consultation for residential development at land at Redheugh West, Gorebridge was submitted on 10 July 2020.
- 2.3 As part of the pre-application consultation process a public event would have been arranged in 'normal' times, however this no longer an option as a consequence of the ongoing Covid-19 public health emergency. Legislative requirements for pre-application consultations have been amended for a temporary period under the Town and Country Planning (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020. The changes remove the requirement for a public event, but as an alternative require prospective developers to advertise where relevant consultation material can be viewed online. The

legislation does not prescribe the method of consultation but the guidance does set out the Scottish Government's expectations – which includes giving interested parties the opportunity to make comment. On the conclusion of the online event the applicant could submit a planning application for the proposal.

- 2.4 To meet these statutory obligations, the prospective applicant held an on-line event on 27 August 2020. This event was attended by members of the project team and utilised webchat software to engage with visitors to the website and answer any questions attendees may have regarding the proposal.
- 2.5 Copies of the pre application notice has been sent by the prospective applicant to the local elected members, Gorebridge Community Council, Moorfoot Community Council, Newtongrange Community Council, the local Member of Parliament (MP) and the local Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP).
- 2.6 On the conclusion of the public event the applicant could submit a planning application for the proposal. It is reasonable for an Elected Member to attend such a public event without a Council planning officer present, but the Member should (in accordance with the Commissioner's guidance reported to the Committee at its meeting in June 2017) not offer views, as the forum for doing so will be at meetings of the Planning Committee.

3 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 In assessing any subsequent planning application, the main planning issue to be considered in determining the application is whether the currently proposed development complies with development plan policies unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The development plan is comprised of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (June 2013) and the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP).
- 3.3 The site comprises a 22.69 hectare parcel of agricultural land located on the north-western edge of Gorebridge, to the south of the B704 and west of Povert Road. It forms the western portion (Phase 2) of the larger Redheugh new community redevelopment area.
- 3.4 The site is allocated in the MLDP for housing (Housing Site Hs7) for an indicative 400 dwellings. The site is seen as an extension to the neighbouring housing site (site h50) which has been granted planning permission in principle for residential development, a primary school and associated works. The applicant will be required to masterplan site Hs7 demonstrating connectivity and design compatibility to the neighbouring development.
- 3.5 There are various site specific policy requirements associated with the proposed development, including: mitigation measures to reduce the

adverse impacts on the nearby Arniston designated landscape; a 30m wide planting strip along the western and southern edges of the site; and contaminated land mitigation measures. Moreover, the existing hedge-lined Povert Road (linking north to south) should be retained as a recreational link. Landscape buffer strips along watercourses and the alignment of the River South Esk will also be required.

- 3.6 Any forthcoming application will be required to be accompanied by a Drainage Impact Assessment to assess potential capacity and impact on the existing network (with early discussions with Scottish Water recommended). A Flood Risk Assessment will also be required to mitigate potential flood risk within the site and the immediate area.
- 3.7 In addition to the principle of development, consideration will also have to be given to design matters such as layout, siting, design, appearance, materials and landscaping in order to accord with the policies in the Sustainable Place-making section of the MLDP (policies DEV2, DEV3, DEV5, DEV6, DEV7 and DEV9).
- 3.8 The Council will also need to be satisfied an appropriate access solution can be secured. It is likely the site would need to be accessed from the east, via the adjoining site, site H50.
- 3.9 A small part of the site is also identified as countryside within the MLDP (i.e. the eastern parts of the site that includes Povert Road). Any proposed development within this location would be required to take cognisance of the respective tests within Policy RD1 Development in the Countryside of the MLDP and the corresponding Supplementary Guidance – it is expected this part of the site is not used for housing, but instead access/pedestrian links and landscaping.
- 3.10 Consideration of landscape character along the western and southern edges will also be required to ensure that any future development is compatible and respects the nearby Special Landscape Area (South Esk Valley and Carrington Farmland).
- 3.11 The Council's Learning Estate Strategy sets out the long term plans to accommodate the expected education needs. This has been informed by the location and level of development outlined in the MLDP and the Housing Land Audits. With respect to the site, a suitable education solution will be required to accommodate associated need from the proposed development. This will be delivered through developer contributions.
- 3.12 If an application is submitted there is a presumption in favour of residential development on the site subject to confirming that the site specific policy requirements can be met, providing an appropriate access solution and securing developer contributions towards infrastructure including education provision, equipped children's play provision, new green network links, allotments/community growing, safeguarding land for a community use (e.g. health facility); water and drainage

infrastructure, Borders Rail and town centre improvements and adequate affordable housing provision (at least 25%).

4 PROCEDURES

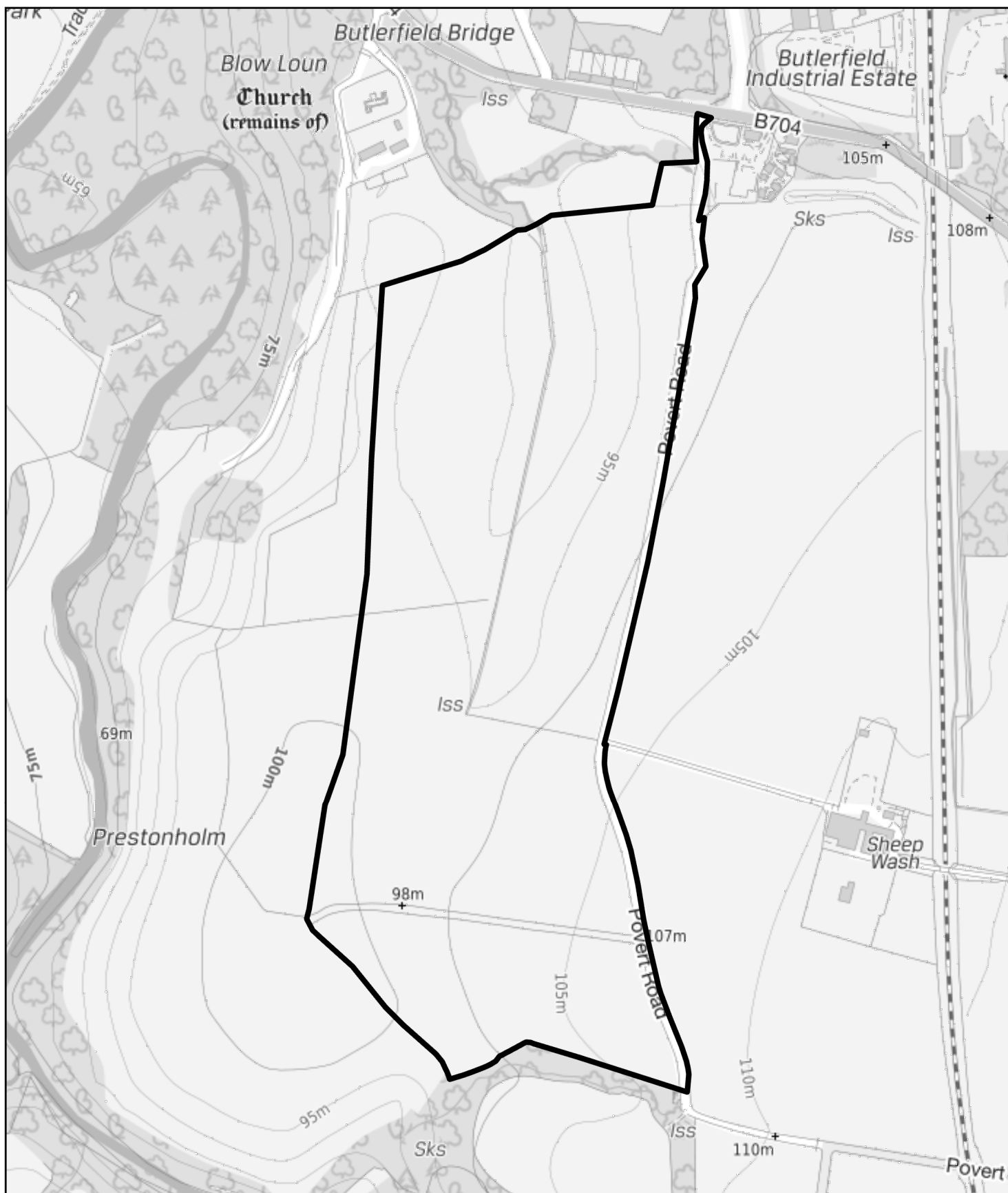
- 4.1 The Scottish Government's Guidance on the Role of Councillors in Pre-Application Procedures provides for Councillors to express a 'without prejudice' view and to identify material considerations with regard to a major application.
- 4.2 The Committee is invited to express a 'without prejudice' view and to raise any material considerations which they wish the applicant and/or officers to consider. Views and comments expressed by the Committee will be entered into the minutes of the meeting and relayed to the applicant for consideration.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government's Guidance on the Role of Councillors in Pre-Application Procedures advises that Councillors are expected to approach their decision-making with an open mind in that they must have regard to all material considerations and be prepared to change their views which they are minded towards if persuaded that they should.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes:
 - a) the provisional planning position set out in this report;
 - b) that any comments made by Members will form part of the minute of the Committee meeting; and
 - c) that the expression of a provisional view does not fetter the Committee in its consideration of any subsequent formal planning application.

Peter Arnsdorf
Planning Manager

Date:	6 October 2020
Application No.	20/00446/PAC
Applicant:	ORS and DBLT Redheugh Ltd
Validation Date:	10 July 2020
Contact Person:	Steve Iannarelli
Email:	Stephen.Iannarelli@midlothian.gov.uk



**Planning Service
Place Directorate**
Midlothian Council
Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3AA

Proposal of application notice for residential development at
Redheugh West, Gorebridge

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