



PRE - APPLICATION REPORT REGARDING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS, DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE ON LAND AT THE FORMER WELLINGTON SCHOOL, PENICUIK (19/00252/PAC)

Report by Head of Communities and Economy

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a pre-application consultation submitted regarding residential development and associated access, drainage infrastructure and open space at land at the former Wellington School, Penicuik. The land comprises site Ahs5 in the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP) which is an additional housing development opportunity site with an indicative capacity of 50-60 units.
- 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 A pre-application consultation for residential development, associated access, drainage infrastructure and open space on land at the former Wellington School, Penicuik was submitted on 20 March 2019.
- 2.3 As part of the pre-application consultation, a public event took place at Howgate Village Hall on Tuesday 14 May. On the conclusion of the 12 week consultation process 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.

- 2.4 Copies of the pre application notices have been sent by the prospective applicant to the local elected members and Howgate Community Council.

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 is located to the east of the A701 in the vicinity of Springfield, to the southeast of Penicuik. There is a mid-20th century building on the site that was used as a school until 2014 when it closed. The site has an elevated position in the local landscape with the former school building being prominent from views from the north. The site includes areas of mature planting along the southern, eastern and western boundaries, which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 3.4 The site is designated as an Additional Housing Development Opportunity (policy STRAT4) in the MLDP, with an indicative capacity of 50-60 units. An additional housing development opportunity site is identified as being acceptable for housing development in principle, but which is subject to development uncertainties such as land ownership, road access constraints and/or financial viability issues. Due to the uncertainty in developing such sites, their delivery is not relied upon to maintain the Council's effective housing land supply.
- 3.5 The Penicuik and Auchendinny Settlement Statement in the MLDP outlines a number of matters to be considered in determining proposals for development on this site (page 152). The plan states that while there is potential for redevelopment, the existing access is not suitable for a major increase in traffic. As an option for addressing this, the plan outlines the possibility of creating a new access by utilising the land to the north, which is identified as a Low Density Rural Housing site under policy RD2. The current redevelopment of Wellington School proposal does not include the land to the north and therefore it is unlikely that the amended access option referenced is being sought. The site boundary suggests that access will be sought to the east of the site onto the A701, in the vicinity of the existing access near the house called Ard Craig.
- 3.6 The plan also outlines a number of matters in relation to the landscape treatment of the site such as the need to retain existing landscape strips and the need to make provision for new landscape screening to

minimise the visual impact on the countryside. This is a consequence of the site's elevated position in the local landscape.

- 3.7 The Planning Committee will recall considering a number of reports (at its meeting of 28 August 2018 and 2 April 2019) with regard the designation of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) at land to the south and east of Ard Craig. The TPO includes areas of mature planting along the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the site. The effect of this designation is to prevent the felling, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of these tree without the consent of the planning authority.
- 3.8 If an application is submitted, there is a presumption in favour of an appropriate residential development and associated works subject to securing developer contributions towards infrastructure including education provision. Additionally, any application would be subject to the need to provide affordable housing equal to, or exceeding 25% of the total number of dwellings consented, as required by policy DEV3.

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.

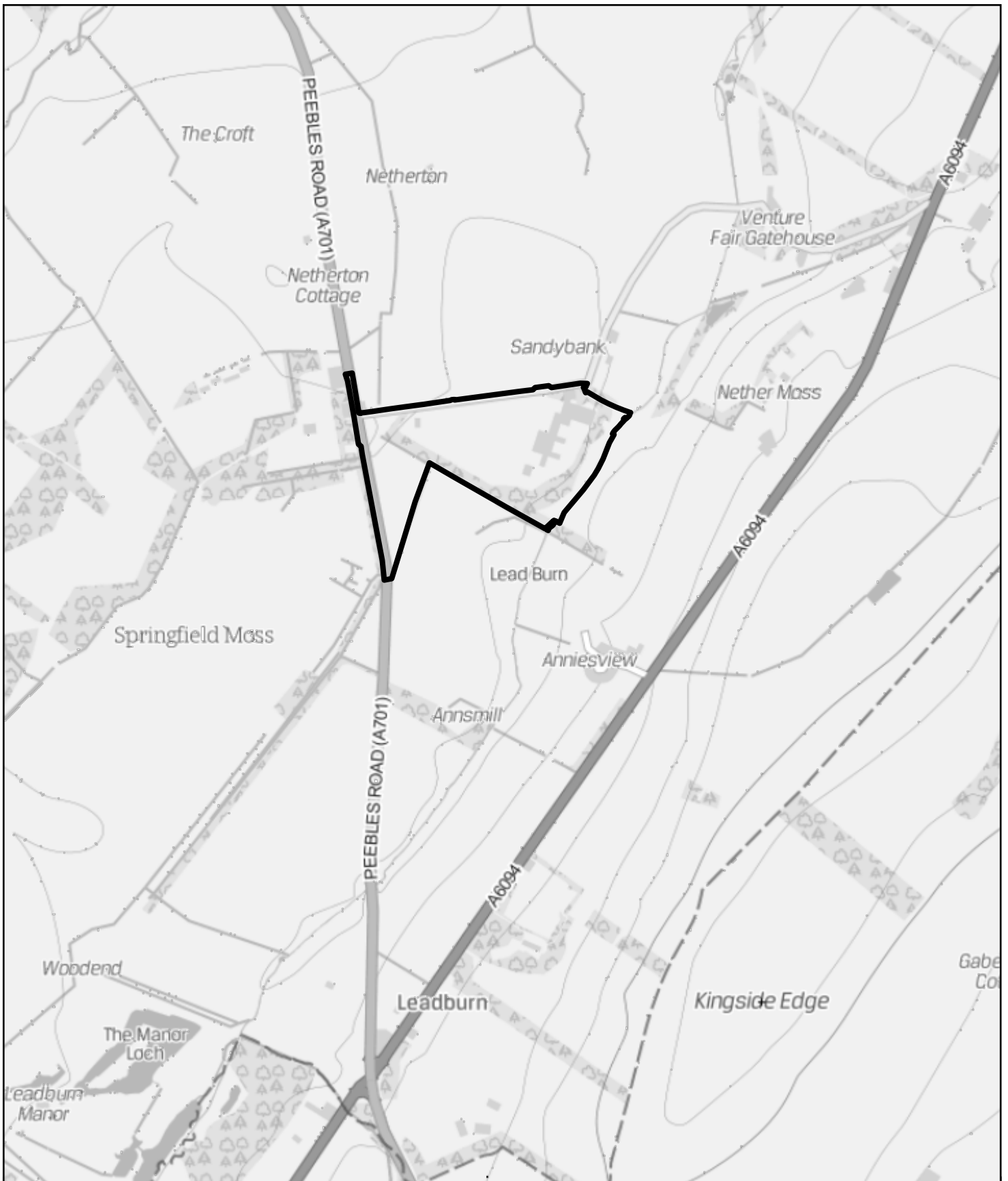
5 RECOMMENDATION

- 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.

Dr Mary Smith
Director of Education, Communities and Economy

Date: 7 June 2019

Application No: 19/00252/PAC (Available online)
Applicant: Strutt and Parker, 5 St John Street, Perth
Validation Date: 20 March 2019
Contact Person: Fraser James
Tel No: 0131 271 3514
Background Papers:



**Education, Economy
& Communities**
Midlothian Council
Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3AA

Proposal of application notice for residential development and associated access, drainage infrastructure and open space at Land At Wellington School, Penicuik

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