

REFERENCE: 2100166/MPLAN

Land West Of Hazel Cottage, Scalasaig, Isle of Colonsay: PDA 8/1

1. Summary

The site is largely located within the settlement boundary of the minor settlement of Scalasaig on the Isle of Colonsay within Potential Development Area (PDA) 8/1. The PDA schedule within the LDP allocates this site for a mixed density housing site with 25% affordable requirement.

The proposal is largely within the PDA boundary with the exception of three houses and partially a fourth. Equally, an aspiration has been indicated for phase 2. This does not form part of the officer assessment and we are only considering phase 1. Should the applicant wish to realise their ambitions across phase 2 then this will need a separate submission and assessment. The slight deviation from the existing PDA boundary is a result of ground investigation works. The northern portion of the PDA is largely boggy and offers potential for corncrake habitat. Equally, it forms a natural SuDS basin. It is important to keep unimpeded views of the listed church and hotel to the west as gateway view on arrival at the ferry terminal. With this in mind the proposal is considered a minor departure to policy LDP DM 1 and the PDA but can be considered acceptable on grounds of site specifics and landscape impacts.

The proposal is made up of 12 units. Of these there are six houses to be retained by the applicant, three self-build plots and three Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The self-build plots are designed for detached properties and the details will be considered in separate proposals. Of the remaining units there are three house types with type A forming a single detached unit and a further pair of semi-detached. House types B and C form two pairs of semi-detached with a further semi-detached pair made up of type B.

- Type A is a detached HMO with accommodation in the roof space offering three bedrooms. It is expected that no more than six unrelated people will be resident in these units at any one time therefore the units are not classed as dwelling houses. It will be finished in render with a metal roof cladding. Volumetrically is a rectangle of traditional proportions. There are three of these within the site.
- Type B is a semi-detached house of which there are four of them. They will form a pair with house type C. Type B is a two bed four person property over a single level.
- Type C forms the other half of the semi-detached range and is taller and narrower providing a variety in roof height. This type also offers a timber porch on the front elevation.

Ownership of the properties is split into the HMOs being retained by MOWI, the fish farm company, and the remainder by the Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC). The proposal is a partnership approach by the fish farm operator and the community to address a long standing problem of a lack of housing on the island. Both organisations intend to retain control of their units. The finer method of this is yet to be determined but can be secured through suspensive planning conditions. It is likely to take the form of MOWI retaining

complete ownership of the HMOs with the CCDG likely offering a shared ownership scheme. Such an approach has been done in other remote island communities.

The applicant is proposing an access perpendicular to the main road whilst the portion of the PDA to the east can still be accessed by the private road through the site. Officers are satisfied that, in land use terms, the adjacent land can still be delivered. It will be up to the relevant parties to agree the finer details of the access arrangements.

Landscaping is minimal as is the character of the area but the dry stone walling will be retained to add a sense of place and a landscaping condition will be attached to any planning decisions to ensure some element of planting of trees and shrubs.

The applicant intends to connect to public services. However, the waste water will be dealt with by means of a private system and a surface water soakaway will process any run off.

There have been no objections from consultees. No objections from third parties.

The Masterplan is considered in detail below.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Officers consider that the components of the proposed Masterplan are compatible with the envisaged development of PDA 8/1 despite being a minor departure. It is accepted that the Masterplan might require some refinement in some locations but this can be secured via the submission of planning applications. It is considered that there is sufficient detail to assess the proposed development of the PDA and that it meets with the expectations and requirements of the LDP and technical working note on Masterplanning.

It is therefore recommended that Members approve the current Masterplan submission as a minor departure to the provisions of the LDP.

3. ASSESSMENT

PDA 8/1 at Scalasaig is designated in the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP) for a development of mixed density housing with a 25% affordable provision.

PDAs are areas identified by the Council where they can contribute to economic development and environmental improvement and where a comprehensive approach to prospective development is warranted in order to avoid unplanned piecemeal development.

PDAs are defined in the LDP as areas of land within which opportunities may emerge during the period of the LDP for infill, rounding off, redevelopment or new development. Such opportunities, as were identified, were not fully resolved at the time of the adoption of the development plan, which requires constraints to be overcome in terms of the 'mini development brief' accompanying these PDAs before development opportunities within the PDA area can be realised and be supported by the LDP. It is standard practice to require a Masterplan approach when considering development within such designated areas. Masterplans help the Council assess at an early stage in the development process, the interrelationships of layout, design, access, existing transport infrastructure and sustainable modes of travel, landscape and ecology, open space provision and integration of a proposed development with existing communities.

The Scottish Government most commonly refers to Masterplans as being '*a plan that describes and maps an overall development concept, including present and future land use, urban design and landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation and service provision. It is based upon an understanding of place and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development*' (PAN 83). The Scottish Government

endorses the use of Masterplanning in general, but considers that it is especially useful for large sites and in areas / sites which are going to undergo substantial change, have multiple users, or are sensitive in environmental or landscape terms.

The council's Technical Working Note on Masterplanning requires a consultation period of a minimum of 21 days for public comment. In this instance we have received no public comment.

Should Members approve the submission the Masterplan will be regarded as a material consideration that will provide a context for deciding any future planning application within the masterplan area. It should be noted however, that all Masterplans are indicative and not prescriptive in nature.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Scottish Water, 12th March 2021 – No objection.

Historic Environment Scotland 18th March 2021 – No comment to make.

ABC Roads, 12th March 2021 – No objection subject to conditions to be attached to any future permission.

ABC Environmental Health, 5th March 2021 – No objection subject to a condition relating to working hours being attached to any planning permission.

ABC Biodiversity Officer, no response at time of writing this report but the applicant has provided a preliminary ecological report focusing specifically on the northern portion of the site which may offer some limited opportunity for corncrakes.

ABC Education, No response

5. PUBLICITY

The Masterplan was advertised in The Oban Times 18th March 2021, expiry date 8th April 2021.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

None

7. ASSESSMENT

List of all Development Plan Policy considerations taken into account in assessment of the masterplan.

'Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan' Adopted March 2015

LDP STRAT 1 – Sustainable Development

LDP DM 1 – Development within the Development Management Zones

LDP 3 – Supporting the Protection Conservation and Enhancement of our Environment

LDP 5 – Supporting the Sustainable Growth of our Economy

LDP 8 – Supporting the Strength of our Communities

LDP 9 – Development Setting, Layout and Design

LDP 10 – Maximising our Resources and Reducing our Consumption

LDP 11 – Improving our Connectivity and Infrastructure

Local Development Plan Schedule

'Supplementary Guidance to the Argyll and Bute Local Plan 2015' (Adopted March 2016)

Natural Environment

SG LDP ENV 1 – Impact on Habitats, Species and our Biodiversity

SG LDP ENV 7 – Water Quality and the Environment

SG LDP ENV 10 – Geodiversity

SG LDP ENV 11 – Protection of Soil and Peat Resources

Landscape and Design

SG LDP ENV 14 – Landscape

Historic Environment and Archaeology

SG LDP ENV 20 – Impact on Sites of Archaeological Importance

General Housing Development

SG LDP HOU 1 – General Housing Development Including Affordable Housing Provision

SG LDP HOU 2 – Special Needs Provision in Housing Developments

Housing Greenspace

SG LDP HOU 3 – Housing Green-Space

Sustainable Siting and Design

SG LDP Sustainable – Sustainable Siting and Design Principles

Resources and Consumption

SG LDP SERV 2 – Incorporation of Natural Features / SuDS

SG LDP SERV 5(b) – Provision of Waste Storage & Collection Facilities within New Development

Transport (Including Core Paths)

SG LDP TRAN 4 – New & Existing, Public Roads & Private Access Regimes

SG LDP TRAN 6 – Vehicle Parking Provision

List of all other material planning considerations taken into account in the assessment of the application, having due regard to Annex A of Circular 4/2009.

- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), 2014
- Creating Places- A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland
- Designing Streets – A Policy Statement for Scotland
- Planning History
- A&B –Design Guide
- A&B Technical Working Note: Masterplanning
- Statutory/Non-Statutory Consultee Comments
- The Argyll and Bute Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP2), November 2019

A. Development Plan Context

The Masterplan applies largely to land within the boundary of PDA 8/1 as defined in the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015. The PDA proposals for this specific location are an expression of the Local Development Plan's objectives for the site and advocate the development of a mixed density residential scheme. The LDP also requires a 25% affordable housing component of the development.

The proposal seeks to utilise only a portion of the site. This is after discussion with officers and therefore is likely to fall short of the volume aspirations of the LDP. However, it is important to consider site conditions and officers consider that the area to the north adjacent the public

road is best left undeveloped to retain the long distance views and setting of the two listed buildings nearby, the church and the hotel. Equally, this area is boggy and acts as a natural SuDS basin. Developing this area would require extensive engineering works making potential projects unviable. The area in the north west corner provides some potential for limited Corncrake (*crex crex*) habitat. It is currently not well utilised but opportunities exist for its enhancement. The land to the east could be developed but has been retained by the Colonsay Estate. They have been involved with the development of the Masterplan and attended meetings between officers and the CCDC. There are no detailed proposals for this portion of land but the applicants' proposals clearly show this portion of the PDA could be accessed through the site under consideration. The applicant has demonstrated that their proposals will not sterilise this area and could be delivered by the land owner in future. This is an approach that has been utilised elsewhere. Phase two is not under consideration at this time. It is an area of aspiration by the applicant who has been advised to pursue this extension to the PDA through the LDP process as opposed to development management. Should the applicant wish to realise their ambition then they will need to do so under separate submission.

Given officer advice to reduce the area available for development it has been accepted that some works could occur outwith the PDA boundary to facilitate the development and go some way to meeting community and LDP aspirations. To this end some units are just outwith the PDA boundary. Although this extension of the settlement boundary is not normally acceptable on this particular site it works well with the topography and natural features of the wider area.

The proposal is considered a minor departure to the PDA designation but one that can be justified through housing need and design.

B. Settlement Strategy

Under Policy LDP DM 1 – *Development Within the Development Management Zones* in minor settlements and villages such as Scalasaig, encouragement is given to development serving a local community of interest, including 'medium scale' development on appropriate infill, rounding-off and redevelopment sites. Medium scale development is defined in the Local Development Plan as development of between 6 and 30 dwellings. In exceptional cases, 'large scale' development may be supported if it helps to counter population decline in the area, would help to deliver affordable housing, or else meet a particular local housing need. Large scale development is defined in the LDP as development exceeding 30 dwelling units.

Under Policy SG LDP HOU 1 – *General Housing Development Including Affordable Housing Provision*, there is a general presumption against 'large scale' housing development in minor settlements. Exceptions apply where there is a deliberate attempt to counter population decline, to develop affordable housing, or else meet a particular housing need. However, within PDA's these constraints are removed and the issue becomes the assessment of the site based criteria. This proposal represents medium scale development. There is, therefore, a general presumption in favour of this development in terms of the 'Argyll & Bute Local Development Plan'.

C. Location, Nature and Design of Proposed Development

The Masterplan / PDA site is currently open grazing land with a gently undulating topography and no distinguishing geographical or topographical features. The site represents the southern part of the wider glen with the proposal seeking to mirror that on the northern side. The masterplan area is bounded by substantial stone dyke walls and post and wire fencing. The main road is to the north. Immediately south the landform rises steeply providing a natural end point to the settlement. To the east is the ferry terminal and some operational buildings including a café and information point. The land rises to the west further enclosing the site.

The Masterplan / PDA area is within the ownership of separate parties. The community own the section highlighted in red on the submitted plans whilst the estate retains the remainder.

There has been no objection from Colonsay Estate and they have been involved with the delivery of the Masterplan.

The proposal is made up of six houses to be retained by the applicant, three self-build plots and three HMOs. There are three house types with type forming a single detached unit and a further pair of semi-detached. House types B and C form two pairs of semi-detached with a further semi-detached pair made up of type B.

- Type A is a detached HMO with accommodation in the roof space offering three bedrooms. It will be finished in render with a metal roof cladding. Volumetrically is a rectangle of traditional proportions. There are three of these within the site.
- Type B is a semi-detached house of which there are four of them. They will form a pair with house type C. Type B is a two bed four person property over a single level.
- Type C forms the other half of the semi-detached range and is taller and narrower providing a variety in roof height. This type also offers a timber porch on the front elevation.

Ownership of the properties is split into the HMOs being retained by MOWI and the remainder by the Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC). The proposal is a partnership approach by the fish farm operator and the community to address a long standing problem of a lack of housing on the island. Both organisations intend to retain control of their units. The method of this is yet to be determined but can be secured through suspensive planning conditions. It is likely to take the form of MOWI retaining complete ownership of the HMOs with the CCDC likely offering a shared ownership scheme.

It is considered that there is no requirement for formal playspace provision as there is an existing play park within walking distance of the site and the wide open areas provide sufficient space for older children to explore. Given the small community, quiet roads and access to an existing facility it is better to see the current playspace invested in rather than two spaces of a lower standard. LDP policy SG LDP HOU 3 – *Housing Green-Space* requires that any residential development of 20 dwelling units or more are required to provide a minimum of 12 square metres of casual play space per unit plus a minimum of 6 square metres of equipped children's play space per unit.

Supplementary Guidance SG LDP HOU 3 requires developers to provide casual open space and equipped children's play space including provision for under 5 year olds for developments of 20 dwellings units or more.

Housing numbers do not require this policy assessment but given the development is a large one for the island it is appropriate for officers to consider the 'spirit' of the policy. Should phase two come forward then it is likely officers will seek some form of developer contribution for the nearby play park but such expectation for the current proposal development would not be reasonable in the face of the policy threshold.

D. Natural Environment

Policy SG LDP ENV 1 – Impact on Habitats, Species and our Biodiversity of the LDP states that development which impacts on wildlife sites or other nature conservation interests, including sites, habitats or species at risk will be assessed on its acceptability balanced with social and economic considerations. It also notes that enhancements to nature conservation issues are encouraged. There are no protected sites within the masterplan area.

The Masterplan specifies that although there are no nature designations covering the site they are minded to undertake pre-commencement walkover surveys for the presence of ground

nesting birds and other species. Appropriate mitigation will be provided at that time and discussed with planning officers.

A small section of the lower portion of the site does provide some limited opportunity for Corncrake (*crex crex*) but a survey report stated there is little chance for Corncrake to take up this option given the land to the north is far more suitable. Planning conditions could secure walkover surveys of the site with a buffer zone to ensure do damage to breeding / nesting birds.

E. Landscape Character

The acceptability of the current proposal will be largely dependent on the successful integration of the development in its landscape context through design, layout and landscape planting. The proposal mirrors the development pattern on the northern side of the settlement with the land to the south and west rising creating a bowl effect and framing the proposals. It is considered that it is a natural and logical extension to the settlement in landscape terms.

It is important to retain as much of the existing stone dyke boundary walls as possible. These walls should be relocated where necessary and set back behind any access visibility splays. This retention/replacement can be secured by planning conditions attached to any future planning applications.

F. Historic Environment

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WOSAS) have not commented on the Masterplan but have provided feedback on the associated planning application. Given the overlap between the proposals it is appropriate for officers to consider their response. The proposal lies in an area populated with recorded archaeological remains.

Whilst there is no objection to the principle of development as indicated by this masterplan on grounds of material harm to the historic environment, WOSAS have strongly recommended that no planning permissions be granted until such time as a preliminary archaeological investigation has been carried out in order to assess the likelihood of the presence of buried remains within the masterplan area and in order to properly evaluate how any development might impact upon the archaeology of the area and how any such remains might be best preserved and/or recorded.

A planning condition can be used to secure these works through the submission of planning applications. The use of such a planning condition would require an archaeological evaluation of the site and afford an opportunity to properly record/remove any important remains, whilst not being a precursor to the granting of planning permission and thus allowing other works towards the provision of further phases of the development to proceed without undue delay.

G. Affordable Housing

The site is being brought forward through a partnership approach with the CCDC and MOWI. MOWI intend to take control of the HMOs and provide housing for those employed to work on their fish farm. This will free up already overcrowded existing housing stock. The CCDC will retain control of the remaining units and offer to those resident full time on the island. The details of this mechanism has not been provided but can be secured as a suspensive planning condition to ensure the planning authority agree to the method of retention prior to the occupation of the housing. It is likely that the mechanism will be one of shared ownership allowing CCDC to retain an element of control whilst assisting island residents to own their property.

Given the public funding streams for this development and the lead role CCDC are taking it is not considered unreasonable to expect this information at a later date and a grant of permission

at this time to allow works to proceed given the tight project timescales. However, the applicant has been reminded that this is an important element to the proposal and has been encouraged to submit these details sooner rather than later.

H. Road Network, Parking and Associated Transport Matters.

The masterplan shows the whole site being served via a single access point from the public road that runs along its northern boundary. This single access is included within the current planning application and aims to serve the remainder of the site.

It is proposed to take an access point perpendicular from the public road. This will then be to an adopted standard with a non-adopted standard serving the final units on the eastern side and potentially providing access beyond the site to allow the adjacent land owner to potentially meet their own aspirations.

Adequate vehicle parking and turning will be provided to meet the Council's required development standards.

The council's Area Roads Engineer has raised no objection subject to a set of conditions being attached to any future planning application approval.

I. Water and Sewage Capacity.

The proposed development of the Masterplan area will be served by the existing public water supply and the mains sewage system. Scottish Water have confirmed that there are currently no capacity constraints or off-site infrastructure issues that would prevent the development being brought forward in the manner proposed.

J. Conclusion

PDA's are defined in the adopted LDP as areas of land within which opportunities may emerge during the period of the LDP (5 to 10 years) for infill, rounding-off, redevelopment or new development. Such opportunities as were identified were not fully resolved at the time of the adoption of the plan, which requires constraints to be overcome in terms of the 'mini development brief' accompanying these PDA's before development opportunities within the PDA area can be realised and be supported by the LDP.

The Council supports developments that contribute to the economic vitality of the area. Both the Scottish Government and the Council places the delivery of sustainable economic growth as its number one objective.

The Masterplan, whilst indicative, gives all interested parties and statutory consultees sufficient detail to assess the future development of the site. Assessed against Development Plan policy and other material considerations the components of the phased housing development scheme are considered to be compatible with PDA 8/1 and the potential constraints to development acknowledged within its accompanying schedule. As such the masterplan is considered fit for purpose. It is recommended that the masterplan be approved and endorsed as a material consideration in the assessment of any future planning applications on the site.

As has been previously clarified. The proposed Masterplan is also in accordance with emerging LDP2 which is a material planning consideration at this time.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	None
Financial:	None

Personnel: None
Equal opportunities: None

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