



Craigiebuckler Campus Masterplan Consultation Summary

Consultation on the Craigiebuckler Campus Masterplan was carried out from 2nd – 23rd March 2022. As part of the consultation exhibition material was available online for the duration of the consultation period. In addition, a drop in exhibition event was held on 9th March 2022 with James Hutton Institute staff and members of the public meeting with the design team to discuss the Masterplan and future vision for the campus.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in this consultation and the feedback given which will help inform the Masterplan and future proposals within Craigiebuckler Campus.

Through this consultation, feedback was gathered, and a number of questions were raised in terms of the proposals. The following provides a summary of the question themes and responses provided.

- **Masterplan – general comments, content and detail.**

The masterplan has been developed to consider the future of the campus. The site has dual ownership with various parts of the site owned by the James Hutton Institute, others and by the Macaulay Development Trust and therefore it was considered important how these could be developed in a well-planned and considered way rather than piecemeal.

The James Hutton Institute is committed to remaining in Aberdeen with the Craigiebuckler Campus an important historic and present day hub for research. The proposed developments will enable its continued presence within the city contributing to local education, research and employment. The land in and around the campus will enable future growth and complementary uses to expand and enhance the institute.

There is a vision for the site to act as an Open Science Campus, welcoming stakeholders, other researchers and the public onto the site and therefore the aim of the masterplan is to show how this could be done, what uses are needed to develop these and where there is opportunity for alternative, compatible uses on the site to enable the vision to be delivered.

The uses and developments proposed are indicative at this stage. The aspirations for development in the site include:

- Extension to the main building to create a new publicly-accessible science hub;
- A new access road and improvements to the existing car park to enable coach access and turning and to include EV charging;
- New accommodation provision (laboratory and office) including opportunities for starter hubs; and
- Small pockets of residential development including exploration of potential visiting staff accommodation; and
- The potential for a battery storage facility.

In terms of the detail of the masterplan, the proposals at this stage are indicative only. The consultation exercise has been provided as an opportunity to help shape and inform the detail of future proposals.



Any new proposals would consider the surrounding properties in terms of protecting the amenity and environment of surrounding neighbours. This would include retaining and enhancing boundaries.

- **New Access Road – requirement for new road, proposal and details, visibility and impact on existing road and immediate neighbours.**

The area indicated for the proposed new access road has been identified for future uses related to the Institute as well as a new access road as part of an Aberdeen City Council Planning Brief since 2005. It is currently allocated for appropriate complementary uses in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and has been for many years. The proposed redevelopment of this area of land including a new access road has therefore been established for at least 17 years.

To align with the expanding uses within the campus a new access road is proposed to relieve pressure on the existing road which is also used to access existing residential properties. The new road would be designed to allow coaches to access the site. For clarification this would not be a public transport link but for private groups visiting the Institute.

The existing access road is very narrow with land contours and density of mature trees precluding this as a viable option for widening to access the pending and proposed expansion of uses within the existing building as well as future starter hubs.

The current narrow access would be retained and repurposed as a public pedestrian/cycle path opening up the Campus along with an improved network of paths for community amenity use.

The existing car park would be improved with some realignment to enable coach turning and would also incorporate EV charging.

A Transport Feasibility study is being undertaken to consider the various access options into the site and the indicative development proposal as part of this consultation is the preferred option for the site. The design team are in ongoing discussion with Aberdeen City Council with regards to the access road including working with roads team to ensure an acceptable solution. Detailed information will be available at the planning application for review on the details of the access road and junction, likely traffic and consideration of any potential impact.

In terms of the proposed access road the road layout is not currently set and is therefore indicative only at this stage. The details in terms of design of the road and distance from existing properties and any landscaping are still being prepared and will be available as part of any forthcoming planning application.

With regards to traffic levels a transport assessment including analysis of existing and proposed traffic associated with the Institute will inform the final detail of the proposed access road. Changes in working practice including working from home and encouraging active travel such as walking, and cycling will be considered in terms of likely future trips in and out of the site as will the impacts of incoming new tenants. Appropriate supporting information will be prepared and submitted as part of the planning application for the access road.



- **Parking and EV charging**

The proposed new access road also includes plans to improve the existing car park with some realignment to enable coach turning and would also incorporate EV charging. The design team are in discussion with the Council to establish the level of EV charging that could be provided as part of the proposals.

- **Cycling Provision**

The proposed new access road would include separate cycle provision. In addition, the existing access road will be retained and repurposed for cycle and pedestrian links into the site. It is noted that the current cycle arrangements are to the rear of the buildings. Consideration will be given to repositioning of these facilities to the front of the building to provide a safer, more pleasant experience to encourage more cycling to the site.

- **Proposed Housing Site (NW of masterplan) – need for housing, detail of proposed development, access arrangements and drainage concerns.**

It would be the intention that the potential development of housing would be in keeping with the adjacent residential uses. Through the design process concerns regarding overlooking, overshadowing etc would be considered to ensure the retention of the amenity and privacy of existing residents. Additional new housing in this area will provide housing choice and contribute to the Council's housing strategy to prioritise future housing development on brownfield (previously developed) land.

The potential for residential use is indicative at this stage and therefore there are no details of the type, number or design of potential housing in the site.

It is likely that the existing access into this area of the site would be enhanced to provide a suitable vehicular access. The access would be from Macaulay Drive with no plans to take an access from the north of the site. The existing pedestrian links between the existing greenspace to the north, the Scout Hall and the campus grounds would be retained and opportunities for enhancement would be explored.

- **Proposed Housing Site (SW of masterplan) – need for housing, detail of proposed development and concern of loss of trees**

The phrase "Housing/Potential Battery St" refers to a small pocket of land within the Masterplan that has been identified for either housing development or battery storage.

In terms of potential housing within this area, this would be a small development of family homes with the potential of around 4 units.

Trees are a key to the character of the campus, therefore the concerns raised regarding tree loss within this area are noted. Many of the more recently planted trees would be retained, with those that require to be moved and would be replaced/replanted elsewhere within the campus.



A tree survey will be carried out to assess the existing trees and ensure continued management, retention where possible and replanting within the campus.

- **Potential Battery Storage – detail of what this is, what it will look like, noise impact, visual impact, health and safety concerns.**

The potential battery storage proposed within the site is indicative at this stage as opportunities are explored to link in with Aberdeen City's wider aims to move toward zero carbon and respond to climate change.

Energy storage systems are being utilised by National Grid to support the existing electricity infrastructure. They store energy when there is high generation but low demand and discharging energy to the network when the generation is low and the demand is high.

- What does a Battery Store look like? - It is made up of batteries stored in a number of single level shipping-like containers, cabled together through a small control building.
- What does a Battery Store do? - It stores energy when electricity demand is low which is drawn down when demand is high. Battery Stores are essential as we increase the amount of wind produced energy as they help capture energy when the wind is blowing and turbines are producing more energy than the network needs at that time.
- Will the Battery store be visible from Macaulay Drive? – The majority of the storage units would be screened by the existing boundary hedge and further screening and tree planting would be proposed to obscure them further. Only the very top of the units are likely to be seen.
- Will the battery store make a noise? - There would be a little noise but with the intended noise reduction screening this would reduce to 40-50 decibels, which is equivalent to between a whisper and normal conversation at the boundary, reducing further for every metre beyond.
- What type of batteries will be used and what would the benefit be to adjacent houses? Lithium Iron Phosphate batteries will be used. The benefit to households and businesses is that the battery system will increase the reliability of the electricity system in the area whilst reducing its reliance on fossil fuels. It should also reduce the cost of electricity over the long term.
- Will the existing trees have to be cut down to make way for the Battery Store? - None of the big mature trees would be cut down. Some of the smaller trees planted more recently would have to be transplanted, some to increase the boundary cover and some elsewhere in the Campus grounds, though a few of the more common types may have to be removed.
- Why are you wanting to put a Battery Store here? Battery Stores are best located as close to major electricity sub stations as possible. Therefore, given the proximity to the existing substation to the south of Countesswells Road this site would provide a potential opportunity.



- Are there examples of existing battery storage close to existing residential developments? There are a number of examples of battery storage being built in residential areas. Two such projects are, the Smarter Network Storage project, which was carried out by UKPN, (<https://innovation.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/projects/smarter-network-storage-sns/>) and the FALCON project, carried out by WPD (<https://www.westernpower.co.uk/downloads-view-reciteme/2566>).

The aim through the consultation was to gauge feedback from the community regarding this proposed use.

Concerns have been raised in terms of the safety of the proposed battery storage and risks associated with locating the storage in this location. While discussions regarding this proposed use are in very early stage, where any planning application was to be made for this use, the planning process would require the submission of a full risk assessment and risk management plan, to inform any Council decision on the proposal.

- **Community Hub/Entrance Pavilion – detail of what this is, what will it look like, what will be included and public accessibility.**

The potential new entrance pavilion/community hub is to provide a new reception area, lecture theatre, meeting rooms and cafeteria and may include the existing library. The aim would be to provide a more welcoming and public face to the Institute and encourage the public to visit and use the facilities including the provision of a café.

The potential new entrance pavilion/community hub is likely to be a two-storey building immediately adjacent to or adjoining the southwest corner of the existing main building, connecting the west wing to the existing main entrance.

The details of the design and finish of this extension are not yet known as the proposal is at the indicative concept stage.

- **Starter Hubs – what are these, what will they look like and the need for them.**

This area has been identified for future uses related to the Institute as part of an Aberdeen City Council Planning Brief since 2005. It is currently allocated for appropriate complementary uses in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and has been for many years. The proposed redevelopment of this area of land has therefore been established for at least 17 years.

Potential starter hubs are likely to be small specialist units which would be aimed at science and research companies that are currently or are seeking to work in collaboration with the Institute.

The design of the potential Starter Hubs is not yet established as the detail of the Masterplan is indicative at this stage. However, they would likely be one or two-storey domestic buildings with a low roof profile. There would be a desire to ensure they are designed to promote sustainability in both appearance, for example sedum roofs, and energy use. The contour of the land should allow them to be built in the lower lying areas of the South Field minimising visual impact. This area is also likely to



include additional tree planting and opportunities for biodiversity enrichment which could be used to provide screening and a buffer between the proposed new uses and existing residents.

In terms of the current use of the campus building and rented space by other, generally public organisation, this current approach complements the proposed plans for the Institute by generating income while beneficially reducing costs for these organisations. This will enable the improvement and enhancement facilities for not only staff but the creation of a community hub including a café as part of their Open Science Campus proposals. The proposed starter hubs would enable new commercial/academic businesses to work with onsite expertise and complement the work of the Institute.

- **Nursery/Walled Garden/Staff Accommodation– plans for retention and expansion**

The existing nursery building, which is located within the walled garden, would be retained. The intention would be to enable the nursery to expand into the rest of the existing building and move the current staff accommodation into new purpose-built facilities to the east of the existing building.

The Institute would welcome further discussion on these proposals with the nursery and other opportunities for collaboration.

- **Coupar's Pond – plans to improve**

The existing Coupar's Pond would be retained as part of the proposal. Comments and concerns regarding the current state of the pond with the desire to see improvements to this area are noted and supported. It is recognised this is an important natural asset within the local area. The Macaulay Development Trust and James Hutton Institute are keen to explore opportunities to improve and continue discussion with local residents on the future enhancement and preservation of the pond.

- **Trees – TPO, loss and protection**

A Tree Survey was undertaken of the site in 2017 which will be updated and reviewed to inform the design and layout of proposals within the site. The importance and role that trees play in the character of the campus are extremely important. Therefore, proposals will seek to minimise any impact on the existing trees and seek to retain where possible. Where the removal of trees is required, careful consideration will be given to the mitigation and compensatory replanting within the Campus.

- **Biodiversity – loss, protection and opportunity for enhancement**

The Institute will be undertaking an update to their current Biodiversity Plan to monitor current biodiversity within the campus grounds. The plan will seek to ensure retention where possible, and replacement or indeed enhancement as part of the proposals. Through the Masterplan proposals opportunities for further biodiversity provision and enhancement will be progressed.



- **Public Accessibility – opportunities for enhancement and public suggestions.**

The vision of the Masterplan is to enhance and improve public access to the campus. The aim is to create more opportunity and accessibility onto the site. Feedback provided to improve signage and give the surrounding community a sense of welcome when using the grounds for recreation are noted and supported. The Institute will continue to look at opportunities to improve accessibility of the campus.

- **Next Steps – timescales and planning applications**

The Masterplan is a long-term vision and will be subject to a phased approach in implementing it. Each development proposal will be subject to a separate planning application.

The first phase will be development of the access road which forms part of this consultation and will be submitted over the next few months.

Please note that comments that have been made at this stage are not representations to the planning authority in respect of a planning application. If a planning application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make representation on the planning application to the planning authority at that time.