

Abbotsford House Planning Statement

1. Introduction

The purpose of this planning statement is to provide planning advice in support of the marketing of the former Abbotsford House site, which was previously occupied by Falkirk Council. It sets out the planning policy context to the site, and the Council's expectations for potential development of the site, along with design and access considerations.

2. Site Location and Description

The site is around 1.5 hectares in size and is located within the urban limit, as shown on the LDP2 proposals map. The site was formerly Council offices with associated parking and storage functions. The site also includes an area of lock up garages. The site is located adjacent to the existing residential area of Langlees, which lies to the east, south and west, with Langlees Primary School to the north of the site. Boundaries are defined by existing steel security fencing, with a mix of hedging, scrub and a number of large non-native trees. Abbotsford Business Park lies to the east of the site. Current vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access to the site is gained from David's Loan to the north of the site, and to the east from Lammermuir Avenue, a spur from the primary access road for the business park. No vehicular access is available at present from the lock up garage site.

3. Planning Policy and Potential Uses

The current development plan covering the property comprises [National Planning Framework 4](#), which sets out national planning policy, the [Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 \(LDP2\)](#) and associated [Supplementary Guidance \(SG\)](#).

The Abbotsford House site itself falls within a Core Business Area, identified on the LDP2 proposals map together with Abbotsford Business Park. The lock up site is not covered by any LDP designation. Core business areas comprise existing industrial estates and business parks which the Council wishes to retain in business use because of their contribution to the local economy. Policy JE02 seeks to safeguard core business areas primarily for business and industrial use, and states that Class 4, 5 and 6 uses will be supported in principle within these areas. Policy JE02 does allow flexibility for other employment uses which would be appropriate within an industrial estate or business park environment.

The adjacent Abbotsford Business Park is identified specifically in LDP2 as business site BUS06. The site has been the subject of a masterplan, leading to the consent for a number of businesses uses. Development of the site is currently ongoing.

For residential development, a proposal would be contrary to Policy JE02, which seeks to safeguard core business areas. Residential proposals may however be considered favourably, subject to detailed assessment as part of a planning application. This is because there is residential use immediately adjacent to the site, and the site could form a part of an extension to the residential community of Langlees/Bainsford with a frontage to David's Loan. The site is reasonably well located in relation to access to local services, and this would assist in meeting the aspiration towards 20-minute neighbourhoods. Abbotsford House was also not included within the boundary of the Business Park masterplan, and delivery of the remaining business park is not dependent on the inclusion of the Abbotsford House site.

Residential proposals would also be assessed against Policy HC02 which applies to windfall housing sites, which are sites within the settlement limit not the subject of a specific LDP2 proposal. HC02 supports housing proposals subject to several criteria including supporting the reuse of brownfield land, maintaining residential amenity, accessibility, infrastructure capacity and flood risk.

Other LDP2 policies may be relevant depending on the nature and scale of any proposals.

National Planning Framework 4 also sets out national policies. The most relevant policies include:

- Policy 9 - Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
- Policy 13 – Sustainable Transport
- Policy 14 – Design, Quality and Place
- Policy 15 – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Policy 26 - Business and Industry

4. Design Considerations

Given the location of the site between the Abbotsford Business Park to the east, and an existing residential area to the west, careful consideration will be required in terms of the scale and nature of any development proposals, whether business or residential. Business proposals which come forward must avoid impacts on residential amenity in the surrounding area, and proposals for Class 5 and 6 uses would be difficult to accommodate on this basis. Some minor impacts can be mitigated for by incorporating measures such as a buffer between business and housing, acoustic fencing and a landscaping scheme to the site boundaries. Depending on the scale and nature of proposal, a noise impact assessment will be required, in consultation with Environmental Protection. This would also apply to residential proposals, and developments should demonstrate that new residential properties will not be significantly impacted by existing uses within Abbotsford Business Park.

The primary frontage of the site is along the northern boundary to David's Loan. For business uses, it would be appropriate for a reinforced landscape buffer along this boundary, incorporating pedestrian access, and potential vehicle/emergency vehicle access. For residential uses, this should be an active frontage, with properties fronting with a high standard of design to integrate the development into the existing residential area.

Primary access points and the design response to these will depend on the type of proposal.

Whilst former office use of the site is unlikely to require significant remediation of contaminated land, the site is still brownfield land and as may require a contaminated land assessment.

6. Access and Transport

Re-development proposals should be accompanied by a supporting Transport Assessment (TA), to assess likely trip generation, as well as walking, cycling and public transport accessibility, and potential vehicular impact. The scope of the TA should be agreed with the Council's Transport Planning Unit.

For business uses, it is expected that the primary access will be from Lammermuir Avenue, within the business park. Through access to David's Loan will not be permitted, except for emergency vehicle provision, of an appropriate design. For residential uses, the primary vehicular access will be from David's Loan. It would be desirable to move the existing access further east to be further away from the access to the primary school. For both business and residential uses pedestrian links to Ivanhoe Drive and Lammermuir Avenue within the business park, and David's Loan should be addressed. Vehicular access through the lock ups is unlikely to be acceptable, although a pedestrian link through the lock up site to North Street would be desirable. The southern footway along David's Loan is fairly narrow along the frontage of the site, and this should be upgraded to 2m.

The site benefits from bus stops on David's Loan, adjacent to the site. These stops service the site and the wider business park, so ensuring pedestrian connectivity throughout the site and the surrounding area will be critical. There is also scope to improve the bus stops to encourage usage.

Layout, parking and visibility plans, as well as 12m swept path analysis should be carried out in consultation with the Council's Roads and Development Team. Parking standards for new development are set out in the [National Roads Development Guide](#). The Council's [Travel Plan SPG](#) also sets out thresholds for Travel Plan requirements which depend upon site use and capacity.

7. Developer Contributions

Under Policy IR02 (Developer Contributions), developers are required to contribute to the provision, upgrading and, where appropriate, maintenance of infrastructure where development will create or exacerbate deficiencies in, or impose significantly increased burdens on, existing infrastructure. Guidance on the calculation of contributions is set out in [SG13 Developer Contributions](#).

Open Space (for residential development)

[SG05 Green Infrastructure and New Development](#) sets out the relevant requirements for green infrastructure, which are calculated following a local open space audit. Local open spaces which fall within the accessibility distances for the site, and which are likely to be used by residents include:

- Dawson Park (200m) – playspace, amenity open space and football pitch;
- Langlees Park (100m) – MUGA and kickabout area;
- Coo Park (500m) - MUGA, kickabout area and playspace; and
- Langlees community Woodland (600m) – Urban woodland and greenspace.

Developer contributions are likely to be focused on rationalisation and improvement of these open spaces.

Education (for residential development)

There are no current capacity issues in the relevant catchment schools or nurseries, and so contributions are unlikely to be required. Capacity issues are reviewed regularly by Childrens Services, and as such contributions may be required at a later date.

Health

NHSFV will be consulted as part of any future planning application for residential development. They have not, at this stage, identified any specific primary healthcare capacity issues for the locality. Contributions may be required at a later date should capacity issues be identified.