

Aberdeen Local Development Plan Review 2018

Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council Response

Pre-Main Issues Report Questionnaire

2. Main Planning Issues

2.1 What do you think are the most important things that make Aberdeen a good place to live, visit and/or work? The proximity to beautiful areas of Scottish countryside – the Dee and Don valleys – as well as being a coastal city makes living in Aberdeen enjoyable. The city has a vision and plan to make it more attractive to be in and around albeit funding the work is still a challenge. Development proposals tend to be directed towards some of the more attractive areas of the city rather than those that would benefit from regeneration. There needs to be strict control of new housing and commercial development to ensure that it does not damage the aspects that make living in Aberdeen enjoyable – greenspace needs to be preserved and development directed to brownfield sites.

2.2 What do you think should be the Council's top priorities for the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan? To ensure planned developments already included in the LDP are progressed before adding any additional proposals, particularly along the A93 corridor where we already have approved, planned and in progress developments at Countesswells, Friarsfield, Milltimber South and Oldfold (around 3900 homes). To ensure that the additional and improved infrastructure needed to support the development already included in the LDP is provided as a priority – better roads, public transport, school places, leisure facilities, core paths and cycle routes are needed. The impact of the AWPR on traffic movement around the city should be fully assessed before any major new developments are accepted in the Dee valley, the A93 and A944 corridors. Uniform infill growth of the city out towards the AWPR should be resisted. The new Local Development Plan should protect the junctions and corridor of the AWPR from inappropriate speculative development.

A timeframe for a new Bridge of Dee Crossing should be set out.

2.3 Do you have any particular aspirations for your community or Aberdeen as a whole? To see the condition of local roads improved through resurfacing. To see the completion of more core path routes connecting communities to key community services and the city, to encourage wider use of sustainable transport. In particular the Milltimber aspirational core path network requires reconsideration in light of the AWPR development.

There is a need for both low cost housing and for bungalows/retirement houses in many parts of Aberdeen so developers should be encouraged to come forward with suitable proposals. There should be a greater mix of house type in future development proposals (small, large, detached, semi-detached, terraced, bungalows). Current LDP Policy H4 should be more strictly applied when reviewing development proposals.

To see the preservation of greenspace between communities along the A93 and A944 corridors. The building at Milltimber South is an unwelcome development which has been forced upon the community – we would hope not to see any similar proposals for the remaining fields/greenspace

along the A93. In particular, it is proposed that there should be no development south of the Deeside Way. One minor exception would be suitable minimal development on the three Camphill Community estates. A more important possible exception is the land between the Inchgarth Road and the North Deeside Road (NDR) where some careful retirement housing development may lead to the construction of new road linking NDR and Inchgarth Road.

The existing green space between the individual Cults, Bielside, Milltimber and Peterculter communities should be preserved as agricultural or amenity land to support the character of the separate communities. Similarly, the greenspace around the approved Countesswells development site should be preserved to provide pleasant surroundings for the future residents of Countesswells and the existing residents in the local area and prevent gradual urbanisation of the area sitting between the A93 and A944 corridor. The retention and preservation of a minimum area of green space between communities to provide a distinct boundary should be clearly stated as a policy for the LDP.

Den of Cults -Cults Pumping Station - This site is in the current LDP as OP40 (0.69 ha) and earmarked for residential development: *“Redundant building which would provide a sustainable brownfield housing site with few apparent constraints or problems. Development will have to respect green linkages to the west of the site and the retention of the allotments to the east of the site”*. We oppose the use of this site for development – the site is too important both in terms of the Den of Cults path and its central location. A more suitable community-oriented use should be considered.

2.4 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for the city centre? To make the city centre more welcoming and attractive to residents and visitors – progress the key projects of the City Centre Masterplan to give people a reason to come to the city centre and support the city of Aberdeen. Support new plans for residential and commercial development to encourage people to live and work in the city.

2.5 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for providing infrastructure? Develop a city centre access plan; establishing key routes into the city centre for private vehicles that connect with good and reasonably priced public parking sites; establishing prioritised bus routes with minimal or no access to HGV and private cars; keep all HGV out of the city centre with only smaller vans used for deliveries during daylight hours. Address the need for a modern and welcoming integrated bus and rail station which is easily accessible to the public.

The availability of school places and the ability to expand capacity should be a key determinant of any future development proposals and this should be evaluated in the aggregate, not just the specific individual proposal.

2.6 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for transport and accessibility? Progress the plan for pedestrianisation in parts of Union Street and other streets in the city centre. This must be done as part of an overall city centre access strategy that accommodates public transport movement, private car access and parking and managed goods delivery for stores and businesses. It must also be better project managed than the recent work on Broad Street to minimise disruption to businesses and residents and lead to a timely completion of the work. Look for options to improve the bus service and access to all parts of the city e.g. more competition through a Strategic Transport Authority model where NESTRANS has the power to define service

requirements and then franchise out the operation (as in London, Strathclyde etc.) or reinstate a publicly owned bus service that provides transport for all areas of Aberdeen. Establish circular bus routes to complement the current radial system so that people do not have to go through the city centre when commuting.

The new Local Development Plan should protect the junctions and corridor of the AWPR from inappropriate speculative development.

The need for a new Bridge of Dee crossing should be incorporated together with a timescale for delivering the preferred option; this is particularly relevant if Local Development Plans move to a 10 year timeframe.

2.7 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for ensuring we have high quality buildings and places? Ensure new buildings proposed for the city centre reflect the heritage of Aberdeen through the use of Planning Guidance and Control. Opinions are strongly voiced about the MUSE development and while one can argue that the juxtaposition of the modern with the traditional of Marischal College provides a topic for discussion, a more sympathetic design may have led to less division in public opinion. Ensure landlords maintain the appearance of their property to make the streets safe and attractive to walk along – use of gentle persuasion, possible grant funding and legal enforcement (By-Laws?). Incorporate more open public space in new developments.

2.8 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for meeting the needs of businesses and industry? Improve accessibility to the city centre (see 2.5) and increase the amount of city centre accommodation to encourage more people to live and work in the city.

2.9 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for meeting Aberdeen's housing and community needs? Encouraging the building of more accommodation in the centre, either through private developers, housing associations or through council supported housing schemes. There is also a need for more social housing to accommodate lower paid workers, particularly in the health and education sectors.

2.10 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for supporting retail centres across Aberdeen? The existing centres should be encouraged to renovate and expand – we don't need any new ones and we should not encourage/support out-of-town retail parks. Work with the owners of existing centres to improve their offering and adapt to the needs of Aberdeen residents. Improve pedestrian connectivity and accessibility between the main centres e.g. safe walkways, well lit routes, good signage remembering the sometimes inclement weather in the NE of Scotland. Encourage growth of local retail businesses in prime locations perhaps through rent or rate relief.

2.11 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for protecting and enhancing the natural environment and preventing flooding? Planning Officers need to be clear and firm when reviewing and refusing applications for development in recognised flood areas. Similarly a city access strategy (see 2.5) needs to incorporate clean air requirements and ensure that levels of pollution are reduced across the city, particularly in air quality problem areas. Encourage the increased use of hydrogen and electrically powered buses and vehicles, including by enforcing future-proofing of new houses so that charging facilities can be easily installed as required.

2.12 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for ensuring that resources and waste are managed sustainably? Waste collection services must be continued at a frequency that ensures our streets are clean and hygienic with recycling further encouraged through continued education in schools and improved access to recycling points in the city – more separate recycling bins in the main streets.

2.13 Any other views on topics not covered above?

Encourage the creation of sustainable home energy supply in new developments, looking at the use of geothermal sources. The availability of drilling expertise in the city and its geological setting should be an advantage when developing deep high temperature heat generation systems as an alternative to energy from waste.