

ABERDEENSHIRE



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

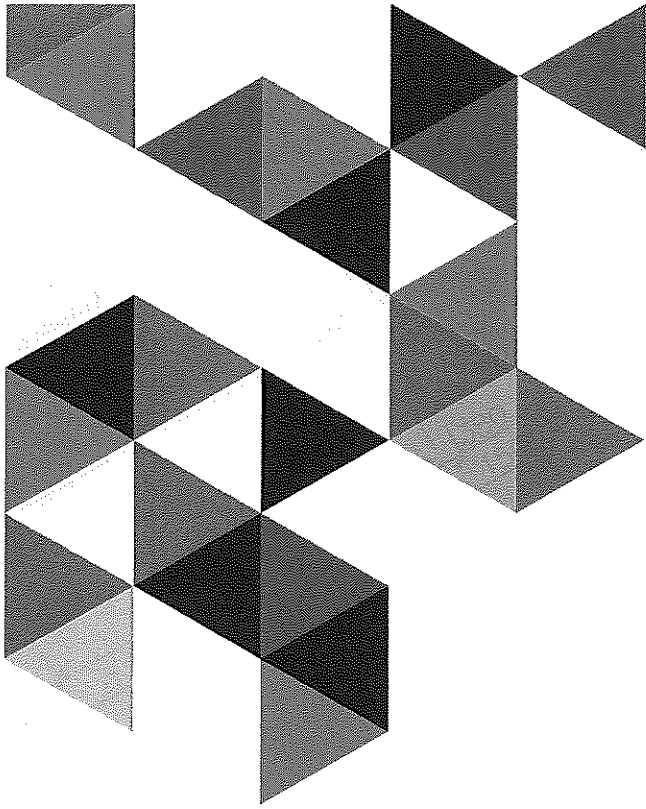
MAIN ISSUES REPORT **RESPONSE FORM**

The Main Issues Report is the main focus for engagement on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2016. The report sets out choices and options for the land allocations that could be set for development, and for the policies that Aberdeenshire Council will use to make decisions on planning applications. The Main Issues Report was published on 28th October 2013 along with a Monitoring Report and an interim Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. It is supported by a series of analysis papers. All of these documents can be found at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldp.

This form should be used to provide us with your views on these questions, or on any other issue raised by either the Main Issues Report, the Monitoring Report, the interim Environmental report or, indeed any other matter that you feel that we need to consider.

All comments received will be carefully assessed and will be used to inform the preparation of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. There will be a further opportunity to comment on the specific proposals contained in this plan when it is published, in October 2014.

**Please email to
ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
or send this form to reach us
by 1st February 2014.**



Please use this form to make comments on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2013. If you are making comments about more than one topic it would be very helpful if you could fill in a separate form for each comment.

Please email or send the form to reach us by 1st February 2014 at the following address:

Post: Planning Policy Team
Infrastructure Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
ABERDEEN
AB16 5GB

Email: ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

YOUR DETAILS

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Are you happy to receive future correspondence only by email - Yes No

Are you responding on behalf of another person? Yes No

If yes who are you representing Homes for Scotland

An acknowledgement will be sent to this address soon after the close of consultation.

YOUR COMMENTS

Please provide us with your comments below ensuring you tick the appropriate box to highlight what issue you are commenting on. Please feel free to add any extra pages you may require, ensuring you highlight the issue. We will summarise long comments and in our analysis will consider every point that is made. Once we have done this we will write back to you with Aberdeenshire Council's views on the submissions made. We will publish your name as the author of the comment, but will not make your address public.

Are you answering a question? Yes / No

Question Number being answer

Various

Please see attached document

Save this form to your system for your own records and send a copy to the address on the previous page

HOMES FOR SCOTLAND

ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – MAIN ISSUES REPORT

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1 Comments on policies that it is proposed to leave largely unchanged

Policy 5 Housing Land

The Policy needs to do more than “aspire” to a 7-year effective land supply. Scottish Planning Policy is clear that a Local Development Plan should identify a minimum 5-year supply of effective land at the point of adoption and at all times thereafter. In addition, a Plan should identify a supply of land which is effective, or capable of becoming effective, for the full 10-year span of the Plan. In addition, it is required to identify a “generous” supply such that there is sufficient flexibility to deal with unexpected changes in effectiveness without the need for a Plan alteration. Any land policy should also identify how the planning authority would respond in the event of a shortfall in effective supply emerging. The word “aspire” is therefore inappropriate – SPP places a duty on the planning authority to achieve these outcomes.

Policy 6 Affordable Housing/SG AH1 Affordable Housing

The SG should express the affordable requirement as a target or aim of 25% affordable housing on sites of 4 or more houses. Using a percentage figure is in line with SPP and PAN2/2010. The suggested wording in the table is less clear. In terms of the policy, the Council needs to consider very carefully why it is not achieving its intended outcomes. If the aim is to “meet all forms of housing need”, then the implementation of the policy needs to move away from a narrow reliance on social-rented housing provision to embrace all the options for types and tenures of affordable housing identified in SPP and PAN 2/2010. Undue restrictions are being placed on the ability of housing developers and providers to build a wide range of market and affordable properties.

Further discussion with developers before the LDP is drafted is recommended.

SG LSD 5 Open Space

This Policy needs a wider review of its operation. There is still a lack of clarity over what is actually required by this policy, what counts as open space, and the relative merits of public and private open space within developments.

Further discussion with developers before the LDP is drafted is recommended.

SG LSD 11 Carbon Neutrality

This is a complex area of technical and legislative issues, many of which are beyond the scope of planning control. It is essential that technical matters of construction and design are regulated by the Building Standards rather than planning policy. The standards expected of new development are set by the Building Standards and should not be arbitrarily-exceeded by planning policy. Future issues of the Building Standards are under review through the Sullivan Panel, and the timing of introduction of future changes is still unclear. Likewise, the Climate Change Act, which contains some of the provisions on micro-renewables, is subject to statutory review by Ministers in 2014 and there are indications that the Government recognises that the requirement to use low and zero-carbon technologies is proving impractical and problematic.

The house building industry is clear that such technologies are uneconomic, not wanted by most customers, cause problems for funding, insurance and maintenance, and do not contribute significant energy and carbon savings in a context where Scottish housing is already amongst the most energy-efficient and low-carbon in Europe.

Again, further discussion with developers before the LDP is drafted is recommended.

Policy 9 Developer Contributions; SG DevCon 1; SG DevCon 5

It is agreed that these should reflect the most recent Circular. It is also agreed that more clarity and reasoned justification is needed, as required by SPP and by Reporters in previous Examinations. In that context, it is important to review the approach to ensure that expected contributions are justified and affordable. In particular the proposals for strategic transport contributions are strongly-disputed by the industry as unreasonable and not compliant with the Circular. In addition, the industry rejects moves to extend contributions to services and infrastructure which are the statutory responsibility of other bodies who receive central Government funding through taxation for their functions. The prime example is a growing trend to seek contributions to health services. This is unacceptable, and indeed an Inspector in England has already made it clear that developers can only be expected to deal with the land issues of health services, not funding their operation. The cumulative impacts of a range of expected contributions also require consideration.

Further discussion with developers before the LDP is drafted is recommended.

Question 2 Is it appropriate to have a high level policy on climate change and group together policies on this subject?

In principle, this is sensible. The draft National Planning Framework 3 makes climate change one of its over-arching themes, and shows some of the spatial planning implications of the Government's overall aims and objectives. It would be appropriate

for LDPs to carry this approach into local planning proposals and policies. However, the policy framework has to be clear about what it is trying to achieve and why. In particular, it should ensure no confusion between planning issues and Building Control matters, as discussed under question 1. The LDP should concentrate on land use issues, spatial planning issues and energy issues as they relate to masterplanning, layout and design briefs for sites and not stray into matters related to design and construction of buildings.

Question 3 Is it appropriate to have the creation of green networks as one of the principal aims of the plan?

Yes. Green networks are identified in SPP as a key land-use objective. As with physical infrastructure, co-ordinated planning and delivery is essential if they are to be successfully-provided. Developers therefore need clarity and guidance on what is expected as part of any new development.

Question 5 Are the changes suggested for the "housing in the countryside" policy appropriate?

A number of Homes for Scotland members have commented in the past that they are deterred from investing in the Rural Market Area by the lack of clarity of the current policy provisions, combined with uncertainty caused by the scale of local and political opposition to rural development. If the proposed changes result in greater clarity about what will and will not be supported, then there may be merit in the changes.

Question 7 Are new policies required to consider new and emerging renewable generating technologies?

It would be appropriate for the LDP to contain policies dealing with the siting, design and impacts of new technologies. However, it would NOT be appropriate to contain policies which seek to require the use of particular technologies either generally or in specific circumstances. The discussion of biomass contains a risk of such prescription. Biomass has not proved a viable or technically-easy solution for large-scale heat/power, and it would be unwise to try to impose it or any other specific technology. The best-known CHP scheme in the Highlands has recently been shown to have required massive subsidy. The scheme installed in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Village is promoted by the City Council.

Power generation and distribution is essentially a matter for power and infrastructure companies, not developers or property owners. It is driven by energy markets and regulations not planning policy.

Question 8 Is it appropriate to deliver housing for people on modest incomes through reference to the range of house sizes and tenures within developments, or is an approach more closely tied to the national affordable housing benchmark required?

The home building industry rejects any implication that it cannot provide a range of types, sizes, prices and tenures of housing to meet a range of needs. Planning policy restrictions on land supply, and policies which drive up construction costs, are factors in driving house prices and site development mixes. A truly generous land supply in areas corresponding to market demands would be the single greatest assistance to providing a full range of housing in the market-place. It is not the role of planning policy to dictate house types and mixes on sites – that is a commercial judgement based on a wide range of factors relating to customer demand and preference, as well as complex financial viability considerations.

In respect of affordable housing, there is no national cost benchmark. Benchmarks for both HAG and mid-market rent are set with regard to local market prices and rents. What is needed is a policy approach which recognises the full range of affordable housing provision set out in SPP and Circular 2/2010. In terms of adaptability, the Building Standards now incorporate all of the adaptability provisions of the former Varying Needs standards.

Question 9 Is it appropriate to decrease the risk of future flooding by applying a higher standard now?

No. The MIR gives no justification for this from any sources such as SEPA. On what evidence does the Council assert that “today’s 1 in 400 year risks may be a 1 in 200 year risk within the lifespan of the building”? The existing levels of flood risk have been devised on the basis of analysis of weather trends and flood events, and already include a freeboard allowance above the 1:200 year risk. Any arbitrary changes to national policy at a local level are unacceptable.

Question 10 Are the requirements for sustainability labels an appropriate way of achieving carbon neutral buildings by 2020? Are the standards for the installation of LZCGT’s appropriate?

See response to Questions 1, 2 and 7. These are not matters for land-use planning policies. They are issues to be regulated through Building Standards and should not be duplicated in a development plan.

Question 12 Should the policy on locally valued views be removed and ultimately replaced by a set of local landscape designations or reviewed?

The MIR seems to answer its own question. The designated views seem arbitrary in terms of the criteria used to define them and are therefore open to dispute at any time. Landscape character assessment, by contrast, is an accepted and rigorous methodology which can be tested.

Question 13 What reasons might there be to add to the greenfield housing and/or employment land supply by allocating more sites?

The MIR makes the same fundamentally-flawed assumption made by many other planning authorities – that all identified established housing land will become effective and deliver housing to meet the requirements of the Strategic Plan. Evidence nationally suggests that this is far too simplistic a view. SPP is clear that it is the duty of a Local Development Plan to demonstrate that it has sufficient land which is effective, or capable of becoming effective, to meet the requirements for the full 10-year span of the Plan. The implication of that is clear – that there must be a robust exercise accompanying the LDP to test the effectiveness and deliverability of all land which is assumed to meet the housing requirement. Both the Glasgow and Clyde Valley SDP and SESplan as modified by Ministers make clear that any assumptions about land supply made within the SDP or made in advance of LDP production must be tested through preparation of the LDP.

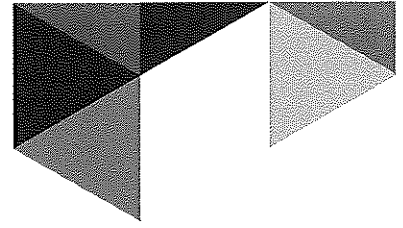
Policy also requires the identification of a generous land supply to ensure that there are no difficulties with delivering housing later in the Plan period. Further, policy requires that a Plan's strategy is capable of delivery. This implies that housing land allocations should relate to areas and locations where the market – the principal mechanism of housing delivery – can actually deliver units on the ground. Policy also requires consideration to be given to range and choice – again a key consideration is satisfying the spread of market demand. There is also the longer-term perspective of delivering the SDP requirement to be considered. Some Homes for Scotland members have noted the possible implication that "f" sites in the adopted Local Plan may not be identified this time. That would seem perverse if sites identified previously as having longer-term potential are not retained in the LDP in order to give longer-term guidance for investment decisions.

All of that means that it is not possible, writing a MIR in 2013, to assert now that there will be sufficient land up to 2023 and beyond. A detailed process of testing effectiveness and delivery is needed, and that should be conducted in conjunction with the house building industry to ensure that its assumptions are valid.

The Council has a wider responsibility for economic development. Having sufficient housing to accommodate incoming labour is essential. The quality of housing stock is a factor in decisions made by businesses to relocate. Housebuilding makes a substantial contribution to local economies through direct investment and through multipliers.

The assertion that there is no reasonable alternative is clearly false in that context.

Further liaison with the industry to assess the deliverability of the established land supply is essential prior to drafting the LDP.



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This data will potentially be disclosed worldwide (via publication on Internet). We will not publish any address information, but may publish the name of the person completing the form.

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Aberdeenshire Council,
Planning Policy Team
Tel: 01224 664221

This is the Main Issues Report and associated documents of the **Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2016**.

If you have difficulty understanding this document and require a translation, or would like a copy in larger print, please phone us on 01224 665168.

Aberdino sīties 2016. gada Vietas plētno plāna Pagrindinių klausimų sprendimo pranešimas ir su juo susiję dokumentai. Jei jums yra sunku suprasti šį dokumentą ir norėtumėte šio dokumento verstos kopijos, ar Dideliu šriftu, prašau kreipkitės telefonu 01224 665168.

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To jest Sprawozdanie na temat Głównych Zagadnień Lokalnego Planu Rozwojowego Aberdeenshire 2016 i powiązane z nimi dokumenty. Jeśli mają Państwo trudności ze zrozumieniem tego dokumentu i wymagają tłumaczenia, lub chcieliby otrzymać odpis w dużym druku, proszę się z nami skontaktować pod numerem telefonu 01224 665168.

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Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

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