

ANGUS COUNCIL

ANGUS COUNCIL- 21 MARCH 2019

**NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION
ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 – MAIN ISSUES REPORT**

REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

This Report comments on and provides the suggested basis for the Council's response to consultations on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 – Main Issues Report.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) note the publication for consultation of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 - Main Issues Report, supporting assessments and evidence base.
- (ii) agree this Report as the Council's response to Aberdeenshire Council and that no formal objection is made to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 - Main Issues Report.

2. TO ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

- 2.1 This report responds to consultation documents prepared by Aberdeenshire Council a neighbouring local authority and consequently does not contribute directly to local outcomes contained in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030 and Locality Plans.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Aberdeenshire Council published the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report on 14 January 2019. The period for representation runs until 8 April 2019. The Main Issues Report is a key consultation document published in the early stages of the preparation of a new Local Development Plan. Its purpose is to identify the main areas of change facing the area and put forward preferred and alternative options to address identified issues. The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report and supporting documents are available to view at: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/plans-and-policies/ldp-2021/main-issues-report/.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report recognises that consistency and continuity with previous development plans remains a key element in supporting the implementation of the long term development strategy and decision making. Consistent with the strategic framework set by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014), the Main Issues Report largely reaffirms the broad development strategy and site allocations as set out in the current Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan adopted in March 2017.
- 4.2 The Main Issues Report focuses on those areas where significant policy change might be required, and those new sites where development should be permitted. The Main Issues Report has identified 18 Main Issues focused on the policy content of the Plan. Six Area Appendices outline an assessment of bids received during the Call for Sites stage, and

identifies preferred sites that could be taken forward for development in the Proposed Local Development Plan.

- 4.3 The following specific Policy areas and site Proposals in Laurencekirk and at Edzell Woods affect the areas adjacent to Angus and have been considered for potential implications for land use planning in Angus:

Policy R1 Special Rural Areas - The Coastal Zone currently recognises the specific nature of the green belt and the coastal zone, and restricts development to a limited number of circumstances. Aberdeenshire Council consider that a review of these coastal zones, first developed in the 1980's, could support delivery of the provisions of SPP by "*integrating the "coast" as part of other policies within the Plan (such as policy on landscape and nature conservation).*" The Main Issues Report notes that conflicts exist when applying the coastal zone policy alongside other 'Shaping Development in the Countryside' policies. The 'preferred' option is the retention of the coastal zone designation with some minor wording amendments to provide clarity and to state that development in the coastal zone should be "small-scale", and that incremental development of settlements will be permitted in appropriate circumstances, with a full review undertaken in future to ensure the designation is fit for purpose.

Conversely, the "alternative" option would be removal of the coastal zone designation and current policy wording from the Plan in favour of promoting an approach that addresses the issues through application of landscape and natural heritage policies. SPP would then be taken forward at a local level through amendment to relevant Local Development Plan policies.

While this policy approach is a detailed matter for Aberdeenshire Council it would be prudent to monitor its application in considering the policy approach for the Angus coastline in the forthcoming Angus Local Development Plan 2021.

Policy R2: Housing and Employment Development Elsewhere in the Countryside "*aims to support a long-term sustainable pattern of development that takes a measured approach to development in rural areas, generally directing development to our towns and villages and restricting development in the wider countryside to a small number of circumstances in order to meet local needs.*" The Main Issues Report identifies a number of changes could provide greater clarity on the interpretation and implementation of the policy. These changes would be in relation to the extent of the area of Aberdeenshire identified as "pressured and easily accessible"; the application of the "organic growth" element of the policy; and the scale of development considered appropriate on rural brownfield sites. The latter issue is of most interest to Angus Council. The 'preferred' option is to remove the policy restriction that business proposals outwith settlements should be "small-scale" in order to take account of larger brownfield sites.

Although the consequences of the preferred option are unclear at present, this is a detailed policy matter for Aberdeenshire Council. It would be prudent monitor its application and any potential cumulative effects in considering the policy approach for development in the countryside in the forthcoming Angus Local Development Plan 2021.

Laurencekirk The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Main Issues Report carries forward Opportunity Sites 1 and 2 from the Adopted Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 which make provision for 1095 homes, 11 ha of employment land and a further 16ha for strategic reserve. Through the 'Call for Sites' exercise, Aberdeenshire Council received proposals for an additional 991 homes and 18,345m² of employment land across 12 sites at Laurencekirk. Of these the Main Issues Report identifies 2 sites as their 'preferred' options to provide an additional 88 homes and 7745 m² of employment land (Classes 4, 5 and 6) at Laurencekirk within the next Local Development Plan. One of the sites (KN073) already has current planning permission for 77 homes, 2370 m² commercial/office space (Class 4), and 5375 m² industrial/warehousing (Classes 5 and 6). The site assessment comments in the Main Issues Report recognise that the site has the potential to be increased to provide 100

homes. The commentary for Opportunity 1 in the Adopted Local Development Plan states that a transport assessment will be needed before development can be carried out.

Edzell Woods Site Opportunity 1 has been carried forward from the Adopted Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 and no new 'preferred' site options have been identified. Opportunity 1 was identified for 300 homes and employment land, with the commentary that *"future development should ensure that appropriate access is taken to the site and this will require A90 junction improvements along with local road improvements"*.

- 4.4 The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report continues the general strategy and policy approach contained in the current adopted Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017. The additional sites proposed for inclusion at Laurencekirk in the forthcoming Local Development Plan are of limited capacity. Subject to resolution of the access and capacity issues at the A90(T)/A937 south junction through delivery of the planned grade separated junction improvement, the additional sites at Laurencekirk and continuation of the site at Edzell Woods are not considered to have land use planning issues for Angus. Given the above the Head of Communities recommends that no formal objection should be made to the Proposed Plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this Report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required. It should be noted that Aberdeenshire Council has published an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the document package.
- 6.2 There are no Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) implications for Angus Council. It should be noted that Aberdeenshire Council has undertaken SEA of the Proposed Plan and published an Environmental Report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Angus Local Development Plan 2016.
- Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report, Aberdeenshire Council, January 2019.

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