

ANGUS COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE 26 MAY 2015

PROPOSED ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015

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ABSTRACT

This report comments on and provides the suggested basis for the Council's response to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note the publication of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015; and
- (ii) agree that the draft representation to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015 set out in Appendix 1, be submitted by Angus Council.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report responds to a consultation document of an external agency and consequently does not directly contribute to the local outcome(s) contained in the Angus Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement / Corporate Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

Aberdeenshire Council published their Proposed Local Development Plan on the 27 March 2015. The period of representation runs for six weeks to 17:00 on 8 May 2015. When adopted this Proposed Plan will replace the Local Development Plan adopted in 2012.

Following extensive consultation particularly on the Main Issues Report (2013), the Proposed Plan is Aberdeenshire Council's settled view on what land should be made available for building in the period to 2026. It also contains policies which will be used for assessing planning applications across Aberdeenshire. The Proposed Plan itself is short, concise and a map based document. Much of the detail has been presented in 9 appendices and seven volumes of Supplementary Guidance.

4. SYNOPSIS OF THE PROPOSED ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015

The Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan reflects the Scottish Government's purpose and adopts the vision and aims of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan and largely continues the vision and aims of the adopted Local Development Plan. The plan seeks to:

- Promote sustainable mixed communities with the highest standards of design;
- Take on the challenges of sustainable development and climate change;
- Protect and improve assets and resources;
- Increase and diversify the economy;
- Promote the creation of green networks within and between settlements; and
- Make efficient use of the transport network, reduce the need to travel and promote walking, cycling and public transport.

In accordance with the spatial strategy established by the Strategic Development Plan, the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan:

- Concentrates development in strategic growth areas centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes, where 75% of the anticipated growth in the city region will take place.
- Allows for development in local growth and diversification areas where growth will be matched to local needs.

The Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan identifies housing land for communities in the area South of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk as shown in the table below. This is extracted from the Proposed Plan (Appendix 5, Table 6) and indicates the scale of development and the time period. It can be seen that all of the sites allocated were included (with difference site references) in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan adopted in 2012. Site details are shown in the Proposed Plan in Section 9 - Shaping Kincardine and Mearns. The detailed settlement statements also outline planning objectives for the settlements, protected land, existing sites, settlement infrastructure and proposed sites.

Table: Distribution of housing in the South of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk area:

Community	site	South of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk		Local Growth (AHMA)		Local Growth (RHMA)	
		Existing to 2016	2017-2026	Existing to 2016	2017-2026	Existing to 2016	2017-2026
Auchenblae	OP1 (M1)					35 (35)	40
	OP2 (H1)					5 (5)	
	OP3 (EH1)					(0)**	
Drumlithie	OP1 (M1)			15 (0)	15		
Drumoak	OP1 (H1)			15 (0)	20		
Edzell Woods	OP1 (M1)					150 (150)	150
Fettercairn	OP1 (H1)					15 (10)	15
Fordoun	OP1 (H1)	15 (15)					
Gourdon	OP1 (H1)					25 (0)	10
Inverbervie	OP1 (H1)					30 (0)	
	OP2 (H2)					100 (50)	100
Johnshaven	OP1 (H1)					(67)**	
Kirkton of Maryculter	OP1 (H1)			6 (0)			
Laurencekirk	OP1 (M1)	485 (440)	400				
	OP2 (EH1)	(210)**					
	OP3 (EH2)	(10)**					
Luthermuir	OP1 (M1)					25 (25)	
	OP2 (M2)						25
Marykirk	OP1 (M1)					15 (8)	15
Mill of Uras	OP1 (NEW)				5		
Park	OP1 (H1)			6 (3)			
Roadside of Kinneff	OP1 (M1)					15 (15)	15
St Cyrus	OP1 (M1)					65 (65)	60
	OP2 (EH1)					(2)**	
Woodlands of Durris	OP1 (EH1)					(0)	
	TOTAL	500 (675)	400	42 (3)	40	480 (432)	430

Figures in brackets indicate the remaining site capacity that is expected by the end of 2016 (i.e the number of houses that are still to be built on the site). This is based on information from the 2014 Housing Land Audit.

** Figures in brackets include the remaining site capacity that is expected by the end of 2016 on previously committed sites that do not contribute to the Strategic Development Plan allowances.

In Laurencekirk, the Proposed Plan allocates Site OP1 for a mixed use proposal of up to 885 homes and 11ha of employment land with a further 16ha of strategic reserve. This site is allocated as site M1 in the adopted plan. A Development Framework and masterplan were agreed by Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee in November 2013. The Settlement Statement identifies that there are significant road infrastructure issues which need to be resolved before further development can occur. In terms of new infrastructure the document identifies a requirement for a section of distributor road around Laurencekirk (from the Fourdoun Road to the A90(T)) and grade separated access onto the A90(T); upgrades to water infrastructure; contribution to capacity at the Primary School and Mearns Academy, community facilities, sports and recreation facilities, waste facilities, health facilities and open space needs. The Action Programme indicates that the grade separated junctions will be developer funded and any commitment to the upgrade and the timing of implementation remains unconfirmed. Any solution will be informed by the outcomes of the NESTRANS "Access to Laurencekirk" Study, the initial findings of which were presented in January 2015. Consultation on the options set out at that time will inform the decision about which improvements will be taken forward to the next stage of assessment.

The above table indicates a significant housing land release for Edzell Woods over the plan period within the confines of the former US navy base. Site OP1 is allocated for a mixed use proposal of up to 300 houses in two phases, with 150 houses in the first phase (to 2016). This site was previously allocated as site M1 in the adopted plan. A masterplan was approved by Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee in April 2013 and Planning Permission was granted in April 2013 but is subject to a legal agreement. In terms of infrastructure an upgrade to the A90 junction is identified; together with an upgrade of the sewage works. The Action Programme gives no indication of a commitment or timetable for any of the works.

In St Cyrus, site OP1 is allocated for a mixed use proposal of up to 125 houses over two phases with 65 houses in the first phase (to 2016). Approximately 2ha of the site will be for employment and retail uses. This site was previously allocated as site M1 in the adopted plan. A masterplan was approved by Kincardine and Mearns Area committee in September 2014.

5. DISCUSSION

The Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015 has identified sites to meet the housing allowances, established by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014), for the area South of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk as per the table above.

In the case of Edzell Woods and Laurencekirk where significant new housing is proposed, an important issue is related to the timing of implementation of the necessary infrastructure required in support of the new allocations, particularly the need for improvements to the relevant A90(T) road junctions. While the requirement for infrastructure improvements on the A90(T) is identified in the Settlement Statement and Proposed Action Programme, at this stage there is a lack of any indication of a firm commitment or timing for these improvements. It will be essential to make sure that any planning approval for these significant sites is linked to the required upgrade of the junctions on the trunk road. The documents set out that developer contributions will be sought for upgrades to the A90(T) junctions, including a grade separated access onto the A90(T) at Laurencekirk.

Any solution to the issues faced at the A90(T) junctions (including the A90(T) and A937 junction) will be informed by the Transport NESTRANS "Access to Laurencekirk" study, which aims to develop a preferred solution for access between the A90 Trunk Road and Laurencekirk and Montrose that is cost effective, improves road safety and meets the needs of local businesses and residents. Initial options resulting from work undertaken were presented in January 2015. Consultation on these options will inform the decision about which improvements will be taken forward to the next stage of assessment. It is only once a final option is identified for all of the junctions that there can be any more certainty in terms of costs, funding and timing.

The impact that the lack of capacity at the junctions is having on development North Angus and the area South of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk is, however, considered to be a strategic issue. It is vital that, given the strategic nature of the impact, there is a national or strategic approach to funding any scheme(s) identified as a result of the NESTRANS study. Whilst developer contributions should not be ruled out at this stage, they should not be considered to

be the only source of potential funding. It is only once a final option is identified by the NESTRANS study, and there is commitment and a timetable for the works agreed, as well as funding identified that the allocations in the Proposed Local Plan in Aberdeenshire could reflect a more certain proposal, including associated costs and the level of potential developer contributions. Whilst it would be too early for any certainty in terms of funding, it is considered that the Proposed Plan should recognise the possibility of a more strategic approach to solutions on the A90(T), including potential funding sources. It is recommended that a formal representation reflecting this be made on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The proposed representation is set out in Appendix 1.

New housing in the Laurencekirk area (South of Drumlithie – Laurencekirk) on the scale and over the time frame suggested, and the need for associated infrastructure could have an impact on the North Angus (Brechtin and Montrose) Housing Market Area. It will be important to monitor progress on the deliverability of housing in this area and any impact on the North Angus HMA. The Proposed Angus Local Development Plan takes cognisance of the housing and employment land strategy set out in the adopted Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2012) and rolled forward into the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015 to ensure that north east Angus continues to offer opportunity for inward investment and local needs. Officers from Angus and Aberdeenshire Councils have met to discuss such issues and will continue to meet on a regular basis.

The level and distribution of land allocations (both housing and employment land) contained in the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan is consistent with the approved Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014). Angus Council did not make a formal representation on the Strategic Development Plan (Report 245/13 refers). In order to meet the Strategic Development Plan requirements in the South of Drumlithie – Laurencekirk area, the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan proposes continuing allocations made in the adopted Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2012) on which Angus Council did not to make a formal objection (Report 583/10 refers). It is therefore considered that the only formal representation Angus Council should make on the contents of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015 should relate to the resolution of issues and potential funding of the junction improvements on the A90(T), as set out in Appendix 1.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

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 have undertaken and published an Equalities Assessment as part of the range of published document supporting the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

There are no SEA implications for Angus Council. It should be noted that Aberdeenshire Council has undertaken SEA of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and a draft Environmental Report has been published alongside the Proposed Plan for consultation.

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:

- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan, Approved by Scottish Ministers, March 2014
- Report 245/13 – Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan to Infrastructure Services Committee 16 April 2013
- Report 583/10 – Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2010 to Infrastructure Services Committee 24 August 2010

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Appendix 1 – Draft Angus Council Representation on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2015.

Title: Mrs

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Are you happy to receive future correspondence by email: yes

Are you responding on behalf of another person?: yes

If yes who are you representing: Angus Council

Modification that you wish to see:

The Proposed Plan should not rely solely on Developer Contributions to fund junction improvements and / or upgrades on the A90(T) in the Kincardine and Mearns area and should recognise the possibility of a more strategic approach to solutions on the A90(T), including potential funding sources. This broader range of potential funding sources should be reflected in the Edzell Woods and Newesk and Laurencekirk Settlement Statements as well as in the Action Programme.

Reason for Change:

significant new housing is proposed at Edzell Woods and Laurencekirk where there are issues relating to the timing of implementation of the necessary infrastructure required in support of the new allocations, particularly the need for improvements to the relevant A90(T) road junctions. While the requirement for infrastructure improvements on the A90(T) is identified in the Settlement Statement and Proposed Action Programme, at this stage there is a lack of any indication of a firm commitment or timing for these improvements. It will be essential to make sure that any planning approval for these significant sites is linked to the required upgrade of the junctions on the trunk road. The documents set out that developer contributions will be sought for upgrades to the A90(T) junctions, including a grade separated access onto the A90(T) at Laurencekirk.

Any solution to the issues faced at the A90(T) junctions (including the A90(T) and A937 junction) will be informed by the Transport NESTRANS "Access to Laurencekirk" study, which aims to develop a preferred solution for access between the A90 Trunk Road and Laurencekirk and Montrose that is cost effective, improves road safety and meets the needs of local businesses and residents. Initial options resulting from work undertaken were presented in January 2015. Consultation on these options will inform the decision about which improvements will be taken forward to the next stage of assessment. It is only once a final option is identified for all of the junctions that there can be any more certainty in terms of costs, funding and timing.

The impact that the lack of capacity at the junctions is having on development North Angus and the area South of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk is, however, considered to be a strategic issue. It is vital that, given the strategic nature of the impact, there is a national or strategic approach to funding any scheme(s) identified as a result of the NESTRANS study. Whilst developer contributions should not be ruled out at this stage, they should not be considered to be the only source of potential funding. It is only once a final option is identified by the NESTRANS study, and there is commitment and a timetable for the works agreed, as well as funding identified that the allocations in the Proposed Local Plan in Aberdeenshire could reflect a more certain proposal, including associated costs and the level of potential developer contributions. Whilst it would be too early for any certainty in terms of funding, it is considered that the Proposed Plan should recognise the possibility of a more strategic approach to solutions on the A90(T), including potential funding sources.

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