



Local Development Plan – Pre-Main Issues Report, 2018

Heritage (including City Centre)

- Maintenance and upkeep of buildings along and adjacent to Union Street, including frontages and upper floors. This should include encouraging more use of floors beyond ground level, including as housing, office space and more.

- Maintenance and upkeep of roads, and in particular of pavements along, adjacent to, leading to and from Union Street and Castlegate. This should include making sure that historic cobbles are retained but while also making sure they are not loose, are not left to crumble and are part of smooth surface. This is particularly important in adverse weather conditions to reduce injuries and strong concern for those experiencing mobility issues to ensure that the surface is suitable for wheelchairs, prams, zimmer frames, walking sticks and other mobility devices.

Public Transport – Union Square, Station Gateway

- Public transport and pedestrian access for the 'Station Gateway' ensuring that is connectivity between the Union Square and Harbour areas with 'city centre', West End, East End and Castlegate areas. This should also include accessibility to and amenity in the bus stations and train stations and for the car parking at Union Square, to ensure that there are options for mobility beyond the mall space. This would ensure that those arriving to the train, bus stations and car parks do not feel confined to Union Square and can use the site as a transport hub for access into the wider city. This would also mean that there is the opportunity for those visiting the surrounding city to also have access to Union Square as part of their journey, therefore providing a commercial benefit to local businesses, to the mall and strengthening public transport and pedestrian links.

Management and Sustainable Tourism

- There should be further consideration given to the management of sustainable tourism, to ensure that there is adequate provision in place for those visiting the city and to ensure that this does not result in a detrimental impact to those living in areas of interest such as Fittie / Foot Dee and other areas in the city. This is especially important as tourism is an identified priority within the City Council's Economic Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy.

Air Quality

- Further improvement for air quality throughout the city, particularly in identified 'Hot-Spots' / 'Zones of Concern' such as Union Street, Market Street and other places throughout the city. These areas continue to have low air quality and have among the lowest air quality in Scotland, UK and Europe. This should include stronger and more robust procedures for monitoring areas of likely emissions and potential excess emissions such as the Incinerator / Energy from Waste facility.

Variety of Activities

- Greater variety of activities including entertainment, recreation, leisure and activity which do not depend on alcohol as the main focus. This should lead to greater dialogue between planning and licensing, to ensure that the kinds of developments (and development zones) encouraged take this into account and promote a greater variety. This is particularly important for the health of our city's population and our communities as the consumption of alcohol is identified as a priority in Aberdeen in many of the 'Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership' Locality Plans, as well as a national health priority for Scotland. This would also ensure greater economic success and sustainability as increasingly young people and visitors to the city, whether for business, education or tourism are looking for activities which do not depend on alcohol as the focus.

Public Transport, Community Links

- Greater connectivity between communities, as well as through central transport hubs, such as the routes recently commissioned to Stagecoach and First Bus by the City Council. This is particularly important when certain routes and transport links have faced reduction of frequency, times of operation or even being withdrawn altogether. In ongoing consultation and engagement with our community, we hear often how relied upon these public transport links are to many within our communities and particularly for those who have little to no other option of alternative travel.

- It is good to see that there is the recommendation of connecting Regional Centres, Town Centres, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Commercial Centres with public transport and other transport. This should also include connections to pockets of communities and rural location where required.

- Consideration given rail links throughout Aberdeen and branching further into North and North-East, to secure Aberdeen's place as a 'Gateway' destination, as well as a place to visit, learn and do business in, in its own right. If this proceeds, there must be account taken to ensure that there is not a detrimental impact on the environment, on ecosystems or on those living and travelling near the potential rail lines.

Local Business Support

- Further support for local businesses, such as cafes, restaurants, artisans, crafts and more which are unique to Aberdeen and unique in the world. This is important for our economic success as the absence of unique places leaves only franchise and international brands which can be found anywhere else in the world. It is the local and unique places which give a unique sense of place, character and communities for those visiting but also living in the city. This would also ensure a shared success, reaching more levels of wealth and income and would enable and encourage an environment of entrepreneurship, in addition to finding employment in already existing larger companies.

Heritage (including Granite and Materials)

- It is excellent to see that there is the recommendation of the Re-Use of Construction Materials, particularly in consideration of heritage such as granite and other historically significant materials. This should also include a concerted effort to preserve the upkeep and preservation rather than demolition of granite buildings, cobbled streets which are part of the distinct character and heritage of the city.

Vertical Development (Big Buildings)

- In the place-setting and positioning of termed 'Big Buildings', there should be consideration given that they do not overshadow or overcrowd but instead compliment iconic landmarks and sought after views and lines of sight and light.

Water Quality

- We welcome the City Council's proposed commitment to the 'EU Water Framework Directive' to ensure good population health, preservation of aquatic ecosystems and economic benefits through clean water, and we very much support this commitment being adhered to in the future.

Public Health Standards

- If and when the UK withdraws from the EU, we propose that the standards of Water Quality, Air Quality, Hazardous Materials, Noise Levels and all other Public Health priorities remain at least as strong in their standards as they are currently, and are not reduced in their aims for improving and protecting our city's population's health.

Public Health (Wi-Fi / EMF)

- There must be continued dialogue with NHS, WHO and other health organisations in the design and development of 'Mobile Broadcast' (EMF) infrastructure throughout the city. Mobile Phone Towers, Wi-Fi, Wireless Broadcasting, Electro-Magnetic Fields are currently classified by the World Health Organisations as 'Possibly carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B), a category used when causal association is considered credible, but when chance, bias or confounding cannot be ruled out with reasonable confidence'. While we recognise the importance of this digital infrastructure, there should also be consideration given to protecting public health when we consider where this infrastructure is placed in relation to our resident communities.

Innovation and Research Support

- Excellent to see that there is the recommendation of the Aberdeen Energy Park and Aberdeen Innovation Park as areas which support Aberdeen continuing to lead globally on research and development in the Energy (including Oil & Gas and Renewables) and other industries. However, we must also look beyond these industries to look at supporting emerging fields and industries of city-wide, regional and national importance to ensure that we build on our heritage of Oil & Gas and ensure that the benefit translates into other industries. There should also be consideration given to more locally based areas to ensure that the benefits of this priority makes a difference to all of our community and not only the currently wealthiest and most economically successful.

Affordable and Social Housing

- We very much welcome and strongly support the identified priority of 'Affordable Housing' and 'Social Housing', led by the City Council and in dialogue with Developers and Housing Associations.

Green Spaces, and Activities

- We also welcome and strongly support the retention and promotion of green spaces, outdoors physical and sport and leisure activity spaces. It is important that these spaces are locally located to communities to ensure that people are able to access them, rather than to be faced with potential barriers of travel cost, travel time or physical mobility. This should also include the priority of 'sensory experiences' in our green spaces, for example as has been proposed in the current plans for Union Terrace Gardens. This could include scent and touch of flowers, smooth surfaces for walking, benches for sitting etc. This sensory interaction can be very stimulating and positive health impact for those experiencing conditions such as Alzheimers, Dementia, Autism, Learning Disabilities and many other physical and neurological conditions.

Local Place Plans (Proposed Planning Bill)

- The Planning (Scotland) Bill that is currently being considered by the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament makes reference to 'Local Place Plans' which would secure the right of communities to develop plans that identify issues to be improved and priorities for future development.

Based on engagement and dialogue with a number of colleagues and Officers from the City Council's Planning Department, there has been a very constructive and positive reception to how these plans could feature more prominently toward informing and guiding the development of future Local Development Plans and Strategic Development Plans and Masterplans in particular with the Local Authority.

This could also include a more inclusive dialogue with Developers and other Community Planning and Public Service Partners.

It is our recommendation that we continue to explore how this process can be supported for communities throughout the city, with Community Councils serving as a key link and partner in the formation of the plans, as Statutory Consultees to the Planning Process.

Aberdeen Beach (Beach Strategy)

- It is important that Aberdeen's Beach is protected and looked after as treasured asset to the city for generations. This should include a Beach Masterplan, independent of the City Centre Masterplan which consults with local communities to the beach and who have their homes nearby, to ensure that their needs and priorities are taken fully and thoroughly into account as well as the what the wider city may wish to see. Similarly, part of this should include ongoing engagement with cafes, restaurants and other stores and outlets on, along and around the Beach / Beach Boulevard. It is vital that the Safety Strategy, such as that developed by the Water Safety Group is given further promotion and prominence to ensure a safe experience for any and all visiting the beach, particularly in relation to the water. This should also include a robust Litter / Waste Disposal and Recycling Strategy as part of this to preserve and protect this treasured natural asset.

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- prepared by Jonathan Smith, as Chairperson on behalf of Castlehill and Pittodrie Community Council

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