

Response ID ANON-WYN9-4S3V-7

Submitted to **Local Development Plan - Pre-Main Issues Report Questionnaire**

Submitted on **2018-05-27 23:31:46**

Introduction

1 Please let us know the capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire. Are you...

A community representative e.g. Community Council

If you are a community representative, which area do you represent?:

Old Aberdeen

If you answered Other, please tell us who you are.:

2 Please provide your name and contact details?

Name and Organisation::

Dewi Morgan, Old Aberdeen Community Council

Address::

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

3 If you are acting as an agent or completing this on behalf of an organisation, group or landowner, please provide their details:

Organisation/Group/Landowner:

Address::

Postcode::

Telephone::

Email::

4 May we have your permission to publish your name and/or organisation alongside your comments?

Yes

Aberdeen's Main Planning Issues

1 What do you think are the most important things that make Aberdeen a good place to live, visit and/or work?

The most important things that make Aberdeen a good place to live, visit and/or work?:

- With the contraction of the oil industry it is important that employment opportunities are regained, otherwise our capability as a technology centre will rapidly wind down. Consider opportunities for supporting start-up companies; the ready availability of premises around the city could make this quite an economical initiative.
- Aberdeen needs good availability of suitable housing, particularly at the social housing end of the scale. This is just not going to happen while we depend upon the private developers.
- Improved public transport connectivity, both local to encourage car-free commuting and national destinations would help to mark Aberdeen as a desirable place to live. The ongoing dualing to Inverurie is a very positive development, but what about dualing the rail south of Montrose?
- We need a local bus service that is quick. Currently buses spend too much time at bus stops and in traffic snarl-ups to be able to offer a quick service. Then we have routes which seem to change every year.
- We need to offer a city with a strong clean air policy. Some streets such as King St, Market St, Wellington Road are known as having poor air quality. Slow and stationary traffic exacerbates this and buses at a bus-stop can exacerbate this where there is no pull-in.

2 What do you think should be the Council's top priorities for the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan?

What should be the Council's top priorities for the next Local Development Plan?:

- To put in place a moratorium on any further specialist student accommodation blocks throughout Aberdeen for a fixed period (suggest 5 years) to enable the balance between supply and demand for this type of property to stabilise and future needs to be properly evaluated.
- Put in place a legally robust means to limit local density of HMO properties to a maximum of 12% of properties within each Census Output Area. This should apply throughout Aberdeen. A motion passed by the full council on 16th January 2018 acknowledged the importance of achieving mixed, balanced communities.

3 Do you have any particular aspirations for your community or Aberdeen as a whole that you think should be taken forward through the Aberdeen Local Development Plan? For example, what are your views on recycling of waste, affordable housing, access to green space or ways to reduce CO2 emissions?

Do you have any particular aspirations for your community or Aberdeen as a whole that you think should be taken forward through the Aberdeen Local Development Plan:

- Put in place a legally robust means to limit local density of HMO properties to a maximum of 12% of properties within each Census Output Area. This should apply throughout Aberdeen. A motion passed by the full council on 16th January 2018 acknowledged the importance of achieving mixed, balanced communities.
- The processing of HMO applications and planning permission applications should be conducted concurrently as in Dundee.
- There is no proactive support for the conservation area of Old Aberdeen. It is designated as a conservation area, a character appraisal has been published, but nothing is done to nurture the area (and we assume this applies to every conservation area).
 - We would like to see area specific leaflets published and circulated on a yearly basis to remind owners and occupiers of their obligations
 - We would like to see council departments treating the location differently; particularly road improvements and road lighting; changes in these areas are imposed with no communication and often create a result that is inimical to the conservation area.
- The ALDP 2017 City-Wide Proposals Map identifies the various zones which are designated CF1 'Existing Community Facilities'. The area in Old Aberdeen that is designated CF1 is fundamentally different to the other areas in that the Old Aberdeen area incorporates a considerable number of private properties. The area shown on the Proposals Map shows includes many domestic properties in The Orchard, University Road, The Spital, College Bounds, The High Street, Sunnybank Road, King Street, St Machar Drive. Of these properties within CF1, a large majority are not owned by the University and include sheltered housing, a mosque and a doctors' surgery as well as a considerable number of privately owned domestic properties. We have attached a map which shows how much non academic property has been incorporated in this zone.

As comparison, please consider the delineation of CF1 for Robert Gordon's University and for the Foresterhill hospital complex. These areas carefully exclude domestic properties from the CF1 designated area, and this principle is followed throughout the City.

We therefore contend that the CF1 area needs to be revised to better reflect that Old Aberdeen is an ancient township, not a mono-culture university campus. While some of this can be corrected by a straightforward revision of the boundary, the spine of the conservation area (Spital / College Bounds / High Street) is more complex and might justify a new zone designation to acknowledge the complex historical development and to support and maintain the existing balance between education, retail and domestic use.

- We would like to see a Council led, pro-active tourism group make the most of the heritage areas of Aberdeen and Old Aberdeen. This should be focussed on individual tourism, not coach tours which appear to bring little to the economy, but hold up traffic and use the toilets.
- Old Aberdeen would like to see more local services on the High Street (other than a pub!). The reduced population in Old Aberdeen over the summer months makes it very hard for a business to remain sustainable, yet this is the main tourism period. Can anything be done to encourage shops? Perhaps a two month council tax holiday, provided they remain open during July and August?

Policy Topic Areas

1 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for the City Centre? (For example, what should the role of Union Street be? Does the City Centre have all the uses we want, or should there be more uses there - and if so where could they go?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for the City Centre?:

- While it seems inevitable that retailing will continue to contract on Union Street, it is really important that the core, eastern section of Union Street, along with the north end of Market St are kept alive to retail to prevent Aberdeen degenerating into two completely separate shopping hubs.
- The proposed increase in size of the Union Square mall could jeopardise the viability of the St Nicholas, Bon Accord, John Lewis area. This needs to be taken very seriously; with all the main retailers in the process of cutting back the number of outlets nationally. Aberdeen cannot afford to risk the loss of M&S or John Lewis; this would probably lead to the effective closure of the remaining shops north of Union Street.
- A high level covered bridge between the St Nicholas and Bon Accord malls would help to tie these shopping areas together.
- The double council tax for long term unoccupied property is a good first step to making better use of the properties on Union Street and an increase in residents in this area will help to encourage corner shop type developments. Do push for a swingeing increase for longer term unoccupied properties; e.g. rising progressively to 6 times council tax.

2 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for providing infrastructure? (For example, how should new infrastructure be provided and how might it be paid for?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for providing infrastructure? :

- The relationship between Union Street and the railway station and bus station has long been identified as nonsensical. The access to the station from Unions Street and the Trinity Shopping Centre is inadequate with a staircase down to Guild St that does not comply with normal building regulations due to its excessive steepness, its unsuitability for disabled persons and it is also closed outside shopping hours.

3 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for transport and accessibility? (For example, how can we make it easier to travel in and around Aberdeen? Should we look at pedestrianisation in the City Centre?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for transport and accessibility?:

- Pedestrianisation that reduces the efficiency of the local bus services will be a failure
- The cycle lanes around Aberdeen are farcical. The completely new cycle lane associated with the third Don Crossing is a disgrace, changing from one side of the road to the other without signs, sometimes shared with pedestrians, sometimes dedicated cycle path.
- The encouragement of cycling on footpaths, typically over short distances, sometimes less than a hundred metres, encourages cyclists to use pavements even when completely unsuitable, to the danger of pedestrians.
- We need a local bus service that is efficient. Currently buses spend too much time at bus stops and in traffic snarl-ups to be able to offer a quick service. In Edinburgh and other towns where there is a single ticket price, movement onto the bus is much quicker. Add to this a simple swipe and ping for entry at a cheaper price than cash, (as per London Oyster) and boarding will be even quicker.

4 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for ensuring we have high quality buildings and places? (For example, how can we better protect our built heritage and ensure high quality and sympathetic architecture and landscape design?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for ensuring we have high quality buildings and places?:

- Unfortunately, the new Planning Bill appears to be streamlining the planning process to make it harder for local authorities to maintain local guidance and controls. While developing the next LDP in compliance with the Planning Legislation, ACC must ensure that the Supplementary Guidance documents are not discarded, but are, at least, turned into robust, Aberdeen and Old Aberdeen focused Technical Advice Notes.
- The dispiriting rash of satellite dishes we see on new build flats could readily be avoided by ensuring that each development is provided with a multi-user dish with all properties pre-wired. That could readily become a suitable Technical Advice Note.

5 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for meeting the needs of business and industry? (For example, what can be done to retain existing businesses and attract new employment opportunities to Aberdeen?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for meeting the needs of business and industry? :

With the contraction of the oil industry it is important that employment opportunities are regained, otherwise our capability as a technology centre will rapidly wind down. Consider opportunities for supporting start-up companies; the ready availability of premises around the city could make this quite an economical initiative

6 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for meeting Aberdeen's housing and community needs?(For example, how can we meet the needs of people who cannot afford mainstream housing?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for meeting Aberdeen's housing and community needs?:

- The country needs to return to building social housing. Not in big estates, but should as a minimum be a first choice for odd corners of land that come free and particularly those owned by the council. The housing developers will always ensure there is a shortage of property as that is what keeps the prices up.
- There is a considerable glut in land put aside for greenfield business development and now there is further land with empty offices and workshops and our belief is that much of this greenfield and brownfield land will never get used. While the oil industry will re-build, Aberdeen should not expect this to reach the same intensity as was previously reached. Designated land which is owned by the Council and reasonably accessible should be considered for housing and suitably located brownfield sites that are out of use should also be evaluated.

7 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for supporting retail centres across Aberdeen? (For example, should we be safeguarding existing centres, and what are your thoughts on new out-of-town retail parks?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for supporting retail centres across Aberdeen?:

- Out-of-town retail parks are absolutely not supported. They would damage Aberdeen town centre fundamentally.
- While it seems inevitable that retailing will continue to contract on Union Street, it is really important that the core, eastern section of Union Street, along with the north end of Market St are kept alive to retail to prevent Aberdeen degenerating into two completely separate shopping hubs.
- The proposed increase in size of the Union Square mall could jeopardise the viability of St Nicholas, Bon Accord, John Lewis area. This needs to be taken very seriously; with all the main retailers in the process of cutting back the number of outlets nationally. Aberdeen cannot afford to risk the loss of M&S or John Lewis; this would probably lead to the effective closure of the remaining shops north of Union Street.
- A high level covered bridge between the St Nicholas and Bon Accord malls would help to tie these shopping areas together.

8 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for protecting and enhancing the natural environment and preventing flooding?(For example, what areas or features should we be safeguarding?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for protecting and enhancing the natural environment and preventing flooding?:

- Flood plains should remain flood plains.

9 What do you think should be our main planning priorities for ensuring that resources and waste are managed sustainably? (For example, can we make more innovative use of waste as a resource? Should we encourage renewable energy use? How could we do these things?)

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for ensuring that resources and waste are managed sustainably? :

- The plan to build a Tory based incinerator should be suspended pending further research as the original application was, we fear, in many ways faulty. We certainly need to be able to dispose of the vast amounts of unrecyclable rubbish that Aberdeen generates. However, a process that itself generates hazardous chemicals, a process that may require import of waste to maintain the required weekly volume and has not proven to be a commercially robust solution elsewhere in the UK would not appear to be the wisest solution.

10 If you have any views on topics not covered above, please write them below.

If you have any views on topics not covered above, please write them below:

- The HMO public notification process (a poster on the nearest lamp-post) is simply not fit for purpose and is not in compliance with the principle of local empowerment as it is, in practical terms, impossible for the community to keep on top of what licences are being renewed and issued. An internet based listing and notification of existing properties, along with renewals and new applications is urgently required. To send a weekly list to every community council or making more use of the 'TellMeScotland' website (for instance) would be a minimal effort step forward requiring minimal resource.

11 If you have any further information you would like to upload please do so below

File upload:

Old Aberdeen Community Council submission map as attachment to MIR.docx was uploaded

12 If you wish to be added to the LDP emailing list be kept informed of the progress of the local development plan, please provide your email address:

Newsletter list :

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