

# Aberdeen Local Development Plan Pre-MIR Consultation Events

**Kingswells Community Centre**

15 April 2013 19:00 - 21:00

12 participants

## Workshop 1 – Local Area

### **What does 'your local area' make you think of? What does it feel / look like?**

Phenomenal change in Kingswells over the last 20 years – some good, some bad.

Overall a super place to stay.

### **What do you like about your local area? What makes it a good place to live, work or visit?**

Plenty of nice walks around Kingswells, e.g. to Hazlehead and Bucksburn.

Easy access to the countryside without a car – should maintain this.

Good balance of feeling within the countryside but close to the city centre.

Importance of having open countryside between Kingswells and the rest of Aberdeen, keeps Kingswells separate, it's unique and gives it a semi-rural setting, keeps it from becoming one big suburb with the rest of Aberdeen.

Kingswells is a nice place, of a good size and layout. It has nice landscaping, paths and greenery.

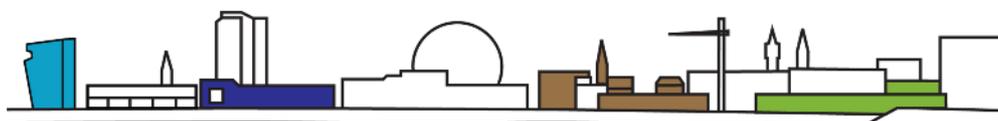
Children's play areas.

Was a good choice to live in Kingswells as you are able to have a small house with a garden, which would be unaffordable in town.

### **What's not so good about living, working or visiting here? What problems are there?**

Biggest issue is transport. Closure of Mugiemoor Road will have big implications.

Too much traffic on the Queens Road corridor.



**aberdeen** local development plan

Broadband an issue in some parts of Kingswells – hope that it should be improved with new exchange.

Primary school at capacity.

**Are there any opportunities for improvements?**

There is a need for more, better, shops in Kingswells. Some vacant shops in Kingswells, but understand that these may soon be filled. Chip shop would be a good addition.

More activities for older people, e.g. “pensioners playpark”. Need to consider homes for a growing elderly population – Kingswood Mews super homes for older people.

Adventure Aberdeen field a great opportunity for more activities for younger people.

Public transport connections need improved. 215 was a busy bus but this has now stopped. 11 bus is empty – may get more frequent with the Prime 4 development. Shuttlebus from Hazlehead should be investigated.

Consider the inclusion of an identifiable building within each new area, this is something that Kingswells lacks.

Consider the use of design guides, for example the Ballater Design Guide.

The Masterplans for sites should identify the house types.

Need to provide more, smaller housing to allow people to downsize.

For older people this should be smaller but not small. Still want a house with a garden and storage, but less rooms.

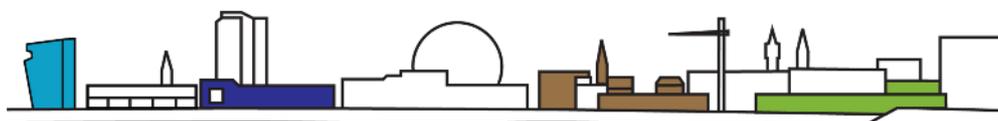
**What do you think is important when considering new development?**

Most of Kingswells built into the valley – new development starting to be built on the ridge lines, this should be limited.

Concern over the West Huxterstone numbers – will they build more than the allocation? What implications will this have?

When considering new development it is important to take care of the local environment.

We need to learn lessons from previous developments. For Kingswells there should



have been more space at the school to allow for possible expansion, this should be remembered for Countesswells. There needs to be a community hub and shops there.

### **How can local communities be involved in new development areas?**

Knowing what's going on in Kingswells is important – i.e. sufficient advertising.

Community Council have been doing consultation for years, and try to use their local geographical and social knowledge to contribute ideas. However they have become disillusioned with the consultation process which they see as box ticking, and that their ideas seem to be ignored. There may be a wider point to be made about other the role of Community Councils in general here.

Concern was raised regarding the reality of what is actually granted consent compared to what sites are allocated for.

The community councillors expressed the point that planners and developers should not view KCC as being opposed to development and saying no to everything, and that they do appreciate that development can be good thing. KCC regard themselves as having a good relationship with the developers of Prime Four but stressed that problems arise when developers do not communicate with them. For example, the community were unaware of the design planned for the Prime 4 site and had hoped that the hotel would be community oriented and contain services local people could use.

A key lesson to take forward; that if developers can work constructively with local communities, everybody wins. Positive partnerships can be established.

There should be community involvement in the Design Review Panel.

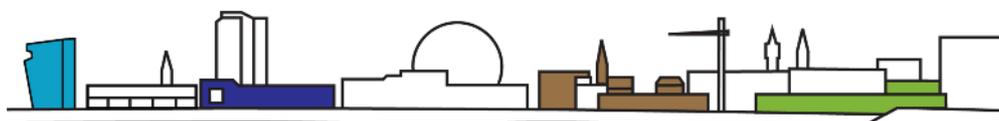
### **Other points:**

The Council's map bases are out of date – this should be rectified.

For next events make sure to advertise in the local shops.

Princes Trust 3 day workshop took place a few years ago – what happened to the work undertaken?

What about the approved garden centre that is not shown on the LDP map?



### **West One**

West One houses- the community councillors had viewed the show houses and were concerned with regards to space standards and how this was acceptable in planning terms. Concern was also raised that companies have bought and leased them out to tenants, showing that they are not a 'first choice home'. It was further questioned whether the SuDS pond at this development was complete.

### **Gillahill**

The local community deemed Gillahill to be an unacceptable development site for many reasons including traffic, school roll issues and the development of open countryside. However, at MIR / Proposed Plan stage only school issues were mentioned for not allocating Gillahill- all the other concerns voiced by the community were not. There are concerns that once school roll issues have been resolved the site may be seen as acceptable for development.

### **Services and Maintenance**

Council cut backs have had an impact on the level of maintenance undertaken. Additional development will increase maintenance pressure. One person raised the issue of grass cutting- but there was some debate within the group as whether this was a desirable thing or not as leaving grass to grow can provide valuable wildlife habitats. The group was split over the issue of maintenance with one person saying it was very poor and another arguing that it is excellent.

### **Countesswells**

Hope Kingswells will be a model for the future Countesswells development. Community Councillors see the settlement as being at a 'critical mass' and would not cope well with more development without being detrimental to the balance of homes to services etc. Concern was raised regarding risk of coalescence with outer Aberdeen suburbs if further development to the west was to occur.

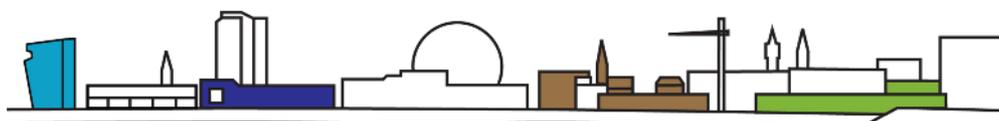
It is not clear from the Local Development Plan how Countesswells will link up to the road network. This should be shown and be clear how traffic is going to distribute once on the A944.

### **Maidencraig**

New junctions onto the Lang Stracht from the Maidencraig development will hold up traffic.

### **Bus services and local facilities**

Bus services from Kingswells into Aberdeen are not ideal but they are regular. The Park and Ride has been disadvantaged by splitting the route so people have to change at the hospital. One person argued that there was a lack of common sense in planning the bus route around Kingswells, with access to the surgery and other facilities being poor. It is thought that Kingswells has a good provision of local



services to sustain the community although the Community Centre is oversubscribed and the mobile library is only available one day every fortnight

### **AWPR**

One person said that although they do not want to see the AWPR built they appreciate that it is very well planned with lots of excellent mitigation measures. The key concern was the access points into Kingswells. Someone stated that there were plans to make the junction at Derbeth from a half into a full junction which have not been consulted on.

### **Greenfield development**

The Community Councillors would support no more greenfield land being allocated.

### **Hazlehead Park**

Hazlehead Park is a jewel in Aberdeen's crown and we should not do anything to detract from it. Shocked by the decision for the Grove Nursery recycling centre.

## **Workshop 2 – City Centre**

### **What's not so good about the City Centre? What problems are there?**

Aberdeen market used to be a great place – we should make more of this important use in the heart of the city centre

### **How do you think we should build on these strengths / address the problems?**

Should never have closed off the Castlegate to traffic.

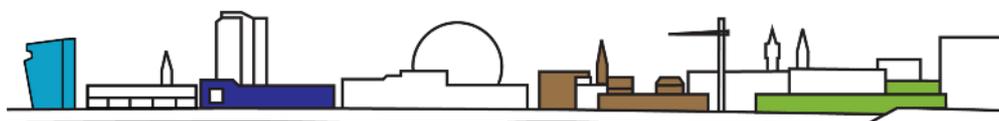
Should never have got rid of the trams.

Dirty run down buildings on Union Street - owners of buildings should be forced by the Council to clean up their buildings.

Union Square seen as a place only for younger people – how can we address this? Connectivity a big issue, particularly for elderly and disabled people – Market Street not appealing to walk down and steps beside Debenhams in the Trinity Centre not good for elderly or disabled people.

Currently an over provision of pubs and nightclubs – clustering these uses together results in 'no go areas' after nightfall – e.g. Belmont Street.

Not being able to drop off or pick up people at the station is a problem.



## **How do you think we should build on these strengths / address these problems?**

Visiting markets should be directed to the Castlegate.

Reduce rates to encourage more retail on Union Street. Diversity of uses should be promoted on Union Street. Encourage subdivision of larger units on Union Street to encourage take up from smaller operators. Large vacant units daunting. Mixed residential and businesses above ground level on Union Street – amenity shouldn't be a problem for younger people who may want to live in the centre of town. More hotels should be located on Union Street, although parking is an issue. Maybe there should be a new purpose for Union Street such as cultural uses and restaurants.

Justice Mill Lane could be pedestrainised down to Windmill Brae and smaller shopping units created, e.g. for more independent stores.

Masterplans should cover larger areas to ensure that there is joined up thinking especially for the infrastructure.

There should be some protection from the weather at the bus station.

Allow shops to provide pick up facilities at the Park and Rides so that people don't need to travel to the city centre to do it.

You can not pedestrianise Union Street and improve public transport.

There needs to be more residential development in the city centre, but there needs to be parking to make it work.

Need to improve links between Union Street and Union Square and between Union Square and the Bon Accord Centre.

Everything that draws retail out of the centre is destroying Union Street.

There needs to be free parking in the city centre after 6pm to encourage more people to visit during the evenings.

