

123 Kirkton of Skene

Response ID	Respondent
20	Mr James Lyon
88	Mr Scott Dingwall
111	Echt & Skene Community Council
142	Mr Scott Dingwall
152	Mr Mervyn Barr
434	Westhill and Elrick Community Council
1117	Mr & Mrs Ian Burnett
1317	Barratt Homes on behalf of Barratt North Scotland
1579	Barratt North Scotland
1580	SEPA
1809	Scottish Water
1824	Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

1. Issues

Settlement Objectives

A number of respondents raised concern about future developments resulting in the coalescence and loss of greenspace between Kirkton of Skene with Westhill (434, 111, 142, 152). One went on to argue that a green belt should be established in this area (152).

Another respondent suggested that proposals for Kirkton of Skene and Westhill should be considered together due to the proximity of various land bids (1117).

One respondent argued that the road connecting Kirkton of Skene with Westhill needs to be upgraded, fitted with streetlights and a 30mph limit introduced (20).

Bid Sites GA017 and GA018

The promoter of the bid sites commented that development at this location would provide affordable housing and developer contributions as well as providing housing in an area of high market pressure. They stated that the bid sites would also support local economic development and would represent a sympathetic addition to the existing settlement (1579,1317). However, a number of respondents objected to these bids on the grounds that further housing development at Kirkton of Skene would detract from the character of the settlement (111, 142, 1117).

One respondent objected to bid Ga017 on the grounds that further development would spoil the location and result in coalescence between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill (88).

Environmental and Physical Infrastructure

Three respondents provided factual information regarding water treatment, flood risk and the impact of development on the river environment in respect of both the existing EH1 allocation and the bid sites (1580, 1809, 1824).

2. Actions

The comments in relation to the potential for loss of greenspace and the coalescence of Kirkton of Skene and Westhill as a result of potential future development raise legitimate concerns. In response to this issue, it should be noted that a proposed planning objective for Kirkton of Skene is to 'preserve the character and setting of the village, including the countryside between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill'. The

potential for coalescence between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill has also been specifically taken into consideration within the MIR's assessment of the development bid sites.

In response to the request for a green belt designation to be established in this area, it should be noted that a review of the green belt within Aberdeenshire was undertaken in 2010¹. This review recommended potential amendments to the green belt, but did not recommend any extension to the green belt designation in the area between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill. It is also significant to note that guidance in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states that for most settlements a green belt is not necessary, as other policies or designations, such as countryside policies, provide an appropriate context for decision making. Given the findings of the 2010 review, and taking into account SPP guidance, it is considered unnecessary to extend the green belt designation in this area.

In light of the comments above, and the particular concerns regarding coalescence, the proposal to consider development proposals for Kirkton on Skene and Westhill together is not considered appropriate.

The comments in relation to the road between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill (the B979 Old Skene Road) are noted. Introduction of urban characteristics to this link reduces the character and sense of place of Kirkton of Skene as a separate settlement from Westhill. However, these matters are largely outwith the control of the LDP. A more general discussion on transport strategies, transport infrastructure and traffic matters can be found within the issues and actions paper on the objectives of the plan.

The comments both in support of and against the bid sites are acknowledged. There are clearly conflicting views as to whether or not further development would be beneficial for the settlement. However, it is not considered that the comments in support of the bid sites raise any significant new issues that would justify their inclusion in the plan. Developer contributions would only address the impacts caused by the new development and cannot be seen as any form of betterment for the community. Likewise affordable housing is a requirement of all housing development promoted in the plan.

It is therefore maintained that the MIR outlines a robust assessment of the bid sites and the constraints associated with further development at Kirkton of Skene. It is also maintained that there are currently sufficient site allocations within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area that are effective or capable of becoming effective to meet the SDP housing requirement and meet the local housing demands. As such, it is not considered appropriate to allocate any of the bid sites for development at this stage.

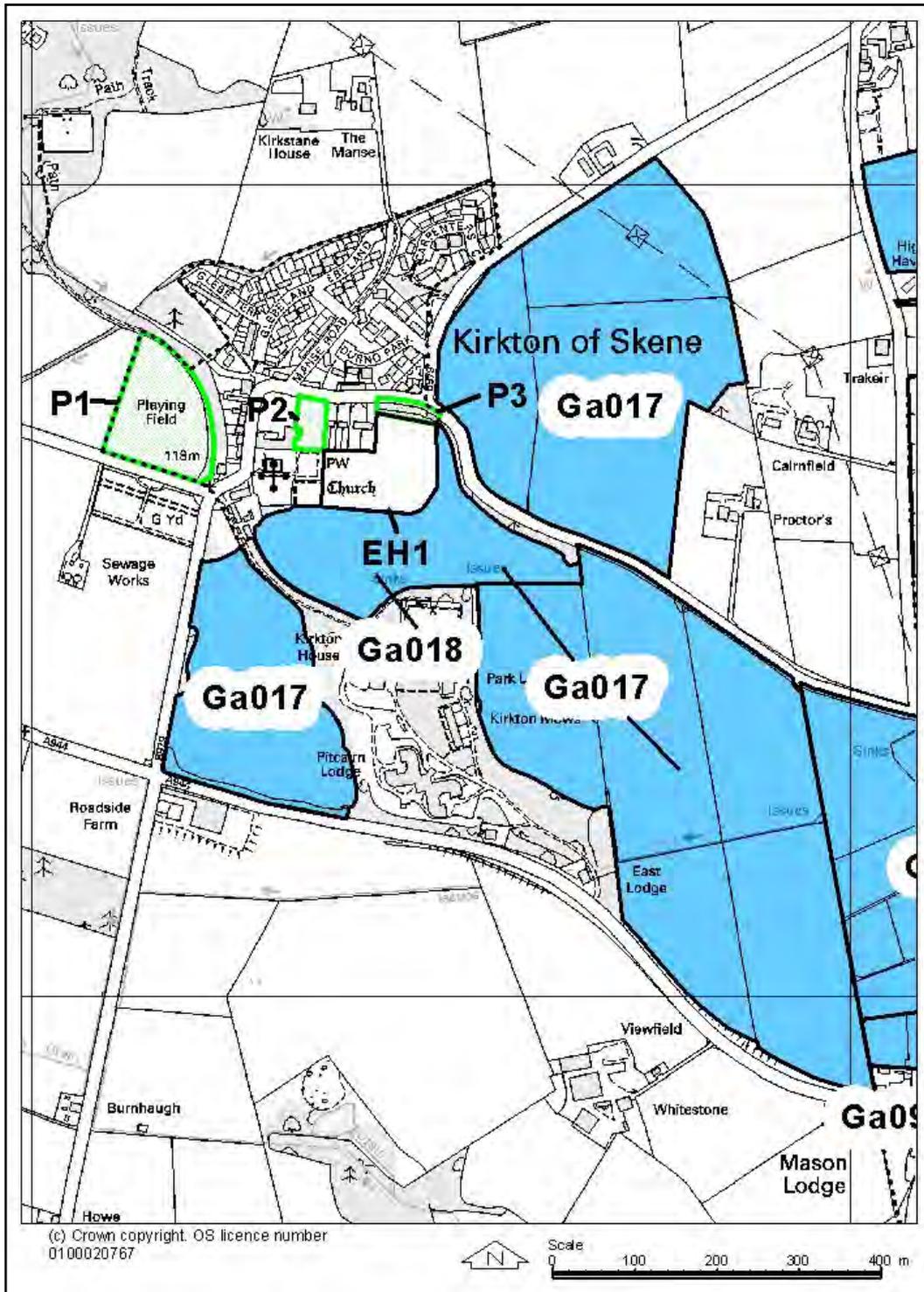
The technical matters raised by consultees are noted. These issues were taken into account when planning permission was granted for the EH1 site. As neither of the new bid sites are proposed to be allocated for development, no further action is required in response to these detailed comments at this stage.

3. Committee Recommendations

1. The existing EH1 allocation does not need to be carried forward into the Proposed Plan as the development of this site is now complete.
2. As there are currently sufficient site allocations within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area that are effective or capable of becoming effective to meet the

¹ Review of the Aberdeen Green Belt (Aberdeenshire), March 2010

SDP housing requirement, there is no reason to allocate additional development land in Kirkton of Skene at this stage.



4. Committee Decisions

1. Garioch Area Committee agreed the above recommendations at their meeting on 28 May 2014. The committee also agreed that there should be a further

settlement objective to prevent coalescence and loss of green space between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill.

2. Infrastructure Services Committee noted the recommendation of the Area Committee and agreed that no further allocations were required.