

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2016
Developers and Agents Forum Stakeholder Meeting
11th June 2013
Acorn Centre, Inverurie

Attendees

32 agents and developers from the development industry

Bruce Stewart BS (Aberdeenshire Council – Development Management, Manager)

Piers Blaxter PB (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy, Team Leader)

Alan Davidson (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy, Senior Planner)

Sarah MacRitchie SM (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy)

Ashley Hamilton AH (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy)

Katie Crerar KC (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy)

Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy)

Nic Lopez (Aberdeenshire Council – Policy)

1. BS welcomed and introduced the LDP team. BS advised that the purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of the LDP programme, development bids and the main issues. No questions or comments were raised.
2. PB provided an overview of the Local Development Plan (LDP) programme. He explained why a new LDP is being prepared, the timetable to deliver the LDP, and the key stages to get involved. It was stated that the expected date of adoption for the next LDP is 2016, and that the Main Issues Report is expected to be published on 29 October 2013. No questions or comments were raised.
3. SM provided an overview of the development bids received. She highlighted that that 367 bids were received, with 103 in Kincardine and Mearns alone. SR explained how the bids will be evaluated and presented to the public.

PB noted that the Goal Achievement Matrix assessment of each bid will be published on the website, but asked whether there is a need to put all the other assessments (Equalities Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment) online. SR stated this could be done and the developers/agents generally agreed.

A question was asked about the format of public meetings, how many there will be and where. PB advised there will be around 40, with developers invited to attend (it was noted from the floor that this process worked well in Aberdeen City for their 2012 LDP), but added that it was likely that not everywhere will require attendance from the development industry.

Concern was raised that the outcome of the assessments will only be revealed in the Main Issues Report and that councillors will already have influenced the MIR on the basis of that information. PB explained that this will be an 'officers' Main Issues Report (MIR) with no direct input from councillors. He added that a report will be presented at the Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) in October 2013 that will highlight what issues were raised during the preparation of the MIR and how officers have responded to them within the MIR. Members will only agree to the publication of the MIR if they believe that the work undertaken is a fair reflection of the concerns raised. Members will view the consultation report at a later committee, after the MIR consultation period ends in 2014, and will take a view on matters to produce the Proposed Plan. A developer/agent noted there

seemed to be dubious last time about the scale of change that might occur from this process, but that it seems much clearer now.

4. PB briefly explained what will be in the MIR, how a main issue is identified (e.g. early engagement, analysis and evaluation of bids), and what they are likely to be (e.g. spatial, policy or site issues).

In the interest of openness and transparency it was asked whether all the minutes of the forums and focus groups will be published online. PB confirmed that most are already on the website and the rest will be published once ready. He added that the minutes of the Area Committees will not be published until the October ISC.

A question was raised concerning the deliverability of sites. PB noted that this is set out in the submitted bids form. A second question was then asked on whether there is an opportunity for developers to input into this process. PB said that the MIR will be the first stab at this, adding that he is content that the 2014 Housing Land Audit (HLA), Action Programme and bids forms will provide sufficient information on marketability. He added that the Council will challenge developers to exceed the build-out rates suggested in the Housing Land Audit to ensure the strategic development plan (SPD) targets are met. PB dismissed having an open forum to discuss land supply issues at this time as there is currently insufficient information (i.e. we only have the 2013 HLA).

It was suggested that development needs to reflect marketability and that there needs to be an agreement (i.e. the plan delivers to marketable locations). PB stated the plan can deliver to marketable locations, adding that, unlike the development industry, we are looking 10-15 years ahead and the aspirations contained in the HLA may change (we are coming out of a recession).

It was asked if the housing numbers in the SDP can be adjusted, as this is imposing a constraint on development. PB stated that legally we can't and the LDP must be consistent with the SDP. PB also added that there is the opportunity to amend SDP figures at the Proposed Plan and Examination stages, and that we invite bids in case the Examination of that plan requires additional housing land.

Confirmation was sought that we are not looking at strategic numbers. PB clarified that we are not looking strategically, but within the SDP framework. PB said there is lots of latitude in the Rural Housing Market Area, but in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, housing land must be in the context of the SDP spatial strategy.

5. An overview of the candidate main issues were presented by AH on climate neutrality, AD on housing for people on modest incomes (affordable housing), SM on green networks, KC on rural development, and PB on valued views, town centres, local conservation review sites and wind energy. PB also briefly explained why economic development and enabling development are not considered as main issues, and the opportunities to raise new issues.

In relation to carbon neutrality, concern was expressed that developers are doubling up on the work relating to this, as this is already considered in Building Standards. AH stated this requirement is set out in Scottish Planning Policy and SDP and therefore needs to be considered in the LDP. He added that this argument is however being made at the national level.

In relation to rural development, it was suggested that the changes to this policy are coming from development management rather than the public. PB stated that this is incorrect, citing that the Citizens Panel was used, and the results from around 760 respondents (out of 1,000) showed that 80% [*This was an over exaggeration, the actual figure was 63%*] agreed that development in the countryside should be curtailed. A follow-on question suggested these issues could not have been addressed from their response (i.e. their replies not detailed

enough). PB noted that was the case, but added that we have to provide a policy response on the general principle of their concerns, and that the MIR will provide the opportunity for alternative views. PB advised that the results of the Citizens Panel questionnaire will be published on the website once we have received a breakdown of their comments (expected this week).

6. AD provided an overview of the settlement main issues relating to land supply (established, constrained, effective), phasing (LDP plan periods), settlement objectives and sites (bids assessment and constraints). No questions or comments were raised.
7. PB set out the next steps in the LDP process, reminding attendees when the main opportunities to comment are. PB also advised that there will no circulation list, but that you can up-to-date on the LDP process through the website at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/plans_policies/next_ldp.asp and Twitter account: @shireldp.
8. BS closed the meeting, citing it is very important to get the information out into the public domain and to understand the viewpoints from both sides. He thanked attendees for their time.