

# Response ID ANON-B3JU-DSKU-B

Submitted to **Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2019 Consultation**

Submitted on **2019-05-13 14:18:40**

## About You

### What is your name?

**Name:**

Ben Freeman

### What is your organisation?

**Organisation:**

Bancon Homes Ltd

**On behalf of:**

### How can we contact you?

**Email:**

[REDACTED]

**Telephone:**

[REDACTED]

**Address:**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1 Introduction

### Section 1 provides a context for the Main Issues Report Do you have any comments in relation to this section?

**Do you have any comments in relation to this section?:**

No comments to make on section 1

## 2 Settlement Strategy

### Question 1 New Housing Sites

**Do you agree with our preferred housing sites? Are there any other sites that would be suitable for housing?:**

Bancon object to the scale of housing allocations deemed necessary in section 2. Allocations have been rolled forward from the 2017 Local Development Plan, which is accepted, but ongoing expected delivery rates set out in the Housing Land Audit do not expect all the allocations to be delivered by 2032 - i.e. the lifetime of this LDP.

Appendix 1 to this response addresses this in some detail and outlines the need for additional allocations to be made in the 2022 LDP.

Additional sites have been promoted by Bancon Homes through the LDP bidding process, and it is our view that these should be included as allocations in the 2022 LDP.

Appendix 2 addresses site B0935 - Newmill Farm, which should be allocated for around 50 housing units

Appendix 3 addresses sites B0936 and B0937 - Treepark, Pitfodels, which should be allocated for around 10 and 40 houses respectively

Appendix 4 addresses site B0938 - Lovers' Walk, Peterculter, which should be allocated for around 12 houses and public open space.

Appendix 5 addresses sites B0939, B0940 and B0941 - Peterculter East, which should be allocated for development - with alternative solutions ranging from around 30 housing units, to around 50 housing units and a business park, or solely residential use amounting to around 100 housing units.

Appendix 6 addresses the OP114 site at Milltimber South, which should be retained as an allocation, but with an adjustment to ensure an appropriate design led approach to planning the site can take place.

Appendix 7 addresses site B0943 - Milltimber Farm, which should be allocated for around 70 housing units

Appendix 8 addresses sites B0314 and B0315 - Maidencraig Northwest, which should be allocated as an extension to the Maidencraig masterplan site to add

additional housing units (around 200) or a mix of housing and business uses.

## **Question 2 Housing Allowances Beyond 2032**

**Is there a need for us to identify further Housing Allowances or sites for the period beyond 2032?:**

## **Question 3 Brownfield and other Opportunity Sites**

**Are there any further brownfield or other opportunity sites which would be suitable for redevelopment?:**

no comments

## **Question 4 New Healthcare Facilities**

**Do you have any comments on these sites? Are there any other sites in these areas that we should be considering?:**

no comments

## **4 Quality Places**

### **MAIN ISSUE 4 Minimum Internal Space Standards for New Residential Development**

**How can we ensure that new residential development delivers an adequate amount of internal floor space for future occupants?:**

The housing market in Aberdeen City and Shire is diverse, and there is a huge range of house types and tenures available to buyers and renters. If there was no market for smaller properties then the development industry would stop building them. To artificially restrict this by imposing minimum space standards will not affect house prices directly, and will simply make the first step on the property ladder less attainable for first time buyers in particular. Planning policies are sufficiently robust to ensure that housing is suitable in terms of light, privacy, private and public open space and general amenity. The proposal to introduce lower limits on housing sizes will impact on the viability of developments, in a market housing requirements are already not being met.

Option 1 - Current Approach

### **Question 16 External Space Standards**

**Do you think that the amenity spaces currently delivered are of a sufficient quality? Should we strive for a better quality/ quantity of private/ semi-private residential amenity space across the city and refuse planning permission to proposals which do not meet our high standards? What standards would you like to see set for new dwellings, flats, and conversions in respect of quality and quantity of external amenity space?:**

Rather like question 15, it is inappropriate for the Local Development Plan to so specifically dictate what people might wish to buy or rent. In no other industry is the product almost entirely out of the hands of the manufacturer! While external space is an important element of developments, not every householder wants the same. Some wish a garden, private space, and some don't. Consumers should be entitled to a degree of choice, and it should be down to the manufacturer, i.e. the house developer, to establish what they believe is marketable.

Excessively strict standards lead to more and more developments seeking to achieve the bare minimum, in order to (as an average) be a viable solution. The best solution might, however, be a range of external space standards to appeal to different customers.

An excessively stringent planning approach runs the risk of further standardising all housing, and reducing any scope for developers to offer a unique product - leading to stagnant and lifeless developments.

Bancon therefore submit that the current policy position is arguably too strict, and that further flexibility should be afforded to the developers and the designers to create places that people want to live in.

### **Question 17 Natural Environment**

**Do you agree that the proposed list of policies for Natural Environment gives a clearer and more coherent structure than at present?:**

### **Question 18 Food Growing**

**How can the Local Development Plan support the delivery of food growing projects in the City? Do you think food growing should be included in the next Plan by way of a new policy, or through existing policy and guidance?:**

The provision of community food growing opportunities is commendable, but not fit for all scenarios. This is an area where planning policy could be designed to enable officers to use their own common sense and reason to identify where there might be opportunities to work with developers to utilise public open space to deliver food growing opportunities. A policy should not, however, introduce a blanket set of standard requirements for all developments, as it is not something that fits with all development opportunities, and could hinder marketability, and provide an unreasonable maintenance burden, particularly where there is not the necessary community buy in to keep it running efficiently.

## **5 Transport and Infrastructure**

### **Question 19 City Centre Parking**

**Should we reduce car parking in the City Centre to support the City Centre Masterplan? If so, how?:**

### **MAIN ISSUE 5 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**

**How best can we encourage the provision of infrastructure to support changes in transport technologies? :**

There are schemes available to support householders retrofitting houses with electric charging facilities, but nothing available to developers. There is insufficient confidence that the solution is electric cars, and insisting upon installation of charging facilities in all development could result in the vast majority never being used, and considerable amounts of money being wasted.

Option 1 - Current Approach

**Question 20 Digital Infrastructure**

**Should high speed broadband be mandatory in all new residential developments with 5 or more units? Do you wish to suggest any other proposed changes to the Digital Infrastructure and Telecommunications Infrastructure policies?:**

The delivery of digital infrastructure should be a market led decision by the developer, and not a mandatory planning requirement.

**Question 21 Developer Obligations and Infrastructure Delivery**

**Do we need to change our approach to securing developer obligations for future development proposals?:**

**6 Resource and Business Policy**

**MAIN ISSUE 6 Low and Zero Carbon Generating Technologies and Water Efficiency**

**Should the requirement of existing Policy R7 be changed?:**

The development industry continues to face a conflict between planning policy and Building Standards, and often the most cost effective way of complying with both sets of requirements is fundamentally not the most energy efficient approach. For example, a fabric first approach might achieve a greater reduction in emissions, the requirement to utilise low and zero carbon generating technologies might require cost savings in the fabric that ultimately render the house less efficient. Current planning policy does not encourage us to use less energy, which should be the ultimate aim.

Option 1 - Current Approach

**Question 22 Low and Zero Carbon Generating Technologies and Water Efficiency**

**What methodology should the Council use in calculating compliance with Policy R7, specifically how should the target of reducing carbon dioxide levels be calculated?:**

The technical calculations are best done through the Building Warrant process, as the detailed construction drawings required to do the necessary calculations are not generally done until after planning is attained, due to the risk of fundamental changes being required. In line with the response to question 21, it is apparent that there are two processes trying to achieve the same thing, and they aren't always aligned very well. Planning should not be about Building Warrant.

It is appropriate to expect an energy statement to be submitted with a planning application, to demonstrate measures taken through the design process to seek the most efficient outcome, such as water efficiency measures, use of LZCGTs where appropriate etc., but this should not be confused with the Building Warrant process. Calculations should therefore not form part of the planning process beyond theoretical or examples.

**Question 23 Solar Farm Developments**

**Do you agree that Solar Farms should be supported within the Council's policy on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy developments, and should specific guidance be included within Policy R8?:**

no comment

**MAIN ISSUE 7 Heat Networks**

**Should we include a policy in the Local Development Plan supporting the development of Heat Networks within the City?:**

Heat networks can be a positive measure to reduce carbon emissions, but evidence shows that viability for residential development can be questionable at best. While it would be valuable for the LDP to include information about existing heat networks, and encourage their use, it should not form part of a policy requirement. Consultation responses from SEPA recently have demanded that developers demonstrate why they are not using a heat network, and this is a position that would be concerning if supported by planning policy, where project viability can be impacted directly by a policy requirement that might not be the best solution for a site.

Option 1 - Current Approach

**Question 24 Supporting Business and Industrial Development**

**Should we carry forward our current policy approach to safeguarding existing business and industrial areas from other development pressures into the next Local Development Plan?:**

**MAIN ISSUE 8 West End Office Area**

**Should the policy support a mix of uses in the West End Office Area? If so, what types?:**

Not Answered

**7 Affordable Housing**

## Question 25 Affordable Housing

**Do you agree with the Local Development Plan's current affordable housing approach being carried forward? What other measures could the Council consider in order to assist with the delivery of affordable housing units via the Plan? Should the threshold of not applying affordable housing requirements to developments smaller than 5 units remain in place?:**

The development industry is equally committed to the provision of affordable housing. However, a lack of mainstream housing delivery year on year means the delivery of less affordable housing too. The LDP should, as directed by SPP, have a 'sharp focus on delivery' of housing, rather than relying on a small number of very large sites that are consistently under delivering.

## Question 26 Private Rented Accommodation and Build to Rent

**Are there ways that the Local Development Plan can facilitate Build to Rent development, through policy?:**

## 8 Sustainable Mixed Communities

### MAIN ISSUE 9 Inclusive Housing Mix (Housing for the Elderly and Accessible Housing)

**How can the Local Development Plan ensure a greater mix of housing types is achieved in new developments?:**

On developments of more than 50 units, the priority for most developers is consistency of build and sale. By default, this results in the development of a housing mix that is most likely to sell efficiently on the site, and based on comprehensive market research. Ultimately, the outcome should be similar to the HNDA. Where these are offset is the established need for 47% affordable housing, which is not a viable delivery target. Theoretically the delivery of smaller mainstream housing might bridge the gap between market housing and the need for more affordable housing, but the reality is not so simple.

The current approach is therefore wholly appropriate, and moves to dictate a housing mix as a standard across Aberdeen City would achieve little but to impact project viability, sales rates and therefore delivery rates. It would be directly contradictory to the 'sharp focus on deliver' sought in SPP.

Again it is worth reiterating the point that housing developers are manufacturing a product, and in no other case is that product's design so restricted by local regulations. It is in the developers interests to build what will sell, and if the LDP genuinely allocated enough sites that are effective or expected to become effective, then the demand would mirror the HNDA and the housing mix would be delivered as required by the demand. Because the market is so restricted by a lack of genuinely effective housing allocations, the housing mix is constrained to the highest demand first.

Option 1 - Current Approach

### MAIN ISSUE 10 Residential Care Facilities

**How should the Local Development Plan cater for proposals relating to Residential Care Facilities?:**

Not Answered

### MAIN ISSUE 11 Student Accommodation

**How can the Local Development Plan cater to proposals relating to student accommodation?:**

Not Answered

### MAIN ISSUE 12 Houses in Multiple Occupation

**How can the Local Development Plan support sustainable mixed communities, with regards to HMOs?:**

Not Answered

**Percentage limit of HMOs in each area:**

**Please explain why you chose your answer:**

**Geographical boundary of each area:**

**Please explain why you chose your answer:**

**Threshold for when planning permission is required for a HMO:**

**Please explain why you chose your answer:**

## Question 27 Community Planning

**Is there anything else that the Local Development Plan can do to support the objectives of the LOIP or the aims of Community Planning?:**

## Question 28 Changing Places Toilets

**Should large new developments that require public access provide Changing Places toilets? What types of venues should provide them?:**

## **Appendix 1 Proposed Draft New Policies**

### **Policy D2 Amenity**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

As mentioned response to Main Issue 4, Bancon do not support the introduction of minimum standards for internal floor space through LDP policy.

### **Policy D5 Advertisements and Signage**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy D8 Shopfronts**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy D9 Windows and Doors**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy H4 Housing Mix and Housing for Particular Needs**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

As noted in response to main Issue 9, Bancon do not support the introduction of housing mix restrictions via planning policy.

### **Policy H8 Residential Care Facilities**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy H9 Student Accommodation Developments**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy H10 Houses in Multiple Occupation**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy NC9 City Centre Living**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy NC10 24-hour City**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy NC11 Visitor Attractions and Facilities**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

### **Policy NC12 Public Art Contribution**

**Do you have any comments on the policy?:**

## **Additional Documents**

**Please include comments on other documents below:**

**Please include comments on other documents below::**

The developer bids assessments contain a number of inconsistencies, which have been specifically noted in the appendices to this objection.

## **Additional Files**

**If you have further information you would like to provide you may upload it here.:**

MIR Representation - Bancon Homes - Appendices 1-8.pdf was uploaded

## **Bancon Homes Ltd**

### **Representation to the 2022 Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report**

#### **Contents**

<b>Page</b>	<b>Appendix</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Appendix 1 – Housing Land Allowances and New Sites</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Appendix 2 – Housing sites – B0935 – Newmill, Peterculter</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Appendix 3 – Housing sites – B0936 and B0937 – Treespark, Pitfodels</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Appendix 4 – Housing sites – B0938 – Lovers’ Walk, Peterculter</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix 5 – Housing sites – B0939, B0940 and B0941 - Peterculter East</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appendix 6 – Milltimber South – OP114</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Appendix 7 – Housing sites – B09343 – Milltimber Farm</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Appendix 8 – Housing sites – B0314 and B0315 – Maidencraig North West</b>

## **Appendix 1 – Housing Land Allowances and New Sites**

### **Requirement for additional allocations in the 2022 LDP.**

Bancon submit that the proposed allocations set out in the Main Issues Report are significantly short of what is required to enable the delivery of the housing requirement set out in the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.

The Main Issues Report is extremely unclear about the housing allocations. It identifies a number of new allocations, but does not list the allocations carried over from the 2017 Local Development Plan, some of which have already been built out.

The analysis on page 8 appears to be based on the 2016 Housing Land Audit, which is now 3 years out of date. The draft 2019 Housing Land Audit still needs to be confirmed, but the completions to date at least provide an accurate picture.

The draft 2019 Housing Land Audit identifies 3,004 houses on constrained sites, not the 2,449 reported in the Main Issues Report.

An assessment of the Housing Land Audit also clearly identifies that large sites, most notably Grandhome, are not expected to deliver the allocations set out in the 2017 LDP, and therefore carried over to the 2022 LDP. Even taking the ambitious HLA figures as an accurate completion rate, 4,094 allocated houses will not be delivered by the end of the plan period. This is demonstrated in the table overleaf, which shows projected housing completions on all sites that are expected to deliver housing beyond 2022, based upon the draft 2019 Housing Land Audit.

With a lack of clarity about what the actual allocations are to be in the 2022 LDP, it is impossible to give an accurate figure on the additional housing land allocations required to deliver the SDP requirements, but as a best case scenario, using the most up to date figures, there is an identifiable shortfall of 4,094 + 505 additional constrained sites, totalling 4,599 units.

This shortfall is in addition to the 640 additional houses identified in the Main Issues Report as required by the SDP. It is therefore suggested that the 2022 LDP should be seeking to allocate an additional 5,239 houses, rather than 640, for the 2020-32 plan period.

It is also noted that almost all of the proposed new sites are brownfield sites, and therefore deliverability is dependent on unproven viability.

Scottish Planning Policy identifies the need for housing allocations in development plans to be 'effective or expected to become effective' during the plan period, and for there to be a 'sharp focus on delivery'. The effectiveness of a site must be measured on realistic completions during the plan period. Bancon submit that the Main Issues Report does not provide any confidence that the 2022 Local Development Plan will achieve these basic requirements, and will be woefully short in the allocation of effective housing sites – or at the very least sites expected to become effective during the plan period.

## **Proposed Amendment to Local Development Plan**

Bancon therefore submits that the 2022 Local Development Plan must allocate more sites to meet the housing requirement set out in the Proposed Strategic Development Plan, and to accord with the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy – i.e. establishing a housing land supply that is expected to be delivered.

There is no fundamental objection to the majority of the allocated sites in the plan, but a realistic approach to the delivery rates on large sites should be bolstered by the allocation of more small to medium sized sites that are expected to be delivered during the plan period. This requirement is supported by the Housing Land Audit, that does not expect large sites, even with an optimistic outlook, to be delivered during the plan period.



Estimated housing delivery based on draft 2019 Housing Land Audit returns and SDP MIR																					
Sites expected to deliver houses in 2022 and beyond or constrained but allocated in LDP	remaining capacity of site	estimated based on HLA returns																		constrained	
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	after 2032		
<b>Aberdeen City AHMA</b>																					
Kepplestone, Queens Road	9																				9
45-47 Holland Street	21																				21
1 Western Road	22																				22
Greenferns	120							60	60												
Broadford Works, Maberly Street	460					203	257														
Pittodrie Stadium	350						150	150	50												
Greenferns	1,350																				1,350
Woodside	400					55	55	55	55	55	55	15									
1-5 Salisbury Terrace	6																				6
Cornhill Hospital	401		31	102	40	40	40	40	30												78
9 Pittodrie Place	10																				10
41-45 Leadsie Road	11							11													
67 Jute Street	5																				5
Bruce Motors, 171 Hardgate	8																				8
Former Summerhill Academy	369					116	70	140	43												
Kincorth Academy	230						60	90	80												
Craibstone South A	770				30	60	60	30	30	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	20		
Craibstone South B	300																				300
Rowett South	1,732				124	212	130	122	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	32	32			
Greenferns Landward	1,000																				1,000
Maidencraig	820	19	36	32	51	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	32		
Davidsons Papermill	835	90	90	75	45	45	50	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	20						
Wellington Road, Cove Bay	313	53	58	24	30	33	35	40	40												
Stationfields, Cove Bay	150						25	25	25	25	25	25									
Loirston	1,500						50	100	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150				
Grandhome	6,233			32	90	100	120	150	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	3,741		
Balgownie Centre	171																				171
Friarsfield	258	25	26	34	26	26	26	24	24	24	23										
Countesswells	3,000	4	150	150	150	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	271		
Edgehill House, North Deeside Road	5																				5
Oldfold	550	25	25	25	35	35	35	35	35	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30		
Peterculter Burn	19																				19
Milltimber South	60					24	24	12													
<b>City Totals - sites expected to deliver units in 2021 and beyond</b>	<b>20,244</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,369</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>800</b>			<b>4,094</b>		<b>3,004</b>

## **Appendix 2 – Housing sites – B0935 – Newmill, Peterculter**

Bancon objects to the non-allocation of site B0935, Newmill Peterculter, for development of around 50 housing units. The proposed development site sits to the west of Peterculter, and with access from the A93, and could be accommodated in the landscape away from the key ridgeline to minimize visual impacts. Pedestrian links to the East would be available to existing residential areas, as well as to the south towards the Deeside Way. The site is readily serviceable and could be delivered comfortably within the early years of the Local Development Plan period.

Appendix 1 of Bancon's objection to the Main Issues Report identifies serious concerns about the overall housing allocations, and the need to identify a range of additional, deliverable sites in order to meet the housing needs and demands of the City. This site offers an ideal opportunity to address part of this shortfall.

The Development Options Assessment Report is also queried on a number of points. The landholding at Newmill includes areas of woodland, and there is no intention to destroy this. The indicative housing numbers are proposed on the basis of the developable area of the site without impacts on trees or woodland. Similarly, a low score based on an assumption of negative impacts on a nearby Local Nature Conservation Site is unreasonable, given that there is no detail of design or layout. The Options Assessment Report should not score sites based upon a worst case scenario of a poor development solution, when the same LDP contains policies that seek to ensure high quality sensitive developments.

### **Proposed amendment to Local Development Plan**

The land at Newmill, Peterculter (B0935) should be allocated in the Local Development Plan for the development of around 50 houses.

### **Appendix 3 – Housing sites – B0936 and B0937 – Treespark, Pitfodels**

Bancon objects to the non-allocation of site B0936/B9037, Treespark, Pitfodels, for development of around 10 large houses on the northern part of the site, or alternatively a higher density development of around 40 houses across the whole site. The proposed development site forms a logical infill site in Pitfodels, with development to the west and south, and a reservoir and allotments to the north. The land is currently rough grazing land, and apart from peripheral trees, which would be retained as part of the development, offers little in the way of visual or ecological benefit to the area.

Appendix 1 of Bancon's objection to the Main Issues Report identifies serious concerns about the overall housing allocations, and the need to identify a range of additional, deliverable sites in order to meet the housing needs and demands of the City. This site offers an ideal opportunity to address part of this shortfall.

The Development Options Assessment Report indicates that the site is valuable as Green Belt, but there is no justification given for the inclusion of this land, surrounded by development, as Green Belt. The designation as such seems to be based on little other than the fact it does not already have housing on it, as it does not contribute positively to the network of green space. The low score given for the relationship to the settlement is also questioned, as the site is surrounded by housing, and contains a small number of houses already. The sympathetic development of the site would be entirely consistent with its existing use and the immediate surroundings.

#### **Proposed amendment to Local Development Plan**

The land at Treespark, Pitfodels (B9036/B9037) should be allocated in the Local Development Plan for the development of around 10 large houses, or a higher density development across the whole site of around 40 houses.

## Appendix 4 – Housing sites – B0938 – Lovers’ Walk, Peterculter

Bancon objects to the non-allocation of site B0938, Lovers’ Walk, Peterculter for development of around 12 large houses on the northern part of the site, and the provision of the balance of the site as public open space.

The site is bounded to the North by the Deeside Way, although this is well screened from the site as it is largely in cut with trees along the banks. To the south of the site is Lovers’ Walk, a local footpath that provides a pleasant walk along the north bank of the River Dee. However, this path is prone to erosion, both from the River Dee, and from drainage issues from the application site. It is understood that a public sewer installed some years ago cause damage to local drains, which cause overland flow during storm events to cause further damage to the Lovers’ Walk footpath, and the river bank. As a further feature of the proposal, development of the north part of the site would allow all of the open space to be maintained via a factoring arrangement, bringing a significant local public benefit.



Indicative site layout sketch – showing large houses set in landscaped parkland.

As with a number of development options, the Assessment Report makes an assumption that the whole of the site will be developed in a damaging way to the surrounding area, with no cognisance given to the development proposals themselves. The site is noted as a valuable contributor to the Green Belt and Green Space Network and therefore inappropriate for development. However, the value of the site to these designations are questioned due to the negative impacts of the current situation, with drainage problems, and flood damage causing the path to be undesirable for users, and the use of the site as private grazing for horses providing little or no public benefit as open space. The allocation of the site for a sympathetic and high quality development of a small number of houses would enable the balance of the site (around two-thirds of the area) to be given over to high quality public open space, including a new route for the footpath away from the immediate

riverbank (but with no loss in amenity value), and a resolution to historic drainage issues by tying all of the site into the required SUDS measures for the houses.



Sketch of the proposed development looking East, with greatly improved and extended public realm.



The view west shows the majority of the site given over to public open space.

As with a number of other sites assessed in the Main Issues Report, the land does not form a designated Local Nature Conservation Site, but is considered unsuitable for development because it is 'near' to one (in this case two). No consideration is given to whether the development proposals are capable of delivering a benefit or an improvement to these designated areas – in this case a significant one. The development would have little or no impact on the Deeside Way, and could provide a substantial improvement to the LNCS area alongside the River Dee – perhaps even justifying an extension to the designation in time. The southern and western parts of the site, shown as public open space on the plans below, is not suited to development because of potential flood risk in severe storm events, so there is no risk of a future erosion of these areas for more development. (The area of the site proposed for development of housing is outwith the flood plain).

The low score for landscape fit is also questioned, with the site largely invisible from all vantage points except the footpath, which is proposed to be substantially improved, both in quality and setting.

Appendix 1 of Bancon's objection to the Main Issues Report identifies serious concerns about the overall housing allocations, and the need to identify a range of additional, deliverable sites in order to meet the housing needs and demands of the City. This site offers an ideal opportunity to address part of this shortfall.

#### **Proposed amendment to Local Development Plan**

The land at Lovers' Walk, Peterculter should be allocated in the Local Development Plan for the development of around 12 large houses and associated public open space.

## **Appendix 5 – Housing sites – B0939, B0940 and B0941 - Peterculter East**

Bancon objects to the non-allocation of site B0939, B0940 and B0941 - Peterculter East, for development of three alternative scales of development, around 30 housing units, around 50 housing units and business uses, and around 100 housing units respectively.

Appendix 1 of Bancon's objection to the Main Issues Report identifies serious concerns about the overall housing allocations, and the need to identify a range of additional, deliverable sites in order to meet the housing needs and demands of the City. This site offers an ideal opportunity to address part of this shortfall.

The Development Options Assessment Report scores the site relatively well, despite low scores for flood risk (despite acknowledging the issue being local drainage infrastructure, which could be addressed as a betterment through development) and Nature Conservation because the site is near to LNCS designations. The development of the site would not threaten the LNCS areas that are close to it. The site is also scored down due to limited employment opportunities, despite one of the development options including business land that would generate employment opportunities on the site.

### **Proposed amendment to Local Development Plan**

The land at B0939, B0940 and B0941 - Peterculter East should be allocated in the Local Development Plan for suitable development based on local needs and demands, ranging from around 30 houses to around 100 houses, or a mix of residential and business use.

## Appendix 6 – Milltimber South – OP114

### Introduction

Bancon are supportive of the allocation of the OP114 site at Milltimber South, which is carried forward from the 2017 Local Development Plan. However, Bancon continue to maintain that the capacity of the site, when considered in the context of all appropriate Local Development Plan policies, remains in excess of the currently allocated number. In order to responsibly demonstrate this, a landscape assessment led masterplan for the whole site will be prepared in the coming months and Bancon look forward to positively engaging with key stakeholders in this process.

There is therefore a concern that the current allocation is not appropriate when considered against other policies within the Local Development Plan – principally policies D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design, H3 – Density, H4 – Housing Mix and H5 – Affordable Housing, all of which are also proposed to be carried forward to the new 2022 Local Development Plan. Bancon therefore submit that the allocation be retained, but the fixed capacity of the site be removed from the allocation to allow the appropriate design process to determine the best development solution.

### Context

A masterplan was submitted in 2017, and public consultation carried out. However, this was considered inappropriate because it did not utilise the whole of the allocation, and several other concerns about the quality of the design and details provided. Bancon submit that much of the design work was unfortunately led by a conflict of trying to conform rigidly with the headline numbers of 60 houses and 1225sqm of commercial uses, whilst trying to also comply with planning policies such as D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design, H3 – Density, H4 – Housing Mix and H5 – Affordable Housing. Compliance with the requirements of these policies are fundamentally at odds with the development of such a large site for only 60 houses and 1225 sqm of commercial use.

Even assuming 40% of the site is set aside for public open space, and additional land for commercial uses, the net housing density of 60 houses across the 11 hectare site would be around 10 houses per hectare. Policy H3 seeks a density of 30 houses per hectare – and although it allows for variations depending on the site and it's setting, paragraph 3.78 of the current LDP states that 'the density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing by stifling change or requiring replication of existing style or form.'

An indicative layout was submitted with the LDP bid back in 2013, aimed at demonstrating that the site could be developed in a suitable manner to retain valuable views and proportion of open space. This plan was prepared to support an LDP bid at a time when the housing market was very different, and was not subject to a detailed masterplanning process. It was also not prepared with regard to the policies that were to be published in the 2017 LDP.

Policies within the 2017 LDP identified above strongly support design through a 'process of site context appraisal to arrive at an appropriate proposal' (paragraph 3.3). It is without question that this approach, set out in detail in Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design has raised the bar in terms of both the design process and the design expectations, and coupled with requirements in terms of density (policy H3), Housing Mix (H4) and Landscape (D2), the standard of design itself. The



Main Issues Report does not raise any proposals to alter the approach of these policies in the emerging 2022 LDP.

There is no question that the site must be delivered with an excellent design solution in order to protect the valuable views and character of the area, and the requirement to formally go through the Council's masterplanning process is therefore not disputed. However, this should not be hamstrung by an unreasonable limit on housing numbers and scale of commercial uses – as a 'process of site context appraisal to arrive at an appropriate proposal' should be followed.

Paragraph 3.4 of the current Local Development Plan states that 'Aberdeen encourages an engaging, design-led approach to secure quality placemaking through the appropriate use of pre-application discussion, the application of the masterplan process and on design matters.

Without concluding the design, following the established masterplanning route, it is not appropriate to dictate a limit on housing numbers and commercial land that so clearly conflict with other policies in the plan.

### **Proposed Approach to Allocation OP114**

It is therefore proposed that the allocation on site OP114 be amended to allow flexibility in terms of numbers, subject to the design team following the relevant planning policies, and the masterplanning process, including the required community consultation and engagement with key stakeholders.

At a very high level, and having regard to the physical site constraints as well as feedback from the previous consultation exercise, an initial assessment of an appropriate allocation for the site might look something like that shown below, identifying conceptual distribution of development having regard to constraints. Only once this kind of structured design led approach, considering landscape first (as identified as of key importance by the Reporter in the last LDP review) should matters such as density, housing mix and affordable housing, along with appropriate commercial uses and locations, be considered in detail, in line with the relevant policies of the plan and fully tested through the masterplanning process.



Conceptual idea of developable areas within a landscape structure – such a plan should be tested through the masterplanning process.

The landscape analysis and structure may well dictate that the developable area of the site is proportionally less than on sites closer to the city centre for example. It is not, however, appropriate to pre-empt this without full and detailed engagement with key stakeholders.

Fundamentally, the specificity of the allocation of 60 houses and 1225sqm of employment land is questioned, as it is based upon an indicative plan that had gone through none of the above described processes, is unreasonably restrictive, and will without question hamper an appropriate design solution. This has been confirmed by the progress made on a first attempt at a masterplan for the site – clearly conflicting with policies in the LDP.

Where sites are considered appropriate for development, but sensitive enough, or large enough, to warrant a masterplan process, the specific numbers of houses and areas of commercial uses should be reserved for the outcome of the design led process. Indeed various masterplans have been prepared and approved within the City and 'Shire which specifically exclude housing numbers, preferring to focus on a detailed site analysis, taking all factors of the local environs into account, and providing framework 'blocks' of landscaping and development footprints; the actual housing numbers being subject to a detailed application for planning permission that accords with the principles established in the approved masterplan.

The Development Plan as a whole allows for flexibility in terms of housing numbers, and indeed the housing allowances include a degree of 'generosity' above the housing requirements to ensure

housing numbers are delivered. It is not considered that retaining a degree of flexibility to ensure an appropriate design led approach would render the LDP ineffective in any way.

Housing delivery across the City and Shire has consistently fallen well short of that required by the Development Plan – for a number of reasons covered in other representations to this LDP – but not least the reliance on a small number of very large sites to deliver consistently very high numbers of houses. Long lead in times, infrastructure requirements and marketability restrictions on single outlets have led to a continued under delivery of housing. A quick comparison of the current Housing Land Audit with one from a few years ago will show that anticipated delivery from large sites simply rolls forward year after year, and the shortfall is simply written off at the year end.

Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils should therefore be encouraging the delivery of sites, in order to meet the housing requirement. If some sites deliver slightly more housing than anticipated, this is almost certainly going to be offset by the under delivery, delay or non-delivery of other sites, and there is irrefutable evidence to this effect in Housing Land Audits – the prime examples of which are Chapelton of Elsick in Aberdeenshire and Grandhome in Aberdeen City – both within the Aberdeen Housing market Area – which continue to deliver substantially less houses than forecast in the LDPs. This matter is addressed in detail in Appendix 1 of Bancon's representation to the Main Issues Report.

This again brings the case for encouraging appropriate design led and masterplan process led assessment of development sites in order to deliver the most distinctive, welcoming, safe and pleasant, easy to move around in, adaptable and resource efficient placemaking possible, entirely consistent with Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking By Design.

The OP114 Milltimber South site is a prime example of a site where this process needs to be completed before the correct and appropriate number of houses and area of commercial development can be determined.

### **Proposed amendment to LDP allocation**

It is therefore proposed that development allocations that require and do not yet benefit from approved masterplans or detailed designs be allocated with an indicative 'range' of housing numbers to allow the design process to be utilised appropriately to ensure quality placemaking is achieved. The OP114 site at Milltimber South is a key example of a site where this approach is necessary. The strict limitation of 60 houses and 1225 sqm of commercial use should therefore be either removed, with emphasis put on the need for a robust landscape assessment led masterplan to follow the correct processes. Policies within the Local Development Plan are detailed and robust, and will ensure the best development for the site is achieved.

## **Appendix 7 – Housing sites – B09343 – Milltimber Farm**

Bancon objects to the non-allocation of site B0943 – Milltimber Farm, for development of around 70 houses.

Appendix 1 of Bancon’s objection to the Main Issues Report identifies serious concerns about the overall housing allocations, and the need to identify a range of additional, deliverable sites in order to meet the housing needs and demands of the City. This site offers an ideal opportunity to address part of this shortfall.

The Development Options Assessment Report scores the site relatively well, despite low scores for relationship to the existing settlement and landscape fit. The site already contains housing along the northern boundary, and the farmhouse and outbuildings of Milltimber Farm. The site does not currently offer a visual break between Milltimber and Peterculter, as suggested in the report.

### **Proposed amendment to Local Development Plan**

The land at B9043 – Milltimber Farm should be allocated in the Local Development Plan for the development around 70 houses, as set out in the LDP bid report.

## **Appendix 8 – Housing sites – B0314 and B0315 – Maidencraig North West**

Bancon objects to the non-allocation of site B0314 and B0315 – Maidencraig North, for development of around 200 houses, or a mix of around 100 houses and business/retail opportunities, as an extension to the existing allocations at maidencraig.

The Development Options Assessment Report scores the site very highly, but is dismissed due to the fact that an allocation would be an extension to a strategic site. However, with greater certainty there would be scope to accelerate the development to complete the entirety of the site within the plan period, unlike some other sites in the Local Development Plan.

The land promoted for development forms a logical expansion of the existing Maidencraig development, which is due to be completed within the next ten years. The allocation of the proposed site was supported by the Scottish Government Reporter in his report of the Local Plan inquiry in 2008. Aberdeen City Council, however, decided not to accept his recommendation on this occasion.

Supported by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Bancon submitted that development could be accommodated within the landscape up to the 145m contour line, or thereabouts, without risk of significant visual impact or risk of coalescence with Kingswells. This was specifically supported by the Reporter, who stated that the 145m contour line should mark the boundary of the zoning.

Subsequently, the Dobbies Garden Centre has been built, but a significant area of land below the 145m contour, to the west and north of the garden centre, remains undeveloped. The land is suitable for around 200 dwellinghouses, or 100 dwellinghouses and a mix of business and retail uses, to support the wider masterplan area.

### **Proposed amendment to Local Development Plan**

The land at B0314 and B0315 – Maidencraig Northwest should be allocated in the Local Development Plan for the development around 100 houses and commercial retail use, or for around 200 houses.