



## Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015 Representation Form

Please use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, ensuring that your comments relate to a specific issue, site or policy in either the Proposed Plan, Proposed Supplementary Guidance, Proposed Action Programme or Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report. Please include the relevant paragraph(s) and use a separate form for each issue you wish to raise.

**The consultation period runs between Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015. Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

Name	Mr <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mrs <input type="radio"/> Miss <input type="radio"/> Ms <input type="radio"/> <b>Sandy Hutchison</b>
Organisation	
On behalf of (if relevant)	
Address	Bogskeathy House, Countesswells Road, Aberdeen
Postcode	AB15 9BX
Telephone	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 15px;"></div>
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Please tick if you would like to receive all future correspondence by e-mail

<b>What document are you commenting on?</b>	Proposed Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Proposed Supplementary Guidance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Proposed Action Programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Policy/Site/Issue</b>	OP38: Countesswells	<b>Paragraph(s)</b>	

## What would you like to say about the issue?

I have responded to Ms Bouchall at the Planning Department of Aberdeen City Council several times on this issue already but this time I believe it is even more relevant and we need to ensure we take urgent and appropriate action to this planning application.

The state of Aberdeen's economy and requirement to have new housing is under-pinned on a thriving oil and gas industry. For the first time in history in 2014 the north sea oil companies together made a significant loss and the oil and gas economy combined in Aberdeen was a cash negative. As for any any business running at a cash negative is unsustainable and the Aberdeen City Planning Department needs to ensure that this reality is reflected and considered seriously as part of this planning application. Coupled with the downturn and poor performance of oil companies we have had a crash in oil prices from June 2014 (by more than 50%) which has meant Aberdeen and the North Sea oil industry is in significant decline. Since October 2014 approximately 8,000 jobs have been lost from the oil industry in Aberdeen and many more will follow as most operators and supplier companies make plans for further job cuts, reduction in capital and operating spending and phased decommissioning to try and make their business' survive.

Given the escalating cost to do business in the North Sea no companies are projected to make a profit in 2015 and the depressed oil prices are forecast to continue for many years to come. Given the maturity of the oil basin we now reach a turning point and given the backdrop of that reality it would be very dangerous and likely to be very damaging for the local taxpayer to approve a Housing Development of the scale envisaged at Countesswells.

Recent examples in Aberdeen say that there is no need to approve more housing in the west end. The Muir Homes development at Blairs have abandoned building as they were not able to sell any houses. The Development at Hazledean at Countesswells is also on a major slow down because they are not able to sell any houses for the next Phase in the development.

Given job security is a major issue for people in Aberdeen the knock on impact to the local economy has been massive and the number of houses for sale (many at the mid-top end) in Aberdeen has increased significantly since January 2015 (but are not able to be sold). That, coupled with many people leaving the city to get alternative employment has meant that there is a surplus of housing in Aberdeen that cannot be sold. I would expect that to continue and if it does house prices can only fall and will do so significantly. That will then have ongoing long term damage to Aberdeen's economy.

Financial security of housing developers has to know be of significant concern before providing any planning approval. In previous years I don't think there would be an issue however now potential buyers are reluctant to commit to new property given they are unsure whether they are going to get made redundant and what is going to happen to house prices (likely go down in value significantly). For a west end Aberdeen house developer there is not the market to sell houses which will impact their business, likely make them financially vulnerable and mean they are not able to complete the housing development which creates an exposure for the City and local taxpayers.

We need to put a halt on further development particularly at Countesswells at a time when we need to avoid the situation like in Ireland and Spain where the recession hit these countries hard and they have acres of unfinished housing estates. Similarly in Aberdeen as mentioned above housing developments in Blair's and Hazledean are not able to progress because of Aberdeen's economy and so no approval should be provided for more development.

The major commercial property development plot at Prime 4 at Kingswells is only 40% let and every tenant is trying to re-negotiated their lease terms to exit their property as their business' are in survival mode. The Prime 4 development was expected to be the feeder stock for the Countesswells housing development in a booming oil and gas economy but that is no longer the case.

There are still many concerns regarding the environmental and transport impact of the Countesswells development which causes a series of questions including safety related which means that I would not recommend that we allow the planning approvals to proceed. There is frankly too much risk across these areas and specifically the financial condition of developers in the current environment, the reality that most housing developments cannot be completed in Aberdeen and potential buyers are reluctant to invest given the insecurity they all have with the oil industry and future employment prospects means we have a duty to stop any further development at this time.

## What change would you like to see made?

That the Countesswells development goes "on hold" and is taken out of the local plan until a time when Aberdeen's economy is stabilised and there is more confidence that house developers will survive and there is a market to sell mid-high range property. Until that and the other issues highlighted in response to the first question above are addressed we run the very likely risk that a housing development would not be able to be completed and therefor leave a very expensive legacy for Aberdeen taxpayers to clear up if it proceeds.

Please return the completed form by:

- post to the Local Development Plan Team, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB; or
- email to [ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

The representation form can be filled in, saved, e-mailed and/or printed. You must “save as” to ensure the completed form is saved with the changes you have made. If you need more space, please fill out another representation form or send a word document attachment via e-mail with your completed representation form. **Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

Thank you. For more information, please visit [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/aldp2016](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/aldp2016) or to contact the Local Development Plan Team call 01224 523470.

#### **Data Protection Statement**

The comments you make on the Proposed Plan will be used to inform the Local Development Plan process and the Examination into the Local Development Plan by the Scottish Ministers' Reporter. You must provide your name and address for your representation to be considered valid, and this information will be made publicly available. Other personal contact details such as telephone and e-mail will not be made public, although we will share these with the Reporter, who may use them to contact you about the comments you have made. For more information about how Aberdeen City Council maintains the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg (Local Development Plan Team Leader) on 01224 523317.