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I also agree that following the end of the consultation, i.e. after 8 April 2019, my name and respondent identification number (provided to you by Aberdeenshire Council on receipt of your submission) can be published alongside a copy of my completed response on the Main Issues Report website (contact details and information that is deemed commercially sensitive will not be made available to the public).

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- Mr Andrew Lawson, Data Protection Officer, Aberdeenshire Council, Business Services, Town House, 34 Low Street, Banff, AB45 1AY

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Which document(s) are you commenting on?	Main Issues Report	X
	Draft Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Environmental Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your comments

I am writing in response to the request for people to pass their comments on the Aberdeenshire LDP 2021 main issues report.

Having had this brought to my attention by my neighbours and subsequently discussed the issues on several occasions with them I now wish to highlight the main objections we have discussed to the proposal for a development in New Byth to be zoned for housing in an agricultural field to the rear of the Square and Urquhart Road New Byth, proposal BB013.

At the recent planning open session at the Baden Powel Centre in Turriff there were many residents from New Byth advising officers of their objections, in fact they said there was probably nearly as many people from New Byth as Turriff in attendance.

Various people have different objections but many also have similar concerns.

Several residents point out that the council asks for community participation in planning decisions and that is why they attended the planning meetings and are sending written objections to the planning department and some are contacting their local councillors to pass on their concerns and objections.

No formal meeting has been held to discuss planning issues so these views expressed are from various neighbours who discussed these issues, especially those near the proposed site and myself.

As discussed various points were raised so I would wish to highlight them.

At present there is no up to date community action plan, but the last one which we had several years ago, discussion was held on what would be preferable for housing in the area and it was felt that it would tidy up the appearance of the village if the many gap sites could be utilised. It was also felt at that time that if further development was required that a triangular field going out towards the kirkyard, which is just outside the village, would help join that closer to the village and could include a pavement for pedestrians, which would be a great asset and improve safety for residents. This would also seem to be far more in line with the historic linear layout of the village. This is a view still shared by some residents at least. Since that time the school has also closed and been demolished and has planning for housing on the site as indicated in the MIR.

Some residents also thought that having reviewed current planning policy that this was a view shared by planners who had noted in their draft plan statement for New Byth that they would encourage infill development and brownfield sites for a planned development, with no mention of considering large scale greenfield sites. So it seemed very strange to see that statement and then contradicting it by having a large agricultural field being considered, which could be foreseen to curtail the development of existing sites and leave infill sites unused around the existing settlement. Some residents especially those living near to the Square thought that any development leading onto the Square would cause congestion and create a crossroads in that area leading to road hazards, those adjacent to the site thought they would lose parking space which they have always had and have continual traffic past their property. There is also a commercial garage and bus park running along one side of the access which could cause traffic conflict hazards to users if this were made a busy traffic lane.

An issue which has caused many problems for other sites, and been brought up by community members in the past as something that is often not thought through in applications, is having a good access into a property. In regards to the site BB013 there were many questions which arose when residents discussed the proposal regarding access issues which troubled them, and they wished to highlight.

The access into the field is at present a field gate and if pavements are provided along the access lane, as suggested is a requirement by planners, then this cuts down the space available in that area further. This entrance is also offset to one side of the top lane on approach from the Square and

would cross over to one side, how would pavements etc be provided in that area, there is of course no detail at present of how this access lane would be up-graded and set out to tell if this is feasible so it is difficult to tell. This proposal suggests going down the top section of a grass lane to gain more space to turn into the field, which seems an unusual and poor access to a housing development. There is also the issue that the grass lane is a core path, as recorded on their webpage and sign posted on site by Aberdeenshire council and used by pedestrians, could this cause a problem with extra traffic directed onto this area.

The access lane is currently a rough hardcore finish and would require a tarred road with pavements and services to be provided as part of the proposal project according to planning officers, this would be a major cost and would a developer have the right and be allowed to carry out this work on this ground, such issues have stopped other developments in the past, it was thought if issues such as these were not fully agreed beforehand there seemed little point zoning areas of land and rather concentrate on areas which are available and easy accessed. There is also a grass lane running in front of the field access which would need to be crossed over to access the field. It was noted this site was previously turned down on access issues.

Other sites have also been zoned then removed on access issues previously in this village and also in other areas in the past. Possibly these issues need full consideration and only those sites which are likely to have a probable access be considered for developing. In the case of such sites presumably good planning policy would be to visit the sites in question and carry out a proper investigation so that access issues and service provision were carried out in advance of consideration of zoning. This would then possibly avoid the situation where areas are zoned, then removed and other areas zoned in their place such as seems to often occur. This is a situation queried by many members of the community, and also been discussed with community councillors in the past.

Various sites on Urquhart road, Kirkhill, Main Street and the school site are presently available. Also, the owner of land within the village with a large gap site off Old School road which could accommodate several plots has stated to residents his land would be available for development. All of these are within the settlement boundary and could accommodate a good supply of land for development in relation to the size of the village.

Considering the availability of land it seems strange to consider a large scale development on agricultural land outside the settlement. It was also noted that after consideration planners removed the village from the organic growth scheme due to the loss of the majority of amenities such as the school, church, post office and hotel and thought that since this is the case this policy meant that the main settlement within the village boundary would be the area to concentrate on developing.

To sum up after discussion it was felt in the opinion of some of my neighbours and myself that the application for housing on this field was apparently contradicting the current guidance for the area, and that the village would be perfectly well served at present by encouraging development on the various gap sites and brownfield sites which have good access and which would improve the overall appearance of the village and may be more likely to proceed than large scale developments on prime agricultural land, and also be more in line with the gradual development the village has gone through up till now. If future development was required several residents have brought up the site heading to the kirkyard as being reasonably easily accessed, could offer pavements as part of the project to help improve safety for an area which many pedestrians regularly use, and be in keeping with the historic design and layout of the village and be an asset for the community.

I am sure you will have heard similar comments, and various others, from other residents but as pointed out by planning officers at planning discussion meetings the only way for the planning department to judge opinion is for residents to submit their thoughts and opinions on how development is carried out within their community and the wider area, which we have therefore done.

I trust you will give consideration to the above points raised by myself and others when you are reviewing your decisions for the future LDP. Regards for now

Your comments (continued)