

21st March 2019

Aberdeenshire Development Proposals 2021

MR 050

My Observations re: Inchmarlo Retirement Village submission

Whilst not disagreeing with the demographic comments re: increasing number of people living to a greater age, being physically fitter, but with an increasing risk of developing dementia and increased requirement for sheltered accommodation, I would like to make the following observations:

Inchmarlo's original concept seemed great, [***“Our original intention was to create at Inchmarlo the finest place for people to spend their retirement.”***] however, the provisions now fall short of its aims (see my comments below).

Retirement Village facilities - e.g. **Auchlochan** in Lesmahagow - have surpassed those of Inchmarlo. Early on in their development they built: a **community complex** including a large multipurpose **meeting hall** used (amongst other things) for concerts, indoor bowls, film shows & religious services (with, for those unable to attend in person, an internal **Audiovisual link** between the hall & residents flats); several small **hobbies rooms**; a good quality level **putting green**; one of their 3 lochan's is stocked with trout for residents to **fish** & return; a **café/restaurant**; and as their community has grown they have **increased** the provision of **care home beds** along with more **“supported” flats**.

In the Inchmarlo submission there a number of “half-truths”

Page13.16 **Community facilities 400m** currently refers to the communal use of a **lounge** (capable of seating about 30 people) whilst the **dining room** seats approx. 50, so for home owners formal dinners a waiting list system has to operate; i.e. **already totally inadequate for the current number of home owners!**

Likewise the **“Pub”** which only has room for 7 circular tables, 21 seats & 3+ bar stools with very little circulation space *will be grossly inadequate for the increased number of home owners proposed!*

Page13.17 **Consultation with home owners** takes place twice a year and because of the lack of a large enough community meeting place, has to be held as separate successive hour-long meetings for each of the 3 grouped “hamlets”. Comments are given to previously submitted questions. There is little time for open discussion. ***The contract between home owners & Skene Enterprises Ltd enables the company to “do as it chooses” (my choice of words).***

Page13.18 **“Residual Value”** Once Inchmarlo sells a property to a home owner, they have no further responsibility for that property, other than in maintaining the various agreed

facilities in return for a monthly service charge. There is no provision for the “Enterprise” to buy back, nor to provide shared ownership or rented alternatives. *As the estate charges rise, will there be sufficient numbers of folk able to afford to “buy in”? Currently, several empty properties on the estate have been on the market for more than a year! Why plan to build more whilst the current supply seems to exceed demand?*

“Community Facility” This has been mooted for years and *until it materialises* - providing facilities for hobbies; adequate space for meetings (future-proofed for any expansion of the retirement village), film shows, concerts, lectures; socialising; “wining & dining”; along with outside activities compatible with the abilities and interests of the retirement community - *the attractiveness of the original concept is declining rapidly.*

Page14.19 “On site care” Whilst the “emergency care response” seems to work well at present, the **residential care home** provision has remained static with 52 beds, one of which is currently reserved for home owners needs (subject to availability!). *Should providing yet more properties not be linked to provision of more Residential Care beds or will they be unaffordable?*

Page15.19 *“continuing demand for the provision of additional residences”*. *Several of the second-hand (plus one new property) on the estate have been on the market for more than a year! Why plan to expand when current supply seems to exceed demand? This would further disadvantage Home owners, or their Executors, by excess competition. Currently the service charge continues to be levied on each property - regardless of occupancy state - so Skene Enterprises have no incentive to encourage the second-hand market if they have new properties for sale!*

Page16.19 To “future-proof” any planned new development the proposal to provide **assisted living** seems very sensible. *However, under “Tenure Types”, would rented (or part ownership with lower rent) arrangement be better, considering the risks of residents developing dementia and becoming progressively unable to make their own decisions?*

Page16.19 “Community Facility” *The provision of adequate facilities to enable both physical & mental stimulation should surely (see extract below) be provided prior to expanding the retirement village?*

<https://vida.co.uk/blog/10-activities-to-help-prevent-dementia/>

Dementia is considered to be the leading cause of death for elderly people in the UK. The [Office for National Statistics report](#) for 2017 states that 1 in 6 people over the age of 80 (UK) are diagnosed with dementia. As of now, over 850,000 people are living with dementia, which is expected to rise to 2 million by 2050. Additionally, 70% of individuals who are looked after in Care Homes have dementia or memory difficulties that severely impact on their daily lives.

“..... By increasing brain and physical activity, and making lifestyle choices, you can help reduce the risk of these symptoms.”

I should also stress my safety concerns about pedestrians and vehicular access, not only within the estate (there are no footpaths and some of the roads are quite narrow), but also with the single entrance to the A93 main road.

I hope my observations may be of help in reaching sensible decisions for the future of the Inchmarlo Retirement Village.

Yours faithfully,

