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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).

The data controller for this information is Aberdeenshire Council. The data on the form will be used to inform a public debate of the issues and choices presented in the Main Issues Report of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021. It will inform the content of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

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

If you have difficulty understanding this document and require a translation, or you need help reading this document (for example if you need it in a different format or in another language), please phone us on 01467 536230.

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

Your comments

Site FR006 – Land to the South West of Pitmedden – 110 homes

On behalf of Claymore Homes, the identification of bid site FR006 as an Officer's Preference for a reserved site for 110 houses to the south west of Pitmedden is welcomed in the Main Issues Report. Support is also given to the identification of this site as Future opportunity (FOP1) site in the Draft Proposed Local Development Plan (DPLDP).

This is in addition to the FR007 site to the east which is identified as an Officer's Preference for 110 units in the MIR and as OP3 in the DPLDP. These sites are under the control of the same developer and this representation should therefore be read in conjunction with the representation prepared for the FR007 site. They should also be read in conjunction with the development bids submitted at the pre-MIR stage and demonstrate that these sites are suitable for development.

The MIR raises a number of issues to which we wish to respond.

“The proposed site provides many benefits in relation to the existing habitats and core paths that are found within it, but is significantly constrained by much of the site being classified as prime agricultural land”

The site is classified as 3.1 agricultural land. This means that it is *capable* of being used to produce a wide range of crops. It does not mean that it is utilised as prime agricultural land. The benefits outweigh the loss of this land and this classification is therefore not considered to an impediment to development and if the landowner farmed the land would not have entered discussions with the proposer to develop the site. It is argued that the benefits in relation to habitats and core paths outweigh the loss of the agricultural land.

“The protected species register notes that badger and red squirrels have been seen on the site, therefore the woodland to the north west should be retained”

The developer confirmed within the development bid submitted that the woodland to the north west would be retained. This will avoid the fragmentation or isolation of habitats, including badger and red squirrel and also provide a mature landscape feature to any development on the site. This is seen as a positive feature in the development of this site.

“The watercourse across the site will require a buffer strip”

The site is of a sufficient size to provide buffer strips and not affect the development potential of the site. This can be agreed through any layout prepared for the site.

“The whole site could accommodate up to 566 homes and this will have to be rationalised in bringing the reserved site forward”

Aberdeenshire Council's preferred option, under Main Issue 10, is to review capacity to a level greater than that used for the allocations in the current Local Development Plan. A revised indicative standard density of 25 homes per hectare is proposed for the settlement statements. The entire site extends to 19ha, allowing a development of up to 475 dwellings at this density. This includes the 4.8ha site adjacent (FR007), leaving a balance of up to 355 houses on the remainder of the site.

The two sites vary considerably in size with FR006 being substantially larger than the FR007 site. There is an imbalance in housing numbers allocated to each of the sites and it is questioned if the size of the two parcels are appropriate for the housing identified. It is therefore considered appropriate to consider the two sites under a masterplan approach, which has been identified in the text within the DPLDP.

It is also requested that there is flexibility in the boundaries and densities of the two sites to ensure that a high quality, well-designed, efficient development can be provided at each plan stage. This may result in the boundaries of each site changing to suit the housing allocations identified and this is possible since the land is under option to the same developer.

“The scale of this allocation would constitute a substantial expansion of the existing settlement that it would not be possible to argue that such an allocation would be made on the basis of it being “essential” but the allocation could be justified as needed up to 2031”

This is welcomed and progressing a masterplan approach will ensure a high quality expansion can be achieved on the site taking drainage, layout and open space considerations into account. As stated previously, it is considered appropriate to be flexible in the boundaries of each site to ensure the efficient use of each site.

Conclusion

In summary, support is given to the identification of site FR006 as an Officer’s preference for a reserved site for 110 units in the MIR and as FOP1 in the DPLDP. This site should be considered in conjunction with the FR007 site which forms the first phase of development and is also identified as an Officer’s Preference for 110 homes and OP3 in the DPLDP.

It is considered appropriate to progress the two sites under a masterplan approach which will consider all relevant issues affecting the site. It is also important for flexibility in the site boundaries and densities of the two sites going forward to ensure an appropriate expansion of Pitmedden is created at each Plan stage.

This site should continue to be identified for development in the Proposed Local Development Plan, but with flexibility over the boundaries and unit numbers.