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Which document(s) are you committing on?	Main Issues Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	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 strongly object to the application by developers and Dunecht Estate to build on land west of Westhill, and south of the A944 (Reference sites GRO39, GRO40 and GRO41) as currently being considered in the ongoing SDP and LDP process.

My objections are as follows:

The effects of westward expansion on Mason Lodge and local landscape:

Mason Lodge is currently a distinct community of older properties which would be swallowed up by any new development extending westward beyond the existing boundary of the settlement resulting in coalescence of Mason Lodge with Westhill. New building on the Mason Lodge side of the B979 and south of the A944 opens up a huge precedence for further building on this side of the road where currently there are natural boundaries.

Destroying the natural attractions of the area by building new houses over huge swathes of our countryside will result in suburbanisation of our beautiful Aberdeenshire countryside. With the new deep water berth being built to encourage cruise ships in to Aberdeen, which will be a huge boost to the local economy, further building to the west of the city will mean it takes ever longer for tourists on a tight schedule to leave the urban sprawl and get into the beautiful scenery of Donside and Deeside. Better surely to build smaller pockets of housing within the existing town of Westhill which can be more easily absorbed rather than overdevelopment of the countryside by westward expansion.

Currently when driving towards the west from Westhill on the A944 once you leave Mason Lodge there are beautiful views of the hills towards Clachnaben, Scoltie and the Donside Hills. This would be totally obliterated by housing if westward expansion is given the go ahead.

Agriculture too is an obvious local industry to be nurtured, especially with the prime farming land we have in Aberdeenshire. The proposed sites GRO39, GRO40 and GRO41 are situated on such farmland. When there is a need to nurture industries other than the oil industry should good agricultural land be taken out of use for housing.

Heritage considerations:

On the development bid sites: GRO39, GRO40 and GRO41 to the west of Westhill there are many heritage sites and landscapes which should be preserved, including the Monument to the Reformation, Standing stones, drystone dykes and ancient woodlands. My neighbour has just told me of a Stone Age burial tomb that was found in the field adjacent to our houses in proposed site GRO39. Human remains were found but the field never fully excavated.

At migration times the local fields are covered in wild geese gathering to migrate.

The Skene area itself is a very beautiful area where the Scottish mountains are clearly seen. The Loch of Skene which is already highly conserved would be very close to the Site 3 GRO41 development area. It is an area of outstanding beauty, which could be destroyed by increased footfall from nearby houses. You have only to look at the damage caused to Carnie woods to see the effects of close proximity to housing and extrapolate to visualise the potential damage to the Loch of Skene area of westward expansion to Westhill.

Amenities:

The amenities of Westhill: shops, schools, swimming pool, library, community centre, hotels, restaurants and pubs are quite localised in the centre of the town, some miles from the development bid sites GRO39, GRO40 and GRO41. Social isolation in the new developments could be an issue as the new developments would be isolated from the main hub of Westhill. Children would have to be transported to and from school (again adding to congestion on the A944) and school capacity could be an issue.

Traffic issues on the A944:

This is a major consideration. Traffic on the A944 is huge issue locally with traffic very heavy even at non peak travel times with both heavy Lorries and cars. We can easily wait 10 minutes to get out of our drive in Mason Lodge on to the A944 and it can be a very hazardous manoeuvre trying to “pick your moment”. With more development westward and estimating x2 cars per household, even the Site I GRO39 development of 100 homes would add hundreds of extra cars travelling the A944 every day, making an already busy road even more congested.

Personal Considerations:

From a personal point of view, we have a house with a beautiful rural view over the fields, hills and the Loch of Skene [REDACTED]

We would be directly affected by GRO39 as it would completely surround our property. A view over a housing estate is in no way comparable to our current outlook.

From a financial point of view, a development of this type surrounding our house would certainly devalue the price of our property. If the development goes ahead we will take advice on pursuing a claim to compensate for the devaluation of our property, loss of view and environment and disruption and mess caused during building works.

In conclusion

Building on sites GRO39, GRO40 and GRO41, west of Westhill and south of the A944 would result in:

- The coalescence of Mason Lodge with Westhill,
- Housing expansion beyond the natural boundary of the B979,
- An increase in demand for existing local amenities, particularly schools,
- The destruction of an area with beautiful views and many historic and heritage landmarks,
- The loss of prime agricultural land,
- Risk to the environmentally sensitive areas around the Loch of Skene,
- A massive increase in traffic on the already congested A944.

I strongly object to the application by Dunecht Estate to build up to 2500 homes and community facilities on Reference sites GRO39, GRO40 and GRO41 of the current SDP on land west of Westhill and south of the A944 and propose that it should not be supported.



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Your comments (continued)

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