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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 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

WECC has been involved throughout the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan consultation process. We were involved in the place standard meeting where community councillors discussed their views on the future of Westhill with the planners. Two community councillors were then invited to comment on the Westhill proposed development sites at the Councils Policy Planning team. A drop in session was then organised by Aberdeenshire Council in Westhill on the 21st February so that residents were able to discuss with the planning officers the Main Issues Report findings. WECC also organised an additional follow up event on the 6th March for a presentation by a senior planning officer at Aberdeenshire Council followed by a question and answer session.

The Main Issues Report states that only two development bids may be considered for potential development in Westhill; the land to the south of the Arnhall Business Park and the land at the former Blockworks site on Straik Road, Elrick, Westhill.

As a result of the public consultations there have been a number of issues raised by both Community Councillors and Westhill residents.

GR066 site

Concerns have been raised about the GR066 site for 750-900 houses which borders onto the B0933 site spanning both Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen, the land is at Damhead, Cadgerford and Blackhill which is to the south of Westhill. In the conclusion of the MIR it states that 'it is not considered appropriate to allocate any new major opportunity sites for housing at Westhill'. This site is not a supported site however WECC and Westhill residents are concerned that the developer could challenge this decision in the future and should this development be approved it would have considerable impact on both the B9119 and the A944 as well as putting further significant demands on the schools, health services and amenities within Westhill.

A member of the public highlighted that if this site to the south of Westhill were to be developed that it would result in 'losing the heart of Westhill'.

WECC wishes to re affirm its support for the planners recommendation not to support this bid.

At the moment there is no development strategy for Westhill, if there were it would allow any future developments to be community led rather than the current situation where the development of the Community is currently developer led.

Green belt Main Issue 5

Green Belt is an area of land where development is strictly controlled and which acts as a buffer between communities, its primary purpose is to prevent the coalescence of urban areas.

There has been mention of extending the Green Belt to the west and north of Westhill to avoid coalescence and this is welcomed by both community councillors and residents particularly as 25 hectares of Green Belt land has already been lost to the east of the town with the development of the Kingsford Stadium. Protecting further expansion to the North of the current boundary is a positive step as is the concept to extend the Greenbelt to the West and South to protect Kirkton of Skene, Garlogie and Wester Ord as distinct and discrete communities.

Road Traffic issues

Residents are now reporting that since the opening of the AWPR their journey times particularly at peak periods, have increased in either directions and concerns have also been expressed about the traffic flow on the roundabout leaving and entering the AWPR. It has been suggested that the installation of traffic lights could help at peak flow times plus installing some type of traffic calming measures.

Residents have also commented on the lack of clear signage along the AWPR.

Aberdeenshire Council need to recognise that there are serious limitations on the capacity within the urban area of Westhill and that there is a need for improvement to accommodate a greater volume of traffic, this problem which will be further exacerbated in a few years when fans will be travelling to the Kingsford Stadium along the A944 and the AWPR. A side road, from the Kingsford site training grounds has recently been constructed which does not have a slip road onto and off the training ground so that traffic, could in the future, be backed up on the the A944 causing more traffic flow issues.

On page 84 of the Westhill summary it was highlighted that 'significant traffic congestion also remains an issue along Hays Way and around the shopping centre' but did not mention that traffic congestion is also a problem at Westhill Drive and the Tesco roundabout. It has been suggested that traffic lights could alleviate some of these issues or adding a slip road onto the A944 could keep the traffic moving out of Westhill instead of being backed up at Westhill Drive.

Housing

There has been a recognition in the MIR about the need for building affordable houses and GR125 has been identified as a potential site, this is the land at the former Blockworks Site, Straik Road, Elrick. In addition to affordable housing it has also been recognised by Westhill residents and WECC that there is also a need for low priced starter homes for young people/families, shared ownership schemes should be encouraged by developers, rented housing in Westhill needs to more affordable and that there is a lack of very sheltered housing for the elderly.

Development bids on the A944

Concern that the A944 will be viewed as a development corridor with more of the Green Belt being lost and a threat to the further coalescence between Westhill and Kingwells.

Strategic Development Plans

A resident has highlighted that Strategic Development Plans are, according to Scottish Planning Policy, to be agreed by a consensus between the partner authorities. Aberdeenshire Council should think about how they can make representations to the Scottish Government to enable them to be able to over rule planning decisions that contravene the agreed Strategic Development Plan. Particularly any that receive the unilateral approval of one partner authority and that are perceived as a partner in the Strategic Plan to be detrimental to their own development plans.

Additional comments made by the public

A lack of public accessible electric vehicle charging points in Westhill

New cycle routes and walkways around Westhill to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

A Community sports facility

A skatepark

A childrens gated play park in the Denman Park

Allotments

Concerns about the economic impact upon Westhill of the football stadium

The condition of the car park at Westhill shopping centre and the width of the parking spaces which are very tight

Seeking advice from planners as to how WECC could develop a Development Strategy for Westhill

Conclusion

WECC have appreciated the findings of the Main Issues Report and the fact that the Aberdeenshire planners have understood the need for Westhill to have a period of settlement after many years of extensive development.

WECC and residents support the Main Issues Report recommendations but do have concerns about the impact that any future developments particularly to the south of Westhill will have upon the community.