

Dear Councillors,

I'd like to take this opportunity to voice my opinion about housing development in Aberdeen City and Shire. Feel free to share with the relevant planning and infrastructure departments.

I've met most of you in my capacity as a member of the Crathes, Drumoak & Durriss Community Council but these opinions are my own and do not represent the views of the CC.

I've lived in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire since 1975 and have seen many changes over that time including the ebb and flow of industry with its associated impact on the housing market. More recently I've started to feel strongly about the continual development of greenfield sites for housing. Land is the one thing no-one can make more of and our green spaces are becoming more and more precious.

Whilst the LDP has been drawn up with a view to the perceived housing needs of the next 5 years, I'm concerned that there doesn't appear to be any thought to the effect on existing housing stock that new developments bring.

A quick internet search reveals approximately 5000 homes currently on the market, a figure remarkably similar to the estimated housing requirement noted in the LDP. I appreciate that the LDP was drawn up pre COVID-19 and does not take into account the recent effect on the local economy but I feel the demand for housing is going to be depressed for quite a number of years and should instigate an immediate halt to new housing developments, especially on greenfield sites.

I'd like to put forward two points for consideration:

1. No more new houses are built until a significant proportion of the existing housing stock has been sold. It does no-one any favours to have unsold property on the market for years on end. It's detrimental to property values and can severely impact on people wishing to relocate.
2. Rather than building new housing schemes, developers are encouraged to consider buying existing housing stock with a view to refurbishing and reselling it. E.g. smaller tenement flats could be joined together to form larger family homes. It's quite common in countries such as France and Spain to have large 4-5 bedroomed apartments in city centres – not something we see a lot of in the UK but makes sense given the trend of populations moving towards larger

conurbations. In addition, with a little imagination many obsolete office/industrial spaces could be re-purposed for housing.

I realise the above may be blue sky thinking but ideas have to start somewhere!

I'll leave it up to you to voice my opinions (or not) as you see fit.

Kind Regards

Joyce Scott