

## RESPONSE FORM

As part of the production of the Local Development Plan, a 'Main Issues Report' was published in January 2019. The responses from these consultations have helped to inform the content of the Proposed Local Development Plan ("the Proposed Plan").

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan will direct decision-making on land-use planning issues and planning applications in Aberdeenshire for the 10-year period from 2021 to 2031. The Proposed Plan was agreed by Aberdeenshire Council in March 2020 as the settled view of the Council. However, the Proposed Plan will be subjected to an independent examination and is now open for public comment.

## This is your opportunity to tell us if anything should be changed in the Proposed Plan, and why.

When writing a response to the Proposed Plan it is important to specifically state the modification(s) that you would wish to see to the Plan.

This is the only remaining opportunity to comment on the Proposed Plan. The reasons for any requested changes will be analysed and reported to Scottish Ministers. They will then appoint a person known as a Reporter to conduct a public examination of the Proposed Plan, focusing particularly on any unresolved issues and the changes sought.

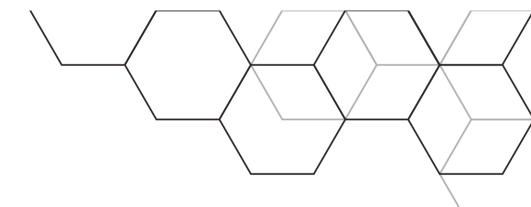
Ministers expect representations (or responses) to be concise (no more than 2000 words) and accompanied by limited supporting documents. It is important to ensure that all of the information that you wish to be considered is submitted during this consultation period as there is no further opportunity to provide information, unless specifically asked.

Please email comments to <a href="mailto:ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a> or send this form to reach us by 31 July 2020\*.

We recommend that you keep a copy of your representation for your own records.

\*UPDATE 16 June 2020: Consultation period was extended from 17 July 2020 for a further two-week period.





## **ACCESSIBILITY**

If you need information from this document in an alternative language or in a Large Print, Easy Read, Braille or BSL, please telephone 01467 536230.

Jeigu pageidaujate šio dokumento kita kalba arba atspausdinto stambiu šriftu, supaprastinta kalba, parašyta Brailio raštu arba britų gestų kalba, prašome skambinti 01467 536230.

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații din acest document într-o altă limbă sau într-un format cu scrisul mare, ușor de citit, tipar pentru nevăzători sau în limbajul semnelor, vă rugăm să telefonați la 01467 536230.

Jeśli potrzebowali będą Państwo informacji z niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, pisanych dużą czcionką, w wersji łatwej do czytania, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w brytyjskim języku migowym, proszę o telefoniczny kontakt na numer 01467 536230.

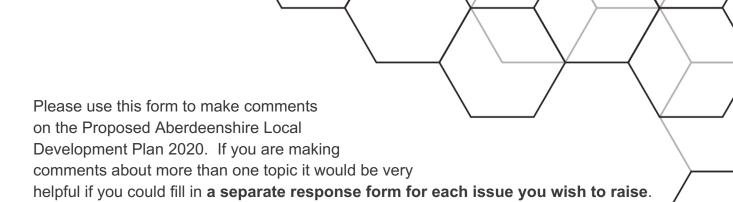
Ja jums nepieciešama šai dokumentā sniegtā informācija kādā citā valodā vai lielā drukā, viegli lasāmā tekstā, Braila rakstā vai BSL (britu zīmju valodā), lūdzu, zvaniet uz 01467 536230.

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB

Tel: 01467 536230

Email: Idp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Web: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Idp Follow us on Twitter @ShireLDP

If you wish to contact one of the area planning offices, please call 01467 534333 and ask for the relevant planning office or email planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.



Please email or send the form to reach us by 31 July 2020 at the following address:

Post: Planning Policy Team, Infrastructures Services Aberdeenshire Council, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB

Email: Idp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Please refer to our **Privacy Notice** at the end of this form for details of your rights under the Data Protection Act.

## YOUR DETAILS

Title:	Mrs
First Name:	Audrey
Surname:	Wright
Date:	22 July 2020
Postal Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	
Are you happy to rece	ive future correspondence only by email? Yes χ No □
Are you responding or	n behalf of another person? Yes □ No χ
If yes who are you rep	presenting?
v Tick the box if you	would like to subscribe to the Aberdeenshire LDP eNewsletter:

An acknowledgement will be sent to this address soon after the close of consultation.

## YOUR COMMENTS

Please provide us with your comments below. We will summarise comments and in our analysis will consider every point that is made. Once we have done this we will write back to you with Aberdeenshire Council's views on the submissions made. We will publish your name as the author of the comment, but will not make your address public.

**Modification that you wish to see** (please make specific reference to the section of the Proposed Plan you wish to see modified if possible, for example Section 9, paragraph E1.1):

LDP 2021 NN Potterton OP1 and OP2.

I wish to see the removal of OP1 and OP2 from the LDP for Potterton and the reinstatement of this land as Green Belt.

#### Reason for change:

Inappropriate Use of Green Belt Land: I believe this development is not an appropriate use of land which has been included for many years in the Green Belt around Aberdeen. The value of the Green Belt is recognised by both Scottish Planning Policy and the Council's own policies. It helps to protect the countryside, to contain urban sprawl and ribbon development and unnecessary speculative development. It preserves and enhances the landscape setting in which Aberdeen and Potterton are set. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the consequent Lockdown situation, the residents of Potterton are now even more appreciative of their Green Belt and the impact this has on our physical and mental health and well-being. Our Government aspires to encourage a Green recovery from the negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic ('transitioning towards a greener, net-zero and wellbeing economy') and I believe retaining and nurturing our existing Green Belt should be central to that. Building on Green Belt land creates an undesirable precedent for future development on, and further erosion of, the Green Belt.

In addition, this part of the Green Belt separates the small satellite of Milton of Potterton from the main settlement of Potterton. I understand that being located within the Green Belt makes Potterton a desirable place for developers – however, removing the land from the Green Belt to allow the developers to build destroys the very thing that makes it desirable in the first place.

Lack of consultation regarding change of Green Belt: I object very strongly to the way this release of Green Belt land has been handled. There has been NO consultation with the residents of Potterton and indeed one might think that the change has been rushed through on the quiet between versions of the Local Development Plan. The LDP does not even mention that the land has been removed from Green Belt or attempt to justify why this has been done. By and large the residents of Potterton had no idea this was happening. Clearly the only way this development could be recommended in the proposed Plan is to remove the land from Green Belt, as it is not of a type which would be permissible on Green Belt land. We are told that minor changes to the Green Belt boundary are to be made to account for any new allocations arising from Settlement Issues and Actions papers, where required. However, the Issues and Actions paper states 'it is recommended that only very minor changes to the green belt boundary should be made ahead of publication of the Proposed LDP to account for any recommendations arising from Issues and Actions papers related to settlements that require amendment to settlement boundaries to be

made. Commitment should be given to reviewing the green belt in 2022 to inform a mid-term review of the LDP. The review would include public consultation utilising a range of engagement tools to ensure those with an interest can fully participate in the review.' The change which has been made to the Green Belt at Potterton runs absolutely contrary to the spirit of this — it is definitely not a 'minor change' and has been made with no discussion, notification or consultation. In addition, there is no attempt in the proposed LDP to explain or justify it. It seems totally unjust that we the public have to explain and justify our request to change the LDP whereas the council and planning department can make this change behind the scenes without even mentioning it. It is my view that such a change should be documented, explained and justified to allow comment or rebuttal of the reasoning by the public.

Aberdeenshire Council says it is Committed to Engagement as a key part of the Plan-making process....so that 'the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan reflects the land use changes that people would wish to see in their communities.' They claim to use national standards for community engagement using a best practice approach to achieving community participation. However the proposed LDP does not reflect changes that the people of Potterton want in their village. There was no public meeting or information about this significant change being made to the Green Belt in Potterton. There has been no engagement with the community by Belhelvie Community Council (BCC), which is supposed to represent the views of the community to Aberdeenshire Council and promote the wellbeing of the community. We would have expected BCC, before expressing opinions to Aberdeenshire Council on what should happen to Potterton, to inform residents of what was going on and to attempt to gather our views. This did not happen. Nor did BCC mention the proposed changes to Potterton in their column in the Belhelvie Banter newsletter, which would be a usual means of communication, nor on their website or Facebook page. Nor did they run a survey or facilitate a public meeting with Planners or developers.

- No consultation with Potterton by Planning Department or Councillors
- No liaison with Potterton by Belhelvie Community Council
- No information from proposed developer

LDP process is developer-led: It appears the process is completely developer-led with no regard to the residents and no opportunity for us to provide input, until now. It seems that the planning department took input from the Developers in their Bid documents and from Belhelvie Community Council and assumed these covered the wishes of the people of Potterton. The Formartine Area Committee were lobbied at their Special Meeting on the proposed LDP in Sept 2019, and voted to INCREASE the amount of land reallocated out of the Green Belt to allow to build MORE houses. This despite the fact that the planners' view was that this would be excessive. The planners considered that there are sufficient additional housing land allocations identified in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and that Potterton has an appropriate amount of land identified for housing to meet local housing needs during the Proposed Plan period.

#### **Previous Local Development Plans**

The previous LDP recommended no development in Potterton due to the Green Belt and lots of very valid concerns over lack of infrastructure etc. The Reporter appointed by the Scottish Government examined all the reasoning behind the recommendation for no development and agreed that it was appropriate. On the Green Belt question, the Reporter stated:

'The Green Belt was reviewed in 2010 (see Review of the Aberdeen Green Belt (Aberdeenshire) 2010) and this review remains consistent with paragraphs 49 to 51 of SPP. It is clear that Green Belts can be used where a Planning Authority think it appropriate to direct development to the most appropriate locations, to protect the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement, and to provide access to open space. The fundamental purpose of the Green Belt, as

identified, is to protect and enhance the setting of Aberdeen City and key dormitory suburbs, such as Potterton and Portlethen, and as such reviewing the boundaries at this time is not considered appropriate. No change is required.'

'Potterton lies outwith the Aberdeen to Peterhead Strategic Growth Area (SGA). It is a small village with a limited number of services. The planning objective for the village is to protect the amenity of the village. This is achieved, in part, through application of the Green Belt policy (see Schedule 4 Issue 36: Potterton). It would be inappropriate to amend the Green Belt boundary as the village is not earmarked for development at this time. No change is required.'

'The council has pointed out that the greenbelt in Aberdeenshire was reviewed in 2010 [council document 287] and that it remains consistent with the purposes set out in paragraph 49 of SPP: (a) directing development to the most appropriate locations and supporting regeneration; (b) protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of settlements; and (c) protecting and providing access to open space. There is no evidence before me to suggest that, in broad terms, the greenbelt boundaries identified in the local development plan (Appendix 3) do not meet these objectives. The criticisms essentially relate to individual sites which representees wish to see excluded from the greenbelt.'

I believe all of the above still holds good now. I do not believe there are any arguments to justify any necessity to build on this green belt land.

In addition, the Reporter stated that with regard to the available land supply:

'...The sound reason for not making allocations in in Potterton was that the strategic housing land supply in the area had been met and further local needs in the area have not been identified...there was no need for further allocations to meet the SDP requirements. No evidence is presented to justify a local need for development in the village....This is not considered as inhibiting development as the Housing Land requirements have been met.'

'There has been no change in circumstances since the MIR 2013 indicated that the findings of the Reporter were still relevant. As noted above, there is an adequate housing land supply within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area local growth and diversification area. The allocation sought would be unlikely to deliver the infrastructure investments required to support it. No change is required.' '...there has been no change in circumstances since the MIR 2013 indicated that the findings of the Reporter were still relevant. These were that there is an adequate housing land supply within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area local growth and diversification area and the provision of services is not a reason in itself to make an additional allocation. Therefore, as there has been no material change since the Reporter made these comments, no allocation should be made.'

'there is no imperative to identify further housing land. As Potterton is surrounded by greenbelt and there are identified infrastructure constraints relating to the local road network, school capacity and water infrastructure that could only be resolved through the economies of scale offered by large scale development (which itself would be contrary to the spatial strategy), there is no basis upon which the inclusion of any bid sites could be supported.'

I do not believe anything has changed so I am at a loss as to how development in Potterton could now be recommended. All of the above comments by the Reporter still hold good. I believe it should be incumbent on the planners and councillors to explain the rationale behind their change of view. The only reason I can see for removal of Green Belt status here is that want to build on it. This is not a good enough reason.

#### No requirement to increase housing land supply

We are not told the rationale behind the removal of green belt status in order to build houses in Potterton. If the rationale is to provide housing land supply, there is no necessity to do this. There is already a very generous supply of land (non green belt land) available for housing in the area. According to the 2019 Housing Land Audit there is a supply of 7.2 years available, well in excess of the 5 years requirement. Aberdeenshire's Monitoring Report of 2019 details the decrease in housing completions over the recent years but is very clear that this is not the result of a shortage of land: 'It is important to note that the fall in completions does not indicate an issue with deliverable land supply. The ALDP 2017 continues to provide a generous supply of land for housebuilding, well in excess of the requirement to provide at least five years' worth of land in both housing market areas as shown below.' This report references the fall in the oil price in 2014 and the resultant economic downturn as a chief influence over the fall in house prices and the decrease in completions. This situation has now been exacerbated by the Covid-19 Pandemic and expectation of the worst recession for hundreds of years. Therefore I believe that there is absolutely no need to release green belt land in Aberdeenshire for housing. This would be an unnecessary loss of green belt land and would have long-term negative implications for the green belt. There is no logic in destroying our natural environment to build more housing at a time when many properties across Aberdeenshire sit unsold.

#### Policies on Landscape, Ancient Woodland and the Historical Environment

Aberdeenshire Council Policy E1 on Natural Heritage sets out to protect the natural environment against any unacceptable adverse impacts caused by development. Policy E2 on Landscape establishes a general presumption against development that would cause unacceptable effects on a landscape's overall character and quality. I believe approving the change from green belt to housing land would run contrary to the Council's own policies as set out. This would clearly cause unacceptable adverse effects on the natural environment and on the overall character and quality of the land. Policy E3 promotes the protection of Aberdeenshire's forest and woodland areas. The proposed development would enclose a precious area of Ancient Woodland. This should be retained within its natural rural setting surrounded by fields, not endangered by development and surrounded by housing.

Policy HE1 sets out to protect archaeological sites and historic interests against any unacceptable adverse impacts caused by development. The field proposed for development has been unchanged since the Middle Ages and has Broad Ridge and Furrow still visible today; this has been preserved due to it being used as grazing land for sheep. In accordance with Policy HE1 this should be retained, not destroyed by a housing development.

#### Impact on Landscape

The proposed site would have an unacceptable impact upon the landscape character and setting of Potterton and Milton of Potterton. We would lose the character of the landscape, and particularly the sense of space and openness through the development of expansive fields. This sense of space and openness defines the land and is extremely significant in a local context. The size of the proposed development is huge in relation the size of the village of Potterton — a proposed development of more than 230 houses in a village of less than 400 homes. This would have an unacceptable impact upon the landscape through inappropriate scale and siting and would contribute to significant urban sprawl within the Greenbelt. Development would significantly erode the landscape character as defined in the Landscape Character Assessments produced by Scottish Natural Heritage. Their 1996 report recognises Potterton as a Landscape Character Area and states that large scale development would not fit in with the existing pattern of landscape and offers the opinion that existing areas of green belt should be allowed to have some permanence.

#### Impact on Biodiversity and Protected Species

The site proposed for development is in an environmentally sensitive area near to Balmedie Beach and the Sands of Forvie. Services required by hundreds of new houses would be likely to endanger these wonderful natural areas which need to be protected. Within the site or within the immediate vicinity (a couple of hundred yards) of the proposed development there are nesting red squirrels, badgers, bats, deer, common lizards, buzzards, sparrowhawks and many other species of birds, hummingbird hawkmoths and countless other species of insects, and countless species of plants. I believe that retaining the rural setting is essential to protect these species, many of which are protected by law. By rezoning this land from green belt, I believe that Aberdeenshire Council have not given sufficient weight to the interests of biodiversity and protected species and I believe that they are neglecting their duties under the law. A comprehensive ecological survey of the area would be required.

#### Roads – adverse safety impact

The developments would have access points onto an unclassified road and a C class road which are both already inadequate for the existing volume, speed and type of traffic following the opening of the AWPR. (The LDP states that there would be access on to the B977 – this is an error, both roads are C class or unclassified roads). It would be crazy to increase the loading on to these two small country roads. There are no passing places, footpaths, or streetlights and few road markings. The roads are used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and are becoming increasingly risky for people to use. There are bends and blind summits as well as a significant stretch which is only suitable for single file traffic and is marked accordingly. The single file traffic road markings tend to be largely ignored with the result that vehicles try to squeeze past in unsuitable locations and do this by driving up the banks and on the verges, which are disappearing fast due to erosion by heavy vehicles. My husband and I live on the unclassified road and have already been in touch with the Roads department (Enquiry ref. 569311) to express our concerns over road safety and erosion of the verges and banks due to heavy traffic and to ask for a review of signage and road markings to try to reduce the negative impacts of heavy vehicles using this small country road.

The developers make much fuss over the fact that there is an existing bus service (which is infrequent) to the village of Potterton. This is however impractical for people to use to commute to work unless right in the centre of Aberdeen due to the limited service and lack of good onward transport links. There are absolutely no public transport links to places where the infrastructure is (schools, medical facilities, library etc are all located either in Balmedie or at Bridge of Don). So building 230+ houses could only mean 400+ additional cars on roads which are already inadequate to take their current load. This would be against council and government policy which aims to encourage greener transport and life options and discourage the use of the car.

#### Sewage / Drainage / Flood Risk – Adverse Impact

There is insufficient capacity in the current sewage system for more development. Development could not be permitted without a growth project from Scottish Water, but I understand that there is no firm date for this project to be initiated.

The fields proposed for development flood in periods of rain and are flagged by SEPA as a 1 in 200 flood risk area and therefore I believe they should not be built upon. The British Geological Survey map of the UK shows the geology of both fields proposed for development as on bedrock of the Belhelvie troctolite basic intrusion which is impermeable to water. Therefore the drainage is poor, so that dips in the land flood during heavy rain. There are areas at risk on the proposed site including dips in the ground which currently fill with water and areas of swampy ground with reeds. This problem could only be increased by buildings and hard surfaces which would not allow

drainage of water into the soil during heavy rains. I believe this would endanger the existing homes in the small settlement of Milton of Potterton which lies lower down than the fields proposed for development and it is a real concern for ourselves and our neighbours, especially with increases in flooding being seen around the country due to climate change.

In the area and its surroundings the water table is high and there are several natural springs. There are problems with drainage and run off from the fields in periods of heavy rain. The road junction at Mill of Potterton can flood after only a short period of heavy rain, the upgraded drainage pumping system gets swamped and causes pollution to the Millden Burn and thereafter to the sea. In fact, this has happened with SEPA needing to become involved even within the last few weeks.

I believe that further development in this area would increase flood risk in the surrounding area and cause serious environmental pollution with consequent impact on biodiversity.

#### Lack of Infrastructure

Schools and medical practices are at capacity and will not be able to cope with the additional demand which would be created by this volume of new housing in the area. In fact, Balmedie Primary School is already operating in excess of capacity. This problem will be even more serious in the post Covid-19 world with the need for some type of social distancing likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Scotstown Medical Practice is at full capacity already, with access to medical services also being of huge importance to residents in the post Covid-19 world, and additional space likely to be required.

No additional facilities are included in the development plans.

#### **Landfill Site**

The proposed site is too close to a landfill site (Wester Hatton) which is producing methane gas. It would be dangerous to build houses so close to the landfill site.

#### **Nuisances caused by Development**

Development of the fields surrounding Potterton would cause noise, unsuitable traffic, and pollution for a period of years and destroy the peace and quiet of our countryside location. There would be excessive traffic on roads unsuitable to cope with this, causing danger to residents. This will limit the safe use of open space for active travel.

#### **Vision for Potterton**

The Vision for Potterton in the 2017 LDP was clear:

'The planning objective for the settlement is to preserve the amenity of the village, which shall be achieved through the use of protected land designations and through the application of the greenbelt policy'.

What happened to this Vision? I do not believe anything has changed in the intervening couple of years which could possibly justify removal of the greenbelt and destroying the amenity of a huge part of our village. Please please reinstate the Vision.

#### **Lack of Clarity**

There is a complete lack of clarity in the proposed LDP for Potterton.

In the 2013 Main Issues Report there is some helpful context provided in the introduction to the Formartine section. This explains that Settlement Objectives based on the previous LDP and updated via consultation with Community Councils would form the justification for any new allocations and would guide development management decisions on the merits of development

proposals. Furthermore, there is a helpful Conclusion to the Potterton section where the planners explain their recommendations. They said that there were 2 reasons why no housing was allocated to Potterton: one, that there was no need for strategic land allocation as there was already plenty; and two, that there was no local need for housing allocation BECAUSE THE PLANNING OBJECTIVE FOR POTTERTON WAS TO PRESERVE THE AMENITY OF THE SETTLEMENT (BY MAINTAINING THE GREEN BELT).

And not only that, they went on to say that even if one of those things changed, Potterton was not suitable for housing allocation because of the infrastructure constraints. And that a development huge enough to deliver all the infrastructure required would change the character of the place so much that this would outweigh any benefits of development.

Why is there no context or explanation provided in the proposed LDP? Since nothing has changed since the 2017 LDP I cannot understand how such a radically different conclusion has been reached. Surely in the interests of transparency Aberdeenshire Council needs to explain to the residents of Potterton how they think the situation has changed.

And to reiterate, there was no consultation with the community through the Community Council so I do not believe any input from the BCC represents the views of the residents of Potterton. If the Vision / planning objectives for our village has a critical part to play in the planning process, then the villagers need to be consulted first as to what they want.

### PRIVACY NOTICE



# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT

The Data Controller of the information being collected is Aberdeenshire Council.

The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at Town House, 34 Low Street, Banff, AB45 1AY.

Email: dataprotection@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Your information is being collected to use for the following purposes:

 To provide public comment on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The data on the form will be used to inform Scottish Ministers and individual(s) appointed to examine the Proposed Local Development Plan 2020. It will inform the content of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021.

#### Your information is:

Being collected by Aberdeenshire Council X
--

#### The Legal Basis for collecting the information is:

Personal Data	
Legal Obligations	Х

Where the Legal Basis for processing is either Performance of a Contract or Legal Obligation, please note the following consequences of failure to provide the information:

It is a Statutory Obligation under Section 18 of the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, for Aberdeenshire Council to prepare and publish a Proposed Local Development plan on which representations must be made to the planning authority within a prescribed period of time. Failure to provide details requested in the 'Your Details' section of this form will result in Aberdeenshire Council being unable to accept your representation.

Your information will be shared with the following recipients or categories of recipient:

Members of the public are being given this final opportunity to comment on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The reasons for any changes that the Council receives will be analysed and reported to Scottish Ministers. They will then appoint a person to conduct a public examination of the Proposed Plan, focusing particularly on the unresolved issues raised and the changes sought.

Your name and respondent identification number (provided to you by Aberdeenshire Council on receipt of your

submission) will be published alongside a copy of your completed response on the Proposed Local Development Plan website (contact details and information that is deemed commercially sensitive will not be made available to the public).

In accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 where the appointed person determines that further representations should be made or further information should be provided by any person in connection with the examination of the Proposed Plan the appointed person may by notice request that person to make such further representations or to provide such further information.

Your information will be transferred to or stored in the following countries and the following safeguards are in place:

Not applicable.

The retention period for the data is:

Aberdeenshire Council will only keep your personal data for as long as is needed. Aberdeenshire Council will retain your response and personal data for a retention period of 5 years from the date upon which it was collected. After 5 years Aberdeenshire Council will review whether it is necessary to continue to retain your information for a longer period. A redacted copy of your submission will be retained for 5 years beyond the life of the Local Development Plan 2021, possibly until 2037.

The following automated decision-making, including profiling, will be undertaken:

Not applicable.

Please note that you have the following rights:

- to withdraw consent at any time, where the Legal Basis specified above is Consent;
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (after raising the issue with the Data Protection Officer first);
- to request access to your personal data;
- to data portability, where the legal basis specified above is:
  - (i) Consent; or
  - (ii) Performance of a Contract;
- to request rectification or erasure of your personal data, as so far as the legislation permits.

