

PROPOSED ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 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 ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk 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: ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Web: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldp
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 use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020. If you are making comments about more than one topic it would be very helpful if you could fill in **a separate response form for each issue you wish to raise.**

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: ldp@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:	Mr
First Name:	Angus
Surname:	Dodds
Date:	27.07.2020
Postal Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	

Are you happy to receive future correspondence only by email? Yes ☐ ☐

Are you responding on behalf of another person? Yes ☐ ☐

If yes who are you representing?

☐ 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):

Section 7: Shaping Development in the Countryside

Amendment:

Insert the following as a second paragraph within the 'Shaping Development in the Countryside Chapter:

"In addition to housing and business, the countryside is an essential host to renewable energy developments to tackle climate change, and deliver rural diversification. While specialist policies later in this Plan detail how any such proposals should be considered, the overall principle of renewable energy is supported in the countryside, subject to meeting site-specific qualifying criteria".

Policy R1 Special Rural Areas

Amendment:

We appreciate that a change has been introduced to policy R1.1 in the PLDP to include the term 'development'. This is welcomed. However, for clarity we would like to see a further modified version of this text being adopted to work with the proposed new wording:

Recommendation – Remove the term 'small-scale' from the first line of paragraph R1.1:

"Opportunities for development will be restricted in the green belt and coastal zone to reflect the special nature of these areas"

Amendment:

Re-word current wording of second bullet-point at paragraph R1.2 to state the following:

"development identified as a national priority in the National Planning Framework or serving an established need (such as appropriately sited renewable energy installations), where no other suitable site is available".

Amendment:

Add the word 'environmental' at paragraph R1.3:

"In the coastal zone development must require a coastal location or there must be clear social, economic, environmental or community benefits arising".

Amendment:

Add an additional bullet-point under paragraph R1.5 stating the following:

“non-permanent renewable energy development such as ground mounted solar PV schemes, where it can be designed in such a way that biodiversity will be enhanced, and the landscape impact is minimal or can be mitigated. A statement may be required setting out the reasons why a Green Belt location is optimal for the project. Any such proposal will also need to demonstrate that it accords with the overriding objectives of the Green Belt”.

Policy R2: Development Proposals Elsewhere in the Countryside

Amendment:

No amendment sought. We welcome the change in the title of this section.

Policy C2: Renewable Energy

Amendment:

Change opening line of section C2.5 to the following:

“We will approve applications for solar panel arrays greater than 4kW throughout the countryside if”:

Reason for change:

INTRODUCTION

Elgin Energy welcomes the general support given for solar energy as articulated in Policy C2 of the Proposed Local Development Plan (PLDP). However there is a lack of direct reference to renewable energy within the ‘Shaping Development in the Countryside’ chapter of the PLDP. Elgin Energy feels that this is an opportunity missed as just like agriculture, woodland and forestry, fishing and horticulture, renewable energy typically requires a countryside location as well as a result of grid issues and area of land required. Accordingly it is considered that this sector should be given the same type of support as other rural-based sectors that are looked upon favourably in the green-belt.

Section 7: Shaping Development in the Countryside

As noted within our MIR submission, we consider that the introduction to Section 7 needs to be more explicit in recognising the locational need for renewable energy in the countryside as a prelude to discussing special rural areas. The suggested amendment should prevent any unintended resistance on policy grounds to renewable energy in rural areas. This would be most useful for Case Officers and/or objectors when interpreting the policy, as there is concern that the policies in Section 7, if read in isolation, suggest that renewable energy is not supported in such areas.

Policy R1 Special Rural Areas

Criteria R1.1- R1.5 set out the opportunities for development within Special Rural Areas by giving a list of acceptable developments. We consider that they do not go far enough to offer appropriate support to important countryside developments, such as Renewable Energy.

Criterion R1.1 is considered to read awkwardly as this suggests that only ‘small-scale’ (rather than large scale) development will be restricted in rural and coastal zones. In the interests and clarity and completeness therefore, it seems prudent to remove the term ‘small-scale.’

As currently drafted, criterion R1.2 in the Special Rural Areas policy allows the following to be permitted in the green belt:

“development identified as a national priority in the National Planning Framework or established need, where no other suitable site is available.”

Again, it is considered that the language employed is a little unclear. There is no clarity as to whether the need cited is to be derived from the National Planning Framework or from other policy documents or strategies. The current National Planning Framework does not highlight solar PV as one of the 14 ‘national developments’. However, it does note the following at paragraph 2.7

“Great places support vibrant, empowered communities, and attract and retain a skilled workforce. Emerging technologies for renewable energy and improved digital connectivity are changing our understanding of what constitutes a sustainable community. We must ensure that development facilitates adaptation to climate change, reduces resource consumption and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.”

Further, in its discussion of the Aberdeen and North-East region, the NPF3 notes the following:

“The City Investment Plan sets out an ambition “to maintain Aberdeen’s position as one of the world’s key energy capitals”

We therefore consider that NPF3 references renewable energy as a key driver for the North-East economy and for the rural economy more generally. It will help to create sustainable communities and meet national climate change targets. Accordingly, we consider that there is a need for renewable energy to be more clearly articulated through criterion R1.2.

Section 13: Climate Change

Overall we support the proposed wording for Solar panel arrays under policy C2.5. However, in order to ensure that there is a comprehensive appreciation of the general acceptability of Solar PV across all different types of the countryside (including in the green belt and coastal areas), it seems prudent to stress this in the Climate Change Chapter.

It is noted that wind, on-farm biomass and hydro are the three other named technologies alongside Solar in the emerging ‘Climate Change’ policy. The policy as currently drafted offers a clear steer on the acceptable location/siting for these three technologies, but as currently drafted is silent on appropriate siting and location for solar. To offer clarity and consistency on this matter, it is suggested that the opening line to the Solar section should be clear that Solar PV can be accommodated on a range of different sites.

REASONING

Overall, we think that the visual impact of solar PV is minimal especially where mitigation such as appropriate screening/planting can be put in place. Evidence from elsewhere supports the view that careful site-selection and landscaping allow such developments to be successfully integrated into the landscape. Solar sites, which are compatible throughout their installed life with ongoing conventional agriculture, are also easily removed at the end of their life, and are therefore only a temporary use.

The PLDP recognises at 3.10 the ‘urgent challenges of climate change’, and it is considered that a technology like Solar PV which can enhance biodiversity, increase land diversification, and improve the character of the Green Belt, is one technology that could be more robustly defended through the emerging LDP. In the light of their benign nature and general lack of impact, it is considered that Aberdeenshire Council could provide more explicit support for solar PV sites through the emerging Local Development Plan.

Since consultation closed on the Main Issues Report, the Covid-19 outbreak has highlighted the importance of renewable energy and the public appetite for a changed energy landscape going forward. The very nature of towns and cities, and by corollary their greenbelts are currently being debated, and major changes may take place to them in the short to long term. Adopting a more permissive approach to renewable energy like Solar in the green belt would appear to align with the public mood which will support inobtrusive forms of renewable energy.

With changes in the oil and gas industry in the north-east, engineering jobs in the area are at risk. Opportunities to retain engineering jobs will therefore be seized upon and solar represents one such opportunity. Restricting its use to areas outside the greenbelt will close off opportunities to host green energy generating plant closest to the region's largest population, where such opportunities are likely to be most viable.

Finally, the recently published 'Energy Transition Strategy' by Aberdeen City Council highlights the locational importance of the Aberdeen area in supporting the transition to a low carbon future. It states that planning authorities should direct and shape energy transition through Local Development Plans. We consider that Aberdeenshire's forthcoming LDP should reflect the need across the City and Shire region to adapt to a greener future by offering clear support for Solar PV renewable energy that can be delivered in locations across the Shire.

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
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The Legal Basis for collecting the information is:

Personal Data	
Legal Obligations	X

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.

