

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
31st July 2020**Response to the Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan 2020.**

Dear Sir / Madam,

I object to the newly allocated site OP1, North of Forbes Park, Echt, and request that it be removed from the LDP, for the following reasons:

1. There is currently a “desire line for walkers” through this field which would be lost should this site be included in the LDP. Families enjoy this footpath daily and it was used extensively during lockdown. It would be a loss to our village to lose this field and this path.

Developing this field would reduce the existing community's access to local green space. There is a huge amount of literature demonstrating how important it is to retain
this: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0882596317301859>

2. The proposal is not in line with the “linear pattern of local settlements”.

Historically the housing in Echt is built either side of the main road and around the crossroads. This proposed site is taking the development in Echt further away from this linear pattern.

3. Flood risk.

This field is subject to regular flooding which extends beyond the designated protected land P2. Our own garden on Forbes Park is frequently waterlogged and our neighbours in Forbes Close have experienced flooding of their garage. OP1 should not be deemed suitable for development.

OP1, Echt is well known by those of us who live here to flood dramatically. We see it from our kitchen windows. We even enjoyed watching some boys kayaking there last autumn. The proposed LDP has an area marked as protected land P2 to the northeast of the site which is said to be at risk of flooding. “This area should be enhanced and include a buffer strip to ensure the risk of flooding is minimised”. In reality, a much larger area is prone to flooding and the entire field is often waterlogged. I am concerned, not just that you are proposing to build homes on such an area so prone to flooding, but also the impact this will have on our existing homes and gardens that back onto OP1. This site OP1 should not be identified as a site suitable for development.

Attached are photographs of the flooding 19th October 2019 demonstrating the true extent of the flooding that occurs here. (Taken by [REDACTED] and used with permission.)



4. Issues with parking / dependence on cars for transport.

As we are all aware, Echt has an extremely limited bus service which results in dependence on the family car. Development here will increase private car travel whereas new developments should be situated near good transport links. With current concerns regarding climate change, we should not be breeding this reliance on the private car. Most families in Echt possess at least 2 cars. 25 new homes therefore equate to at least 50 more cars in Echt village.

We already have **issues with parking** in Echt. The Settlement Statement for Echt acknowledges that *“Car parking provision required to support these facilities is an issue for the local community, particularly at peak times.”* Cars are frequently parked on pavements which is unsafe for local children. The proposal to use Forbes Park as an access point for connectivity to OP1 will result in the loss of **2 well used visitor parking spaces**. Development of OP1 will result in an increased demand for visitor parking in the village, but we note that no bid has been received that intends to provide a car park for the village.

The proposed access to OP1 through Forbes Park and Forbes Way for work vehicles and then increased traffic poses **a real danger to our children** who ride their bikes and scooters here.

(As residents of Forbes Park, we have been paying maintenance costs for the grassed area adjacent to the visitor parking spaces beside house number 12.)

5. Lack of Infrastructure.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, Scottish Water have reported that the Echt Wastewater Treatment Works is operating near or at capacity. I note that Lyne of Skene is excluded from the proposed LDP. The council poster regarding Lyne of Skene states, *“Significant further development could not be accommodated without improvements being made to sewerage provision”*. It would appear that the same constraints exist for Echt, and therefore Echt should also be excluded.

6. Piecemeal development of Echt village.

I am concerned about the cumulative impact of the piecemeal development of Echt village by 3 phases resulting in creeping expansion of housing in this rural area. Under the 2012 LDP, in Phase 1 of Kirkwood Homes development, 30 homes were built. In Phase 2, a further 28 homes were built. Now under a different LDP a further 25 new homes are proposed on site OP1. This is a total of 83 new houses in this

once tiny village. This is massive expansion which I suspect would not have been permitted had it all been proposed in one LDP. It is therefore inappropriate to allow this expansion via 2 separate LDPs. The full picture of a development such as that in Echt should have been declared all together and not submitted in sequential applications. When considered as a whole, the total development since 2012 is enormous for this once small village.

7. The children of Echt object to further development here.

My son, [REDACTED], has surveyed 20 other school aged children who live in the Forbes Park development. 100% said they do not want OP1, Echt to be developed and request that it be removed from the proposed LDP. He has submitted a joint letter from these children along with his representation outlining their reasons. We should listen to their views as they are the future of this village and will live with the consequences of these decisions longer than we will.

8. Development of this field will result in the loss of a valuable ecological habitat.

My son conducted an Ecological Survey of this field and our back garden which directly joins OP1, Echt. The results are attached to his letter. In short he identified 219 species, 38 of which are endangered or vulnerable and in need of conservation efforts. This field is unique from the other fields locally in that it is unfarmed and not used for grazing animals. This has allowed vegetation and animal species to flourish here. We have a responsibility to protect these species for our own survival as well as theirs. This field has significant biodiversity interest. Developing this field appears to be contrary to the National Planning Framework 3 (2014)'s objective that Scotland should be a natural, resilient place where 'natural and cultural assets are respected'. The NPF4 (which is still under development) has a goal of 'Securing positive effects for biodiversity'.

I therefore object to the newly allocated site OP1: North of Forbes Park, Echt, and request that it be removed from the Aberdeenshire LDP.

I am also concerned by the proposed 10-year period of time that this LDP will cover. Much can change in 10 years and decisions taken 10 years prior may not still be valid. A five-year time period would seem more appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Jack