



31st July 2020

Director of Planning
Aberdeenshire Council
Local Development Plan Team
Woodhill House
Ashgrove Road West
Aberdeen

Dear Sirs

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020

We write to formally object to the proposal contained within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 to change the zoning of Harlaw Park Football Ground from its current mixed use zoning contained with the current 2017 Local Development Plan to P19 'to protect the football pitches and grounds'. This change was introduced at the final committee stage of the draft plan and done without the knowledge or consultation with the Club or their supporters.

CALA Homes have been main sponsor of Inverurie Loco Works Football Club for the last four years and as a direct result of the work we have experienced them carrying out in the local community, the support it gives to local groups, charities and support it provides for the local economy this sponsorship has been extended for a further 5 years. The rezoning of the ground as proposed would not only have a negative impact on the clubs ambitions to improve their facilities but also adversely affect the contributions they can continue to make to the local community and therefore considered an unnecessary change.

The removal of the existing zoning will make it difficult for the club to raise any borrowings through traditional sources as the change would significantly reduce the value of the asset the club would be borrowing against. The Club is ambitious and at the forefront of many initiatives in the Highland League and Local Community and has detailed plans to enhance the current facilities at Harlaw Park which would not comply with the wording of the proposed zoning and at the same time the revised zoning would reduce the ability to achieve funding.

The current zoning of the site for mixed use development is considered appropriate for a site which lies adjacent to the defined town centre and has in the recent past been the subject of positive advanced discussions with the Council for its redevelopment for commercial purposes. Even with the mixed use zoning in place the facility has protection from Sports Scotland who require the replacement of facilities lost with equivalent or better facilities in a suitable location. This was achieved in the previous proposal and is understood by the Club as an acceptable position should the facilities be redeveloped no further protection is required.

The Open Space Audit used as justification for the change of position was not available to the Club, public nor Councillors when arriving at the decision to change the grounds zoning. When made available, the Audit referred to is merely a limited update from the 2010 Audit and continues to confirm that 'Inverurie is well provided with sports area relative to other types of open space and the average proportion for the Shire (13%)'. No indication of a shortage of sports areas in Inverurie is given, nor any shortage of open space in the area surrounding the Town Centre.

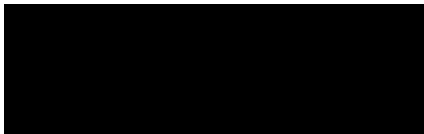
Policy PR1.6 related to open space would suggest that any development at Harlaw Park would only be exceptional circumstances and would be for the development of essential community infrastructure. This wording would significantly impact on the potential improvements of the existing facilities or development of any part of Harlaw Park for the future benefit of the Club or community. We believe the words exceptional and essential community infrastructure should be removed from the wording in relation to open space. PR1.6 also refers to important areas of open space. Harlaw Park is surrounded by a fence, surrounded on two sites by business and industrial premises and by two busy roads, and is not an 'open space'.

Policy 3.1. Infill developments within settlements allow for sites which can contribute to housing and employment land requirements. Given the site is adjacent to Town Centre, existing residential and employment uses, it would be more appropriate to retain the existing zoning or white land to fulfil the objective of this policy.

A recent 2016 independent Economic Impact Assessment identifies that 85% of respondents confirmed ILWFC had a positive impact on their business with 61% indicating this to be the case on match days with 47% experiencing an increase in footfall with match day upturn across the season giving a potential £500,000 boost to the local economy.

Any change to the zoning which puts this at risk must be resisted and for the reasons above given is considered unnecessary and we would request the current zoning is retained.

Yours sincerely

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Managing Director