

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 17 July 2020.

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



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.

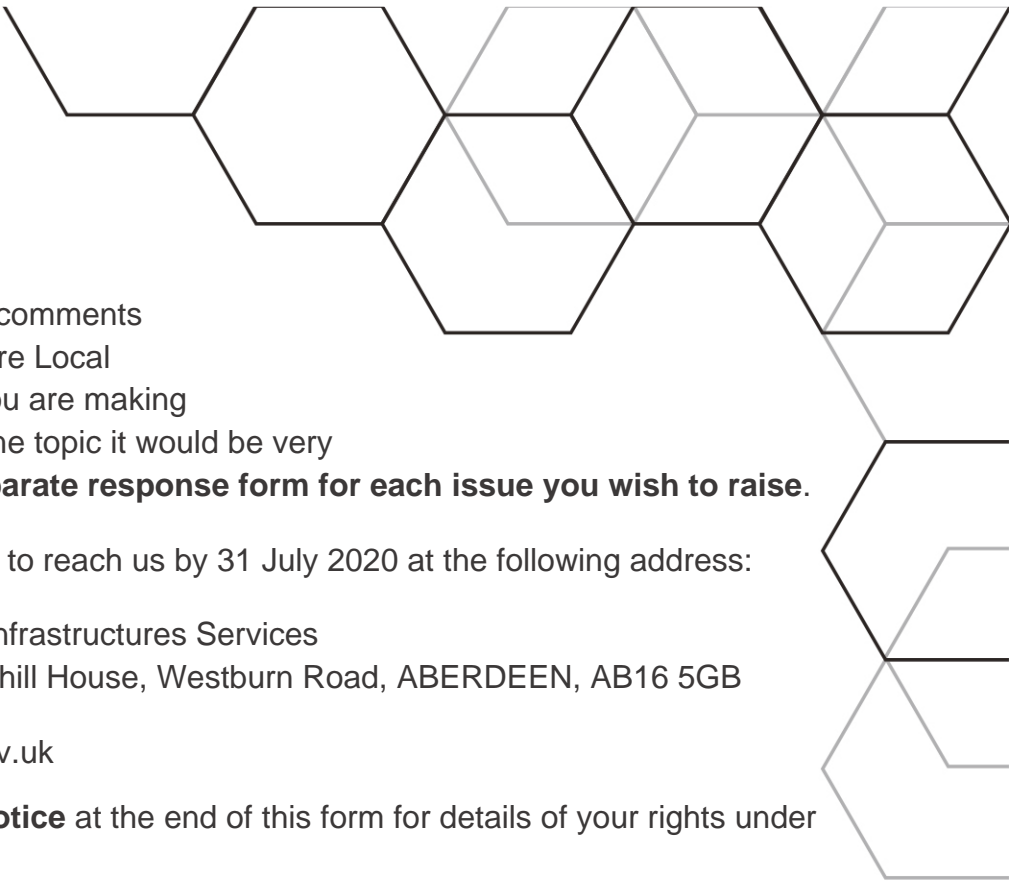
Jeśli potrzebowali będą Państwo informacji z niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, pisanych dużą czcionką, w wersji łatwej do czytania, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w brytyjskim języku migowym, proszę o telefoniczny kontakt na numer 01467 536230.

Ja jums nepieciešama šai dokumentā sniegtā informācija kādā citā valodā vai lielā drukā, viegli lasāmā tekstā, Braila rakstā vai BSL (britu zīmju valodā), lūdzu, zvaniem 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
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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 17 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:	Michael
Surname:	Westwater
Date:	31 July 2020
Postal Address:	████████████████████
Postcode:	██████
Telephone Number:	██████████
Email:	████████████████

Are you happy to receive future correspondence only by email? Yes No

Are you responding on behalf of another person? Yes No

If yes who are you representing? BARRATT NORTH SCOTLAND

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):

1. Include additional housing land allocations, including Mill of Forest in Stonehaven - KN120, KN121 or KN122, in the following sections of the plan:
 - Section 8 – Shaping Homes and Housing
 - Section 5 - The Spatial Strategy - Paragraph 5.13 - Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area
 - Appendix 6 – Housing Land Allocations (page 172)
 - Appendix 7E (Settlement Statements Kincardine and Mearns) Stonehaven (pages 744-756)

Reason for change:

We have prepared a separate report “ABERDEENSHIRE PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 - RESPONSE TO PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - Housing Land and the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area Review” setting out in more detail the proposed modifications to the PLDP including the reasons for these.

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:

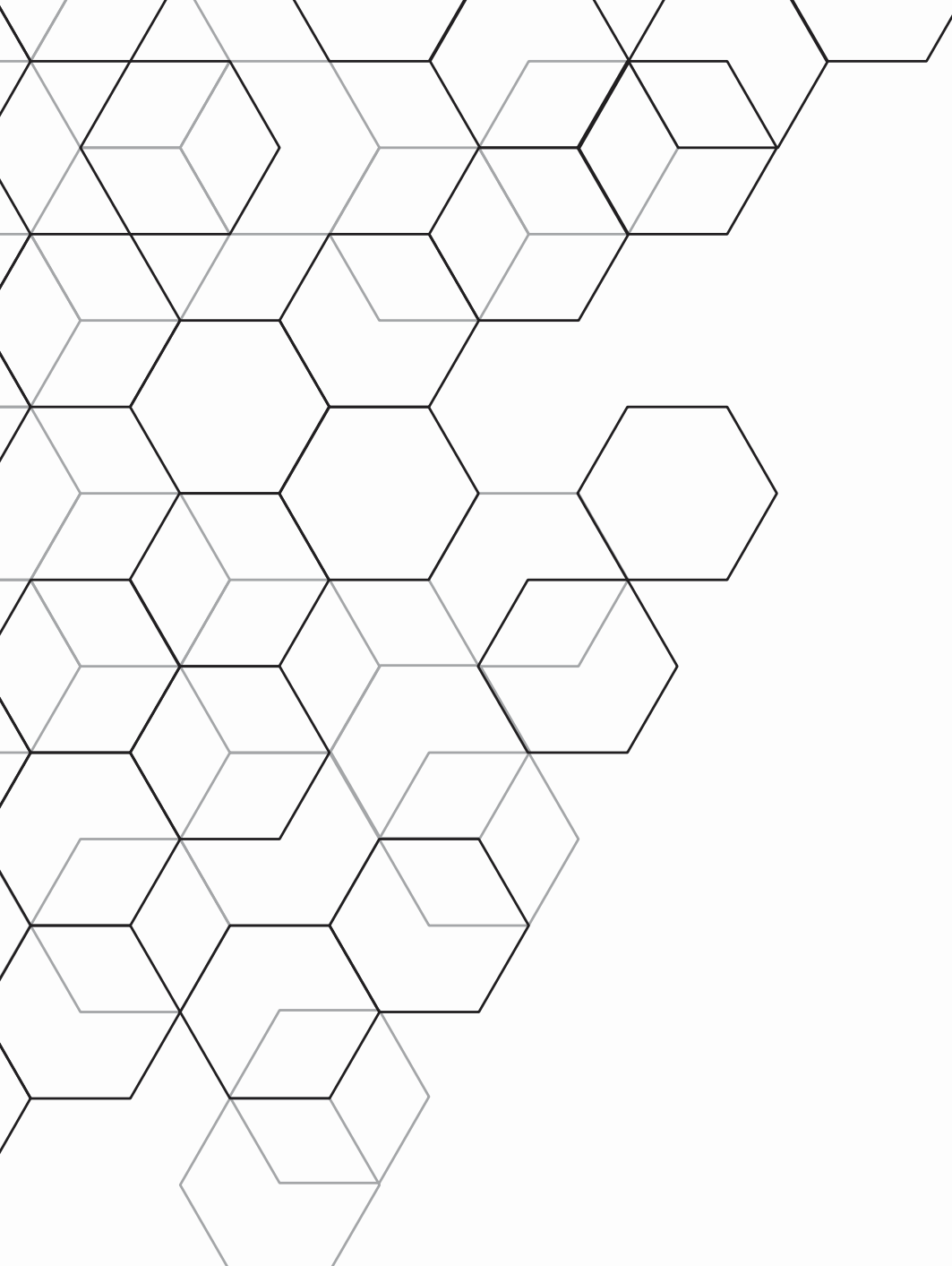
Aberdeenshire Council will only keep your personal data for as long as is needed. Aberdeenshire Council will retain your response and personal data for a retention period of 5 years from the date upon which it was collected. After 5 years Aberdeenshire Council will review whether it is necessary to continue 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.





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ABERDEENSHIRE PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Housing Land and the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area Review

JULY 2020

On behalf of
BARRATT NORTH SCOTLAND



HALLIDAY FRASER MUNRO
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS & PLANNING CONSULTANTS



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1. Introduction
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3. Housing Land Strategy and the Strategic Growth Corridor
4. Conclusions



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Halliday Fraser Munro, Chartered Architects and Town Planning Consultants, on behalf of Barratt North Scotland. It is written in response to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020.
- 1.2. This representation uses evidence to identify problems in relation to the Council's proposed housing land strategy and concerns about housing delivery within the southern strategic growth area (Aberdeen to Laurencekirk). This representation is also relevant to separate representations made by Barratt North Scotland in relation to land at Mill of Forest in Stonehaven (KN120, KN121 and KN122). This submission seeks to modify the plan to allow for additional housing land release to support growth and meet strategic housing requirements. This is outlined below for clarity.
- 1.3 **Barratt North Scotland, as members of Homes for Scotland, will be also be adopting their more detailed review of housing land supply. This response should therefore be seen as complementary to the HfS response.**

2. Modifications sought:

Include additional housing land allocations, including Mill of Forest in Stonehaven - KN120, KN121 or KN122, to specifically address the 939 dwellings from the SDP are not apportioned within the plan, to compensate for historic under-delivery of existing housing sites and to ensure that realistic densities can be applied on a site by site basis. We believe that the following sections of the plan require to be modified on this basis:

- Section 8 – Shaping Homes and Housing
- Section 5 - The Spatial Strategy - Paragraph 5.13 - Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area
- Appendix 6 – Housing Land Allocations (page 172)
- Appendix 7E (Settlement Statements Kincardine and Mearns) Stonehaven (pages 744-756)

Reasons for change: Barratt North Scotland contend that Aberdeenshire Council are not allocating a sufficient amount or range of sites to meet its housing requirements. The proposed LDP spatial strategy relies heavily on large, existing allocated sites that are not delivering at the rate proposed when the allocations were made, or at all; plus, only limited small-scale allocations across the area. This raises serious concerns on the range and scale of housing that can be delivered, the practicality of delivering significantly increased densities on certain sites, and the relationship between that strategy, the SDP and SPP on delivering more housing more effectively. There is clear developer industry concern that the Plan as proposed does not provide a sharp focus on delivery and will not improve housing delivery across Aberdeenshire. We expand on these reasons in the remainder of this report.

3. Housing Land Strategy and the Strategic Growth Corridor

- 3.1 A review of housing trends across the last five HLAs in Aberdeenshire identified evidence of:
 - Housing delivery on currently allocated sites falling below HLA predictions;
 - Over-optimism on housing delivery that becomes less accurate the further in the future it predicts; and



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- A need for a greater supply and range of housing allocations to supplement existing allocated sites and help deliver more housing over the life of the Plan.
- 3.2 The PLDP housing strategy is not fully aligned with the new Strategic Development Plan's ambitions or requirements. The 939-unit increase required by the SDP Examination outcomes should be adopted and additional land allocated to meet that specific requirement; increasing densities on existing sites where not requested by the promoter as a result of a site-specific assessment does not increase delivery rates, but instead adds to the length of time a site is under construction, if that density can be accommodated at all.
- 3.3 Reviewing the Council's series of agreed HLAs identifies that the site programming year on year has failed to reflect the delivery on the ground in the SGA since sites were allocated in 2012. This has resulted in a significant shortfall in delivery which isn't meeting local housing need. The HLA information also usefully points out the average housing delivery rate in the Aberdeenshire AHMA of 522 units/annum between 2017 and 2019. This is the period since the adoption of the 2017 LDP. Looking further back to the 2015 HLA suggests a slightly higher delivery rate of 582 units/annum. The 2019 HLA includes some ambitious anticipated delivery rates including around 1,000 each in years 2022/2023. If the actual delivery rates from the last 5 and 3 year's HLAs respectively are applied to the anticipated future housing delivery then, by 2025, this part of the AHMA could be between 1,400 and 1,700 houses short.
- 3.4 To help illustrate this we have reviewed a sample of the larger sites in four key settlements that were allocated originally within the 2012 Local Development Plan and have rolled forward into the Adopted 2017 LDP and most recently the PLDP as allocations:

- **Newtonhill – 70 units** (2012/2017/2021 (121 units) (HLA ref: K/NH/H/018))

Proposed Plan site OP1 was originally allocated in 2012 to deliver 70 units over two LDP phases, this allocation was carried over into 2017 and is proposed for 121 units. The 2013 HLA programmed delivery of the first 50 units by 2016 (the end of the first LDP period), none were delivered by Jan 2019 according to the schedule [PAGE REF] of the PLDP, **a shortfall of 70 units from the anticipated delivery between allocation and Jan 2019.**

To note: Planning permission for 121 units was granted on appeal in 2019 and development commenced in early 2020.

- **Chapelton (Elsick) - 4045 units** (allocation 2012/2017/2021).

The 2013 HLA programmed delivery of 75 units by 2015 and increasing to 200 per annum in later years. At the projected rate there should have been 1,000 units built by Jan 2019. Appendix 6 records that 164 units were built by Jan 2019 – **a shortfall of 836 units from the anticipated delivery between allocation and Jan 2019.**

*To note – According to the 2020 Draft Housing Land Audit during 2019 Chapelton delivered 106 units however it should be noted that 94 of these were part of a retirement living block and were market restricted to qualifying purchasers only and is unlikely to be repeated annually. However, by this point there should also have been a further year of completions (1,200 completions since commencement), which **would increase the shortfall to 934 units.***

- **Stonehaven (New Mains of Ury (2 sites))** – 130 and 75 (205 units total) (allocation 2012/2017/2021)

OP2 (formally H2) has permission for an increased capacity of 205 units since the original 2012 allocation with OP3 (formally H3) decreasing in capacity to 25 units, meaning the delivery shortfall will be around 159 units. The 2013 HLA programmed delivery of 75 units by 2017 at this rate there



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should have been 130 units built by Jan 2019. Appendix 6 records that 71 units were built by Jan 2019 – **a shortfall of 134 units from the anticipated delivery between allocation and Jan 2019.**

To note – additional housing land allocations have been included in the PLDP to supplement the development at New Mains of Ury further.

- **Laurencekirk (North Laurencekirk) - 885 units** - (allocation 2012/2017/2021)

The 2013 HLA programmed delivery of 15 units per annum from 2015 at this rate should have delivered at least 75 homes by Jan 2019. Appendix 6 records that no units were built by Jan 2019 resulting in **a shortfall of 75 units.** There is no indication that development is likely to commence anytime in the near future and the shortfall in anticipated output is likely to continue for a number of years.

To note – the PLDP has reduced and split the allocation over two sites (OP1 and OP3). The proposed number of units on OP1 is 310 units and OP3 is 247 units. The latest 2019 HLA projects that housing is unlikely to be delivered until at least 2022 where an average of only 25 units per annum is anticipated.

- 3.5 This highlights a systemic failure for the current LDP allocations is the SGA to deliver the housing programmed, thereby severely restricting the supply in that corridor. The evidence above demonstrates that on just the five sites analysed there is a shortfall of **over 1,100 anticipated units** that have not been delivered in the corridor. This has pervaded over two LDPs now and has now become an established pattern. The Proposed LDP provides no change to the spatial strategy which will improve this position. It is therefore imperative that additional sites are allocated in the corridor to assist the delivery of the Housing Land Requirement and ensure that there is an adequate supply land and range of sites coming forward for households in this SGA.
- 3.6 The most recent Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) estimated that affordable housing need across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire is likely to be in excess of 48% of all need. This was also noted in the Main Issues Report (MIR). The Council's strategy places a heavy reliance on an average 25% of housing being delivered on allocated sites to be affordable. The largest allocation within the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA at Chapelton is only providing a total of 13% affordable housing across the approved site area. Furthermore, under the terms of the planning consent no affordable housing is required within phase 1 of development, and only 10% is to be delivered in phase 2.
- 3.7 The Council should therefore allocate additional housing sites to make up that expected shortfall in the SAGA and address the lack of affordable housing delivery in the short term and also provide a strategic reserve housing land with a draw-down mechanism as a backstop where there is evidence of under-delivery. Officers supported the inclusions of strategic reserve sites at the MIR stage of the Plan.
- 3.8 There is also clear evidence of sites under-delivering over a long period and related to that an over-reliance on existing large strategic sites as the main housing delivery mechanism. By not allocating a wider range of sites the PLDP does not fulfil national or local planning requirements. Allocating more and delivering more houses would:
- meet housing requirements,
 - deliver more affordable homes,
 - meet the housing needs of a wider range of households
 - contribute to the economy and economic recovery.



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- 3.9 Paragraph 4.10 of Aberdeenshire's PLDP Committee Report (dated 5th March 2020) supports that approach stating, "The overprovision of housing land as proposed is considered to be acceptable as it builds in flexibility, particularly in the Rural Housing Market Area, as well as continuing to promote Aberdeenshire as an area open for business".
- 3.10 Officers took a different approach to housing strategy at the MIR stages which involved a setting greater housing land allocation in relation to SDP requirements than presently the case. That was considered a valid approach and remains so. SDP requirements have since increased but housing land supply has decreased. That isn't a valid approach and will lead to an under supply of housing land over time. When sites were removed during the MIR process the minimum required should be that these are replaced by more suitable sites.
- 3.11 On the back of this paper we suggest that:
- The SDP increased requirement of 939 homes should be accounted for in additional allocations;
 - The evidence from HLAs suggest that additional housing land should be allocated to make up for a predicted shortfall in housing delivery – possibly up to 1,700 homes over the plan's first 5 years. This could be in the form of additional allocations which can deliver housing in the short term, but incorporate future phases; and
 - The equivalent quantum of the sites removed from the MIR stages (min. 400 units) be replaced with new allocations.
- 3.12 Barratt North Scotland consider that the approach proposed by the Council to increase densities across allocated and new sites from an average of 22 units to 25 units per hectare is unrealistic and creates an artificially inflated housing land supply. The majority of development bids for allocations within the proposed plan were based on detailed consideration of their sites, recognising context and constraints and, in some cases, provided indicative layouts that took all of these into account. Increasing densities on many of those sites beyond what was proposed is unlikely to be achievable. The actual development capacity is likely to be significantly less. To demonstrate this, we have carried out an assessment of those sites within the Laurencekirk – Stonehaven Strategic Growth Area that have received permissions for increased housing units and are allocated within the plan.

Newtonhill

- OP1 Park Place – 121 units across 7.3 hectares providing a gross density of 17 units per hectare.

Portlethen

- OP1 – Schoolhill – 176 units across 8.21 hectares providing a gross density of 21 units per hectare.

Stonehaven

- OP1 – Carron Den – 155 units across 7.36 hectares providing a gross density of 21 units per hectare.
- OP2 - Ury House, East Lodge – 212 units across 12.267 hectares providing a gross density of 17 units per hectare.
- OP3 - Ury House, Blue Lodge – 99 units across 15 hectares providing a gross density of 6.6 units per hectare.

- 3.13 The above analysis identifies that gross densities are highly variable across the area but are consistently below 22 units per hectare on average. This demonstrates that local site



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circumstances will determine site numbers but a generic assumption of 25 units per hectare as being achievable on every site is unrealistic and presents an artificially inflated housing supply figure which overstates the potential delivery.

- 3.14 This is particularly the case in the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area where the concentration of housing supply is around the new settlement at Chapelton with a limited range of sites in Stonehaven and in Laurencekirk. We have reviewed the allocations within this area utilising information from the Council's published Housing Land Audits over the last 5 years. This assessment confirms that the existing allocations in these areas have failed to deliver year on year based upon the housing delivery projections, resulting in a shortfall of new housing being delivered across the 2017 LDP period as is set out in paragraph 3.4 of this report. Sites in Stonehaven have demonstrated a higher degree of reliability than others and reinforces the importance of focussing development on key market towns where there is existing services and infrastructure.
- 3.15 The Council acknowledges within the proposed plan that "the existing and substantial allocations at Laurencekirk have been slower to come forward than anticipated." The reality being that even with the proposed delivery of the grade separated southern junction there remain serious questions regarding the potential delivery rate of sites within the settlement. Sites in Laurencekirk are collectively expected to deliver over 900 homes or approximately 15% of the total growth area requirement.
- 3.16 As identified in paragraph 3.4 of this report, the rate of growth in Chapelton has been slow, with an average delivery rate of only 54 units per annum being delivered over last 5 years (which includes 94 market restricted retirement apartments. What also concerning is that Chapelton makes up more than two thirds of the total housing land available in the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area and has yet to deliver any affordable housing. Despite this the Council maintain the stance that restricting significant new development land elsewhere in the corridor is necessary to prevent delivery of the new settlement from being constrained (Page 19 Paragraph 5.13 of the PLDP).
- 3.17 Despite being the largest town within the strategic growth area, Stonehaven's only significant land allocations are at Ury Estate and are linked to the restoration of Ury House in the north of the town. Delivery of this has not progressed at a pace required to meet housing demand within the town as is evidenced in HLAs dating back to 2015. Following the completion of Carron Den and Kirkton of Feterresso early in the LDP lifetime the allocations at Ury Estate will represent the only allocated housing area for Stonehaven.
- 3.18 At Portlethen the Council has allocated land for 176 units. Another site at Portlethen was removed by Councillors as the proposed local development plan made its way through the Council's Committees, reducing land available by at least 300 units in the AHMA and therefore further exacerbating the housing land shortage.
- 3.19 The next largest allocation, OP1 Newtonhill is being delivered by Barratt and will deliver 121 new homes. Development recently commenced and is programmed to deliver around 35 units per annum including both private and affordable from 2021, completing in 2024, which will make a positive contribution to the growth corridor within the first LDP period. However, its scale will not deliver the additional housing that will be needed to meet housing land requirements in a strategic context. Nor will the remaining site allocations located in smaller settlements within the growth corridor deliver at a scale where they will make any significant contribution to addressing the housing delivery shortfall and these are located within smaller settlements.



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4. Conclusions

- 4.1 SDP para 3.8 states that “the Strategic Growth Areas will be the main focus for development in the area up to 2040. Over this period, we expect that at least 75% of all homes built and employment land developed will be in the Strategic Growth Areas.” The Aberdeen – Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area and its allocations are expected to be the main delivery mechanism for both private and affordable housing in southern Aberdeenshire. The Council’s Housing Land Audits however show that Chapelton, the area’s main housing allocation, and sites in Laurencekirk, Newtonhill and Stonehaven are not delivering at a pace required to meet housing land requirements for the area or deliver the necessary affordable housing. Barratt North Scotland also consider that the approach proposed by the Council to increase densities across allocated and new sites from an average of 22 units to 25 units per hectare is unrealistic and creates an artificially inflated housing land supply and should not be used as a justification to prevent additional sites from being allocated within the plan. We believe that the contributing factors of; the ineffectiveness of current allocations; significantly slower rates of delivery; increased housing requirement as set out following the SDP examination; and, the removal of sites by Councillors at Committee justifies additional housing land release within the SGA.
- 4.2 As the largest town within the strategic growth area, additional development options should be allocated in Stonehaven, providing a reasonable and realistic prospect for new housing sites to serve current or future housing needs in the area. Locating development in Stonehaven is fully in line with the LDP and SDP strategies of sustainable development in the right place with access to sustainable travel options. Stonehaven is one of the few locations where access to the rail network (north and south) is available but it also has very good bus access and local employment opportunities. It is important that Stonehaven is enhanced throughout the Plan period and it has a strong demand for development. As such, it plays an important role in delivering strategic housing allowances.
- 4.3 The PLDP should therefore be modified to provide additional housing land allocations, including Mill of Forest in Stonehaven - KN120, KN121 or KN122, to specifically address the 939 dwellings from the SDP are not apportioned within the plan, to compensate for historic under-delivery of existing housing sites and to ensure that realistic densities can be applied on a site by site basis.