



Aberdeen Local Development Plan Review

Pre- Main Issues Report Questionnaire 2018

Aberdeen City Council is currently in the early stages of reviewing the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017(ALDP). The 2018 Development Plan Scheme provides a timetable for the review of the ALDP and the opportunities to participate throughout the process.

It is available to view online at: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan

This questionnaire forms part of the pre-Main Issues Report consultation activities we are undertaking. It is designed to gather views on the main planning issues in Aberdeen to be considered by the next ALDP.

Using your Personal Information

Information you supply to Aberdeen City Council (ACC) in this questionnaire will be used to prepare the Local Development Plan. ACC will not share the personal information provided in this questionnaire with other parties or organisations. ACC will not disclose any contact information about you to any organisation or person unless it is authorised or required to do so by law.

The Local Development Plan team may use your contact details to contact you about the comments you have made. Your name and organisation may be published alongside your comments but contact details will not be made public. If you chose not to provide a name or contact details, your comments will still be valid but we will not be able to contact you in the future.

For further information on how your information is used, how ACC maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information ACC holds about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg, Team Leader, Local Development Plan Team, Strategic Place Planning, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4 Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB.

A separate form for submitting development sites for consideration can be found on our website at: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan

**Our consultation runs from the 19th March to the 8th of May 2018.
Please note the deadline has been extended to Monday 28th May 2018.**



1. YOUR DETAILS

1.1 Please let us know the capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire. Are you...

- A member of the public
- A community representative e.g Community Council

If yes, which area do you represent?

- A developer/ their agent
- A landowner/ their agent
- From a Key Agency
- Other

1.2 Please provide your name and contact details:

Name and Organisation:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

1.3 If you are acting as an agent or completing this on behalf of an organisation, group or landowner, please provide their details:

Organisation/group/landowner:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

2. ABERDEEN'S MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

Feel free to continue on separate sheets if necessary and attach to the questionnaire. You do not have to answer every question.

Vision

2.1 What do you think are the most important things that make Aberdeen a good place to live, visit and/or work?

2.2 What do you think should be the Council's top priorities for the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan?

see attached supporting letter.

2.3 Do you have any particular aspirations for your community or Aberdeen as a whole that you think should be taken forward through the ALDP? For example, what are your views on recycling of waste, affordable housing, access to green space or ways to reduce CO₂ emissions?

Policy Topic Areas

What do you think should be our main planning priorities for...

- 2.4** ...the City Centre? (For example, what should the role of Union Street be? Does the City Centre have all the uses we want, or should there be more uses there - and if so where could they go?)

see attached supporting letter.

- 2.5** ...providing infrastructure? (For example, how should new infrastructure be provided and how might it be paid for?)

- 2.6** ...transport and accessibility? (For example, how can we make it easier to travel in and around Aberdeen? Should we look at pedestrianisation in the City Centre?)

- 2.7** ...ensuring we have high quality buildings and places? (For example, how can we better protect our built heritage and ensure high quality and sympathetic architecture and landscape design?)

- 2.8** ...meeting the needs of business and industry? (For example, what can be done to retain existing businesses and attract new employment opportunities to Aberdeen?)

- 2.9** ...meeting Aberdeen's housing and community needs? (For example, how can we meet the needs of people who cannot afford mainstream housing?)

2.10 ...supporting retail centres across Aberdeen? (For example, should we be safeguarding existing centres, and what are your thoughts on new out-of-town retail parks?)

see attached supporting letter.

2.12 ...ensuring that resources and waste are managed sustainably? (For example, can we make more innovative use of waste as a resource? Should we encourage renewable energy use? How could we do these things?)

2.11 ...protecting and enhancing the natural environment and preventing flooding? (For example, what areas or features should we be safeguarding?)

2.13 If you have any views on topics not covered above, please write them below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return completed questionnaires to:

Local Development Plan Team

Strategic Place Planning
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 4
Ground Floor North
Marischal College
Broad Street
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Twitter: [@AberdeenLDP](https://twitter.com/AberdeenLDP)

You can also visit the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Facebook page.

COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES SHOULD BE WITH US BY NO LATER THAN 28 MAY 2018.

If you wish to be added to the LDP E-Mailing list to be kept informed of our progress in producing the next Local Development Plan, please tick here.

If yes, please provide an email address



Our Ref: N/A
Your Ref: LDP Pre-MIR

28 May 2018

Local Development Plan Team
Strategic Place Planning
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 4
Ground Floor North
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Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

Dear Sir/Madam

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
PRE-MAIN ISSUES REPORT CONSULTATION 2018**

We act on behalf of our client Capreon (UK) Ltd. who is the asset manager for the owners of the Bon Accord shopping centre (previously known as Bon Accord and St Nicholas shopping centres) and 20 smaller properties situated on Schoolhill, Upperkirkgate, George Street and St. Andrews Street in Aberdeen city centre (which we will refer to collectively as Bon Accord).

This representation should be read within the context of the recently published Pre-Main Issues Report (MIR) Questionnaire (2018) which invited comments in preparation of the emerging replacement Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP).

Our response provides commentary on a selection of subject areas, particularly in relation to priorities for Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Centre (questions 2.2, 2.4 and 2.6) and retail planning (question 2.10).

Given the very early stage of the preparation of the LDP and lack of any significant published material from Aberdeen City Council (ACC), our comments remain broad at this stage and we reserve the right to amend and/or expand at the appropriate juncture as the LDP continues to emerge.

Background

Located within the heart of Aberdeen city centre and with an offer of over 85 shops, restaurants and cafés, the Bon Accord shopping centre is one of the largest and most convenient retail and leisure destinations in Aberdeen. The centre has played a key role in the provision of prime retail floorspace

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within the city throughout the last 30 or so years. The owners of the centre intend that this role should continue during the emerging LDP period and are of the view that this is in the best interests of the city and city centre as a whole.

The owners of the Bon Accord are committed to delivering significant investment in Aberdeen city centre and successfully gained planning consent in 2014 (and revised in 2017) to develop an exciting new leisure hub, incorporating a high-end 700-seat cinema, plus additional food, drink and leisure space. The proposals, which will represent a significant financial investment in the city centre, also includes upgrade works to Drums Lane between the shopping centre and Upperkirkgate and will provide improved access, connectivity and interface between the shopping centre and the wider public realm. They are looking to commence approved works in this regard later in 2018.

Furthermore, in 2017 they also achieved planning permission in principle (subject to section 75) for a substantial retail-led mixed-use development around the George Street / Loch Street / Crooked Lane area of the Bon Accord Shopping Centre in Aberdeen city centre. The approved scheme will significantly contribute towards meeting a number of key policy objectives of the current LDP. In particular, those objectives that relate to providing significant new retail and commercial floorspace in the city centre to meet the identified shortfall; improving a key city centre site; and safeguarding the primacy of the city centre as the regional focus for retail and town centre uses.

As well as the key projects detailed above, the owners of the Bon Accord are also investigating means of improving pedestrian linkages between the entrances of the centre which sit either side of at Upperkirkgate / Schoolhill. It is anticipated that such emerging proposals will continue to be progressed through ongoing discussions with ACC throughout 2018.

City Centre and Retail Planning

One of the key objectives of the Aberdeen and Shire Strategic Development Plan is for '*Aberdeen city centre to remain one of the top-20 retail areas in the UK*'. We are of the view that quality and not necessarily quantity is what makes the top retail destinations in the UK stand out from the rest. Whilst retail provision in Aberdeen city centre is strong, the offer is a little fragmented and lacks quality in some areas, particularly on Union Street, and that the shopper experience could be greatly improved.

Shifts in shopping patterns and the subsequent decline in demand for traditional retail floorspace within town/shopping centres have been well documented within the press as of late and has had a significant impact on some traditionally strong retail operators and destinations. E-commerce has transformed the way UK consumers shop over the last 10 years and now accounts for around 14.5% of total retail sales. If growth continues at a similar rate, then online retailing could potentially reach a quarter of all retail sales by around 2025.

In order to fight the threat of e-commerce and the relative convenience of out of town retail parks, a number traditional high streets and associated shopping centres (including Bon Accord and Union Square in Aberdeen; Edinburgh St James, Edinburgh; and, Buchanan Galleries, Glasgow, etc.) have responded by diversifying their offer by looking to provide additional services such as leisure, food & drink, residential units and hotels, as well as improve connectivity and interface between the shopping centre and the wider public realm.

It is essential that investor confidence for the delivery of investment in Aberdeen city centre is maintained. Whilst it might be easier for a developer to deliver development (for example a retail

park) on a greenfield site; the more challenging development proposals, such as those within the city centre, require a greater level of confidence in the certainty of development plan policy in order to deliver them. For example, town centres can require considerable investment to upgrade existing spaces and improve public realms. Such sites are also often within multiple ownership, subject to heritage constraints, or are hindered by servicing and access challenges. These factors can impact on viability, overly complicate and ultimately derail development aspirations, even with the support of local planning authorities. Such issues make the prioritisation of town-centre-first development even more important.

Whilst an updated retail study has not yet been prepared by ACC for comment, at this stage we would strongly advocate that the City Centre should remain the focus for accommodating any identified capacity for additional comparison retail floorspace within the city-region and that the council continues to resist pressure to allocate additional sites outwith the city centre.

Development proposals which generate significant levels of footfall should continue to follow the sequential approach and the primacy of Aberdeen City Centre as the regional centre should continue to be protected. Likewise, proposals which could in any way negatively impact upon the vitality and viability of Aberdeen City Centre as the regional centre should continue to be resisted.

The emerging LDP should prioritise working with relevant stakeholders and owners of city centre development opportunity sites to explore partnerships and funding mechanisms (such as a Growth Accelerator Model) which could help to bring forward development proposals and assist in the delivery of LDP objectives to improve quality and diversity and enhance the vitality and retail attractiveness of the city centre.

Furthermore, proposals which would contribute to delivering the aims and objectives of the City Centre Masterplan should continue to be supported. Projects such as the Bon Accord Centre (CM07), St Nicholas Centre (CM09) and reinstating the central role and enhancing the attractiveness and connectivity of Union Street, as well as improvements to St. Nicholas Street and Market Street are essential for the future of Aberdeen city centre as a destination and should therefore remain as some of the key priorities for the city centre.

We trust that these comments will be taken into consideration when preparing the MIR. We look forward to your early acknowledgement of receipt of these as formally validated representations on the LDP on behalf of Capreon.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of these representations then please contact GVA.

Yours sincerely



Chris Miller MRTPI
Associate



For and on behalf of GVA Grimley Limited