**Banchory Community Council (BCC)**

**Response to Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Development Local Plan**

The general view in the community is that Banchory has been allowed to expand at too great a rate in the last few decades, and that the necessary infrastructure to support this growth has not been provided. Banchory Community Council (BCC) is not against development per se, but agrees with the community that this should be limited in amount, should consider the huge increase in population that has taken place, and should fit into the environment without damaging ecologically important areas which have significance in their own right and help to make the town a pleasant place to live.

BCC wishes to make the following comments:

**Protected Land**

BCC would

* wish all areas of Protected land to remain so but would ask if P7 could be linked to P9 so adding a protective buffer before the development of OP2.
* stress the importance of the River Dee Local Nature Conservation site (LNCS) and the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Loch of Leys and other woodland areas withig the town.

**Allocated Sites i.e. development in principle already agreed.**

OP1 East Banchory /Eco Village (linked to MR075)

BCC is supportive of the Eco Village concept, but believes the community would consider it essential that the development should be of high quality in what is a key site at the eastern entry to the town. This means that:

* Houses should be of high quality
* Site design should incorporate features to retain stone dykes
* Quality landscaping is essential at what is a key site at the entry to the town.

BCC is:

* Supportive of all weather pitch
* Against any increase in the number of houses already agreed (30)

OP2 (345 homes and 2 hectares of business land) Lochside of Leys

Building on this site is already approved but BCC wishes to stress the community’s wish for the principles outlined in the 2015 masterplan to be honoured and in particular that ‘Biodiversity and landscape character must be protected and enhanced as the town expands to the north”. The community is greatly concerned that these principles could be disregarded/weakened. BCC would wish to recommend that:

* The areas of Protected Land designated as P7 and P9 should be extended so that they meet in order to ‘conserve and protect the landscape buffer’ and ‘conserve the area of woodland and amenity as part of the green network’ in the area immediately north of the R3 site along and including the Business 1
* Within the land allocated for housing there should be an emphasis on good quality and soft landscaping
* A core path network to provide access to schools, recreational facilities and other facilities should be provided
* The path network should be upgraded before house building commences
* Trees should not be clear felled but felled in stages as work is due to commence.

OP3 (50 homes)

As with OP2 the community would wish the principles of the 2015 masterplan to be honoured. There should be:

* Quality soft landscaping
* Green buffer zones to allow biodiversity
* A path network providing appropriate access and linkage.

OP4 (15 homes) Hill of Banchory

In addition to the comments made above about the need to ensure landscaping, the community is concerned about the access on to Raemoir Road. There are serious safety concerns at all junctions leading on to this road. BCC has objected to a planning application for this site (App/2018/

**Development Bid Sites – Officers’ Preferences**

MR014 Retail Site (Class 1) Hill of Banchory

This has some support within the town but in its development it would be of high importance that the need to mitigate adverse effects on the Town Centre should be considered as a top priority. The High Street is at present struggling and further competition could weaken its viability further.

MR024 Royal Deeside Visitor Centre Bellfield Carpark

BCC is supportive of this project, especially with regard to its potential to support the High Street and tourism

MR038 (100 homes) Lochside of Leys

BCC is aware of great community concern about the continued expansion of housing and the loss of woodland in the OP2 area. There is a strong feeling among residents in Hill of Banchory that this would be overdevelopment. As this is in effect an extension to OP2, the following factors need to be considered:

* Building houses in this area would reduce biodiversity and wildlife habitat
* Any development must honour the commitment to green buffer zones and soft landscaping
* As with all sites, it would be essential that core paths should link to schools, sports centre, other parts of town and fit into the local community
* The access road should take account of the above and not adversely affect the local environment
* Local schools are at or near capacity
* Concern about possible flooding risk

MR039 (200 homes) Lochside of Leys Reserved i.e. not preferred by Officers for immediate development

Comments as for MR039

MR061 (50 homes) Land at former Glen O’Dee Hospital

BCC would support this development as the site is currently an eyesore and subject to

vandalism. The reduction in the number of homes to 50 is welcome. It has the potential to be a very attractive

site and the community council would stress the importance of:

* retaining some reference to the Old Hospital in the design of the homes
* ensuring that the homes are of very high quality
* tree removal being minimal
* top quality soft landscaping to enable the development to fit into its semi rural setting
* the need to ensure a core path network links the development to the town and its facilities
* greater access by public transport

MR080 Site R4, A93, Banchory Health Care Use

Banchory Community Council would strongly support this.

**Other Options which Planning Officers have not preferred**

MR029 (10 homes) North of the B974, Deebank, Banchory

BCC would agree with the Planning Officers’ recommendation. This site should not be developed.

MR030 Royal Deeside Visitor Centre and Heritage Hub

BCC would agree that with the Planning Officers’ recommendation. This site should not be used for this purpose. It is a sensitive site south of the river next to River Dee Special Area of Conservation etc

MR031 (15 Homes) Land West of Auchattie, Banchory

BCC would agree that this is an inappropriate site for development.

MR033 (10 homes)

BCC would agree that this is an inappropriate site for development

MR040 (50 homes) Land adjacent to the Wood of Arbeadie, Arbeadie Road, Banchory

BCC would agree that this is an inappropriate site for development

MR041 (50 homes) Land adjacent to the Wood of Arbeadie, Arbeadie Road, Banchory

BCC wishes to object to this site being used for housebuilding for the following reasons:

* It does not relate well to the town and would be somewhat isolated
* Development would adversely affect the surrounding woodland and it biodiversity
* Inadequate educational provision

We note it is identified in the Conclusion as a possible Officers’ Preference, but with an amended boundary to exclude the woodland. BCC’s view is that this would risk the important woodland in neighbouring bid sites in future Local Development Plans and building here therefore, should be avoided.

MR053 (100 homes) Land East of Raemoir Garden Centre, Banchory. Currently designated R3

BCC object to a housing development on this site in the strongest possible terms. It must be retained for educational use. We, therefore, agree with the Planning Officers’ recommendations

MR062 (61 Homes) Land at Upper Arbeadie Road, Banchory

BCC would agree that this is an inappropriate site for development

MR062 (50 homes) Land at Hillcroft Road, Banchory

BCC would agree that this is an inappropriate site for development

MR075 See Comment on OP1

MR076 (40 homes) Alexander Park, Glassel

BCC would not support the development of this site and are pleased that this is not likely to happen in the near future. We do, however, have strong reservations about the suggestion that it might be suitable for housing in the future if the sports ground had been relocated. The community would see this as an important site situated as it is at the western gateway to the town and, therefore, as one on which any future development would need to be carefully managed to enhance rather than detract from the entrance to the town. We would strongly support its P1 status being preserved.

MR082 Football Pitch land South West of Drumshalloch Wood, Lochton of Leys

BCC objects to development on this site because:

* It is within the Loch of Leys Nature Conservation site. It is not an Officers’ Preference at this current time but we believe that the community would wish Loch of Leys to be safeguarded for posterity
* Flooding is also an issue

**Additional Options referred to in the Conclusion of the Report**

MR077 Land at Upper Lochton (40 homes) Reserved

BCC would agree that this site might be a possible site for development although its position is somewhat on the edge of the settlement.

**Inchmarlo Developments**

**Existing Development Sites App/2015/2350 (Hotel and 85 houses)**

BCC is concerned that this application is not featured in the maps accompanying the Planning Officers’ text on developments in Inchmarlo. We would ask for it to be included in the final version.

**Development Bid Sites**

MR068 (100 – 150 homes) Land at former Golf Course, west of Glassel Road, Inchmarlo

BCC would agree that this is an inappropriate site for development.

Issues include:

* Would promote increased car dependency
* Adds to pressure on inadequate road network, education facilities
* Adds to urban sprawl and to Banchory and Inchmarlo merging