



Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 4, Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

16 June 2014

Dear Mr. Williamson,

Planning Application 140730: Residential development Comprising 124 units & Associated New and Upgraded Access Roads, Landscaping & Ancillary Engineering Works

I am writing on behalf of the Cults Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council (CBMCC) to raise some concerns that need to be addressed relating to Planning Application 140730 for Planning Permission at the Countesswells site before approval should be granted. These supplement the views we have already submitted regarding the Countesswells Masterplan.

Housing

The quality and design of the proposed affordable housing should be of a high enough standard which would be acceptable to housing associations and encourage them to purchase properties. This has not always been the case.

There does not appear to be any mention of planned opportunities to take advantage of natural energy in the housing design e.g. the installation of solar powered water heaters, use of ground source heat pump arrangements or a central heating ring main. If these ideas are incorporated early on they can be installed at very low cost with significant energy saving potential.

Roads and Transport

The supporting documents for the application do not provide any new information on plans to mitigate disruption on nearby roads during construction. Earlier documents refer to the potential risk of lengthy closure of the Kirk Brae/C189 road due to construction and installation of utilities. This road is a key route for people travelling north to Kingswells, Westhill, the airport and other locations north of Aberdeen and we expect the Aberdeen Council to impose strict limitations on road closures of the C189 until the new link road to the Jessiefield junction is available for use. Road closures should not take place at peak travel times. An obvious way to avoid the risks of road closure is to build the new link road very early in the development. We expect the developer to coordinate activity with utility providers to minimise the amount of disruption.

The proposed route for the road to the Jessiefield junction appears to run through the western end of the remembrance garden at the Aberdeen Crematorium (ref. map page 61 and elsewhere). Given that many families will have spread ashes of loved ones in this area we feel it is inappropriate to route the road through the garden and it should be moved sufficiently west of the garden to minimise noise disturbance in the garden.

We suggest the Aberdeen City Council also reconsider the desirability of routing traffic moving South to North through the middle of the Countesswells development and to look at the value of having the main route running around the edge of the settlement.

We re-iterate our previous comments on the Countesswells Transport Assessment:

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1. Generally very disappointed that the report is not proposing any imaginative solution to the travel needs of this new township. The only travel modes considered are the traditional and available bus and car modes supplemented by a desire to increase the use of bicycles. The latter being available only to the fitter section of the population and much affected by inclement weather conditions.
2. Rather than suggest a forward looking novel means of transporting the new residents to the city and places of work – monorail across Hazlehead? dedicated bus-road? tram? - it is proposed to tinker with the overloaded junctions around the development to squeeze in the expected extra traffic. The report's calculations and its conclusions have failed to convince us that the travel from, to, through and around Countesswells will be without problems even after completion of the AWPR. Some details to illustrate our doubts are as follows:
 - a) The 'committed developments' included in the base traffic loads do not appear to include the major new developments in Friarsfield and Oldfold Farm (see 8.2.3). The additional traffic from these areas has already been shown to overload some of the North Deeside Road junctions and cannot be neglected when evaluating a new town in the immediate vicinity.
 - b) The model used seems overly optimistic. The check on its calibration reported in Appendix J - 1.2.2, table 3, shows that the observed maximum queue lengths are significantly longer than the modelled ones (8 vehicles instead of 1, and 10 vehicles instead of 3 to 4!!). On the basis of this comparison it can not possibly be concluded that the model is valid.
 - c) It is doubted that simple signalling can return the performance of a junction that has been shown to have a Ratio of Flow to Capacity of 125% to acceptable levels – see Appendix J, 1.2.6 and 1.2.7. In previous submissions by Fairhurst it was explained that by agreement with the City a maximum RFC of 90% would be allowed for signalised junctions instead of the normal accepted standard of 85%.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Roberts

Peter Roberts

Planning Liaison Officer

Copy to: Councillor Marie Boulton, Councillor Aileen Malone, Councillor Tauqeer Malik