



Responding to community needs

Park Quarry

Proposed property development – Public Meeting

ABSTRACT

This report provides information on the public meeting conducted by the Crathes, Drumoak & Durris Community Council on the proposed property development of the CHAPS Group. This report outlines the purpose of the meeting, the presentations, the conclusion and the way forward.

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1. Introduction:

On Wednesday 5th August 2015, the CDDCC held a public meeting to engage with local residents and with the CHAP Group concerning the recently re-presented development proposal for Park Quarry (previously Park Eco Village).

The agenda for the meeting was, as follows:

The purpose of this meeting is to invite the public to participate in the following:

19:00hrs	Welcome, introduction rules of engagement – Maxine Smith, Vice Chair
19:05hrs	CDDCC to provide a summary of the previous CHAP Group proposal and why it was rejected and the CDDCC's position on that matter. – David Morrish
19:15hrs	CHAP Group to make a short reiteration of their proposed development with specific reference to material facts to support their decision to re-present the proposal. (15 mins)
19:30hrs	CDDCC lead in with questions – Maxine Smith direct Community Councillors' responses
19:50hrs	Receive all comments, responses from local residents on the proposal and the information made available – Open floor
20:20hrs	Present LCD process and where the current situation – David Morrish
20:30hrs	Questions - Open floor
20:40hrs	Summary and close – Maxine Smith

2. Summary of discussion:

David Morrish – presentation (CDDCC working group)

David prepared a pre-event summary of background information on the proposed development. This was a one-page document, which was issued to local residents, with the formal invitation to attend the public meeting. A copy of the document is provided as **Document A** enclosed.

At the public meeting, David provided two power point presentations, which covered the following:

- Protocol of engaging with the Aberdeenshire Council Planning process
- Process of engaging with the local residents/communities
- Summary of the outcome of the previous development proposal from CHAP Group

David then expanded on the:

- Strategic Development Plan – strategic growth areas
- Local Development Plan
- Summary of enforcement by Aberdeenshire Council of their decisions and the implementation and enforcement of such decisions.

A copy of the document is provided as **Document B.** enclosed.

Reference to a previous community questionnaire was made during David's presentation. **Document C1. & 2.**, enclosed of the questionnaire, a news article extract **Document D.** regarding the community questionnaire, and previous Aberdeenshire Council Planning Consent for Park Quarry

The latter part of David's presentation covered a summary of the milestones and timelines of the strategic plan and the local development plan process and the application advancement of the proposed development.

David summarised by challenging the grounds of the development proposal, based on public stated processes, in particular the material facts supporting the proposed development bid.

3. CHAPS GROUP PRESENTATION

The invitation extended to the CHAP Group was for them to present a case for the re-submission of this development proposal. A summary of the key points presented:

- The proposed development addressing the needs for additional affordable housing in the area. Various statistics were quoted by CHAP Group, which was refuted by members of the public.
- They presented the affordable housing stipulation to be available to key workers i.e. Educators, Health Workers, Emergency Service workers etc. However, no enforceable stipulation on how this could be achieved was noted.
- When challenged about affordable housing properties being acquired and sold on for commercial value, CHAP Group stated there would be an embedded condition within the Property Deeds which would prevent any such eventuality to perpetuity.
- As their motivation for this proposed development, the CHAP Group presented the Park Quarry proposal stating it has key needs within the area for Education, Health, Business and Community provision.
- In the motivation, the CHAP Group planning representative stated irrespective of strategic or local development plans, any developer could, at any time submit a formal development bid such as the one currently proposed.
- One of the key advantages of the proposed development was the land acquisition being already achieved, affording them the flexibility to accommodate a response to a community need for the area.
- CHAP Group Planning Representative stated that the lodging of a planning application for the proposed development will automatically negate and overrule the current obligations of the stated planning conditions.

The Park Quarry presentation is provided via this internet link: [Kincluney Village](#)

4. PUBLIC RESPONSE:

Many questions came from the floor, key common areas of concern noted are:

1. Why CHAP Group had not yet implemented the measures noted from the planning conditions of the Quarry?
2. Road infrastructure
3. Park Bridge
4. Economic business case for the proposed development
5. Justification for such a large residential development outside of the local authority strategic plans.

To capture some of the views, here is an outline of some of the questions presented:

- In view of the present and foreseeable economic climate in the North East of Scotland, particularly Oil & Gas Industry specific to this area what is the material facts to validate the justification and business case of this proposed development in meeting the needs of this community and responding to the needs of the Local Council.
- This proposal appears to be molded to suit the commercial intention of CHAP Group. Previously an Eco Village, now to respond to affordable housing, what next? This is a media spin to wrap a commercially driven enterprise by blinding a community with emotional blackmail of responding to an assumed people need.
- Challenges in various forms queried the sustainability of the Park Bridge infrastructure and the additional traffic on an already over capacitated road network system in the area.
- With a development of this size, the increased traffic flow significantly compounds a range of road safety issues, which presently is a high priority concern within the area.
- Strong concerns were noted from the floor directly questioning how the CHAP Group have managed to negate all responsibilities in applying the phased reinstatement to agricultural land.
- Questions were raised about the proposed facilities within the development for Educational needs, Health needs, Social needs, Leisure needs. What is the specific provision? Will the CHAP Group be paying for these provisions? How will this be sustained? What warranted the need for these provisions in the proposed development? How is this being joined up with surrounding facilities i.e. Banchory, Drumoak & Durris?

- A range of questions and strong opinions came from various residents querying the justification and the practicalities of the affordable housing proposal. What is the logistical building plan i.e. when and where within the site will affordable housing be built. What will anchor them to meet their proposed quota of affordable housing if they do not sell according to plan.

5. Conclusion of the meeting:

The objectives of the public meeting had been achieved by the CDDCC. In doing so, it is felt some highly concerning issues have been raised concerning the following areas:

1. The application, implementation and enforcement of Local Authority processes and procedures.
2. Over-saturation of housing developments in the present and longer term economic climate
3. Clarification on the guidelines that apply for Property Developers to present significant property development outwith pre-agreed spatial strategies and policies.
4. The current status and update from Aberdeenshire Council on the re-instatement to agricultural land / greenfield site of Park Quarry.
5. Silence from Ward Councillors on issues of process regarding enforcement of planning conditions from what was a high profile and contentious property development.

6. The Way Forward:

- A draft letter to Bob Thomson, Planning Enforcement Officer, Aberdeenshire Council presented to all Community Councillors' for approval to dispatch asap.

See **Document E** enclosed.

- A formal call to local residents to submit formal responses on whether they support or do not support the proposed development.
- Clarity from CHAP Group whether they have or are intending to submit a formal application for the proposed development of Park Quarry.

Document A: Park Quarry

The Chap proposal, The Community Council, The Community & the Planners.

Important summary background information:

- Since late 2008, CHAP have proposed building some 1500 houses on the site of the Park Quarry as an alternative to reinstating their quarry to agricultural land, which is believed to be a condition of the original planning consent for their quarrying operation.
- Since 2008, CHAP has spent considerable time and money promoting this idea of a large village instead of honouring the condition of the original planning consent.
- Since 2008, the Community Council's engagement with the community and planning process has naturally also addressed this 'bid' from CHAP. On the basis of local public opinion (which included a widely-distributed public questionnaire), there was overwhelming objection (91% against) to this proposal from the local community, which has been reflected in the Community Council's representations at the various planning milestones. As a result of this and the planning policy team's own strategic view; such a development is not supported by the high level Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan as it is a large development outside the agreed 'Strategic Growth Areas'. As a result, this proposal has not made it into the current or the new Local Development Plan.

In summary, the CHAP proposed housing development idea, has not received support from the local community, has not received support strategically by the Planning Policy Team and is specifically excluded from Local Development Plans, at least to 2020.



Community Council Meeting

Kincluny Village Proposal

5th August, 2015



The CC and Kincluny

- For many years now, certainly over the past 7 years or so, since CHAP first raised the idea of a Park Village, a Park ECO Village or a Kincluny Village, the Community Council has engaged with the planning process in its role as a statutory consultee.
- The CC has sought to be informed about the planning processes, to engage with the 'planners' and the local community and to represent the views of the local community within the planning process and to thereby influence our local development plans
- In this way the CC has attempted to ensure that the spirit of local democracy is upheld and that local voices have their rightful influences on what happens in their community.

The CC and Kincluny

- The CC has sought community views at key planning milestones such as input to Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan, the Main Issues Reports and the Local Development Plans
- This has been achieved through public meetings, input to community newsletters and questionnaires and has resulted in timely representations on behalf of the community
- Where appropriate (as has mostly been the case in the past 7 years) these activities have included the CHAP proposal for the Park Quarry area at Kincluny.

The CC and Kincluny

- In summary, the idea of the CHAP proposal for a Kincluny type development has been consistently opposed by the majority of respondents to CC requests for views. (Evidence for this has been submitted to Aberdeenshire Council with CC representations)
- This idea has also been consistently opposed by Aberdeenshire Planning Policy Unit who have also not supported the idea and therefore such a proposal is not included in either the current LDP or the new 2016 LDP
- The local community and the Planning Policy unit would therefore seem to be perfectly aligned with the idea that such a development is inappropriate

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan

Strategic growth areas

This strategic development plan identifies four strategic growth areas which will be the main focus for development in the area up to 2035.

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan

Key

Spatial concept



Strategic growth



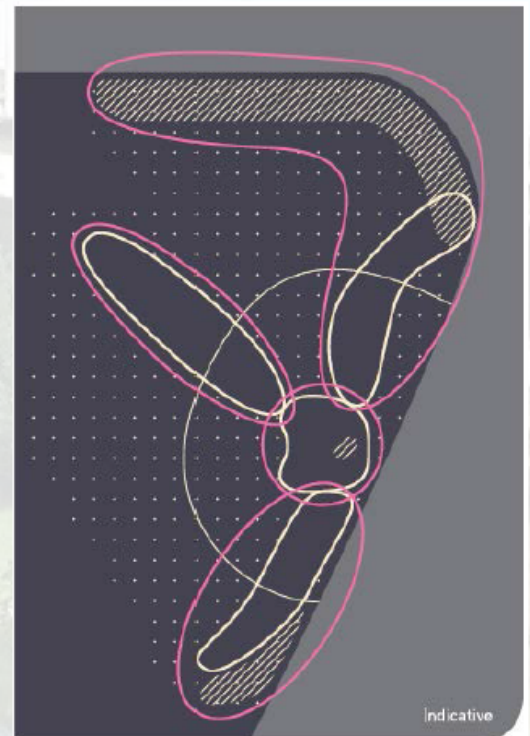
Regeneration



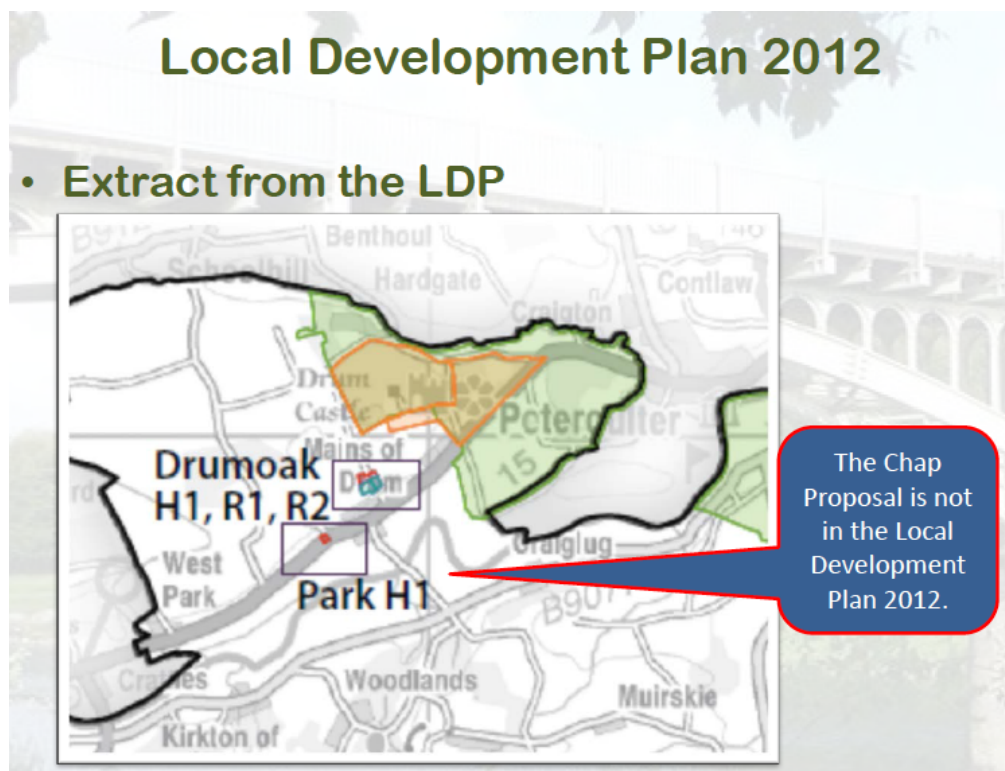
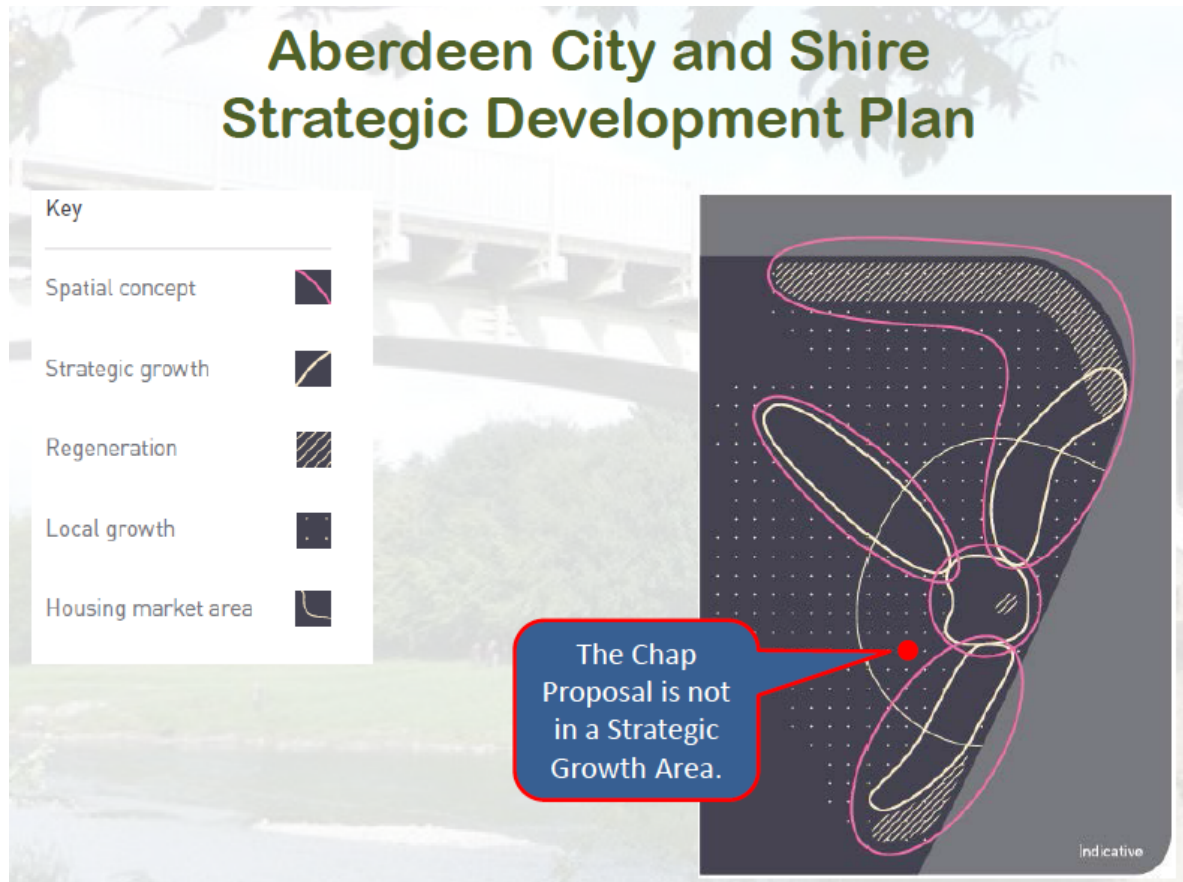
Local growth



Housing market area



Document B (continued/-4)



Main Issues Report 2013

Under “Other options which officers* have not preferred”,
K&M Area:

KM034 Mixed use development. (Refers to the Chap Proposal for the Park Quarry Area)

Erection of 1500 residential units.

- Remote from Drumoak. Effectively creating new settlement in remote area not served by public transport. No water supply/foul drainage. Need for education. Issues over construction of bridge over River Dee. Have already committed to new town at Elswick, therefore no need for additional new settlement. Possible impact on River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

* Officers from the Planning Team at Woodhill House

Local Development Plan 2016

- Extract from the LDP



The Chap Proposal is not in the Local Development Plan 2016.

Backdrop to the meeting!

- The Strategic Development Plan informs the Local Development Plans and the Local Development Plans inform the Planning Officers who determine the outcome of planning applications.
- Assuming that local democracy counts for anything at all, we must conclude that a Kinclun planning application would meet with immediate refusal at the Stonehaven planning office.
- Certainly the CC would be duty bound to maintain a consistent view by submitting an objection.
- Were this to happen, such an application would then be referred to the K&M Area Committee where it would be in the hands of elected members.

Document C.1. – Results (Anonymised) of Questionnaire on Housing (22 March 2009)

[illegible]

[illegible]

Document C.2. (continued)

[illegible]

Q3= 22 no
3 blank
89 yes

Document D - EXTRACT FROM DRUMOAK & DURRIS NEWSLETTER

The following text was part of the recent local Newsletter, with which the questionnaire was distributed. It is the statement of the “initial views on the Structure Plan expressed by CDDCC” to which Question 3 refers.

Crathes Drumoak & Durris Community Council (CDDCC) Local Development Plan 2009 (LDP2009)

CDDCC were asked by Aberdeenshire Planning Policy and Environment to comment on the Development Bids for this community and to indicate any areas where they might wish to have specific designations. CDDCC have been very busy checking on public opinion and writing comments on the plan. They divided their activities into two parts

- 1 Drumoak /Park
- 2 Crathes/Durris.

Part 1 was based on the responses from previous public meetings

Part 2 was based on a public meeting on 28th Jan. 2009 in Crathes Village Hall attended by over 70 people including members of all three parishes, a representative of Aberdeenshire and City Council Planning and Environmental Services, representatives of Dunecht Estates and a member of the press. In the interests of good communication, the two written responses on the development bids are reproduced in full.

Part 1 - Drumoak, Park and Surrounds

This reply is based on responses received by email and in person. It also draws upon relevant comments from the public meeting held to consider the location of a replacement Drumoak School.

References below are to the map at <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/localplan/Drumoak.pdf>

Local opinion and CDDCC have over a period of years been consistent in opposing:-

- Ribbon development which would encourage the urbanisation of a rural area
- Over-development of a rural area

The ideal for the community would be to limit development to that needed to support strictly-local growth in demand. However, some **modest** growth beyond this would be supportable without adversely changing the character of the area.

In line with the above, CDDCC offers the following comments:-

- Site K62 (if it is, as proposed, limited to six low-density dwellings) would seem acceptable, but any further development of Park should be banned, since such a small settlement would be overwhelmed by further development.
- Some, but not all, of the development encompassed in the sites designated K126 is supported, subject to the provision - from central Government funds - of adequate infrastructure (including shops, sewerage, medical centre) for Drumoak as a whole:-

Referring to Figure 5 (the “Indicative Land Use Masterplan” in the Ryden Property Consultants Development Bid document), the sub-sites numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 seem acceptable, since they are cloaked from short- and long-distance views by the lie of the land

Sub-sites 7 and 8 are not supported, as they would contribute towards ribbon development. Sub-site 5 is less-preferred, as it would tend to close the gap between Drumoak and Park, although if the view of this site from the North Deeside Road were to be completely obscured – from an early date – by trees, it could be acceptable.

Sub-sites 10 and 11 are not supported for housing, because they form a natural bridge to

the existing recreation area of the Glebe and could usefully be annexed thereto, making a feature of the wetlands area supplied by the irrigation stream from Park Estate and providing a corridor between central Drumoak and the Glebe. Allotments (as already proposed) could be a useful part of this mix.

- K133 is acceptable for its proposed use as a site for the replacement Primary School for Drumoak
- K134 is ideal for its proposed use as an extension to the cemetery at Drumoak Church
- There must be sufficient provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people who are less- advantaged.

With the exception of the sites explicitly mentioned above, CDDCC and local opinion do not wish to see any further housing development in the whole of the Crathes, Drumoak and Durris area.

In the terms used in your letter, (Team Leader Planning Policy and Environment) the area should be regarded as “protected”, for reasons which include:-

- Preservation of the natural beauty and environment of the area
- Protection of historically-significant built environment
- The inability of the road infrastructure (particularly the South Deeside Road) to safely accommodate any significant traffic growth
- The evaporation of demand for new housing as a result of the economic recession
- The need to concentrate development in areas which are truly – as opposed to notionally – sustainable..

The only exceptions to the generality of all the above are:-

- the construction of additional **single** houses on sites and with a design which strictly limits the visual and other impact of the house. An example of this could be an individual house constructed in existing permanent woodland.
- the extension or reconstruction of existing dwellings, subject to the normal planning rules to prevent inappropriate or excessive development.

Part 2 – Crathes and Durris

Summary of Public statements:

There is almost no public support for any further significant increase to housing to any of these villages. Most objections are related to lack of local infrastructure, lack of local need for additional housing, lack of adequate public transport and inappropriate roads.

Infrastructure comments focus on overcrowding of educational establishments and the lack of sewerage treatment. Many people also point out that living in these areas necessitates the use of a car as there are no local shops. It is interesting to note that there is also little or no support for the Local Plan 2006 applications for additional housing at either Crathes or Woodlands of Durris which is already viewed by many as overdevelopment, a situation greatly exacerbated by these new bids. Where development is supported, the provision for an appropriate proportion of affordable housing is also supported.

Community Council Statement:

In addition to the public meeting output and the summary above, the community council would also like to add the following.

Important in the appraisal of local infrastructure is the lack of access to gas. This necessitates the need for other forms of heating. Which in almost all cases requires the transport and storage of such fuels further compromises environmental impact as well as adding more HGVs to unsuitable roads.

Furthermore, the Community Council notes that the pressure for significant increases to Crathes, Drumoak & Durris Community Council – Report on Park Quarry – Public Meeting – 5th August 2015

the size of these villages is driven entirely by the Structure Plan Vision and housing allocation. While the Community Council understands and supports the vision for Aberdeenshire and City, it does not support the overall percentage allocation of Aberdeenshire housing targets to Local rather than Strategic Growth Areas. These currently represent around 48% of the overall target of 36,000 houses required by 2030.

This Community Council feels that this percentage completely emasculates the strategy essentially giving carte blanche to develop anywhere in the shire. 10-15% is felt to be more appropriate. Even at 10-15%, any allocation at all to Local Growth should only come into force once the Structure Plan Strategy is seen to be successful following its application to the Strategic Growth Areas in the first period to 2016. In other words the Local Growth area target should be 0-5% to 2016 increasing thereafter after if the effectiveness of the strategy is proven".