

6. **LRB 549** – Notice of Review Against Refusal of Full Planning Permission for Erection of Dwellinghouse, Garage / Workshop and Holiday Lodge at Land to The North West of Beechfield, Bridgend Terrace, Turriff, Aberdeenshire – Reference: APP/2021/2402.

(iii) Information Requested from the Planning Service.

Additional information regarding Local Review Body 549 (Planning Reference APP/2021/2402).

On 6 July 2022 the Senior Committee Officer wrote to the Planning Service requesting additional written submission to address the following matters:

1. To comment on the proposed development and the policy position with regards to Policy E2 Landscaping
2. To comment on the policy position with regard to the coalescence of a cluster and the boundary of Turriff (and its change)

With regard to the first point. Policy E2 Landscape states that we will refuse development that causes unacceptable effects through its scale location or design on key natural landscape element, historic features or the composition or quality of landscape character. Development should not significantly erode the characteristic of the landscape as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment. The application site falls within “Deveron and Upper Ythan Valleys” as does Turriff. While the application site is outwith the settlement boundary for Turriff and is in the countryside, the site location near the edge of Turriff’s settlement boundary would have a negligible impact on the Landscape Character of this area. As such the proposed development would not conflict with Policy E2.

With regard to the second point. Only houses outwith a defined settlement boundary can be considered under Policy R2 that allows for additions to existing clusters of 5 or more houses. Within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 the application site is outwith the settlement boundary of Turriff, this does not change in the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022.

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 allows development in the rural housing market area if they are small scale addition to an existing cluster or group of at least 5 houses which is of a scale and character that is in keeping with that cluster or group. No more than an additional 20% group of the cluster, up to a maximum of 2 new homes will be permitted under this policy during the plan period. A “Cluster” is defined within Planning Advice Note for Policy R2 as being *“group of houses positioned or occurring closely together, usually sharing common curtilages, or in very close proximity to one another. Decisions regarding the existence of a cluster relate to the character of the landscape in which they sit, and the pattern of development observed over time. This will vary across rural Aberdeenshire and generally need to be established on a case by case basis.”*

Proposals for additions to clusters and groups must demonstrate a reasonable degree of “connectedness”. This may be achieved through aspects such as design or layout i.e., through the sharing of curtilage boundaries, and there should be a clear sense of place felt within the cluster or group. Sites for development must be directly related to the existing houses within the group or “infill”, where appropriate,

between properties and upon completion will further strengthen the perception of the cluster or group being connected in some way. Clusters and groups subdivided by substantial boundary features and landscaping (e.g. high walls, hedges or trees, access roads or substantial changes in ground level between dwellings) are unlikely to be considered as being connected.

An extract from the Planning Interpretation Notes is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.

## Appendix 1 – Extract from Planning Interpretation Notes (PINS) for Policy R2.

### Addition to existing cluster or group of at least 5 houses

A cluster for the purpose of this policy provision is not a settlement listed in Appendix 8 of the LDP or an identified settlement in terms of organic growth, or within the 200m buffer of an identified settlement, and is situated within the RHMA. A cluster or group consists of at least 5 dwellings. In the majority of cases, the upper size of a cluster or group will be no more than around 15 houses. It is expected that in most cases it will be difficult for applicants to demonstrate how a cluster or group of more than 15 houses is connected, or linked together. Larger housing groups of greater than 15 houses should not be sub-divided in order to comply with this policy.

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Proposals must be sympathetic in scale and character to the existing cluster or group.

Key considerations:

- Is the site consistent with the pattern of the existing cluster or group?
- Is the site appropriate in terms of landscape character?
- Does the site have a natural boundary consistent with the other properties?
- Could addition lead to suburbanisation of the area?
- Would development promote an unsustainable settlement pattern occurring at the location?
- Are there any services within the vicinity of the cluster?
- Would development lead to increased car dependency at this location? Is there adequate public transport provision and/ or provision for footpaths and cycle routes?

Clusters and groups up to 9 houses will be permitted one addition during the plan period. Clusters and groups of 10 or more houses may be permitted addition of up to 2 houses during the plan period.

During the plan period, there is the possibility for planning consent granted as an extension to a cluster or group expires and is not implemented during the plan period e.g. planning permission granted in 2017 could lapse in 2020, in such instances, the number of units subject to that consent will be returned to the capacity for growth and made available for other prospective applicants to deliver.