



REPORT TO GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2015

ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SETTLEMENTS FOR UNALLOCATED ORGANIC GROWTH

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and approve the list of settlements identified as being suitable for organic growth under Appendix 2.

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 The Local Development Plan (LDP) permits organic growth of 'identified settlements' listed in the appendix accompanying *Policy R2 Housing and business development elsewhere in the Countryside* found under the *Shaping Development in the Countryside* chapter of the Proposed Local Development Plan. Policy as drafted allows small scale development, subject to other policies, where it is for development that contributes to the organic growth of an identified settlement of no more than 3 houses on a site within approximately 200m of the edge of the built up area. Development granted as part of organic growth should not exceed 20% of the existing size of the settlement up to 10 new homes within the 5 year plan period.
- 2.2 As part of the review of the Local Development Plan, the opportunity has been taken to review and update the list of identified settlements. A summary of the background and methodology used to undertake the review of the existing list of identified settlements, and to identify any additions to the list, is set out under **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3 The proposed list of identified settlements for Garioch is set out under **Appendix 2**.
- 2.4 Settlements in the rural housing market area that are not "identified settlements" may be permitted development as housing "clusters" under the terms of the proposed policy. Identified settlements cannot also be considered as housing "clusters".

3 Equalities, Financial and Staffing Implications

- 3.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and there are no staffing or financial implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.
- 3.2 After consideration by relevant officers it was agreed that an Equality Impact Assessment was not required because the recommendation will not have a differential impact upon people with protected characteristics.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

Review of Identified Settlements

1. Background and Methodology

- 1.1 The role of the main settlements, particularly the largest of them, is to act as the focal point for most new development in Aberdeenshire. Outwith these main settlements, there are also other settlements that have been identified as key rural service centres for the surrounding areas that they serve. As well as existing allocations, limited development may be appropriate to meet local needs and to support existing communities in a sensitive and sustainable way by allowing organic growth. Small-scale development, occurring organically, is preferred in some locations rather than driving development through specifically identified opportunity sites. Frequently, release of land for the development of one or two houses is a reaction to an opportunity presented by a developer rather than a decision from the landowner to act as a land developer themselves. An exercise has been undertaken to review existing settlements identified as being suitable for organic growth as well as to consider whether it is reasonable to include any additional settlements within organic growth for the next Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 We undertook analysis of 261 locations with a view to assessing whether they are genuinely suitable for such development. Of these 192 were identified as potential settlements. Various sources were used to examine each location. A number of qualities (see below) were identified and used for each location to build a picture of the urban character of the location. A general description of the location was derived, ranging from 'disparate housing with no obvious settlement pattern' to 'obvious settlement'.
- 1.3 Using this evidence base we used criteria to identify those settlements which may be suitable for organic growth. Settlements identified for organic growth should have:
 - a density above 5 homes/ ha to reflect an urban area; AND
 - two or more urban characteristics (i.e. street lighting, pavements and speed limits); AND
 - two or more public facilities (e.g. hall , shop) OR have a school with a declining school roll.
- 1.4 This list was then further filtered by excluding settlements of over 500 homes because organic growth may not be appropriate and development will be generally be supported through formal allocations. In a very few exceptional locations organic growth has been proposed for larger settlements due to an identified need but no prospect of allocated development land being made available by landowners. Consideration has also been given to those settlements which meet the test criteria but have identified opportunity sites within the Proposed LDP.
- 1.5 Finally a judgement has also been made to determine the possible impact to the character of settlement, as well as implication for the delivery of the allocated sites and the need to sustain local community services such as the school. The results of this analysis are presented in the tables in appendix 2.

Specific consideration of settlements which may be appropriate to remove from the current policy list is also provided.

- 1.6 It is considered that by using a mix of both qualitative and quantitative measures this has allowed rounded interpretation of the locations and resulted in the most appropriate settlements being identified for organic growth.

Review of Settlements in Garioch identified in SG Rural Development 1 “Housing and Business development in the Countryside” in the 2012 LDP (Currently “identified settlements”)

Settlement	Proposed Inclusion in 2016 LDP	Justification
Auchleven	Yes	Promotion of organic growth is appropriate in this settlement.
Chapel of Garioch	Yes	The settlement is of a suitable size and has facilities to be supported. Although there are two identified opportunity sites, both are of a modest size, it is considered that promotion of organic growth is deemed appropriate in order to support the primary school roll, which is significantly below capacity.
Kirkton of Rayne	Yes	Future growth of this settlement is most sustainably achieved through promotion of organic growth.
Meikle Wartle	Yes	The settlement is of suitable size and density and has facilities to support it. Although there is little in the way of urban characteristics it is considered that organic growth would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the settlement in the absence of identified opportunity sites.
Oyne	Yes	The settlement is of suitable size and density and features urban characteristics and facilities to service it. Organic growth is deemed to be appropriate.

Additional “identified settlements” identified by review

None.

List of Identified Settlements proposed for the 2016 Local Development Plan

Garioch
Auchleven
Chapel of Garioch
Kirkton of Rayne
Meikle Wartle
Oyne