



The Community Council of the Royal Burgh of
Dunbar

**RESPONSE TO EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL'S MAIN ISSUES REPORT
8 February 2015**

Dunbar Community Council has sought to capture the predominant views of the community in respect of ELC's Main Issues Report through:

- attendance at ELC sponsored information sessions on 2 December 2015
- organisation of public meeting on 19th January 2015 at which MIR was outlined by Norman Hampshire and DCC
- attendance at Local Area Planning Partnership review of MIR on 28th January 2015

The community responses are not aggregated in accordance with the questions as asked by ELC in their on line consultation feedback form but, rather, reflect the issues that local people saw as being important. *(Ref Appendix 1)*

The key responses from the community of Dunbar are as follows:

ELC approach to development – Compact v Dispersed

- General acknowledgement that some development was inevitable although the numbers were queried and some exasperation expressed at the lack of detail on housing types – it did not seem appropriate to simply let developers decide that family homes were the answer as this did not reflect the demographic position.
- Queried the reason for leaving the northern coastal area effectively out of the proposed development 'band' – a perception that capacity train service was a deciding factor in letting this area away from having to share the load.
- Accepting that development would happen, there was majority support for compact growth because:
 - Perceived benefits in locating housing close to actual/potential employment sites – reduced travel
 - Preference for building on brownfield sites and perception that there was more of this type of land in the west of East Lothian
 - Acknowledgement that infrastructure in the west of the county was better able to cope with significant development

- Support for smaller scale local development, even in outlying villages because this will rejuvenate communities and capitalise on school capacity etc. *(The lack of public transport in rural areas was, however, seen as a conflict to this plan - see Transport section)*

Housing in Dunbar

There was a general acceptance that new housing was needed in Dunbar to accommodate increased demand to live in this town.

Caveats to the position of general support were as follows:

- Very strong preference should be given to the development of brownfield sites and/or underused commercial sites, including sites within the conservation area, before any more agricultural land is used
- Any future development must preserve the perceived boundaries of West Barns and Dunbar
 - VERY strongly expressed disappointment in the events that led to the approval of development at Beveridge Row (Pref D2). The community feels very badly let down by this decision and sees it as a disempowerment of the community and as flaunting the stated aim of the 2008 Local Plan that the settlements of West Barns and Dunbar should be separated.
- Any future development should only be permitted once there was a robust and community agreed plan in place to meet the impact on already 'at capacity' resources in respect of:
 - Schools
 - Healthcare provision for all ages – primary, secondary and long term including residential care
 - Water and drainage
 - Electricity, gas
 - Telecoms
 - Transport
- Consideration should be given to increasing housing density wherever possible to leave more green space/play space and capitalise on the limited resource of the land bank
- Housing mix should reflect the demographic needs of the community
- The quality of design should be improved both at a 'unit' level and at a site layout level.
 - A design guide should be considered which would include requirements for ecological and energy efficient design
- Green links should be maintained and, where necessary, created to allow for the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity links

Views in respect of specific sites were as follows:

- The Hallhill sites (Pref D3 and Pref D4) were seen as a fairly obvious adjunct to current development and should be prioritised. That having been said, it was felt that:
 - housing south of the railway line **MUST** be connected to the town by means of at least one additional link under or over the railway track. A vehicular link is essential and all links should prove safe and attractive for cyclists and walkers. The links should present as 'safe routes to school' and be located such that the southern community feels better connected to the facilities enjoyed by the community north of the railway line
 - Lochend Woods should be protected as far as possible
 - Links within and between the development should support cycle routes and walking
- Pref D5 and D6 were acknowledged as options but should not be developed unless or until the development at Dunbar Golf Club was progressed. There is currently a distinct town edge which is valued here.
 - If housing is developed here, the route under the railway track should be maintained and properly developed to create an attractive and safe pedestrian and cycle link through to Spott Road. This would mean that the route would be lit, landscaped and protected from the visual impact of any development on the allocated 'employment site' at Spott Road.
 - The creation of pedestrian routes over the Golf Club sites to the coastal walkway should be mandatory
- The site at Eweford should not be developed
 - The site is so large that its development would create a new village
 - Development on this scale would blur the boundaries of West Barns and Dunbar
 - A development here would be effectively estranged from Dunbar and West Barns by the railway
 - The site is seen as having potential to provide land for additional allotments and/or small holdings for local food production

Dunbar Town Centre

Dunbar's town centre, seafront and harbours are seen as a very real asset to the community both in respect of amenity and economy. There is a very strong wish that development should impact positively on the High Street and the historic town, whilst respecting the value of the conservation area. In this regard, the new Local Plan should:

- Prioritise sensitive development of brownfield sites, placing pressure on owners who have long held vacant/derelict land/buildings, to build high quality housing and small high tech work units as well as public open spaces.
 - Assembly Rooms – housing in higher density courtyard type development, allowing demolition of seaward wall

- Amusement Arcade (Lamer St) – designate for public use/public open/recreational space
- Backlands – allow sensitive modern interventions to create small scale housing/work units with E/W pedestrian links
- Cinema site (ELC) – work units with studio type housing over. Sensitive, contemporary, environmentally robust design with new E/W link
- Existing commercial sites at Friarscroft (Co-op/Factory Outlet) – redesignate for future housing and associated carparking
- Allow for the freeing up of landlocked and underused garden ground to allow for sensitive small scale development. This should include for permissions to demolish structures (houses/walls etc) in the conservation area to create appropriate access.
- Allow for a less conservative approach to design solutions. Conservatism has impacted a number of sites (eg Abbey Church) resulting in development impasse and a long-term negative impact on the town.

Protected Landscapes

There was general support for the concept of protected landscapes around settlements. These should, wherever possible:

- Permit sensitive and appropriate small scale development that does not unduly impact on the landscape
- Allow for recreational routes for walking and cycling
- Create/enhance biodiversity corridors
- Be managed with 'light touch' guidelines that do not adversely impact the agricultural economy

Educational Provision

Feedback from Local Area Planning Partnership meetings clearly expresses the aspiration that the Dunbar cluster should build on already high educational standards and strive to become a region of educational excellence. Educational infrastructure is seen as playing an important role in this. Development plans should therefore:

- Enhance school property to provide good places to learn
- Provide for a full range of sporting activities that can be accessed by all
- Provide for a full range of cultural activities including music
- Provide appropriate facilities for early learning and support
- Provide appropriate facilities for adult learning and support

Land must be thoughtfully allocated to meet these needs over the plan period.

Health Provision

Feedback from the Local Area Planning Partnership meetings clearly expresses the view that local health provision is key to supporting the settlements in our cluster.

- There is strong support for proposals for a new hospital in Haddington
- There is strong support for a retained but modernised 'cottage hospital' provision at Belhaven

- There is an important and emerging discussion suggesting that the provision of a specialist centre (day and residential) for dementia sufferers should be accommodated in the Local Plan, probably within the grounds of Belhaven Hospital but, alternatively, at or close to development areas Pref D5/D6.

Transport + Travel

Dunbar now enjoys very good main road links and an improving rail link. The halt at East Linton is supported. There are, however, very serious issues relating to public transport that still impact adversely on residents in the cluster, particularly those with no access to private cars and those living in outlying settlements in the cluster.

- The train service is still poor for non-rush hour travel and especially poor in the evenings and at weekends. Long haul trains are often close to capacity on the Dunbar Edinburgh leg. Future development is likely to exacerbate this problem unless improvements are made to the provision. The East Linton halt will not help.
- Bus travel is a poor alternative for longer journeys. Anybody working in Edinburgh on a Sunday must add 3 – 4 hours to their working days just to access their workplace. Trains are not an option at this time. Bus travel to/from North Berwick is equally poor at the weekends, especially on Sunday
- The improved trainline and A1 have effectively estranged communities and parts of communities. More and safer crossings are required on both the A1 and the trainline and land needs to be allocated for this.
- Car parking provision for an increased number of train users must be planned for

Employment

Local employment is seen as a very important part of a growing town. Disappointment has been expressed that the already allocated site for employment at Spott Road has not been developed and there are several, perhaps apocryphal, reasons given for this, including the suggestion that the landowner(s) are asking for too much money for unserviced land. The community view is that:

- there is and would be good demand for smaller scale workshops and high tech offices with sole practitioners/small business owners electing to set up workspaces close to where they live
- priority should be given by ELC to models that would support the release of at least part of the Spott Road site as serviced modules
- small scale, contemporary office modules could be accommodated in the backlands and/or the ELC owned cinema site (High St) whilst creating links to the west and respecting the historic rig plan
- the Spott Road site should allow for the future development of a safe and attractive link between Spott Road and development sites Pref D5/D6
- the Spott Road site SHOULD NOT be re-allocated to housing particularly not on the grounds of 'no demand' for employment use

Developer Contribution

There was a strong sense that developers have too strong a hand when it comes to building in communities. The experience of Beveridge Row has left a very bad feeling both towards the developer in question and the planning process in its entirety.

The community feels that:

- Developers should be made to contribute to the infrastructure needs brought about by new development. The Roof Tax (a contribution per unit) seems an interesting model whereby every developer makes a contribution to the infrastructure funding even if the development is for a small number of houses.
- Developers should be pushed to work to high standards of design both aesthetically and environmentally

Energy, Environment and Waste Management

There are conflicting views in the community about renewable energy. The majority view is perceived to be that renewables are good in principle but not if they prove to be overly expensive to deliver or if they impact adversely on the landscape or townscape.

The introduction of retrofitted solar panels/photovoltaics have caused some concern because of the visual impact on properties that are in or are immediately adjacent to the conservation area.

Fracking has only recently been discussed and there is no consensus view at present. More information on the environmental impact of fracking would have to be shared before a final community position could be formed.

The burning of waste derived fuels at Lafarge has the backing of Dunbar's Community Council but is not supported by everybody. This remains a sensitive issue and is likely to remain so. A section of the community remains very concerned over the perceived pollution that the Lafarge plant generates – chemical smells are driven towards the town in some winds.

Viridor's plans to incinerate waste caused great controversy when they were tabled in 2009 and 2010. The grant of planning consent was, and remains, widely unwelcomed by the community. The community wishes and expects to be fully informed of Viridor's proposals for making use of generated heat/energy and will wish to closely scrutinise proposals for associated land use before planning applications are made to ELC.

Appendix 1

Feedback from Public Open Meeting
19th January 2015
Dunbar Town House

Hosted and led by Dunbar Community Council

MIR detail provided by EL Councillor Norman Hampshire

Dunbar Community Council MIR Consultation Feedback

Public Open Meeting - 19th January 2015

Key	Main Feedback Theme	Weight
6	Service + transport infrastructure needs to be developed to meet need before development	15%
4	Local people would like to be involved in the development and delivery of well designed, sustainable housing	14%
2	No development on farmland - precious resource. Use brownfield/poorer quality land	12%
1	Good connections over/under the railway are essential to bind community	10%
9	More diverse housing types are needed to meet needs of different ages/incomes/family groups	8%
10	Developers should be made to contribute more to local economy and listen to what people want	8%
3	Local people should have more say about specifics of design to create better places	5%
5	New homes should be ecologically designed and sustainable and could be built to greater density	5%
8	More employment is needed to allow people to work where they live	5%
11	More houses would place the school quality at risk - careful strategy needed	5%
14	The premise of the requirement for development needs to be tested and if needs be, challenged. The Planning process does not always reflect the wishes of communities.	5%
12	We need to protect biodiversity and the environment	3%
13	What can we do to support ELC Planners deliver on their preferred plan to develop westwards?	3%
7	We need to take conservation areas seriously - they are an asset. New approaches needed	2%
		100%

Ref	Individual Feedback	Contact information	% of total returns
1	We need better road network and ability to cross the railway line to connect the community		
1	A wide and bright, maybe vehicular road/pathway/bicycle route/bus route through the railway is <u>crucial</u> for the old town and southerly town to be an integrated, viable community.	Su Nuttgens susnut@cooptel.net	
1	The current infrastructure without/before any more new building, Queens Road, bridge needed under/over the railway	Gavin Wilson gavin1wilson@btinternet.com	
1	I would hope that prior to any further developments go ahead, planners be aware of the views of the community and look closely at access/exit roads etc	Peter Nevans 5 Eweford Cottages Dunbar EH42 1RF peterdalenevans@yahoo.co.uk	
1	Thoughtful and well placed connections over/under the railway are essential to bind the community	pipps_swan@yahoo.co.uk	
1	Good cyclepaths/footpaths through and between settlement areas are essential to link the communities		10%
2	In East Lothian, we have some of the best farming land in Britain - do not cover it in concrete. We may need it in the future for home grown food.		
2	More brownfield sites vs farmland		
2	ALT - D1 should not be developed. Very high value agricultural land - we need to feed ourselves		
2	Issue of East Lothian soils - the best in Scotland being lost forever if built upon. This alone is a significant argument for discouraging building to eastern area of East Lothian.		
2	Green corridors are essential to link forested and wild areas, including across A1 to support bio-diversity.		
2	use of land out by quarry? better than using valuable arable land. Make better use of brownfield sites.		

2	Emphasis should be placed on developing brownfield sites throughout the county before any more farmland is used.	pippa.swan@yahoo.co.uk	12%
3	If we have to have 1000 more homes, we want to decide on the design, the eco-credentials, the infrastructure through Dunbar Community Development Ltd OR Council stipulates		
3	how do we affect the level of control we have over type/style of buildings		
3	In order to maintain the feel of East Lothian, new houses need to be built with a sense of place, so that residents feel there is an identity to their immediate neighbourhood and that there is a strong physical and emotional connection with the wider community.	alasdairswan@yahoo.co.uk	5%
4	I would be pleased to contribute to a development group for Dunbar. The historic environment is one of East Lothian's prime assets, but played no part in tonight's discussion - it must be treated as an asset and not just wallpaper.	Bill Dodd 01368 864659 bill.dodd@yahoo.co.uk	
4	I am interested in joining a housing development team for a group of houses in Dunbar over which we have some control in location, design, sustainability.	Su Nuttgens susnut@cooptel.net	
4	How to encourage community involvement to influence developer attitudes and motives? E.g some community co-operative that has a say in potential development		
4	I would be interested in forming some group to further community affairs	golfingbob@sky.com	
4	Interested in the potential to develop something locally e.g from DCDC into an active company and take on projects to develop areas in line with what people want/could want if they knew about it, and which would not need to seek huge profits	Simon Bell s.bell@ed.ac.uk	
4	I'd like to be part of any Community Housing Association/Community driven development	Gavin Wilson gavin1wilson@btinternet.com	
4	can we make use of Dunbar Community Development Company to take forward community driven development?		
4	I would be interested in joining a group that supported the ambition to make Dunbar a good place to live, work and play, for all ages and levels of income	pippa.swan@yahoo.co.uk	14%
5	Ecohousing is essential for sustainability. It CAN be cheap - see Vikinghouse website, building eco-friendly passive houses for council in Ireland.		
5	increase the density of housing development		
5	houses being built are of the lowest common denominator		5%
6	impact of increased road traffic from Eweford development into West Barns		
6	need for improvements to bus service in rural areas, extended bus timetables would reduce isolation		
6	reliance on car usage by owners of new homes requiring better access routes in and out of Hallhill		
6	quicker to cycle between existing new estate than to drive, could make this a positive feature		
6	Water supply - I believe we are short		
6	Electricity supply - power cuts are becoming more frequent with power stations closing.		
6	existing problems with WTW only getting fixed by continued pressure from West Barns community, responsibility for ensuring plant has sufficient capacity to meet demand should lie with local authority and the developers before any further development allowed.		
6	pressure on health centre/GP services; sewerage works and drainage at Hallhill - foul water on playing fields with existing new houses let alone with additional homes		
6	How will the medical and educational needs and service infrastructure of the larger town be met?	pippa.swan@yahoo.co.uk	15%
7	A conservation plan for E Lothian must mesh with similar plans in adjacent counties. Listed buildings and the special heritage and amenity and conservation areas are fast being eroded and are a wasting asset - because of lack of expertise in the planning department. A single Conservation Officer, properly qualified, would revolutionise the future of the historic and cultural environment in East Lothian.	Bill Dodd 01368 864659 bill.dodd@yahoo.co.uk	2%
8	Employment; not enough firms in the area to provide more work		

8	More development for tourism		
8	I am strongly in favour of concentrating new house building to the west of the county unless and until there is real evidence that significant new job opportunities have been created to the east.	alasdairswan@yahoo.co.uk	5%
9	More flats vs houses (more affordable)		
9	Increase affordable % above 25%		
9	I am concerned at the lack of rentable housing for children of Dunbar and lack of single parent housing	Gavin Wilson gavin1wilson@btinternet.com	
9	Need for more flats		
9	The mix of housing should be designed to meet the changing needs of the community - we are not all families. Where are homes for the elderly/retired or those just starting out?	pippa_swain@yahoo.co.uk	8%
10	Apart from contributions to school extensions what have developers contributed in terms of improvements to town's infrastructure to date? Town needs more than just bigger schools when it expands to such an extent		
10	We need to get power lessened to developers. We need to have what we, the community, consider suitable and not have our decisions turned over by reporters who do not know the area and its needs. Parliament needs to have awareness of our dissatisfaction and do something in the name of democracy. Does it need changing ACTS etc?		
10	More developer contributions to infrastructure		
10	New houses need to have more visually attractive features and far more living space (eg bedrooms like studies, kitchens too small for family to eat in etc)		
10	Developers should be made to assist in the development of council owned land in the conservation area to provide carefully designed work units and starter/retirement flats.	pippa_swain@yahoo.co.uk	8%
11	Is an existing village school and adjacent playing field to be sacrificed as result of development at Eweford which includes plan for new primary school. Such a move would cut out vital elements essential to wellbeing of West Barns community.		
11	The secondary school in Dunbar is already big enough and another solution will need to be found. Extending the existing school risks degrading the quality and character. This issue really needs to be considered in the overall plan	DGS Senior School pupil	
11	Wherever the house building takes place, it should be good to see that the process for providing increased school capacity has been identified first. New school building should not be erected on existing sport and leisure grounds which are needed of the wellbeing of future generations.	alasdairswan@yahoo.co.uk	5%
12	Opposition to fracking/unconventional gas extraction. Currently ELC is to permit it subject to certain conditions being met although the conditions have not been defined		
12	Biodiversity - Lochend woodland is already becoming isolated and Eweford site would greatly exacerbate this		3%
13	What are the most effective 'objection' strategies? E.g What would support ELC planners to be successful in securing their preferred options?		2%
14	Question over why NB not included in SES SDA? Decided when and by whom?		
14	Questioning the premise on which need for 10,050 is based		
14	Village/Town identity - paying lip service to this as development at Beveridge Row demonstrates		5%

Total comments posted

59 posts in total

100%