

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT – COLLIESTON**

**Dear Piers,**

Collieston and Slains Community Council would like to thank Aberdeenshire Council for the opportunity to comment on development proposals for Collieston and the 'Main Issues Report', sent to the Community Council in May 2009.

The Community Council, for the following reasons, considers the proposals inappropriate in scale for our community and would contravene existing Aberdeenshire planning guidance. In particular the Community Council noted that the Draft Structure Plan states that development proposals will be assessed against its aims. With reference to these aims the Community Council believes that:

- The proposals fail to “protect and improve our valued assets and resources, including the built and natural environment and our cultural heritage.” The proposal would increase the size of the village by almost a third and destroy a unique community recognised for its eclectic mix of housing. The increase in population would probably be over 50%. This exceeds the 10% growth stated in Aberdeenshire’s plans for strategic development areas, within which the community does not fall.
- The proposals do not “make the most efficient use of the transport network”, and increase rather than, “reduce the need for people to travel and making sure that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices.
- The proposals also contravene a number of the principles laid out in Policy Review Papers, particularly those relating to “Housing in the Countryside”, “Sustainability” and “Public Access”.
- There was no support for the proposals in the recent Community Council survey.

### **COLLIESTON AND SLAINS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

The Community Council recognised that Collieston and Slains must integrate with the wider Aberdeenshire community and that development plans for the community must fit with the vision for North East Scotland for the next 20 years laid out in the draft structure plan. The Community council supports the following vision for the community.

#### **Our Community Today**

The harbour village of Collieston and the surrounding parish of Slains form a vibrant community of about 400 people, living in an eclectic mix of small houses, clustered round a small harbour. The area is bordered by farmland, the Forvie Nature Reserve, and has Aberdeenshire’s coastal path running through it.

Over the last few decades, the proportion of the community who commute to work has steadily increased to form the vast majority of the working population of the village. In common with so many communities across the UK, the working population is independent, has easy access to transport and the freedom to choose where to access those services that fit their lifestyle. Currently the village has a hall, a small shop that has recently lost its Post Office services and is in danger of closing shortly, and an active Community Council which supports numerous social events.

The community inhabits a unique natural environment enjoyed by many visitors from the surrounding area. It has also preserved the unique physical and cultural heritage of one of North east Scotland's small fishing communities and retains much of the spirit that was both typical of, and necessary in, the fishing and farming community of old. This unique community is now under threat.

## **POTENTIAL AREAS FOR PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

An estimated population growth of 10%, across the Community Council area over 10 years would appear to meet both the aims of the Draft Structure Plan and the aims outlined above. This would equate to a small number of individually developed new homes spread out across the community. A significant limiting factor however would be the size of the local school. Current population predictions and a newly built extension fit with an estimate of 10% growth over 20 years.

With regards to the protection of the community, the policy paper regarding the "Historic and Built Environment" would suggest that the Community Council should consider the advantages and possible disadvantages of applying for "Conservation Status".

## **SUMMARY**

- The current proposals for development in Collieston do not appear to meet Aberdeenshire Council planning guidelines and are opposed by the majority in the community.
- There is scope across the entire Collieston and Slains community for a small number of homes to be converted or built on existing plots.
- Collieston and Slains may benefit from Conservation Area status.