

UDNY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

<p>Planning Department Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>By email only to <u>planningonline@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</u> and <u>esmond.sage@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</u></p>	<p>Claire Woodward - Secretary Udny Community Council Email – <u>UdnyCCSecretary@outlook.com</u></p> <p>Your Ref: ENQ/2023/0033 Our Ref: OP2/POAN/Apr2023 Date: 12 April 2023</p>
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Dear Sir/Madam

**Pre-Application Advice Request
Response from Udny Community Council
Erection of up to 60 Dwellinghouses at OP2 Site, Pitmedden
Grid Reference 389264.827192**

We refer to the above and to your letter dated 30th March 2023 providing 14 days to respond to your request for pre-application advice. We have sought local community views with regard to the request, albeit some responses may have been hindered due to the timing of your letter and the 14 day time limit coinciding with the school Easter holidays.

The community have provided us with thorough and well thought out responses to the pre-application advice request under the following headings:-

OVERDEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE:

With the development of OP1 (Bonnyton) and OP2 together with the ongoing building of houses at Tarves further along the B999, Pitmedden looks to rapidly lose its rural identity. The development of OP2 will see the village become a housing development with houses in close proximity and out of character to the remainder of the village.

Currently there are 16 houses at Saddlers View and Saddlers Rise which have not been built in character with the village. They do look more akin to a housing development in a large town or city.

The development of OP2 is over development of the village. The 16 houses built by Claymore at Saddlers View and Saddlers Rise took 4 years to sell with a mix of 3-5 bedroom houses either detached, semi-detached or terraced. The situation with the sale of this style of house in the Pitmedden and new build prices can only be expected to worsen due to the long term impact of Brexit and Covid-19 on the economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

If OP1 and OP2 are fully developed, this could see an addition of 164 houses to the village. A one child household would add 164 children to the Primary School. Residents are aware that the school website confirmed they currently have 148 pupils and 52 nursery pupils. This is approximately 21 children per class. The current provision within the Primary School is at capacity with Primary 1 and 2 split into 2 groups. The secondary school within the catchment area being Meldrum Academy is also at capacity. The Aberdeenshire average household has 2.28 children according to 2021 data published by the Scottish Government. The School and Nursery would statistically see a dramatic rise in numbers. There simply are not the teachers or facilities available for such an increase and this would be to the detriment of the children already enrolled. The numbers of houses proposed as being included as part of the site will worsen this situation.

The increased demand on the Medical Practice would see existing patients suffer through the competition for appointments. There are 5 GPs currently working at the practice and with the expansion of Tarves and Pitmedden, the practice will significantly struggle.

Currently the approach to Pitmedden provides an 'attractive entrance' and 'Village Gateway'. Development of OP2 would adversely impact the character of the area as any housing or development would sit in a highly prominent position as you approach Pitmedden from the South. This would negatively impact on the setting of the village.

The site is also within a pipeline safety zone. Due to the location of the mains gas pipeline, the limits of development of the area mean that it is unsuitable for 60 houses. As development would be restricted due to the location and zoning of the gas pipeline, these are not issues that can be mitigated or changed as part of developing the site.

Furthermore, screening of the boundaries to attempt to preserve the amenity of the neighbourhood and also shelter the working farm close to the OP2 site will be almost impossible. The working farm has livestock and the development will increase noise pollution. Saddlers View, Saddlers Rise, Seton Terrace, Athol Rise, and Belhaven Road will all lose the edge of village experience and views of the green countryside.

ROADS:

Despite repeated requests from Udney Community Council, speeding by motorists through the roads in and around Pitmedden continues to cause a great deal of stress and concern to residents with reluctance on the part of Aberdeenshire Council to assist with mitigation of these issues.

There are known safety issues within Pitmedden including (but not limited to) narrow pavements, a variety of junctions close to or nearby both local schools, areas on Oldmeldrum Road in Pitmedden without crossing patrollers, a road next to Pitmedden school/nursery without a pavement, narrow points of roads where cars park obscuring views and limiting safe crossing over roads, cars speeding through the crossing in Pitmedden and not stopping despite a crossing patroller being in place on Tarves Road.

Cars regularly speed on the B999 around the corner from the garage in Pitmedden in excess of 30mph having the effect that by the time they reach the national speed limit sign heading towards Aberdeen, they are excessively and dangerously speeding.

The current entrance to the Saddlers development is blind for those travelling North on the B999 meaning residents and visitors often require to edge out a considerable distance into the road in order to ascertain if a vehicle is approaching when heading south towards Aberdeen. The residents within the Saddlers development through their lived experiences are very concerned about increased traffic coming from the OP2 development leading to more cars "taking a chance" in exiting the junction in the hope it is safe to do so.

Residents also shared with us their great safety concerns in respect of the new entrance to the site. With a new entrance designated between the current Saddlers development and CMB Autos on the B999, there will be a string of exits onto the B999 in very close proximity to each other. From the 30mph sign at the entrance of the village access is taken to Allathan Park, Bothwell Terrace, Saddlers View and a lane providing access to a number of houses which is located on the opposite side of the road between the current access to the Saddlers development and the new proposed entry point. So many entrances points to housing all being taken in close proximity along this section of the road makes the danger of either a road accident or an accident involving pedestrians far more likely. Junctions in close proximity also give rise to a high level of conflicting traffic manoeuvres resulting in a higher risk of accidents. With vehicles travelling at excessive speeds from CMB Autos South towards the exit of the village, it is inevitable that a fatal accident will happen at some point along this stretch of road.

The current access to the Saddlers development has a narrowing after leaving the B999. Residents already find this a 'choke point' for vehicles. With the introduction of a further 60 houses to the rear of the development, this will lead to congestion within the Saddlers development and a danger of congestion for vehicles waiting on the B999 to exit and enter the development itself. The result of this will be impatient drivers and larger vehicles such as lorries and buses requiring to overtake on that section of road and passing at least the 1 or 2 other entrance/exit points already in existence and as mentioned above.

The Primary School, Nursery and local shop all lie directly on, or in close proximity to the B999, which is a concern to pedestrians and parents walking their children to these areas. The pavements here are narrow opposite CMB Autos. At present there is no foot path on the side of the road where CMB Autos is located. This is a private car park used every day with cars entering and existing the business. This will not only impact on CMB Autos as to how they are able to operate their business but there is also a safety concern with increased numbers of residents requiring to cross the B999 prior to the garage in order to reach the centre of the village. There is no designated crossing point and the dangers of the road and prevalence of speed has already been mentioned above.

The proposed new junction is also in close proximity to the Medical Practice, which is another choke point for traffic in the area.

Residents report various potholes throughout the village and state they experience long waiting times to see these repaired. Further pressure from increased vehicle traffic will worsen the condition of the road with the inclusion of construction traffic adversely impacting on the condition of the road.

Residents also experience immense congestion further along the B999 into the centre of the village, particularly at School drop off and pick up times. Increased cars and traffic, including construction traffic from OP1 and OP2 along the B999 will have the effect of highlighting and intensifying the dangers of this road, deterring people from walking and biking in their everyday life. There will be no safe spaces for our community and it will lead to a lack of inclusion for both the young and elderly who may require additional assistance.

Currently Saddlers View & Rise are seen as a safe space for children to play as it is a quiet cul-de-sac. With the increased traffic that an additional 60 houses would bring, not to mention construction vehicles, residents within the Saddlers development are frightened that the existing streets within the development will become busy and dangerous through roads.

Feedback from the local community also highlights the B999 through Pitmedden and the village will also suffer with increased noise, pollution and emissions from the growing traffic utilising the road.

With the above considerations in mind, the local community would respectfully request that as part of this pre-application advice request and at a very minimum serious attention be given to the introduction of 20mph speed limits within the village and along the B999. With development at Tarves, the proposed development at OP1 and now OP2, the volume of traffic passing through Pitmedden will exponentially increase. Currently the increase in traffic has not been taken into account with regard to the submissions from the road department for OP1.

The threshold for action with regard to speeding and the dire situation of our roads within our community cannot and should not be at the point where a person is knocked over and killed and as time goes on with the increasing numbers of houses within our village, increasing numbers of cars on our roads and the increasing speeds that drivers are adopting in our village, a fatality seems to be a ticking time bomb.

BUILDER:

It is important the residents at the Saddlers development are heard with regard to their comments as to the conduct of Claymore Homes as the builder of the development. We are informed by a number of residents within the Saddlers development that they were told by Claymore Homes unequivocally that future development of OP2 was not going to happen other than the proposal for the community hall (it is noted the current Pre-Application Advice Request does not include the area designated for the community hub). Indeed residents have

confirmed they were told the roads within the Saddlers development which now look to lead into the OP2 site would not be used for further building as they were created for refuse vehicle turning only as was a requirement by the council.

This incorrect information provided to the residents by the builder at the time they purchased their houses has clearly led to shock and dismay at the current situation. The length of time taken for the houses to sell and for post purchase issues being resolved leads the residents to have a real concern as to additional activity by the builder around the site for years to come as they slowly address these issues.

DRAINAGE:

The development of the site will also have permanent and catastrophic effect on the water tables resulting in flow of excess water into the current properties in the vicinity. At present, during light rainfall the residents within the Saddlers development find their gardens boggy and saturated with water. With heavier rainfall the gardens gather surface water which takes considerable time to recede. The residents have confirmed they have raised these issues with Claymore Homes who in turn confirmed there were diagonal running drains in the rear gardens of some/most properties to assist with drainage. When some residents have installed patios at their properties, it has been found that no such drains are in existence within these gardens.

There are also already known drainage issues within the Saddlers development as a whole and experienced by all residents. Scottish Water have attended the development and identified that drainage on the street has been installed at an unsuitable angle which is resulting in waste/water not being evacuated as it should. A solution for this has not been identified. An additional demand on the existing drainage will only amplify these issues.

60+ properties will also significantly impact on the streets and properties in and around the OP2 development and the Bronie Burn. Currently with heavy rainfall the Bowling and Tennis Clubs experience severe flooding and the garages at a number of properties at Allathan Park are flooded with the properties near the end of the street also impacted. The Bronie at parts of Oldmeldrum Road also struggles with flooding on the verges and the road and residents living in fear of flooding when heavy rainfall is forecast.

There is also the presence of a sewage drain located near the entrance to Allathan Park which carries the sewage from the neighbouring development at Hunter's Rise towards the Bronie Burn.

Residents also regularly report the drain on the B999 at the corner of 'The Neuk' and 'Millbank' being blocked. This drain overflows and sends water and silt into the drain on the lane between these 2 houses. Thereafter it blocks and sends water through the garden at Millbank onto and through the Tennis Court / Bowling Club area.

The development of OP2 will have a significant impact on the existing drainage issues experiences by the local community and will increase the demands of the current water way (Bronie Burn).

There are stated concerns during previous LDP processes for OP2 as to the lack of water and drainage capacity and a flood risk for the site. The Strategic Environmental Assessment relating to the LDP 2023 published in January 2023 stated the OP2 site would have a significant negative impact on the area.

ENVIRONMENT:

Pitmedden is a rural village with trees alongside the B999 requiring to be cut down to provide the new proposed access to the OP2 site. A new culver will affect the wildlife within the areas of trees and the burn itself which will be disturbed.

Together with the concerns relating to the nearby working farm, there are also reported sighting of newts along the Bronie burn and in the vicinity of the proposed development. Residents have commented that a newt study should be carried out. There are both short term and long term issues with development of the site that would have an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbourhood and the biodiversity of the area.

COMMUNITY HUB:

The community noted during the LDP process that they would wish to see provision for a community hub and this is recorded within the LDP itself. The only positive impact designed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the OP2 site was for the provision of a community hub. The LDP states that the OP2 site should deliver a multipurpose hall for purposes such as sport, event space, accessible office space and a library. There is no mention of a proposed community hub at present with regard to this pre-application advice request or the POAN.

CONCLUSIONS:

The response from the community has been apprehensive and with a large degree of concern as to how Pitmedden will be impacted by further development. On paper some of the assessments particularly within the Strategic Environmental Assessment and within the LDP appear to provide for any negative impact to be medium term with the appearance of a general view being that as long as development fits within policies there should be no issue with development proceeding. This approach does not take into account the real life effect on residents and the community as a whole who live and work in the village. The incidence of flooding has increased at an incredible rate and the requirement for the Udney Resilience Group to aid the local community highlighting the real need for residents concerns to be fully taken into account.

We look forward to hearing from you with regard to this letter and to next steps as to the POAN process.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue rectangular background. The signature reads "Claire Woodward" in a cursive, flowing script.

Claire Woodward, Secretary on behalf of Udney Community Council