

MAINS ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
CONTACT – secretary@mera-milngavie.co.uk

Comments for National Planning Framework 4 from MERA 28 April 2020

We thank you for being able to comment on the above. Our Association has been established for over 40 years and we represent over 1000 households in our community. We have been able to highlight some points below which have been given to us at AGMs and from recent feedback following our input into our own LDP2 for our Authority area. We hope this is helpful.

The following are our comments for consideration:-

As Local Development Plans together with the National Planning Framework will be moving to 10 year Plans instead of 5, it will be extremely important that the right type of land and development are put forward.

Following the current Covid outbreak it has highlighted the importance of Greenbelt land and Green Space. Even more important is the protection of farmland as it is extremely important that Scotland and the UK produce as much of our own food and supplies as possible. This must be done on a large scale and therefore farmland is extremely important. It is good to encourage, where there is an interest or desire, local food growing, but this should not be the priority as it is relatively low level and food safety cannot be guaranteed. Therefore farmers and farmland should be protected for the future to take us to 2050 and beyond to ensure a good food supply for future generations.

The importance of Green Space is also paramount for wellbeing and peoples' desire to get out to green areas has also been shown during the crisis to be extremely important. However, it has also highlighted that education and etiquette of how to use these spaces is badly needed. Farmers have encountered problems with walkers, runners and cyclists disregarding countryside rules. The same applies to priority on footpaths etc. Where new developments are created these issues can be addressed, however many well established communities have no room for change due to over development and poor road and pavement infrastructure. It is also important that provision is made for parking and every new property development should be built with charging points and parking at each individual property and larger properties should have provision for at least two cars and visitor parking as should flatted property. Recent new developments have made under provision for parking and it ends up that vehicles are parked on grass verges, pavements and places they should not be. By 2050 it is anticipated electric vehicles will be widely available and provision must be made and it must be accepted that with an ageing, but relatively fit population, cars together with public transport are essential to enable people to be independent. New developments should have wide roads, as the trend at present is for narrow brick roads where you cannot differentiate between road and pavement and these areas are cluttered with cars. The trend should go back to nice wide roads with clearly defined wide pavements. Very important for when there are more electric vehicles, which are quiet and therefore pedestrians must have their own safe space. Roads are not play areas.

New developments should also have a large provision for storage of recycling bins. Every property in our area currently has 5 recycling bins to store, planning must take account of this in order that they can be stored in the property boundary and not left cluttering streets. Access for delivery and refuse lorries is also important.

With regard to public transport, investment is required for ease of use and again park and ride provision is required, particularly for more rural communities where local employment is not enough to sustain every member of the working population. Going into the future it must be remembered that the working population will be an ageing one as many will be working into their 70s and provision for public transport and road infrastructure is extremely important. The road infrastructure must be kept moving, as this is also extremely important for business and for supplies and deliveries. All lorries and deliveries end up on local roads when they come off the main link roads to get to their actual destination and shops and communities need to be developed to accommodate this. In order for communities to survive and thrive they need their services and for a shop, chemist or bank to remain in an area or be attracted to an area they need to get their deliveries timeously and easily otherwise they will move away from communities as has been seen on numerous occasions over recent years. These same communities need schools, doctors, etc. and all these facilities need good links and provision and at the same time must be attractive for all ages to live, work and share.

Turning to local housing targets we could agree that there is a case for Local Authorities, through consultation with local people, be allowed through their planning departments to stipulate to developers what type of housing is required. Such as stating that a portion of any proposed development should include terraced, semi-detached or housing for the elderly. However, before this could be allowed the issue of "affordable housing" needs to be clarified. Our experience as an Association has highlighted that this description confuses people. For our Local Authority area "affordable housing" is mostly rented property. However other Authority areas this can mean different things. Housing Need and Demand will be different in Local Authority Areas. A clear difference needs to be made between Affordable Housing for Buying and Affordable Housing for Renting as the need and demand will be different throughout the country. A clear picture is required for housing for sale on the open market and for rented and social housing. Our area has a high elderly population, many still living in large family homes who are stuck there as many would like to downsize to a smaller possibly adapted bungalow or similar with a little bit of low maintenance garden. However, developers are not building these. No every older person wants to live in a flat. Making provision for development for older people then releases larger family homes into the housing market. There is also a need for sheltered housing for when people become frailer where they cannot manage themselves. Again this will depend on different L A areas. Some may have a need for first time buyer or lower priced family homes such as terraced and semi-detached and this is where Authorities could grant permission to private developers who are willing to provide what is needed for an area. However, as many local authority planners and employees

do not live in the areas they work in it is essential that research and consultation with local residents be carried out to identify what is and will be needed. Making a varied provision enables communities to thrive and stops elderly going into care homes and younger people having to move away from family to get properties they can afford or of the right size for their needs. This in turn allows families to support each other letting younger members go out to work with grandparents giving back up and they in turn can support elderly relatives, as they get older. All this helps to relieve the burden on the state and local authorities. Local Authorities should also be providing and funding their own building projects to provide social/rented/sheltered properties to meet their own local needs. Many of the housing associations do not address the long-term provision required by local authorities. If these properties are in ownership of the authorities there is a potential better long-term provision.

The Framework should have provision for Local Authorities to declare that areas have no capacity to release land or improve infrastructure. There are places that are full.

Turning to the case for Local Authorities to work with other bordering Authorities we would observe that an odd case could be made where an Authority has very little capacity. However, there are many pitfalls to this. Things like the knock on effect as to which schools would have the capacity to take more children. Medical provision, public transport, park and ride and shopping would all come into consideration. These would all be important for communities to gel together effectively as children on opposite sides of a street would not want to be going to different schools etc. Care would need to be taken to avoid increased pressure on a community or Local Authority that is already struggling. Retaining greenbelt is often a good way of separating these issues. We could not comment further on this without knowing more.

All of the above comments and through all your documents should take account of flooding and climate change. Development should be avoided where there is a chance of flooding or creating a knock on effect of flooding. Loss of greenbelt must be avoided too. These are key as stated before, these are going to be long-term plans and a mistake could have grave consequences. We will be going forward over the coming years where the whole country will be in a financial crisis and money will require to be spent wisely to give a good long-term value. We think some of our suggestions and observations will give this.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

R Hooper (Mrs)
Secretary
Mains Estate Residents' Association
Milngavie