It is brilliant that you publish all the submissions to the Planning Bill consultation. It provides an excellent insight into what groups and individuals across the country are thinking!

I am in full agreement with the submissions from Planning Democracy & Spokes, particularly in respect of their support for equal rights of appeal.

Questions 1 to 3: No response.

4. Will the changes in the Bill to the content and process for producing Local Development Plans achieve the aims of creating plans that are focussed on delivery, complement other local authority priorities and meet the needs of developers and communities? If not, what other changes would you like to see introduced?

Dundee City Council has just held its meeting to ratify their final draft Local Development Plan (LDP2) and I was appalled that all the unresolved comments were to be considered by the Reporter. I spoke at the meeting and claimed their action to be a cop-out. One of my comments could easily have been dealt with by discussion because it was about terminology. This criticism has also been made by others and it is also reflected in my other comments at the end.

Questions 5 to 8: No comment.

9. Do you support the requirement for local government councillors to be trained in planning matters prior to becoming involved in planning decision making? If not, why not?

Yes, but I'd like to draw attention to the varying composition of Councillors on Planning Committees between Angus and Dundee; Angus has a small group of 7 Councillors while Dundee includes all 29 Councillors on its Planning Committee. A smaller number allows Councillors to specialise so that they are able to challenge officers on matters of planning law etc.

Questions 10 & 11: No comment.

12. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Bill?

Inclusion is the key word in respect of encouraging community involvement. Developers employ staff to pursue their plans, communities mainly rely on voluntary input to represent them, so they need as much help as they can obtain. This can
include ensuring that all responses to Planning applications and Development Plan preparations are placed on line, and that neighbour notification is comprehensive - Dundee was criticised recently for "not going the extra mile" in ensuring that closely interested parties are informed of applications and meetings. Another omission in Dundee has been to fail to circulate statutory consultees' responses to Councillors and the public. Transparency of information and procedures is essential if communities are to be able to challenge the expertise of developers. Planning would then become a joint enterprise between the Council, Developers and Communities.

Doug McLaren