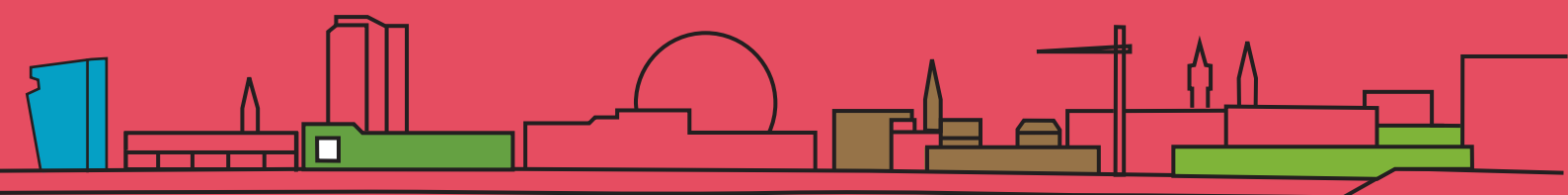




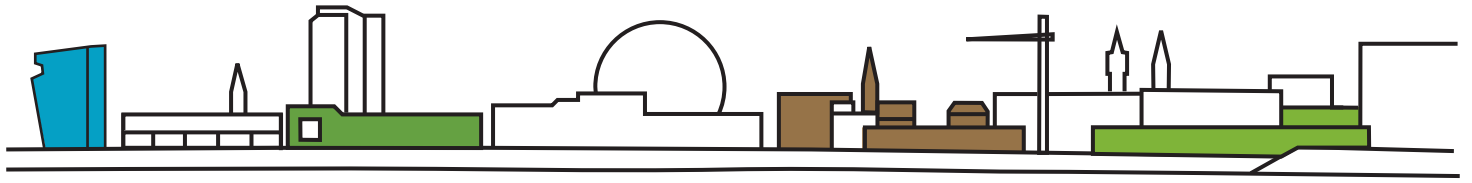
ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Aberdeen Local Development Plan **Main Issues Report**

January 2014







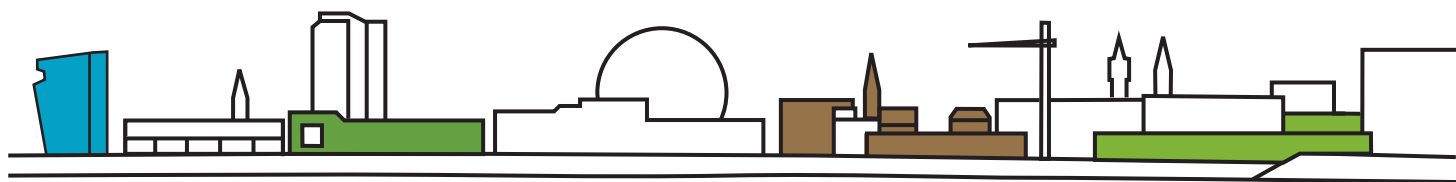
Aberdeen Local Development Plan **Main Issues Report**

January 2014

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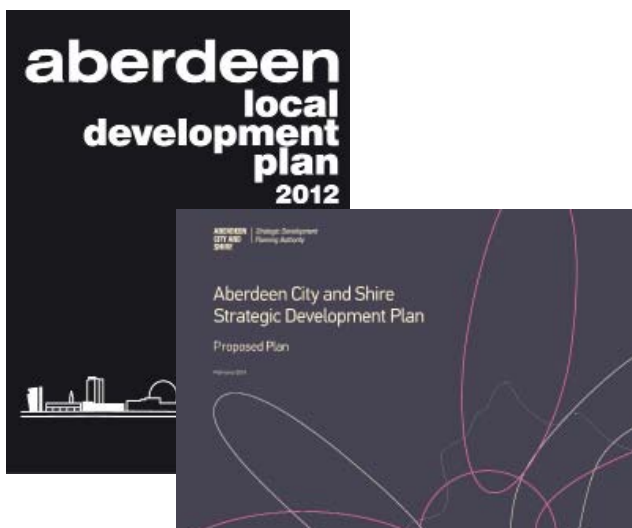
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The planning system in Scotland is 'plan-led'. Policies, proposals and guidance are set out in Development Plans. In Aberdeen, the Development Plan is in two parts. The Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan sets out the broad vision, objectives and development requirements for both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. More detailed policies, proposals and land allocations are then set out in Local Development Plans which cover individual local authority areas. This is the Main Issues Report for the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan and it covers the whole of the Aberdeen City area.

This Main Issues Report is the first stage in producing a revised and updated Local Development Plan for Aberdeen which, when adopted, will replace the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012. It has been informed by:

- Pre-Main Issues Report consultation,
- The Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan,
- Monitoring of key changes since the preparation of the 2012 Local Development Plan,
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment,
- The National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy (including their draft replacements) and
- Other key plans, strategies and legislation.



1.2 Vision and Objectives

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan must be consistent with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP). The Proposed Strategic Development Plan vision is to make the area an even more attractive, prosperous and sustainable European city region and an excellent place to live, visit and do business. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan will share the main aims of the Proposed SDP which are to:

- provide a strong framework for investment decisions which help to grow and diversify the regional economy, supported by promoting the need to use resources more efficiently and effectively, and
- take on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change.

This is the same vision as that in the current Local Development Plan and we would anticipate that much of the new Plan will be the same. The Local Development Plan will also be informed by a number of national, regional and local strategies and plans, but the National Planning Framework (NPF) is likely to be particularly important. The National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) is under review and will be replaced in due course by NPF3.

NPF2 highlighted the importance of the area around Aberdeen as an energy hub, and referred to ongoing activities including the Energetica project which aims to build on offshore energy skills and expertise to support the development of emerging renewable and clean energy technologies. The strategic importance of Aberdeen Harbour, work to improve the built environment of the City, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and air links to the region were also emphasised.

The emerging strategy for the NPF3 takes forward these themes, and prioritises key developments for the coming years, including the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour which is proposed as a National Development. It also recognises the importance of improved access to Aberdeen International Airport. The Energetica project continues to bring together these development aspirations, and link them with ongoing and planned transport improvements.

The key themes that emerge from both the NPF3 Main Issues Report and the Proposed SDP are summarised in the following list:

- Make sure the area has enough people, homes (including affordable homes) and jobs to support the level of services and facilities needed to maintain and improve the quality of life.
- Protect and improve our valued assets and resources, including the built and natural environment and our cultural heritage.
- Help create sustainable mixed communities supported by robust strategic infrastructure.
- Make the most efficient use of the transport network, reducing the need for people to travel and making sure that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices.
- Promote a low carbon economy.
- Maintain connections by land, air and sea.

1.3 Aberdeen Main Issues Report

The role of the Main Issues Report is to stimulate debate on the main planning issues facing Aberdeen and to suggest possible options for dealing with these issues. It is not intended to cover all policy topics that will eventually be in the Local Development Plan – rather it covers those areas where change from the current Plan is proposed. There will be a further opportunity to comment when the Proposed Local Development Plan is published next year. The timetable for preparation of the Local Development Plan is set out in the table below.

During the Pre-Main Issues Report stakeholder engagement, a number of broad themes emerged which people were particularly interested in or concerned about. Not all issues raised can be addressed through the planning system. We have therefore, structured this Main Issues Report around the following planning themes:

- City Centre and Retailing
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Business and Industry
- Housing and Community
- Design and the Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Resources

Key Stage	Dates
Publish Main Issues Report and Monitoring Statement for consultation.	January 2014
Consult on the Main Issues Report.	13 January 2014 to 24 March 2014
Publish Proposed Local Development Plan and Proposed Action Programme.	February 2015
Consult on Proposed Local Development Plan and Proposed Action Programme.	February 2015 to April 2015
Submit Proposed Local Development Plan, Action Programme and Report of Conformity with Participation Statement to Ministers. Publicise submission of Plan.	November 2015
Examination of Proposed Plan.	November 2015 to July 2016
Report of Examination in Public published and submitted to Aberdeen City Council.	July 2016
Aberdeen City Council adopts Plan.	October 2016

We have identified 13 main issues from these themes and have set out reasonable options to deal with the issue, including our preferred option. For each of the main issues we would welcome views on:

- **Whether you agree with the preferred option?**
- **If not, whether you support any of the alternate options presented?**
- **If not, whether you have ideas for options that should be considered?**

Alongside the main issues there are also 21 questions on other related proposals which we would like to hear your views on.

The Monitoring Report which accompanies this Main Issues Report contains a list of policies in the existing Local Development Plan and our suggestions on how to take these, and possible new policies forward. The Monitoring Report also contains a list of Supplementary Guidance and Technical Advice Notes with our suggestions on how these may change.

1.4 What Should I Do Next?

As an interested individual or group you can help and contribute to the process of preparing the Local Development Plan by telling us what you think about the options and questions set out in this Main Issues Report or related land use planning issues in Aberdeen.

Comments should be submitted to the Council using the representation form, copies of which are available online from the Council's website, within City libraries or from the address below.

The consultation period will commence on **13 January 2014 and run for 10 weeks until 24 March 2014**. Comments can be submitted by post or email using the contact details set out below.

Local Development Plan Team Aberdeen City Council

Business Hub 4
Ground Floor North
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

E-mail : ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Tel : 01224 523317

Fax : 01224 636181



2. Settlement Strategy

2.1 Main Issue 1 - Greenfield Housing and Employment Allocations

The 2012 Local Development Plan allocates land for housing and employment over two phases in line with the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009. Although the Structure Plan is being replaced by the Strategic Development Plan, the amount of greenfield land we need to allocate has not changed. Therefore, it is proposed that the greenfield allocations included in the 2012 Local Development Plan will be carried forward to the next Plan, and the Main Issues Report reflects this.

The Proposed Strategic Development Plan states that around half of all new development in the city region will be within Aberdeen City. Development on brownfield sites will be encouraged; however, the scale of growth required means that more than half of new development will need to take place on greenfield sites. New development should aim to reduce travel distances and make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive to people. We will need to make sure that secondary schools, associated primary schools and improvements to transport infrastructure are provided, including improvements to the Haudagain Roundabout and providing a third Don crossing. Table 1 shows the housing allowances and the employment land allocations set by the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.

The Examination into the 2012 Local Development Plan confirmed the existing sites and we consider the rationale behind them to be robust. The release of sites in both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire means that the effective land supply has risen from around 6,000 units to 11,000 in 2013. We think that the overall vision and spatial strategy of the Local Development Plan remains appropriate. In order to maintain an effective supply 10 years from the predicted date of adoption as required by the regulations, the greenfield housing units that are identified for 2017 - 2026 would be released by the new Local Development Plan (see Table 2 below). Land for these units has already been identified in the current Local Development Plan, although it has not yet been released for development. This would provide sufficient land to meet the allowance for this phase. The Proposed Strategic Development Plan already seeks to provide a generous supply of housing and employment land and there is no numerical justification to allocate further greenfield housing or employment sites. However, it is considered that a number of additional small sites could be identified as preferred options around Peterculter to increase housing choice there and to support the primary school. These are set out in Table 3.

We will carry over all the greenfield housing allowances to 2026 and those allowances we identified to 2035. We will identify brownfield sites for the first phase only as it is difficult to predict the availability of brownfield sites too far into the future. All of the employment land allocations – including strategic reserve land – are identified through to 2035 (see Table 2). This is our preferred spatial strategy.

Table 1 : Proposed SDP Housing and Employment Land Allowances

	Housing Allowances		
	Existing LDP allocations to 2016	2017-2026	2027-2035
Brownfield	4,500	3,000	3,000
Greenfield	12,000	5,000	4,500
	Employment Land Allowances (hectares)		
	105		70

Table 2 : Greenfield Development Allowances and Allocations

Housing Allowances	Existing LDP Allowances to 2016	2017-2026	2027-2030	Total
OP10 East Woodcroft North	60			60
OP12 Grandhome	2,600	2,100	2,300	7,000
OP25 Dubford	550			550
OP24 Stoneywood	500			500
OP29 Craibstone South	750	250	0	1,000
OP30 Rowett South	1,000	700	240	1,940
OP31 Greenferns Landward	750	250	500	1,500
OP135 Woodside	300			300
OP41 Kingswells C	50			50
OP42 Kingswells D and West Huxsterstone	120			120
OP43 Maidencraig South East	450			450
OP44 Maidencraig North East	300			300
OP45 Greenferns	600	350	400	1,350
OP58 Countesswells	2,150	850	0	3,000
OP59 Peterculter East	25			25
OP60 Culter House Road	5			5
OP61 Edgehill Road	5			5
OP62 Oldfold	400	150	0	550
OP64 Craigton Road/Airyhall Rd	20			20
OP65 North Garthdee Farm	80			80
OP134 Peterculter Burn	19			19
OP77 Loirston	1,100	400	0	1,500
Aberdeen City Total	11,834	5,050	3,440	20,324
Proposed SDP Allowances	12,000	5,000	4,000	21,000

Employment Land (hectares)	Existing LDP Allowances to 2026	Strategic Reserve 2027-2035	Total
OP2 Murcar		27	27
OP12 Grandhome	5		5
OP26 Craibstone North and Walton Farm	1.5	18.5	20
OP28 Rowett North	34.5		34.5
OP40 Prime 4 Kingswells	50		50
OP45 Greenferns	10		10
OP46 East Arnhall	1		1
OP58 Countesswells	10		10
OP62 Oldfold	5		5
OP69 Aberdeen Gateway extension	2		2
OP77 Loirston	11		11
OP78 Charlestown		20.5	20.5
Aberdeen City Total	130	66	196
Proposed SDP Allocations	105	70	175

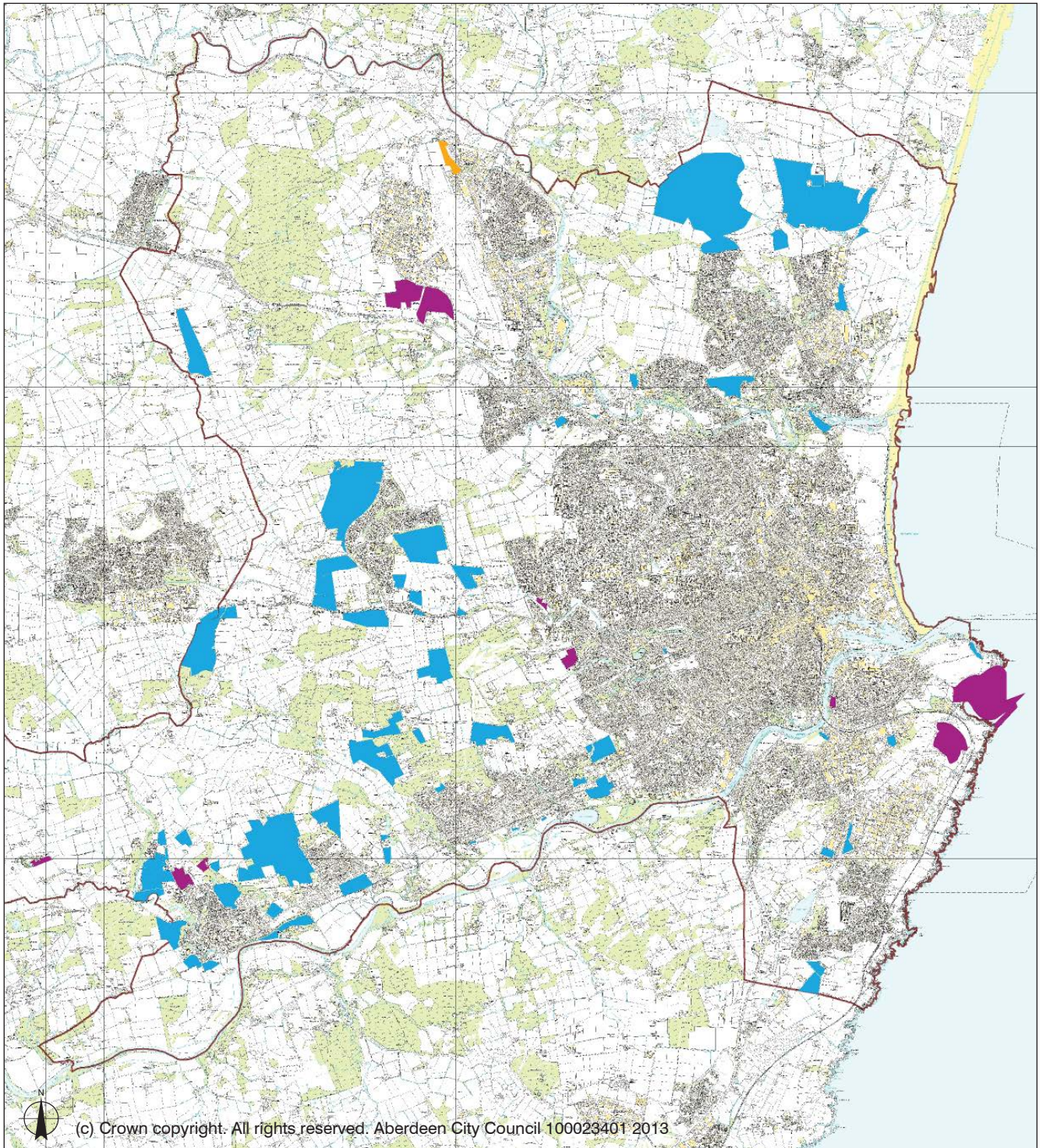
Table 3 : Preferred Development Options at Peterculter

Reference	Site	Proposal
B0905	Woodend Site 1 Peterculter	14 to 16 houses
B0904	Woodend Site 2 Peterculter	3 houses
B0913	Malcolm Road East and the remaining land to the south west between Malcolm Road and Bucklerburn Road	71 houses
B0914	Mid Anguston	8 houses

The development industry and landowners submitted over 80 proposals for sites to be included in the Main Issues Report during the Pre-Main Issues consultation stage (see Map 1: Development Bids 2013). Some of the proposals on brownfield or previously identified sites are considered appropriate and have been included as 'preferred' development options here. However,

for the greenfield sites we think there is no overriding benefit arising from the new development bids which would justify allocating them for development (with the exceptions of Aberdeen Harbour and Ness Solar Farm which are dealt with later and the sites around Peterculter identified in Table 3). They are however, included as an alternative to our preferred option.

Map 1 : Development Bids and Representations 2013 - Recommendations



Key to the Development Bid recommendations

- Desirable
- Possible
- Undesirable

Issue 1 : Greenfield Housing and Employment Allocations	
Do we need to add to the greenfield housing and/or employment land supply by allocating more sites?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current and Preferred Approach	
Carry over existing Local Development Plan allocations and do not release further land from greenfield sites, other than the existing Phase 2 housing allocations and the sites at Peterculter identified in Table 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach would make the Local Development Plan consistent with the Proposed Strategic Development Plan. • These allocations already provide a generous supply of housing and employment sites. • Continues to support the development of brownfield sites. • Protects existing Green Belt and green spaces.
Option 2 – Alternative Option	
Release further greenfield housing and/or employment land to increase supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach would make the Local Development Plan inconsistent with the Proposed Strategic Development Plan. • This could undermine brownfield and sustainable development. • Further infrastructure is likely to be required and it may undermine the delivery of existing infrastructure. • Further encroachment onto Green Belt and green spaces is likely.

2.2 Brownfield Sites and Other Proposals

A number of brownfield sites and other proposals have emerged during the Pre-Main Issues consultation which we think could be included as opportunity sites in the next Local Development Plan (see Maps 2- 6).

Craiginchies (B1202) – The proposed closure of HMP Aberdeen at Craiginchies presents an opportunity to redevelop this 1.5 ha site. Although no uses are currently proposed, the site lies in a predominantly residential area so a mixture of residential and other compatible uses are likely to be acceptable. There are however, school capacity issues at Walker Road Primary School which will need to be considered.

Grove Nursery (B1002) – Following a Council resolution part of this site could be identified for social enterprises specialising in nursery, horticulture and/or allotments and other associated uses.

Raiths Rail Freight Facility (B0105) – A change of use to employment land is proposed on the unused part of the site that is currently zoned as T1 Land for Transport. Before this happens, it would need to be confirmed that this land is not likely to be required for any future expansion of the rail freight facility. In addition there is no requirement to identify additional employment land. We have therefore referred to this as being a ‘possible’ development option, rather than a ‘preferred’ one at this stage.

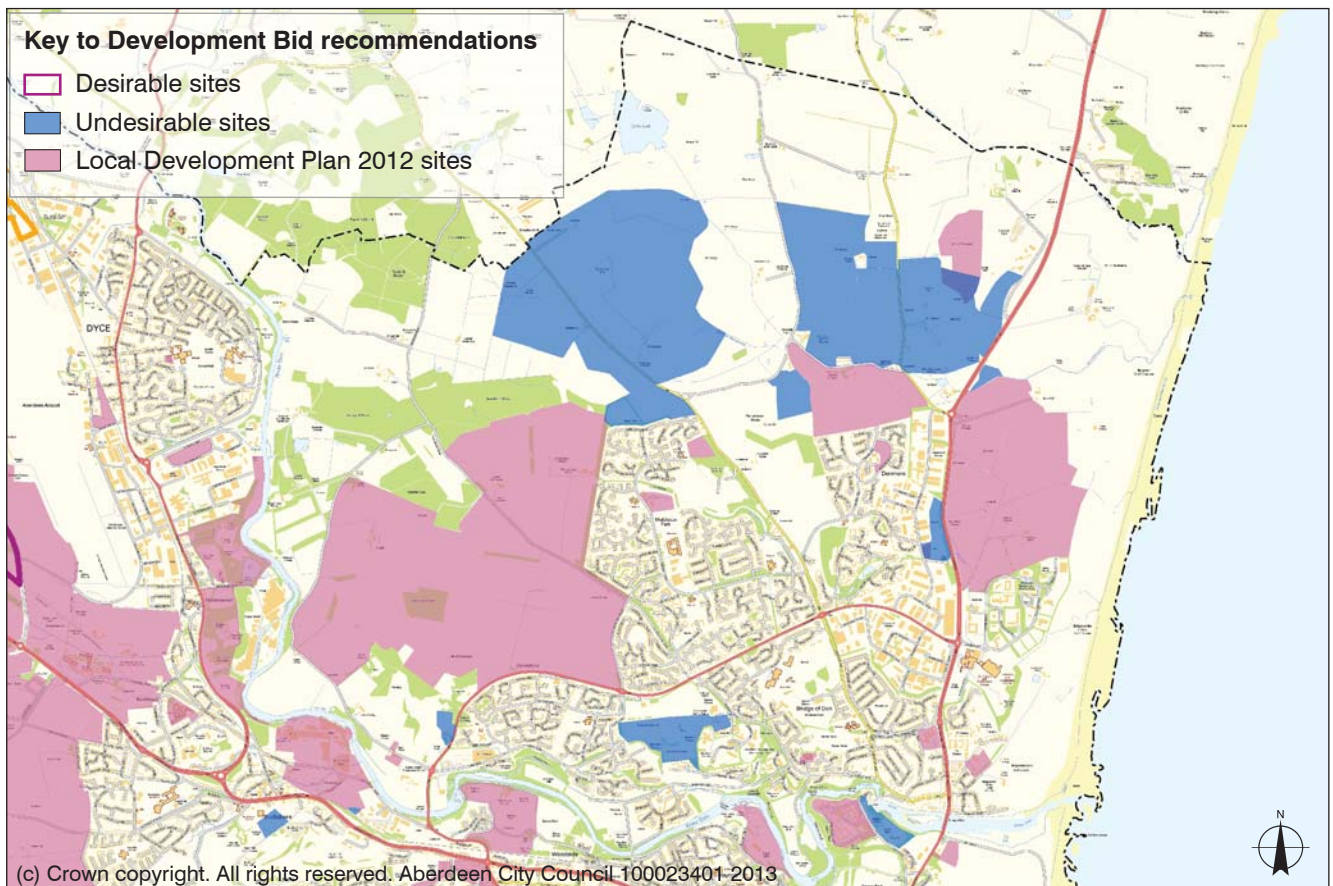
Charlie’s House, Woodend Hospital West (B0302/0307)– This is a proposal to develop a specialist care facility for children which would serve the North East of Scotland. It may be necessary to alter the layout of the proposed development from that which has been submitted with this bid in order to best accommodate the development in light of flooding and slope issues which have been identified on part of the site.

Dyce Drive (Part of OP32)(040/OP32_1; 040/OP32_2) – The Dyce Drive employment area is currently split between two zonings – BI1 Business and Industry (which allows Class 4, 5 and 6 uses) and BI2 Specialist Employment (which restricts uses to Class 4 offices). However, nearly all of the BI2 Specialist Employment land now has planning permission for Class 5 and 6 uses as well as Class 4. We therefore propose to rezone the BI2 land at Dyce Drive to BI1.

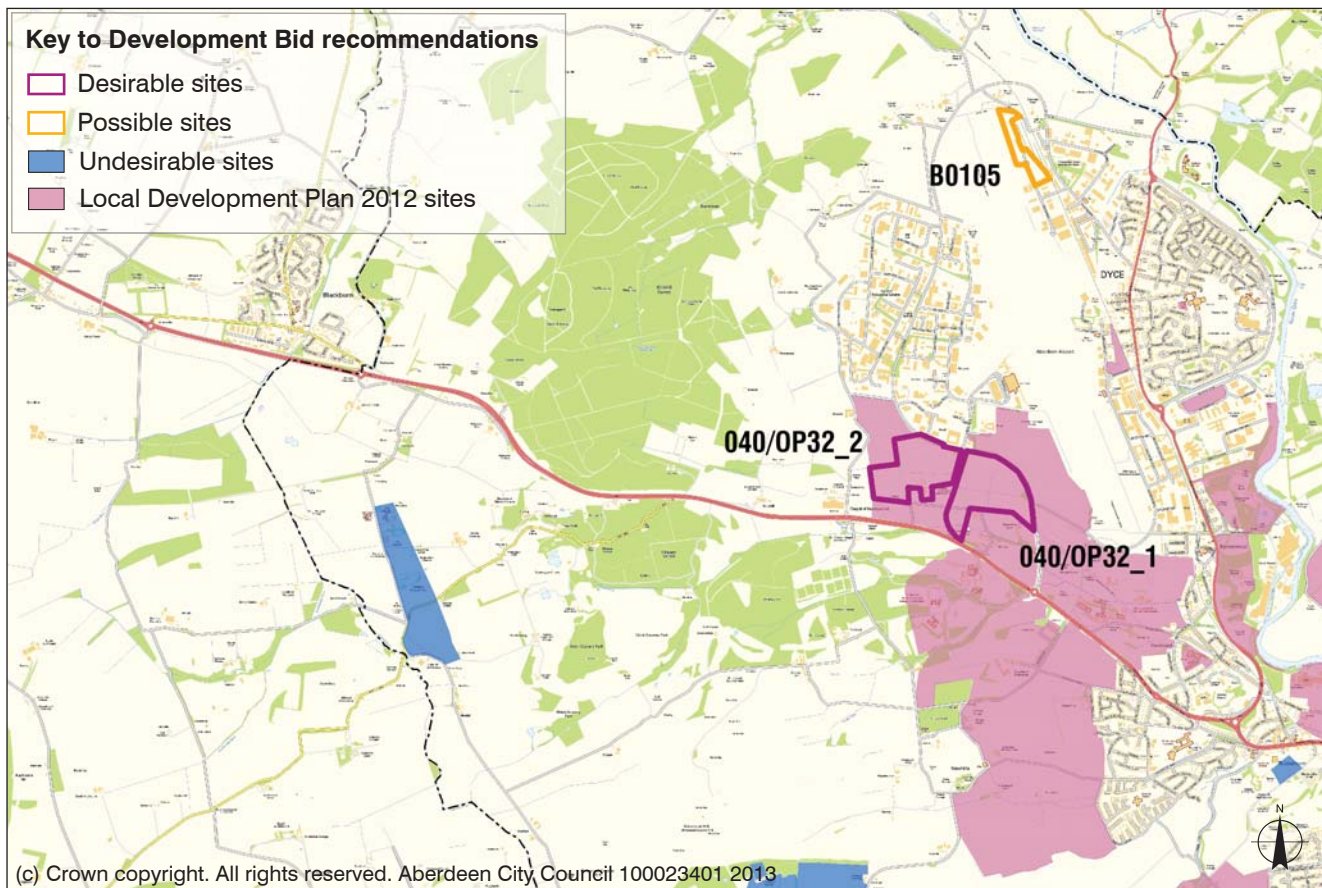
Other proposals detailed elsewhere in this Main Issues Report include the following proposals:

- Retail proposals (in Sections 3 Aberdeen City Centre and Section 4 Retail Centres outwith the City Centre).
- New Schools Proposals (in Section 5 Infrastructure and Transport).
- A number of transportation proposals are carried forward from the current Local Development Plan. Some new proposals are also listed but because they have not yet been fully designed, it is not possible to map these at this stage (in Section 5).
- Aberdeen Harbour expansion (054)(in Section 6 Supporting Business and Industrial Development).
- Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (in Section 6).
- Ness Solar Farm (051)(in Section 10 Climate Change).

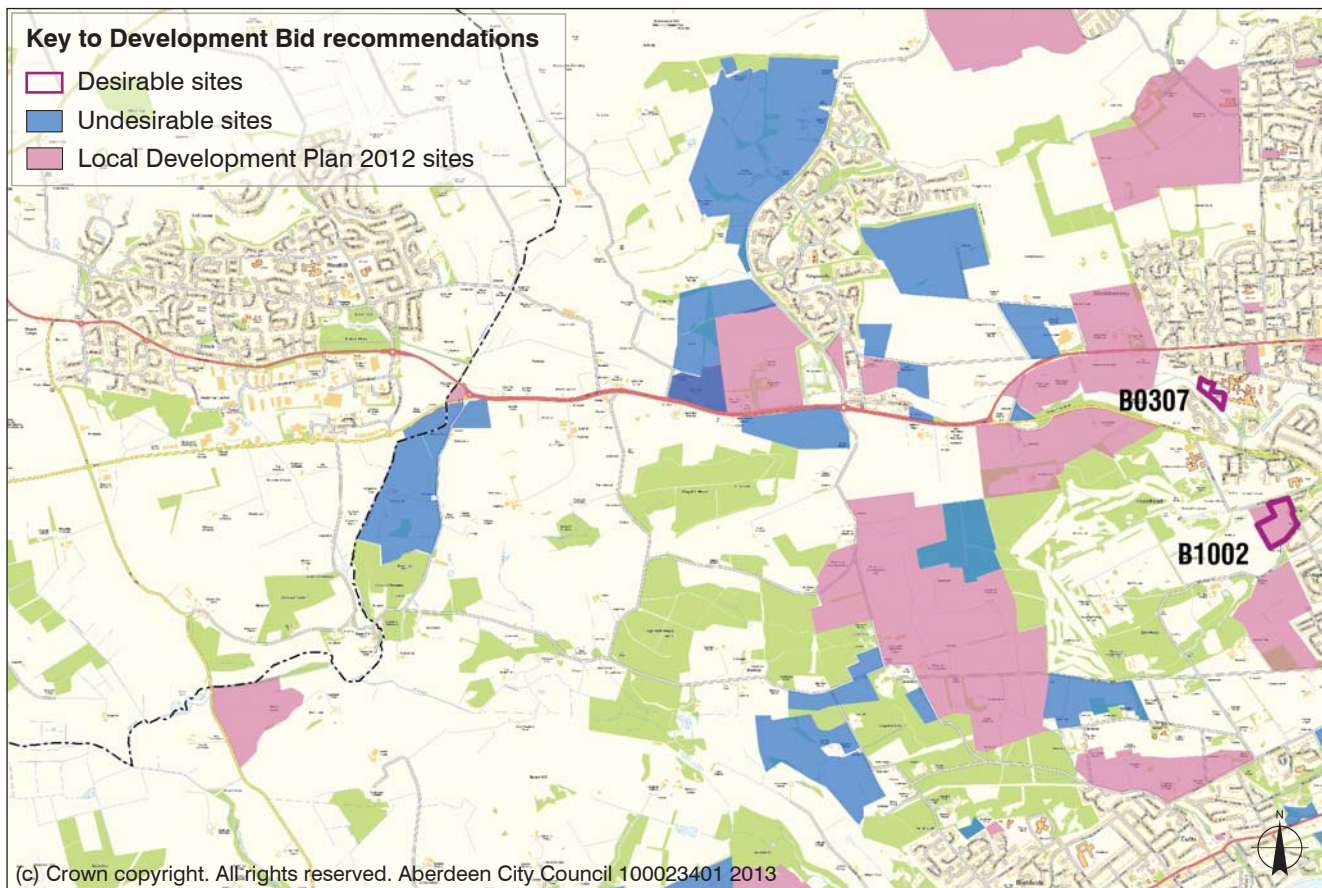
Map 2 : Bridge of Don



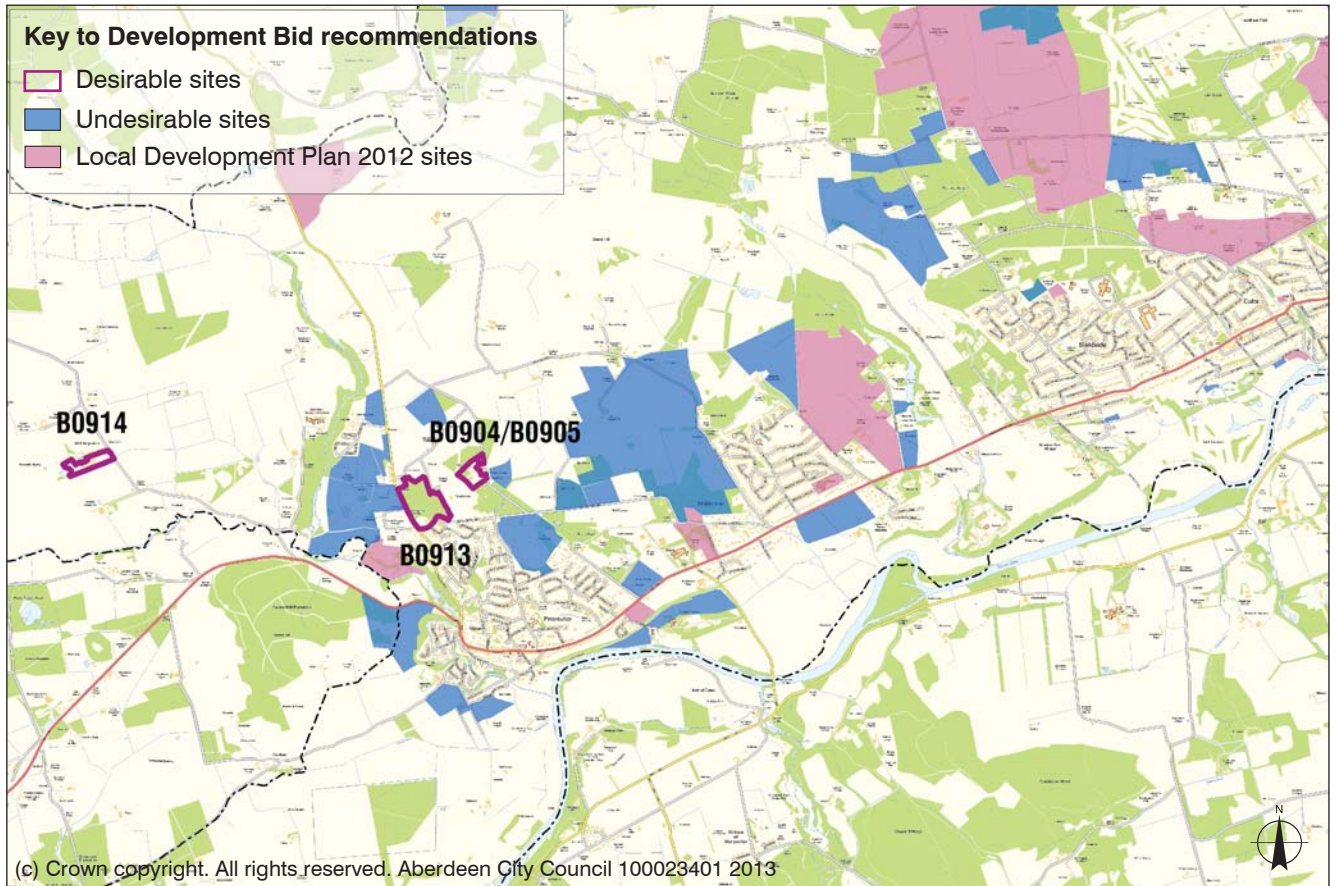
Map 3 : Dyce and Bucksburn



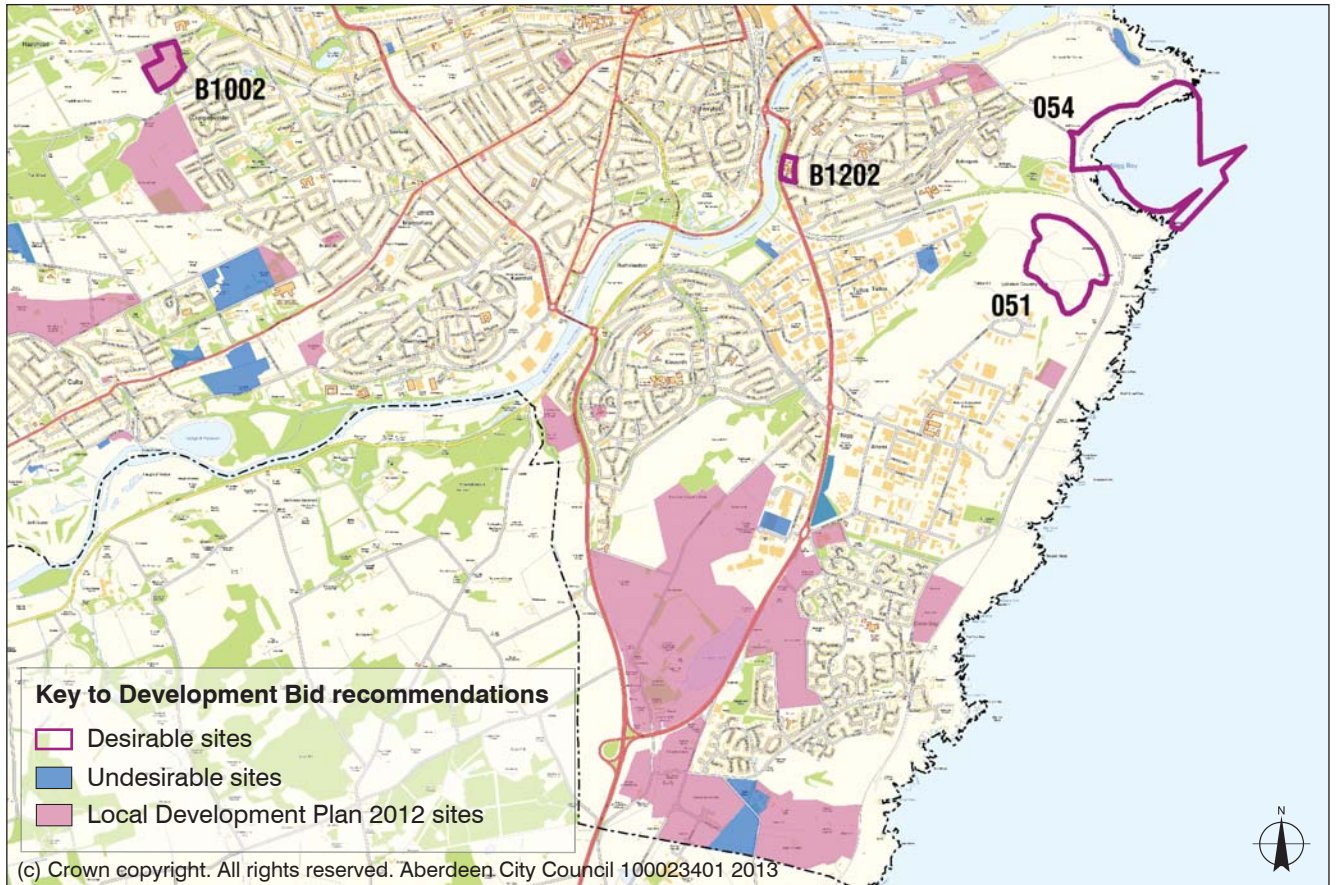
Map 4 : Kingswells and Countesswells



Map 5 : Deeside



Map 6 : Torry, Kincorth and Cove



3. Aberdeen City Centre

3.1 City Centre - Background

The current Local Development Plan recognises that the City Centre plays a major role in the commercial, economic, social, civic and cultural life of Aberdeen and the wider North East.

The City Centre is an important regional centre providing a focus for employment and business interaction, it offers access to a wide range of goods and services, and it is a place where many people meet socially and choose to live and visit. It is especially important given the need for Aberdeen to be internationally competitive with other global oil and gas centres in order to anchor our oil and gas economy in the long term.

Throughout our Pre-Main Issues Report consultation earlier this year the City Centre was raised as a major issue with many saying there is a need for improvement. It is vital for the future prosperity of Aberdeen that the City Centre is enhanced and promoted as a safe, attractive, accessible and well connected place which contributes to an improved quality of life.

The City Centre has a strong character and a rich urban legacy. It includes a number of listed buildings and conservation areas, as well as the remnants of a historical street pattern and areas of archaeological significance. Union Street lies at the heart of the City Centre and epitomises Aberdeen to residents and visitors to the City alike.

The City Centre is the focus of the City's transport routes and includes hubs for bus, rail and ferry. There are relatively limited areas of open space, with two parks at Union Terrace Gardens and Bon Accord Terrace Gardens.

Recently there has been a lot of discussion regarding town and city centres across the United Kingdom. Draft Scottish Planning Policy (2013) and the National Review of Town Centres (2013) have proposed a 'town centre first' policy approach for all footfall creating uses, such as retail, employment, culture etc. This means that such uses should be located in town centres ahead of other locations. Aberdeen City Council has promoted this approach for a number of years as it is been recognised that a mix of uses is important for a vibrant City Centre. Therefore, we will continue with this approach for the City Centre. There are a number of committed and proposed projects within the City Centre that will help create a better place for people to live, work and visit. These are the potential pedestrianisation of Union

Street, pedestrian friendly spaces at Marischal Square and redeveloping St Nicholas House.

Recently, there have been different partners and organisations leading on a number of initiatives across the City Centre such as The Aberdeen Inspired Business Improvement District and the Townscape Heritage Initiative. Robert Gordon University has also produced a paper on 'Regenerating Aberdeen: A Vision for a Thriving and Vibrant City Centre.'

The City Centre Development Framework is Supplementary Guidance to the 2012 Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The Development Framework aims to create and maintain 'a sense of place' by separating the City Centre into a number of character areas and improving accessibility. Building on the Robert Gordon University paper we intend to revise the Development Framework to develop key themes and express these as a City Centre Vision and Masterplan which will replace the existing City Centre Development Framework.

Proposed Changes

3.2 Main Issue 2 - City Centre Vision

We propose that the Aberdeen City Centre Vision and Masterplan document should address five main themes - Urban Design, Cultural Vision, Union Street, North South Access and Links to the Sea.

- **Theme 1: Urban Design**

We want to balance conserving the historic character of Aberdeen with carefully considered high quality contemporary architecture. The Vision and Masterplan will include a Union Street Conservation Character Appraisal. We propose creating a green transport strategy combined with appropriate use of public space in the City Centre by preparing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) which we discuss later in this section.

- **Theme 2: Cultural Vision**

It is essential that the City Centre is the focus of cultural activity for not only Aberdeen, but the North East of Scotland. The City should incubate culture and extend the range of provision to retain talent in the City. There are major refurbishment proposals for Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Music Hall. There has also been major investment at the Tivoli Theatre.

- **Theme 3: Union Street**

Union Street connects all areas of the City Centre together and presents a unifying spine to the central core of the City. The character and identity of Union Street must be clearly defined, maintained and enhanced – combined with a strategy for its future function and activity.

- **Theme 4: North South Access**

Retail activity is focussed around the Bon Accord, St Nicholas, Trinity and Union Square shopping centres but delivering pedestrian priority and comfort between the north and south of these areas is challenging. Orientation and wayfinding from Guild Street is required. We need a clear brief for Denburn Valley, incorporating Denburn, Woolmanhill to the north, Belmont Street and Union Terrace east-west and Union Bridge through to Guild Street to the south.

- **Theme 5: Links to the Sea**

The City has turned its back on the sea. We have a working harbour right in the heart of the City Centre and a sea beach within walking distance of Union Street. Neither is perceived to be accessible to the City Centre.

We would like to develop the Aberdeen City Centre Vision and Masterplan and adopt it as Supplementary Guidance to the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Issue 2 : City Centre Vision	
What do you want your City Centre to be like by 2035 and how should it be used?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Policy Approach	
City Centre Development Framework is the strategy for the City Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This gives direction for development in the City Centre but does not focus on implementation.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Continue work on the Aberdeen City Centre Vision and Masterplan and adopt it as Supplementary Guidance to the new plan. The public sector will lead on the implementation of the strategy with help from private investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing this work will give the City Centre a robust strategy, direction for development and will focus on implementation. • A City Centre team to be set up to lead on and co-ordinate development. • Public funding constraints.
Option 3 – Alternative Option	
Continue work on the Aberdeen City Centre Vision and Masterplan and adopt it as Supplementary Guidance to the new plan. Implementation will happen through market demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing this work will give the City Centre a robust strategy, a direction for development and will focus on implementation. • It is not known how the market will react.

3.3 Review of City Centre Boundaries

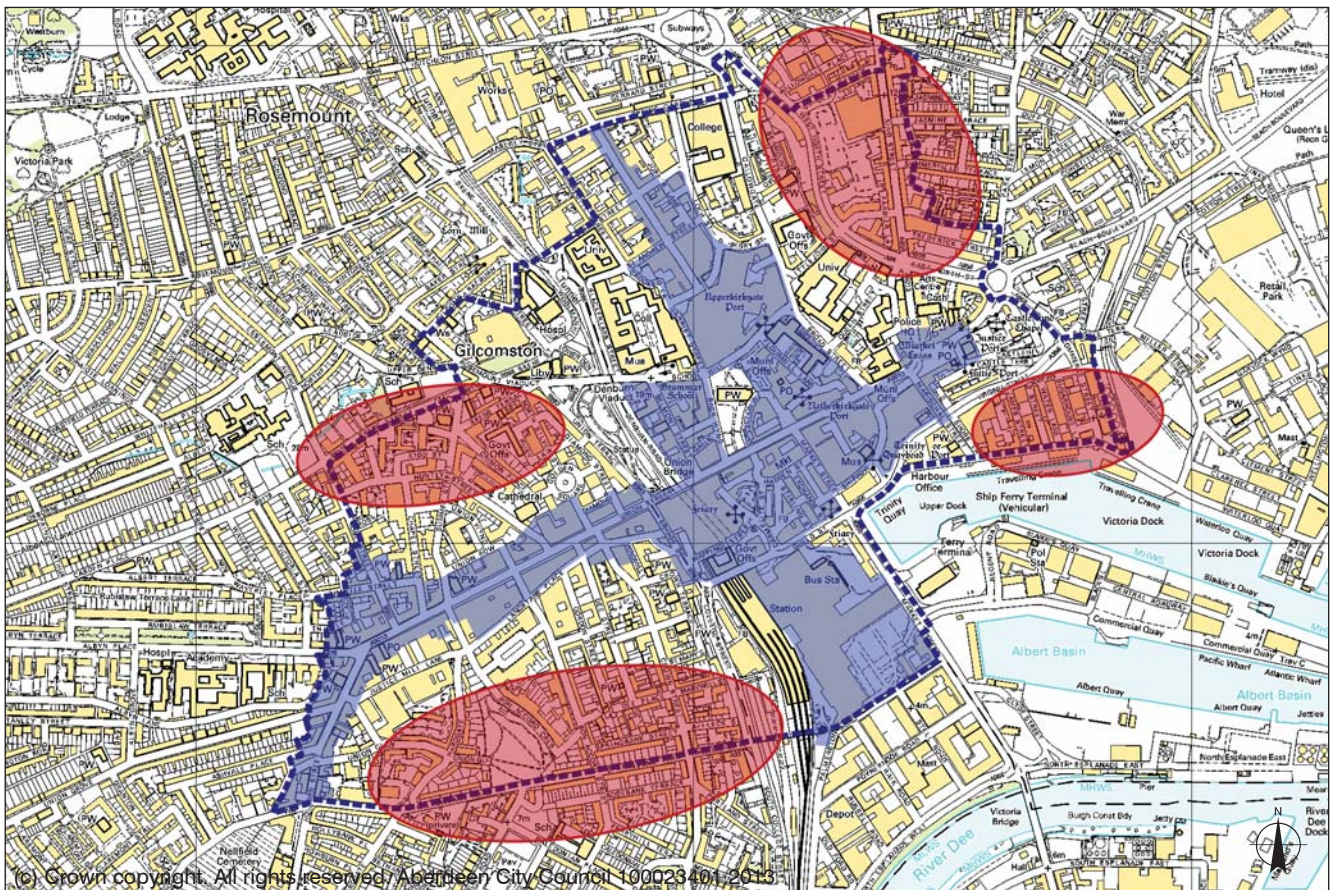
A review of the City Centre and / or City Centre Business Zone boundaries is proposed. This review would concentrate on providing a more focused vision for the City Centre. Areas which we think could be excluded from the City Centre boundary include King Street, Skene Street and north Ferryhill (see Map 7).

Question 1




Review of City Centre Boundaries

What do you think is important to include within the City Centre boundary and why?

Map 7 : City Centre and City Centre Business Zone Boundaries



Key

-  Existing City Centre Boundary
-  Existing City Centre Business Zone
-  Proposed areas to be removed from within the City Centre Boundary

3.4 Design Expectations in the City Centre

The existing City Centre Development Framework touches on the need for quality design solutions in the City Centre and the need for all development to make a contribution to the wider context of Aberdeen. We feel that a stronger policy stance is required so that excellent design quality within the City can be encouraged, and substandard proposals can be refused.

As discussed in Chapter 7, better design quality, both in terms of individual buildings and the wider places and spaces, is something which we want to achieve across the whole City. We need to drive standards of design even higher and strive for excellence. This is particularly important in the City Centre as it is here where the character and identity of our City is especially prominent and where the majority of our social and business interactions take place.

We intend to introduce a new policy which specifically considers design quality in the City Centre and for which all applications within the City Centre boundary will be assessed against, no matter the scale of the proposal. We want to make it clear that proposals that do not demonstrate an appropriately high quality design solution will not be supported. The City Centre also has a number of specific design issues which we intend to address within this policy, including feature lighting and public realm and public art.

3.5 High Quality Contemporary Design

The City Centre has over the last few centuries developed a uniformity of materials and styles, which is particularly reflected in the prominence of granite buildings. Contemporary architecture in Aberdeen City Centre is not obvious and when many people think of contemporary buildings they think of tower blocks from the 1960s and 1970s. A number of examples of successful modern architecture do however exist, for example the extension to His Majesty's Theatre, the former General Post Office Building on Crown Street and the Maritime Museum.

The use of granite unites many periods and styles of building and gives the City Centre its unique character. Although developments will be expected to consider and reflect the City's rich heritage, we propose that where there are opportunities for contemporary design solutions then these should be actively encouraged and embraced. This is something which our consultation with young people particularly touched upon.

Question 2

City Centre Design Policy

- a. Do you think we should have a new policy which specifically addresses the design quality of proposals within the City Centre?
- b. What other things do you think we could do to improve design quality within the City Centre?

Question 3

High Quality Contemporary Design

- a. What ways are there to encourage more opportunities for high quality contemporary design in the City Centre?
- b. Is this something we should do?

3.6 Tall and/or Bulky Buildings

Tall buildings are defined as buildings which exceed the general height of its surrounding context and/or which significantly change the skyline. A bulky building may not breach the skyline, but may be viewed as at odds with its surroundings from strategic locations. Not all 'big' buildings have to be seen as tall or bulky however. Marischal College is a very large building at the heart of the City Centre, but its design means that it fits in comfortably with the surrounding streetscape and urban realm.

It is important that new development makes a positive contribution to the City Centre, and the impact of development on the skyline and the prevalent built form must be properly addressed. It is considered that a new policy on Tall and/or Bulky Buildings is required.

This policy would address locations where tall and bulky buildings might be limited to, for example, the Palmerston area to the south of the City Centre. It could also address how proposals contribute positively to the associated street scene. We think that proposals for tall and/or bulky buildings must be of excellent design quality, show a clear assessment of local character and identity, consider strategic views and vistas, and contribute positively to placemaking. The lighting and climatic impacts of such buildings are also important considerations which we think this policy should address.

3.7 Public Realm and Wayfinding

Public realm is the space between buildings, including streets, footways, squares, gardens, and landscaping. These areas, such as St Nicholas Street, set the scene for social interaction and cultural activities. They are just as important as the buildings and uses which surround them. High quality public realm is essential to the future success of the City Centre; if it looks good, and is easy, comfortable and safe to walk around, then the more successful it will be.

Currently we have no specific guidance which addresses the high design quality we expect within these spaces, or indeed how we expect the public realm of the City Centre to be treated. We think that a new Supplementary Guidance document is required which focuses specifically on public realm and public spaces throughout the city, but particularly within the City Centre. This could look at wayfinding, materials for street and road surfaces, areas for shelter, street lighting, and where and how public art should be incorporated.

This Supplementary Guidance could take the form of a Streetscape Manual in order to guide future public realm projects. As the majority of public realm areas within the City Centre are owned and maintained by Aberdeen City Council, this guidance would have to reflect the priorities of a number of different Council's services in order to be successful.

Question 4

Tall and/or Bulky Buildings

- a. Where do you think would be the most appropriate locations for new tall and/or bulky buildings to be located?
- b. Are there any locations where you think tall and/or bulky buildings should not be allowed? Where do you think these are?
- c. What do you think is important for us to consider when assessing proposals for tall and/or bulky buildings?

Question 5

Public Realm and Wayfinding

- a. What type of things do you think a new Streetscape Manual should consider?
- b. What can be done to improve wayfinding throughout the City Centre (particularly between the north and south of the City Centre through the level changes)?

3.8 Main Issue 3 - Retail in the City Centre

Following the opening of Union Square and the extension and improvement of Bon Accord and St Nicholas Centres there is still demand for growth and investment from the retail sector in the City Centre.

Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority have recently commissioned a retail study for the North East region. The conclusions of the study show there is potential for developing an additional 30,000 - 35,000 m² of retail floorspace in the City Centre by 2022. This is approximately the size of floorspace offered in the ground floor of Union Square (including the outdoor retail park). This potential is driven by a combination of expenditure growth per capita and large population increases within the catchment area served by the City Centre. Additional floorspace will also help to prevent expenditure leakage and maintain the City Centre as the primary retail area of the North East. Aberdeen has retail units dispersed throughout the City Centre, however, there are two areas of retail focus: the retail core (John Lewis to Union Square and Broad Street to Bon Accord Street) where many multiples are located; and the West End which is dominated by independent retailers.

The current Local Development Plan identifies a Regional Centre zoning and within that a City Centre Business Zone. Two policies cover these zonings, **Policy C1: City Centre Development – Regional Centre** and **Policy C2: City Centre Business Zone and Union Street**. The current Plan reinforces the role of the City Centre as the regional centre and it is the preferred location for retail, leisure and commercial development serving a city wide or regional market. The City Centre Business Zone contains most of the City's shopping floorspace and this is where most new development of this nature is to be directed. We intend to draft a retail strategy within the Aberdeen City Centre Vision and Masterplan informed by the findings of the retail study. We would like to identify land for retail development in the City Centre. Retail should be located in close proximity to Union Street between the north / south bookends of Union Square and Bon Accord Centre and the east / west bookends of Broad Street to Huntly Street.

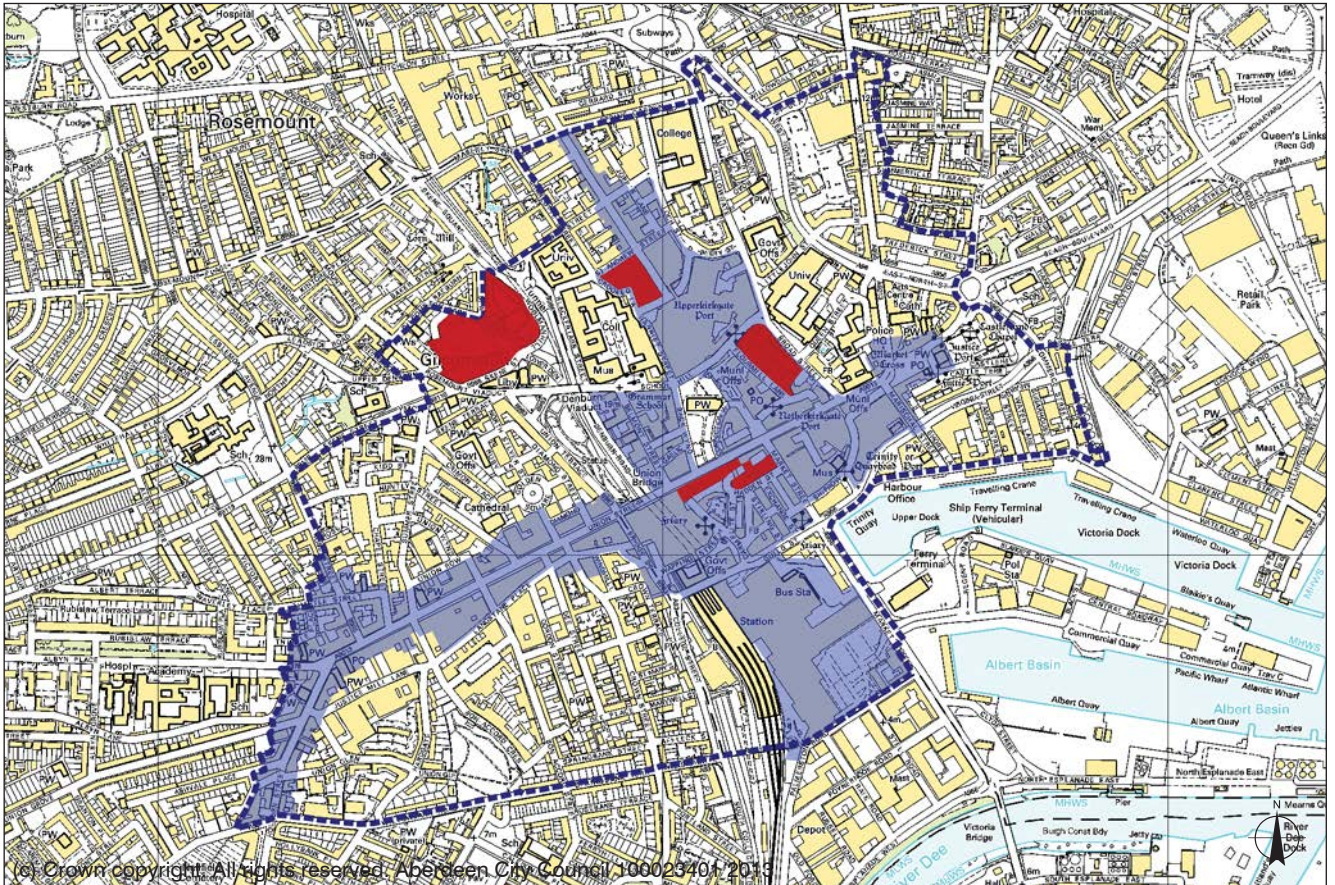
There is no site large enough in the City Centre to accommodate the amount of retail development identified in the retail study. Therefore, we need to explore opportunities to maximise the floorspace available, at all levels, on Union Street and possible extensions to the existing shopping centres in the City Centre. A number of other locations have been suggested through the retail study that could contribute. Table 4 and Map 8 detail this below (please note that sites are not ordered in preference).






Table 4 – Opportunities for Retail Development in the City Centre Business Zone

Site	Size - Gross Floor Area (m ²) approx.	Implications
Aberdeen Market	Existing retail offering 12,500 Additional gross floor area 5,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative retail improvement. • Opportunity to address accessibility issues from the Green to Union Street. • Opportunity to address public realm issues.
Upper / Basement Floors, 73-149 Union Street	Existing retail offering 8,000 Additional gross floor area 2,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings back upper and basement floor use. • May lose some retail floorspace through redevelopment. • Listed building constraints.
St Nicholas House	<2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to address accessibility issues through St Nicholas Centre. • Opportunity to address public realm issues. • Council already has committed scheme for a mixed use development for the St Nicholas House site. • Listed building constraint – Provost Skene’s House.
George Street / Crooked Lane	6,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to enhance George Street and link to John Lewis / extend Bon Accord Centre. • Opportunity to address accessibility issues through Bon Accord Centre. • Opportunity to address public realm issues. • May lose some retail floorspace through redevelopment. • Listed building constraints.
Denburn / Woolmanhill – long term major retail development	Approx. 20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to enhance accessibility through the Denburn Valley. • Listed building constraints. • Flooding issues. • Planning Brief for the site.
Total additional floorspace within the City Centre = approx. 33,500 m² Gross Floor Area		

Map 8 : Opportunities for Retail Development in the City Centre Business Zone



Key

-  Existing City Centre Boundary
-  Existing City Centre Business Zone
-  Proposed Retail Opportunity Sites



Issue 3 : A Retail Strategy for the City Centre

Where should new retail development be located?

Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
<p>No strategy for retail development in the City Centre. However, major retail development focused within the City Centre Business Zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc approach to retail development, assessing any new development and its relationship to existing uses on its merits. • Dispersed retail locations bring a lack of legibility to the City Centre.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
<p>Find land for approx. 30,000 – 35,000 m². of retail development within the City Centre in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen Market • Upper / Basement Floors, 73-149 Union Street • St Nicholas House • George Street / Crooked Lane • Denburn and Woolmanhill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Centre to be the main destination for major retail development. • Sites may need to be assembled for retail development. • Implications detailed in Table 4. • May not deliver all the retail space required if some sites are not developed.
Option 3 – Alternative Option	
<p>As per Option 2, however if this cannot be delivered, identify further sites on the edge of the City Centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not focus all major retail development in the City Centre – this may impact on its vitality and viability. • Provides more space for retail development.



3.9 Main Issue 4 - Union Street Frontages

Union Street plays a prominent and wide-ranging role in the life of the City and has had a major role in the City's retail function. Current Supplementary Guidance for the frontages on Union Street seeks to enhance its vitality and viability by retaining units for retail use along Union Street. However, in line with Draft Scottish Planning Policy's 'Town Centre First' policy and to help address the recent increase in vacancies on Union Street, we propose to encourage a greater mix of uses to the west end of Union Street. Therefore, we are proposing to relax the Union Street Frontages Supplementary Guidance.

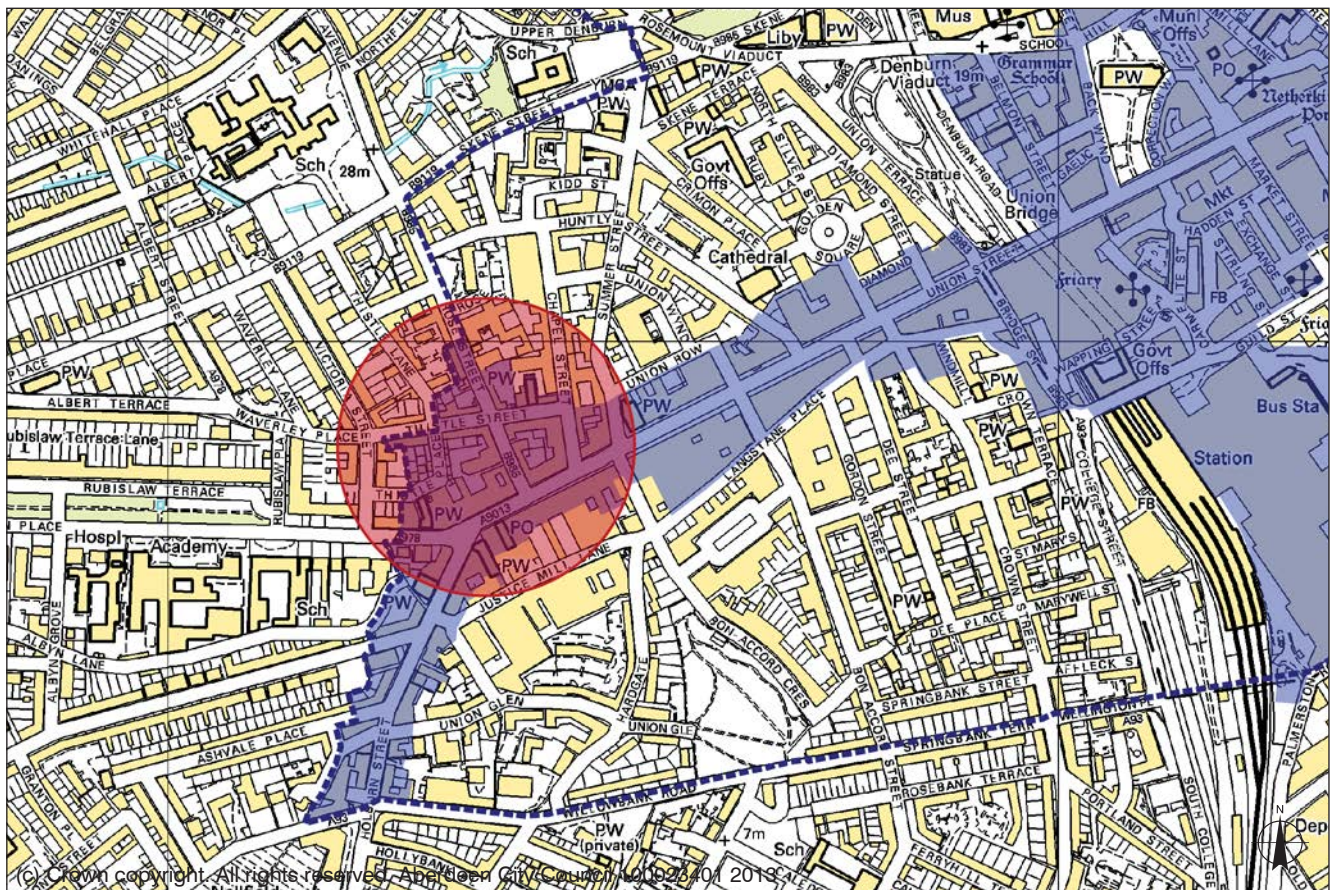
Issue 4 : Union Street Frontages	
Should there be a minimum level of retail frontage on Union Street or are other uses acceptable?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
Encourage the retention of retail on Union Street through the current policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail on Union Street is becoming fragmented due to vacancies and approved change of use applications. • Lack of demand for retail on Union Street.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Relax the current policy. Promote a mix of uses on the frontage to the west of Union Street so long as it is public space and / or puts the whole building into use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a mix of uses in the west end of Union Street. • Protect public space on the ground level of Union Street.
Option 3 – Alternative Option	
Remove the policy altogether. Allow all uses on Union Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further fragmentation of retail on Union Street. • Loss of public space on ground level.

3.10 Main Issue 5 - New Policy for the West End Shops and Cafes




Due to the proposed review of the City Centre and City Centre Business Zone designations, a new policy protecting the retail and café function around Rose Street (in the West End area north of Union Street) is also proposed.

The Council's powers to protect and promote specialist and independent stores and cafes are limited and we cannot influence the occupier of individual premises or the type of goods and services they provide. Nevertheless, we can refuse applications that result in the loss of such premises where we consider that this would harm the character, function, viability and vibrancy of the West End.

Map 9 : Approximate location of proposed West End Shops policy



Key

-  Existing City Centre Boundary
-  Existing City Centre Business Zone
-  Indicative proposed location of the West End Shops Policy

Issue 5 : New Policy for West End Shops and Cafes	
Should the West End shops and cafes be protected? If so, how? Do you agree with the proposed area (please see Map 9)? If not, what do you think the boundary should include?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
West End shops covered by City Centre Business Zone designation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West End shops are protected.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Establish a new policy to protect, encourage and enhance the West End shops and cafes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Centre Business Zone to be the main destination for major retail development. Encourage and enhance specialist / independent retail in the West End by focusing specialist / independent retail and cafes in this area.
Option 3 – Alternative Option	
No designation for the West End shops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No protection for West End shops.

3.11 The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

Aberdeen City Centre is facing many transport challenges; large numbers of movements take place here and a large surrounding population commutes into the City Centre for work and to use Aberdeen’s services and facilities. We have a working harbour in the City Centre and large numbers of movements bringing goods to and from it. The buoyant oil industry has brought affluence to the North East, meaning that car ownership is high.

These challenges have led to high car usage in the City Centre, congestion and poor air quality which exceeds both EU and national targets. Furthermore, the success of covered shopping centres and peripheral business parks has meant that many areas of the City, especially Union Street, are in need of revitalisation. The requirement to consolidate current and future transport projects within the City Centre whilst also tackling Aberdeen’s transport challenges provides us with an opportunity to create a long-term plan on how transport and movement should be shaped within the City Centre.

We want the City Centre to be both accessible and sustainable and propose to develop and deliver

a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), which would inform any Aberdeen City Centre Vision and Masterplan document. A SUMP will assist in addressing many of the issues that the City Centre is currently facing. A SUMP is essentially a transport masterplan that looks forward into the next 25 years, setting out how Aberdeen could achieve a range of urban transport solutions.

A successful SUMP:

- ensures the transport system is accessible to all,
- improves the safety and security of its users,
- reduces air and noise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption,
- improves the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the transportation of people and goods, and
- enhances the attractiveness and quality of the urban environment.

The SUMP will provide a comprehensive and detailed guide to how transport connections will develop over the next 25 years and how these connections will help to achieve regeneration of the City Centre as a whole. Examples of the type of issues it could address include the following:

- Pedestrianisation – either part or in full.
- The location of car parking and the connections between it and the City Centre.
- Public transport linkages between key locations.

Question 6

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

What are the main transport issues in the City Centre which need to be addressed in a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan?

3.12 The Beach Leisure Area

Aberdeen beach is one of the major leisure developments in the City comprising a cinema, restaurants, cafes and Codona's Amusement Park. It was apparent through early engagement on the new Local Development Plan that the beach and its facilities are well appreciated. However, the beach is not perceived as being accessible from the City Centre as the route is not very attractive or pedestrian friendly. Enhancing links between the beach and the City Centre was mentioned as something that could be improved. It was also stated that the development at the beach is rundown and needs to attract more activities. It has also become apparent (through a planning application) that there is pressure for out of centre retail development in this location.

The beach leisure area is currently zoned as Urban Green Space. However, it is realised that this zoning is inappropriate for the development at the beach. There is a lack of guidance for development at the beach and this is due to the inappropriate zoning and absence of an adopted masterplan. Therefore, it is proposed that a masterplan is prepared for the Beach Leisure Area.

Question 7

A Masterplan for the Beach Leisure Area

Should a masterplan be commissioned for the beach leisure area? What issues should the masterplan address?

How can we best connect the beach to the City Centre?

We propose changing the zoning of the development at the beach from Urban Green Space to a new 'Beach and Leisure' designation. This will encourage leisure uses that are compatible with the beach. We would propose discouraging retail development in this area in order to protect the City Centre.

Question 8

Policy Zoning for the Beach

Should the beach leisure area be zoned as 'Beach and Leisure'? If not, what should the area be zoned as?

What uses should be promoted at the Beach? Should retail be discouraged?

4. Retail Centres Outwith the City Centre

4.1 Retail Centres Outwith the City Centre - Background

As stated in Section 3: Aberdeen City Centre, the City Centre is the preferred location for retail of a regional / city wide scale. However, designating retail centres outwith the City Centre is still important as it helps create sustainable mixed communities and encourages more sustainable travel patterns.

Retail Centre Health Checks were undertaken in 2012 and will be updated every two years. During this work it became apparent that Aberdeen has a large number of centres outwith the City Centre. Although they are important, they are relatively small and can be covered by RT4: Local Shops. It was also noted that there has in the past been an inconsistent approach in designating centres. A review of the retail centres is proposed and this may result in de-designation, change of designation or boundary changes.

Due to the development of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the residential and business development allocated in the current Local Development Plan, Aberdeen will become a more attractive city for retailers. Although nothing is proposed currently for a large scale retailer to locate in Aberdeen, we must be prepared for this eventuality.

The City's network of retail centres are classified into a hierarchy. A sequential approach to assessing retail proposals is taken in accordance with the hierarchy and in line with Scottish Planning Policy. The hierarchy comprises of the regional centre (the City Centre), town centres, district centres, neighbourhood centres and retail parks. Protection is afforded to all centres except retail parks through Policy RT1 – Sequential Approach and Retail Impact. Existing local shops outside the defined centres play an important role in helping maintain sustainable communities. Therefore protection for these shops is afforded through Policy RT4 – Local Shops.

Retail facilities at a local scale are to be provided in new major developments to encourage more sustainable travel patterns.

Proposed Changes

4.2 Protect Retail Parks

Retail Parks are not afforded protection through the sequential approach and are vulnerable to the pressures of out-of-centre retail development. It is therefore proposed that retail parks are protected through the sequential approach from out of centre retail development.

Question 9 Retail Parks

Should Retail Parks be protected from the impacts of out-of-centre development through the sequential approach?

4.3 Network of Centres

It is proposed that the network of centres are rationalised through a review of the Hierarchy of Centres Supplementary Guidance. This would allow greater focus on the larger centres throughout the city and give scope for strategies to be drafted for these centres. All remaining local shops will be protected through Policy RT4 – Local Shops.

Question 10 Review the Network of Centres

Should the network of centres be reviewed? If so, can you suggest any changes that should be made?

4.4 Main Issue 6 - Retail Centres outwith the City Centre

The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2013 has looked at addressing retail deficiencies around the City. We propose to allocate land outwith the City Centre for retail development using the findings from the retail study. There are a number of committed retail opportunities across the city that have either been allocated through the existing Local Development Plan or have planning permission. Table 5 details these below.

Table 5 : Committed Retail Opportunities

Location	Proposed Development	Size GFA (m ²)
Site 4 Denmore Road	Unrestricted Class 1	7220
Dubford	Class 1	510
390-406 Great Northern Road	Convenience	230
Haudagain Roundabout	Retail Park	6500
Hazlehead Nurseries	General Comparison	500
Souter Head Road	Retail opportunity	5750
Wellington Road East	Class 1	912

Although the retail study has taken these commitments into account, it has identified that there are a number of further retail deficiencies which should be addressed (see Table 6). We think that proposals to address these deficiencies should be in addition to the opportunities detailed above in Table 5.

Table 6 : Opportunities Addressing Deficiencies

Location	Proposed Development	Size GFA (m ²)
Newhills Expansion Area	Create a new Town Centre comprising of supermarket, general comparison, local shops and retail services.	Approx. 7,500 total floorspace 4,000 supermarket 3,500 other comparison + local shops and retail services.
Zone 29 – West Aberdeen / Countesswells (please see Retail Study)	Development to address deficiency identified in Zone 29. Floorspace can be in more than one location.	Approx. 7,000 total 5,500 convenience + 1,500 general comparison + local shops and retail services.
Grandhome	Create a new Town Centre comprising of supermarket, general comparison, local shops and retail services.	Approx. 7,500 total floorspace 4,000 supermarket 3,500 other comparison + local shops and retail services.

The retail study also examined a scenario involving providing additional comparison retail floorspace in out of centre locations in the form of new retail parks. This scenario was rejected on the grounds that it would have a potential adverse impact on existing centres and could undermine retail investment in the City Centre.

Issue 6 : Retail Centres Outwith the City Centre	
Should retail be allocated outwith the City Centre beyond the committed developments detailed in Table 5? If so, where?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
No retail strategy for development outwith the City Centre. Committed developments are detailed in Table 5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc retail development. • Does not address the retail deficiencies across the city.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Allocate land for retail to address deficiencies across the city (see Table 6) along with committed developments detailed in Table 5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail development will be delivered that is appropriate to the local catchment. • Retail deficiencies across the city will be addressed. • The creation of new centres encouraging a more diverse range of uses.

4.5 Very Large Scale Single Retail Units

As mentioned above, due to future development in Aberdeen, it is now more likely that very large scale retailers (in units of around 30,000m²) may wish to locate within Aberdeen. As discussed in Chapter 2 – City Centre, there are constraints on the amount of space for retail development within the City Centre for this type of development.

If a large scale retailer wished to locate to Aberdeen, we would be interested to know your views as to where they should go. The key issues such a proposal would need to address are:

- the impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres, including the City Centre, and
- the need for good access to the transport system and by a range of transport modes.

Question 11

Very Large Scale Single Retail Units

If a large scale retailer wished to locate to Aberdeen, where should they go?

5. Infrastructure and Transport

5.1 Infrastructure and Transport Background

Throughout the Pre-Main Issues consultation, there were a number of concerns expressed over infrastructure. These focussed on current congestion issues and potential congestion arising from new development, and the ability of new developments to deliver infrastructure in a timely manner. School capacity was frequently mentioned and it was stated that new schools should have adequate space to expand if necessary.

Most major pieces of infrastructure are paid for and provided by the public sector at both local and national levels. These schemes are essential for the delivery of the spatial strategy in both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The next Local Development Plan will continue to support these schemes and safeguard land where appropriate. Major committed transport schemes include:

- The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- A96 Park and Choose/Dyce Drive link road
- Berryden corridor and South College Street improvements
- Haudagain roundabout improvements
- Third Don Crossing
- Improved rail services, including a new station at Kintore

New development has an important role in the delivery of infrastructure. However, infrastructure provided by development must relate to it either as a direct consequence of the development or arising from the cumulative impact of development in the area.

Proposed Changes

The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) shows that new development across the north-east will have an impact on transport infrastructure. Through detailed testing, modelling and forecasting a package of defined transport projects have been identified by the Cumulative Transport Assessment to mitigate the impacts of new development and a Strategic Transport Fund has been set up to secure contributions from development to fund the delivery of this infrastructure. These projects are:

- River Dee Link
- Upgrade A944 Kingswells Roundabout
- A956 Junction Capacity Improvements
- Upgrade A944 Lang Stracht junctions
- New station at Kintore
- Bus priority measures, frequency improvements & additional services
- Capacity Improvements on the A96 corridor
- Upgrade AWPR Kingswells North junction
- Upgrade Bucksburn-AWPR Kingswells North Junction
- Upgrade A944 Anderson Drive junction
- Persley Bridge
- Parkway junction improvements
- Safety/limited capacity improvements on access to A93
- Capacity Improvements on the B977 / B997

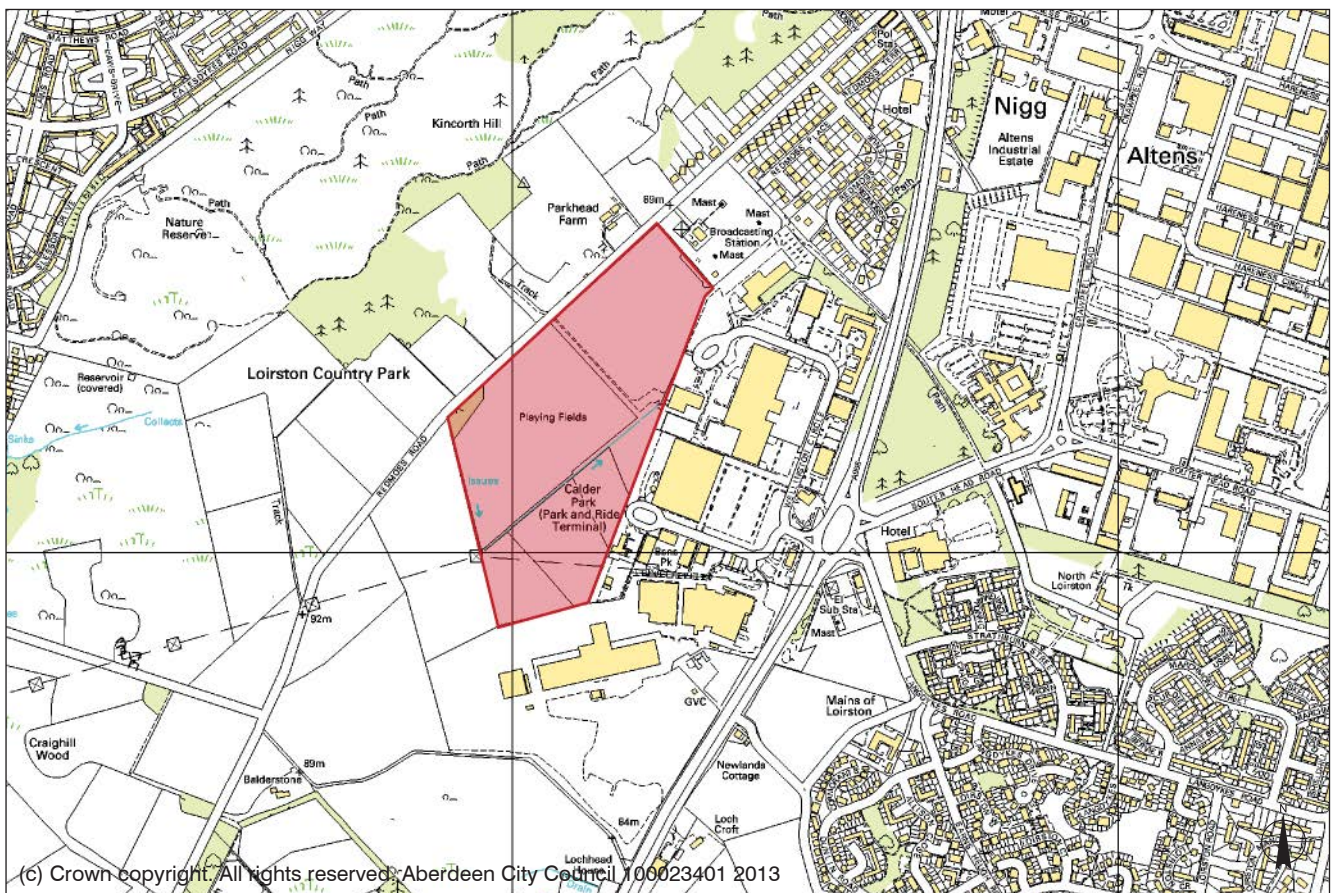
The Strategic Transport Fund will be re-published as statutory Supplementary Guidance on approval of the forthcoming Strategic Development Plan.

The Council has carried out a review of its school estate, which provides a clear direction for education provision in Aberdeen for the next 25 years and takes into account significant education changes, demographics and future developments identified for the City. The full report contains 64 recommendations including new schools, mergers and improvements to existing schools and changes to school catchment areas, and will be subject to further rounds of consultation over the next few years. The new schools estate is likely to be funded by a combination of Council capital funding, Scottish Futures Trust and developer contributions. There are three specific proposals

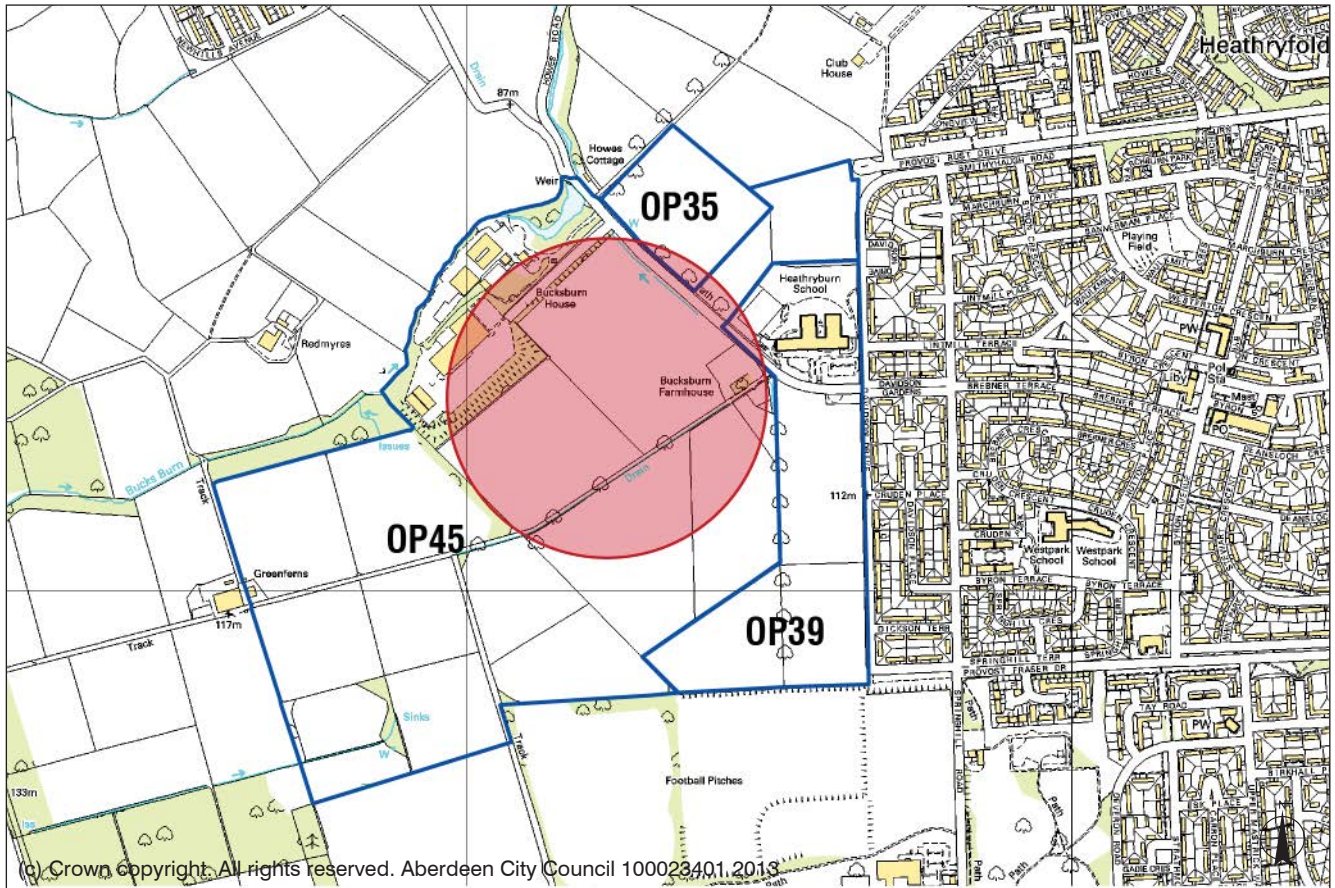
which are more advanced and could be included in the Local Development Plan:

- A new Academy at Bobby Calder Park which will replace Torry and Kincorth Academies (Map 10).
- An Additional Special Needs School is proposed on part of OP45 Greenferns (Map 11).
- Identify Braeside Infants School as an interim primary school for pupils from new development at Countesswells, pending the completion of a new primary school there.

Map 10 : New Education Proposal – Amalgamation of Kincorth and Torry Academies – Bobby Calder Park site.



Map 11 : New Education proposal – School at Greenferns – Approximate Location



5.2 Infrastructure Provision

Transport and education provision tend to receive the most attention in terms of infrastructure provision. However, there are many other types of infrastructure required to make a successful development including water and sewage, utilities, waste, health and community facilities and green infrastructure. Some of these are considered elsewhere in this Main Issues Report. We will continue to work closely with key agencies and infrastructure providers throughout the preparation of the Local Development Plan to ensure that we have planned for sufficient levels of infrastructure and services. We want to improve our Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions and provide greater clarity on delivery through our Action Programme. We will continue to hold ‘delivery workshops’ which bring together developers and infrastructure providers to overcome constraints affecting specific sites.

The Local Development Plan is one of a series of strategies and plans either in place or under development which puts us in a good place to take Aberdeen forward as a successful city. Others

include the Proposed Strategic Development Plan, the Community Plan and Aberdeen – A Smarter City.

All have infrastructure implications and the Council is preparing a Strategic Infrastructure Plan to deliver the infrastructure needed. It will identify where there are deficiencies in the City’s needs and will define the City’s infrastructure goals for the next 20 years and look at how these can be funded.

We would be interested to hear your views on whether there are other things we should be doing to deliver infrastructure.

Question 12
Infrastructure Provision

Are there any other measures we should be taking to ensure that infrastructure can be provided in a timely manner?

5.3 Sustainable and Active Travel

The current Local Development Plan allocates a significant amount of housing and employment land. The next Local Development Plan must continue to deliver these allocations, in line with the Proposed Strategic Development Plan. It is essential that Aberdeen's transport system supports this development through appropriate walking and cycling infrastructure, bus and rail services and where appropriate new road infrastructure. The transport system must allow all citizens of Aberdeen to choose from a range of modes with health and sustainability at their core.

Travel needs can be reduced if the right development is in the right place and accessibility has been one of the criteria used to determine where development should go. In addition, the Transport Framework informed the settlement strategy and continues to act as a supporting tool as we go forward towards the next Plan. The Transport Framework assesses the compatibility of groups of sites against the objectives and proposals set out in the Local Transport Strategy.

The Local Transport Strategy is being reviewed to reflect Aberdeen City's current situation with a view to improving the transport network for the future and this is informed by the National Transport Strategy and the recently approved re-refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy. Significant progress has been made since its publication in 2008 but there is still much to be done in advance of the opening of the AWPR to ensure the benefits of the new road can be 'locked in' and to provide a range

of opportunities to reorganise and improve the City's transport networks for active and sustainable travel. A refreshed Local Transport Strategy will be adopted by summer 2014 and the next Local Development Plan will continue to support its policies and objectives.

The Local Development Plan must continue to prioritise travel modes in line with Scottish Planning Policy's modal hierarchy, which places active travel above other, less sustainable modes. Active travel and public transport networks must be supported and enhanced by new development so that walking, cycling and public transport are viable, attractive options for the people of Aberdeen.

However, we recognise that there are still instances in which people will require to travel by car. Therefore the Plan will look to encourage initiatives like car sharing and will continue to support development and expansion of the car club in Aberdeen to provide an alternative to people owning their own car.

Question 13 Sustainable and Active Travel

Are there any other measures we should be taking to promote sustainable and active travel and to ensure that they become the first choice of transport?



6. Supporting Business and Industrial Development

6.1 Supporting Business and Industrial Development Background

Maintaining a ready supply of employment land in the right places is vital to Aberdeen retaining its position as a competitive and sustainable business location, which in turn will help to achieve the housing and population growth targets set by the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.

Current policy aims to safeguard existing business and industrial areas across the City from other development pressures, including safeguarding crucial infrastructure such as the Airport and Harbour. It is also recognised that support facilities can make an important contribution to the City's employment areas and current policy supports this approach.

Proposed Changes

6.2 Digital Infrastructure

Although Aberdeen has one of the highest rates of domestic broadband uptake in the UK, we think that all citizens and businesses should have access to World Class Digital connectivity. This requires the provision of the necessary wired and wireless digital infrastructure that will enable such connectivity. In recent years Ofcom (The Office of Communications) has produced guidance that new build domestic and non-domestic developments should be connected to fast broadband.

The Proposed Strategic Development Plan identifies world class digital infrastructure as a priority for attracting and enabling development. This infrastructure includes having the provision for the necessary enabling infrastructure such as ducts to enable commercial cabling to premises. Policy I1 Infrastructure applies to all parts of the City and to any development that requires further supporting infrastructure, but does not specifically mention digital infrastructure. This is seen as an economic imperative to ensure the City's continued competitiveness as a World Energy City.

We propose that digital infrastructure should be a supporting infrastructure required for all new developments.

Question 14 Digital Infrastructure

Should all new developments provide modern high speed telecommunications networks?

Two key opportunities have been identified relating to business and industrial development in Aberdeen - the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) and Aberdeen Harbour. Discussions on each of these can be found below.

6.3 Main Issue 7 - Aberdeen Harbour Expansion

The emerging National Planning Framework 3 proposes that the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour should be designated a "national development". These are developments considered to be in the national interest and which are of strategic importance. Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans are required to identify national developments within their areas. This is to establish the need for the development and to help facilitate the consenting processes, such as planning permission, that are required. The growth of the Harbour is supported by the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.

Aberdeen Harbour Board released its 'Case for Growth' document in September 2012. This stated that in order for the Harbour to continue to grow as a business, there was a need to consider ways of expanding the existing facilities in Aberdeen. Expansion is needed to accommodate growth in oil and gas markets, decommissioning, offshore renewables, ferry traffic, the cruise market and the development of larger ships and vessels which cannot currently be accommodated within the confines of the current harbour.

A second document called 'Directions for Growth' looked at different options for expanding the harbour. Two options (at the beach around Footdee and at Cove) have been discounted due to their considerable planning, construction, access and transportation difficulties. Nigg Bay, however, has emerged as the preferred option for growth by means of a new harbour facility. This would involve constructing the harbour itself on the north side of the bay. The south part of the bay would be largely

undeveloped, although a breakwater would need to be constructed from the southern point at Greg Ness. The existing harbour at Market Street would remain.

A new harbour at Nigg Bay has its own constraints which need to be carefully considered, specifically potential impacts on the landscape, open spaces, core paths, the historic environment, transport network and environmental designations such as the Nigg Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest and the River Dee Special Area of Conservation. However, Nigg Bay could accommodate the potential growth identified in the Case for Growth. It is also relatively close to the existing harbour and its planning, environmental and transport implications were considered more manageable when compared to the other options.

The consolidation and rationalisation of the existing harbour remains a potential option in the event that Nigg Bay cannot be progressed. It is not possible to accommodate larger vessels here without removing the two main peninsulas in the harbour. This in itself would reduce the harbour's capacity. If provisions for larger ships are not made then ferry services, off shore renewables and decommissioning work is likely to relocate elsewhere resulting in loss of business to Aberdeen. Acceptance of this option would therefore represent the maintenance of the status quo or even managed decline.

Issue 7 : Aberdeen Harbour Expansion	
How can we best accommodate an expansion to Aberdeen Harbour?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Preferred Approach	
Create a new deep water harbour facility at Nigg Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental, transport and planning issues need to be resolved. • Less impact on the City Centre and its transport network. • Opens up potential opportunities for economic growth.
Option 2 – Alternative Option	
Focus future growth on the existing harbour estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to accommodate larger vessels would reduce berth space. • Continued reliance on City Centre road network. • Loss of potential future business to Aberdeen.



The principal means of access into Nigg Bay is likely to be the coast road. This will need to be widened to accommodate the heavy goods vehicles which use the harbour and it is likely that an improved crossing over the railway will be needed. In order to avoid impacts on residential areas, the coast road would be accessed via Wellington Road and through Altens Industrial Estate. Should transport modelling indicate that more than one road access is required, then these will need to be explored.

Some alternative access points are discussed in detail in the Harbour Board's bid submission to the Pre-Main Issues Report consultation in a document called 'Proposed Harbour Facility and Associated Infrastructure at Nigg Bay'. One option was to take access through East Tullos Industrial Estate, tunnel underneath the railway then take the road around the north of the sewage treatment plant. This would impact on the Tullos Hill Local Nature Conservation Site and the woodland and open space around Tullos Burn. A second alternative would join the coast road to East Tullos via the former landfill site. This would also affect Tullos Hill and would require reconfiguration of the landfill itself. These options are likely to be very disruptive and expensive. The infrastructure document mentioned above discusses the possibility of releasing further business land in the area to help fund infrastructure costs – either along the coast road at Altens East or on the former landfill. We think it would be better if such interventions could be avoided if possible. However, we have raised them here for discussion purposes to hear what people think of their potential impacts and/or benefits, or to see if there are any other alternatives we should be thinking of.

The Harbour Board documents mentioned in this section can be found on the Council's website here; <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=52210&SID=23540>

Should plans for a new facility at Nigg Bay progress, then more detailed consideration needs to be given to its interaction with the surrounding area. This could be addressed through a masterplan or development framework for the area. Specific issues that would need to be looked at are the interaction between the harbour and surrounding recreation areas, open spaces footpaths and viewpoints. Much of this would be dependent on how road access would be configured. However, the aspiration would be to create an operational port alongside an accessible beach and coastline giving visibility

into the port within Nigg Bay. Other issues that could be explored are transportation, development and environmental impacts and opportunities for local community benefits that could emerge. Any feedback we receive through this Main Issues Report will help to shape and evolve these proposals.

6.4 Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre

The Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) is recognised as a key element of the business infrastructure needed to promote Aberdeen as a World Energy City and the Energy Capital of Europe. The facility's economic impact on the North-East economy was estimated as being £50 million by AECC 2012/13 Annual Reports. This impact relates to business brought to the City through exhibitions, conference and business events and includes the impact on local hotels, restaurants and other businesses throughout the City. In the 2011/2012 Offshore Europe year, the economic impact of the AECC was estimated at £103 million.

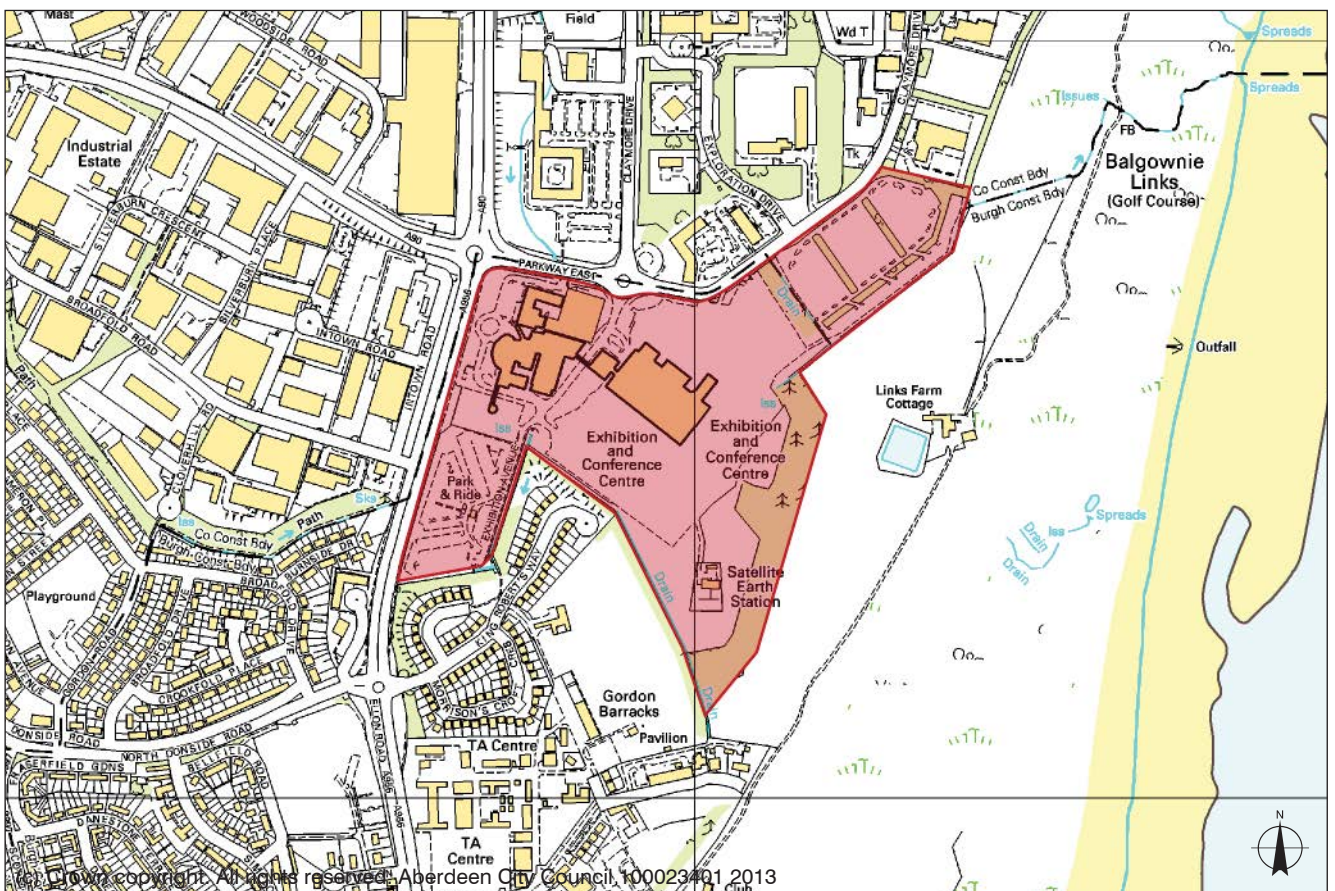
The AECC site at Bridge of Don is identified by the existing Local Development Plan as a Special Employment Area, reserved for exhibition centre purposes and uses compatible with the exhibition centre and the Park and Ride facility. The existing AECC facility (and in particular the 27 year old arena) is however considered to be no longer fit for purpose, with both energy and building maintenance costs steadily rising. In addition, the accommodation is no longer large enough to adequately accommodate some of the exhibitions and conferences held there.

In June 2012 the Council began a procurement process to select a private sector partner to help develop additional or replacement facilities for the AECC. Participants were invited to propose detailed development solutions either on the existing AECC site at Bridge of Don or at a new location somewhere else within the City boundary. At a meeting of Full Council on 31st October 2013, Henry Boot Developments was selected as the Preferred Bidder for the joint venture project. The proposed scheme put forward by Henry Boot Developments is for a new AECC facility to be built on land at Rowett North, to the south of Aberdeen International Airport. This site is identified within the existing Local Development Plan under the land release policy as suitable for employment land (OP28).

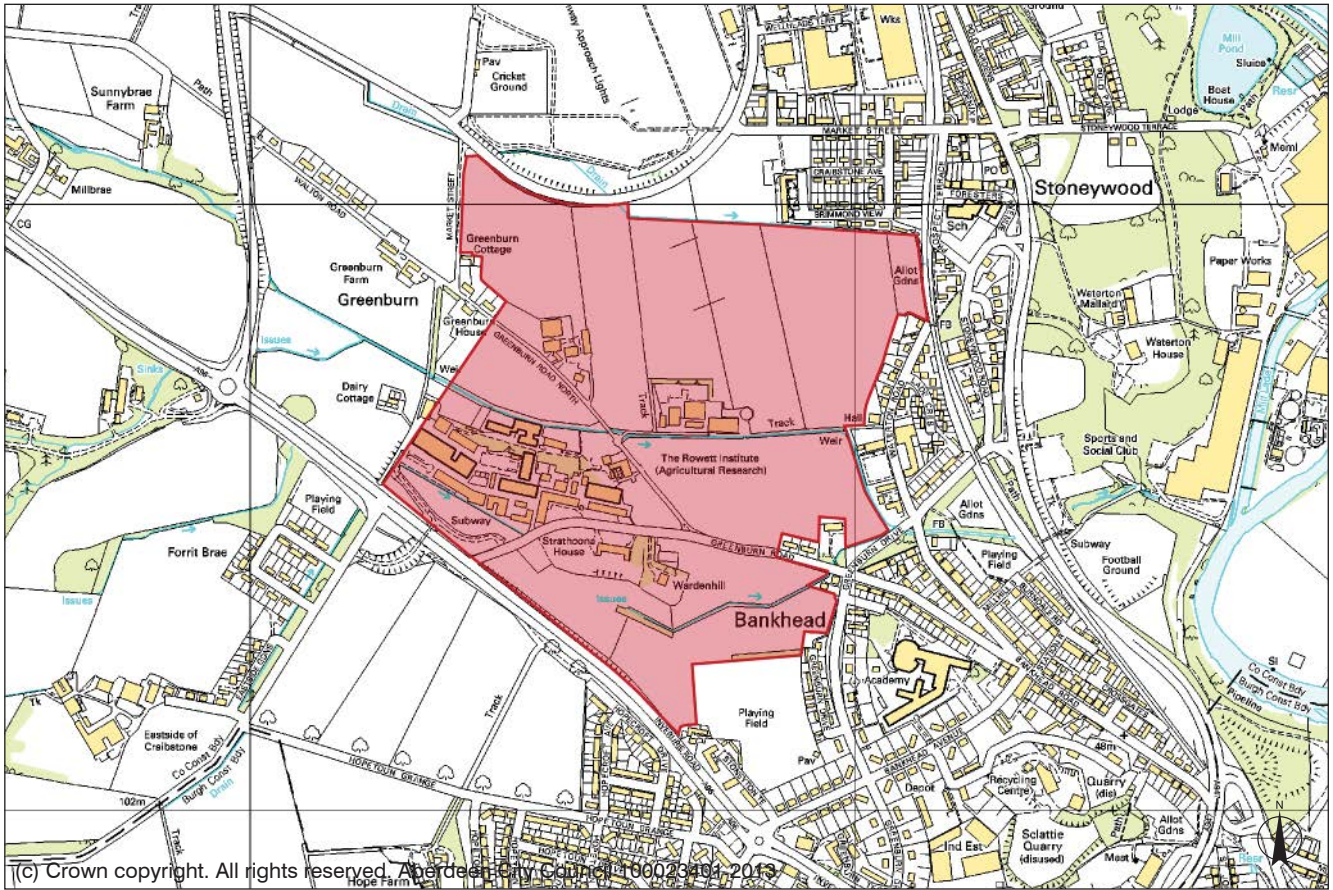
Henry Boot Developments also proposes that, upon moving the AECC to the Rowett North site, the existing site at Bridge of Don would be redeveloped for housing and some business use, with the current Park and Ride facility retained. Both sites will require to be masterplanned in accordance with The Aberdeen Masterplanning Process Supplementary Guidance and achieve planning permission prior to any development starting on site.

The new Local Development Plan will reflect the decision of Council on 31st October 2013 in respect of the future development of these sites.

Map 12 : Existing AECC Site at Bridge of Don



Map 13 : Location of New AECC Facility at Rowett North



7. Housing Needs

7.1 Housing Needs Background

In Aberdeen the value of housing is so high that there is a large proportion of the population that will not be able to afford to buy. Affordable housing is defined as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes, providing a housing option for those people that can not afford private housing. Affordable housing may be in the form of social rented accommodation, mid-market rented accommodation, shared ownership, shared equity, discounted low cost housing for sale including plots for self build, and low-cost housing without subsidy. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (2011) identified a shortage of affordable housing and there is a need to address this in the Local Development Plan as part of the housing land allocation.

Currently the Local Development Plan requires that for all sites of 5 units or more there will be a requirement for 25% affordable housing. There is an expectation that for sites of 20 units or more the affordable element will be provided on-site. There are a range of tenures available that have been accepted as 'affordable housing' and there is currently no specified mix, thereby allowing flexibility to increase the probability of delivery. The Council's Housing Service is consulted at the time of an application to advise the most suitable size and tenure for a specific site. The availability of grants from the Scottish Government has a significant impact on the ability for affordable housing to be delivered on-site through the implementation of this policy. At present there is

a total funding allocation of £7.5m to 2015 and an allocation of at least £8m for the period 2015 to 2018. The Proposed Strategic Development Plan is seeking to meet a housing requirement of 9,017 homes over this period across the Strategic Development Plan Area (2015-2018) and with 25% of houses in Aberdeen to be affordable this places significant pressure on the funding available.

Housing in Aberdeen is unaffordable to a large proportion of the population in Aberdeen and the delivery of more affordable housing is vital to support an increasing population and growing economy. It is important that there is consideration given to how the affordable element of developments can be delivered. There is an opportunity through this review to consider options for housing that deliver the most, in terms of numbers, and meet the requirements of those in the greatest need.

Proposed Changes

7.2 Main Issue 8 - Housing Needs and Affordable Housing

Given the potential difficulties in delivering the total affordable housing at present there is a need to consider alternative approaches that are able to deliver the increased number of affordable units. The preferred approach would be to continue to support the development of affordable housing in all new development areas, but to consider being flexible to approaches that increase the number of affordable units delivered or meet a greater



housing need. Within this option consideration would be given to a mix of commuted payments and on-site units, the purpose of the commuted payment being to top up or replace any Government funding available. This would result in a lower on-site delivery than has been identified as being required to meet housing need through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. As a part of this option consideration would also be given to flexibility on the sale price for low cost home ownership products. If the sale price can be reduced this would put it in reach of more existing Council tenants. The low cost home ownership model does not rely on any grant and has the ability to free up existing council houses.

Within the Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing there is a need to review the methodology for calculating commuted payments in lieu of affordable housing. The findings for this review will be incorporated into Supplementary Guidance to support the Local Development Plan.

The existing approach for a requirement of 25% affordable homes on all sites greater than 20 units would continue to be an option. Also, there is an option to move away from a blanket approach to the delivery of on-site affordable housing and identify areas or to allow for flexibility to determine which sites are expected to provide affordable housing on-site. For those remaining sites a commuted payment would be expected. This could focus the delivery of affordable housing in areas where the land values are lower to increase the ability to deliver affordable housing. There is also the opportunity to invest money from commuted payments from other areas in the delivery of the housing. This option does not conform to the Proposed Strategic Development Plan aim or advice in Scottish Government PAN2/2010 and does not help to provide mixed communities.

Issue 8 : Housing Needs	
How and where can we meet housing needs?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
Blanket requirement for 25% affordable housing on sites greater than 20 units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is significant need identified and there is a requirement for at least 25% affordable housing. • There are difficulties with the delivery, with reduced funding available.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Flexibility in the policy approach for affordable housing allowing options that can help to deliver greater numbers of affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could be a decrease in the predicted number of affordable homes provided compared to the existing approach. • It is considered that in reality this approach will meet a greater need and deliver more affordable housing within sustainable new communities.
Option 3 – Alternative Option	
Identify specific sites or allow flexibility for when on-site delivery is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would not conform to the Proposed Strategic Development Plan's objective for sustainable mixed communities. • It may help to provide a greater number of affordable houses than the existing approach.

7.3 Regeneration

Aberdeen City Council is currently developing a new framework for regeneration to replace its strategy of 2007. This will integrate social, economic and area-based initiatives in a number of parts of the city. As well as redirecting existing spending, the strategy will look at access to new funding sources and the use of its own asset base to stimulate new investment.

The regeneration framework is currently based on three priority projects: Middlefield, Tillydrone and 'Green' regeneration at Torry / Balnagask. Individual Project Teams have been established to work with local communities in implementing these projects. It is likely that more projects will be progressed during the period of the next Local Development Plan. Any significant new developments will take into account any masterplanning work previously undertaken.

7.4 Private Rented Accommodation

There are significant pressures in the private rented sector and the rental values in Aberdeen are amongst the highest in Scotland. Citylets reports that in Aberdeen average rents are now £967 per calendar month, which is the highest figure recorded for Aberdeen and represents a 7.3% increase over the year. Over the last four years rents are up in Aberdeen by 15.5%. The private rented sector plays an important role in meeting housing demand in providing support for contract workers, young professionals, households who have deferred house purchase or households who prefer to rent. Even with increased housing supply many young professionals or key workers will not have the resource to purchase housing. The new supply of private sector rented accommodation delivered through private investment is something that should be encouraged.

Question 15

Private Rented Accommodation

Do you agree that private rented accommodation should be supported by policies in the Local Development Plan and are there ways in which it can be promoted?

7.5 Main Issue 9 - Housing for Older People and Particular Needs

There has been significant growth in the older population across Scotland and in Aberdeen. This trend is forecast to continue and the largest growth in population is for people older than 75, and there is also significant growth in population of people aged between 65 and 74 (National Records of Scotland 2013). It is important that the Local Development Plan recognises this change in demography and responds to the challenges that this will effect. Scotland's National Planning Framework 2 seeks to "ensure that the implications of our changing demographic profile are fully reflected in the provisions for housing, transport and community facilities."

The provision of attractive housing for older people has wider benefits because it will help to free up much needed under occupied family housing. Delivering attractive accommodation is very important in achieving this because older people do not necessarily want small one bedroom properties, but they may want space for visiting relatives and private garden ground. Without making properties attractive to older people they are less likely to consider leaving their family home. This has been confirmed through the consultation that has been undertaken on the preparation of this Report with the public and colleagues in the housing service.

'Ageing wi' Opportunity', Aberdeen City Council's Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People, presents feedback that suggests older people want opportunities for social interaction, that safe travel options are important and that they want the opportunity to contribute towards their community. The Scottish Government's key policy priority is to support people to remain at home for as long as possible, rather than in care homes or hospital settings. This is known as 'shifting the balance of care' and is a national priority across all care groups. This is reflected in the national indicator to increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high levels of care needs who are cared for at home. It will be important that through planning, due consideration is given to providing opportunities for older people to choose to be housed within mainstream housing. There will always be a proportion of older people that do not feel the need to downsize or would not consider leaving the family home.

As the population of older people in Aberdeen increases so too will the number of people suffering from dementia. Research by Alzheimer's International suggests the prevalence rates in those aged over 85 years is 23.6%. Based on the projected population increase of 109.8% in this age group there would be a resultant 91.6% increase (826 people) in the over 85 population with dementia in Aberdeen by 2033. The design of development is important for older people, especially those who suffer from dementia. Older people want to have good quality housing, good transport links and local facilities, which all benefit the whole community if they can be provided. For people suffering from dementia the creation of a high quality, distinctive, place will help them orientate themselves. This objective is in harmony with proposals in the Report in Section 8: Design, Placemaking and the Designated Built Environment.

In addition to housing for older people it is important that there is a sufficient supply of housing that can be adapted to meet the needs of people with physical and learning difficulties. Their requirements will vary and minor or major adaptations can be undertaken to allow an individual to remain in their home.

There is a question about how the provision of housing for older people and people with particular needs can be increased. Although there is clearly an increasing demand resulting from the increase in the population of older people the provision of suitable accommodation has been limited to small scale care developments. There is currently a policy in the Local Development Plan that seeks a mix of house types and sizes to be provided, although there is no specific mix required.

The 2008 population projections for Aberdeen City and Shire identified that the proportion of householders aged 60 or over is and will continue to be 28%. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment identified that 4.5% of households have someone in need of adaptations (this figure excludes people aged 60 or over).

Proposed Changes

It is proposed that 10% of housing in new development is suitable for older people and have the ability to be fully adapted for particular needs. 10% reflects the Council's minimum requirement for their own housing projects and reflects the fact that not all older people would consider moving or have the need for adapted properties. This requirement would apply to larger developments of 50 or more where it should not cause difficulties in providing a suitable mix. This could be restricted to properties with step free access and are built to the Government's standard of Housing for Varying Needs – A Design Guide Part 1: Houses and Flats or Part 2: Housing With Integral Support. There will also be a demand for affordable housing for older people and people with specialist requirements and a share of the affordable housing should also be designed to be suitable, again 10% is suggested as a preferred option. The provision of housing should be in within high quality, distinctive, places with good access to facilities and public transport.

The Alternative Options would be to either maintain the current approach and not to address this issue or to increase to percentage of housing up to 33%, reflecting the proportion of the population that are in this age group.

Issue 9 : Housing for Older People and Particular Needs	
How can we ensure that a range of house types and sizes can be delivered to meet the needs of the population, including older people and people with specialist housing requirements?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
The current approach is to rely on the market to deliver what is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It does not appear that the market is responding to the increasing demand at present. • The current housing mix policy through monitoring does not appear to be achieving the desired results. • This approach would be simple to manage through the application process.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Set a target of 10% of homes on sites of 50 dwellings or more to be suitable to the older population and people with physical disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be an expectation that this would increase the proportion of dwellings that would be suitable to older people and people with physical disabilities.
Option 3 – Alternative Option	
Set a target of 33% of homes on sites of 50 dwellings or more to be suitable to the older population and people with physical disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be an expectation that this would increase the proportion of dwellings that would be suitable to older people and people with physical disabilities.

7.6 Gypsy/Travellers

There is currently a lack of suitable Gypsy/ Traveller sites in Aberdeen as identified through the Accommodation Needs Assessment (2009). The lack of suitable sites leads to unauthorised encampments in any available location across the City. Often these can be in unsuitable locations. To meet the needs identified, the existing Local Development Plan identifies a requirement to provide three new Gypsy/Traveller sites within new development areas, namely Grandhome, Newhills Expansion and Loirston. Development of these sites is currently at an early stage and there is not a timetable for the delivery. There is also a policy framework to assess proposals for private Gypsy/ Traveller sites or alternative Council projects.

Since the needs assessment was undertaken there has been an increase in the number of large (up to 40 caravans) unauthorised encampments. These large encampments have been largely the same group that have been evicted from one site and, with no available sites, move onto another unauthorised site. The current approach does not address the needs of this group.

In addition the Council has made a decision to progress the development of a halting site on Howes Road, which is located within the Greenferns area, identified for residential development. The Council has committed to continue the process to deliver further sites across the City.

It is necessary for the Local Development Plan to take cognisance of the Council's decision to bring forward a site on Howes Road. It is proposed that the site on Howes Road will be identified for the use as a Gypsy/Traveller site and the Development Framework will be updated to reflect this decision.

Question 16 Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Do you have any comments on the current approach to the provision of Gypsy/Traveller sites?

8. Design, Placemaking and the Designated Built Environment

8.1 Design Background

A high quality environment is at the heart of everything the Council wants to achieve by 2035. High design quality and the creation of safe, clean, well-maintained and attractive environments were also touched on a great deal during early consultation on the next Local Development Plan.

For residents of the city we know that the design quality of buildings and public spaces is fundamentally important. This is the case be it listed buildings, conservation areas, or new modern developments. Buildings and spaces set the scene for our lives. Better design quality can help increase social interaction, reduce emissions, have a positive effect on physical and mental health, and promote a sense of local ownership of (and respect for) a neighbourhood.

For visitors investing and working in the city, places and buildings which are well-designed also play a significant role. The economic growth of the city depends upon attracting and retaining the best businesses and workforce. This is especially important to Aberdeen as it continues to compete on a global scale in the oil and gas sectors. Competition is rife, and it is increasingly apparent that decisions on location can often hinge on quality of environment.

There are currently six policies within the Local Development Plan which fall under the heading "Promoting High Quality Design", and generally these seem to be working well. We do however intend to make some changes to the way the Local Development Plan considers Design, Placemaking and the Designated Built Environment in order to build upon our current approach. We also need to ensure our policies can help us meet the targets set by both strategic and national planning policy.

In the next Local Development Plan we intend to place a far greater emphasis on ensuring the delivery of high quality places where the value of good design can be truly realised. This will require a collaborative process and consideration of the six qualities of a successful place: distinctive; welcoming; adaptable; resource efficient; safe and pleasant; and, easy to move around and beyond. We need to ensure these qualities are at the heart of the places we are maintaining and creating.

Proposed Changes

8.2 Design Quality

In terms of increasing design quality, a lot of important work has been done already, for example through the introduction of the Masterplanning Process and the Design Review Panel. But we need to go further – to drive standards of design even higher and demand excellence. This is supported by the Proposed Strategic Development Plan which states (para 4.33) that we must set the highest standards for both urban and rural design.

Design is a material consideration in determining planning applications and applications can be refused solely on design grounds. A building might look good architecturally, but if it doesn't relate to its context (for instance if the materials are out of keeping, or if the building is too tall or bulky) then it will not contribute to successful placemaking and should not be approved. A key part of protecting and enhancing design quality involves understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of place and setting.

As such, we want to introduce a clear requirement that proposals must, no matter where they are in the city, or what they are proposing, demonstrate a high design quality which clearly shows how local context has informed the final design solution. To do this we want to make it clear in our policies that proposals which do not demonstrate an appropriately high quality design solution will not be supported.

Question 17 Better Design Quality

- a. Should we strive for a better design quality across the city and refuse permission to proposals which do not meet our high standards?
- b. How do you think we should do this?

8.3 Design Statements

One way of increasing design awareness and demonstrating how the local character and distinctiveness of a place has informed a design solution is through a Design Statement. Design Statements show how proposals have had regard to sustainability and low carbon design, for instance through orientation, material choice, and a positive consideration of renewables. Design Statements aren't just useful for new building proposals, but also for things like new lighting, advertisement and landscaping proposals as well.

At a national level the Scottish Government requires that Design Statements or Design and Access Statements are submitted in the following circumstances:

- Design and Access Statement: required for applications for planning permission for 'national' and for 'major' developments. The 'access' part of the statement must also demonstrate how issues relating to access for disabled people to the development have been dealt with. Definitions of 'national' and 'major' development can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/278390/0083657.pdf>.
- Design Statement: unless the development comprises the alteration or extension of an existing building, applications for planning permission for 'local' (i.e. not 'major' or 'national') development within the following areas must be accompanied by a Design Statement:
 - a World Heritage Site,
 - a conservation area,
 - a historic garden or designed landscape,
 - a National Scenic Area,
 - the site of a scheduled monument, or
 - the curtilage of a category A listed building.

This means there are a large number of applications that do not require a Design or Design and Access Statement to be submitted. This leaves a gap where a number of important applications (e.g. local proposals affecting Category B listed buildings outwith a conservation area) do not have to demonstrate the principles which the design has been based, or how the local identity has been taken into account. We think this needs to be rectified if we are serious about raising design quality across the City.

Outwith the existing requirements set by the Scottish Government, we would like to increase the number of applications which are accompanied by a Design Statement (and would require the submission of such a Statement before they could be determined), and produce detailed guidance to set out what Design Statements should address.

We think that Design Statements should accompany every application submitted for determination (be it for planning permission, listed building consent, conservation area consent or advertisement consent) with only the following exceptions:

- Residential development of less than 5 dwellings
- Applications solely for a change of use
- Applications for business, general industry, storage or distribution of less than 5,000 square meters

Notwithstanding the above, all proposals which have the potential to affect either a listed building, no matter the category of listing, or the character of setting of a conservation area, will require to be accompanied by a Design Statement, as will any proposal impacting on the Green Belt or the Green Space Network.

Question 18 Design Statements

- a. Do you think introducing a requirement for Design Statements to accompany a greater range of applications is a good idea?
- b. When do you think we should request a Design Statement?
- c. When do you think a Design Statement might not be useful?
- d. We intend to produce guidance on what should be included within Design Statements. What do you think might be important to include within a Design Statement?

8.4 Demolition of Traditional Granite Buildings

Aberdeen is known internationally as the Granite City and Policy D4 of the current Local Development Plan encourages the retention of granite buildings even if not listed or in a conservation area. This policy recognises that there will however be instances where there is no reasonable alternative except to demolish, and in such circumstances states that we will expect the original granite to be used on the principal elevations of any replacement building.

The current policy does not however give any scope to assess applications which propose demolition. We think that the policy needs to be updated to include some provision for this, and suggest that applications for demolition of a traditional granite building are assessed against similar criteria to that set out by Scottish Ministers in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy, i.e. applicants will be expected to provide evidence to show that:

- a. the building is not of special interest,
- b. the building is incapable of repair,
- c. the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community, or
- d. the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

Introducing such criteria would allow a tool for Planning Officers to appropriately assess proposals for demolition, something which the current policy wording does not provide. We also intend to clarify that this policy applies to traditionally constructed granite buildings, and not buildings with modern granite façades where generally this stone is of a lesser quality and has been imported into the country rather than sourced from local quarries.

We also think that the use of granite on replacement buildings should not be limited to the principal elevations of a building, but also used on any other prominent elevations and potentially within landscaping proposals as well.

Question 19 Demolition of Traditional Granite Buildings

- a. What do you think about our suggestion to include the criteria that applications for the demolition of traditional granite buildings will be assessed against our existing policy?
- b. For replacement schemes, what do you think about encouraging the reuse of granite in places other than the principal elevation?



9. Natural Environment

9.1 Natural Environment Background

Current Local Development Plan policy provides protection for Urban Green Space and the Green Belt and ensures the provision of open space in new developments, as well as safeguarding access rights. It also protects areas of trees and woodland and any areas identified for their natural heritage value. In addition, policy seeks to manage flood risk and drainage issues, and restricts inappropriate development in coastal areas.

9.2 Principles

These principles were widely appreciated during our Pre-Main Issues consultation and will remain the same in the next Local Development Plan. It is proposed that existing policy on this topic will be carried forward largely unchanged, with only minimal updates. However, a number of changes are proposed to the format of Supplementary Guidance, in order to make the information contained in the documents more focused and useful.

It is also proposed that climate change will be more of a significant strand in the next Local Development Plan, and it is suggested that where relevant, Natural Environment policies explicitly mention their contribution to adaptation and mitigation for climate change. This is discussed in more detail in the Climate Change section of this report.

Question 20 Natural Environment

Should we carry forward our current policy approach to protecting and enhancing the natural environment into the next Local Development Plan?

Do you wish to suggest any other proposed changes to natural environment policy?

10. Climate Change

10.1 Climate Change Background

Climate change presents a key challenge for Aberdeen with potential impacts on the built and natural environment, the people and the economy. Climate change projections for the City indicate an increase in temperature and autumn and winter rainfall, with more episodes of heavy rainfall and extreme temperatures presenting a risk for people, property, infrastructure, habitats and species.

The Scottish Government's commitment to tackling climate change is set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This legislation has put in place targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, ensuring Scotland plays its role in reducing emissions and is prepared for and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Through planning there is the opportunity to both help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure that we are in a position to adapt to the impacts of future climate change.

1. Mitigation – to slow down human induced climate change by reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Scottish Planning Policy recommends that the planning system should contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with Scottish targets; to reduce energy consumption and support the development of renewable energy generating technologies. It will be important that the Local Development Plan responds to these issues.

Scottish Planning Policy also states that 'when designating land for new residential, industrial and commercial development, planning authorities should consider energy and heat requirements, with new development making use of opportunities for decentralised and local renewable or low carbon sources of heat and power, where possible.'

The current Local Development Plan spatial strategy is based on sustainable planning principles seeking to minimise greenhouse gas emissions by creating sustainable communities that focus on sustainable travel and seek to minimise the use of land and resources. The Plan also includes policies that respond individually to some of the key issues.

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Delivery Plan states that we require: "Almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050 with significant progress by 2030 through wholesale adoption of electric cars and vans, and significant decarbonisation of rail by 2050." The current Local Development Plan therefore supports actions which encourage the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles using alternative fuels such as electricity and hydrogen in addition to continuing to encourage more trips by sustainable and active modes.

2. Adaptation – measures to adapt to our changing climate. Predictions are for warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, rising sea levels and increased extreme weather conditions.

Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework: Spatial Planning and Land Use Sector Action Plan Getting the best from our land - A Land Use Strategy for Scotland (March 2011) identifies that the predicted changes to our climate, green networks and peat stores are key objectives relevant to the Local Development Plan.

The predicted changes to our climate will result in an increased risk of flood events and more severe flood events. Flooding has the potential to affect public safety, to cause damage to properties and disrupt day-to-day life. The Local Development Plan provides an important opportunity to take a long term, catchment focused, approach to flood risk. Site allocations for future development should seek to avoid areas at risk of flooding to ensure their long term sustainability and resilience to climate change and all development must incorporate drainage infrastructure to ensure that the flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Supporting and enhancing green networks in the urban area plays an important role in adapting to the impacts of climate change. Green networks have the opportunity to be used to create floodplain woodlands and wetland habitats that can reduce the risk of flooding. Green Networks can provide habitat networks to help biodiversity thrive as the climate changes. Green networks in the City may provide valuable cool areas if temperatures increase in the summer.

Peatland is a major store of carbon, and development that removes or disturbs this store will result in increased emissions. It will be important through the Local Development Plan to protect against the development or disturbance of peatland, which will minimise further changes to the climate.

Proposed Changes

10.2 Existing Policies

There are policies in the current Local Development Plan that do mitigate and adapt to climate change, but there is not currently an overarching policy highlighting the importance of climate change and its links to planning. It is suggested that summarising the wider issue and identifying the relevant policies will help to place a greater emphasis on climate change and ensure that it is given the appropriate weight in the decision making process. The policies directly relevant to climate change cover a wide range of issues and it is suggested that a climate change mark is made on these policies to relate back to the summary section. Policies and supplementary guidance impact on climate change in different ways and the policies listed contribute towards mitigation and adaptation measures. The Council is preparing a climate change framework and when finalising the policies for the Proposed Local Development Plan we will assess these policies against the objectives of the framework:

- Sustainable and Active Travel
- Ultra-Low emissions vehicles
- Density
- Green Space Network
- Trees and Woodlands
- Coastal Planning
- Energy from Waste
- Low and Zero Carbon Buildings
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments
- Buffer Strips Adjacent to Water Bodies
- Drainage Impact Assessments
- Open Space
- Energetica
- Air Quality

10.3 Ultra-low Emission Vehicles

One of the solutions to achieving the target of “Almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050” is to encourage the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, using fuels such as electricity and hydrogen.

Aberdeen has already benefited from “Plugged in Places” funding from the Scottish Government which has enabled the installation of nine publicly available electric charge points. The Council will continue to explore additional locations as well as encourage businesses to install charging points for their car parks. We will also explore the opportunity to include domestic charge points in new residential provision.

The Scottish Government is also offering grant funding to homes and businesses to install home and workplace charging units through the Energy Saving Trust. At present, planning permission is required for the installation of electric vehicle charge points but, as part of the planned update for the permitted development regulations in Scotland, these are set to become permitted development.

10.4 Urban Greening and Urban Fringes

In existing built up areas and in areas identified for new development green space and green networks are invaluable, creating a more attractive environment, reducing the impact of noise and air quality, and increasing resilience to flooding. Policies in the Local Development Plan will be updated to promote urban greening and the factors that should be considered are: street trees, green roofs, green walls, open space, greenspace network, reducing tarmac driveways and landscaping. As a part of this it is important that we recognise our urban fringes and their contribution to the environment and the economy. It is proposed that urban fringes will be protected and enhanced through future developments.

10.5 Energy Infrastructure

Low & Zero Carbon Generating Technologies (LZCGT) have a central role to play in delivering a low carbon future and the Scottish Government is committed to ensuring they play a key part in the future energy mix. Scottish Planning Policy expects all local authorities to have a spatial framework for onshore wind farms. An Onshore Wind Spatial Framework has been prepared to assess the opportunities for identifying areas suitable for wind turbine developments. The countryside surrounding Aberdeen within the local authority boundary is limited to a small area and together with the presence of Aberdeen Airport there is not the scope to identify suitable sites for large scale wind farms. The Local Development Plan will continue to support the principle of a wide range of renewable or low-carbon energy developments and a criteria-based policy for assessing proposals is the most appropriate method for dealing with applications for wind turbines and other renewable developments.

In order to anchor the world energy industry a sustainable approach to energy management is favoured in city developments. This approach supports the implementation of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Many alternative fuels such as hydrogen require the necessary infrastructure for production, storage and usage. The production of such fuels can be part of a renewable energy development, which will require storage. Some alternative fuels are often treated as chemical production which has a variety of production, storage and usage implications. Aberdeen City is undertaking a demonstration project which will deploy 10 hydrogen buses and the necessary production, storage and usage infrastructure. This project will provide the necessary lessons learned for further alternative fuels and energy production. The project is at an early stage, but any land use implications that emerge from it should be identified in the next Local Development Plan.

In addition to the wider support for renewable technologies the Council is promoting the development of a facility at the former Nigg Bay landfill to generate up to 5 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy to produce low carbon hydrogen or to feed into the grid. It is proposed that the next Local Development Plan identifies a site for a solar farm alongside the use of the gas from the landfill for energy.

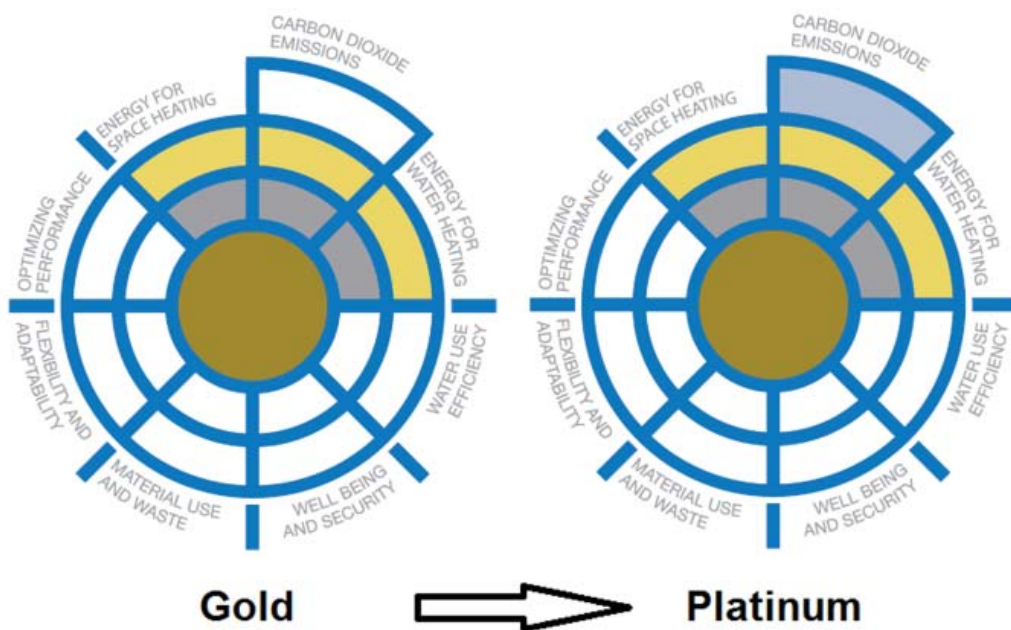
Any wind energy proposals that have been submitted as part of the Pre-Main Issues Report consultation would need to be determined against the criteria set out in the Local Development Plan given the constraints in Aberdeen. Any proposals for on-shore infrastructure associated with the off-shore wind farm off the coast of Aberdeen will be supported in principle, subject to detailed assessment.

Question 21
Nigg Solar Farm

What is your opinion on a solar farm at Nigg Bay as indicated on Map 6?

10.6 Main Issue 10 – Low and Zero Carbon Buildings

It is important that there is an increase in the energy efficiency of buildings and it is important that developments are designed and built to minimise the need for energy, to use resources more efficiently and incorporate low and zero carbon generating technologies. The Proposed Strategic Development Plan sets a target for all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2020. The preferred option has been developed in collaboration with officers from Aberdeenshire Council to provide a coherent approach to this issue. The first stage in achieving low and zero carbon buildings is to maximise passive solar gain and to minimise the energy requirements. In addition, to achieve the longer term target there will be a need to incorporate low and zero carbon generating technologies and the policy must provide encouragement to incorporate these technologies. To achieve the target of carbon neutral by 2020 it is proposed that we use the Building Standards Sustainability labels to clearly set out a route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2020. This is a target contained within the Proposed Strategic Development Plan and there are no reasonable alternatives that conform to this. In addition we will require that a specified and rising proportion of emissions to be saved by the instillation of low and zero carbon generating technologies. The specified and rising proportion of low and zero carbon generating technologies is set out in the following table.



Issue 10 : Low and Zero Carbon Buildings

How can we meet the target to achieve carbon neutral buildings by 2020?

Note: The % requirements for low and zero carbon generating technologies (LZCGT) is the % of the overall emissions reduction achieved by Scottish building regulations in force at the time of the application.

Options	Implications
Option 1 – Preferred Option	
20% requirement for LZCGT in 2016 and achieve Gold standard for energy. 25% requirement for LZCGT in 2020 and achieve Platinum standard for energy. 30% requirement for LZCGT in 2025 and achieve Platinum standard for energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase will help to promote the use of renewable technologies and a move to a low carbon economy. • The targets are lower than at present to ensure that savings in energy efficiency are maximised. • There is also a further increase post 2020 to continue to promote growth in renewable technologies.
Option 2 – Alternate Option	
15% requirement for LZCGT in 2016 and achieve Gold standard for energy. 20% requirement for LZCGT in 2020 and achieve Platinum standard for energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This alternative sets the lowest requirement to place greater emphasis on the energy efficiency of buildings. • These targets are in line with many other local authorities and are considered readily achievable.
Option 3 – Alternate Option	
30% requirement for LZCGT in 2016 and achieve Gold standard for energy. 35% requirement for LZCGT in 2020 and achieve Platinum standard for energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the most ambitious option for the incorporation of LZCGT and a move to a low carbon economy. • This option is in line with current policy, for which there have been difficulties in achieving the targets for LZCGT. • This option places a greater weight on LZCGT and may detract from measures to maximise energy efficiency.

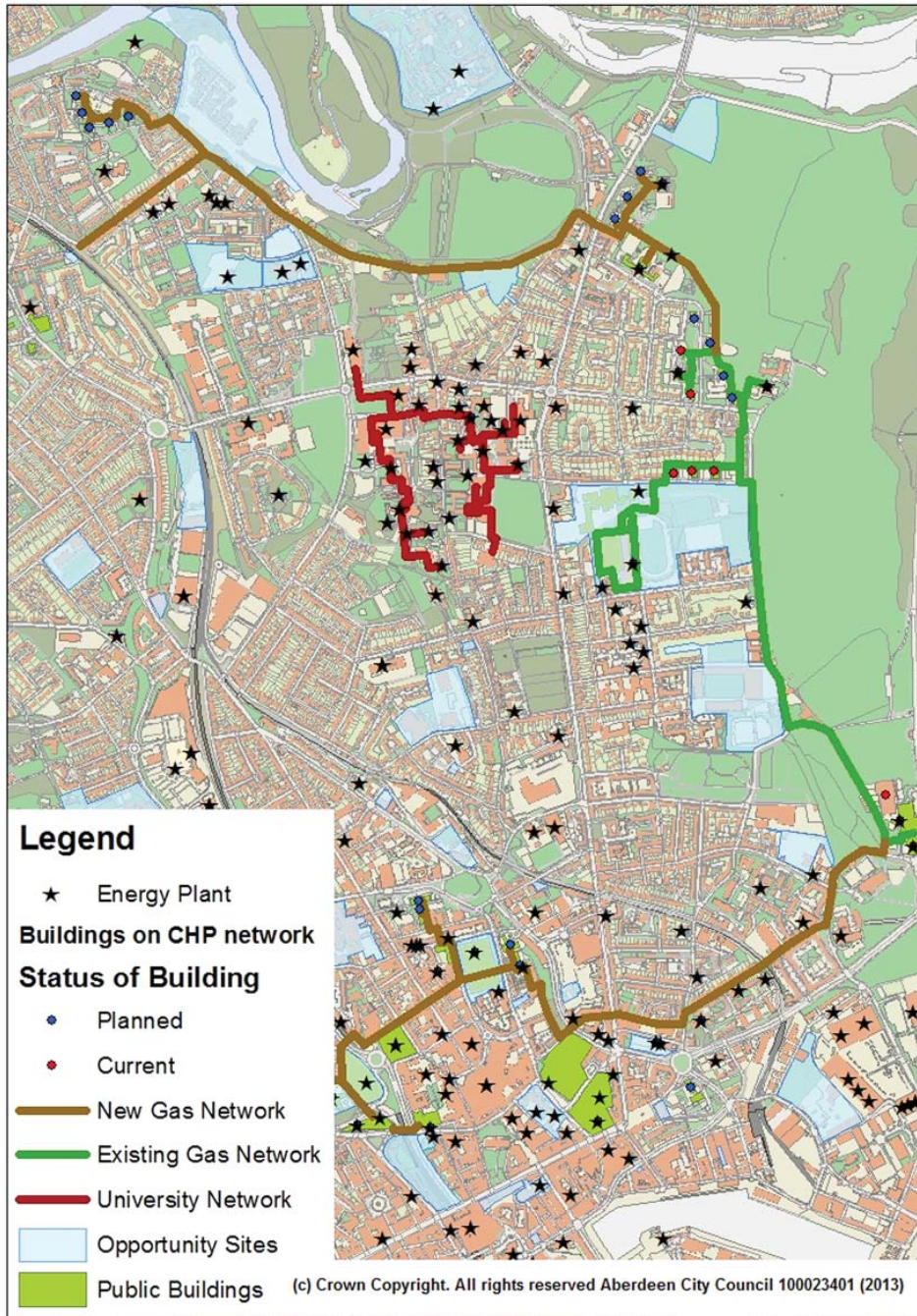


10.7 Main Issue 11 - Energy Mapping

There is already an extensive heat network in Aberdeen under the management of Aberdeen Heat and Power, which has plans for growth to provide heat to public housing and public buildings. There is an opportunity to make a wider transition to a sustainable energy system in Aberdeen. The use of heat or energy networks can reduce emissions, improve fuel security and offer economic opportunities. Aberdeen City Council

has already undertaken a heat mapping exercise for Council properties and businesses and it is intended that this will be expanded City wide. This data will be valuable in promoting the creation of linkages between waste heat, high heat demand and new development areas. With a complete map of sources and high demand users there is information that developers and companies can use to investigate potential for expanding the network of locally generated energy.

Issue 11 : Energy Mapping	
Should an energy map be incorporated into the Local Development Plan?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
The current approach does not provide the information, but asks developers to consider the use of district heating schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option assumes that this information is widely known by developers. • This approach may miss out on potential links that could be identified in such map.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Include the energy map in the Local Development Plan in supplementary guidance and set out that major developments must give consideration to linking into the energy network. Exceptions would only be accepted where it is demonstrated that links are not feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option will promote the more efficient use of energy across the City. • There is no guarantee with this approach that developers will make links to an energy network.
Option 3 – Alternate Option	
As per option 2, but require that where there is an opportunity to connect to a network that it will be required as a condition on the planning approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be a greater chance that the energy network would be expanded. • It may not be financially viable or the most efficient solution for a development.



Source: Aberdeen City Council Heat Mapping



10.8 Main Issue 12 - Water Use Efficiency

Aberdeen's water supply is abstracted from the River Dee and is licensed by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). The River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation that is designated under the Habitats Directive and is an internationally important habitat for Atlantic Salmon, Otter and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. Therefore, as the population of the City and Shire grows and the climate changes, it is essential to ensure that there will continue to be a sustainable supply of water and that we can continue to protect the habitat provided by the River Dee by minimising water consumption in Aberdeen. The Proposed Strategic Development Plan sets

a target for all new developments to use water-saving technologies. Currently Building Standards require that, as a minimum, every building must be designed and constructed in such a way that sanitary facilities with water efficient fittings which are designed for the prevention of undue consumption of water are installed. It is proposed to increase this standard using the sustainability labels for water use efficiency for domestic buildings and for non-domestic buildings, as there is no standard at present, it is proposed to request that developments achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) level 4 for water use.

Issue 12 : Water Use Efficiency	
Do you think that standards above building standards should be set for water efficiency?	
Options	Implications
Option 1 – Current Approach	
Leave this issue to be dealt with through building standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no information on when standards may be increased at present. • The implementation and monitoring of this sits well within the building standards.
Option 2 – Preferred Option	
Set an increasing target to achieve the gold standard for water use efficiency for domestic buildings and BREEAM level 5 for non-domestic buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will achieve greater savings in water use than options 1 and 3. • There will be increased costs associated with higher standards.
Option 3 – Alternate Option	
Set a target for domestic buildings to achieve silver standard for water use efficiency in all new buildings and BREEAM level 4 for water for non-domestic buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will increase the water efficiency of new developments and minimise water abstraction from the River Dee.

10.9 Main Issue 13 - Recycling and Energy

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan Annex B requires 70% of waste to be recycled and a maximum of 5% of waste sent to landfill by 2025. It places a strong emphasis on preventing waste wherever possible and sets progressive bans on sending particular materials to landfill. Both Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework ask all development plans to identify appropriate locations for required waste management facilities, where possible allocating specific sites, and provide a policy framework which enables the development of these facilities.

These are challenging targets that will require a significant increase in the number and type of installations needed to manage our waste. In response, the Council is progressing plans for the following types of facility:

- Development of a new Materials Recovery Facility which will sort out collected waste into separate materials for recycling.
- An In-Vessel Composting plant which will compost food and green waste.
- Development of a new waste collection depot and offices for the Waste and Recycling Service.
- Development of a new Bridge of Don Recycling Centre to replace the one on Scotstown Road.
- Development of an interim Refuse-Derived Fuel plant. This will turn residual waste that cannot be recycled or composted into fuel for export, pending development of a residual waste processing facility in Aberdeen.
- In the longer term the Council intends to develop a residual waste processing facility – energy from waste - which will provide heat and power for homes and workplaces. The procurement, permitting, funding, construction and commissioning of this, if approved, will take several years (possibly up to 2022) so the Refuse-Derived Fuel Plant is an interim solution which will be used until it is replaced by energy from waste.

Ideally, it would be preferable to locate as many waste facilities together as possible because this would reduce vehicle movements, particularly among the Council's collection fleet. This may not be easy due to the size of site needed to accommodate all these (around 17 acres). In addition the nature of the In-Vessel Composting Plant in particular means that it may need to be located away from sensitive areas due to odours that can be generated.

Our preferred option is therefore to identify a site or a cluster of sites for the Materials Recovery Facility, Refuse-Derived Fuel plant and waste collection depot and offices, and ultimately the energy from waste plant. In line with national policy, such facilities should be located in general business and industrial areas (Policy BI1 areas on the Local Development Plan Proposals Map).

We would like to undertake a site identification exercise over the coming months with a view to identifying a site or sites in the next Local Development Plan for all facilities. This will take into account views received during the Main Issues Report consultation.

Issue 13 : Recycling and Energy

What is the best approach to accommodating the Council's waste management facilities?

Options	Implications
Option 1 – Preferred Approach	
Locate most waste facilities in one location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single location reduces transport emissions and staff time and costs from transporting materials from one site to another. • A very large site is required – this reduces the number of options available to us.
Option 2 – Alternative Option	
Locate waste facilities on a number of sites around the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs and emissions as a result to greater vehicle movements. • Provides more site options if it is not possible to secure all facilities on one site.

To address waste service provision across our increasing housing stock, Aberdeen City Council will witness significant changes to its waste services over the coming years. Food waste collection will be expanded to cover communal on-street collection. There will be changes from kerbside sort to co-mingled recycling collections and potentially splitting our trade and domestic collection routes.

Consideration should be given to embedding these requirements further in the planning process so to accommodate the flexibilities of an ever changing waste service. We propose to update our Waste Management Supplementary Guidance so that new development proposals need to consider the:

- storage of refuse containers either through underground or above ground collection systems,
- containment location,
- provision of containment systems for general refuse, recycle and food,
- refuse Collection Vehicular Access,
- manual handling requirements of the collection crew, and
- Dwelling type – different property types receive different types of collection system.

All of the facilities discussed above are intended to deal with household and trade waste collected by the Council. However, in Scotland as a whole, the majority of waste (85%) comes from commerce and industry. It would appear that much of this is recycled within the private sector but it is likely that there will be some requirements for processing this waste which is not currently accounted for.

Any feedback on the need for private sector waste facilities would therefore be welcomed.

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Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report

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Local Development Plan Team
Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 4
Ground Floor North
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Twitter: @AberdeenLDP

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