

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015 Representation Form

Please use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, ensuring that your comments relate to a specific issue, site or policy in either the Proposed Plan, Proposed Supplementary Guidance, Proposed Action Programme or Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report. Please include the relevant paragraph(s) and use a separate form for each issue you wish to raise.

The consultation period runs between Friday 20th March and Monday 1st June 2015. Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1st June.

Name	Mr <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mrs <input type="radio"/> Miss <input type="radio"/> Ms <input type="radio"/> Ian Livingstone
Organisation	Ryden LLP
On behalf of (if relevant)	Stewart Milne Homes
Address	c/o Ryden LLP 25 Albyn Place Aberdeen
Postcode	AB10 1YL
Telephone	01224 588866
E-mail	ian.livingstone@ryden.co.uk

Please tick if you would like to receive all future correspondence by e-mail

What document are you commenting on?	Proposed Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Proposed Supplementary Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Proposed Action Programme	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy/Site/Issue	Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion Greenfield Housing Land Supply	Paragraph(s)

What would you like to say about the issue?

See Papers Apart regarding:

1. Land at Derbeth - 'Area 1' Development Option B0303
2. Land at Gillahill - 'Area 2' Development Option B303
3. Land at Huxterstone - 'Area 3' Development Option B0303

What change would you like to see made?

See Papers Apart

Please return the completed form by:

- post to the Local Development Plan Team, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB; or
- email to ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk

The representation form can be filled in, saved, e-mailed and/or printed. You must “save as” to ensure the completed form is saved with the changes you have made. If you need more space, please fill out another representation form or send a word document attachment via e-mail with your completed representation form. **Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1st June.**

Thank you. For more information, please visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/aldp2016 or to contact the Local Development Plan Team call 01224 523470.

Data Protection Statement

The comments you make on the Proposed Plan will be used to inform the Local Development Plan process and the Examination into the Local Development Plan by the Scottish Ministers' Reporter. You must provide your name and address for your representation to be considered valid, and this information will be made publicly available. Other personal contact details such as telephone and e-mail will not be made public, although we will share these with the Reporter, who may use them to contact you about the comments you have made. For more information about how Aberdeen City Council maintains the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg (Local Development Plan Team Leader) on 01224 523317.

PAPER APART

Objection is made on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes to the failure of the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ADLP) to identify Area 1 (Derbeth) of Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion as an opportunity site for mixed use.

What change would you like to see made?

Stewart Milne Homes wish to see the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2016 modified to allocate land at Derbeth as an opportunity site for mixed use development including 900 homes. As explained below, the land's current zoning as Green Belt (NE2) and Green Space Network (NE1) is no longer appropriate and the infill area should be released to contribute to strategic housing requirements.

Background

Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) previously promoted land at Derbeth through the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008) Review for inclusion in the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan, adopted in June 2012. The site was overlooked based on reasoning pertaining to the site's perceived remoteness to Kingswells and the development's potential impact upon Brimmond Hill. In response to the Council's call for sites in April 2013, the 89.5 ha of land at Derbeth was promoted within a joint development bid for mixed used development alongside lands at Gillahill and Huxterstone (Appendix 1). The Development Option Assessment of the Main Issues Report published in January 2014 failed to identify Derbeth as a preferred option for development owing to its proximity to ecological habitats of the Three Hills Local Nature Conservation Site as well as the route of the AWPR, due for completion in 2018.

Representation (Appendix 2) was made on behalf of SMH in response to this, however, Aberdeen City Council Policy Team recommended that the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee discount the site based on the reasoning of the Reporter into the examination of the 2012 ALDP that Derbeth's green belt status was *'justified by reasons of protecting the setting of Kingswells and preventing encroachment into the countryside that separates Kingswells from Aberdeen'*. Objection is now made to this as development at Derbeth would be a logical extension to Kingswells and complement a major infrastructure component in the shape of the AWPR, directing housing and employment development to the *'right place'*, in line with paragraph 40 of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).

Stewart Milne Homes is committed to the development of this site and has appointed OPEN (Optimised Environments) to prepare a Vision Workbook Document which illustrates the potential for mixed use development at Derbeth and the form that this could take. This

document is submitted alongside the representation as Appendix 3 and should be read in conjunction with this.

National & Strategic Planning Context

Land at Derbeth is currently designated as green belt and in accordance with SPP paragraph 50, its boundaries should be reviewed by the planning authority to *'identify the most sustainable locations for longer-term development'*. Additionally, paragraph 51 proceeds to state that owing to the need for development in smaller settlements, *'room for expansion'* should be considered and that *'clearly identifiable visual boundary markers... such as... main roads'* are appropriate in defining green belt perimeters. The AWPR, upon its completion in 2018, will effectively become this defining boundary to the settlement. It will deem the land at Derbeth as infill, possessing potential to accommodate mixed use development which will maximise land resource whilst enhancing the character and setting of the area.

The development of the AWPR is a major roads infrastructure project which should be given utmost regard when evaluating the future context of Kingswells. It should be recognised as an opportunity to enable the successful growth of the settlement and in line with paragraph 40 of SPP, its use should be optimised by *'co-ordinating housing and business development with infrastructure investment including transport'*. The success of Prime Four is obvious to see and the allocation of an addition 12.7 ha of employment land seeks to meet what paragraph 2.16 of the Proposed ALDP recognises as the *'exceptional demand for employment land in this area'*. This is testament to continued high levels of investment within Aberdeen which should be identified as possessing potential for associated growth. As such, residential allocations should be made in Kingswells to create a balanced and sustainable settlement whilst reducing the need to travel. In failing to reasonably assess the impact of the AWPR, the green belt is falling short in its role of *'directing development to the most appropriate locations'*, as encouraged by SPP.

The allocation of a mixed use development at Derbeth comprising of 900 residential units as well as 6.5 ha of employment land use in combination with extensive strategic landscaping and network of core paths, as detailed in Appendix 3, will enable integration with the wider settlement, the adjacent countryside and Country Park to the west, resulting in the sustainable expansion of Kingswells.

Paragraph 2.2 of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP), adopted in March 2014, aims to *'help create sustainable mixed communities and [the] associated infrastructure'* whilst making 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'*. The investment in new roads infrastructure, such as the AWPR, should act as a catalyst for the creation of sustainable

mixed communities, an objective of the SDP. The opportunity to expand Kingswells by utilising the development potential at Derbeth in tandem with the implementation of the transport corridor should not be overlooked.

As a Strategic Growth Area (SGA), Aberdeen City is expected to deliver 31,500 new homes in the period to 2035. Including existing allocations to 2016, 21,000 homes are expected to be built on greenfield land by 2035. Kingswells lies within the perimeters of the SGA and is therefore well placed to help satisfy these housing requirements. The Proposed ALDP currently allocates 20,422 dwellings to be developed on greenfield sites, falling some 578 units short of the SDP target. Further residential allocations at Balgownie Home Farm and Peterculter will not fully address this deficit. It is therefore necessary that additional land for housing is identified to ensure that an effective 5 year supply is maintained, in line with the requirements of SPP.

Furthermore, the Proposed ALDP continues to place undue emphasis on large scale areas, allocated under the Council's land release to deliver strategic housing requirements. Delivery at several of these sites, including Greenferns and Loirston continue to be delayed due to various constraints, with development upon effective land at locations such as at Derbeth, deemed as a suitable alternative in contributing to achieving housing requirements. In line with SPP paragraph 119, planning authorities should allocate land which can become effective and deliver residential development within a 5 year period. The site at Derbeth is effective and capable of delivery through phased development as a logical extension to Kingswells. It is highly accessible and will contribute to the sustainable development of the settlement. It is well served by the no. 11 and X40 bus First Bus services, linking Kingswells to Aberdeen City centre and offers alternative modes of travel to that of the private car. It will benefit from junctions with the AWPR both to the south and north east of the settlement, enabling travel outwith Aberdeen City. Potential exists to reduce commuting frequency through mixed use development inclusive of employment land, as well as capitalising on its proximity to the established and expanding area of employment at Prime Four and its ancillary Park & Ride. Allocation as such would bring economic benefit to the settlement and enable population growth in the region, in accordance with the objectives of the SDP.

Population Growth

The shortfall in greenfield housing allocations, as set out in the Proposed ALDP, is likely to be compounded by the fact that the population of the North East region is projected to rise to around 570,000 by 2035, significantly in excess of the figure of 500,000 upon which the SDP housing allowances have been based. This will inevitably result in a shortfall in housing supply over the next 20 years, requiring additional sites to be identified to alleviate this problem. It is clear that since examination by the Reporter into the extant ALDP, the circumstances at

Kingswells have changed. The AWPR is expected for completion by 2018 and is considered as a material component in the identification of land for housing. This major transport corridor should be recognised as an opportunity to accommodate the needs and demands of an increased population through the allocation of effective infill sites for mixed use development, such as that at Derbeth. This will ensure that strategic objectives are achieved through the appropriate extension of existing settlements and the creation of sustainable mixed communities.

Design & Layout

The accompanying Vision Workbook Document prepared by OPEN recognises that through integrated design and layout, Derbeth can maximise and enhance the growth of Kingswells as a sustainable community. The delivery of five distinct neighbourhoods, which are integrated through high quality pedestrian and cycle connections to both Kingswells and the Three Hills LNCS and Brimmond Hill Country Park, promotes a mix of urban and rural living which benefits from optimal levels of accessibility to Aberdeen and beyond via the AWPR. The preservation of existing areas of woodland, stone dykes and traditional buildings, as well as focusing development upon lesser elevated areas of the site will enhance the area's character without detracting from the setting of Kingswells.

Through a sensitive layout, design and phasing, the mixed use development will maintain a significant woodland landscape buffer between the development edge and the defensible boundary of the AWPR. Development will be based predominately along its eastern edge upon the lesser elevated areas of the site. An extensive network of pedestrian paths within the development will enhance existing and implement aspiration routes to ensure integration with the wider Kingswells settlement to the east, as well as the open countryside and Country Park to the north and west. Five distinctive development pockets, as identified within Appendix 3, will deliver a sense of place in accordance with the six qualities of a successful place as promoted by SPP, whilst also integrating effectively with the greater development and the wider settlement of Kingswells via pedestrian and cycle connections. This will safeguard and enhance the character and setting of the area, contrary to the opinions of the Policy Team.

This notwithstanding, the impact of the AWPR upon Brimmond Hill Country Park and the Three Hills LNCS is likely to be of greater scale in comparison to a mixed use development at Derbeth which can rebuild fragmented habitats and create a sustainable community which focuses on strategic landscaping and green space networks. In any case the LNCS, as identified within the 'Local Nature Conservation Sites' document published by Aberdeen City Council in July 2013, possesses a non-statutory status, carrying lesser weight than statutory policy and supplementary guidance and should therefore be evaluated accordingly.

Proposed ALDP

The reasons for the site's exclusion from the Proposed ALDP, as stated by the Council's Policy Team recommendations to the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee are untenable. The site does not lie between Kingswells and Aberdeen and therefore cannot be deemed to cause coalescence or encroach on lands between the two. By continuing to overlook the attributes of the site for development, it is failing in its role as green belt which should guide appropriate development to the most appropriate location and preserve the landscape and identity of Aberdeen. The issue of coalescence is deemed redundant in the context of Derbeth as the site will effectively become infill land on completion of the AWPR in 2018. The development of the site in accordance with Appendix 3 will enable the sustainable and planned growth of Kingswells.

Furthermore, circumstances relative to Kingswells have altered since the site's previous review by the Reporter into the extant ALDP. Paragraph 2.22 recognises that the AWPR will *'provide benefits to this area, with junctions proposed to the north and south-west of Kingswells'*. The impact of the AWPR should be considered material in the review of housing land supply in Kingswells and owing to its potential for future growth, should be included as an allocated site within the Aberdeen LDP 2016. This would be a pre-emptive and entirely appropriate action on behalf of the Council in ensuring the long term sustainable growth of the area.

Recommendations

Based on the forgoing, Stewart Milne Homes wish to see the current zoning of land at Derbeth for Green Belt (NE2) and Green Space Network (NE1) removed, as they no longer meet the criteria to be designated as such. Derbeth should be included within the Aberdeen LDP 2016 as an opportunity site for mixed use development including 900 homes. Table 5 of the Proposed ALDP should be modified accordingly to reflect this. Doing so will enable the appropriate and sustainable growth of Kingswells in tandem with the implementation of the AWPR and its associated benefits, whilst helping to meet strategic housing requirements which at present are unlikely to be achieved.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Development Bid June 2013

Appendix 2 – Representation to Main Issues Report March 2014

Appendix 3 - Derbeth Development Strategy June 2015

Appendix 4 – Transport Appraisal May 2015



STEWART MILNE HOMES

**DEVELOPMENT BID FOR LAND AT
KINGSWELLS**

JUNE 2013

**Ryden LLP
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1YL
Tel: 01224 588866
Fax: 01224 589669**

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Planning History**
- 3.0 Description of Site and Proposals**
- 4.0 National Planning Policies**
- 5.0 Structure Plan**
- 6.0 Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (February 2013)**
- 7.0 Services**
- 8.0 Justification**
- 9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Figures

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan

Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan

Figure 5: SEPA Flood Risk Map

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes who have an interest in land, covering around 133 hectares (330 acres) in Kingswells.

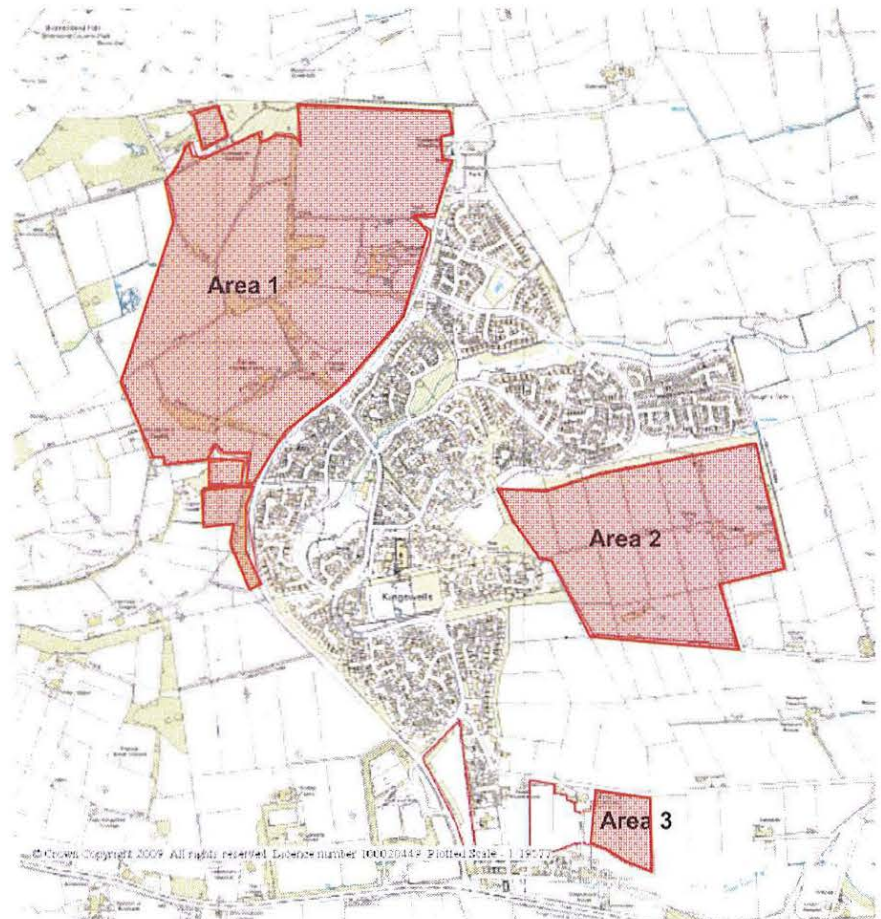


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 1.2 The Stewart Milne Group was founded in Aberdeen in 1975. Since then it has grown to become one of the UK's leading privately owned house builders. They have a commitment to enterprise and innovation matched with traditional value for quality services. The Stewart Milne Group are currently building homes across the North East of Scotland, Tayside, the Central Belt of Scotland and North West England.

- 1.3 Kingswells is a planned village within the boundary of the City of Aberdeen, which lies four miles west of Aberdeen City Centre on the A944, an arterial route into the city. It has a population of approximately 5,181 residents.
- 1.4 Planning permission was first granted for residential and ancillary development in Kingswells in 1983. The village at that time comprised a church, public hall, former school building and public house. Construction commenced in the late 1980s.
- 1.5 The first phase of development in the village was completed in 1995 and included the provision of shops, a community centre and a primary school in the centre of the village. Additional shops, a health centre, dentist, nursing home and veterinary practice were developed as the village expanded. Included in Phase 1 of the development was a western distributor road leading north from a roundabout junction on the A944 towards Newhills.
- 1.6 The settlement then extended to the north-east. A further section of the western bypass was upgraded to allow access to this phase. This expansion enjoys good vehicular and pedestrian links to the village centre and also connects to the wider footpath network. Provision was made for open space, play areas and all weather facilities.
- 1.7 Kingswells has continued to attract significant investment from both residential and commercial property developers. Barratt Homes' 'Willowburn' development comprised 35 new family homes. Stewart Milne Homes have also invested heavily in the area with their West 1, Kingswood Drive, Huxterstone and Den View developments providing a range of house types that add to the established mix of housing to create a vibrant and sustainable community. In addition to these, Drum Property Group's Prime Four development has attracted significant interest from major global energy firms. The first phase of their development is currently under construction and has secured pre-lets by Apache, Nexen and Transocean. Phase 2 is currently the subject of a detailed planning application and already has attracted

occupiers such as Premier Oil and leading hotelier The De Vere Group to create a 150 bedroom "Village Urban Resort" with associated spa, conference, retail and leisure facilities. This level of developer interest demonstrates the success of Kingswells as an investment location, a place where people want to live, work and visit.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 At the request of Aberdeen City Council a development bid was submitted in March 2009 for the expansion of Kingswells which identified that the sites, comprising approximately 139 hectares were suitable for development.
- 2.2 Following the publication of the Main Issues Report (MIR) the sites proposed were identified as site reference 3/05 with the western section of Huxterstone identified as 3/06. Specifically the area proposed by the development bid for expansion had been listed as sites: A - North West of Kingswells (Derbeth), B - Gillahill, C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone), and D - Fairley Road. The MIR identified sites: B - Gillahill, the western section of C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone) and D - Fairley Road as preferred options for development. Site A - North West of Kingswells (Derbeth) was not identified as a preferred option development. Representations were submitted in response to the publication of the MIR supporting the identification of the sites as preferred options for development; highlighting that Site A - Land to the North West of Kingswells was suitable to accommodate growth and accordingly requesting that it be allocated within the proposed Local Development Plan (LDP); and seeking the inclusion of the entire site at Huxterstone for development.
- 2.3 The proposed LDP was published for consultation in August 2010 however, only identified sites D - Fairley Road and the western part of C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone) for development. Due to school capacity figures the Council

considered that the site at Gillahill was undeliverable and failed to carry it forward for development.

- 2.4 Development proposals at Huxterstone and Fairley Road were discussed under Issue 30 of the reporter's recommendations. The Reporter considered that the principle of development on both sites had been established as they had both previously been allocated as Strategic Housing Land Reserve in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008). Consequently the Reporter recommended that the sites be allocated for development. However the allocation at Huxterstone was made as per its allocation in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008) and was not extended to the east as per the development bid. This development bid seeks to extend the allocation at Huxterstone to that shown above in Figure 1 (Area 3).
- 2.5 Development proposals at Gillahill and Derbeth were discussed in Issue 35 of the Reporter's recommendations. In discussing development at Gillahill, the Reporter acknowledged that the site is readily deliverable and would contribute to the housing land supply and may also accommodate a new primary school however, did not consider there to be numerical justification with regards to the housing land supply to allocate further housing sites. Consequently the Reporter found the site's green belt status to be justified.
- 2.6 The Reporter concluded that similar benefits could be secured through the development for housing of land at Derbeth, noting that the development of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) would secure good road access to the area. However, given that the review of the green belt included this area the reporter did not consider there to be over-riding benefits to justify allocation at that time.
- 2.7 This development bid now seeks the development of land at Derbeth for a mixed use development of 900 dwellings; land at Gillahill for the development of 600 dwellings and a primary school; and land at Huxterstone for the development of 60

dwellings as an extension to allocated site OP42. Indicative masterplans for the sites are shown below.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

3.1 This development bid relates to three distinct areas in Kingswells as highlighted in Figure 1 above. The total land covers over 137 hectares (340 acres).

3.2 Area 1: Derbeth lies to the north west of Kingswells and extends to approximately 89.5 hectares (221 acres). It is bound to the north by a shelter belt and pockets of woodland; to the east by open fields; to the south by fields, an access track and some residential dwellings; and to the east by the Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944. Within this area lie a number of properties, including Fairley House, Fairley Home Farm and Derbeth Farm. The AWPR runs through this area of land with a junction proposed to the north east corner. This is due for completion in 2018.

3.3 In topographic terms, the land is undulating, but generally slopes from north west to south east and from north to south. To the south, the land is level before rising from south to north outwith the boundaries of the site. The aspect of the site is south and south east. There are a wide range of landscaped areas, comprising mature trees and drystone dykes throughout the site. From the A944 this land is screened by the topography of the land to the south, Prime Four Business Park and by the Park and Ride site. It becomes more visible as you travel along the distributor road, however good screening exists along parts of this road where there is mature landscaping. The urbanising effect of the development at Prime Four Business Park should be stressed at this point. The construction of tall units with large footprints alters the landscape character of Kingswells significantly, changing the surrounding area from the village/suburb it was, into a global energy hub accommodating international energy companies and other prestigious brands, such as the De Vere Group. The effect on the character of the area is dramatic and

redraws the settlement boundaries of Kingswells in a way that softens the impact of development on the bid sites, as they are seen in this changing urban context.

3.4 Within the extant LDP, this land is mainly identified as green belt, with small pockets to the north west and south identified as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

3.5 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

3.6 Area Two: Gillahill lies to the east of Kingswells and extends to approximately 39.5 hectares (97.6 acres). It is bound to the north and east by a mature tree belt and beyond this, existing dwellinghouses; to the south by open fields; and to the west by further woodland and built development. To the south also lies a farm track.

3.7 In topographic terms the site rises from north to south to a plateau within the site before rising again to a high point between the site and the Lang Stracht. A number of drystane dykes create a distinctive pattern of field boundaries. Within the extant Plan, this site is identified as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

3.8 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan

3.9 Area Three: Huxterstone lies to the south of Kingswells and extends to approximately 4.7 hectares (10.3 acres). It is bound to the north by an unclassified road which leads to the Lang Stracht to the east. This road is part of the Park and Ride bus route. Along this access road immediately adjacent to the bid site lies a cluster of dwellinghouses. To the east, the site is bound by open fields; to the south by a burn and existing development comprising dwelling houses, a public house

and garage along Old Skene Road; and, to the west by OP42 Huxterstone which was allocated for development in the adopted LDP. Following completion of OP42 the site will be bound to the west by development. Work is due to commence on Site OP42 in Autumn 2013

- 3.10 The site is relatively low lying and the land slopes from north to south, with a high point beyond the boundary of the site to the north beyond the cluster of dwellinghouses. There is also a ridge running north south to the west of the site. The land slopes west to east. The land reaches a low point around the line of the Den Burn to the south. The aspect of the site is south facing.
- 3.11 The site is identified within the extant LDP as lying within an area designated as Green Belt and Green Space Network. Development of this site would be seen as an extension of allocated site OP42 Huxterstone which lies to the west.
- 3.12 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 4.1 Paragraph 3 of SPP explains that the purpose of planning is to guide the future development and use of land. It states that *'planning is about where development should happen, where it should not and how it interacts with its surroundings'*. Paragraph 5 goes on to advise that the Scottish Government believe in the value of forward-looking, visionary and ambitious plans that will guide development. Development plans are discussed in paragraphs 10 – 21 of SPP which explains that their purpose is to *'guide the future use of land and the appearance of cities, towns and rural areas. They should indicate where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not.'* In monitoring development plans SPP directs local authorities to *'focus on what has changed for example the extent to which key assumptions remain valid, whether land allocations have provided viable and investment in infrastructure has been forthcoming. Monitoring should set the direction for the future review of the plan.'*
- 4.2 The Scottish Government are committed to sustainable development, paragraph 37 of SPP explains the important role the planning system has to play in supporting the achievement of sustainable development through its influence on the location, layout and design of new development. In deciding the locations of new development SPP directs local authorities to:
- Promote regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land,
 - Reduce the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel and transport opportunities,
 - Promote the development of mixed communities,
 - Take account of the capacity of existing infrastructure,
 - Promote rural development and regeneration, and
 - Prevent further development which would be at risk from flooding or coastal erosion.

- 4.3 Paragraph 40 explains that the *'settlement strategy set out in the development plan should promote a more sustainable pattern of growth for an area, taking account of the scale and type of development pressure and the need for growth and regeneration'*.
- 4.4 In discussing the delivery of new housing SPP states that *'the delivery of housing through the development plan to support the creation of sustainable mixed communities depends on a generous supply of appropriate and effective sites being made to meet the demand, and on the timely release of allocated sites'* (Paragraph 70). SPP goes on to explain that *'allocating a generous supply of land for housing in the development plan will give the flexibility necessary for the continued delivery of new housing even if unpredictable changes to the effective land supply occur during the lifetime of the plan'* (paragraph 71).
- 4.5 To support sustainable development SPP states that planning permission should not be granted for significant travel generating uses in locations which would encourage the private car and where access to public transport would involve walking more than 400m.
- 4.6 Green belts are discussed in paragraphs 159 - 170 of SPP which states that their purpose is to:
- direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration,
 - protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities, and
 - protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities.
- 4.7 SPP states that *'green belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable locations, not to prevent development from happening'* (paragraph 159).

Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport

- 4.8 Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport accompanies SPP. It states that planning authorities should establish accessibility profiles for sites. The profile should reflect the catchment areas served likely quality of service and result in indicators of accessibility. A maximum threshold of 1600 metres in terms of accessibility to local services by walking and cycling should be achieved for new developments.

5.0 STRUCTURE PLAN

- 5.1 The Structure Plan (2009) identifies a requirement for around 72,000 dwellings within the Structure Plan area over the next 20-25 years. Three Strategic Growth Areas (SGA's) are identified which will be the main focus for development and are expected to accommodate 75-80% of growth over the next 20 years and more. Around half of new development will be located within Aberdeen City, with significant development expected in the Aberdeen to Huntly SGA, Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA and the Aberdeen to Peterhead SGA.
- 5.2 The Structure Plan states that around half of the growth proposed will be located within Aberdeen City. The Plan states that within Aberdeen City 21,000 new homes should be built on greenfield sites in the period 2007 - 2030.
- 5.3 The Structure Plan also advocates sustainable mixed communities and seeks to achieve new development that meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.

6.0 PROPOSED ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FEBRUARY 2013)

- 6.1 Consultation into the proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) closed on 12th April 2013. Once adopted it will replace the approved Structure Plan. Accordingly it forms a material consideration in the determination of this development bid.
- 6.2 The proposed SDP carries forward the extant Structure Plan's vision for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. In doing so it also carries forward the aims and objectives of the extant plan.
- 6.3 The proposed SDP again identifies three SGA's. Aberdeen city is identified as accommodating around half of the growth proposed within the city region. Figure 1 of the proposed SDP states that 9,000 new homes should be build on greenfield sites in the City over the period 2017 - 2035.
- 6.4 As the proposed SDP has not identified any increase in allocation in terms of residential and employment land, it is the subject of objection from the development industry. Should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a reporter be minded to increase allocations made within the Strategic Development Plan, the LDP will fall short of meeting housing and employment land requirements.
- 6.5 In addition to this shortfall, there are significant concerns from the development industry that the 5 year housing land supply is not being maintained. Some sites which make up this supply are not effective, as defined by the Scottish Government¹. The 2013 Housing Land Audit clearly demonstrates the constraints facing some sites that make up the housing land supply, such as Greenferns, Greenferns Landward and Grandholme. If sites such as these fail to deliver as originally anticipated, the City Council will be required to identify new sites that are effective in order to make up the shortfall.

¹ Circular 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits

7.0 SERVICES

7.1 Drainage capacity is available through connections to the wider network although upgrades may be required. Extensions would be required and investigated as the planning process evolves.

7.2 SEPA's Flood Risk map, as shown in Figure 5 below highlights that there is no flood risk associated with any of the areas of land under consideration.

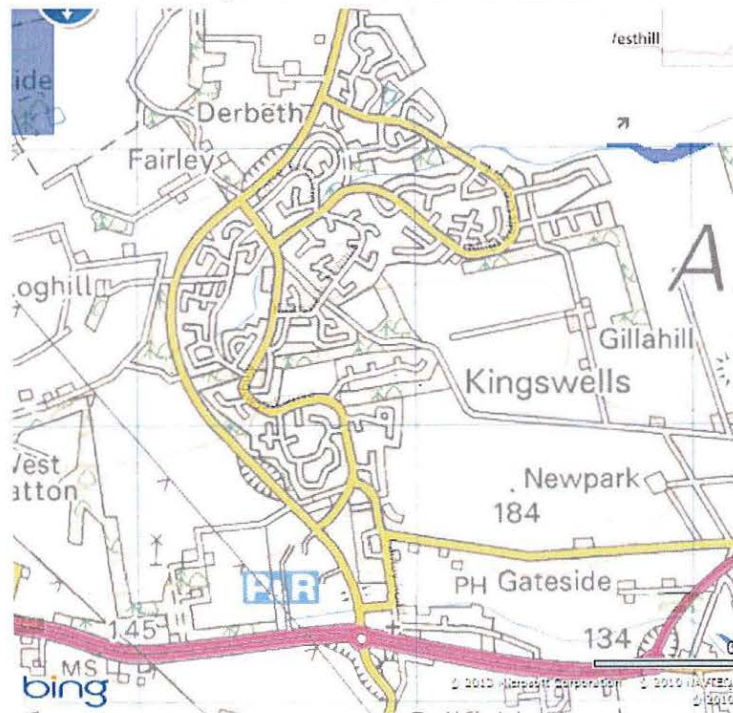


Figure 5: SEPA Flood Map

7.3 Kingswells lies in the catchment area for Bucksburn Academy which has an increasing school roll. However, pupils in Kingswells will be rezoned to the new Countesswells Academy in due course. Primary school provision for the Kingswells area is located at Kingswells Primary School which is currently operating above capacity however is forecast to fall to below capacity in 2018². The development at Gillahill proposes the development of a new primary school which would alleviate

² 2012-Based School Roll Forecasts, Aberdeen City

any school capacity issues. It is likely that should the sites be allocated and an application be submitted financial contributions would be sought by Aberdeen City Council to go towards education provision. As such, the development would not have a detrimental impact on the capacity of the local primary and secondary school.

8.0 JUSTIFICATION

- 8.1 It is considered that Kingswells is capable of accommodating further development. Kingswells not only lies in the Aberdeen City Strategic Growth Area, but it is well related to the city centre, being only four miles from it. It benefits from good links to the surrounding area and can therefore be accessed conveniently by a variety of transport modes.
- 8.2 As discussed in paragraph 6.1, consultation into the proposed SDP closed on 12th April 2013; as no increase to employment and residential allocations are proposed objections have been submitted by the development industry. These objections seek an increase in employment and residential allocations in keeping with the population projections. Should the Strategic Development Authority or reporter be minded to increase allocations there will be insufficient housing and employment land allocations within the LDP. As directed by SPP the review of the LDP should be ambitious and visionary, in doing so it should identify new greenfield allocations. As such, new allocations are required to meet the inevitable shortfall in housing land supply. Sites such as those proposed at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone, that can deliver development in the short term and continue to provide housing for local needs should be identified within the review of the LDP for development within the period 2017 - 2035. Doing so would ensure that the review of the LDP maintains an adequate housing land supply. The review of the LDP should also be an opportunity to review the effectiveness of existing allocations to ensure the 5 year housing land supply is being maintained. Simply rolling forward allocations that

have shown a persistent ineffectiveness, such as those at Greenferns and Grandholme, will only serve to create artificial bottlenecks in the supply of new housing land. These large allocations absorb large portions of the housing demand and yet are not delivering these houses on the ground. The review of the LDP should also include a review of these allocations and, if they shown to be ineffective, then new allocations should be brought forward to ensure the homes required in the area are provided for by the planning system.

- 8.3 Further development in Kingswells is justified. Following the completion of OP42 in 2017 there will be no new sites within Kingswells for development. Given the development of employment land at OP40 (50ha) is the largest employment land release within in the extant LDP it is logical to identify further land releases within Kingswells to provide housing in proximity to employment and to maximise on investment made in infrastructure. In addition to this the development of further housing in Kingswells in proximity to this employment land would encourage sustainable living and contribute to creating a sustainable community; in doing so it will encourage businesses to locate to the business park being developed at OP40, in keeping with the objectives of both the extant Structure Plan and the proposed SDP which aim to make the region a more attractive location for businesses to move to.

Area One: Derbeth

- 8.4 In the first instance, there is strong justification for the removal of this land from the green belt. As recognised by SPP the objective of green belt policy is to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations. This location is considered appropriate for development due to its proximity to the AWPR. A junction is proposed to the north east of the site, therefore opening up this area for further development. Although this land extends to just less than 90 hectares, the majority of this land lies to the west of the AWPR and will remain free from development. Any development will be located to the east of the AWPR and covers approximately 35 hectares. This amounts to less than 40% of the total landholding in this area.

The AWPR will provide a defensible boundary to the green belt with development contained between the AWPR and the existing settlement boundary.

- 8.5 As directed by SPP green belt policy also aims to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. The development of the AWPR at this location will significantly affect the character, landscape setting and identity of this area. The land between the AWPR and the existing distributor road will therefore become a suitable and sustainable location for further development. The indicative masterplan shown in Figure 2 demonstrates that the development will create sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development. This will create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and provide a new landscape and identity for Kingswells. Further landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a formal masterplan for the site.
- 8.6 Access opportunities to the wider countryside will be affected by the development of the AWPR at this location. The land identified for development to the east of the proposed AWPR would not provide attractive land for access and recreational opportunities and its contribution to the aims of the green belt would be diminished. It is therefore an ideal location for development. As shown on the indicative masterplan in Figure 2 landscaping and open space proposed as part of this development will provide a network of meaningful open space providing access and recreation opportunities for the local community within a wider development network.
- 8.7 During consultation into the current LDP Aberdeen City Council previously raised concerns relating to landscape and visual impact of development and its detachment from the existing community; despite acknowledging during their analysis of the site that it did not conflict with existing surrounding uses.

- 8.8 As recognised above, the AWPR will permanently alter the landscape of the area and any impacts arising on the sensitive landscapes to the north and west, particularly Brimmond Hill are likely to arise as a direct result of the AWPR rather than any development at Derbeth. Development at Derbeth will infill the area between the existing settlement and the proposed AWPR. Importantly however, specific areas of the site which are considered sensitive to development will be kept free of development. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the site was previously undertaken which confirmed that the proposed development should be located to the lower areas with any development on higher ground to be orientated away from the most sensitive landscape and visual receptors in the area, particularly Brimmond Hill. It considered that the AWPR, which lies to the west of the proposed development mainly on higher ground, will, with its associated landscaping, form a vegetated back drop to the development when viewed from Kingswells. In addition, the AWPR landscape will form a linear feature between the proposed development and Brimmond Hill.
- 8.9 Previous criticism that the site will be detached from the existing Kingswells village is refuted. Like development at OP40, it lies to the west of the existing bypass, but traffic using this route following completion of the AWPR will be significantly reduced thereby enabling formation of new junctions serving the existing and proposed developments and enhanced pedestrian and cycle linkages between the two. There are already footpath networks connecting through the proposed development site. These will be safeguarded and enhanced with the proposed development. Indeed, the development proposed at Derbeth provides an opportunity to improve the connectivity between the existing village and the countryside area lying beyond the AWPR, particularly Brimmond Hill.
- 8.10 Integration with the existing community can be achieved through the physical design of the development. The range of uses proposed for the site will also encourage integration with the provision of employment opportunities for the wider community and the facilities and services provided as part of the development

being available and accessible to all Kingswells residents. New developments in Kingswells, such as Prime Four, are also easily integrated with the bid site and indeed help integrate the bid site with the wider community thereby ensuring the settlement expands in the most organic and sustainable way.

- 8.11 The AWPR represents a significant investment in the north east of Scotland and many of the development sites identified in the LDP are predicated upon completion of that route. Kingswells will enjoy a high level of connectivity with the route through the grade separated junction proposed to the west on the A944 and also the half diamond grade separated junction proposed to the north. A strategy promoting the long term growth of Kingswells would therefore make maximum use of that investment by utilising the spare capacity created on the network. As directed by SPP new developments should be located in such areas where they can maximise opportunities to take advantage of investment made in infrastructure.
- 8.12 Kingswells is also well served by public transport, both through a town service and a park and ride service. On completion of Prime Four and the AWPR public transport services are likely to be enhanced, particularly services connecting key communities and employment locations on the periphery of the city. Derbeth is capable of being connected to that network to ensure that all residential development lies within 400 metres of a bus route as required by SPP.

Area Two: Gillahill

- 8.13 In 1991 the adopted Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan designated the site as falling within a GB2 "Countryside Around Towns" area. These areas were identified to accommodate the future development requirements of the city because of the limited contribution made to the landscape setting of the city. The most recent expansion of Kingswells was drawn entirely from areas of 'Countryside Around Towns' as defined in that Plan thereby setting a precedent for development in these areas.

- 8.14 In the period between then and the adoption of the LDP, Aberdeen City Council made various attempts to replace the 1991 Local Plan. A finalised version of the Aberdeen City Local Plan, published in September 1999 in conformity with the now superseded Grampian Structure Plan identified the site as an area of 'Strategic Reserve'. Similar to the Countryside Around Towns designation these areas were specifically identified as land that may be required in the longer term for development. That plan never progressed to adoption following the preparation and approval of the Aberdeen Structure Plan (NEST) 2001-2016.
- 8.15 To conform to the extant Structure Plan a modified finalised Local Plan was published in August 2002. In that plan the site at Gillahill, along with all the land lying in the Kingswells, Newhills corridor reverted to Green Belt. This was despite the Council's own Aberdeen Green Belt Review recommending that the site be removed from the Green Belt. This plan was also subsequently abandoned by the Council.
- 8.16 In August 2004 Aberdeen City Council published the finalised Aberdeen Local Plan, Green Spaces – New Places. This Plan identified the northern part of the Gillahill site for residential development in the period 2000-2010. The southern part of the site was identified as a future new community capable of accommodating 230 houses post-2010. The stated intention for the development of the site was to create a more sustainable community, which was capable of supporting its own community facilities and employment area.
- 8.17 The northern part of the Gillahill site was initially identified to accommodate 200 units. That was subsequently reduced to 170 units as a consequence of the limited capacity at Kingswells Primary School. Following public consultation on the finalised Plan, planning officers recommended that the entire site be re-designated as a future new community suitable for development post-2010. Following a Public Inquiry into the plan the site was excluded from the adopted Plan and the land identified as falling within the Green Belt and Green Space Network.

- 8.18 Land at Gillahill was subsequently identified as being suitable for development during the consultation into the LDP where the MIR identified it as a preferred option for development. It was not carried forward for development due to school capacity concerns. It is clear from the consultation into the extant LDP that the only impediment envisaged by the Council to the development of the land at Gillahill is the capacity of the existing primary school. The Council's previous assessment of the site and its inclusion in the MIR as a preferred site, suggests that in every other respect they consider the site capable of development. This reflects their longstanding view on the development potential of the land at Gillahill.
- 8.19 The key issue which has repeatedly been a stumbling block to the development of the land at Gillahill is the capacity of the existing primary school. During the consultation into the extant LDP TPS Planning were appointed to undertake an Education Impact Analysis of development at Gillahill. The analysis assessed achievable ways for accommodating the primary pupil product arising from the Gillahill development in line with the development economics of the site, including the prospect of changing school catchment areas and/or changing the existing primary school provision in the area. The report concludes that a new single stream primary school should be accommodated on the development site. Managed with the existing primary school this would ensure that the pupil product of the Gillahill site and the residual/overflow from the existing school could be accommodated in the proposed school at Gillahill. The scale of development necessary to provide a primary school would dictate the capacity of the Gillahill site to be 600 units. The site can accommodate this whilst reflecting the design policies of Aberdeen City Council.
- 8.20 A Transportation Appraisal was previously undertaken to inform the LDP which confirmed that the site is capable of being satisfactorily accessed and served by public transport. It demonstrated that the entire development of up to 600 houses can be accommodated in advance of the AWPR. It identified that some mitigation

would be required on the local road network, particularly the junction of the Kingswells bypass with the A944. All of these works, however, were capable of being carried out within the confines of the currently adopted road and indeed have now been undertaken as part of the Prime Four development.

- 8.21 The inclusion of the Gillahill site for development during the period 2017 - 2035 would ensure that there is sufficient land allocations should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a Reporter be minded to increase allocations proposed by the SDP. Should this happen the Review of the LDP, without any new greenfield allocations, would fall short in delivering new land for housing. New sites also require to be identified to address the emerging shortfall in the housing land supply as a consequence of a number of larger sites failing to come forward within the timescales anticipated.
- 8.22 The site at Gillahill lies immediately adjacent to the existing community and is ideally placed to maximise on current investment in infrastructure being made at Kingswells. Furthermore it is well placed in proximity to development at OP40 to take advantage of employment opportunities available thus contributing to creating a sustainable community.
- 8.23 The land is currently in agricultural use for grazing purposes. There are no landscape or visual impact issues constraining the development of the site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the site was previously undertaken to inform consultation into the extant LDP it concluded that the landscape and visual impact of the development is medium which can be mitigated by the implementation of strategic landscaping.
- 8.24 In terms of the Green Space Network designation of the site, current policy aims to protect and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of these areas. It was the intention of the Council to identify the most important wildlife and recreation sites as Green Space Network. At present the site does not meet the

objectives of the Green Space Network as it does not add value to the provision, protection, and enhancement of open space and habitats nor does it enable connectivity of open space or habitat. As such it is evident that this land is not particularly important in these terms as it would not have been identified for development in previous plans if it was. Despite this the indicative masterplan shown in Figure 3 safeguards and enhances this area creating footpath connections between the site, the community and areas of open space within the site.

- 8.25 Mature tree belts existing to the north and east will contain development and soften the appearance of the development. The woodland shelter belt to the north will partially screen development from close and distant views whilst the woodland to the west will act as a backdrop to development. The landscape framework is defined by the distinctive pattern of field boundaries formed by drystone dykes and these will be incorporated into the layout and design of the development to create a distinctive residential environment.
- 8.26 Linked footpaths and a network of open space through the site is important and where possible will utilise historic routes defined by drystone dykes. This will be further enhanced by landscaping. Development would maintain the cohesion of Kingswells with minimal impact on the setting of the city.
- 8.27 In locational terms the site forms a natural expansion of the existing settlement set within a mature landscape framework. It lies close to, and would enjoy good pedestrian links with the centre of the village where a range of services can be found. Public transport services currently lie along Kingswells Crescent which lies within 400 metres of the site in line with SPP.
- 8.28 A number of supporting studies have previously been prepared for this land, including drainage and transportation assessments and an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts. These confirm that there are no traffic, infrastructure

or landscaping issues which cannot be adequately addressed. Therefore, it is argued that the potential of this site to accommodate development has been recognised by the Council since 1991. Given this acknowledgement, it should continue to be allocated for development through the Review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

8.29 SPP states that the aim of green belt policy is to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. Landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a masterplan for the site and will provide sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development to create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and form a defensible boundary to the settlement.

8.30 As recognised by SPP the other objectives of a green belt are to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations; and protect and give access to open space. At present the site at Gillahill does not meet the objectives of green belt policy. It does not direct growth to the most appropriate location and it does not provide access or protect areas of open space. As demonstrated by the indicative masterplan in Figure 4 development of the site will enable areas of open space to be created which will be accessible for all of the community to use. Furthermore it enables development to occur in a location which is in proximity to both the existing settlement and services within the settlement; accordingly it is an ideal location for development. As such the site should be removed from the green belt and allocated for development in the Review of the LDP.

8.31 As recognised by the Reporter during the examination into the extant LDP a number of benefits would accrue as a result of this development including a new primary school. Consequently it should be removed from the green belt and allocated for the development of 600 units of housing and a new primary school.

Area Three: Huxterstone

- 8.32 The suitability of land at Huxterstone for development is established and it is considered that land to the east of the existing allocation (OP42) should be allocated as an extension of OP42. As previously outlined the site is bound to the north by an unclassified road which leads to the Lang Stracht (the A944) to the east. Along this access road, immediately adjacent to the site, lies a cluster of dwellinghouses. The Den Burn runs along the southern section of site, alongside an area of rough grass and a line of trees which separate the site from an area of existing development beyond, including a public house and garage along Old Skene Road. To the west, the site is bound by OP42 and to the east, the site is bound by open fields.
- 8.33 With regards to the accessibility of the site and its proximity to the local services available in Kingswells; the site is well related to the existing built up area and is situated in close proximity to the local road and transport network as well as the local shop and services available along Kingswood Drive. The local services, which include a primary school, medical practice and local shop, are easily accessible from the site within a walking distance of approximately 1400 metres, within the 1600 metre threshold set by PAN 75, in terms of access to services by walking and cycling. The local bus network is also accessible on foot, with a number of bus stops available along Fairley Road and the Kingswells Park and Ride is also within walking distance of the site. This encourages sustainable travel in line with SPP. A number of First Bus services also operate along the bus-only section of the Lang Stracht directly to the north of the site, connecting Kingswells to Aberdeen City and the Bridge of Don Park and Ride.
- 8.34 As discussed above, the site is well related to the existing built up area, with existing development to the north and south of the site. It is therefore an ideal location for further residential development in Kingswells. It is acknowledged, however, that development in this area should respect the surrounding landscape and endeavour to protect the public views of Kingswells from the east. Taking this into consideration, it is proposed to incorporate areas of landscaping and open

space, including a shelter belt along the eastern boundary of the site. This will screen the proposed development from the south and east and also provide an attractive residential environment for future residents. An extension to the riverside walk along the Den Burn to the south of the site is also proposed, with further walkways provided to promote pedestrian movement through the site and to enhance connections to the Core Path Network and the wider Kingswells area. It should be noted that the site also benefits from a south facing aspect, with the land rising in a northerly direction. Consequently, any development on the site would be well contained and will not breach the skyline.

8.35 During the consultation into the LDP concerns were noted that land to the east of OP42 residential use would develop too far to the east of Kingswells. This is disputed. The proposed site is well related to the existing built up area, with existing development to the north and south of the site. Following completion of OP42 the site will be bound on three sides by development. It is acknowledged that development in this area should respect the surrounding landscape and endeavour to protect the public views of Kingswells from the east; and it is therefore proposed to incorporate areas of landscaping and open space, including a shelter belt along the eastern boundary of the site. This will screen the proposed development from the south and east and also provide an attractive residential environment for future residents. A continuation of the riverside walk along the Den Burn to the south of the site is also proposed to be extended, with further walkways provided to promote pedestrian movement through the site and to enhance connections to the Core Path network, land to the west and the wider Kingswells area. The proposed boundary of the site also ensures adequate land is retained between the site and other proposed developments to the east of Kingswells, so as to mitigate any issues of coalescence.

8.36 To enable development the site should be removed from the green belt. SPP stated that *'green belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable*

locations, not prevent development from happening'. At present the designation is preventing development from happening in this location which is considered to be a suitable location to accommodate further growth in Kingswells. As such, the green belt designation is not contributing to the settlement strategy for the area. Removal of the site from the green belt will allow for an extension of OP42 and in doing so create a number of benefits.

9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

- 9.1 In conclusion Kingswells is an appropriate area for further expansion. It enjoys good links with the surrounding area, including Dyce, Westhill and Aberdeen. Its close proximity to Aberdeen makes it an ideal location to absorb development pressure. Furthermore as noted above it is the location for one of the largest employment land releases within the extant Plan at OP40 and further development would support this and maximise on investments made.
- 9.2 As discussed above objections have been submitted in response to the proposed SDP in response to its failure to increase employment and housing land allocations. Should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a reporter be minded to increase allocations the review of the LDP will have insufficient allocations to meet the requirements. Allocation of land at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone for development will ensure that the review of the LDP does not fall short in delivering further land for development. It will also ensure that development in Kingswells continues past 2017 thereby enabling a sustainable community to be delivered.
- 9.3 On completion of the AWPR Derbeth will become infill land. It will be contained by the road to the west and the existing settlement to the east and the proposed junction to the north east will provide convenient access to the area opening up both development potential and the site for the local community should it be developed.

- 9.4 Gillahill has been recognised by various Local Plans as a suitable location for further development, only failing to receive favourable allocations at proposed plan stage due to concerns regarding primary school capacity. As discussed above a primary school is proposed on site which would alleviate any concerns regarding primary school capacity issues. This is a significant benefit if the proposal.
- 9.5 An extension at OP42 Huxterstone is also justified. Following completion of development at OP42 the site will be bound on three sides by development thus forming a logical area for expansion with sufficient distance between it and development to east to avoid coalescence.
- 9.6 To enable the development of the above sites their green belt designations should be removed. All three sites are well connected to Kingswells, and as development would be of a high standard resulting in a number of benefits, including a new primary school, areas of open space, extension to country park and river side walk, the loss of this land from the greenbelt would not be detrimental to the character and amenity of the settlement.
- 9.7 A number of benefits would accrue as a consequence of development at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone. This with the likelihood that the Review of the LDP will fall short in meeting housing land supply requirements should allocations be increased in the proposed SDP, justifies the removal of these sites from the green belt. It is therefore respectfully requested that sites at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone are identified for development in the Review of the LDP.

PAPER APART

Representation to Aberdeen City Council on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in Response to the failure of the Main Issues Report to identify Area 1 (Derbeth) of Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion as a Preferred Site for Mixed Use

Introduction & Background

Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of Aberdeen City Council to recognise land at Derbeth (Area 1 of Development Option B0303) as an opportunity site for mixed use development within the Main Issues Report (MIR) published in January 2014. This objection requires to be considered in conjunction with the accompanying objection made by Stewart Milne Homes submitted in respect to Issue 1 of the MIR pertaining to Greenfield Housing Allocations.

The Development Bid was submitted to the local authority in June 2013 as per the Council's request for Development Option sites. The area at Derbeth was part of a combined bid alongside two other sites at Gillahill and Huxterstone, all of which were subsequently deemed as undesirable by the technical response issued within the Development Options Assessment Report.

Pertaining to Derbeth, specified as 'Area 1' within the bid, the site was excluded by the MIR for reasons relating to proximity to Three Hills Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) which adjoins the site to the west; priority habitat within the site; and the AWPR route which dissects the site travelling north. Additional issues referring to the loss of green belt land and the protection of the setting of Kingswells were also stated as reasons for exclusion.

Previously, a bid had been forwarded by Stewart Milne Homes for the inclusion of the site into the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) which was adopted by the local authority in February 2012. The proposal site (3/05 A as referred to by the MIR of 2009) was reasoned to be unsuitable for development as the site is remote from the existing settlement of Kingswells would impact further on the setting of Brimmond Hill which lies to the northwest of the area.

In respect of the above, the Council have been inconsistent in their reasons for exclusion of the site in both instances. Within the Consultation Responses to the 2009 MIR, the site is referred to as being '*remote from the existing settlement of Kingswells*', with no reference made to the LNCS. However, with the Development Options Assessment Report to the recent MIR, reasons for exclusion refer to the site as being '*somewhat segregated from the existing settlement of Kingswells*' and that it '*adjoins Three Hills Local Nature Conservation Area*'. This highlights variations in the Council's assessment criteria and should be reconsidered.

Stewart Milne Homes contend that the land at Derbeth should be designated within the Proposed LDP for mixed use development incorporating residential, employment and recreational land with the intention of providing a sustainable community that is accessible, well integrated and useable for all residents of Kingswells and its surroundings.

Green Belt & Green Network Designation

The development bid site lies to the west of the distributor road linking Kingswells and Newhills and is currently designated under the extant LDP as Green Belt and Green Space Network land. Within paragraph 159 of the current Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) document, it is stated that green belt designations shall direct growth to the most appropriate locations; protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity as well as protecting and giving access to open space areas around towns and cities.

It is reasoned that due to the implementation of the AWPR, upon which work shall begin in 2015, the nature of the extant green belt and its associated environs shall be unduly damaged due to the route dissecting through the centre of the Derbeth site. As per SPP guidance, existing green belt should direct development to suitable locations. It is argued that the proposed bid site represents viable development due to its infill nature east of the imminent AWPR and should subsequently be included within the finalised LDP, with the green belt designation removed.

Additionally, it is stated within paragraph 162 of the same document, that *'inner boundaries should not be drawn too tightly around the urban edge, but where appropriate should create an area suitable for planned development between the existing settlement edge and green belt boundary... and leave room for expansion'*. In light of this it is considered that the bid site would represent appropriate settlement expansion as it will be deemed an infill site post AWPR construction.

The draft bid site masterplan indicates ample provision of open public green space on site in line with the 2.8ha per 1,000 residents as per Policy NE4 – Open Space Provision in New Development of the extant LDP. This ensures that the development advocates the Proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) objective of promoting and encouraging sustainable mixed communities which are accessible to residents of the locality. Existing and aspirational Core Paths within and adjacent to the site shall be promoted by the proposed use, with links between Kingswells and the District Wildlife Site at Three Hills being enhanced in order to improve connectivity through the development and beyond.

In the development option response issued by the Council, the site scores lowly within the nature conservation category due to its proximity to Three Hills Local Nature Conservation Site adjoining to the west. This LNCS is identified within the 'Local Nature Conservation Sites' document published by Aberdeen City Council in July 2013. The site possesses a non-statutory status, carrying lesser weight than statutory policy and supplementary guidance and should therefore be assessed accordingly.

The indicative masterplan designates all development occurring to the east of the route of the AWPR, with an appropriate buffer zone retained between this and the limits of the Priority Habitat further to the west, therefore negating any potential ecological or visual impact upon the LNCS.

The AWPR will become a long term defensible boundary to further development. Substantial strategic green landscaping immediately adjacent to the east of the AWPR within the site shall soften visual impacts of this defensible boundary and enhance the landscape setting of the site within the context of Kingswells and the wider area.

Further visual screening will be provided on site through the implementation of existing areas of woodland adopted with tree-lined avenues enhancing landscape fit. In any case, it is maintained that the development of the AWPR alone would have a much greater landscape and character setting impact upon the amenity of the LNCS than any development at Derbeth. Hence, it is reasoned that this low score be reconsidered due to the landscape specifics detailed within the indicative masterplan pertaining to the Derbeth site.

The removal of green belt and green space network designations is fully justifiable in this instance, with the imminent AWPR reasoned to be an appropriate defining boundary from which the green belt could extend, encompassing the countryside to the west. Post AWPR development, this area of infill land would be observed as unappealing in terms of recreational use, undermining its designation within the green belt network. It is therefore recommended at this juncture that current zonings are relinquished and the land forwarded as a preferred site for mixed use development which represents a more viable future use to that presently on site.

Employment Land & Accessibility

It is intended that approximately 12ha of the proposed bid site shall be utilised for the delivery of employment within an effective mixed use development at Derbeth. This shall complement the development at Prime Four and make a valuable contribution to the 105ha of land proposed by the SDP up to 2026. The incorporation of employment use has the potential to further establish Kingswells as an area of Aberdeen which promotes mixed use development inclusive of a range of services, hence transforming the area from the exclusively residential commuter suburb as it currently operates into an attractive and functional settlement.

Due to the route of the AWPR, the accessibility of the Derbeth site is enhanced. Proposed new junctions to the north and northeast of the bid site provide the opportunity for additional links to this major thoroughfare which will provide efficient links both north and south. The site shall benefit from its location relative to the AWPR, with access primarily taken from the northern boundaries, hence likely to reduce the concentration and frequency of traffic upon the existing distributor road.

The location of the AWPR enhances the desirability of Kingswells for businesses, promoting future investment into the area. The area is sufficiently served by the existing Park and Ride and no. 11 and X40 bus First Bus services which currently operate, linking Kingswells to Aberdeen City centre. The AWPR provides potential for additional transport links and can therefore add to the viability of the site as an accessible mixed use development promoting business and employment opportunities for local residents.

It is reasoned that the site should be awarded a greater score within the integration with existing settlements and connectivity categories as it shall not be *'segregated from the existing settlement of Kingswells'* as the *'Core Paths [which] connect the centre of the site to Kingswells local centre to the east and the Brimmond Hill Country Park to the northwest'*, will be added to and connectivity enhanced through the designation of the bid site for mixed use.

The inclusion of two foot bridges over the distributor road will provide ample pedestrianised links to the facilities at the centre of Kingswells as well as enabling existing residents to benefit from links to green space within the Derbeth area as well as the open countryside further west. This enhances the integration of the site within the existing settlement and promotes additional links via footpaths and the Core Paths network. This indicative masterplan approach detailing proposed pedestrianised links serves to mitigate the Council's concerns over segregation with Kingswells.

Further to this, it is reasoned that the site should score higher within the proximity to facilities category within the Council's Checklist criteria as it is located *'just over'* 800m of the village centre on Kingswood Drive and well within the 1.6km standard laid out within PAN75: Planning for Transport.

Summary

As detailed by the reasons above, Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of the MIR to identify Derbeth as a preferred site for Mixed Use development.

The site identifies and concurs with the Proposed Strategic Development Plan's objectives pertaining to the promotion of sustainable communities and giving priority to mixed use development which respects local character and identity. It is believed that the balance of residential and employment land identified by the indicative masterplan addresses the requirements of the local area in terms of meeting greenfield housing targets as well as contributing to employment needs.

The recommendation for 900 homes on site makes a valuable contribution to the shortfall indicated within the MIR and shall effectively deliver necessary housing as per the population projections for the Aberdeen City & Shire area up to 2035, as discussed within the separate Paper Apart, submitted alongside this document.

The bid site shall be physically integrated with Kingswells through the implementation of footpath and cycle networks, in addition to those existing and aspirational Core Paths on and adjacent to the Derbeth site, detailed within the indicative masterplan. The provision of on-site recreational facilities will benefit both future residents of the development as well being amenable to those residing to the east of the distributor road within the existing Kingswells area.

The inclusion of this site shall represent flexible strategic planning with the objective of implementing an effective and sustainable expansion to Kingswells upon an appropriate infill site, the location of which shall be enhanced by its proximity to the AWPR, as encouraged by the Proposed SDP. It signifies an opportunity to mitigate greenfield housing shortfalls illustrated by the MIR and provides a suitable mix of development which contributes to the growth and amenity of the local area, resulting in a higher quality of life for residents through improved access and proximity to facilities.

Recommendation

For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that the designations of the current site within the extant LDP as Green Belt (NE2) and Green Space Network (NE1) are removed and the area included within the Proposed LDP as an opportunity site for mixed use development.

The Derbeth site should be identified and developed within a long term framework detailing the appropriate expansion of the Kingswells settlement through appropriate service provision and infrastructure needs.




DERBETH, ABERDEEN

Development Strategy - Response to Aberdeen Local Development Plan

June 2015





This document sets out initial findings and analysis of the Derbeth site in Aberdeen. It contains an early assessment of baseline information and surrounding context, set out along with initial concepts and design approach to demonstrate the potential of the site. Stewart Milne believe sensitive development in this location would form a natural extension to the existing urban area of Kingswells creating strong, identifiable and clearly defensible landscape boundaries.

Introduction

The site at Derbeth has the potential to become a distinctive and sustainable extension to Kingswells, offering a choice of housing within easy reach of local facilities, the city centre and significant employment areas.

1.1 Purpose of document

This representation to the forthcoming Aberdeen Local Development Plan has been prepared by Optimised Environments Limited, 'OPEN' on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes Ltd.

The document forms a supporting statement to accompany Stewart Milne's response to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and provides support for the allocation of land at Derbeth, Aberdeen for 900 homes and other mixed uses.

This report aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of the land as an attractive residentially led, mixed use development, by exploring the capacity of the site for development uses and how it could connect to Kingswells and the city context, including those areas that are currently at planning stage, whilst above all establishing a viable and logical future vision for the area that is engaging to the wider community and meets the land use objectives of the Council.

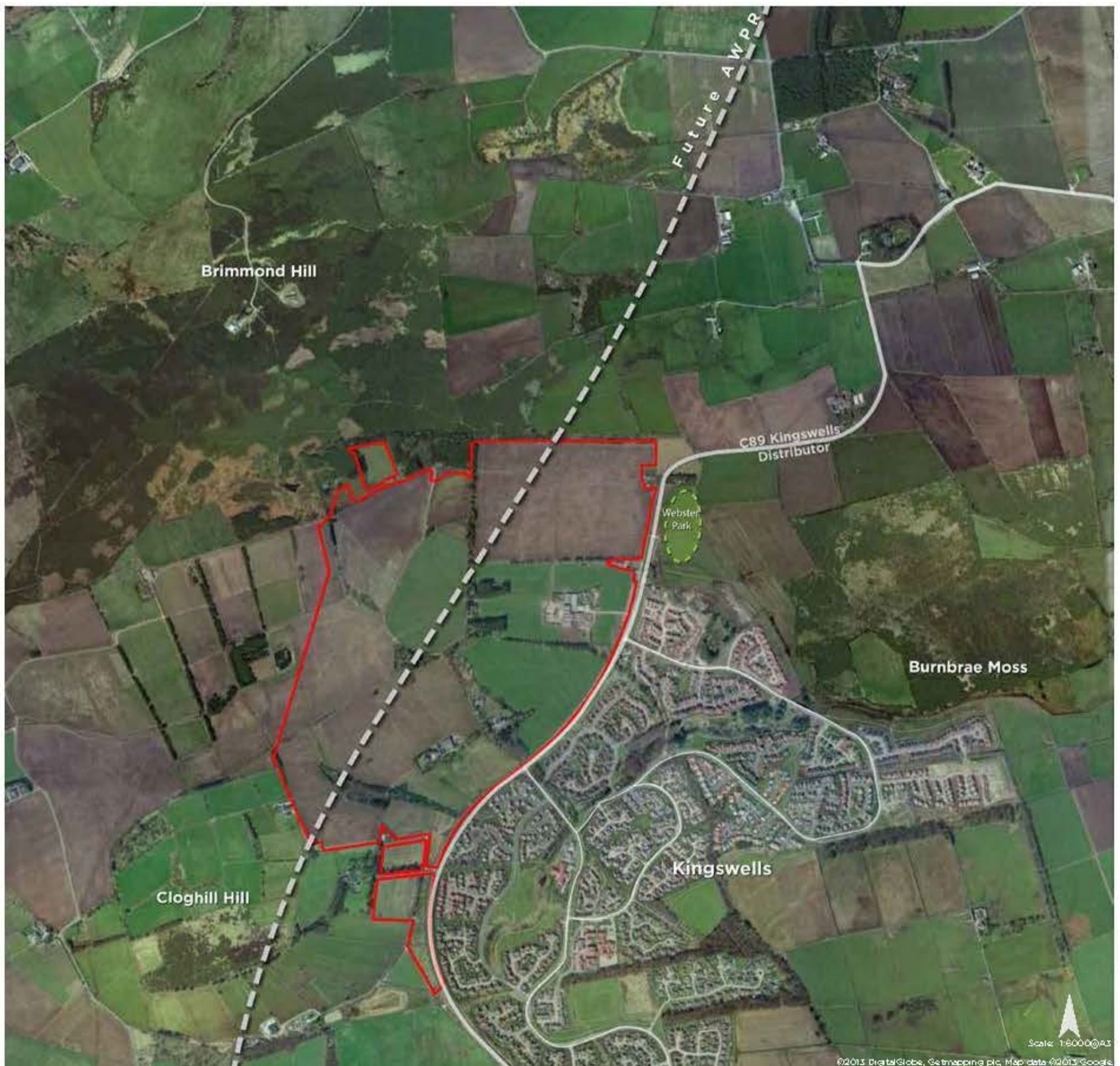
This document and should be read in conjunction with the planning response prepared by Ryden.

1.2 Current planning context

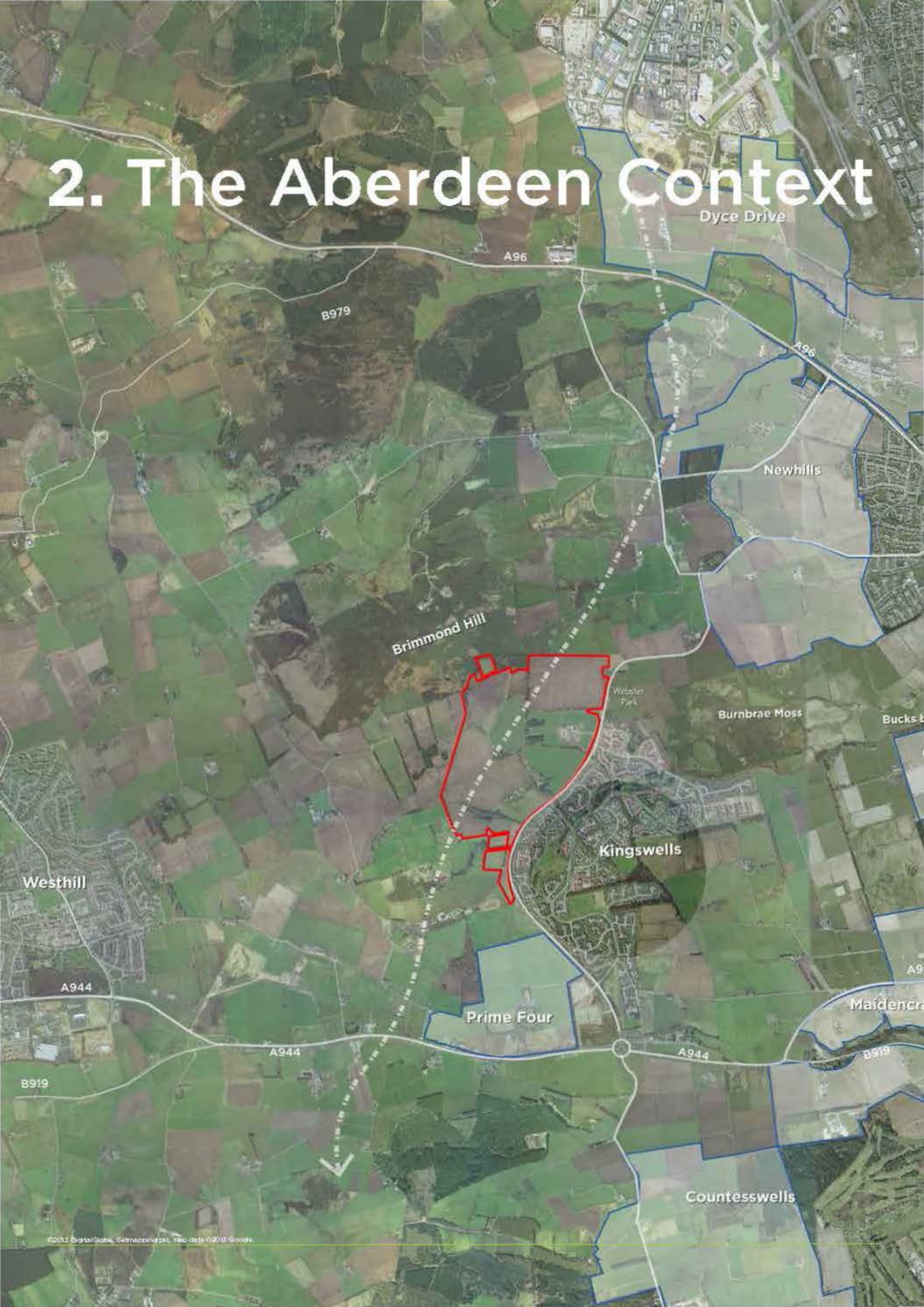
Within the LDP this site is mainly identified as Green Belt, with small pockets to the north west and south and south categorised as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

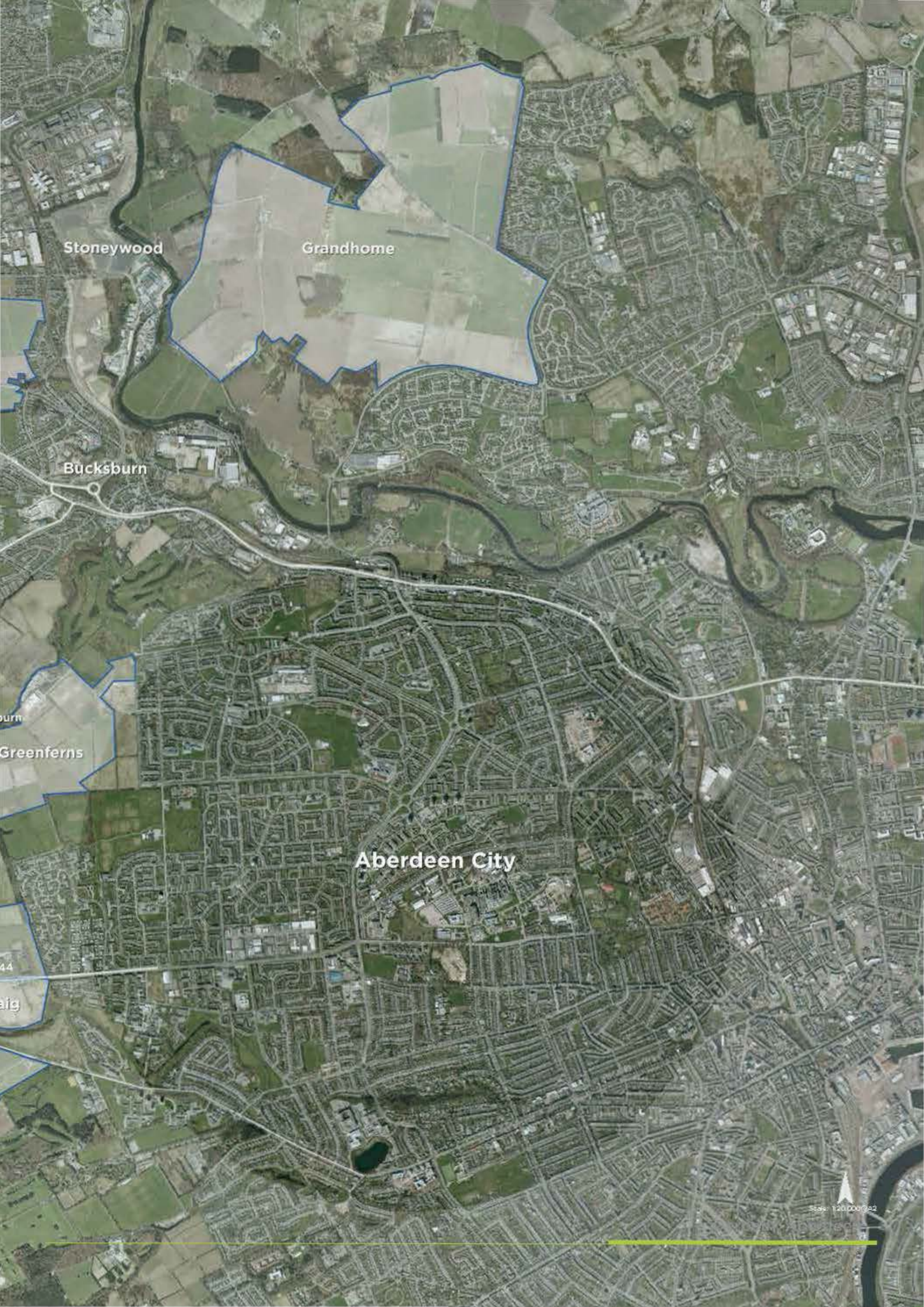
1.3 Site

Derbeth is located on the western edge of Aberdeen, north west of Kingswells and extends to approximately 89.5 hectares (221 acres). It is bound to the north by a shelter belt and pockets of woodland; to the west by open fields; to the south by fields, an access track and some residential dwellings; and to the east by the Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944. Within this area lie a number of properties, including Fairley House, Fairley Home Farm and Derbeth Farm. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) is planned to run through this area of land and will become a long term defensible boundary to the west of the city with a junction proposed to the north east corner of the site. This is due for completion in 2018.



2. The Aberdeen Context





Stoneywood

Grandhome

Bucksburn

Greenferns

Aberdeen City

2.1 Introduction and site context

City context

The Derbeth site is on the western edge of Aberdeen bounded to the east by the Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944 an arterial route to the city centre.

The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) is designed as a dual carriageway which will provide an alternative route from north to south Aberdeen, bypassing the city.

The north west of Aberdeen will see significant expansion and economic growth in the next 20 years. The diagrams opposite depict a series of masterplan zones that have been identified by Aberdeen City Council- some under construction; others at planning stage - and illustrates the scale of growth planned.

Strategically, the Derbeth site sits midway between the Newhills expansion area to its north and Prime Four to the south.

Newhills and Prime Four, along with Dyce Drive will form a new western boundary to the city and will benefit from excellent connections via the planned AWPR, the A96(T) and the A944 both into the city and outward to the surrounding area. This edge is important in terms of arrival at Aberdeen when travelling along the AWPR.

Key opportunities for the Derbeth site in relation to the wider context of this area are:

- Assisting in defining the western city edge site;
- Potential to benefit from transport and infrastructure resources including the Kingswells park and ride;
- Access to significant associated employment north of A96(T) and also to Prime Four;
- Proximity to Aberdeen International Airport;
- Access to Brimmond Hill open space and other landscape resources; and
- Access to AWPR via junction immediately to the north east of the site.

Local Context

The site is located west of the village of Kingswells, four miles west of Aberdeen City Centre. Kingswells has a small selection of local facilities including a school, convenience store, cafe and vet surgery within walking distance of the Derbeth site. A sports pitch and community centre are located at Webster Park to the immediate north east of the site.

Aberdeen International Airport is located approximately 4 miles to the north.

The site enjoys good links to the open space resource of Brimmond Hill and connects into the wider network of the 'Three Hills', a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS). The Bucks Burn corridor runs to the east of the area and is also identified as (LNCS) incorporating Burnbrae Moss, an important wildlife site.

Evolving context

The AWPR will form a boundary immediately to the west of the site and the northern boundary will be adjacent to a slip road and junction from the AWPR. The south-west edge remains adjacent a landscape area designated Green Belt, however development at Prime Four Business Park has an urbanising effect on the area - construction of tall units and large footprints alters the character of Kingswells significantly. It also offers employment opportunities adjacent to residential which supports good sustainable development.



fig. 1: The Derbeth site in the context of other masterplan areas, city structure and the AWPR route



fig. 2: Derbeth local context

Adjacent masterplans

There are a number of other masterplans in the area leading to an exciting time for this part of the city and offering excellent potential for the Derbeth site to take advantage of

Dyce Drive Masterplan

A new international business park delivering c750,000 square feet of commercial, industrial and hotel development is proposed on the site adjoining Aberdeen International Airport.

Prime Four

Prime Four Business Park combines offices, small retail outlets, hotel and children's nursery. The northern part of the development will include the new publically accessible park.

Newhills

Newhills is a residential-led mixed use development of up to 4440 residential units, supporting local retail, service, community and employment uses.

Greenferns

Greenferns is a residential-led mixed use development of up to 1250 residential units, primary school and neighbourhood centre.

Maidencraig

The Maidencraig masterplan is purely residential for 750 homes.

Countesswells

Countesswells will provide 3,000 homes, community facilities including two primaries and a secondary school, and 10 hectares of employment land.



fig. 3: Derbeth site and surrounding area.

3. The Site

Derbeth is set within an agricultural landscape characterised by undulating topography, field boundaries and woodland. The settlement is contained by the ridgeline of which Brimmond Hill forms part.

Brimmond Hill is an attractive and prominent feature - the highest point in the city and key to the setting of west Aberdeen.

The site is situated on the slopes leading up to the ridge with much of it sitting on an east facing slope. Spectacular views over the city and the north sea are afforded from the highest points on the western edge.



3.1 Site description

Site boundaries

The site is bounded to the north by a shelter belt and pockets of woodland; to the west by open fields; to the south by fields, an access track and some residential dwellings.

The eastern edge of the site is defined by the Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944. The existing housing at Kingswells directly east is set back from the road by a strip of landscape and turns its back to the road.

The relationship between the site levels and the road varies along its length.

Existing land use & Ownership

The site is used as agricultural land. A number of properties lie within the site area, including Cloghill House, Fairley House, Fairley Home Farm and Derbeth Farm.



fig. 4: The northern edge of the site



fig. 5: The western edge of the site is currently open fields. The planned AWPR will cut through this area creating a new western edge to Aberdeen



fig. 7: The eastern edge of the site is bounded by the Kingswells distributor road and properties with rear gardens



fig. 6: The southern boundary of the site

3.2 Historical growth

An analysis of historic Ordnance Survey maps shows that there are a number of landscape elements which have been in place within the Derbeth area for a significant period of time. These include the woodland areas associated with Cloghill House and Fairley House and other related shelterbelt planting bands which have been in place for over a century. Key road infrastructure follows largely the same alignments today.

The most visible changes have been the construction of Kingswells to form an urban edge to the east of the site. Planning permission was first granted for residential and ancillary development in Kingswells in 1983. The village at that time comprised a church, public hall, former school building and public house. Construction commenced in the late 1980s.

The first phase of development in the village was completed in 1995 and included the provision of shops, a community centre and a primary school in the centre of the village. Additional shops, a health centre, dentist, nursing home and veterinary practice were developed as the village expanded. Included in Phase 1 of the development was the distributor road leading north from a roundabout junction on the A944 towards Newhills. The settlement then extended to the north-east. A further section of the western bypass was upgraded to allow access to this phase. This expansion provided good vehicular and pedestrian links to the village centre and also connection to the wider footpath network. Provision was also made for open space, play areas and all weather facilities.

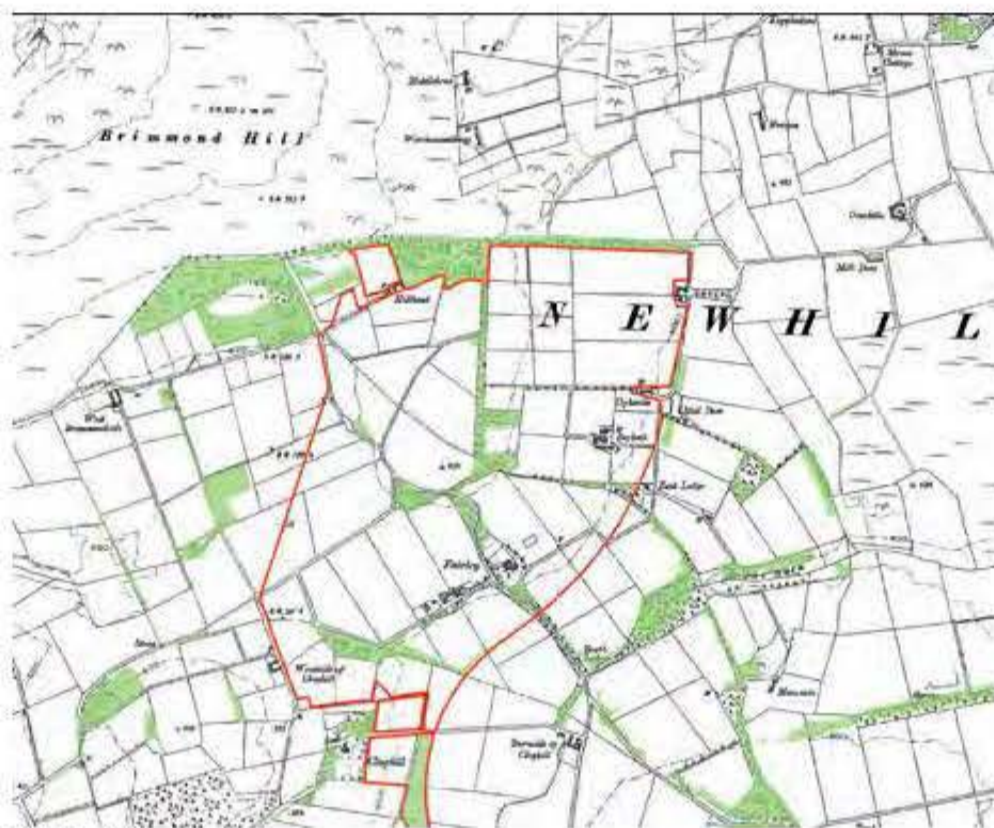


fig. 8: 1899

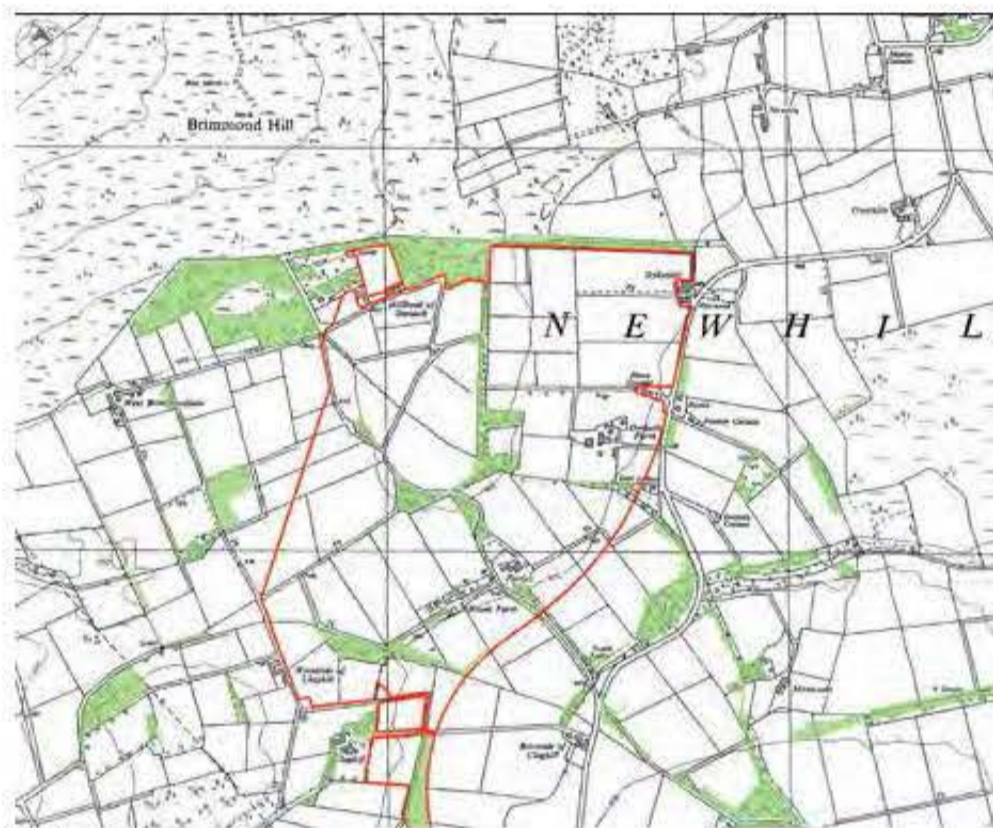


fig. 9: 1968



fig. 10: 1987



fig. 11: 1995

3.3 Site today



3.4 Topography

The landform is undulating, but generally slopes from north west to south east and from north to south. To the south, the land is level before rising from south to north outwith the boundaries of the site. The aspect of the site is south and south east. There are a wide range of landscaped areas, comprising mature trees and drystone dykes throughout the site. From the A944 this land is screened by the topography of the land to the south, Prime Four Business Park and by the Park and Ride site. It becomes more visible as you travel along the distributor road, however good screening exists along parts of this road where there is mature landscaping.

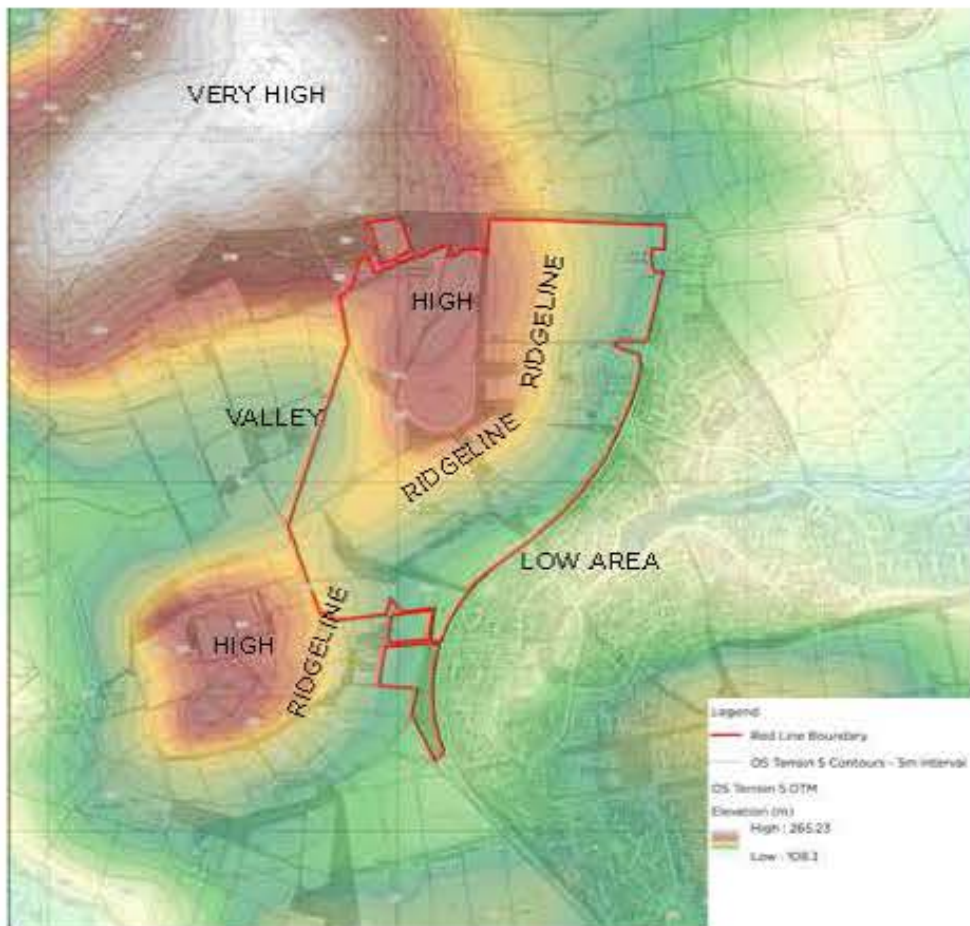


fig. 12: Landform survey mapping

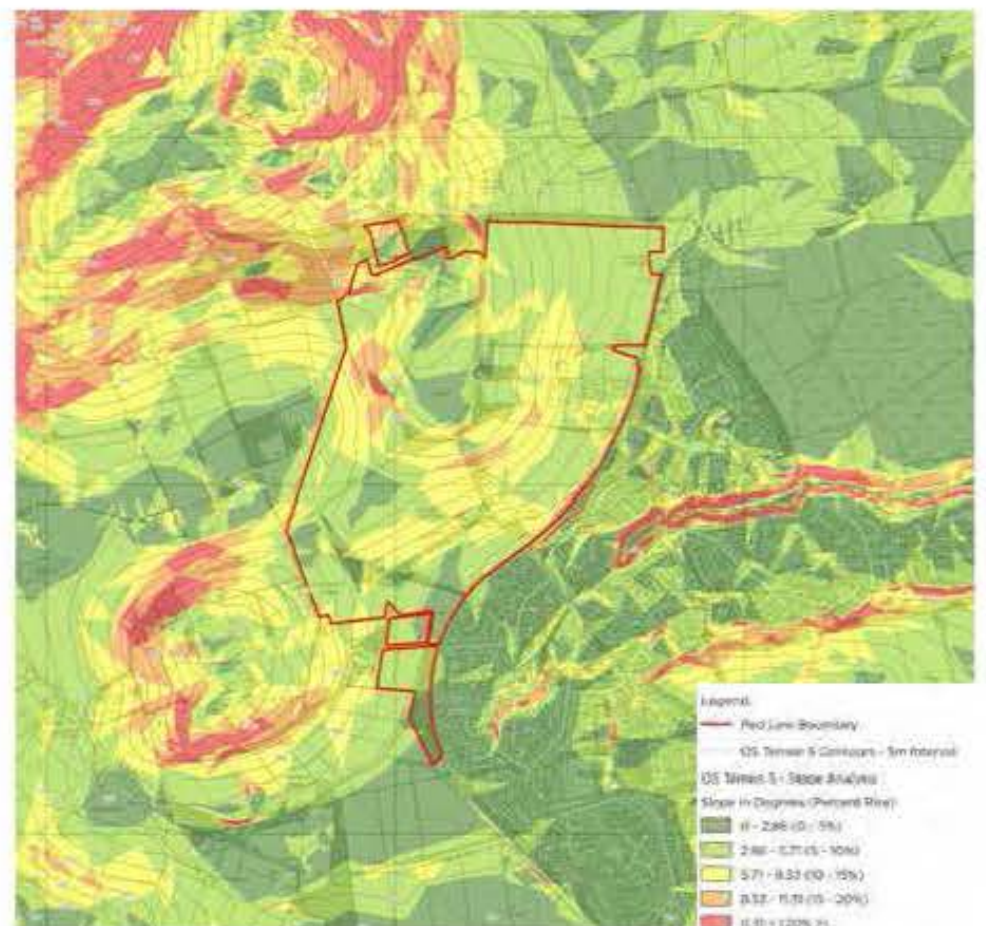


fig. 13: Slope survey mapping

3.5 Designations

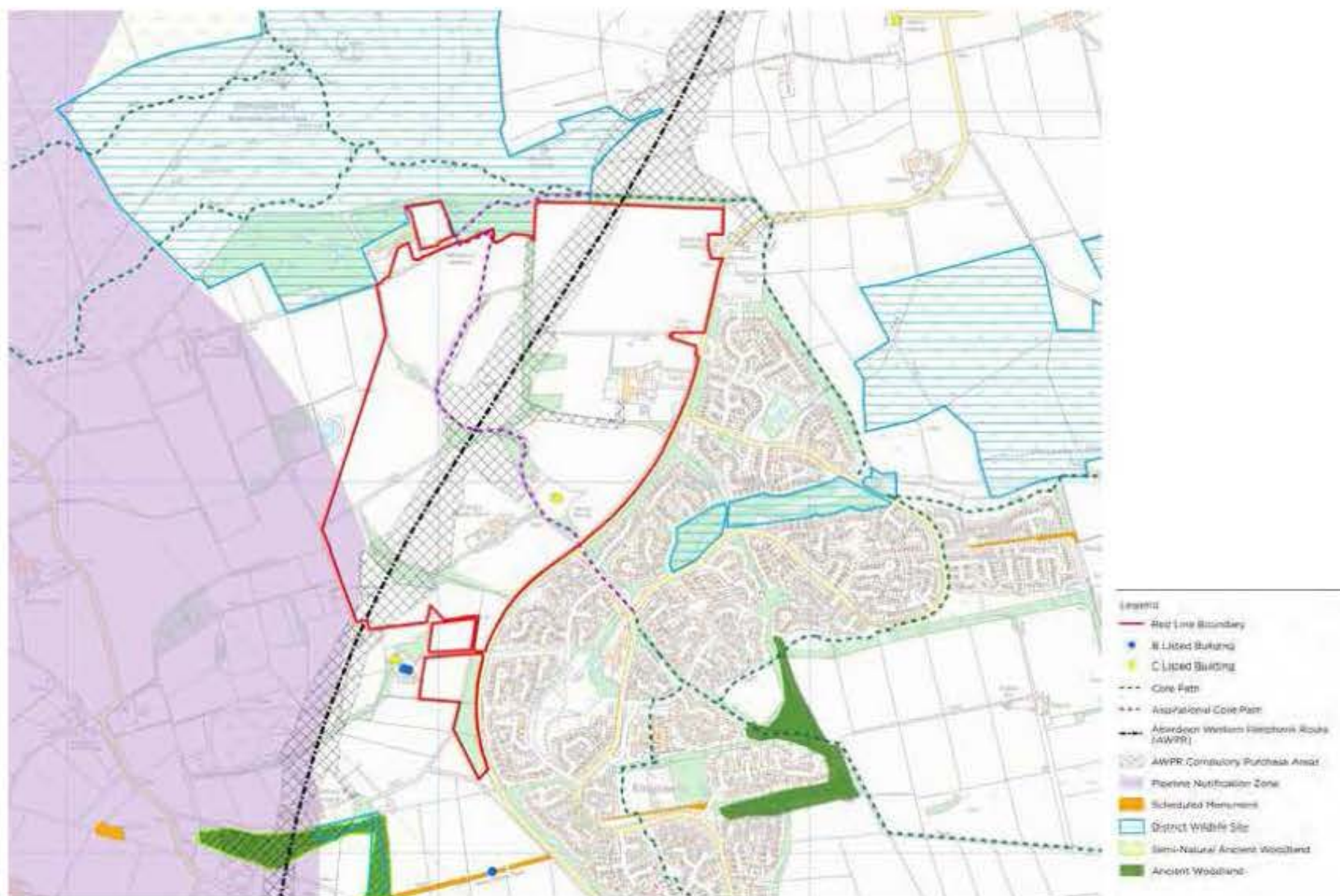


fig. 14: Designations on and surrounding the site

3.6 Existing character and setting

Setting

The majority of the site falls within Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Types identified in the SNH Landscape character assessment of Aberdeen (1996). Topography is generally undulating, sometimes strongly and the distinguishing characteristic is the large amount of woodland and trees that it contains - shelterbelts, or clumps of trees around buildings, adding to the diversity of the landscape. Fields are mostly divided by stone dykes or post-and-wire fences. Existing settlement consists mostly of scattered traditional-style farmsteads and cottages with three listed large houses historically linked with the farms. These are generally associated with their own clumps of trees and entrance avenues. The amount of woodland limits views, both from within and towards the site. The topography allows longer views to the city and even the sea from high points to the west. A section in the north east corner is categorised as Open Farmland.

Brimmond Hill is an important setting to the west and the associated landforms of Elrick Hill and Tyrebagger Hill act to form long distance boundaries. The ridge formed by Cloghill defines the visual boundary to the south west. A hard edge is formed by the distributor road and urban development at Kingswells to the east. These are softened in places where woodland strips reach the road or wrap around the edge as at Fairley. The AWPR will ultimately form a robust boundary to the west, with views into the site restricted by the topography and woodland.



fig. 15: Landscape character types

Character

The diagram opposite illustrates the key characteristics and defining features which fundamentally influence the Derbeth site. These elements act to form landscape compartments which break the overall area into particular identifiable 'pockets'.

Whilst there are characteristics which are common to the site as a whole, there are definite contained landscape pockets which are formed at ground level by topography, structural woodland areas, stone walling and existing buildings - distinctive components around which landscape compartments are centred.

A summary of the key components is set out below:

Transportation corridors

The Kingswells distributor road, forms a physical barrier between the site and Kingswells to the east. A number of access points to the site are in place along its length, and there are opportunities for strengthening pedestrian connections into Kingswells.

The planned AWPR will have a major influence on the west of the site which is currently a rural edge. The road will permanently alter the landscape of the area providing a defensible boundary to the west of the city.

Landscape structure

Mature woodlands and established structure planting strongly influence the character of the site. Within the site, structure planting along roads and field boundaries forms pockets of open space.

Landscape compartments

The elements above combine to form distinct landscape compartments which suggest where development might be most sensitively accommodated and those areas which are appropriate for structuring open space. These pockets are an asset, offering a unique and ready made setting for development.

The following pages of photographs illustrate the distinctive features and existing condition of individual pockets.

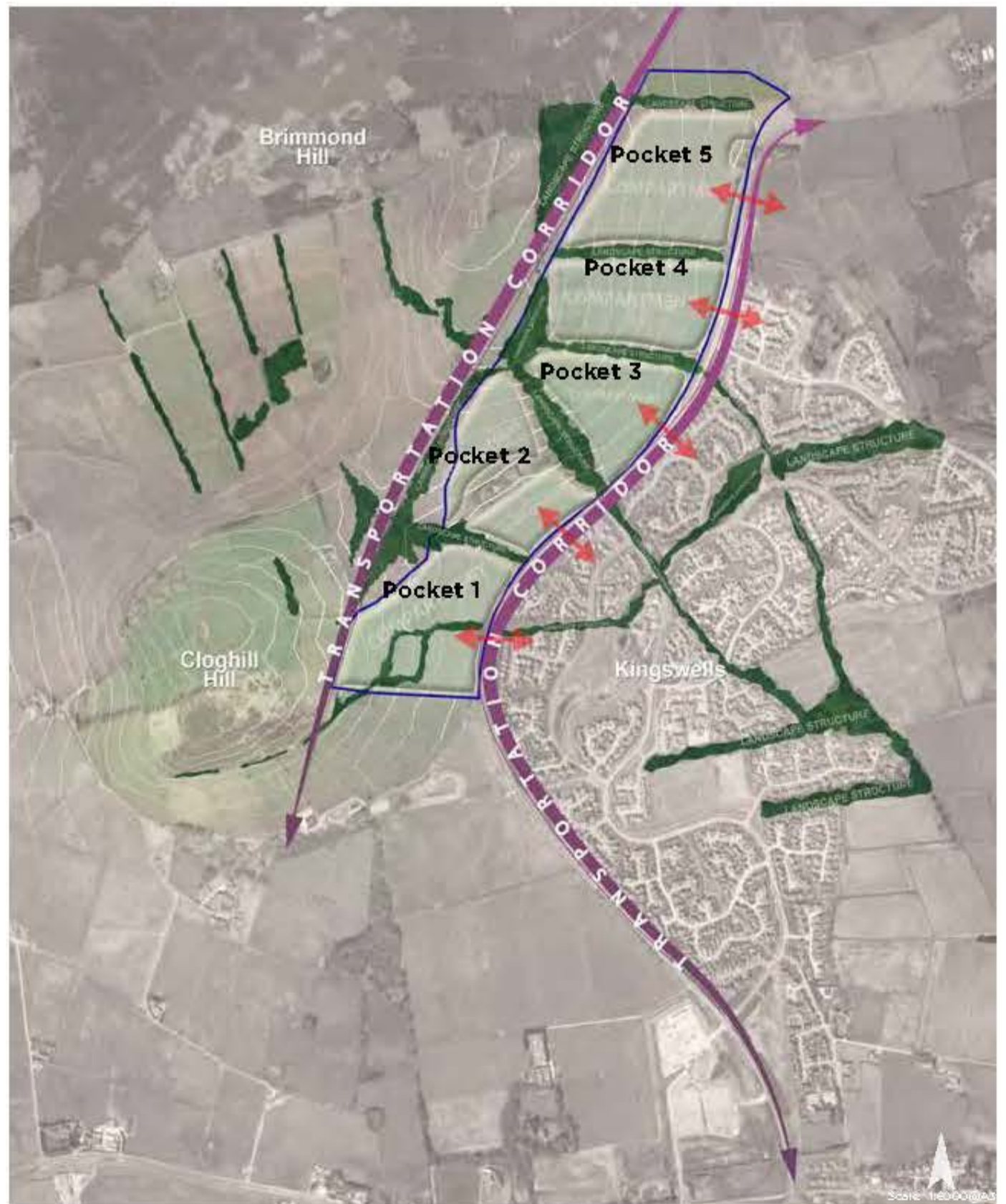


fig. 16: Site character areas

3.7 Site appraisal

Pocket 1

This pocket is at the south of the site and is defined by the landscape around the listed buildings and the entrance drive to Cloghill House and an access road running north-south. Stone walls form an attractive entrance to the house and wrap west to north across the land forming distinctive features in this area. These walls create flat parcels of land - paddocks, level with road and offer the opportunity to create an attractive landscape setting to development and the start of a parkway along the Kingswells distributor road.



fig. 17: Paddock adjacent the main road



fig. 18: Existing track



fig. 19: Aerial view of pocket 2



fig. 20: Flatter field adjacent to the road



fig. 21: Entrance approach to Cloghill House



fig. 22: Stone walling creates an attractive, distinctive character



fig. 23: Looking west over access road and northern section of pocket 1



fig. 24: Existing access road



fig. 25: Walling around Cloghill House



fig. 26: Cloghill House



fig. 27: Looking east over the northern portion of pocket 1 from the west

Pocket 2

Fairley Home Farm lies at the centre of pocket 2, accessed off a tree lined track that runs north-east to south-west splitting the area into two distinct sections.

The area to the north-west of the farm rises up towards the ridgeline to the north-west offering views out over towards Kingswells and Cloghill Hill. The field to the south-east slopes down and levels out towards the distributor road and is partially contained by tree planting to the south. This again offers a very attractive setting for housing and the continuation of the parkway setting along the edge of the distributor road.



fig. 28: The eastern edge of pocket 2 adjacent to the Kingswells Distributor Road



fig. 29: Aerial view of pocket 2



fig. 30: Looking south over pocket 2



fig. 31: Looking south-east over pocket 2 towards Cloghill Hill

Pocket 3

The south-west boundary of the pocket is defined by an attractive wooded access road which leads from the distributor road past the listed Fairley House northwards towards Hillhead of Derbeth and Brimmond Hill Country Park. This is the route of the aspirational core path linking directly with the existing core path that runs through the centre of Kingswells but currently stops at the medical centre just short of the distributor road.



fig. 32: Fairley House



fig. 33: Access road



fig. 34: Aerial view of pocket 3



fig. 35: The site slopes down towards the distributor road and sits at a higher level than the road



fig. 36: Views from the north-west highlight the intimate scale and containment of the site

Pocket 4

Derbeth Farm occupies much of pocket 4. The farm is accessed directly off the Kingswells distributor road and therefore offers clear and safe access into the site. Some of the existing cluster of buildings that would be retained and areas of stone walling will assist in quickly establishing a sense of place.



fig. 37: Entrance to Derbeth Farm



fig. 38: Aerial view of pocket 4



fig. 39: The ground is reasonably flat in the fields to the east of the farm



fig. 40: Looking north over the eastern section of pocket 4

Pocket 5

Pocket 5 comprises the northern section of the site and consists of a completely open field that slopes down from west to east. An existing track runs along the southern edge and connects from pocket 4 linking the areas together. The pocket is defined by woodland to the north, west and southern boundaries but is open to the distributor road to the east. The core path runs along the northern edge of the site connecting walkers from Kingswells with Brimmond Hill Country Park to the west. There are farm steading buildings in the north-east outwith the redline boundary and due cognisance should be taken of these in the design proposals.



fig. 41: Aerial view of pocket 5



fig. 42: Pocket 5 consists of a clear field with an open aspect



fig. 43: The site slopes from west to east leveling out alongside the distributor road

3.8 Views

The wooded character and undulating topography of the site mean that views are generally contained within the pockets previously described. Views into the site are concealed from both the north and south by woodland. From the eastern side, the defined pockets are open to the distributor road. Attractive views over the site can be obtained from the higher slopes to the west, particularly from the high ground to the north-west of the site boundary where distant views to the sea are gained. The following photographs show the site from these viewpoints.



fig. 44: Views into the site from the south are obscured by landform and planting



fig. 45: Woodland encloses the site to the south



fig. 46: View looking north-west towards Brimmond Hill Country Park



fig. 47: Long view over Kingswells towards the sea



fig. 48: View looking eastwards towards Kingswells



fig. 49: View looking south-east over Fairley Home Farm towards Prime Four in the distance

3.9 Existing movement

Pedestrians

A core path runs directly along the northern boundary of the site connecting Brimmond Hill with Kingswells. An aspirational core path through the site is identified along the alignment of the access road running past Fairley House which bisects the site running from east to west.

Cycling

The closest National Cycle Route is located some distance north-east of the site, south of the River Don. There are local connecting routes however within Kingswells and Bucksburn area to the east of the site.

Existing public transport

Bus stops are highlighted on the diagram opposite. The majority of the site is within 400m of a stop.

Rail

The nearest stations are at Dyce and Aberdeen. There is the potential to establish a station within the Stoneywood area, however this would realistically be on a long term timeline.

Road network

The site is well connected to the main road network. The Kingswells distributor road skirts the site to the east, connecting it to the A944 to the south and the A96(T) to the north.

An access road bisects the site running from east to west, connecting settlement to the west outwith the site with the Kingswells distributor road.

The AWPR will run to the west of the site and will secure good road access to the area.

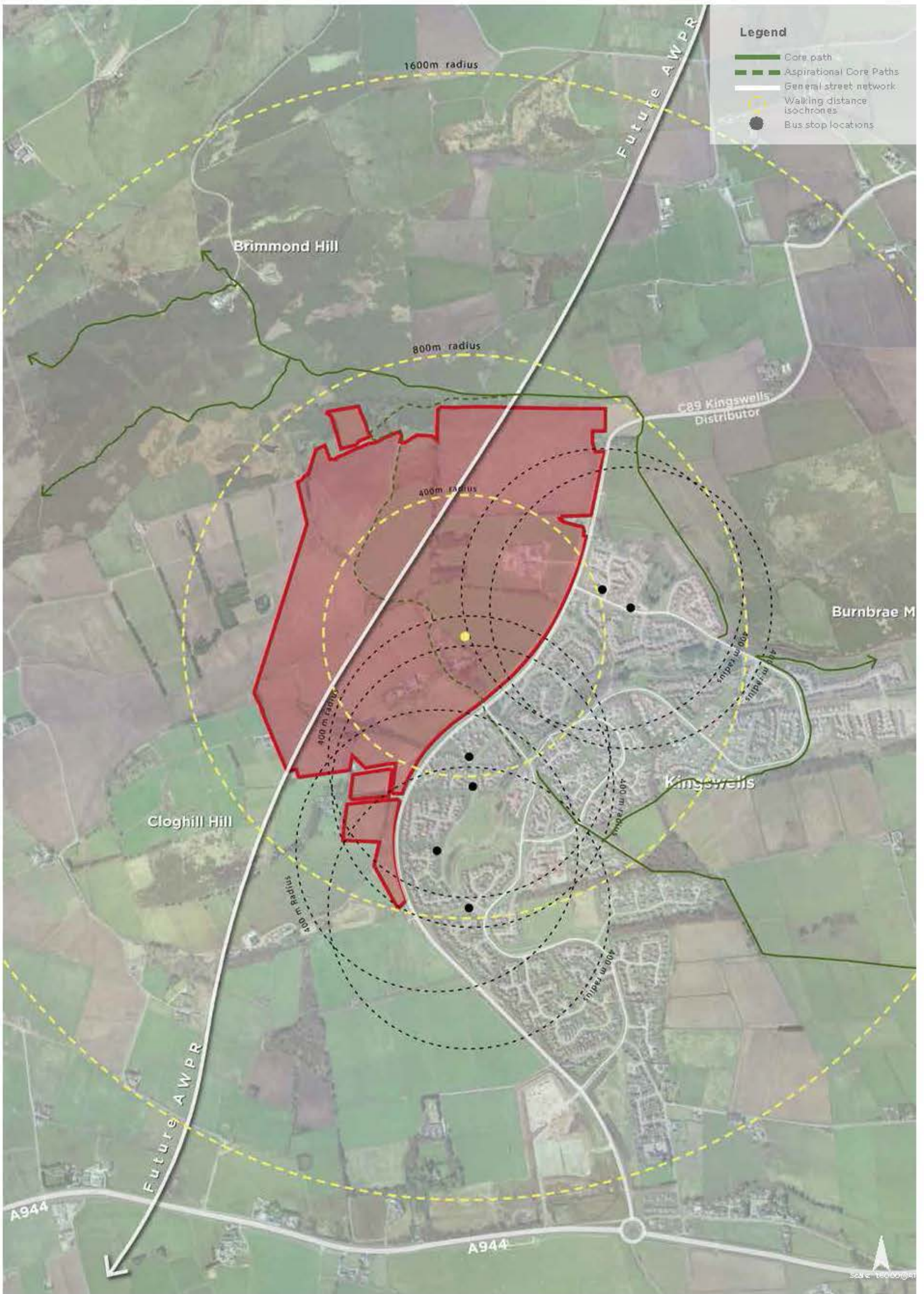


fig. 50: Connectivity

4. The Opportunity

4.1 Site opportunities and constraints

The diagram opposite illustrates the key physical opportunities and constraints which influence the site as follows:

- Proximity to Kingswells;
- Topography;
- Setting;
- Distinctive woodland planting;
- Existing buildings;
- Proximity to the Brimmond Hill Country Park and the Bucks Burn; and
- Proximity to the planned AWPR and potential employment areas to the north.

In considering the opportunity at Derbeth, cognisance must also be taken of its position within a rapidly evolving urban context and the future demands and offer presented by the surrounding masterplans highlighted at the start of the document.

4.2 Site potential and vision

Development at Derbeth would be a logical expansion of Kingswells and could offer several benefits to the immediate locale and to the wider city:

- Assist with settlement edge design to the west;
- Sustainable natural growth - maximising site potential without overdeveloping and utilising infrastructure effectively;
- Creation of distinctive neighbourhoods shaped by existing landscape features;
- Creation of new local facilities and support of existing ones within Kingswells;
- Enhanced green network and connections to Kingswells and Brimmond Hill Country Park;
- Attractive parkland areas west and east of the site, including extension of Brimmond Hill Country Park; and
- Improved appearance of the Kingswells distributor road currently addressed by rear gardens.

As the site is currently comprised of agricultural fields, ecological benefits could be gained from further tree planting, green-space planting, domestic gardens and allotments providing opportunities for enhanced biodiversity.

The vision for Derbeth is of a highly desirable location offering a countryside setting with excellent connections to the city and other areas. Local facilities and walkable neighbourhoods, coupled with a range of housing typologies in a characterful setting, will create a vibrant and distinctive community.

Integration with Kingswells

Every opportunity should be made to integrate the site with the existing settlement at Kingswells. Although the Kingswells distributor road runs between the two there are significant opportunities to link the areas through connections, green linkages, open space and the design of buildings including new community buildings that may be necessary. Landscape design would do a great deal to improve the existing edge of the road and tie the two areas together visually. The distributor road could be lined on both sides with boulevard tree planting and become a parkway.

Well connected place

The site is well connected to the city and could in time combine with Prime Four and Newhills to form the new western edge of the city. Numerous opportunities exist for pedestrian and cycle connections to the existing network. Existing public transport routes provide a viable alternative to car use. Proximity to the A944 and future connection to the AWPR gives easy access for car users. On a regional and international scale, the railway station and Aberdeen International Airport at Dyce allow for movement across the country and beyond.

Facilities

Whilst largely residential in nature, Derbeth would provide for locally assessed needs, in the form of local retail and other small-scale community and commercial uses, although large scale development should not be ruled out at this early stage.

Countryside

Notwithstanding the benefits of proximity to the city, the site location on the western edge of the city offers the asset of being adjacent to the countryside with access to Brimmond Hill Country Park and the Bucksburn corridor.



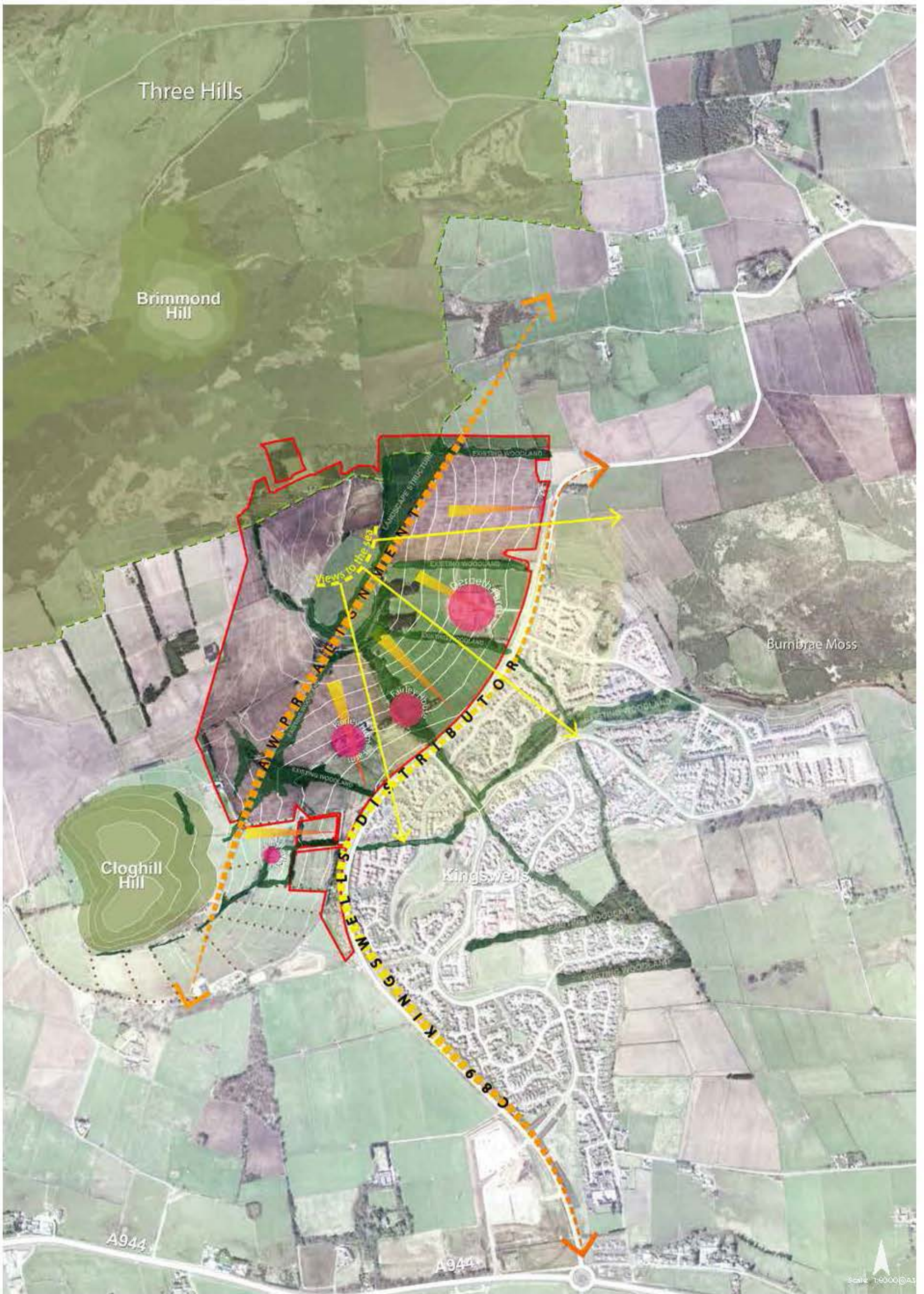


fig. 51: Site appraisal

5. Design Approach

5.1 Site concept

Derbeth is a particularly attractive site within Aberdeen, with a character defined by its landscape and strong woodland structure that forms an important, unifying element for the site.

Potential pockets of development are naturally and logically defined by the existing fingers of woodland. These offer a variety of opportunities for development which connects with the landscape in which it is set. Although there is a distinctiveness in creating a series of 'parcels' of development enclosed within woodland, there is also a danger that these become isolated. It is important therefore that these clearly defined compartments are well connected by streets and paths, both to adjacent 'pockets' and also into the wider context.

Once the pockets are defined and connected, opportunities should be highlighted for recreation space.

Identifying strategic green spaces and opportunities to integrate with existing green space resources suggests the creation of linear parks bounding transport corridors along the east and west edges of the site, connecting development pockets.

The key aspects of the concept are illustrated in the diagrams below and opposite, identifying the main principles that underly the initial development framework.

Identifying the pockets

Mapping existing woodland, features and routes, understanding the context of the AWPR and providing an appropriate response to the Kingswells distributor road enables potential pockets of development to be identified that:

- Protect valuable areas of core habitat;
- Protect and enhance connectivity of core habitat; and
- Create opportunities for distinctive development character.

Linking the pockets

Residential development should be connected with a network of interconnected paths and streets:

- To create a walkable community;
- To integrate with the wider community and landscape; and
- That consider place before movement.

Spaces between pockets

Public parkland spaces adjacent the transport corridors east and west of the site will connect with woodland fingers creating a green grid of linked residential pockets that:

- Connect the community with their environment;
- Provide a hierarchy of public spaces to serve the needs of the community;
- Respect sensitive areas of ecological and cultural significance; and
- Create spaces to meet and gather.



fig. 52: Concept diagram



fig. 53: Concept diagram in wider context

6. Developing a spatial strategy

6.1 Introduction and purpose

This section of the workbook sets out an initial development framework, demonstrating how development at Derbeth could be structured. The framework is illustrated opposite and the structuring principles for the spatial strategy are defined below.

Landscape features

Analysis of the site has identified local and specific features which contribute to character, visual containment and landscape interest; these features should be retained and integrated within development proposals.

These features include important structural woodland planting, entrance avenue planting at Cloghill House, dry stone walling and the rolling character of open fields to the north. Additionally, the adjacent landscape resources of the Brimmond Hill Country Park and the Bucksburn LNCS should be accessible to new residents at Derbeth and the existing population at Kingswells by providing clear routes from within the site to existing connections on the boundary edge.

Landform and orientation

The site is predominantly an east facing slope and there are several areas with challenging topography. The overriding strategy for the design of the development is to work in harmony with the natural topography and take advantage of the opportunities it affords in terms of aspect and orientation. This will ensure Derbeth retains its distinctive character and provide a unique sense of place. Working with landform will drive design and may allow for design elements such as undercroft parking. Development blocks will be organised to allow properties to maximise passive solar energy gain.

Connections and integration

Key connections have been shown to:

- Promote pedestrian movement between the Bucksburn and the Brimmond Hill Country Park;
- Promote integration with Kingswells and ensure a permeable block structure;
- Ensure development overlooks and addresses open space;
- Provide a variety of connections to the existing network wherever reasonable in order to maximise the permeability of the framework boundary;
- Develop a street hierarchy that allows for strategic North-South and East-West movements whilst providing a permeable block structure for new residents; and
- Promote pedestrian connections to existing bus stops.

Potential public transport routes through the site and connections via a slip road parallel to the AWPR should be considered.

Views

The development blocks have been laid out to respond to the contours of the site and ensure that several key views are retained and created. These will help create both a legible and attractive place.

Excellent long views to the sea are offered from the top of the site where residents will be able to enjoy them from a woodland park setting.

Spatial experience

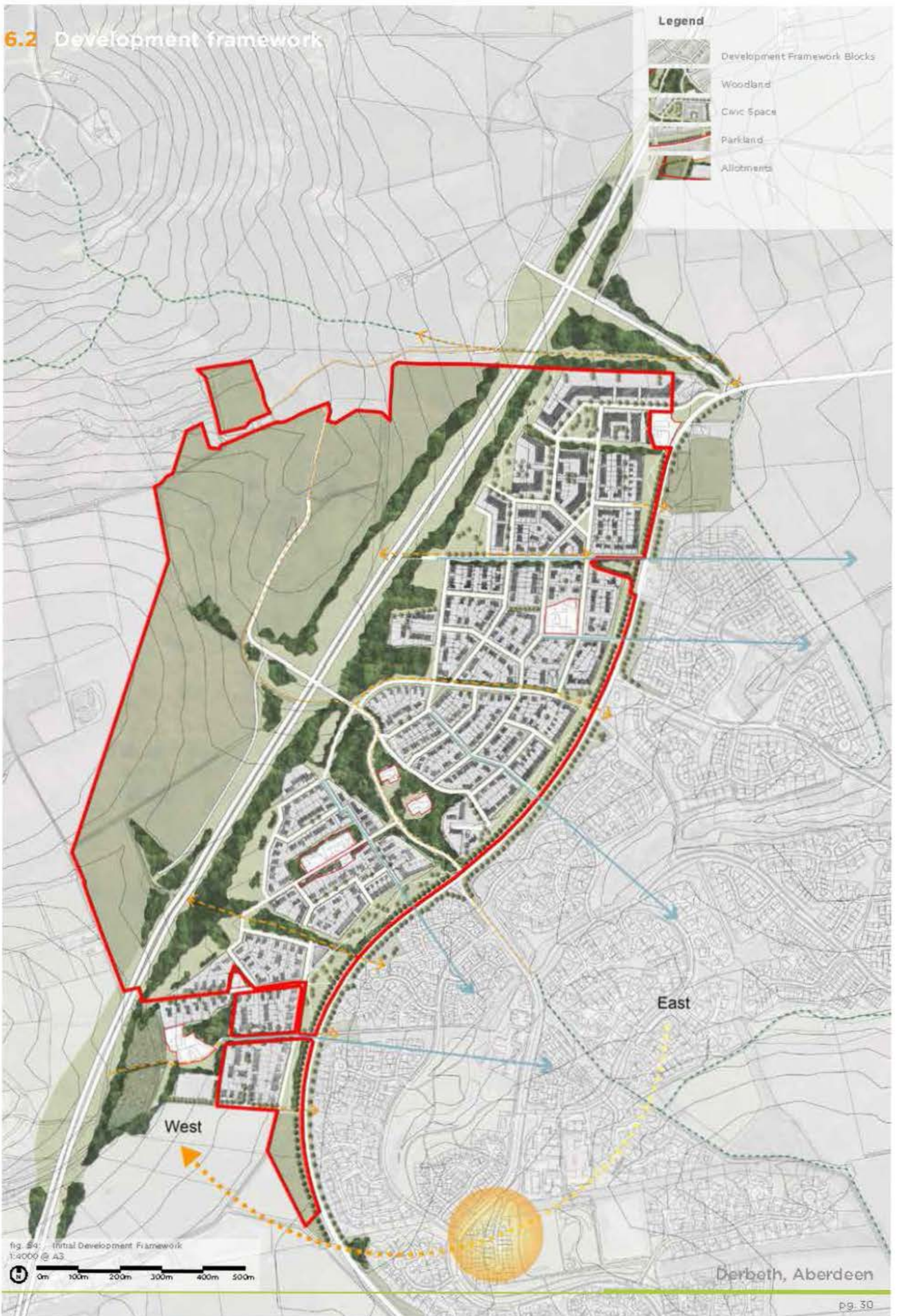
The southern part of the site with its established woodland areas, existing buildings and characteristic stone walling has a more internalised and intimate character compared to the more expansive character in the northern land parcels. The spatial experience along the Kingswells distributor road to the east provides more formal landscape park edge set back using open spaces and lines of trees. In contrast the parkland to the west will form woodland buffer edge against the AWPR and will offer a more varied, natural landscape leading to the Brimmond Hill Country Park.

Development Blocks have been laid out to ensure that an interesting spatial experience is created. Core spaces, civic spaces and a hierarchy of different streets will create a varied and legible urban form. This basic structure can then be further articulated by additional requirements and guidance such as building height, landmarks and building typology as the design progresses.

The following pages briefly describe and illustrate the framework under three main headings:

- Access and connectivity;
- Landscape framework strategy; and
- Development block structure.

6.2 Development framework



6.3 Access and connectivity strategy

At the core of the access and connectivity strategy is the ability for pedestrians and cyclists to move through Derbeth using a permeable network of paths. Derbeth should aim to create a place where people can live and work without relying heavily on private transport - within a walkable neighbourhood. Access to the wider urban area of Aberdeen is supported by efficient public transport and cycleways, allowing residents and workers to benefit from the proximity to the city and the surrounding communities at Kingswells and Bucksburn in addition to the forthcoming developments at Newhills, Prime Four and other areas in this part of the city.

Access

Entry to the site is provided via existing access points from the Kingswells distributor road and a link from the proposed junction to the north east of the site.

Pedestrians

The pedestrian network is designed to actively encourage walking as a viable transport option and also as a recreational pursuit. Pedestrian links should be developed to meet the needs of the new community in terms of connecting key destinations such as schools, local shops, community centres and existing amenities such as Brimmond Country Park.

Pathways, pavements and shared surfaces all combine to create the pedestrian network, and where possible they are closely linked with areas of existing woodland to create pleasant walking experiences.

Cyclists

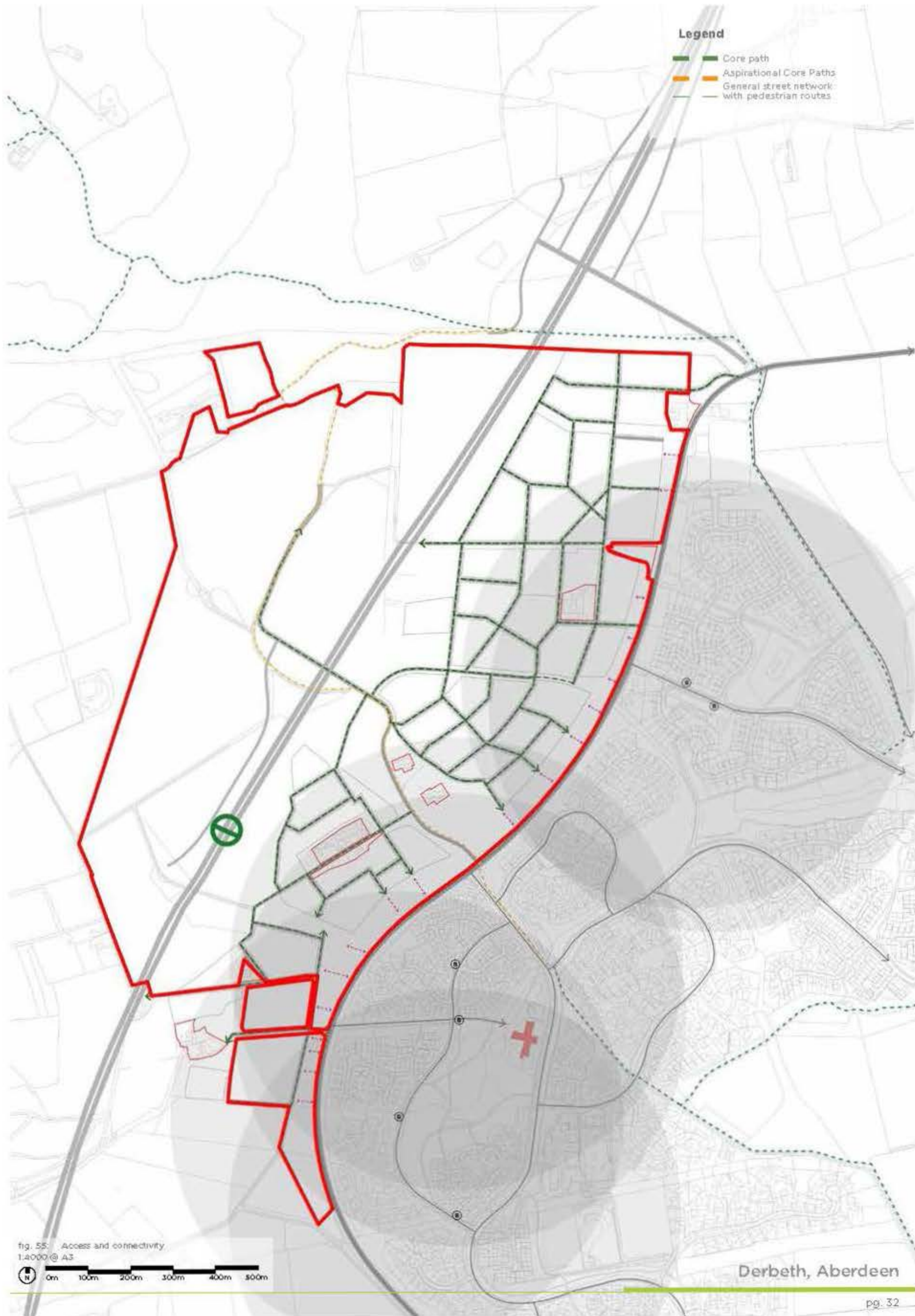
Cyclists will be generally accommodated on the street network (on road). The streets and cycleways will also allow a variety of cycle routes connecting the new community to the local and wider urban context and providing routes to significant destinations such as schools, employment and leisure facilities.

Public transport

The route of current public transport provision in the area is illustrated on the plan opposite. The majority of the suggested areas of development is within 400m of existing bus stops with frequent services connecting the site to the city centre, Dyce, Cove, Elgin and other destinations in between. With the construction of the AWPR the whole development will be within 400m of a bus stop. Pedestrian connectivity to stops should be considered as a priority.

AWPR

Connection to the planned AWPR will be via a half junction to the north east of the site and will provide easy and convenient access. An option has been shown in the land use section demonstrating the impact of a junction from the AWPR which may deliver significant commercial impacts for Derbeth and is therefore worth exploring further.



6.4 Landscape framework strategy

Usable, well-designed, public space is recognised as creating opportunities for communities to interact, promoting a sense of place and helping to promote healthy active lifestyles. This section briefly describes how and where this could be provided at Derbeth.

The access points from the Kingwells distributor road, existing woodland, and existing buildings are the principal organising elements for the structure of the site. The surrounding woodland provides considerable potential for informal recreation.

In addition to the wider network of informal open space surrounding the site, 'Core public spaces' are also defined and are described below.

Local open space

Local space is distributed throughout the framework area and generally associated with retained landscape features, at key junctions or other linking spaces which support pedestrian and cycle movements.

Existing woodland

The existing woodland areas provide a backdrop for the development and create a setting and sense of place. A network of pathways provides access through the woodland which will be managed with an environmental and habitat bias, ensuring appropriate regeneration of the woodland together with public safety.

Core public spaces

Core spaces are formed as a direct response to the existing landscape and are larger scale strategic resources fulfilling recreation, hydrology and ecological functions. These spaces are predominantly soft and should be designed so that they are addressed by development, providing passive surveillance. They are proposed as linear spaces running the length of the western and eastern site boundaries and will form important edges to, and within, the development. Their careful design would be essential to creating character at Derbeth. A key aim of these spaces will be ecological improvement and management.

These spaces are also well integrated with the street and path networks, linking the pockets of development together along with Kingwells, creating a cohesive community.

As described earlier the 'Core public spaces' include both areas of open 'parkland' and areas of woodland. In addition the area of site located west of the AWPR will become an extension of Brimmond Hill Country Park.

Key civic spaces

Civic spaces have been located within the development structure at key nodal points and gateways and have been formed in conjunction with proposed landuses and existing site features. These spaces may be a combination of hard and soft landscape as appropriate and could provide opportunities for formal and imaginative play.

Spaces with development blocks

Opportunities for the creation of spaces within development blocks should be promoted. It is anticipated that a further network of small public spaces will be created within development blocks where appropriate. These should be located at nodal points within the layout, be of a usable size and overlooked by surrounding properties.

Allotments

An area of land for allotments has been indicated on the plan. It is envisaged the majority of housing typologies at Derbeth will have private garden space for such activities, however potential use of land west of Cloghill House could be appropriate for this use.

Play space

Open and green spaces for play will be integrated, with elements of children's playbeing accommodated at the outset of each phased development. The detailed design of the spaces should embody the principles of education, adventure play, and interpretation of the natural environment.

Connecting green networks

The linear parkland areas extending along the eastern and western edges of the site are linked by the fingers of woodland running perpendicular, creating a continuous green network linking the Three Hills LNCS and Bucks Burn LNCS. This will allow for the transit of wildlife - utilising the mammal underpass planned with the AWPR, and provide an extremely attractive environment in which to live or visit.

Open space standards

As further design work progresses, reference to the following documents should be made to determine the type, quantity and quality of open space and their particular functions:

- ACC's Open Space Supplementary Guidance, March 2012;
- ACC Open Space Audit; and
- ACC GIS Green Space Network.

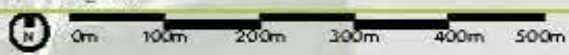




Legend

-  Development Framework Blocks
-  Woodland
-  Civic Space
-  Parkland
-  Allotments

fig. 56: Landscape framework strategy.
1:4000 @ A3



6.5 Development blocks

General landuse and density principles

The suggested proposal is that the Derbeth site would be suited to a residential led development with supporting retail, service and community uses.

Development would aim to meet the current Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan target of 30 dwellings per hectare or above, as an average across the development plots of the site. Individually not all development plots will meet the 30 dwellings per hectare target, this is in recognition of the character of Derbeth.

The diagram on the opposite page shows an initial approach to landuse and density for discussion and future testing purposes. Analysis of the site suggests an approximate total developable area of 24.5 hectares.

Opportunities for mixed use service/retail provision

Within the development framework a principal mixed use area which could accommodate support services for the new and existing communities has been identified in the northern pocket of the site. This area is within a walkable distance and the parcel of land is open and clear with no existing buildings or landscape features within the body of it to work around; rendering it more suitable to mixed use. Proximity to the AWPR provides opportunities for a landmark building such as a hotel in this location.

The amount of service and retail provision actually provided will be dependant upon market research, however sketch options are shown as a starting point for further exploration.

Locations have also been suggested for community uses such a village hall, shop or cafe. One is adjacent to the aspirational core path addressing the proposed parkland along the Kingswells distributor road. This would provide an attractive stopping point for those walking to Brimmond Hill Country Park. The second is to the south east of the site on a flat area of ground defined by existing stone walling. As this area also addresses the parkland and road, a building here could provide a gateway or landmark feature.

Approach to density

Residential densities should respond to existing topography and utilise layouts which avoid requirement for significant earth-modelling/platforming. Densities will generally fall across the site with higher densities to the north on less constrained area and adjacent the connection to the AWPR, and lower densities predominantly to the west and south. A range of housing types and tenures will also ensure that uniform densities are avoided and that a varied urban form is created.

Appropriate density

Given the scale and character of the site, a wide range of residential densities will be used to further test the capacity of the site. These range from relatively low density, 'city-edge' conditions of around 20-25 units per hectare up to high density 'urban' character where perimeter blocks of flats and apartments up to 4 storeys might be appropriate adjacent the planned AWPR infrastructure to the north.

The surrounding density at Kingswells adjacent the site has been analysed to ascertain appropriate density in this area. Densities range from 22 - 27 per hectare.



fig. 57: Surrounding density at Kingswells



Alternatives for extent of mixed use

The northern pocket of the site is more appropriate for commercial and retail uses and on its own provides a developable area of around 6.5 ha. The diagram opposite indicates a section of this area as mixed use, however there will be numerous options on how this area could be developed and a couple of sketches are shown below for further consideration. Dependant on viability, the whole pocket could be mixed use or indeed residential.

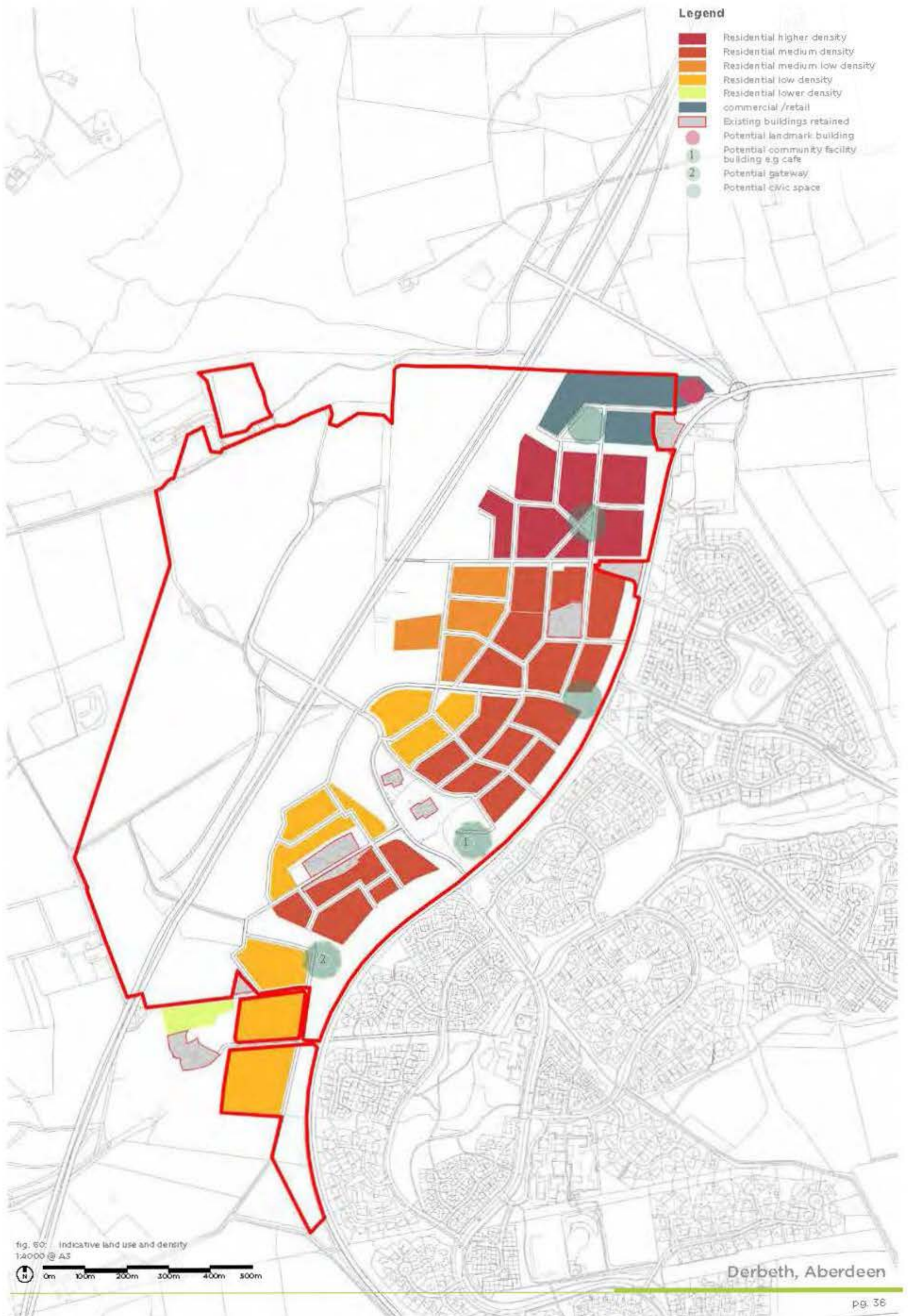
Consideration should also be given to the possibility of slip road from the AWPR entering the site from the west. This would make the site significantly more attractive as a mixed use area. Further detailed examination of gradients and earthworks would be required to assess the impact on land take and therefore developable area properly, however the sketch below indicates the probable road alignment based on similar situations along the AWPR.



fig. 58: Alternative showing all commercial/ retail uses to the north of the site



fig. 59: Option showing alignment of possible slip road from the AWPR



7. Vision of Derbeth

Derbeth could become a distinctive and sustainable extension to Kingswells offering a choice of housing within easy reach of local facilities, the city centre and significant employment areas. Responding to the existing qualities of the site will create a characterful and well-connected community and a highly desirable location within Aberdeen.



fig. 61: Vision sketch



7.1 Creating character

Local character areas can be defined by existing site features such as the woodland, stone walling, existing buildings, topography, access points and roads. The influence of neighbouring Kingswells and other large scale developments happening in the vicinity of the site influences the positioning of commercial, retail and neighbourhood facilities. The overarching defining elements on the site are topography and the bands of woodland running west to east which will create pockets and influence the pattern of development. Character areas will also be determined by size - large enough to feel like a small community area on their own whilst still very clearly part of the overall Derbeth neighbourhood and compact - easily walkable to support community facilities. These characteristics will engender a community spirit locally within each character area and generally throughout the entire development. Initial ideas for local character areas are illustrated on the opposite diagram.

Architectural character

Each character area should provide a variety of housing typologies and other uses as appropriate, not only to create a social inclusive community but also to ensure the best urban response to the site context. The following pages of images and illustrations aim to give a flavour of some of the particular architectural responses and that could happen within the site at Derbeth.

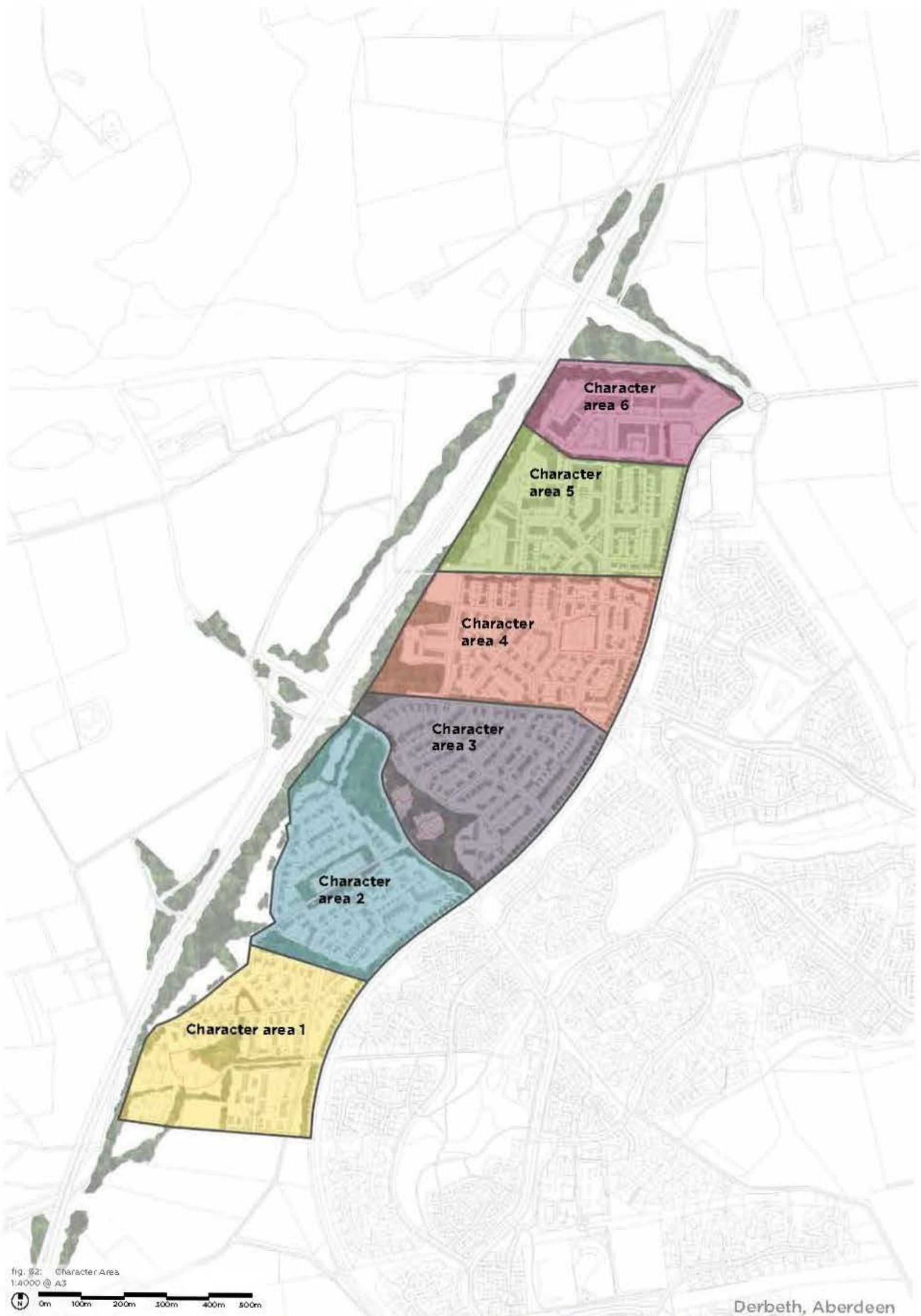


fig. 92: Character Area
1:4000 @ A3



Character area 1

This area on the southern edge of the site should contain lower density housing. Predominantly larger detached homes with generous gardens reflecting the edge of site location, the existing detached house within a large triangular plot and proximity to Cloghill House. The existing stone walls would form attractive boundaries for the houses to the east and naturally define a parkland setting.

There is an opportunity for a gateway building which could form a community function such as a village hall.

Development should not continue beyond Cloghill house, however the area to the south-west immediately outwith the site would be appropriate for allotments if considered suitable.



Character area 2

Fairley Home Farm, the existing access track and existing trees which sit centrally within this character area should generate the layout for this part of the site.

A wide range of housing types should be present within this pocket, including steading forms and clusters to reflect the farm.

Terraces would be appropriate on the south-eastern side addressing the parkland and distributor road whilst a mix of semi detached and terraces could lead into larger detached properties on the peripheries.



Character area 3

This aspiration is for the core path to continue from Kingswells along the existing road that runs along the south-western edge of this area past Fairley House. This presents an opportunity for a facility such as cafe and perhaps a community building where walkers could stop on their route to Brimmond Hill Country Park or users could spill out to the parkland alongside the main road.

A denser grain of buildings could front the park reflecting the shift in position within the site. This could potentially be a good location for some live/ work type units, close to the cafe if provided. Density should still lower towards the north-western edges of the area and adjacent to Fairley House.



Character area 4

Retention of some buildings at Derbeth Farm and use of existing stone walling will help establish an instant sense of place and creates the starting point for the spatial arrangement of the site.

The existing access should be retained and upgraded as necessary. A range of building typologies should be provided and more terraces would be appropriate.



Character area 5

This area is closely linked to character area 6 and as such is much denser with flatted blocks and townhouses and slightly more formal in arrangement.

The parkway along the distributor road ends to the north of character area 5 at the existing farm of Dykeside Steading on the boundary of character area 6.



Character area 6

The core path continues from Kingswells along the northern boundary of the site offering good opportunities for pedestrian and cycle links.

This northern pocket of the site is open and clear with no existing buildings or landscape features within the body of it, lending it suitable to commercial uses. Proximity to the AWPR provides opportunities for a landmark building such as a hotel.



Derbeth, Aberdeen

Potential layout in Aberdeen Context

The site at Derbeth presents a logical future extension of Kingswells and adds to the emerging sustainable growth of Aberdeen.



optimised environments ltd
6th Floor | 24 Torphichen Street | Edinburgh | EH3 8JB
t 0131 221 5920 | w optimisedenvironments.com

Optimised Environments Ltd. Registered in Scotland SC359690.
Registered address: 6th Floor | 24 Torphichen Street | Edinburgh | EH3 8JB

Development Bid Site at Derbeth, Kingswells

Transport Appraisal

May 2015



FAIRHURST

CONTROL SHEET



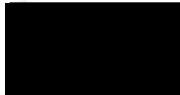
CLIENT: Stewart Milne Homes

PROJECT TITLE: Development Bid Site at Derbeth, Kingswells

REPORT TITLE: Transport Appraisal

PROJECT REFERENCE: 110176

DOCUMENT NUMBER: 110176 TApp02

Issue & Approval Schedule	ISSUE 2		Name	Signature	Date	
	Prepared by	M Peters			28/05/15	
	Checked by	R McDonald			28/05/15	
	Approved by	R McDonald			28/05/15	
Revision Record	Rev.	Date	Status	Description	Signature	
	1	29/05/15	Final	Amended with Client Comments	By	MA
					Checked	MP
					Approved	RMcD
	2	29/05/15	Final	Updated Public Transport Information and revision to Diagram B	By	MP
					Checked	RMcD
Approved					RMcD	

This document has been prepared in accordance with procedure OP/P02 of the *Fairhurst Quality and Environmental Management System*

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	General	1
1.2	Site Location	1
1.3	Development Proposal	2
2	Transport Planning Policy Context	3
2.1	National Planning Policy	3
2.2	Regional Policy	4
2.3	Local Policy	5
3	Site Accessibility Review	8
3.1	The Site	8
3.2	Pedestrian Network	8
3.3	Cycling Network	8
3.4	Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access	9
3.5	Public Transport Accessibility	10
3.6	Existing Local Road Network	12
3.7	Committed Transport Infrastructure	12
3.8	Potential Road Improvements	13
3.9	Site Access	13
4	Summary and Conclusions	14
4.1	Summary	14
4.2	Conclusion	15

Tables

Table 3-1: Local Bus Service Information	11
--	----

Enclosures

Diagram A: Walking & Cycling Accessibility Map

Diagram B: Local Bus Routes & Stops

1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in support of a potential development site at Derbeth, Kingswells. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the site's accessibility in accordance with transport planning guidance, with a view to demonstrating that the site is in a location which will encourage travel in a sustainable manner, reducing car dependency. The report also considers vehicular access to the site and opportunities to improve the surrounding road network in conjunction with its development.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The Derbeth site lies to the north west of Kingswells bounded to the east by the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road which leads directly to the A944, as shown in Figure 1-1 below. The route of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) runs through the site with an interchange located on the A944 to the south of the site. An additional Kingswells junction with north facing slip roads only is located approximately 200m to the north east of the site.

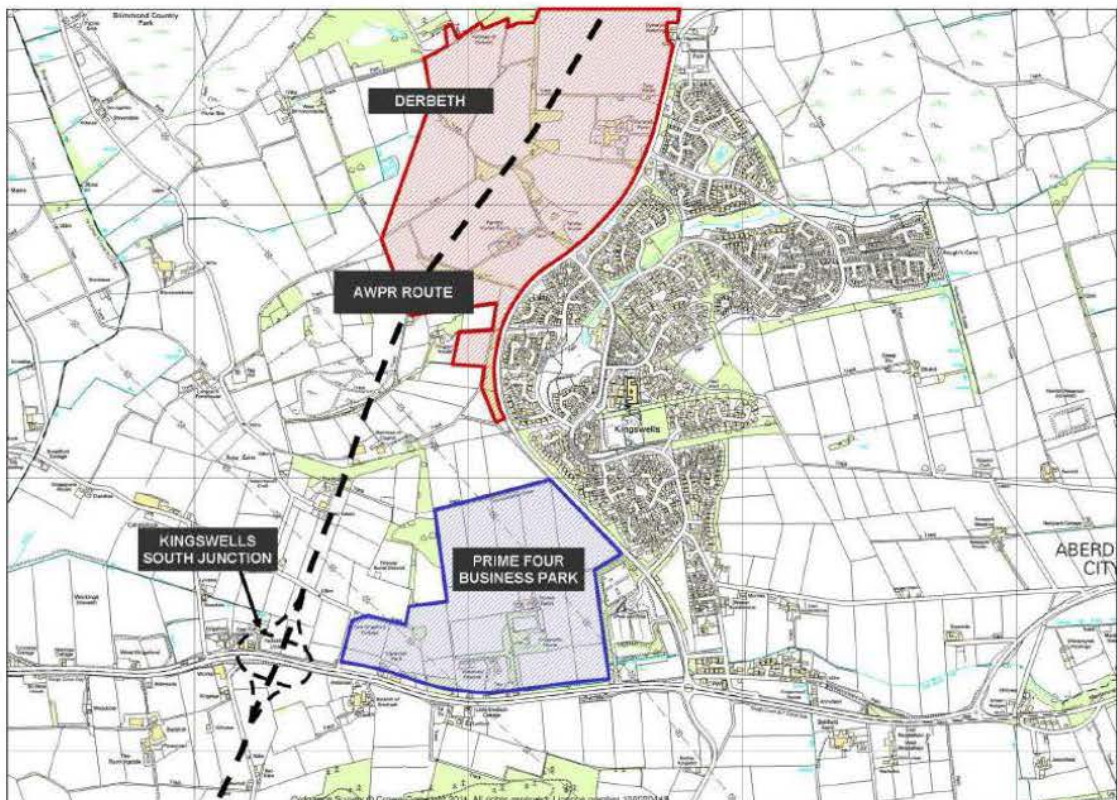


Figure 1-1: Site Location Plan

1.3 Development Proposal

- 1.3.1 The site extends to a total area of 89.5 hectares to the north west of Kingswells and straddles the identified route of the AWPR where land within the line of the bypass is promoted for employment uses, a proposed local centre and up to 900 residential units.
- 1.3.2 The Development Framework for the site sets out options for a planned expansion of the existing Kingswells settlement to the land west of the C89 Kingswells distributor road up to the AWPR. The site at Derbeth has the potential to become a distinctive and sustainable extension to Kingswells, offering a choice of housing within easy reach of local facilities, the village centre and significant employment areas such as Prime Four Business Park just to the south of the site.

2 Transport Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Policy Context is principally defined by 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP), and Scottish Planning Advice Note 75 (PAN 75) 'Planning for Transport'. The Scottish Government documents 'Transport Assessment Guidance' and 'Designing Streets' are also of relevance.
- 2.1.2 The Scottish Government's 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP) issued in June 2014 replaces SPP (2010) and Designing Places (2001). SPP identifies the Scottish Government's overarching aim to increase sustainable economic growth within Scotland.
- 2.1.3 SPP revolves around the principal policies – sustainability and placemaking. In considering how planning should support the vision, the document outlines the key outcomes that developments need to contribute to:
- *'A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and creation of well-designed, sustainable places.'*
 - *'A low carbon place – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.'*
 - *'A natural, resilient place – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their use.'*
 - *'A more connected place – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.'*
- 2.1.4 The 'Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel' section of SPP stresses the importance of efficient transport connections within Scotland and to international markets, and the crucial role that planning plays to improving such infrastructure. The section goes on to identify within paragraph 270 that the planning system should support developments that:
- *'optimise the use of existing infrastructure;*
 - *reduce the need to travel;*
 - *provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport;*
 - *enable the integration of transport modes'.*
- 2.1.5 Paragraph 273 notes that *'the spatial strategies set out in plans should support development in locations that allow walkable access to local amenities and are also accessible by cycling and public transport. Plans should identify active travel networks and promote opportunities for travel by more sustainable modes in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, cars.'*
- 2.1.6 SPP notes in paragraph 287 that *'Planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:*
- *direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;*
 - *access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400m'*

- 2.1.7 PAN75 identifies the need for the integration of land use planning with transport, taking into account policies on economic growth, education, health and the objective of a more inclusive society.
- 2.1.8 PAN75 identifies in Annex B the undernoted thresholds:
- *‘For accessibility of public transport the recommended guidelines are less than 400m to bus services;*
- 2.1.9 PAN 75 indicates that *‘Travel Plans are documents that set out a package of positive and complementary measures, for the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns for a specific development.’* It further states that *‘their ability and success in influencing travel patterns is dependent upon the commitment of the developer and occupier of a development.’* For residential land uses, PAN 75 notes at paragraph 43 that *‘travel plans may set out measures which will be used as an incentive to house purchasers to use non-car travel modes, but setting targets is generally not practicable for this land use. Sustainability in housing should come through design in relation to walking, cycling and public transport networks’.*
- 2.1.10 Transport Assessment Guidance (TAG) has been published by Transport Scotland to guide the preparation of Transport Assessments (TA) for development proposals in Scotland. Paragraph 1.8 notes that the TA process *‘is directed towards successful delivery of development-related transport measures aimed at achieving sustainable transport outcomes.’* It further notes that the *‘process incorporates scoping, transport assessment and implementation including travel plans and monitoring.’*
- 2.1.11 TAG identifies that *‘Journey times of up to 20-30 mins are appropriate for walking and 30-40 mins for cycling’.*
- 2.1.12 ‘Designing Streets’ sets out Scottish Government policy to be followed in designing and approving the layout of settlements. The Scottish Government’s policy emphasises that street design should meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in Designing Places. The six qualities and key considerations are summarised as follows:
- *Distinctive – street design should respond to local context to deliver places that are distinctive*
 - *Safe and pleasant – streets should be designed to be safe and attractive place*
 - *Easy to move around – streets should be easy to move around for all users and connect well to existing networks*
 - *Welcoming – streets layout and detail should encourage positive interaction for all members of the community*
 - *Adaptable – street networks should be designed to accommodate future adaptation*
 - *Resource Efficient – street design should consider orientation, the integration of sustainable drainage and use attractive, durable materials that can be easily maintained.*

2.2 Regional Policy

- 2.2.1 Regional Policy for the proposed development is largely defined by:
- Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (March 2014)
 - NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (June 2008)

- 2.2.2 The Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) identifies 'four strategic growth areas' (SGA) which will be the focus of development in the area up to 2035. The SDP notes, 'The strategic growth areas are centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes.' The SDP also aims to '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.'
- 2.2.3 The Strategic Development Plan identifies the undernoted objectives:-
- *'To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses*
 - *To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and business to move to.*
 - *To make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices'.*
- 2.2.4 The SDP endorses the role of 'Sustainable mixed communities' in making sure that 'new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to'.
- 2.2.5 The NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (RTS) identifies within its four Strategic Objectives the requirements to:
- *'to enhance and exploit the North East's competitive economic advantages, and to reduce the impacts of peripherality*
 - *enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited*
 - *support transport integration and a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east'*
- 2.2.6 In identifying an 'Internal Connections Strategy' the RTS sets out key initiatives aimed at improving transport infrastructure within the City and Shire. These are focussed on improvements to public transport aimed at delivering economic, environmental and social inclusion benefits, with construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route facilitating the delivery of complementary transport measures as well as contributing 'to the economy and sustainable communities across the north east'. It also sets out a detailed programme for the delivery of additional park and ride sites and improved bus services aimed at maximising the identified benefits of reducing congestion, improving air quality and broadening travel choices.

2.3 Local Policy

- 2.3.1 Local Policy that would guide development is largely defined by:
- The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan – (February 2012)
 - Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (March 2008)
 - ALDP Supplementary Guidance 'Transport and Accessibility' – (March 2012)

- 2.3.2 The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) outlines proposals for development and land use for a period of 10 years from adoption. It sets out the strategic policies and proposals for promoting sustainable growth of the city over a 10-20 year period.
- 2.3.3 The LDP also sets out specific policies for ensuring that new developments contribute to delivering sustainable communities within the city. A number of the policies identified within the current LDP would remain relevant to the emerging LDP. These include:
- Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions
 - Policy T2 – Managing the Traffic Impact of Development
 - Policy D3 – Sustainable and Active Travel
- 2.3.4 The Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (LTS) still forms the current Transport Strategy for Aberdeen and outlines the policies and interventions adopted by ACC to guide the planning and improvement of the local road network over a five-year period.
- 2.3.5 The LTS sets out five high level aims, as follows:
- *‘Support and Contribute to a thriving economy for Aberdeen and its region*
 - *Ensure a safe and secure transport system*
 - *Minimise the environmental impact of transport on our community and the wider world*
 - *Ensure the transport system is integrated and accessible to all*
 - *Ensure that transport policies integrate with and support sustainable development, health and social inclusion policies’.*
- 2.3.6 A number of specific objectives detailed within the LTS also support the previously listed aims. Key considerations among these objectives include:
- *‘minimise and improve reliability of journey times for people and goods through Aberdeen’s transport networks*
 - *improve the condition of road, footway and cycle road network*
 - *increase the share of travel by the most sustainable modes to promote economic growth without the associated traffic growth*
 - *continue to reduce road casualties*
 - *reduce carbon emissions from road transport*
 - *improve accessibility (network and cost) to jobs and services to support social inclusion,*
 - *to facilitate and support land use development adjacent to sustainable transport corridors and nodes*
 - *to promote healthy living by encouraging safe walking and cycling’*
- 2.3.7 The LDP Supplementary Guidance ‘Transport and Accessibility’ (March 2012) advocates that a Travel Plan should ‘*be site specific and measures and objectives should reflect the individual characteristics of the site as well as the trips likely to be generated by that development.*’ The document further highlights that ‘*Residential Travel Plans should outline measures aimed at influencing the travel behaviour of new home owners to, from and within the development. These could include:*
- *Ensuring the development is well served by safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes;*
 - *Entering into negotiations with bus operators to ensure that the development can be served by public transport if it is not at present;*

- *Distributing a welcome pack to new residents with maps showing local walking and cycling routes and local public transport maps, leaflets and timetables;*
- *Providing a car club vehicle(s) for residents to use;*
- *Establishing a residents' car share scheme;*
- *Providing residents with 1 months' free public transport tickets or a voucher for discounted walking or cycling goods'.*

3 Site Accessibility Review

3.1 The Site

- 3.1.1 The Derbeth site is located on the western edge of Aberdeen, north west of Kingswells and extends to approximately 89.5 hectares (221 acres). It is bound to the north by a shelter belt and pockets of woodland; to the west by open fields; to the south by fields, an access track and some residential dwellings; and to the east by the C89 Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944. Within this area there are a number of properties, including Fairley House, Fairley Home Farm and Derbeth Farm.
- 3.1.2 The AWPR is due to be completed by the end of 2017 and will traverse through this area of land and will become a long term defensible boundary to the west of Aberdeen.

3.2 Pedestrian Network

- 3.2.1 The pedestrian desire line from the site would be to the south east towards the settlement of Kingswells, Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park & Ride site. Diagram A enclosed illustrates existing pedestrian infrastructure in the vicinity of the site with links to the potential walking catchment from the Derbeth site.
- 3.2.2 The existing Kingswells community has been established since the 1980s with a high quality network of footpath and cycle route provision to serve local needs and connect existing residential areas to attractions within the village such as the local village shopping centre and primary school. As well as routes alongside the road network there is a complementary network of off road routes and paths providing more direct connections in appropriate locations.

3.3 Cycling Network

- 3.3.1 Existing cycling infrastructure largely replicates provision for pedestrians as many of the facilities are shared by pedestrians and cyclists. The nearby Aberdeen to Westhill cycleway runs along the north side of the A944 close to the site. The route facilitates east-west cycling opportunities from Hazlehead through Kingswells to Westhill. There are connections from the A944 dual use path to other routes on the core path network within Kingswells and beyond. There are also links to / from Bucksburn to the north and other Aberdeen City suburbs to the west.
- 3.3.2 As development continues at Westhill's Arnhall Business Park, additional cycle infrastructure is expected to be developed which will offer further segregated routes along the B9119 and towards Westhill town centre, linking with existing cycling infrastructure elsewhere in Westhill. This offers clear potential for cycleway links to be formed between the Derbeth site and Arnhall Business Park; and the rest of Westhill using dedicated infrastructure.
- 3.3.3 Beyond Kingswells, at the A944 Six Mile Fork junction to the east of Westhill, there is a Toucan Crossing which connects footway / cycleways on both sides of the A944, linking to the strategic Aberdeen to Westhill Cycleway. Additional facilities to aid cyclists at the Six Mile Fork junction include Advanced Stop Lines (ASL) on all approaches.

3.4 Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

- 3.4.1 The site adjoins the existing Kingswells settlement which provides a wide range of local amenities allowing it to function as a sustainable settlement. The Derbeth development site provides an opportunity to expand the existing settlement to the north west to complement the extensive existing and future employment opportunities at Kingswells (Prime Four Business Park).
- 3.4.2 The site at Derbeth is of such a scale that it will justify the provision of significant new path infrastructure to serve the needs of future residents, employees and visitors. Even allowing for the chosen alignment of the AWPR with no development to the west, sufficient land remains to accommodate up to 900 dwellings together with a 12.3ha employment site and provision for a new local centre accommodating shops and community facilities to complement existing provision in the village.
- 3.4.3 An appropriate network of foot and cycle paths would be provided within the site to prioritise use of these modes particularly for internal journeys between residential and employment areas and the local centre. Such proposals would be identified through a master planning process aimed at providing connections as directly as possible in order to encourage use of these modes, with the obvious advantage of 'designing-in' such provision from the outset.
- 3.4.4 A core path runs directly along the northern boundary of the site connecting Brimmond Hill with Kingswells. A further core path through the site is identified along the alignment of the access road running past Fairley House which bisects the site from east to west. Where these paths cross the Kingswells Distributor Road the implementation of development proposals for the Derbeth site could formalise these crossing arrangements.
- 3.4.5 Whilst the site is presently in agricultural use and is segregated from the existing built up area by the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road, this situation will inevitably change as a consequence of development. Traffic flows along the C89 will decrease significantly as a consequence of the AWPR (although it will remain an appropriate route for local traffic circulation and access to the bypass) with studies showing that the number of vehicles using the route will reduce by 74% and the number of HGV's will reduce by 12%.
- 3.4.6 The vehicular access strategy for serving development of the site (which is outlined more fully below) envisages the provision of at least two principal accesses to the residential area and local centre from junctions opposite Kingswells Crescent and Kingswells Drive. Both locations would incorporate priority crossings for pedestrians and cyclists interlinking with suitable extensions to the existing network of roadside and off road paths within the village.
- 3.4.7 There would be an opportunity to integrate the site with the existing settlement at Kingswells. Although the Kingswells Distributor Road runs between the two there are significant opportunities to link the areas through existing and proposed footway connections and crossings. The significant reduction in C89 traffic usage predicted following completion of the AWPR will reduce the severance effect currently caused by high traffic flow at peak times.
- 3.4.8 With a major employment area just to the south of the site at Prime Four Business Park, and with the projected reductions in C89 traffic, a dual use footway / cycleway could be provided alongside the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road. This would not only provide direct pedestrian and cycle access to Prime Four but would also provide

a connection into the Aberdeen to Westhill dual use footway / cycleway network adjacent to the A944.

- 3.4.9 PAN75 stipulates that '*a maximum threshold of 1600m (20 minutes) for walking is broadly in line with observed travel behaviour.*' Reference to Paragraph 5.21 of TAG also suggests that journey times of 20 – 30 minutes (1600 – 2400 metres) are appropriate for walking.
- 3.4.10 Walking isochrones representing 1600 metres (20 minutes) and 2400 metres (30 minutes) are illustrated by Diagram A enclosed in the Appendix. The walking isochrones illustrate walking distances from a point within the Derbeth site adjacent to Fairley Home Farm. The walking isochrones are measured along existing footways and potential links from the site.
- 3.4.11 Diagram A shows that the majority of Kingswells, including a number of local amenities, are within 1600 metres (20 minutes) walking distance. This includes a primary school, medical centre, post office and Co-operative convenience store. The 2400 metres walking catchment, representing 30 minutes walking time, incorporates Prime Four Business Park and Kingswells Park and Ride.
- 3.4.12 The site location offers an opportunity to encourage pedestrian and bicycle trips, and this would be enhanced through infrastructure improvements in connection with the site development. Thus the site meets with transport planning policy in this regard.

3.5 Public Transport Accessibility

- 3.5.1 PAN75 guidance comments that significant trip generating developments should be located within a walking distance of 400 metres from an existing public transport route. Kingswells is currently served directly by regular and frequent buses with the majority of the village within convenient walking distance of services operated by First Aberdeen via the local road network and the Kingswells Park and Ride. Further services by Stagecoach Bluebird can be accessed from the A944. As discussed previously.
- 3.5.2 The Kingswells P&R has dedicated services that operate between this facility and locations across the city centre via the bus priority route which has been introduced along the A944 Lang Stracht.
- 3.5.3 Details of existing bus service frequencies and typical journey times are summarised in Table 3-1 and the plan at Diagram B in the Appendix illustrates the current pattern of routes and available stops.

Service	Route	Monday -Friday	Bus Stop
Stagecoach Bluebird Service 218	Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to Westhill	18 journeys daily	A944 at Prime Four
Stagecoach Bluebird Service X17	Aberdeen Bus Station to Westhill via Woodend and Elrick	Every 10 minutes	A944 at Prime Four
Stagecoach Bluebird Service X18	Aberdeen Bus Station to Alford via Westhill, Dunecht, Sauchen, Whitehouse	12 journeys daily	A944 at Prime Four
First Aberdeen Service 11	Northfield Terminus – City Centre – Woodend - Kingswells Medical Centre (Circular)	At: 19:26, 19:46, 20:23, 20:53, 21:23, 21:53, 22:23 & 23:23	Kingswells Medical Centre
First Aberdeen Service X40	Kingswells Park & Ride – Kingswells Medical Centre - Aberdeen Royal Infirmary - City Centre - Bridge Of Don Park & Ride - Dubford	Approximately 15 Minutes During Commuter Travel Peak	Kingswells Park & Ride
Bains Coaches Service 777	Kingswells – Newhills – Bankhead - Aberdeen Airport - Kirkhill	5 Daily Services	Kingswells Park & Ride / A944 at Prime Four

Table 3-1: Local Bus Service Information

- 3.5.4 Kingswells' location on a principal transport corridor already served by established park and ride infrastructure and bus priority measures on the route to the centre of the city gives a firm basis for the development of further opportunities to enhance public transport services in the area. In particular the commitment to the establishment of a chain of park and ride sites around the AWPR provides an opportunity for the intensification of orbital services providing direct connections to major attractions such as Aberdeen Airport and adjoining employment destinations at Kirkhill and Dyce, which development at Derbeth would be well placed to access. The AWPR could result in the increased frequency of Service 777 and its potential extension to other destinations to the north and south.
- 3.5.5 The Derbeth site is directly bound by the C89 to the east which is presently the route of Service 777 to/from Kirkhill and Aberdeen Airport. The development proposed at Derbeth is of a scale that could support significant changes to existing bus service routes to ensure that the site is appropriately served.
- 3.5.6 With full development of the Derbeth site and multiple accesses onto the C89, bus services could be enhanced within Kingswells and could be re-routed to pass directly through the site following an internal loop road network, maximising accessibility for future residents and employees. Some bus services could be developed and re-routed along the AWPR by accessing Kingswells via the Kingswells North junction, and thereafter continuing to route directly past or through the site from where services could be accessed within specified walk thresholds.

- 3.5.7 The existing services to Aberdeen terminate at Aberdeen Bus Station where there are interchange opportunities for onward travel by bus to other local and national destinations. Additionally, Aberdeen Rail Station is within 150 metres (2 minutes) walking distance from the bus station, therefore further opportunities exist for travel by rail to local and national destinations.
- 3.5.8 The Development Framework and subsequent Masterplan layout for the site would explore opportunities for public transport accessibility for the initial and later phases of the development. Roads within the site would be designed to allow public transport access to encourage bus transport.

3.6 Existing Local Road Network

- 3.6.1 The existing site is predominantly green fields with road frontage to the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road. The C89 is single carriageway connecting the A944 to the A96 via Bucksburn. It also provides a means of access to the employment land at Prime Four Business Park and further afield to destinations such as Westhill via the A944, and Kirkhill / Dyce via the A96. It is subsequently well used during weekday peak periods in particular.
- 3.6.2 Studies show that flows on the C89 are predicted to reduce by as much as 74% upon completion of the AWPR. Relevant sections of the C89 are designed to a suitably high standard as a traffic route and the significant forecast reduction in existing traffic levels would counterbalance increased development traffic associated with the Derbeth site, even after the implementation of crossing facilities and priority controls required to enhance pedestrian accessibility as outlined previously.
- 3.6.3 On the wider road network the site's direct accessibility to the AWPR via the Kingswells North interchange will accommodate future movement demands in that direction. Movements towards the city centre would route via the A944 Kingswells Roundabout and Lang Stracht or Skene Road at the A944 / B9119 Bellfield junction. These roads afford access to the A90 Aberdeen to Peterhead road, and subsequently to the A96 Aberdeen to Inverness Trunk Road. To the west of Kingswells the A944 provides connections to the future grade separated junction with the AWPR and the residential and employment areas of Westhill.
- 3.6.4 Recent improvements on the A944 corridor have eased previous constraints, such as at the Kingswells Roundabout and other identified bottlenecks. Further improvements are committed in connection with other approved development proposals on the corridor which can be expected to provide additional capacity, maintaining the benefits of traffic reduction due to the AWPR on the corridor.

3.7 Committed Transport Infrastructure

- 3.7.1 The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will be a new orbital route around the west side of Aberdeen described as *'the most important infrastructure project taking place in the North East (which) will bring a range of substantial benefits to the region'*. Its construction is anticipated to provide *'a much needed fast and safe route around Aberdeen which links with the existing major roads and key locations such as the airport, park and ride sites and the major industrial estates around the City'*.
- 3.7.2 The route runs between Stonehaven and Blackdog and follows an orbital alignment around the city to the west, with interchanges on the A93, A944, A96, A947 and A90.

- 3.7.3 The construction of the AWPR has commenced and it is expected to be complete by winter 2017. The route of the AWPR passes directly through the Derbeth site and will include a new grade separated junction on the A944 nearby to the south. An additional junction (currently north facing slips only) just to the north east of the site will also be built and would enable traffic from the Derbeth site (and Kingswells) to access areas to the west and north of Aberdeen City without the need for routing via the A944 AWPR grade separated junction. It is anticipated that upon completion the AWPR will change the accessibility options for the settlements and developments along its route, which will open up opportunities for improved connectivity and public transport services. The Derbeth site is extremely well placed to benefit from the future AWPR.

3.8 Potential Road Improvements

- 3.8.1 Although operation of parts of the local road network (notably the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road and key approaches) is under pressure at present at peak times this situation will fundamentally change following completion of the AWPR. As previously noted forecast traffic flows on the C89 north of the village are predicted to reduce by 74% following diversion to the strategic AWPR. It is anticipated that the dramatic traffic reduction will lead to improved junction performance, releasing capacity for additional development traffic from the Derbeth site.
- 3.8.2 Notwithstanding this, the future performance of junctions and links would be analysed through a Transport Assessment for the Derbeth site and any necessary mitigation measures identified would be proposed in support of future planning applications.
- 3.8.3 It is likely that there is scope for the completion of early phases in advance of the AWPR opening.

3.9 Site Access

- 3.9.1 The Development Framework illustrates how the Derbeth land could be accessed by vehicles and developed to integrate with the existing settlement of Kingswells.
- 3.9.2 Access to the site would be provided via existing access points from the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road and via a new junction to the north east of the site. Within the site a street hierarchy that allows for strategic North-South and East-West movements would be developed.
- 3.9.3 Traffic analysis to consider the performance of the site access junctions would be detailed in a future Transport Assessment once development proposals are refined.

4 Summary and Conclusions

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 This Accessibility Appraisal has been undertaken on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in support of a development bid site at Derbeth, Kingswells. The Derbeth site lies to the north west of Kingswells bounded to the east by the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road which leads directly to the A944. The site is located to the immediate north west of the existing Kingswells settlement with the established Prime Four Business Park found to the immediate south.
- 4.1.2 Opportunities exist through the master planning process for the site to provide appropriate footway / cycleway infrastructure for connections with existing facilities on the adjacent network. There is potential for a footway / cycleway link to be provided along the Kingswells Distributor Road, providing a connection to Prime Four.
- 4.1.3 Securing integration of development with the existing community will involve formalising and developing existing rights of way across the Kingswells Distributor Road. A significant reduction in traffic flow is predicted to occur on the Kingswells Distributor Road upon opening of the AWPR. The provision of formalised crossing points directly connecting the site to existing path networks serving Kingswells will be implemented. It is concluded that the Derbeth site can be successfully integrated into the expanded urban community.
- 4.1.4 The mixed development proposed for the Derbeth site would justify significant modification and extension of existing bus service provision. Existing services operating in direct proximity of the site form a suitable basis for the development of local services, with the Kingswells Park & Ride site having the potential to develop as a local interchange between these and more strategic services (such as development of Service 777) operating orbital routes via the AWPR.
- 4.1.5 It is likely that there is scope for the completion of early phases of the Derbeth site in advance of the AWPR opening. It is anticipated that the completion of the AWPR and the dramatic traffic reduction, on key routes around Kingswells, will lead to improved junction performance, releasing capacity for further development traffic from the Derbeth site.
- 4.1.6 The route of the AWPR passes through the site with an interchange located on the A944 to the south of the site and a further half junction with north facing slip roads located approximately 200m to the north east of the site. Upon completion the AWPR will provide excellent access between Kingswells and other parts of Aberdeenshire / Aberdeen City through its connection with the A944 and Kingswells Distributor Road. The potential benefits from the AWPR would be extended to the Derbeth site due to its close proximity to the A944.

4.2 Conclusion

- 4.2.1 This Transport Appraisal has identified that the Derbeth site offers an excellent opportunity for development. Through its location in relation to Kingswells, Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park and Ride the site offers potential to generate trips by sustainable means in preference to cars trips, which would be to the benefit of the existing local road network. There are opportunities to provide walking and cycling infrastructure from the proposed site to connect with existing facilities within Kingswells. There are also opportunities to provide further enhancements to pedestrian and cycle networks via a dual use provision on the Kingswells Distributor Road.
- 4.2.2 The development at the Derbeth site, incorporating appropriate transport infrastructure to support the development, could readily be accessible by sustainable transport modes. The site is within easy access from a major regional employment centre as well as the settlement of Kingswells.
- 4.2.3 The Derbeth site can be developed to be fully compatible with national and local transport planning policy guidance and as such it is considered that there are positive transport related reasons for developing the site for mixed uses.
- 4.2.4 Development of the site could occur in a sustainable manner offering many benefits due to its location. In addition, development of the site can offer road capacity benefits through its easy access to both nearby AWPR Kingswells junctions, whereas development of alternative sites cannot offer that same benefit.
- 4.2.5 The Transport Appraisal concludes that the inclusion of this site in the LDP will assist in promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel and will not only optimise the use of existing infrastructure, but improve upon it. With continued expansion and allocations of development along the A944 corridor the proposed mixed use development at Derbeth would help to reduce the need to travel, provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling and enable the integration of different transport modes. Public Transport opportunities outweigh many alternative sites due to the proximity of existing bus services and the Kingswells Park and Ride facility.

Enclosures

Diagram A: Walking & Cycling Accessibility Maps

Diagram B: Local Bus Routes & Stops







Project Title:
110176 Derbeth, Kingswells
Development Bid Site



Drawing Title:
Walking and Cycling Accessibility
Local Walking and Cycling Routes

Diagram A

KEY:

-  Development Site
-  Prime Four Business Park




Walking Isochrones:

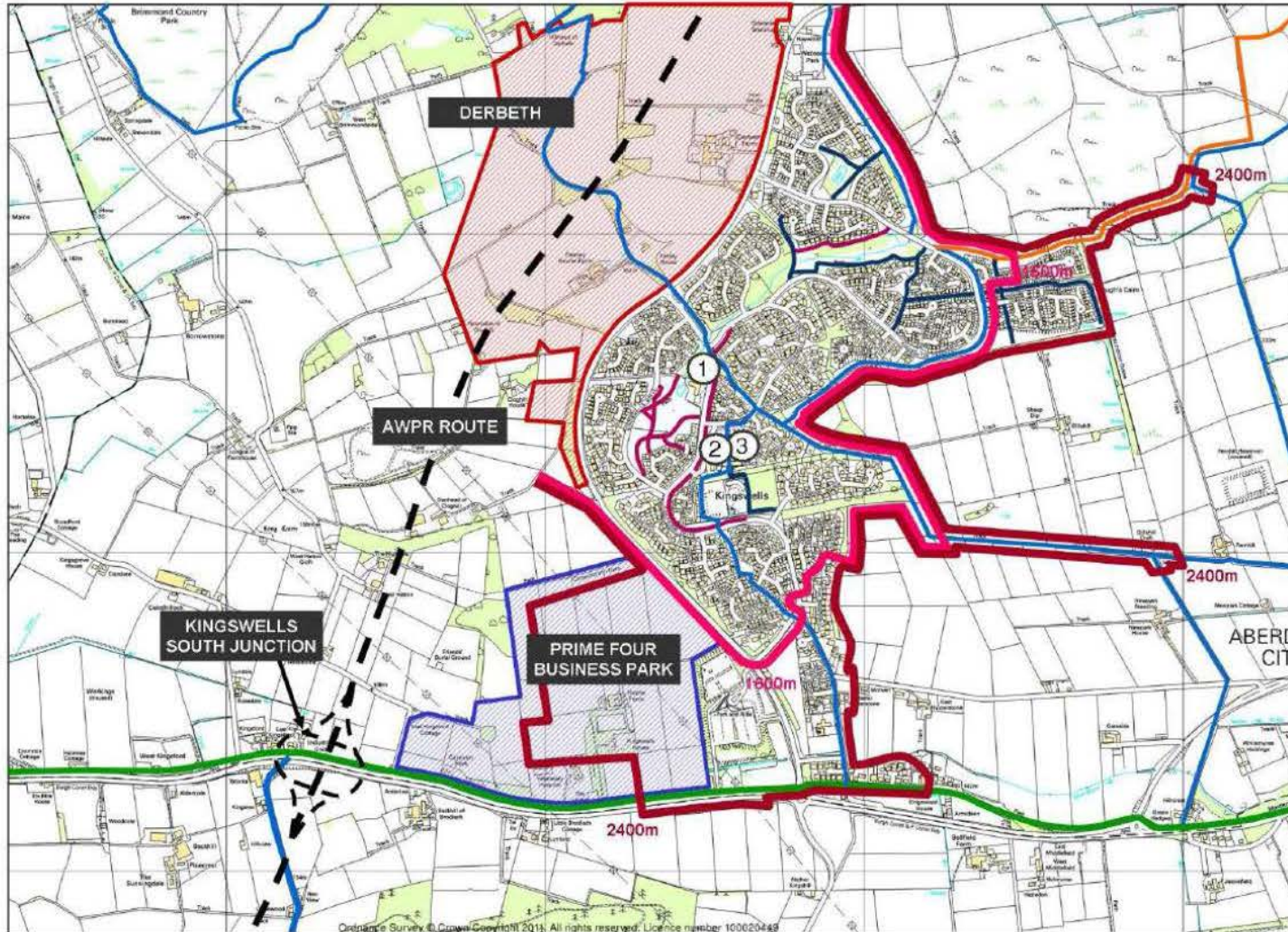
-  1600 metres (20minutes)
-  2400 metres (30minutes)

Local Walking and Cycling Routes:

-  Aberdeen to Westhill
Dual-Use Cycleway Network
-  Dual-Use Path Network
-  Core Path Network
-  Kingswells to Bucksburn
Recommended Route
-  Formal Footpaths

Local Amenities:

-  Kingswells Medical Centre
-  Co-operative, Community Centre
Veterinary, Post Office & Pharmacy
-  Kingswells Primary School



Client:
STEWART Milne HOMES

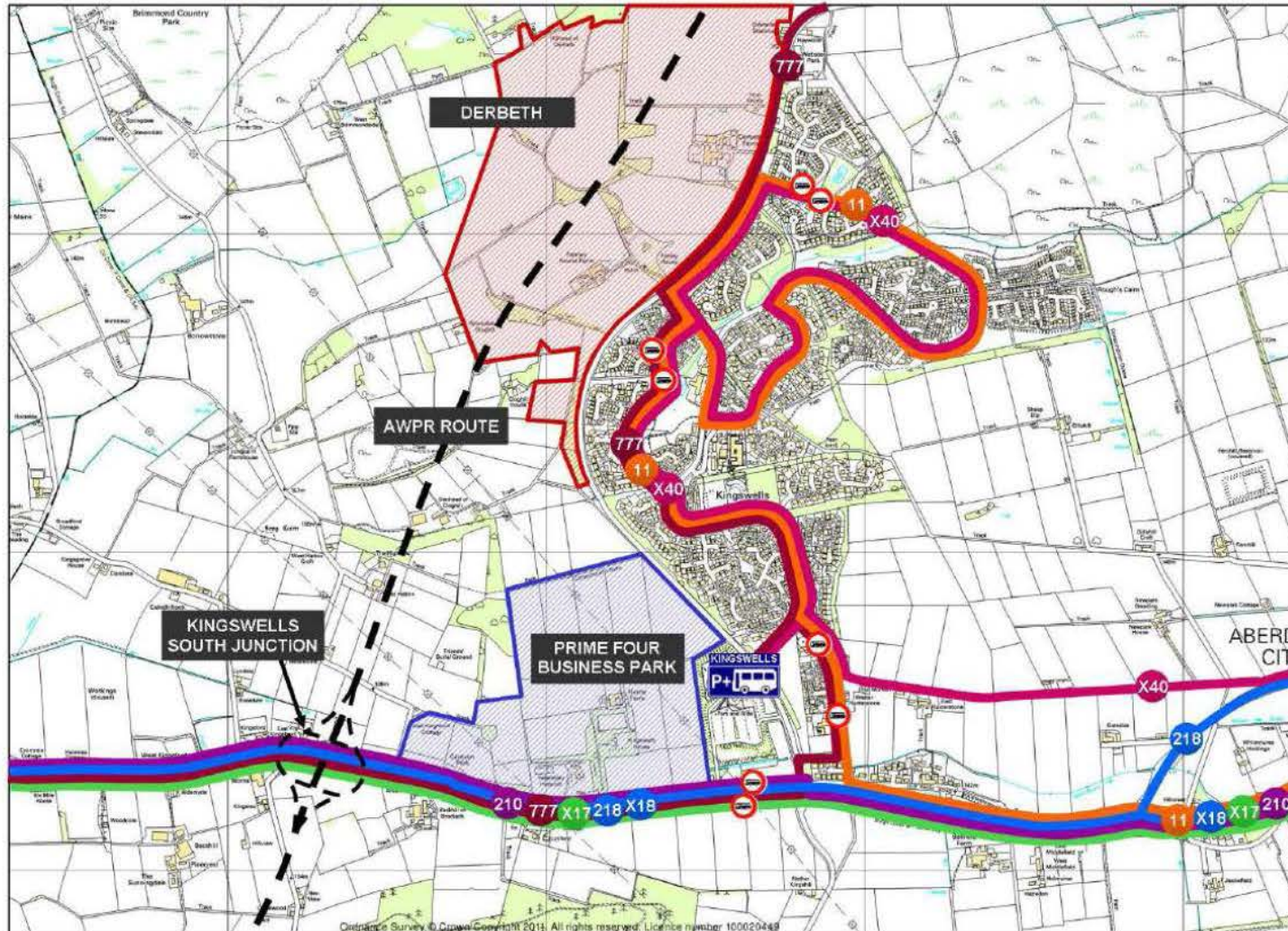
Drawn by: KC
Date: 25/05/15
88 Queens Road
Aberdeen
AB15 4YQ
T: 01224 321222
F: 01224 323201

This map is based on Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. License number: 109905

Project Title:
110176 Derbeth, Kingswells
Development Bid Site

Drawing Title:
Bus Accessibility
Local Bus Routes and Stops

Diagram B



KEY:

-  Development Site
-  Prime Four Business Park
-  AWPR Routing
-  Kingswells Park and Ride
-  Bus Stops

Local Bus Routes:

-  **Service 777**
To Oldmeldrum, Westhill, Kingswells
Aberdeen Airport and Dyce
-  **Service 11**
To Aberdeen, Woodend Hospital,
and Kingswells
-  **Service X40**
To Kingswells, Aberdeen Royal
Infirmary, Bridge of Don P&R and
Dubford P&R via City Centre
-  **Service X17**
To Aberdeen, Woodend Hospital,
Westhill and Erlick
-  **Service 218/X18**
To Aberdeen, Foresterhill Hospital,
Westhill, Erlick and Afford
-  **Service 210**
To Aberdeen, Torphins, Aboyne
and Ballater

Client:

**STEWART
Milne
HOMES**

Drawn by: KC
Date: 25/05/15
88 Queens Road
Aberdeen
AB15 4YQ
T: 01224 321222
F: 01224 323201

This map is based on Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. License number: 100020449

CIVIL ENGINEERING • STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING • TRANSPORTATION • ROADS & BRIDGES
PORTS & HARBOURS • GEOTECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING • PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT • WATER SERVICES • CDM COORDINATOR SERVICES

www.fairhurst.co.uk

Aberdeen	Inverness
Birmingham	Leeds
Bristol	London
Dundee	Manchester
Edinburgh	Newcastle upon Tyne
Elgin	Sheffield
Glasgow	Watford
	Wellesbourne

FAIRHURST

PAPER APART

Objection is made on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes to the failure of the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ADLP) to identify Area 2 (Gillahill) of Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion as an opportunity site for 600 dwellings and new primary school.

What change would like to see made?

Stewart Milne Homes wish to see the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2016 modified to allocate land at Gillahill as an opportunity site for 600 homes and a primary school. As explained below, the land's current zoning as Green Belt (NE2) is no longer appropriate and the area should be released for development to contribute to meeting strategic housing requirements as well as enabling the sustainable growth of Kingswells.

Background

Land at Gillahill possesses a complex history relative to its promotion as an area of residential development. Following the initial expansion of Kingswells during the 1980s, Gillahill was recognised by the 1991 Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan as a GB2 'Countryside Around Towns' area, as being suitable for the future growth of the settlement. In preparation of the 2008 Aberdeen Local Plan, the Aberdeen Green Belt Review recommended the removal of the entire site from the Green Belt. However, only its northern area was subsequently identified for the development of 170 residential dwellings in the period 2000-10. The remainder of the site was identified as a 'Future New Community' capable of accommodating 230 units post 2010. Further consultation and a Public Inquiry resulted in the site eventually reverting to Green Belt and Green Space Network due to a perceived insufficient school capacity. This has been addressed within the latest proposals which include a primary school and therefore mitigate any concerns in this respect.

The Main Issues Report (MIR) of the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) identified the site at Gillahill for 400 homes delivered over two phases in the period to 2030. However, following a meeting of the Council's Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee in May 2010, the site was excluded from the Proposed ALDP as a consequence of insufficient school capacity in the area.

In a response to the Council's call for sites in April 2013, Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) promoted the 39.5 ha of land at Gillahill within a joint development bid for residential development and a primary school alongside lands at Derbeth and Huxterstone (Appendix 1). The Development Option Assessment of the Main Issues Report published in January 2014

failed to identify Gillahill as a preferred option for development owing to nature conservation, Tree Preservation Orders and the presence of ancient monuments. However, several positive attributes were acknowledged such as how well the site relates to Kingswells, nearby services and the public transport network, enhancing connectivity.

Representation (Appendix 2) was made on behalf of SMH in response to the MIR but notwithstanding this, the Council's Policy Team advised the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee in November 2014 that the continued green belt status of the site was justified in order to protect the '*setting of Kingswells and preventing encroachment into the countryside that separates Kingswells from Aberdeen*', and in addition, '*there is no primary school capacity at Kingswells*'. This justification was derived from the Reporter's examination into the extant ALDP with no regard given to the changing circumstances at Kingswells. A solution to education capacity issues has been identified through the delivery of a new school at Gillahill, negating this issue. The site continues to be zoned as Green Space Network and Green Belt within the Proposed ALDP (2015). Objection is made in response to this.

Principle of Development

Since 1991, Gillahill has been recognised by various Local Plans as an appropriate expansion of Kingswells and was only excluded from the extant ALDP at Public Inquiry stage. It is therefore contended that the principle of residential development is considered acceptable. The site is unconstrained and developable and will optimise land resource adjacent to the settlement for a mix of uses, in accordance with paragraph 40 of SPP. The masterplan included in Appendix 1 illustrates how the development will integrate and strengthen existing pedestrian and cycle linkages and promote the use of the local Core Path network which connects Kingswells with Aberdeen to the east.

The reasons cited by the Reporter owing to encroachment into the countryside between Aberdeen and Kingswells are unreasonable as the area at Gillahill extends no further east than that of the existing residential development to the north. Development of 600 houses, strategic public open space landscaping and a new primary school would deliver sustainable growth of Kingswells and fit well within the settlement. Furthermore, a strategy for the implementation of a new primary school in tandem with residential development, as proposed by an Education Impact Analysis, renders the Reporter's comments into the extant ALDP as untenable. Such a facility would accommodate overflow from the current school as well as pupil numbers arising from the delivery of residential dwellings at Gillahill.

Material changes have occurred within Kingswells since the previous examination such as the imminent implementation of the AWPR and the continued expansion of the employment hub at Prime Four and should be duly considered in accordance with paragraph 30 of SPP.

Development at Gillahill would be a logical extension to Kingswells and would capitalise on its well related location in the context of the wider settlement. As denoted by the masterplan within Appendix 1, development would integrate with its surrounding countryside and maintain and enhance Urban Green Space as well as providing areas of recreation usable to all residents of Kingswells. Stewart Milne Homes are committed to delivering homes in Kingswells, as shown through development at Huxterstone, Kingswood Drive and Den View.

Current Zoning

Land at Gillahill is currently designated within Green Space Network and Green Belt by the Proposed ALDP. SPP dictates that green belt boundaries should be reviewed by the planning authority where necessary to *'identify the most sustainable locations for longer-term development'*. Paragraph 51 proceeds to state that owing to the need for development of smaller settlements, *'room for expansion'* should be considered and green belt should be *'appropriate to the location'*. Objection is taken to the proposed continued zoning of land at Gillahill as Green Belt. As addressed above, green belt policy (NE2) should direct planned growth to the most appropriate location and the proposed development at Gillahill will maximise land resource whilst enhancing the character and setting of the area. This is demonstrable of the site's green belt zoning failing in its role and justifying the removal of the allocation. Land at Gillahill represents an appropriate area for expansion of Kingswells and, as recognised by the MIR, relates well to and fits well with the wider settlement, avoiding coalescence. The consideration and identification of Gillahill with previous Local Plans for a 'Future New Community' is testament to the site's suitability to accommodate development and further justifies its current Green Belt zoning. The growth of Kingswells in accordance with the masterplan approach promoted by SMH through Appendix 1 will enable the sustainable growth of the settlement through the delivery of vital housing units and education infrastructure.

In the context of Policy NE1 Green Space Network (GSN), zoned areas at Gillahill will be maintained as illustrated by the masterplan approach illustrated in Appendix 1. This ensures compliance with Policy NE1 by considering *'existing areas of Green Space Network and identify new areas'*. The masterplan for the site illustrates the integration of the development in the context of the existing ancient woodland GSN along the northern and north-western perimeter. Indeed, proposals promote the extension of these areas through incorporated woodland and shelterbelt planting defining its eastern edge. The implementation of a central park as well as consolidating the Core Path and cycle network will attract use by residents of the wider settlement, providing usable space for all. This ensures that development at Gillahill adds positively to the settlement of Kingswells whilst enhancing connections with the wider countryside to the east.

Local Infrastructure

The development of the AWPR should be given due consideration when evaluating the future context of Kingswells. Paragraph 2.22 of the Proposed ALDP recognises that the AWPR will *'provide benefits to this area, with junctions proposed to the north and south-west of Kingswells'*. Its associated growth potential should be realised as an opportunity to enable the successful growth of the settlement, and in line with paragraph 40 of SPP, its use should be optimised by *'co-ordinating housing and business development with infrastructure investment including transport'*. The success of Prime Four is obvious to see and the allocation of an additional 12.7 ha of employment land seeks used to meet what paragraph 2.16 of the Proposed ALDP recognises as the *'exceptional demand for employment land in this area'*. This is testament to continued high levels of investment within Aberdeen that should be identified as possessing potential for associated growth and development.

As such, residential allocations should be made in Kingswells to create a balanced and sustainable settlement whilst reducing the need to travel. In failing to reasonably assess the impact of the AWPR, Gillahill as green belt land, is falling short in its role of *'directing development to the most appropriate locations'*, as required by SPP. A Transport Appraisal conducted into the likely impacts arising from the development of Gillahill concluded that the existing road network, due to upgrades associated with the delivery of Prime Four, would comfortably accommodate traffic generation from proposed residential development. The presence of the AWPR will introduce further capacity to the surrounding area and beyond, outwith Aberdeen City boundaries. The site will provide links to the road network via the residential development immediately to the north and as such, will integrate successfully with the settlement of Kingswells, as recognised by the Development Option Assessment at MIR stage.

Paragraph 2.2 of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP), adopted in March 2014, aims to 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'*. The masterplan illustrates strong pedestrian and cycle links with the wider settlement, as well as connecting with the Core Path network extending east to Aberdeen. As recognised by the MIR, the site at Gillahill lies within 400m of the nearest bus stop, and 800m from the closest service centre at Kingswells Crescent, in line with PAN 75 Planning for Transport thresholds. The combination of infrastructure and business land uses in tandem with education provision, green spaces and residential development at Gillahill will enable the creation of sustainable mixed communities, in accordance with the objectives of the SDP.

Strategic Growth Area

As a Strategic Growth Area (SGA), Aberdeen City is expected to deliver 31,500 new homes in the period to 2035. Including existing allocations to 2016, 21,000 homes are expected to be built on greenfield land by 2035. Kingswells lies within the perimeters of the SGA and is therefore well placed to contribute to these housing requirements. The Proposed ALDP currently allocates 20,422 dwellings to be developed on greenfield sites, falling some 578 units short of the SDP target. Further residential allocations at Balgownie Home Farm and Peterculter included in the Proposed ALDP will not fully address this deficit. It is therefore necessary that additional land for housing is identified to ensure that an effective 5 year supply is maintained, in line with the requirements of SPP.

This shortfall in greenfield housing allocations is likely to be compounded by the fact that the population of the North East region is projected to rise to around 570,000 by 2035, significantly in excess of the figure of 500,000 upon which the SDP housing allowances have been based. This will inevitably result in a shortfall in housing supply over the next 20 years, requiring additional sites to be identified to alleviate this problem.

Furthermore, the Proposed ALDP continues to place undue emphasis on large scale areas, allocated under the Council's land release policy to deliver strategic housing requirements. Delivery at several of these sites, including Greenferns, Grandholme and Loirston continue to be delayed due to various constraints, with development upon effective land, such as at Gillahill, deemed a suitable alternative in contributing to achieving housing requirements. Doing so would ensure the alignment of the 2016 ALDP with SPP by allocating land which can become effective and deliver residential development within a 5 year period. The site at Gillahill is effective and capable of delivery within the short term. This fact has been previously acknowledged and accepted by the Council since 1991 through the identification of these lands as an area of logical expansion for Kingswells by several Local Plans. In compliance with the SDP, the site is highly accessible and will contribute to the creation of sustainable mixed communities and the appropriate growth of the settlement.

Gillahill is well served by the no. 11 and X40 bus First Bus services, linking Kingswells to Aberdeen City centre and therefore offers alternative modes of travel to that of the private car. Future road improvements associated with the implementation of the AWPR will enable further links to Dyce to the north as well as Portlethen to the south, enabling travel outwith Aberdeen City. Strong pedestrian and cycle linkages with the wider settlement and employment land at Prime Four, as well as its associated Park & Ride facility, will serve to reduce reliance on the private car and commuting frequency. Allocation of Gillahill for residential development will ensure that sufficient housing land is identified proportional to proposed employment land.

This will contribute to the sustainable development of Kingswells and enable population growth in the region, in accordance with the objectives of the SDP.

Proposed ALDP

The Main Issues Report recognised the numerous positive attributes of the site at Gillahill, referring to its proximity to local services, transport links and areas of employment. Concerns over education provision are negated by the inclusion of a new primary school within the masterplanned area. The examining Reporter into the extant ALDP acknowledged the site as being deliverable, but was excluded due to a lack of justification for an increase in housing land. Material differences now exist relative to Kingswells in this context. The delay in delivering upon large land allocations across Aberdeen City is evident, with the Proposed ALDP falling almost 600 units short in identifying 21,000 dwellings on greenfield land by 2035. This, when taken in the context of the rising population of the region, will further exacerbate the inevitable lack of supply expected to materialise over the ALDP 2016 period, in conflict with SPP.

Recommendations

Based on the forgoing, Stewart Milne Homes wish to see the current zoning of land at Gillahill for Green Belt (NE2) removed and replaced with an allocation for 600 dwellings and a primary school. Table 5 of the Proposed ALDP should be modified accordingly to reflect this. There exists firm justification for the removal of the area of land at Gillahill as green belt as this has failed in its role to guide development to the most appropriate location.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Development Bid June 2013

Appendix 2 – Representation to Main Issues Report March 2014

Appendix 3 - Transport Appraisal May 2015



STEWART MILNE HOMES

**DEVELOPMENT BID FOR LAND AT
KINGSWELLS**

JUNE 2013

**Ryden LLP
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1YL
Tel: 01224 588866
Fax: 01224 589669**

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Planning History**
- 3.0 Description of Site and Proposals**
- 4.0 National Planning Policies**
- 5.0 Structure Plan**
- 6.0 Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic
Development Plan (February 2013)**
- 7.0 Services**
- 8.0 Justification**
- 9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Figures

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan

Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan

Figure 5: SEPA Flood Risk Map

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes who have an interest in land, covering around 133 hectares (330 acres) in Kingswells.

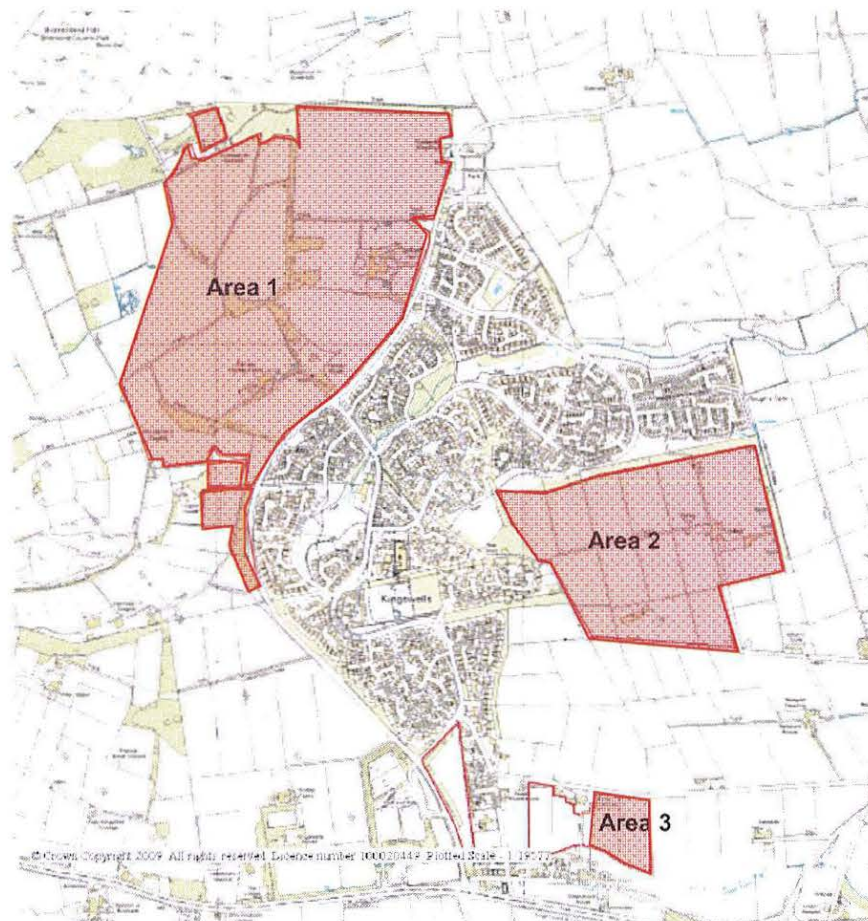


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

1.2 The Stewart Milne Group was founded in Aberdeen in 1975. Since then it has grown to become one of the UK's leading privately owned house builders. They have a commitment to enterprise and innovation matched with traditional value for quality services. The Stewart Milne Group are currently building homes across the North East of Scotland, Tayside, the Central Belt of Scotland and North West England.

- 1.3 Kingswells is a planned village within the boundary of the City of Aberdeen, which lies four miles west of Aberdeen City Centre on the A944, an arterial route into the city. It has a population of approximately 5,181 residents.
- 1.4 Planning permission was first granted for residential and ancillary development in Kingswells in 1983. The village at that time comprised a church, public hall, former school building and public house. Construction commenced in the late 1980s.
- 1.5 The first phase of development in the village was completed in 1995 and included the provision of shops, a community centre and a primary school in the centre of the village. Additional shops, a health centre, dentist, nursing home and veterinary practice were developed as the village expanded. Included in Phase 1 of the development was a western distributor road leading north from a roundabout junction on the A944 towards Newhills.
- 1.6 The settlement then extended to the north-east. A further section of the western bypass was upgraded to allow access to this phase. This expansion enjoys good vehicular and pedestrian links to the village centre and also connects to the wider footpath network. Provision was made for open space, play areas and all weather facilities.
- 1.7 Kingswells has continued to attract significant investment from both residential and commercial property developers. Barratt Homes' 'Willowburn' development comprised 35 new family homes. Stewart Milne Homes have also invested heavily in the area with their West 1, Kingswood Drive, Huxterstone and Den View developments providing a range of house types that add to the established mix of housing to create a vibrant and sustainable community. In addition to these, Drum Property Group's Prime Four development has attracted significant interest from major global energy firms. The first phase of their development is currently under construction and has secured pre-lets by Apache, Nexen and Transocean. Phase 2 is currently the subject of a detailed planning application and already has attracted

occupiers such as Premier Oil and leading hotelier The De Vere Group to create a 150 bedroom "Village Urban Resort" with associated spa, conference, retail and leisure facilities. This level of developer interest demonstrates the success of Kingswells as an investment location, a place where people want to live, work and visit.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 At the request of Aberdeen City Council a development bid was submitted in March 2009 for the expansion of Kingswells which identified that the sites, comprising approximately 139 hectares were suitable for development.
- 2.2 Following the publication of the Main Issues Report (MIR) the sites proposed were identified as site reference 3/05 with the western section of Huxterstone identified as 3/06. Specifically the area proposed by the development bid for expansion had been listed as sites: A - North West of Kingswells (Derbeth), B - Gillahill, C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone), and D - Fairley Road. The MIR identified sites: B - Gillahill, the western section of C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone) and D - Fairley Road as preferred options for development. Site A - North West of Kingswells (Derbeth) was not identified as a preferred option development. Representations were submitted in response to the publication of the MIR supporting the identification of the sites as preferred options for development; highlighting that Site A - Land to the North West of Kingswells was suitable to accommodate growth and accordingly requesting that it be allocated within the proposed Local Development Plan (LDP); and seeking the inclusion of the entire site at Huxterstone for development.
- 2.3 The proposed LDP was published for consultation in August 2010 however, only identified sites D - Fairley Road and the western part of C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone) for development. Due to school capacity figures the Council

considered that the site at Gillahill was undeliverable and failed to carry it forward for development.

- 2.4 Development proposals at Huxterstone and Fairley Road were discussed under Issue 30 of the reporter's recommendations. The Reporter considered that the principle of development on both sites had been established as they had both previously been allocated as Strategic Housing Land Reserve in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008). Consequently the Reporter recommended that the sites be allocated for development. However the allocation at Huxterstone was made as per its allocation in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008) and was not extended to the east as per the development bid. This development bid seeks to extend the allocation at Huxterstone to that shown above in Figure 1 (Area 3).
- 2.5 Development proposals at Gillahill and Derbeth were discussed in Issue 35 of the Reporter's recommendations. In discussing development at Gillahill, the Reporter acknowledged that the site is readily deliverable and would contribute to the housing land supply and may also accommodate a new primary school however, did not consider there to be numerical justification with regards to the housing land supply to allocate further housing sites. Consequently the Reporter found the site's green belt status to be justified.
- 2.6 The Reporter concluded that similar benefits could be secured through the development for housing of land at Derbeth, noting that the development of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) would secure good road access to the area. However, given that the review of the green belt included this area the reporter did not consider there to be over-riding benefits to justify allocation at that time.
- 2.7 This development bid now seeks the development of land at Derbeth for a mixed use development of 900 dwellings; land at Gillahill for the development of 600 dwellings and a primary school; and land at Huxterstone for the development of 60

dwellings as an extension to allocated site OP42. Indicative masterplans for the sites are shown below.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

3.1 This development bid relates to three distinct areas in Kingswells as highlighted in Figure 1 above. The total land covers over 137 hectares (340 acres).

3.2 Area 1: Derbeth lies to the north west of Kingswells and extends to approximately 89.5 hectares (221 acres). It is bound to the north by a shelter belt and pockets of woodland; to the east by open fields; to the south by fields, an access track and some residential dwellings; and to the east by the Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944. Within this area lie a number of properties, including Fairley House, Fairley Home Farm and Derbeth Farm. The AWPR runs through this area of land with a junction proposed to the north east corner. This is due for completion in 2018.

3.3 In topographic terms, the land is undulating, but generally slopes from north west to south east and from north to south. To the south, the land is level before rising from south to north outwith the boundaries of the site. The aspect of the site is south and south east. There are a wide range of landscaped areas, comprising mature trees and drystone dykes throughout the site. From the A944 this land is screened by the topography of the land to the south, Prime Four Business Park and by the Park and Ride site. It becomes more visible as you travel along the distributor road, however good screening exists along parts of this road where there is mature landscaping. The urbanising effect of the development at Prime Four Business Park should be stressed at this point. The construction of tall units with large footprints alters the landscape character of Kingswells significantly, changing the surrounding area from the village/suburb it was, into a global energy hub accommodating international energy companies and other prestigious brands, such as the De Vere Group. The effect on the character of the area is dramatic and

redraws the settlement boundaries of Kingswells in a way that softens the impact of development on the bid sites, as they are seen in this changing urban context.

3.4 Within the extant LDP, this land is mainly identified as green belt, with small pockets to the north west and south identified as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

3.5 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

3.6 Area Two: Gillahill lies to the east of Kingswells and extends to approximately 39.5 hectares (97.6 acres). It is bound to the north and east by a mature tree belt and beyond this, existing dwellinghouses; to the south by open fields; and to the west by further woodland and built development. To the south also lies a farm track.

3.7 In topographic terms the site rises from north to south to a plateau within the site before rising again to a high point between the site and the Lang Stracht. A number of drystane dykes create a distinctive pattern of field boundaries. Within the extant Plan, this site is identified as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

3.8 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan

3.9 Area Three: Huxterstone lies to the south of Kingswells and extends to approximately 4.7 hectares (10.3 acres). It is bound to the north by an unclassified road which leads to the Lang Stracht to the east. This road is part of the Park and Ride bus route. Along this access road immediately adjacent to the bid site lies a cluster of dwellinghouses. To the east, the site is bound by open fields; to the south by a burn and existing development comprising dwelling houses, a public house

and garage along Old Skene Road; and, to the west by OP42 Huxterstone which was allocated for development in the adopted LDP. Following completion of OP42 the site will be bound to the west by development. Work is due to commence on Site OP42 in Autumn 2013

- 3.10 The site is relatively low lying and the land slopes from north to south, with a high point beyond the boundary of the site to the north beyond the cluster of dwellinghouses. There is also a ridge running north south to the west of the site. The land slopes west to east. The land reaches a low point around the line of the Den Burn to the south. The aspect of the site is south facing.
- 3.11 The site is identified within the extant LDP as lying within an area designated as Green Belt and Green Space Network. Development of this site would be seen as an extension of allocated site OP42 Huxterstone which lies to the west.
- 3.12 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 4.1 Paragraph 3 of SPP explains that the purpose of planning is to guide the future development and use of land. It states that *'planning is about where development should happen, where it should not and how it interacts with its surroundings'*. Paragraph 5 goes on to advise that the Scottish Government believe in the value of forward-looking, visionary and ambitious plans that will guide development. Development plans are discussed in paragraphs 10 – 21 of SPP which explains that their purpose is to *'guide the future use of land and the appearance of cities, towns and rural areas. They should indicate where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not.'* In monitoring development plans SPP directs local authorities to *'focus on what has changed for example the extent to which key assumptions remain valid, whether land allocations have provided viable and investment in infrastructure has been forthcoming. Monitoring should set the direction for the future review of the plan.'*
- 4.2 The Scottish Government are committed to sustainable development, paragraph 37 of SPP explains the important role the planning system has to play in supporting the achievement of sustainable development through its influence on the location, layout and design of new development. In deciding the locations of new development SPP directs local authorities to:
- Promote regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land,
 - Reduce the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel and transport opportunities,
 - Promote the development of mixed communities,
 - Take account of the capacity of existing infrastructure,
 - Promote rural development and regeneration, and
 - Prevent further development which would be at risk from flooding or coastal erosion.

- 4.3 Paragraph 40 explains that the *'settlement strategy set out in the development plan should promote a more sustainable pattern of growth for an area, taking account of the scale and type of development pressure and the need for growth and regeneration'*.
- 4.4 In discussing the delivery of new housing SPP states that *'the delivery of housing through the development plan to support the creation of sustainable mixed communities depends on a generous supply of appropriate and effective sites being made to meet the demand, and on the timely release of allocated sites'* (Paragraph 70). SPP goes on to explain that *'allocating a generous supply of land for housing in the development plan will give the flexibility necessary for the continued delivery of new housing even if unpredictable changes to the effective land supply occur during the lifetime of the plan'* (paragraph 71).
- 4.5 To support sustainable development SPP states that planning permission should not be granted for significant travel generating uses in locations which would encourage the private car and where access to public transport would involve walking more than 400m.
- 4.6 Green belts are discussed in paragraphs 159 - 170 of SPP which states that their purpose is to:
- direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration,
 - protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities, and
 - protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities.
- 4.7 SPP states that *'green belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable locations, not to prevent development from happening'* (paragraph 159).

Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport

- 4.8 Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport accompanies SPP. It states that planning authorities should establish accessibility profiles for sites. The profile should reflect the catchment areas served likely quality of service and result in indicators of accessibility. A maximum threshold of 1600 metres in terms of accessibility to local services by walking and cycling should be achieved for new developments.

5.0 STRUCTURE PLAN

- 5.1 The Structure Plan (2009) identifies a requirement for around 72,000 dwellings within the Structure Plan area over the next 20-25 years. Three Strategic Growth Areas (SGA's) are identified which will be the main focus for development and are expected to accommodate 75-80% of growth over the next 20 years and more. Around half of new development will be located within Aberdeen City, with significant development expected in the Aberdeen to Huntly SGA, Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA and the Aberdeen to Peterhead SGA.
- 5.2 The Structure Plan states that around half of the growth proposed will be located within Aberdeen City. The Plan states that within Aberdeen City 21,000 new homes should be built on greenfield sites in the period 2007 - 2030.
- 5.3 The Structure Plan also advocates sustainable mixed communities and seeks to achieve new development that meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.

6.0 PROPOSED ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FEBRUARY 2013)

- 6.1 Consultation into the proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) closed on 12th April 2013. Once adopted it will replace the approved Structure Plan. Accordingly it forms a material consideration in the determination of this development bid.
- 6.2 The proposed SDP carries forward the extant Structure Plan's vision for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. In doing so it also carries forward the aims and objectives of the extant plan.
- 6.3 The proposed SDP again identifies three SGA's. Aberdeen city is identified as accommodating around half of the growth proposed within the city region. Figure 1 of the proposed SDP states that 9,000 new homes should be build on greenfield sites in the City over the period 2017 - 2035.
- 6.4 As the proposed SDP has not identified any increase in allocation in terms of residential and employment land, it is the subject of objection from the development industry. Should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a reporter be minded to increase allocations made within the Strategic Development Plan, the LDP will fall short of meeting housing and employment land requirements.
- 6.5 In addition to this shortfall, there are significant concerns from the development industry that the 5 year housing land supply is not being maintained. Some sites which make up this supply are not effective, as defined by the Scottish Government¹. The 2013 Housing Land Audit clearly demonstrates the constraints facing some sites that make up the housing land supply, such as Greenferns, Greenferns Landward and Grandholme. If sites such as these fail to deliver as originally anticipated, the City Council will be required to identify new sites that are effective in order to make up the shortfall.

¹ Circular 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits

7.0 SERVICES

7.1 Drainage capacity is available through connections to the wider network although upgrades may be required. Extensions would be required and investigated as the planning process evolves.

7.2 SEPA's Flood Risk map, as shown in Figure 5 below highlights that there is no flood risk associated with any of the areas of land under consideration.

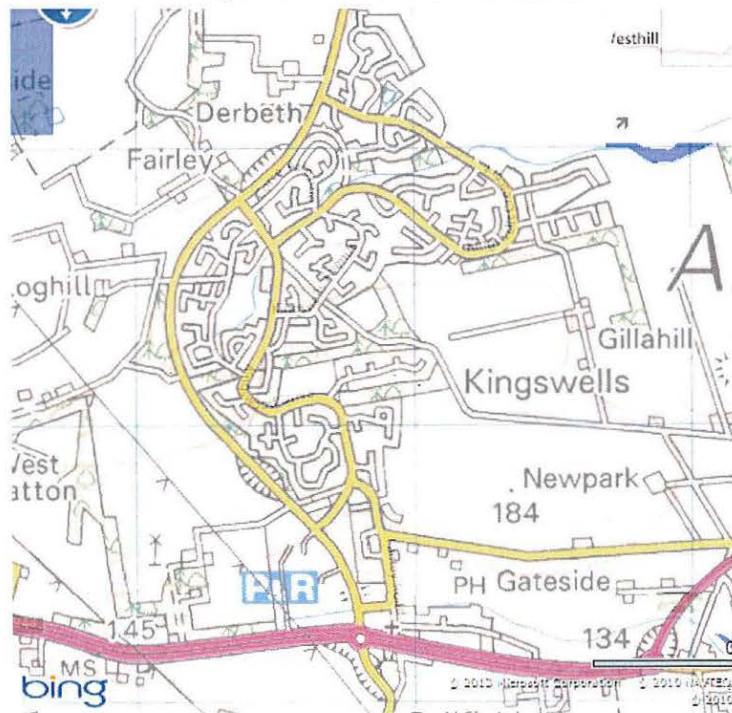


Figure 5: SEPA Flood Map

7.3 Kingswells lies in the catchment area for Bucksburn Academy which has an increasing school roll. However, pupils in Kingswells will be rezoned to the new Countesswells Academy in due course. Primary school provision for the Kingswells area is located at Kingswells Primary School which is currently operating above capacity however is forecast to fall to below capacity in 2018². The development at Gillahill proposes the development of a new primary school which would alleviate

² 2012-Based School Roll Forecasts, Aberdeen City

any school capacity issues. It is likely that should the sites be allocated and an application be submitted financial contributions would be sought by Aberdeen City Council to go towards education provision. As such, the development would not have a detrimental impact on the capacity of the local primary and secondary school.

8.0 JUSTIFICATION

- 8.1 It is considered that Kingswells is capable of accommodating further development. Kingswells not only lies in the Aberdeen City Strategic Growth Area, but it is well related to the city centre, being only four miles from it. It benefits from good links to the surrounding area and can therefore be accessed conveniently by a variety of transport modes.
- 8.2 As discussed in paragraph 6.1, consultation into the proposed SDP closed on 12th April 2013; as no increase to employment and residential allocations are proposed objections have been submitted by the development industry. These objections seek an increase in employment and residential allocations in keeping with the population projections. Should the Strategic Development Authority or reporter be minded to increase allocations there will be insufficient housing and employment land allocations within the LDP. As directed by SPP the review of the LDP should be ambitious and visionary, in doing so it should identify new greenfield allocations. As such, new allocations are required to meet the inevitable shortfall in housing land supply. Sites such as those proposed at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone, that can deliver development in the short term and continue to provide housing for local needs should be identified within the review of the LDP for development within the period 2017 - 2035. Doing so would ensure that the review of the LDP maintains an adequate housing land supply. The review of the LDP should also be an opportunity to review the effectiveness of existing allocations to ensure the 5 year housing land supply is being maintained. Simply rolling forward allocations that

have shown a persistent ineffectiveness, such as those at Greenferns and Grandholme, will only serve to create artificial bottlenecks in the supply of new housing land. These large allocations absorb large portions of the housing demand and yet are not delivering these houses on the ground. The review of the LDP should also include a review of these allocations and, if they shown to be ineffective, then new allocations should be brought forward to ensure the homes required in the area are provided for by the planning system.

- 8.3 Further development in Kingswells is justified. Following the completion of OP42 in 2017 there will be no new sites within Kingswells for development. Given the development of employment land at OP40 (50ha) is the largest employment land release within in the extant LDP it is logical to identify further land releases within Kingswells to provide housing in proximity to employment and to maximise on investment made in infrastructure. In addition to this the development of further housing in Kingswells in proximity to this employment land would encourage sustainable living and contribute to creating a sustainable community; in doing so it will encourage businesses to locate to the business park being developed at OP40, in keeping with the objectives of both the extant Structure Plan and the proposed SDP which aim to make the region a more attractive location for businesses to move to.

Area One: Derbeth

- 8.4 In the first instance, there is strong justification for the removal of this land from the green belt. As recognised by SPP the objective of green belt policy is to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations. This location is considered appropriate for development due to its proximity to the AWPR. A junction is proposed to the north east of the site, therefore opening up this area for further development. Although this land extends to just less than 90 hectares, the majority of this land lies to the west of the AWPR and will remain free from development. Any development will be located to the east of the AWPR and covers approximately 35 hectares. This amounts to less than 40% of the total landholding in this area.

The AWPR will provide a defensible boundary to the green belt with development contained between the AWPR and the existing settlement boundary.

- 8.5 As directed by SPP green belt policy also aims to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. The development of the AWPR at this location will significantly affect the character, landscape setting and identity of this area. The land between the AWPR and the existing distributor road will therefore become a suitable and sustainable location for further development. The indicative masterplan shown in Figure 2 demonstrates that the development will create sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development. This will create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and provide a new landscape and identity for Kingswells. Further landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a formal masterplan for the site.
- 8.6 Access opportunities to the wider countryside will be affected by the development of the AWPR at this location. The land identified for development to the east of the proposed AWPR would not provide attractive land for access and recreational opportunities and its contribution to the aims of the green belt would be diminished. It is therefore an ideal location for development. As shown on the indicative masterplan in Figure 2 landscaping and open space proposed as part of this development will provide a network of meaningful open space providing access and recreation opportunities for the local community within a wider development network.
- 8.7 During consultation into the current LDP Aberdeen City Council previously raised concerns relating to landscape and visual impact of development and its detachment from the existing community; despite acknowledging during their analysis of the site that it did not conflict with existing surrounding uses.

- 8.8 As recognised above, the AWPR will permanently alter the landscape of the area and any impacts arising on the sensitive landscapes to the north and west, particularly Brimmond Hill are likely to arise as a direct result of the AWPR rather than any development at Derbeth. Development at Derbeth will infill the area between the existing settlement and the proposed AWPR. Importantly however, specific areas of the site which are considered sensitive to development will be kept free of development. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the site was previously undertaken which confirmed that the proposed development should be located to the lower areas with any development on higher ground to be orientated away from the most sensitive landscape and visual receptors in the area, particularly Brimmond Hill. It considered that the AWPR, which lies to the west of the proposed development mainly on higher ground, will, with its associated landscaping, form a vegetated back drop to the development when viewed from Kingswells. In addition, the AWPR landscape will form a linear feature between the proposed development and Brimmond Hill.
- 8.9 Previous criticism that the site will be detached from the existing Kingswells village is refuted. Like development at OP40, it lies to the west of the existing bypass, but traffic using this route following completion of the AWPR will be significantly reduced thereby enabling formation of new junctions serving the existing and proposed developments and enhanced pedestrian and cycle linkages between the two. There are already footpath networks connecting through the proposed development site. These will be safeguarded and enhanced with the proposed development. Indeed, the development proposed at Derbeth provides an opportunity to improve the connectivity between the existing village and the countryside area lying beyond the AWPR, particularly Brimmond Hill.
- 8.10 Integration with the existing community can be achieved through the physical design of the development. The range of uses proposed for the site will also encourage integration with the provision of employment opportunities for the wider community and the facilities and services provided as part of the development

being available and accessible to all Kingswells residents. New developments in Kingswells, such as Prime Four, are also easily integrated with the bid site and indeed help integrate the bid site with the wider community thereby ensuring the settlement expands in the most organic and sustainable way.

- 8.11 The AWPR represents a significant investment in the north east of Scotland and many of the development sites identified in the LDP are predicated upon completion of that route. Kingswells will enjoy a high level of connectivity with the route through the grade separated junction proposed to the west on the A944 and also the half diamond grade separated junction proposed to the north. A strategy promoting the long term growth of Kingswells would therefore make maximum use of that investment by utilising the spare capacity created on the network. As directed by SPP new developments should be located in such areas where they can maximise opportunities to take advantage of investment made in infrastructure.
- 8.12 Kingswells is also well served by public transport, both through a town service and a park and ride service. On completion of Prime Four and the AWPR public transport services are likely to be enhanced, particularly services connecting key communities and employment locations on the periphery of the city. Derbeth is capable of being connected to that network to ensure that all residential development lies within 400 metres of a bus route as required by SPP.

Area Two: Gillahill

- 8.13 In 1991 the adopted Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan designated the site as falling within a GB2 "Countryside Around Towns" area. These areas were identified to accommodate the future development requirements of the city because of the limited contribution made to the landscape setting of the city. The most recent expansion of Kingswells was drawn entirely from areas of 'Countryside Around Towns' as defined in that Plan thereby setting a precedent for development in these areas.

- 8.14 In the period between then and the adoption of the LDP, Aberdeen City Council made various attempts to replace the 1991 Local Plan. A finalised version of the Aberdeen City Local Plan, published in September 1999 in conformity with the now superseded Grampian Structure Plan identified the site as an area of 'Strategic Reserve'. Similar to the Countryside Around Towns designation these areas were specifically identified as land that may be required in the longer term for development. That plan never progressed to adoption following the preparation and approval of the Aberdeen Structure Plan (NEST) 2001-2016.
- 8.15 To conform to the extant Structure Plan a modified finalised Local Plan was published in August 2002. In that plan the site at Gillahill, along with all the land lying in the Kingswells, Newhills corridor reverted to Green Belt. This was despite the Council's own Aberdeen Green Belt Review recommending that the site be removed from the Green Belt. This plan was also subsequently abandoned by the Council.
- 8.16 In August 2004 Aberdeen City Council published the finalised Aberdeen Local Plan, Green Spaces – New Places. This Plan identified the northern part of the Gillahill site for residential development in the period 2000-2010. The southern part of the site was identified as a future new community capable of accommodating 230 houses post-2010. The stated intention for the development of the site was to create a more sustainable community, which was capable of supporting its own community facilities and employment area.
- 8.17 The northern part of the Gillahill site was initially identified to accommodate 200 units. That was subsequently reduced to 170 units as a consequence of the limited capacity at Kingswells Primary School. Following public consultation on the finalised Plan, planning officers recommended that the entire site be re-designated as a future new community suitable for development post-2010. Following a Public Inquiry into the plan the site was excluded from the adopted Plan and the land identified as falling within the Green Belt and Green Space Network.

- 8.18 Land at Gillahill was subsequently identified as being suitable for development during the consultation into the LDP where the MIR identified it as a preferred option for development. It was not carried forward for development due to school capacity concerns. It is clear from the consultation into the extant LDP that the only impediment envisaged by the Council to the development of the land at Gillahill is the capacity of the existing primary school. The Council's previous assessment of the site and its inclusion in the MIR as a preferred site, suggests that in every other respect they consider the site capable of development. This reflects their longstanding view on the development potential of the land at Gillahill.
- 8.19 The key issue which has repeatedly been a stumbling block to the development of the land at Gillahill is the capacity of the existing primary school. During the consultation into the extant LDP TPS Planning were appointed to undertake an Education Impact Analysis of development at Gillahill. The analysis assessed achievable ways for accommodating the primary pupil product arising from the Gillahill development in line with the development economics of the site, including the prospect of changing school catchment areas and/or changing the existing primary school provision in the area. The report concludes that a new single stream primary school should be accommodated on the development site. Managed with the existing primary school this would ensure that the pupil product of the Gillahill site and the residual/overflow from the existing school could be accommodated in the proposed school at Gillahill. The scale of development necessary to provide a primary school would dictate the capacity of the Gillahill site to be 600 units. The site can accommodate this whilst reflecting the design policies of Aberdeen City Council.
- 8.20 A Transportation Appraisal was previously undertaken to inform the LDP which confirmed that the site is capable of being satisfactorily accessed and served by public transport. It demonstrated that the entire development of up to 600 houses can be accommodated in advance of the AWPR. It identified that some mitigation

would be required on the local road network, particularly the junction of the Kingswells bypass with the A944. All of these works, however, were capable of being carried out within the confines of the currently adopted road and indeed have now been undertaken as part of the Prime Four development.

- 8.21 The inclusion of the Gillahill site for development during the period 2017 - 2035 would ensure that there is sufficient land allocations should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a Reporter be minded to increase allocations proposed by the SDP. Should this happen the Review of the LDP, without any new greenfield allocations, would fall short in delivering new land for housing. New sites also require to be identified to address the emerging shortfall in the housing land supply as a consequence of a number of larger sites failing to come forward within the timescales anticipated.
- 8.22 The site at Gillahill lies immediately adjacent to the existing community and is ideally placed to maximise on current investment in infrastructure being made at Kingswells. Furthermore it is well placed in proximity to development at OP40 to take advantage of employment opportunities available thus contributing to creating a sustainable community.
- 8.23 The land is currently in agricultural use for grazing purposes. There are no landscape or visual impact issues constraining the development of the site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the site was previously undertaken to inform consultation into the extant LDP it concluded that the landscape and visual impact of the development is medium which can be mitigated by the implementation of strategic landscaping.
- 8.24 In terms of the Green Space Network designation of the site, current policy aims to protect and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of these areas. It was the intention of the Council to identify the most important wildlife and recreation sites as Green Space Network. At present the site does not meet the

objectives of the Green Space Network as it does not add value to the provision, protection, and enhancement of open space and habitats nor does it enable connectivity of open space or habitat. As such it is evident that this land is not particularly important in these terms as it would not have been identified for development in previous plans if it was. Despite this the indicative masterplan shown in Figure 3 safeguards and enhances this area creating footpath connections between the site, the community and areas of open space within the site.

- 8.25 Mature tree belts existing to the north and east will contain development and soften the appearance of the development. The woodland shelter belt to the north will partially screen development from close and distant views whilst the woodland to the west will act as a backdrop to development. The landscape framework is defined by the distinctive pattern of field boundaries formed by drystone dykes and these will be incorporated into the layout and design of the development to create a distinctive residential environment.
- 8.26 Linked footpaths and a network of open space through the site is important and where possible will utilise historic routes defined by drystone dykes. This will be further enhanced by landscaping. Development would maintain the cohesion of Kingswells with minimal impact on the setting of the city.
- 8.27 In locational terms the site forms a natural expansion of the existing settlement set within a mature landscape framework. It lies close to, and would enjoy good pedestrian links with the centre of the village where a range of services can be found. Public transport services currently lie along Kingswells Crescent which lies within 400 metres of the site in line with SPP.
- 8.28 A number of supporting studies have previously been prepared for this land, including drainage and transportation assessments and an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts. These confirm that there are no traffic, infrastructure

or landscaping issues which cannot be adequately addressed. Therefore, it is argued that the potential of this site to accommodate development has been recognised by the Council since 1991. Given this acknowledgement, it should continue to be allocated for development through the Review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

8.29 SPP states that the aim of green belt policy is to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. Landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a masterplan for the site and will provide sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development to create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and form a defensible boundary to the settlement.

8.30 As recognised by SPP the other objectives of a green belt are to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations; and protect and give access to open space. At present the site at Gillahill does not meet the objectives of green belt policy. It does not direct growth to the most appropriate location and it does not provide access or protect areas of open space. As demonstrated by the indicative masterplan in Figure 4 development of the site will enable areas of open space to be created which will be accessible for all of the community to use. Furthermore it enables development to occur in a location which is in proximity to both the existing settlement and services within the settlement; accordingly it is an ideal location for development. As such the site should be removed from the green belt and allocated for development in the Review of the LDP.

8.31 As recognised by the Reporter during the examination into the extant LDP a number of benefits would accrue as a result of this development including a new primary school. Consequently it should be removed from the green belt and allocated for the development of 600 units of housing and a new primary school.

Area Three: Huxterstone

- 8.32 The suitability of land at Huxterstone for development is established and it is considered that land to the east of the existing allocation (OP42) should be allocated as an extension of OP42. As previously outlined the site is bound to the north by an unclassified road which leads to the Lang Stracht (the A944) to the east. Along this access road, immediately adjacent to the site, lies a cluster of dwellinghouses. The Den Burn runs along the southern section of site, alongside an area of rough grass and a line of trees which separate the site from an area of existing development beyond, including a public house and garage along Old Skene Road. To the west, the site is bound by OP42 and to the east, the site is bound by open fields.
- 8.33 With regards to the accessibility of the site and its proximity to the local services available in Kingswells; the site is well related to the existing built up area and is situated in close proximity to the local road and transport network as well as the local shop and services available along Kingswood Drive. The local services, which include a primary school, medical practice and local shop, are easily accessible from the site within a walking distance of approximately 1400 metres, within the 1600 metre threshold set by PAN 75, in terms of access to services by walking and cycling. The local bus network is also accessible on foot, with a number of bus stops available along Fairley Road and the Kingswells Park and Ride is also within walking distance of the site. This encourages sustainable travel in line with SPP. A number of First Bus services also operate along the bus-only section of the Lang Stracht directly to the north of the site, connecting Kingswells to Aberdeen City and the Bridge of Don Park and Ride.
- 8.34 As discussed above, the site is well related to the existing built up area, with existing development to the north and south of the site. It is therefore an ideal location for further residential development in Kingswells. It is acknowledged, however, that development in this area should respect the surrounding landscape and endeavour to protect the public views of Kingswells from the east. Taking this into consideration, it is proposed to incorporate areas of landscaping and open

space, including a shelter belt along the eastern boundary of the site. This will screen the proposed development from the south and east and also provide an attractive residential environment for future residents. An extension to the riverside walk along the Den Burn to the south of the site is also proposed, with further walkways provided to promote pedestrian movement through the site and to enhance connections to the Core Path Network and the wider Kingswells area. It should be noted that the site also benefits from a south facing aspect, with the land rising in a northerly direction. Consequently, any development on the site would be well contained and will not breach the skyline.

8.35 During the consultation into the LDP concerns were noted that land to the east of OP42 residential use would develop too far to the east of Kingswells. This is disputed. The proposed site is well related to the existing built up area, with existing development to the north and south of the site. Following completion of OP42 the site will be bound on three sides by development. It is acknowledged that development in this area should respect the surrounding landscape and endeavour to protect the public views of Kingswells from the east; and it is therefore proposed to incorporate areas of landscaping and open space, including a shelter belt along the eastern boundary of the site. This will screen the proposed development from the south and east and also provide an attractive residential environment for future residents. A continuation of the riverside walk along the Den Burn to the south of the site is also proposed to be extended, with further walkways provided to promote pedestrian movement through the site and to enhance connections to the Core Path network, land to the west and the wider Kingswells area. The proposed boundary of the site also ensures adequate land is retained between the site and other proposed developments to the east of Kingswells, so as to mitigate any issues of coalescence.

8.36 To enable development the site should be removed from the green belt. SPP stated that *'green belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable*

locations, not prevent development from happening'. At present the designation is preventing development from happening in this location which is considered to be a suitable location to accommodate further growth in Kingswells. As such, the green belt designation is not contributing to the settlement strategy for the area. Removal of the site from the green belt will allow for an extension of OP42 and in doing so create a number of benefits.

9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

- 9.1 In conclusion Kingswells is an appropriate area for further expansion. It enjoys good links with the surrounding area, including Dyce, Westhill and Aberdeen. Its close proximity to Aberdeen makes it an ideal location to absorb development pressure. Furthermore as noted above it is the location for one of the largest employment land releases within the extant Plan at OP40 and further development would support this and maximise on investments made.
- 9.2 As discussed above objections have been submitted in response to the proposed SDP in response to its failure to increase employment and housing land allocations. Should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a reporter be minded to increase allocations the review of the LDP will have insufficient allocations to meet the requirements. Allocation of land at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone for development will ensure that the review of the LDP does not fall short in delivering further land for development. It will also ensure that development in Kingswells continues past 2017 thereby enabling a sustainable community to be delivered.
- 9.3 On completion of the AWPR Derbeth will become infill land. It will be contained by the road to the west and the existing settlement to the east and the proposed junction to the north east will provide convenient access to the area opening up both development potential and the site for the local community should it be developed.

- 9.4 Gillahill has been recognised by various Local Plans as a suitable location for further development, only failing to receive favourable allocations at proposed plan stage due to concerns regarding primary school capacity. As discussed above a primary school is proposed on site which would alleviate any concerns regarding primary school capacity issues. This is a significant benefit if the proposal.
- 9.5 An extension at OP42 Huxterstone is also justified. Following completion of development at OP42 the site will be bound on three sides by development thus forming a logical area for expansion with sufficient distance between it and development to east to avoid coalescence.
- 9.6 To enable the development of the above sites their green belt designations should be removed. All three sites are well connected to Kingswells, and as development would be of a high standard resulting in a number of benefits, including a new primary school, areas of open space, extension to country park and river side walk, the loss of this land from the greenbelt would not be detrimental to the character and amenity of the settlement.
- 9.7 A number of benefits would accrue as a consequence of development at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone. This with the likelihood that the Review of the LDP will fall short in meeting housing land supply requirements should allocations be increased in the proposed SDP, justifies the removal of these sites from the green belt. It is therefore respectfully requested that sites at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone are identified for development in the Review of the LDP.

PAPER APART

Representation to Aberdeen City Council on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in Response to the failure of the Main Issues Report to identify Area 2 (Gillahill) of Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion as a Preferred Site for Residential Use

Introduction & Background

Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of Aberdeen City Council to recognise land at Gillahill (Area 2 of Development Option B0303) as an opportunity site for residential use and associated primary school within the Main Issues Report published in January 2014. This objection requires to be considered in conjunction with the accompanying objection made by Stewart Milne Homes submitted in respect to Issue 1 of the MIR pertaining to Greenfield Housing Allocations.

This Development Bid was submitted to the local authority in June 2013 as per the Council's request for Development Option sites. The area at Gillahill was part of a combined bid alongside two other sites at Derbeth and Huxterstone, all of which were subsequently deemed as undesirable through the technical response issued within the Development Options Assessment Report published as a supplementary document to the Main Issues Report (MIR).

Pertaining to Gillahill, specified as 'Area 2' within the bid, the site was excluded by the MIR for reasons relating to proximity to Ancient Woodland which defines the western site boundary as well as the lack of primary school capacity within Kingswells. Concerns also related to the landscape fit of the proposal owing to the site's topography.

The Development Option site excluded in this instance possesses a complex history relating to its designation as an area for residential development. Originally, the site was identified by the local authority in 1991 as an area of GB2 'Countryside Around Towns', from which the existing Kingswells settlement materialised. It was subsequently designated as a 'Future New Community' by the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan of 2004 and classified as possessing the potential for development as a sustainable community in a post 2010 context.

The Main Issues Report of the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) proposed the site at Gillahill (3/05 B) for 400 homes delivered through two phases up to 2030. However, following a meeting of the Council's Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee in May 2010, the bid was formally excluded from the Proposed LDP, citing insufficient school capacity as reason for this. Currently the area falls within Green Belt (NE2), with woodland corridors on site included as Urban Green Space (NE3) and Green Space Network (NE1).

It is maintained that the site at Gillahill should be designated within the Proposed LDP as it shall provide a sustainable community that is accessible and useable for all residents of Kingswells and its surroundings. It should be noted that the bid scored 49 out of a possible 60 within the Council's Checklist criteria and therefore, clearly represents a viable site for inclusion within the Proposed LDP.

Current Land Designation

Within the extant LDP, the Gillahill site is designated as Green Belt, Urban Green Space and Green Space Network pertaining to its rural composition comprising open farmland, linear woodland features which define the site boundaries to west and east with partial coverage to the north. Within the Council's search for development land to be included in the 2012 LDP, it was stated that green belt status was justified by reason of protecting the setting of Kingswells and preventing encroachment into the countryside.

The designation of green belt land should be removed as it is not justified in the instance of the Gillahill site. Within paragraph 159 of the current SPP document, it is stated that green belt designation shall direct growth to the most appropriate locations; protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity as well as protecting and giving access to open space areas around towns and cities. The current green belt land fails to enhance of the landscape character and setting of the suburban entity in its current use. Furthermore, the green belt fails to direct growth to the most appropriate locations, which is how the Gillahill site is considered in this instance as its proposed use will provide for the increasing population of the Aberdeen City Strategic Growth Area over the course of the Proposed LDP.

It is stated within paragraph 162 of the same document, that '*inner boundaries should not be drawn too tightly around the urban edge, but where appropriate should create an area suitable for planned development between the existing settlement edge and green belt boundary... and leave room for expansion*'. In light of this it is considered that the bid site would represent an appropriate area of settlement expansion as it represents an opportunity for the opening and utilisation of the green belt through the promotion of new and interconnected path networks through retained woodland as specified within the indicative site masterplan.

These areas of defining woodland would be maintained and enhanced with additional planting consolidating the northern boundary shelterbelt. Ancient Woodland under protection from the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) will be retained. Woodland walks shall promote a strategy of connectivity throughout the site and integrate with the existing footpath network within the Kingswells settlement. The central park shall become an area which is easily accessible to residents of the Gillahill site as well as those areas to the north and northwest, which are not provided with such expansive or useable open space. This concurs with the SDP objective of providing sustainable mixed use communities, supplying a mix of housing typology inclusive of all.

It is recommended that the areas of the site included within the Urban Green Space and Green Space Network are retained as these shall be preserved, enhanced and added to by the proposed development bid option. This shall ensure an optimum supply of open and green space within a mixed use development which promotes a high quality of life for local residents.

School Capacity

As previously identified, the Gillahill site was excluded from the adopted extant Local Development Plan due to concerns over the capacity of Kingswells Primary School. A site for a new primary school has been included within the proposed masterplan in order to mitigate any capacity issues within the settlement and provide for the future residents of the Gillahill site. An independent Education Impact Analysis has been conducted and compiled by TPS assessing the likely impact of the pupil-product from the proposed school upon the existing local school estate. This document concluded that a new single stream primary school on site, managed as part of the existing school in order to cope with overflow would represent the most suitable option upon the Gillahill land, and would fully accommodate the pupil numbers accrued from the influx of new housing within the area.

Therefore, the reasoning forwarded within the Council's response stating 'School Capacity' as a reason for exclusion from the Proposed LDP is no longer accepted or justifiable as suitable provisions have since been made in order to address these concerns. This should be removed from the Council's response as this factor has been fully addressed through work commissioned by Stewart Milne Homes with the outcomes indicating the ability of a single stream primary in accommodating the likely number of pupils arising from the recommended 600 homes on site.

Further Justification

Concerns over the landscape fit of the proposal have been mitigated through basing development within the northern regions of the site upon lower elevated land and excluding the southern reaches located in a more prominent position within the landscape. Furthermore, a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment has been carried out during the consultative period into the extant LDP, concluding a landscape sensitivity of medium which could be mitigated through effective strategic landscaping as detailed within the indicative masterplan and complying with the guidelines stated within PAN65: Planning & Open Space.

Through substantial landscaping, the retention and enhancement of existing shelterbelts which define the northern and western boundaries and the expansion of the existing footpath networks and woodland walks, the Gillahill site promotes effective integration with the existing Kingswells settlement. This discourages the use of the private car as promoted by SPP and promotes pedestrian access linking to facilities within Kingswells village centre, located 800m from the centre of the Gillahill site and 400m of the nearest bus route, complying with the guidance laid out within PAN75: Planning for Transport.

Vehicular access shall be gained via a gap in the shelterbelt which forms the northern boundary. This provides links to the existing road which serves dwellings directly north of Gillahill with subsequent easy access to the distributor road to the north, the A944 to the south and the AWPR. This access route has been adjudged to be capable of accommodating increased vehicle numbers confirmed through the Transportation Appraisal carried out for the site, whilst maintaining and enhancing the

links with the existing settlement through integration with Kingswells and preventing coalescence into the countryside to the east of the site.

The provision of homes and a new primary school within the Gillahill site is considered to enhance employment opportunities within the locality as well complementing the large scale employment land at Prime Four, promoting Kingswells as a sustainable location in which to work and live. The allocation of this site for mixed use will enhance an area of currently under-utilised green belt land within an effective and functional urban entity which Kingswells should strive to become, complementing the objectives of the Proposed SDP pertaining to sustainable mixed communities and benefitting from current infrastructure within an accessible location.

Summary

It has been made clear through past designations that the Council accepts the principle of residential development upon the Gillahill site, demonstrated through the site's allocation for 400 homes identified by the MIR of the extant LDP. The reasoning issued by the Development Option Assessment accompanying the recent MIR pertaining to school capacity is no longer accepted and should be removed as it has been fully addressed through the indicative site masterplan via the provision of a new primary school which meets the current and future requirements of Kingswells, taking into account further expansion.

The development option bid forwards a site recognised by the local authority as being appropriate for development since its categorisation as GB2 'Countryside Around Towns', from which the current settlement of Kingswells has emerged, hence setting a precedent for further land release and development within the area. Gillahill promotes a more effective use of green belt land than in place at present, representing a sensitively sited and suitably integrated extension of an optimally served settlement as promoted through SPP.

A valuable contribution can be made by Gillahill to the shortfall in greenfield housing allowances depicted by the MIR and detailed within Paper Apart 1, accompanying this document. The delivery of 600 homes would ensure the provision of homes for the projected population of Aberdeen City and Shire up to the year 2035 while also maintaining an effective 5 year housing supply at all periods throughout the lifetime of the LDP. These provisions are seen to be deliverable in compliance with the 30 dwellings per hectare rate as specified within the Proposed SDP, maximising available space whilst enhancing the Strategic Growth Area of Aberdeen City.

It is ascertained through previous designations by the local authority pertaining to the Gillahill site, that the only barrier to its allocation for residential land use is the lack of school capacity, with current access, service provision, transport and landscape issues deemed acceptable to the Council. As the element of primary school provision has been fully addressed and solutions identified through an indicative masterplan, there remains no viable reason to refrain from identifying the Gillahill site for residential development.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the site's current designation within the extant LDP as Green Belt (NE2) should be removed and the area included within the Proposed LDP as an opportunity site for 600 homes and a new primary school.

Furthermore, the Gillahill site should be identified and developed within a long term framework detailing the appropriate expansion of the Kingswells settlement through appropriate service provision and infrastructure needs.

Development Bid Site at Gillahill, Kingswells

Transport Appraisal

May 2015



FAIRHURST

CONTROL SHEET



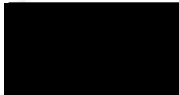
CLIENT: Stewart Milne Homes

PROJECT TITLE: Development Bid Site at Gillahill, Kingswells

REPORT TITLE: Transport Appraisal

PROJECT REFERENCE: 110177

DOCUMENT NUMBER: 110177 TApp02

Issue & Approval Schedule	ISSUE 2		Name	Signature	Date	
	Prepared by	M Peters			28/05/15	
	Checked by	R McDonald			28/05/15	
	Approved by	R McDonald			28/05/15	
Revision Record	Rev.	Date	Status	Description	Signature	
	2	29/05/15	Final	Report amendment following comments from client	By	KC
					Checked	RMcD
					Approved	RMcD
	3				By	
					Checked	
Approved						

This document has been prepared in accordance with procedure OP/P02 of the *Fairhurst Quality and Environmental Management System*

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	General	1
1.2	Site Location	1
1.3	Development Proposal	2
2	Transport Planning Policy Context	3
2.1	National Planning Policy	3
2.2	Regional Policy	4
2.3	Local Policy	5
3	Site Accessibility Review	8
3.1	The Site	8
3.2	Pedestrian Network	8
3.3	Cycling Network	8
3.4	Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access	9
3.5	Public Transport Accessibility	10
3.6	Existing Local Road Network	11
3.7	Committed Transport Infrastructure	12
3.8	Potential Road Improvements	12
3.9	Site Access	12
4	Summary and Conclusions	13
4.1	Summary	13
4.2	Conclusion	13

Tables

Table 3-1: Local Bus Service Information	10
--	----

Enclosures

Diagram A: Walking & Cycling Accessibility Map

Diagram B: Local Bus Routes & Stops

1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in support of a potential development site at Gillahill, Kingswells. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the site's accessibility in accordance with transport planning guidance, with a view to demonstrating that the site is in a location which will encourage travel in a sustainable manner, reducing car dependency. The report also considers vehicular access to the site and opportunities to improve the surrounding road network in conjunction with its development.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The Gillahill site lies to the east of Kingswells and extends to approximately 39.5 hectares (97.6 acres) as shown in Figure 1-1 below. In locational terms the site forms a natural expansion of the existing settlement set within a mature landscape framework. Figure 1-1 also identifies the route of the strategic Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) which is under construction and will be complete by winter 2017.

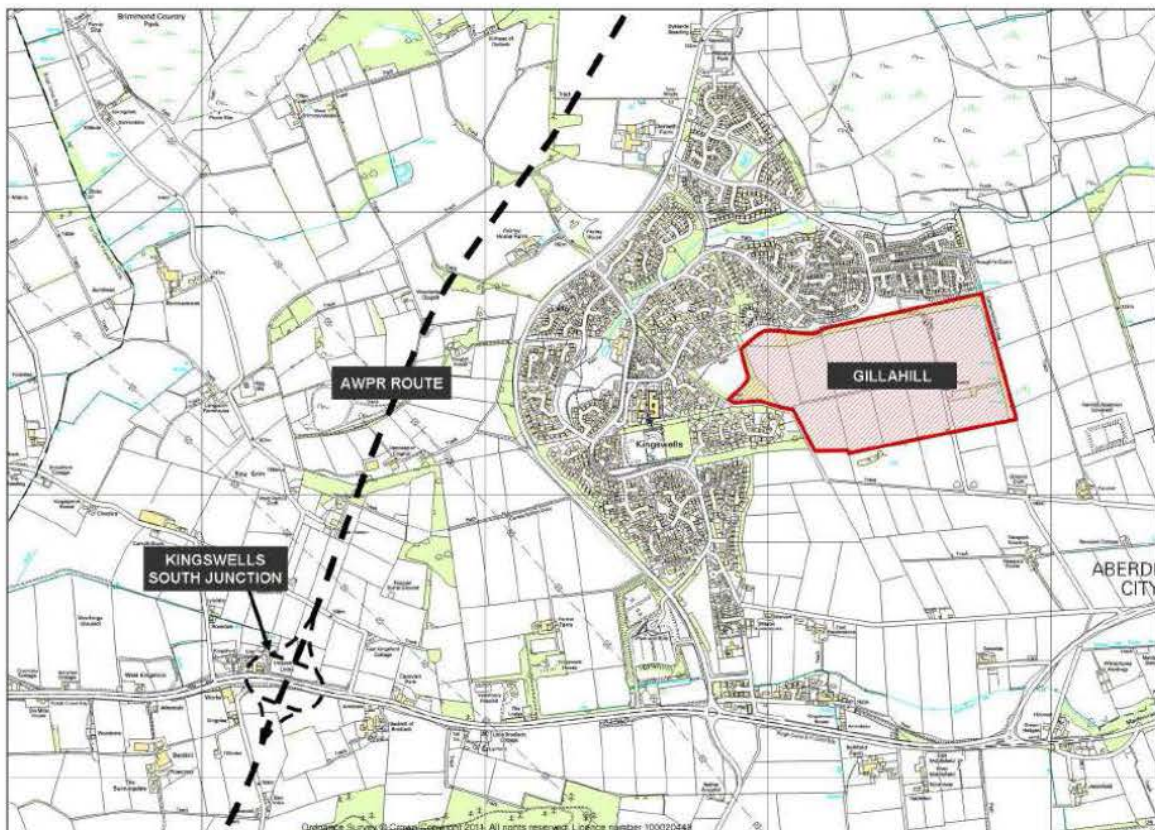


Figure 1-1: Site Location Plan

1.3 Development Proposal

- 1.3.1 The site is proposed for a residential development, with land also available for a potential relocation of the existing primary school. Due to the site's location directly to the east of existing urban edge of Kingswells it can be served readily by extensions to existing networks and can easily integrate with the existing community.
- 1.3.2 Relocation of the existing school would offer an opportunity for the existing school site to be used to expand the existing Village Centre.
- 1.3.3 Access to the site would be taken from Kingswells Crescent through a gap in the existing tree belt and this road will act as a distributor road serving the entire site.

2 Transport Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Policy Context is principally defined by 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP), and Scottish Planning Advice Note 75 (PAN 75) 'Planning for Transport'. The Scottish Government documents 'Transport Assessment Guidance' and 'Designing Streets' are also of relevance.
- 2.1.2 The Scottish Government's 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP) issued in June 2014 replaces SPP (2010) and Designing Places (2001). SPP identifies the Scottish Government's overarching aim to increase sustainable economic growth within Scotland.
- 2.1.3 SPP revolves around the principal policies – sustainability and placemaking. In considering how planning should support the vision, the document outlines the key outcomes that developments need to contribute to:
- *'A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and creation of well-designed, sustainable places.'*
 - *'A low carbon place – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.'*
 - *'A natural, resilient place – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their use.'*
 - *'A more connected place – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.'*
- 2.1.4 The 'Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel' section of SPP stresses the importance of efficient transport connections within Scotland and to international markets, and the crucial role that planning plays to improving such infrastructure. The section goes on to identify within paragraph 270 that the planning system should support developments that:
- *'optimise the use of existing infrastructure;*
 - *reduce the need to travel;*
 - *provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport;*
 - *enable the integration of transport modes'.*
- 2.1.5 Paragraph 273 notes that *'the spatial strategies set out in plans should support development in locations that allow walkable access to local amenities and are also accessible by cycling and public transport. Plans should identify active travel networks and promote opportunities for travel by more sustainable modes in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, cars.'*
- 2.1.6 SPP notes in paragraph 287 that *'Planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:*
- *direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;*
 - *access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400m'*

- 2.1.7 PAN 75 identifies the need for the integration of land use planning with transport, taking into account policies on economic growth, education, health and the objective of a more inclusive society.
- 2.1.8 PAN 75 identifies in Annex B the undemoted thresholds:
- *'For accessibility of public transport the recommended guidelines are less than 400m to bus services;*
- 2.1.9 PAN 75 indicates that *'Travel Plans are documents that set out a package of positive and complementary measures, for the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns for a specific development.'* It further states that *'their ability and success in influencing travel patterns is dependent upon the commitment of the developer and occupier of a development.'* For residential land uses, PAN 75 notes at paragraph 43 that *'travel plans may set out measures which will be used as an incentive to house purchasers to use non-car travel modes, but setting targets is generally not practicable for this land use. Sustainability in housing should come through design in relation to walking, cycling and public transport networks'*.
- 2.1.10 Transport Assessment Guidance (TAG) has been published by Transport Scotland to guide the preparation of Transport Assessments (TA) for development proposals in Scotland. Paragraph 1.8 notes that the TA process *'is directed towards successful delivery of development-related transport measures aimed at achieving sustainable transport outcomes.'* It further notes that the *'process incorporates scoping, transport assessment and implementation including travel plans and monitoring.'*
- 2.1.11 TAG identifies that *'Journey times of up to 20-30 mins are appropriate for walking and 30-40 mins for cycling'*.
- 2.1.12 'Designing Streets' sets out Scottish Government policy to be followed in designing and approving the layout of settlements. The Scottish Government's policy emphasises that street design should meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in Designing Places. The six qualities and key considerations are summarised as follows:
- *Distinctive – street design should respond to local context to deliver places that are distinctive*
 - *Safe and pleasant – streets should be designed to be safe and attractive place*
 - *Easy to move around – streets should be easy to move around for all users and connect well to existing networks*
 - *Welcoming – streets layout and detail should encourage positive interaction for all members of the community*
 - *Adaptable – street networks should be designed to accommodate future adaptation*
 - *Resource Efficient – street design should consider orientation, the integration of sustainable drainage and use attractive, durable materials that can be easily maintained.*

2.2 Regional Policy

- 2.2.1 Regional Policy for the proposed development is largely defined by:
- Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (March 2014)
 - NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (June 2008)

- 2.2.2 The Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) identifies 'four strategic growth areas' (SGA) which will be the focus of development in the area up to 2035. The SDP notes, 'The strategic growth areas are centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes.' The SDP also aims to '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.'
- 2.2.3 The Strategic Development Plan identifies the undernoted objectives:-
- 'To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses
 - To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and business to move to.
 - To make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices'.
- 2.2.4 The SDP endorses the role of 'Sustainable mixed communities' in making sure that 'new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to'.
- 2.2.5 The NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (RTS) identifies within its four Strategic Objectives the requirements to:
- 'to enhance and exploit the North East's competitive economic advantages, and to reduce the impacts of peripherality
 - enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited
 - support transport integration and a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east'
- 2.2.6 In identifying an 'Internal Connections Strategy' the RTS sets out key initiatives aimed at improving transport infrastructure within the City and Shire. These are focussed on improvements to public transport aimed at delivering economic, environmental and social inclusion benefits, with construction of the Western Peripheral Route facilitating the delivery of complementary transport measures as well as contributing 'to the economy and sustainable communities across the north east'. It also sets out a detailed programme for the delivery of additional park and ride sites and improved bus services aimed at maximising the identified benefits of reducing congestion, improving air quality and broadening travel choices.

2.3 Local Policy

- 2.3.1 Local Policy that would guide development is largely defined by:
- The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan – (February 2012)
 - Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (March 2008)
 - ALDP Supplementary Guidance 'Transport and Accessibility' – (March 2012)

- 2.3.2 The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) outlines proposals for development and land use for a period of 10 years from adoption. It sets out the strategic policies and proposals for promoting sustainable growth of the city over a 10-20 year period.
- 2.3.3 The LDP also sets out specific policies for ensuring that new developments contribute to delivering sustainable communities within the city. A number of the policies identified within the current LDP would remain relevant to the emerging LDP. These include:
- Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions
 - Policy T2 – Managing the Traffic Impact of Development
 - Policy D3 – Sustainable and Active Travel
- 2.3.4 The Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (LTS) still forms the current Transport Strategy for Aberdeen and outlines the policies and interventions adopted by ACC to guide the planning and improvement of the local road network over a five-year period.
- 2.3.5 The LTS sets out five high level aims, as follows:
- *‘Support and Contribute to a thriving economy for Aberdeen and its region*
 - *Ensure a safe and secure transport system*
 - *Minimise the environmental impact of transport on our community and the wider world*
 - *Ensure the transport system is integrated and accessible to all*
 - *Ensure that transport policies integrate with and support sustainable development, health and social inclusion policies’.*
- 2.3.6 A number of specific objectives detailed within the LTS also support the previously listed aims. Key considerations among these objectives include:
- *‘minimise and improve reliability of journey times for people and goods through Aberdeen’s transport networks*
 - *improve the condition of road, footway and cycle road network*
 - *increase the share of travel by the most sustainable modes to promote economic growth without the associated traffic growth*
 - *continue to reduce road casualties*
 - *reduce carbon emissions from road transport*
 - *improve accessibility (network and cost) to jobs and services to support social inclusion,*
 - *to facilitate and support land use development adjacent to sustainable transport corridors and nodes*
 - *to promote healthy living by encouraging safe walking and cycling’*
- 2.3.7 The LDP Supplementary Guidance ‘Transport and Accessibility’ (March 2012) advocates that a Travel Plan should *‘be site specific and measures and objectives should reflect the individual characteristics of the site as well as the trips likely to be generated by that development.’* The document further highlights that *‘Residential Travel Plans should outline measures aimed at influencing the travel behaviour of new home owners to, from and within the development. These could include:*
- *Ensuring the development is well served by safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes;*
 - *Entering into negotiations with bus operators to ensure that the development*

can be served by public transport if it is not at present;

- *Distributing a welcome pack to new residents with maps showing local walking and cycling routes and local public transport maps, leaflets and timetables;*
- *Providing a car club vehicle(s) for residents to use;*
- *Establishing a residents' car share scheme;*
- *Providing residents with 1 months' free public transport tickets or a voucher for discounted walking or cycling goods'.*

3 Site Accessibility Review

3.1 The Site

3.1.1 The Gillahill site is located on the eastern edge of Kingswells, and extends to approximately 39.5 hectares. It is bound to the north and east by a mature tree belt and beyond this, existing dwelling houses; to the south by open fields; and to the west by further woodland and built development.

3.2 Pedestrian Network

3.2.1 The site lies close to, and benefits from good pedestrian links to the centre of the village where a range of services can be found. The pedestrian desire line from the site would be to the west into the centre of Kingswells, Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park & Ride site. Diagram A enclosed in the Appendix illustrates existing pedestrian infrastructure in the vicinity of the site with links to the potential walking catchment from the Gillahill site.

3.2.2 The site is well related to the existing development and the majority of the site is within walking distance of the community centre and school which is approximately 500m away at its closest point, connected by Core Paths.

3.2.3 The existing Kingswells community has been established since the 1980s with a high quality network of footpath and cycle route provision to serve local needs and connect existing residential areas to attractions within the village such as the local village shopping centre and primary school. As well as routes alongside the road network there is a complementary network of off road routes and paths providing more direct connections in appropriate locations.

3.3 Cycling Network

3.3.1 Existing cycling infrastructure largely replicates provision for pedestrians as many of facilities are shared by pedestrians and cyclists. The nearby Aberdeen to Westhill cycleway runs along the north side of the A944 to the south of Kingswells. The route facilitates east-west cycling opportunities from Hazlehead through Kingswells to Westhill. There are connections from the A944 dual use path to other routes on the core path network within Kingswells and beyond. There are also links to / from Bucksbum to the north and other Aberdeen City suburbs to the west.

3.3.2 As development continues at Westhill's Arnhall Business Park, additional cycle infrastructure is expected to be developed which will offer further segregated routes along the B9119 and towards Westhill town centre, linking with existing cycling infrastructure elsewhere in Westhill. This offers clear potential for cycleway links to be formed between the Gillahill site and Arnhall Business Park; and the rest of Westhill using dedicated infrastructure.

3.3.3 Beyond Kingswells, at the A944 Six Mile Fork junction to the east of Westhill, there is a Toucan Crossing which connects footway / cycleways on both sides of the A944, linking to the strategic Aberdeen to Westhill Cycleway. Additional facilities to aid cyclists at the Six Mile Fork junction include Advanced Stop Lines (ASL) on all approaches.

3.4 Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

- 3.4.1 The site adjoins the existing Kingswells settlement which provides a wide range of local amenities allowing it to function as a sustainable settlement. The Gillahill development site provides an opportunity to expand the existing settlement to the east to complement the extensive existing and future employment opportunities at Kingswells (Prime Four Business Park).
- 3.4.2 Linked footpaths and a network of open space through the site is important and where possible would utilise existing and historic routes. The site at Gillahill is of such a scale that it will justify the provision of significant new path infrastructure to serve the needs of future residents and visitors.
- 3.4.3 An appropriate network of foot and cycle paths would be provided within the site to prioritise use of these modes particularly for internal journeys between residential and employment areas and the local centre. Such proposals would be identified through a master planning process aimed at providing connections as directly as possible in order to encourage use of these modes, with the obvious advantage of 'designing-in' such provision from the outset.
- 3.4.4 Cyclists can make use of the existing network of local roads in the vicinity of Kingswells. On the western edge of Kingswells studies have shown that construction of the AWPR will radically reduce traffic on the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road as orbital traffic diverts to the strategic new strategic route. With this traffic reduction (as much as 74% on the C89 north of the village) it is envisaged that further opportunities to encourage cycle trips will arise, with destinations such as the major business and employment opportunities at Prime Four, Amhall and Kirkhill / Dyce all within a convenient cycling distance of 5km.
- 3.4.5 The site at Gillahill has been the subject of previous investigation where arrangements for accessing the site from Kingswells Crescent in compliance with appropriate Council Roads Guidelines were agreed in principle and supplementary footpath connections (in addition to paths alongside the principal access) are identified to link the site to nearest existing bus stops, the village centre and existing primary school via the bridleway to the west (within 800m of the edge of the site).
- 3.4.6 PAN 75 stipulates that '*a maximum threshold of 1600m (20 minutes) for walking is broadly in line with observed travel behaviour.*' Reference to Paragraph 5.21 of TAG also suggests that journey times of 20 – 30 minutes (1600 – 2400 metres) are appropriate for walking.
- 3.4.7 Walking isochrones representing 1600 metres (20 minutes) and 2400 metres (30 minutes) are illustrated by Diagram A enclosed. The walking isochrones illustrate walking distances from a central point within the Gillahill site. The walking isochrones are measured along existing footways and potential links from the site.
- 3.4.8 Diagram A shows that the whole of Kingswells, including a number of local amenities, are within 1600 metres (20 minutes) walking distance. This includes a primary school, medical centre, post office and Co-operative convenience store. The 2400 metres walking catchment, representing 30 minutes walking time, incorporates the Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park and Ride.

3.5 Public Transport Accessibility

- 3.5.1 PAN75 guidance comments that significant trip generating developments should be located within a walking distance of 400 metres from an existing public transport route. Kingswells is currently served directly by regular and frequent buses with the majority of the village within convenient walking distance of services operated by First Aberdeen via the local road network and the Kingswells Park and Ride. Further services by Stagecoach Bluebird can be accessed from the A944.
- 3.5.2 The Kingswells P&R has dedicated services that operate between this facility and locations across the city centre via the bus priority route which has been introduced along the A944 Lang Stracht.
- 3.5.3 Details of existing service frequencies and typical journey times are summarised in Table 3-1 and the plan at Diagram B illustrates the current pattern of routes and available stops.

Service	Route	Monday -Friday	Bus Stop
Stagecoach Bluebird Service 218	Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to Westhill	18 journeys daily	A944 at Prime Four
Stagecoach Bluebird Service X17	Aberdeen Bus Station to Westhill via Woodend and Elrick	Every 10 minutes	A944 at Prime Four
Stagecoach Bluebird Service X18	Aberdeen Bus Station to Alford via Westhill, Dunecht, Sauchen, Whitehouse	12 journeys daily	A944 at Prime Four
First Aberdeen Service 11	Northfield Terminus – City Centre – Woodend - Kingswells Medical Centre (Circular)	At: 19:26, 19:46, 20:23, 20:53, 21:23, 21:53, 22:23 & 23:23	Kingswells Medical Centre
First Aberdeen Service X40	Kingswells Park & Ride – Kingswells Medical Centre - Aberdeen Royal Infirmary - City Centre - Bridge Of Don Park & Ride - Dubford	Approximately 15 Minutes During Commuter Travel Peak	Kingswells Park & Ride
Bains Coaches Service 777	Kingswells – Newhills – Bankhead - Aberdeen Airport - Kirkhill	5 Daily Services	Kingswells Park & Ride / A944 at Prime Four

Table 3-1: Local Bus Service Information

- 3.5.4 Kingswells' location on a principal transport corridor already served by established park and ride infrastructure and bus priority measures on the route to the centre of the city gives a firm basis for the development of further opportunities to enhance public transport opportunities in the area. In particular the commitment to the establishment of a chain of park and ride sites around the AWPR gives the opportunity for the intensification of orbital services providing direct connections to major attractions such as Aberdeen Airport and adjoining employment destinations at Kirkhill and Dyce which development at Gillahill would be well placed to access. The AWPR could result in the increased frequency of Service 777 and its potential extension to other destinations to the north and south.

- 3.5.5 Bus services currently route along Kingswells Crescent directly past the Gillahill site access. The development proposed at Gillahill is of a scale that could support the diversion of existing bus service routes to ensure that the entirety of the site was within 400m of regular bus services in line with national guidance.
- 3.5.6 Initial discussions have been held with First Aberdeen and the Council PTU to confirm the viability of this arrangement and the infrastructure requirements to accommodate it and it is anticipated that agreement will be reached on the level of support necessary to secure the viability of necessary service extensions in the short term as proposals progress
- 3.5.7 The existing services to Aberdeen terminate at Aberdeen Bus Station where there are interchange opportunities for onward travel by bus to other local and national destinations. Additionally, Aberdeen Rail Station is within 150 metres (2 minutes) walking distance from the bus station, therefore further opportunities exist for travel by rail to local and national destinations.
- 3.5.8 The Development Framework and subsequent Masterplan layout for the site would explore opportunities for public transport accessibility for the initial and later phases of the development. Roads within the site would be designed to allow public transport access to encourage bus transport.

3.6 Existing Local Road Network

- 3.6.1 The existing site is predominantly green fields with access from existing farm tracks. Access is proposed from Kingswells Crescent which is the main loop road access through Kingswells. As such the road is designed to accommodate buses with bus stops located along the route. Kingswells Crescent connects with Kingswood Drive and then on to the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road at two locations.
- 3.6.2 The C89 is single carriageway connecting the A944 to the A96 via Bucksburn. It also provides a means of access to the employment land at Prime Four Business Park and further afield to destinations such as Westhill via the A944 and Kirkhill / Dyce via the A96, and is subsequently well used during weekday peak periods in particular.
- 3.6.3 Studies show that flows on the C89 are predicted to reduce by as much as 74% upon completion of the AWPR. Relevant sections of the C89 are designed to a suitably high standard as a traffic route and the significant forecast reduction in existing traffic levels would counterbalance increased development traffic associated with the Gillahill site.
- 3.6.4 On the wider road network the site's direct accessibility to the AWPR via the Kingswells North interchange will accommodate future movement demands in that direction. Movements towards the city centre, would route via the A944 Kingswells Roundabout and Lang Stracht or Skene Road at the A944 / B9119 Bellfield junction. These roads afford access to the A90 Aberdeen to Peterhead road, and subsequently to the A96 Aberdeen to Inverness Trunk Road. To the west of Kingswells, the A944 provides connections to the future grade separated junction with the AWPR and the residential and employment areas of Westhill.
- 3.6.5 Recent improvements on the A944 corridor have eased previous constraints, such as at the Kingswells Roundabout and other identified bottlenecks. Further improvements are committed in connection with other approved development proposals on the corridor which can be expected to provide additional capacity, maintaining the benefits of traffic reduction due to the AWPR on the corridor.

3.7 Committed Transport Infrastructure

- 3.7.1 The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will be a new orbital route around the west side of Aberdeen described as *'the most important infrastructure project taking place in the North East (which) will bring a range of substantial benefits to the region'*. Its construction is anticipated to provide *'a much needed fast and safe route around Aberdeen which links with the existing major roads and key locations such as the airport, park and ride sites and the major industrial estates around the City'*.
- 3.7.2 The route runs between Stonehaven and Blackdog and follows an orbital alignment around the city to the west, with interchanges on the A93, A944, A96, A947 and A90.
- 3.7.3 The construction of the AWPR has commenced and it is anticipated to be completed in winter 2017. The route of the AWPR passes Kingswells approximately 500m to the west of the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road and will include a new grade separated junction on the A944. An additional junction (currently with north facing slip roads only) just to the north east of the site would enable traffic from Kingswells to access areas to the west and north of Aberdeen City without the need for routing via the A944 AWPR grade separated junction. It is anticipated that upon completion the AWPR will change the accessibility options for the settlements and developments along its route, which will open up opportunities for improved connectivity and public transport services. The Gillahill site is extremely well placed to benefit from the future AWPR.

3.8 Potential Road Improvements

- 3.8.1 Although operation of parts of the local road network (notably the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road and key approaches) is under pressure at present at peak times this situation will fundamentally change following completion of the AWPR. As previously noted forecast traffic flows on the C89 north of the village are predicted to reduce by 74% following diversion to the strategic AWPR. It is anticipated that the dramatic traffic reduction will lead to improved junction performance, releasing capacity for additional development traffic from the Gillahill site.
- 3.8.2 Notwithstanding this, the future performance of junctions and links would be analysed through a Transport Assessment for the Gillahill site and any necessary mitigation measures identified would be proposed in support of future planning applications.
- 3.8.3 There is likely to be scope for the completion of early phases in advance of the AWPR opening.

3.9 Site Access

- 3.9.1 As previously noted the Gillahill site has been the subject of repeated investigations for potential residential development through previous planning applications. This process has resulted in agreement that the development can be served by the provision of a single widened vehicle access onto Kingswells Crescent leading to an internal loop road system within the site. A separate emergency access would also be provided onto Kingswells Crescent.
- 3.9.2 Traffic analysis to consider the performance of the site access junction would be detailed in a future Transport Assessment once development proposals are refined.

4 Summary and Conclusions

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been undertaken on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in support of a development bid site at Gillahill, Kingswells. The Gillahill site lies to the east of the existing Kingswells village and would be a natural expansion of the existing settlement with opportunities through the master planning process for the site to provide appropriate footway / cycleway infrastructure for connections with existing infrastructure on the adjacent network.
- 4.1.2 Securing integration of development with the existing community will involve formalising and developing the existing path network across the site. It is concluded that the Gillahill site can be successfully integrated into the expanded urban community.
- 4.1.3 The level of development proposed for the Gillahill site would justify extension of existing bus service provision. Existing services operating in the proximity of the site form a suitable basis for the development of local services, with the Kingswells Park & Ride site having the potential to develop as a local interchange between these and more strategic services (such as development of Service 777) operating orbital routes via the AWPR.
- 4.1.4 There is likely to be scope for the completion of early phases of the Gillahill site in advance of the AWPR opening. Following construction of the AWPR by winter 2017 the dramatic traffic reduction that it will have on key routes around Kingswells will lead to improved junction performance, releasing capacity for further development traffic from the Gillahill site.
- 4.1.5 The route of the AWPR passes within 500m to the west of Kingswells with an interchange located on the A944 to the south and a further half junction with north facing slip roads located to the north east of Kingswells. Upon completion the AWPR will provide excellent access between Kingswells and other parts of Aberdeenshire / Aberdeen City through its connection with the A944 and Kingswells Distributor Road. The potential benefits from the AWPR would be extended to the Gillahill site due to its close proximity to the A944.

4.2 Conclusion

- 4.2.1 This Transport Appraisal has identified that the Gillahill site offers an excellent opportunity for development. Through its location in relation to Kingswells, Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park and Ride, the site offers potential to generate trips by sustainable means in preference to cars trips, which would be to the benefit of the existing local road network. There are opportunities to provide walking and cycling infrastructure from the proposed site to connect with existing facilities within Kingswells.
- 4.2.2 The development at the Gillahill site, incorporating appropriate transport infrastructure to support the development, could readily be accessible by sustainable transport modes. The site offers easy access to all of Kingswells local amenities as well as to a major regional employment centre at Prime Four Business Park.

- 4.2.3 The Gillahill site can be developed to be fully compatible with national and local transport planning policy guidance and as such it is considered that there are positive transport related reasons for developing the site for mixed uses.
- 4.2.4 Development of the site could occur in a sustainable manner offering many benefits due to its location. In addition, development of the site can offer road capacity benefits through its easy access to both nearby AWPR Kingswells junctions.
- 4.2.5 The Transport Appraisal concludes that the inclusion of this site in the LDP will assist in promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel and will not only optimise the use of existing infrastructure, but improve upon it. With continued expansion and allocations of development along the A944 corridor the proposed development at Gillahill would help to reduce the need to travel, provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling and enable the integration of different transport modes. Public Transport opportunities outweigh many alternative sites due to the proximity of existing bus services and the Kingswells Park and Ride facility.

Enclosures

Diagram A: Walking & Cycling Accessibility Maps

Diagram B: Local Bus Routes & Stops

FAIRHURST


FAIRHURST

Project Title:
110177 Gillahill, Kingswells
Development Bid Site



Drawing Title:
Walking and Cycling Accessibility
Local Walking and Cycling Routes

Diagram A

KEY:

-  Development Site
-  Prime Four Business Park

Walking Isochrones:

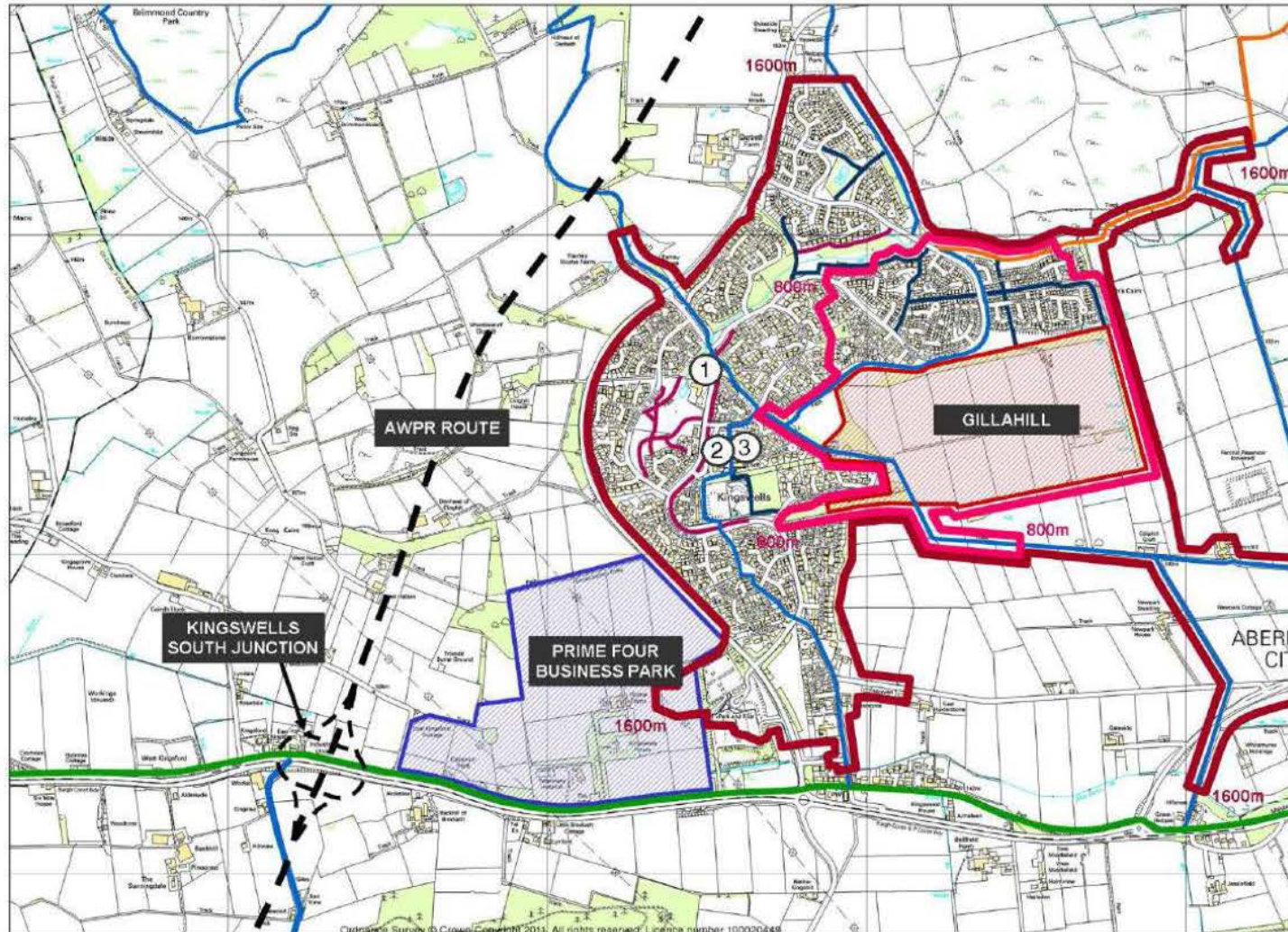
-  800 metres (10minutes)
-  1600 metres (20minutes)

Local Walking and Cycling Routes:

-  Aberdeen to Westhill
Dual-Use Cycleway Network
-  Dual-Use Path Network
-  Core Path Network
-  Kingswells to Bucksburn
Recommended Route
-  Formal Footpaths

Local Amenities:

- ① Kingswells Medical Centre
- ② Co-operative, Community Centre
Veterinary, Post Office & Pharmacy
- ③ Kingswells Primary School



Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2011. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449

Client:  **Drawn by:** KC
Date: 25/05/15
**88 Queens Road
Aberdeen
AB15 4YQ**
**T: 01224 321222
F: 01224 323201**

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. Licence number: 109305

FAIRHURST



Project Title:
110177 Gillahill, Kingswells
Development Bid Site

Drawing Title:
Bus Accessibility
Local Bus Routes and Stops

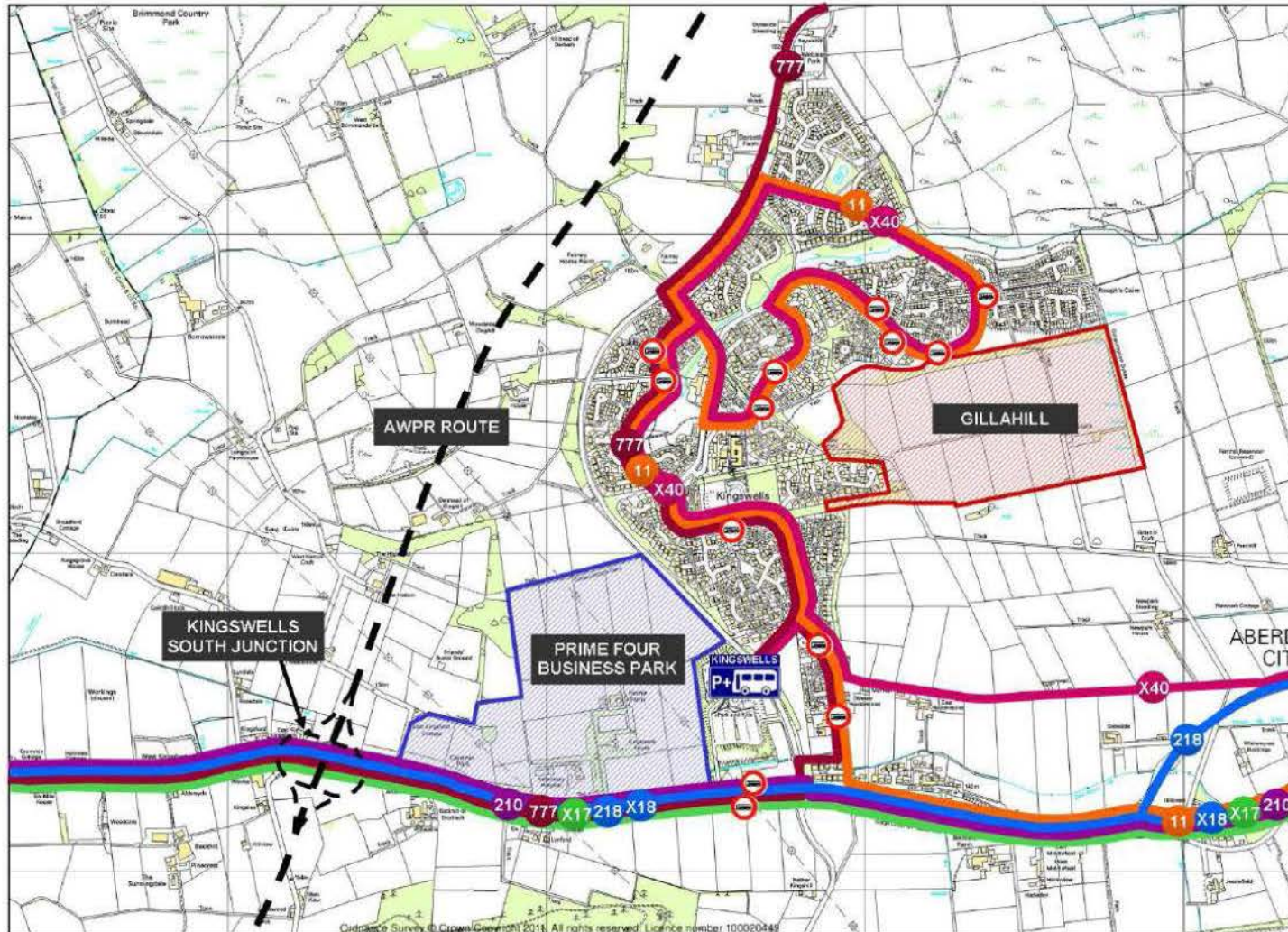
Diagram B

KEY:

-  Development Site
-  Prime Four Business Park
-  AWPR Routing
-  Kingswells Park and Ride
-  Bus Stops

Local Bus Routes:

-  **Service 777**
To Oldmeldrum, Westhill, Kingswells
Aberdeen Airport and Dyce
-  **Service 11**
To Aberdeen, Woodend Hospital,
and Kingswells
-  **Service X40**
To Kingswells, Aberdeen Royal
Infirmary, Bridge of Don P&R and
Duford P&R via City Centre
-  **Service X17**
To Aberdeen, Woodend Hospital,
Westhill and Elrick
-  **Service 218/X18**
To Aberdeen, Foresterhill Hospital,
Westhill, Elrick and Alford
-  **Service 210**
To Aberdeen, Torphins, Aboyne
and Ballater



Client:



Drawn by: KC
Date: 25/05/15
**88 Queens Road
Aberdeen
AB15 4YQ**
**T: 01224 321222
F: 01224 323201**

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. Licence number: 109925

CIVIL ENGINEERING • STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING • TRANSPORTATION • ROADS & BRIDGES
PORTS & HARBOURS • GEOTECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING • PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT • WATER SERVICES • CDM COORDINATOR SERVICES

www.fairhurst.co.uk

Aberdeen	Inverness
Birmingham	Leeds
Bristol	London
Dundee	Manchester
Edinburgh	Newcastle upon Tyne
Elgin	Sheffield
Glasgow	Watford
	Wellesbourne

FAIRHURST

PAPER APART

Objection is made on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes to the failure of the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ADLP) to identify Area 3 (Huxterstone) of Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion as an opportunity site for 90 dwellings, associated open space and strategic landscaping.

What change would like to see made?

Stewart Milne Homes wish to see the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2016 modified to allocate land at Huxterstone as an opportunity site for 90 homes. As explained below, the land's current zoning as Green Belt (NE2) is no longer appropriate and the area's potential has previously been identified through its designation as a 'Future New Community' by the Council. The allocation of the site is a logical extension to OP42 and should therefore be released for development to contribute to meeting strategic housing requirements as well as enabling the sustainable growth of Kingswells.

Background

Stewart Milne Homes promoted land at Huxterstone for identification within the Main Issues Report of the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP), following the area being recognised as a 'Future New Community' within the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan 2004. However, only the western parcel of the site was included within the extant ALDP as opportunity site OP42 with an allocation of 120 houses for delivery in the period to 2016. Planning permission has now been granted on site and is expected to be built out by 2018.

In response to the Council's call for sites in April 2013, the remaining 4.7 ha of the area lying to the east of OP42, was promoted through a joint development bid alongside land at Derbeth and Gillahill (Appendix 1). This provided a long term growth strategy for the expansion of Kingswells through a masterplanned approach. The Development Option Assessment within the Main Issues Report (MIR) of January 2014 failed to identify the remaining land at Huxterstone as a preferred option for development. However, several positive attributes were acknowledged, such as how well the site relates to development at Kingswells, nearby services, employment land at Prime Four and the public transport network, which enhances the site's connectivity.

Representation (Appendix 2) was made on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in response to the MIR. However, notwithstanding this, the Council's Policy Team advised the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee in November 2014 that the continued green belt status of the site was justified, based on reasoning of the Reporter's examination into the extant ALDP.

This is regardless of the changing circumstances at Kingswells in the interim. The site remains to be zoned as Green Space Network and Green Belt within the Proposed ALDP (2015).

Objection is now made to this. Stewart Milne Homes seek the removal of the site's green belt status and its inclusion within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2016 as an opportunity site for 90 dwellings, open space and strategic landscaping.

Principle of Development

It is firmly contended that the principle of residential development has been accepted upon the remaining land at Huxterstone owing to the entire area being recognised within the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan 2004 as a 'Future New Community'. However, the area was reduced with the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008, with only the area of OP42 identified as 'Strategic Housing Land Reserve (SHLR30)'. Notwithstanding this, Stewart Milne Homes, in recognition of development potential of the entire area, submitted a masterplan for the area to the Council within a development bid for inclusion in the MIR of the extant ALDP, published in 2009. Ultimately, site OP42 was included within the extant PLDP. Upon the build out of OP42, the remaining balance to the east will be bound on three sides by development, effectively deeming it infill land which is logical for the expansion of the settlement.

As recognised at MIR stage of the extant ALDP Review process, the site is vacant agricultural land and is of little value. It is unconstrained and developable for homes in the short term. Its development for residential use will maximise land resource and enhance the appearance and setting of the area, in accordance with paragraph 40 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). Huxterstone relates well to existing and emerging development at Kingswells and, as recognised previously by the Council through its zoning as a 'Future New Community', has the potential to successfully integrate with the settlement.

Strategic Housing Requirements

As a Strategic Growth Area (SGA), Aberdeen City is expected to deliver 31,500 new homes in the period to 2035. Including existing allocations to 2016, 21,000 homes are expected to be built on greenfield land by 2035. Kingswells lies within the SGA and is therefore well placed to contribute to these housing requirements. The Proposed ALDP currently allocates 20,422 dwellings to be developed on greenfield sites, falling some 578 units short of the SDP target. Further residential allocations at Balgownie Home Farm and Peterculter included in the Proposed ALDP will not fully address this deficit. It is therefore necessary that additional land for housing is identified to ensure that an effective 5 year supply is maintained and that strategic requirements are delivered in the period to 2035.

Notwithstanding this shortfall in greenfield housing allocations, the population of the North East region is projected to rise to around 570,000 by 2035, significantly in excess of the figure of 500,000 upon which the SDP housing allowances have been based. This will inevitably result in a shortfall in housing supply over the next 20 years, requiring additional sites to be identified to alleviate this problem.

Furthermore, the Proposed ALDP continues to place undue emphasis on large scale areas, allocated under the Council's land release policy to deliver strategic housing requirements. Delivery at several of these sites, including Greenferns, Grandholme and Loirston continue to be delayed due to various constraints, with development upon effective land, such as at Huxterstone, deemed a suitable alternative in contributing to housing requirements. Doing so would ensure the alignment of the 2016 ALDP with SPP by allocating land which can become effective and deliver residential development within a 5 year period. As recognised by the Council in their Development Option Assessment of the MIR, the remaining balance at Huxterstone is free of technical constraints and capable of delivery within the short term. It has been previously identified as logical area for the expansion of Kingswells by the 2004 Local Plan and an allocation of 90 dwellings would enable the sustainable growth of the settlement whilst making a valuable contribution to achieving strategic housing requirements.

Infrastructure

Material changes have occurred within Kingswells since the previous examination, such as the imminent implementation of the AWPR and the continued expansion of the employment hub at Prime Four. The scale and importance of such major development should be duly considered in accordance with paragraph 30 of SPP. Indeed, paragraph 2.16 of the Proposed ALDP recognises the *'exceptional demand for employment land in this area'* which is testament to continued high levels of investment within Aberdeen. Proposed expansion at Prime Four in response to such demand should be identified as possessing potential for associated growth and development at Kingswells.

In light of this, it is firmly contended that additional housing land should be identified to balance the further expansion of Prime Four. Following completion of OP42 there will be no further housing allocations in Kingswells for delivery in the period 2017-2026, restricting the growth of the settlement.

Additional units assigned to the remaining balance at Huxterstone will help to meet housing requirements and contribute to Kingswells functioning as a sustainable settlement which reduces the need for travel. This approach is consistent with paragraph 40 of SPP in that it will co-ordinate *'housing and business development with infrastructure investment'*. Furthermore, paragraph 2.22 of the Proposed ALDP recognises that the AWPR will *'provide*

benefits to this area, with junctions proposed to the north and south-west of Kingswells'. Its associated growth potential should be realised as an opportunity to enable the successful growth of the settlement. To overlook the development potential associated with the AWPR coupled with the expanding Prime Four would be short sighted. The identification of additional land for housing, such as at Huxterstone, is logical and will harness benefits arising from infrastructure developments at Kingswells.

Proposed ALDP Zoning

The remaining balance of the area at Huxterstone is currently designated under policy NE1 Green Space Network and NE2 Green Belt by the Proposed ALDP. SPP dictates that green belt boundaries should be reviewed by the planning authority where necessary to *'identify the most sustainable locations for longer-term development'*. The review of the green belt is now considered necessary due to changing circumstances at Kingswells and the need for an increased housing land supply in order to meet strategic requirements in the period to 2035.

SPP paragraph 51 proceeds to state that owing to the need for development of smaller settlements, *'room for expansion'* should be considered and green belt should be *'appropriate to the location'*. Objection is made to the proposed continued zoning of land at Huxterstone under Policy NE2 Green Belt. As addressed above, green belt policy (NE2) should direct planned growth to the most appropriate location. The Council has previously recognised Huxterstone as a 'Future New Community' with the MIR acknowledging its well related nature to OP42 and the wider settlement of Kingswells. It is therefore contended that by overlooking the remaining balance of the site, the green belt is failing in its role to direct development to the appropriate location. Consequently, its zoning should be removed. The proposed residential use at Huxterstone will maximise land resource whilst preserving the setting of Kingswells as well as implementing a defining eastern edge to the settlement.

In the context of Policy NE1 Green Space Network (GSN), zoned areas at Huxterstone along the Den Burn will be maintained, as illustrated by the masterplan in Appendix 1. This ensures compliance with Policy NE1 by considering *'existing areas of Green Space Network'* as well as serving to *'identify new areas'*. The existing riverside walk will be extended and links to the nearby Core Path and cycle network, connecting Huxterstone to the wider settlement as well as Aberdeen to the east, will be consolidated, enhancing the site's connectivity. The allocation of the remaining balance of the site for residential use will effectively act as a catalyst in strengthening the existing GSN and encouraging modes of active travel within Kingswells and beyond, in line with SDP objectives.

Masterplan

As mentioned above, the masterplan included in Appendix 1 illustrates how the development at Huxterstone will be a logical extension to the adjacent OP42 site. The area's elevation falls moving south and ensures that dwellings will sit well within the landscape with no sky-lining effects anticipated as well as being well placed to benefit from passive solar gain. Design, layout and density is shown to reflect that of the adjacent consented development at OP42 and will be a sustainable addition to this. A play park and substantial associated public open space is proposed within the southern segment of the area in close proximity to the Den Burn, with a defining eastern edge to the site marked by shelterbelt planting. This will ensure development does not result in the coalescence of Kingswells and Aberdeen to the east.

The site shall benefit from established road infrastructure links with Kingswells through the adjacent development at West Huxterstone, as well as maximising services and utilities provision on site, in line with SPP paragraph 40. Paragraph 2.2 of the SDP, aims to 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'*. The masterplan illustrates strong pedestrian and cycle links with the wider settlement, as well as connecting with the Core Path network extending east to Aberdeen. This illustrates the site's optimal levels of accessibility, identified by the SDP as a key component in the creation of sustainable mixed communities.

As recognised by the MIR and in accordance with the thresholds set out in PAN 75 Planning for Transport, Huxterstone lies within 400m of the nearest bus stops on Fairley Road and the bus-only section of the Lang Stracht which bounds the area to the north. Kingswells is well served by the no. 11 and X40 First Bus services, linking Kingswells to Aberdeen City centre, offering alternative modes of travel to that of the private car. Further road improvements associated with the implementation of the AWPR will enable future links to Dyce to the north as well as Portlethen to the south, enabling travel outwith Aberdeen City. Kingswells Park & Ride facility and major employment hub at Prime Four are easily accessible, situated approximately 500m west, with the local service centre at Kingswood Drive within 900m of the site.

The masterplanned approach as proposed by Stewart Milne Homes can deliver appropriate sustainable growth of Kingswells. This has been illustrated as acceptable by the Council through the consented development at West Huxterstone. The Proposed ALDP allocates no further units to Kingswells in the period 2017-2026 which will restrict the expansion of the settlement which is highly accessible and well placed to accommodate growth. It is clear that Stewart Milne Homes is committed to delivering development in Kingswells which will ensure that housing growth is proportional to that of proposed employment land. This will contribute

to the sustainable development of Kingswells and enable population growth in the region, in accordance with the objectives of the SDP.

Recommendations

Based on the forgoing, Stewart Milne Homes wish to see the current zoning of Green Belt (NE2) land on the remaining land at Huxterstone to the east of OP42 removed and replaced with an allocation for 90 dwellings, associated open space and strategic landscaping. Table 5 of the Proposed ALDP should be modified accordingly to reflect this. There exists firm justification for the removal of the area of land at Huxterstone from the green belt. It is clear this has failed in its role to guide development to the most appropriate location, as the development potential of area had previously been recognised by the Council through its identification of Huxterstone as a 'Future New Community'. Coalescence with Aberdeen will be minimal. Strategic landscaping and shelterbelt planting within the masterplanning area will ensure that a defining eastern edge to the settlement is established and retained while enhancing the character and setting of Kingswells.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Development Bid June 2013

Appendix 2 – Representation to Main Issues Report March 2014

Appendix 3 - Transport Appraisal May 2015



STEWART MILNE HOMES

**DEVELOPMENT BID FOR LAND AT
KINGSWELLS**

JUNE 2013

**Ryden LLP
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1YL
Tel: 01224 588866
Fax: 01224 589669**

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Planning History**
- 3.0 Description of Site and Proposals**
- 4.0 National Planning Policies**
- 5.0 Structure Plan**
- 6.0 Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (February 2013)**
- 7.0 Services**
- 8.0 Justification**
- 9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Figures

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan

Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan

Figure 5: SEPA Flood Risk Map

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes who have an interest in land, covering around 133 hectares (330 acres) in Kingswells.

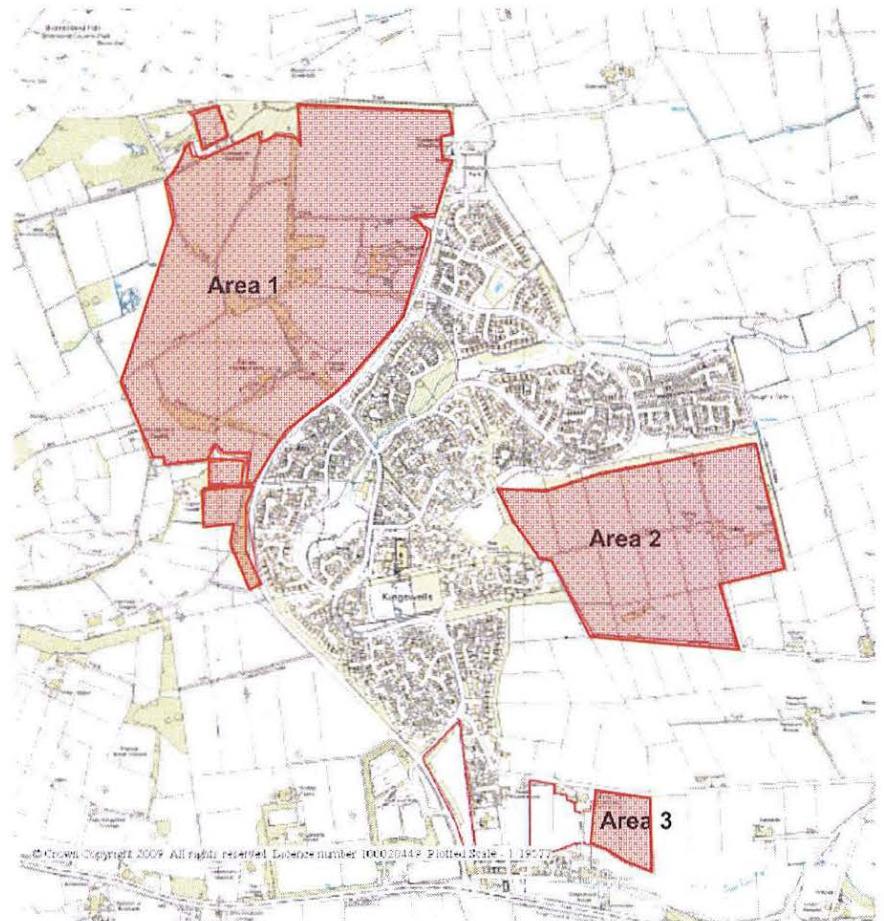


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

1.2 The Stewart Milne Group was founded in Aberdeen in 1975. Since then it has grown to become one of the UK's leading privately owned house builders. They have a commitment to enterprise and innovation matched with traditional value for quality services. The Stewart Milne Group are currently building homes across the North East of Scotland, Tayside, the Central Belt of Scotland and North West England.

- 1.3 Kingswells is a planned village within the boundary of the City of Aberdeen, which lies four miles west of Aberdeen City Centre on the A944, an arterial route into the city. It has a population of approximately 5,181 residents.
- 1.4 Planning permission was first granted for residential and ancillary development in Kingswells in 1983. The village at that time comprised a church, public hall, former school building and public house. Construction commenced in the late 1980s.
- 1.5 The first phase of development in the village was completed in 1995 and included the provision of shops, a community centre and a primary school in the centre of the village. Additional shops, a health centre, dentist, nursing home and veterinary practice were developed as the village expanded. Included in Phase 1 of the development was a western distributor road leading north from a roundabout junction on the A944 towards Newhills.
- 1.6 The settlement then extended to the north-east. A further section of the western bypass was upgraded to allow access to this phase. This expansion enjoys good vehicular and pedestrian links to the village centre and also connects to the wider footpath network. Provision was made for open space, play areas and all weather facilities.
- 1.7 Kingswells has continued to attract significant investment from both residential and commercial property developers. Barratt Homes' 'Willowburn' development comprised 35 new family homes. Stewart Milne Homes have also invested heavily in the area with their West 1, Kingswood Drive, Huxterstone and Den View developments providing a range of house types that add to the established mix of housing to create a vibrant and sustainable community. In addition to these, Drum Property Group's Prime Four development has attracted significant interest from major global energy firms. The first phase of their development is currently under construction and has secured pre-lets by Apache, Nexen and Transocean. Phase 2 is currently the subject of a detailed planning application and already has attracted

occupiers such as Premier Oil and leading hotelier The De Vere Group to create a 150 bedroom "Village Urban Resort" with associated spa, conference, retail and leisure facilities. This level of developer interest demonstrates the success of Kingswells as an investment location, a place where people want to live, work and visit.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 At the request of Aberdeen City Council a development bid was submitted in March 2009 for the expansion of Kingswells which identified that the sites, comprising approximately 139 hectares were suitable for development.
- 2.2 Following the publication of the Main Issues Report (MIR) the sites proposed were identified as site reference 3/05 with the western section of Huxterstone identified as 3/06. Specifically the area proposed by the development bid for expansion had been listed as sites: A - North West of Kingswells (Derbeth), B - Gillahill, C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone), and D - Fairley Road. The MIR identified sites: B - Gillahill, the western section of C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone) and D - Fairley Road as preferred options for development. Site A - North West of Kingswells (Derbeth) was not identified as a preferred option development. Representations were submitted in response to the publication of the MIR supporting the identification of the sites as preferred options for development; highlighting that Site A - Land to the North West of Kingswells was suitable to accommodate growth and accordingly requesting that it be allocated within the proposed Local Development Plan (LDP); and seeking the inclusion of the entire site at Huxterstone for development.
- 2.3 The proposed LDP was published for consultation in August 2010 however, only identified sites D - Fairley Road and the western part of C - Kingswells South (Huxterstone) for development. Due to school capacity figures the Council

considered that the site at Gillahill was undeliverable and failed to carry it forward for development.

- 2.4 Development proposals at Huxterstone and Fairley Road were discussed under Issue 30 of the reporter's recommendations. The Reporter considered that the principle of development on both sites had been established as they had both previously been allocated as Strategic Housing Land Reserve in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008). Consequently the Reporter recommended that the sites be allocated for development. However the allocation at Huxterstone was made as per its allocation in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008) and was not extended to the east as per the development bid. This development bid seeks to extend the allocation at Huxterstone to that shown above in Figure 1 (Area 3).
- 2.5 Development proposals at Gillahill and Derbeth were discussed in Issue 35 of the Reporter's recommendations. In discussing development at Gillahill, the Reporter acknowledged that the site is readily deliverable and would contribute to the housing land supply and may also accommodate a new primary school however, did not consider there to be numerical justification with regards to the housing land supply to allocate further housing sites. Consequently the Reporter found the site's green belt status to be justified.
- 2.6 The Reporter concluded that similar benefits could be secured through the development for housing of land at Derbeth, noting that the development of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) would secure good road access to the area. However, given that the review of the green belt included this area the reporter did not consider there to be over-riding benefits to justify allocation at that time.
- 2.7 This development bid now seeks the development of land at Derbeth for a mixed use development of 900 dwellings; land at Gillahill for the development of 600 dwellings and a primary school; and land at Huxterstone for the development of 60

dwellings as an extension to allocated site OP42. Indicative masterplans for the sites are shown below.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

3.1 This development bid relates to three distinct areas in Kingswells as highlighted in Figure 1 above. The total land covers over 137 hectares (340 acres).

3.2 Area 1: Derbeth lies to the north west of Kingswells and extends to approximately 89.5 hectares (221 acres). It is bound to the north by a shelter belt and pockets of woodland; to the east by open fields; to the south by fields, an access track and some residential dwellings; and to the east by the Kingswells distributor road which leads directly to the A944. Within this area lie a number of properties, including Fairley House, Fairley Home Farm and Derbeth Farm. The AWPR runs through this area of land with a junction proposed to the north east corner. This is due for completion in 2018.

3.3 In topographic terms, the land is undulating, but generally slopes from north west to south east and from north to south. To the south, the land is level before rising from south to north outwith the boundaries of the site. The aspect of the site is south and south east. There are a wide range of landscaped areas, comprising mature trees and drystone dykes throughout the site. From the A944 this land is screened by the topography of the land to the south, Prime Four Business Park and by the Park and Ride site. It becomes more visible as you travel along the distributor road, however good screening exists along parts of this road where there is mature landscaping. The urbanising effect of the development at Prime Four Business Park should be stressed at this point. The construction of tall units with large footprints alters the landscape character of Kingswells significantly, changing the surrounding area from the village/suburb it was, into a global energy hub accommodating international energy companies and other prestigious brands, such as the De Vere Group. The effect on the character of the area is dramatic and

redraws the settlement boundaries of Kingswells in a way that softens the impact of development on the bid sites, as they are seen in this changing urban context.

3.4 Within the extant LDP, this land is mainly identified as green belt, with small pockets to the north west and south identified as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

3.5 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

3.6 Area Two: Gillahill lies to the east of Kingswells and extends to approximately 39.5 hectares (97.6 acres). It is bound to the north and east by a mature tree belt and beyond this, existing dwellinghouses; to the south by open fields; and to the west by further woodland and built development. To the south also lies a farm track.

3.7 In topographic terms the site rises from north to south to a plateau within the site before rising again to a high point between the site and the Lang Stracht. A number of drystane dykes create a distinctive pattern of field boundaries. Within the extant Plan, this site is identified as Green Belt and Green Space Network.

3.8 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan

3.9 Area Three: Huxterstone lies to the south of Kingswells and extends to approximately 4.7 hectares (10.3 acres). It is bound to the north by an unclassified road which leads to the Lang Stracht to the east. This road is part of the Park and Ride bus route. Along this access road immediately adjacent to the bid site lies a cluster of dwellinghouses. To the east, the site is bound by open fields; to the south by a burn and existing development comprising dwelling houses, a public house

and garage along Old Skene Road; and, to the west by OP42 Huxterstone which was allocated for development in the adopted LDP. Following completion of OP42 the site will be bound to the west by development. Work is due to commence on Site OP42 in Autumn 2013

- 3.10 The site is relatively low lying and the land slopes from north to south, with a high point beyond the boundary of the site to the north beyond the cluster of dwellinghouses. There is also a ridge running north south to the west of the site. The land slopes west to east. The land reaches a low point around the line of the Den Burn to the south. The aspect of the site is south facing.
- 3.11 The site is identified within the extant LDP as lying within an area designated as Green Belt and Green Space Network. Development of this site would be seen as an extension of allocated site OP42 Huxterstone which lies to the west.
- 3.12 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 4.1 Paragraph 3 of SPP explains that the purpose of planning is to guide the future development and use of land. It states that *'planning is about where development should happen, where it should not and how it interacts with its surroundings'*. Paragraph 5 goes on to advise that the Scottish Government believe in the value of forward-looking, visionary and ambitious plans that will guide development. Development plans are discussed in paragraphs 10 – 21 of SPP which explains that their purpose is to *'guide the future use of land and the appearance of cities, towns and rural areas. They should indicate where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not.'* In monitoring development plans SPP directs local authorities to *'focus on what has changed for example the extent to which key assumptions remain valid, whether land allocations have provided viable and investment in infrastructure has been forthcoming. Monitoring should set the direction for the future review of the plan.'*
- 4.2 The Scottish Government are committed to sustainable development, paragraph 37 of SPP explains the important role the planning system has to play in supporting the achievement of sustainable development through its influence on the location, layout and design of new development. In deciding the locations of new development SPP directs local authorities to:
- Promote regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land,
 - Reduce the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel and transport opportunities,
 - Promote the development of mixed communities,
 - Take account of the capacity of existing infrastructure,
 - Promote rural development and regeneration, and
 - Prevent further development which would be at risk from flooding or coastal erosion.

- 4.3 Paragraph 40 explains that the *'settlement strategy set out in the development plan should promote a more sustainable pattern of growth for an area, taking account of the scale and type of development pressure and the need for growth and regeneration'*.
- 4.4 In discussing the delivery of new housing SPP states that *'the delivery of housing through the development plan to support the creation of sustainable mixed communities depends on a generous supply of appropriate and effective sites being made to meet the demand, and on the timely release of allocated sites'* (Paragraph 70). SPP goes on to explain that *'allocating a generous supply of land for housing in the development plan will give the flexibility necessary for the continued delivery of new housing even if unpredictable changes to the effective land supply occur during the lifetime of the plan'* (paragraph 71).
- 4.5 To support sustainable development SPP states that planning permission should not be granted for significant travel generating uses in locations which would encourage the private car and where access to public transport would involve walking more than 400m.
- 4.6 Green belts are discussed in paragraphs 159 - 170 of SPP which states that their purpose is to:
- direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration,
 - protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities, and
 - protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities.
- 4.7 SPP states that *'green belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable locations, not to prevent development from happening'* (paragraph 159).

Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport

- 4.8 Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport accompanies SPP. It states that planning authorities should establish accessibility profiles for sites. The profile should reflect the catchment areas served likely quality of service and result in indicators of accessibility. A maximum threshold of 1600 metres in terms of accessibility to local services by walking and cycling should be achieved for new developments.

5.0 STRUCTURE PLAN

- 5.1 The Structure Plan (2009) identifies a requirement for around 72,000 dwellings within the Structure Plan area over the next 20-25 years. Three Strategic Growth Areas (SGA's) are identified which will be the main focus for development and are expected to accommodate 75-80% of growth over the next 20 years and more. Around half of new development will be located within Aberdeen City, with significant development expected in the Aberdeen to Huntly SGA, Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA and the Aberdeen to Peterhead SGA.
- 5.2 The Structure Plan states that around half of the growth proposed will be located within Aberdeen City. The Plan states that within Aberdeen City 21,000 new homes should be built on greenfield sites in the period 2007 - 2030.
- 5.3 The Structure Plan also advocates sustainable mixed communities and seeks to achieve new development that meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.

6.0 PROPOSED ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FEBRUARY 2013)

- 6.1 Consultation into the proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) closed on 12th April 2013. Once adopted it will replace the approved Structure Plan. Accordingly it forms a material consideration in the determination of this development bid.
- 6.2 The proposed SDP carries forward the extant Structure Plan's vision for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. In doing so it also carries forward the aims and objectives of the extant plan.
- 6.3 The proposed SDP again identifies three SGA's. Aberdeen city is identified as accommodating around half of the growth proposed within the city region. Figure 1 of the proposed SDP states that 9,000 new homes should be build on greenfield sites in the City over the period 2017 - 2035.
- 6.4 As the proposed SDP has not identified any increase in allocation in terms of residential and employment land, it is the subject of objection from the development industry. Should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a reporter be minded to increase allocations made within the Strategic Development Plan, the LDP will fall short of meeting housing and employment land requirements.
- 6.5 In addition to this shortfall, there are significant concerns from the development industry that the 5 year housing land supply is not being maintained. Some sites which make up this supply are not effective, as defined by the Scottish Government¹. The 2013 Housing Land Audit clearly demonstrates the constraints facing some sites that make up the housing land supply, such as Greenferns, Greenferns Landward and Grandholme. If sites such as these fail to deliver as originally anticipated, the City Council will be required to identify new sites that are effective in order to make up the shortfall.

¹ Circular 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits

7.0 SERVICES

7.1 Drainage capacity is available through connections to the wider network although upgrades may be required. Extensions would be required and investigated as the planning process evolves.

7.2 SEPA's Flood Risk map, as shown in Figure 5 below highlights that there is no flood risk associated with any of the areas of land under consideration.

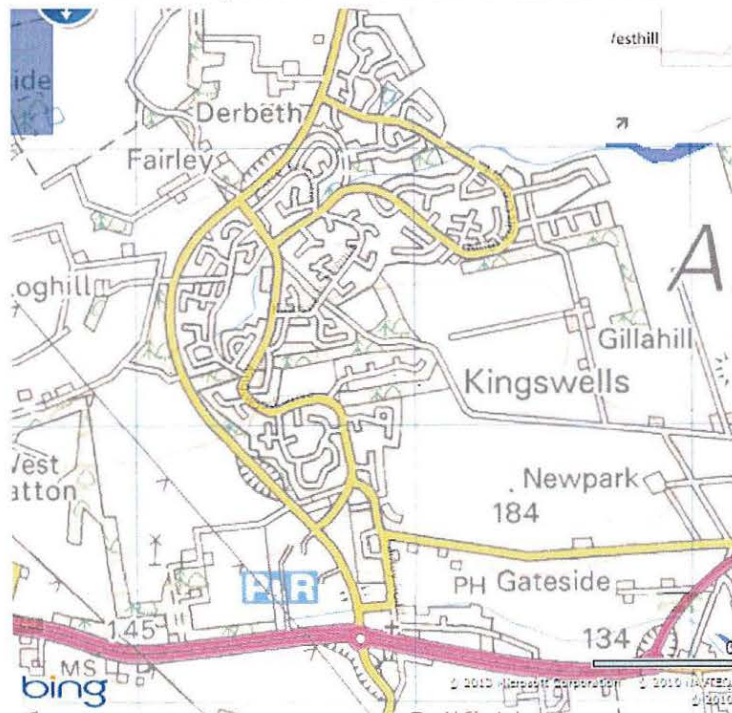


Figure 5: SEPA Flood Map

7.3 Kingswells lies in the catchment area for Bucksburn Academy which has an increasing school roll. However, pupils in Kingswells will be rezoned to the new Countesswells Academy in due course. Primary school provision for the Kingswells area is located at Kingswells Primary School which is currently operating above capacity however is forecast to fall to below capacity in 2018². The development at Gillahill proposes the development of a new primary school which would alleviate

² 2012-Based School Roll Forecasts, Aberdeen City

any school capacity issues. It is likely that should the sites be allocated and an application be submitted financial contributions would be sought by Aberdeen City Council to go towards education provision. As such, the development would not have a detrimental impact on the capacity of the local primary and secondary school.

8.0 JUSTIFICATION

- 8.1 It is considered that Kingswells is capable of accommodating further development. Kingswells not only lies in the Aberdeen City Strategic Growth Area, but it is well related to the city centre, being only four miles from it. It benefits from good links to the surrounding area and can therefore be accessed conveniently by a variety of transport modes.
- 8.2 As discussed in paragraph 6.1, consultation into the proposed SDP closed on 12th April 2013; as no increase to employment and residential allocations are proposed objections have been submitted by the development industry. These objections seek an increase in employment and residential allocations in keeping with the population projections. Should the Strategic Development Authority or reporter be minded to increase allocations there will be insufficient housing and employment land allocations within the LDP. As directed by SPP the review of the LDP should be ambitious and visionary, in doing so it should identify new greenfield allocations. As such, new allocations are required to meet the inevitable shortfall in housing land supply. Sites such as those proposed at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone, that can deliver development in the short term and continue to provide housing for local needs should be identified within the review of the LDP for development within the period 2017 - 2035. Doing so would ensure that the review of the LDP maintains an adequate housing land supply. The review of the LDP should also be an opportunity to review the effectiveness of existing allocations to ensure the 5 year housing land supply is being maintained. Simply rolling forward allocations that

have shown a persistent ineffectiveness, such as those at Greenferns and Grandholme, will only serve to create artificial bottlenecks in the supply of new housing land. These large allocations absorb large portions of the housing demand and yet are not delivering these houses on the ground. The review of the LDP should also include a review of these allocations and, if they shown to be ineffective, then new allocations should be brought forward to ensure the homes required in the area are provided for by the planning system.

- 8.3 Further development in Kingswells is justified. Following the completion of OP42 in 2017 there will be no new sites within Kingswells for development. Given the development of employment land at OP40 (50ha) is the largest employment land release within in the extant LDP it is logical to identify further land releases within Kingswells to provide housing in proximity to employment and to maximise on investment made in infrastructure. In addition to this the development of further housing in Kingswells in proximity to this employment land would encourage sustainable living and contribute to creating a sustainable community; in doing so it will encourage businesses to locate to the business park being developed at OP40, in keeping with the objectives of both the extant Structure Plan and the proposed SDP which aim to make the region a more attractive location for businesses to move to.

Area One: Derbeth

- 8.4 In the first instance, there is strong justification for the removal of this land from the green belt. As recognised by SPP the objective of green belt policy is to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations. This location is considered appropriate for development due to its proximity to the AWPR. A junction is proposed to the north east of the site, therefore opening up this area for further development. Although this land extends to just less than 90 hectares, the majority of this land lies to the west of the AWPR and will remain free from development. Any development will be located to the east of the AWPR and covers approximately 35 hectares. This amounts to less than 40% of the total landholding in this area.

The AWPR will provide a defensible boundary to the green belt with development contained between the AWPR and the existing settlement boundary.

- 8.5 As directed by SPP green belt policy also aims to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. The development of the AWPR at this location will significantly affect the character, landscape setting and identity of this area. The land between the AWPR and the existing distributor road will therefore become a suitable and sustainable location for further development. The indicative masterplan shown in Figure 2 demonstrates that the development will create sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development. This will create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and provide a new landscape and identity for Kingswells. Further landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a formal masterplan for the site.
- 8.6 Access opportunities to the wider countryside will be affected by the development of the AWPR at this location. The land identified for development to the east of the proposed AWPR would not provide attractive land for access and recreational opportunities and its contribution to the aims of the green belt would be diminished. It is therefore an ideal location for development. As shown on the indicative masterplan in Figure 2 landscaping and open space proposed as part of this development will provide a network of meaningful open space providing access and recreation opportunities for the local community within a wider development network.
- 8.7 During consultation into the current LDP Aberdeen City Council previously raised concerns relating to landscape and visual impact of development and its detachment from the existing community; despite acknowledging during their analysis of the site that it did not conflict with existing surrounding uses.

- 8.8 As recognised above, the AWPR will permanently alter the landscape of the area and any impacts arising on the sensitive landscapes to the north and west, particularly Brimmond Hill are likely to arise as a direct result of the AWPR rather than any development at Derbeth. Development at Derbeth will infill the area between the existing settlement and the proposed AWPR. Importantly however, specific areas of the site which are considered sensitive to development will be kept free of development. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the site was previously undertaken which confirmed that the proposed development should be located to the lower areas with any development on higher ground to be orientated away from the most sensitive landscape and visual receptors in the area, particularly Brimmond Hill. It considered that the AWPR, which lies to the west of the proposed development mainly on higher ground, will, with its associated landscaping, form a vegetated back drop to the development when viewed from Kingswells. In addition, the AWPR landscape will form a linear feature between the proposed development and Brimmond Hill.
- 8.9 Previous criticism that the site will be detached from the existing Kingswells village is refuted. Like development at OP40, it lies to the west of the existing bypass, but traffic using this route following completion of the AWPR will be significantly reduced thereby enabling formation of new junctions serving the existing and proposed developments and enhanced pedestrian and cycle linkages between the two. There are already footpath networks connecting through the proposed development site. These will be safeguarded and enhanced with the proposed development. Indeed, the development proposed at Derbeth provides an opportunity to improve the connectivity between the existing village and the countryside area lying beyond the AWPR, particularly Brimmond Hill.
- 8.10 Integration with the existing community can be achieved through the physical design of the development. The range of uses proposed for the site will also encourage integration with the provision of employment opportunities for the wider community and the facilities and services provided as part of the development

being available and accessible to all Kingswells residents. New developments in Kingswells, such as Prime Four, are also easily integrated with the bid site and indeed help integrate the bid site with the wider community thereby ensuring the settlement expands in the most organic and sustainable way.

- 8.11 The AWPR represents a significant investment in the north east of Scotland and many of the development sites identified in the LDP are predicated upon completion of that route. Kingswells will enjoy a high level of connectivity with the route through the grade separated junction proposed to the west on the A944 and also the half diamond grade separated junction proposed to the north. A strategy promoting the long term growth of Kingswells would therefore make maximum use of that investment by utilising the spare capacity created on the network. As directed by SPP new developments should be located in such areas where they can maximise opportunities to take advantage of investment made in infrastructure.
- 8.12 Kingswells is also well served by public transport, both through a town service and a park and ride service. On completion of Prime Four and the AWPR public transport services are likely to be enhanced, particularly services connecting key communities and employment locations on the periphery of the city. Derbeth is capable of being connected to that network to ensure that all residential development lies within 400 metres of a bus route as required by SPP.

Area Two: Gillahill

- 8.13 In 1991 the adopted Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan designated the site as falling within a GB2 "Countryside Around Towns" area. These areas were identified to accommodate the future development requirements of the city because of the limited contribution made to the landscape setting of the city. The most recent expansion of Kingswells was drawn entirely from areas of 'Countryside Around Towns' as defined in that Plan thereby setting a precedent for development in these areas.

- 8.14 In the period between then and the adoption of the LDP, Aberdeen City Council made various attempts to replace the 1991 Local Plan. A finalised version of the Aberdeen City Local Plan, published in September 1999 in conformity with the now superseded Grampian Structure Plan identified the site as an area of 'Strategic Reserve'. Similar to the Countryside Around Towns designation these areas were specifically identified as land that may be required in the longer term for development. That plan never progressed to adoption following the preparation and approval of the Aberdeen Structure Plan (NEST) 2001-2016.
- 8.15 To conform to the extant Structure Plan a modified finalised Local Plan was published in August 2002. In that plan the site at Gillahill, along with all the land lying in the Kingswells, Newhills corridor reverted to Green Belt. This was despite the Council's own Aberdeen Green Belt Review recommending that the site be removed from the Green Belt. This plan was also subsequently abandoned by the Council.
- 8.16 In August 2004 Aberdeen City Council published the finalised Aberdeen Local Plan, Green Spaces – New Places. This Plan identified the northern part of the Gillahill site for residential development in the period 2000-2010. The southern part of the site was identified as a future new community capable of accommodating 230 houses post-2010. The stated intention for the development of the site was to create a more sustainable community, which was capable of supporting its own community facilities and employment area.
- 8.17 The northern part of the Gillahill site was initially identified to accommodate 200 units. That was subsequently reduced to 170 units as a consequence of the limited capacity at Kingswells Primary School. Following public consultation on the finalised Plan, planning officers recommended that the entire site be re-designated as a future new community suitable for development post-2010. Following a Public Inquiry into the plan the site was excluded from the adopted Plan and the land identified as falling within the Green Belt and Green Space Network.

- 8.18 Land at Gillahill was subsequently identified as being suitable for development during the consultation into the LDP where the MIR identified it as a preferred option for development. It was not carried forward for development due to school capacity concerns. It is clear from the consultation into the extant LDP that the only impediment envisaged by the Council to the development of the land at Gillahill is the capacity of the existing primary school. The Council's previous assessment of the site and its inclusion in the MIR as a preferred site, suggests that in every other respect they consider the site capable of development. This reflects their longstanding view on the development potential of the land at Gillahill.
- 8.19 The key issue which has repeatedly been a stumbling block to the development of the land at Gillahill is the capacity of the existing primary school. During the consultation into the extant LDP TPS Planning were appointed to undertake an Education Impact Analysis of development at Gillahill. The analysis assessed achievable ways for accommodating the primary pupil product arising from the Gillahill development in line with the development economics of the site, including the prospect of changing school catchment areas and/or changing the existing primary school provision in the area. The report concludes that a new single stream primary school should be accommodated on the development site. Managed with the existing primary school this would ensure that the pupil product of the Gillahill site and the residual/overflow from the existing school could be accommodated in the proposed school at Gillahill. The scale of development necessary to provide a primary school would dictate the capacity of the Gillahill site to be 600 units. The site can accommodate this whilst reflecting the design policies of Aberdeen City Council.
- 8.20 A Transportation Appraisal was previously undertaken to inform the LDP which confirmed that the site is capable of being satisfactorily accessed and served by public transport. It demonstrated that the entire development of up to 600 houses can be accommodated in advance of the AWPR. It identified that some mitigation

would be required on the local road network, particularly the junction of the Kingswells bypass with the A944. All of these works, however, were capable of being carried out within the confines of the currently adopted road and indeed have now been undertaken as part of the Prime Four development.

- 8.21 The inclusion of the Gillahill site for development during the period 2017 - 2035 would ensure that there is sufficient land allocations should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a Reporter be minded to increase allocations proposed by the SDP. Should this happen the Review of the LDP, without any new greenfield allocations, would fall short in delivering new land for housing. New sites also require to be identified to address the emerging shortfall in the housing land supply as a consequence of a number of larger sites failing to come forward within the timescales anticipated.
- 8.22 The site at Gillahill lies immediately adjacent to the existing community and is ideally placed to maximise on current investment in infrastructure being made at Kingswells. Furthermore it is well placed in proximity to development at OP40 to take advantage of employment opportunities available thus contributing to creating a sustainable community.
- 8.23 The land is currently in agricultural use for grazing purposes. There are no landscape or visual impact issues constraining the development of the site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the site was previously undertaken to inform consultation into the extant LDP it concluded that the landscape and visual impact of the development is medium which can be mitigated by the implementation of strategic landscaping.
- 8.24 In terms of the Green Space Network designation of the site, current policy aims to protect and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of these areas. It was the intention of the Council to identify the most important wildlife and recreation sites as Green Space Network. At present the site does not meet the

objectives of the Green Space Network as it does not add value to the provision, protection, and enhancement of open space and habitats nor does it enable connectivity of open space or habitat. As such it is evident that this land is not particularly important in these terms as it would not have been identified for development in previous plans if it was. Despite this the indicative masterplan shown in Figure 3 safeguards and enhances this area creating footpath connections between the site, the community and areas of open space within the site.

- 8.25 Mature tree belts existing to the north and east will contain development and soften the appearance of the development. The woodland shelter belt to the north will partially screen development from close and distant views whilst the woodland to the west will act as a backdrop to development. The landscape framework is defined by the distinctive pattern of field boundaries formed by drystone dykes and these will be incorporated into the layout and design of the development to create a distinctive residential environment.
- 8.26 Linked footpaths and a network of open space through the site is important and where possible will utilise historic routes defined by drystone dykes. This will be further enhanced by landscaping. Development would maintain the cohesion of Kingswells with minimal impact on the setting of the city.
- 8.27 In locational terms the site forms a natural expansion of the existing settlement set within a mature landscape framework. It lies close to, and would enjoy good pedestrian links with the centre of the village where a range of services can be found. Public transport services currently lie along Kingswells Crescent which lies within 400 metres of the site in line with SPP.
- 8.28 A number of supporting studies have previously been prepared for this land, including drainage and transportation assessments and an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts. These confirm that there are no traffic, infrastructure

or landscaping issues which cannot be adequately addressed. Therefore, it is argued that the potential of this site to accommodate development has been recognised by the Council since 1991. Given this acknowledgement, it should continue to be allocated for development through the Review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

8.29 SPP states that the aim of green belt policy is to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. Landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a masterplan for the site and will provide sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development to create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and form a defensible boundary to the settlement.

8.30 As recognised by SPP the other objectives of a green belt are to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations; and protect and give access to open space. At present the site at Gillahill does not meet the objectives of green belt policy. It does not direct growth to the most appropriate location and it does not provide access or protect areas of open space. As demonstrated by the indicative masterplan in Figure 4 development of the site will enable areas of open space to be created which will be accessible for all of the community to use. Furthermore it enables development to occur in a location which is in proximity to both the existing settlement and services within the settlement; accordingly it is an ideal location for development. As such the site should be removed from the green belt and allocated for development in the Review of the LDP.

8.31 As recognised by the Reporter during the examination into the extant LDP a number of benefits would accrue as a result of this development including a new primary school. Consequently it should be removed from the green belt and allocated for the development of 600 units of housing and a new primary school.

Area Three: Huxterstone

- 8.32 The suitability of land at Huxterstone for development is established and it is considered that land to the east of the existing allocation (OP42) should be allocated as an extension of OP42. As previously outlined the site is bound to the north by an unclassified road which leads to the Lang Stracht (the A944) to the east. Along this access road, immediately adjacent to the site, lies a cluster of dwellinghouses. The Den Burn runs along the southern section of site, alongside an area of rough grass and a line of trees which separate the site from an area of existing development beyond, including a public house and garage along Old Skene Road. To the west, the site is bound by OP42 and to the east, the site is bound by open fields.
- 8.33 With regards to the accessibility of the site and its proximity to the local services available in Kingswells; the site is well related to the existing built up area and is situated in close proximity to the local road and transport network as well as the local shop and services available along Kingswood Drive. The local services, which include a primary school, medical practice and local shop, are easily accessible from the site within a walking distance of approximately 1400 metres, within the 1600 metre threshold set by PAN 75, in terms of access to services by walking and cycling. The local bus network is also accessible on foot, with a number of bus stops available along Fairley Road and the Kingswells Park and Ride is also within walking distance of the site. This encourages sustainable travel in line with SPP. A number of First Bus services also operate along the bus-only section of the Lang Stracht directly to the north of the site, connecting Kingswells to Aberdeen City and the Bridge of Don Park and Ride.
- 8.34 As discussed above, the site is well related to the existing built up area, with existing development to the north and south of the site. It is therefore an ideal location for further residential development in Kingswells. It is acknowledged, however, that development in this area should respect the surrounding landscape and endeavour to protect the public views of Kingswells from the east. Taking this into consideration, it is proposed to incorporate areas of landscaping and open

space, including a shelter belt along the eastern boundary of the site. This will screen the proposed development from the south and east and also provide an attractive residential environment for future residents. An extension to the riverside walk along the Den Burn to the south of the site is also proposed, with further walkways provided to promote pedestrian movement through the site and to enhance connections to the Core Path Network and the wider Kingswells area. It should be noted that the site also benefits from a south facing aspect, with the land rising in a northerly direction. Consequently, any development on the site would be well contained and will not breach the skyline.

8.35 During the consultation into the LDP concerns were noted that land to the east of OP42 residential use would develop too far to the east of Kingswells. This is disputed. The proposed site is well related to the existing built up area, with existing development to the north and south of the site. Following completion of OP42 the site will be bound on three sides by development. It is acknowledged that development in this area should respect the surrounding landscape and endeavour to protect the public views of Kingswells from the east; and it is therefore proposed to incorporate areas of landscaping and open space, including a shelter belt along the eastern boundary of the site. This will screen the proposed development from the south and east and also provide an attractive residential environment for future residents. A continuation of the riverside walk along the Den Burn to the south of the site is also proposed to be extended, with further walkways provided to promote pedestrian movement through the site and to enhance connections to the Core Path network, land to the west and the wider Kingswells area. The proposed boundary of the site also ensures adequate land is retained between the site and other proposed developments to the east of Kingswells, so as to mitigate any issues of coalescence.

8.36 To enable development the site should be removed from the green belt. SPP stated that *'green belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable*

locations, not prevent development from happening'. At present the designation is preventing development from happening in this location which is considered to be a suitable location to accommodate further growth in Kingswells. As such, the green belt designation is not contributing to the settlement strategy for the area. Removal of the site from the green belt will allow for an extension of OP42 and in doing so create a number of benefits.

9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

- 9.1 In conclusion Kingswells is an appropriate area for further expansion. It enjoys good links with the surrounding area, including Dyce, Westhill and Aberdeen. Its close proximity to Aberdeen makes it an ideal location to absorb development pressure. Furthermore as noted above it is the location for one of the largest employment land releases within the extant Plan at OP40 and further development would support this and maximise on investments made.
- 9.2 As discussed above objections have been submitted in response to the proposed SDP in response to its failure to increase employment and housing land allocations. Should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a reporter be minded to increase allocations the review of the LDP will have insufficient allocations to meet the requirements. Allocation of land at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone for development will ensure that the review of the LDP does not fall short in delivering further land for development. It will also ensure that development in Kingswells continues past 2017 thereby enabling a sustainable community to be delivered.
- 9.3 On completion of the AWPR Derbeth will become infill land. It will be contained by the road to the west and the existing settlement to the east and the proposed junction to the north east will provide convenient access to the area opening up both development potential and the site for the local community should it be developed.

- 9.4 Gillahill has been recognised by various Local Plans as a suitable location for further development, only failing to receive favourable allocations at proposed plan stage due to concerns regarding primary school capacity. As discussed above a primary school is proposed on site which would alleviate any concerns regarding primary school capacity issues. This is a significant benefit if the proposal.
- 9.5 An extension at OP42 Huxterstone is also justified. Following completion of development at OP42 the site will be bound on three sides by development thus forming a logical area for expansion with sufficient distance between it and development to east to avoid coalescence.
- 9.6 To enable the development of the above sites their green belt designations should be removed. All three sites are well connected to Kingswells, and as development would be of a high standard resulting in a number of benefits, including a new primary school, areas of open space, extension to country park and river side walk, the loss of this land from the greenbelt would not be detrimental to the character and amenity of the settlement.
- 9.7 A number of benefits would accrue as a consequence of development at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone. This with the likelihood that the Review of the LDP will fall short in meeting housing land supply requirements should allocations be increased in the proposed SDP, justifies the removal of these sites from the green belt. It is therefore respectfully requested that sites at Derbeth, Gillahill and Huxterstone are identified for development in the Review of the LDP.

PAPER APART

Representation to Aberdeen City Council on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in Response to the failure of the Main Issues Report to identify Area 3 (Huxterstone) of Development Option B0303 Kingswells Community Expansion as a Preferred Site for Residential Use

Introduction & Background

Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of Aberdeen City Council to recognise the land at Huxterstone (Area 3 of Development Option B0303) as an opportunity site for residential development within the Main Issues Report published in January 2014. This objection requires to be considered in conjunction with the accompanying objection made by Stewart Milne Homes submitted in respect to Issue 1 of the MIR pertaining to Greenfield Housing Allocations.

This Development Bid was submitted to the local authority in June 2013 as per the Council's request for Development Option sites. The area at Huxterstone was part of a combined bid alongside two other sites at Derbeth and Gillahill, all of which were subsequently deemed as undesirable through the technical response issued within the Development Options Assessment Report published as a supplementary document to the Main Issues Report (MIR).

The site was classified as undesirable by the MIR for reasons relating to a continuation of residential development and not contributing to a suitable land use mix, with local facilities located over 800m away from the site. It is considered that this reasoning lacks substance, the reasons for which are detailed within this document.

The Development Option site excluded in this instance has been previously designated for the expansion of Kingswells through its inclusion within the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan 2004 as a 'Future New Community' for development post-2010. In light of this, the site was included within a draft indicative Masterplan document produced by Stewart Milne Homes in 2009 depicting a proposed expansion of Kingswells, considered as beneficial to the Aberdeen City Strategic Growth Area.

The site had been forwarded to the Council for consideration within the MIR 2009 as a cohesive bid accompanying the land at West Huxterstone. The West Huxterstone site was subsequently identified as site OP42 within the Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) for the development of 120 homes and adopted by the finalised extant plan. However, the eastern area of the site was excluded from the Proposed LDP.

Despite a further representation from Stewart Milne Homes objecting to the failure of the Proposed LDP to identify the eastern segment of the site, it was excluded from the Adopted LDP after a meeting of the Council's Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee in May 2010, reverting to concerns over coalescence. A further representation was lodged to object to the exclusion of the segment of site from the adopted LDP, but was subsequently overlooked and the site formally excluded.

MIR Context

The proposed bid site was poorly marked by the Council within its technical Development Option Assessment Report stating that it would propose more residential which would be *'unlikely to contribute to a better mix or balance of uses'*. This argument is refuted and it is recommended that the site is designated within the Proposed LDP as extension to Opportunity Site 42 identified within the extant LDP with the objective of achieving growth targets set out in the current Structure Plan which requires the release of greenfield land. The extension of the site to the east through the inclusion of this bid site was previously adjudged by the Council to indicate coalescence within an area of green belt land which separates Kingswells with Aberdeen.

The bid site at east Huxterstone has been previously identified by the local authority for community development and expansion as outlined above, therefore the concept of residential development on the site has been accepted in principle. The indicative masterplan for the site illustrates a substantial enhancement and area of tree planting to the east of the site, therefore establishing a definitive boundary and physical border which segregates Kingswells from any future development which may occur further east, such as at Maidencraig. This strategic planting and sensitive landscaping deployed in this instance identifies an appropriate mitigation strategy in preventing coalescence with the western perimeter of Aberdeen and ensuring a boundary with the green belt to the east is suitably imposed.

Additionally, it should be noted that the area was awarded a score of 51 out of a possible 60 by the Council's Checklist within the Development Option Assessment Report published alongside the MIR, and therefore represents a viable option for inclusion within the Proposed LDP for the development of 60 homes. Indeed, each of the sites listed within Table 3 of the MIR as 'Preferred Development Options at Peterculter' scored significantly lower than the bid site at Huxterstone, which provides justification for its inclusion.

Current Land Designation

The bid site currently falls within designated Green Belt (NE2) as designated with the extant LDP and is comprised of two arable fields, bound by a shelterbelt to the south and a bus-only extension of Lang Stracht to the north, with open countryside occupying the landscape to the east.

It is recommended that the site's designation as green belt should be removed and the site promoted for residential use incorporating open space, play parks, enhanced shelterbelt planting and river walks along the Den Burn in the southern perimeters of the area. This would complement the development to the west, which is currently under construction, and contribute to the complete delivery of the proposed masterplan produced by Stewart Milne Homes.

Within paragraph 159 of the current SPP document, it is stated that the green belt should direct growth to the most appropriate locations; protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity as well as protecting and giving access to open space areas around towns and

cities. The current green belt land operates solely as non-descript grazing farmland and demonstrates minimal integration with Kingswells, offering no existing pedestrian footpaths or countryside walks which may utilise the woodland on site. The Core Path network is located to the south of the site along Old Skene Road but is inaccessible due to the presence of the Den Burn.

It is argued that the development of a sustainable residential area or 'Future New Community', as identified by the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan (2004), which incorporates enhanced connectivity with Kingswells and its wider area, would represent a more functional and efficient use of green belt land in comparison with that of present.

The bid site was previously included within the Green Space Network (GSN29) by the 2008 Local Plan, with this designation removed by the extant LDP and restricted to the linear shelterbelt which forms the southern boundary of the site. This indicates lesser value attributed to the land, hence increasing its viability and potential for development.

Further Justification

It is reasoned that the site should score higher within the proximity to facilities category within the Council's Checklist criteria as it is located within 900m of the village centre on Kingswood Drive and within 400m of the nearest bus stop on Fairley Road, hence complying with the standards laid out within PAN75: Planning for Transport.

Additionally, the site is recognised as being highly accessible, gaining direct access to the bus-only stretch of Lang Stracht which bounds the site to the north and could accommodate further bus stops to facilitate travel in both directions. This route may also be used by cyclists and pedestrians which illustrates the intention of the area to discourage the use of the private car, in line with the current SPP.

Vehicular access shall be taken from the north of the site and referred in a westerly direction in order to minimise the impact on the bus-only part of the Lang Stracht. Additionally, traffic will be referred through the West Huxterstone site, contributing to the exclusivity of the Lang Stracht bounding the site to the north. The Kingswells Park & Ride facility is located approximately 350m west. Therefore it is maintained that local facilities lie within the proximity of the bid site, with sufficient transport links available to enable mobility of residents within the proposed development.

Strategic landscaping on site, depicted through the indicative masterplan including woodland and river walks integrating the Den Burn with the area for development, shall enhance the connectivity of Huxterstone both internally as well as opening links to the Core Path network located along Old Skene Road to the south, providing improved accessibility to the centre of Kingswells and its wider area. Increased green space provision on site complies with guidance laid out by PAN65: Planning & Open Space, with new woodland features being planted and existing areas improved and enhanced in order to formulate an attractive and useable environment for future residents.

The proposed prominent shelterbelts in the west as well as that marking the eastern boundary would, in addition to that currently defining the southern boundary, serve to integrate the development into the surrounding landscape and complement its environmental setting.

The OP42 West Huxterstone Masterplan published by Aberdeen City Council in November 2012 provides a basis into which the promoted site at east Huxterstone can integrate. This shall materialise through the utilisation of future infrastructure in order to enhance vehicular and pedestrian connectivity throughout the site, augmenting the nature of Den Burn Character Area via new tree and shelterbelt planting as well as the extension of woodland walking networks, contributing to the reinforcement of the designated Green Space Network.

The site is generally low lying and south facing, with development not adjudged to breach the skyline when viewed within the context of the village. This enhances screening when viewed from the Lang Stracht in the east and the A944 to the south, therefore ensuring the visual protrusion of the site to the east is minimised.

The site at east Huxterstone represents a viable extension to the OP42 area which is currently subject to two current planning applications, affirming the effective delivery of the proposed development use. The designation of the site at east Huxterstone for the development of 60 dwellings would make a valid contribution to the shortfall of the greenfield housing allowances as depicted by the MIR in order to accommodate the projected population growth within Aberdeen City & Shire up to the year 2035 and maintain a sustainable 5 year housing supply.

Summary

It has been made clear through designations as a 'Future New Community' within the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan (2004) that the Council accepts the principle of residential development upon the Huxterstone site. The inclusion of the site in the forthcoming Proposed LDP for 60 dwellings and associated open space and strategic landscaping is recommended in order to progress the growth of Kingswells and accommodate the projected population increases within the Aberdeen City & Shire region up to 2035.

The site is well integrated with the existing Kingswells settlement and its proposed use shall complement its setting within the broader landscape. Accessibility is observed as being at optimum levels, with local facilities within Kingswells easily reached by future residents with the areas of Westhill, Dyce and Aberdeen City Centre readily available via the existing public transport and local road network.

The proposal indicates a viable and prudent extension to the Kingswells settlement which utilises existing infrastructure as promoted by SPP and is closely located to the Prime Four development, located 800m to the west. Additional dwellings hold the potential to complement this designated

employment land, providing employees with housing nearby which enhances Kingswells as an effective sustainable community in which to live and work.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the site's current designation within the extant LDP as Green Belt (NE2) should be removed and the area included within the Proposed LDP as an opportunity site for 60 homes.

Furthermore, the Huxterstone site should be identified and developed within a long term framework detailing the appropriate expansion of the Kingswells settlement through appropriate service provision and infrastructure needs.

Development Bid Site at Huxterstone, Kingswells

Transport Appraisal




May 2015



FAIRHURST

CONTROL SHEET

CLIENT: Stewart Milne Homes
PROJECT TITLE: Development Bid Site at Huxterstone, Kingswells
REPORT TITLE: Transport Appraisal
PROJECT REFERENCE: 110178
DOCUMENT NUMBER: 110178 TApp02

Issue & Approval Schedule	ISSUE 2		Name	Signature	Date	
	Prepared by	M Peters			29/05/15	
	Checked by	R McDonald			29/05/15	
	Approved by	R McDonald			29/05/15	
Revision Record	Rev.	Date	Status	Description	Signature	
	2	29/05/15	FINAL	Minor amendments following client review	By	KC
					Checked	RMcD
					Approved	RMcD
					By	
					Checked	
					Approved	

This document has been prepared in accordance with procedure OP/P02 of the *Fairhurst Quality and Environmental Management System*

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	General	1
1.2	Site Location	1
1.3	Development Proposal	1
2	Transport Planning Policy Context	3
2.1	National Planning Policy	3
2.2	Regional Policy	4
2.3	Local Policy	5
3	Site Accessibility Review	8
3.1	The Site	8
3.2	Pedestrian Network	8
3.3	Cycling Network	8
3.4	Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access	9
3.5	Public Transport Accessibility	9
3.6	Existing Local Road Network	11
3.7	Committed Transport Infrastructure	11
3.8	Potential Road Improvements	12
3.9	Site Access	12
4	Summary and Conclusions	13
4.1	Summary	13
4.2	Conclusion	13

Tables

Table 3-1: Local Bus Service Information	10
--	----

Enclosures

Diagram A: Walking & Cycling Accessibility Map

Diagram B: Local Bus Routes & Stops

1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in support of a potential development site at Huxterstone, Kingswells. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the site's accessibility in accordance with transport planning guidance, with a view to demonstrating that the site is in a location which will encourage travel in a sustainable manner, reducing car dependency. The report also considers vehicular access to the site and opportunities to improve the surrounding road network in conjunction with its development.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The Huxterstone site lies to the east of Kingswells adjacent to the pending West Huxterstone development for 97 houses. Figure 1-1 below shows the site location and confirms that in locational terms the site forms a natural expansion of the existing settlement. Figure 1-1 also identifies the route of the strategic Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) which is under construction and will be complete by winter 2017.

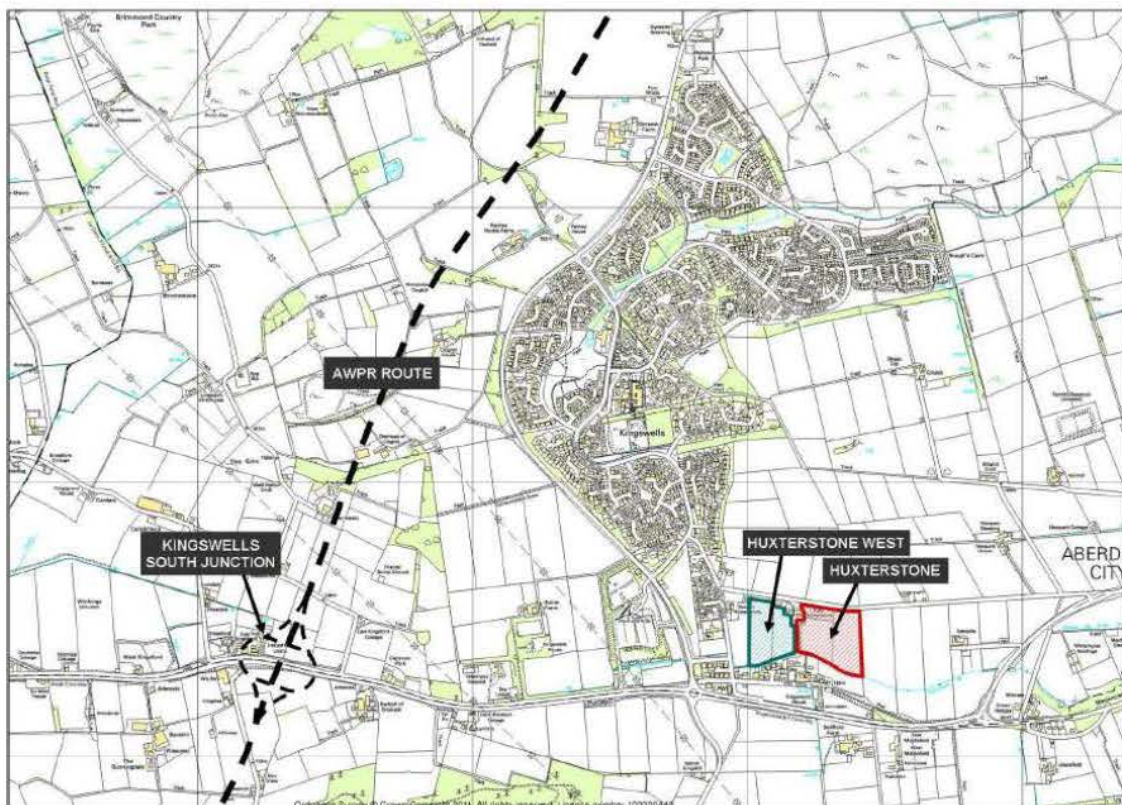


Figure 1-1: Site Location Plan

1.3 Development Proposal

1.3.1 The site is proposed for development of a high quality village expansion that will create a unique environment that complements the existing character of the local

area. Development of 90 houses is proposed which can be served readily by extensions to existing networks and can easily integrate with the existing community.

2 Transport Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Policy Context is principally defined by 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP), and Scottish Planning Advice Note 75 (PAN 75) 'Planning for Transport'. The Scottish Government documents 'Transport Assessment Guidance' and 'Designing Streets' are also of relevance.
- 2.1.2 The Scottish Government's 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP) issued in June 2014 replaces SPP (2010) and Designing Places (2001). SPP identifies the Scottish Government's overarching aim to increase sustainable economic growth within Scotland.
- 2.1.3 SPP revolves around the principal policies – sustainability and placemaking. In considering how planning should support the vision, the document outlines the key outcomes that developments need to contribute to:
- *'A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and creation of well-designed, sustainable places.'*
 - *'A low carbon place – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.'*
 - *'A natural, resilient place – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their use.'*
 - *'A more connected place – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.'*
- 2.1.4 The 'Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel' section of SPP stresses the importance of efficient transport connections within Scotland and to international markets, and the crucial role that planning plays to improving such infrastructure. The section goes on to identify within paragraph 270 that the planning system should support developments that:
- *'optimise the use of existing infrastructure;*
 - *reduce the need to travel;*
 - *provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport;*
 - *enable the integration of transport modes'.*
- 2.1.5 Paragraph 273 notes that *'the spatial strategies set out in plans should support development in locations that allow walkable access to local amenities and are also accessible by cycling and public transport. Plans should identify active travel networks and promote opportunities for travel by more sustainable modes in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, cars.'*
- 2.1.6 SPP notes in paragraph 287 that *'Planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:*
- *direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;*
 - *access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400m'*

- 2.1.7 PAN 75 identifies the need for the integration of land use planning with transport, taking into account policies on economic growth, education, health and the objective of a more inclusive society.
- 2.1.8 PAN 75 identifies in Annex B the undemoted thresholds:
- *‘For accessibility of public transport the recommended guidelines are less than 400m to bus services;*
- 2.1.9 PAN 75 indicates that *‘Travel Plans are documents that set out a package of positive and complementary measures, for the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns for a specific development.’* It further states that *‘their ability and success in influencing travel patterns is dependent upon the commitment of the developer and occupier of a development.’* For residential land uses, PAN 75 notes at paragraph 43 that *‘travel plans may set out measures which will be used as an incentive to house purchasers to use non-car travel modes, but setting targets is generally not practicable for this land use. Sustainability in housing should come through design in relation to walking, cycling and public transport networks’.*
- 2.1.10 Transport Assessment Guidance (TAG) has been published by Transport Scotland to guide the preparation of Transport Assessments (TA) for development proposals in Scotland. Paragraph 1.8 notes that the TA process *‘is directed towards successful delivery of development-related transport measures aimed at achieving sustainable transport outcomes.’* It further notes that the *‘process incorporates scoping, transport assessment and implementation including travel plans and monitoring.’*
- 2.1.11 TAG identifies that *‘Journey times of up to 20-30 mins are appropriate for walking and 30-40 mins for cycling’.*
- 2.1.12 ‘Designing Streets’ sets out Scottish Government policy to be followed in designing and approving the layout of settlements. The Scottish Government’s policy emphasises that street design should meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in Designing Places. The six qualities and key considerations are summarised as follows:
- *Distinctive – street design should respond to local context to deliver places that are distinctive*
 - *Safe and pleasant – streets should be designed to be safe and attractive place*
 - *Easy to move around – streets should be easy to move around for all users and connect well to existing networks*
 - *Welcoming – streets layout and detail should encourage positive interaction for all members of the community*
 - *Adaptable – street networks should be designed to accommodate future adaptation*
 - *Resource Efficient – street design should consider orientation, the integration of sustainable drainage and use attractive, durable materials that can be easily maintained.*

2.2 Regional Policy

- 2.2.1 Regional Policy for the proposed development is largely defined by:
- Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (March 2014)
 - NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (June 2008)

- 2.2.2 The Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) identifies 'four strategic growth areas' (SGA) which will be the focus of development in the area up to 2035. The SDP notes, '*The strategic growth areas are centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes.*' The SDP also aims to '*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.*'
- 2.2.3 The Strategic Development Plan identifies the undernoted objectives:-
- '*To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses*
 - '*To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and business to move to.*
 - '*To make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices.*'
- 2.2.4 The SDP endorses the role of 'Sustainable mixed communities' in making sure that '*new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.*'
- 2.2.5 The NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (RTS) identifies within its four Strategic Objectives the requirements to:
- '*to enhance and exploit the North East's competitive economic advantages, and to reduce the impacts of peripherality*
 - '*enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited*
 - '*support transport integration and a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east*'
- 2.2.6 In identifying an 'Internal Connections Strategy' the RTS sets out key initiatives aimed at improving transport infrastructure within the City and Shire. These are focussed on improvements to public transport aimed at delivering economic, environmental and social inclusion benefits, with construction of the Western Peripheral Route facilitating the delivery of complementary transport measures as well as contributing '*to the economy and sustainable communities across the north east.*' It also sets out a detailed programme for the delivery of additional park and ride sites and improved bus services aimed at maximising the identified benefits of reducing congestion, improving air quality and broadening travel choices.

2.3 Local Policy

- 2.3.1 Local Policy that would guide development is largely defined by:
- The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan – (February 2012)
 - Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (March 2008)
 - ALDP Supplementary Guidance 'Transport and Accessibility' – (March 2012)

- 2.3.2 The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) outlines proposals for development and land use for a period of 10 years from adoption. It sets out the strategic policies and proposals for promoting sustainable growth of the city over a 10-20 year period.
- 2.3.3 The LDP also sets out specific policies for ensuring that new developments contribute to delivering sustainable communities within the city. A number of the policies identified within the current LDP would remain relevant to the emerging LDP. These include:
- Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions
 - Policy T2 – Managing the Traffic Impact of Development
 - Policy D3 – Sustainable and Active Travel
- 2.3.4 The Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (LTS) still forms the current Transport Strategy for Aberdeen and outlines the policies and interventions adopted by ACC to guide the planning and improvement of the local road network over a five-year period.
- 2.3.5 The LTS sets out five high level aims, as follows:
- *‘Support and Contribute to a thriving economy for Aberdeen and its region*
 - *Ensure a safe and secure transport system*
 - *Minimise the environmental impact of transport on our community and the wider world*
 - *Ensure the transport system is integrated and accessible to all*
 - *Ensure that transport policies integrate with and support sustainable development, health and social inclusion policies’.*
- 2.3.6 A number of specific objectives detailed within the LTS also support the previously listed aims. Key considerations among these objectives include:
- *‘minimise and improve reliability of journey times for people and goods through Aberdeen’s transport networks*
 - *improve the condition of road, footway and cycle road network*
 - *increase the share of travel by the most sustainable modes to promote economic growth without the associated traffic growth*
 - *continue to reduce road casualties*
 - *reduce carbon emissions from road transport*
 - *improve accessibility (network and cost) to jobs and services to support social inclusion,*
 - *to facilitate and support land use development adjacent to sustainable transport corridors and nodes*
 - *to promote healthy living by encouraging safe walking and cycling’*
- 2.3.7 The LDP Supplementary Guidance ‘Transport and Accessibility’ (March 2012) advocates that a Travel Plan should *‘be site specific and measures and objectives should reflect the individual characteristics of the site as well as the trips likely to be generated by that development.’* The document further highlights that *‘Residential Travel Plans should outline measures aimed at influencing the travel behaviour of new home owners to, from and within the development. These could include:*
- *Ensuring the development is well served by safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes;*
 - *Entering into negotiations with bus operators to ensure that the development*

can be served by public transport if it is not at present;

- *Distributing a welcome pack to new residents with maps showing local walking and cycling routes and local public transport maps, leaflets and timetables;*
- *Providing a car club vehicle(s) for residents to use;*
- *Establishing a residents' car share scheme;*
- *Providing residents with 1 months' free public transport tickets or a voucher for discounted walking or cycling goods'.*

3 Site Accessibility Review

3.1 The Site

3.1.1 The Huxterstone site is located on the eastern edge of Kingswells, and extends to approximately 6 hectares (15 acres). The site is bounded to the north by the Lang Stracht, which is part of the bus and local access route. To the east lie a further group of dwelling houses and beyond this, open fields. The site is bound to the south by the Den Burn and to the west is the pending West Huxterstone residential development referred to previously.

3.2 Pedestrian Network

3.2.1 The site lies close to and benefits from good pedestrian links to the centre of the village where a range of services can be found. The pedestrian desire line from the site would be to the north west into the centre of Kingswells and west to Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park & Ride facility. Diagram A enclosed illustrates existing pedestrian infrastructure in the vicinity of the site with links to the potential walking catchment from the Huxterstone site.

3.2.2 The site is well related to the existing settlement being within reasonable walking distance of the community centre, school and other local amenities which are all well within 1600m via footways and Core Paths, as illustrated on Diagram A.

3.2.3 The existing Kingswells community has been established since the 1980s with a high quality network of footpath and cycle route provision to serve local needs and connect existing residential areas to attractions within the village such as the local village shopping centre and primary school. As well as routes alongside the road network there is a complementary network of off road routes and paths providing more direct connections in appropriate locations.

3.2.4 The Lang Stracht is a lightly trafficked route with access restricted to a small number of properties and providing a through route only for buses, with a bus gate located at the east end. It is suitable for leisure walking and cycling.

3.3 Cycling Network

3.3.1 Existing cycling infrastructure largely replicates provision for pedestrians as many of facilities are shared by pedestrians and cyclists. The nearby Aberdeen to Westhill cycleway runs along the north side of the A944 to the south of Kingswells. The route facilitates east-west cycling opportunities from Hazlehead through Kingswells to Westhill. There are connections from the A944 dual use path to other routes on the core path network within Kingswells and beyond. There are also links to / from Bucksburn to the north and other Aberdeen City suburbs to the west.

3.3.2 As development continues at Westhill's Arnhall Business Park, additional cycle infrastructure is expected to be developed which will offer further segregated routes along the B9119 and towards Westhill town centre, linking with existing cycling infrastructure elsewhere in Westhill. This offers clear potential for cycleway links to be formed between the Huxterstone site and Arnhall Business Park; and the rest of Westhill using dedicated infrastructure.

3.3.3 Beyond Kingswells at the A944 Six Mile Fork junction just to the east of Westhill, there is a Toucan Crossing which connects footway / cycleways on both sides of the

A944, linking to the strategic Aberdeen to Westhill Cycleway. Additional facilities to aid cyclists at the Six Mile Fork junction include Advanced Stop Lines (ASL) on all approaches.

3.4 Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

- 3.4.1 The site adjoins the existing Kingswells settlement which provides a wide range of local amenities allowing it to function as a sustainable settlement. The Huxterstone development site provides an opportunity to expand the existing settlement to the east to complement the extensive existing and future employment opportunities at Kingswells (Prime Four Business Park).
- 3.4.2 Linked footpaths and a network of open space through the site is important and where possible would utilise existing and historic routes. There are excellent opportunities to link the site with the wider area and the site would be integrated with the wider area by linking it to the most direct, attractive, safe and secure pedestrian and cycle links as possible.
- 3.4.3 An appropriate network of foot and cycle paths would be provided within the site to prioritise use of these modes particularly for internal journeys. Such proposals will be identified in full through a Transport Assessment process aimed at providing connections as directly as possible in order to encourage use of these modes, with the obvious advantage of 'designing-in' such provision from the outset.
- 3.4.4 Cyclists can make use of the existing network of local roads in the vicinity of Kingswells. On the western edge of Kingswells studies have shown that construction of the AWPR will radically reduce traffic on the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road as orbital traffic diverts to the new strategic route. With this traffic reduction (as much as 74% on the C89 north of the village) it is envisaged that further opportunities to encourage cycle trips will arise, with destinations such as the major business and employment opportunities at Prime Four, Amhall and Kirkhill / Dyce all within a convenient cycling distance of 5km.
- 3.4.5 PAN 75 stipulates that '*a maximum threshold of 1600m (20 minutes) for walking is broadly in line with observed travel behaviour.*' Reference to Paragraph 5.21 of TAG also suggests that journey times of 20 – 30 minutes (1600 – 2400 metres) are appropriate for walking.
- 3.4.6 Walking isochrones representing 800 metres (10 minutes) and 1600 metres (20 minutes) are illustrated by Diagram A enclosed. The walking isochrones illustrate walking distances from a central point within the Huxterstone site. The walking isochrones are measured along existing footways and potential links from the site.
- 3.4.7 Diagram A shows that the majority of Kingswells, including a number of local amenities, are within 1600 metres (20 minutes) walking distance. This includes a primary school, medical centre, post office and Co-operative convenience store. The Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park and Ride site are also shown to be within 1600 metres walking distance.

3.5 Public Transport Accessibility

- 3.5.1 PAN 75 guidance comments that significant trip generating developments should be located within a walking distance of 400 metres from an existing public transport route. Kingswells is currently served directly by regular and frequent buses with the majority of the village within convenient walking distance of services operated by First

Aberdeen via the local road network and the Kingswells Park and Ride. Further services by Stagecoach Bluebird can be accessed from the A944.

- 3.5.2 The Kingswells P&R has dedicated services that operate between this facility and locations across the city centre via the bus priority route which has been introduced along the A944 Lang Stracht.
- 3.5.3 Details of existing service frequencies and typical journey times are summarised in Table 3-1 and the plan at Diagram B illustrates the current pattern of routes and available stops.

Service	Route	Monday -Friday	Bus Stop
Stagecoach Bluebird Service 218	Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to Westhill	18 journeys daily	A944 at Prime Four
Stagecoach Bluebird Service X17	Aberdeen Bus Station to Westhill via Woodend and Elrick	Every 10 minutes	A944 at Prime Four
Stagecoach Bluebird Service X18	Aberdeen Bus Station to Alford via Westhill, Dunecht, Sauchen, Whitehouse	12 journeys daily	A944 at Prime Four
First Aberdeen Service 11	Northfield Terminus – City Centre – Woodend - Kingswells Medical Centre (Circular)	At: 19:26, 19:46, 20:23, 20:53, 21:23, 21:53, 22:23 & 23:23	Kingswells Medical Centre
First Aberdeen Service X40	Kingswells Park & Ride – Kingswells Medical Centre - Aberdeen Royal Infirmary - City Centre - Bridge Of Don Park & Ride - Dubford	Approximately 15 Minutes During Commuter Travel Peak	Kingswells Park & Ride
Bains Coaches Service 777	Kingswells – Newhills – Bankhead - Aberdeen Airport - Kirkhill	5 Daily Services	Kingswells Park & Ride / A944 at Prime Four

Table 3-1: Local Bus Service Information

- 3.5.4 Kingswells' location on a principal transport corridor already served by established park and ride infrastructure and bus priority measures on the route to the centre of the city gives a firm basis for the development of further opportunities to enhance public transport opportunities in the area. In particular the commitment to the establishment of a chain of park and ride sites around the AWPR gives the opportunity for the intensification of orbital services providing direct connections to major attractions such as Aberdeen Airport and adjoining employment destinations at Kirkhill and Dyce which further development at Kingswells is well placed to access. The AWPR could result in the increased frequency of Service 777 and its potential extension to other destinations to the north and south.
- 3.5.5 The existing services to Aberdeen terminate at Aberdeen Bus Station where there are interchange opportunities for onward travel by bus to other local and national destinations. Additionally, Aberdeen Rail Station is within 150 metres (2 minutes) walking distance from the bus station, therefore further opportunities exist for travel by rail to local and national destinations.

- 3.5.6 The Huxterstone site is directly bounded by the through bus only connection (the Lang Stracht) between the Park and Ride site and the A944 Lang Stracht served by dedicated Park and Ride buses.
- 3.5.7 Existing public transport provision to the Huxterstone development is excellent, and the provision of additional bus stops on this link would ensure that all of the site is within specified walk distances of these services.

3.6 Existing Local Road Network

- 3.6.1 The existing site is predominantly green fields with access from the Lang Stracht. From the Lang Stracht the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road is accessed.
- 3.6.2 The C89 is single carriageway connecting the A944 to the A96 via Bucksburn. It also provides a means of access to the employment land at Prime Four Business Park and further afield to destinations such as Westhill via the A944 and Kirkhill / Dyce via the A96, and is subsequently well used during weekday peak periods in particular.
- 3.6.3 Studies show that flows on the C89 are predicted to reduce by as much as 74% upon completion of the AWPR. Relevant sections of the C89 are designed to a suitably high standard as a traffic route and the significant forecast reduction in existing traffic levels would counterbalance increased development traffic associated with the Huxterstone site.
- 3.6.4 On the wider road network the site's direct accessibility to the AWPR via the Kingswells North and South interchanges will accommodate future movement demands in both directions. Movements towards the city centre would route via the A944 Kingswells Roundabout and Lang Stracht or Skene Road at the A944 / B9119 Bellfield junction. These roads afford access to the A90 Aberdeen to Peterhead road, and subsequently to the A96 Aberdeen to Inverness Trunk Road. To the west of Kingswells, the A944 provides connections to the future grade separated junction with the AWPR and the residential and employment areas of Westhill.
- 3.6.5 Recent improvements on the A944 corridor have eased previous constraints, such as at the Kingswells Roundabout and other identified bottlenecks. Further improvements are committed in connection with other approved development proposals on the corridor which can be expected to provide additional capacity, maintaining the benefits of traffic reduction due to the AWPR on the corridor.

3.7 Committed Transport Infrastructure

- 3.7.1 The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will be a new orbital route around the west side of Aberdeen described as *'the most important infrastructure project taking place in the North East (which) will bring a range of substantial benefits to the region'*. Its construction is anticipated to provide *'a much needed fast and safe route around Aberdeen which links with the existing major roads and key locations such as the airport, park and ride sites and the major industrial estates around the City'*.
- 3.7.2 The route runs between Stonehaven and Blackdog and follows an orbital alignment around the city to the west, with interchanges on the A93, A944, A96, A947 and A90.
- 3.7.3 The construction of the AWPR has commenced and it is anticipated to be completed in winter 2017. The route of the AWPR passes Kingswells approximately 500m to the west of the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road and will include a new grade separated junction on the A944. An additional junction (currently with north facing slip roads

only) just to the north east of the site would enable traffic from Kingswells to access areas to the west and north of Aberdeen City without the need for routing via the A944 AWPR grade separated junction. It is anticipated that upon completion the AWPR will change the accessibility options for the settlements and developments along its route, which will open up opportunities for improved connectivity and public transport services. The Huxterstone site is extremely well placed to benefit from the AWPR.

3.8 Potential Road Improvements

- 3.8.1 Although operation of parts of the local road network (notably the C89 Kingswells Distributor Road and key approaches) is under pressure at present at peak times this situation will fundamentally change following completion of the AWPR. As previously noted forecast traffic flows on the C89 north of the village are predicted to reduce by 74% following diversion to the strategic AWPR. It is anticipated that the dramatic traffic reduction will lead to improved junction performance, releasing capacity for additional development traffic from the Huxterstone site.
- 3.8.2 Notwithstanding this, the future performance of junctions and links would be analysed through a Transport Assessment for the Huxterstone site and any necessary mitigation measures identified would be proposed in support of future planning applications.
- 3.8.3 There is likely to be scope for the completion of early phases in advance of the AWPR opening.

3.9 Site Access

- 3.9.1 The Lang Stracht is subject to traffic management restrictions to accommodate its use as a priority route for bus access to the Kingswells Park and Ride site from the A944 Lang Stracht and to control its inappropriate use as a rat run for general traffic. Measures in place include a bus gate west of the junction with the A944 preventing through traffic movements except by buses and cycles with restrictions on vehicles accessing the link from the Fairley Road junction to the west except for access. The proposal to serve development via an access onto the link east of the Fairley Road junction will not be compromised by these traffic management arrangements or require their amendment in any way. However, a direct consequence will be that all traffic movements generated by the development will be required to route westwards onto Fairley Road and from there onto the Kingswells Distributor Road in accessing the wider road network.
- 3.9.2 There are several options for access into the site; with potential access taken from the Lang Stracht to the north of the site, and further access would also be possible through a link connecting with the adjacent development at West Huxterstone which has been designed to enable a future connection to the Huxterstone site. This link, or the link and access onto the Lang Stracht, could be formed as a full vehicle link or possibly as an emergency access only, maintaining a pedestrian / cycle connection.
- 3.9.3 Traffic analysis to consider the performance of the site access junction would be detailed in a future Transport Assessment once development proposals are refined.

4 Summary and Conclusions

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been undertaken on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in support of a development bid site at Huxterstone, Kingswells. The Huxterstone site lies to the east of the existing Kingswells village and would be a natural expansion of the existing settlement with opportunities for the site to provide appropriate footway / cycleway infrastructure for connections with existing facilities on the adjacent network.
- 4.1.2 Securing integration of development with the existing community would involve formalising and developing the existing path network across the site. It is concluded that the Huxterstone site can be successfully integrated into the expanded urban community.
- 4.1.3 Public transport provision to the Huxterstone development is excellent with existing services operating past the site in addition to there being access to the Kingswells Park and Ride within 1km of the site.
- 4.1.4 The route of the AWPR passes within 500m to the west of Kingswells with an interchange located on the A944 to the south and a further half junction with north facing slip roads located to the north of Kingswells. Upon completion the AWPR will provide excellent access between Kingswells and other parts of Aberdeenshire / Aberdeen City through its connection with the A944 and Kingswells Distributor Road. The potential benefits from the AWPR would be extended to the Huxterstone site due to its close proximity to the A944.

4.2 Conclusion

- 4.2.1 This Transport Appraisal has identified that the Huxterstone site offers an excellent opportunity for development. Through its location in relation to Kingswells, Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park and Ride facility, the site offers potential to generate trips by sustainable means in preference to cars trips, which would be to the benefit of the existing local road network. There are opportunities to provide walking and cycling infrastructure from the proposed site to connect with existing facilities within Kingswells.
- 4.2.2 The development at the Huxterstone site, incorporating appropriate transport infrastructure to support the development, could readily be accessible by sustainable transport modes. The site is within easy access to all of Kingswells local amenities as well as from a major regional employment centre at Prime Four Business Park and the Kingswells Park and Ride.
- 4.2.3 The Huxterstone site can be developed to be fully compatible with national and local transport planning policy guidance and as such it is considered that there are positive transport related reasons for developing the site for residential uses.
- 4.2.4 Development of the site could occur in a sustainable manner offering many benefits due to its location. In addition, development of the site can offer road capacity benefits through its easy access to both of the AWPR Kingswells junctions.
- 4.2.5 The Transport Appraisal concludes that the inclusion of this site in the LDP will assist in promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel and will not only

optimise the use of existing infrastructure, but improve upon it. With continued expansion and allocations of development along the A944 corridor the proposed development at Huxterstone would help to reduce the need to travel by car, provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling and enable the integration of different transport modes. Public Transport opportunities outweigh many alternative sites due to the proximity of existing bus services and the Kingswells Park and Ride facility.

Enclosures

Diagram A: Walking & Cycling Accessibility Maps

Diagram B: Local Bus Routes & Stops

Project Title:
110178 Huxterstone, Kingswells
Development Bid Site



Drawing Title:
Walking and Cycling Accessibility
Local Walking and Cycling Routes

Diagram A

KEY:

-  Development Site
-  Huxterstone West
-  Prime Four Business Park




Walking Isochrones:

-  800 metres (10minutes)
-  1600 metres (20minutes)

Local Walking and Cycling Routes:

-  Aberdeen to Westhill
Dual-Use Cycleway Network
-  Dual-Use Path Network
-  Core Path Network
-  Kingswells to Bucksburn
Recommended Route
-  Formal Footpaths

Local Amenities:

-  Kingswells Medical Centre
-  Co-operative, Community Centre
Veterinary, Post Office & Pharmacy
-  Kingswells Primary School

Client:



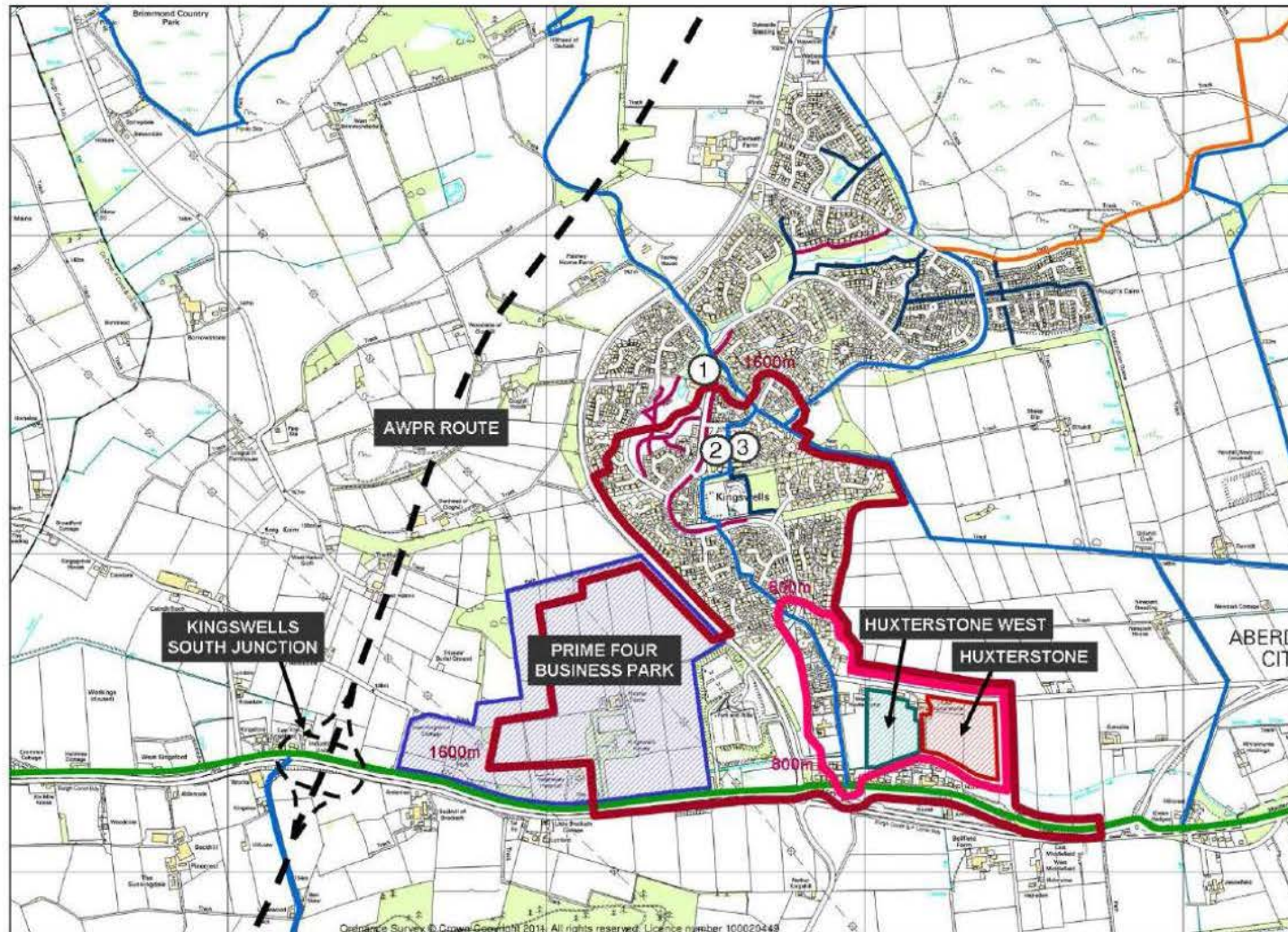
Drawn by: KC

Date: 25/05/15

88 Queens Road
Aberdeen
AB15 4YQ

T: 01224 321222
F: 01224 323201

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. License number: 109306



Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number: 100020448



Project Title:
110178 Huxterstone, Kingswells
Development Bid Site

Drawing Title:
Bus Accessibility
Local Bus Routes and Stops

Diagram B

KEY:

- Development Site
- Huxterstone West
- Prime Four Business Park
- AWPR Routing
- Kingswells Park and Ride
- Bus Stops

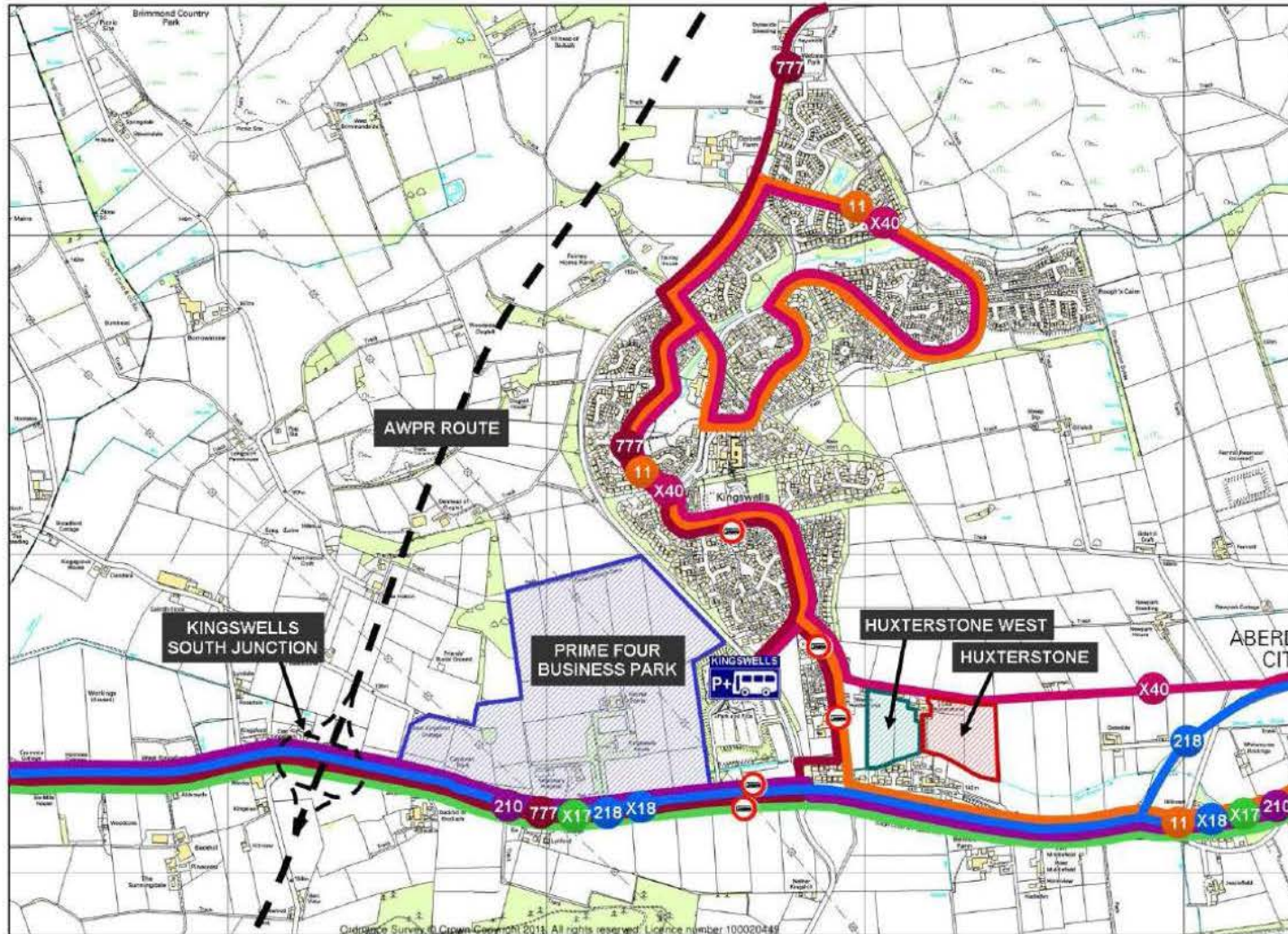
Local Bus Routes:

- Service 777**
To Oldmeldrum, Westhill, Kingswells
Aberdeen Airport and Dyce
- Service 11**
To Aberdeen, Woodend Hospital,
and Kingswells
- Service X40**
To Kingswells, Aberdeen Royal
Infirmary, Bridge of Don P&R and
Duford P&R via City Centre
- Service X17**
To Aberdeen, Woodend Hospital,
Westhill and Elrick
- Service 218/X18**
To Aberdeen, Foresterhill Hospital,
Westhill, Elrick and Alford
- Service 210**
To Aberdeen, Torphins, Aboyne
and Ballater

Client:
 Stewart Milne HOMES

Drawn by: KC
Date: 25.05/15
**88 Queens Road
Aberdeen
AB15 4YQ**
**T: 01224 321222
F: 01224 323201**

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of the Map's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. Licence number: 109305



CIVIL ENGINEERING • STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING • TRANSPORTATION • ROADS & BRIDGES
PORTS & HARBOURS • GEOTECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING • PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT • WATER SERVICES • CDM COORDINATOR SERVICES

www.fairhurst.co.uk

Aberdeen	Inverness
Birmingham	Leeds
Bristol	London
Dundee	Manchester
Edinburgh	Newcastle upon Tyne
Elgin	Sheffield
Glasgow	Watford
	Wellesbourne

FAIRHURST