



# CASE FOR GROWTH



# Introduction

With year on year growth and continued increase in activities projected, Aberdeen Harbour Board is developing a plan for growth that will secure our current position as Europe's leading marine support centre for the offshore energy sector, and the principal commercial port serving north-east Scotland.

Contributing upwards of £510 million to the economy annually and supporting in excess of 11,000 full time equivalent jobs, the Port plays a critical role in the economy of Aberdeen and Scotland as a whole. Its sustained activity and growth are essential to the maintenance of the local and national economy.

There is a strong message from our customers that the Port must grow in order to better accommodate current and emerging demands. Physical growth will be complicated by our city centre location and the current demands on the existing transport network.

We recognise the opportunity presented by the review of the National Planning Framework and the first Strategic Development Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire to begin a dialogue with partners on the future growth of the Port.



Contributes  
£510 million  
to the  
economy  
annually

11,000  
full time  
equivalent  
jobs

4.76 million  
tonnes of  
imports &  
exports

World Imports & Exports



More than  
7,800 vessel  
arrivals

In excess  
of 150,000  
passengers

Links to 40 +  
Countries

# Aberdeen Harbour

25.91 million  
Gross Shipping Tonnage



UKCS Cargos

2,124,233 Goods Tonnage

Goods Tonnage 1,574,822

533,966 Goods Tonnage

173,951 Goods Tonnage

European Imports & Exports

UK Imports & Exports







## Aberdeen Harbour & Global Gateway

During 2011, Aberdeen Harbour was Scotland's gateway for trade linking with more than 40 countries around the globe, as well as numerous UK ports. Shipping enables the efficient movement of cargoes around the world at far greater volumes than are achievable by less sustainable means.

As well as the various destinations for trade, Aberdeen Harbour enables access to offshore locations, where platforms, rigs and renewable energy installations are established, maintained and eventually decommissioned. Last year this activity transported some 2.1 million tonnes of cargo to the UKCS and other oil and gas regions around the world, highlighting the level of influence the UK holds in this global industry.

Current forecasts predict an increase in cargo over the coming years with little sign of a slow-down. Major investments in the UKCS, announced recently, ensure continued oil and gas support activity up to and beyond 2040. In the future, should certain streams of business taper off as a consequence of reductions in oil and gas production, these will likely be replaced by growing markets such as decommissioning and offshore renewables.



# Accommodating Growth Today

Through careful investment we have, to date, served the expanding needs of our customers; maximising use of the available space.

A number of significant improvements have already been implemented, or are planned to meet requirements in the future.

These include:

Commercial Quay East	Operational
Torry Quay Phase One	Operational
Delivery of Torry Quay Phase Two	Spring 2013
Deepening and widening of the Navigation Channel	Complete

Torry Quay phases One & Two will provide additional deep water berthing and an extensive back up area that will greatly assist in handling future growth in oil-based traffic. Commercial Quay East provides much needed additional general cargo handling space. Changes to the Navigation Channel will assist with 24-hour operation for the majority of vessels and allow access for the wider vessels used for subsea work and those involved in deploying offshore renewables projects.

However, there are further developments in the key sectors that we currently support which will place pressure on the existing physical confines of the harbour. These include:

## OIL AND GAS SUPPORT

- Some subsea and specialised vessels are now too big for the port
- Some deeper drafted oil support vessels are tidally restricted in gaining access to the port or particular berths
- Vessels requiring berths whilst “off hire” or carrying-out routine maintenance
- Further growth in oil service traffic where existing bases are busy or nearing capacity

## OTHER TRAFFIC

- The increase in size of general cargo vessels serving West Africa and beyond
- Growth in other cargo sectors (eg. Scrap, Salmon Feed & Timber)
- The anticipated growth in decommissioning work from the Oil and Gas industry
- The physical size of offshore windfarm deployment vessels
- Potential future increase in size of Northern Isles ferries
- Other ferry traffic
- The physical size of the vast majority of cruise vessels in a growing European market
- Inability to create a Cruise terminal and ‘welcoming area’







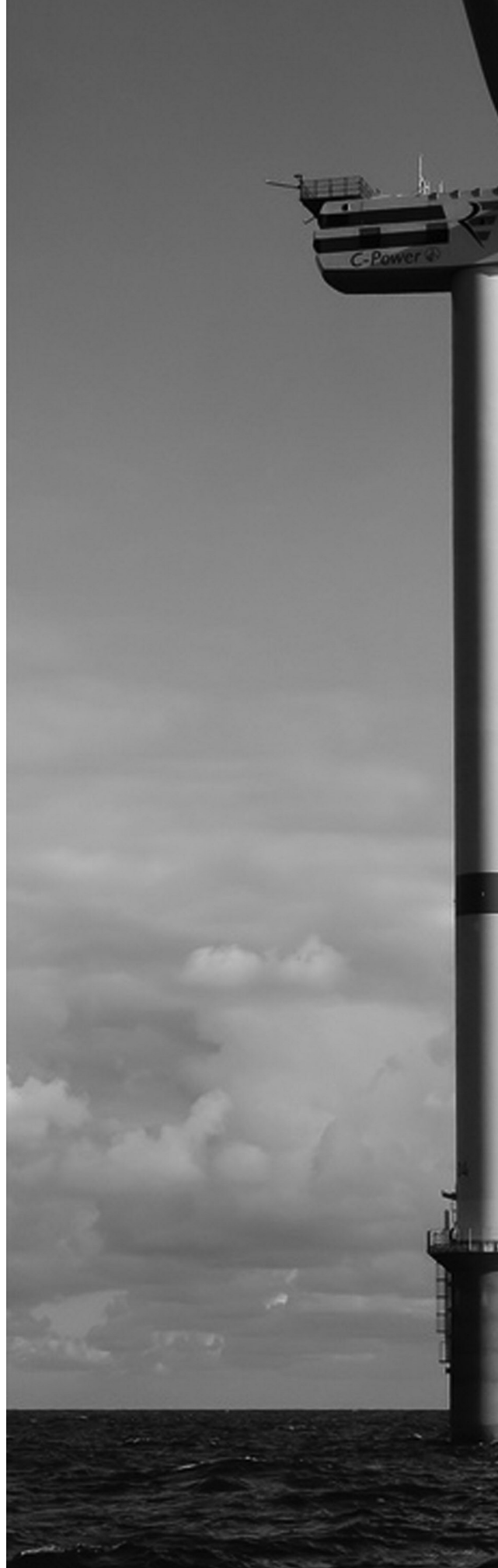
## Renewables

The National Renewables Infrastructure Plan (N-RIP) was published by Scottish Enterprise in 2010 and sets out the means by which it is intended to realise the Government's aspirations for significant growth in the offshore renewables industry.

Capitalising on Scotland's potential to develop a world leading renewables industry is a key element of the Scottish Economic Recovery Plan (February 2011) and as such it is in the national interest to support the means of doing so.

Aberdeen Harbour, as one of the identified locations for the development of the offshore renewables industry, is key to the realisation of national ambitions in this regard as well as the generation of new jobs and employment opportunities at a regional level.

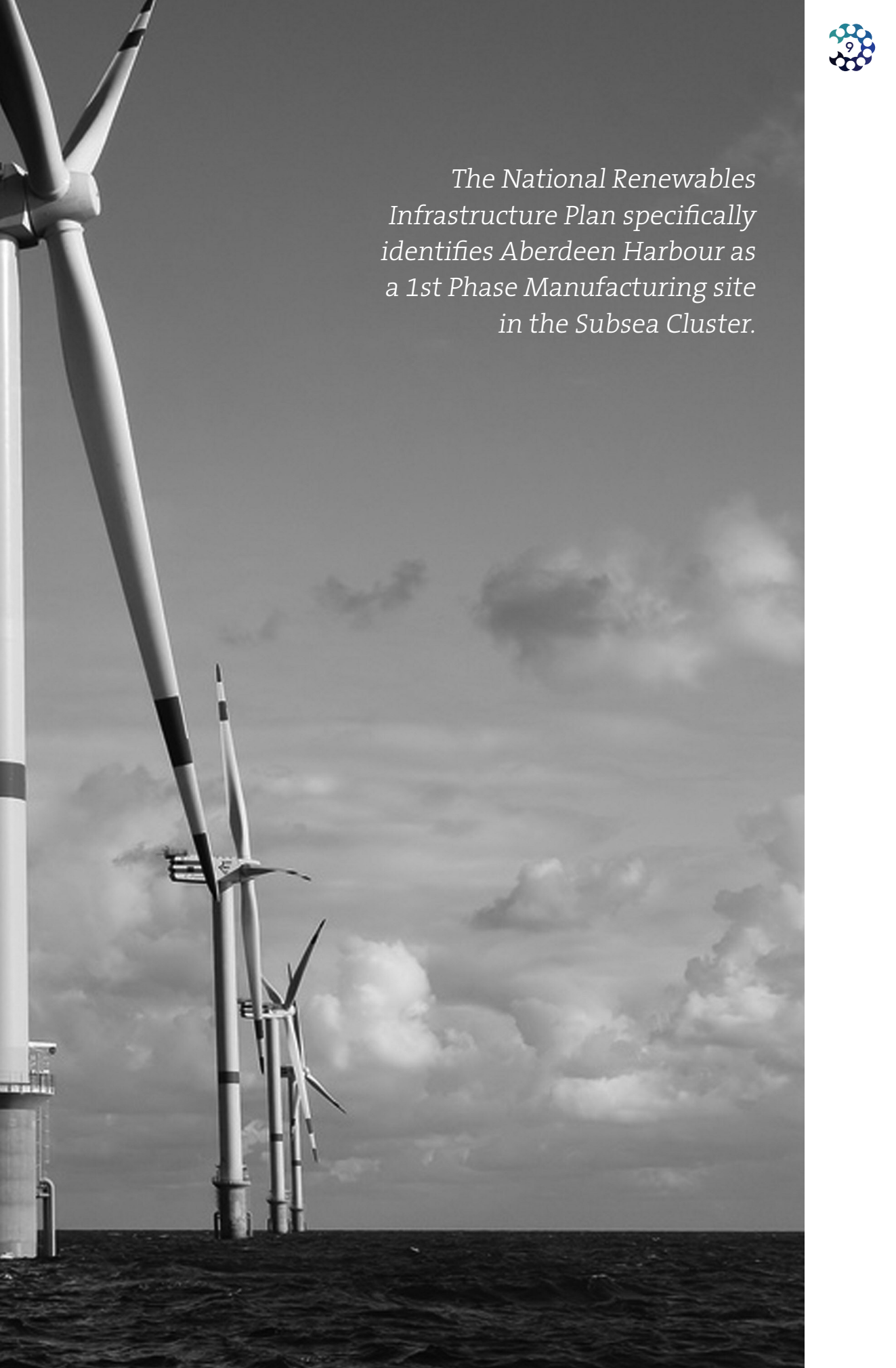
The Board recognise the significant opportunity which this represents and is keen to embrace this with a view to the future operations at the Port. In order to realise the full potential of this opportunity, however, further thought is required on how to overcome the current physical limitations and improve access to the Port.







*The National Renewables  
Infrastructure Plan specifically  
identifies Aberdeen Harbour as  
a 1st Phase Manufacturing site  
in the Subsea Cluster.*





## Growth & Planning Context

The preparation of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for Aberdeen City and Shire is well underway with the draft document expected to be issued for consultation in the coming months. It is anticipated that the importance of the Harbour and the need to secure its future contributions to national and regional economies will be recognised in this publication.

National Planning Framework 2 was published in June 2009. This sets out the spatial aspects of the Scottish Government's commitment to sustainable economic growth and recognises the significance of the port, stating (Paragraph 205, Page 81) that "Aberdeen Harbour provides essential support services for the offshore oil and gas industry and the tonnage of vessels and cargo handled continues to grow. It is the principal mainland port for freight, passenger, vehicle and livestock services to Orkney and Shetland."

A monitoring report was recently published for NPF which confirmed that a review will commence shortly with a draft NPF3 to be published in the autumn for consultation.

It is anticipated that the sites identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan, of which Aberdeen Harbour is one, will be identified in the next iteration of the National Planning Framework as National Developments, either individually or collectively. These emerging planning documents and the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan will set the context within which our future growth will take place.

From the evidence gathered thus far, it is clear that the significance of the Harbour in terms of international trade and its services to the energy industry, tourism and lifeline ferry services point towards the need for development associated with securing its long term future and growing its role within the renewable energy industry.





# Considering the Options for a Nationally Important Development

## THE PRESSURE ON LAND

Our location within the heart of Aberdeen offers unique qualities much valued by the Board, the City Council and surrounding communities. A programme of land assembly has been undertaken, however, the natural confines of the existing Harbour provide limited scope for the expansion of our operations.

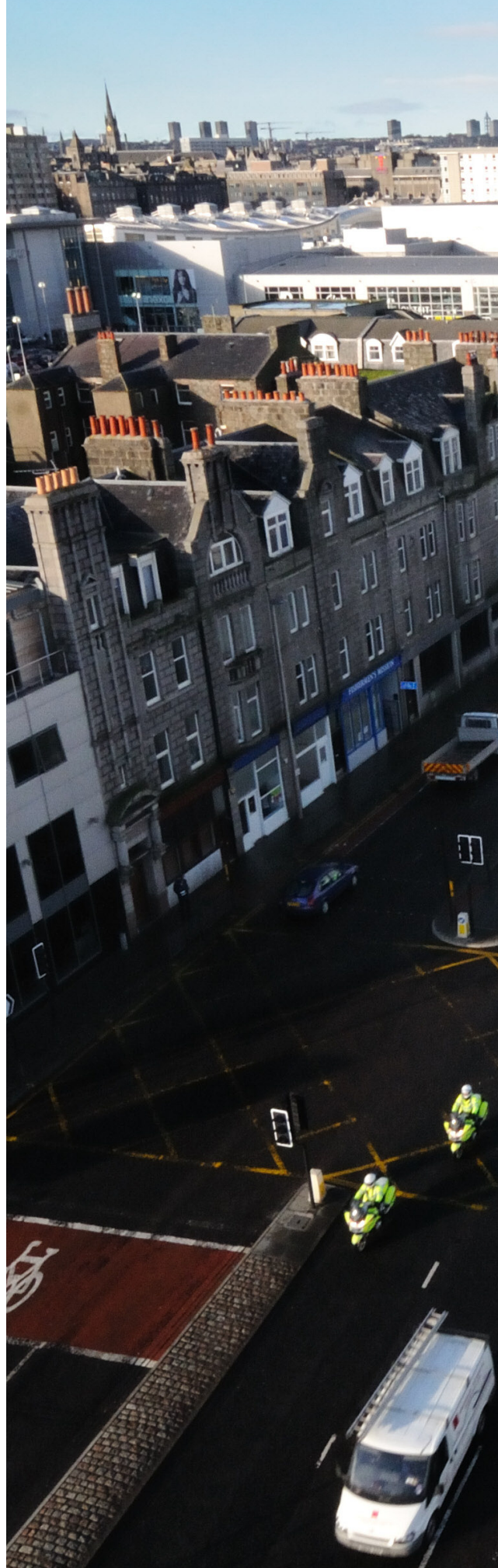
The River Dee Special Area of Conservation also presents a challenge to expansion and is likely to become an increasingly significant constraint to future development and Port operations.

Land surrounding the Harbour is predominantly allocated for mixed use development in the current Local Development Plan and is the subject of continuous pressure for the development of uses which are not always compatible with Port activities.

## INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITATIONS

The existing access arrangements can also be a hindrance to our effective operation and future expansion.

The area in and around Market Street has consistently been identified as a problem area for traffic management and the impact of such on the public realm and City Centre. The high volume of traffic not only affects the City itself, but can also cause problems maintaining consistent and efficient transport links to and from the Port. This constraint could detract from the appeal of the Harbour as a place to do business. Various studies and surveys have concluded that there are limited options for addressing this issue, with pressure on the local road network likely to increase as our operations grow.







Chris Lloyd

*Aberdeen Harbour Board Chairman*



**Colin Parker**

*Aberdeen Harbour Board Chief Executive*

*Aberdeen Harbour Board seeks early engagement with key stakeholders to consider the different scenarios for the future growth of the Port. We want to discuss what growth means for Aberdeen, the region and Scotland as a whole.*

We understand that many stakeholders will have an interest in this process. In our roles as Chairman and Chief Executive, it is our hope that this document goes some way to demonstrate the pressures which are faced by the Harbour and the exciting opportunities that may present themselves as we move forward.

We will shortly commence the consideration of the feasibility of the future development of the Harbour, taking into account a range of criteria, including; Business Case; Deliverability; Accessibility (Road/Rail); Proximity to existing Port; Community Benefits; Environmental Impact; Landscape and Visual Impact; and Minimising Traffic Impact and Disruption.

We would like to hear your views on the growth of the Port. If you wish to be kept up to date with the feasibility study process and informed of any opportunity to participate you can register interest using the contact details shown below:

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16 Regent Quay  
Aberdeen  
AB11 5SS

TEL: 01224 597 000

[caseforgrowth@aberdeen-harbour.co.uk](mailto:caseforgrowth@aberdeen-harbour.co.uk)







# DIRECTIONS FOR GROWTH

*Aberdeen Harbour is a trust port - i.e. an independent statutory authority operating in a commercial environment for the benefit of the port's stakeholders. Under the Aberdeen Harbour Order Confirmation Act 1960, as amended, the Board has a responsibility "for the regulation and administration of the harbour undertaking", which by definition includes improving the port for future generations.*



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# SECTION 1



## Introduction & Purpose

Aberdeen Harbour Board has prepared this report as an easy read summary of the broader options testing work that has developed in response to a recognised need for future expansion of harbour facilities. This marks the conclusion of a period of work which to date has been undertaken mainly by Aberdeen Harbour Board and their appointed partners, that sought to identify options for the future of the harbour.

Our initial 'Case for Growth' document was sent to a wide range of stakeholders, including customers, statutory agencies and members of the public in September this year. The feedback to that document has been very positive. Early engagement with Aberdeen City Council and other key stakeholders has been constructive and in this paper we summarise some of those discussions, explaining how the current options being considered in the latter part of this paper have emerged.

Expansion at Aberdeen harbour is an ambitious proposal. The Port is physically limited by its City Centre location and neighbouring uses. Significant expansion of facilities may require quite a radical solution – and perhaps a new port facility. In this document we seek to openly and transparently explain the reasoning for identifying, then discounting, early options for expansion. We also clearly identify the criteria that have and will continue to shape our journey as we move towards a preferred location for growth. This paper takes into account the views of the key stakeholders that we have spoken to, as well as information gathered via desk-based surveys.

The Case for Growth document and this options testing process will feed into the various tiers of strategic planning from the emerging National Planning Framework to the Local Development Plan, and has the potential to form the basis of aspects of environmental assessment through either the Environmental Impact Assessment process or, if required, Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

This is the first time that we had the level of information required to be able to share the detail of these proposals and the selection process with members of the public. We have already organised a series of workshops with key stakeholders and we will engage more openly with communities in the early part of 2013. Before we do so it is our intention that we have a limited number of options that we believe will be financially viable, physically deliverable and minimise any negative impacts on the environment and local communities. We hope you find the information contained within this document useful and we welcome your thoughts and comments going forward.



## Background

In September 2012, Aberdeen Harbour Board released a Case for Growth document, which set out the current situation in terms of Harbour operations and the management of its estate. This effectively represented the first public acknowledgement of ongoing work which considered the harbour's future, in terms of capacity and its ability to continue to serve its existing customers as well as attracting new streams of business, thus continuing to play a critical role as Scotland's northern gateway.

Aberdeen harbour is now operating close to capacity and the lack of available land for the creation of new berths, combined with the inability to make further gains through reconfiguration, is hindering its potential and could lead towards a decline in harbour operations. Our Case for Growth document confirmed that in order to continue to grow as a business and to avoid the loss of trade and industry and the associated skills from not just Aberdeen and the north east, but from Scotland as a whole to overseas competitors, there is a pressing need to consider ways to accommodate expansion of the existing facilities at Aberdeen.

Aberdeen harbour has been identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan, alongside a number of other ports, as offering potential to facilitate the establishment of a strong renewables industry in Scotland. Aberdeen is specifically identified as having scope to contribute towards distributed manufacturing and operation/maintenance of offshore renewables.

A Scoping Report carried out by Fisher Associates on behalf of the Harbour Board identifies significant opportunities for growth in new and existing markets which could be captured if facilities were expanded.

The Scoping Report confirms that:

- The outlook is for a steady rise in oil production in West Africa and that this will continue to be a significant market for shipments of oil and gas equipment from Aberdeen.
- The expected level of decommissioning over the next decade is considerable and that it is estimated that before the year 2020 the requirements for support vessels servicing decommissioning activities will be greater than for drilling.
- There is considerable potential for developing and supporting offshore wind farms from Aberdeen.
- Aberdeen is a natural base for marine energy support services, construction and fabrication.
- Oil and gas related shipments between Aberdeen and Norway and Russia should grow by at least 3% per year.
- Modest growth is anticipated in the passenger and car market.
- If facilities to accommodate larger vessels were developed then Aberdeen could enter the Northern European cruise market and attract around 40 - 60 ships per year.



## Our Criteria

Emerging options require to be considered against a range of criteria. In order to properly consider the options available, a number of criteria were identified for each option to be tested against. These are:

- The Aberdeen Harbour Board Constitution;
- Proximity to existing Port boundary;
- Business Case;
- Deliverability;
- Accessibility (Road/Rail);
- Community Benefits;
- Environmental Impact;
- Landscape and Visual Impact; and
- Minimising Traffic Impact and Disruption.

These options were later subject to discussion with Aberdeen City Council and other stakeholders who agreed on their suitability for the intended purpose. Feedback from Aberdeen City Council in response to these suggested criteria has been positive. However, the Council's role is clear, and any advice received at this stage is without prejudice to consideration of inclusion of any potential proposal in the emerging Local Development Plan or the consideration of any potential planning application.

At this stage, the Harbour Board and Council recognise that as well as there being a need to document the process to date, the consideration of the options, which are identified later in this paper, is currently being carried out in discussion with key stakeholders and regulators.

### CONSTITUTION

Aberdeen Harbour Board is an independent statutory body, also known as a trust port authority, which operates in a commercial environment. In terms of the Aberdeen Harbour Order Confirmation Act 1960, as amended, the Board has a responsibility to regulate and administer the harbour undertaking for the benefit of the port's many and varied stakeholders. By definition this includes maintaining and improving the port's infrastructure for future generations.

### PROXIMITY TO EXISTING PORT

The relationship and close proximity to the existing port facility at Aberdeen is key for a number of reasons. Firstly, the facilities offered at the existing port are critical for servicing the strong customer base located in the city and immediate region. Relocation or diversion of this business elsewhere would result in unsustainable traffic patterns and the potential loss of the skills and knowledge base that exists in Aberdeen.

Secondly, the current port limits extend two nautical miles north of the mouth of the River Dee and ¼ miles south. Anything outwith this area cannot be developed by Aberdeen Harbour Board without requiring new or revised legislation.

The practicalities of a working relationship between the existing port facility and any extension or new facility outwith the existing port boundary is therefore a key consideration.



## BUSINESS CASE

Fundamentally, the chosen option requires to be financially viable, otherwise proposals simply cannot progress.

The options testing process currently being undertaken will serve a number of purposes, feeding into Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and development plan promotion to name a few, but it must conclude and identify a location. This is critical in order that a proper business case can be prepared and assessed to establish whether the concept can be realised.

Until a site is selected and the full business case progressed, none of the options can be fully considered.

Some important aspects of the business case need to be anticipated at this early stage. For example, the amount of operational land and berths which need to be delivered will be critical. The length of new quays and amount of dredging required for a particular site (both factors which will significantly impact upon construction costs) require a more detailed consideration.

## DELIVERABILITY

As well as being financially viable, each option should be considered against the route to delivery and any perceived obstacles, both physical and procedural. The ability to achieve the necessary consents is paramount and a development of the nature proposed will require to undergo several regulatory processes. These might include and are not limited to:

- Identification in the development plan
- Planning permission
- Marine licence
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Habitats Regulations Appraisal
- Roads Construction Consent
- Traffic Regulation Orders
- Harbour Development / Revision Orders

In addition to the consenting process, land ownership/availability and infrastructure capacity will also influence the deliverability of each option.

Some of the elements which contribute to or detract from the deliverability of an option will also be considered as part of other assessment criteria.



#### ACCESSIBILITY (ROAD/RAIL)

The Pre-Feasibility Study carried out by HR Wallingford on behalf of the Harbour Board and referred to later in this document worked on the assumption that improved road and rail access would be required to allow any expansion of the harbour to link to the existing road/rail networks.

There is a need to minimise adverse impact upon the existing transport infrastructure network, in particular in the City Centre which is already at capacity during peak times. Where infrastructure upgrades might be necessary to facilitate development at any of the options then these should be identified as early as possible.

#### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

As mentioned above, the regeneration implications of any proposed development are a key consideration in site selection. Where an option could result in much needed investment in certain communities these should be given due consideration.

Similarly, where an option would result in adverse impacts upon amenity and vitality of an area then this should also be taken into account.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Each option presents a number of different environmental considerations, of varying significance. The presence of areas protected for their ecological attributes, including protected species, and how development might impact upon these habitats and species must be afforded proper scrutiny. Similarly, any sites of cultural, historical or geological significance should also be taken into account in order that adverse impact is either avoided or properly understood and mitigated against.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

Development on the scale envisaged is likely to have an impact upon the landscape and each location should be assessed for its capacity to absorb development.

#### MINIMISING TRAFFIC IMPACT AND DISRUPTION.

The ability to create the new facilities or alter existing with minimal disruption to existing harbour traffic is crucial. If certain options would sterilise or reduce existing operations to an extent that it would affect business and specifically relationships with Harbour users, then this must be carefully balanced with the gains to be achieved through new development.



# SECTION 2



## Pre-feasibility Study

As part of the initial investigations HR Wallingford produced a Pre-Feasibility Report on behalf of Aberdeen Harbour Board which looked for potential locations for a deep water port facility along the Aberdeen coastline approximately 1 mile to the north of the mouth of the River Dee and 5 miles to the south. The extent of this area of search was partially selected by Aberdeen Harbour Board to be within Port Limits, beyond which the Harbour Board as a Trust Port cannot operate.

This length of coastline to the south is predominantly rocky and exposed to waves from the North Sea with little natural protection. For this reason options were limited and the majority of locations along this stretch were ruled out due to the lack of existing physical features which would enable new facilities to be created without significant upfront costs, which from the outset would render the development financially unviable.

As a result, the Report then identified and considered more closely the potential of 3 locations which demonstrated physical capacity to accommodate new harbour facilities. These were:

- North Beach -immediately to the north of the mouth of the existing Harbour entrance;
- Nigg Bay – immediately to the south of the river mouth; and
- South of Cove Bay – approximately 5 miles south of the river mouth.

A number of potential configurations were given high level consideration on each of these three locations to give an indication of physical works required and the extent of new facilities which could be achieved.



PORT LIMIT

2 NAUTICAL MILES

1

ABERDEEN  
HARBOUR

2

3

# Three Directions for Growth

## 1 | NORTH BEACH

This location was considered due to its proximity to the existing harbour and the ability to tie in with the existing north breakwater. In each configuration considered, the landside access would be taken through the existing road network. Direct rail access to the south does not exist at present and would not be easily achievable.

## 2 | NIGG BAY

This location was considered due to its physical form being a natural bay with some shelter from the North Sea from Girdle Ness to the north and Greg Ness to the south. The length of breakwaters required could be minimised due to the existing features of the bay.

The main Edinburgh to Aberdeen railway line loops to the south of the site, and a secondary coastal road passes the bay. The principal road access could be taken from the grade separated junction on the A956 which serves Altens Industrial Estate to the south. Upgrades to the existing coastal road and rail crossing would likely be required.

## 3 | SOUTH OF COVE BAY

This location is on a straight stretch of rocky coast with no natural bays of any scale which could accommodate a new facility. The lack of development immediately inland from this location, other than a quarry, made it worth of further consideration.

Again the Edinburgh to Aberdeen railway line passes along the coast near to the site. Formation of a new road access from the A956 trunk road would be required.

## Options

The Pre-Feasibility Study considered between 3 and 6 potential options for each site and prepared construction estimates considering:

- Breakwater
- Quay
- Dredging
- Reclamation
- Facilities
- Indirect Costs

A high level assessment of each option was also made which considered:

- CAPEX - Capital Expenditure evaluation based on the comparative capital constructions costs.
- OPEX - Operating Expenditure, including management and labour costs, energy, fuel and lubricants costs, comms and IT, civil maintenance costs, equipment maintenance costs and other operating costs such as marketing, legal, insurance.
- Marine Operability - Ability to manoeuvre to and from the berths including navigation, approach and berthing and evaluation of down time as a result of weather/wave conditions.

- Environmental Issues - Potential impact upon environmentally sensitive areas and the existing coastline.
- Landside Access and Operations - Existing and proposed road and rail networks.
- Constructability and Project Schedule - Ease of material delivery, construction execution and timing.

Following this exercise, each of the various options were scored according to the adopted assessment matrix. The 6 options for South Cove all scored poorest and were ranked 8 - 13 out of the 13 options.

It was apparent that due to the lack of natural or existing physical features, and in particular the need for the creation of extensive new breakwaters, land reclamation and dredging, construction costs of a facility at South Cove was considerably higher than potential options for options both at North Beach or at Nigg Bay, so much so that the construction costs alone would be likely to render the proposals financially unviable. In addition, due to topographical constraints along this stretch of coastline, accessibility to any harbour facility would be extremely challenging.





For these reasons land south of Cove was not considered further.

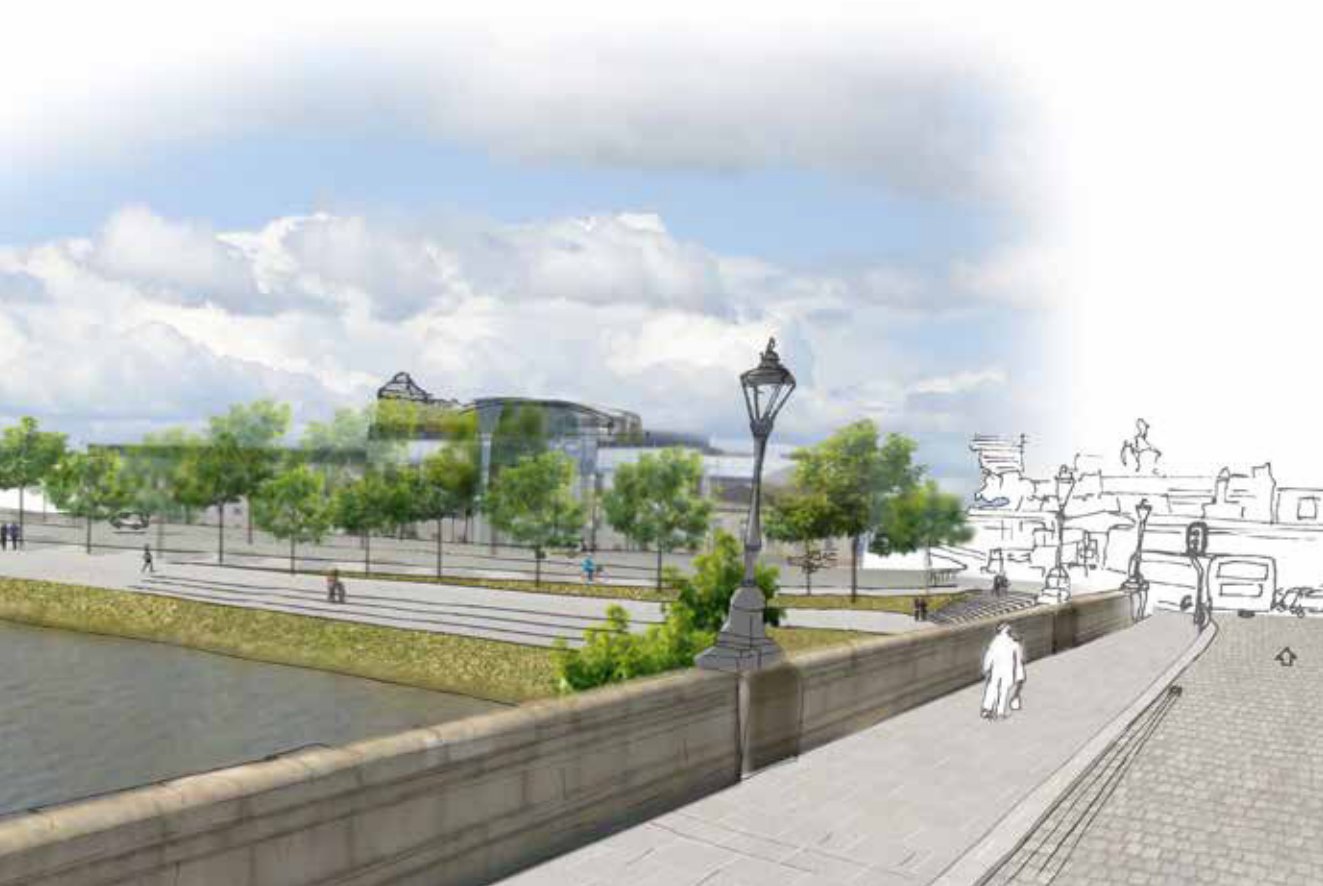
Development options for Nigg Bay ranked 1st and 4th and two for North Beach ranked 2nd and 3rd. The report advised that these two sites and configurations should be considered further.

Following the completion of the Pre-Feasibility Report Aberdeen Harbour Board commissioned a further study by Fisher Associates in association with HR Wallingford. This was a Strategic Review: Scoping Report, which considered the following:

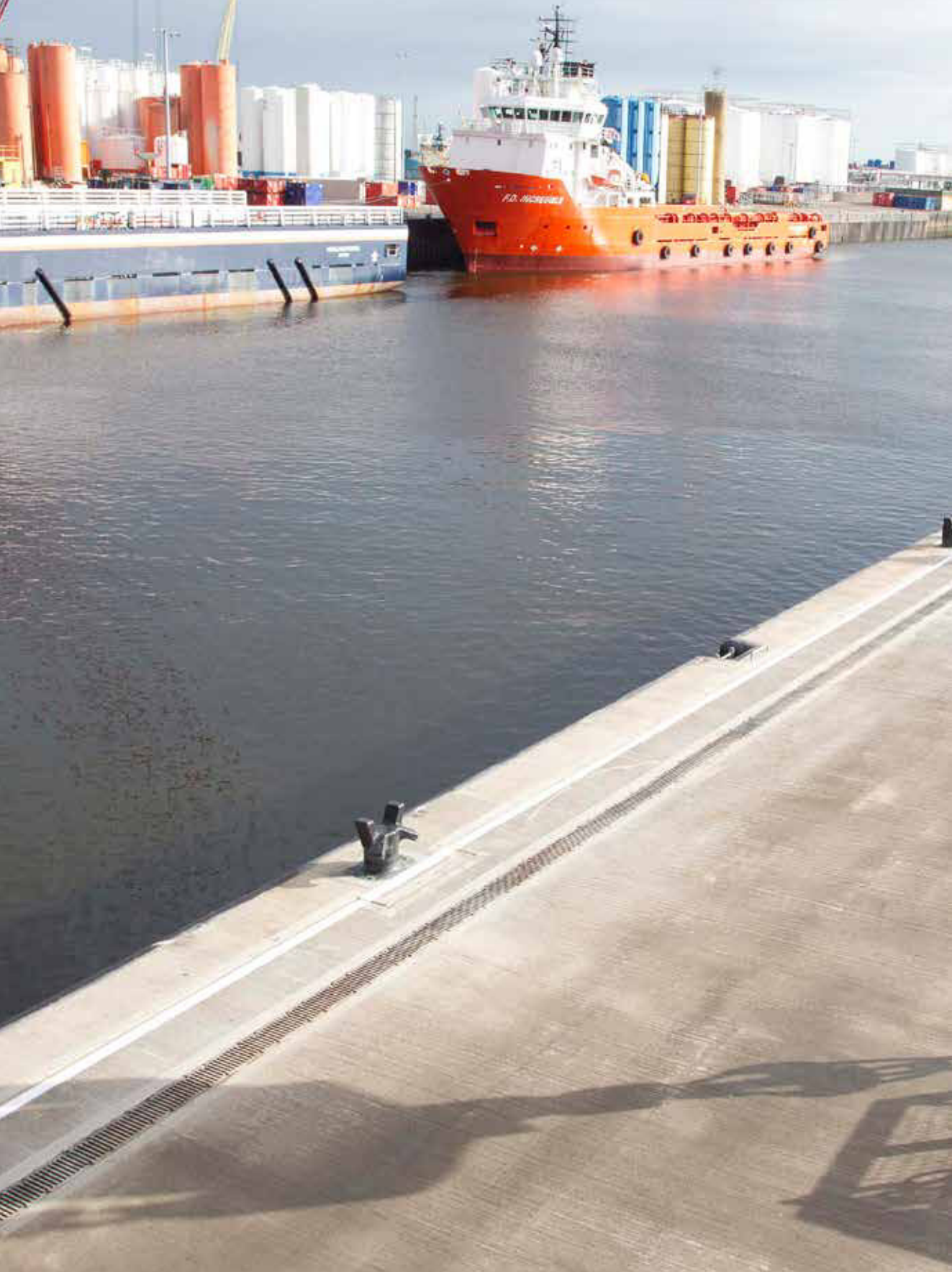
- The long term strategic outlook for port activity in Aberdeen.
- Whether development of a new harbour could be justified.
- What approach to development might be the most feasible.
- Whether the best options pass a reality test in terms of funding.
- The strategic implications of undertaking such a development, and of not undertaking this.

Importantly, this report considered both “do nothing” and “do something” scenarios, with the former pointing towards a “managed decline” of the Harbour and the latter considering some of the options for Nigg Bay which emerged from the Pre-Feasibility Study along with the possibility of further works within the boundary of the existing harbour estate.

These studies will feed into the options testing process, currently the subject of this document along with high level assessment against the criteria identified in the Case for Growth.



# SECTION 3



# Workshops

Following completion of the Pre-Feasibility Report and Scoping Report, both Aberdeen Harbour Board and Aberdeen City Council were conscious of the need to open up this latter stage of testing to other stakeholders. As we move toward selection of a location, three options are being given further consideration:

- The existing harbour
- North Beach
- Nigg Bay

In light of the discussions with Aberdeen City Council and other stakeholders, it was agreed to hold 3 topic based workshops to further consider the options. These were themed around Transportation, Planning and Environmental considerations and invitations were issued to representatives from:

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Environmental Protections Agency
- Marine Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- First Bus
- Stagecoach
- Network Rail
- NESTrans
- ARR Craib
- Scottish Water
- RSPB
- Scottish Dolphin Centre



The key messages which came out of the three workshops can be roughly summarised as follows.

## EXISTING HARBOUR

### Transportation

- Market Street would need to remain the principal access to the Harbour.
- The AWPR is expected to free up capacity in the city centre road network by around 5% - 8%.
- Post-delivery of the AWPR and related infrastructure improvements, the city centre road network could accommodate a limited increase in Harbour traffic of around 10% - 15%.
- Any capacity benefits from the AWPR would be taken up with the increase in Harbour traffic.
- This option presents no opportunity to improve the traffic situation in the city centre and will represent an increase in traffic even if there is associated mitigation.

### Planning

- The intensification of this existing use would be unlikely to raise insurmountable concerns in land use planning terms.
- The impact upon the SAC must be carefully considered and each option balanced against one another.
- There may be scope to acquire additional land on the northern side of the harbour for landward expansion and intensification.
- There is no opportunity for new berth creation, only upgrading existing berths, resulting in a lost opportunity to respond to existing customer needs and attract additional business.
- Acceptance that this option may represent maintenance of the status quo or even managed decline.

### Environment

- Potential for impact upon River Dee SAC, marine mammals and birds during construction.
- Minimal landscape impact

## NORTH BEACH

### Transportation

- Market Street would need to remain the principal access to the Harbour.
- The AWPR is expected to free up capacity in the city centre road network of around 5% - 8%.
- Post-delivery of the AWPR and related infrastructure improvements the city centre road network could accommodate a limited increase in Harbour traffic, however for the level of investment required, the reality is that the increase in Harbour traffic would be much greater.
- Any capacity benefits from the AWPR would be taken up with the increase in Harbour traffic.
- Achieving a rail connection to the North Beach option would be a significant challenge due to land ownerships between.
- This option presents no opportunity to improve the traffic situation in the city centre and will represent an increase in traffic even if there is associated mitigation.

### Planning

- The landscape and visual impact and impact upon the amenity and character of the city is so significant that this does not represent a realistic option and should be discounted.
- The impact upon amenity would be contrary to the spirit of Aberdeen Harbour Board's constitution.
- Planning permission unlikely to be achievable.

### Environment

- The landscape and visual impact is significant.
- Close proximity to the River Dee SAC
- Potential impact upon marine mammals.
- Potential impact upon birds.

## NIGG BAY

### Transportation

- The coast road to the south of Nigg Bay is already used by Heavy Goods Vehicles and could accommodate a significant increase in HGV traffic.
- If upgrading of the road is required, it is likely to be achievable.
- Potential exists for the creation of a transportation loop servicing the existing industrial estates at East Tullos and Altens and a new harbour.
- Network Rail requires to feed into proposals for rail crossing / halting.
- Likely to avoid increase in city centre traffic and would not result in loss of potential benefits of AWPR.

### Planning

- Potential impact upon amenity of Torry.
- Possibility for physical regeneration of Altens and Tullos industrial estates as well as an opportunity to work with the community of Torry to realise their objectives.
- Consideration required on impact upon and opportunities for recreation.
- Landscape and Visual Impact is a key issue.

### Environment

- The landscape and visual impact would be significant.
- Of the three options, this is furthest from the River Dee SAC.
- Presence of SSSI would require careful consideration to minimise impact.
- Potential impact upon marine animals and birds.
- Protected plant may be present at this site, (*Lathyrus japonicus* - common name Sea Pea) which should be carefully considered.
- A listed lighthouse lies to the north of the site at Girdle Ness. Impact upon setting will require consideration.

*The outcomes of the workshops, along with desk-based analysis and the findings of the Pre-Feasibility Study and Strategic Review: Scoping Report have informed the consideration of the final three options against the agreed criteria.*



The Existing Harbour



Urban green space



Greenbelt



Urban development



Views

Accessibility (road/rail)



Railway



Aberdeen Railway Station



Traffic pressure on the local road network (inc. Market Street)



Union Square and North Dee development to the west forming a barrier between the Harbour and Aberdeen Railway Station

Environmental



River Dee is designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)



Significant engineering and demolition works

City and community impact

Community Impact

# Assessment of Directions

## The Existing Harbour

This option would mean acceptance of Aberdeen Harbour as a fully mature business, with future development focussed on its current estate in a programme of consolidation and internal adjustment. Three potential options were considered in the Scoping Report, offering limited capacity for larger vessels while simultaneously reducing overall berthing.

### BUSINESS CASE

As described previously, the business case cannot be considered fully until a site is selected and assessed in detail. Notwithstanding, some high level consideration can be made with regard to the economic implications in terms of port business.

The physical limitations which constrain the expansion of current site outwards are equal internally. The current harbour comprises two main peninsulas which in their present configuration cannot facilitate the larger vessels required for decommissioning, offshore renewables or large cruise ships without loss of existing berths. Current maximum ship length is 165m. In order to accommodate turning circles for larger vessels, sections of the existing peninsulas would require to be removed and other areas sterilised while ships were turning, thus further reducing capacity.

The Fisher Associates report confirms that if provisions are not made for larger ships then ferry services, off-shore renewables and decommissioning work is likely to relocate elsewhere. Therefore, this option would result in significant compromise in terms of new and existing facilities.

The future development options which have already been considered such as Torry Quay Phase 3 and redeveloping the former fish market area would upgrade existing berths but not provide any new ones. The costs/benefits will require consideration to establish whether these stack up.

The Planning Workshop highlighted a need to consider land to the north side of the Harbour, not currently in the ownership of AHB, as the perception is that it is presently underused. This should establish whether better use could be made of it for landside operations as it was agreed that there was no scope for the creation of new berths into this area. It is recognised that the Harbour Board already operate a programme of land assembly and purchase any land which comes available around the Harbour. However, to date, this has offered little scope for meaningful increase in operational area.

### DELIVERABILITY

The current Harbour is covered by a Harbour Order under the 1964 Harbours Act, which affords permitted development rights to all works within its boundaries. As such planning permission would not be required for the works within its boundaries and the intensification of this existing use would be unlikely to raise major concerns in land use planning terms. The Harbour Order does not however negate the need for Environmental Impact Assessments or Habitats Regulations Appraisal under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 and with the presence of protected habitats and species in and around the Harbour, these would be of considerable importance.

As the road network surrounding the Harbour already exists, the delivery of the materials etc. for construction can be carried out without the need for physical upgrades, however there are obvious implications for congestion and network capacity.

#### ACCESSIBILITY (ROAD/RAIL)

Any further expansion within the existing estate boundary would continue to be served via the existing road network through the City Centre. Any increase in activity would have a direct impact upon the local road network, including Market Street which is already under pressure at peak times.

The Transportation workshop established that although constrained at present, the existing road network could physically accommodate an increase in harbour traffic post-delivery of the AWPR and related infrastructure improvements, but this would likely be to the detriment of the City Centre and would negate the benefits achieved by the construction of the AWPR.

#### PROXIMITY TO EXISTING PORT

This option would not give rise to any issues with regard to remoteness from the existing port.

#### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The opportunities for regeneration to be achieved in and around the existing harbour would be limited as works would predominantly be internal.

The amenity of the City would likely be affected if there was an increase in road traffic to and from the Harbour and any benefits arising from the AWPR would be lost.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The River Dee is designated as a Special Area of Conservation under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 due to the habitat that it provides for certain species. At the Harbour, the species of relevance are the Atlantic Salmon and the Otter, the latter of which is a European Protected Species.

Dolphins are regular visitors to the Harbour, are protected by another SAC, and are also a European Protected Species. Any works which might impact on these species requires a license. Similarly, any proposals for development which might affect the integrity of a Natura site such as the River Dee Special Area of Conservation will require to be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment and potentially appropriate assessment.

Major engineering and demolition works such as those likely to be carried out under this option could potentially require significant mitigation in order to be accommodated without adverse impacts upon the biodiversity of the site. Any works may involve dealing with contaminated land.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

The site is an existing industrial location and, within reason, any additions would be unlikely to cause significant adverse landscape and visual impact.

#### MINIMISING TRAFFIC IMPACT AND DISRUPTION

Internal works within the existing harbour have a direct impact upon availability of berths during construction. If the more significant of the three options within the existing harbour were pursued, not only would berth space be reduced overall, the interim arrangements during construction would have a seriously detrimental impact upon operations and capacity.





#### SUMMARY - EXISTING HARBOUR

As previously mentioned, limiting the future growth of Aberdeen Harbour to the existing estate and any additional areas of land which might be acquired on its fringes effectively represents the managed decline of the Harbour and its business in the long term. A compromise would be required between existing berth space and the ability to accommodate larger vessels.

If the decision was made to redevelop the Harbour to accommodate larger vessels, the environmental implications of the demolition of existing quays, redevelopment and dredging/blasting could be considerable. While not necessarily insurmountable, as has been demonstrated by recent works within the Harbour, these could present difficulties in obtaining the relevant permissions and licences as well as limiting the ability to physically deliver the development.

The continued reliance on the city centre road network is also a hindrance to this as an option. If traffic were to increase significantly, the local road network, post-delivery of the AWPR, could accommodate this, but to the detriment to the amenity of the city.

This option will remain under consideration as a “Low/No Growth Option” in the event that others cannot proceed. Regardless of whether this option is accepted or expansion elsewhere is achievable, consideration will be given to the ability to create more landside operational area to the north.



- North Beach
- Urban green space
- Greenbelt
- Urban development
- Views

**Accessibility (road/rail)**

- Railway
- R
 Aberdeen Railway Station
- Traffic pressure on the local road network (inc. Market Street)
- U
 Union Square and North Dee development to the west forming a barrier between the Harbour and Aberdeen Railway Station
- Existing road network through Footdee

**Environmental**

- River Dee is designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Landscape & City Wide Impact

FOOTDEE

Community Impact

Listed Building (Lighthouse)

# North Beach

The development of a new deep-water port facility north of the existing harbour mouth could be accommodated by extension onto the beach. This would require the creation of new breakwaters to the north and the extension of the existing North Breakwater. Six potential configurations were considered at the Pre-Feasibility Report stage with varying gains to be achieved from each.

## BUSINESS CASE

As with each of the options, the full business case cannot be considered until a site and build option is selected.

In terms of cost, of the three potential options, the development of North Beach would require the most dredging and most significant new breakwater creation. This would significantly impact upon construction costs.

## DELIVERABILITY

Planning permission would be required for new development at the North Beach option. This would be informed by the same environmental considerations as apply to works within the harbour referred to previously (EIA, HRA etc.) and would also be considered against likely road traffic impacts associated with the proposed development. At the Planning Workshop it was suggested that the impact upon the character and amenity of Aberdeen was so significant that planning permission for development of the scale envisaged was unlikely to be achievable on this site.

As the road network surrounding the Harbour already exists, the delivery of the materials etc for construction can be carried out without the need for physical upgrades. However, there are implications for congestion and network capacity which would be a consideration in the determination of a planning application.

The site is identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan as Urban Green Space and Coastal Management - Coastal Area Development. The former carries a presumption against development not used for the purpose of sport or recreation. The consideration of these proposals through the development planning process will establish whether a re-designation would be appropriate.

## ACCESSIBILITY (ROAD/RAIL)

Vehicular access would require to be taken through the existing road network which is already constrained. Traffic leaving the Harbour would have to travel through the city centre, and traffic linking the two would increase the traffic impact around Footdee. Neither options are likely to be attractive to the City Council or local residents and businesses.

Attendees of the Transportation workshop considered that although constrained at present, the existing road network could physically accommodate an increase in harbour traffic of around 10% -15%, following delivery of AWPR and related infrastructure improvements, but this would be to the detriment of the city centre and would likely negate the benefits achieved by the construction of the AWPR.

The Fisher Associates Feasibility Report scored this location poorly for Landside Access and Operations, which was the lowest score of the three options it considered.

Direct rail access to the south is currently not available at this location and provision of rail infrastructure would be a challenge given its distance from the existing harbour rail sidings at Waterloo Quay and also the main rail facilities in the city centre.

### PROXIMITY TO EXISTING PORT

This location is in close proximity to the existing harbour and could undoubtedly operate in tandem. The skills and workforce which already exist in Aberdeen around the existing harbour would be of benefit to the new facility and the two need not conflict. The site's central location would not result in unsustainable travel patterns, however, its immediate proximity also carries with it a level of impact during the construction phase.

### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The regeneration objectives which could be achieved are limited. The village of Footdee which is adjacent to north beach is attractive and is not a regeneration priority. Any impact upon Footdee would be likely to be adverse due to traffic impact and setting.

The loss of this area of beach which is used for leisure and recreation would also give rise to adverse affects to amenity.

Indeed, the impact upon the amenity of the city in landscape and recreation terms was considered at the Planning Workshop to be insurmountable and probably contrary to the spirit of Aberdeen Harbour Board's constitution. It was considered that the civic impact as a result of the development of this option would affect the most citizens, albeit the impact would be transient. The amenity of the city would also likely be affected if there was an increase in road traffic to and from the Harbour over and above the 10% - 15% previously discussed. Any medium term benefits arising from the AWPR would likely be absorbed by this expansion.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The same designations as apply to development within the existing harbour are relevant to development at north beach due to its being immediately adjacent to the mouth of the River Dee and in turn the SAC. The point at which the existing North breakwater would require to be significantly extended is a location of regular dolphin sightings.

The extensive marine construction which would be required to realise development at this location coupled with the increase in operational activity following completion may give rise to significant adverse affects upon the SAC and protected species. Effects as a result of development outwith the SAC boundary also require consideration, such as impacts upon salmon migratory routes, or dolphins which are regularly sighted around north pier.

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

The landscape and visual impact upon the setting of the city as a result of this option would be significant. Views from Footdee and from the beach would be significantly affected, as would views toward the city from Girdle Ness to the south.

### MINIMISING TRAFFIC IMPACT AND DISRUPTION.

While the impact upon harbour operations during construction would be less severe than increasing development within the existing harbour, the extension of the north breakwater from that existing at North Pier would heavily constrain the passage of vessels through the existing river mouth during the construction phase which from a commercial perspective is not desirable.



#### SUMMARY - NORTH BEACH

The development of a new port facility at North Beach would provide an overall, increase in berthing capacity and offer the facilities required to accommodate larger vessels. It could operate without impact upon the existing Harbour, although there would be an impact during construction.


The need for vehicular traffic to utilise the existing road network through the City Centre would be a considerable constraint. The increase in the volume of traffic generated at the Harbour would likely be considerable and put more pressure on the already constrained network. While it was accepted at the Transportation workshop that post delivery of the AWPR the City Centre road network could potentially accommodate an increase in Harbour traffic of around 10-15%, the reality is that for the significant level of investment required,

there would be a requirement for more significant increase in Harbour activity to make the investment worthwhile.

As with the option for the Existing Harbour the environmental considerations are considerable at this location. SNH indicated during discussions that this option would be likely to have a significant impact upon marine mammals.

The environmental and traffic impact and impact upon amenity will make obtaining planning permission very difficult if not impossible. Planning officers at Aberdeen City Council have indicated that this option would not receive Council support. Indeed it was recommended that this option is not pursued any further. The outcome of the workshops alongside informal soundings with key stakeholders has led Aberdeen Harbour Board to discount this option in the short term.



-  Nigg Bay
-  Urban green space
-  Greenbelt
-  Urban development
-  Views

**Accessibility (road/rail)**

-  Railway
-  Aberdeen Railway Station
-  Traffic pressure on the local road network (inc. Market Street)
-  Union Square and North Dee development to the west forming a barrier between the Harbour and Aberdeen Railway Station
-  Potential vehicular access via Coast Road. This would likely require upgrading to dual width
-  Improved railway crossing
-  Potential vehicular access via Greenbank Road
-  Rail freight yard

**Environmental**

-  River Dee is designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
-  SSSI

Listed Building (Lighthouse)

Community Impact

SSSI

# Nigg Bay

The third option is the creation of a new deep-water facility at Nigg Bay, south of the existing harbour, beyond Girdle Ness.

## BUSINESS CASE

Nigg Bay offers the most scope for flexible new berth creation. Estimated construction costs identified in the Pre-Feasibility Study and Scoping Report carried out to date indicate that this location is the most attractive in terms of upfront costs. The natural features of the bay mean that minimal breakwater creation is necessary and dredging is less than the North Beach option.

These factors mean that Nigg Bay presents the option most likely to be financially viable at this stage, albeit additional infrastructure costs such as road and rail upgrades/creation are still unknown.

## DELIVERABILITY

Planning permission would be required for new development at Nigg Bay. This would be informed by the same environmental considerations as apply to works within the harbour referred to previously (EIA, HRA etc.) and would also be considered against likely road traffic impacts associated with the proposed development. The location away from the River Dee SAC and slightly removed from the city centre road network makes it less likely to face obstacles at planning application and at environmental and transportation assessment stages than the two city centre options.

The existing road network around Nigg Bay already accommodates HGVs but may require physical upgrading, particularly the coast road and the railway crossing to enable both construction and future access from the south.

Nigg Bay is identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan as Green Belt, Green Space Network and Undeveloped Coast. The Green Belt policy carries a presumption against development not required for the purposes of agriculture, forestry or recreation or for essential infrastructure. Green Space Network also presumes against development that would significantly affect its function as such, and where development is permitted requires that mitigation measures are put in place.

The Undeveloped Coast policy sets a number of criteria against which proposals for development must be tested.

The consideration of these proposals through the development planning process will establish whether a re-designation would be appropriate.

## ACCESSIBILITY (ROAD/RAIL)

The primary vehicular access would be taken from the coast road which presently passes the site. This may require upgrading and may also require improvements to the existing railway bridge. Importantly, this would mean that some Harbour traffic could come and go via the neighbouring industrial estates and potentially avoid the City Centre. Careful management of some vessel traffic to either port depending on cargo destination presents scope to reduce vehicular traffic in the City Centre long term.

The rail network passes Nigg Bay and could present an opportunity for a new halt and rail link to the new harbour facility. In addition, links to the existing rail freight facilities at Craiginches could also be considered. Network Rail were unable to attend the workshops but would require to feed into discussions regarding the delivery of any rail crossing and halt.

The opportunity therefore presents itself for the creation of a loop road between a new harbour, the adjacent rail infrastructure and the existing industrial estates at Altens and East Tullos.

### PROXIMITY TO EXISTING PORT

While Nigg Bay is not as close to the existing facility as options within the current estate boundary or at North Beach it is sufficiently close to the Harbour and City to utilise existing infrastructure and feed into the skills and knowledge base that exists in the City without resulting in unsustainable travel patterns. It lies within the Port limits but would require some alteration to existing legislation to accommodate development.

### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Nigg Bay lies in relatively close proximity to the community of Torry and to Altens and Tullos Industrial Estates. These areas could benefit from regeneration, and in the case of Torry, is already identified as a regeneration priority by the City Council.

The potential adverse impacts upon local communities are arguably lesser than those which would be experienced at the North Beach option, but nonetheless would require to be carefully considered and mitigated against. The use of Nigg Bay and the surrounding area for recreation is variable and requires further consideration to establish impact and whether there is any scope for improvements.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Nigg Bay is located further away from the River Dee SAC and as such would be less likely to have any significant impact upon its defining features, habitats and species within that the other two options. Similarly, there is less evidence of dolphins in and around the bay, although confirmation of this would be subject to survey.

The cliff facing into the bay on its southern side is identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological merits. The site is of interest due to ongoing coastal erosion processes. Any impact upon this feature would require to be carefully considered and managed appropriately. At this

stage it is considered that significant adverse impact on the SSSI could be avoided through design and mitigation. Primarily this would be achieved by leaving this section of rock largely undeveloped, however changes to hydrodynamics within the bay as a result of the breakwaters may give rise to changes in the erosion process and would require consideration.

Scottish Natural Heritage have confirmed the potential presence of the “sea pea” (*Lathyrus japonicus*) at Nigg Bay, a locally important species of flower which is scarce in the area/Scotland. This would require to be the subject of survey and potentially employment of mitigation measures.

The need to survey for birds and assess any impact upon species associated with nearby Special Protection Areas was also identified by SNH and the RSPB.

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

The Bay is relatively open and views into it from Girdle Ness and Gregg Ness on either side would be affected. Similarly, views from Torry would be affected. The bay is seen from these views in the context of significant existing development including Altens Industrial Estate, the railway line, Scottish Water facility and the community of Torry itself.

Girdle Ness Lighthouse is sited to the north of Nigg Bay and is an A-Listed building dating from 1833 and becoming listed in 1967. Impact upon its setting would require consideration. Given the nature of the proposed development and the nautical origins of the lighthouse, the two are not considered to be incompatible.

### MINIMISING TRAFFIC IMPACT AND DISRUPTION.

Given that Nigg Bay does not lie immediately adjacent to the existing harbour it is anticipated that it could be constructed and operational without any adverse impact upon current Harbour operations.





#### SUMMARY - NIGG BAY

As with both of the other options there are environmental implications which require careful consideration. The presence of a SSSI and any associated impact would require to be carefully considered and mitigated against. The site is further from the SAC than the other two options but will still require to be assessed for any potential impact upon its qualifying features and on any protected species in or around the site. Landscape and visual impact will also require careful consideration.

Significant opportunity for regeneration exists at this location, as does the scope to improve the current transport network and contribute towards the reduction of traffic in the City Centre.

As with both of the other options there are environmental implications which require careful consideration. The presence of a SSSI and any associated impact would require to be carefully considered and mitigated against. The site is further from the SAC than the other two options but will still require to be assessed for any potential impact upon its qualifying features and on any protected species in or around the site. Landscape and visual impact will also require careful consideration.

## Emergence of Preferred Option

While not definitive in advance of completion of the business case, Nigg Bay is emerging as the preferred direction for growth and intended new harbour facility. In reality, the existing harbour does not provide scope to accommodate the new facilities required without compromising the current offer, increasing pressure on the existing transport network and creating potential for significant adverse environmental impact.

The consolidation and rationalisation of the existing Harbour Estate, including any incremental land acquisitions which might be achievable should stay live as a potential option in the event that neither of the options for a new port facility at North Beach or Nigg Bay can be progressed.

While North Beach might offer greater scope to create the required berthing space than the existing harbour estate, this again comes with traffic and environmental impact which may prove problematic to mitigate against. The development of this area would offer little in the way of community benefits and would result in adverse impact upon the amenity of the city centre and residents of Footdee. For this reason it would likely generate significant opposition from regulators, stakeholders and the public.

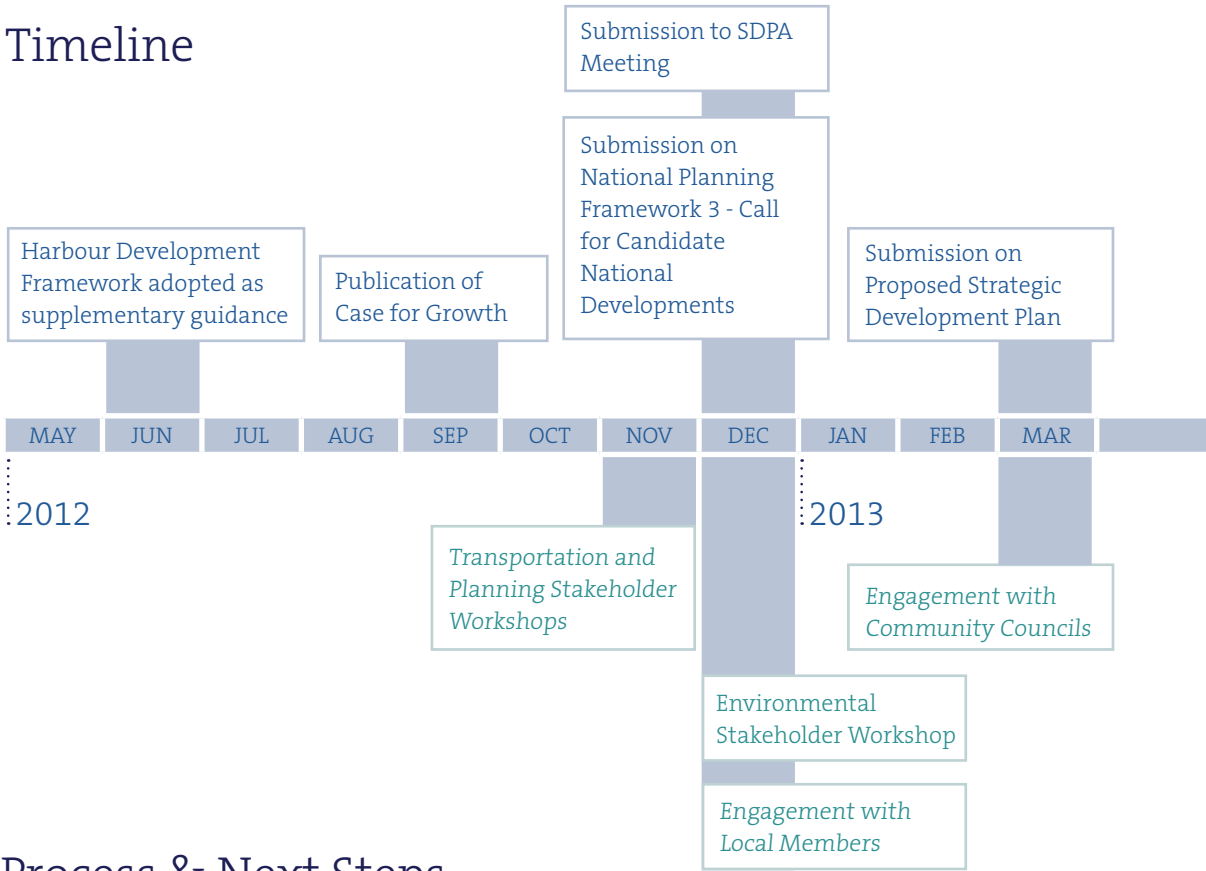
Nigg Bay appears at this stage to offer the greatest scope to accommodate a new deep-water facility with potential for the lowest environmental and traffic impact. Additional survey work and close working with stakeholders will be necessary in order to minimise the potential for environmental impact. The facility could be constructed with little to no impact upon the operations of the existing harbour. The opportunities for regeneration of nearby communities and areas such as Torry, Altens and East Tullos are considerable.

## CONCLUSION

It is therefore recommended that development options for Nigg Bay are considered further with a view to exploring the potential for the creation of a new deep-water facility and the likely implications of such. Continued focus on the existing estate and those other options identified within this document cannot however be ruled out, in the event that the development of Nigg Bay cannot proceed. Proposals for creation of a facility at North Beach should not be pursued further at this stage.



# Timeline



## Process & Next Steps

As this process progresses, the intention is to proceed through the plan-led route. We will continue to work closely with Aberdeen City Council, the Scottish Government and other key stakeholders to feed into the various plan processes that are ongoing.

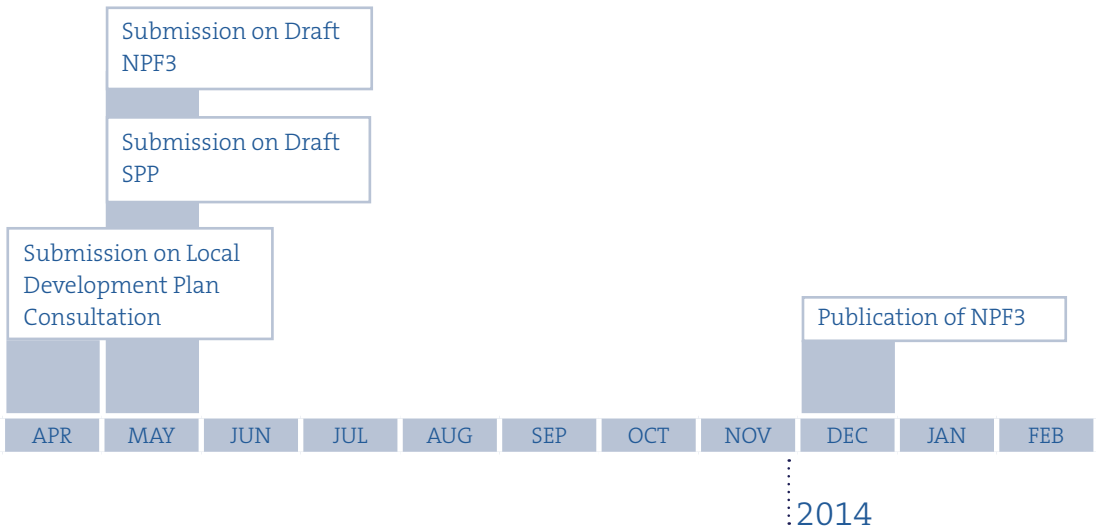
This document will accompany Aberdeen Harbour Board's submission on the Scottish Government's Call for Candidate National Developments for inclusion with the emerging National Planning Framework 3.

We will continue to feed into the Strategic Development Planning process, with the consultation on the proposed SDP likely to commence early 2013. The Proposed SDP already identifies the need for further work to set out in more detail the likely implications of this (building on 'The Case for Growth') and how the growth of the harbour can be accommodated to inform the next local development plan.

Submissions will be made on the initial stages of the local development plan consultation which is scheduled to commence early 2013. The Main Issues Reports for both the NPF3 and the LDP will open these proposals up to a wide audience for consultation.

Notwithstanding, Aberdeen Harbour Board will now seek to prepare its own programme of engagement to enable communities and groups who might be interested in or affected by the proposals to feed into the design process.

The identification of a preferred direction for growth also allows advancement of discussions with regulators and agencies as to the level of information required to advance the proposals through the design stage towards planning and environmental assessment. Necessary survey work can be identified and commissioned.



## Engagement

Following on from the workshop process, Aberdeen Harbour Board unanimously approved the decision to move forward with two options for Candidate National Developments.

While the National Planning Framework process allows for such flexibility it was the Board’s view, and that of the City Council, that realistically the two options identified – low growth / gradual decline at the existing Harbour and a new facility at Nigg Bay – stood the best chance of passing the all important viability test and ultimately securing the necessary statutory consents.

The details of this approach are played out in the previous chapters of this document. This allows these options to be subject to a much greater level of detailed analysis in the forthcoming months. The Board reserves the right to consider alternatives should this detail investigative work identify unexpected constraints or unforeseen issues.

The Harbour Board also recognise the importance of continuing liaison with local members. A meeting was held prior to the NPF submission on 14th December where the options were presented to widespread support. This continued

the engagement that has taken place amongst key Aberdeen City Councillors and the SDPA Board. However this will now accelerate as detailed work gets underway. We know that local members around the Harbour will have specific interests and therefore we need the detail to answer their questions and provide assurances that cannot be given at the more strategic level.

Going into next year Aberdeen Harbour Board, propose to establish a working group with local members, representatives from the Community Council and local business people. This group will have a Torry bias as both current options are located close to that community, however (numbers allowing) other groups will have a say. The working group will have a remit to consider and influence the new Harbour proposals at the same time as championing the Action Plan that was identified in the Harbour Development Framework.

Representation to this group is currently being discussed with Aberdeen City Council.







**BARTON  
WILLMORE**

Desktop Publishing by Barton Willmore.





Aberdeen City Local Development Plan Bid Submission, June 2013

**PROPOSED HARBOUR FACILITY  
& ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE**  
AT NIGG BAY, ABERDEEN



## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Case for Growth (September 2012)

Appendix 2 Directions for Growth (December 2012)

# INTRODUCTION

Barton Willmore is instructed by Aberdeen Harbour Board to prepare and submit this proposal for the inclusion of land at Nigg Bay within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan as a suitable location for the construction of a new harbour facility to support the continued growth of the Board's activities in Aberdeen.

We wish to be kept informed of the consideration of our bid as preparation of the Local Development Plan progresses and would be pleased to meet officers of the Council to discuss our submissions.

# PROPOSAL

Aberdeen Harbour Board is considering the potential for development at Nigg Bay as the preferred direction for the expansion of the Harbour. At this stage, it is envisaged that development at this location as a minimum would comprise:

- Breakwaters north and south of the bay;
- Creation of quays for offshore support vessels, cargo and ferries, with an indicative target of 1500m quay length;
- Internal access roads;
- Road junction onto St Fitticks Road;
- A gatehouse; and
- Ancillary works and facilities.

Further explanation to the nature of works envisaged at this stage is set out in more detail in the EIA Scoping Report which was recently submitted to

Transport Scotland and will shortly be submitted to Aberdeen City Council and Marine Scotland. This included the nature of access, dredging, breakwaters, temporary construction areas and ancillary facilities.

A series of workshops with key stakeholders were held in 2012 which informed the options testing process into the potential location for new port facilities. The implications of development at Nigg Bay specifically were then the subject of consideration and discussion at a further a series of workshops, held in May/June 2013 and referred to later in this submission. Some of this discussion revolved around opportunities for landward development which could arise as a result of the creation of port facilities at Nigg. Potential opportunities beyond the site boundary the subject of this submission are set out in a separate response to this consultation.

TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION

PRINCIPAL ACCESS



# THE SITE

## NIGG BAY

### *Site description*

Nigg Bay lies approximately 850m south south east from the mouth of Aberdeen Harbour. It is bounded by headlands to the north and south, named Girdle Ness and Greg Ness respectively. The bay and valley to the east are the former mouth of the River Dee. The mouth of the bay measures 950m across from the water mark on its northern side to that on the southern side.

Nigg Bay has a small public beach with car parking on its western side. The local road network surrounds the bay, with Greyhope Road to the north and the Coast Road to the west and beyond to the south.

Greyhope Road follows the edge of Girdle Ness, leading from Nigg Bay to Aberdeen city centre and the existing harbour around the headland. Girdle Ness hosts an A-Listed lighthouse (1833) and four residential properties on its eastern side. One of the residential properties sits immediately adjacent to the northern side of Greyhope Road, directly above the bay. Torry Battery (1840) is a former defensive structure which lies on the north side of Girdle Ness

and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. To the west of the lighthouse and south of Torry Battery is Balnagask Golf Course and Clubhouse.

Due west of Nigg Bay over the coast road is a large area of open space, with a Scottish Water treatment works on the southern side. The treatment works outflow discharges some 1.5km out to sea, beyond the bay. A small watercourse traverses the Treatment Works and into the bay.

To the west of the open space and Girdle Ness is the community of Torry.

South and south west of Nigg Bay is the main east coast railway line which follows the coast from the south before heading westward adjacent to Nigg Bay into Aberdeen city centre, passing between Torry and East Tullos Industrial Estate to the north and south respectively. Beyond the railway line to the south west is a large area of landfill then Altens Industrial Estate.

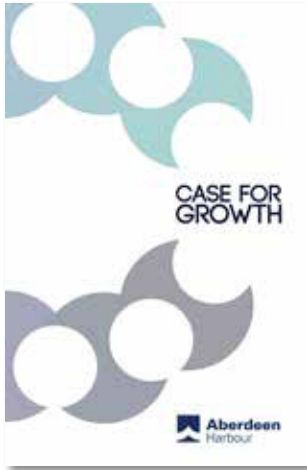
The southern headland, Greg Ness comprises rocky outcrop facing into the bay, part of which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The plateau at Greg Ness is grassed, and a coastal path leads from the south around the bay.



# BACKGROUND

## WORK TO DATE

### *Case for Growth*



In September 2102 Aberdeen Harbour Board published their Case for Growth (Appendix 1). This confirmed that with year on year growth in activity being experienced and projections indicating no slow down in this growth, there was a pressing requirement to give consideration to how the Port continues to function and meet the evolving needs of its existing and future customers.

The contribution that Aberdeen Harbour makes to the local, regional and national economy is well documented and recognised throughout Scotland. Its continued success is in the national interest. The Harbour Board have made significant investment over recent years to make the best use of their existing estate and meet the needs of their customer base. However, the changing operational needs of the modern freight industry and new opportunities presented in emerging work streams has resulted in the existing Harbour nearing operational capacity. There is a growing need for additional and larger berth spaces in order to meet the needs of the industry and to maintain Aberdeen's international role in the energy industry. This has been confirmed by the existing customers of the Harbour.

In the context of the evidence gathered, the Harbour Board progressed a feasibility study into options for the future of the Port, and to date a significant body of work has been undertaken.

### *Background Studies - Wallingford / Fisher Associates*

A Scoping Report carried out by Fisher Associates on behalf of the Harbour Board identifies significant opportunities for growth in new and existing markets which could be captured if facilities were expanded.

The Scoping Report confirms that:

- The outlook is for a steady rise in oil production in West Africa and that this will continue to be a significant market for shipments of oil and gas equipment from Aberdeen.
- The expected level of decommissioning over the next decade is considerable and that it is estimated that before the year 2020 the requirements for support vessels servicing decommissioning activities will be greater than for drilling.
- There is considerable potential for developing and supporting offshore wind farms from Aberdeen.
- Aberdeen is a natural base for marine energy support services, construction and fabrication.
- Oil and gas related shipments between Aberdeen and Norway and Russia should grow by at least 3% per year.
- Modest growth is anticipated in the passenger and car market.
- If facilities to accommodate larger vessels were developed then Aberdeen could enter the Northern European cruise market and attract around 40 - 60 ships per year.

HR Wallingford prepared a Pre-Feasibility Study in January 2011 which considered locational and design options for new port facilities, specifically at North Beach, Nigg Bay and further south at Cove. The various options for each location were scored on a range of criteria which are summarised in Directions for Growth. As a result of this study, notwithstanding the locational disadvantages likely to be experienced at a remote location, all options for Cove were ruled out due to construction costs rendering any such development financially unviable.



## Directions for Growth



In December 2012, the Harbour Board's Directions for Growth (Appendix 2) was published. This was the first public acknowledgement of the work that had been undertaken by the Harbour Board to this point and considered three options for growth worthy of further consideration. These were:

1. Further consolidation and potential expansion of the existing port;
2. Creation of a new port facility north of the Harbour at Aberdeen Beach; and
3. Creation of a new port facility south of the Harbour at Nigg Bay.

The Directions for Growth considered each of these options against a range of criteria, building on the Scoping Study and Pre-Feasibility Study by HR Wallingford and Fisher Associates respectively and through a series of workshops with stakeholders, themed around Planning, Transportation and Environment.

Through discussion with Aberdeen City Council and other stakeholders/regulators the criteria for options testing were agreed, these being:

- The Aberdeen Harbour Board Constitution;
- Proximity to existing Port boundary;
- Business Case;

- Deliverability;
- Accessibility (Road/Rail);
- Community Benefits;
- Environmental Impact;
- Landscape and Visual Impact; and
- Minimising Traffic Impact and Disruption.

The terms of each criteria are explained in Directions for Growth (Appendix 2, Pages 8 – 10).

The options testing process found that when tested against the agreed criteria that Nigg Bay offers the most potential for the creation of new port facilities. The assessment found that:

- Nigg Bay offer the scope for flexible new berth construction and is likely to be the most cost effective solution;
- The construction period would have no impact upon ongoing harbour operations;
- The presence of a SSSI and other environmental attributes require careful consideration, however this option would be likely to have a lesser impact upon the SAC and protected species due to its distance from the River Dee;
- The landscape and visual impact including impact upon historic environment would require careful consideration;
- The construction of a new port at this location would be unlikely to increase congestion in the city centre and would enable the locking in of the benefits to be gained by the AWPR;
- The opportunities for regeneration are greater with the Nigg Bay option, with potential for benefits to Torry, East Tullos and Altens.

Options for expansion at North beach were found to be limited due to a range of factors, including landscape/civic impact, environmental impact and constrained access arrangements. Similarly, opportunity for expansion was also found to be limited at the existing harbour however, continued rationalisation within and adjacent to the Harbour Estate boundaries will likely continue regardless of scope for expansion.



*AS A RESULT, IT WAS AGREED TO PROGRESS FEASIBILITY ON THE BASIS OF TWO OPTIONS BEING THE FOCUS FOR EXPANSION, THESE BEING FURTHER WORK AT THE EXISTING HARBOUR ESTATE AND THE CREATION OF A NEW FACILITY AT NIGG BAY.*



# HOW IT RELATES TO NPF3

## NPF / SDP CONTEXT

At the time of publication of the Directions for Growth (Appendix 2), Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Authority (ACSSDPA) published its Proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for consultation. This was the subject of a period of consultation which ended in April 2013, the responses to which are to be forwarded to Scottish Ministers for Examination in summer 2013.

The Proposed SDP states (Paragraph 3.20, Page 14) that:

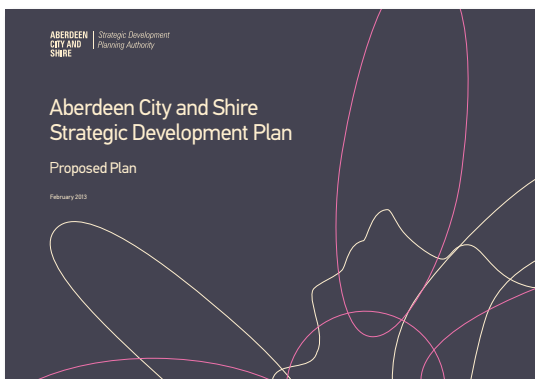
*“Aberdeen Harbour is a vital gateway for the regional economy and provides important passenger and freight links to the Northern Isles. The harbour has been identified as a key port in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan. Work will be needed to set out in more detail the likely implications of this (building on ‘The Case for Growth’) and how the growth of the harbour can be accommodated to inform the next local development plan. Given its city-centre location, this work should take into account the wider city-centre regeneration as part of the current City Centre Development Framework and the competing demands for land.”*

Its accompanying Action Programme confirms (Page 3) that there is a need to set out in more detail how the growth of Aberdeen Harbour can be accommodated to inform the next Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. This is stated to be actioned by Aberdeen Harbour Board, Aberdeen City Council, SDPA, Nestrans, Scottish Enterprise, SNH and SEPA.

The Action Programme also confirms (Page 3) that:

*“The Case for Growth’ was supplemented by ‘Directions for Growth’ in December 2012. A submission has been made for the inclusion on the harbour expansion as a National Development in NPF3. Response to NPF3 Main Issues Report and Proposed Framework required.”*

AHB made representations on the Proposed SDP which were broadly supportive of the acknowledgement of work required to realise proposals for the expansion of the Harbour. These submitted that the Reporter during any forthcoming examination into unresolved representations have due regard to the emerging National Planning Framework and update the SDP accordingly in light of any identified status of the Harbour.



Aberdeen Harbour Board then made representations to the Scottish Government’s Call for Candidate National Developments consultation in January 2013 proposing that the Expansion of Aberdeen Harbour be identified as a National Development in the forthcoming National Planning Framework (NPF3). This submission comprised a copy of the Case for Growth and Directions for Growth alongside an accompanying standard proforma.

The submission was seconded by ACSSDPA who proposed that the Aberdeen Harbour form a joint National Development alongside Peterhead Harbour in the context of their status in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan as first phase sites key to the realisation of its.

In April 2013 the Scottish Government then published the NPF3 Main Issues Report and Draft Framework (NPF3 MIR) for a period of consultation ending 23rd July 2013.

The NPF3 MIR sets out a vision for Scotland, based around key areas of change. These are:

- A low carbon place
- A natural place to invest
- A successful, sustainable place
- A connected place

The Government in the NPF3 MIR state (Paragraph 2.61, Page 25) that:

*“We consider that the proposed expansion of Aberdeen Harbour merits designation as a national development, partly due to its contribution to the renewables sector, but also in recognition of its wider role in supporting international trade, links with Orkney and Shetland, and the importance of its contribution to the economy of the North East and Scotland as a whole.”*

NPF3 MIR goes on to state (Paragraph 5.31, Page 60) that:

*“We believe that the potential for growth at Aberdeen Harbour is nationally significant. Opportunities will arise from the expected growth in cargo over the coming years, and the port will continue to play a vital role in the oil and gas and renewable energy sectors, as well as providing key links to the Northern Isles. Given the significance of the North East and Orkney and Shetland to our long-term strategy for growth, there is a clear need to support expansion of the harbour and associated development to overcome the current limits of its capacity. Any potential impacts on the River Dee Special Area of Conservation will need to be appropriately addressed. We consider that the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour should be designated as a national development in NPF3, to reflect its importance to the spatial strategy as a whole.”*

The Harbour’s proposed National Development status is summarised (Page 60) as:

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Aberdeen Harbour Expansion
WHY IT IS NEEDED	To support oil and gas and renewable energy investment, freight traffic and transport links to the northern isles
DESCRIPTION	Expansion of the harbour and associated facilities

# CONSIDERATION

*THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF HARBOUR FACILITIES INTO THE PREFERRED LOCATION AT NIGG BAY IS CONSIDERED TO BE BROADLY IN LINE WITH NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY AS EXISTING, AND EMERGING. WITH THIS IN MIND THE MERITS OF DEVELOPMENT AT NIGG BAY ARE CONSIDERED AGAINST PLANNING POLICY AND OBJECTIVES, BY TOPIC, UNDER THE KEY AIMS OF NPF3.*



## A LOW CARBON PLACE

The draft NPF3 aims to make Scotland as a whole a low carbon place. One of the means of doing so is to prioritise the infrastructure required to support some of the earliest offshore renewable energy projects.

Aberdeen has been identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan as a key site for Distributed Manufacturing and Operation/ Maintenance for the realisation of the spatial framework related to offshore wind. Latterly, the Harbour's identification in the draft NPF3 as a National Development is specifically stated (Paragraph 2.61) to be linked to its contribution to the renewables sector.

At present, Aberdeen Harbour serves as the principal gateway for offshore support to the north sea and west of Shetland, with an average of 5,000 offshore support ship calls per annum over the past 10 years. As continued activity related to oil and gas and general freight continue to rise, servicing new offshore industries associated with renewable energy would be difficult to accommodate given existing constraints with regard to berth space and the ability of increasingly large vessels to enter and navigate in and around the port.

The expansion of port facilities into Nigg Bay will create sufficient additional capacity to assist in the facilitation of not only ongoing maintenance of offshore renewables, but by the creation of new deepwater berths, will serve as essential infrastructure for the installation and construction of such facilities. Large vessels required to ship the large components that make up renewable energy infrastructure which at present may not be able to be accommodated within the existing port facilities could dock at Nigg Bay without adverse impact upon the ability of the Harbour to serve the needs of its existing customers associated with its established streams of business.

The expansion of the Harbour at a location in close proximity to the existing port and the skills and knowledge base associated with the oil and gas industry will benefit new industry drawn to the region. This too is a key component to the spatial strategy set out in the draft NPF3, which aims to support future investment in oil and gas infrastructure and transfer of skill to support the renewable energy sector.

Indeed, as inferred in the draft NPF3, the expansion of the Harbour into Nigg Bay also represents future investment in the oil and gas industry from which harbour related activity is forecast to continue increasing over the coming years, through construction, maintenance, offshore support, freight and, latterly, decommissioning.

Nigg Bay's location in such close proximity to the city of Aberdeen and an existing, skilled workforce will facilitate sustainable travel patterns. In particular, the site's ability to be directly served by new and existing public transport routes is in accord with national planning policy and advice.

SPP states (Paragraph 38) that decisions on the location of new development should reduce the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel and transport opportunities.

PAN75: Planning for Transport advises (Appendix B, Paragraph B13 and B14) that reasonable walking distances are 400m to bus stops and 800m to rail.

Existing bus stops lie within 550m from the site, with several services passing the site directly. The creation of a new facility at Nigg Bay, which will represent a significant economic generator, will enable the extension of existing bus services as well as the establishment of new ones, providing linkages to the city centre, neighbouring industrial areas as Altens and East Tullos and outlying communities.

During the options testing process undertaken in 2012 as set out in Directions for Growth (Appendix 2) Nigg Bay was found to offer the greatest scope for connection to the existing rail network, with potential for the creation of a new rail halt to the west. If achievable, this would be within 800m of the site. Options for landward development such as this and the wider masterplanning of the area surrounding Nigg Bay are considered in a separate submission to the LDP Bid Consultation.

The draft NPF3 also states that the spatial strategy should facilitate the transition to a lower carbon, more energy efficient built environment.

The new generation of ships expected to use the new harbour will have low emissions and the port will endeavour to explore suitable sustainable energy sources.

## A NATURAL PLACE TO INVEST

NPF3 sets out a continued commitment to environmental protection, considering environmental assets including important landscapes, enhancement of green infrastructure and promotion of tourism.

### *Green Belt*

The landward components of the site are presently identified in the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan as lying within the green belt and in an area of undeveloped coast.

In SPP, Green Belts are stated (Paragraph 159) to be identified for the purposes of:

- directing planned growth to the most appropriate locations and supporting regeneration,
- protecting and enhancing the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities, and
- protecting and giving access to open space within and around towns and cities.

Types of development which may be considered appropriate within the green belt include essential infrastructure (Paragraph 163).

The majority of development directly associated with the construction of a new port facility at Nigg Bay would be seaward, with limited land take. Some road infrastructure upgrades would likely be required, including new vehicular access and the creation of an upgraded junction at the intersection of Greyhope Road and the Coast Road. Notwithstanding, the principle of development at this location still requires to be considered against the objectives of green belt policy.

The first objective of green belt as stated above is to direct development to the most appropriate locations and to support regeneration.

In relation to coastal planning, SPP states (Paragraph 98) that the sustainable development of coastal areas is an important contributor to sustainable

economic growth and (Paragraph 100) that development plans should identify coastal areas likely to be suitable for development.

It further clarifies (Paragraph 101) that:

*“Coastal areas which are likely to be suitable for development include existing settlements and substantial free standing industrial and energy developments, particularly where development is linked to regeneration or the re-use of brownfield land. These coastal areas may also contain internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites, important cultural heritage resources and valuable areas of open space which should be protected from inappropriate development.”*

SPP states (Paragraph 101) that:

*“When identifying areas which are appropriate for development, planning authorities should take into account the locational requirements of different types of development, for example ports, Ministry of Defence related development, marine fish farms and other marine industries, land-based development associated with off-shore renewable energy generation or oil and gas production and tourism and recreation related development.”* (Emphasis added)

As was demonstrated in Directions for Growth (Appendix 2) Nigg Bay has been found to be the most suitable location for development such as that proposed and as such is in line with the terms of SPP set out above.

The neighbouring industrial estates of Altens and East Tullos to the south west of Nigg Bay are presently under utilised and in need of investment. The creation of harbour facilities at Nigg Bay would act as a catalyst for regeneration of these industrial areas, which would in turn compliment port activity.

The community of Torry to the west of Nigg Bay is one of seven regeneration priority areas identified in the adopted LDP and has been the subject of regeneration initiatives for a number of years, with varied success. The community presently experiences significantly higher levels of unemployment than the remainder of the city as a whole. The direction of

the expansion of harbour facilities offers opportunity for increased investment in the area with direct implications for the regeneration of the community of Torry.

The second objective of green belt as defined by SPP relates to the protection and enhancement of the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities.

Aberdeen as a city has its roots firmly established around port related activity and indeed, its recent economic success in comparison to other Scottish cities can be linked directly to its role in the energy industry which relies heavily on the Harbour. The maritime character of much of the city centre and surrounding coast, shaped by harbour activity, would be reinforced through the creation of additional port facilities, however, by directing this outwith the city centre, the impact upon the increasingly cosmopolitan character of the city centre would not be compromised through intensification of port activity.

Landscape is considered later in this section as a degree of landscape impact associated with development of the scale proposed is inevitable however, it is submitted that of the options available and considered in Directions for Growth, of those offering opportunity for the required quantum of development, Nigg Bay represents the most favourable option in this regard.

The final objective of green belt policy relates to the protection and provision of access to open space around towns and cities. As previously stated, the majority of development associated with the proposed facility at Nigg Bay would be on the seaward side. Options for potential landward development are considered in a separate submission, however for the purposes of this bid, it is submitted that there would be limited impact upon the existing green network.

It is therefore evident that **the creation of a port facility in Nigg Bay would not impact upon green belt objectives and its status as essential infrastructure means that it is an appropriate use within the green belt.**

SPP is presently under review and an updated draft document is presently under consultation. This states (Paragraph 51) in relation to green belts that local development plans should describe the types and scales of development which would be appropriate within the green belt, which may include essential infrastructure and development meeting a national requirement or established need if no other site is available.

While still in draft and the subject of ongoing consultation, this statement further confirms that the creation of harbour facilities such as those proposed represent an appropriate use within the green belt.

#### ***Natural Heritage and Biodiversity***

Both SPP and the LDP seek to offer protection to species and habitats which are the subject of specific designations or protected status, with varying degrees of protection being afforded to different qualifying interests.

The River Dee Special Area of Conservation lies a short distance to the north of Nigg Bay, flowing through the existing harbour estate. While the proposals at Nigg are in theory remote from the SAC and its boundaries, any effect upon the SAC and its qualifying interests will be taken into consideration when undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development.

If it is considered that there would be any impact upon the SAC then there may be a requirement for the proposals to be subject to an Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) and 'Appropriate Assessment' under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Aberdeen Harbour Board have recently submitted an EIA Scoping Report to Aberdeenshire Council and Marine Scotland which seeks to ascertain the parameters of an EIA for the proposal. This is discussed later in this submission.

SPP states (Paragraph 134) that *“ Development which could have a significant effect on a Natura site can only be permitted where:*

- *an appropriate assessment has demonstrated that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site, or*
- *there are no alternative solutions, and*
- *there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature.”*

As referred above and later in this report, a full EIA will be carried out for the proposed development at planning application stage which will ascertain any impact upon the SAC or otherwise. Aberdeen Harbour Board are committed to working with regulators to mitigate against any adverse impact upon the SAC which might arise from proposed works.

Notwithstanding, and in the absence of EIA and full detailed design at this stage, it is submitted that as has been demonstrated in our Case for Growth and Directions for Growth submissions, that there is no alternative solution in locational terms for this proposal. Furthermore, there are imperative reasons of public interest, both of a social and economic nature in support of the proposed development.

In addition to designations of national interest, local biodiversity is equally important. A District Wildlife Site lies immediately adjacent to the site. Any impact upon this designation and on protected species at national and local levels will also be assessed as part of EIA and mitigation measures proposed and implemented to minimise or negate any adverse impact.

### **SSSI**

The southern side of Nigg Bay hosts an area identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its geological importance in interpreting glacial activity and ice movements. Current management of the SSSI has been limited to enable coastal processes to re-expose features which have been affected by previous coastal protection activities and subsequent vegetation growth.

SPP considers national designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), with advice being (Paragraph 137) that development that affects a SSSI should only be permitted where:

- it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated, or
- any such adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

There are clear social (regeneration/employment) and economic benefits associated with the proposed development, the latter being of national importance as is confirmed by the draft NPF3. However, it is anticipated that the creation of port facilities at Nigg Bay can be achieved with minimal impact upon the integrity of the SSSI or the qualities for which it has been designated and Aberdeen Harbour Board are committed to identifying and mitigating against any potential adverse impacts.

In the first instance, no development is proposed directly on or adjacent to the area identified as a SSSI. Due to the need for dredging, land reclamation and construction of breakwaters, as part of the EIA Scoping exercise underway, Aberdeen Harbour Board will undertake hydrodynamic modelling to establish any potential effects as a result of altered wave patterns upon the SSSI and identify suitable mitigation measures.



**Landscape**

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal was carried out for the three options considered as part of the Directions for Growth document. This found that, overall the landscape character sensitivity of Nigg Bay has been assessed as medium owing to its open character in a generally contained area.

Although Nigg Bay is not a developed landscape, urban influences from the City of Aberdeen do appear within the area (i.e. roads, rail, water

treatment works) which detract from the character of the area. In addition, the large scale residential blocks within Balnagask and the surrounding urban edge influence the character of the area. Landscape value has been assessed as medium on account of the high degree of accessible open space in close proximity to the city’s edge although this is viewed in the context of adjacent built form.

A summary of the findings for all three sites are set out below:

	Landscape Character/ Townscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Capacity
<b>Site A:</b> Existing Harbour	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
<b>Site B:</b> North beach	Medium	High	High	Medium - High	Low - Medium
<b>Site C:</b> Nigg Bay	Medium	Medium - High	Medium	Medium	Medium

Further landscape assessment will be carried out as the proposals evolve with a view to sensitively integrating the proposed development into the landscape and mitigate against any impacts.



### **Historic Environment**

SPP states (Paragraph 113) as regards listed buildings that:

*“The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development which will affect a listed building or its setting should be appropriate to the character and appearance of the building and setting.”*

Similar protection is afforded to Conservation Areas (Paragraph 115).

The site does not lie within a designated conservation area nor does it contain any listed buildings.

Girdleness Lighthouse and its adjacent foghorn (Torry Coo) lie immediately north of the site. Any impact upon their setting will be considered in further landscape assessment as part of an EIA process to follow, however, given their maritime related purpose, it is submitted that further port infrastructure would not be considered at odds with their setting.

### **Sustainable Tourism - Cruise Market**

As previously referred, the new facility will enable the further development of the cruise industry within Aberdeen. The Fisher Associates Scoping Report concluded that if the port facilities are enhanced such that Aberdeen can promote itself as a cruise port for large cruise ships, then the number of ship calls could be substantially increased to 40 - 60 per annum, up from 9 in 2011.

### **Green Space Network**

The site lies within an area identified in the adopted local development plan as Green Space Network and a Core Path follows the coast and through part of the site. The interaction between the proposed development and these features is considered in our supporting representation which considers the landward implications of the proposed development. Notwithstanding, careful consideration will be given to the ability of the port to sit alongside recreational uses with opportunities for enhancement maximised.

## **A SUCCESSFUL, SUSTAINABLE PLACE**

NPF3 identifies the need to ensure that Scotland is a great place to do business and that the spatial strategy must reflect the importance of cities as drivers of the economy.

Aberdeen is a case in point of a city being a driving force not only for the regional economy but the national one, with the energy industry playing a crucial role. The continued success of Aberdeen Harbour is vital to retaining and growing investment in the city and as previously demonstrated, this now requires specific investment in the expansion of port facilities.

However, in order to attract new business to the city region in preference to other locations around Europe, new development must be of the highest quality in order to compete effectively. With this in mind, Aberdeen Harbour Board are committed to the delivery of exemplar development which utilises sustainable technologies and is respectful of its environmental impact. Careful consideration is being given to the relationship of the new facilities to the city and its interaction with neighbouring communities, land uses and environmental assets. As previously referred, the landward implications of these proposals are covered by an accompanying submission.

## **A CONNECTED PLACE**

NPF3 also states that the Scottish Government's ambition is to maintain and develop good internal and global connections, and it is under the heading of "A connected place" that the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour is listed as a National Development.

Aberdeen Harbour provides vital ferry access to Shetland and Orkney upon which island communities are dependent. The expansion of Harbour facilities into Nigg Bay will protect these key services from the pressure being experienced on port capacity as well as offering the opportunity to further enhance the services as currently being provided.

The existing ferry contract is due for renewal in the next 5 years and it is anticipated that the ferries will be replaced with larger vessels, capable of carrying greater numbers of passengers as well as freight. By combining freight and passengers trips, overall vessel movements could be reduced, resulting in more sustainable travel patterns. However, as previously described, the trend for larger vessels is one of the key drivers for increasing port capacity and structure and it will be crucial to secure such enhancements to enable the continued delivery of these vital services.

However, while there is an established ferry service to the Northern Isles, the ability to create linkages to other locations victim to the now accepted capacity constraints at Aberdeen Harbour. With the creation of facilities at Nigg, opportunity to add transport links to new destinations around Scotland and beyond will be able to be considered by operators. This would be in line with aspirations set out in NPF3 (Paragraph 1.15) to enhance transport links between cities.

NPF3 references (Paragraph 1.15) ambitions for world-class digital infrastructure, fixed and mobile, across Scotland. In this regard, Aberdeen Harbour Board will give thorough consideration as to how the new harbour can contribute towards this aim, be it through freight associated with the installation of such infrastructure or the inclusion of infrastructure within the new facility.

The need to enhance and make best use of existing infrastructure instead of building anew is also set out in NPF3. Aberdeen Harbour Board continue to make significant investment within their existing estate. While proposals at Nigg Bay do represent the creation of new infrastructure, these are being developed to build on and offer complementarily to that existing, and in this regard, it is considered that they are consistent with this aim.

As previously referred the proposals will enable the accommodation of larger vessels and in turn potential for the reduction of vessel movements when considered against volume of cargo or number of passengers. This will go some way to assisting in the aspirations of the Scottish Government to decarbonise the transport sector.

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*While there is a significant body of work still to be undertaken, it is clear that the proposals are in line with national objectives as set out in the emerging NPF3. The Harbour Board will continue to evolve its proposals giving due consideration to the various land interests and designations which affect the site and its hinterland.*



# WHAT'S NEXT

## PARTNERSHIP



A proposal of this scale is clearly in the national interest and has implications well beyond the site's boundaries. It cannot therefore be delivered by Aberdeen Harbour Board alone and partnership working will be vital to ensure its delivery. The Harbour Board are beginning to give thought as to how the port facility will interact with its surroundings and the ideas which are beginning to emerge are included in our separate submission. These are the beginnings of a masterplan for the southern part of the city, including Nigg Bay, Torry, Altens and East Tullos.

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*On both the site specific proposals set out in this submission and emerging thoughts on the landward opportunities, Aberdeen Harbour Board will work in close partnership with Aberdeen City Council to shape and drive these proposals forward. As well as forming a partnership with the Council, the views and aspirations of a number of other parties must and will be fully considered.*

## LISTENING

Since the publication of Case for Growth in September 2012, Aberdeen Harbour Board have been engaging with key stakeholders, providing status updates and seeking opinions as to the form that their proposals might take.

### *Regulator Meetings*

Meetings have been held with regulators to discuss the consents process which proposals for the expansion of the Harbour will be subject to. These meetings have to date been non-specific as to which of the three options considered in Directions for Growth may be progressed and have focussed on scope and process rather than output.

The meetings have been led by Transport Scotland and attended by representatives from:

- Transport Scotland
- Marine Scotland
- Historic Scotland
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeen Harbour Board

### ***Options Testing Workshops***

A series of workshops themed around Planning, Transportation and Environment were held in November 2012 as part of the Options Testing process. These were open to representatives from:

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Authority
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Marine Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- First Bus
- Stagecoach
- Network Rail
- NEStrans
- ARR Craib
- Scottish Water
- RSPB
- Scottish Dolphin Centre

The discussions held in the series of workshops held in November 2012 are summarised in Directions for Growth (Appendix 2).

As further series of workshops were held in May/June 2013, to inform the preparation of the bid to the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan Pre-Main Issues consultation and representation to the NPF3 MIR consultation. These were again themed around Planning, Transportation and Environment, with Planning and Transportation merged into a single session. These workshops considered in closer detail the options for development at Nigg Bay and the implications of various scenarios of development at and around this site.

The discussion generated during these workshops is summarised in a separate submission which considers the landward opportunities arising as a result of development opportunity at Nigg Bay.

### ***Community Council***

Aberdeen Harbour Board in January 2013 attended a meeting of Torry Community Council where a presentation was made describing the Options Testing process carried out to date. This was concluded with a commitment from Aberdeen Harbour Board to re-engage with the community of Torry as the proposals progress.

The Harbour Board recently made a presentation to the Community Council Forum where a digital flythrough of our emerging plans were shown. This was followed by an open discussion at which positive feedback was received.

### ***East Grampian Coastal Partnership***

In April 2013, the Harbour Board attended and made a presentation to the East Grampian Coastal Partnership's Annual General Meeting.

### ***Communication and Engagement Strategy***

In May AHB produced their Communication and Engagement Strategy which details the format and indicative programme for engagement events to the end of 2013. This confirms the key planning submissions during this period being representations on the Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan, the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan Pre-MIR consultation and the NPF3 MIR consultation. The timings of these submissions have informed a programme of events in order that discussions with key stakeholders are timed so as to inform the preparation of representations and to advise communities of progress of the ongoing feasibility study.

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***The Harbour Board will continue to listen to and consider the interests of all stakeholders and relevant parties in order that a development which brings benefit to as many as possible can be achieved.***

# DELIVERY



## ***EIA Scoping***

Any proposed development at Nigg Bay will require works on the landward side of the bay and below water level. As such the consenting process will encompass:

- The Harbours Act 1964;
- The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006; and
- The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (Marine Licences).

As a consequence, in May 2013 a formal Scoping Request was submitted to Aberdeen City Council and Marine Scotland under:

- The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011; and
- The Marine Works (Environmental impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 as amended by The Marine Works (Environmental impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

The Scoping Report, prepared by RPS, considers:

- Socio-economics;
- Hydro-dynamics, Sediments and Coastal Processes;
- Flood Risk and Surface Water Effects;
- Nature Conservation;
- Marine Ecology – Fish and Shellfish;

- Marine Ecology – Benthic Intertidal and Sub-Tidal;
- Marine Ecology – Marine Mammals;
- Terrestrial Ecology;
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape and Visual Effects;
- Traffic and Transport (incl. Navigation)
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Ground Conditions and Contamination;
- Waste;
- Microclimate (incl. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing and Wind); and
- Electromagnetic Fields.

This process was commenced at this stage in part due to the level of survey information required to carry out EIA for a project of this nature and the associated timescales for completion of these surveys, as identified during the Regulator Meetings in 2012, but also to shape the proposals as we move through the development planning process.

This process focuses on Nigg Bay as the preferred location for expansion of the Harbour, but does not preclude further development at the existing harbour, nor does it make any assumptions as to the outcome of the ongoing development planning process or crucially, the conclusion of the Feasibility Study and Business Case. The work undertaken at Scoping and during the survey process will inform the ongoing Feasibility Study and Business Case as well as serving as a baseline for EIA should proposals at Nigg Bay be formally progressed through the consenting process.

Following receipt of a formal Scoping Opinion, AHB will commence the surveys as required, in particular those which must be carried out over an extended period.

## ***Studies***

As well as surveys necessary for EIA as referred to above, AHB have recently acquired a license to undertake initial investigations into the geology of the bay and have commenced a survey which will involve the drilling of boreholes to establish the make-up of bedrock below the water.

## STREAMLINING THE PROCESS

By undertaking initial work to support a future EIA in tandem with promotion of the site through the development plan, the intention is that the planning process can be streamlined and made more robust by each component informing the other with a view to both ensuring the most sustainable development in social and environmental terms as well as facilitating a smooth approvals process.

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## NEXT STEPS

*Aberdeen Harbour Board wish to thank Aberdeen City Council and other stakeholders for the resources which they have committed to date to assist in facilitating the significant progress that has been made thusfar. We hope to continue this momentum as we continue the feasibility study and shape our proposals.*

*Ongoing survey work will continue which will inform the evolution of detailed design proposals and in turn the business case.*

*Regular updates will be provided to key officials at Aberdeen City Council through focussed meetings, and as set out in our Communication and Engagement Plan, the same will be afforded to local communities and other stakeholders through our programme of engagement.*



*IN SUMMARY, ABERDEEN HARBOUR BOARD IS PLEASED TO PRESENT LAND AT NIGG BAY FOR INCLUSION WITHIN THE FORTHCOMING ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ITS PREFERRED OPTION FOR THE FUTURE EXPANSION OF THE HARBOUR. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO REALISE THE SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR EXEMPLAR DEVELOPMENT AT THIS LOCATION.*











Aberdeen City Local Development Plan Bid Submission, June 2013

**PROPOSED HARBOUR FACILITY  
& ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE**  
AT NIGG BAY, ABERDEEN - LANDWARD CONSIDERATIONS





# INTRODUCTION

This document forms the second submission to Aberdeen City Council's Local Development Plan Process. Aberdeen Harbour Board recognise that this submission is to the pre consultation stage and that its content can help inform Aberdeen City Council Main Issues Report and in time the Proposed Local Development Plan when considering emerging proposals at Nigg Bay.

The submission is one of a number of documents that have been prepared over the last two years to support and inform ideas for the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour. The first of those documents, the Case for Growth, was published in March 2012. It set out the justification for growth of Aberdeen Harbour. The Case for Growth was warmly received by Aberdeen City Council and stimulated significant positive discussion with stakeholders and communities alike.

Case for Growth was followed by Directions for Growth published in the December of last year. Directions for Growth took the options testing process a stage further, narrowing the site search down to three main options:

- North of the harbour
- Within the existing harbour itself and;
- Considering the development potential of nearby Nigg Bay.

Directions for Growth effectively summarised those considerations that emerged as part of Aberdeen Harbour Board's ongoing feasibility study. It concluded with a firm recommendation to take forward Nigg Bay as the preferred option for further survey and feasibility work. At the same time it emphasised the fact that the existing Harbour would continue to be subject to rationalisation, investment and improvement.

Our first submission, focuses specifically on the port, its operation and its emerging design when considered against established and emerging planning policy. Part 2 considers, in far greater detail, the location of the port and critically its interaction with the city that surrounds it.

# SECTION 1

## THE NIGG BAY LOCATION

Part One considered the site specific considerations associated with the creation of a new port facility at Nigg Bay, as well as the proposal's synergy with national, regional and local planning policy and objectives. Clearly, its location has determined to a significant extent its shape and form. That location emerged after a detailed options testing process which is summarised in Directions for Growth and explained in much more detail in the feasibility report.

Nigg Bay emerged as the preferred development area for a variety of reasons. Criteria that were used to establish Nigg Bay as the preferred option included the potential for transportation access, its location within the existing harbour limits, proximity to the existing port, and the limited impact upon the environment and community. The location at Nigg Bay is not however without constraint.

Nigg Bay sits within an area of approved Greenbelt in the existing Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. A large part of the area is identified within Aberdeen's green network affording the site a degree of protection and status. This Green Network is connected by a series of core paths and importantly by a national coastal route. The existence of a Site of Special Scientific Interest, several Listed Buildings and St Fittick's church, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, mean that significant development at Nigg Bay requires Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Aberdeen Harbour Board has now formally commenced this process. The EIA scoping report has been submitted to Transport Scotland, Marine

Scotland and Aberdeen City Council for discussion. Aberdeen Harbour Board is committed to working with these and other organisations to mitigate impact upon this important environment. That said, Nigg Bay has many locational advantages which we believe can outweigh appropriately mitigated environmental concerns.













- Directions for Growth pointed to the ability to access Nigg Bay from the south;
- The opportunity to link Nigg Bay with the industrial estates at Altens and East Tullos contributing to their economic regeneration;
- The opportunity to channel investment in the port to support the ongoing regeneration of the Torry community; and,
- The significant opportunity that is afforded by its location on the coast and the potential improvement of the green network that surrounds this area.

In May this year Aberdeen Harbour Board organised a series of workshops, stakeholder and community in nature. At these events the preference to see ideas develop at Nigg Bay was reinforced and early discussions were had on some of the key issues facing transportation, planning in and around the port and the impact upon the neighbouring environment.

This document considers in further detail the alternatives that were discussed at the workshops, the points that were raised and the early response to these observations.





-  EIA SCOPING BOUNDARY
-  TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION
-  PRINCIPAL ACCESS
-  SECONDARY ACCESS
-  GREEN BELT
-  GREEN SPACE NETWORK
-  SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT
-  SAC
-  SSSI
-  LNCS
-  COASTAL PATH
-  CORE PATHS



East Tullos Industrial Estate

Altens Industrial Estate



## SECTION 2

### TRANSPORTATION

#### *Strategic Implication*

In identifying Nigg Bay as the preferred option, its strategic accessibility was uppermost in our thoughts. Nigg Bay sits significantly south of Aberdeen City Centre. Unlike the continuing expansion of the port or a significant new facility north of the current harbour, Nigg Bay had fewer transportation constraints that currently affect the existing port and that come with its central location.

At an early transportation workshop the AWPR was identified as offering a further 10 – 15% capacity in city centre traffic. At the subsequent transportation workshop this was queried. Either way it seems very clear that there is limited (and specifically time limited) capacity in the City Centre. The City Centre options had no obvious potential for expansion

within this current tight transport infrastructure. Nigg Bay on the other hand has the potential for a dedicated route, currently referred to as the coast road, servicing the site from the south.

Aberdeen Harbour Board are currently engaged in a significant transport modelling exercise to determine existing traffic patterns for vehicles using the port. Early thoughts were that traffic was predominantly from the south. These ideas were challenged at a transportation workshop in December 2012 with some participants indicating traffic is more likely to be split 50/50 between north and south.

Before the detailed design of transport access in Nigg Bay can be undertaken, it is important that this modelling work is completed. It is also likely that the arrival of Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road in 2016, while it may not massively increase traffic capacity in the City Centre, will change the travel patterns of road users. It is quite possible for example, that AWPR will encourage more users from Westhill etc. to travel south and come into the Harbour from this direction. The existence of a new harbour facility at Nigg Bay would arguably, further encourage this movement.

The Coast Road and its viability as the key landward access into the new Harbour, therefore needs to be considered in terms of its broader traffic impact upon Wellington Road and the southern gateway to Aberdeen. Access to the Coast from the motorway network would be through Altens industrial estate. This means that the identification of the access / egress junction to Wellington Road is key and that access from the coast road west will have potential implications upon the existing businesses that are operating in Altens. Heavy goods vehicle traffic would be encouraged west through Altens to link to Wellington Road as opposed to further south towards Cove.



	EXISTING DEVELOPMENT
	EXISTING OPEN SPACE
	PARK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME
	PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

*Transport modelling work will be completed towards the end of 2013 and much more informed discussion can take place then but the potential impacts of a new harbour facility upon this immediate and strategic roads context clearly need to be considered through the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report.*

## The Coast Road

The Coast Road itself has been identified as requiring a significant physical upgrade. As a minimum, its widening to 6 metres and potentially to 7.3 metres of carriageway has been identified as a prerequisite of its elevation to the main access to any new Harbour. It is likely that as part of this process there would also be a requirement to improve pedestrian and cycle connections along its length.

Some flexibility has been offered given the existence of the current railway bridge such that cycle and pedestrian linkages could travel north to an alternative bridge crossing near the sewerage treatment plant. The recent transportation workshop identified some concerns even with this approach. It raised a view that there would instead be a much more significant reconstruction of the road required to accommodate heavy goods traffic; that this would involve considering its camber, alignment, etc. The Roads Authority also raised the possibility that there would likely be a requirement for a new bridge across the east coast mainline.

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*Aberdeen Harbour Board have engaged with Network Rail and will develop this discussion further in the next few months, however, the construction of a new bridge across the mainline and all the additional works identified for the coast road itself should be the subject of discussion through the Main Issues Report stage of the Local Development Plan.*

## Rail Freight

While on the subject of transportation there was significant discussion on the potential for increased rail freight and even consideration of a possible station associated with the new port facility. In terms of rail freight there is currently a rail goods yard operating within the East Tullos industrial estate. Considering roads access through Altens along the coast road from this facility may result in the potential for increased traffic using rail freight. However, this must be considered against a rail freight figure for Aberdeenshire which is around 1% of all freight travelling. This figure is partly shaped by limitations on the East Coast mainline itself as opposed to locally.

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*Aberdeen Harbour Board is interested in garnering views from Network Rail and others, as part of the Main Issues stage of the Local Development Plan into the further potential for rail freight generated by Nigg Bay and Aberdeen generally.*

*In terms of the opportunity for a mainline railway station we would highlight that this idea emerged during a workshop discussion. The current arrangements which see the existence of a ferry terminal, a bus station and Aberdeen's main rail station all within easy walking distance of each other are entirely satisfactory for the Harbour Board in 2013. It is not our expectation that a mainline railway station would emerge at Nigg Bay however, in the spirit of this pre consultation stage, Aberdeen Harbour Board are happy to hear peoples' thoughts on this matter too.*



### **Alternative Approaches to Roads Access**

With roads access realistically the most likely focus for freight and passenger access, the workshops identified a number of alternatives. Using the Coast Road as a base or minimum requirement. If the transport modelling identifies the need for more than one roads access, in other words, for roads access that goes beyond what can be provided for by the coastal road, then Aberdeen Harbour Board would have to weigh up the costs of creating a new road facility against financial viability and the potential impacts upon the Torry community.

Realistically the new harbour is capable of being accessed from the south by the coast road and from the north by Balnagask Road and Victoria Road. Balnagask Road is far from ideal as it is considered far too narrow for heavy goods vehicles.

Victoria Road is also far from ideal. While there would be some day to day use of Victoria Road, up and over the hill and down into South Dee, it is our expectation that there will not be any significant heavy goods vehicles or freight traffic moving between the port facilities. Indeed it is more likely to be workers or employees moving between the facilities by car. Even at that, with transport modelling underway, Aberdeen Harbour Board do not expect this movement to be significant.

### **The Western Routes**

If transport modelling identifies the need for an additional route then one to the west of Nigg Bay could be considered. An alternative discussed at the workshop was to construct a route that ran west from the new facility at Nigg Bay towards the railway line, tunnel underneath the railway line and emerged in East Tullos industrial estate or to make the move west further south of the railway line perhaps utilising an existing or new bridge and then to head west either through the landfill site or over the top of Altens industrial estate and the local wildlife site. These two options are considered in greater detail in the next few paragraphs.

Aberdeen Harbour Board has been keen to work closely with Torry Community Council to date. In the early workshops and discussions we had with the Community Council, the importance of Nigg Bay as a recreational resource and specifically the importance of the green land between Torry and Nigg Bay for recreational use, woodland walks, dog walking, etc has been highlighted as being of significant importance to people in Torry.

While this was matched with a realisation of the important economic contribution a new facility could have, local people seemed more willing to consider the arrival of a major piece of infrastructure if a significant area of green space can be retained. Any road west of the harbour through the valley (that area of land traditionally identified for recreational space for the community) would clearly have an impact upon this value.



Technically, a new road could head west from a roundabout at the harbour entrance and drop into the ground 300metres or so west of the sewerage treatment works eventually tunnelling underneath the railway and emerging on the East Tullis side. It seems likely that the land and the levels could support such an approach, although obviously much further discussion with Network Rail needs to take place.

Alternatively a bridge solution could also be considered.

Aberdeen Harbour Board do not favour this proposal because we feel it runs contrary to the views expressed thus far from the community in Torry. Physically, it will also impact heavily upon the woodlands that have been constructed to date and upon the community wetland project. That said its viability and costs must be considered in the round and, if there was the potential to develop this idea further, Aberdeen Harbour Board recognise that investment into existing community projects, etc would need to be considered as part of any development package.

One further alternative that was discussed during the transportation workshops was the potential to construct a road from around the location of the existing bridge west either through the landfill site or the local wildlife reserve. With regard to the landfill site and without having looked at the proposal in any significant detail Aberdeen Harbour Board are of the view that this solution would be incredibly expensive

and politically sensitive. In all likelihood, the levels of impact upon the landfill site would be so extensive as to require a huge amount of excavation and potentially the creation or requirement for an entirely new landfill site nearby. As a result, any route along in this direction seems unlikely.

There may be the possibility to somehow angle a road between the landfill site and the local nature reserve. It would also seem that taking the road directly through the nature reserve is also unlikely. Again all of these options would be difficult and all of them would require entering East Tullis to be of real value.

***Community benefits of a direct road link with the new harbour facility***

The value of a road entering East Tullis, in whichever form or shape or location it takes, is that this industrial estate is among the lowest quality of any in Aberdeen. Aberdeen Harbour Board recognise that a direct road link with any new harbour facility would be of tremendous advantage to those looking to regenerate this area.

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***Aberdeen Harbour Board will fully support thoughts and ideas that emerge within the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan as to how the regeneration of East Tullis could be linked to the new harbour facility and will consider a partnership approach to its delivery.***





*Coastal Path at Girdleness*

# SECTION 3

## DEVELOPMENT

The construction of new road links along the coast road or between Nigg Bay and the strategic routes to the west would be significant infrastructure projects all of their own.

Currently Aberdeen Harbour Board recognise the need for the delivery of transport infrastructure to serve the new port. Clearly some of these emerging thoughts and ideas will have significant cost implications. Given the projects' national and regional significance, in all likelihood there would be a need for public level support for these and other elements.

One way of lessening the impact of these infrastructure costs is to create opportunities through the Local Development Plan process for land release to facilitate the construction of these new routes.

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*Aberdeen Harbour Board do not propose any such development in its own right, however, identify these as issues that are worthy of further discussion and consideration through the Main Issues Report stage of the Local Development Plan.*

Development along the coast road, for example, could attract interest in the land that currently sits to the east of Altens industrial estate. While some of this land is currently allocated in the existing plan there are areas of land between the coast road and the access road to Altens that are currently protected by a landscape designation and a policy identifying the need for a setback from the coast road itself to the tune of some 100 metres.

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*This document asks the question whether that land and its development could create a level of planning gain that would offset the costs of the significant improvements that would be required to the coast road itself.*

Similarly, the costs of any new bridge and the contribution required to Network Rail will place further demands upon those who deliver this improved route. Development that can go some way to offsetting these costs could be of great value and such development would ultimately benefit the regional and national economy.

The two alternatives that were identified and discussed in more detail will also cost money to build and should also be considered in terms of the development potential they trigger. The second alternative which showed a route moving west from the roundabout in Nigg Bay, across the valley and underneath the railway line is likely to see very little development on the northern side of the railway track. However, as this route moves south under the railway track into East Tullos there are a number of vacant sites, and perhaps more relevantly, a number of underutilised sites that could see significant development. At the very least this road will also incur significant costs where it meets Wellington Road and is likely to require significant junction improvements at this point.

The alternative that looked at access up and over the landfill site or the local nature conservation site is also costly and would benefit from some development. However, whether developers would be interested in doing anything on the landfill site or whether physically this is achievable would require a great deal of further investigation, probably stretching beyond the timescales of this Main Issues Report stage.

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*Aberdeen Harbour Board request, that the identification of land with the purpose of facilitating development of infrastructure to the Port be considered in the Main Issues Report.*

# NIGG BAY DEVELOPMENT SKETCH



**KEY**



EXISTING DEVELOPMENT



OPEN SPACE



RAILWAY LINE



POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



COASTAL PATH



POTENTIAL GATEWAY

# SECTION 4

## DEVELOPING A MASTERPLAN IN PARTNERSHIP

in June this year, Aberdeen Harbour Board submitted Environmental Impact Assessment scoping report to the City Council. There are a series of environmental designations that any emerging proposal will need to consider in far greater depth through this environmental impact assessment process. That said the current environment at Nigg Bay on the landward side has its challenges and could be improved. This has long been recognised with Aberdeen City Council putting in place the Torry Wetlands Project (currently looking for funding) and tree planting initiatives.

The interaction of this recreational land with the coastal route and with the bay itself needs careful thought. It is our intention to discuss further with Aberdeen City Council the potential to masterplan or produce a development framework which considers how this land can interact with the new harbour facility. This Development Framework would also consider the issues of transportation, development and environmental impact can be addressed in a positive, forward looking strategy for the area's development and improvement.

The proposal at Nigg Bay shows the northern half of the bay developed. The southern half of the bay, with the exception of a major piece of infrastructure in the southern breakwater, would remain relatively clear. Partly this is due to the presence of a Site of Special Scientific Interest, partly it is to do with the presence of

the existing outfall pipe from the sewerage treatment works but partly it is to afford a level of access and visibility to the existing port. The people of Aberdeen would welcome and have identified as a concern relative to the existing harbour.

The detail of how this actually works may be more difficult to make work in real terms however the aspiration is to create an operational port on one hand and accessible beach and coastline on the other, all within the same bay.

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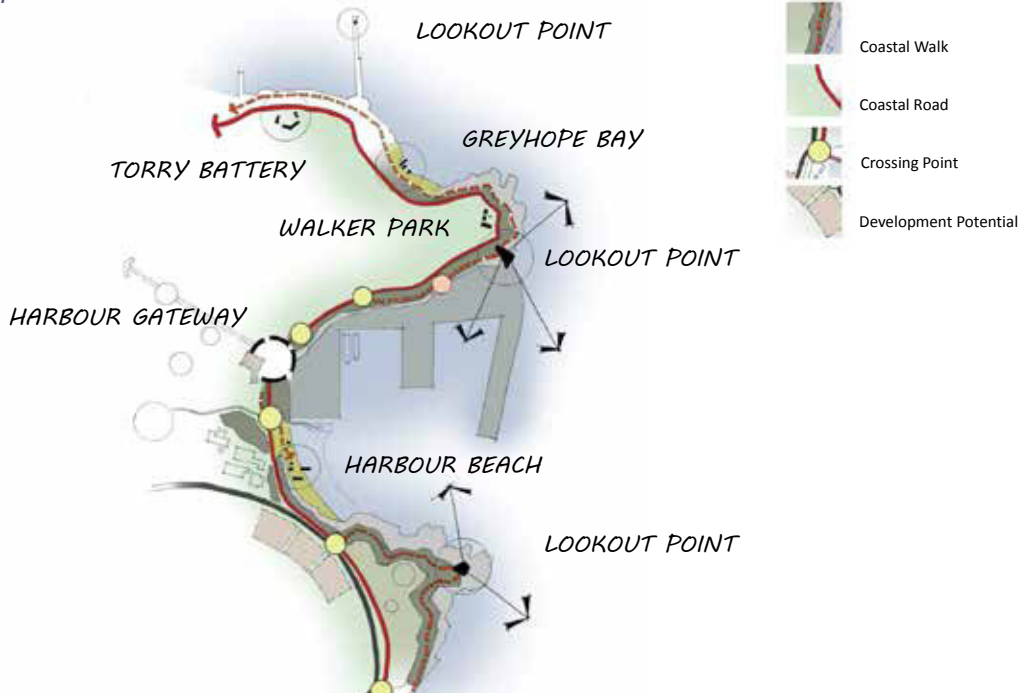
*Managing the interaction, particularly the marine interaction, between the two will require careful consideration. Aberdeen Harbour Board identify this as an area for further consideration and discussion through the Main Issues Report stage of the Local Development Plan.*

The interaction between the proposal and the valley, that area of green space to the south of Torry, is clearly of great interest to the local community and to the Harbour Board. Aberdeen Harbour Board are not in the business of deliberately impacting on one community over another. While we believe there are great opportunities for the local community in Torry we want to work with them in partnership, to minimise any adverse impact and maximise the opportunity for community benefits.

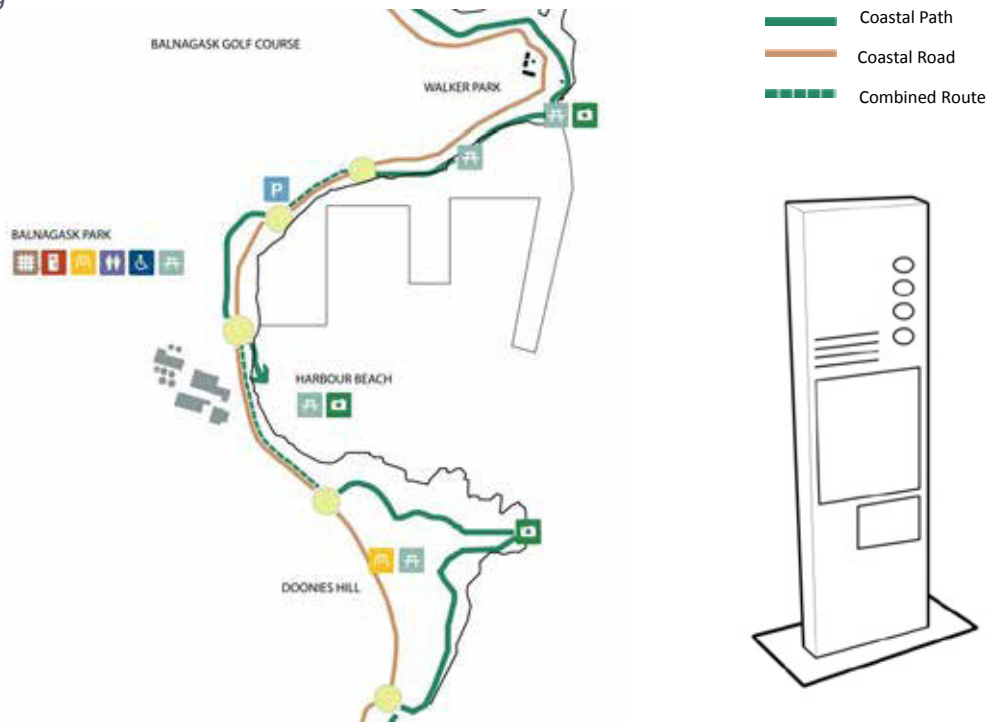




Concept



Wayfinding

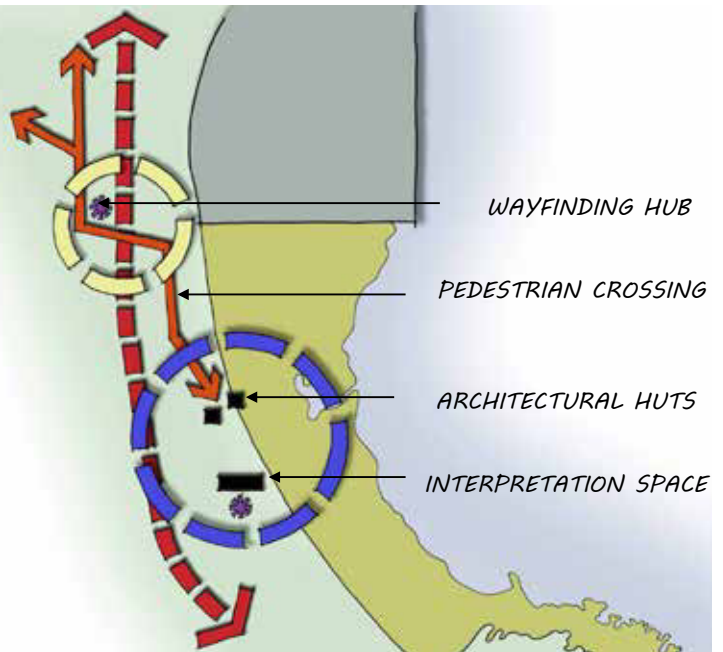
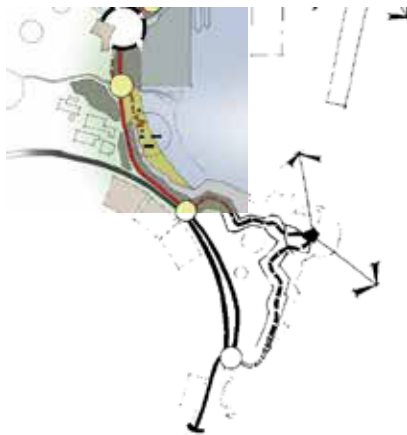


The use and the interaction with the green spaces around Torry are very much dependent upon the emerging transportation approach. However, the Board are keen to hear from the City Council and others through the Main Issues Report stage of the Local Development Plan as to how best achieve this interaction with this land to the west.

The Board do however make clear that if we are required to take access west through this land, this will emerge as a requirement of the planning process rather than something that we necessarily want to do at this stage.

The third key interaction with the local environment is the opportunity to utilise and interact with the coast. Aberdeen Harbour Board have a development framework in place with Aberdeen City Council which was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance in December 2012. In short this document identified a series of key spaces, viewing platforms and viewpoints located around the port that would help visitors and locals alike to orientate themselves around the harbour and also to travel around the port with a level of safety and interest.

### *Room 1 Harbour Beach*

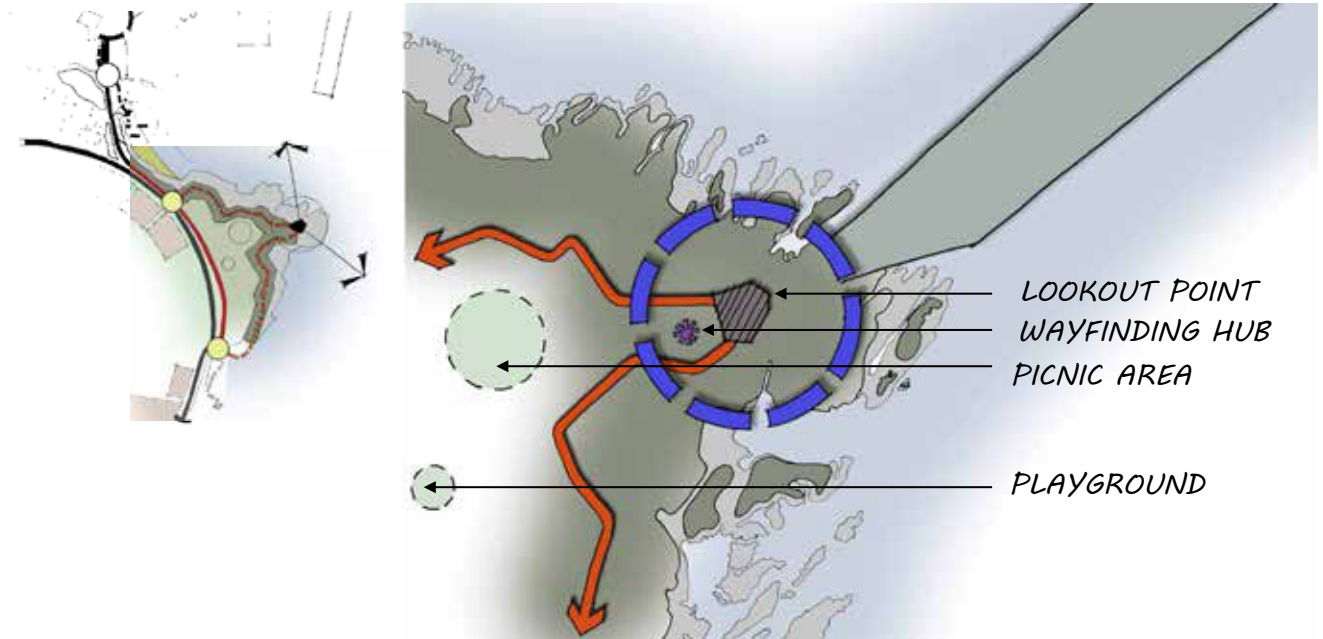


The Board are considering whether this chain of events or at least the principle behind its design could be extended beyond the Torry Battery and around the Balnagask Headlands past the proposed new facility at Nigg Bay. Effectively this would link with opportunities at Torry Battery, "Torry Coo", the existing valve station next to the proposed northern breakwater, St Fittick's church, the community wetland project, Torry beach and up onto the headland near the southern breakwater.

*These key points and public spaces would all be linked by the coastal path that already exists. The Board are keen to hear of people's ideas for how these green spaces could be developed, evolved and interconnected to maximise the recreational potential of this land.*

*Is there the possibility that a new harbour facility could be constructed yet the green spaces that surround it could be improved as a result? We believe this is a key question to be asked at the Main Issues Report stage of the Local Development Plan.*

*Room 2 Lookout Point*



# SECTION 5

## CONCLUSION

Aberdeen Harbour Board has submitted this document to inform an open and transparent discussion as part of the Main Issues Report stage of the Local Development Plan. We have raised questions, some of which are sensitive and some of which we are only now beginning to consider. The Board have however embraced the principle of utilising the development plan process to consider, shape and evolve these major infrastructure proposals.

We are keen to demonstrate this as part of the emerging National Planning Framework document as we believe passionately that successfully grasping the challenge of spatial planning major infrastructure proposals is a key objective of National Planning Framework 3.

We hope that the City Council treat this document in that context as an open and discursive communication of our emerging ideas and of how they may positively contribute to the growth and development of the city of Aberdeen. We also propose that the City Council use the months leading up to the publication of the MIR to fully engage in preliminary Masterplanning of this area.







