



# Aberdeen Local Development Plan Review

## Proposal for a site to be included in the Main Issues Report

The Proposed Strategic Development Plan does not require us to allocate extra housing or employment land in the next Local Development Plan (LDP). Because the 2012 LDP identified a significant number of greenfield sites to accommodate these requirements, we are not looking to allocate any more greenfield housing or employment land in this plan. It is for this reason that we are not asking for greenfield development options this time around. However, we are always keen to identify new brownfield sites for housing or for other uses. Please use this form to provide details of the site that you wish to have included in the Main Issues Report for consideration as a proposal in the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

One of the purposes of this form is to inform a public debate on the merits of the different sites being proposed. All information submitted will therefore be made available to the public to promote a transparent and open process.

Please feel free to provide any further information you feel appropriate to support your submission. The City Council has produced a Sustainability Checklist which provides guidance on the issues which will be used to help us judge the merits of competing development options.

This can be found on [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan)

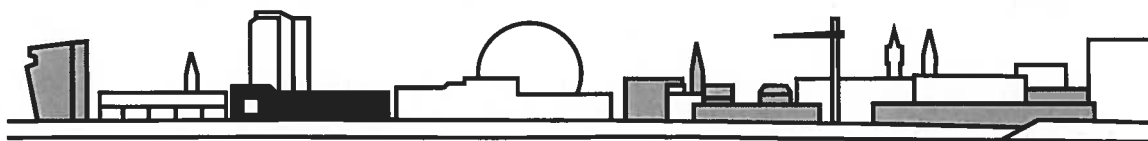
**Please ensure your proposal is with us by 14th June 2013.**

### Using your personal information

Information you supply to Aberdeen City Council (ACC) in this form will be used to prepare the Local Development Plan. The information provided will be made public and will be placed on the Council's website. This will include the name and address of the proposer and landowner.

The Local Development Plan team may also use your contact details to contact you about the information you have provided.

For further information on how your information is used, how ACC maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information ACC holds about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg, Team Leader, Local Development Plan Team, Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4 Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB.



1

Name of proposer: Stewart Milne Homes

Date: 14 June 2013

Address: C/O Ryden LLP, 25 Albyn Place, Aberdeen

Postcode: AB10 1YL

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

2

Name of landowner: Various

Address: [REDACTED]

### The site and your proposal

3 What name would you like the site to be known as?  
[The site name could be descriptive or an address]

Kingswells Community Expansion

Have you any information for the site on the internet? If so please provide the web address:

[REDACTED]

4 Please provide a map showing the exact boundaries of the site you would like considered.

Map Provided

5 Please provide the National Grid reference of the site.

Derbeth: (North) NJ864087, (South) NJ861072, (West) NJ856078; Gillahill: NJ874073; Huxterstone: NJ873063

6 What is the current use of the site?

Agricultural

Has there been any previous development on the site?

Yes

No

If so, what was it?

Existing farm houses and buildings lie within the site boundaries.

7 What do you propose using the site for?

Residential, employment, primary school, local centre, open space and strategic landscaping.

- 8 If you are proposing housing on the site please provide details of what you think would be appropriate, both in terms of the number of dwellings, and their forms (flats, detached houses, terraces etc).

A mix of house types would be provided.  
Derbeth - 900 dwellings  
Gillahill - 600 dwellings  
Huxterstone - 60 dwellings

- 9 It is likely that there will be a requirement for 25% of the housing within the development to be affordable. If applicable, are you considering more or less than this figure?

25%  More  Less

- 10 If you are proposing business uses please provide details of what you would market the land for?  
[Please make sure the area of land proposed for business use is shown on the site plan]

Business and offices (Use Class 4)

General industrial land (Use Class 5)

Storage and distribution (Use Class 6)

Do you have a specific occupier in mind for the site? Yes  No

- 11 If you are proposing uses other than housing or business please provide as much detail as possible on what you propose.  
[Examples could include retailing, tourism, renewable energy, sports, leisure and recreation, institutions and education.]

Community/ Retail uses in new local centre;  
Land for educational use;  
Open space for recreational purposes.

- 12 Will the proposed development be phased? Yes  No

If yes, then please provide details of what is anticipated to be built and when.

Development would be delivered in the period 2017 - 2035.

- 13 Has the local community been given the opportunity to influence/partake in the development proposal?

Yes  No  Not Yet

If there has been any community engagement please provide details of the way in which it was carried out and how it has influenced your proposals. **If no consultation has yet taken place, please detail how you will do so in the future.**

Appropriate public consultation will take place in due course.

## Sustainable Development and Design

**14** Have you applied principles of sustainable siting and design to your site? The City Council has produced a Sustainability Checklist which provides guidance on the principles of sustainable siting and design and other issues which can be found on [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan)

Please provide the following information:

A) Exposure – does the site currently have

- Little shelter from northerly winds
- Some shelter from northerly winds
- Good shelter to northerly winds

B) Aspect – is the site mainly

- North facing
- East or west facing
- South, south west or south east facing

C) Slope – do any parts of the site have a gradient greater than 1 in 12?

- Yes

If yes, approximately how much (hectares or %)

- No

D) Flooding – are any parts of the site at risk of flooding?

- Yes

If yes, approximately how much (hectares or %)

- No

E) Drainage – do any parts of the site currently suffer from poor drainage or waterlogging?

- Yes

If yes, approximately how much (hectares or %)

- No

F) Built and Cultural Heritage – would the development of the site lead to the loss or disturbance of archaeological sites or vernacular or listed buildings?

- Significant loss or disturbance
- Some potential loss or disturbance
- No loss or disturbance

G) Natural conservation – would the development of the site lead to the loss or disturbance of wildlife habitats or species?

- Significant loss or disturbance
- Some potential loss or disturbance
- No loss or disturbance



H) Landscape features – would the development of the site lead to the loss or disturbance of linear and group features of woods, tree belts, hedges and stone walls?

- Significant loss or disturbance
- Some potential loss or disturbance
- No loss or disturbance

I) Landscape fit – would the development be intrusive into the surrounding landscape?

- Significant intrusion
- Slight intrusion
- No intrusion

J) Relationship to existing settlements – how well related will the development be to existing settlements?

- Unrelated (essentially a new settlement)
- Partially related
- Well related to existing settlement

K) Land use mix – will the development contribute to a balance of land uses, or provide the impetus for attracting new facilities?

- No contribution
- Some contribution
- Significant contribution

L) Accessibility – is the site currently accessible to bus, rail, or major road networks?

	Bus Route	Rail Station	Major Road
Access more than 800m away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access between 400-800m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access within 400m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Varying distances due to the extent of land under consideration.

M) Proximity to services and facilities – How close are any of the following?

	400m	400m-800m	>800m
Community facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public transport networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Varying distances due to the extent of land under consideration. New services will be provided.

N) Footpath and cycle connections – are there any existing direct footpath and cycle connections to community and recreation facilities or employment?

- No available connections
- Limited range of connections
- Good range of connections

O) Proximity to employment opportunities – are there any existing employment opportunities within 1.6km for people using or living in the development you propose?

- None
- Limited
- Significant

P) Contamination – are there any contamination or waste tipping issues with the site?

- Significant contamination or tipping present
- Some potential contamination or tipping present
- No contamination or tipping present

Q) Land use conflict – would the development conflict with adjoining land uses or have any air quality or noise issues?

- Significant conflict
- Some potential conflict
- No conflict

If there are significant conflicts, what mitigation measures are proposed?

R) Physical Infrastructure – does the site have connections to the following utilities?

- Electricity
- Gas
- Water and Sewage

If you are proposing housing, is there existing school capacity in the area?

Secondary Capacity

Primary Capacity

A new primary school is proposed as part of development at Gillahill.

Are there any further physical or service infrastructure issues affecting the site?

**15** No site is going to be perfect and the checklist above will inevitably raise some potential negative impacts from any development. Where negative impacts are identified, please provide details of their nature and extent and of any mitigation that may be undertaken. Listed below are examples of further information that may be included in your submission;

	Included	Not applicable	
Contamination Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Various assessments have been prepared for land at Gillahill and Derbeth. LVIA assessment and transport issues considered as part of the indicative masterplan submitted for all three sites.
Flood Risk Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Drainage Impact Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Habitat/biodiversity Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Landscape Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Transport Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other as applicable (e.g. trees, noise, dust, smell, retail impact assessment etc please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**16** Does the development proposal give any benefits to the community? If so what benefits does the development bring, and how would they likely be delivered?

Community benefits can include new community facilities (such as local shops, health, education, leisure and community facilities), affordable housing, green transport links and open spaces. Include elements which you anticipate may be required as developer contributions from the development. (Please note, specific contributions will have to be negotiated with the Council on the basis of the proposal.)

Provision of employment land;  
 A new local centre proposed to provide a new heart to Kingswells and new services;  
 A new local primary school;  
 New areas of open space with footpath connections to the existing community;  
 Developer contributions would be delivered in scale and kind with the development of the sites.

**17** If you have prepared a framework or masterplan showing a possible layout for the site, please include it with this form.

Masterplan/ Framework attached

If you need help reading this document  
(for example if you need it in a different  
format or in another language), please  
phone us on 01224 523317.

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ভাষা/ইন্টারপ্রেটিং এবং অন্যান্য ফরম্যাটের  
যোগাযোগ সাহায্যের জন্য দয়া করে  
:01224 523317  
নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

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如果需要語言/傳譯及其他形式的傳訊支援服務，  
請聯絡：01224 523317。

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Если требуется помощь при выборе  
языка /переводчика или других  
способов общения, звоните по  
телефону: 01224 523317

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للحصول على مساعدة بخصوص اللغة/ الترجمة  
و وسائل الاتصال الأخرى، الرجاء الاتصال  
بالرقم التالي: 01224 523317

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Lai saņemtu palīdzību sakarā ar  
valodu/tulkošanu un citiem iespējamiem  
komunikāciju atbalsta formātiem, lūdzu  
zvanīt 01224 523317

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Jej jus turite sunkumu su kalba/ vertimu  
ar kitomis bendravimo formomis,  
skambinkite 01224 523317

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Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy językowej /  
tłumacza lub innej pomocy w  
porozumiewaniu się, proszę zadzwonić  
pod numer: 01224 523317



**Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.**  
Please return completed forms to:

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

Or email it to: [ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

March 2013  
[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)



**STEWART MILNE HOMES**

**DEVELOPMENT BID FOR LAND AT  
KINGSWELLS**

**JUNE 2013**

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

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## **Figures**

**Figure 1: Location Plan**

**Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan**

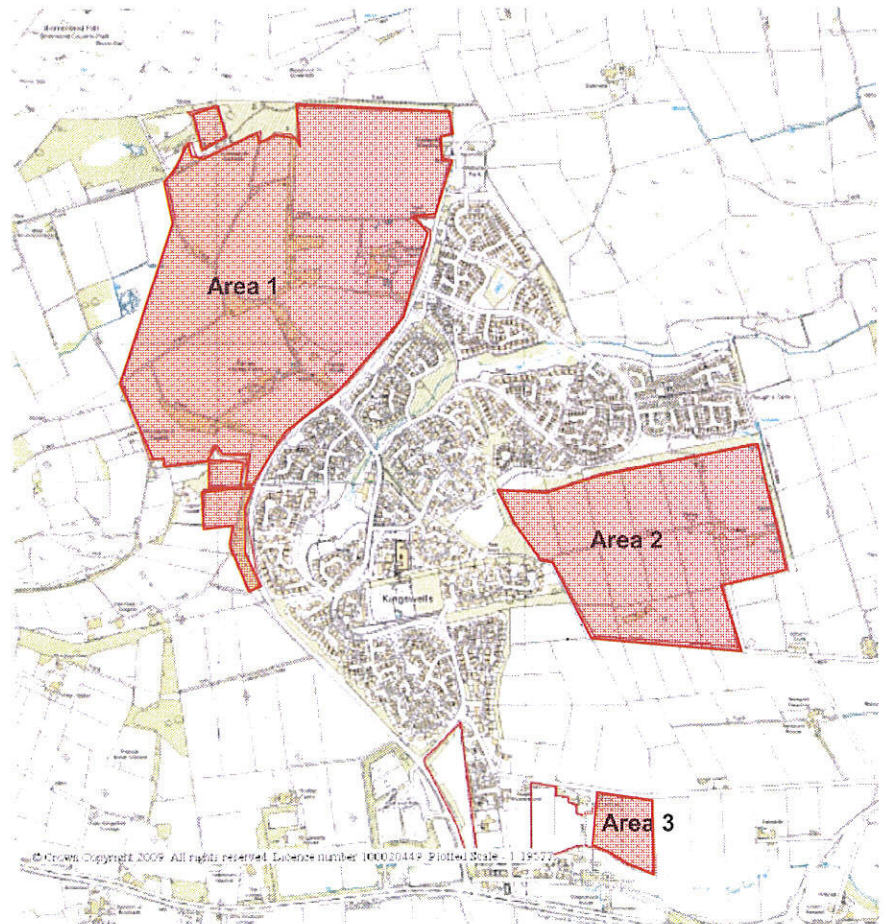
**Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan**

**Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan**

**Figure 5: SEPA Flood Risk Map**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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



**Figure 1: Site Location Plan**

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

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



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

## **2.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

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

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

2.4 Development proposals at Huxterstone and Fairley Road were discussed under Issue 30 of the reporter's recommendations. The Reporter considered that the principle of development on both sites had been established as they had both previously been allocated as Strategic Housing Land Reserve in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008). Consequently the Reporter recommended that the sites be allocated for development. However the allocation at Huxterstone was made as per its allocation in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008) and was not extended to the east as per the development bid. This development bid seeks to extend the allocation at Huxterstone to that shown above in Figure 1 (Area 3).

2.5 Development proposals at Gillahill and Derbeth were discussed in Issue 35 of the Reporter's recommendations. In discussing development at Gillahill, the Reporter acknowledged that the site is readily deliverable and would contribute to the housing land supply and may also accommodate a new primary school however, did not consider there to be numerical justification with regards to the housing land supply to allocate further housing sites. Consequently the Reporter found the site's green belt status to be justified.

2.6 The Reporter concluded that similar benefits could be secured through the development for housing of land at Derbeth, noting that the development of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) would secure good road access to the area. However, given that the review of the green belt included this area the reporter did not consider there to be over-riding benefits to justify allocation at that time.

2.7 This development bid now seeks the development of land at Derbeth for a mixed use development of 900 dwellings; land at Gillahill for the development of 600 dwellings and a primary school; and land at Huxterstone for the development of 60

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

### 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

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

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

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

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

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

3.5 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 2.

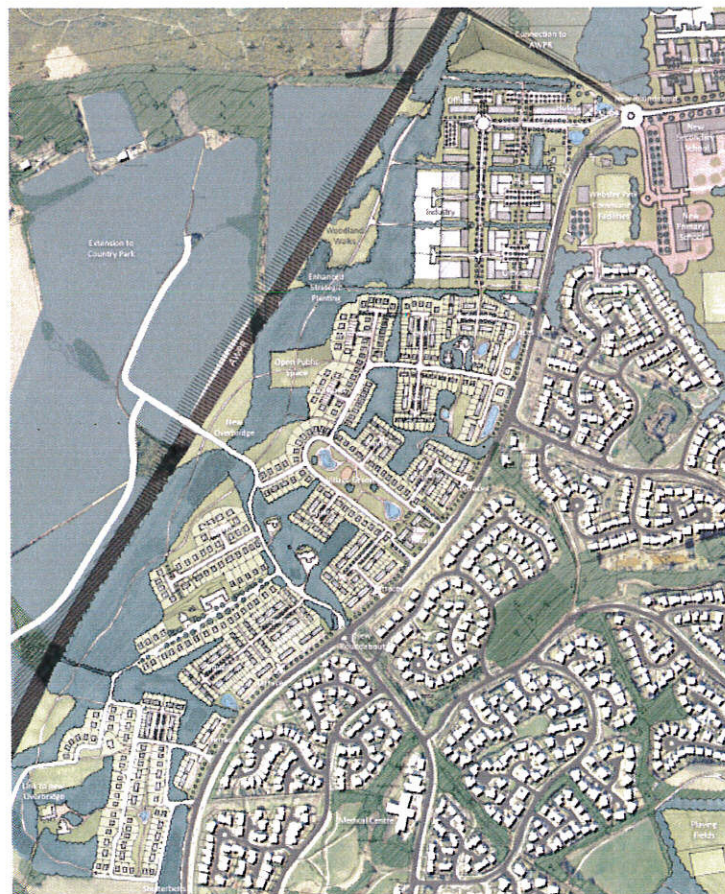


Figure 2: Derbeth Indicative Masterplan

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



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

3.8 An indicative masterplan is shown below in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Gillahill Indicative Masterplan**

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

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

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



**Figure 4: Huxterstone Indicative Masterplan**

#### 4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

##### Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

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



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



**Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport**

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

**5.0 STRUCTURE PLAN**

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Circular 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits

## 7.0 SERVICES

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

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

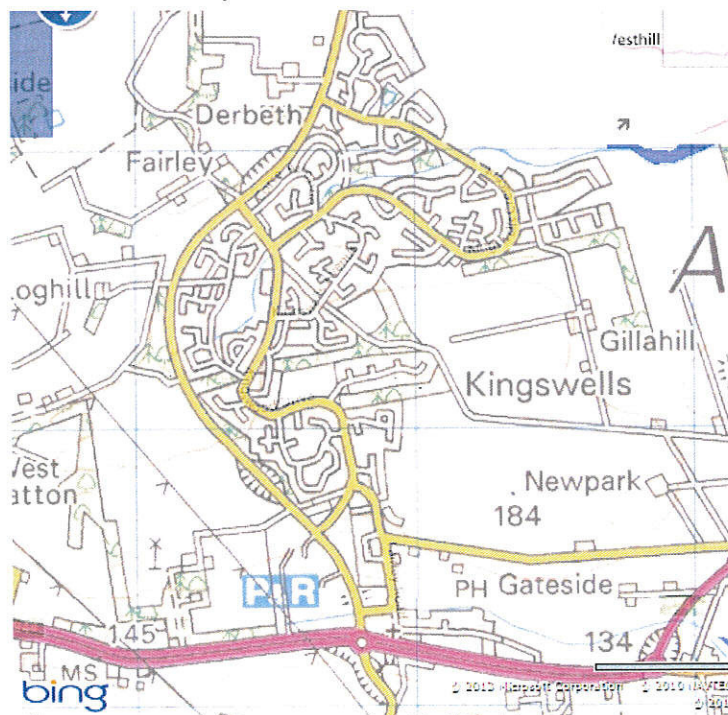


Figure 5: SEPA Flood Map

7.3 Kingswells lies in the catchment area for Bucksburn Academy which has an increasing school roll. However, pupils in Kingswells will be rezoned to the new Countesswells Academy in due course. Primary school provision for the Kingswells area is located at Kingswells Primary School which is currently operating above capacity however is forecast to fall to below capacity in 2018<sup>2</sup>. The development at Gillahill proposes the development of a new primary school which would alleviate

<sup>2</sup> 2012-Based School Roll Forecasts, Aberdeen City

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

## **8.0 JUSTIFICATION**

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

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

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

**Area One: Derbeth**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Area Two: Gillahill**

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



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

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

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

8.21 The inclusion of the Gillahill site for development during the period 2017 - 2035 would ensure that there is sufficient land allocations should the Strategic Development Plan Authority or a Reporter be minded to increase allocations proposed by the SDP. Should this happen the Review of the LDP, without any new greenfield allocations, would fall short in delivering new land for housing. New sites also require to be identified to address the emerging shortfall in the housing land supply as a consequence of a number of larger sites failing to come forward within the timescales anticipated.

8.22 The site at Gillahill lies immediately adjacent to the existing community and is ideally placed to maximise on current investment in infrastructure being made at Kingswells. Furthermore it is well placed in proximity to development at OP40 to take advantage of employment opportunities available thus contributing to creating a sustainable community.

8.23 The land is currently in agricultural use for grazing purposes. There are no landscape or visual impact issues constraining the development of the site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the site was previously undertaken to inform consultation into the extant LDP it concluded that the landscape and visual impact of the development is medium which can be mitigated by the implementation of strategic landscaping.

8.24 In terms of the Green Space Network designation of the site, current policy aims to protect and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of these areas. It was the intention of the Council to identify the most important wildlife and recreation sites as Green Space Network. At present the site does not meet the

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

8.25

Mature tree belts existing to the north and east will contain development and soften the appearance of the development. The woodland shelter belt to the north will partially screen development from close and distant views whilst the woodland to the west will act as a backdrop to development. The landscape framework is defined by the distinctive pattern of field boundaries formed by drystone dykes and these will be incorporated into the layout and design of the development to create a distinctive residential environment.

8.26

Linked footpaths and a network of open space through the site is important and where possible will utilise historic routes defined by drystone dykes. This will be further enhanced by landscaping. Development would maintain the cohesion of Kingswells with minimal impact on the setting of the city.

8.27

In locational terms the site forms a natural expansion of the existing settlement set within a mature landscape framework. It lies close to, and would enjoy good pedestrian links with the centre of the village where a range of services can be found. Public transport services currently lie along Kingswells Crescent which lies within 400 metres of the site in line with SPP.

8.28

A number of supporting studies have previously been prepared for this land, including drainage and transportation assessments and an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts. These confirm that there are no traffic, infrastructure

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

- 8.29 SPP states that the aim of green belt policy is to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities. The development of this land will not affect this. Landscaping will be considered during the preparation of a masterplan for the site and will provide sufficient strategic landscaping to mitigate any identified impact of the proposed development to create an attractive environment that will enhance the character of the area and form a defensible boundary to the settlement.
- 8.30 As recognised by SPP the other objectives of a green belt are to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations; and protect and give access to open space. At present the site at Gillahill does not meet the objectives of green belt policy. It does not direct growth to the most appropriate location and it does not provide access or protect areas of open space. As demonstrated by the indicative masterplan in Figure 4 development of the site will enable areas of open space to be created which will be accessible for all of the community to use. Furthermore it enables development to occur in a location which is in proximity to both the existing settlement and services within the settlement; accordingly it is an ideal location for development. As such the site should be removed from the green belt and allocated for development in the Review of the LDP.
- 8.31 As recognised by the Reporter during the examination into the extant LDP a number of benefits would accrue as a result of this development including a new primary school. Consequently it should be removed from the green belt and allocated for the development of 600 units of housing and a new primary school.

**Area Three: Huxterstone**

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

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

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

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

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

## **9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS**

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



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