



ABERDEEN  
CITY COUNCIL

# 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

Date: 14 June 2013

Address: c/o Ryden LLP, 25 Albyn Place, Aberdeen

Postcode: AB10 1YL

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

2

Name of landowner: Messrs Jaffrey

Address: c/o Agent

### 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]

Contlaw, Milltimber

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

no

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.

NJ847024

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?

[REDACTED]

7 What do you propose using the site for?

Mixed use development

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).

850 - variety types and tenures

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.]

Local Retail Centre  
Community Facilities  
Primary School with associated Playing Fields  
Open Space

12 Will the proposed development be phased? Yes  No

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

100 units - 1st Phase  
Remainder thereafter

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.**

Applicant is committed to a process of full community participation in the formulation of the masterplan, in line with best practice and statutory requirements.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access between 400-800m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access within 400m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

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

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

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

See Paper Apart

**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"/>
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 type="checkbox"/>
Landscape Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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.)

See Paper Apart

**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 ফরমেটের  
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 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



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CITY COUNCIL

**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)





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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes and Messrs Jaffrey, as land owners, in response to an invitation by Aberdeen City Council to put forward development proposals for consideration for inclusion within the review of the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. The land, which is under the control of Stewart Milne Homes, extends to approximately 75.0 hectares or thereby lying mainly to the west and south of Contlaw Road, Milltimber. It mainly comprises the farmlands of Nether Beanshill and is predominantly in agricultural use.
- 1.2 Stewart Milne Homes is part of the Stewart Milne Group, founded in Aberdeen in 1975. Since that time the company has grown to become one of the UK's leading privately owned house builders. The company has a commitment to enterprise and innovation meshed with a traditional value for quality services. Stewart Milne Homes are currently building houses across the North East of Scotland, Tayside, the Central Belt and the North West of England.
- 1.3 The development proposals have evolved following a detailed analysis of the land and its capacity to accommodate further development. A mixed use development is proposed to promote a sustainable community and to provide services and facilities, not only for the occupiers of the new development, but also for the benefit of the existing community. An indicative Masterplan has been prepared and, whilst there has not been any community consultation to date, Stewart Milne Homes are fully committed to that process. Subject to the principle of further growth in Milltimber being acceptable, an extensive exercise of community consultation will take place with a view to refining the proposals and addressing issues raised by the community.

## 2.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- 2.1 The suburb of Milltimber lies approximately 10 km to the west of Aberdeen City Centre. It is primarily a residential area with the majority of the housing lying to the north of the A93, North Deeside Road which runs between Aberdeen and Banchory and beyond to Ballater.
- 2.2 Its population of Milltimber at 2010 amounted to 2,890 residents<sup>1</sup>. It has expanded significantly over the last 30 years but growth has been restricted over recent years due to housing land supply constraints. Housing in the area is almost entirely

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<sup>1</sup> GRO Scotland

private sector comprising detached, semi detached and terraced properties. The older properties sit either side of the A93 to the east and west of the suburb and are set in large feus, some of which have been subject to subdivision in recent years. The intervening properties fronting North Deeside Road enjoy a south facing aspect with views to the River Dee.

2.3 The A93 is one of the main arterial routes from the west into the city. It is also a public transport corridor with Stagecoach and First Group both providing services eastwards into the city and westwards to Peterculter, Banchory, Aboyne and beyond to Ballater and Braemar. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, the construction of which is due to commence in 2014, bisects the land under the control of Stewart Milne Homes. A new grade separated junction is proposed, linking it to the A93. This will ultimately relieve some pressure on the A93 between Milltimber and the City Centre.

2.4 The Lower Deeside corridor is a popular residential area with potential residents attracted by popular primary and secondary education school provision in the area. Despite development pressures there have been very few developments of note in recent years and each of the communities along Lower Deeside have maintained their identity with coalescence being avoided between Cults, Bielside and Milltimber and Peterculter. These areas remain separated by land designated as Green Belt and Green Space Network in the extant Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2012.

2.5 Being a predominantly commuter suburb, Milltimber lacks the range of uses and facilities which would define it as a sustainable community. A primary school, church and community hall are located within the suburb. However, there are no local shopping facilities or employment opportunities. In recent years, planning permission was granted for a new church to the east of the suburb<sup>2</sup>. The former Tor-na-dee Hospital closed a number of years ago and has since been converted to provide private health care and sheltered housing.

### **3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS**

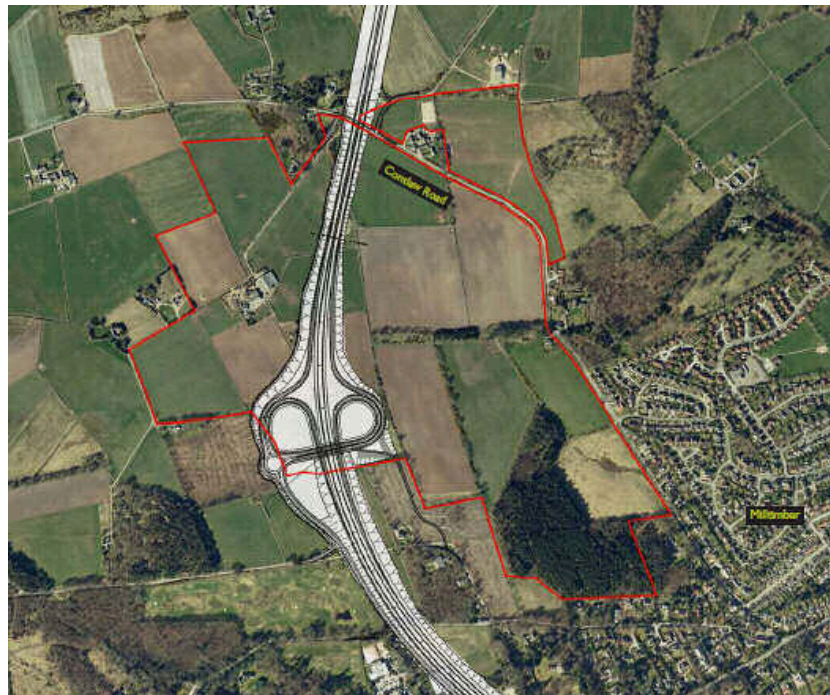
3.1 The land under the control of Stewart Milne Homes extends to approximately 75.0 hectares. A plan highlighting the full extent of the land holding is shown in Figure 1. All of the land lies to the north of the A93 and to the west and north - west of the existing suburb. Other than two parcels of land around Hill of Milltimber the majority

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<sup>2</sup> Application Reference: 090270

of the land lies to the west and south of Contlaw Road. The bid site immediately abuts the existing built up area along part of its eastern and southern boundaries.

**Figure 1: Site Location**



- 3.2 The land is predominantly in agricultural use of 3.2 quality in terms of the Macaulay Land Capability for Agriculture classification. There are localised areas of woodland on the periphery of the site, particularly to the south which provides shelter and landscape and visual containment. There are a number of farm buildings and residential properties dispersed around and through the site.
- 3.3 In topographic terms the land rises gradually from around 50m AOD at North Deeside Road to 130m at its northern boundary with Contlaw Road. Beyond this the land continues to rise to a high point of 146m thereby providing a backdrop to the development of the site.
- 3.4 The site is characterised by a patchwork of fields of varying sizes. The field boundaries are delineated by a combination of post and wire fences and dry stone dykes. Gorse and other shrubs are evident along some of these boundaries along with a number of isolated trees. There is also shelter belt planting along a number of the field boundaries some running east – west and others north – south. The land is utilised for a combination of grazing and arable purposes. The land immediately abutting Contlaw Road adjacent to the existing built up area is no longer in active agricultural use.

- 3.5 The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will bisect in a north – south direction and the alignment of the road subdivides the site to the immediate east of Nether Beanshill Farm. The subdivision of the farm will impact significantly upon its viability as a business whilst presenting opportunities to utilise much of the land for alternative uses.

#### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The further growth of Milltimber has been under consideration for a number of years. The Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan adopted by the then District Council in 1991 identified that part of the site lying immediately to the west of the built up area as an area of 'Countryside Around Towns'. Whilst these areas were covered by Green Belt policy the plan recognised that should there be future demand for housing these areas would be considered for release at the appropriate time. In 1999, the Aberdeen City Finalised Local Plan, intended as a replacement for the 1991 adopted Local Plan, identified the same land as an area of strategic reserve for longer term development. The modified version of that plan, published in August 2002, identified a reduced area specifically for residential development.
- 4.2 That plan was eventually abandoned and the City Council embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan, "Green Spaces – New Places". This plan returned the land to Green Belt and also identified certain areas as falling within the Green Space Network which imposed further controls. Objections were lodged to the exclusion of the site for development and these were considered at the Public Local Inquiry into the Plan in 2006. The Reporters to the Inquiry concluded that there was already a clearly defined boundary to the existing built up area along Contlaw Road and that the development of the site identified at that time may impinge on the landscape setting of Milltimber. Also, concern was expressed at the limited number of facilities in the settlement and consequently the need to travel to access those facilities by means other than public transport.
- 4.3 Importantly, at that time the route of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route was not finalised and as such did not form part of the plan. The publication of the Road Orders for the route, and the ruling by the UK Supreme Court to dismiss the legal challenges to the Order, provides an opportunity for this area to be considered afresh for development.

- 4.4 The site was also the subject of a development bid for inclusion in the now extant Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2012. Objections were also lodged against the plan's spatial strategy which sought to limit development along the Lower Deeside corridor and retain the site within the City's Green Belt. These issues were considered at the Examination in Public into the Plan in 2011. The planning authority rejected the bid to include the site in the plan claiming the area is situated within an attractive landscape setting which provides a green wooded backdrop to Milltimber. The Reporter appointed by the Scottish Government agreed that the site should continue to form part of the Green Belt. The Reporter noted that the settlements along Lower Deeside follow the 90 to 95m contour as a northern building line and the site at Contlaw would breach this to the detriment of the settlement pattern prevalent in the area. The Reporter also noted that the site lay too far north of the main bus routes to walk, although admitted that the site would be large enough to accommodate its own facilities. Education capacity was also cited as a concern.

## 5.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Scottish Planning Policy

- 5.1 The 2010 consolidated document on Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) places sustainable economic growth at the heart of town planning policy in Scotland. It is designed to encourage the right development in the right place, which enables social, environmental and economic benefits to result from land use change. This "triple-bottom line" approach to spatial planning is recognised as the best way to promote sustainability which will help this generation meet its needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs.
- 5.2 Paragraph 3 of SPP explains that the purpose of planning is to guide the future development and use of land.
- "Planning is about where development should happen, where it should not and how it interacts with its surroundings".*
- 5.3 Development plans are discussed in paragraphs 10 – 21 of SPP. In monitoring development plans, SPP directs local authorities to focus on key assumptions previously made and whether or not they remain valid and whether or not land allocations proved viable. Monitoring plans are a key practice for local authorities and should set the direction for the future review of the plan.

- 5.4 SPP is split into various subject policies that deal with the composite elements of town planning. The first of these that concerns this development bid is housing. SPP affirms the Scottish Government's commitment to providing new homes and ensures that the planning system is fully committed to supporting this aim. A generous supply of effective housing land is one of the ways planning authorities can support this aim. Development plans should provide a housing land supply that is effective and robust enough to ensure that there are no unnecessary impediments to housing developments coming forward.
- 5.5 The key aspect of a local authority's housing land supply should be flexibility. In this sense, the supply of housing land should be adaptable to changing conditions and able to react to external circumstances or failures within existing supply. SPP also directs local authorities towards the possibilities of the siting of specific housing land requirements in an attempt to achieve other non-housing policy objectives, such as promoting active lifestyles and place-making.
- 5.6 High-quality design of new residential development is a key policy objective of the Scottish Government and should guide the whole process of delivering new housing. The aim for this policy is to create places that are distinctive, with a good mix of integrated land uses including homes of varied types and tenures. Fundamental to this policy is the integration with new residential development of active travel solutions, including walking and cycling as well as public transport. This will reduce reliance on the private car and encourage easy access to local services and promote healthy lifestyles.
- 5.7 To this end, SPP promotes new housing land that is located within or adjacent to existing settlements. This helps to reduce costs in terms of servicing sites but also helps to sustain local services, schools, shops and community facilities, as well as encouraging investment in new services. 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"*.
- 5.8 SPP makes it clear that affordable housing needs should be met within the housing market area that the need is based. It sets a benchmark of 25% of new housing to be affordable yet allows for an increased allocation where the housing need and demand assessments identifies areas with acute need.



- 5.9 SPP encourages development to consider carefully the opportunities to strengthen local ecosystems, such as habitat networks and wildlife corridors, which re-establish broken links and fragmented ecologies. Open space, which enables the enjoyment and appreciation of natural heritage, can have a profound impact on the sustainability of new developments. Landscapes constantly change and evolve and the aim of Scottish Planning Policy is to facilitate this change whilst enhancing the distinctive character of places. What is clear from careful reading of Scottish Planning Policy is that, whilst concerns over landscape and natural heritage conservation may act as a constraint on development, more often than not, careful planning and design can minimise potential conflict and maximise the potential for positive enhancement of the natural environment.
- 5.10 The links between spatial planning and transport are vital to ensuring new development contributes towards sustainable economic growth. These links are addressed by SPP, which aims to encourage new patterns of travel behaviour that are more active (i.e. walking and cycling) or more sustainable (public transport and car-sharing). The planning system in Scotland should support a pattern of development which limits the need for car-based travel and supports a range of travel options.
- 5.11 This theme is explored more thoroughly in Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport. It recommends local authorities create accessibility profiles for sites in the production of development plans. The profile should reflect the catchment areas served, likely quality of service and result in indicators of accessibility. A maximum threshold of 1600m from local services and 400m from bus stops should be achieved by new developments.
- 5.12 The outcomes of these subject policies should be to encourage sustainable and well-designed places that are accessible to as many people within the community as possible. The key to a successful place does not just rest with the buildings themselves, but the function of the space between buildings and their ability to adapt to the changing circumstances of local residents and visitors. These outcomes form the basis of all planning policy documents including for Aberdeen City.

#### **Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009**

- 5.13 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan approved by Scottish Ministers in 2009 sets growth targets for the city region and promotes a spatial strategy designed to accommodate this growth in the most sustainable locations. It identifies a

requirement for 72,000 houses within the Structure Plan area over the period to 2030. Aberdeen City is identified as one of three Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) which will be the main focus for development in that period. Around half of all new development is likely to be located in Aberdeen City. Of those 36,000 houses required within the City it is envisaged that 21,000 will be provided on greenfield sites with a further 15,000 split between brownfield sites and identified regeneration areas within the City. In terms of phasing of greenfield housing, 12,000 are anticipated to be required between 2007 and 2016; 5,000 between 2017 and 2023 and 4,000 between 2024 and 2030.

- 5.14 The Structure Plan advocates sustainable mixed communities with new housing and developments for employment and commercial use well related to each other to improve people's quality of life and opportunity. One of the targets to meet the sustainable mixed communities objective is for all housing development over 1 hectare in the Strategic Growth Areas to be in line with approved supplementary guidance and generally have no less than 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.15 With regard to economic growth, the plans objective is to provide opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment in a range of areas that are both appropriate and attractive to the nature of different industries. The Plan seeks to ensure that at least 60 hectares of land available to businesses at all times in a range of locations within the City. New employment land allocations in the City between 2007 and 2023 require to total 105 hectares, with 70 hectares identified as strategic reserve land to come forward in the period between 2024 and 2030.

#### **Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan**

- 5.16 The proposed SDP for the Aberdeen city region was published in February 2013 for consultation. It is expected that a finalised Plan will be sent to Scottish Ministers in the coming weeks for approval. The Plan sustains many of the fundamental principles contained in the Structure Plan. As in the preceding Structure Plan, Aberdeen City is identified as a Strategic Growth Area with around half of all new development in the SDP area to be located here.
- 5.17 The Plan acknowledges the scale of growth expected in the City region, and anticipates that a significant proportion of development will be located on greenfield sites. The housing and employment allowances for Aberdeen are set out in the table below.

**Figure 2: SDP Land Allowances**

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

- 5.18 Economic Growth is a key objective for the SDP. The Plan looks to provide opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment in a range of areas that are both appropriate for and attractive to the needs of different industries. It acknowledges the success of the area's economy during the recent global downturn and looks to capitalise on this by continuing to diversify the economy into other key sectors such as life sciences, food and drink and tourism.
- 5.19 On sustainable development and climate change, this objective looks at the energy resource use in new developments and stipulates the need for employing energy saving technologies in all new development. The target for this policy is for all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2020. Transportation use, as it impacts on climate change, is another focus of this policy and new developments are encouraged to consider a proposal's impact on the environment from increased unsustainable forms of transport.
- 5.20 With regard to population growth, the region's population has risen in recent years and the plan is based on the assumption that this will continue to grow up to 500,000 people by 2035. However, as many stakeholders have argued during the recent consultation on the proposed plan, these projections significantly underestimate the anticipated population growth published by the National Records of Scotland (NRS). They project the population of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Area to rise to 567,800 by 2035. This is reinforced by the projections for household growth published by the NRS which is set to increase by 35% over the period from 2010 – 2035. Overall, whilst the SDP sets an annual average housing requirement of 2,159 units for the period 2011 – 2035, according to realistic projections, this figure is more likely to be 2,815 units a year, creating an annual shortfall of 656 units across the plan period. Over the plan period, this points to a requirement for an additional 16,400 houses for which the Local Development Plan Review should be seeking to identify sites for.

- 5.21 Another key objective of the plan is the creation of sustainable mixed communities, where housing, jobs, services and recreation facilities are available to as wide a range of people within existing settlements as possible. The Plan states that within the SGAs, services and facilities for the community must be part of a development. Employment and commercial use must be well integrated with new housing to maximise the benefits for the environment and the quality of life of local residents.

## **6.0 SERVICES**

- 6.1 Mains water and drainage are available nearby to service the site as are gas and electricity connections. It is likely that additional drainage capacity will be required within the City as a whole to accommodate the overall scale of development envisaged.
- 6.2 The existing transport infrastructure is capable of supporting the first phase of development at Contlaw with access taken from Contlaw Road. This access strategy was previously agreed to be suitable by Aberdeen City Council in the context of consideration of earlier proposals for development of the site. Once the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is open, access to the first phase could be taken from either Contlaw Road or the AWPR. These alternatives provide the site with the flexibility of delivery, meaning the site is not dependant on the AWPR. Both options will create opportunities to link the development with North Deeside Road thereby relieving traffic from the historic road network. The site presents the opportunity to create a transport interchange that will link the residential areas of the Deeside corridor with the employment opportunities located to the North and South of the city.
- 6.3 Milltimber Primary School currently has a functional working capacity of 270 pupils. The Roll at 2013 fell short of this at 209 pupils. This has the scope to accommodate some of the pupils arising from the development (approximately 193 housing units), and all of those generated by the first phase. A replacement of Milltimber Primary School is proposed within Local Development Plan allocation OP62: Oldfold Farm. The Development Framework/ Masterplan for this site states that the replacement school would be large enough to accommodate all the pupils generated by the development as well as the existing pupil numbers.
- 6.4 Within the Contlaw Masterplan, land is reserved within the first phase of the masterplan for a new primary school, should this be required. The proposed expansion area would require additional primary school capacity for 222 pupils to

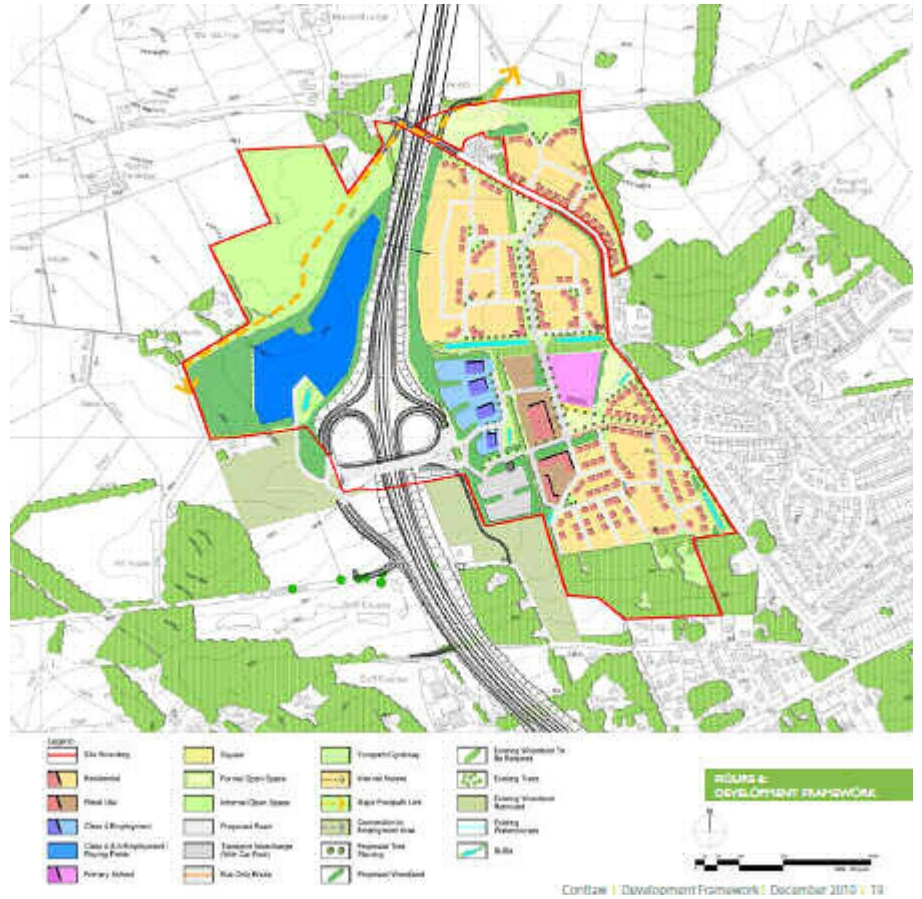
support 493 housing units. The total primary school capacity across the existing and new facilities would be able to fully support the development at Contlaw. Indeed, given that the development of a single housing site of this scale is likely to extend out past the 7 year initial life-cycle of a new primary school, then it is possible to consider an even larger allocation, as the pupil numbers decline in a maturing community.

- 6.5 Cults Academy provides secondary education for those within the area and has a capacity for 1,141 pupils. The school roll forecasts show that this capacity is likely to be breached by 2015. Contributions would be provided to secure an expansion of the academy to cater for pupils arising from this development. Several options also exist to increase the capacity of Cults Academy, including a review of catchment areas in light of new secondary schools coming on-stream at locations such as Kingswells and Countesswells. In addition, there are a number of non-district pupils attending Cults Academy from Aberdeenshire. Catchment reviews of Cults Academy would most likely remedy this situation, thus providing extra capacity at Cults to accommodate the development.

## **7.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

- 7.1 The development proposals involve the north westwards expansion of Milltimber to provide a sustainable, mixed use community largely contained and separated from Peterculter by the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. The uses to be provided include residential, business and commercial, local shopping provision and community facilities with associated strategic landscaping and public open space. A site is also retained for the provision of a new primary school with associated playing fields. The site has the potential to accommodate a park and ride facility also. An indicative Development Framework is shown below.

**Figure 3: Indicative Masterplan**



7.2 Access to the proposed development would be by the existing road network, specifically Contlaw Road, and by means of the new infrastructure to be constructed to provide access to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route from North Deeside Road. The existing Contlaw Road would only be capable of accommodating an initial phase of residential development with the remainder being dependant upon the construction of the new grade separated junction. The Western Peripheral Route is in cutting for much of its length as it passes to the west of the site, thereby minimising potential noise impacts. North of Culter House Road a new “all ways” junction is proposed with the Western Peripheral Route. This will take the form of an over bridge with roundabouts providing access from the slip roads to development on either side of the carriageway. The slip roads themselves run parallel to the Western Peripheral Route southwards to connect at a new junction with the A93, North Deeside Road.

- 7.3 The bid site is sub-divided by the Western Peripheral Route with the larger of the two land parcels lying to the east between it and the existing built up area. It is anticipated that the woodland to the south of this area would substantially be retained and strengthened. A small area to the east adjoining the existing open fields is in poor condition and would benefit from clearance. Existing shelter belts running north-south and east-west would be retained and strengthened to define the landscape pattern and contain the various phases of development. A landscape buffer would be created adjacent to the proposed Western Peripheral Route to mitigate its landscape and visual impacts.
- 7.4 The first phase of residential development would be to the south - east of the site adjacent to Contlaw Road. Adjoining this to the north - west would be the "village" centre and land safeguarded for the primary school and associated playing fields. Further higher density housing would be located around the village centre. Beyond the shelter belt which runs north - south through that area would be land designated for the first phase of commercial development. This area would also accommodate the new access link from the grade separated junction. This first phase has the potential to be a smaller, stand-alone development in the short term which is not dependant on additional phases for viability. The first phase could form part of the first phase of the Plan and contribute towards the housing land requirement should other sites carried forward from the extant Plan fail to come forward as programmed.
- 7.5 To the north, beyond the existing tree belt which runs east - west would be later phases of residential development contained within the existing landscape framework. A further area of residential development would lie to the north east of the site beyond Contlaw Road contained to the south by the properties around West Lodge and to the north - west by the properties around Hill of Milltimber. Overall, the area lying between the Western Peripheral Route and Milltimber is considered capable of accommodating around 650 houses at an average density of 30 units per hectare. This would be developed in three phases with the land to the south - east, off Contlaw Road, being developed as Phase 1a. Phase 1b would involve the development of the commercial area and the provision of connections to the Western Peripheral Route grade separated junction. Phase 1a also include a further phase of residential development and the provision of the village centre. Phases 2, 3 & 4 would be the housing to the north of the current shelter belt running east-west from West Lodge. The commercial areas to the west of the AWPR could be provided in tandem with the additional residential phases and would be flexible in their delivery to respond to changing circumstances and market demand.

- 7.6 The parcel of land lying to the west beyond the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route would contain a further phase of commercial development. A substantial area of community woodland would also be created to the west of the site. This would contain the entire development and form a long term, defensible boundary to the Green Belt.

## **8.0 DEVELOPMENT JUSTIFICATION**

- 8.1 The land to the west of Contlaw Road has long been considered for residential development. It has been designated for such use in earlier Local Plans and, at one time, benefited from an outline planning permission. The development potential of the area has long been signalled and it has been widely debated at Public Local Inquiry.
- 8.2 The Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan identifies a significant requirement for new housing and employment land over the period to 2035. The City is a Strategic Growth Area and is expected to accommodate an unprecedented scale of development amounting to almost 39,000 new homes in the City's Housing Market Area. The SDP expects that around half of these new homes will be located on greenfield sites. These new homes should contribute to the creation of sustainable mixed communities by linking housing with employment land and community services and facilities. This conforms to Scottish Planning Policy which seeks to ensure that new developments remain desirable, attractive and safe places to live for many years to come.
- 8.3 Recent objections to the proposed SDP have centred around the conservative estimates of growth in housing demand in the North East. Section 5.20 above argues that a shortfall of 16,400 houses over the SDP period can be identified by analysing updated official population and household growth figures. If this argument is accepted by the Scottish Government, then the Local Development Plans within the SDP area will need to find additional sites to address this shortfall. This would provide Aberdeen City Council with scope to allocate land at Contlaw for this purpose, either the first phase as a stand-alone expansion of Milltimber or the whole site as a sustainable, mixed use development.
- 8.4 The development of this land at Contlaw would meet the sustainable community objectives whilst providing land to meet the SDP housing requirements and also the employment land requirements. It would also extend the range of services and facilities, and importantly employment opportunities, available to the existing



Milltimber suburb which is currently a dormitory commuter suburb. It is unclear at this stage whether or not existing allocations within Milltimber will be able to come forward to provide the services and infrastructure that the area needs to make it more sustainable. The allocation OP62 at Oldfold Farm is a large site with complex and costly infrastructure required to be provided upfront. The delivery of this site is still not assured, which threatens the extant LDP's ability to meet its vision and objectives. By contrast, Contlaw is supported by a development framework that sets out a phased delivery strategy that demonstrates the site's ability to deliver housing and community facilities in the short term whilst presenting further opportunities in the longer term to build on this success.

- 8.5 The scale of development would allow the provision of a complete range of house types in a variety of sizes, types and tenure. Densities could vary throughout the site to reflect the character of the area with more concentrated development around the core of the development. Importantly, affordable housing would also be provided as a key component of the development. It is likely that this would amount to around 25% of the mainstream housing, subject to the housing need identified in the updated Housing Needs and Demand Assessment and could be provided either as affordable housing for sale or rent. The scale of development would, in effect, provide for the entire range of housing in an area where there is currently a significant level of unmet demand.
- 8.6 Milltimber has previously been criticised as a dormitory suburb with very few facilities for its residents, thereby requiring access to those facilities elsewhere, usually by private car. Whilst public transport accessibility via services along North Deeside Road is comparatively good to destination in/ around the city centre, the mode share for journeys to work at 11% is below the city average (14%). Whilst commercial development at Oldfold Farm should partially address this imbalance, there are no guarantees that the commercial/ community element within this site will come forward. Given the location of Oldfold in relation to the AWPR, any significant vehicle movements would need to travel through Milltimber to access the orbital corridor, putting pressure on existing networks. This is also true for the replacement Primary School. The existing school in Milltimber is relatively central, whereas the proposed replacement is further to the east. This will prove to be an inconvenience for existing residents as well as generating more trips by private car.
- 8.7 In terms of commercial development, the Contlaw site is far better located to provide an attractive, well-connected business location that can attract occupiers into the area and achieve a better balance of land use within the Lower Deeside area. Rather than compete against the Oldfold site, however, Contlaw would

- complement it well for the benefit of the communities situated along this corridor. In terms of the Primary School, a new school to the west of Milltimber will offset the inconvenience felt by existing residents as the replacement school is located further east at the Oldfold site. Locating a school to the west of Milltimber will also help reduce traffic flows through the settlement and make the resident's route to school much safer.
- 8.8 Development at Contlaw would incorporate a mixed use employment site as well as local retail and community facilities within 1600m of the existing built up area of Milltimber and the new residential areas within the site. This falls within the threshold walking and cycling distance specified in PAN75: Planning for Transport and will result in a more sustainable community than currently exists. Improved networks of footpaths through the site would connect to enhanced provision which will link the site with sustainable modes of transport currently available along Deeside Road, including the Deeside cycleway. Not only would the site itself conform to the requirements of PAN75, but it would ensure that the existing community of Milltimber would also meet these policy objectives.
- 8.9 In addition to the above, the development would also be designed to provide public transport services to each of the respective uses and ensure that all residential development fell within the 400m walk distance of a public transport route. The Local Transport Strategy for the area promotes the use of public transport as a key strategic objective. To achieve this, the strategy calls for the expansion of the network to realise the opportunities provided at the junctions of radial corridors (running west-east) and orbital corridors created by the AWPR (north-south), particularly for park and ride sites. It is believed that the development of these facilities along the AWPR will increase the attractiveness of this mode and support the desired increase in the modal share of public transport in the North East.
- 8.10 However, the only Park and Ride site located along the North Deeside corridor is at Banchory. The Bus Action Plan produced for Nestrans recognises that it "will miss picking up people from Peterculter and Cults". Further provision could be provided within the bid site to serve people living along the Deeside corridor which will promote a sustainable mode of transport that is efficient, cost-effective and perceived to be convenient. This is vital to ensure a real modal shift in travel patterns that reduces congestion, improves the environment and local resident's quality of life.
- 8.11 The proposed development will also maximise the investment in infrastructure related to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. The initial phase of residential

development can be accommodated on the existing road network. However, it would be the intention to also access phases from the new grade separated junction linking the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to North Deeside Road. The Western Peripheral Route lies immediately to the west of the development bid site with the junction lying close to the midway point between the north and south of the site. Development of this area would effectively infill between the existing Milltimber settlement and the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

- 8.12 It is acknowledged that the site currently lies within the Green Belt. However, Scottish Planning Policy states that Green Belts should form part of a long term settlement strategy and ensure settlements are able to accommodate planned growth<sup>3</sup>. Green Belts are intended to direct growth to the most sustainable locations and support regeneration, to protect and enhance the character, landscape and setting and identity of towns and cities. They also provide access to open green space within and around urban areas. Green Belt policy can also be used to prevent coalescence of settlements. However, SPP clearly states that only those areas of land which can help deliver these objectives should be covered by Green Belt Policy and Local Development Plan reviews provide an opportunity to review the success of this policy and adjust Green Belt boundaries to accommodate sustainable growth.
- 8.13 In particular, the issue of coalescence is no longer a concern due to the construction of the AWPR. This will form a well defined physical feature in the landscape which could become the long term defensible boundary of Aberdeen City, a function currently performed by the Green Belt. The intervening land between the Western Peripheral Route and the existing settlement of Milltimber would effectively become infill development and the prospects for coalescence with Peterculter would be minimised as a consequence.
- 8.14 The proposed development would maintain the landscape setting of the City by limiting the amount of development to the west of the AWPR whilst allowing public access for recreational purposes to those areas, currently in use for those purposes, lying to the east of the AWPR. Enjoyment of these areas can be further enhanced by their expansion and improvement as proposed through the Indicative Masterplan (see figure 2).
- 8.15 Indeed, the existing landscape framework is to be improved with new planting and strengthening of shelter belts. This will satisfy the current objectives of the Green Space Network designation. It will also ameliorate the landscape and visual impacts

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<sup>3</sup> SPP paragraph 162

of development when viewed from outwith the site. Distant views of the development from the south will be contained by the AWPR to the west and by the rising ground beyond the development site to the north.

8.16 Deeside is popular area for house buyers due to the attractiveness of the landscape and the availability of public transport into Aberdeen City. The AWPR will further increase the connectivity of the area to key employment locations in the north, west and south of the City as well as remove congestion issues which currently affect the A93 road into the City Centre. This increased level of accessibility will re-stimulate demand for housing in the area as well as commercial occupiers keen to capitalise on the surrounding infrastructure improvements. Developers have shown a sustained interest in the Deeside area through previous LDP reviews, which is evidence of confidence in the area to accommodate growth and attract investment.

8.17 During the last LDP review, the site was examined by the Scottish Government Reporter who concluded that the site should not be included in that version of the Plan. The reasons cited concerned landscape issues, education capacity constraints and connectivity issues. In terms of landscape, the Reporter argued that the settlement pattern along Lower Deeside was limited to the 90metre – 95metre contour line and future development should not breach this building line in order to preserve this historic pattern.

8.18 However, the Reporter agreed with the inclusion of the Oldfold site to the east of Milltimber as a development site. This site also breaches the building line and will alter the historic settlement pattern of the Lower Deeside area. The Reporter also failed to consider the urbanising effect of the AWPR which runs on a north-south axis through the area. The impact this road will have on the historic pattern of the area cannot be understated. It will remove the rigid form of ribbon development along the west - east transport corridors through the area and create new opportunities for sustainable settlements to link in with the junctions created along the route. The northern extent of the development respects the existing basin topography of the site and ensures potential visual effects of development occurring along the ridgeline, observed from the opposite side of the River Dee Valley, are avoided.

8.19 Given that the site makes no meaningful contribution to the setting of Aberdeen with no visual connectivity, it is considered that including land beyond the 90 – 95m contour would not result in visual or physical harm to the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of Milltimber and the Deeside towns. The development shown in the Development Framework (figure 2) would remain

associated with the main transport corridor of the AWPR as well as provide enhanced recreational access and open space within and around Milltimber.

8.20 The creation of the AWPR will also absorb much of the farmland within the bid site itself and bisect the whole farm. This would seriously affect the viability of the current agricultural business, reduce the quality of the land and endanger its long-term maintenance. The ability of current owners to ensure the area remains attractive Green Belt land would be under threat. The land, therefore, would be much more productive if used to accommodate the growth associated with the significant improvements in infrastructure and investment in the local economy.

8.21 In terms of accessibility, the bid site has the potential to provide many supporting services within the site boundaries for the benefit of both existing and future residents. The Reporter acknowledged that the size and scale of development presented opportunities to increase primary education capacity within the area and a public transport interchange to enhance sustainable travel patterns. The initial phase would also involve the creation of footpath links through the site and connecting to existing networks along Contlaw Road and Colthill Road. Direct path connections would be enhanced along Culter House Road and Bellenden Walk aimed at maximising its potential for accommodating pedestrian movements to/from existing bus services and cycle routes. This phase would also incorporate signal control at the junction of Contlaw Road and North Deeside Road as previously agreed with the City Council. Subsequent phases of development would incorporate a strategy that looks to minimise travel demand through a balanced mix of land uses as well as maximise public transport attractiveness through easy and convenient connections to destinations across the city region, particularly employment, education and recreational facilities. The AWPR connection would ensure a minimal impact on the existing road network.

8.22 The phasing of development on this site could easily be synchronised with development of increased secondary education capacity at Cultis Academy, contributions for which would come from development on this site. Phasing of the site would also allow for a new secondary school to come on stream at Countesswells<sup>4</sup>. This school will overlap catchment areas with Cultis Academy and potentially relieve some of the forecast capacity issues there, should the catchment boundaries be re-examined. Overall, education capacity should not be viewed as a barrier to development. Rather, development should be seen as a catalyst for further investment in education provision leading to better facilities for the whole community.

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<sup>4</sup> Site OP58, Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2012

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 This area has long been considered by the City Council as being capable of accommodating residential development. Stewart Milne Homes North Scotland and Messrs Jaffrey consider that the development potential of the area has been overlooked in recent years. The improvements to the area resulting from the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route significantly enhance this potential. Accordingly, they wish it to be considered for inclusion in the forthcoming Local Development Plan.
- 9.2 The site is capable of accommodating a phased, mixed use development with the initial phase of residential units being accessed from the existing road network. Thereafter, subsequent phases would be accessed from the new grade separated junction serving the AWPR and linking it with North Deeside Road. The development would effectively infill the land lying between the AWPR and the existing built up area defined by Contlaw Road to the east.
- 9.3 The AWPR would provide a defensible boundary to the Green Belt whilst development in the intervening area would provide employment opportunities, services and facilities not only for the proposed development but also for the wider community of Milltimber.
- 9.4 The scale of the development would not only create a sustainable mixed community, it would provide a comprehensive range of housing and a mix of tenures in an area where there is significant unmet demand.
- 9.5 The landscape setting of the City would not be adversely affected by the development. The urban pattern of the Lower Deeside area will be altered by the AWPR beyond the existing building line of the 90metre – 95 metre contour line, as will the development at the nearby Oldfold site which the Council and Scottish Government Reporter both supported. The development on this site would retain and enhance existing woodland and landscape features to encourage continued public access. A proposed community woodland to the west of the AWPR would provide a strong defensible barrier that will prevent coalescence with Peterculter. As a consequence of this, and the rising topography to the north, the landscape and visual impacts arising from the development when viewed from a distance would be minimised.

- 9.6 The development would also stimulate investment in the area's education provision, employment land, retail offer and community facilities such as playing fields and open space. The suburb of Milltimber is currently a dormant commuter settlement where residents are forced to access these services by private car. This development offers the chance to create a more sustainable community by providing key facilities within walking distance for both existing and future residents.
- 9.7 On this basis, Stewart Milne Homes North Scotland and Messrs Jaffrey respectfully request that this development bid be considered for inclusion in the forthcoming Local Development Plan review for the range of uses highlighted.