



# 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)

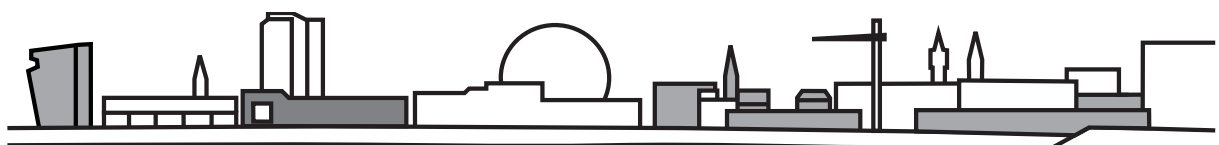
**Please ensure your proposal is with us by 14th June 2013.**

### 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:

Date:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

2

Name of landowner:

Address:

### 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]

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

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.

6 What is the current use of the site?

Has there been any previous development on the site? Yes  No

If so, what was it?

7 What do you propose using the site for?

- 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 variety and choice of housing will be provided.  
An indicative framework showing how this could be provided is attached and would be work up in due course.

- 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.]

There is potential for appropriate facilities should they be required.

- 12 Will the proposed development be phased? Yes  No

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

This would be agreed through a masterplan for the sites.

- 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.**

Extensive consultation has taken place with local interest groups regarding the Countesswells Community proposals. Further engagement would be carried out on these additional areas at the appropriate time.

## 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?

New schools are being provided as part of the Countesswells Community proposals and capacity will be available.

See Paper Apart for a discussion on service infrastructure.

**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 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 checked="" 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 saņemtū palīdzību sakarā ar  
valodu/tulkošanu un citiem iespējamām  
komunikāciju atbalsta formātiem, lūdzu  
zvanīt 01224 523317

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Jei 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)



## Stewart Milne Homes and IDJ Properties

## Development Bid for land at Countesswells



**June 2013**

Ryden LLP

25 Albyn Place

Aberdeen

AB10 1YL

Tel; 01224 588866

Fax; 01224 589669

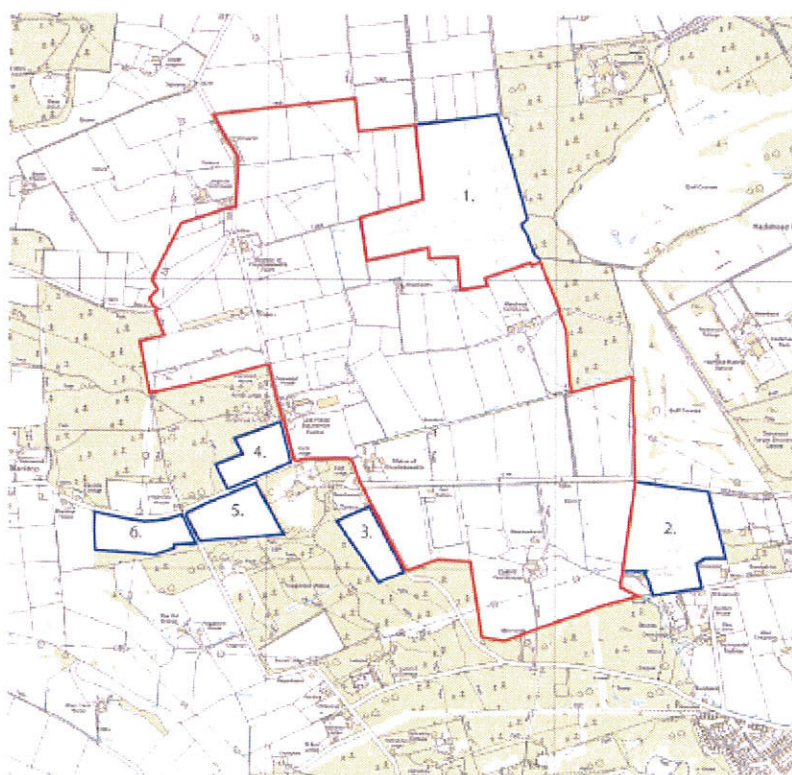
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of the Stewart Milne Homes and IDJ Properties who own land at Countesswells, to the west of Aberdeen, as highlighted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 1.2 Development at Countesswells is due to start in the near future and will be an exciting sustainable new community, a place to live, work and play with 3,000 homes, employment land and associated uses such as schools, shops and a GP surgery.
- 1.3 Progress with the development has involved the preparation of a development framework for the whole site which will guide the direction of growth for Countesswells. A masterplan and planning permission in principle application are to be submitted to Aberdeen City Council in early course. These proposals have been informed by an extensive period of consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders. It is anticipated that work will commence on the site in Spring/Summer 2014.

- 1.4 Given the opportunities surrounding this new community, and the social, environmental and economic benefits resulting from it, the applicants wish to expand the boundaries to include those parcels of land edged blue on Figure 1 and numbered 1 to 6. This expansion of the development site will make the maximum use of the planned investment in infrastructure for Countesswells and enhance the sustainability of the community by allowing for future growth to be accommodated in a comprehensive masterplanned manner.
- 1.5 This development bid wishes to remove areas of ground edged blue on Figure 1 from their current Green Space Network and Green Belt designations and include them within the site boundaries of Countesswells, allocated in the extant Local Development Plan as Opportunity site OP58. Further justification is provided in section 6.0.

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The bid site comprises those six parcels of land edged blue in Figure 1 and numbered 1 to 6. All six parcels of land are currently designated in the adopted Local Development Plan as Green Space Network and Green Belt Land, with the exception of Development Site 2 (see Figure 2) where the majority of the site lying to the north sits outside of the Green Space Network boundary. This bid proposes that these designations are removed and the land incorporated into the Countesswells allocation making the best use of proposed infrastructure. The development proposals and justification are described in section 6. Descriptions of each site in turn are given below.

### Development Site 1



- 2.2 This is 21.16ha in size and sits on the boundary of OP58 to the north and east. It is currently commercial woodland plantation adjoining Hazlehead Park, which provides convenient access via a core path to outdoor recreational pursuits such as walking, cycling, jogging and dog walking. The current plantation has a life span of no more than 15 years, is all even aged and is not of the same quality as other surrounding woodlands. These woodlands have not been managed effectively in recent years and their integrity will be further compromised by the primary infrastructure (new road connection) that is required to run through this area connecting Countesswells to the A944, and as a result sits on a prominent future access to Countesswells. An overhead power line runs through the site.

#### Development Site 2



- 2.3 This is 9.87ha in size and sits on the boundary of Countesswells to the south and east. It is currently agricultural land, generally flat, with a gradual gradient to the south, providing good southerly aspect for future development, good positive drainage in to common low lying areas leading to the Burn of Cults. It has well defined stone walled field boundaries and an access track to a collection of farm buildings. It is bound to the north by Countesswells Road and in turn Hazelhead Golf Course and as a result sits on a prominent access to Countesswells. An overhead power line runs through the site.

#### Development Site 3



- 2.4 This is 2.92ha in size and sits on the boundary of Countesswells to the south and west. It is currently agricultural land, generally flat, with a gradual gradient to the

south providing positive drainage to common low lying areas. It is well defined on each side. To the west and south by Foggieton Wood, the east by Kirk Brae and to the north by a field boundary. The site sits on a prominent access to Countesswells.

#### Development Site 4



- 2.5 This is 3.31ha in size and sits on the boundary of Countesswells to the west. It is currently agricultural land, sloping gently from north to south toward Blacktop Road and is well defined on the north and west by Countesswells Wood and to the east by Kirk Brae. The site has a good southerly aspect and sits on a prominent entrance to Countesswells. An overhead power line runs through the site.

#### Development Site 5



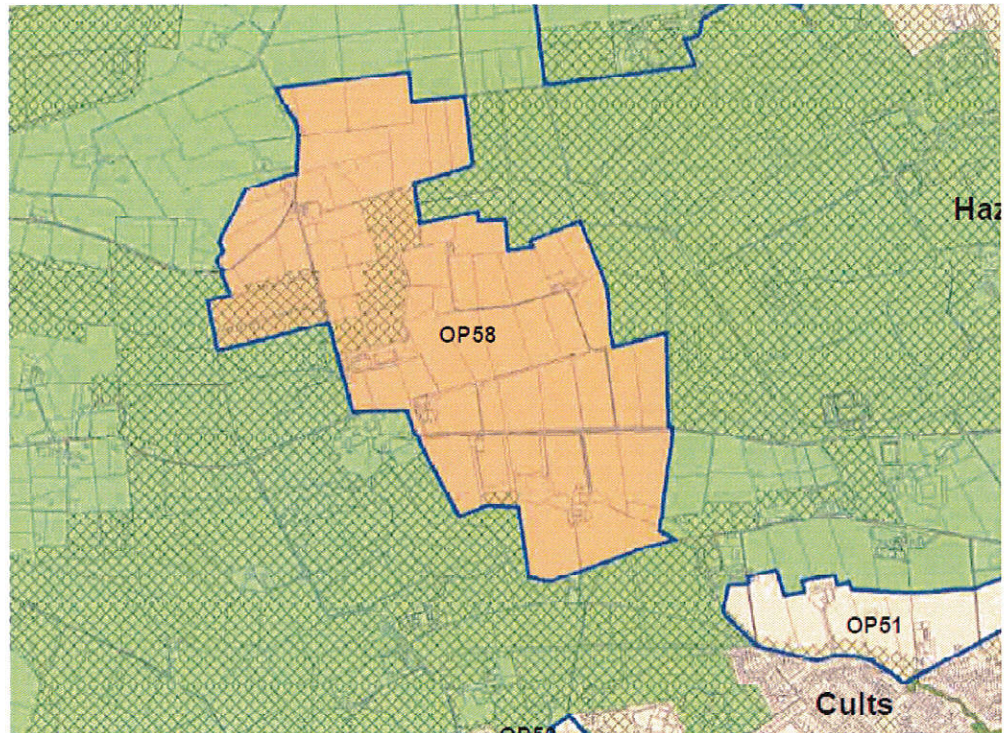
- 2.6 This is 4.34ha in size, is currently agricultural, and sits to the south of Blacktop Road at a key gateway to Countesswells. It is well defined by Blacktop Road to the north and in turn, Development Site 4, Baillieswells Road to the west and Foggieton Ancient woodland to the south. It had good southerly aspect and views eastward to the Dee Valley. There are a number of stone walled field boundaries typical of the local area, and a number of overhead power lines run through the site.

### Development Site 6



- 2.7 This is 3.90ha in size, it is currently agricultural, and sits to the south of Blacktop Road, west of Bailliewells Road and is well defined to the south by Foggieton Wood. It slopes from north to south, providing good southerly aspect and some expansive views out over the Dee Valley. There are a number of internal stone walled field boundaries typical of the local area and a number of overhead power lines run through the site.
- 2.8 Current Green Belt and Green Space Network policies state that no development will be permitted in the green belt for purposes other than those essential for agriculture, forestry, recreation, mineral extraction or restoration or land renewal. Green Space Network land consists of areas of land that are considered to have particular value in terms of public access, wildlife or landscape together with links between such areas.

Figure 2: Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2012



2.9 The proposals for these sites include their removal from the Green Belt and Green Space Network and their inclusion within the current allocation at Countesswells site OP58, for the appropriate number of additional homes, in the extant Local Development Plan. The inclusion of these sites will support the viability of this mixed use development and the services contained therein. Any development will incorporate excellent sustainability principles in its design in order to minimise any landscape impact and loss or disturbance to the natural environment. These designs will look to incorporate residential units to support the viability of the new settlements, add significant ecological value to the surrounding environment and enhance the social and economic benefits of the development as a whole for the local community.

### 3.0 SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY

3.1 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.

- 3.2 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".*

- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 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.

- 3.6 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.

- 3.7 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”*.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Economic development is an important consideration for the planning system in Scotland, and SPP promotes a proactive and flexible approach to the diverse locational needs of different businesses. It is essential that the planning system does not create any unnecessary barriers to the realisation of new economic opportunities.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.

- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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.

#### **4.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING**

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

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 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

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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 3: 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

- 4.6 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.

- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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.

## 5.0 SERVICES

- 5.1 Significant infrastructure works are planned for the creation of the relevant phases of development at Countesswells. The additional sites comprising this development bid would be supported by this infrastructure.

- 5.2 SEPA's Flood Risk Map is shown below in figure 4. With no significant watercourse through or nearby the site, there is no risk of flooding on any of the additional parcels of land sought for inclusion in the Countesswells site.

Figure 4: Flood Risk



- 5.3 Countesswells will be a sustainable mixed community that looks to provide as many services and facilities as possible within the settlement boundary. This is primarily to create an attractive, balanced community that people will want to live and work in, but also to reduce the amount of travel to other locations outside the settlement, as much as possible. This includes primary and secondary schooling which form part of the proposals on site OP58. A primary school will be developed in the first phase of the development and a new secondary school and a further primary school provided in latter phases to support the increase in housing. These additional sites in this bid would be supported by the new provision of education facilities, as well as the leisure, community, retail, employment and open space provision as described in the development framework.

## 6.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND JUSTIFICATION

- 6.1 This section will provide a justification for each individual site separately before exploring arguments in favour of the expansion of the Countesswells Community boundaries as a whole.

### **Development Site 1**

- 6.2 The current quality of the woodland area that makes up Development Site 1 is considered to be of poor quality. This is one of the main reasons that it was deemed logical in the first instance to align a new primary access road to the A944 through it. It therefore makes sustainable development sense to combine this primary infrastructure with well linked development. However over time and with positive management and intervention, most notably diversification of species, at least part of the woodland could still provide cover, screening and shelter, especially to the northern boundary where it will link in with current proposed woodland treatment for the northern edge of Countesswells. With heightened ecological and recreational value, it will provide significant high quality and desirable development potential and a positive addition to the Countesswells Community.
- 6.3 This links not only to the primary infrastructure, as in the access road to the A944, but also the recreational benefits of Hazlehead Park, core path network, will provide a positive sustainable neighbourhood within Countesswells. Additional benefits include the site's proximity to the proposed Countesswells northern mixed use local centre and primary school as well as the main settlement centre, and with the southerly aspect of the site, all combine to enhance the quality of the proposed community and the attractiveness of the area. The alignment of the new primary access to Countesswells provides a corridor for growth to the north and east. Development would logically be built off this road integrating new mixed density neighbourhoods with the surrounding residential areas, the woodland backdrop and the recreational use of Hazlehead Woods, while responding to the key arrival sequence into Countesswells from the north. It provides a very logical and well integrated extension to the proposed settlement.

### **Development Site 2**

- 6.4 The benefits of this development site include the southerly aspect for future residential development, presenting opportunities for passive solar gain and high quality residential amenity. The site is also ideally placed to link into the proposed SUDS system for Countesswells, enhancing the drainage system and combining infrastructure requirements, thereby utilising the residential development potential of this particular site in a sustainable way. With a boundary to the main site it also allows for good connections between neighbourhoods on this development site and those already proposed within Countesswells both in terms of streets and open space.

- 6.5 Situated along Countesswells Road, the site also has the potential to provide good access for future public transport. This would strengthen the sustainability of development in this location and reduce the need for residents to rely on the private car. Due to the proximity to the town centre and arrival sequence to Countesswells proposals for the site would include a broad range of residential densities and areas of open space including SUDS well integrated within the existing development pattern.

### **Development Site 3**

- 6.6 The boundaries of the site adjoin both Kirk Brae and the Countesswells site which presents the opportunity to enhance connections through the whole development. With the woodland cover of Foggieton to the west and south, there are also potential connections into this outdoor recreational resource and in turn further connections to new neighbourhood developments in sites 4, 5 and 6. Due to its proximity to the settlement centre, its key location on entering Countesswells from the south, the site offers the potential for a broad range of residential densities with attractive open space. Opportunities also exist to enhance the core path network that links the residents of Countesswells to the outdoor recreation opportunities in the surrounding rural areas. This connection to the woodland, which includes Ancient Woodland remnants and extensive path networks, provides a positive connection for the rest of Countesswells, which was not readily available before. Combine this with the lower lying nature of the southern portion of the site, the creation of an enhanced open space network starts to emerge.

### **Development Site 4**

- 6.7 This site is bound on the north by Countesswells Wood which includes Ancient Woodland remnants and extensive path networks. This presents excellent opportunities for residential development integrated with existing outdoor recreational pursuits. This network of paths connects well into the Countesswells neighbourhoods that bound the northern edge of Countesswells Woodland and, in turn, facilitates a better connected place and resource.
- 6.8 Its southerly aspect provides views out over the wider Dee Valley, and with its location on the junction of Blacktop Road and Kirk Brae, provides a key gateway site to the Countesswells Community. The key location of the site in close proximity to the centre of Countesswells, on a key arrival sequence from the west and on gently sloping land presents the opportunity to allow an increasing density of



residential development towards the settlement core, while allowing excellent access to the existing recreational opportunities in Countesswells Woods.

#### **Development Site 5**

- 6.9 The proximity of this site to Foggieton Wood allows for new residential development to be connected to the extensive path network that exists and the wider outdoor recreational pursuits. It also offers the connection to the potential new residential neighbourhoods in development site 3 and on to the Countesswells Community. It benefits from a southerly aspect and glimpsed views out over the Dee Valley. The key location of the site in close proximity to the centre of Countesswells, on a key arrival sequence from the west and on gently sloping land presents the opportunity to allow an increasing density of residential development toward the settlement core, while allowing excellent access to the existing recreational opportunities in Foggieton Woods. Together with development site 4 there is an opportunity to create a meaningful and attractive settlement entrance sequence.

#### **Development Site 6**

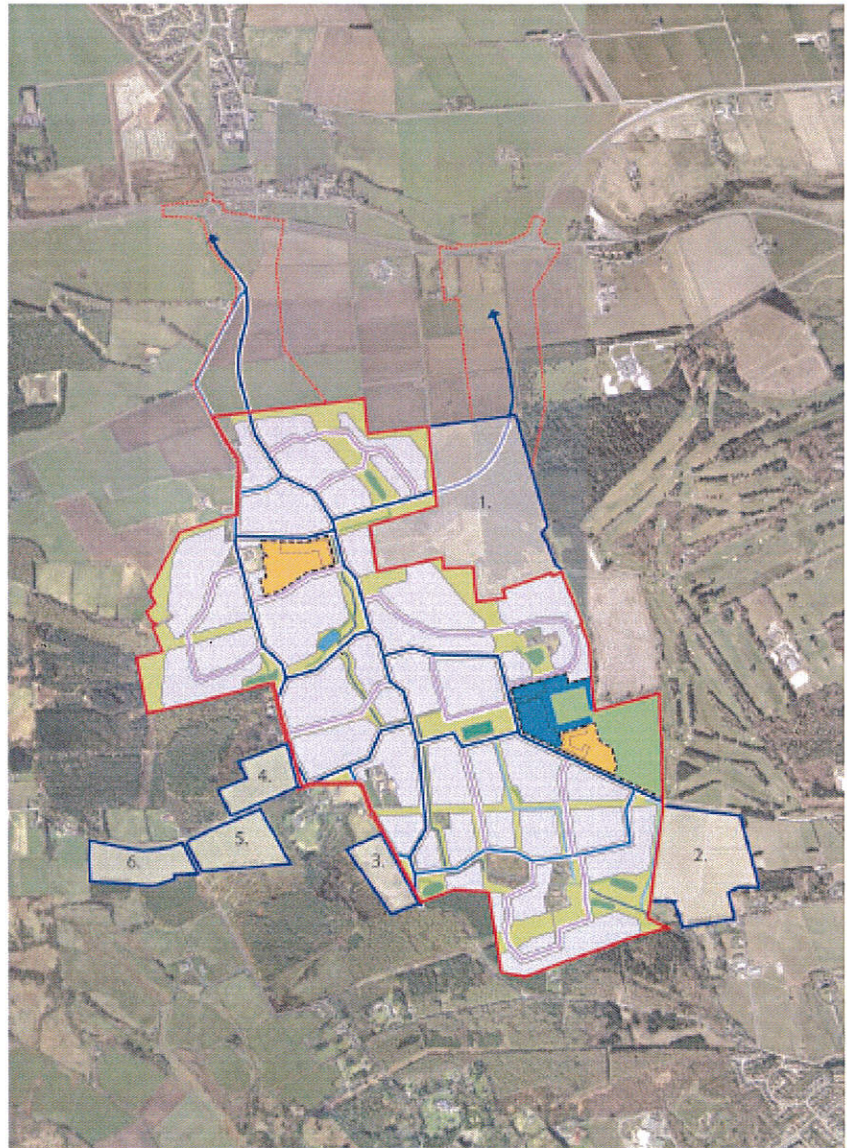
- 6.10 This site shares many of the benefits of the above development site 5, with the addition of expansive views out over the Dee Valley. Its connection to Foggieton Wood allows for the potential for a new residential neighbourhood link in to the wider network of footpaths and outdoor pursuits that this offers, as well as good connections to the other development sites and the Countesswells Community. The key location of the site on the arrival sequence into the settlement of Countesswells presents the opportunity to allow lower to medium density residential development, while allowing excellent access to the existing recreational opportunities in Foggieton Woods. With development sites 4 and 5 there is a tremendous opportunity to create a gradually increasing density of development when arriving from the west, typical of many traditional Scottish places which evolve over time and create attractive rural to urban arrival sequences providing memorable gateways to distinctive places. Path connections would be created to link the area with the development sites 4 & 5 as well as the other areas of Countesswells beyond.

#### **Countesswells Community Expansion**

- 6.11 In addition to the site-specific benefits each site represents, there are more universal benefits which are presented by considering the expansion of the Countesswells Community as a whole. Figure 5 below shows the Countesswells

Development Framework with the addition of the six development sites described above.

Figure 5: Development Framework and Proposed Development Sites



6.12 The development of green belt land is necessary to allow the future growth of the City and this is acknowledged in the Strategic Development Plan<sup>1</sup>. There is a strong justification for the removal of these sites from their current Green Belt/Green Space Network designations to support the development of the Countesswells Community.

<sup>1</sup> Proposed SDP, paragraph 3.16

- 6.13 The sites at present form part of the rural setting of the City of Aberdeen and contribute towards the landscape which defines the urban area as it exists currently. However, this development bid should be assessed in relation to the planned creation of a new urban community at Countesswells which will alter the landscape fundamentally. This landscape change has been accepted in the adopted Local Development Plan. Since then, the Consortium have committed significant resources towards progression of the plans, including extensive consultation with local residents and other stakeholders.
- 6.14 The removal of these sites from the green belt would not impact on the ability to give access to open space around the city. Footpaths to the wider area would be created that link in with those already described in the development framework for the main Countesswells site. Any development on the additional sites would respect the most important mature landscape features that exist and use strategic landscape to re-establish fragmented ecologies, encourage wildlife and biodiversity and improve access to open space for the whole community. The development of land to the north east of Countesswells would retain the existing paths that form part of the Aberdeen City Core Path Network.
- 6.15 Further to this, the Green Belt designation on these sites is not required to manage growth or prevent unplanned growth. Scottish Planning Policy promotes Green Belts that contribute towards the long-term growth of a settlement, and warns that boundaries should not be drawn too tightly round settlements. Not all Greenfield land will be designated Green Belt, according to SPP<sup>2</sup>. Green Belts, therefore, should not artificially restrict growth but should ensure that growth is directed towards the best locations. The development of Countesswells Community has been established by the adopted Local Development Plan as a good location to accommodate growth. As such, these six development sites would be more productive if they were added to the Countesswells Community boundary than they would be if they remained as Green Belt Land.
- 6.16 In terms of the Green Space Network designation, current policy aims to protect and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of these areas. Access through the expansion sites would link in with the current access strategy for Countesswells and provide opportunities for recreation, community access as well as contributing towards ecological improvements through the creation of wildlife corridors linking habitats with feeding grounds. These areas will provide a high level of amenity for existing and new residents and result in the creation of an attractive, sustainable and high quality place.

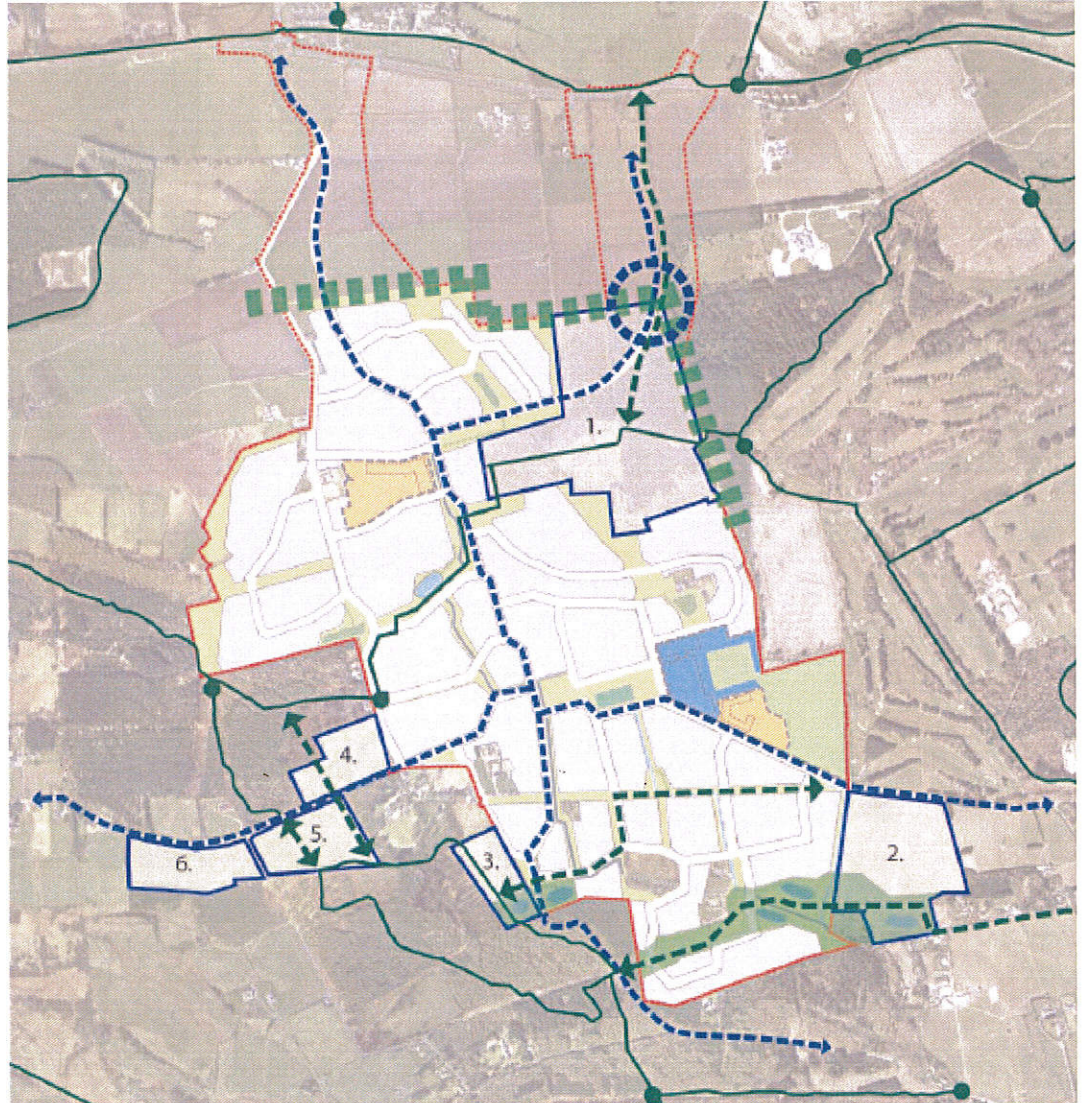
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<sup>2</sup> SPP, paragraph 160

- 6.17 During the examination into the previous Local Development Plan, the Scottish Government Reporter recognised there was scope to extend the development area at Countesswells. At that time it was agreed that the boundary of OP58 was sufficient to accommodate the scale of development required by the Local Development Plan. However, given the scale of growth required to satisfy demands for housing and employment land in the review of the Local Development Plan, the expansion sites would be able to accommodate additional growth. This is a position supported by the Reporter.
- 6.18 The sustainability benefits of additional sites at Countesswells make these an ideal addition to the reviewed Local Development Plan. The sites are still within the minimum walking distance requirements of PAN75: Planning for Transport. The new settlement will feature primary and secondary schools, local shops, community facilities, leisure facilities and health services. All additional sites will be within walking distance of the planned "town centre" where the majority of these services will be located. Additional residential sites added to Countesswells would increase the viability of these services, increase the attractiveness of the location for employment land occupiers and ensure that the services that will eventually be taken-over by public sector providers would be more cost-effective.
- 6.19 Additional housing on these sites would also increase the viability of public transport provision within the settlement, enhancing the mass of population concentration that could support a range of services, improving the perception of convenience and, therefore, uptake of services. This modal shift away from private car transport is essential to secure the climate change objectives of the Local Development Plan's vision and spatial strategy. By increasing the allocation at Countesswells by adding the sites in this development bid, these objectives would be more easily obtainable.
- 6.20 With regard to the natural environment, development would not be intrusive into the surrounding landscape. The additional sites, much in the way that the original development site was, are well screened from major approaches into Aberdeen from the A93 and A944. The sites are also screened from the city itself and would have no impact on the landscape setting of Aberdeen, as is the case with OP58. Countesswells will have an urbanising effect on the landscape, thus minimising the impact on the additional sites sought for inclusion in this bid. Additional development would be well contained by mature landscape features.

- 6.21 The proposed Strategic Development Plan recognises that not all land requirements can be met by previously developed sites and acknowledges the constraints associated with land that has a history of prior development. These can include site contamination works, demolition and clearance. The challenge for the local authority is to accommodate growth whilst protecting environmentally-sensitive locations that contribute to the landscape setting of the City. There are limited opportunities within the existing built up area to accommodate growth, and fewer still that are viable in terms of upfront costs. The additional sites at Countesswells present an opportunity to satisfy growth demands in a location that has an established capacity to accommodate development without harming the natural environment.
- 6.22 The identification of these development sites in the review of the Local Development Plan will also provide clarity and certainty regarding the future direction of growth in the area. Identification of these sites in the emerging Local Development Plan will promote opportunities for growth that contribute towards the creation of sustainable, high quality places. A comprehensive masterplanned approach to the individual development sites, as part of the whole development, will ensure that supporting services, amenity areas and appropriate infrastructure are secured (see Figure 6). This certainty will reassure future residents of Countesswells that they are investing in a project that will have a positive lasting legacy and be a secure investment for the future. This certainty is vital to the success of Countesswells as a whole and these individual sites are able to help ensure that the emerging plans and proposals become a successful place to live, work and invest in.

Figure 6: Concept for Future Growth of Countesswells



## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The principle of development at Countesswells was established during the production of the extant Local Development Plan. The social, environmental and economic benefits of this development were highlighted and endorsed by the City Council, relevant stakeholders and Scottish Government Reporter. The Consortium have undertaken a further period of consultation to refine the proposals and will present a development framework, masterplan and planning permission in principle to the City Council for examination. This establishes the viability of the development and confirms the desire to create a sustainable, high quality place for people to live and work in.
- 7.2 This development bid looks to extend the boundaries of Countesswells to include six parcels of land located to the south west, south east and north east of the original boundaries as described in the extant Local Development Plan as Opportunity Site OP58. This bid argues for the removal of the Green Space Network and Green Belt designation over these sites and puts forward the case for their inclusion in the review of the Local Development Plan as part of the Countesswells new settlement.
- 7.3 These additional sites will have a minimal impact on the surrounding landscape as, like the original site boundary, they are either already well contained and screened or can be managed to the considerable enhancement of the existing landscape given the topography and existing features of the site as a whole. The sites are free from constraints such as contamination and flood risk and would be ideal locations to accommodate mixed density residential organic growth of Countesswells.
- 7.4 Countesswells will accommodate a large range of services within its boundaries to provide day-to-day requirements of residents including employment, health, education, shopping and recreation. The expansion of the site's boundaries to include the additional parcels of land would ensure that these services remain viable, attractive and cost-effective.
- 7.5 On the basis of the above, these additional parcels of land should be considered favourably as a location for development within the review of the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan to meet the requirements for the Aberdeen City area as identified in the Strategic Development Plan.