

The Aberdeen Landscape Study

Landscape Character Assessment

February 2021





Planning and Sustainable Development
Aberdeen City Council
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

Acknowledgments

Douglas Harman thanks the Project Team for their dedicated support and hard work in producing this study. Thanks are also extended to members of the Project Steering Group and in particular, Donna Laing, Claire McArthur, Deb Munro, Laura Campbell, Jo Duncan, Piers Blaxter and Ailsa Anderson whose enthusiasm and helpful advice have been integral to the development of this project.

All maps are reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. ©Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401 (2016). The Ordnance Survey mapping within this publication is provided by Aberdeen City Council under licence from Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function as a planning authority. Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey Copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey mapping for their own use. www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

Project Team

Aberdeen City Council

Donna Laing, Deb Munro and Claire McArthur



NatureScot

Laura Campbell, Jo Duncan



Aberdeenshire Council

Piers Blaxter and Ailsa Anderson



Douglas Harman Landscape Planning

Douglas Harman



Buchan Landscape Architecture

Nigel Buchan



Carol Anderson Landscape Associates

Carol Anderson



Countryside

Jonathan Porter



Fiona Fyfe Associates

Fiona Fyfe



Contents

<i>Section 1:</i>	Introduction	Page 6
<i>Section 2:</i>	Landscape Character Assessment - methodology	Page 11
<i>Section 3:</i>	Landscape evolution	Page 14
<i>Section 4:</i>	Visual analysis	Page 38
<i>Section 5:</i>	Landscape Character Types	Page 45
<i>Section 6:</i>	Landscape Character Areas	Page 58
	LCA 1 Upper Don Valley	Page 59
	LCA 2 Lower Don Valley	Page 65
	LCA 3 Tyrebagger Hill	Page 71
	LCA 4 Brae of Don	Page 77
	LCA 5 Mundurno	Page 83
	LCA 6 Murcar Plain	Page 89
	LCA 7 Murcar & Balgownie Links	Page 95
	LCA 8 Blackburn	Page 101
	LCA 9 West Brimmond	Page 107
	LCA 10 Craibstone	Page 113
	LCA 11 Greenburn	Page 119
	LCA 12 Brimmond Hill	Page 125
	LCA 13 Bucks Burn	Page 131
	LCA 14 Den Burn	Page 137
	LCA 15 Kingshill	Page 143
	LCA 16 Bogskeathy	Page 149
	LCA 17 Hazelhead Park	Page 155
	LCA 18 Leuchar & Silver Burns	Page 161
	LCA 19 Countesswells	Page 167
	LCA 20 Dee Valley	Page 173
	LCA 21 King's Links	Page 180
	LCA 22 Girdle Ness	Page 186
	LCA 23 Kincorth Hill	Page 192
	LCA 24 Tullos Hill	Page 198
	LCA 25 Souter Coast	Page 204
	LCA 26 Loirston	Page 210
	LCA 27 Findon Plain	Page 216
	LCA 28 South Deeside Upper Slopes	Page 222

Appendices

<i>Appendix I</i>	References	Page 227
<i>Appendix II</i>	Methodology	Page 229
<i>Appendix III</i>	Changes to the 1996 Landscape Study	Page 234
Appendix IV	Glossary	Page 236

Figure list

<i>Figure 1</i>	Study area	Page 10
<i>Figure 2</i>	Bedrock geology	Page 16
<i>Figure 3</i>	Drift geology	Page 19
<i>Figure 4</i>	Geology analysis	Page 20
<i>Figure 5</i>	Soils	Page 23
<i>Figure 6</i>	Landform	Page 25
<i>Figure 7</i>	Landcover	Page 28
<i>Figure 8</i>	Natural designations	Page 29
<i>Figure 9</i>	Indicative development of the city	Page 35
<i>Figure 10</i>	Historic Landuse Assessment	Page 36
<i>Figure 11</i>	Cultural designations	Page 37
<i>Figure 12</i>	Visual analysis	Page 43
<i>Figure 13</i>	Landscape features and elements	Page 44
<i>Figure 14</i>	Landscape Character Types	Page 46
<i>Figure 15</i>	Landscape Character Areas	Page 58
<i>Figure 16</i>	Comparison with 1996 Landscape Character Assessment	Page 235

1. Introduction

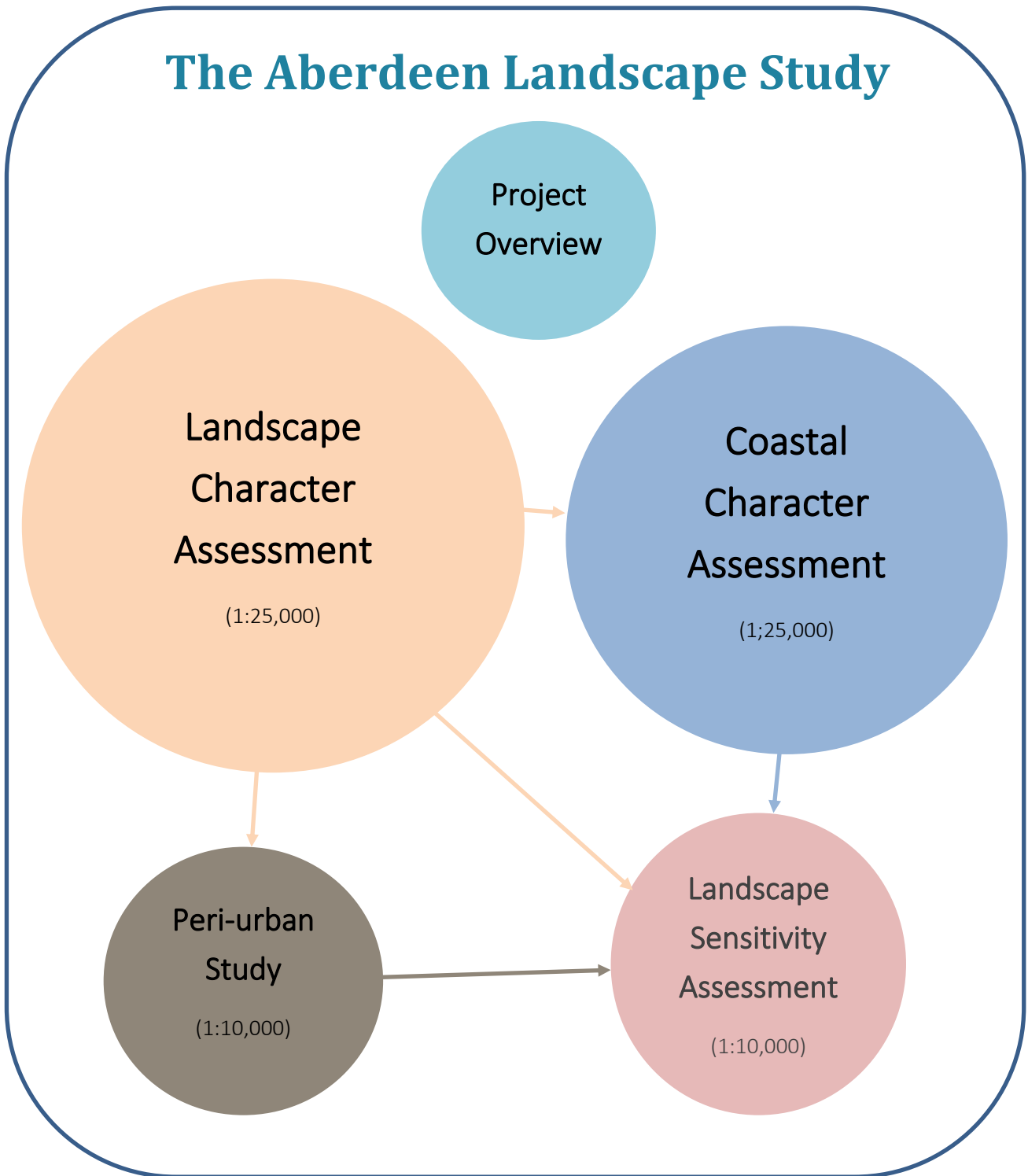
Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report presents an updated Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen, based on a review of the *Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen* (Nicol, Johnston & Campbell, 1996). The review was carried out in parallel with Scottish Natural Heritage's review of the national suite of Landscape Character Assessments.
- 1.2 Since the publication of the 1996 assessment, the practice of Landscape Character Assessment has continued to evolve and, as well as updating this in line with current best practice, the landscapes of Aberdeen have undergone a lot of change. Most notably, the city has experienced a period of sustained economic growth resulting in demand for additional housing, land for business and industrial expansion, and other related infrastructure such as roads and port development.
- 1.3 It is important to note that *Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen* (1996) provides a comprehensive understanding of the city's landscape character. Although some notable changes have taken place since its production, much of the assessment remains relevant and has been incorporated into this updated study.
- 1.4 Consequently, this updated assessment reflects changes that have occurred since 1996 and describes the variety of local landscapes that continue to underpin Aberdeen's sense of place. The main purpose of this updated Landscape Character Assessment is to provide a robust landscape baseline to inform future plans, strategies, policies, projects and decision making, including the review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan



The Aberdeen Landscape Study

1.5 This Landscape Character Assessment forms part of the *Aberdeen Landscape Study* (ALS), which as illustrated in the following diagram, is presented in five separate project parts. Collectively, these provide a comprehensive understanding of Aberdeen’s rural, coastal, and peri-urban landscapes. The ALS also includes information to help shape change, namely a *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* for a range of development types, and a project overview provides a summary of the documents.



Overview of the Aberdeen landscape

1.6 Known as ‘the Granite City’, Aberdeen is a coastal city that is largely situated between the two valleys of the rivers Dee and Don, where they flow into the North Sea. These valleys are very important features of Aberdeen, instrumental in forming distinctive links with the surrounding landscape that bring elements of the countryside and associated flora and fauna right through the city. The valleys and the ring of low hills which encloses the western side of the city, provide views of the countryside and the sea from many parts of the city and underpin its distinctive and diverse landscape character. The Aberdeen coast forms an important part of regional and local identity, and its distinctive character provides an important setting to daily life.

- 1.7 The influence of coastal and river landscapes upon the city's development has been considerable and these elements have helped to create a very distinctive identity. As a small city, the surrounding landscape and seascape have a strong influence on urban character and Aberdeen's townscape underlines the importance of conserving and enhancing its distinctive setting and sense of place.

Study area

- 1.8 This Landscape Character Assessment covers the entire terrestrial administrative area of Aberdeen City (see Figure 1 on page 10) although the process of identifying landscape character also considers the surrounding landscapes in Aberdeenshire. It focuses on the prevailing rural parts of the city and does not include a detailed assessment of Aberdeen's townscape. Although built areas part of the landscape, a detailed assessment of urban areas is beyond the scope of this report.

Structure of report

- 1.9 Following this introduction, this report is set out in the following sections:

<i>Section 2:</i>	Landscape Character Assessment – methodology
<i>Section 3:</i>	Landscape evolution
<i>Section 4:</i>	Visual analysis
<i>Section 5:</i>	Landscape Character Types
<i>Section 6:</i>	Landscape Character Areas
<i>Appendix I:</i>	References
<i>Appendix II:</i>	Methodology
<i>Appendix III:</i>	Changes to the 1996 Landscape Character Assessment
<i>Appendix IV:</i>	Glossary

Study area



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 1. Study area



-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Study area

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

2. Landscape Character Assessment - methodology

What is Landscape?

- 2.1 *'Landscape is more than just 'the view': it is about the relationship between people, place and nature that provides an ever-changing backdrop to our daily lives', (Landscape: beyond the view, Countryside Agency). It encompasses the urban and rural and can mean a small patch of urban wasteland or vast open moorland. It is shaped by the interaction of the natural and cultural components of our environment with a focus on how these factors are perceived and experienced by people. People value landscape for many different reasons and it is important to understand how the landscape has evolved, what it is like today and how it may change into the future.*

*'Landscape' means an area, as **perceived by people**, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of **natural** and/or **human** factors. (Council of Europe, 2000)*

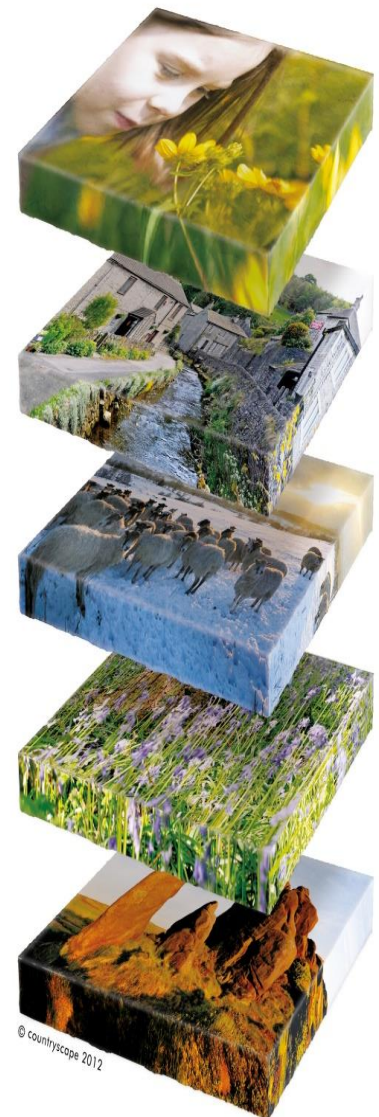
Experience: Landscape is more than the sum of physical features that make up our environment and how we perceive the landscape can have an important influence on how we use or value its character and resources.

History: Landscapes have been shaped by human activity throughout history. It is therefore important to understand past patterns, the extent to which they have survived and how different stages in history have contributed to the character of today's landscape.

Land use: Land use includes all of the various uses that people make of the landscape, such as recreation and leisure, settlement, farming and field enclosure, energy production and forestry. The character of the landscape is influenced by the present-day pattern of these features, as well as their historical legacy.

Wildlife & habitats: The variety of plants and animals in landscape has been shaped over thousands of years by a complex set of social, historical and economic factors, all operating against the physical backdrop of the landscape itself. Wildlife and habitats occur in the landscape surrounding a city and within the built areas. The types and abundance of wildlife and the habitats of which they form a part can play a significant role in shaping the character and sometimes, the function of a landscape.

Natural form: Natural form includes geology, landform, river and drainage systems, soils and vegetation cover. The shape of the land, or landform, is often the main influence on the character of the landscape. Rivers and drainage systems also have an important part to play in shaping the landscape, whilst geology, soils and vegetation cover can determine the 'usefulness' of the land for agriculture, settlement and other functions.



(Above text adapted from *Landscape: beyond the view*, Countryside Agency, 2006)

What is Landscape Character Assessment?

- 2.2 Landscape character is about the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another. Landscape Character Assessment, therefore, is the process of identifying and describing variations in the character of the landscape.
- 2.3 This updated Landscape Character Assessment identifies and describes the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing a range of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). It also describes how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.

*“Landscape Character Assessment is a standard methodology for identifying, **describing, classifying** and mapping what is **distinctive** about our landscapes. It shows us their variety, and helps us to understand what makes one landscape different from another” (www.snh.gov.uk)*

- 2.4 A landscape can be classified and described according to its Landscape Character Type (LCT) and at a number of different scales from the national through to the local LCT’s:
- are generic and can recur in different places;
 - have similar characteristics wherever they occur; and
 - are called by a descriptive name e.g. *River Valley*.
- 2.5 A landscape can also be classified and described as a Landscape Character Area (LCA) and these:
- are specific to one place;
 - focus on differences and local distinctiveness; and
 - are called by a specific place name e.g. *Don Valley*.

Ideally, assessments undertaken at different scales should fit together as a nested hierarchy of landscape character types and/or areas.



- 2.6 Landscape Character Assessment is undertaken by means of a standard process of desk and field studies. A description of the assessment methodology is set out in *Appendix II* at the end of this report.

Using the Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.7 The main purpose of this updated Landscape Character Assessment is to provide a robust landscape baseline to inform future plans, strategies, policies, projects and decision making, including the review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- 2.8 Landscape Character Assessment is used for a wide range of planning and management activity including:

Landscape planning

- Spatial planning
- Development management
- Landscape and visual impact assessment
- Landscape designations
- Minerals planning
- Transport planning
- Development capacity studies
- Master-planning and area-wide regeneration
- Urban fringe and settlement analyses
- Green infrastructure strategies
- Development briefs
- Design guidance
- Community Planning

Landscape management

- Management plans and strategies
- Forest and woodland strategies
- Forestry and agri-environment design
- Recreation management
- Biodiversity planning
- Historic environment planning
- Planning for climate change
- Monitoring landscape change
- Identifying and managing special landscapes
- Environmental education and interpretation
- Marketing tourism and local produce

3. Landscape evolution

Introduction

- 3.1 The landscape of Aberdeen has been formed by the interaction of physical influences such as geology, climate and vegetation, and also how humans have changed the natural environment. The influence of humans in an area as developed as Aberdeen has been profound. The early development of the city was gradual and, before technology reached its present advanced stage, it responded more directly to the topography and the natural landscape. However, the pace of change over recent times has become more accelerated and dynamic and is largely driven by economic growth.
- 3.2 This chapter outlines the physical and human influences that have formed the current landscape of Aberdeen, and the interactions between them.

NATURAL INFLUENCES

- 3.3 Aberdeen has a close relationship with its natural environment – the names ‘Granite City’ and ‘Silver City’ reflecting the abundance of buildings constructed from the locally sourced sparkling silver grey granite. Its coastal location, its two river valleys, and the arc of hills that bound it to the west are key features of the city, and they shaped the city’s development.

Bedrock geology (see Figure 2 on page 16)

- 3.4 The oldest rocks in the study area are regionally metamorphosed sedimentary rocks of the Dalradian Supergroup. In Aberdeen, these are represented by the Aberdeen Formation. They comprise a series of strongly deformed metasediments, generally as psammites, semi-pelites, pelites and rarer calcareous bodies. These were formed from sandstones, mixed sandstones and shales, shales and limestone sediments which, following deep burial, underwent intense metamorphism during the Grampian Orogeny. In addition to these metamorphosed sediments some basic igneous material was transformed to amphibolite during metamorphism.
- 3.5 This Dalradian succession was originally formed as a series of marine sediments, along with some basic igneous bodies, on the South East margin of the opening ancient Iapetus Ocean, whilst attached to the Laurentian-Greenland continent. These Aberdeen Formation rocks probably range in age from the late Pre-Cambrian to possibly the Middle Cambrian.
- 3.6 Following closure of the Iapetus Ocean, large-scale mountain building occurred, known as the Caledonian Orogeny. This led to deep-burial and associated complex deformation and metamorphism. This has resulted in highly complex geological structures that are difficult to interpret, due to lack of good exposure, multiple deformation episodes, each masking the evidence of previous events and the effect of migmatitisation. Within the study area, the cliffs from Aberdeen southwards, for example at Girdle Ness, provide exposures that display many of these complex structural features (Whittow, 1992). The most resistant of the metamorphic rocks are quartzites (BAAS, 1963), and they are associated with high ground in the area, such as Brimmond and Tyrebagger Hills.
- 3.7 The Dalradian sequence is intruded by granites, which underlie much of Aberdeen. The Aberdeen granite is a large pluton which trends NNW-SSE, forming a body 16-17 km long by 6 km wide and

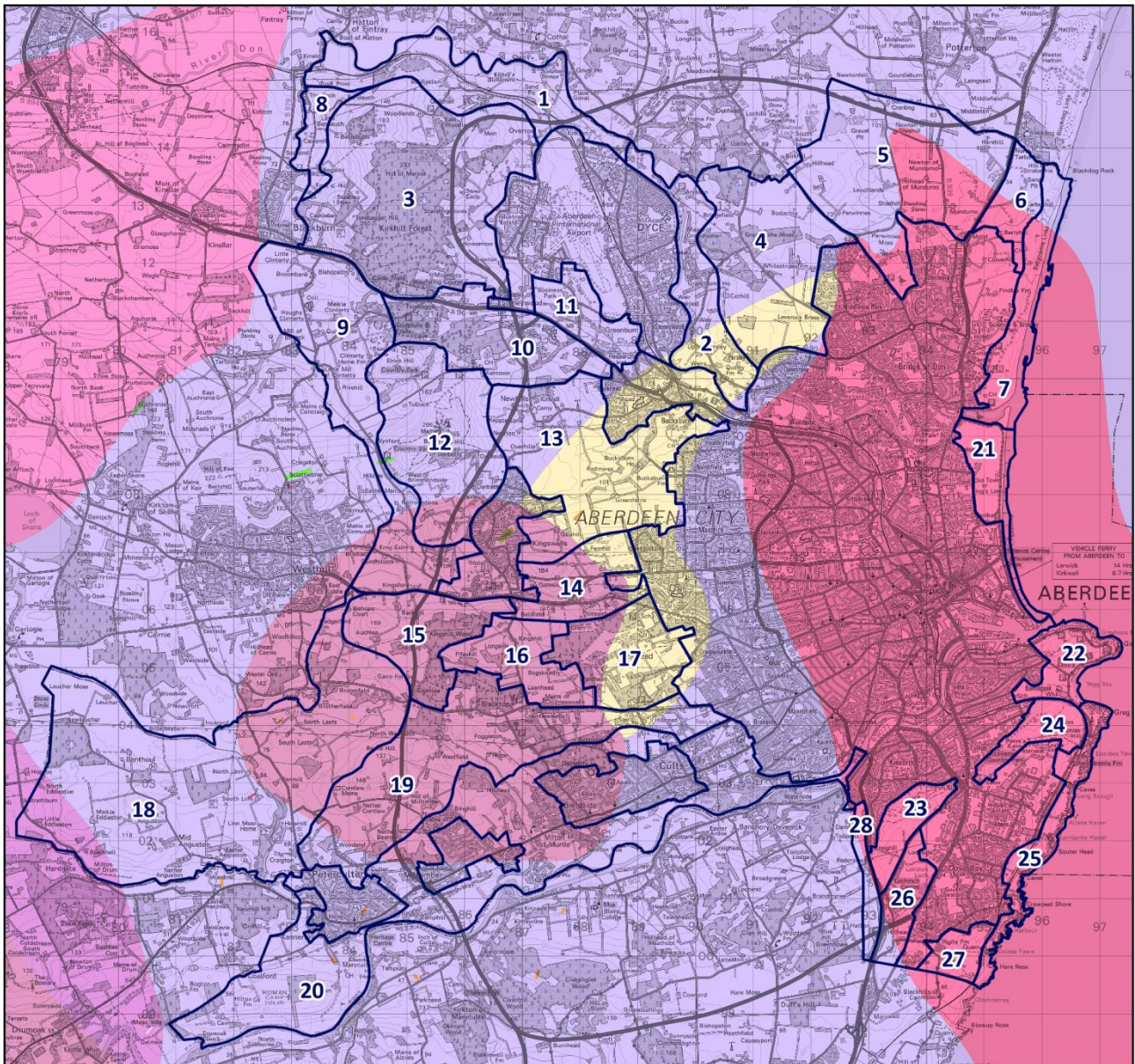
comprises grey-coloured muscovite biotite granite. It was emplaced about 470 million years ago in the Ordovician, based on material from Rubislaw quarry (Kneller & Aftalion, 1987). This is significant, indicating that it not linked to the younger suite of Newer Granites formed in the Silurian to Devonian.

- 3.8 The famous Rubislaw Quarry is located within this area of granite and has a depth of about 150 m, although much of the quarry is now flooded. Up to Victorian times most of the buildings in Aberdeen were constructed from solid granite, until rising costs prevented the stone being used for more than facing or decorative work. This prevalent use of granite is the most noted characteristic of the city. Rubislaw and the quarry at Kenmay supplied stone for building docks and lighthouses as well as houses and municipal buildings (Whittow, 1992).
- 3.9 Red and unmetamorphosed sedimentary rocks are found to underlie the eastern part of Aberdeen city, extending from north of Dyce southwards to the Dee, where they terminate against a possible fault trending ENE-WSW. They comprise conglomerates with rarer sandstones and argillaceous (clay-rich) beds and thicken eastward. Study of these rocks is hindered by lack of good exposure and much of what we know has been derived from temporary exposures and drill holes. However, they have allowed its boundaries, character and extent to be determined. Although they lack fossils, they have been assigned to the Old Red Sandstone (ORS) of Devonian age and may be part of the Lower ORS. During deposition, Scotland lay between 20 and 30 degrees south of the equator (Trewin et al. 1987). These sediments were deposited as alluvial fans and fluvial deposits in a semi-arid climate across a major unconformity surface which was highly irregular in character. This unconformity can be seen in a low cliff face on the southern bank of the Don just east of the Brig o’Balgownie (Trewin et al. 1987).
- 3.10 The coast where the Old Red Sandstone occurs consists of the wide sandy beach at Aberdeen, the shifting estuary of the Don, and the dune system to the north where the links are now used for golf. In complete contrast, where the Dalradian rocks form the coastline south of Aberdeen, the coast takes the form of cliffs. The rocks here are interspersed by igneous (dolerite) dykes that were injected into the existing rock approximately 295 million years ago, during the late Carboniferous period, when Scotland was located near the equator. These dykes were more easily eroded than the surrounding metamorphic rocks, and the differential erosion that occurred has resulted in the highly varied coastline of today (Whittow, 1992).



Dalradian metamorphic formation along the *Souter Coast* LCA

Bedrock geology



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 2. Bedrock geology



 Landscape Character Area 1-28

Bedrock Geology

-  Early Devonian: Brig O' Balgownie Formation- Conglomerate and Sandstone
-  Ordovician: Aberdeen Formation- Psammite
-  Ordovician: Aberdeen Pluton- Granite Foliated
-  Neoproterozoic: Aberdeen Formation- Psammite and Semipelite
-  Neoproterozoic: Aberdeen Formation- Psammite

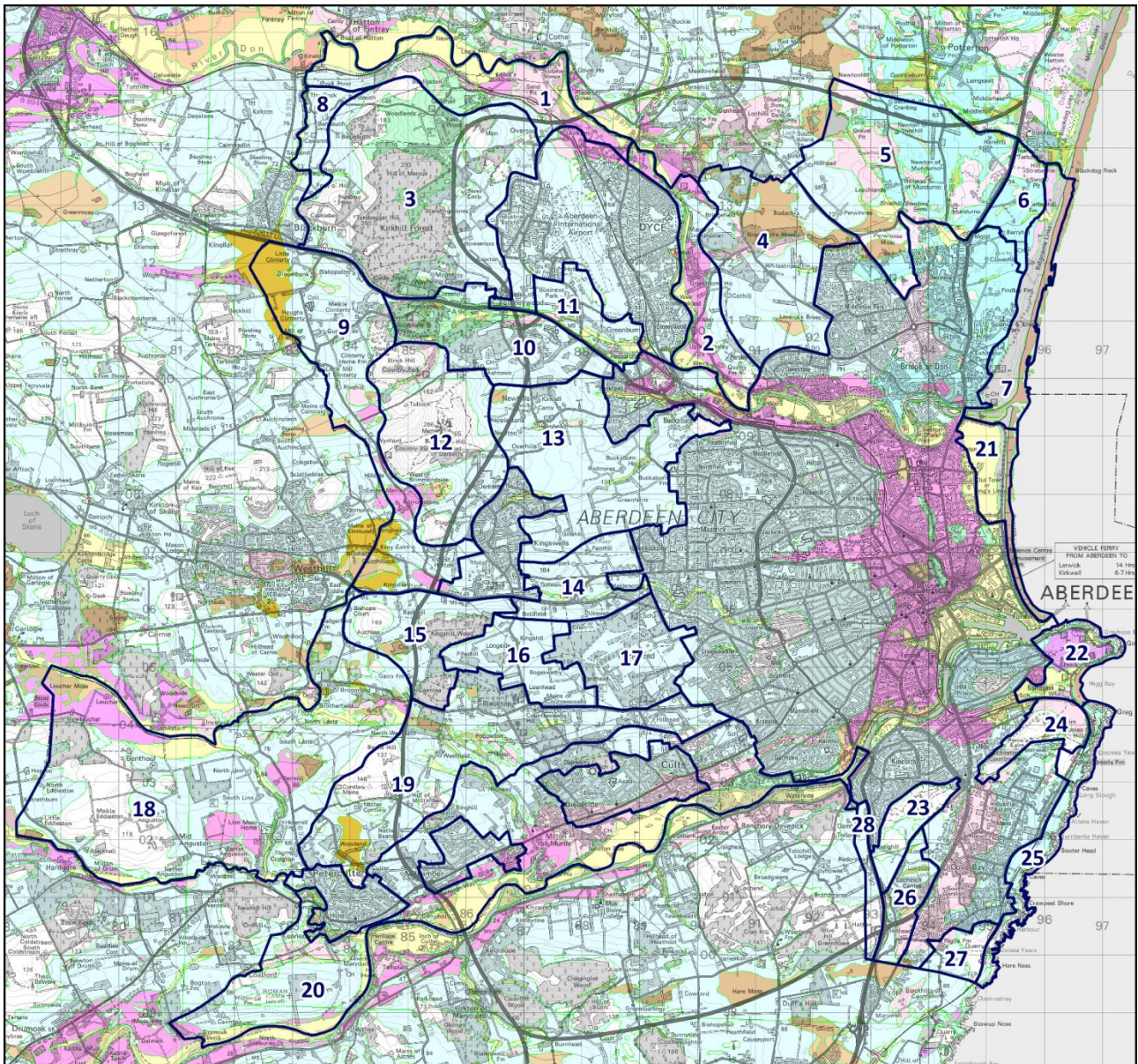
Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401. Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC 2017

Drift geology and geological analysis (see Figure 3 & 4 on page 18-19)

- 3.11 The present landform of Aberdeen is the result of various erosional and depositional processes acting on the underlying solid geology over time. Generally, the more resistant rocks form the higher ground while softer rocks have been subject to greater erosion. In comparison with the west of the country, the drier north-east of Scotland was eroded less by rivers and glaciers, but glaciation has still been the most significant recent agent of erosion and deposition. During the Quaternary period (from 2 million to 10,000 years ago) many separate glaciations occurred, but understandably only the last, termed the Devensian (approximately 11,500 years ago), has left a noticeable onshore record.
- 3.12 The Cairngorm plateau and the Mounth were probably major sources of the ice sheets that flowed roughly eastwards. The high ground would have been glacially eroded with deposits occurring on lower ground, for example along much of the Dee valley. The vast quantities of meltwater that resulted when the glaciers shrank due to the warming climate deposited large amounts of eroded material, and had sufficient power to carve out channels in the substrate. Zones of relative weakness, for example existing river valleys or fault lines, were deepened the most.
- 3.13 Both the Dee and the Don currently follow meltwater channels that were cut into bedrock. The Dee used to outflow at Nigg Bay, south of its present river mouth, but the old channel was infilled with glacial deposits, including some erratics of Scandinavian origin. This is possible evidence of the wastage of older ice sheets from the Devensian. The Don has also changed its course through what is now Seaton Park. The Don takes a steeper course than the Dee, with a narrower channel which creates a faster flow. The rapidity of the flow enabled the river to be used as a source of power for fabric and, subsequently, paper mills. The constricted and shallow outlet of the river negated its use as a harbour. In contrast, the mouth of the Dee, after considerable dredging, formed the basis of the important harbour of Aberdeen.
- 3.14 Other meltwater features such as valley side-terraces and eskers were formed in the area. For example the ridge between the Dee and Don estuaries, at either end of which the early, separate settlements of Aberdeen were located is an esker. An esker is a ridge of stratified sand and gravels formed within ice wall tunnels by streams within and under glaciers, or by the accumulated of sediment in an ice crevasse. The small-scale undulating topography between Tyrebagger and Brimmond hills is due to kames being deposited by meltwater, and the spillways that were carved into the hillsides by ice, water and debris. The material for the kames was deposited in depressions by retreating ice which was then pushed out of the depression and onto the land by further retreating ice.
- 3.15 Away from the meltwater channels widespread rock debris, or till, was plastered over the lower terrain by the retreating ice. It is likely that much of this boulder clay what was moved by the ice was developed from local material. The painstaking work of clearing the larger stones from the boulder clay to improve the cultivability of the soil resulted in the distinctive drystone dykes that form field boundaries in many parts of the area. The sand and gravel morainic mounds in the area – Ferryhill, Woolmanhill and Broad Hill for example – are distinctive in the topography of Aberdeen. These were either deposited as the ice sheet was meeting the sea or when it was breaking up and moving in streams rather than as an unbroken front. The valley of the Pitmuckston Burn, Carnegie's Brae, Berryden, and the hollow west of the Spital Hill are examples of where the ice sheet was breaking up, creating narrow streams.
- 3.16 In the 11,500 years or so since the last ice sheets melted, minor changes to the drift geology of the area have continued to occur. There is evidence of peri-glacial activity throughout the Aberdeen area and

hinterland. It may be that this coincided with the last glaciation in Scotland – the Loch Lomond Readvance – which did not directly affect the area around Aberdeen, but which would have been accompanied by a lowering of temperature across the country. The changes in sea level as the glaciers melted resulted in the raised beach deposits that are located between the mouths of the rivers Dee and Don. In addition to the present day beach and dune systems along the coast at Aberdeen, recent deposits include the alluvium that occurs along the stream valleys and, at a larger broader scale, in the valleys of the Dee and Don. Peat deposits also occur in the area, particularly in the poorly-drained basins that were the result of glacial erosion.

Drift geology



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 3. Superficial geology



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401. Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC 2017


 Landscape Character Area 1 - 28

Superficial Geology

 Alluvium

 River terrace

 Sand, gravel and boulders

 Sand and gravel

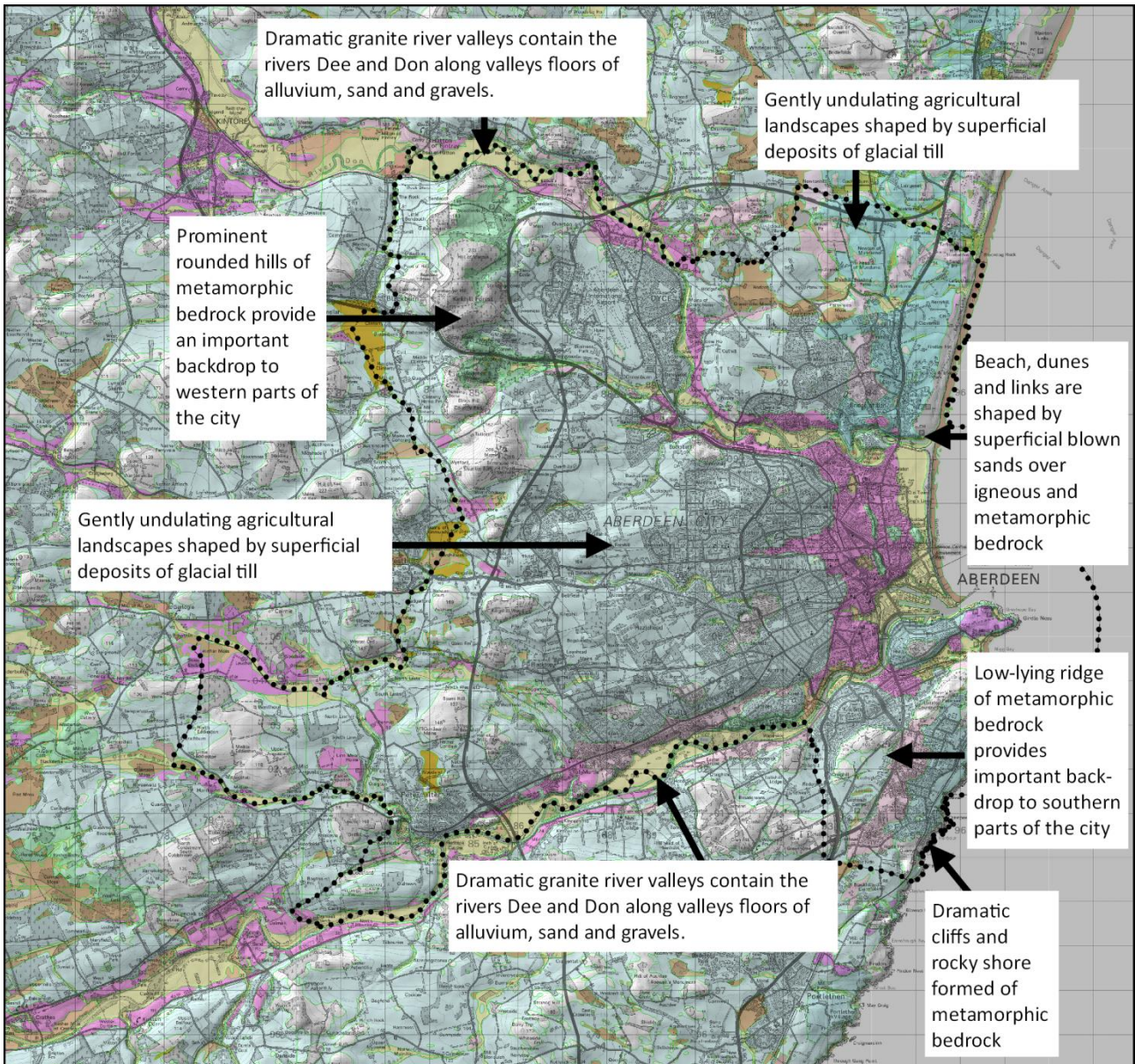
 Diamicton sand and gravel

 Till

 Peat

 Marine beach deposits

Geology analysis



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 4. Geology analysis



0 1 2 3 km



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.
Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC 2017

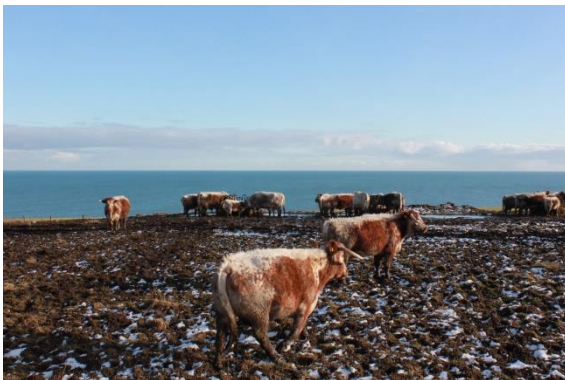
 Aberdeen City Council boundary

Superficial Geology

-  Alluvium
-  River terrace
-  Sand, gravel and boulders
-  Sand and gravel
-  Diamictton sand and gravel
-  Till
-  Peat
-  Marine beach deposits

Soils (see Figure 5 on page 23)

- 3.17 Soils can be broadly classified according to the parent material that formed them. However, this basic division is complicated by the interaction of other factors including climate, vegetation, time and human influences. It is common in north-east Scotland for soils to have better drainage on hill slopes than in flatter area, although this will be locally dependent on soil parent material, soil texture and degree of slope.
- 3.18 As would be expected given the geology of the area, most of its soils are formed from glacial till that was derived from granitic rocks. In the study area it is known as the Countesswells association (a soil association is a series of soils that share a common parent material). Variations within this depend on how freely-drained the soil is, with better-drained soils generally occurring on higher ground. Soils formed from a different parent material are found in the river valleys and tributaries, where they developed on alluvium or meltwater-sorted sands and gravels.
- 3.19 A humus iron podzol predominates over much of the area in combination with brown forest soils and gleys. The podzols and brown earths tend to exist on hillsides with gleys dominating the lower, wetter ground. Humus iron podzols are naturally acidic and tend to be nutrient deficient, however, they are capable of supporting a number of uses, such as forestry and agriculture when they have been improved, although the soils tend to be stony with rocky outcrops which can restrict agricultural use. The stony nature of the till-derived soils is revealed by the extensive use of drystone dykes to demarcate fields.
- 3.20 Brown forest soils are well drained and have a brownish sub soil where iron oxides, created through weathering, are bonded to silicate clays. The formation of these soils is often associated with broadleaved forest where rapid decomposition of leaves and plant residues enabled the development of the soils and the recycling of plant nutrients. Gley soils are wet soils, often intermittently or permanently waterlogged. They tend to form either where ground water is high or where surface drainage is poor, often due to the underlying geology or on low-lying land.
- 3.21 Within this mosaic there are areas of non-calcareous gleys, peaty gleys, some humic gleys and peat. At Grandhome Moss for example, there are occasional pockets of basin peat; this is a lowland peat soil, formed in basins created through glacial erosion. Basin peat is ombrotrophic, receiving nutrients and water from precipitation alone. It is confined by mineral ground which prevents drainage, causing a build-up of organic material which forms peat as it decomposes in acidic conditions. Basin peats have no mineral layer and can appear domed.



Brown forest soil, south Aberdeen coast



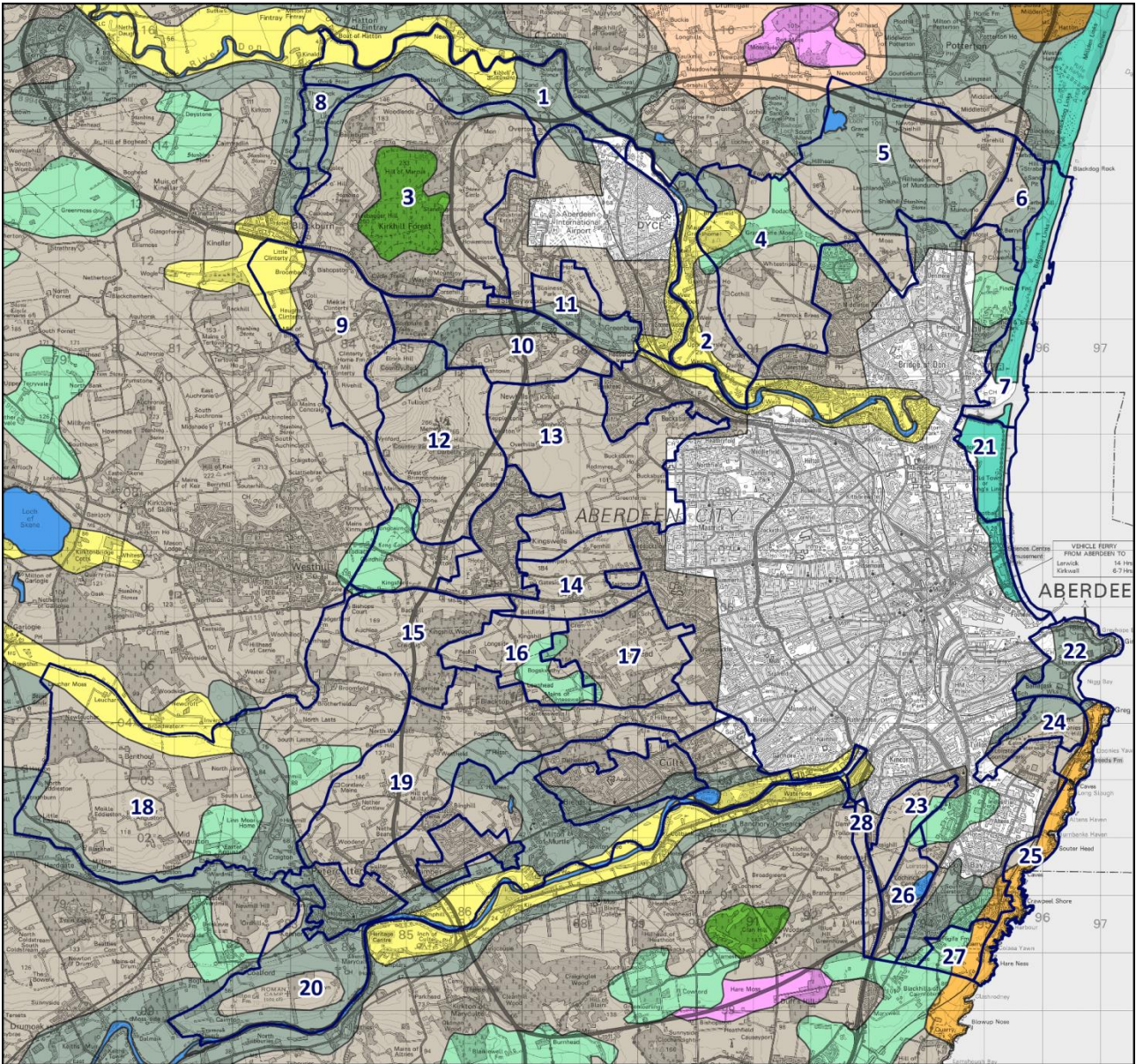
Humus iron podzol, Mundurno



Peat deposits, Grandhome Moss

- 3.22 Lower river valleys are dominated by alluvium. These fluvial deposited soils tend to be more fertile than other soils in the area because they are periodically inundated which enables nutrient deposition. Further up the valley sides the alluvium gives way to humus iron podzols and gleys.
- 3.23 Along the coastline running north of the urban area, soils are characterised by sand which is classed as a regosol (soil consisting of unconsolidated material derived from freshly deposited alluvium or sands). In contrast, to the south of the urban area, along the cliff tops running from Greg Ness southwards, soils tend to be dominated by the richer brown forest soils with humus iron podzols and some gleys.

Soils



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 5. Soils



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401. 1:250,000 Soil data copyright and database right The James Hutton Institute 2017. Used with permission of The James Hutton Institute. All rights reserved.

- Alluvial soils
- Basin and valley peats
- Brown forest soils with gleying; some noncalcareous gleys
- Brown forest soils, humus-iron podzols; some gleys
- Brown forest soils; some humus-iron podzols, gleys
- Humus-iron podzols; some brown forest soils and gleys
- Humus-iron podzols; some gleys
- Noncalcareous gleys, peaty gleys; some humic gleys and peat
- Peaty podzols; some humus-iron podzols and gleys
- Regosols; some gleys
- Open water
- Landscape Character Area 1 - 28

Landform (see Figure 6 on page 25)

- 3.24 Shaped by fluvial processes, landform has a significant influence on the character of the landscape and Aberdeen is fortunate in having a dramatic setting between hills, valleys and the coast. The two main river valleys of the Dee and Don are major landscape features within the area, and were undoubtedly instrumental in the location of the city. Both valleys have developed as transport corridors, and major roads follow the valley landform.
- 3.25 Hills are a distinctive feature across two areas within the city, most notably to the west where they form a distinctive western edge to the city. Smooth slopes predominate and all the hills have gently rounded landforms. At 266 metres AOD, Brimmond Hill is the highest point in the city. Expansive views can be experienced from these hills towards the Grampian Uplands to the west, and across the city to the east. There is also a smaller area of hills to the south of the city namely, Kincorth Hill and Tullos Hill. Although relatively low, these hills form a prominent skyline feature when seen from northern parts of the city.



Rounded landform of Brimmond Hill

- 3.26 The varying coastal landforms are also a distinctive feature in the city. The craggy, rocky coast south of the Girdle Ness headland forms a series of striking coastal landforms including ravines, small rocky headlands, sea caves and jagged rock platforms. The strong contrast between land and sea that occurs along the coastline is heightened where sandy beaches and dunes are found near to a harbour city.

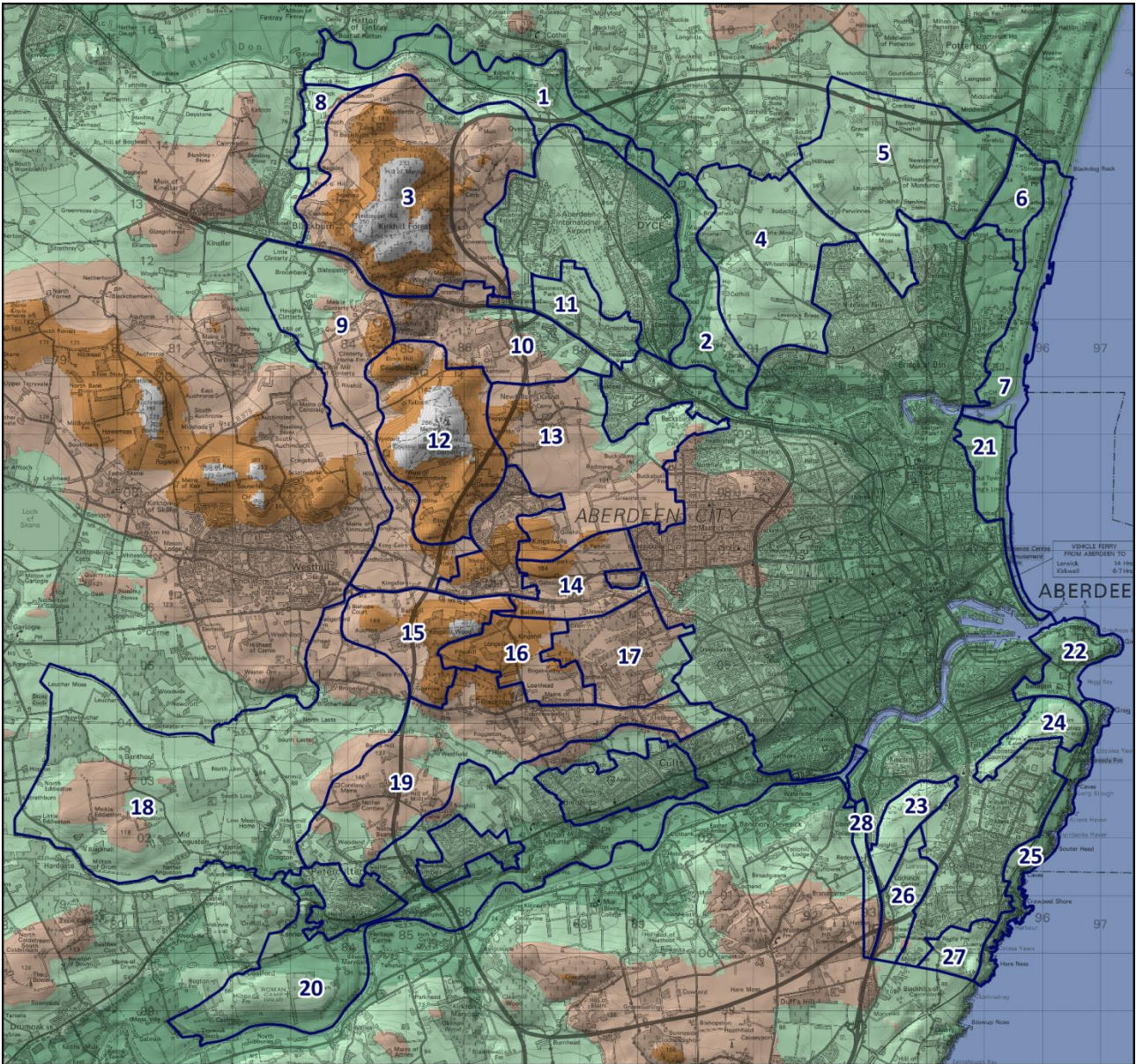


Contrast of sandy beach and a busy harbour city



Rocky coastline near Cove Bay

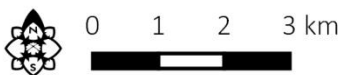
Landform



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 6. Landform



Landscape Character Area 1 - 28

Elevation / m

- < 0
- 0- 50
- 50- 100
- 100- 150
- 150- 200
- > 200

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401. Ordnance Survey Terrain 50.

Climate

- 3.27 The climate of Aberdeen is milder in winter than its northerly location would suggest. This is due to the oceanic climate created by proximity to the sea. With a prevailing north-easterly wind, the cooling sea breeze in summer means that Aberdeen is recorded as the coldest UK city. Proximity to the coast also reduces snowfall within the city although this is relatively high inland and on higher ground. The sea is also associated with the prevalence for haar (cold sea fog) to form over the city. This is most common in spring but can occur throughout the year. Higher ground within the city is associated with greater wind exposure and colder temperatures. Historically, the climate has influenced the pattern of development and the location and type of agriculture. For example, crops requiring greater amounts of sunlight are grown on south-facing slopes, and many settlements (such as those along the northern side of the Dee Valley) have also developed on south-facing slopes where the local climate is warmer.

Landcover (see Figures 7 & 8 on pages 28-9)

- 3.28 Despite being a relatively small area, there is a wide range of habitat and landcover types. The variation is associated with the diversity of landscapes, from coastal to rural and including river valleys and hillsides. Human intervention and cultivation means that the character is less wooded than would have naturally occurred and much rural land is used for forestry and agriculture, predominantly improved grassland but with a high proportion of arable land and some rough grazing.
- 3.29 Following the retreat of the ice sheet, the first pioneering species to colonise inland would have been dwarf shrubs, such as crowberry and juniper. Dwarf shrub habitats still exist within heath/ moorland patches throughout the landscape. Some patches are relatively large but generally moorland occurs as small areas and is often associated with woodlands, usually broadleaved. Heathland is one of the habitats at Scotstown Moor Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which also supports marshy grassland and wetland, and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



Extensive heather on Brimmond Hill



Heathland mosaic at Stoneyhill Wood

- 3.30 As the climate began to warm further, tree species would have started to spread from the south. The first of these was birch, approximately 10,000 years ago, and hazel would have also become more common. Around 8,000-7,000 years ago, the species mix would have become richer; oak, ash and elm in drier areas and alder, hawthorn, willow and rowan on wetter soils. The woodland cover would have been most extensive and diverse 5,000 years ago. After this, changing climate and the clearance of land for agriculture, settlement, fuel and timber led to woodland decline and the establishment of a habitat matrix more comparable with that of today, consisting of a combination of farmland, both arable and pasture depending on soil quality, grasslands, heath, woodland and peat.

- 3.31 The use of wood for timber and fuel meant that much of the native woodland was felled, leaving only small pockets of woodland in less accessible areas, such as valley sides. During the 18th and 19th Centuries, landowners began a process of replanting woodlands, often for economic benefit. These plantation woodlands can still be seen in the landscape today, for example at Hazlehead Park, and are characterised by a diverse non-native species mix including sycamore, sweet chestnut and beech. Some woodlands were managed for coppice to provide wood for a variety of uses including charcoal production and the use of bark for tanning. The hazel and rowan woodlands at Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve were managed as coppice woodland and in recent years, the practice has been reinstated. Predominantly conifer plantations have been planted on higher ground in response to soil conditions where deciduous species would be less likely to thrive, such as Kirkhill forest on Tyrebagger Hill. Most of the hilltops and uplands around Aberdeen are characterised by such forestry, although there are some examples of moorland habitats and Ancient Woodland on higher ground.
- 3.32 Where urban development has not occurred, approximately half of the Aberdeen bay coastline comprises soft sand dune systems and beaches. The dune system extends inland to no more than 1km and in places has been altered by human intervention. The bay supports intertidal and subtidal habitats, including saltmarsh, sand spits and mud. The River Dee is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and despite the harbour development at the river mouth, the Dee provides a range of important tidal habitats, including sandflats and mudflats, fens, marshland, wet grassland, scrub and the estuary itself. The river supports three species of high conservation value, namely freshwater pearl mussel, otter and Atlantic salmon. Designated as a Local Nature Reserve, the mouth of the Don has been less affected by human influence. It is very dynamic in nature with a spit bar complex deflecting the channel to the north and supports a range of wading bird species, including oystercatcher, redshank and sandwich tern.
- 3.33 Across the city, there are 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs) with a diverse range of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats supporting important wildlife. For example, Corby Loch is centred on a large body of water surrounded by reed beds, floating mire and scrub woodland with a rich insect fauna, important for roosting wildfowl and breeding birds.
- 3.341 Along the Balnagask to Cove LNCS, there are coastal cliffs and caves, shingle beaches, coastal and neutral grassland, European dry heath and coastal heath with a range of nationally scarce coastal plants and associated insects. The rocks by the harbour have pools that provide mini salt marsh habitats. The site also has a good variety of coastal birds including those that nest on the rocky cliffs. Whales, dolphins and porpoises can sometimes be seen out to sea. Kinaldie Den LNCS consists of damp broadleaved woodland with a mix of priority habitats and species such as red squirrel and hard shield fern, the latter being uncommon in the north-east.

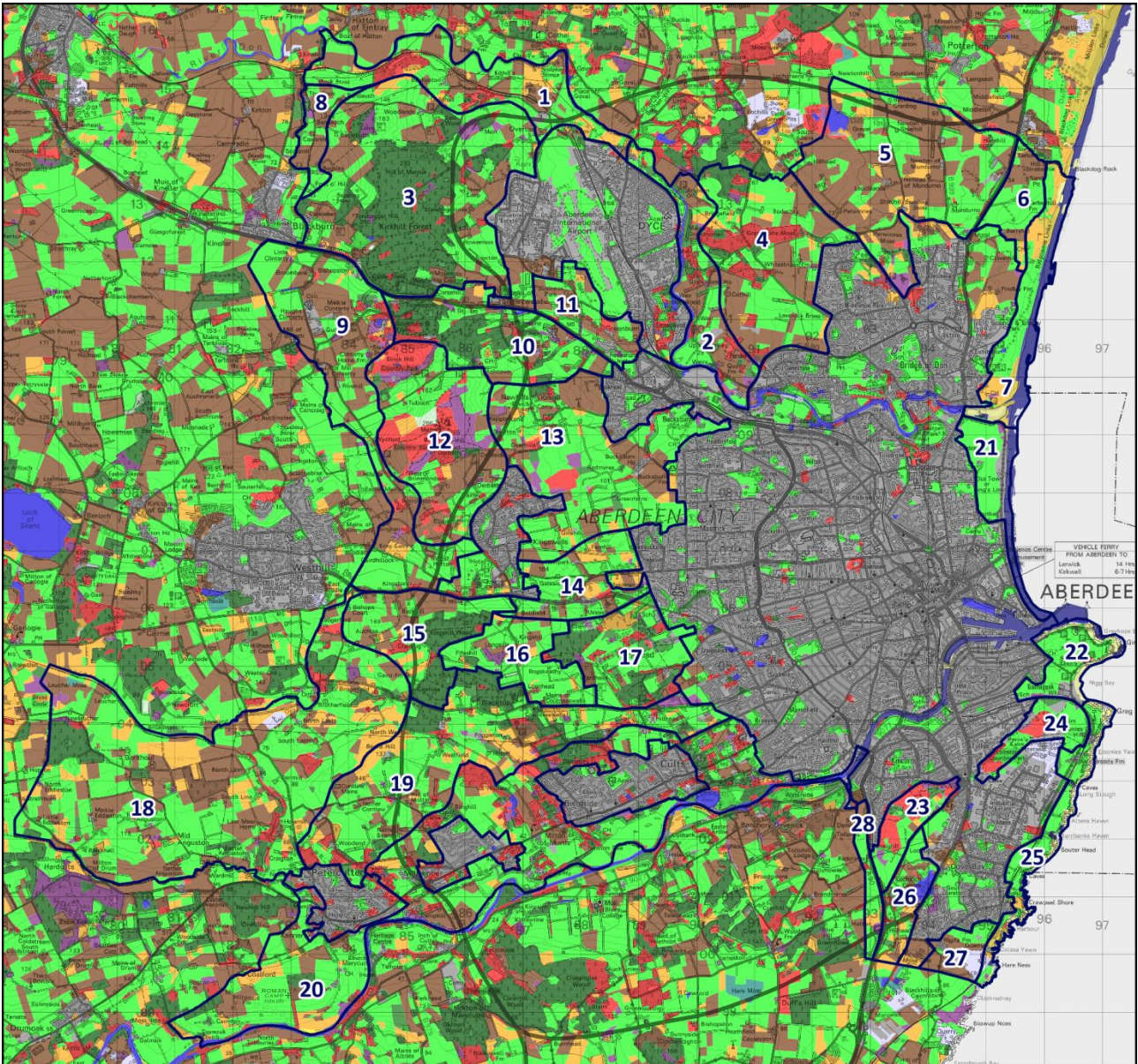


Donmouth Local Nature Reserve



Woodland planting along the Dee valley

Land cover



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

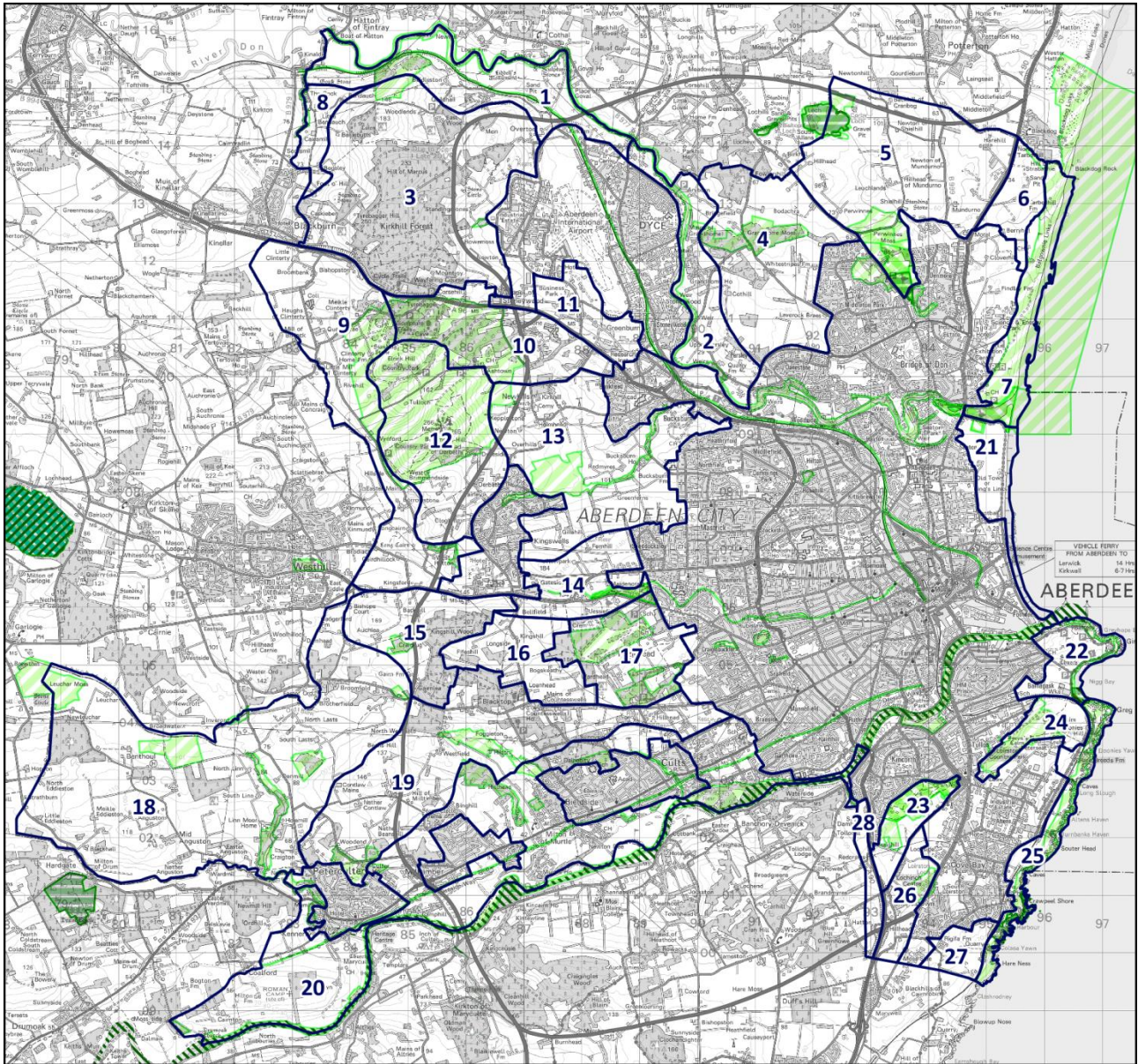
Figure 7. Land cover



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401. Land Cover Map 2007 © NERC (CEH) Crown Copyright 2017.

Land Cover Map 2007	
	Broad leaved woodland
	Coniferous woodland
	Arable and horticulture
	Improved grassland
	Rough grassland
	Neutral grassland
	Acid grassland
	Dwarf shrub heath
	Fen marsh and swamp
	Bog
	Freshwater
	Inland rock
	Littoral rock
	Littoral sediment
	Supra-littoral rock
	Supra-littoral sediment
	Built up areas & gardens
	Salt water
	Landscape Character Area 1 - 28

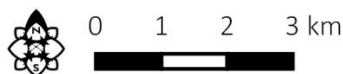
Natural designations





Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 8. Natural designations



-  Special Protection Area
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Ramsar Site
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Local Nature Conservation Site
-  Geological Conservation Review Site
-  Landscape Character Area 1-28

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Early Settlers

- 3.35 Mesolithic flint-working sites uncovered during the course of archaeological excavations at The Green, close to the mouth of the River Dee, and of covered pits at Garthdee, provide some of the earliest evidence for semi-permanent settlement in the Aberdeen area (Murray, 2014). These ‘hunter-gatherer’ communities would have been the first to exploit the natural resources of the rivers, coast and woodlands and may have contributed to clearance of parts of the natural vegetation cover. Surviving burial cairns, occupying a prominent position on the Tullos ridge to the south of the present City, indicate the presence of late Neolithic and Bronze Age communities who farmed the land and kept domesticated animals, although no traces of their settlements have yet been uncovered. Prehistoric sites on and around Kirkhill including burial cairns, hut circles, a cairnfield and stone circle have been designated as Scheduled Monuments.
- 3.36 The Roman marching camp at Normandykes is thought to date from the 2nd Century AD. The camp is rectangular in shape and would have been surrounded by a ditch and bank, although earthworks of the perimeter only survive along the northern edge. Elsewhere, the perimeter is visible as cropmarks crossing arable fields. Excavations in the 1930s confirmed the Roman origins of the site and identified six defended gates around the perimeter. More recent small-scale excavations revealed evidence for hearths within the camp. Normandykes is one of a series of temporary marching camps established by the Emperor Severus in 208-9AD and his son Caracalla in 210AD. The temporary camps extend from the Antonine Wall to the Moray Firth and are thought to result from punitive expeditions against the Scots following disruption in Northern Britain at the end of the 1st Century AD (Faulks and Gillingham, 1981).
- 3.37 Pictish symbol stones which stand in the Kirkyard of the Chapel of St Fergus at Dyce are pointers to the communities which lived in the area in the 8th and 9th centuries, about whom very little is known. One of the stones is decorated with a Christian cross which provides tangible evidence of the adoption of Christianity by the native population, to set alongside the dedications of various churches and chapels to Celtic saints and the tradition that St Machar, a disciple of Columba of Iona, was the first to introduce Christianity to this part of the North East.

Twelfth to eighteenth centuries

- 3.38 It has been suggested that the dedication of the chapel at Fittie (Footdee) to St Clement, a saint revered by Danish sea-faring communities, may point to a small settlement in the mouth of the estuary founded by traders from across the North Sea in the 11th century. The dedication of the parish church of Aberdeen to St Nicholas also speaks of the strong maritime influence which shaped and characterised the burgh of Aberdeen which developed around the natural harbour at the mouth of the River Dee, and which was created a Royal Burgh in the reign of David I (1124 - 1153).
- 3.39 The River Don estuary was narrower than the Dee and constantly changed through the repeated deposition of silt and sand. As a result, it was not suitable for development as a harbour. In the 12th century, a small religious centre grew up close to the River Don, focused on St Machar's Church, the cathedral of the Diocese of Aberdeen. This settlement - Old Aberdeen - was created a Free Burgh of Barony in 1498 and it functioned as a distinct and separate community from ‘New’ Aberdeen in the

south, having its own social, political, religious, and economic infrastructure, until both towns merged in 1891.

- 3.40 With the advent of the oil boom in the mid-1970s, and the consequent re-development of much of the city centre, the opportunity arose to excavate several sites within the bounds of the former medieval burgh. The information thus uncovered, carried out in tandem with documentary research, has revealed much about the growth and character of Aberdeen over several centuries; its trading links with a large hinterland, the sea-borne import and export trade upon which the economy depended, and the day-to-day decisions of the Burgh Council which ultimately influenced and dictated most aspects of life in the town.
- 3.41 By 1300 the street pattern of 'New Aberdeen', which survived unaltered until the late 18th century, was well established. It was centred around the focus of the main roads leading to and from the harbour. Broad Street / Gallowgate formed the main route from Old Aberdeen to the north while Castle Street formed part of the road to the south and also served as the link between the castle at one end of the burgh and the parish church at the other. A number of other streets radiated out, among them Shore Brae, Futtie Wind, Upper and Nether Kirkgate and Putachieside. The hummocky terrain that was the result of glacial deposition would have influenced the alignment of these routes. For example, the road linking Old and New Aberdeen was built on a north-south orientated ridge of morainic deposits.
- 3.42 Of major importance to the prosperity of the burgh were the watercourses which provided power for the town mills and water for the many small industrial activities which flourished in the town. The Loch, which lay to the immediate north-west of the burgh, provided much of the supply through its outlet the Mill Burn, while the Denburn and Puttachie Burn were of importance in the south-western sector of the town. Over time the Loch dried out, leaving the area of marshland that was recorded on the earliest map of Old and New Aberdeen, drawn in 1661. Marshland also precluded the early growth of settlements beside the link road between the two burghs where the leper hospital stood in isolation until the development of the Mounthooly and Spital areas in the late 18th century.
- 3.43 Most of the buildings in the 12th-14th century burgh were constructed of timber which was weather- and water-proofed by the addition of daub, and thatched with heather, rushes or straw. Only St Nicholas Church, the Tolbooth, and the Friaries were built of stone. Continual re-building of the relatively flimsy, fire-prone buildings occurred. This required a constant source of timber, and consequently the surrounding forest was gradually cut back. As the pressure of population increased, new houses were built with their gable ends to the street. The addition of extra stories was used as a means of accommodating more and more people in the same limited area, rather than expanding into the surrounding countryside to any significant extent.
- 3.44 By the 15th century, a distinctive pattern of land-holding was well established with the long-riggs (or tenements) partitioned into foreland, inland and backland, with the houses of the wealthier burgesses and merchants situated on the street frontage and the homes of poorer, more self-sufficient Aberdonians on the backlands. Gradually, stone (usually granite) became the preferred building material for those who could afford it, giving rise to fine examples of 16th century burgh architecture which survive in portions of Provost Skene's House (Guestrow) and Provost Ross's House (Shore Brae). Sandstone, quarried some distance away, was restricted to prestigious buildings or small intricate details and by the beginning of the 18th century brick was making an appearance.

- 3.45 One of Aberdeen's subtle but unique landscape features are the boundary stones (known as 'March Stones') which ring the city. There are two sets of March Stones: the inner set which mark the boundaries of the crofts which ringed the medieval Burgh of Aberdeen, and the outer set which define a larger area known as the 'Freedom Lands'. These lands became the responsibility of the medieval (and later Royal) burgh of Aberdeen.



Prehistoric Stone Circle on eastern slopes of Tyrebagger Hill



March Stone 12 above Cults

- 3.46 In 1313 Robert the Bruce granted Aberdeen custodianship of his Royal forest (hunting ground) of the Stocket. Between 1379 and 1680 the City Council also bought three other plots of land, namely Rubislaw, Cruives and Gilcomston which (together with the Stocket Forest) were known as the 'Freedom Lands' of Aberdeen. In 1551, Aberdeen applied to Mary Queen of Scots for the right to let these lands, and they became privately managed. Many of the estates established at this time are still part of today's landscape, including Countesswells, Forresterhill, Hazlehead and Kingswells.
- 3.47 In medieval times it was customary to ride around the boundaries (Marches) of the burgh in order to ensure that its boundaries were being observed, and that adjacent landowners had not encroached its lands. To aid this process, a series of stones were placed around the boundaries. From 1790 the older stones were replaced with a series of lettered and numbered stones. They are inscribed ABD for Aberdeen, and a numeral from 1-65. They are still in situ, and Aberdeen City Council has produced a March Stones Trail leaflet. Many of the March Stones are designated as Listed.
- 3.48 Due to the need for timber for construction as well as the need for farmland, the native forests around the town were gradually cut back, and from the twelfth century onwards much of the area was converted to pasture or open heath. Only two fragmented areas of woodland, at Stocket and Nigg, remained up to mediaeval times as royal hunting forests.
- 3.49 To the west and north of the burgh, the cleared croftlands provided a proportion of the grains and cereals milled at the town's mills and also some of the root crops consumed by the burgh's population. The area of cultivated fields continued right up to the edge of the town and small remnants of the medieval rig-and-furrow and some field boundaries have survived (for example around Broomfold and on the lower eastern slopes of Brimmond Hill). The cleared fields produced barley, oats, and root crops, or provided pasture for livestock. The fields are likely to have been farmed communally, with strips of land within each field allocated to individuals. Beyond this area were moors and marshes through which very poor roads passed. Moors, marshes, heaths and some woodlands would generally have been common land, where villagers would have had common rights (for example grazing animals, cutting peat, collecting wood for fuel, and gathering bracken for animal bedding). Fishing rights on the Dee and Don were highly prized and tended to be monopolised by the burgh oligarchy which passed them on

from generation to generation. Similarly, the right to collect shellfish from the shores was restricted by the council.

- 3.50 Over several centuries, from the medieval period onwards, the communal fields were broken up and common land was enclosed, often in an ad-hoc manner. They were gradually replaced by groups of fields with an associated farmhouse, owned by individual farmers. These 'rectilinear fields and farms' are shown on the Historic Landuse Assessment database (see Figure 10 on page 35) and cover the majority of the rural land within the Study Area. They have a range of origins from small crofting parcels of land to ever-larger field systems resulting from agricultural improvement measures from the 18th century up to the present day. The fields are generally rectilinear in shape, but vary in size, orientation and regularity. They may be surrounded by stone dykes, ditches, fences or very occasionally hedgerows.
- 3.51 Aberdeen acted as a market for the surrounding rural areas with produce sold and exchanged around the fish and flesh crosses in the Castlegate close to the Burgh Tolbooth. The hinterland also provided the raw materials for the export trade: wool, hides, skins, tallow and salmon made up the bulk of cargoes sent to ports in present day Belgium and the Netherlands. Manufactured goods and luxury items formed the main imports with wines, spices, clothing and precious metals reaching the burgh alongside the more mundane, but necessary, timber, grain, wax and iron.
- 3.52 Aberdeen today comprises an amalgamation of several once distinct and separate communities which developed around the periphery of the medieval burgh. The fishing village of Fittie, the burgh of Torry, Ferryhill district and the weaving village of Gilcomston were only incorporated within Aberdeen in the nineteenth century. Traces of field systems outwith the bounds of the present urban area point to the presence of small farming communities which developed at some distance from the medieval town but which now form part of the modern conurbation, for example Bankhead, Bucksburn, Kinsgwells and Dyce.
- 3.53 Effective interaction with a wider hinterland (which stretched beyond present day Inverurie to the north, and south to Montrose) assumes that a certain level of sophistication existed in terms of communication, transport, and travel networks in the late medieval period. Sea transport formed one of the quickest and most effective ways of moving goods and people from place to place although rough roads also connected Aberdeen to the inland burghs, for example Kintore, Inverurie and Huntly. The Bridge of Dee dates from 1527, at the northern end of the Causey Mounth, a drovers' road between Aberdeen and Stonehaven. The Don Valley Canal was constructed at the start of the nineteenth century to link the Inverurie/Port Elphinstone area to the northwest with the city, mainly for the marketing of agricultural produce. With the Turnpike Road Act of 1795 a programme of widening and improving the existing road network in the County was instigated, linking Aberdeen with a country-wide system of highways.

Late eighteenth century onwards

- 3.54 Within Aberdeen in the late 18th century, several new streets were constructed which dramatically changed the appearance of the town. St Katharine's Hill, a major landmark, was flattened to aid the construction of Union Street. King Street provided easy access from the Castlegate to the new Don Bridge (opened in 1830) and the laying out of George Street, St Nicholas Street and Rosemount Viaduct opened up access to the city centre. These developments, together with the construction of Victoria Bridge over the River Dee, opened the way for the outward expansion of the town, especially to the

west and south. Along the coastal strip the Links were flattened and reduced in size to make way for additional housing.

- 3.55 Aberdeen harbour, which had proved adequate to cope with the demands of medieval shipping despite the constantly changing character of its shallow basin, was continually re-shaped throughout the 19th century. The North Pier was built in 1815, followed by the construction of Trinity, Waterloo and Regent Quays in 1829; the building of several wet docks; and the diversion of the channel of the River Dee to its present course immediately to the south of the harbour in 1874. From 1839, Aberdeen Clipper ships, operating out of the improved facilities, dominated the China Tea Trade. Aberdeen was also particularly attractive for new factory production of textiles and paper, given the presence of its two rivers which could be harnessed for water power. The Don, with a steep gradient between Dyce and the sea, was especially suited and a series of mills was built along its banks.
- 3.56 Around the city, a number of estates, with their distinctive buildings, designed grounds and policy woodlands, influenced the character of the rural landscape, and continue to do so. The estate houses varied in size and grandeur but were usually set in a parkland landscape of trees and grassland, often with avenues and other ornamental features. Away from the main house, the estates contained areas of managed woodland/ plantation, and farmland. Estate farms and cottages often have distinctive designs which contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the rural landscape. Most of the large houses and some of the smaller estate buildings are now Listed Buildings. Their ornamental grounds are recorded as 'designed landscape' on the Historic Landuse Assessment (see Figure 10 on page 35).
- 3.57 In the mid-19th century, some of the stoniest land was cleared by landowners in a series of planned enclosures to create the 'planned rectilinear fields and farms' described in the Historic Landuse Assessment. The stones cleared from the fields were incorporated into field walls (often several metres wide) known as consumption dykes. These consumption dykes (named because of the way they consumed the stones from the fields) are a distinctive feature of the landscape around Aberdeen, and are visible in several locations within the Study Area. There are particularly good surviving examples of consumption dykes around Kingswells, with some designated as Scheduled Monuments.



Consumption Dyke on Tullos Hill



Urban expansion of Aberdeen

- 3.58 In 1850 the railway reached Aberdeen with the first station built at Ferryhill, prior to the construction of the Ferryhill Viaduct which made it possible to re-locate the main station at Guild Street. This sparked additional housing and industrial development along the course of the Dee, with the Victoria Bridge opening in 1881. Soon Aberdeen was at the centre of a comprehensive rail network which radiated out in all directions from the city and provided links between small communities in the north and west of

the city. More recently, the development of the airport at Dyce has widened links with other parts of the country while the only railway routes to have survived the cuts of the 1960s are those to Dundee and the south, and north-west to Inverness. There has been rapid building and expansion of the city during this century, which required extension to its administrative boundaries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the administrative area of Aberdeen City was around 27 square kilometres in area; in 1950 it was 47 square kilometres; and from 1970 it has been approximately 186 square kilometres.

3.59 During the late 20th century, the discovery of North Sea oil changed the city. The oil boom brought unprecedented wealth to the area and Aberdeen became known as the ‘Oil Capital of Europe’. Today, Aberdeen Harbour is one of the UK’s busiest ports. A world leading marine support centre, it is the principal port for the energy sector in Western Europe and serves a number of industries as the main commercial port in the North-East of Scotland.

3.60 As a consequence of the economic growth from the oil and gas industry, there has been significant demand in recent times for additional housing, land for business and industrial expansion, and other related infrastructure such as roads and port development. The forces for change currently affecting the Aberdeen landscape are discussed in more detail in section 7.

Indicative development of the city

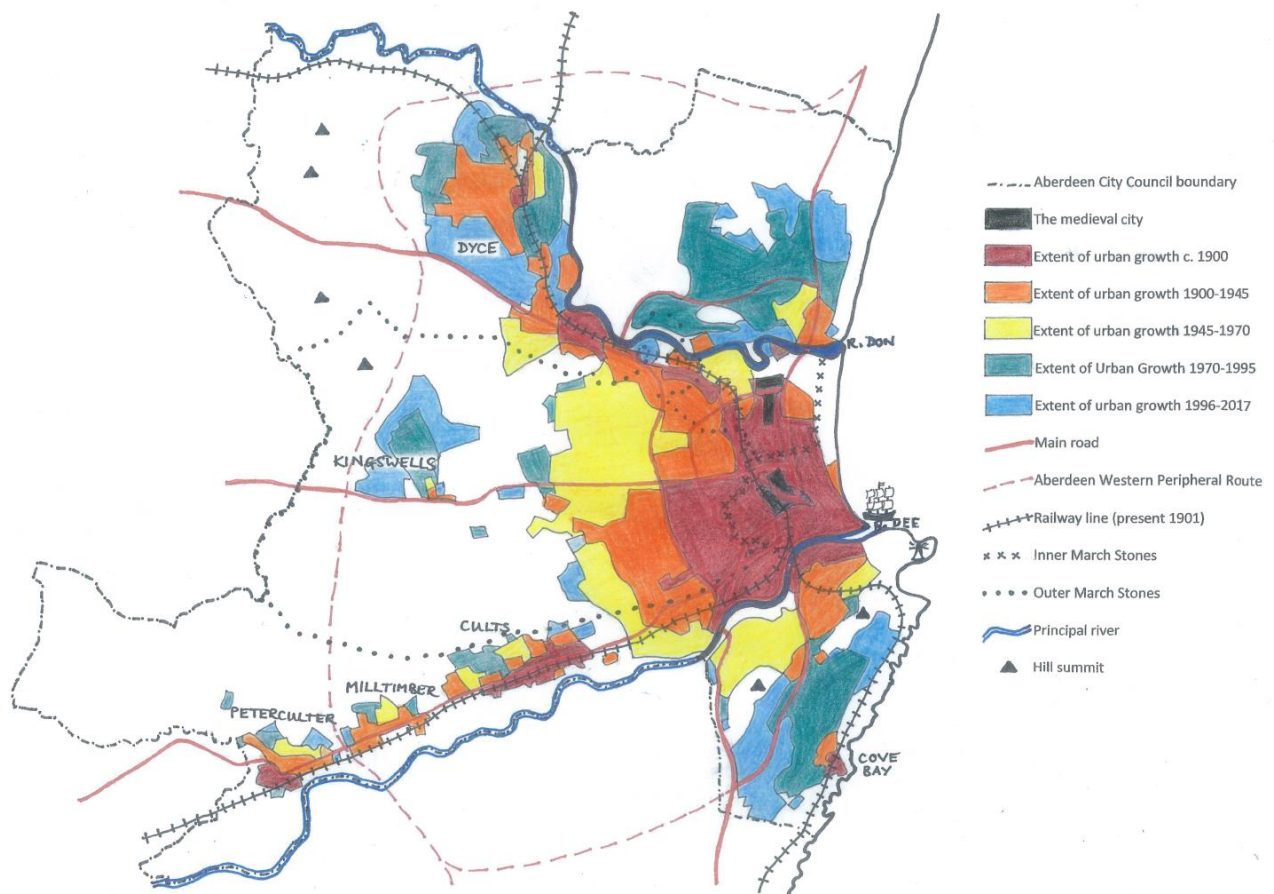
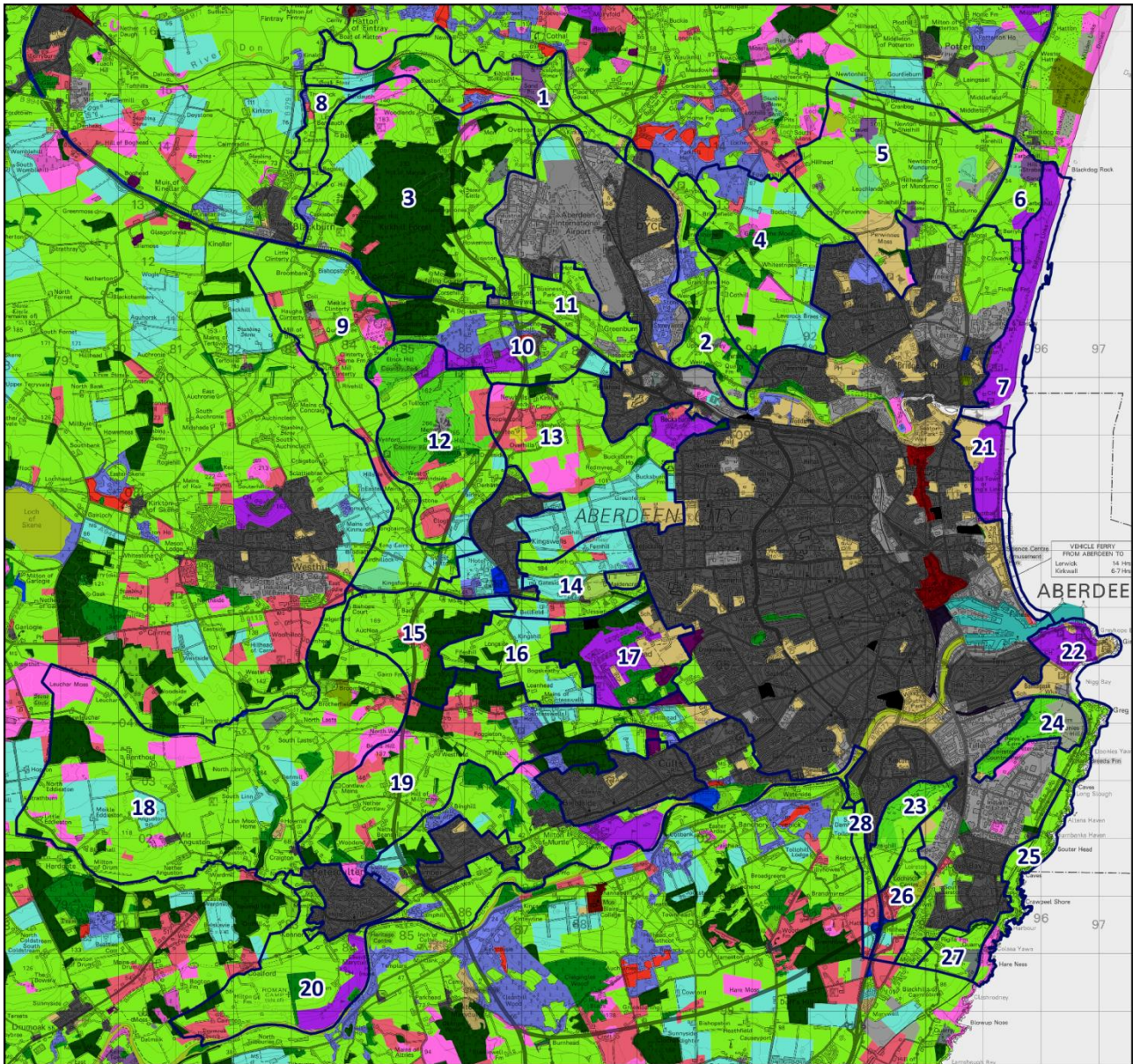


Figure 9. Indicative development of the city

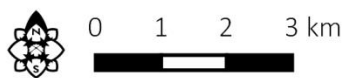
Historic Landuse Assessment



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

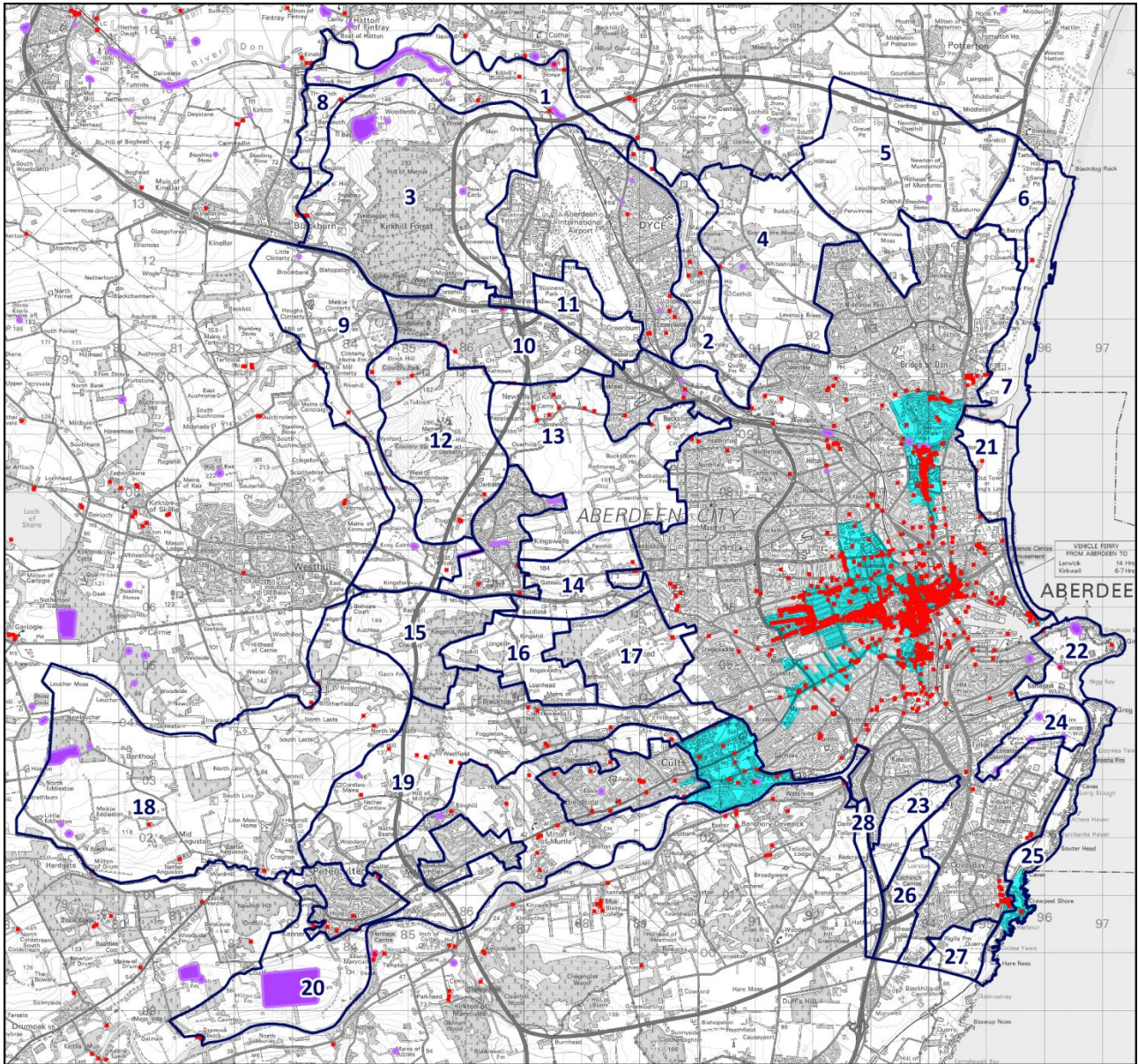
Figure 10. Historic Landuse Assessment



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Airfield | Military Site |
| Cemetery | Monastery or Cathedral |
| Country Park | Motorway |
| Cultivated Former Parkland | Opencast Site |
| Designed Landscape | Planned Rectilinear Fields and Farms |
| Freshwater Area | Plantation |
| Golf Course | Quarry |
| Holdings | Railway Features |
| Industrial or Commercial Area | Recreation Area |
| Industrial Planned Village | Rectilinear Fields and Farms |
| Industrial-scale Farming Unit | Reservoir |
| Landfill Site | Restored Agricultural Land |
| Managed Woodland | Rough Grazing |
| Maritime Installation | Smallholdings |
| Medieval Town | Urban Area |
| Medieval/Post-medieval Curvilinear-shaped | Landscape Character Area 1 - 28 |
| Medieval/Post-medieval Reverse-S-shaped | |

Cultural designations



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 11. Cultural designations



- Landscape Character Area 1 - 28
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed Building
- Conservation Area

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

4. Visual analysis

Approach

- 4.1 The purpose of the visual analysis is to assess how the surrounding landscape functions as a setting for the city. This includes an assessment of:
- the visual characteristics, perception and appearance of the city as a whole, and how it relates to the landscape that surrounds it;
 - key landmarks within and around the city focusing on features that are either prominent and/or easily recognisable; and
 - the indicative extent of visibility of areas across the city from major road, rail and ferry route vantage points.



View of Aberdeen from Tullos Hill

- 4.2 The perception of the city is particularly important from the main approaches to Aberdeen by land and sea - the gateways to the city. As part of this, prominent landmarks and key views are important factors in assessing the relationship between the city and its surroundings.
- 4.3 The degree of visibility of areas around the city also affects their sensitivity to change. In assessing this, the landscape character descriptions (see *Section 6*) provide an overview of visibility to and from each Landscape Character Area.
- 4.4 At a strategic level, this chapter considers the key visual characteristics of the study area, focusing on perceptions of the city and its notable landmarks and features. The *Visual analysis* (see Figure 12 on page 42) has been updated from the 1996 landscape character assessment to reflect any changes in

visibility as result of recent built development and the potential visibility from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Other vantage points include major roads and rail lines across the city, and ferry routes out of the harbour.

Perception of the city

- 4.5 Situated between hills and coast, Aberdeen benefits from a distinctive landscape setting although this can be appreciated from only a relatively few viewpoints. Topography plays a critical role in providing views across the city; the surrounding hills are important locations to experience its extent and context. Hills where long range panoramic views can be experienced include Tullos and Kincorth to the south, and Brimmond and Tyrebagger to the west. Sections of the A96 near Tyrebagger Hill, the A90 near Kincorth Hill and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route at Brimmond Hill also provide views across parts of the city and its setting.
- 4.6 The main river valleys of the Dee and Don are distinctive landscape features of the city although the main roads that pass along them do not generally provide important views. In contrast, the A90 from the north provides a strong sense of the city's coastal location although the surrounding hills are less significant. Arriving from the A90 from the south and the A96 from the north-west provide gateway perspectives, as the expanse of the city is suddenly revealed. Roads that do not allow an appreciation of the city and its hinterland can still provide a "sense of arrival", particularly if there is a clear distinction between city and country, or if particular landmarks can be seen. For example, the B9119 enters the city through a distinctive beech avenue near a Victorian hospital tower. Along its wooded approaches, the impact of the different seasons on the appearance of the city and its surroundings can be particularly dramatic. On leaving the city, the A96 to the south of Tyrebagger Hill and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to its north provide important views of the rural hinterland. The perception of leafy, historical settlements across Deeside is also experienced from A93 to the west of the city.



Looking north-west across the Don Valley from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

4.7 The bridges across the rivers Dee and Don are probably the most evocative gateways to Aberdeen, particularly the view of the Bridge of Dee from the A90. The railway from the south also crosses the River Dee, where the sudden change from its coastal route into the built-up area at Balnagask is a distinctive part of this approach to the city. The north-western approach by rail via the River Don valley generally follows the river alignment, has a rural character until Dyce is reached where the experience is dominated by the urban area of the city.



Bridge of Dee



Bridge of Don

4.8 The approach by air reveals the relatively small scale of the city in its rural surroundings and emphasises its coastal setting, and network of green spaces. The views from taxiing aircraft of the nearby farmed and wooded slopes are a distinctive aspect. The pattern of expansion and connection with outer settlements and major routes can be seen to relate to the river valleys, and avoidance of hills, wet ground, steeper slopes and exposed coastlines. The varying pattern of forests, woodlands, moorlands and fields can be fully appreciated from the air. The dramatic differences between the hard and soft coast can be seen at a glance, and in the context of the wider Aberdeenshire landscape and North Sea seascapes.



Contrasting pattern of industrial development and woodland



River Don floodplain

4.9 On arriving by ferry, the distinctive horizontal extent of the city's skyline is an important feature. Landmark buildings include several church spires, Ocean View, Castle Hill, Hutcheon Court, Seamount Court, Sir Duncan Rice Library, Union Plaza and Union Square. Further north, Seaton high rise flats are prominent in view and to the north of the Don, the Aberdeen Exhibition Conference Centre tower and nearby wind turbine and test drilling rig are located above a foreground of open beach and dunes. The Marine Operations Centre is a distinctive feature at the mouth of the harbour and further south, the Girdle Ness Lighthouse is prominent in view on an exposed headland. Tullos Hill, Kincorth Hill and the

north facing wooded slopes of the upper Dee Valley form a rising backdrop to the southern part of the city. On entrance to the busy harbour, its contained nature contrasts with the open sea.



The distinctive city skyline as seen from the sea

Landmarks (see Figure 13 on page 44)

- 4.9 City landmarks can be roughly categorised as topographical, archaeological or historical, and prominent modern buildings or structures. Of the topographical features, the hills which most commonly occur in views from within the city are Brimmond Hill, Tyrebagger Hill, and Elrick Hill to the west, and Tullos and Kincorth hills to the south. The valleys of the Don and Dee are also topographical features, generally prominent in views from their crossing points, particularly the Bridge of Don, Brig o' Dee, Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route; transport routes that follow them; and some areas of high ground such as Brimmed Hill or adjacent valley sides. The coastline is the other major topographic feature that makes the city's surroundings distinctive, but the presence of the city limits distant views to it, except from high points or coastal routes.
- 4.10 Historical and archaeological features tend to be less obvious although they are set in a very evocative landscape. The consumption dykes west of the city are distinctive but cannot be seen from afar. Similarly, the burial cairns on Tullos and Kincorth hills are not particularly prominent. More noticeable historic structures are the cluster of towers and spires (e.g. Tolbooth, the Citadel, and Marischal College) that indicates the location of the city centre, and the Girdle Ness lighthouse at the entrance of the harbour. The granite tower of Woodend Hospital is a feature in western approaches to the city. The dock area seen on the approach to the city centre presents a powerful scene. There are frequent shipping movements in and out of the nearby harbour entrance and the coastal waters are sometimes used for anchorage for up to approximately thirty ships associated with the oil industry.



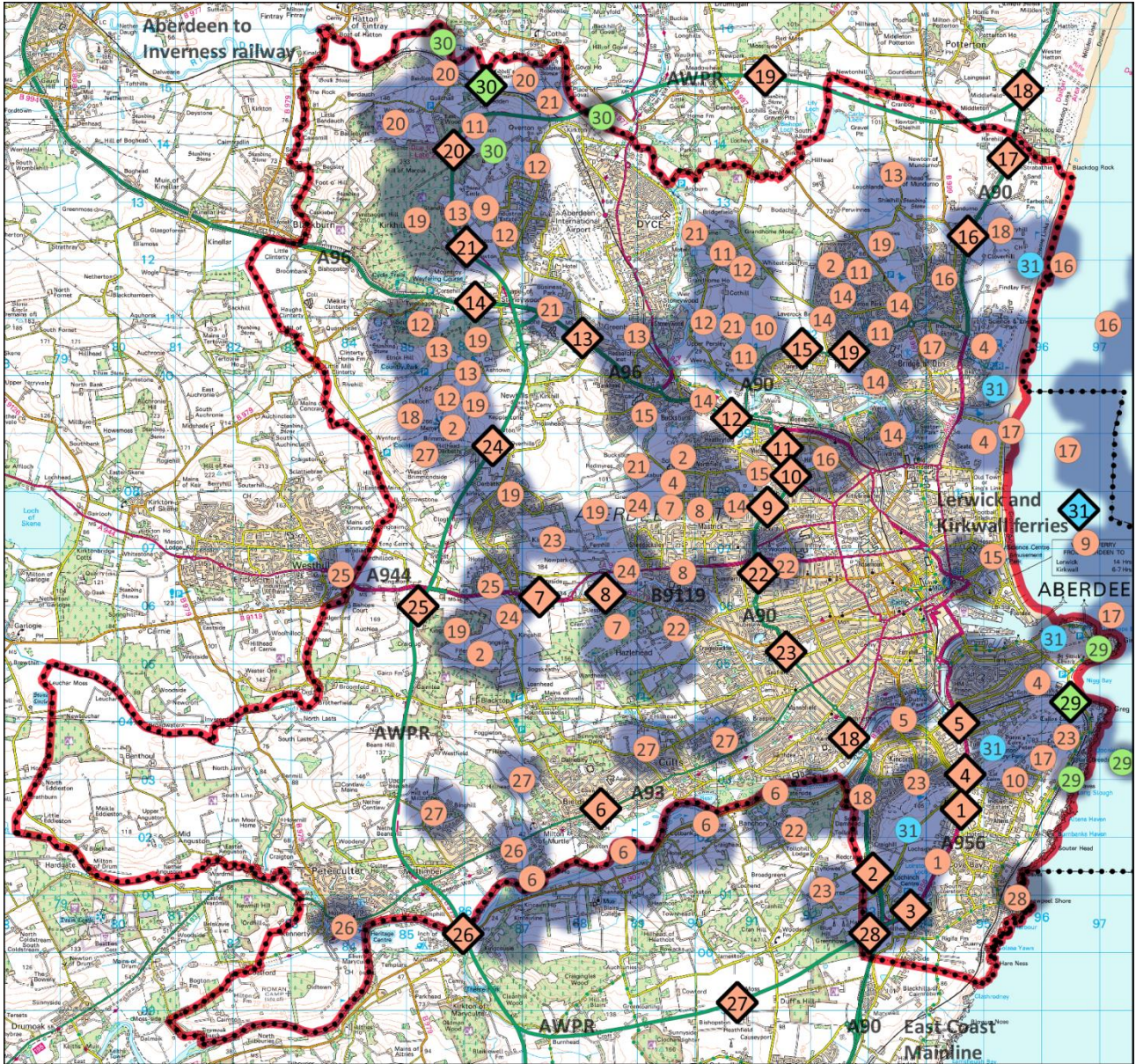
Girdle Ness Lighthouse from the Bay of Nigg



Seaton high-rise flats from the Esplanade

- 4.11 Prominent modern buildings and structures are amongst the more noticeable city landmarks. For example, clusters of high rise buildings that were constructed during the 1960's and 1970's create skyline features which can be seen from many viewpoints. Those at Seaton and Northfield are particularly prominent. Telecommunications structures also tend to be highly visible, for example the Northfield transmitter, the masts on Brimmond Hill, and the radar system at Perwinnes. A temporary feature in views in the north of the city is the test drilling rig near the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre Tower and the nearby wind turbine. Oil-related development has resulted in several large-scale buildings which can be locally prominent, for example the large offices on rising ground to the south of the city and business parks in outlying areas at Prime Four and Dyce.
- 4.12 Modern developments, often on the edge of the city and sometimes visually prominent from key viewpoints and main approaches, tend to have a greater variety of colours and materials. Examples include red or orange roofs in residential areas, and reflective materials in larger-scale commercial developments. This is in contrast to the traditional prevalence of grey granite and slate roofs which is strongly associated with the city. Recent large-scale introductions to the city's skyline include the buildings of the Sir Duncan Rice Library, Union Plaza, Ocean View and the Robert Gordon University Library. These are often prominent from a distance, particularly from areas of higher ground, and in contrast to the typical granite buildings across the city, tend to have varying coloured designs or glazed facades.

Visual analysis









Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 12. Visual analysis

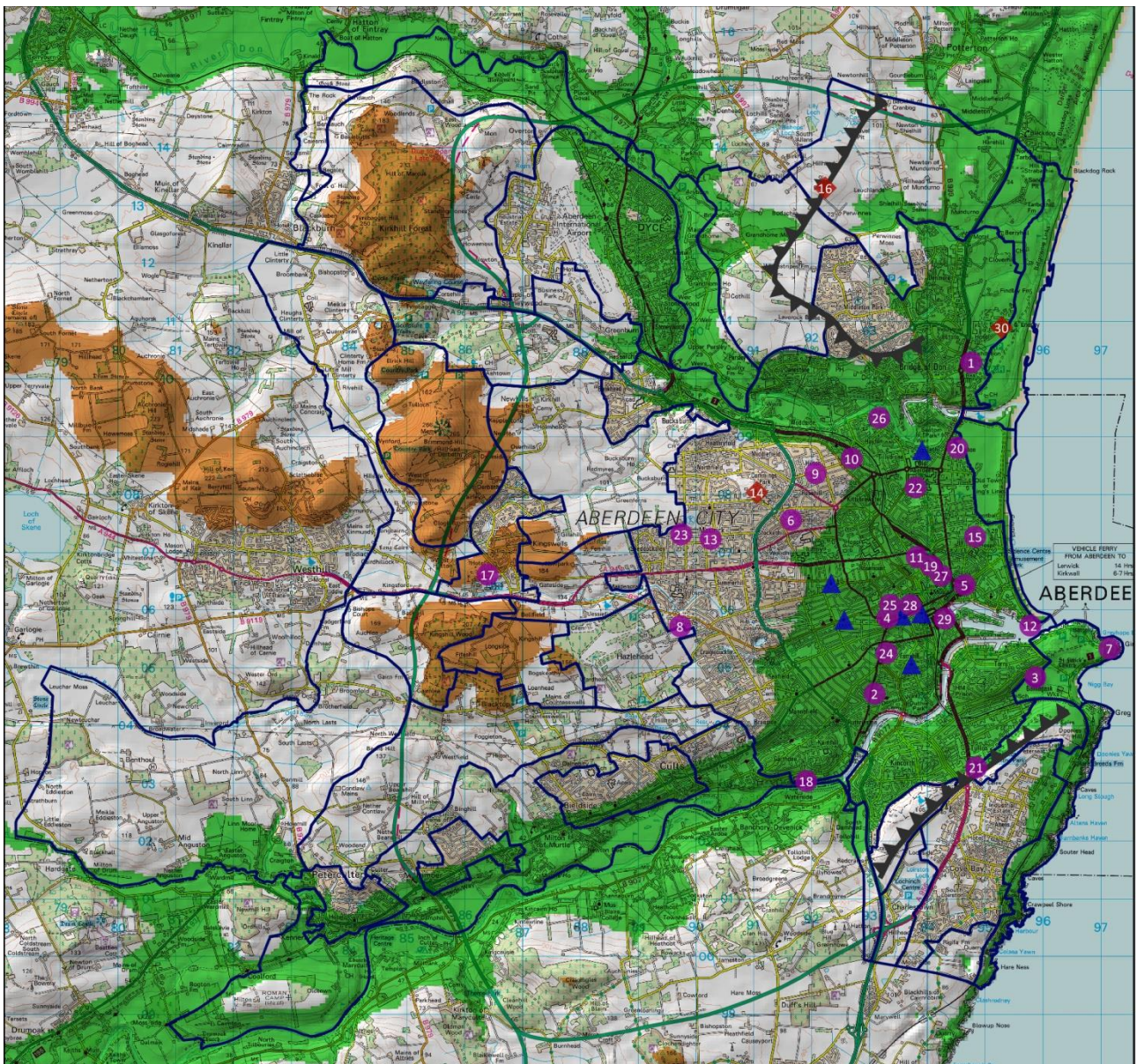


Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Study area
-  Major road viewpoint
-  Ferry route viewpoint
-  Railway viewpoint
-  Indicative visible area (Numbers refer to the viewpoints from which the area is seen)

NB. the shading does not reflect the total visible area available from any viewpoint, but generally indicates a prominent feature or approximate location.

Landscape features and elements



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 13. Landscape features and elements



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401. Ordnance Survey Terrain 50.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 AECC Tower | □ Landscape Character Area |
| 2 Balmoral Court | ▲ Church spire |
| 3 Balnagask | ● Multi-storey building |
| 4 Capitol Silver Fin | ◆ Other landmark |
| 5 Castle Hill | ■ Elevation over 150m |
| 6 Cornhill | ■ Elevation under 60m |
| 7 Girdleness Lighthouse | ▼ Skyline Plateaux |
| 8 Hazelhead | |
| 9 Hilton | |
| 10 Clifton Court | |
| 11 Hutcheon Court | |
| 12 Marine Operations Centre | |
| 13 Mastrick | |
| 14 Northfield Transmitting Mast | |
| 15 Ocean View | |
| 16 Perwinnes Tracking Station | |
| 17 Prime Four - De Vere Hotel | 24 Talisman Building |
| 18 RGU Library | 25 Thistle Court |
| 19 Seamont Court | 26 Tillydrone |
| 20 Seaton | 27 Town House/ Marischal College |
| 21 Shell headquarters | 28 Union Plaza |
| 22 Sir Duncan Rice Library | 29 Union Square - Jury's Inn |
| 23 Springhill | 30 Wind Turbine/ Test Drilling Rig |

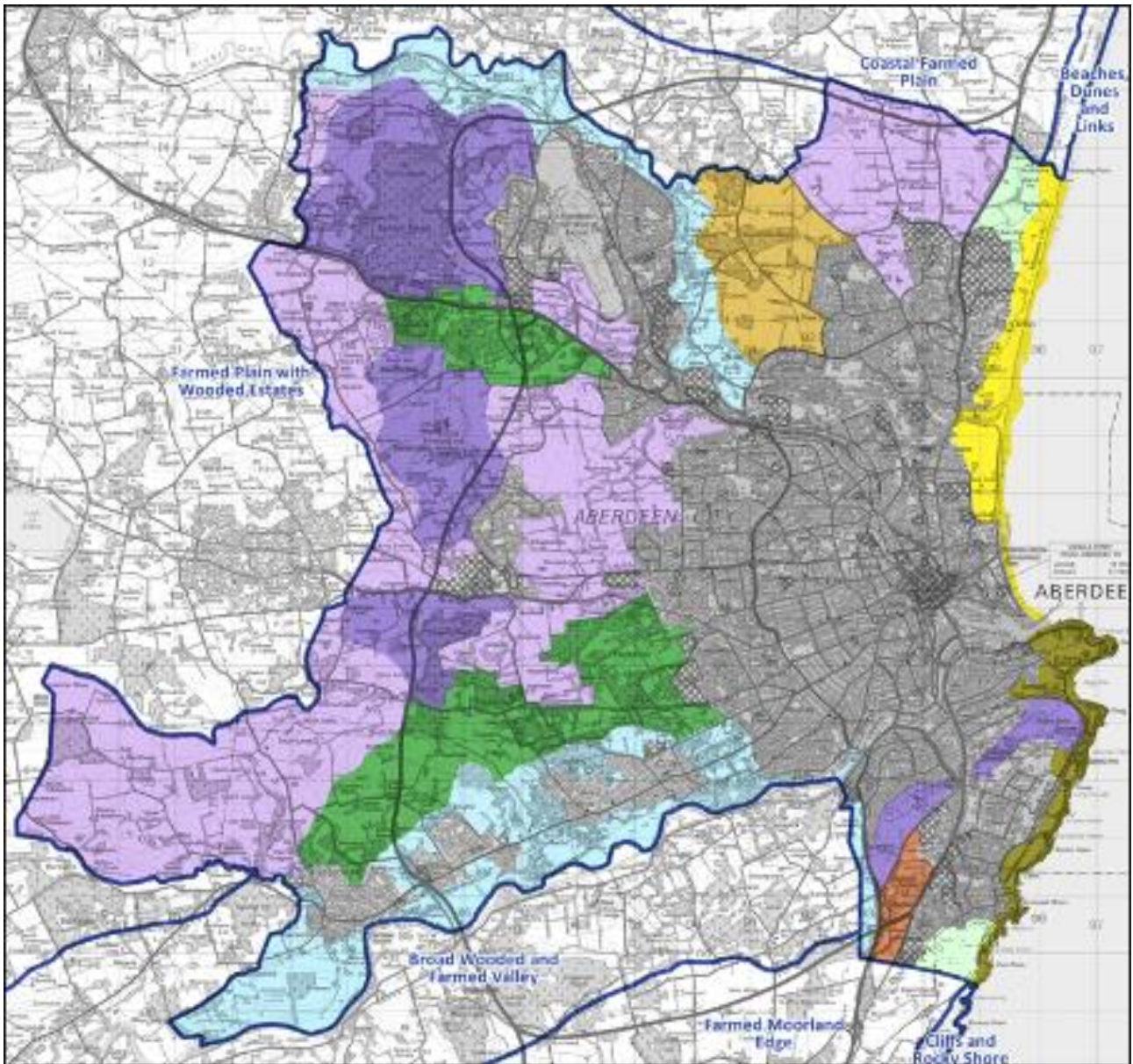
5. Landscape Character Types

Overview of Landscape Character Types

- 5.1 As illustrated in Figure 14 (see page 46), nine Landscape Character Types have been identified across Aberdeen City. These are generic and share some similar characteristics wherever they recur. Twenty-eight smaller and locally specific Landscape Character Areas are identified within these Landscape Character Types and these are described in section 6 of this report.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
Beaches, Dunes and Links	Murcar & Balgownie Links (LCA 7)
	King's Links (LCA 21)
Cliffs and Rocky Coast	Girdle Ness (LCA 22)
	Souter Coast (LCA 25)
Coastal Farmed Plain	Murcar Plain (LCA 6)
	Findon Plain (LCA 27)
Low Hills	Tyrebagger Hill (LCA 3)
	Brimmond Hill (LCA 12)
	Kingshill (LCA 15)
	Kincorth Hill (LCA 23)
	Tullos Hill (LCA 24)
River Valley	Upper Don Valley (LCA 1)
	Lower Don Valley (LCA 2)
	Dee Valley (LCA 20)
	Upper Deeside Slopes (LCA 28)
Undulating Open Farmland	Mundurno (LCA 5)
	Blackburn (LCA 8)
	West Brimmond (LCA 9)
	Greenburn (LCA 11)
	Bucks Burn (LCA 13)
	Den Burn (LCA 14)
	Bogskeathy (LCA 16)
Leuchar & Silver Burns (LCA 18)	
Undulating Wooded Farmland	Brae of Don (LCA 4)
Urban and Farmland	Loirston (LCA 26)
Wooded Estates	Craibstone (LCA 10)
	Hazelhead Park (LCA 17)
	Countesswells (LCA 19)

Landscape Character Types



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Figure 14. Landscape Character Types



-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
 -  Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Types
- Shown as text labels**

Landscape Character Type

-  Beaches, Dunes and Links
-  Cliffs and Rocky Shore
-  Coastal Farmed Plain
-  Farmed Moorland Edge
-  Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Undulating Wooded Farmland
-  Urban
-  Wooded Estatelands

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

- 5.2 The Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken at a detailed scale of 1:25,000. Landscape character has been defined on a broader scale of 1:50,000 across the surrounding Aberdeenshire area with Landscape Character Types only being classified by Scottish Natural Heritage at a national level. Where the generally broader Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Types about the Aberdeen City area, they therefore do not often accord with the finer grain landscape character classification undertaken for the city. However, despite this, many similar key characteristics extend outwards from the city into adjacent Landscape Character Types within Aberdeenshire.
- 5.3 The following descriptions of each of the Landscape Character Types defined within Aberdeen provides some wider context in terms of the relationship with surrounding landscapes in Aberdeenshire, indicating where similar characteristics extend beyond the city's boundaries. Detailed maps of each of Landscape Character Type and the associated Landscape Character Area are provided in section 6.

Beaches, Dunes and Links

Location and context

- 5.4 The *Beaches, Dunes and Links* Landscape Character Type extends north from the mouth of the Dee and beyond the northern boundary of the city to near Collieston in Aberdeenshire. Another area of this same Landscape Character Type also occurs to the south of St Cyrus in Aberdeenshire. Two locally specific Landscape Character Areas are defined within this Landscape Character Type within Aberdeen at *King's Links* (LCA 7) and *Murcar/Balgownie Links* (LCA 21).

Key characteristics

1. A strong horizontal emphasis and great sense of openness.
 2. Long, gently curving sandy beaches are a consistent feature with dunes and grassy links backing the beach in the north.
 3. Gently undulating links north of the Don estuary form a golf course.
 4. Links are more modified, forming municipal grassland and sports facilities south of the Don.
 5. Little settlement apart from the village of Footdee and occasional golf club buildings although the urban edge lies close to the coast in the south.
 6. Intensively used beaches, esplanade and road close to the urban core of Aberdeen in the south although the coast is less frequented north of the Don estuary.
 7. Extensive open views along beaches and out to sea contrast with the urban hinterland.
 8. A dynamic landscape where natural coastal processes change the appearance of dunes and beaches.
 9. A distinct sense of naturalness and tranquillity is associated with the northern section of coast.
- 5.5 Shaped by superficial blown sands over igneous and metamorphic bedrock, long sandy and subtly curving beaches are a consistent feature of this character type. While complex interlocking dunes back the beach north of the Don estuary, modification of the coastal edge has resulted in a more uniform grassy bank or concrete storm walling against the beach in the southern area close to the centre of the

city. Links areas are also more undulating in the north compared with the flatter, low-lying municipal grasslands of King's Links in the south.

- 5.6 The southern boundary of this character type is formed by the Dee estuary and the prominent rocky headland of Girdle Ness marks the start of the *Cliffs and Rocky Coast* Landscape Character Type. The mouth of the River Don divides the two character areas within this character type. The natural character of irregular sandbanks and marshy and scrubby edges of the Don estuary contrasts with the angular channels and docks at the mouth of the Dee at Aberdeen harbour. Other smaller water courses wind their way through the northern dunes, fanning out into braided rivulets across the beach where they reach the sea.
- 5.7 The grassy links which lie in the lee of dunes are managed as golf courses or, closer to the city, public recreational areas. Floristically rich grassland colonises dunes and links in the north while grassland closer to dense areas of high-rise housing close to the city centre in the south is more intensively managed. This is a landscape which is largely devoid of woodland with the exception of areas of young planting on King's Links and close to the Don valley. Occasional wind-swept solitary trees on the northern links areas stand out against huge skies.
- 5.8 There is little settlement apart from the hunkered-down village of Footdee and occasional golf club buildings which form conspicuous features on open links areas backing the dunes. This character type has been modified in part within the urban centre of Aberdeen in the area of King's Links to include coastal defences against erosion, a broad promenade and a busy road. Harbour and commercial development form the immediate hinterland in the south although the urban edge is less conspicuous in the north where undulating links are broader and partially screen low density housing.
- 5.9 This coastline has a distinctly natural and more secluded character north of the River Don where it is less accessible. The dynamic power of the sea is also more evident in this part of the coast as the appearance of dunes, water courses and beaches changes with tides and storms. A strong sense of expansiveness and light is, however, experienced across all of this character type due to the openness of views across the North Sea.

Cliffs and Rocky Coast

Location and wider context

- 5.10 This character type occurs to the south of the Dee estuary and extends beyond the city's southern boundary to Inverbervie within Aberdeenshire. It is also found on the north coast of Aberdeenshire from the boundary with Moray to Fraserburgh and along the North Sea coast from Peterhead to Collieston. Two Landscape Character Areas are defined within this Landscape Character Type within Aberdeen at *Girdle Ness* (LCA 22) and *Souter Coast* (LCA 25).

Key characteristics

1. Steep rugged slopes and cliffs cut by narrow inlets and with fissured headlands and occasional small coves.
2. Grazed fields extend close to the top of cliffs while semi-natural coastal grassland covers rocky headlands.
3. Business and industrial buildings, a quarry and a landfill site form the urban edge abutting this coast.

4. A narrow road and the East Coast Mainline railway are aligned tight against this coast.
 5. A long cultural heritage associated with the fishing industry.
 6. The battery and lighthouse on the headland of Girdle Ness form landmark features seen from the city.
 7. Dramatic sea views from cliff-top paths and the railway.
 8. Rugged cliffs and exposure to the elements instil a sense of wildness unusual in a city.
- 5.11 The steep rugged slopes, sheer cliffs and predominantly rocky shorelines of this landscape are formed of metamorphic bedrock. The cliffs are cut by narrow inlets, interspersed with fissured headlands and occasional small rocky coves which accommodate shingle beaches. The rocky headland of Girdle Ness is prominent at the southern edge of the Dee estuary and Aberdeen Harbour.
- 5.12 Grazed fields extend close to the top of cliffs in the south, generally leaving only a very narrow fringe of rough grassland although occasional more extensive areas of coastal grassland cover more undulating, rocky headlands. A narrow road and the East Coast Mainline railway are aligned close to the southern part of this coastline. A small farmstead and a few isolated dwellings are present on the edge of fields against the road and business and industrial buildings, a quarry and a landfill site form the urban edge abutting this coast.
- 5.13 There is a long cultural heritage associated with the fishing industry and this is evident in the small harbour and traditional fishing village at Cove Bay. A battery and lighthouse are located on the headland of Girdle Ness and form landmark features seen from the city.
- 5.14 Dramatic views occur along the coast and are particularly extensive and exhilarating out to sea from coastal footpaths aligned on the top of the cliffs. Views from the East Coast railway over this fragmented coastline provide an intriguing and distinctive approach to the city. Rugged cliffs and exposure to the elements can instil a sense of wildness unusual in a city, this heightened by wheeling birds, vertiginous rock faces and waves pounding within narrow inlets.

Coastal Farmed Plain

Location and wider context

- 5.15 The *Coastal Farmed Plain* provides the immediate hinterland to the *Beaches, Dunes and Links* in the north and south of the city. This Landscape Character Type extends northwards from the city boundary into Aberdeenshire to near Fraserburgh where it forms a considerably more expansive swath of open and low-lying farmland, forestry and remnant moss abutting the east coast. Although the landscape is more undulating further inland from the coast, it retains a characteristic simple and open character with little woodland, a relatively weak field enclosure pattern and extensive views to the sea. Mineral extraction and landfill sites are more evident closer to the coast and to Aberdeen. Two Landscape Character Areas, the *Murcar Plain* (6) and *Findon Plain* (LCA 27), are defined within this type in Aberdeen.

Key characteristics

1. A low-lying plain which gradually falls toward the coast but becomes more undulating in the west as it merges with the *Undulating Open Farmland* Landscape Character Type.
2. An open character emphasised by low relief, scarcity of woodland and a coastal aspect.

3. Land use is principally improved grassland with some arable fields.
 4. Semi-natural habitats limited to pockets of rough grass edging fields and ditches and clumps of gorse.
 5. Woodland is sparse and limited to small clumps of trees sheltering stone farm buildings.
 6. A restored landfill site is located close to the Aberdeenshire boundary.
 7. Older dispersed stone farmsteads and cottages contrast with larger business park buildings and dense housing on the edge of Aberdeen.
 8. This landscape lies close to the A90 which forms the main approach to Aberdeen from the north.
 9. The gently eastward falling relief allows long views across this landscape to the sea.
- 5.16 Shaped by superficial till above igneous and metamorphic bedrock, this landscape comprises an extensive and open sweep of low-lying, very gently undulating farmland which rises gradually to the west away from the coastal edge. Landform becomes more complex to the east where this character type merges gradually with the grassy links of the Murcar Golf Course and the pale, coarse-textured grassland of the dunes within the adjacent *Beaches, Dunes and Links* Landscape Character Type. The landform is also more undulating and elevated to the west of the A90 at the transition with the *Undulating Open Farmland* Landscape Character Type.
- 5.17 Small burns cross this plain but are generally inconspicuous with the exception of the more deeply incised Blackdog Burn which forms the city boundary to the north. Land use is principally improved grassland with some arable fields. Small clumps of trees shelter stone farm buildings with semi-natural habitats limited to pockets of rough grass and clumps of gorse edging fields and ditches. The open character of the landscape is emphasised by the low relief, scarcity of woodland and the subtle delineation of farmland by fences, scrubby gorse boundaries and occasional low broken stone dykes. A restored landfill site at Tarbothill close to the Aberdeenshire boundary is obvious in its higher form and more engineered profile.
- 5.18 Compact stone farmsteads form focal point features in this simple, open landscape and these contrast with larger buildings within the business parks and the denser pattern of newly constructed housing estates which are highly visible on the edge of Aberdeen.
- 5.19 This landscape is bounded by the busy A90 in the west which forms the main approach to Aberdeen from the north. The openness of this low-lying coastal plain allows long views to the sea from this road. The proximity of the A90 and highly visible business park development inhibits any sense of tranquillity.

River Valley

Location and context

- 5.20 The Rivers Dee and Don both lie in well-defined granite valleys within Aberdeen and are key features of the city. These rivers form the boundaries of the city with the southern valley side of the Dee and the northern side of the upper Don valley lying in Aberdeenshire. Both the Don and Dee are classified as the *River Valley* Landscape Character Type within the Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment. The Dee valley continues as a pronounced incised feature upstream and is accordingly defined as a separate Landscape Character Type, the *Broad Wooded and Farmed Valley*, in Aberdeenshire. The southern valley side of the Dee which lies in Aberdeenshire is also classified as this broader character type. The northern

side of the Don valley, which lies in Aberdeenshire, is classified as the *Narrow Winding Farmed Valley* at the national scale. The Don valley is less defined as it flows across a broad farmed plain to the west of the city boundary and is thus incorporated into the *Wooded Estates* Landscape Character Type in Aberdeenshire.

- 5.21 Four Landscape Character Areas are defined within the *River Valleys* Landscape Character Type within Aberdeen. These are the *Upper Don Valley* (LCA 1), the *Lower Don Valley* (LCA 2), the *Dee Valley* (20) and the *South Deeside Upper Slopes* (LCA 28).

Key characteristics

1. The dramatic river valleys of the Dee and Don are a major landscape feature of the city and instrumental to its development.
 2. Fast flowing rivers channelled within an increasingly constricted valley floor close to the city.
 3. Semi-natural habitats of riparian woodland and marginal vegetation pattern the generally open floodplains associated with the Dee and Upper Don.
 4. Diverse and often extensive wooded policies, shelterbelts and clumps of trees cover valley sides.
 5. Farming is the dominant land use in the upper Don, while the lower Don and Dee feature more recreational uses and open space.
 6. A nucleated settlement pattern is associated with the lower slopes of the Dee valley while a denser urban edge borders the western banks of the lower Don.
 7. The upper Don is generally less settled and more rural in character.
 8. A strong historic character of estate parklands and buildings with striking historic bridges across rivers.
 9. Roads are aligned within or close to these valleys and some provide key approaches to the city.
 10. Views are contained by the valley landform.
 11. Well-used recreational routes are aligned close to the Dee and lower Don.
 12. A sense of tranquillity can be experienced in these often strongly contained valleys.
- 5.22 The Rivers Don and Dee lie in well-defined incised valleys, contained by well-wooded slopes, and with more open areas of floodplain, shaped by alluvium, sand and gravel deposits, varying in size within each character area. The rivers are generally fast flowing and gently meandering. They are increasingly channelled into a constricted valley floor close to the city with some steep slopes and terraces but more often gently rising valley sides. Broader areas of open floodplain occur upstream close to the western boundary of the city.
- 5.23 Semi-natural riparian woodland and trees and marginal vegetation along the river banks pattern generally open floodplains. Valley sides are often well-wooded with a diverse mix of policy woodland shelterbelts and clumps of mature trees. Farming is the dominant land use in the upper Don and although the floodplain of the Dee accommodates some farmland, open space and recreational uses increasingly feature closer to the edge of the city.
- 5.24 A nucleated settlement pattern is located along the lower side of the Dee valley and is softened by mature woodland and large trees. A denser urban edge borders the western banks of the lower Don at Dyce while the upper Don is generally less settled and more rural in character. A strong historic character

is evident in these *River Valleys* including estate policies and buildings, distinctive bridges, long-established settlements and old industrial mills.

- 5.25 Views tend to be contained by the valley landform and focus on the valley sides. Roads are aligned within or close to these valleys with the A93 providing a key approach to the city along the Dee valley. Well-used recreational routes are aligned close to the Dee and lower Don and a sense of tranquillity can be experienced in these often strongly contained and well-wooded valleys.

Low Hills

Location and context

- 5.26 This Landscape Character Type comprises well-defined rounded hills with steep slopes which lie on the western and southern edges of Aberdeen. Immediately to the west of the city boundary in Aberdeenshire, hills of a similar height (but generally less well-defined in form) are incorporated into the broader national level Landscape Character Type of the *Wooded Estates*.
- 5.27 There are five Landscape Character Areas defined within this character type, *Tyrebagger Hill* (LCA 3), *Brimmond Hill* (LCA 12), *Kingshill* (LCA 15), *Kincorth Hill* (LCA 23) and *Tullos Hill* (LCA 24).

Key characteristics

1. Prominent hills which form distinctive landmark features seen from the city.
 2. A gently rounded landform with relatively steep slopes give these hills a well-defined profile.
 3. Large areas of open moorland and woodland cover summits and upper slopes.
 4. Farmland is associated with the lower slopes of the western hills.
 5. These hills are largely undeveloped apart from telecommunication masts on some summits.
 6. Small farms are generally situated at the foot of the larger western hills.
 7. Prehistoric monuments are associated with many of these hills.
 8. Many of these hills are well-used for recreation.
 9. Areas of higher open ground provide panoramic views across the city, Aberdeenshire and the sea.
 10. A sense of seclusion can be experienced on summits and within the more extensive woodlands.
- 5.28 These hills range from heights of just 83m (Tullos Hill) to 265m (Brimmond Hill). While they do not attain great heights, their isolation, smooth rounded form and often steep slopes given them a well-defined profile. The higher western hills of Brimmond and Tyrebagger are particularly distinctive, forming landmark features seen from the city and also from Aberdeenshire. The smaller southern hills of Tullos and Kincorth are less widely visible although their steep wooded northern faces are prominent in views from parts of the city.
- 5.29 Characteristics common to the majority of these hills are the relatively high proportion of woodland covering either slopes and/or capping summits and extensive areas of grass and heather moorland on hills such as Brimmond. Commercially managed coniferous woodland covers Tyrebagger Hill. Areas of semi-natural woodland are present on the southern fringes of Tyrebagger Hill and, less extensively, on Tullos and Kincorth hills.

- 5.30 Walled and fenced pastures cover the lower slopes of the larger hills on the western edge of the city. Small farms are commonly located at the foot of these hills, framed by clumps of broadleaves or set within a grid pattern of shelterbelts. Upper slopes and summits are largely undeveloped although telecommunication masts are prominent features on some hills. A concentration of prehistoric monuments is associated with these hills, including cairns, hut circles and standing stones.
- 5.31 Most of these hills are well-used for recreation and accommodate a network of cycle and walking paths and car parks. Areas of higher open ground provide panoramic views across the city, Aberdeenshire and the sea. A sense of seclusion can be experienced on summits and within the more extensive woodlands.

Undulating Open Farmland

Location and context

- 5.32 This landscape largely forms part of the broader *Wooded Estates* Landscape Character Type which extends to the west and, in a narrower sliver, to the north-west of the city in neighbouring Aberdeenshire. This national level character type comprises both more open, gently undulating farmland as well as well-wooded areas where estates have a greater influence. The finer grain of the Aberdeen landscape character assessment has resulted in the predominantly open and the more wooded areas within the city area being separately defined at a local level into *Undulating Open Farmland* and *Undulating Wooded Farmland* Landscape Character Types.
- 5.33 There are eight Landscape Character Areas defined within the *Undulating Open Farmland*. These are the *Blackburn Valley* (LCA 8), *West Brimmond* (LCA 9) and *Leuchar and Silver Burn* (LCA 18) which lie on the western edge of Aberdeen and merge imperceptibly with the adjacent *Farmed Plain with Wooded Estates* in Aberdeenshire. The character areas of *Greenburn Valley* (LCA 11), *Bucks burn* (LCA 13), *Den Burn Valley* (LCA 14) and *Bogskeathy* (LCA 16) also lie to the west of the city but are more contained by outlying urban areas and, in some instances, the western *Hills* and are generally less rural in character. The character area of *Mundurno* (LCA 5) lies on the northern city boundary and while it shares some similarities with the adjacent *Coastal Farmed Plain* Landscape Character Type in terms of its openness and proximity to the coast, its landform is subtly different.

Key characteristics

1. A gently undulating landform with some shallow basins contained by low-lying ridges.
2. Predominantly improved pasture and arable farming with a weak enclosure pattern.
3. Semi-natural habitats are limited to pockets of rough grass and scrub with occasional areas of moss and wetland.
4. Sparse woodland with only occasional small clumps and lines of trees and some coniferous plantations in the south-west.
5. A sparsely settled landscape with a pattern of scattered farmsteads and houses accessed by a network of minor but often busy roads.
6. The openness of this landscape allows extensive views particularly on the western edges of the city.
7. A landscape with a prevailing rural character although eastern areas are influenced by the proximity of the urban area.

- 5.34 This landscape has a gently undulating landform with shallow basins and broad valleys contained by low smoothly rounded ridges. Water courses, while often small, form a focus in many of these landscapes, being accentuated by riparian woodland or associated with broader areas of wetland or moss.
- 5.35 Land use is predominantly improved pasture and arable farming with a generally weak enclosure pattern although field trees and stone consumption dykes are notable features in some areas. Woodland cover is generally sparse with only occasional small clumps and lines of broadleaved trees largely associated with farms although occasional medium-sized blocky coniferous plantations are a feature in the south-west.
- 5.36 Semi-natural habitats are not widespread although areas of wet heath, moss and wetlands and small wooded dens are present in some areas.
- 5.37 A pattern of dispersed farmsteads and houses are accessed by a network of minor but often busy roads. The eastern parts of this character type are strongly influenced by nearby urban areas.
- 5.38 The openness of this landscape allows extensive views with the western *Hills* forming a key focus. Views from the western-most areas of this character type extend to distant outcrop hills such as Bennachie within Aberdeenshire while sea views are a feature of the *Mundurno* (5) area.

Undulating Wooded Farmland

Location and context

- 5.39 The *Undulating Wooded Farmland* comprises a single Landscape Character Area, *Brae of Don* (LCA 4) which lies on the eastern flanks of the lower Don valley. The landscape has a similar character where it extends into Aberdeenshire and is classified as the broader national character type of the *Wooded Estates*.

Key characteristics

1. A gently undulating landform with occasional shallow basins and low ridges.
 2. Particularly well-wooded in the north-west with many former estate woodlands.
 3. Long shelterbelts of beech line roads and screen residential areas on the edge of the city.
 4. Wet woodland, bog communities and heathland habitats are associated with low-lying basins.
 5. A mix of open and expansive predominantly arable farmland in the south with smaller pastures in the north-west.
 6. Surviving influence of estate landscapes, including policy woodland and estate buildings.
 7. Settlement is dispersed and often hidden by woodland. Well-used roads traverse this landscape.
 8. Views tend to be short-medium range, curtailed by nearby woodland blocks.
 9. Despite the proximity to the city there is a strongly rural character and a sense of tranquillity can be experienced.
- 5.40 A gently undulating landform with long sweeping slopes gradually rising from the top of the incised valley of the Don to cumulate in the subtle ridge of Perwinnes Hill which forms the north-eastern boundary of the character type. Shallow basins occur in the south and at the core of this landscape.

- 5.41 This landscape is particularly well-wooded in the north-west with a mix of broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantations, some of these comprising former estate woodlands. This particularly well-wooded character extends into neighbouring Aberdeenshire where policy woodlands are a key defining feature. In the more open south-eastern part of this character type, long shelterbelts of beech line roads and mature broadleaved woodlands screen residential areas on the edge of the city.
- 5.42 Wet woodland, bog communities and heathland habitats are associated with Grandhome Moss which lies in a low-lying peaty area at the core of this landscape.
- 5.43 Farmland is open and expansive to the south-east with large arable and pastoral fields enclosed by fences and occasional low stone dykes. Smaller pastures appear carved out of woodland in the north-west and these areas have a more intimate scale.
- 5.44 Settlement is dispersed and often hidden by woodland. Well-used roads traverse this landscape and provide elevated views over the Don Valley and Dyce. Views are more curtailed in the well-wooded north-western part of this landscape.
- 5.45 Despite the proximity to the city there is a predominantly rural character and a sense of tranquillity can be experienced from the many footpaths within woodlands.

Urban and Farmland

Location and context

- 5.46 This landscape lies to the south of Aberdeen and some of its key characteristics are evident in neighbouring Aberdeenshire where it is defined as the *Farmed Moorland Edge* Landscape Character Type. These characteristics include the simple, elevated and very open landform, small walled pastures, the presence of areas of wetter rough grazing and moss and, particularly close to Aberdeen, a piecemeal pattern of recent development.
- 5.47 A single Landscape Character Areas is defined within this character type, *Loirston* (LCA 26).

Key characteristics

1. A landscape that lies close to the coast but also on the fringes of the uplands of Aberdeenshire.
 2. Gently undulating with some flatter areas of moss and a small water body
 3. Semi-natural vegetation is limited but includes some coastal grassland, wetlands and scrub.
 4. Diverse land uses with some areas within and adjacent to the landscape undergoing development.
 5. Small fields of pasture with many of these unmanaged or severed by development.
 6. Coniferous shelterbelts and small blocky plantations.
 7. Small scattered farms, isolated groups of dispersed post-war and adjacent new business parks.
 8. Strongly influenced by major transport routes and a network of local roads.
 9. Views tend to be short range, contained by nearby built development and woodland blocks.
 10. A busy and fragmented landscape.
- 5.48 This landscape lies close to the coast but also on the outer northern fringes of the Mounth uplands in Aberdeenshire.

- 5.49 The gently undulating landform is interspersed with shallow basins with some of these accommodating peaty mosses and the small water body of Loirston Loch. The landform slopes down steeply to the edge of the *Cliffs and Rocky Shore* Landscape Character Type although in the south, close to the boundary with Aberdeenshire, the natural landform has been modified by quarrying.
- 5.50 There is a pattern of small fields interspersed with isolated built development and major roads. Many fields, and small pockets of land severed by built development, are unmanaged with rank vegetation cover although some grazing occurs in places. Remnant stone walls and fences enclose fields.
- 5.51 Woodland is sparse, mainly comprising blocky plantings of conifers and angular shelterbelts. Some small areas of semi-natural grassland occur at the transition with the coast near the urban edge and wetlands, birch woodland and scrub are associated with Loirston Loch.
- 5.52 Small farms of brown and dark grey stone and isolated groups of post-war housing contrast with denser areas of new housing and larger buildings within recently constructed business parks on the urban edge. The A90 and the AWPR create a complex pattern of flyovers and junctions which, together with the disparate pattern and form of housing and business park development, contribute to the fragmented character of this landscape.
- 5.53 Views tend to be short range, contained by nearby built development and woodland blocks although there are views to the sea closer to the coast. The presence of major roads, railway, industry and construction activity negates any sense of tranquillity.

Wooded Estates

Location and context

- 5.54 This Landscape Character Type does not abut Aberdeenshire. Three Landscape Character Areas are defined within the *Wooded Estates*. These are *Craibstone* (LCA 10), *Hazelhead Park* (LCA 17) and *Countesswells* (LCA 19).

Key characteristics

1. A gently undulating landform becoming more rolling to the west.
 2. Well-wooded with large areas of broadleaved woodland, mixed plantations and policy plantings.
 3. Some areas of pasture are present with these often used as horse paddocks closer to the urban area.
 4. A golf course, sports fields and former nurseries occur close to the city.
 5. Dispersed small farmsteads and other residential buildings are often well screened by woodland.
 6. *Hazelhead Park* (17) and many of the larger woodlands across this type are well-used for recreation.
 7. Views tend to be short range being strongly contained by woodland.
 8. Nearby urban areas are often well-screened by woodland and this can give a sense of detachment from the city.
- 5.55 Landform is gently undulating in most of these landscapes although it becomes more complex and rolling in the west within *Countesswells* (LCA 19).
- 5.56 The character of these landscapes is strongly influenced by their origins as estate landscapes lying close to the city and the Dee valley. They all feature extensive wooded policies, with many of these

now publicly owned and well-used for recreation. The variety of woodland contributes to the rich diversity characteristic of much of this landscape. Large areas of broadleaved woodland, mixed plantations and policy plantings such as avenues and roundels are present.

- 5.57 Areas of farmland comprise small pastures commonly enclosed by fences, low stone dykes and coniferous plantations. Horse paddocks are more evident closer to urban areas. A golf course, sports fields and former nurseries occur on the outer fringes of *Hazlehead Park* (LCA 17) close to the city.
- 5.58 Dispersed small farmsteads, converted steadings, small holdings and former estate buildings are present but not readily visible from roads due to the screening provided by the strong framework of woodland.
- 5.59 *Hazelhead Park* (LCA 17) and many of the larger woodlands within this character type are well-used for recreation.
- 5.60 Views tend to be short range being strongly contained by woodland. The wooded character of this landscape screens views of nearby urban areas and this, together with the absence of major roads within parts of this landscape, can instil a distinct sense of detachment from the city.

6. Landscape Character Areas



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment



March 2017

Figure 15. Landscape Character Areas



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Upper Don Valley | 15. Kingshill |
| 2. Lower Don Valley | 16. Bogskeathy |
| 3. Tyrebagger Hill | 17. Hazelhead Park |
| 4. Brae of Don | 18. Leuchar & Silver Burn |
| 5. Mundurno | 19. Countesswells |
| 6. Murcar Plain | 20. Dee Valley |
| 7. Murcar & Balgownie Links | 21. King's Links |
| 8. Blackburn Valley | 22. Girdle Ness |
| 9. West Brimmond | 23. Kincorth Hill |
| 10. Craibstone | 24. Tullos Hill |
| 11. Greenburn Valley | 25. Souter Coast |
| 12. Brimmond Hill | 26. Loriston |
| 13. Bucks Burn | 27. Findon Plain |
| 14. Den Burn Valley | 28. South Deeside Upper Slopes |

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

LCA 1: Upper Don Valley (River Valley LCT)



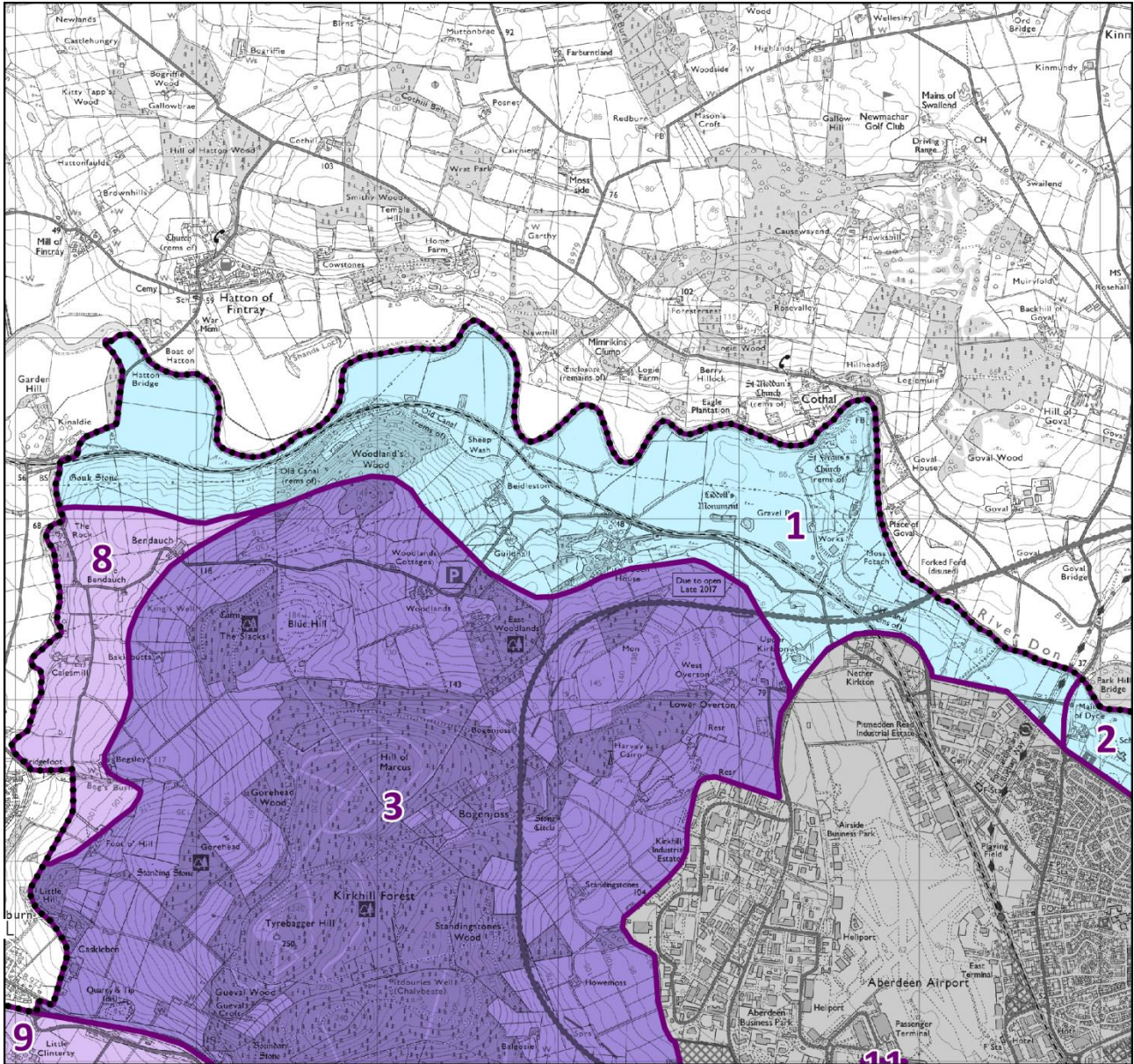
Location and context

With a mostly rural setting, the River Don forms the administrative boundary to the north-western part of the city and although the valley extends into Aberdeenshire, only those parts within the city are described here. The upper reaches of the river are contained within a relatively large-scale broad valley floor with low rising valley sides. Downstream, the valley floor begins to narrow before the river flows into the adjoining *Lower Don Valley* (LCA 2). *Tyrebagger Hill* (LCA 3) forms the majority of the southern boundary and to the south-east, the influences of Dyce and nearby airport provide a developed context to this part of the valley.

Key characteristics

1. Contained by the prominent northern lower slopes of Tyrebagger Hill, the naturally formed River Don meanders across a broad valley floor which begins to narrow towards the east.
2. Upstream, land use is predominantly pastoral with occasional arable fields, with areas for informal recreation alongside the river.
3. A mostly open floodplain with planned rectilinear fields enclosed by low stone dykes contrasts with pockets of open fields enclosed by large woodland blocks scattered along the valley sides.
4. Semi-natural habitats are limited to linear sections of marginal vegetation and occasional trees along the river banks, and a large area of deciduous woodland on the north-facing valley side.
5. A sparsely settled landscape with occasional farmsteads located on the lower hill slopes, while the upper slopes and valley floor are mostly undeveloped.
6. The Aberdeen to Inverness railway runs along the south bank of the river and there are few river crossings.
7. Apart from occasional farm tracks and small sections of minor roads, the landscape is reasonably inaccessible.
8. Despite the dominance of modern transport developments, the landscape still contains a sense of time-depth due to the presence of the ruins of St Fergus' Church which sits on an elevated spur of land within the valley; sections of the Aberdeenshire Canal; Liddell's Monument, and Pitmedden House.
9. The valley sides and containing ridges and hilltops tend to channel long views east to west along the valley floor, while views to the south and north are restricted by rising ground and woodland blocks.
10. Most of the valley has a distinctive identity with a strong rural character and sense of tranquillity.

LCA 1 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 1
Upper Don Valley



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Urban

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The river channel was formed by fluvial processes over metamorphic bedrock rock, which shapes a containing valley landform of gently sloping valley sides and small undulating hills. A wide flat valley floor is formed of superficial alluvium with small areas of glacial sands and gravels. In the east of the character area where the valley floor begins to narrow, there is an area of intrusive igneous bedrock with granite.

The River Don is relatively fast flowing downstream where the valley floor narrows although upstream around Hatton of Fintray, it takes a slower meandering course. The steep slopes that form the lower northern slopes of Tyrebagger Hill around Woodland's Wood are particularly prominent within the valley. The valley character is strong in this area, in contrast to both down-stream and up-stream where the topography becomes flatter and wider and less enclosing as a consequence.

The riverbanks have rich marginal vegetation except where it flows through intensively grazed areas. Woodland's Wood Local Nature Reserve is a fairly large area of deciduous, semi-natural woodland with some wet woodland and acid grassland south of the railway line. The railway embankments provide a green corridor through the agricultural landscape and contain tall grassland which in some places, is being colonised by shrubs and trees.

The main land use is agriculture with some scattered areas of woodland and informal recreation alongside the river. The valley floor and lower hill slopes are mainly farmed, with fields enclosed by a mixture of stone dykes and fences. Towards the eastern end of the character area, a large sand extraction site is prominent on the floodplain. Further east, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is also very prominent across the open floodplain. The area is relatively sparsely settled, with occasional farmsteads located on the lower hill slopes. Settlement avoids areas of higher ground and the floodplain. A transmission line follows the valley, the pylons descending the western end of the hillside to run eastwards along the valley floor.

The farmed landscape comprises mainly rectilinear fields and farms on the valley floor, with the enclosing valley sides containing some rough grazing land, further planned rectilinear fields and farms, cultivated former parkland and managed woodland. A distinctive designed landscape survives around Pitmedden House (a Listed Building), containing a range of mature parkland trees. Sections of the Aberdeenshire Canal Navigation survive on the valley floor and are designated a Scheduled Monument. This canal closed in 1854 when this means of transport was replaced by the Aberdeen to Inverness line of the Great North of Scotland Railway. The stone obelisk of Lidell's Monument (dated 1637), and the ruins of St Fergus' Church are also notable features in views from within and across the valley.

The hillsides channel long views along the east to west orientation of the valley. Views to the north and south are generally curtailed by rising ground although some wider views beyond the valley can be glimpsed, for example to the industrial estate at Dyce. Views of much of the area are also experienced from the Aberdeen to Inverness railway that follows the valley floor and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route that passes along northern slopes of Tyrebagger Hill.

With limited river crossings, most of the valley has a distinctive identity with a strong rural character. In contrast to the nearby city and airport, there is an experience of relative peace and tranquillity. Once the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is operational, noise and activity will increase across the eastern part of the area where urban influences are already evident.

Management Guidelines

The valley is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. With a predominantly strong rural character, it contains transport routes from which this major feature can be seen.

- a) Maintain the clear distinction between the open valley floor and the wooded valley sides.
- b) Conserve the natural character of the river and tributaries, that is, mainly free from hard river engineering and with limited bridge crossings
- c) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of semi-natural habitats including riparian woodland and trees, marginal vegetation along the river banks, and deciduous woodland along the valley sides.
- d) Encourage the planting of new broadleaved woodlands along the valley sides
- e) Conserve the pattern of stone dykes along the valley floor.
- f) Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern of occasional farmsteads located on the lower valley sides and the undeveloped character of the upper valley slopes and valley floor.
- g) Explore opportunities for cycle routes along rural roads and new footpath routes along the river.
- h) Safeguard the setting of important historic features including the ruins of St Fergus' Church, Liddell's Monument, the Old Parish Church of Dyce, and Pitmedden House.
- i) Maintain the opportunity to view the river in its rural valley setting, including maintaining open views along the valley as a whole and from higher ground, long range views towards the Grampian hills.
- j) Maintain the strong rural character of the valley and the experience of tranquillity it provides.



River Don towards Tyrebagger Hill



Floodplain pastures



Construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route



Looking south-east from northern slopes



Looking east from the A947



Looking across the valley towards Tyrebagger Hill



Looking north-west from Tyrebagger Hill



Farm track north of Aberdeen Airport

LCA 2: Lower Don Valley (River Valley LCT)



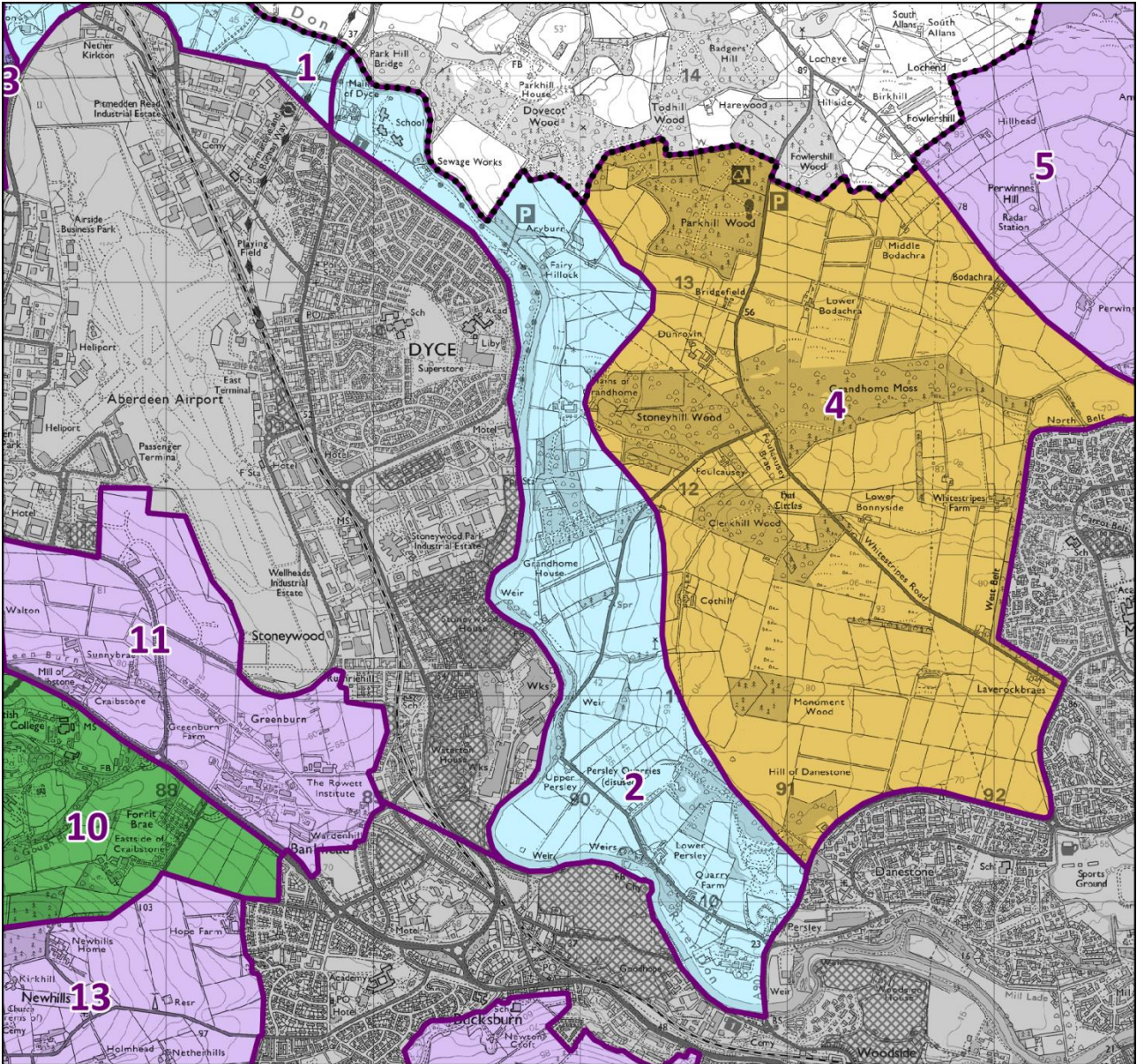
Location and context

The *Lower Don Valley* adjoins the adjacent *Upper Don Valley* (LCA 1) at the A947 road bridge to the north of Dyce. In contrast to the *Upper Don Valley*, this character area is formed of a much narrower valley floor and incised valley sides. The setting to the valley is heavily influenced by a variety of surrounding urban land uses where the settlement of Dyce forms much of the western boundary. To the east, woodland blocks across the *Brae of Don* (LCA 4) provide an important backdrop to the lower-lying valley and to the north of Grandhome, the pattern of wooded estates extends into Aberdeenshire. To the south, the character area meets the edge of the urban area where the river flows through the city and out to sea.

Key characteristics

1. The meandering River Don is contained within a defined narrow valley floor with steep terraces and gently sloping valley sides. In places, the river has been modified by weirs, mill races, and embankments.
2. Semi-natural habitats consist of occasional clumps of riparian woodland and trees with marginal vegetation along the river banks.
3. Woodland cover is diverse with extensive areas of broadleaved trees and estate woodland along the river and a pattern of irregular wooded policies, geometric shelterbelts and small clumps of trees along the valley sides.
4. A diversity of land uses including agriculture, recreation, education, mills, water treatment and extraction.
5. A pattern of rectilinear fields, mainly enclosed by low stone dykes, vary in size and are generally orientated towards the River Don.
6. The area is sparsely settled, although extensive urban areas to the south and west provide a developed context.
7. Recreational use is relatively extensive, with opportunities for formal and informal activities including walking, cycling and fishing.
8. The river retains features of historic industry, including some surviving mill buildings, weirs and mill races. Along the riverbanks, designed parklands and associated estate buildings contribute to the historic character.
9. From the lower-lying parts of the valley, views are restricted by nearby woodlands and areas of adjacent built development although from some open areas of upper valley sides, there are longer views over parts of the city.
10. The valley retains a distinctive and mostly undeveloped character with a sense of peace and seclusion along the enclosed wooded valley floor although urban influences are evident towards the west.

LCA 2 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment


March 2017

LCA Map 2
Lower Don Valley



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Undulating Wooded Farmland
-  Urban
-  Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Shaped by a bedrock of granite, *the Lower Don Valley* is generally less meandering than in the *Upper Don* (LCA 1) and, for most of its length, is contained within a narrow valley floor of mainly superficial sand and gravels with steep terraces. To the east of the river, partly wooded valley sides with convex shoulders rise above the floodplain and although the urban area of Dyce is outside of the area, it provides a sense of containment to the valley floor.

The area has a high proportion and large variety of trees and woodland. This includes riparian trees and woodland along the river, policy woodland at Grandhome and a pattern of shelterbelts and clumps of trees along the valley sides. The steep sided wooded banks of the Lower Don are some of most distinctive woodlands in the city. Marginal vegetation also lines the river banks.

Between the woodlands, there is a pattern of rectilinear pastoral and arable fields of varying sizes, enclosed by low stone dykes with occasional trees, backed by skyline woodlands. In addition to agriculture, land uses include recreation, education and several industrial uses along the valley floor, such as mills, sewage works and a quarry.

Although this part of the valley is sparsely settled, extensive urban areas to the south and west provide a developed context. A section of footpath follows the northern part of the river and, to the north, a busy road follows the valley side along the eastern edge of Dyce. Several bridges also provide access across the river. On the edge of Dyce, the presence of public parkland, with open grassland, paths and ornamental trees creates a managed, recreational character alongside the river.

The Don has been used as a source of water power for approximately two hundred years. Consequently, the area has a strong historical industrial character where the valley floor is lined with mills from Dyce downstream to Seaton Park. Those at the southern end of the area are shown on the 1909 Ordnance Survey map. The weirs and leats associated with former mills survive in the river channel.

The majority of the area on the east bank of the river Don is rural in character. It includes rectilinear fields sloping down the valley side, and some scattered farms. Estate influences are still strong within the landscape, particularly around Grandhome House, which contains parkland, policy woodland, shelterbelts and plantation. Grandhome House and several of the estate buildings (including lodges, walled garden and a dovecot) are Listed, along with a cemetery at Skene.

From the lower parts of the valley, views are restricted by the rising valley sides, nearby woodlands and areas of built development to the west of the river. From more open areas of higher ground towards the *Brae of Don* (LCA 4), the valley floor tends to be hidden from view although there are some long views over parts of the city and towards Tyrebagger Hill. Parts of the valley are also visible from nearby main roads.

Although the areas adjacent to the valley are heavily influenced by a variety of surrounding urban land uses and pockets of industry within it, the valley retains a distinctive and largely secluded character, resulting from the enclosure provided by the river corridor landform and the variety of dense woodland cover.

Management Guidelines

The valley is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. It contains transport routes from which this major feature can be seen.

- a) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of semi-natural habitats including riparian woodland and trees.
- b) Maintain the wooded character of the valley and encourage appropriately designed woodland planting and new parkland trees along the valley sides.
- c) Maintain and enhance the natural and semi-natural characteristics of the river including its steep terraced sides and meandering course.
- d) Conserve the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by low stone dykes.
- e) Maintain the sparsely settled character of the valley, and relative lack of river crossing.
- f) Maintain and enhance recreational routes and access along the valley and explore opportunities for extending the riverside footpath into the city.
- g) Safeguard the historic character of designed parklands and associated estate buildings.
- h) Maintain the views of woodland along the valley floor, and from the upper valley sides the open views across parts of the city.
- i) Maintain the relative sense of peace and seclusion experienced along the enclosed wooded valley floor.



Looking south-east from a local road on northern slopes



Informal recreation at Riverside Park



Paper mill on valley floor



River Don looking west



Estate parkland and policy woodlands



Semi-natural woodland along the river



River Don looking east



Rectilinear fields of farmed upper slopes

LCA 3: Tyrebagger Hill (Low Hill LCT)



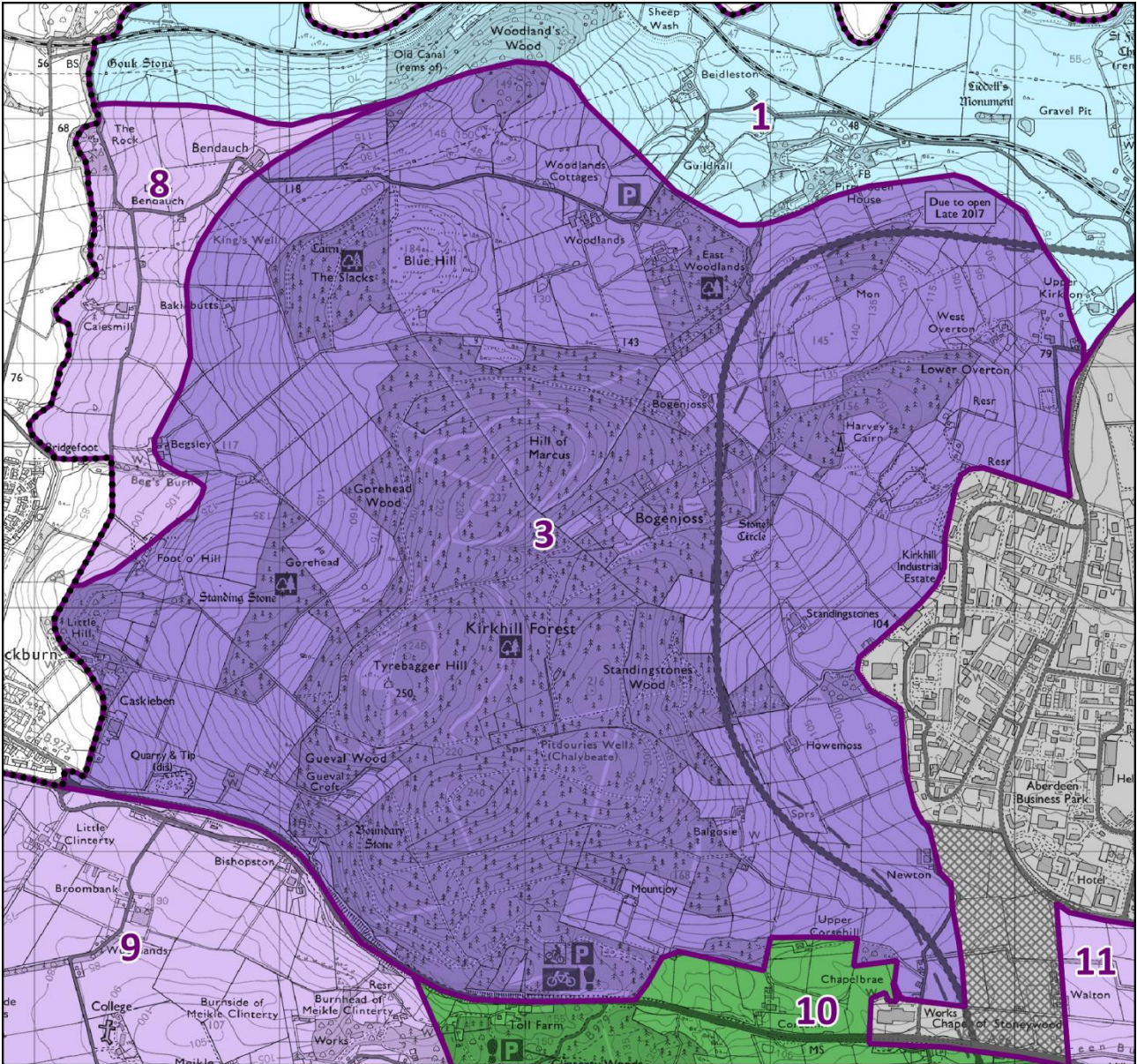
Location and context

This is a relatively large character area centred on the prominent summits of Tyrebagger Hill and the Hill of Marcus. The summits provide important landmarks which are visible from many parts of the city and the surrounding landscape. The character area also includes the farmed lower slopes to the east which provide a backdrop to the airport, while those to the west form a gentle transition to *Blackburn* (LCA 8). To the north, the partly wooded slopes provide an important transitional setting to the *Upper Don Valley* (LCA 1) and to the south, the extensive woodland of Kirkhill Forest continues down to the busy A96 which forms the boundary with *Craibstone* (LCA 10).

Key characteristics

1. A large-scale landform of gently rounded hills with smooth slopes, forming the northern end of an arc of hills that curve around the western edge of the city.
2. Extensive areas of geometric conifer forests broadly relate to upper slopes and summits, and contrast with pockets of broadleaved woodlands scattered across the farmed lower slopes.
3. Below the forests, mixed shelterbelts and clumps of trees divide open pastures. Along the lower hill slopes, dykes and fences enclose fields and, in several places, are reinforced by lines of gorse and occasional trees.
4. Settlement is sparse, consisting of a few farmsteads across the lower slopes, served by minor roads.
5. With a good network of footpaths and cycle trails accessed by several forest car parks, the extensive areas of forests are an important recreational resource.
6. There is a concentration of prehistoric Scheduled Monuments within the landscape, including the prominent Standingstones stone circle on the hillside overlooking the airport.
7. From areas of higher open ground, there are long views east and south over the city towards the sea, north over the Don Valley and west to Bennachie and the Grampian hills.
8. Tyrebagger Hill forms a prominent landmark feature seen widely from the city and surrounding farmland, easily recognisable because of the extensive forest cover.
9. Extensive areas of conifer forest provide a sense of seclusion and tranquillity. The eastern lower slopes are busier and noisier, with nearby industrial development, airport activity and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route prominent in view.

LCA 3 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 3
Tyrebagger Hill



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Urban
-  Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The rounded landform of the area is shaped by mainly metamorphic bedrock, with small areas of intrusive igneous rock in the east, overlain with glacial till, sands and gravels. Centred on the forested landform of Tyrebagger Hill (250 metres AOD), this is a large-scale landscape with broad, rounded hill slopes. The area is situated at the northern end of an arc of hills which curve around the western edge of the city and the northern slopes form a prominent feature in the setting to the *Upper Don Valley* (LCA 1).

Tyrebagger Hill has dry heathland on the hilltop with some willow, birch and rowan woodland. Mainly conifer forest then covers the hill in a single plantation down to a height of approximately 150 metres AOD and includes impressive Douglas firs, large beech trees, mature Scots pine and larch. Smaller plantations are located on the lower slopes to the west, north and east. Below the extensive areas of forest, mixed shelterbelts and clumps of trees divide open pastures. The regular shape of agricultural fields on the upper slopes is emphasised by the adjacent forest which follows the field boundaries. Along the lower hill slopes, dykes and fences enclose rectilinear fields and in several places, are reinforced by lines of gorse and occasional trees.

The forest is an important recreational resource for the city and accessed by several forest car parks. There is a good network of footpath and cycle trails through Tyrebagger and Kirkhill Forests. Settlement is sparse, consisting of a few farmsteads served by rural minor roads that follow the lower slopes. The most obvious man-made elements are the transmission lines that cross the north-east corner of the area, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which cuts across the eastern slopes and the A96 which forms the southern boundary to the area.

The area has a long history of settlement, spanning several thousand years. There are a number of prehistoric sites (many of which are Scheduled Monuments) including Woodlands Croft hut circle and field system; the Slacks on Kirkhill (prehistoric burial cairns, hut circles and cairnfield); Standingstones stone circle on the eastern slopes of Hill of Marcus, and a non-designated standing stone on the western side of Tyrebagger Hill.

Today, much of the area has a landcover of woodland and forestry, surrounded by agricultural land with pockets of moorland and rough grazing. Fields are generally regular in shape, with an area of planned rectilinear fields and farms (probably dating from the mid-nineteenth Century) with associated consumption dykes on the western side of Hill of Marcus. There are also pockets of surviving smallholdings within the forest on the western slopes of Tyrebagger Hill, and a designed estate landscape (with associated Listed agricultural and estate buildings at Caskieben). This landscape pattern of farms, plantations and estates is largely unchanged since at least the early 1900s.

From areas of higher open ground, there are long views to the east and south over the city towards the sea, north over the Don Valley and west to Bennachie and the Grampian hills. Tyrebagger Hill forms a prominent landmark feature seen widely from the city and surrounding farmland, easily recognisable because of the extensive forest cover. It appears most prominent in views from the Don Valley and from lower-lying areas to the west of the city. The area is also widely visible from surrounding main roads.

Despite the close proximity of Aberdeen Airport and the A96, the extensive forests provide a sense of seclusion and tranquillity. Although the eastern lower slopes are affected by nearby industrial development and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, the western slopes retain a strong rural character.

Management Guidelines

This character area forms the northern end of an arc of hills that is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's skyline and landscape. It is prominent in open views and can be seen from several main transport routes.

- a) Maintain the contrast of the forested upper slopes and summits with the pattern of mixed shelterbelts and clumps of trees amongst areas of open pastures on the lower slopes.
- b) Conserve stone dykes.
- c) Conserve the existing settlement pattern, consisting of the undeveloped upper hill slopes and summits, and scattered farmsteads across lower hill slopes.
- d) Conserve and enhance the recreational value of forests and woods, and the network of footpaths that connect them.
- e) Conserve and enhance the species diversity and connectivity of forests and woodlands.
- f) Safeguard the setting of important historic features including a hut circle and field system, prehistoric burial cairns, a consumption dyke, and standing stones.
- g) Explore opportunities for interpretation of historic features.
- h) Maintain long views east and south from the higher ground over the city towards the sea, north over the Don Valley and west to Bennachie and the Grampian hills.
- i) Maintain the sense of seclusion and tranquillity experienced within areas of forest.



Tyrebagger and Blue Hills from the west



Long range views towards Bennachie



Forest carpark and trails



Farmed northern slopes



Stone circle on eastern slopes



Towards Tyrebagger Hill from the south



Views over Dyce industrial estate towards Aberdeen Airport



Farmed western slopes

LCA 4: Brae of Don (Undulating Wooded Farmland LCT)



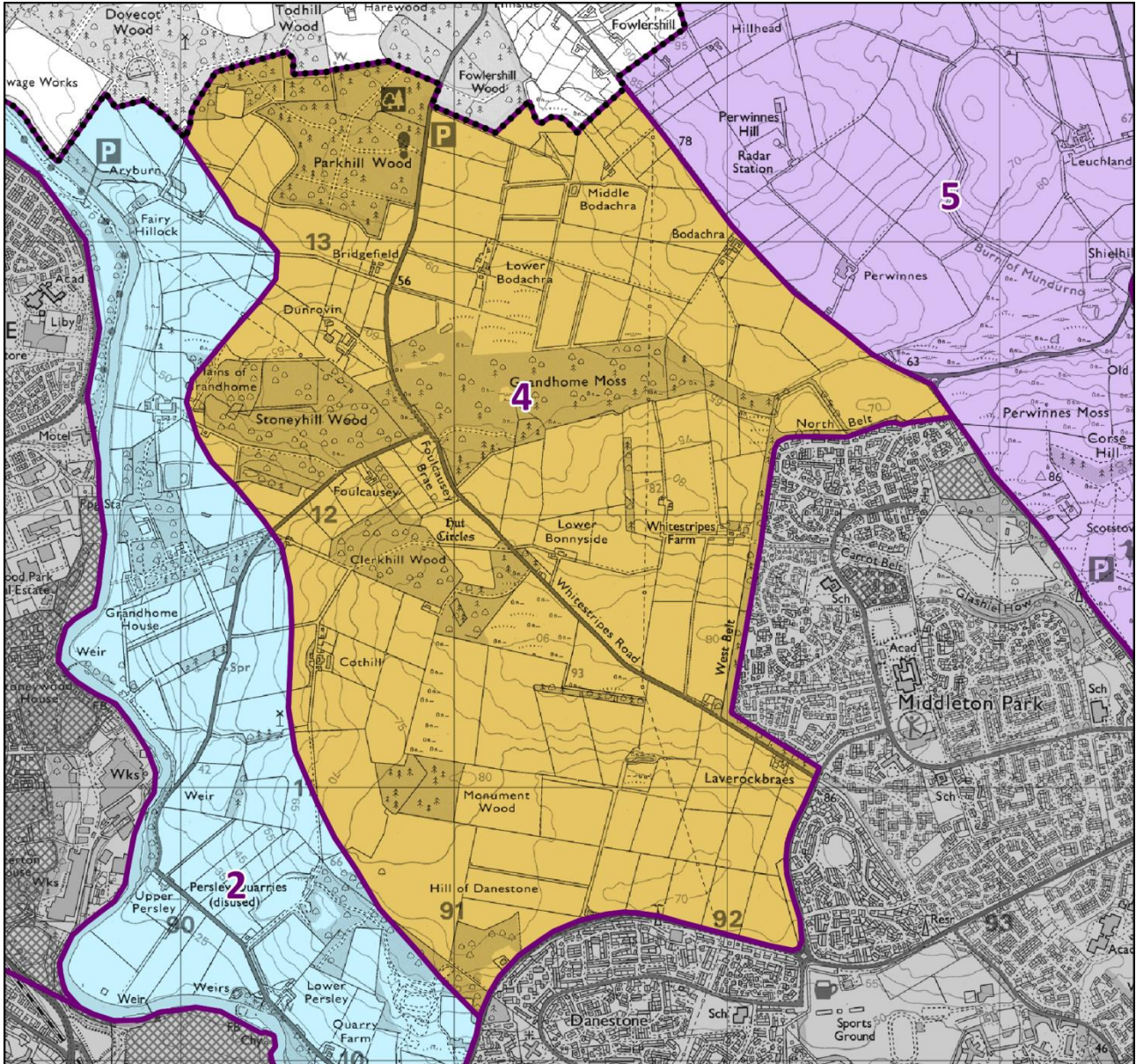
Location and context

The *Brae of Don* is located on the northern fringes of the city and with its pattern of varying woodlands, the landscape provides a slightly elevated rural backdrop to the city. Along the western boundary, the land drops away towards the River Don with Dyce beyond. The northern boundary is defined by the administrative boundary between Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire. The landscape type continues north into Aberdeenshire and to the north-east, the land gently rises towards *Mundurno* (LCA 5). To the south-east, the area abuts extensive residential development at Middleton Park and further south, Danestone.

Key characteristics

1. The landform is dominated by a large flat basin set within containing weakly defined low ridges to the east, and to the south-west, undulating land that forms a shoulder above the Don valley.
2. A relatively well-wooded landscape with large areas of broadleaved woodland, mixed plantations and estate woodlands.
3. Land use is predominantly pastoral with some arable and pockets of rough grazing within medium-large sized planned rectilinear fields, enclosed by stone dykes or post and wire fences.
4. With a pattern of scattered farmsteads, the landscape has a mostly undeveloped character.
5. Roads are few although mature beech trees along the B997 form a distinctive skyline feature.
6. There are long distance views to the west over the Don Valley towards Tyrebagger Hill and to the south across the city.
7. While the southern part of the area is influenced by its settled context, the mostly undeveloped landscape in the north has a strong rural character and sense of detachment from the city.

LCA 4 boundary










Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 4
Brae of Don



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

- Landscape Character Type
-  River Valley
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Undulating Wooded Farmland
 -  Urban

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The area has a gently undulating landform shaped by superficial till with occasional deposits of sand and gravel. To the east of Whitestripes Road, which follows a low-lying weakly defined ridgeline, there is a large, flat peat basin set within a series of further low-lying ridges to north that collectively, provide a sense of surrounding containment. To the west of the road, undulating land drops away to a break in slope that forms a shoulder above the eastern side of the *Lower Don Valley* (LCA 2).

The area is reasonably well-wooded, with several large blocks of geometric, mainly broadleaved woodlands with some conifer blocks. In the north and west, there are large mixed and broadleaved woodlands, whereas to the east and south shelterbelts and clumps of trees are more common. Along Whitestripes Road, an avenue of mature beech trees forms a distinctive feature of Aberdeen, which is visible on the skyline from many parts of the city.

Within the central parts of the area, Stoneyhill Wood and Grandhome Moss are important sites for nature conservation. Stoneyhill Wood consists mainly of birch woodland, but with some other broadleaves, Scots pine and planted non-native conifers. It is one of the best examples within the city of birch woodland that has formed on dry heathland. The wetter areas of the woodland contain alder, willow and sphagnum moss. Adjoining Stoneyhill Wood, Grandhome Moss is a large area of semi-natural habitat of very wet broadleaved woodland with open areas of bog, fringed by rushes, non-native conifer woodland, neutral grassland, acid grassland and a small pond.

The farmland is more pastoral than arable, consisting of medium-large sized rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes or post and wire fences. There is little development within the area although a transmission line crosses the area from north to south and a limited road network generally follows weak ridgelines. Some residential development at Middleton Park on the north-western edge of Bridge of Don forms a prominent boundary edge to the area, although it is only visible from some eastern parts of the landscape.

Although recreation and access are generally quite limited, there are footpaths through Stoneyhill Wood and Grandhome Moss. Accessed by a car park, there is also network of footpaths through Parkhill Wood, which is managed by the Forestry Commission.

Patterns of rectilinear fields and farms with associated consumption dykes, suggest Mid-nineteenth Century enclosure. The area also contains pockets of rough grazing land, and is well-wooded, including managed woodland, plantations and estate woodlands within the designed landscape at Parkhill Woods. Some of these woodlands have been planted relatively recently. For example, Grandhome Moss is not shown as being wooded on the 1909 Ordnance Survey map. There is a group of prehistoric hut circles in Clerkhill Wood, with one (Foucausie) designated a Scheduled Monument.

Towards the south of the area, there are long distance views over the Don Valley and across the city. To the north, Grandhome Moss forms an important visual feature where colours and textures of semi-natural vegetation contrast with surrounding open farmland.

With views over Aberdeen and its proximity to the Bridge of Don, the southern part of the area is influenced by neighbouring settlement. Within the northern part and to the east of Whitestripes Road, the predominantly undeveloped landscape has a strong rural character and sense of seclusion and tranquillity.

Management Guidelines

This character area is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. The edge of the river valley forms the skyline in views from the south and forms a rural backdrop to the city.

- a) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape and help to define or contain urban edges.
- b) Maintain and enhance the distinctive shelter belts of beech trees.
- c) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of semi-natural habitats of diverse woodlands, areas of bog and heathland.
- d) Conserve stone dykes.
- e) Maintain the pattern of scattered farmsteads and conserve the rural character of minor roads.
- f) Maintain the long-distance views to the west over the Don Valley towards Tyrebagger Hill and to the south across the city.
- g) Maintain the strong rural character and sense of detachment from the city in the north of the area.



Avenue of beech along Whitestripes Road



Grandhome Moss



Looking over Grandhome Moss towards Kingshill



Stoneyhill Wood



Beech shelterbelt



Looking across the Lower Don Valley



Looking north towards Perwinnes Radar Station



Grandhome Moss

LCA 5: Mundurno (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



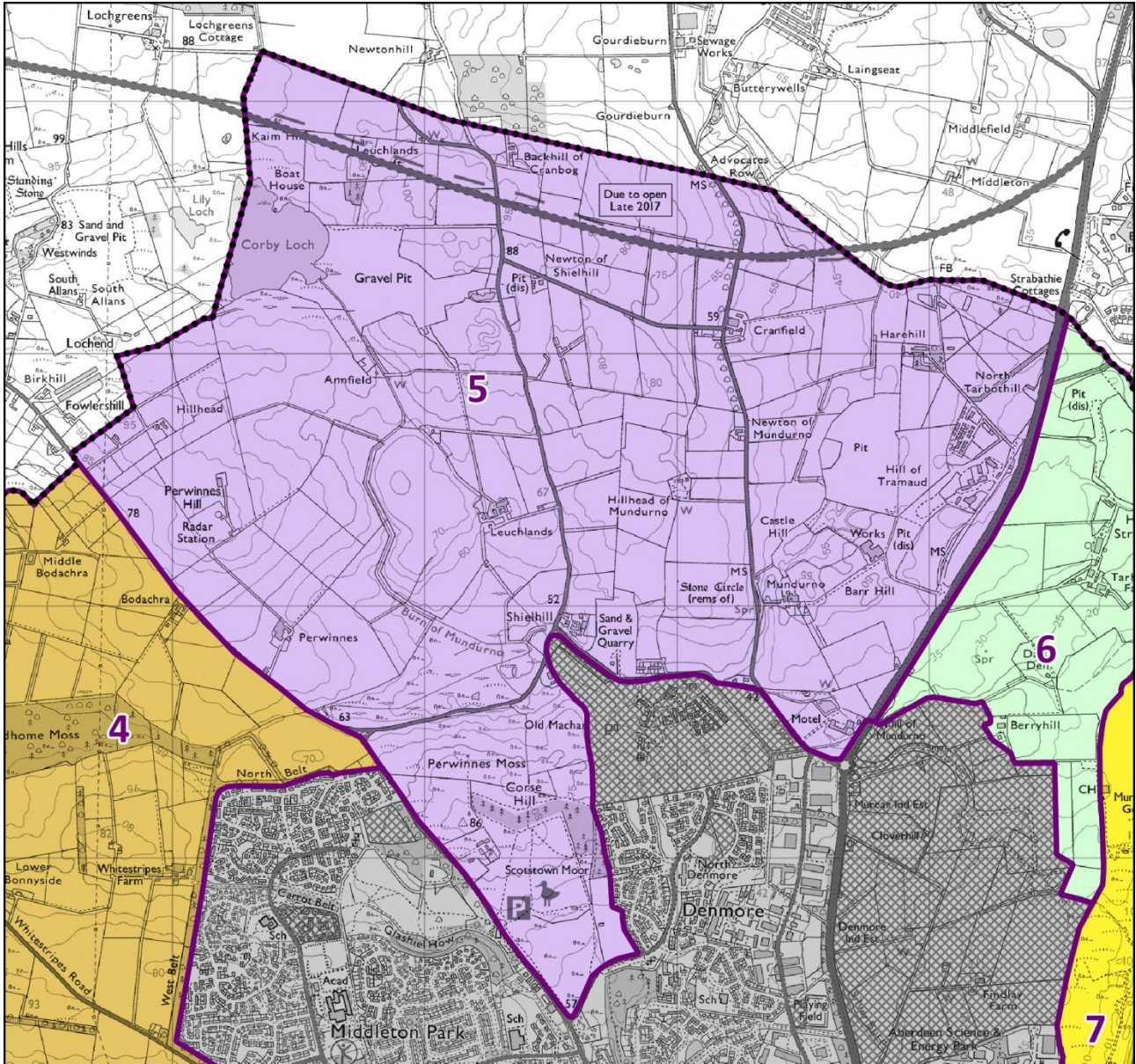
Location and context

Located to the north of Aberdeen, *Mundurno* is a relatively large character area of predominantly open farmland. Beyond the northern boundary, a similar landscape continues into Aberdeenshire. To the south, there is an abrupt transition defined by the urban edge of Middleton Park and Denmore. The eastern boundary is marked by the busy A90, with the open *Murcar Plain* (LCA 6) situated on slightly lower ground to the east. The landscape is reasonably contained by surrounding land use and gently rising ground, and the North Sea is visible nearby from some areas of higher ground.

Key characteristics

1. A gently undulating medium-large scale landform with shallow basins set amongst a series of low-lying, weakly defined ridges.
2. With reed beds, floating mire and scrub woodland, Corby Loch forms a local landscape feature. Other semi-natural habitats include patches of rough grassland and gorse scattered across the agricultural landscape and a mosaic of wet and dry heathland habitats at Scotstown Moor.
3. Woodland cover is sparse with occasional small clumps and tree lines, largely associated with scattered farmsteads, particularly within some eastern parts of the area.
4. Land use is predominantly improved pasture and arable within rectilinear fields of varying in size and orientation. Field boundaries, some lined with ditches and gorse, tend to be post and wire fences or stone dykes.
5. There are some restored and active mineral workings, and recreational use at Scotstown Moor and Corby Loch.
6. A sparsely settled landscape with a pattern of scattered farmsteads, some unoccupied and with derelict buildings.
7. Few minor roads and tracks cross some parts of the area, and footpath access is limited, except for Scotstown Moor.
8. The prevailing views are wide of nearby open farmland and more distant woodland blocks with some long views including to the sea, towards Brimmond and Tyrebagger hills and to the city edge.
9. An open, often exposed and mostly rural landscape, but with some major built features in places to the west and north.

LCA 5 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment






March 2017

LCA Map 5
Mundurno



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Beaches, Dunes and Links
-  Coastal Farmed Plain
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Undulating Wooded Farmland
-  Urban

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The open farmland of *Mundurno* has an undulating topography shaped by glacial till, sands and gravels on metamorphic bedrock. The landscape is contained in two shallow basins to the north-west and south-west, centred on the depressions of Corby Loch and Perwinnes Moss respectively.

Forming part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Conservation Site, Corby Loch is a distinctive local landscape feature important for recreation. It is centred on a large body of water surrounded by reed beds, floating mire, scrub woodland and extensive mosses. At Scotstown Moor, a small area of marshy vegetation is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and forms part of a wider Local Nature Conservation Site and Local Nature Reserve. Further north, within the main part of the reserve, there are a range of habitats including plantation woodland, marshy grassland, heathland and scrub.

Land use is predominantly improved pasture and arable rectilinear fields of varying in size and orientation, although there are some areas of rough grassland. Field boundaries within the western parts of the area tend to be post and wire fences or stone dykes while gorse is more common in the east. There are also occasional remnant hedgerows, particularly in the north-east.

Woodland cover is sparse with only occasional small clumps and tree lines, including a distinctive roundall, mostly associated with scattered farmsteads, particularly to the east of the area. Mineral extraction and landfill are historically important to the area and many can still be seen today.

The landscape is sparsely settled, with a pattern of scattered farmsteads, some unoccupied and with derelict buildings. In contrast to this, the radar installation at Perwinnes is prominent on open rising ground. The busy A90 runs along the eastern boundary and the residential areas of Bridge of Don lie to the south. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) also passes across the northern part of the area. Although footpath access within the agricultural landscape is limited, some linear minor roads and tracks cross the area although large parts have no roads. There is a good network of footpaths across Scotstown Moor, accessed from a car park.

The Historic Land Use Assessment shows that much of the area is rectilinear fields and farms, and analysis of historic maps shows that the overall pattern of farms has changed little in the past century. However, the pattern of rectilinear fields is broken in areas which have been restored to agricultural land use following quarrying. There is also an extensive area of recreational landscape around Scotstown Moor Nature Reserve. The oldest man-made feature within the landscape is likely to be the Dubford Standing Stone (Scheduled Monument) which is a surviving remnant of a prehistoric stone circle.

The landscape has a slightly higher elevation than adjacent character areas, and wide views are therefore possible from many parts. Although the urban fringe of Bridge of Don can be seen to the south, the prevailing views are of surrounding open farmland set against more distant woodland blocks. From areas of higher ground within the eastern parts of the area, there are views over the lower-lying *Murcar Plain* (LCA 6), across the adjacent *Murcar Links* (LCA 7) and out to sea. To the south, there are some views towards the city edge and to the west, long range views towards Brimmond Hill and Tyrebagger Hill. There are also glimpsed views across parts of the area from the A90 to the east and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to the north.

The lack of tree cover contributes to an open and often exposed experience. Although the area has a prevailing rural character with a coastal influence, there are also areas of mineral workings and the radar installation at Perwinnes. Noise from the AWPR and A90 are also evident from parts of the area.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the diversity of important habitats across Corby Loch and Scotstown Moor.
- b) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape, help to define or contain urban edges, and enhance gateway routes to the city.
- c) Encourage the planting of small broadleaved woodlands near to farmsteads.
- d) Manage tree belts to ensure their retention.
- e) Conserve stone dykes.
- f) Maintain the sparsely settled landscape of scattered farmsteads and the rural character of minor roads.
- g) Consider the provision of circular footpath links from residential areas and Scotstown Moor to features such as Corby Loch and the stone circle in the wider countryside.
- h) Maintain views across open farmland to the sea and Brimmond and Tyrebagger hills.



Gently undulating open fields



Looking north from Corse Hill



Perwinnes Radar Station



Corby Loch



Leuchlands Farm



Roundall



Looking west towards Brimmond Hill



Looking east towards the coast

LCA 6: Murcar Plain (Coastal Farmed Plain LCT)



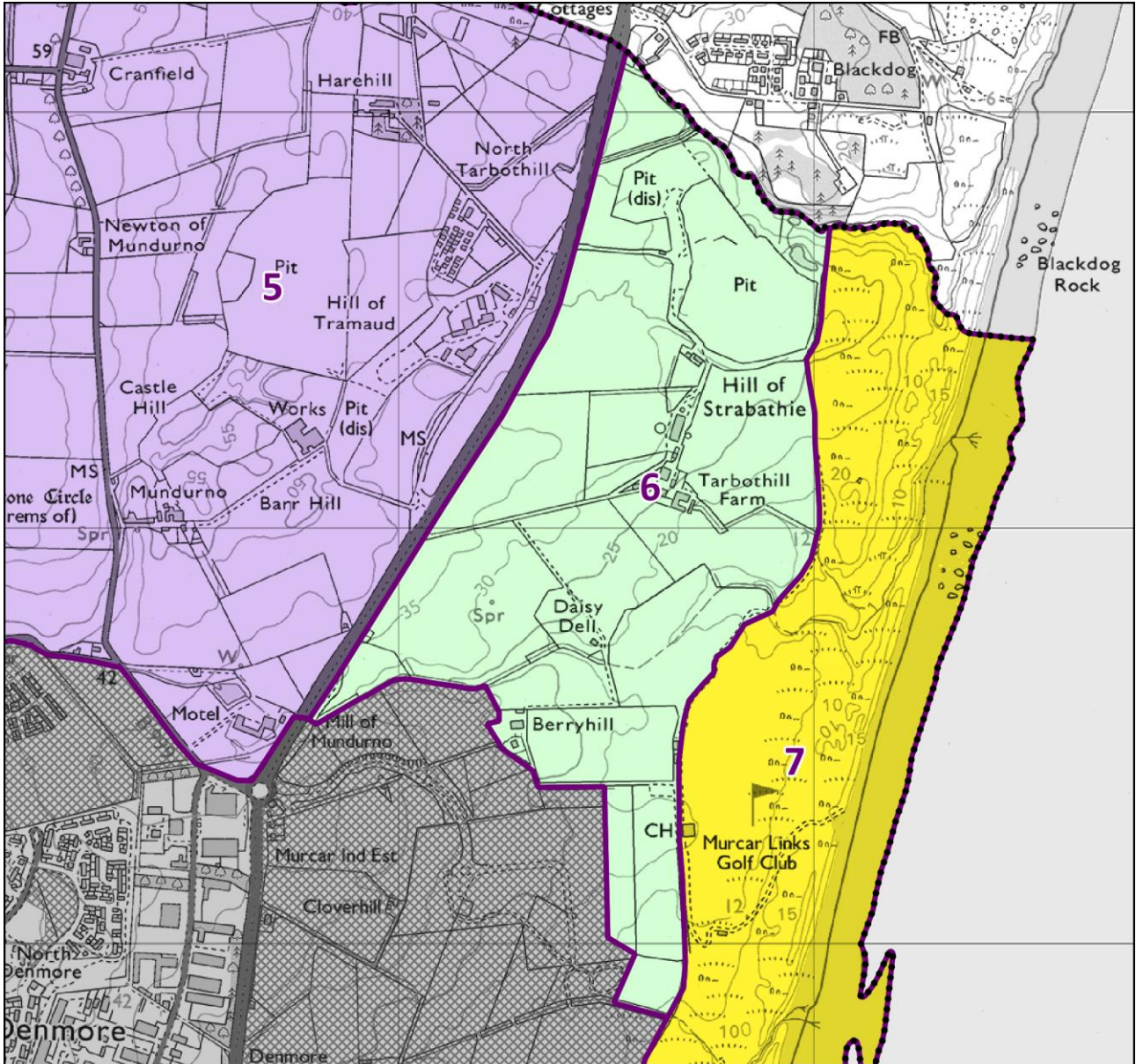
Location and context

This is a small area of open coastal plain that continues northwards into Aberdeenshire. Although the farmland immediately to the south is part of this landscape type, it is currently being developed and therefore forms part of the urban area of the city. The western boundary is formed by the A90 with *Mundurno* (LCA 5) located immediately beyond. The landscape has a strong visual connection with *Murcar & Balgownie Links* (LCA 7) which forms the eastern boundary of this character area.

Key characteristics

1. A low-lying, gently undulating, open coastal plain which slopes gently towards the coast.
2. There is little woodland although there are some small clumps around farm buildings and along some field boundaries.
3. Land use is principally improved grassland within medium-large sized rectilinear fields enclosed by post and wire fences, with occasional lines of trees or gorse along field boundaries.
4. Mainly undeveloped, apart from several scattered cottages and large modern farm buildings.
5. A long history of settlement going back to the Bronze Age, although there is little visible evidence for early settlement within the landscape.
6. There are extensive views out to sea across the adjacent Murcar Links and shorter views along the coastline and inland to the west.
7. The landscape has a strong coastal influence with an open and windswept appearance.





LCA 6 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 6
Murcar Plain

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

- Landscape Character Type
-  Beaches, Dunes and Links
 -  Coastal Farmed Plain
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Urban



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The *Murcar Plain* LCA is a small area of low-lying open coastal plain. The gently undulating landform is shaped by the influence of glacial till, sands and gravels over metamorphic bedrock, and to the north, igneous rock. There is little variation in landform although there is a gentle slope towards the coast. The restored profile of the Tarbothill landfill site provides a slightly raised containing backdrop within the northern part of the area.

Land use is mostly agricultural, with a pattern of rectilinear medium-large sized fields of improved grassland with some arable, enclosed by post and wire fences and remnant stone dykes. A resorted landfill site lies to the north of the area and the Murcar Links Golf Club is located immediately to the east of this LCA, where it adjoins *Murcar and Balgownie Links* LCA.

There is no woodland cover, only some small clumps of trees around farm buildings with occasional thin lines of trees, or gorse, along field boundaries. A small group of trees has been planted along the A90, just beyond the south-west boundary.

The area is mostly devoid of settlement although several cottages and large modern farm buildings are scattered across the landscape. Access is limited to several farm tracks and linear local roads. The busy A90 runs along the western boundary and parts of the farmland to the south are currently being developed, extending urban influences to the undeveloped farmland.

Despite the lack of recent settlement in the landscape, there is a very long history of human occupation within the area. Bronze Age tumuli formerly existed on Hill of Strathbathie but were lost during quarrying. Evidence of Bronze Age occupation has also been found at Cloverhill. The area would have been ideal for prehistoric settlement, providing easy access to the sea for food and transport, as well as to surrounding woodland. The sandy coastal soils would have been relatively easy to cultivate.

The current landscape dates from post-medieval agricultural improvements, with the Historic Land Use Assessment showing the area to be primarily rectilinear fields and farms. Today's pattern of farms dates back to at least 1909. In the northern part, there are areas of opencast quarrying. The area has a history of mineral extraction, with the Starthbathie brick and tile works at Black Dog closing in 1924. The brick and tile works had a private railway line to the depot at Bridge of Don (later purchased by Murcar Golf Course) and traces of its embankments and cuttings can still be seen along the eastern side of the area.

There are extensive views out to sea across the adjacent *Murcar & Balgownie Links* (LCA 7) and shorter views along the coastline and inland across the nearby *Mundurno* (LCA 5). The rising backdrop of the Tarbothill landfill site restricts views further north. Much of the area is also visible from the adjacent A90.

With views of the nearby North Sea, the landscape has a strong coastal influence with an open and windswept appearance. The busy A90 road corridor and expanding urban edge of the city give this area a relatively busy character.

Management Guidelines

- a) Maintain the gently undulating coastal plain landform, a continuation of the natural landform on LCA 7.
- b) Encourage the planting of broadleaved trees to augment groups near to farmsteads and in field boundaries.
- c) Avoid extensive or large-scale woodland planting, which would impact on the overall open character and views.
- d) Conserve stone dykes.
- e) Maintain the prevailing open and undeveloped character.
- f) Maintain the extensive views out to sea across the adjacent Murcar Links.



Coastal farmland



Looking towards Murcar Links Golf Club



Derelict farm building



Open rectilinear fields



Minor road towards golf course



Looking east towards the coast



Looking north towards restored quarry



Tarbothill Farm

LCA 7: Murcar & Balgownie Links (Beach, Dunes & Links LCT)



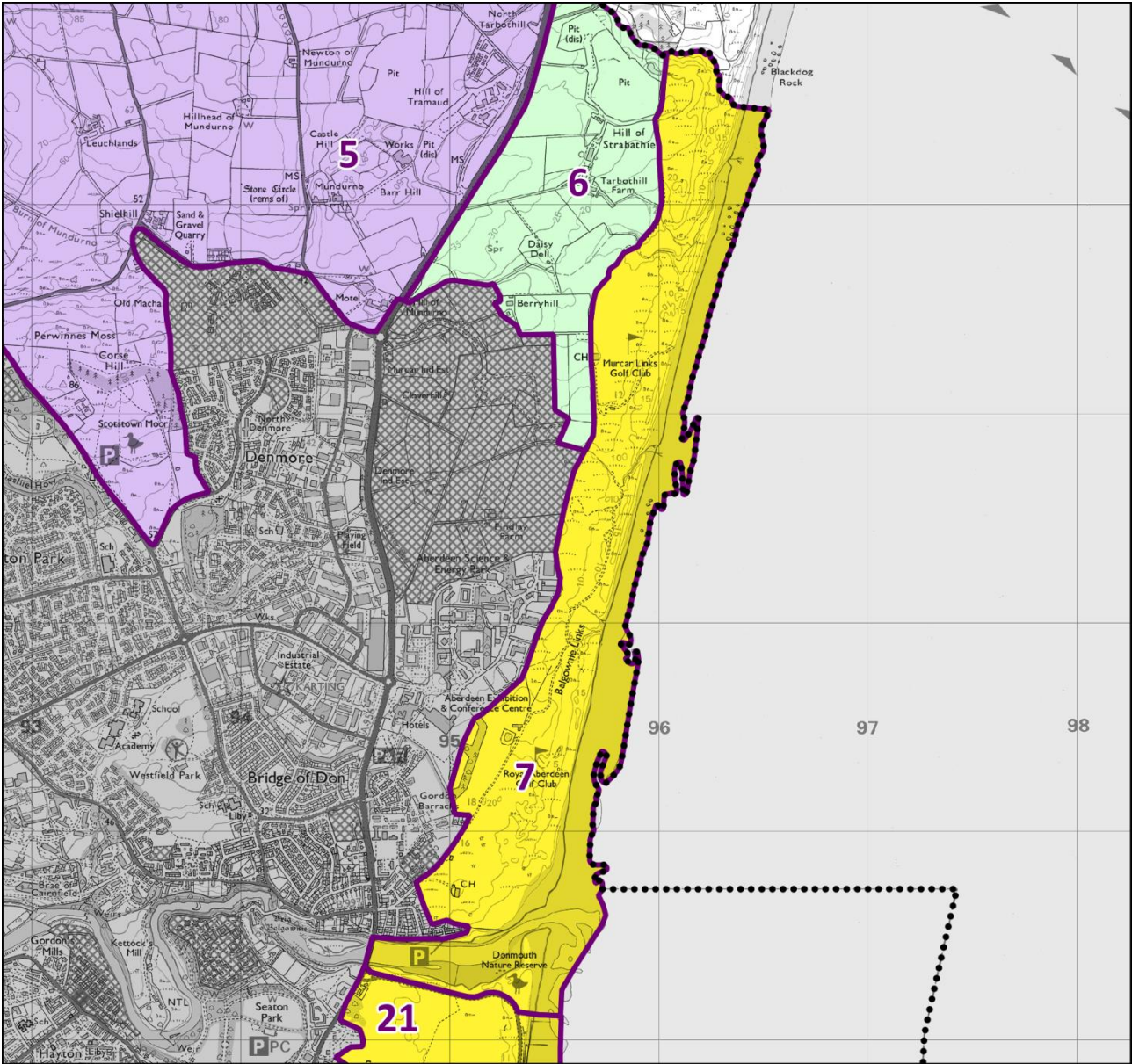
Location and context

The *Murcar & Balgownie Links* LCA is a continuous swathe of sandy beach backed by undulating sand dunes and links golf courses. It includes the dynamic waters at the mouth of the River Don and extends northwards to the border with Aberdeenshire, where the extensive beach and dunes continue much further north. The beach continues south of the Don into *King's Links* (LCA 21), where it is heavily engineered and has a more developed backdrop. To the east, the North Sea forms a dominant setting.

Key characteristics

1. A distinctive landform consisting of shore, dunes and links of mainly horizontal form, with contrasting short, steep, eroded seaward slopes of the dunes.
2. A dynamic coastline with natural processes including ongoing migration of blown sand, shifting dunes and coastal erosion from wave action.
3. With very limited built development, the extensive swathe of semi-natural beach contrasts with dune habitats and links.
4. Extensive recreational landuses across open expanses of sandy beach and amenity grass.
5. Tree cover is limited to small clumps of stunted pines planted amongst the links.
6. Built development is very sparse, limited to golf clubhouses and associated infrastructure. The bridge across the river Don is a locally distinctive feature.
7. With an absence of roads, a network of footpaths through the sand dunes provides access to the beach.
8. Frequent, visible archaeological evidence of the long standing strategic importance of the coast.
9. Panoramic views along the coast and out to sea from much of the area.
10. A distinctive, predominantly natural and undeveloped character with a strong sense of exposure to the elements.

LCA 7 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 7

Murcar and Balgownie Links



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

A distinctive topography consisting of shore, dunes and links is influenced by the bedrock of the entire area being overlain by blown sand. It has a horizontal emphasis, although the short, steep seaward slopes of the dunes introduce some near vertical forms. The elevation rises from sea level to approximately 20 metres AOD. The coast is very dynamic, with natural processes constantly shaping the composition of sand and dunes. There is ongoing migration of blown sand across the beach, shifting sand dunes and coastal erosion, especially at Donmouth, where the dunes are currently being reduced by wave action.

Nearly all of the area is included within the Balgownie-Blackdog Links Local Nature Conservation Site, an extensive coastal site with the eastern part consisting of beach and sand dunes. Typical dune vegetation consists of marram grass and its natural appearance contrasts with the manicured expanses of golf course fairways and greens further inland. Patches of gorse and small areas of planted trees are also dotted amongst the links. To the south, Donmouth Nature Reserve has a diverse range of habitats, including salt marsh, mudflats and scrub.

Land use is mainly recreational, with opportunities for a range of informal activities including beach recreation, bird watching and walking. Its proximity to the city means the beach is very well used by the public and is particularly popular for surfing. The area also has a long history of use for golf links. The Royal Aberdeen Golf Club was established in 1780, and its course has been in its present coastal location since 1888. Much of the area is also managed for nature conservation. The area itself has no roads and public access is limited to a footpath through the dunes to the beach, from a car park to the north of the Don.

The landscape is treeless, although ornamental planting near the exhibition centre, which lies immediately to the west of the area, has a localised influence. Built development is very sparse, limited to golf clubhouses and associated outbuildings. The bridge across the river Don is a locally prominent feature and is particularly notable from the sea and nearby roads. It is a traditional masonry structure which carries the main road north out of the city. Although just outside of the area, the wind turbine at the nearby energy park is visible from the surrounding open dunes.

There are a number of historic structures which reflect the importance of the coast to strategic defence and to the local economy. Berryhill salmon netting station (a Listed Building) dates from the early 19th Century and has an unusually complete interior. It is still in use as a netting station today. A series of WW2 defences occur along the beach, including pillboxes, and concrete anti-landing blocks. Decades of movement by water and sand has caused them to be eroded and moved out of alignment. A March Stone on the south bank of the River Don, marking the boundary of the medieval burgh of Aberdeen, is a Listed Building. It is inscribed with a Ω symbol and is known as the 'Omega Stone' because it is the last one in the series.

The cuttings and embankment of the private railway line which connected the Strathbathie brick and tile works with the depot at Bridge of Don can be seen within the landscape. Following closure of the brick and tile works in 1924, the line was purchased by the Murcar Golf Club, which ran a passenger service until 1949.

Views are panoramic and extensive, following the north-south sweep of the coast from Girdle Ness lighthouse in the south to fade out northwards towards Balmedie and Forvie. Inland, views are restricted by nearby built development and trees along the western edge of the Aberdeen Exhibition Conference Centre, although there are some longer views along the Don Valley from the mouth of the river. The extensive system of dunes and sandy beach and a general lack of visible development contribute to a natural character and the beach has a strong sense of exposure to the elements.

Management Guidelines

The coast is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. This character area provides an important contrast between the land and sea and is heavily influenced by dynamic natural processes.

- a) Conserve the continuous swathe of sandy beach
- b) Conserve the strong natural, undeveloped character (and absence of roads and lighting).
- c) Maintain natural dynamic coastal processes and avoid the introduction of hard coastal defence structures.
- d) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of sensitive beach and sand dune habitats, and the diverse range of habitats at Donmouth Nature Reserve.
- e) Avoid large scale woodland planting.
- f) Any new tree planting should be near the inland periphery where it could help soften the urban edge.
- g) Maintain and sensitively enhance footpath access through the dunes, seeking opportunities to reduce erosion pressure.
- h) Explore opportunities for improving the North Sea Trail.
- i) Conserve features of archaeological and historical interest, notably the salmon netting station pillboxes and tank traps, and their setting
- j) Maintain the open character and uninterrupted panoramic views along the coast and out to sea.



Species rich dunes



In play at Murcar Links



King Street Bridge at Donmouth



Rugged sand dunes



WWII pillbox



Royal Aberdeen Links fairway



Murcar Links



Diverse dunes at Donmouth

LCA 8: Blackburn (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



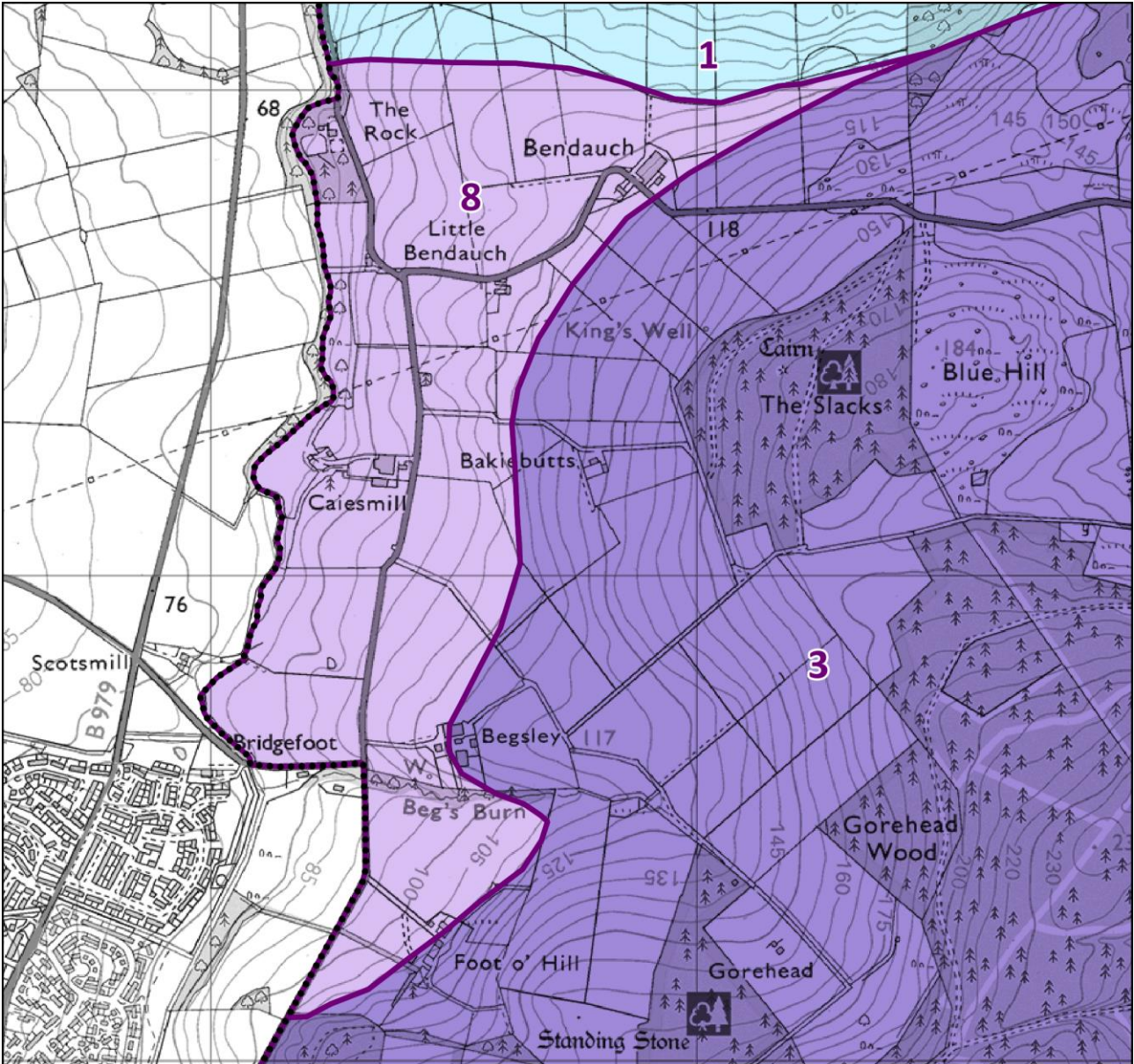
Location and context

Blackburn is a small area in the north-western part of the city which is defined by the eastern slopes of a small valley, containing the Black burn. The burn flows northwards into the nearby river Don and forms the administrative boundary to the city. The valley extends westwards into Aberdeenshire, up to a nearby ridgeline west of the burn. To the east, there is a gradual transition to the nearby slopes of Blue Hill (*Tyrebagger Hill* LCA) which along with Little Hill to the south, form an important containing backdrop to the valley.

Key characteristics

1. A small valley landform with a narrow valley floor and shallow valley sides rise gently towards the nearby lower slopes of Blue Hill.
2. Along the gently meandering course of the Black burn, semi-natural habitats consist of a linear pattern of damp broadleaved woodland, riparian trees and marginal vegetation.
3. Across the valley side, there is little woodland cover although small wooded policies and groups of trees are associated with farmsteads, roads and field boundaries.
4. Land use is predominantly pastoral farming, with medium-sized rectilinear fields divided by either low stone dykes or post and wire fences.
5. Settlement is limited to occasional farmsteads along the valley side with the nearby village of Blackburn providing a partly settled context to the area.
6. Local roads, often lined with old beech trees, and adjacent farm tracks follow the valley landform.
7. A traditional agricultural character with a strong pattern of early twentieth century roads and farmsteads.
8. Views are primarily confined to the valley although there are some longer views to the north over the Don valley and of the nearby slopes of Blue Hill to the east.
9. Despite the nearby urban influence of Blackburn, the landscape has a mostly rural character, relative sense of tranquillity and detachment from the city.

LCA 8 boundary




Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 8
Blackburn

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The area has a small valley landform shaped by metamorphic bedrock overlain with glacial till and sands. Along the narrow valley floor, the gently meandering Black Burn flows northwards into the nearby River Don. To the east, the valley sides rise gently to the nearby lower slopes of Blue Hill which form part of *Tyrebagger Hill* (LCA 3). Within Aberdeenshire, the valley is contained by a nearby low-lying ridge to the west of the burn. Although there are some small tributaries within the Aberdeenshire part of the valley, there are none within the Aberdeen part.

To the north of the area, a linear pattern of semi-natural damp broadleaved woodland habitats that form the Kinaldie Den Local Nature Conservation Site contribute to a strong sense of intimacy and natural character. Riparian trees and marginal habitats also line the burn further to the south.

Across the valley side, land use is mainly agricultural with medium sized rectilinear fields of pasture and occasional arable divided by either low stone dykes or post and wire fences. There is little woodland cover although small angular shelterbelts and groups of trees are associated with farms. Distinctive beech trees also line parts of minor roads that follow the topography of the valley sides. Apart from occasional farmsteads, the area is devoid of settlement although the nearby settlement of Blackburn is visible at the southern end of the area.

The Historic Land Use Assessment shows the area as being rectilinear fields and farms, but the varying size and orientation of fields suggests that the area was not enclosed as a single unit. The present pattern of roads and farms is largely unchanged since 1909, and the 19th Century farmhouse at Bendauch is a Listed Building. Landscape variety is provided by the pockets of smallholdings, managed woodland and designed landscape (around The Rock) found at the north-western edge of the LCA.

Curtailed by landform and with a north to south orientation, views are primarily confined to the valley although there are some longer views to the north over the Don Valley and beyond. To the south, the settlement of Blackburn restricts views. To the east, the wooded slopes of the *Tyrebagger Hill* LCA form an important visual focus from within the lower-lying valley.

Despite the nearby urban influence of Blackburn, the landscape has a prevailing undeveloped rural character, experience of tranquillity and a strong sense of detachment from the city.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the management of damp broadleaved woodland, riparian trees and marginal vegetation habitats.
- b) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would maintain key views, maintain a balanced open / wooded landscape and help to define or contain urban edges to the city.
- c) Encourage the planting of broadleaved trees near to farmsteads and along field boundaries.
- d) Conserve the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes.
- e) Maintain the undeveloped character of the valley floor and the pattern of occasional farmsteads scattered along the valley side.
- f) Conserve the rural character of minor roads and maintain the associated avenues of beech.
- g) Maintain any open views north over the Don valley and of the nearby slopes of Blue Hill to the east.
- h) Maintain the rural character, relative sense of tranquillity and detachment from the city.



Looking north-west across valley



Black burn



Looking towards north-east towards Tyrebagger Hill



Looking south-west towards Blackburn



Black burn



Beech lined minor road



Strong rural character



Transition to Tyrebagger Hill

LCA 9: West Brimmond (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



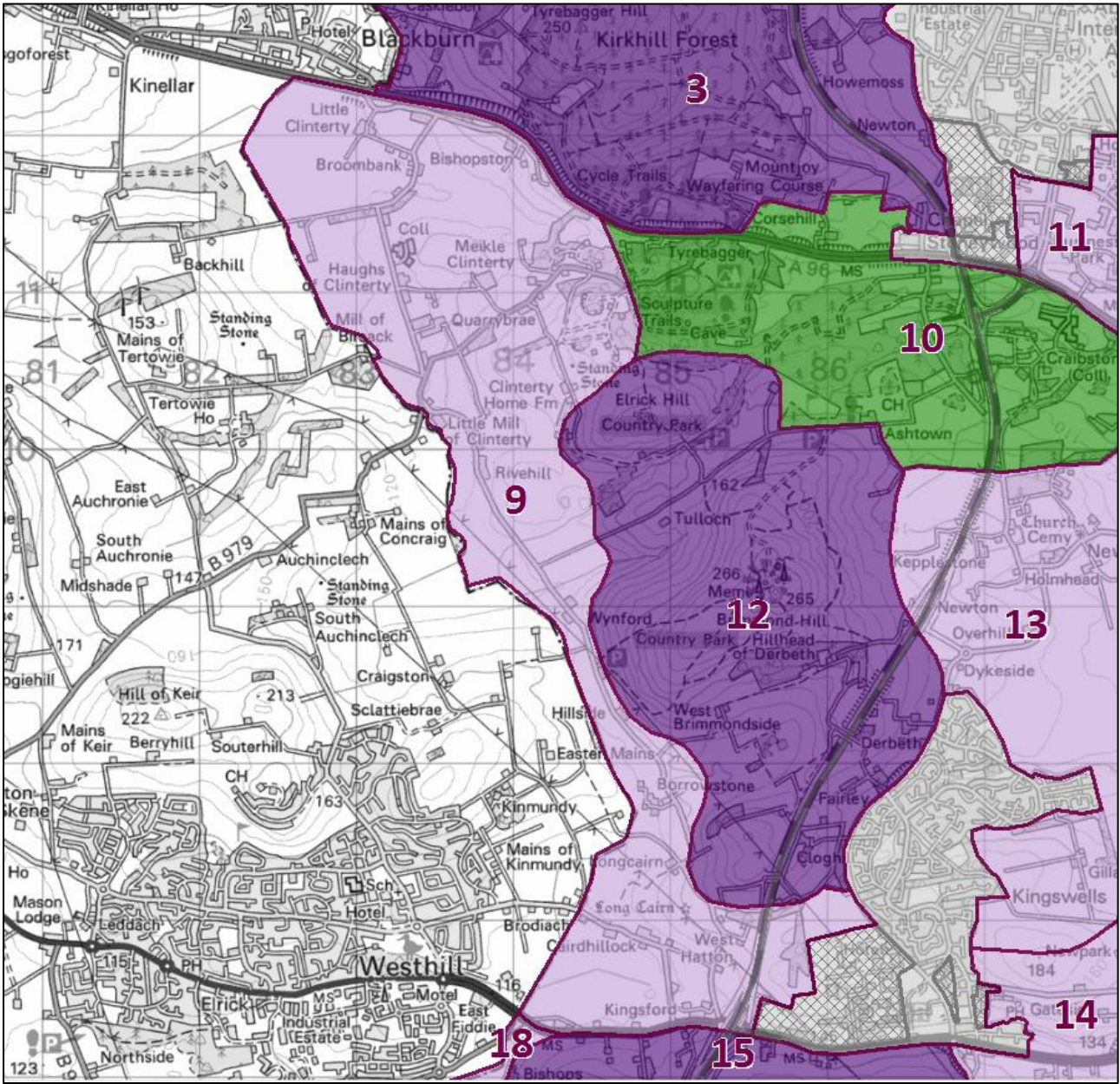
Location and context

Located on the western periphery of the city boundary, this landscape character area comprises a small valley landform which extends into Aberdeenshire. Narrow in the south, where it is strongly contained by the steep slopes of Brimmond Hill, this landscape broadens out to the north in the Clinterty area to form a gently undulating basin. The A944 forms the boundary to the south and the A96 to the north. Both these routes are aligned at the foot of hill slopes which mark a topographical change, influencing landscape character area boundaries.

Key characteristics

1. A small undulating valley landform that, to the north of the area, broadens out to form a more expansive gently undulating basin. The meandering Littlemill burn is contained within the valley.
2. Limited woodland cover of small angular conifer shelterbelts and groups of trees associated with farms although the lower slopes of Elrick Hill around Clinterty House are more wooded.
3. A mosaic predominantly of arable and pastoral land use with a strong pattern of medium-sized rectilinear fields divided by either low stone dykes or post and wire fences.
4. Settlement is relatively limited with a pattern of regular spaced farms along the valley sides, particularly in the north of the area. Occasional groups of houses are also scattered within the broad basin of Clinterty where an agricultural college, a Travelling Persons Site and some light industry are also evident.
5. Several busy minor and local roads cross the landscape, providing links between the major routes of the A944 and A96.
6. Variations in field size and orientation suggest a gradual process of enclosure, possibly over several centuries.
7. Confined views in the south are restricted by the steep slopes of Brimmond Hill, while views from the Clinterty area are more open and tend to focus on the hills of Elrick and Tyrebagger.
8. Although the landscape has a distinct rural character and is detached from the city, surrounding busy roads to the north and south limit the experience of peace and tranquillity.

LCA 9 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 9
West Brimmond



- Landscape Character Area
- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
- AWPR

- Landscape Character Type
- Low Hills
 - Undulating Open Farmland
 - Urban
 - Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Shaped by glacial till deposits, the undulating valley landform which contains the Littlemill burn, fringes the high hills which lie to the west of Aberdeen. The administrative boundary of the city follows this burn (and other related watercourses on a similar alignment) and the western valley slopes extend into adjacent Aberdeenshire. A broad and gently undulating basin, with a flat area formed by superficial clay silts, opens up to the north. This is edged by the smaller Elrick Hill and rolling ground of Clinterty Wood to the east and a ridge of undulating farmland to the west. To the south of Clinterty, the valley landform narrows where it is confined by the steep slopes of Brimmond Hill and smaller ridges and hills to the west within Aberdeenshire. Further south, the landform broadens out towards to a relatively flat area to the north of the A944.

Agriculture is the main land use, consisting mainly of rectilinear arable fields divided by low stone dykes and fences, with pasture more prevalent on upper valley sides. Farms are aligned at the foot of Brimmond Hill in the south and more widely dispersed in the north. There are also small pockets of rough grazing and smallholdings. Long shelterbelts, predominantly comprising pine and spruce, are often planted perpendicular to the valley sides, provide some sense of localised enclosure. The landscape retains estate influences in its planting and buildings, particularly around Clinterty. Semi-natural habitats are limited to riparian trees and marginal vegetation along the burn.

The landscape generally has an open character, but is more wooded to the east, close to Elrick Hill. Small clusters of houses, framed by groups of broadleaved and conifer trees, are dotted throughout the Clinterty area. A former agricultural college, a Travelling Persons Site and some pockets of light industry with relatively large buildings are also present in the Clinterty area. Busy minor and local roads cross the landscape providing links between the major routes of the A944 and A96. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route also passes across the southern part of the area.

The variations in field size and orientation suggest a gradual process of enclosure, possibly over several centuries. Around Kingswells there are areas of planned rectilinear fields and farms, which are likely to date from the Mid-19th Century. These contain some of the most impressive consumption dykes in the Aberdeen area, with some designated as Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The earliest surviving man-made features within the landscape are the prehistoric standing stone at Little Clinterty and long cairn at West Hatton Croft. Both are Scheduled Monuments.

Views are confined south of Westhill, restricted by the slopes of Brimmond Hill and the low rolling ridges which contain the western side of the Littlemill burn in Aberdeenshire. Views from the Clinterty area in the north are more open and tend to focus on the hills of Elrick and Tyrebagger, but also on large industrial/business park buildings on the southern fringes of the settlement of Blackburn and traffic using the busy A96. To the south, road users along the A944 and Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route also have views across nearby parts of the area.

Although this landscape has some rural character and is detached from the city, heavily trafficked minor roads and intermittent views of the A96 and A944 make it relatively busy.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the management of woodland, riparian trees and marginal vegetation along the burn.
- b) Avoid large scale woodland planting that would detract from open parts of the valley.
- c) Encourage the planting of broadleaved trees and small woodlands clumps near to farmsteads and large buildings.
- d) Conserve the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes.
- e) Conserve the pattern of regular spaced farms along the valley sides and the rural character of minor roads.
- f) Maintain open views towards nearby hills.
- g) Maintain areas of open rural character.



Large farm buildings



Looking south along minor road



Looking east towards Brimmond Hill



Flat pastures south of Westhill



Looking north-west towards Bennachie



Looking north towards Clinterty



Undulating open farmland



Looking south towards lower slopes of Brimmond Hill

LCA 10: Craibstone (Wooded Estates LCT)



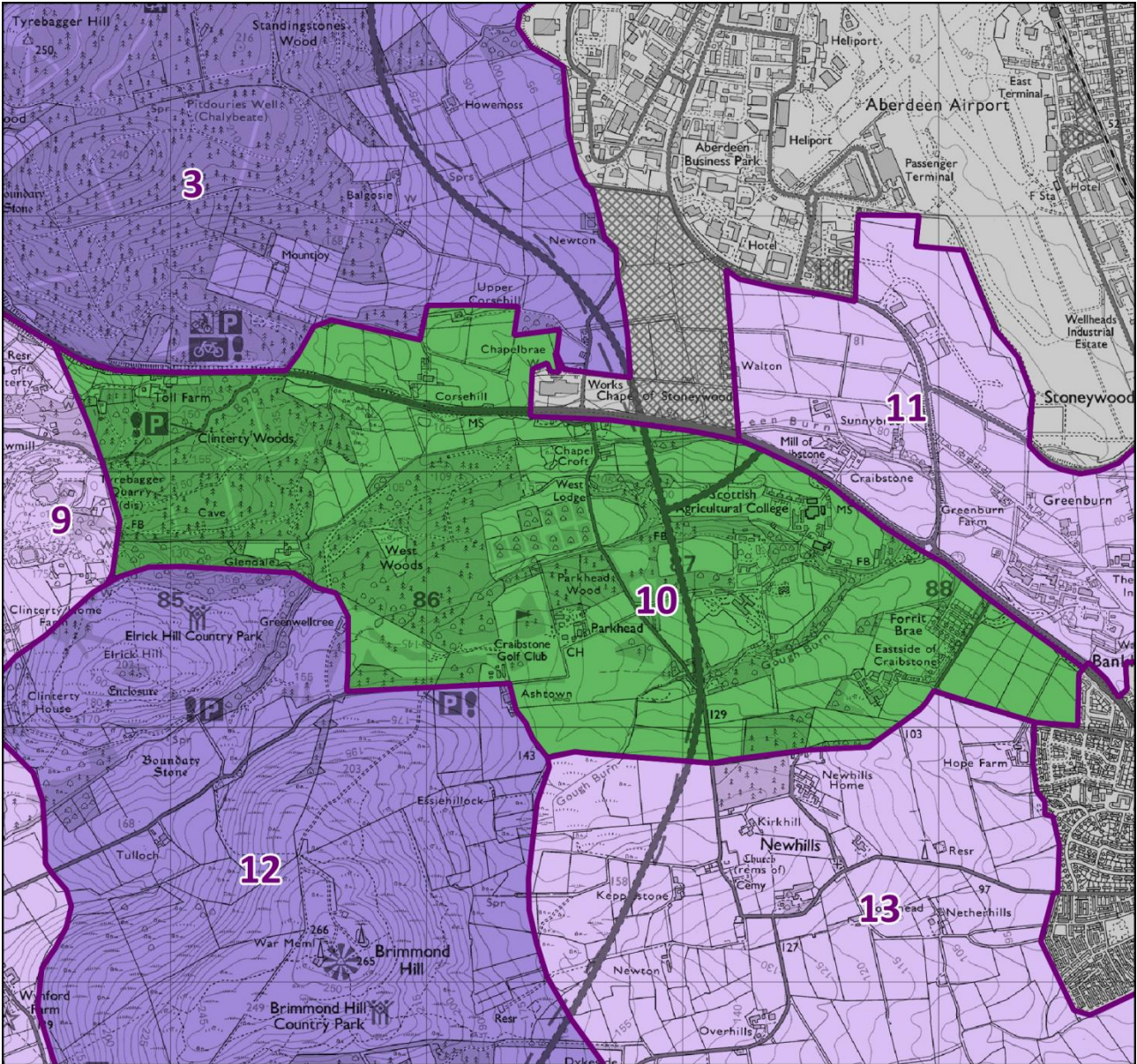
Location and context

The *Craibstone* landscape character area extends westwards from the urban area of Bucksburn, and comprises the north-facing slopes containing the broad basin of Dyce airport. It is bounded by the A96 to the north and the higher ground of Elrick Hill to the west. A long spur extending from the eastern slopes of Brimmond Hill forms a subtle ridge marking the boundary between this character area and the adjacent *Bucks Burn* (13).

Key characteristics

1. A strongly undulating landform of north and south-facing slopes that become more complex and hummocky towards the west, containing a series of small burns.
2. A well-wooded landscape with a pattern of policy woodlands and surrounding tree belts and conifer woodland blocks in the east, and extensive mixed woodlands to the west.
3. The woodlands contrasts with a pattern of scattered farmsteads set amongst geometric pockets of medium-sized regular fields, enclosed by shelterbelts in the east and low stone dykes and post and wire fences elsewhere.
4. A diverse landcover of bracken and scattered pine and birch, and occasional stands of beech planted on knolls, accentuates the more complex landform in the west. Drifts of larch, pine and beech extend down the western slopes of West Woods.
5. Extensive accessible woodlands provide opportunities for informal recreation.
6. Designed landscapes exert a strong influence with associated estate buildings, parkland and policies of mixed woodlands, broadleaved shelterbelts and beech-lined roads.
7. Views from this landscape are contained to the west by the rising slopes of Tyrebagger Hill and by dense woodland cover. Towards the east, there are open views to Aberdeen Airport, a nearby business park and longer views to the city and sea.
8. A degree of seclusion is experienced within the Clinterty Woods although the close proximity of the busy A96, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and airport limits the sense of tranquillity.

LCA 10 boundary











Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 10
Craibstone



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

- Landscape Character Type
-  Low Hills
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Urban
 -  Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

This area forms north-facing slopes overlooking the broad plain of Dyce, which is occupied by the airport. Shaped by superficial glacial till, the slopes are strongly undulating. Towards the west, at the transition with Elrick Hill, they are more rolling with small hummocks and dips shaped by small pockets of peat soils within a patch of sands and gravel of fluvial origin.

Centred on the designed landscape of the Craibstone Estate, this landscape has a well-wooded character comprising former estate policies of mixed woodlands, broadleaved shelterbelts and beech-lined roads to the east. A more diverse landcover of bracken and scattered pine and birch, and occasional stands of beech planted on knolls, accentuates the more complex landform in the west. Craibstone Golf Course lies between these two areas and is more open with younger belts of trees between the mown fairways. Drifts of larch, pine and beech extend down western slopes of West Woods onto the course. Younger plantings of pine and broadleaves provide the boundary between the golf course and adjacent farmland.

There is a relatively small proportion of farmland comprising pasture in the main. In the east, fields tend to be enclosed by shelterbelts and field trees and by low walls in the west. A few traditional farms and cottages are present, often located in wooded settings. Scotland's Rural College occupies the former Craibstone Estate and is well-screened by woodland. To the west, there is a notable lack of roads and West Woods and Clinterty Woods have a good network of footpaths.

The area includes part of the Gough Burn part of Three Hills Local Nature Conservation Site. Low-lying patches of wet heathland, willow scrub and marshy grassland provide a diverse composition of habitats along the burn.

The development and present appearance of this area has been strongly influenced by the Craibstone and Clinterty Estates. It is a well-established landscape, with the 1909 Ordnance Survey map showing Craibstone House surrounded by plantation woodland and farmland, with the plantation woodlands of the Clinterty estate to the west. Listed Buildings include the chapel of Stoneywood Graveyard, on the site of the Chapel of St Mary of Stoneywood, founded in 1367, and March Stones. A line of March Stones (marking the boundary of land which was the responsibility of the medieval burgh of Aberdeen) roughly follows the southern edge of this area.

Views from this landscape are mainly contained to the west by the rising slopes of Tyrebagger Hill and by denser woodland cover. Elsewhere, there are open views to Dyce Airport and associated peripheral business park development, and longer-range views to the city and sea. Parts of this landscape is visible from the A96 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route although the well-wooded character of the area tends to screen views of built development.

A degree of seclusion is experienced within the Clinterty Woods although the proximity of the busy A96 and airport limits a sense of tranquillity. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route also cuts through the area, increasing the sense of busyness and activity.

Management Guidelines

- a) Safeguard the strongly undulating landform of slopes and complex, hummocky landforms, appreciation of these from the gateway route is an important part of the landscape.
- b) Conserve and enhance the diversity and well-wooded character of policy woodlands, tree belts, coniferous woodland blocks, extensive mixed woodlands and beech-lined roads.
- c) Maintain the pattern of scattered farmsteads set amongst geometric pockets of medium-sized regular fields, enclosed by shelterbelts or low stone dykes.
- d) Maintain and enhance the recreational value of forests and woods, and the network of footpaths that connect them.
- e) Maintain open views towards nearby hills.
- f) Maintain the sense of seclusion experienced within Clinterty Woods.



Grazed pastures to south



Hummocky landform in the west



Craibstone Golf Course



Looking south towards Brimmond Hill



Woodland footpath through Clinterty Woods



Looking north-west towards Tyrebagger Hill



Looking northeast over Craibstone Golf Course



Wooded pastures near A96

LCA 11: Greenburn (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



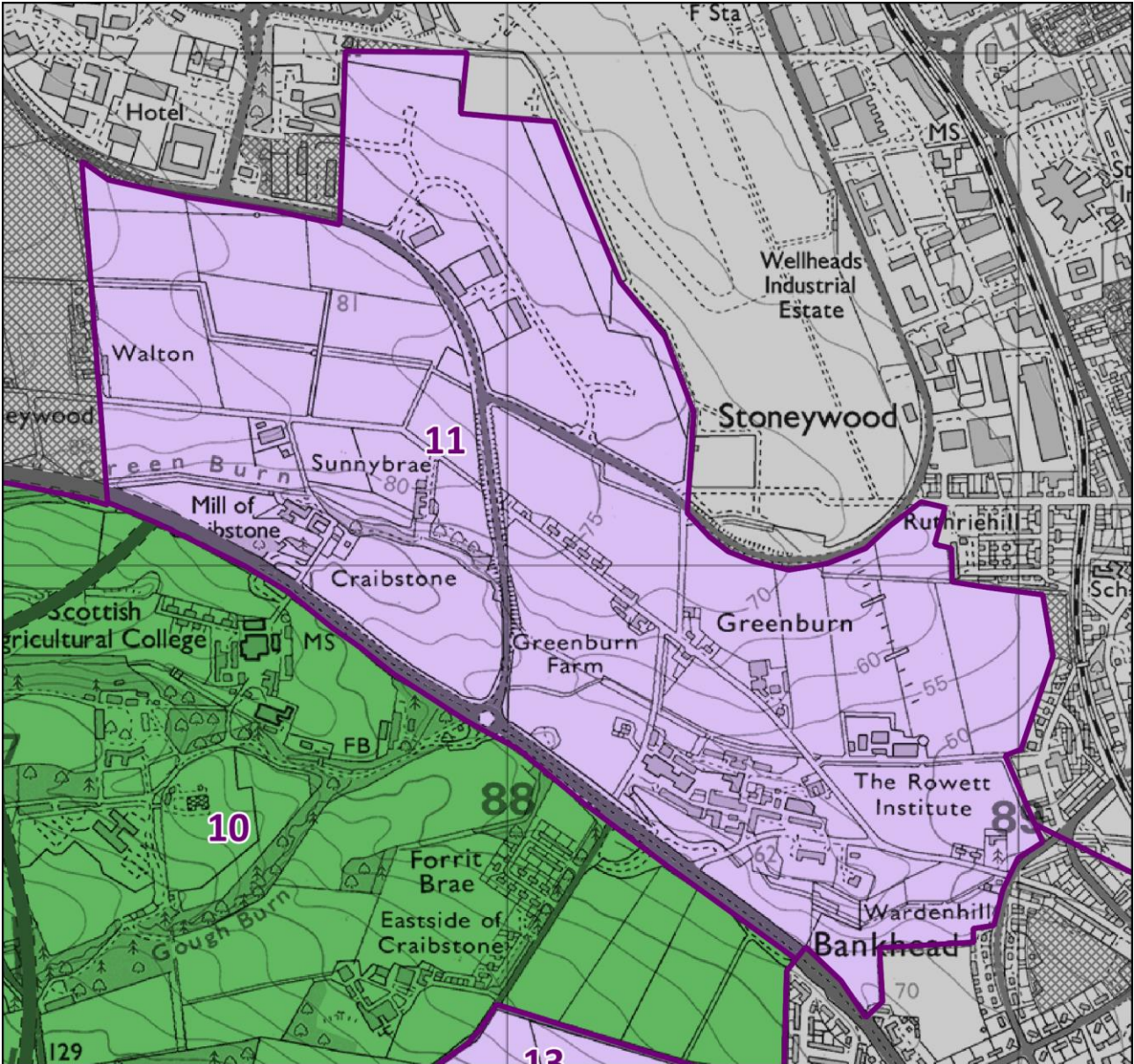
Location and context

Centred on Green burn, this landscape character area is situated to the south of Aberdeen Airport. The urban edge of Dyce and Bankhead form the eastern boundary and the busy A96 forms the southern edge. To the south-west of the area, there is a gentle transition to the wooded landscape of *Craibstone* (LCA 10). Although the majority of the landscape is farmed at present, the entire character area is allocated for development and as such, is likely to become part of the urban area in the near future.

Key characteristics

1. The relatively straight alignment of the Green Burn is contained by a small valley landform with a very narrow valley floor and gently rising valley sides.
2. Woodland cover consists of a few small mixed woodland blocks and policy woodlands associated with the Craibstone Estate. Occasional areas of riparian trees with marginal vegetation along the river banks accentuate the course of the burn.
3. Landuse is mostly pastoral medium sized rectilinear fields enclosed by post and wire fences and scrubby vegetation.
4. There is a pattern of farms associated with the minor road that follows the topography of the valley sides
5. Settlement and development is generally sparse, consisting of occasional farmsteads with some large modern barns, some of which appear abandoned. Near the airport there is a cluster of large industrial and commercial buildings, with an abandoned cluster of buildings at Rowett Institute to north of the A96.
6. Curtailed by landform and with an east to west orientation, views are primarily confined to the valley and the gently rising backdrop of woodlands to the south of the A96.
7. The nearby airport and residential areas on the edge of the city have a significant urban influence on the setting of the valley.
8. The A96 trunk road and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route junctions are constantly busy and give a sense of movement and a near constant background of noise.





LCA 11 boundary






Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 11
Greenburn

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

- Landscape Character Type
-  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Urban
 -  Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The area has a small valley landform of gently rising valley sides. A narrow valley floor, shaped by till deposits with some alluvium towards the south, contains the narrow and straight alignment of Green burn. The burn flows off the nearby slopes of Brimmond Hill and flows eastwards towards the River Don. To the south of the A96, the valley sides continue to rise and these form part of the prevailing wooded character of the adjacent *Craibstone* (LCA 10).

Woodland cover is limited to small mixed woodland blocks associated with farmsteads, while riparian trees mark the course of the burn in places. To the south-west, there is a parkland influence associated with the Craibstone Estate, most of which is located in LCA 10 to the south.

Land use is predominantly improved grassland, enclosed by post and wire fences and scrubby vegetation, and the Historic Landuse Assessment shows the majority of the LCA to be rectilinear fields and farms. Settlement appears to be related to topography. Farms and cottages are along Walton Road and Greenburn roads, on the south-facing slope of the valley side.

There are several farmsteads, some of which appear abandoned, are associated with the minor road that follows the topography of the valley sides. Near the airport there is a cluster of large industrial and commercial buildings, to the north of the A96. The nearby airport and residential areas on the edge of the city have a significant urban influence on the setting of the valley.

The busy A96 runs along the southern boundary and as the area is allocated for development, most of the farm buildings appear to be disused. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is also being constructed nearby to the west of the area.

Curtailed by landform and with an east to west orientation, views are primarily confined to the valley and the gently rising backdrop of *Craibstone* LCA to the south of the A96. Road users along the A96 also have views of the area.

With the A96 corridor to the south and significant pressures for change encroaching from surrounding areas, the sense of any rural character is limited and noise from nearby main roads gives the area sense of busyness.

Management Guidelines

The entire landscape character area is allocated for development in the 2017 Local Development Plan with Opportunity Sites OP18 (Craibstone North and Walton Farm– housing), 19 (Specialist Employment) and 23 (Dyce Drive – Business/Industry). In the event that developments do not proceed or are delayed, the following management guidelines apply:

- a) Safeguard the valley landform, centred on Greenburn.
- b) Encourage advanced tree planting to enhance the setting of future development and improve wildlife habitats, including riparian trees.
- c) Encourage advanced tree planting close to the A96 to mitigate the noise effects of the road and enhance the gateway route to the city.
- d) Conserve and enhance riparian, tree and woodland habitats and connectivity.
- e) Maintain the settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and minor roads related to the valley topography.
- f) Maintain views to the backdrop of woodlands to the south of the A96.



Small valley landform



Farm track near Aberdeen Airport



Derelict farm buildings



Looking south-east across valley



Looking south-west across valley



Rowett Institute



Looking south across valley



Recent construction activity

LCA 12: Brimmond Hill (Low Hill LCT)



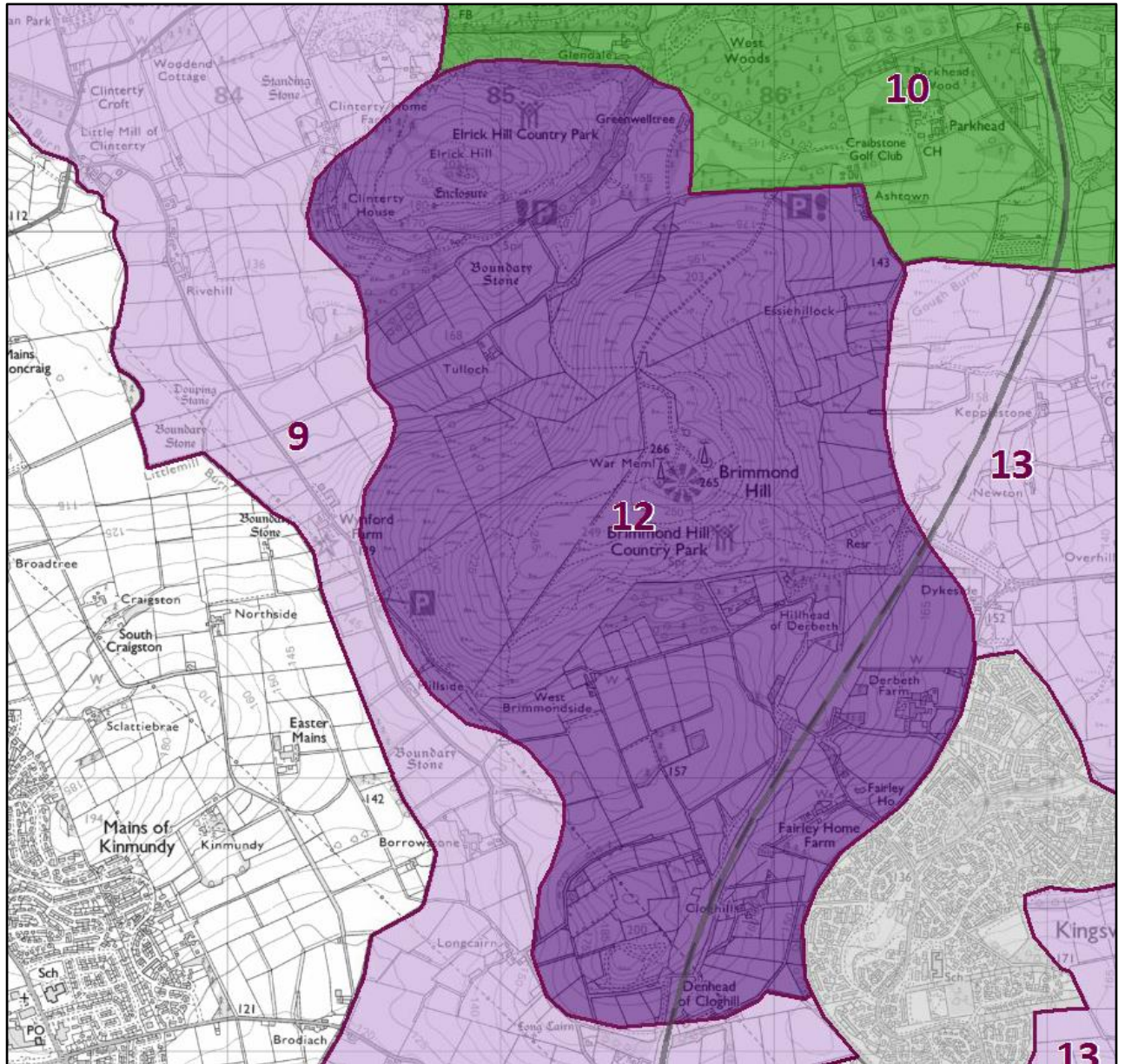
Location and context

Brimmond Hill, and the smaller hills lying to the north and south, form part of the distinctive arc of hills which partly encircle Aberdeen to the west. This landscape character area also includes the lower ridge and smaller hill of Cloghill lying to the south of Brimmond Hill, Elrick Hill to the north and the western and eastern slopes of Brimmond Hill which extend towards adjacent lower-lying farmland. The wooded *Craibstone* (LCA 10) forms the northern boundary, *Bucks Burn* (LCA 13) and Kingswells to the east, and *West Brimmond* (LCA 9) to the south and west.

Key characteristics

1. A landform of gently rounded hills and smooth slopes form a prominent western edge and skyline to the city. The summit of Brimmond Hill is the highest point in Aberdeen.
2. With an extensive coverage of dry heathland with patches of dense gorse and scrubby birch across upper slopes and summits, Brimmond Hill is one of the largest areas of semi-natural habitat in the city.
3. Open upper slopes and hill summits contrast with a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields divided by rough stone dykes with post and wire fences across lower hill slopes.
4. Accessed by minor roads that follow landform, a pattern of compact farmsteads, occasional larger dwellings and small woodland blocks are located on lower hill slopes.
5. Centred on Brimmond Hill and Elrick Country Parks, land use is predominantly recreational with a network of footpaths accessed from car parks situated along the lower hill slopes.
6. Faint outlines of abandoned fields can be seen on higher slopes and some medieval rig and furrow mark parts of hill slopes, which indicate a history of agricultural use.
7. From the upper slopes and summits, there are panoramic views eastwards across the city to the sea and westwards over undulating farmland to Bennachie and the Grampian hills.
8. Brimmond Hill forms a prominent landmark, seen from parts of the city and from surrounding lower-lying farmland.
9. The upper slopes and summits appear detached from the city with a strong sense of exposure and naturalness.

LCA 12 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 12
Brimmond Hill

- Landscape Character Area
- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
- AWPR

- Landscape Character Type
- Low Hills
 - Undulating Open Farmland
 - Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

At 266 metres AOD, Brimmond Hill is the highest point within Aberdeen city and forms a broad, rounded undulating ridge formed mainly of metamorphic rock. Superficial till covers much of the character area with small patches of sands, gravels, boulders and river terraces to the west. This shapes a landform of smaller rounded hills, including Elrick Hill lying to the north and Clog Hill to the south. The landform of north-western slopes of Brimmond Hill is more complex, interlocking with the lower, rounded Elrick Hill which merges with the knolly, small scale landform found in the adjacent *Craibstone* (LCA 10).

Brimmond Hill is one of the largest areas of continuous semi-natural habitat in the city. The high ground is covered with dry heathland, colonised by dense gorse scrub. Patches of birch and Scots pine are present on the lower slopes. Elrick Hill supports a mosaic of habitats with dry heathland and acid grassland on the top of the hill with bracken and colonising birch/rowan trees around the margins and more established woodland at the base of the slopes. Occasional wet flushes are present on the hillside. Clog Hill is capped by rough grassland and gorse although enclosed pastures extend onto upper slopes.

Compact farmsteads are located on lower hill slopes with some larger properties present at Clinterty (Clinterty House) and on south-eastern slopes (Fairly and Kingswells Houses). The densely clustered late 20th/early 21st century settlement of Kingswells lies to the south-west of Brimmond Hill. The long south-western slopes of the hill contain the edge of this settlement and the hill is an important feature in the wider setting of Kingswells. There are notable estate buildings within this LCA, including the Listed Buildings of Fairley House (c.1800) and the offices of Cloghill House. The early 20th Century Clinterty House (also listed) was designed by W.J. Duelin and is set in wooded grounds. A narrow and eroded metalled road provides access to the summit of Brimmond Hill from a small car park to the north of the hill and is well used by walkers. A network of footpaths forms part of the Four Hills Country Walks. A minor road follows low ground between Elrick and Brimmond hills while the busy B979 skirts the foot of these hills to the west.

Historic features within the landscape help to tell its story. Although today much of the area is a recreational landscape associated with the Country Park on Elrick Hill and Brimmond Hill, in the past the extent of agricultural land was greater. Faint outlines of abandoned fields can be seen on the higher slopes of Brimmond Hill, which may be associated with past population pressure demanding use of marginal land, or with a climate which was more conducive to agriculture than today's. Landscape change has occurred relatively recently within this LCA. For example, the 1909 Ordnance Survey map shows Elrick Hill to be wooded, whereas today it is relatively open. Today, farmland is generally located on the lower slopes. It comprises a mixture of rectilinear fields and farms, and smallholdings, which add to the diversity of landscape pattern. There is also a number of older structures within the landscape, including a prehistoric hut circle at Hillhead of Clinterty on the north-west slope of Elrick Hill (a Scheduled Monument), and March Stones along the southern side of Elrick Hill (Listed Buildings), which mark the boundary of lands which were the responsibility of the medieval Burgh of Aberdeen.

Brimmond Hill forms a prominent landmark feature seen widely from the city and surrounding farmland, easily recognisable because of its profile, colourful landcover and the masts on its summit. It appears most prominent in views from the south and west where its steep slopes rise from lower-lying farmland.

The more natural vegetation cover contrasts with nearby urban and intensively farmed areas and expansive views from these hills to the Grampian hills and Bennachie to the west provide a rural prospect. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will cut through the lower slopes to the north-west of the Kingswells area.

Management Guidelines

As part of an arc of hills to the west of the city, this character area is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's skyline and landscape. It is prominent in open views and can be seen from several main transport routes.

- a) Safeguard the character of the hill and slopes as a prominent skyline feature in views from surrounding areas and the city.
- b) Conserve and enhance the extensive coverage of dry heathland with patches of dense gorse and scrubby birch across upper slopes and summits.
- c) Encourage the planting of broadleaved trees near to farmsteads and existing woodlands.
- d) Avoid planting woodlands which would detract from open parts of the hill and hill slopes
- e) Maintain the undeveloped character of upper slopes and summits and the strong sense of exposure and relative naturalness they provide.
- f) Maintain the patchwork of arable and pastoral fields divided by stone dykes across lower hill slopes.
- g) Conserve stone dykes.
- h) Safeguard the setting of listed buildings and archaeological remains.
- i) Maintain the network of footpaths and improve the provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, car parking and signage.
- j) Maintain the panoramic open views from areas of higher ground.



Erick Hill



Small area of coniferous woodland near summit



Brimmond Hill from north



Looking north-west towards Bennachie



Looking north-east towards the coast



Seating near to summit



Informal recreation



Extensive heather

LCA 13: Bucks Burn (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



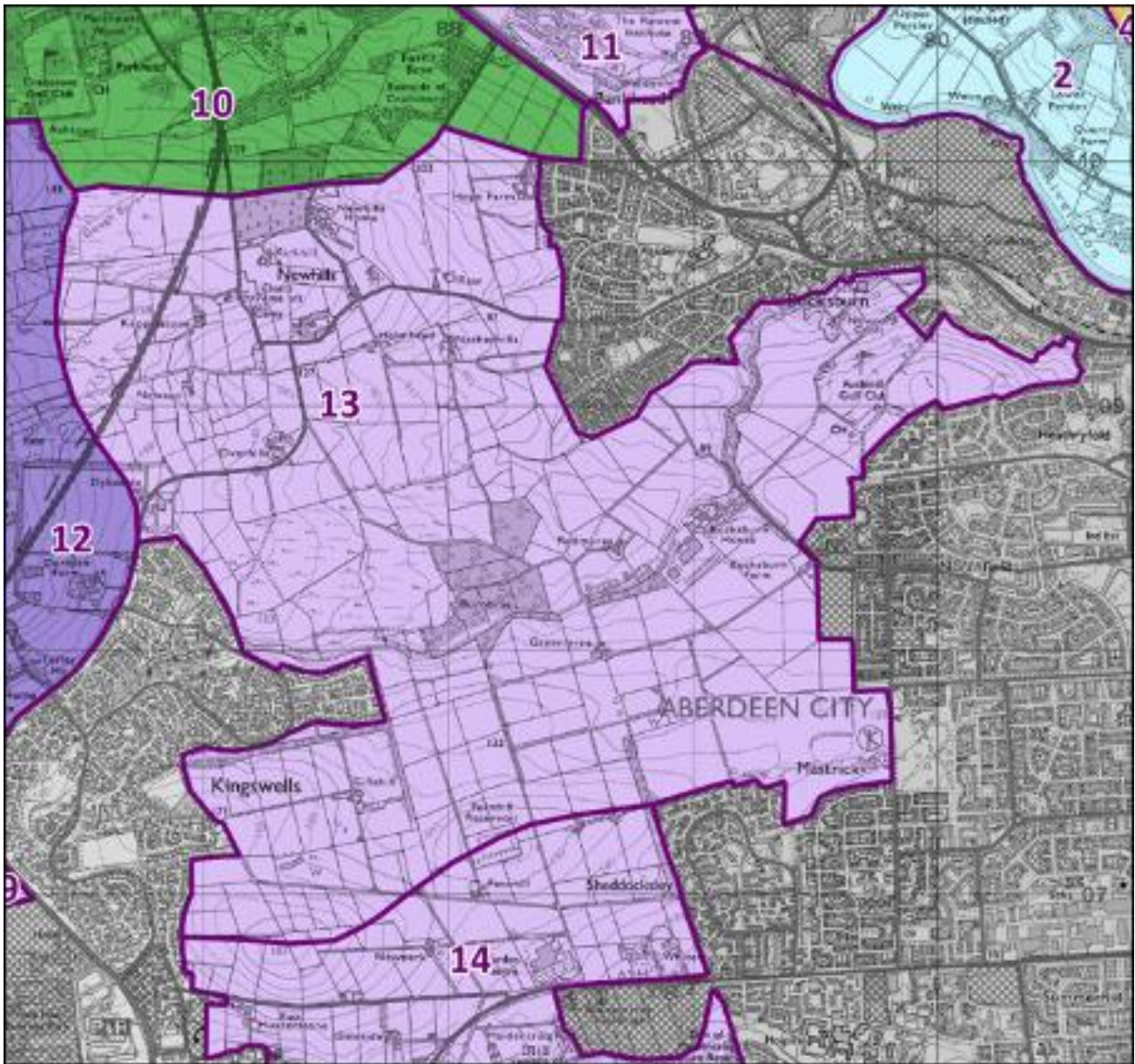
Location and context

The principal focus of this landscape is the broad and shallow basin of Bucks Burn which lies between the western urban edge of the city and the settlement of Kingswells. The long east-facing slopes of *Brimmond Hill* (LCA 12) border this landscape to the west while distinct ridges of higher ground provide definition to the south and north. *Den Burn* (LCA 14) is located to the south and *Craibstone* (LCA 10) to the north. The urban area of the city adjoins the eastern boundary.

Key characteristics

1. A broad and shallow basin formed around Bucks burn is contained by a series of gently rolling ridges aligned east-west.
2. Woodland cover is sparse, limited to scattered small coniferous woodlands. Striking beech shelterbelts pattern the slopes of the ridge which contains this landscape to the south.
3. Patches of neutral grassland, rush pasture and wet heath, and linear broadleaved woodland along the burn accentuates its course across the landscape.
4. Land use is predominantly improved grassland with occasional arable fields.
5. Enclosure patterns are diverse and although much of the area contains rectilinear fields, there are some rare medieval and post-medieval S-shaped and curvilinear-shaped fields, enclosed by low stone dykes and fences, often lined with clumps of gorse and occasional small boundary trees.
6. Farms and houses of various ages and styles are dispersed along minor roads or on lower slopes. The southern ridge within this landscape forms the landscape setting to the settlement of Kingswells.
7. Historic features which indicate a history of settlement include consumption dykes close to Kingswells and a cluster of Listed Buildings around Newhills, including the ruined church.
8. Views are generally contained by rising ground although long views to Dyce Airport and the city are possible from more elevated areas and also along the valley of the Bucks burn. Brimmond Hill is prominent to the west.
9. Although the landscape retains a degree of rural character, roads are often busy.

LCA 13 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 13
Bucks Burn



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Undulating Wooded Farmland
-  Urban
-  Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 10002340L

Description

This landscape is formed of a series of gently rolling east-west aligned ridges of metamorphic and igneous rock overlain with till. The broad valley and shallow gradients of the Bucks burn is shaped by superficial till deposits with small patches of alluvium in the north and a small patch of peat in the north-east of the area. The area is contained by a higher ridge of rounded hills to the south and the long slopes of Brimmond Hill to the west. The Bucks burn is a tributary to the Don and generally forms an inconspicuous feature in the landscape. Immediately east of Kingswells it is aligned through a broad flat valley. The valley becomes more incised closer to the urban edge of Northfield where the burn is dammed, forming a small pool within the grounds of Buckburn House before falling through a narrow wooded gorge.

At Bucksburn Gorge, semi-natural habitats include of broadleaved woodland and neutral grassland alongside the burn. Burnbrae Moss is an area of mainly wet heath and gorse shrub on the north side of Kingswells. There is also rush pasture and neutral grassland, with a very small area of planted broadleaved woodland.

A small coniferous woodland is located near Newhills and a stand of spruce has been planted on an area of gently domed moss in the Buck Burn valley. Beech shelterbelts are a striking feature on the fringes of Kingswells and on the northern slopes of the ridge between this settlement and Sheddocksley. Mixed farmland covers drier slopes and is divided into medium-sized fields by low stone dykes and fences, often lined with straggly clumps of gorse.

The largely late 20th/early 21st Century settlement of Kingswells lies in a dip between Clog Hill and the southern ridge which contains this landscape. Farms and houses of varying ages and styles are dispersed along busy minor roads or set on lower slopes. In contrast, Newhills Old Parish Church and graveyard occupies a prominent ridgetop location. Newhills Old Parish Church and churchyard are part of a cluster of Listed Buildings, which also include the Manse and Newhills House. The boundary of the lands for which the medieval Burgh of Aberdeen was responsible runs through the northern part of this area, and as a result there is a line of March Stones (Listed Buildings) crossing the landscape from east to west.

The Historic Landuse Assessment shows many different stages of enclosure patterns. The oldest are rare Medieval/ Post medieval reverse-S-shaped fields near Newton, and a small area of irregular medieval/ post-medieval curvilinear-shaped fields between Redmyres and Kirkhill. The reverse-S- shaped fields formed as a result of medieval open-field ploughing, where the oxen pulling the plough had to be turned before they reached the end of the field. Over time, this led to a curved shape, and these curves are sometimes 'fossilised' in field boundaries. Both of these field patterns represent remnants of the earlier medieval field pattern which was largely lost during the later process of agricultural improvement and the laying out of more regular fields. These medieval fields may well be rare surviving features from the 'Freedom Lands' which surrounded the medieval Burgh. Much of the area is covered by later rectilinear fields and farms, with pockets of rough grazing (in the lowest-lying areas) and smallholdings. In the southern part of the area (around Fernhill) there is a relatively large area of planned rectilinear fields and farms (likely to date from the Mid-19th Century), with a clear grid pattern of fields. Associated with these are consumption dykes, with Rough's Cairn designated as a Scheduled Monument.

Views from the core of this landscape are generally contained by rising ground outside the LCA although long views to Dyce Airport and the city are possible from more elevated areas and along the valley of the Bucks Burn. This area is highly visible in views from Brimmond Hill. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will also cut through the lower slopes of Brimmond Hill in the north of the area.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the sparse scattered woodlands, the riparian broadleaf woodland and beech shelterbelts.
- b) Encourage the planting of small scale broadleaved woodlands and trees near to farmsteads and other woodlands.
- c) Maintain the open character of the landscape.
- d) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of important habitats including broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland, rush pasture, wet heath, gorse and scrub.
- e) Conserve field patterns, especially rare medieval and post-medieval S-shaped and curvilinear-shaped fields, enclosed by low stone dykes and fences, often lined with clumps of gorse and occasional small boundary trees.
- f) Maintain the dispersed settlement pattern.
- g) Safeguard the setting of important historic features such consumption dykes, the cluster of Listed Buildings around Newhills and Newhills ruined church from built development.
- h) Maintain the opportunity to view open views towards nearby hills and over the city, from more elevated areas and along the valley of the Bucks Burn.



Looking south-west towards Kingshill



Looking south from Newhills Cemetery



Bucks burn



Looking across Burnbrae moss



Undulating open farmland



Newhills Cemetery



Looking east towards city



Footpath links north of Kingswells

LCA 14: Den Burn (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



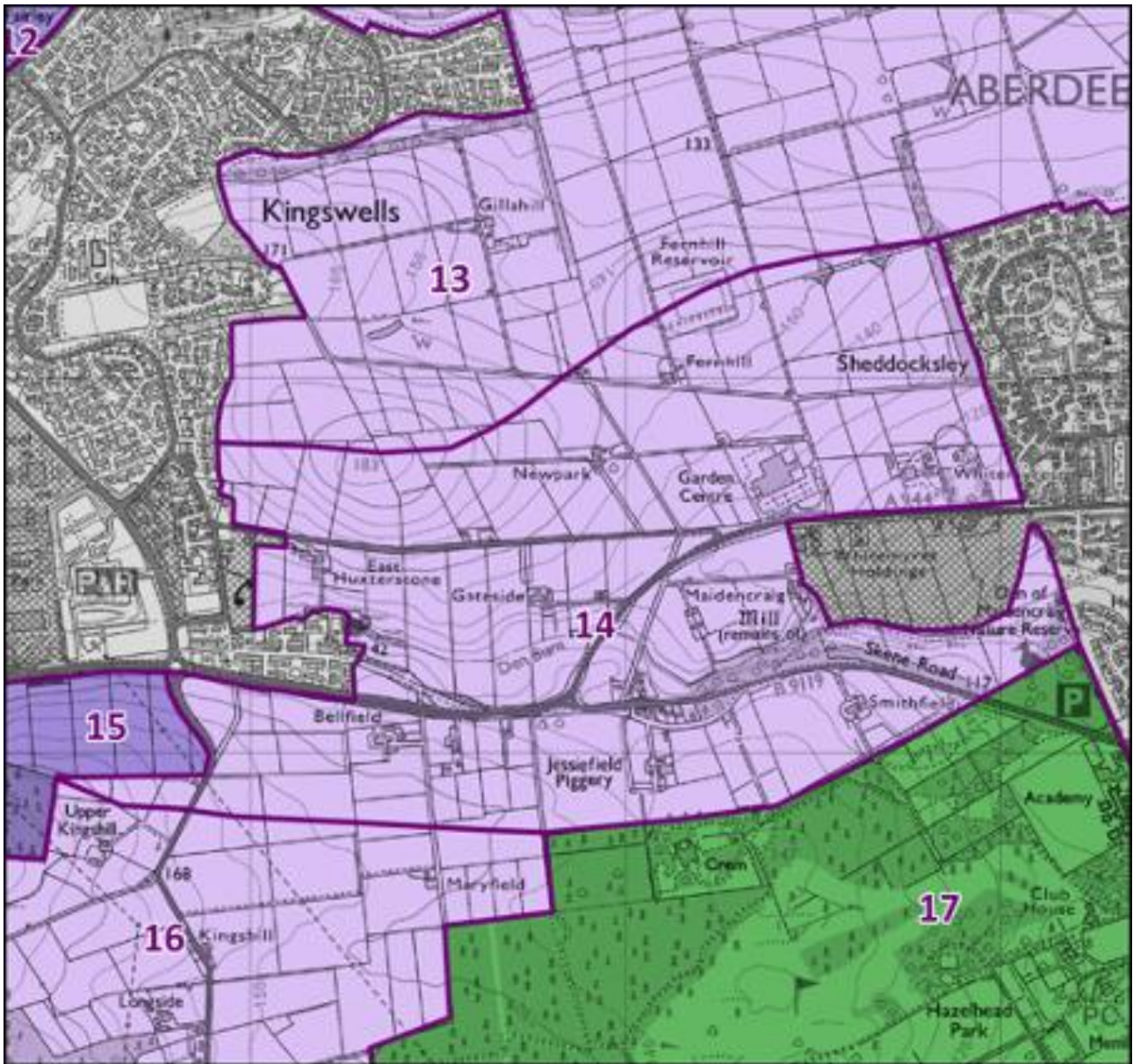
Location and context

This landscape comprises a shallow valley landform centred on the Den Burn. It is contained by the slopes of a ridge which extends from Kingswells and Sheddocksley to the north, by more gently graded slopes along the wooded fringes of *Hazlehead Park* (LCA 17) to the south-east, and the adjacent landscape character area of *Bogskeathy* (LCA 16) to the south-west. The eastern edge is defined by the urban edge of the city.

Key characteristics

1. This area consists of a shallow valley landform that contains the small, meandering Den Burn. It flows within a narrow, gently curving valley contained by steeper slopes to the north and more gently graded slopes to the south.
2. Broadleaved woodland along the Den of Maidencraig encloses a distinctive secluded valley with a relatively semi-natural character.
3. Land use is predominantly improved grassland with occasional arable fields. A strong pattern of stone dykes along the valley sides contributes to a rural character.
4. Field patterns are diverse, including planned and unplanned rectilinear fields, with an extensive area of smallholdings to the south of the A944.
5. Woodland and tree cover include small wooded polices, groups of mature trees planted around farms and houses, occasional field trees while beech trees and tall conifers line the main roads.
6. Stone built farms and houses are scattered across lower valley sides with a network of major and minor roads and farm tracks forming a grid across the landscape.
7. There are long views to the city and the sea along the open valley near Kingswells and the clock tower of Woodside Hospital forms a key focus in these views.
8. A sense of seclusion is experienced within the Den of Maidencraig and although parts of the landscape retain a degree of rural character, roads are often busy.




LCA 14 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 14
Den Burn

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

- Landscape Character Type**
-  Low Hills
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Urban
 -  Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Located between Kingswells and Sheddocksley, the landform consists of a narrow gently curving valley contained by steeper slopes to the north. Superficial glacial till deposits shape gently graded slopes to the south. Underlain with sections of alluvium, the Den Burn flows across a narrow floodplain and becomes more incised to the east at the Den of Maidencraig.

The Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve consists of a small semi-natural woodland thought to be ancient woodland and provides an important green link into the city. The site also supports a variety of other habitats, including broadleaved woodland along the valley sides, and small patches of open heathland, rush pasture, scrub woodland and neutral grassland scattered along the valley.

There is little woodland elsewhere, although coniferous woodlands on the northern edge of Hazlehead Park and the crematorium provide a wooded backdrop to the area. Groups of mature trees and woodland policies are associated with the farms and houses which are located on lower valley sides and intermittent trees trace the course of Den Burn. Steeper banks fringing the burn are patterned with gorse and areas of rush are present on the narrow floodplain.

Farms and houses are scattered across lower valley sides throughout and the nearby settlement of Kingswells and the western edge of Aberdeen have a significant urban influence on the area. There is also a garden centre to the east and a large cemetery to the south. The A994 that leads west out of Aberdeen follows the line of the valley and mature beech and conifer trees lining the road as it enters the built up area form a notable feature.

Much of the area is covered by rectilinear fields and farms and planned rectilinear fields and farms, which give the landscape a strong geometric pattern of fields, particularly where they are divided by stone consumption dykes. The field pattern continues across an extensive area of holdings to the south of the A944, and newer land uses (such as the garden centre) also respect the older landscape patterns in their boundaries. Older roads and tracks are relatively straight and follow the field alignments. However, the A944 has been re-aligned in recent years and now curves through the grid pattern.

Whitemyers House (Late 18th Century) is a Listed Building within a small designed landscape comprising trees and lawns. There are also several traditional farms and cottages, including the Listed Building of Old Whitemyers, and the remains of Maidencraig Mill on the Den Burn.

There are long views to the city and the sea along the open valley near Kingswells. The granite Victorian clock tower of Woodside Hospital forms a key focus in these views. Views into this valley are fairly limited to the east as woodland, the valley landform and built development tend to screen views from roads.

The urban edge of Kingswells and the city is highly visible from this LCA and busy roads contrast with rural parts of the area. A sense of seclusion is also experienced within the Den of Maidencraig.

Management Guidelines

- a) Safeguard the shallow valley landform that contains the small, meandering Den Burn, appreciation of these from the gateway route is an important part of the landscape.
- b) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of important habitats along the den including broadleaved woodland, rush pasture, scrub and neutral grasslands.
- c) Maintain the open character of the landscape
- d) Conserve tree belts, wooded policies and settlement planting, and encourage the planting of small broadleaved woodlands near to settlements.
- e) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape and enhance gateway routes to the city
- f) Conserve the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes.
- g) Safeguard the setting of Listed Buildings and the remains of Maidencraig Mill on the Den Burn.
- h) Maintain the open views along and across the valley towards the city and sea.
- i) Maintain the semi-natural character and sense of seclusion within the Den of Maidencraig, and pockets of rural character elsewhere.



Looking across stone dykes towards city



Looking west along Den Burn



Informal recreation



Path through Den Burn



Looking south-west towards Kingshill/edge of Kingswells



Looking east from Den Burn



Looking north across valley landform



Core Path east of Kingswells

LCA 15: Kingshill (Low Hill LCT)



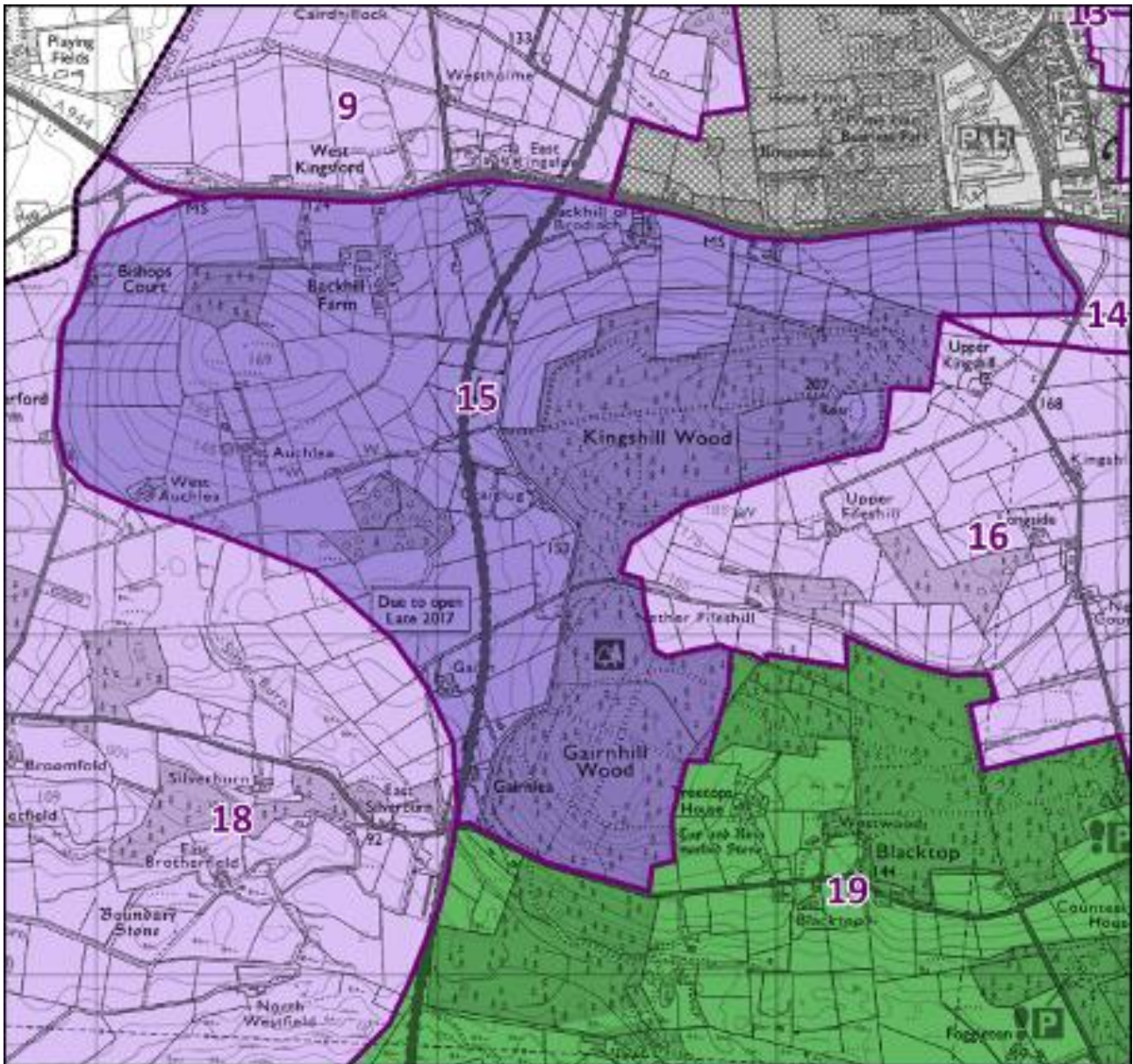
Location and context

Kingshill is a small landscape character area covering a group of three distinct, but low, rounded hills lying on the western fringes of Aberdeen, close to the Aberdeenshire border. The boundary of this character area is formed by the A944 in the north and the lower edge of woodlands on Kingshill and Gairnhill to the east. This landscape has a more complex landform to the south-west where it merges gradually with the landscape character area of *Leuchar and Silver Burn* (18).

Key characteristics

1. A landform of three gently rounded hills lying on the western fringes of Aberdeen with a more complex small-scale landform in the south-west.
2. Across areas of higher ground, forestry is the main land use where extensive geometric coniferous forests cover most of Kingshill and Gairnhill, with small patches of bracken, gorse and birch colonizing steep slopes and small hummocks.
3. In contrast to forested upper slopes, a strong pattern of rectilinear fields and some small pockets of smallholdings across lower slopes are enclosed by stone dykes and post and wire fences.
4. Settlement is dispersed and limited to farms located on lower hill slopes, with small clumps of broadleaved trees commonly planted near buildings.
5. Farm tracks, lined by mature Scots pine and spruce line farm tracks in places, are accessed by minor roads that follow the curved landform of lower hill slopes.
6. Opportunities for views out from this character area are often restricted by dense forestry and landform although from some roads, there are elevated views to the north and west.
7. This landscape is sparsely settled and can feel relatively remote from the city, with a distinctive rural character.





LCA 15 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 15
Kingshill

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

- Landscape Character Type**
-  Low Hills
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

These gently rolling hills form the southern outliers of the arc of rolling hills which lie on the western edges of the city. At 207 m AOD, Kingshill is the highest, but when seen as a cluster, the hills appear to link with the higher Brimmond and Tyrebagger hills to the north. Till covers most of the area although there is a large patch of peat in the west that supports a range of wet semi-natural habitats.

Despite their limited height, around 200m AOD, the hills seem quite pronounced in views from the west where they are viewed in the context of lower-lying farmland around Westhill in Aberdeenshire. A more complex small-scale landform of interlocking slopes and hummocks occurs in the south-west at the transition with *Leuchar and Silver Burn* (18). A small burn lies in the narrow dip between the hills, draining southwards to the Dee

Bracken, gorse and birch colonizing steep slopes and capping small hummocks accentuate the complexity of the landform in this area. The two highest hills are mostly capped with coniferous woodland, much of this composed of thinned stands of Scots pine, fringed with birch and occasional beech. The margins of these woodlands are often angular, dovetailing with the field pattern on lower slopes. Areas of forestry notably contrast with the agricultural land use across lower hill slopes. Groups of Scots pine, spruce and beech shelter dispersed farmsteads and houses and occasionally line farm tracks. Pastures enclosed by low stone dykes and fences cover lower hill slopes and much of the lower western hill. An area of birch scrub, rough grass and heath is present on flatter wetter ground between the hills. There are also small pockets of smallholdings and managed woodland. Wet woodland, rush pasture, small areas of upland birch woodland, broadleaved woodland and neutral and acid grassland are found at the Moss of Auchlea.

Forestry is the main land use across upper hill slopes and summits while across lower ground, improved grassland with occasional arable fields predominates. The coniferous woodlands on Gairnhill and Kingshill contain a network of tracks and paths used by walkers.

Outside the forested areas, the landscape is largely made up of rectilinear fields and farms which give it a strongly rural character. The varied size and orientation of the fields suggests that enclosure took place over a long period of time and was piecemeal in nature. Farms are fairly regularly-spaced, and many contain traditional farmhouses, as well as more modern farm buildings and dwellings.

The close proximity of these hills to Westhill and the A944 increases visibility of this character area although there are elevated views to the north and west when travelling along some roads. Users of the A944 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route also experience views across part of the area.

This landscape is sparsely settled and feels relatively remote from the city, despite the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which cuts through the lower western slopes of Kingshill and Gairnhill.

Management Guidelines

This character area is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. The low hills form the southern outliners of the arc on high ground that contains the city.

- a) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting along the lower farmed hill slopes, while maintaining the balance of areas of open space.
- b) Conserve and maintain the strong pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes.
- c) Maintain the dispersed settlement pattern.
- d) Maintain the contrast between the forested upper hill slopes and summits, and the settlement pattern of the lower slopes.
- e) Maintain the long range views experienced from elevated open areas.
- f) Maintain the distinctive rural character and sense of detachment from the city.



Northern slopes of Kingshill



Looking west from northern slopes of Kingshill



Stone dykes across northern slopes of Kingshill



Looking south from A944



Western slopes of near Auchlea



Looking south-west towards Kingshill



Looking north from northern slopes of Kingshill



Looking east towards Gairnhill

LCA 16: Bogskeathy (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



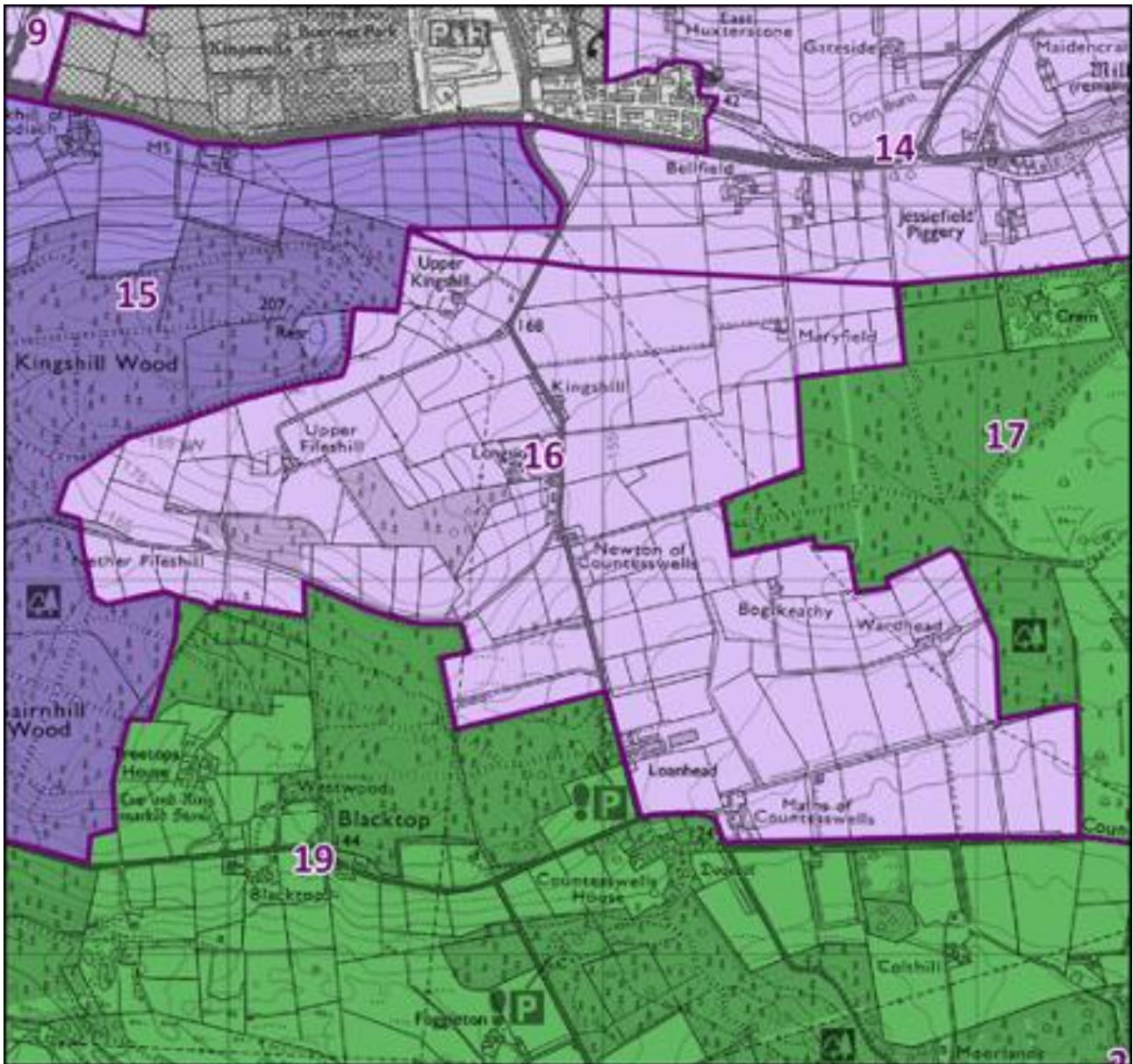
Location and context

This area forms a raised, gently sloping plateau contained by the small, softly rolling hills of Kingshill and Gairnhill to the west and a subtle ridge at the transition with *Den Burn* (LCA 14) to the north. Long-established conifer woodlands around Hazlehead Park border this area to the east while the minor road to the south marks a gradual change in elevation and woodland cover towards the adjacent landscape character area of *Countesswells* (19).

Key characteristics

1. An elevated, gently sloping plateau including a very shallow basin to the south of the area.
2. The core of the landscape has a prevailing open character although several irregular shaped coniferous woodlands, planted on higher ground on the fringes of this landscape, contribute to the strong sense of surrounding wooded enclosure.
3. The main land use is a mix of improved grasslands and occasional arable fields with some small pockets of smallholdings with occasional patches of heather, rough grassland and gorse scattered amongst the fields.
4. Planned medium-sized rectilinear fields with associated consumption dykes are enclosed by post and wire fence with stone dykes and occasional gorse and scrub.
5. Small clusters of stone houses and cottages are located along a twisting minor road, and long tracks provide access from this to several traditional farms located on lower hill slopes.
6. Rising ground and surrounding woodland limit views out from this landscape although long views to the city and the nearby settlement of Kingswells are possible from more elevated areas of open ground near to the central section of the A944.
7. The landscape retains a traditional agricultural character and although the strong visual containment of this landscape gives a feeling of detachment from the city, the minor road is busy.





LCA 16 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 16
Bogskeathy

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

- Landscape Character Type**
-  Low Hills
 -  River Valley
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Shaped by glacial till deposits, the landform of this character area comprises a raised, gently sloping plateau which contains a very shallow basin to the south. Dense plantations of mainly Scots pine and spruce planted on higher ground in adjacent areas provide a sense of surrounding containment to this prevailing open landscape. Some of these woodlands are long-established, comprising former policies associated with the estates of Countesswells and Hazlehead. Semi-natural habitats are limited to occasional patches of heather, rough grassland and gorse.

The often angular edges of woodlands that contain the unit about medium-sized mixed arable and pastoral fields. The farmland lying at the core of this landscape has a distinctly open character with a gently undulating landform and weak enclosure pattern of low broken stone dykes and fences. There are several irregular shaped coniferous woodlands, planted on higher ground on the fringes. The few individual trees which occur are generally associated with the small farms and houses which are either clustered close to the minor road, or occupy more isolated positions on gently rising ground.

Most of the area is in agricultural use, and comprises rectilinear fields and farms, with some areas of later planned rectilinear fields and farms (particularly in the eastern part of the LCA) which are associated with Mid-19th Century enclosure. These later fields are generally larger and bounded by stone consumption dykes which can be striking features of the landscape. Farms, including several traditional farmhouses, are scattered across the LCA in a pattern which has been largely unchanged for the past 100 years.

Small clusters of stone houses and cottages are located along the minor road and long tracks provide access off this road to farms raised on gently rising ground. The twisting minor road which cuts through this landscape is heavily trafficked. Transmission lines cross the northern area and are prominent within open farmland.

In general, surrounding rising ground and woodland provide some sense of containment and limit views out from this open landscape. Long views to the city from more elevated open ground in the northern part of this character area focus on the tower blocks around Northfield and the large buildings of the business park on the southern edge of nearby Kingswells. Views into the core of this landscape are very limited and its containment enhances the sense of relative separation from the city.

Although this LCA has a prevailing agricultural character and some sense of detachment from the city, the minor road is busy.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve existing trees and woodlands on higher ground to retain the strong sense of wooded enclosure, and strong sense of visual containment.
- b) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape.
- c) Conserve and enhance the connectivity of semi-natural habitats including heather, rough grassland and gorse.
- d) Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields with consumption dykes, and stone dykes.
- e) Maintain the settlement pattern of small clusters of dwellings located along a twisting minor road, and traditional farms located on higher ground.
- f) Maintain the rural character.



Open undulating farmland



Minor road is a busy commuter route



Looking south-east towards Deeside



Looking north-east towards the city



Farm track near Upper Fifeshill



Surrounding wooded enclosure



Large pylons cross the landscape



Recent construction activity of residential development

LCA 17: Hazelhead Park (Wooded Estates LCT)



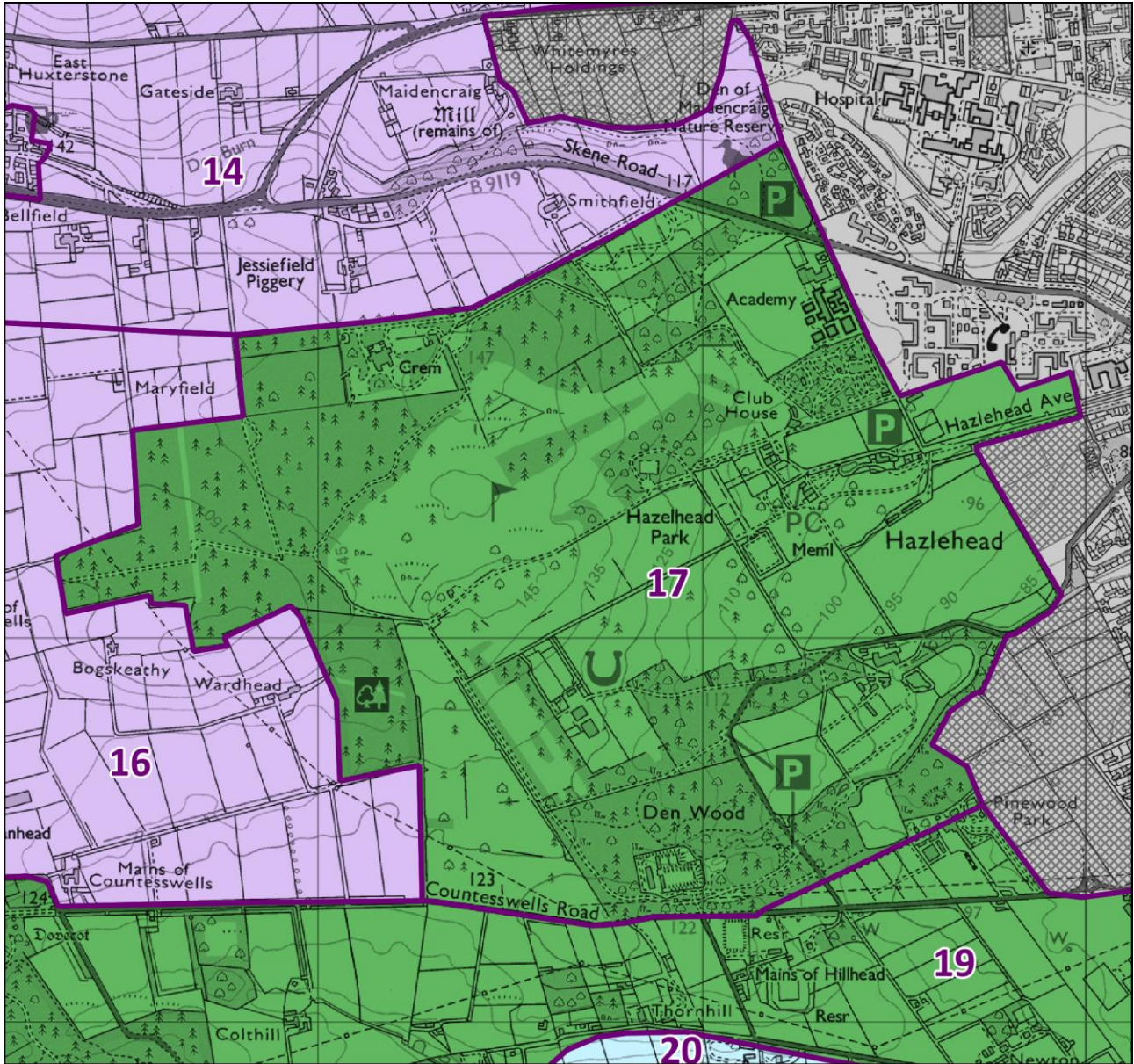
Location and context

This landscape character area comprises Hazlehead Park which lies on the western fringes of the city. As a former estate, Hazlehead Park was largely laid out in the 1920s, when it was gifted to the city as a public park. The boundaries of this character area are formed by the mature coniferous woodlands which restrict views to and from much of the park. The urban edge of the city adjoins the eastern boundary.

Key characteristics

1. A subtle domed landform that slopes gently away to flatter ground to the south-east.
2. Woodland and tree cover is extensive with a diverse composition of irregular shaped and varying sized coniferous, mixed and broadleaved woodlands, and ornamental trees in formal parkland.
3. Avenues of mature trees along tracks and paths enclose areas of open space into a series of distinct geometric compartments.
4. A highly accessible landscape with extensive recreational use. The woodlands and parkland accommodate an extensive network of well used footpaths and tracks some of which link the park to nearby urban areas.
5. The accessible edges of the area accommodate a wide range of scattered development including nurseries, a school, paddocks, garden centre and several former estate buildings and dwellings.
6. Remnants of the historic estate landscape are evident in the formal gardens and the woodland and trees present throughout the area.
7. Views are largely contained by woodland and trees although long views across the city are possible from the more elevated and open parts of the golf course.
8. The woodland that surrounds this LCA results in a sense of relative tranquillity and detachment from the city.




LCA 17 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 17
Hazelhead Park

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

- Landscape Character Type
-  River Valley
 -  Undulating Open Farmland
 -  Urban
 -  Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Set above the Dee Valley which lies further to the south, the park is located on a very gently sloping hill formed of metamorphic rock. Flatter areas to the south-east are shaped by glacial till deposits. Semi-natural habitats are relatively extensive and include a mixture of woodland types. With varying shapes and sizes, pine woodland, other coniferous woodland, mixed woodland, lowland birch woodland and other broadleaved woodland tend to form the outer edges.

A predominantly wooded landcover provides a framework within which open areas, mostly recreational in use, are set. Within the golf course the roughs contain remnants of dry heathland, with birch and Scots pine trees. The surrounding woodland contains a mixture of Scots pine and introduced conifers with occasional broadleaves around the margins. Where the tree canopy is open, there are varied mosaics of bracken, scrub woodland, neutral grassland and improved grassland scattered throughout the area.

With an extensive composition of gardens, sports pitches and a golf course, land use is largely recreational. There is an extensive network of well-used footpaths and tracks across the area. Stands of beech and Scots pine and avenues of mature trees along roads and rides form a distinct grid pattern. Paths follow a burn with small ponds and link the park with the urban area of Craigiebuckler to the east and with the Den of Maidencraig to the north.

Pastures, enclosed by low, broken stone dykes, are grazed by horses. A riding school is located in the western part of this landscape. Nurseries and maintenance yards are located close to the main access road into the park. A number of buildings are clustered around the core of the park and include some former estate buildings and a café. The telephone box at Hazelhead Park is a Listed Building. A semi-derelict group of buildings associated with a former garden centre lies in the south-east set amongst woodland and horse paddocks.

This is a former estate landscape, dating back to the Burgh's purchase of the 'Freedom Lands' in medieval times. Hazelhead Park was gifted to the city as a public park in the 1920s, although remnants of the estate landscape can be seen in the formal gardens, woodlands and mature trees present throughout the LCA. Hazelhead House (which formerly sat at the centre of the estate) was demolished in the 1950s, but its grounds have been incorporated into a municipal park, with lawns and ornamental gardens enclosed by walls, mature trees and shrubberies. A separate area contains a collection of sculptures and memorial gardens with a cafe and large car park. An extensive golf course and sports facilities add to the recreational character and land use of the LCA.

Views are largely contained by woodland and trees although long views across the city are possible from the more elevated and open parts of the golf course. Views to the park from surrounding roads and settlement are similarly restricted.

Despite its close proximity to urban areas, the screening effect of surrounding woodland results in a sense of tranquillity and detachment from the city. The park features a well-managed core but some peripheral areas are in poor condition and include semi-derelict buildings. Recent housing expansion and current sites under construction, with associated tree planting are visible from some southern parts of the Park.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the wooded parkland character and the contrast between them and open spaces
- b) Diversify the age and species mix of woodland and encourage the planting of new parkland trees.
- c) Conserve and manage the avenues of mature trees.
- d) Conserve and enhance the connectivity of semi-natural habitats
- e) Maintain and enhance the recreational use and value of extensive areas of open spaces and woodlands, and the network of paths that connect them.
- f) Conserve and enhance the remnants of the historic estate landscape.
- g) Maintain long views across the city from areas of higher ground
- h) Maintain the sense of relative tranquillity and detachment from the city.



Wooded pastures



Ornamental gardens



Looking south-east from golf course



Footpath links to nearby residential areas



Sport pitches



Hazlehead high rise flats



Wooded enclosure



Tree lined tracks

LCA 18: Leuchar & Silver Burns (Undulating Open Farmland LCT)



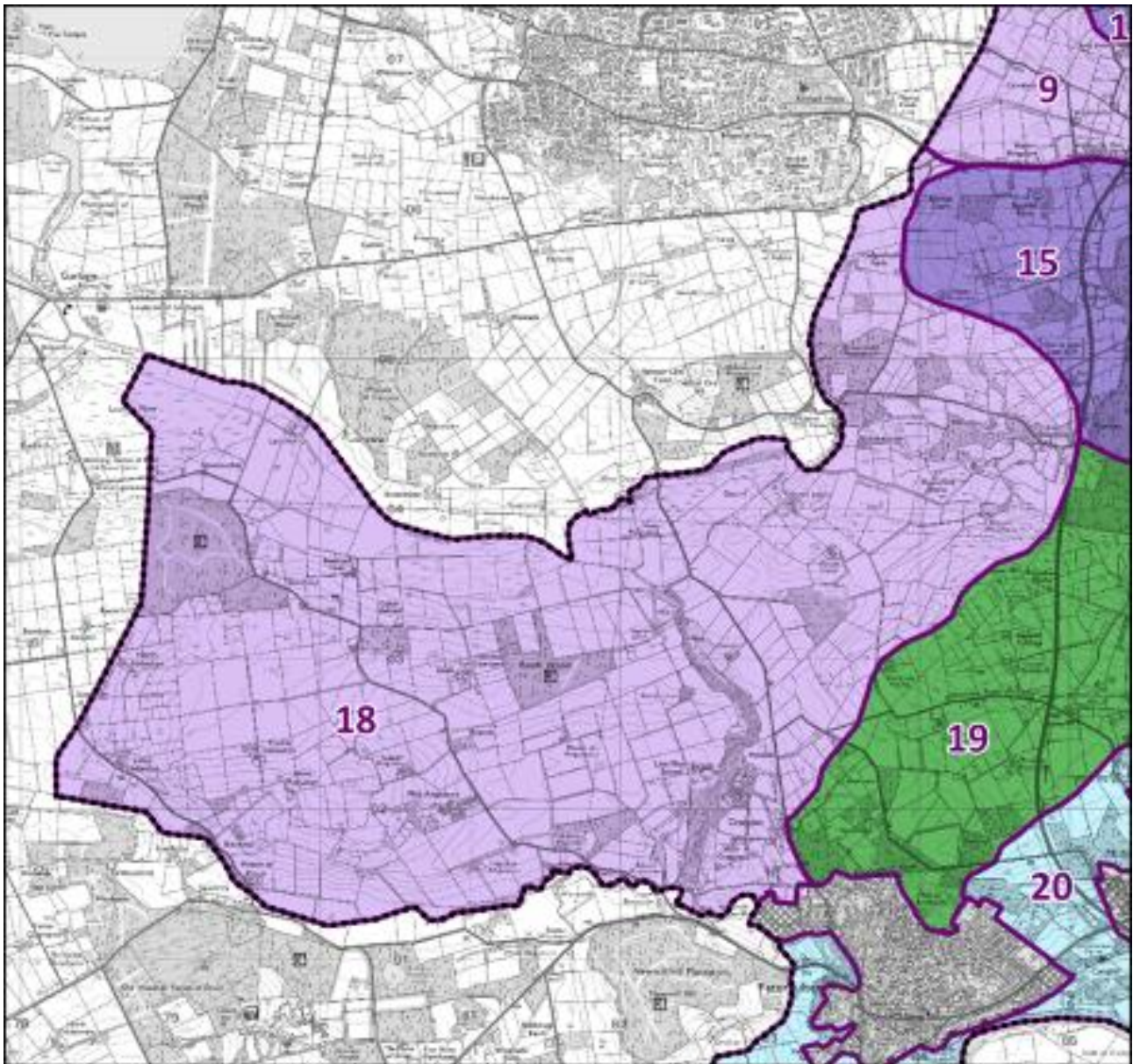
Location and context

Lying on the western periphery of the city, this landscape comprises the broad shallow basins of the Leuchar and Silver Burns and the gently undulating ridges which contain them. To the south-east, the lower Culter Burn near Peterculter, which forms a tributary of the Dee, is also included in this character area. The southern, western and northern boundaries of the LCA abut Aberdeenshire where the landscape beyond shares similar characteristics. To the east, where there is a gentle transition to *Countesswells* (LCA 19), the boundary is formed by the gentle ridge of Beans Hill and to the north-east, the slightly higher group of hills within *Kingshill* (LCA 15).

Key characteristics

1. A gently undulating landform with broad, shallow basins contained by low, smoothly rounded ridges contrasts with a more complex smaller scale knolly landform to the north-east and a small incised den to the south-east.
2. Across low-lying ground, a series of ditches drain surrounding moss and along several small burns a diverse mosaic of semi-natural wet habitats add interest to the open expanse of surrounding farmland.
3. Land use is predominantly pastoral although several large irregular geometric coniferous forests sited on higher ground are prominent amongst a surrounding pattern of medium-sized rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes, with areas of gorse or broom on hill slopes.
4. Generally located on middle slopes, settlement is sparse and consists of isolated, compact farmsteads and cottages sheltered by groups of mixed trees, forming regular point features dotted across the open landscape.
5. A limited network of winding narrow roads follow areas of raised ground and provide access to straight tracks leading to scattered farms and houses, whilst large areas of lower-lying wet ground are generally inaccessible.
6. The landscape has a traditional agricultural character with important historic features, including hut circles with associated field systems and burial cairns, indicating a long history of occupation.
7. Overall, there is strong sense of openness and expansiveness, with long views towards the Grampian hills.
8. With a prevailing undeveloped appearance, the landscape has a strong rural character with a sense of relative tranquillity and separation from the city.

LCA 18 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 18

Leuchar and Silver Burns

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Wooded Estates



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 10002340L

Description

Deposits of superficial till have shaped a gently undulating landform of wide shallow basins with small burns, contained by gently sloping ridges of metamorphic rock. The difference in relief between the valleys and ridges is generally small although in the south of the area, the land slopes more steeply towards Gormack Burn. To the south-east, the Culter Burn is contained within a steep narrow den and a more complex smaller scale knolly landform also occurs at the transition with *Kingshill* (LCA 15). Alluvium occurs along the Leuchar and Silver Burns that form inconspicuous watercourses aligned through broad, flat-bottomed valleys associated with large patches of superficial sand and gravel. In places, the series of meandering small burns have been straightened to form field drains and an area of peat forms the expanse of Leuchar Moss, in the north west.

As much of the landscape is under intensive agricultural management, a diversity of semi-habitat is largely restricted to areas of wetter ground. Leuchar Moss supports a variety of semi-natural habitats including scrub, wet woodland, rush pasture, bog, dry heath and acid grassland. Along the Silver burn, there is a small area of rush pasture, acid grassland with small areas of broadleaved woodland and gorse. Lowland fen, rush pasture and acid grassland is found at Baads Moss, while at Southlasts Mire, there is birch woodland, wet woodland, neutral grassland and rush pasture. Within the Culter Burn, much of the valley is covered by long-established broadleaved woodland.

The majority of this landscape is farmed, mostly consisting of improved pasture, but with some pockets of rough grazing which give the landscape a rougher texture and more varied pattern. Medium to large rectilinear fields are enclosed by dykes on higher ground. Pastures within the valleys, usually lying on slightly raised terraces above the floodplain, are more open with generally indistinct field boundaries. To the north of Silver burn around Broomfield, there is a small area of rare surviving medieval/ post-medieval curvilinear-shaped fields. Woodland is relatively sparse and appears prominent in a prevailing open landscape. Isolated stands largely comprise of irregular geometric plantations of spruce, larch and pine with some areas of semi-natural woodland near to burns.

Settlement is sparse with compact traditional farmsteads and cottages generally located on middle slopes, avoiding areas of lower-lying wetter ground. Groups of broadleaved and coniferous trees shelter farms and houses, forming regular point features dotted across this open landscape. Road access is limited to two winding narrow roads that follow areas of raised ground, providing access to straight tracks leading to scattered farms and houses. Within some plantations, forest tracks provide opportunities for informal recreation, accessed by small carparks. Sand and gravel extraction occurs near the Silver Burn and two wind turbines are located on the upper slopes of Beans Hill. A transmission line is aligned across the open Leuchar valley.

The landscape contains some of the earliest-surviving evidence for occupation in the area, including a late Bronze Age/ Iron Age hut circle at Eddieston, and a further cluster at Easterhill with associated field systems. To the east of the Easterhill hut circles is a cairn thought to date from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. These are all Scheduled Monuments, as is the remains of a medieval farmstead at Eddieston. The area contains a number of traditional mills and farmsteads, including two Listed Buildings at Upper and Nether Anguston.

The relative elevation of this landscape, its smooth gently rolling landform and low woodland cover combine to instil a strong sense of openness and expansiveness. This is heightened by the long views which are possible to the Grampian hills, with Bennachie forming a particular focus. This landscape is principally seen from the B979 and A944. The area has a distinct rural character and sense of detachment from the city. It is relatively tranquil, particularly in the less frequented south-western area.

Management Guidelines

- a) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would conserve the contrast between the low lying wet ground, the open agricultural land, and the forested higher ground.
- b) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of important habitats including fen, rush pasture, grasslands, dry heath, woodlands.
- c) Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes across lower ground. .
- d) Maintain the settlement pattern of regularly scattered, compact farmstead and cottages, accessed by a network of winding narrow roads.
- e) Conserve and enhance trees and small woodland clumps near to existing scattered dwellings and farmsteads.
- f) Safeguard the setting of important historic features such as the hut circles with associated and field systems and burial cairns, and the several Listed Buildings scattered across the area.
- g) Maintain the strong sense of openness and expansiveness, with long views towards the Grampian hills.
- h) Maintain the strong rural character, sense of relative tranquillity and separation from the city



Woodland blocks against open farmland



Forest carpark at Leuchar Moss



Commercial forestry on raised ground



Wind turbines and large pylons



Long range view towards Bennachie



Gormack burn



Straight farm track across open farmland



Traditional cottage and tree group

LCA 19: Countesswells (Wooded Estates LCT)



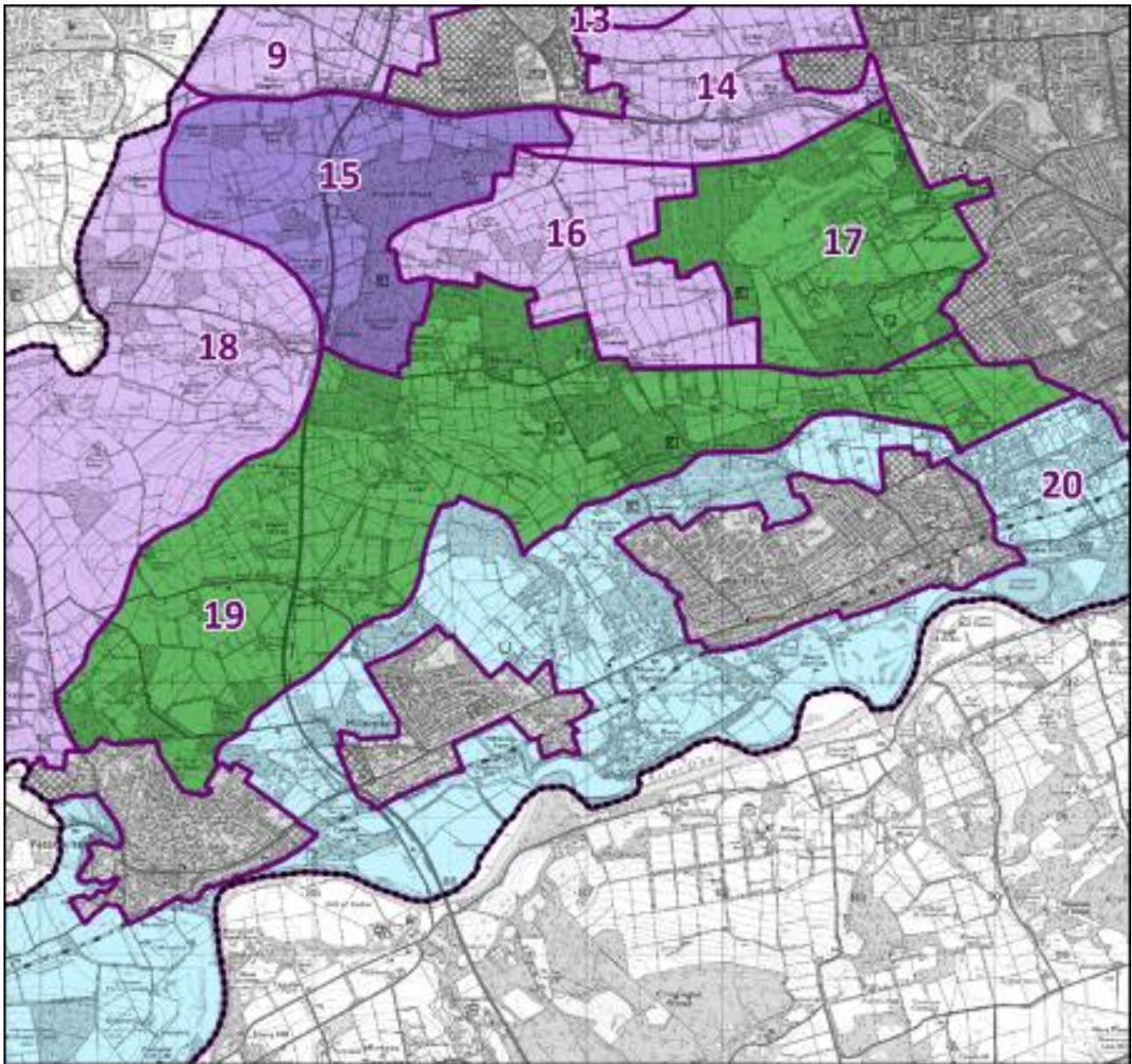
Location and context

This landscape forms an undulating plateau to the north of the *Dee Valley* (LCA 20) and is largely contained by rising ground and woodland. Conifer woodlands on the edge of *Hazlehead Park* (LCA 17) and *Bogskeathy* (LCA 16) form a backdrop along its northern boundary. The higher ground of Beans Hill contains this landscape to the west, while the eastern edge of the character area adjoins the urban area of the city.

Key characteristics

1. A prevailing gently undulating landform which contains a shallow basin with small burns slopes gradually southwards in the east and contained by rolling ridges to the west.
2. A diversity of land use, landcover and semi-natural habitats including a pattern of large geometric coniferous plantations, small blocks of broadleaved woodlands, patches of scrub, rush pasture, acid grassland, heath, bracken and neutral grassland and, to the east, horse grazing, pockets of light industry and playing fields, are scattered amongst a mosaic of pastoral fields.
3. A strong pattern of open rectilinear fields enclosed by post and wire fences and stone dykes, many lined with gorse and mature beech trees, contrast with extensive areas of woodland and trees.
4. Stone houses and former farmsteads, many of these modernised, are dispersed along narrow minor roads while the large estate houses of Countesswells and Westfield Lodge are located amidst woodland.
5. Occasional rural roads provide access to limited parts of the area although areas of forestry accommodate car parks and a network of well-used paths.
6. Parts of the landscape have a strong wooded estate character, principally due to the influence Countesswells House, its policy woodlands and a designed landscape of mature trees and parkland.
7. With a pattern of diverse woodlands scattered across the area, a variety of views are experienced ranging from short range ones enclosed by woodland that suddenly open out to longer range views from elevated areas.
8. A landscape with a relatively strong rural character with a prevailing sense of peace, seclusion and detachment from the city.

LCA 19 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 19
Countesswells



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Urban
-  Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

This landscape is formed by an undulating plateau shaped predominantly by superficial till deposits. Alluvium occurs along water courses with associated patches of peat. The landscape is more rolling in the west where it is cut by a shallow basin formed by silt deposits that accommodate a network of small burns flowing to the Dee. The eastern part of the area is more gently undulating, sloping gradually to the south towards the Dee Valley. To the south, a series of small wooded hills and gently rolling ridges form a distinct edge between this character area and the *Dee Valley* (LCA 20).

Pastoral farming is the main land use although across central parts in particular, large geometric conifer plantations and the influence of former estate landscapes contribute to a strong wooded character. Across the wider landscape, there are areas of semi-natural birch in wetter areas and pockets of rough grass, bracken and gorse scattered across gently rising ground. At Foggieton, semi-natural habitats comprise a diverse mix of woodland including birch, wet woodland, scrub woodland, upland oak, pine with some rush pasture, acid grassland, heath, bracken, neutral grassland and a small area of standing water.

There are designed landscapes around Countesswells and Mains of Hillhead and their wooded polices are important features in the landscape. Countesswells estate was established in c. 1551 so the landscape reflects estate influences over several centuries. Countesswells House and its dovecote are Listed Buildings and sit within a designed landscape of mature trees and parkland. In combination with nearby large coniferous plantations, these provide a strong sense of wooded enclosure. The variety and extent of mixed woodland, shelterbelts and mature beech bounded fields and aligning roads and rides, contribute to its diversity and a distinctive roundel is also located towards the east of the area.

Although parts are heavily wooded, the majority of the area is covered by rectilinear pastoral fields enclosed by rough stone dykes and often edged by clumps of gorse. There are some pockets of smallholdings and planned rectilinear fields with consumption dykes and field trees are particularly distinctive on the eastern slopes of Beans Hill. A line of March stones runs east from Beans Hill, marking the extent of land under the responsibility of the medieval Burgh of Aberdeen.

Stone former farmsteads and houses, many are sensitively modernised and extended, are dispersed along a limited network of narrow straight roads that generally follow the landform. Former estate woodlands are now owned by the Forestry Commission and accommodate discrete car parks and a network of well-used paths. The eastern part of this character area is strongly influenced by the urban edge and contains small walled pastures used for horse grazing. There are also transmission lines and urban fringe uses such as playing fields and a water storage facility.

Although much of this landscape is visually contained by rising land or woodland, long views are possible from elevated roads in the west towards the south Deeside hills and Grampian foothills. There are also glimpsed views of the city and the North Sea from some eastern parts of the area. Towards the south-east of the area, a bank of narrow linear walled pastures located above Cults is prominent in views from south Deeside.

Especially across central and eastern parts, a good coverage of trees and woodland contributes to a strong sense of intimacy and seclusion. Despite its proximity to urban areas, much of this landscape has a rural character with a sense of detachment from the city, particularly to the west due to the degree of containment by landform. To the east of the area, rural character is less pronounced and once operational, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will introduce noise and activity across some western parts.

Management Guidelines

- a) Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape, and help to define or contain urban edges.
- b) Conserve and enhance the diversity of landcover and semi-natural habitats including woodlands, patches of scrub, rush pasture, acid grassland, heath, bracken and neutral grassland.
- c) Maintain the strong pattern of open rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes, many lined with gorse and mature beech trees.
- d) Maintain the settlement pattern of dwellings dispersed along narrow minor roads.
- e) Conserve and enhance the recreational use and value of forests and woods, and the network of paths that connect them.
- f) Conserve and enhance the strong wooded estate character, especially the influence of Countesswells House, its policy woodlands and a designed landscape of mature trees and parkland.
- g) Maintain the variety of views ranging from short range ones enclosed by woodland that suddenly open out to longer range views from elevated areas.
- h) Maintain the strong rural character, sense of peace, seclusion and detachment from the city.



Wooded estate roads



Stone dykes and rectilinear fields, contained views



Horse paddocks in the east



Robert Gordon sports pavilion and playing fields in the east



Forest carpark and trails



Longer views, looking south-west towards Deeside



Contained views looking west towards Gairnhill



Distinctive roundel

LCA 20: Dee Valley (River Valley LCT)



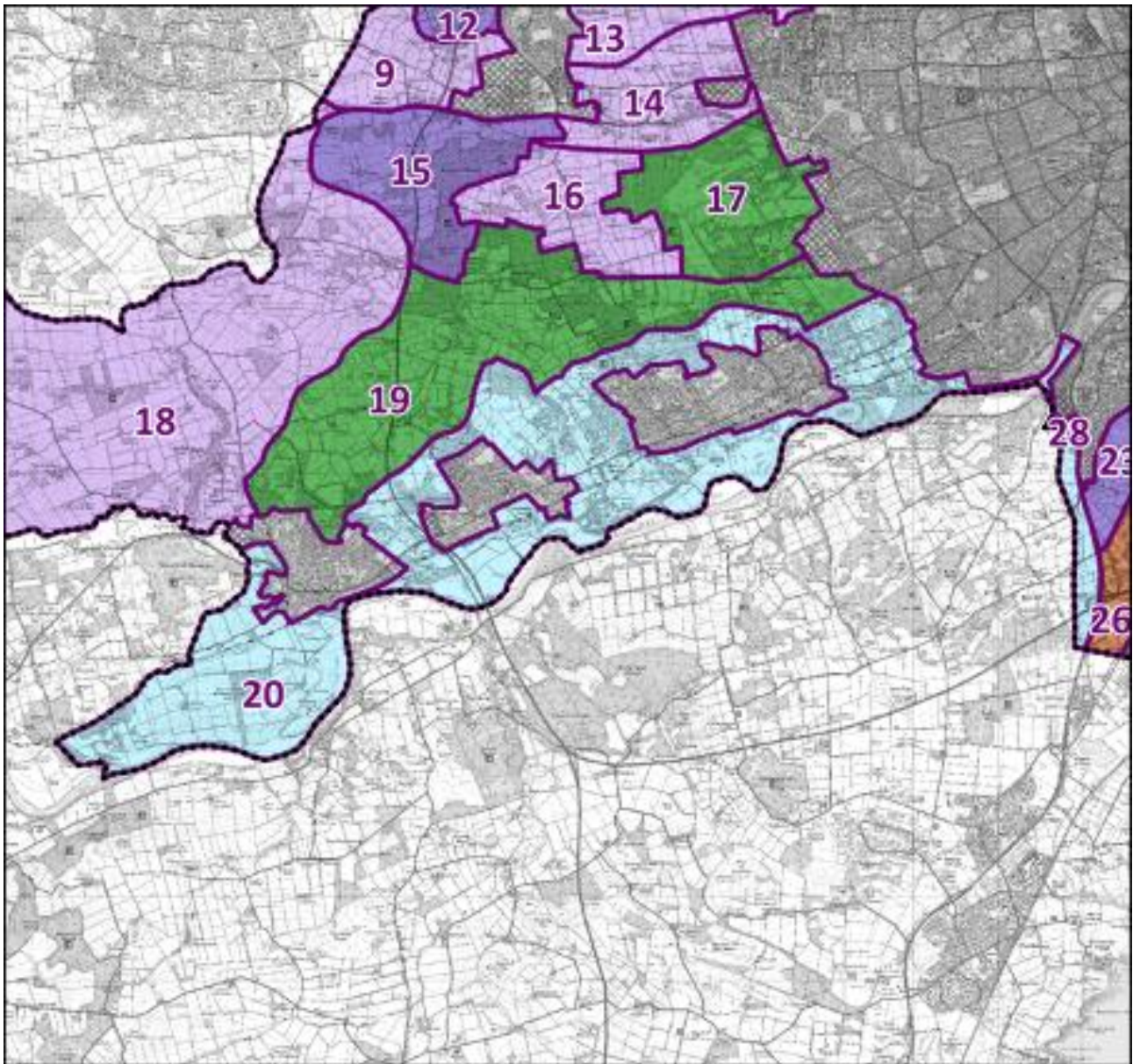
Location and context

The River Dee forms the administrative boundary with Aberdeenshire and only the north side of the valley lies within the city. The character area extends eastwards to the Dee Bridge at which point the river is bordered on both sides by the urban area of the city. The northern boundary is defined by the wooded ridges and low-lying hills of *Countesswells* (LCA 19) which form immediate skylines in views from the lower valley sides on the south side of the Dee. Within Aberdeenshire, the largely undeveloped valley sides provide an important undeveloped setting to the partly settled northern slopes within the city.

Key characteristics

1. The fast-flowing River Dee with its relative natural character and lack of engineering flows across a broad valley floor contained by steep terraces and gently rising upper valley sides, with a series of small tributaries is backed by a series of small hills and ridges.
2. Narrow belts of riparian woodland and trees with marginal vegetation line the river bank and along the valley sides, there is a diverse pattern of extensive estate woodlands, mature trees and a range of woodland habitats along small burns.
3. A diverse pattern of land use including mixed agriculture, forestry, settlement recreation, golf courses and a reservoir.
4. A series of historic settlements separated by clear areas of pasture and woodland contrast with the prevailing undeveloped north-facing valley sides.
5. Enclosed by low stone dykes, the field pattern is emphasised by tree belts and woodland blocks, which extend down valley sides in the undeveloped areas between settlements.
6. Following the lower valley side landform, the straight A93 forms is the main approach into the city with a series of minor roads running perpendicular up the valley sides.
7. Above the river terraces, a former railway line accommodates the Deeside Way recreational trail although much the river is largely inaccessible and only accommodates two road crossings.
8. A diverse range of historic features indicate a long history of settlement and the strategic importance of the river corridor.
9. Long views to the Grampian hills are possible from higher slopes at the western end, although in general, views tend to be contained by the valley landform and focus on the southern slopes of the valley.
10. Although the mid valley sides are busy and the sense of tranquillity is limited, less developed upper slopes are more peaceful and there is a sense of naturalness, with some secluded areas more natural in character along the river.

LCA 20 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 20
Dee Valley



- Landscape Character Area
- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
- AWPR

Landscape Character Type

- Urban and Farmland
- Low Hills
- River Valley
- Undulating Open Farmland
- Urban
- Wooded Estates

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The River Dee meanders across a broad valley floor of predominantly alluvial deposits contained by terraces of till, sands, gravels and boulders. Within the city, lower valley sides abutting the floodplain tend to be steeper before slackening to the north to form more gently sloping terraces. A series of small wooded hills and ridges forms a backdrop to the northern slopes of the valley that contain several small wooded burns. The valley gradually narrows eastwards to form a relatively well-defined channel within the built up area of the city. Although within Aberdeenshire, the north-facing slopes of the valley are largely undeveloped and provided a strong sense of wooded enclosure to the river corridor.

The River Dee is a clean, fast flowing river with a prevailing natural character. Along sections of the river bank, semi-natural habitat includes narrow swathes of grasslands, marginal vegetation, with patches of willow and alder trees where grazing is absent. The River Dee is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for Atlantic salmon, European otter and Fresh water pearl mussel. Across the valley sides, there is diverse range of semi-natural habitats, including birch woodlands, reed beds, marsh and willow scrub, wet woodlands and neutral grassland. The variety and extent of woodlands and mature trees give this landscape a distinctive character and provide a framework for the built development. In addition, garden and street trees within the settlements add to the well-treed appearance of the valley.

This is a landscape with a long history of settlement, reflecting its economic and strategic importance overlooking the Dee Valley. Prehistoric monuments include a recumbent stone circle surrounding a ring cairn and a burial cairn at Binghill (both Scheduled Monuments). Normandykes Roman Camp (also a Scheduled Monument), in the west of the LCA, comprises rectangular earthworks, and is thought to be one of a series of temporary marching camps established in eastern Scotland in the 2nd Century. Dating from several centuries later, the medieval motte and bailey castle at Pitfodels is located in a strategic position to the north of the River Dee.

The distinct settlements of Peterculter, Milltimber, Bielside and Cults originally developed on the alluvial terrace on the northern side of the River Dee. Here they were above the floodplain, but close to the valley floor for ease of transport, and on a south-facing slope. The 1909 map shows the settlements strung out along the main road along the Dee Valley between Aberdeen and Banchory, and also served by a railway line (closed in 1967 and now used by the Deeside Way). The concentration and variety of Listed Buildings (including mills) indicate the historic origins of settlements, and the level of survival of historic buildings. This creates some distinctive settlements, such as Culter Village to the south of the A93.

The 20th and 21st Centuries have seen development of the settlements up the northern valley sides, and Bielside and Cults have now coalesced. Nevertheless, distinct gaps remain between Peterculter and Milltimber, and between Milltimber and Bielside. These gaps comprise a relatively small-scale landscape mosaic, comprising mainly rectilinear fields and farms, but with pockets of plantation, managed woodland, designed landscape, planned rectilinear fields, and recreational land uses. Each gap is unique in character and has a distinct sense of place. Fields on the strongly-rolling landform of the valley side are crossed by small incised burns with wooded dens. Some of the field boundaries appear to be ancient, for example the angular boundary which marks the break of slope above Hillhead, and which is followed by March Stones, indicating its existence in medieval times.

The gap between Cults and the urban edge at Braeside is formed by the Pitfodels Conservation Area. This was formerly the estate of Pitfodels, which was broken up in the 19th Century into a series of regularly-shaped

building plots, occupied by villas in large grounds surrounded by mature trees. To the east, several modern buildings of the Robert Gordon University are prominent on the urban edge, close to the river.

The settlements are linked by the relatively open spaces on the valley floor. Land uses in the valley floor include golf courses, farmland and historic well-treed estates on raised land (including the Camphill and Murtle Estates now used by the Camphill Communities). Some of the estate buildings are Listed Buildings. The Deeside Way follows the former railway line and is a well-used route for walking and cycling, including cycle commuting into Aberdeen. From the Deeside way there are attractive views across the floodplain. There is, however, limited access to the River Dee, and only one bridge over the river (used by the B979) close to the new crossing for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Much of the upper valley slopes are free of settlement, and skylines remain generally treed.

Long views to the Grampian hills are possible from higher slopes at the western end of the valley although in general views from roads, settlement and recreational routes tend to be medium range, contained by the broad valley landform and focussing on the slopes and skyline of the south side of the valley, which has maintained its rural character.

This is a busy landscape around the A93 and mid-slope settlements, with limited tranquillity. On the less developed upper slopes which are accessed by minor roads, rolling landform and woodland create more contained basins that feel separate from the densely settled areas lower down the valley sides. The less developed wooded river banks can also feel natural and secluded, especially where built development is screened. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will cut a broad swathe between Peterculter and Milltimber and alter the character of the valley in this area.

Management Guidelines

The valley is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. This character area provides an important contrast in landform. The linear feature, which contains a transport route, enables the ability to see and experience the major feature.

- a) Maintain the contrast between the undeveloped, open valley floor and the wooded valley sides.
- b) Conserve the natural character of the river and tributaries, that is, mainly free from hard river engineering and with limited bridge crossings.
- c) Conserve and enhance the connectivity of natural and semi-natural habitats including riparian woodland and trees, marginal vegetation along the river banks, and deciduous woodland along the valley sides.
- d) Maintain the pattern of historic settlements, separated by distinct areas of pasture emphasised by stone dykes, tree belts and woodland blocks, which extend down valley side.
- e) Maintain and enhance the Deeside Way for recreational enjoyment.
- f) Safeguard the diversity and setting of historic features.
- g) Maintain the opportunity to view the river in its rural valley setting, including the open views along the valley as a whole, and from higher ground the views towards the prevailing undeveloped character of the north facing valley sides.
- h) Maintain the sense of peace and seclusion along the river and the peaceful, semi-rural character of the less developed parts of the valley sides.



Looking north across the valley floor towards Cults



Looking south across the river Dee from the south of Cults



Farmed slopes in between Bielside and Milltimber



Hilton farm on upper valley sides



Robert Gordon University buildings on the urban edge



Deeside Golf Club



The Deeside Way



Western edge of Peterculter

LCA 21: King's Links (Beach, Dunes & Links LCT)



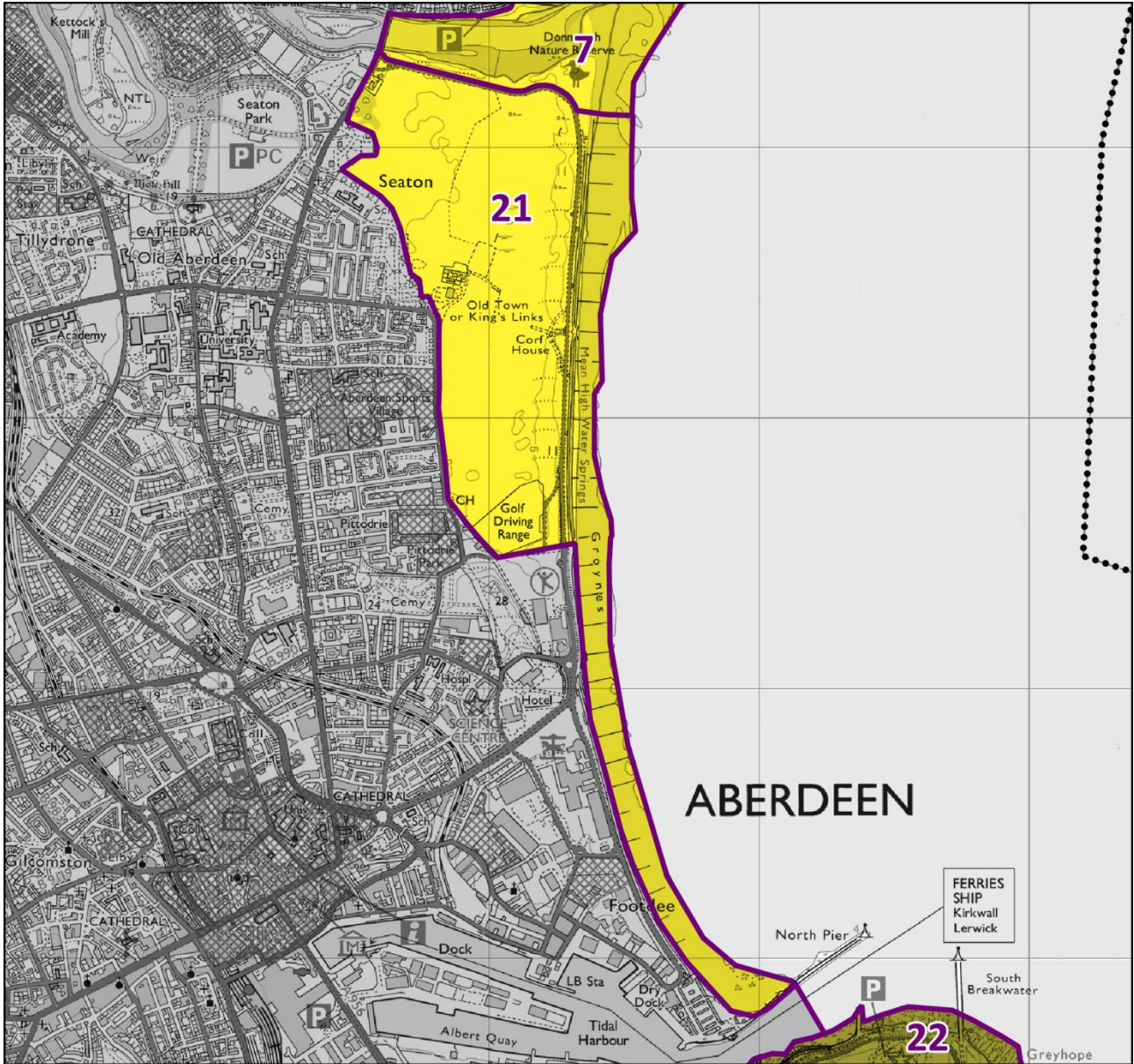
Location and context

King's Links consists of a long gently curving swathe of golden sand, situated between the harbour and the mouth of the River Don, and the links behind the beach. The beach is popular and is engineered to counteract erosion. There is a strong visual connection to the largely undeveloped area of *Murcar & Balgownie* (LCA 7) to the north, and the headland of *Girdle Ness* (LCA 22) provides a sense of containment beyond the harbour to the south. Inland, the area adjoins the city centre.

Key characteristics

1. A long gently curving swathe of golden sandy beach is backed by a similarly curved, raised pedestrian esplanade, with regular access points leading from the esplanade to the beach.
2. The beach is heavily engineered with a regular pattern of timber groynes along its length, and backed by sloping concrete reinforcements.
3. The landscape is mainly treeless and the beach provides an extensive semi-natural habitat, with patches of rough grassland amongst the links.
4. Land use is mainly coastal, beach and golf leisure and recreation.
5. The landscape is largely undeveloped, with built development limited to the recreational facilities within the links.
6. The area is very accessible and although the road network within it is limited, it is an open esplanade road follows the coastline.
7. Panoramic sea views contrast with views of nearby extensive built development and extend along the coast from the harbour control tower towards the lighthouse at Girdle Ness in the south, and northwards towards Balmedie and Forvie.
8. The landscape is very open and exposed and although the esplanade and nearby visitor facilities are often very busy, there is a sense of relative peace and experience of natural coastal processes along the shore.

LCA 21 boundary









Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 21
King's Links



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

- Landscape Character Type
-  Beaches, Dunes and Links
 -  Cliffs and Rocky Coast
 -  Urban

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Alluvium, blown sand and marine deposits shape a landform with a prevailing horizontal form and a gently curving swathe of flat sandy beach. Subject to longitudinal drift, the sandy beach is engineered with a regular sequence of groynes along its length. The beach is also backed by sloping concrete coastal reinforcements. The gently undulating open ground of King's Links is separated from the beach by the raised road and promenade. The sandy beach provides an extensive, semi-natural habitat that supports a range of sea birds. Beyond this there are small patches of rough grassland amongst the links. As a result of the past intensive management of the links, typical dune vegetation plant communities have almost disappeared and have been replaced by amenity and rough grasslands. Apart from some recent tree planting along the urban edge at Seaton, the landscape is entirely treeless.

With the beach, golf and other visitor-based facilities, land use is mainly for leisure activities and recreation. Although large parts of the area free from roads, it is served by an esplanade road that follows the coastline and nearby car parks. The coastal part of the area is very accessible and the beach can be very busy with recreational activity. The North Sea Coast Path runs along the raised esplanade and there are several interpretation panels at intervals. The area has a long history of recreation, with the Kings Links Golf Course dating back to 1876. Early 20th Century maps show a bathing station on the beach, although this is no longer present.

Although the LCA itself is mostly open and relatively undeveloped, the pattern and extent of nearby built development varies and has a strong influence on the area. The simple and unified pattern of beach and groynes, backed by slopes of the raised esplanade with the open expanse of King's Links beyond, contrasts strongly with the adjacent developed area.

To the north of the area, there is a discrete group of prominent high rise flats that form a strong contrast to the open links. A combined heat and power plant is also located in open ground near to the urban edge. Further south, visitor and recreational facilities line the esplanade and provide a developed context to the beach. Amongst more recent 20th century development, there is some traditional seaside architecture, including the landmark Beach Ballroom building, designed in an art deco style and opened in 1929 (a Listed Building, Category B).

Towards the southern end of the area, harbour related development and the old fishing village of Footdee ('Fittie') lie adjacent to North Pier at the entrance to the harbour and create a distinctive sense of place. A line of March Stones run north-south along the eastern side of the LCA, indicating that this was the boundary of the medieval 'freedom lands' of Aberdeen, for which the burgh had responsibility.

Sea views are panoramic and extensive with passing and static boats and ships adding interest to the long-range panoramic views across the North Sea towards the distant horizon. Along the coast, views follow the north-south sweep of the beach from the harbour control tower towards the lighthouse at Girdle Ness in the south, northwards towards Balmedie and Forvie. Inland, views are generally restricted by nearby built development where the Beach Ballroom and funfair, including a 'big wheel', form notable features on the raised esplanade.

Overall, the area is very open and often exposed to coastal influences. Although the esplanade, coast road and nearby visitor facilities are often very busy, once away from the busy main road the beach can provide a sense of relative peace and an experience of natural coastal processes.

Management Guidelines

The coast is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. This character area provides an important contrast between the land and sea.

- a) Conserve the gently curving swathe of sandy beach.
- b) Maintain the distinctive open, coastal character.
- c) Ensure that future coastal protection measures are appropriate in scale and design.
- d) Conserve and enhance sensitive beach habitat.
- e) Encourage the enhancement of rough grassland management and seek opportunities for the expansion of native grassland habitats amongst the links.
- f) Any new tree planting should be located near the built-up inland edge where it could help to soften the hard urban edge and geometric woodland plantation edge in the north of the unit.
- g) Maintain the network of footpaths and the mostly recreational landuse.
- h) Maintain the simple character of the Esplanade.
- i) Enhance the condition and design of the esplanade, coast road and open links. The provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, car parking and signage should be sensitively designed and implemented. Consider continuing a distinctive coastal or marine aesthetic for street furniture
- j) Explore opportunities for improving the North Sea Trail.
- k) Maintain the contrast between the built up southern section and less developed northern section, and avoid the introduction of structures such as street lighting along the northern section.
- l) Investigate opportunities for traffic calming measures which do not contribute to clutter and which help the area retain a distinction from other more urban roads and traffic levels and speed.
- m) Safeguard the setting of Footdee and other important historic features such as light towers from intrusive built development.
- n) Maintain the uninterrupted panoramic views across the North Sea and inland, towards the distinctive seaside architecture and skyline of the Esplanade.



Looking south along the Esplanade



City skyline



Seaton high-rise flats



Looking across King's Links



Looking south towards Girdleness Lighthouse



Esplanade road



Looking south across King's Links



Looking north-east

LCA 22: Girdle Ness (Cliffs & Rocky Coast LCT)



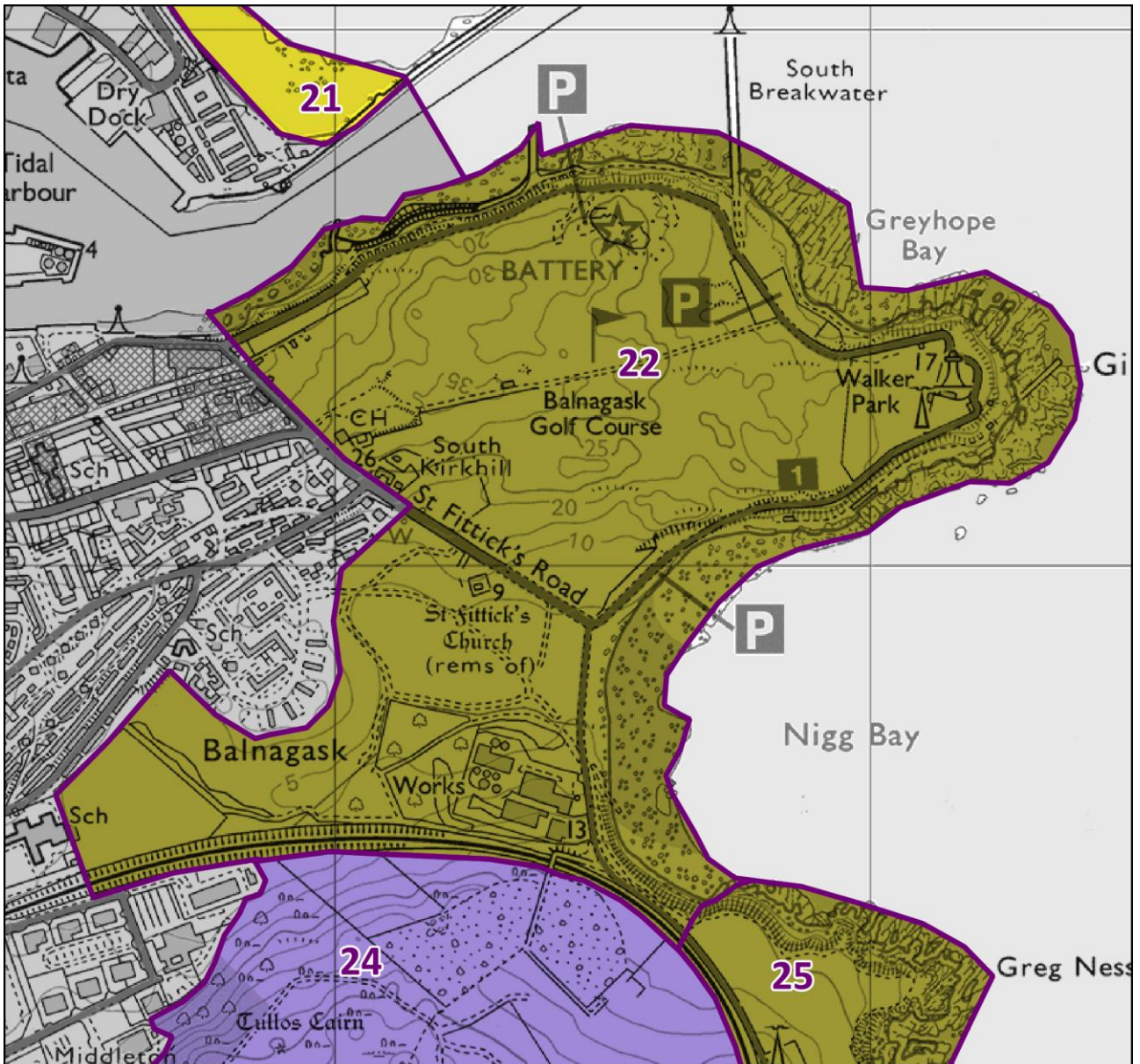
Location and context

With its distinctive lighthouse, Girdle Ness is a small rocky headland which guards the southern entrance to Aberdeen Harbour. To the south, the area includes the sheltered Bay of Nigg, backed by a low-lying floodplain where the River Dee once drained out to sea. To the south of the Bay of Nigg, *Tullos Hill* (LCA 24) provides an open backdrop, with the rocky coastline of *Souter Coast* (LCA 25) extending southwards. The western boundary of the area is formed by allotments, port-related development and the residential area of Torry and Balnagask.

Key characteristics

1. An exposed low-lying rocky headland with a distinctive crescent-shaped bay and associated flat floodplain hinterland, interspersed with a few pockets of shingle and sandy beach.
2. Above the rocky shore, semi-natural habitat consists of a narrow swathe of coastal habitats along the sloping cliffs and inland, pockets of wetland and woodland.
3. The headland is entirely treeless and unenclosed, with a very open and exposed character. In contrast, the floodplain to the west of the Bay of Nigg has a more sheltered appearance.
4. Land use is mostly recreational, with extensive areas of mown grass for public open space, sports pitches and a golf course.
5. Buildings are few and those that are present indicate the strategic importance of the area for defence and navigation. They include the Old Torry Battery, Girdle Ness Lighthouse and the ruins of St Fittick's Church.
6. The western edge of the area is dominated by the adjoining urban areas of Torry and Balnagask with several residential tower blocks that are very visible in the nearby backdrop.
7. A curved, open coastal road follows the coastline with several small car parks providing ready access to the area.
8. From the open and exposed headland, panoramic views extend across the expansive North Sea and northward, across the harbour to the city, and of the beach curving away towards Balmedie. Inland, views are more varied, including those of the urban area and the rising flanks of Tullos Hill.
9. The windswept landscape has a mainly natural coastal character with a sense of relative seclusion along the shore and some parts of the coastal road when backed by higher ground. Inland, rising ground and development provides a sense of containment.

LCA 22 boundary






Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 22
Girdle Ness



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

- Landscape Character Type
-  Beaches, Dunes and Links
 -  Cliffs and Rocky Coast
 -  Low Hills
 -  Urban

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The landform of the area is centred on an exposed headland of metamorphic rock at the mouth of the River Dee and in contrast, the distinctive crescent-shaped form of the Bay of Nigg. Superficial drift covers much of the area with areas of alluvium forming a flat floodplain to the west of the Bay of Nigg where the river Dee once drained out to sea. Higher ground around Balnagask and St Fitticks are part of the landform which slopes towards the Bay, linking with the golf course on the headland and the nearby settlement to the coast.

The outer parts of the shoreline are predominantly rock but, within the sheltered parts of the bay, there is a relatively wide, flat area of shingle, backed by a raised platform, with some sand exposed at low tide. Sand and shingle are constantly shifting and sometimes, sand can be seen higher up the beach. Above the shoreline, the cliffs contain glacial deposits and are designated a SSSI for their habitat and geological interest, including coastal and neutral grassland, pockets of gorse scrub and other coastal plants. Along the northern coast, rock pools provide mini salt marsh habitats and towards Balnagask, wetlands and new woodlands have been created. The Bay of Nigg shoreline has also revealed very early archaeology in the form of shells and other organic rubbish left by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers.

Land cover includes linear sections of craggy shoreline rocks and the large expanse of smooth grass across the golf course. Close-mown grass forms most of the vegetation cover of the area and, despite the proximity of the area to the urban edge, there is very little variation. There is little tree cover and most of the area is devoted to recreational use, as public open space, sport pitches and golf course (originally established in 1905). The area is almost entirely Green Space Network, around St Fitticks, Balnagask and the East Tullos Burn and wetlands. A curved open road follows the coastline with several associated small car parks to access the coast and other recreational facilities. The North Sea Coast Path also follows the coastal edge.

There are very few buildings within the area although distinctive landmark buildings include the Old Torry Battery, and the Listed Buildings of Girdle Ness Lighthouse and nearby Fog Horn. The ruins of St Fittick's Church (a Scheduled Monument, together with its graveyard) are set amongst open amenity grasslands. The outer walls of St Fittick's church survive, with the bell frame on a gable wall creating a distinctive profile. The church site dates back to the 12th Century and was rebuilt in the 18th Century before being abandoned in 1829. The location of this area at the mouth of Aberdeen harbour means that it has long been important for both defence and navigation. The Torry Battery (Scheduled Monument) was constructed in response to a perceived threat of French invasion. It was also used in WW1 and WW2, and during the 1956 Suez crisis. Other structures include a water treatment plant, private house at the Ness, and ruined fishing station and slipway in Nigg Bay. The western edge of the area is dominated by the adjoining urban areas of Torry and Balnagask. There is also a cluster of communication masts near to the lighthouse.

The Girdle Ness Lighthouse is a focal point from many areas within and outside of the character area, including the city. Outward views are varied, including those towards the city and adjoining urban areas, the rising flanks of Tullos Hill and views of the sea east of Nigg Bay. From Girdle Ness and other areas of higher ground, there are extensive northward views across the harbour to the city and of the beach, curving away towards Balmedie. From the lower ground close to the railway line there are views of the industrial estates at Tullos as well as the residential areas of the city. There are also some elevated views across parts of the area from the railway.

The windswept landscape has a prevailing open and exposed character with a strong sense of exposure to the sea. Along the shore and in some cliff areas, a sense of seclusion with a natural undeveloped appearance is experienced and towards Balnagask, rising ground provides a sense of containment.

Management Guidelines

The coast is one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape. This character area provides an important contrast between the land and sea.

- a) Safeguard the distinctive and important geological landform of an exposed low-lying rocky headland and coastline with a crescent-shaped bay and pockets of shingle and sandy beach.
- b) Conserve and enhance the diversity of important habitats such as beaches and cliffs, coastal and neutral grassland, wetland, broad leaved woodland and pockets of gorse scrub. Across the golf course, encourage the management and enhancement of rough grassland habitats.
- c) Ensure that any future coastal protection measures are appropriate in scale and design.
- d) Retain the distinctive open and mainly undeveloped coastal character.
- e) Any new tree planting should be located near the built-up inland edge where it could help to soften hard urban edge.
- f) Improve the provision, design and management of visitor and recreational infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, paths (including the North Sea Trail), signage, car parking and roadside fencing, and interpretation of geology, habitats, wildlife, history and built heritage. These measures should not disturb wildlife
- g) Consider traffic management of the Greyhope Road which do not contribute to clutter, and opportunities for cycle lane provision.
- h) Seek opportunities to improve the visitor experience at the Old Torry Battery.
- i) Conserve features of historical interest, notably St Fittick's Church, the Old Torry Battery, Girdleness Lighthouse and breakwaters, and their setting.
- j) Explore opportunities to provide appropriately designed informal recreational path access to the stony shore to the north of Greyhope Road, where this would not disturb wildlife.
- k) Maintain the uninterrupted panoramic views across the North Sea and to the nearby harbour, city and beach.



St Fittick's Church



Bay of Nigg



Eastern edge of Balnagask



Torry Battery



Backdrop of Tullos Hill



Looking north across Balnagask golf course



Greyhope Bay



Coast road towards Girdle Ness Lighthouse

LCA 23: Kincorth Hill (Low Hill LCT)



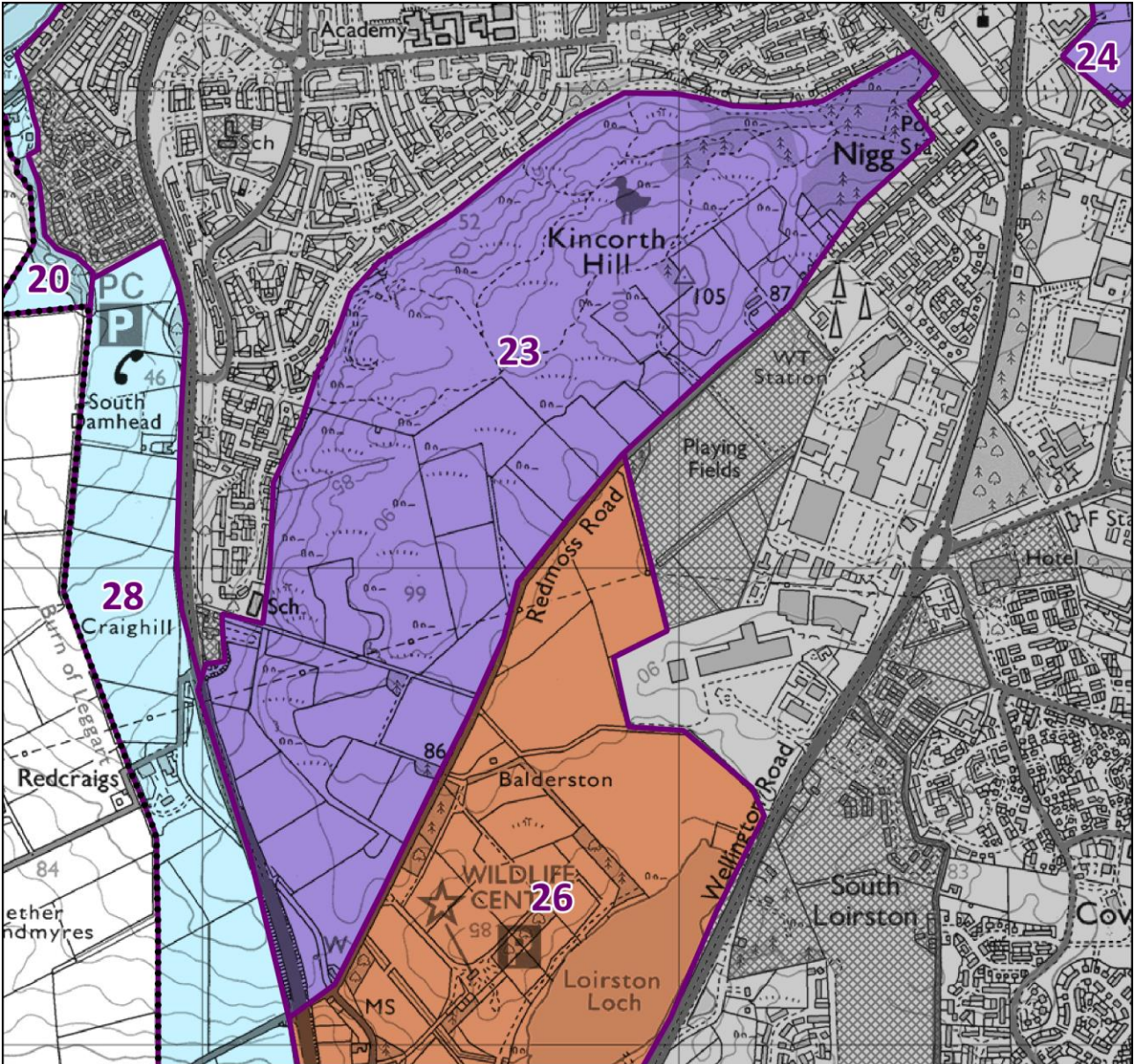
Location and context

Kincorth Hill comprises the western half of a long low-lying ridge extending from the coast to the A90, with *Tullos Hill* (LCA 24) lying to the north-east. This mainly open and undeveloped ridge is interrupted by the A956 and housing, with some large scale business development either side. A minor road runs along the south-eastern side between Nigg and the A90, forming the boundary of the area. The road marks a distinct break in slope but also a more pronounced contrast in land use and management between the farmed hill slopes and business park development in the Loirston area. The residential area of Kincorth lies to the north.

Key Characteristics

1. A gently undulating ridge of elevated ground which, although relatively low, forms an important backdrop to the city.
2. Semi-natural vegetation is extensive and is dominated by gorse/broom and willow scrub with dry heathland on the higher ground with scattered trees, neutral grassland and small patches of wet heathland.
3. Extensive mixed woodland and some scattered Scots pine and birch is concentrated along the north-west facing slopes and to the south, there is a mixed land use of rough grazing, nature conservation, recreation and pastoral farming.
4. Predominantly an open and often exposed landscape with a pattern of rectilinear fields along the south-east slopes, enclosed by dry stone dykes.
5. There is no settlement within the LCA although a transmission line crosses the western lower slopes.
6. With a good network of well-used footpaths accessed from a few small car parks and nearby housing areas, the area is important for informal recreation.
7. Non-designated historic landscape features include prehistoric and medieval remains and 20th century industrial archaeology.
8. Prominent in views from the north-western parts of the city, with extensive views across Aberdeen and the North Sea from open parts of the summit.
9. Although close to the city, the landscape has a natural appearance with a relatively peaceful and often secluded character.

LCA 23 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 23
Tulloch Hill



- Landscape Character Area
- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
- AWPR

Landscape Character Type

- Urban and Farmland
- Low Hills
- River Valley
- Urban

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Kincorth Hill forms part of a long, low ridge of metamorphic rock with superficial till deposits. Together with *Tullos Hill* (LCA 24), this area forms the lowest and most coastal outcrops of the Grampian Mountains. Although relatively low at around 105 metres AOD, the summit of Kincorth Hill forms a prominent skyline feature seen from north-western parts of the city. This ridge continues further east to include *Tullos Hill* but is interrupted by buildings and the A959 and consequently, the two hills are seen as separate features in principal views northwards from the city.

The area includes one of the largest remaining areas of semi-natural vegetation in the Aberdeen City region. The northern part of the LCA is dominated by gorse/broom and willow scrub with dry heathland on the higher ground. Scattered trees, neutral grassland and small patches of wet heathland are also present. The majority of Kincorth Hill is classified as a Local Nature Reserve and a network of footpaths provides access to the hill from a few small car parks and nearby housing. The proximity of the site to residential areas of the city makes it an important educational and well-used recreational resource.

The north-west facing slopes of the hill are steep and covered with mixed woodland and more scattered Scots pine and birch, swathes of rough grassland and heather and large areas of gorse. In contrast, the gentler dip slopes on the south-east face accommodate pastures of rectilinear fields and farms enclosed by stone dykes. A transmission line follows the southern slopes of the hill and a group of tall masts sit to the east of the summit. These are prominent in views from the city. To the south of the area, recently constructed business park development contrasts with the prevailing undeveloped slopes.

The name 'Kincorth' is thought to derive from the Gaelic 'Kin' (hill or high place) and the Celtic word for 'stone'. Hence 'stony high place', which remains an accurate description of the area. It is likely that Kincorth Hill and Tullos Hill formed part of an ancient routeway to/ from the coast at the Bay of Nigg which avoided flooded land in the Dee Valley. Although there are no designated archaeological sites, Kincorth Hill contains landscape features which tell its story from prehistoric times onwards. The earliest features are numerous stone cairns and a possible prehistoric hut circle. There are also features associated with medieval farming on the slopes above the Dee Valley (for example banks, walls and a sheiling). The area is also rich in industrial archaeology, including several granite quarry sites and a pumping station which provided water from the River Dee to the former Michelin tyre factory near Redmoss Road. In addition to features on the ground, Kincorth Hill also has a strong cultural association with the Marquis of Montrose, who camped here with his army on 17th June 1639, before the Civil War Battle of the Bridge of Dee the following day.

While this low ridge forms a distinct open backdrop to views from north-western parts of the city, it is a more subtle feature seen on the approach to Aberdeen from the south where it is masked to some degree by large business park buildings sited close to its south-eastern slopes. This ridge is more prominent in views from the north-western parts of the city where it tends to merge in long views with the wooded southern ridges which contain the Dee valley. Extensive views across Aberdeen and its coastal backdrop are a feature from open parts of the summit.

Although close to the city, the landscape has a prevailing natural appearance with an often peaceful and secluded character. Towards the northern edge, the adjacent housing exerts a suburban influence and noise from nearby busy roads is often evident.

Management Guidelines

This is a ridge of elevated ground which, although relatively low, forms an important backdrop to the city. It is part of the arc of low hills that fringe Aberdeen and form its skyline in many views.

- a) Conserve and enhance the management of woodlands and the diversity and connectivity of other important habitats such as heathland, grasslands and scrub.
- b) Retain the open character of much of the hill. Any additional woodland planting should be appropriately located and designed, to create a balanced open / wooded landscape, help to define or contain urban edges, and enhance gateway routes to the city.
- c) Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by dry stone dykes along the south-east slopes.
- d) Retain the undeveloped character of the area; the hill summit areas form the skyline in views from many parts of the city and this natural backdrop should be retained.
- e) Maintain the network of footpaths and areas of recreational landuse. Seek opportunities to improve the provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, car parking and signage.
- f) Retain the extensive views across Aberdeen and the North Sea from open parts of the hill.
- g) Retain the natural semi-character and experience of relative peace and seclusion.



Farmed southern slopes



Kincorth summit



Stone walls across southern slopes



Looking east towards Tulllos Hill



Looking west across pastoral farmland



Gorse covered ridges



Footpath along edge of Kincorth



Looking west towards Deeside

LCA 24: Tullos Hill (Low Hill LCT)



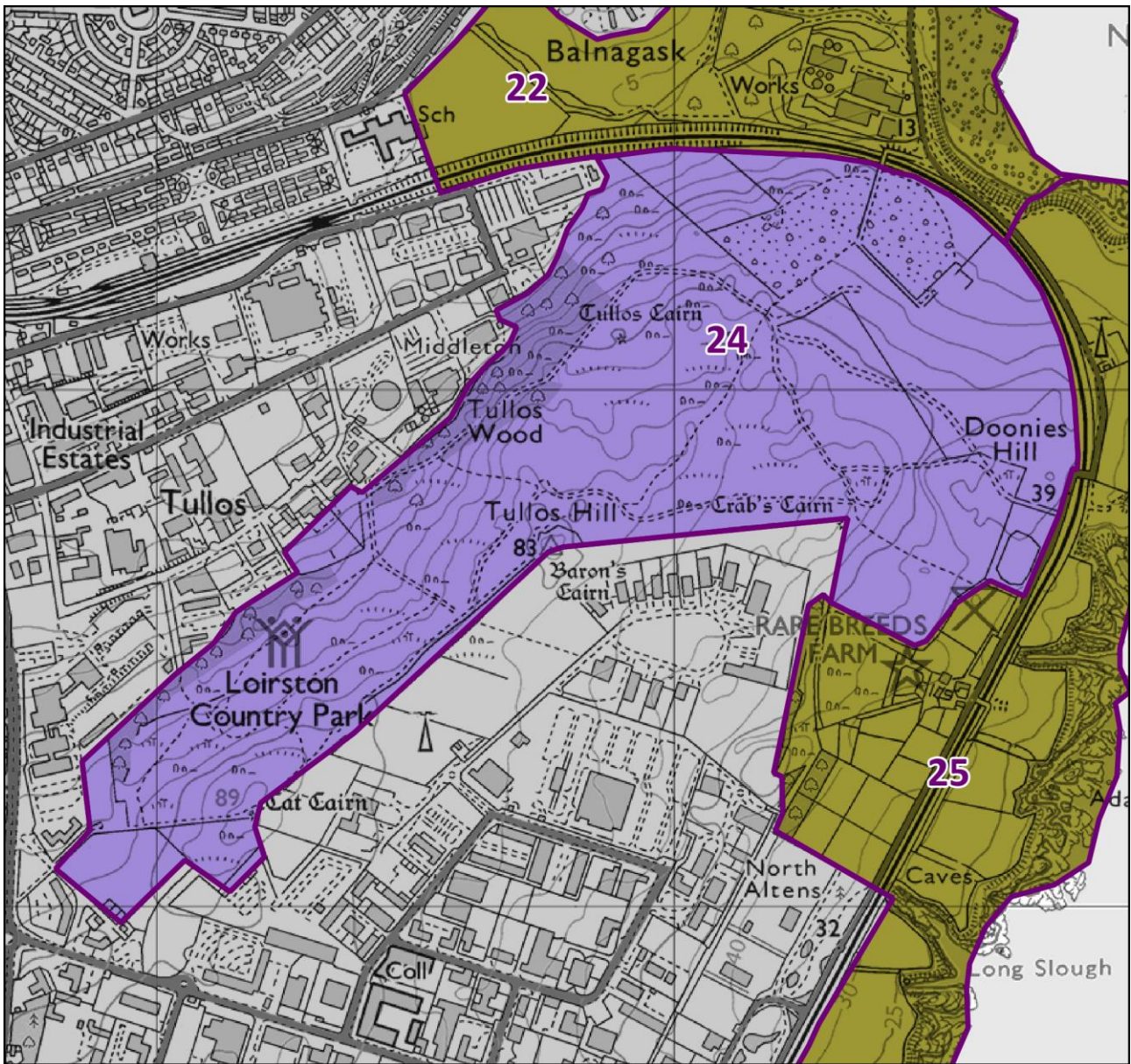
Location and context

Tullos Hill comprises the eastern half of a long low ridge extending from the coast to the A90 with the similar character area of *Kincorth Hill* (LCA23), lying to the south-west. The open and undeveloped ridge is bounded by housing and large scale business development in the Nigg and Tullos area, either side of the A956. The eastern boundary adjoins the *Souter Coast* (LCA 25) and the along the northern boundary, *Girdle Ness* (LCA 22) and the Tullos Industrial Estate. The Altens Industrial Estate forms the southern boundary.

Key characteristics

1. A prominent ridge of gently undulating elevated open ground which, although relatively low, forms an important well-wooded backdrop to the city.
2. A mainly semi-natural character with large swathes of broadleaved woodland on the northern slopes, and a mosaic of scrub woodland, bracken, acid and neutral grassland and dry heath with small patches of lowland birch woodland and wet heath on areas of higher ground.
3. The area is free of settlement with a mixed land use of informal recreation, rough grazing, woodland and former landfill.
4. An undeveloped and open summit contrasts with an area of a restored landfill site enclosed by prominent security fencing and woodland across the northern slopes.
5. With a good network of well used footpaths, the area is important for informal recreation.
6. The landscape has a rich archaeological and historical heritage which includes a series of locally prominent hilltop prehistoric burial cairns (Scheduled Monuments).
7. Prominent in views from the north-western parts of the city, with extensive views across Aberdeen and the North Sea from parts of the open summit.
8. The undeveloped hill has a coastal influence and its mainly recreational land use contrasts with the surrounding built-up areas.







LCA 24 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 24
Kincorth Hill

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------------|
|  | Landscape Character Area |  | Cliffs and Rocky Coast |
|  | Aberdeen City Council boundary |  | Low Hills |
|  | Developed/under construction (at time of assessment) |  | Urban |



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council- Licence No. 100023401.

Description

Tullos Hill forms part of a long low-lying ridge south of the city which, with Kincorth Hill, extends from the coast to the A90. Kincorth and Tullos hills are also part of a ridge of land which forms a coastal outcrop of the Grampian Mountains. The landform is shaped by sand, gravel and boulder deposits over metamorphic bedrock. This ridge is interrupted by buildings and the A959 and the two hills are seen as very separate features in principal views northwards from the city. Although relatively low (around 83 metres AOD at the summit) Tullos Hill forms a prominent skyline feature in views from north-eastern parts of the city.

Extensive semi-natural broadleaved woodland covers much of the northern slopes. Across areas of higher ground, there is an extensive mosaic of grassland, scrub woodland, bracken, acid grassland and dry heath. In addition there are small patches of birch woodland and wet heath. Because of its size, the site supports populations of larger mammals, such as fox and roe deer. This area is a good example of dry heathland close to the city.

Tullos Hill has been significantly modified by former landfill development on its north-eastern slopes and by industrial and business park developments, which extend high up the south-eastern slopes of this low ridge onto part of the skyline. The north-west facing slopes are steeper and are covered with broadleaved woodland on lower slopes and rough grassland and patchy gorse on upper slopes and on the narrow undulating ridge. A network of footpaths provides access to the ridge. This area includes a recently planted Community Woodland of mixed species. The smooth, modified profile, security fencing and sparse grass cover on a former landfill site on the north-eastern slopes of Tullos Hill contrasts with the more irregular landform and naturalistic vegetation pattern of north-west facing hill slopes.

It is likely that Kincorth Hill and Tullos Hill formed part of an ancient routeway to/ from the coast at Nigg Bay which avoided flooded ground in the Dee Valley. There are five Scheduled Monuments concentrated on Tullos Hill, comprising a series of prehistoric burial cairns (probably Bronze Age in date) and a post-medieval consumption dyke. The cairns form stony mounds along the ridge of the hill, with one (Tullos Cairn) set slightly lower to the north. A number of locally visible surviving prehistoric cairns suggest that the landscape forms part of a relict prehistoric funerary landscape. Tullos Hill was part of an estate purchased by the Morrice family in the late 18th Century and after the construction of Tullos House, much of the area was planted with indigenous Scottish trees. The area also contains more recent archaeology reflecting its defensive importance, including the site of a World War II anti-aircraft battery. A Prisoner of War camp was also located on the hill.

While this low ridge forms a distinct open backdrop to views from north-eastern parts of the city, it is not a notable landform feature in views from the south due to the scale and extent of development on its south-east facing slopes. This long ridge provides a backdrop to views from Aberdeen beach and from nearby housing in the Balnagask area. It is also visible from the East Coast Main Line.

The hill provides views along the coast from its open, windswept ridge. A sense of time depth can be appreciated in the many visible archaeological features. The restored landfill site, and busy nearby industrial parks are modern components of this LCA.

Management Guidelines

This is a ridge of elevated ground which, although relatively low, forms an important backdrop to the city. It is part of the arc of low hills that fringe Aberdeen and is a prominent skyline feature.

- a) Conserve and enhance the management of woodlands and the diversity and connectivity of other important habitats such as heathland, grasslands and scrub.
- b) Retain the open character of much of the hill. Any additional woodland planting should be appropriately located and designed, to create a balanced open / wooded landscape, help to define or contain urban edges, and enhance gateway routes to the city.
- c) Maintain the undeveloped and semi-natural character of the area. The hill summit areas form the skyline in views from many parts of the city and this natural backdrop should be retained
- d) Improve the management, access to, and interpretation of important prehistoric burial cairns and the post-medieval consumption dyke.
- e) Seek opportunities to reduce the intrusiveness of security fencing.
- f) Maintain the network of footpaths and areas of recreational landuse. Seek opportunities to improve the provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, car parking and signage.
- g) Maintain the sense of tranquillity experienced across the area.
- h) Retain important views of the city through vegetation management.



Wooded northern slopes



Wetland habitats



Landfill fencing



Nearby Tullos Industrial Estate



Panoramic views across the city



Burial cairn



Looking west from Tullos Hill



Looking west to nearby business park development

LCA 25: Souter Coast (Cliffs & Rocky Coast LCT)



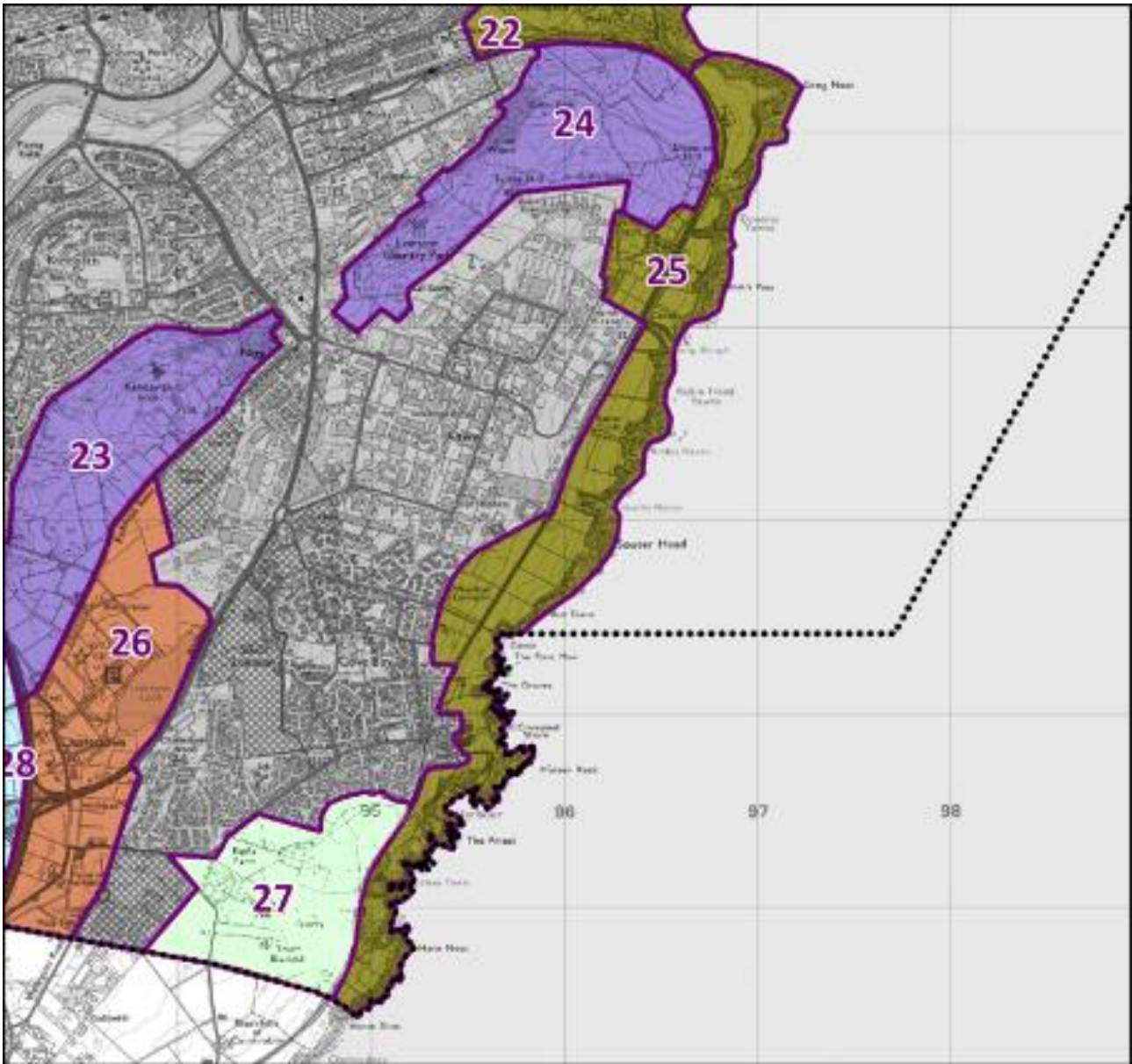
Location and context

The *Souter Coast* comprises a series of relatively low-lying rocky cliffs backed by open coastal farmland. It lies to the south of the Bay of Nigg and extends southwards into Aberdeenshire, where the landscape has a very similar character. Inland, the large majority of the character area is bound by built development with residential areas of Cove to the south and further north, the Altens industrial estate. The North Sea forms the eastern boundary.

Key characteristics

1. A highly indented, rocky coastline with a series of striking, rugged coastal forms comprising cliffs, narrow ravines, jagged rock platforms, small rocky headlands, sea caves and storm beaches.
2. A strong pattern of medium-sized rectilinear fields, enclosed by dry stone dykes and post and wire fences slope gently towards the coastal edge, contrasting with the natural character of the coastline.
3. With intensive farming across much of the area, semi-natural habitats are limited to the narrow coastal strip. These include occasional shingle beaches and, along the sloping cliffs, swathes of dry heath and coastal heath, neutral grassland and pockets of gorse scrub.
4. The landscape retains a traditional agricultural character although there is a strong connection with fishing at Cove and Burnbanks.
5. The area generally has no woodland or notable trees, other than occasional trees associated with settlement.
6. A mainly undeveloped character with isolated farmsteads and dwellings scattered across the open farmland.
7. The coast road and prominent railway emphasis the linear nature of the area and a coastal footpath follows the intended coastline.
8. There are impressive views along the rocky coast and out to sea, but views inland are limited by the railway embankment, rising ground, woodland blocks and nearby development.
9. Despite proximity to nearby development, the coast has a rugged, natural and exposed coastal character with a sense of detachment from the city.

LCA 25 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment







March 2017

LCA Map 25
Souter Coast



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Cliffs and Rocky Coast
-  Urban and Farmland
-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Urban
-  Coastal Farmed Plain

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 10002340L

Description

The area consists of a narrow strip of open gently undulating farmland which slopes gently towards rugged cliffs. Although the cliffs are relatively low-lying, there is a series of striking coastal forms. Jagged rock platforms can be observed as discontinuous features along the entire length of the coast, mostly occurring at or slightly above the intertidal zone. Sea caves are found at intervals along this coastline together with steep sided, narrow ravines and near-vertical igneous dykes. Storm beaches with isolated boulders are perched 'high and dry' on the tops of the cliffs.

The extent of semi-natural habitats is limited to the narrow coastal strip. The sloping cliffs are designated (Local Nature Conservation Site) for their conservation interest including dry heath and coastal heath, coastal and neutral grassland, pockets of gorse scrub and other coastal plants. Exposure and salt spray limit the range of vegetation although there are some wind-stunted trees around Altens Farm, Burnbanks and Loirston Manor. Behind the coastal strip, agricultural grassland is the dominant vegetation type.

Above the cliffs, the land slopes gently towards the coastal edge. Land use is mainly pastoral with a strong pattern of rectilinear fields running perpendicular to the coast, enclosed by post and wire fences and some dry stone dykes. Farmsteads and dwellings are scattered infrequently across the open farmland. There is a strong connection with fishing at Cove and Doonies Model Farm provides visitor attractions. There is a sinuous coastal footpath along the top of the cliffs with limited connections to the coast road. The railway line also prevents easy access to the coast. The large Altens industrial estate lies immediately to the west, contrasting with the prevailing undeveloped character of this area.

The Aberdeen-Edinburgh railway line, opened in the early 1850s, is a prominent landscape feature. Listed Buildings include early 19th Century fishermen's cottages in Cove Bay. The coastal part of Cove Bay (the historic core of the area), the harbour and surrounding undeveloped coast is designated as a Conservation Area and has a strong sense of place and of history.

There are impressive views along the rocky coast with extensive views out to sea although from the coast road, these are obscured in places by the railway embankment. Views inland are generally restricted by rising land, nearby built development and woodland blocks. The large Altens industrial estate is prominent on the skyline in places.

Along the rugged coastline, the area has a very natural and undeveloped character with a strong sense of exposure to the elements. Inland, the influence of nearby development and the busy coast road contrast with the sense of peace experienced along the coast.

Management Guidelines

The diverse, natural, rugged coastal landforms of cliffs, narrow ravines, jagged rock platforms, small rocky headlands, sea caves and storm beaches forms part of the coastal setting that is part of Aberdeen's distinctive character.

- a) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of habitats including coastal cliffs, neutral grassland and pockets of gorse scrub.
- b) Maintain the strong pattern of rectilinear fields, many of which are enclosed by dry stone dykes.
- c) Conserve the open character of cliffs tops. Accordingly, any new tree planting should consist of small-scale clumps and trees associated with farm buildings and scattered dwellings.
- d) Maintain the mainly undeveloped character of the area and avoid increasing light pollution.
- e) Improve the provision, maintenance and management of infrastructure along the North Sea Coast Path such as seating, interpretation and footpath signage, in a way which avoids introducing clutter.
- f) Explore opportunities for additional footpath links across the farmland to the coast
- g) Conserve and enhance the open and rural character of the coastal road. Avoid urban style elements such as kerbs and unnecessary signage. Improve the management of car parking and the condition of roadside fencing and signage.
- h) Retain the rugged, natural and exposed coastal character and the sense of detachment from the city.
- i) Maintain the uninterrupted panoramic views over the North Sea and along the coast.



East Coast Mainline Railway and gently sloping fields



Coastal farmland



Looking south along rocky coastline



Nearby Tullos industrial estate



Looking south towards Blackhill quarry



Prominent railway cutting



Looking north along the railway and across open farmland



Looking south towards Cove Bay

LCA 26: Loirston (Urban and Farmland LCT)



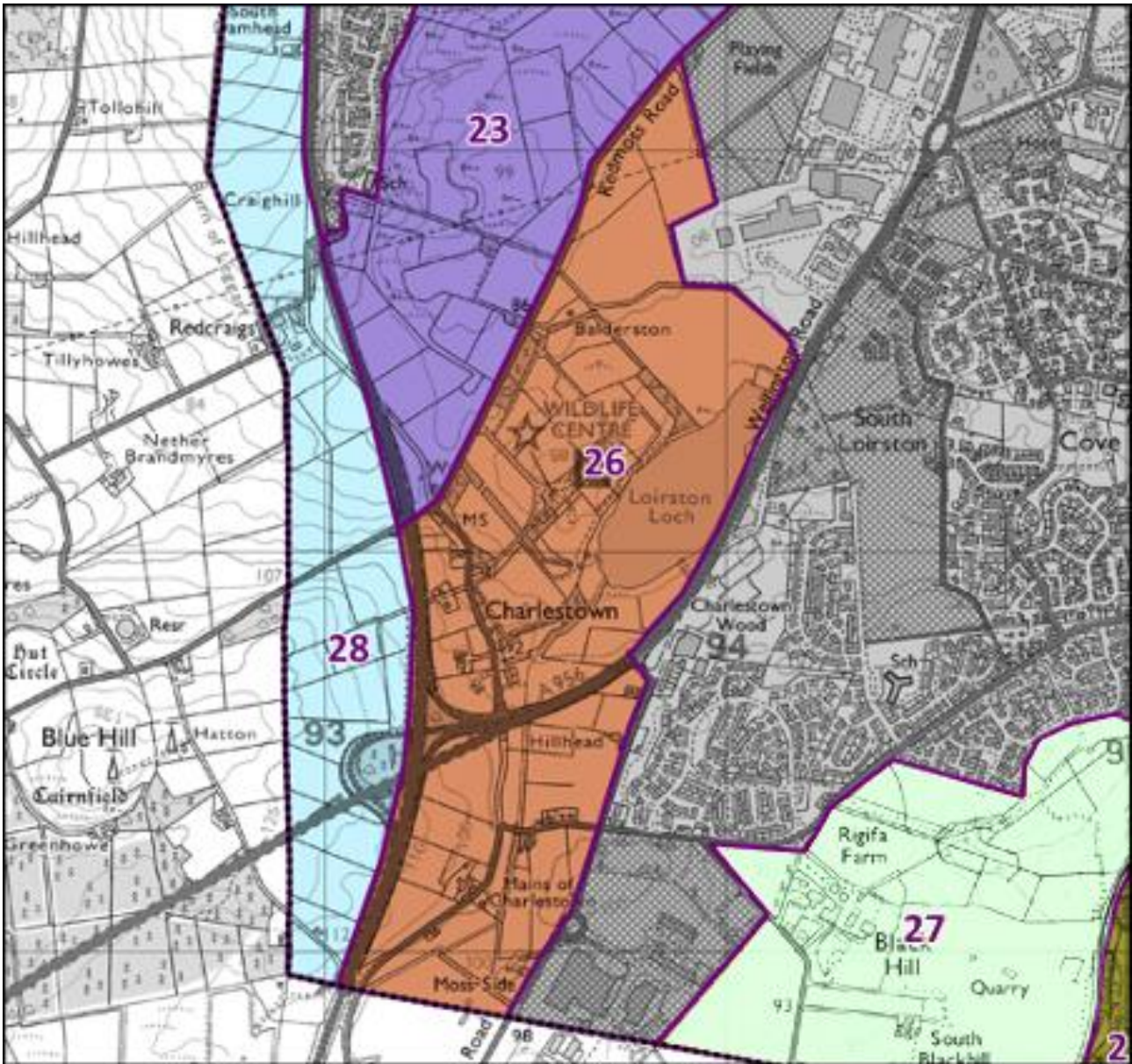
Location and context

This character area forms a gently undulating coastal plain lying on the southern fringes of the city, backed by the subtle long ridge of *Kincorth Hill* (LCA 23) to the north-west and adjacent to the settlement of Cove Bay to the east. The boundary with Aberdeenshire forms the southern edge of the character area where there is continuation of similar landscape character. The A90 forms the western boundary with the *South Upper Deeside Upper Slopes* (LCA 28) beyond.

Key characteristics

1. Centred on a shallow basin around Loirston Loch, the landform consists of a gently undulating coastal plain.
2. A large body of open water at Loirston Loch is fringed by a variety of aquatic and marginal flora with a surrounding mosaic of grassland and wet habitats, a small area of heath, clumps of mixed and wet woodland, and patches of gorse scrub.
3. Although the landscape has a mainly open character, shelter belts and screen planting provide a sense of enclosure to the west of the loch.
4. Land use is varied and often fragmented and in addition to large pockets of rough unmanaged grassland, uses include grazing, small areas of smallholdings, conifer plantation, and recreation at Loirston Loch.
5. Agricultural areas consist of a varied pattern of medium sized rectilinear fields with drainage ditches, enclosed by remnant stone dykes and post and wire fences, unenclosed drained marshes, and small areas of smallholdings.
6. Settlement and development is varied with a pattern of small farmsteads and isolated lines of dispersed post-war bungalows scattered across much of the area, and pockets of light industry.
7. A well connected network of main and local roads follow areas of slightly raised ground. Around Loirston Loch, a network of footpaths and areas of open space provide recreational access.
8. Views tend to be short, contained by road embankments, nearby built development and woodland blocks.
9. A busy and varied landscape traversed by major roads, including the Aberdeen Western Peripheral route.

LCA 26 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 26
Loirston



- Landscape Character Area
- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
- AWPR

Landscape Character Type

- Cliffs and Rocky Coast
- Urban and Farmland
- Low Hills
- River Valley
- Urban
- Coastal Farmed Plain

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

This character area is located across a gently undulating coastal plain and formed on peat deposits, low-lying fields have been historically drained for agricultural use. Shallow wet basins occur in the flatter plateau around Loirston Loch, one of the largest bodies of open water in the city with a good variety of aquatic and marginal flora, and bird life. There are also various grassland and damp habitats, a small area of heath, plus some mixed and wet woodland, a small Scots pine plantation and areas of gorse scrub. The proximity of this site to the heathland areas of Kincorth and Tullos and the coastal strip of Balnagask-Cove contributes to its value in forming a network of habitats to the south of Aberdeen.

The loch lies in a shallow basin of fields with drainage ditches enclosed by remnant stone dykes. Pockets of farmland and drained marsh intersected by a network of roads in the south-western corner comprise rough-textured pastures, many of these unmanaged and enclosed by broken, low, coarse stone dykes. Even-aged shelterbelts of Lodgepole pine, spruce and occasional beech create a distinct grid pattern north-west of Loirston Loch but also occur less frequently elsewhere. Farmsteads and land holdings are small.

There is a pattern of scattered farmsteads and cottages, often in small groups close to roads. Post-war bungalows are dispersed across this landscape and contrast with the denser clusters of more recently constructed nearby housing estates, which are often bounded by earth mounds planted with young trees. Industrial development and a recycling plant are also located in the southern part of the area. Adjacent business parks with large new buildings are often very prominent.

This is a highly varied landscape, traversed by the major roads of the A90 and A956 and undergoing significant change as widespread and highly visible roads, housing and business park development is under construction. Small patches of unmanaged open space and remnant farmland lie between areas of recent built development and construction sites. In the south-west of the LCA (around Charlestown) is a remnant of an agricultural landscape of crofts, which were severed from their associated plots by the re-routing of the A90 in the late 20th Century.

This landscape forms a highly visible entrance to Aberdeen from the major road to the south. Loirston Loch is a key feature seen from the A965 where it is juxtaposed with the large buildings of a business park. Views tend to be short range, curtailed by extensive built development across the urban edge, road embankments, woodland blocks and large buildings scattered across the unit.

This is a busy landscape, with major roads and recent and new construction. Once operational, the Aberdeen Western Periphery Route will add to the activity and busyness. If developed, Opportunity Sites could change this landscape into a predominantly urban area with only very small pockets of open space remaining.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of habitats including, grassland, wetlands, heath and woodland.
- b) Retain remaining areas of open space, particularly around Loirston Loch.
- c) Encourage the enhancement of the gateway routes in development proposals through appropriate design.
- d) Encourage tree planting along roadsides and areas of woodland to help integrate the urban edge with the surrounding rural fringe and enhance gateway routes to the city.
- e) Maintain the network of footpaths, areas of recreational landuse and improve the provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation car parking and signage.



Drainage ditch



Remnant farmland



Nearby backdrop of Aberdeen Gateway Business Park



Busy minor roads



Informal recreation at Loirston Country Park



Farm clutter



Scattered post war bungalows



Unmanaged pastures

LCA 27: Findon Plain (Coastal Farmed Plain LCT)



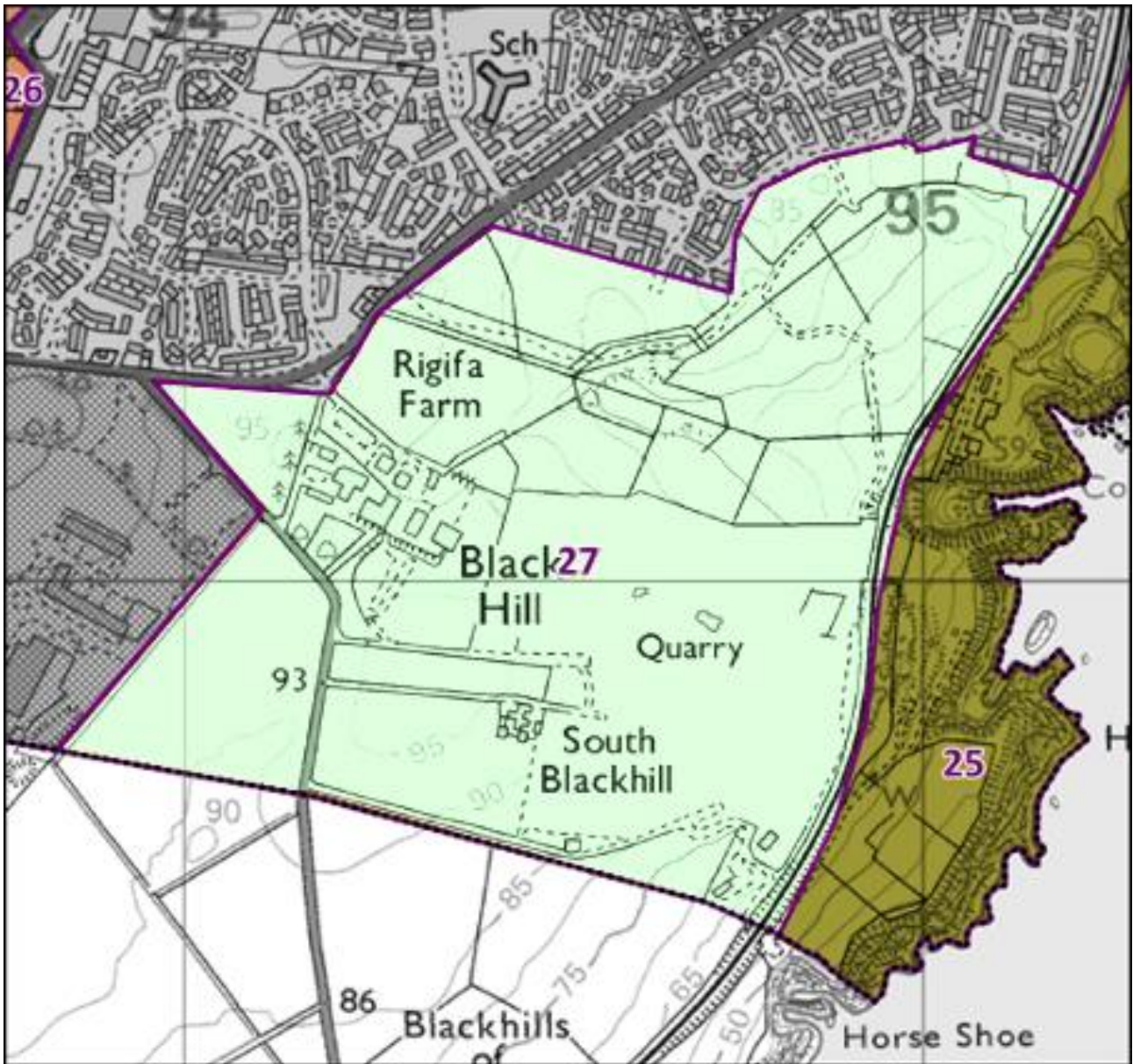
Location and context

With a close association to *Loirston* (LCA 26), this small character area forms a gently undulating coastal plain lying on the southern fringes of the city, near to business parks and residential development. A similar landscape continues into Aberdeenshire. The East Coast Main Line bounds its eastern edge, with the rocky coast of *Souter Coast* (LCA 25) beyond.

Key characteristics

1. A gently undulating coastal plain with a shallow basin interrupted by the artificial landform of Blackhill quarry. There is a more complex rolling landform to the north-east which is cut by a narrow wooded den which slopes down towards the sea.
2. Although much of the area is intensely managed, swathes of rough grasslands extend towards the coast with small pockets of wet grassland, areas of gorse and scrub scattered across agricultural areas.
3. The landscape has a predominantly open appearance of medium sized rectilinear fields enclosed by remnant stone dykes and post and wire fences although some farm buildings are screened by small geometric woodland blocks.
4. Land use is mostly agricultural although an active quarry is prominent in the southern part of the area.
5. Although the area has a partly developed context of residential areas and the Aberdeen Gateway Business Park, settlement and development within the area is limited to large farm buildings and quarry related infrastructure.
6. Views tend to be short, contained by nearby built development, railway embankments and quarry landforms although nearer the open coast, there are some sea views in places.
7. A busy landscape, influenced by surrounding development and quarrying activity although it is quieter near the coast away from major roads.

LCA 27 boundary



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

LCA Map 27
Findon Plain



- Landscape Character Area
- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

Landscape Character Type

- Cliffs and Rocky Coast
- Urban and Farmland
- Urban
- Coastal Farmed Plain

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

The area is located across a gently undulating coastal plain which is interrupted in places by noticeable man-made landforms including steep-sided mounds around the Blackhill quarry works and the embankments of the adjacent railway. A more natural and complex rolling landform is evident in the small den which slopes down to the sea, north of the quarry on the southern fringes of Cove Bay. A small, shallow, wet basin occurs in the flatter plateau between the Blackhill quarry and the Aberdeen Gateway business park.

Although semi-natural vegetation across agricultural areas are limited to small patches of wet and rough grassland and clumps of gorse, there is a relatively extensive area of unenclosed rough grasslands and scrub towards the coast.

Land use is mostly agricultural with surrounding small coniferous shelter belts and several medium sized rectilinear fields enclosed by remnant stone dykes and post and wire fences. A large quarry is also located towards the south of the area. These land uses appear to have been taking place in this area for at least the past century. Adjacent to a narrow den to the south of Cove Bay, small rolling partially cultivated fields slope towards the coastal edge. The den accommodates a narrow belt of young tree planting although overall, the area has very limited tree or woodland cover. To the south-east of Cove, open space and a network of paths provides opportunities for informal recreation.

Settlement and development is limited although Blackhill quarry lies close to the coast in the south-eastern corner of this landscape and quarry traffic is often very noticeable on local roads. There is a cluster of large modern buildings associated with quarry activity at Rigifa farm. The Aberdeen Gateway Business Park with large new buildings is particularly visible along the south-western boundary. Prior to the development of the business park, this character area would have been part of *Loirston* (LCA 26) as this has resulted in physical severance and visual separation between these two areas.

From main roads into Aberdeen to the south-west, the area is generally screened from view by intervening development although the area is partly visible from the East Coast Main Line. It has a mainly open appearance although in general, views tend to be short range, contained by nearby built development, railway embankments and quarry landforms. From southern parts of the area however, there are longer range views southwards.

Although settlement and development is limited, surrounding business park and residential development have a significant influence on the setting of the area. Traffic and activity from the quarry operation further impact on tranquillity although a sense of peace and seclusion can be experienced towards the coast.

Management Guidelines

- a) Conserve and enhance the semi-natural habitats, including swathes of rough grasslands that extend towards the coast, and the wooded den which slopes down towards the sea.
- b) Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields some of which are enclosed by dry stone dykes.
- c) Maintain the open character and the views towards the sea.
- d) Encourage tree planting to help integrate the urban edge with the surrounding rural fringe.
- e) Maintain the sense of peace and seclusion experienced towards the coast.



Looking across wetland towards nearby business park



Informal recreation to the south-east of Cove



Footpath towards den



Looking west across southern edge of Cove Bay



Industrial buildings at Rigifa Farm



Coastal views



Looking south towards Blackhill quarry



Looking south-east towards Blackhill quarry

LCA 28: South Deeside Upper Slopes (River Valley / Broad Wooded and Farmed Valley LCT)



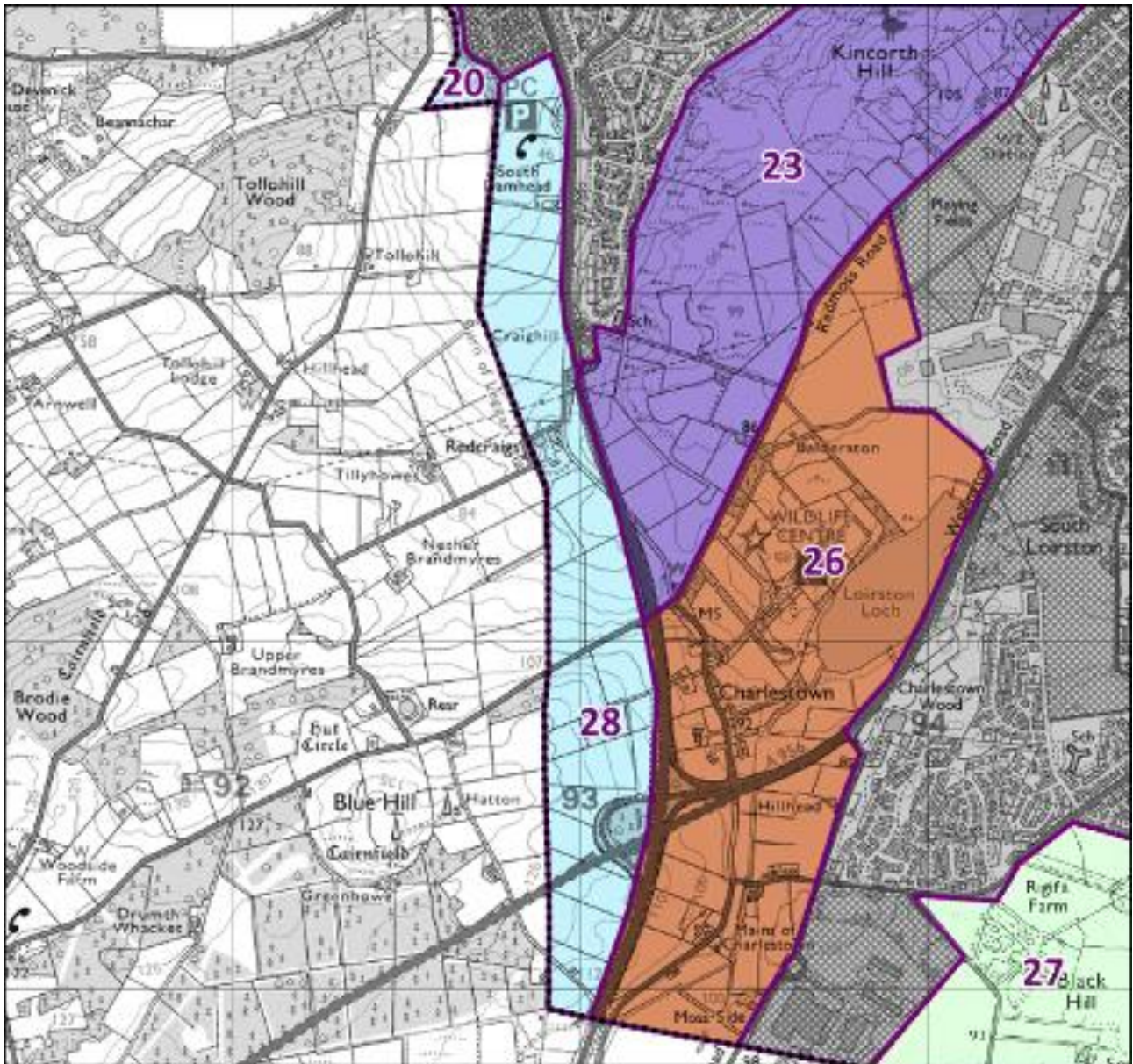
Location and context

The *South Deeside Upper Slopes* LCA is a narrow sliver of land that forms part of a wider landscape character type in Aberdeenshire, namely the *Broad Wooded and Farmed Valley* (see the *Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Assessment* for further details). The small area with Aberdeen city borders the western edge of the A90 and comprises the eastern slopes of a minor valley which accommodates a small burn marking the city boundary. To the west of the city boundary, the area extends into Aberdeenshire where the upper valley sides form the north facing slopes to the *Dee Valley* (LCA 20).

Key characteristics

1. Forming a small part of the upper north facing slopes of the Dee Valley, the landform slopes down towards the urban edge of the city, with a gentler break in slope from east to west.
2. To the north of the area, broadleaved woodland covers the small incised Den of Leggart where the Leggart burn drains into the nearby River Dee.
3. Land use is mostly intensively managed pastoral farming with a linear pattern of medium-sized planned rectilinear fields, typically enclosed by stone and broad consumption dykes, extending up the valley side.
4. A predominantly open and undeveloped landscape containing one farmstead enclosed by mixed shelter belts and two isolated dwellings.
5. A largely inaccessible landscape although the busy A90 is adjacent and the AWPR cuts through the southern part. The area thus forms an important undeveloped gateway into the city.
6. Looking north across sloping fields, there are long range views over the city and shorter range views of the low-lying skyline of Kincorth Hill to the north-east.
7. The very busy nearby roads make the landscape noisy although, like the adjoining areas in Aberdeenshire, the landscape retains a degree of rural character.

LCA 28 boundary







Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017






LCA Map 28

South Deeside Upper Slopes



-  Landscape Character Area
-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  AWPR

Landscape Character Type

-  Urban and Farmland
-  Low Hills
-  River Valley
-  Urban
-  Coastal Farmed Plain

Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

Description

This very small area forms the far eastern extent of the upper valley sides to the river Dee. The landform drops gently away towards the north where a small burn within the incised Den of Leggart drains into the nearby river. The eastern boundary is contained by a raised embankment along the A90 and to the west, the landform of nearby areas within Aberdeenshire rises to a nearby partly wooded skyline.

As nearly all of the area is under intensive agricultural management, the extent of semi-natural habitat is limited to a narrow finger of semi-natural broadleaved along the Den of Leggart. Beyond this, land use is almost entirely pastoral farming.

Historically, this area would have been relatively marginal land, and is therefore unlikely to have been enclosed early. From the Mid-19th Century the central part of the area contained crofting land, with crofts fronting onto the old road through Charlestown and their plots extending back towards the Burn of Leggart. Re-routing of the A90 in the late 20th Century resulted in the severance of the plots, although their linear field patterns survive on both sides of the road. To the south there are planned rectilinear fields and farms (probably dating from the Mid-19th Century). These are bounded by broad consumption dykes.

The area has a prevailing open and undeveloped appearance although the presence of the nearby A90 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) that cuts through the southern part of the landscape have a significant influence upon it. Settlement is limited to one farmstead enclosed by linear mixed shelter belts and two isolated dwellings. Towards the northern part of the area, adjacent built development at Kincorth and Hilldowntree contrast with the undeveloped fields.

With the close proximity of the A90 and the AWPR cutting through the south of the area, the landscape provides a very important undeveloped gateway into Aberdeen. Although trees, hedge and embankment line much of the A90, the experience of undeveloped valley sides is clearly evident. From areas of higher ground within the area, there are long range views across open fields towards the expanse of the city. Several prominent tower blocks are particularly noticeable on the skyline. To the east, there are short range views to the low-lying profile of Kincorth Hill and to the west, views tend to be curtailed by nearby rising ground and woodland blocks.

In combination with the adjoining areas of pastures and woodland blocks across the upper sides that extend into Aberdeenshire, the landscape has a prevailing rural character and from areas of higher ground, a sense of detachment from the city. However, with the influence of the busy A90 and the future operation of the AWPR, noise and activity limit the experience of tranquillity.

Management Guidelines

The LCA forms part of the far eastern extent of the upper valley sides of LCA 20 Dee Valley, one of the distinctive and defining features of Aberdeen's landscape.

- a) Conserve and enhance broadleaved woodland, particularly in the Den of Leggart.
- b) Maintain the pattern of rectilinear open fields, typically enclosed by stone and broad consumption dykes, extending up the valley side.
- c) Maintain the mostly undeveloped rural character. This serves as a contrast to the adjacent urban edge and busy roads, and form an important gateway. Views of its open fields are possible from parts of the city.
- d) Maintain the long range views over the city and shorter range views of the low-lying skyline of Kincorth Hill.

Due to the small size of this unit there are no further photographs.

Appendix I - References

- Aberdeen City Council (2013) *Aberdeen City Local Nature Conservation Sites*.
- Aberdeen City Council (2017) *Aberdeen Local Development Plan*.
- Allan, J. R. (1974) *The North-East Lowlands of Scotland* 2nd ed. London, Robert Hale.
- British Association for the Advancement of Science (1963) *The North-East of Scotland - A Survey pre-pared for the Aberdeen Meeting of the Association*. Aberdeen, The Central Press and the Local Committee of the Society.
- Brogen, W A (1986) *Aberdeen: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. RIAS illustrated architectural guides to Scotland.
- Council of Europe (2000) *European Landscape Convention*.
- Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*.
- County Development Officer (1950) *County Survey and Development Plan for Aberdeen District*. Aberdeen, The Council.
- Craig, G .Y. (ed.) (1991) *Geology of Scotland 3rd ed*. London, The Geological Society.
- Dennison, P .E. and Stones, J.A. (eds.) *Historic Aberdeen: the Archaeological Implications of Development Scottish Burgh Survey*.
- Dobson, Chapman and Riley (1952) *Granite City: A Plan for Aberdeen*. City and Royal Burgh of Aberdeen.
- Edlin, H. L. (ed.) (1976) Forestry Commission Guide: *Forests of North-East Scotland*. Edinburgh, HMSO.
- Faulks and Gillingham [Eds] (1981) *Historical Atlas of Britain*, London, Book Club Associates.
- Kneller, C. and Aftakion, M. (1987). *The isotopic and structural age of the Aberdeen Granite* (pp717-721). Journal of the geological Society, Vol. 144.
- Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3rd Edition*.
- Marren, P . (1982). *A Natural History of Aberdeen*. Aberdeen.
- Millman, R.N. (1975) *The Making of the Scottish Landscape*, London, Batsford.
- Munro, M. 1986. *Geology of the Country around Aberdeen*. Memoir for British Geological Survey 1:50.000 sheet 77. London, HMSO.
- Murray, H.K and J.C (2014) *Mesolithic and early Neolithic activity along the Dee: Excavations at Garthdee Road* (pp. 1-64). Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. 144.

Murray, J.C. (ed.) (1982) *Excavations in the Medieval burgh of Aberdeen 1973 - 81*. Society of Antiquities Monograph Series no . 2, Society of Antiquaries, London.

Nicol, Johnston & Campbell (1996) *Landscape character assessment of Aberdeen*. Scottish Natural Heritage.

Rackham, O. (1989) *The History of the Countryside*, London, J .M. Dent.

Scottish Natural Heritage (2011) *Summary of the effects of climate change on landscape and quality of life in Aberdeenshire*.

Stapleton, C. and Pethick, J., (1996), *Coastal Processes and Management of Scottish Estuaries III: The Dee, Don and Ythan Estuaries*. Scottish Natural Heritage.

Stephenson, D . & Gould, D. (1995) *British Geological Survey Regional Geology: The Grampian Highlands* (4th ed.) London, HMSO.

Stones, J.A. (ed.) (1987) *A Tale of Two Burghs: the Archaeology of Old and New Aberdeen*, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums.

Tansley A.G. (1968) *Britain's Green Mantle, Past Present and Future* (2nd ed.). London, George Allen & Unwin.

Trewin, N.H. Kneller, B .C. & Gillen, C. (1987) *Geological Society of Aberdeen Excursion Guide to the Geology of the Aberdeen Area*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press.

Whitten, D .G.A. & Brooks, J.R.V. (1972) *Dictionary of Geology* London, Penguin.

Whittow, J. (1992) *Geology and Scenery in Britain*. London, Chapman and Hall.

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files/LocalHistory/march_stones_01.pdf

www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk

www.buildingconservation.com/articles/rockofages/rockofages.htm

www.canmore.org.uk

www.macaulay.ac.uk/explorescotland/sa_countess2.html

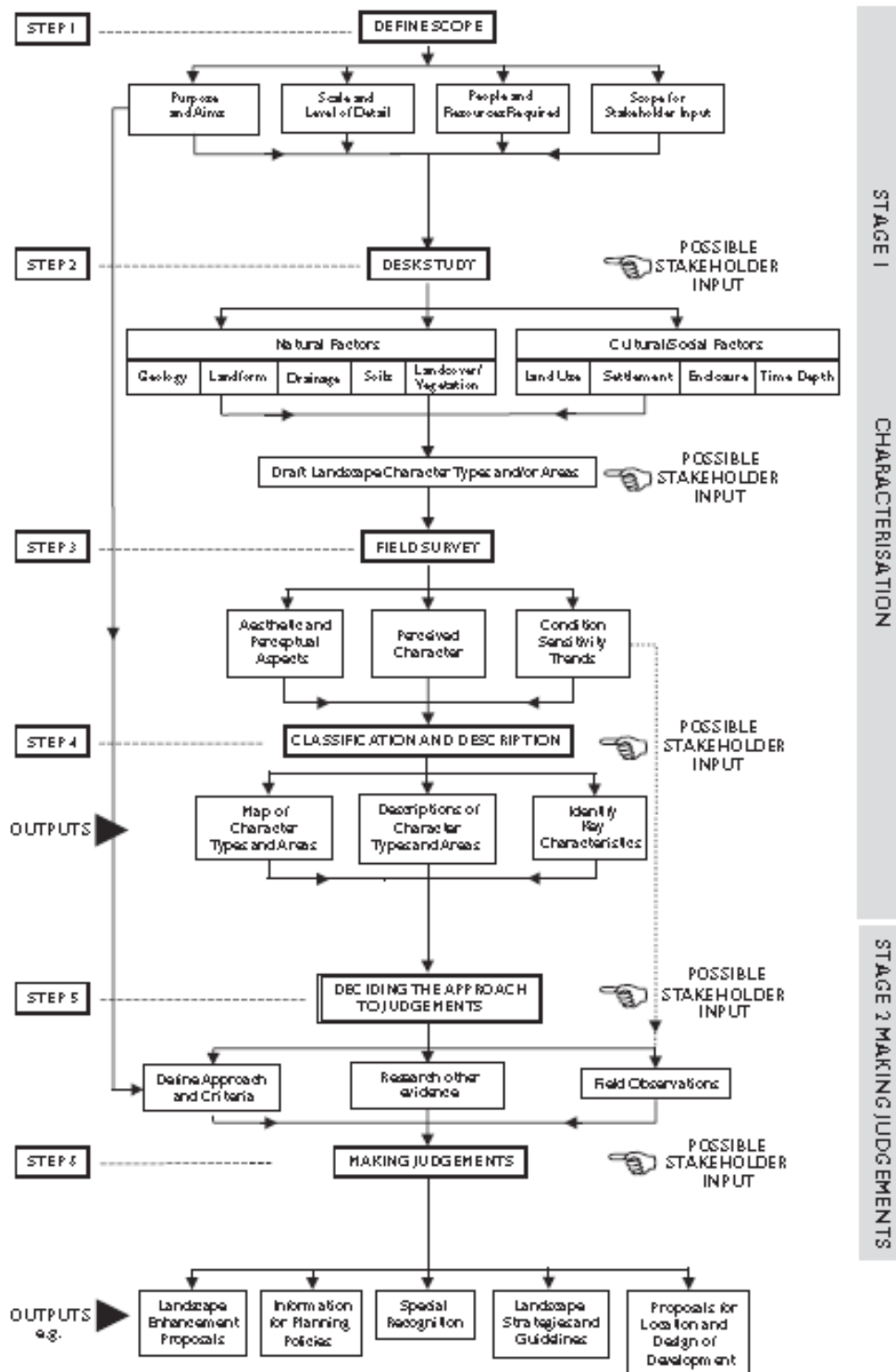
www.mcjazz.f2s.com/Geology.htm

www.portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/quicksearch

Appendix II - Methodology

Undertaking a landscape character assessment

Landscape character assessment is undertaken by means of a standard process of desk and field studies. This is based on latest guidance¹ and as an overview, includes the following steps:



¹ The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002. *Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland*.

Stage 1: Scope

This report presents an updated Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen, based on a review of the *Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen* (Nicol, Johnston & Campbell, 1996). The review was carried out in parallel with Scottish Natural Heritage's review of the national suite of Landscape Character Assessments.

Since the publication of the 1996 assessment, the practice of Landscape Character Assessment has continued to evolve and, as well as updating this in line with current best practice, the landscapes of Aberdeen have undergone a lot of change. Most notably, the city has experienced a period of sustained economic growth resulting in demand for additional housing, land for business and industrial expansion, and other related infrastructure such as roads and port development.

It is important to note that *Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen* (1996) provides a comprehensive understanding of the city's landscape character. Although some notable changes have taken place since its production, much of the assessment remains relevant and has been incorporated into this updated study.

Consequently, this updated assessment reflects changes that have occurred since 1996 and describes the variety of local landscapes that continue to underpin Aberdeen's sense of place. This report, together with other parts of the *Aberdeen Landscape Study* (ALS), will help to inform a wide range of future planning and management activity.

Best Practice Guidance

The approach undertaken to assessing, characterising, mapping and describing landscape character is based on best practice guidance, and reflects the holistic and people-based definition of landscape as set out in the European Landscape Convention. The following guidance informed the approach:

- Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidelines for England & Scotland*;
- Natural England (2014) *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*;
- Research Box et al. (2009) *Experiencing Landscapes: Capturing the 'Cultural Services' and 'Experiential Qualities' of Landscape* (NECR 024); and
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, (3rd Edition).

Baseline

The baseline for the LCA is the current landscape at the time of field survey, and takes into account developments under construction during the period of the study, including the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

Scale of Assessment

The study is undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000.

Stage 2: Desk Study

The desk study involved the review of relevant background information and spatial data, including a number of GIS datasets to inform the assessment process. This included information on planning policy, landscape character, natural and cultural designations. This provided an understanding of how these factors have influenced the evolution of landscape character and to gauge the effects of future changes.

Through the desk-based data analysis, 28 Landscape Character Areas were identified for further assessment and validation in the field including an assessment of the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of each area.

As part of the desk study, the following data sets were analysed to help define Landscape Character Areas and to inform associated description (see Section 6). The Landscape Character Areas have also been classified according to their Landscape Character Type (see Section 5).

Data analysis

As part of the desk study, the following data sets have been examined to identify and describe the nine landscape character types and twenty eight landscape character areas as detailed in this report:

- Aberdeen City Council boundary © Aberdeen City Council, 2017
- Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment (1996) – landscape character types and areas
- Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Sites and Monuments records
- Aerial imagery 2014
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Ancient and Semi Natural Woodlands
- BGS Bedrock and superficial deposits 1:50,000
- BGS Bedrock geology 1:625,000 (2007)
- BGS Fault lines 1:625,000
- BGS Superficial deposits 1:625,000 (2007)
- Conservation Areas © Aberdeen City Council, 2017
- Digital Terrain Model
- Historic Land-use Assessment
- Intertidal habitat data
- Land Cover Map 2007
- Listed Buildings © Historic Environment Scotland, 2017
- Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS)
- Local Nature Reserves © Aberdeen City Council, 2017
- Local Nature Reserves © Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017
- National Marine Plan Interactive Mapping
- National Nature Reserve © Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017

- North East Biological Records Centre data Integrated Habitat Systems mapping
- Open Spaces data
- OS 1:25,000 raster
- OS Administrative Boundary, OS Vector Map Local, OS VectorMap Local (raster layer), OS Water features, OS Woodlands
- Ramsar Sites, Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017
- Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Battlefields, Historic Marine Protection Areas, Conservation Areas and Historic Landuse Assessment Canmore
- Scheduled Monuments © Historic Environment Scotland, 2017
- Scottish Native Woodlands
- Site of Special Scientific Interest: © Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017
- Sites of Interest to Natural Science (SINS)
- Soil map of Scotland 1:250,000
- Special Areas of Conservation© Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017
- Special Protection Areas © Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017
- Wildness characteristics maps (June 2014) Absence of modern artefacts; Perceived naturalness; Remoteness from road and ferries; and Rugged or challenging terrain

Stage 3: Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the Landscape Character Assessment took place in February 2016. This was undertaken by two Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute. The purpose was to:

1. Check, refine and develop the initial classification and boundaries of each Landscape Character Area identified in the Aberdeen and revised Aberdeenshire landscape character assessments.
2. Review detailed boundaries and update descriptions within the Aberdeen City Landscape Character Assessment to reflect changes that have occurred since the original assessment was undertaken.
3. Examine in detail aspects considered to be relevant at the local scale. The survey focused on factors which are difficult to assess through desk-based studies, for example special qualities, perceptual qualities (remoteness, tranquillity and relative wildness), setting and visual influences, and noting any changes which have taken place since the original landscape character assessment studies were undertaken.
4. Complete a tailored field survey form for each Landscape Character Area at representative locations.
5. Capture photographs to provide a comprehensive coverage of digital photographs to illustrate the Final Report, and to aid in the writing-up process.

Stage 4: Draft report

This stage of the project brings together the findings of the desk and fieldwork stages of the project, as well as incorporating the local specialist knowledge. Profiles for each Landscape Character Area were prepared and structured to include:

- Photos of LCA
- Map of LCA
- Context
- Key Characteristics
- Natural Influences
- Cultural Influences
- Perceptual Influences

This Draft Report was then reviewed by Steering Group to further inform the production of the Final Report.

Stage 5: Final report

The Final Report was updated to reflect the national landscape character types.

Appendix III – Changes to the 1996 Landscape Study

Overview of findings

As illustrated in Figure 14, nine Landscape Character Types have been identified across Aberdeen City. These are generic and share some similar characteristics wherever they recur. Twenty-eight locally specific Landscape Character Areas (see Figure 15) are then identified within the framework of Landscape Character Types.

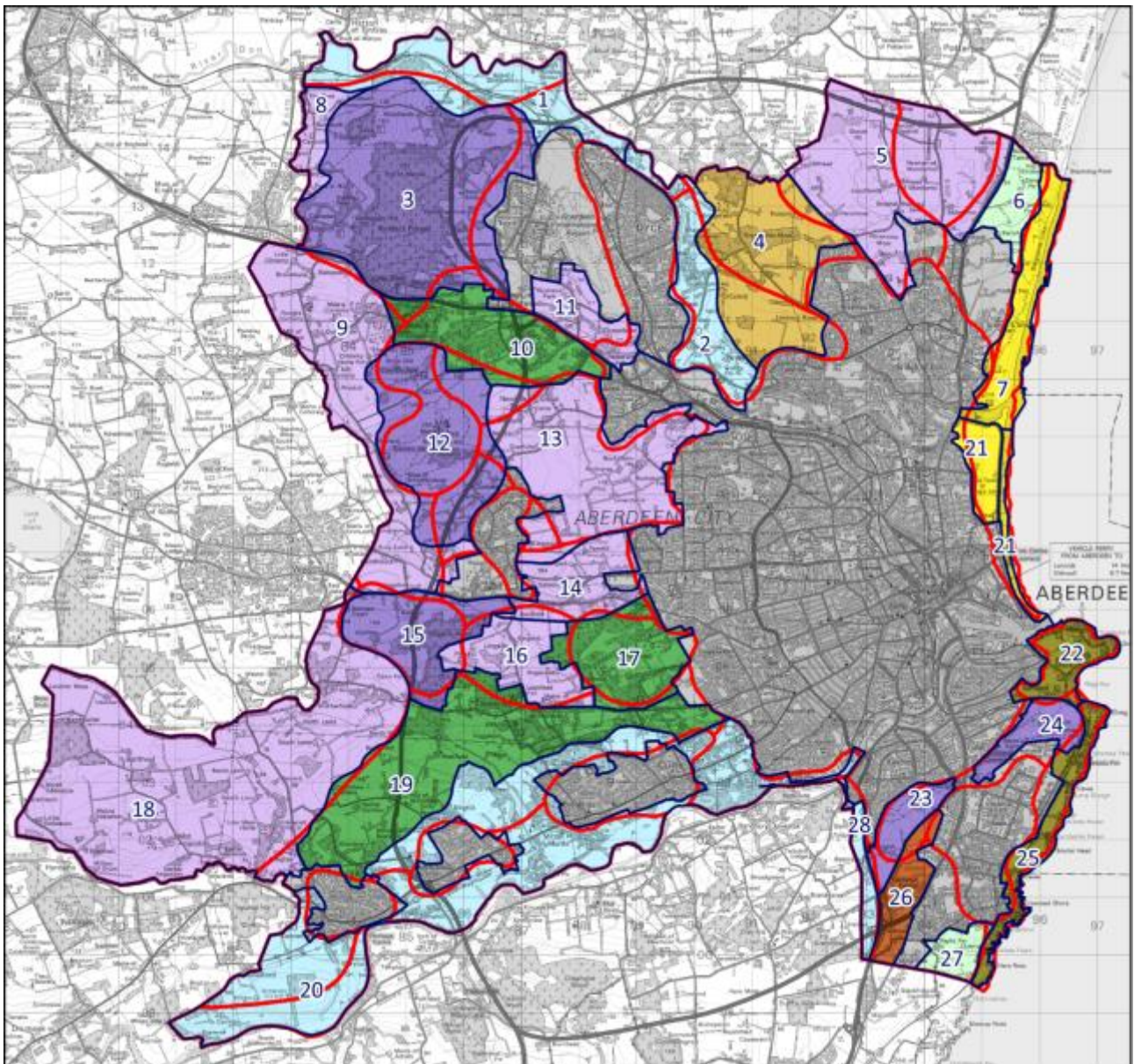
Although most boundaries of Landscape Character Areas/Types follow defined edges of landscape features such as roads, woodlands and the edges of built development, some boundaries represent a more gentle transition of changes in landform. Where this might be the case, the character of adjacent areas should be also considered. It is also important to consider how the construction of any Opportunity Sites may affect the findings at the time of the assessment.

Summary of main revisions

Although most of the landscape character areas from the 1996 assessment have been retained, the review process has resulted in a number of notable changes. These are:

1. Re-naming of landscapes types to help ensure better consistency at regional and national levels;
2. Refinement of all landscape character type/area boundaries based on accurate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and associated analysis of more recent natural and cultural data;
3. The extent of the urban area has been revised to take into account recent developments and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Opportunity Sites that are currently under construction;
4. An area of higher ground in Area 11 (*Lower Don*) from the 1996 assessment has been incorporated into Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4 (*Brae of Don*);
5. Due to similarities in character, Area 5 (*Perwinnes*) and Area 6 (*Potterton*) from the 1996 assessment have been amalgamated to form one character area - LCA 5 (*Mundurno*);
6. Area 13 (*East Elrick*) from the 1996 assessment has been amalgamated with adjacent LCAs as the area was not considered to be sufficiently distinctive to form a character area at the scale the assessment;
7. To take into account local variations in landscape character, the following LCAs from the 1996 assessment have been subdivided:
 - Area 9 (*Clinterty & West Brimmond Farmland*) from the 1996 assessment to form LCA 8 (*Blackburn*) and LCA 9 (*West Brimmond*);
 - Area 24 (*Kincorth & Tullos Hills*) from the 1996 assessment to form LCA 23 (*Kincorth Hill*) and LCA 24 (*Tullos Hill*); and
 - Area 27 (*Loirston*) from the 1996 assessment to form LCA 26 (*Loirston*) and LCA 9 (*Findon Plain*); and
8. Updating key characteristics and detailed descriptions for each landscape character type/area

The following figure illustrates the boundary changes to the 1996 Landscape Character Assessment.



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

September 2016

Figure 12. Comparison with 1996 Landscape Character Assessment



Map contains Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copy. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may be subject to prosecution or civil proceedings. Aberdeen City Council - Licence No. 100023401.

- Landscape Character Area
- 1996 Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Type

- Beaches, Dunes and Links
- Cliffs and Rocky Shore
- Coastal Farmed Plain
- Hills
- River Valley
- Undulating Open Farmland
- Undulating Wooded Farmland
- Urban
- Urban and Farmland Mosaic
- Wooded Estatelands

Appendix IV: Glossary

Above Ordnance Datum (AOD): a measurement of spot height relative to the average sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall UK.

Conservation Area: areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance

Containment: where rising landform, built development or landcover such as woodlands provide a visually containing edge to adjacent areas of landscape and coast.

Exposure: experience of the elements or being affected by them because of being in a particular situation or place due to elevation, lack of shelter from vegetation, landform or built structures, or a combination thereof.

Fluvial: of or found in a river.

Geomorphology: the study of the physical features of the surface of the earth and their relation to its geological structures

Igneous: rock solidified from volcanic lava or magma.

Landscape Character Area: areas of seascape with a unique identity. They are specific to one place, focus on differences and local distinctiveness, and are identified by a local place name.

Landscape Character Assessment: a standard methodology for identifying, describing, classifying and mapping what is distinctive about our landscapes. It shows us their variety, and helps us to understand what makes one landscape different from another (SNH).

Landscape Character Type: distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement pattern.

Landscape: an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/ or human factors [European Landscape Convention].

Listed Building: buildings of 'special' architectural or historic interest

Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS): non-statutory designated sites within the City of Aberdeen of local importance for nature conservation.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): areas of natural heritage that are at least locally important

Naturalness: where qualities or state of the landscape are considered natural.

Openness: the quality of a place not being covered with buildings, trees or other prominent landcover.

Remoteness: the state of being distant from the main centres of population and influences of built development.

Sedimentary: rocks formed from material deposited by water, ice or wind

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): areas of land and water (to the seaward limits of local authority areas or MLWS) that Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) considers to best represent our natural heritage - its diversity of plants, animals and habitats, rocks and landforms, or a combinations of such.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC): areas that protect one or more special habitats and/or species, terrestrial or marine, as listed in the EU Habitats Directive