

# The Aberdeen Landscape Study

Peri-urban Study

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Strategic Place Planning  
Aberdeen City Council  
Marischal College  
Broad Street  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1AB

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## Project Team

### **Aberdeen City Council**

Claire McArthur, Deb Munro and Donna Laing



### **NatureScot**

Laura Campbell, Jo Duncan



### **Aberdeenshire Council**

Piers Blaxter, Ailsa Anderson and Katherine Southwell



### **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



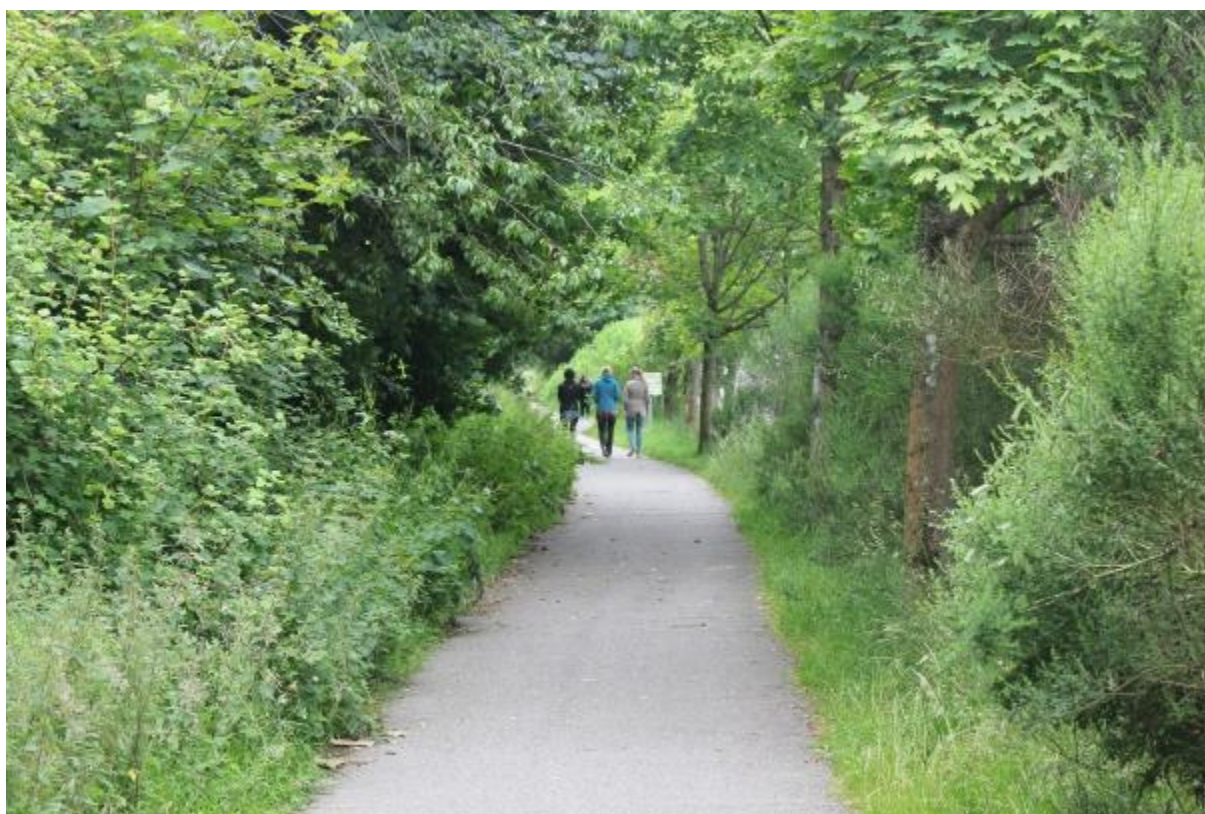
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## 1. Introduction

This section outlines the need and purpose of the study and how it fits within the overall Aberdeen Landscape Study. It also provides some background to the work, and definitions of peri-urban areas and the main issues affecting them.

### The need for this study

- 1.1 Peri-urban issues tend to receive little attention in spatial planning. Despite being areas that are subject to considerable development and recreational pressures, there is a lack of detailed information for these places that explores the interaction of townscape and rural/sub-urban character. In Aberdeen, much of the peri-urban landscape is designated Green Space Network, yet this is where there is also significant pressure for development. This study aims to test one approach to filling this information gap. It also provides an opportunity to plan and manage strategic Green Space Network corridors which radiate into, and connect with, rural as well as future areas of settlement expansion. As part of this, there is an opportunity to increase access, contribute to the health, wealth and well-being of urban and rural communities, underpin sustainable development and enhance biodiversity.



The Deeside Way provides an important link from the city to the countryside

- 1.2 This *Peri-urban Study* examines the nature of the urban to rural transition, and the function and condition of the city's peri-urban landscape. This is the area of greatest change, near where

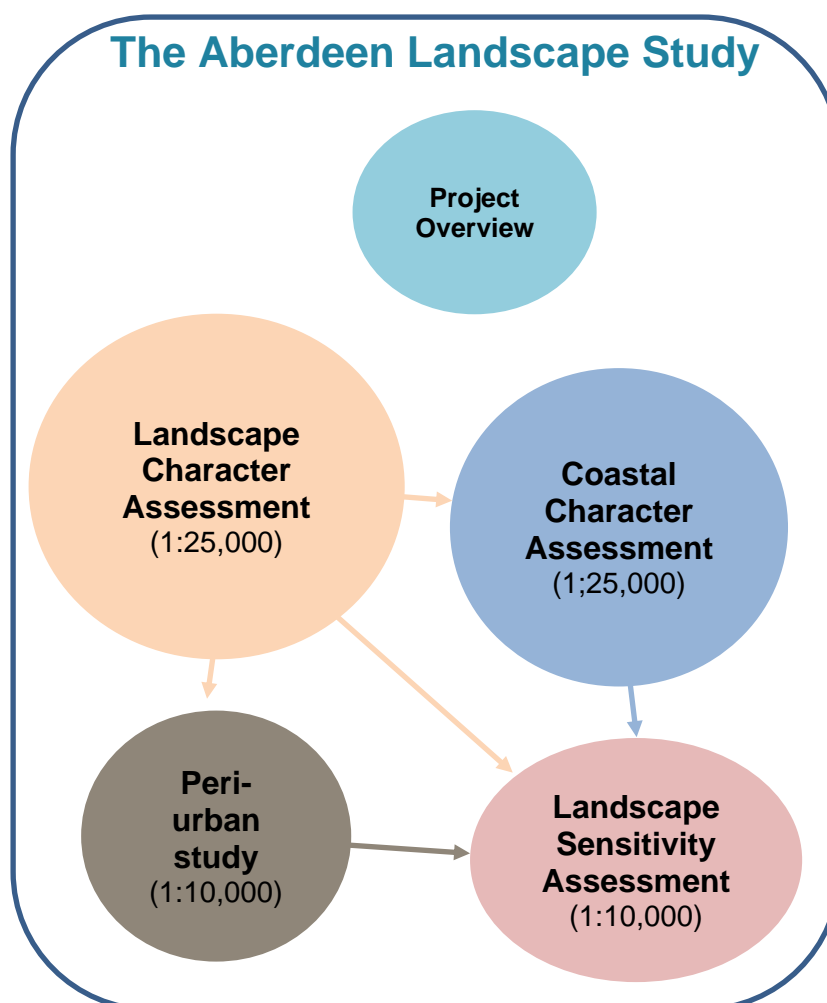
many people live and how they move from town to country. It is therefore important to consider peri-urban areas in more detail and identify opportunities and relevant guidance – all aimed at facilitating subsequent improvement on the ground. It complements the *Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment* which sets out a detailed understanding of landscape character around the urban edge of the city.

### **Purpose of report**

- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to develop and test an assessment methodology before using it to undertake a detailed study of the city's peri-urban landscapes. As part of developing the methodology this report reviewed urban-fringe related studies undertaken elsewhere across the UK. The scope of the study has been developed and tested through a pilot study. It then describes how field survey work was undertaken and the subsequent refinement of how best to analyse and present the detailed findings.
- 1.4 Within this context, this study supplements information contained in the *Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment* with a more detailed and focused appraisal of the characteristics, function and condition of the peri-urban landscape. In addition to other parts of the ALS, this information will provide a robust, up-to-date baseline to inform future plans, strategies, policies and projects, including the review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- 1.5 The level of detail provided in this study is useful, as is the range of topics analysed in the fields. Aspects such as separation function and gateways, landmarks and views, are all helpful when considering landuse change in the area around the city. As with LCA, we have found it is essential to look at the findings of adjacent study units when testing the findings for, say, development proposals, and when looking at connections for habitats or paths.

### **The Aberdeen Landscape Study**

- 1.6 This Peri-urban Study 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 a *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* for a range of development types, and a project overview provides a summary of the documents.



### What is peri-urban?

- 1.7 At its most basic level “Peri-Urban” is the combination of the words Periphery & Urban. The Oxford dictionary defines Periphery as “The outer limits or edge of an area or object.” While it defines Urban as “In, relating to, or characteristic of a town or city.” Accordingly, we are looking at the outer edge of Urban settlements - where the Urban edge begins to end we increasingly encounter the Rural.

Although no statutory definition of peri-urban exists we can provide a clear example of what is meant by using The Countryside Agency’s, now known as Natural England, definition of the urban fringe:

*“that zone of transition which begins with the edge of the fully built up urban area and becomes progressively more rural whilst still remaining a clear mix of urban and rural land uses and influences before giving way to the wider countryside<sup>1</sup>”*

- 1.8 Peri-urban areas can be described as the landscape interface between town and country, encompassing both characteristics of the urban and rural domain. As the setting for settlements and people’s lives and surroundings, peri-urban landscapes are important assets and with positive management, they can provide significant benefits to communities and the wider environment. With a diverse mix of land uses and habitats, the peri-urban domain has an important role in linking town with country and is ideally placed to demonstrating good practice in sustainable development.

## Peri-urban issues

- 1.9 Peri-urban landscapes are often subject to considerable pressures for and from development and as urbanisation occurs, traditional rural activities such as farming and forestry retreat. With often competing processes, pressures and functions, between which there is frequently a lack of integration, urban and rural land uses can sometimes conflict with one another.



Competing land uses of recreation, farming and recent industrial development

- 1.10 In 2008, the Scottish Landscape Forum considered peri-urban landscapes. Its report to Government identified several key issues facing Scotland's landscape, including the existence of poor settings for many urban and peri-urban communities, impinging on well-being and quality of life<sup>1</sup>. As part of this work, a study was commissioned (Steve Luker Associates) which concluded:

- a) The difficulty of not having an agreed definition of peri-urban landscapes, the terminology not being widely used, and as a consequence the lack of clarity identifying their spatial extent.
- b) The need to consider peri-urban landscapes not simply as 'problem' landscapes that suffer from misuse, but as providing many opportunities for meeting society's needs.
- c) The lack of explicit policy recognition given to peri-urban landscapes in key Government statements. Landscapes are often characterised as either urban or rural, and as a consequence the issues and requirements of peri-urban landscapes can be forgotten if not ignored.
- d) A concern with the adequacy of green belt policy to address either urban or rural landscape issues was identified. One of the critical influences on the condition of these landscapes is 'hope value'.
- e) New drivers for landscape change present opportunities for these landscapes - adaption to climate change, new sources of renewable energy, demand for local food production, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Landscape Forum's report to Scottish Ministers (2007) Scotland's Living Landscapes Places for People. Box 1 p.17



- f) Current priorities may need to be challenged, whether it is the focus on areas strictly defined as vacant and derelict land, or the lack of landscape management to be found in peri-urban areas.
  - g) The few examples of clear landscape objectives that could be identified from existing documents, despite the significance of these landscapes to Scotland's population.
- 1.11 Peri-urban areas can undergo fragmentation, neglect or abandonment and a lack of integration between urban and rural land uses. Problems typically facing the peri-urban are:
- a) Development pressure and the uncertainty it creates sometimes results in land abandonment;
  - b) Disturbance and disruption of land caused by conflict between different land uses and recreational pressures, vandalism and fly-tipping;
  - c) Uncertainty of land use can prevent long term investment resulting in good agricultural land being used for marginal activities;
  - d) Land fragmentation and the loss of farm holdings can lead to a lack of land management;
  - e) Market forces which encourage diversification can sometimes lead to activities such as the re-use of buildings for office and retail development, extending urban pressures into rural areas; and
  - f) Loss of farmed land can lead to a reduction in sense of place.
- 1.12 In Scotland, it is acknowledged<sup>2</sup> that the peri-urban landscape is becoming increasingly similar in character around many towns and cities. For example, the uniform approach to lay-out and design of housing estates has led to a loss of identity and the quality of the rural landscape surrounding cities and large towns often lacks distinctive local features and areas of high landscape quality.
- 1.13 The various drivers for this study, and the literature review of other case studies, informed the approach taken. This, and the development of the methodology, is in the second section of the report. The third and final section contains the survey findings and the recommendations for each peri-urban unit.

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<sup>2</sup>. Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002, "Natural Heritage Zones, A National Assessment of Scotland's Landscapes"

**Key stages**

- 2.1 As noted in section 1, this study is relatively novel. In developing, testing and implementing an approach, the key stages of this study are:

Stage 1 - Case study review

Stage 2 - Development of methodology and pilot study

Stage 3 - Field survey

Stage 4 - Refinement of analysis

Stage 5 - Final methodology and writing of report.

**STAGE 1 - Case study review**

- 2.2 The first stage in developing an appropriate methodology to examine the nature of the urban to rural transition, function and condition of the city's peri-urban landscapes was to undertake a review of other similar studies undertaken elsewhere in the UK. As detailed in Appendix 1, nine case studies were reviewed and in developing an approach for this study, the following key points were identified:

**Key findings from the literature review**

1. Urban fringe/peri-urban landscapes occur at the interface of rural landscape character types and urban areas.
2. In land use and planning terms, the interface of urban and rural areas is usually well-defined. In landscape terms however, the boundary may be less clearly defined, for example, where the presence of vegetation or a range of urban fringe land uses might blur the transition. In other areas however, the rural character may extend to the urban edge, providing a sudden transition.
3. The character and condition of the rural and urban components of an urban edge can be the dominant influence across peri-urban landscapes.
4. The assessment of peri-urban areas should capture the rural and urban character types/areas, and how they combine and interact at their interface.
5. A range of natural, cultural and other environmental datasets and designations is important to help understand the current value and function of peri-urban landscapes. The identification of local peri-urban or urban fringe character areas provides a useful spatial framework to examine urban fringe issues. As part of this, a logical approach to defining the extent and scale of urban fringe areas should be clearly set out.

6. Criteria to identify and assess peri-urban/urban fringe areas should focus on the specific characteristics of these landscapes, rather than a general overview of landscape character. Criteria to consider in assessing the urban fringe include:
  - a) Integrity and distinctiveness of landscape character
  - b) Representativeness and consistency with wider character
  - c) Landform and important topographical features
  - d) Land use
  - e) Field pattern
  - f) Field boundaries
  - g) Tree cover
  - h) Important landscape features that contribute to the setting
  - i) Built character, settlement form and pattern of urban development
  - j) Character of the existing urban edge and urban edge integration
  - k) Robustness and sustainability of existing boundaries
  - l) Locally and regionally important views and visual connections
  - m) Recreational resources, including public accessibility and gateways into urban areas
  - n) Experiential sense of the townscape and rural character
  - o) Remoteness and tranquillity
7. The assessment of landscape condition can be an important consideration as this helps to guide management opportunities. Aspects to that have been considered in the studies reviewed include:
  - a) Landcover change
  - b) Abandonment/fragmentation of land uses
  - c) Habitat survival
  - d) Field boundaries
  - e) Tree cover
  - f) New development
8. Detailed field survey, ideally at a scale of 1:10,000, is important in understanding and describing peri-urban/urban fringe character.
9. Identifying the key peri-urban issues can help in defining individual units/areas and are relevant to developing management opportunities.
10. To give further weight to a study, stakeholder engagement should seek to gain consensus on key issues and actions.

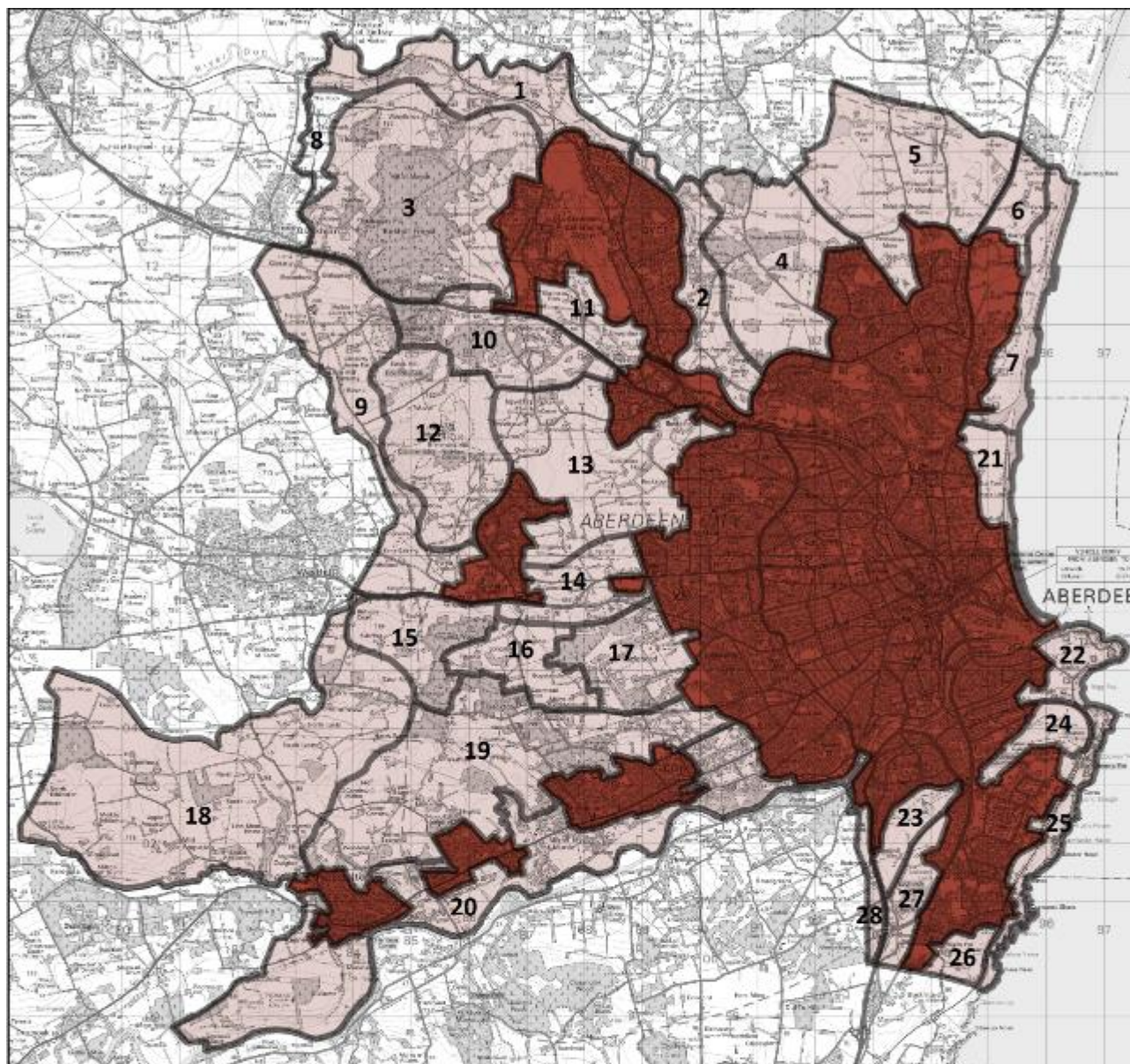
## **STAGE 2 – Development of methodology and pilot study**

2.3 Following the review of a number of relevant urban fringe/peri-urban case studies, a methodology was proposed and tested on two pilot areas. It:

1. provides an approach to identify the extent of peri-urban areas;
2. assesses and describes the characteristics of the Aberdeen peri-urban landscape based on a clear set of peri-urban aspects;
3. identifies and analyses the main functions and key landscape issues of for each peri-urban area;
4. could provide opportunity for the development of a peri-urban typology (this was not followed in this study – see 2.12 9e); and
5. provides evidence to identify area specific landscape planning and management opportunities for each peri-urban area.

### **Defining the urban edge**

2.4 The urban areas as defined in the *Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment* formed the starting point to determine which landscape character areas (LCAs) adjoin the main urban area of the City. In addition, those LCAs adjacent to the ‘island’ urban areas of Kingswells, Peterculter and Milltimber were included. As illustrated on the following map, all LCAs, apart from LCA 8 (Blackburn Valley), have some contact with the current urban edge or Opportunity Sites (sites allocated for development in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan) under construction.



## Aberdeen Peri-urban Study

May 2016

 Landscape Character Area

 Urban

 Peri-urban



0 1 2 3 km

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- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 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 |

### **Scale of assessment**

- 2.5 As noted in the brief, the study was to be undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000. As part of the pilot study, and as a result of the case study literature review; a 1:10,000 scale was also explored to ascertain the most appropriate level of analysis. The 1:10,000 scale was preferred and used for the study.

### **Desk study**

- 2.6 Prior to the pilot study field work, a desk study analysis using GIS data was undertaken to identify:

- Relevant landscape character (a review of key characteristics)
- Nature conservation interests (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Conservation Sites)
- Historic and cultural interest (e.g. Historic Landuse Assessment, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings)
- Recreational interest (Core Paths, National Cycle Routes, open spaces, outdoor sports facilities, allotments). Active travel is an important consideration but has no mapped data. Core Paths and National Cycle Routes information was used as a proxy.
- Other Environmental considerations (e.g. Agricultural Land Classification)

This provided a starting point for the features and range of interests in the landscape of the study area. Some aspects, such as active travel routes, are not available as mapped data, but the desk study was a useful indication of where interests occurred or overlapped.

### **Defining the extent of peri-urban areas**

- 2.7 Defining the extent of the peri-urban pilot areas was undertaken initially through desk study (see above). It also involved an assessment of the following additional criteria to be examined through field survey:

- a) Pattern and extent of urban development beyond the urban edge.
- b) Experiential sense of townscape and rural character beyond the urban edge.
- c) Degree of visual containment provided by robustness and permeability of outer boundaries (e.g. woodland/landform)
- d) Locally important views and visual connections to surrounding areas.

Early on, defining a whole LCArea as urban fringe was considered. This would have simplified the process of identifying study units. But it was quickly found that this underplayed the transition from urban to rural, and the extent of urban influence, both of which emerged as important factors in identifying peri-urban study units. See the key findings section, below, for the parameters that were followed in practice.

### **Field survey**

- 2.8 Once the extent of the urban fringe area had been identified, the following aspects were assessed through field survey to identify key characteristics for each peri-urban area:
1. Integrity and distinctiveness of landscape character and important landscape features that contribute to the setting of nearby urban areas;
  2. Representativeness and consistency with wider character;
  3. Landform and important topographical features;
  4. Land use (e.g. nature of farmland and field boundaries/presence of horse-grazing/other 'urban fringe' land uses);
  5. Character and visibility of existing urban edges and urban edge integration;
  6. Likely character and visibility of any Opportunity Site urban edge and urban edge integration;
  7. Robustness of boundaries and degree of permeability (e.g. natural or built edge, degree of screening by woodland/landform);
  8. Pattern and extent of urban development/built features beyond the urban edge (e.g. dispersed dwellings, farmsteads, masts, pylons);
  9. Recreational and active travel resources (Core Paths, National Cycle Routes and open spaces) including public accessibility and routes into urban areas;
  10. Experiential sense of townscape and rural character beyond the urban edge, including sense of remoteness and tranquillity;
  11. Views and visual connections to surrounding areas; and
  12. Landscape condition (e.g. landcover change, habitat survival, field boundaries, tree cover, new development and other impacts).

### **Pilot study**

- 2.9 The pilot study (see Appendix 2 for further details) tested the method on the following two areas:
- LCA 5 (Mundurno) at 1:25,000 (pilot 1)
  - LCA 17 (Hazlehead Park) & LCA 19 (Countesswells) at 1:10,000 (pilot 2).
- 2.10 Pilot 1 (LCA 5) provided the opportunity to explore how the outer rural edge of the area is defined. Pilot 2 (LCAs 17 and 19) provides an example of more detailed assessment and examination of how the future impact of Opportunity Sites are considered.
- 2.11 In presenting the findings, the peri-urban areas were mapped to show the following descriptive information:
- Location & context;
  - Extent of peri-urban influences; and
  - Key characteristics based on the field survey aspects (see 2.8) and character area descriptions

### Key findings of the pilot studies

2.12 On review of the pilot studies, the following key findings were identified:

- a) Undertaking field survey at scale of 1:10,000 provided the opportunity to analyse peri-urban areas in more detail. In particular, it was evident that nature of urban edges often varies considerable at a local level and capturing other aspects that contribute to the character, function and condition of peri-urban areas in more than detail than an assessment at 1:25,000 would provide a more meaningful and useful analysis.
- b) The identification and associated mapping of individual peri-urban areas is complex because it should consider a wide range of factors including landscape character, the type and function of urban edges and how the wider landscape functions in terms of access, recreation, nature conservation and other land uses.
- c) In mapping the inner boundaries of peri-urban units, it is important to include the outer edges of urban areas, i.e. not just the edge itself but part of the built-up area behind the edge, as these are integral to the character and functioning of peri-urban areas.
- d) In mapping the outer unit boundaries, consideration should be given to the nature and extent of urban to rural transition. In one area (Scotstown Moor) two adjacent Peri- Urban units were identified one beyond the 'external' area of the other (See page 258 for map). This approach was not followed because it focussed more on detailed landscape character analysis of the two units rather than the nature and extent of urban to rural transition.
- e) Use of a typology of urban edges could have been developed but it was considered unnecessarily complex.

### STAGE 3 – Field survey

2.13 On review of the pilot studies, the field survey criteria forms were revised to better reflect patterns of relevant peri-urban character, function and condition. These are:

<p><b>A: Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key characteristics from Landscape Character Assessment</li> <li>• Designated sites within sub-unit</li> <li>• Perceptual qualities, e.g. tranquillity, remoteness, seclusion (relative to the study area)</li> <li>• Presence of Green Space Network and degree of connectivity</li> </ul>
<p><b>B: Settlement boundaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development</li> <li>• Any distinctive buildings within the urban edge or sub unit</li> <li>• Type of settlement edge</li> <li>• Type of visual containment (slope, vegetation, road)</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apparent physical and visual continuation with wider urban area</li> </ul>
<p><b>C: Recreational use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type and degree of recreational use evident (e.g. parks / designations / country parks)</li> <li>• Linear routes and evidence of recreational links (e.g. Core Paths)</li> <li>• Public open space</li> <li>• Recreation sites / facilities (e.g. carparks, picnic benches) and whether publicly accessible</li> <li>• Viewpoints on 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey maps</li> </ul>
<p><b>D: Views and gateways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type and variety of key views from sub-unit (e.g. panoramic, contained)</li> <li>• Visibility from main road/rail/ferry approaches</li> <li>• Gateway function</li> <li>• Prominent/notable features</li> </ul>
<p><b>E: Landscape setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Function as foreground/ backdrop to urban areas and/ or other landscapes</li> <li>• Separation function e.g. between different landuses</li> </ul>
<p><b>F: Landscape condition and forces for change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition of landscape features (e.g. intactness of field boundaries)</li> <li>• Degree of management evident</li> <li>• Forces for change observed</li> <li>• Notes regarding enhancement opportunities/ management guidelines (e.g. agriculture and recreation)</li> </ul>

2.14 In July 2016 a detailed field survey was undertaken. While this study is distinct from the *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* the similarities in assessment criteria and timescale of the project drove the pragmatic choice to conduct field work for both studies concurrently. As part of this, the 28 landscape character areas (see *Landscape Character Assessment*) were sub-divided into 79 units based on local variations of principally landform, landcover, land use and visibility. For each of these units, a field survey form, based on the above criteria, was then completed by two Landscape Architects.

## **STAGE 4 - Refinement of analysis following pilot studies**

- 2.15 On completion of the pilot study field work, the information was analysed and draft assessments presented for review. The steering group considered these in detail. Consequently, fifteen peri-urban units were defined through:
- a) Further analysis of the interaction and relationship of the urban edge with the adjacent landscape; and how this varies along different sections of the urban edge. As part of this, all urban edges, including the likely future edges of Opportunity Sites, were classified by the following types:
    - 1. Open edges (e.g. amenity open space)
    - 2. Wooded or heavily-treed edges
    - 3. Hard urban edge
  - b) In defining the outer extent of units, consideration was given to the nature of the wider landscape, including some areas that extend into Aberdeenshire where there is some visual and/or functional influence on peri-urban areas within Aberdeen City, and the transition from urban to rural. As part of this, the peri-urban function, including the experience of travelling through the area, of moving from town to country and vice versa – partly the ‘gateway’ aspect, was also assessed.
  - c) Ensuring that the units have a clear relationship to the defining characteristics/types of the Aberdeen urban fringe i.e. coastal dunes/beach, rocky coast, hills, river valleys and agricultural landscape.

## **STAGE 5 – Finalised methodology**

- 2.16 The preceding iterative stages of project development led to the identification, assessment and analysis of the fifteen peri-urban units identified in this study (see Figure 1). This has been determined through the following steps:

### **STEP 1 – Defining the initial study area**

- 2.17 The first step was to identify the urban areas within Aberdeen and all landscape character areas (LCAs) that adjoin them. As result of this exercise, the edges around main urban area of the City (including the ‘island’ urban areas of Kingswells, Peterculter and Milltimber) along with 27 LCAs formed the starting point of subsequent for study.

### **STEP 2 - Desk study**

- 2.18 To gather information on the natural, cultural and wider environmental interest of the study area, an initial desk study analysis was undertaken using GIS data and other written information were available to identify:
- a) Relevant landscape character (a review of key characteristics from LCAs)

- b) Nature conservation interests (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Conservation Sites)
- c) Historic and cultural interest (e.g. Historic Landuse Assessment, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings)
- d) Recreational interest (e.g. Core Paths, National Cycle Routes, open spaces, outdoor sports facilities, allotments)
- e) Other Environmental considerations (e.g. Agricultural Land Classification)

### **STEP 3 – Field survey**

2.19 A detailed field survey at a scale of 1:10,000 was undertaken across the study area. For convenience, this utilised the 79 landscape units that were identified as part of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. These were based on local variations of principally landform, landcover, land use and visibility. Field survey forms (see example in Annex 3) for each unit were then completed by two Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute to record the following the information:

#### **A: Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics**

- Key characteristics from Landscape Character Assessment
- Designated sites within sub-unit
- Perceptual qualities, e.g. tranquillity, remoteness, seclusion (relative to the study area)
- Presence of Green Space Network and degree of connectivity

#### **B: Settlement boundaries**

- Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development
- Any distinctive buildings within the urban edge or sub-unit
- Type of settlement edge
- Type of visual containment (slope, vegetation, road)
- Apparent physical and visual continuation with wider urban area

#### **C: Recreational use**

- Type and degree of recreational use evident
- Linear routes and evidence of recreational links (e.g. Core Paths)
- Public open space
- Recreation sites/ facilities (e.g. carparks, picnic benches) and whether publicly accessible
- Viewpoints on 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey maps

**D: Views and gateways**

- Type and variety of key views from sub-unit (e.g. panoramic, contained)
- Views to unit (e.g. from the sea, elevated areas, adjacent housing)
- Visibility from main road/rail/ferry approaches
- Gateway function
- Prominent/notable features

**E: Landscape setting**

- Function as foreground/ backdrop to urban areas and/ or other landscapes
- Separation function e.g. between different landuses

**F: Landscape condition and forces for change**

- Condition of landscape features (e.g. field boundaries)
- Degree of management evident
- Forces for change observed
- Notes regarding enhancement opportunities/ management guidelines (e.g. agriculture and recreation)

**STEP 4 – Analysis and identification of Peri-urban units**

- 2.20 On completion of the field work, the identification and associated mapping of individual peri-urban units considered a wide range of factors including landscape character, the type and function of urban edges and how the wider landscape functions in terms of access, recreation, nature conservation and other land uses. Ultimately, the identification of units was based on a judgement of consistent patterns of common character, function and condition.
- 2.21 In practice, this process was based on findings of the desk study and field survey to include an analysis of the following:
- a) Natural and cultural designations (Aberdeen Local Development Plan GIS data)
  - b) Open Spaces (Aberdeen Open Space Strategy GIS data). The categories for this list are derived from PAN65<sup>3</sup>
    - Public Parks & Gardens
    - School Grounds
    - Institutional Grounds
    - Amenity Spaces
    - Playing Fields & Other Sports
    - Golf Courses
    - Green Access & Riparian Routes
    - Woodlands

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/05/30100623/18h>

- Open Semi-Natural
  - Open Water
  - Other Functional Spaces
- c) Landcover (Landcover Map2007, field survey/LCA)
  - d) Redundant/under managed farmland (field survey/LCA)
  - e) Scattered dwellings and other built infrastructure (field survey/LCA)
  - f) Allotments (field survey/LCA)
  - g) Horse paddocks (field survey/LCA)
  - h) Infrastructure corridors (field survey/LCA)
  - i) Park and ride (field survey/LCA)
  - j) Communications infrastructure (field survey/LCA)
  - k) Green Space Network (Aberdeen Local Development Plan GIS data)
- 2.21 In mapping the inner boundaries of peri-urban units, it was considered important to include the outer edges of urban areas as these are integral to the character and functioning of peri-urban areas.
- 2.22 In mapping the outer unit boundaries, it was clearly evident that is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify definitive boundaries between peri-urban areas and the wider rural landscape. In all cases, there is a gradual transition to the wider rural landscape and to illustrate this, it was agreed to have open outer boundaries for all units.
- 2.23 An overall review of the units reinforced the importance of the main gateway routes into the city. They provide different arrival experiences, whether with a sudden “reveal” or a sequence of gaps between settlements. This aspect could be part of what is considered when designing new buildings and built-up areas.

## **STEP 5 – Presentation of results**

- 2.24 For each peri-urban unit (see Section 3 for detailed results), the following information is provided and structured as follows:

### **Introduction**

- Overview of unit
- Map of unit
- Location and landscape context

### **Detailed written analysis**

1. Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics
  - Landform, landcover and land use
  - Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit
  - Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity

- Experience
- 2. Edges / urban-rural interaction
  - Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development
  - Prominent and distinctive buildings
  - Type of settlement edge
  - Type of visual containment
  - Apparent continuation with wider urban area
- 3. Recreational use
  - Type and degree of recreational use evident
  - Recreational and active travel routes and links
- 4. Views
  - Key views to peri-urban unit
  - Key views from peri-urban unit
- 5. Landscape role
  - Landscape setting
  - Gateway function
  - Separation Function
- 6. Condition and management
  - Condition of landscape features
  - Degree of management evident

### **Mapped analysis**

To inform and help illustrate the detailed written analysis, the following maps are presented for each unit:

- Designations - natural, cultural and Core Paths
- Open Space - based on Aberdeen Open Space Audit types (2010)
- Overall analysis - Green Space Network and connectivity, landform containment, key views, key features, main road, rail and sea routes and gateways

### **Photographic study**

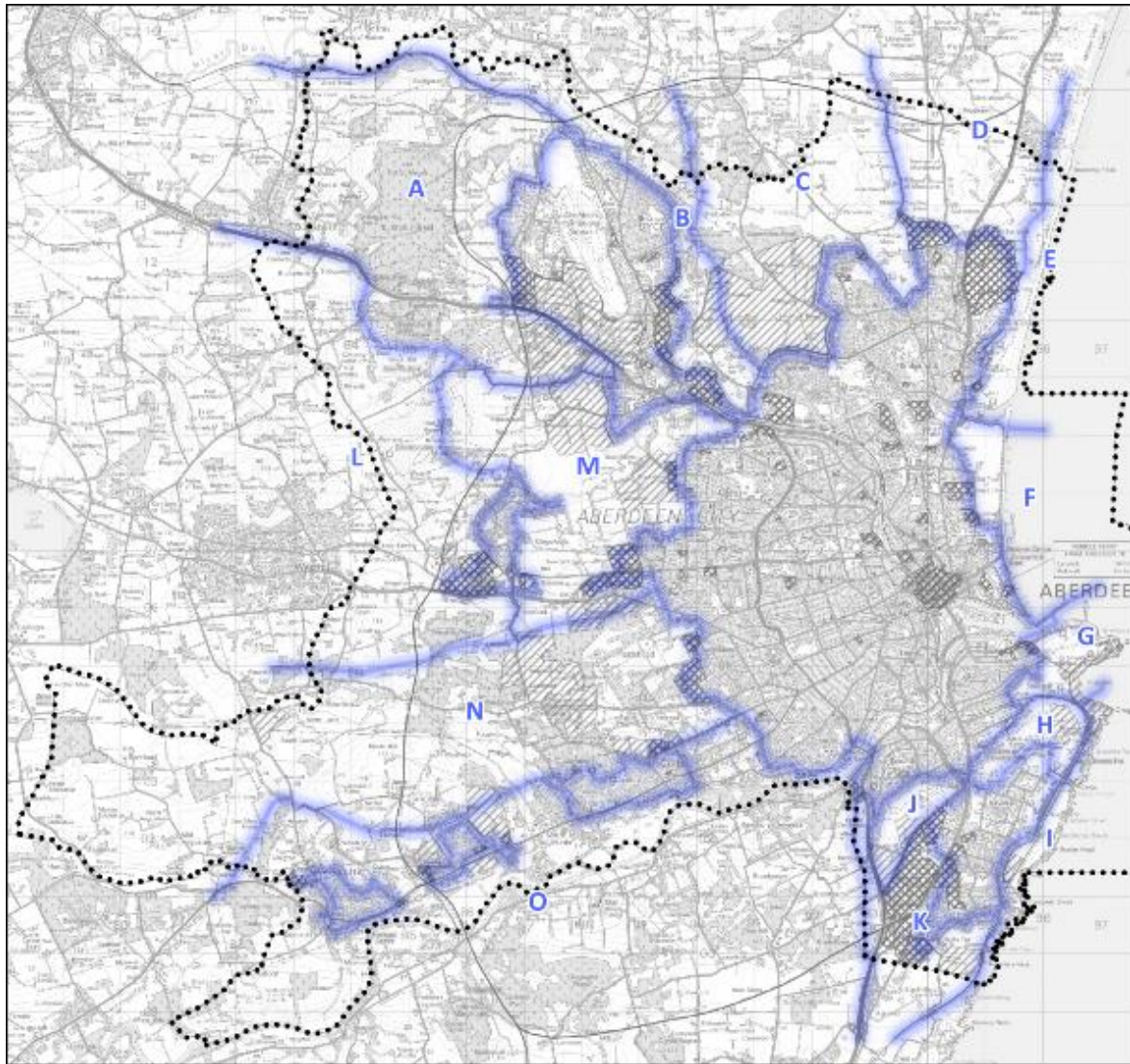
- Selection of eight representative images of each peri-urban unit

### **Potential opportunities**

- Suggested opportunities for management of relevant landscape characteristics (as detailed in the *Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment*). Also and other appropriate features of the peri-urban landscape such as urban edges, and access and habitat links.

**Overview of peri-urban units**

3.1 In total, fifteen peri-urban units have been identified and the following sections set out the detailed assessment of each unit.






**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



-  Aberdeen City Council boundary
-  Peri Urban Unit boundary
-  Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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### Overview of unit



Looking along the western edge of Dyce Industrial Estate across rural fields towards a forested skyline

Apart from the influence of the busy A96 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, there is a sudden transition from the urban edge of industrial estate and business park development to a mostly undeveloped landscape with a distinctive rural character. Within extensive areas of woodland and forest, there is a strong sense of tranquillity and detachment from the city although from the eastern lower hill slopes, the nearby industrial estate and airport, with parts of the city extending beyond, are very obvious.

To the west of the farmed lower slopes, the prominent summits of Tyrebagger Hill and the Hill of Marcus provide a distinctive forested backdrop to the setting of Aberdeen, visible from many parts of the city and the surrounding landscape. From the A96, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the Aberdeen to Inverness railway, the unit provides an important forested gateway into and out of the city. The unit also provides an important separation function between development along the north-western urban edge of Aberdeen and the rural landscapes in Aberdeenshire.

Across areas of higher ground, the extensive coverage of woodlands and forests are very important for informal recreation, with a good network of connecting footpaths through them. There are also good footpaths links to nearby urban areas, west towards Blackburn and south towards Brimmond Hill. A

large proportion of the woodlands and forests are designated part of the Green Space Network, with good access and habitat linkages to the surrounding peri-urban units.

The urban edge of Dyce industrial estate is generally hard, resulting in a prominent contrast with adjacent open fields. From parts of the city, the location of development along the lower hill slopes is particularly evident. Along the A96, recently constructed business and industrial units are prominent within the intervening open ground.

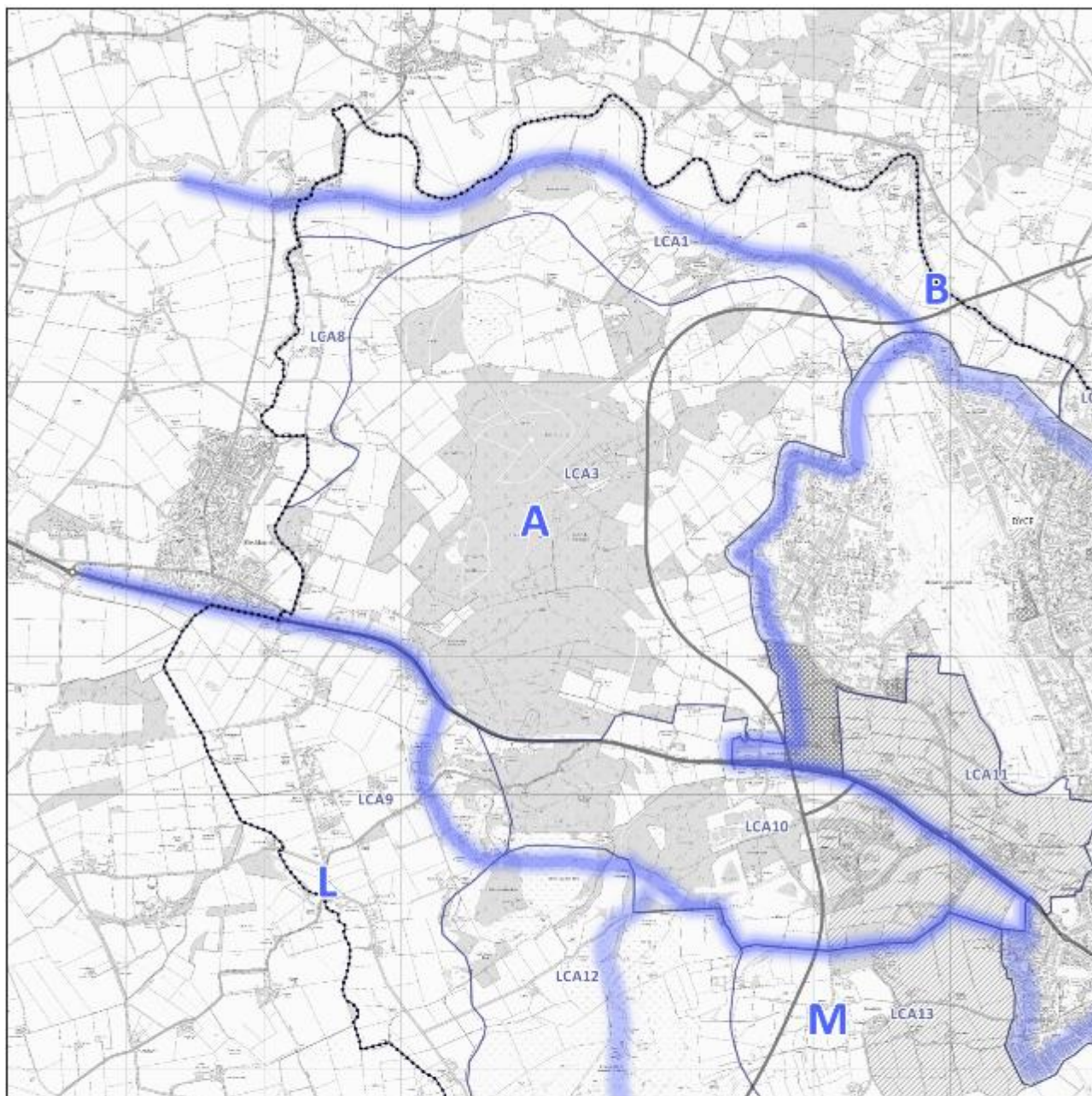
### **Location and landscape context**

*Tyrebagger Hill* (LCA 3) and *Craibstone* (LCA 10) Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) form most of peri-urban unit A (see figure A-1). The southern part of the *Upper Don* (LCA 1) up to the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line is also within the unit although the easternmost part towards Dyce is within peri-urban unit B. *Blackburn* (LCA 8) is located to the west of the unit. The River Don forms an important landscape feature to the north of the unit and the summit of Brimmond Hill is prominent to the south-west.

The unit reflects the strong contrast between the western edge of Dyce Industrial Estate and recent business park development towards the A96, with the mainly rural forested and wooded hills lying on the north-western fringes of Aberdeen. Several factors set this unit apart from these surrounding units including the extensive opportunities for recreation within woodlands and forests, and the strategic importance of the River Don, A96 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route in providing key/main routes into and out of the city.

Peri-urban unit L lies adjacent to the south-west, unit M to the south-east, and unit B to the north-east. The unit is bounded to the east by Dyce Industrial Estate, Aberdeen Airport to the north-east and recent business park development and park and ride to the south-east.

Figure A-1: Unit boundary



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- ▨ Opportunity Site
- ▩ Developed/under construction at time of assessment

## Analysis

Unit A	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
<p>a) Landform, landcover and land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit is centred on the large scale rounded landform of Tyrebagger Hill (250 m AOD) and the Hill of Marcus (233 m AOD). These hills form the northern end of an arc of hills that curves around the western edge of the city. To the north of the unit, the landform slopes steeply away towards the flat floodplain of the River Don. To the south, the unit is typified by a strongly undulating landform of north and south-facing slopes that become more complex and hummocky towards the west. On the western fringes of the unit, a small valley containing the Black Burn separates Tyrebagger Hill and the nearby settlement of Blackburn.</li> <li>ii. On the summit of Tyrebagger Hill, semi-natural habitats include an area of dry heathland with small patches of broadleaved woodland. South of the A96, there are small pockets of broadleaved woodlands and along the Gough Burn, a mosaic of wet heathland, marshy grassland and patches of willow scrub. On the north-facing slope of the River Don Valley, Woodlands Wood is relatively large area of deciduous, semi-natural woodland and along the riverbanks of the Don there are narrow ribbons of marginal vegetation.</li> <li>iii. On hill summits and upper slopes, land use is predominantly conifer forest which provides an important resource for informal recreation. Across the lower slopes, mixed farming dominates. Along the urban edge of Dyce, there are small pockets of amenity open space associated with Dyce Industrial Estate with the expanse of airfields across Aberdeen Airport further north. The construction of a park and ride and nearby business units has recently taken place along the A96. In the south of the unit, Scotland’s Rural College occupies the former Craibstone Estate and to the south-west, a golf course is set amongst woodland.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Across areas of lower ground, there is a relatively high proportion of natural designations (see figure A-2). Woodland’s Wood on the northern slopes of the Hill of Marcus is designated as a Local Nature Conservation Site and nearly the entire unit to the south of the A96 forms part of the Three Hills Local Nature Conservation Site.</li> <li>ii. There is a concentration of prehistoric Scheduled Monuments on areas of higher ground. These include the prominent Standingstones stone circle on the hillside overlooking the airport, Woodlands Croft hut circle and field system, and the prehistoric burial cairns, hut circles and cairnfield at The Slacks on Kirkhill. A line of nine March Stones (34-42) is also situated near to the southern boundary of the unit.</li> </ul>
<p>c) Presence of open space and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There are concentrations of Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Space that extend down the lower east-facing slopes of the Hill of Marcus and Tyrebagger Hill (see</li> </ul>

Unit A	
degrees of connectivity	<p>figure A-3). To the south of the A96, West Moors and Parkhead are identified (by the Open Space Audit) as Woodland Open Spaces with Golf Courses to their south. Small pockets of open space are also associated with institutional grounds, business parks and industrial estate.</p> <p>ii. The Green Space Network covers a very large proportion of the unit (see figure A-4). This includes most of the woodland to the south of the A96 and the extensive area of Kirkhill Forest to the north.</p> <p>iii. Ribbons of wooded Green Space Network also extend down the lower east-facing slopes of Tyrebagger Hill and the Hill of Marcus which provide habitat links from the edge of Dyce Industrial Estate, north to the Don Valley, and west towards the core area of Green Space Network across Kirkhill Forest.</p> <p>iv. The adjoining Green Space Network within the Don Valley to north of the unit and Brimmond and Elrick hills to the south, provide an extensive undeveloped rural setting. These links are also recognised in the provision of the ‘Four Hills Walks’ a recreational trail that links Brimmond, Elrick, Kirkhill, and Tyrebagger hills.</p>
d) Experience	<p>i. With an absence of development, extensive areas of conifer forest provide a sense of seclusion and tranquillity.</p> <p>ii. Along the eastern lower slopes towards Dyce, noise from nearby industrial development, roads and airport activity is very noticeable.</p> <p>iii. To the south of the A96, a degree of seclusion is experienced within the Clinterty Woods, although the proximity of the A96, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and airport limits the sense of tranquillity through noise and occasional visibility.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<p>i. The settlement edge at Dyce Industrial Estate consists of relatively large and compact late 20th century light industrial buildings, with varying colours and styles. Further south towards the A96, large modern business park buildings and a park and ride are currently being constructed. Although the airport is classified as urban (and therefore mostly outside of the unit), there are no airport buildings close to the unit boundary.</p>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<p>i. A tall office block is the most prominent building on the urban edge of Dyce Industrial Estate. This is situated on higher ground than surrounding buildings and appears larger in form. Towards the south of the unit, several large office blocks and warehouses appear prominent in views from the nearby A96.</p> <p>ii. Away from the urban edge, there is pattern of distinctive traditional farm buildings scattered across the lower hill slopes. Scotland’s Rural College occupies</p>

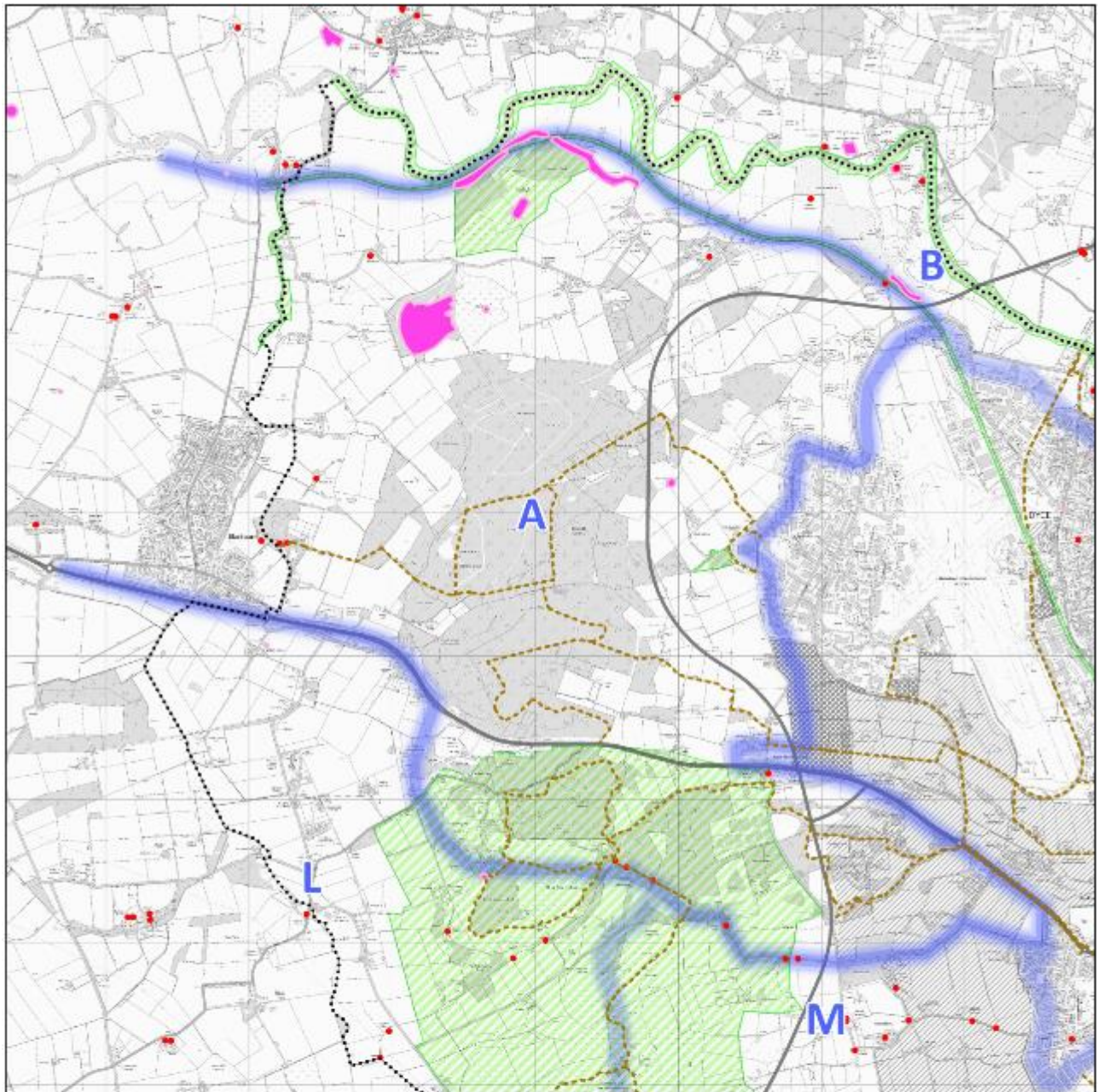
Unit A	
	the former Craibstone Estate although this is well screened by surrounding woodland.
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To the north-east of the unit, undeveloped grassed fields that separate the airport runway from Dyce Drive provide an open edge, with boundaries marked by post and wire fences along a raised embankment.</li> <li>ii. Along the western edge of Dyce Industrial Estate, large industrial units back on to the unit, enclosed by security metal fencing, forming an abrupt hard edge to the rural fields that extend across the lower east-facing slopes of Tyrebagger Hill and the Hill of Marcus. Along part of the edge, a farm track separates the agricultural fields from the industrial estate and occasional scattered trees and small woodland blocks provide a softer edge in places.</li> <li>iii. To the south of Dyce Industrial Estate, recently constructed office blocks and warehouses adjoin open fields to the west. Along the southern edge, open grassed embankments with post and rail fences and the ongoing construction activity of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route line the A96.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Along the western urban edge, the lower slopes of Tyrebagger Hill and the Hill of Marcus provide a sense of gently rising visual containment, emphasised by a backdrop forested upper slopes.</li> <li>ii. From areas of higher open ground, the lower parts of the unit are experienced in a wide context. Parts of the city are widely visible to the east, the Don Valley to the north, Brimmond to the south, and Bennachie and the Grampian hills to the west.</li> <li>iii. At a more local level, roadside embankments along part of Dyce Drive to the north of Dyce Industrial Estate provide some visual containment from the nearby airport. Along other sections, an absence of visual containment provides uninterrupted views across nearby intervening fields to the airport and wooded rising ground beyond. Development to the south of the unit tends to be open although along the A96, roadside embankments, Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route earthworks and woodland to the south of the road, form a sense of localised containment.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From lower-lying areas, the abrupt urban edge formed by extensive industrial development at Dyce allows little continuity with the wider urban area.</li> <li>ii. From areas of higher ground however, Dyce Industrial Estate is viewed in the context of the nearby airport, with longer views towards the northern part of the city and the North Sea beyond.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	

Unit A	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Recreational use is extensive across the much of the unit. In particular, there are many opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding in Kirkhill Forest and Tyrebagger Wood, and to the south of the A96, in Clinterty Wood and West Woods. Within Kirkhill Forest and Tyrebagger Wood, several forest car parks provide access to the many trails and informal recreation. Opportunities for formal recreation are limited to golf.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is a good network of well-connected Core Paths across much of the unit. Many of these form part of the ‘Four Hills Walks’ a recreational trail that link Brimmond, Elrick, Kirkhill, and Tyrebagger hills.</li> <li>ii. Core Path 3 provides access from the western edge of Dyce Industrial Estate, across the lower farmed slopes and into Kirkhill Forest. Core Path 11 provides circular access through the forest and connects with Core Path 1 which leads west towards Blackburn. Core Path 2 also connects with Core Path 11 and leads south to the A96.</li> <li>iii. South of the A96, Core Path 36 provides access through Clinterty Woods. Core Path 37 follows the western edge of West Woods with further links to the south and east of the unit.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 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.</li> <li>ii. In comparison to other units, there is a notable absence of built development within it although much of the unit is visible from the adjacent Dyce Industrial Estate and airport. Although the extent of nearby residential development is limited, the upper slopes and hill summits are visible from many areas across the city.</li> <li>iii. There are open views from the Don valley to the north and from parts of Aberdeenshire to the west. Areas of higher ground within the unit are also visible from a number of hills to south of the unit, including Brimmond and Elrick.</li> </ul>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The forests and woodlands are popular destinations for informal recreation, highly visible when travelling along busy main roads.</li> <li>ii. From the lower-lying parts of the unit, views tend to be short range, curtailed by nearby rising ground, woodlands and built development.</li> </ul>

Unit A	
	iii. 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 towards Bennachie and the Grampian hills.
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<p>i. Situated at the northern end of an arc of hills which curves around the western edge of the city, this unit forms an important part of the setting to Aberdeen.</p> <p>ii. The prominent summits of Tyrebagger Hill and the Hill of Marcus provide a distinctive forested backdrop which is visible from many parts of the city and the surrounding landscape.</p>
b) Gateway function	<p>i. Key transport routes that traverse the unit are the A96, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the Aberdeen to Inverness railway which follows the River Don.</p> <p>ii. When travelling east along the A96 to the south of Kirkhill Forest, there is sudden sense of arrival into the city which is emphasised by the relatively high elevation of the road at this point. When travelling west, there is distinctive transition to a predominantly rural landscape. When travelling by rail along the Don valley, there is a sudden rural to urban transition to the north of Dyce.</p>
c) Separation Function	<p>i. The unit provides an important separation function between development along the north-western urban edge of Aberdeen and the rural landscape in Aberdeenshire to the west.</p>
Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<p>i. Overall, the condition of landscape features is very good. Stone dykes on lower slopes are generally intact, and across the upper slopes, woodland and forests are well managed for a variety of uses.</p>
b) Degree of management evident	<p>i. Farmland is generally intensively managed for mixed agriculture.</p> <p>ii. The degree of management of the extensive coverage of forests across upper hill slopes and summits reflects the different uses of commercial timber production, recreation and nature conservation.</p> <p>iii. To the south of A96, woodlands appear well managed for access and nature conservation.</p>



Figure A2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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#### Natural Heritage Designations

Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

Listed Building

Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

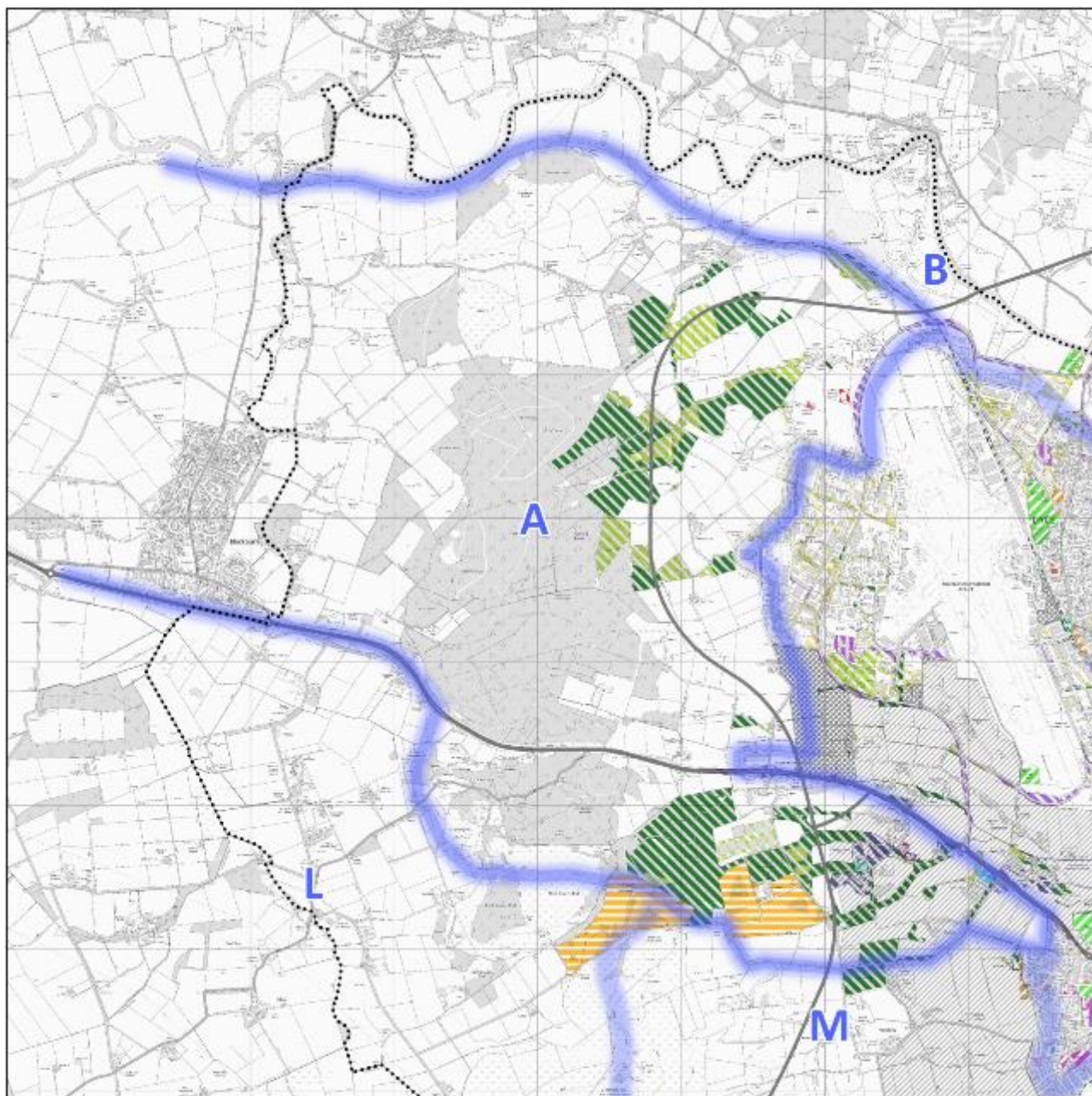
Core Path

AWPR

Opportunity Site

Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure A-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

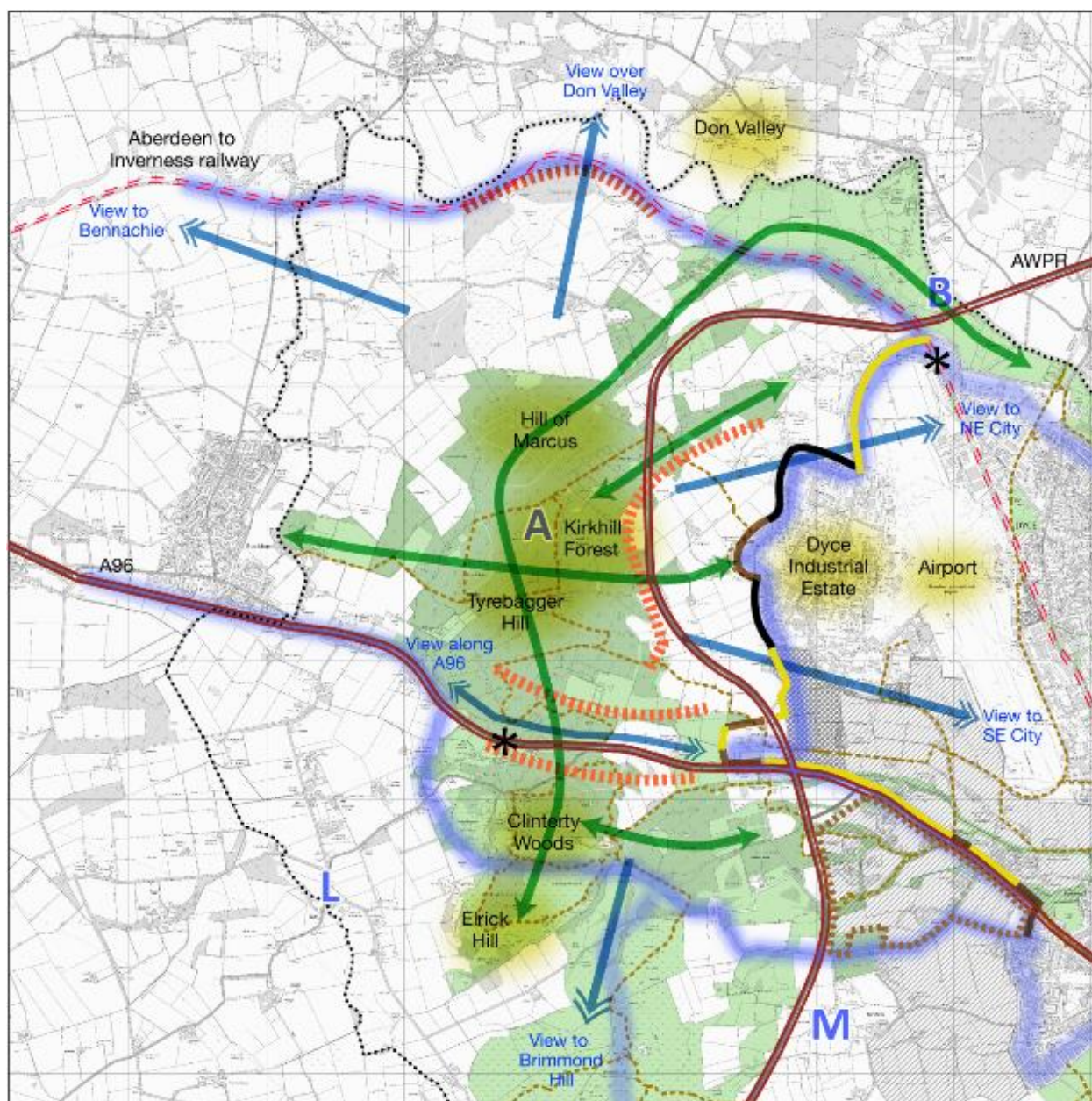
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■ Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Amenity - Business
- Amenity - Residential
- Amenity - Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Bowling Greens
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland

Figure A-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017  
Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Looking east over Dyce Industrial Estate towards the city



Long range views towards Bennachie



Forest trails through Tyrebagger Wood



AWPR and business park construction along the A96



Core Path 3 leading up the eastern slopes of Tyrebagger Hill



Looking towards Tyrebagger Hill from the south



Views over Dyce Industrial Estate



Wooded backdrop of Clinterty Woods along the A96

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Maintain the contrast of undeveloped, forested upper slopes and summits, with the pattern of scattered farmsteads, minor roads, shelterbelts, beech avenues and tree groups across lower hill slopes.*
- b) *Maintain the undeveloped, rural, open character of the River Don and Bucksburn valley floors.*
- c) *Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of semi-natural habitats.*
- d) *Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of forests and woodlands, including enhancing species diversity of forests, connectivity with woodlands and shelterbelts in river valleys, the wooded estate of Craibstone, surrounding farmland, and to offset the fragmentation effects of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.*
- e) *Encourage appropriately designed woodland planting that would: maintain open landscapes with key views of hills; maintain key views from hills; help to define or contain hard urban edges, such as at Dyce Industrial Estate and Blackburn; and, enhance the AWPR, A96 and railway gateway routes to the city whilst maintaining a balance of open views from these routes to the hummocky landforms around Craibstone, other surrounding landscapes, and the city.*
- f) *Maintain and enhance the recreational value of forests and woods, and the network of paths, tracks and minor roads that connect them with each other, with nearby settlements such as Blackburn and Craibstone, and with Brimmond Hill, Elrick Hill and the River Don Valley.*
- g) *Maintain the sense of seclusion and tranquillity experienced within parts of this unit, including the forest, hills, Don Valley and western slopes of Tyrebagger and Brimmond.*
- h) *Enhance the setting of historic landscape features such as cairns, hut circles and field systems, and encourage the provision of appropriate interpretation and improved access to them.*
- i) *Maintain key views of the hills within this unit and adjoining units, including from parts of the city, the Don Valley, AWPR, A96 and railway.*
- j) *Maintain long views from elevated land to the east and south over the city towards the sea, north over the Don Valley and west to Bennachie and the Grampian hills.*

## Overview of unit



Looking south-east along the wooded river corridor

Despite the influences of extensive built development and busy roads along the western fringes of the unit, there is a sudden transition from the urban edge to the largely undeveloped river corridor with a distinctive wooded appearance. Along the valley floor, the nearly continuous enclosure of trees and woodland provides a sense of seclusion. To the east of the river, the pattern of fields and woodlands has a relatively strong rural character. Despite the proximity of the city, the extensive coverage of woodland often screens nearby development from view, resulting in a sense of detachment from it.

The wooded valley is an important feature viewed from nearby roads leading into and out of the city, and from these routes the distinct urban to rural contrast is clearly evident. The unit also provides an important separation function between the river corridor and development sites to the east.

The river corridor is very important for nature conservation, access and recreation, much of it designated as a Green Space Network. The Green Space Network continues along much of the Don Valley to the north of the unit and parts of the valley sides further south and east, reinforcing the strategic function of the river corridor. Riverside Park and the connecting footpaths provide good access within the northern part of the unit although there are no footpaths to south of the unit.

The urban edge along the western part of the unit is generally well integrated by roadside trees and extensive areas of woodland along the valley floor. Although pockets of development are visible alongside the river from the west-facing valley sides, the majority of the unit retains an undeveloped appearance.

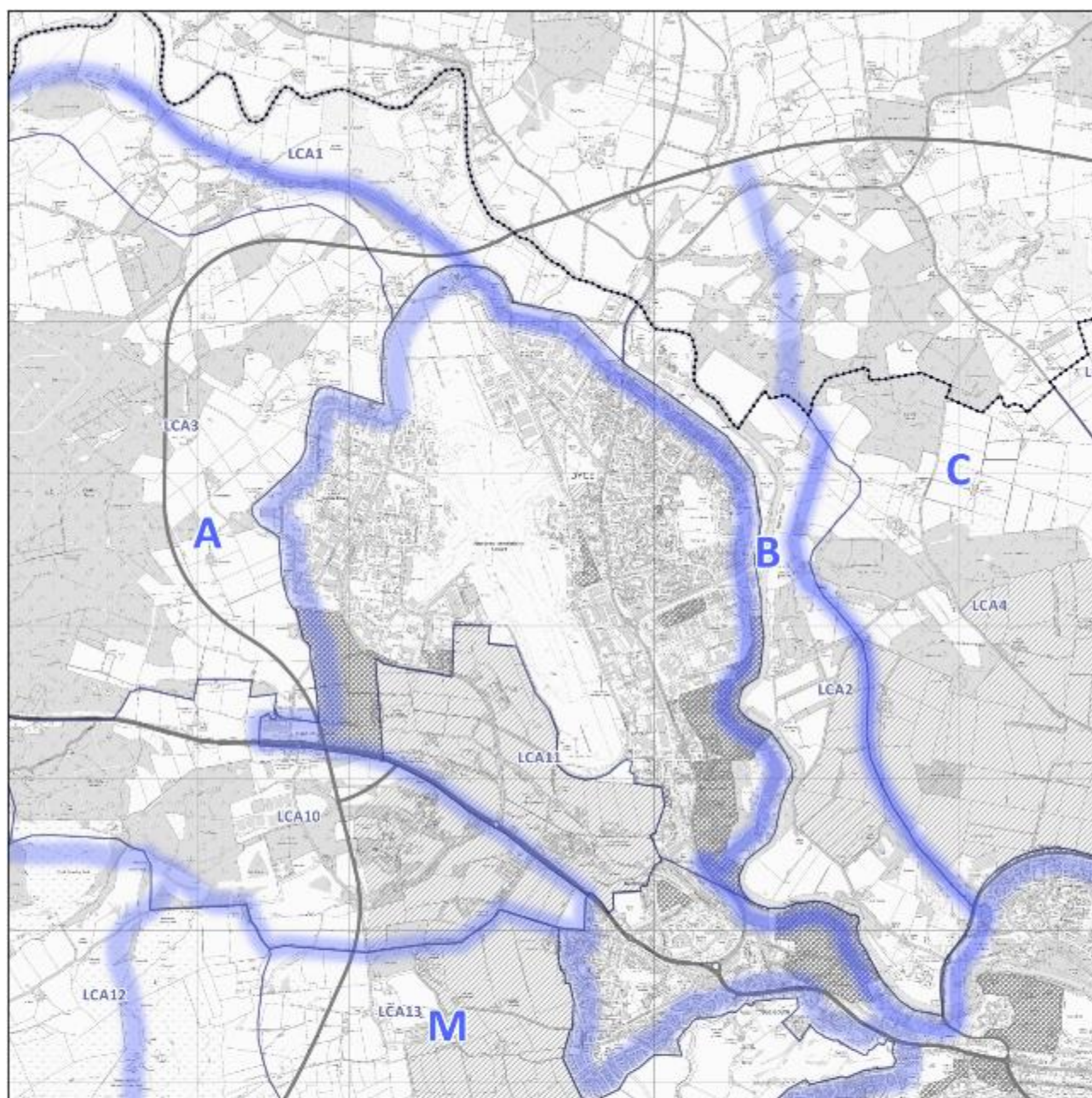
### **Location and landscape context**

The *Lower Don* Landscape Character Area (LCA 2) forms the majority of this peri-urban unit, which also includes a very small part of the *Upper Don* (LCA 1) to the east of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route where the urban influences of Dyce are apparent (see figure B-1). Formed around a narrow valley floor and incised valley sides containing a high proportion and large variety of trees and woodland, its setting is 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 along the nearby skyline provide a distinctive backdrop to the lower-lying valley.

The unit reflects the strong contrast between the urban edges of Dyce, Bucksburn and Persley with the mostly rural and secluded character provided by the river corridor and a variety of woodland cover across the west-facing valley side.

Peri-urban unit C lies adjacent to the east and although the boundary is generally defined by a gentle break in slope, these units are set apart by the strong sense of seclusion experienced along the river corridor, the linear nature of habitat and recreational links, and the consistent relationship of the urban edge with the valley floor. Unit A lies to the north-west where the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the Aberdeen to Inverness railway cross the valley floor. The influence of extensive residential development along the western edge of this unit sets it apart from unit A, where the urban edge is defined by industrial estates.

**Figure B-1: Unit boundary**



**Aberdeen Landscape  
Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment



## Analysis

Unit B	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
<p>a) Landform, landcover and land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The meandering River Don is contained within a mostly narrow valley floor with shallow terraces and gently sloping upper valley sides. Towards the northern part of the unit, the valley floor broadens out. In places, the valley floor has been modified by weirs, mill races, and embankments. To the east of the river, valley sides with convex shoulders rise above the floodplain and although most of the urban area of Dyce is outside of this unit, it provides a sense of containment to the west.</li> <li>ii. Woodland cover is diverse with riparian trees and woodland along the river, policy woodland at Grandhome and a pattern of shelterbelts and clumps of trees along the valley sides. Semi-natural habitats consist of occasional clumps of riparian woodland and trees with marginal vegetation along the river banks.</li> <li>iii. Woodland and agriculture are the main land uses although the unit has a diversity of other uses scattered throughout. These include facilities for informal recreation, residential development, a school, mills, a hotel, water treatment, a scrap metal yard and mineral extraction. Part of Opportunity Site OP9 (Grandhome) extends across part of the valley sides although the majority of this site is included within peri-urban unit C.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The River Don corridor is designated a Local Nature Conservation Site (see figure B-2) and with rich marginal vegetation, the steep sided wooded banks of the Lower Don are some of the best riverine woodlands in the city.</li> <li>ii. Grandhome House and several of the estate buildings are listed, including the lodges, walled garden and a dovecot. The cemetery at Skene is also listed.</li> </ul>
<p>c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Open Space Audit (see figure B-3) shows a diverse range of Open Space types located across much of the valley floor. These include Playing Fields, Amenity Business, School Grounds, Public Parks, Open Semi-Natural and Open Water. Across the valley sides, there is a concentration of Woodland Open Space around Grandhome and Woodland and Open Semi-Natural Open Space at Persley.</li> <li>ii. Almost the entire unit is designated as Green Space Network apart from several fields along the valley side. This extensive coverage demonstrates the importance and value of this unit for access, recreation and wider ecosystem services including nature conservation.</li> <li>iii. The Green Space Network continues across much of the Don Valley to the north of the unit and parts of the valley sides further south and east, reinforcing the strategic connective function of the river corridor in these directions. In contrast,</li> </ul>

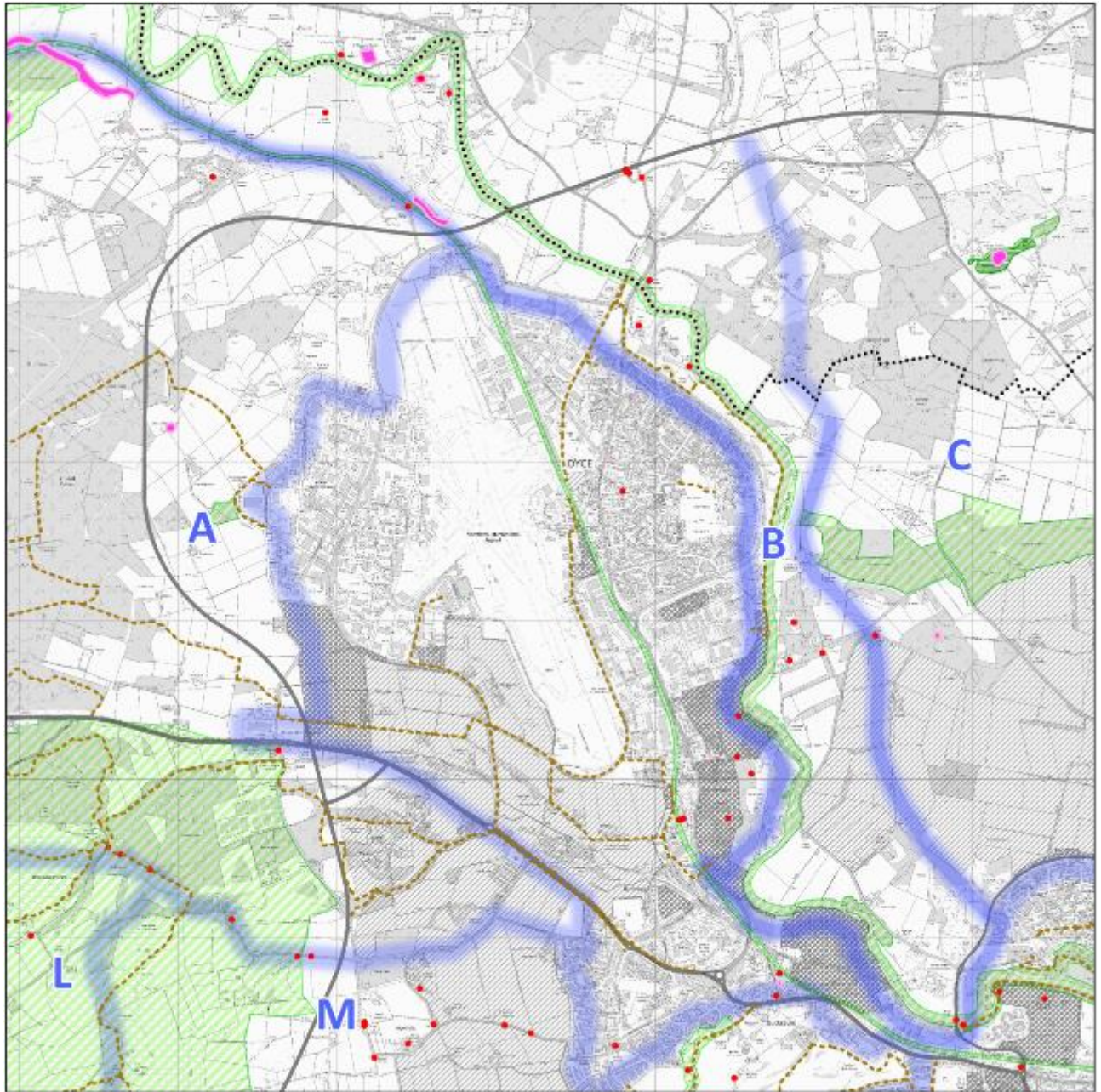
Unit B	
	greenspace network connections with the urban area to the west are very limited, due to the extent of dense urban development.
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Much of the unit, especially to the east of the river, retains a largely peaceful and secluded character, resulting from the enclosure provided by the river valley landform and the amount and variety of woodland cover.</li> <li>ii. Pockets of industry along the valley floor, nearby areas of residential development and roads along the western fringes of the unit contrast with the rural character and sense of relative tranquillity experienced elsewhere.</li> <li>iii. Towards the northern part of the unit, noise and activity from nearby industrial development, roads and the airport is very noticeable.</li> </ul>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The type and pattern of development along the urban edge is diverse and includes areas of residential, commerce, light industry and business uses. Areas of mixed use and residential development are also being constructed along the western side of the river.</li> <li>ii. The settlement edge along the eastern part of Dyce is largely typified by a reasonably dense pattern of late 20th century two storey semi-detached and detached dwellings, with occasional blocks of low rise flats. North of this, the edge is defined by late 20th century light industrial buildings, with varying colours and styles.</li> <li>iii. At Stoneywood Park to the south of Dyce, there is dense pattern of mostly late 20th century light industrial buildings and business units, of varying colours and styles. Further south, residential development of varying forms and scale is currently being constructed at Stoneywood (Opportunity Site OP17). To its south, Mill Lade Industrial Estate has a dense pattern of industrial buildings, with varying colours and styles.</li> <li>iv. Towards Bucksburn on a site of the former Davidsons paper mill, mixed-use development of varying form and scale is currently being constructed (Opportunity Site OP16) with a small light industrial estate immediately to its south.</li> <li>v. At Persley, a large supermarket with car park forms the south-eastern edge of the unit. A small section of late 20th century two storey semi-detached and detached dwellings lies to its north.</li> </ul>
b) Distinctive and prominent buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The most prominent buildings along the urban edge are several old mill buildings with chimneys. Recently constructed blocks of flats are noticeable above the treeline and several industrial estate buildings also appear prominent along parts of the valley floor.</li> </ul>

Unit B	
	<p>ii. Away from the urban edge, several bridges and weirs across the Don and a water treatment works are prominent on the open valley floor. Along the valley sides, farm buildings tend to be screened from view by nearby clumps of woodland.</p>
c) Type of settlement edge	<p>i. Along the urban edge to the west of the unit, development is mostly screened by, or integrated within woodland or trees.</p> <p>ii. To the north of the unit, the Dyce Drive industrial estate that is bounded by Dyce Drive and the A947 is largely screened by a thin belt of mixed woodland.</p> <p>iii. Residential development bound by low fences and walls along the northern part of Riverview Drive faces onto the unit and generally forms a hard urban edge, although occasional garden trees softens this in places. Further south, the edge of a commercial centre is screened from view by a raised bank with mature broadleaved trees. To its south, residential development backs onto the unit, bounded by a low stone wall with a variety of garden fences, mature garden vegetation and a line of street trees beyond.</p> <p>iv. Industrial development at Stoneywood Park, Stoneywood House and the development site to its south are enclosed by mature policy woodlands that line the river bank. Much of Mill Lade industrial estate is also bounded by mature woodland along the river bank although where a small break in woodland occurs development forms a hard urban edge.</p> <p>v. On the site of the Davidsons paper mill and the industrial site to the south, riverside trees provide a soft edge to development although where a small gap exists there is a hard urban edge.</p> <p>vi. At Persley, amenity trees along the A92 provide a soft edge to the nearby supermarket and further north, wooden fencing forms the edge of residential development.</p>
d) Type of visual containment	<p>i. In general, the majority of development along the settlement edge is well contained by the valley landform, the river corridor and dense trees and woodland along the valley floor.</p> <p>ii. The most open part of the urban edge is within the residential development along Riverview Drive. To the north, there are views to the nearby Riverside Park and street trees and woodland across the park provide a strong but localised sense of containment.</p> <p>iii. Development sites and areas of industrial and commercial development are generally well contained by nearby woodland, particularly to the south of the unit where dense policy woodlands alongside the river provide a robust edge. In some places however, development is clearly visible from the eastern valley side, where there are gaps in the woodland cover.</p>

Unit B	
<p>e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. When viewed from the valley floor, nearby trees, woodlands and built development tend to screen much of the wider urban area to the south and east from view.</li> <li>ii. From western parts of the unit, the dense pattern of development along the urban edge and busy roads provide some sense of being within in the city.</li> <li>iii. From areas of higher ground along the west-facing valley side, there are views of relatively extensive urban development extending along the valley.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
<p>a) Type and degree of recreational use evident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit has an important recreational function, with opportunities for formal and informal activities, including walking, cycling and fishing.</li> <li>ii. There are several sport pitches and playing fields located in the northern part of the unit and Riverside Park, on the eastern edge of Dyce, provides a popular resource for nearby residents. There is a public car park at Riverside Park with picnic benches and signposting along footpaths.</li> <li>iii. Other recreation includes fishing along the Don and the use of several fields for horse riding.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Recreational and active travel routes and links</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Core Path 6 follows the eastern edge of Dyce and where it leads through Riverside Park, it follows the river for most of this unit. Further north, the route follows Riverside Drive where at Dyce Drive it connects with Core Path 5, which follows the western edge of Dyce. To the south of Riverside Park, the path continues alongside the river to Stoneywood Industrial Estate. There is no footpath along the southern section of the river, which is a missed opportunity to complete a link to the city.</li> <li>ii. National Cycle Network Route 1 (from Aberdeen to Inverness) passes along the eastern edge of Dyce. Heading north from the A96 at Persley, it leads along Mugiemooss Road, the A947 and Riverside Drive.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
<p>a) Key views to peri-urban unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Parts of the unit are visible from nearby residential areas, main roads and the railway line, particularly from areas of higher ground, although dense woodlands along the valley floor tend to screen the river from view. Where open views are experienced, fields and woodland within the unit contrast with the surrounding urban context.</li> <li>ii. There are also open views across the southern part of the unit from Whitestripes Road (unit C) and some longer views from Tyrebagger and Brimmond hills to the west.</li> </ul>

Unit B	
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From the lower-lying parts of the unit, views tend to be short range, curtailed by the dense pattern of nearby trees and woodland along the valley floor although from some residential areas, there are views framed by woodland across the rural valley.</li> <li>ii. From areas of higher open ground to the south-east of the unit, there are views across the valley towards extensive urban development with occasional longer glimpses of Tyrebagger and Brimmond hills.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit is an important green corridor for recreational users and those travelling into and out of the city.</li> <li>ii. The wooded river corridor provides a contained setting and undeveloped foreground to Dyce.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Key transport routes that fringe the unit include the A96, A92, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the Aberdeen to Inverness railway.</li> <li>ii. Although the unit provides very little gateway function itself, the strongly wooded appearance of the valley floor is an important feature from nearby roads leading into and out of the city.</li> </ul>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The river corridor provides an important separation function between extensive development to its west and rural valley sides to its east.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The condition of landscape features is generally good.</li> <li>ii. Stone walls are intact and there is a good proportion of mature trees and woodland.</li> <li>iii. Along Riverside Drive, some street trees have been lost and some field trees have also been lost and not replaced.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Farmland is generally intensively managed for mixed agriculture.</li> <li>ii. Woodland in the south of the unit contains extensive areas of bracken. Along the river, woodlands and other riverine habitats are managed for nature conservation.</li> <li>iii. Recreational sites along the river appear to be well managed.</li> </ul>

Figure B2: Designations



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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**Natural Heritage Designations**

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Conservation Site

**Cultural Heritage Designations**

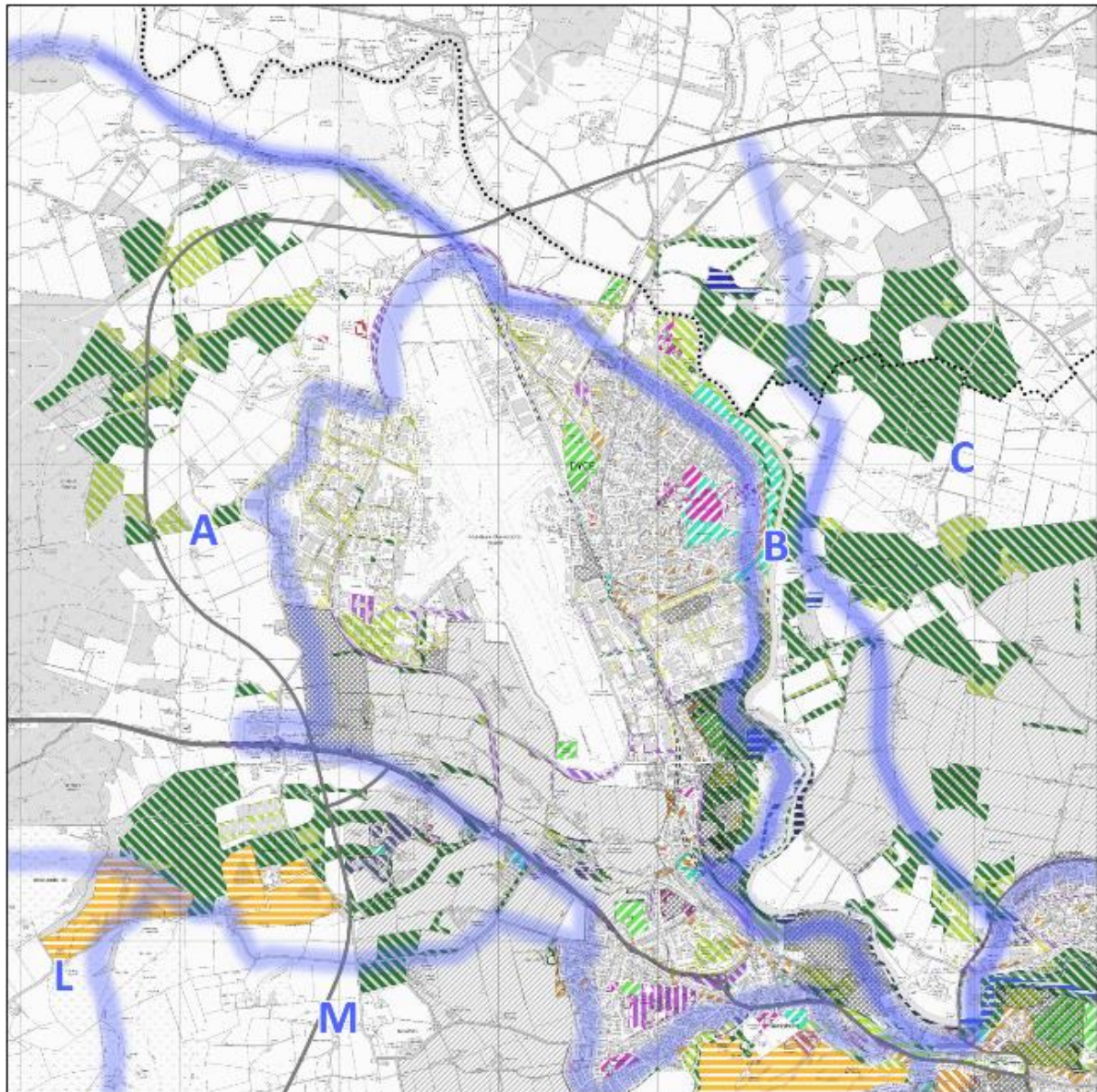
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Aberdeen City LDP**

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure B-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

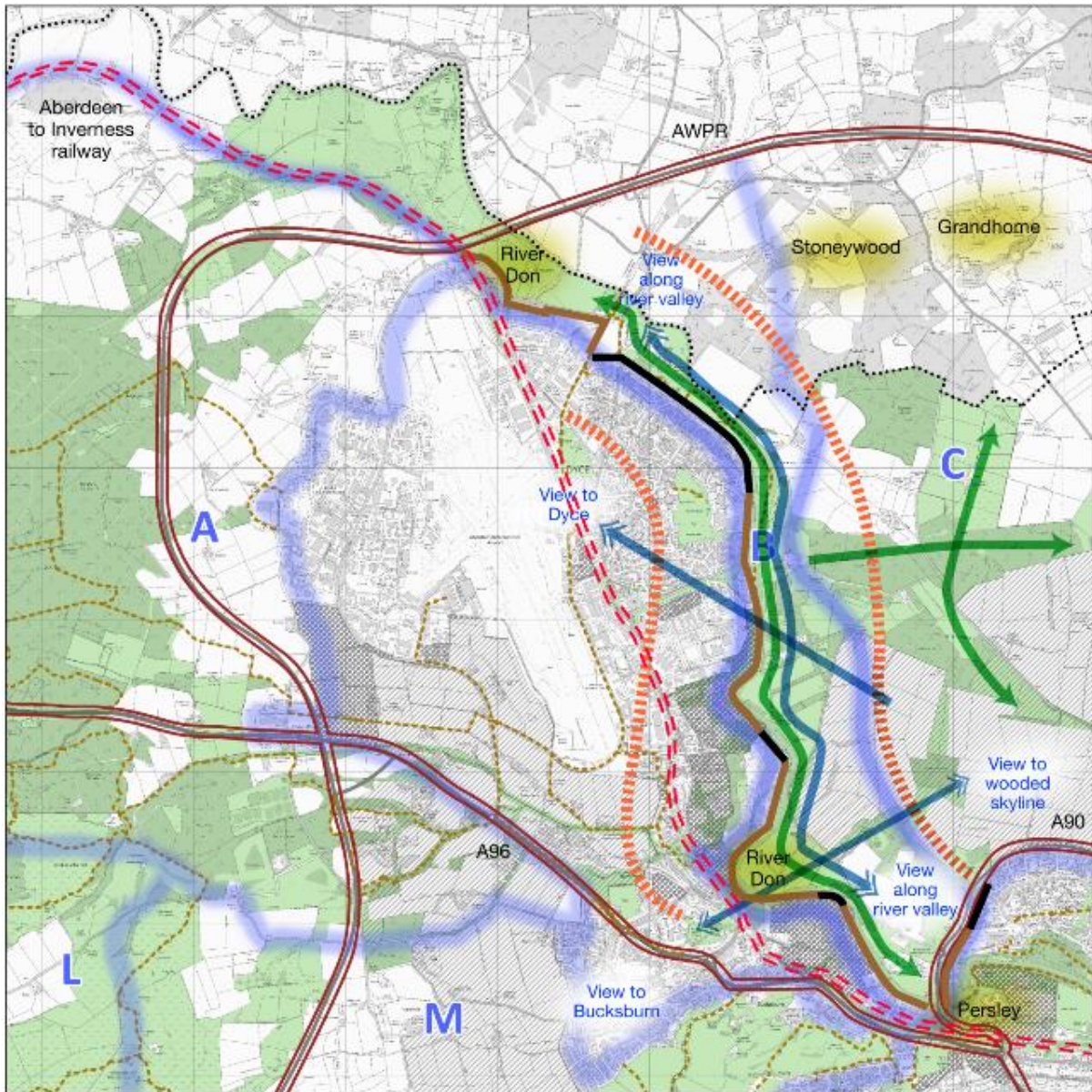
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Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Bowling Greens
- Cemetery
- Churchyard
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland

Figure B-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway



## Photographic study



Wooded containment along the valley floor



Tree-lined Riverside Drive



Riverside Park



Mature tree belts along Riverside Drive



Looking west across the valley towards Dyce



Industrial units along the valley floor



Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route construction



Wooded edge of Dyce Drive industrial estate

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Maintain and enhance the natural and semi-natural characteristics of the river including its steep terraced sides, meandering course, wooded character and relative lack of crossings.*
- b) *Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of semi-natural habitats including riparian woodland and trees.*
- c) *Encourage appropriately designed woodland planting and new parkland trees along the valley sides and tree and woodland planting to help define or contain hard urban edges to the east of the unit, and to reduce noise impacts from industry and the AWPR at the north end of the unit.*
- d) *Maintain the contrast between the sparsely settled, wooded estate character of the unit and the developed areas to the west of the river.*
- e) Where pockets of industrial development are visible along the valley floor, encourage appropriately designed woodland and tree planting to help integrate buildings into views, whilst ensuring that historic features such as chimneys and mills can be appreciated.
- f) *Safeguard the historic character of designed parklands and associated estate buildings.*
- g) Conserve the industrial archaeology within this unit and adjacent urban areas and introduce appropriately designed interpretation.
- h) *Conserve the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by low stone dykes.*
- i) Ensure that any new development along the eastern valley sides is designed to reinforce the landscape character of the valley, and includes substantial river buffers and linkages to accommodate green corridors for recreation and wildlife.
- j) Enhance gateway routes and main roads through new woodland and tree planting and replacement of lost street trees.
- k) Maintain and enhance recreational routes and access along the river valley.
- l) Explore opportunities for extending the riverside footpath into the city, and the creation of recreational links with nearby residential areas, woodlands (such as in Grandhome), and green spaces.
- m) *Maintain the relative sense of peace and seclusion experienced along the enclosed wooded valley floor.*

## Overview of unit



Looking across Grandhome Moss towards Tyrebagger Hill

In general, extensive residential housing estates are well integrated into the landscape and consequently, there is sudden transition from dense urban development to gently undulating farmland with a mainly rural character. To the east, the strong contrast between urban areas and the adjoining open farmland is noticeable, while to the west, woodland blocks provide a degree of enclosure to the agricultural landscape. At Scotstown Moor, nearby development is sometimes evident along the urban edge, contrasting with the semi-natural character of the moor.

Despite the influence of busy roads, the agricultural landscape that extends north into Aberdeenshire has an undeveloped and rural character, in stark contrast to areas of residential development along the southern edges of the unit. Although parts of the city are visible from Scotstown Moor and the south-western parts, most of the unit has a sense of detachment from urban areas.

The open agricultural landscape provides an undeveloped setting to northern parts of the city when travelling along the gateway route of the B997. Further south, Scotstown Moor forms an attractive backdrop to the residential area of Denmore and to the west the unit forms a distinctive rural backdrop that contrasts with densely developed urban areas on the south side of the Don Valley.

The Green Space Network connects several designated nature conservation sites that provide opportunities for informal recreation, extending along part of the urban fringe and into the wider agricultural landscape. Although a good footpath network across Scotstown Moor provides links to nearby urban areas, there is notably absence of recreational access within the wider agricultural landscape.

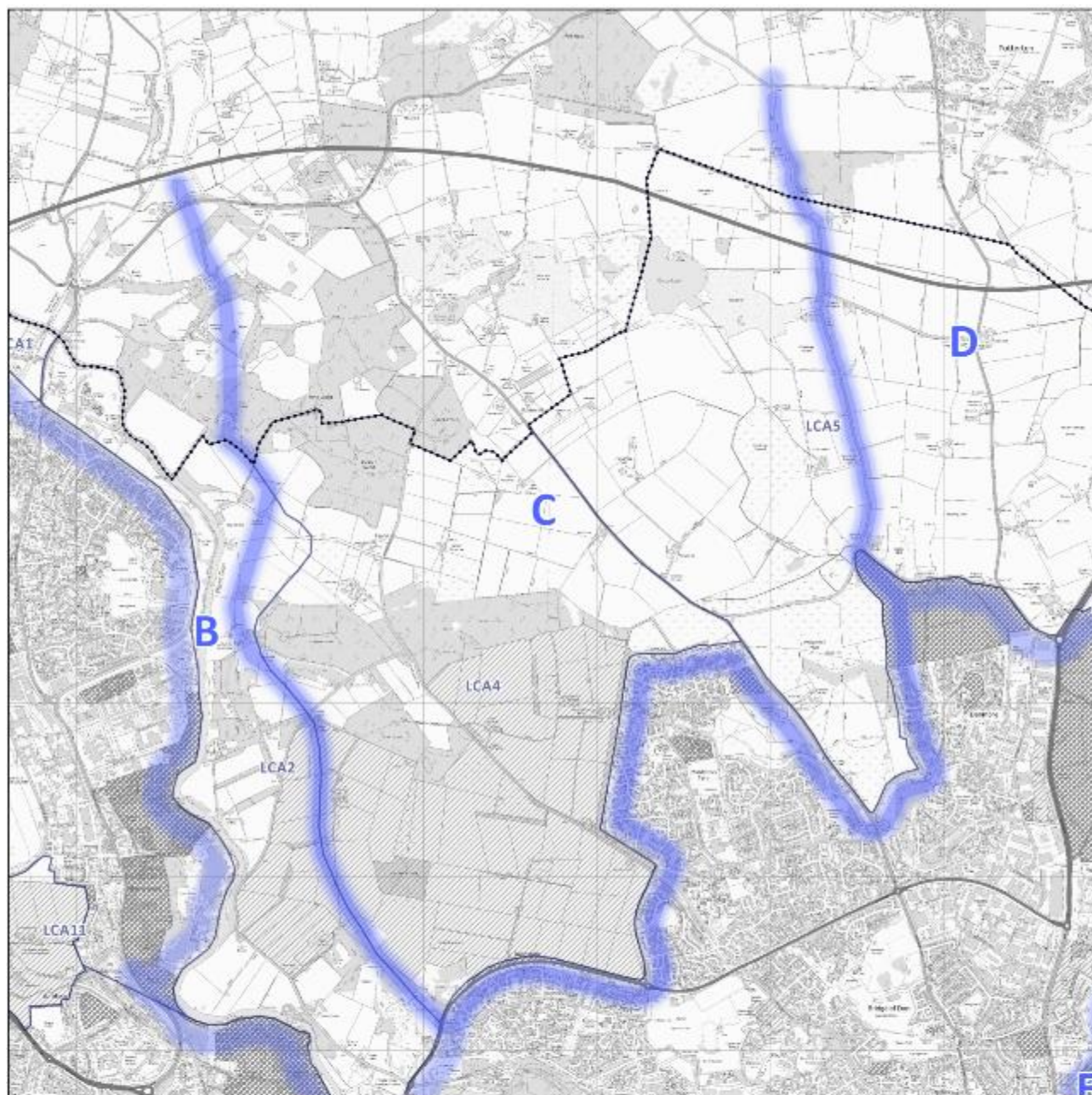
### **Location and landscape context**

This peri-urban unit comprises all of *Brae of Don* Landscape Character Area (LCA 4) and the western part of *Mundurno* (LCA 5) - see figure C-1. The majority of the unit consists of gently undulating farmland. To the east this is more open in character while to the west, the unit has more woodland cover. Connected by extensive areas of Green Space Network, Scotstown Moor, Perwinnes Moss, Corby Loch, Grandhome Moss and Stoneyhill Wood are all designated for their conservation interest.

The unit reflects the striking contrast between the mostly linear settlement edges of the late 20th century housing estates of Middleton Park and Danestone that tend to back onto open farmland with a mostly rural and undeveloped character.

Peri-urban unit B lies adjacent to the west where the boundary with the lower-lying valley unit is defined by a gentle break in slope. Separated by a minor road that marks the boundary, unit D lies to the east where, in contrast to this unit, urban fringe uses are more extensive and more noticeable. The unit also extends north beyond the city boundary where rural farmland continues into Aberdeenshire.

Figure C-1: Unit boundary



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- ▨ Opportunity Site
- ▩ Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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## Analysis

Unit C	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Much of this landscape is gently undulating, forming a series of shallow basins contained by softly rolling subtle ridges. The landscape slopes gradually to the south-west towards the edge of the incised Don Valley.</li> <li>ii. Areas of flatter ground are associated with the floodplain of the Mundurno Burn and the shallow basin of Grandhome Moss. South of the Mundurno Burn, the slopes of Perwinnes Moss rise to a distinct ridge (and Corse Hill, the high point) above the south-facing slopes of Scotstown Moor.</li> <li>iii. This unit is relatively rich in semi-natural habitat with grassland, heath and scrub within Scotstown and Perwinnes mosses, wetland and native woodland within Grandhome Moss and damp grassland on the floodplain of the Mundurno Burn. Corby Loch is a large waterbody, surrounded by reed beds, floating mire and scrub woodland.</li> <li>iv. Mixed policy woodlands, including the fairly extensive woodlands of Stoneyhill and Parkhill, are a feature in the western part of this unit. Long, narrow belts of broadleaved woodland and trees, some only a single tree in width, are prominent along roads and against the urban edge.</li> <li>v. While the southern and western parts of this unit support rich semi-natural habitats, farmland elsewhere is less diverse comprising large open arable fields and sparse woodland.</li> <li>vi. An active mineral extraction site and a small scale vehicle plant hire facility within this unit are limited in extent and are the only industrial or commercial land uses. Compact, stone farmsteads are dispersed across farmland. A prominent line of large pylons also lead across western parts of the unit.</li> <li>vii. A relatively large part of the unit is designated for future development where Opportunity Site OP9 (Grandhome), which extends across farmland and down the valley side of the adjacent peri-urban unit B.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Scotstown Moor and Perwinnes Moss are designated as a Local Nature Reserve while Corby Loch, Grandhome Moss and Stoneyhill Wood comprise Local Nature Conservation Sites (see figure C-2). Scotstown Moor and Corby Loch are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Connected by woodland, Scotstown Moor and Perwinnes Moss are identified as Semi-Natural Open Space (see figure C-3).</li> </ul>

Unit C	
degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Across the western part of the unit, Stoneyhill Wood and Grandhome Moss and several blocks to the mixed plantations further to north are classified as Woodland with small areas of Semi-Natural Open Space around the fringes of Stoneyhill Wood and Grandhome Moss.</li> <li>iii. The sparsity of woodland, hedgerows and field trees on farmland in the remainder of this unit tends to limit habitat connectivity.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. With views over Aberdeen and its proximity to the Bridge of Don, the south-western part of the unit is influenced by neighbouring settlement. Within the northern part and to the east of Whitestripes Road, the mainly undeveloped landscape has a strong rural character with a sense of seclusion and tranquillity. The lack of tree cover in the eastern parts contributes to an open and often exposed experience.</li> </ul>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The urban edge to the south around Scotstown Moor at Denmore and Middletown Park comprises predominantly late 20th century low rise residential estates.</li> <li>ii. Housing at Danestone is of a similar age and character to Middletown Park but its layout appears denser.</li> </ul>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There are no prominent buildings along the urban edge, although the Perwinnes Tracking Station is a prominent landmark feature set in open fields.</li> <li>ii. Distinctive compact stone farmsteads are dispersed across farmland and on the edge of woodlands. A smallholding is also located on the western edge of Scotstown Moor Local Nature Reserve.</li> </ul>
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Residential development at Denmore is partially screened by woodland and scrub that continues into the urban area.</li> <li>ii. Along the eastern and western edges of Scotstown Moor, built development forms a hard edge in places.</li> <li>iii. Middleton Park residential area is very well screened by former policy woodland belts that form a strong wooded edge to development.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Scotstown Moor lies on south-facing slopes orientated towards the city and is strongly contained by a ridge-top conifer woodland and housing areas to the east, west and south.</li> <li>ii. There is a degree of containment within the narrow steep sided valley of the Mundurno Burn north of Perwinnes Moss although farmland further north is</li> </ul>

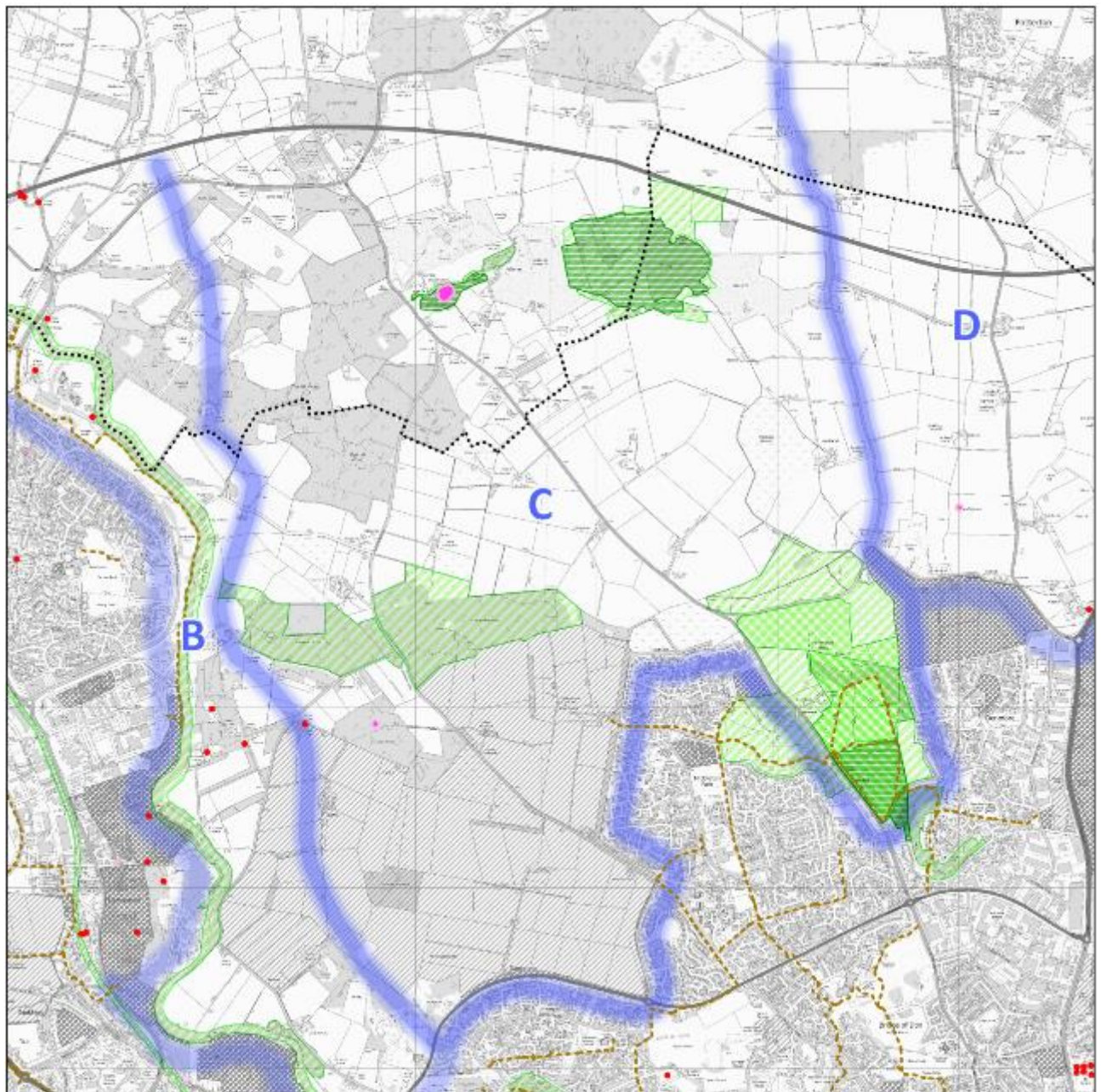
Unit C	
	<p>more open in character, due to the gently undulating landform and sparse woodland.</p> <p>iii. Extensive woodlands on the western edge of this unit provide strong containment.</p>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<p>i. Older housing in the Denmore area merges with the denser development of the city to the south, when viewed from the Scotstown Moor area.</p> <p>ii. The densely developed Don Valley and Dyce areas are visible from the south-western part of this unit, although much of it appears separate from the wider urban area due to its elevation, degree of containment and the limited visibility of adjacent residential areas.</p>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<p>i. Walking and other informal recreation is focussed on Scotstown Moor, Parkhill and Stoneyhill Woods with formal and informal parking provision and footpaths that appear to be well-used. Cycling appears limited, perhaps inhibited by the absence of safe routes on busy roads. Recreational access is very limited on farmland.</p> <p>ii. Corby Loch is mostly used by fishermen.</p>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<p>i. The network of footpaths within the Scotstown Moor area is well used with good links to nearby residential areas. Recreational routes between the urban and western rural area (and to key areas of attraction such as Stoneyhill Wood) appear very limited.</p> <p>ii. Access is difficult across Perwinnes Moss due to extensive areas of gorse scrub and there are few recreational routes across the farmland in the north of this unit and no obvious links with adjacent housing.</p> <p>iii. Busy roads may inhibit wider safe recreational access and there are very few circular routes.</p>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. Views into this unit are generally limited due to its distance from major transport routes and the screening of views from the adjacent housing by woodland.</p> <p>ii. There are more distant views of the western part of this unit from the A96 and settlement on the southern slopes of the Don Valley. A degree of foreshortening occurs in these views where woodlands and tree belts are particularly prominent features.</p> <p>iii. Peripheral houses and low rise flats in the Denmore area have views to Scotstown Moor in the southern part of this unit.</p>



Unit C	
	iv. A line of mature beech trees along Whitestripes Road are prominent on the skyline when viewed from parts of the city to the south of the unit.
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<p>i. Views to the wider rural area from the Scotstown Moor area are largely prevented by landform and woodland, although there are long views from the higher slopes towards the city centre.</p> <p>ii. Views from open farmland and the B997 and Whitestripes Road are generally open and fairly extensive across the shallow farmed basins of this unit towards the large buildings of Dyce airport in the distance.</p> <p>iii. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is mainly in a cutting although there are occasional glimpses across the unit, where the road crosses flat open areas.</p>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<p>i. Scotstown Moor forms a semi-natural backdrop to the residential area of Denmore.</p> <p>ii. The western part of this unit forms a distinctive rural backdrop that contrasts with densely developed urban areas on the south side of the Don Valley.</p> <p>iii. Shallow farmed basins and the gently undulating farmland in the north of this unit are less visually prominent and are not important in terms of providing a setting to urban areas.</p>
c) Gateway function	i. The B997 leads north from the city towards Aberdeenshire and is a busy route, from where much of the unit is visible. Most of the route has an open rural character and only when it nears the edge of Middleton Park does a sense of the city become apparent.
b) Separation function	<p>i. Mature woodland belts currently provide a strong containing edge to the urban area of Middleton Park. The Opportunity Site OP9 will breach this if developed although more extensive woodland to the west would provide a buffer to the wider rural area.</p> <p>ii. Most of the unit also separates the urban edge of the city from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.</p>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<p>i. Distinctive belts of broadleaved and mixed policy woodlands do not appear to be regenerating or to be actively managed.</p> <p>ii. Litter and dumping are evident close to roads and on the edges of woodland.</p>

Unit C	
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Some management is evident at Scotstown Moor and Perwinnes Moss, where gorse scrub is currently being cleared.</li><li>ii. Farmland and Forest Enterprise woodland is generally well managed.</li></ul>

Figure C-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

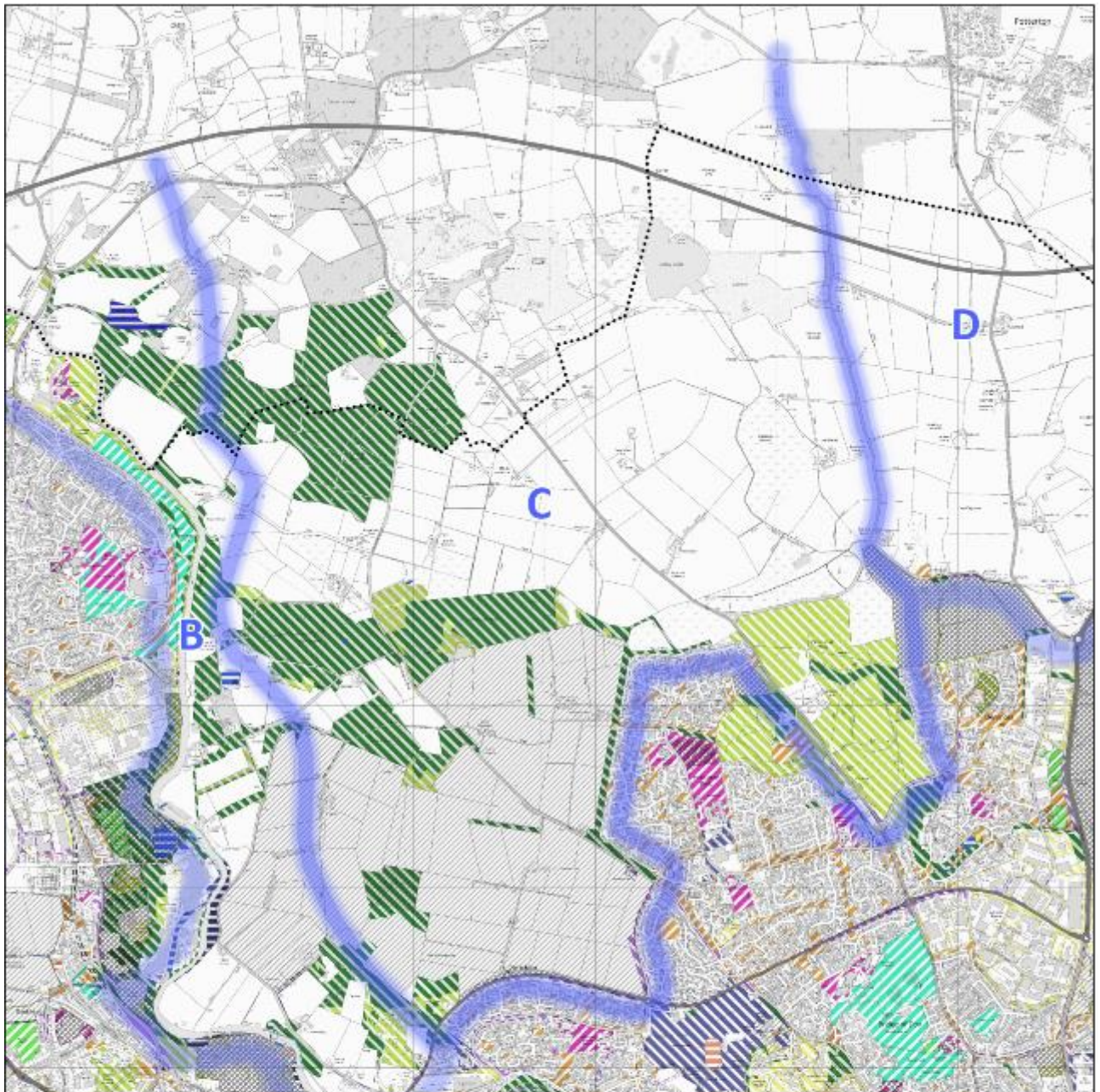
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure C-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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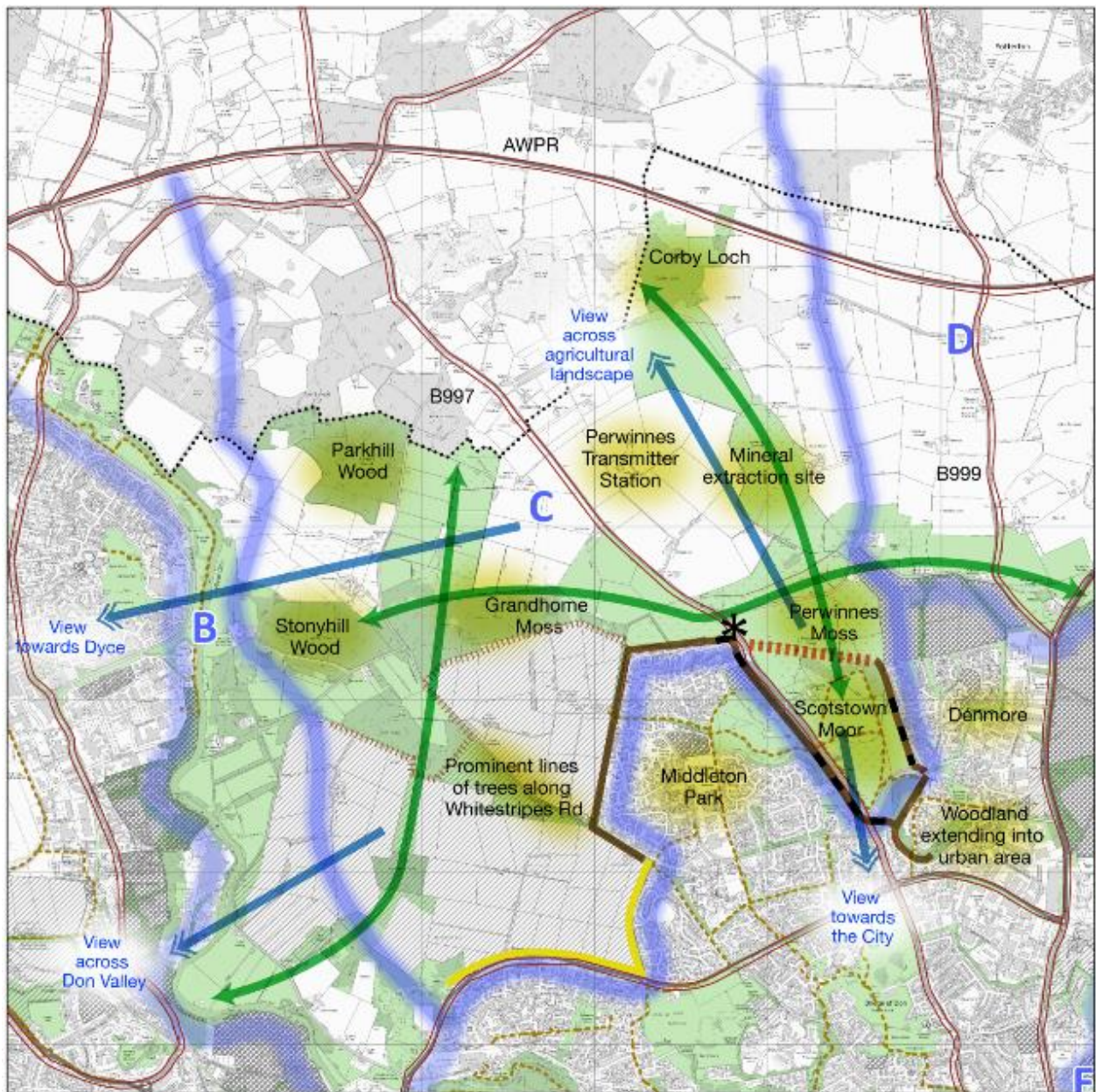
Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Bowling Greens
- Churchyard
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural

- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland

Figure C-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Gorse covered slopes and damp grassland of Perwinnes Moss



Open, gently undulating farmland in the north



Woodland at Grandhome Moss fills a shallow basin



The urban edge seen from the north-east



Views to Dyce across elevated open farmland



Mature broadleaved belts screen much of the urban edge



Looking south across Scotstown Moor towards the city



Looking west towards Middleton Park

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of semi-natural habitats including those at Corby Loch, Stoneyhill Wood, Parkhill Wood, Scotstown Moor, Perwinnes Moss and Grandhome Moss.*
- b) *Maintain and enhance the wooded character of parts of this landscape, and the distinctive tree belts and woodlands which help to provide a setting for the city and define the edge of built areas.*
- c) *Encourage appropriately designed, woodland and tree planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape, help to define or contain urban edges, improve connectivity between woodlands and across rural landscapes, and enhance gateway routes to the city.*
- d) Manage distinctive broadleaved woodland along the urban edge of Middleton Park in order to increase longevity.
- e) Manage the plantation woodlands in the Scotstown Moor area to improve the age structure and species mix.
- f) *Maintain the sparsely settled landscape of scattered farmsteads and the rural character of minor roads.*
- g) Ensure that any new development within the unit is designed to avoid breaching woodland containment lines such as at Middleton Park; includes substantial buffers to important habitats; and includes linkages to accommodate green corridors for recreation and wildlife, which also reinforce the existing character of the landscape.
- h) Encourage road calming measures on minor roads such as Whitestripes Road, in order to improve safe access for walkers and cyclists.
- i) Establish new circular recreational routes from housing areas to the wider countryside including, for example, links between Scotstown Moor, Perwinnes Moss, Corby Loch and Grandhome Moss.
- j) Improve the current parking area for walkers accessing Stoneyhill Wood.
- k) Encourage replacement of unsightly security fencing along the B997 in the Perwinnes Moss area.
- l) Conserve stone dykes.
- m) *Maintain the long distance views to the west over the Don Valley towards Tyrebagger hill and to the south across the city.*
- n) *Maintain the strong rural character and sense of detachment from the city in the north of the area.*

## Overview of unit



Looking across gently undulating open fields towards the coast

In contrast to unit C located to the west, this unit exhibits more of a gradual transition from the urban edge to the rural landscape. In particular, a range of land uses including a hotel, caravan park, former quarries and light industry are scattered along the A92 corridor. In combination with busy traffic, the relative intensity and diversity of development beyond the urban edge contributes to a strong sense of being on the edge of the city in places, rather than in the countryside. Recent construction of housing at Dubford and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to the north and business units to the south, reinforce the dynamic nature of this peri-urban unit.

Despite the urban influence of the A92 corridor, western parts of the unit have a stronger rural character as a result of the mainly agricultural land use. Nonetheless, some scattered dwellings and a former quarry close to the urban edge of Dubford affect the strength of rural character. To the east of the A92, the unit has a mostly open and undeveloped character with a strong coastal influence.

This eastern part of this unit is visible from the A92, a key approach to the city where the open foreground is viewed by many road users. This has an important role in defining the northern extent of the urban area and provides an undeveloped approach to the city. The gently undulating farmland of the western part of this unit does not provide a notable backdrop or particularly distinctive landscape



setting to urban areas. Although the unit provides an important gateway function, its habitat and recreational value is very limited.

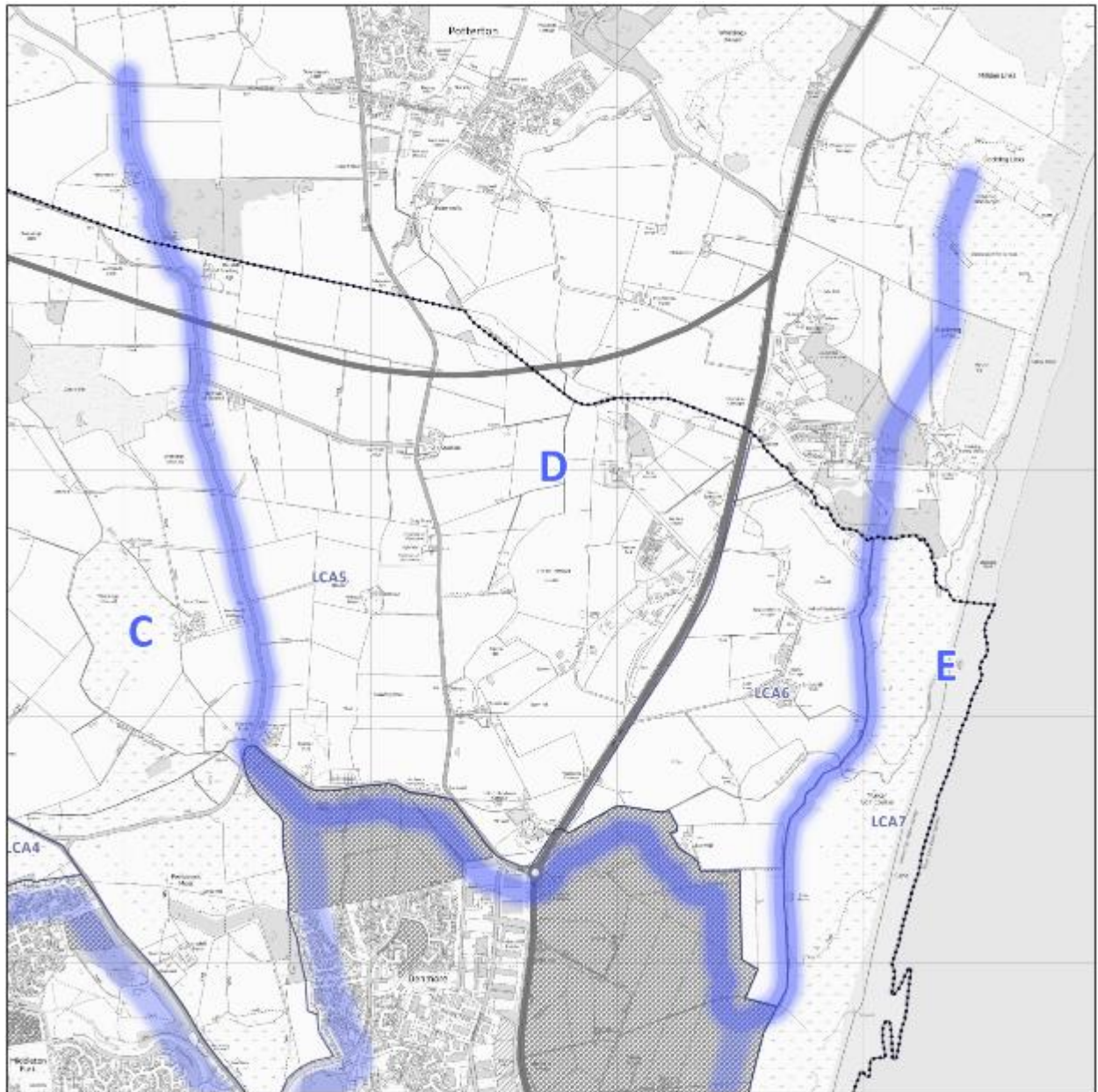
### **Location and landscape context**

This peri-urban unit comprises the eastern part of the *Mundurno* Landscape Character Area (LCA 5) and all of *Murcar Plain* (LCA 6) - see figure D-1. The predominant character of the unit is influenced by the gently undulating farmland, its openness and the strong coastal influence. The coastal influence becomes less pronounced to the west, which has determined the definition of the boundary with unit C. The unit also appears to have a fragmented pattern of built/industrial development alongside the A92.

The unit extends north beyond the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route into Aberdeenshire, while a minor road set on a slight ridge forms the western boundary with unit C. To the south, the unit includes the urban edge of Denmore, most of which is formed by a development site (Opportunity Site OP1) where business park development is under construction. The transition to the east is more gradual, where the less developed coastal edge north of the River Don adjoins unit E.

The eastern part of this unit is defined in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan as an Undeveloped Coastal Management Area which extends beyond further north along the coastal strip. The coast and the Blackdog Burn valley, which partly forms the northern section of this unit, is a Local Nature Conservation Site.

Figure D-1: Unit boundary



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri urban Assessment



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- ▨ Opportunity Site
- ▩ Developed/under construction at time of assessment

## Analysis

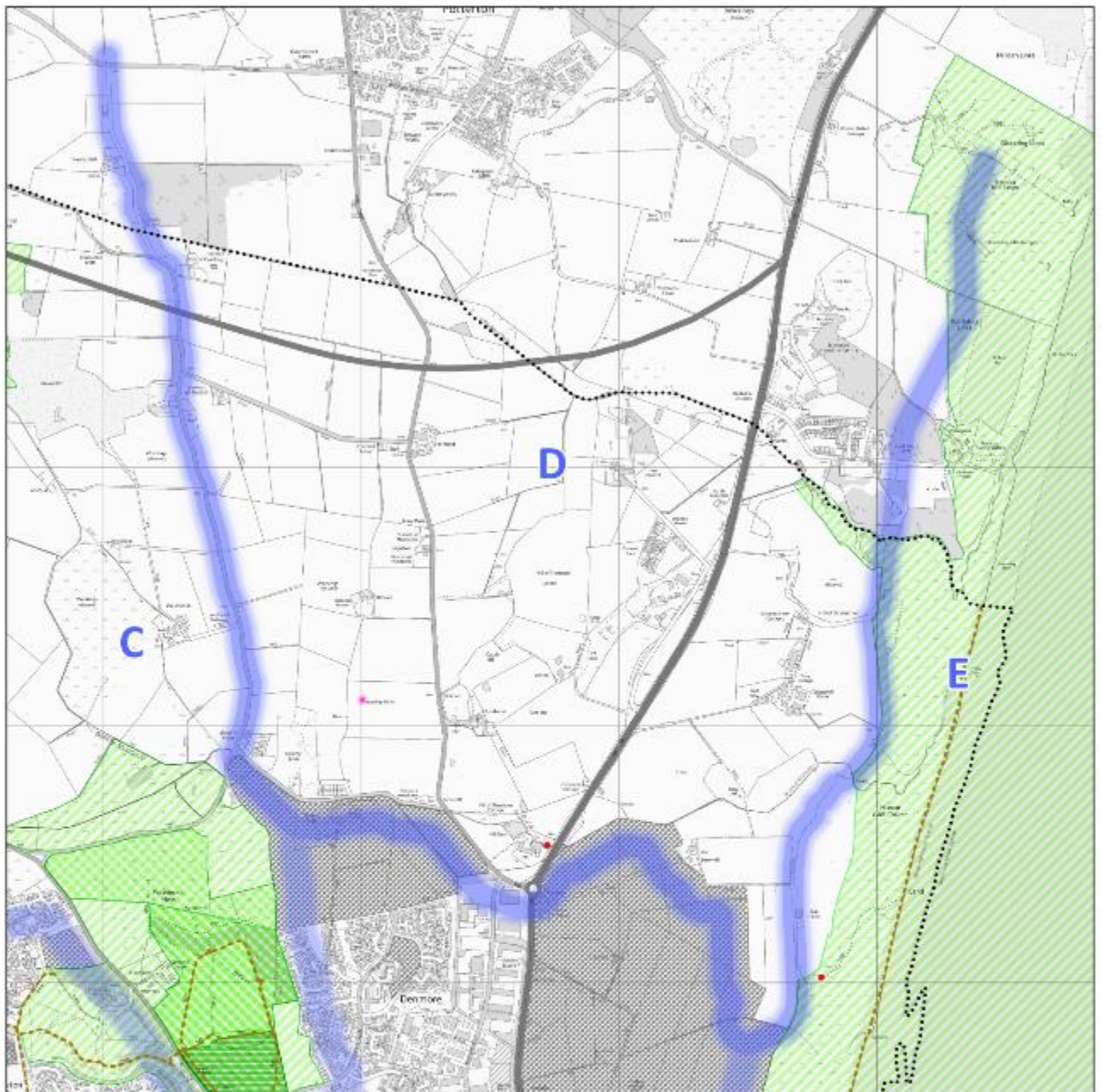
Unit D	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Much of this landscape is gently undulating with a gradual fall to the east towards the coast where the landform is flatter.</li> <li>ii. Water courses are aligned west-east through this landscape. The Mundurno Burn cuts through a narrow and well-defined valley in the west but is less distinct across flatter farmland in the east. The valley of the Blackdog Burn which forms the Aberdeen boundary is steep sided where it falls to the sea.</li> <li>iii. This unit predominantly comprises mixed farmland with a generally weak field enclosure pattern. There are few trees and little woodland although occasional lines of ash tree along farm tracks and fields are distinctive features in the western part of this unit.</li> <li>iv. Semi-natural grassland and scrub is confined to narrow valleys, field margins and disturbed areas around former quarries.</li> <li>v. Some current and former quarrying and landfill operations lie close to the A92, at Tarbothill and adjacent to this area in the Blackdog area in Aberdeenshire.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and culture designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Only a very small proportion of the unit is covered by natural and cultural designations (see figure D-2).</li> <li>ii. The Blackdog Burn which lies on the north-eastern boundary of the unit is a Local Nature Conservation Site.</li> <li>iii. Dubford Standing Stone (Scheduled Monument) is a surviving remnant of a prehistoric stone circle.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The proportion of the unit identified as Open Space is very limited (see figure D-3). This is restricted to a small patch of Semi-Natural Open Space that forms part of the wider expanse of habitats in unit E and small pockets of Open Water, Woodland, Institutional Grounds and Residential Amenity Open Space near to the urban edge.</li> <li>ii. Blackdog Burn flows eastwards providing connectivity with Murcar Links (Peri-urban unit E) which is also a Local Nature Conservation Site.</li> <li>iii. The absence of woodland, hedgerows and other natural corridors, combined with busy roads, restricts connectivity for wildlife.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The strong coastal influence gives a sense of space, openness and exposure.</li> </ul>

Unit D	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Although this unit has a predominantly rural character with a degree of detachment from the city, recent housing and business park development has introduced more urban elements.</li> <li>i. There is little sense of seclusion or tranquillity due to the closeness of the urban edge, aircraft passing low overhead, the A92 and other very busy roads.</li> </ul>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The recently constructed Dubford residential development in the south-west has a dense form comprising three storey housing and limited open space within the development. There is however some open space provision alongside the Burn of Mundurno.</li> <li>ii. To the south-east, the urban edge consists of a partly constructed 21<sup>st</sup> century business park within Opportunity Site OP1, with well-spaced large business units set within distributor roads.</li> </ul>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There are few distinctive buildings within this unit although a hotel, based around a former stone mill building, is located in an open position close to the A92 and is detached from nearby development.</li> <li>ii. Prominent buildings to the south of the unit include the old Aberdeen Exhibition Conference Centre tower, test drilling rig and wind turbine.</li> </ul>
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Recently constructed housing within the Dubford development abuts the Mundurno Burn to the north and the steep gorse covered slopes of Perwinnes Moss to the west. This development forms a dense hard settlement edge against open ground.</li> <li>ii. The large, well-spaced buildings of the business park which have been constructed to date form a relatively open edge, allowing framed views of the urban area further to the east.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is a degree of containment provided to the Dubford housing development by the valley of the Mundurno Burn. Although this water course is small it is accommodated in a well-defined narrow valley with low, but steep, northern side slopes providing a degree of containment to the urban edge.</li> <li>ii. To the south-east of the unit the urban edge is partly contained by the embankments of a new road serving the business park. These partially screen the buildings from lower-lying parts of the unit although new tree planting provides ineffective screening of large buildings which consequently form an abrupt hard edge, particularly when seen from more elevated parts of the unit to the west.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To the south-west, the recently constructed Dubford housing development is located on north-east facing slopes orientated away from the adjacent Murcar</li> </ul>

Unit D	
with wider urban area	<p>Industrial Estate. From within this part of the unit, there is little inter-visibility with the wider urban area and consequently, it does not appear continuous with much of the city.</p> <p>ii. From the flatter and very open, eastern part of this unit, there are views to business and industrial development associated with the A92 corridor and key buildings within the Aberdeen Science and Energy Park to the south. The absence of a strong containing edge to the urban area gives a sense of continuity and fragmentation.</p> <p>iii. From more elevated parts of the open farmland in the north of this unit some parts of the city are visible. However, the city appears distant and this predominantly rural landscape can feel detached.</p>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	i. There are no formal recreational facilities and informal use appears very limited.
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	i. There are no Core Paths or active travel routes within the unit – the closest path follows the coast within the adjacent unit E. The busy nature of the A92 and B999 also make access across the landscape very difficult.
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. There are open views across the lower-lying eastern part of this unit from the coast although rising ground inland tends to limit views into the western part of this unit.</p> <p>ii. Although there are views across the flatter eastern parts of this unit from recent housing at Dubford, there is limited visibility of this unit from the adjacent urban area of Denmore due to the containment provided by the low ridge and conifer tree belt east of Corse Hill.</p> <p>iii. There are views across the eastern part of this unit from the new business park.</p> <p>iv. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is in cutting in places although it where it passes across flat open areas there are occasional glimpses across the unit.</p>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<p>i. The eastern part of this unit is highly visible from the busy A92, from where it forms an important undeveloped foreground to sea views. The western part of this unit is less visible from the A92 due to rising ground.</p> <p>ii. Views south towards the urban area include glimpses of the old Aberdeen Exhibition Conference Centre tower, test drilling rig and wind turbine.</p>

Unit D	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. The raised profile of the restored Tarbothill landfill site also limits views to the north. Perwinnes Tracking Station is visible above the wooded road corridor to the west.</li> <li>iv. The sea is visible to the east. These views are generally framed by landform and vegetation, particularly from lower-lying parts. Oil supply vessels are almost always visible offshore.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	i. The eastern part of this unit forms an undeveloped foreground in views from the A92. The subtly undulating farmland of the western part of this unit does not provide a notable backdrop to adjoining urban areas. However, it provides an undeveloped, strongly contrasting landscape setting to adjoining urban areas
b) Gateway function	i. When travelling south towards the city along the busy A92, scattered development alongside the route contributes to a gradual rural to urban transition although immediately to north of Denmore, there is a sense of arriving at the edge of the city.
c) Separation function	i. Most of the unit separates the urban edge of the city from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Field boundary walls, in common with most farmland surrounding Aberdeen, are poorly maintained and many are supplemented or replaced by post and wire fences.</li> <li>ii. Field trees appear even-aged.</li> <li>iii. The landform has been extensively modified within the northern part of the unit.</li> <li>iv. Evidence of litter and dumping close to roads.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Farmland is managed with small areas of redundant land associated with former quarries and close to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.</li> <li>ii. Field boundaries and track margins appear under managed with rank vegetation and some gorse invasion. Giant hogweed is present along Silver Burn</li> </ul>

Figure D-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

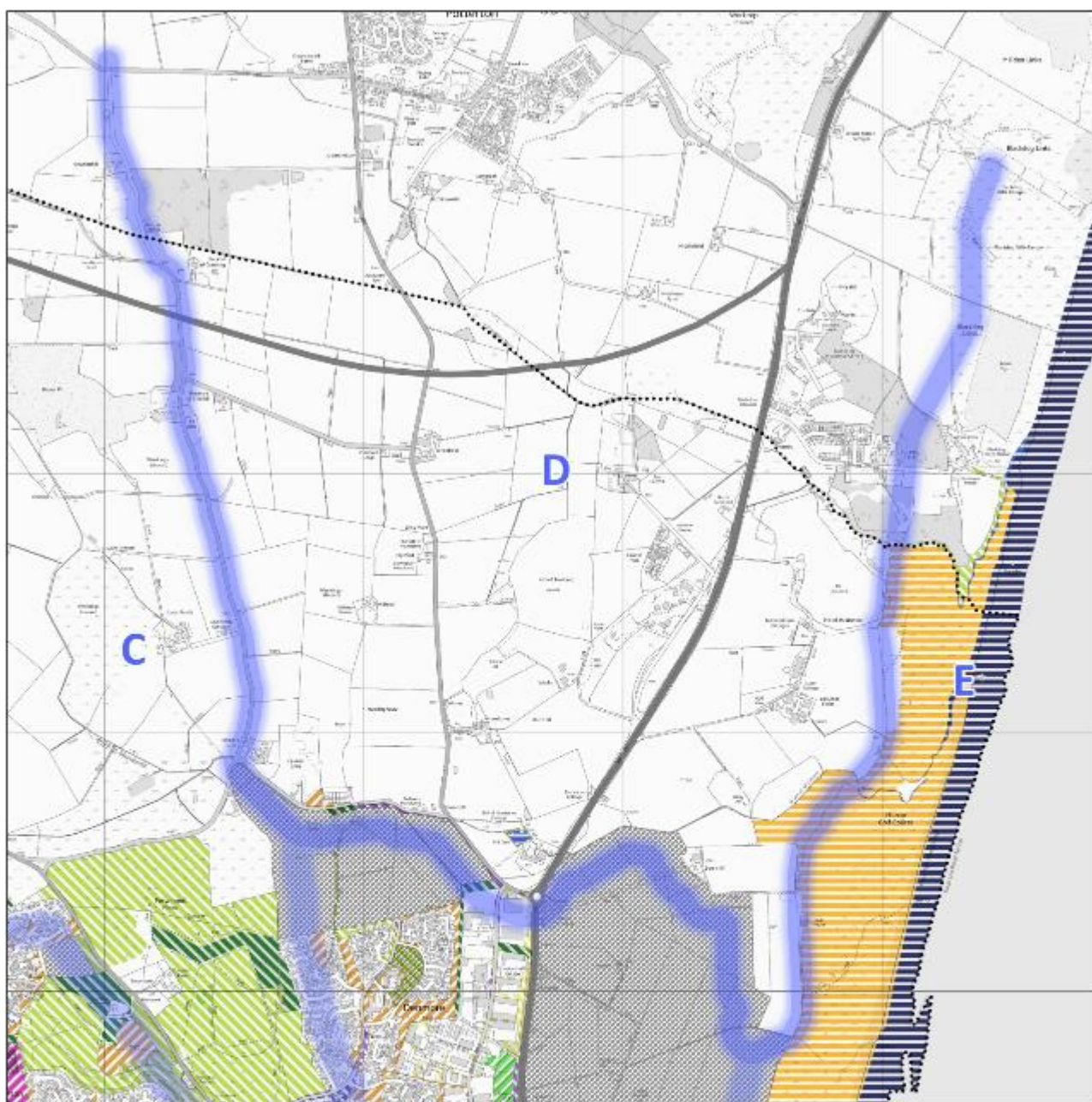
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure D-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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Peri Urban Unit boundary

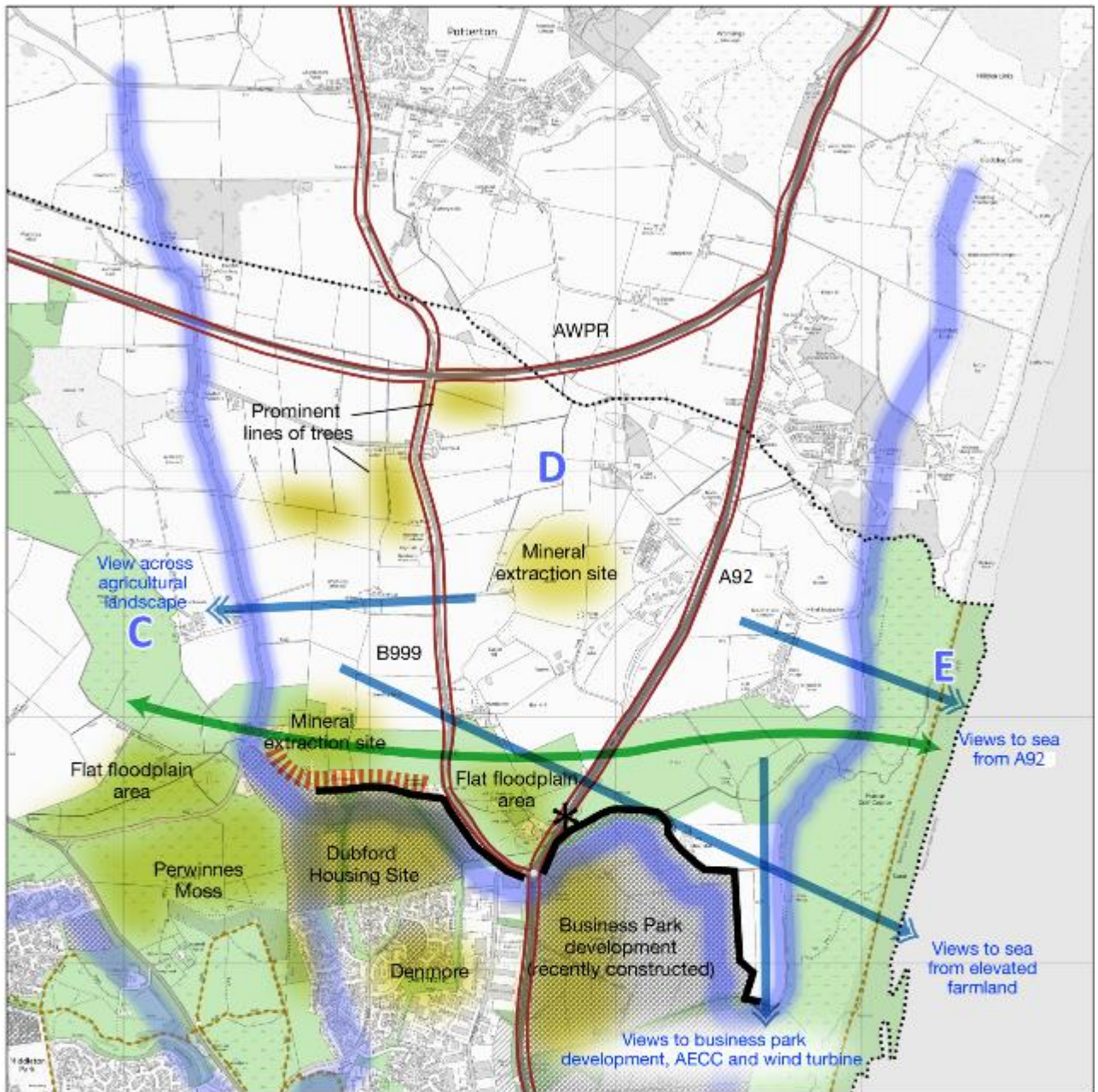
**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds

- Open Semi Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Woodland



Figure D-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Recently constructed Dubford housing development



This landscape has a strong coastal influence



Occasional rows of trees line farm tracks and fields



Former quarry used for light industry and storage



Hotel and industrial units near to the A92



The urban edge and A92 seen across flatter farmland



Urban edge of recently constructed development at Dubford



Looking east across towards the nearby Murcar Links Golf Club

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Maintain areas of open rural character and gently undulating coastal plain landform to the east of the unit, particularly east of the A92.*
- b) *Enhance the rural landscape to increase the provision of appropriate semi-natural habitats and corridors for wildlife and provide connectivity between the coast and landward habitats.*
- c) Encourage riparian woodland planting and wetlands enhancement adjacent to water courses such as the Mundurno and Silver burns.
- d) *Encourage appropriately designed woodland and tree planting that would: help to define or contain hard urban edges in the south, including those at Perwinnes Moss, Dubford and the business park and which would be in keeping with the landform in these areas; improve connectivity between woodlands across the south west of the unit; maintain key views to the coast; and enhance gateway routes to the city.*
- e) *Encourage the planting of broadleaved trees near to farmsteads and in field boundaries.*
- f) *Manage tree belts to ensure their retention.*
- g) *Maintain the sparsely settled landscape of scattered farmsteads and the rural character of minor roads.*
- h) Encourage re-use of redundant buildings where feasible.
- i) Encourage road calming measures on the B999 and minor roads close to the Dubford housing area in order to improve safe access for walkers and cyclists.
- j) New circular recreational routes into the wider countryside to the west and north could provide links between housing, Perwinnes Moss and Corby Loch (both located in Unit C).
- k) Improve recreational connectivity to the east between the Dubford housing area and the coast. Explore opportunities to create safe access across the A92 and establish a formal recreational route across the Murcar Golf Course. Links to the Aspirational Core Path AP1 between Denmore and the coast could also be explored to create a circular route.
- l) *Conserve stone dykes.*
- m) *Maintain views across open farmland in the east, across Murcar Links to the sea, and to Brimmond and Tyrebagger hills.*

## Overview of unit



Looking north from the informal footpath along the dunes

Beyond the urban edge, much of the unit has a strong undeveloped and semi-natural appearance that underpins a distinct urban to rural/coastal contrast. Although parts of the urban edge, particularly large industrial and business units are sometimes visible, development is generally well screened by woodland. To the south, Donmouth Local Nature Reserve forms a transition between the more urbanised coast to the south and the comparatively wilder coast further north.

Traffic noise from the A92 is very evident at Donmouth, where open views to the city centre add to the sense of being on the edge of the urban area. Further north, the unit becomes increasingly rural as visibility of the urban edge lessens and the influence of the sea and dunes dominate.

The unit has a key function in separating the sea and the urbanised areas to the west and, being mainly undeveloped, the unit forms an important setting to Aberdeen. Its exposed coastal character can be widely experienced from the dunes and beach, where a sense of seclusion and naturalness is felt.

Most of this unit is defined as Green Space Network, and the beach and dunes are very important for nature conservation, access and recreation. Habitat and access links extend north and south of the unit, providing a strategic connective function.

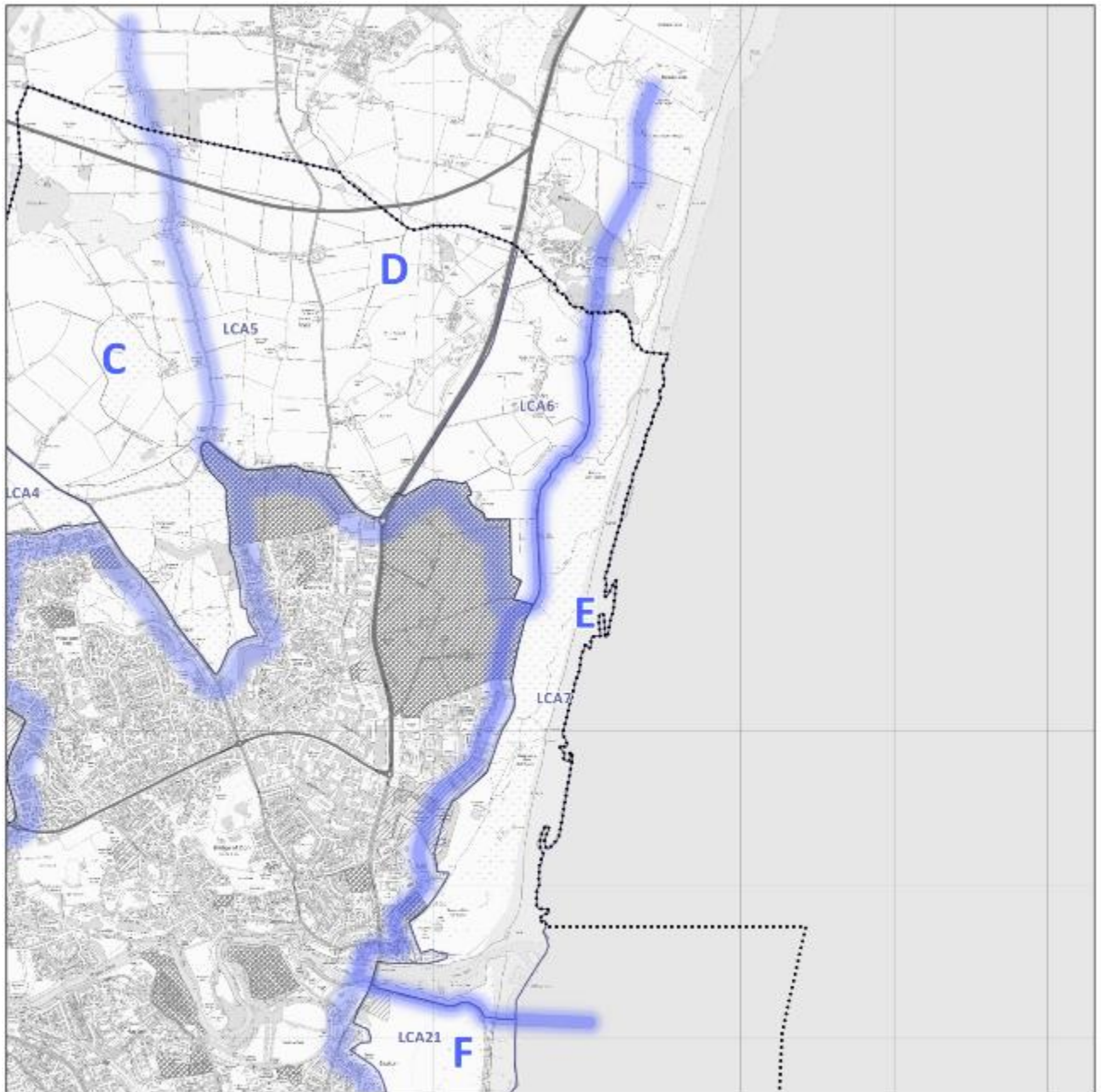
## Location and landscape context

The *Murcar & Balgownie Links* Landscape Character Area (LCA 7) forms a distinct peri-urban unit (see figure E-1). This is an exposed, coastal unit and is bordered by the mouth of the River Don to the south and the coastal settlement of Blackdog, to the north.

The unit forms a transition between the relatively dense urban edge to the west and the sea, adjacent to the east. The southern part is bounded to the west by housing, the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, the Aberdeen Science and Energy Park, more recent business park development (Core Business Park) and the low-lying farmland and restored landfill site within unit D, further to the north. To the east, the sea lies beyond a broad, sandy beach.

Peri-urban unit D lies to the north-west and unit F to the south. This unit differs from unit D in terms of its proximity of the sea and the more heavily developed urban edge, which is experienced from the links and dune system. Whereas the urban edge is abrupt in unit F, in this unit it is well screened, more open and better integrated. Consequently, although the urban edge is often evident in this unit, it is not as prominent as in unit F.

Figure E-1: Unit boundary



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- ▨ Opportunity Site
- ▩ Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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## Analysis

Unit E	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Murcar and Balgownie links are low-lying and gently undulating, separated from the beach by a series of dunes with steep seaward slopes.</li> <li>ii. Semi-natural habitats consist of the sandy beach, dunes with marram grass and numerous wild flowers, some areas of gorse scrub and rough grass within the links and the salt marsh, mudflats and scrub at Donmouth Local Nature Reserve.</li> <li>iii. Land use consists of formal and informal recreation, including the golf fairways, surfaced tracks, car parking and club houses within the links, and the beach and dunes. Much of the area, including Donmouth, is managed for nature conservation.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Donmouth Local Nature Reserve includes the whole of the southern end of the unit and extends westwards beyond the Bridge of Don (see figure E-2).</li> <li>ii. Historic features include a series of WWII defences along the beach, a March Stone, Berryhill salmon netting station and The Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, established in 1780.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. All land within the unit is identified as Semi-Natural Open Space (see figure E-3). This forms part of the Green Space Network which continues to the south across the River Don into King’s Links (unit F) and along the Don to the west, linking the sea to the city centre. Donmouth Local Nature Reserve and the River Don Corridor Local Nature Conservation Site form part of this.</li> <li>ii. There are no physical connections with the urban areas to the west, as the boundary is fenced throughout. The golf courses within the links are private, and also partly fenced, further limiting east-west connections. The beach and dunes are used as open space for informal recreation, providing strong physical connectivity north-south between the River Don and Aberdeenshire.</li> <li>iii. The adjoining Green Space Network to the south and west and agricultural land to the north of the unit provide an extensive undeveloped open setting for this unit.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The proximity of the sea gives the unit a strong sense of exposure and openness and, along the beach, a sense of naturalness and seclusion. Tidal movements are especially noticeable from the shifting sand banks at Donmouth. Collectively, these contribute to a distinctive coastal character evident across most of the unit.</li> <li>ii. Traffic noise from the A956 is very evident at Donmouth, where open views to the city centre compound the sense of being on the edge of the urban area. Further north the unit becomes increasingly rural as visibility of the urban edge</li> </ul>

Unit E	
	lessens and the influence of the sea and dunes dominate. Noise from the industrial units within Aberdeen Science and Energy Park and the sound of the frequent helicopters passing overhead is noticeable throughout much of the unit, eroding the sense of tranquillity.
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The settlement edge to the west includes a mix of development types, including residential and recent industrial and business units.</li> <li>ii. At the southern end of the unit, development consists of a dense mix of two and one and a half storey mid-20th century houses. These are mostly semi-detached with some terraced dwellings with large gardens.</li> <li>iii. Further north, Links Road runs along the western boundary. Widely spaced, late 20th century mixed two and a half storey terraces and semi-detached three and one and a half storey houses form the edge. Larger, two storey stone terraced houses set amongst parkland lie further to the west and date from the 1930s.</li> <li>iv. To the north of this, late 20th century large-scale buildings and extensive car parking of the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre forms the urban edge.</li> <li>v. Further north the Aberdeen Science and Energy Park consists of widely spaced, late 20th century and recent large industrial and business units, with further business units being developed within the Core Business Park (Opportunity Sites OP1, 2 and 3).</li> </ul>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Prominent buildings and structures in the urban edge include the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre tower and the wind turbine and test rig within the Aberdeen Science and Energy Park further north.</li> <li>ii. Distinctive buildings include the Royal Aberdeen clubhouse and the salmon netting station, both within the unit, and the 1930s house on Donmouth Road, within the urban edge, now used as an architect's office.</li> </ul>
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The urban edge to the west of the unit includes a variety of settlement edge types.</li> <li>ii. At the southern end of the unit, trees and shrubs within the gardens and some areas of gorse scrub within Balgownie links provide screening of the houses, which are generally well integrated.</li> <li>iii. Further north beyond a wide grass verge, a metal palisade fence gives way to metal railings along the western edge of the road. A line of mature trees follows the western edge of the fence and with gorse scrub on the links side generally provide effective screening of the houses from the unit.</li> </ul>

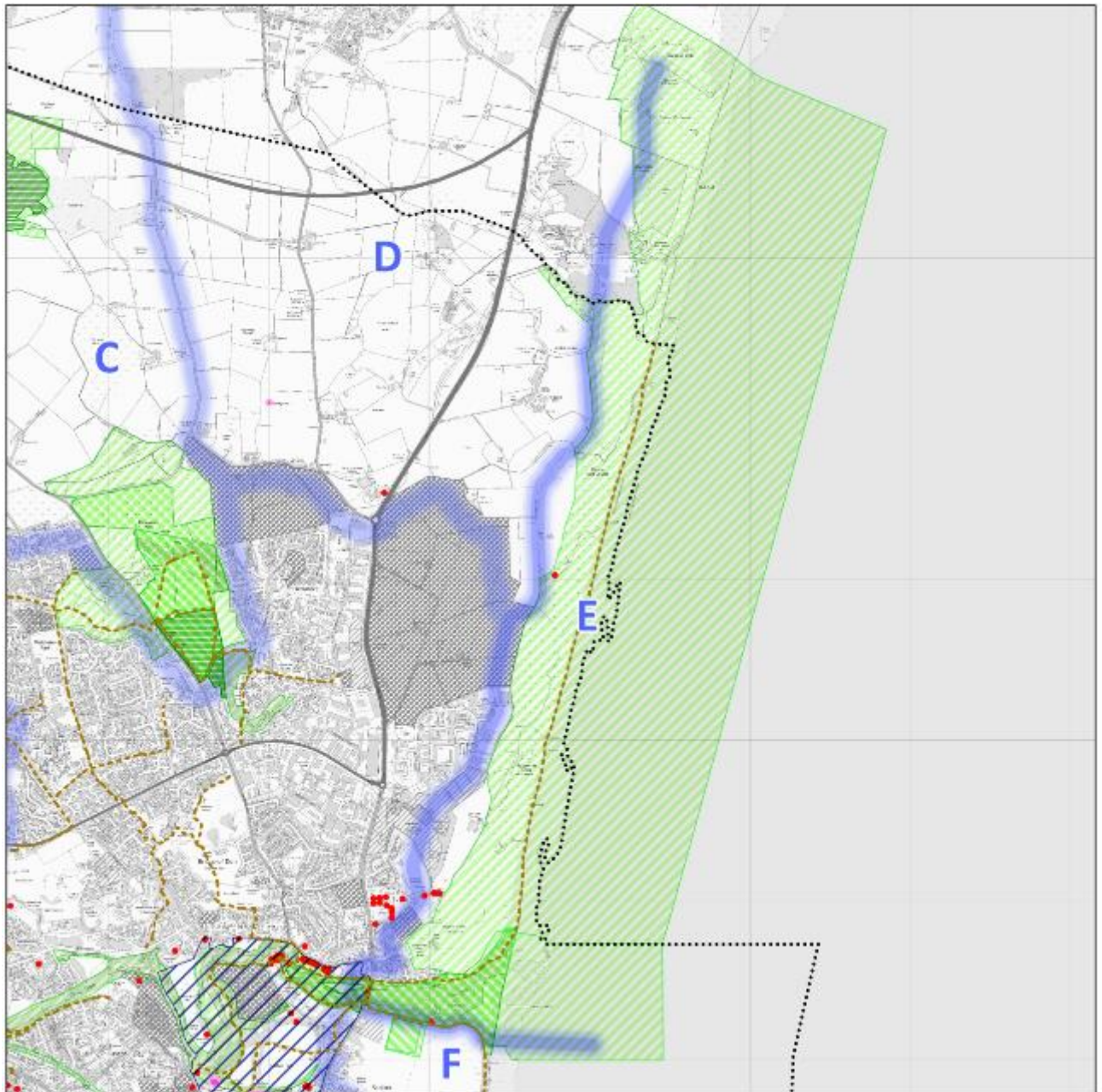


Unit E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. To the north of this, a dense mature conifer belt screens much of the late 20th century large scale buildings and extensive car parking of the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, which forms the urban edge to the west. A wire mesh fence runs along the boundary at this point.</li> <li>v. Further north, dense planting and protective fencing generally edge the Aberdeen Science and Energy Park industrial and business units, all set within a robust woodland framework.</li> <li>vi. North of this, further business units are being developed within the Core Business Park (Opportunity Sites OP1, 2 and 3). Although widely spaced, these units have no screen planting and form an abrupt edge to the peri-urban unit. A post and wire fence runs along the boundary and extensive car parking beside the buildings is highly visible in the open landscape.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The links have a predominantly open character but are contained by tree and woodland belts to the west and along the Don valley to the south and by the dunes to the east. The beach is also characteristically open with uninterrupted seaward views contained by the steep dunes to the west.</li> <li>ii. The urban edge is generally more open to the north and denser to the south, although tree belts and woodland planting provide extensive screening along much of its length. The undulating landform provides a degree of containment to the urban edge when viewed from Donmouth and the dunes further north.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Screening by trees along the western side of this unit mostly limits continuity with the urban area further to the west, although there are long distance views south-westwards to the residential tower blocks in Seaton from much of the unit. There are also views towards the city centre, including glimpses of the St Machar Cathedral roofline from Donmouth.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is widespread formal recreational provision within the golf links and informal use, including walking, jogging, horse riding, etc. along the beach and dunes. The Donmouth Road car park and the nearby areas of beach and dunes are especially well used.</li> <li>ii. Much of the undeveloped area is private land used for golf, containing club houses, car parking and maintenance buildings.</li> <li>iii. Recreational facilities for the general public include Donmouth Local Nature Reserve, where there is a car park and footpath, and the beach and dunes.</li> </ul>

Unit E	
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The North Sea Trail (Core Path 18) follows the beach north from Donmouth towards Balmedie. An informal footpath follows the top of the dunes but is interrupted in places where burns cut through the dunes.</li> <li>ii. An Aspirational Path (AP1) would run from Denmore Road eastwards to the beach, providing a link to the North Sea Trail from Bridge of Don, Denmore Industrial Estate and the Core Business Park. This would require access across the golf course to be negotiated.</li> <li>iii. Elsewhere, fencing and intensive formal recreational uses restrict informal access.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. This is a relatively hidden unit, the links are generally well screened from the surroundings by trees and woodland belts and views of the beach are limited by the adjacent dunes.</li> <li>ii. There are glimpses of the dunes from the A956 as it crosses the Don, and of the links and dunes from the housing to the south of the unit and from the newer business units further north.</li> <li>i. Longer distance views from the residential tower blocks in Seaton are also possible and the unit forms the foreground in views towards the city from the Orkney and Shetland ferries.</li> </ul>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From the lower-lying parts of the links, the sea is screened by the sand dunes, but from the beach there are uninterrupted sea views. The linear nature of the beach tends to draw the eye and views extend along the coastline south towards Aberdeen Beach (unit F) and north to Aberdeenshire, as well as out to sea where ship and ferry traffic is almost always present. Views of the planned turbines just offshore will be possible from many parts of the unit.</li> <li>ii. Westward views are generally restricted by tree and woodland belts, but the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre tower, Aberdeen Science and Energy Park wind turbine and test rig are visible above the trees from the dunes and links. There are views south-westwards to the residential tower blocks in Seaton from much of the unit and also views towards the city centre, from Donmouth Local Nature Reserve, with the A956 road bridge and the river in the foreground.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Local Nature Reserve, beach and dunes are popular areas, allowing residents and visitors the opportunity to experience a relatively natural, exposed area close to the city centre.</li> </ul>

Unit E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. The unit forms an important undeveloped part of the setting of Aberdeen and its exposed coastal character can be widely experienced from the dunes and beach.</li> <li>iii. There is a striking contrast between the tower blocks to the south-west, occasional vertical elements to the west and the horizontal emphasis of the undeveloped links, dunes and beach. The beach and dunes also form an undeveloped foreground in views from the sea towards the city.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit is largely hidden from main roads but the dunes of the Local Nature Reserve can be glimpsed from the A956 as it crosses the Don. There are also views of the unit on arrival into Aberdeen harbour by sea.</li> </ul>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Donmouth Local Nature Reserve forms a transition between the more urbanised coast to the south and the comparatively wilder coast further north. The unit as a whole has a key function in separating coastal edge and the urbanised areas to the west.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Coastal erosion is apparent, especially at Donmouth, where the dunes are being eroded by wave action and recreational use.</li> <li>ii. Otherwise the landform within the unit appears to be largely intact, with relatively minor modifications to form surfaced access tracks and fairways within the links. The vegetation of the links is highly modified, although there are some large areas of gorse scrub.</li> <li>iii. The landscape treatment of Donmouth Road car park and the adjacent Scottish Water facility is utilitarian, with a variety of fences and vehicle barriers. A section of chain link fencing along the footpath to the west of the car park is in poor condition and appears to be partly redundant.</li> <li>iv. Conifer tree belts adjacent to the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre are even-aged and are likely to require management in future.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Most of the links are managed for formal recreation. Highly managed golfing greens contrast strongly with the more naturalistic roughs and the semi-natural vegetation along the dunes to the east and the beach beyond.</li> </ul>

Figure E-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

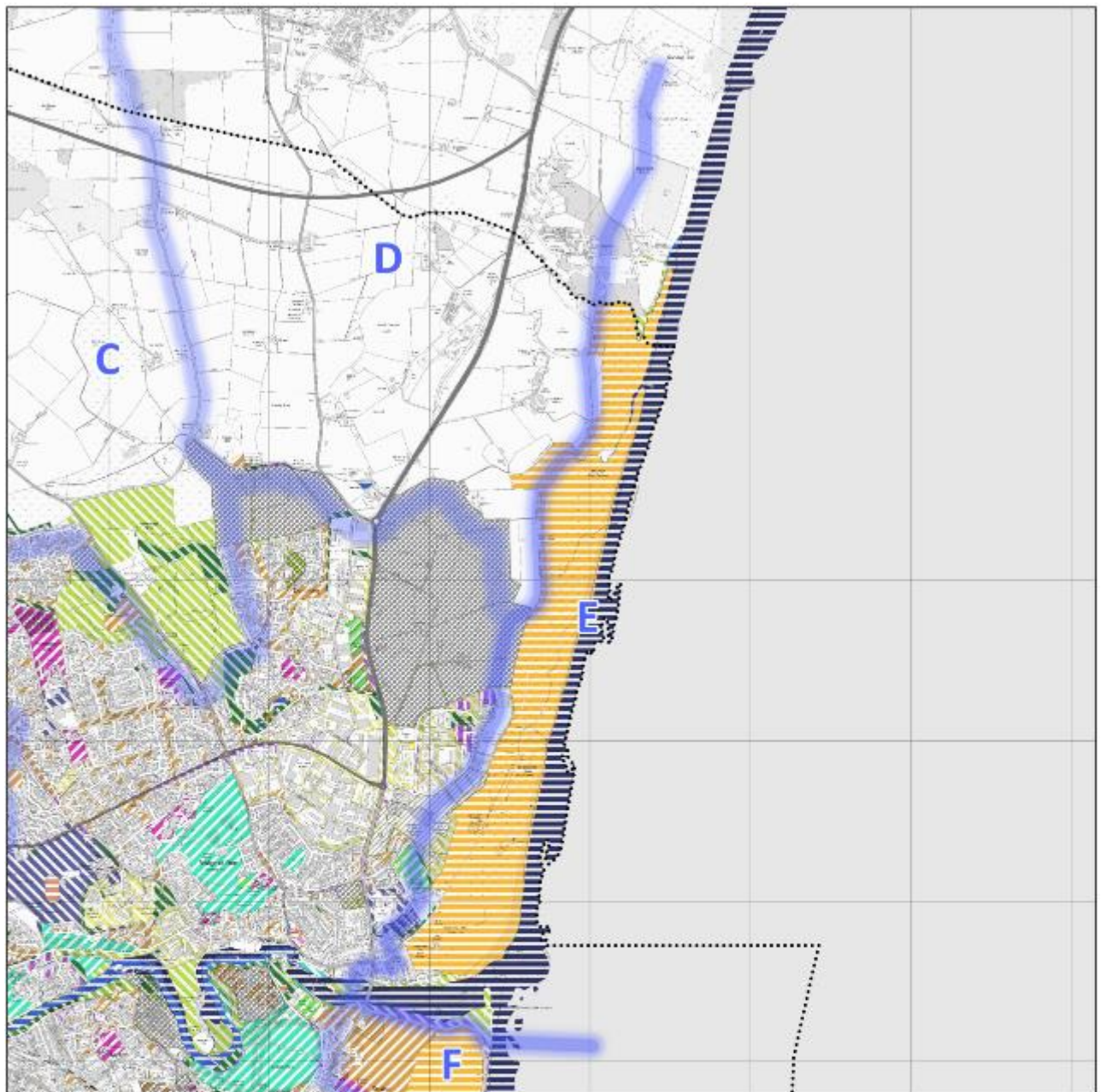
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure E-3: Open Space



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

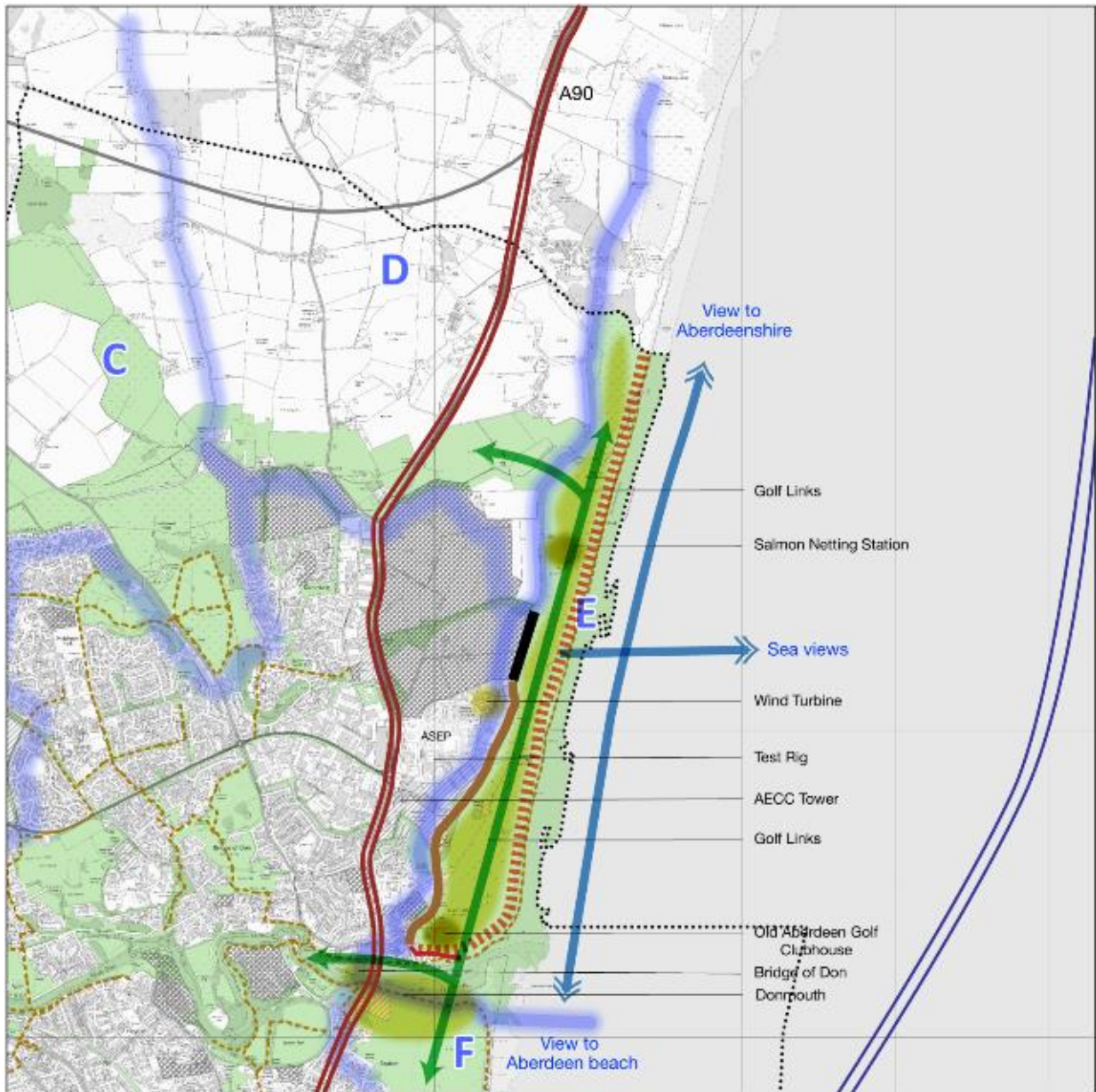
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Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Open Space Audit 2010

- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Bowling Greens
- Churchyard
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland

Figure E-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



View south-west to Seaton from Donmouth



Footpath leading from Donmouth Road towards the dunes



WWII defences along Murcar beach



Salmon netting station, Murcar Links



Looking west across Murcar Links to the Core Business Park



View west across Balgownie Links to ASEP



Looking south-west to the Royal Aberdeen golf clubhouse



View south across Donmouth to Aberdeen Beach (unit F)

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA and CCA.

- a) *Conserve the continuous swathe of sandy beach.*
- b) *Maintain the strong natural, undeveloped character and prevailing lack of roads and lighting.*
- c) *Maintain natural dynamic coastal processes and avoid the introduction of hard coastal defence structures.*
- d) *Conserve and enhance sensitive sand dune and beach habitats, and the diverse range of habitats at Donmouth Nature Reserve.*
- e) Enhance the management of the rough grassland within the links for biodiversity and seek opportunities for the expansion of native grassland and scrub habitats where appropriate.
- f) *Avoid woodland planting and tree planting which would conflict with the natural and open character.*
- g) *Any tree planting should be near the inland periphery where it could help to soften the urban edge.*
- h) Any new development should ensure that connectivity is maintained through the Green Space Network to accommodate green corridors for informal recreation and wildlife, which also help to connect urban communities with the coast, and which reinforce the existing character of the landscape.
- i) *Conserve features of archaeological interest, notably the pillboxes and tank traps, and their setting.*
- j) *Maintain and sensitively enhance footpath access across this unit and through the dunes, seeking opportunities to reduce erosion pressure.*
- k) Ensure that water based recreational activity and associated facilities do not adversely detract from the natural and undeveloped character.
- l) Improve the landscape treatment of Donmouth Road car park and the adjacent Scottish Water facility by, for example, removing redundant fencing, reducing the variety of fences and introducing some less utilitarian fence materials and designs. The existing footpath should be upgraded and litter removed on a regular basis.
- m) *Investigate opportunities to underground the outfall pipe.*
- n) *Maintain the open character and uninterrupted panoramic views along the coast and out to sea.*



## Overview of unit



Looking across the links towards Aberdeen Football Ground and the city beyond

This is a busy peri-urban unit, with extensive areas of open space. A good network of connected footpaths serves the beach and Esplanade, which together provide opportunities for a range of informal recreational activities. To the west of the Esplanade, the King's Links form part of the Green Space Network and are mostly used for formal recreation. The Green Space Network continues to the north across the River Don into Balgownie Links (unit E), but habitat connections with the urban area are generally limited.

The proximity of the sea gives the unit a strong sense of exposure and openness although there is little sense of seclusion due to the strong influence of the urban edge, busy roads and extensive recreational use. The coast and the undeveloped links provide a striking contrast to the mostly hard urban edge, heightened by the relatively dense nature of the adjacent development and the prominence of tower blocks to the north-west of the unit. The majority of edges are formed by dense built development, although there are pockets of greenspace and sections of fencing in places.

This unit forms an important and very distinctive setting to Aberdeen. The golf links provide an important open space, separating the busy Esplanade from the urban edge to the west. This is a highly

visible area, seen by many residents and road users along key/main routes, and by recreational users of the promenade, beach and the sea.

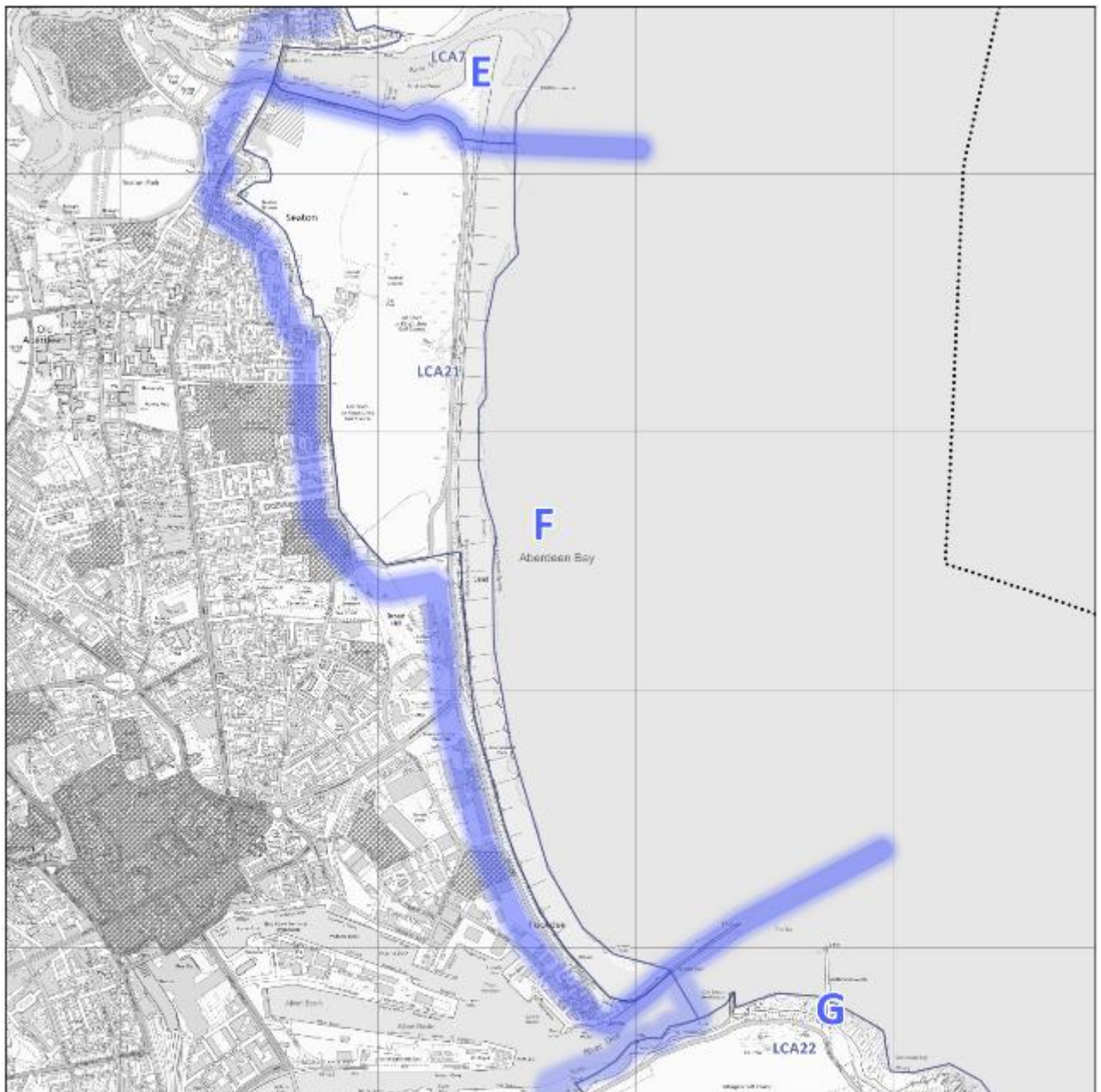
### **Location and landscape context**

The *King's Links* Landscape Character Area (LCA 21) forms most of peri-urban unit F. Apart from the inclusion of the urban edge and parts of the sea, the boundary of the unit (see figure F-1) follows that of the LCA. This is an exposed, coastal unit, bounded to the west by dense housing developments within Seaton and Pittodrie and by the Beach Leisure Centre, other recreational, commercial and a few industrial developments further south. The sea lies to the east, beyond broad, curving sandy beach and the Esplanade, which is a busy minor road.

The unit reflects the strong contrast between the relatively dense urban edge to the west and the open links and adjacent sea to the east. The urban edge and coast are in close proximity and contrast strongly in character. This differs from unit E, where the urban edge is highly screened by landform, trees and woodland and the coastal experience is less dominated by urban influences.

The unit is bordered by the mouth of the River Don to the north and the 19th century planned fishing settlement of Footdee, to the south, adjacent to North Pier at the harbour entrance. Peri-urban unit E lies adjacent to the north and unit G to the south, beyond Aberdeen harbour.

Figure F-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

## Analysis

Unit F	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The King’s Links are low-lying and gently undulating, separated from the beach by the Esplanade. This runs along a low, remnant dune system which has been heavily engineered. Broad Hill, a more prominent dune with an Ordnance Survey triangulation pillar, lies adjacent to the south of the links. Further south the urban edge directly abuts the Promenade. The beach is subject to longitudinal drift and is heavily engineered with a regular pattern of groins.</li> <li>ii. Apart from the sandy beach, semi-natural habitat is limited to patches of rough grass between close mown areas within Kings Links. A recently planted rectilinear area of woodland at the northern end of the links provides a developing habitat.</li> <li>iii. Land use consists almost entirely of formal recreation, including golf fairways which extend along the entire eastern edge of Kings Links, several sports pitches to the west of the links, sports pavilions and car parking further south and a club house, fenced driving range and car park at the southern end of the links. Other land uses include a cat and dog home and a combined heat and power unit, which lie near to the pavilions. A small Opportunity Site (OP 85) extends around the existing petrol station at the northwest corner of the unit.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The southern part of the Donmouth Local Nature Reserve includes the newly planted woodland area at the northern end of the unit (see figure F-2).</li> <li>ii. Four March Stones (63, 64, 65 and OMEGA) lie within the unit and mark the boundary of the crofts that ringed the medieval burgh.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Beyond the urban edge, almost the entire unit is defined as Open Space. The majority of this is identified as Golf Course, Playing Fields and Fore Shore/Rocks (see figure F-3).</li> <li>ii. The beach and Esplanade provide the main open space for informal recreation within this unit. To the west of the Esplanade, the King’s Links form part of the Green Space Network and are mostly used for formal recreation.</li> <li>iii. The Open Spaces form part of the Green Space Network which continues to the north across the River Don into Balgownie Links (unit E). Donmouth Local Nature Reserve and the River Don Corridor Local Nature Conservation Site also form part of the network but are physically separated from this unit by the Esplanade apart from a section of new woodland in the Local Nature Reserve, which is within the unit.</li> </ul>

Unit F	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Connections with the urban area to the west are generally limited but include important physical and visual links along the banks of the River Don towards Seaton Park.</li> <li>v. The adjoining Green Space Network to the north provides an extensive undeveloped setting for this unit.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The coast and the undeveloped links area provide a striking contrast to the urban edge, heightened by the relatively dense nature of the adjacent development.</li> <li>ii. The proximity of the sea gives the unit a strong sense of exposure and openness and, along the beach, a sense of naturalness. There is little sense of seclusion due to the strong influence of the adjacent urban edge within this open landscape.</li> <li>iii. The Esplanade is highly managed and has a strong urban character, although areas of rough grass in the northern section and some naturalistic mounding further south help to soften this in places.</li> <li>iv. During the day, surrounding roads are busy and traffic noise is noticeable throughout, eroding any sense of tranquillity. The beach and esplanade are often busy with recreational activity too.</li> </ul>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The settlement edge to the west includes a mix of development types, predominantly mid-20th century residential, including tower blocks, with recreational, commercial and industrial developments further south.</li> </ul>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Prominent buildings in the urban edge include multi-storey tower blocks in Seaton and the main Aberdeen City football stadium of Pittodrie. Distinctive buildings include the 1929 Beach Ballroom at the south end of the links and the 19th century planned settlement of Footdee at the southern end of the unit.</li> <li>ii. To the south of the unit, the Girdleness light house is prominent beyond the harbour entrance. To the west a variety of tall buildings form a distinctive city centre skyline.</li> </ul>
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The urban edge to the west of the unit includes a complex mix of settlement edge types.</li> <li>ii. To the north, well-spaced, mid-20th century residential tower blocks with some mature trees provide a relatively open edge, allowing views through to the city further to the west. South of this, the grounds of the late 20th century two storey Seaton School form the boundary to the urban area, surrounded by a mesh fence. Further south, mid-20th century three storey terraced houses lie to the west of a mix of mid-20th century tower blocks and five storey apartment buildings that provide a denser urban edge.</li> </ul>

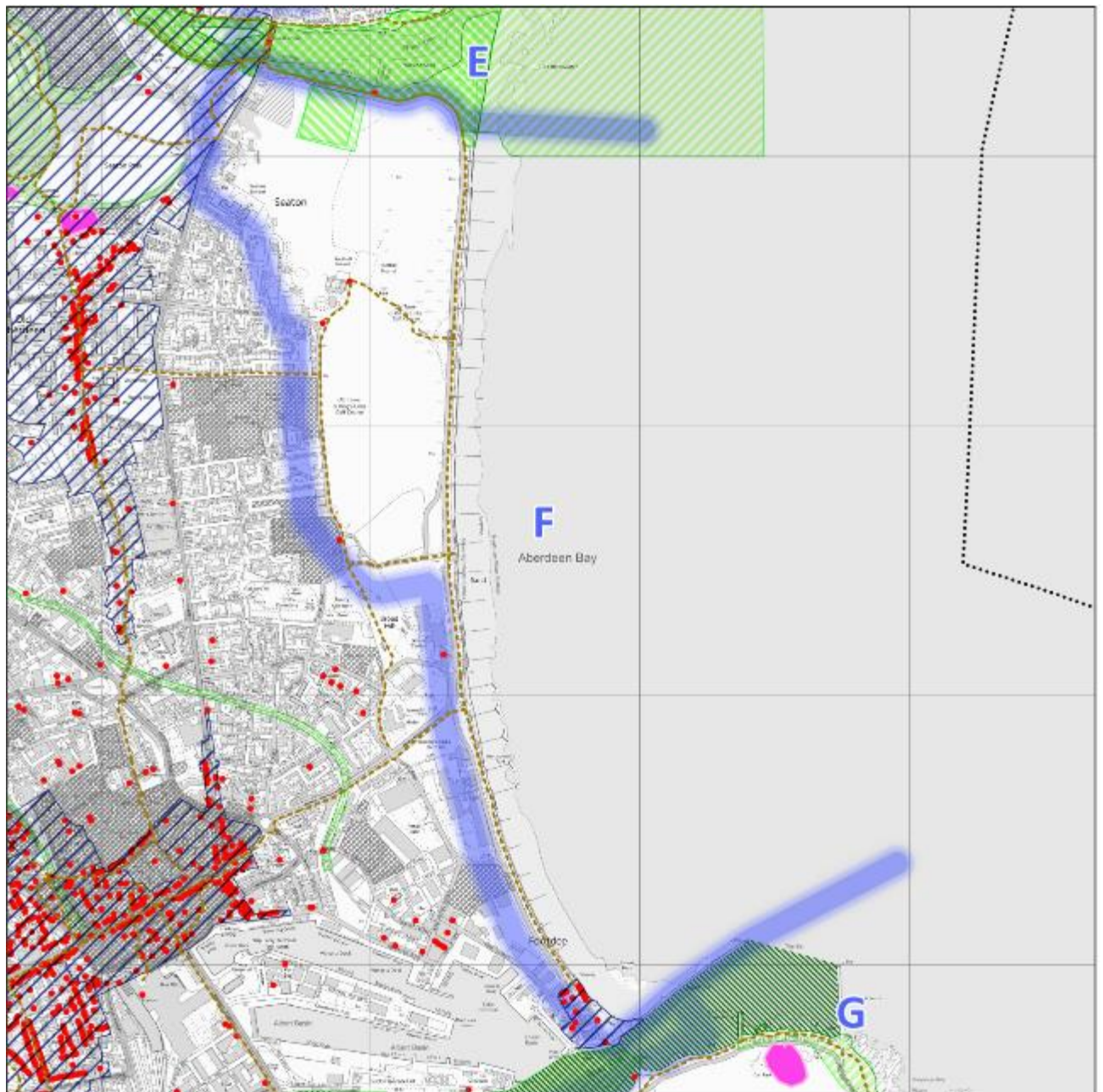
Unit F	
	<p>iii. South of Regent Walk an area of land surrounded by a high wire mesh fence provides a more open edge, with late 20th century four storey apartments and the Aberdeen Sports Village visible within the urban area further west. To the south of this, late 20th century single and two storey houses are partly screened by semi-mature trees. Pittodrie, the late 20th century Aberdeen City football stadium, forms an abrupt edge at the southern end of the open space.</p> <p>iv. The southern edge of the links is undeveloped. To the west, Broad Hill (28 m AOD) provides some visual containment and east of this a grass area used for cricket allows views of various recreational buildings beside the Esplanade further south.</p> <p>v. At this point the unit narrows and the late 20th century ice arena and Beach Leisure Centre and the 1929 Beach Ballroom form an abrupt edge, adjacent to the Esplanade. South of this, open areas of mown grass either side of Beach Boulevard allow views beyond the late 20th century three storey hotel and adventure sports and climbing complex westwards towards the city centre. Further south, a range of mostly one and a half storey 20th century amusement arcades and retail developments front directly onto the Esplanade. Beyond this, an open area of grass to the south of Wellington Road allows views of commercial and business units further west and is an Opportunity Site (OP 83).</p> <p>vi. Further south, a series of fenced one and a half storey industrial units, some set back slightly but most fronting directly on to the Esplanade, form an abrupt edge beyond a grass verge that narrows further south.</p> <p>vii. Footdee Conservation Area forms the urban edge at the southern end of the unit, composed of a variety of mostly single and two storey 19th century housing, arranged around a series of squares and lying slightly lower than the Esplanade, allowing views of the fenced harbour area and modern Marine Operations Centre building beyond.</p>
d) Type of visual containment	<p>i. The links have a predominantly open character, partly contained by some sporadic woodland along the Don valley to the north and by the subtle variations in landform to the south and east.</p> <p>ii. The beach is characteristically open with uninterrupted seaward views.</p> <p>iii. To the west, the urban edge is generally more open to the north and denser and abrupt to the south, with few trees apart from those amongst the tower blocks in Seaton.</p>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<p>i. The abrupt edge formed by much of the urban development along the western side of this unit allows little continuity with the wider urban area, although open spaces within the edge, notably at Beach Boulevard and Wellington Street do allow some framed views west towards the city.</p>

Unit F	
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is widespread formal recreational provision (golf and football). Informal use (for example walking, jogging, and cycling) occurs mostly on the beach, Esplanade and peripheral roads.</li> <li>ii. Nearly all of the undeveloped area is used as open space for recreation but, apart from the Esplanade and the beach, there are few recreational facilities (e.g. surf school) within the unit for the general public to use.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The North Sea Trail follows the Esplanade from Footdee to Donmouth and is designated as a Core Path 19. Core Path 17 provides access east to west between Seaton and the Esplanade across the centre of the links. Other paths follow roads around the southern end of the links and along part of the western periphery and the Esplanade. Elsewhere, fencing, intensive recreational use and the busy roads restrict informal access.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit is visible from the adjacent urban areas and from more elevated ground at Girdle Ness Battery and Broad Hill. It also forms the foreground in views of the city from the Lerwick and Stromness ferries.</li> </ul>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. This is a busy area, seen by many residents and road users as well as promenade and beach users.</li> <li>ii. From the lower-lying parts of the links, the sea is occasionally screened by the remnant sand dunes, but elsewhere there are uninterrupted sea views. There is frequent ship and ferry traffic to and from Aberdeen harbour and vessels are almost always present out to sea. Views of the planned turbines just offshore will be possible from many parts of the unit.</li> <li>iii. The linear nature of the Esplanade tends to draw the eye and views extend along the coastline as well as out to sea. The Marine Operations Centre building and the Girdleness lighthouse are prominent to the south and the old Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre tower can be seen to the north.</li> <li>iv. Westward views are mostly curtailed by the urban edge, but there are views towards the city centre, including glimpses of the St Machar Cathedral roofline.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. This unit forms an important part of the setting of Aberdeen, where the city's exposed coastal character can be best experienced. The contrast between the tower blocks and relatively dense urban edge and the flat, undeveloped links to the east with the sea beyond is striking. The beach and Promenade are often busy,</li> </ul>

Unit F	
	<p>popular areas allowing many residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the wide, open, coastal space in contrast to the dense, developed city.</p> <p>ii. The links form an undeveloped foreground in views from the Esplanade and the sea towards the city.</p>
b) Gateway function	<p>iii. The unit is highly visible from the sea route gateway where the Aberdeen to Orkney and Shetland ferries pass daily. The Beach Boulevard is an important route into the unit. On approaching the Esplanade from the city, areas of nearby open space, amusements and the Beach Ballroom building form a distinctive sense of arrival to the coast. Northern parts of the unit are also visible from the A956 as it crosses the Bridge of Don.</p>
c) Separation function	<p>i. The links provide an important open space, separating the often busy Esplanade from the urban edge to the west.</p>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<p>i. There are few natural coastal features and little wholly natural vegetation remaining in the unit. There are some large expanses of intensively managed amenity grass, with signs of heavy use and vegetation/soil erosion in places</p> <p>ii. Fencing tends to be highly visible within this open landscape and the sections of tall wire mesh fencing around the golf driving range and metal palisade along the industrial units at the southern end of the unit are particularly noticeable. Some chain link fencing along the western edge of the golf course is in poor condition and appears to be partly redundant.</p>
b) Degree of management evident	<p>i. Most of the links are managed for formal recreation. Highly managed golfing greens, a driving range and sports pitches contrast with the more naturalistic roughs and new woodland planted further north.</p> <p>ii. Coastal erosion measures along the beach include timber groins and concrete revetments. Mown grass banks and wide tarmac walkways reinforce the municipal character of the Esplanade.</p>



Figure F-2: Designations



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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**Natural Heritage Designations**

- Special Area of Conservation
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

**Cultural Heritage Designations**

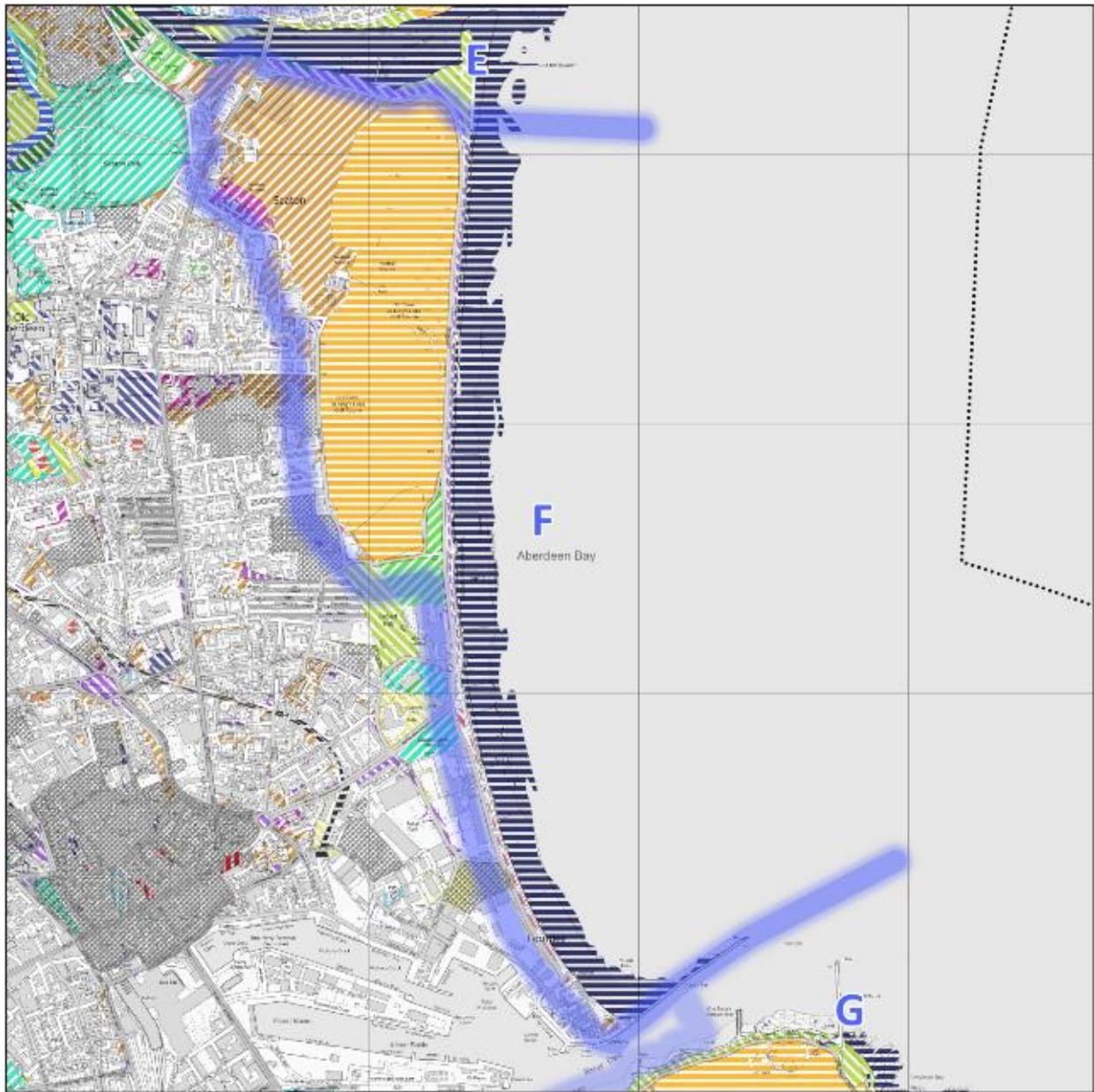
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Aberdeen City LDP**

- Core Path
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure F-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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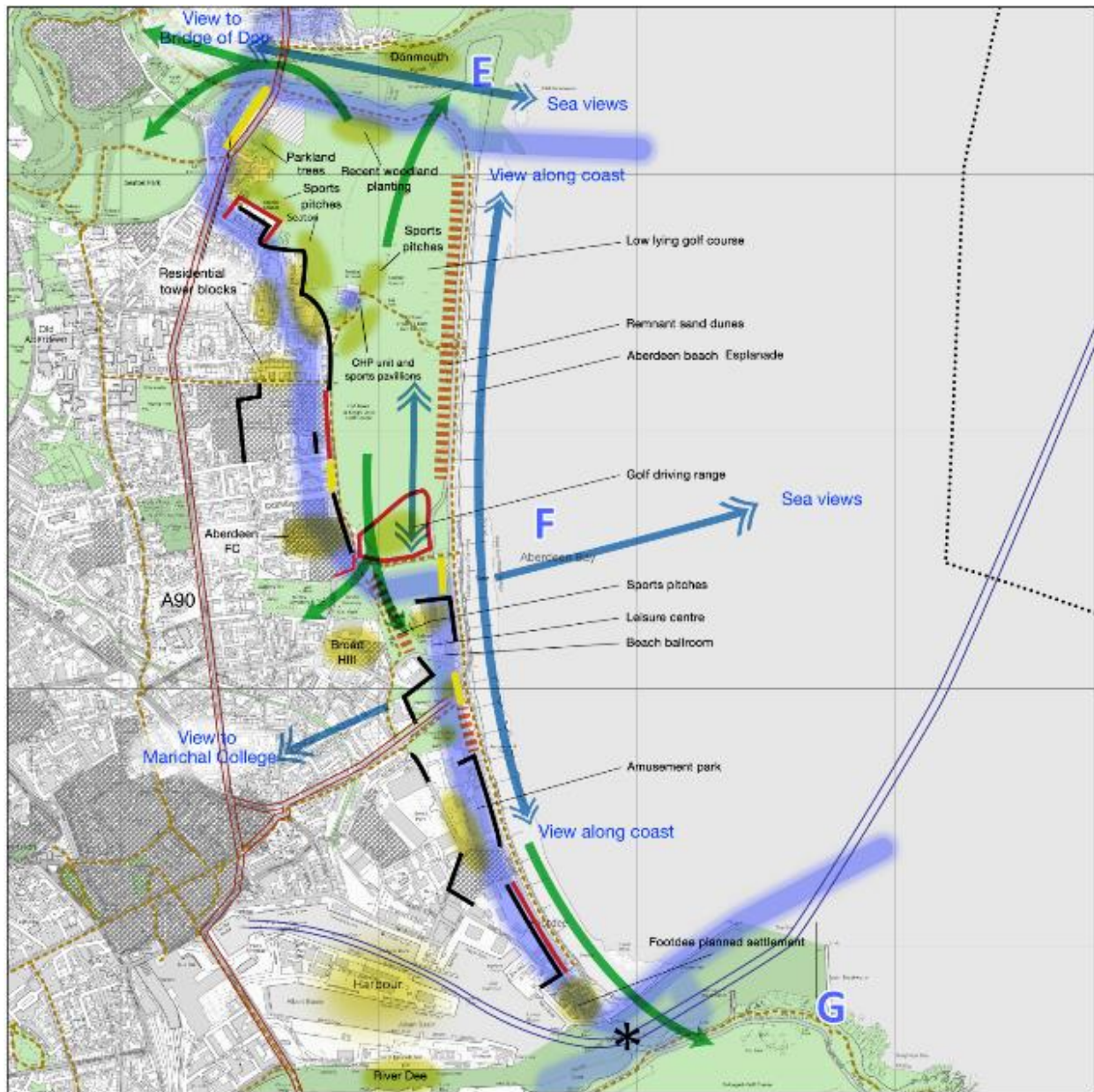
Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Bowling Greens
- Cemetery
- Churchyard
- Civic Space
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes

- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland

Figure F-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



View north across the links to Seaton from Broad Hill



Looking south along the Esplanade to the harbour



View south towards Girdle Ness from Broad Hill



Metal fencing adjacent to industrial units



Tower blocks in Seaton from the Esplanade



Concrete revetments and timber groins along the beach



Pittrodie football stadium from Broad Hill



Southern end of the Esplanade looking north

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA and CCA.

- 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 coastal habitats.*
- e) *Encourage the management of rough grassland for enhanced biodiversity and landscape objectives, and seek opportunities for the expansion of native grassland and other appropriate 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. Undertake limited native planting and selective thinning of woodland edges to better integrate the rectangular woodland in the north into the landscape.*
- g) *Maintain the contrast between the built-up southern section and less developed northern section. Avoid the introduction of structures which would increase the urbanisation of the landscape, such as street lighting, particularly along the northern section.*
- h) *Enhance the condition and design of the esplanade, coast road and golf links. The provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, car parking and signage should be sensitively designed. Consider continuing a distinctive coastal or marine aesthetic for street furniture. The simple character of the Esplanade should be maintained.*
- i) *Investigate opportunities for sensitive traffic calming and reducing measures which do not contribute to clutter and which help the area retain a distinction from other more urban roads in terms of traffic levels and speed.*
- j) *Safeguard the setting of Footdee and other important historic features, such as light towers, from the adverse effects of built development and land-use change.*
- k) Consider introducing planting along the western edge of the industrial units further south, widening the strip between the road and the units where possible.
- l) Maintain the extent and enhance the character of the Green Space Network, for its important role as a setting for this unit and the city, and as a place for people and wildlife. Avoid further fragmentation of the network from new development and enhance the physical and visual relationship with the urban area, improving connectivity for both people and wildlife.
- m) Maintain and improve the condition of the urban edge by, for example, removing redundant fencing, reducing the variety of fences and introducing some less utilitarian fence materials and designs.
- n) *Maintain the network of footpaths, and the mostly recreational land use.*
- o) Consider introducing further footpath links between the urban areas and the coast.
- p) Explore opportunities to enhance the formal recreation facilities.
- q) *Maintain the uninterrupted panoramic views across the North Sea, and inland towards the distinctive seaside architecture and skyline of the Esplanade.*

## Overview of unit



Overlooking Balnagask Golf course towards Aberdeen Bay

In general, the unit reflects the striking contrast between built development in Balnagask and the mainly open and undeveloped coastal landscape. The contrast of the hard urban edge and adjacent open green space is emphasised by the relatively dense nature of the adjacent development and the prominence of several tower blocks. Similar to unit F to the north, the intensity and extent of recreational use underpins a relatively busy peri-urban unit, although to the south there is a degree of transition to a rural/coastal landscape towards the boundary with unit I.

With extensive areas of open space and a good network of connected footpaths, the unit provides opportunities for a range of informal recreational activities. The proximity of the sea gives the unit a strong sense of exposure and openness although there is little sense of seclusion over much of the unit due the strong influence of the urban edge and the close proximity to the city and harbour.

The prominent headland at the entrance to the harbour forms an important undeveloped backdrop to the city and is an important gateway feature when travelling into and out of the city by ferry and rail.

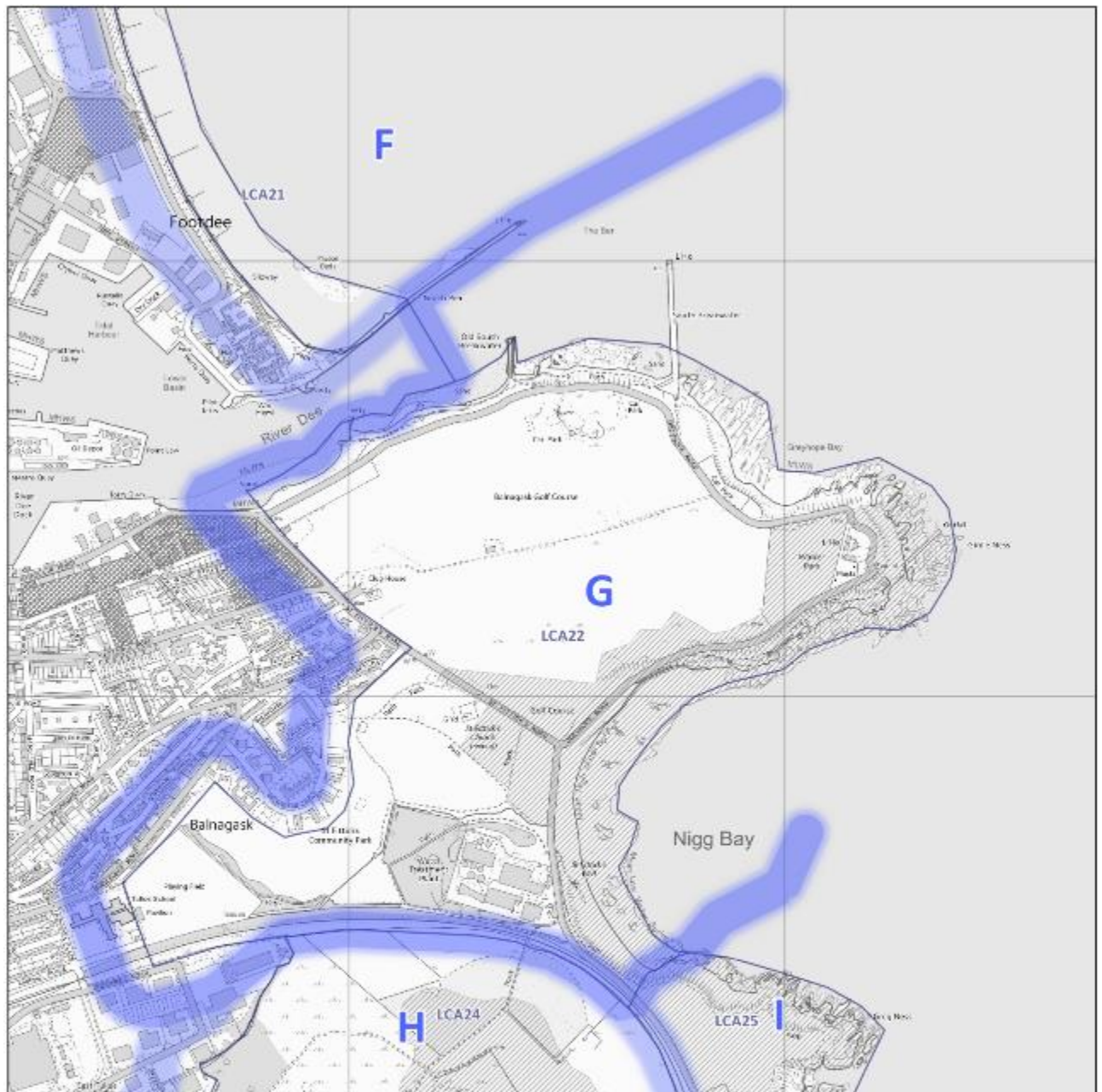
## Location and landscape context

The *Girdle Ness* Landscape Character Area (LCA 22) forms a distinct peri-urban unit (see figure G-1). The unit is formed around an exposed headland that juts out into the North Sea and, further south, a shallow basin that lies to the west of a distinctive crescent-shaped bay. The sea lies to the east of the unit and Aberdeen harbour, at the mouth of the River Dee, to the north.

The unit reflects the strong contrast between the dense urban edge of Balnagask, the open coastal headland of Girdle Ness and the sheltered, lower-lying Bay of Nigg to its south. This will change with the harbour extension in the Bay of Nigg. To the north, beyond Aberdeen harbour is peri-urban unit F and to the south is peri-urban units H and I.

Extensive opportunities for recreation and the proximity to the coast set this unit apart from unit H, which, despite its coastal aspect, is partly surrounded by extensive industrial development. Although unit I extends along the coast to the south, it differs from this unit due to the mostly linear, urban edge with the railway line and the open coastal farmland edged by rocky cliffs.

Figure G-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment



## Analysis

Unit G	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. An exposed, low-lying, rocky headland, which rises above the mouth of the River Dee. A distinctive crescent-shaped bay to its south is contained by the headlands of Girdle Ness and Greg Ness. To the west of the Bay of Nigg, an area of low flat ground is contained by Tullos Hill to the south and residential development on rising ground to the north.</li> <li>ii. The exposed headland is entirely treeless. To the west of Bay of Nigg, the landcover is mostly amenity grassland although there is some recent woodland planting along the Tullos Burn and around a water treatment works. Along the coastal edge, there are extensive semi-natural grasslands.</li> <li>iii. Land use is mostly recreational, with extensive areas of mown grass for public open space, sports pitches and a golf course. A narrow, winding road follows the coast and there are three car parks providing access to the coast and other places of interest such as Old Torry Battery and Girdle Ness Lighthouse. The North Sea Trail generally follows the tops of the cliffs and provides good access along the coastline. Aberdeen Harbour expansion (Opportunity Site OP62) extends across the coastline of the bay.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As illustrated in figure G-2, the mouth of the River Dee is designated a Special Area of Conservation. Much of the rocky coastline is designated a Local Nature Conservation Site. The glacial deposits exposed in the cliff section to the south-east of the Bay of Nigg are a Site of Special Scientific Interest.</li> <li>ii. Torry Battery and the ruined St Fittick’s Church, with its surrounding graveyard, are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Girdle Ness Lighthouse is a Listed Building.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Open Space Audit (2010) shows almost the entire unit as Open Space of varying types (see figure G-3).</li> <li>ii. Balnagask public golf course extends across the open headland and to its east, Walker Park is identified as Playspace. Much of the accessible coastline is identified as Foreshore/Rocks (a relatively rare Open Space type in Aberdeen) and Open Semi-Natural space.</li> <li>iii. To the west of Greyhope Road, much of the area is designated Public Park and Garden, with Playing Fields located next to Tullos School. Along the</li> </ul>

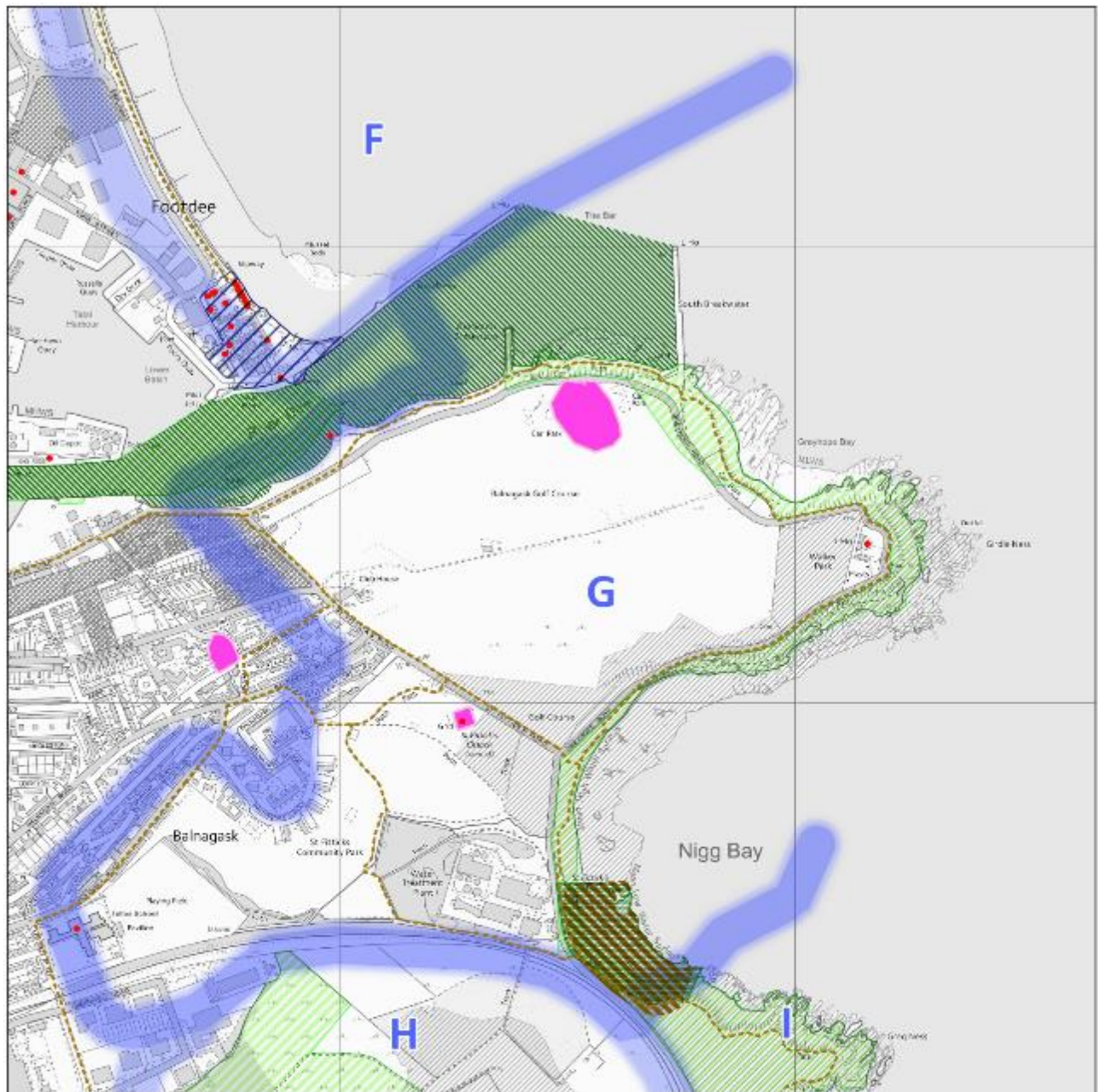
Unit G	
	<p>edge of Balnagask there are pockets of Residential Amenity Open Space and Allotments near the harbour.</p> <p>iv. Apart from the coastal edge around the Bay of Nigg, the entire unit is designated Green Space Network. This extends across adjacent peri-urban units, demonstrating the importance and value of these wildlife, access and recreation links along the coast.</p>
d) Experience	<p>i. The sounds of many seabirds and the crashing of waves along the coast contribute to a strong experience of nature, particularly at the windswept headland.</p> <p>ii. Along the urban edge, busy roads and other activity and the backdrop of prominent tower blocks at Balnagask contrast with the undeveloped coastal experience provided by the rest of the unit.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<p>i. Along St Fittick's Road, the settlement edge towards the existing harbour consists of several mid-20th century low rise light industrial buildings of varying colours and styles. To the south of these, there is an irregular pattern of several well-spaced 1970s three-four storey residential tower blocks.</p> <p>ii. In Balnagask, three prominent tower blocks rise above an irregular pattern of well-spaced 1970s three-four storey residential tower blocks, and semi-detached houses on ground that slopes south to the Tullos Burn.</p> <p>iii. In the south-west corner of the unit, south of the railway line, several large industrial buildings within Tullos Estate form the urban edge.</p>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<p>i. The most prominent building within the unit is Girdle Ness Lighthouse, with several large communications masts nearby. It forms an important landmark on the exposed headland. Torry Point Battery is locally prominent above the existing harbour entrance.</p> <p>ii. Along the mostly undeveloped coastline, the South Breakwater and Lighthouse, a derelict salmon netting station and a foghorn are distinctive built features. Inland, the ruined St Fittick's Church overlooks the bay, and is a notable feature in local views.</p> <p>iii. Along the urban edge, several tower blocks are prominent on rising ground and further to the south, a water treatment works and industrial development contrast with the undeveloped backdrop of Tullos Hill.</p>

Unit G	
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To the north of the unit, offices (including Marine Scotland laboratory buildings) and some light industrial units bounded by a low stone wall with piecemeal wire fences, form an intermittently hard urban edge along St Fittick’s Road. Further south, three-four storey residential tower blocks also form a hard urban edge against the open road.</li> <li>ii. Along the edge of Balnagask, the irregular composition of apartment blocks forms abrupt hard edges which contrast with the surrounding open space. In a few places, this is softened by amenity trees and some recent woodland planting.</li> <li>iii. Tullos School adjoins open playing fields. Along the edge of Tullos Industrial Estate, an informal line of trees and scrub follows the railway line, but views to the industrial estate and houses beyond are generally uninterrupted.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The exposed headland is characteristically very open with uninterrupted and panoramic seaward views. In contrast, seaward views from the Bay of Nigg are framed by the headlands of Girdle Ness and Greg Ness.</li> <li>ii. Inland, the north-facing slopes of Tullos to the south of the unit and rising ground to the north contain views from the low ground inland of the Bay of Nigg.</li> <li>iii. The sense of natural containment is reinforced by the elevated residential development of Balnagask.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From northern parts of the headland, the main harbour forms the foreground to extensive views of the city. From some parts of the coastal edge there is a stronger sense of detachment from the city with little or no part of the urban area visible.</li> <li>ii. From lower-lying areas inland of the Bay of Nigg, there is little apparent continuity with much of the wider urban area, although some larger buildings including offices, are visible in the backdrop.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Nearly the entire unit is designated as Open Space, and it thus provides an important recreational resource to the city. There are a wide range of formal and informal activities including cultural attractions, golf, walking, cycling and wildlife watching and sea fishing.</li> <li>ii. Several car parks provide access to the coast and other attractions such as Old Torry Battery and Girdle Ness Lighthouse. There are several</li> </ul>

Unit G	
	<p>benches along the coast from where the expansive sea views can be best enjoyed.</p> <p>iii. There are several sport pitches and playing fields associated with Tullos School and St Fittick’s Community Park and associated playground is used by local residents.</p>
<p>b) Recreational and active travel routes and links</p>	<p>i. There is a network of well-connected Core Paths across the unit with good links to the city and the adjacent coast.</p> <p>ii. Core Path 78, which forms part of the North Sea Trail, leads from Victoria Bridge (outside this unit) and around the headland and the Bay of Nigg, and then south along the coast towards Cove. Core Path 104 follows St Fittick’s Road and connects at either end with the coastal path. Core Path 108 leads through St Fittick’s Park, connecting with Core Path 104. Core Path 103 also leads west from St Fittick’s Road through Balnagask and along the urban edge to Tullos School, then south through the nearby industrial estate (see figure G-2).</p> <p>iii. National Cycle Network Route 1 leads south from the city and follows Greyhope Road around the headland, and then along the coast road towards Cove. It uses the coast road, which is particularly busy with vehicle traffic between the harbour / Balnagask and Altens industrial estate.</p>
4 Views	
<p>a) Key views to peri-urban unit</p>	<p>i. From the north, the headland and associated lighthouse is prominent in views from the nearby harbour and across Aberdeen Bay and beyond. From the south, there are open views across much of the unit from the nearby Tullos Hill.</p> <p>ii. The unit is generally visible only from adjacent areas of residential development, the coast road, railway line and the sea, although higher parts of the headland and Tullos Hill are widely visible.</p>
<p>b) Key views from peri-urban unit</p>	<p>i. Looking east from the headland, there are long-range uninterrupted panoramic views across the North Sea towards the distant horizon. From the northern shoreline, views are channelled towards Aberdeen Harbour while, to the south, there are short range views across Bay of Nigg.</p> <p>ii. From lower-lying parts, there are uninterrupted views seaward, framed by the bay’s headlands. To the north and south, views are curtailed by nearby rising ground and from the coast, there are short to medium-range views towards the urban edge of Balnagask.</p>

Unit G	
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The open headland forms an important rising backdrop to the harbour entrance, Aberdeen beach/esplanade and nearby urban areas.</li> <li>ii. The lower-lying floodplain provides an open foreground to the eastern edge of Balnagask.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The prominent headland at the entrance to the harbour is an important feature for those travelling into and out of the city by ferry, rail and road.</li> <li>ii. When arriving by rail or travelling along the coast road from the south, there is a sudden gateway transition at Balnagask from open coastal landscape to the busy city centre. The harbour entrance also marks the gateway into the city when arriving by boat.</li> </ul>
c) Separation Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The open space of St Fittick's Community Park separates Tullos Industrial estate and residential development at Balnagask.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Road infrastructure, such as signage and car park surfaces, is often in a poor state of repair.</li> <li>ii. Fences alongside roads and footpaths are often broken or in need of replacement.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The golf course and football pitches are well managed and maintained.</li> <li>ii. The management of Old Torry Battery appears to underutilise its full potential as a visitor attraction.</li> <li>iii. Some amenity grass areas near to the urban edge appear to be infrequently maintained.</li> </ul>

Figure G-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Conservation Site
- Geological Conservation Review Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

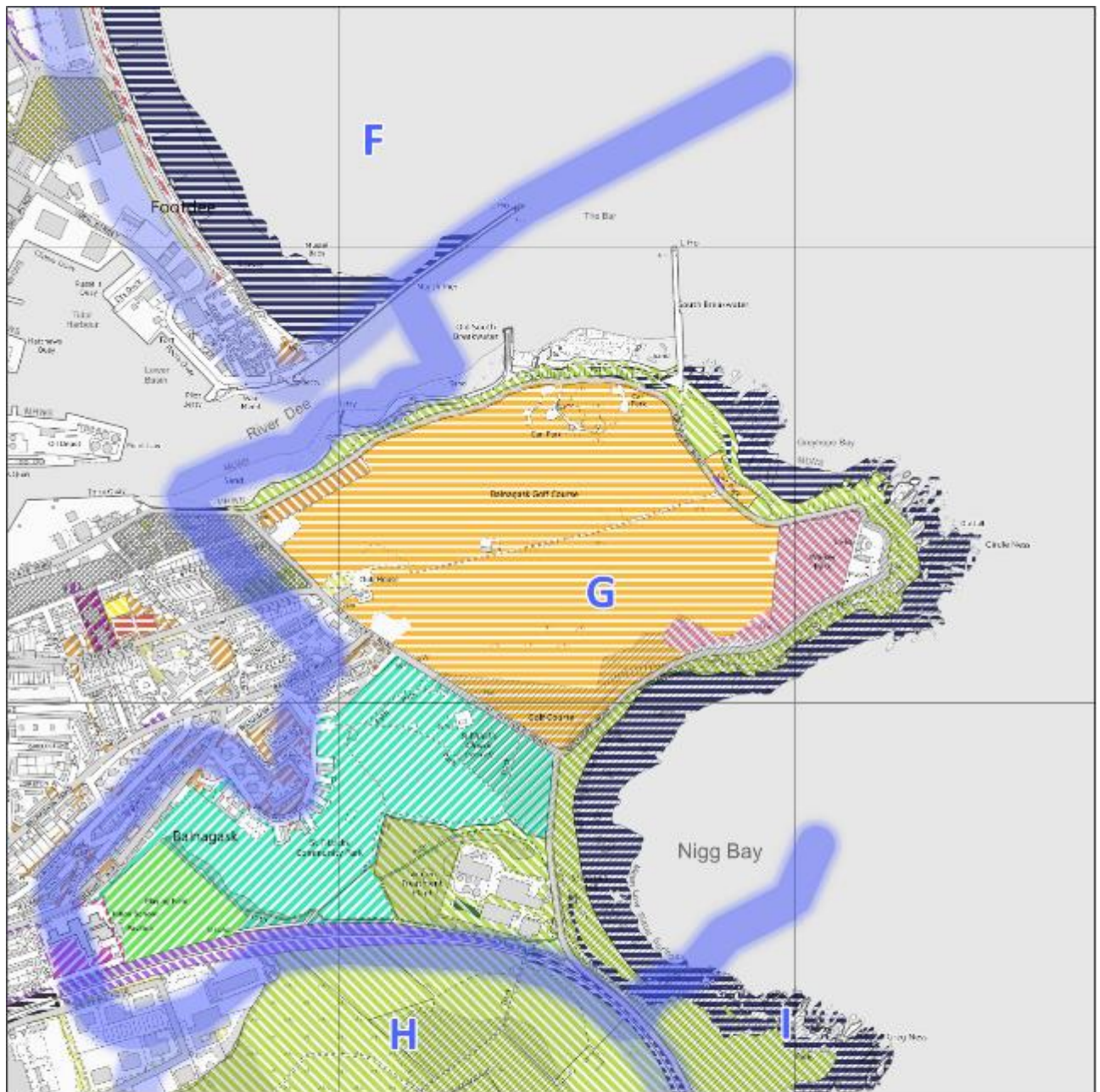
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure G-3: Open Space



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



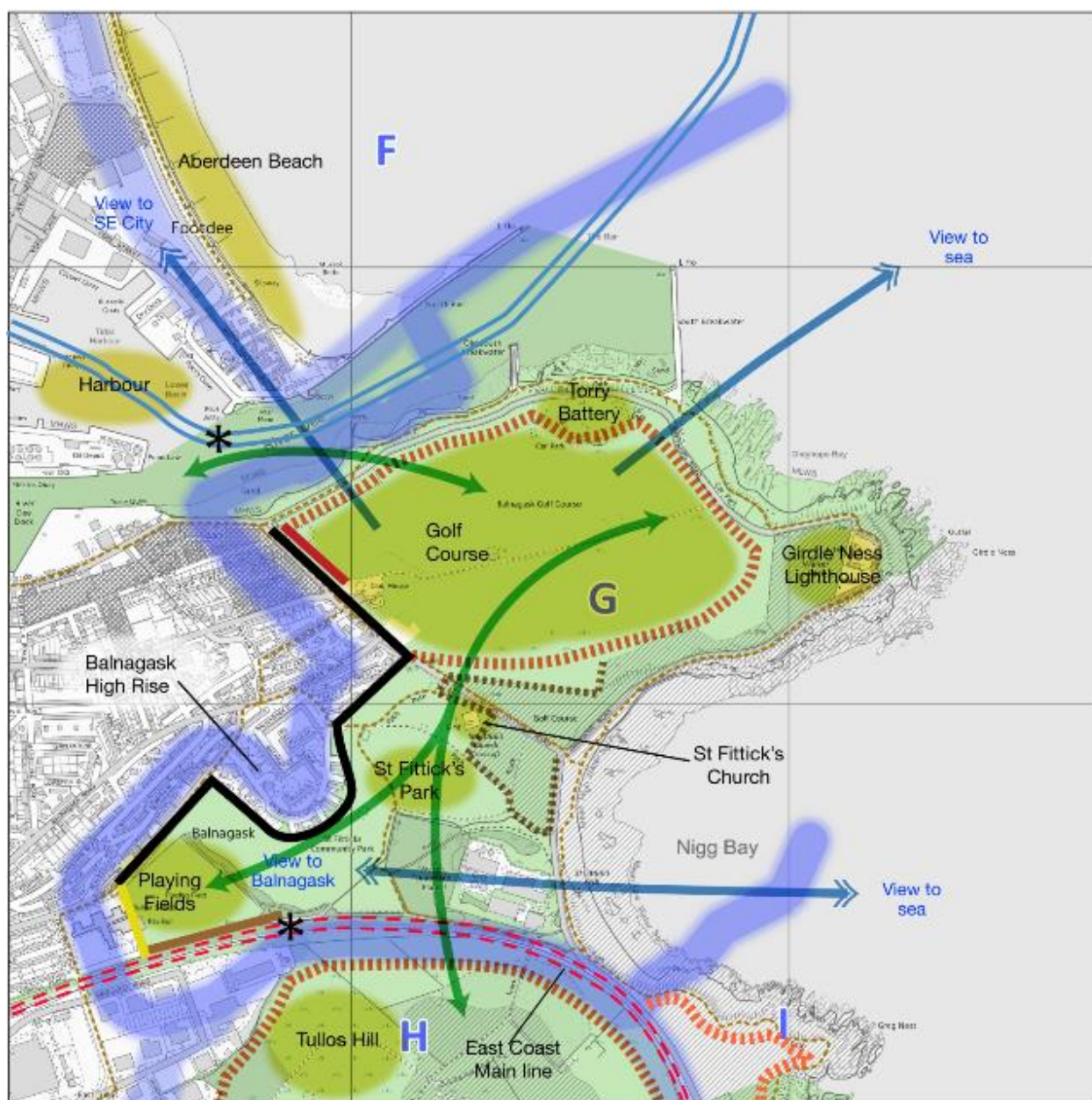
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Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Open Space Audit 2010

- |                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Allotment              | Open Water                  |
| Amenity- Business      | Other Functional Greenspace |
| Amenity- Residential   | Parking / Loading           |
| Amenity- Transport     | Playing Fields              |
| Area Undergoing Change | Playspace                   |
| Bowling Greens         | Public Park and Garden      |
| Foreshore/ Rocks       | Railway                     |
| Golf Courses           | School Grounds              |
| Open Semi-Natural      | Tennis Courts               |
|                        | Woodland                    |

Figure G-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway



## Photographic study



Looking west towards Balnagask



Looking north towards the city



St Fittick's Church



Towards Tullos Hill



Looking across Girdle Ness headland from Tullos Hill



St Fittick's Park



Edge of industrial units near the harbour



Edge of Balnagask

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA and CCA.

- a) *Safeguard the distinctive 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 habitats such as beach and cliff habitats, coastal and neutral grassland, wetland, broadleaved woodland and pockets of gorse scrub. Across the golf course, encourage the management and enhancement of rough grassland habitats for wildlife.*
- c) *Retain the remaining areas of distinctive open and undeveloped coastal character.*
- d) *Any new tree planting should be located near the built up inland edge where it could help to soften hard urban edges.* Planting in open coastal areas is discouraged as this would erode the distinctive open character and affect views. The open slopes of the immediate coastal hinterland and area around St Fittick's Church should be kept open to maintain the setting of St Fittick's Church and the visual connection between St Fittick's Park and the headland at Girdle Ness.
- e) Retain and manage the existing woodland and tree planting to mitigate the impact of new and existing coastal development, such as the harbour and waste water treatment works.
- f) *Improve the provision and management of visitor and recreational infrastructure such as seating, interpretation and footpath signage, car parking and the condition of roadside fencing.* In accommodating future harbour development, ensure the design and management of fencing, lighting, traffic and other infrastructure takes account of the undeveloped setting and nearby residential areas.
- g) *Consider traffic management of the headland road, and opportunities for cycle lane provision.*
- h) Avoid the introduction of intrusive visitor facilities.
- i) *Improve the visitor experience at the Old Torry Battery.*
- j) *Explore opportunities to provide appropriately designed informal recreational path access to the stony shore to the north of Greyhope Road, provided this would not disturb wildlife.*
- k) Ensure that connectivity is maintained through the Green Space Network to accommodate green corridors for informal recreation and wildlife, to connect urban communities with the headland, and reinforce the existing character of the landscape.
- l) *Maintain the uninterrupted panoramic views across the North Sea and to the nearby harbour, city and beach.*

## Overview of unit



Looking north-east from the summit of Tullos Hill

This is an exposed unit of high ground, bounded by industrial estates to the north, south and west and by the East Coast Mainline railway to the east. Tullos Hill provides an important undeveloped backdrop in views from most parts of the city and is very prominent in views from the north-east. It has a predominantly open character and provides panoramic views east towards the sea, north-west to the city and longer views to the west. Views from lower lying areas are generally restricted by the surrounding development or woodland.

Much of the unit is semi-natural open space, designated as a country park and available for informal recreation. Most of the unit, including Doonies Rare Breeds Farm, forms part of the Green Space Network, which extends along the coast and provides an extensive undeveloped setting for this unit, reinforcing its relationship with the sea. The northern part is also defined as a Local Nature Conservation Site, which continues along the coast within unit I towards Bay of Nigg.

Physical connections with the urban areas to the north and south are generally limited, but a Core Path links northwards along Greenbank Crescent and west across the A956 towards Kincorth. To the east, the railway line and coast road restrict access although there is a bridge over the railway close to Doonies Farm which connects with the North Sea Trail.

This unit separate Tullos and Altens industrial estates. It has a strong gateway function, being visible from the coast road and from sea-based approaches to the harbour.

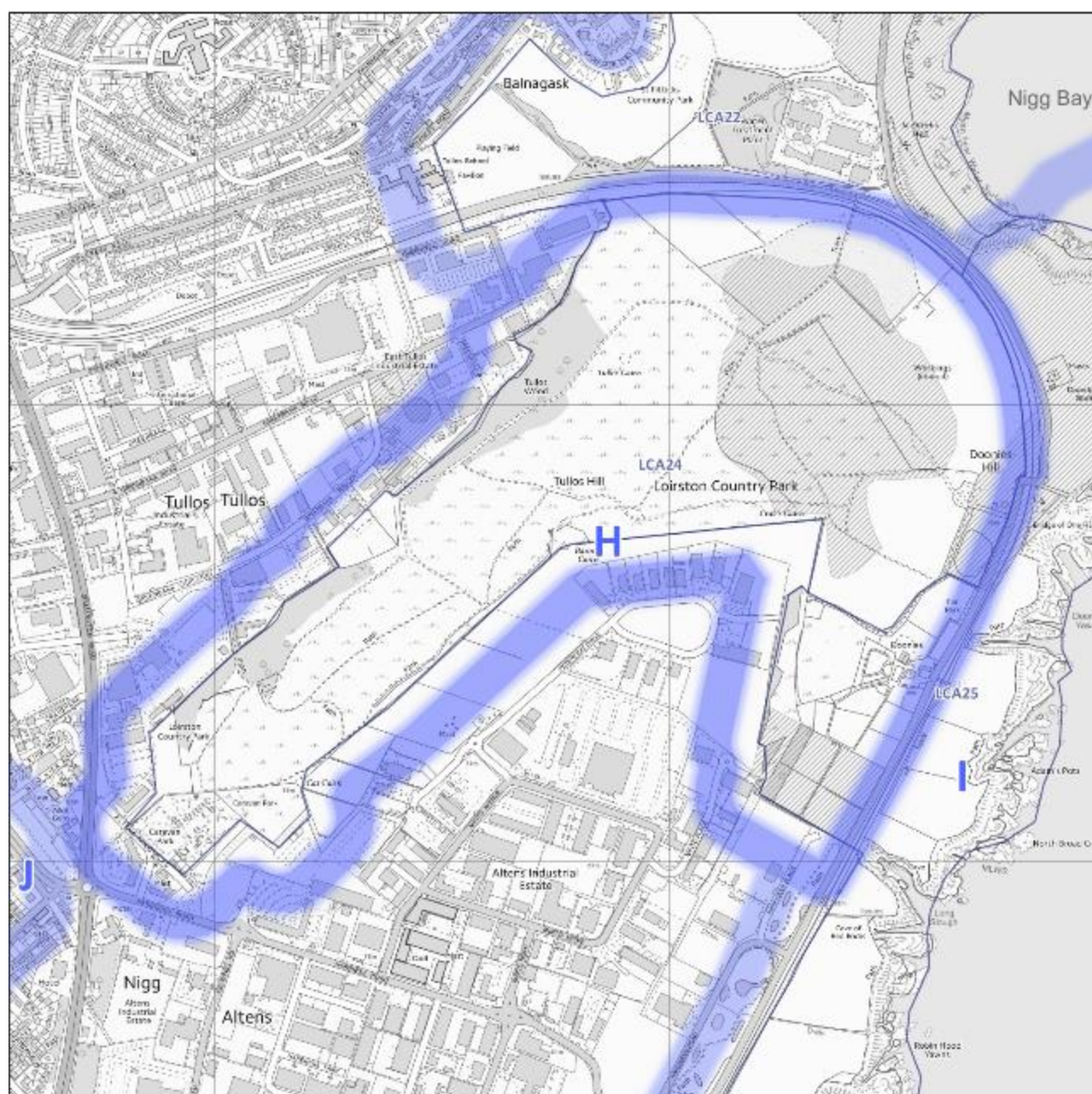
### **Location and landscape context**

This unit includes all of the *Tullos Hill* Landscape Character Area (LCA 24) and a small part of the *Souter Coast* Landscape Character Area (LCA 25).

Peri-urban unit G lies adjacent to the north and unit I to the east, both separated by the main railway line. The proximity of, and degree of contrast between, the open space of Tullos Hill and the surrounding densely developed urban edge sets this unit apart from unit I, where urban influences are lower and the coastal experience much stronger. By comparison, unit G has a more fragmented urban edge and a more direct connection to the coast.

This is an exposed landscape of high ground, bounded to the north, south and west by industrial estates and business parks. The sea lies to the east, beyond units G and I.

Figure H-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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## Analysis

Unit H	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Tullos Hill forms an undulating ridge of open ground, elevated above the surrounding parts of the city.</li> <li>ii. Most of the unit comprises extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation. This includes broadleaved woodland, rough grassland, scrub woodland, wet and dry heath and bracken.</li> <li>iii. The northern slopes of the ridge are well-wooded and some recent planting of mixed woodlands has been undertaken nearer the summit, towards the eastern end of the ridge.</li> <li>iv. Land uses include Loirston Country Park, which occupies much of Tullos Hill and is well-used for information recreation, Doonies Rare Breeds Farms, which lies to the south of the country park, and a partly restored landfill site within the north-eastern part of the unit. There are a few small fields adjacent to the northern edge of Altens Industrial Estate which contain unmanaged vegetation.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The northern area is designated as a Local Nature Conservation Site, as illustrated in figure H-2.</li> <li>ii. There are five Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the unit, including four prehistoric burial cairns and a post-medieval consumption dyke.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Much of the unit is Semi-Natural Open Space (see figure H-3), which is available for informal recreation and designated as a country park, although the former landfill site beside the coast road and a pipeline along the boundary with Altens Industrial Estate are fenced off with no public access. Most of the unit, including Doonies Farm, a publicly owned rare breeds farm and visitor attraction, forms part of the Green Space Network.</li> <li>ii. Although there are visual links between Doonies Farm and farmland within the adjacent unit I; the railway line and coast road restrict physical links between these areas.</li> <li>iii. Physical connections with the urban areas to the north and south are generally limited, but Core Path 103 crosses the western end of the unit, connecting Balnagask to the north and Kincorth to the west. To the east, a footpath between Doonies Farm and the landfill site provides access from a car park on the coastal road, just north of the farm. Otherwise the boundaries of the unit are fenced, preventing access.</li> <li>iv. The Local Nature Conservation Site continues along the coast within unit I towards Bay of Nigg. The Green Space Network continues north to Aberdeen</li> </ul>

Unit H	
	Harbour and south to the city boundary, providing an extensive undeveloped setting for this unit and reinforcing the relationship with the sea.
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The ridge of Tullos Hill has a sense of relative seclusion within the wooded lower northern slopes, but allows expansive views to the coast and sea. The diversity of vegetation contributes to a sense of naturalness and the many archaeological features give a sense of time depth.</li> <li>ii. A profusion of metal palisade fencing, the smell of the partly restored landfill site, noise from the surrounding industrial units and the sound of traffic on the coast road and other routes detract from the relatively rural character and the recreational experience.</li> </ul>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The settlement edge to the north, south and west is largely composed of widely spaced, late 20th century and more recent, large scale business and industrial units, their service yards next to the hill, surrounded by security fencing. Included amongst these is a civic amenity site on Greenbank Crescent, but is not distinguishable from the other buildings.</li> <li>ii. To the west, the car parks of some large, new, low-rise business units back directly onto the unit.</li> </ul>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The urban edge includes several large structures of similar design and scale. A blue chimney stack provides a more distinctive element within an industrial unit to the north and a transmitter mast is prominent amongst the spoil heaps to the south.</li> <li>ii. Distinctive buildings include Nigg Parish Church to the west of the unit.</li> <li>iii. The archaeological structures within the unit are highly distinctive, especially the large consumption dyke beside Cat Cairn.</li> </ul>
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Widely spaced, late 20th century, large scale industrial units to the north are surrounded by a mix of metal palisade and wire mesh security fencing. Along much of this edge, the fencing, yards and buildings are screened from view by scrub or woodland, but there are more open areas where views are possible.</li> <li>ii. At the western end of the unit, the business units are set amongst existing mature trees with some new planting. These are enclosed by post and wire and wire mesh fencing. The natural landform and some recent ground modelling here combine with the vegetation to screen the units from lower-lying areas.</li> <li>iii. The southern settlement edge is mostly formed by the service yards of widely spaced, late 20th century and more recent large-scale industrial units. At the eastern end these abut the hill and the metal palisade and wire mesh security</li> </ul>

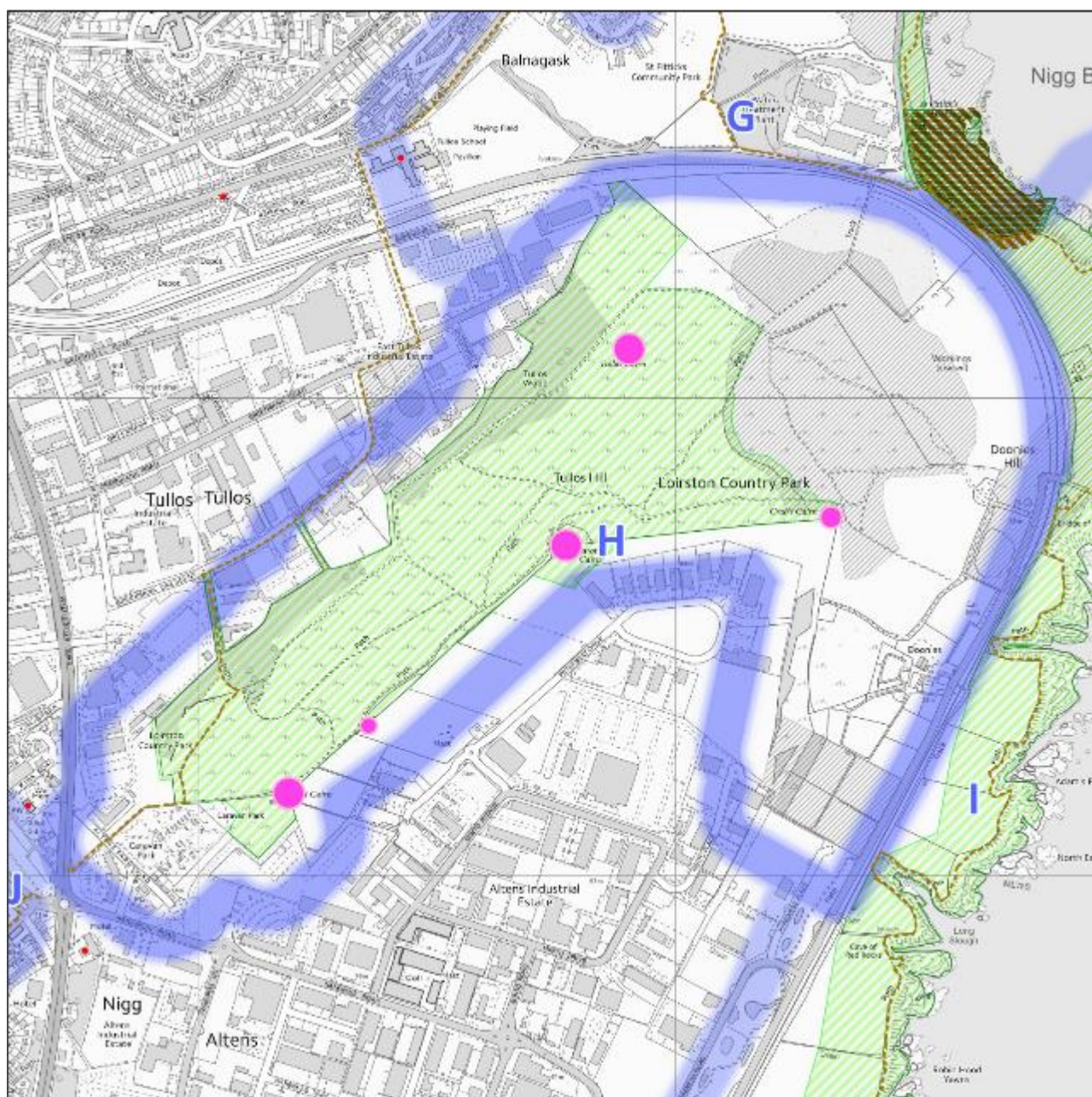
Unit H	
	<p>fences present an abrupt edge, with no screening of the buildings beyond. Further west the buildings are set back, with an area of rough ground adjacent to the unit. The rough ground is surrounded by a mix of post and wire and wire mesh security fencing and contains many low spoil heaps and a transmitter mast. Apart from some trees recently planted along Peterseat Drive the waste ground is open, although the spoil heaps provide some limited screening of the buildings. West of this the industrial units abut three fields that are enclosed by stone dykes. The wire mesh security fencing that surrounds the industrial units is partly screened by scrub vegetation and mixed woodland belts around the fields, but the buildings are clearly visible, presenting an abrupt urban edge.</p>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The top of Tullos Hill is predominantly open although lower slopes are partly contained by scrub and woodland along the steeply sloping northern edge.</li> <li>ii. To the south, the edge of the unit is generally more open, with few trees to provide screening of the large-scale buildings. Numerous spoil heaps provide some screening of the industrial units, when viewed from the lower parts of the unit.</li> <li>iii. At the western end of the unit existing mature trees with some new planting, the natural landform and some recent ground modelling combine to provide effective containment from lower areas.</li> <li>iv. The unit is open to the east, with wide sea views.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The large-scale urban development surrounding the unit generally allows little sense of the wider urban area from lower-lying areas. Where there are gaps along the northern perimeter, there are strong visual links to the city, beyond the industrial yards in the foreground.</li> <li>ii. From the upper parts of the hill there are panoramic views towards the city, although the elevation of the viewpoint and intervening woodland along the northern edge of the unit provide a sense of detachment from the city below.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is widespread informal use of the hill (walking, jogging, and cycling), which is evident from the numerous, well-worn paths. Doonies Rare Breeds Farm is a widely promoted visitor attraction with various facilities including a car park and picnic site.</li> <li>ii. Much of the undeveloped area is used as open space for recreation but the landfill site to the east is fenced off.</li> <li>iii. Core Paths are well signed, and there are several benches and interpretation boards at entrances to the open space and beside archaeological features.</li> </ul>



Unit H	
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<p>i. A well-signed Core Path (CP103) crosses the western end of the unit, connecting Kincorth Hill to the west (unit J) with Balnagask to the north (unit G). Numerous other informal routes cross the open areas of the hill. A public car park is located north of Doonies Farm, where a path provides access west to Tullos Hill. To the east, across the coastal road, a bridge over the East Coast Main Line railway provides access to the North Sea Trail.</p>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. Although relatively low in elevation (83m AOD at the summit), Tullos Hill is visible from much of the city. It is particularly prominent in views from the north-east, such as Balnagask and Aberdeen beach, and from more elevated areas to the north and west, including Kingshill, Brimmond and Tyrebagger Hills.</p> <p>ii. It is also visible from the East Coast Main Line railway and from the sea, but less evident in views from the south due to the scale and extent of development on its south-eastern slopes.</p>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<p>i. From the summit of the hill there are panoramic views of the city to the north-west and longer views to the west. From the lower slopes, these views are curtailed by woodland along the northern and western periphery, although there are framed views from more open areas within the unit.</p> <p>ii. Sea views are a characteristic feature, particularly from the open, eastern parts of the unit. Girdle Ness lighthouse forms a landmark to the north. There is frequent ship and ferry traffic to and from Aberdeen harbour and vessels are almost always present out to sea.</p> <p>iii. Views to the south are generally curtailed by the large-scale buildings within Altens industrial estate.</p>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<p>i. Tullos Hill provides an important backdrop in views from most parts of the city. Although part of a long low ridge, which extends from the coast to the A92, it is perceived as a distinct hill.</p>
b) Gateway function	<p>i. This unit has quite a strong gateway function.</p>
c) Separation function	<p>i. The unit separates Tullos and Altens industrial estates.</p>
6 Condition and management	

Unit H	
<p>a) Condition of landscape features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Tullos Hill has been significantly modified by former landfill development, evident from the smooth profiles and sparse grass cover, gas vents over a wide area and a buried pipeline surrounded by metal palisade near the southern boundary. The north-west facing slopes are steeper and appear less disturbed.</li> <li>ii. There is a wide variety of fencing types within the unit and the sections of metal palisade fencing adjacent to the industrial units, landfill site and pipeline are particularly noticeable.</li> <li>iii. Footpaths are generally well-maintained and in good condition, although there is some erosion of steeper sections.</li> <li>iv. Some of the stone dykes surrounding the rectangular fields are in poor condition and are supplemented by post and wire fences in places.</li> <li>v. Some of the woodland belts within the north of the unit are even-aged.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Degree of management evident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Management of the areas of semi-natural vegetation is typically low-key. There are some areas of new tree planting on the northern slopes and to the west of the landfill site on the ridge.</li> <li>ii. The small pastures to the south-west show signs of underuse, with rank vegetation. In contrast, the pastures to the south-east, including Doonies Farm, are actively grazed.</li> </ul>

Figure H-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Conservation Site
- Geological Conservation Review Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure H-3: Open Space



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment

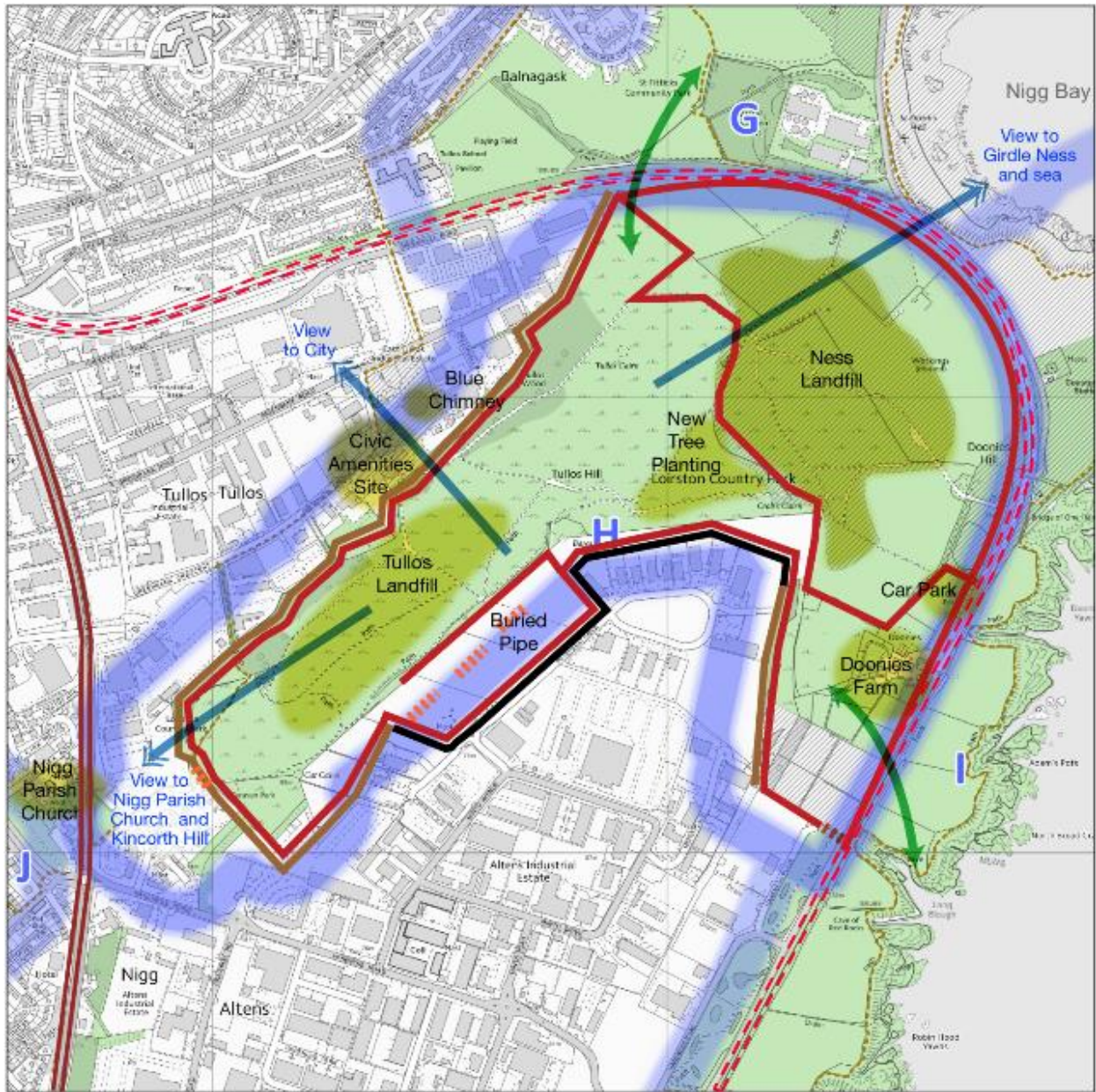


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- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Peri Urban Unit boundary | Open Water             |
| Allotment                | Parking / Loading      |
| Amenity - Business       | Playing Fields         |
| Amenity - Residential    | Public Park and Garden |
| Amenity - Transport      | Railway                |
| Foreshore/ Rocks         | School Grounds         |
| Institutional Grounds    | Woodland               |
| Open Semi-Natural        |                        |

Figure H-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Looking north-west from northern slopes



Beech belt along the northern boundary



View west towards Nigg Parish Church



Interpretation panel and pedestrian access to Baron's Cairn



View north from summit cairn



Fenced pipeline and industrial units beyond to the south



View south-east to consumption dyke and industrial units



New planting to west of landfill site

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance the 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 and important views of the city and sea. 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. Management of existing and future vegetation should retain and frame important views.*
- c) *Maintain the undeveloped and semi-natural character of the area. The hill summit area forms the skyline in views from many parts of the city and this natural backdrop should be retained.*
- d) Sensitively located and designed woodland and hedgerow planting along the unit boundaries would help to screen industrial development and break up the abrupt urban edge. Key areas to consider are the southern and the northern boundaries.
- e) Improve the condition of the urban edge by removing any redundant fencing and softening utilitarian fences with planting where possible.
- f) *Improve the management, access to, and interpretation of important prehistoric burial cairns and the post-medieval consumption dyke.*
- g) Carry out environmental improvements to the landfill site, reducing the visual impacts of gas vents and enhancing habitats, and remove fencing to improve the access from the east.
- h) In any future management plans or agri-environment incentives, consider biodiversity enhancement, such as grazing within the fields to the south-west and on the open areas of the hill.
- i) Repair and enhance stone dykes.
- o) Improve linkages with adjoining areas of Green Space Network, for example by providing path links and reducing fencing where possible.
- p) *Maintain the sense of tranquillity experienced across the area, taking account of this in proposals for development in surrounding areas, and on the future use of the unit.*

## Overview of unit



Looking south along the railway towards Cove

The unit generally exhibits a strong urban to rural/coastal contrast. With the influence of a busy minor coast road, the area to the west of the railway line forms a transition from the linear urban edge to open coastal farmland that slopes gently towards a coastline of striking geological features. For parts of the unit the road and railway provide an important separation function between the urban edge and the prevailing undeveloped coastal strip.

From the road and nearby urban areas, the coastal farmland provides an important undeveloped open foreground to the expanse of the North Sea. The coastal strip is also particularly important for nature conservation and informal recreation. This is reinforced by the Green Space Network, which extends across most of the unit and continues into nearby urban areas to the west and north into peri-urban unit G, the Balnagask to Cove Local Nature Conservation Site which extends along the entire east side of the coastal strip, and Cove Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Although parts of the western settlement edge are well contained by landform and/or woodland, some large industrial units towards the north of the unit are prominent on the skyline. To the south of the unit, the distinctive settlement of Cove Bay slopes down to a small harbour and in contrast to other



parts of the unit, development extends east of the railway line. The open pastures that slope down towards the coast provide an important undeveloped setting to Cove Bay Conservation Area. To the south of Cove Bay, the coastal strip that extends into Aberdeenshire retains a mainly rural character although the landform and infrastructure of Blackhill Quarry are prominent on the skyline.

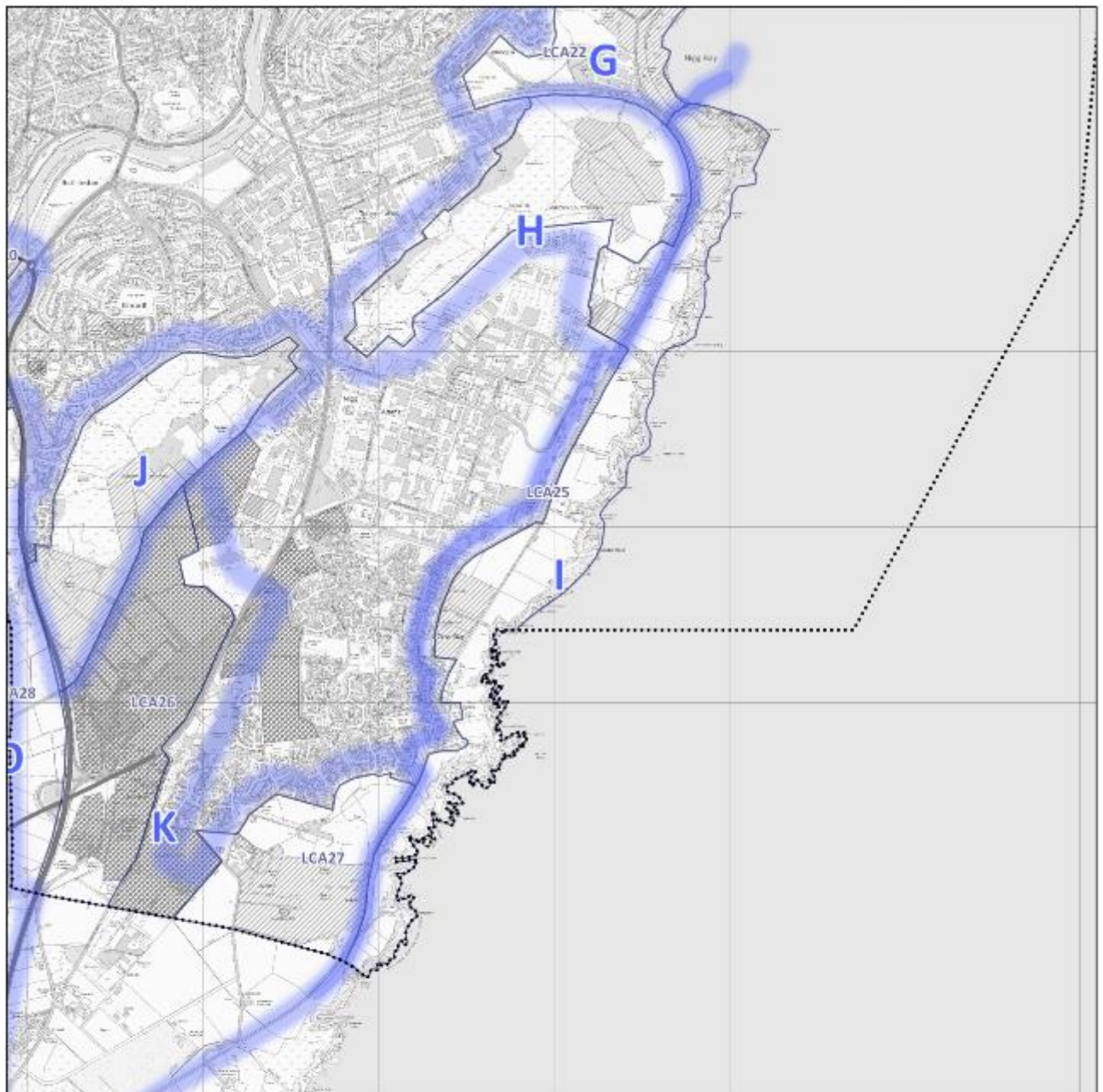
### **Location and landscape context**

The *Souter Coast* Landscape Character Area (LCA 25) forms nearly the entire unit although a small part beside the coast road near to *Tullos Hill* (LCA 24) is excluded (see figure I-1).

The unit reflects the strong relationship of the mainly linear urban edge and the East Coast Main Line railway, which isolates the swathe of open coastal farmland and dramatic coastline of rocky cliffs. The mainly undeveloped and open coastal nature of the unit contrasts with unit K which lies to the west of the railway and which is heavily influenced by main roads and development within the unit. Unit H lies to the north-west and is partly bounded by extensive industrial areas with, to the east and north, open green spaces which link to Unit I.

With expansive views across the North Sea, the unit is shaped by a strong pattern of rectilinear fields that slope gently towards the rugged cliffs. To the north of the unit, the coast road and railway separate the southern edge of Tullos Industrial Estate from the lower-lying open pastures. Further to the south, development at Cove extends east of the railway, and includes a traditional fishing village and harbour. To the south of Cove, the coastal strip extends into Aberdeenshire.

Figure I-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

## Analysis

Unit I	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The landform of the unit consists of a narrow strip of open, gently undulating farmland which slopes gradually towards the coastline. The coastal edge consists of dramatic, rocky and rugged cliffs, with striking geological features. Most of the coastal edge has a very strong natural form and is undeveloped.</li> <li>ii. The main landcover is pastoral, rectilinear fields running perpendicular to the cliff tops, enclosed by dry stone dykes and post and wire fences. The area generally has no woodland or notable trees, other than occasional trees associated with settlement. Semi-natural coastal grassland and heath vegetation extends along the cliff tops.</li> <li>iii. Land use is mainly agriculture and a coastal path that leads along the cliff tops provides recreational access. There is also some limited fishing at Burnbanks and Cove Bay. A residential development site (Opportunity Site OP58) is within the unit, on the eastern edge of Cove Bay. Part of the Aberdeen Harbour expansion (Opportunity Site OP62) also extends into the unit.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Cove Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest is important for cliff and coastal habitats. The sloping cliffs are designated a Local Nature Conservation Site for their conservation interest including coastal and neutral grassland with pockets of gorse scrub (see figure I-2).</li> <li>ii. Cove Bay harbour, village and the surrounding undeveloped coast are designated as a Conservation Area, which also contains several Listed Buildings.</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In general, the pattern of Open Space (see figure I-3) is relatively limited and is fragmented apart from the coastal edge.</li> <li>ii. A narrow section of coastline along most of seaward boundary of the unit is identified as Foreshore/Rocks – one of few such Open Spaces of this type in Aberdeen. Open Semi-Natural space along the coastal farmland is limited to a small area around a coastguard station near the boundary with unit G and another area south of Cove Bay. Small blocks of Woodland Open Space also lie within the urban edge.</li> <li>iii. Apart from a small development site on the edge of Cove Bay, the entire unit is designated as Green Space Network and provides an important coastal link between the fragmented open spaces, Bay of Nigg, Tullos Hill, Cove Bay and beyond. The Network extends across adjacent peri-urban units and demonstrates the importance and value of wildlife, access and recreation along the coast.</li> </ul>

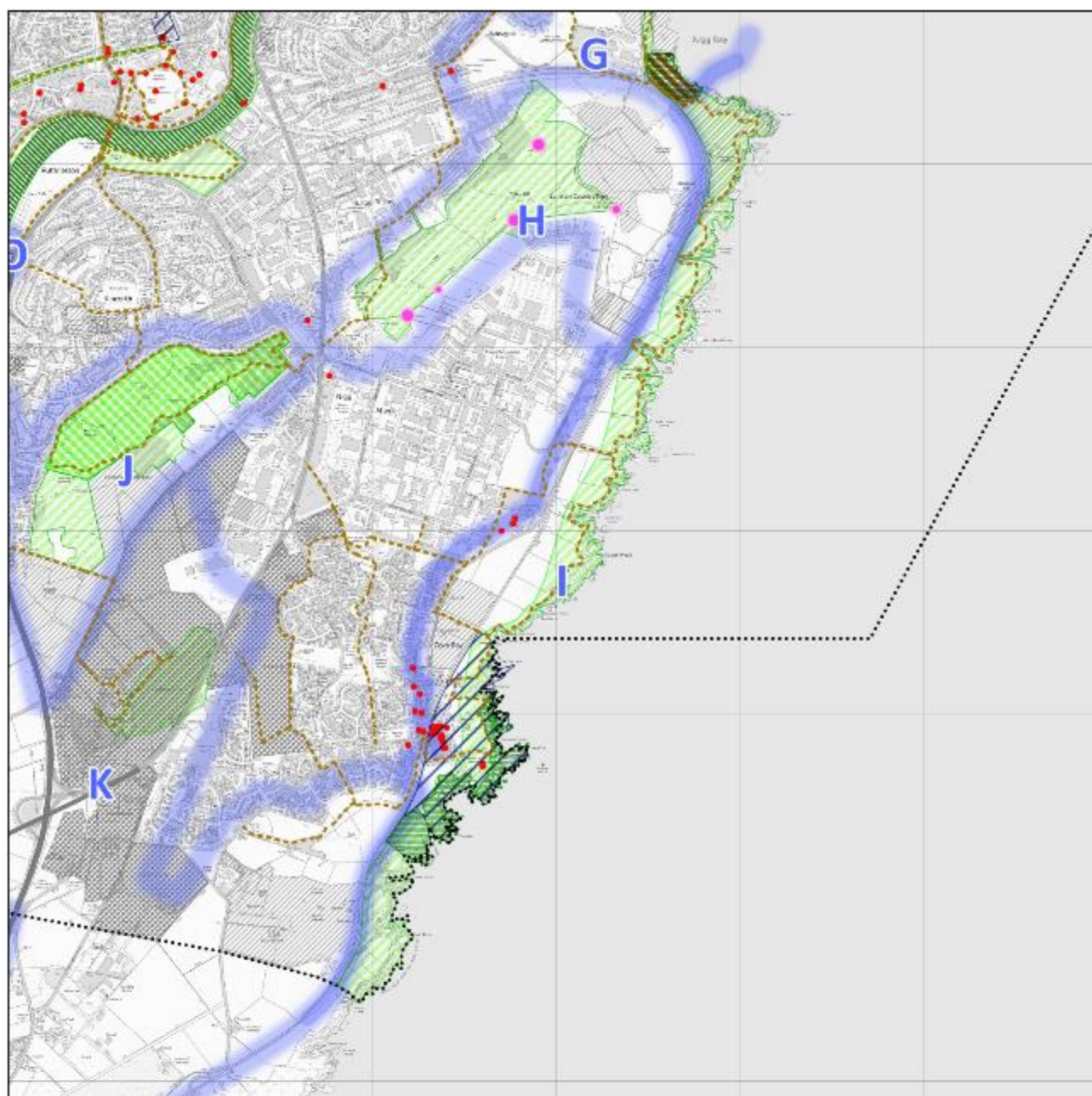
Unit I	
	<p>iv. Green Space Network connections with the urban area to the west are limited to a small linear route to the south of Altens industrial estate and another to the south of Cove.</p>
d) Experience	<p>i. The large buildings at Altens industrial estate along the north-western boundary contrast with the mainly undeveloped nature of adjacent open farmland.</p> <p>ii. Along the coastline, the unit has a very natural and undeveloped character with a strong sense of exposure to the elements. Crashing waves and surges contribute to the sense of wildness and drama.</p> <p>iii. Marine wildlife including sea birds and cetaceans can be observed from the coastal path, which contributes to enjoyment of the natural environment.</p> <p>iv. Noise from traffic along the coast road and activity at nearby industrial areas is noticeable from much of the unit.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<p>i. In general, the northern part of the urban edge is formed by large scale industrial units while the southern part of the edge contains a diverse mix and pattern of largely residential development along the eastern edge of Cove Bay.</p> <p>ii. Towards the northern end of the unit, there is linear pattern of large evenly spaced industrial units of varying colours and styles. These are mostly set back from the western side of the coast road although several units to south of Doonies Farm have recently been constructed further east towards the coast road and adjacent railway line.</p> <p>iii. On the southern edge of Altens industrial estate, Burnbanks Village forms a small clustered pattern of bungalows set around a village green.</p> <p>iv. Further south, development along the eastern edge of Cove consists of a fragmented pattern of mid-late 20th century housing estates. At the northern end there are series of staggered two storey terraced houses set back from the railway line.</p> <p>v. To the north of Coast Road / Falkland Avenue, there is an area of large 20th century detached houses of various designs and orientation. To the south of the walled football club, several two storey terraced houses lead towards the railway line.</p> <p>vi. On lower ground to the east of the railway line, there are several scattered dwellings of various styles and ages and two rows of mid-late 20th century cottages. To the east of these, several very large glasshouses extend towards the coast with a series of staggered two storey mid-late 20th terraced houses to the south. Along the southern edge, to the east of the railway, a series of traditional</p>

Unit I	
	<p>stone terraced cottages and some more recent detached bungalows extend up the coastal slope.</p> <p>vii. On higher ground to the west of the railway, there is a dense pattern of late 20th century detached houses that form part of a larger housing estate on the southern edge of Cove Bay.</p>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<p>i. In Cove Bay, a cluster of early 19th century terraced fishermen’s cottages contributes to the historic character of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>ii. There is a distinctive pattern of traditional farmsteads scattered across the agricultural landscape and stone bridges across and beside the railway are also notable features.</p> <p>i. Along the urban edge at Altens industrial estate, several units are very noticeable and large quarry buildings within peri-urban unit K are very prominent on the skyline to the south.</p> <p>ii. Set against the surrounding open coastal landscape, several large glasshouses and an old fish factory building on the south-eastern edge of Cove Bay are very distinctive.</p>
c) Type of settlement edge	<p>i. Along much of the eastern edge of Altens industrial estate, the large units are set back from the coast road and an intervening, raised bund with patches of scrubby vegetation provide a soft edge.</p> <p>ii. Further north, the introduction of more recent industrial units encroaches across open fields towards the coast road, resulting in an abrupt, hard urban edge. To the north of Burnbanks village, a dense geometric conifer plantation provides a robust edge to the industrial estate.</p> <p>iii. Across much of Cove Bay, the urban edge is mostly open, with dwellings backing onto the unit, their gardens enclosed by low walls, fences and occasional vegetation.</p> <p>iv. To the north, the gardens of large detached houses contain several mature trees that help to soften the settlement edge. The entire eastern edge of the housing estate in the southern part of Cove Bay is formed by rear gardens, bounded by a relatively high wooden fence.</p>
d) Type of visual containment	<p>i. The urban edge is mainly contained by the coast road and/or the railway line, although development extends down towards the coastal edge at Cove Bay.</p> <p>ii. Much of the eastern edge of Altens industrial estate is contained by a raised bund with scrubby vegetation that helps to screen most buildings from view when travelling along the coast road. However, recent development to the north extends across gently sloping open ground towards the coast road and is</p>

Unit I	
	<p>prominent in view. To the north of Burnbanks village, a conifer plantation provides a good degree of visual containment.</p> <p>iii. Although much of the development at Cove Bay is contained by roads and the railway, the prevailing open nature of the sloping coastal farmland results in a relatively high degree of visibility.</p>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<p>i. From northern parts of the unit, most of the industrial estate to the west is screened from view with little apparent continuity with the southern part of the city.</p> <p>ii. Towards the southern part of Cove Bay, development extends across a gently rising, open backdrop that provides a relatively strong visual relationship between the immediate urban edge and the wider settlement.</p>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<p>i. Although opportunities for formal recreation are limited, the coast provides an important resource for informal recreation including walking, cycling, bird watching and sea fishing.</p> <p>ii. A car park with associated picnic benches in Unit H, to the north of Doonies Farm, provides parking for access to this unit. Random parking on roadside verges elsewhere in the unit indicates an overall lack of formal parking provision.</p>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<p>i. There is a network of well-connected Core Paths across the unit with good access along most of the coast and links to nearby urban areas.</p> <p>ii. Core Path 78, which forms part of the North Sea Coast Trail, leads south from the Bay of Nigg and follows the cliff top to the southern edge of Cove Bay. Core Path 95 leads west from the coast path along the south-eastern edge of Altens industrial estate towards Cove Bay before heading east, where it re-joins the coast path.</p> <p>iii. Core Path 83 leads west from Core Path 95 along the southern edge of Altens with links to the wider urban area. Although just beyond the unit, a footpath also leads from a car park to the north of Doonies Farm and provide access across Tullos Hill.</p> <p>iv. National Cycle Network Route 1 follows the coast road from the Bay of Nigg to Cove Bay and provides an important recreational route to and from the city.</p>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. In general, this is a relatively self-contained unit with limited visibility from the wider landscape, although many parts are visible from the sea and nearby urban areas.</p>

Unit I	
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Despite its relatively limited visibility from the surrounding landscape, much of the unit is widely visible from residential areas along the edge of the unit, and by users of the busy coast road and East Coast Mainline railway.</li> <li>ii. From most parts, there are wide views to the North Sea. Views along the coast tend to be medium in length, curtailed by rocky outcrops and small headlands.</li> <li>iii. The Cove Bay Conservation Area forms an important focal point in many views and the railway, with its distinctive stone bridges, provides a unifying feature within the open farmland.</li> <li>iv. Looking west, the railway embankment and development beyond provide a degree of visual containment inland of the open farmland.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From urban areas and the adjacent coast road and railway, the open farmland provides a mainly undeveloped, rural and semi-natural foreground to the expanse of the North Sea.</li> <li>ii. Around Cove Bay, the open pastures that slope down towards the coast also provide an important undeveloped setting to the Conservation Area.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The open coastal farmland provides an important undeveloped gateway for those travelling to and from the city along the coast road. There are also views of the unit from the East Coast Main Line, National Cycle Network Route 1 and the North Sea Coast Trail.</li> </ul>
c) Separation Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. For most of the unit, the coast road and railway provide an important separation function between the urban edge and the largely undeveloped coastal farmland and cliffs.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Some fields appear unmanaged, and there is some farm clutter and derelict/dilapidated buildings.</li> <li>ii. In places, stone dykes have been replaced with post and wire fences and some field boundaries have been lost.</li> <li>iii. Road infrastructure is often in a poor state of repair.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Management of recreational and visitor-based infrastructure appears to be minimal.</li> <li>ii. Management of farmland is mostly intensive.</li> </ul>

Figure I-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site
- Geological Conservation Review Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

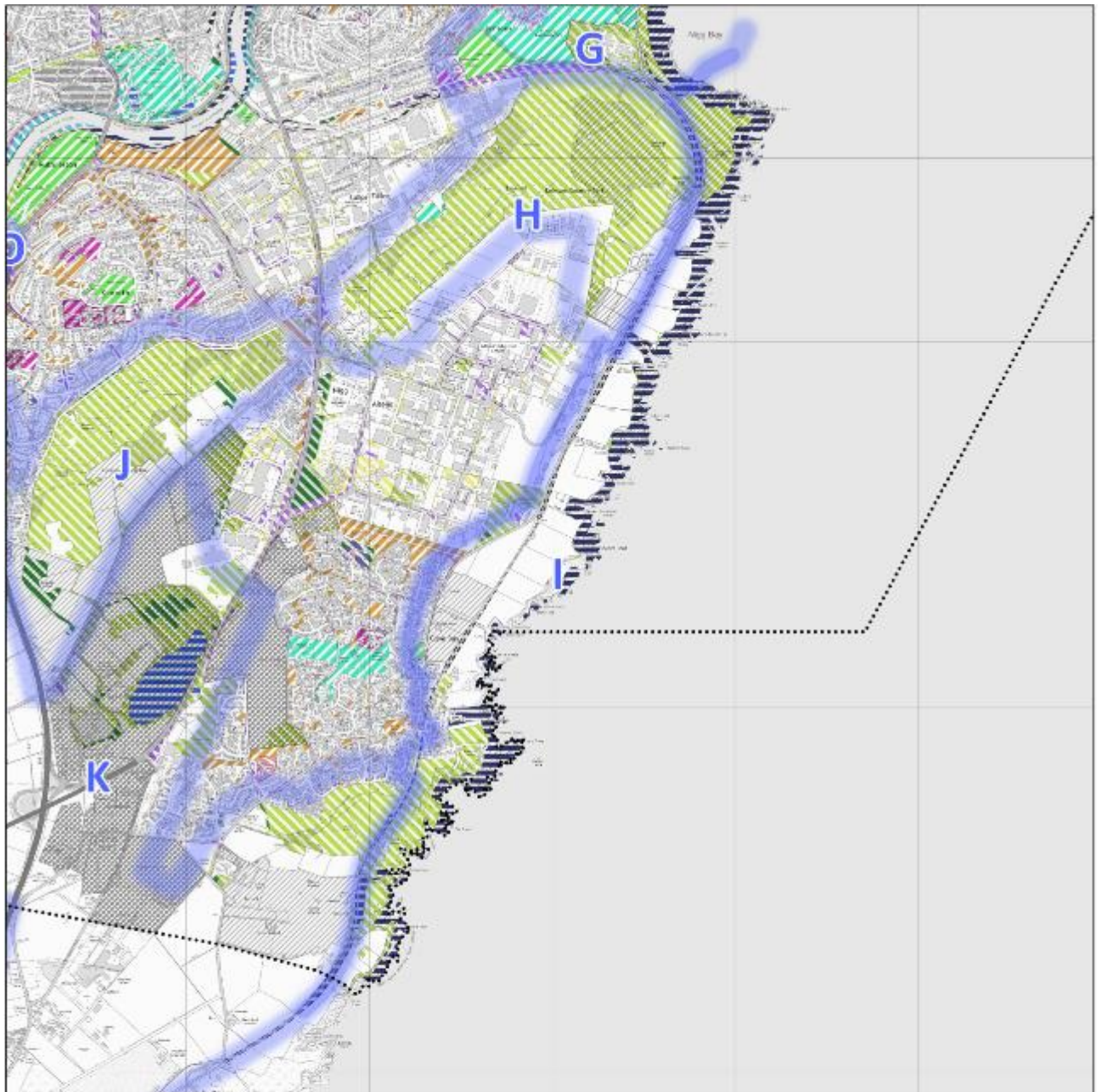
Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment



Figure I-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment

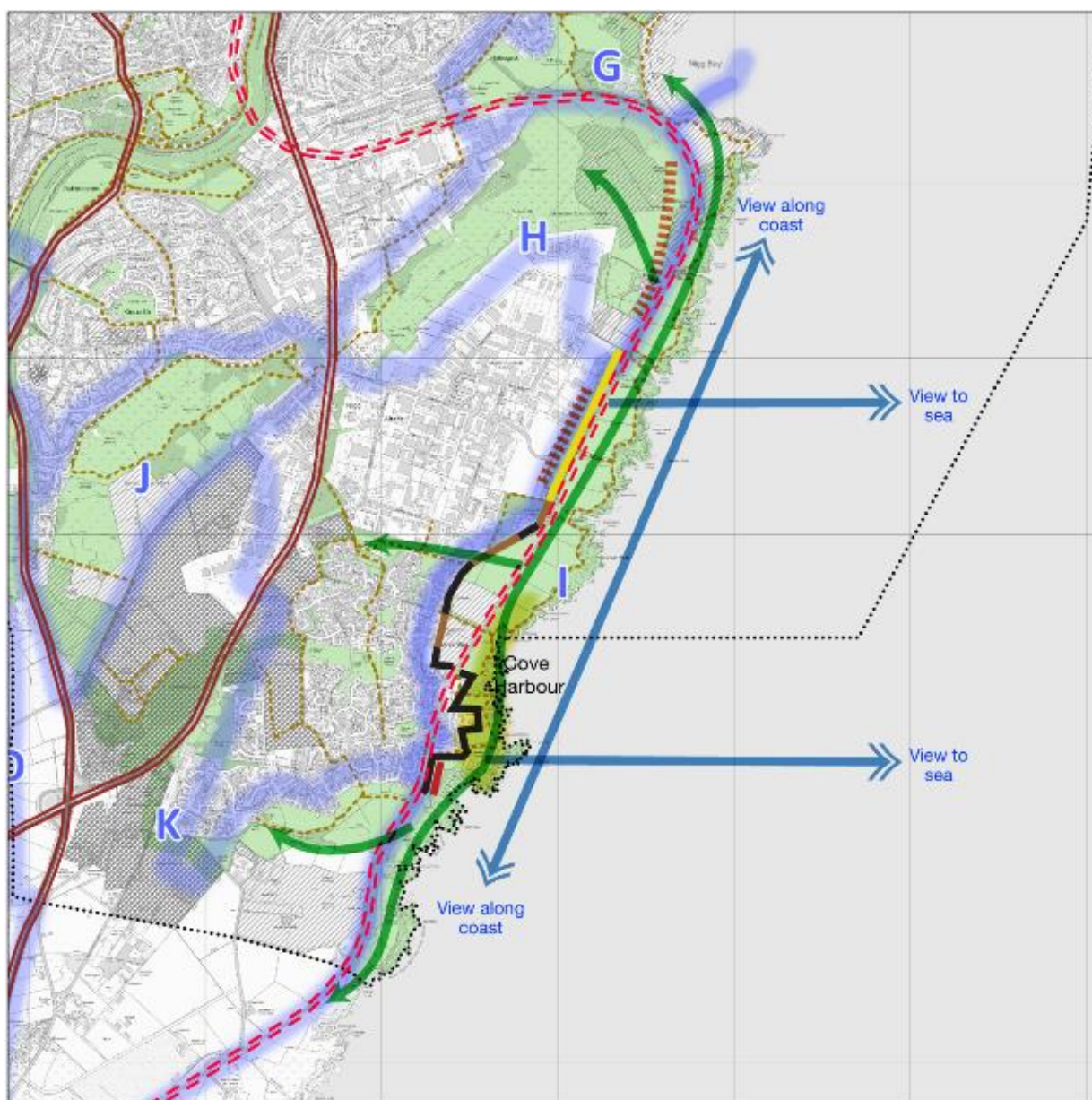


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- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Peri Urban Unit boundary | Open Semi-Natural      |
| Allotment                | Open Water             |
| Amenity- Business        | Parking / Loading      |
| Amenity- Residential     | Playing Fields         |
| Amenity- Transport       | Playspace              |
| Bowling Greens           | Public Park and Garden |
| Cemetery                 | Railway                |
| Foreshore/ Rocks         | Riparian Routes        |
| Green Access Routes      | School Grounds         |
| Institutional Grounds    | Woodland               |

Figure I-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- |                        |  |  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
|                        | Aberdeen City Council boundary                     |  | Containment by landform                    |
|                        | Peri Urban Unit boundary                           |  | Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity |
|                        | Core Path  |  | Key views                                  |
|                        | Greenspace Network                                 |  | Feature                                    |
|                        | Opportunity Site                                   |  | Urban style fences                         |
|                        | Developed/under construction at time of assessment |  | Main sea route                             |
| <b>Urban edge type</b> |  |  | Main road route                            |
|                        | Existing open edge                                 |  | Main rail route                            |
|                        | Likely future open edge                            |  | Gateway                                    |
|                        | Existing wooded edge                               |  |  |
|                        | Likely future wooded edge                          |  |  |
|                        | Existing hard urban edge                           |  |  |
|                        | Likely future hard urban edge                      |  |  |

## Photographic study



Looking north over Cove Bay



South-western edge of Cove



Mature trees on eastern edge of Cove



Open edge of Cove Bay



Looking south towards Cove Bay



Landscape embankment along edge of Altens industrial estate



Looking north along railway



Blackhill Quarry

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA and CCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of habitats including coastal cliffs, neutral grassland and pockets of gorse scrub.*
- b) *Conserve the open character of cliffs tops and adjoining fields. Accordingly, any new tree planting should be limited to the west of the unit and should consist of small scale clumps and trees associated with buildings and scattered dwellings. Some broad leaved tree/shrub planting may be appropriate along the western edge of the unit to soften the urban edge.*
- c) *Maintain the mainly undeveloped character of the area, and the largely undeveloped skyline viewed from the coastal footpath. Avoid the introduction of lighting outside of existing settlement, and avoid increasingly light pollution from adjacent built areas on the coast and inland.*
- d) *Improve the provision, maintenance and management of infrastructure along the North Sea Coast Path such as seating, interpretation and footpath signage, reducing clutter and designed to be fit the coastal setting and conditions.*
- e) *Maintain the strong pattern of rectilinear fields, and retain and repair dry stone dykes.*
- f) *Conserve and enhance the open character of the coastal road. Avoid urban style elements such as road kerbs and unnecessary signage. Improve the management of car parking and the condition of roadside fencing and signage.*
- g) Improve the provision and management of visitor and recreational infrastructure such as sensitively designed seating, geological and wildlife interpretation and signage. Avoid the introduction of intrusive development
- h) Maintain and enhance linkages for recreation and wildlife across the Green Space Network, connecting habitats, and urban communities with the coast, and reinforcing the existing character of the landscape. Explore opportunities for additional footpath links across the farmland to the coast.
- i) *Retain the rugged, natural and exposed coastal character and the sense of detachment from the city.*
- j) *Maintain the uninterrupted panoramic views across the North Sea and along the coast.*

## Overview of unit



Looking north-west from the southern part of unit

The unit is surrounded on three sides by dense urban development, which contrasts strongly with the largely undeveloped character of the unit. This is most evident along the northern edge, where woodland within Kincorth Hill Local Nature Reserve abuts housing development.

The northern part of the unit consists of semi-natural open space. This includes the Local Nature Reserve, which is particularly important for nature conservation and informal recreation. Despite its proximity to the city, the Reserve's woodland areas provide a strong sense of enclosure, naturalness and seclusion. The Reserve has an excellent network of footpaths, served by car parks at either end of Nigg Way, with good links into the adjacent housing areas, although physical connections to the south are limited by agricultural use. Most of the unit lies within the Green Space Network, although surrounding roads limit physical connectivity.

The open parts of the summit provide extensive views across Aberdeen towards the coast. Woodland on the lower slopes limits views northwards but there are wide views to Tullos Hill and the south-eastern parts of the city from the more open southern slopes.

Although relatively low in elevation, the summit of Kincorth Hill forms a prominent undeveloped skyline feature in views from many parts of the city and the unit forms part of the rural setting of Aberdeen when viewed from the south. It has an important role as an undeveloped green wedge that separates housing in Kincorth and industrial and business development within Opportunity Site OP61 to the south.

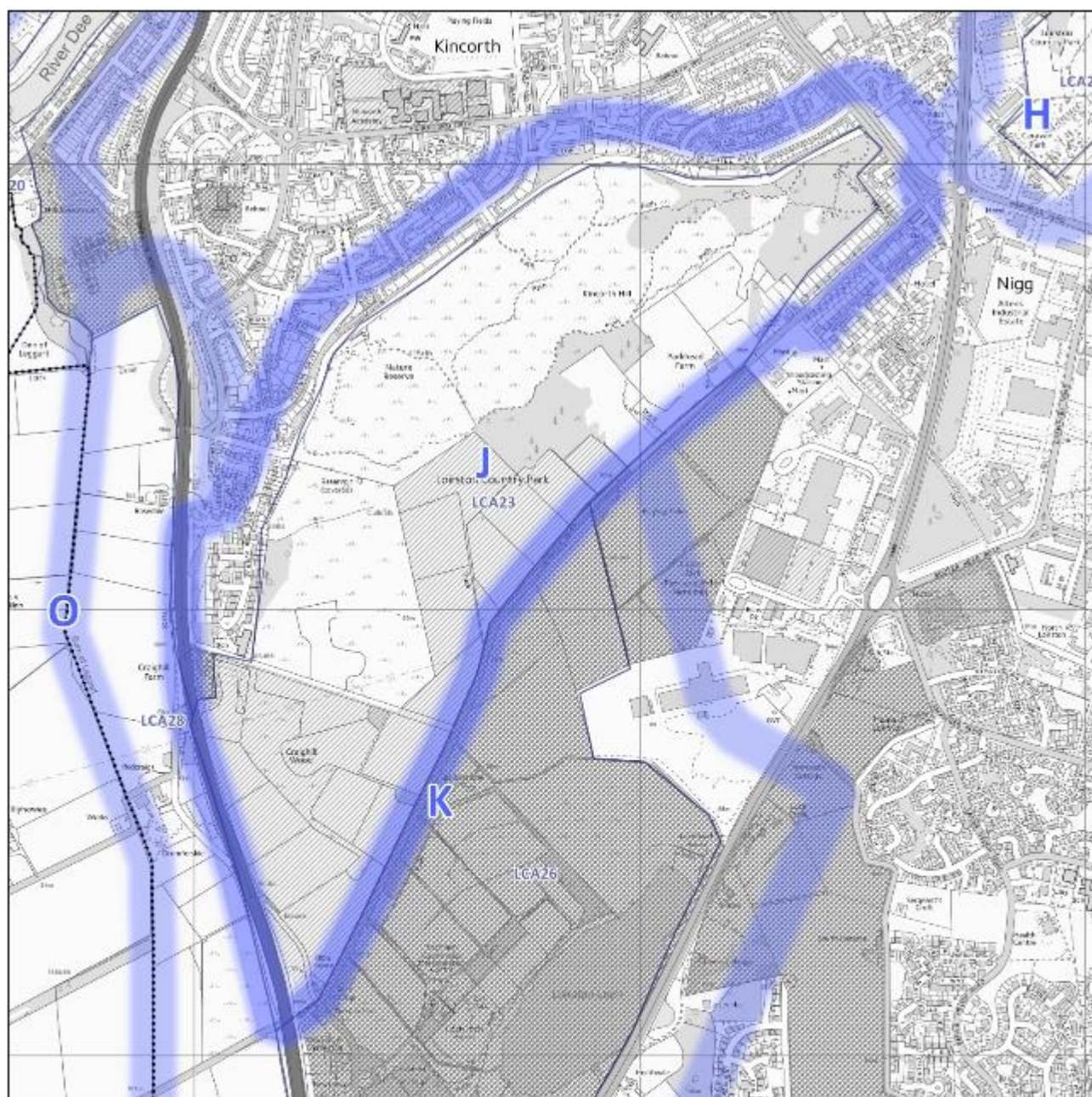
### **Location and landscape context**

*Kincorth Hill* Landscape Character Area (LCA 23) forms a distinct peri-urban unit and apart from the inclusion of the urban edge, the extent of the unit follows that of the LCA (see figure J-1).

Peri-urban unit K lies to the west, separated by the A92. This unit is surrounded on three sides by dense urban development, which exerts a strong influence but also provides good opportunities for recreational links, particularly with housing in Kincorth, along the northern edge. This distinguishes it from unit K, where urban influences are less and there is greater connectivity with the rural landscape extending into Aberdeenshire.

The northern part of the unit is bounded by housing within Kincorth and to the east by West Tullos Road, with Nigg Parish Church beyond. The south east boundary of the unit is formed by housing along Redmoss Road and the road itself, with recently constructed industrial and business units within Opportunity Site OP61 to the south of the road. Further south-west the unit is bounded by the fields and woodland belts of Lochinch Farm Interpretation Centre. The A92 forms the south – west edge of the unit.

Figure J-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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Unit J	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A relatively low, gently undulating ridge of ground, which is elevated above the surrounding parts of the city.</li> <li>ii. Extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation include gorse, broom and willow scrub with dry heathland on the higher ground and scattered trees, neutral grassland and small patches of wet heathland.</li> <li>iii. Woodland is mainly concentrated on north-west facing slopes, but there is also some to the south of the unit, including Craighill Wood and smaller areas of scrubby woodland scattered across the top and sides of the ridge.</li> <li>iv. Land use consists of rough grazing, nature conservation and recreation.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Kincorth Hill Local Nature Reserve includes the steep slopes abutting Kincorth to the north of the unit. The northern part of the unit is also defined as a Local Nature Conservation Site (see figure J-2). This includes the area of the Local Nature Reserve and extends further to the south-west, into the Opportunity Site (OP59).</li> </ul>
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The majority of the unit consists of Open Space (see figure J-3). Semi-Natural Open Space covers the northern slopes and summit with smaller areas of Woodland Open Space identified around its periphery.</li> <li>ii. The Local Nature Reserve provides the main Open Space for informal recreation within the unit. The south-facing slopes of the unit are in agricultural use with fences and stone dykes that generally discourage access.</li> <li>iii. Most of the unit is included in the Green Space Network, except for part of Opportunity Site OP59. Surrounding roads limit connectivity, but the Green Space Network links with Craighill Wood to the south. Beyond the A92 the network continues west around the city edge and to the east of the A956 it continues towards Tullos Hill and the coast.</li> <li>iv. The Local Nature Reserve has an excellent network of footpaths, served by car parks at either end of Nigg Way, with good links into the adjacent areas, although physical connections to the south are limited by agricultural use within the unit.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Despite its proximity to the city, the woodland component of the Local Nature Reserve provides a strong sense of enclosure, tranquillity, naturalness and seclusion. Towards the northern edge, the adjacent housing exerts a suburban influence and Nigg Way has an urban character. The top and southern slopes of Kincorth Hill are more open and exposed, where views of housing in Nigg, the broadcasting station and business and industrial development in Opportunity Site OP61 to the south, contrast with the otherwise strongly rural character.</li> </ul>



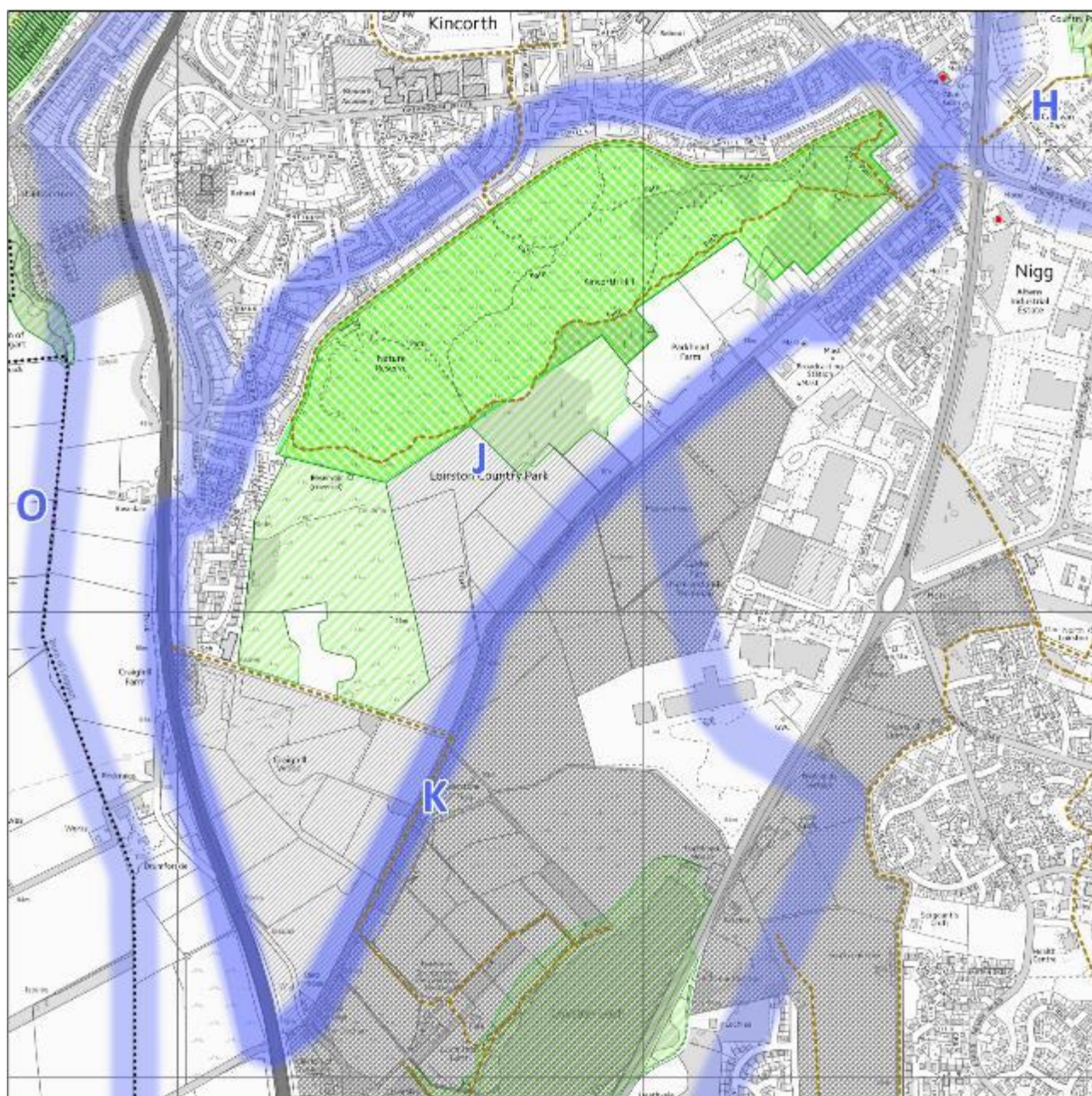
Unit J	
	<p>ii. Traffic noise is evident throughout and construction activity to the south also affects the sense of tranquillity.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
<p>a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development</p>	<p>i. To the north, the settlement edge consists of mid to late 20th century housing estates that extend the length of the unit. To the east, the unit is bordered by West Tullos Road with Nigg Parish Church set in wooded grounds. Housing along Redmoss Road forms the southern edge at the eastern end of the unit, with housing in Nigg and an adjacent broadcasting station and masts beyond, to the south of Redmoss Road. Further to the south-west the edge is formed by Redmoss Road, with recently constructed industrial and business units within Opportunity Site OP61 extending to the south-west.</p>
<p>b) Prominent and distinctive buildings</p>	<p>ii. Residential tower blocks in Kincorth are prominent landmarks from the north but are largely screened from the unit by dense woodland within the Local Nature Reserve. Masts within the broadcasting station on the south side of Redmoss Road provide strong vertical elements and Nigg Parish Church is a distinctive building within the urban edge to the east.</p> <p>iii. Within the unit, redundant farm machinery and storage around Parkhead Farm is prominent on the southern slopes below Kincorth Hill.</p>
<p>c) Type of settlement edge</p>	<p>i. The urban edge to the north includes a mix of late 20th century, two storey terraced houses with more widely spaced tower blocks at Tollochill Square, which are set back from the edge amongst mown grass. The houses generally back onto Nigg Way, with timber fencing in a wide variety of styles and condition forming the edge to the gardens. Mature amenity trees provide extensive screening along much of the edge, helping to integrate the housing, although there are places where the edge is more abrupt. Further south, late 20th century one and a half and two storey houses along Boyd Orr Avenue back onto the unit. Vegetation within the gardens and trees and gorse scrub to the rear help to screen the houses and garden fences from Kincorth Hill. South of this, a small development of single storey holiday chalets is set amongst woodland and not visible from the unit.</p> <p>ii. To the east, beyond West Tullos Road, the 19th century Nigg Parish Church and graveyard is set in wooded grounds.</p> <p>iii. The southern boundary is formed by a mix of early and late 20th century single, one and a half and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, mostly with generous gardens which back onto the unit. A small development of late 20th century one and half storey semi-detached dwellings lies at the north-eastern corner of the unit. Trees and areas of scrub along the base of Kincorth Hill screen the property boundaries, which are mainly concrete with some stone walls. Trees</p>

Unit J	
	<p>and shrubs within the gardens provide further screening, although the houses become more evident on climbing the southern slopes of Kincorth Hill.</p> <p>iv. Further to the south-west the urban edge is formed by large scale, widely spaced business and industrial units within Opportunity Site OP61 to the south of Redmoss Road, which are currently under construction. Where built, these present an abrupt edge, although young woodland belts are likely to mitigate this in future.</p>
d) Type of visual containment	<p>i. To the north, the unit is contained by mature amenity tree planting, which forms a dense screen along much of the northern edge. Undulating ground levels also provide a degree of containment but the edge is open in places, allowing long views northwards to the city centre.</p> <p>ii. To the south, the edge is predominantly open at present. Beyond the housing along Redmoss Road the road, lined by stone dykes for much of its length, forms the boundary. The emerging large-scale business and industrial units within Opportunity Site OP61 are highly visible within the open landscape. The units are set within newly planted woodland belts which should help to integrate the buildings in future.</p> <p>iii. A dense conifer belt adjacent to Redmoss Road currently provides some screening. South-west of this the edge is open until Balderston, an early 20th century cottage set within woodland and partly screened by undulating ground. Further south-west, a network of shelterbelts on undulating ground within Lochinch Farm provide containment and limits views to the south.</p>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<p>i. Screening by trees along the northern edge of this unit restricts the sense of continuity with the urban area, although there are intermittent views across Kincorth from Nigg Way in places. From the upper slopes of Kincorth Hill there are extensive views of the city, although the elevation of the viewpoint and wooded foreground of the Local Nature Reserve provide a sense of detachment from the city below.</p> <p>ii. From the southern part of the unit there are views eastwards towards Nigg and Altens, to the new developments within Opportunity Site OP61 and the large business and industrial units and housing within Loirston further to the south-east. Collectively these provide a strong sense of being on the edge of a wider urban area.</p>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of	<p>i. There is widespread informal recreational provision within the northern part of the unit, including walking, jogging, cycling, etc. The southern slopes are farmed and access here is generally restricted by field boundaries.</p>

Unit J	
recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. The northern part of the unit, including the Local Nature Conservation Site, consists of semi-natural open space. This includes the area at the foot of Kincorth Hill, to the rear of the houses along Redmoss Road.</li> <li>iii. Recreational facilities for the general public within the unit include Kincorth Local Nature Reserve, car parks and a network of footpaths.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Local Nature Reserve has an excellent network of footpaths, served by car parks at either end of Nigg Way, with good links into the adjacent areas, although physical connections to the south are limited by agricultural use within the unit.</li> <li>ii. Core Path 79 follows the perimeter of the Local Nature Reserve and joins Core Path 105 which links north through the housing at Kincorth. Core Path 103 links with Core Path 79, heading eastwards via Redmoss Walk and across West Tullos Road towards Tullos Hill. Core Path 82 follows the southern limit of the Local Nature Conservation Site, providing a link between Kincorth and Loirston Loch. An Aspirational Path (AP3) would provide a more direct link from the Local Nature Reserve to Loirston Loch and then to Cove.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Although relatively low in elevation (105m AOD), the summit of Kincorth Hill forms a prominent skyline feature in views from the north-western parts of the city. It is less noticeable from the south where it is masked to some degree by large scale industrial and business units sited close to its southern slopes.</li> </ul>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Extensive views across Aberdeen towards the sea are a feature from the open parts of the summit. From the lower northern slopes, dense woodland screens views northwards, but the more open southern slopes give wide views to the south-eastern parts of the city, Tullos Hill and the A92.</li> <li>ii. There are also long views to the west and north-west, including to Brimmond, Kingshill and Tyrebagger hills from some southern parts of the unit.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Kincorth Hill provides an important wooded backdrop in views from many parts of the city, from the north-west through to the south-east. Although part of a long low ridge, which extends from the coast to the A92 and includes Tullos Hill, it is perceived as a distinct hill, due to intervening roads and buildings.</li> <li>ii. The unit forms part of the rural setting of Aberdeen when viewed from the south.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit is visible from open sections of the A92, where it provides an important undeveloped context on approach from the south. It is also visible in longer views from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.</li> </ul>

Unit J	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. When travelling north along the A92, there is a relatively sudden sense of arrival into the city at the southern edge of Kincorth although to some extent, this is compromised by scattered development alongside the route extending south into Aberdeenshire.</li> </ul>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit has an important role in providing a green wedge that separates the housing of Kincorth to the north and the industrial and business development within Opportunity Site OP61 to the south.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Within the northern part of the unit, individual trees along Nigg Way are even-aged and some are missing. Some fences along the adjacent property boundaries are in poor condition, the surfacing of Nigg Way needs attention and patches of Himalayan balsam require removal.</li> <li>ii. Field boundaries within the southern part of the unit are generally intact, consisting of low stone dykes that form a strong framework. In places, including along sections of Redmoss Road, the dykes have become dilapidated or replaced with post and wire fencing or metal barriers. An area of redundant farm machinery and storage around Parkhead Farm is very noticeable from the southern slopes of Kincorth Hill.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Most of the northern area is managed for nature conservation and recreation.</li> <li>ii. Nigg Way shows few signs of any maintenance, other than essential grass cutting. Fly-tipping, litter and dumping of garden waste are evident, detracting from the woodland character.</li> <li>iii. Most of the southern part of the unit is in pasture and appears to be in current use. The remaining areas, of scrub and woodland do not appear to be actively managed.</li> </ul>

Figure J-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Special Area of Conservation
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

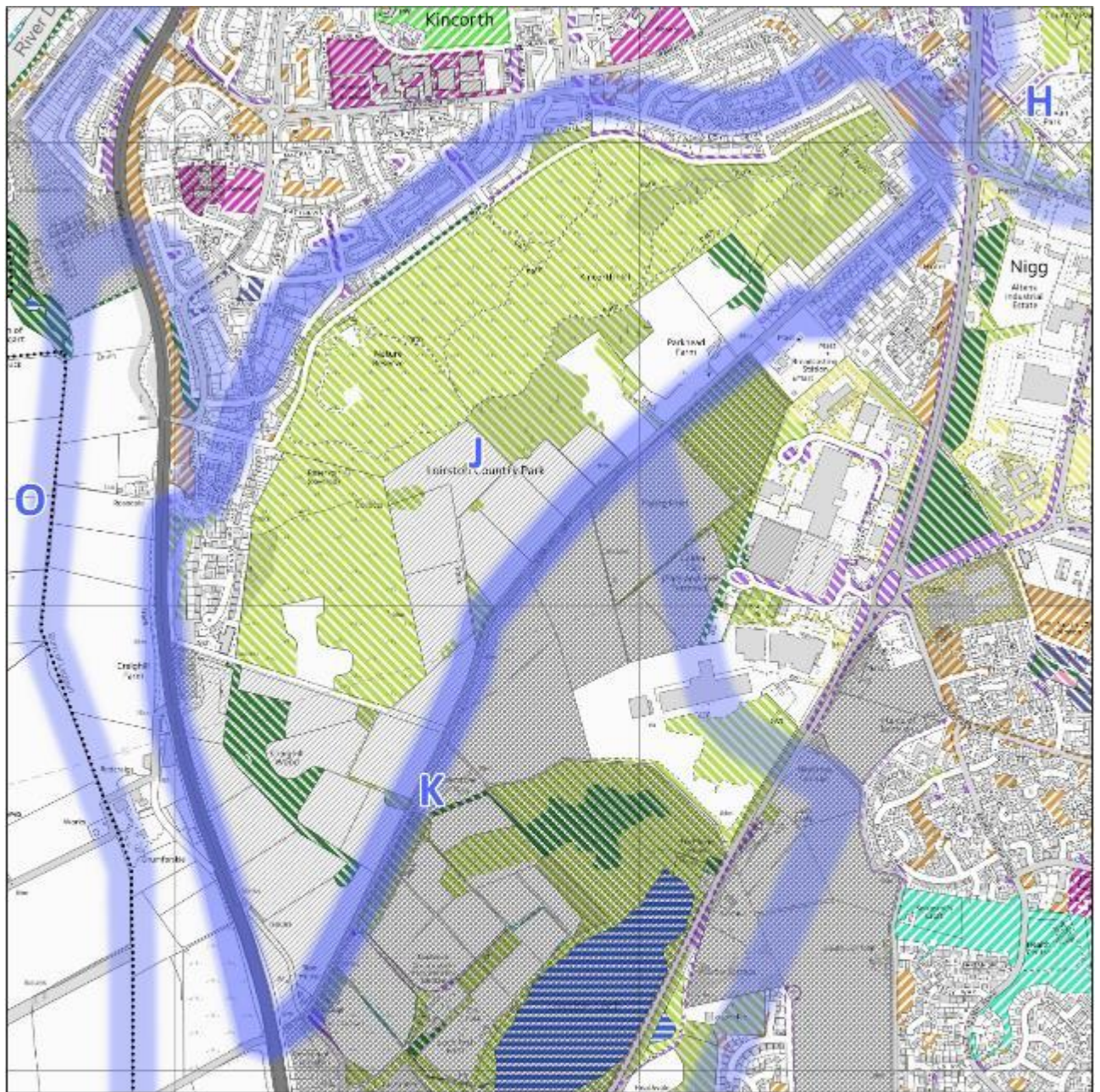
- Listed Building

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure J-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

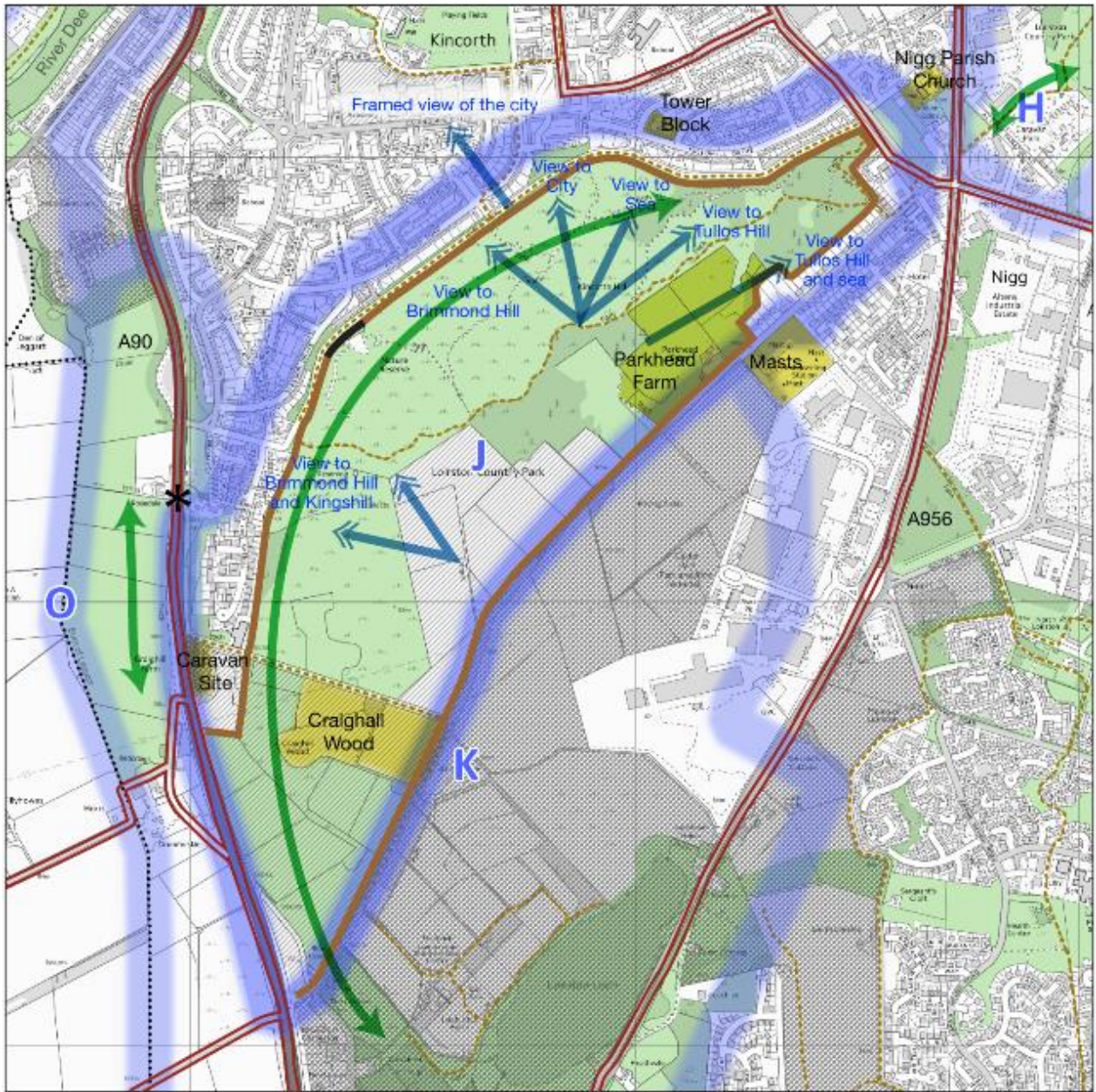
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Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Woodland

Figure J-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017  
Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Looking east to Nigg Parish Church from LNR visitor car park



Core Path 105 links northwards into Kincorth from the LNR



View east on Nigg Way (CP 79) along northern edge of unit



Looking south from Kincorth Hill towards OP61



View north-west to gorse scrub area, south of Kincorth Hill



View north-east from Kincorth Hill



View west on Nigg Way (CP 79) along northern edge of unit



Looking west along ridge top



## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance 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 deigned to create a balanced open / wooded landscape, help to define or contain urban edges, enhance gateway routes to the city, and protect and frame important views.*
- c) *Retain the undeveloped character of the area; the hill summit areas form the skyline in views from many parts of the city and this semi-natural backdrop should be retained.*
- d) *Maintain the network of footpaths and areas of recreational land use. Seek opportunities to improve the provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation car parking and signage, appropriately designed to fit the landscape setting, and avoiding/reducing clutter.*
- e) *Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by dry stone dykes along the south-east slopes.*
- f) Interplant specimen trees along Nigg Way to provide long term continuity of the tree canopy without obscuring visibility at lower levels.
- g) Improve the experience for residents and visitors to the Local Nature Reserve by upgrading the surface of Nigg Way and providing appropriately designed seating.
- h) Introduce woodland and tree belts along Redmoss Road and roads within the development site to provide further screening and landscape integration of new development to the south.
- i) Consider improvements to the gateway along the A92, such as environmental enhancements to signal arrival at the city.
- j) Introduce appropriately designed planting to screen the area of redundant farm machinery and storage around Parkhead farm, when viewed from the southern slopes of Kincorth Hill.
- k) *Retain the extensive views across Aberdeen and the North Sea from open parts of the hill.*
- l) *Retain the semi-natural character and experience of relative peace and seclusion.*

## Overview of unit



Looking south across remnant farmland towards a skyline of large business and industrial buildings in Aberdeenshire

This peri-urban unit is subject to large scale development pressures and, with the influence of the busy A92 and Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, any sense of rural character is very limited. In contrast to many other peri-urban units, the transition from urban to rural is very gradual. This is partly because the urban influence extends for some distance beyond the boundary, and also because development outside the city edge includes scattered industrial units.

Recently constructed business park units tend to form a hard urban edge next to open ground, appearing locally prominent. Beyond the urban edge, there is a relatively extensive pattern of scattered development that includes industrial units, farmsteads, dwellings and quarries. This scattered pattern of varied development types continues south into Aberdeenshire. In general, there is a strong sense of being on the edge of a busy and expanding city, rather than entering the rural countryside.

The unit is an important gateway for people travelling to and from the south of the city. At present, areas of undeveloped farmland provide a degree of separation between residential areas, a scatter of large buildings and the A92 corridor. There are some Green Space Network links to adjacent units and the urban area of Cove. Designations consist of the Local Nature Conservation Site at Loirston Loch and small sections of the Core Path network.

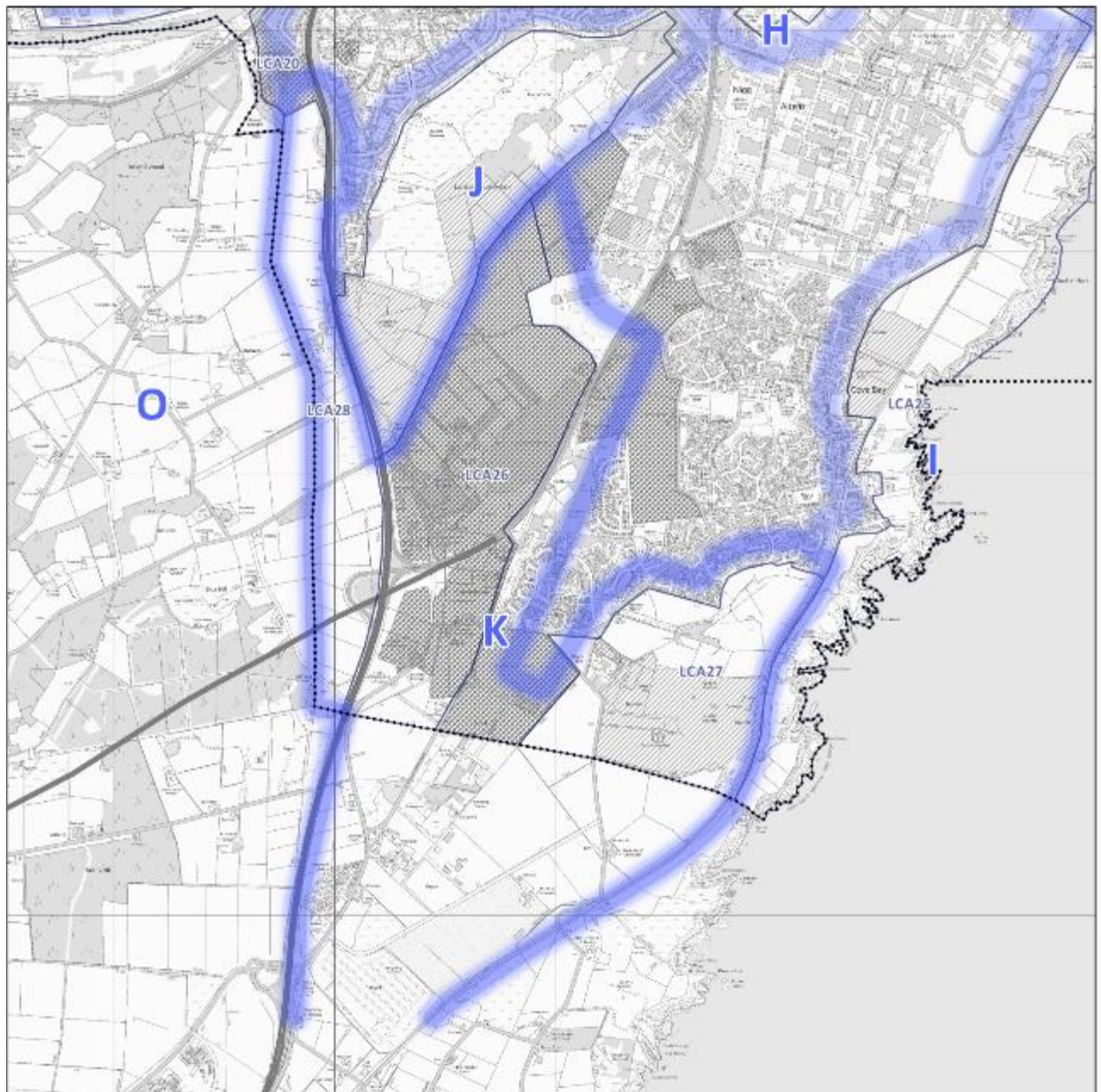
## Location and landscape context

Apart from the inclusion of the urban edge, the unit is formed of the *Loirston* Landscape Character Area (LCA 26) *Findon Plain* (LCA 27) and the *South Deeside Upper Slopes* (LCA 28). The unit extends south into Aberdeenshire across part of the *Urban and Farmland Mosaic* Landscape Character Type where the urban influences of industrial units, business parks and residential development are apparent (see figure K-1).

The unit reflects the fragmented pattern of development beyond the urban edge that extends south along the A92 corridor. The varied pattern of scattered industrial development, business parks and the influence of major transport routes sets this unit apart from those surrounding it.

In contrast to this unit, unit I is separated by the East Coast Main Line and has a mainly undeveloped coastal character. Lying to the north, unit J is almost entirely surrounded by extensive industrial and residential development and forms a nearly self-contained unit, important for nature conservation and recreation. To the west of the A92, the wooded valley side of unit O has a strong relationship with the urban edges of settlement across the Dee Valley.

Figure K-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

## Analysis

Unit K	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
<p>a) Landform, landcover and land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The landform of the unit consists of a gently undulating coastal plain with occasional shallow wet basins including Loirston Loch, one of the largest bodies of open water in the city. To the south-east of Cove, a more complex rolling landform is cut by a narrow wooded den which slopes down towards the coast. In places, large scale quarrying and the construction of main roads have significantly altered the landform.</li> <li>ii. The main landcover consists of drained pastoral fields although these are unmanaged in places. Much of the unit is open, but shelterbelts provide a sense of enclosure to the west of the loch. Several other shelterbelts and small woodland blocks are scattered across the unit.</li> <li>iii. Land use is diverse. Although the majority is agricultural, there are two large quarries, business parks and an industrial estate within the urban area. Recreation and nature conservation are important at Loirston Loch and there are many dwellings scattered throughout the unit.</li> <li>iv. In the future, land use is likely to change significantly. Opportunity Sites OP59 and OP60 extend across much of the undeveloped parts of the unit and if taken forward, these would result in extensive residential and employment uses. As a consequence, a large proportion of the unit would become part of the urban area.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Natural heritage designations consist of a Local Nature Conservation Site at Loirston Loch (see figure K-2).</li> <li>ii. There are no features designated for their cultural interest. There are some remnant crofts around Charlestown, which were severed by the re-routing of the A92.</li> </ul>
<p>c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In general, the provision of Open Space (see figure K-2) is relatively limited although at Loirston Loch and an area to the south of Cove, there are areas of Semi-Natural Open Space used by local communities.</li> <li>ii. At Loirston Loch, Semi-Natural Open Space fringes the open water and to the west, a network of Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Space extends to the southern edge of Kincorth Hill.</li> <li>iii. To the south of Cove, several fields are identified as Semi-Natural Open Space with small pockets of Amenity Open Space scattered along the urban edge.</li> <li>iv. The Green Space Network follows a very similar distribution to the Open Space and consists of the loch and adjacent farmland to the west, and several fields and a small wooded den to the south of Cove.</li> </ul>

Unit K	
	<p>v. To the west of the loch the Green Space Network continues across the adjacent unit J, Kincorth Hill. To the east of the loch, there is a connection across open fields into the urban area of Cove.</p>
d) Experience	<p>i. Traffic noise from busy main roads and activity within nearby industrial areas and quarries is noticeable from much of the unit.</p> <p>ii. The large industrial units and business park buildings contrast strongly with areas of adjacent open farmland.</p> <p>iii. Towards the coast, there are areas with views out to sea, where a sense of relative peace and seclusion can be experienced.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<p>i. The urban edge is formed of a diverse range of development types including residential, large scale retail buildings, business parks and industrial units. With areas of ongoing construction activity, the form and pattern of development is constantly changing.</p> <p>ii. To the north-east of the unit, there is a dense pattern of mid-late 20th century detached houses that form part of a larger housing estate on the southern edge of Cove. Further to the west, development along Cove Road consists of a mixed pattern of mid-late 20th century detached houses and bungalows of varying styles. Residential development continues along the south-western edge of Cove, with a dense pattern of mostly newly constructed detached houses.</p> <p>iii. To the south of Cove, several well-spaced large units at Aberdeen Gateway Business Park have recently been constructed. Further north along the eastern edge of Wellington Road / the A956, there is a scattered pattern of post-war bungalows and to the east of Loirston Loch, several small business units. To the north of Charleston Wood, a dense pattern of mostly terraced houses has recently been constructed.</p> <p>iv. To the west of the A956, there are several widely spaced large retail and industrial units that form the northern edge to Loirston Loch. To the north of these, a school and a football complex. The remaining northern edges of the unit, which extend along the southern lower slopes of unit J, are currently undeveloped fields, although these are allocated for future mixed use development.</p>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<p>i. The large grey industrial and business park buildings are very noticeable against surrounding open fields.</p> <p>ii. Within Aberdeenshire, recently constructed industrial and business park buildings and quarry development are prominent throughout the open landscape.</p>

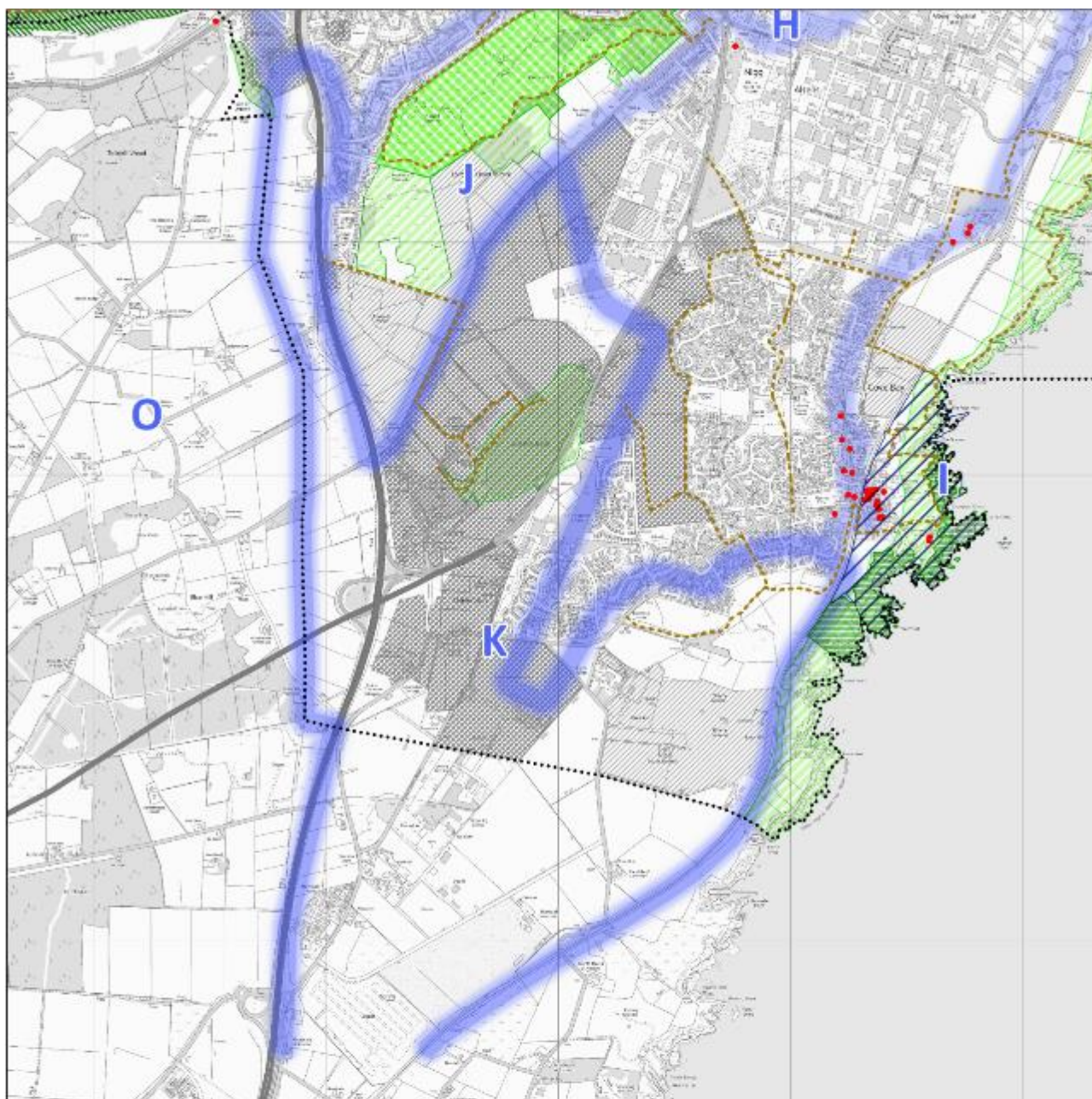
Unit K	
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Along most of the south-eastern edge of Cove, the rear and side gardens of adjacent dwellings are bounded by a relatively high wooden fence that forms an abrupt edge against open fields. Further west, residential development along Cove Road is bordered by a diverse mix of low garden fences and stone walls, hedgerows and garden vegetation. Along the south-western edge of Cove, amenity shrub planting forms a softer edge to the housing development.</li> <li>ii. Units at Aberdeen Gateway Business Park to the south of Cove generally form a very abrupt edge against open fields. Some limited amenity tree planting and metal fence construction occurs along Wellington Road.</li> <li>iii. Further to the north along Wellington Road, a vegetated embankment forms a containing edge to the south-western part of Cove. A row of post-war bungalows is bounded by a diverse mix of low garden fences and stone walls, hedgerows and garden vegetation. Beyond fields of scrubby vegetation and mature broadleaved woodland at Charleston Wood, the edge of residential development to the north is robust, consisting of mature trees and an embankment.</li> <li>iv. The edge of commercial and industrial units to the west of the A956 is very abrupt, contrasting with open fields around the northern part of the loch.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In general, much of the urban edge is contained by roads, with little visual containment provided by landform or woodland planting.</li> <li>ii. Residential areas within the southern parts of Cove are mostly open, although a section of amenity planting along Cove Road provides localised screening. Along the A956, a raised embankment and Charleston Wood provide a degree of separation and containment to part of the south-western edge of Cove.</li> <li>iii. Although relatively large business and industrial units provide a sense of visual containment to surrounding areas of open farmland, the immediate setting of these buildings offers no visual containment, resulting in a stark contrast with surrounding open fields.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Due to the prevailing gently undulating landform and the presence of nearby buildings across the southern edge of Cove, the majority of residential development is screened from view, with very little continuity with southern parts of the city. The large scale buildings of the business parks and industrial units also prevent views of the wider urban area to the north.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Loirston Loch and Wildlife Centre provide an important resource for informal recreation including walking, cycling and bird watching. Other than this, opportunities for informal recreation across the unit are relatively limited,</li> </ul>

Unit K	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. To the south-east of Cove, open space provides opportunities for informal recreation with coastal views.</li> <li>iii. In addition to informal Semi-Natural Open Space around Loirston Loch and to the south of Cove, there is a small car park and playground to the west of Loirston Loch.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Core Path network is mostly in the northern part of the unit, focused around the urban edge of Cove with several links to nearby urban areas.</li> <li>ii. From Cove Bay, Core Path 78 follows the south-western edge of the settlement to Cove Road. This connects with a network of local paths that lead through open grassland. Core Path 83 connects with Core Path 78 and heads north into the housing estate.</li> <li>iii. To the west of the A956, Core Path 82 follows the edge of Loirston Loch and leads north-west along farmland tracks to the southern edge of Kincorth Hill (unit J)</li> <li>iv. National Cycle Network Route 1 heads south along the Cove Road and a minor coastal road towards Portlethen.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Loirston Loch is a popular destination for informal recreation, used by many local residents. The majority of the unit is generally well contained by development that overlooks it, with limited visibility from the wider landscape.</li> <li>ii. The busy A92 follows the western edge of the unit and with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to the south; a larger number of road users will have views across part of the unit.</li> <li>iii. There are also views from areas of higher ground on Kincorth Hill and from some of the upper valley sides to the west of the unit.</li> </ul>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In general, views tend to be short, curtailed by the extensive built urban edge, road embankments, woodland blocks and large buildings scattered across the unit.</li> <li>ii. Along the south-eastern edge of Cove there are long range views out to sea, framed by built development and low undulations in the foreground.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Pockets of remnant farmland provide an open foreground to adjacent development throughout much of the unit.</li> <li>ii. To the south-east of Cove, informal open space provides an important undeveloped setting when seen from the coast.</li> </ul>



Unit K	
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Located alongside the A92 and Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, the unit is an important gateway for people travelling to and from the city.</li> <li>ii. When travelling north along the busy A92, the city's expanse is suddenly revealed just past the junction with the A956/Wellington Road.</li> </ul>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Pockets of undeveloped farmland currently provide a degree of separation between residential areas, large buildings scattered across the unit and the A92 corridor.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The landform of parts of the unit has been significantly modified, most notably due to quarrying activity and the construction of main roads.</li> <li>ii. Much of the farmland has been drained and many remnant stone dykes have been replaced with post and wire fencing.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Largely as a consequence of development pressure, there is little active management of the remaining areas of undeveloped farmland.</li> <li>ii. Areas of open space around Loirston Loch and to the south-east of Cove are generally well managed for nature conservation and informal recreation.</li> </ul>

Figure K-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

- Conservation Area
- Listed Building

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure K-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment

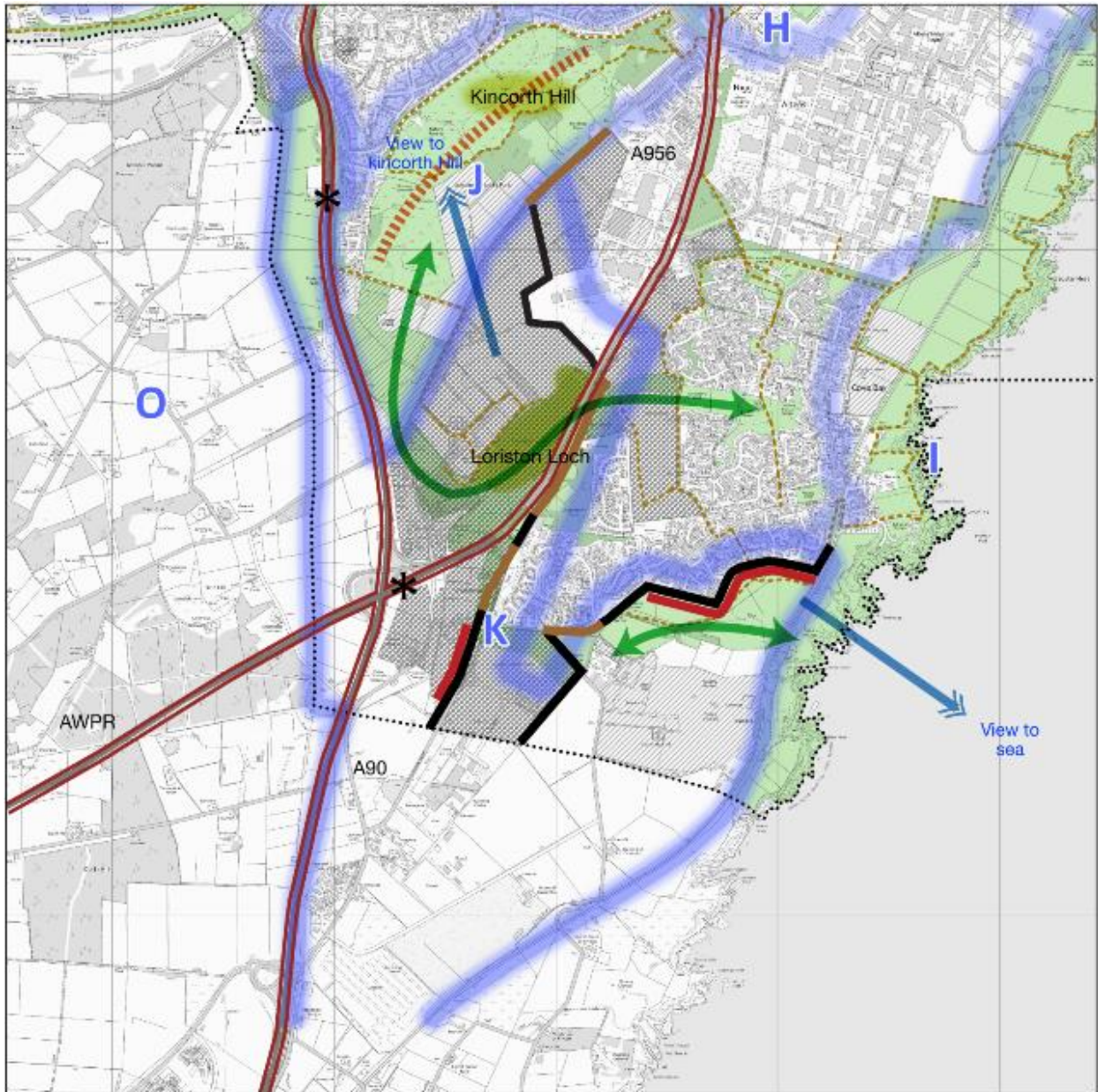


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- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Open Space Audit 2010**
- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Woodland

Figure K-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
  - Peri Urban Unit boundary
  - Core Path
  - Greenspace Network
  - Opportunity Site
  - Developed/under construction at time of assessment
  - Containment by landform
  - Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
  - Key views
  - Feature
  - Urban style fences
  - Main sea route
  - Main road route
  - Main rail route
  - Gateway
- Urban edge type**
- Existing open edge
  - Likely future open edge
  - Existing wooded edge
  - Likely future wooded edge
  - Existing hard urban edge
  - Likely future hard urban edge

## Photographic study



South-eastern edge of Cove



Development along Cove Road



Towards Blackhill Quarry



Aberdeen Gateway Business Park from the south



Scattered farms and dwellings



Development along Wellington Road



Views over Loirston Loch towards Cove



Aberdeen Gateway Business Park from the north

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

### Unit K

- a) *Retain remaining areas of open space, particularly around Loirston Country Park.*
- b) *Encourage tree planting along roadsides and areas of woodland to help integrate the urban edge with the surrounding rural fringe.*
- c) *Conserve and enhance the swathes of rough grasslands that extend towards the coast.*
- d) *Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by dry stone dykes and seek to replace any post and wire fences with stone dykes.*
- e) *Maintain the open character, especially towards the coast.*
- f) Explore opportunities for the creation of new recreational and active travel links across the areas that link Loirston Loch with residential areas further to the south.
- g) Explore opportunities for the creation of allotments or other community uses to the south of Cove.
- h) *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.*
- i) *Maintain open views towards the sea, the long range views over the city and shorter range views of the low-lying skyline of Kincorth Hill.*
- j) *Retain the experience of relative peace away from main roads and settlement.*

## Overview of unit



Looking north-west from Brimmond Hill to Elrick Hill and Bennachie in the distance

In this Unit there is a sudden transition from the urban edge of Kingswells to a mostly undeveloped landscape with a distinctive rural character. With a series of prominent hills along the western edge of Aberdeen, there is a strong sense of relative tranquillity and detachment from the city, away from the influence of the busy A944, A96 and Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. The distinctive summit of Brimmond Hill is especially visible from many parts of the city and the surrounding landscape.

From the main roads that lead into city, the unit provides an important and largely undeveloped setting to the city. The unit also provides an important separation function between the western parts of the city, Kingswells, and the nearby settlement of Westhill within Aberdeenshire. Across Kingshill, Brimmond and Elrick Hills, a network of well-connected network of footpaths that link to nearby urban areas provide an important recreational resource to the city.

The urban edge of Kingswells is generally well integrated with mature tree planting. The recent development at Prime Four is mostly situated within an existing woodland framework with some well-designed more open edges.

## Location and landscape context

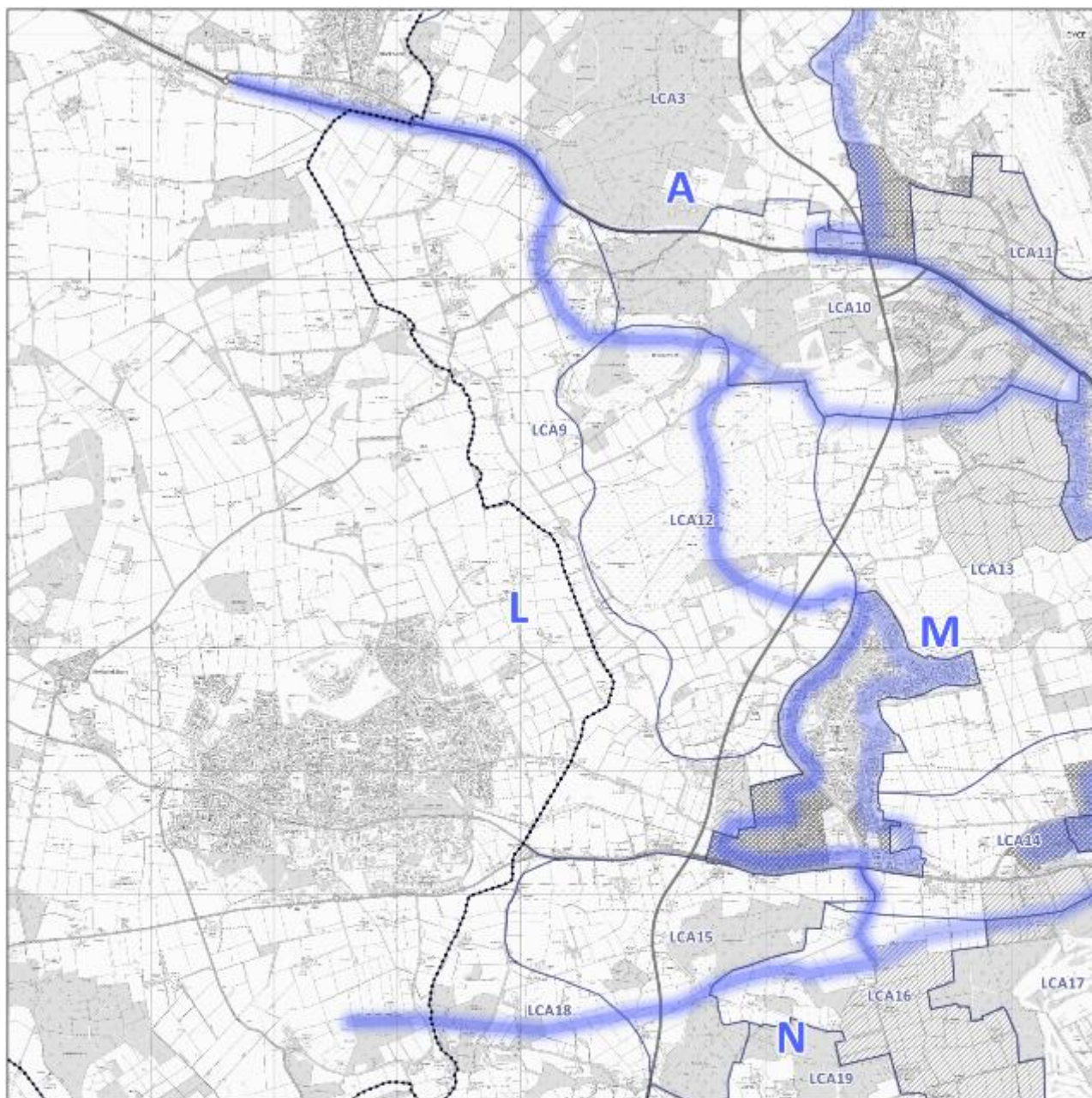
The unit is centred on the prominent summit and west facing slopes of *Brimmond Hill* (LCA 12) with Elrick Hill to its north. To the south of Kingswells, *Kingshill* (LCA 15) forms a forested backdrop to the southern part of the unit. To the west of Brimmond Hill, *West Brimmond* (LCA 9) extends northwards from the A944 to the A96. The unit also extends west into Aberdeenshire towards the settlement of Westhill and the surrounding rural landscape (see figure L-1).

The unit includes the distinctive profile of rounded hills that form a prominent backdrop to the city and the nearby areas within Aberdeenshire. Important for recreation and nature conservation, the hills have a strong undeveloped character that contrast with the dense settlement edge of Kingswells and busy main road corridors.

Compared to this unit, unit A located to the north and unit N to the south have a much greater proportion of forests and woodlands. To the east, although unit M has a mostly rural character, it is heavily influenced by extensive urban edges that in combination with surrounding ridges and hills, provide a degree of self-containment.



Figure L-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape  
Character Assessment**

November 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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## Analysis

Unit L	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
<p>a) Landform, landcover and land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The broad, rounded slopes and summit of Brimmond Hill is the most prominent landform in the unit and at 266 metres AOD, it is the highest point within the city. The north-western slopes of Brimmond Hill are more complex, interlocking with the lower, rounded Elrick Hill which merges with the knolly, small scale landform. To the west of Kingswells, Clog Hill is locally prominent and to the south of the unit, there is cluster of three gently rounded hills, Kingshill being the highest. The landform of the western parts of the unit consists of a small undulating valley landform that, to the north of the area, broadens out to form a more expansive gently undulating basin around Clinterty.</li> <li>ii. 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. To the south, extensive coniferous plantations cover most of Kingshill and Gairnhill. Across lower hill slopes and covering an extensive area westwards there is a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields.</li> <li>iii. Across Brimmond and Elrick hills (both designated as Country Parks), informal recreation and nature conservation are the primary land uses whilst forestry is the dominant use across Kingshill and Gairnhill. Across lower-lying western parts, agriculture is the main land use although occasional groups of houses are also scattered within the broad basin of Clinterty where an agricultural college, a caravan park and some light industry are located.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The summit and extensive western slopes of Brimmond Hill are designated a Local Nature Conservation Site. West Hatton, (a small strip of broadleaved woodland to the west of Kingswells) and the Moss of Auchlea, (a small moss site to the southeast of Westhill), are also designated Local Nature Conservation Sites (see figure L-1).</li> <li>ii. There is 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. To the west of Kingswells, the unit contains some of the most impressive consumption dykes in the Aberdeen area, with some designated as Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. To the west of the unit, there is a prehistoric standing stone at Little Clinterty and a long cairn at West Hatton Croft. Both are Scheduled Monuments.</li> </ul>

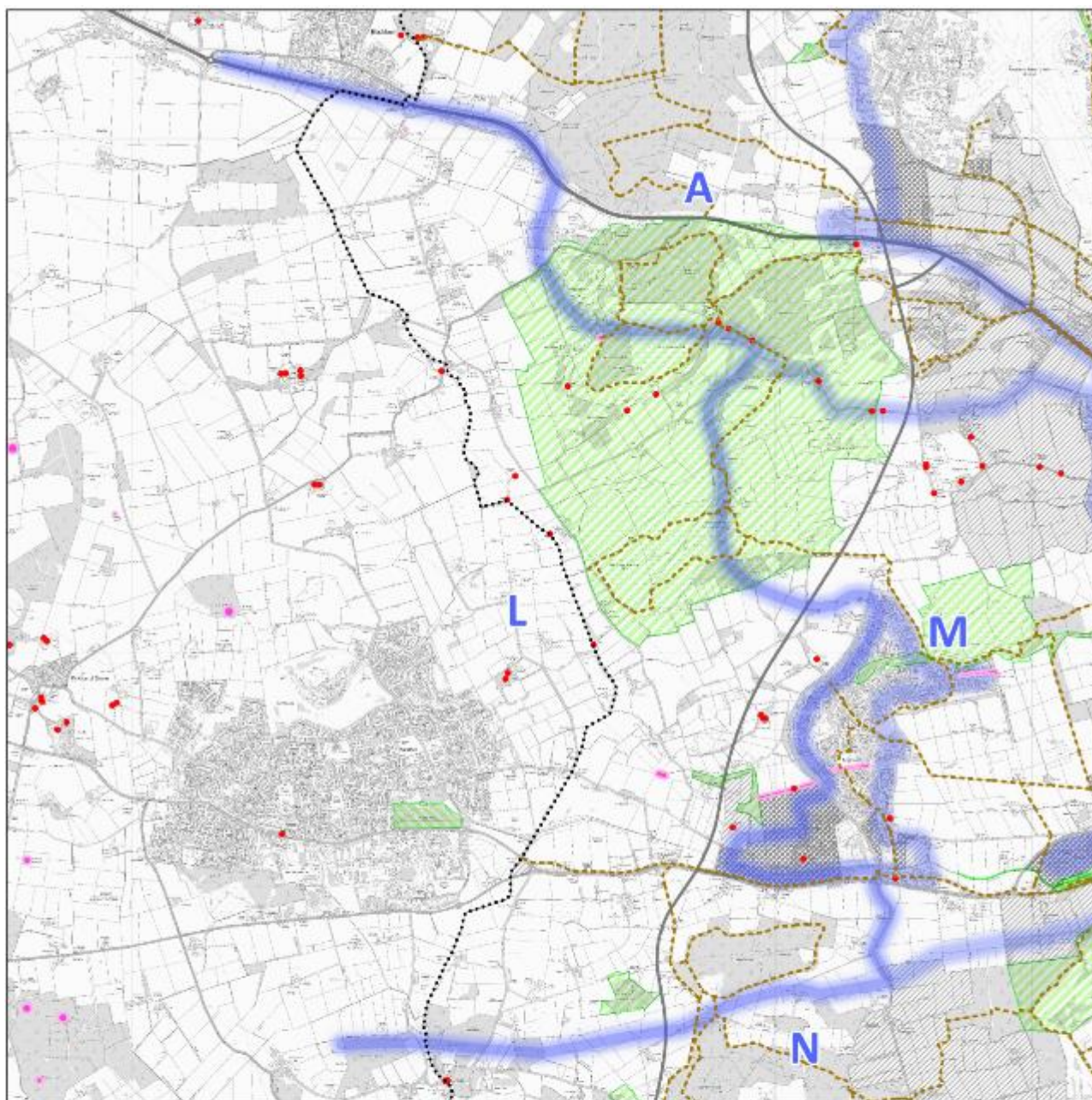
Unit L	
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The provision of Open Space across the unit (see figure L-2) is very limited. There is a golf course to the south-east of Elrick Hill and small areas of Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Space to the west of Kingswells.</li> <li>ii. In contrast to the provision of open space, there is extensive coverage and good connectivity of Green Space Network across most of the unit's hills slopes and summits. Lower-lying parts to the west are undesignated.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The upper hill slopes and summits are generally tranquil, appear detached from the city with a strong sense of exposure and naturalness.</li> <li>ii. From areas of higher ground, expansive views to the Grampian hills and Bennachie to the west provide a rural prospect.</li> <li>iii. Along the main road corridors of the A96, A944 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route traffic noise and activity contribute to a busy experience.</li> <li>iv. To the west of the unit, the landscape has a distinct rural character and although detached from the city, surrounding busy roads to the north and south limit the experience of peace and tranquillity.</li> </ul>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Compared to most other units within the study area, the extent of urban edges are very limited.</li> <li>ii. The western edge of Kingswells is formed entirely of large, well-spaced, late 20th century detached residential development. This backs onto the curving Fairley Road and is generally low-lying in relation to the unit.</li> <li>iii. To the west of Kingswells, there is a large business park development at Prime Four (Opportunity Site OP29).</li> </ul>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Most of the unit has a strong undeveloped character although a cluster of communications masts are prominent on the summit of Brimmond Hill.</li> <li>ii. Residential development along the urban edge of Kingswells is generally well integrated into a wooded edge. Business park development (Prime Four) on rising ground to the south of Kingswells is locally prominent from the A944 corridor and nearby hill summits.</li> <li>iii. Extensive residential development on rising ground across Westhill is prominent in view from western parts of the unit. Along the eastern edge of the settlement, several large business and industrial units are prominent in view from the A944 and nearby hill summits.</li> <li>iv. Across more rural western parts, there are several locally distinctive estate buildings and traditional farmsteads scattered across the agricultural landscape.</li> </ul>

Unit L	
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Along the central western edge of Kingswells, houses are well concealed within a framework of tree belts. To the north and south of this, garden trees are scattered amongst wooden fenced rear gardens that back onto the Fairley Road.</li> <li>ii. At Prime Four Business Park, tree belts form the western edge and much of the southern edge along the A944 although towards the city, recently landscape grounds form an open edge to the development. The northern edge of the business park is formed of open grassed embankments with some recently planted trees and hedgerows. Westhill has a skyline of housing on the highest ground. The western edge of Westhill is relatively open, with partial tree screening along the A944.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The western edge of Kingswells is generally well contained by tree belts and garden trees and the relatively low-lying nature of the settlement. To the west of Fairley Road, the gently rising slopes of Clog Hill further contain the settlement edge.</li> <li>ii. Although located on gently rising ground above the A944, the Prime Four Business Park is generally well contained by a framework of mature trees and rising ground to the south of the main road. In contrast, Westhill is open to view.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From Fairley Road, there is very little sense of continuity with the wider urban area although from open hill summits, particularly Brimmond Hill, Kingswells in viewed in context with the extensive city beyond. Westhill is a separate settlement.</li> <li>ii. When travelling eastwards along the A944, Prime Four Business Park appears on the very edge of the city with only scattered development visible nearby along the busy road corridor.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. With an extensive network of footpaths accessed from several car parks situated along the lower hill slopes, Brimmond Hill and Elrick Country Parks are an important recreational resource to the city that provide wide spread opportunities for informal activities. A golf course is also situated to the south-east of Elrick Hill.</li> <li>ii. Across the wider agricultural landscape, opportunities for recreation generally consist of walking and cycling along country roads and footpaths.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A network of footpaths across Brimmond and Elrick Hills forms part of the Four Hills Country Walks. Core Path 35 provides a circular route around Elrick Hill which links with Core Paths 34 across Brimmond Hill. Core Path 33 provides a link from Core Path 34 to the nearby settlement of Kingswells.</li> </ul>

Unit L	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Towards the south of the unit, Core Path 91 follows the route of the A944, providing an important east-west link between Westhill and the City.</li> <li>iii. To the south of the A944, Core Path 48 links Core Path 91 to Core path 49 that provides circular route around Kingshill.</li> </ul>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Brimmond Hill forms a prominent landmark seen widely from the city and surrounding farmland in Aberdeenshire. It is easily recognisable because of its profile, seasonally 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. Brimmond Hill is part of an arc of hills around the city. Other hills form less prominent landmarks.</li> </ul>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From open hill 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.</li> <li>ii. From lower-lying areas to the south of Westhill, views are restricted by the slopes of Brimmond hill and the low rolling ridges which contain the western side of the Littlemill Burn in Aberdeenshire.</li> <li>iii. 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.</li> <li>iv. To the south, road users along the A944 and lower-lying parts of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route also have views across the unit, including to Brimmond and Clog and Kings hills.</li> </ul>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Situated at the centre of an arc of hills which curve around the western edge of the city, the prominent summit of Brimmond Hill forms a landmark and is also an important undeveloped backdrop to Aberdeen and nearby areas in Aberdeenshire.</li> <li>ii. Agricultural areas and woodland to the west of the unit and in higher areas behind Westhill provide a rural setting to Westhill.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The series of hills across the eastern part of the unit provide an important gateway feature for people travelling east into the city and those heading west towards Aberdeenshire.</li> </ul>

Unit L	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Key transport corridors that traverse the unit are the A944, A96, the B9119 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. When travelling east from Westhill towards the city, there is a sequence of built-up areas and gaps and no major gateway point</li> </ul>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit provides an important separation function between development along the western urban edge of Aberdeen and Kingswells, and the settlement of Westhill.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Overall, the condition of landscape features is generally good. Extensive semi-natural habitats on open hill slopes are well connected although scrub encroachment of moorland habitats is an ongoing issue in places.</li> <li>ii. Stone dykes on lower-lying farmland are generally intact although some small woodlands and tree belts across the agricultural landscape are even-aged, with few young trees to provide continuity.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Semi-natural habitats on open hill slopes and summits are well managed for nature conservation and recreation.</li> <li>ii. Farmland is generally intensively managed for mixed agriculture although some tree belts and woodlands appear unmanaged.</li> <li>iii. To the south of A944, forestry on Kingshill appears to be managed for commercial purposes, with little nature conservation or reactional management evident.</li> </ul>

**Figure L-2: Designations**



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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**Natural Heritage Designations**

- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

**Cultural Heritage Designations**

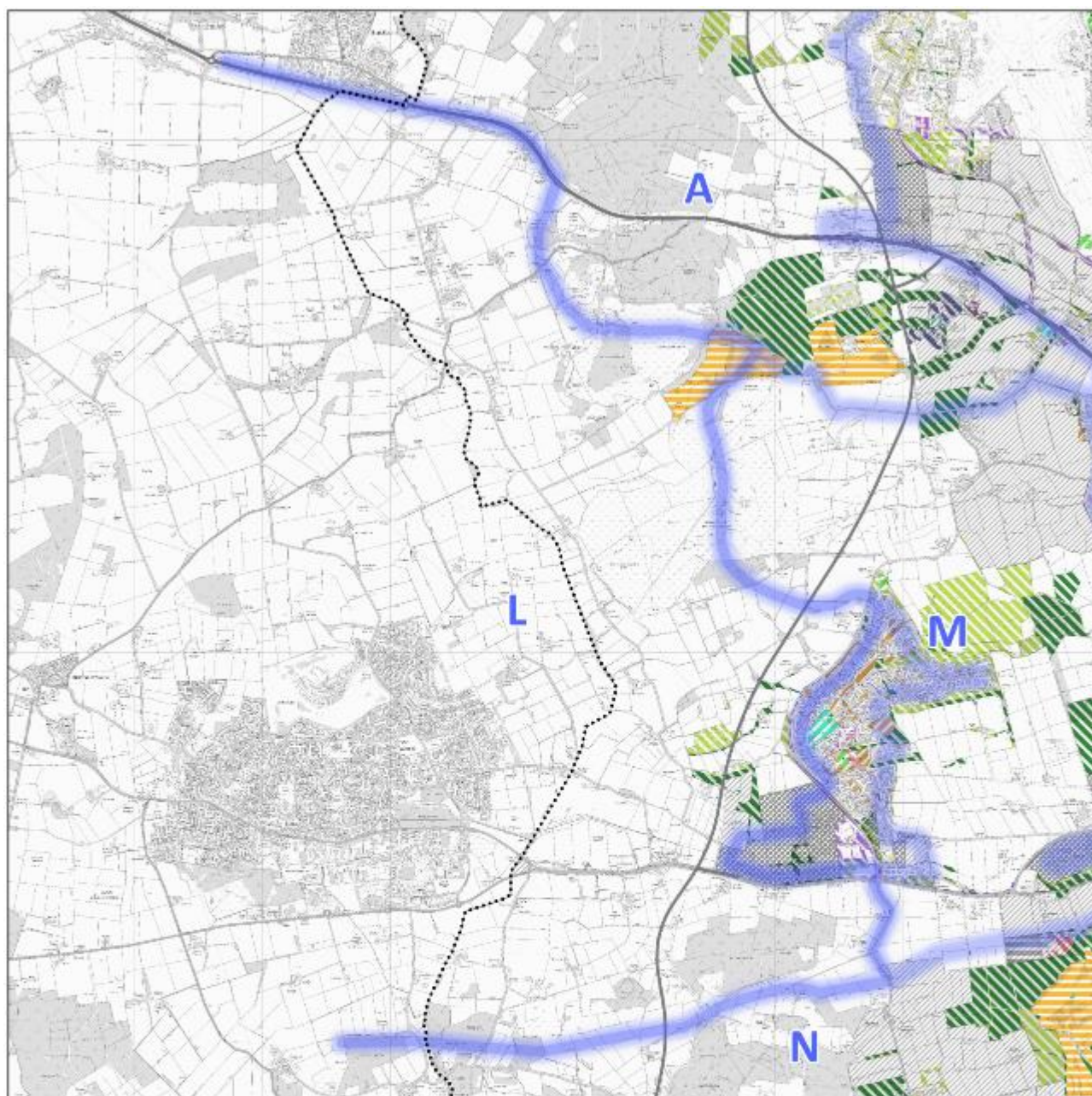
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Aberdeen City LDP**

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure L-3: Open Space



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



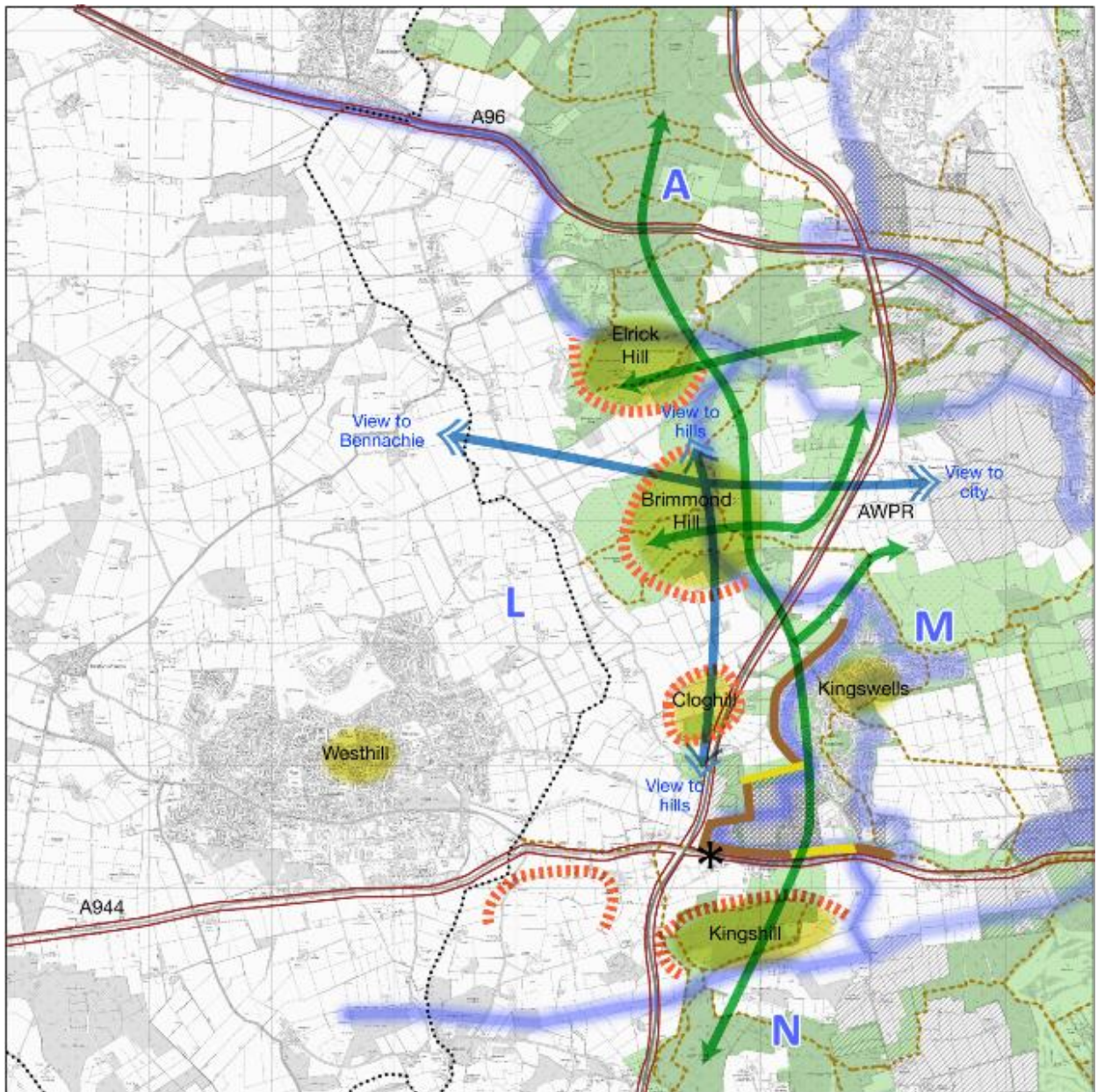
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- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Open Space Audit 2010**
- Amenity - Business
- Amenity - Residential
- Amenity - Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Cemetery
- Churchyard
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Woodland



Figure L-4: Analysis



### Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

#### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Treed back gardens along Fairley Road



Tree belts along the western edge of Kingswell



Low-lying development at Kingswells



Western edge of Kingswells towards Clog and Brimmond hills



Looking west along the A944



Rural farmland to the west of Kingswells



Expansive views of the city from Brimmond Hill



Looking west towards the edge of Westhill and the Grampians

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance the extensive coverage of dry heathland with patches of dense gorse and birch across upper slopes and summits and the connectivity of semi-natural habitats.*
- b) *Across the lower farmed slopes, encourage the planting of broadleaved trees and small woodland clumps near to farmsteads and existing woodlands. Avoid planting woodlands which would detract from open parts of the hills.*
- c) *Retain the pattern of compact farmsteads and the patchwork of arable and pastoral fields divided by stone dykes across lower hill slopes.*
- d) *Maintain the network of footpaths and improve the provision and management of existing infrastructure such as seating, interpretation, car parking and signage.*
- e) *Retain areas of open rural character to the west and the pattern of regularly spaced farms along the valley sides. This should also help retain the sense of relative detachment from the city.*
- f) Maintain and enhance the Green Space Network, avoiding further fragmentation and improving connectivity between the city and rural areas to the west.
- g) Maintain and improve the condition of the urban edge, especially along parts of Westhill and Fairley Road, through further roadside tree planting.
- h) Along the A944, consider the creation of a green corridor including the planting of broadleaved trees to create a more recognisable gateway feature along this approach route and a stronger sense of arrival. Integrate existing scattered development into the landscape/townscape.
- i) *Safeguard the setting of listed buildings and archaeological features including consumption dykes.*
- j) *Retain the panoramic open views for example from areas of higher ground, and also areas of lower ground e.g. main roads.*
- k) *Maintain the undeveloped character of upper slopes and summits and the strong sense of exposure and naturalness they provide. They also form a prominent skyline feature in views*

## Overview of unit



Looking north across Burnbrae Moss to Newhills

This is a predominantly rural landscape, formed by a series of gently undulating east-west ridges, draining towards the Bucks Burn in the north and the Den Burn further south. The unit is bordered by dense housing areas to the east, from Bucksburn in the north to Sheddocksley in the south. Much of it lies within the Greenspace Network.

Most of the unit is actively farmed, but there are some areas for informal recreation at Sheddocksley playing fields, the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve, and within some limited parts of Burnbrae Moss. The unit has an extensive network of Core Paths and other routes, particularly along the Den Burn and Bucks Burn and also within the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve. This network is well connected with the surrounding areas and appears to be well used. To the north-west, it connects with Brimmond Hill and there are several links into adjacent housing areas to the east, south to Hazlehead Park and west to Kingswells. Sheddocksley playing fields and Auchmill golf course also provide formal recreational facilities.

The unit has a key role in separating Kingswells from the urban areas to the east and also provides a connection with the wider rural landscape to west. The northern part of the unit separates Brimmond

Hill and Bucksburn while Auchmill golf course separates urban development to the north, east and south.

The northern and western parts of the unit provide the wider setting to Kingswells and the foreground in views from Brimmond Hill and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route towards the city. The unit forms a rural backdrop when seen from the adjacent urban areas of Bucksburn, Heathryfold, Northfield and Sheddocksley, from parts of the city further to the east and also from the north-east slopes above the Don valley.

Den Burn valley is visible from the A944 and, with Hazlehead Park to the south, provides an important undeveloped gateway along this major approach to the city from the west. Large parts of the unit, especially to the north and west, are visible from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route as it skirts Brimmond Hill and the busy minor roads in the Newhills area also have some gateway function.

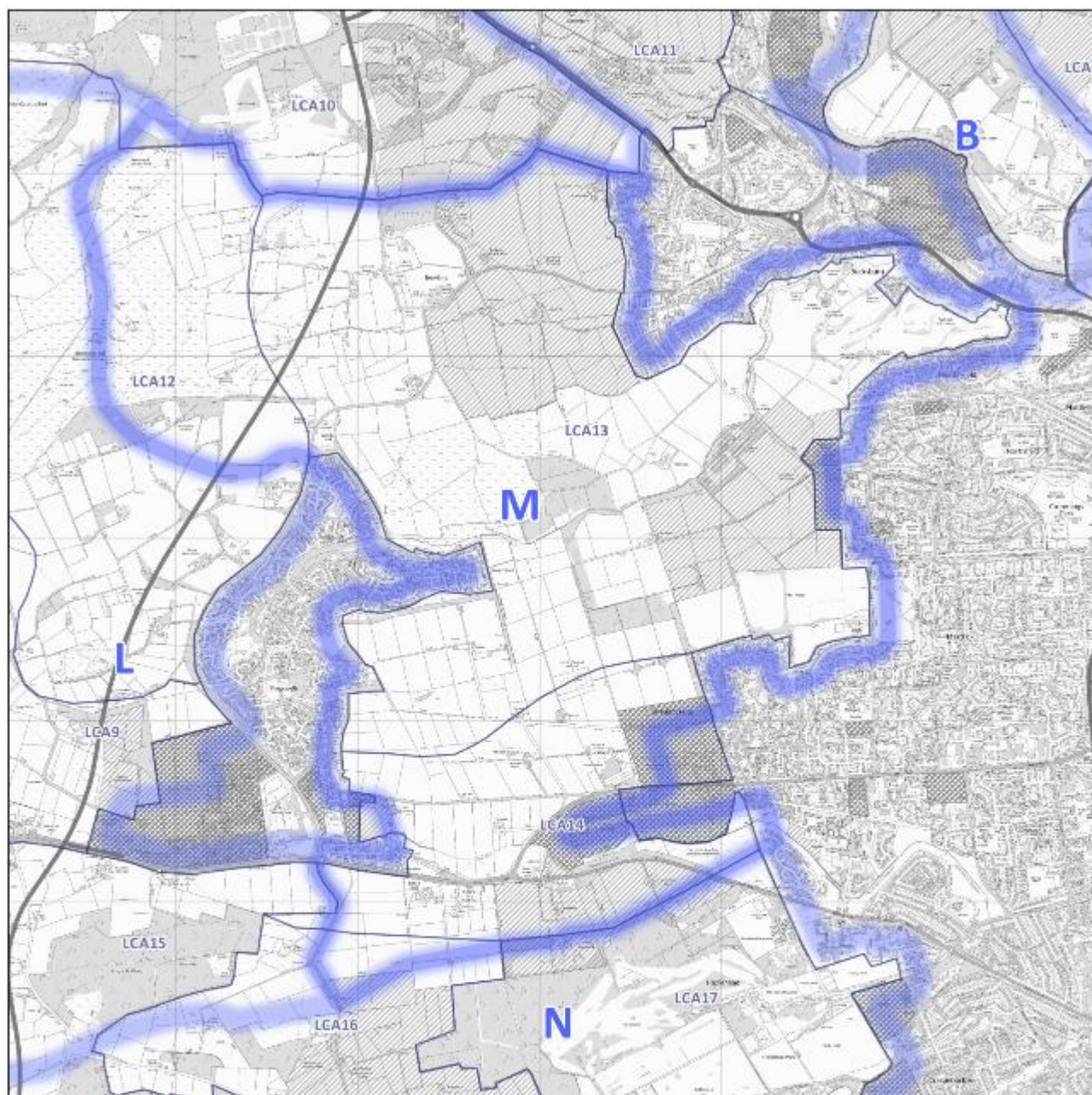
### **Location and landscape context**

Peri-urban unit M includes the whole extent of *Bucks Burn* Landscape Character Area (LCA 13) and *Den Burn* (LCA 14) (see figure M-1). This is a predominantly rural landscape, formed by a series of gently undulating east-west ridges, draining towards the Bucks Burn in the north and the Den Burn further south.

This unit differs from those adjacent in terms of the pattern of informal recreation and how well the urban edge is integrated. Whereas informal recreation within this unit is mostly focused along paths that follow field boundaries and stretches of the two main burns, it is much more widespread in the adjacent units. The extensive urban edge to the east of this unit exerts a stronger influence than in either unit A, L or N, where woodland mitigates urban influences.

The unit is bordered by dense housing areas to the east, from Bucksburn in the north to Sheddocksley in the south. Peri-urban unit A (LCA 10 Craibstone) lies to the north. To the west, peri-urban unit L (LCA 12 Brimmond Hill) forms the boundary to the north and housing within Kingswells further south. To the south, the unit is bordered by unit N (LCA 17 Hazlehead Park) to the east and LCA 16 Bogskeathy to the west.

**Figure M-1: Unit boundary**



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

## Analysis

Unit M	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit consists of a series of gently rolling ridges, aligned east-west with the Bucks Burn valley to the north and Den Burn valley to the south, separated by a ridge which extends between Kingswells and Northfield. The long east-facing slopes of Brimmond Hill contain the unit to the north-west.</li> <li>ii. Semi-natural habitats include broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland, rush pasture, wet heath, gorse and scrub and some rough grassland on drier land. The Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve includes woodland, possibly of ancient origin, grassland and wetland habitats.</li> <li>iii. To the north of the unit, woodland cover includes small conifer plantations near Newhills, conifer plantations on Burnbrae Moss and a framework of beech shelterbelts on the ridge between the main two burns. Further south there are policies and groups of mature trees around farms and houses, lines of beech trees along tracks and boundaries and some mature beech and conifer trees along the main roads.</li> <li>iv. Land use is predominantly agricultural, consisting mostly of improved grassland with some arable land, but several fields near urban areas are unmanaged. The slopes above the Don valley are grazed by horses and some land south of the A944 is used for smallholdings. The unit also includes Auchmill golf course, Sheddocksley playing fields, a business park around Bucksburn House, cemeteries at Newhills and Hazlehead, a large garden centre and several covered reservoirs, the largest of these is at Fernhill.</li> <li>v. Several undeveloped Opportunity Sites lie within this unit and could change the balance of land use significantly if developed in future. Opportunity Sites OP21 and OP22 lie in the north of the unit, Opportunity Sites OP26 and OP33 to the west of Heathryfold and Opportunity Sites OP50, south of the A944.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve consists of semi-natural woodland within the valley of the Den Burn and provides an important green link into the city centre (see figure M-2).</li> <li>ii. A cluster of listed buildings around Newhills includes the Parish Church, Parish Manse and Newhills House. March Stones at Newhills and near Bucksburn are also listed and Whitemyres and Old Whitemyres are listed buildings to the north of the Den Burn. The remains of Maidencraig Mill, beside the Den Burn are not listed. Some of the consumption dykes to the east of Kingswells are scheduled monuments.</li> </ul>

Unit M	
c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Most of the eastern edge of Kingswells is defined as Urban Green Space and also forms part of the Greenspace Network. Both penetrate deep into the housing to the west, providing an especially strong natural and physical connection between Kingswells and the unit.</li> <li>ii. Open Space covers a relatively small part of the unit (see figure M-3). This includes narrow sections of Semi-Natural and Woodland Open Space along the Den of Maidencraig and Den Burn, an area of Semi-Natural Open Space to the north-east of Kingswells, Golf Course at Auchmill and Woodland and Playing Fields to the west of Mastrick.</li> <li>iii. Much of the unit is included within the Greenspace Network, including a swathe of land extending from Kingswells eastwards to the urban edge at Heathryfold and south to Opportunity Site OP32, west of Sheddocksley. A thin strip of land along the western edge of Sheddocksley (within Opportunity Sites OP32 and OP31) provides connectivity with the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve, at which point the Greenspace Network links east along the North Burn of Rubislaw into the city, west along Den Burn and south into Hazlehead Park. To the north of Kingswells, the network also links with Brimmond Hill.</li> <li>iv. Physical connections with the surrounding urban area are generally good, with many Core Paths linking with Brimmond Hill to the north-west, into adjacent housing areas to the east, south to Hazlehead Park and west to Kingswells.</li> </ul>
d) Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. This is a large unit and the landscape experience varies with the degree of elevation, extent of enclosure, the presence of roads and the proximity to the urban edge.</li> <li>ii. The northern part of the unit is open and elevated, with busy roads that affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity. There are long views east towards the city and north to Dyce, although the elevation and undeveloped foreground provide some sense of detachment.</li> <li>iii. In the west, Burnbrae Moss has a strong sense of naturalness, tranquillity, seclusion and detachment from the city, due to the enclosing woodland and absence of roads.</li> <li>iv. Further east, the area around Redmyres has a strong rural character and a sense of naturalness and detachment from the city, despite views of nearby housing in Bucksburn. This area is quieter, having no vehicle access, with a stronger sense of tranquillity.</li> <li>v. The area around Auchmill golf course is relatively secluded, with tree belts providing a sense of enclosure and helping to screen the surrounding urban edge, although there are long views towards the Don valley from the north-east-facing</li> </ul>



Unit M	
	<p>slopes. Housing along the southern periphery, visible at close range, also affects the rural character.</p> <p>vi. The area south of the Bucks Burn, between Kingswells and Heathryfold, is relatively tranquil and secluded and predominantly rural in character, with no roads and a robust framework of tree belts, hedges and stone dykes. Views of housing to the east exert a strong urban influence throughout, however, and closer to the A944 the sound of traffic is very noticeable.</p> <p>vii. Sheddocksley playing fields, in the south-east of the unit, are relatively secluded, due to a strong pattern of mature tree belts, although there is a stronger urban influence along the eastern boundary, due to the adjacent housing.</p> <p>viii. Within the southern part of the unit, there is a strong contrast between the naturalness and sense of seclusion of the Den of Maidencraig and the urban influences extending from the east, including the busy A944, garden centre and recent housing developments.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	<p>i. The urban edge of this large unit is long and varied. Predominantly late 20th with some more recent housing developments in Bucksburn, Heathryfold, Northfield and Sheddocksley form a continuous urban edge along the east of the unit.</p> <p>ii. To the south, Hazlehead Cemetery and Aberdeen Crematorium, and Hazlehead Park beyond, lie within unit N. To the west of this, mixed arable and improved grass farmland on rising ground within Bogskeathy (LCA 16) provides containment to the Den Burn valley, along the southern edge of the unit.</p> <p>iii. To the west of the unit, late 20th century and more recent housing within Kingswells forms the urban edge, with business park development west of the unit along the A944, visible further to the south.</p>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<p>i. Prominent buildings in the urban edge include large scale business park development along the A944. The granite tower of Woodend Hospital, within the city to the east of Den of Maidencraig, is widely visible, especially from the Den Burn valley. Northfield mast (also within the city) and Perwinnes Radar Tracking Station (outside the city, on high ground to the north) are visible from more elevated areas, especially the north and west parts of the unit.</p> <p>ii. Newhills Church, in the north-east of the unit, is widely visible from the surrounding area.</p>
c) Type of settlement edge	<p>i. The urban edge along the east of the unit includes a mix of housing types, with some business development, all of which is late 20th century, unless noted otherwise.</p>

## Unit M

- ii. Housing in Bucksburn generally forms an abrupt edge and includes single, one and a half and two storey, semi-detached and terraced houses. Where these back on to the unit, vegetation along the edge and within gardens helps to integrate the houses, some of which sit quite low in relation to the adjacent fields. Where houses face onto the unit, they form a more abrupt edge, with little screening. Tree belts provide some screening, notably at the north end of Hopetoun Terrace and along the southern edge of the housing area, where the terraces are aligned north-south and present a more open edge towards the unit. Further east, houses along Howes Road are generally screened from the unit by woodland along Bucks Burn.
- iii. Development is more varied along the north-east facing slopes below Auchmill golf course where it is set amongst woodland and generally well integrated. This includes two storey semi-detached houses, a police headquarters, small business unit, a former primary school and a range of houses, apartments and shops along Auchmill Road (A96), including some early 20th century stone buildings. Blacksmiths Croft, a development of single storey holiday homes, three storey terraces along Cairnfield Place, an industrial unit and recently constructed apartments along Auchmill Road are similarly well-integrated, set amongst trees along the slopes below the golf course.
- iv. Within Heathryfold, single and two storey terraces back onto the unit, with a variety of fences, outbuildings, hedges and some garage courts, forming an abrupt edge to the golf course, although adjacent tree belts provide some screening at the eastern end. Further south, houses on Davidson Drive face the unit, with a wide grass road verge and wire mesh fence forming the edge and amenity tree planting providing a degree of screening. South of this the two storey Heathryburn School forms the edge, open to the north-west but screened to the north and west by a framework of mature tree belts. Further south, the terraced housing along Davidson Drive lies low in relation to the unit, reducing its prominence.
- v. South of this, at Sheddocksley playing fields, a grass verge with amenity tree planting and a wire mesh fence along Springhill Road forms the western edge. Along the southern edge of the playing fields, single and two storey terraced houses back onto the unit. Outbuildings, metal fences and hedges form the edge, the buildings partly screened by garden vegetation and amenity tree planting within the playing fields. Four storey blocks of flats to the north of Taransay Crescent face directly onto the unit and form a more abrupt edge.
- vi. South of the playing fields, a wide tree belt screens housing in Sheddocksley from the unit. Opportunity Site OP32 forms the edge of the unit north of the A944 and the area north of Whitemyres House is surrounded by temporary fencing. The remainder of the Opportunity Site is generally open to the west, although the south-east facing slopes, new woodland plantations to the north and surrounding

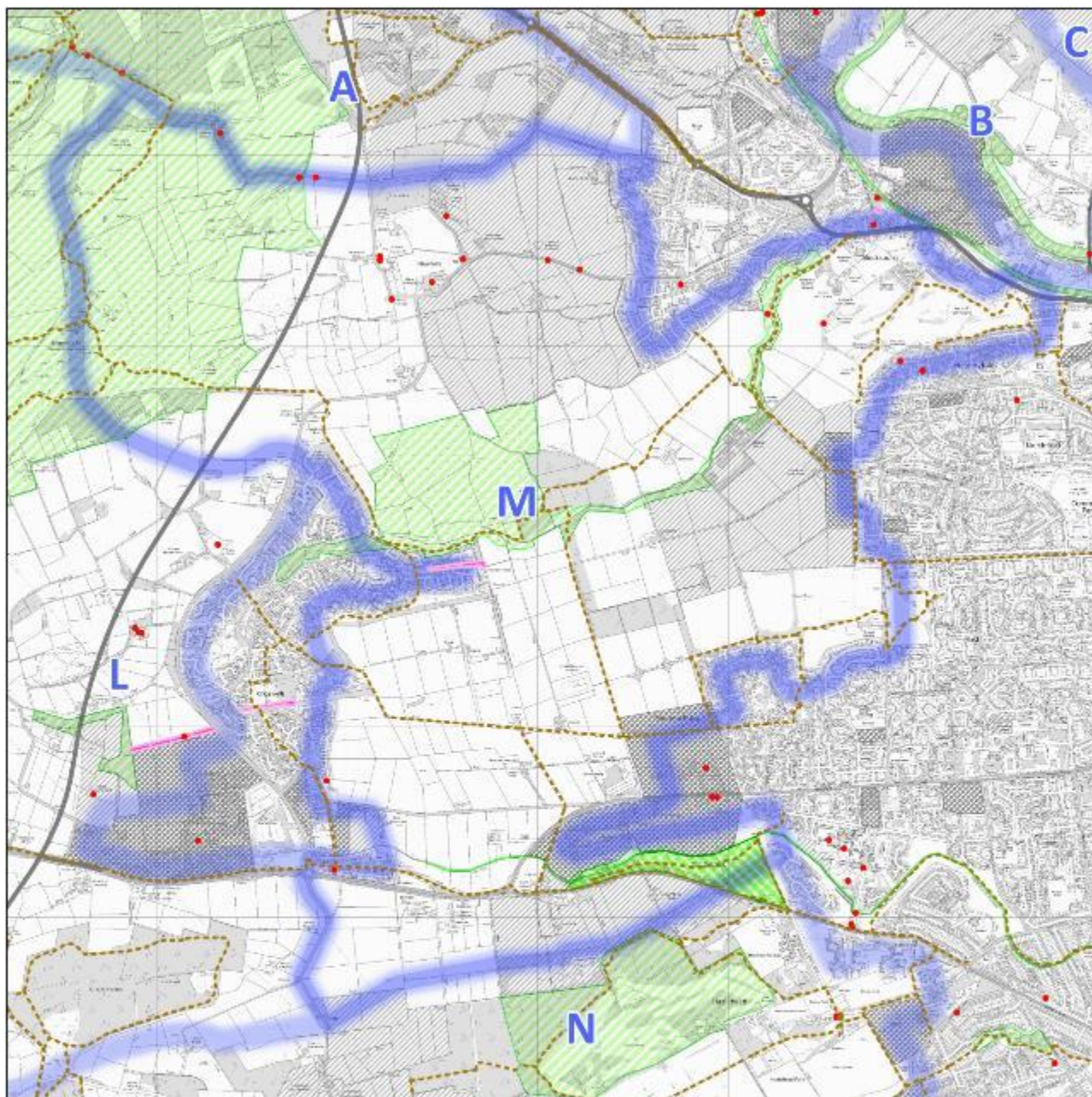
Unit M	
	<p>hedgerows and stone dykes provide a degree of screening. A temporary fence runs along the boundary of Opportunity Site OP31, to the south of the A944. Recently constructed, two and three storey housing on the north side of Maidencraig Way forms a prominent edge along the steep slopes above the Den Burn. A mix of fencing around property boundaries and extensive earthworks that provide access to the existing path network form a prominent edge to the development. South of Opportunity Site OP31, detached, semi-detached and terraced housing backs onto the unit, with a mix of fences, walls and hedges along the edge. These houses are set relatively low with garden vegetation and mature trees providing screening.</p> <p>vii. Kingswells forms the urban edge to the west of the unit. Recent and late 20th century detached and semi-detached housing developments are generally low-lying in relation to the unit and well concealed within a framework of tree belts, although some of the more recent houses, such as those on Derbeth Grange and Concraig Gardens, have little screening of the fenced rear gardens that back onto the unit.</p> <p>viii. South of Kingswells, detached and semi-detached houses along Fairley Road are generally well integrated, relatively low-lying and set within mature woodland.</p> <p>ix. Recent two and single storey, semi-detached and terraced housing within Opportunity Site OP30 on the slopes above Den Burn forms an abrupt edge further south. The Opportunity Site is generally contained by the steep slopes to the north, but is open to the east. Houses facing onto the unnamed minor road along the northern boundary of the site are more prominent.</p> <p>x. Single and one and a half storey houses within East Huxterstone Steading form the eastern edge of the Opportunity Site. Some are stone built, presumably 19th century, set low in the landscape, bounded by stone dykes and hedges and well integrated. South of this, a mix of one and a half and two storey semi-detached and detached houses, some early 20th century, form the urban edge at the south-west corner of the unit. These generally back onto the unit and are well screened by woodland.</p>
d) Type of visual containment	<p>i. The gently rolling east-west aligned ridges of this unit are contained by the farmed lower slopes of Brimmond Hill to the west and by woodland in and near Hazlehead Park to the south. Elevated areas have a predominantly open character, especially to the west, but views from lower slopes are contained by the rolling landform.</p> <p>ii. Tree belts between Kingswells and Sheddocksley provide a degree of containment, screening views of the adjacent urban areas from much of this part of the unit, although there are longer views towards the city and Dyce.</p> <p>iii. Tree belts provide effective containment of some parts of the urban edge, notably at the northern end and along the southern edge of Bucksburn and along the</p>

Unit M	
	<p>western edge of Sheddocksley. Kingswells is also well contained within a strong framework of tree belts.</p> <p>iv. Landform provides a degree of containment along the southern edge of Bucksburn, where the housing sits low in relation to the unit and along the eastern edge of Kingswells, where the wooded slopes of the Bucks Burn provide visual containment.</p>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<p>i. The strongest sense of continuity is from the eastern periphery, where adjacent housing in Bucksburn, Heathryfold, Northfield and Sheddocksley gives a sense of being on the edge of a wider urban area. This is reinforced where there are also longer views towards the city centre, for example from Sheddocksley playing fields or the open slopes above the Den Burn.</p> <p>ii. To the west, there is a limited sense of continuity with Kingswells, which is often screened from view by tree belts or woodland along the Bucks Burn.</p> <p>iii. Burnbrae Moss and the area to the south have a sense of detachment, due to the screening effect of tree belts and woodland, which limit long distance views. The wooded sections of the Den Burn provide a strong sense of detachment from the city, and parts of Auchmill golf course are also secluded.</p> <p>iv. From higher open areas, such as Newhills, the elevation and extent of the intervening rural landscape give a sense of detachment from Dyce and the city centre, visible below.</p>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<p>i. There is widespread informal recreation (walking, jogging, cycling and some horse riding) along the network of Core Paths, other paths and tracks, and also within the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve, which is particularly well-used. Sheddocksley playing fields and Auchmill golf course provide formal recreational facilities and are also used for informal recreation.</p> <p>ii. There is open access at Sheddocksley playing fields, where there is a car park and sports pavilions and also throughout the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve, which also has a dedicated car park. There is more limited access within semi-natural areas at Burnbrae Moss. Auchmill golf course has a car park and club house and is crossed by a number of paths.</p>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<p>i. There is an extensive network of linear recreational routes, including Core Paths, along the Den Burn and Bucks Burn, linking to other routes along tracks or field boundaries. This network is well connected with the surrounding areas and appears to be well used. To the north-west, it connects with Brimmond Hill via Core Path 33. There are also several links into the adjacent housing to the east,</p>

Unit M	
	<p>including Core Path 44, Core Path8, Core Path 15, Core Path 44, Core Path 45, Core Path 93, Core Path 28 and Core Path 91.</p> <p>ii. To the south Core Path 57 and Core Path 58 provide links into Hazlehead Park and Core Path 91, Core Path 29, Core Path42 link into Kingswells to the west of the unit. Core Path 91 also has a dedicated cycle path, providing an alternative east-west route to the A944.</p>
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. Much of the unit is visible from Brimmond Hill and parts can also be seen from surrounding elevated areas, including Perwinnes Hill, Tullos and Kincorth Hills, and Kingshill. Higher areas of the unit are visible from western areas of the city and Newhills Parish Church is widely visible from the surrounding areas. There are also views of the Den Burn valley from the A944 and Lang Stracht.</p> <p>ii. There are views of the unit from housing areas along much of the eastern periphery, although tree belts limit visibility in places. Steep wooded slopes above Auchmill limit views into the unit from the north-eastern periphery. To the west, there is little visibility of the unit from houses in Kingswells due to their wooded setting and relatively low elevation</p> <p>iii. Sheddocksley playing fields and the Den Burn are largely hidden, except from urban areas to the east.</p> <p>iv. Large parts of the unit, especially to the north and west, are visible from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, which is on an embankment as it skirts Brimmond Hill.</p>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<p>i. Views from the slopes of the Den Burn and Bucks Burn valleys are generally contained by rising ground, but from more elevated parts of the unit there are wide views towards the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and Brimmond Hill, Perwinnes Hill, the Don Valley and Dyce, Tullos and Kincorth Hills, the sea and tower blocks in the city centre.</p> <p>ii. From the wider, western section of the Bucks Burn valley there are some views towards Kingswells and Brimmond Hill. There are also long views east towards the city and west to recent business developments along the A944 and Kingshill from parts of the Den Burn valley.</p>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<p>i. The unit forms a rural backdrop when seen from the adjacent urban areas of Bucksburn, Heathryfold, Northfield and Sheddocksley, from parts of the city further to the east and also from the north-east slopes above the Don valley.</p>

Unit M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. The northern and western parts of the unit form the wider setting to Kingswells and the foreground in views from Brimmond Hill and Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route towards the city. The Den of Maidencraig contributes a rural character to views from the A944 corridor towards the city.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Den Burn valley is visible from the A944 and, together with Hazlehead Park to the south, provides an important undeveloped setting to the city along a main approach to the city from the west. Minor but busy roads in the Newhills area also have some local gateway function.</li> </ul>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit has a key role in separating housing in Kingswells from the urban areas to the east and provides a connection with the wider rural landscape to west.</li> <li>ii. The northern part of the unit separates Brimmond Hill and Bucksburn, while Auchmill golf course separates urban development to the north, east and south.</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Some of the tree belts, especially between Sheddocksley and Kingswells and within the Den Burn valley, are even-aged, with few young trees to provide continuity.</li> <li>ii. Stone dykes are generally in fair condition, except those to the north-east of Auchmill golf course, within parts of the area near Redmyres and along the farmed slopes above the Den Burn valley, where post and wire fences are also in poor condition. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route corridor has severed the field pattern to the north-west of the unit.</li> <li>iii. Some property boundaries along the eastern edge of the unit are highly visible, with a variety of materials that include wire mesh fencing. Some are in poor condition.</li> <li>iv. Fly tipping occurs in the parts of the unit with ready vehicle access, such as the northern area east of Newhills and the Den Burn valley, but is also noticeable in Sheddocksley playing fields.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Much of the agricultural land is actively managed, although pastures to the north-east of Auchmill golf course are in poor condition and some fields within the Den Burn valley appear unmanaged. Tree belts and many of the woodlands also appear unmanaged.</li> <li>ii. Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve, Auchmill golf course and Sheddocksley sports fields are all actively managed.</li> </ul>

Figure M-2: Designations



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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**Natural Heritage Designations**

- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

**Cultural Heritage Designations**

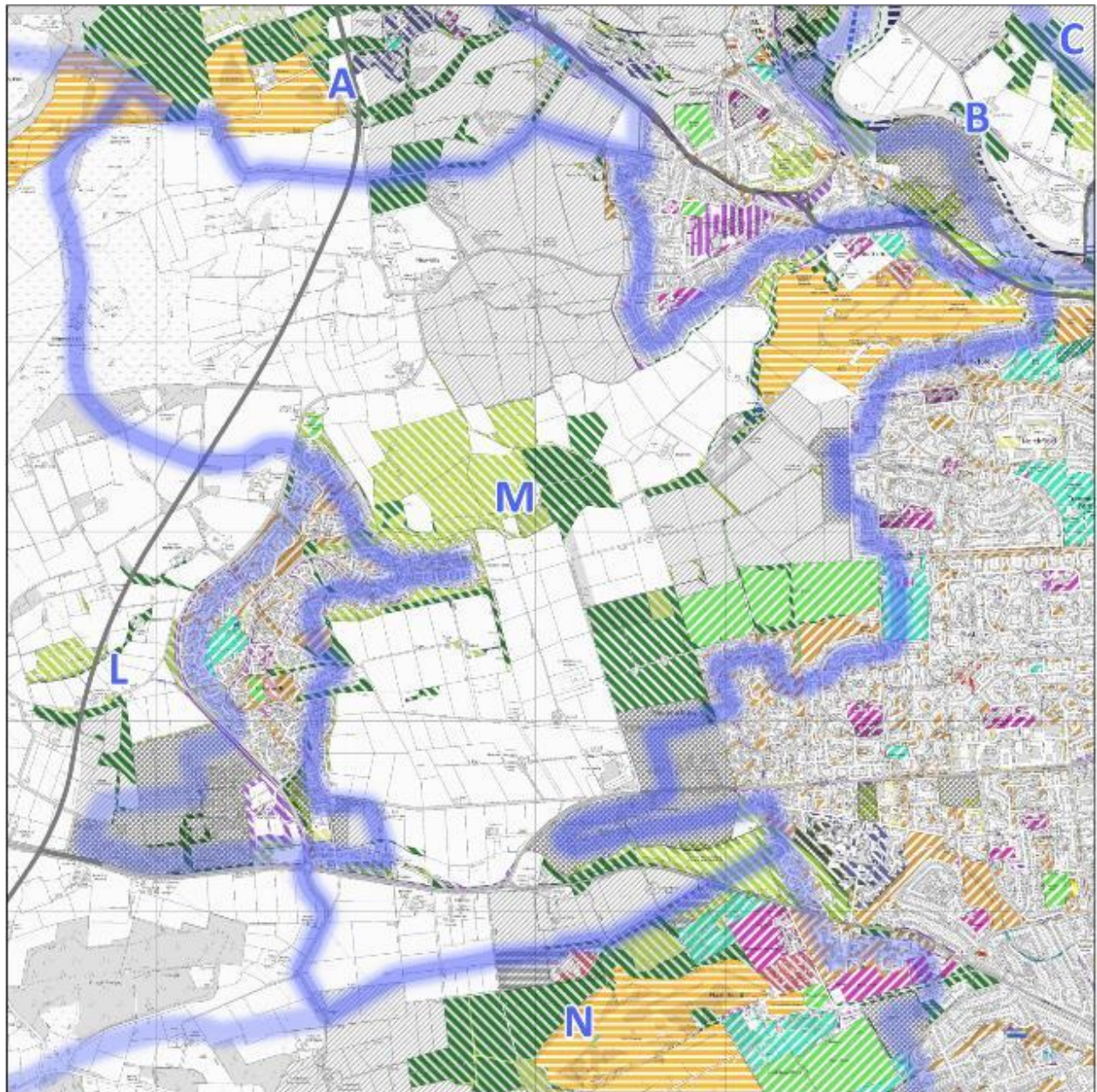
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Aberdeen City LDP**

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure M-3: Open Space



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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Peri Urban Unit boundary

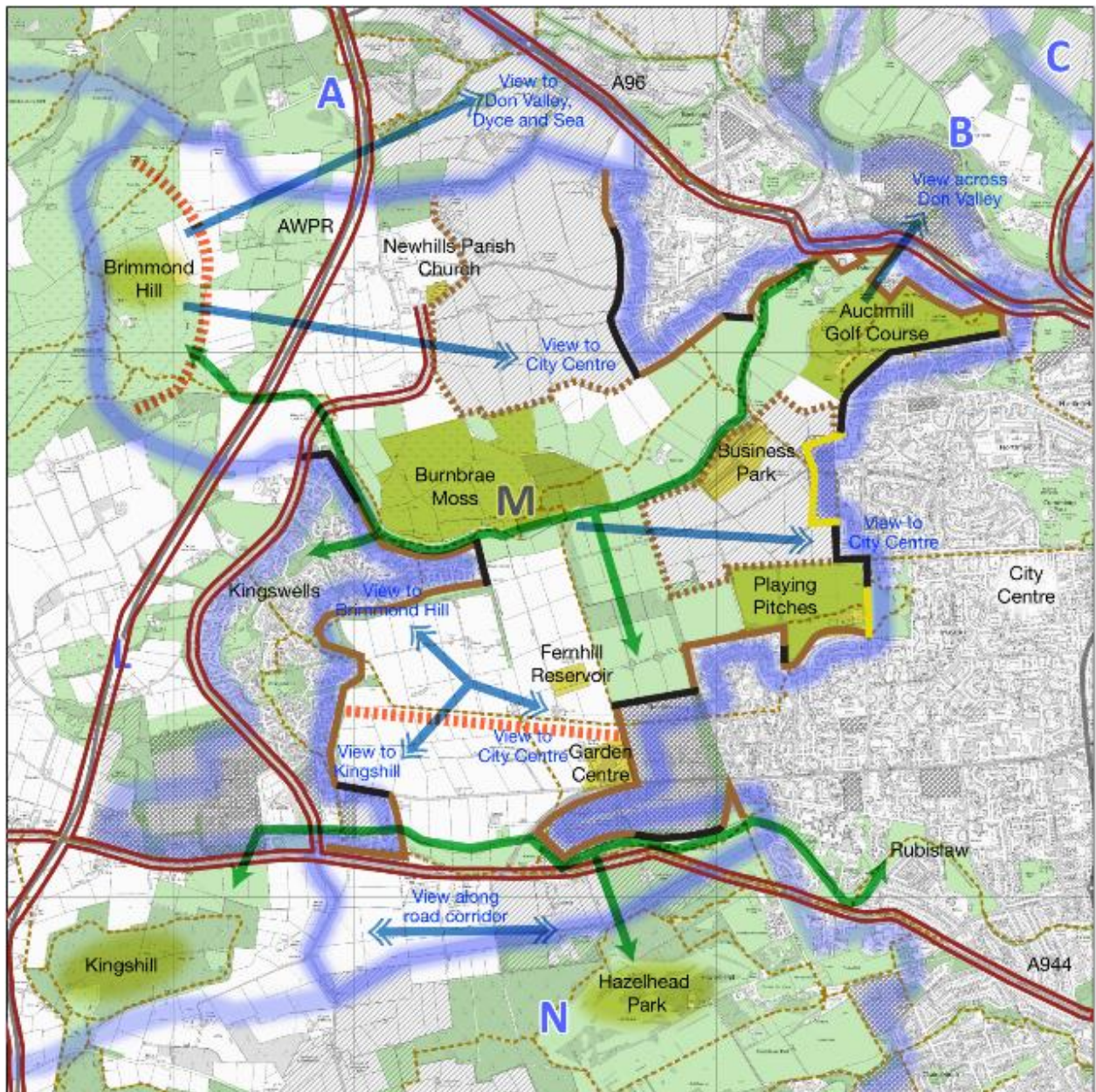
#### Open Space Audit 2010

- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Bowling Greens
- Cemetery
- Churchyard
- Civic Space
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes

- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Railway
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland



Figure M-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017  
Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway

## Photographic study



Housing to the south of Sheddocksley playing fields



Looking west to Kingswells housing and consumption dykes



Housing in Bucksburn seen from Auchmill golf course



Rolling landform, looking south from Newhills to Kingswells



Core Path 27 within Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve



Looking north to Bucksburn from Bucksburn House



New housing within OP32, from Den of Maidencraig



Looking south-west to Kingshill from the slopes of Den Burn

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance the diversity and connectivity of important habitats including broadleaved woodland, rush pasture, scrub, wet heath, gorse and neutral grasslands.*
- b) *Maintain the open character of the landscape.*
- c) *Conserve and enhance the woodlands and beach shelterbelts.*
- d) *Encourage the planting of small broadleaved woodlands near to farmsteads, other woodlands and settlements.*
- e) *Encourage appropriately designed woodland planting that would enhance gateway routes to the city.*
- f) *Maintain the pattern of small holdings and rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes, and seek to replace post and wire fences with stone dykes.*
- g) *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.*
- h) *Safeguard the setting of listed buildings, and archaeological features, and important historic features, such as consumption dykes, the cluster of listed buildings around Newhills and Newhill ruined church and the remains of Maidencraig Mill on the Den Burn.*
- i) *Maintain the undeveloped character of upper hill slopes and summits, and the pattern of scattered farmsteads access by minor roads across lower hill slopes.*
- j) Maintain and manage the line of beech trees along the A944 and encourage new planting to retain and extend this feature (also see P-U unit L).
- k) Under-plant beech tree belts to provide longer term continuity of these distinctive features. Consider planting broadleaves to replace conifer-dominated woodlands, for example within Burnbrae Moss or around Auchmill golf course, to bring landscape and wildlife benefits in the longer term.
- l) Introduce appropriate woodland planting along the eastern periphery to improve habitat connectivity and provide integration of housing developments where possible.
- m) Maintain the network of tracks and paths used from informal recreation. Improvements, e.g. to surfacing and drainage, could facilitate their use for active travel too. Introduce additional footpaths with appropriate surfacing, signage and benches within the northern part of the unit, including Burnbrae Moss.
- n) Maintain and enhance the Green Space Network, avoiding further fragmentation and improving connectivity between the city and rural areas to the west.
- o) Enhance the management of the amenity grassland within the golf course and playing fields for biodiversity, creating new grassland habitats where appropriate.
- p) Upgrade Sheddocksley recreational facilities, and plant shrubs and trees in the car park to enhance the frontage from Springhill Road.

- q) Encourage community-led tree planting and landscape maintenance projects.
- r) *Maintain open views towards the city, sea and nearby hills.*
- s) *Maintain the experience of seclusion and semi-natural character within the Den of Maidencraig and pockets of rural character elsewhere.*

## Overview of unit



View from near eastern end of Hazlehead Park looking north

With most of the urban edge screened from view by woodland and tree belts, there is a sudden transition from the dense western edge of the city to recreational and rural areas. Collectively, the network of important open spaces within a framework of trees and woodlands provide a wide range of informal and formal recreational activities. Further west, a pattern of pastures, stone walls and woodlands with a distinctive estate character give way to an extensive coverage of dense conifer woodlands. A further transition occurs towards the outer parts of the unit where a largely agricultural landscape exhibits a strong rural and undeveloped character.

Throughout the entire eastern part of the unit, there is an extensive network of well-connected Core Paths with very good links to surrounding urban areas and adjacent peri-urban units. Woodland and other habitat are also relatively well connected across eastern parts with important links to the north and south of the unit. The unit has limited gateway function (the minor Countesswells Road), but views to it, and its pattern of woodlands, tree belts and forests form an important wooded backdrop to adjacent units and gateways routes within them.

Trees and woodlands along the urban edge also provide an important definition to the urban edge. Nearly all of the western edge of the city is visually separated from Hazlehead Park and areas to south by tree belts and/or garden vegetation. From areas of nearby open space, this provides a sense of

detachment from the city and contributes towards the enjoyment of recreational activity. Along the southern edge of unit, trees and woodlands are also important in provided a backdrop and setting to settlement along the Dee Valley

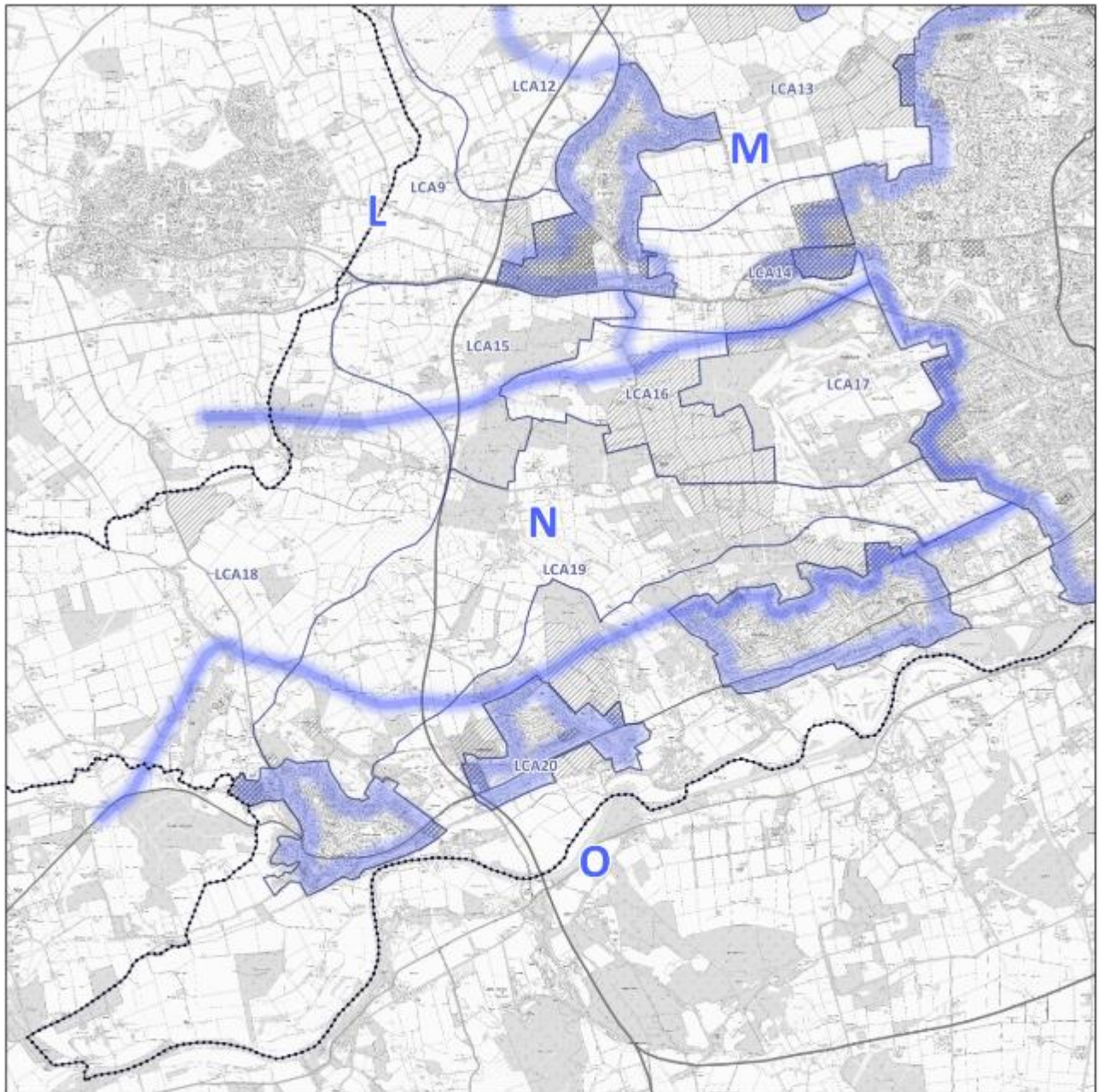
### **Location and landscape context**

Towards the urban edge of the city, the unit incorporates *Hazlehead Park* (LCA 17) and to its south, *Countesswells* (LCA 19). To the west of Hazlehead Park, a pattern of large geometric conifer plantations within *Bogskeathy* (LCA16) extend south towards the northern fringes of the *Dee Valley* (LCA 20) which forms most of the southern fringes of this peri-urban unit. Further west, the unit includes the more rural parts of the *Countesswells* LCA and beyond the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, *Leuchar & Silver Burns* (LCA 18) (see figure N-1).

The unit displays a strong contrast between extensive residential development along the western fringes of the city and a sudden transition to adjacent areas of open space, and further west to large coniferous woodlands and rural farmland beyond. With extensive areas of public park, woodlands and other amenity open space accessed by a well-connected network of footpaths, the unit is particularly important for urban fringe recreation and the provision of active travel and recreational routes to surrounding areas.

In contrast to the relatively well wooded and treed character of this unit, units L and M located to the north are more open in character and have a greater variation of settlement types and urban edges. To the south, the valley landform and associated pattern of settlements dotted along the valley sides of unit O set it apart from this unit.

Figure N-1: Unit boundary



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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## Analysis

Unit N	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
<p>a) Landform, landcover and land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Along the urban edge of the city, the landform is flat although to the north-west of Hazlehead Park, it gently rises to form a low rising ridge. To the west of this, a shallow basin is contained by gently rising ground around the edges of Bogskeathy (LCA16). To the south of Hazlehead Park, the landform in the eastern part of Countesswells (LCA19) gently undulates and slopes gradually to the south towards the Dee Valley (peri-urban unit O). Further west, a shallow basin that accommodates a network of small burns flowing into the Dee is contained by low rolling ridges. Across the outer parts of the unit within the central part of Leuchar &amp; Silver Burns (LCA 18), a large scale gently undulating landform with broad, shallow basins is contained by low, smoothly rounded ridges.</li> <li>ii. Hazlehead Park is heavily wooded and includes various gardens and other horticultural interests, children’s play areas and other facilities. The park itself is surrounded by football pitches, golf courses, fields and woodlands with walking and cycling paths. Outside of the park to the south, several playing fields and sport pitches adjoin the urban edge. Further west, landcover is mostly improved grasslands that give way to an almost continuous coverage of extensive conifer plantations across the central part of the area. Outer parts of the unit are predominately improved grasslands with occasional fields of arable and coniferous woodlands.</li> <li>iii. With an extensive coverage of gardens, sports pitches and a golf course, land use across Hazlehead Park is largely recreational. Around the edges of park, there are plant nurseries, and to the north-east, a school. Aberdeen Crematorium and Hazlehead Cemetery are located just to the north. In south-eastern parts of the unit, formal recreation is the primary land use adjacent to the urban edge although with areas of pastoral farming, nurseries, allotments, water storage, horse-grazing and riding stables, land use across this part of the unit is more diverse. Further west, land use is mainly agricultural but with some pockets of forestry, mineral extraction and a golf course.</li> </ul>
<p>b) Natural and cultural designations within peri-urban unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Although there are no nationally important sites for nature conservation, there are several Local Nature Conservation Sites scattered through the unit. Cults Quarry, Denwood, Foggieton, Hazlehead Park, South Last Mire and the northern parts of Murtle Den Local Nature Conservation Sites all include significant areas of broadleaved woodland, amongst other habitats.</li> <li>ii. Cultural designations are also scattered throughout most of the unit although these tend to be located away from the urban edge of the city. Across central parts, these include Listed Buildings (e.g. Countesswells House and dovecote) associated with the estate landscapes and several March Stones. Further west,</li> </ul>



Unit N	
	<p>the landscape contains some of the earliest-surviving evidence for occupation in the study 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.</p>
<p>c) Presence of open space and degrees of connectivity</p>	<p>i. The provision of Open Space (see figure L-2) is concentrated along the urban edges towards the eastern parts of the unit. At Hazlehead Park, a large area of Golf Course and Amenity Open Spaces of varying types are enclosed by Woodlands and Semi-Natural habitats. To the south of the park, there are Playing Fields and Allotments. Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Space types are found above the Dee Valley, mostly notably an extensive area of woodland above Cults. There are no designated Open Spaces across western parts of the unit.</p> <p>ii. The majority of the unit from the urban edge of the city to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is designated Green Space Network. In addition to providing good habitat links across eastern parts of the unit, there is good connectivity to Green Space Network in adjacent units L and M to north, and unit O to the south.</p>
<p>d) Experience</p>	<p>i. Across central and eastern parts, a good coverage of trees and woodland contribute to a strong sense of seclusion and a degree of relative tranquillity. Despite its proximity to urban areas, much of this landscape has a rural character with a sense of detachment from the city although only very close to the urban edge does the sense of detachment diminish.</p> <p>ii. Further to the west, the unit has a distinctive rural and undeveloped character with a sense of relative tranquillity and separation from the city.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
<p>a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development</p>	<p>i. Aberdeen Crematorium and associated grounds form the northern edge to Hazlehead Park. Along the north-eastern edge of the unit, well-spaced, post war terraced two storey houses and bungalows, with several prominent high rise flats beyond, are set back from the edge of park by amenity greenspace. To the south of these, the edge is formed by the recently constructed developments at Pinewood and Hazeldene of large detached houses. Further south to the boundary with unit O, the linear edge consists of a regular pattern of one and a half storey mid to late twentieth century semi-detached bungalows.</p> <p>ii. Along the southern boundary of the unit, the edge of Cults consists of post war and some more recent semi-detached houses and bungalows of varied styles. Part of Friarsfield (Opportunity Site OP 41) on the northern edge of Cults is currently under construction and consists of modern and relatively dense</p>

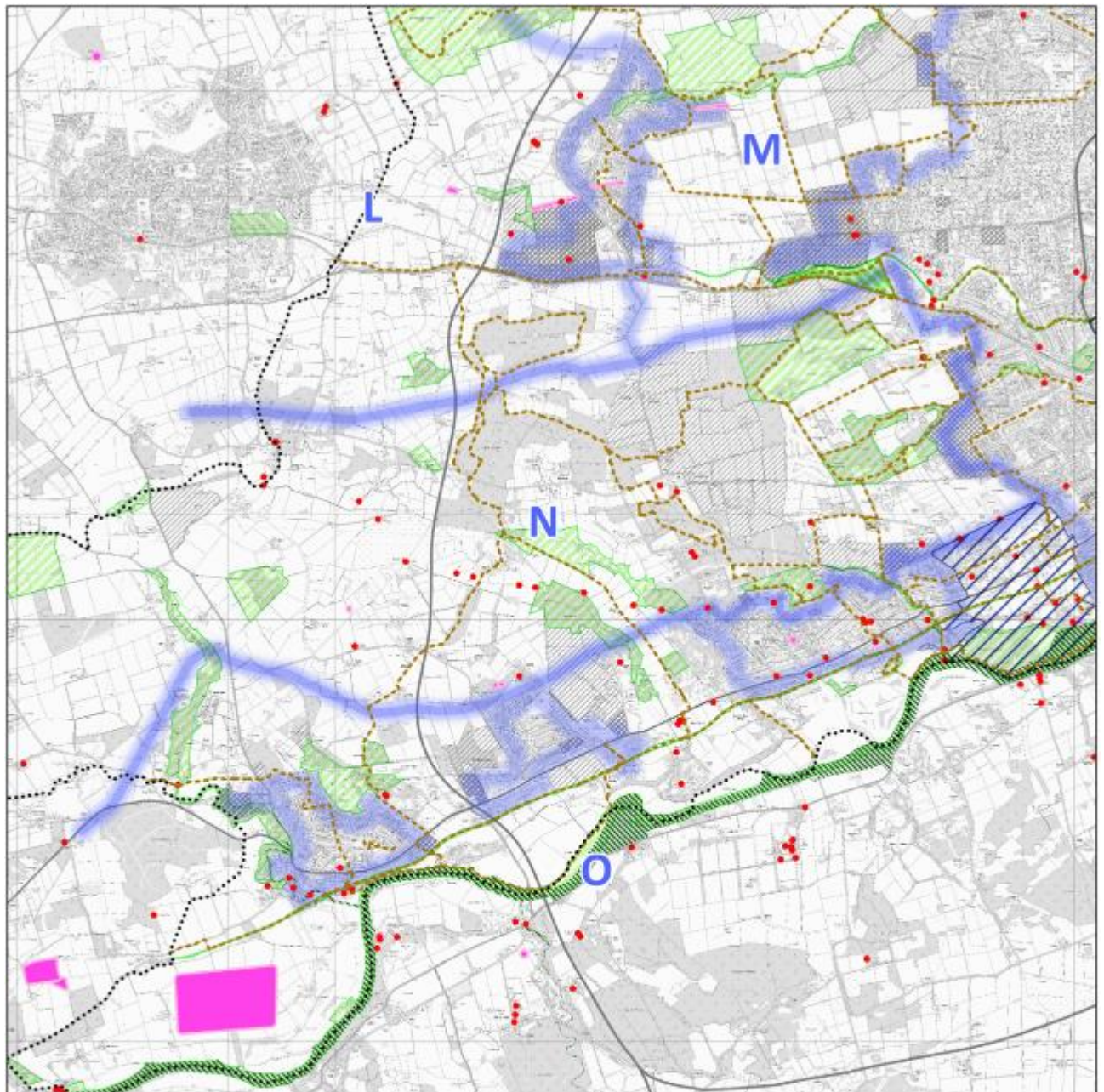
Unit N	
	<p>detached and semi-detached houses. The edge of Bielside is similar to Cults but with a greater proportion and continuity of bungalows and more recent detached housing development. Further west, the northern edge of Milltimber consists of both mid to late and late twentieth century well-spaced detached houses and bungalows.</p>
b) Prominent and distinctive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From parts of from parts of Hazelwood Park, several high rise flats (Hazlehead) are prominent above the intervening tree line.</li> <li>ii. Although the distinctive buildings of Cults Academy are prominent in view from parts of unit O, woodland along its north tends to screen views from this unit. From some nearby areas, the ongoing construction of housing development at Friarsfield (Opportunity Site OP 41) is also locally prominent on the upper side of the Dee Valley.</li> <li>iii. Beyond the urban edge, a sport pavilion and grandstand are prominent in the local landscape and a line of large pylons running east to west are prominent in open parts of the unit. Towards the west, most of the unit has a strong undeveloped character although there are several locally distinctive estate buildings and traditional farmsteads scattered across the rural landscape.</li> </ul>
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Along the western edge of the city adjoining Hazlehead Park, houses are generally well concealed within a framework of linear tree belts with pockets of amenity open space. To the south of Hazlehead Park, garden trees and other vegetation form the edge to rear facing gardens that back onto adjacent sports pitches.</li> <li>ii. Along the southern edge of the unit, the settlements of Cults, Bielside and Milltimber are also generally edged by dense woodland and trees. Along parts of the edges of Cults there are several short sections where residential development bound by low stone walls forms a relatively hard urban edge although this is softened in many places by garden vegetation.</li> <li>iii. The northern edge of Friarsfield (Opportunity Site OP41) is likely to be partly treed/wooded and partly hard urban. Along the northern edge of Oldfold (Opportunity Site OP48) on the eastern edge of Milltimber, the future urban edge is likely to be a mix of woodland, hard urban and open types. The edges around Countesswells (Opportunity Site OP38) in the centre of the unit are likely to be predominantly formed of woodland and trees with pockets of open space and associated footpaths.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The western edge of the City adjacent to Hazlehead Park is generally well contained by tree belts. To the south of park, garden trees and vegetation provide a degree of containment to the low-lying nature of residential development.</li> </ul>

Unit N	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Along the southern edge of unit, dense broadleaved woodland above Bieldside and much of Cults contains the lower-lying settlement and to the east of this, trees and the valley landform contain the settlement edge. Further to the west, a dense area of broadleaved woodland contains the lower-lying settlement of Milltimber.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From most eastern parts of the unit, the relatively flat topography, and intervening woodlands and tree belts limit the sense of continuity with the nearby extensive urban area of the City. From some open areas however, several tower blocks are evident above the treeline and there are occasional glimpses of dense residential development along parts of the edge.</li> <li>ii. Along the southern edge of the unit, there are occasional open views across the Dee Valley where the pattern of clustered settlements is clearly evident extending the along the valley side.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The unit provides a vital recreational resource to city. In particular, Hazlehead Park is very popular with residents and visitors to the city. There are widespread opportunities for formal and informal activity including walking, cycling, general enjoyment of the gardens and surrounding grounds and Hazlehead and Den Woods, use of sports pitches and the golf course. To the south of the park, the sport pitches of Robert Gordon’s College are used for a range of organised sports and nearby allotments also provide an important resource for local residents.</li> <li>ii. Across more rural parts of the unit, opportunities for recreation include walking and cycling along country roads and footpaths, and informal recreation in some woodlands, in particular the Forestry Commission managed sites of Countesswells and Foggieton Woods. Some pastures are also used for horse riding.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The eastern parts of the unit contain a well-connected network of Core Paths that link to nearby urban areas and adjacent peri-urban units.</li> <li>ii. In and around Hazlehead Park, Core Paths 56, 57 and 58 provide a circular route with several links to nearby residential areas. Core Path 56 leads south and connects with Core Path 61 that loops around Den Wood. This links with Core Path 65 that leads east and along the edge of Craigiebuckler with several routes leading off this into the city.</li> <li>iii. Leading south from Core Path 61 in Den Wood, Core Path 87 connects with Core Path 63 with both routes leading to the edge of Cults. Core 87 also connects with Core Path that along with Core Path 55, provide routes through Foggieton Woods. Further west, Core Paths 48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 89 and 90 provide a well-connected</li> </ul>

Unit N	
	network through Blackhill towards Gairnhill to the north and Milltimber to the south.
4 Views	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. Views to the unit from the north are almost entirely curtailed by dense intervening conifer plantations and from urban areas to the east, by intervening development and tree belts along the urban edge. From the lower lying Dee Valley to the south, rising landform and skyline woods prevent views of most of the unit although a bank of narrow linear walled pastures located above Cults is prominent in views from south Deeside.</p>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<p>i. From Hazlehead Park, views to the city and surrounding areas are largely restricted by woodland and trees although long glimpsed views across south-eastern parts city are evident from the more elevated and open parts of the golf course.</p> <p>ii. To the south and west of Hazlehead Park, views are generally short range where curtailed by nearby trees and woodlands although some 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.</p> <p>iii. From the outer western parts of the unit, there are long and expansive views towards the Grampian hills and Bennachie.</p>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<p>i. Situated at the central part of the western edge of the City, the unit provides a very important recreational function with very good footpath and habitat links to surrounding areas.</p> <p>ii. The pattern of large conifer blocks and the strong wooded estate character that dominates eastern and central parts of the unit provide a distinctive wooded backdrop to adjacent peri-urban units and containing setting to nearby urban areas.</p> <p>iii. Lower-lying agricultural areas to the west of the unit provide a rural setting to the fringes of the city.</p> <p>iv. When travelling along the A93 within peri-urban O, skyline woodlands on the southern edge of this unit provide an important backdrop to the Dee Valley.</p>
b) Gateway function	<p>i. The only key transport corridor that traverses the unit is the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Although there are no key viewpoints along the section that</p>

Unit N	
	<p>passes through the unit, surrounding areas of farmland, woodland and forestry provide an undeveloped and rural experience around the fringes of the city.</p> <p>i. The unit has a gateway for travellers on Countesswells Road and the B9119 (Skene Road), both of which are busy routes to and from the city.</p>
c) Separation function	i. The unit does provide any notable separation functions.
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<p>i. In general, the landscape is well managed although there are some pockets of under managed pastures and in places, field boundaries are in a poor state of repair and many trees are over mature.</p> <p>ii. The diversity of urban fringe land uses and associated infrastructure such as and semi-derelict buildings, pylons, fencing and signage also detracts from the rural landscape.</p>
b) Degree of management evident	<p>i. Semi-natural habitats, and recreational open spaces and associated facilities are generally well managed.</p> <p>ii. Farmland is generally intensively managed for mixed agriculture although some tree belts and woodlands appear unmanaged.</p>

Figure N-2: Designations



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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**Natural Heritage Designations**

- Special Area of Conservation
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

**Cultural Heritage Designations**

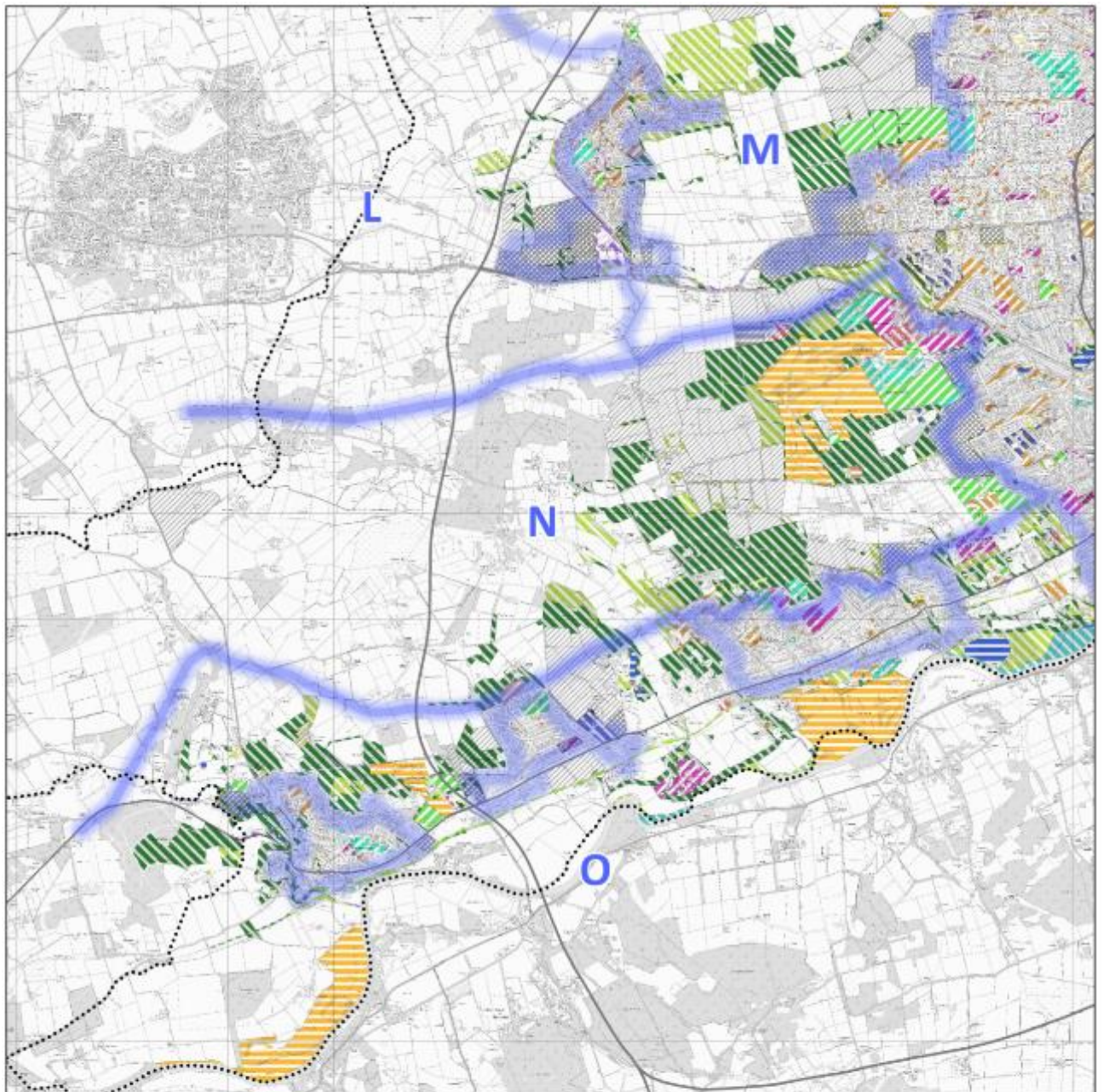
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Aberdeen City LDP**

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure N-3: Open Space



**Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment**

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

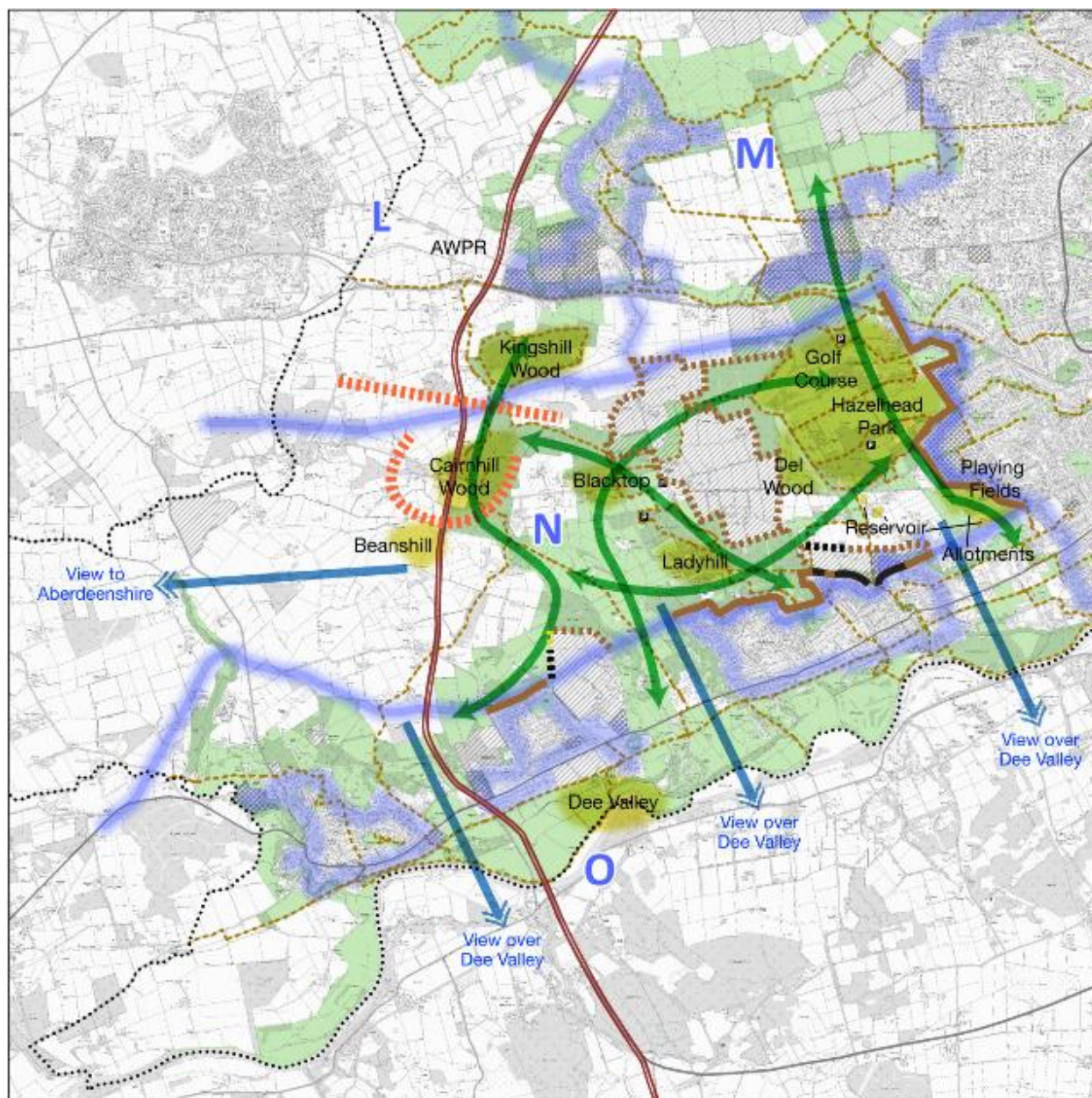
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Peri Urban Unit boundary

**Open Space Audit 2010**

- Allotment
- Amenity- Business
- Amenity- Residential
- Amenity- Transport
- Area Undergoing Change
- Bowling Greens
- Cemetery
- Churchyard
- Civic Space
- Foreshore/ Rocks
- Golf Courses
- Green Access Routes
- Institutional Grounds
- Open Semi-Natural
- Open Water
- Other Functional Greenspace
- Other Sports
- Playing Fields
- Playspace
- Public Park and Garden
- Riparian Routes
- School Grounds
- Tennis Courts
- Woodland

Figure N-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017

Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Core Path
- Greenspace Network
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

### Urban edge type

- Existing open edge
- Likely future open edge
- Existing wooded edge
- Likely future wooded edge
- Existing hard urban edge
- Likely future hard urban edge

- Containment by landform
- Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity
- Key views
- Feature
- Urban style fences
- Main sea route
- Main road route
- Main rail route
- Gateway



## Photographic study



North-eastern urban edge of Hazlehead Park



Urban edge of Hazeldene



Sport pitches and pavilion at Robert Gordon's College



Footpath along Eastern edge of Hazlehead Park



Recent residential development on northern edge of Cults



Urban edge to south of Hazlehead Park



Estate woodlands and pastures



Looking west towards Gairnhill and the distant Grampians

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Conserve and enhance the wooded parkland character of Hazlehead park and protect important open spaces.*
- b) *Diversify the age and species mix of woodland and encourage the planting of new parkland trees where appropriate in Hazlehead park. Encourage appropriately designed and located woodland planting while maintaining a balance of open space.*
- c) *Retain the avenues of mature trees along tracks and paths in Hazlehead Park that enclose areas of open space into a series of distinct geometric compartments.*
- d) *Maintain the pattern of rectilinear fields enclosed by stone dykes – some with gorse and beech trees too - across lower ground.*
- e) *Conserve and enhance the diversity of 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.*
- f) *Conserve the strong wooded estate character, especially the influence Countesswells House, and its policy woodlands and the wooded and parkland landscapes at Hazlehead and nearby.*
- g) *Maintain the settlement pattern, in the more rural areas, of regularly scattered, compact farmsteads and cottages.*
- h) *Conserve and enhance the recreational value of extensive areas of open spaces, parks, woodlands and forests, and the network of footpaths that connect them.*
- i) *Consider planting further trees along the urban edge to reinforce the urban to rural transition.*
- j) *Conserve and enhance the character of rural roads and promote active travel routes from the city into the wider countryside.*
- k) *Maintain the variety of views from short range ones enclosed by woodland that suddenly open out to longer range views from elevated areas.*
- l) *Retain the strong rural character, sense of peace, seclusion and detachment from the city.*

## Overview of unit



Looking across the valley floor towards Cults

The valley is a highly distinctive landscape feature in defining the setting to the city and is an important resource for nature conservation, access and recreation. The most notable contrast in urban to rural transition occurs between the prevailing busy and partially developed north part of the unit (within Aberdeen) and separated by the River Dee and the largely undeveloped wooded valley sides within Aberdeenshire.

Along the northern side of the valley, there is a notable but gradual transition from the busy southwestern edge of the city towards the more rural parts of the unit towards Peterculter. When travelling west along the A93, the experience of busy traffic when travelling through the sequence of settlements along its length contrasts with the mostly undeveloped valley floor and areas of undeveloped valley sides.

Overall, the line of settlements along the valley sides is well integrated into the landscape with edges mostly defined by woodland or mature tree and garden vegetation. As result, there is generally a clear distinction between urban areas and surrounding farmland and woodland.

Despite the influences of relatively extensive built development and busy roads along northern parts of the unit, there is a marked transition from the southern edges of development along the river terraces to the largely undeveloped valley floor. To the south of the river, the pattern of fields enclosed woodlands has a relatively strong rural character. Despite the proximity of the city, the screening provided by trees and woodland and the valley landform results in a sense of detachment from it.

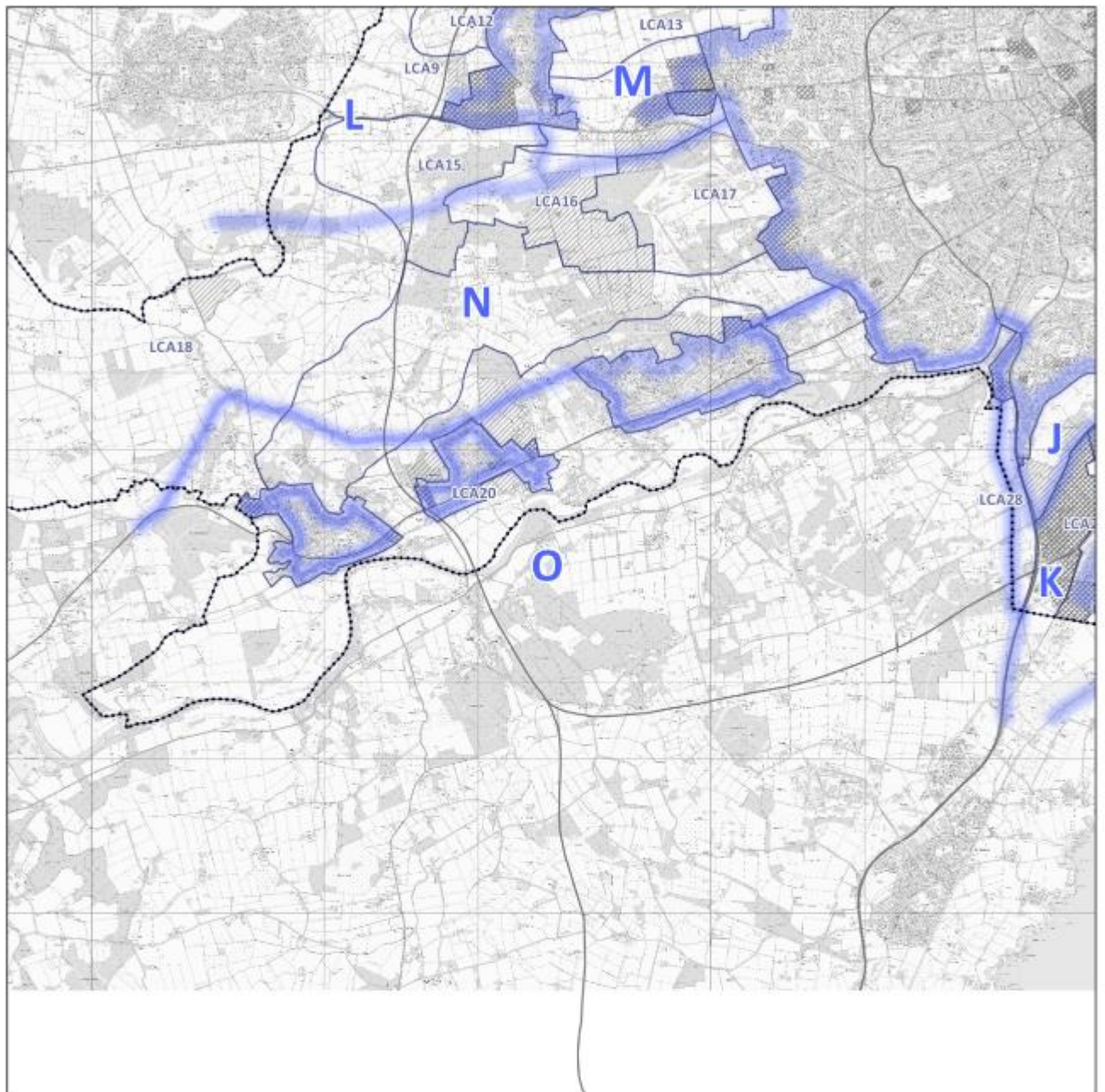
### **Location and landscape context**

The unit is centred on the Dee Valley that extends from the western edge of the city, to Peterculter in the west and south into Aberdeenshire. In Aberdeen, the unit includes all of the *Dee Valley* (LCA 20), and *South Deeside Upper Slopes* (LCA 28) and to the north of Peterculter, small parts of *Countesswells* (LCA 19) and *Leuchar & Silver Burns* (LCA 18). In Aberdeenshire, the north facing slopes form the *Broad Wooded and Farmed Valley* landscape character type (see figure O-1).

The unit reflects the distinctive valley landform that forms a major landscape feature in the southern part of the city. The northern slopes contain a linear pattern of separated settlements connected by a main road and the Deeside Way recreational route that leads into and out of the city. Within Aberdeenshire, the largely undeveloped valley slopes on the south side provide an important undeveloped setting that contrasts with the partly settled northern slopes

The valley landform greatly influences how the unit functions in terms of settlement, transport, access, habitat networks and recreation. Collectively, these factors set it apart from unit O to the north and unit J to the east.

Figure O-1: Unit boundary



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

- Aberdeen City Council boundary
- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- Landscape Character Area
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

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## Analysis

Unit O	
1 Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics	
a) Landform, landcover and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The River Dee meanders across a broad valley floor. The northern lower valley sides abutting the floodplain tend to be steeper before slackening to the north to form more gently sloping terraces. A series of low wooded ridges form 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. To west, the Culter Burn is contained within a steep narrow den. Within Aberdeenshire, the southern slopes of the valley are largely undeveloped and provided a strong sense of wooded enclosure to the river corridor.</li> <li>ii. The River Dee is a major river. Along sections of the river bank, of the Dee and its tributaries, semi-natural habitat includes narrow swathes of grasslands, marginal vegetation, with patches of willow and alder trees. 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 across the northern slopes, provide a framework for built development. In addition, garden and street trees within the settlements add to the well-treed appearance of the valley.</li> <li>iii. There is a diverse pattern of land use that indicates a long history of settlement and the strategic importance of the river corridor. This includes mixed agriculture, forestry, settlement, recreation, golf courses and a reservoir. A series of historic settlements on the northern side, separated by areas of pasture and woodland contrast with the prevailing undeveloped southern valley sides.</li> <li>iv. Enclosed by low stone dykes, the field pattern is emphasised by tree belts and woodland blocks, which extend down both valley sides including the undeveloped areas between settlements on the northern side. There is some variation in field shape and size. Following the lower valley side landform, the almost straight A93 form is one of the main approaches into the city with a series of minor roads running perpendicular up the valleys side. Above the river terraces, a former railway line accommodates the Deeside Way recreational trail although much the river is largely inaccessible and only accommodates three road crossings (the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, adjacent B979 crossing and the Bridge of Dee). These crossing connect with the busy B9077 that follows the southern bank of the river.</li> </ul>
b) Natural and cultural designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation designated for Atlantic salmon, European otter and Fresh water pearl mussel. A number of primarily wooded Local Nature Conservation Sites are scattered across the northern valley side,</li> </ul>

Unit O	
<p>within peri-urban unit</p>	<p>including the Culter Burn, Cults Den, Den of Leggart, Murtle Den and Peterculter. These tend to contain small tributaries that flow into the Dee. Running east to west, the Deeside Old Railway Line Local Nature Conservation Site provides important habitat links across the northern valley side. The south side has several instances of ancient semi-natural woodland.</p> <p>ii. Cultural designations are scattered throughout the unit and reflect a long history of settlement. 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 unit, comprises rectangular earthworks, and is thought to be one of a series of temporary marching camps established in eastern Scotland in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. The old churchyard at Maryculter has associations with the Knights Templar. A sequence of mansion houses, often Scots Baronial in style and several in remnant designed landscapes follows the southern side of the valley. Notable amongst these is Blairs, a parsonage and Roman Catholic college. The Bridge of Dee is also Category “A” Listed Building.</p> <p>iii. On the north side, the gap between Cults and the urban edge at Braeside comprises the Pitfodels Conservation Area. This was formerly the estate of Pitfodels, which was broken up in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century into a series of regularly-shaped building plots, occupied by villas in large grounds surrounded by mature trees. Within the unit, 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.</p>
<p>c) Presence of open space types and degrees of connectivity</p>	<p>i. Within Aberdeen City, the provision of Open Space (see figure O-2) is scattered throughout the valley. Across the valley floor, there are patches of Semi-Natural Open Space, Water, ribbons of Woodland and pockets of Open Space associated with institutions. Across the northern valley side, there is pattern of mostly Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Spaces in between settlements.</p> <p>ii. Apart from areas of settlement, nearly all of the valley floor and sides within Aberdeen are designated Green Space Network. In addition to providing very good habitat links across the unit, there is good connectivity to the Green Space Network in unit N to north and east into the city.</p> <p>iii. On the south side of the valley, the fields and woodlands provide a mostly rural character. Part of Deeside lies within Aberdeenshire, where it provides an important role in connectivity of this unit with the wider landscape.</p>
<p>d) Experience</p>	<p>i. This is a relatively busy unit particularly near to the city and includes sections of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and A93 corridors, and mid-slope settlements. In contrast, areas to the west and the less developed river banks and slopes, of the Dee and tributaries, can feel natural and secluded, especially where</p>

Unit O	
	<p>built development is screened. This results in a gradual transition from the busy south-western edge of the city towards the more rural parts of the unit towards Peterculter. However, the diversity of urban fringe land uses and associated infrastructure such as pylons, fencing and signage sometimes detracts from rural character.</p> <p>ii. The south slopes have a distinctive farmed, wooded and undeveloped character with a sense of relative tranquillity and separation from the city. It contrasts greatly with the more built-up northern slopes.</p>
2 Edges / urban-rural interaction	
<p>a) Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development</p>	<p>i. At the eastern part of the unit, large modern commercial and retail units form the urban edge to the River Dee, including several distinctive buildings of the Robert Gordon University. To the north, the western edge of Garthdee is formed of several three storey mid-twentieth flats and to the north of the Deeside Way, the urban edge consists of mid to late twentieth century semi-detached and detached bungalows of similar designs.</p> <p>ii. The eastern edge of Cults is formed of mid to late twentieth century semi-detached bungalows and houses and along the southern edge to the north of Garthdee reservoir, well-spaced mid to late twentieth century large detached houses of varying designs. Further west, the edge consists of mostly detached houses of varied styles, sizes and ages. The western edge of Bielside consists of mid to late twentieth detached houses and bungalows of a similar design.</p> <p>iii. The edges of Milltimber typically consist of mid to late and late-twentieth century detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows of a similar styles and designs. At Peterculter, a mix of ages and types of development, including a football ground, form an abrupt edge to the rural area to the west. A row of single houses follows part of the busy, minor road northwards from the A93. Traffic on the A93 is less visible than expected given its proximity, due to landform and established tree belts.</p> <p>iv. On the south side there is a distinctive series of estate houses and associated lodges, gates and outbuildings. These are frequently in the Scots Baronial style. At Blairs estate, a cluster of modern detached houses has been built near the south Deeside road. Elsewhere, there is a scattered pattern of steadings and dwellings.</p>
<p>b) Prominent and distinctive buildings</p>	<p>i. The design of the cluster of Robert Gordon University buildings are distinctive above the river. When viewed from the southern valley side, the buildings at Cults Academy are prominent.</p> <p>ii. Some large villas within the Pitfodels Conservation Area and other listed buildings within the unit are locally distinctive. With surrounding mature trees and</p>

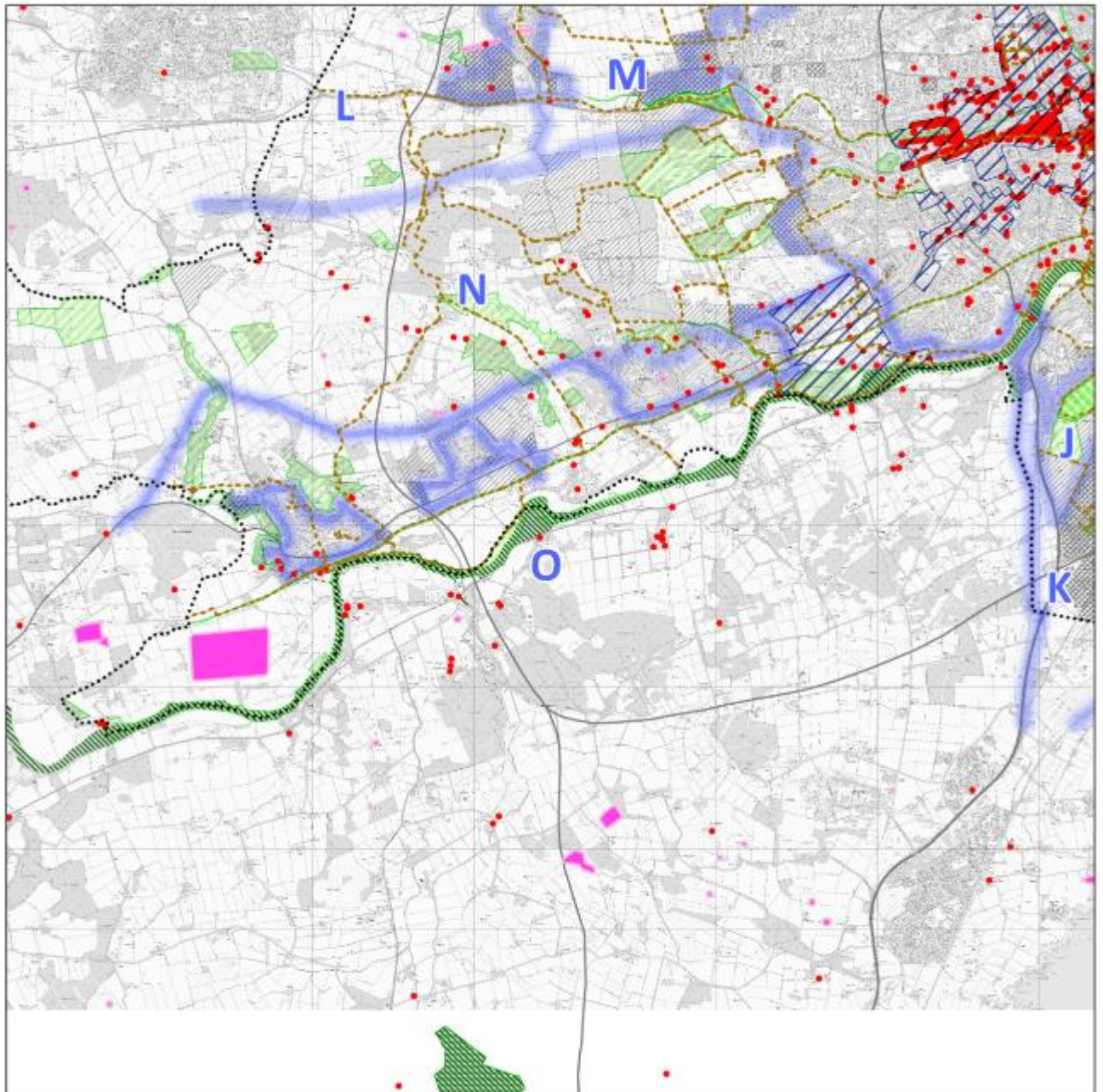


Unit O	
	woodlands, residential development is generally well integrated into the valley landscape.
c) Type of settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Along most urban edges, settlement is bound by woodland or mature trees and garden vegetation that provides a robust edge. A small section along the southern edge of Cults and Peterculter are open and along parts of the east and western edges of Milltimber and Peterculter, development forms a hard edge.</li> <li>ii. On the south side of the River, the contrasting settlement pattern of scattered buildings means there is no settlement edge here.</li> </ul>
d) Type of visual containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The distinctive valley landform of the unit provides a strong sense of visual containment and separation from surrounding units.</li> <li>ii. In places, trees and woodlands provides a sense of localised containment. Elsewhere more open wedges provide longer views. Where some historical development has taken place towards the valley floor, it is well contained by surrounding trees and woodlands.</li> </ul>
e) Apparent continuation with wider urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. From most parts of the unit, the valley landform, trees and woodland, and pattern of intervening built development restrict views of the city and as such, there is very little sense of visual continuity with the city centre.</li> <li>ii. Along the northern valley sides, the amount of settlement and busy roads provide some sense of being within the city.</li> </ul>
3 Recreational use	
a) Type and degree of recreational use evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Deeside Way follows the former railway line and is a well-used route for walking and cycling, including cycle commuting into Aberdeen. Across more rural parts of the unit, opportunities for recreation include walking and cycling along country roads and footpaths, and informal recreation in some woodlands. Some pastures are used for horse riding and there are two golf courses situated on the valley floor.</li> </ul>
b) Recreational and active travel routes and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In general, the unit is an important green corridor for recreational users and those travelling into and out of the city. As noted above, the Deeside Way (Core Path 66) is an important recreational trail that leads along the northern valley side. It this also forms part of National Cycle Network Route 195. Core Paths 63, 65, 74, 64 and 89 all provide north to south routes at various points across the valley and connect nearby settlements with the Deeside Way. Core Path 70 is riverside route to the south of Peterculter and Cults with sections in between these settlements identified as an aspirational link.</li> </ul>
4 Views	

Unit O	
a) Key views to peri-urban unit	<p>i. Views to the valley from adjacent units are very limited. To the north, there are localised areas across the southern fringes of unit N where the valley is partially visible due to open wedges. Woodlands along the top of the valley tend to conceal most of the lower lying unit from view. With dense intervening built development, there no key views from the city.</p>
b) Key views from peri-urban unit	<p>i. There are long views to the Grampian hills 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 opposing valley side. From some open parts of the valley floor, there are views towards the edge of the city where the Bridge of Dee forms an important focal point over the river.</p> <p>ii. When travelling along the A93 and parts of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, there are contrasting views of the partially developed and wooded appearance of the north valley side, and the broad open floodplain, meandering river and the mostly undeveloped wooded southern valley side. The Culter Burn forms the extreme western edge. From the B9077, roadside trees and woodland tend to restrict views of the nearby river and northern valley sides beyond. From the Bridge of Dee, there are glimpsed views of the wooded river corridor.</p>
5 Landscape role	
a) Landscape setting	<p>i. The valley is one of the key features of the city and part of its identity.</p> <p>ii. A series of historic settlements on the northern side, separated by areas of pasture and woodland, contrast with the prevailing undeveloped southern valley sides.</p> <p>iii. The wooded appearance of the northern valley side and tributary valleys provide a contained setting to nearby settlements.</p> <p>iv. The relatively undeveloped southern valley side provides a rural setting and at Culter Burn extends right to the edge of the settlement.</p> <p>v. At Peterculter, the rural character consists of a mix of smaller scale fields and other landscape features and relates to landscapes to the west in Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>vi. The valley landform also provides a contrasting foreground to a backdrop of skyline woodlands.</p>
b) Gateway function	<p>i. The unit is an important green corridor for recreational users and those travelling into and out of the city. Main roads in the unit are the A93 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. When travelling north along the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, there is a sense of gateway arrival into the city to the south of Milltimber. From the A93, the pattern of scattered roadside development reduces a sudden gateway function when travelling into the city, but the</p>

Unit O	
	<p>restaurant building and glimpses of the bridge and housing at Peterculter Burn give some sense of arrival. When travelling away from the city on the A93, there is a reveal to the rural. There is an intensification of settlement travelling eastwards, punctuated by the open areas between individual villages. When travelling east along the B9077, there is a local gateway into and out of the city. The Deeside Way provides a gateway function for active and recreational travel to and from the city.</p>
c) Separation function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The river corridor provides an important separation function between development scattered along the northern valley sides and the largely undeveloped southern sides within Aberdeenshire.</li> <li>ii. There is also separation between the sequence of settlements on the northern valley side</li> </ul>
6 Condition and management	
a) Condition of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The condition of landscape features is generally good.</li> <li>ii. Stone walls across the valley sides are intact and there is a good proportion of mature trees and woodland.</li> </ul>
b) Degree of management evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Semi-natural habitats, footpaths and recreational open spaces are generally well managed, although there are significant areas of less intensively managed habitats.</li> <li>ii. Farmland is generally intensively managed for mixed agriculture and horse grazing although some tree belts and woodlands appear unmanaged.</li> </ul>

Figure O-2: Designations



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment



0 400 m

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#### Natural Heritage Designations

- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Conservation Site

#### Cultural Heritage Designations

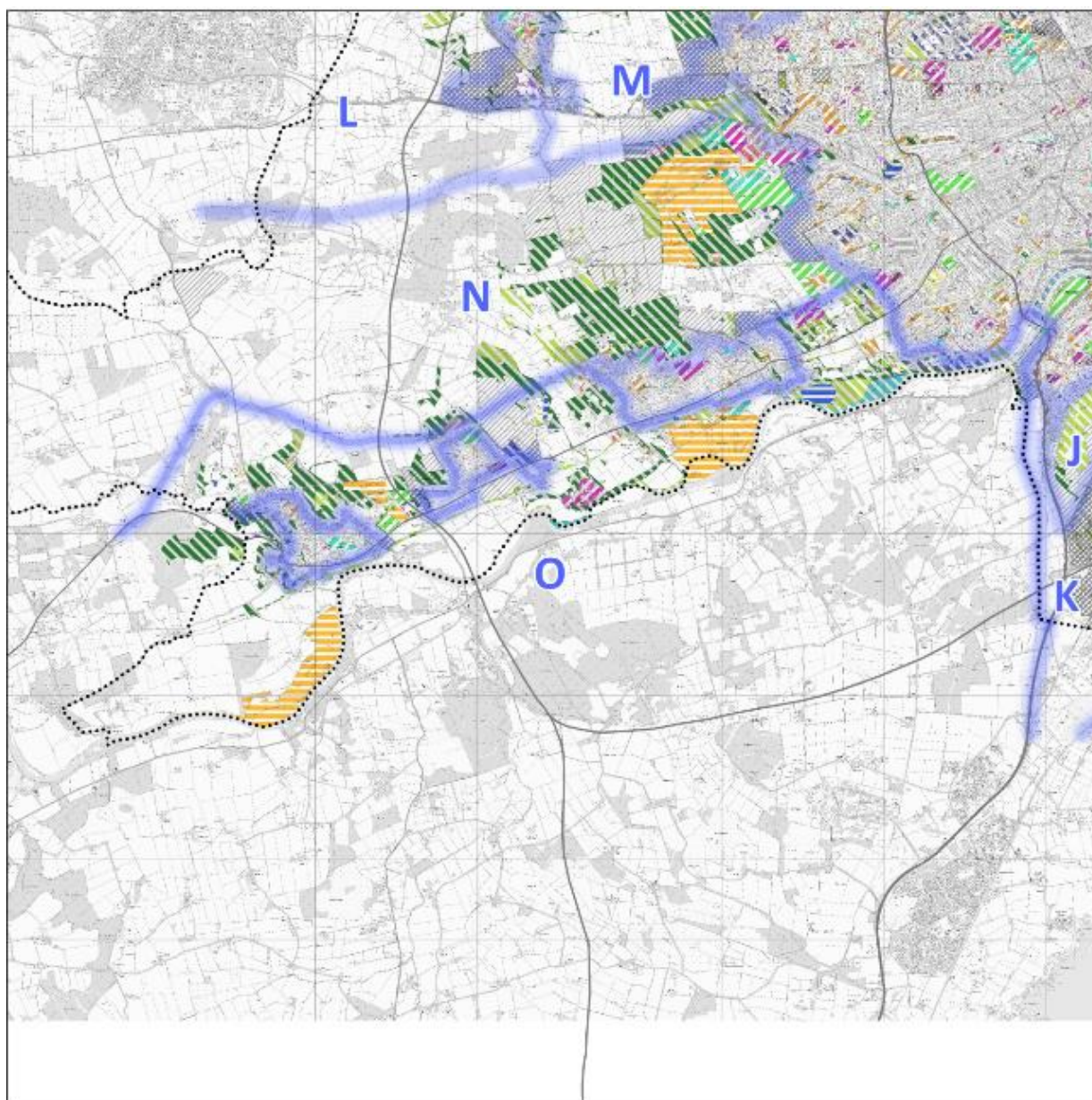
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument

Peri Urban Unit boundary

#### Aberdeen City LDP

- Core Path
- AWPR
- Opportunity Site
- Developed/under construction at time of assessment

Figure O-3: Open Space



### Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

March 2017

Peri-urban Assessment

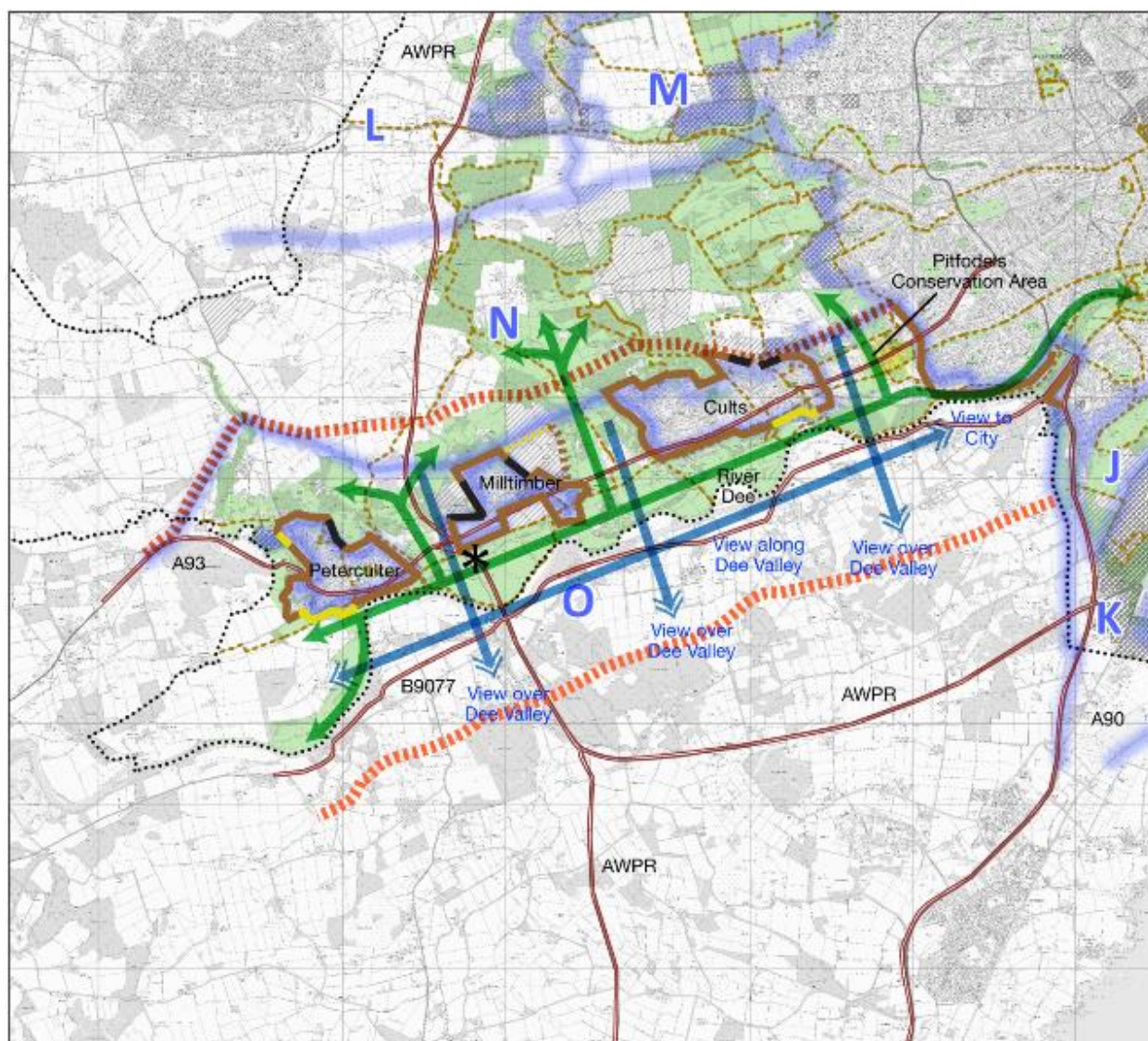


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- Peri Urban Unit boundary
- | <b>Open Space Audit 2010</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, orange 2px, orange 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Allotment              | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, yellow 2px, yellow 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Open Semi-Natural     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, yellow 2px, yellow 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Amenity- Business      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Open Water                |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, orange 2px, orange 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Amenity- Residential   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, red 2px, red 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Other Functional Greenspace |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, purple 2px, purple 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Amenity- Transport     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, orange 2px, orange 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Other Sports          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, purple 2px, purple 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Area Undergoing Change | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, grey 2px, grey 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Parking / Loading         |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, red 2px, red 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Bowling Greens               | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, green 2px, green 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Playing Fields          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, grey 2px, grey 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Cemetery                   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, pink 2px, pink 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Playspace                 |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Churchyard                 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, green 2px, green 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Public Park and Garden  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, red 2px, red 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Civic Space                  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Railway                 |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Foreshore/ Rocks           | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Riparian Routes           |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, orange 2px, orange 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Golf Courses           | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, pink 2px, pink 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> School Grounds            |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, green 2px, green 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Green Access Routes      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, yellow 2px, yellow 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Tennis Courts         |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Institutional Grounds      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, green 2px, green 4px); border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Woodland                |

Figure O-4: Analysis



## Aberdeen Landscape Study

March 2017  
Peri-urban Study



0 400 m

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- |                        |  |  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
|                        | Aberdeen City Council boundary                     |  | Containment by landform                    |
|                        | Peri Urban Unit boundary                           |  | Indicative Greenspace Network connectivity |
|                        | Core Path  |  | Key views                                  |
|                        | Greenspace Network                                 |  | Feature                                    |
|                        | Opportunity Site                                   |  | Urban style fences                         |
|                        | Developed/under construction at time of assessment |  | Main sea route                             |
| <b>Urban edge type</b> |  |  | Main road route                            |
|                        | Existing open edge                                 |  | Main rail route                            |
|                        | Likely future open edge                            |  | Gateway                                    |
|                        | Existing wooded edge                               |  |  |
|                        | Likely future wooded edge                          |  |  |
|                        | Existing hard urban edge                           |  |  |
|                        | Likely future hard urban edge                      |  |  |

## Photographic study



Looking towards the western edge of Peterculter



Looking south across the river Dee from the south of Cults



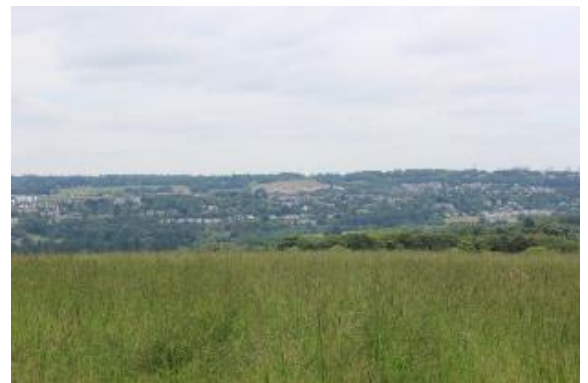
Farmed slopes in between Bieldside and Milltimber



Large houses above Deeside Golf Club



Robert Gordon University buildings on the urban edge



Looking north over the valley from Aberdeenshire



The Deeside Way



Well screened housing along the A93

## Potential opportunities

The following opportunities relate to the management of the peri-urban landscape with an emphasis on recreation, habitat and urban edge issues. Any guidelines in *italics* are relevant landscape management guidelines from the LCA.

- a) *Maintain a clear distinction between the undeveloped open valley floor and the wooded valley sides.*
- b) *Conserve the natural character of the river and tributaries*
- c) *Encourage appropriately designed, woodland planting that would create a balanced open / wooded landscape, and help to define or contain urban edges and landscape structure within site.*
- d) *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.*
- e) *Maintain the pattern of historic settlements, separated by areas of pasture reinforced by stone dykes, tree belts and woodland blocks, and other semi-natural habitats which extend down the valley side.*
- f) *Maintain and enhance the recreational enjoyment of the Deeside Way and the network of other routes, and the recreational value of forests and woods.*
- g) *Safeguard the setting of important historic features including stone circle, a burial cairn, a Roman Camp, Pitfodels Castle, Pitfodels Conservation Area, a variety of Listed Buildings, and bridges across the river.*
- h) *Maintain the pockets of undeveloped wedges of land between settlements and their important function for connecting the river valley with elevated land to the north.*
- i) Explore opportunities for further footpath access along the River Dee and elsewhere with footbridge links to the south and creation of a network of routes ((e.g. with Hazlehead and Countesswells).
- j) *Maintain the open character and views along the floodplain, and from higher ground, views towards the prevailing undeveloped character of the north facing valley sides.*
- k) *Maintain the experience of semi-natural character along the river and tributaries and pockets of peace and seclusion along the upper valley sides.*



## Appendix 1 – Case study review

As summarised in section 2.2, the following case studies were reviewed to inform the development of this study.

### CASE STUDY 1: Brighton & Hove Urban Fringe Assessment (2014)

#### Overview of study

The purpose of the study was to examine:

1. The potential contribution of the city's 66 urban fringe sites to accommodate residential development and the forms of residential development which might be particularly suitable.
2. The extent to which some urban fringe sites should remain protected, including scope for new designations, such as Local Green Spaces, where justified by national planning policy.
3. The scope for and role of mitigation in minimising adverse effects of development and the nature and extent of any residual adverse effects.
4. Linked with c), the potential for sites to generate additional benefits for the city in relation to other strategic objectives, including public open space, multifunctional green spaces, and biodiversity enhancement.
5. Mechanisms for bringing forward sites suitable for residential development.

The overall approach involved identifying different levels and types of constraint on residential development in the urban fringe. Base maps were used to identify all levels of constraint and the areas of the urban fringe with no 'absolute' constraints together with all those performing functions such as open or green spaces were screened for secondary constraints. The likely effects of residential development were then assessed both before and after mitigation. Visits were made to all the urban fringe sites to determine whether residential development might be appropriate and, if so, the density and type of development that would be most suitable.

In describing and evaluating the urban fringe, the assessment criteria were:

- a) Site Characteristics – land use, access issues, agricultural land classification etc.
- b) Ecology
- c) Open space
- d) Landscape
- e) Other Environmental Issues

Following site visits, conclusions on capacity were developed taking into account the potential for mitigation.

### Analysis

- i. Although the purpose of the study was to identify landscape capacity for residential development, the study highlights the importance of identifying planning constraints across urban fringe landscapes.
- ii. In examining the value and function of the urban fringe the following designations and data sets are important consider:
  - Ecological (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest)
  - Historic (e.g. Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings)
  - Open spaces (e.g. Outdoor Sports Facilities, Allotments)
  - Other Environmental (e.g. Agricultural Land Classification)
- iii. Although the study focuses on the urban fringe, it is not clear to what extent, if at all, specific urban fringe characteristics (e.g. settlement edges) were assessed to determine capacity and in general, the approach seems to focus primarily on constraints as a basis to determine capacity.
- iv. Overall, the study appears to be of limited use to the development of an approach for the Aberdeen study although it does highlight the importance of recognising designations in understanding the value and function of urban fringe landscapes.

## CASE STUDY 2: Brixham Urban Fringe Landscape Study (2011)

### Overview of study

The study was commissioned to consider the landscape of the Brixham urban fringe and how the pressures for growth might be considered alongside the primary purpose of AONB designation. The objectives were to:

1. Provide an evidence base that will inform the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
2. Identify opportunities for repairing and strengthening landscape character.
3. Identify the optimum functions and purposes that could be provided by land compartments (their “ecosystem services”).
4. Identify opportunities for securing enhancements through the development system (by conditions to planning permissions, through Section 106 agreements and developer contributions).

## CASE STUDY 2: Brixham Urban Fringe Landscape Study (2011)

### Overview of study

5. Provide design and land management guidance appropriate to the locality (covering – for example – boundary treatments, planting, pasture management, lighting).
6. Identify the critical environmental capital of the locality and make recommendations for conserving, maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the various designations.
7. Identify opportunities for improving connections between Brixham and the countryside and coastline of the study area, and improve the management of the rural-urban interface.

In analysing the urban fringe, the following factors were assessed across several local urban fringe character areas:

- a) Environmental designations and constraints
- b) Land use
- c) Landscape analysis
- d) Landscape character types and areas of local character
- e) Principle recreation facilities
- f) Rights of Way network
- g) Ecological potential

In relation to the urban fringe landscape characteristics, the study examined:

- Land use
- Vegetation condition
- Field boundary condition
- Landscape vulnerability to change
- Tranquillity
- Accessibility
- Nature of urban edge /condition

For each area, key issues were then summarised (e.g. Forces for change, visual intrusion, Poor land management) with associated key initiatives and implementation mechanisms (e.g. Potential landscape enhancements, potential projects and development/design considerations).

### Analysis

- i. This is a detailed study that provides a clear and comprehensive study of the urban fringe although it is not clear how the extent of urban fringe landscapes were identified.

### **CASE STUDY 2: Brixham Urban Fringe Landscape Study (2011)**

#### **Overview of study**

- ii. It includes a logical approach to describe the urban fringe with practical planning and management guidance to address key issues.
- iii. Feedback from the Council noted that the inclusion of stakeholder workshops to gain consensus on key issues and actions has given weight to the study.
- iv. Although application of the document has been limited to date, it is the aspiration of the Council that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan will deliver its objectives.
- v. With no landscape expertise within the Council, officers would benefit from training to help implement the study.
- vi. Overall, the scope of the study is very relevant to the Aberdeen study and the identification of urban fringe character areas with associated management guidelines provides a useful approach to further explore.

### **CASE STUDY 3: Coventry Urban Fringe Landscape Assessment (2007)**

#### **Overview of study**

Following on from the Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines (1987), the objectives of the study were to:

1. Review the character and condition of the Coventry urban fringe landscapes.
2. Review recent management/conservation activity.
3. Identify forces for change and management priorities.

Based on a systematic GIS analysis, a map of Landscape Description Units had already been produced for Warwickshire and for this study, these were then sub-divided into smaller (1:10,000 scale) units based on differences in land cover and historic pattern. The land cover analysis identified features within the landscape, such as areas of parkland, larger woodlands, and patches of disturbed land, smaller urban areas and other non -agricultural land. The historic analysis identifies parish units and areas of farmland with different sizes/patterns of fields.

Further informed through field survey, the character, condition and sensitivity of each unit was then assessed based on:

Character:

- a) Land use
- b) Field pattern
- c) Field boundaries

### CASE STUDY 3: Coventry Urban Fringe Landscape Assessment (2007)

#### Overview of study

d) Tree cover

Condition:

e) Landcover change

f) Habitat survival

g) Field boundaries

h) Tree cover

i) New development

j) Other impacts

Following this, management guidelines were identified such as:

- Conserve existing field pattern and improve management of field boundaries.
- Enhance hedgerow tree cover.
- Maintain strong rural character.

#### Analysis

- I. The study is based on a systematic GIS analysis that helps to ensure a consistent approach to characterisation with a focus on historic character.
- II. Although the study provides a useful approach to characterisation and separate condition assessment, the emphasis of assessment criteria is more applicable to general landscape character assessment rather than the particular characteristics associated the Aberdeen urban fringe.
- III. In general, the study lacks detail and the management guidelines are quite broad in scope.
- IV. Overall, the study provides some useful criteria to be considered for the Aberdeen study when assessing landscape condition.

### CASE STUDY 4: Edinburgh Green Belt study (2010)

#### Overview of study

The aim of the study was to define areas of less sensitivity within the Green Belt where development could potentially be accommodated. The study was based on the detailed 1:25k LCA prepared for Edinburgh in 2008. Some additional characterisation was undertaken to include parts of Midlothian which lie within the Green Belt around Edinburgh and neighbouring settlements. 96 detailed Landscape Character Areas were defined (including the 71 within Edinburgh's boundaries).

#### **CASE STUDY 4: Edinburgh Green Belt study (2010)**

##### **Overview of study**

A two stage evaluation process was adopted and each landscape character area was initially evaluated against criteria based on the following Green Belt objectives (set out in SPP21):

- Protection and enhancement of the character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities
- To protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities as part of the wider structure of green space.

Each character area was then evaluated and scored (1-3) based on the following criteria:

1. Integrity of landscape character
2. Distinctiveness of landscape character
3. Landscape condition
4. Potential for enhancement of landscape condition
5. Contribution in setting to Edinburgh
6. Contribution in identity to Edinburgh
7. Robustness and sustainability of existing boundaries in landscape terms

Scores were added and some weighted and each LCA was ranked. The bottom ranking LCAs (the 'cut off' of 67% score was determined in conjunction with the Steering Group with 17 LCAs falling below this) were then put through an additional evaluation process during Stage Two which appraised landscape capacity for settlement expansion based on the following:

8. Impact on the local and wider landscape character and setting and the broader pattern of settlement
9. Impact on existing settlement form and boundaries
10. Relative visibility and prominence of the area in question both locally and in the wider landscape
11. Relationship between the area in question and open space, access networks and land use
12. Potential role of existing or additional landscape features (such as structural landscaping) in integrating development within the local and wider landscape and existing and potential links with the Forest Habitat Network

##### **Analysis**

From Carol Anderson's experience of having been involved in the field work/assessment for this study, the following points are to be considered:

#### **CASE STUDY 4: Edinburgh Green Belt study (2010)**

##### **Overview of study**

- i. Criteria 2, 5 and 6 led to double-counting in the evaluation and a simpler methodology would have been more transparent.
- ii. While the brief for the Aberdeen City study does not require evaluation against Green Belt objectives, some of the key evaluation criteria as listed above could form a useful basis to consider.
- iii. It is also important to note that cultural heritage and ecological aspects are fully evaluated and although these values could be assessed in the landscape integrity/distinctiveness evaluation to some degree, separate criteria might be required for the Aberdeen study.
- iv. The numerical scoring system is good and easy to follow, especially when there are likely to be a large number of LCAs to be evaluated.
- v. This evaluation worked fairly well and was straightforward to undertake in the field and there would be potential in perhaps adopting this method.
- vi. One of the criticisms of the Edinburgh Green Belt study from Midlothian Council was that it was insufficiently detailed in comparison with the series of SNH funded settlement capacity studies led by Alison Grant (landscape consultant) which they felt would have been more useful for Local Development Plan purposes.

#### **CASE STUDY 5: Guilford Rural-Urban Fringe Assessment (2007)**

##### **Overview of study**

In identifying rural/urban fringe landscapes, the study objectives were to:

1. Provide a tool for decision making in the development control process.
2. Inform planning policy formation.
3. Guide landscape management decisions.
4. Form an information source for Guildford's two Area Action Plans.

The initial desk study reviewed the existing landscape character assessments that over the borough. Physical influences included geology, soils, landform, drainage, and land cover, as these have a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity. Research also covered cultural/social factors such as patterns of settlement and land use, enclosure, and socio-economic and cultural traditions and influences from pre-historic times to the present day.

Draft townscape and rural-urban fringe characterisations were produced at 1:10,000 scale for testing in the field. The rural-urban fringe characterisation focussed on character areas.

The field survey was used to check draft classifications (as initially defined by the desk study), to identify additional character area subdivisions and define precise boundaries. Assessment criteria addressed the following:

- a) How is the rural fringe similar or different to the wider Borough landscape character area description?
- b) Is the rural fringe representative of the wider LCA?
- c) Important landscape features that contribute to the setting of Guildford.
- d) Locally important views and visual connections
- e) Important topographical features
- f) Important landscape features
- g) Local gateways into Guildford
- h) Is the existing urban edge integrated successfully into the landscape?
- i) Does the urban edge have a good relationship with its landscape setting?
- j) Which urban edges should be conserved?
- k) Notes on built character of the urban edge

In reporting the findings, the following information was presented:

- Landscape Character
- Character of the existing urban edge
- Role in the landscape setting
- Key Positive Landscape Attributes
- Forces for Change/Sensitivities/Pressures
- Landscape Strategy
- Landscape Guidelines

### Analysis

- i. Based on the identification of local rural/urban fringe character areas, the study sets out a relatively detailed appraisal of urban fringe character although there is no description of how the rural/urban fringe study area was defined.
- ii. The assessment identifies some specific urban fringe characteristics to be considered although some of the general LCA areas appear to be the same as the rural/urban fringe areas.
- iii. An important factor the assessment considers is how representative the rural fringe is of the wider LCA.
- iv. Although there is some reference to a suite of assessment criteria to describe the urban fringe, the field survey forms are quite open ended.



- v. Overall, the study appears to provide some relevant guidance to the emerging scope of the Aberdeen study with some useful urban fringe criteria to be further considered.

### **CASE STUDY 6: Landscape Character Assessment of Taunton's Rural-Urban Fringe - Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2005)**

#### **Overview of study**

Based on a landscape character assessment approach, the study includes a detailed assessment of landscape sensitivity for the purpose of making initial recommendations as to the potential capacity for Taunton's urban fringe to accommodate future built development. The study aims to inform development briefs and guidance to assist with landscape management and strategies

The study notes that the urban fringe is difficult to define and although not having one single definition, The Countryside Agency provided a description as "that zone of transition which begins with the edge of the fully built up urban area and becomes progressively more rural whilst still remaining a clear mix of urban and rural land uses and influences before giving way to the wider countryside".

The study then goes on to define the urban fringe as:

"The extent of land lying immediately beyond the existing edge of Taunton (and its Associated Settlements) that has a strong physical and/or visual and/or perceptual connection with the town."

The study had four main stages:

1. Draft Borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment
2. Identification of the Immediate Landscape Setting: Taunton's Rural – Urban Fringe (the focus study area).
3. Landscape Character Assessment of Landscape Types and Character Areas that extend up to Taunton's Urban Edge and incorporate the Rural-Urban Fringe (incorporating judgements of Overall/Inherent Landscape Sensitivity).
4. Detailed assessment of the Rural- Urban Fringes' sensitivity to (and capacity to accommodate) built development.

Three criteria were used to delineate the Rural-Urban fringe were:

- a) Landform – topographic variation and how this influences views and a sense of physical connection/detachment with/from the town.
- b) Visibility - linked with topography, visibility is particularly concerned with visual prominence (proximity of the town and clarity of the view). This ensures that those areas providing views of Taunton that are distant and physically removed from the town, do not sit within the immediate landscape setting or rural-urban fringe boundary.
- c) Experiential sense of the townscape – landscape/townscape features that are indicators of proximity and connection to the town. It is possible for example to be stood within an area

of agricultural land use whilst having views of urban elements - landmark buildings, urban furniture such as street lighting or roadside kerbing, and perceptual characteristics such as busy roads, noise levels and/or reduced tranquillity.

### Analysis

- i. The study provides some useful definitions of urban fringe.
- ii. The range of assessment criteria used to define and describe the character, quality and extent of the urban fringe are quite limited in number although they appear to encompass so important factors to consider.
- iii. The descriptions of urban fringe areas are quite detailed and appeared to be informed through extensive field survey.
- iv. Feedback from the Council notes that both the LCA and the sensitivity studies have been very useful for landscape and planning staff within the Council in appraising specific developments.
- v. There have been two very large residential developments on the outskirts of Taunton and the guidance contained in the sensitivity study was particularly useful in developing design briefs for developers.
- vi. Developers have largely respected the findings and guidance in the study although the tougher legislation associated with wildlife/habitats has been the main driver rather than landscape issues in influencing the location and design of developments.
- vii. No updates to the study have been undertaken since 2005 and none are likely in future due to Council budget constraints.
- viii. Overall, the study appears to be very relevant to the emerging scope of the Aberdeen study with some useful urban fringe definitions and criteria to be further considered.

### CASE STUDY 7: North West Leicestershire Settlement Fringe Assessment (2010)

#### Overview of study

This study assessed the landscape value of land around settlement fringes, the most distinctive landscapes, and those which are important for the setting of settlements. The second part was to undertake a more detailed landscape assessment of the possible future development sites around the settlements identified in the Core Strategy consultation.

The main objectives were:

1. To establish the landscape character around the fringes of Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donnington, Coalville, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham.
2. To identify sensitive landscapes to be retained, maintained or enhanced.
3. To establish the character and setting of settlements within the landscape, identifying any landmark views or features.
4. To help inform decisions about the location and amount of new development across the District.

5. To inform the development of policies to secure the provision of new development which respects and contributes to its landscape character setting.
6. To provide information on how development may contribute to enhancements along settlement fringes.

The settlement fringes were then divided into suitable parcels and assessed using the following criteria:

Landscape value

- a) Landscape character
- b) Representativeness and consistency with wider character
- c) Remoteness and tranquillity

Visual Quality

- d) Visual prominence
- e) Nature of the urban edge
- f) Distinctive views and setting of the settlement
- g) Public accessibility

The assessment included a basic scoring system of landscape and visual quality.

#### **Analysis**

- i. The assessment criteria and definitions are specifically relevant to the urban fringe although it is not clear how each area was initially defined.
- ii. Although the assessment included a basic scoring system of landscape and visual quality, no descriptive analysis is provided.
- iii. Feedback from the Council indicated the assessment has provided limited practical use as the Core Strategy was not adopted and most of the sites assessed have now been developed without reference to the study.
- iv. Although the study was used as evidence at two Planning Appeals, the findings were contrary to views of Planning Officers.
- v. Although the study provides some useful urban fringe criteria, (particularly visual prominence, nature of the urban edge and distinctive views and setting of the settlement), the study lacks detail to help understand the character of the urban fringe.

### **CASE STUDY 8: Perth Landscape Capacity and Green Belt Study (2001)**

#### **Overview of study**

The study was commissioned to assess the capacity of the landscapes around Perth, and 17 of the other larger settlements in the Local Plan area, to accommodate further built development, (in the form of small, or larger, scale expansion or a new settlement). The study is intended to inform the locational strategy of the development plan. The second phase of the study assessed the need and justification for a Green Belt around Perth and advised on possible inner and outer boundaries (and the role that a Green Belt may play in controlling development pressure and managing landscape change).

Study objective were to:

1. Identify long term preferred options for development
2. Identify where development should be discouraged
3. Evaluate the landscape setting of Perth
4. Identify an area for a new village

Based on 6 regional LCTs identified in the Tayside LCA but with these sub-divided into smaller 'landscape character units' and even smaller 'local landscape character units' at 1:25k and 1:10k scale.

- Two principal development types usefully categorised –industrial/commercial and housing
- Development described as taking the following forms:
  - Expansion of Perth on existing edges
  - Expansion of existing surrounding villages
  - Creation of a new village
- 4 'key aspects' to capacity assessment:
  - Physical constraints
  - Landscape constraints
  - Settlement form and pattern
  - Visual constraints
- A numerical scoring system is not used but rather judgements made on whether change would be 'beneficial, neutral or adverse'. The assessment appears to have focussed on the area immediately around Perth and each of the 17 settlements. It is presented in tabular form with 1:10k maps produced for the 17 settlements and a 1:25k map for Perth.
- Page 13 under the heading 'objectivity and consistency' includes an interesting description of the field work undertaken in conjunction with SNH and Council staff.

### Analysis

- i. It is not clear whether all the 'landscape character units' and 'local landscape character units' have been assessed or whether the study has focussed on the immediate area surrounding the 17 settlements and Perth.

- ii. Only the 6 regional landscape character types are described in the report – there is no description or detailed analysis of character of the smaller character units.
- iii. The tables setting out the assessment for Perth/each settlement seems to jump straight into conclusions with little analysis.
- iv. This study is less focussed on Green Belt objectives than the Edinburgh GB study. For example, it doesn't appear to evaluate open space provision.
- v. This study does not undertake a two stage evaluation process unlike the Edinburgh GB study which makes it less transparent as to how the conclusions have been reached.

### CASE STUDY 9: Urban Fringe Action Plan for Southern Swindon (2006)

#### Overview of study

Developed through stakeholder workshops, the action plan identifies the following key issues relating to the southern urban fringe of Swindon:

1. Erosion of landscape character and Biodiversity
2. Uncertainty about the future of agriculture in the urban fringe
3. A fragmented and poorly managed rights of way network
4. Lack of transport alternatives to the Car
5. Rat running on rural roads
6. Declining community sustainability
7. Lack of understanding /communication
8. Misuse of the countryside
9. Lack of integration

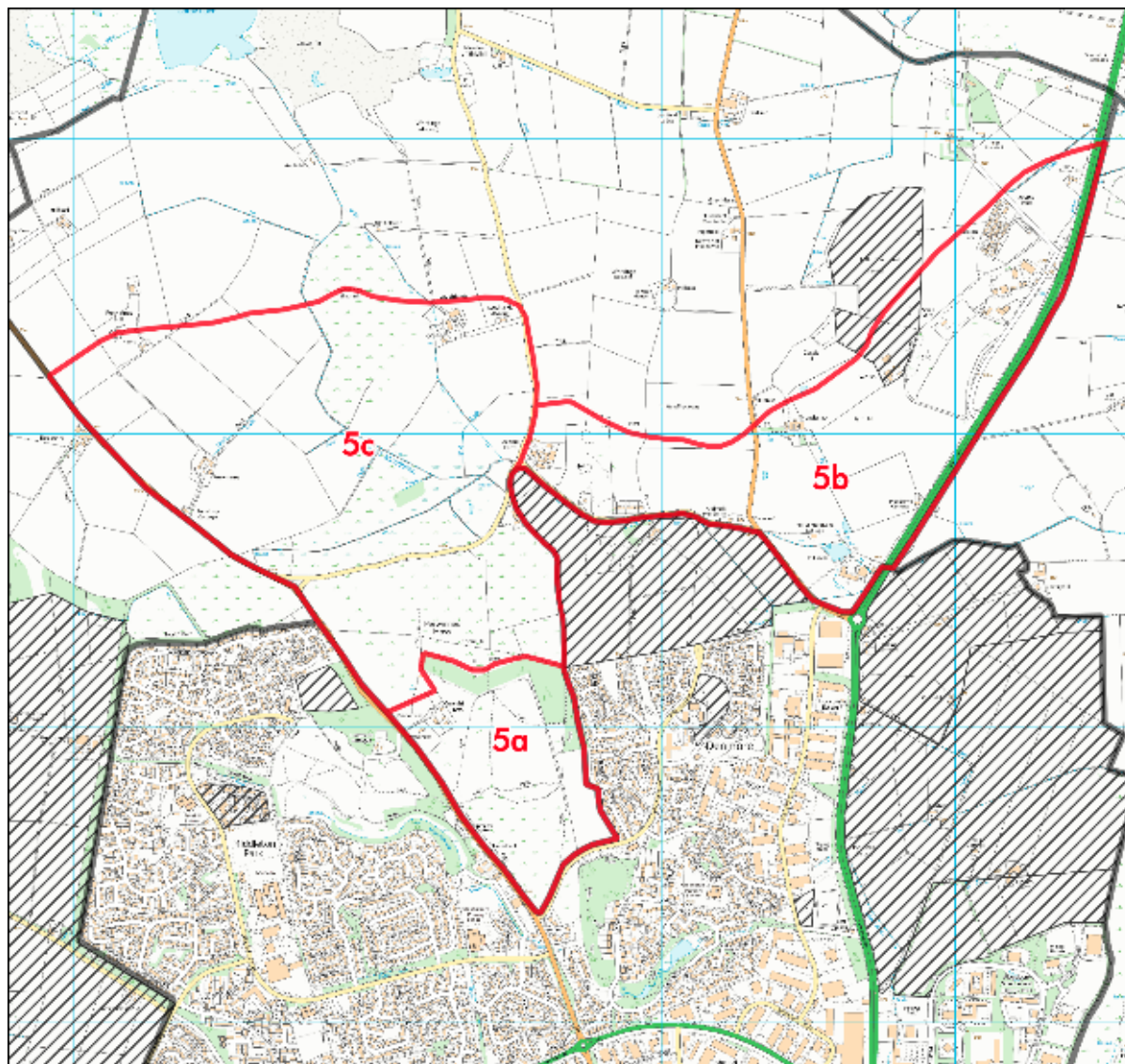
In addressing these, the plan identifies a vision, with themed objectives and associated actions for a range of partners to take forward.

#### Analysis

- i. Although the study does not provide a characterisation of the urban fringe landscape, it identifies some useful issues that might be relevant to parts of the Aberdeen urban fringe landscape.
- ii. In setting out a wide range of practical actions to help conserve and enhance the South Swindon urban fringe, the study provides some useful examples to help inform landscape management guidelines and wider environmental enhancement initiatives within the Aberdeen study.

## Appendix 2 - Pilot Study

The following map illustrates the three urban fringe character areas identified within the Mundurno LCA (Pilot 1):



### Aberdeen Peri-urban Study

May 2016



0 1 km

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- Peri-urban Pilot Areas
- ▨ Landscape Character Area
- ▩ LDP12 Opportunity Site

## AREA 5a: Scotstown Moor

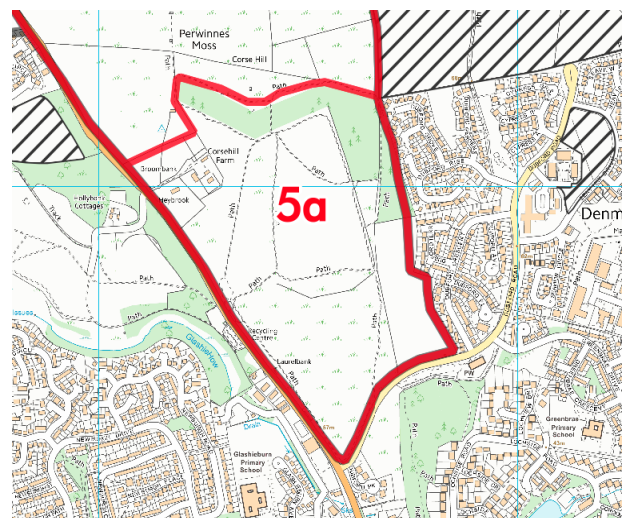
### Location & Context

The *Scotstown Moor* Urban Fringe Character Area is located within the *Mundurno* LCA, across the western fringes of Middleton Park and the eastern fringes of Denmore. The northern boundary adjoins the Perwinnes Urban Fringe Character Area. Most of the area is designated a Local Nature Reserve with a range of habitats including plantation woodland, grassland, heathland, scrub and marshy grassland. The area has a good network of footpaths accessible from nearby urban areas and a car park is situated off the B997 that forms the western boundary.



### Extent

The extent of the area is primarily influenced by the distinct and homogenous character of the nature reserve and the physical containment provided by surrounding woodlands. In particular, the coniferous plantation across rising ground to the north underpins a sense of detachment from the wider landscape. With its close proximity and accessibility to urban areas, recreational



activity is evident across the entire area with busy roads along the south and western boundaries contributing to an urban fringe influence.

### Key Characteristics

1. The area has a very distinctive character formed of plantation woodland, grassland, heathland, scrub and marshy grassland. Although local character notably differs from the wider character of the *Mundurno* LCA, the area provides an important setting to nearby urban areas.
2. Immediately beyond the southern boundary, a small wooded hill provides a backdrop to gently undulating lower-lying nature reserve. The land then gently rises towards Corse Hill at the northern boundary, forming a strong sense of visual enclosure and physical relationship to the urban edge.
3. Apart from a small holding with associated pockets of rough grazing located in the northern part of the area, land use is dedicated to nature conservation and informal recreation.
4. Surrounding urban development is characterised by high density late 20 century residential housing estates with some piecemeal light industry along the B997.
5. Settlement edges are linear in form and relate to local landform. Boundaries are generally well defined by woodland edges that tend to screen the majority of housing from view although some housing is visible along the eastern boundary. To the south of the area, the transition is softer, with mature trees appearing to integrate with nearby housing.
6. Overall, the area has a strong undeveloped appearance with urban development limited to a small holding with associated out buildings towards to the northern boundary.
7. With a good network of footpaths across the nature reserve easily accessible from nearby urban areas, the area is an important resource for informal recreation.
8. Although some urban development is visible from within the area, there is a strong sense of detachment from the city, whilst intervening woodland across the northern boundary restricts experience of the wider rural landscape.
9. Although the area is generally visually well contained, there are some views from areas of higher ground across the southern fringes of the city and from the woodland edge to the north; open views across the *Mundurno* LCA. The wooded backdrop of Corse Hill is also important in local views when approaching the city from the north.
10. In general, the landscape is well managed although the car park, litter and the pockets of rough grazing and associated out buildings detract from condition in places.





Wooded backdrop of Corse Hill



Visible housing along the eastern fringe



Small holding in north-west



Development along the B977

## AREA 5b: Denmore Fringe

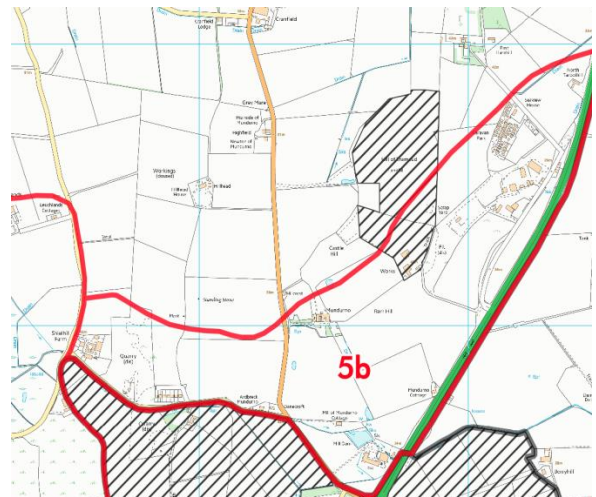
### Location & Context

The *Denmore Fringe* character area is located across south-eastern part of the *Mundurno LCA*, to the north of Denmore. The Dubford development site (currently under construction) forms the southern boundary, the busy A92 the eastern boundary, and the western boundary adjoins the *Perwinnes Urban Fringe Character Area* at a local road. The northern boundary follows a ridge line across gently rising landform, incorporating Castle Hill and Hill of Traudaud.



### Extent

The outer extent of the area is determined by the gently rising ground that forms a degree of visual containment to the intervening lower lying area towards the urban edge. Although there is some limited landscape and visual connection with the prevailing rural landscape further to the north of the area, urban fringe influences are much more apparent to the south of the



ridgeline, particularly along the A92 corridor where quarry related development and other mix uses are clearly evident.

### Key Characteristics

1. The character of the area is not particularly distinctive although the gently rising ground across the north of the area provides a locally important containing backdrop to the urban edge.
2. Although the landform and areas of remaining agricultural landscape are generally representative of the wider *Mundurno* LCA, the pattern of scattered mix use development is more extensive than across the wider rural landscape further north.
3. Although parts of the landscape are still under agricultural management, there is a diverse land use including quarrying/landfill, light industry, some residential development and a large hotel.
4. At Dubford, surrounding urban development is dominated by dense large detached houses (some currently under construction) where constrained by the Burn of Mundurno, edges are linear in form. Along the eastern edge, the development is very visible although some mature trees along the northern boundary of the site helps with its integration. When viewed from the west, the housing has a poor relationship with the sloping local landform.
5. To the south-east of the area, a business park is partly visible although some trees along its northern boundary shape a softer linear edge.
6. There is a pattern of scattered development across most of the lower lying areas although the gentle slopes tend to be under agricultural management and undeveloped.
7. The area is easily accessible by road although there no opportunities for recreational activity and enjoyment.
8. Although some urban development is visible from across most of the area, there is a sense of detachment from the city centre, whilst a variety of urban fringe land uses and the busy A92 restricts any experience of rural character and quality.
9. Although the area is generally visually self-contained, the western edge of the area is important in views when approaching the city along the A92.
10. In general, the landscape is in poor condition with areas of unmanaged pasture, neglected field boundaries and visible industrial land use and activity.



Residential development near Dubford



Visible urban edge of Dubford



Containing rising ground to the north



Landfill along the A92

## AREA 5c: Perwinnes

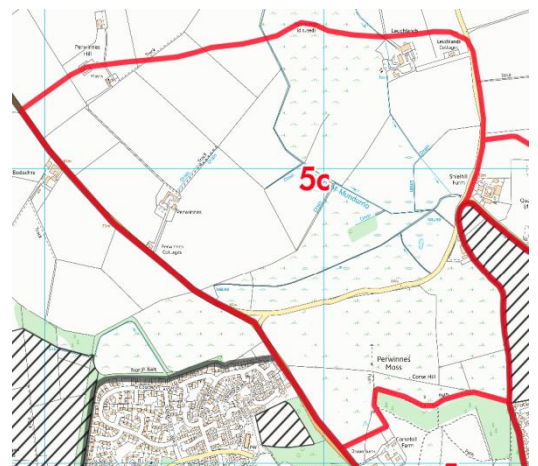
### Location & Context

The *Perwinnes* Urban fringe Character Area is located to north of the *Scotstown Moor* Urban Fringe Character Area and to the west of the *Denmore Fringe*. Although it has strong relationship with the wider *Mundurno* LCA, a small part of the Middleton Park urban area is located across the south-western boundary and to the south-east, the Dubford development site. The northern boundary follows a ridge line across gently rising landform from Perwinnes Hill towards Leuchlands Farm. The southern part of the area also forms part of the Scotstown Moor Local Nature Reserve.



### Extent

The outer extent of the area is determined by the gently rising ground that forms a degree of visual containment to the intervening lower lying foreground. As there is a strong landscape and visual connection with the prevailing rural landscape further to the north of the area, particularly when viewed from areas of higher ground, the



outer boundary represents a zone of gradual transition rather than a definitive urban fringe edge.

### Key Characteristics

1. The area has a distinctive character which sparsely settled and with a prevailing pastoral land use, is very representative of the wider *Mundurno* LCA.
2. Contained by a low lying ridge along the northern boundary, an area of marshy grassland rises towards the gorse scattered slopes of Coarse Hill that provides an important setting to nearby urban edge.
3. Apart from a small holding with associated pockets of rough grazing located in the northern part of the area, land use is dedicated to nature conservation and informal recreation.
4. Land use is predominantly pastoral farming although there is disused mineral working to the north of the area and Perwinnes Moss is managed for nature conservation.
5. Settlement edges at Middleton Park are linear in form and high density late 20 century residential housing is well integrated with the lower-lying landform. Boundaries are generally well defined by woodland edges that tend to screen the majority of housing from view.
6. At Dubford, surrounding urban development is dominated by dense large detached houses (some currently under construction) when viewed from the west, the housing is very visible with a poor relationship to the sloping landform.
7. Apart from several scattered farmsteads located on higher ground, the area has an undeveloped appearance.
8. The area is easily accessible by road although there are limited opportunities for recreational activity and enjoyment.
9. Although some urban development is visible from within the area, there is a strong sense of detachment from the city with a prevailing rural experience.
10. From lower lying areas, the landscape is generally visually well contained, although from elevated areas, there are longer views to the north and east. The gorse covered slopes and the wooded backdrop of Coarse Hill are important in local views when approaching the city from the north.
11. In general, the landscape is reasonably well managed although field boundaries are in decline. Disused quarry workings, redundant farm buildings and the Perwinnes Hill radar station also detract from rural character.



Looking west towards Middleton Park



The wooded backdrop of Corse Hill

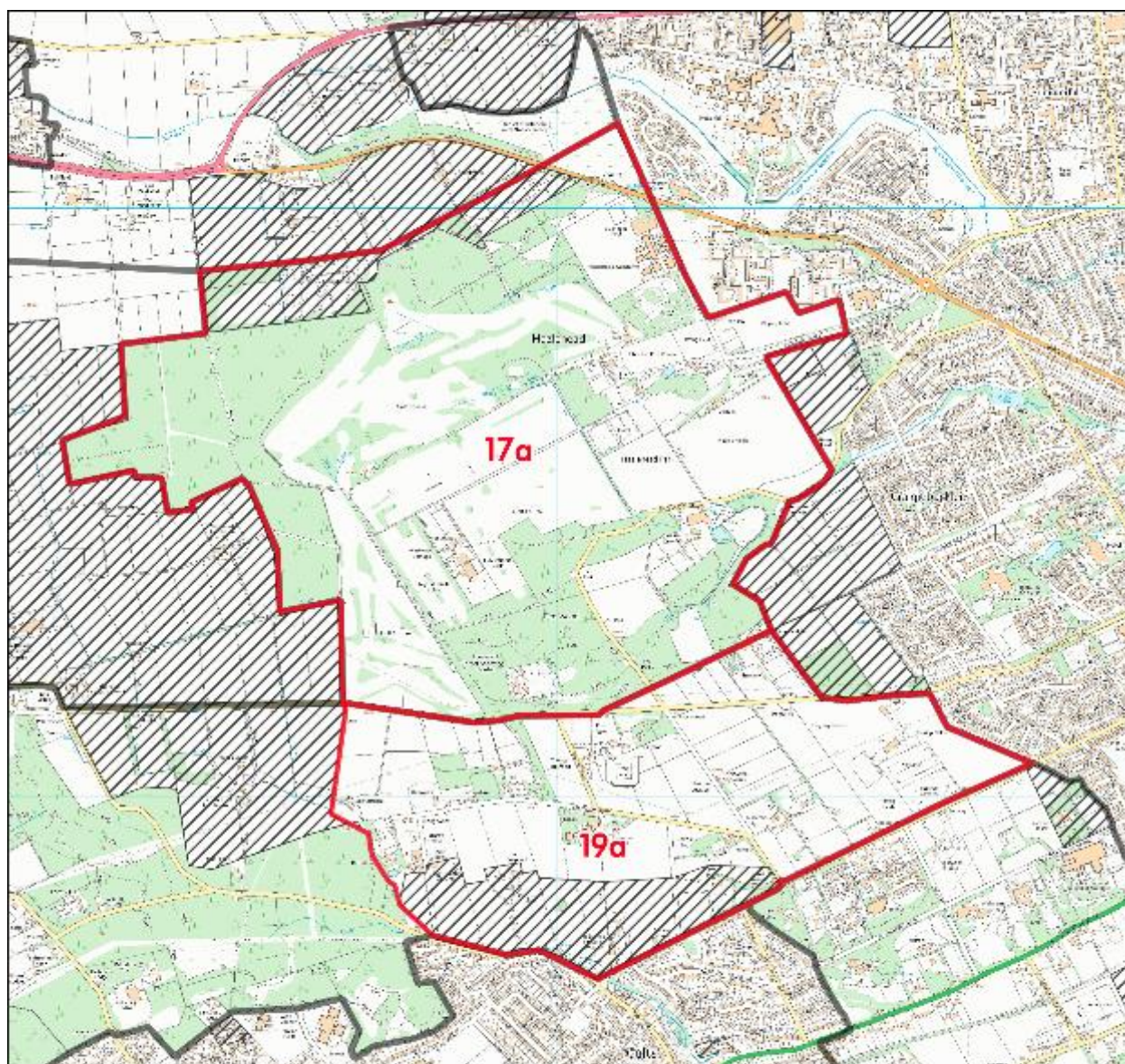


Looking east towards Dubford



Containing rising ground to the north

The following map illustrates the two urban fringe character areas identified within LCAs 17 and 19 (pilot 2):






## Aberdeen Peri-urban Study

May 2016



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-  Peri-urban Pilot Areas
-  Landscape Character Area
-  LDP12 Opportunity Site



## AREA 17a: Hazlehead Park

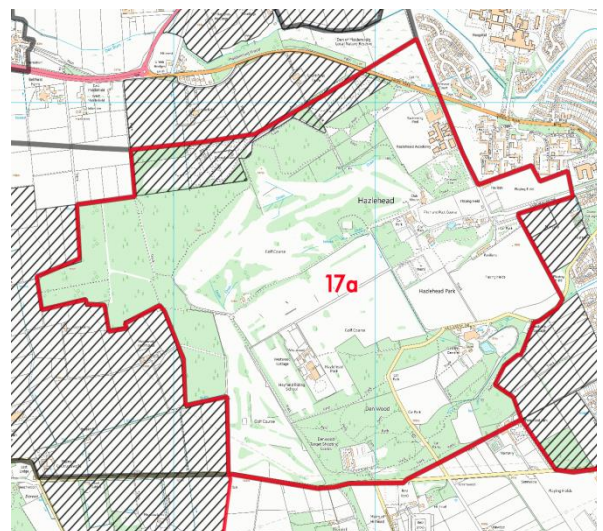
### Location & Context

Located on the western fringes of the city, the *Hazlehead Park* Urban Fringe Character Area covers the same area as the *Hazlehead Park* LCA. Primarily designated Open Space, the public park and surrounding recreational land uses are an important resource to the city. The eastern boundary adjoins the urban area and the recently constructed Pinewood and Hazeldene development. The *Countesswells Fringe* Character Area adjoins the southern boundary and to the west; the Countesswells Opportunity Site.



### Extent

The extent of the *Hazlehead Park* Urban Fringe Character Area remains the same area as the *Hazlehead Park* LCA as a diversity of recreational uses including public park, golf course, playing fields and riding school occur across most of the area. This mosaic of land use is also enclosed by a framework of surrounding woodlands that underpin a



unifying area of urban fringe recreational activities.

### Key Characteristics

1. The area has a very distinctive character defined by a mosaic of recreational land uses enclosed by woodlands and mature trees. As the Urban Fringe Character Area is the same area as the *Hazlehead Park* LCA, the description of landscape character is relevant to the entire urban fringe area.
2. The mostly wooded perimeter of the area provides a locally important setting for nearby urban areas and the gently rising ground towards to the west of the area provides a degree of containment to lower lying park.
3. Land use is primarily recreational including a public park, golf course, playing fields and riding school. Located in the north-eastern part Education also takes place at Hazlehead Academy.
4. To the north-east, surrounding urban development is characterised by post war housing estates and several blocks of high rise flats. Linear edges relate to the wooded boundaries of the park that tend to screen the majority of housing from view although the flats are clearly visible above the trees.
5. To the south of the area, the edge of the recently constructed Pinewood and Hazel development of large detached houses are partly visible from some nearby areas although tree planting and a stone wall along the southern edge of the development has helped to integrate it into the surrounding landscape.
6. If constructed, it is very likely that development across the Countesswells Opportunity Site would be screened from view by intervening landform and woodland at the western edge of the area.
7. There are number of buildings scattered across the landscape that are associated with the various management and use of recreational activities. There is also a semi-derelect group of buildings associated with a former garden centre amongst woodland and horse paddocks in the southern part of the area.
8. Easily accessible from nearby urban areas, there is a very good network of footpaths and open spaces across the area that provide a very important recreational resource to the city.
9. Despite its close proximity to urban areas, the screening and noise-muffling effect of surrounding woodland results in a sense of tranquillity and detachment from the city experienced from the core of this landscape.

10. 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 are similarly contained from surrounding roads and settlement.
11. In general, the landscape is well managed although there are some pockets of under managed pastures and semi-derelict buildings in the south of the area.



Footpath through the Hazeldene development



The urban edge of Hazeldene



The eastern boundary from within the park



Wooded perimeter from urban area

## AREA 19a: Countesswells Fringe

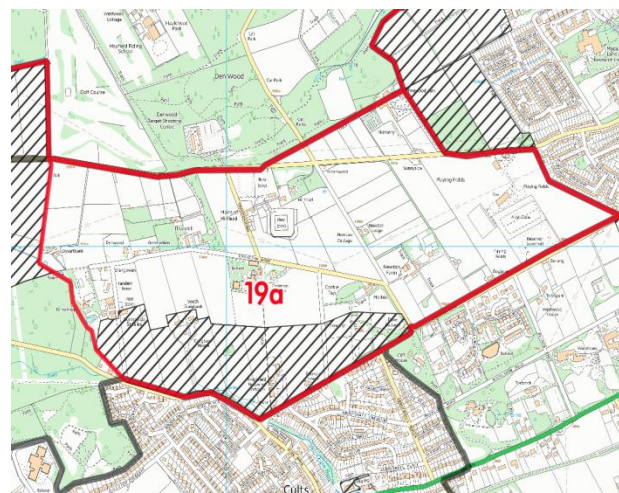
## Location & Context

The *Countesswells Fringe* Character Area forms the eastern part of the *Countesswells* LCA. Its northern boundary adjoins the *Hazlehead Park* Urban Fringe Character Area whilst to the east; the recently constructed Pinewood and Hazeldene development and adjacent residential development. Pitfodells Conservation Area and the settlement of Cults adjoin the southern boundary and to the west; an extensive area of plantation woodland to the south and the Countesswells Opportunity Site.



## Extent

The extent of the area has been determined by a diverse range of urban fringe related land uses that are evident across most of the landscape including sport pitches, allotments, water storage, and horse grazing. Furthermore, the woodland at the western boundary provides a sense of visual containment to these uses and beyond this; the landscape retains a stronger rural character and quality.



## Key Characteristics

1. Although the landscape has retained a pattern of stone walls enclosing geometric pastures, due to the influence of urban fringe land uses, the overall character is not as strong as the predominantly rural estate character evident across the western parts of the *Countesswells* LCA.
2. Although there are no topographic features of interest, small clumps of broad leaf woodland and mature boundary trees are locally important to the distant setting of some nearby urban areas.
3. Land use is very mixed and includes areas of pastoral farming, nurseries, sport pitches, allotments, water storage, horse grazing and riding stables.
4. Surrounding urban development is characterised by the recently constructed Pinewood and Hazel development of large detached houses and further south, post war bungalows.
5. The southern edge of the Pinewood and Hazel development is defined by a linear woodland edge that tends to screen the majority of housing from view. The linear edge of post war bungalows along the eastern boundary is partly visible amongst trees along the edge of the sport pitch.
6. If constructed, it is very likely that development across the Countesswells Opportunity Site would be screened from view by proposed intervening woodland along the eastern boundary.
7. Some built development is scattered across the landscape including farmsteads, sports pavilions, an assortment of out buildings, and a line of large pylons.
8. Although opportunities for walking are limited, the sport pitches are a valuable local recreational resource.
9. Although some urban development is visible from within the area, there is a strong sense of detachment from the city, whilst intervening woodland across the western boundary restricts experience of the wider rural landscape. Despite urban fringe land use, parts of the area retain a rural quality.
10. Views are generally contained to within the local landscape although towards the fringes, there are long range views over the Dee Valley. When approaching from the west, the pattern of pastures and mature boundary trees contribute are locally important when approaching the city.

11. The diversity of urban fringe land uses and associated infrastructure such as pylons, fencing and signage detracts from landscape quality. In places, field boundaries in a poor state of repair and many trees are over mature.



Distinctive woodland clump



Pylons can appear visually intrusive



Sport pitches along the urban edge



Looking west towards the Countesswells OP site

## Appendix 3 – Sample survey form

LCA: 20 Dee Valley

Sub unit: E Valley Side above Milltimber/ Binghill

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> July 16

Surveyors Fiona and Doug

<b>A: Physical and perceptual landscape characteristics</b>	
Key characteristics from Landscape Character Assessment	(see highlighter and notes in copy of LCA page and also record any variations in character and notable landscape features) 1 (series of hill tops and ridges), 2 (woodland habitats within valley-side tributaries- Murtle Den gorge) 3 (well-wooded landscape of extensive estate woodlands and mature trees which provide an attractive setting for existing built development), 4 (agriculture and forestry), 5 (stone dykes marking field pattern, extending down valley sides between settlements), 6 (distinct gaps of less-developed areas) 8 (historic features- prehistoric stone circle and cairn) 9 (long views across Dee Valley), 10 (less developed upper slopes are more peaceful and have sense of naturalness).
Designated sites within sub-unit	(desk study, but note on site where evident) Scheduled Monuments: cairn and stone circle at Binghill. Listed building at Binghill House. HLA shows designed landscape to the south of Binghill House, and small areas of planned rectilinear fields and farms at east and west of sub-unit. LNCS at Murtle Den, comprising large area of upland birch woodland, with smaller areas of wet woodland, coniferous woodland and broadleaved woodland.
Perceptual qualities, e.g. tranquillity, remoteness, seclusion (relative to the study area)	Landscape comprises fields and forestry blocks. Away from urban edges, has strongly rural character, and feels relatively tranquil and remote. Some very secluded areas, e.g. deep wooded gorge of Murtle Den. Binghill is high point, with nearby stone circle suggesting a commanding position within the surrounding landscape.
Presence of Green Space Network and degree of connectivity.	All Green Space Network. Strong connectivity to surrounding woodlands, grasslands and valley-side gaps. Limited potential to connect with greenspaces within urban areas e.g. sports pitches on eastern edge of Milltimber
Scores (against 3 development scenarios)	R - 4 B - 5 I - 5
<b>B1: Settlement Boundaries</b>	
Form, type, age and pattern of adjacent development	Mostly 1960s-1980s housing estates, relatively high density. 'The Meadows' to the north of Milltimber appears to be more recent.

Any distinctive buildings within the urban edge or sub unit	None
Type of settlement edge	Urban edges to east and west of Milltimber are unusually suburban, with front gardens (with low walls and ornamental planting) fronting onto roads, and facing fields. Although there are some trees alongside roads, these urban edges are relatively harsh compared to other parts of the Dee Valley. Northern settlement edge is difficult to access, but appears to be back gardens backing on to parkland.
Type of visual containment (slope, vegetation, road...)	Valley side edges contained by roads. Northern edge of settlement contained by landform and woodland/ trees.
Apparent continuation with wider urban area	Limited by landform and nearby housing
Score	R - 4 B - 5 I - 5
<b>C: Recreational Use</b>	
Type and degree of recreational use evident	Riding school in eastern part of sub-unit (within allocated site).
Linear routes and evidence of recreational links (e.g. Core Paths)	None obvious. Aspirational Core Paths running east-west connecting Peterculter, Milltimber and Bielside.
Open space	Most of area is open space (fields and forests) but not formal.
Recreation sites/ facilities (e.g. carparks, picnic benches) whether publicly accessible	None observed.
Viewpoints on 1:50K OS	None
Scores	R - 2 B - 2 I - 2
<b>D: Views and Gateways</b>	
Views to sub-unit (e.g. from the sea, elevated areas, adjacent housing)	Sub-unit highly visible in views across the Dee Valley, from where it forms the green backdrop to settlements, and also the skyline in views from the valley floor.
Type and variety of key views from sub-unit (e.g. panoramic, contained)	Long views across the Dee Valley, often framed by vegetation.
Visibility from approaches (gateways).	Lower part of sub-unit visible from A93 (part of allocation-already under construction). AWPR passes through western edge of sub-unit.
Prominent/notable features	Woodlands and strong field patterns.
Score	R - 4 B - 5



	I - 5
<b>E: Landscape Setting</b>	
Function and foreground/ backdrop to urban areas and/ or other landscapes	Forms backdrop in views across the Dee Valley, and from the valley floor (need to check latter). Also provides rural setting for Milltimber.
Separation function between landuses	Contributes to valley side gaps between settlements
Score	R - 5 B - 5 I - 5
<b>F: Landscape Condition and Forces for Change</b>	
Condition of landscape features (e.g. field boundaries)	Stone walls in variable condition. Some replaced/ strengthened with post and wire. Difficult to assess much of sub-unit as access limited.
Degree of management evident	Farmland generally well-managed, but much of sub-unit difficult to access.
Forces for change observed	AWPR will affect western edge of sub-unit. Much of eastern part of sub-unit already allocated, with big Cala Homes houses going up near A93. Top end of allocation is elevated rural fields which extend further up the valley side than existing development. This part of allocation is highly sensitive visually and in terms of rural character.
Notes re. enhancement opportunities/ management guidelines (e.g. agriculture and recreation)	Potential to improve access to countryside through new waymarked paths (could be achieved through Aspirational Core Paths). Improve access to stone circle (need to check if there is already a path, but it doesn't look like it!). Explore potential to improve access to Murtle Den gorge. Tree/ hedge planting along Contlaw Road and Binghill Road would soften existing urban edge and reduce suburban character of these roads.  It's probably too late, but try and make sure that the top end of the allocation isn't actually built on, but used as greenspace with a rural character!
<b>G: Sustainability Notes</b>	
Key constraints and buildability issues observed	None observed