

Development Bid Site at Contlaw, Aberdeen

Transport Appraisal



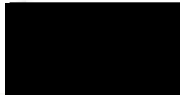
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1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in support of a potential development site at Contlaw Road, Milltimber. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the site's accessibility in accordance with transport planning guidance, with a view to demonstrating that the site is in a location which will encourage travel in a sustainable manner, reducing car dependency. The report also considers vehicular access to the site and opportunities to improve the surrounding road network in conjunction with its development.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The Contlaw site lies to the north west of the Milltimber residential area of Aberdeen, as shown in the site location plan below. Milltimber is primarily a residential suburb of Aberdeen located on the north bank of the River Dee approximately 10km to the west of the city centre. Having expanded rapidly over the past 30 years it is a community that lacks services due to lack of a planned approach to development.

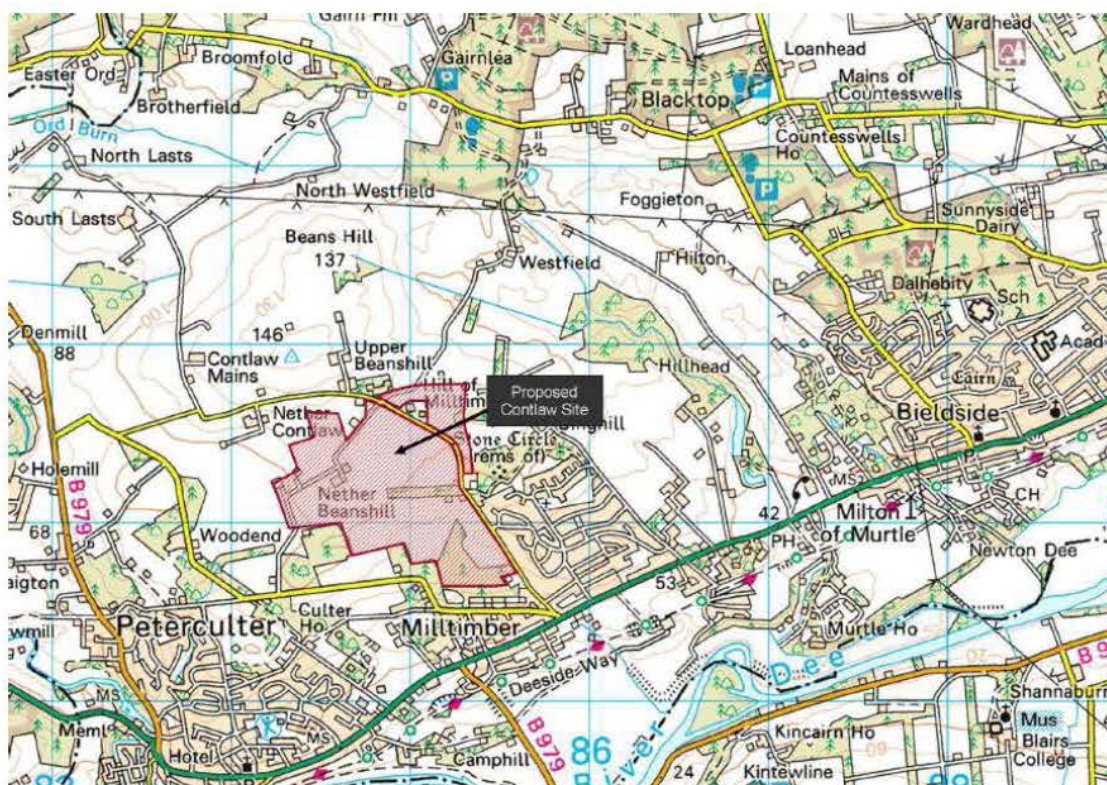


Figure 1-1: Site Location Plan

1.3 Development Proposal

1.3.1 The site extends to a total area of approximately 75 hectares. The Development Framework prepared for the Contlaw site sets out the development of up to 650 houses, the provision of a local centre accommodating a supermarket and a range of smaller shops, plus leisure uses including a public house and cafes, a community

centre, a primary health centre, a primary school and a mixed use employment site of at least 2.4 ha capable of accommodating small offices and workshops. All of these complementary land uses are within easy walking distance of residential development areas within the site and also within acceptable walking distance (the 20-30 mins (2400m) walk threshold specified in Transport Assessment Guidance) of the established Milltimber community.

- 1.3.2 The Contlaw site will be bisected by the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) which will pass through the site from north to south. The AWPR is under construction and is due to be completed by winter 2017. The Contlaw site would include strategic employment land of 6.64 ha for Class 4 and 5 uses located on land to the west of the AWPR. It could be accessed from Contlaw Road, and potentially also from the roundabout junction which is to be constructed as part of the AWPR A93 intersection.
- 1.3.3 Measures designed to encourage the use of alternative travel modes comprise another important element of the Development Framework proposal aimed at minimising development traffic impact. Provision of a balanced, integrated mix of development will encourage and enable walking and cycling activity within the site. Provision of a park and choose interchange facility within the site will also encourage public transport use for longer distance travel to the benefit of local residents and existing road users on the A93 corridor.

2 Transport Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Policy Context is principally defined by 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP), and Scottish Planning Advice Note 75 (PAN 75) 'Planning for Transport'. The Scottish Government documents 'Transport Assessment Guidance' and 'Designing Streets' are also of relevance.
- 2.1.2 The Scottish Government's 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP) issued in June 2014 replaces SPP (2010) and Designing Places (2001). SPP identifies the Scottish Government's overarching aim to increase sustainable economic growth within Scotland.
- 2.1.3 SPP revolves around the principle policies – sustainability and placemaking. In considering how planning should support the vision, the document outlines the key outcomes that developments need to contribute to:
- *'A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and creation of well-designed, sustainable places.'*
 - *'A low carbon place – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.'*
 - *'A natural, resilient place – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their use.'*
 - *'A more connected place – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.'*
- 2.1.4 The 'Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel' section of SPP stresses the importance of efficient transport connections within Scotland and to international markets, and the crucial role that planning plays to improving such infrastructure. The section goes on to identify within paragraph 270 that the planning system should support developments that:
- *'optimise the use of existing infrastructure;*
 - *reduce the need to travel;*
 - *provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport;*
 - *enable the integration of transport modes'.*
- 2.1.5 Paragraph 273 notes that *'the spatial strategies set out in plans should support development in locations that allow walkable access to local amenities and are also accessible by cycling and public transport. Plans should identify active travel networks and promote opportunities for travel by more sustainable modes in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, cars.'*
- 2.1.6 SPP notes in paragraph 287 that *'Planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:*
- *direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;*
 - *access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400m'*

- 2.1.7 PAN75 identifies the need for the integration of land use planning with transport, taking into account policies on economic growth, education, health and the objective of a more inclusive society.
- 2.1.8 PAN75 identifies in Annex B the undernoted thresholds:
- *'For accessibility of public transport the recommended guidelines are less than 400m to bus services;*
- 2.1.9 PAN 75 indicates that *'Travel Plans are documents that set out a package of positive and complementary measures, for the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns for a specific development.'* It further states that *'their ability and success in influencing travel patterns is dependent upon the commitment of the developer and occupier of a development.'* For residential land uses, PAN 75 notes at paragraph 43 that *'travel plans may set out measures which will be used as an incentive to house purchasers to use non-car travel modes, but setting targets is generally not practicable for this land use. Sustainability in housing should come through design in relation to walking, cycling and public transport networks'*.
- 2.1.10 Transport Assessment Guidance (TAG) has been published by Transport Scotland to guide the preparation of Transport Assessments (TA) for development proposals in Scotland. Paragraph 1.8 notes that the TA process *'is directed towards successful delivery of development-related transport measures aimed at achieving sustainable transport outcomes.'* It further notes that the *'process incorporates scoping, transport assessment and implementation including travel plans and monitoring.'*
- 2.1.11 TAG identifies that *'Journey times of up to 20-30 mins are appropriate for walking and 30-40 mins for cycling'*.
- 2.1.12 'Designing Streets' sets out Scottish Government policy to be followed in designing and approving the layout of settlements. The Scottish Government's policy emphasises that street design should meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in Designing Places. The six qualities and key considerations are summarised as follows:
- *Distinctive – street design should respond to local context to deliver places that are distinctive*
 - *Safe and pleasant – streets should be designed to be safe and attractive place*
 - *Easy to move around – streets should be easy to move around for all users and connect well to existing networks*
 - *Welcoming – streets layout and detail should encourage positive interaction for all members of the community*
 - *Adaptable – street networks should be designed to accommodate future adaptation*
 - *Resource Efficient – street design should consider orientation, the integration of sustainable drainage and use attractive, durable materials that can be easily maintained.*

2.2 Regional Policy

- 2.2.1 Regional Policy for the proposed development is largely defined by:

- Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (March 2014)
- NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (June 2008)

2.2.2 The Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) identifies *'four strategic growth areas'* (SGA) which will be the focus of development in the area up to 2035. The SDP notes, *'The strategic growth areas are centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes.'* The SDP also aims to *'make the most efficient use of the transport network, reducing the need for people to travel and making sure that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices.'*

2.2.3 The Strategic Development Plan identifies the undernoted objectives:-

- *'To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses'*
- *'To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and business to move to.'*
- *'To make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices.'*

2.2.4 The SDP endorses the role of 'Sustainable mixed communities' in making sure that *'new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to'.*

2.2.5 The NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (RTS) identifies within its four Strategic Objectives the requirements to:

- *'to enhance and exploit the North East's competitive economic advantages, and to reduce the impacts of peripherality'*
- *enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited'*
- *support transport integration and a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east'*

2.2.6 In identifying an 'Internal Connections Strategy' the RTS sets out key initiatives aimed at improving transport infrastructure within the City and Shire. These are focussed on improvements to public transport aimed at delivering economic, environmental and social inclusion benefits, with construction of the Western Peripheral Route facilitating the delivery of complementary transport measures as well as contributing *'to the economy and sustainable communities across the north east'*. It also sets out a detailed programme for the delivery of additional park and ride sites and improved bus services aimed at maximising the identified benefits of reducing congestion, improving air quality and broadening travel choices.

2.3 Local Policy

2.3.1 Local Policy that would guide development is largely defined by:

- The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan – (February 2012)
- Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (March 2008)

- ALDP Supplementary Guidance 'Transport and Accessibility' – (March 2012)
- 2.3.2 The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) outlines proposals for development and land use for a period of 10 years from adoption. It sets out the strategic policies and proposals for promoting sustainable growth of the city over a 10-20 year period.
- 2.3.3 The LDP also sets out specific policies for ensuring that new developments contribute to delivering sustainable communities within the city. A number of the policies identified within the current LDP would remain relevant to the emerging LDP. These include:
- Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions
 - Policy T2 – Managing the Traffic Impact of Development
 - Policy D3 – Sustainable and Active Travel
- 2.3.4 The Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (LTS) still forms the current Transport Strategy for Aberdeen and outlines the policies and interventions adopted by ACC to guide the planning and improvement of the local road network over a five-year period.
- 2.3.5 The LTS sets out five high level aims, as follows:
- *'Support and Contribute to a thriving economy for Aberdeen and its region*
 - *Ensure a safe and secure transport system*
 - *Minimise the environmental impact of transport on our community and the wider world*
 - *Ensure the transport system is integrated and accessible to all*
 - *Ensure that transport policies integrate with and support sustainable development, health and social inclusion policies'.*
- 2.3.6 A number of specific objectives detailed within the LTS also support the previously listed aims. Key considerations among these objectives include:
- *'minimise and improve reliability of journey times for people and goods through Aberdeen's transport networks*
 - *improve the condition of road, footway and cycle road network*
 - *increase the share of travel by the most sustainable modes to promote economic growth without the associated traffic growth*
 - *continue to reduce road casualties*
 - *reduce carbon emissions from road transport*
 - *improve accessibility (network and cost) to jobs and services to support social inclusion,*
 - *to facilitate and support land use development adjacent to sustainable transport corridors and nodes*
 - *to promote healthy living by encouraging safe walking and cycling'*
- 2.3.7 The LDP Supplementary Guidance 'Transport and Accessibility' (March 2012) advocates that a Travel Plan should *'be site specific and measures and objectives should reflect the individual characteristics of the site as well as the trips likely to be generated by that development.'* The document further highlights that *'Residential Travel Plans should outline measures aimed at influencing the travel behaviour of new home owners to, from and within the development. These could include:*

- *Ensuring the development is well served by safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes;*
- *Entering into negotiations with bus operators to ensure that the development can be served by public transport if it is not at present;*
- *Distributing a welcome pack to new residents with maps showing local walking and cycling routes and local public transport maps, leaflets and timetables;*
- *Providing a car club vehicle(s) for residents to use;*
- *Establishing a residents' car share scheme;*
- *Providing residents with 1 months' free public transport tickets or a voucher for discounted walking or cycling goods'.*

3 Site Accessibility Review

3.1 The Site

- 3.1.1 The Contlaw site lies to the north of the A93 North Deeside Road to the north west of Milltimber. Milltimber is one of a string of commuter suburbs along the A93 North Deeside Road between the city boundary at Peterculter 3kms to the west and the city centre 10kms to the east. Demands for movement primarily follow this east-west corridor with limited localised opportunities for north-south travel due to constraints caused by the River Dee immediately to the south and the network of local roads to the north which are suitable only for access and leisure uses.
- 3.1.2 Whilst provision of the AWPR bisecting the site will clearly influence future opportunities for localised movements within the development area (as well as opening up new opportunities for north-south strategic traffic movements) it will not materially impact present walking and cycling opportunities.

3.2 Pedestrian Network

- 3.2.1 Existing attractions available within the specified 1600m walking distance identified in guidance are relatively few. The Contlaw development masterplan would introduce new facilities to rectify existing deficiencies. Those facilities which are presently available include Milltimber Primary School, the church and a community centre all of which are accessed by footways alongside the existing residential streets as shown at Diagram A in the Appendix.
- 3.2.2 The proposed mixed use development at Contlaw would provide an enhanced level of local amenities and facilities to the benefit of the local community. This would encourage trips to remain within the Milltimber community, reducing the need to travel out with the area to access employment, community, leisure and retail facilities, many of which would be within an acceptable walking distance within the Contlaw site.

3.3 Cycling Network

- 3.3.1 Current provision of cycle priority facilities in the vicinity of the site include continuous on-road advisory cycle lanes along the A93 North Deeside Road from east of Milltimber to the city centre and the parallel off road cycleway, 'The Deeside Way', which follows the former Deeside railway alignment is only 250m south of the road.
- 3.3.2 The Deeside Way provides a continuous segregated through route between Peterculter and Duthie Park to the south of the city centre and is used for both leisure and commuter purposes. The on-road route provides a direct link into the city centre some 10km to the east of the Contlaw site as well as connections to other priority routes across the city centre which are well within convenient cycling distance for commuters.



On Road Advisory Cycle Lanes on A93 North Deeside Road at Contlaw Road

3.4 Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

- 3.4.1 In order to ensure that walking and cycling opportunities are maximised, appropriate provisions could be made to link the development areas to existing path networks serving the Milltimber area. The primary focus of such connections would involve establishing an integrated network of footpath routes through the site directly linking with existing networks in Contlaw Road and Colthill Road to accommodate movements to the existing primary school and other community facilities.
- 3.4.2 The Contlaw site could be developed with direct paths connecting to Culter House Road and associated improvements to Bellenden Walk aimed at maximising its potential for accommodating pedestrian movements to/from existing bus services in the North Deeside Road corridor, and cyclists accessing existing priority routes along the A93 and the Deeside cycleway.
- 3.4.3 Culter House Road will be severed as a through route by construction of the AWPR and provision will be made for a direct footway/bridleway connection between the eastern section of the severed route and the new A93 interchange. Consequently there is an obvious opportunity to expand the role of Bellenden Walk to provide segregated pedestrian access to serve the expanded development resulting in principal parts of the most intensively developed area lying within approximately 1000m walk distance of the A93 North Deeside Road.
- 3.4.4 A signalised pedestrian crossing could also be installed on A93 North Deeside Road near the Bellenden Walk junction, however it is expected that the A93 / B979 Traffic Signals, being delivered as part of the AWPR, will include a pedestrian crossing facility which is less than 200m to the west of Bellenden Walk.

3.5 Public Transport Accessibility

3.5.1 Public transport provision in the vicinity of the site presently comprises bus services operating along North Deeside Road. Such services are accessible within 1000m walk distance of a major part of the site via Bellenden Walk or Contlaw Road.



First service 19 on A93 North Deeside Road at Contlaw Road

3.5.2 First Service 19 (Culter to Tillydrone) and Stagecoach Services 201, 202 and 203 (Aberdeen City Centre to Braemar / Lumphanan / Banchory) are accessible from the A93 North Deeside Road. These operate a combined frequency of about 7 services per hour or one service every 8 – 9 minutes. Further details of these and other services frequencies are summarised in the following table.

Operator	Service	Route	Mon-Fri	Nearest Bus Stop
First Group	19	Culter – Tillydrone via Bon Accord Centre and Union Street	Approximately Every 12 Minutes	A93
Bluebird Stagecoach	201	Aberdeen – Cults – Banchory – Torphins – Aboyne – Ballater – Braemar	Every Hour	A93
Bluebird Stagecoach	202	Aberdeen – Cults – Banchory – Torphins – Lumphanan	Every Hour	A93
Bluebird Stagecoach	203	Aberdeen – Cults – Banchory	3 Daily Services (PM)	A93

Table 3-1: North Deeside Road Bus Service Frequencies

- 3.5.3 As part of the implementation of the Regional Transport System, Aberdeen City and Shire Councils and NESTRANS are promoting the introduction of a network of interlinked park and ride / choose sites around the AWPR. At present NESTRANS strategic aim is to establish an inter urban park and choose facility serving the A93 corridor at Banchory and preliminary proposals involving improvements to service frequencies and journey times have been introduced previously as part of the Banchory Quality Bus Corridor initiative.
- 3.5.4 With the future introduction of orbital bus services around the AWPR interlinking available park and ride sites and with the establishment of significant employment opportunities at the Contlaw Road site it will be feasible to develop a suitable interchange point within the development area to fully realise the benefits expected to arise from the AWPR in providing for future public transport movements between the North Deeside radial corridor and the AWPR orbital corridor serving major employment opportunities such as Prime Four, Arnhall Business Park and Kirkhill/Dyce to the north and Tullos/Altens to the south and east. Present services operating along North Deeside Road could then be diverted up the access road to the AWPR interchange to interconnect with such orbital services and also serve the development more directly.
- 3.5.5 With provision of the proposed interchange facility substantial parts of the development area will be directly within the specified 400m walking distance of bus services to a range of destinations (including destinations accessible via the AWPR with the implementation of the envisaged circumferential services). The minor extension of services via a loop through the northern part of the site and back along the northern section of Contlaw Road (returning to the interchange through the development as illustrated in the Development Framework Report) will ensure that all parts of the site (as well as adjoining established residential areas) are within the 400m walk threshold of frequent bus services whilst providing options to prevent access by other vehicles by the introduction of bus gates if deemed necessary following completion of a detailed Transport Assessment.
- 3.5.6 This concept for enhancing public transport service provision post AWPR and providing improved connections to serve the development has been the subject of preliminary discussion with First Aberdeen which has demonstrated its feasibility in principle. Proposals would be developed in greater detail as the project evolves and dialogue would continue with both the operators and the Council's Public Transport Unit aimed at ensuring delivery of a feasible and economically viable service.

3.6 Existing Local Road Network

- 3.6.1 The existing site is predominantly vacant and low quality agricultural land with access onto Contlaw Road which traverses through the northern part of the site and bounds the eastern edge of the site at Milltimber. Contlaw Road connects with the A93 North Deeside Road approximately 300m to the south of the site.
- 3.6.2 To the east of the site the A93 serves a number of commuter suburbs including Milltimber, Bieldside and Cults before it intersects with the A90 via a signalised junction, approximately 6.5km from the site. The A90 is a strategic Trunk Road which routes between Fraserburgh and Dundee and is therefore the main route used by vehicles accessing Aberdeen from the South. The A90 routes north to south through Aberdeen City, serving Bridge of Don, Ellon and Peterhead to the north and settlements such as Stonehaven, Portlethen and Montrose to the south. To the east

of the A90 junction, Great Western Road provides access into the City Centre and adjoins Holburn Street / Willowbank Road.

- 3.6.3 To the west of the site settlements including Peterculter, Drumoak, Banchory, Aboyne, Ballater and Braemar are served by the A93. The route continues through Royal Deeside to Braemar, before passing through to Blairgowrie and on to Perth.

3.7 Committed Transport Infrastructure

- 3.7.1 The AWPR will be a new orbital route around the west side of Aberdeen described as *'the most important infrastructure project taking place in the North East (which) will bring a range of substantial benefits to the region'*. Its construction is anticipated to provide *'a much needed fast and safe route around Aberdeen which links with the existing major roads and key locations such as the airport, park and ride sites and the major industrial estates around the City'*
- 3.7.2 Work has commenced with the AWPR due to open in 2017 and will become the primary route north to south past Aberdeen, linking residential zones to employment and education facilities. North Deeside Road is one of only two non-trunk primary distributor roads that will have a junction with the committed AWPR, which will follow an alignment through the Contlaw site. North Deeside Road will therefore remain a primary route carrying traffic between the AWPR and the City Centre.
- 3.7.3 One of the key benefits of the AWPR is the expected reduction of demand on use of the various minor orbital routes around western Aberdeen. Reductions in flow along these routes will provide relief to the city-bound traffic along North Deeside Road past the development, improving traffic flow operation overall.
- 3.7.4 Traffic modelling undertaken by Systra in connection with the Aberdeen Sub Area Model 4a (ASAM4a) reports that the AWPR will lead to a reduction in daily traffic flow on the A93, with the reduction varying on differing sections of the road. To the west of the A90, the traffic flow changes on the A93 in 2018 due to the AWPR opening are reported to be -13% eastbound and -25% westbound in the AM Peak, and -23% eastbound and +3% westbound in the PM peak. The reduction in two way Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is reported to be 12%, which would equate to approximately 1,600 vehicles.
- 3.7.5 The construction of the AWPR around the city offers an exceptional development opportunity at Contlaw. The AWPR will include a grade separated interchange within the Contlaw site, offering direct access around the periphery of the City. It will also offer an access to the A93 North Deeside Road via a new connector road. The A93 will experience significantly reduced traffic flow upon opening of the AWPR, offering capacity to accommodate additional development on the corridor.

3.8 Potential Road Improvements

- 3.8.1 The proposal could include the introduction of traffic signal control at the junction of Contlaw Road and North Deeside Road. Additionally, a direct vehicular access between the development site and the proposed AWPR interchange could be implemented, requiring only minor modification to the proposed intersection design.
- 3.8.2 Further connections between the AWPR interchange and the existing local road network serving the Milltimber community could be provided, such that existing

residents could access the new route directly without adding to traffic pressure on the A93 corridor, consistent with Council objectives to 'lock in' the benefits of the AWPR.

3.9 Site Access

- 3.9.1 Vehicular access to the site can be achieved from Contlaw Road. Arrangements to serve residential development of that part of the site were the subject of previous application proposals which were agreed with the City Council. These involved a loop of residential access roads served by simple 'T' junctions with the upgrading of the junction with North Deeside Road to accommodate traffic signals. Details of the agreed junction proposal are shown on drawing 48065/001 in the Appendix.
- 3.9.2 Access from Contlaw Road would be appropriate to serve initial phases of the development, maximising integration with the existing community. Upon completion of the AWPR additional access points could be achieved by adapting the currently proposed grade separated junction serving the link to North Deeside Road. Diagram B in the Appendix shows the route of the AWPR through the site, including the A93 interchange.
- 3.9.3 At present the AWPR junction comprises a grade separated trumpet layout with slip roads either side of the through dual carriageway and a single overbridge with a roundabout junction to the west providing access to the proposed Link Road to North Deeside Road. It is proposed to duplicate this roundabout by providing a second junction on the east side of the overbridge providing direct access into the development area. This arrangement is shown indicatively on Diagram C in the Appendix.
- 3.9.4 Within the site access to individual development areas would be provided via a loop road network to optimise flexibility and accessibility and accommodate emergency access. Access to the development area on land to the west of the AWPR would be via Contlaw Road just to the west of a future bridge over the AWPR, which forms part of the AWPR works.
- 3.9.5 Key issues to be addressed in delivering this strategy will focus on delivery of the proposed modifications to the AWPR junction. This will require dialogue with the Council and Transport Scotland regarding technical requirements. Whilst there is a presumption against the provision of new trunk road junctions, the proposal would represent an alteration to an existing junction rather than a new trunk road junction. The alteration would be of benefit to the future operation of the road network. There is therefore a strong case for its provision and further discussions with Transport Scotland to agree such modifications would be progressed as part of a detailed Transport Assessment for the site.

4 Summary and Conclusions

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been undertaken on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in support of a development bid site at Contlaw, Milltimber. The site at Contlaw Road Milltimber occupies a suburban location on the North Deeside Road corridor with the potential for excellent direct accessibility from the AWPR as it passes through the site.
- 4.1.2 There are currently few local facilities and amenities within the general area which the existing Milltimber community can make use of. The proposed mixed use allocation at Contlaw would address the current inadequacies in the interests of delivering a balanced community capable of promoting sustainable transport options. The mixed use nature of the development would encourage and enable walking and cycling for short trips within the development. In addition, walking and cycling trips would be drawn in to the development from surrounding residential streets. The site would establish opportunities for promoting walking routes and for tying into longer distance existing cycle routes. The site is capable of integrating well with surrounding residential zones making use of existing infrastructure and providing enhancements where necessary. In this regard the site would meet with transport planning and policy.
- 4.1.3 The Contlaw site would support the introduction of a park and choose interchange within the site to accommodate future orbital bus services around the AWPR and services on the North Deeside Road corridor. Thus the site can be developed offering potential for a high degree of public transport accessibility with units located within 400m of a frequent bus service. Development of the site would meet with planning policy for public transport accessibility.
- 4.1.4 Investigation of site access options has confirmed the importance of connecting into Contlaw Road in order to integrate the development with the existing Milltimber community. Access to Contlaw Road is achievable at a number of points. The principal point of access to the site would be from the AWPR interchange and would require a modification to the A93 junction, which is technically achievable.
- 4.1.5 Preliminary traffic analysis has established that an initial phase of approximately 100 houses could satisfactorily be accommodated from an access to Contlaw Road, albeit with signalisation of the junction with North Deeside Road. Further assessments to consider the performance of the wider network in the context of the AWPR scheme would be required through a Transport Assessment process. However the site is very well located giving direct access to the AWPR. In addition, studies have shown that the AWPR will lead to a significant reduction in traffic flow on the A93 corridor which would counterbalance traffic impacts associated with the development.

4.2 Conclusion

- 4.2.1 This Transport Appraisal has identified that the Contlaw site offers an excellent opportunity for development. Through its location in relation to existing development the site offers potential to generate trips by sustainable means in preference to car trips, which would be to the benefit of the existing local road network. There are opportunities to provide walking and cycling infrastructure from the proposed site to

connect with existing facilities and future proposals on the adjacent local road network.

- 4.2.2 The development at the Contlaw site, incorporating appropriate transport infrastructure to support the development, could readily be accessible by sustainable transport modes. The site is within easy access from major regional employment centres with direct access proposed from the AWPR.
- 4.2.3 The Contlaw site can be developed to be fully compatible with national and local transport planning policy guidance and as such it is considered that there are positive transport related reasons for developing the site for mixed uses.
- 4.2.4 Development of the site could occur in a sustainable manner offering many benefits due to its location. In addition, development of the site can offer road capacity benefits through formation of a new roundabout on the east side of the AWPR Milltimber junction, providing a link to residential zones to the east. Development of alternative sites cannot offer that benefit.
- 4.2.5 The Transport Appraisal concludes that the inclusion of this site in the LDP will assist in promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel and will not only optimise the use of existing infrastructure, but improve upon it. With continued expansion and allocations of development in the A93 North Deeside Corridor the proposed mixed use development at Contlaw would help to reduce the need to travel, provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling and enable the integration of different transport modes. Public Transport opportunities will be significantly improved with the provision of an interchange and 'park and choose' facility within the site.

Enclosures

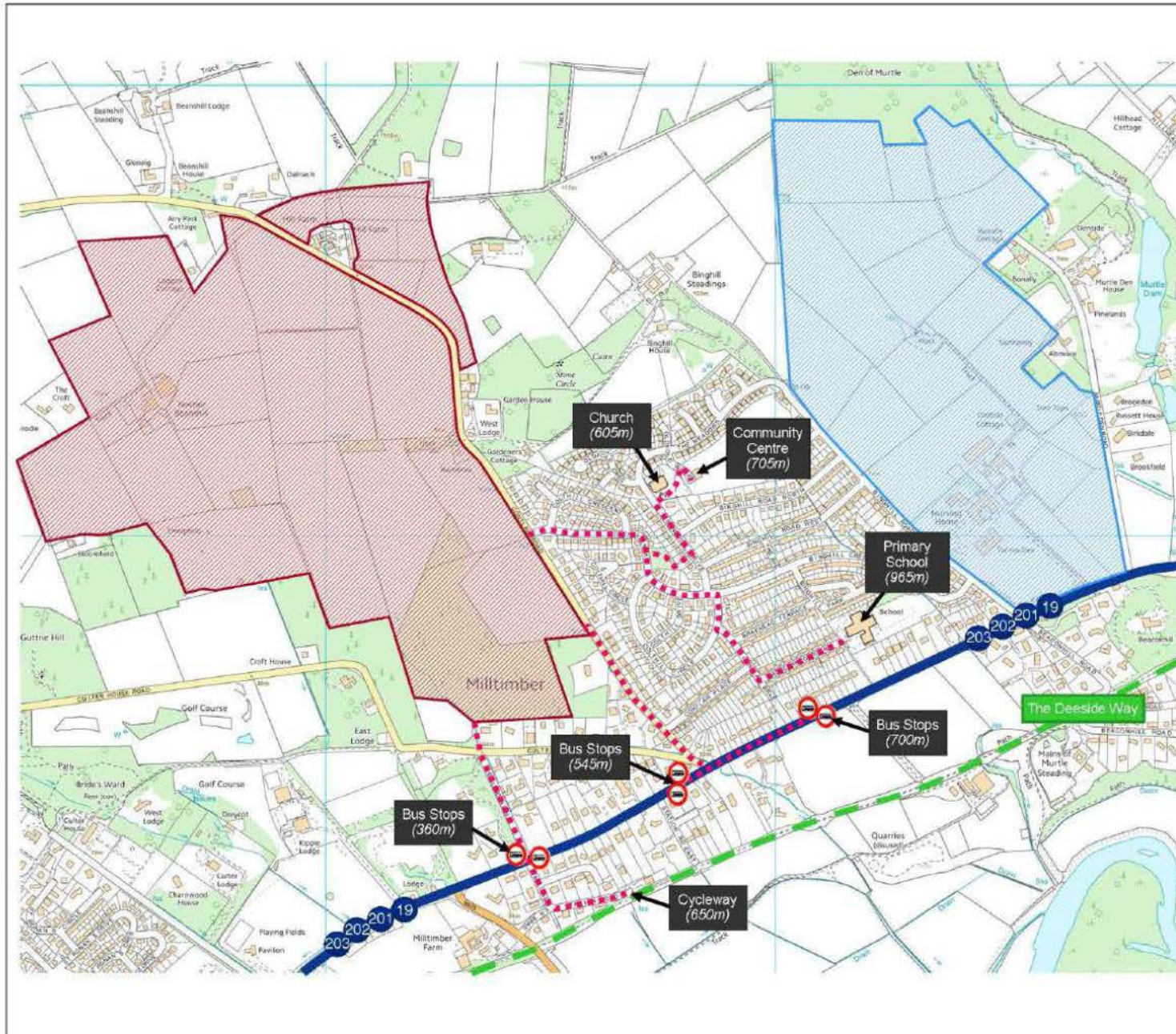
Diagram A: Public Transport, Cycleway Networks & Accessibility Routes

Diagram B: AWPR Proposals & Contlaw Site boundary

Diagram C: Site Plan

Drawing 48065/001: Proposed A93 Signalised Junction Layout

FAIRHURST



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Project Title:
110174 Contlaw
Proposed Mixed-Use Development


Drawing Title:
Walking and Cycling Accessibility
Walking Routes and Local Facilities

Diagram A


KEY:

-  Development Site
-  Oldfold Development
-  Local Amenities

Walking Routes:

-  Walking Routes to Amenities

Cycle Routes:

-  The Deeside Way

Bus Routes and Facilities:

-  Local Bus Services
-  Local Bus Stops

Client:


STEWART
Milne
HOMES

Drawn by: KC

Date: 22.05.15

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Project Title:
110174 Contlaw
Proposed Mixed-Use Development

Drawing Title:
AWPR Proposals and
Contlaw Site Road

Diagram B

KEY:

 Site Boundary

Client:

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HOMES

Drawn by: KC

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Project Title:
110174 Contlaw
Proposed Mixed-Use Development

Drawing Title:
Indicative Site Masterplan

Diagram C

KEY:

-  Site Boundary
-  Residential
-  Mixed Use
-  Employment
-  Primary School
-  Employment/Playing Fields
-  Formal Open Space
-  Informal Open Space
-  Transport Interchange
-  Major Footway Link

Client:



Drawn by: KC

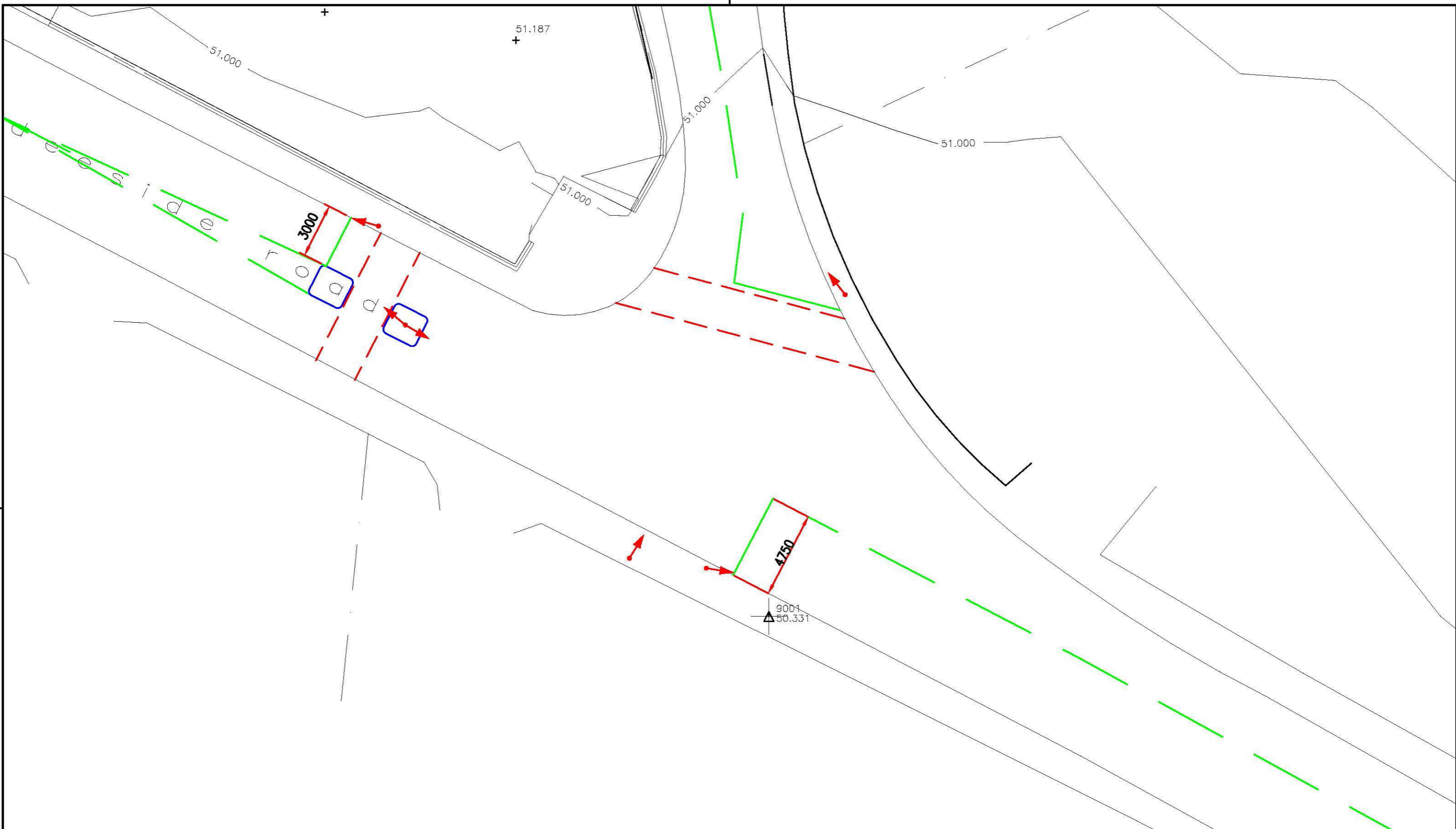
Date: 27/05/15

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Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked	Approved
A	12/11/03	CROSSING & STOP LINES MOVED	NAM		

Client:	
Project Title:	Contlaw Road Aberdeen
Drawing Title:	Possible Signalised Junction Layout

Scale at A3:	1:200
Status:	PRELIMINARY
Drawn:	KY
Date:	06/12/01

FAIRHURST 43 George Street,
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CONSULTING STRUCTURAL
AND CIVIL ENGINEERS

Scale at A3:	Status:	CAD File Name:
1:200	PRELIMINARY	pc00002a
Drawn:	Checked:	Approved:
KY		
Date:	Date:	Date:
06/12/01		

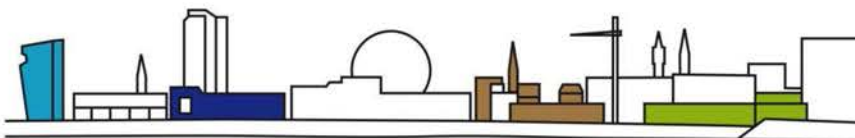
Drawing No: **48065/001** Revision: **A**

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Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015 Representation Form

Please use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, ensuring that your comments relate to a specific issue, site or policy in either the Proposed Plan, Proposed Supplementary Guidance, Proposed Action Programme or Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report. Please include the relevant paragraph(s) and use a separate form for each issue you wish to raise.

The consultation period runs between Friday 20th March and Monday 1st June 2015. Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1st June.

Name	Mr <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mrs <input type="radio"/> Miss <input type="radio"/> Ms <input type="radio"/> John Findlay
Organisation	Ryden LLP
On behalf of (if relevant)	Stewart Milne Homes
Address	25 Albyn Place Aberdeen
Postcode	AB10 1YL
Telephone	01224 588866
E-mail	john.findlay@ryden.co.uk

Please tick if you would like to receive all future correspondence by e-mail

What document are you commenting on?	Proposed Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Proposed Supplementary Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Proposed Action Programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy/Site/Issue	Spatial Strategy, Greenfield Development should include provision for site B0202, Mundurno, Bridge of Don	Paragraph(s)	Table 3

What would you like to say about the issue?

Please refer to attached Paper Apart.

What change would you like to see made?

Please refer to attached Paper Apart.

Please return the completed form by:

- post to the Local Development Plan Team, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB; or
- email to ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk

The representation form can be filled in, saved, e-mailed and/or printed. You must “save as” to ensure the completed form is saved with the changes you have made. If you need more space, please fill out another representation form or send a word document attachment via e-mail with your completed representation form. **Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1st June.**

Thank you. For more information, please visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/aldp2016 or to contact the Local Development Plan Team call 01224 523470.

Data Protection Statement

The comments you make on the Proposed Plan will be used to inform the Local Development Plan process and the Examination into the Local Development Plan by the Scottish Ministers’ Reporter. You must provide your name and address for your representation to be considered valid, and this information will be made publicly available. Other personal contact details such as telephone and e-mail will not be made public, although we will share these with the Reporter, who may use them to contact you about the comments you have made. For more information about how Aberdeen City Council maintains the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg (Local Development Plan Team Leader) on 01224 523317.

PAPER APART

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2015) ON BEHALF OF STEWART MILNE HOMES RELATIVE TO THE FAILURE TO IDENTIFY DEVELOPMENT OPTION SITE B0202 AT MUNDURNO, BRIDGE OF DON FOR RESIDENTIAL LED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of the proposed Local Development Plan to identify Development Option Site B0202 at Mundurno, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen for development in accordance with their Development Bid submitted in June 2013.

That Bid identified the site, straddling the B999, and extending to approximately 75 hectares or thereby capable of providing a mixed use, sustainable community adjoining the existing suburb of Bridge of Don. It proposed around 1,000 residential units, comprising a mix of house types and tenures, a retail and business hub and community facilities, including scope for a new single stream primary school and playing field.

Separate representations have been submitted in respect of the housing land supply and the requirement for additional housing sites to be identified through the emerging Local Development Plan 2015. This objection requires to be read in conjunction with those representations. Stewart Milne Homes contend that the site is capable of contributing to the Housing Land Supply requirements and accordingly, should be identified through the emerging Local Development Plan for phased development.

Modification Required

The site should be identified in the Bridge of Don/Grandhome Growth Area. The extent of the site should be identified on the Citywide Proposals Map to coincide with that of Development Option Site B0202. It should be allocated to accommodate around 500 houses in each phase of the Plan (1,000 houses) with associated ancillary uses and community facilities.

Modifications should be made to Table 2 and Table 3 of the emerging Local Development Plan to allow for the development of the site in the period 2017-2026 and 2027-2035. Further consequential amendments will be required to the supporting text.

Background

Development Bids relative to the site were submitted in 2009 and again in 2013 in response to a call for sites from the Council to be considered for inclusion in the Local Development Plan 2012 and the emerging Local Development Plan 2015.

The Main Issues Report (MIR), published by Aberdeen City Council in October 2009, identified the Denmore and Murcar areas to the north of the city as one of eight directions for growth. That has been maintained through the extant LDP 2012 and carried forward into the proposed Plan 2016. The 2009 MIR considered that development to the north of the city would contribute to delivering the vision set by the Energetica initiative promoted by Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Future (ACSEF), but failed to identify the Mundurno site for development. Despite representations being lodged to the MIR the Proposed Plan, published in 2010, again failed to include the site for development.

Objections were subsequently submitted to the proposed Plan and these were considered by a Reporter appointed to undertake an Examination in Public into the Plan. The Reporter concluded that adequate housing land had been provided to meet the allowances in the Structure Plan and as such, there was no numerical justification to allocate further housing sites. On a site specific basis he considered that its development would extend built development into the open countryside and as a consequence, the Greenbelt boundary, particularly to the west of the B999, would be considerably weakened and the ability to prevent further encroachment into the countryside reduced. He considered removal of the site from the Greenbelt and its allocation for development had not been justified.

The subsequent commitments to deliver the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the Third Don Crossing had material implications for the Bridge of Don area and the Mundurno site in particular. As a consequence of these material changes a further Development Bid was submitted in 2013 (Appendix 1) accompanied by an indicative Development Framework and Access Strategy.

The Development Options Assessment, published with the Main Issues Report (MIR) in January 2014 allocated the site Reference B0202. However, the MIR considered there to be no requirement for additional housing land to be identified through the emerging Plan and consequently failed to identify it as a preferred site for development. Detailed representations were submitted in response to the MIR and these are attached at Appendix 2.

The representations in response to the MIR were considered by Officers and reported to a meeting of the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee on 28 October 2014. Officers advised the Committee that “...**irrespective of the suitability of each site for development, the LDP already provides adequate housing and employment land to meet the allowances set in the Strategic Development Plan. We do not believe there are any overriding benefits which would justify allocating these sites for development**”.

Notwithstanding that recommendation, Members chose to allocate a number of additional sites in the city capable of accommodating 98 houses. All three sites fall within the Deeside Growth Area.

Responding to the specifics of the site, Officers noted that the City Council had previously assessed the Bid and rejected it. They maintained their view that the site forms Greenbelt functions of contributing to the identity and landscape setting of the city, and of preventing coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton. They further considered that development on the site would introduce alien elements into a landscape which has the character of open farmland and would diminish the setting of a standing stone and Mundurno Farmhouse. These issues are addressed below and in the previous response to the MIR attached at Appendix 2.

Justification

Officers have sought to argue that there is no scope for further housing allocations as the extant LDP 2012 addressed the Structure Plan requirements, which were rolled forward into the Strategic Development Plan approved in 2014. However, Members of the Council clearly did not accept that view and chose to allocate a number of additional sites, particularly in the Deeside Growth Area. That in itself is an acknowledgement that there are concerns regarding the delivery of an adequate Housing Land Supply.

Separate representations have been submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes relative to the Housing Land Supply and these should be referred to for their terms. The Structure Plan housing requirements were predicated upon depressed population and household projections. Recent population projections suggest that the Strategic Development Plan seriously underestimated the anticipated population growth to 2035 and consequently, underestimated the housing requirement over that period. This, and the failure of sites to deliver the required housing numbers within the specified timescales, raise issues regarding the ability of the Plan to maintain at least a five year supply of effective sites at the end of the Plan period.

Even if these arguments are not accepted it is evident from Table 2 of the Proposed Plan that the Plan fails to satisfy the Strategic Development Plan housing allowances. In the city, this amounts to a shortfall of 578 units. That could be accommodated through the phased development of the Mundurno site.

The continued assertion that the site performs Green Belt functions of contributing to the identity and landscape setting of the city, and of preventing coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton is again refuted. These claims arise from the findings of the Reporter following Examination in Public of the extant Local Development Plan. Unfortunately, they take no cognisance of the presence of the AWPR which is now under construction.

In terms of coalescence, the site is located some 2km from Potterton and is not visually connected. Also, the construction of the AWPR to the north of the site negates any prospect of future coalescence. On completion, the AWPR will entirely alter the character of the area and the introduction of strategic landscaping associated with the proposed development, as highlighted in the Development Bid, will provide for landscape enhancement, the formation of defensible Green Belt boundaries and improvements to the setting of the city on approaches from the north.

In any event, much of the land in the wider area to the north of the city is degraded by former mineral workings, some of which have now been infilled and redundant industrial buildings often related to those earlier workings. These detract from the appearance of the area and significant benefits would accrue from development which in turn, would provide substantial areas of strategic landscaping to mitigate these impacts. All of these issues have been fully addressed in the Landscape & Visual Assessment and Development Masterplan prepared for the site and submitted in conjunction with the Development Bid. An updated Masterplan and Landscape and Visual Assessment are attached at Appendices 3 and 4. Similarly, the Greenspace network would be respected with provision made in the Development Framework for east-west linkages to encourage the movement of wildlife and pedestrian and cycle linkages through the area. It would provide added value in terms of recreational, public access, wildlife and landscape use.

The contention that the development would introduce “alien” elements into the landscape could be levelled at any Greenfield site allocated for development. It is inevitable that the character of the area would change, but that change need not be for the worse. The important issue is how those elements are dealt with and assimilated into the landscape. Strategic landscaping along the periphery of the site and following key contour lines as development progresses in phases would substantially mitigate landscape and visual impacts when viewed from the south and south east. The existing woodland feature around Mundurno would be strengthened to provide a focal point to the development and soften the impacts of the development when viewed from outwith the site. Similarly, the standing stone feature on the land to the west of the B999 would be protected to ensure development did not detract from the setting of the stone. There would also be benefit to the wider public through the provision of public access to the standing stone.

The allocation of additional land for development in the Bridge of Don area would conform with the Spatial Strategy of the extant Local Development Plan. The site lies within the city, which itself is a Strategic Growth Area; it also anchors the Energetica corridor, a Strategic Growth Area running north from Aberdeen along the A90 corridor and the focus for significant energy related development. The importance of the area is further reinforced by the allocation of substantial areas of employment land lying to the east of the proposed site and allocated for development through the extant Local Development Plan.

The AWPR and the Third Don Crossing, both now under construction, will have significant implications for the area, reducing traffic on the existing road networks and improving links to the west and south of the city. Improved road links are also under construction north of the city providing dual carriageway links between Bridge of Don and Ellon. The site is well served by public transport with dedicated bus lanes along the A90/King Street linking to the city centre. A dedicated Park & Ride facility operates from the Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre and public transport provision will be further enhanced upon completion of the Third Don Crossing and AWPR. As a consequence, the area is well placed to accommodate further residential development. These matters are fully addressed in the Transport Appraisal attached at Appendix 5.

This is reinforced by the fact that the extant Local Development Plan identifies significant areas for development at Grandhome and Denmore, as well as the employment land at Berryhill referred to above. Indeed, the scale of this employment land allocation is significantly out of proportion to the housing allocation in the Bridge of Don area. As a consequence, it is contended that more housing land requires to be identified in the area to improve the integration of housing and employment uses and encourage sustainable walking and cycling linkages between the two.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) advocates sustainable mixed communities, but the imbalance between residential and employment land in the Bridge of Don limits the ability of the area to fully satisfy SPP.

Conclusions

Circumstances have changed significantly since consideration of the site through the extant LDP process. The construction of the AWPR and Third Don Crossing have significant implications in terms of traffic reduction and improved links to the west and south of the city. The AWPR will further address the Council's concerns regarding coalescence of the city with Potterton to the north.

A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment prepared and submitted with the most recent Development Bid demonstrates that the impacts of development are likely to be minimal. In particular, it is considered that the site maintains limited visual influence over surrounding areas of countryside and is not considered to form an important component of available views. As such, the land does not warrant Greenbelt and Green Space Network designations.

The site is considered capable of contributing to the Housing Land Supply and, if allocated, would accommodate a sustainable, mixed use expansion of Bridge of Don comprising around 1,000 houses with associated local shopping provision and community facilities, including scope for a new primary school.

The identification of the site for development would help address the shortfall highlighted in the representations on Housing Land Supply.

Recommendations

It is respectfully recommended that the site be allocated for development in the period 2017-2026 and 2027-2035 for around 500 houses in each phase with associated uses and community facilities. This would address the immediate shortfall in the housing land supply and help ensure that the increased requirements are catered for.

Appendices

1. Development Bid
2. Response to MIR
3. Development Masterplan
4. Landscape and Visual Assessment
5. Transport Appraisal.

Appendix 1

STEWART MILNE HOMES NORTH SCOTLAND

Development Bid for Land at
Mundurno, Bridge of Don.



June 2012

Ryden Property Consultants
25 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1YL
Tel; 01224 588866
Fax; 01224 589669

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Development Context**
- 3.0 Site Description and Analysis**
- 4.0 Planning History**
- 5.0 Services**
- 6.0 Development Proposals**
- 7.0 Development Justification**
- 8.0 Conclusions**

Appendices

- A Indicative Development Framework**
- B Access Strategy**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This development bid is submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in response to an invitation by Aberdeen City Council to put forward development proposals for consideration for inclusion within the review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The land, which is under the control of Stewart Milne Homes, extends to approximately 75 hectares or thereby lying to the north east of Bridge of Don, straddling the B999 and extending between it and the A90. It comprises the farmlands of Mundurno and is predominantly in agricultural use.
- 1.2 Stewart Milne Homes Limited are part of the Stewart Milne Group, founded in Aberdeen in 1975. Since that time the company has grown to become one of the UK's leading privately owned house builders. The company has a commitment to enterprise and innovation meshed with traditional value for quality services. Stewart Milne Homes are currently building houses across the North East of Scotland, Tayside, the Central belt and the North West of England.
- 1.3 The extent of land under the control of Stewart Milne Homes enables the promotion of a sustainable, mixed use community providing services and facilities for the occupiers of the development and for the benefit of the wider community. Subject to the principle of development being acceptable in this location, an extensive exercise of community consultation will take place with a view to refining the proposals and addressing issues raised by the community.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- 2.1 The suburb of Bridge of Don lies to the north of the City. It has grown substantially over the last 30 years to become the largest suburb in Europe with a population of over 22,000. It is linked to the remainder of the City by two crossing points over the River Don, at the Bridge of Don to the East and Persley Bridge to the west. A third Don crossing is proposed at Balgownie linking the area with Tillydrone. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, which is due for completion in 2018, will have significant implications for the Bridge of Don area, reducing traffic on several of the existing road networks and improving links to the west and south of the City. Improved road links are also proposed northwards providing a dual carriageway link between Bridge of Don and Ellon to the north.

- 2.2 The suburb houses the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, which may soon be redeveloped to provide more modern and larger facilities, and has a significant employment base lying predominantly to the north east of the suburb. It also houses the Aberdeen Science and Energy Parks which continue to expand. Beyond this, consent also exists for a major business and industrial expansion lying to the east of the A90. This will accommodate significant employment growth in the area and with the Science and Energy Park forms the anchor to the “Energetica” corridor running northwards along the A90 to Peterhead and currently being promoted by ACSEF.
- 2.3 The suburb is currently served by two District Centres at Danestone, anchored by Tesco, and at Middleton Park anchored by a first generation Asda. Non food retailing units are interspersed throughout the business and industrial area to the north east. The area benefits from three world class Links Golf Courses lying to the east at Murcar, Royal Aberdeen and Trump International, north of Balmedie. There are a number of primary schools serving the area and all feed into Bridge of Don Academy. In addition, a range of sporting and leisure facilities are interspersed throughout the area. The area is well served by public transport with dedicated bus lanes along the A90 / King Street linking to the City Centre. A dedicated Park & Ride facility operates from the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre and tentative proposals are in hand to relocate this northwards. Public transport provision will further be enhanced through the provision of the Third Don Crossing and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The land under the control of Stewart Milne Homes extends to approximately 75 hectares or thereby. A plan highlighting the full extent of the land holding is shown in Figure 1. It comprises a farm unit set around the disused house and steading of Mundurno, which lies approximately 600m north, north west of the Murcar Roundabout where the B999 joins the A90 trunk road. The development bid site straddles the B999 with the larger of the two land parcels lying to the east of that road between it and the A90 trunk road. The southern boundary of the site lies immediately to the north of the Mill of Mundurno which is now a hotel. The eastern boundary follows the A90 before a “tongue” extends northwards following the alignment of the old A90 to a point at Harehill where it abuts a mix of employment uses. The boundary returns south westwards before leading north westwards along the boundary of the

former concrete manufacturing yard. Its northern boundary abuts the access to Hill of Tramaud Landfill Site beyond which lies agricultural land.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 3.2 The smaller parcel of land lying to the west of the B999 comprises three fields, the northern boundary of which is formed by the access to Hillhead of Mundurno which lies at the north west of that land parcel. The western boundary runs southwards to Dubford Cottages where it joins Shielhill Road which forms the southern boundary and broadly follows that until it connects with the B999.
- 3.3 The extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan, identifies the bid site as falling within the Aberdeen Green Belt. A swathe of land to the south of the site is also identified as part of the Green Space Network. The Soil Survey of Scotland identifies the entire farm as Grade 3₂ quality. This is land capable of producing only a moderate range of crops. The farm itself, in recent years, has primarily been used for grazing purposes.
- 3.4 In topographic terms the land rises from around 40m AOD north of the Mill of Mundurno to approximately 70m at Hillhead of Mundurno to the extreme north west of the site. Mundurno Farm and steading buildings, lying to the east of the B999, occupy a prominent knoll at around 50m AOD. A valley feature runs parallel to the B999 between it and Mundurno Farm buildings.

- 3.5 The land parcel to the west of the B999 rises from the 45m contour adjacent to Shielhill Road to the 70m contour which touches the site to the north east at Hillhead of Mundurno. The three fields which form this land parcel have parallel east / west boundaries which form part of a pattern extending to the north. A scheduled ancient monument comprising the remains of a stone circle lies towards the western boundary of the middle field. No other archaeological features are evident on the bid site.
- 3.6 The area is rich in sand and gravel deposits and this is evident by the extent of previous workings, some of which are now being landfilled. Localised extraction is understood to have taken place on the bid site but the extent of such workings are minimal compared to the extent of extraction in the surrounding area. These workings predominantly lie to the north east of the bid site and to the south west. A range of business and industrial uses are also located to the north east and landfill operations are currently underway at Hill of Tramaud. A number of cottages presently abut the south eastern boundary but this area is allocated by the extant Local Development Plan for the development of 550 houses. Development of this site has already commenced. A further long established residential development lies 500m beyond this at North Denmore. Beyond the hotel on the south eastern boundary lies the Denmore Industrial Estate which comprises a mix of business and industrial uses as well as a number of bulky goods retail units.
- 3.7 Typical of the site's coastal location there is little woodland evident on the site. The main features are small groups and lines of trees around the Mundurno Farm buildings. A number of low hedges and dry stone dykes demark some of the field boundaries. The Burn of Mundurno runs from west to east beyond the site to the south with a small pond formed serving the former Mill of Mundurno.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The land was previously promoted through the Aberdeen Local Plan, Green Spaces – New Places and an Indicative Land Use Masterplan debated at the subsequent Public Local Inquiry into that Plan. This proposed a conceptual layout, described as a “round hilltop village” with a capacity for 785 dwellings at 25 per hectare with the proposed landscaping of the site to the north providing a well defined and defensible boundary to the Green Belt. It envisaged the development being served by local shopping and community facilities based on the existing farm buildings.

- 4.2 The Reporters to that Inquiry considered that the site performed a number of functions all contributing to the identity and landscape setting of the City whilst preventing coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton. At that time however, the alignment of the Western Peripheral Route had not been confirmed and as such had no bearing on the findings of the Inquiry. The Reporters' conclusions also raised a number of issues which had not been adequately addressed in the evidence to the Inquiry. This included the view that the conceptual layout had not demonstrated that a future new community at Mundurno could be functionally integrated with the Dubford future new community by linkages for all forms of transport, without causing serious harm to the east west wildlife and landscape link in the valley of the Burn of Mundurno. Doubt was also expressed regarding the diversion of bus services to serve the site thereby questioning the sustainability of the development. As a consequence, no change was recommended to the Local Plan in respect of the proposals for Mundurno.
- 4.3 More recently, a Development Bid was submitted in 2009 for the site to be considered for inclusion in the extant Local Development Plan. That Bid proposed a mixed use, sustainable community adjoining the existing suburb of Bridge of Don comprising housing, employment land and community facilities along with strategic landscaping and public open space.
- 4.4 The Main Issues Report (MIR), published by Aberdeen City Council in October 2009, identified the Denmore and Murcar areas to the north of the City as one of eight directions for growth. It considered that development to the north of the City would contribute to delivering the vision set by the Energetica Initiative promoted by Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF). In response, the MIR preferred sites comprising Dubford/Mundurno for residential development capable of accommodating 550 homes in the period 2007 – 2016. A further site to the east of the A90 was identified as a 20 hectare extension of the existing employment land allocation at Murcar. The MIR failed to identify the Mundurno site for development.
- 4.5 Representations submitted on behalf of the objectors to the Main Issues Report argued that the Mundurno site should be developed as an integral part of the overall expansion of the Denmore area; it would provide local road improvements and connectivity; that construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) would form a strong physical and defensible boundary for the Aberdeen Green Belt; and, that landscaping and visual impacts would be minimised.

- 4.6 The Officers' response to the MIR representation was considered by the Council's Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 31 May 2010. That response maintained their contention that this site performs Green Belt functions; that it is "isolated" from the existing settlement; and, that the schools could not cater for the demand generated by the development. This is despite the fact that the MIR acknowledged spare primary school capacity in the area. They also considered the site to be too large, yet argued that it was unlikely that the scale of development proposed could support the necessary neighbourhood facilities and services required to significantly reduce residents' need to travel. As a consequence, the proposed Plan retained the site as lying wholly within the Green Belt and partly within the Green Space Network.
- 4.7 Objections were subsequently submitted to the proposed Plan and these were eventually considered by a Reporter appointed to undertake an Examination in Public into the Plan. The Reporter concluded that adequate housing land had been provided to meet the allowances in the Structure Plan and as such there was no numerical justification to allocate further housing sites.
- 4.8 More specifically, in relation to the Mundurno site, he considered that its development would extend built development into the open countryside and as a consequence, the green belt boundary particularly to the west of the B999 would be considerably weakened and the ability to prevent further encroachment into the countryside reduced. He felt the removal of the site from the green belt and its allocation for development to be unjustified.

5.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Planning Policy

- 5.1 The 2010 consolidated document on Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) places sustainable economic growth at the heart of town planning policy in Scotland. It is designed to encourage the right development in the right place, which enables social, environmental and economic benefits to result from land use change. This approach to spatial planning is recognised as the best way to promote sustainability which will help this generation meet its needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs.
- 5.2 Paragraph 3 of SPP explains that the purpose of planning is to guide the future development and use of land.

“Planning is about where development should happen, where it should not and how it interacts with its surroundings”.

- 5.3 Development plans are discussed in paragraphs 10 – 21 of SPP. In monitoring development plans, SPP directs local authorities to focus on key assumptions previously made and whether or not they remain valid and whether or not land allocations proved viable. Monitoring plans are a key practice for local authorities and should set the direction for the future review of the plan.
- 5.4 SPP is split into various subject policies that deal with the composite elements of town planning. The first of these that concerns this development bid is housing. SPP affirms the Scottish Government’s commitment to providing new homes and ensures that the planning system is fully committed to supporting this aim. A generous supply of effective housing land is one of the ways planning authorities can support this aim. Development plans should provide a housing land supply that is effective and robust enough to ensure that there are no unnecessary impediments to housing developments coming forward.
- 5.5 The key aspect of a local authority’s housing land supply should be flexibility. In this sense, the supply of housing land should be adaptable to changing conditions and able to react to external circumstances or failures within existing supply. SPP also directs local authorities towards the possibilities of the siting of specific housing land requirements in an attempt to achieve other non-housing policy objectives, such as promoting active lifestyles and place-making.
- 5.6 High-quality design of new residential development is a key policy objective of the Scottish Government and should guide the whole process of delivering new housing. The aim of this policy is to create places that are distinctive, with a good mix of integrated land uses including homes of varied types and tenures. Fundamental to this policy is the integration with new residential development of active travel solutions, including walking and cycling as well as public transport. This will reduce reliance on the private car and encourage easy access to local services and promote healthy lifestyles.
- 5.7 To this end, SPP promotes new housing land that is located within or adjacent to existing settlements. This helps to reduce costs in terms of servicing sites but also helps to sustain local services, schools, shops and community facilities, as well as encouraging investment in new services. Paragraph 40

explains that the *“settlement strategy set out in the development plan should promote a more sustainable pattern of growth for an area, taking account of the scale and type of development pressure and the need for growth and regeneration”*.

- 5.8 SPP makes it clear that affordable housing needs should be met within the housing market area that the need is based. It sets a benchmark of 25% of new housing to be affordable but permits an increased allocation where the housing need and demand assessment identifies areas with acute need.
- 5.9 SPP encourages development to consider carefully the opportunities to strengthen local ecosystems, such as habitat networks and wildlife corridors, which re-establish broken links and fragmented ecologies. Open space, which enables the enjoyment and appreciation of natural heritage, can have a profound impact on the sustainability of new developments. Landscapes constantly change and evolve and the aim of Scottish Planning Policy is to facilitate this change whilst enhancing the distinctive character of places. What is clear from careful reading of Scottish Planning Policy is that, whilst concerns over landscape and natural heritage conservation may act as a constraint on development, more often than not, careful planning and design can minimise potential conflict and maximise the potential for positive enhancement of the natural environment.
- 5.10 The links between spatial planning and transport are vital to ensuring new development contributes towards sustainable economic growth. These links are addressed by SPP, which aims to encourage new patterns of travel behaviour that are more active (i.e. walking and cycling) or more sustainable (public transport and car-sharing). The planning system in Scotland should support a pattern of development which limits the need for car-based travel and supports a range of travel options.
- 5.11 This theme is addressed more thoroughly in Planning Advice Note 75: Planning for Transport. It recommends local authorities create accessibility profiles for sites in the production of development plans. The profile should reflect the catchment areas served, likely quality of service and result in indicators of accessibility. A maximum threshold of 1600m from local services and 400m from bus stops should be achieved by new developments.
- 5.12 The outcomes of these subject policies should be to encourage sustainable and well-designed places that are accessible to as many people within the

community as possible. The key to a successful place does not just rest with the buildings themselves, but the function of the space between buildings and their ability to adapt to the changing circumstances of local residents and visitors. These outcomes form the basis of all planning policy documents including for Aberdeenshire.

Development Plan

- 5.13 The extant Development Plan comprises the City and Shire Structure Plan approved by Scottish Ministers in August 2009 and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan adopted in February 2012. More recently, a proposed Strategic Development Plan was the subject of public consultation and will ultimately replace the City and Shire Structure Plan. The Local Development Plan Review will require to conform with that Plan.
- 5.14 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan, approved by Scottish Ministers in 2009, set growth targets for the city region and promoted a spatial strategy designed to accommodate this growth in the most sustainable locations. It identified a requirement for 72,000 houses within the Structure Plan area over the period to 2030. Aberdeen City was identified as one of three Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) which was to be the main focus for development in that period. Around half of all new development was to be located in Aberdeen City. Of those 36,000 houses required within the City it was envisaged that 21,000 would be provided on greenfield sites with a further 15,000 split between brownfield sites and identified regeneration areas within the City. In terms of phasing of greenfield housing, 12,000 were anticipated to be required between 2007 and 2016; 5,000 between 2017 and 2023 and 4,000 between 2024 and 2030.
- 5.15 The plan advocated sustainable mixed communities with new housing and developments for employment and commercial use well related to each other to improve people's quality of life and opportunity. One of the targets to meet the sustainable mixed communities objective was for all housing development over 1 hectare in the Strategic Growth Areas to be in line with approved supplementary guidance and generally have no less than 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.16 With regard to economic growth, the plan's objective was to provide opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment in a range of areas that are both appropriate and attractive to the nature of different industries. The Plan sought to ensure that at least 60

hectares of land was available to businesses at all times in a range of places within the City. New employment land allocations in the City between 2007 and 2023 were required to total 105 hectares, with 70 hectares identified as strategic reserve land to come forward in the period between 2024 and 2030.

- 5.17 It is important to recognise that the Plan identified the Aberdeen to Peterhead corridor as the second of three Strategic Growth Areas. It acknowledged that this area has important strategic assets and has significant potential which requires to be realised. This included the Trump Golf Resort and the Energetica initiative, which seeks to focus on energy related development. In this area the Structure Plan considers that the focus needs to be on developing and diversifying the economy, delivering vital infrastructure projects in the first plan period to help create growth. These projects include the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, the dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Tippetry, improvements to the Haudigan Roundabout and delivering the third Don crossing.
- 5.18 A proposed Strategic Development Plan has recently been the subject of public consultation and will eventually replace the extant Structure Plan. The Local Development Plan Review will require to conform with that Plan. The proposed Plan maintains the spatial strategy of the extant Structure Plan and 'rolls forward' the housing and employment land allocations to 2035. Presently, it is the subject of significant objection, particularly in regard to its failure to increase the housing allocation in response to a significant increase in the projected housing requirement by the National Records of Scotland (NRS). Whilst the Strategic Development Plan provides for a housing allowance of 67,500 for the period 2011 to 2035, the NRS figures, using the principal projection, would suggest that this should be increased by 20,500 units to 88,000. Should this increased requirement be accepted additional sites will require to be identified through the City and Shire Local Development Plan Reviews.
- 5.19 The extant Local Development Plan identified sites throughout the City to meet the Structure Plan allocations. A number of sites were identified in the Bridge of Don area in the immediate vicinity of this site. This included site OP25 at Dubford for 550 houses and OP2 at Murcar for 27 hectares of employment land. The bid site sits between these areas and is identified within the Plan as falling within the green belt and partly within the green space network.

6.0 SERVICES

- 6.1 Mains water and drainage are available nearby to service the site, as are gas and electricity connections. It is anticipated that additional water and drainage capacity will be required to accommodate the overall scale of development envisaged to the north of the City.
- 6.2 Access from the north of the City to the City Centre and beyond to the south is currently constrained by the crossing points of the River Don. As intimated above, substantial investment is proposed to alleviate these constraints and the development of the bid site will require to be phased to coincide with those improvements. Improvements to the local road network in the vicinity of the site would also be necessary, potentially involving a realignment of the B999 and a new junction with the A90. This route will be de-trunked following the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route thereby enabling the provision of further junctions onto the road. An Access Strategy has previously been prepared for the site and is attached at Appendix 2.
- 6.3 Reference to SEPA's Flood Risk Maps indicate that there are no water courses in the vicinity of the site which would result in any flood risk to future development.
- 6.4 In terms of education provision, spare capacity exists in many of Bridge of Don's primary schools. However, given the scale of the development it is envisaged that provision would be made within the development bid site for a new primary school capable of accommodating pupils generated by the development. Two secondary schools, Bridge of Don Academy and Old Machar Academy currently serve the area. Both are currently significantly below capacity and the 2012 based School Roll Forecasts demonstrate that both are anticipated to remain well below capacity through to 2020. At that time, Old Machar Academy is forecast to be at only 63% of capacity whilst Bridge of Don Academy is forecast to be at 88% of capacity. Accordingly, secondary school capacity is not an impediment to development. On the contrary, further residential development in the catchment areas of the school would help to sustain the existing facilities for the benefit of the wider community.

7.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

7.1 The development proposals seek to provide a mixed use, sustainable community adjoining the existing suburb of Bridge of Don. The site is well located for direct connections to the trunk road network via the A90 and the proposed Western Peripheral Route which will lie to the north. It is also well positioned to provide direct vehicular and pedestrian links to the wider Bridge of Don community to the west and south ensuring easy access to existing services and facilities. The development will comprise residential, commercial, local shopping and community facilities as well as scope for a new primary school. Significant areas of landscaping and open space are also proposed as integral parts of the development.

7.2 An indicative Development Framework has previously been prepared for the site and is attached at Appendix 1. This shows the distribution and extent of uses, together with urban form, landscape treatment and pattern of movement. An extract from the Development Framework is highlighted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Indicative Development Framework



- 7.3 The bid site is capable of accommodating around 1,000 houses which can be delivered in a phased manner. These would predominantly be family housing with a range of types and tenures. A small number of apartments could be provided around the proposed community and retail hub. Around 32 hectares of residential land has been identified which would be developed at a range of densities responding to the characteristics of the area in terms of vegetation, topography and proximity to the community and retail hub.
- 7.4 The community and retail hub will provide a range of facilities to help meet local needs. It would also have the ability to address some of the demand for local retail and community facilities in the existing community. The range of potential facilities could include;
- A convenience store,
 - Small shops,
 - Business space,
 - Community / Health facilities
- 7.5 The intention would be to deliver a fully integrated urban extension which will make a positive contribution to the function, character and appearance of both the new development and the broader area. A site of 1.2 hectares would be set aside adjacent to the community hub for the provision of a primary school whilst a range of open spaces will be provided throughout the development to serve the needs of all age groups.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT JUSTIFICATION

- 8.1 This site is capable of accommodating a sustainable, mixed use development. It is located in an area which will benefit from a number of strategic investment projects including the third Don crossing, improvements to the Haudigan Roundabout, the dualling of the A90 northwards between Tippetty and Ellon and the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Development in this area would therefore maximise the benefits of that investment.
- 8.2 The site relates well to the existing and proposed trunk road network with scope to provide a new access directly from the A90. Whilst this currently forms part of the trunk road network it is likely to be de-trunked following the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. As well as reducing traffic on that stretch of road it will also enable the creation of a new junction. The realignment and extension of Shielhill Road will create a strong east-west

emphasis which, as well as providing improved access, will facilitate integration of the existing and proposed communities. This will be further enhanced by the provision of new footpath and cycle links.

- 8.3 The corridor is also well served by public transport with bus services from Ellon utilising the A90 and the provision of a Park & Ride facility at Bridge of Don. Tentative proposals are in hand for the relocation of the Park & Ride facility northwards to Berryhill or Blackdog, both of which are close to the bid site. As well as Park & Ride services, it is anticipated that the existing bus network serving the Bridge of Don would be expanded to meet the accessibility requirements specified by Scottish Planning Policy thereby ensuring that all housing within the proposed development fell within 400m of public transport provision. This is capable of being achieved by the alignment of the main distributor routes through the site. There may also be scope to reroute bus services linking Potterton with the City, currently via the B999, to pass through the site thereby providing further enhancements.
- 8.4 The development bid site occupies an undulating coastal landscape with the land rising gradually from the A90 to the south east of the site to Hillhead of Mundurno lying to the north west of the site. The farm and steading buildings at Mundurno occupy a prominent knoll. The land is generally south, south-east facing making it ideal to accommodate residential development and benefit from passive solar gain. Much of the land in the wider area is degraded by former mineral workings, some of which are now being infilled, and redundant industrial buildings, often related to those earlier workings. These detract from the appearance of the area and significant benefits would accrue from development which in turn would provide substantial areas of strategic landscaping to mitigate those existing impacts.
- 8.5 At the Public Local Inquiry into the 2008 Local Plan, Green Spaces – New Places, concern was expressed by the Reporters regarding the possibility of coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton to the north, the avoidance of which is a specific objective of Green Belt Policy. However, the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) to the north of the development bid site will negate any prospect of future coalescence and could itself form a long term and defensible boundary to the City and the Green Belt.
- 8.6 Similar concerns were raised by the Reporter at the more recent Examination into the extant Local Development Plan. However, the construction of the

AWPR is now firmly committed and programmed for completion in 2018. This will entirely alter the character of the area and the introduction of strategic landscaping associated with the proposed development can provide for landscape enhancement, the formation of defensible green belt boundaries and improvements to the setting of the City on approaches from the north. The realignment of the Green Belt boundary to the north of this area would also satisfy the long term development strategy proposed by the Structure Plan and carried forward into the proposed Strategic Development Plan whilst ensuring the long term integrity of the remaining Green Belt by utilising a strong physical feature to define its boundary.

- 8.7 The Green Space Network designation which covers a swathe of land to the south of the bid site need not be compromised by the proposed development. The extent of the corridor running east-west would be reduced but its purpose and intent would be retained. Indeed, it would be enhanced by strategic landscaping thereby providing added value in terms of recreational, public access, wildlife and landscape use.
- 8.8 Presently, the scale of the employment land allocation to the east of Bridge of Don is significantly out of proportion to the housing allocation in that area. More housing land requires to be identified in that area to improve the integration of housing and employment uses and encourage sustainable walking and cycling linkages between the two. The approach currently advocated by the extant Plan is not sustainable.
- 8.9 The allocation of the land at Mundurno for mixed use development comprising, primarily residential use, in conjunction with the Dubford site would help address these issues. It lies within walking and cycling distance of the main employment land allocation which is the anchor for the Energetica corridor. Whilst the trunk road presently constitutes a barrier to direct linkage, that could be addressed by a Development Framework to be prepared for the wider. The phased development of both sites would also achieve the critical mass considered necessary by the Council to provide neighbourhood facilities. Mundurno has previously been criticised for being of insufficient size to provide those facilities yet the site allocated at Dubford is significantly smaller. Clearly, on its own it will not be able to provide those facilities.
- 8.10 The allocation of the land at Mundurno could also help address the housing land supply issues highlighted in the objections to the proposed Strategic Development Plan. Additional sites may be required throughout the Plan period to ensure that housing requirements are satisfied. Concern must also be expressed that certain large sites cannot deliver the required numbers in

the specified timescale and this can only be addressed through the release of additional sites.

- 8.11 It is recognised that key infrastructure, including the AWPR and Third Don Crossing, require to be delivered prior to significant development taking place in the Bridge of Don area. It is also logical to develop the Dubford site, as a natural progression northwards of the city, prior to development of the land at Mundurno. The Mundurno land should therefore be allocated for development in the next plan period. It could however be brought forward to satisfy demand in the area and to meet any housing land supply shortfall depending upon the provision of the relevant infrastructure and the development of Dubford. The Mundurno site however, is not dependent upon others being developed out in advance of it i.e Dubford.
- 8.12 The scale of investment in new infrastructure is in itself justification for other allocations in the area to maximise the use of the additional capacity created. The development of the land at Mundurno would secure improvements to the alignment of the B999, affording direct access on to the A90 and via this to the existing and proposed River Don crossings. It would also enable easy access to the interchange of the A90 with the AWPR at Blackdog. The development of the site would also afford access to public transport currently using the B999 and the A90. In addition, it is well located to provide access to the existing park and ride facility serving the A90 corridor. Whilst this is currently located at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, it is understood that proposals are afoot to relocate this northwards to either the Berryhill, Murcar area or to Blackdog, both of which are well placed to serve this site.
- 8.13 The landscape and visual impacts of the development are likely to be minimal. A Landscape and Visual Assessment prepared for the site highlights that the site is seen in the context of adjoining built elements and represents a contained area of lower lying land with limited intervisibility in the wider landscape. Accordingly, the site is considered to maintain limited visual influence over surrounding areas of countryside and is not considered to form an important component of available views. As such the land does not warrant Green Belt and Green Space Network designations as proposed in the Plan.
- 8.14 The Council's earlier assertion that it would introduce alien elements into the landscape would be applicable to every greenfield site. The key issue is how those elements are dealt with and assimilated into the landscape. Having regard to the Landscape and Visual assessment, an indicative Development Framework has been prepared for the site. This is attached at Appendix 1 and demonstrates that the proposed development will create a sustainable

neighbourhood which integrates new development with the dispersed pattern of settlement.

- 8.15 Other areas of contention are perfectly capable of being addressed as highlighted in the supporting documentation. Adequate stand off is capable of being provided between the landfill site to the north and proposed residential development. Localised land filling and drainage are not an impediment to the development of the site. The ancient monument to the west of the site has been identified and will be respected by the development through the provision of public open space and strategic landscaping to enhance its setting. There are no significant obstacles to the development of the Mundurno site.
- 8.16 The development of this site would not only meet the objectives of the City being identified as a Strategic Growth Area but would importantly also contribute to the Aberdeen to Peterhead strategic growth corridor. A key plank of the strategy for that corridor is the Energetica initiative which intends to maximise the benefits of the major infrastructure provision in the area as highlighted above. The development of the bid site would make an important contribution to this initiative and further maximise the use of those investments.
- 8.17 The site is capable of phased development, particularly now that work has commenced on Opportunity Site OP25. It could be developed from the south west, accessed initially off the B999 and progress north eastwards to link with the A90 once it is 'de-trunked' following the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route in 2018. The early release of land through a phased development of the site could also address housing land supply shortfalls arising through the failure to deliver the required housing numbers on larger sites such as Greenferns, Greenferns Landward and Grandhome.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Stewart Milne Homes consider that their land at Mundurno, Bridge of Don has significant development potential. Accordingly, they wish it to be considered for inclusion in the Local Development Plan review.
- 9.2 It is considered capable of accommodating a sustainable, mixed use expansion of Bridge of Don comprising around 1,000 houses with associated local shopping provision and community facilities including scope for a new

primary school. Significant areas of strategic landscaping would be included within the development. Development could be phased to address housing land supply shortfalls arising, both as a consequence of a number of larger sites failing to deliver the required numbers in the short term and the anticipated increased requirement that will need to be addressed through the Strategic Development Plan.

- 9.3 Localised road improvements would provide enhanced vehicular, pedestrian and cycle links through the area and better connections with the wider residential and business community in the Bridge of Don. Bus services would be extended through the site utilising the proposed distributor road network to ensure that all residential properties fell within 400m of a public transport route.
- 9.4 The construction the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to the north removes any prospect of coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton. Longer term, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route could form a strong physical, and defensible, boundary for the Aberdeen Green Belt. In the short to medium term this can be adequately addressed by strategic landscaping.
- 9.5 Landscape and visual impacts would be minimised through that strategic landscaping works and the land currently identified as falling within the Green Space Network to the south of the bid site would be respected albeit in a reduced form. Nevertheless, the east-west corridor would be retained providing scope for recreational, public access and wildlife use.
- 9.6 On the basis of all of the above, Stewart Milne Homes respectfully request that this site be considered for inclusion in the forthcoming Local Development Plan review for mixed use development.

APPENDIX A
Indicative Development Framework

Appendix 2

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2016



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Main Issues Report Consultation 13th January to 24th March Response Form

The Main Issues Report describes and invites discussion on options for policies and land allocations in the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan. No settled view on the content of the next plan has yet been reached, making the Main Issues Report the key stage for public consultation. Giving us your views will help to shape the future strategy for development and the policies by which future planning applications are determined. You can view a copy of the Main Issues Report on our website at: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_local_development_plan.asp. A series of accompanying documents, including an Interim Environmental Report, Monitoring Statement and Developer Bids Assessments, can also be viewed online.

How to respond

The Main Issues Report contains a series of issues and questions which we would particularly like to hear your views on. Use this form to respond to these, or any other issues raised by the Main Issues Report, Monitoring Statement, Interim Environmental Report or any other accompanying documents. **Please return it to reach us by 5pm on Monday 24th March.**

- **Post:** Local Development Plan Team, Planning and Sustainable Development, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4 Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB
- **Email:** If you are filling out our online PDF form, please be aware that you cannot save what you have written and come back to it later. Once you have finished filling it in, you can print to PDF. You could also scan your paper form if you have this facility. You can then email your response to ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk
- If you prefer not to use this form, you could also send us an email or letter with your comments. Please include your name, address, telephone number and email address (if applicable), as well as the details of anyone you are representing.

Data Protection Statement

The comments you make on this form will be used to inform the preparation of the next Local Development Plan. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) will not share or disclose the personal information provided on this form with other parties or organisations unless we are required to do so by law.

The Local Development Plan Team may use your contact details to contact you to seek further detail or information about the comments you have made. Your name and organisation (if relevant) will be published alongside your comments, but personal contact details (address, telephone, e-mail address) will not be made public. If you choose not to provide a name or any contact details, your comments will still be valid.



For more information on how your information is used, how Aberdeen City Council maintains the security of your information, and your rights to access information ACC holds about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg (LDP Team Leader), Planning and Sustainable Development, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB.

Please provide your name and contact details:

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Postcode AB10 1YL

Telephone 01224 588866

E-mail address john.findlay@ryden.co.uk

If you are completing this form on behalf of an organisation, group or landowner, please provide their details below.

Please tick this box if you wish further correspondence to be directed to this address:

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) Stewart Milne Homes

Organisation/Group Stewart Milne Group Ltd.

Address Osprey House, Mosscroft Avenue,

Westhill Business Park, Westhill

Postcode AB32 6JQ

Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

If you wish to be added to the LDP e-mailing list to be kept informed of our progress in producing the next LDP, please tick here: and provide the email you wish to be added to our database:

E-mail address john.findlay@ryden.co.uk

Please use a separate box for each issue/question you wish to respond to. If you wish to continue on a separate sheet, please attach to the paper copy or email.

Main Issue and/or Question Number	1	MIR Page Number	11
<p>Development Bid Site B0202, Mundurno, Bridge of Don.</p> <p>Please refer to attached Paper Apart</p>			

Main Issue and/or Question Number		MIR Page Number	

Main Issue and/or Question Number		MIR Page Number	

PAPER APART

REPRESENTATION TO THE ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL MAIN ISSUES REPORT ON BEHALF OF STEWART MILNE HOMES IN RESPECT OF DEVELOPMENT OPTION B0202-MUNDURNO, BRIDGE OF DON

Introduction

Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of the Main Issues Report (MIR) to identify Development Option Site B0202 at Mundurno, Bridge of Don for development in accordance with their Development Bid submitted in June 2013.

That Bid identified a site, straddling the B999, extending to approximately 75 hectares or thereby. The Bid considered the site capable of providing a mixed use, sustainable community adjoining the existing suburb of Bridge of Don. It considered the site capable of accommodating 1,000 residential units, comprising a mix of house types and tenures, a retail and business hub and community facilities, including scope for a new single stream primary school and playing field provision.

This representation requires to be read in conjunction with general representations on the overall MIR and, in particular, with their representations on the housing land supply. Stewart Milne Homes contend that additional land should be allocated for residential development to ensure that a five year housing land supply is in place at the end of the Local Development Plan period. This site is capable of contributing to the Housing Land Supply requirements and accordingly, should be identified for phased development.

Representations

The allocation of additional land for development in the Bridge of Don area would conform with the Spatial Strategy of the extant Structure Plan, the extant Local Development Plan and the emerging Strategic Development Plan. It lies within the city, which itself is a strategic growth area and it anchors the Energetica corridor, a strategic growth area running north from Aberdeen along the A96 corridor and the focus for significant energy related development. The importance of the area is further reinforced by the allocation of substantial areas of employment land lying to the east of the proposal site and allocated for development through the extant Local Development Plan.

The development of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the Third Don Crossing, now committed, will have significant implications for the area, reducing traffic on several of the existing road networks and improving links to the west and south of the city. Improved road links are also proposed northwards providing a dual-carriageway link between Bridge of Don and Ellon to the north. The area also benefits from three world class links golf courses lying to the east at Murcar, Royal Aberdeen and Trump International north of Balmedie. There are a number of primary schools serving the area and all feed into Bridge of Don and Old Machar Academies. In addition, a range of sporting and leisure facilities are

interspersed throughout the area. It is well served by public transport with dedicated bus lanes along the A90/King Street linking to the city centre. A dedicated park and ride facility operates from the Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre and public transport provision will be further enhanced through the provision of the Third Don Crossing and the AWPR. All of the above suggest that the area is well placed to accommodate further residential development.

This is reinforced by the fact that the extant Local Development Plan identifies significant areas for development at Grandhome and Denmore, as well as the employment land at Berryhill referred to above. Indeed, the scale of this employment land allocation is significantly out of proportion to the housing allocation in the Bridge of Don area. As a consequence, it is contended that more housing land requires to be identified in the area to improve the integration of housing and employment uses and encourage sustainable walking and cycling linkages between the two.

This is emphasised by recent research (<http://www.scotsman.com/news/scotland/top-stories/aberdeen-is-no1-property-hot-spot-in-uk-1-3335496>) which highlighted the Bridge of Don area as one of three Aberdeen postcode sectors identified as the fastest selling hotspots in the UK over the past year. This is reflective of the demand for residential properties in the area given its proximity to employment areas and which should be catered for through the proposed LDP.

The approach currently advocated by the extant Plan is not sustainable and the allocation of the proposal site at Mundurno would address this by the provision of land for residential development in close proximity to places of employment. The trunk road, which currently separates the two need not be a barrier to development and direct linkages could be addressed by the preparation of a Development Framework for the wider area.

The phased development of the site at Mundurno would also achieve the critical mass considered necessary by the Council to provide neighbourhood facilities. Mundurno continues to be criticised for being of an insufficient size to provide those facilities yet the site allocated in the extant Plan at Dubford is significantly smaller and clearly, on its own, is not able to provide those facilities.

The approved Structure Plan, extant Local Development Plan and emerging Strategic Development Plan promote significant investment in new development and infrastructure in the area and as such it is incumbent upon the Planning Authority to maximise the use of the additional capacity created. This could be achieved through further development at Mundurno which, as well as offering improvements to the alignment of the B999, affords direct access on to the A90 which is of dual-carriageway standard. This allows access to the existing River Don crossings and the proposed Third Don Crossing. It also enables easy access to the northern interchange of the A90 with the AWPR at Blackdog. This development would also afford access to public transport currently using the B999 and the A90. In addition, it is well located to provide access to the existing park and ride facility serving the A90 corridor.

The Development Bid recognised that key infrastructure, including the AWPR and Third Don Crossing, would require to be delivered prior to significant development taking place in the Bridge of Don area. It also noted that it was logical to develop the Dubford site, as a natural progression northwards to the city, prior to development of the land at Mundurno. That development is now progressing and the land at Mundurno should be allocated for development in the next Plan period. It is not, however, dependent upon other sites being developed out in advance.

A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment prepared and submitted with the Development Bid demonstrates that the impacts are likely to be minimal as the site is seen in the context of adjoining built elements and represents a contained area of lower lying land with limited intervisibility in the wider landscape. Accordingly, it is considered that the site maintains limited visual influence over surrounding areas of countryside and is not considered to form an important component of available views. As such, the land does not warrant greenbelt and green space network designations as identified in the extant Plan.

Response to Development Options Assessment

The assessment undertaken by the Council maintains the assertion that the site performs greenbelt functions of contributing to the identity and landscape setting of the city, and of preventing coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton. However, much of the land in the wider area is degraded by former mineral workings, some of which have now been infilled, and redundant industrial buildings often related to those earlier workings. These detract from the appearance of the area and significant benefits would accrue from development which in turn, would provide substantial areas of strategic landscaping to mitigate those impacts.

In terms of coalescence the site is located some 2 kilometres from Potterton and is not visually connected. Also, the construction of the AWPR to the north of the Development Bid site would negate any prospect of future coalescence and could itself form a long term defensible boundary to the city and the greenbelt. The AWPR is now firmly committed and programmed for completion in 2018. This will entirely alter the character of the area and the introduction of strategic landscaping associated with the proposed development, as highlighted in the Development Bid, will provide for landscape enhancement, the formation of defensible greenbelt boundaries and improvements to the setting of the city on approaches from the north. The realignment of the greenbelt boundary would also satisfy the long term development strategy proposed by the Structure Plan and carried forward into the proposed Strategic Development Plan, whilst ensuring the long term integrity of the remaining greenbelt by utilising a strong physical feature to define its boundary.

The site is again criticised as development would introduce 'alien' elements into the landscape, which has a character of open farm land and, it is argued would diminish the setting of the Standing Stone and Mundurno Farmhouse. However, it is inevitable that the character of the area would change and that is the same for the development of any greenfield site. The important issue is how those elements are dealt with and assimilated into

the landscape. Strategic landscaping along the periphery of the site and along contour lines as development progresses in phases would substantially mitigate landscape and visual impacts when viewed from the south and south east. The existing woodland feature around Mundurno would be strengthened to provide a focal point to the development and soften the impacts on the development when viewed from outwith the site. Similarly, the Standing Stone feature on the land to the west of the B999 would be protected to ensure development did not detract from the setting of the stone. These, and other issues, have been fully addressed in the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment and Development Framework prepared for the site and submitted in conjunction with the Development Bid. Similarly, the Green Space Network would be respected with provision made in the Development Framework for east-west linkages to encourage the movement of wildlife and pedestrian and cycle linkages between the two. It would provide added value in terms of recreational, public access, wildlife and landscape use.

The suggestion that the site is isolated from the existing settlement of Denmore is somewhat surprising, particularly in the context of the earlier argument that it will result in coalescence. The latter acknowledges that it is connected to one or other of the communities to the north or south. In reality, the site immediately abuts the land at Dubford, allocated through the extant Local Development Plan for the development of 550 houses, and development has commenced on that site. The Development Bid acknowledged that the site can only be developed as part of a phased northern expansion in the area. The phased development of the site linked to Dubford will provide opportunities to create a coherent development and provide linkages with existing communities to the south. Whilst employment and local retail opportunities are proposed as part of the development, it also lies within the 1,600m threshold for walking and cycling, as specified in Planning Advice Note 75 of the existing major employment location at Denmore and the significant expansion of employment uses granted planning permission to the east of the A90 at Berryhill. As a consequence, it is not accepted that the site is in any way isolated.

The development of the site at Dubford for 500 units, will not achieve the critical mass required to provide and support neighbourhood facilities yet that is a key criticism in respect of the proposals for Mundurno. Taken together with Dubford, there is scope to provide a phased development of over 1,500 houses, which would certainly be sufficient to support the necessary neighbourhood facilities and services required to reduce residents' need to travel. In addition, a retail superstore is proposed to the south on Denmore Road. This would adequately serve the existing and proposed communities whilst also meeting the needs of employees on the proposed Business Park to the east of the A90. This, the employment land to the east and the proposed housing to the north all combine to reinforce the sustainability of development in this area.

Whilst spare capacity exists in many of Bridge of Don's primary schools, the Development Bid acknowledged that a new primary school may be required and provision is made in the Development Framework to accommodate, at the very least, a single stream primary school. However, adequate secondary school provision exists within the area. Bridge of Don Academy and Oldmachar Academy currently serve the area. Both are significantly below

capacity and the 2012 based school roll forecasts demonstrate that both are anticipated to remain well below capacity through to 2020. At that time, Oldmachar Academy is forecast to be at only 63% of capacity whilst Bridge of Don Academy is forecast to be at 88% of capacity. Accordingly, secondary school capacity is not an impediment to development. Indeed, further residential development in the catchment areas of the schools would help to sustain the existing facilities for the benefit of the wider community.

Turning to the detailed criteria used to assess the Development Bid, it is contended that none present insurmountable obstacles to the development of this site. All of the issues raised have been addressed through the Development Bid and associated supporting documents. Key issues relative to landscape fit, relationship to existing settlement and proximity to facilities and infrastructure capacity, which were marked down by the assessment, have all been addressed above. Other constraints highlighted relate to the bridge crossings over the River Don and the fact that they are overloaded at peak times.

The assessment goes on to argue that traffic constraints in the area are only likely to be resolved once the Western Peripheral Route is open. This was fully acknowledged in the Development Bid, which was supported by an Access Strategy and a recognition in the Development Bid that development would require to be phased in co-ordination with the various infrastructure improvements in the area. The AWPR and Third Don Crossing provide opportunities to accommodate further development in the Bridge of Don area and accordingly, this site should be allocated for phased development as a natural expansion of the Bridge of Don to create an attractive and sustainable community.

Summary and Recommendation

Stewart Milne Homes contend that additional housing land requires to be allocated to ensure that there remains a five year supply of effective housing land at the end of the Plan period. That is unlikely to be achieved on the basis of the allocations carried forward from the extant Plan and the limited additional allocations emerging through the Main Issues Report.

The site identified at Mundurno is considered capable of contributing to the Housing Land Supply and, if allocated, it would accommodate a sustainable, mixed use expansion of Bridge of Don comprising around 1,000 houses with associated local shopping provision and community facilities, including scope for a new primary school. Significant areas of strategic landscaping would be included within the development and the construction of the AWPR route to the north removes any prospect of coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton. Longer term, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route could form a strong physical and defensible boundary for the Aberdeen greenbelt.

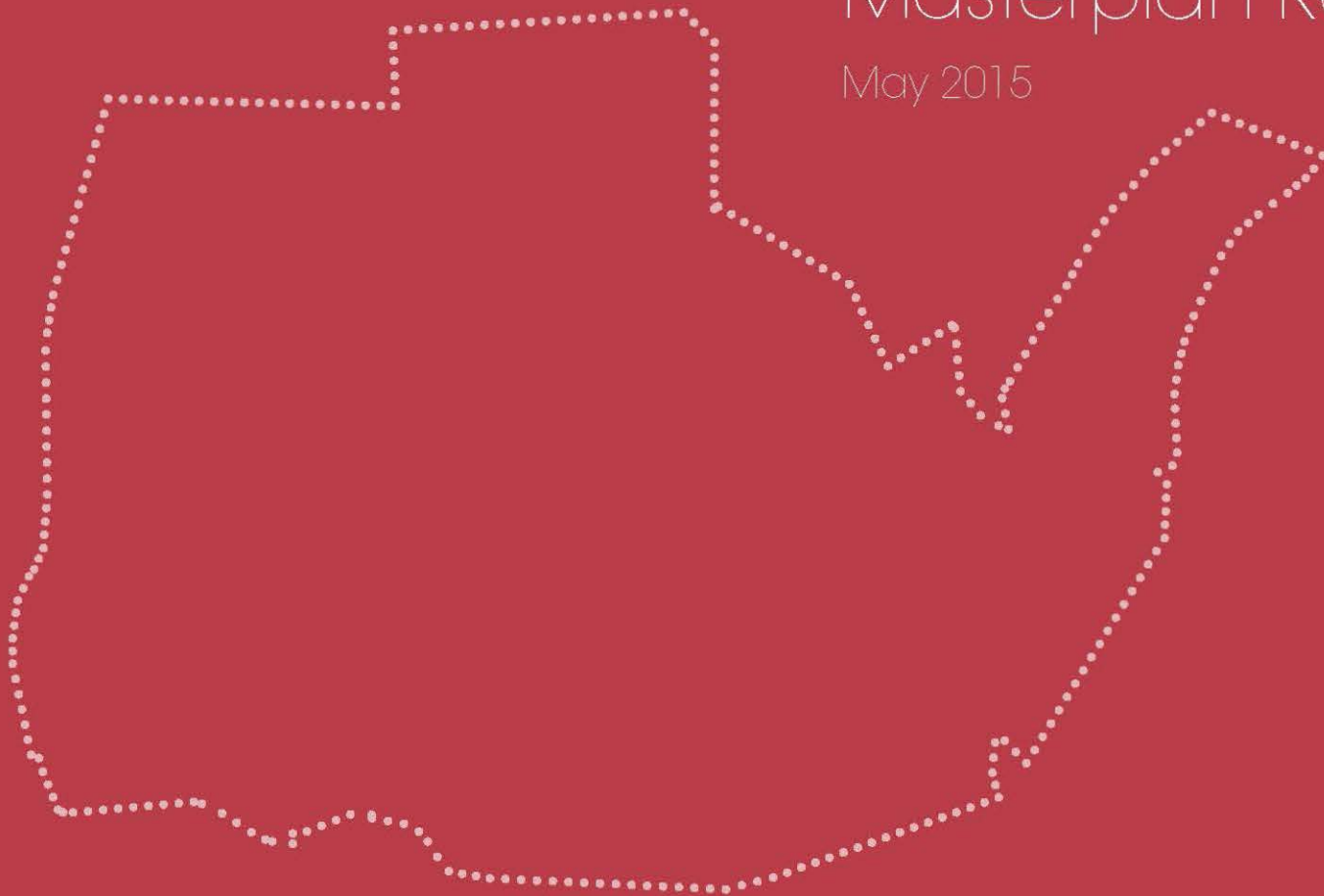
On the basis of the previously submitted Bid, the above representations and those submitted by Stewart Milne Homes in respect of the Housing Land Supply issue, it is considered that this site should be allocated for development. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this site be identified in the forthcoming Local Development Plan review for mixed use development to be phased over two Plan periods with 500 units in each phase.

Appendix 3

MUNDURNO

Masterplan Report

May 2015



Project Ref	18974
Status	Final
Date	May 2015
Prepared by	CT
Checked by	MW

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**BARTON
WILLMORE**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides information in support of land at Mundurno for mixed use development as part of the process to prepare the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2016).

1.2 The plan is envisaged to be adopted by Aberdeen City Council in 2016 following an Examination in Public. The Proposed Local Development Plan was published on 27th March 2015.

1.3 As part of the process to prepare the City Local Development Plan a Main Issues Report was published in January 2014. The report suggests possible options for dealing with issues such as the location of new housing and employment and where supporting infrastructure should be located. The purpose of the report was to stimulate debate and provide an opportunity for people to express their views. The Main Issues Report, as the precursor to the proposed Plan carried forward the Settlement Strategy set out in the existing LDP adopted in February 2012. This focused on development in places which encourage use of public transport, it identified that half of new development will need to take place on greenfield sites.

1.4 The Development Framework addresses these issues and outlines how a sustainable development at Mundurno can provide quality homes next to growing employment areas. It also highlights the potential to deliver new infrastructure and a range of facilities that will be of benefit to new and existing communities alike. This report also explains how the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan objectives set out below will be met.

- Landscape setting;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Encourage economic development and create new employment;
- Taking a lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released;
- Achieve a balanced age range;
- Maintaining the region's natural and cultural assets; and,
- Meeting the needs of the whole community and making the area a more attractive place to move to.

1.5 Ensuring a contribution to reducing the need to travel and encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport;

1.6 To demonstrate how these objectives will be met and to address the specific issues the report is structured as follows:

CONTEXT – examination of the surrounding area including existing services and facilities.

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES – an analysis of the issues affecting development of the site.

CONCEPT – an explanation of the approach to development of the site.

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION – a description of the development components.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT – a review of the measures to be taken to mitigate impact and adapt to the predicted changes.

1.7 This report is to be read in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Assessment Report of December 2010.



Figure 1: Site Aerial

Site Location

1.8 The site is on the northern edge of Aberdeen and lies to the west of the A90. It sits within Masterplan Zone 1 of the existing and proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, and forms part of Energetica; a 30 mile corridor between Aberdeen and Peterhead which will create a concentration of energy technology companies, housing and leisure facilities. Aberdeen airport is approximately 3 miles to the east. The site is subdivided by the B999.



Site Description

1.9 The site comprises an area of land which extends to approximately 71 hectares of arable fields.

1.10 The land falls from 65 metres AOD in the west to 35 metres AOD to the east. Most of the site gently sloping with only small sections steeper than 1:10.

1.11 There are two dwellings located centrally within the site; Hillcrest and Mundurno. These are currently accessed off the B999 which runs north south through the centre of the site.

1.12 A Scheduled Ancient Monument - Standing Stone is located toward the west of the site.

1.13 There is very little tree planting / vegetation within the site and surrounding area.

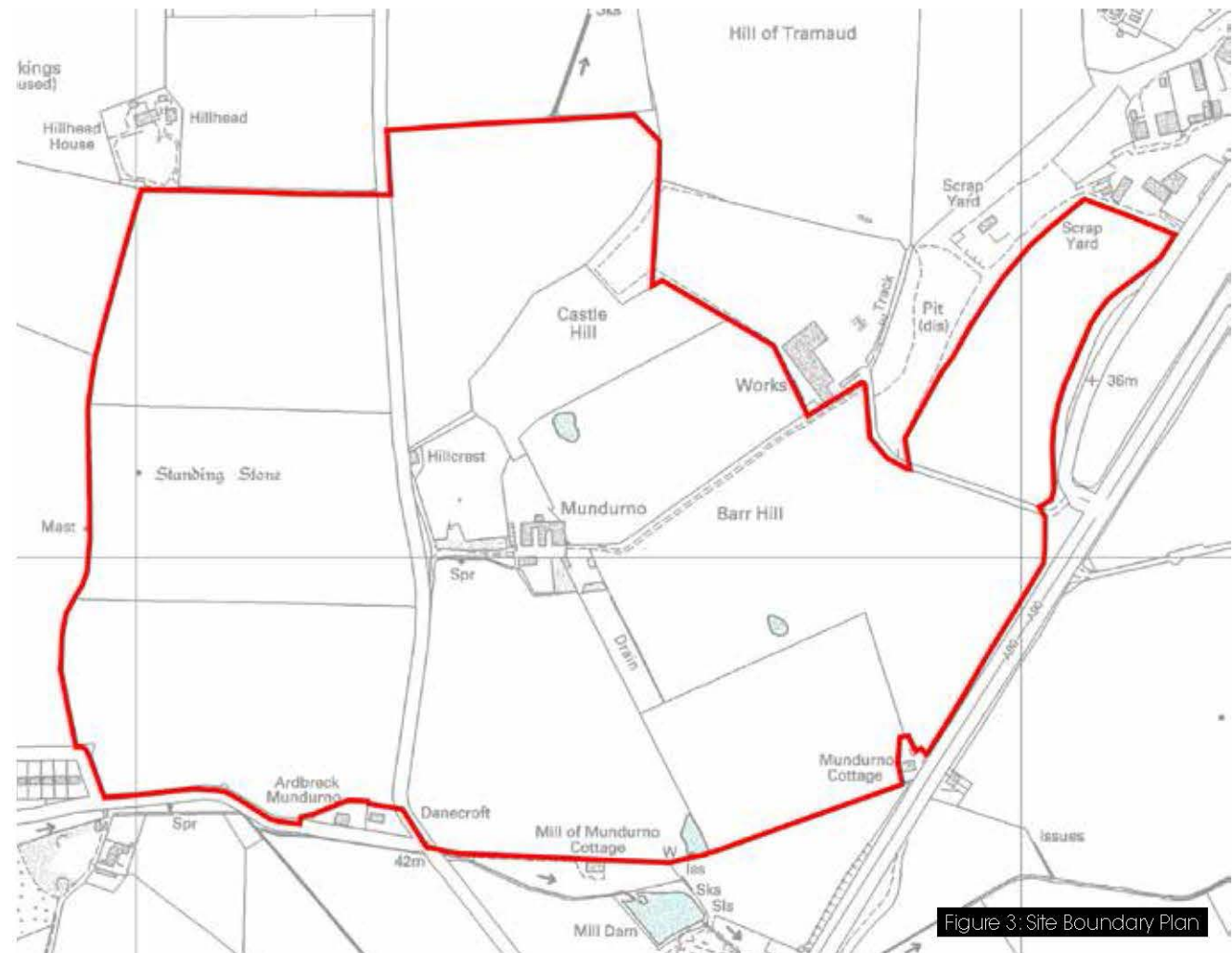


Figure 3: Site Boundary Plan

2.0 ASSESSMENT

Site Context

2.1 The context of the site provides a basis for design decisions. An analysis of the local character including the retail, leisure, employment opportunities and transport systems has been undertaken to inform the proposals.

Retail

2.2 For its size Bridge of Don is not particularly well served by retail facilities and services. The two District Centres at Middleton Park and Danestone are remote from the Denmore/Murcar area. There are however several convenience stores and services dispersed throughout the area such as Boots pharmacy on Scotstown Road which is over 2km from the site and the Bank of Scotland on Ellon Road approximately 2.4km. The nearest large supermarket is Asda which is situated in the Middleton Park District Centre on Jesmond Drive, around 1.8km from the site. A 2013 retail study, commissioned by the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, identified a shortfall in convenience floorspace provision to the north east of Aberdeen. That has never been addressed. Masterplan Zone 1 proposals for 550 homes by 2016 and a further 27 hectares of employment by 2030 will increase the retail needs of the area.

Leisure

2.3 There are 3 main leisure attractions: Murcar Links Golf Course located 1.2km east of the site, an indoor go-karting centre and indoor football centre (both located in the industrial park around 1km south of the site). The growth of the Energetica concept will provide further leisure facilities within the surrounding area over time.

Employment

2.4 Bridge of Don Industrial Park begins 200m south of the site adjacent to the A90 and Ellon Road and can be easily accessed by residents and commuters by private transport and public bus services. The companies based here are mainly motor enterprises for example Peugeot and Murison vans and trucks or homeware stores such as B&Q. Nearly 1000 people are employed within the Industrial Park.

2.5 There are also some 2,000 high value jobs located at the Science and Energy Park south east of the site. Masterplan Zone 1 has allocated 27 hectares of land to employment to be developed between 2024 and 2030. The Energetica project may attract further employment uses to this locale. Provision for nearby residential development land must be

capable of supporting the principles of sustainable development. In other words reducing the need to travel by putting a sufficient number of homes near these jobs.

2.6 Beyond the Industrial Park there are a number of hospitality services such as a Holiday Inn hotel approximately 2km south of the site, as well as several pubs and restaurants dispersed throughout the settlement. These facilities are mostly outside the walking distance from the site. The dispersed nature of facilities is an issue for the existing population around Bridge of Don. New development at Mundurno should consider a level of provision, and access to facilities that would also benefit the existing community.

Open Space

2.7 Bridge of Don contains numerous large open spaces and fields. Denmore Park is the closest public green space to the site, approximately 600m south of it. Further south from the area (just over 1.2km), Middleton Park exists which consists of an expansive stretch of open ground with public footpaths and woodland. The Energetica project will enhance the green space network in and around the area and provide linkages to the coast.

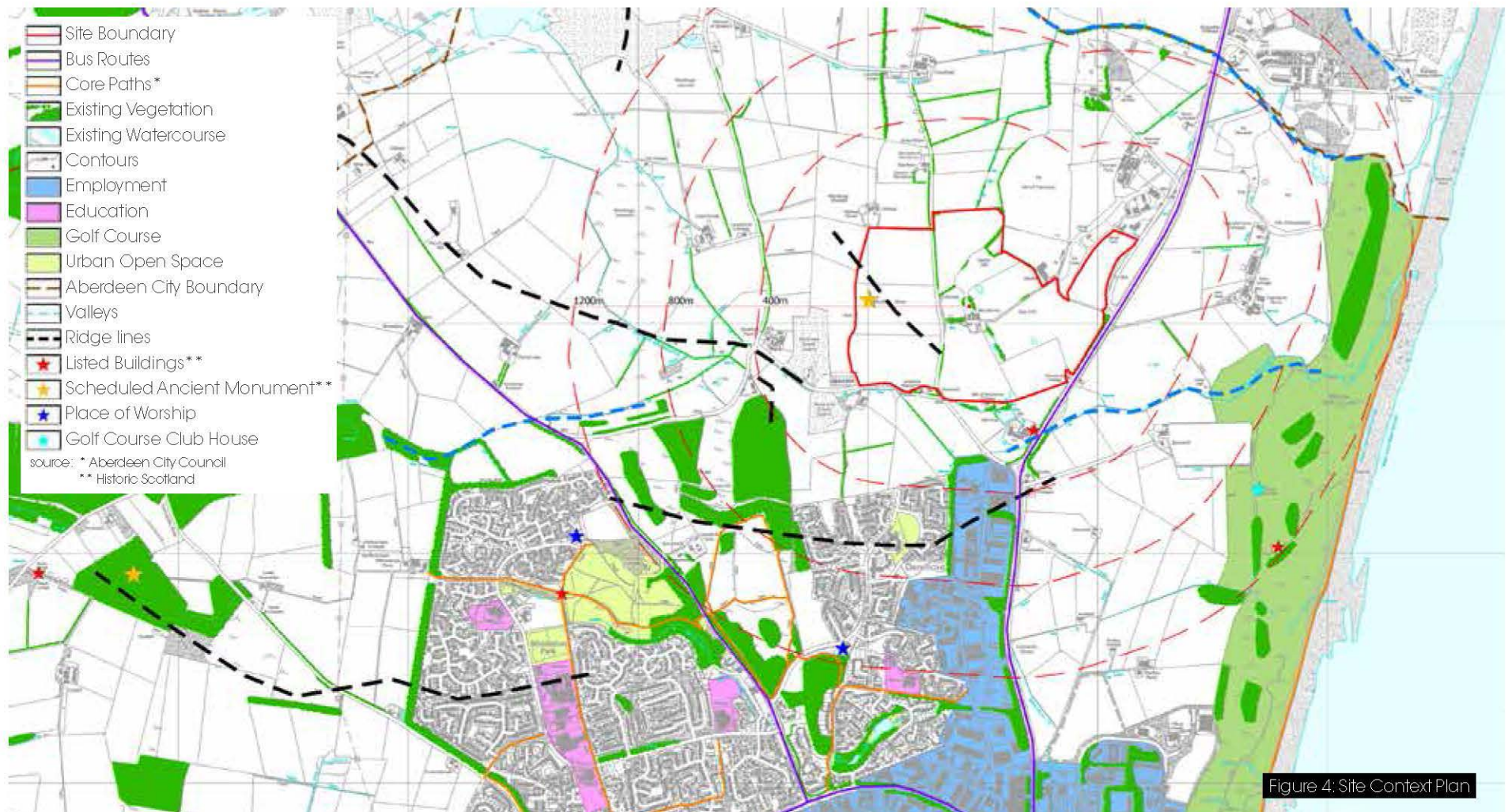


Figure 4: Site Context Plan

Education

2.8 There are 3 primary schools in the area: Forehill Primary School on Jesmond Drive, and Scotstown School are both approximately 2 kilometres (dl distance) from the site, Greenbrae Primary School on Greenbrae Crescent is the nearest school at less than 1.5 kilometres (dl distance). There are 2 secondary schools within 2 kilometres south (dl distance) of the site, Bridge of Don Academy and Oldmachar Academy, within an approximate walk of 30-35 minutes.

Places of Worship

2.9 Within the Bridge of Don area there are 4 churches. Those positioned closest to the development site are shown on the map which are: the Bridge of Don Baptist Church on Dubford Road 1.1km south of the site and Oldmachar Church of Scotland 1.5km south-west of the site. St Columbas Roman Catholic Church on Braehead Way and St. Ninians Episcopal Church on Buckie Road are also within easy reach.

Transport

2.10 Bridge of Don is served by a range of bus routes. The majority of bus routes include numerous stops on Jesmond Drive, Scotstown Road and the A90, which are connected and lead towards the Bridge of Don Industrial Park. Masterplan Zone 1 proposes a new bus route from Dubford through Denmore with frequent public transport to serve the whole area, and which may include extensions to existing services. It is likely that future bus services will be reconfigured to make provision for the growing employment opportunities at Murcar.

2.11 The Bridge of Don is linked to Aberdeen Train Station by a range of bus services.



Site Opportunities and Constraints

2.14 A review has been made of the constraints and opportunities for development on this site. Further site specific surveys will be carried out at the appropriate stage and before submission of a planning application. On the available evidence a development area has been defined. The issues influencing the definition of the development area and disposition of uses are reviewed below.

Topography

2.15 The site is undulating, forming a series of low hills rising to between 50 and 65 metres AOD. Most of the site is gently sloping with only small sections steeper than 1:10.

Vegetation

2.16 There is limited vegetation in the surrounding area and within the site.

Heritage

2.17 There is one area of archaeological significance within the site. A standing stone (designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument) is to the west of the site. There are no other buildings or structures of particular historic or architectural value within the site.

Ecology

2.18 Much of the site is actively farmed and there are no known species or habitats of significant importance within the site. A green corridor will be provided to provide ecological connectivity between land to the north of Mundurno Farm and the area to the south of the site.

2.19 The Hill of Tramaud landfill site to the north of the site requires a 250 metre stand-off due to potential methane transition.

Visual

2.20 The Hill of Tramaud Landfill Site and a scrap yard sit adjacent to the northern boundary. A netting enclosure covers the landfill, spanning the equivalent of a dozen international football pitches.

Hydrology

2.21 There is a water course which runs from west to east along the south of the site and Mill of Mundurno Cottage. A drain to the south of Mundurno Farm runs north to south to link with this watercourse.

Access and Circulation

2.22 The site is split by the B999. The AWPR provides the opportunity to provide access to the site from the proposed new interchange at Blackdog to the north.

The internal circulation system should be designed to focus access on an east-west axis primarily from the east. Movement restrictions for general traffic will manage any increase in flows through the existing network of residential roads to the south west.

Future Development

2.23 The site lies within Masterplan Zone 1 of the existing and proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Masterplan Zone 1 identifies the sites of Dubford and Murcar for development and considers these under one masterplan to best coordinate the planning and delivery of associated infrastructure. Dubford is allocated for 550 homes, and Murcar for 27 hectares of employment. Several strategic footpath/cycleway routes are proposed within Masterplan Zone 1, as well as a bus route from Dubford through Denmore, which may connect to existing services into Aberdeen City.

2.24 The site also falls within the 30 mile Energetica corridor between Aberdeen and Peterhead; a concept driven by ACSEF. Energetica seeks to consolidate the region as a global all-energy hub, with the aim of attracting new high level investment, and supporting the export drive of indigenous businesses and industry. Energetica aims to create a concentration of energy technology companies, housing and leisure facilities stretching north from Aberdeen along the coast.

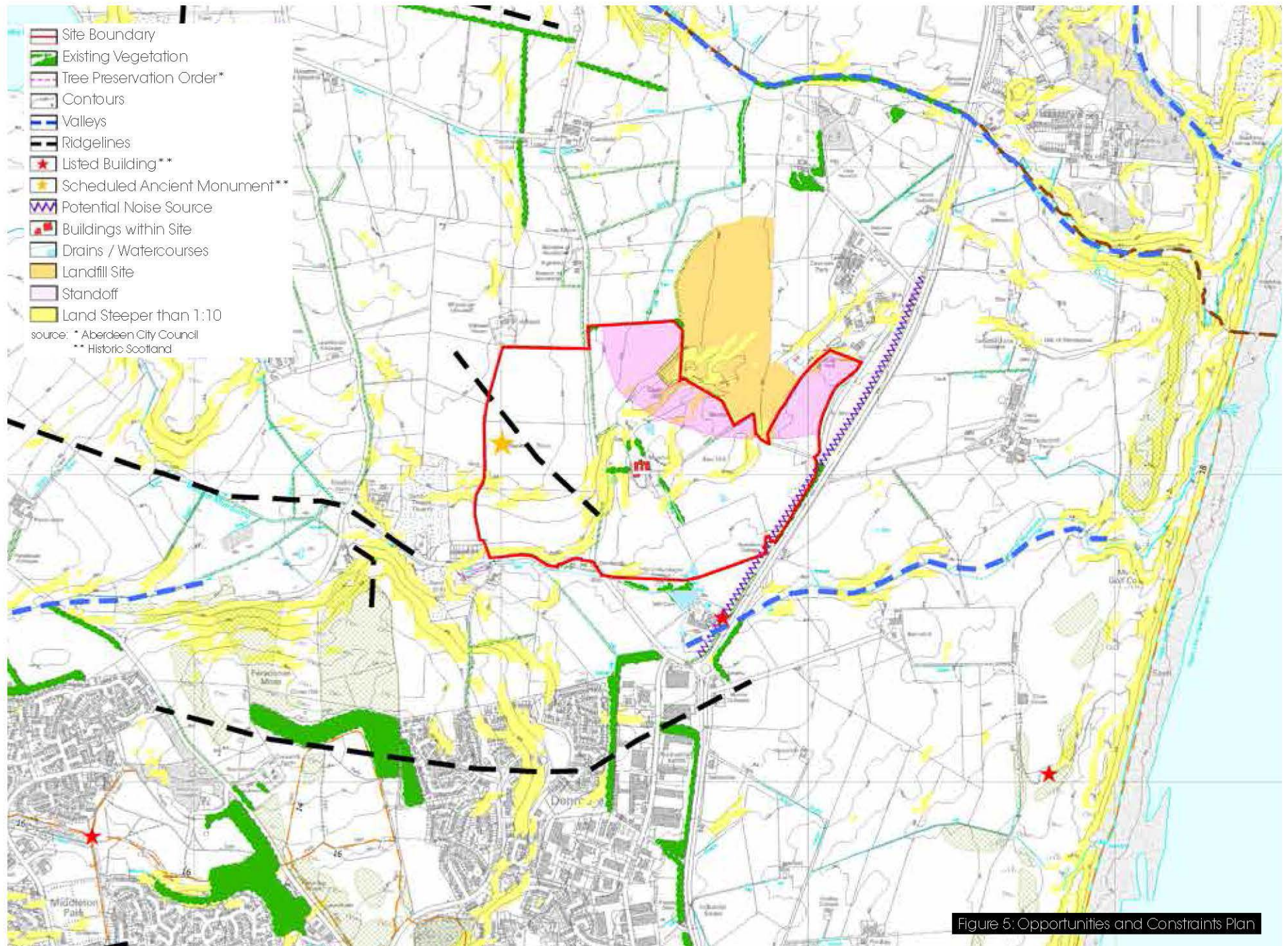


Figure 5: Opportunities and Constraints Plan



Landscape and Visual Appraisal

2.25 Figure 6 illustrates the development potential of the site with reference to important landscape features and visual characteristics. This divides the opportunities and constraints for development (in landscape and visual terms) in the following manner:

- Areas of high landscape/visual constraint: suitable for open space and / or mitigation.
- Areas of moderate landscape/visual constraint: suitable for development that includes retention and reinforcement of existing landscape framework to create a sympathetic development edge.
- Areas of low landscape/visual constraint: suitable for higher density development that retains and enhances the existing landscape framework where possible.

2.26 The Concept Masterplan and associated Landscape Strategy that has informed the context and basis for the proposed layout has also been developed in accordance with the principles set out in Planning Advice Note PAN 44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape. The process has drawn strongly on 'Part B: The Design Process' described in PAN 44, including the considerations of 'Design P: Landscape Master Plan'.

- Site Boundary
 - Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts
 - Existing Scrub
 - Contours/Spot Heights (metres AOD)
 - Valleys / Ridge lines
 - Existing Watercourses
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - Listed Building
 - Area of OP25: Dubford area allocated for residential development
- Opportunities
- Potential Green Corridor / Green Infrastructure
 - Potential Gateway Planting / Green Link
 - Potential Views from the Site
- Constraints
- Areas of Highest Landscape suitable for open space/woodland link creating backdrop to development
 - Areas of High Landscape suitable for low density development within open space and mitigation
 - Areas of Moderate Landscape suitable for development that includes retention and reinforcement of existing landscape framework to create a sympathetic development edge
 - Areas of Low Landscape suitable for higher density development that retains and reinforces the existing landscape framework where possible
 - Standoff from Landfill Site

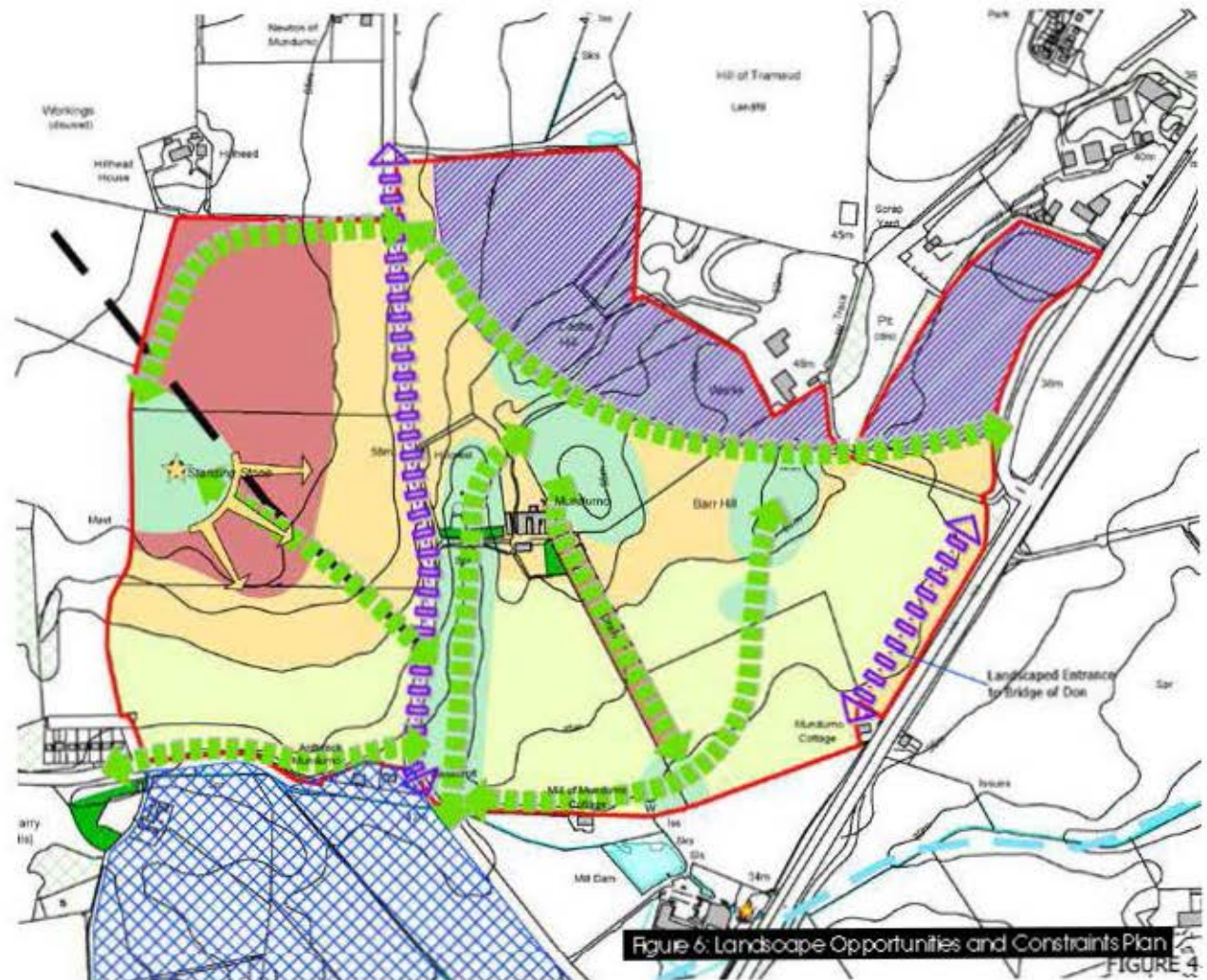


Figure 6: Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan

3.0 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

3.1 The exemplars that inspired the Energetica concept; the Research Triangle Park in the USA and Sophia Antipolis in France, seek to achieve a balance between employment related development and residential use. Increasingly, the planning of sustainable communities recognises the need to offer a choice to live near employment areas, to reduce the residents need to travel.

3.2 The inclusion of a section of the Mundurno site within Masterplan Zone 1 has inspired a concept that sees Mundurno as an integral part of a much broader strategy. Mundurno can provide a balance of homes and facilities, and the public transport and green networks, to serve this broader development zone.

3.3 The proposed development will contribute to the creation of a sustainable neighbourhood on the northern fringe of Aberdeen, which integrates new development and the existing dispersed pattern of settlement. In particular the concept shown in Figure 7 achieves a coordinated approach with the possible development areas to the south and east to ensure a cohesive, high quality, urban extension and distinctive new neighbourhood.

3.4 Next to major employment areas, including the Science and Energy Park, the development will help achieve a better balance in the distribution of housing and jobs and potentially reduce the need to travel to work. Mundurno will bring a wide range of benefits to the existing community and help create an attractive gateway to the City from the north.

3.5 The Concept shown in Figure 7 has the following elements.

- A residential led development with a mixed use community and retail hub at its heart.
- A new pattern of movement which improves safety and accessibility. The key element is a diverted B999 with a new junction on the A90. This new section of road allows a series of improvements to the local network and the creation of a series of east-west and north-south links. The links are within the wider development area and between the City to the south and countryside to the north and east towards Murcar and the employment areas.
- The infrastructure to accommodate a frequent bus service running in a loop across Masterplan Zone 1. This route will serve Dubford, Mundurno and Murcar respectively and enable residents

in Bridge of Don to better access employment opportunities to the east.

- A new landscape structure will be created incorporating retained vegetation which improves environmental quality, enhances biodiversity and creates shelter. The retention and sympathetic profiling of the landform will make best use of the topographical value of the site to create a series of open, low hills which are a distinctive element of the landscape of the area. The minor regrading of the landform will take place in association with the construction of the link road. The objectives of the landform exercise will be to:
 - > Retain vegetation and other features where possible;
 - > Be in keeping with the landscape character of the area;
 - > Minimise cuttings and embankments;
 - > Create usable open space areas.

3.6 The treatment, including species of plants, will be in keeping with the landscape character and climate of the area. A series of wooded spines provide containment, and ecological connectivity.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

4.1 The Development Framework shown in Figure 8, shows the distribution and extent of uses, together with urban form, landscape treatment and pattern of movement. Each of the masterplan components is described below:

Residential

4.2 The dwellings will be predominantly family housing with a range of types and tenures. A small number of apartments may be provided around the community and retail hub. There will be flats above shops and other ground floor businesses. Residential land of around 33 hectares is identified. Affordable housing will be provided in line with current LDP policy.

4.3 The residential area has a variety of densities. The densities respond to site characteristics in terms of vegetation, topography and proximity to the community and retail hub. The residential buildings will be predominantly 2 or 2½ storey.

Community and Retail Hub

4.4 A small neighbourhood centre will provide a range of facilities to help meet local needs. It will also answer some of the demand for local retail and community facilities in the existing community. The range of potential facilities include:

- A convenience store
- Small shops
- Business space
- Community/health facilities

4.5 The importance of the hub should not be underestimated. The intention is to deliver a fully integrated urban extension which will make a positive contribution to the function, character and appearance of both the new development and the broader area.

Education

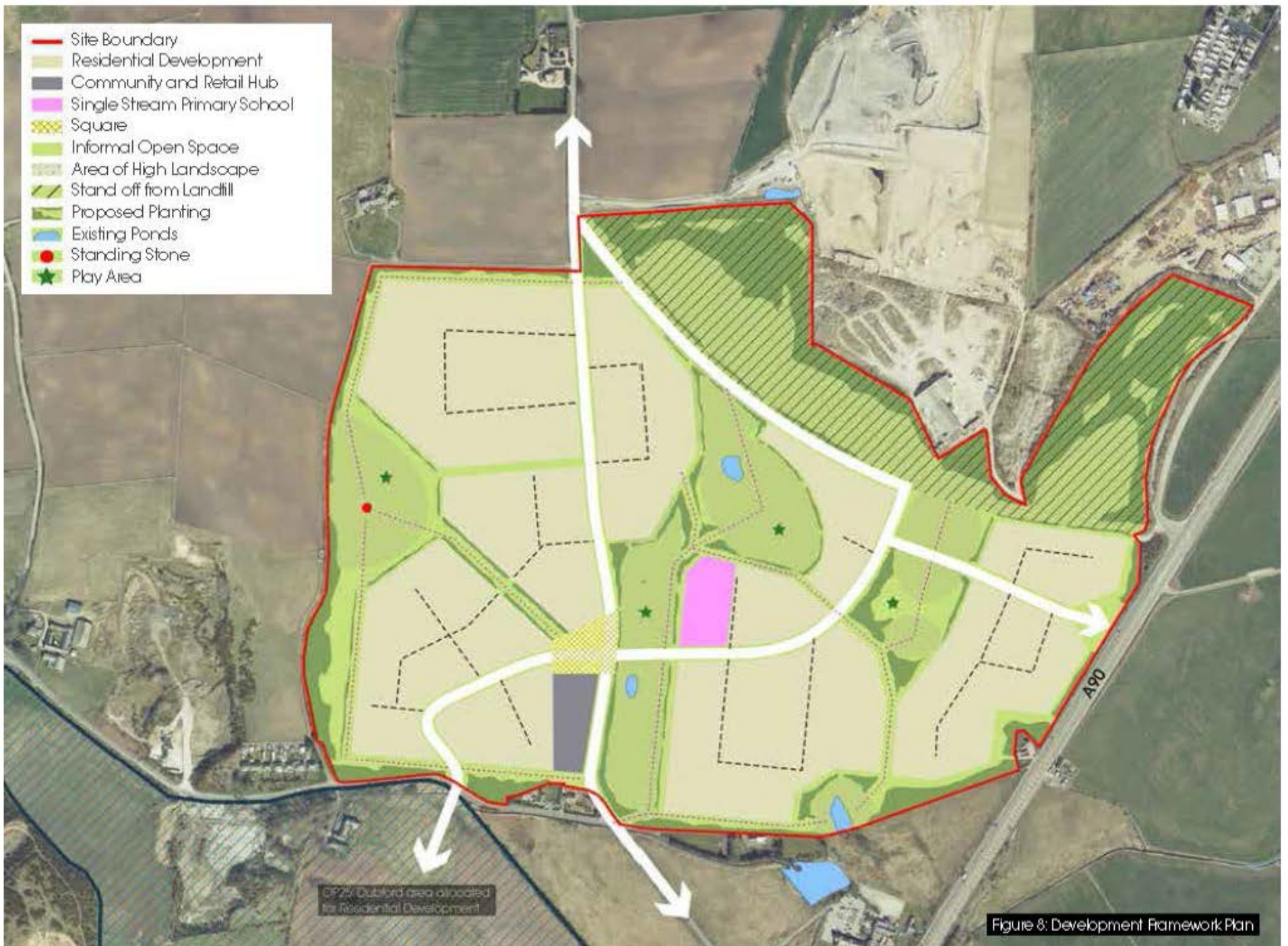
4.6 A site for a single stream primary school is provided alongside the Community and Retail Hub. The co-location of the neighbourhood centre with the site for a primary school will help to create a heart for the new community.

Open Space

4.7 A range of open spaces will be provided to serve the needs of all age groups in the development. Open space is distributed across the site with four main areas; one to the north of the housing, the second on the western edge of the development area and the third and fourth acting as green spine alongside the main roads.

4.8 The area north of the housing will act as an informal local park with a range of uses which include sporting facilities, allotments and amenity areas. The western open space area has a more informal character and treatment. The third, fourth and the other smaller green space corridors which subdivide the development area, have a range of functions including open space use.

4.9 Four children's play areas are located in the green corridor. These spaces will act as focal points in the development.



Access and Circulation

4.10 The provision of a new link between the B999 and A90 will provide an opportunity to restructure the pattern of circulation in the area focussing on the east-west axis favoured in Council responses in respect of accessing adjoining development allocations at Dubford and Muroar. The elements of this restructured pattern of movement area are set out below:

- The new link to the A90 passes through the site from the B999 in the north to a new roundabout junction constructed on the A90 to the east. The new link road would provide access for traffic from the north, including the landfill site. The exact road alignment and junction configuration will need to be subject of further design work, but this arrangement will allow the existing B999 to be turned into an access road for the new housing development.

- A network of footpaths and cycleways will link the development areas to the existing attractions to the south, including the potential development areas of Dubford and Murcar to the east and with the open space and land to the north.
- Bus routes are proposed through the site, connecting it with Dubford, Denmore and Murcar providing for circulation within the existing and future extended residential and employment area and connecting with existing services.

4.11 Within the site, networks of streets and paths will be developed in line with the philosophy identified in 'Designing Streets'. This focuses on the objective of designing places, not prioritising requirements for traffic movements. It aims to promote a better quality of living for all users and appropriately influence sustainable patterns of behaviour. The parallel 'Designing Places' identifies six qualities of successful places setting out key considerations for street design:

- Distinctive
- Safe and Pleasant
- Easy to move around
- Welcoming
- Adaptable
- Resource efficient

4.12 It is envisaged that street and path networks within the development area will be designed to maximise delivery of these qualities through implementation of the recommendations of this Policy Statement and in compliance with requirements of the City Council.



Figure 9: Land Use Plan



Figure 10: Green Space Plan



Figure 11: Density Plan



Figure 12: Movement Plan

5.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

5.1 This section describes the measures incorporated into the development to ensure mitigation through reducing CO² emissions and conserving water and adaptation to the predicted changes to the climate and extreme weather events.

5.2 The measures are a fundamental part of an approach which in itself is focussed on creating a balance of homes and facilities near jobs and excellent public transport connections. These elements of the scheme are fully integrated into the development in a way which enhances the appeal of the scheme and its distinctiveness. The measures are briefly described below.

Drainage

5.3 The issue of drainage including the provision for storm water in extreme weather events has been of fundamental concern in the development of the masterplan report. The measures outlined below are a fundamental and integral part of the design approach to the development.

- Reduce the amount of non permeable surfaces and thereby run-off specifically on road areas and maximise the space devoted to gardens.
- Use of permeable paving where appropriate

- Retain the system of watercourses and ditches on their current alignment wherever possible with improvements to increase capacity and nature conservation value
- A Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUD) system which incorporates the existing watercourses and provides a network of new ditches, swales, wetlands and ponds

5.4 The SUD system is designed to form a highly positive element in the landscape of the development creating focal points and positive elements in the public realm.

Energy Efficiency

5.5 New shelter belts incorporating retained vegetation will create a series of landscape cells. In addition, buildings can be orientated to reinforce the shelter created by the structure planting. These measures will help create the appropriate conditions for energy efficiency. The buildings will conform to the guidelines current at the time of construction on energy efficiency and insulation. Use will be made of new construction and building material technologies to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. With the southerly aspect there are opportunities for passive solar gain.

Transport and Movement

5.6 The emphasis is on promoting sustainable transport modes offering choice for a wide range of journeys. The modes which can significantly reduce car journeys.

- Walking and cycling along safe streets and a network of dedicated paths which link with adjoining neighbourhoods and countryside.

- Linking the neighbourhood with the City.

5.7 By providing a neighbourhood centre within the development with a primary school, a range of open space and facilities, the need to travel outside the site is reduced. These facilities will also considerably enhance the sustainability of the adjoining Bridge of Don community.

Ecology

5.8 The strategy for the development includes the following measures to protect, enhance and extend biodiversity:

- Retention of the areas of ecological value including water courses and hedges as far as possible;
- Management measures will protect and enhance the ecological value of these areas;
- New habitats will be created including wetlands and ponds as an integrated part of the measurements of SUDS areas;
- The landscape treatment of open spaces and parts of the public realm will encourage wildlife through careful selection of plant species and management regime; and,
- Measures to encourage wildlife will be extended to private space and buildings.



6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Phasing

6.1 It is likely that all four phases of construction, consisting of 1000 homes, could be complete between six and eight years.

- Phase One extends to approximately 13 hectares
- 200 units.
- Phase Two extends to approximately 26 hectares
- 400 units.
- Phase Three extends to approximately 17 hectares
- 200 units.
- Phase four extends to approximately 15 hectares
- 200 units.

6.2 These phases are indicative and subject to revision following discussions with Aberdeen City Council.



OP25: Dubford area allocated for Residential Development

Figure 14: Phasing Plan

Appendix 4

Bridge of Don, Aberdeen: Landscape and Visual Assessment

Prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes

May 2015

Bridge of Don, Aberdeen: Landscape and Visual Assessment

Prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes

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Prepared by:	RJG
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) were instructed by the Stewart Milne Group Limited (hereinafter referred to as 'our client') to advise on the landscape and related visual aspects (LVA) of their proposals for mixed use development on land located to the west of the A90 and straddling the B999 to the north-east of Bridge Of Don, Aberdeen ('the Site'), in the context of Representations to the Proposed Aberdeen City Local Development Plan.
- 1.2 This report utilises and updates the work undertaken by BWLPD for the Site in 2010, which at that time was undertaken in the context of providing Aberdeen City Council with sufficient supporting information to assist in the decision making process in determining the allocation of preferred development sites as part of the emerging Local Development Plan consultation process.
- 1.3 This report deals with the landscape and visual aspects of the proposed mixed use development as well as policy matters as far as they relate to landscape and visual amenity matters.
- 1.4 The objectives of this LVA are to:
- a) Update and utilise the 2010 landscape and visual appraisal of the Site and its surroundings in order to assess its character and visibility and its relationship with adjacent areas;
 - b) To consider whether development could be accommodated on the Site without detriment to the views from surrounding areas, or adverse impact on the landscape features, and character of the Site and its surroundings;
 - c) To assess the potential of the Site to accommodate mixed use development in terms of landscape and visual opportunities and constraints in order to inform the Representations to the Proposed Aberdeen City Local Development Plan.
- 1.5 With reference to the above, as this report utilises information from 2010, consideration has been given to the potential requirement to re-assess the findings in light of the update from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition (GLVIA 2) to GLVIA 3 in 2013. With reference to the guidance provided by the Landscape Institute, it is considered that as the approaches and methodologies between GLVIA 2 and GLVIA 3 are, in general terms, the same, the 2010 methodology remains valid.
- 1.6 In terms of considering development of the Site at Bridge of Don in relation to its landscape context, visual amenity and landscape features, it is concluded that development on the Site

would be acceptable in landscape and visual terms and could be accommodated without detriment or significant adverse landscape and visual effects on landscape quality and character, and accordingly it is concluded that the Site has the capacity to absorb development.

- 1.7 This report should be read in conjunction with the Development Framework Report also prepared by Barton Willmore as well as reports prepared by Ryden Property Consultants which deals with planning policy issues and Fairhurst which deal with issues relating to transportation planning.

2.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Site Context

- 2.1 The Site at Bridge of Don and the surrounding area comprises a mixture of agricultural fields along the northern edge of residential development at Denmore as illustrated on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**. The Site, which covers an area of approximately 75.0 hectares lies some 6.6 kilometres from Aberdeen city centre and includes a patchwork of fields of varying sizes comprising of both pasture and arable use surrounding the houses and steading of Mundurno. The landscape features and character of the site is described in more detail in the next section.
- 2.2 The topography surrounding the Site forms a complex area of undulating topography that generally rises from sea level approximately 1.2 kilometres to the east of the Site towards a highpoint of approximately 100 metres AOD approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north-west of the Site. A gentle valley extends west of the Site towards Grandhome Moss at an elevation of approximately 60 metres AOD and divides elevated land in the vicinity Perwinnes Moss to the south-west of the Site from larger areas of rising topography extending to the north-west. The settlement of Denmore, to the south of the Site, accommodates development between an elevation of approximately 40 metres AOD and 75 metres AOD and follows a similar topographic aspect as the Site.
- 2.3 A number of lochs are dispersed amongst the complex topography surrounding the Site, including Corby Loch located approximately 1.7 kilometres to the north-west of the Site. Within the Site itself smaller ponds are located within the northern area of the Site adjoining the Hill of Tramaud landfill site and along the eastern margin of the B999 as it extends to the south of Mundurno.
- 2.4 Vegetation surrounding the Site is predominately limited to gorse hedgerow field boundaries and clumps of woodland trees typically associated with residential development. More extensive areas of woodland are also apparent to the west of the Site at distances over approximately 2.7 kilometres. This includes Fowlershill Wood, Parkhill Wood, Todhill Wood, Den Wood and Littlejohn's Wood combining to form a larger semi-circle enclosure of woodland occupying elevated land rising to the north of Grandhome Moss.
- 2.5 Built form surrounding the Site is limited to isolated farm buildings and steadings and works buildings associated with quarry and landfill sites. The larger settlement of Bridge of Don also introduces a visible urbanising influence on the Site. Dry stone wall field boundaries are also a characteristic feature of the landscape in this area.

- 2.6 To the north of the Site, over a distance of approximately 1 kilometre, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) running east – west through this area of landscape extending between the settlements of Potterton and Bridge of Don, is currently under construction. Once completed, this strong linear feature will establish a road link wrapping around the western edge of Aberdeen and connecting onto the A90 to the north of Blackdog Burn radically changing the character and perception of the landscape in the locality through the introduction of new major transport infrastructure.
- 2.7 A single Scheduled Ancient Monument is located within the Site being a standing stone to the west of the B999.

Landscape Planning Designations and Guidance

- 2.8 Only those policies and guidelines, which are of relevance to the proposed allocation from a landscape perspective, have been taken into account in assessing the landscape and visual implications of the development of this area.

National Planning Guidance

- 2.9 There are a variety of documents at the National level which provide the context for housing developments.

National Planning Framework 3: A Plan for Scotland: Ambition, Opportunity, Place (NPF 3) (June 2014)ⁱ

- 2.10 This sets the context for spatial development planning in Scotland, with the vision to create ***"high quality, diverse and sustainable places that promote well-being and attract investment."***
- 2.11 Infrastructure provision within Aberdeen is identified as a key part of the agenda for growth and investment, with the AWPR scheduled for opening in 2018. Much of the new housing development in the city region is identified to extend northwards and southwards from the city centre.
- 2.12 'Landscapes' are identified as having ***"an important role to play in sustaining local distinctiveness and cultural identity, and in supporting health and well being."*** Creating well designed streets that link open spaces and wider active travel environments are noted for delivering a better environment and improving health and well being; along with increasing the rate of woodland creation and opportunities for recreation.
- 2.13 Within the Action Programme for NPF 3, to ensure the delivery of priorities is co-ordinated, the Scottish Government:

"Will work with housing providers and the development sector to support housing development and encourage innovative approaches to affordable housing."

Scottish Planning Policy (June 2014) (SPP)ⁱⁱ

2.14 This states that the planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places, and a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development, including:

"Protecting, enhancing and promoting access to natural heritage, including green infrastructure, landscape and the wider environment."

2.15 The Placemaking Policy Principle states that:

"Planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach."

2.16 The six qualities that define a successful place are:

- ***"Distinctive;***
- ***Safe and Pleasant;***
- ***Welcoming;***
- ***Adaptable;***
- ***Resource Efficient; and***
- ***Easy to Move Around and Beyond."***

2.17 In relation to Green Belts, SPP provides a guide to the current position of the Scottish Government on the role and function of green belts and settlement patterns, and that for most settlements a green belt is not necessary as other policies can provide an appropriate basis for directing development to the right locations. It is stated that where a planning authority consider it appropriate, the development plan may designate a green belt around a city or town to support the spatial strategy by:

- ***"Directing development to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration;***
- ***Protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement; and***
- ***Protecting and providing access to open space."***

2.18 Paragraph 50 states that:

"In developing the spatial strategy, planning authorities should identify the most sustainable locations for longer-term development and, where necessary, review the boundaries of any green belt."

2.19 SPP confirms at Paragraph 51 that the spatial form of the green belt should be appropriate to the location, giving consideration to and that:

"...establishing clearly identifiable visual boundary markers based on landscape features such as rivers, tree belts, railways or main roads. Hedges and field enclosures will rarely provide a sufficiently robust boundary."

2.20 It further states in Paragraph 53 that:

"The creation of a new settlement may occasionally be a necessary part of a spatial strategy, where it is justified either by the scale and nature of the housing land requirement and the existence of major constraints to the further growth of settlements, or by its essential role in promoting regeneration or rural development."

2.21 Paragraph 55 also states that Local Development plans should contribute to high-quality places by setting out how they will embed a design-led approach, with reference to the six qualities of successful places.

2.22 The section on Enabling Delivery of New Homes outlines the policy principles in support of NPF3's aims to facilitate new housing development.

2.23 The section on A Natural, Resilient Place outlines the policies related to the natural environment, in protecting, enhancing and promoting access to the key environmental resources. Paragraph 194 states that the planning system should:

- ***"Facilitate positive change while maintaining and enhancing distinctive landscape character;***
- ***conserve and enhance protected sites and species, taking account of the need to maintain healthy ecosystems and work with the natural processes which provide important services to communities;***
- ***promote protection and improvement of the water environment, including rivers, lochs, estuaries, wetlands, coastal waters and groundwater, in a sustainable and co-ordinated way;***
- ***seek to protect soils from damage such as erosion or compaction;***
- ***protect and enhance ancient semi-natural woodland as an important and irreplaceable resource, together with other native or long-established woods, hedgerows and individual trees with high nature conservation or landscape value;***
- ***seek benefits for biodiversity from new development where possible, including the restoration of degraded habitats and the avoidance of further fragmentation or isolation of habitats; and***
- ***support opportunities for enjoying and learning about the natural environment."***

2.24 Within the section on Development Management, Paragraph 202 states that:

"The siting and design of development should take account of local landscape character. Development management decisions should take account of potential effects on landscapes and the natural and water environment, including cumulative effects. Developers should seek to minimise adverse impacts through careful planning and design, considering the services that the natural environment is providing and maximising the potential for enhancement."

2.25 Paragraph 216 states that:

"...Other woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees, especially veteran trees...should be protected from adverse impacts resulting from development."

2.26 The above is supported by Paragraph 217 which states:

"Where appropriate, planning authorities should seek opportunities to create new woodland and plant native trees in association with development. If a development would result in the severing or impairment of connectivity between important woodland habitats, workable mitigation measures should be identified and implemented, preferably linked to a wider green network (see also the section on green infrastructure)"

2.27 Paragraph 220 identifies that planning policy should protect, enhance and promote green infrastructure, including open space and green networks, as an integral component of successful placemaking.

Creating Places - A Policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland (June 2013)ⁱⁱⁱ

2.28 This reiterates the six qualities of 'successful places' and with regards to landscape change, the policy states:

"Considered approaches to siting and design of development, which recognise landscape character and landscape capacity, will help to guide appropriate landscape change."

Planning Advice Notices (PAN)

Planning Advice Note PAN44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape (April 2005)^{iv}

2.29 Planning Advice Note PAN44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape follows on from earlier advice in PAN36 on the siting and design of new housing in the countryside with a consideration of design principles for larger development on the edge of built up

areas, including the importance of the impact on the surrounding area. Paragraph 7 notes the emphasis from NPPG3 on well designed schemes that respect both the local environment and the landscape setting; and the visual impact of new development as seen from major roads and rail routes.

- 2.30 With regard to the need for advice on landscape fit, PAN44 states at Paragraph 9 that ***"insensitive development can undermine the special environmental quality of towns and their setting in the countryside"***. At Paragraph 36 the advice states that:

"...The process of design must begin with an acknowledgement of the elements of the existing landscape in order to establish opportunities for enhancement and requirements for conservation. Each site has an individual capacity to accept change. Some sites are inherently scenic and may require minimum intervention while others may already be degraded and invite improvement and alteration."

"...It is important to determine the extent of alteration, if any, that a site can absorb without losing its character and sense of place."

- 2.31 The guidance contains an assessment 'analysis checklist' of features that need to be considered when fitting new housing development into the landscape. Of particular relevance to the consideration of landscape and visual amenity have been the criteria with regard to Landform (Analysis C&D), Landscape (Analysis E), Landscape Character (Analysis G) Visual Assessment (Analysis H) and Vegetation (Analysis L). Also carefully considered is the Design Checklist contained in PAN44, the most relevant criteria of which are Landscape Capacity (Criterion A), Landscape Studies: The Imprint of Man (Criterion E), Landscape Studies: New Planting (Criterion F) and Landscape Masterplan (Criterion P). With regard to Landscape Capacity the guidance states on page 34:

ii) "Landscape capacity is a measure of the degree of acceptable modification that the landscape can absorb. It embraces:

the capacity or sensitivity of the landscape; and the potential of new elements to strengthen positive attributes (such as an attractive wetland area) and ameliorate the impact of elements which detract from the overall integrity of the landscape (for example, derelict buildings and degraded land).

iii) Landscape capacity can be established by recording and integrating the natural features of the landscape such as the incidence and scale of valleys, woodland and so on. Essentially, capacity is a function of topography, i.e. landform and groundcover vegetation. The interplay of these can combine to create a landscape of high capacity, e.g. undulating with tree cover or low capacity, e.g. open, expansive and bare.

- iv) *The character of the landscape is used to interpret its capacity to absorb development and can be described using a standard vocabulary and associated plans, sketches and photographs. This approach is adopted in the former Countryside Commission for Scotland guidelines on landscape assessment which provides a useful reference.*
- v) *Generally speaking, undulating and complex topography will create opportunities to absorb new development as will wooded or afforested areas. This will not be the case with flat lowland landscapes or open and expansive upland landscapes..."*

2.32 Landscape Studies: The Imprint of Man, Criterion Design E states on page 38 that:

- i) *"Existing landscape patterns should be understood, to assist in developing the form of new planting formation..."*
- ii) *There are also opportunities presented by man-made features in the surrounding landscape, some of which may, in their current state, detract from the landscape..."*

2.33 With regard to Landscape Studies: New Planting, the guidance states on Page 40 that:

"Where appropriate new tree planting can be used to create a matrix or framework into which development sites can be located..."

2.34 Design Criterion P: Landscape Masterplan: states that:

- iii) *"Decisions must be made regarding the location of development components within the site itself, together with their relationship to the wider landscape. In order to achieve a good fit between a development and its surroundings, an integrated approach is required with regard to all landscape features, both within the site and in the surrounding visual context.*
- iv) *The form and layout of new residential developments should be in balance with the nature of the site, its natural features and context. The treatment of built form and the detailed design of spaces around them must be considered as an integrated whole, in order to achieve unity and a successful fit into the landscape.*
- v) *The spatial arrangement should be considered both functionally and visually. Every part of the site must have a clear purpose, with careful consideration of the relationship between public and private space, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation.*
- vi) *These various principles for the layout need to be married with the requirements of the landscape masterplan which will also deal with important factors such as the use of new landform; the design of structure planting (both for visual and climatic benefit), the choice of species and the use of formal and informal planting to highlight different characters in different areas. For example, formal boulevards, informal groups of semi-natural vegetation, meadow landscape, hedgerows, ponds and so on. These*

various landscape elements should be used to reinforce the overall development concept or to create an individual landscape concept.

- vii) The general visual character of plants must be considered in addition to their function. They can enhance the setting of built form, provide shelter, enclosure, dramatic effect, colour and texture."*

- 2.35 PAN44 concludes at paragraph 54 that in regional planning, landscape capacity and the relationship of new to existing urban form should be primary factors in determining the desirability of settlement expansion stating:

"...In the development of sites, environmental quality objectives require to be prioritised and good practice on position, setting, form, layout and colour followed by planning authorities and developers."

PAN72: Housing in the Countryside^v (February 2005)

- 2.36 PAN72: Housing In The Countryside supersedes and reinforces the key themes set out in PAN36: Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside. This document sets out three factors that influence location, namely landscape, layout and access. This document states the importance of understanding the landscape and the importance of landscape character assessment as part of this process, stating on page 10 that:

"1. Landscape

Scotland's geological and climatic conditions have influenced vegetation, land use, settlement patterns, building methods and styles. This has led to a rich diversity of landscapes. These landscapes have different capacities to accommodate development. It is therefore crucial that the proposed location and siting of new housing considers the impact on the landscape, in terms of both immediate and wider surroundings. If a proper fit in the landscape is not achieved, then even a well designed building can fail...

...Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), in partnership with local authorities across Scotland, has completed a suite of Landscape Character Assessments. These provide a more objective description of landscape enabling a better assessment of how change will affect it..."

PAN 83 Masterplanning (September 2008)^{vi}

- 2.37 This outlines the stages of effective masterplanning in making a positive contribution to the creation of sustainable and successful places.
- 2.38 The vision for the future of housing in Scotland is stated as:

"...encompassing an increased supply of housing across all tenures, all of which will be delivered to higher environmental and design standards. In addition, the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative will encourage the development of new, sustainable communities of varying sizes. These may be much-expanded or new, stand-alone settlements that are sympathetic to Scotland's landscape and environment."

Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking (November 2011)^{vii}

- 2.39 This document provides advice on incorporating green infrastructure (GI) into masterplans, in order to knit development into the wider green network; joining up the existing green network and providing good connections to a network of routes.
- 2.40 The three themes of integrating GI within a masterplan are Context, Identity and Connection, based PAN 83 Masterplanning.

Strategic Planning Guidance

Strategic Development Plan - Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Development Plan - March 2014^{viii}

- 2.41 The approved Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan plays a key role in guiding development over the next 25 years, with the vision of creating an ***"even more exciting, modern and sustainable European city region - an excellent place to live, visit and do business"***.
- 2.42 The Structure Plan states (Paragraph 3.9, Page 9) that:

"...While we prefer development to take place on brownfield sites, ...the scale of growth we expect will mean that more than half of the development will need to take place on greenfield sites. This will mean reviewing the whole green belt to make sure that it meets the requirements of this plan and Scottish Planning Policy."

- 2.43 Under 'Local Growth and diversification areas' it states:

"Increasing tree cover can bring significant environmental, economic, social and community benefits if new planting respects the different functions of the land concerned and its role in a wider green network. There is clear potential to increase the tree cover of this area while respecting the competing interests for land. This will contribute to a wider Scottish Government target of increasing tree cover and recognising the role of woodland in reducing the causes of climate change (known as mitigation)."

- 2.44 It is confirmed in the 'Quality of Environment' section (Paragraph 4.31, Page 34) that the green belt around Aberdeen will:

"continue to play a vital role in protecting the character and landscape setting of the City. However, it will need to change to meet the growth this plan seeks to achieve. It must guide development to appropriate places while protecting the most important areas. Accessible green networks within and around Aberdeen and other major settlements will also be important to achieving a high quality environment "

- 2.45 The identified 'targets' for the Quality of Environment Section include:

"To make sure that development improves and does not lead to the loss of, or damage to, built, natural or cultural heritage assets."

Local Planning Guidance

Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report - January 2014^x

- 2.46 The Main Issues Report is the first stage in producing a revised and updated Local Development Plan for Aberdeen, which, when adopted, will replace the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012.
- 2.47 The Site is included as one of the proposals included in the Pre-Main Issues consultation stage (Development Bids 2013) and assessed as 'undesirable'. The justification for this assessment is set out within the Development Options Assessment Report, as Development Bid B0202, within Ward 2 - Bridge of Don. This assessment identifies the Site performs green belt functions of contributing to the identity and landscape setting of the city and preventing coalescence between Bridge of Don and Potterton. Other threats identified include the loss of open farmland landscape character as a result of new development; diminishing the setting of the standing stone at Mundurno, and threatening the contribution of the Green Space Network corridor role of the Site between the coast and important natural heritage areas to the west.
- 2.48 Land to the west of the Site at Shielhill Farm (Development Option B0205) is assessed as 'undesirable' in relation to the development of 1000 dwellings due to the constraints of green belt and relationship to existing settlement.
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan (adopted February 2012)^x
- 2.49 This replaced the Aberdeen Local Development Plan in providing a land use framework.

- 2.50 Within this plan, the southern part of the Site is within an area of Green Space Network (NE1), which forms a strategic network defined as:

"a strategic network of woodland and other habitats, active travel and recreation routes, greenspace links, watercourses and waterways, providing an enhanced setting for development and other land uses and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature conservation and landscape enhancement."

- 2.51 Policy NE1 - Green Space Network states:

"The City Council will protect, promote and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of the Green Space Network. Proposals for development that are likely to destroy or erode the character or function of the Green Space Network will not be permitted. Where major infrastructure projects or other developments necessitate crossing the Green Space Network, such developments shall take into account the coherence of the network. In doing so measures shall be taken to allow access across roads for wildlife and for access and outdoor recreation purposes."

Masterplanning of new developments should determine the location and extent of the Green Space Network within these areas."

Development which has any impact on existing wildlife habitats, or connections between them, or other features of value to natural heritage, open space, landscape and recreation must be mitigated through enhancement of Green Space Network."

- 2.52 The Site is within the Green Belt (Policy NE2) for which the aim is defined as:

"aim of the green belt is to maintain the identity of Aberdeen and the communities within and around the city by defining their physical boundaries clearly, avoiding coalescence and urban sprawl, maintaining the landscape setting and providing access to open space. The green belt directs planned growth to the most appropriate locations and supports regeneration."

- 2.53 Policy NE2 - Green Belt states:

"No development will be permitted in the green belt for purposes other than those essential for agriculture, woodland and forestry, recreational uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting, mineral extraction (on sites identified in Policy R1) or restoration or landscape renewal."

- 2.54 Adjacent to the north-east edge of the Site is an area identified as OP1: Hill of Tramaud, identified as an opportunity site for landfill followed by reinstatement to uses acceptable to the Council.
- 2.55 Adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site is an area identified as OP25: Dubford, allocated in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan for residential development of up to 550 homes (2007-2016).
- 2.56 With respect to 'Landscape', the Proposed Local Development Plan identifies that natural topography and landscape play an important role in determining future development layout of the City. Maintaining and managing aspects of Aberdeen's unique landscape setting is critical. In particular, Policy D6: Landscape (p188) identifies that development will not be acceptable unless it avoids the following:

- 1) Significantly adversely affecting landscape character and elements which contribute to, or provide, a distinct 'sense of place' which point to being either in or around Aberdeen or a particular part of it;**
- 2) Obstructing landmarks and features when seen from publicly accessible vantage points such as roads, railways, recreation areas and pathways and particularly from the main city approaches;**
- 3) disturbance, loss or damage to recognised recreation, wildlife or woodland resources or to the physical links between them;**
- 4) sprawling onto green spaces or buffers between places or communities with individual identities, and those which can provide opportunities for countryside activities.**

- 2.57 In addition, Policy D6 identifies that:

"Development should avoid significant adverse impacts upon existing landscape elements, including linear and boundary features or other components, which contribute to local amenity and provide opportunities for conserving, restoring or enhancing them."

- 2.58 Any landscape design scheme will also be expected to conform to the Supplementary Guidance: Landscape Strategy Part 2 – Landscape Guidelines.

Supplementary Guidance Topic: Landscape Guidelines^{xi} (March 2012)

- 2.59 This states that:

"The council's general environmental approach to development indicates that developments will be allowed where they do not destroy or damage natural resources or their setting, adversely affect amenity or be visually damaging to the appearance or setting of Aberdeen."

2.60 The character of the landscapes and townscapes around Aberdeen are noted as being dependent upon a combination of physical elements, and that these should be taken into account when designing new developments, so that they:

"Do not erode essential character, but conserve or enhance it."

2.61 As such, Landscape Practice Note 3 - Landscape and Townscape Character states that proposals must relate to local landscape or townscape character. Paragraph 6.4 states that development shall be sensitive to landscapes of local significance that are:

- ***"Distinctive elements or features which impart a sense of place;***
- ***intermediate areas that allow open views between vantage points (public roads, paths or recreation areas), and landscape features that give a sense of place;***
- ***natural resources such as trees or woodlands, wildlife habitats, natural heritage sites, waterbodies, and open spaces; or***
- ***green buffers between settlements."***

2.62 Paragraph 6.6 states that:

"Good landscape and visual design reasons, to maintain public safety, to reduce climatic exposure, and to ensure developments are sustainable, buildings shall not be sited on the tops of exposed hilltops, the bottoms of river valleys, close to shorelines, or in areas liable to flood. Wind turbines, radio, television and telecommunication masts which require to be at some height shall avoid locations at the highest points or brows of hills. Elsewhere they shall be sited in close association with other features like trees or large buildings so that their presence in some views can be masked or screened."

2.63 Paragraph 7.10 states that:

"The design and layout of the landscape of any development shall demonstrate that it is sustainable through, for example, -

- ***the maintenance of landscape and townscape character;***
- ***the retention of trees, vegetation and open spaces as a means of attenuating climatic effects and as a valuable landscape, recreation and wildlife resource;***
- ***minimising the use of hard ground surfacing and maximising the use of more natural or permeable materials, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS);***
- ***providing direct linkages for pedestrian movement and placing less reliance on car travel;***

- *the use of SUDS in keeping water courses clean and open, and by diverting any run-off from hard surfaces towards areas of vegetation rather than capturing and transporting it away in enclosed gullies and drains;*

- *using building and landscaping materials only from sustainable sources; and*

- *helping to optimise the energy efficiency of buildings."*

Supplementary Planning Guidance Trees and Woodlands (March 2012)^{xii}

2.64 The objective of new tree planting within Aberdeen is outlined due as:

"Aberdeen has one of the lowest percentages of tree cover of any city in Scotland. There is clearly a need to improve this situation; by increasing the level of tree cover and protecting the existing trees. One way of doing this is by increasing the amount of new tree planting in new developments within the city."

2.65 Additionally, the policy states that:

"New developments must include measures to ensure the long term retention of existing trees, replacement tree planting and where possible increase the overall level of tree cover."

Core Paths Plan (2009)^{xiii}

2.66 There are no Core Paths crossing the Site, nor in the immediate vicinity.

Landscape Character

2.67 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool which can make a significant contribution to the objectives that relate to "environmental protection" and "prudent resource use", the cornerstones of sustainable development. Scotland's various elements of planning legislation now recognise the importance of landscape character, as noted in paragraph 202 of SPP which promotes the siting and design of new development taking account of local landscape character. In particular, landscape character assessment can help in processes which:

- Identify what environmental and cultural features are present in a locality;
- Monitor change in the environment;
- Understand a location's sensitivity to development and change; and
- Inform the conditions for any development and change.

National Assessment: Scottish Natural Heritage No 80: Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen (1996)^{xiv}

- 2.68 The landscape character assessment of Aberdeen was undertaken in 1996 and published later in 1999 as part of Scottish Natural Heritage's nationwide programme of assessments as No 80: Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen.
- 2.69 The report considers the likely pressures and opportunities for change in the landscape, assesses the sensitivity of the landscape to change and includes guidelines indicating how landscape character may be conserved, enhanced or restructured as appropriate.
- 2.70 Following this assessment, the area of landscape encompassing the Site has been divided into a number of Landscape Character Areas, illustrated on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**. These Character Areas form part of the larger Open Farmland Landscape Character Type which identifies an extensive agricultural character type that forms much of the immediate hinterland of the city outwith the river valleys. Within this landscape type, fields are often bordered by stone dykes, with limited woodland and hedgerows. The traditional settlement pattern consists of scattered farmsteads that are often associated with small clumps of trees. Considerable pressure from the expanding development in Aberdeen is also noted.
- 2.71 As identified in **Figure 1**, the majority of the Site is identified as Area 6: Potterton, the distinctive landscape features of which include:
- ***"Agricultural dominant, with little woodland;***
 - ***The distinctive shelterbelts;***
 - ***Sparse settlement;***
 - ***Stone dykes and occasional hedgerows as field boundaries;***
 - ***Views eastward to the sea; and Views to the urban edge."***
- 2.72 The 'Sensitivity to Landscape Change' relating to built development identifies that this landscape is characterised by its lack of buildings consisting mostly of widely scattered traditionally styled steadings. The undulating topography has influenced this settlement pattern, with most buildings located in shallow hollows and associated with tree groups and not typically associated with groups of buildings.
- 2.73 A summary of 'Sensitivity to Landscape Change' identifies that the open, agricultural, and relatively un-settled character, together with the undulating landform are notable, and could make new development difficult to locate here. Where present, buildings are located below the skyline. Landscape Guidelines for this area seek to manage tree belts to ensure their retention and expansion, alongside the maintenance of dry stone dyke field boundaries and hedgerows.

2.74 The south-western area of the Site extends into Character Area 5: Perwinnes which includes the following distinctive landscape features:

- ***"The presence of Corby Loch and Perwinnes Moss and their nature conservation interests;***
- ***Few trees, and fences rather than dykes as field boundaries;***
- ***The sparse, scattered settlement pattern;***
- ***The radar installation; and***
- ***Mineral extraction."***

2.75 Visibility of this area is regarded as low, being hidden from view from the city, and generally seen only from the minor, but busy roads that pass through it. Sensitivity to landscape change with relevance to built development identifies the lack of adjacent infrastructure, the preponderance of poorly drained ground, the nearby local nature reserve at Scotstown Moor, and the lack of visual continuation with the existing urban fringe providing an open rural character and a rolling topography all combine to make this area sensitive to development.

2.76 The eastern area of the Site also extends into Character Area 7: Murcar, the Distinctive Landscape Features of which include:

- ***"The low-lying, flattish topography;***
- ***The open character***
- ***Occasional clumps of trees around traditional buildings;***
- ***Many scattered houses;***
- ***The abrupt urban edge at industrial estate;***
- ***The presence of the trunk road;***
- ***The presence of landfill sites;***
- ***Views to the sea along coast."***

2.77 The summary of sensitivity to landscape change in this area identifies this character area as an open, coastal landscape with considerable amounts of existing development, but which is sensitive to new development in terms of siting and integration. Its location on the main northern road access to the city increases its visibility and sensitivity to the impacts of development.

2.78 Landscape Guidelines in this area seek to achieve enhancement through the planting of trees around buildings that echo the pattern of traditional development and aid integration into the landscape without losing its characteristic openness. Management of existing / new planting within the industrial estate is also recognised as helping to integrate this with the surrounding more rural landscape.

2.79 It should be noted that the landscape character assessment of Aberdeen was undertaken in 1996 and published later in 1999, and is 16 years old and will not reflect recent changes in the landscape of the area including approval of the AWPR. It is also very broad brush, and

therefore its usefulness in determining the relative appropriateness of different areas within the landscape character area is relatively limited.

A Landscape Strategy for Aberdeen^{xv}

- 2.80 Part 1 of the Landscape Strategy for Aberdeen was prepared in 2002. This relates to the maintenance of Aberdeen's setting and sets out the criteria by which landscape setting may be defined. In defining Aberdeen's setting, the strategy highlights areas, landmarks and features which are most important to the landscape setting of the city and which should be safeguarded from general development. Within this study, the majority of the Site is identified as providing Green Spaces or Buffers that have importance of the creation, enhancement or maintenance of individual identity contributing to a 'sense of place'. They function as green thresholds that extend or link with one another to form part of a citywide green structure which will serve to: enhance the landscape, provide opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the countryside, help to maintain wildlife habitats and provide the potential for the implementation of green transport links.
- 2.81 Part 2 of the Landscape Strategy sets out a series of landscape guidelines that can assist making developments more attractive. With respect to landscape and townscape character, Landscape Practice Note 3 identifies that Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have taken all relevant environmental considerations into account, show how proposals relate to local landscape or townscape character, and indicate what physical and visual impacts developments may have upon them.

Aberdeen Green Belt Review^{xvi}

- 2.82 This was prepared for the previous Local Development Plan. Within this assessment, 'Area A Bridge of Don' included the area of land accommodated within the Site defining the area of land located north of Denmore and Murcar and extending to the city boundary close to Blackdog and Potterton. This area is described as: ***"largely open in character, highly visible and containing several old quarries and landfills sites including an existing landfill at Hill of Tramaud"***.
- 2.83 The preferred options for development identified at this time in this area relates to 3 adjoining housing sites at Dubford and around 27 hectares of employment land at the southern section of Murcar to the north of existing development at Berryhill and Cloverhill extending east of the Site. In directing development towards these areas, the assessment refers to a line of lower ground running roughly from the Mill of Mundurno, along the burn to Sheilhill then along Perwinnes Moss through Grandhome Moss and Stoneyhill Wood. Identifying this line is used to describe a function of "separating the developed plateaus at Denmore and Middleton Park from the higher ground to the north of Mundurno and

Perwinnes and the woodland areas at Parkhill.” When referring to this line, this assessment concludes that, “breaking out over this feature would add to a sense of urban sprawl and feel unconnected to the existing urban area”. Mundurno Farm is also identified as part of the buffer between Aberdeen and Potterton contributing to the landscape setting of the city.

3.0 SITE APPRAISAL

- 3.1 **Figure 2: Site Appraisal Plan** and aerial photograph of the Site (**AP-1**) shows the existing landscape characteristics of the Site at Bridge of Don including the vegetation on and adjacent to it and its relationship to the built up edge of Bridge of Don.
- 3.2 As **Figure 2** illustrates, the Site comprises approximately 75.0 hectares under a variety of different land uses, predominantly fields of rough grassland, pasture and arable land with limited hedgerow and tree belt planting. The fields within the Site have been divided into a total of 11 fields for ease of reference. Field boundaries are typically contained by dry stone wall dykes and gappy gorse (*Ulex* sp.) hedgerows with larger groups of trees more typically associated with the farm buildings at Mundurno in the centre of the Site.
- 3.3 The topography of the Site is undulating rising from a low point of approximately 40 metres AOD along the south-east boundary of the Site adjoining the A90 and rising to an elevation of approximately 70 metres AOD in the north-west corner of the Site adjoining Hillhead House. Within the central area of the Site, in the vicinity of the Mundurno Farm, lies an area of more steeply irregular mounding and channelling that is likely to have resulted from fluvio-glacial processes in this area. This creates a steeply incised gully running parallel and east of the B999 and which extends north into an area accommodating a series of mounds.
- 3.4 Built form within the Site is limited to a cluster of buildings at Mundurno and a separate residential dwelling known as Hillcrest approximately 120 metres further to the north-west. A number of works buildings and dwellings are also located along the boundary of the Site including Ardbreck Mundurno, Danecroft, Mill of Mundurno Cottage and Mundurno Cottage along the southern boundary; Works buildings and structures associated with the Hill of Tramaud landfill site along the northern boundary; Hillhead and Hillhead House along the north-western boundary and a row of seven bungalows in the north-west corner of the Site.

Site Appraisal Photographs

- 3.5 A number of Site Appraisal Photographs (A-J inclusive), described below, were taken to demonstrate the character and appearance of the area as existing and these annotated panoramas are included as part of the illustrative material to this report.
- 3.6 **Site Appraisal Photograph A** is taken to the east of the B999 in the northern area of the Site looking east across Field F4. To the left of the photograph, the B999 is visible adjacent to a low gappy gorse hedge following alongside this boundary. In the centre left of the photograph, Field F4 in the northern area of the Site is visible sloping towards the Hill of Tramaud landfill site adjoining the Site to the north-east. In the centre right of the

photograph, the northern boundary continues along an undulating area of terrain adjoining works building to the north of the Site and viewed in the mid-ground of long distance views towards the Northern Sea. In the right of the photograph, vegetation is visible enclosing residential development at Mundurno and Hillcrest in the centre of the site.

- 3.7 **Site Appraisal Photograph B** is taken from the edge of the B999 looking west across the western area of the Site. In the left hand side of this photograph, Mundurno and Hillcrest are visible alongside the B999 bisecting this areas of the Site. Through the centre of the photograph, Field F2 is visible on falling towards residential development in Denmore visible beyond the Site's southern boundary. To the right of the photograph, a dry stone dyke separating Field F2 from Field F3 is visible rising to the west of the Site. In the far right hand side of the photograph, Hillhead House is visible beyond the north-west corner of Field F3.
- 3.8 **Site Appraisal Photograph C** is taken from the western boundary of Field F7 adjoining the B999 in the centre of the Site. In the left hand side of this photograph, Hillcrest is visible on elevated land adjoining the B999. In the centre left hand side of the photograph, Field F7 is visible occupying an area of undulating land extending through the central area of the Site and extending towards the Hill of Tramaud landfill site along the north-east boundary. In the centre of the photograph, Mundurno is visible amongst an area of established vegetation within the centre of the Site. To the right of the photograph, further vegetation is visible continuing towards the B999 and framing views of the Industrial Estate along Denmore Road in the far right hand side of the photograph.
- 3.9 Moving further to the south, **Site Appraisal Photograph D** illustrates the view in the north-west corner of Field F8 looking eastwards. In the left hand side of this photograph, the B999 is visible following rising land that bisects the Site. In the centre left of the photograph, Mundurno is visible along the horizon beyond tree and scrub vegetation extending into the centre of the Site. In the centre of the photograph, undulating land within Field F8 is visible rolling towards a linear tree belt in the centre of the Site and in the foreground of view towards the North Sea further to the right. In the right hand side of the photograph, vegetation following the southern boundary is visible and associated with the industrial estate and residential development within Denmore.
- 3.10 **Site Appraisal Photograph E** is taken from the northern boundary of Field F8 as this adjoins Mundurno. From this location, field F8 is visible sloping towards the B999 bisecting the centre of the Site. In the left hand side of the photograph, a band of vegetation is visible extending into the south-west corner of the Site in the foreground of long distance views towards the North Sea. In the centre of the photograph, Field F8 is visible sloping south towards the Mill of Mundurno Cottage along vegetation associated with the Mill of Mundurno Cottage, Danecroft and Ardbreck Mundurno along the southern boundary. Beyond this, the

urban area of Denmore is visible along the northern edge of Bridge of Don. In the left hand side of the photograph, the B999 is visible following lower lying land and framed by gappy trimmed hedgerows. Beyond this, pasture within Fields F1 and F2 is visible on rising land in the western area of the Site. In the far right hand side of the photograph, trees along the path leading to Mundurno are visible entering off the B999.

- 3.11 Moving east of Mundurno, **Site Appraisal Photograph F** is taken in the western corner of Field F10 looking eastwards. In the left hand side of this photograph, a farm track extending through the Site is visible extending towards works buildings and the Hill of Tramaud landfill site along the north-east boundary. In the centre of the site, undulating land in Field F6 is visible falling extending towards Mundurno Cottage and the A90 following alongside the Site's south-eastern boundary. In the far right hand side of the photograph, a tree belt extending to the south-east of Mundurno is visible following alongside the western boundary of Field F10.
- 3.12 Further to the north, **Site Appraisal Photograph G** is taken from the western area of Field F6 looking eastwards. In the left hand side of this photograph, the tree belt extending to the north of Mundurno is visible. In the centre left of the photograph, a small pond is visible in the north-west corner of Field F6. Beyond this, and further to the right, the works buildings and netting associated with the Hill of Tramaud land fill site are visible along the Site's north-eastern boundary. In the centre of the photograph, undulating land within Fields F6 and F10 is visible extending towards the A90 following alongside the Site's south-eastern boundary. Beyond this, the North Sea is visible along the horizon. In the Far Right hand side of the photograph, vegetation associated with Mundurno is visible in the centre of the Site.
- 3.13 **Site Appraisal Photograph H** is taken from the north-eastern corner of Field F11. In the left hand side of this photograph, the road between the A90 and East Harehill is visible following alongside the Site's eastern boundary. Through the centre of the photograph, Field F11 is visible rising towards a scrap yard located adjacent to the Site's northern boundary. In the far right hand side of the photograph, gorse and scattered scrub is visible following along the north-western boundary of Field F11.
- 3.14 **Site Appraisal Photograph I** is taken from the south-western corner of Field F11 looking eastwards. In the left hand side of this photograph the entrance to the works building along the northern boundary is visible alongside a substantial gorse horse hedgerow established along the north-western boundary of Field F11. From this viewpoint, areas of gorse are visible continuing along the north-western boundary of Field F11 towards a scrap yard adjoining the Site to the north. In the centre of the photograph, Field F11 is visible forming an area of undulating arable land extending towards the A90 with the North Sea visible beyond this along the horizon. In the right hand side of the photograph, the existing access

to works buildings along the northern boundary is visible extending through the eastern area of the Site.

- 3.15 **Site Appraisal Photograph J** is taken from the track leading to the works building in the north-east corner of Field F10 and visible in the far left hand side of the photograph. In the centre of the photograph, Field F10 is visible extending towards the residential area of Denmore visible beyond the Site's southern boundary. In the centre right hand side of the photograph, Mundurno within the Site is visible in association with existing vegetation established in this area. In the right hand side of the photograph, an existing access through the eastern area of the Site is visible, extending towards the works buildings along the Site's northern boundary.

Summary

- 3.16 An appraisal of the Site identifies an area of undulating topography divided into a total of 11 fields typically divided by a combination of dry stone walls and gappy gorse hedgerows. Existing buildings within the Site include the houses and steading of Mundurno, with views from within the Site observed in the context of the adjoining development at Denmore, Hillhead House and works buildings and netting associated with the Hill of Tramaud landfill site. A single Scheduled Ancient Monument is also located in the western area of the Site. Overall the landscape sensitivity of the Site is considered to be low and recognised by the Reporter in the 2006 Public Local Inquiry as by no means representing outstanding open countryside.

4.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL OF THE SITE

- 4.1 A visual appraisal of the Site and its environs has been undertaken to determine the relationship of the area with its surroundings, the visibility of the Site within the wider landscape, the suitability of the land for development and the effect that this would have on the landscape and visual characteristics of the area. The study was undertaken in accordance with GLVIA 2.
- 4.2 The visual appraisal was undertaken from publicly accessible viewpoints within the surrounding landscape, such as from roads and footpaths to determine the approximate extent of the area from which the Site is visible from the eye level of a person standing on the ground. As part of this appraisal, consideration has also been given to the visual contribution that the Site makes to the Aberdeen Green Belt.
- 4.3 The visibility of any Site is predominantly influenced by its landform and the extent and type of buildings and vegetation cover within the Site and the surrounding landscape. In describing the existing vegetation and topographical variation surrounding the Site, it is explained how this existing landscape framework is important in controlling views into the Site from the surrounding area.
- 4.4 A series of Site Context Photographs were taken to illustrate key views towards the Site from the surrounding countryside. These photographs are included as Site Context Photograph Nos. 1-8 in the second part of the illustrative material to this report. The locations of these photographs are indicated on **Figure 3: Visual Appraisal Plan**.

Near Distance Views (0-300m)

- 4.5 Near distance public views towards the Site are available from adjoining roads including the A90 along the eastern boundary, the B999 bisecting the Site and an unnamed road following part way along the southern boundary of the Site to the west. Private views are also available from Mundurno and Hillcrest within the Site and the cottages and bungalows which abut up against the Site boundary.
- 4.6 **Site Context Photograph 1** is taken from the B999 as this adjoins the southern boundary of the Site. In the left hand side of this photograph, Danecroft is visible adjoining the southern boundary of Field F1 in the western area of the Site. To the right of this, the western area of the Site is visible on rising land to the west of B999 as this bisects a central area of the Site. In the centre of the photograph, the eastern area of the Site is visible rising beyond the B999 towards vegetation associated with Mundurno along the horizon. In the right hand side of the photograph, the Mill of Mundurno cottage is visible alongside the

southern boundary with the B999 continuing to the south-east towards the A90 in the far right hand side of the photograph.

- 4.7 **Site Context Photograph 2** is taken from Hill Head House alongside the north-western boundary of the Site. In the left hand side of the photograph, Hillhead is visible with ground and upper floor views towards the Site. In the centre left hand side of the photograph, the Hill of Tramaud landfill site is visible along the northern boundary of the Site. Through the centre of the photograph, a foreground of lawn associated with Hillhead House is visible extending towards a dry stone dyke and post and wire fence defining the northern boundary of Field F3 in the western area of the Site. Beyond the Site, existing development including the Industrial Estate along Denmore Road and the wider residential area of Denmore are visible alongside areas of woodland planting punctuating the horizon.
- 4.8 **Site Context Photograph 3** is taken from the B999 in the vicinity of the northern boundary of the Site looking southwards. To the left of this photograph, the Hill of Tramaud landfill site is visible alongside access to this area following the northern boundary of the Site off the B999. In the centre-left hand side of the photograph, the eastern area of the Site is visible in the foreground of long distance views towards the North Sea. Views across this area of the Site are punctuated by trees at the intersection between the B999 and access to the Hill of Tramaud landfill site and vegetation enclosing Mundurno. In the centre of the photograph, the B999 is visible bisecting the central area of the Site with the western area of the Site visible to the right of this as it extends towards Hillhead House along the horizon in the right hand side of the photograph.
- 4.9 **Site Context Photograph 4** is taken from land adjacent to the Mill of Mundurno visible in the right hand side of the photograph. In the centre of the photograph, the Site is visible beyond an area of rough pasture accommodating gently rising terrain that extends towards vegetation associated with Mundurno along the horizon. In the centre right hand side of the photograph, the Hill of Tramaud landfill site is visible, along the horizon beyond the Site. In the right hand side of the photograph, vegetation is visible along the A90 as it passes to the south of the Site.
- 4.10 **Site Context Photograph 5** is taken from the roundabout between the B999 and the A90. In the left hand side of the photograph, the B999 is visible extending north-west towards the southern boundary of the Site in the vicinity of Danecroft. In the centre of the photograph, the Mill of Mundurno (Motel) is visible on lower lying land adjoining the southern boundary. Beyond this, the Site is visible as an area of gently rising arable land beyond vegetation enclosing the southern boundary and rising towards vegetation associated with Mundurno within the Site. In the centre-right of the photograph, the A90 is visible extending towards the south-eastern boundary of the Site. To the right of this, vegetation within the centre of

the roundabout between the B999 and A90 is visible with views to the North Sea visible beyond this.

Middle Distance Views (300-600m)

- 4.11 **Site Context Photograph 6** is taken from the urban edge of Denmore over a distance of approximately 490 metres. In the left hand side of the photograph, Hillhead and Denmore are visible in the vicinity of the respective north-western and south-western boundaries of the Site. The approximate extent of the Site continues in the centre left hand side of the photograph, with vegetation associated with Mundurno visible in association with Danecroft along the southern boundary and the Hill of Tramaud landfill site visible along the northern boundary. In the right hand side of the photograph, residential properties on Cypress Grove are visible defining the northern edge of Denmore.
- 4.12 **Site Context Photograph 7** is taken from Scotstown Road looking south-eastwards towards the vicinity of the Site. In the left hand side of the photograph, the approximate extent of the Site is visible extending to the right of Hillhead along the horizon. In the centre of the photograph, Scotstown Road is visible running south towards the vicinity of Denmore. In the right hand side of the photograph, Lachlands cottages are visible below more elevated land in Perwinnes Moss along the horizon.

Long Distance Views (600m+)

- 4.13 **Site Context Photograph 8** is taken from Dubford Road within Denmore looking north towards the Site. In the left hand side of the photograph, Dubford Road is visible extending north towards the vicinity of the Site. Beyond this, in the centre left of the photograph, the approximate extent of the Site is visible beyond residential properties in Denmore. From this viewpoint, the B999 is visible extending through the Site alongside tree groups associated with Mundurno and the Hill of Tramaud landfill visible along the horizon adjoining the northern boundary. Residential properties in Denmore continue through the right hand side of the photograph in the foreground of views towards the North Sea along the horizon.

Summary

- 4.14 Visibility of the Site is typically associated with properties and roads adjoining the Site boundary and extending south towards the northern edge of Dunmore. Where visible from this area, the Site is seen in the context of adjoining built elements including a working pit at the Hill of Tramaud and represents a contained area of lower lying land with limited intervisibility in the wider landscape. Views are typically limited to adjoining sections of roads and residential development seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Aberdeen. Accordingly the Site is considered to maintain a limited visual influence over surrounding

areas of open countryside and is not considered to form an important component of available views.

5.0 LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- 5.1 The opportunities and constraints for development are set out in **Figure 4: Opportunities and Constraints Plan**. This demonstrates that the lower areas of the Site are relatively unconstrained from a landscape and visual perspective and provide an opportunity to successfully tie development together with land immediately to the south of the Site, allocated for 550 homes and (OP25: Dubford) in the Aberdeen Local Plan and reduce the existing degrading landscape impact of the adjoining Hill of Tramaud quarry.
- 5.2 The entirety of the Site remains contained within the visual catchment of the northern edge of Bridge of Don with views from the Site remaining influenced by existing development in Denmore and future development opportunities identified in Dubford. This creates an urban edge context within the Site and distinguishes the land from areas of true open countryside extending beyond the undulating nature of the topography further to the north-west.
- 5.3 To the north-east of the B999 within the Site, the combination of steeply irregular mounding and channelling is apparent and creates a combination of varied landscape features that help reveal the influence of underlying fluvio-glacial processes that have helped form this area. To the south of this lies a linear corridor following an existing melt water channel through the centre of the development running parallel with the B999. These topographic features present an opportunity to retain legible landscape features throughout the development and backdrop to development observed in the southern area of the Site when travelling along the A90 past the Site.
- 5.4 To the west of the Site and south of more elevated land accommodating Hillhead, a standing stone located near a gentle ridge extending through this area of the Site presents an isolated archaeological feature that can be retained as part of an extended network of Green Infrastructure (GI) including open space areas extended through this area. This offers a key opportunity to provide open space that increases the sense of place associated with this area and enhances opportunities to access green links that extend from the existing residential edge into wider areas of countryside extending to the north of the settlement to the west of the B999.
- 5.5 The existing pattern of vegetated boundary features within the Site is presently limited with the most substantial areas of vegetation associated with tree planting enclosing built elements at Mundurno Farm. Additional gappy hedgerows along the B999 and A90 road margins exist with a linear substantial hedgerow extending along an internal field boundary to the south-east of Mundurno Farm. Wherever possible, these features should be retained within open space areas which extend through the development and include measures to further reinforce their contribution to the surrounding landscape character.

5.6 In this context, the Site offers the ability to identify a comprehensive development area which appears contained by elevated areas of topography rising to the north and connected with the existing settlement pattern through the provision of a comprehensive GI and open space network which extends through the Site. Such GI open space provisions can be informed by the existing landscape framework and include opportunities to enhance the contribution of natural and cultural features that weave through this area of landscape and contribute more meaningfully to its associated sense of place.

5.7 Given the above, the landscape opportunities and constraints presented within the Site can be summarised as follows:

- Contain the form of development within the existing visual catchment associated with Bridge of Don;
- Enable a comprehensive Green Infrastructure and Open Space Network informed by natural processes and cultural artefacts extending through the Site;
- Positively address negative detractors in this area including the Hill of Tramaud landfill and the entrance experience currently associated with the A90 adjoining the Site;
- Establish a robust northern / north-eastern edge of the settlement contained by advanced woodland planting that responds to the topography and provides a backdrop observed from lower lying areas extending to the south of the Site;
- Provide a sympathetic open space corridor to the north-west of the Site which remains respectful to adjoining areas of countryside extending north of Hillhead; and
- Reinforce existing gappy hedgerows and tree belts with appropriate native species as part of improving the condition of the landscape that contributes a further sense of containment to the development.

6.0 CONSIDERATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

6.1 In response to the landscape opportunities and constraints identified above, the Development proposals have been set out within the Bridge of Don, Development Framework Report (May 2015). The following section of this report discusses the potential landscape and visual impacts relating to this development below.

Visual Effects

- 6.2 The development proposals will appear visible from the existing northern edge of Bridge of Don and represent an extension of the existing urban area into an area of undulating terrain already associated with views towards urban development. Whilst development will extend onto undulating areas of topography visible within the Site, the maximum elevation of such development will be limited to approximately 70 metres AOD and remain below the existing pattern of development occupying elevated land adjacent to Middleton Park to the west of Denmore (at approximately 90 metres AOD). Further elevated topography to the north of the Site, ensures views of development do not spill beyond the existing visual catchment of Bridge of Don and remain below more elevated areas of undulating topography separating Denmore and Potterton to the north which reaches an elevation of approximately 80 metres AOD.
- 6.3 Where visible on the northern approach into Aberdeen along the A90, development of the Site will appear visible along a disjointed urban edge that includes negative visual impacts associated with the Hill of Tramaud landfill site located along an elevated ridgeline extending to the north-east of the Site. Where development is visible in this area, views of built elements will remain contained within an enhanced landscape structure that includes the provisions for a reinforced green backdrop which conceals work within the Hill of Tramaud landfill and the former concrete manufacturing yard known locally as 'Robertson's yard'. Such views of development will establish a more sympathetic and positive edge treatment that reinforces the contribution of a meaningful green space network in this area.
- 6.4 When passing through the centre of the development along the existing alignment of the B999, views of development will remain anchored within a comprehensive landscape framework which accommodates built elements within legible natural features which contribute to the surrounding open space network and reinforce a strong sense of place. Such features include a legible melt water channel to the east of the B999 and a backdrop of woodland planting occupying elevated hill forms and characteristic of the existing development at Mundurno Farm.

- 6.5 Any views north of the Site along the B999 approaching Potterton will be contained beyond intervening topography and within the alignment of the AWPR encircling this area of Aberdeen. The combination of intervening topography and the alignment of the AWPR in this area will ensure that the form of development remains visually connected along an established urban edge and avoids any sense of visual intrusion within open countryside extending beyond the visual catchment of Aberdeen.
- 6.6 Overall, the visual effects of development introduced in this area are considered localised with clear opportunities to improve views of degraded landscape elements apparent in this area.

Landscape Impacts

- 6.7 The landscape value of the Site is influenced by its proximity to the existing settlement edge of Aberdeen and its proximity of the Hill of Tramaud landfill which occupies elevated areas of topography forming the Site's northern boundary. Given this context, the landscape character of the Site is considered distinct from areas of true open countryside occupying more elevated land rising to the north and north-west and able to absorb residential development without comprising the identity or character of the northern edge of Aberdeen.
- 6.8 The pattern of development introduced in this area reflects an understanding of the underlying processes of the landscape and remains associated with existing tree planting enclosing built elements observed at Mundurno Farm. In this context, the Site is considered to afford successful opportunities to create a sympathetic landscape edge to Aberdeen and improve the Site's existing association with degrading landscape elements to establish a reinforced landscape framework improving the character and condition of this area of landscape.
- 6.9 Overall, the low landscape value of the Site is considered suitable to absorb new residential development along a sympathetic urban edge and avoid a sense of encroaching into areas of true open countryside extending beyond the visual catchment currently associated with the northern edge of Aberdeen. Any views of development introduced in this area will remain in the context of existing degraded activity associated with the Hill of Tramaud and provide an opportunity to absorb residential development within a reinforced landscape structure which establishes a more meaningful and positive relationship along the northern edge of Aberdeen.

Effects on Green Belt

- 6.10 As the Site currently falls within the Green Belt, the ability to develop the Site has also been considered in terms of its contribution to this underlying designation and its support of the spatial strategy as outlined within the SPP.

Directing development to the most appropriate locations and supporting regeneration

- 6.11 Extending development in this area retains an ability to enable development to appear contained within a robust settlement edge that uses a combination of changes in topography and advanced woodland planting to direct growth within an area of low landscape sensitivity; currently influenced by its proximity to existing urban development in Denmore, and contained within a reinforced settlement edge presently associated with degrading landscape influences associated with the Hill of Tramaud landfill site.
- 6.12 The ability to direct growth in this area is further reinforced by the alignment of the AWPR which passes north of the Site and which forms a legible landscape boundary enclosing the northern edge of the settlement. The alignment of this road in association with the nature of intervening topography between the Site and existing settlements including Potterton, accessed along the B999, ensures the inclusion of development in this area will remain contained within the context of an established urban edge and avoid a sense of coalescence with adjoining towns.

Protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement

- 6.13 Whilst development will appear visible in views from the south, it will remain contained within an area of lower lying topography that continues to rise to the north-west beyond the Site. Any views of development will remain within the existing visual catchment of Aberdeen and associated with the existing pattern of development occupying the area of undulating terrain in which the settlement of Denmore has become established. The nature of more elevated and undulating areas of topography extending to the north of the Site ensures a sense of visual and perceptual separation between Denmore and Potterton is retained, with further elevated planting introduced in association with the northern area of development ensuring woodland backdrop contains areas of built form.
- 6.14 Whilst development will inevitably reduce the physical separation between the existing settlements of Bridge of Don and Potterton, this will have no material change on the identity or character of these distinct urban areas. Development will also include further open space provisions, enhancing the character and setting of the northern edge of Denmore, reinforcing

the legibility of the formative processes responsible for the creation of this area of landscape as an underlying element which reinforces the Site's contribution to sense of place.

- 6.15 In this context, the ability to introduce development within the Site offers an opportunity to reinforce a positive landscape framework which assimilates within the northern edge of the Bridge of Don and remains separated from surrounding areas of countryside and adjoining settlements including Potterton. The construction and operational phases of the AWPR to the north of the Site will further change the context of this locality and reinforce a sense of containment of development along an existing settlement boundary and ensure any sense of coalescence between Potterton and Bridge of Don is avoided. Furthermore, the GI and open space strategy embedded within the development proposals would ensure that the contribution of open space areas to the landscape setting associated with the northern edge of Bridge of Don would be enhanced and provide a more meaningful gateway experience along the alignment of the A90.

Protecting and providing access to open space

- 6.16 A key element of the proposal is Green Infrastructure (GI) including for open space, which seeks to reinforce legible green links which extend through the development and establish meaningful links between urban areas and adjoining areas of countryside. The establishment of a meaningful open space network would connect to area OP25: Dubford (550 homes) and reinforce links with the underlying landscape and wider areas of countryside associated with this area. Furthermore, the ability to respond to the underlying natural topography of the Site also offers an opportunity to promote a comprehensive open space framework in this area which reinforces links between a new urban edge and wider areas of countryside.

The Green Space Network

- 6.17 The underlying Green Space Network designation applied to the southern area of the Site, seeks to promote and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access values of this area. In response to this designation, the development proposals seek to introduce GI with a linked network of open space within the Site and assist with the creation of a comprehensive green space network defining the northern edge of Bridge of Don.
- 6.18 The ability to absorb residential development in this area is reinforced by its assimilation within open areas of topography retained in the northern area of the Site. Such areas will work in combination with corridor links introduced through the southern area of the Site and combine to create a meaningful east-west link which weaves through the northern edge of Bridge of Don to promote a positive urban edge development that integrates well with adjoining areas of countryside. Such links remain responsive to the underlying topography and vegetation features occurring within the Site and improve their association as positive

landscape and recreational resources. Further opportunities exist to reinforce gateway planting along this southern edge and the northern entrance into the Bridge of Don along the A90 corridor forming a more attractive northern gateway experience along this road.

- 6.19 Overall, this treatment will contribute to the protection and enhancement of the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of the green space network identified in this area.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Site, which covers an area of approximately 75.0 hectares lies some 6.6 kilometres from Aberdeen city centre along the northern edge of residential development at Denmore and comprises a patchwork of fields of varying sizes made up of both pasture and arable use surrounding the houses and steading of Mundurno.
- 7.2 Vegetation surrounding the Site is predominately limited to gorse hedgerow field boundaries and clumps of woodland trees typically associated with residential development. Built form surrounding the Site is limited to isolated farm buildings and steadings and works buildings associated with quarry and landfill sites. The larger settlement of Bridge of Don also introduces a visible urbanising influence on the Site.
- 7.3 To the north of the Site, over a distance of approximately 1 kilometre, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) is under construction, running east – west through this area of landscape extending between the settlements of Potterton and Bridge of Don. Once operational, this strong linear feature will establish a road link wrapping around the western edge of Aberdeen and connecting onto the A90 to the north of Blackdog Burn radically changing the character and perception of the landscape in the locality through the introduction of major transport infrastructure.
- 7.4 The topography surrounding the Site forms a complex area of undulating topography that generally rises from sea level approximately 1.2 kilometres to the east of the Site towards a highpoint of approximately 100 metres AOD approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north-west of the Site. A gentle valley extends west of the Site towards Grandhome Moss at an elevation of approximately 60 metres AOD and divides elevated land in the vicinity Perwinnes Moss to the south-west of the Site from larger areas of rising topography extending to the north-west. The settlement of Denmore, to the south of the Site, accommodates development between an elevation of approximately 40 metres AOD and 75 metres AOD and follows a similar topographic aspect as the Site. The topography of the Site itself is undulating rising from a low point of approximately 40 metres AOD along the south-east boundary of the Site adjoining the A90 and rising to an elevation of approximately 70 metres AOD in the north-west corner of the Site adjoining Hillhead House. Within the central area of the Site, in the vicinity of the Mundurno Farm, lies an area of more steeply irregular mounding and channelling which creates a steeply incised gully running parallel and east of the B999 and which extends north into an area accommodating a series of mounds.
- 7.5 Built form within the Site is limited to a cluster of buildings at Mundurno. A number of works buildings and dwellings are also located along the boundary of the Site including those associated with the Hill of Tramaud landfill site along the northern boundary. A single

Scheduled Ancient Monument (standing stone) is located within the Site to the west of the B999.

- 7.6 The entirety of the Site remains contained within the visual catchment of the northern edge of Bridge of Don with views from the Site remaining influenced by existing development in Dunmore and future development opportunities identified in Dubford. This creates an urban edge context within the Site and distinguishes the land from areas of true open countryside extending beyond the undulating nature of the topography further to the north-west.
- 7.7 The visual appraisal confirms that views towards the Site are typically associated with properties and roads adjoining the Site boundary and extending south towards the northern edge of Dunmore. Where visible from this area, the Site is seen in the context of adjoining built elements including a working pit at the Hill of Tramaud and represents a contained area of lower lying land with limited intervisibility in the wider landscape. Views are typically limited to adjoining sections of roads and residential development seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Aberdeen. Accordingly the Site is considered to maintain a limited visual influence over surrounding areas of open countryside and is not considered to form an important component of available views.
- 7.8 The Site offers the ability to identify a comprehensive development area which appears contained by elevated areas of topography rising to the north and connected with the existing settlement pattern through the provision of a comprehensive Green Infrastructure and open space network which extends through the Site. Such open space provisions would be informed by the existing landscape framework and include opportunities to enhance the contribution of natural and cultural features that weave through this area of landscape and contribute more meaningfully to its associated sense of place.
- 7.9 Overall, the low landscape value of the Site is considered suitable to absorb new residential development along a sympathetic urban edge and avoid a sense of encroaching into areas of true open countryside extending beyond the visual catchment currently associated with the northern edge of Aberdeen. Any views of development introduced in this area will remain in the context of existing degraded activity associated with the Hill of Tramaud and provide an opportunity to absorb residential development within a reinforced landscape structure which establishes a more meaningful and positive relationship along the northern edge of Aberdeen.
- 7.10 Extending development in this area retains an ability to enable development to appear contained within a robust settlement edge that uses a combination of changes in topography and advanced woodland planting and new structural planting to direct growth within an area of low sensitivity landscape currently influenced by its proximity to existing urban

development in Denmore, and contained within a reinforced settlement edge presently associated with degrading landscape influences associated with the Hill of Tramaud landfill site. The ability to introduce development within the Site also offers an opportunity to reinforce a positive landscape framework and provide a more meaningful gateway experience along the alignment of the A90.

7.11 In conclusion, the Site would be well suited to accepting the proposed quantum and mix of development proposed, as illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and sensitive development of this area would not result in adverse or unacceptable landscape or visual effects.

7.12 It is therefore respectfully requested that the Site at Bridge of Don be removed from the Green Belt and Green Space Network and be allocated as a preferred development site within the Proposed Aberdeen City Local Development Plan.

i The Scottish Government, National Planning Framework 3: A Plan for Scotland: Ambition, Opportunity, Place, <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/NPF3-SPP-Review/NPF3>

ii The Scottish Government, Scottish Planning Policy, 2014, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00453827.pdf>

iii The Scottish Government, Creating Places - A policy Statement on architecture and place for Scotland, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/06/9811/downloads#res-1>

iv PAN 44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/04/01145231/52326>

v The Scottish Government, Planning Advice Note Housing in the Countryside, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/02/20637/51636>

vi The Scottish Government, Planning Advice Note Masterplanning, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/11/10114526/0>

vii The Scottish Government, Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/11/04140525/5>

viii Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Development Plan, March 2014, <http://www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=1111&sID=149>

ix Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Local Development Plan, Main Issues Report, January 2014, <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=54146&sID=24188>

x Aberdeen Local Development Plan, http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_local_development_plan.asp

xi Aberdeen Local Development Plan, Supplementary Guidance Topic: Landscape Guidelines, March 2012, <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31802&sID=14394>

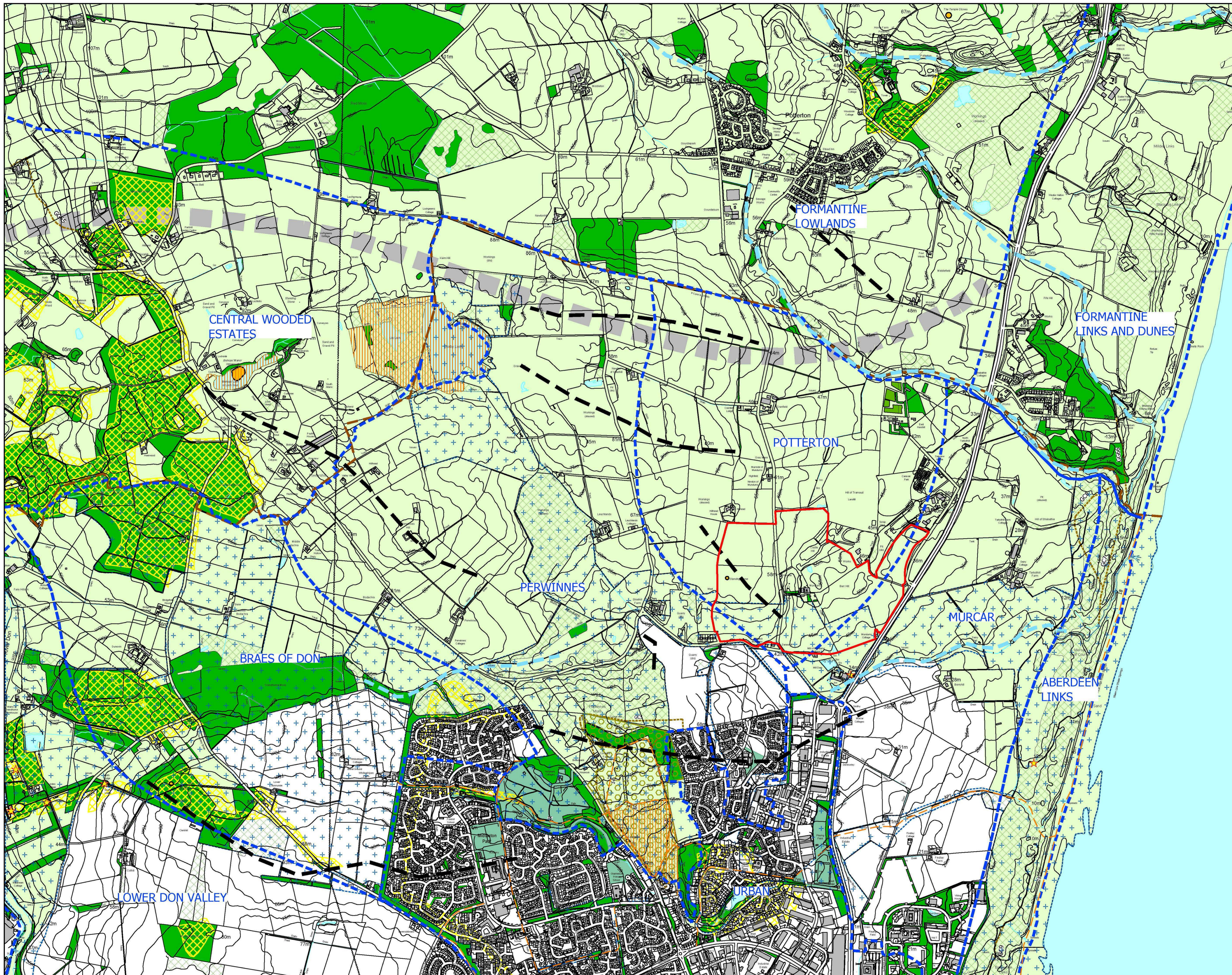
xii Aberdeen Local Development Plan, Supplementary Guidance Topic: Trees and Woodland, March 2012, <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31830&sID=14394>

xiii Core Paths Plan, Map Guide, April 2009,
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=25258&sID=3159>

xiv Scottish Natural Heritage, No.80 Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen, 1996,
<http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/review/080.pdf>

xv Aberdeen City Council, Landscape Strategy for Aberdeen Part 1 - Maintenance of Aberdeen's Landscape Setting and Part 2 - Landscape Guidelines,
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_LandscapePlan.asp

xvi Aberdeen City Council, Green Belt Review,
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31732&sID=14344>



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured
 Revision _____ Date _____ Dm _____ Ckd _____



- ### Legend
- Site Boundary
 - Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
 - Ancient Woodland #
 - Existing Scrub ^
 - Existing Water Courses ^
 - Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
 - Valleys
 - Ridgelines
 - Core Paths / Aspirational Paths +
 - Rights of Way ++ Claimed - Permissive (2010 Data)
 - Aberdeen City Boundary
 - ★ Listed Building +++
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument +++
 - Landscape Character Areas *
 - Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
 - Landscape & Planning Designations **
 - Green Belt **
 - Green Space Network **
 - Urban Green Space **
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest #
 - Local Nature Reserve #

Source:
 ^ OS Mapping
 + Aberdeen City Council - Core Paths Adopted April 2009
 ++ Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society
 +++ Historic Scotland
 * Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen - No.80, 1996 & South & Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment - No.102, 1998
 ** The Aberdeen Local Development Plan, 2012
 # Scottish Natural Heritage's GIS Plan

Figure 1

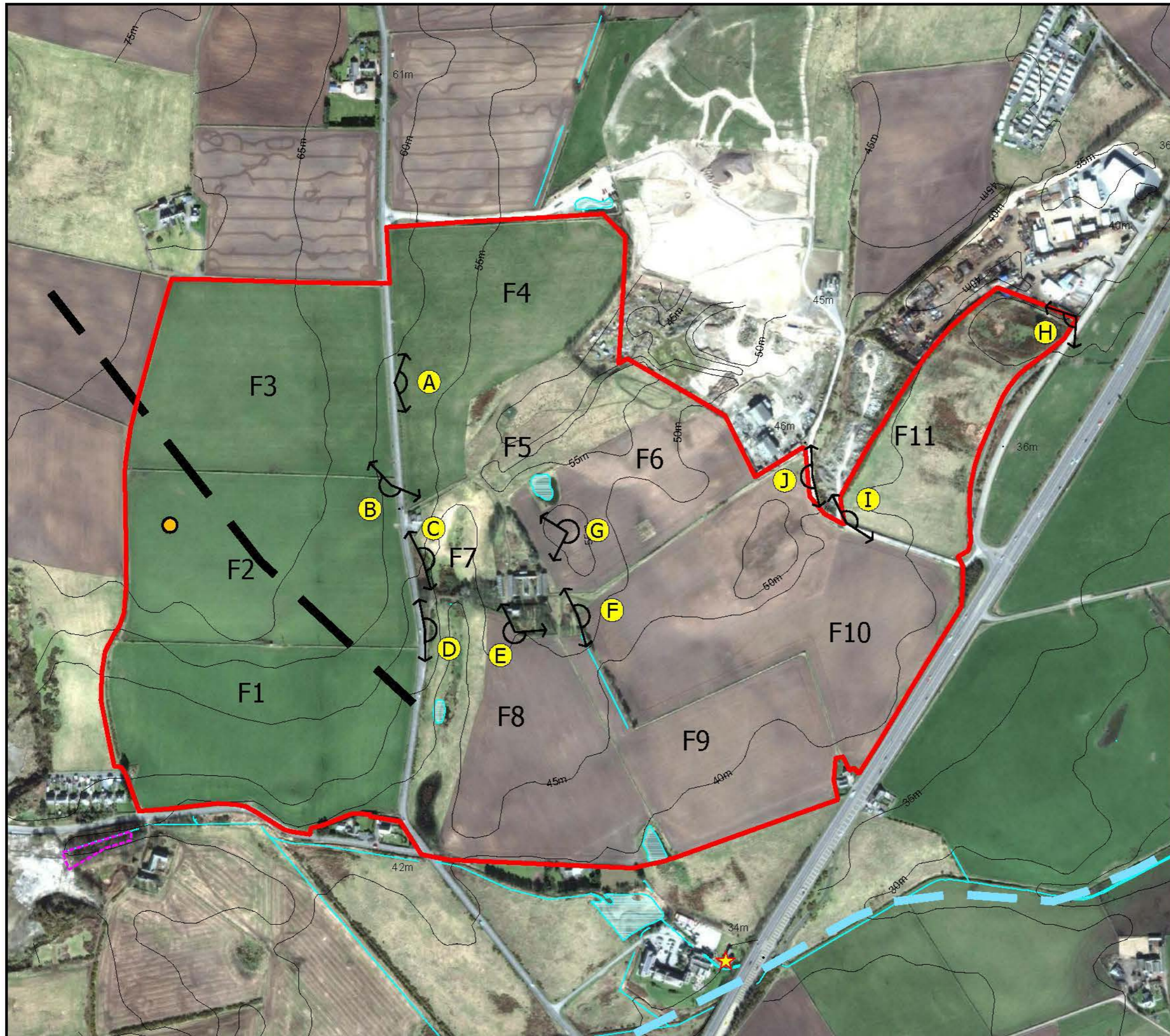
Project: Bridge of Don, Aberdeen
 Drawing Title: Site Context Plan

Date: 29.05.2015	Scale: 1:10,000@A1	Drawn by: MN	Check by: RH
Project No: 18974	Drawing No: L1	Revision: -	

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Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Tree Preservation Order + (2010 Data)
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres Aod)
- Valleys
- Ridgelines
- Existing Water Courses
- Listed Building ++
- Scheduled Ancient Monument ++
- Field Reference Numbers
- Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Appraisal Photographs: A-J)

Source:
 + Aberdeen City Council
 ++ Historic Scotland

Figure 2
 Project
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen
 Drawing Title
Site Appraisal Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
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Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
18974	L3	-	

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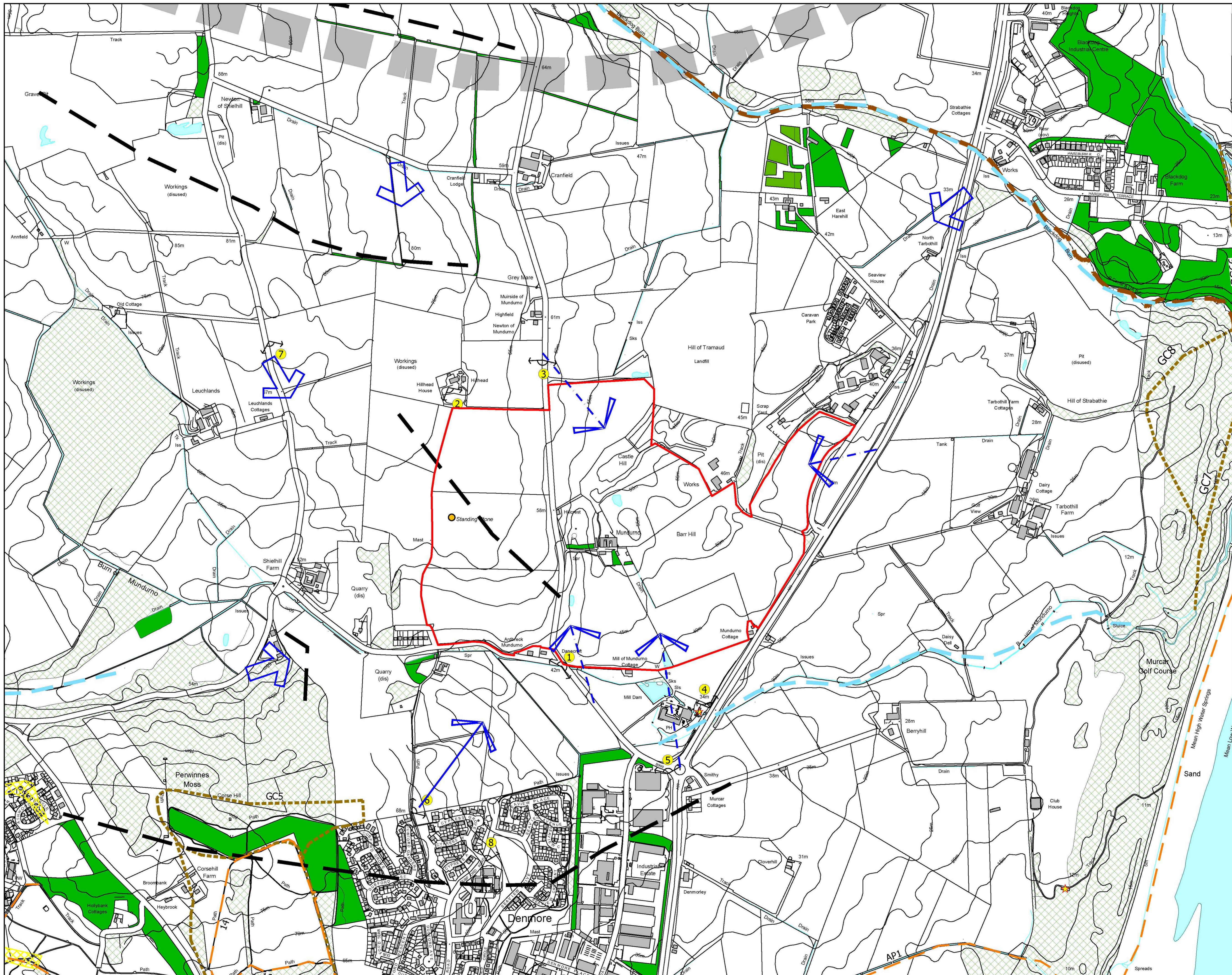
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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
- Ancient Woodland #
- Existing Scrub ^
- Existing Water Courses ^
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Valleys
- Ridgelines
- Core Paths / Aspirational Paths +
- Rights of Way ++ Claimed - Permissive (2010 Data)
- Aberdeen City Boundary
- ★ Listed Building +++
- Scheduled Ancient Monument +++
- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

VISUAL APPRAISAL

- OPEN VIEWS
- PARTIAL VIEWS
- TRUNCATED /NO VIEWS
- Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Context Photographs: 1-8)

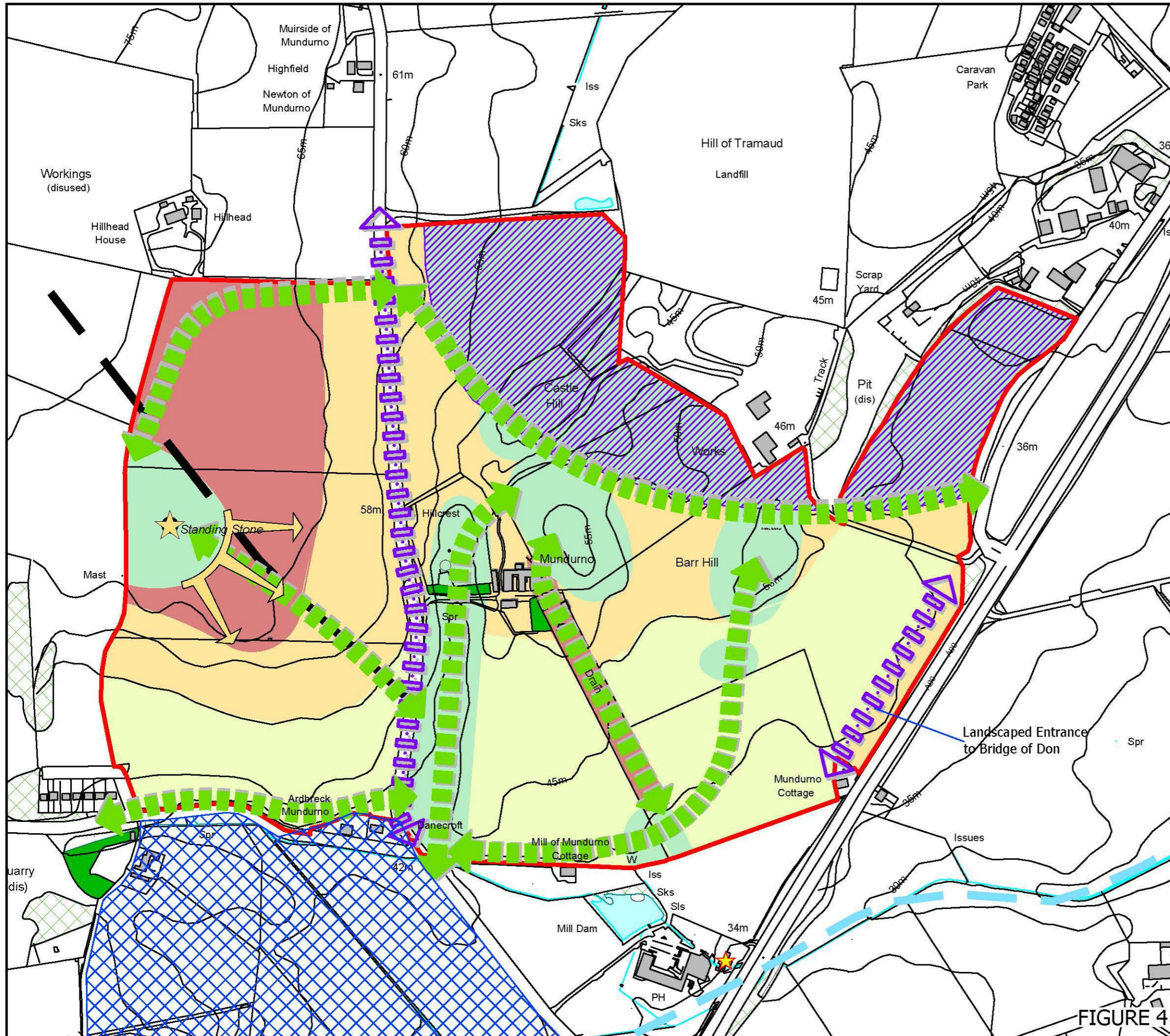
Source:

- ^ OS Mapping
- + Aberdeen City Council- Core Paths Adopted April 2009
- ++ Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society
- +++ Historic Scotland
- # Scottish Natural Heritage's GIS Plan

Figure 3
 Project: Bridge of Don, Aberdeen
 Drawing Title: Visual Appraisal Plan

Date: 29.05.2015 Scale: 1:5,000@A1 Drawing By: MN Check By: RH
 Project No: 18974 Drawing No: L2 Revision: -



















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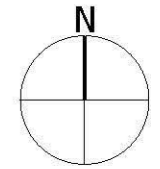


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Revision _____ Date _____ Drn _____ Ckd _____

Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts
-  Existing Scrub
-  Contours/Spot Heights (Metres ACD)
-  Valleys
-  Ridgelines
-  Existing Water Courses
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Listed Building
-  Area for OP25: Dubford area allocated for residential development
- Opportunities**
-  Potential Green Corridor / Green Infrastructure
-  Potential Gateway Planting / Green Link
-  Potential Views from the Site
- Constraints**
-  Areas of Highest Landscape / Visual Constraint - Suitable for Open Space/Woodland Link Creating Backdrop to Development
-  Areas of High Landscape / Visual Constraint - Suitable for Low Density Development With Open Space and Mitigation
-  Areas of Moderate Landscape / Visual Constraint - Suitable for Development that Includes Retention and Reinforcement of Existing Landscape Framework to Create a Sympathetic Development Edge
-  Areas of Low Landscape / Visual Constraint - Suitable for Higher Density Development that Retains and Reinforces the Existing Landscape Framework Where Possible
-  Standoff from Landfill Site



Project
**Bridge of Don
 Aberdeen**
 Drawing Title
Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Date 26.05.2015	Scale 1:5,000@A3	Drawn by ML	Check by RH
Project No 18974	Drawing No L5	Revision C	



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FIGURE 4



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH B

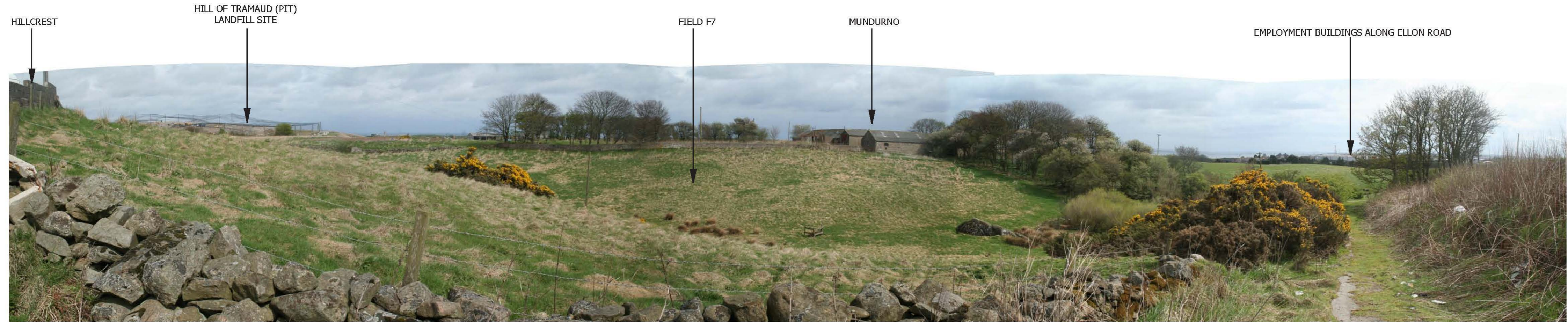
**BRIDGE OF DON
ABERDEEN**

**SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS**

MAY 2010

JOB NUMBER: 18974





SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH C



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D

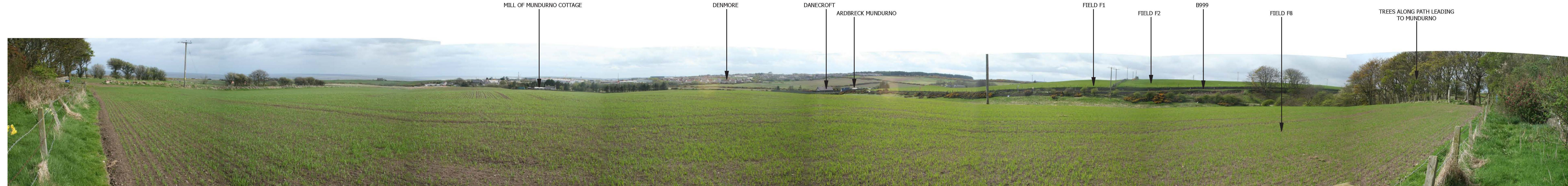
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**SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS**

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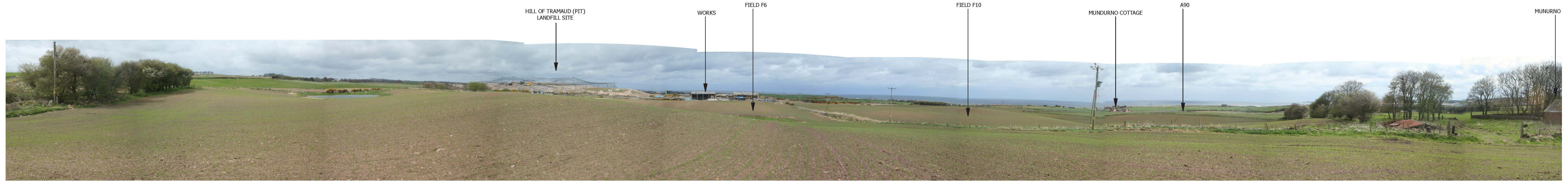
SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH E



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH F

BRIDGE OF DON
 ABERDEEN
 SITE APPRAISAL
 PHOTOGRAPHS
 MAY 2010
 JOB NUMBER: 18974





HILL OF TRAMAUD (PIT)
LANDFILL SITE

WORKS

FIELD F6

FIELD F10

MUNDURNO COTTAGE

A90

MUNURNO

SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH G



ROAD FROM A90 TO EAST HAREHILL

FIELD F11

SCRAP YARD

VEGETATION ALONG SITE BOUNDARY

SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH H

BRIDGE OF DON
ABERDEEN

SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS

MAY 2010

JOB NUMBER: 18974





SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH I



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH J

**BRIDGE OF DON
ABERDEEN**

**SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS**

MAY 2010

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SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW TAKEN FROM B999 LOOKING NORTHWARDS



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW TAKEN FROM HILLHEAD HOUSE LOOKING SOUTH-EASTWARDS TOWARDS THE SITE

**BRIDGE OF DON
ABERDEEN**

**SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS**

MAY 2010

JOB NUMBER: 18974

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SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW TAKEN FROM B999 LOOKING SOUTHWARDS



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW TAKEN FROM LAND ADJACENT TO MILL OF MUNDURNO

**BRIDGE OF DON
ABERDEEN**

**SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS**

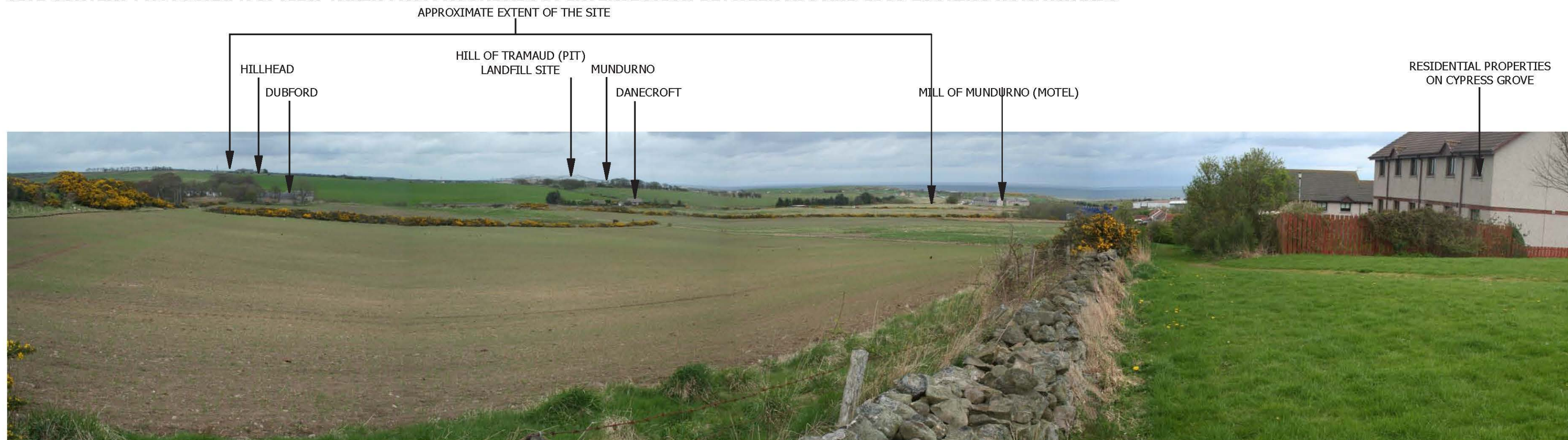
MAY 2010

JOB NUMBER: 18974





SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW TAKEN FROM ROUNDABOUT INTERSECTION BETWEEN A90 AND B999 LOOKING NORTHWARDS



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 6: VIEW TAKEN FROM URBAN EDGE OF DENMORE

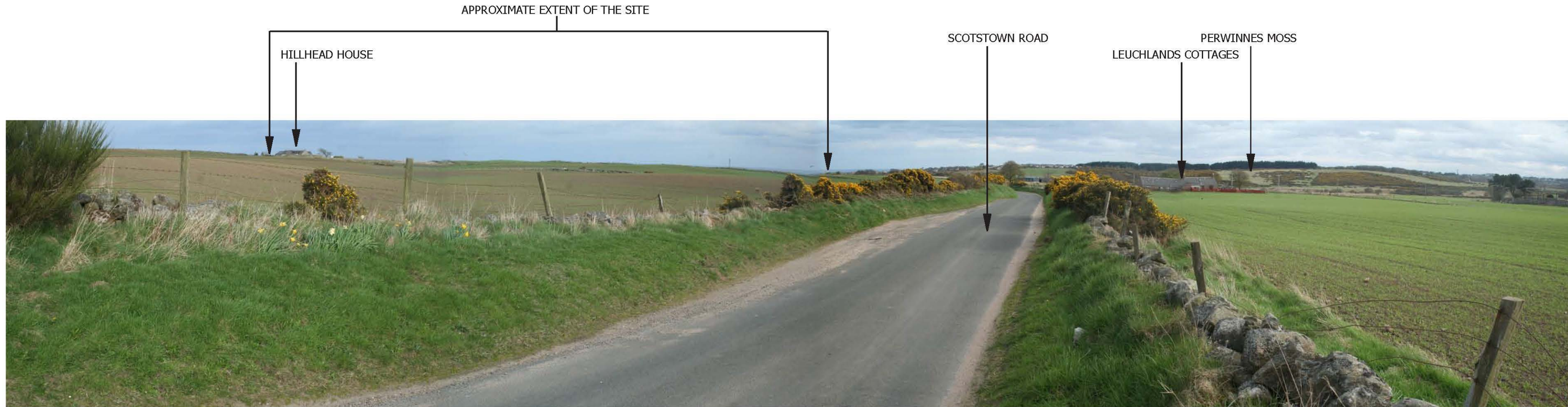
**BRIDGE OF DON
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**SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS**

MAY 2010

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SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 7: TAKEN FROM LOCAL SCOTSTOWN ROAD LOOKING SOUTH-EASTWARDS



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 8: TAKEN FROM DUBFORD DRIVE LOOKING NORTHWARDS TOWARDS THE SITE

**BRIDGE OF DON
ABERDEEN**

**SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS**

MAY 2010

JOB NUMBER: 18974

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Appendix 5

Development Bid Site at Mundurno, Aberdeen

Transport Appraisal

May 2015



FAIRHURST










CONTROL SHEET

CLIENT: Stewart Milne Homes

PROJECT TITLE: Development Bid Site at Mundurno, Aberdeen

REPORT TITLE: Transport Appraisal

PROJECT REFERENCE: 110175 TApp03

Issue & Approval Schedule	ISSUE 3		Name	Signature	Date	
	By		M Peters		21/05/15	
	Checked by		R McDonald		22/05/15	
	Approved by		R McDonald		22/05/15	
Revision Record	Rev.	Date	Status	Description	Signature	
	2	29/05/15	DRAFT	Incorporating Client comments and additional detail	By	
					Checked	
					Approved	
	3	01/06/15	FINAL	Incorporating Client comments	By	
					Checked	
Approved						

This document has been prepared in accordance with procedure OP/P02 of the
Fairhurst Quality and Environmental Management System

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Diagrams

Diagram A: Walking Isochrones

Diagram B: Mundurno Access Strategy

1 Introduction

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This Transport Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in support of a potential development bid site at Mundurno, Aberdeen. The site was omitted from the draft LDP 2016. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the site's accessibility in accordance with transport planning guidance, with a view to demonstrating that it is in a location which will encourage travel in a sustainable manner, reducing car dependency. The report also considers vehicular access to the site and opportunities to improve the surrounding road network in conjunction with its development.
- 1.1.2 This report considers access to the development site by all modes taking into consideration the committed residential development at the adjacent Dubford development site which has Planning Permission for 550 residential units and is currently under construction. Appropriate priority is given to providing for access by non-motorised modes in line with policy objectives to encourage their use, whilst the analysis also focuses on arrangements for vehicular access.

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 The site is located to the north of the existing Bridge of Don area within the Aberdeen City boundary. The site location is hatched in red on Figure 1-1 below, and is shown in the context of the Bridge of Don area. The allocated Dubford development site is represented by the blue hatched area for context. The line of the strategically important Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) which is under construction and due to be opened in winter 2017 is also highlighted.

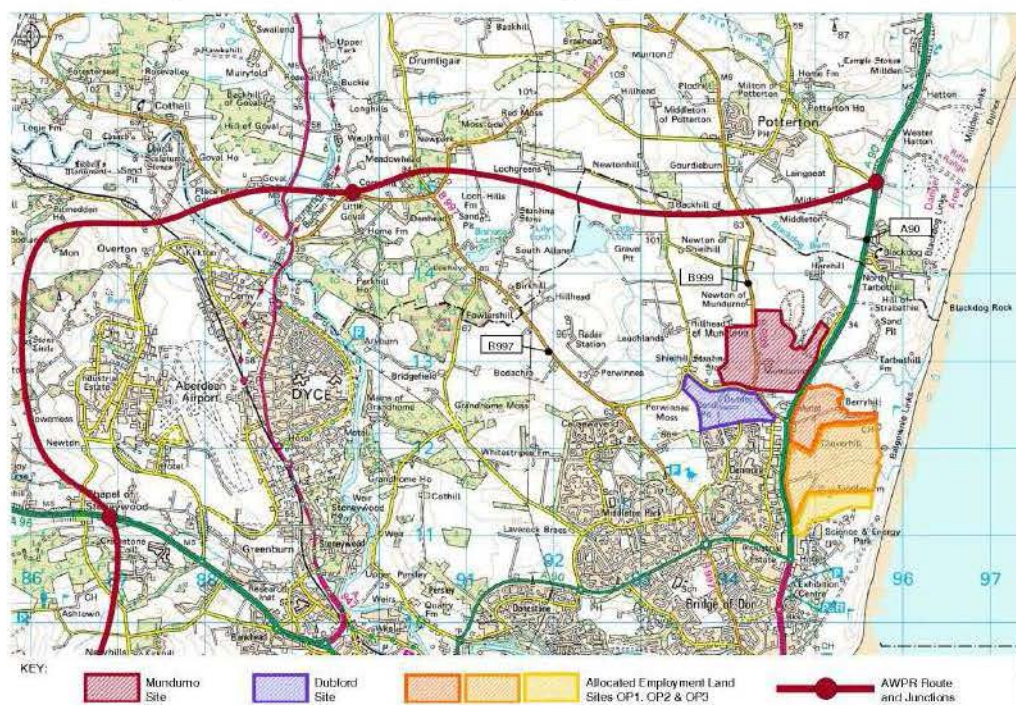


Figure 1-1: Mundurno Site Location

1.2.2 The Mundumo site is bisected by the B999 approximately 500m north of the junction between the A90 and the B999 at Murcar roundabout. It also has frontage on to the A90 to the east, and to Shielhill Road to the south which forms a link between the B999 and the B997.

1.3 Development Proposal

1.3.1 The development site at Mundumo is identified as having capacity to accommodate up to 1000 houses with associated community facilities and potential for a new primary school. The development would represent a natural extension to the northern urban settlement boundary of Aberdeen, expanding north from the Dubford development.

1.4 Planning Context

1.4.1 The site at Mundumo is located within an expansion area to the north of Bridge of Don, where there are plans for significant levels of commercial development. The draft LDP 2016 comments that *'land allocations have been made to the area north of the River Don to support the Energetica Corridor promoted by ACSEF. This seeks to improve the economy and promote the energy industry along the Aberdeen to Peterhead growth corridor'*.

1.4.2 Energetica is a 30 mile development corridor extending from Bridge of Don north to Peterhead, and west to Aberdeen International Airport. Energetica commenced in 2008 and over a 25 year period a world class development corridor is planned, offering investment and growth opportunities for energy, engineering and technology organisations of all sizes.

1.4.3 The current LDP 2012 allocates land on the east side of the A90, close to the Mundumo site, for employment uses (OP2, OP3, and OP4). These land parcels are also allocated for employment use within the draft LDP 2016 (now OP1, OP2 and OP3). Planning permission has been granted for employment uses within the land, notably the 100 acre development known as 'The Core'.

1.4.4 Allocating land at Mundumo for residential development, within the Energetica corridor, would be of clear benefit providing a complementary land allocation to the nearby employment zones. It would represent good land use planning, allocating residential development close to employment zones where the opportunity to create sustainable transport links could be explored.

1.4.5 Major strategic transport infrastructure projects are under construction to the north of Aberdeen close to the Mundumo site which will benefit the area with a view to accommodating planned expansion. The Draft LDP 2016 comments that *'The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), Third Don Crossing and Haudagain roundabout improvements will bring improvements to this area. These are all scheduled for completion during the lifetime of this Plan'*.

1.4.6 The Mundumo site is located to the north of the approved residential development site at Dubford (planning reference 120723), which is under construction and will extend the urban extents of Aberdeen north towards the Mundumo site boundary on Shielhill Road. A further planning application (reference 131851) is pending for a 99

house development on land which lies between the Dubford (ref: 120723) application site and the B999. Both of these land parcels made up the OP25 Dubford allocation in the current LDP, and are included in the draft LDP 2016 as site reference OP10.

1.4.7 The Dubford development (ref: 120723) will take vehicular access from Shielhill Road. A number of infrastructure improvements are to be implemented in connection with the Dubford development (some of which have already been implemented). Measures that are particularly relevant to the Mundurno site include:

- The speed limit on Shielhill Road is to be reduced to 40mph between the B999 and Leuchlands Road (U019C).
- The developer is required to make forward visibility improvements at two locations on Shielhill Road.
- A developer contribution is to be made to ACC to enable them to implement forward visibility improvements at a third location on Shielhill Road, which requires land from the Mundurno site.
- Improvements are required at the B999 / Shielhill Road junction (developer contributions to be made to enable ACC to undertake the works due to land constraints).
- Improvements are required to the B997 / Shielhill Road junction.
- Cycle track to be formed on Scotstown Road (developer contributions to be made to enable ACC to undertake the works).
- Existing bus services are to be extended north from Dubford Road in to the Dubford site, close to the Mundurno site boundary. This is to be controlled by a bus gate at the south end of the Dubford development restricting access to buses and bicycles only.

1.4.8 In connection with the Dubford development improvements have already been made to the B999 / Denmore Road junction through widening on the B999 and provision of a ghost island arrangement, though the Dubford Transport Assessment concluded that a ghost island would not provide sufficient capacity to accommodate peak hour junction flows.

1.4.9 The separate planning application for 99 houses within the LDP 2012 OP25 site (planning reference 131851) is pending, and there is a presumption that it will be approved for residential development given that it has an allocation in the current and emerging LDPs. The planning application for the development indicates a vehicular access point onto the B999, and internal roads and footway connections to the larger Dubford development site to the west. The site layout also includes a footway within the site running parallel to the B999 from Shielhill Road to a point immediately west of Denmore Road.

1.4.10 The Transport Assessment proposed in connection with planning reference 131851 suggests that the speed limit on the B999 should be reduced to 30mph in connection

with residential development along its frontage. The B999 is currently subject to the national speed limit, which is 60mph for cars.

2 Transport Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Transport Planning Policy

2.1.1 The National Policy Context is principally defined by 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP), and Scottish Planning Advice Note 75 (PAN 75) 'Planning for Transport'. The Scottish Government documents 'Transport Assessment Guidance' and 'Designing Streets' are also of relevance.

2.1.2 The Scottish Government's 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP) issued in June 2014 replaces SPP (2010) and Designing Places (2001). SPP identifies the Scottish Government's overarching aim to increase sustainable economic growth within Scotland.

2.1.3 SPP revolves around the principle policies – sustainability and placemaking. In considering how planning should support the vision, the document outlines the key outcomes that developments need to contribute to:

- *'A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and creation of well-designed, sustainable places.'*
- *A low carbon place – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.*
- *A natural, resilient place – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets, and facilitating their use.*
- *A more connected place – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.'*

2.1.4 The '*Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel*' section of SPP stresses the importance of efficient transport connections within Scotland and to international markets, and the crucial role that planning plays to improving such infrastructure. The section goes on to identify within paragraph 270 that the planning system should support developments that:

- *'optimise the use of existing infrastructure;*
- *reduce the need to travel;*
- *provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport;*
- *enable the integration of transport modes'.*

2.1.5 Paragraph 273 notes that *'the spatial strategies set out in plans should support development in locations that allow walkable access to local amenities and are also accessible by cycling and public transport. Plans should identify active travel networks and promote opportunities for travel by more sustainable modes in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transport, cars.'*

- 2.1.6 SPP notes in paragraph 287 that *'Planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:*
- *direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;*
 - *access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400m'*
- 2.1.7 PAN75 identifies the need for the integration of land use planning with transport, taking into account policies on economic growth, education, health and the objective of a more inclusive society.
- 2.1.8 PAN75 identifies in Annex B the undernoted thresholds:
- *'For accessibility of public transport the recommended guidelines are less than 400m to bus services;*
- 2.1.9 PAN 75 indicates that *'Travel Plans are documents that set out a package of positive and complementary measures, for the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns for a specific development.'* It further states that *'their ability and success in influencing travel patterns is dependent upon the commitment of the developer and occupier of a development.'* For residential land uses, PAN 75 notes at paragraph 43 that *'travel plans may set out measures which will be used as an incentive to house purchasers to use non-car travel modes, but setting targets is generally not practicable for this land use. Sustainability in housing should come through design in relation to walking, cycling and public transport networks'.*
- 2.1.10 Transport Assessment Guidance (TAG) has been published by Transport Scotland to guide the preparation of Transport Assessments (TA) for development proposals in Scotland. Paragraph 1.8 notes that the TA process *'is directed towards successful delivery of development-related transport measures aimed at achieving sustainable transport outcomes.'* It further notes that the *'process incorporates scoping, transport assessment and implementation including travel plans and monitoring.'*
- 2.1.11 TAG identifies that journey times of up to 20-30 mins are appropriate for walking and 30-40 mins for cycling.
- 2.1.12 'Designing Streets' sets out Scottish Government policy to be followed in designing and approving the layout of settlements. The Scottish Government's policy emphasises that street design should meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in Designing Places. The six qualities and key considerations are summarised as follows:
- Distinctive – street design should respond to local context to deliver places that are distinctive
 - Safe and pleasant – streets should be designed to be safe and attractive place

- Easy to move around – streets should be easy to move around for all users and connect well to existing networks
- Welcoming – streets layout and detail should encourage positive interaction for all members of the community
- Adaptable – street networks should be designed to accommodate future adaptation
- Resource Efficient – street design should consider orientation, the integration of sustainable drainage and use attractive, durable materials that can be easily maintained.

2.2 Regional Policy

2.2.1 Regional Policy for the proposed development is largely defined by:

- Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (March 2014)
- NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (June 2008)

2.2.2 The Approved Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) identifies 'four strategic growth areas' (SGA) which will be the focus of development in the area up to 2035. The SDP notes, '*The strategic growth areas are centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes.*' The SDP also aims to '*make the most efficient use of the transport network, reducing the need for people to travel and making sure that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices.*'

2.2.3 The Strategic Development Plan identifies the undemoted objectives:-

- '*To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses*
- '*To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and business to move to.*
- '*To make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive choices.*'

2.2.4 The SDP endorses the role of 'Sustainable mixed communities' in making sure that '*new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.*'

2.2.5 The NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Finalised Strategy 2021 (RTS) identifies within its four Strategic Objectives the requirements to:

- *‘to enhance and exploit the North East’s competitive economic advantages, and to reduce the impacts of peripherality*
- *enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited*
- *support transport integration and a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east’*

2.2.6 In identifying an ‘Internal Connections Strategy’ the RTS sets out key initiatives aimed at improving transport infrastructure within the City and Shire. These are focussed on improvements to public transport aimed at delivering economic, environmental and social inclusion benefits, with construction of the Western Peripheral Route facilitating the delivery of complementary transport measures as well as contributing *‘to the economy and sustainable communities across the north east’*. It also sets out a detailed programme for the delivery of additional park and ride sites and improved bus services aimed at maximising the identified benefits of reducing congestion, improving air quality and broadening travel choices.

2.3 Local Policy

2.3.1 Local Policy that can be used to guide the development is largely defined by:

- The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan – (February 2012)
- Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (March 2008)
- ALDP Supplementary Guidance ‘Transport and Accessibility’ – (March 2012)

2.3.2 The Adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) outlines proposals for development and land use for a period of 10 years from adoption. It sets out the strategic policies and proposals for promoting sustainable growth of the city over a 10-20 year period.

2.3.3 The LDP also sets out specific policies for ensuring that new developments contribute to delivering sustainable communities within the city. A number of the policies identified within the current LDP would remain relevant to the emerging LDP.

- Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions
- Policy T2 – Managing the Traffic Impact of Development
- Policy D3 – Sustainable and Active Travel

2.3.4 The Local Transport Strategy 2008 – 2012 (LTS) still forms the current Transport Strategy for Aberdeen and outlines the policies and interventions adopted by ACC to guide the planning and improvement of the local road network over a five-year period.

2.3.5 The LTS sets out five high level aims, as follows:

- *'Support and Contribute to a thriving economy for Aberdeen and its region*
- *Ensure a safe and secure transport system*
- *Minimise the environmental impact of transport on our community and the wider world*
- *Ensure the transport system is integrated and accessible to all*
- *Ensure that transport policies integrate with and support sustainable development, health and social inclusion policies'.*

2.3.6 A number of specific objectives detailed within the LTS also support the previously listed aims. Key considerations among these objectives include:

- *'minimise and improve reliability of journey times for people and goods through Aberdeen's transport networks*
- *improve the condition of road, footway and cycle road network*
- *increase the share of travel by the most sustainable modes to promote economic growth without the associated traffic growth*
- *continue to reduce road casualties*
- *reduce carbon emissions from road transport*
- *improve accessibility (network and cost) to jobs and services to support social inclusion*
- *to facilitate and support land use development adjacent to sustainable transport corridors and nodes*
- *to promote healthy living by encouraging safe walking and cycling'*

2.3.7 The LDP Supplementary Guidance 'Transport and Accessibility' (March 2012) advocates that a Travel Plan should 'be site specific and measures and objectives should reflect the individual characteristics of the site as well as the trips likely to be generated by that development.' The document further highlights that '*Residential Travel Plans should outline measures aimed at influencing the travel behaviour of new home owners to, from and within the development. These could include:*

- *Ensuring the development is well served by safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes;*
- *Entering into negotiations with bus operators to ensure that the development can be served by public transport if it is not at present;*
- *Distributing a welcome pack to new residents with maps showing local walking and cycling routes and local public transport maps, leaflets and timetables;*

- *Providing a car club vehicle(s) for residents to use;*
- *Establishing a residents' car share scheme;*
- *Providing residents with 1 months' free public transport tickets or a voucher for discounted walking or cycling goods'.*

3 Site Accessibility Review

3.1 The Site

3.1.1 The site at Mundurno lies to the north of Bridge of Don to the north of Aberdeen. It has frontage on to the A90, the B999, and Shielhill Road offering a number of access options and potential to link the site to surrounding areas. The site is located immediately north of land that is allocated for residential development at Dubford, and is located within the Energetica Corridor where extensive employment land uses are planned nearby.

3.2 Existing Road Network

3.2.1 The development site is bisected by the B999 from north to south. The B999 is rural in nature and subject to the national speed limit. It provides local connections northwards to Tarves via Potterton and makes a number of connections to other local roads in the area. To the east the B999 connects to the A90 at Murcar Roundabout.

3.2.2 The B999 connects to Shielhill Road on the boundary of the Mundurno site. Shielhill Road provides local connections westwards from the B999 via a priority junction at Danecroft. It connects with B997 Scotstown Road to the west at a priority junction which provides onward connections south to The Parkway and west towards the A947 and Dyce. Part of Shielhill Road is now subject to a 40mph speed restriction in connection with development at Dubford. The whole route is due to become 40mph and forward visibility improvements form part of the committed Dubford requirements. The Mundurno development has frontage on to Shielhill Road.

3.2.3 The B999 carries rat-running commuter traffic at peak periods as they access Aberdeen from the wider rural catchment to the north, avoiding the A90.

3.2.4 To the east the Mundurno site has frontage on to the A90 which forms part of the strategic Trunk Road network. The A90 provides the main road link between Aberdeen and numerous towns in the North East. It is a dual carriageway subject to a 70mph speed limit.

3.3 Pedestrian and Cycling Networks

3.3.1 On the eastern site boundary the A90 has a narrow surfaced footway which runs adjacent to the southbound side of the carriageway extending from the site boundary south to Murcar Roundabout. There is an existing pedestrian crossing on the A90 at the northern end of the Mundurno boundary, encompassing dropped kerbs and a refuge island. The pedestrian crossing and footway adjacent to the A90 carriageway are lightly used which reflects that there is currently a low level of development over that section of road.

3.3.2 To the west of the Mundurno site the B999 is rural in nature and does not currently comprise footways to the west of Denmore Road. However a residential development is planned on the west side of the B999 which is expected to lead to footway

provision being extended from Denmore Road to Shielhill Road, where the Mundurno site boundary also exists.

- 3.3.3 The Dubford development is under construction with access from Shielhill Road. It will provide pedestrian and cycle infrastructure linking the Mundurno site boundary at Shielhill Road to the existing residential neighbourhood around Dubford Road, and through to industrial premises formed around Denmore Road. The Dubford site layout indicates that it will be a highly permeable development for pedestrians, including a segregated path running north – south from Shielhill Road to Dubford Rise, and a further segregated path running east – west through the site. Cyclists will also be permitted to pass through to Dubford Road, whereas cars will not be able to do so.
- 3.3.4 To the south east of the Mundurno site there are local traffic free cycle routes on both sides of the A90 Ellon Road from Murcur Roundabout south to the AECC roundabout, offering a connection to the wider Bridge of Don area.
- 3.3.5 The existing pedestrian / cycle infrastructure, and infrastructure that will shortly be provided, offer the Mundurno site good pedestrian connectivity from the south and eastern frontages. External pedestrian and cyclist movements from the site would principally be expected in a southern and eastern direction towards established urban areas and future employment zones.
- 3.3.6 Diagram A in the Appendix illustrates a 1600m walking catchment area, as referenced in PAN 75. A 2400m walking catchment is also shown, representing a 30 minute catchment as noted within TAG. The catchment areas have been measured utilising existing and future pedestrian routes from the centre of the Mundurno site. The isochrones indicate that a number of local amenities and employment zones are located within a reasonable walking distance from the Mundurno site. This includes existing industrial and retail premises on Denmore Road, and future employment land to the east of the A90.
- 3.3.7 The site is capable of generating pedestrian trips for short journeys due to its location, which meets with transport planning policy. Measures could be introduced in connection with development at Mundurno to further enhance pedestrian infrastructure and encourage walking and cycling trips.

3.4 Public Transport Networks

- 3.4.1 Existing bus stops close to the site include one located at the north end of Dubford Road where there is a bus turning circle. The stop is served by First Group Services 4 and X40.



Dubford Turning Circle with Mundurno Development and B999 Beyond

- 3.4.2 Service 4 operates on an hourly basis connecting Dubford to the City Centre. Service X40 operates every 15 minutes and links Dubford to Kingswells via the City Centre. It provides an excellent link to major business parks to the west of Aberdeen.
- 3.4.3 In connection with development at Dubford, a public transport link is to be formed to allow buses to enter the site from the turning circle at Dubford Road. Buses will thereafter be able to permeate in to the Dubford site to a similar turning facility further north close to the Mundurno site boundary at Shielhill Road. Thus future bus stops will be formed closer to the Mundurno site boundary.
- 3.4.4 The B999 bisects the site and is a bus route, forming part of the Stagecoach Service 290 and 291 routes. These services connect Methlick to the City Centre via the B999 and Denmore Road, approximately every hour. The closest available bus stops to the Mundurno site are located on Denmore Road.
- 3.4.5 The A90 adjacent to the site is also a bus route, carrying numerous bus services which connect north eastern towns to Aberdeen. There are bus stops located on the A90 approximately 700m north from the Mundurno site boundary.

3.5 Committed Transport Infrastructure

- 3.5.1 Strategic transport infrastructure is under construction including the Third Don Crossing (due to be complete in winter 2015) and the AWPR (due to be complete in winter 2017). The draft LDP 2016 acknowledges that these will bring improvements to the area. The AWPR will be a new orbital route around the west side of Aberdeen which will provide a much needed fast and safe route which links with the existing

major roads and key locations such as the airport, Park and Ride sites and the major industrial estates around the City. One of the key benefits of the AWPR is the expected traffic reduction on various minor orbital routes around northern and western Aberdeen.

- 3.5.2 Traffic movements around the Mundumo site are expected to be fundamentally influenced by the strategic road infrastructure. Studies have projected a reduction in daily traffic levels at Bridge of Don by as much as 18%, which will improve the efficiency of the road network all around, particularly the A90 corridor. There is also potential for reduced traffic flow on the B999 as drivers divert to the AWPR. The reduced traffic flows would allow capacity to be released for new development at Mundumo.
- 3.5.3 The construction of the AWPR around the city offers an exceptional development opportunity at Mundumo. The AWPR will include a grade separated interchange only around 1.5km away at Blackdog, which will offer easy access to destinations around the periphery of the City. Upon opening of the AWPR it is anticipated that a high percentage of traffic from the Mundumo site would travel to and from the north to the AWPR on the detrunked A90. Traffic from the Dubford development would also be expected to distribute in similar fashion.

4 Site Access Strategy

4.1 Road Access

- 4.1.1 Once the AWPR is open the existing section of the A90 south from Blackdog, past the Mundurno site, is to be detrunked and become a local road. As development progresses northwards from Aberdeen on both sides of the road it would be logical to consider a reduction in the speed limit to 40 or 50mph, respecting the urbanised environment. Thus in connection with development at Mundurno a reduced speed limit on the A90 would be envisaged post AWPR.
- 4.1.2 Primary vehicular access to the Mundurno land would be taken from the detrunked A90. The Mundurno land has frontage on to the A90 for approximately 400m, which is sufficient to allow construction of a new roundabout utilising only land from within the site and highway boundary.
- 4.1.3 There are many benefits to forming a new roundabout on the A90 giving access to the Mundurno land. These include:
- Within the site a link road would be formed between the new A90 roundabout and the B999 providing access to land parcels but also providing an alternative route towards the A90 for traffic using the B999. This would bring relief to junctions on the B999 including those with Shielhill Road, Denmore Road and Murcar Roundabout. The Transport Assessment prepared for the Dubford development concluded that the B999 / Denmore Road junction would still operate over capacity after the recent ghost island improvements. Providing an alternative route to the A90 for through traffic would offer traffic relief and improve the operation of existing junctions.
 - Providing a roundabout would allow closure of the existing at-grade junction between the A90 / Resser Way to the immediate north of where the roundabout would be located. The junction has a poor safety record. In the 8 year period from 2006 – 2013 records indicate that there have been 1 slight injury accident, 3 serious injury accidents, and 1 fatal accident at the junction. The junction could be closed, with the road realigned to meet the internal Mundurno road network and ultimately a safer connection to the new roundabout.
 - Providing a roundabout could allow closure of the central reserve at various at-grade junctions between the A90 and private accesses to individual dwellings / farms. A roundabout would allow the accesses to the properties to operate on a safer left in / left out basis, or in some cases may allow a direct connection to the new roundabout.
 - Providing a roundabout would allow enhanced pedestrian crossing provision to be made and would encourage lower vehicle speeds, in comparison to the current arrangement whereby pedestrians cross the 70mph dual carriageway.



Existing A90 / Resser Way At-Grade Junction Could be Stopped Up

- 4.1.4 The Mundurno site also has frontage on to the B999 and Shielhill Road, which offers additional access options to the development land. The B999 bisects the site and it is envisaged that vehicle speeds could be lowered to 30mph passing through the site and continuing to Murcar Roundabout. Development on the north side of Shielhill Road could also lead to a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph on that road.
- 4.1.5 The Dubford development takes access from Shielhill Road. The Mundurno land could also take access from Shielhill Road providing a connection between the land parcels. Such a connection could allow residents within the Dubford land to distribute to the AWPR via the Mundurno site and new A90 roundabout, thereby relieving pressure on Murcar Roundabout and the B999 / Denmore Road junction.
- 4.2 Pedestrian / Cycle Access**
- 4.2.1 Pedestrian and bicycle links could be developed from each of the roads that the site fronts on to, in conjunction with reduced speed limits. On the east side of the A90 between the site access roundabout and Murcar Roundabout improvements could be made to the existing narrow surfaced path that currently exists. This would provide a link to future employment land that is allocated in the draft LDP 2016.
- 4.2.2 On the B999 footway improvements are proposed between Denmore Road and Shielhill Road in connection with development of a 99 house site. Alternative footway / cycleway improvements could be considered on the route in the event that they are not delivered by the OP10 site (draft LDP 2016).
- 4.2.3 Pedestrian and cycle links could also be developed up to the Shielhill Road boundary, from where they could link to similar provision within the Dubford development. This would allow onward connections to Dubford Road and through to Denmore Road.

4.3 Public Transport Access

- 4.3.1 First Services 4 and X40 are to be extended in to the Dubford site via a bus gate leading from the existing turning circle on Dubford Road. The services could extend further north into the Mundurno development by crossing Shielhill Road.
- 4.3.2 Existing Stagecoach services 290 and 291 would have the option of routeing via their existing route towards Mundumo on Denmore Road and the B999, or alternatively via Greenbrae Drive and Dubford Road, following the route of First Service X40. In order to provide a more balanced service to both east and west sides of the Mundumo development Stagecoach services could operate in the reverse direction to First services.
- 4.3.3 In both cases, bus services passing through the Dubford site and in to the Mundumo land would have an option of either returning back towards Aberdeen City via the Dubford site or Denmore Road, or passing through the Mundurno land on to the A90 via the new roundabout. From the A90 there could be an opportunity to link services to future employment opportunities on the east side of the A90, accessed via Murcar Roundabout.
- 4.3.4 A further option that could be considered would be to restrict use of the existing section of the B999 between Denmore Road and Shielhill Road to bus, bicycle and local access only. Such a measure could be beneficial in reducing the through flow of traffic on the B999 helping it to become urbanised. Formation of a link road from Shielhill Road through the Mundurno land and out to the A90 would provide the alternative route required to allow consideration to be given to restricted use of the B999. Diagram B in the Appendix illustrates this strategy. Such detail could be considered within a Transport Assessment.

4.4 Other Potential Road Improvements

- 4.4.1 It is noteworthy that the Section 75 Agreement for the Dubford site requires the developer to make a contribution to ACC towards forward visibility improvements on the Shielhill Road corridor involving land from the Mundurno site. If the site at Mundumo were to be allocated for development then any land required from the Mundumo holding to make the visibility improvement could be made available.
- 4.4.2 Additionally, the Dubford developer is also required by Section 75 Agreement to make a contribution towards improvements to the B999 / Shielhill Road junction. The Transport Assessment prepared in support of the Dubford development acknowledged that the land required to make safety improvements to the junction so as to accommodate the Dubford development traffic was not in the control of the developer or Aberdeen City Council.
- 4.4.3 Land from the Mundurno development could be utilised to make appropriate improvements to the B999 / Shielhill Road junction, and allocation of the Mundurno site would allow the necessary road changes to be made. The B999 could be realigned to the east through the Mundumo land in order to improve visibility for vehicles exiting Shielhill Road. Alternatively Shielhill Road could be realigned to the

north of Danecroft which would offer improvements to forward visibility on Shielhill Road and the visibility / geometry of the B999 / Shielhill Road junction.

5 Conclusions

5.1 General Accessibility

- 5.1.1 Stewart Milne Homes are bidding to have land at Mundurno allocated in the Local Development Plan 2016 for development of up to 1,000 houses and associated amenities. The site is considered to be in an accessible location where sustainable transport modes of travel can be promoted. The site benefits from frontage on to three roads offering options for access by various modes of transport.
- 5.1.2 The site is located on the northern edge of Aberdeen's settlement boundary. Land immediately adjacent to the site has been allocated for residential development and has received planning permission, which emphasises that the general site location is suitable for residential development. The site lies within the Energetica Corridor, where a 30 mile long world class development corridor is planned, offering investment and growth opportunities for energy, engineering and technology organisations of all sizes. The allocation of residential land close to such an extensive employment zone is considered to represent good land use planning allowing sustainable modes of travel to be planned between complimentary land uses, thereby reducing car dependency.
- 5.1.3 Extensive employment land is allocated in the LDP 2012 on the east side of the A90 within close proximity to the Mundurno site, and it has retained an allocation in the draft LDP 2016. Much of the employment site is within a reasonable walking distance from the Mundurno site, as is existing employment and retail land uses at Denmore Road.
- 5.1.4 The Mundurno development site is extremely well placed to benefit from the AWPR, being located close to the Blackdog Junction. Not only does the site offer easy access to the AWPR, but it can improve access to the strategic route from surrounding areas also.

5.2 Site Access

- 5.2.1 The site has access potential on to the A90, the B999 and Shielhill Road. An access strategy incorporating a primary access on to the A90 can be achieved by means of a new roundabout formed using SMH and highway land. There are many benefits to be derived from construction of a new roundabout on the A90. In addition to providing site access, a link road could be formed through the site to the B999 offering an alternative means for traffic on the B999 to reach the A90. By extension traffic from the Dubford development site could also utilise the route to gain access to the AWPR, thereby relieving the existing Murcar Roundabout. A new roundabout on the A90 would also have many safety advantages, allowing closure of an existing junction which has a poor safety record, and enabling safer access to private properties and safer pedestrian crossing movements.

5.3 Pedestrian and Cyclist access

- 5.3.1 Pedestrian and cyclist access can also be gained from the A90, B999 and Shielhill Road. It is anticipated that the speed limit on each road would be reduced in accordance with residential development plans, to the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5.3.2 Improvements could be made to the existing footway on the east side of the A90 in order to enhance connections to emerging employment land at Murcar. Additionally, improvements could be made to the B999 corridor to allow a connection to be made from the site to Denmore Road. Plans for a footway on that stretch of road have already been made via a planning application for residential development on allocated residential land. Footway / cycleway links could also be provided from the site to Shielhill Road, which would allow a connection to be made to footway / cycleway routes within the adjacent Dubford land.

5.4 Public Transport Access

- 5.4.1 The B999 passes through the site and is a bus route. Additionally, bus services are to be extended in to the adjacent Dubford site. There would be opportunities to extend services from Dubford and the B999 in to the Mundurno land. They could return back through their respective routes, or could continue to the new A90 roundabout from where future connections to emerging employment land on the east side of the A90 would be available.
- 5.4.2 The site is accessible by public transport, in accordance with transport planning policy.

5.5 Potential Road Improvements

- 5.5.1 A requirement for road safety improvements to the Shielhill Road corridor and the B999 / Shielhill Road junction have previously been identified and there is an obligation for improvements to be made in connection with an adjacent development. Land from the Mundurno site could be utilised to make the necessary safety improvements, through allocation for development.

5.6 Conclusions

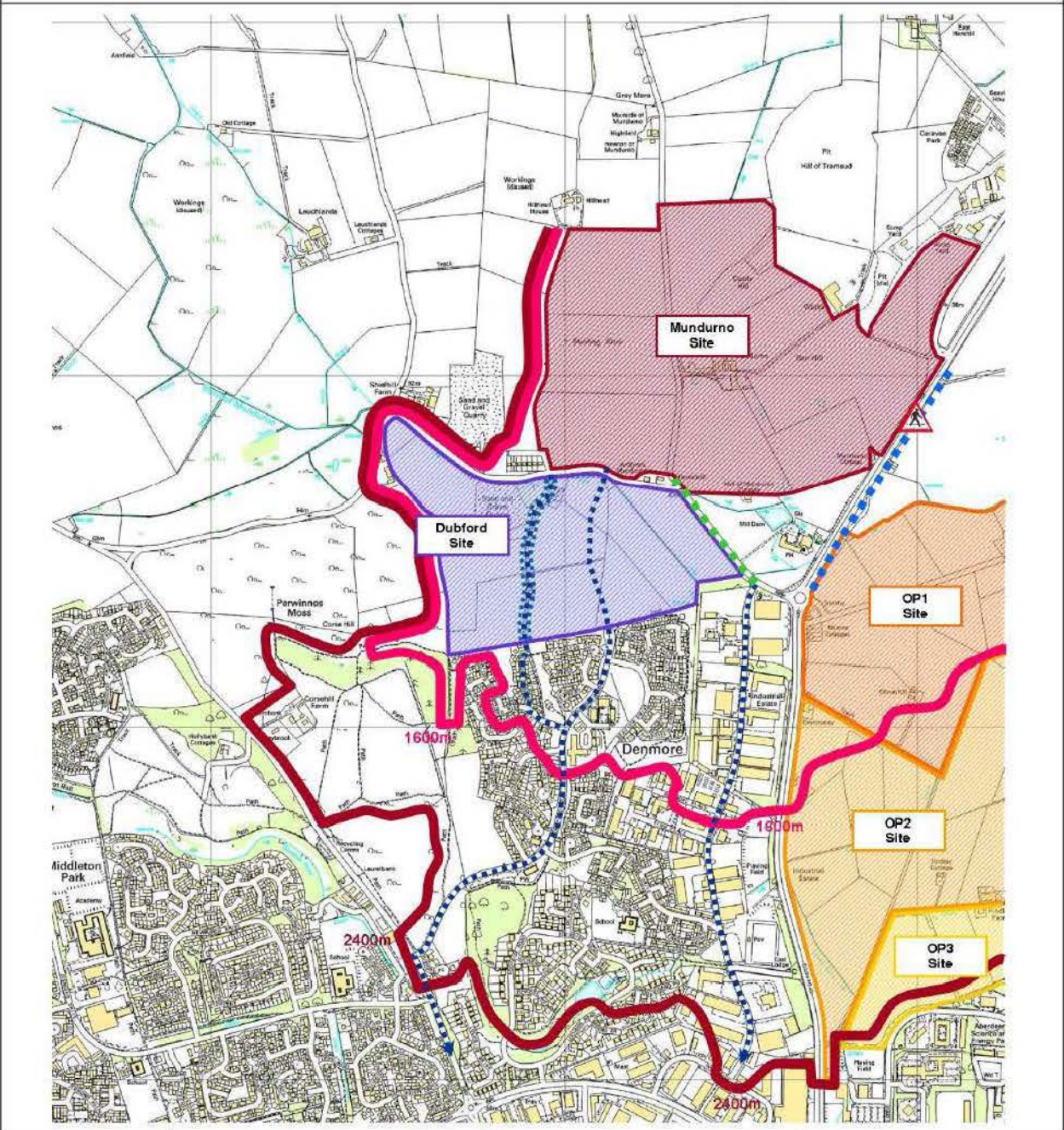
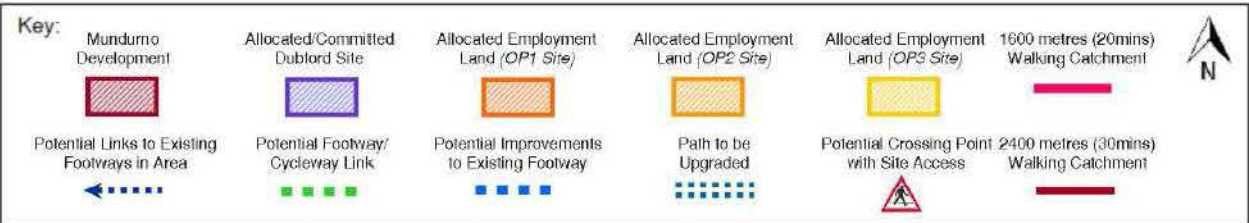
- 5.6.1 This report considers access to the Mundurno development by all modes of transport, including the implications for the access strategy for the development taking into full consideration the adjacent Dubford development which is currently under construction.
- 5.6.2 The addition of housing at Mundurno will assist in promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel and will not only optimise the use of existing infrastructure, but improve upon it. With continued expansion and allocations of employment development at neighbouring sites such as Murcar and Berryhill, the proposed residential development at Mundurno will help to reduce car dependency.


- 5.6.3 There are traffic and transport benefits associated with allocation of the Mundurno land for residential development. The site meets, or can be made to meet, with transport planning policy.

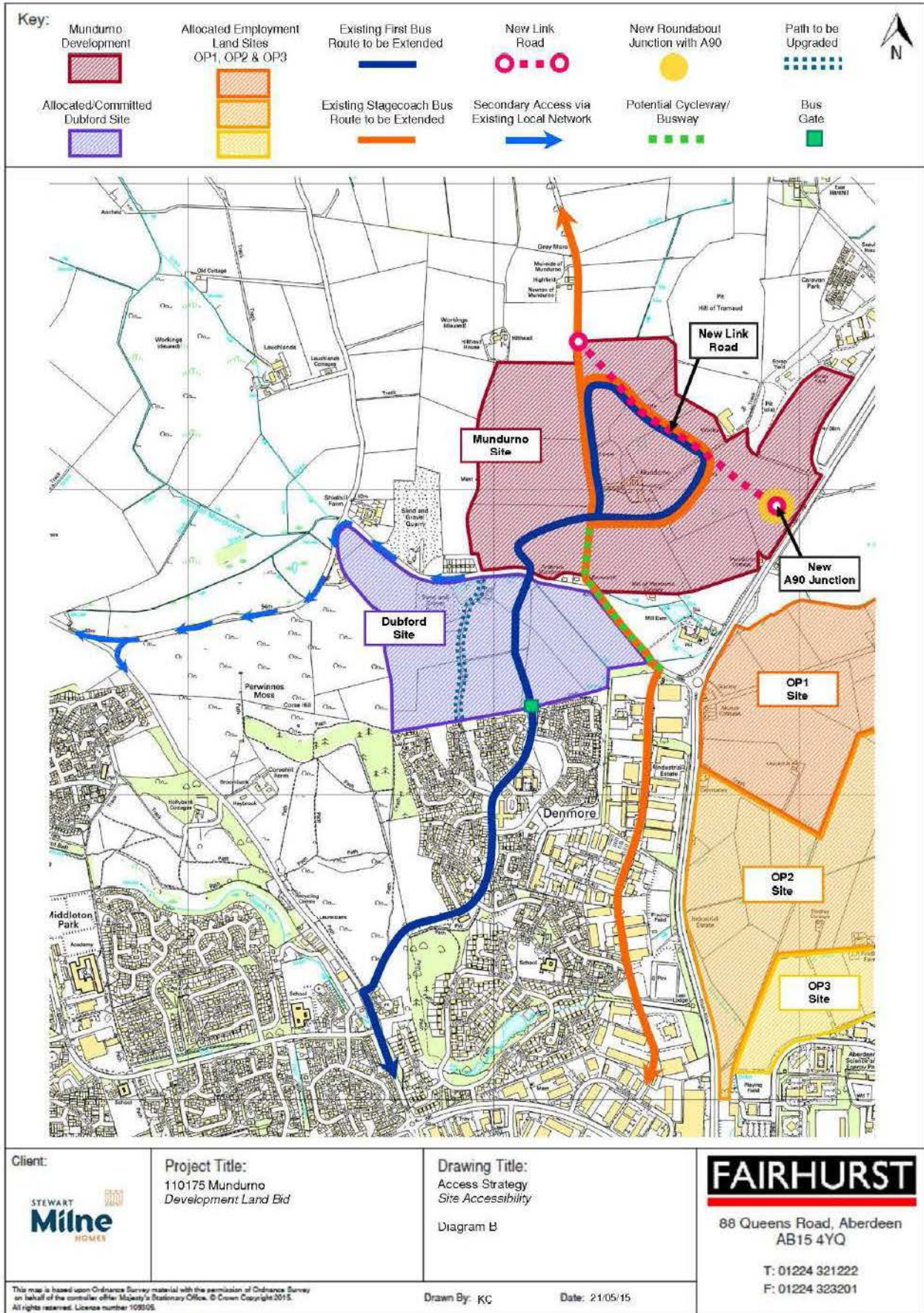
Diagrams

Diagram A: Walking Isochrones

Diagram B: Mundurno Access Strategy



<p>Client:</p> 	<p>Project Title: 110175 Mundumo Development Land Bid</p>	<p>Drawing Title: Walking Accessibility Walking Isochrones Drawing</p> <p>Diagram A</p>	<p>FAIRHURST</p> <p>88 Queens Road, Aberdeen AB15 4YQ</p> <p>T: 01224 321222 F: 01224 323201</p>
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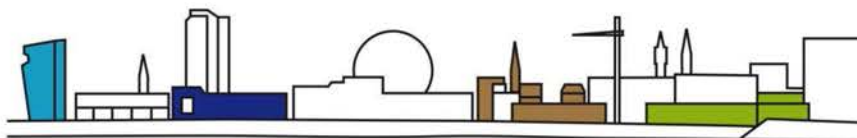


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Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015 Representation Form

Please use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, ensuring that your comments relate to a specific issue, site or policy in either the Proposed Plan, Proposed Supplementary Guidance, Proposed Action Programme or Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report. Please include the relevant paragraph(s) and use a separate form for each issue you wish to raise.

The consultation period runs between Friday 20th March and Monday 1st June 2015. Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1st June.

Name	Mr <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mrs <input type="radio"/> Miss <input type="radio"/> Ms <input type="radio"/> John Findlay
Organisation	Ryden LLP
On behalf of (if relevant)	Stewart Milne Homes
Address	25 Albyn Place Aberdeen
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Please tick if you would like to receive all future correspondence by e-mail

What document are you commenting on?	Proposed Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Proposed Supplementary Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Proposed Action Programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy/Site/Issue	Spatial Strategy, Greenfield Development should include provision for site B0946, Contlaw Road, Milltimber.	Paragraph(s)	Table 8

What would you like to say about the issue?

Please refer to attached Paper Apart.

What change would you like to see made?

Please refer to attached Paper Apart.

Please return the completed form by:

- post to the Local Development Plan Team, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB; or
- email to ldp@aberdeencity.gov.uk

The representation form can be filled in, saved, e-mailed and/or printed. You must “save as” to ensure the completed form is saved with the changes you have made. If you need more space, please fill out another representation form or send a word document attachment via e-mail with your completed representation form. **Please ensure all representations are with us by 5pm on Monday 1st June.**

Thank you. For more information, please visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/aldp2016 or to contact the Local Development Plan Team call 01224 523470.

Data Protection Statement

The comments you make on the Proposed Plan will be used to inform the Local Development Plan process and the Examination into the Local Development Plan by the Scottish Ministers’ Reporter. You must provide your name and address for your representation to be considered valid, and this information will be made publicly available. Other personal contact details such as telephone and e-mail will not be made public, although we will share these with the Reporter, who may use them to contact you about the comments you have made. For more information about how Aberdeen City Council maintains the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold about you, please contact Andrew Brownrigg (Local Development Plan Team Leader) on 01224 523317.

PAPER APART

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2016) ON BEHALF OF STEWART MILNE HOMES RELATIVE TO THE FAILURE TO IDENTIFY DEVELOPMENT OPTION SITE B0946 TO THE WEST OF CONTLAW ROAD, MILLTIMBER FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Stewart Milne Homes object to the failure of the proposed Local Development Plan to identify Development Option Site B0946 lying to the west of Contlaw Road, Milltimber for development in accordance with their bid submitted in June 2013.

The site, which is the subject of the Development Bid, extends to approximately 2.9 hectares. It presently comprises a mix of woodland and vacant scrub land. The woodland is, however, in poor condition as no management or maintenance has taken place in recent years. Contlaw Road forms the eastern boundary of the site with residential properties beyond. Immediately to the south the site is also bound by residential properties set in generous feus.

The Development Bid envisaged the site being accessed from Contlaw Road and accommodating 10-15 dwellinghouses. A copy of the Bid is attached at Appendix 1.

A Development Bid was also submitted for the wider area (Site B0915) and separate representations have been submitted in respect of that site and also in respect of the Housing Land Supply and the requirement for additional housing sites to be identified through the emerging Local Development Plan 2016. This site could be developed as a stand-alone site or as Phase 1 of Site B0915. This objection requires to be read in conjunction with the representations on that site and the Housing Land Supply.

Modification Required

The site should be identified in the Deeside Growth Area to coincide with Development Option Site B0964 to the west of Contlaw Road, Milltimber. This should be allocated to accommodate around 15 houses.

The City Wide Proposals Map would require amendment to accommodate it and modifications will be required to Table 2 and Table 8 of the emerging Plan to highlight the additional allocation. Further consequential amendments will be required to the supporting text.

Background

The Bid site has a long planning history of being considered capable of accommodating residential development. The 1991 adopted Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan identified the land lying immediately to the west of Contlaw Road, Milltimber as an area of "Countryside Around Towns". That Plan acknowledged that should there be demand for housing these areas would be considered for release at the appropriate time. In 1999, the Aberdeen City Finalised Local Plan, intended as a replacement for the 1991 adopted Local Plan, identified the same land as an area of "Strategic Reserve" for longer term development. The modified version of that plan, published in August 2002, identified a reduced area specifically allocated for residential development.

The 2008 Local Plan "Green Spaces – New Places" subsequently identified the site as falling within the Green Belt and partly within the Green Space Network. However, in the intervening period, circumstances have changed with construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR). As a consequence, the character of the area will change significantly. The AWPR, when completed, will provide a well-defined physical boundary to the west of Milltimber and justifies a rethink of Green Belt boundaries and the allocation of development land in the area.

A Development Bid was submitted specifically for this site in 2013, in response to a call for sites from the Council, to be considered for inclusion in the emerging Local Development Plan. A separate Bid was submitted for the wider area.

The Development Options Assessment, published with the Main Issues Report (MIR) in January 2014 allocated the site reference B0946. However, the MIR considered there to be no requirement for additional housing land to be identified through the emerging Plan and consequently, failed to identify it, or indeed the wider area, as a preferred site for development. Detailed representations were submitted in response to the MIR and these are attached at Appendix 2.

The representations in response to the MIR were considered by Officers and reported to a meeting of the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee on 28 October 2014. Officers advised the Committee that **"...irrespective of the suitability of each site for development, the LDP already provides adequate housing and employment land to meet the allowances set in the Strategic Development Plan. We do not believe there are any overriding benefits which would justify allocating these sites for development"**. Notwithstanding that recommendation, Members chose to allocate three additional sites in the Deeside Growth Area capable of accommodating 98 houses.

Responding to the specifics of the site, Officers considered that development would have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape. They further noted that the AWPR is not a development corridor and proximity to the AWPR does not make a site suitable for development. These issues are addressed below.

Justification

Officers have sought to argue that there is no scope for further housing allocations as the extant LDP 2012 addressed the Structure Plan requirements, which were rolled forward into the Strategic Development Plan approved in 2014. However, Members of the Council clearly did not accept that view and chose to allocate a number of additional sites, particularly in the Deeside Growth Area. That in itself is an acknowledgement that there are concerns regarding the delivery of an adequate housing land supply.

Separate representations have been submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes relative to the Housing Land Supply and these should be referred to for their terms. The Structure Plan housing requirements were predicated upon depressed population and household projections. More recent population projections suggest that the Strategic Development Plan seriously underestimated the anticipated population growth to 2035 and consequently, underestimated the housing requirement over that period. This, and the failure of sites to deliver the required housing numbers within the specified timescales, raises issues regarding the ability of the Plan to maintain at least a five year supply of effective sites at the end of the Plan period.

Even setting aside these arguments, it is evident from Table 2 of the proposed Plan that the Plan fails to satisfy the Strategic Development Plan housing allowances. In the city this amounts to a shortfall of 578 units. The majority of that could be addressed by the allocation of the wider area for development as advocated through separate representations. Alternatively, this site could be allocated as a stand-alone development which, when taken with the other land releases in the Deeside Growth Area, would contribute to addressing the shortfall.

The development of the site for around 15 large detached houses set in generous feus would help address a clear demand for such housing in the Deeside corridor. The site enjoys an attractive setting adjacent to an established residential area and within walking distance of bus routes along the A93 North Deeside Road. The site is also well placed to take advantage of the services and facilities available in Peterculter to the west and Bieldside to the east.

The Council's position that the site would have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape is refuted. It provides an obvious extension to the existing settlement of Milltimber and has previously been acknowledged by the Council as acceptable. The topography of the site and landscape features, both within and peripheral to the site, ensure its containment in landscape terms. The development of the site would have minimal impact upon the setting of the city, or indeed, that of Milltimber itself.

The site comprises open scrubland with woodland, which mainly lies to the west and southern periphery of the site. This provides shelter and visual containment. However, the woodland is in poor condition with long term maintenance required to manage the fragile wooded areas. The woodland was planted as commercial forestry and not indigenous Scottish species and as a consequence, management would not only improve the woodland, but also enhance its diversity. Indeed, the management of the woodland, with the development of the more open

land would bring significant benefit to the area in terms of visual enhancement and increased recreational opportunities.

The scale of development proposed would not have a significant impact on infrastructure. Capacity constraints at Cults Academy are not an impediment to development. Given development pressures in the wider area, consideration could be given to increasing the capacity at Cults Academy through developer contributions. Also, the development of a new secondary school to serve Countesswells new community could also address capacity issues at Cults. Spare capacity currently exists at Milltimber Primary School to accommodate the pupils generated by the development. Again, however, should constraints arise these could be addressed through developer contributions.

Similarly, given the scale of development proposed there will be no adverse impact on the road network. Public transport is available on North Deeside Road within walking distance of the site and provides regular connections eastwards to Aberdeen and westwards to Peterculter. Should the wider area be developed in the future there would be scope to upgrade the road network and provide public transport through the site. In the meantime, the site is perfectly capable of stand-alone development.

Conclusions

The site has long been recognised by the City Council as being capable of accommodating residential development. The site immediately abuts the existing built up area and is well contained in landscape terms as a consequence of the site's topography and areas of woodland on the periphery of the site. Those woodlands provide an opportunity for long term management and recreational use associated with the residential development proposed.

Adequate infrastructure can be provided to serve the development which, given its scale, would have minimal impact on education and road infrastructure in the area. The site can be developed in isolation or as part of the wider development of the area. Its early development would not prejudice the longer term development of the wider area.

Recommendation

That the site be identified in the Local Development Plan 2016 for the development of around 15 houses in the period 2017-2026.

Appendix 1



Aberdeen City Local Development Plan

Bid Prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes North Scotland
Call for Sites – June 2013

Land at Contlaw, Milltimber, Aberdeen

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Proposals
- 3.0 Scottish Planning Policy
- 4.0 Development Plan
- 5.0 Planning History
- 6.0 Services
- 7.0 Justification
- 8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This development bid is prepared and submitted by Stewart Milne Homes who own the land subject of this development bid. The land referred to as the subject of this bid document is identified below in Figure 1.



Figure 1 (Land hatched in blue)

1.2 The Stewart Milne Group was founded in Aberdeen in 1975. Since then it has grown to become one of the UK's leading privately owned house builders. They have a commitment to enterprise and innovation matched with traditional value for quality services. We are currently building in a number of locations through the UK but are proud to be headquartered in the North East of Scotland.

1.3 The suburb of Milltimber lies approximately 10 km to the west of Aberdeen City Centre. It is primarily a residential area with the majority of the housing lying to the north of the A93, North Deeside Road which runs between Aberdeen and Banchory and beyond to Ballater.

1.4 The population of Milltimber at 2010 amounted to 2,890 residents. It has expanded significantly over the last 30 years but growth has been restricted over recent years due to housing land supply constraints. Housing in the area is almost entirely private sector comprising detached, semi detached and terraced properties. The older properties sit either side of the A93 to the east and west of the suburb and are set in large feus. The intervening properties fronting North Deeside Road enjoy a south facing aspect with views to the River Dee.

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

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

2.0 Site Description and Proposals

2.1 The land extends to approximately 7.2 acres and is a mix of woodland and vacant scrub land. There is a localised area of woodland on the west and southern periphery of the site which is mostly Norway Spruce. This provides shelter and landscape visual containment. The woodland is however, in poor condition as no management or maintenance has taken place in recent years. The topography of the site is undulating with ground levels generally rising to the north. Contlaw Road forms the eastern boundary of the site with residential properties immediately to the south. These are generally larger properties in generous feus.

2.2 It is proposed that this area of land be developed for a small scale, sensitive residential development which would take an access from Contlaw Road to serve between 10 to 15 dwelling houses. A connecting road through to the adjoining land of Nether Beanshill to the north and west would be safeguarded in order that the fuller masterplan for wider area may be brought forward in due course. This has been submitted as a full separate bid for consideration. The wider masterplan sets out a phasing strategy and will predominantly be accessed from the AWPR junction, which is located to the immediate west of the wider site. Allowing a small scale development on the land owned by Stewart Milne Homes will provide much needed homes within an area under significant housing demand pressure.

3.0 Scottish Planning Policy

3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out the Scottish Government's commitment to the delivery of land for housing and for that housing land to be released in sustainable locations through the Local Development Plan process. SPP states that the Government is committed to increasing the supply of new homes and the planning system should contribute to raising the rate of new housebuilding by identifying a generous supply of land for the provision of a range of housing in the right places. The

planning system should enable the development of well designed, energy efficient, good quality housing in sustainable locations and allocate a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures. Scottish Government policy requires Local Authorities to allocate a sufficient amount of land to enable maintaining at least a 5 year housing land supply at all times which will mean allocating land within the LDP sufficient for a 10 year period to include and up to the year the LDP is adopted.

4.0 Development Plan

4.1 The extant Development Plan comprises the City and Shire Structure Plan approved by Scottish Ministers in August 2009 and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan adopted in February 2012. More recently, a proposed Strategic Development Plan was the subject of public consultation and will ultimately replace the City and Shire Structure Plan. The Local Development Plan Review will require to conform with that Plan.

4.2 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan, approved by Scottish Ministers in 2009, set growth targets for the city region and promoted a spatial strategy designed to accommodate this growth in the most sustainable locations. It identified a requirement for 72,000 houses within the Structure Plan area over the period to 2030. Aberdeen City was identified as one of three Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) which was to be the main focus for development in that period. Around half of all new development was to be located in Aberdeen City. Of those 36,000 houses required within the City it was envisaged that 21,000 would be provided on greenfield sites with a further 15,000 split between brownfield sites and identified regeneration areas within the City. In terms of phasing of greenfield housing, 12,000 were anticipated to be required between 2007 and 2016; 5,000 between 2017 and 2023 and 4,000 between 2024 and 2030.

4.3 A proposed Strategic Development Plan has recently been the subject of public consultation and will eventually replace the extant Structure Plan. The Local Development Plan Review will require to conform with that Plan. The proposed Plan maintains the spatial strategy of the extant Structure Plan and 'rolls forward' the housing and employment land allocations to 2035. Presently, it is the subject of significant objection, particularly in regard to its failure to increase the housing allocation in response to a significant increase in the projected housing requirement by the National Records of Scotland (NRS). Whilst the Strategic Development Plan provides for a housing allowance of 67,500 for the period 2011 to 2035, the NRS figures, using the principal projection, would suggest that this should be increased by 20,500 units to 88,000. Should this increased requirement be accepted, additional sites will require to be identified through the City and Shire Local Development Plan Reviews. Retaining this opportunity site within the LDP will allow the Council to maintain housing land within the southern growth corridor and provide the much needed housing as identified through the policy analysis above.

5.0 Planning History

5.1 The further growth of Milltimber has been under consideration for a number of years. The Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan adopted by the then District Council in 1991 identified that part of the site lying immediately to the west of the built up area as an area of 'Countryside Around Towns'. Whilst these areas were covered by Green Belt policy the plan recognised that should there be future demand for housing these areas would be considered for release at the appropriate time. In 1999, the Aberdeen City Finalised Local Plan, intended as a replacement for the 1991 adopted Local Plan, identified the same land as an area of strategic reserve for longer term development. The modified version of that plan, published in August 2002, identified a reduced area specifically for residential development.

5.2 The site has significant planning history. The Aberdeen City Wide District Local Plan 1991 designated the site as GB2 "Countryside around Towns". Such areas were designated to preserve the integrity of the Green Belt. The Plan stated "it is from the Countryside around Towns area that any longer term requirement for development land might be identified within the framework of the development plan review", thereby giving permanence to designated Green Belt boundaries.

5.3 Subsequent attempts by Aberdeen City Council to replace the 1991 plan also recognised the sites capacity for development. For example the Aberdeen City Council Green Belt Review favoured this site for development in the period 2001-2006 and recognised that the site was capable of development ahead of the AWPR. The site was ultimately not allocated due to a lack of housing numbers.

5.4 The site previously had the benefit of a planning consent in 1995 for residential use. The Court of Session however, quashed this decision as a consequence of education issues. At the reconvened inquiry the Reporter refused planning permission on the grounds that the then recently approved Grampian Structure Plan did not allocate any housing to Lower Deeside in the period up to 2001.

5.5 It is clear that the principle of development on the site has been established through previous removal from the Green Belt and subsequent planning approval.

6.0 Services

6.1 Mains water and drainage are available nearby to service the site as are gas and electricity connections which would permit this stand alone development to be brought forward.

6.2 The existing transport infrastructure is capable of supporting a small scale development which would be the first phase of development at Contlaw with access taken from Contlaw Road. This access strategy was previously agreed to be suitable by Aberdeen City Council in the context of consideration of earlier proposals for development of the site. Once the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is open

6.3 Milltimber Primary School currently has a functional working capacity of 270 pupils. The Roll at 2013 fell short of this at 209 pupils. This has the scope to accommodate any pupils arising from this small proposed development. Cults Academy provides secondary education for those within the area and has a capacity for 1,141 pupils and a falling school roll.

7.0 Justification

7.1 The land to the west of Contlaw Road has long been considered for residential development. It has been designated for such use in earlier Local Plans and, at one time, benefited from an outline planning permission. The development potential of the area has long been signalled and it has been widely debated at Public Local Inquiry with the principle of development clearly having been long established.

7.2 The allocation of this site would meet the guidance set out within SPP, providing a range of land for delivery to the market free of constraints. The site has no other topographical or ecological constraints and as such could be delivered within the next Local Development Plan period.

7.3 The Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan identifies a significant requirement for new housing land over the period to 2035 which requires to support the City's Strategic Growth Areas. Part of that, is identifying a range of sites to suit varying needs and that can accommodate development without detriment. The SDP expects that around half of these new homes required will be located on greenfield sites. These new homes would contribute to the creation of sustainable mixed community by linking housing with community services and facilities. This conforms to Scottish Planning Policy which seeks to ensure that new developments remain desirable, attractive and safe places to live for many years to come.

7.4 It was previously recognised that this site can be developed ahead of the AWPR, and will have a no net detriment effect on traffic movements in and around Milltimber and therefore can be delivered quickly with minimal infrastructure costs.

7.5 It is acknowledged that the site currently lies within the Green Belt. However, Scottish Planning Policy states that Green Belts should form part of a long term settlement strategy and ensure settlements are able to accommodate planned growth. Green Belts are intended to direct growth to the most sustainable locations and support regeneration, to protect and enhance the character, landscape and setting and identity of towns and cities. They also provide access to open green space within and around urban areas. Green Belt policy can also be used to prevent coalescence of settlements. However, SPP clearly states that only those areas of land which can help deliver these objectives should be covered by Green Belt Policy and Local Development Plan reviews provide an opportunity to review the success of this policy and adjust Green Belt boundaries to accommodate sustainable growth particularly given the historical recognition that the site does not meet Green Belt criteria.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 The land to the west of Contlaw Road has long been considered for residential development. It has been designated for such use in earlier Local Plans and, at one time, benefited from an outline planning permission. The development potential of the area has long been signalled and it has been widely debated at Public Local Inquiry. Although the site currently lies within the Green Belt, Scottish Planning Policy states that Green Belts should form part of a long term settlement strategy and ensure settlements are able to accommodate planned growth. The site history includes being taken out of the Greenbelt when a principle for development was established.

8.2 This area has long been considered by the City Council as being capable of accommodating residential development. Stewart Milne Homes consider that the development potential of the area has been overlooked in recent years. The improvements to the area resulting from the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route significantly enhance this potential.

8.4 The site is capable of accommodating a stand alone residential development accessed from the existing road network. Potential subsequent phases, as identified in the separate bid, could be accessed from the new grade separated junction serving the AWPR and linking it with North Deeside Road. The development would effectively infill the land lying between the AWPR and the existing built up area defined by Contlaw Road to the east.

8.5 The AWPR would provide a defensible boundary to the Green Belt whilst development in the intervening area would provide homes within an area that has been constrained in recent years due to lack of housing land allocations.

8.6 The sensitive scale of the development would be in keeping with the wider settlement of Milltimber and provide essential housing in an area where there is significant unmet demand.

8.7 On this basis, Stewart Milne Homes respectfully request that this development bid be considered for inclusion in the forthcoming Local Development Plan review for residential use highlighted and justified within this bid submission.

Appendix 2

Aberdeen City Council Main Issues Report 2014

Objection on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes

Land to west of Contlaw Road, Milltimber

March 2014

Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) submitted a development bid for land to the west of Contlaw Road, Milltimber for consideration and inclusion within the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan for housing development of between 10 to 15 units. The site has been given the reference number B0946.

We object to the failure of the Council within their Main Issues Report (MIR) to identify site B0946 at Contlaw Road as preferred for residential development. It is submitted that this site is suitable for residential development in its own right as an infill gap site within an existing residential area, and can deliver phase 1 as part of a larger masterplan for the wider area which has been submitted as a separate objection.

This representation requires to be read in conjunction with general representations on the overall MIR and, in particular, with the representations on the housing land supply which have been submitted by Ryden on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes. SMH contend that additional land should be allocated for residential development to ensure that a 5 year housing land supply is in place at the end of the Local Development Plan period. The site is capable of contributing to the Housing Land Supply requirements and accordingly, should be identified for residential development within the Proposed LDP. It is owned by a housebuilder and the scale of the site ensures there are no infrastructure constraints that would preclude development being delivered in the short term.

Contlaw has long been considered by the City Council as being capable of accommodating residential development. The Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan adopted by the then District Council in 1991 identified part of the site lying immediately to the west of Milltimber as an area of "Countryside Around Towns". That Plan acknowledged that should there be demand for housing, these areas would be considered for release at the appropriate time. In 1999, the Aberdeen City Finalised Local Plan, intended as a replacement for the 1991 adopted Local Plan, identified the same land as an area of "Strategic Reserve" for longer term development. The modified version of that Plan, published in August 2002, identified a reduced area specifically allocated for residential development.

Whilst the 2008 Local Plan "Green Spaces – New Places" identified the site as falling within the Greenbelt and partly within the Green Space Network, circumstances have changed considerably since that time. The AWPR is now a committed project with construction due to commence early in 2015. This will significantly change the character of the area and provides an opportunity to expand Milltimber westwards to the well-defined limit of the AWPR. Furthermore, its junction with the A93 North Deeside Road presents a development opportunity at a key intersection of the route. Accordingly, the development proposals require to be considered as a first phase of development in the context of the AWPR.

The proposed site extends to 7.2 acres and is a mix of woodland and vacant scrub land. The sections of woodland which lie mainly to the west and southern periphery of the site is Norway Spruce and serves to provide shelter and landscape visual containment. As indicated within the development bid however, this area of woodland is in poor condition with long term maintenance required to carefully

manage the fragile wooded areas. The Council state that one of the main constraints to development on the site is that the trees are designated as ancient woodland. The trees on the Contlaw site were planted as commercial forestry and are not indigenous Scottish species, we therefore question on what grounds the Council have designated the Norway Spruce as ancient woodland? Stewart Milne Homes contend that only a portion of the site is wooded which leaves the unplanted section of the site free for development. The long term maintenance and management of the trees on site would be assured through a masterplan for this first phase of Contlaw which would provide much needed development in the early part of the plan with potential for further phased release as set out within paper apart set out against bid site B0915. The Contlaw site brings to the fore an opportunity to meet a market demand which is currently not realised within other greenfield land release, namely low density plots offering executive family homes within large grounds. The Council must recognise the need to provide a range and choice of housing sites across the administrative area, providing for all market sectors.

The Council also state that landscape fit is a constraint to developing this site however as clearly indicated above, the land at Contlaw was considered to have significant development potential with the local authority indicating that should there be a demand for housing in this area, the site would be released at the appropriate time. This is further justified when the Council allocated this land for Strategic Reserve Land as part of the 1999 Finalised local Plan.

The third constraint identified to development on the site is stated as school capacity. The current school roll for Milltimber Primary is sitting significantly lower than the working capacity with a current projected roll of 215 out of a possible 270 school places. The upper end of the housing numbers proposed for development on this site would only produce 6 children which could easily be accommodated within the current primary school. The school is not projected to be over capacity until 2018 and so school capacity cannot be justifiably used as a constraint to developing this site in the short to medium term. Cults Academy is also stated as having limited capacity however, planning gain contributions can be negotiated as part of any planning consent approved on the site to ensure that the small number of secondary school aged pupils generated from this bid site could be accommodated within the Cults Academy.

The site is currently zoned as Green Belt however, the land at Contlaw Road sits adjacent to existing residential development and makes an obvious extension to the settlement boundary and one already acknowledged by the Council as acceptable. This aside, Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out that Green belt boundaries identified in local development plans should reflect the long term settlement strategy and ensure that settlements are able to accommodate planned growth. Inner boundaries should not be drawn too tightly around the urban edge, but where appropriate should create an area suitable for planned development between the existing settlement edge and green belt boundary. Boundaries should also take into account the need for development in smaller settlements within the green belt, and where appropriate leave room for expansion. It is therefore suggested that the greenbelt allocation on the edge of the settlement should not be considered a barrier to development and the site should be removed from Green Belt zoning.

The sites future potential link to AWPR should be recognised as a key to release this site in early course. The proposed first phase of development, subject of this bid can however be accommodated within the existing road infrastructure network, with access to the site being taken from Contlaw Road itself.

We therefore contend, as set out within our representation submitted by Ryden on Issue 1 – Housing Land Supply, that additional housing land requires to be allocated to ensure that there remains a 5 year supply of effective housing land at the end of the Plan period. That is unlikely to be achieved on the basis of the allocations carried forward from the extant Plan and the limited additional allocations emerging through the Main Issues Report.

The proposal site at Contlaw has long been considered by the City Council as capable of accommodating residential development. This is now further reinforced through the commitment to the AWPR, which will connect with the A93 North Deeside Road Corridor in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site. This will change the character of the area and provide an opportunity for development.

The site is capable of accommodating residential development which would be in keeping with the existing residential nature of Milltimber and form an initial phase of development adjacent to Contlaw Road, accessed from the existing road network. This stand-alone development has the ability to provide housing land that can be delivered in the short term, providing much needed land for housing to enable the Council to provide a deliverable rolling 5 year land supply.

The AWPR will provide a longer term defensible boundary to the greenbelt whilst development in the intervening area would have limited impact on the general landscape due to the wooded portion of the site to the south and west.

On the basis of the previously submitted Bid, the above representations and those submitted in respect of the housing land supply issue, it is considered that this site should be allocated for residential development. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this site be identified in the forthcoming Local Development Plan Review for residential development.