



# **HOUSING LAND RELEASE (2006 - 2010)**

**Supplementary Planning Guidance**

October 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) explains how Aberdeen City Council will implement the current structure plan (NEST) and the Aberdeen Local Plan in relation to housing sites identified for the period 2006 – 2010. This guidance explains how Aberdeen City Council will deal with planning applications for residential development on sites identified in the Aberdeen Local Plan (ALP) as sites safeguarded for residential development for the period 2006–2010 (under the Structure Plan Policy 9).

## BACKGROUND

The provision of land for new housing in the current structure plan ‘North East Scotland Together’ (NEST) and the Aberdeen Local Plan is divided into 3 phases, outlined in the following table:

	Period	NEST Policy	GSNP Policy
Phase I	2004-2005	8	Policy 37 - Sites for Residential Development
Phase II	2006-2010	9	Policy 38 – Sites Safeguarded for Residential Development
Phase III	2011-2015	10	Policy 30 – Strategic Housing Land Reserve

This guidance relates only to Phase II sites identified under NEST Policy 9 and those in table 8b of the Aberdeen Local Plan. These are identified in both plans as relating to the period 2006 – 2010 and amount to 795 units in Aberdeen.

The structure plan and local plan policies both state that planning permission will not be granted on Phase II sites until a review of the structure plan has been completed and has confirmed that specific sites should be released. The relevant policy from the adopted Aberdeen Local Plan is quoted below:

### Policy 38: SITES SAFEGUARDED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

This policy applies to sites that are listed in Figure 8b and shown on the proposals map as being safeguarded for residential development.

The sites to which this policy applies shall be safeguarded for residential development.

Any proposal (whether or not it is located on a site to which this policy applies) which is likely to prevent or make more difficult residential development on any site to which this policy applies shall not be permitted.

There shall be a presumption against residential development on any Greenfield site to which this policy applies until such time as a review of the structure plan has been completed and has confirmed that the site should be released for residential development.

### WHY DO WE REQUIRE THIS SPG?

A number of factors contribute to the justification for this SPG. Phase II sites were expected to be required to maintain the housing land supply in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area from 2006; it is now 2008. There is a land supply argument to suggest that Phase II sites should be released now for the granting of planning permission to ensure the continued supply of housing land in this area and to meet our statutory duty to maintain a 5-year supply of effective housing land.

The 2007 Housing Land Audit shows that housing completions have been running at a high level over recent years, particularly in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area. This faster than expected take-up of land has meant that the effective land supply has deteriorated at a faster pace than expected. This points to the need to release land for house building so as to ensure continuity of supply.

Aberdeenshire Council adopted a SPG in similar terms to this in 2005/06 but the Aberdeen City Local Plan has only now reached a stage where a similar approach can be adopted in Aberdeen City.

There can be a significant lead-in time covering the period between the decision to submit a planning application, its actual submission, consent being granted and any legal agreements signed, and the start of development on the ground. This is particularly the case given the need to ensure that the development delivered is of a high standard in terms of design and which meets the needs of communities with an appropriate mix of house types (e.g. detached, semi-detached, flats etc), tenures and sizes, along with the mitigation of impacts on communities in terms of infrastructure and community facilities.

The requirement in some cases for the preparation of a masterplan also potentially increases the period of time before the start of development on the ground. Therefore there is a strong argument that Phase II sites should be released as soon as possible.

All of the above reasons suggest that there is a need to progress the release of Phase II sites. There are various reasons why a review of the current structure plan was not taken forward on the timetable envisaged in the plan (i.e. before 2006). Although Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council formally commenced the preparation of a new structure plan for the North East in February 2007, this is unlikely to be approved before late 2009. Within this context, the release of this SPG offers a pragmatic solution to the current situation which both manages the housing market responsibly and at the same time responds to the desire for certainty over the delivery of Phase II sites. These sites have already been considered against the background of the spatial strategy within the structure plan and have been examined by independent Reporters at the Public Local Inquiry into the objections to the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan in 2006.

## PROPOSAL

Aberdeen City Council proposes the release of all Phase II sites identified for residential development in the Aberdeen Local Plan (see Map 1 at the end of this document), subject to the terms of this SPG being adhered to in relation to each site. This release would take effect on the date this guidance is formally approved by Aberdeen City Council.

### Position Statement:

As stated in the Reporters' report of the Public Local Inquiry into objections to the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan (and the Proposed Changes):

"Planning applications for residential development on sites identified in Table 8(b) of the Aberdeen Local Plan 'Green Spaces | New Places' will be given favourable consideration as departures from the development plan subject to the consideration of matters arising during the application process. This will apply from the date that this SPG is adopted."

All applications should have regard to the need to provide a range of housing types and sizes (SPP3 paragraph 24; NEST Policy 11; and ALP paragraph 1.3). The extent of the range will be influenced by site size but a range should be achieved on all sites. Regard should be had to the scope for smaller house sizes and the incorporation of semi-detached and terraced houses into proposals for market housing.

Sites that meet the requirements of this SPG will be included as part of the established land supply at the base date of the 2009 Housing Land Audit and subsequently assessed for effectiveness during the Audit process.

Planning applications for residential development on these sites will require to be treated as departures from the development plan and will be the subject of standard departure procedures. However sites which meet the requirements of this SPG will not be treated as significant departures from NEST Policy 9 or ALP Policy 38.

This SPG does not impact upon the acceptability or otherwise of brownfield or infill development opportunities which will continue to be addressed in the normal way through the planning process.

## CONCLUSION

This supplementary guidance explains how Aberdeen City Council will deal with housing applications on Phase II sites identified in the Aberdeen Local Plan.

It also makes clear that applications should be of a high standard, meeting all relevant structure/ local plan policies and create mixed communities, providing for the needs of all. Developments should provide housing that is long lasting, adaptable and energy-efficient.

This SPG will help to maintain the supply of housing land in Aberdeen and provide certainty to both communities and developers as to how Aberdeen City Council will deal with applications on Phase II sites.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any further information please contact us:

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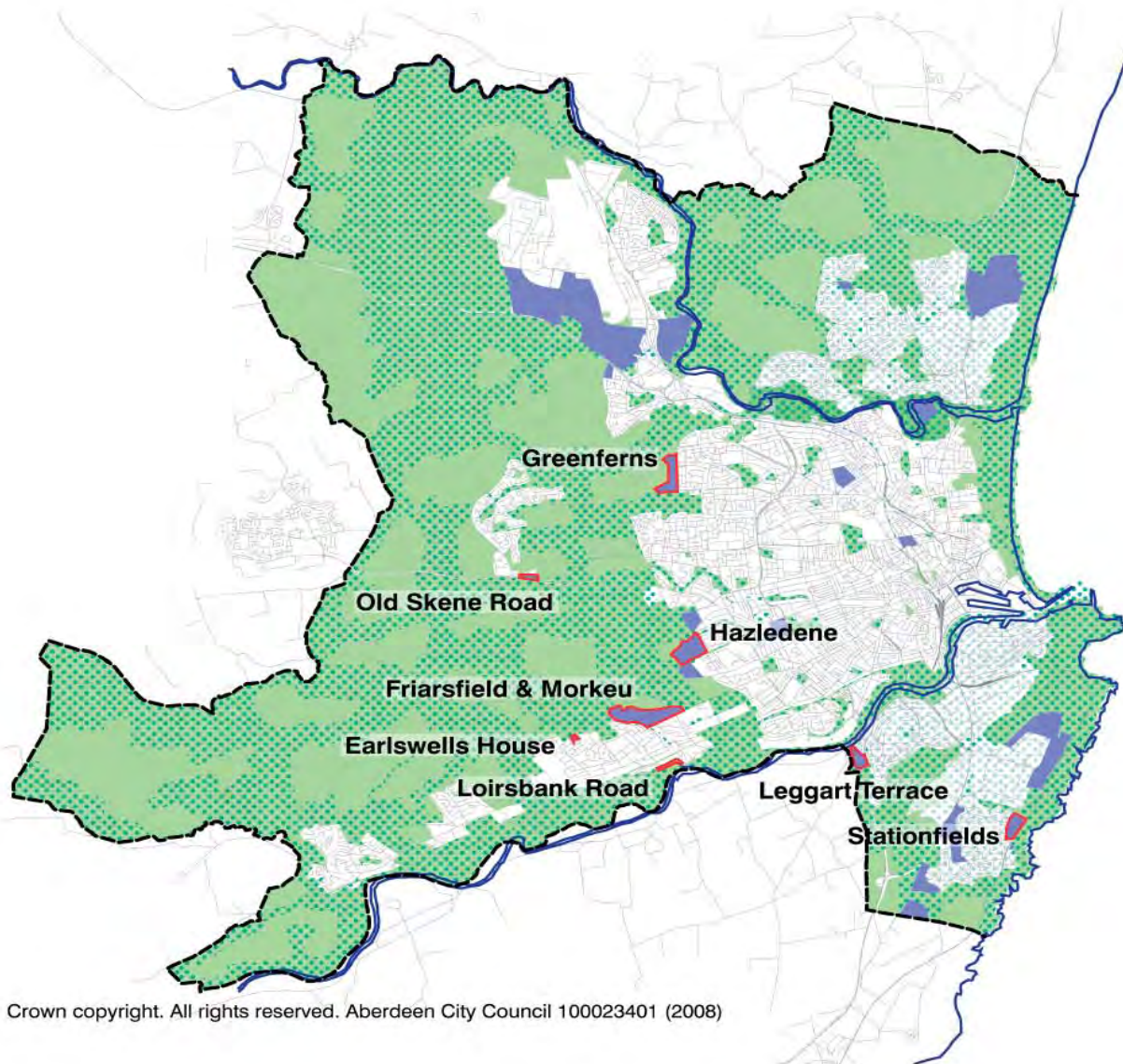
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**MAP 1: THE ABERDEEN LOCAL PLAN –  
HOUSING LAND ALLOCATIONS (PHASE 2)**

**Sites Identified in Terms of Policy 38 of the  
Aberdeen Local Plan**

Sites that are safeguarded for residential development (2006 - 2010)



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Site	Units
Greenferns	120
Old Skene Road	25
Hazledene	150
Friarsfield & Morkeu	280
Earlswells House	10
Loirsbank Road	10
Leggart Terrace	50
Stationfields	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>795</b>

-  Existing Built-up Area
-  Green Space Network
-  Green Belt
-  Development Phases up to 2010
-  Development Phases beyond 2010