ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE | *Strategic Development Planning Authority*
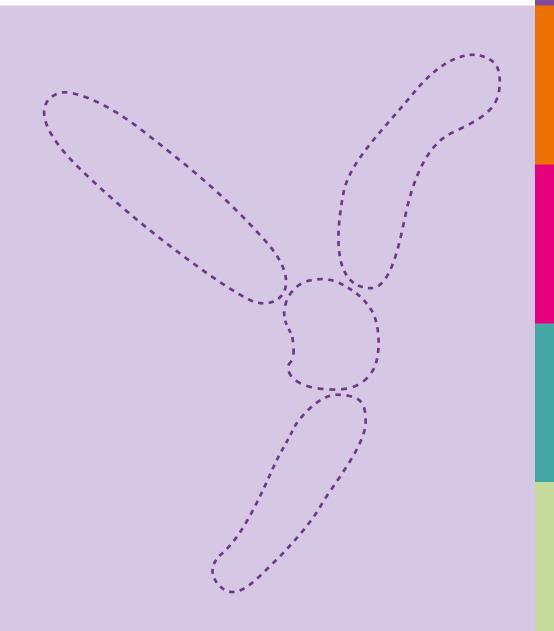
Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan

Approved August 2020

Queries relating to the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic
Development Plan can be sent to:

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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the second Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan. This Plan continues the City Region's ethos of collaborative and effective partnership working between the two constituent local authorities, along with local communities and other key stakeholders. This will be the last Strategic Development Plan and while there will be new challenges and opportunities as a result of Scotland's emerging planning system this Plan will enable us to look forward with both vision and confidence.

Our vision is a City Region that is even more attractive as a place to live, work and do business, as well as a City Region that is more resilient and sustainable for our communities and our environment. As a City Region we aspire to promote growth that embraces economic opportunity and diversification, while protecting and valuing the environment and people on which it so greatly relies.

Councillor John Cox

Chair Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority

Scolty Hill, Banchory

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Union Terrace Gardens Regeneration Credit: LDA Design

1. Our Plan

1.1   This Strategic Development Plan tells the story of where and how we want our City Region to grow, drawing on our historical roots and using our skills and expertise to continue sustainable economic growth well into the future.

1.2   This Plan has been prepared by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority on behalf of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. The Plan covers the local authority areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, except that part of Aberdeenshire which is within the Cairngorms National Park. The area covered by this Plan is referred to throughout as the 'City Region'.

1.3   A Strategic Development Plan is a statutory planning document which is prepared at a City Region level. This Plan is one of four Strategic Development Plans across Scotland and covers a twenty-year period to 2040.

1.4   The Plan aims to be concise and visionary, and targets what we want to change. It does this by focusing on issues which are nationally or regionally important, or which can be best dealt with by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils working together.

1.5   The Plan has been written in the context of national strategies, policy and guidance from the Scottish Government, and should be read as a whole document rather than as individual sections.

1.6   The Strategic Development Plan will be used to inform Local Development Plans prepared by both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, and these Plans will cover a wider range of local planning issues in more detail.

1.7   The Plan is supported by an Action Programme which shows how we will realise our goals with the help of our partners.

1.8   This Plan is a refresh of the Strategic Development Plan 2014, which updated the Structure Plan of 2009. The Spatial Strategy formulated in the Structure Plan 2009 has been successfully pursued for almost ten years, and this Plan seeks to continue that Strategy for the next five years. At the time of writing, the Planning (Scotland) Bill 2017 is progressing through Scottish Parliament. Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council are committed to the benefits of regional spatial planning in the City Region.

2. Our Vision

By 2040, Aberdeen City and Shire will have grown and evolved to become an even more attractive, prosperous, resilient and sustainable European City Region. It will be an excellent place to live, visit and do business.

We will be recognised for:

- *our enterprise and inventiveness in the knowledge economy and high-value markets – with a particular focus on energy, biopharmaceuticals, tourism, food and drink, fishing and the primary industries; and,*

- *the City Region's unique built, historic and natural environment, which will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced as a key asset in underpinning a high quality of life and place.*

Decision makers will have acted confidently and taken the courageous decisions necessary to further develop a robust and diversified economy.

Both Councils will have taken a proactive approach towards development that: ensures the sustainable use of natural resources, the ability to live within the area's environmental capacity, can deal with climate change, and creates a more open, inclusive society.

Turriff Town Centre

2.1   Although the two Councils will lead the way, many organisations will be involved in delivering the Vision.

2.2   To make the Vision a reality, and to contribute towards the Scottish Government's central purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth, we have developed a series of aims. These are to:

- provide a strong framework for investment decisions which will help to grow and diversify the regional economy in a sustainable manner;

- promote the need to use resources more efficiently and effectively whilst protecting and where appropriate enhancing our assets; and,

- take on the urgent challenges of climate change.

2.3   To support these aims, this Plan will need to:

- make sure the area has enough homes and job opportunities to support the level of services and facilities needed to maintain and improve quality of life;

- protect and, where appropriate, enhance our valued assets and resources, including biodiversity, the historic and natural environment and our cultural heritage;

- help create and support sustainable mixed communities, and the provision of associated infrastructure, which will meet the highest standards of placemaking, urban and rural design, and cater for the needs of the whole population;

- encourage opportunities for greater digital connectivity across the City Region; and,

- 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 available and attractive choices.

Policy

In assessing proposals for development, we will balance the importance given to each Aim in coming to a decision, taking into account the Vision, Spatial Strategy, Objectives and Targets of this Plan.

Duthie Park, Aberdeen

3. Our Spatial Strategy

3.1   All parts of the City Region are important for the future of the area. However, different areas will play different roles as a result of both their current characteristics and their future potential.

3.2   All parts of the Strategic Development Plan area are either within a Strategic Growth Area or a Local Growth and Diversification Area. Identifying where development will take place is an essential part of delivering the Plan's Vision. Being clear about where we want new homes, businesses and other developments to be focused will provide long-term certainty and confidence for communities and businesses, as well as organisations that provide infrastructure and other key services.

3.3   The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 developed a long-term Spatial Strategy to promote development in places that would meet the needs of business and, at the same time, would be sustainable and take on the challenges of climate change. It also recognised the need to maintain and improve the area's communities and the services they depend on. The Spatial Strategy was carried forward into the Strategic Development Plan 2014 and is continued by this Plan. This Strategy has been responsible for significant positive change across the City Region in the last decade, and this Plan will continue to support its ongoing delivery.

3.4   The Spatial Strategy plans for growth to be focused in a limited number of places. These are locations where public and private investment in schools, community facilities and transport infrastructure can take place in order to benefit wider quality of life and provide the flexibility to meet the needs of local communities.

3.5   Local Development Plans will use the Spatial Strategy from this Plan to set policies and identify land for development. Planning applications will be assessed against the Spatial Strategy and the Local Development Plans to decide whether the location, nature and scale of development is in line with this Plan.

3.6   The Aberdeen City Region Deal is the primary mechanism to support the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and the wider economic vision for the region. The City Region Deal is valued to be worth £826.2 million over a ten-year period. Both the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments have jointly committed to invest up to £250 million in the City Region. This will be supported by a further £44 million by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and other regional partners. In addition, the Scottish Government have committed a further £254 million to the City Region to be focused on affordable housing delivery, digital/superfast broadband and transport connectivity.

3.7   To make changes on the scale proposed by this Plan, we must invest in existing and new infrastructure, and City Region Deal investment will help to deliver a number of key infrastructure projects. This will be essential to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of our communities. Developers will also have to accept the need for contributions towards necessary infrastructure, services, and facilities, and should take account of this when negotiating the price paid for land. The proposed interventions listed in Schedule 1 will be subject to further relevant detailed appraisal and design work which will inform the requirements for developer contributions for their appraisal and/or delivery.

Legend:
- Strategic Growth Areas
- Rail Lines
- Trunk Roads
- A Roads
- Local Growth and Diversification Areas
- Regeneration Priority Area

Map labels: Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh, Turriff, Peterhead, Huntly, Ellon, Inverurie, Alford, Westhill, Aberdeen, Banchory, Stonehaven, Laurencekirk

Strategic Growth Areas

3.8 The Strategic Growth Areas will be the main focus for development in the area up to 2040. Over this period, we expect that at least 75% of all homes built and employment land developed will be in the Strategic Growth Areas.

3.9 The Strategic Growth Areas outwith Aberdeen City are relatively narrow, up to 5 kilometres wide, and the Local Development Plans will take the final view on which settlements and sites are within a Strategic Growth Area.

3.10 The Strategic Growth Areas will make housing, employment opportunities and services sustainable by ensuring that these uses are in close proximity to each other and connected by high quality active travel networks and public transport.

3.11 It will therefore be important for Local Development Plans to explore opportunities to expand and connect strategic walking and cycle networks, building on current and planned networks where these are available. This should provide opportunities to improve the natural environment by linking habitats and open spaces through green infrastructure and networks. Appropriate new planting will also play an important role. These networks should consider how best to link in with plans for a National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network as they are developed in conjunction with the Regional and Local Transport Strategies.

3.12 All four Strategic Growth Areas will focus on creating sustainable mixed communities with the services, facilities and infrastructure necessary for the 21st century. This will include new and improved infrastructure, such as:

- new or extended primary and secondary schools;
- multifunctional green networks and green spaces, including areas for food growing;
- improvements to roads and railways as well as active travel (walking / cycling) and bus networks;
- upgrades to energy networks;
- enhanced digital connections; and,
- new water supply and waste-water systems.

3.13 In addition, the City Region Deal has identified the need for three key Innovation Hub projects, and it is expected that these will be located within the Strategic Growth Areas. The location of these Hubs should be identified by the Local Development Plans.

- Oil & Gas Technology Centre
- Agri-Food and Nutrition Hub for Innovation
- Bio-Therapeutic Hub for Innovation

3.14 The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route provides a new strategic route to improve travel in and around the City Region and connects the four Strategic Growth Areas. Local Development Plans must ensure that the transport benefits created by the road are "locked in" and that the capacity of the route, and its junctions, is not negatively affected by development. Local Development Plans, in line with the sequential test and Town Centre First Principle, should expressly avoid any new development that would result in a negative impact on the route or any junction. Any new development adjacent to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, including the Fastlink to Stonehaven, will be resisted unless it has been properly considered through the Development Plan process, and any proposals which are not identified by a Local Development Plan will generally not be supported.
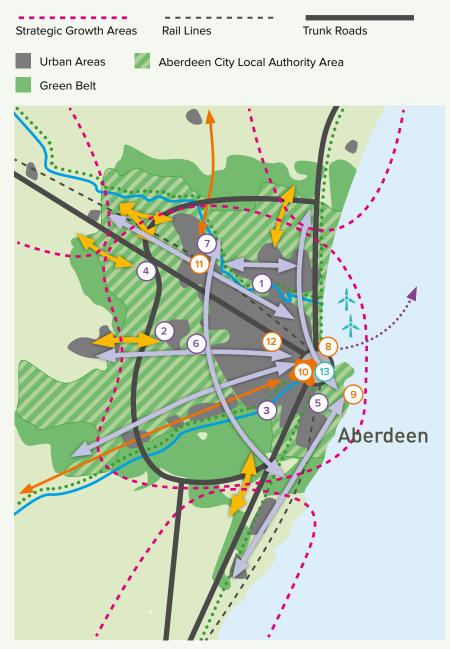
Peterhead Port

Strategic Growth Area: Aberdeen City

3.15 Aberdeen is Scotland's third-largest city and the regional centre for employment, retail, culture, health and higher education as well as being the City Region's main transport hub – with road, rail, sea and air links.

3.16 Since the approval of the last Strategic Development Plan, large projects such as the new Aberdeen South Harbour at Bay of Nigg, the development of TECA – The Events Complex Aberdeen, and the commitment towards provision of a new Energy From Waste plant continue to demonstrate a drive towards future growth and diversification.

3.17 During the lifetime of this Plan a new regional mortuary will be required in order to address capacity and other technical constraints at the existing facility on Queen Street. The preferred location for the new facility is within the existing Aberdeen Royal Infirmary site at Foresterhill. Aberdeen City Council should work with NHS Grampian and other agencies to ensure a suitable location can be identified for this facility in the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan.

City Centre Transformation Zone

3.18 Aberdeen City Centre is an important asset for the City Region and must continue to be enhanced and promoted. We need to take determined action to create a City Centre to be proud of, and which reflects the global status and ambitions of the city and the wider region. The City Centre will be promoted through excellent public transport links and by minimising the impact of traffic.

3.19 A City Centre Transformation Zone is identified by this Plan to build on existing work undertaken by the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme and the Business Improvement District.

3.20 Eight objectives are included within the City Centre Masterplan to provide a framework for addressing the challenges facing the area:

- Changing perceptions and promoting the City as more than just an energy hub.

- Growing the City Centre employment base by promoting the area as a centre for business, trade, leisure, innovation and enterprise.

- A metropolitan outlook and recognition of the fact that proposals for the City Centre will have a wider metropolitan context across the City Region.

- Creating a living city for everyone by increasing the amount of housing available in the city centre, and by creating more "liveable" environments to ensure that City Centre living is an attractive choice.

- Promoting the "Made in Aberdeen" brand by ensuring the City Centre retains its distinctiveness and embraces local character.

- Revealing waterfronts by reconnecting the City Centre with the harbour, beach and rivers.

- Striving to become a technologically advanced and environmentally responsible City.

- Promoting cultural identify and a culturally distinctive place.

Strategic Growth Areas

Rail Lines

Trunk Roads

Urban Areas

Aberdeen City Local Authority Area

Green Belt

Movement:

1 Intervention - Persley Bridge / Parkway

2 Intervention - Kingswells

3 Intervention - River Dee Link

4 Intervention - A96 Dualling

5 Intervention - A956

6 Intervention - A944

7 Aberdeen International Airport

Place:

8 Aberdeen Harbour

9 Aberdeen South Harbour / Cruise Terminal

10 City Centre Transformation Zone and Business Improvement District

11 TECA - The Event Complex Aberdeen

12 North & North East Mortuary Project

Infrastructure:

13 City Fibre Project

Aberdeen Bay, European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre

Connections:

Improved Cross City Connections for Active Travel

Improved Cross Boundary Connections for Active Travel / Green Networks

National / International Maritime Links

Rivers – Blue / Green Corridors

Walking / Active Travel Opportunities / Coastal Trail

Formartine & Buchan Way / Deeside Way

3.21 It will be important for the public and private sector to work together to ensure these objectives can be realised. Prospects for a Low Emission Zone and individual projects set out in the City Centre Masterplan should be recognised within the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. Development proposals outwith the City Centre that would undermine its regional role should be strongly resisted.

Connections

3.22 Aberdeen Harbour is a vital gateway for the regional economy and provides important passenger and freight links to the Northern Isles, Scandinavian, Europe and further afield. Work has commenced on the £350 million development of a new Aberdeen South Harbour at Bay of Nigg, which has been identified as a National Development. This work is expected to be completed in 2020 and will provide facilities which are in addition to the existing harbour. Work undertaken as part of the City Region Deal will identify what infrastructure will be required to ensure the benefits of the harbour developments are maximised.

3.23 The Aberdeen City Local Development Plan will need to consider how to maximise the opportunities presented by the two harbours by way of detailed masterplanning exercises, taking into account the wider transformation of Aberdeen City Centre and the potential to improve existing business and industrial land in the surrounding area. The Local Development Plan should also consider other opportunities for 'blue growth' within this area, and how best to promote sustainable tourism proposals in particular.

3.24 In terms of public transport, a wide range of measures will be required to either tackle existing problems or support the growth planned in this Strategic Growth Area over the Plan period. The Cross City Transport Connections Study will inform opportunities to provide a cross-city public transport service and enhance accessibility to more destinations by public transport and active travel modes.

3.25 The planned completion of the railway dualling works between Aberdeen and Inverurie also means there are opportunities for improved rail services into the City. In conjunction with a new Regional Transport Strategy, work should be undertaken to assess the feasibility of additional local rail stations around Aberdeen. When planning for future transport networks, opportunities to incorporate infrastructure improvements should be pursued.

3.26 Tackling road congestion will be another key consideration within the City, and reducing the effect of transport on the environment (including improving air quality) is particularly important. Providing safe active travel opportunities and promoting the connectivity of green networks will also be a key part of tackling road congestion.

Aberdeen Harbour

Marischal Square, Aberdeen
Credit: Muse Developments

Strategic Growth Area: Aberdeen to Peterhead

3.27   This area includes the Energetica Corridor and has important strategic assets, high environmental quality and significant potential for development. The focus for this Strategic Growth Areas is on developing and diversifying the economy with a strong focus on the quality of development and placemaking. Upgrading the A90 to reduce safety concerns and improve journey times will be key to unlocking this area's potential.

3.28   There are a number of National Developments identified within this area which the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan must make provision for. These include:

- the development of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Technology at Peterhead Power Station (Boddam), with a potential pipeline extension to St Fergus;

- a key role for Peterhead as a National Renewable Infrastructure Site and "Energy Hub"; and,

- the expected landfall for offshore High Voltage Energy Transmission Networks to Norway and England.

3.29   At St Fergus, the gas terminal continues to play an important role. The Acorn Project at St Fergus creates the opportunity for low carbon hydrogen production, using natural gas and capturing the carbon dioxide (CO_2) for storage offshore deep underground. Around 35% of all the United Kingdom's natural gas comes ashore at St Fergus, making it an ideal site for a major hydrogen production hub. It is hoped that hydrogen from St Fergus will be blended directly into the gas grid and enable phased decarbonisation of heat. Ensuring that the Terminal's integrity is safeguarded from development which could compromise operations or future growth will therefore be important.

3.30   The northern end of this Strategic Growth Area can play an important role in the economic future of the City Region by way of the following:

- Peterhead Port offers deep-water, decommissioning and off-shore renewable opportunities. We need to embrace these opportunities, and also build on the £51 million expansion of the Port to develop the facility into a fully-integrated fishing hub.

- A Simplified Planning Zone at Peterhead South is in the process of development, and will have a focus on employment generation and economic development.

- The Peterhead Town Centre Business Improvement District provides an opportunity for local businesses to work together, secure investment and improve the economic viability of the town and its Centre.

3.31   Within the central and southern parts of this Strategic Growth Area it will be important to realise economic potential by embracing opportunities for tourism. It will also be important to consider any further opportunities for development at Ellon following the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the A90 Balmedie to Tipperty dual carriageway.

3.32   Aberdeenshire Council should also continue to work with Nestrans to investigate rail links to Buchan.

Strategic Growth Area - Aberdeen to Peterhead

Legend:

Strategic Growth Areas
Rail Lines
Trunk Roads

Regeneration Priority Area
Green Belt
Aberdeen City Local Authority Area

Movement:

1 A952 to Fraserburgh Improvements

2 A90 (North) Corridor Improvements

Place:

3 Peterhead Town Centre Business Improvement District

4 Peterhead Port

Infrastructure:

5 North Connect
Long Haven Bay (south of Peterhead) towards Hardangerfjord in Western Norway

6 Boddam - Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Network and Thermal Generation

7 St Fergus Gas Terminal

········ Carbon Capture and Storage Infrastructure

——— High Voltage Energy Transmission Network Lines

⚡ Hywind Scotland

8 Decommissioning Centre of Excellence

9 Moray Offshore Renewable Power / Operations and Maintenance Base

Connections:

——— Green Network Opportunities

⟷ Improved Cross Boundary Connections for Active Travel/Green Networks

⟷ Formartine & Buchan Way

⟷ Strategic Bike Project

——— River - Blue / Green Corridor
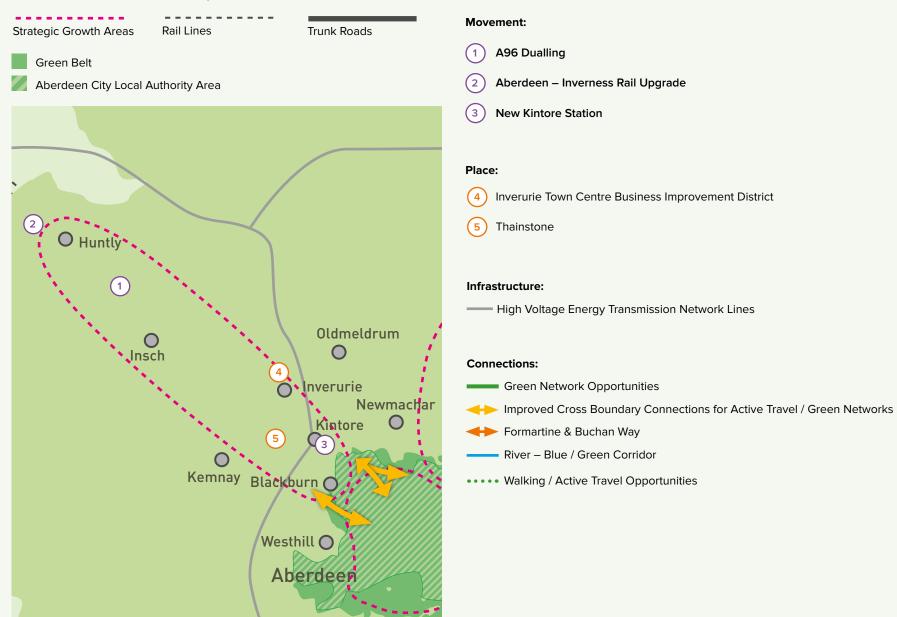
········ Walking / Active Travel Opportunities/ Coastal Trail

Strategic Growth Area: Aberdeen to Huntly

3.33 This area contains several thriving Aberdeenshire communities, and significant development will take place in the road and rail corridor stretching from Huntly to Blackburn over the Plan period.

3.34 The Inverurie Business Improvement District aims to capitalise on existing resources and build a stronger, more sustainable, town for the future. This Strategic Growth area will also be boosted by the expansion of the Thainstone Business Park to create an agricultural hub for the whole City Region, and the subsequent opportunities to move existing industrial and agricultural uses out of Inverurie.

3.35 The Strategic Growth Area is served by a dual carriageway to Aberdeen, and the Scottish Government has committed to upgrading the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness over the lifetime of this Plan. The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan should explore opportunities for increasing active travel use and connections to settlements through green networks along the A96 corridor.

3.36 The A96 dualling project is likely to provide for grade separated junctions, including those at Inverurie, with options considered for bypassing the town. Until this infrastructure is in place, development opportunities in this area will likely be limited.

3.37 Significant phased improvements are also planned to the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line, with more services, shorter journey times and further improvements for a more local rail service. This will build on the opening of a new rail station at Kintore.

Thainstone Agricultural Centre

Figure 4:

Strategic Growth Area - Aberdeen to Huntly

- - - - - - (pink dashed) Strategic Growth Areas
- - - - - - (black dashed) Rail Lines
━━━━━ Trunk Roads

■ Green Belt

▨ Aberdeen City Local Authority Area

Movement:

(1) **A96 Dualling**

(2) **Aberdeen – Inverness Rail Upgrade**

(3) **New Kintore Station**

Place:

(4) Inverurie Town Centre Business Improvement District

(5) Thainstone

Infrastructure:

━━━━━ High Voltage Energy Transmission Network Lines

Connections:

━━━━━ Green Network Opportunities

⬌ Improved Cross Boundary Connections for Active Travel / Green Networks

⬌ Formartine & Buchan Way

━━━━━ River – Blue / Green Corridor

····· Walking / Active Travel Opportunities

Strategic Growth Area: Aberdeen to Laurencekirk

3.38 We are proposing significant new development in the northern part of this Strategic Growth Area early in the Plan period. A new settlement is already under construction at Chapelton, and this has the potential to set a new placemaking standard for future development in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and beyond.

3.39 The opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the "Fastlink" will enhance the desirability of many towns in this Strategic Growth Area, as these locations become more accessible from destinations across the City Region. Stonehaven, Portlethen, Chapleton and Newtonhill are towns which should see particular benefits.

3.40 The City Region Deal's Strategic Transport Appraisal will consider the need for enhancements along the A90 to improve safety, reduce journey times and increase resilience and competitiveness through greater connectivity. Towards the southern end of this Strategic Growth Area, the Scottish Government has already committed to provide £24 million for the design and construction of a new grade-separated junction at Laurencekirk. This funding is in addition to that already agreed through the City Region Deal. This junction will result in significant benefits to Laurencekirk and the surrounding area (potentially including parts of the area covered by the neighbouring TAYPlan Strategic Development Plan to the south) and will help to "unlock" the development of around 800 new homes around the town in the first period of this Plan.

3.41 The Scottish Government has also committed to reduced rail journey times to the Central Belt during the first period of this Plan, and opportunities for enhanced local rail services should also be investigated.

3.42 Opportunities for the provision and enhancement of active travel networks in this Strategic Growth Area should be explored by the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

Chapelton

Figure 5:

Strategic Growth Area - Aberdeen to Laurencekirk

Legend

- - - - - Strategic Growth Areas
- - - - - Rail Lines
━━━━━ Trunk Roads

■ Green Belt
▨ Aberdeen City Local Authority Area

Movement:

① Rail improvements to Central Belt

② A90 Junction Improvements

③ A90 Corridor Improvements

Infrastructure:

④ Stonehaven Flood Protection Scheme

✦ Kincardine Offshore Wind Farm

━━━ High Voltage Energy Transmission Network Lines

Connections:

━━━ Green Network Opportunities

⬌ Improved Cross Boundary Connections for Active Travel / Green Networks

•••••• Walking / Active Travel Opportunities / Coastal Trail

Westhill

Local Growth and Diversification Areas

3.43   Most of Aberdeenshire is identified in this Plan for Local Growth and Diversification in order to recognise the vital role that these Areas play to the Region's economy. Within these Areas are many important assets to the City Region and Scotland as a whole, providing areas of high environmental quality, specialist employment areas, as well as significant opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation. These Areas also include an important supply of rich agricultural land which is essential for food production.

3.44   Fishing, farming and forestry are important sectors of the economy across the Local Growth and Diversification Areas, however economic diversification and growth is needed in order to meet local needs, with tourist-related developments having an important role to play. Opportunities to service the renewable energy industry will also be key to promote, develop and encourage.

3.45   Encouraging sustainable mixed communities and sustainable economic growth will be an essential part of making sure the Local Growth and Diversification Areas continue to contribute positively to the wider City Region. The scale and level of opportunities for new growth will vary from place to place, with larger towns such as Fraserburgh, Alford, Turriff, Banchory and Westhill being the main focus for new investment. Levels of growth in individual settlements should relate to local needs, with different places having different potential.

3.46   Across these Areas there will continue to be pressure for housing in the countryside that is not connected to existing settlements. This pressure will be dealt with through the Rural Policies of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, which should approach this by focusing new housing in, or as an extension to, existing settlements, particularly those which are well served by public transport. This will help to create and maintain successful and sustainable places and protect agricultural land for food production.

3.47   All development that meets more than local needs will generally be located within the Strategic Growth Areas. However in some cases, development which aims to meet more than local needs may be appropriate in the Local Growth and Diversification Areas. In these cases, developers will need to justify this against the vision, aims, strategy, and targets of this Plan. Meeting sustainable economic or regeneration needs could be part of this justification.

3.48   Increasing tree cover (both community and commercial) can bring significant environmental, economic, social and community benefits, particularly 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 tree cover across Aberdeenshire while respecting the competing interests for land. This will contribute to a wider Scottish Government target of increasing tree cover and timber production, and recognising the role of woodland in mitigating climate change.

Tractor ploughing field near Echt

Macduff Harbour

Regeneration

3.49 Regeneration is another vital part of the Spatial Strategy of this Plan. Positive actions are needed to support ongoing efforts, such as through the Local Outcome Improvement Plans, and will involve partnership working across the public, private and voluntary sectors which should focus on achieving clear results.

3.50 Although there are a number of individual, particularly rural, communities across the City Region that could benefit from some type of regeneration, the vibrant and inclusive northern coastal towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead are specifically identified by this Strategic Development Plan as priority areas. This will support Aberdeenshire Council's wider strategy for these North Coast Communities.

3.51 In this context, we need to improve road infrastructure and links to and from the Northern Coastal Communities, in particular the A952 to Fraserburgh, the A90 to Peterhead and the A947 to Banff and Macduff.

3.52 Local partnerships have already been established in each of the four priority towns, and an individual Vision and Action Plan prepared for each. The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan should consider the Vision and Action Plans for each of these towns when considering opportunities to focus growth and new investment.

3.53 Although each town has its own individual priorities, common themes across all are to diversify and grow the economy, build on local community spirit and enhance feelings of a distinctive place, and to work together to become better connected destinations.

3.54 These towns have the benefit of an impressive coastal setting and rich maritime history, and opportunities should be taken to make the most of this coastal setting. Protecting and enhancing the significant natural and historic assets in these towns will help to boost opportunities for tourism. The Formartine and Buchan Way is one of 'Scotland's Great Trails'. It connects with these towns and provides a key tourism opportunity.

3.55 The opportunities for harbours along the North Coast to play a vital role in supplying services to offshore renewable energy facilities in the Moray Firth should also be recognised, and proposals encouraged where appropriate. Fraserburgh in particular has significant opportunities to support the delivery of offshore windfarms in the Moray Firth.

3.56 The challenges and opportunities in these towns are wide-ranging and will demand a response appropriate to their individual circumstances. Aberdeenshire Council must do everything in its power to explore external funding opportunities to bring about positive change. This change must bring lasting benefits and have positive effects on vitality and viability of these towns. Improving the economy, environmental quality, accessibility, employment opportunities and the competitiveness of business should play an important role.

4. Our Communities

Objective

To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the City Region a more attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses to remain, grow and relocate to.

Placemaking

4.1   To achieve our overall Vision we must set the highest standards for placemaking, urban and rural design, promote a mix of land uses, use land more efficiently, and prioritise the re-use of previously developed land and protect existing habitats.

4.2   Good, distinctive, resilient places can play a fundamental role in attracting investment and supporting sustainable economic growth across the City Region. Quality of environment and place provides a cornerstone for quality of life and can promote a sense of identity.

4.3   Working with local people and community planning partners, we must focus on creating sustainable and mixed communities. Retail, employment, education, health, leisure, open space, transport and housing are all needed to create successful places and must be considered holistically. The contribution of the historic and natural environment must be properly recognised.

4.4   For this to be achieved, everyone involved in the process will need to show a commitment to quality and set the highest standards, aiming always for excellence. The Place Standard Tool is an effective tool to engage people in conversations about what places should look like and should be utilised wherever appropriate.

4.5   It is important that new development meets the needs of the whole community, including the specific needs of the Gypsy Traveller Community. With an ageing population and smaller households, new development should also meet the changing needs of society over its whole life and give regard to greater mix, size and types of new homes.   These are important considerations in terms of access to facilities, but also the provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure such as high-quality public and private amenity spaces. The provision of social care and support homes in particular can play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of communities by working to prevent fuel poverty and promote social inclusion.

4.6   Providing affordable housing is critical to delivering sustainable mixed communities. Scottish Government affordable housing funding has increased significantly over the period 2016 to 2020 to assist with meeting national targets for the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes by 2021. This Plan assumes that these funding levels will be maintained. There is, however, currently a need for significantly more affordable housing in the City Region than there is funding available. Meeting the targets in this Plan will need considerable effort, coordination and creativity, and for the public and private sectors to work together. Local Housing Strategies will consider in more detail how to provide affordable housing, and the two Councils will progress their own programmes to deliver more affordable and social housing in their areas.

4.7 Communities must be mixed in terms of the type and size of homes, as well as tenure and cost. We need to make sure that new homes are well designed and that they respect local distinctiveness and promote and improve the existing qualities of the area. Larger developments must provide a mix of house sizes, from starter homes to large detached houses, and all developments must consider opportunities to reduce fuel poverty and address the impact of climate change. Developments should also make it easy for people to access green and open space, including places where people can enjoy nature and take advantage of opportunities for food growing, such as allotments and community orchards.

4.8 Land brought forward for housing must be used efficiently, and brownfield sites and regeneration areas should be given priority. Through this process, we should create opportunities for new development that will close the gap between the wealthiest and most disadvantaged areas of the City Region. Opportunities for redeveloping brownfield sites will vary from place to place and over time but need to be a clear priority.

Stoneywood Estate, Aberdeen

Targets

- To increase the range, quality and design of new development across the City Region, in order to create better places.

- For at least 40% of all new housing in Aberdeen City to be on brownfield sites.

- In the Strategic Growth Areas, housing development on sites larger than one hectare should generally have no less than 30 dwellings per hectare. In the Aberdeen City Strategic Growth Area this target should increase to generally no less than 50 dwellings per hectare.

- For new housing to meet the needs of the whole community by providing appropriate levels of affordable housing (generally no more than 25%) and an appropriate mix of types and sizes of homes.

How to Meet the Targets

- Local Development Plans will take account of these targets when deciding how and where to identify land for development.

- Local design policies and guidance will emphasise the importance of ensuring high quality architecture and urban and rural design in the delivery of great places.

- The two Councils will consider innovative ways to ensure the delivery of affordable housing in order to address the identified need. This could include the use of self-build plots.

Delivery of New Homes

4.9 The population of the City Region has been growing for a number of years and, over the next 20 years, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are both projected to have population increases above the overall Scottish growth rate. However, as well as its total size, the age range of the population also presents challenges for the years ahead, as not all age groups are projected to grow at the same rate. For example, growth in the under 15 population is much stronger in Aberdeen City whilst growth in the over 65 population is stronger in Aberdeenshire. This will have a significant effect on the economy of the area in terms of the available workforce, as well as the way in which services are provided.

4.10 Table 1 illustrates the Housing Supply Target for the City Region, as informed by the Principal Scenario from the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2017. The Housing Supply Target is divided into Market and Affordable Sectors, and is divided for each Council and Housing Market Area. The total Housing Supply Target identifies a need for approximately 55,000 new homes over the period to 2040.

4.11 The Housing Land Requirement, Table 2, sets out a generous level of housing land to try and ensure that the Housing Supply Target can be met. An increase to the Housing Supply Target of 10% "generosity" is focussed on the 2016 to 2019 period with 20% applied for the period 2020 to 2032 to cover the next Local Development Plans. This will provide a generous land supply without compromising the viability of allocated sites or undermining existing allocations. In the period 2033 to 2040 a 10% "generosity" level has been added. The allowances for this period are indicative and will be subject to future review.

4.12 A total Housing Land Requirement of just over 64,000 new homes over the period to 2040 will make sure that sufficient land is available at a local level to cope with higher levels of demand than we currently expect, without resulting in an excess oversupply.

4.13 Both the Housing Supply Target and the Housing Land Requirement are informed by previous Aberdeen City and Shire Housing Land Audits, and the figures set are considered to be realistic and deliverable in terms of historic rates of delivery and future anticipated growth, while remaining ambitious.

4.14 Housing Land Audit data indicates that there is sufficient housing land already available to meet this Housing Land Requirement for both the Aberdeen and Rural Housing Market Areas for the period 2020 to 2032 at current rates of completion. This is a result of the considerable allocations made under the Housing Land Requirements of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and the Strategic Development Plan 2014.

4.15 As such, it is possible that no further housing land allocations could be made for the next Local Development Plans. However; a considerable proportion of current allocations are strategic allocations, and if any of these sites failed to come forward, there is a risk that the housing land supply may not be maintained. As such, additional allocations are proposed over the period 2020 to 2032, with a Strategic Reserve of housing land that may be identified for the period 2033 to 2040.

Table 1: Housing Supply Target by Housing Market Area, Local Authority and Tenure Mix										
	2016 - 2019			2020 - 2032			2033 - 2040			2016 - 2040
	Affordable	Market	Total	Affordable	Market	Total	Affordable	Market	Total	Global Total
Aberdeen Housing Market Area	2,050	3,800	**5,850**	8,008	14,872	**22,880**	5,242	9,734	**14,976**	**43,706**
Rural Housing Market Area	680	1,270	**1,950**	2,002	3,718	**5,720**	1,310	2,434	**3,744**	**11,414**
Aberdeen City Council	1,365	2,535	**3,900**	5,005	9,295	**14,300**	3,276	6,084	**9,360**	**27,560**
Aberdeenshire Council	1,365	2,535	**3,900**	5,005	9,295	**14,300**	3,276	6,084	**9,360**	**27,560**
Aberdeen City and Shire — Total	2,730	5,070	**7,800**	10,010	18,590	**28,600**	6,552	12,168	**18,720**	**55,120**

Note - components may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Table 2: Housing Land Requirement by Housing Market Area, Local Authority and Tenure Mix										
	2016 - 2019			2020 - 2032			2033 - 2040			2016 - 2040
	Affordable	Market	Total	Affordable	Market	Total	Affordable	Market	Total	Global Total
Aberdeen Housing Market Area	2,256	4,180	**6,436**	9,610	17,846	**27,456**	5,766	10,708	**16,474**	**50,366**
Rural Housing Market Area	748	1,396	**2,144**	2,402	4,462	**6,864**	1,442	2,676	**4,118**	**13,126**
Aberdeen City Council	1,502	2,788	**4,290**	6,006	11,154	**17,160**	3,604	6,692	**10,296**	**31,746**
Aberdeenshire Council	1,502	2,788	**4,290**	6,006	11,154	**17,160**	3,604	6,692	**10,296**	**31,746**
Aberdeen City and Shire — Total	3,004	5,576	**8,580**	12,012	22,308	**34,320**	7,208	13,384	**20,592**	**63,492**

Note - components may not sum to totals due to rounding.

	Table 3: Local Development Plan Housing Allowances					
	Housing Supply		Allowances			
	Housing Supply 2016 - 2032 *1	Housing Supply 2032 - 2040 *2	Housing Allowances 2020 - 2032	Housing Allowances 2033 - 2035	Housing Allowances 2036 - 2040	Total Allowances
Aberdeen Housing Market Area	26,325	2,767	8,172	7,200	6,402	21,774
Rural Housing Market Area	6,361	821	2,042	1,800	1,602	5,444
Aberdeen City Council	16,719	1,733	5,107	4,500	4,002	13,609
Aberdeenshire Council	15,967	1,855	5,107	4,500	4,002	13,609
Totals	32,686	3,588	10,214	9,000	8,004	27,218
	36,274		27,218			
Housing Land Requirement	63,492					

*Comprising completions 2016-2018 (6,223); effective supply 2019-2023 (13,067); programming of sites 2024 to 2026 (5,876); and extrapolated programming 2027 to 2032 (7,520) all based on the agreed 2019 housing land audit.

*2 Compiled from extrapolated programming from the agreed 2019 housing land audit.
Note – components may not sum to totals due to rounding. Allowances will not include sites of less than 5 homes.

4.16   In order to support sustainable communities, the best use of infrastructure, and increased levels of housing delivery, these allocations are divided on an 80% / 20% basis between the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and the Rural Housing Market Area respectively.

4.17   It is important that the scale of these allocations does not undermine the deliverability and viability of the effective housing land supply. As such, the 2020 to 2032 period makes provision for moderate allocations, with levels increasing in the second half of the Plan period as the effective supply is delivered and additional housing land supply is required.

4.18   Local Development Plans must identify allocations for the period 2020 to 2032 which are deliverable within the timeframe of this period. These allocations should be focused within the Strategic Growth Areas, but ensure appropriate levels of local growth can be provided across the rest of City Region, with a specific focus on those towns named by this Plan as Regeneration Priority Areas (Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead). New allocations should consider opportunities to reuse brownfield land and attempt to utilise the current "constrained" supply in the first instance. However; it is likely that some new development will need to take place on greenfield sites in order to help deliver our Vision and future strategy for growth. Reducing travel distances and making walking, cycling and public transport more attractive to people will be important considerations, particularly for any new greenfield development sites that are proposed.

4.19   Allocations should be of a scale which would not inhibit the delivery of current strategic allocations and should not be extensions to any existing, strategic, development sites that have been subject to a masterplanning exercise.   It will be up to the Local Development Plans to determine whether a proposal is "small scale" or not, giving due regard to its context and deliverability. Additionally, the affordable requirements of these allocations should be delivered in the early stages of development.

4.20   Local Development Plans may choose to make provision for additional Strategic Reserves for Housing for the period 2033 to 2040 in line with Table 3, but this is not a requirement.

4.21   In exceptional circumstances, for example if it is essential to put this Plan's Vision or Spatial Strategy into practice, planning applications for planning permission may be considered before 2033 on land identified as Strategic Reserve for Housing. Both the Strategic Development Planning Authority and the relevant Council should seek to agree to any such proposal before permission is granted. Any permission may have conditions which control the rate of development.

Targets

*   For Local Developments Plans to maintain a 5-year supply of effective land for housing at all times.

How to Meet the Targets

*   Both Councils will make land available for housing through Local Development Plans in line with the Spatial Strategy and Table 3 of this Plan.
*   Where necessary, Action Programmes, developer contributions and compulsory purchase powers should be used to focus attention on delivering new housing development and the associated necessary infrastructure.

Figure 6:

Housing Market Areas

- - - - Strategic Growth Areas

⬜ Local Growth and Diversification Areas

——— Trunk Roads

▨ Regeneration Priority Area

🟧 Aberdeen Housing Market Area (80%)

🟩 Rural Housing Market Area (20%)

Banff   Macduff   Fraserburgh

20%

Turriff

Huntly

Peterhead

Ellon

Inverurie

80%

Alford

Westhill   Aberdeen

Banchory

Stonehaven

Laurencekirk

Aberdeen Beach

5. Our Economy

5.1   To promote a diverse regional economy we will have to build on our existing assets, particularly in the field of innovative energy, and put into practice new ideas, including those from our universities, research organisations and our skilled workforce. We also need to improve our connections through upgrades to our transport and high speed digital communications networks.

5.2   A Regional Economic Strategy sets out a vision for the economic future of the City Region for the next 20 years. The ambition of the Strategy is to build upon the reputation of the area as an international operations base for oil and gas and to become a world-leading offshore technology base. The Strategy supports a broadening and diversification of our economy across other sectors – including renewables, tourism, food and drink, fisheries, agriculture, life sciences and the creative industries.

Tourism

5.3   Tourism is a key sector of the economy, and 1 in 10 of Scottish tourism jobs are based in the City Region. In order to support the sustainable growth of the visitor economy, specific support is given by this Plan to protecting and enhancing existing nationally and regionally important locations for tourism and recreational development.

5.4   The Tourism Destination Strategy for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (2018-2023) set an ambition to grow visitor spend in the City Region to £1 billion per year by 2023. Significant opportunities exist to further grow this sector, including more short breaks, active holidays, converting business visitors to leisure visitors, extending overnight stays and capitalising on direct flights from Aberdeen International Airport to the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe.

5.5   Local Development Plans should consider opportunities to ensure the importance of sustainable tourism to the regional economy is properly recognised and safeguarded. The importance that the historic and natural environment makes to sustainable tourism must also, however, be properly recognised.

Prime Four, Kingswells

Town Centre First

5.6 The Town Centre First Principle should be applied when considering significant proposals for retail, commercial leisure, offices and for community and cultural facilities. It is important that retail services throughout the City Region are directed to guarantee the vitality and viability of our town centres, while creating opportunities for growth in the economy. It is particularly important that we continue to support the transformation of Aberdeen City Centre, and make sure that this key regional asset fulfils its potential. Local development plans will identify a network of centres, which is likely to include the city centre, town centres, local centres and commercial centres and be organised as a hierarchy.

Decommissioning

5.7 Building on the opening of the National Decommissioning Centre of Excellence in Newburgh, there will be opportunities for different levels and types of decommissioning across the City Region in order to enhance the onshore decommissioning market. This will include opportunities for decommissioning of renewable energy infrastructure, for example wind turbines, as well as North Sea Infrastructure related to oil and gas.

5.8 The treatment, storage, management and export of decommissioned waste materials, and proposals which allow the reuse of these materials should be encouraged in appropriate locations where residential amenity can be protected. It will also be important to ensure that appropriate proposals for business and office space can be accommodated to allow decommissioning projects to be effectively managed.

Land for Business

5.9 Making sure that there is enough of the right type of land for business use, in the right places, will give the City Region a competitive advantage.

5.10 Table 4 sets out the existing Employment Land Allocations for the area. These allocations will allow for an appropriate range of locations for business clusters to be provided throughout the Strategic Growth Areas, whilst also encouraging economic development in the Local Growth and Diversification Areas at appropriate levels to meet local need.

5.11 In order to ensure we can plan for growth, Local Development Plans should ensure that Strategic Reserve Land for Employment is provided in line with the allocations set in Tables 4 and 5. In exceptional circumstances, for example if it is essential to put this Plan's Vision or Spatial Strategy into practice, applications for planning permission may be considered before 2033 on land identified as Strategic Reserve for Employment. This will ensure that the supply of employment land can be flexible to future changing economic circumstances. Both the Strategic Development Planning Authority and the relevant Council should seek to agree to any such proposal before permission is granted. Any permission may have conditions which control the rate of development.

5.12 Where new development is proposed adjacent to Employment Land Allocations, the potential impact of that development on existing or future nearby uses must be considered, as well as the potential impact of those existing uses on the new development.

Targets

- To make sure there is at least 60 hectares of marketable land available to businesses at all times in a range of locations within Aberdeen City.

- To make sure there is at least 60 hectares of marketable land available to businesses at all times in a range of places within Strategic Growth Areas in Aberdeenshire.

- For at least 20 hectares of marketable land in the Strategic Growth Areas to be of a standard which will attract high-quality businesses or be suitable for company headquarters.

How to Meet the Targets

- Local Development Plans must where practicable protect all Employment Land Allocations from other uses.

- Local Development Plans should identify and maintain an appropriate amount of business land for Local Growth and Diversification Areas in Aberdeenshire.

- Both Councils should work in partnership with universities, colleges and other research organisations to help them make as positive a contribution as possible to the area.

- Where appropriate, Action Programmes should be used to identify and co-ordinate the actions needed to make land allocations available to business in line with the Spatial Strategy.

Table 4: Employment Land Allocations (all hectares)		Established Land 2016 *	Marketable Land 2016 *	Minimum Land Available At All Times	Local Development Plan Allocations to 2032	Strategic Reserve Land 2033 - 2040
Aberdeen City Council		269	205	60	105	70
Aberdeenshire Council		558	341	60	150	113
Aberdeen City and Shire	Total	827	546	120	255	183

* Taken from Aberdeen City and Shire Employment Land Audit 2015-2016

Table 5: Employment Land Allocations by Strategic Growth Area (SGA) (all hectares)		Local Development Plan Allocations to 2032	Strategic Reserve Land 2033 - 2040	Total
Aberdeen City SGA		105	70	175
Aberdeen to Peterhead SGA (Blackdog – Peterhead)		45	43	88
Aberdeen to Huntly SGA (Blackburn - Huntly)		42	28	70
Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA (Portlethen – Laurencekirk)		62	42	104
Aberdeen City and Shire	Total	254	183	437

6. Our Resources

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Objective

- To make sure new development safeguards and, where appropriate, enhances the City Region's historic, natural and cultural assets and is within the capacity of the environment.

- To be a City Region which:

  - takes the lead in reducing the amount of emissions and pollutants released into the environment;

  - mitigates and adapts to the effects of climate change and changing weather patterns;

  - limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses; and,

  - Supports and protects our biodiversity.

</div>

Quality of the Environment

6.1   The historic and natural environment is a valuable resource which needs to be protected. Ensuring only appropriate sites are promoted and supported for development, and that only high-quality design is accepted, will make sure that development safeguards and, where appropriate, enhances the historic, natural and cultural assets that the City Region has to offer.

6.2   The important contribution that trees make, whether as natural landscape features, designed landscapes or recreational facilities, cannot be underestimated. Trees provide a valuable ecological resource, as well as a significant contribution to the City Region economy. Trees, forest and woodland cover should be protected and increased where possible. It is particularly important to protect native and ancient semi-natural woodlands and support their restoration.

Flooding, Water Supply and the Coast

6.3   Areas of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are already at risk from flooding and storm surges, but increased risk is expected due to changing and more unpredictable weather patterns, extreme weather events and rising sea levels. Development which avoids areas of flood risk and which improves surface water management will be important in adapting to climate change. Local Development Plans should consider ways to ensure new development can be appropriately "future-proofed" to take into account climate change effects relating to extreme weather. Both Councils will need to work together to deliver a coordinated approach to flood prevention.

6.4   We will need to monitor and take account of the scale of these changes. We will also need to continue to develop adaptation strategies as we consider how and where new developments should be built. River Basin Management Planning at the catchment level should consider strategic options for improved surface water management that contributes to wildlife and ecology, while delivering opportunities to balance surface water flows and provide recharge for rivers and wetlands that may be under environmental pressure.

6.5   Not all water bodies in the City Region currently meet the quality standards required under the European Union Water Framework Directive. River Basin Management Plans promote improvements to water bodies not currently meeting the standards of the Directive, as well as to help maintain the quality of those that currently do. New development should not adversely impact on water quality either during construction or at operational phase. Wherever possible new development should contribute to developing and enhancing blue / green networks and habitat improvement.

Aberdeen Bay, European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre

6.6 The River Dee is an important environmental as well as economic asset, as well as being the region's main source of drinking water. It is designated a Special Area of Conservation reflecting its environmental importance. This resource is under pressure and, as a result, managing the use of water and increasing water efficiency is vital. During and beyond the period of this Plan, the effects of climate change and increasing water demand from development may affect the river. Both Councils will need to work together to reduce impacts on the River Dee. Appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures will have to be taken to deal with this matter. Any variation of the water abstraction licence would be the responsibility of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

6.7 The City Region is home to an extensive coastline which contributes to the regional economy and provides a significant environmental resource. The marine environment is, and will continue to be, important to the economy and much of our coast and inshore waters are important nationally and internationally for their nature conservation value. Increased coastal erosion, the undermining of the land edge, and sea level rises all make the coast more vulnerable to potential dramatic change. For developments that may require a coastal location, the impact on coastal defences and the natural environment will be critical issues to be considered. For the city region there is proposed to be two regional marine partnerships to cover the marine areas of Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, but they have not been established yet. The regional marine partnership work is intended to take forward the National Marine Plan and allow more local ownership and decision-making about specific issues within their respective areas.

Green Belt and Green Networks

6.8 Biodiversity, wildlife habitats and landscape can be vulnerable to the effects of new development. When considering the location and design of new development, we need to focus on protecting and enhancing key features as well as ensuring habitat connectivity. Most importantly, we need to make sure there are no unacceptable adverse effects from proposed development on internationally, nationally or locally designated areas. Biodiversity and the natural environment also underpin much of the City Region's rural economy, as well as the quality of life of its communities.

6.9 The green belt around Aberdeen will continue to protect the character and landscape setting of the City and make sure that development is directed to appropriate locations. It will do so whilst protecting the most important undeveloped areas that contribute to the environment and provide the City with its setting. The green belt is an area that should be positively planned for, and involve integration of approach across Council boundaries. Local Development Plans should promote recreational access, landscape improvement and habitat enhancement within green belt areas and beyond.

6.10 Green infrastructure provides many key environmental services (such as water management, climate change adaptation, habitats, and quality of life and place) as well as recreational opportunities for local communities and associated benefits to health and well-being.

6.11 Green networks connect elements of green infrastructure within and between our towns, villages and cities. Well designed and well located green networks are fundamental to creating sustainable healthy and accessible places, and often serve as active travel routes. Local Development Plans will play a key role in identifying existing and proposing new green networks and, where appropriate, considering enhancement and implementation opportunities, including through new development.

Heritage Assets

6.12 Structures, sites and areas and their appropriate settings are valued for their contribution to the historic environment, they also contribute to a sense of place, the economy and the natural environment and should be protected from unacceptable impacts of development.

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

6.13 Delivering sustainable development and responding to climate change are some of the most serious challenges we will face over the period covered by this Plan. Reducing the causes of climate change (known as mitigation) will be important. However, due to current and past actions, it is also important to put in place a number of measures to address the consequences of climate change as well (known as adaptation).

6.14 To help mitigate climate change, the energy efficiency of buildings needs to be improved in existing as well as new development. All new developments must be designed and built to use resources more efficiently and be located in places with as little negative effect on the environment as possible. Along with increasing the use of renewables, focusing on a fabric first approach and energy-efficiency measures to reduce the demand for energy and improve water efficiency, will be an early step towards achieving carbon-neutral development in the near future. Developments should examine the potential for including, or linking to, combined heat and power schemes or district or community heating schemes, and also ensure the incorporation of low and zero carbon generating technologies wherever appropriate.

6.15 We will also need to tackle the supply of energy during the Plan period. This will involve increasing the supply of heat and power from renewable sources, as well as supporting reduced emissions from existing power stations. There remains some additional capacity for onshore wind, and there is still considerable potential in offshore renewables yet to be realised. This is in addition to opportunities for energy from waste, solar and biomass, as well as ground, water and air source heat pumps. Figure 7 identifies, at a strategic scale, areas with potential for onshore wind farms. Local development plans will provide detailed spatial frameworks indicating the minimum scale to which the framework relates and provide criteria to assess wind energy proposals.

6.16 A more diverse mix of renewable energy sources, along with storage, will be needed if we are to meet Scottish Government renewables targets, make best use of the resources available, and ensure continuity of supply to serve communities and businesses across the City Region. This will mean upgrading key North-East and East Coast electricity transmission lines from 275 kilovolts to 400 kilovolts.

6.17 The City Region also remains committed to Carbon Capture and Storage and the development of hydrogen opportunities, both to maximise the benefits from existing energy resources and energy infrastructure available.

6.18 In terms of waste, our objective is to meet our waste-management needs locally as far as possible and promote the development of a circular economy. This will make sure that the economic, social and environmental value from managing this important resource is kept in the local area, and the environmental costs of transport are kept to a minimum. An Energy from Waste facility is committed for East Altens in Aberdeen, and this will serve the whole City Region.

6.19 While there is no overall need for new landfill space in the Plan area, we may need time extensions at some existing sites to make sure we maintain capacity, make the best use of sites, and restore redundant sites to the highest standards. We should do this while taking into account the effect on communities and the legitimate concerns of residents close to such facilities.

6.20 Construction materials, such as sand and gravel and hard rock, are important to the construction industry and ensuring there is a sufficient supply is important. Where this supply is in proximity to development this reduces transport haulage distances and costs, both carbon and environmental. It is also important to achieve recycling of secondary aggregate (materials from redundant built structures) wherever feasible, for example when the conversion of traditional buildings is not possible. Where materials are available or capable of being made available for re-use, then re-use should be a priority. Recycling of buildings and materials can make a significant contribution to sustainable development and reduce waste.

6.21 Sufficient hard rock aggregate is available across the region with sites identified in local development plans. The position regarding sand and gravel is less clear as availability of sites, demand and the monitoring of use for any large infrastructure project is less easy to gauge. There are also opportunities for recycling of secondary aggregate. Policy should be put in place in the local development plans to allow supplies of construction aggregates to be made available within the plan area to support the development needs of the city region over the plan period. Local development plans should also identify areas of search for minerals and safeguard where practicable all workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value and ensure that these are not sterilised by other development. As an alternative, a criteria based approach may be taken.

Targets

- To make sure that development safeguards and, where appropriate, enhances, the City Region's historic and natural environment, and that development will not lead to its loss or damage.

- To avoid new development where it would prevent water bodies achieving good overall status under the Water Framework Directive.

- To avoid having to increase the amount of water Scottish Water are licensed to take from the River Dee, as a result of the new developments proposed in the Plan.

- For all new developments to be designed to minimise resource demand and incorporate water and energy efficiency measures.

- To reduce waste going to landfill and support the provision of waste treatment facilities and the recycling of waste.
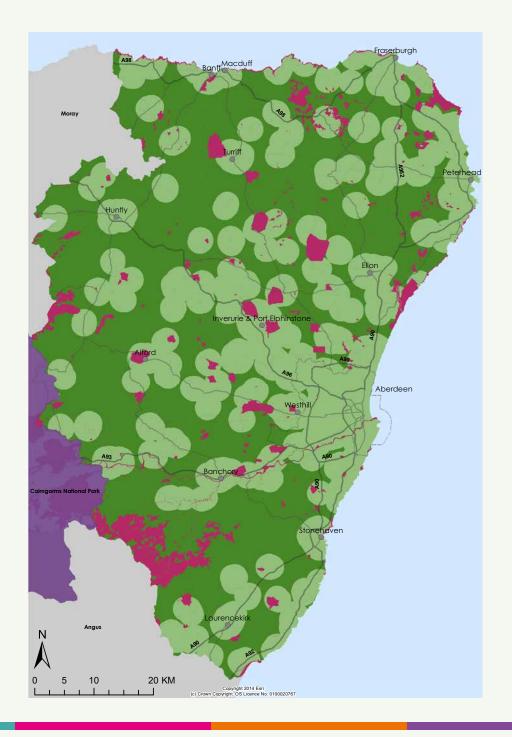
How to Meet the Targets

- Local Development Plans will make sure the City Region's historic and natural environment continues to be protected and improved and that all internationally, nationally and locally designated areas are afforded the appropriate protection.
- Both Councils will take part in the River Basin Management Planning process, particularly as it relates to new development.
- Local Development Plans should take due regard of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which accompanies this Plan and not identify sites for new development which are at an unacceptable risk from flooding. This may exclude brownfield sites which have appropriate flood prevention measures in place. Unacceptable risk will normally be more than a 1 in 200 (0.5%) chance of a flood happening in any year, although this will vary with the type of development being proposed.
- Both Councils will protect and enhance biodiversity, wildlife habitats, landscape, green and water networks and other sensitive areas, and prevent habitat fragmentation, in identifying land for development, preparing masterplans and assessing development proposals.
- Local Development Plans will identify existing and proposed green networks and, where possible, identify opportunities for enhancement and priorities for implementation.
- Both Councils will work with Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water and other stakeholders to better understand the likely medium to long-term effects of climate change in combination with proposed development on the River Dee and the mitigation or adaptation measures that may be required to ensure the river is restored to good status.
- Local Development Plans and masterplans will identify areas where technology can potentially contribute to the supply of renewable energy along with the potential opportunity to use residual or waste heat.
- Both Councils should use masterplans to consider the scope of combined heat and power and district heating schemes to contribute towards using energy more efficiently and in reducing the amount of energy used overall.
- The Councils should work together to identify and put in place appropriate residual waste management solutions.

Spatial Framework for Wind Farms over 15 metres in height

Spatial Framework for onshore wind energy

Group 3 Areas with potential:
Subject to detailed policy considerations
and local constraints

Group 2 Areas of significant protection:
National or international designations
and other nationally important mapped
environmental interests

Group 2 Areas of significant protection:
Areas not exceeding 2km around
settlement envelopes or edges

**Group 1 Areas where Wind farms will
not be acceptable:**
National Parks and National
Scenic Areas

7. Our Connections

Objective

To make sure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel long distances and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making these attractive options.

Transport

7.1   Good connections are critical for the future health of the City Region's economy. Aberdeen International Airport and the region's main ports are key gateways and have a vital role to play in accessing international markets as well as providing lifeline services to Orkney and Shetland. It is vital that these important regional assets are supported in meeting their potential for the regional economy, and that they reflect the Vision for the area.

7.2   Future development should not be allowed to limit the growth of the economy by making the City Region less attractive to business, particularly in relation to congestion and access to roads, ports, airports and rail facilities. This infrastructure needs to be protected and improved, including, where appropriate, supporting freight being transported by rail and sea.

7.3   This Plan will help to promote the link between land use and transport to make sure that all new development is conveniently located and designed in such a way as to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Improving bus and train services and maximising the opportunities for charging and refuelling network for electric and hydrogen vehicles will make sure that people will be encouraged to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport and secure the City Region as a world leader in transport and energy technologies.

7.4   Walking and cycling are the most environmentally friendly forms of transport and should be encouraged as a way to achieve important health, social and environmental benefits. The Plan will help ensure sustainable land use patterns to reduce the need to travel and promote improved connections between both local and strategic active travel networks and public transport.

7.5   Improving access to the City Region is also essential to developing a strong economy and providing better links. The Spatial Strategy promotes opportunities at harbours and the airport. Continued improvements at Aberdeen International Airport form part of a wider National Development for Strategic Airport Enhancements across Scotland, and are needed to improve customer experience and increase the number of travellers, while keeping the effect on the environment to a minimum. Access to the Airport also needs to be improved, and this should be developed through a Surface Access Strategy to encourage better use of public transport.

7.6   The Spatial Strategy also helps to promote accessibility by making sure that future development allows for improvements in the rail and road networks. This will help to improve bus and train services and encourage people to use them.

7.7   A Cumulative Transport Appraisal supports this Plan and identifies interventions to support our growth aspirations. These are set out in Schedule 1. When planning for future transport networks and upgrades, the opportunity to plan for and incorporate other infrastructure improvements (for example utilities, digital connections, waste water systems, sewers) should be considered holistically.

Digital

7.8 As the first city in Scotland to benefit from Gigabit-capable full-fibre broadband, Aberdeen is set to become a beacon of digital transformation throughout the life of this Plan. The roll-out of high-gigabit speed broadband throughout the area is vital for the economy as well as bringing environmental and social benefits. Internet access and significantly improved speeds are essential in both the Strategic Growth Areas and the Local Growth and Diversification Areas. The public and private sectors will need to work together to deliver these improvements.

Energy

7.9 With energy continuing to play a significant role to the economy, energy connections to and from the City Region are important. Energy network improvements are proposed for both on and offshore. The upgrading of the North-East and East Coast electricity transmission lines traverses the City Region from Kintore substation (with connection from the new Rothienorman substation) via Fetteresso substation and southwards towards Central Scotland.

7.10 The volumes of electricity likely to be generated within the City Region also means that new offshore transmission links will also be required. Peterhead will act as a main transmission hub in order to balance renewable energy generation and overcome the intermittency challenges associated with the widespread use of wind energy.

Targets

- For all developments to meet the accessibility standards set out in the Regional and Local Transport Strategies.

- For major employment and service developments in Strategic Growth Areas to show that they are easy to access by walking, cycling or using public transport. The interventions listed in Schedule 1 will be considered through Local and Regional Transport Strategies subject to their appropriate appraisal, review, development and programming, and included in local development plans as appropriate.

- To reduce the percentage of journeys made by car.

- For all new development to have the use of modern, up-to-date high-gigabit speed telecommunications networks, such as fibre optics.

How to Meet the Targets

- The Councils will work with Nestrans to make sure that the implementation of this Strategic Development Plan closely links with the Regional Transport Strategy, the Active Travel Action Plan and the implementation of local active travel routes.

- Local Development Plans will safeguard land for transport proposals identified in the Local and Regional Transport Strategies.

- The Spatial Strategy will direct development to areas that can be accessed by a greater choice of more environmentally friendly forms of transport.

- Both Councils will keep under review Core Path Plans, taking due account of where new developments will take place and issues which affect both Council areas and cross-boundary links.

- Local Development Plan policies will ensure the design and layout of new developments are easily accessed and promote movement within, and links outwith, for walking, cycling and public transport.

- Local Development Plans will consider appropriate ways to encourage the use of modern telecommunications networks in major new developments.

Midmill Primary, Kintore

8. Our Future – How this Plan Can Make a Difference

8.1 This Plan provides a Vision to develop the economy, maintain and improve the quality of our environment, and provide better places and a high quality of life. The scale of the changes needed, and the challenges set by the Vision, especially in relation to sustainable development and climate change, should not be underestimated.

8.2 This Plan sets the framework for other plans and strategies and promotes targets to achieve our aims. Regional and partnership working between the public and private sectors will be essential to put this Plan into practice. One of the main ways of doing so will be through the Local Development Plans prepared separately by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, which must be consistent with this Plan.

8.3 However, Local Development Plans do not have the long-term vision of the Strategic Development Plan, and there may be actions that need to be taken now to allow proposals to be included in future Local Development Plans. We have therefore developed an Action Programme to support this Plan.

8.4 The Action Programme identifies who is to take action, when this will need to happen, and how it will be funded and delivered. This will give people the confidence to make decisions on investment. The Action Programme will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

8.5 We have carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitats Regulations Appraisal for this Plan. However, both Councils will have to carry out more detailed assessments for Local Development Plans to demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally, nationally or locally designated areas. The Habitats Regulations Appraisal of this Plan contains safeguards which will need to be applied at that stage.

Monitoring and Reviewing this Plan

8.6 We recognise that things will change over time, both in response to the direction this Plan promotes and events we are not able to predict. Monitoring must take place to assess our progress in meeting the Plan's objectives and ultimately, the Vision. We will produce a Monitoring Report to assess our progress in meeting the targets set by this Plan.

8.7 A particularly important part of this review will be to ensure the continued success of the Spatial Strategy. This should include consideration of whether changes to the extents of the existing Strategic Growth Areas are required, or if any new locations for growth should be designated in the future, for example in the corridor west of Aberdeen. Over the next five years a range of studies will be undertaken in order to explore whether any amendments to the existing Spatial Strategy will be necessary, and this will include studies on the impact of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route on travel patterns across the City Region. The interventions listed in Schedule 1 shall continue to be reviewed, appropriately appraised, developed and programmed in association with the Regional Transport Strategy, the Local Development Plans, and other delivery mechanisms.

COASTAL PATH
Duthie Park   2
Cove   5

The Torry Battery, Aberdeen

Schedule 1

Summary of Transport Intervention Options (Road, Public Transport and Active Travel)

The table below summarises the transport interventions identified by a Cumulative Transport Appraisal that to mitigate predicted transport impacts and help accommodate the delivery of the Strategic Development Plan. These options relate to a sifted 'long list' of interventions that were considered at a high level in relation to their ability to potentially meet the relevant transport planning objectives (as identified within the Cumulative Transport Appraisal) and in terms of deliverability. Transport options include a range of public transport, active travel, road and multimodal interventions. The appraisal work undertaken to date has been proportionate and based on the approach outlined within Transport Scotland's Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPMTAG). The proposed interventions listed in this schedule will require further appropriate appraisal and review but are, at this stage, required to assist the delivery of the spatial strategy.

Summary of Transport Intervention Options		
Enhanced bus service provision through developing cross city bus services, bus stop review and optimisation of services with new bus priority infrastructure		
Additional rail station car parking capacity at Dyce, Stonehaven, Portlethen, Laurencekirk and Huntly Rail Stations.		
Improved interchange at Inverurie Station		
Potential new rail stations to the north and south of Aberdeen which will be required to be considered through the STAG appraisal process and in accordance with rail station investment guidance		
Range of active travel infrastructure initiatives improving accessibility		
Package of behavioural change initiatives encouraging car-sharing, public transport use and active travel		
Optimisation of the performance of the network and new transport investments following the monitoring and evaluation of post-AWPR travel conditions		
Road traffic signalisation or equivalent capacity enhancement measures at AWPR Cleanhill, A944, A947 and Kingswells North intersections to be considered following monitoring and evaluation period and through further detailed traffic assessment		
Road Junction and operational efficiency enhancements	Urban Corridors	Aberdeen City Centre
		Wellington Road, Persley Bridge & Parkway, Parkhill, A96, Dyce Drive, and Bridge of Dee corridors
	Rural Corridors	A90 North Toll of Birness/Ellon, A90 South and A947 corridors
		Dualling the A96 between the east of Huntly and Aberdeen

Glossary

Action Programme
Documents that set out what needs to be done to put the Development Plan into practice. They show important dates and who is responsible for each action.

Active Travel
An approach to travel that focuses on physical activity such as walking and cycling.

Adaptation
Action to limit how exposed the environment and people are to the effects of climate change.

Adjacent to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
Land next to or adjoining the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route or that may be required for future improvements to the main line of the road, or any of the junctions, within the life of this Plan. Where developments are brought forward that are either adjacent to or have the potential to negatively impact upon the capacity of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and / or its junctions, then said development will be required to be assessed in line with the requirements set out by Transport Scotland.

Affordable Housing
Housing which is made available at a cost below full market value to meet an identified need.

Allocations
Areas of land identified in a Local Development Plan for development.

Biodiversity
The range and diversity of ecosystems; plants, animals, species and genes, and the ecological processes that support them.

Blue Growth
A strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors.

Brownfield Land
Land which has been built on or used in the past for some purpose. Brownfield land does not include private or public gardens, sports pitches, woodlands or open spaces used for leisure and recreation purposes. The grounds of redundant institutions (such as schools or hospitals) shall also not be considered as brownfield land.

City Region Deal
City Region Deals are agreements between the Scottish Government, the United Kingdom Government and Local Government designed to bring about long-term strategic approaches to improving regional economies. Each deal is tailored to its City Region, reflecting its individual economic strengths and weaknesses, and comprises a programme of interventions to support positive, transformative change.

Circular Economy
An all-encompassing approach to life and business where everything has value, and nothing is wasted. In simple terms, it can be explained as "make, use, remake" as opposed to "make, use, dispose."

Climate Change
A large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures.

Compulsory Purchase Powers / Order
Notice issued by the Government or Council to acquire land or buildings for public interest purposes. This may include property to enable private development to achieve a priority aim of the Development Plan.

Constrained Housing Land Supply
Sites or parts of sites which have problems preventing their development.

Development Plan
A generic term for the Strategic Development Plan and/or Local Development Plan, which apply to a planning authority area. Any planning application should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Diversify
Increase the range of sectors of the economy to reduce the risk of relying too much on any one sector.

Dwellings per Hectare
The number of homes that are built on a single hectare of land.

Effective Housing Land Supply
The part of the total Housing Land Supply (sites that are allocated or with planning permission) which is free, or expected to be free, of development constraints and is available for the building of new homes.

Established Housing Land Supply
Sites allocated for housing in the Local Development Plan, unallocated sites with a current planning consent, the remaining capacity of sites under construction, and other sites with agreed potential for development. Within the Established Supply, sites may be classed as effective or constrained.

Energetica
A development initiative between Aberdeen and Peterhead to create a world-class business and residential location within a high-quality environmental setting.

Energy from Waste
The process of creating energy, in the form of electricity or heat (or both), from waste.

Environmental Capacity
A property of the environment and its ability to accommodate a particular activity or rate of an activity without unacceptable impact

Flood Prevention Measures
Examples include walls, embankments, new channels and flood storage areas to try and prevent a site from flooding.

Flood Risk
The combination of the probability of a flood and the potential adverse consequences associated with a flood, for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.

Fuel Poverty
A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use.

Generosity
An additional percentage (usually 10% to 20%) added to the Housing Supply Target in order to create the Housing Land Requirement.

Green Belt
An area of countryside where strict planning controls are in place to protect landscape setting, maintain the identity of a place and provide land for recreation.

Green Infrastructure
Includes the 'green' and 'blue' (water environment) features of the natural and built environments that can provide benefits without being connected. Green features include parks, woodlands, trees, play spaces, allotments, community growing spaces, outdoor sports facilities, churchyards and cemeteries, swales, hedges, verges and gardens. Blue features include rivers, lochs, wetlands, canals, other water courses, ponds, coastal and marine areas including beaches, porous paving and sustainable urban drainage systems.

Green Networks
Connected areas of green infrastructure and open space that together form an integrated and multi-functional network.

Greenfield Land
Land which has not been developed, in either urban or rural areas.

Housing Market Area
A geographical area where the demand for housing is relatively self-contained. There are two Housing Market Areas in the City Region – the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and the Rural Housing Market Area.

Housing Need and Demand Assessment
The Housing Need and Demand Assessment estimates the future number of additional homes to meet existing and future housing need and demand.

Housing Land Requirement
In order to ensure a generous supply of land for housing, the Housing Land Supply is increased by a margin of "generosity" to establish the Housing Land Requirement.

Housing Supply Target
The total number of new housing needed over the Plan period, as informed by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

Infrastructure
The facilities and other items needed to support development. This includes roads, sewage and water facilities, and community infrastructure including education and lifelong learning, health and sports facilities.

Knowledge Economy
Sections of the economy that use knowledge rather than physical resources to create wealth. Examples include education, research, and product development.

Local Development Plan
These are prepared by every local authority in Scotland. They contain detailed policies and sites that have been chosen for development in line with the Strategic Development Plan and after consultation with local communities and other stakeholders. The Local Development Plan will be the main way for planning applications to be assessed.

Low Emission Zone
Low Emission Zones set an environmental limit on certain road spaces, to improve air quality by allowing access to only the cleanest vehicles, particularly at locations where there is public exposure.

Mitigation
Action to reduce carbon dioxide and other harmful substances released into the air as a way of reducing the level of climate change.

National Development
Designated in the National Planning Framework, these are the Scottish Government's priority projects for the development of Scotland.

National Planning Framework
The Scottish Government's strategy for the long-term development of Scotland's towns, cities and countryside. It sets out a vision for Scotland's development for the next 20 to 25 years and designates developments of national importance (National Developments).

Non-Renewable Resources
Resources that will run out and cannot be replaced. Non-renewable energy sources include coal, gas and oil.

Placemaking
A creative, collaborative process that includes design, development, renewal or regeneration of our urban or rural built environments. The outcome should be sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet people's needs.

Place Standard Tool
A framework to structure conversations about place. It allows people to think about the physical elements of a place (for example its buildings, spaces, and transport links) as well as the social aspects (for example whether people feel they have a say in decision making).

Regeneration
Regeneration is the process of reversing the economic, physical and social decline of places.

Renewable Resources
Resources that do not run out. Renewable energy sources include energy from the sun, the ground, wind, waves, tides and wood.

Residual Waste
The waste left over after items have been removed to be re-used or recycled.

Scottish Planning Policy
A document stating Scottish Government policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters.

Sequential Approach
A process for choosing sites for retail development. The approach first looks for sites in city and town centres, then sites on the edge of these centres, then other commercial centres identified in the development plan, and finally out-of-town sites which can be, or are, accessed by different forms of transport.

Simplified Planning Zone
A Simplified Planning Zone is an area where the need to apply for planning permission for certain types of development is removed so long as the development complies with the details and guidance set out in the Scheme.

Strategic
Important issues of greater than local significance, which may need both Councils to work together.

Strategic Allocation
Major land allocations which are identified in a Local Development Plan for development over a number of phases.

Strategic Development Plan
Part of the Development Plan – a statutory document prepared after full public consultation. Strategic Development Plans apply to the 4 City-Regions (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and their surrounding areas) and cover several Council areas.

Strategic Infrastructure
This is major investment in large-scale infrastructure (see above). This can include railways or main roads, major junctions, water reservoirs, waste-water treatment works, pumping stations, secondary schools and hospitals.

Strategic Reserve
Areas of land identified in a Local Development Plan for possible future development.

Strategic Transport Network
Includes the trunk road and rail networks. Its primary purpose is to provide the safe and efficient movement of strategic long-distance traffic between major centres, although in rural areas it also performs important local functions

Sustainable Development
A widely used definition of this is 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.
It means that development should take full account of its implications on the local community and economy and on the environment both locally and worldwide. It has increased in importance in both National and European policy guidance and is a pivotal consideration in the planning process.

Sustainable Economic Growth
Building a dynamic and growing economy that will provide prosperity and opportunities for all, while ensuring that future generations can enjoy a better quality of life too.

Sustainable Mixed Communities
Settlements which have a wider range of uses within them that allow for living, working and undertaking recreation within them.

Tenure
The legal right under which properly is held. Housing tenures include owner-occupied homes, homes rented from private landlords, and homes rented from a council or housing association. Shared ownership is a tenure where a percentage of a property is owned and the rest is rented.

Town Centre First
A Town Centre First principle is intended to support city/town centres, where these exists, or new centres which are supported by the Development Plan.

Vitality and Viability
A measure of how lively and busy city and town centres are and their ability to attract ongoing investment for maintenance, improvement and to meet changing needs.

Water Bodies
Places where water is found such as rivers, burns, lochs, ponds, boggy wet land, water held under the ground and coastal waters.

Banff

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