

An aerial photograph of Aberdeen Harbour, showing a large industrial area with numerous white storage tanks, large warehouse-like buildings, and several large ships docked at the piers. The harbour is surrounded by urban areas with residential buildings and green spaces. The water is dark blue, and the sky is clear.

ABERDEEN HARBOUR

Development Framework

January 2012

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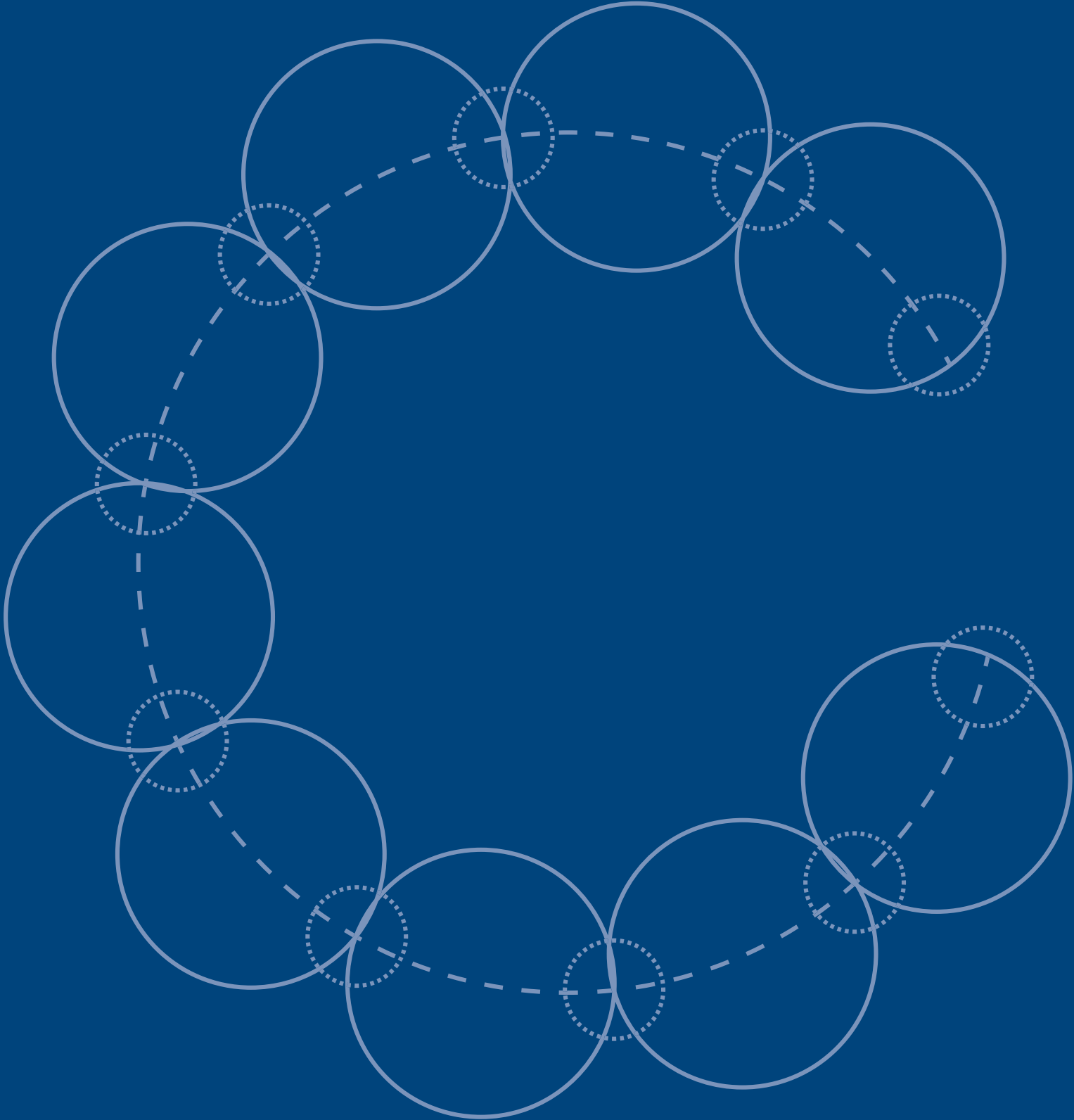
Aberdeen
Harbour

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The guidance was first produced prior to the adoption of the Local Development Plan. However, the document remains valid and the guidance derived from this still informs the City Council’s decisions on such development in Aberdeen. Therefore any queries concerning the text of the guidance should be directed to the Planning Authority for possible clarification.

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3. PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT	» Community Engagement » Stakeholder Engagement » Business & Customer Engagement
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INTRODUCTION

1

PURPOSE



fig. 1 Site Location Plan

1.2 Aberdeen Harbour has played a central role in the identity of Aberdeen and in its economic success, past and present. Latterly it has become the support centre for the North Sea oil and gas industry, but its historical influence and economic importance dates back many hundreds of years.

1.3 Aberdeen Harbour Board (who own and operate the Harbour) has engaged with Aberdeen City Council to explore how the Harbour and the City can develop in partnership over the next 20 years. Aberdeen City Council

recently prepared the City Centre Development Framework which seeks to better connect areas of the City Centre and improve the environment therein.

1.4 The Harbour Development Framework builds on this work and explores the connections between the Harbour and the City, both physical and visual. This document considers how these connections can be improved so that the Harbour can continue to complement and support Aberdeen's economic and cultural growth. It also provides guidance to ensure that

the objective for a greater mix of uses at the Harbour can be delivered without impacting on the operation of the port.

1.5 The Harbour Development Framework must be read in the context of the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. The document must also be considered in the context of existing guidance and practice on a range of issues, including Aberdeen City Council Open Space Audit, the Air Quality Action Plan, the SEPA floodmap and guidelines, and guidance relative to the protection of the River Dee 8AC.



fig. 2 Ownership Boundary Plan

OBJECTIVES: CONNECT | PROTECT | IMPROVE

1. INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OBJECTIVE APPROACH
2. ANALYSIS The Harbour : Form and Function Contextual Analysis Visual relationship Physical Relationship: Character Areas, gateways and Interfaces
3. PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT Setting out the communication and engagement strategy. Summarising the results obtained from public exhibitions and workshops.
4. URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY Details of the urban design objectives for the character areas around the Harbour.
5. SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE Setting out Development Guidance for future land use including safeguarded land, mixed use areas and open space and recreation. Setting out Design Guidance for North Dee, The Esplanades & South Dee and St Clements.
6. ACTION PLAN Wayfinding and Signage, Public Realm, Landscape, Lighting, Public Art
7. DELIVERY Xx

fig. 3 Document Structure

Connect

- 1.6 The role of this Framework examines the relationship between the Harbour and the City of Aberdeen. To this end, the Framework considers how we assist one of the main objectives outlined in the City Centre Framework, that of better connecting the City with its waterfront.
- 1.7 In doing so, the framework identifies potential areas for investment beyond the Harbour ownership boundary. Potential improvements to the areas around the Harbour have been identified through community and stakeholder engagement. These are to be delivered through an Urban Design Strategy which focuses on:
- » Market Street: A Place
 - » North Dee – a New Sustainable Urban Business District
 - » The Esplanades, the Riverpark and South Dee
 - » Castlegate, Virginia Street and Regents Quay
 - » St Clements and the Beach Connection
 - » The Torry Gateway
- 1.8 Few cities have an operational port that sits only a few hundred metres from their main shopping street. The Harbour area connects to the City to the north, south and west. The City and Harbour must carefully consider these edges and how better connections can be made either physically through development, or visually through framed views or public art / lighting strategies.

Protect

- 1.9 The viability of Aberdeen Harbour, and its capability to generate and accommodate economic activity, depends on its ability to respond to local, national and global trade conditions. This Development Framework has been prepared within this context and recognises the competitive environment in which Aberdeen Harbour operates. It acknowledges that:
- Aberdeen Harbour is a major economic engine for the City of Aberdeen, and is a vital asset to the regional and national economy.
 - The Harbour not only serves a regional constituency but also has a critical European trade role.
 - The Harbour has a limited land base that must be carefully managed to accommodate the long term needs of the industries it serves.
 - The viability of the Harbour depends on an effective and efficient road and rail network for the movement of cargo between the Harbour and the markets of its many users
 - As many Harbour businesses are heavy industrial operations with specific land and infrastructure needs, the retention of businesses and industrial land adjacent to the Harbour is a key priority.

- The Harbour provides public benefits extending beyond economic viability including environmental stewardship, conservation and public access to the water. Public benefits must be balanced with the operational realities of a working Harbour.
- 1.10 There will be areas identified within this framework where mixed use development could be considered acceptable and appropriate, while other areas are crucial to be safeguarded to ensure sustained port operations and to accommodate growth in the future. These sites and areas are identified with the Supplementary Guidance section of this framework which in itself is broken down into both Development Guidance and Design Guidance.

Improve

- 1.11 The delivery of the proposed improvements will be implemented over the short, medium and long term.
- 1.12 Certain areas identified within this framework are capable of early action, triggered by investment within the next five years. Aberdeen Harbour Board has taken cognisance of public opinions regarding access to the water at certain points.
- 1.13 Other medium term opportunities are dependent upon significant investment, and in some cases decisions on the future of transportation in this part of the City.
- 1.14 There are also a series of longer term opportunities for areas such as North and South Dee. Development in these areas must respond to this guidance. However, redevelopment of these areas is likely to take many years.
- 1.15 Other improvements, in the form of investment in public realm, lighting, public art and signage and wayfinding, will take place alongside larger development projects. These are detailed in the Action Plan section of this framework.
- 1.16 The successful delivery of what is presented in the framework will greatly depend on partnership working between the Harbour Board, Aberdeen City Council, the development industry and third party land owners.

CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: AN AMBITION TO CONNECT THE CITY CENTRE TO ITS WATERFRONT

1.17 Aberdeen City Council recently published its City Centre Development Framework (see diagram below). The Framework seeks to:

- Complement and enhance Aberdeen's unique identity;
- Develop clearly defined character areas;
- Ensure future development understands the existing context;
- Complement the wealth of urban design;
- Celebrate the architectural quality present in the City Centre; and,
- Ensure a co-ordinated and integrated approach to future development.

1.18 The Framework identifies nine character areas, including Union Square. Crucially, the document stresses the need to better connect these areas to the City Centre and where possible with each other.

How Does the Harbour Framework Respond

1.19 Specifically, the Framework identifies three main points of integration/interface between the Harbour and the City, these are:

- Market Street through to Union Square/Union Street
- Virginia Street through to Castlegate
- Riverside through to North Dee/North Esplanade

1.20 However, beyond these links to the City Centre, connections could be improved to, and through, other areas. These include:

- Footdee
- St Clements
- Regents Quay
- South Dee
- Torry
- Balnagask

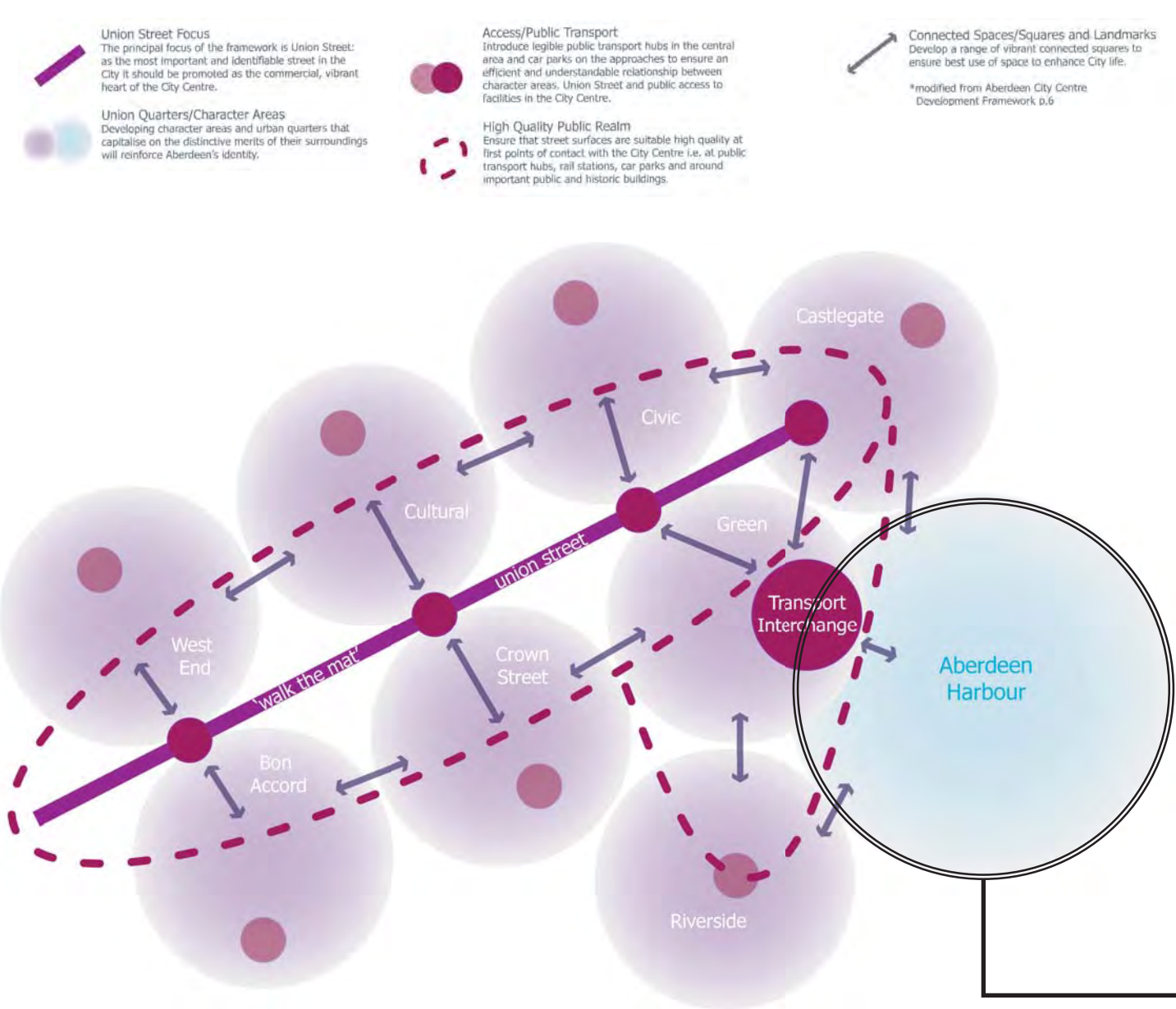


fig. 4 image adapted from Aberdeen City Council, City Centre Development Framework

THE FOCUS OF THE HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

1.21 The principle of improving connections between the City Centre and Harbour is recognised as a key objective in the Harbour Development Framework.

1.22 While the Harbour Development Framework seeks to improve connections between the Harbour and the City Centre, it also seeks to improve connections between its neighbouring city districts, which include:

- Footdee;
- St Clements;
- Castlegate;
- Union Square;
- North Dee;
- South Dee;
- Torry; and
- Balnagask.

1.23 There is effectively a crescent of land that surrounds the Harbour consisting of a series of

communities, sites and zones of employment.

1.24 These character areas vary greatly, dependant on attributes such as predominant land use (residential, industrial, business transport or open space), urban form and grain as well as topography and proximity to the water.

1.25 How each of these areas relates to the City, the Harbour and to each other is important when considering just how deliverable the principle of 'connectivity' is. For some, the objective will be simply to improve a number of key routes through the areas e.g. St Clements and Torry. For others, particularly North Dee, Union Square, there exists greater potential for integration through new development and improvements to public realm.

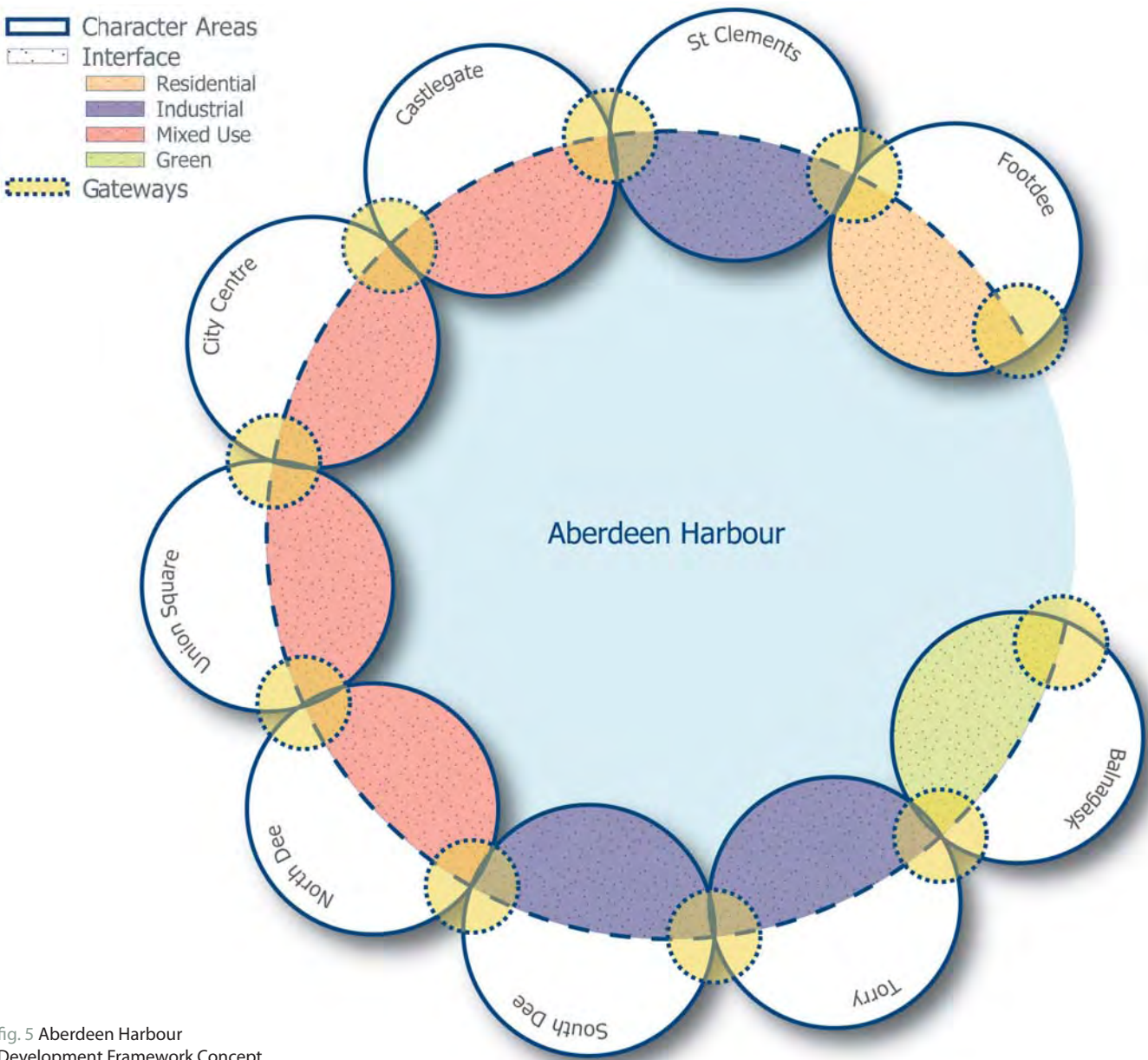
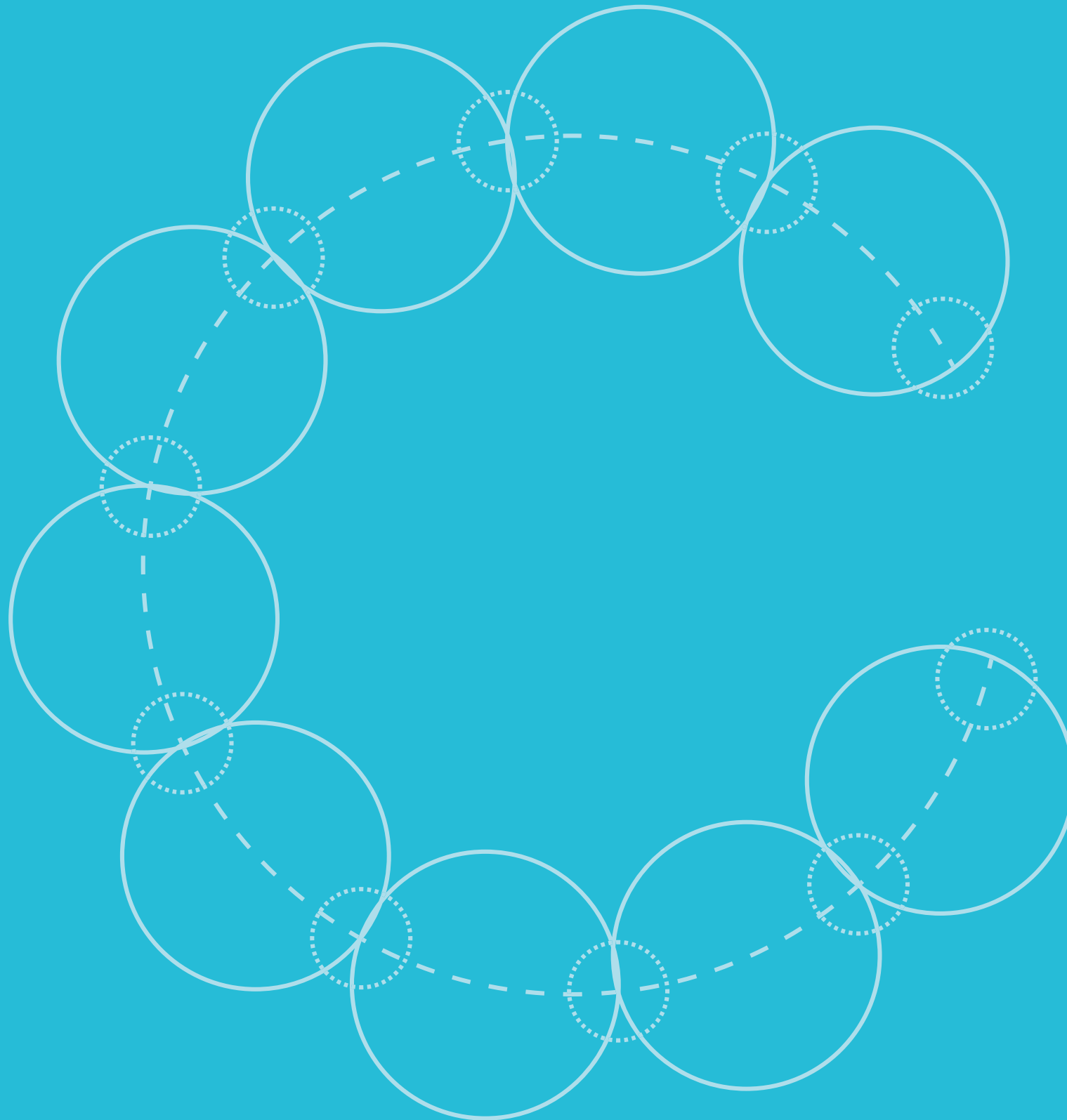


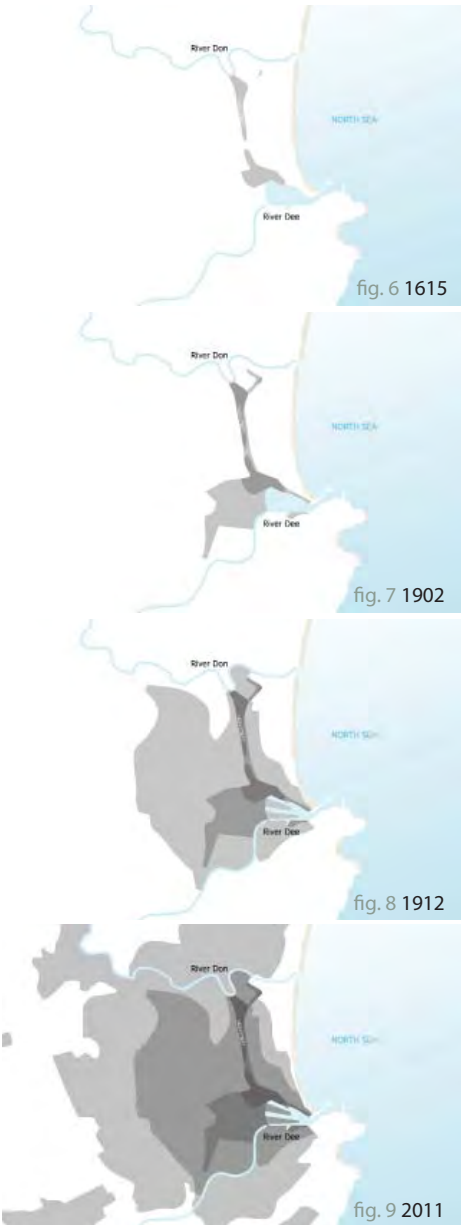
fig. 5 Aberdeen Harbour Development Framework Concept



ANALYSIS

2

BACKGROUND



History: The Harbour and the City

2.1 Aberdeen Harbour was formally established in the 12th Century at the point where the River Dee met the North Sea. It was some distance from the original settlement of Old Aberdeen (beside the River Don). Separation between the two settlements (often referred to as the 2 burghs) was a natural response to location but was compounded by topography, with steep inclines running north from the Harbour towards the Castlegate.

2.2 In the centuries that followed, significant areas of land were developed around the Harbour, and while there was growth to the north at the River Don, the City that we recognise today grew around the Harbour. The High Street did at least form a continuous physical connection between the two areas.

2.3 By the 20th Century, following the completion of the Harbour's breakwaters and the diversion of the River Dee, the modern Harbour expanded further and its industrialisation demanded railway and roads infrastructure; elements that in time would serve to reinforce the physical separation.

The Relationship Today

2.4 Today, the Harbour and City sit cheek by jowl. They share boundaries and in many cases the edges between them are neither characterised as part of the Harbour or part of the City. This makes planning, developing and ultimately improving these areas quite complex. The needs of the City Centre and those of an operational port are quite different.

2.5 Areas within and around the Harbour need to be available to respond to the increasing or changing needs of the Port and its customers. These uses are, on occasions, not directly associated with the day to day operations of the port - but can be associated with Harbour activities and require to be in close proximity to the port in order to do business and grow. The myriad of businesses that operate on land immediately adjacent the port make a significant contribution to the success of the Harbour and to the areas economy.

2.6 It will be important to balance the continued economic development of the port with the Councils increasing ambitions to embrace the Harbour and exploit where possible the close proximity of the water and areas of open space and recreation that are located close by.



HARBOUR OPERATIONS

Harbour Form and Function

2.7 Aberdeen Harbour extends to 153 hectares (378 acres), of which 83 hectares (205 acres) is land and 70 hectares (173 acres) water. There are more than six kilometres of quays, including 14 deep water berths, and significant back up areas supporting the ports extensive cargo handling and shipping operations.

2.8 Aberdeen Harbour is the main commercial port for North East Scotland and the principal port in Europe for marine support of the North Sea oil and gas industry. It also handles roll-off shipping services to Norway, and the lifeline passenger ferries to the northern isles of Orkney and Shetland. In addition, there are direct shipping links to forty countries worldwide. The Harbour is, therefore, a major component in the transport infrastructure of North East Scotland and the ports activities contribute over £420 million per year into the local economy where it directly, and indirectly, supports around eleven thousand jobs.

2.9 Aberdeen Harbour Board have always recognised the strategic importance of the location of the Harbour in the centre of Aberdeen, particularly in terms of transport links, both road and rail, and have adopted a proactive strategy of redeveloping the port to accommodate the changing requirement of uses and attract new business.

2.10 Located within the city, and with existing development adjacent to the Harbour restricting port expansion, it is vital that the potential of Harbour land and property is optimised to ensure that facilities are available for expanding and new businesses, and that its operation is effective and efficient.



CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.11 As part of a comprehensive review of the site and surrounding area, existing constraints and opportunities have been identified as illustrated in figure X.

Topography

2.12 The Harbour is situated on flat land around the mouth of the River Dee. The areas of Castlegate to the north and Torry to the south, both rise relatively steeply from the Harbour edges.

Port Boundary

2.13 The 1960 boundary (used today) was determined by the Aberdeen Harbour Order Confirmation Act which established a new port authority and vested the Harbour estate in the Aberdeen Harbour Board. The Harbour boundary includes both land dedicated to Harbour operations and strategically placed adjacent land.

Pedestrian/Cycle Routes

2.14 There are several core path and trail walk routes around the Harbour. A variety of character areas are covered within this network, including residential, industrial, business and green space. There are no known dedicated cycle routes within the surrounding context of the Harbour.

Transport Hub

2.15 Aberdeen Harbour is positioned in a central, strategic and accessible location in relation to public transport options, including ferry, train, bus and taxi.

2.16 There are two rail lines generally accessible to the Harbour;

- The north south line at Guild Street Station, not used for heavy freight; and
- The intermodal rail freight yard at Waterloo Quay, owned by Aberdeen Harbour Board.

2.17 The Guild Street rail and bus station connects Aberdeen City with Aberdeenshire and almost all major cities within the UK. The ferry terminal offers daily sailings to Lerwick, Shetland, with four of these going via Orkneys capital, Kirkwall.

2.18 The Harbour is key in the commercial side of Aberdeen's transport hub, it is the principal commercial port in Northern Scotland and is an international port for general cargo, roll-on/roll-off and container traffic. It is also the principal mainland port for freight, passenger, vehicle

and livestock services to and from Orkney and Shetland, and a gateway for agricultural products and supplies.

Roads and Access

2.19 The A956 is the key means of access to the Harbour. It carries high levels of traffic during peak times, including heavy goods vehicles associated with Harbour operations. It also carries significant through traffic and all vehicles entering and leaving the Union Square development as well as being a major public transport route. The volume of traffic along this section of the A956 (North Esplanade West, Market Street and Virginia Street) may reduce with the emerging Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

2.20 The Constraints and Opportunities Plan in figure 10, highlights the permeability of the Harbour and its integration with the City Centre.

2.21 Regents Quay and Waterloo Quay are the only roads within this network which are under the Harbour Boards control.

2.22 Access points into the Harbour have been identified to highlight the importance of safeguarding the circulation and access routes for strategic Harbour operations. Whereas many

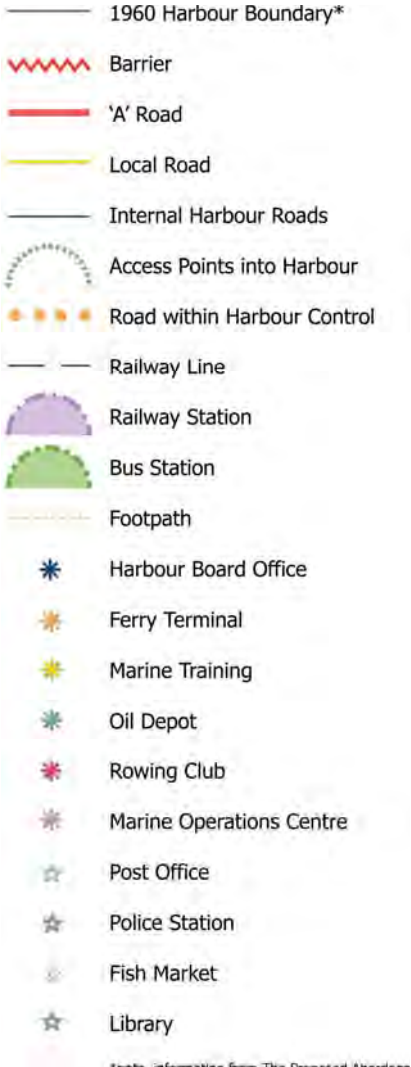
harbours only have one or two controlled access points, Aberdeen Harbour has over 10 access points.

Harbour Facilities

2.23 Within the Harbour itself there is a mixed use community that supports Harbour operations, and at the same time broadens the standard definition of what a working Port should look like. In addition to operational quayside areas other key uses include the new Marine Operations Centre, office and stevedoring uses, oil depots and dedicated marine base facilities servicing the oil and gas sector, a high quality seafood restaurant, marine training, and ferry services.

Surrounding Community Facilities

2.24 The areas surrounding the Harbour also have a rich cross-section of community facilities that support the residential and employment components of the district. Key uses include retail, post office, police station, leisure centre, library, schools and research and training establishments. The location some of the surrounding facilities are mapped on the Constraints and Opportunity Plan in figure 10.



*note. information from The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan, September 2010

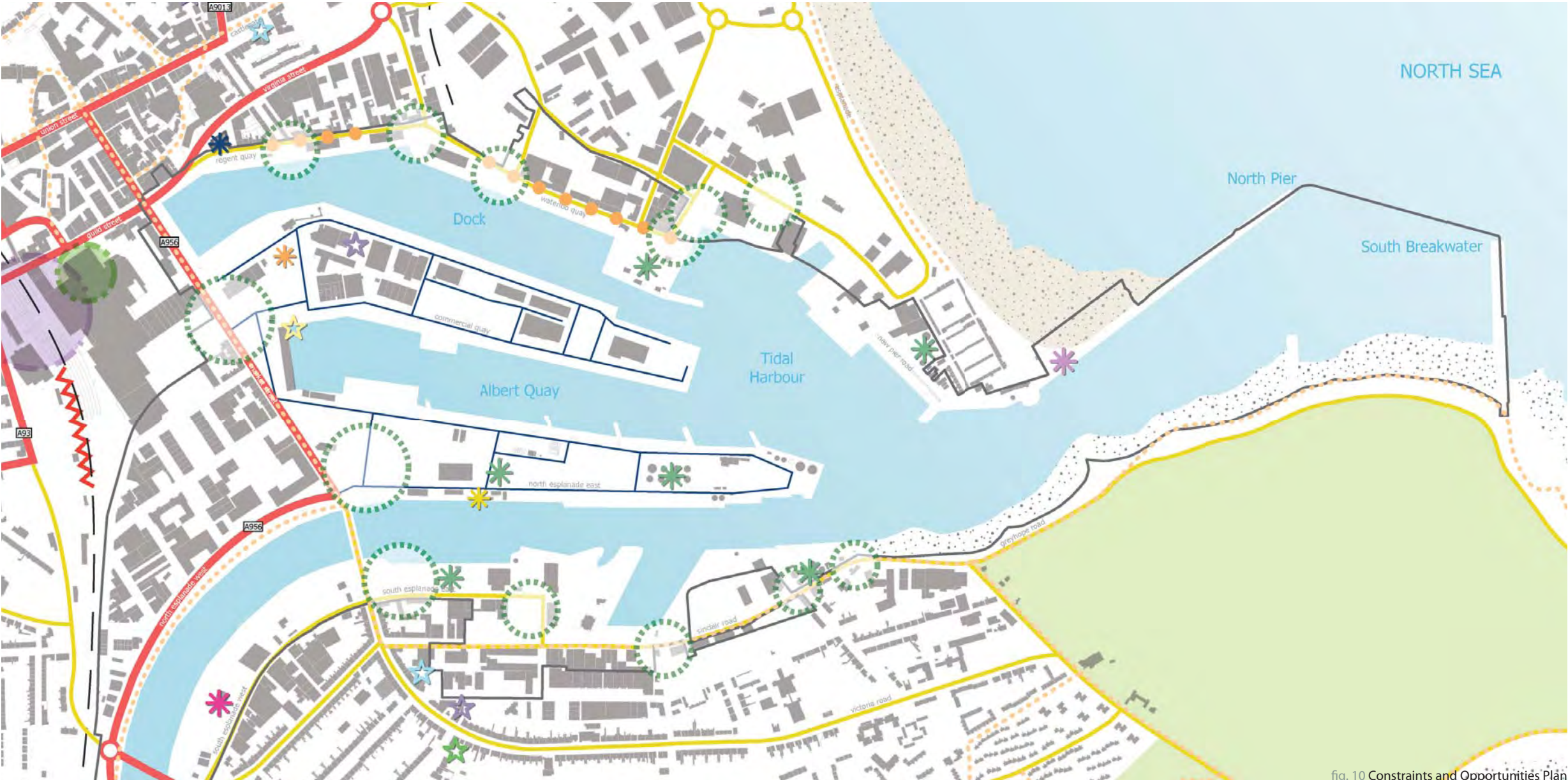


fig. 10 Constraints and Opportunities Plan

ACTIVITY ZONES

2.25 A Development Framework is a strategic document that sets out a plan for development or improvement. Large parts of the operational port are fully developed. The area that surrounds the Harbour (Zone 2) is therefore the likely focus of this study.



fig. 11 Zone 1 Plan

Activity Zone 1

2.26 Zone 1 is land within the Aberdeen Harbour Board operational area. Importantly this land is industrial in nature and subject to permitted development rights. Public access to these areas is restricted due to security and health and safety considerations however views of these areas could be, and perhaps should be, improved and encouraged.



fig. 12 Zone 2 Plan

Activity Zone 2

2.27 Zone 2 is land directly associated with the operational area (Zone 1) and which Aberdeen Harbour and others are actively considering for development. This area is the main focus of this Development Framework.



fig. 13 Zone 3 Plan

Activity Zone 3

2.28 Zone 3 incorporates a much larger area and makes us consider the important connections to the wider area and the communities therein. These areas, around the Harbour, have an interest in its future development and success.



VIEWS

2.29 Aberdeen City and Harbour are unique in terms of their proximity and relationship to one another. This proximity and the interaction between the Harbour and adjacent areas creates a stunning setting. There are a number of places in Aberdeen where these two elements (Harbour and city) can be viewed together in a variety of ways.

2.30 A key aspect of the analysis was to identify a range of different views, as illustrated in figure 14. Each view is different in character, where views are in some cases framed, open, short or long. Some of the most significant views are identified below:

1. **Market Street (top):** the northern part of Market Street is enclosed creating a framed view of the Harbour and Torry beyond. The road width to building height ratio works well, however, heavy traffic often dominates this view.

2. **Shiprow:** this recently upgraded public realm benefits from open views direct to the Harbour, within close proximity of moored ships. The foreground view established here is of an impressive scale, and is exemplar in celebrating the uniqueness of Aberdeen's Harbour and City relationship.

3. **Marischal Street:** a tightly framed view of large scale ships moored at the foot of Marischal Street creates an impressive vista.

4. **Castlehill:** this underused space has spectacular elevated views spanning across the City and Harbour area.

5. **Market Street (midway):** this open view spans the western edge of the Harbour. The foreground is often dominated by heavy traffic along Market Street, however, the large scale ships dominate the background, and can be viewed at all times along the length of the street.

6. **North Esplanade West:** this view captures the City and Harbour together, alongside the River Dee green network. A combination of business, industrial and green space.

7. **Sinclair Road:** the view down Sinclair Road stretches into the distance encompassing both industrial and business uses within the Harbour.

8. **Pocra Quay:** this viewpoint spans the length of the southwest edges of the Harbour.

11. **Torry Battery:** an excellent elevated view taken from Torry Battery within Aberdeens Green Belt, looking at the City and Harbour together.

2.31 These views offer an opportunity to celebrate the visual relationship between the City and the Harbour, and where necessary safeguard and enhance them.



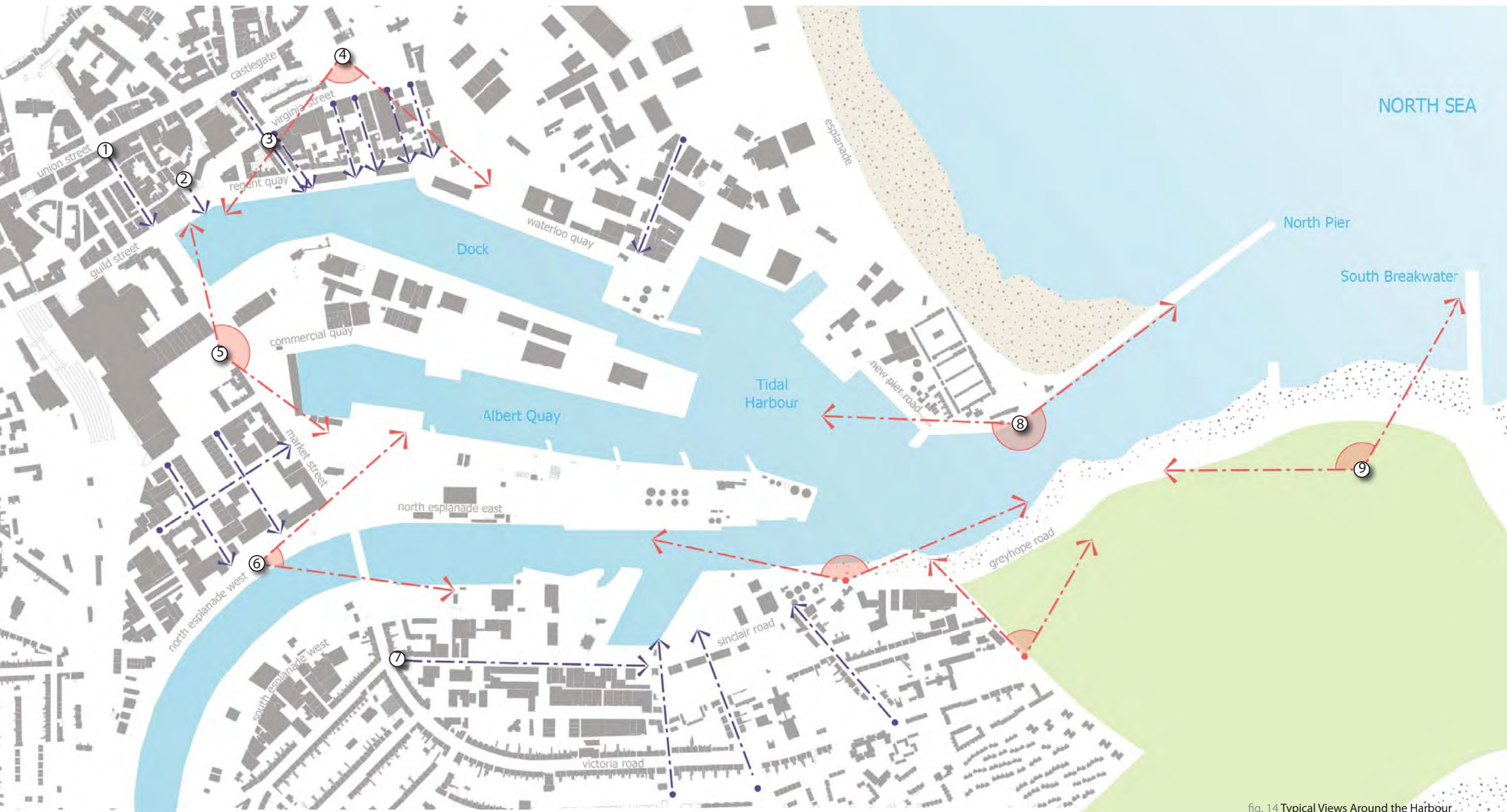


fig. 14 Typical Views Around the Harbour

CHARACTER AREAS, GATEWAYS AND INTERFACES

Character Areas

2.32 Aberdeen City Council's City Centre Development Framework identified nine separate character areas across the City Centre. Using similar methodology, this framework has identified a number of areas located around the edges of the Harbour which have very different characteristics.

2.33 The main attributes that define the character of an area include; predominant land use (residential, industrial, commercial or recreation, for example); scale and massing; routes through (how you experience an area); and activity points (nodes)

2.34 The identified character areas include:

- **Footdee:** Residential
- **St Clements:** Industrial
- **Castlegate:** Mixed use
- **City Centre:** Mixed use
- **Union Square:** Mixed use
- **North Dee:** Mixed Use
- **South Dee:** Industrial
- **Torry:** Residential
- **Balnagask:** Green / Recreation

Gateways

2.35 Key entry points or gateways are important in any city, or for any area within a city. They contribute greatly to how you experience a 'place'. Therefore, a key aspect of this Framework is not only the identification of distinct areas around the Harbour, but also the gateways between them.

1. Footdee / St Clements: this gateway, along York Street, is unpronounced but marks a significant change in land use and built form from large scale industrial buildings to a fine grain residential community at Footdee.

2. St Clements / Castlegate & Regent Quay: this gateway is currently vehicular dominated and characterised by topography. It is represented by a vehicular junction with some historical buildings at its edges.

3. Regent Quay / Castlegate: there are two gateways here connecting the Harbour to the City which are at Marischal Street and Shiprow.

4. Harbour / City Centre: with the highest footfall and heavy vehicular traffic, this is one of the key gateways between the City and the Harbour. However, the gateway is characterised as a major vehicular junction at Market Street / Guild Street and Virginia Street.

5. City Centre / Union Square: situated halfway down Market Street this very important gateway sits at the junction where bus and ferry passengers meet the City and also where Union Square meets Market Street.

6. Union Square / North Dee: at the point where North Esplanade meets Market Street is an important arrival point to the heart of the City and where the Harbour and City meet along Market Street. It is currently characterised as a vehicular junction with little sense of arrival delivered.

7. North Dee / South Dee: is a gateway to Torry is formed at the southern end of Victoria Bridge / Victoria Road

8. Torry / Balnagask: is a gateway when entering the City via coastal routes (e.g. from Cove). The setting is stunning but the existing gateway falls short of its potential.

9. Water/Land: entering into the Harbour from the North Sea, for some, is the first experience of Aberdeen; making this an important gateway to be celebrated.

Interfaces

2.36 Of equal, if not greater importance are the main interfaces between the Harbour and City. These mostly consist of roads and streets. Identifying and improving these interfaces is critical for better connections.

Summary

2.37 It is clear to see that Market Street in particular represents a significant area of interface between the Harbour and the City. Indeed, the spine of areas along North Esplanade, Market Street and Virginia Street provide the best opportunity for improved connections between the Harbour and the main part of the City.

2.38 The gateways between the character areas are very much defined by transport infrastructure and as a result fail to provide attractive and welcoming environments.

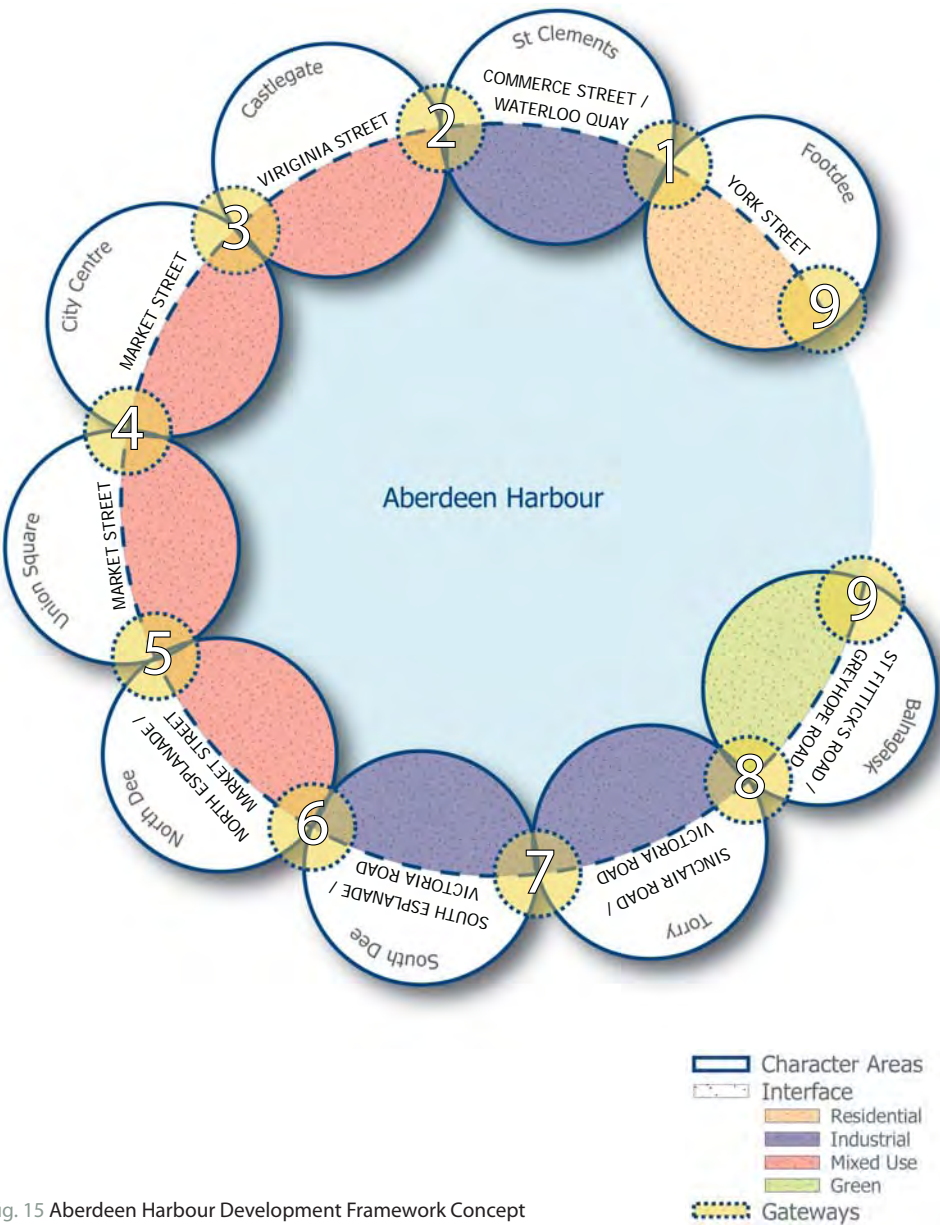
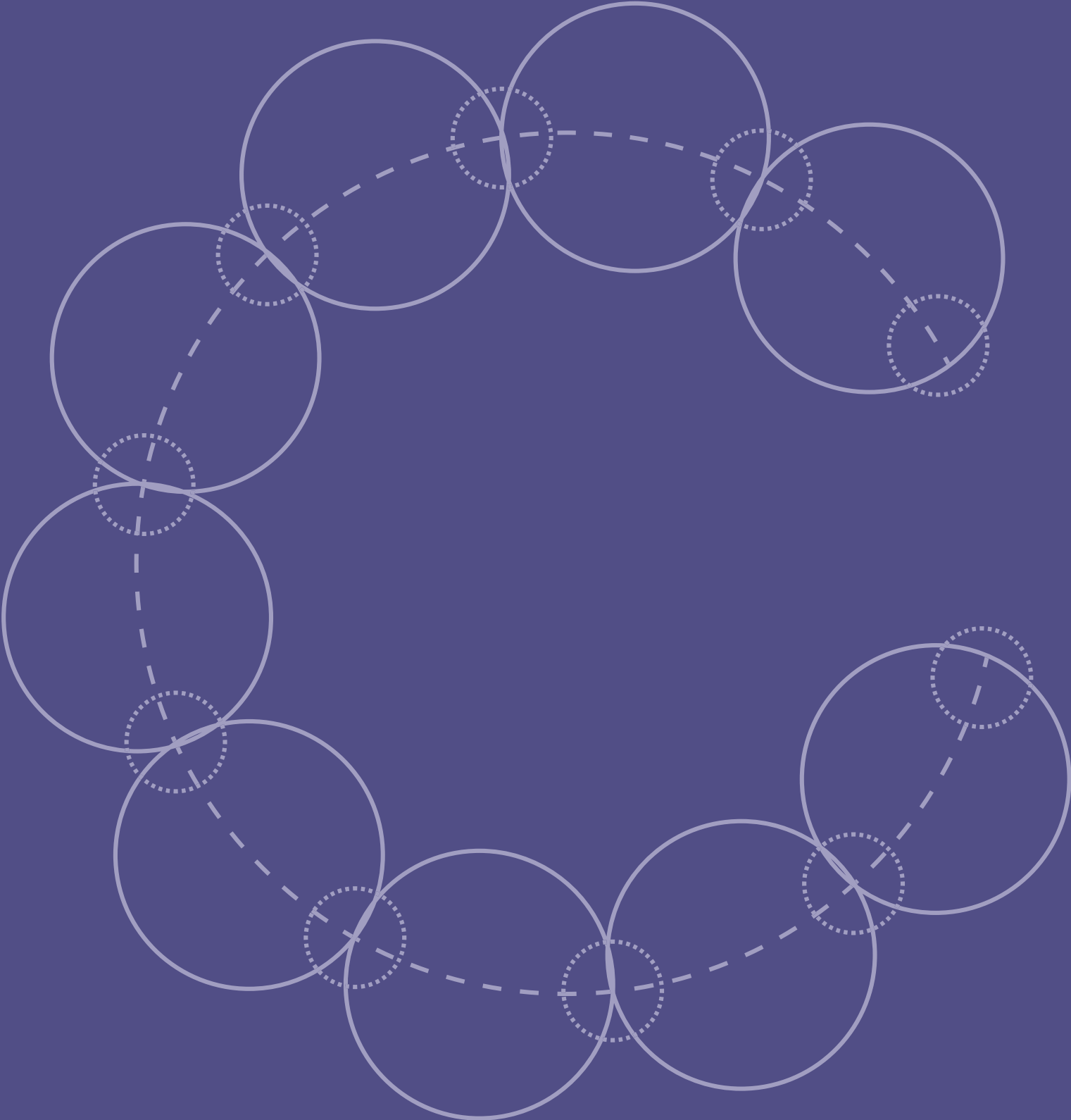


fig. 15 Aberdeen Harbour Development Framework Concept



fig. 16 Character Areas, Gateways and Interfaces Plan



PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT

3

PROCESS AND ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 At the heart of this Development Framework process was a commitment to engage and listen to local people and other stakeholders.
- 3.2 A communication and engagement strategy was undertaken which reflected the best practice set out in Aberdeen City Council's Masterplanning Handbook.
- 3.3 A wide variety of media were used in consulting with the public and other stakeholders. These included:
- Aberdeen Harbour website;
 - Newsletters;
 - Questionnaires;
 - Public Exhibitions; and,
 - Stakeholder Workshops.

3.4 The initial programme of consultation events ran between May and July 2011. A timeline of the process is shown in figure 17.

Newsletters

3.5 Key to a successful engagement strategy is getting the message out early to all members of the various communities. Therefore, a newsletter was distributed to community councils which introduced the consultation process and identified key areas for local communities to consider in terms of perceptions of the Harbour. The newsletter was also available from Union Square, Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Hanover Community Centre, Torry Community Centre and Aberdeen Harbour

Headquarters. The newsletter also advertised the public consultation timetable and provided contact details through which people could pass their views to the team.

3.6 Furthermore, the newsletter was distributed, alongside a questionnaire and prepaid self addressed envelope to all Key Stakeholders and Community Steering Groups, approximately 250 copies. A distribution list can be found in the Appendix 1.

3.7 A second newsletter was published which recorded the outcomes and feedback from the exhibitions and workshops, and established a way forward for the Development Framework. This newsletter was distributed to all Key Stakeholders and Community Steering Groups.

3.8 Both newsletters were published on Aberdeen Harbours website following their distribution.

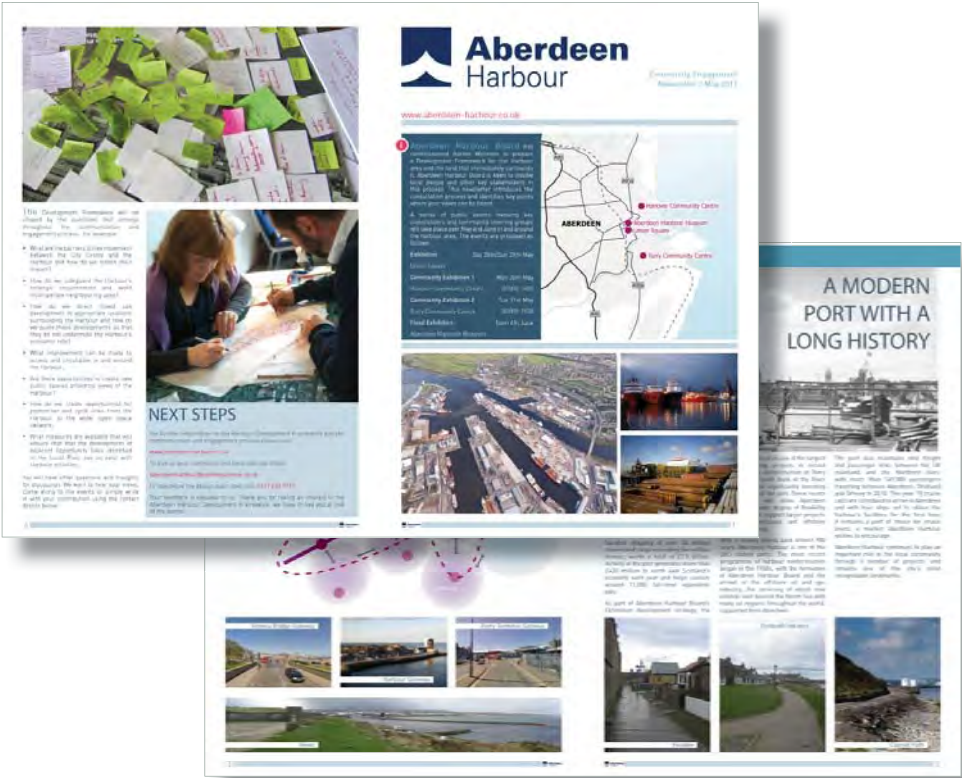


fig. 18 Newsletter 1

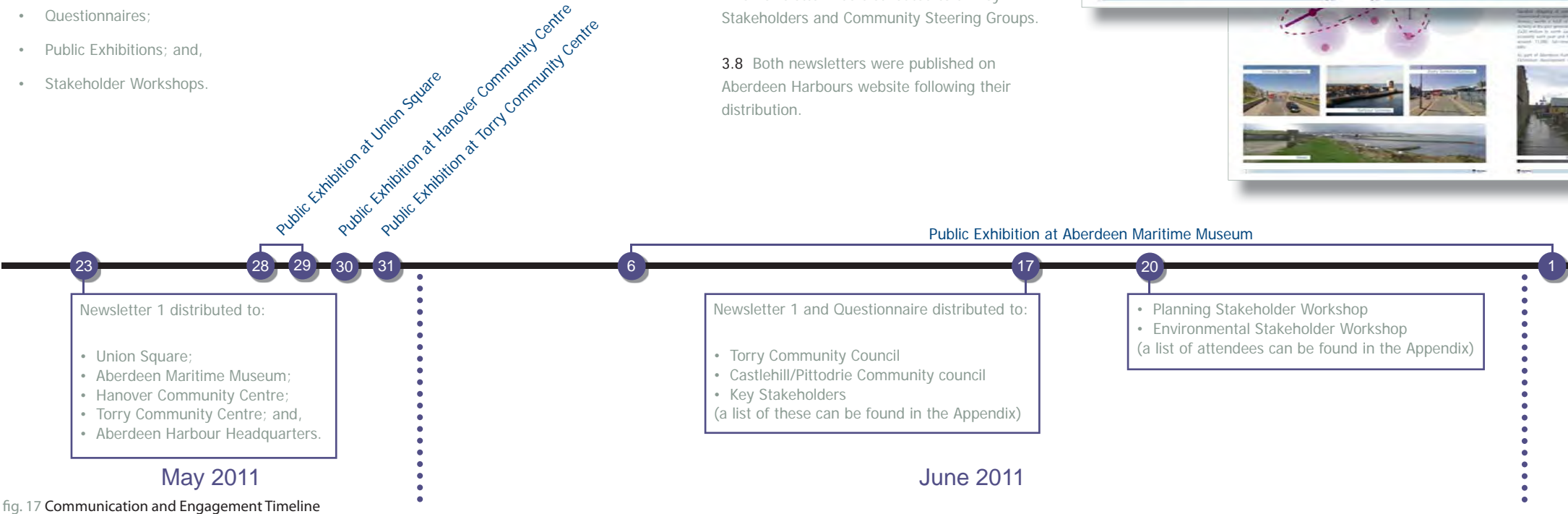


fig. 17 Communication and Engagement Timeline

Stage 1 Public Exhibitions

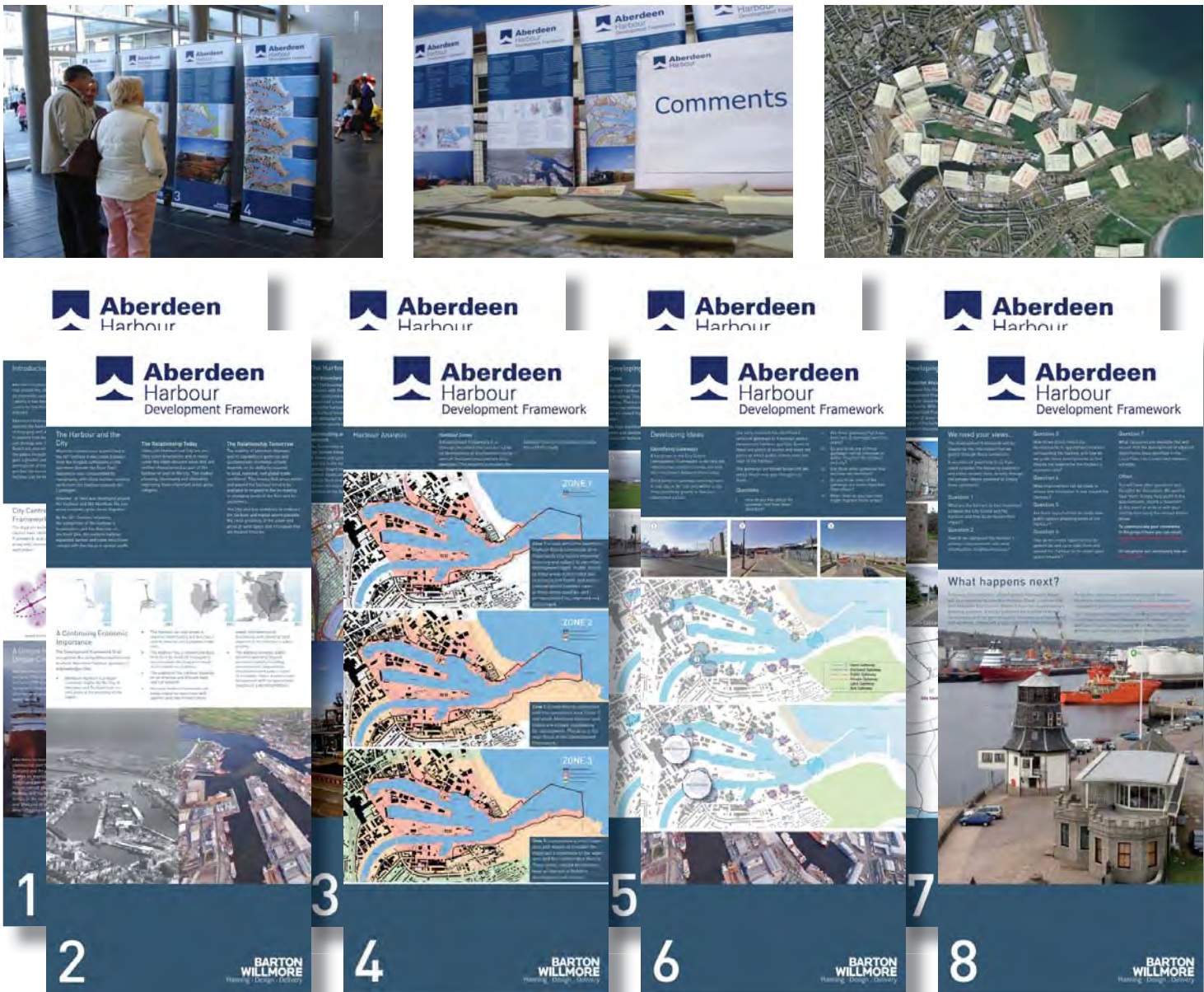
3.9 Public exhibitions took place between May and July 2011 at the locations listed below:

- Public Exhibition: Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th May in Union Square;
- Public Exhibition: Monday 30th May in Hanover Community Centre;
- Public Exhibition: Tuesday 31st May in Torry Community Centre; and
- Fixed Exhibition: from Monday 6th June to Friday 1st July in Aberdeen Maritime Museum.

3.10 The events were attended by members of the Barton Willmore Design Team, and by staff and Board Members from Aberdeen Harbour.

3.11 The exhibitions consisted of eight pull-up banners, 2 x A1 boards showing ordnance survey data and an aerial photograph of the Harbour. There were also newsletters and questionnaires available for people to take away, and a comments box which members of the public were encouraged to drop completed questionnaires into.

3.12 The events were a huge success, demonstrating a live and passionate interest in the Harbour from local people and visitors alike, with over 200 people in attendance.



July 2011

fig. 19 Exhibition Banners

Collecting Feedback

3.13 Those attending and viewing the exhibition were able to provide feedback either by speaking to a member of the project team when the exhibition was manned, or by filling out one of the questionnaires provided. Questionnaires were either returned by posting them in the comments box, or returning by post or email at a later date. A total of 108 questionnaires were recieved following the initial consultation event.

3.14 Some of the main points coming from the Public Exhibition Events were as follows:

- Almost everyone commented upon and understood the economic importance of the Harbour to Aberdeen. Roughly half added that the SDF should not do anything that undermined or negatively impacted upon the operational port;
- Almost everyone reflected on the value of having a Harbour in the heart of a City. Importantly, many contributors recognised that this also brought challenges in terms of new

development potentially impacting upon the Port operation;

- The issue of noise from the operational port was identified early on by one visitor. This view was in a minority of one, with others recognising that some noise was a natural aspect of this location. They responded that the views of the Harbour and / or its economic benefits more than outweighed any concerns over noise. Existing communities simply do not see this as an issue;
- There was a real sadness that the relationship between the Harbour and the City had become / is becoming divorced. However, peoples frustration on this matter was focussed on the road system and the 'Home Office' inspired (their words) fence. There was a widespread recognition that an operational port these days simply cannot accommodate people walking freely on the docks - however there were some informed suggestions on improving access at some key points;
- A number of visitors spoke of the Tall Ships and how wonderful it was to have the Harbour opened up for a day or two. People understood that this was increasingly difficult for the Harbour but suggested that one event every 10 years wasn't unreasonable. Their reasoning was that this would allow every new generation in Aberdeen an opportunity to spend a day at the Harbour and no doubt hear stories from parents and grandparents about what the Harbour (and the Sea) means to them and their City;
- Viewing areas / platforms and public spaces at a number of key points proved a popular suggestion. A consistent view was that more could be done at Torry battery, possibly in terms of a restaurant/cafe and maybe shops. The Ferry arrival point was highlighted as an area that could be improved;
- A marina (or such like) was a relatively popular choice. The aspiration was to attract tourists

who sailed around the coast, with Aberdeen possibly established as a starting point for races etc. However, most people understood that developing and running a marina alongside an operational port was not a straightforward task;

- Most visitors identified a desperate need to improve the environment, signage, lighting and security around the Harbour area. Especially along the beach, through St Clements and along Sinclair Road;
- Signage was hugely important from the point of view of both locals and tourists. Signage should connect into the maritime museum, offer better guidance from town to the Harbour and around the Harbour between points of interest like Footdee and Torry Battery as well as including information on distances and walking times;
- Views of the Harbour from elevated ground in the Castlegate were identified as some of the best in

the City and that these should be improved and celebrated where possible;

- The Esplanade gateway at the bottom of Market Street was identified as a real opportunity. 'Knock down the lone building (tyre centre) and redevelop that block'. 'Opportunity for a striking iconic building at scale that could incorporate a viewing area / restaurant.' 'This will encourage people down Market Street from Union Street and past Union Square down to the river';
- There was a suggestion of planting along the eastern edge of Market street (the Harbour edge). The intention here was not to screen but to soften the edge.
- Reintroducing a fishmarket at the Harbour was a popular suggestion. However, most people did understand that this product isn't landed in the Harbour in the same quantities as in the past.

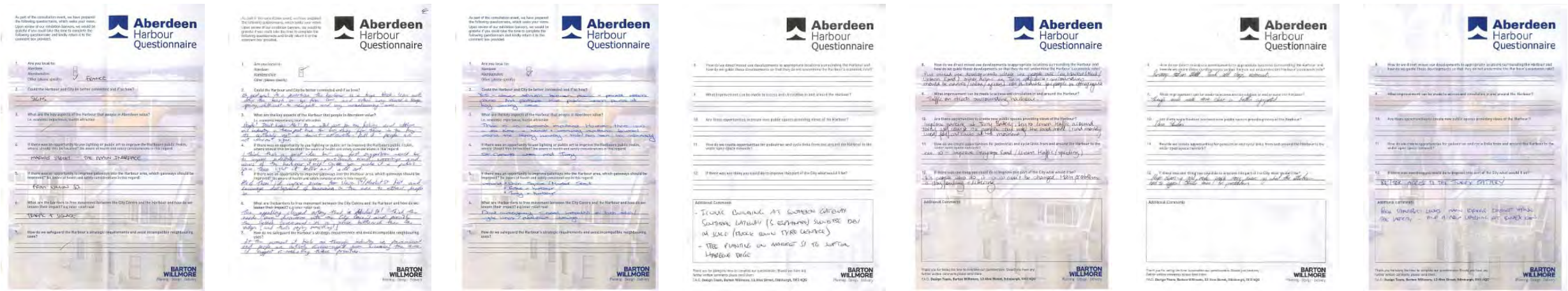


fig. 20 Selection of Completed Questionnaires



fig. 21 Map of Site with Post-it Comments



Stage 1 Stakeholder Workshops

3.15 A series of workshops were in June 2011, which comprised the following dates and locations:

- Planning Stakeholder Workshop: Monday 20th June in Aberdeen City Council offices, 0900-1100hrs;
- Environmental Stakeholder Workshop: Monday 20th June in Aberdeen City Council offices, 1115-1315hrs;

3.16 The workshops were used to highlight the project objectives, scope of work and key issues to be considered, as well as talking the officers through the outcomes of the community engagement exercise. This was carried out through a PowerPoint presentation which gave the background to the project to date, including historical analysis, site and context analysis, engagement summary and proposed areas of focus.

3.17 The presentation was interactive and participation was encouraged, with comments recorded on post-its, which were applied to maps of the site and surrounding area. The

discussion was structured around the following themes:

- New Development;
- Views, Gateways and Character Areas;
- Movement, Wayfinding and Signage; and,
- Public realm, Public Art and Lighting.

3.18 The Planning Stakeholder Workshop included City Council officers from Masterplanning and Design, Transport and Infrastructure, Development Planning, Development Management, Environment and Sustainability, Community Planning and Economic Development, as well as several members from Aberdeen Harbour Board and Barton Willmore.

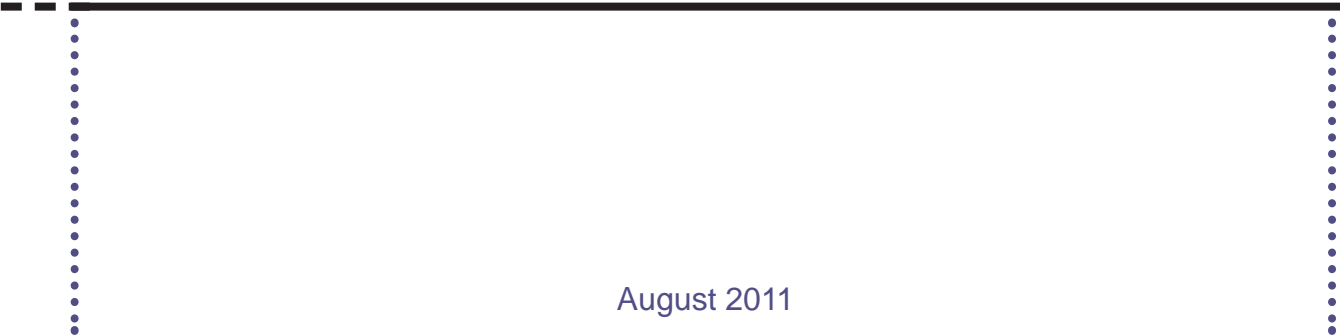
3.19 The Environmental Stakeholder Workshop included Aberdeen City Council officers from Masterplanning and Design, Environment and Sustainability, Environmental Health, SNH and SEPA, as well as several attendees from Aberdeen Harbour Board and Barton Willmore.

Collecting Feedback

3.20 Some of the main points raised during the Stakeholder Workshops were as follows:

New Development

- Discussions on new development focussed mainly on North Dee. Ideas for South Dee and St Clements were also discussed. Potential proposals for North Dee included a new sustainable hub which could be directly linked to the existing transport hub around Union Square and the Harbour. Any new development around North Dee would be most appropriately mixed use, although focused on business. South Dee's river edge was discussed as an opportunity to increase leisure and recreation activities close to the City Centre. Discussions around St Clements raised proposals for assembled plots of land with development opportunities which were linked. The Esso site in Torry was further identified as a development opportunity, although there are significant development constraints in the form of land contaminated.



August 2011

fig. 22 Extract from PowerPoint Presentation

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Issues were raised regarding land ownership and car parking at North Dee; the implementation of a parking strategy was suggested to tackle the latter, with suggestions that additional parking could be incorporated in South Dee with the redevelopment of the land up to the South Esplanade.Potential development/improvements were also discussed regarding Torry Battery, however, the lack of power infrastructure to the area would be a major constraint.Introducing a marina had been suggested during the public events however, it was felt that this is unlikely to be possible anywhere around the Harbour as there are issues with regard to the scale and volume of existing harbour traffic. <p>Views, Gateways and Character Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Safeguarding and enhancing views on the coastal edges of the Harbour i.e. Footdee and Torry Battery were identified as important. Safeguarding and enhancing views of the Harbour from within the built environment, where there is the potential impact of traffic and new development, is	<p>more difficult. Following on from that, key viewing areas were identified, these being; Marischal Street, the Esplanades and Castlehill. It was suggested that these viewing areas could be themed or characterised, with clear links and signposting between them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The mouth of the Harbour was identified as an important gateway, and one that should be celebrated more but not to the detriment of Harbour functions. Other gateways around the Harbour could be accentuated through tall buildings. Council officers highlighted that Aberdeen City Council are currently preparing a Tall Buildings Strategy, which is likely to advocate that there is capacity to incorporate tall buildings into lower lying areas, and that potential tall buildings do not interfere with identified landmarks and view corridors.Footdee was identified as a very popular attraction, and that its relative isolation may have something to do with its charm. It was expressed that this should be kept in mind when considering links to the area and/or	<p>development around the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The rich variety in character areas across a relatively short distance around the Harbour was identified, providing a series of gateways and interfaces.Representation from SNH and SEPA stressed the importance of considering the impact of new development on the River Dee and SAC. <p>Movement, Wayfinding and Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Traffic was only identified as an issue in concentrated areas such as Market Street, and during weekday peak times and Saturday afternoons when Union Square car park becomes full.There should be the potential to reduce car orientated movement. The leisure area near the beach (St Clements) is all car based visitors and there are a huge amount of car based journeys.Wellington Bridge is attractive and could be celebrated more, there is a possibility to assess what it connects from and to, and what it could contribute to in the future. Vehicle traffic could be diverted to Palmerston Road in order to reduce traffic and congestion on Market Street.It was raised that the Western Peripheral Route will only reduce traffic in the City Centre by 5% (potential pedestrianisation of Union Street would eat this up immediately).Pedestrian movement routes around the Harbour need to be improved,	<p>particularly the Coastal Path around Torry Battery as well as the routes to and from Union Square along Market Street. Better lighting and signage would aid legibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Desire lines should be respected, with focal points provided to help direct movement.Improvements to the green network and connections therein were raised, with the identification of primary routes established. Ownership issues around the coastal path were identified which could lead to difficulties with improvements.A series of routes, viewing areas and event spaces around the Harbour were suggested which should be well signed and include interpretation material.The lack of footpaths on the north eastern edge of Market Street was identified as an issue. However, the reason for this was due to space restrictions, as large vehicles need to turn both on Market Street and within the Harbour area at that point.A new footbridge link between North and South Dee was suggested.Improvements to cycling routes were raised, with the inclusion of dedicated routes. <p>Public Realm, Public Art and Lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Specific activities were suggested as a way to define the spaces i.e. location, treatment, scale and outlook.The public realm on Market Street was highlighted for improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Beach Boulevard was also discussed, with the outcome that it ought to be treated as a street not a road. With interactive and pleasant edges, making it a major conduit for people from the City to the beach.Improvements were sought for the coastal path and parkland associated with Torry Battery. It was suggested that Abbey Road and/or Sinclair Road be improved as part of the direct route / desire line from Torry coast to the town.Public art works were suggested, linking Union Street down to Union Square and beyond, although consideration would have to be given to the harsh elements in certain areas.Improved street and building up-lighting along Regents Quay. The lighting of buildings and objects would need to be considered in terms of 'light spill'. Modern lighting techniques should reduce this problem. Any lighting strategy should be cohesive all around the Harbour and link to the City Centre where possible, assisting in unifying the area and character areas. This would help in making the Harbour a more welcoming place. Lighting could be used to direct people to where they should go to.
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Stage 2 Public Exhibitions

3.21 Public exhibitions took place in December 2011 at the locations listed below:

- Public Exhibition: Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th December in Union Square;
- Public Exhibition: Monday 5th December in Torry Library;
- Fixed Exhibition: from Tuesday 6th December to early 2012 in Aberdeen Maritime Museum.

3.22 The events were attended by members of the Barton Willmore Design Team, and by staff and Board Members from Aberdeen Harbour.



3.23 The exhibitions consisted of eight pull-up banners and an floor mounted aerial photograph of the Harbour. There were also newsletters and questionnaires available for people to take away, and a comments box into which members of the public were encouraged to drop completed questionnaires.

3.24 All in all, the public events were well attended with some very good detailed feedback. Aberdeen Harbour Board, were encouraged by the continued level of interest in the project and by a genuine desire from local people to support, contribute and get involved in the production of the framework document.



Collecting Feedback

3.25 Approximately 300 people attended the Union Square event over the course of 2 days, with approximately 200 people approaching the team to discuss the project, and 100 either completing or taking away a questionnaire. The Torry Library event had approximately 20 people in attendance with several stopping to discuss the project and complete the questionnaire.

3.26 The project team received a total of 27 (+) completed feedback forms posted in the comments box over the exhibitions, with the majority of people simply wanting to discuss the project further, and express their encouragement to connect, protect and improve the Harbour area.

3.27 The majority of respondents (74%) were from Aberdeen itself, with some visiting from the surrounding areas.

3.28 The majority (88%) understood the purpose of the Development Framework and that it aims to better connect the Harbour with the City, and make the area more accessible and appealing to local business and visitors alike. The same percentage were in support of the outcomes, with a mixed response on the amount of ideas which had been incorporated within the proposed Development Framework. The reasoning behind which ideas had or had

not been adopted were explained further to respondents by the project team.

3.29 A number of respondents raised the issue of improving safety around the Harbour area, by means of lighting, signage, general maintenance at key spaces i.e. Torry Battery. There was also several comments on car parking/traffic flow, with an understanding that current car parking/traffic flow is at maximum capacity and any new development must take into consideration the needs to address this.

3.30 85% of respondents supported the principles of Connect, Protect and Improve, with a view to improve connections both visually and physically, as well as improving safety in the area and natural habitats.

3.31 There was strong support (88%) for aims of the Urban Design Strategy of better connecting Aberdeen City Centre with the Harbour, with the majority showing enthusiasm to connect the Harbour with the City, as it once did during the Fish Festival, Tall Ships and Fish Market. The Harbour was recognised as being key to Aberdeen's economy, respondents generally felt that the Harbour was long overdue improvements to better connect and protect it.

3.32 All respondents agreed with the concepts proposed for Market Street and The Esplanades, with 85% agreeing with the concepts identified

for North Dee, 88% for Castlegate and Torry Gateway, and 92% with St Clements, the remainder of respondents were undecided.

3.33 96% of respondents agreed with the need to protect the operation of the Harbour, due to the economic importance of the Harbour to the City, although it was suggested that areas of the Harbour, such as the ferry terminal could be opened up and made more friendly to the public, whilst at the same time protecting the working Harbour area.

3.34 The majority of respondents agreed with the 3 objectives of the Development Framework, with one respondent highlighting the importance of Objective 3.

3.35 81% of respondents supported the early ideas that are emerging for the Action Plan, with a general consensus that lighting, signage and public art would benefit the area, and any public realm proposals should have local relevance.

3.36 It was generally understood that the content being presented represent early proposals and that their delivery is dependent upon further partnership working.

3.37 There was a desire for continued consultation and workshops, partnership between Aberdeen Harbour Board and Aberdeen city Council, as well as funding support through



fig. 23 Stage 2 Exhibitions

the Council and oil industry in order to realise the proposals.

3.38 A number of suggestions for other alternative use/proposals were suggested, including business and leisure development along the riverside, a means to tackle prostitution, improved access between the Harbour and Esplanade, improved pedestrian facilities at the ferry terminal, and thoughts on how the Harbour will adapt as oil and gas reserves dwindle.

Stage 2 Stakeholder Workshops

3.39 A series of workshops were held between December 2011 and January 2012. These comprised the following dates and locations:

- Planning and Environmental Stakeholder Workshop: Thursday 15th December 2011 between 0930 - 1130hrs at Aberdeen City Council.
- Customer Stakeholder Workshop: TBA January 2012 at Aberdeen Maritime Museum.
- SNH/SEPA Meeting: Tuesday 10th January 2012 at Aberdeen City Council.

3.40 The workshops were used to discuss the findings from the second phase of consultation. They touched on the project objectives, scope of work and key issues which were established in previous workshops. This was carried out through a PowerPoint presentation by Stephen

Tucker which gave the background to the project to date, including historical analysis, site and context analysis, engagement summary and proposed areas of focus.

3.41 The presentation was interactive and participation was encouraged, with comments recorded on 'post-its', which were applied to maps of the site and surrounding area. The discussion was structured around the following themes:

- Urban Design Strategy: Connect;
- Supplementary Guidance: Protect; and,
- Action Plan: Improve.

3.42 Planning and Environmental Stakeholder Workshop

3.43 The Planning and Environmental Stakeholder Workshop included City Council

officers from Masterplanning and Design, Transport and Infrastructure, Roads, Development Planning, Development Management, Environment and Sustainability, Community Planning, Economic Development and Environmental Health, as well as several members from Aberdeen Harbour Board and Barton Willmore.

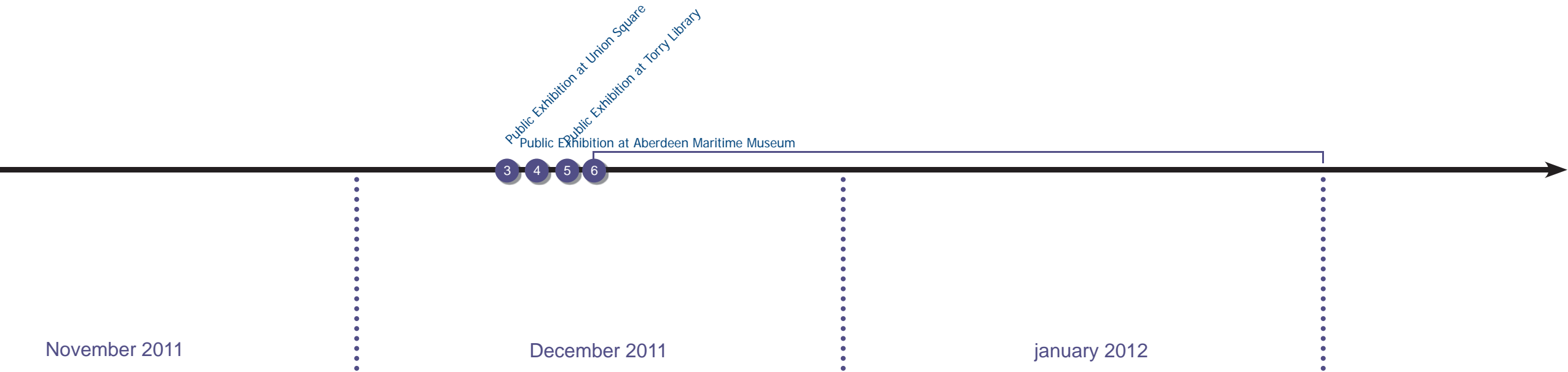
SNH/SEPA Meeting

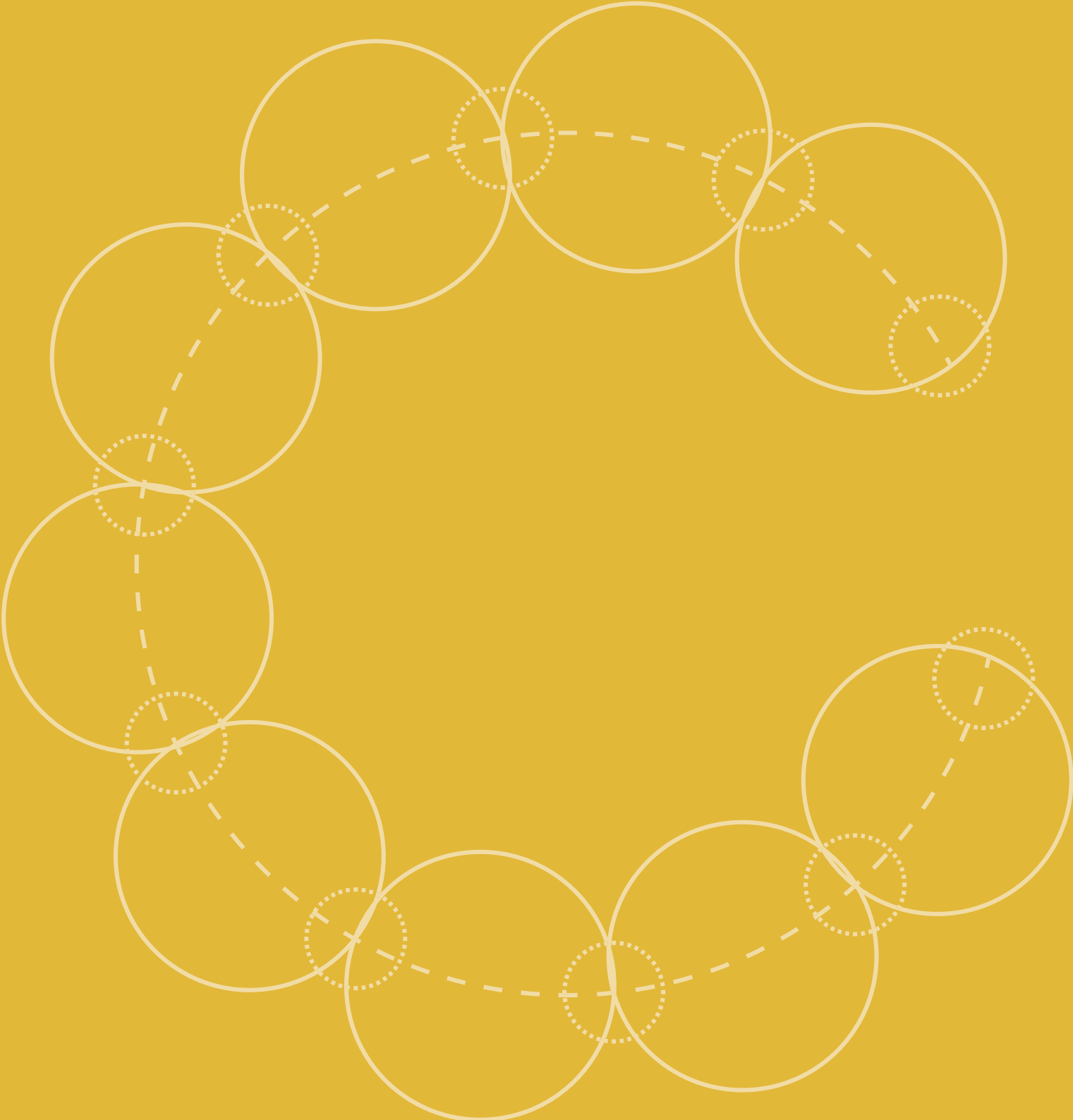
3.44 A meeting was held with Aberdeen City Council planners and SNH and SEPA to discuss the implications of the Development Framework on the natural environment and in particular European designated habitats and species.

3.45 It was agreed that the Development Framework required to be the subject of Habitats Regulations Appraisal, and that Aberdeen City Council would screen with SNH for the likelihood of significant adverse effects upon the integrity of the SAC and protected species.

3.46 A number of recommendations were made by SNH and SEPA with regard to the wording of the Development Framework and its implications with regard to the SAC. It was agreed to include reference to the need for all proposals which come forward in the context of the Development Framework to be the subject of a suitable construction method statement and that the Supplementary Guidance will not negate the requirement for other permissions, approvals and assessments i.e, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Planning Permission, Building Warrant etc.

3.47 It was also agreed that in the context of proposed changes to the Local Development Plan as a consequence of the report of Examination that Objective 3 would be extended to cover the natural environment and biodiversity.





URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

CONNECT

4

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

4.1 This section of the report identifies a number of strategic proposals aimed at better integrating and connecting Aberdeen City Centre with the Harbour. This objective will not be achieved by environmental improvements alone, it will require focussed investment, land assembly, new development and serious consideration of potential alterations to the City's transport infrastructure. This draft document is intended to stimulate and inform this debate. At this point in the process it does not have definitive answers, however it does raise important questions.

4.2 The sense of separation between the City Centre and the Harbour is partly historical, (as was illustrated in chapter 2) and to some extent geographical. A number of significant modern interventions have however, underpinned and in many cases, exacerbated the division. The scale of transport infrastructure in the area, the levels of traffic and the importance and priority given to roads around the Harbour, as well as the pressure placed upon this infrastructure by new development, has significantly added to the sense of division. It is important to reflect on the fact that Aberdeen is no different from many other industrial cities with a waterfront in this regard. Glasgow is just one example, that has spent years and much focussed investment on healing these divisions.

4.3 The delivery of better connections between the City and the Harbour area will require considerable structural changes to the way the City works. Some tough decisions may need to be made in order to deliver the levels of

integration that start to see Aberdeen Harbour develop upon its core economic role and become a better place. This draft document raises some of these issues and asks only that we discuss the proposals seriously and pragmatically. A key truth in this consideration is the fact that better connection between the City and Harbour will only be delivered over time. Proposals that at the moment seem improbable may in 20 years time seem mundane and obvious.

4.4 It is the role of an SDF to explain what 'vision' means and to identify exactly how and when such ambitions can become real. It is also the role of a draft document to shape and stimulate discussion. This document should be read in that context and will be the basis for further discussion between the Harbour Board, the City Council and a number of other key stakeholders.

4.5 The urban design strategy aspect of the Development Framework, identifies six significant strategic proposals in and around the Harbour, as listed below:

- Market Street: A Place
- North Dee – a New Sustainable Urban District
- The Esplanades, the Riverpark and South Dee
- Castlegate, Virginia Street and Regents Quay
- St Clements and the Beach Connection
- The Torry Gateways

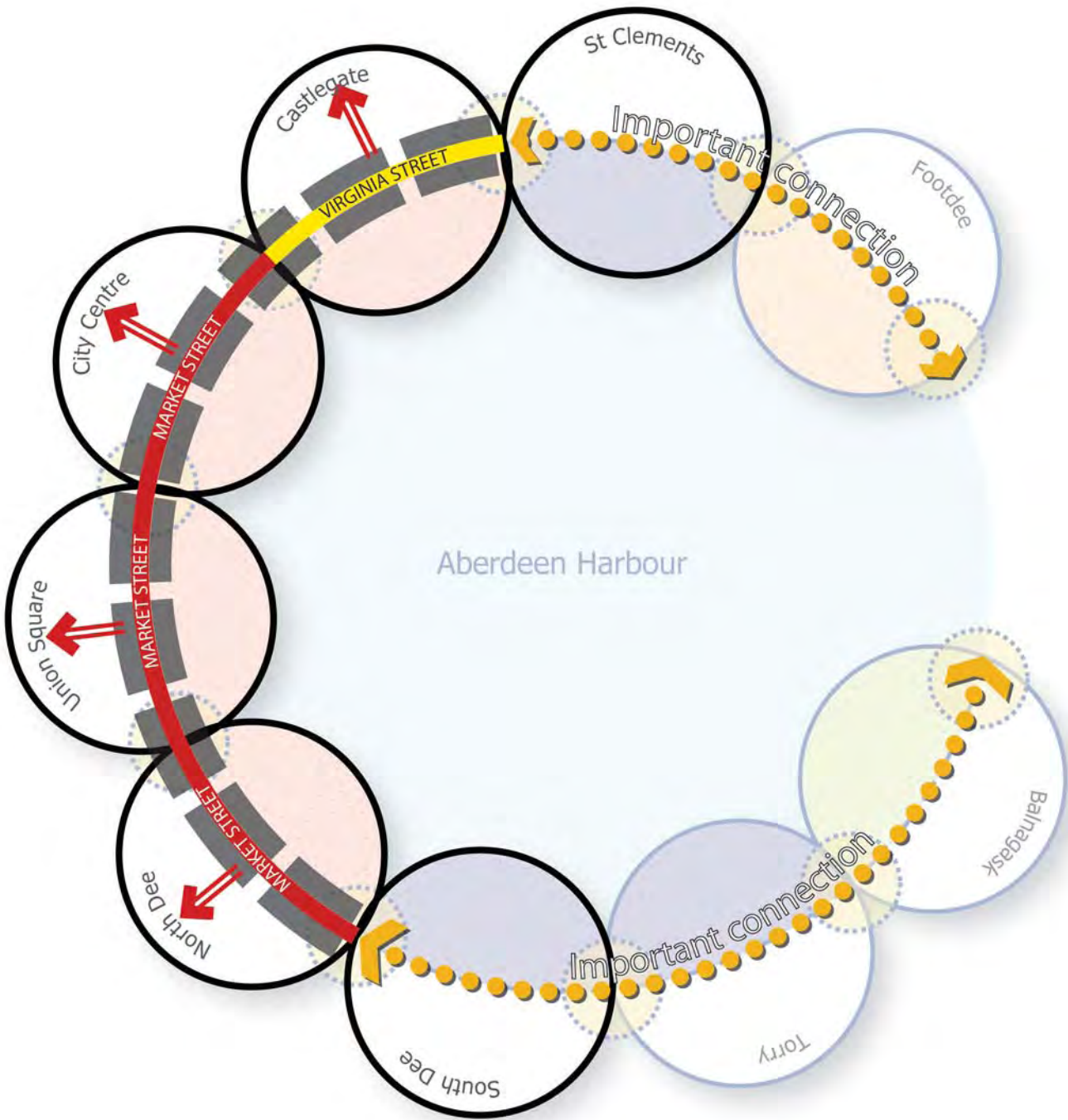


fig. 24 Urban Design Strategy Concept



MARKET STREET: A PLACE

The Challenge

4.6 In all of our assessments, Market Street emerges as the most significant physical barrier between the Harbour and Aberdeen City Centre. Interestingly it could represents a considerable opportunity to improve the connection between the two.

4.7 However, Market Street is a key element of Aberdeen's transport infrastructure. Every day many thousands of vehicles travel this route, some passing through the area and others using it to access the developments and businesses located around the Harbour. Market Street is also a key public transport route in the City, second only to Union Street. Many bus services use the Street. Indeed with the City's main bus station located on Guild Street, just off Market Street, a signifiacnt proportion of the people travelling by bus to the City Centre as well as passing through the City, use this route.

4.8 The identification of Market Street as a fundamental issue in terms of better connecting the Harbour and City has been confirmed by an urban design and planning led analysis, as well as community and key stakeholder engagement. In all of our engagement sessions, Market Street was identified again and again as a missed opportunity, a disappointing street and a physical barrier.

4.9 High levels of traffic and poor environmental quality were identified as the key issues (a factor also acknowledged in the City's Air Quality Action Plan). In particular, great concern was expressed over the quality of this as a key gateway into the City Centre and the relative unfriendliness of the street to pedestrians and cyclists. Most respondents felt that views and access to the Harbour in Aberdeen, is far better than it is in Leith or in other major ports within Scotland. In fact, the Harbour boundary fence is not nearly as damaging as the levels of traffic on Market Street itself. Quickly and obviously, Market Street emerged as the fundamental challenge facing this Development Framework.

The Opportunity

4.10 Market Street is the historical link between Old Aberdeen and the Harbour. It was the main route connecting Union Street with the Harbour and as the name suggests was the location of the old commercial fish market. In later years it formed the key axis for the City's expansion south, the area we know today as Torry. Simple geographical and economic reasons gave Market Street this importance.

4.11 The geography has not changed sufficiently to alter its relevance. Neither is its economic role that different today. Arguably, the Harbour area has become more economically important to Aberdeen, rather than less. Therefore, if we are serious about improving connections between the City and its Harbour it is to Market Street and other north / south routes that lie at either end of it, that we must look first.



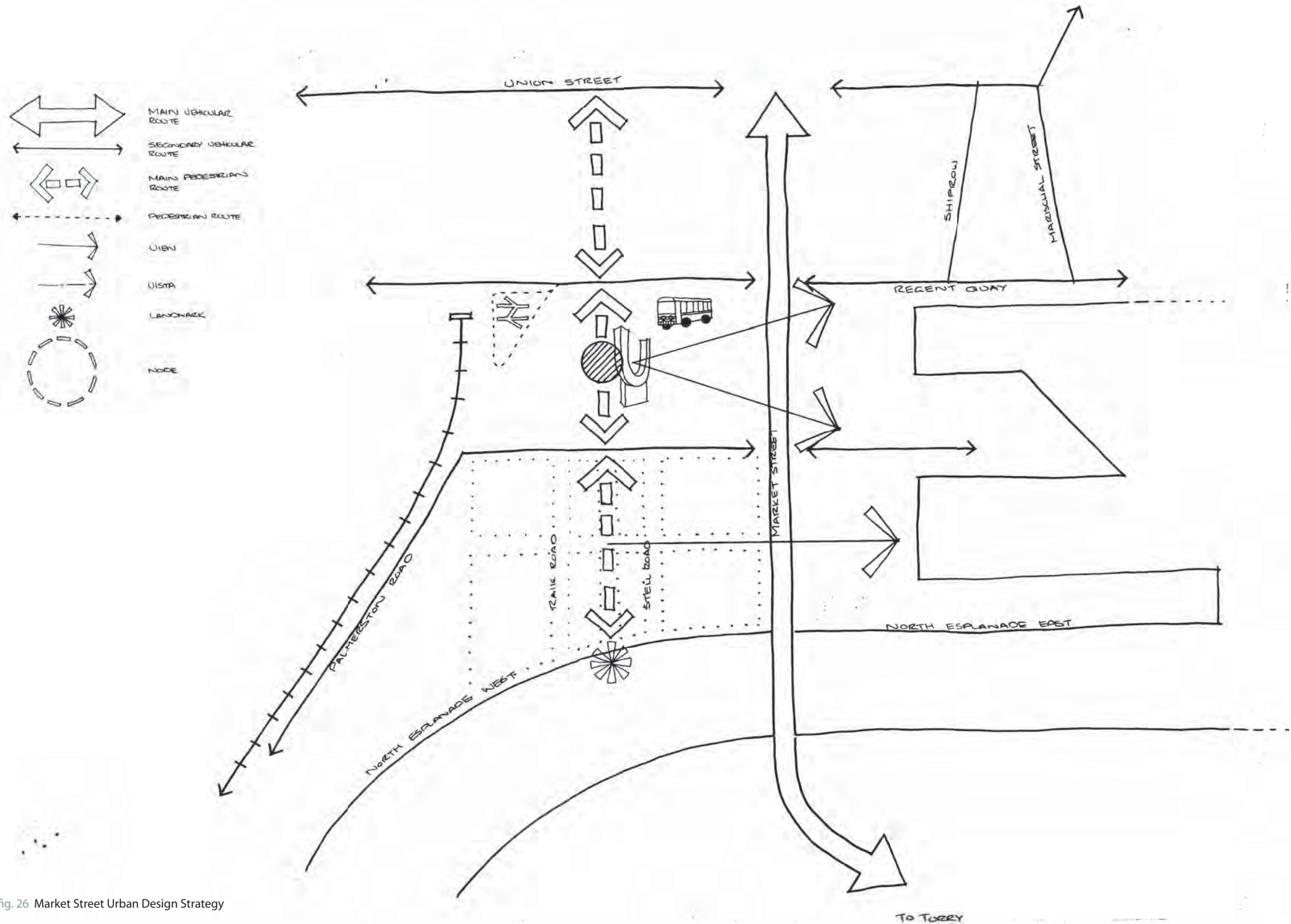


fig. 26 Market Street Urban Design Strategy

Considerations and Alternatives

4.12 Market Street cannot be considered in isolation. The Street runs past the North Dee development area, one of the significant development opportunities around the Harbour. It also skirts Union Square and other key developments at points along its length. Perhaps most important of all, it is a critically important transport route for the Harbour itself. As a result of this the future of Market Street is inextricably bound with the future of these key elements, namely the North Dee development area and the Harbour.

4.13 At this strategic level it is important to consider how the future of Market Street could be influenced by different approaches to the development and growth of the areas that sit alongside it. Similarly, a robust SDF process must test ambitions against the realities of what will happen in these diverse environments and genuinely consider the difficulties involved in delivering proposals. The stakeholder engagement process was hugely valuable in this regard.

The Impact of Traffic

4.14 Currently, the heavy traffic on Market Street falls into four main categories.

- Traffic using Market Street and the inner relief road to move north of Aberdeen;
- Traffic which is accessing the Harbour and the industrial areas around the Harbour;
- Traffic which is accessing the new Union Square development or the parking areas that service the rest of the City Centre; and,
- Public transport using this key route within Aberdeen.

4.15 If Market Street is to be improved, mechanisms to reduce the impact of traffic using it must be considered. However, it is fair to say that the delivery of this project is some time away. Other considerations must therefore be given to whether traffic accessing either the Harbour, or the City Centre / Union Square, could somehow be diverted to lessen the impact on Market Street.

4.16 Consideration could be given to more substantial and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes on Market Street or by means of an alternative route. However, any proposal would be subject to a future detailed Transport Assessment.

An alternative axis - North Dee

4.17 In the face of this challenge, and bearing in mind the importance of Market Street's role as north south axis, one notable alternative might be to create a central pedestrian / cycle route (that does the same job) as a north south axis within the North Dee development area, joining with pedestrian movement which runs up and through the Union Square development itself.

Emerging Vision: Market Street as a Place

4.18 Market Street will continue to be considered as primarily a transport route. This is a challenge to its importance as a place. In response to the physical challenge, the public perception of those problems and with a view to what is achievable, the SDF details an emerging vision for this area.

4.19 Successful places have common characteristics. They are active, well used and popular with local people. They contain a mix of uses, destinations and have varied environments along their length. Visitors to the City are attracted to these lively places.

Our long term vision is to introduce a variety of new uses, destinations and spaces along the length of Market Street, from its junction with Union Street south to Victoria Bridge, and integration with the North Dee Sustainable Business District. There are the potential for public realm improvements to reduce the impact of traffic, whilst retaining the carriageway width and traffic capacity of Market Street.

Consideration must also be given to an alternative north / south route that runs through the North Dee development area.

In its current state, Market Street suffers in active edges as well as a poor definition along its eastern edge. It is also dominated by a large number of traffic junctions.



fig. 27 Market Street - existing

The distance from Union Street to the junction with North Esplanade is just 1000m. Strung along this route are vehicular junctions which currently act as barriers to direct and free pedestrian movement. If these junctions were to be transformed into nodes of activity then the journey would be punctuated with attractions and help create a 'place' 'place' with potential for public realm improvements.

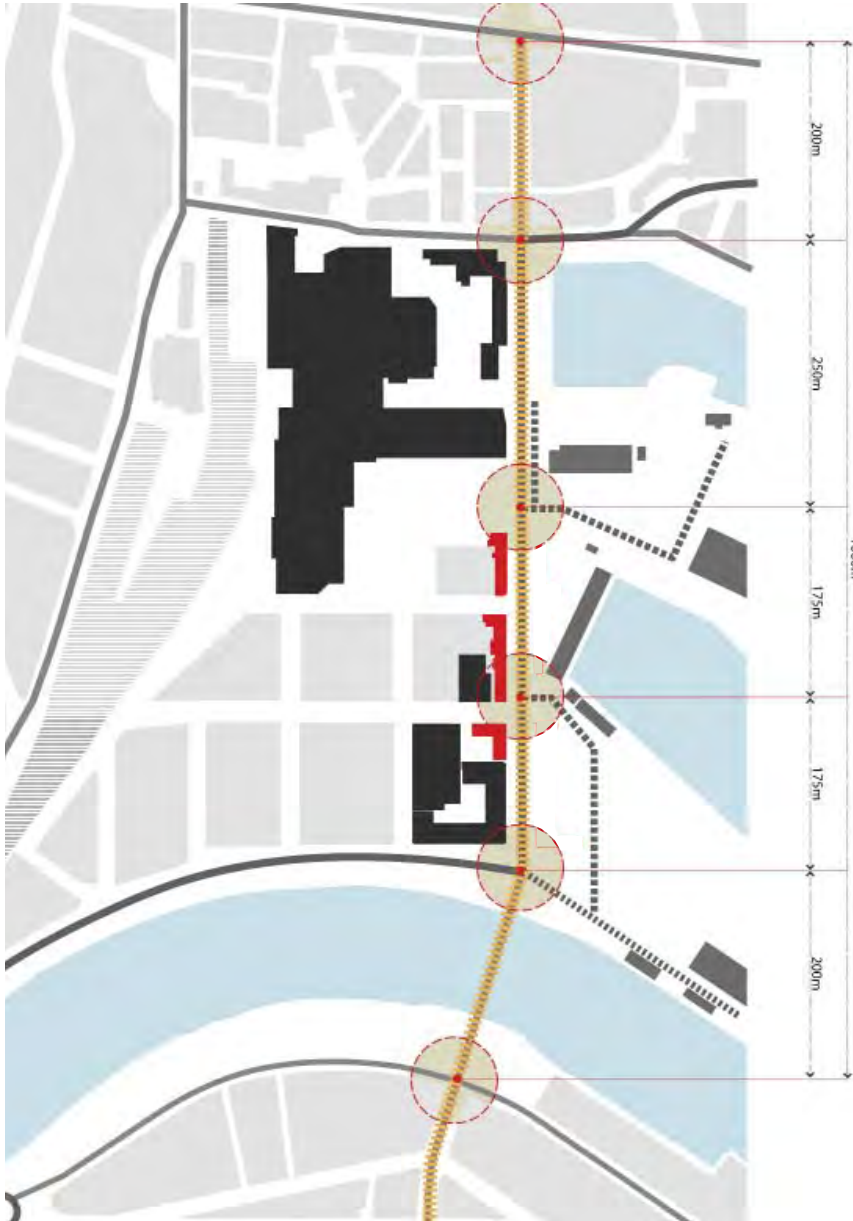


fig. 28 Market Street - active nodes and street definition (built form or landscape)

Alternatively this axis could be internalised within North Dee. If this was to form the main north south route then redevelopment of the existing grid will need to be made.

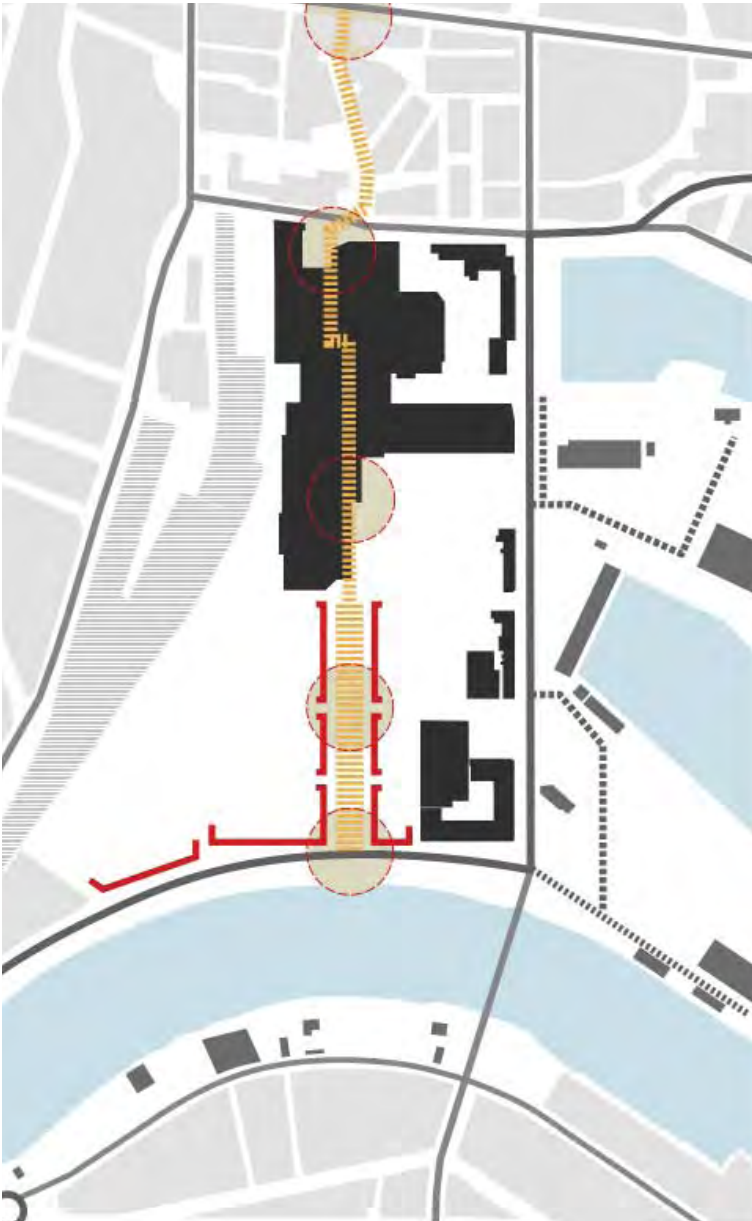


fig. 29 Internal Axis - active nodes and street definition (built form)

NORTH DEE: A NEW SUSTAINABLE URBAN DISTRICT

The Challenge

4.20 North Dee is a mixed use area that in parts works very well and is currently in the process of being redeveloped. There is a healthy partnership approach between Aberdeen Harbour Board, Aberdeen City Council and key developers. The quality of the environment varies widely but there is a strong urban grid and from a masterplanning point of view there is little point in altering this basic structure.

4.21 The challenge is twofold. Firstly, North Dee suffers from traffic impact and parking pressure in a different but no less damaging way, than Market Street. Secondly, the difficulties in delivering comprehensive high quality redevelopment in a part of the City is significant due to fragmented ownerships and diverse land uses. There are a large number of separate businesses based in the streets that collectively form North Dee. Some are very active and very important to the City's economy and others less so. Some sites are massively underutilised when one considers their proximity to both the Harbour and City Centre.

4.22 Through the key stakeholder engagement process North Dee repeatedly emerged as a significant but unrealised opportunity. Miller Cromdale is a development partnership specifically established to drive forward redevelopment of this area. They are committed to and passionate about the opportunity, however admit that their efforts have been frustrated and delayed by issues of land ownership. Miller Cromdale has been operational within the area for 12 years and yet have delivered only half of what they believe could have been achieved if the consolidation of sites was not such a difficult process.

4.23 In addition, while the site is blessed with exceptional public transport infrastructure links, the businesses that Miller Cromdale could attract to the site demand a certain level of parking. Indeed, companies expect only slightly less than they might expect from out of town locations.

The Opportunity

4.24 There has long been a recognition that the redevelopment of this area is important for Aberdeen. Aberdeen Harbour Board has supported the efforts of Miller Cromdale in the recognition that North Dee represents one of the best opportunities to attract high quality office accommodation and other uses directly adjacent to the port, train station and bus station. North Dee already houses offices for many large companies; most of which have an important relationship with the Harbour. The economic opportunity and potential benefit from the redevelopment of North Dee to City and Harbour alike, are significant. The continuing high quality redevelopment of North Dee could bring a range of other benefits, including:

- Creating better links between the Harbour and City Centre;
- Establishing a more positive southern gateway to the Harbour and City Centre;

- Creating a uniquely sustainable business park that makes best use of the transport infrastructure nearby;
- Providing a better setting for the southern end of Union Square;
- Providing opportunities for the expansion of Union Square or for other high profile City Centre attractions that might benefit from a location near the Harbour; and
- Activating the river edge / esplanades and the areas to the south.

4.25 The SDF response to the opportunities in North Dee is driven by the physical form of existing development and roads as well as existing and potential future pedestrian movement. There is benefit in retaining the strong grid pattern currently on site. However, for the opportunity to be fully realised there has to be an increase in the level of ambition for this area. Only a truly ambitious vision will provide a platform for cohesive action through partnership working.



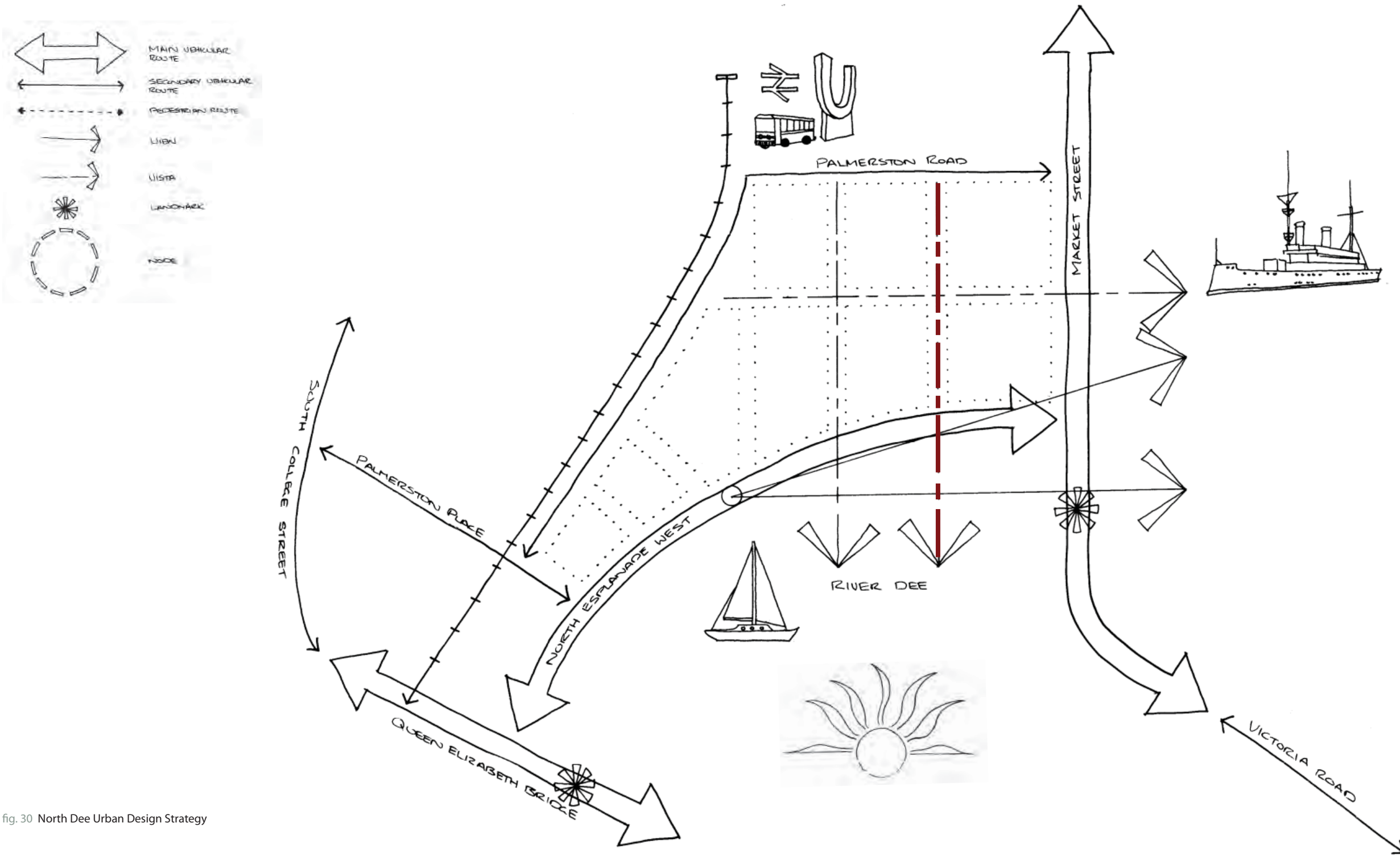


fig. 30 North Dee Urban Design Strategy

Considerations and Alternatives

4.26 The site is currently identified for business / commercial type uses, particularly business space. It is an excellent site in many respects, close to the City Centre and road and rail infrastructure as well as its proximity to the Harbour itself. However, most modern business premises have a significant supply of car parking spaces and this will be difficult to develop on this site. Consideration needs to be given as to how redevelopment maximises the use of public transport infrastructure. Such an approach depends a great deal on the attitudes of local workers. From other sites in Aberdeenshire we know that the car is still a very popular choice in terms of how people travel to work, whether it be in the City Centre or on its periphery.

4.27 Further considerations include the possibility of a future expansion of Union Square and what form that expansion may take. It is very unlikely that the retail floorspace of Union Square will expand any further south into North Dee, but it may be that at some point it extends onto its current surface car park. Development on the current surface car park would take retail activity even closer to Market Street, the Harbour area and importantly the key sea

borne arrival point to the City. Development on the surface car park could potentially lead to an extension of the Union Square multi-storey car park in a southern direction into North Dee. If this happened, the car park could also help to serve future business / commercial development in North Dee. This would remove the requirement to provide on site car parking on each and every development block and in the right location a multi storey car park could provide an attractive and efficient alternative.

4.28 Importantly, in terms of reducing congestion on Market Street, much of the car parking in North Dee could be better accessed from North Esplanade as opposed to Market Street itself. This could reduce traffic in Market Street and potentially avoid some of the tail backs that take place at particularly busy times.

4.29 As to alternative development options for North Dee, these will depend greatly on whether the Market Street Axis or internal North Dee Axis is deemed to be the most appropriate north south axis for directing pedestrian movement from the City Centre (Union Street) down to the River Dee, Torry or other areas in the south of the city.

4.30 Furthermore, the structural consideration identified previously, namely increased multi-storey car parking, primary access to Union Square gained from North Esplanade or a one-way system loop, will affect development options if they were to be adopted individually or in combinations.

An Emerging Vision: A New Sustainable Urban District

4.31 In the property and development industry location is hugely important. North Dee is in the right location. Its proximity to the Harbour and the City Centre will mean that there will always be pressure to see the area change from a traditional mixed use Harbour environment with many small businesses to something altogether more ambitious and potentially more economically rewarding to the City. However, this change needs to be realistic, not just in terms of what gets built but because existing businesses and landowners do not necessarily share this vision at this time. North Dee is a good location for these businesses. Many have a long history in the area and unless a package of measures is put in place and alternative sites identified they are unlikely to leave willingly. Compulsory purchase should be considered where a landowner is unwilling to participate in the broader redevelopment of the area.

4.32 Given its location, sustainable transport and the creation of a high quality business environment are attractive objectives. However the former is only possible with a resolution of the parking issue and the latter demands that we create a momentum of development activity and a rising profile in terms of land uses that can attract other investors.

Our Vision for North Dee is a comprehensive yet simple masterplan based on the grid system and reflecting the importance of Market Street as the natural north south axis. Ground floor commercial uses will be focussed on the Market Street and North Esplanade West edges and sites could be identified for a central car parking facility. Flexibility is important in considering an alternative approach to the North South Axis

- ||||| Pedestrian Axis'
- North Dee development blocks
- Active Edges



fig. 31 North Dee Option 1 - Internal Axis



fig. 32 North Dee Option 2 - External Axis



fig. 33 North Dee Option 3 - Union Square Expansion

THE ESPLANADES, RIVERPARK AND SOUTH DEE

The Challenge

4.33 The areas of land immediately adjacent to the River Dee, on both sides, provide an important gateway and route to the Harbour and City Centre. Furthermore, a Riverpark with active edges and high quality environments surrounding it would not only provide an attractive gateway, but would be a significant attraction for local residents and visitors alike.

4.34 The success of the river edges, in terms of North and South Esplanade West and the areas between them and the river, rely heavily upon the potential redevelopment of their neighbouring districts, North and South Dee. The future approach taken to reduce the volume of traffic using North Esplanade West will also have a major impact on how successful the northern river edge can be.

4.35 The challenge will be to successfully activate the street edges, improve the quality and feel of the street itself and to better connect both of these elements to the river and provide a high quality recreational resource for the City which is befitting of such a prominent and accessible location. To be clear, there is no proposal to develop land that is currently identified as open space

The Opportunity

4.36 Given the location of this section of the river and its orientation, the opportunity exists to create a series of environments that positively engage with the built form of the City and the natural environment of the River Dee to produce a far more dynamic relationship than what is currently experienced. This could potentially be delivered through:

- Active street frontage along North Esplanade West, at least in a focussed area;
- Establish a more positive and dynamic river route and gateway to the Harbour and City Centre; and
- Provide opportunities for recreation and leisure along the River Dee.



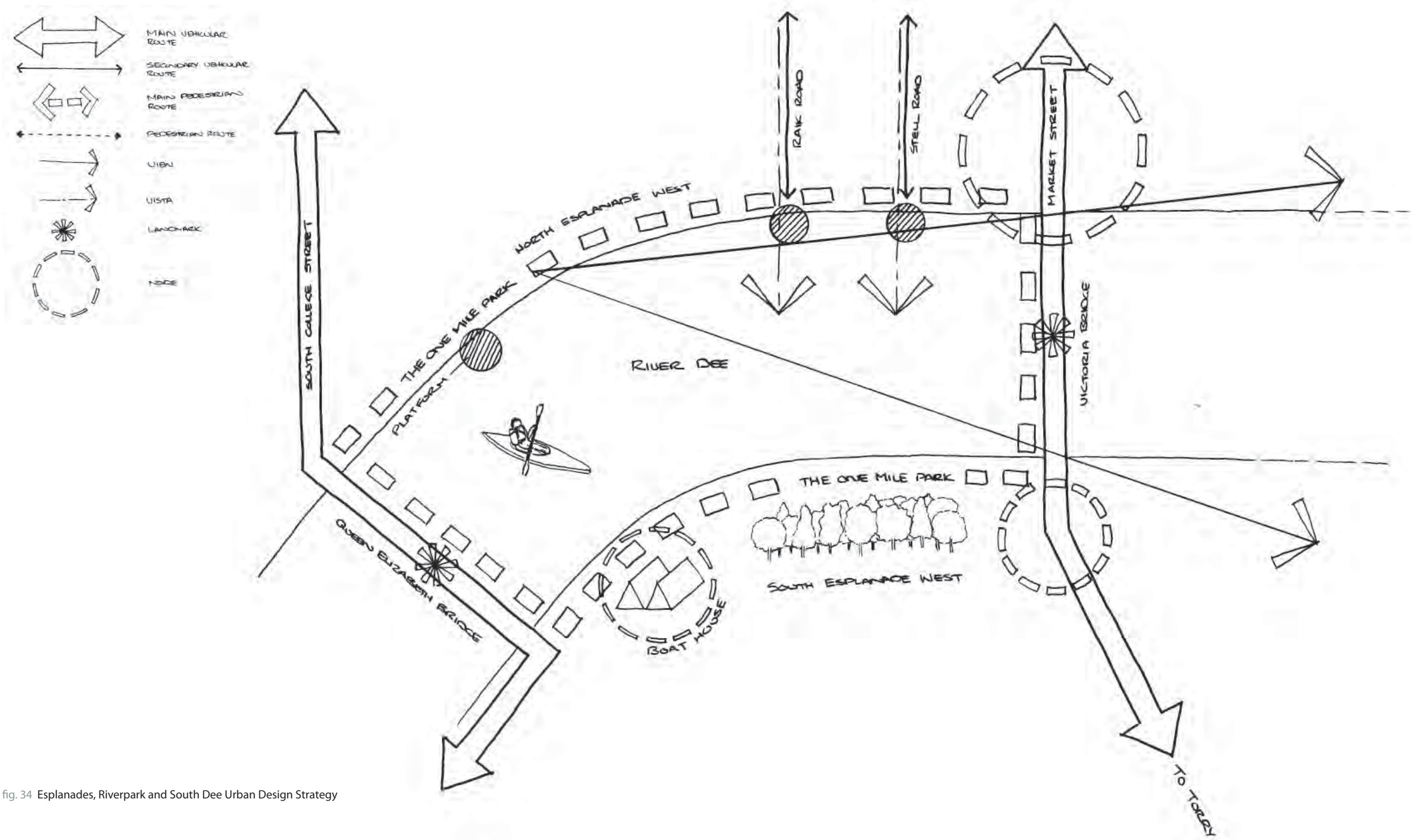


fig. 34 Esplanades, Riverpark and South Dee Urban Design Strategy

Considerations and Alternatives

4.37 The esplanades will be affected to a large degree by potential redevelopment at North Dee. There remains a strong focus on the River Dee, enhancing and improving this as a resource and attraction in its own right. Potential funding for ambitious proposals along the riverside should be investigated further.

Traffic Reduction

4.38 North Esplanade West suffers from similar traffic problems to Market Street. Although the form of the street is different to Market Street in terms number of junctions (Market Street having several large junctions), it does carry the same high volume of traffic. As suggested previously, there are a number of different users of this route which carries traffic, north through the City. Reducing vehicle numbers by providing better access to Union Square from a signed junction on North Esplanade West, located on towards its western end, will help towards reclaiming the esplanade as a street and ‘place’ rather than simply a conduit for traffic.

The One Mile Walk

4.39 The location of Victoria Bridge and Queen Elizabeth Bridge at the eastern and western ends of North and South Esplanade West create a loop which is one mile in circumference.

4.40 By introducing uses (attractions) and points of visual interest (public art and lighting) along this circuit, it would help promote the area as a destination and potentially draw people down Market Street or through the North Dee area to what is a very attractive place, and an active and animated location beside the river.

The Boardwalk

4.41 Building upon the concept of the One Mile Walk there is an opportunity to create usable public space on the south facing northern bank of the River Dee. Currently the bank is narrow and steep and features a thin strip of grass and trees. Currently pedestrian movement is to the north of this green strip which is in itself not a particularly usable resource. However, if a space were to be created south of the green strip, through constructing a boardwalk or series of platforms, a significant public space could be created that would provide viewing area (for the Harbour) and could host semi-permanent structures housing cafes, restaurants or bars.

4.42 Any proposals for structures must be considered in light of the importance of the River Dee SAC

South Dee

4.43 Another element to these proposals is the redevelopment of parts of South Dee. For a number of years there has been interest from the private sector in redeveloping this area. However, we feel that any proposals need to consider South Dee’s role carefully.

4.44 The southern bank of the river benefits from shallower topography that the northern bank and is currently characterised by green open space, although the quality of these spaces is not particularly high. The built form to the south, between South Esplanade West and Menzies Road is also at a scale that allows the southern bank to benefit from good sunlight.

4.45 Therefore, any development in this area will need to carefully consider its scale, its location and where possible improve upon South Dee’s role as a gateway to Torry. Loss of green space must be considered in the context of Aberdeen City Council’s Open Space Audit

An Emerging Vision: Esplanade Riverpark

4.46 The focus of the emerging vision for this area should be the River Dee. The edges of the river, in the form of North and South Dee, should aim to enhance it as a gateway to the City Centre by creating streets as places with appropriate environmental improvements and uses to this end.

4.47 A successful Riverpark would be used by the adjacent residential communities, as well as those who might populate the redeveloped business area at North Dee.

4.48 The potential for uses along a boardwalk offers the opportunity to diversify the recreation and leisure activities in the area and potentially draw a lot more people to use this resource.

4.49 In addition to these, further interest could be created by encouraging more activity on the river, building upon its use an area for rowing.

Our vision for the Esplanades is to use them as the active edges of a new and exciting public space with water its heart. This Riverpark will incorporate a ‘One Mile Walk’ and will form a core component of the wayfinding / signage and public space strategy.

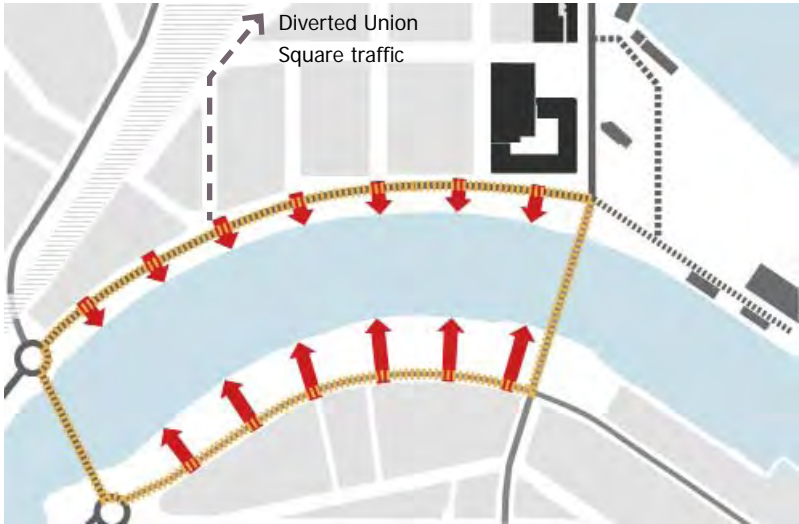


fig. 35 Riverside 'circuit' and river activation



fig. 36 Street activation and potential development areas

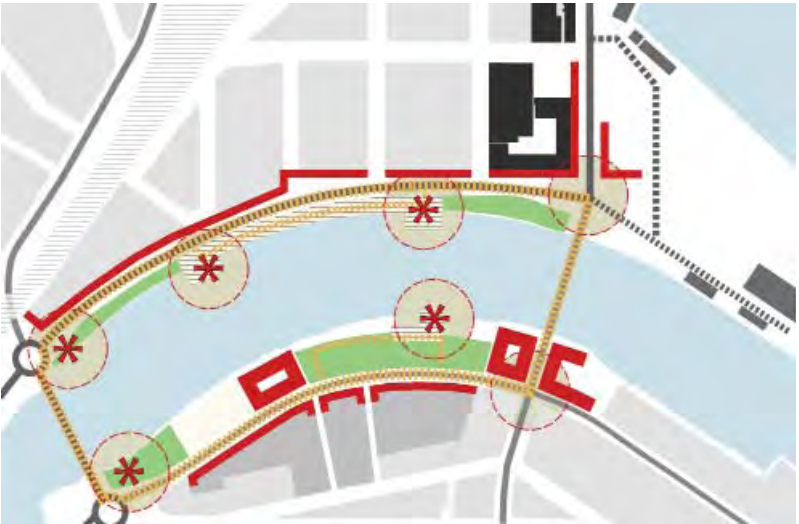


fig. 37 Nodes of activity along the activated esplanades and river

- Existing development blocks
- Node of activity
- Visual point of interest
- Activate the river
- One mile walk
- Active Edges
- Boardwalk

REGENT QUAY / VIRGINIA STREET

The Challenge

4.50 Two of the interesting areas around the Harbour in terms of their built form are the Castlegate area (broadly the northern area set between Virginia Street and Justice Street which features the Castlegate square and Castlehill, the site of the former English Garrison) and Regent Quay (broadly the southern area set between Virginia Street and Regent Quay itself).

4.51 These two areas are separated by Virginia Street, which forms a significant barrier to north south movement between the Harbour and the City.

4.52 Virginia Street, stretching from the junction with Market Street and Guild Street to Commerce Street, is a street with varying characteristics which represent different challenges.

4.53 The small section of Virginia Street, between Market Street and Shiprow is probably the best opportunity. This area feels quite urban and the dynamic relationship between the City and Harbour may even be at its most interesting in this short 50m section of road. However, while attractive stone buildings overlook moored vessels, the space in between is dominated by traffic and the resultant environment is oppressive.

4.54 However, the remainder of Virginia Street faces greater challenges. As the road cuts through the steep topography it becomes divorced from its neighbouring districts, its edges are inactive and create an environment

that does not relate to the Harbour or the City. This is not to say its is not without its merit or opportunities. Its southern edge features a number of large warehouses which provide a tangible link to the history of Regent Quay as the main goods handling area from the Harbour's past. Although these edges are not active, the buildings themselves could be better celebrated. The northern edge of the street is characterised by large imposing retaining walls.

4.55 The challenge will be to improve the quality of the environment along Virginia Street and enhance what north south connections which remain between Castlegate and Regent Quay. These connections take the form of Shiprow, Marischal Street and Commerce Street.

The Opportunity

4.56 There have been recent efforts made to improve the quality of public realm in the area around Shiprow. High quality materials have been used within a much improved public realm set between the recent developments on Shiprow itself. The overall environment created is attractive and is likely to draw pedestrians towards the Harbour from Castlegate square.

4.57 However, with Marischal Street representing the most direct route to the Harbour this should also be improved, with the dramatic street celebrated accordingly.

4.58 Other than Shiprow, Marischal Street represents an important north south link through Castlegate and down to the Harbour. The opportunities are therefore very much linked to improvements to the environments.

Creating a Pedestrian Loop

4.59 There is an opportunity to define a looped route that connects Castlegate, Marischal Street, Regent Quay and Shiprow. This route, with a variety of character areas, buildings and street types along its length could begin to draw people down to Regent Quay and the Harbourside which is already seeing increased investment delivering residential infill developments that may help support a greater mix of uses in the area.

Regent Quay: A Mixed Use Historic District

4.60 With its intriguing lanes, warehouses and grand Harbourside buildings, Regent Quay has the potential to be a very attractive mixed use area. Further residential development may be appropriate as it is within a five minute walk of the train station and Union Street.

Regent Quay Gateway

4.61 The junction between Virginia Street and Commerce Street presents the opportunity to establish a significant gateway to Regent Quay and the wider Harbour area. Currently the junction is difficult to read, unclear and has poorly defined edges, with the overall environment dominated by vehicular traffic. Improvements to existing edges, the creation of new edges or public realm along with landscaping could help create an attractive entrance to Regent Quay and also soften the edge of Virginia Street alongside it.

Castlehill Viewing Platform

4.62 Some of the most interesting views across the Harbour are gained from Castlehill and Castle Terrace. The foreground view from here is of Regent Quay which adds further intrigue to the view. This area is merely 100m from Castlegate square and sits at the foot of the Castlehill multi storey flats. The environment along Castlehill is neglected but it offers great potential for a viewing platform / public space which includes information and interpretation material on views as well as the history behind Castlehill itself. Such a space would also need to be adequately signposted from Union Street / Castlegate square.

Considerations and Alternatives

4.63 Any redevelopment opportunities within the Regent Quay area must be considered carefully in terms of their proximity to existing industrial uses in the area. Indeed, new commercial and industrial development within this area can also make a contribution to environmental / public realm improvements either along the 'Loop' or around the Regent Quay Gateway.

4.64 There is likely to be limited opportunity to reduce the levels of traffic along Virginia Street, however consideration should be given to how the environment can be improved to reduce the feeling of vehicle domination and to celebrate where possible the rich urban form within Regent Quay.

An Emerging Vision

4.65 The Castlegate and Regent Quay area offers up a tremendous opportunity to reconnect the city to the Harbour. The further improvements to north south routes such as Marischal Street and Commerce Street will be need to counter the significant barrier to movement which is Virginia Street. Virginia Street itself could be improved greatly to provide a more attractive environment for those who use it.

4.66 With its close proximity to the city centre and public transport infrastructure, the future redevelopment / regeneration of this area can form a critical element in better connecting the City and Harbour.

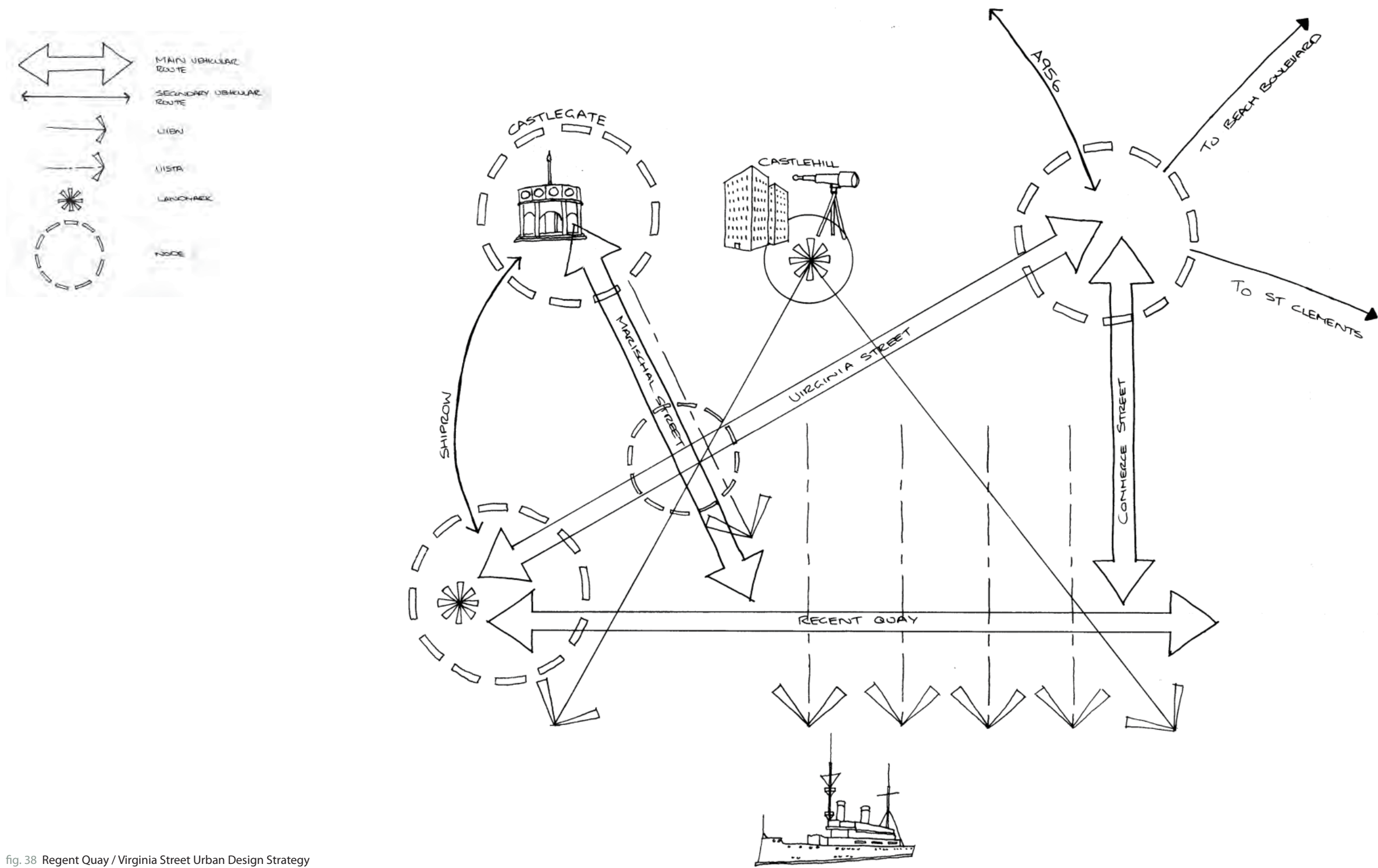


fig. 38 Regent Quay / Virginia Street Urban Design Strategy

ST CLEMENTS AND THE BEACH CONNECTION

The Challenge

4.67 This industrial area of the City has become increasingly dominated by large single use sites. It is characterised by large footprint buildings and development blocks which combine to create a ‘superblock’. This block is not at a human scale and prevents ease of movement for pedestrians around the St Clements area. This area has by and large been developed to cater for visitors travelling by car, with swathes of surface car parking which further reduces the ability of the pedestrian to access or move around within St Clements.

4.68 This triangular superblock contains a number of large and successful businesses. It has within it uses and activities that do not lend themselves to public access and in some cases are visually unattractive. There is little sense in creating new routes through the block or to try and change it fundamentally. It is what it is and provides a very valuable large industrial area in the heart of the harbour.

4.69 There are, however, a number of important streets and routes that surround this block which could be improved. Local environmental improvements could therefore have a significant impact on improving the legibility and permeability of this area. Improved routes could also better connect the attractions of its edges such as the Beach Esplanade, St Clements Church and Footdee.

The Opportunity

4.70 Environmental improvements such as public realm, lighting and even public art could help to enhance the main routes within the St Clements area.

4.71 There are a small number of potential development sites in and around this area, although it remains to be seen whether the development of these sites (identified with the LDP) with anything other than a large single use would improve the area.

Considerations and Alternatives

4.72 However, there is one emerging development proposals for the triangular site of open space just south of the retail park. Given the surrounding nature of land uses, it is likely that this site will be industrial or commercial in nature. However, there may be the opportunity for this development to form a positive edge fronting the beach promenade, to possibly act as a gateway from the beach Esplanade and to potentially house the Renewable Energy Centre that was identified for this site in the LDP. Such a proposal could be a very interesting co-tenant for an industrial use especially in renewable energy.

Emerging Vision

4.73 The emerging vision is based upon realism and pragmatism. The triangular superblock houses many important uses and offers little opportunity for change. Investment should therefore be directed to surrounding routes in the context of a wayfinding strategy.

4.74 The development site currently zoned for a Renewable Energy Centre should be redeveloped for an industrial use and interpretation centre.

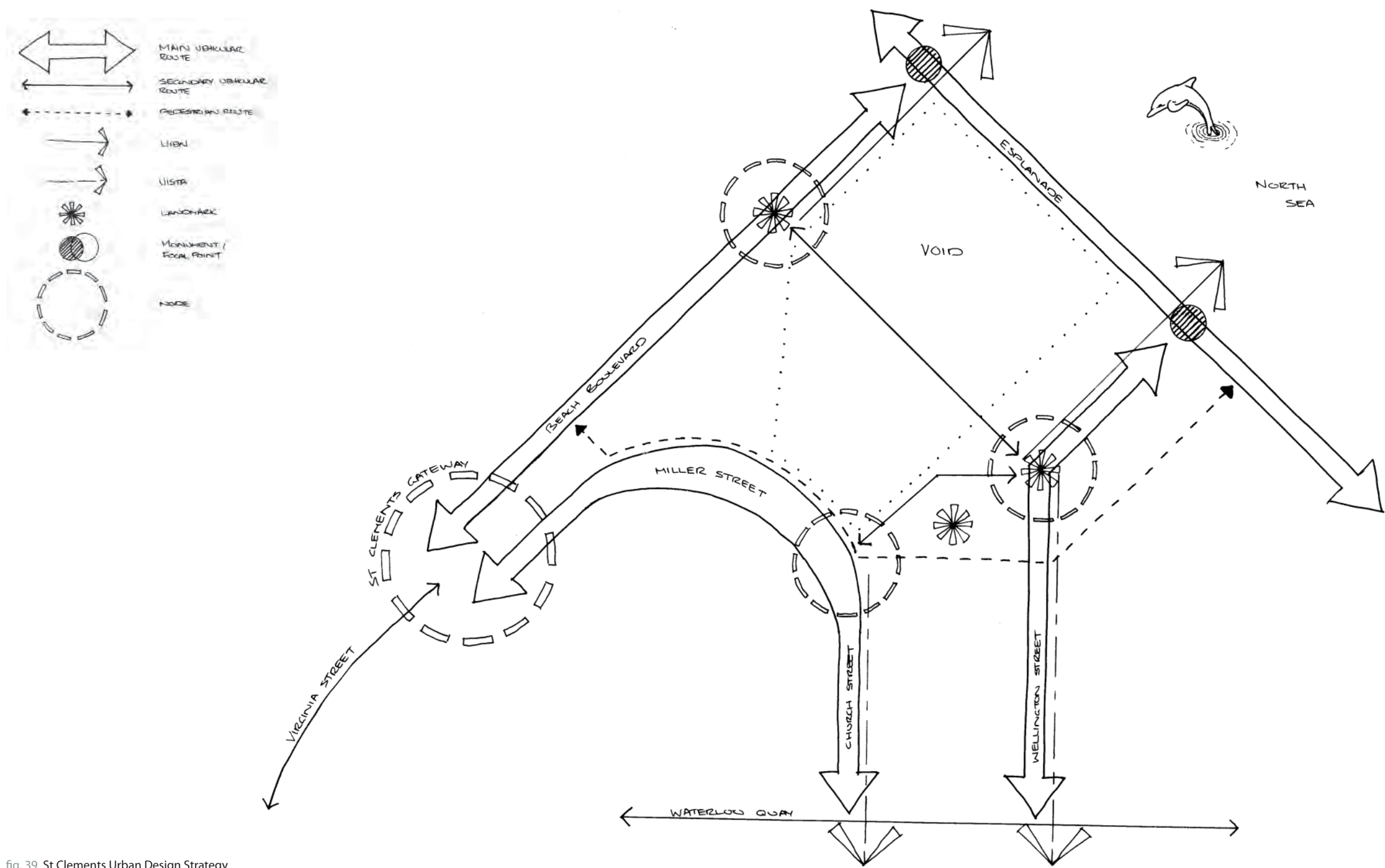


fig. 39 St Clements Urban Design Strategy

THE TORRY GATEWAYS

The Challenge

4.75 The approach to Aberdeen from the Torry Coast is dramatic and beautiful. However the quality of this route, along Greyhope Road is unmaintained and neglected providing a poor first impression of Aberdeen from both a vehicular and pedestrian point of view.

4.76 Furthermore, the point at which ‘green’ Torry meets the built environment, the Torry Gateway, is unremarkable. Improvements have been made with the development of the SEPA HQ but more could be done.

4.77 Beyond the Torry gateway, the main pedestrian and cycle route through Torry to the City Centre is along Sinclair Road which is characterised by industrial Harbour related uses and a poor street environment. Such an important route into the City needs to be addressed and improved.

The Opportunity

4.78 While there are a number of opportunity sites for development within Torry, the most significant and beneficial improvements within Torry are along the Greyhope Road and Sinclair Road axis. Development sites will play a part and indeed in places they front this route and can therefore provide a positive contribution when they are developed.

4.79 It should be noted that where possible these sites should be developed for a use that reflects the areas heritage and current pattern of land uses. The Torry Masterplan proposes a significant commercial development and visitor attraction at this point.

Considerations and Alternatives

4.80 Through the community and key stakeholder engagement sessions, Torry battery was highlighted as an area that had potential to be improved. Following these sessions and through additional research, it has been determined that the infrastructure requirements in terms of electricity and gas needed to service an attraction that would feature a cafe for example are prohibitive.

Emerging Vision

4.81 The emerging vision for the Torry Gateway is to provide a built form gateway at the eastern edge of Torry that celebrated its role as the coastal access point to the City of Aberdeen

4.82 Furthermore, there should be a much improved coastal route joining the Torry Battery to the edge of built Torry, as well as significant improvements for pedestrian and cyclists along Sinclair Road. Sinclair Road represents the most direct route to Victoria Bridge and environmental improvements should reflect this importance. This route should be punctuated where possible by nodes or activity and active edges. There are some fantastic features such as the lighthouse on Sinclair Road.

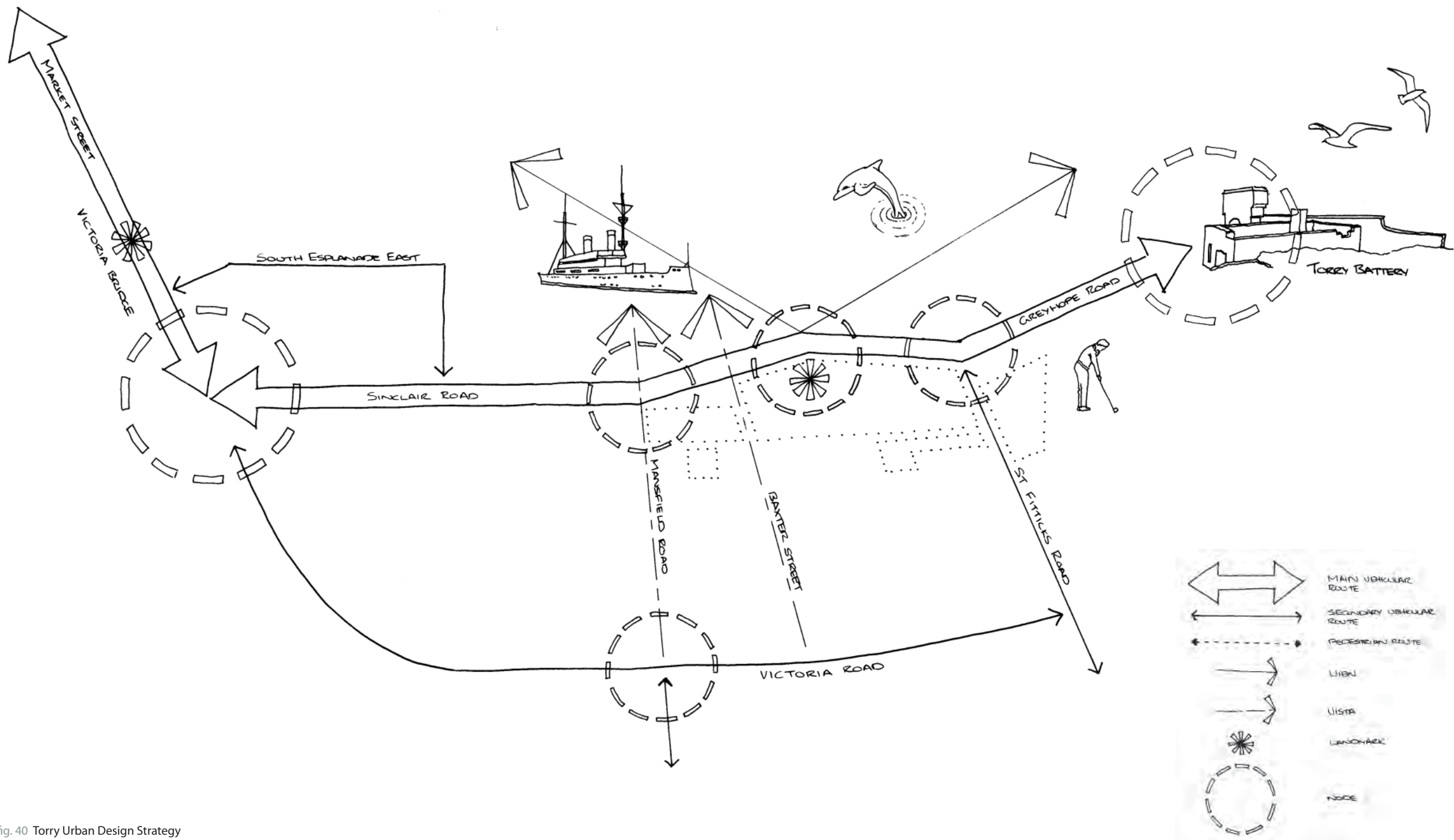
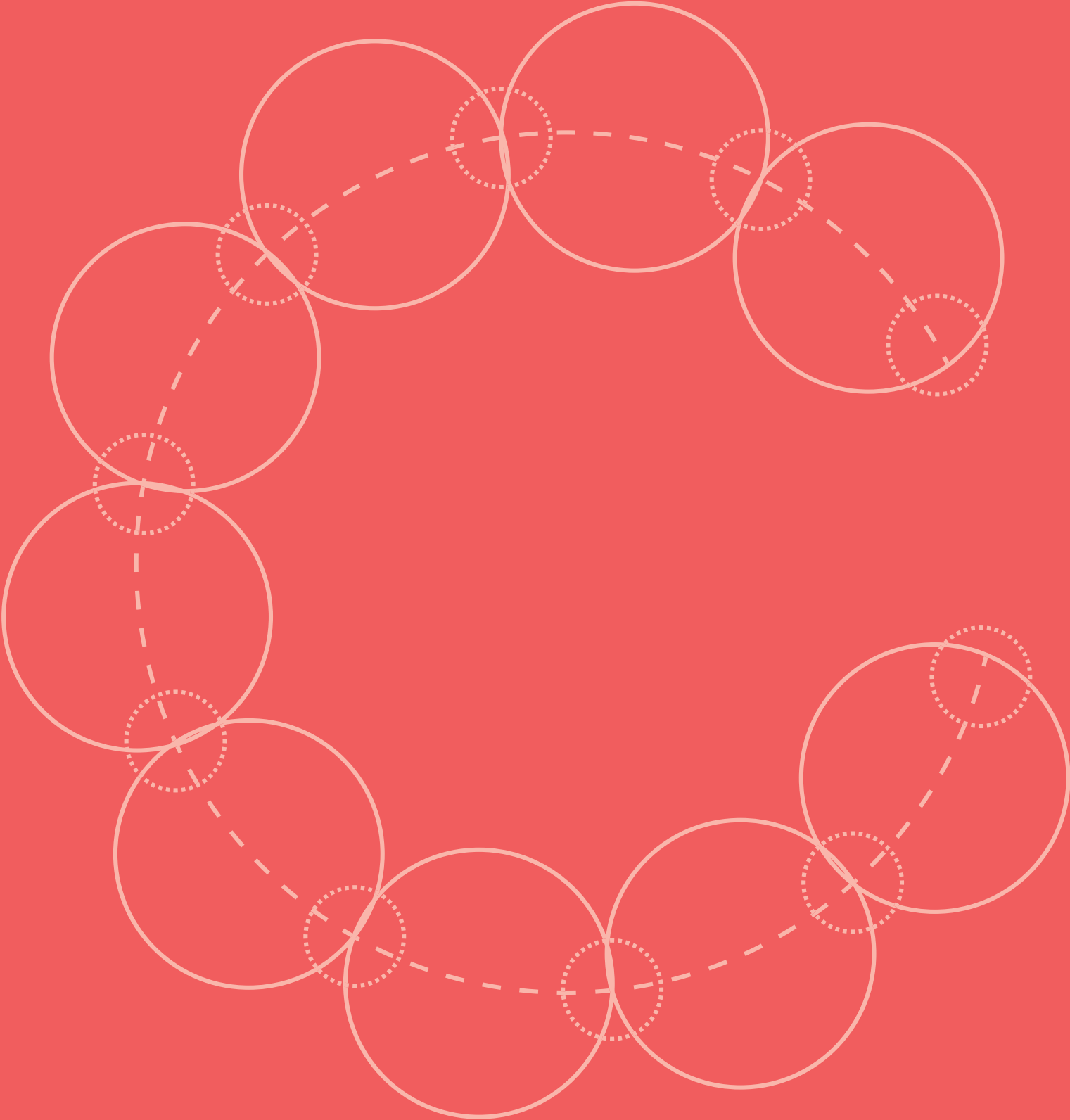


fig. 40 Torry Urban Design Strategy



SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

PROTECT

5

THE HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AS SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

Introduction

5.1 This section identifies a series of development and design guidelines intended to shape and influence the use, form and quality of development in and around the Harbour area. The chapter translates the vision for Aberdeen Harbour that is explained in Section 4 into clear, concise planning guidance on the desired standards that should be adopted when planning new developments within the area. The document will be reported to Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee at Aberdeen City Council in late 2011, alongside the findings of an extensive and ongoing consultation exercise with stakeholder groups. The eventual aim is to recommend the Development Framework and these accompanying guidelines for adoption as Supplementary Guidance as part of the emerging Local Development Plan.

The Objectives of this Guidance

5.2 The overall aim is to ensure that the type, scale and form of development in and around the Harbour area leads by example on issues such as the mixture and co-location of different uses and facilities, environmental sustainability and performance, landscaping and greenspace management, travel and built form. Crucially, the supplementary guidance must balance the advantages of new development and investment with the need to protect and ensure the long term viability and operation of Aberdeen Harbour.

5.3 Currently the Harbour and the areas that immediately surround it, represent the greatest mix of uses in the City. Industry, business, retail, homes and areas for recreation sit side by side. The relationship between these areas is not always an easy one. Most of the uses within these areas have been in place for a long period of time, and as such people using the areas accept the advantages and disadvantages of their environment.

5.4 However, with increasing pressures in terms of delivering new housing across the city, the Harbour is seen as potentially an attractive location due to its proximity to the City Centre, the coast and transport infrastructure. As an independent statutory authority, Aberdeen Harbour Board enjoys permitted development rights in respect of the operational Harbour. However, for the Harbour to safeguard its current operations and allow potential future growth, it must carefully consider the land use pressures around the Harbour as well as the aspirations of Aberdeen City Council, local businesses and developers. The Harbour Board share many of the same aspirations as the Council, and wish to see both the Harbour and the City achieve their maximum potential in terms of economic growth, development and where possible, integration.

5.5 This framework recognises these pressures and issues and accepts that they will continue. It seeks to achieve a level of land use and design guidance that ensures all types of development can be accommodated in and around the Harbour, but not at the expense of potential future economic growth of the either the Harbour, businesses around the Harbour or indeed the City Centre. In light of this, the Harbour Development Framework and guidance responds directly to the existing planning position at both a strategic and local level.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

The Planning Context: Setting clear objectives for development guidance

5.6 The guidance sits within the context of the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 2 for Scotland, the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan and the emerging Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

National Planning Framework for Scotland 2

5.7 NPF2 takes forward the spatial aspects of the Scottish Government's commitment to sustainable economic growth, setting out a strategy for long-term development over the coming 25 years.

5.8 This confirms that Aberdeen Harbour provides essential support services for the offshore oil and gas industry and the tonnage of vessels and cargo handled continues to grow. It further highlights the Harbour's role as the principal mainland port for freight, passenger, vehicle and livestock services to Orkney and Shetland.

Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan

5.9 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved in August 2009 and while this was prepared under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 1983, the structure plan marked a shift towards the new style development plans as are now required under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006. This sets out a range of objectives and targets for realising the strategic vision for the north east.

5.10 The Structure Plan confirms that the oil and gas industries are the predominant economic force in the plan area and will continue to be important in the future. One of the key objectives for economic growth is to improve the essential strategic infrastructure necessary to allow the economy to grow over the long term. The need to protect the existing infrastructure and in particular that supporting freight by rail and sea is also referred to.

5.11 A key priority of the Structure Plan is the completion and implementation of the city-centre masterplan (Development Framework) which, since approval of the plan, has been completed.

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan

5.12 The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Authority recently published the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the next strategic plan to cover the area up to 2035. This paper identifies Aberdeen Harbour's existing role within the regional energy industry and that it has a future role as a base for the manufacturing, maintenance or operations associated with the renewable energy industry. Consultation on this paper is ongoing until January 2012 following which the responses received will go on to inform the production of a proposed plan.

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2008: Green Spaces New Places

5.13 The Aberdeen Local Plan was adopted by the Council in June 2008 and remains the adopted plan for the area. Notwithstanding, it will soon be superseded by the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, the Proposed version of which is presently undergoing examination.

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

5.14 Once complete it is anticipated that this Framework will be adopted by Aberdeen Council to form part of the Aberdeen LDP and as such consideration is given to those emerging policies contained therein.

5.15 The emerging LDP confirms that there is a need to safeguard the supply of existing industrial and business land from other development pressures. This is particularly true for sites located in strategic locations, i.e., close to or beside Aberdeen Harbour, including land suitable for Harbour related uses.

5.16 Policy B14: Aberdeen Airport and Aberdeen Harbour states that "Within the operational land applying to Aberdeen Airport and Aberdeen Harbour there will be a presumption in favour of uses associated with the airport and Harbour respectively."

5.17 The Proposed LDP also confirms that the Harbour Board Operational Area will be subject to a Masterplan which will provide detailed guidance in respect of land uses, policies, proposals, access and connectivity within it and adjoining areas.

Objective One – *Consideration of land use, policies, proposals, access and connectivity within the Harbour and adjoining areas, must be aimed at safeguarding the supply of existing industrial and business land.*

Meeting Housing and Community Needs

5.18 Policy H2 states that applications for development or change of use within Mixed Use Areas must take into account the existing uses and character of the surrounding area and avoid undue conflict with the adjacent land uses and amenity. Where new housing is proposed, a satisfactory residential environment should be created which should not impinge upon the viability or operation of existing businesses in the vicinity. Conversely, where new industrial, business or commercial uses are permitted, development should not adversely affect the amenity of people living and working in the area. The LDP is supportive of the redevelopment within the existing urban area which can play a part in regeneration. It confirms that planning briefs or masterplans may be required for larger brownfield sites or sites in sensitive locations. A number of sites within the City are identified in the

Objective Two – *Housing and mixed use development within this area, must take account of the character of the surrounding area to avoid undue conflict with adjacent land uses. Specifically, residential and mixed use development proposals must be comprehensive, shaped by a consultative masterplan approach and must not impinge upon the viability or operation of existing business in the vicinity.*

The Green Space Network, Access and Informal Recreation

5.19 Policy NE1 states that the City Council will protect, promote and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of the Green Space Network. Where major infrastructure projects or other developments necessitate crossing the Green Space Network, such developments shall take into account the coherence of the network. Masterplanning of new developments should determine the location and extent of the Green Space Network within these areas. Urban Green Space is also afforded protection under Policy NE3 which seeks its retention for recreation purposes.

5.20 The LDP also confirms in Policy NE9 that new development should not compromise the integrity of existing or potential recreational opportunities including rights of access, and that every opportunity should be taken to improve public access, permeability and links to green space for recreation and active travel.

Objective Three – *Development proposals must seek to protect, promote and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of the Green Space Network within the SDF area. Proposals must demonstrate how they improve public access, permeability and links to green space for recreation and active travel.*

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

OBJECTIVE ONE

Consideration of land use, policies, proposals, access and connectivity within the Harbour and adjoining areas must be aimed at safeguarding the supply of existing industrial and business land.

OBJECTIVE TWO

Housing and mixed use development within this area must take account of the character of the surrounding area to avoid undue conflict with adjacent land uses. Specifically, residential and mixed use development proposals must be comprehensive, shaped by a consultative masterplan approach and must not impinge upon the viability or operation of existing business in the vicinity.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Development proposals must seek to protect, promote and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of the Green Space Network within the SDF area. Proposals must demonstrate how they improve public access, permeability and links to green space for recreation and active travel.

Objective One: Refocus on commercial & industrial development

5.21 The supply of effective business on industrial sites around Aberdeen Harbour is a matter of great importance to the economic fortunes of the City. Aberdeen City Council recognise this importance but also harbour a long term ambition to see a greater degree of mixed use development around the Harbour and the River Dee.

5.22 Balancing these objectives can on occasion create some debate. It is partly the reason why the Development Framework identifies areas like North Dee, the Esplanades and parts of South Dee for a greater focus on mixed use developments. This is an attempt to resolve this issue at a strategic level.

5.23 In providing developing guidance to satisfy Objective 1, the starting point must be an honest interpretation of:

- where industrial activity currently is;
- where an obvious market for mixed use activity currently exists; and
- an appreciation of which areas may change over the next 15 or 20 years.

5.24 Only North Dee and some small parts of South Dee area are likely to change to mixed use development in the next 10 to 15 years. Progress in North Dee has been slow.

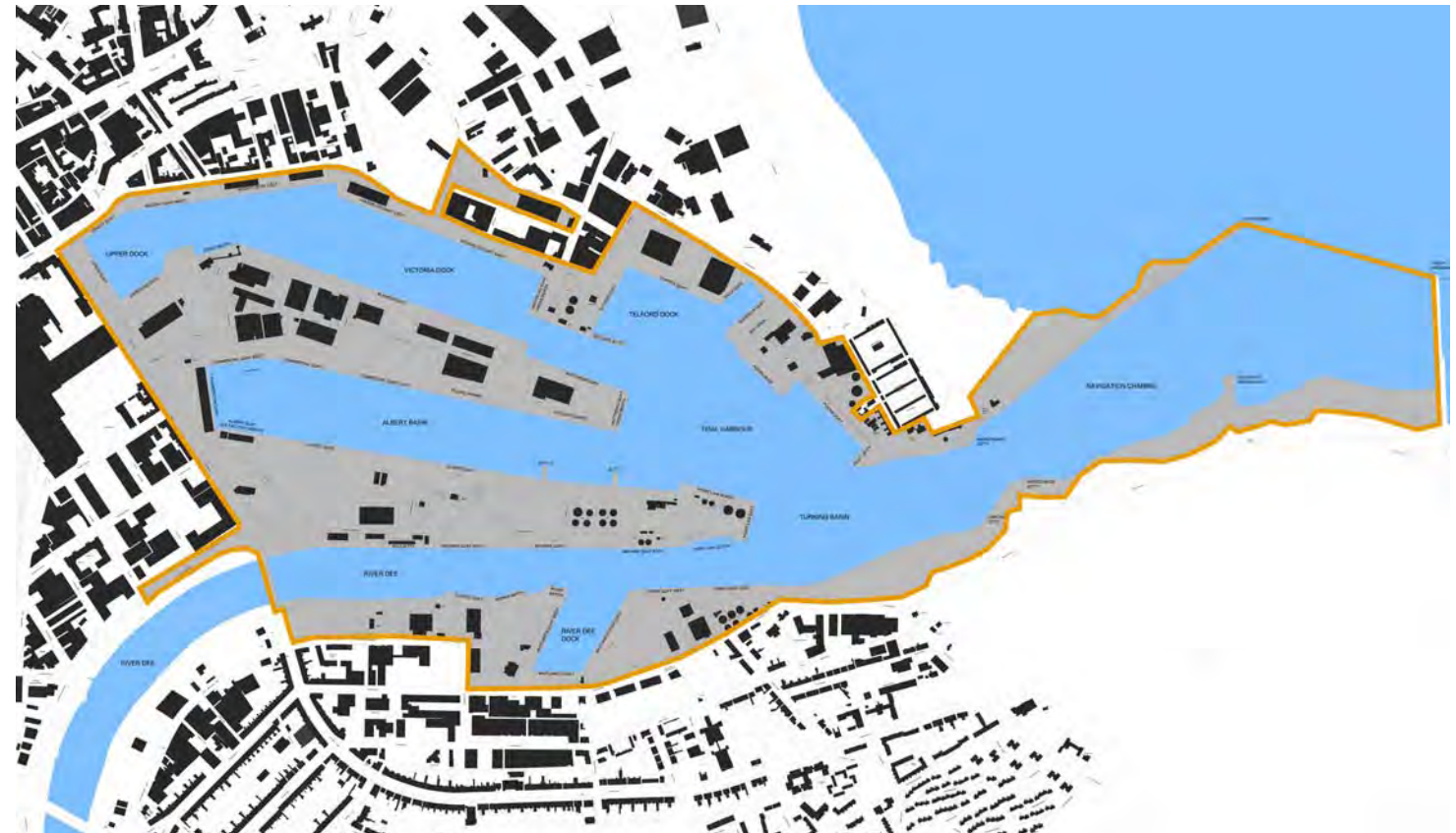
5.25 Conversely there is still huge demand for industrial and commercial sites in St Clements and in Torry and therefore, this Development Framework argues for simplicity and for a refocusing of industrial development towards these areas.

5.26 That is not to say that this development should not consider the amenity of mixed use or residential developments nearby, they should and they must. However, in the short to medium term, the supply of industrial and business sites in these areas must take precedence over any ambitions to see them change toward a greater mix of uses.

5.27 Objective 1 does test the current planning approach in these areas. The policy is relatively clear, however, there are some ambitions for mixed use in both St Clements and Torry. Practically speaking this is where the “infrastructure” sits, it is where existing businesses are located and existing people are employed. We believe that it is foolhardy to suggest anything other than a short to medium term retention of these areas as industrial and business land. We suggest, however, that in meeting this objective it is also possible to consider how new developments can improve the areas by placing greater emphasis upon public realm, landscaping, lighting and public art within them.

5.28 The concept of a delivery fund or implementation fund is considered in greater detail in the final chapter but we do believe that there is a need for simplicity that focuses these areas on commercial and industrial development.

Consideration of land use, policies, proposals, access and connectivity within the Harbour and adjoining areas must be aimed at safeguarding the supply of existing industrial and business land.



Objective Two

Housing and mixed use development within this area must take account of the character of the surrounding area to avoid undue conflict with adjacent land uses. Specifically, residential and mixed use development proposals must be comprehensive, shaped by a consultative masterplan approach and must not impinge upon the viability or operation of existing business in the vicinity.

5.29 A greater focus of industrial and commercial development in St Clements and Torry, a presumption in favour of that development in the areas identified under Objective 1, allows a more relaxed attitude towards mixed use development in the areas identified in Objective 2. In particular, North Dee, some areas of South Dee along the esplanade, the areas of the City Centre as they touch the Harbour to the south and some other parts of the city centre.

5.30 The identification of Market Street as a place, means that mixed use development will come into direct contact with Harbour activity. If this is the case, this development and its end users must accept the realities of an operational port on their door step. In particular, with regard to noise, an obvious and unavoidable impact on amenity and other aspects that are a fact of an operational port.

5.31 Policy BI4 (see figure x.x) in the emerging Local Development Plan seeks to ensure that residential development for mixed use development does not impinge upon the viability or operation of the port. It is the role of this

development guidance to demonstrate how that can be achieved.

5.32 It is also the case that these objectives will remain open to a level of interpretation and therefore there is a need for service level agreement between the Harbour Board and the City Council. One objective that is absolutely clear is the necessity that any mixed use development coming forward does so in a comprehensive way. Development must not emerge in a piecemeal fashion but be taken forward in full consultation with Aberdeen Harbour Board and their design advisors following a masterplan process.

5.33 That masterplan must also be considered in the context of this development guidance and the accompanying design guidance. There should be a presumption against piecemeal developments in the areas identified under Objective 2.



Objective Three

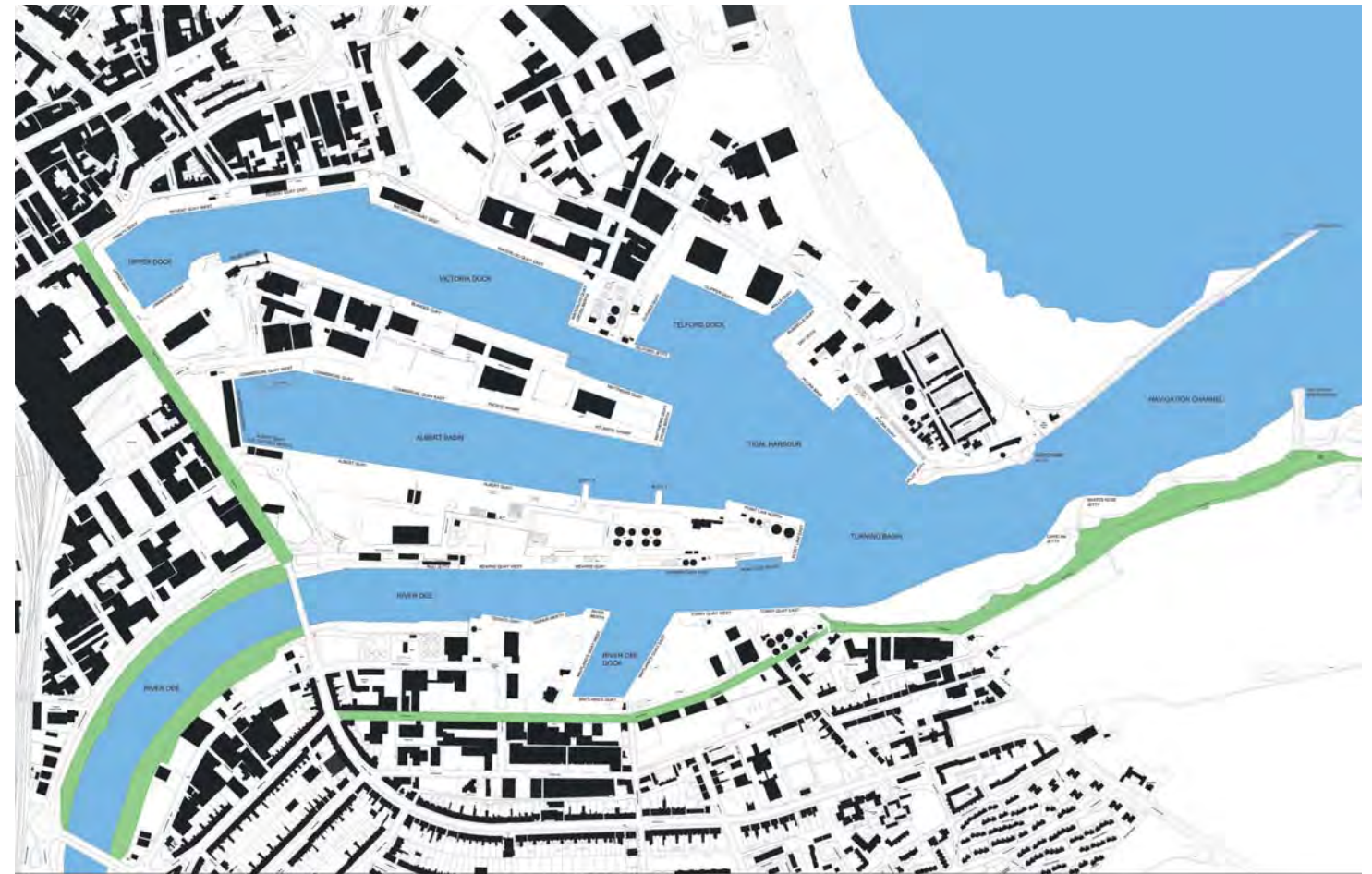
Development proposals must seek to protect, promote and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape and access value of the Green Space Network within the SDF area. Proposals must demonstrate how they improve public access, permeability and links to green space for recreation and active travel.

5.34 This Development Framework promotes a long term and gradual improvement in the land, public areas and streets around the Harbour. These improvements will be taken forward in three ways.

- Firstly, an upfront investment in line with the Action Plan that promotes new areas of public realm, landscaping, public art and lighting around the Harbour, allied to an overall wayfinding and signage strategy.
- Secondly, the improvements that emerge from the significant redevelopment proposals contained in this Development Framework for North Dee, South Dee and the Esplanade area.
- Thirdly, an ongoing set of improvement and investments that emerge more slowly over the medium to long term and/or associated with individual developments, redevelopments and extensions and alterations to existing businesses.

5.35 This last category under objective 3 covers the entire Harbour area, including both mixed use, industrial and commercial sites. No matter the nature of a development proposal, we contend that it can still make a contribution to the environment around the Harbour and like most strategic planning or development approaches, that contribution could be delivered off site through way of a commuted payment. Such an approach would be managed and distributed over the years by Aberdeen City Council in partnership with Aberdeen Harbour Board.

5.36 Such monies could over the next twenty years have a significant impact in the establishment of green network, walking, cycling routes, landscaping, lighting, public realm investment, public art and other improvements for both the business and residential communities in the area.



STRATEGIC DESIGN GUIDANCE: THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

Introduction

5.37 The Harbour Development Framework covers an area of land around the Harbour and marine space amounting to nearly 200 Hectares. Detailed design advice is not appropriate over such a large land area however allied to the high level objectives detailed in the preceding section, some broad design principles have been set out in the urban design strategy for the likely key areas of change.

5.38 Fundamentally, the Harbour Development Framework encourages developers, landowners and citizens of Aberdeen to consider the Harbour as a series of special places. The overwhelmingly functional nature of the Harbour does not mean that the principles of good place making are unimportant. A unique and busy place it may be, but it is an extraordinary and special place too. In Designing Places, the Scottish Government sets out six qualities of good placemaking. When considering change along the edges of the Harbour and particularly in the areas identified under Objective Two, new developments should be:

- Distinctive;
- Welcoming;
- Safe and pleasant;
- Adaptable;
- Easy to get to; and,
- Resource efficient.

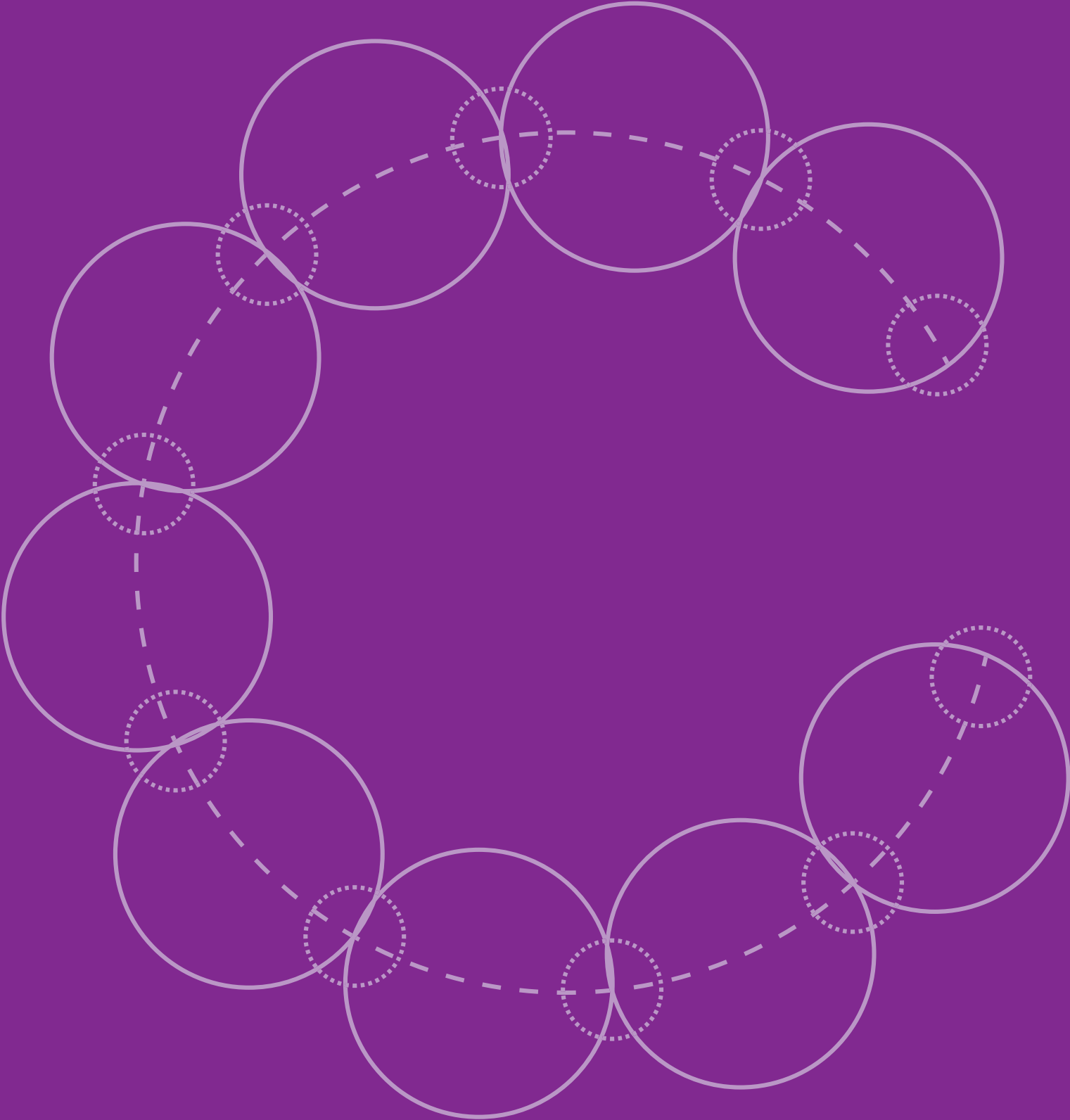
5.39 Given the physical scale of the Harbour area and the long term nature of this development guidance – it may take up to twenty years for some of these ideas come to fruition – there is also a benefit in offering general guidance on the key components of a successful development process. The importance of a positive design process has been recognised in local design guidance in Aberdeen City for several years – this is a key purpose of the Aberdeen Master Planning Process. Key lessons that have been distilled from our own experience of major development projects concur with the

six practicalities of designing places identified by Architecture and Design Scotland, namely that in good projects there exists:

- A Placemaking Culture engendered in the wide range of people and organisations from the local politician to the street cleaners, who have a shared vision for a specific place.
- The Right Team of creative, talented people with strong leadership, communicating and collaborating with the numerous organisations involved in designing and managing a place.
- Ownership and Control is critical to influencing the quality of the place, it allows a strategic view of infrastructure and a long term view of management and maintenance issues.
- Community Engagement which builds the support coalition, encourages local leaders, ensures good communication and captures local people's memories and aspirations of a place.

- Adequate Time to form a vision, to engage effectively, to implement strategic changes while accepting that making good places needs to ride the wave of political, economic and funding cycles.
- Policy Context through national policy, local policy, neighbourhood masterplans, maintenance policies and management strategies which support the quality and vibrancy of a place.

5.40 Delivering better places requires a strong spatial framework and a range of quality design skills but a culture of placemaking is also crucially important. Within the Development Framework area there are only limited opportunities for redevelopment, some are for the continued development of industrial and commercial land, others for mixed use development steered by a comprehensive master planning process. However the principle of seeking to celebrate what is special about this place must underpin development around the Harbour no matter its land use or form.



ACTION PLAN

IMPROVE

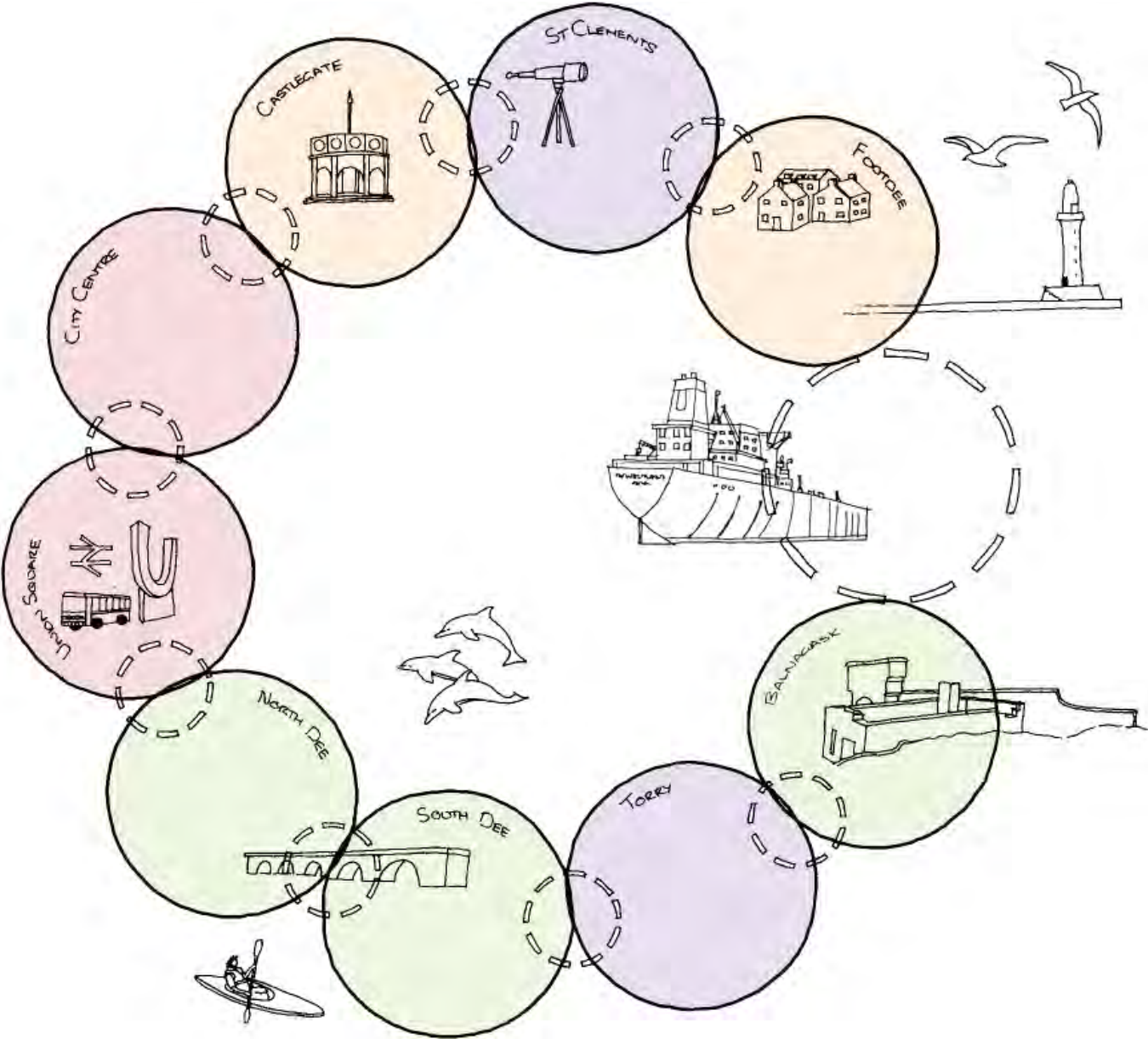
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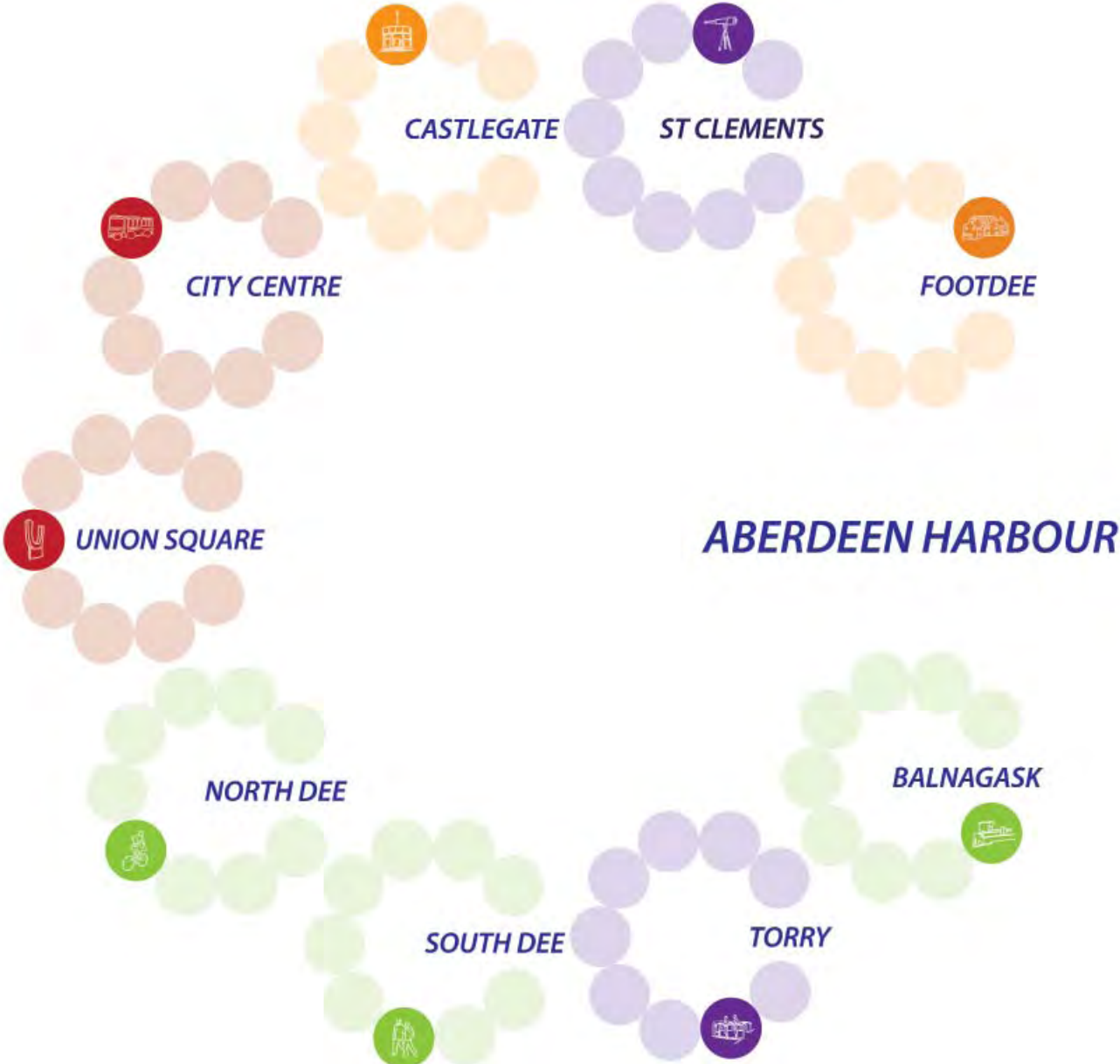
THE ACTION PLAN

Introduction

6.1 This section illustrates a series of projects that are likely to emerge as part of an Action Plan to deliver the principle of Improvement around the Harbour. Work on a more detailed action plan will be progressed in the next year or so in consultation with key stakeholders and local communities. Aberdeen Harbour and the City Council are equally committed to playing their part in the delivery of this plan but the reality is that many of the projects will sit beyond their control and will require the support of other landowners, developers and statutory agencies.

6.2 This chapter sets out high level proposals for Branding, Wayfinding, Public Realm, Public Art and Lighting in a variety of locations around the Harbour. These projects have been shaped by the three key principles of orientation, viewpoint and movement. In focussing the action plan on these elements it is hoped that a cohesive, integrated and high quality Harbour area will evolve. These projects are not exclusive. As the consultation process on the Action Plan gets underway in earnest it is anticipated that new ideas will develop and existing proposals will evolve.







WAYFINDING, SIGNAGE AND BRANDING

6.3 Throughout the extensive consultation process that informed the production of the Development Framework, local people and visitors to Aberdeen both commented on the complex geography and legibility of the Harbour Area. Their comments fell into three broad categories:

- Scale – the journey around the Harbour area (between Torry and Footdee) is over three miles long.
- Change – The Harbour area was subject to a fundamental change in the 1970's when in response to health and safety and security concerns, a fence and controlled access arrangement was put in place. Added to this the last thirty years has seen a gradual increase

in the size of development blocks around the Harbour in response to the requirements of mainly industrial and commercial property.

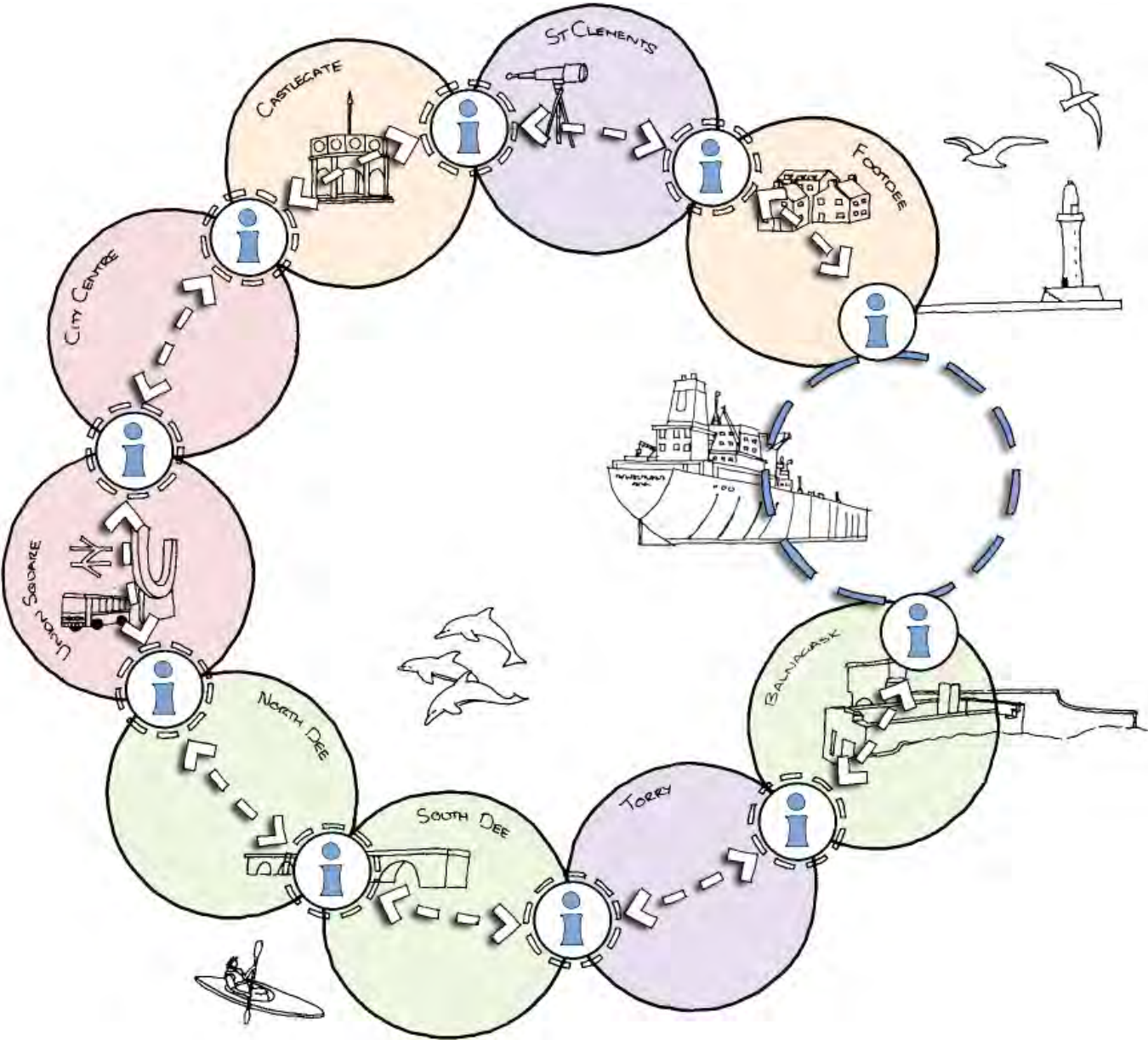
- Experience – In places the historic street pattern has been completely removed and replaced with an environment that while ideal for an industrial area, does little to encourage public access, especially at night. Added to this is the impact of anti social behaviour at certain times in certain locations.

6.4 That is not to say that local people do not continue to move around the Harbour, they do. Many have adapted their journeys to avoid certain places at certain times of day and night. Nor does everyone want access to the old docks. Almost everyone that commented at the

community engagement events understood the requirements of a modern Harbour in terms of access, health and safety. The problem is that the experience of the journey around the Harbour could be better facilitated and improved by a system of wayfinding and signage.

6.5 Similarly, many visitors also make their way to and from Footdee and Balangask and points in between. However many were keen for a greater level of detail to aid orientation and legibility around the Harbour. More visitors spending more time in the many attractions around the Harbour can only add to the areas importance as a tourist resource. An effective system of orientation and wayfinding could also ensure that important local facilities like the Maritime Museum as well as other commercial enterprises, benefit from this increase in trade.

6.6 For this reason the Development Framework proposes the simple wayfinding concept shown in Fig . This simple motif reflects an accurate geography of accessible land around the Harbour. It is intended that this motif could be repeatedly used on signage, public spaces and interpretation areas around the Harbour. The ambition is to use this one simple branding mechanism to explain the basis of experiencing the journey around the Harbour.



NORTH TO SOUTH: A JOURNEY AROUND ABERDEEN HARBOUR



FOOTDEE / SEA



6.7 The improvements that are currently in place at Pocra Quay in Footdee, are a perfect example of what could be achieved around the edges of the Harbour. This area of public realm is supported by a small mixture of uses and some attractive architecture – old and new. This area is already considered a destination for locals and visitors alike, however it is the area between Footdee and the City (St Clements) that must be the focus of further investment.



ST CLEMENTS / FOOTDEE

6.8 Future investment should reflect the key principles set out in the earlier urban design strategy. Investment should be focused on a number of key routes through St Clements to ensure that the monies are not spread too wide. There are a number of particularly wide streets in this area that could accommodate investment in street lighting, and improvements to the streetscape and landscape.

6.9 Signage at Footdee should indicate proximity to the beach area but also the opportunities to move through St Clements to begin the journey west and south around the Harbour. There is also an opportunity to consider how the public space at Footdee could use lighting or public art to better develop a relationship with a sister space at Torry – the beginning or conclusion of the journey.





CASTLEGATE / ST CLEMENTS / REGENTS QUAY

6.10 This is an important point where the Harbour and the journey comes into contact with the City Centre proper. The busy junction between Commerce Street and Virginia Street / Castle Terrace is currently dominated by traffic. While there is no suggestion to impact upon this junction, there is undoubtedly potential to improve this general area with lighting, environmental improvements and new planting. There is also an opportunity to improve the physical gateway at the junction with investment in lighting, perhaps floodlighting the existing buildings of value which line its edges.

6.11 The steep landscaped bank that runs north to the City Centre from Victoria Road could also benefit from some improvement and better management. Similarly efforts should be made to improve the environment generally along Victoria Road. Again floodlighting of the old warehouses along this route as well as general improvements to the street environment should be considered.

6.12 The Regents Quay frontage contains many buildings of note. Its visibility is limited by structure within Regents Quay and of course, by the ships in dock at any particular time, however some consideration should be given to a broader approach to floodlighting this key frontage. Proposals to develop a public space at the end of Regents Quay where it meets Victoria Road are being discussed between Aberdeen Harbour Board and Aberdeen City Council.





CITY CENTRE /
CASTLEGATE

6.13 The area of Castlegate offers exceptional elevated views of the Harbour area stretching south toward Balnagask. The construction of a public space or platform at this point offers a great opportunity to view the Harbour. However the location of this space so near the Castlegate and Union Street offers the opportunity for high levels of public access to this area and in time the journey around Harbour.



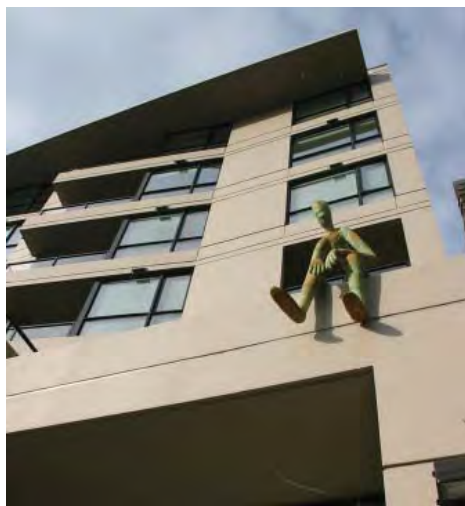


CITY CENTRE / UNION SQUARE

6.14 This proposal should sit as part of a general improvement of the pedestrian environment along Market Street. It is intended to help the perception of this important transport route as a place as well as a street. The space between Union Square and Market Street is a key arrival point into the City for travellers leaving the Ferry Terminal. Improvements to the Ferry Terminal will be made in the coming years however this concept investigates whether those improvements should extend to the public space outside Union Square.

6.15 This will be a complex proposal to develop and will require detailed consideration of the transport implications. Currently Market Street forms a key part in the city's transport infrastructure. It is likely to involve consideration of improvements to the streetscape, lighting and the possibility of elements of public art.





UNION SQUARE / NORTH DEE

6.16 Greater detail on the emerging ideas for North Dee is provided within the urban design strategy however the proposals for this area are strongly linked with the proposals for Market Street and the interface with the North Esplanade. Currently the grid pattern is the defining feature of this area and this should continue to act as the basis for emerging master planning work.

6.17 The alternative approach to achieving the north south link will have a significant effect upon proposals for this area. Similarly the opportunity to reconsider access and parking arrangements for Union Square will be an important consideration relative to the development of North Dee. The potential for an expansion to existing communal parking facilities could be hugely beneficial for the development of the small street blocks – potentially freeing them from having to deliver all parking on site. In this redevelopment, every opportunity should be taken to promote the site as a more sustainable approach to business development based around outstanding public transport connections.





NORTH DEE / SOUTH DEE

6.18 The concept of the 'One Mile Walk' was a very positive idea that was well supported at the second stage of the community engagement process. In particular, contributors felt that the environment between Victoria Bridge and Wellington Road was a wasted opportunity that was not particularly welcoming. The green space that was there while it should be protected, was not as usable and accessible as it could be. There was strong support for the redevelopment of North Dee and also for the principle of creating an active built frontage on the southern edge of this redevelopment area overlooking the River Dee – caveated on the treatment of the road at this point. There was less pressure from the public for redevelopment of the South Dee area. Support existed for the principle of this area being improved rather than redeveloped.

6.19 Proposals are very much focused on exploiting the proximity of the river for informal recreation – a walking and cycling route, seating areas and places with limited access to the water. The boat clubs to the south already deliver some access to the water however the general environment could be improved and better lit. The possibility of a board walk to the north (aimed at increasing the pedestrian space and alleviating the worst impacts of the slope on the north bank) is proposed. As work continues on the Action Plan due cognisance must be taken of the River Dee SAC, issues relative to flooding and the importance of this open space.



NORTH DEE

The One Mile Walk

Walk

YOU ARE HERE

Bridge

Footpath

Road

Roundabout

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NORTH DEE





TORRY

6.20 While the journey can continue east along the South Esplanade there is perhaps more logic in focusing investment upon the junction between Victoria Road and Sinclair Road. This crossroads is important to the City and its integration with Torry could be celebrated more than at present. It is also an important point in the journey along the edges of the Harbour. It is visible for a significant part of the journey along Sinclair road and is one of the first genuinely recognisable pieces of the City Centre that can be seen if the pedestrian or cyclist is travelling from the south

6.21 The journey along Sinclair Road is and will remain one that moves through an industrial environment. However that is not to say that it should be unpleasant. There are a variety of views north toward the Harbour and the views south rise up the hill toward Victoria Road and Torry. Along the route itself there are points of interest including a number of buildings and of course the tall slender tapering octagonal-section tower of the 'leading light', that dates from 1842.

6.22 Proposals for Sinclair Road are focused on general carriageway improvement to the streetscape and mechanisms like planting to soften the environment. Opportunities to achieve a common and improved boundary treatment and street edge should also be considered. There are a number of points – the leading light and the junction with Victoria Road where improved lighting should be considered in greater detail.

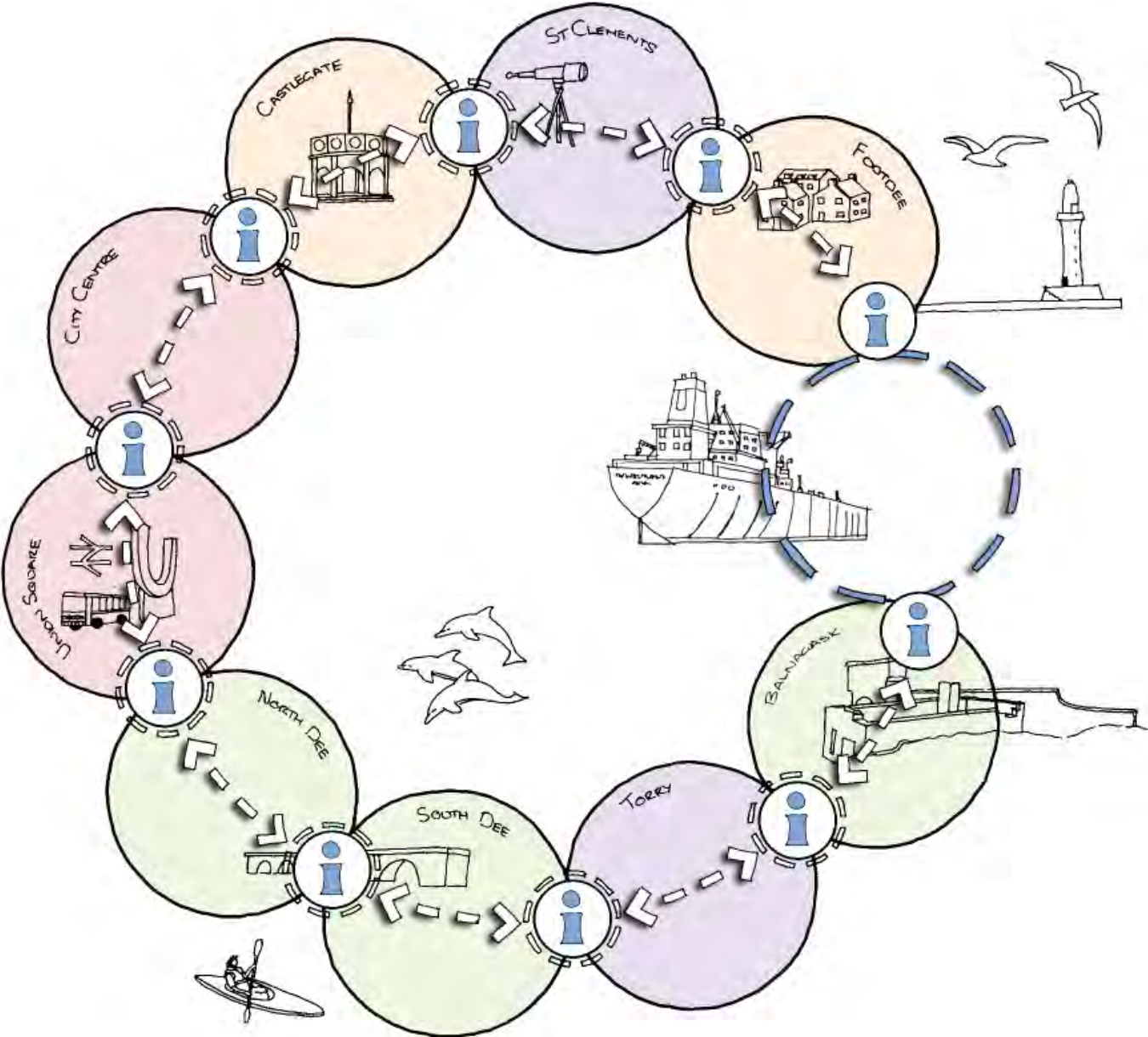


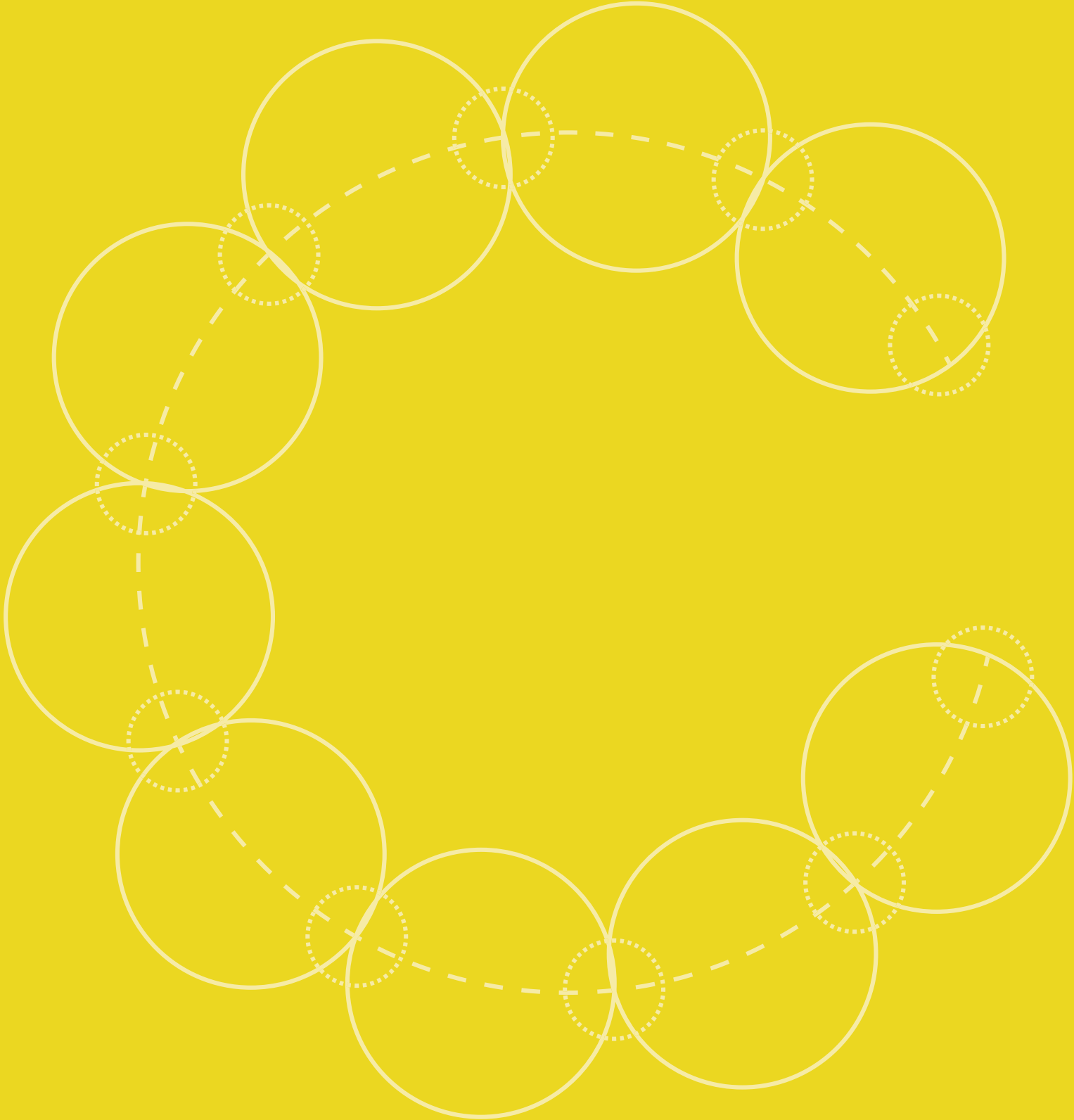
BALNAGASK / SEA



6.25 Effectively this stretch of the route sees the pedestrian leave Aberdeen and enter the coastal area that travels south toward Cove and Stonehaven. From Torry Battery the views of the City are exceptional. Evidence from the community consultation shows that local people and visitors alike, see this as one of the most inspirational and unique viewpoints of any City in the UK. Such an important visual gateway should be acknowledged and celebrated. The fact that the view is industrial in nature is to some extent part of this unique quality. The sense of movement created by the Sea and traffic in the Harbour means that this is a most dynamic landscape.

6.26 Proposals at this point consider the potential to invest in Torry Battery and perhaps in the public space that surrounds it. The proposals are likely to consider public realm improvements, better lighting and the possibility of a piece of public art. It should be noted that opportunities for investment in the Torry Battery need to be considered in the context of the limitations on local power supply.





DELIVERY

7

Introduction

7.1 This document is draft in nature. It is intended to stimulate and in some cases provoke debate. Debate and discussion at this interim stage is vital. The final document will be guided by the outcome of these discussions and it will take genuine partnership working to achieve a better balance between the objective of taking the City Centre to the water and the reality that the operation of the port is impacted by different forms of development, particularly those of a residential nature.

7.2 In the process of agreeing this document, it is important that both the City Council and Aberdeen Harbour Board, together with other important stake holders, come together to achieve this balance. For the SDF to work there must be an agreement on how best to secure the future of the area as an economic power house as well as a potentially attractive site for a new mixture of uses.

7.3 The draft document simply cannot have all the answers at this stage, however, as identified in the introduction, the document does ask the right questions. A series of focused workshops are planned that will seek agreement on each of these matters.

Partnership Working

7.4 A strong partnership between the City Council, Aberdeen Harbour Board and other key players in the Harbour area exists. This is vital not only for broad agreement of SDF as supplementary guidance, but also for the long term management and delivery of the proposals contained within this document.

7.5 Aberdeen Harbour Board are committed to working in partnership in this way. This document has been a product of extensive partnership working between the Board and Aberdeen City Council. A continuation of this level of partnership working in the near and medium term, will make many of these proposals are eminently deliverable. It is in all parties' interests to grasp this opportunity to improve, connect and protect the Harbour area.

Timescales

7.6 Recent discussions between Aberdeen Harbour Board and Aberdeen City Council indicate that a revised and finalised version of this document could be approved as supplementary guidance toward the end of this year / early 2012.

7.7 Once adopted as supplementary guidance the document would then become a material consideration for any planning application in the broader Harbour area.

7.8 Aspects of the Urban Design Strategy and of the Action Plan are likely to take many years to deliver and an important element of the next round of community engagement, is the prioritisation of these projects from a community as well as a commercial viewpoint.

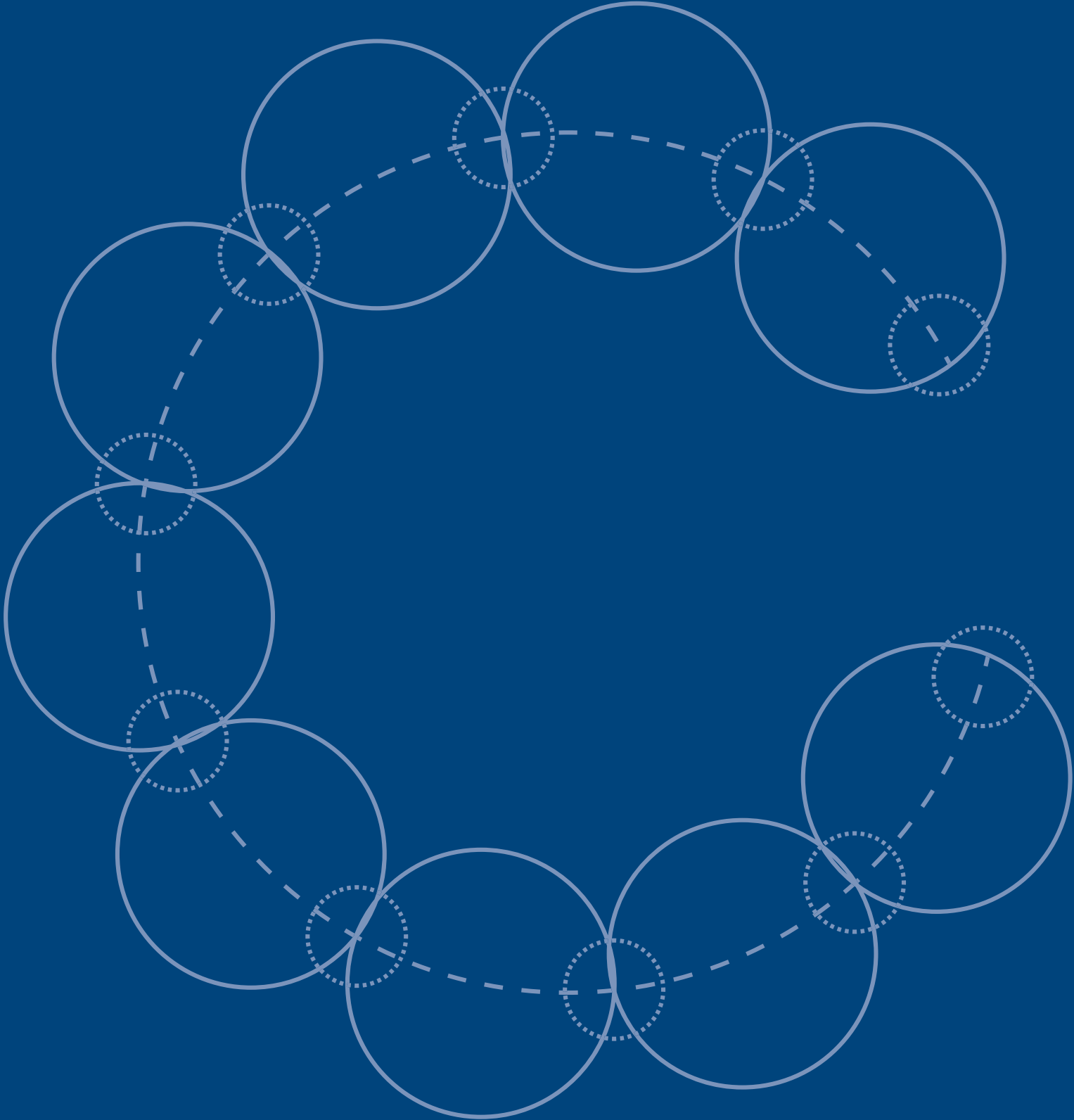
An Improvement Fund

7.9 Delivery partnerships of this nature and the success of mechanisms like the Development Framework, require finance and practical agreement on priorities, to be successful. Very rarely is the ability to zone a site for mixed use development an end in itself. There must be a recognition that funding is required and that that funding, has to be directed at projects to stimulate and drive their implementation.

7.10 The funding of improvements around the Harbour cannot and will not, be the reserve of an Aberdeen Harbour Board alone. The Board will consider delivering (in years one to five) significant improvements to the public realm and the lighting of the area around the Harbour. However, proposals beyond their land ownership rest in the hands of a number of key stake holders.

7.11 There is a need therefore to have some form of co-ordinated delivery mechanism and independent funds, to ensure the long term improvement of this area. For this reason, the final SDF will identify a contributory based fund that grows year on year and is directed following the objectives of the strategy and / or in response to site specific opportunities.

7.12 A great deal of further discussion on the fund is required before it can be agreed. Identifying the key stake holders that should contribute and the levies that are attached to new developments be it mixed use, commercial or industrial, have to be clearly set out and agreed by all parties. This approach must also consider the context of BID proposals and TIF projects nearby.



APPENDIX

A1

LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY STEERING GROUPS

Key Stakeholders and Community Steering Groups which were involved in the process are as follows:

- Torry and Castlehill/Pittodrie Community Councils;
- Elected members of the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee;
- Local members/members in neighbouring wards;
- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce;
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Authority;
- Aberdeen City Centre Management;
- Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future;
- Aberdeen City Heritage Trust;
- Architectural Heritage Society for Scotland;
- Aberdeen Taxi Group;
- Aberdeen Trades Council;
- Disability Advisory Group;
- Federation of Small Business’;
- Scottish Natural Heritage;
- Scottish Water;
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency; and,
- Stagecoach/Bluebird.

LIST OF WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Planning Workshop 20.06.11 @ 0900-1100hrs:

Barton Willmore	Urban Design	Stephen Tucker (Design Director)
		Michael Ward (Senior Urban Designer)
Aberdeen Harbour		Ian Jessiman (Board Secretary)
		Ken Reilly (Engineering Director)
		George Massey (Board Member)
		David Young (Board Member)
Aberdeen City Council	Masterplanning and Design	Sandy Beattie (Team Leader)
		Rebecca Oakes (Planning Trainee)
	Transport and Infrastructure	Ken Neil (Senior Engineer)
	Local Development Plan	Ross MacLennan (Planner)
	Development Management	Lucy Greene (Senior Planner)
		Daniel Lewis (Team Leader)
	Environment and Sustainability	Anne-Marie Gauld (Environmental Planner)
	Community Planning	David Fryer (Neighbourhood Community Planning Officer)

Environmental Workshop 20.06.11 @ 1115-1315hrs:

Barton Willmore	Urban Design	Stephen Tucker (Design Director)
		Michael Ward (Senior Urban Designer)
Aberdeen Harbour		Ian Jessiman (Board Secretary)
		Ken Reilly (Engineering Director)
		Patrick Jordan (Environmental Officer)
Aberdeen City Council	Masterplanning and Design	Sandy Beattie (Team Leader)
		Rebecca Oakes (Planning Trainee)
		Alan Simpson (Planning Trainee)
	Environment and Sustainability	Anne-Marie Gauld (Environmental Planner)
		Aftab Majeed (Environmental Planner)
	Environmental Health	Aileen Brodie (Principal Environmental Health Officer)
	SNH	Sue Lawrence (Grampian Area Officer)
	SEPA	Nick Bedding

