

Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: Landscape

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1. Introduction

1.1 Status of Aberdeen Planning Guidance

This Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) supports the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This APG expands upon the following Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies:

- Policy D4 – Landscape
- Policy D5 – Landscape Design

Due to the cross-cutting nature of landscape, a number of other Local Development Plan policies are also relevant to consider, for example: Policies D1 – Quality Placemaking, D3 – Big Buildings, D6 – Historic Environment, VC11 – Beach and Leisure, NE1 – Green Belt, NE2 – Green and Blue Infrastructure, NE3 – Our Natural Heritage, NE4 – Our Water Environment, NE5 – Trees and Woodland, and R2 – Degraded and Contaminated Land.

Given the timing of the Local Development Plan, a pragmatic approach has been taken to changes in the planning system. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted following the examination and subsequent modification of the Local Development, and the publication of a draft version of this APG for consultation. As a result, some terminology referred to in this APG may vary from the new NPF4 policy framework but it should be noted that the LDP together with NPF4 now forms the basis of the statutory development plan.

1.2 Introduction to Topic / Background

Scotland is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC) which highlights the importance of all landscapes, not just special places. The Convention establishes the need to recognise landscape in law, and to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management, and planning of landscapes. .

Landscape is about more than just ‘the view’. It is about how people, places and natural environments relate to each other. Landscape results from the way that different natural and cultural (human-made) components of our environment interact over time, and how they are perceived by us. Landscape can be ordinary, everyday places as well as special, valued

‘scenery’. It can be a patch of urban wasteland, a mountain, a farmed valley, or an urban park. Landscapes at the coast, which include the marine environment, are referred to as *seascapes*, and those which are primarily urban are often referred to as *townscapes*. Landscapes, seascapes, and townscapes are usually assessed and described in terms of character or value.

Section 2 of this document sets out the design principles for considering landscape, seascape and townscape in the siting, layout and design of development proposals. Further detailed information on landscape techniques (e.g. Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Capacity Assessment, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) is provided in the accompanying technical advice in Section 3 of this document. Section 3 also contains further guidance on supporting landscape information, planting requirements, native species, amenity species, information for landscape plans and landscape guidelines. Section 4 provides a summary of the Aberdeen Landscape Study and its implications for new development proposals.

1.3 Climate Change

In addition to providing a sense of place and an appropriate setting for buildings, high quality landscape provision within new developments can help to provide overall biodiversity enhancements and address the sustainable management of surface water. This APG will therefore help to tackle climate change and relates directly to [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#): 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); 13 (Climate Change); and 15 (Life on Land). It also aligns with [Aberdeen Adapts](#) Goal 7: Increased Space for Nature.

1.4 Health and Wellbeing

Where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. How places are designed within their urban or natural environment are vital to the health of the people and communities within them. Maintaining access to good quality greenspace within walking distance and contact with nature in everyday life are important parts of this, and has been shown to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

This guidance can help to achieve the following Public Health Priorities for Scotland:

- Priority 1: A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities; and
- Priority 3: A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.

This guidance is deemed to have minimal impact on population health and wellbeing. This means that, whilst it is unlikely a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) screening report will be requested to support any planning application, this will depend on the detail and scope of the application. There may be elements of the proposals that relate to the health and wellbeing of the population that warrant consideration. If that is the case, then a screening HIA will be required, and further advice on this will be provided.

2. Aberdeen Planning Guidance

2.1 General Guidance

2.1.1 Involvement of Landscape Professionals

A competent landscape professional should be an integral part of the assessment, design and development team for any proposal that is likely to affect Aberdeen's landscapes, seascapes or townscapes. Any required plans, surveys, assessments and designs must be completed by a competent and suitably experienced professional.

2.1.2 Site Assessment

The creation of a high quality landscape will follow a design process that systematically considers the existing landscape, seascape and townscape character of the site and surroundings, influences the site layout and built form of the proposed development, and considers the requirements of the intended users and for biodiversity, so creating a scheme that is both visually pleasing and functional.

Retaining and protecting appropriate landscape elements, complemented by new features and planting, are important factors in creating a sense of place. Where there are no existing landscape features of note, new landscapes will complement the surroundings of the site and provide positive enhancements.

A fundamental part of any design process must include an assessment of the landscape, seascape and townscape characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Standard techniques for undertaking these assessments should be used, as outlined in the technical advice in Section 3.

The Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment provides information on the Landscape Character Types of Aberdeen, and guidance on key characteristics and sensitivities which should be taken into account when planning, siting and designing development.

The siting and design of development is expected to be informed by, and respect, the following characteristics and sensitivities of the site and surroundings. Proposals should include for enhancement and retention of any key characteristics.

- Key characteristics of the site and surroundings (identified in the Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment, or detailed assessments of the site) and landscape features which impart a sense of place, can include landform, soil type, trees, woodlands, hedges, walls, field and road patterns, water bodies, views and approaches, and recreational networks, paths and cycle routes; Key views and gateways to the city as identified in the Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment, including a more detailed views and visual analysis where relevant or required;
- Surveys of wildlife habitats and species, including protected habitats and species, designated natural heritage sites, trees, woodlands, waterbodies, wetlands and other wildlife habitats and corridors (refer also to the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage);
- Open Spaces and the *Green Space Network* including opportunities to avoid fragmentation and enhance connectivity (refer also to the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure); and,
- Green buffers around and between settlements, including places or communities with individual identities.

The technical advice in Section 3 includes a detailed checklist of landscape considerations.

2.1.3 Layout and Design

Development layouts and detailed landscape design must be informed by the assessment of the site and surroundings. Poorly sited and designed developments cannot usually be redeemed through good landscape design. The layout and design of a development should be integrated with landscape design, and shall demonstrate that the proposals:

- respect and enhance landscape, seascape and townscape character of the site and its surrounds. Conservation Area Character Appraisals should be referenced where relevant;
- integrate adjoining areas, buildings and features in a way which maintains and creates a sense of place or identity;
- maximise adaptation and resilience of the built and natural environment to the effects of climate change, and mitigate impacts on climate change;
- use building and landscape materials from sustainable sources;
- enhance the external environment of buildings for the benefit of people's wellbeing in a changing climate, including the

provision of open spaces and path/cycle networks;

- arrange the layout and orientation of buildings to optimise the energy efficiency of buildings, maximise potential for renewable energy, and minimise shading of external private and public spaces;
- provide safe, direct linkages within the site and to adjoining areas for encouraging pedestrian/cycling movement and placing less reliance on car travel;
- provide for high quality, accessible, safe play and open spaces as appropriate to the development;
- avoid fragmentation and loss of the Green Space Network, and ensure that the *green/blue space* within the development site is connected to green/blue space in adjacent areas (whether they are developed or not) so that the integrity of the city wide Green Space Network is both maintained and enhanced;
- retain trees, habitats including wetlands and water courses, habitat networks and mosaics, and open spaces, as a means of reducing environmental effects, helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change, improving air quality, and as a valuable landscape, recreation and wildlife resource;
- create appropriate habitats for wildlife such as wetlands, trees/woodlands and nesting sites;
- wherever possible and appropriate, use locally native tree/shrub/plant species both to help maintain biodiversity and achieve low maintenance requirements;
- place buffers strips alongside waterbodies;
- minimise earthworks and maximise the conservation of natural soil profiles;
- incorporate water sensitive urban design principles (refer to 'Ciria production C723: Water Sensitive Urban Design in the UK' and the RSPB / WWT guidance 'Sustainable Drainage Systems – Maximising the Potential for People and Wildlife');
- introduce appropriate and multifunctional Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) solutions, including minimising the use of hard ground surfacing and maximising the extent of unbound, porous and permeable materials; and
- provide a safe environment by designing out crime and provide lighting and signage where appropriate (refer to 'Secured by Design' guidance).

The technical advice in Section 3 includes a detailed checklist of survey and supporting information.

2.1.4 Landscape Design

Landscape design forms a central part of the design and layout of any development, drawing together the retention of existing site features and new landscape proposals into a coherent design.

Through the correct choice, use, placement and combination of hard and soft materials and plants, landscape designs should provide robust, sustainable design solutions which also aim for minimal energy use in their maintenance.

Soft Landscaping

Soft landscaping, which can consist of existing features and new planting or earthworks, can act as a buffer between developments, increase the amenity of an area, provide visual interest and detail along with increased biodiversity. Soft landscape treatments will be expected to cover a substantial proportion of any site and form part of the fundamental layout, design and siting for the development.

Planting beds need to be a suitable size and appropriate shape to enable plants to establish and fulfil their design function. The choice of plants must be appropriate to the site, climate and soil conditions and required function of planting. More information on soft landscape design is included in the technical advice in Section 3.

Hard Landscaping

Hard landscaping, especially for the areas around vehicular entrances, car parking and the immediate surrounds of buildings, must be considered as a fundamental part of the design which, integrated with soft landscaping, should be attractive and functional. Minimising the extent of impermeable hard surfacing can help to reduce adverse environmental effects such as loss of vegetation, soil loss / sealing and increased surface water run-off.

Hard landscape proposals are expected to consider the sustainable sourcing and use of materials, and be designed for climate resilience. Permeability, run off from surfaces and the methods of disposing of surface water from slopes, car parks, hard standings and pathways, shall comply with the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems in agreement with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Further guidance can be found in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality.

2.2 Specific Proposals

2.2.1 Residential Layouts

Layouts for flatted residential schemes shall have clearly defined public and private spaces. There will be a requirement for the provision of formal or informal open spaces (refer also to the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure). In private / parking courts, at least 50% of the external space shall be used as amenity ground, open space and to provide a landscape setting.

Individual flats or houses shall be designed to make the most of any opportunities offered by the site to optimise views and sunlight. Buildings should be orientated and designed to ensure that public areas and open spaces are sunlit wherever possible. Residents of flatted developments shall have access to sitting-out areas. This can be provided by balconies, private gardens, terraces or communal gardens. Opportunities for individual and communal food growing should also be provided in appropriate locations in accordance with the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Food Growing.

Rear gardens of houses up to 2 storey in height should be an average length of at least 9 metres and houses of more than 2 storey should have garden lengths of at least 11 metres.

There must be consideration of space for:

- minimum stand-off distances from existing trees within or adjacent to the site, and new and replacement tree planting (refer to the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Trees and Woodland for more guidance on minimum stand-off distances and zones of influence);
- drawing cars completely off the road;
- clothes drying out of public view;
- sheds and greenhouses;
- refuse bin storage;
- lawns; and
- future extension of buildings, for example for conservatories.

2.2.2 Commercial Layouts

A soft landscaping scheme is expected to form at least 15% of site coverage for commercial and industrial proposals. Soft landscaping should be appropriate to the scale and design of the building and car parks to provide an attractive and functional landscape setting. Sheltered, sunlit, accessible and attractive external spaces should be provided to enhance benefits for employees.

2.2.3 Car Parking

Approaches to front entrances of buildings will be provided with an appropriate landscaped setting, rather than through a large expanse of car parking. Pedestrian movement shall be designed to accommodate the safest and most direct routes between places. Landscape designs for car parks will include:

- peripheral planting which balances the need for screening with safety and natural policing, often in the form of clear-stemmed trees and low shrub planting;
- trees within parking areas to break up expanses of hard surfacing;
- internal divisions within large parking areas;
- hard surfacing that will relate to and link with the buildings; and
- methods for demarcating parking bays.

Sufficient space for landscaping, including trees, must be provided in the layout to allow planting to survive without a constant threat of damage, especially at the edges of planting beds. Planting beds need to be a minimum size and appropriate shape to enable plants to establish and fulfil their design function. As a general rule, a minimum space of 4 square metres is required per planting bed. Narrow beds of less than 1.5 metres should be avoided. The overhang of cars must be taken into account in the design to prevent damage to plants from physical impact and exhaust fumes. Planting beds shall have a hard landscaped edge at least 300 millimetres wide.

Smaller areas of planting, for example at ends of car parking bays, are usually ineffective on their own and prone to damage. Planting in the central strip between car parking lines should be included. This planting should emphasise and enhance pedestrian routes to and from buildings, provide visual amenity and will have a more successful survival rate. Wherever possible suitable tree species should be included to enhance shade and reduce the impact of severe rain events on surface water run-off.

Where space is at a premium, thought shall be given to using chevron parking arrangements, traffic barriers and vertical screen elements like hedging, to make internal landscaping a feasible proposition. Further guidance on car parking

standards can be found within the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Transport and Accessibility.

2.2.4 Earthworks and Ground Modelling

The use of low mounding or earth modelling should be used with care and should be assessed in terms of the effects on landscape character. In some locations mounding and bunds with a gently rounded form, graded gently into surrounding levels, up to one metre in height, can serve to enhance the screening potential of planting and can be effective for screening car parking, open storage or ground clutter around buildings. However, earth bunds can draw attention to the development by being out of keeping with the character of the landscape. They can also result in the loss of natural soil profiles and flora, and affect adjoining habitats by changing drainage patterns. In rural contexts, such mounding can also appear visually inappropriate.

Where earthworks are proposed, slopes steeper than 1 in 3 gradient will be avoided, especially where over one metre high. In exceptional circumstances and appropriate locations steeper slopes up to 1 in 3 may be used to accommodate landscape planting, provided adequate slope stabilisation treatments are included.

Ground level changes shall show a degree of natural undulation. Variation in gradient shall be included to minimise the height of slopes and control surface water run-off. Slopes should avoid sharp angles and flat faces. Adequate sub-surface and surface water drainage will be used to manage surface water run-off and prevent flooding and de-stabilisation of slopes.

Garden ground on a slope will need to be functional and usable amenity space. Steep embankments within gardens will not be considered usable garden space and should be avoided. Where there is no alternative, embankments within gardens should be adequately retained, drained and landscaped.

2.2.5 Boundary Treatments

Existing boundary elements such as landscape strips, hedges, trees, walls, dykes, fences, gates and gate piers that contribute to local landscape character shall be retained or reinstated, and incorporated into the design.

Boundary enclosures, for screening, privacy or security shall be designed to provide a good visual external and internal presentation for development sites.

2.3 **Landscape Plans, Implementation and Management**

Developers must submit supporting landscape information in accordance with this guidance and the technical advice in Section 3. Supporting information may include landscape and habitat surveys, landscape assessments, concept plans, strategic landscape plans, and landscape proposals. The requirements for wind energy proposals are outlined in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Wind Turbine Development.

Depending on the nature and scale of developments, *Design and Access Statements* or *Design Statements* may also be required. These should include reference to landscape, seascape and townscape issues (as appropriate) and how they are addressed through siting and design.

Details of hard or soft landscaping will require to be submitted as part of a planning application for development. Landscape plans shall include a site layout plan showing the hard and soft landscape proposals in detail, and whether it is proposed to retain, remove, or replace existing elements. Landscape plans must also include details of how hard and soft landscaping will be maintained and managed.

The implementation of landscape schemes shall be properly time-tabled into the construction process. Advance structural planting may be required for major greenfield or urban edge developments.

Planning conditions relating to landscape plans will normally be applied to planning approvals.

For further guidance on supporting landscape information, planting requirements, plant species, information for landscape plans and maintenance plans see the technical advice in Section 3 below.

3. Technical Advice

3.1 Introduction and General Approach

The technical advice in this section provides information on:

- Techniques in landscape assessment and design
- Supporting landscape information
- Information for hard and soft landscape plans
- Planting design

Landscape design is commonly used in the design and layout of many of the external areas around developments. As a tool it can inform the process of designing, locating and orientating buildings so that they are compatible with the areas in which they sit, are more sustainable, and have respect for the wider environment. Above all, it can make developments more attractive and help to give a sense of place - of being in and around Aberdeen.

The Council's general environmental approach to development indicates that developments will not adversely affect landscape / seascape / townscape character and existing elements which provide, or contribute to, a distinct 'sense of place', they will not destroy or damage natural resources or their setting, adversely affect amenity or be visually damaging to the appearance or setting of Aberdeen. Other objectives also apply, of course, and in particular it is to be expected that new developments will be designed with due consideration for their context and make a positive contribution to their setting.

This technical advice is intended to raise the general awareness of landscape issues and standards for new developments, aid the effectiveness of the development management process, and address the lack of professional landscape design in some planning applications. The advice does not intend to provide a comprehensive outline of all landscaping matters. It serves merely as an 'aide-memoir' of the many factors which shall be borne in mind when considering developments.

3.2 Landscape Design

The term 'landscape design' is used to refer to the hard and soft treatment of external spaces around buildings to provide an attractive setting for them, to help give them a 'sense of place' and create an appropriate relationship to their surroundings. Landscape design already makes a significant contribution to the existing character and setting of the buildings in and

around Aberdeen. By following this advice landscaping will continue to make a valuable contribution to Aberdeen's environment in the future.

Many developments will be expected to incorporate hard and soft landscaping as an important element of their design, especially the larger ones, and irrespective of the type of land use involved. Where appropriate, planning permissions granted by Aberdeen City Council will have conditions attached to ensure that appropriate landscaping schemes are prepared, submitted for approval, implemented and subsequently maintained, to appropriate standards and timescales. Where applications are for planning permission in principle, or there are justified reasons why a landscaping scheme cannot be submitted simultaneously with development proposals, landscaping conditions may often require the submission of a landscaping scheme before a development can actually begin on the ground.

3.3 Techniques in Landscape Assessment and Design

The techniques of Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Capacity Assessment, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and landscape design are used to inform the process of designing, locating and positioning development such as buildings, roads and other infrastructure so that they are well placed in their surroundings, are more sustainable, and have respect for the wider environment. This approach can make developments more attractive and help to enhance the sense of place.

Landscape character is the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes one landscape different from another. This landscape diversity can be observed at many scales. For example, the open rolling farmland and large fields to the north of the city are distinct from the wooded estates and hills to the west of the city. Landscapes are classified and mapped into different landscape character types through a largely objective process using a standard methodology called Landscape Character Assessment and [Coastal Character Assessment](#).

Landscape values are identified through a process of evaluation, seeking to define areas of special importance to people, and this is inherently a more subjective type of landscape assessment.

Landscape capacity is the extent to which a particular landscape type is able to accept a particular kind of change (e.g. mining, forestry, windfarms) without significant effects on its character. The capacity of a landscape for a specific type of change will depend upon the nature and magnitude of the change and the landscape's sensitivity.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a standard methodology used to identify the effects of a proposal on landscape and determine how these effects can be mitigated. Landscape and visual impacts are closely related issues that are assessed separately:

- landscape impacts are physical changes caused by a development which affect the character of the landscape and how it is experienced;
- visual impacts are changes in the composition and character of views available to people living, working and recreating in the area affected by the proposed development. The places from which these views are obtained, and by inference the people occupying these places, are described as the 'receptors' of the views.

A formal LVIA is often a requirement of Environmental Impact Assessments. However, the basic techniques can be used to consider the siting and design of any development in any landscape. The Council would normally expect LVIA's to be carried out by a Chartered Landscape Architect.

Townscape is defined as the physical and social characteristics and components of the built urban environment and the hard and soft open spaces within it, together with the way in which people perceive those characteristics. It is this mix of characteristics and perceptions that make up and contribute to townscape character and create a 'sense of place' or identity. Townscape impact assessment considers the effects on the integrity and character of the townscape as a whole, considering not only the individual components but also the overall form and coherence of the places affected.

Landscape design is a process which systematically analyses the characteristics and features of the selected site and surroundings and informs the layout of development and associated landscape proposals. Effective landscape design commences early in the master planning and detailed design process. A successful design will enhance the relationship between the development and its surroundings and provide other environmental enhancements such as habitats for wildlife, open space, and access for people.

Supporting information may include assessments, analysis and concept plans, strategic landscape plans, detailed landscape and habitat surveys and landscape proposals. Depending on the nature and scale of developments, Design and Access Statements or Design Statements may also be required. These should include reference to landscape, seascape and townscape issues (as appropriate) and how they are addressed through siting and design.

3.4 Supporting Landscape Information

Depending on the location, type and size of the proposed development, applicants for planning permission may be asked to provide information on:

Local context - To show that the overall development is supported by the local development plan's environmental policies, and to illustrate how appropriate landscape related considerations have been taken into account. Context should refer to the following:

- Adjoining land uses, landscape character, the setting of listed buildings, green belts, green space network and open space, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, cultural heritage sites and features, nature conservation sites, wildlife (species and habitats), recreational areas, public access and rights of way, waterbodies, landscapes of local significance, Tree Preservation Orders or important forests, woods and trees.
- There shall also be an assessment of landscape and/or townscape character to illustrate how the proposed development will relate to and be compatible with the surrounding area. This will include reference to the key characteristics of the landscape, seascape or townscape and the visual context of the proposal in terms of key views and approaches to the city¹.

Landform - An accurate plan illustrating existing and proposed levels and contours across the whole site, together with sections across the site.

Soils & hydrology - On some sites the maintenance of certain types of soil with associated drainage characteristics, and in some cases the landform itself, is essential if characteristic vegetation and habitat are to survive. Where wetlands and water courses exist these should normally be retained and buffers provided to prevent damage to wildlife habitats, water levels and quality. On other sites, it is important to be able to assess from such information what types of vegetation the site can support before designing a landscape scheme.

Vegetation - trees, shrubs, hedges and other flora are often the influential elements which make one area visually distinct from another. Since they also function as habitats for wildlife, it is important to record what is actually there from the outset

Key landscape characteristics and information on key views and features can be found in the Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

as part of a landscape survey and analysis. On some sites ecological surveys will be required to identify important, protected and sensitive habitats and species. Further information on ecological is available in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage. Particular information shall be provided on trees; a trees survey by a qualified arboriculturalist will be required. Further information on tree surveys is available in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Trees and Woodland.

Public access - the Council has a statutory responsibility to protect rights of way, core paths, other paths, as well as uphold access rights. Access is important for active and sustainable travel as well as for informal recreation purposes. All paths, irrespective of their status shall be clearly marked on survey drawings. Further information on access is available in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure, and Transport and Accessibility.

Features - Along with vegetation and water bodies, other features on the site can be retained or enhanced to create a distinctive and characterful development. The presence of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, historic landscape features such as stone dykes, water, rocky outcrops or other geological formations, and important views are examples of the type of feature which shall be highlighted. Key features that contribute to character will be sympathetically incorporated..

Services - Existing services whether above or below ground - such as gas, electricity, telephone, water, and sewerage facilities - entering, crossing, leaving or in the general vicinity of the site and to which connections could be made, shall all be clearly marked so that accommodation can be made during the preparation or assessment of a landscape plan.

Any other supporting information which may be relevant to individual sites.

If developments are of a particular type or size (schedule 1), an application may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). An LVIA Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment may also be required. Planning officers will advise in appropriate case.

Where information has not been submitted with planning applications or has not been given in response to a case officer's request for it, delays to application processing may occur. Where supporting information is considered essential to a proper assessment of the proposals and there is a failure to deliver it a case officer may recommend that an application is either deferred or refused. If it is considered to be of a minor nature, however, suspensive conditions may be attached to a planning permission to require its submission before any development commences on the ground.

3.5 Information for Hard and Soft Landscape Plans & Existing Site Plans

Details of hard or soft landscape design, or a combination of both, will be required to be submitted as part of a planning application for development. Landscape plans shall include a site layout plan showing the hard and soft landscape proposals in detail, and whether it is proposed to retain, remove, or replace existing elements.

a. Existing and proposed ground levels:

The slope of the ground shall be indicated by contour lines and/or spot heights, using separate symbols for existing and proposed levels where changes are to occur. Earthworks including those for SuDs ponds and swales will be shown.

b. Existing vegetation:

Trees

Where there are proposals to develop land, and trees may be affected, it is usually necessary to request developers to provide specific, detailed information. This is to help us to make a well-informed decision about the proposed development and its likely impact on the trees. For more detailed information see the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Trees and Woodland.

Shrubs

1. precise location, extent and distribution of planting;
2. species, numbers or densities, and heights and condition;
3. grouping arrangements for single species;
4. shrubs to be retained and removed.

Other vegetation and habitats

1. precise location, extent and distribution of each habitat within the site and in adjoining areas;
2. vegetation or habitat type and its condition;
3. vegetation/ habitats to be retained or removed.

c. Existing features:

The following details shall be provided for any existing features on and adjoining the site which may influence site character and development, or which are important to retain e.g. water courses, walls, ancient monuments, listed buildings, and other artefacts.

1. precise location and extent;
2. description of the feature including dimensions, character, condition, and materials where relevant;
3. features to be retained or removed;
4. method of protection during construction.

d. Proposed tree planting:

The following details shall be given for proposed trees.

1. precise location;
2. species - full botanical name;
3. planting size, root stock specification and provenance;
4. planting distances and densities;
5. tree staking/anchoring and tying details;
6. mulching details
7. tree protection (e.g. guards, deer fencing).

e. Proposed shrub planting:

The following details shall be given for proposed shrub areas/hedges/shelter belts.

1. precise location of shrub beds;
2. the arrangement and massing of different groups of shrubs in each bed;
3. species - full botanical name;
4. planting size, root stock specification and provenance;
5. planting distances or densities;
6. mulching details;
7. shrub protection (e.g. rabbit guards, deer fencing), if required.

f. Grassed and wildflower areas:

1. precise location and extent of areas to be grassed;
2. precise location of areas of seeding, turf, wildflower plugs or other method of re-vegetating.

g. Other habitats and SuDS features

See also the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage, and Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality. The following details shall be provided.

1. location of proposed habitats and SuDS features such swales and retention ponds;
2. SuDS planting details including:
 - a. species - full botanical name;
 - b. planting size, root stock specification and provenance;
 - c. planting distances or densities.
3. protection and fencing if required.

h. Children's play areas:

1. location of the play area and the arrangement of play equipment within it;
2. details of the play equipment to be supplied;
3. safety surfacing - location and type;
4. hard and soft landscape details - paths, fences, seats, bins, lighting, shrubs, trees etc;
5. landform changes - by contours.

i. Hard landscape elements:

The following details shall be given for hard landscape elements - e.g. hard surfacing, drainage, boundary features, gates, water features, structures, seating, lighting, signs, litter bins, planters etc.

1. precise location and extent of feature;
2. description of materials/colours;
3. elevations and sections where appropriate for boundary walls/fences, gates, structures, water features, drainage etc.;
4. use of sustainable and locally sourced materials;
5. manufacturers' information with regard to appearance and method of installation for such items as seats, litter bins, lighting, planters etc.

j. Construction information:

1. precise location of temporary access routes, parking, site compounds, fencing and storage areas for materials and spoil/soil heaps;

2. precise location, type and details of protection for existing features to be retained. For tree protection requirements see the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Trees and Woodlands.

k. Maintenance and management:

Landscape plans will be accompanied by a schedule of maintenance to ensure successful establishment and long-term management of soft and hard landscaping to demonstrate that a high standard of landscaping can be achieved. The details to be provided shall include:

1. Maintenance objectives - to ensure that soft landscape is maintained and managed in a way which achieves the landscape design objectives.
2. A schedule of regular maintenance inspections and actions for soft landscaping for a minimum of two years or until successful establishment of plants, whichever is the later. This will include details of all operations and their timing to maintain planting, grass etc., including watering (regular and dry weather arrangements), feeding, weed control, pruning, hedge trimming, pest and disease management, checking and firming plants, mulching, grass cutting, edging, checking of tree supports and plant protection, re-stocking for plant losses, litter picking, bin emptying and dog mess removal.
3. A post-establishment management schedule for soft landscaping to achieve the longevity and designed function of plants, for example tree management, hedge maintenance, removal/repairs of protective fencing and tree stakes, restocking of failed or damaged plants, management of SuDS features, weed control, litter picking, bin emptying and dog mess removal.
4. A schedule of regular maintenance inspections and actions for hard landscape, replacement and repair of damaged items or surfaces, cleaning and clearing of items and surfaces, drains, grids, and litter picking, bin emptying and dog mess removal.
5. Timing of maintenance operations will avoid works which disturb birds during the bird breeding season.

All plans should be submitted at the appropriate, standard scale to enable proposals to be clear and legible. The most common scales for landscape plans are 1:100 and 1:200. For an extensive site the scale may be 1:500; for a small, or complex site the plan scale is likely to be 1:20 or 1:50. A north sign should be included. All levels shown should be against the Ordnance Survey Datum. A scale bar needs to be included on the plans.

Development Type	Level of detail in landscape design submission
Local Developments Individual dwelling	Basic plan showing design of the planting scheme and hard landscaping If development is within a Conservation Area, a Design and Access Statement is required including landscaping.
Local Developments More than 1 dwelling but < 50	Plan showing design of the planting scheme, plant schedule, hard landscaping and materials Landscaping should also be included as part of the Design and Access Statement
Major Developments Residential a) 50 or more dwellings; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 2ha.	For full planning permission or an application for approval of matters specified in conditions, a detailed landscaping scheme including a maintenance/management plan is required For planning permission in principle, a landscape appraisal and strategy may be sufficient; where the site layout is part of the outline application, indicative landscape proposals should be provided Landscaping should also be included as part of the Design and Access Statement
Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial	As for Major

3.6 Open Space

Open spaces shall be provided to the standards specified by the Council and outlined in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure. Further information is also available in the Council's Open Space Strategy.

Open spaces shall not consist of small, irregular or inconvenient areas of ground that are often found in layouts that have been set out merely to optimise the number of buildings on a site. (These are sometimes referred to as SLOAP - Spaces Left Over After Planning). Developers who submit layouts which appear to contain open spaces that have no distinct function, or which represent SLOAP, will be asked to amend them, failing which they may be rejected.

Play equipment in children's play areas shall meet the safety standards operated by the Council. Advice on this particular subject may be obtained from the Environment Service of the City Council.

In terms of other forms of open space around individual buildings, and except for some locations in the central area of the City, it is important to consider the provision of space not just for the distribution of buildings, car parking and landscaping, but also in many cases for relating the scale of buildings to their setting. For visual harmony a useful guide for the minimal provision of reasonable open space is a direct relationship to the elevational area of the buildings themselves. The proportional areas of masses to voids, such as walls to windows, is an example of a measure that may be used as to determine the distribution of landscape elements around open spaces so that they may more directly reflect the scale, rhythm and proportions of the buildings.

A wind tunnel effect can occur where there are a cluster of buildings, particularly taller buildings. Narrow areas of open space between buildings can create low pressure causing the wind to accelerate at the base of the buildings and around corners of buildings. This effect is emphasised where proposed buildings on exposed sites have frontages to the southwest or northeast. Tree and hedge planting can be used to mitigate the wind tunnel effect as well as the layout of buildings. Trees and hedges are most effective in mitigating the wind tunnel effect when they are grouped together. Evergreen species are more effective than deciduous, and an element of evergreen planting should be considered where the wind tunnel effect is likely to be an issue.

The location of breakout areas in commercial or industrial sites should be positioned in a pleasant location to maximise the benefits of time spent outdoors. These areas should be in a sheltered sunny location with adequate screening to provide a sense of enclosure and privacy.

The need for appropriate edge treatments - for screening, privacy or security - shall be assessed in conjunction with requirements in most cases for good visual presentation of development sites, by retention for example, of traditional stone dykes and the establishment of quality landscaping. The use of plants to form hedging as an effective boundary treatment has tended to decline in recent years and there is great scope for informal, and clipped, hedges to serve a variety of useful functions and appearances to the advantage of a site. In many areas around the city, the clearance of stone from agricultural fields has been used to provide a particular style of dry stone wall. Some of the older walls have become scheduled monuments as 'consumption dykes'. Dry stone walls are very distinctive and, along with associated tree and shrub planting, can help to provide an attractive, strong landscape grain and a sense of place.

3.7 Biodiversity

In line with LDP Policy NE3 (Our Natural Heritage) all development proposals should make provision to achieve an overall biodiversity gain on their site, and in many cases it will be possible to achieve an increase in biodiversity through appropriate

landscape design. New landscape planting and other landscape features including SuDS should integrate and link with the surrounding green space network.

For more information on biodiversity and development refer to LDP Policy NE3 and the associated Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage.

3.8 Landscape Establishment and Maintenance

Complaints are often made to the Council from occupiers of new developments about a failure to implement landscape schemes at an appropriate time, or to maintain planted areas when they have been carried out. Given the tight timescales of planting seasons and the vagaries of the Aberdeen climate, efforts shall be made to implement and establish landscaping in step with developments and in accordance with conditions of planning permissions. This will mean that two things will require to be done.

Firstly, for all major developments on approved greenfield sites, developers may be required to deliver advance planting of the structural landscaping elements which shall be clearly illustrated on submitted drawings. The structural planting shall be designed to accord with an assessment of site context but will generally relate to the peripheral or external areas around a development site. Where it is agreed as a suitable mechanism for implementation, a legal agreement under Section 75 of the Planning Act may need to be entered into with the Council before the decision notice of a planning permission is delivered. The funding for such planting will normally be derived from the expected income from developments. In a few cases and very much dependant on the size of area to be planted additional grant funding maybe available for woodland creation. Additional information and advice should be sought from Scottish Forestry as they administer and make decisions on the grant funding. Despite the involvement of such external agencies structural planting schemes will still be subject to compliance with all of the conditions of the relevant planning permission. There will also be the normal requirement of carrying out any other forms of landscape treatments within development sites as are shown on approved plans.

Secondly, for all sites, the storage of soil or spoil, and the location of site offices and compounds, or of workers parking, shall not take place on areas marked on layout plans for landscaping or as described in BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, within the root protection area of trees. Not only will this compress and otherwise adversely affect the areas to be planted, but they will be left until the last of the areas around a development site to be properly completed. Ideally, especially with larger applications, planting shall be carried out during the first planting season after construction commences, and whilst the building works are underway.

Maintenance of planted areas is essential, but it is acknowledged that in some cases, after a developer has completed a development and where there is multiple ownership or certain types of industrial or commercial operation, it is difficult to arrange for maintenance to be carried out at appropriate times. New landscaping, therefore, shall preferably be designed to be of low maintenance unless higher priority can be committed to regular management. Applicants will normally be required to show that the external areas around buildings will be properly maintained after the development has been completed, for example by suitable factoring arrangements.

Arrangements by developers for making householders communally responsible for open space maintenance at the time of house sale will not generally be acceptable unless a single, legally constituted, residents' body has been set up to oversee and administer such works. Proof may be required in some instances that arrangements for future maintenance have been made before an approved development may commence on the ground.

3.9 Planting Design and Selection

Planting beds need to be a minimum size and appropriate shape to enable plants to establish and fulfil their design function. Structural planting, and arrangements that are required to have a greater environmental impact, need to consist of plants which have greater height, and shall be accommodated in beds that are wide enough to achieve the desired function, for example screening or shelter.

Planting which incorporates trees shall be based on the mature spread of the largest species. For tree belts incorporating large species such as Oak and Ash, where crown spreads may average 10 metres or more, a planting width of 20 metres will accommodate two to three staggered rows of trees with associated edge and under planting of other species, to prevent fully grown trees overhang adjoining areas, such as roads and private gardens. New trees are more effective planted in shrub areas. Within grassed areas they are prone to mowing and strimming damage. To ensure the establishment of landscape planting, it is recommended that new tree planting is undertaken in accordance with BS 8545 (2014) Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape.

For most sites it is preferable that a landscape scheme has a permanent structural core for visual continuity, but it may incorporate arrangements for ornamental or herbaceous displays. The choice of shrubby plant material will depend on the location and size of the site, the proposed land use and the landscape design concept. In general, it is advisable to consider the establishment of a structural element or core of permanent shrub planting which will form the backbone of the design.

This may best comprise a low maintenance mix of larger, informal evergreen shrub species around which an ornamental element of smaller shrubs or groundcover may be added to the edges to provide seasonal interest and colour.

The choice of plants must be appropriate to the site, soil, local conditions and required function of planting. Plant selection must be informed by knowledge of plants and their suitability for the site, including tolerance of local climate and air quality. It is important to consider factors such as the seasonality, mature size, rooting system and management requirements of plants. Plant selection, particularly of tree species, should also consider the effects of climate change, which is predicted to bring drier summers, wetter winters, more extreme weather events and new pests and diseases.

Locally native trees are encouraged in appropriate locations to provide wildlife habitat and to ensure that planting is in keeping with local landscape characteristics. However, ornamental (non-native) plants can provide very valuable habitats and food sources for wildlife. Ornamental plants are available in wide variety of forms which are usually more suited to space constrained or urban sites. Under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 the planting of species out with their native range is not permitted in some locations. Refer to the Code of Practice on Non-Native Species (2012).

As a guide a list of native and non-native amenity plants is included below:

Native plants

Trees

<i>Botanical Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>
Acer campestre	Field maple
Alnus glutinosa	Alder
Betula pendula	Silver Birch
Betula pubescens	Downy Birch
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam
Ilex aquifolium	Holly
Malus sylvestris	Crab Apple
Pinus sylvestris	Scot's Pine
Populus tremula	Aspen
Prunus avium	Wild Cherry
Prunus padus	Bird Cherry

Quercus petraea
Quercus robur
Salix alba
Salix caprea
Salix fragilis
Sorbus aucuparia
Sorbus intermedia
Taxus baccata
Ulmus glabra

Sessile Oak
Pedunculate Oak
White Willow
Goat willow
Crack Willow
Rowan
Whitebeam
Yew
Wych Elm

Shrubs

Buxus sempervirens
Corylus avellana
Crataegus monogyna
Cytisus scoparius
Ilex aquifolium
Juniperus communis
Myrica gale
Prunus spinosa
Rosa canina
Salix aurita
Salix cinerea
Salix purpurea
Salix viminalis
Sambucus nigra
Ulex europaeus
Viburnum opulus

Box
Hazel
Hawthorn
Broom
Holly
Juniper
Bog Myrtle
Blackthorn
Dogrose
Eared Willow
Grey Sallow or Willow
Purple Osier
Common Osier or Basket Willow
Elder
Gorse
Guelder Rose

Ground cover

Calluna vulgaris
Erica cinerea
Erica tetralix

Ling
Bell Heather
Cross-leaved Heath

Hedera helix	Ivy
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle
Vaccinium myrtillus	Bilberry

Amenity Trees

Large

Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Castanea sativa	Sweet Chestnut
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam
Corylus collurna	Turkish Hazel
Fagus sylvatica	Beech
Fagus sylvatica 'purpurea'	Copper Beech
Metasequoia glyptostroboides	Dawn Redwood
Quercus robur 'Fastigiata'	Fastigate Oak
Quercus frainetto	Hungarian Oak
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Tilia euclora	Caucasian Lime
Tilia tomentosa	Silver Weeping Lime

Medium

Acer platanoides	Norway maple
Acer cappadocicum	Cappadocian Maple
Betula pendula 'Laciniata'	
Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'	Fastigate Hornbeam
Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyky'	Fastigate Beech
Juglans regia	Common Walnut
Parrotia persica	Persian ironwood
Picea omorika	Serbian Spruce
Prunus avium 'Flore Plena'	Wild Cherry (double)

Prunus yedoensis	flowered)
Sorbus aria 'Magnifica'	Yoshino Cherry
	Whitebeam

Small

Crataegus laevigata 'Pauls Scarlet'	Red flowered Hawthorn
Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet Gum
Malus 'John Downie'	Flowering Crab Apple
Prunus serrula	Tibetan Cherry
Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'	Ornamental Pear
Sorbus 'Joseph Rock'	Mountain Ash

Street Trees

Acer campestre 'Elsrijk' Fastigate (Fastigate field maple) Height 10m Spread 4m
 Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine' (Fastigate Hornbeam) Height 12m Spread 5m
 Fagus sylvatica Dawyck Purple (Fastigate Purple Beech) Height 12m Spread 6m
 Malus tschonoskii (Chonosuki crab) Height 8m Spread 6m
 Pinus sylvestris 'Fastigiata' (Fastigate Scots Pine) Height 8m Spread 3m
 Populus tremula 'Erecta' (Fastigate Aspen) Height 12m Spread 4m
 Prunus sargentii 'Rancho' (Upright Sargent's Cherry) Height 6m Spread 4m
 Populus tremula 'Fastigiata' (Fastigate Aspen) Height 10m Spread 4m
 Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer' (Callery Pear) Height 12m Spread 4m
 Quercus robur 'Fastigiata' (Fastigate Oak) Height 15m Spread 6m
 Robinia pseudoacacia 'Pyramidalis' (Fastigate False Acacia) Height 12m Spread 5m
 Sorbus aucuparia 'Fastigiata' (Fastigate Rowan) Height 6m Spread 4m
 Sorbus thuringiaca Fastigiata (Hybrid Whitebeam, Service Tree) Height 8m Spread 4m

Woodland species

Quercus petraea	Sessile Oak
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Alnus glutinosa	Alder
Acer campestre	Field Maple

Betula pendula
Betula pubescens
Prunus avium
Prunus padus
Sorbus aucuparia
Corylus avellane
Pinus Sylvestris
Ilex aquifolium
Prunus spinosa
Crataegus monogyna
Malus Sylvestris
Salix alba
Salix caprea
Salix fragilis
Taxus bacatta
Lonicra periclymenum

Silver Birch
Downy Birch
Wild Cherry
Bird cherry
Rowan
Hazel
Scots pine
Holly
Blackthorn
Hawthorn
Crab apple
White Willow
Goat willow
Crack Willow
Yew
Honeysuckle

Amenity Shrubs

Ground Cover

Cotoneaster dammeri
Euonymus europaeus
Euonymus fortunei 'Vegetus'
Hebe 'Pagei'
Hedera helix 'Erecta'
Hypericum calycinum
Mahonia aquifolium
Sarcococca humilis
Vinca minor and V. major

LOW (0.300 - 1.000m high)

Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa'

Cytisus praecox
Fothergilla gardenia 'Blue Mist'
Genista sagittalis
Pernettya mucronata 'Bells Seedling'
Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyken'
Salvia lavandulifolia
Senecio laxifolius
Skimmia japonica 'Rubella'

LOW - MEDIUM (1.000 - 1.500m high)

Aucuba japonica
Hebe cupressoides
Mahonia aquifolium
Olearia macrodonta
Skimmia japonica 'Foremanii'
Ulex europaeus 'Plenus'

MEDIUM (1.500 - 3.000m high)

Aucuba japonica
Berberis x stenophylla or B. darwinii
Berberis vulgaris
Buxus sempervirens 'Aureovariegata'
Chenomeles speciosa
Choisya ternata
Cornus sanguinea
Cytisus scoparius
Elaeagnus pungens 'Maculata'
Escallonia macrantha
Euonymus fortunei 'Silver Queen' or E. japonicus 'Ovatus Aureus'
Hypericum 'Hidcote'
Ligustrum japonicum
Mahonia japonica or M. x 'Charity'

Olearia x haastii
 Osmarea burkwoodii
 Viburnum plicatum
 Viburnum tinus

HIGH (3.000 - 4.500m high)

Buddleja davidii 'Harlequin'
 Buxus sempervirens
 Cotoneaster bullatus
 Elaeagnus x ebbingei
 Griselinia littoralis
 Hamamelis x intermedia
 Ligustrum ovalifolium
 Mahonia x media 'Charity'
 Prunus lusitanica
 Pyracantha coccinea 'Lalandei' or 'Orange Glow'
 Rhododendron (Hardy Hybrids).
 Symphoricarpos albus

Climbers

Lonicera periclymeneum 'Honeysuckle'
 Clematis vitalba 'Old Man's Beard'

3.10 Landscape Checklist

The following checklist is intended to help developers, agents and planning officers understand the landscape related information that needs to be considered.

Siting/Location		
Setting	Is the development likely to affect landscape, seascape or townscape character or landscapes of local significance?	
	Will the development be compatible with the scale, massing, form and density of the surrounding area?	

	Will the development be on a skyline, visible from an important viewpoint or gateway or other approach to the city?	
	Will the development be on a sunny aspect or is it on a north facing slope?	
	Will the development be located on a level, gently sloping or steeply sloped site?	
Protected areas and sites	Does the development affect a designated historic, amenity or ecological site or area, or protected species? (Green Belt, Conservation Area, Tree Preservation Order, Listed Building, Ancient Monument, Historic Garden and Designed Landscape, Core Path, Cycle Route, Right of Way, protected species or habitat [Special Area of Conservation, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Conservation Site, Local Nature Reserve]).	
Green Space Network	Does the development affect the Green Space Network? Does it fragment or otherwise affect the integrity or functions of the network? Does the development enhance the Green Space Network? See also the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure.	
Sustainability and climate	See the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Resources for New Developments, and Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality	
	Is, or will, the development be in an area liable to flooding, including sea-level rise? Is it located in or near an area has potential for strategic management of flooding, including SuDS?	
	Can waste products from the development be disposed of or treated within the site, or otherwise, without any adverse impact on the local environment?	
	What was the previous use of the land and is there any potential for the presence of old foundations, underground structures, obstructive artefacts and contamination?	
	Is the development located close to existing paths and routes that could be enhanced to provide recreation and active travel?	
Survey Information		
Context	Is there supporting information illustrating how the development will be compatible with the landscape / seascape/townscape of the local area? Are key characteristics, views, vantage points and approaches indicated?	
Ground level/ contour map	Is there a plan showing levels across the whole site and a slope analysis?	
Drainage & hydrology	See the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality. Are there details showing water courses, water bodies, wetlands, potential flood areas, and how the existing site is drained?	
Existing vegetation &	Are there details showing trees and other significant vegetation growing on the site? Is there any detailed information on the location, condition, size and species of trees, shrubs,	

habitats	other vegetation and habitats, and whether they are to be retained or removed? Has a tree and ecological survey been provided as required. See the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage and Trees and Woodlands for more information.	
Access/ paths and routes	Are all access points and formal / informal or worn paths, cycleways and other routes entering or crossing the site shown?	
Site features	Is there information on the location and descriptions of historic sites or features, walls, fences, geological features, open spaces and play areas etc?	
Services	Is there information on water / gas / electricity / renewable energy / telephone / sewerage within, entering or crossing the site?	
Proposals		
Design Statement	Is there a statement or notes on the plans illustrating how the development relates to the landscape/seascape/townscape setting? Do landscape proposals maintain, restore or enhance the landscape/seascape/townscape, and is a design philosophy or objectives included in the landscape plan? Does the proposal incorporate existing and new landscape features (built and natural) into the design?	
Sustainability and climate resilience	Do the landscape proposals – a) use materials from sustainable sources and optimise energy efficiency by the location, orientation and design of buildings and the use of plant material (see Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Resources for New Developments); b) retain existing areas of trees, vegetation, open space, and wildlife habitat (see Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage); c) minimise earthworks and disturbance to natural soil profiles; d) minimise the use of hard surfacing and maximise the use of natural and permeable materials and deal with surface water drainage in conformity with SuDS (see Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality); e) enhance the connectivity and functions of the Green Space Network (see Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure)?	
Open Space	See Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Open Space and Green Infrastructure. Where necessary, do the proposals accommodate – a) accessible, functional, safe and attractive public open space; b) play equipment; c) space and facilities for communal or individual food growing; d) amenity space / structural landscape treatment; and e) biodiversity enhancement?	

Ground Level Changes	Is information provided on the excavation, upbuilding, filling or regrading of ground?	
	Are any slopes steeper than 1 in 3?	
	Do gardens include embankments? If so, are they retained, drained and landscaped and do they leave sufficient usable garden space?	
Landscape Details	Are hard landscape details provided in accordance with the technical advice in this section?	
	Are soft landscape details provided in accordance with the technical advice in this section?	
Car Parking	Do the proposals show – a) surface treatment and bay demarcation? b) internal landscaping, or use of vertical divisions or barriers c) external screening and peripheral boundary treatments? d) that car park elements do not dominate the open space elements?	
Security	Has consideration been given to aspects of site safety and security?	
Construction		
Siting of temporary buildings, parking, access and storage Parking	Do the plans clearly show the location of the site access, parking, compound, temporary buildings (including site huts, offices), storage areas for topsoil, spoil and building materials?	
Protection of trees and habitats and features	Does the site construction accommodation for access, offices, parking and storage avoid proximity to existing trees, habitats, and features to be retained (see the Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage, and Trees and Woodland)?	
	Have the locations and methods for protection been clearly shown?	
	Will all trees and habitats be protected from physical impacts / fires / spillage?	
	Will natural drainage be maintained?	
Post Construction		
Landscape management	Do the proposals include schedules for establishment and post establishment maintenance? Are there effective means of carrying it out or enforcing it; and is there a single identifiable body established for future management?	

4. Aberdeen's Landscape Character

4.1 Background to the Aberdeen Landscape Study

An Aberdeen Landscape Study was published in 2021 to provide a comprehensive understanding of Aberdeen's rural, coastal and peri-urban landscapes. The study comprises four key elements:

- Landscape Character Assessment
- Coastal Character Assessment
- Peri-Urban Study
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Each individual element of the landscape study provides a range of important information which should be taken into consideration during the design of new development proposals.

4.2 Landscape Character Assessment

The Landscape Character Assessment notes that Aberdeen is a coastal city that is largely situated between the two valleys of the rivers Dee and Don, where they flow into the North Sea. It concludes that these river valleys, and the ring of low hills which encloses the western side of the city, provide views of the countryside and the sea from many parts of the city and underpin its distinctive and diverse landscape character. It also notes that the Aberdeen coast forms an important part of regional and local identity, and that its distinctive character provides an important setting to daily life.

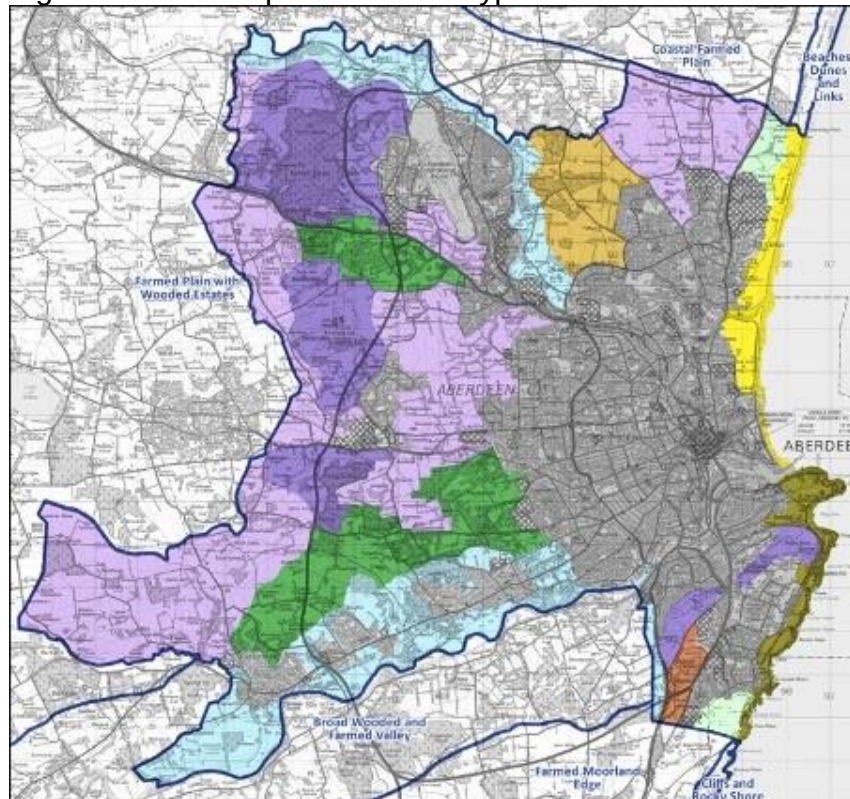
The Landscape Character Assessment goes on to identify the key Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) in Aberdeen. LCTs are generic, can recur in different places, and usually have descriptive names (eg River Valley). LCAs on the other hand are specific to one place, focus on differences and local distinctiveness, and usually have specific place names (eg Don Valley). The assessment identifies 9 general LCTs and 28 unique LCAs in Aberdeen, as outlined in the table and figures below:

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
Beaches, Dunes and Links	Murcar & Balgownie Links (LCA 7)
	King's Links (LCA 21)
Cliffs and Rocky Coast	Girdle Ness (LCA 22)
	Souter Coast (LCA 25)
Coastal Farmed Plain	Murcar Plain (LCA 6)
	Findon Plain (LCA 27)
Low Hills	Tyrebagger Hill (LCA 3)
	Brimmond Hill (LCA 12)
	Kingshill (LCA 15)
	Kincorth Hill (LCA 23)
	Tullos Hill (LCA 24)
River Valley	Upper Don Valley (LCA 1)
	Lower Don Valley (LCA 2)
	Dee Valley (LCA 20)
	Upper Deeside Slopes (LCA 28)
Undulating Open Farmland	Mundurno (LCA 5)
	Blackburn (LCA 8)
	West Brimmond (LCA 9)
	Greenburn (LCA 11)
	Bucks Burn (LCA 13)
	Den Burn (LCA 14)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
	Bogskeathy (LCA 16)
	Leuchar & Silver Burns (LCA 18)
Undulating Wooded Farmland	Brae of Don (LCA 4)
Urban and Farmland	Loirston (LCA 26)
Wooded Estates	Craibstone (LCA 10)
	Hazelhead Park (LCA 17)
	Countesswells (LCA 19)

The assessment identifies the key characteristics of each LCT and LCA, as well as providing management guidelines for each LCA. All new development proposals must have appropriate regard to, and be informed by, the management guidelines for the LCA in which they are located.

Figure 1: Landscape Character Types



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

-  Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)
-  Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Types
- Shown as text labels

Landscape Character Type

-  Beaches, Dunes and Links
-  Cliffs and Rocky Shore
-  Coastal Farmed Plain
-  Farmed Moorland Edge
-  Hills
-  River Valley
-  Undulating Open Farmland
-  Undulating Wooded Farmland
-  Urban
-  Wooded Estatelands

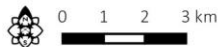


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Figure 2: Landscape Character Areas



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment



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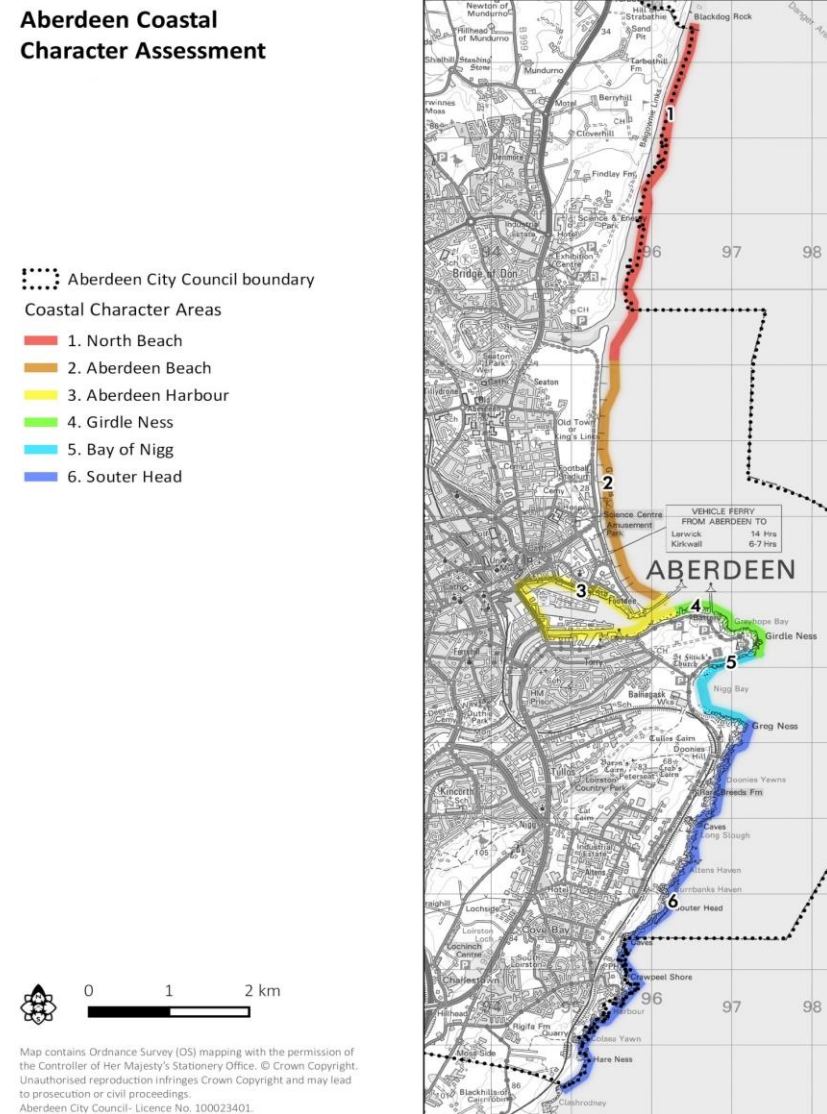
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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Upper Don Valley | 15. Kingshill |
| 2. Lower Don Valley | 16. Bogskeathy |
| 3. Tyrebagger Hill | 17. Hazelhead Park |
| 4. Brae of Don | 18. Leuchar & Silver Burn |
| 5. Mundurno | 19. Countesswells |
| 6. Murcar Plain | 20. Dee Valley |
| 7. Murcar & Balgownie Links | 21. King's Links |
| 8. Blackburn Valley | 22. Girdle Ness |
| 9. West Brimmond | 23. Kincorth Hill |
| 10. Craibstone | 24. Tullos Hill |
| 11. Greenburn Valley | 25. Souter Coast |
| 12. Brimmond Hill | 26. Loriston |
| 13. Bucks Burn | 27. Findon Plain |
| 14. Den Burn Valley | 28. South Deeside Upper Slopes |
- Landscape Character Area
 Developed/under construction (at time of assessment)

4.3 Coastal Character Assessment

The Coastal Character Assessment relates to the Landscape Character Assessment but focuses in more detail on the specific characteristics of the coastal area. It identifies the key Coastal Character Areas (CCAs) of Aberdeen. Each CCA has a unique identity, is specific to one place, and is identified by a local place name. Although the boundaries of the CCAs are broadly related to those of the LCAs, they do not always correlate exactly with LCA boundaries. The assessment identifies six CCAs within Aberdeen, as shown in the figure overleaf.

The assessment identifies the key characteristics and visual qualities of each CCA. It also identifies management guidelines for each CCA. Any new development proposals within the coastal area must have appropriate regard to, and be informed by, the management guidelines for the CCA in which they are located.

Figure 3: Coastal Character Assessment

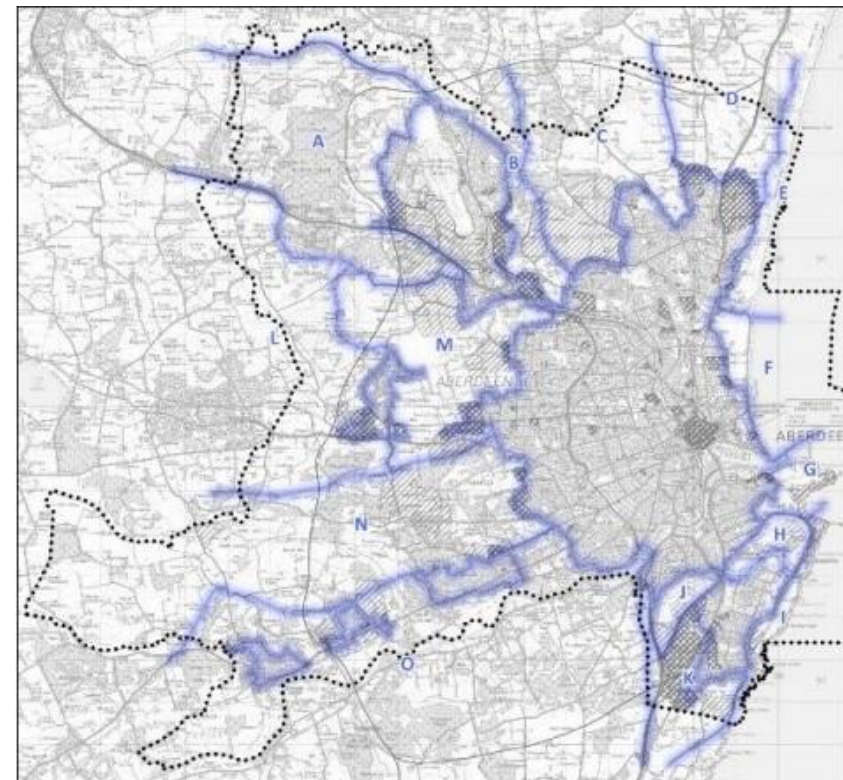


4.4 Peri-Urban Study

The term peri-urban is an amalgamation of the words 'periphery' and 'urban', and is generally used to refer to the area on the periphery of an urban environment. The Peri-Urban Study examines the nature of the urban-rural transition and the function/condition of Aberdeen's peri-urban landscape. It identifies a series of 'Peri-Urban Units' which share consistent patterns of common character, function and condition. The study includes an analysis of each unit as well as potential opportunities for improvement / enhancement. It should be noted that some of the opportunities are similar to the management guidelines for the LCAs in which each unit is located.

Any new development proposals within the peri-urban area should have appropriate regard to, and be informed by, the opportunities identified in the Peri-Urban Study.

Figure 4: Peri-Urban Units



Aberdeen Landscape Character Assessment

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



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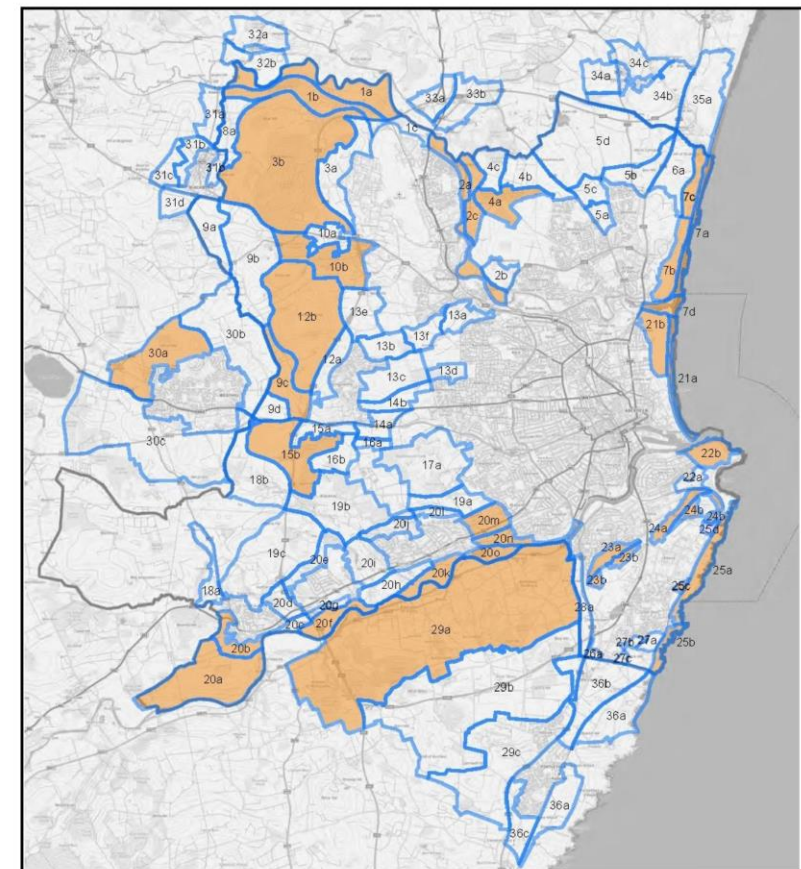
4.5 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

This assessment examined the sensitivity of landscapes around Aberdeen to an agreed set of hypothetical development types. The agreed development types included: residential developments of 25 or more houses; business developments/offices of 1 ha or more; and large-scale industrial units/warehouses.

The assessment excluded the existing urban area as well as those areas that were either under development at the time of the study or were allocated for development in the 2017 Local Development Plan. It utilised the LCAs from the Landscape Character Assessment but sub-divided them into finer-grained 'Landscape Sensitivity Units' which formed the basis for detailed landscape sensitivity assessment.

The assessment initially identified a number of units that are deemed so sensitive from a landscape perspective that they would be unable to accommodate any of the hypothetical development types without detrimental change to the landscape features and elements that are integral to the overall character and identity of Aberdeen. These units were therefore 'scoped out' of the detailed sensitivity analysis. The 'scoped out' areas are shown in the figure overleaf. As can be seen, these areas are essentially the river valleys, the ring of low hills which encloses the western side of the city, and the coastal zone which, as noted previously, form an important part of Aberdeen's overall character and identity.

Figure 5: Units Scoped Out of Sensitivity Study



Aberdeen Landscape Study



5. Further Reading

Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Character Assessment

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/media/19973>

Aberdeen Landscape Study - Coastal Character Assessment

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/media/19974>

Aberdeen Landscape Study - Peri-Urban Study

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/media/19975>

Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/media/19976>

Ciria Production C723: Water Sensitive Urban Design in the UK

https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/ciria_guidance/wsud_ideas_book.pdf

NatureScot Guidance on Landscape Character Assessment

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment>

NatureScot Guidance on Coastal Character Assessment

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/coastal-character-assessment>

NatureScot Guidance on Landscape Capacity

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-tools-and-techniques/landscape-sensitivity-studies>

NatureScot Guidance on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-tools-and-techniques/landscape-and-visual-impact-assessment>

Scottish Government Non-Native Species Code of Practice
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/non-native-species-code-practice/>

Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-1-2013-environmental-impact-assessment/>

Scottish Forestry: Forestry Grant Scheme
<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/forestry-grants>

Secured by Design
<https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides>

Sustainable Drainage Systems – Maximising the Potential for People and Wildlife
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/positions/planning/sustainable-drainage-systems.pdf>

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/schedule/1/made>

Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/6/contents/enacted>

BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction
<https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/trees-in-relation-to-design-demolition-and-construction-recommendations?version=standard>