

<b>Issue 11</b>	<b>ALLOCATED SITES &amp; GENERAL AREA STRATEGY: DEESIDE</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Pages 14- 15 and Pages 83-86, Proposals Map, Table 7, Table 7 notes, Appendix 2, Appendix 5, Appendix 6	<b>Reporter:</b> Michael Cunliffe
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
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<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Overview of Direction for Growth in this area and specific OP sites	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>Deeside – General</u></p> <p>98: Developers should build affordable homes instead of giving contributions as planning gain. Culter Community Council need homes to keep the community viable and prevent it from becoming a dormitory suburb.</p> <p>98: Culter Community Council are in agreement with most of the policies and have used them to evidence the Spatial Strategy comments. They highlighted how they could deter the erosion of Peterculter as a sustainable community with new family housing. Do not wish to see the community reduced to a dormitory suburb of the city.</p> <p>183: The Peterculter Burn site is constrained in the Housing Land Audit. Three new sites at Peterculter were dismissed by the Reporter during the Examination into the extant Local Development Plan 2012, only the Oldford site will provide land supply in 2017-2026 phase of the Plan. 160 homes will be complete by 2016, a shortfall of 388. It also shows that 330 will be delivered up to 2026, against an allocation of 248. The remaining shortfall will be built</p>		

post 2026. Significant failures to deliver housing in other parts of the city justify the increased allocation of housing land in the Deeside corridor.

9: Education - The recent Aberdeen City Council School Estate Consultation in respect of Cults Academy should have taken place prior to the development of new homes at Blairs.

OP43 Milltimber Primary School

Designation

4, 39: Query as to why the site is designated as a brownfield site. The site should be left as open space. The site would be better used by developing it into a play park and sports field.

Trees and Loss of Open Space

39: The site is the only green space for recreation at the lower end of Milltimber. Mature trees around the park should be protected.

Scale of Development and Residential Amenity

4, 39, 44: The development should have regard to all existing properties and the quiet residential nature of the area. Houses on the site should be single storey. Any houses built should be in keeping with the existing properties on Binghill Park and Monearn Gardens, i.e. semi-detached, two storey houses. Very large, expensive detached houses would not be in-keeping. Residents of Binghill Park would have their outlook obliterated which could prove detrimental to house values. Any large building will completely spoil open aspect from Binghill Park to the south

Flooding

4: Concerns about flooding on the site.

Transport and Access

39, 44: Concern about impact of increased traffic. Access would be from Binghill Crsecent which is already a busy access to roads beyond. Site entrance would be after two sharp bends which are already hazardous. Monearn Gardens is a narrow residential street unsuitable for increased traffic.

OP48: Oldfold

Traffic

13, 98: The allocation will result in a serious amount of extra traffic on North Deeside Road. Visibility splays required to access the site will require works within private property. The main junction of the site with A93 should be the existing junction from Binghill Road with improvement of the Tornadee junction and traffic lights.

Education

98: The new primary school should be located close to Binghill Road, north of Tornadee (central to Milltimber) to help connect the development with the existing settlement and to

allow the community to access facilities without having to use North Deeside Road.

Conditional Support for Development

98: Conditional support for the development, subject to the points raised.

Status of Development Framework/Masterplan

98: Query as to whether the Development Framework/Masterplan has been completed.

Identification of Masterplan Zone

102: The Masterplan Zones Figure 1, page 34, omits to mention OP48

Action Programme

102: The Action Plan should include OP48 and as a result the detailed actions should be set out for Oldford.

OP39: Braeside Infant School

11: Object to the loss of this valuable amenity to the area, the school may be required in the future. The development will cause disruption and inconvenience to the surrounding properties, and the development will lead to loss or erosion of the adjacent play area.

OP51: Peterculter Burn

98: Support housing opportunity as it can be developed in the first phase, will support local primary school, encourage and sustain local businesses and sustain the viability and amenity of the community. Developer contributions will include leisure and play area. Affordable homes should be built on site.

183: Object to the allocation of the site.

OP52: Malcolm Road, Peterculter

Previous Examination

5, 46, 5, 107, 183: The site was dismissed at the previous examination and the Reporter's recommendations for the site were that it should remain as Green Belt/Green Space Network due to Malcolm Road being substandard and development not contributing to a compact urban form. Hard to understand why this site is included due to the Reporter's negative comments. It was noted to be remote, isolated and with difficult access.

Natural Environment

5, 23, 51, 83, 107, 110, 114, 126, 174, 1: The area is covered by Ancient Woodland status. SPP states a strong presumption against removing Ancient Woodland. Existing trees would need to be removed and would not meet the requirements of SPP. The site is used by residents for leisure and development would have a significant impact on wildlife. Development would erode the Green Belt and set an unwelcome precedent for development of land with Green Belt status. It will ruin the character and countryside setting of Peterculter

and have a significant visual impact on the immediate area. The site forms a natural boundary and development would make the definition between built up area and countryside less clear. There are already sufficient housing allocations in this area and development would intrude into the surrounding landscape. It would provide a precedent which should be discouraged. The site can be viewed clearly from Malcolm Road. Development of this scale would appear sporadic and isolated from Peterculter.

Infrastructure and Facility Constraints

5, 23, 46, 51, 107, 110, 114, 174, 175, 1: The schools and health centres are at capacity. Malcolm Road is a busy commuter route that is unsuitable for the volume and size of vehicles that use it. It would be nonsensical to add further development and junctions. The volume of traffic has increased dramatically due to commercial office developments in Westhill. Located on the edge of the village it does not have good access, there is no continuous pavement and given the volume of traffic it is not very safe. Pedestrians have to cross at a hazardous crossing point due to poor visibility. This section of road is dangerous and has been the scene of a number of accidents. Developer has not demonstrated how a continuous footpath would be achieved and do not believe contributions will fund upgrades to the footpath and road. Third party ownership prevents the widening of the footpath. AWPR will not result in a decrease of traffic. The site is not on a bus route and access to the nearest stop is by a narrow path. The site is too far from the village resulting in increased use of cars and there is insufficient parking within the village. There is no existing sewerage capacity, the site has steep slopes and there is a lack of employment opportunities and facilities.

Flooding

23, 51, 83, 114: There are ground water/natural drainage issues with flooding after heavy rainfall and development will have an impact.

Mix of Use

114: Residential development will not contribute to a balance of land uses.

Support the Allocation

98, 151: Support housing allocation for the following reasons: They can be delivered in the first phase, will support local schools, encourage and sustain local businesses and help the viability and amenity of the community. The development will comply with the vision by providing affordable housing, leisure and play areas, there will be no vehicle access onto the Core Path, and paved path through the trees will be provided. Affordable homes should be built on the site.

80: Supports the allocation but has the following concerns: the site is in two separate ownerships and the respondent has been working to bring forward their land for high quality houses. The Plan should not prevent this happening at the earliest opportunity and the site should be recognised as the first phase of development. Page 15 requires the site to have a Planning Brief but page 85 refers to a Masterplan. Clarity is required. Council guidance on Masterplans/Planning Briefs are for sites in single ownership. The Respondent's site should be considered on its own as it is not of a scale to require either documents and the requirement to do so will slow down the development unnecessarily. There is no flood risk/drainage issues affecting the respondents site therefore a flood risk assessment is not

justified. Tree loss will be kept to a minimum but the Plan must recognise the requirement for their removal.

Property Included

83: Notes that the south-eastern corner of OP52 includes his property and two others on Malcolm Road. Demands an explanation and objects to the proposed development.

OP108: Mid Anguston

Sustainability

7, 16, 47, 98, 99, 119, 171, 172, 183: Object to the inclusion of the site. Rural community and the access to local employment opportunities and facilities are poor. There is no street lighting or footpaths and would encourage the use of cars. The existing road is in poor condition and does not allow two vehicles to pass. It is used by heavy agricultural vehicles. There will be additional cars which will contradict the Council's Transport Plan and SPP to reduce car usage. The site is 2 kilometres from public transport and 3 kilometres from amenities and shops. If the houses were necessary they could be located on more suitable sites. Community Council members do not enter into discussions with developers. Quarryhill Road would be the entrance/exit for the proposed houses but is not fit for the increase in traffic. There would be a loss of amenity for local residents. Close to Easter Anguston school for disabled and new riding school and increase in traffic would have safety issues for horse riders, vulnerable residents and their carers.

Housing

98, 171: Site does not supply affordable housing. There are sufficient Green Belt allocations. There is an oversupply of housing in the area. There is a history of individual applications for new houses being refused on the basis of Green Belt allocation. Houses will be out of the price range for most people.

Schools

7, 47, 98, 119, 171: Reluctant support given to the site during the preparation of the Local Development Plan 2012 due to concern regarding falling school rolls in Culter Primary School. This has now halted. Culter Academy is forecast to be over capacity. There is no guarantee people with children will buy these houses.

Current Use

47, 119, 171: There is no vermin problem from the chicken sheds as is alleged by the developer. One argument for development is that the chicken sheds are an environmental health issue. It should be the responsibility of the owner to rectify this without the need to build houses.

Water and Drainage

47, 171, 98, 171: There is no mains sewerage. Excavation, given the proximity to Anguston Quarry, would have severe repercussions. The quarry is the water supply for nearby houses and disturbance has potential risk to the water supply. There is concern about water seepage from the disused quarry. There is concern for the potential for pollution reaching

the Gormack Burn. Drainage system is over capacity and there are instances of local flooding.

Environment and Landscape

7, 16, 47, 98, 119, 171: The chicken sheds are less intrusive on the landscape than eight detached houses. New homes will impact on views. The development will alter the nature and settlement pattern and destroy the rural character. There will be negative impacts in the landscape from urbanisation of the greenbelt and goes against greenbelt and landscape policies. It will be an isolated development out of character with the designated greenbelt land. Negative impact on wildlife with development leading to disturbance of wildlife, species and their habitats.

Site Previously Rejected

7, 47, 99, 171, 183: The site was previously rejected at examination and deemed undesirable by officers at Main Issues Report Stage. Other sites were found to be more desirable than Mid Anguston.

Gas Pipelines

12: Site is located within close proximity to gas pipeline. No permanent structures are built over or under pipelines or within the zone specified in the agreements. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to consider applications within the vicinity of pipelines and there is additional guidance that has been prepared by National Grid. If sites are taken forward developers should be made aware of the issues.

Support

151: Support inclusion of OP108 Mid Anguston as a development site.

OP109: Woodend Peterculter

Environment

54, 178, 185, 126: Ancient Woodland is on the site and it is a priority habitat requiring protection. It is part of Green Space Network. Scottish Government guidance includes a strong presumption in favour of protecting woodland. It is difficult to see how 19 houses could be accommodated without impacting on the woodland. Any future proposal will not meet the requirements of SPP or Scottish Government policy and as a result it is not an appropriate site. Concerned about the impact on wildlife. It drains into an existing wetland habitat. Development would fragment the Green Belt and encourage more infill development.

Support

83, 98: Support the proposed development. Dilapidated farm buildings make it necessary for their demolition. The area to the south west of the existing farm buildings is suitable for small development. Support housing opportunity for the following reasons: they can be developed in the first phase; will support local primary school; will encourage and sustain small businesses into the District Centre; will help sustain the viability and amenity of the community; the development will comply with the Local Development Plan vision by

including leisure and play areas; and affordable homes should be built on the site instead of monetary contributions.

Infrastructure

178, 183, 185: The location is unsuitable due to limited infrastructure, schools, GP practice, dental practice etc. Concerned about the increase in traffic that has already been generated by the equestrian centre, on such a small road. Other sites are more suitable and it has been rejected twice. Site is detached from the existing village, remote from services and projects into the Green Belt. The site has no access to transport links. There are no footpaths beyond Bucklerburn Drive, vehicle access is constrained and drainage is an issue.

OP42: Kennerty Mill

98: Support the redevelopment of brownfield site as it has become a local eyesore. Support for the following reasons: they can be developed in the first phase, will support the local primary school, will sustain new and existing businesses, will help sustain the viability and amenity of the community, affordable homes should be built on site instead of monetary contributions.

OP44: North Lasts Quarry

98, 65: Support the greenfield housing allocation for the following reasons: they can be developed in the first phase, will support the local primary school, will sustain new and existing businesses, will help sustain the viability and amenity of the community, affordable homes should be built on site instead of monetary contributions.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

Deeside - General

183: Additional housing sites need to be allocated.

OP43: Milltimber Primary School

39: Once Milltimber School is demolished, develop the land and field into a children's playpark and sports field. Save the mature trees that border the field.

OP51: Peterculter Burn

183: Remove the site from the plan.

OP52: Malcolm Road, Peterculter

5, 23, 51, 107, 110, 114, 174, 175, 183, 1: Remove the site from the plan. It is not viable due to the lack of infrastructure, services and traffic control opportunities. Housing development in Peterculter should be put on hold. Retain the site as part of the Green Belt/Green Space Network.

80: The text should be amended to acknowledge that the site is in two separate ownerships. The Plan should identify the respondent's site as the first phase of OP52. It should be made

clear that a Masterplan is not required for the respondent's part of the site nor is a Flood Risk Assessment. The Plan should recognise that there will be trees removed to provide access into the site.

OP108: Mid Anguston

7, 16, 47, 99, 183: Remove OP108 from the Local Development Plan. There are more desirable sites.

OP109: Woodend Peterculter

54: Advise that the boundary of the site is redrawn to exclude the areas of woodland. An alternative approach would be for the requirement of a development brief that would set out how the existing woodland would be protected and managed in the long term.  
178, 183: Remove the Opportunity Site from the Plan, there are better sites.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

General Strategy

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 (CD12) proposed not to allocate additional land, but to 'roll forward' the allocations from the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 (CD20) into the SDP, and this was accepted by the Reporter during the SDP's Examination (Issue 5 pages 54 - 74) (CD13). The Reporter's conclusion stated "Drawing all of these matters together, I conclude that the scale and distribution of growth provided for in the housing allowances is appropriate and sufficient, in accordance with the requirement of paragraph 117 of Circular 6/2013." Aberdeen City Council agrees with these conclusions.

The Vision and Objectives for the Proposed Plan are the same as the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2014. The role of the Strategic Development Plan is to "set clear parameters for subsequent Local Development Plans and inform decisions about strategic infrastructure investment." (Circular 06/2013 paragraph 41, CD10). The Strategic Development Plan sets a clear strategy for development in Aberdeen, which includes housing allowances to be delivered through Local Development Plans.

Deeside – General

98: This point is covered in Issue 28 Affordable Housing.

98: The Proposed Plan aims to deliver sustainable communities in the most sustainable locations. Peterculter is a well-established settlement to the west of Deeside and is a recognised Neighbourhood Centre in the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012. The Council considers that the continued viability and prosperity of Peterculter is an important goal for maintaining Deeside as a whole. The Council has recognised that in order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify sites which are deemed acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter both as a population centre and as a Neighbourhood Centre.

183: The queries surrounding a shortfall in housing are dealt with in the General Strategy

section above.

9: Education - Following the review of the school estate in Aberdeen City in 2012, the Council have been working through an extensive programme of consultations on changes to school zones and other matters relating to the estate. The programme and the timescales for each consultation were required to be approved in advance by Education Scotland. It was not possible to undertake the Cults Academy consultation any sooner, due to the other consultations which were required to be carried out at that time.

OP43: Milltimber Primary School

Background

This allocation has been carried forward from the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012) (OP55) and was previously considered by Reporters during the Examination of this Plan (Issue 46 CD44). The site will become available for development once a new Primary School for Milltimber is constructed as part of the OP48 Oldfold site. The site is still currently used for educational purposes.

Designation

4, 39: The site has been previously developed, and thus is considered to be a Brownfield Opportunity Site. This was confirmed by the Reporter via the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan (Issue 46). The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 (CD12) requires 7,500 homes on brownfield sites up to 2026 and residential development on this site will assist in meeting this requirement. The Reporter in the Examination into the extant Plan confirmed the site's suitability for residential development. The Council's Open Space Audit 2010 Report (CD41) identifies (on page 70) two existing local parks in Milltimber and notes (on page 71) that Milltimber residents are within 400 metre catchment of a local park. As such, there is no specific requirement for an additional local park within Milltimber.

Trees and Loss of Open Space

39: Although not specifically identified as Urban Green Space on the Proposals Map due to the small scale of the site, the grassed area of the site (school playing fields) is covered by Proposed Policy NE3 - Urban Green Space and will therefore be protected or replaced in accordance with this policy. With regards the protection of mature trees, this issue would be address via the consideration of any planning application for the site, giving due consideration to Proposed Policy NE5 Trees and Woodlands.

Scale of Development and Residential Amenity

4, 44: At the current moment there is no planning application or design brief for the site. Therefore, specific questions regarding the design of the site are unable to be answered at this time. There will be, in due course, more opportunities for the public to comment on this site when a planning application or design brief is lodged. At the moment all comments regarding the layout and design of the proposed development have been noted. Impact on property values and views from private properties are not planning matters.

Flooding

4: A Flood Risk Assessment will be required to accompany any future development proposals and this is mentioned in the Opportunity Schedule in Appendix 2 of the Proposed Plan. Flooding and drainage issues would be addressed and agreed at planning application stage, in consultation with the Council's Flooding Team.

Transport and Access

39, 44: Concerns over traffic impact and access arrangements are noted, however this will be assessed and agreed at planning application process, in consultation with the Council's Roads Project Team.

In summarising the above, the Council continue to recommend that this site is suitable for development, and that its development would help meet the Strategic Development Plan targets for brownfield development.

OP48: Oldfold

Background

This allocation has been carried forward from the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012) (OP62) and was previously considered by Reporters during the Examination of this Plan (Issue 40). The allocation is subject to a [Development Framework and Masterplan](#) exercise which was approved as Supplementary Guidance to the extant Plan in March 2013. Planning Permission in Principle for the development of approximately 550 residential units, commercial, primary school and associated ancillary uses and infrastructure improvements including road junction formation on A93 ([130378](#)) was approved on 25th February 2015 and a subsequent Approval of Matters Specified by Condition (AMSC) Application for Phase 1 ([150260](#)) was approved on 06th August 2015.

Traffic

13: A Transport Assessment was submitted to accompany the Planning Permission in Principle application, and was audited by the Council's Roads Projects Team. The need for a financial contribution towards improvements on North Deeside Road has been secured via a legal agreement signed under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended ('Section 75 agreement').

With regards the visibility splays required for the development, this matter has been addressed during the consideration of the Phase 1 AMSC Application ([150260](#)) and the visibility splays approved via this application do not require any works within the respondent's private property.

Education

98: The location of the new Primary School has been approved via the Planning Permission in Principle application approved on 25th February 2015 ([130378](#)) further to a detailed Masterplanning exercise. The location of the Primary School is located off Binghill Road, as is the respondent's preference.

Conditional Support for Development

98: Noted.

Status of Development Framework/Masterplan

98: The Development Framework and Masterplan exercise was approved as Supplementary Guidance to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 in March 2013. We would intend to readopt this document as Supplementary Guidance to the Proposed Plan, following its adoption.

Identification of Masterplan Zone

102: The Oldfold Masterplan Zone has been omitted from Figure 1 as it is considered that development of this site is sufficiently advanced and therefore the site no longer requires to be specifically identified as a Masterplan Zone.

Action Programme

102: A response to this comment is provided via Issue 42 – Action Programme. In summarising the above, the Council continue to recommend that this site is suitable for development, and that its development would help meet the Strategic Development Plan targets for greenfield development.

OP39: Braeside Infant School

11: As is outlined in Appendix 2 the school has a potential for future residential use. In the meantime the school can be used to house primary school pupils from the Countesswells development pending the development of a primary school there. Development will have to respect the surrounding residential amenity. The Council seek the retention of the play park in its current location to the south of the site and this is mentioned in the site description in the Opportunity Site Schedule in Appendix 2 of the Proposed Plan.

OP51: Peterculter Burn

98: The support for the opportunity site is noted.

183: The site is already allocated in the adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 as an Opportunity Site reserved for residential use (OP134). The principle of its allocation was tested at the previous Examination in Issue 50. It remains appropriate to identify the site as a development opportunity for residential zoning as there has been no significant change in circumstances which would justify an amendment to this designation. Peterculter is a well-established settlement to the west of Deeside with a recognised neighbourhood centre in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012. The Council considers that the continued viability and prosperity of Peterculter is an important goal for maintaining Deeside as a whole. The Council has recognised that in order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify sites which are deemed acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter both as a population centre and as a neighbourhood centre.

OP52: Malcolm Road, Peterculter

Previous Examination

5, 46, 51, 107, 183: Although the site was removed during the Local Development Plan 2012 Examination it has since been reinserted as a preferred option during a Council meeting on 12 November 2013 in regard to the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report. The primary reasons being that it provided further housing opportunities and would help support the local primary school. There is excess capacity with regards to places at the local primary school with a capacity for 87 extra pupils in 2016, as set out in the School Roll Forecasts (CD32). It is recognised that this site lies out with 800 metres from the Neighbourhood Centre of Peterculter. It is, however considered that a residential development here would provide additional support to the community of Peterculter. The Council considers that the continued viability and prosperity of Peterculter is an important goal for maintaining Deeside as a whole. In order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify additional sites which are deemed acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter both as a population centre and as a Neighbourhood Centre.

Natural Environment

5, 23, 51, 83, 107, 110, 114, 126, 174, 1: The site is designated as Ancient Woodland. Any development would be required to mitigate for any loss to established Woodland and comply with Policy NE5 of the Proposed Plan. These issues do not preclude designation as an Opportunity Site and can be dealt at the planning permission stage. The Council considers that this site is a natural extension to the existing community of Peterculter. Despite its elevated position, the existing trees, along with further supplementary planting should provide adequate screening of the site from the surrounding area and will reduce any landscape impacts arising from housing development there.

Infrastructure and Facility Constraints

5, 23, 46, 51, 107, 110, 114, 174, 175, 1: The Council note the level of objection to this site based on the assertion that Malcolm Road is sub-standard and not suitable for the increased traffic that any development would facilitate. Discussions between any developer and the Local Authority Roads Department would be required to address the access issue but it is not considered that there are any technical concerns which prevent access being taken from Malcolm Road to the proposed site. Perceived deficiencies in Malcolm Road itself, for the level of traffic to be generated, can also be addressed at the planning application stage are not deemed to preclude designation for residential use. The construction of the AWPR should also see a reduction in the traffic currently using Malcolm Road to bypass Aberdeen. It is acknowledged that there are capacity issues at Cults Academy with forecasts indicating the school going over capacity in 2021. However, the housing numbers attributed to the Cults Academy catchment include those houses proposed in Countesswells. It is intended that this area will be removed from the Cults Academy catchment thereby relieving some of the pressures on Cults. Representations made reference to the distance to local facilities from the site. It is recognised that this site lies out with 800 metres from the neighbourhood centre of Peterculter. It is, however, considered that a residential development here would provide additional support to the community of Peterculter and to the neighbourhood centre. It is reasonable to expect that residents of this site would make use of Peterculter and its facilities and contribute towards its sustainability. The Proposed Action Programme (CD21)

requires that site access from the B979 should be a loop or through road and walking access to both bus services are provided. There is a recognised concern regarding the main sewer at this location, however, again this is not felt to preclude allocation of this site for residential use. It is a matter which can and would be dealt with at the application stage.

Flooding

23, 51, 83, 114: Drainage and run off issues along Malcolm Road are noted. Any development here would be likely to include drainage impact assessments and the implementation of SUDS schemes as appropriate in order to alleviate such issues. The requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment in support of any development proposal is identified in the Proposed Action Programme and in the Opportunity Site Schedule in Appendix 2 of the Proposed Plan.

Mix of Use

114: The Council has recognised that in order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify sites which are deemed acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter both as a population centre and as a Neighbourhood Centre.

Support the Allocation

98, 151: Support is welcomed for the Opportunity Site.

80: As this site is to be developed for more than 50 homes, the developer will be required to prepare a masterplan for the whole site prior to applying for planning permission. The requirement for a masterplan or Planning Brief covering the whole site is important to set out a fundamental framework for the way in which this residential site can best be developed. The masterplanning process will set out the key principles of the design approach but it should be noted that collaboratively masterplanning the sites together does not necessarily mean that they must be delivered together. There are precedents, within Aberdeen City, for sites in multiple ownership which have successfully been masterplanned in a collaborative nature. Masterplanning of this site should take into account Policy NE5 of the Proposed Plan (Trees and Woodlands), which seeks to protect and enhance Aberdeen’s trees and woodland. Although the site is in two separate ownerships it is considered overall as one Opportunity Site. Therefore a Flood Risk Assessment will be required to address the whole site including the area owned by the respondent.

Property Included

83: The boundary contains three properties along the southern edge of the site. We are of the opinion that Bucklerburn Road acts as a suitable southern boundary for the site. If these properties were zoned as Green Belt this would not meet the objectives of the Policy NE2: Green Belt. When this site is developed, in the next review of the Local Development Plan, these sites will be zoned as residential which would reflect the proposed use of this site and the current use of the properties.

OP108: Mid Anguston

Supports Local Community and Services in Peterculter

Peterculter is a well-established settlement to the west of the city in Deeside. The Council considers that the continued vitality and viability of Peterculter is an important goal for maintaining Deeside as a whole. The Council recognises that in order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure already present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify additional sites which are acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter as a population centre.

Sustainability

7, 16, 47, 98, 99, 119, 171, 172, 183: The Council accepts that the site is outwith the existing settlement at Peterculter. It is also accepted that accessibility to the major road network and public transport facilities is poor. It is anticipated that the majority of residents at the proposed site would use their own vehicles for transport. It is the Council's submission however, that given the relatively small number of units proposed for this site the impact on sustainability will be minimal and therefore acceptable. The Council would wish to note that there is an existing settlement at Mid Anguston, Peterculter and there are adopted roads, street lighting and refuse collections are carried out to the existing dwellings. The school bus has an existing route through Mid Anguston. A safe walking route exists from the site to the local primary school.

Housing

98, 171: The Council's position is that the site would offer eight residential units close to the city for employment opportunities but retaining the character of living within a countryside setting. The housing which is proposed would be in keeping with the local area. The provision of a limited number of larger homes at the site is considered to contribute to a choice for home buyers of a range of properties available both within the Peterculter settlement and within the Aberdeen City boundaries as a whole.

Schools

7, 47, 98, 119, 171: The zoned local Primary School, Culter Primary has excess capacity with capacity for 87 extra pupils in 2016.

Current Use

47, 119, 171: The current condition of the site is considered undesirable and it is the Council's submission that removal of the chicken sheds would be a positive outcome if the site were to be included for residential development.

Amenity

The Council does not consider that the inclusion of the site would cause significant detriment to the amenity of existing residential properties in the locality. Any question of amenity is something which would be dealt with at the planning application stage. Mitigation measures could be implemented to ensure that any impact on amenity is minimised or negated. The Council does not consider that potential impact on amenity of existing residential properties

would be significant.

Suitability of Alternative Sites

Various representations make reference to the fact that there are more desirable sites for development. It is the Council's submission that the inclusion of this site addresses the Council's identified desire to support and promote the existing settlement at Peterculter.

Proximity of Pipeline

12: The proximity of a pipeline to the proposed site is known and acknowledged by the Council. It is not felt to preclude residential development at the site.

Water and Drainage

47, 171, 98, 171: The site falls within the River Dee catchment area. Various representations make reference to concerns in relation to water and drainage. It is the Council's position that the site is freely draining with no waterlogged areas and no flood risks have been identified by SEPA.

The Council therefore maintains that the allocation of this site for the residential development of 8 houses is appropriate and should be maintained.

OP109: Woodend Peterculter

Supports Local Community and Services in Peterculter

54, 83, 98, 126, 178, 183, 185: Peterculter is a well-established settlement to the west of the city in Deeside. The Council considers that the continued vitality and viability of Peterculter is an important goal for maintaining Deeside as a whole. The Council recognises that in order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure already present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify additional sites which are acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter as a population centre. The Council would like to highlight that the local Community Council support the inclusion of this site.

Sustainability

The Council accepts that the site is outwith the existing settlement at Peterculter. It is also accepted that accessibility to the major road network and public transport facilities is poor. It is anticipated that the majority of residents at the proposed site would use their own vehicles for transport. It is the Council's submission however, that given the relatively small number of units proposed for this site the impact on sustainability will be minimal and therefore acceptable. The site is in close proximity to a site which has planning permission for a cricket pitch, club house and associated parking. The site is near to Core Path 51 (Garinhill Wood to Guttrie Wood) and Core Path 52 (Bucklerburn Road to Easter Anguston. The site is also near to Aspirational Path 4 (Peterculter to Milltimber). The school bus has an existing route through Woodend and refuse is already collected in the area. A safe pedestrian route to Culter Primary School exists from the site.

Housing

The Council's position is that the site would offer 19 residential units close to the city for employment opportunities but would have the character of living within a countryside setting. The provision of a relatively small number of homes at the site is considered to contribute to a choice for home buyers of a range of properties available within the Aberdeen City boundaries and to contribute to mobility in the housing market in this area.

Environment

Various representations make reference to the woodland on the site. It is the Council's position that mitigation measures at the planning application stage could be implemented to minimise any loss of trees on the site. It is the Council's position that minimal loss of trees is an acceptable consequence of development contributing to the viability of Peterculter.

Schools

The zoned local Primary School, Culter Primary has excess capacity with capacity for 87 extra pupils in 2016.

Current Use

The current condition of the site is considered undesirable and it is the Council's submission that removal of the existing derelict and dilapidated farm buildings would be a positive outcome if the site were to be included for residential development.

Amenity

The Council does not consider that the inclusion of the site would cause significant detriment to the amenity of existing residential properties in the locality. It is the Council's submission that woodland to the north and south of the site would screen the development and provide natural mitigation for impact of development. Any question of amenity is something which would be dealt with at the planning application stage. Mitigation measures could be implemented to ensure that any impact on amenity is minimised or negated. The Council does not consider that potential impact on amenity of existing residential properties would be significant.

Suitability of Alternative Sites

Various representations make reference to the fact that there are more desirable sites for development. It is the Council's submission that the inclusion of this site addresses the Council's identified desire to support and promote the existing settlement at Peterculter.

Water and Drainage

It is the Council's position that there are no known flooding risks or drainage issues at the site. The Council therefore maintains that the allocation of this site for the residential development of 19 houses is appropriate and should be maintained.

OP42: Kennerty Mill

98: We welcome the support for the allocation of Proposed Plan Site OP42. Peterculter is a

well-established settlement to the west of Deeside and is a recognised Neighbourhood Centre in the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012. The Council considers that the continued viability and prosperity of Peterculter is an important goal for maintaining Deeside as a whole. The Council has recognised that in order to promote and protect local facilities, shops and infrastructure present within Peterculter it is desirable and necessary to identify sites which are deemed acceptable for residential development and have the potential to enhance the viability of Peterculter both as a population centre and as a Neighbourhood Centre.

OP44: North Lasts Quarry

98, 65: We welcome the support for the allocation of Proposed Plan Site OP42. In response the Opportunity Site is identified for ongoing mineral extraction. There is no housing proposed and there for no requirement for affordable homes.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

Deeside – General

1. It has been concluded at Issue 2 that there is a shortfall of only 18 units in meeting the greenfield housing land requirement, and that Aberdeen City is making a reasonable contribution to ensuring that the housing supply target for the Aberdeen housing market area is met. There is therefore very little requirement to identify additional housing land. However some limited scope does exist to allocate small new greenfield sites, should any suitable opportunities emerge through the examination process.

2. The provision of affordable housing is considered at Issue 28. I note the representation by Culter Community Council (98) about the importance of maintaining Peterculter as a viable neighbourhood centre, and the part that additional housing development could play in achieving that aim. I also note the council's response. Individual sites allocated by the proposed plan (including Peterculter Burn) are dealt with below. However, it would not be appropriate for unsuitable sites to be developed simply in order to boost the population of the settlement and underpin its service function. It would also be inappropriate to expand the population beyond the available infrastructure capacity, including schools. The construction of a new secondary school at Countesswells will, in time, enable some adjustment of catchment boundaries and relieve pressure on Culter Academy.

OP43: Milltimber Primary School

3. This site is currently occupied by school buildings. It is therefore a brownfield site, and its redevelopment for housing will count towards the strategic development plan target of 7,500 houses on brownfield sites in the period up to 2026. It is located within a residential area, and housing is therefore an appropriate land use. Matters of detailed design and layout, and the effects on local amenity, can be addressed at the planning permission stage. I agree with the council that the open, grassed area of the site would be covered by Policy NE3 of the proposed plan, and would therefore need to be protected or replaced, and that Policy NE5 would favour the retention of trees. Any concern about flood risk appears to be limited to surface water at the eastern edge of the site, and can be addressed through a flood risk assessment at the detailed design stage. The site is not of a scale likely to give rise to large amounts of traffic, and the surrounding roads will no longer have to carry traffic associated with the school once it closes. I conclude that the allocation of the site for housing

development should remain unchanged.

OP48: Oldfold

4. The Oldfold development has been carried forward from the existing local development plan, and has progressed through the development management process. The Development Framework and Masterplan are in place, planning permission in principle has been granted and matters specified by condition for Phase 1 have been approved, with construction on site being well advanced. It would be inappropriate at this late stage in the development process to call into question the development plan status of this significant project. I note that matters raised in representations about road improvements and the location of the primary school have been resolved in line with the comments made.

OP39: Braeside Infant School

5. Appendix 2 of the proposed plan notes that the development will have to respect residential amenity within and surrounding the area, and that the council will seek retention of the adjoining playpark in its current location. With these safeguards, it is appropriate for the site to be redeveloped for residential use (consistent with the surrounding area) when it is no longer required for educational purposes.

OP51: Peterculter Burn

6. The representation by Bancon (183) seeks removal of the site from the proposed plan on the grounds that it is constrained in the housing land audit. This lists the constraint as 'ownership'. Such a constraint may be temporary and does not render the site unsuitable for development. The issues regarding the suitability of the site were examined in 2012 in relation to the existing local development plan, and appropriate safeguards for flood risk management and nature conservation are set out in Appendix 2 of the proposed plan.

7. The site is a natural extension of Peterculter and would provide 19 homes within walking distance of community facilities and public transport. As well as a residential component, the proposed development would include a hydro electric scheme, fish pass, football pitch, changing facilities and car parking, and a new pathway opening up access to existing woodland. I consider that it would provide a worthwhile enhancement to the settlement, and that it should remain in the plan.

OP52: Malcolm Road

8. The site is steeply sloping and most of it is covered by woodland. Since it appeared to me that development on the scale envisaged could not be carried out without significant loss of trees, I sought the following further information from the council, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH):

- a. Whether residential development on this site would be possible without any removal of ancient semi-natural woodland from the site and, if so, the number of houses that could be accommodated; and
- b. Whether road access to the development could be achieved without removal of any of the boundary trees beside Malcolm Road.

9. The council responded that the southern half of the site, towards Bucklerburn Road, had been cleared. The proposed plan suggests that the site could accommodate 71 homes, but this figure is based on gross development areas, and does not have the benefit of any

detailed analysis such as a topographical survey or arboricultural implications assessment. The total site area is 8.98 hectares and the cleared area of the site (according to the council) measures approximately 3 hectares, which the council considers sufficient for 71 houses. Trees currently bound the edge of the site fronting onto Malcolm Road and page 85 of the proposed plan states that boundary trees should be retained. Access could potentially be established by upgrading an existing access track into the site from Bucklerburn Road, or from within the small cluster of houses also located within the site boundary at this point.

10. FCS and SNH take a different view from the council on the extent of woodland cover of the site. A recent site visit by SNH found that 83 per cent of the site was occupied by woodland. This figure is broadly consistent with my own observations, which confirm that the council's figure is significantly overstated. Based on 17 per cent of the total area of the site, therefore, about 1.5 hectares in the south-west corner is not covered by trees. However, this area is partly occupied by existing houses to the north of Bucklerburn Road. I estimate that these, with their extensive gardens, take up about one third of the non-woodland area, leaving 1 hectare that could, subject to other constraints, be developed for houses without loss of woodland. The number of houses that could be accommodated would depend on densities and on access constraints, but it would be far fewer than 71. FCS suggests that 8 houses would be a realistic figure. This would be consistent with representation 80 on behalf of Mr George Souter, though I note that the plan accompanying that representation shows an area (2 hectares) more extensive than that shown white on the Forestry Commission's extract from the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland.

11. The woodland on the site is ancient woodland of Long Established Plantation Origin (LEPO). It is native woodland of UK Priority Habitat type, Upland Birchwood, and has been woodland for more than 140 years. LEPO woodland with significant biodiversity interest and (separately) UK Priority Woodland types both hold the same status as ancient semi-natural woodland in the Scottish Government's Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal, as having a strong presumption against removal. Paragraph 194 of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states that the planning system should protect and enhance ancient semi-natural woodland as an important and irreplaceable resource, together with other native or long-established woods, hedgerows and individual trees with high nature conservation or landscape value. I consider that the removal of woodland from this site for housebuilding would not be consistent with Scottish Government policies. Neither would it accord with Policy NE5 of the proposed plan.

12. Any development would therefore need to be limited to the cleared area in the south-west corner. Aside from the substantial differences in ground levels, the main constraint on development here is providing safe road access. Access could be taken from Bucklerburn Road, but that road is narrow, and its junction with Malcolm Road has poor sightlines. Improvements may be constrained by domestic properties on either side. The alternative, of forming a junction directly onto Malcolm Road, would also be constrained by visibility requirements, and the formation of a junction with adequate splays would appear to require extensive felling of mature Scots Pine trees which line the western boundary of the site. Appendix 2 of the proposed plan on page 85 states that boundary trees are to be retained. I note that representation 80 seeks a relaxation of this requirement, but the pine trees have landscape importance and provide screening of the site. Development should therefore avoid their removal. A further possibility would be to form a junction with Malcolm Road to the north of the pine trees, removing a small amount of young birch. This appears to be in different ownership, but might be acceptable subject to arboricultural and ecological implications assessments and compensatory planting.

13. This site was considered in the examination of the existing local development plan, but was removed on the reporter's recommendation. Reasons included loss of trees, the distance on foot from local facilities and bus stops, the amount of heavy goods traffic on Malcolm Road, and the poor standard of the footway leading south. Development of the site would not therefore have been consistent with local or national sustainable transport policies. The reporter considered that development would result in an isolated and obtrusive urban projection north into the countryside from the main built-up area of Peterculter.

14. None of these factors has changed, though I consider that they would apply with less force to a small (8 house) development on cleared land in the south-west corner of the site adjacent to existing housing than to a more extensive development stretching north and east and requiring clearance of woodland. Provided that a satisfactory solution can be found to the provision of road access, a small development would in my view be acceptable. Access may be possible from Bucklerburn Road and would involve the improvement of its junction with Malcolm Road, which the council thinks could be pursued through internal consultations with its Roads Development Management Team as part of a future planning application. An alternative may be possible further north on Malcolm Road. Traffic on Malcolm Road should reduce to some extent once the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is open. Development would be subject to the retention of the boundary Scots Pine trees for landscape reasons, and should also require arboricultural and ecological implications assessments.

15. I note the view of the proposing developer that the south-west part of the site is not subject to a flood risk, but in the absence of supporting evidence I consider that a flood risk assessment requirement should be retained in the plan. If there is no risk, this should easily be demonstrated. A masterplan is not necessary for a single-developer site of 8 houses. I accept the council's reasons for including the existing houses on Bucklerburn Road within the opportunity site, rather than placing them in an isolated pocket of green belt. While access for pedestrians, and to bus stops, is not wholly satisfactory the residents of the new houses would be in a similar position to those in the houses on, and to the south of, Bucklerburn Road. There is a footpath connection from Bucklerburn Road to Bucklerburn Wynd which provides an alternative, if rather lengthy, pedestrian route to the centre of Peterculter without using Malcolm Road.

16. I therefore recommend that the proposed plan is modified to reduce the site area of OP52 to 1.5 hectares (the boundary to accord with the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland) and the housing capacity to 8 houses, with the remainder of the site being redesignated as green belt and green space network. The requirement on page 85 of the proposed plan for a masterplan should be removed, and a requirement for arboricultural and ecological implications assessments should be added.

OP108: Mid Anguston

17. The site is remote from the existing settlement of Peterculter (about 3 kilometres by road). The road access is narrow with poor sightlines, and has an awkward junction with the A93. There is a lack of safe walking and cycling routes to Peterculter, and there is no readily and safely accessible public transport. It appears to me that residents would be wholly dependent on private cars. The council states that development there would help to support local shops and facilities in Peterculter, but there is no guarantee that residents would actually use these in preference to other locations such as Westhill.

18. The site lies in the green belt and is highly visible from the east. Houses there would be obtrusive in the landscape and would detract from its rural character. The site is close to a

high pressure gas pipeline and lacks mains sewerage. I consider that there are conflicts with a number of policies in the proposed local development plan. Policy NE2 (Green Belt) presumes against development that does not need to be located there. While opportunity site designation would remove green belt status, I consider that the underlying principles of the policy, including that of maintaining Aberdeen's landscape setting, are still relevant to this rural area.

19. The development would not accord with Policy T2 (Managing the Transport Impact of Development) and Policy T3 (Sustainable and Active Travel) which seek, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, to reduce the need for travel by car and to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Policy B6 (Pipelines, Major Hazards and Explosives Storage Sites) would require consultation with the Health and Safety Executive and, while the council feels the proximity of the pipeline need not preclude residential development, the possibility of an adverse recommendation on safety grounds does not appear to have been ruled out.

20. This site was considered in the examination of the current local development plan but was rejected by the reporter, mainly on grounds of remoteness, poor accessibility and landscape impact. In my view nothing has changed to make the site more acceptable. Indeed, it no longer has the support of Culter Community Council (representation 98). This remains an unsustainable and inappropriate site for housing development, and it should be removed from the proposed plan.

OP109: Woodend Peterculter

21. Given the concerns raised in representations about the potential loss of trees, I sought the following further information from the council, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH):

While the text on page 86 of the proposed plan states that ancient woodland on the south of the site is to be protected, please indicate whether there is ancient woodland on any other parts of the site; and Whether residential development on this site would be possible without any removal of ancient semi-natural woodland from the site and, if so, the number of houses that could be accommodated.

22. The responses indicate that approximately 20 per cent of the site is covered by woodland, all of which is located in the western corner of the site. The extent of the woodland is shown outlined in blue on OP109 – Map A which accompanied the FCS response dated 27 April 2016. It is ancient woodland of Long Established Plantation Origin (LEPO), which is native woodland of UK Priority Habitat type, Upland Birchwood, and has been woodland for more than 140 years. LEPO woodland with significant biodiversity interest and (separately) UK Priority Woodland types both hold the same status as ancient semi-natural woodland in the Scottish Government's Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal, as having a strong presumption against removal. Paragraph 194 of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states that the planning system should protect and enhance ancient semi-natural woodland as an important and irreplaceable resource, together with other native or long-established woods, hedgerows and individual trees with high nature conservation or landscape value.

23. I consider that the removal of woodland from this site for housebuilding would not be consistent with Scottish Government policies. Neither would it accord with Policy NE5 of the proposed plan. The area outlined in blue on the FCS plan should therefore be removed from the site. There is no longer woodland within the southern boundary of the site, so the

last sentence in the right-hand column of the OP109 entry on page 86 of the proposed plan should be amended to refer to ancient woodland to the south of the site (rather than on the south of the site).

24. Much of the remainder of the site is occupied by derelict buildings. I asked the council whether this part of the site could be regarded as a brownfield site and, if so, why it is not identified in Appendix 1 of the proposed plan. The council responded that Table 2 of Appendix 1 lists brownfield sites with planning consent. Woodend does not have planning consent and so cannot be included in this table. Table 1 lists brownfield sites with potential for housing that were identified in the Brownfield Potential Study 2014. Woodend is in the green belt and outwith the settlement boundary, so it was not considered appropriate to identify it as a brownfield site in the 2014 study. The council does not consider it as appropriate to regard sites outwith the settlement boundary and in the green belt as being 'brownfield'. To do so could set a precedent allowing the redevelopment of previously developed sites for inappropriate uses in the green belt.

25. Nevertheless, I consider that the derelict buildings at Woodend detract from amenity and that the site in its present condition contributes nothing to the quality of the green belt or the green space network. It appears to me that improvement is unlikely to occur without redevelopment of the site which, if sensitively designed, could make a positive contribution to its surroundings. Development could be contained within the landscape. As regards the number of houses that could be accommodated, the non-wooded area of the site measures about 2 hectares, and I agree with the council that this should be sufficient to accommodate the 19 houses proposed.

26. The site is detached from the built-up area of Peterculter and suffers from poor transport links. The road past the site is narrow and lacks a footway. There are no bus stops within easy walking distance. The development would not accord with Policy T2 (Managing the Transport Impact of Development) and Policy T3 (Sustainable and Active Travel) which seek, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, to reduce the need for travel by car and to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport. This needs to be balanced against the improvement to amenity that could result from development, the contribution to meeting housing needs and the contribution to sustaining local services in Peterculter. The proposal has the support of Culter Community Council.

27. The site forms part of a development proposal that was considered, but rejected, by the reporter who examined the existing local development plan. While he found a number of positive factors including replacement of the disused buildings and acceptable landscape and visual impact, he concluded that adequate housing land had been provided to meet the allowances set in the structure plan, which already sought to provide a generous supply of housing land, and that there was no numerical justification to allocate further housing sites. As set out at paragraph 1 above, however, the current proposed plan provides a slight shortfall in greenfield housing land, which is increased by my recommended removal of site OP109 (Mid Anguston, 8 houses) and reduction in the capacity of site OP52 (Malcolm Road) from 71 to 8 houses.

28. I asked the council why a drainage impact assessment (DIA) is required (page 86 of the proposed plan) if the council's position is that there are no known flooding risks or drainage issues at the site. The council responded that a need has been identified for such an assessment to consider the protection of potential wet habitats/woodlands adjacent to the site. In response to the Main Issues Report, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency specifically requested that a DIA should be required for this site as housing development

would have an impact on flooding along Bucklerburn Road. The council agreed to this request and made reference to a DIA in the proposed plan. I accept the council's reasons.

29. I therefore conclude that the site's contribution to greenfield housing land supply and the benefits to amenity from replacing the disused buildings outweigh the detachment from the built-up area and the lack of sustainable transport links, and that OP109 should remain in the proposed plan, subject to adjustment of the boundary to exclude woodland and subject to the amendment of the last sentence of the entry on page 86.

OP42: Kennerty Mill

30. I note the support for the redevelopment of this brownfield site for residential use.

OP44: North Lasts Quarry

31. I note the support for ongoing mineral extraction on this site, and the council's clarification that no housing development is involved.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend the following modifications:

1. On page 15 of the proposed plan, Table 8:

In the entry for OP52 Malcolm Road Peterculter, delete "71 homes" and insert "8 homes";

Delete the entire entry for OP108 Mid Anguston.

2. On page 85 of the proposed plan, in the entry for OP52 Malcolm Road Peterculter:

In the third column, delete "8.98 ha" and insert "1.5 ha";

In the fifth column, modify the text to read: "Opportunity for 8 houses. Scots Pine trees on western boundary to be retained. Site (or part of) may be at risk of flooding. Developers may be required to provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) in support of any development proposals for this site".

3. On page 86 of the proposed plan, delete the entire entry for OP108 Mid Anguston.

4. On page 86 of the proposed plan, in the entry for OP109 Woodend Peterculter:

In the third column, delete "2.9ha" and insert "2 ha".

In the fifth column, modify the final sentence to read "Ancient woodland to the south of the site is to be protected".

5. Modify the proposals map by:

Removing site OP108 Mid Anguston;

Redrawing the boundary of site OP52 Malcolm Road to accord with the white area in the south-west part of the site shown on the map "Native Woodland Survey of Scotland" which

accompanied Forestry Commission Scotland's letter of 27 April 2016;

Redrawing the boundary of site OP109 Woodend Peterculter to exclude the area outlined in blue on OP109 – Map A which accompanied Forestry Commission Scotland's letter of 27 April 2016.

<b>Issue 12</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE SITES: DEESIDE</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	No reference in the Plan	<b>Reporter:</b> Michael Cunliffe
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Mr McDonald (56)                  Stewart Milne Homes (82)                  Polmuir Properties Limited (84)                  Stewart Milne Homes (85)                  Russell Balsillie and Family (95)                  Culter Community Council (98)                  Parkie Property and Development Limited (103)                  Mr &amp; Mrs A N Ironside/Midstocket Development Company (106)                  Shivas Trust/D Gray &amp; Others (122)                  Barratt North Scotland (125)                  Stewart Milne Homes (128)                  Ian Suttie (133)                  Cults Property Development Limited (142)                  W Donald (145)                  Rubislaw Estates (154)                  E Yule (161)                  Park Home Estates (170)                  Bancon Developments (183)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Alternative sites in Deeside	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>BIELDSIDE</u></p> <p><u>Murtle Den &amp; Surrounds, Bielside (B0922)</u></p> <p>84: Object to failure of site being included for one or two housing units. The proposed houses would fit with local character and there are recent precedents.</p> <p>84(2) Object to the land zoning of bid site B0922 and the neighbouring land. The area is not justifiable part of the Green Belt.</p> <p><u>Murtle Den, Bielside</u></p> <p>95: Land has potential to accommodate development without detriment to the area. No consideration given to Green Belt boundaries in the preparation of the Proposed Plan. SPP prepared after the Green Belt Review and takes a more relaxed approach. Development of Oldford Farm will result in a physical connection between Bielside and Milltimber but they</p>		

will be visually separate. Character would not be lost by removal of the Green Belt. There are precedents along the Deeside corridor. Redevelopment of Waterwheel Inn will be out of keeping with the area and demonstrates that Green Belt designation serves little purpose. Redrawing the Green Belt boundaries with the area removed would create stronger defensible boundaries. Green Space Network provides an additional layer of control that can work without the Green Belt.

## CULTS

### Thornhill, Craigton Road (B0924)

125: Object to the non-inclusion of site for a residential development of 150 units.

## MILLTIMBER

### Brookfield (B0902)

56: Site should be identified as a small scale greenbelt housing site for 20-30 houses for over 55's/retired/elderly persons. Consultation with the Cults, Bielside and Milltimber Community Council has indicated there is a need for this type of specialist housing, as it is not being sufficiently provided for in the local area. Larger housing allocations in the local area such as Oldfold and Countesswells have not been delivered as originally anticipated. Development specific for this age group would not conflict with the delivery of other existing housing allocations at Oldfold or Countesswells. The site is immediately available and free from constraints. There would be no coalescence between Bielside and Milltimber. The visual impact on the landscape would be relatively minor. The site sites adjacent to the Oldfold site and can be well contained within existing and proposed woodland. The site is highly sustainable in terms of proximity to public transport routes.

### Contlaw (B0915)

85: Site should be identified for the development of a phased development comprising residential, business and commercial, local shopping provision and community facilities with associated strategic landscaping and public open space. Provision is also made a new primary school with associated playing fields. There will be no visual or physical harm to the landscape setting and identity of Milltimber. Officers' assessment of the site fails to consider the urbanising effect of the AWPR which will change the character of the area significantly and will provide a well-defined physical boundary to the west of Milltimber. A re-think of the Green Belt boundaries are required. Capacity constraints at Cults Academy are not an impediment to development and capacity could be increased through developer contributions. The site has good public transport links and could accommodate a Park & Ride facility serving the A93 corridor. With its 9 hectares of employment land, the site would create a more sustainable Deeside.

### West of Contlaw Road (B0946)

85: Site should be identified for the development of 10-15 residential units. This site could be developed as a stand-alone site or as Phase 1 of the larger Contlaw proposal. The AWPR which will change the character of the area significantly and will provide a well-defined physical boundary to the west of Milltimber. A re-think of the Green Belt boundaries are required. The site enjoys an attractive setting adjacent to an established residential area and within walking distance of bus routes along the A93 North Deeside Road. The site is

also well placed to take advantage of the services and facilities available in Peterculter and Bielside. The topography of the site and landscape features would ensure its containment in landscape terms and the development would have minimal impact on landscape setting. The scale of development proposed would not have a significant impact on infrastructure.

Guttrie Hill West (B0907)

106: Site should be included as a residential allocation for five houses with shared drive. The site is a brownfield site, previously used for quarrying. If any protected species are present, there will be mitigation measures. The houses can be adapted and therefore will provide a mix. The historic features on site will not be damaged. No negative impact on schools. The AWPR is in close proximity, and there is good public transport and paths.

Guttrie Hill East (B0908)

106: Site should be allocated as suitable for a sustainable energy vehicle refuelling station. This would create a charge point for electric vehicles, hydrogen refuelling for vehicles running on fuel cells, an LPG dispenser, in addition to conventional petrol and diesel. It would also include ancillary retail facilities, of the same scale as that found in a conventional petrol station. The site is ideally located at the Milltimber junction of the AWPR. Support for this type of development is provided at every level of hierarchy of planning policy in Scotland. There would be no negative impact on natural heritage, or cultural heritage. The Ancient Woodland status is outdated. The site relates well to the existing built up area of Aberdeen. The area will be subject to major change over coming years as a result of the AWPR.

Binghill Farm (B0933)

145: The site would act as a logical extension to the Oldfold site (OP48). The reasons for rejecting Binghill are not in any way robust. Transport does not provide an excuse for not zoning the land. The site is zoned as Green Belt and Green Space Network however the principle of development is established in a major housing site adjacent to Binghill Farm and nearby Countesswells. The medium to low density nature proposed for the site would not be overbearing to the character of the landscape and it would not extend north beyond the Oldfold allocation. Its integration with the settlement would support a clear, defined physical boundary and not contribute to sprawl. Existing path access would be maintained and enhanced. Little value would be retained through preventing development in favour of the Green Space Network. A small portion of the site would be developed, retaining land for open space, paths and access, and landscape retention. New allocations are scarce in Deeside and a low number of completions have taken place resulting in sites being carried forward. The allocation of small and medium scale sites is the key to reaching housing delivery targets.

Culter House Road (B0901)

154: The site is suitable for housing development (12 units) once the AWPR has been completed. The site does not warrant a Green Belt or Green Space Network designation for the following reasons: 1. Logical Greenbelt boundary is the AWPR, 2. The land is a gap site and development would infill between OP46 and OP47, 3. Removing the land from the Greenbelt will not lead to urban sprawl, 4. The land has little or no value in terms of providing a landscape setting or access to open space The site is free from constraints, there is already street lighting along Culter House Road, it is within walking distance of

public transport routes and connects directly onto the footpath link to the AWPR. There are pavements up to the edge of the site and there is a Core Path Network in the vicinity. The indicative site layout includes a new cycleway/footpath through the middle of the site. Culter House Road will become a dead end once the AWPR is completed and the existing road network will be capable of accommodating a small increase in traffic. The only future housing allocation is Oldford which is controlled by one housebuilder and does not provide a choice. The site is on the Aberdeen side of the AWPR and will be well contained. The site is not visible from public vantage points. The AWPR will vastly change the character of the area and the identification of the site as part of the Green Belt does not protect or enhance the quality, character or landscape setting of the city. There is no public access to the countryside and the site offers nothing in terms of protecting or promoting wildlife, recreational or landscape access value to the wider Green Space Network.

Milltimber South (B0940)

183: Site should be allocated for 60 houses and associated commercial uses. Due to the constrained housing developments in the area, an additional 150 houses are required to be allocated in the period 2017-2026. Due to housing constraints elsewhere in the city the Deeside corridor would be able to accommodate approximately 1000 new homes. Design and landscaping would minimise visual impact. The current view will be replaced by one of the AWPR, routed 25-30 metres above current level. The delivery of the AWPR will provide convenient access for the site, via a grade separated interchange to the west.

PETERCULTER

Business Site, Peterculter

98: A small scale business park should be allocated adjacent to the urban part of Peterculter

Malcolm Road, Peterculter (B0943)

82: Object to the site (B0943) Malcolm Road not being included for 25 residential units. Site can be delivered, has good accessibility and close to amenities. Opportunity Sites 51, 52 and 109, in Peterculter, are not appropriate.

Land North of Peterculter (B0909)

103: Site is half a mile north of Peterculter and suitable for 8 houses. Demand for single storey houses for elderly. Shared access could be provided. Site previously rejected for being adjacent to a Special Area of Conservation and Local Nature Conservation Site but this is incorrect. Development could not be described as having an adverse effect on the landscape. Site is close to Peterculter and has better access than sites that are currently in Proposed Plan. Site is not at risk from flooding, there would be no adverse impact on the landscape, no restriction to open space access, and is adjoined by development on all sides. Small scale development would not impact infrastructure capacity.

Cobblestock, Peterculter (B0930)

122: South west end of Peterculter submitted previously. The Reporters previously had positive comments. There is scope for small scale development in Peterculter. No homes are planned for delivery in Phase 2 of the Proposed Plan. New housing allocations are

limited while housing delivery targets continue to fall short. A range of small/medium sites which can be delivered are needed. In the Main Issues Report checklist the site scored higher than Mid Anguston but yet it was considered less acceptable. Site is closer and more accessible. The road network has capacity, the site is a logical extension and would not contribute to sprawl.

Rob Roy Mobile Home Park, Malcolm Road, Peterculter

170: Rezone land to Residential or Mixed Use. Currently a developed residential site for 101 park homes within the Greenbelt. In a position to replace with new Mobile Homes (Park Homes) or replace with conventional homes and remove from Green Belt. Lifespan and value would be more. Park Home residents have the right to stay for the duration of the owner's life. If mobile homes are replaced it will remain as such for the foreseeable future. Site has mains sewerage, hydro-electric substation, there is a pavement and street lights. With the AWPR there will be no difference in traffic between park homes and conventional housing. Only opportunity to change to conventional housing and would be classed as brownfield development.

Hill of Ardbeck, Peterculter (B0934)

183: Object to non-allocation of Hill of Ardbeck for 61 houses, improved management of open space and contribution to recreational facilities. Constrained housing developments elsewhere have resulted in Deeside being able to accommodate approximately 1000 homes. Part of site has Ancient Woodland and is a Local Nature Conservation Site. Development limited to the bowl to minimise environmental and visual impacts. Site previously supported by the Reporter in 2008 when submitted as sheltered housing. Would provide 25% affordable housing and create a better recreational resource than overgrown area that it is now.

Peterculter East (B0935)

183: Object to the non-allocation of Peterculter East for 38 houses and a business park. Due to constrained housing developments there is a requirement for additional houses and the Deeside corridor could accommodate new homes. The AWPR will improve connectivity and the grade separated junction will provide direct access to the site. Site will provide employment opportunities and is a logical infill. Housing will contribute to needs. Both the business park and housing are free from constraint.

Newmill, Peterculter (B0937)

183: Object to the non-allocation of Newmill. Site split between the City and Shire boundary. Due to constrained housing developments there is a requirement for additional houses and the Deeside corridor could accommodate new homes. It would be masterplanned, landscaped, delivered quickly and help to address the shortfall in residential and business land allocations.

Kennerty Farm, Peterculter (B0938)

183: Object to the non-allocation of Kennerty Farm, Peterculter for 22 houses. Due to constrained housing developments there is a requirement for additional houses and the Deeside corridor could accommodate new homes. The site will meet housing requirement and is a logical extension to the settlement. Close proximity to Local Nature Conservation

Site and Special Area of Conservation. Drainage and landscaping will be provided to mitigate and enhance the area.

## PITFODELS

### Parklea House

133: Garden ground of Parklea should be removed from the Green Belt and rezoned as R1: Residential. The Appraisal notes that Parklea's garden ground does not meet any principles of the Green Belt policy such as to warrant retention of that designation. It demonstrates the removal of the Green Belt designation from Parklea will (1) not affect the important characteristics of the landscape setting of Aberdeen; (2) create a more defensible road boundary to the Green Belt by using an existing road - Baird's Brae and (3) rationalise the Green Belt in this location to reflect the local characteristics of the area.

### Inchgarth Road Residential and Link (B0912)

142: Objects to the non-allocation of the site for 100 residential units and the provision of a new link road from Inchgarth Road to North Deeside Road, and the removal of the site from the Green Belt and Green Space Network. The site would be developed taking into account the local context, sustainable transport and the link road would be beneficial to the wider network, for pedestrians, cyclists and a potential new bus route.

### Inchgarth Road Mixed Use and Link

142: Object to the non-allocation of the site for 300 units of student accommodation, all weather pitch, 60 residential units and a link road, and the removal of the site from the Green Belt and Green Space Network.

Student accommodation fulfils a specific need within the city as is outlined in Policy H5: Affordable Housing and the supporting Supplementary Guidance. Communities facilities are also supported within the Local Development Plan as is outlined in Policy CF2: New Community Facilities. Community facilities include education related facilities.

The site would be developed taking into account the local context, sustainable transport and the link road would be beneficial to the wider network, for pedestrians, cyclists and a potential new bus route.

### Land at Station Road, Pitfodels

142: Objects to the non-allocation of 0.8 hectare site for three residential units and landscaped grounds. Remove the site from the Green Belt and Green Space Network. The site would be developed taking into account the local context and sustainable transport, and would be absorbed easily into the settlement.

### Land at Pitfodels Station Road, Cults

161: Remove the site from the Green Belt and designated for three no. detached residential units. Infill development contributes to the housing land supply, and development of this site would not undermine the Green Belt Policy but would provide a more defensible Green Belt Boundary along the line of the South Deeside Way.

Craigton Road (B0939)

183: Object to the non-allocation of Craigton Road for 32 houses and a care home, with woodland buffers. Due to constrained housing development in the area, and beyond new housing could be accommodated in the area. Allocating the site would create a more defensible Green Belt boundary.

WESTHILL

Cadgerford and Backhill Westhill (B0931/B0932)

128: Object to the non-allocation of B0931 and B0932 and a development site of 6 hectares of employment land and 600-700 homes on Aberdeen City side of the site. A cross boundary Masterplan is advocated for the site. Development strategy has been prepared. The Westhill Capacity Study (Aberdeenshire Council) indicates growth will continue to Westhill. Housing allocations are needed to balance employment land. The site is accessible, in close proximity to local facilities and could assist with infrastructure issues.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

BIELDSIDE

Murtle Den & Surrounds, Bielside (B0922)

84: Identify land at Murtle Den for the allocation of one or two detached houses.

84: Identify site and the neighbouring land (shown by the blue boundary) as H1: Residential Areas.

Murtle Den, Bielside

95: Green Belt zoning should be removed and identified as a residential area.

CULTS

Thornhill, Craigton Road (B0924)

125: Remove from the Green Belt and allocate as Land Release 1.

PETERCULTER

Malcolm Road, Peterculter (B0943)

82: Delete sites OP52 and OP109. Allocate site for 25 residential units and associated infrastructure for release within the first 5 years.

Land North of Peterculter (B0909)

103: Site should be included in the Local Development Plan.

Cobblestock, Peterculter (B0930)

122: Change land zoning to Residential

Rob Roy Mobile Home Park, Malcolm Road, Peterculter

170: Change zoning from Green Belt/brownfield to Residential or Mixed Use.

Hill of Ardbeck, Peterculter (B0934)

183: Allocate site for 61 houses.

Peterculter East (B0935)

183: Allocate the site for 38 houses and a business park.

Newmill, Peterculter (B0937)

183: Remove the Green Belt status and allocate the site.

Kennerty Farm, Peterculter (B0938)

183: Allocate site for 22 houses.

PITFODELS

Parklea

133: Removed the garden ground from the Green Belt zoning.

Inchgarth Road Residential and Link (B0912)

142: Remove the site from the Green Belt and Green Space Network and allocate for residential and a new link road.

Inchgarth Road Mixed use and Link

142: Remove the site from the Green Belt and Green Space Network. The land should be identified as an Opportunity Site

Land at Station Road, Pitfodels

142: Remove the site from the Green Belt and Urban Green Space and allocate for Residential development

Craigton Road (B0939)

183: Allocate the site for 32 houses and a care home

WESTHILL

Cadgerford and Backhill Westhill (B0931/B0932)

128: Allocate 6 hectares of employment land and 600-700 houses.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

General Strategy

In preparing the Proposed Plan a Development Options Assessment (CD28, CD30, CD31), Strategic Environmental Assessment (CD27), and Main Issues Report (CD29) were used to identify the most suitable locations to deliver the required growth. The majority of greenfield sites identified in the Proposed Plan have been carried over from the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) which went through a similar process at that time. Most of these sites are at an advanced stage in terms of planning consents and Masterplans as detailed in the latest version of the Action Programme (CD47).

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 (CD12) sets the requirements for greenfield housing and employment land allowances and these are set out in Figure 1 of the SDP on page 12 and in Schedule 1 on page 42. Under Issue 2 we conclude that the SDP greenfield requirements have been fully met and we are confident that a continuous 5 year housing land supply can be met throughout the lifetime of this LDP. Accordingly, we do not consider it necessary to allocate any further greenfield sites beyond those already identified in the Proposed Plan.

BIELDSIDE

Murtle Den & Surrounds, Bielside (B0922)

84: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). Any development of this site would be prominent from North Deeside Road, particularly when travelling west. Although next to the allocated site at Oldford, Murtle Den Road provides a good Green Belt boundary for development to the west. Murtle Den Road is tree lined and helps to screen and contain Oldford. The effect of this would be lost if development occurred here. The topography and woodland around Murtle Den prevents visual and physical coalescence between Milltimber and Bielside. The site contributes to the landscape setting of the area and should remain zoned as Green Belt. Further detail on the justification of the Green Belt boundary in this locale can be found in Figure 15 of the Green Belt Review (CD38) which examined the boundaries of the allocated sites identified in the extant Local Development Plan 2012.

Murtle Den, Bielside

95: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). The topography and woodland around Murtle Den prevents visual and physical coalescence between Milltimber and Bielside. The land at Murtle Den is important to maintaining the separate identities of the two communities and development on this site would lead to coalescence. The exclusion from Green Belt

areas of existing built development, or sites which may offer some re-development opportunities would be contrary to the purpose of encouraging development to locate within the existing built-up area of the city, or on various large areas of land allocated specifically for new development. Therefore, the site contributes to the landscape setting of the area and should remain zoned as Green Belt.

### CULTS

#### Thornhill, Craigton (B0924)

125: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site was previously assessed at Pre-Main Issues Report stage (Pre-MIR) and was deemed undesirable for development (CD28). The unit number was unspecified at Pre-MIR stage. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the 2012 Local Development Plan (Issue 53, CD44). The development would constitute a substantial but isolated development in the Green Belt undermining the existing separation between Cults and Aberdeen. The site is remote from transport links and there is insufficient school capacity as is outlined in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report.

### MILLTIMBER

#### Brookfield (B0902)

56: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site is situated in an area of wooded farmland which acts as a buffer between Milltimber and Bielside and occupies a very significant visual point as one travels towards Milltimber. Development on this site would therefore impact on the surrounding landscape and school capacity constraints should also be specifically noted (as it should not be assumed that no children would be generated from the development). It is noted that the proposal is for over 55's housing for retired / elderly persons. Outcome 6 of the Aberdeen Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017 (RD59, pg 109) is to: "Improve the housing experience for all vulnerable groups with particular housing needs and in particular minority groups so they can live independently through the provision of accessible accommodation and support systems", which includes ensuring the provision of suitable housing stock to meet the needs of an increasing elderly population. It is considered that the mix of house types and tenures on sites already allocated within the Deeside area will assist with meeting this Outcome and there is no overriding need for this type of specialist housing which would override the Council's decision not to allocate this site for development.

#### Contlaw (B0915)

85: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Public Local Inquiry into the 2008 Local Plan (Issue 83, CD45) and the Examination of the Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 53). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. Most of the site would be a long walk from the bus route on North Deeside Road although it is acknowledged that the site is large enough to accommodate its own facilities.

Development of this site would have significant landscape impact, particularly the areas which are above the 90 to 95 metre contour line within which most of Deeside is contained. The presence of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) through this area makes it even more important to maintain a green buffer between Milltimber and Peterculter. Contlaw Road itself and the woodland north of Milltimber provides distinct Green Belt boundaries and these features serve to contain the settlement and protect its identity. The Green Belt functions of the area should therefore be maintained.

With regards the suggestion by the Respondent that the capacity at Cults Academy could be increased by way of developer contributions, the school was built to take the maximum number of pupils for the size of the site. As such, the possibility of extending the school would be technically complex and could not be delivered while staff and pupils were in the building. School capacity constraints therefore remain important consideration for this proposal.

West of Contlaw Road (B0946)

85: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 53). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site proposes development on land between the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and Milltimber and on land included within the Green Space Network. Coalescence with Peterculter has been a reason in the past that development has been resisted in this area. The site is situated in an attractive landscape setting which provides a green wooded backdrop to Milltimber. The woodland along with Contlaw Road itself provides a clearly defined boundary between Milltimber and the Green Belt in this area. Development on this site would impact on the surrounding landscape, and, although the proposal is for a small scale development, capacity constraints, particularly at Cults Academy, would also impact upon the suitability of this site.

Guttrie Hill West (B0907)

106: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site is covered in its entirety by Ancient Woodland, is designated as a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS), and is also a habitat for protected species including bats and red squirrel. The biodiversity value of the site would be negatively impacted by development. The site is in a highly unsustainable location, being completely unrelated to existing settlement at Culter and an unacceptable distance from local facilities and employment opportunities. There are also capacity constraint issues at Cults Academy, although it is noted that the proposal is only for five units (and that this number has been reduced from previous submissions).

Guttrie Hill East (B0908)

106: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. Although felled, this site retains its formal status as Ancient Woodland, although it is clear that its biodiversity value has been significantly diminished. The main constraints affecting this site are its isolation from existing settlement and inaccessibility by walking, cycling or public transport. It is unlikely that effective links

would be able to be made to encourage this. Although direct access to the strategic road network is needed for a vehicle refuelling station, this proposal would form an isolated outpost of development, accessible only by car from the AWPR. A 'ribbon' of small, isolated developments along the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is not considered to be a desirable or sustainable desirable pattern of development.

Binghill Farm (B0933)

145: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 53). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site would not sit well in the landscape given that it is located above the 90-95 metre contour line on the Deeside Valley which generally marks the northern limit to development of the north Deeside settlements. Breaching this could lead to urban sprawl northwards. The site also has limited facilities within 800 metres and there are school capacity constraints, particularly at Cults Academy.

Culter House Road (B0901)

154: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 53). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. This proposal covers land that was previously Ancient Woodland but has now been felled. This development would be in an unsustainable location on the edge of Milltimber. There are also school capacity issues associated with this proposals, particularly at Cults Academy. It is considered that the Green Belt and Green Space Network allocations should be retained.

Milltimber South (B0940)

183: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 53). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site is designated as Green Belt and Green Space Network as it allows good views across the Dee Valley – as such development would impact on the River Dee Valley landscape as development would be very prominent from North Deeside Road and from the River Dee itself. The area contributes to a sense of place and to landscape setting and should therefore remain as Green Belt and Green Space Network. There are also school capacity constraints, particularly at Cults Academy.

PETERCULTER

Business Site, Peterculter

98: No site has been identified to support the request for more business land to be provided at Peterculter. The Spatial Strategy of the Proposed Plan complies with the employment land allocations set out in the Strategic Development Plan, therefore there is no requirement to allocate more business land.

Malcolm Road, Peterculter (B0943)

82: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 52). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Site Assessment Report. The site is not considered suitable for development due to its isolation and poor accessibility to employment opportunities, local facilities and public transport. The proposal is poorly related to the main settlement at Peterculter and is part of the countryside north of Malcolm Road which serves to maintain its setting. It is part of the green backdrop to Peterculter which contributes to protecting its landscape setting. It should therefore remain as Green Belt.

Land North of Peterculter (B0909)

103: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was previously considered during the Main Issues Report stage and rejected as being unsuitable for development as set out in the Pre-Main Issues Report Development Options Assessment, Issue 3 (CD28). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable, and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site is not considered suitable for development due to its isolation and poor accessibility to employment opportunities, local facilities and public transport. The proposal is poorly related to the main settlement at Peterculter and is part of the countryside north of Malcolm Road which serves to maintain its setting. It is part of the green backdrop to Peterculter which contributes to protecting its landscape setting. It should therefore remain as Green Belt.

Cobblestock, Peterculter (B0917)

122: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was previously considered during the extant Local Development Plan 2012 Examination and rejected (CD44, Issue 52). It has since been resubmitted as a development bid with a reduced area and a proposal for 15 units. We are still of the same opinion that the site at Cobblestock is unsuitable for development. Road access is extremely poor - it is a narrow, single track, steep and with sharp bends in places. The physical characteristics of the access roads and the presence of gardens and houses next to it could restrict road widening and will make this a difficult issue to mitigate.

Rob Roy Mobile Home Park, Malcolm Road, Peterculter

170: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site is not considered suitable for development due to its isolation and poor accessibility to employment opportunities, local facilities and public transport. The proposal is poorly related to the main settlement at Peterculter and is part of the countryside north of Malcolm Road which serves to maintain its setting. It is part of the green backdrop to Peterculter which contributes to protecting its landscape setting. It should therefore remain as Green Belt.

Hill of Ardbeck, Peterculter (B0934)

183: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was considered and rejected by Reporters following the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan (Issue 52). Aberdeen City Council has reassessed this site, again considered it undesirable,

and has rejected the inclusion of the site on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. Its recreational use and designation as a Local Nature Conservation Site makes it an undesirable development option and it should remain as Green Belt.

Peterculter East (B0935)

183: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). Development on this site would be very prominent from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and would have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape. Any development would only partially be related to the main settlement of Peterculter and its shops and services. The Proposed Plan identifies sufficient greenfield housing land. Therefore, we do not think this site should be rezoned from Green Belt and believe the current zoning reflects the site more appropriately.

Newmill, Peterculter (B0937)

183: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). Development would be likely to have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape and may have a negative effect on the species and habitats of the Culter Burn Local Nature Conservation Site, which is adjacent to the site. The site would be poorly related to the existing settlement at Peterculter and isolated from shops and services, meaning that it is likely to be heavily car-dependent.

Kennerty Farm, Peterculter (B0938)

183: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). Development would have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape and any development would only be partially related to the main settlement of Peterculter and its shops and services.

PITFODELS

Parklea

133: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site lies within the Pitfiodels Conservation Area where the pattern of development and setting creates a visual break from the urban pattern of Aberdeen City. The area is characterized by large detached villas set within spacious landscaped gardens with generous tree planting. This relates back to the original feu splitting of 1845. The building plots between North Deeside Road and Rockland Road/Airyhall Road have a very distinctive pattern comprising a tiered arrangement of frontage tree belts and open lawns and further trees set around the buildings. The properties are typically around 100 -200 metres set back from North Deeside Road. Behind the building is another tier of lawns and/or tree belts adjacent to Rocklands Road. Parklea forms the western most boundary of the Green Belt on the north side of North Deeside Road and follows the pattern of development as described above, and therefore established a defensible Green Belt boundary. The Green Belt designated extends to the east and south of the site again reflecting the historic pattern of development of the area, therefore reflecting

the local characteristics and maintaining the visual break between the city and Pitfodels.

Inchgarth Road Residential units and a link road (B0912)

142: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). Development would have a significant impact on the Deeside Line Local Nature Conservation Site with a new road having to cross this area and with a likely impact on the trees and the setting of the Green Belt and Pitfodels Conservation Area. The 'Access from the South' study is exploring the merits of a link road between Inchgarth Road and North Deeside Road as part of a wider solution combined with the proposals for the Bridge of Dee (RD60). The Access from the South Study is not due for completion until late Summer/Early Autumn 2016. This site is located within the Pitfodels Conservation Area and is Green Belt, providing significant visual separation between Garthdee and Lower Deeside which protects their separate identities. It therefore contributes to the landscape setting of these settlements. Although there are other developments in this area, its predominant character is still rural. This, together with the tree cover, prevent both visual and physical coalescence of Garthdee and Cults. Further development would shift the balance from a predominantly rural to a more urban character. This site is an important part of the area which prevents coalescence and therefore serves a Green Belt function that should remain.

Inchgarth Road Mixed Use and Link Road

142: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The development would have a significant impact on the Deeside Line Local Nature Conservation Site with a new road having to cross this area and with a likely impact on the trees and the setting of the Green Belt and Pitfodels Conservation Area. The Access from the South Study is exploring the merits of a link road between Inchgarth Road and North Deeside Road as part of a wider solution combined with the proposals for the Bridge of Dee. The Access from the South Study is not due for completion until late Summer/Early Autumn 2016. This site is located within the Pitfodels Conservation Area and is Green Belt, providing significant visual separation between Garthdee and Lower Deeside which protects their separate identities. It therefore contributes to the landscape setting of these settlements. Although there are other developments in this area, its predominant character is still rural. This, together with the tree cover, prevent both visual and physical coalescence of Garthdee and Cults. Further development would shift the balance from a predominantly rural to a more urban character. This site is an important part of the area which prevents coalescence and therefore serves a Green Belt function that should remain.

Land at Station Road, Pitfodels

142: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. This site is located within the Pitfodels Conservation Area and the area is currently Green Belt, which provides significant visual separation between Garthdee and Lower Deeside and which protects their separate identities. It therefore contributes to the landscape setting of these settlements. Although there are other developments in this area, its predominant character is still rural. This, together with the tree cover, prevents both visual and physical coalescence of Garthdee and

Cults. Further development would shift the balance from a predominantly rural to a more urban character. This site is an important part of the area which prevents coalescence and therefore serves a Green Belt function that should remain. There is limited school capacity; Cults Primary School will be over capacity by 2016, and Cults Academy by 2021.

### Pitfodels

161: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site is part of the Green Belt buffer between Cults and Garthdee which helps to maintain their separate identity and contributes to the landscape setting of Aberdeen. The site is within the Pitfodels Conservation Area which is characterized by large detached villas set within spacious landscaped gardens with generous tree planting. This relates back to the original feu splitting of 1845. Green Belt is the predominant zoning within the Conservation Area. Although there are other developments in this area, its predominant character is still rural. This, together with the tree cover, prevents both visual and physical coalescence of Garthdee and Cults. Further development would shift the balance from a predominantly rural to a more urban character. This site is an important part of the area which prevents coalescence and therefore serves a Green Belt function that should remain. There is limited school capacity; Cults Primary School will be over capacity by 2016, and Cults Academy by 2021 (CD32).

### Craigton Road (B0939)

183: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site was zoned as OP64 within the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 with a residential use for 20 units. Planning permission ([P110020](#)) was granted in May 2012 for the erection of residential development comprising of 20 units, which are now built and occupied, and have satisfied the Opportunity Site allocation. A care home was approved in 2009 ([P090141](#)) with [notice of completion](#) submitted in 2013. A further application ([P131354](#)) was refused for five terraced units, and upheld on appeal ([PPA-100-2060](#)) with the Reporter citing landscape setting, conservation area character, the mature wooded areas associated with the original development of Airyhall House, amongst other more detailed reasons related to the design, material and layout of the development proposal, as reasons for upholding the refusal.

This site plays an important role in separating the settlements of Aberdeen and Cults and is therefore an important part of the Green Belt. The site also contains many mature trees and has an established wildlife and recreational function. The site is semi-rural and wooded in context. The existing development reflects the character and appearance of Airyhall Road.

### WESTHILL

#### Cadgerford, Westhill (B0931)

128: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. The site was previously considered during the extant Local Development Plan 2012 Examination and rejected (CD44, Issue 37). Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). The Site Assessment Report highlights the presence of a major gas pipeline which constrains the site. The site is remote from the built up area of Westhill and the accessibility

of the site is therefore quite poor and difficult to integrate with the existing settlement. Any development would be considered to pose a significant impact on the surrounding landscape. It is part of the open countryside which separates Kingswells and Westhill, and serves a vital Green Belt function by maintaining their separate identities and landscape settings.

Backhill, Westhill (B0932)

128: We do not propose to allocate this site for development. Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). The presence of a major gas pipeline constrains the site. Development would also intrude significantly into the rolling agricultural landscape which surrounds Westhill, and helps to maintain the separate identities of Westhill and Kingswells. Therefore this land performs a vital function as Green Belt and it would not be appropriate to allocate this land for development.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

General Strategy

1. It has been concluded at Issue 2 that there is a shortfall of only 18 units in meeting the greenfield housing land requirement, and that Aberdeen City is making a reasonable contribution to ensuring that the housing supply target for the Aberdeen housing market area is met. There is therefore very little requirement to identify additional housing land. However some limited scope does exist to allocate small new greenfield sites, should any suitable opportunities emerge through the examination process. That scope is increased as a result of my recommendations under Issue 11 (Allocated Sites and General Area Strategy: Deeside), which remove land for 71 houses from the proposed plan.

BIELDSIDE

Murtle Den and Surrounds, Bielside (B0922)

2. This site (representation 84) lies within a narrow band of green belt which separates the communities of Bielside and Milltimber. The green belt is considerably narrowed at this point by the Oldfold development (OP48) which extends Milltimber eastwards. Development on this site would erode the remaining green belt and undermine its purposes of separating communities and maintaining their landscape setting. Even though only two houses are proposed, and they could be viewed as infill development, the allocation of the site for residential use would set a precedent for further erosion of the green belt, and of the green space network. The result would be a diminution in the landscape qualities of the area, which is on rising ground north of the North Deeside Road from which it is highly visible. While I accept that existing trees would (if retained) provide some screening, I do not consider that there is sufficient justification to alter the green belt and green space network status of the site.

Murtle Den, Bielside

3. This site (representation 95) is on the west side of Bielside and extends down to the A93 North Deeside Road, from which it is highly visible. It lies within a narrow band of green belt which separates the communities of Bielside and Milltimber. The green belt is

considerably narrowed at this point by the Oldfold development (OP48) which extends Milltimber eastwards. Development on this site would erode the remaining green belt and undermine its purposes of separating communities and maintaining their landscape setting. I do not accept the claim in the representation that the Oldfold development will result in a physical connection between Bielside and Milltimber. There will continue to be a green corridor between the two communities. I also reject the argument that the Waterwheel Inn redevelopment undermines the green belt so that it serves little or no purpose in the area. That development is on a previously developed site south of the A93. The fields and woods north of the road at Murtle Den continue to serve a valuable green belt purpose which should not be further diminished by intrusive development such as that proposed here. I therefore do not accept that the site should be added to the plan.

## CULTS

### Thornhill, Craigton Road (B0924)

4. This site (representation 125) comprises the eastern part of the Thornhill site considered under Issue 10 (Alternative Sites, Countesswells). For the reasons set out in paragraphs 3-5 of my conclusions on that issue, I do not consider that any part of the Thornhill site should be added to the proposed plan.

## MILLTIMBER

### Brookfield (B0902)

5. This site (representation 56) would provide 25-30 homes for retired and elderly people. It lies to the east of Oldfold and extends northwards from the A93 North Deeside Road, from which it is highly visible, and to the south of Murtle Den. It is located within a narrow band of green belt which separates the communities of Bielside and Milltimber. The green belt is considerably narrowed at this point by the Oldfold development (OP48) which extends Milltimber eastwards. Development on the Brookfield site would erode the remaining green belt and undermine its purposes of separating communities and maintaining their landscape setting.

6. While accessible to bus stops, the site is not within easy walking distance of shops and community facilities, thereby reducing its suitability for elderly people. This position will not improve significantly with the development of Oldfold, since the development framework indicates that mixed-use development and the primary school will be located on the west side of the site and uphill from the A93. I consider that the remaining green belt in this location should be left intact, and that the site should not be added to the plan.

### Contlaw (B0915)

7. This large mixed-use site (representation 85) to the north-west of Milltimber would provide about 650 houses as well as employment land. There is no numerical justification for additional residential land allocations on this scale (see paragraph 1 above). Even if there were, this site suffers from a number of disadvantages. A substantial part lies above the 90 metre contour which generally defines the upper limit of settlement in the Dee valley. Elevations reach 115 metres at the north end of the site. While I accept that development would not break the skyline, it would still be extensively visible in views from the south and would have a significant landscape impact.

8. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) is being constructed across the western part of the site, running in a north-south direction. I agree with the representation that the AWPR will fundamentally change the area, but I do not accept that it effectively negates the purpose and function of the green belt in this location. While the AWPR will provide a physical barrier between Milltimber and Peterculter, the green belt serves other functions (landscape setting and directing development to the most appropriate locations) as well as preventing coalescence. The nature of the AWPR is that it runs largely through a green corridor, and in very few places will it be bounded by built development. There is no need to build up to it, and on the contrary there are strong arguments for not doing so in order to maintain its predominantly rural character and the landscape setting that will be experienced by the many users of the road.

9. The site also suffers from access and infrastructure limitations. Most of it does not lie within easy walking distance of the North Deeside Road bus route, or of shops and community facilities. Eventually, once enough houses were built, a bus service through the site might be possible, and shops and a primary school could form part of the development. In the meantime, however, residents would be heavily dependent on private cars, contrary to local and national sustainable transport policies. I also accept the council's arguments about capacity at Cults Academy and the practical difficulties of expanding this. For all the above reasons, I do not consider that this site should be added to the plan.

West of Contlaw Road (B0946)

10. The site extends to approximately 2.9 hectares and comprises a mix of woodland and vacant scrub land. The representation argues that the woodland is in poor condition, as no management or maintenance has taken place in recent years. The trees do, however, have landscape value in providing a green backdrop on the rising ground to the north-west of Milltimber, and visual separation from the AWPR. Some of the trees may have the status of ancient woodland, whose removal for development would be contrary to Scottish Government policies. Any significant loss of trees would diminish the landscape setting and thus be contrary to Policy NE5 of the proposed plan. However, a small development would be possible using the open ground adjacent to Contlaw Road, perhaps with a minimal encroachment into the woodland that would retain its landscape contribution and nature conservation value. It appears to me that such a development might accommodate about 10 houses.

11. While the site forms the southernmost portion of the larger Contlaw Road site considered above, it is located well below the 90 metre contour and well away from the AWPR, and would in my view be acceptable in landscape terms (subject to woodland retention) without undermining the functions of the green belt. It would lie within easy walking distance of the bus route on the A93 North Deeside Road. Scope exists (see paragraph 1 above) for some small residential developments on Deeside within the catchment of Cults Academy, using capacity allocated in the proposed plan to sites (OP52 and OP108) where I have recommended reduction in house numbers, or removal from the plan.

12. I therefore consider that, on balance, this site should be added to the plan as an opportunity site for residential development, with an indicative capacity of 10 houses, and subject to a requirement for arboricultural and ecological implications studies to determine the appropriate extent of any encroachment into the woodland.

Guttrie Hill West (B0907)

13. This site (representation 106) is located in woodland. The proposal is for 5 houses, with limited tree removal. Whatever the past use of the site for quarrying, the predominant use now is as woodland with a high value for nature conservation and recreation. It forms part of the Peterculter Local Nature Conservation Site, and is identified as ancient woodland. The removal of trees would therefore be contrary to Paragraph 194 of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) which states that the planning system should protect and enhance ancient semi-natural woodland as an important and irreplaceable resource, together with other native or long-established woods, hedgerows and individual trees with high nature conservation or landscape value.

14. I consider that the removal of woodland from this site for housebuilding would not be consistent with Scottish Government policies. Neither would it accord with Policy NE5 of the proposed plan. The proposal would create an isolated pocket of development in the green belt, detached from the communities of Milltimber and Peterculter and lacking sustainable transport links. For the above reasons, I conclude that the site should not be added to the plan.

Guttrie Hill East (B0908)

15. This site lies on cleared ground that was once occupied by ancient woodland, but no longer contains trees. It adjoins the Milltimber junction being constructed as part of the AWPR. The proposal (representation 106) is for a sustainable energy vehicle refuelling station with ancillary retail. I sought further information from the council and from Transport Scotland on whether there is any policy or strategy for the provision of services, and particularly sustainable energy refuelling services, in relation to the AWPR; and if so, whether the suggested facility at Guttrie Hill East would be compatible with the policy or strategy.

16. The response on behalf of Transport Scotland indicated that there is no specific policy or strategy for the provision of roadside services or sustainable energy refuelling services in relation to the AWPR contract. Similarly, the council responded that there is no relevant policy or strategy, either generally or specific to sustainable energy refuelling services, in relation to the AWPR. Although local and national strategies on the provision of hydrogen refuelling infrastructure and electric charging points do suggest a general support for additional infrastructure of this type, the council does not consider that the Guttrie Hill site would be a suitable candidate.

17. Provision exists elsewhere in Aberdeen including hydrogen refuelling facilities at Cove and Kittybrewster, and the council considers that there is a sufficient hydrogen fuel supply to meet expected demand in the short/medium term (based on current industry predictions), and that there is no need for an additional hydrogen refuelling station at Guttrie Hill East at this time. As regards electric vehicle charging, standard recharging is available close to the AWPR junction at Kingswells, while a rapid recharging facility is under construction close to the AWPR junction with the A96. Filling stations supplying petrol and diesel are available near the AWPR in Peterculter and to the west of Kingswells.

18. It appears to me that there is not at present a strong justification based on need for a refuelling facility at this location. The site is not well located for access by foot, cycle or public transport, and employees would be dependent on private cars. While a refuelling station would likely have a low profile and limited impact on the landscape, it would be an isolated development in the green belt and I accept the council's concern about setting a precedent for other pockets of commercial development alongside AWPR junctions. I

therefore conclude that the site should not be allocated for development in the plan.

Binghill Farm (B0933)

19. This roughly triangular site (representation 145) would extend Oldfold (OP48) to the north-west and provide 45-65 houses. Most of it lies above the 90 metre contour which generally defines the upper limit of settlement in the Dee valley. Elevations reach 117 metres at the north end of the site, though I note the intending developer's indication that the highest parts would be maintained as open space. Even so, development on the site would be at a higher elevation than Oldfold and would be prominent in the landscape. The 2010 Aberdeen Green Belt Review noted that woodland to the north of Oldfold and the loaning to the west provide clear boundaries for the development and prevent its encroaching onto higher ground. Development at Binghill Farm would breach those boundaries and introduce a weaker boundary to the west, where further extensions of development above the 90 metre level towards Contlaw Road might be difficult to resist.

20. I note the representation's claim that development of the site would not compromise the key characteristics of the green space network and would retain a large area of open space with paths, access and landscape features. Nevertheless, there would be a reduction in the total amount of green space. The houses would not be well located for access to public transport, lying over 800 metres uphill from the bus route on North Deeside Road. The proposed shops and primary school within the Oldfold development would be within 400 metres walk of the southern part of the site, but again gradient would be a factor affecting pedestrian trips. For the above reasons, I do not consider that this site should be added to the plan.

Culter House Road (B0901)

21. This site (representation 154) consists of cleared ground formerly occupied by woodland. It adjoins sites OP46 and (across Culter House Road to the south-west) OP47. The AWPR runs a short distance to the west. I agree with the representation that the site makes little contribution to the objectives of the green belt or the green space network. The AWPR will provide a barrier preventing coalescence of Milltimber with Peterculter though, as noted elsewhere, it runs for most of its length through a green corridor. That feature would not be lost, however, by developing this site which lies to the east of Culter House Road, with woodland and some houses lying between that road and the AWPR. The land does not contribute to the landscape setting of Milltimber and does not appear to have any recreational value. I regard the site as suitable for small-scale infill development.

22. Access can be provided from Culter House Road, which will become a dead-end north of the site when the AWPR is constructed. The existing footway to site OP46 could be extended westwards. Easy access on foot is available down Bellenden Walk to the North Deeside Road where there are bus stops. The AWPR is running in cutting at this point, and it does not appear to me that traffic noise or air quality would be significant problems (or no more so than for site OP47 which lies a similar distance from the road). Scope exists (see paragraph 1 above) for some small residential developments on Deeside within the catchment of Culter Academy, using capacity allocated in the proposed plan to sites (OP52 and OP108) where I have recommended reduction in house numbers, or removal from the plan.

23. I therefore consider, on balance, that this site should be added to the plan as an opportunity site for residential development. While the representation mentions 12 units and

is accompanied by a plan showing 14, I understand the proposed number of houses has been reduced to 8. This would appear to be consistent with densities and plot sizes on the adjacent sites. The proposed plan should therefore be modified to show an indicative number of 8 houses on a site of 2.4 hectares.

#### Milltimber South (B0940)

24. This site (representation 183) comprises 3 fields lying to the south of the A93 North Deeside Road, and bounded to the south by the North Deeside Way, a former railway line that is now a footpath and cycle route. There is built residential development to the east, west and (across the A93) to the north. The proposal is for about 60 houses and a small amount of retail/office space. The site is currently allocated as green belt and as part of the green space network.

25. In terms of green belt objectives, the site does not help to prevent the coalescence of settlements, since it is surrounded on 3 sides by Milltimber while on the southern side, beyond the North Deeside Way, lie open fields down to the River Dee. The site has landscape value since it brings a wedge of countryside into the urban area and contributes a semi-rural feel to Milltimber. There are views across the Dee Valley over the site from the A93, although the character of these views is being significantly altered by the construction of the AWPR which crosses the valley on an embankment and bridge to the west of Milltimber. The site does not appear to provide public access to open space. It is in agricultural use, including the grazing of horses, and cannot really be considered as a recreational asset except possibly for equestrian purposes.

26. The case for retention as green belt therefore rests on the site's landscape contribution. The site slopes down southwards from the A93 towards the North Deeside Way. Development would therefore be below the level of the road, though it would still be prominent in the view southwards. I note the proposal in the representation to plant trees around the boundaries of the site, including the north side. While this would reduce the visibility of the houses from the road, it would substitute a view of trees for the present open views across the site. The existing semi-rural character would thus be replaced by an impression of leafy suburbia similar to what exists to the east and west. For users of the North Deeside Way, much of the route in this section is lined by trees and hedges, with some glimpses of the site through gaps or where farm accesses cross the route. There would be a slight change in the experience for users of the route, which would remain in a predominantly wooded setting. The view northwards from the River Dee would likewise remain one largely dominated by trees, though with some views of the houses through gaps.

27. In terms of transport and infrastructure, the site could be accessed from the A93 which is well served by buses. An off-road alternative for pedestrians and cyclists is available along the North Deeside Way. Milltimber is not currently well served with shops and community facilities, though provision will increase with the Oldfold development (OP48), and I note the proposal for a small amount of retail/office development on this site. Scope exists (see paragraph 1 above) for some small residential developments on Deeside within the catchment of Cults Academy, using capacity allocated in the proposed plan to sites (OP52 and OP108) where I have recommended reduction in house numbers, or removal from the plan. Those changes are in Peterculter, however, and the addition of 60 more houses in Milltimber might result in pressure on the local primary school. This is due to be replaced by a new school at Oldfold, which will be conveniently located for this site and might be capable of accommodating the additional pupils with a developer's contribution.

28. On balance, however, and taking into account the shortfall in greenfield housing land resulting from my recommended changes in Peterculter (Issue 11), I consider that the advantages of the site are sufficient to outweigh the change in landscape character and in the setting of Milltimber that would result from development there. With sensitive design and landscaping, the development would appear as a natural extension of Milltimber and would blend well with its surroundings. I note that the site was open to public comment through the Main Issues Report, and that it received a comparatively good score of 47 in the council's site assessment process. I therefore recommend that the site be added to the plan as an opportunity site for residential development (60 houses) with ancillary retail/office space (1,225 square metres). In view of its size and sensitive location, and in line with proposed plan Policy H4, the site should be subject to a requirement for a masterplan.

## PETERCULTER

### Business Site, Peterculter

29. Representation 98 by Culter Community Council proposes that a small scale business park should be allocated adjacent to the urban part of Peterculter. No specific site is proposed, however. I agree with the council that the proposed plan provides sufficient land to meet the employment land allocations set out in the strategic development plan, and that there is no requirement to allocate more business land.

### Malcolm Road, Peterculter (B0943)

30. This site (representation 82) is proposed for 25 residential units in the green belt to the north of Peterculter and west of Malcolm Road. While there is a small cluster of existing houses on Malcolm Road adjacent to the site, these are separated from the main built-up area of Peterculter and lie well to its north. I do not accept the argument that the site would be a natural extension of the settlement. The houses would be about 1.5 kilometres from the centre of Peterculter, and 1 kilometre from the nearest bus stops. Paragraph 287 of Scottish Planning Policy states that planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available, or cannot be made available, and where access to local facilities via public transport networks would involve walking more than 400 metres. The council's proposed supplementary guidance requires that developments should be linked by the most direct, attractive, safe and secure pedestrian and cycle links to potential trip sources within 800 metres of the development.

31. While there is a footway on the west side of Malcolm Road, the walking distances to buses and facilities considerably exceed the guidelines. Malcolm Road does not provide a safe environment for cyclists, being relatively narrow with a significant proportion of heavy goods traffic. While development would have a limited landscape impact, it would represent an unnecessary expansion of an island of development in the green belt, detached from the main settlement. I conclude that this site should not be added to the plan.

### Land North of Peterculter (B0909)

32. This site (representation 103) lies just to the north of the Malcolm Road site discussed above. The proposal is for 8 residential units for elderly people. As with the adjacent Malcolm Road site, the site lies a considerable distance from facilities in the centre of Peterculter and from bus stops. This, coupled with a difference in level of about 30 metres above the main street, makes it particularly unsuited for the target occupation group.

Residents who did not drive and suffered declining mobility would be at risk of isolation. Development here would also represent an unnecessary incursion into the green belt, extending the existing cluster of buildings northwards into the countryside and detracting from the landscape setting of Peterculter. I conclude that this site should not be added to the plan.

Cobblestock, Peterculter (B0917)

33. This site (representation 122) is proposed for about 15 residential units and lies to the south of Peterculter and of the former Deeside railway line. The land is fairly close to the centre of Peterculter, adjacent to existing houses and is contained by topography so that the landscape impact of development would be limited. However, road and pedestrian access are poor. Station Road South, which runs along the north of the site, is narrow and has poor sightlines. It lacks a continuous footway. The same is true of Burnside Road and Kennerty Mills Road. There is no safe and satisfactory route to the centre of Peterculter either for vehicles or for pedestrians.

34. I do not agree with the claim in the representation that the road network has the capacity to accommodate the “minimal” scale of development proposed. As well as provision for vehicular traffic, Scottish Planning Policy requires patterns of development which provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling (paragraph 270). The roads leading to the site do not provide such opportunities. Road improvements would require significant expenditure and the acquisition of numerous garden frontages for carriageway widening and footway provision. I conclude that, on grounds of poor accessibility, this site should not be added to the plan.

Rob Roy Mobile Home Park, Malcolm Road, Peterculter

35. The site to the north-west of Peterculter is occupied by 101 ‘park homes’ (akin to static caravans). The representation (170) proposes that these be replaced by a similar number of permanent dwellings; failing which, the existing use would continue and the units would be replaced by new ‘park homes’. The representation maintains that permanent dwellings would have a similar impact to that of ‘park homes’ in terms of access, traffic generation, demand for local services and environmental effects.

36. The site is shown on the proposals map as part of the green belt, although it is in fact developed. It is not well located in relation to the centre of Peterculter for journeys on foot, by cycle or by public transport. However, I acknowledge that this constraint applies to the existing (and likely continuing) use as well as to permanent residential development. The ‘park homes’ are of low profile and are well screened by landscaping. It appears to me likely that permanent houses would be larger, and in particular taller, with pitched roofs. They would therefore have a greater impact on the landscape, and would detract from the qualities of the green belt.

37. There is no numerical justification in terms of housing land need for adding a further 101 houses, particularly in a location where (in the absence of the existing use) new development would be ruled out on sustainable transport grounds (see paragraphs 30 and 31 above, in relation to the nearby Malcolm Road site). Proximity to the Culter Burn and the potential impact on nature conservation interests are potential constraints on construction activity. For all these reasons, I consider that the site should not be added to the plan for residential development.

Hill of Ardbeck, Peterculter (B0934)

38. This site to the north of Peterculter adjoins the existing built up area. The whole site is located within the Peterculter Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS), and part of it is designated as SNH Ancient Woodland. I note that the representation (183) in favour of the site maintains that development (61 houses) would be confined to a central bowl, where biodiversity is limited and where visual and environmental impacts would be minimal. However, the nature conservation value of the site needs to be considered as a whole. There are broadleaf trees around most of the boundary and the site incorporates upland birch woodland, lowland dry acid grassland and other neutral grassland. The site is covered by bat habitat and the designated species, Common Bullfinch and Common Kestrel, have been recorded there.

39. In some respects the site relates well to the existing settlement. It lies within 500 metres of a bus service and there is a safe walking route to the local primary school. I also note that the proposed development would incorporate footpaths, play areas and equipment. However, house building on the central part of the site would compromise the integrity of the LNCS and would result in a loss of green space for informal recreation. It would extend Peterculter north into the green belt and, while not visually prominent, would erode the landscape setting of the settlement. For these reasons, I consider that the site should not be added to the plan for residential development.

Peterculter East (B0935)

40. There are two proposals by Bancon (representation 183): one for a residential site in two parts providing 38 houses, and one for a business park comprising 12 two-storey units. The sites lie to the south of the North Deeside Way on land that slopes down towards the River Dee. The more westerly part of the housing site goes right to the river bank and the lower part of this area appears to be at risk of flooding. The River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation. Development on the higher part of the site would be prominent in the landscape.

41. The more easterly part of the housing site lies between the North Deeside Way and Camphill School. It is further from the river and is better screened, so that development here would have less of a landscape impact. It is reasonably close to the main part of the settlement. However, it lies next to Camphill School which may be considered a sensitive use. There are in my view better sites (such as Milltimber South) which could contribute to addressing the shortfall in greenfield housing land. I do not consider that Peterculter East should be allocated for residential development at the present time.

42. The proposed business park site is more open and would be prominent in the view from the AWPR. Development here would impact on the landscape setting of Peterculter, and would also be close to Camphill School. The proposed plan provides sufficient sites for business development elsewhere, and I do not consider that there is any need to allocate an additional site at Peterculter East.

Newmill, Peterculter (B0937)

43. This site lies to the west of Peterculter and to the south of the A93 road, from which access would be formed. It would extend Peterculter westwards into the green belt and would straddle the Aberdeenshire boundary. The proposal is for 72 residential units, mostly located within Aberdeen City, together with business development and some of the houses

in Aberdeenshire.

44. The site is separated from the existing settlement of Peterculter by the Culter Burn Local Nature Conservation Site. There is a potential risk to habitats and species from development and from severing the connection between the burn corridor and the countryside to the west. The site is elevated above the level of the A93 and, even allowing for the proposed landscaping, development would be prominent in the landscape. The site contributes to the landscape setting of Peterculter and thus serves a valid green belt function.

45. The site is not well located for pedestrian access to shops and community facilities, which would be more than 400 metres from most houses. While a bus route runs along the A93, the nearest stops are in the centre of Peterculter. It might be possible to form bus laybys on the A93 as part of the development. However, it appears likely that residents would be mainly dependent on car travel. Overall, I do not consider that this site is suitable for development or that it should be removed from the green belt and added to the proposed plan.

Kennerty Farm, Peterculter (B0938)

46. This site for 22 houses lies on the south-west side of Peterculter and is bounded to the south by the North Deeside Way. It is reasonably well contained in landscape terms, and directly adjoins the existing built-up area. However, road and pedestrian access are poor. Burnside Road, Kennerty Road and Kennerty Mills Road are all narrow, with poor vehicle passing opportunities. They lack continuous footways. There is no safe and satisfactory route to the centre of Peterculter either for vehicles or for pedestrians.

47. I do not consider that the road network has the capacity to accommodate even the small scale of development proposed. As well as provision for vehicular traffic, Scottish Planning Policy requires patterns of development which provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling (paragraph 270). The roads leading to the site do not provide such opportunities. Road improvements would require significant expenditure and the acquisition of numerous garden frontages for carriageway widening and footway provision. I conclude that, on grounds of poor accessibility, this site should not be added to the plan.

PITFODELS

Parklea

48. Representation 133 seeks the redrawing of the green belt boundary on the west side of Pitfodels to exclude the large area of garden ground at Parklea. It proposes that the boundary be moved southwards to the A93 North Deeside Road, and eastwards to Bairds Brae. It is argued that such boundaries would better accord with Scottish Planning Policy (paragraph 51), which calls for clearly identifiable visual boundary markers based on landscape features such as rivers, tree belts, railways or main roads. The representation suggests that even in the absence of green belt designation, the essential landscape features could be safeguarded by the existing conservation area designation, tree preservation orders, and Policy NE5 (Trees and Woodlands). Sensitive development, it is argued, could take place without compromising the landscape setting.

49. The Pitfodels section of the green belt serves the functions of avoiding the coalescence of Cults with the main part of the city, and maintaining Aberdeen's landscape setting. The

land at Parklea contributes to these aims. Development there would erode the gap between settlements and, even if sensitively managed to retain trees, would adversely affect the landscape setting. I consider that the existing western boundary of the green belt, formed by the garden wall of 230 North Deeside Road, is perfectly robust and there would be no merit in shifting it eastwards to Bairds Brae. I therefore recommend that the land at Parklea should remain in the green belt.

Inchgarth Road Residential units and a link road (B0912)

50. This proposal (representation 142) seeks to remove fields lying south of the A93 North Deeside Road from the green belt to allow construction of residential development and of a link road to Inchgarth Road. The Pitfodels section of the green belt serves the functions of avoiding the coalescence of Cults with the main part of the city, including Garthdee, and maintaining Aberdeen's landscape setting. The site performs a vital role in maintaining the separation of settlements. If it were developed, there would be continuous urban development stretching from the seafront to the west side of Bieldside. An essential feature of the Deeside part of Aberdeen, its separation into distinct settlements with green spaces in between, would be lost.

51. The representation argues that the Pitfodels area is essentially a settled landscape, that the green belt designation has become redundant, and that other planning policies (such as the conservation area status and Policy NE5) would enable the council to protect the setting while allowing appropriate forms of new development to come forward. I reject that view. Maintaining and enhancing the tree structure is not sufficient to protect the landscape setting, which requires open space to be retained. While development could include managed recreational spaces that would contribute to the green space network, the loss of the physical and visual break between settlements would fundamentally alter the landscape setting and the character of the conservation area. I do not consider such an alteration is justified, and conclude that the site should remain within the green belt.

Inchgarth Road Mixed Use and Link Road

52. This proposal is similar to the previous one, except that it would provide fewer houses and would add an all-weather sports pitch and ancillary infrastructure, and student accommodation. The sports pitch is proposed on the western part of the site where the representation (142) argues that it would maintain a green wedge between Cults and Garthdee. I do not consider that this would be sufficient to compensate for the loss of the major part of the site to urban development. While there may be needs for additional sports facilities and for student accommodation in the city, they do not in my view justify this major encroachment into the green belt. I recommend that the proposal be rejected for the reasons described in the foregoing paragraphs.

Land at Station Road, Pitfodels

53. This proposal (also representation 142) concerns the most easterly portion of the site that is the subject of the two Inchgarth proposals. Measuring 0.8 hectare, the site (for 3 houses) is bounded to the east and south by existing residential development, and on the north by the North Deeside Way. The suggested structural planting on the west side would not in my view provide a robust green belt boundary. Development on the site would be perceived by users of the North Deeside Way as an encroachment into the green belt and a reduction in the section of the route that passes through a semi-rural setting. I consider that the existing green belt boundary should be retained.

Pitfodels Station Road

54. Representation 161 seeks the removal from the green belt of this 0.53 hectare site on the east side of Pitfodels Station Road to allow the construction of 3 houses. Considered in isolation, the site does not have a strong justification for green belt status. It is not helping to prevent the coalescence of Garthdee and Cults, because there are existing houses to the east, north and (across Pitfodels Station Road) to the west. It does not contribute significantly to the landscape setting of the city. While it adjoins the North Deeside Way on its south side, it does not (unlike the land further west) contribute to the semi-rural character of the route. It is not accessible for public recreational use. It does not therefore satisfy any of the purposes of the green belt set out in paragraph 3.99 of the proposed plan.

55. While I am sympathetic to the representation, my difficulty is that the site is surrounded on all sides by land which the proposed plan designates as green belt. A change in the status of this site would result in a small island of residential land (Policy H1) surrounded by green belt (Policy NE2). I cannot recommend changes to the green belt boundary except in response to representations. Representation 161 does not seek any change beyond the site itself, and I have rejected representation 142 seeking to change the designation of land to the west of Pitfodels Station Road. In relation to the proposals map, I do not consider that creating a tiny blob of yellow in a sea of green would represent a satisfactory outcome. Perhaps the rather anomalous green belt status of the site could be regarded as a material consideration in any planning application. That, however, would be a matter for the council in its development management role. As regards the proposed plan, I cannot recommend a change in the site's green belt status.

Craigton Road (B0939)

56. This proposal (representation 183) is for 32 houses and a care home on land north-east of Pitfodels. The site north of Airyhall Road and south of Craigton Road has a semi-rural character and is partly covered by woodland, but also crossed by lines of electricity pylons. It forms an important part of the Pitfodels green belt which separates Cults from the main part of the city. It lies just to the north of a narrow 'bridge' of built development which includes the International School and the Marcliffe Hotel and results in a break in the green belt, though the character of this development (large non-residential buildings in spacious grounds) is very different from the type of residential development proposed by the representation. Even with low densities and retention of many trees, the character of the proposal would be that of a residential suburb with more similarities to the existing development to the east and west, rather than that to the south.

57. As well as providing physical and visual separation between communities, the site contributes to the landscape setting of this part of the city (particularly as experienced from Craigton Road) and provides access to open space. There are footpaths crossing the land, and parts of it appear to be well used for informal recreation. It thus contributes to all the aims of the green belt set out in paragraph 3.99 of the proposed plan. It also forms a valuable part of the green space network. There are other sites that can meet the need for greenfield residential development with less impact on green belt and green space functions. I therefore recommend that the site should not be allocated for development.

WESTHILL

Cadgerford, Westhill (B0931)

58. This large site lies just inside the Aberdeen City boundary and is much closer to Westhill in Aberdeenshire than it is to the built-up area of Aberdeen. Representation 128 (on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes) proposes a mixed-use residential and commercial development. I understand that a similar representation has been made in relation to employment use on land on the Aberdeenshire side of the boundary. The Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan does not allocate this adjacent land for development, though it does allocate a site just to the north for employment purposes (OP3, Arnhall Gateway). That site is contiguous with site OP34 for the same purposes in the proposed plan for the city.

59. With 600-700 houses and 6 hectares of employment land, the combined Cadgerford and Backhill proposals would represent a major expansion of Westhill. This would be of strategic significance. The strategic development plan does not call for such an expansion, and does not place Westhill in a strategic growth area. Instead, it includes Westhill within a "local growth and diversification area", which it identifies as being appropriate for a level of growth related to local needs. In the context of Aberdeen City, development at Cadgerford and Backhill would not relate well to the existing built-up area or to facilities and services such as schools. The site is more than 2.5 kilometres from Kingswells. Residential development there would not relate well to Westhill either, being separated from the core of the settlement and from other residential areas by a substantial zone of employment land.

60. The site is prominently located in the green belt and development there would affect the landscape setting of Westhill. Much of the land lies within the safeguarding zone for a major gas pipeline. I do not consider that there is a need for either residential or commercial development on this scale that would outweigh the disadvantages of the site which I have described. I do not recommend that it be allocated for development.

Backhill, Westhill (B0932)

61. This smaller site lies to the north-east of the Cadgerford and is the subject of the same representation (128). It suffers from the same disadvantages as its larger neighbour, though on its own it is not large enough to be of strategic significance. Nevertheless, for the same reasons (poor relationship to existing settlements, green belt landscape impact and gas pipelines) I do not recommend that it be allocated for development.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend the following modifications:

1. On page 15 of the proposed plan, Table 8, add the following opportunity sites:

OP[ ] West of Contlaw Road: Phase 1 capacity 10 homes

OP[ ] Culter House Road: Phase 1 capacity 8 homes

OP[ ] Milltimber South: Phase 1 capacity 60 homes and 1,225 square metres employment.

2. On page 86 of the proposed plan, extend the table for Deeside as follows:

OP[ ]	West of Contlaw Road	2.9ha	Residential	Opportunity for 10 houses.
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PROPOSED ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

				Arboricultural and ecological implications studies required.
OP[ ]	Culter House Road	2.4ha	Residential	Opportunity for 8 houses.
OP[ ]	Milltimber South	11.5ha	Mixed use	Opportunity for 60 houses and 1,225 square metres of ancillary retail/office space. Masterplan required.

3. Modify the proposals map to show the proposed new opportunity sites at West of Contlaw Road and Culter House Road (Residential Areas (H1)), and at Milltimber South (Mixed Use Areas (H2)).

<b>Issue 13</b>	<b>ALLOCATED SITES &amp; GENERAL AREA STRATEGY: LOIRSTON &amp; COVE</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Page 15, 86, 87, Proposals Map, Table 8, Table 8 notes, Materplan Zone table, Appendix 2, Appendix 4, Appendix 5, Policy R4	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Gillian Laing (6) Sandra Thomson (8) Kirstin McKenzie (10) Lynn McVeigh (21) Roderick Menzies (25) Heather Watt (28) Scott Morgan (29) Jennifer Elrick (30) Shona Evans-Morgan (33) Torry Community Council (35) Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) (40) sportscotland (41) Marie Milton (45) Ian Stark (55) Cyan Properties Limited (57) North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (59) June Stark (60) Makro Self Service Wholesalers Ltd (62)</p>	<p>Michael Hyde (68) Mhairi Johnston (69) Torry Medical Practice (70) Wendy Buchan (72) Jennifer Paton (86) SITA UK (91) Hermiston Securities Limited (93) Jodie Stark (96) Nigg Community Council (111) Forestry Commission Scotland (126) Andrew Philp (135) Aberdeen Football Club (146) Cove and Altens Community Council (147) Katie McLachlan (169) Laura Ferguson (176) Bancon Developments (183) Lucy Philip (186)</p>	
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Overview of Direction for Growth in this area and specific OP sites	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>OP58: Stationfields</u></p> <p><u>Environment/Wildlife</u></p> <p>6, 8, 10, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 45, 55, 60, 68, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: Housing development will result in loss of wildlife such as bats and deer, and green and open space. Bats are a European Union protected species. Local flora and fauna will be destroyed by development. Loss of Green Belt impacts on nature conservation areas.</p> <p>96: Negative impact on Fowsleugh nature reserve as the cliffs are used as breeding ground by seabirds.</p> <p><u>Transport Issues</u></p> <p>6, 8, 10, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 45, 55, 60, 68, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: Traffic is already busy at rush hour times and housing development will only increase this. Roads are</p>		

narrow and unable to cope, especially Coast Road. There are inadequate transport facilities. Other developments add to the traffic. Increase in traffic will affect air quality.

10, 45: A new station would be good to link Cove with Aberdeen, and it would reduce traffic.

29, 33, 86: Building houses will deny residents the possibility of a train station

45: Area around railway station could be landscaped to provide habitat for wildlife and improve air quality, noise and congestion.

69: Permission for 150 houses shouldn't go ahead while a decision on building a railway station is pending. The rail halt proposal is not visible in the Proposed Plan and is not referred to in the most recent neighbour notifications.

147: Proposed Plan doesn't mention provision of a railway station. If this is not provided there is no need to develop the site. It should be returned to Green Belt and community facilities provided instead.

169: There is existing shortage of parking. Additional housing will only compound this.

#### Inadequate Facilities

6, 8, 10, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 45, 60, 68, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: facilities such as shops, healthcare, sewage, community centre. No leisure facilities in the area. There are already too many houses and there are additional ongoing developments in and around Cove.

#### Landscape

8, 28, 69, 96, 186: Additional development will spoil general views and views over the sea.

68: The Council should consider more creative and forward thinking uses for how to develop beautiful landscapes around the city.

#### Education

28, 29, 30, 33, 69, 86, 96, 135, 169, 186: Loirston Primary School is already stretched; the development will overload it. Schools are already at capacity.

#### General

21, 72: Housing development is very close to railway line and is unsafe for children.

28: Development being described as 'low-cost' brings concerns of security. This will negatively impact the value of homes.

68: Extra houses will only benefit the developers. There is no evidence of building communities, just houses.

96: Development should be targeted towards redeveloping brownfield sites in central Aberdeen.

186: Clear plans need to be agreed by local residents to take account of any raised concerns

#### Cove Masterplan and Charette Report

69: Disagree that current Cove Masterplan and Charette is out of date and no longer relevant. Developing Stationfields contradicts the Masterplan's 'Vision' for Cove to 'create a coherent and interconnected public open space that connects to the natural and agricultural landscape'. Planners are sacrificing good planning to meet targets and make money.

147: Who will carry out the new Cove Masterplan and when will it be commissioned?

#### OP54: Altens East and Doonies

##### General

35: Respondent requests a number of conditions be attached to any planning permission for OP54. Copy of letter submitted to Development Control Manager also submitted as part of representation.

##### Supports Allocation

91: Strongly support the allocation and safeguarding of land for the development of a materials recycling facility/a refuse derived fuel plant and a depot for the Council's collection fleet.

#### LOIRSTON AND COVE

##### Torry

35: Regrets that key sites in Torry have been placed under 'Loirston and Cove' heading. Torry is a community with strong architectural and spatial character, not a dormitory. Traffic

35: There is an increase in commuter and commercial traffic due to developments outwith Torry, which has led to air pollution particularly in Wellington Road and Market Street. Lorries should be banned to protect the residential character of the area. There should be a new bypass built in Torry to protect health and the built environment. Road and infrastructure must be implemented prior to development; however, the south of River Dee is already overdeveloped. This has resulted in inadequate roads and a lack of safety for pedestrians.

##### Torry Academy

35: This site should remain in use for education and the community.

##### Walker Road School

35: Recommend that this school becomes a Listed Building because of its architectural character.

East Tullos Industrial Estate

35: This is the oldest industrial estate in Aberdeen and is in need of de-industrialisation and modernisation.

Consultation

35: Full and early consultation should be undertaken with Torry Community Council to establish appropriate development for the community's benefit.

Housing Capacity

183: Only 75 units are expected to be delivered up to 2016, giving a shortfall of 1025 units. However, the Housing Land Audit anticipates that the remainder will be built out before 2026. No further development is planned for this extensive area of the city, beyond 2026.

OP103: Former Torry Nursery School

35, 70: Site should be reserved for health and social care uses. Torry Medical Practice has seen an increase of patients from 3,000 to over 7,000 patients. The current care system is poorly funded and an increase in population will lead to a future care crisis.

OP107: East Tullos Gas Holding

35: Oppose identification of the site for an Energy from Waste facility on grounds of public health, air pollution and increased presence of commercial vehicles on an over-stretched and inadequate network of roads.

40: Object to zoning of site as business and industrial use.

OP104: Craiginches Prison

35: Welcomes creation of affordable homes and awaits details of scheme layout and impact on local roads and schools.

OP60: Charleston

Business & Industry Use

93: OP60 should be changed from employment use to business and industry and phasing brought forward to 2017-2026. High take up of employment in Aberdeen suggests the city will run out of suitable Class 5 and 6 before 2027. Proposed Plan should identify additional land to meet future requirements to maintain the 70 hectares of future growth.

Increased Traffic

111: This development and other proposed developments in the area will generate an increase in traffic, all of which join Wellington Road (A956), which currently suffers congestion at peak periods. A956 junction capacity improvements, as stated in Section 5 of the Main Issues Report will be unable to deal with the increased traffic. The whole A956 and its associated junctions should be subject to 'capacity improvements'.

OP59: Loirston

Increased Traffic

111, 147: This development and other proposed developments in the area will generate an increase in traffic, all of which join Wellington Road (A956), which currently suffers congestion at peak periods. The whole A956 and its associated junctions should be subject to capacity improvements before any houses occupy the site.

General Support

146: Supports allocation of site for a new football stadium. It's in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy, paragraph 226 and this requirement was identified in the Strategic Development Plan.

OP61: Calder Park

111: This development and other proposed developments in the area will generate an increase in traffic, all of which join Wellington Road (A956), which currently suffers congestion at peak periods. A956 junction capacity improvements, as stated in Section 5 of the Main Issues Report will be unable to deal with the increased traffic. The whole A956 and its associated junctions should be subject to 'capacity improvements'.

OP64: Ness Tip

126: Site is not ideal as it is partially afforested. Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Government Policy in the Control of Woodland Removal state a general presumption in favour of protecting woodland sites. If an alternative site is not available then mitigation planting should be required with any future development consents.

OP62: Nigg Bay

137: Respondent notes that the harbour proposals have evolved and the footprint is now different to that of National Planning Framework 3 and the Proposed Plan.

The land zoned under Policy B5 should be subject to further adjustment to reflect the draft Harbour Revision Order Boundary and the southern breakwater. The Headland at Greg Ness will likely be used as a temporary construction and manufacturing area during the construction of the breakwater, Post construction the headland would be reinstated, but with an access road retained to enable access for breakwater maintenance. It is not proposed this area would form part of the Harbour Revision order, not part of the harbour's land ownership or permanent lease.

35: Open and green space around Torry should be preserved. Any proposals to change the natural environment character and open space should be subject to public consultation.

General Support

59: Supports creation of new deep water harbour facility at Nigg Bay and welcomes its inclusion in Proposed Plan.

Woodland

126: Site is not ideal as it is partially afforested. Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Government Policy in the Control of Woodland Removal state a general presumption in favour of protecting woodland sites. If an alternative site is not available then mitigation planting should be required with any future development consents.

Doonies Farm

147: The proximity of the Recycling Centre and the indication from the Proposed Plan that fields near and beyond the Bridge of One Hair are to be taken over imply that Doonies Farm will not remain.

Land-Use Change

35: No consents should be given to by-pass or expedite any change of use of lands, such as in the provisions of the Harbour Revisions Act.

OP110: Wellington Circle (Former Makro)

Support for Allocation

57, 62, 147: Support the identification of the site as a potential Class 1 use site.

57: The Council's Retail study identified a need. The site identified in the extant Local Development Plan at Altens Thistle Hotel has not delivered (it has recently been refurbished and there remains an unexpired lease on the site). The allocation of the Makro site as an opportunity for retail use will address a longstanding deficiency in retail provision to the south of the city. Makro site lies immediately opposite the site allocated in the extant Local Development Plan and will serve the same catchment area (including new development areas in the vicinity). The site currently benefits from a wholesale retail use with associated service access and car parking infrastructure. The proposal also utilises an existing building. The site is easily accessible by foot and cycle. The proposal safeguards existing jobs and creates new employment opportunities as well as providing a much needed retail facility for the existing communities. There is public support for the site. There is no alternative site capable of delivering a supermarket use to serve the existing communities and areas of future housing. The Makro site is capable of delivering a supermarket use in the short term. The Council's assessment of the site identified it as "highly suitable for development" and scored highly in the Assessment Matrix. The Council's Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee determined to include the Makro site within the Proposed Plan as OP110 at their meeting on 28 October 2014. There is a live planning application pending for the part change of use of the Makro building to accommodate a supermarket of 5,750 square metres. Modifications sought to paragraph 3.28 and Proposals Map to reinforce Opportunity Site designation.

62: Makro wish to continue trading from current location but the building is too large for their requirements. Pending planning application provides Makro the opportunity to downsize, secure their continued presence on the site and retain local employment.

Traffic Concerns

111: The proposed development will generate a significant increase in the volume of traffic

within the area, all of which join the A956 (Wellington Road) which currently has significant congestion at peak periods. Respondent listed other proposed development, or developments already under construction which will exacerbate the current A956 congestion. Respondent refers to projects listed in Main Issues Report Section 5 Infrastructure and Transport. States that bullet point "A956 Junction Capacity Improvements" will be insufficient to deal with the increased traffic and promotes that the whole A956 and its associated junctions should be the subject of "Capacity Improvements".

147: Concerns about level of traffic in and around site OP110 due to recently approved Travellers' Site and new proposed South of the City Secondary School. Road improvements identified for OP59 must be carried out before this development commences. Or new revised traffic lists should be installed at the Wellington Circle entrance to the roundabout so that cars can exit the site easily and freely.

Object to Allocation/Alternative Site Promoted

93: Respondent wants to see opportunity for retailing/proposed supermarket at OP110 deleted from the Proposed Plan and transferred to OP59 at Loirston. At the Main Issues Report Committee the Planning Officers recommended that Loirston was identified for retail development, however the Committee did not support this and allocated the site at Makro. No justification was provided. Location at OP110 is not suitable for Class 1 supermarket. It is located within an area allocated for Business and Industry. It is important to safeguard the supply of existing industrial and business land situated in strategic locations. Demand for employment land and Class 5/6 remains high in Aberdeen and in the south of the city. Land should not be lost to non-industrial uses.

93: Alternative site at Loirston recommended by the Respondent. The Loirston site can accommodate suitable retail development within the identified retail centre in the Loirston Development Framework and would help anchor a viable village centre in this location. The site at Loirston is deliverable and located to serve the south of the city. It will be accessible by public transport and can be accommodated on the local traffic network. The site is considered to have sufficient prominence to attract an operator to the site. An application is pending determination for retail development at Loirston (P141754).

OP105: Kincorth Academy

41: Consideration should be given to whether the outdoor sports facilities on site serve a community purpose and whether some/all should be retained.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

OP58: Stationfields

Environment/Wildlife

6, 8, 10, 25, 30, 55, 60, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: Less development should be built on greenspace. No culling of innocent wildlife. Impact on conservation area needs to be investigated prior to development. Leave land as is.

68: Fields could be developed into local green space or nature park where local wildlife can be preserved.

Transport Issues

6, 10, 25: Infrastructure should be able to cope with the increased traffic. Issues of road safety should be addressed.

30: Move the development north, this would reduce traffic impact.

169: Better to use land to build a train station which will improve access to the city and ease congestion.

29, 33, 86: Leave land as is and reserve it for the train station.

Inadequate Facilities

6, 10, 21, 25 60, 169, 186: Provide extra facilities. Improve facilities.

55, 72, 176: Area is already dense so just look after current residents. Leave land as is

135: An action plan showing accountability for facilities' improvements should be drawn up prior to planning permission.

Landscape

8: Fewer houses should be built on the land.

69, 96: One of Cove's most prized qualities is its natural landscape. Keep it natural.

General

28, 72: Objects to Plan and site should be left as is.

96: Biodiversity and the views of local residents should be the main concern for the Council. Leave the site as is. If not, there are other options including opening up site for recreation, using the site for education since the school is close-by, or build a small railway station.

LOIRSTON AND COVE

Torry

35: A new section entitled 'Torry' should be introduced.

OP103: Former Torry Nursery School

35, 70: Reserve site for health and social care use. Housing development would remove this option and place burden on the existing Practice's ability to deliver essential medical services. Reference to unmet health needs should be included in Appendix 3.

OP107: East Tullos Gas Holder

Object to Allocation

40: Site should be designated as "white land" or for other higher value uses e.g mixed use, residential, retail.

OP60: Charleston

Business and Industry Use

93: The phasing of OP60 should be brought forward in the new Proposed Plan to period 2017-2026. This should be reflected in the Proposed Plan as follows:

1. The land at Charleston be included in Table 7: Development at Loirston and Cove for 20.5ha of employment land for the period Phase 1:2017 - 2026.
2. The zoning of OP60 be changed from Land Release Policy (LR1) to Business and Industry (B1).
3. OP60 Charleston in the Proposed Plan Action Programme under Masterplan Zone 8: Loirston OP59, OP60, OP61 be amended to reflect the site is allocated to the period 2017 - 2026.

OP62 Nigg Bay Harbour Expansion

137: The extent of the B5 allocation at Nigg Bay should be amended to reflect that shown on the accompanying draft Harbour Revision Order boundary plan.

OP110: Wellington Circle (Former Makro)

57: Opportunity Site designation should be reinforced by reference to the proposal in paragraph 3.28 of the Plan as it clearly addresses an existing deficiency in retail provision. Underlying Business and Industry designation applied on the City Wide Proposals Map should be removed and replaced with designation identifying Commercial Centres (NC6).

62: No change - support the allocation.

93: OP110 deleted from the Proposed Plan City Wide Proposals Map, Appendix 2 and Action Programme. Reference should be made to the retail opportunity/proposed supermarket being included within OP59 Loirston in both Appendix 2 and the Action Programme.

OP105: Kincorth Academy

41: Consider whether any of the outdoor sports facilities should be retained on site for community use.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

OP58: Stationfields

General

This site was first identified (OP8) in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008 (CD43) and has been carried over from the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) following favourable consideration at the last Examination under Issue 59 (CD44). The principle of housing on the site is therefore long established. It is well located to benefit from, and support local services such as primary schools, shops and community facilities which are within walking distance. Whilst the site does not count towards the Aberdeen City and Shire

Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 (CD12) housing allowances, it will nevertheless contribute towards maintaining a healthy 5 year housing land supply. The Housing Land Audit 2015 shows completions on site from 2016 onwards (page 41, CD17).

21, 28, 68 72: Housing is a basic human need and it is important that everyone has access to housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to those with modest incomes. In the case of OP58, development that comes forward on this site would be required to deliver some affordable housing units which would help to build an overall sustainable mixed community. Development in OP58 would be required to comply with Proposed Plan Policy D1 Quality Placemaking by Design. Proposals would be considered against these six essential qualities: distinctive, welcoming, safe and pleasant, easy to move around, adaptable and resource efficient, in order to create sustainable development that enhances the social, economic, environmental and cultural attractiveness of Cove.

96: The SDP sets the requirements for brownfield, greenfield and employment allowances and these are set out in Figure 1 of the SDP on page 12 and in Schedule 1 on page 42. The Proposed Plan has already allocated a significant amount of brownfield land for housing, in line with the SDP. Furthermore, Proposed Plan site OP58 was identified in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008 (CD43) and part of the site was included in the [Cove Masterplan and Charette Report](#), which included a participatory process.

186: Any planning application that comes forward for OP58 Stationfields will be subject to standard consultation procedures.

#### Environment/Wildlife

6, 8, 10, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 45, 55, 60, 68, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: Where it is suspected that a Protected Species is present on this particular site, a survey will be recommended as part of any development proposal that is brought forward and it would have to comply with Proposed Plan Policy NE8. In addition to this, all residential development proposals will have to comply with all relevant policies regarding protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

#### Transport Issues

6,8, 10, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 45, 55, 60, 68, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: Residential development at OP58 Stationfields will be required to carry out a Transport Assessment according to Policy T2 Managing the Transport Impact of Development. They would be required to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise any generated traffic, this would include any impacts on Coast Road. In addition to this, all residential proposals on this site will have to meet the standard parking requirements found in the Proposed Supplementary Guidance Transport and Accessibility (CD25).

The suggestion that having a train station will ease congestion has been noted. Aberdeen City Council recognises that a train station in Cove would help to alleviate traffic congestion. At present there are no firm proposals for a train station at Cove. However, the North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) have confirmed that further studies are due to be carried out in the next 12-18 months in order to identify opportunities for improving rail opportunities in and around Aberdeen, building on the upgrade which is currently ongoing to enhance the Aberdeen-Inverness line. This study will include consideration of the appropriateness of a new station in Cove and will be aligned with the City Region Deal, which will dictate the timeframes. If a train station proposal was to come forward, it would

need to meet the principles of Proposed Plan Policy D2- Landscape, which aims for developments to improve and enhance the setting and visual impact of any development, unify urban form, provide shelter, provide local identity and promote biodiversity.

#### Inadequate Facilities

6, 8, 10, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 45, 60, 68, 69, 72, 86, 96, 135, 169, 176, 186: The [Cove Masterplan](#) identified the need to create a Commercial Centre that serves walkable neighbourhoods. This was to be located on OP56 Cove, which is also part of the Masterplan and is currently being developed. OP56 Cove is in close proximity to OP58 Stationfields, and so any created facilities can be used by persons living in the development on both sites. In addition to this, Proposed Plan Policy I1 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions indicates that development must be accompanied by the infrastructure, services and facilities required to support new or expanded communities and the scale and type of developments proposed. Where development either individually or cumulatively will place additional demands on community facilities or infrastructure that would necessitate new facilities or exacerbate deficiencies in existing provision, the Council will require the developer to meet or contribute to the cost of providing or improving such infrastructure or facilities.

#### Landscape

8, 28, 68, 69, 96, 186: Any residential development proposal that comes forward would be required to comply with Proposed Plan Policy D2-Landscape. The proposals would need to respect the existing landscape and improve upon it through quality development.

#### Education

28, 29, 30, 33, 69, 86, 96, 135, 169, 186: Aberdeen City Council's School Roll Forecast (CD32) indicates that Loirston Primary is within capacity and is able to accommodate residential development that will come forward for this site. The School Roll Forecast also indicates that Kincorth Academy, which is the other school in this catchment area, will also be able to accommodate any residential development that comes forward.

#### Cove Masterplan and Charette Report

69, 147: The [Cove Masterplan and Charette Report](#) will need to be updated when the Proposed Plan 2016 is adopted. Moreover, the Masterplan and Charette does not include the whole OP58 site area. Therefore, any update to the Masterplan should include the whole of OP58 to help avoid incremental development that doesn't fit the area's overall design. Any development on the part of this site that is included in the Masterplanning boundary area will be based on the adopted Masterplan and would align with its vision. Any development outwith the Masterplan area will also take into account the existing adopted Masterplan and will work to connect existing public open spaces and natural landscapes.

#### OP54: Altens East and Doonies

#### General

35: The representation dealt with the detail of a live planning application ([150432](#)), rather than the principle of development on the site, and as such is not considered an issue to be dealt with through the examination of the Proposed Plan. The representation was copied to the Development Management Officer dealing with the planning application which, at the

time of writing, remains a pending application.

Supports Allocation

91: Support is welcomed and noted. The creation of a material recycling facility, refuse derived fuel plant ancillary facilities is a key priority of the Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014 - 2025 (RD31). The principle of its allocation was tested at the previous Examination (CD44, Issue 128), albeit the area has since been extended towards the coast road. It remains appropriate to identify the site as a development opportunity for waste facilities within the wider Business and Industry zoning as there has been no significant change in circumstances which would justify an amendment to this designation. At the time of writing, a planning application ([150432](#)) for erection of materials recycling facility and refuse derived plant with associated car parking and landscaping is pending determination.

LOIRSTON AND COVE

Torry

35: Aberdeen City Council recognises that Torry is a community with strong architectural and spatial character. The Proposed Plan identifies eight Masterplan Zones in the City containing allocated greenfield sites. The allocated sites in Torry are not greenfield allocations and therefore do not warrant being included as a Masterplan Zone nor being given a new section in the Proposed Plan.

Traffic

35: Aberdeen City Council recognises that air quality problems are predominantly a result of emissions from road vehicles and this is reflected in the Air Quality Management Areas, of which Wellington Road and Market Street are included. The Aberdeen Air Quality Action Plan (CD37) recommends a range of initiatives to address air quality problems. This includes raising awareness of air quality issues, promoting sustainable transport, reducing the need to travel, improving traffic management and transport infrastructure, and consideration of a Low Emission Zone. It is outwith the remit of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan to ban certain vehicles from an area. Proposed Plan Policy T1-Land for Transport identifies land that has been safeguarded for several transport projects that will help to alleviate traffic congestion within the city boundary. In addition, Proposed Plan Policy T2-Managing the Transport Impact of Development requires proposed development to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise any traffic generated.

Torry Academy

35: Torry Academy is not an allocated site in the Proposed Plan.

Walker Road School

35: Aberdeen City Council is not responsible for the listing of buildings. This is the responsibility of Historic Scotland.

East Tullos Industrial Estate

35: East Tullos Industrial Estate is an established business park and has been zoned in the Proposed Plan for Business and Industry. Aberdeen City Council welcomes planning

applications that seek to modernise this business park. These applications would be dealt with in accordance with the Proposed Plan policies.

### Consultation

35: Aberdeen City Council undertake consultation with relevant appropriate key agencies and the general public during the Masterplanning and planning application stages when the details of the proposed development have been further investigated.

### Housing Capacity

183: The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 (CD12) sets the requirements for housing and employment allowances and these are set out in Figure 1 of the SDP on page 12 and in Schedule 1 on page 42. The Proposed Plan has already allocated a significant amount of land for residential development, in line with the Strategic Development Plan. The life of the Proposed Plan covers the period up to 2026. Although indicative allocations for the period post-2026 are highlighted, this is not a requirement. The South city area has additional non-allocated sites which will also contribute to residential development in this area. These can be found in the Housing Land Audit 2015 (CD17). Comments on residential development capacity have been further dealt with in Issue 2.

### OP103: Former Torry Nursery School

35, 70: The National Health Service (NHS) is responsible for assessing whether an area is in need of additional health and social care facilities. It is therefore responsible for submitting a bid for any sites it wishes to be put forward for health and social care uses as part of the Local Development Plan. Moreover, the NHS is a member of the Future Infrastructure Requirements Services (FIRS) Working Group and is content with the allocation of OP103 Former Torry Nursery School for residential development.

### OP107: East Tullos Gas Holder

The creation of an Energy from Waste facility is a key priority of the Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014 - 2025 (RD31) in support of Scotland's Zero Waste Plan 2010 (CD08). At their [meeting on 4 December 2013](#), the Zero Waste Management Sub Committee considered an Energy from Waste [Business Case](#) and [Appendix](#). The Committee [resolved](#) to approve the recommendations in the Report and specifically that a site/sites should be nominated for inclusion in the next Local Development Plan for an Energy from Waste Facility. In line with Scottish Planning Policy (CD05) (para 96) the Proposed Plan has identified "opportunities for integrating efficient energy and waste innovations within business environments." OP107 was subject to a development bid, is partially within Council ownership (recycling centre), and is available for development. The industrial setting makes the site suitable for an Energy from Waste facility in line with Scottish Planning Policy and Proposed Plan policies. It is close to a wide range of users of heat and power. The site is also close to OP54 (the materials recycling facility and collection depot) and this will minimise the impact of vehicle trips between the two facilities.

35: It is understandable that people can be concerned about waste facilities and one of the advantages of the site is that it is located away from the main residential areas. We agree that such facilities should be located to sites where potential impacts on human health can be minimised. This is likely to be one of the considerations of an Environmental Impact Assessment which would be required as per Proposed Plan Policy R5 Energy from Waste.

Modern waste facilities have to be licensed by Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and operate to a very high standard. The Regulations covering this activity place strict limits on emissions and extensive modelling of emissions dispersion is required before a permit can be considered. As a result, waste facilities should not have any more adverse effects than other industrial processes that could be considered suitable on the site. SEPA will consult with the Local Authority, Health Board and other appropriate persons when determining whether to permit a license. Once operational, SEPA will monitor and enforce standards as necessary.

The proposed development will be required to carry out a Transport Assessment according to Proposed Plan Policy T2 Managing the Transport Impact of Development. It would need to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise any generated traffic, this would include any impacts on the road network, including Wellington Road.

40: We would reiterate that waste facilities are generally considered acceptable uses on Business and Industrial Land (B1) in line with Scottish Planning Policy (CD05) (paragraph 186) "Suitable sites will include those which have been identified for employment, industry or storage and distribution" and that this land is zoned as such in both the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) and in the Proposed Plan. Proposed Plan Policy R5 states that "industrial sites with the potential for connection to the electricity grid and with potential users of heat or power are likely to be suitable locations for energy from waste facilities." This accords with Scottish Planning Policy (CD05) (paragraph 183) "Any sites identified specifically for energy from waste facilities should enable links to be made to potential users of renewable heat and energy." There is a good mix of potential users in the area which includes surrounding businesses, residential properties including flats and high rise, a school which has a swimming pool at Tullos Primary and potentially developments associated with the harbour at Nigg Bay.

Whilst we appreciate there will be costs associated with decommissioning the gas holder site, the Proposed Plan considers the principle of development on the site and whilst viability/land values is a concern for the landowner that in itself does not justify a change in zoning. The site was subject to a development bid and the principle of Energy from Waste has been considered acceptable by the Council. Rezoning to any other land designation would result in any subsequent planning application for the Energy from Waste facility being contrary to the Development Plan in that there are policies in place which state that industrial sites are likely to be the appropriate locations. Furthermore mixed use, residential and retail are not land uses which we would consider to be acceptable in this location which is fundamentally an industrial estate. Part of the site is currently used as a Household Waste Recycling Centre so is already used for waste management purposes. There are no circumstances in which we would zone "white land" - the Development Plan is intended to guide development to the appropriate locations and "white land" would provide no guidance.

OP104: Craiginches Prison

35: Support is welcomed and noted. The provision of affordable homes helps to relieve Aberdeen of the severe affordability pressures that it faces and it also helps to create sustainable mixed communities. Aberdeen City Council undertake consultation with relevant appropriate key agencies and the general public during the masterplanning and planning application stages when the details of the proposed development will be further investigated.

OP60: Charleston

Business and Industry Use

93: The role of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (CD12) is to "set clear parameters for subsequent Local Development Plans and inform decisions about strategic infrastructure investment" (Circular 6/2013 paragraph 41) (CD10). The SDP (paragraphs 3.15-3.16) sets a clear strategy for development in Aberdeen, which includes housing and employment allowances to be delivered through Local Development Plans. The Proposed Plan has allocated more land for Business and Industrial development up to 2026 than is required by the Strategic Development Plan. Removing OP60 from Phase 2 of the employment land allocations would create a significant departure from the allowances set in Figure 6 of the SDP on page 26 and discussed in more detail in Issue 1. In this context, it would be prudent to retain the current zoning of OP60: Charleston as Land Release Policy and to keep the phasing as it is.

Increased Traffic

111: Aberdeen City Council recognises that the location of development can have a significant impact on the local transport network. The Aberdeen City and Shire Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) (CD18) highlighted the impact new development across the North East would have on transport infrastructure. This resulted in the decision to secure contributions through a Strategic Transport Fund (STF) (Supplementary Guidance to the SDP) (CD19) to fund the delivery of infrastructure. The A956/A90 Corridor is one of the infrastructure projects that will be funded by the STF along with a further crossing over the River Dee. In addition to this, all significant new developments would be required to carry out a detailed transport assessment according to Proposed Plan Policy T2-Managing the Transport Impact of Development. It would be required to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise any generated traffic, this would include impacts on Wellington Road.

OP59: Loirston

Increased Traffic

111, 147: See comment above.

General Support

146: Support has been welcomed and noted.

OP61: Calder Park

111: Aberdeen City Council recognises that the location of development can have a significant impact on the local transport network. The Aberdeen City and Shire Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) (CD18) highlighted the impact new development across the North East would have on transport infrastructure. This resulted in the decision to secure contributions through a Strategic Transport Fund (STF) (Supplementary Guidance to the SDP) (CD19) to fund the delivery of infrastructure. The A956/A90 Corridor is one of the infrastructure projects that will be funded by the STF along with a further crossing over the River Dee. In addition to this, all significant new developments would be required to carry out a detailed transport assessment according to Proposed Plan Policy T2-Managing the

Transport Impact of Development. It would be required to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise any generated traffic, this would include impacts on Wellington Road.

OP64: Former Ness Tip

126: Aberdeen City Council acknowledge that there is a presumption in favour of protecting woodland sites in Scottish Planning Policy (paragraph 201) (CD05). The Proposed Plan also notes that the protection of tree and woodland cover contributes to sustainable development and enhances the services provided by woodland ecosystems. Development on Proposed Plan Site OP64 Former Ness Tip would be required to comply with Proposed Plan Policy NE5 Trees and Woodlands. This Policy has a presumption against activities that result in the loss or damage to trees and woodland that contribute to nature conservation, local amenity or climate change adaptation and mitigation. Development would be required to provide information detailing safeguarding measures for the protection and long term management of the existing trees.

OP62: Nigg Bay

137: The Council strongly welcomes the identification of the new Nigg Bay harbour development within National Planning Framework 3 (CD04) and has, and continues to, work with the harbour board on its delivery. As a Planning Authority the Council nevertheless has a requirement to ensure any development is done in a balanced way to minimise the negative and enhance the positive impacts of such as scheme. While it is noted that the Harbour proposals have developed, the changes are not outwith the OP62 site boundary indicated in the Proposed Plan.

It is noted that the area zoned for harbour use is smaller than the overall OP62 site boundary. The Harbour zoned area reflects the proposals as presented to the Council at the time of preparing the Proposed Plan and does not prevent suitable development coming forward outwith this zoning but still within the OP62 site boundary. The purpose of this smaller harbour zone footprint was to prevent the loss of Green Belt and Urban Green Space which was not necessary for the delivery of the harbour. The proposal to use land either inside or outside the boundary on a temporary basis during construction is generally acceptable and will be considered as part of the application.

Finally the development of an access track to the breakwater would be acceptable under our current and proposed Green Belt and Urban Green Space Policies NE1 (under paragraph 3) and NE2 (under point 2 essential infrastructure).

Open and Green Space

35: Proposed Plan Policy NE3-Urban Green Space safeguards areas of Urban Green Space from development unless the replacement provision. Moreover, Proposed Plan Policy NE4-Open Space Provision in New Development aims to ensure that functional, useful and publicly desirable open space is provided as part of new development. Development that comes forward on OP62 Nigg Bay will be required to comply with both Policies NE3 and NE4. Aberdeen City Council undertake consultation with relevant appropriate key agencies and the general public during the Masterplanning and planning application stages when the details of the proposed development have been further investigated.

General Support

59: Support has been welcomed and noted.

Woodland

126: Aberdeen City Council recognise that there is a presumption in favour of protecting woodland sites in Scottish Planning Policy (paragraph 201) (CD05). This has also been reiterated in Proposed Plan Policy NE5-Trees and Woodlands. However, in the case of OP62 Nigg Bay, there is no woodland located within the site boundary.

Doonies Farm

147: The boundary of OP62 Nigg Bay will have no effect on Doonies Farm. Moreover, the eastwards extension of OP54 Altens East and Doonies will have no effect over and above what was previously identified in the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42).

Land-Use Change

35: The Harbours Act 1964 (RD04) is outwith the scope of the Local Development Plan Process. To support any development proposals for OP62 Nigg Bay, a Development Framework/Masterplan, Flood Risk Assessment and full Transport Assessment are required. In addition, harbour proposals will be subject to three separate but closely related consenting regimes:

- (i) A Harbour Revision Order to deliver and construct the harbour, under the Harbours Act 1964 which is submitted to Transport Scotland for approval by Scottish Parliament;
- (ii) Planning Permission in Principle for ancillary and temporary works related to the construction of the harbour, and further Applications for Matters Specified in Conditions and/or detailed planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (CD02) as amended; and,
- (iii) Marine Licences under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (RD05).

At the time of writing, the [Draft Nigg Bay Development Framework](#) has been produced by planning and design consultants Barton Wilmore on behalf of Aberdeen Harbour Board, Scottish Enterprise and Aberdeen City Council. This was prepared following the Council's adopted Aberdeen Masterplanning Process. The Draft Framework will set the context for a series of more detailed Masterplans to come forward in the future for the three sub-areas of Nigg Bay (Harbour), East Tullos and Altens. Furthermore, to encourage further consultation, the Draft Framework was approved for a 6-week public consultation at the [Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee](#) on 27 August 2015.

OP110: Wellington Circle (Former Makro)

Representations received to the Main Issues Report highlighted limited progress in establishing a retail use on the site identified in the extant Local Development Plan 2012 at OP76 Souter Head Road (Altens Thistle Hotel). In response to representations received to the Main Issues Report the location for a supermarket in the south of the city was for debate. Officers agreed (RD40 - Issue 25) that it was unlikely that the identified site at Souter Head Road would be delivered and that a need for a supermarket to the south of the city remained as its development was highlighted as a retail commitment in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2013 (CD16).

The Planning Authority's recommendation in the draft Proposed Plan was that there was potential for retail development (serving local needs) to be accommodated within the identified retail centre stated in the [Loirston Development Framework](#) to assist in anchoring a village centre for Loirston.

At the meeting of the [Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 28 October 2014](#) (Item 21), the Council considered the responses to the Main Issues Report and took a view which placed greater weight of development at the site now identified in the Proposed Plan at OP110. They concluded that OP110 was favoured over OP59 and incorporated OP110 as the preferred location for retail to the south of the city in the Proposed Plan which was then subject to a ten week consultation process.

OP110 has a number of advantages over OP59. First the proposal would utilise an existing building and car park. This will be much easier and quicker to deliver. It is essentially a refurbishment of an existing building rather than a new purpose built facility elsewhere. OP110 is more central to the communities in the south of Aberdeen and more readily accessible to them from Wellington Road and the public transport that uses that road. It is very close to the original proposal at Souter Head Road.

A detailed planning application ([140924](#)) for alterations to existing Makro building and partial change of use from Wholesale Retail Warehouse (Class 6) to Supermarket (Class 1) on OP110 was considered at the [Planning Development Management Committee meeting on 18 June 2015](#). The Committee approved the application pending a legal agreement under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (CD02) ('Section 75 agreement') to address matters involving local and strategic roads infrastructure contributions.

At the same time a planning application for permission in principle ([141754](#)) was received on the site at Loirston (OP59). This was not however, close to the village centre but a separate stand alone site.

Both planning applications were considered at the [Planning Development Management Committee meeting on 18 June 2015](#) (Item 2 and 3). The Committee favoured the site identified in the Proposed Plan at OP110 with the other being refused planning permission in accordance with Officer recommendation.

Following the Member's decision on 18 June 2015 of willingness to approve the application pending Section 75 agreement, the applicant's agent approached the Planning Authority to request amendments to the terms of the planning application submission ([140924](#)). The amendment proposed alterations to existing building and part change of use from wholesale retail warehouse (Class 6) to two retail units (Class 1). The Planning Development Management Committee considered the proposed amendment at the [17 September 2015 meeting](#) (Item 9) and agreed the amendment. At the time of writing, the consent had not yet been issued due to pending Section 75 agreement.

#### Support for Allocation

57, 62, 147: Support is noted.

57: Paragraph 3.28 of the Proposed Plan highlights retail deficiencies identified in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2013 (CD16). The study took "committed retail opportunity" into account and OP76 (Souter Head Road) provided opportunity in the

south of the city. The designation of OP110 has come about due to the recognition of a need to identify a replacement site for the "committed retail opportunity" currently identified at OP76 Souter Head Road in the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) (which has now been removed in the Proposed Plan). Taking this into account there is no need to specifically mention OP110 in paragraph 3.28 as this specifically relates to new retail requirements arising from new communities.

The site at OP110 is located in the established Wellington Industrial Estate. The overarching policy designation in this area is for Business and Industry. It would not be appropriate to amend the zoning when the allocation identified in Appendix 2 of the Proposed Plan provides sufficient certainty by specifically stating Class 1 retail as being suitable. A commercial zoning would be inappropriate for a single supermarket site and would be inconsistent with the approach taken with other zonings on the Proposals Map.

Traffic Concerns

111, 147: Aberdeen City Council recognises that the location of development can have a significant impact on the local transport network. The Aberdeen City and Shire Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) (CD18) highlighted the impact new development across the North East would have on transport infrastructure. This resulted in the decision to secure contributions through a Strategic Transport Fund (STF) (CD19) to fund the delivery of infrastructure. The A956/A90 Corridor is one of the infrastructure projects that will be funded by the STF. In addition to this, development on OP110: Wellington Circle (Former Makro) would be required to carry out a transport assessment according to Proposed Plan Policy T2-Managing the Transport Impact of Development. It would be required to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise any generated traffic, this would include impacts on Wellington Road.

Object to Allocation/Alternative Site Promoted

93: As the allocation at OP110 discussed above is appropriate and sufficient there is no requirement to consider an alternative site or make modifications sought by respondent. Sufficient provision, to meet local needs, has been identified in the [Loirston Development Framework](#) (adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the extant Plan in May 2013). The Framework confirms that locations for local retail (Blocks B3 and B4) have been identified and these "landuses are intended to provide support services for the new residential community and are likely to take the form of an 'express' and/or local supermarket and other retail uses." Planning Permission in Principle ([130892](#)) was granted on 1 July 2015.

OP105: Kincorth Academy

41: The Council's intention is to retain the green space and oval running track which currently exist on the site. The swimming pool will not be retained as a new pool will be provided on the site of the new South of the City Academy.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

OP58: Stationfields

1. The site comprises a number of agricultural (grazing) fields bounded by the main Aberdeen to Dundee railway line to the east and the built-up area of Cove to the west and

south. Although of no great landscape quality in itself, the site dips gently to the east affording wide sea views, and the current openness of the site allows these views to be enjoyed by travellers on Coast Road and from the properties to the west. A public footpath crosses the site.

2. A range of concerns have been expressed, particularly regarding the traffic implications of accessing this site, wildlife impacts and the prospects for the provision of a railway station on this land. However, the site has been allocated for development for some time, being rolled forward from the current adopted local development plan and the previous local plan. Its suitability for development was considered as part of the examination into the current adopted plan, when it was concluded that there had been no material change in circumstances in relation to the site which would justify deleting it from the plan.

3. It is generally not helpful to the certainty that the planning system is intended to create for the principle of development in development plans to be revisited unless circumstances have clearly changed. Although a wide range of matters have been raised in representations opposing this development, I do not consider that any changes of circumstance have been highlighted that are of such significance as to justify the de-allocation of this longstanding development site.

4. Site OP58 is not listed in Table 7 of the proposed plan, and therefore is not required to contribute towards meeting the greenfield housing allowance set in Schedule 1 of the strategic development plan. However the council has confirmed, in response to a further information request, that the houses to be built on this site have been accounted for as part of the 'Effective Land Supply 2011' in Schedule 1. The site therefore makes a meaningful contribution towards achieving the housing requirement for the Aberdeen Housing Market Area as defined in Figure 10 of the strategic development plan, and to de-allocate the site would increase the pressure on the wider housing land supply.

5. Regarding wildlife impacts, I note that the site is not covered by any national or local nature conservation designation. Regarding parking pressures, it is reasonable to assume that the parking requirements of any new development will be met within the site. Regarding the potential for a new station at Cove, it appears that this proposal has not yet achieved a sufficient level of certainty for it to be included in the plan. More generally, the detailed design of the proposed development is a matter for the masterplanning and development management process.

#### OP54 Altens East and Doonies

6. Development of the proposed use appeared to be underway at the time of my site inspection. While I note the various concerns raised by Torry Community Council, I consider these to be matters of detail best addressed through the development management process. The principle of this development is established, including through previous development plans and their associated examinations. On this basis I conclude that no change to the plan is required.

#### General Issues

7. A number of wider concerns are raised by Torry Community Council. I recognise that Torry has its own individual character that is somewhat overlooked by the plan's inclusion of sites in Torry under the heading of 'Loirston and Cove' in Appendix 2. However I consider that this is principally a presentational matter and that no change is essential. Remaining

open spaces around Torry are largely protected in the proposed plan by green belt, green space network and/ or urban green space designation. I acknowledge that a number of traffic-related problems may exist in Torry, but these principally fall to be addressed in the local transport strategy rather than the local development plan which is primarily concerned with the identification of land for development. The Aberdeen Air Quality Management Plan addresses air quality matters.

8. Regarding individual sites and areas, Torry Academy and its associated sports grounds are not identified for any change of use in the proposed plan. The merits of listing Walker Road School would be for Historic Environment Scotland to consider: this is not a matter for the local development plan. The East Tullos Industrial Estate retains its designation for business and industry in the proposed plan. It appears to retain generally high levels of occupancy, and so to contribute positively to Aberdeen's industrial land supply. However I note that Policy B1 of the plan contains safeguards aimed at ensuring that the amenity of residential areas neighbouring business and industrial areas is protected.

9. It is the case that greenfield housing land release in Loirston and Cove is dominated by Site OP59 Loirston. However the greenfield releases are supplemented by a number of brownfield sites identified on the proposals map, and doubtless also by a certain amount of windfall development.

10. The Loirston and Cove area forms one part of the larger Aberdeen housing market area. The principle described in paragraph 111 of Scottish Planning Policy is that demand for housing is relatively self-contained across a housing market area. Although Scottish Planning Policy goes on to acknowledge the possible existence of sub-market areas, it is not suggested in representations that such a recognisable sub-market exists in Loirston and Cove. Therefore I do not believe it is appropriate to look at one part of the city in isolation when considering the balance between different types of site.

OP103: Former Torry Nursery School

11. This cleared site is identified as an opportunity site within a residential area in the proposed plan. It would be suitable for housing use, being located in a primarily residential area. Policy H1 of the plan also allows for uses complementary to residential use to be approved in residential areas. I expect that any proposal for a medical centre on this site would therefore be likely to be found acceptable in policy terms. However I accept that this position provides less certainty than a positive allocation for health care use would.

12. The representation from Torry Medical Practice persuasively argues the case for additional land for health and social care facilities to be identified in Torry. The council's response (above) does not contradict this case, but argues that any bid for additional land should be made by the National Health Service, rather than individual practices.

13. It is clearly open to any party to suggest alternative land use designations in the proposed plan, and Torry Medical Practice is particularly well placed to give authoritative evidence on this matter. However, the fact that this land is council-owned does not mean it should necessarily be released for healthcare use which, although of benefit to the local community, is not directly connected with the council's service responsibilities. I also have no evidence as to whether this is the best potential site in or around Torry for this use, or regarding the likelihood of funding being available for the development of a healthcare facility here. For these reasons I conclude, on balance, that this land should not be positively allocated for healthcare use. However, I have noted the potential under Policy H1

for an application for such a use to be considered favourably.

OP107: East Tullos Gas Holder

14. The site comprises an apparently disused gas holder and associated facilities and a separate refuse treatment facility situated within the established East Tullos Industrial Estate. Scotia Gas Networks confirm the gas holder site's potential availability for redevelopment, but seek an alternative designation as 'white land' or for mixed uses.

15. Paragraph 186 of Scottish Planning Policy states that local development plans should identify appropriate locations for new waste infrastructure, and allocate specific sites where possible. After a period of public consultation, the council has prepared a city waste strategy. This included a target to 'develop residual treatment capacity in Aberdeen by using non-recycled waste to generate heat and power', and a commitment to build an energy-from-waste plant. The strategy also identified a need for the local development plan to specify suitable sites for the development of waste and recycling infrastructure such as energy-from-waste facilities. For these reasons I conclude that there is a strong case for the identification of a site for an energy-from-waste plant in the plan.

16. Paragraph 186 of Scottish Planning Policy confirms that sites identified for employment, industry or storage and distribution will be suitable for new waste infrastructure. This particular site has a number of advantages as a site for a potential energy-from-waste plant. It is located on established industrial land and is potentially available. It is bounded by other employment land to the west, north and east and by open countryside to the south, and is thus separated from residential areas, the nearest houses lying over 300 metres to the north. The site is also relatively close to the council's proposed materials recycling facility at Altens East and Doonies (Site OP54).

17. I anticipate the operation of an energy-from-waste facility to be associated with a relatively high number of heavy vehicle movements. At the time of my site inspection I found Greenwell Road and Greenbank Road (the principal roads of the East Tullos Industrial Estate) to be busy and on-street parking to restrict two-way traffic by heavy goods vehicles at several points. However this consideration would equally apply to a range of industrial proposals that might arise across the industrial estate, and yet would be acceptable in principle under the terms of Policy B1 of the proposed plan. It may be that certain traffic management measures would benefit the movement of traffic in the estate, and these could be secured alongside the approval of any energy-from-waste plant. However I do not consider that access to the site is so poor as to lead me to conclude that the site could not be satisfactorily developed.

18. Energy-from-waste plants commonly give rise to fears related to public health. However, as the council states above, such facilities are licensed and monitored by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to ensure that emissions do not exceed acceptable levels. This aspect of the development is primarily for SEPA to regulate within the context of the relevant environmental legislation, rather than for the planning system to consider.

19. I accept the possibility of there being high costs associated with the decommissioning of the current gas holder use. To the extent that decommissioning is a responsibility of the current operator, I do not agree that it is necessarily a role for the planning system to identify high value new uses for contaminated land in order to provide funds for decommissioning, though the benefits of remediation may be a material planning consideration, as I discuss

under Issue 16. However, to the extent that site preparation is a responsibility of prospective developers, an element of the cost of remediation may fall to the future operator of the site and not to the current owner.

20. A purpose of development plans is to provide a level of certainty as to what the acceptable future uses of different areas of land are. The inclusion of 'white land' on the proposals map, falling outwith any policy designation, would be unhelpful in that it would fail to provide this guidance. Also, 'white land' has not been identified elsewhere in the plan area, and so to do so here would introduce an inconsistency of approach into the local development plan.

21. The overwhelming character of the East Tullos Industrial Estate is of an industrial/employment area. In this context, housing, retail or other unrelated uses would not generally be appropriate. The former gas holder site contributes to the employment land supply and is not required for housing or retail use. I therefore conclude that its designation for business and industry should be maintained, and for the reasons given above that its identification as an opportunity site for an energy-from-waste plant is appropriate.

OP104: Craiginches Prison

22. No change to the plan appears to be being sought with regard to this site.

OP60: Charleston

23. It is suggested that this site should be released for development in Phase 1 (2017 – 2026), rather than Phase 2 (2027 – 2035), and that it should be designated under Policy B1 (business and industry) on the proposals map, rather than LR1 (land release policy).

24. The local development plan is required by law to be consistent with the approved strategic development plan. The employment land allowances for Aberdeen are clearly set out in Figure 1 of the strategic development plan, and amount to 105 hectares up to 2026 and 70 hectares between 2027 and 2035. Table 2 of the proposed local development plan demonstrates that the plan already exceeds this level of supply in the pre-2026 period. While the rationale for this is explained in paragraph 2.16 of the proposed plan, adding a further 20.5 hectares of employment land to the 2017 – 2026 supply would markedly increase the level of oversupply in this period.

25. I acknowledge the high take-up of employment land at the Gateway Business Park close to the Charleston site. However, significant areas of undeveloped employment land remain available elsewhere in the city including around Dyce and in Bridge of Don.

26. For these reasons I am not prepared to support amending the plan in a way that would make it significantly less consistent with the requirements of the strategic development plan. I therefore consider the land at Charleston should remain as a Phase 2 site to be released through a future review of the local development plan. As such, it would not be appropriate to designate this land under Policy B1, as the wording of that policy indicates the immediate in-principle support for development.

27. Concerns are also expressed regarding traffic generation from this site. The principle of future development on this land has been established through the existing adopted local development plan and associated examination. It is clear from paragraph 3.44 of the proposed plan that the council is aware that junction capacity improvements in the A956

corridor will be required to mitigate the impact of development. The nature of these improvements is not specified, but can be considered in detail at the time of any masterplan or planning application for development on this site.

OP59: Loirston

28. Concerns are expressed regarding traffic generation from this site. The principle of future development on this land has been established through the existing adopted local development plan and associated examination. It is clear from paragraph 3.44 of the proposed plan that the council is aware that junction capacity improvements in the A956 corridor will be required to mitigate the impact of development. The nature of these improvements is not specified, but can be considered in detail either through the development framework for the site or at the time of any planning application for development.

29. The suggestion that land for a supermarket should be allocated within this site is considered below under Site OP110.

OP61: Calder Park

30. Concerns are expressed regarding traffic generation from this site. The principle of future development on this land has been established through the existing adopted local development plan and associated examination. Permission for some development has already been granted. It is clear from paragraph 3.44 of the proposed plan that the council is aware that junction capacity improvements in the A956 corridor will be required to mitigate the impact of development. The nature of these improvements is not specified, but can be considered in detail at the time of any masterplan or further planning applications for development on this site.

OP64: Ness Tip

31. Although not apparently heavily wooded, some minor areas of woodland may exist within this site. I do not consider these to be major constraints to the proposed development, and, as the council states, any development would be required to comply with Policy NE5 of the plan. If trees may be affected by development, this would require the submission and approval of a tree protection plan. Assuming future compliance with Scottish Government and development plan policy on woodland removal, I conclude that no change to the plan is required.

OP62: Nigg Bay

32. Aberdeen Harbour seeks the adjustment of the designated harbour area at Nigg Bay (Policy B5) on the proposals map to match that shown in the most recent draft harbour revision order covering the harbour expansion. Of particular concern is the extent of the B5 designation at the south of the site at Greg Ness.

33. I appreciate that adjustments have been made to the emerging design of the harbour since the publication of National Planning Framework 3. However it appears to me that, at least at the scale of the proposals map, the land area shown as falling within the latest draft harbour revision order at Greg Ness still falls within the B5 designation as shown on the proposals map. Therefore I do not consider that any change to the boundary is required.

34. Significant areas of sea below the low water mark are included on the latest draft harbour revision order plan, but this area is outside the plan area. Aberdeen Harbour states that additional areas may be required on a temporary basis for construction and manufacturing during the construction of the harbour, but would then be reinstated. Given that Policy B5 refers to the ongoing use of the harbour, I do not consider it necessary to include these temporary use areas within the policy designation.

35. Regarding the preservation of open and green space, I note that, beyond the approximate area of the harbour revision order itself indicated by the Policy B5 designation on the proposals map, significant areas within Site OP62 continue to be designated as green belt and green space network. As such these areas will continue to receive protection under the terms of Policies NE1 and NE2 of the plan. Within the harbour revision order area, the principal consenting process is outside the scope of the town and country planning system.

36. Although not apparently heavily wooded, some minor areas of woodland may exist within this site. I do not consider these to be major constraints to the proposed development, and, as the council states, any development would be required to comply with Policy NE5 of the plan. If trees may be affected by development, this would require the submission and approval of a tree protection plan. Assuming future compliance with Scottish Government and development plan policy on woodland removal, I conclude that no change to the plan is required.

37. As regards potential impact on Doonies Rare Breeds Farm, the council asserts above that the Nigg Bay proposals will have no effect on this business. Development of Site OP54, which appears to be already underway, may have had such an effect, but the principle of this development was largely established through the existing adopted local development plan.

OP110: Wellington Circle (Former Makro)

38. There is no dispute that a need exists for a new supermarket in south Aberdeen, or that the previously allocated site at Souter Head Road is now unlikely to become available for this use. The OP110 site comprises a large existing shed and associated car parking set within a larger area of employment land. In line with recent planning permissions, the building is now split into three parts, these being the smaller ongoing Makro operation, a new Ikea store and a residual 1,476 square metres which is currently being marketed for convenience retailing.

39. Given that these permissions have now been issued, it would not be appropriate to delete this opportunity site and transfer the allocation wholesale to another site. However neither do I consider it appropriate to remove the underlying business and industry designation from this land. The wider area retains the character of a business park; the Makro and Ikea operations maintain a storage and distribution component; and I note that individual supermarkets in business parks elsewhere in Aberdeen (for instance Lidl on Lang Stracht) have retained a business and industry designation.

40. Maintaining the OP110 allocation in its current form would provide support for the creation of a larger convenience store here in the future (at the expense of the Ikea or Makro operations), but there is no indication that this is likely. Therefore it now appears that the OP110 site is only capable of accommodating a significantly smaller supermarket operation than originally envisaged (the entire building amounts to 5,750 square metres).

41. The council argues that the need for additional convenience floorspace in south Aberdeen has fallen in recent years, in part because of a shift in demand to smaller format stores. The fact that no supermarket operator has yet taken up the opportunity within the former Makro building may indeed indicate a lessening in demand for a new convenience store in south Aberdeen. However the reduction in available convenience floorspace at OP110 is very significant compared to what was originally envisaged. Only around a quarter of the building remains available for supermarket use. I also note that relatively little time has passed since the publication of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study in 2013, which referred to the existence of supermarket deficiencies in south Aberdeen. For these reasons I conclude that it is likely that some capacity does exist for further convenience retailing in this part of the city.

42. Site OP59 Loirston provides one option (indeed the only option that is before me) for providing additional convenience retail space in south Aberdeen, if required. However no particular piece of land within the OP59 Loirston site has been proposed for a retail allocation. Under the terms of Policy NC8, the proposed plan already signals support for a level of retail provision at Loirston appropriate to serve the needs of the expanded local community. The policy goes on to state that proposals serving a wider catchment will be subject to a sequential test and retail impact assessment in accordance with Policy NC4.

43. If an unmet need for additional convenience retail space does indeed exist in south Aberdeen, and if suitable alternative sites in designated centres do not exist, then it would appear likely that a supermarket proposal within the OP59 Loirston site would meet the policy tests set out in Policies NC4 and NC5. However, it is in the interests of a plan-led approach for the plan to be as specific as possible about where any significant new retail provision should be located. I also agree that a supermarket could help anchor a viable village centre for the new community at Loirston. For these reasons I conclude that a reference should be included in the plan to the suitability of the OP59 Loirston site to accommodate some convenience retailing to meet supermarket deficiencies in south Aberdeen.

44. As regards the inclusion of a reference to the OP110 site in paragraph 3.28 of the plan, I do not consider this to be essential given that Appendix 2 is clear about the retail opportunity on this site. This paragraph also appears to be intended to highlight particular proposals of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study, which did not include the former Makro site.

45. Concerns are expressed regarding traffic generation from this site. It is clear from paragraph 3.44 of the proposed plan that the council is aware that junction capacity improvements in the A956 corridor will be required to mitigate the impact of development.

OP105: Kincorth Academy

46. The principal outdoor sports facilities associated with Kincorth Academy appear to be located in the green area to the north-east of the school buildings. This area falls outwith the OP105 site, and is designated on the proposals map as green space network and urban green space. It therefore benefits from protection under Policies NE1 and NE3 of the plan. Two small 5-a-side pitches exist within Site OP105 on the western part of the site, but these do not appear to be publicly accessible. For these reasons I conclude that no change is required to the plan.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that the second sentence of the 'Other Factors' listed for Site OP59 Loirston in Appendix 2 be amended to read: "Potential to accommodate football or community stadium and supermarket to meet convenience shopping deficiencies in south Aberdeen."

<b>Issue 14</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE SITES: LOIRSTON &amp; COVE</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	No reference in the Plan	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Stewart Milne Homes and John Lawrie (Aberdeen) Ltd (64)                      Hermiston Securities Limited (93)                      Mr and Mrs Nicol (143)                      Persimmon Homes (157)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Alternative sites in Loirston & Cove	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>34-40 Abbotswell Road</u></p> <p>64: Promotes site for residential development. Aberdeen's employment land exceeds Strategic Development Planning Authority targets. Site has good accessibility and rezoning it from business and industrial to residential will make it compatible with surrounding uses i.e. care home, offices and recreational facilities.</p> <p><u>Land at Blackhills of Cairnrobin</u></p> <p>93: Site should be allocated for Business and Industry as an extension to Aberdeen Gateway and Mains of Cairnrobin Business Parks. Site was previously removed from Local Development Plan because it was within 400 metres of a standoff buffer zone to Blackhills Quarry. Any danger zones will be confined within the quarry's landholdings and a landscaped buffer zone will provide separation between Blackhills Quarry and the site. This site needs to be considered in the context of employment land zonings in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Development Plans. It can help supplement the supply of Class 5 and 6 land and provide an important vehicular connection with the employment land to the south.</p> <p><u>Land at Heathvale</u></p> <p>143: 5.7 hectares site should be removed from the Green Belt and Green Space Network as it is surrounded by development on all sides. Site is unkempt and contains no special landscape features. It offers no opportunities for public access. It should be considered for residential development. Appropriate buffer will be retained where site adjoins Wellington Road. Land at Charleston Wood is no longer designates as a District Wildlife Site and is of no environmental value. It would however form part of a considered and logical landscape strategy.</p>		

Land at Hydrogen Fuelling Station

147: The site of the recently approved Hydrogen Fuelling Station, Hydrogen Generation and Fuel Cells is not mentioned anywhere in the Plan. There is no OP site number for it and it's not on the OP map for the Cove area.

Land at Rigifa Farm

157: The six acre site does not contribute to its current designation of Green Space Network and Green Belt as the recent construction of Aberdeen Gateway Business Park (lies immediately southwest of the site) has eroded the purpose and context of the Green Belt in this particular location. It has potential for residential development of approximately 70 units. The farm buildings within the site also have potential for redevelopment as part of the wider site area. Developable land for this site offers no significant constraints to development and has been amended to include only land lying outwith the 250 metres exclusion zone associated with requirements for blasting at Blackhills Quarry. Other large scale greenfield releases from the current Local Plan have experienced delay in implementation. This development will provide a defensible long term boundary to the green belt in this location and offers opportunity to provide a more robust strategy with regards to the Green Space Network.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

34-40 Abbotswell Road

64: Brownfield site should be identified for residential development.

Land at Blackhills of Cairnrobin

93: Site be removed from the Green Belt and identified for Business and Industry. It should be included in Table 7: Development at Loirston and Cove for 5.5 hectares of employment land for the period Phase 1:2017 - 2026 and also included in Appendix 2. It should be identified as an Opportunity Site in the Action Programme.

Land at Heathvale

143: Land at Heathvale, Cove should be removed from the Green Belt and Green Space Network and an alternative land use such as residential development should be considered.

Land at Hydrogen Fuelling Station

147: Make a new OP site for the Hydrogen Fuelling Station.

Land at Rigifa Farm

157: Site at Rigifa Farm should be included as an Opportunity Site suitable for approximately 70 residential units falling within phase 1: 2017 - 2026.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

General Strategy

In preparing the Proposed Plan a Development Options Assessment (CD28, CD30, CD31), Strategic Environmental Assessment (CD27) and Main Issues Report (CD29) were used to identify the most suitable locations to deliver the required growth. The majority of greenfield sites identified in the Proposed Plan have been carried over from the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) which went through a similar process at that time. Most of these sites are at an advanced stage in terms of planning consents and Masterplans as detailed in the latest version of the Action Programme (CD47).

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 (CD12) sets the requirements for greenfield housing and employment land allowances and these are set out in Figure 1 of the SDP on page 12 and in Schedule 1 on page 42. Under Issue 2 we conclude that the SDP greenfield requirements have been fully met and we are confident that a continuous 5 year housing land supply can be met throughout the lifetime of this LDP. Accordingly, we do not consider it necessary to allocate any further greenfield sites beyond those already identified in the Proposed Plan.

34-40 Abbotswell Road

64: Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). There is potential for conflict between new residential development and existing business and industrial uses which are present on the site. The narrow site means that there is insufficient space for a buffer between the proposed residential area and existing business. This means that it will be difficult to maintain an acceptable external amenity for residents. This could lead to complaints which could in turn, prejudice the operation of the existing businesses. In addition the narrow site means it will be difficult to develop high rise development with a sufficient buffer between it and the significant tree belt to the west.

The site is subject to a pending planning application for the demolition of the existing business and industrial land and the erection of a 100 unit flatted residential development inclusive of 24 affordable units, associated infrastructure and landscaping. This application is contrary to the current Development Plan. It is expected the planning application will be presented to committee in December 2015.

Land at Blackhills of Cairnrobin

93: Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31) Issues remain with land use conflict between the quarry and the proposed business use.

Land at Heathvale

143: Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report. The site is zoned as Green Belt and Green Space Network. The allocation of housing within this area would not relate well to existing development and has poor links to local facilities.

Land at Hydrogen Fuelling Station

147: A planning application ([141552](#)) for the site and development was approved at Development Management Committee on 28 May 2015. The timing of this meant that there was no opportunity to include the site in the Proposed Plan which was agreed earlier in January 2015. However, because the site is subject to an approved planning permission, it is considered unnecessary to identify the site as an opportunity site at this stage.

Land at Rigifa Farm

157: Aberdeen City Council has assessed this site, considered it undesirable, and rejected it on the grounds set out in the Proposed Plan Site Assessment Report (CD31). The site is zoned as Green Belt with the north west corner as both Green Belt and Green Space Network. The allocation of housing within this area would be isolated within a greenbelt zoning with only the western edge relating well to existing development. A planning permission ([130490](#)) was approved in January 2015 extending the operating lifespan of the quarry to 2050. The proposed site would abut the northern edge of the quarry OP site; therefore consideration would have to be given to the potential for a negative impact on the business practice of the quarry due to neighbouring residential use.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

General Remarks

1. I concluded at Issue 2 that the proposed plan contained a shortfall of only 18 units in meeting the greenfield housing land requirement, and that Aberdeen City is making a reasonable contribution to ensuring that the housing supply target for the Aberdeen housing market area is met. There is therefore very little requirement to identify additional housing land. However some limited scope does exist to allocate small new greenfield sites, should any suitable opportunities emerge through the examination process.
2. Some proposed sites have previously been considered at the time of the examination into the current adopted local development plan. Where this has been raised in evidence, I have read and agree with the conclusions reached at that time. It is generally not helpful to the certainty that the development planning system is intended to provide to revisit the principle of development on sites that have been considered through earlier equivalent processes unless circumstances have clearly and significantly changed.

34–40 Abbotswell Road

3. The site comprises a narrow area of industrial land, currently apparently mainly used for lorry parking, in the northern part of the West Tullos Industrial Estate. The bulk of the West Tullos Industrial Estate lies to the south of Abbotswell Road and has an overwhelmingly business/ industrial character. The much smaller part of the estate north of Abbotswell Road is significantly more mixed use in character. There are three dwellinghouses and a modern office building to the immediate east of the representation site, while a care home and a sports club lie to the north-east. The representation site is situated on the fringe of the existing estate with the River Dee to the north and a large area of open space to the west.

4. With an area of just over one hectare, the site currently makes a very small contribution to the overall industrial land supply in Aberdeen. It is clear from Table 2 of the proposed

plan that there is something of an oversupply in terms of newly allocated employment land. Although there is some evidence of current activity on the site, it does not appear to be intensively in use for employment purposes at present. I am not therefore unduly concerned about the potential loss of employment land at 34–40 Abbotswell Road.

5. Regarding the potential for noise nuisance, I note above the presence of existing residential property, offices, a care home and a sports club to the east and north-east of the site. Some business units exist further east along Abbotswell Road, but these are closer to the above-mentioned intervening uses than they are to the representation site. A range of business uses also exist on the southern side of Abbotswell Road, opposite the representation site, including a fabricator. However I note from the committee report into a planning application for housing on the 34-40 Abbotswell Road site that the council's environmental health service made no objection. It did, though, seek the submission of a noise assessment (apparently due to concerns about road noise). Overall I conclude that noises issues do not appear to be a significant constraint to the development of the site.

6. Regarding design, I accept that some building forms could have an undesirable physical or visual impact on the tree belt to the west of the site and on views into the site from Duthie Park and from the open space to the west of the site. However it would be possible to develop this site for housing without incurring any of these negative effects. Given that the local development plan is concerned with the principle of development and not with any individual design approach, I consider that these design issues can be adequately addressed through the development management process.

7. Although separated from other significant housing areas, the site is reasonably close to employment, shopping and other local facilities, is accessible by public transport, benefits from available school and other service capacity (according to the council's site assessment report), and appears otherwise suitable for residential development. However other uses might also be acceptable, and therefore a mixed use designation on the proposals map would be appropriate and in keeping with the wider character of the area.

8. Under Issue 2 I did not identify any requirement to allocate additional brownfield sites in order to meet the housing land requirements. However given this site's availability and apparent suitability for development, I conclude that it should be identified as an opportunity site in the plan. In reaching this conclusion I also note that the site has been the subject of a degree of public consultation through the main issues report. A reference to the need for a noise assessment can be included in the notes in Appendix 2.

#### Land at Blackhills of Cairnrobin

9. This site is promoted as an extension to the adjacent Aberdeen Gateway (in Aberdeen City) and Mains of Cairnrobin (in Aberdeenshire) business and industrial parks, and to provide the land for a road to link these two business areas.

10. Although now somewhat enclosed by the allocated and developed business land to the west and south, this site retains an open countryside character that contributes to the landscape setting of the Aberdeen Gateway Business Park and the southern edge of Cove. The site contributes to the openness of the view from Cove Road and of the approach to the city along the minor road from Findon. The quarry to the east could be considered as a green belt use. I therefore conclude that the site's current green belt status is appropriate in terms of the green belt purposes set out in Scottish Planning Policy.

11. Green belt releases are sometimes required, but in this case there is, if anything, something of an oversupply of employment land allocations, as demonstrated by Table 2 of the proposed plan. While I recognise the possible benefits of linking the business land to the west and south of the site by a new road through the site, it is not essential for the land itself to be allocated for employment use in order for this to be achieved.

12. An important concern relates to the proximity of Blackhills Quarry to the east of the site. The quarry has recently been extended to bring the area of potential blasting closer to the Blackhills of Cairnrobin site. Although a substantial bund has been put in place, a risk remains that noise, vibration and pressure waves from the quarry would affect the amenity of any occupiers of business premises on the representation site, and could give rise to complaints. Development on the representation site would be closer to the quarry operations than any other occupied buildings outside the control of the quarry operator (with the possible exception of a single property at Rigifa Farm). The Health and Safety Executive has described (albeit some 13 years ago in 2003) a separation distance of 400 metres between 'housing and other development' and the quarry boundary as 'a minimum good practice'. Such a distance would encompass most if not all of the representation site. I consider the Health and Safety Executive's views on this matter to be authoritative.

13. The merits of this site were considered at the time of the examination of the existing adopted plan, when it was concluded that, pending the working out of the quarry, the site should not be allocated and its current green belt designation retained, to avoid unnecessarily sterilising important mineral resources. I agree with the reasoning and conclusions reached at that time. Since the last examination, a permission has been granted for an extension to the quarry which has been (at least partially) implemented. However, development close to the quarry could still give rise to complaints, so the fact of the recent permission and quarry extension does not lead me to reach a different conclusion now. For these reasons, and given the absence of a pressing need for further employment land release, I conclude that the site should remain in the green belt and not be allocated for business development at this time.

#### Land at Heathvale

14. The site comprises grazing land to the west and gorse scrub on more elevated land to the east. It is highly visible from the A956 Wellington Road which forms the western boundary. As such, the openness of the site, combined with the openness of Loirston Loch to the west, currently contributes positively to the landscape setting of this approach to Aberdeen.

15. The character of this approach will change following the development of the OP59 Loirston site and OP60 Charleston site further south. The site will then be separated by over 500 metres from other substantial areas of green belt. Paragraph 49 of Scottish Planning Policy states that green belts may be designated around a city. While paragraph 51 goes on to describe how the spatial form of green belts can vary, taking the form of buffers, corridors, strips or wedges, I do not consider that this relatively small pocket of land, isolated from open countryside, can form part of a green belt in any meaningful sense. I therefore conclude that it should be removed from the green belt. (Following on from this conclusion, there is also no logic in the very small areas of land immediately to the north and south-west of the site remaining in the green belt.)

16. However, the site continues to play a positive role in the green space network, improving the visual amenity of this important approach into Aberdeen, particularly due to its

relationship with Loirston Loch to the west and links beyond into open countryside. Although an access from the south may be feasible and proximity to employment and services will improve following the development at Loirston, I am not therefore convinced that the plan should offer positive support for residential development here. Given the limited scope that exists for new greenfield releases, I therefore conclude that the land should remain designated as part of the green space network and should not be identified for development at the current time.

Land at Hydrogen Fuelling Station

17. I note that the site of the hydrogen fuelling station is not identified on the proposals map. However given that this development benefits from planning permission, and is relatively small, I do not consider that it is essential that it be separately designated in the local development plan. No change is therefore required.

Land at Rigifa Farm

18. These two nearby sites are located on arable land on the southern fringe of Cove. The openness of the sites provides a clear contrast between the agricultural landscape to the south of Cove Road and the residential areas to the north. Despite the development of the Aberdeen Gateway Business Park to the south-west and the presence of Blackhills Quarry to the south-east, this rural character remains apparent. The site therefore contributes positively to the landscape setting of Cove. Cove Road at this point also forms a particularly strong green belt edge, whereas the site boundaries proposed in the representation do not correspond to any existing features on the ground. For these reasons I conclude that the current green belt status of this land is justified. Because these sites form part of a strip of farmland separating Cove from the quarry operation at Blackhills, and tying in to the landscape strip that has been maintained around the Aberdeen Gateway Business Park, I also consider that the green space network designation is justified.

19. Releases of additional green belt land are sometimes required, but in this case I have concluded under Issue 2 that there is very little scope to allocate additional greenfield land. In any event, although the sites display some advantages as development sites, the proximity to the quarry operations at Blackhills is of concern. I note that a 250 metre separation distance would be maintained, but the letter from the Health and Safety Executive (referred to above) described a 400 metre gap as ‘minimum good practice’.

20. The merits of this site (possibly with somewhat different boundaries) were considered at the time of the examination of the existing adopted plan, when it was concluded that it should not be identified as an opportunity site, principally due to the proximity of the quarry. I agree with the reasoning and conclusions reached at that time, and am not aware of any changes in circumstance of such significance as to lead me to reach a different conclusion now. For these reasons, and given the absence of a pressing need for further housing or employment land release, I conclude that the site should retain its designation as green belt and green space network and not be allocated for built development.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that:

1. The land at 34-40 Abbotswell Road edged in red in the plan accompanying

representation 64 from Stewart Milne Homes and John Lawrie (Aberdeen) Ltd be identified as an opportunity site on the proposals map and in Appendix 2, and designated as a Mixed Use Area (H2) on the proposals map.

2. In Appendix 2, the appropriate site size be given, the Policy be given as Mixed Use, and the Other Factors given as 'Suitable for residential use. A noise assessment will be required.'

3. The land at Heathvale edged in red in Figure 1 of representation 143 from Mr and Mrs Nicol, and the small adjoining areas of land to the north and south-west, be removed from the green belt.

<b>Issue 15</b>	<b>CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT GENERAL</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Page 26; Appendix 4	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>James Sinclair (3)  Queen Street Church of Scotland (18)  Scottish Enterprise (120)  Aberdeen Civic Society (136)  Hammerson plc (158)  Scottish Government Planning and Architecture Division (164)  Irene Strachan (187)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	City Centre	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme</u></p> <p>3, 18: Concerns relating to concept developments outlined in the City Centre Masterplan, the materials used and transportation and access impacts</p> <p>120: Support the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme.</p> <p><u>Mix of Uses in the City Centre</u></p> <p>136: Paragraph 3.18 should include residential as these uses contribute to the vitality of the centre.</p> <p><u>Retail Core and Union Square</u></p> <p>158: Support the inclusion of Union Square within the City Centre Retail Core.</p> <p><u>Town Centre Strategies</u></p> <p>164: There needs to be commitment to progress the development of town centre strategies, as per paragraph 65 of Scottish Planning Policy. We would suggest the inclusion of a 'connection' in the development plan, to allow the spatial elements of the town centre strategies to be developed into Supplementary Guidance as and when they are prepared.</p> <p><u>Public Realm City Centre Improvements</u></p> <p>187: A number of suggestions are put forward for improving the city centre and the public realm. These include providing a roof top restaurant for His Majesty's Theatre, greening the</p>		

Castlegate, emphasising the Salvation Army building, green space should be located in front of St Andrew's Cathedral, provide a skatepark and amphitheatre, Woolmanhill Hospital should be regenerated into housing and possibility and 6 bed mini ward, sorting out the wind tunnelling on Union Street.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme

3: All decision making on future city centre developments removed from Council administration officials.

120: Amend the Plan to place greater emphasis on identifying and securing funding mechanisms and delivery of essential infrastructure to secure the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan

Town Centre Strategies

164: Amend the Proposed Plan to provide a suitable statement to set out that, following the preparation of town centre health checks, town centre strategies will be prepared to deliver improvements to the town centres, and that Supplementary Guidance will be brought forward to cover the spatial elements of town centre strategies.

Retail Core and Union Square

158: Union Square should be identified as an Opportunity Site.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

Town Centre Strategies

164: The long term vision for the City Centre has been progressed through the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD33). The document was agreed at Full Council on 24 June 2015 (RD67). The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 outlines four key themes, eight objectives and a number of proposed projects and interventions for the City Centre. Future Masterplans will be worked up to provide detail on specific projects and interventions; these will be feed into future Aberdeen Local Development Plans at the relevant time. Retail Health Checks will continue to be implemented bi-annually to check activity, physical environment, property, accessibility, and community of our retail centres, with the next checks programmed for 2016. The exact nature of the Supplementary Guidance documents which will be derived from the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 are unknown at this time. The Local Development Plan Team will be heavily involved with the City Centre Masterplan Team to research and deliver the detailed Supplementary Guidance documents when these come forward, and embed these into future Aberdeen Local Development Plans.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme

3, 18, 120: The support for the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 is welcomed.

The objections submitted relate to the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015, which was consulted on just prior to the Proposed Plan, and in which a number of conceptual developments were outlined. It is expected that site specific developments within the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 will be further worked up by the City Centre Masterplan Team in conjunction with other Council Teams and Departments, and these will then feed into future Aberdeen Local Development Plans. The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 time frame goes beyond the 10 year scope of the Local Development Plan. Identifying and securing funding mechanisms for the developments outlined in the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 will be the remit of the City Centre Masterplan Team. Transportation, access to existing facilities and community uses, and materials used would be assessed within a site specific Masterplan and/or planning application.

Delegated powers and the ability for Officers to make decisions, is outlined within Section 56 Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (CD01), and Section 43A Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended (CD02). The delegated powers given to Officers in Aberdeen City is subject to Committee approval.

#### Mix of Uses in the City Centre

136: Paragraph 3.18 of the Proposed Plan outlines that the city centre is a place where people choose to live, visit, meet socially and it offers a wide range of good and services. Therefore, the residential nature of the city centre is outlined within the paragraph already. The principle of residential use in the city centre is also supported with the Proposed Harmony of Uses Supplementary Guidance (CD25). Proposed Plan Policy NC1: City Centre Developments – Regional Centre outlines that development within the city centre must contribute towards the delivery of the vision for the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015. This document says that a mix of uses within the city centre will help to achieve the goal of a vibrant city centre. As outlined above, it is expected that a number of site specific Masterplans will be developed providing further detail on the conceptual developments with the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015. Within these will be proposals for residential developments.

#### Retail Core and Union Square

158: The support for the inclusion of Union Square within the City Centre Retail Core is welcomed.

In 2013 a retail study (CD16) was commissioned by the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Planning Authority, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to investigate the retail provision and needs of the region. The study identified a requirement to allocate further 30,000 - 35,000 square metres of retail space in the city centre to 2022. Following consultation on the Main Issues Report (CD29), the Proposed Plan, in paragraph 3.22, identifies four areas in the city centre where retail development would be supported: OP102 Crooked Lane/George Street, OP67 Aberdeen Market, OP96 Upper/Basement Floors 73-149 Union Street and the OP91 Marischal Square development. This paragraph also says that further expansion and improvements to the existing retail stock in the City Centre Retail Core will be encouraged and this could include the main shopping centres at Bon Accord, St Nicholas, Trinity and Union Square. Further detail on this will be addressed through the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 to ensure flexibility and delivery.

We do not consider it necessary to identify Union Square as an Opportunity Site. The Union Square development sits within the City Centre Retail Core zoning which is the preferred location for major retail development; therefore the principle of retail development in this area is supported and encouraged. Were a planning application to come forward, the scale of development would need to support the wider aims of the Local Development Plan; ensuring there is a resilient, safe, attractive, accessible and well connected city centre. A Proposal of Application Notice ([151362](#)) is pending for the site to extend the shopping centre to provide additional mixed use floorspace.

Public Realm City Centre Improvements

187: The Proposed Plan supports the development of quality places which add to the social, economic, environmental and cultural attractiveness of the city, as outlined in paragraph 3.1, Policy D1 and the six qualities of successful placemaking.

A number of concepts for improving the public realm of the city centre are outlined with the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD33). As outlined above it is expected site specific Masterplans will be brought forward by the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme Team. Conceptual developments outlined within the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 which are relevant to the representation focus on the Castlegate including the Citadel. A number of public realm developments are also outlined. When the site specific Masterplans/planning applications for the concepts in the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 are submitted, further public consultation will take place whereby many of these public realm issues can be explored in detail. The NHS is responsible for health care provision and communication regarding services would be better directed towards them.

Air Quality is an issue for Aberdeen City and we exceed both European Union and UK air quality targets for nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matters (CD37). Three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) exist within Aberdeen City, and one of these is in the City Centre (encompassing Union Street, Market Street, Virginia Street, Commerce Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street, and parts of Holburn Street, King Street and Victoria Road). This is outlined in paragraph 3.50 of the Proposed Plan and the Proposed Air Quality Supplementary Guidance (CD25). Policy T4: Air Quality and Supplementary Guidance Air Quality (CD25) state that development proposals which will have a detrimental impact on air quality will not be permitted unless mitigation measures are proposed and agreed. Policy T3: Sustainable and Active Travel encourages active non-motorised travel which will assist in combating poor air quality.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme

1. The Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan is an important and exciting initiative for the future of the city that is perhaps dealt with too briefly in the proposed plan. Successful implementation of the masterplan will doubtless require a strong focus on securing funding and delivering infrastructure, as is argued by Scottish Enterprise. However, infrastructure and delivery are primarily concerns for the action programme rather than the proposed plan itself.
2. The action programme addresses (as it is required to do) the policies and proposals that

are contained in the proposed plan. But because the city centre masterplan area is not included as a formal proposal in the proposed plan, it does not feature as a separate entry in the action programme. Site OP80, the Bon Accord Masterplan area, covers a large part of the city centre, but the entry in the proposed action programme for this site is short and does not address funding or infrastructure issues. It may be that more could usefully be said on these matters in the final version of the action programme, and in future local development plans, but this is outside the scope of this examination.

3. The comment relating to Queen Street church appears to relate to the detail of the Bon Accord Masterplan (OP80), or the City Centre Masterplan, rather than to the content of the proposed plan.

4. The duty on the planning authority to prepare a local development plan for their area is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

#### Mix of Uses in the City Centre

5. Paragraph 3.18 of the proposed plan describes the diversity of the city centre in terms of its uses and functions, including as a place to live. I therefore consider that the concerns expressed by Aberdeen Civic Society in this regard have already been adequately addressed.

#### Retail Core and Union Square

6. In contrast to the other retail opportunity sites identified in the proposed plan at OP102 Crooked Lane/George Street, OP67 Aberdeen Market, OP96 73-149 Union Street and OP91 Marischal Square, Union Square is an established modern retail development. While the other retail opportunity sites in the city centre have emerged out of a comprehensive study (the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2013) and have been subject to consultation through the main issues report, there is no similar strong evidence before the examination to demonstrate the suitability of Union Square for further significant retail development. I therefore conclude that Union Square should not be added as an opportunity site. This is not to say that there may not be opportunities for further enhancements to the Union Square development, but these are best considered in the supportive context of Policy NC2 of the plan and/ or through the next review of the local development plan.

#### Town Centre Strategies

7. Paragraphs 65 and 66 of Scottish Planning Policy expect local authorities to prepare strategies to deliver improvements to town centres, and include the spatial elements of these in the local development plan or supplementary guidance. Paragraphs 3.19 to 3.22 and Appendix 5 of the proposed plan explain the role of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme, which the council intends to adopt as supplementary guidance, and has also supplied as core document 33. The Masterplan and Delivery Programme appears to largely conform with the guidance for town centre strategies given in Annex A to Scottish Planning Policy, and so, in my view, could reasonably be considered to be such a strategy.

8. Policy NC1 and Appendix 5 refer to the Masterplan and Delivery Programme in a manner that I consider to provide a sufficient 'hook' in the plan for this piece of supplementary guidance. Certain important spatial components of the Masterplan have

been incorporated into the proposed local development plan, including the opportunity sites at Marischal Square, Aberdeen Market and Woolmanhill. Despite the difference in nomenclature, I therefore conclude that the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy have been met as regards the strategy for Aberdeen city centre.

9. However the council’s supplementary guidance on the hierarchy of centres indicates that Rosemount and Torry, in addition to the city centre, are also identified as ‘town centres’ within the administrative area of Aberdeen City. These two centres are not referred to individually in the retail section of the proposed plan or in the proposed action programme. There is therefore no indication that strategies to improve these town centres are being considered by the council, as required by Scottish Planning Policy. I conclude that the proposed plan is deficient in this regard, and recommend below that references to the preparation of strategies for these town centres be included in the plan. I note that health checks and proposed retail strategies for both town centres were included in the Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2013. These could form the starting points for the preparation of town centre improvement strategies for these centres.

10. Action 3.4 in the proposed action programme states that documentation on town centre health checks will be produced in 2016. The council confirms above that retail health checks will continue to be implemented bi-annually. Scottish Planning Policy indicates that health checks should be updated every two years, and used to inform development plans. However there is no requirement for the health check programme to be specifically referenced in the development plan. I therefore conclude that the council has met national expectations regarding town centre health checks.

Public Realm City Centre Improvements

11. A number of detailed suggestions are made in this representation for public realm improvements, mainly in and around the east end of Union Street. I have no doubt that many of these ideas may have merit, but they are largely of a detailed nature more suited to the City Centre Masterplan than to the local development plan. In the main the suggestions relate to the way areas or buildings are managed or maintained, rather than to land use change or to works that would require planning permission. I therefore conclude that no change to the proposed plan is required.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that an additional paragraph be inserted after paragraph 3.28, to read:

“Town centres have also been designated at Torry and Rosemount and are defined on the proposals map. Strategies to improve these centres will be developed, informed by town centre health checks. Any spatial elements of these strategies will be included in supplementary guidance or the next local development plan.”

<b>Issue 16</b>	<b>NEW POLICY</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	No reference in Plan	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) (40)                  The Theatres Trust (92)                  Cults, Bielside &amp; Milltimber Community Council (102)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	New Policies Proposed	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>Gas Holder Site (OP107)</u></p> <p>40: Aberdeen Local Development Plan should include a Policy in order to enable strategic direction when planning for the future of Gas Holder Sites.</p> <p><u>Tourism, Leisure and Culture</u></p> <p>92: The Local Development Plan should ensure that all residents and visitors have access to cultural opportunities. Policies that support and enhance cultural facilities and activities can be used as a catalyst for wider cultural development and city regeneration.</p> <p><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <p>102: A Policy should be developed to ensure infrastructure is delivered regardless of whether a development is completed.</p>		
<b>Modifications sought by those submitting representations:</b>		
<p><u>Gas Holder Site (OP107)</u></p> <p>40: New Policy to be included in the next Local Development Plan Policy: Hazardous Installations. Hazardous installations will be identified in the Strategic Development Plan. The Council will take into account the need to incentivise and fund decommissioning.</p> <p><u>Tourism, Leisure and Culture</u></p> <p>92: The Local Development Plan should contain a Policy (possibly named Tourism, Leisure and Culture) that specifically aims to protect, support and enhance existing leisure and cultural facilities from change of use or redevelopment, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a community need for that facility, as well as providing criteria for encouraging new cultural development of all sizes.</p>		

Infrastructure

102: New Policy requiring the completion of infrastructure irrespective of the completion of the development.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

Gas Holder Site (OP107)

40: The decommissioning of contaminated land is addressed in Proposed Plan Policy R2 Degraded and Contaminated Land. This Policy is framed by The Environment Act 1995 (RD03) which applies the “polluter pays” principle. As highlighted in the supporting text of the Policy, this means that the cost of remediating such land is spread among “polluters, landowners and taxpayers”. This policy also notes that PAN 33: Development of Contaminated Land (RD27) must be consulted. The PAN notes that there may be situations where the benefit of the remediation of such sites may “take priority over other policy objectives”. As such the planning process already considers the implications of remediation and its impact on the viability of developing such sites and an additional Policy would be of little benefit.

Tourism, Leisure and Culture

92: The Proposed Plan is a land use based planning document and, as such, where development proposals come forward which are culture, tourism or leisure related, or impact on such uses, they will be assessed on their merits and the appropriateness of the development within the context of the area. The importance of these uses is however recognised and this is reflected in several policies in the Plan. The Plan aims to promote the principles of Scottish Planning Policy Para 36 (CD05) including those around Placemaking. It seeks to do this by putting Placemaking at the centre of all development within the city. This is reflected by its inclusion in one of the first Policies within the plan, Policy D1 - Quality Placemaking by Design. A fundamental element of Placemaking, and of this Policy, is the importance of culture to the success of any place or city. Policy D1 does this by emphasising that “Places that are distinctive and designed with a real understanding of context will sustain and enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural attractiveness of the city.” In this way the Council recognise the importance of culture and has imbedded in a policy that applies to all development in the city.

In areas which can be specifically identified as being important to culture, tourism and leisure, this has been included in the relevant policies. For example Proposed Plan Policy NC1 City Centre Development – Regional Centre, emphasises the importance of the city centre as a city wide and regional hub for leisure and retail. It also highlights the need for a sequential approach to the location of such uses to protect and support such developments in the city centre. Proposed Plan Policy NC9 Beach and Leisure, recognises the importance of the beach as a centre of leisure and seeks to safeguard the area through a policy and a land use zoning. At a corporate level Aberdeen City Council’s administration have set out their Vision for the city in their vision document a Aberdeen – the Smarter City, 2012-2017(RD32), which includes making art and culture a priority within the city. One of the many results of this can be seen in the £30 million refurbishment of the Aberdeen Art Gallery. In light of the above it is clear that both the Council as a corporate body and the planning department through the Proposed Plan and the planning process already consider this issue in some detail. The inclusion of an additional Policy is not considered necessary.

Infrastructure

102: The importance of infrastructure is highlighted throughout Scottish Planning Policy Para 15, with a requirement for Local Development Plans to allocate sites to maximise the benefits which can be achieved from existing and new infrastructure provisions. National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) (CD04) also highlights this by showing the Scottish Governments considerable commitment to new infrastructure in the form of the new harbour at Nigg Bay and proposed rail upgrades. The availability of infrastructure was amongst the criteria examined in the Development Options Site Selection process (CD28) at Pre-Main Issues Report stage in 2013. The Proposed Plan, and the supporting Proposed Action Programme (CD47), also identify infrastructure requirement as set out in Circular 06/2013: Development Plans (CD10). Appendix 3 of the Plan sets out the expected major infrastructure requirements in each of the Proposed Masterplan Zones to highlight to developers and the community what is, or will be expected, from each development.

These infrastructural requirements will be secured through the Masterplanning and planning application process. However any infrastructure secured through the planning process must be done on the basis of the scale of development proposed and its impact. The Scottish Government sets out the circumstances in which planning obligations can be used in Circular 03/2012: Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements (CD11). This document states that any planning obligation must be related to the development and proportionate in scale. The Circular also sets out a series of policy tests, these include that any obligation must fairly and reasonable relate to the scale of the development and “be reasonable in all other respects”. All of this is done to ensure that any obligation required through the planning process is directly related to the scale of impact of the development as it is the development that must fund or part fund such obligations. If a development is not completed or does not reach a level required by the planning permission or legal agreement under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended (CD02) for the delivery of a piece infrastructure, it would not be reasonable to require its delivery. It would therefore be unreasonable and contrary to Circular 03/2012 to form a Policy which required the delivery of infrastructure to satisfy a deficit not caused by the development. However if the development were to continue at a later date the same obligations would apply and the developer would have to complete any infrastructure requirement attached to the original planning permission.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

Hazardous Substances and Installations Policy

1. Firstly, I am not clear that the matter of a suggested new policy on hazardous substances and installations forms part of the representation Scotia Gas Networks made to the proposed plan. The relevant representation form refers only to the way the gas holder site is designated on the proposals map. The representation attaches Scotia Gas Networks’ response to the main issues report consultation. It is this earlier letter that refers to a new policy, but it is not clear that this point is being maintained in the later representation. However given that there is some uncertainty on this matter, I am prepared to consider the case for a new policy.

2. The council points to the existence of Policy R2 of the proposed plan, which already addresses degraded and contaminated land. This policy does not include the point promoted in the representation that the need to incentivise and fund decommissioning

should be taken into account. However I agree that, if this point has merit, it would be better including it in Policy R2 rather than as a new policy.

3. I do not consider that the proposed reference to hazardous installations being identified in the strategic development plan would be appropriate. It is not the role of the 'lower-tier' local development plan to give directions to the 'upper-tier' strategic development plan. I also note that Policy B6 of the proposed plan already refers to major hazards and the need to consult the Health and Safety Executive.

4. The 'polluter pays' principle is well established, but Planning Advice Note 33: Development of Contaminated Land also acknowledges that there may be situations where the anticipated benefits of remediation are significant enough for them to take priority over other policy objectives. From the evidence before me, I have no way of knowing whether or not this would be the case for the gas holder site. This would be a matter to determine at the development management stage. The gas holder site (OP107) is considered further under Issue 13.

5. However the broader policy point appears to be accepted by the council above. In the balance of planning considerations I accept that there may be occasions where an otherwise sub-optimal use may be considered as a means of funding the removal of contamination. It is preferable to include this reference in the plan itself rather than rely on a reference in the planning advice note that does not form part of the statutory development plan, and will not be immediately apparent to users of the plan. I therefore recommend a suitable form of words below.

#### Tourism, Leisure and Culture

6. Few would dispute the value of the arts and culture, and of the buildings and uses associated with them, to the vibrancy and vitality of cities. The council points to Policies D1, NC1 and NC9 of the proposed plan as providing some support for cultural facilities. However I find that none of these policies address the matters of concern to the Theatres Trust. Policy D1 refers to the benefits high quality places confer to the culture of the city, rather than the benefits of cultural uses to the delivery of high quality places; Policy NC1 directs major leisure and footfall-generating development to the city centre, but does not refer to arts and culture directly; and Policy NC9 only refers widely to leisure and is limited in its geographical scope to the defined Beach and Leisure area. It may be the case that other corporate documents of the council address culture and the arts more directly, but these will be of much less relevance in a planning context than the contents of the development plan.

7. Paragraph 60 of Scottish Planning Policy states that the planning system should apply a town centre first policy to a range of uses that attract significant numbers of people, including cultural and community facilities. It is not necessary for local development plans to cover every possible eventuality or potential change of use, and Scottish Planning Policy does not require the inclusion of policies to protect arts and leisure uses from alternative development. No evidence has been submitted to indicate that this is a particular threat in Aberdeen. However I consider that a minor addition to Policy NC1 to reflect paragraph 60 of Scottish Planning Policy would serve to clarify the important role of the city centre for arts and culture and go some way to meeting the concerns of the Theatres Trust. The relevant recommendation is included under Issue 20.

Infrastructure

8. Circular 3/2012: Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements describes what can reasonably be sought from developers through planning obligations. Paragraph 22 states that staged or phased payments can help the overall viability and success of a project. Policy I1 of the proposed plan sets out the requirements regarding the provision of necessary infrastructure to support development.

9. Each development will give rise to its own individual infrastructure requirements. In some cases there may be some existing infrastructure capacity, and the need for enhancements may not arise for many years. It is also the case that developers may not be able to predict with certainty the pace with which building will proceed, and therefore when the need for particular new items of infrastructure will arise. Unforeseen events, such as slowdowns in the wider economy, may influence build rates and be outside the control of the developer.

10. In many cases it would not be reasonable to require the full provision of all the infrastructure that would be required to service the entire development at earlier phases of building. This may particularly be the case for large developments (several of which are proposed in this plan) which will not be completed for many years. Developers have a reasonable need to manage their cashflow, and to require the provision of infrastructure in advance of when it is needed and when the development is incomplete could threaten the financial viability of some schemes.

11. These are all matters that I consider are best considered through the development management process, within the context of the broad principles set out in Policy I1. For the reasons set out above I therefore conclude that it would not be reasonable to include a policy requirement for infrastructure associated with new development to be delivered within a set time frame.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that the following sentence be added at the end of Policy R2: "The significance of the benefits of remediating a contaminated site, and the viability of funding this, will be taken into account when considering proposals for the alternative use of such sites."

<b>Issue 17</b>	<b>ALLOCATED SITES: CITY CENTRE AND URBAN</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Page 87-90, Proposals Map, Policy R4, Appendix 2, Appendix 5, Appendix 6	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Heri Fernandes (2)  Pootung Cottage (17)  Torry Community Council (35)  St Mark's Church (67)  F&amp;C REIT Asset Management (87)  The New Aberdeen Mosque and Community Centre Project (116),  Charlie House Appeal (Registered Charity SC042643) (121)  John Lewis (139)  Aberdeen Football Club (146)  NHS Grampian (148)  Park Home Estates (170)  George Murray (180)  Susie Murray (181)  Irene Strachan (187)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Opportunity Sites within the existing built environment	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>OP36 Charlie House</u></p> <p>121, 148: Supports the identification of OP36 for the delivery of Charlie House as a respite and care facility to support children with complex disabilities and life limiting illnesses. Aberdeen City Council have failed to remove the Urban Green Space zoning when drafting the Proposals Map. Request the Urban Green Space zoning is removed from this site on the Proposals Map on the basis the zoning conflicts with the Opportunity Site zoning. Support given to the retention of the site boundary as contained in the Development Bid, in order to accommodate infrastructure works and landscaping.</p> <p><u>OP66 Manor Walk</u></p> <p>170: Mobile Home Park Site should be allocated for any type of housing, not just social housing. Mixed Use would be a suitable classification as it also includes residential use.</p> <p><u>OP77 Cornhill Hospital</u></p> <p>180, 181: Too many trees are to be destroyed in and around the area. This will have a negative impact on privacy and wildlife, including nesting birds. (<u>Note</u> - A petition was submitted for this site. The date on the petition is April 2014; 11 months <u>prior</u> to the</p>		

consultation on the Local Development Plan. The petition relates to the planning application for the site ([130381](#)), not the Proposed Plan.)

OP81 Denburn and Woolmanhill

67, 87, 148, 187: Many of the members of St Mark's church use the car parking spaces in the Denburn Car Park, not only on Sundays but during the week to attend the activities which take place in the church and hall. A large part of our revenue comes from hall lets from outside organisations, and good car parking facilities are vital. Support the identification of OP81 for a Mixed Use development. Woolmanhill Hospital should be regenerated into housing. Respondent queries whether it could have a 6 bed mini ward to prepare patients leaving hospital for return to their homes - allowing relatives and friends to visit and ease transition from hospital to home.

OP85 King Street/Beach Esplanade

116: Entry for OP85 includes the sentence: "until proposals for these uses are progressed, or if a decision is made not to pursue them, the existing open space use will be protected by NE3 Urban Green Space." The middle part of this sentence ("or if a decision is made not to pursue them") is unhelpful to the community as there is no question of the development not occurring.

OP87 Pittodrie Park

146: Aberdeen Football Club welcomes the allocation of OP87 for a proposed residential development. Planning Permission in Principle has been granted and the redevelopment of Pittodrie stadium is linked to the construction of a new stadium on site OP59.

OP97 Victoria Road Primary School

35: This site should be recognised as within Torry, and not the City Centre. A new section specific to Torry should be created within the Plan. The Community Council affirm their commitment to the retention of granite buildings, and this building should be retained for conversion to social needs-led housing, including key workers.

OP99 The Waterfront, Torry

17, 35: Too many houses/flats are proposed This will have a negative impact as there is nowhere to park and the streets are already narrow (especially St Fitticks Road), the pavements do not exist. Why close the school and then build more houses? This site should be recognised as within Torry, and not the City Centre. A new section specific to Torry should be created within the Plan.

OP102 George Street/Crooked Lane

2, 139: Comments in Support: We would be supportive of new retail development on this site where it enhances the public realm and attractiveness of this part of the city centre. John Lewis considers that the current area would benefit from improvements and this development could provide the catalyst for achieving this and enhanced links into the John Lewis store.

Comments Against: There are already two large malls located in the City Centre. Union

Street is already in a sorry state due to shops moving from the high street into the malls. The small businesses in the city centre are already struggling due to the downturn in the economy, and opening/extending malls will add to their difficulties. A resident of St Andrews Street, and is not prepared to sell up and move out to make way for this development. The allocation is leading to uncertainties and will lead to residents finding it difficult to sell their houses.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

OP36 Charlie House

121, 148: Remove Urban Green Space zoning from the Proposals Map at OP36.

OP66 Manor Walk

170: Change of classification from Social Housing to Mixed Use.

OP77 Cornhill Hospital

180: Keep the trees.

OP81 Denburn and Woolmanhill

67, 148: Clarification on what car parking facilities will be available and urge that there is not a reduction in the number of spaces available.

OP85 King Street/Beach Esplanade

116: Change the entry for OP85 so it reads: "site identified by Council resolution for a Mosque, community facilities and open space. Until proposals for these issues are progressed or finalised, the existing open space will be protected by Policy NE3 Urban Green Space."

OP87 Pittodrie Park

146: The extant planning permission should be noted in the description of OP87 on page 89.

OP97 Victoria Road Primary School

35: This site should be recognised as within Torry, and not the City Centre. A new section specific to Torry should be created within the Plan. The Community Council affirm their commitment to the retention of granite buildings, and this building should be retained for conversion to social needs-led housing, including key workers.

OP99 The Waterfront, Torry

17, 35: Fewer flats/houses. Space is required for children to play / hang out. Make St. Fitticks Road broader. A shop in the area would be an advantage Clean the streets and remove the recycling more regularly, especially where Abby Road meets St. Fitticks Street. A new section specific to Torry should be created within the Plan.

OP102 George Street/Crooked Lane

2: Abandon the proposals.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

OP36 Charlie House

121, 148: The site was previously considered by Reporters during the Examination of the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (Issue 81) (CD44) when a proposal for residential development of circa 40 dwellings was considered unsuitable by both Aberdeen City Council and the Reporter. The current proposal for the site is the development of a specialist children's respite and care facility. Support for the identification of the site as an Opportunity Site is noted. The decision to retain the site as Urban Green Space has been made intentionally and is not a mapping error. The site is still considered Urban Green Space and any subsequent planning application for this site would need to be assessed against Proposed Plan Policy NE3 – Urban Green Space. Policy NE3 states that permission will not be granted to redevelop Urban Green Space for any use other than recreation or sport, however does make provision for exceptions to this general rule so long as an equivalent and equally convenient and accessible area for public space is laid out and made available in the locality by the applicant for Urban Green Space purposes. Other criteria which any proposal must also meet are also noted in the Policy. Development of this site for the use proposed has been considered acceptable by Officers in principle given the proximity of the site to Woodend Hospital, the proposed location of built development away from areas at risk of flooding, and the intention to only build upon a small proportion of the site area, with the remaining site area developed as sensory and other interactive gardens which would enhance both the landscape character and quality of the Urban Green Space at this location.

OP66 Manor Walk

170: This allocation has been carried forward from the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) where it is listed as OP21. The site zoning for the Mobile Home Park is 'Residential Areas (H1)' which is still considered appropriate given that the site sits within an established residential area. It is neither considered necessary nor suitable to amend the site zoning to Mixed Use as the respondent suggests. Proposals for non-residential use within this area would be considered against Proposed Plan Policy H1.

OP77 Cornhill Hospital

180, 181: The allocation is subject to a [Development Brief](#) which is Supplementary Guidance to the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42). An application for Planning Permission in Principle for Demolition of former Hospital Buildings and Proposed Residential Development of 323 units with associated car parking, open space and infrastructure was submitted in March 2013 ([130381](#)). At its meeting of 12th February 2015, the City Council's Planning Development Management Committee agreed a willingness to approve the Planning Permission in Principle application, subject to the conclusion of a legal agreement under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended. Negotiations on this legal agreement are ongoing.

During the determination of this application for Planning Permission in Principle an

Arboricultural Impact Plan was submitted by the applicant and was assessed and considered acceptable by Aberdeen City Council. The Committee Report (RD76) for the application notes that: "A total of 207 trees were identified in the (tree) survey, with 17 trees identified as category-U, meaning that they are not considered to be suitable for retention. Of the 190 trees surveyed as 'appearing sound and healthy', 2 are category-A, 49 category-B and 149 category-C. A total of 91 trees are to be felled to allow the proposed development. Of those 101 trees, none are category-A, 14 are category-B and 77 are category-C. Whilst it is recognised that a significant number of trees would be removed for facilitate the proposed development, it is noted both that a degree of tree loss on this site was foreseen in order to deliver the level of development envisaged by the Cornhill Development Brief and that the trees to be removed are predominantly of Category-C quality. Replacement tree planting, at a minimum rate of 2 new specimens for every tree to be removed, is recommended in order to ensure that the site maintains its landscape character and the character of the Conservation Area is not adversely affected. The applicants have submitted proposals for replacement planting, however a fully detailed scheme will be required, incorporating an Arboricultural Impact Assessment in order to further establish the impact on retained trees and make recommendations accordingly." This requirement for a detailed scheme of planting is included as a Condition to the proposed consent (Condition 12). An associated application for Conservation Area Consent was submitted at the same time ([130382](#)) and was approved on 21 July 2015.

OP81 Denburn and Woolmanhill

67, 87, 148, 187: Support for the identification of the site as Mixed Use development opportunity is noted. At the current moment there is no planning application for the site. Therefore, specific questions regarding the design of the site, including proposed car parking provision, are unable to be answered at this time. There will be, in due course, more opportunities for the public to comment on this site when a planning application is lodged. At the moment all comments regarding layout and design of the proposed development have been noted. The Council approved the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD33) on 24 June 2015 and Aberdeen City Council is currently working on how to best resource and deliver the range of projects that come under the City Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan accepts that a City Centre Car Parking Strategy is needed in order to: maximise the offering of Park and Ride sites to reduce the overall number of vehicles entering the city centre; maximise current off-street parking available in the city centre; and, increase membership to the Aberdeen Car Club. The Masterplan and Delivery Programme recognises that the Denburn car park is very important to a number of residential and non-residential uses in the area. Therefore any redevelopment that may take place in the Denburn/Woolmanhill area will need to take into consideration car parking provision and recommendations from the intended Car Parking Strategy.

OP85 King Street/Beach Esplanade

116: This allocation has been carried forward from the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42) where it is listed as OP107. The wording which is included within the Proposed Plan is consistent with the wording in the extant Plan. It is considered that there is no need to change the wording as per the suggested modification as the text as currently drafted allows the Council the comfort that the Urban Green Space designation will be protected should proposals for the site not take place. The Respondent's commitment to the delivery of the project is noted.

OP87 Pittodrie Park

146: Support for the continued allocation of Proposed Plan Site OP87 for residential development is noted. The proposed modification to Appendix 2 is discussed separately under Issue 40.

OP97 Victoria Road Primary School

35: This allocation has been carried forward from the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012 (CD42). It should be noted that the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2014 (CD12) requires 7,500 homes on brownfield sites up to 2026, and residential development on this site will assist in meeting this requirement. The Proposed Plan continues to identify this site as a brownfield site and notes its suitability for sensitive residential redevelopment. This would not preclude the development of the site for social housing or key worker accommodation. With regards the potential demolition of this building, the Proposed Plan does not suggest that demolition of the existing building on site would be necessary for development, and indeed Proposed Plan Policy D5 – Our Granite Heritage notes that the Council seeks the retention and appropriate re-use, conversion and adaption of all granite features, structures and buildings.

It should however be noted that the building in question has not been listed for its architectural or historic interest, and the site does not lie within a Conservation Area. Demolition of the buildings on site could be progressed under Part 23, Class 70 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (RD77). The Reporter should also note that an application for detailed planning permission to demolish the existing Victoria Road Primary School and subsequently erect 62 residential units with associated open space, parking and infrastructure was validated on 03 August 2015 is currently pending consideration by Aberdeen City Council ([151260](#)). With regards the Respondent's suggestion that a new section specific to Torry should be included in the Local Development Plan, Aberdeen City Council recognises that Torry is a community with strong architectural and spatial character. The Proposed Plan identifies eight Masterplan Zones in the City containing allocated greenfield sites. The allocated sites in Torry are not greenfield allocations and therefore do not warrant being included as a Masterplan Zone nor being given a new section in the Proposed Plan.

OP99 The Waterfront, Torry

17, 35: This allocation has been carried forward from the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012) (CD42) where it was listed as OP129 and was previously considered by Reporters during the Examination of this Plan (CD44, Issue 79) where the Reporters considered the Council's approach to the site as reasonable. The site is covered by the [Old Torry Planning Study 2002](#) and this document would be considered in any future applications for planning permission. The Study is not however Supplementary Guidance to the extant Local Development Plan 2012. A proportion of the site has planning permission/has been developed although a proportion remains without permission, hence the continued identification of this site as an Opportunity Site in the Proposed Plan. As future applications for planning permission come forward within this site there will be further opportunities for the public to comment on detailed proposals. With regards the concerns regarding traffic and parking, these points are noted and a detailed assessment of any future proposals for the site would include consideration of the Proposed Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility (CD25) as well as Proposed Plan Policy H2 Mixed Use Areas.

The respondent's suggestion that spaces for children to play/hang out is noted, and any future proposals for residential development would require to demonstrate how they would meet the terms of Proposed Plan Policy NE4 – Open Space Provision in New Development. With regards to the question over the decision to close Victoria Road School, at the time this decision was taken in 2008, the available data on School Roll Forecasts showed that the school would remain below 40% occupancy for the following 8 years. If the school had remained open then it would have remained under occupancy, making it inefficient to run, which would have been difficult to justify.

With regards the respondent's suggestion that a shop in the area would be an advantage, the Mixed Use zoning would not restrict a retail proposal so long as the scale were to be considered acceptable in the context of Proposed Plan Policy NC4 – Sequential Approach and Impact and Proposed Plan Policy NC5 – Out of Centre Proposals. Points regarding street cleaning and uplift of recycling are not planning matters. With regards the respondent's suggestion that a new section specific to Torry should be included in the Local Development Plan, Aberdeen City Council recognises that Torry is a community with strong architectural and spatial character. The Proposed Plan identifies eight Masterplan Zones in the City containing allocated greenfield sites. The allocated sites in Torry are not greenfield allocations and therefore do not warrant being included as a Masterplan Zone nor being given a new section in the Proposed Plan.

OP102 George Street/Crooked Lane

2, 139: Response to Comments in Support: The respondent's comments in support of the proposed allocation are duly noted.

Response to Comments Against: In 2013 a retail study (CD16) was commissioned in 2013 by the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Planning Authority, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council to investigate the retail take and shortcomings of the region. The study identified a requirement to allocate further 30,000 - 35,000 square metres of retail space in the city centre to 2022. This potential is driven by a combination of expenditure growth per capita and large population increases within the catchment area served by the city centre. Additional floorspace will also help to prevent expenditure leakage and maintain the city centre as the primary retail area of the North East. Following consultation on the Main Issues Report in 2014 (CD29), the Proposed Plan, in paragraph 3.22, identifies four areas in the city centre where retail development would be supported; Crooked Lane/George Street, Aberdeen Market, Upper/Basement Floors 73-149 Union Street and the Marischal Square development. With regards the respondent's comments on the inclusion of private property within the Opportunity Site boundary, this point is noted, however land ownership is not a planning matter.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

OP36 Charlie House

1. This area of rough grassland sits below the level of the adjacent hospital in the valley of a burn that runs along the south-western boundary of the site. In its current condition, the site forms a valuable part of an undeveloped green corridor through this part of Aberdeen. However with the exception of some isolated trees on the boundary, the site contains no individual features of note, and does not appear to be in any form of public use.

2. The site has been identified in the proposed plan for the development of a children's respite centre and interactive garden. In this context I have some concerns that the site's ongoing designation as urban green space creates something of an internal conflict in the plan. The wording of Policy NE3 (which addresses urban green spaces) only allows for the development of such land where alternative urban green space is provided elsewhere, but I am not clear that this is what is proposed in this case.

3. However, the development of the bulk of the site as a sensory and interactive garden would represent a significant enhancement to the recreational value and accessibility of the site, and the NE3 designation would be the appropriate means of safeguarding this garden element going forward. The council advises that the proposed new building will only take up a small proportion of the site area. For these reasons I am content that it is appropriate for the urban green space designation to remain in place.

OP66 Manor Walk

4. In response to a further information request, the council has accepted that it would not be reasonable to seek to impose a 100% affordable housing requirement on the privately owned (mobile home park) section of Site OP66. Furthermore the council suggests that the mobile home park part of the site could be removed from the opportunity site altogether. I agree that this would be the best way forward. Any aspiration Mr Fraser may have to redevelop the mobile home park for general housing could still be considered acceptable in principle under the terms of the Policy H1 designation which would continue to apply to this land.

OP77 Cornhill Hospital

5. The partial clearance of this large urban former hospital site in advance of redevelopment was well under way at the time of my site inspection. A large number of mature trees exist within and around the periphery of the site that contribute positively to the amenity of neighbouring properties and the wider area. Above, the council describes the way in which arboricultural considerations have been included in the consideration of development proposals on this site.

6. While it is not always possible to retain all trees in the course of redevelopment, it appears that the council has endeavoured to protect the most valuable specimens and secure a significant amount of replanting. Generally, the retention of particular trees is a matter of detail best considered through the masterplanning and development management processes, rather than through the development plan process which is focussed on establishing the principle of development. For these reasons I conclude that no change to the plan is required.

OP81 Denburn and Woolmanhill

7. This site consists firstly of a granite-built former hospital building that forms an imposing city centre landmark, and secondly a concrete car park and medical centre building. The details of any redevelopment proposals are currently unknown and will be for the development management process to consider. However, Appendix 2 of the proposed plan makes clear that health care uses and a level of car parking should be retained on site, as sought in the representations. On this basis I conclude that no change to the plan is required.

OP85 King Street/Beach Esplanade

8. This site forms a small part of the large continuous open space to the west of Esplanade which separates the built-up area of Aberdeen from the coast. The commitment in the plan to the development of a mosque and associated facilities on this land is clear, but the value of the land is such that I consider it reasonable for the plan to contain safeguards to address what the situation would be in the unlikely scenario that this proposal did not progress. I do not consider the current wording of the plan implies any lack of commitment to the development. For these reasons I conclude that no change is required.

OP87 Pittodrie Park

9. The proposed modification to Appendix 2 is discussed under Issue 39.

OP97 Victoria Road Primary School

10. Most of this site is occupied by semi-derelict granite-built former school buildings. Appendix 2 of the plan refers to sensitive residential development, and I consider this could be compatible with the retention and conversion of the existing buildings. Other conversion proposals, such as Site OP96, are included as opportunity sites in the plan.

11. Policy D5 of the proposed plan seeks the retention and appropriate reuse, conversion and adaptation of all granite buildings. Although it may be that the demolition of this building (because it is not listed or in a conservation area) could be carried out in isolation under permitted development rights, any planning application relating to the site would be covered by the provisions of Policy D5. Therefore it would be possible to refuse a planning application for redevelopment that involved demolition citing this policy. However, while in many ways the retention of these granite buildings would be desirable, I do not consider them to be of such architectural or streetscape value as to necessitate a specific reference to their preservation in the plan. On this basis I consider that, through Policy D5, the plan provides a suitable level of protection to the former Victoria Road School.

12. Policy H5 of the plan, relating to affordable housing, would apply to any application for residential development on the site. This would require at least 25% of the units to be affordable. No reasons have been put forward as to why this site should provide a higher affordable housing contribution than other sites across the city. On this basis I conclude that no change is required.

13. Regarding whether a separate section should have been created in Appendix 2 relating to opportunities in Torry, I consider this is primarily a matter of presentation. While I acknowledge Torry's individual character, I do not therefore consider that a change is essential, and I recommend no change.

OP99 The Waterfront, Torry

14. This opportunity site has been rolled forward from the existing adopted local development plan. It was considered as part of the examination into that plan, when it was concluded that the council's approach was reasonable, and should ensure that an adequate balance is achieved between the need for regeneration of Old Torry and the interests of local residents. It is not helpful to the certainty that the planning system is intended to create for the principle of development in development plans to be revisited unless circumstances have clearly changed. In this case, no significant changes in circumstance have been

brought to my attention. I therefore conclude that the opportunity site should remain as designated in the proposed plan.

15. I note the range of issues and suggestions made in the representation from Mrs Mackay. These reflect real concerns about the local environment, but are not matters best addressed through the local development plan. In the main these are factors that should be considered when assessing individual planning applications or through the council's other service responsibilities, such as for roads and waste collection.

OP102 George Street/Crooked Lane

16. This retail proposal emerged out of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study, which demonstrated a requirement for significant additional retail space in the city and identified this site as an opportunity for contributing towards that provision. The site includes some fine granite buildings on the St Andrew Street and George Street frontages, some of which contain residential flats on upper storeys. The site is not within a conservation area but 119-125 George Street is a listed building. Policy D5 of the plan, which seeks to retain granite buildings, would apply to any redevelopment proposals.

17. I consider that the granite buildings on the St Andrew Street and George Street frontages make an important contribution to the character and streetscape of this part of Aberdeen and ought to be retained. It is also the case that the current wording of the entry for this site in Appendix 2, referring as it does to retail development here, could naturally be of concern to residents of these buildings.

18. As the council confirmed in a response to a further information request, retail development on this site could take a number of forms. It would not necessarily be incompatible with the retention of the granite buildings and of residential uses on the upper floors of those buildings. For instance, new retail development on the southern part of the site could be integrated with existing ground floor shop premises on St Andrew Street and George Street. I therefore consider it is reasonable to retain the OP102 designation across the current extent of the site. However, for the reasons outlined above, it is also necessary to include additional references in Appendix 2 of the plan relating to the retention of the granite buildings and upper floor residential uses on the St Andrew Street and George Street frontages.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that:

1. The land outlined in red in the plan accompanying representation 170 from Colin Fraser and currently used as a mobile home park and car park be removed from Site OP66.
2. An additional sentence be added between the existing second and third sentences of the 'Other Factors' relating to Site OP102 George Street/ Crooked Lane in Appendix 2 to read:  
 "Existing traditional granite buildings on the St Andrew Street and George Street frontages, and upper floor residential uses, to be retained."

<b>Issue 18</b>	<b>POLICY D1, D2 &amp; D3: DESIGN</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Page 17-23	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Ken Hutcheson (9)                  Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council (66)                  Stewart Milne Homes (85)                  Dandara LLP (90)                  Culter Community Council (98)                  Old Aberdeen Community Council (100)                  Cults, Bielside &amp; Milltimber Community Council (102)                  The New Aberdeen Mosque and Community Centre Project (116)                  MacTaggart and Mickel Homes (123)                  Scottish Environment Protection Agency (124)                  Aberdeen Civic Society (136)                  NHS Grampian (148)                  British Airways (153)                  AA Webster and Sons (162)                  MacTaggart and Mickel Homes and Fabrizio Necchi (163)                  Old Aberdeen Heritage Society (179)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	To ensure the delivery of well designed, sustainable places that are informed by the surrounding environment and make a positive contribution to it.	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>General</u></p> <p>9: Welcome quality architecture and contemporary design.</p> <p><u>Policy D1: Placemaking by Design</u></p> <p>Support the policy 98, 116, 123, 124, 136, 162, 163</p> <p><u>Design Strategy Requirement and Supporting text</u></p> <p>85: Object to the requirement to supply a Design Strategy. This will create confusion where a Design and Access Statement is required and is an additional burden to the development industry.</p> <p><u>Update the Reference to the Supplementary Guidance Appendix</u></p> <p>85: It is not clear if the criteria set out under paragraph 3.5 are provided as Supplementary Guidance or part of the text pertaining to the Policy. Further confusion arises through</p>		

reference to quality placemaking in Policy D1 but that reference changes to successful placemaking in Section 3.5. The qualities are the same, but a consistent description would be helpful.

136: Concern that paragraph 3.3 suggest some developments will not be of a scale to contribute to effective placemaking.

#### Define Placemaking

100: Define 'Placemaking'. Important buildings of any age, together with conservation areas, listed buildings and the context of these buildings must be preserved and enhanced.

#### Overlap between Policies

123, 162, 163: There is overlap between this and D2: landscape. Would welcome further information on the Aberdeen City and Shire Design Review Panel.

#### Additional Text

124: Support the promotion of resource efficient development

#### Incorrect Appendices

85: The appendices are incorrect

#### Policy D2: Landscape

Support for the Policy: 98, 116, 123

116: We have used these principles in designing the New Aberdeen Mosque and Community Centre

#### Incorrect Appendices

102: The text in Policy D2 refers to Technical Guidance Notes in Appendix 6. The reference is incorrect, it should be Appendix 5.

#### Expansion of the Policy

123, 162, 163: Welcome the inclusion of the sentence, "create new landscapes where none exist and where there are few existing features". The employment of robust, sensitive and strong landscape framework can overcome any concerns regarding allocations of sites. It requires to be expanded as a means by which other aspirations and policy provisions can be met, e.g. Green Space Networks.

162: Land at Derbeth will be developed inline with the policy

163: Land at Bucksburn will be developed inline with this policy.

#### Additional Text

124: Additional text required. See the modification section.

Policy D3: Big Buildings

Support for the Policy: 98, 153

Historic Precedent

66: There is a poor record of appropriately allocated big buildings, such as Marischal Square and the West End of Union Street. Tall buildings in the city centre and surrounding streets should be refused.

Policy content

90: Policy should provide more flexibility on the location rather than restricting to the city centre and its immediate periphery. There should be clearer definition of "Big Buildings". There are successful buildings outwith the city centre e.g. Aberdeen University's library buildings, Robert Gordon's University buildings and Dandara's development at Oakhill.

136: Have concerns about the Policy. There should be text regarding the proliferation of large buildings that are uninteresting and overpower our existing heritage. Proper consideration should be given to the density of these, comparing the new building with the adjacent and surrounding area.

148: Policy is too prescriptive and prevents the provision of big buildings in locations outwith the City Centre. There are a number of locations where big buildings are appropriate outwith the City Centre, for example, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Big buildings should be determined on context, design and materials.

153: Supports clarification that this Policy does not apply to employment land and industrial areas. Support the need for Big Buildings to comply with Civil Aviation Authority requirements. It would be helpful if this requirement was also reflected in Policy.

179: Concerns regarding the Policy. There is no reference to the impact big buildings would have on the character of conservation area. The Big Buildings Policy is inadequate, in that it does not place at the heart of its concerns the imperative to protect the setting of buildings, streetscapes and views in the City's conservation areas. Historic Scotland in their response to the Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Old Aberdeen suggested a Tall Buildings Strategy relating to extremely large buildings and the threat of the visual impact new development/tall building would have on the setting of the core of Old Aberdeen.

Incorrect Appendices/Drafting Error

90: The references in the final paragraph of the policy do not relate to big buildings and the opening sentence on page 23 requires clarification.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

Policy D1: Quality Placemaking by Design

Design Strategy Requirement and Supporting Text

85: The requirement to provide a Design Strategy should be removed from the Policy.

Failing that, greater clarity must be provided on the nature and scale of developments that will be required to provide a Design Strategy.

The references to the various Appendices should be amended to refer to the correct appendices.

136: 'Vision' should be included as a key attribute for good placemaking.

#### Overlap between Policies

123, 162, 163: Acknowledge the overlap with Policy D2 in the preamble to Policy D1 Provide further information within the policy text or associated Supplementary Guidance regarding the Design Review Panel.

#### Additional Text

124: Request the text in the resource efficient section of the six criteria Appendix is modified to read: Maximises efficiency of the use of resources through natural or technological means such as low or zero carbon energy-generating technologies, solar orientation and shelter, water saving measures including water capture and reuse, "connection to mains drainage, avoidance of" carbon rich soils, "incorporation of" SUDS and "blue"/green infrastructure

#### Policy D2: Landscape

##### Expansion of the Policy

123, 162, 163: The Policy text should be expanded /amended to provide greater emphasis on the ability of a robust landscape framework to address policy considerations and significantly assist in meeting the provisions of Policy D1.

##### Additional Text

124: Add the words water features, so the policy reads as below: Be informed by the existing landscape character, topography and existing features to sustain local diversity and distinctiveness, including natural and built features such as "water features", existing boundary walls, hedges, copses and other features of interest.

#### Policy D3: Big Buildings

##### Policy content

179: This guidance needs to be re-written to take account of all the comments made, and incorporate effective policy to protect conservation areas from the detrimental impact of big buildings on their setting.

##### Incorrect Appendices/Drafting Errors

90: The references in the final paragraph of the policy do not relate to big buildings and the opening sentence on page 23 requires clarification.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

General

9: We welcome support of the design policies and the ethos of creating quality places. Quality placemaking is at the core the planning system as is outlined through Scottish Planning Policy (CD05), Designing Streets (CD06) and Creating Places: A Policy Statement for Architecture and Place in Scotland (CD07).

Policy D1: Quality Placemaking by Design

Support the Policy

98, 116, 123, 124, 136 , 162, 163: We welcome the support for the Policy

Supporting Text

136: Proposed Plan Paragraph 3.3 states “not all development will be a scale to make a significant placemaking impact, however all good design and details adds to the attractiveness of the built and natural environment and careful consideration is critical. All developments, from window replacements to large developments, represent an opportunity to add to the rich placemaking legacy of our built environment”. Not all developments will be of the scale to have a significant impact on Placemaking, however, as is stated in paragraph 3.5, “all development will be expected to contribute towards creating successful place”. An application to replace a single window may not in itself have a significant impact on Placemaking, and it is unlikely it will be able to fulfil the criteria of ‘Easy to get to/move to’, but the application is still required to be assessed on the principles of Policy D1, and other relevant policy and Supplementary Guidance. The design, detail, materials and proportions to name but a few characterises will have to be assessed and although the application may not have been able to fulfil the Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking is still adds to the rich placemaking legacy of Aberdeen’s built environment.

The Six Qualities for Successful Placemaking are based on and expand the Six Qualities of Successful Place as outlined in Creating Places (CD07) and on page 13-14 of SPP (CD05). The addition of ‘Vision’ to the list is unquantifiable. The vision of the overarching policy D1 is to create quality Placemaking by achieving the criteria of successful Placemaking. The Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking have tangible criteria, as have been defined in national documents.

85: There is no requirement to retitle the criteria on page 19 of the Proposed Plan from ‘Criteria: Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking’ to ‘Criteria: Six Qualities of Quality Placemaking’. The Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking are based on the Creating Places document and the six qualities of successful places outlined within these. As is stated in the document quality places are successful places. Therefore, quality Placemaking is dependent on achieving the Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking, which in turn will create development that sustains and enhances the social, economic, environmental and cultural attractiveness of Aberdeen. The location of the criteria on pages 19-20, next to the text regarding the Proposed associated Supplementary Guidance documents rather than the policy does raise confusion and could be moved through drafting/editing of the Plan and is not an issue for Examination.

Design Strategy Requirement

85: As is outlined in SPP, paragraph 15 (CD05), planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach. This design led approach should be applied at all levels from National Planning Framework 3 to individual building level.

Design and Access Statements are only required for National and Major Developments, or Local Developments within specific parameters/variables, as is outlined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (RD10) and Circular 3/2013: Development Management Procedures (RD24). The provision of a Design Strategy will provide a robust method of increasing the opportunity to create high quality places and to ensure this is applied to all levels. The provision of a Design Strategy alongside an application need not be onerous.

Define Placemaking

100: A definition of Placemaking can be found within paragraph 36 of SPP, “Placemaking is a creative, collaborative process that includes design, development, renewal or regeneration of our urban or rural built environments. The outcome should be sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet people’s need”. The design policies support the creation, and continuation of well considered places, which contribute towards Placemaking and successful places. As is outlined in Creating Places quality places are successful places. The Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking on page 19-20 of the Proposed Plan builds on the Six Qualities of Successful Place on page 13-14 of SPP. This says that consideration should be given to the context of a development. Proposed Plan Policies D4: Historic Environment and D5: Our Granite Heritage provide further protection to preserve and enhance Aberdeen’s features.

Overlap Between Policies

123, 162, 163: Proposed Plan Policy D1 provides the overarching policy for all development to ensure there is quality of placemaking by design, which includes consideration of a number of different issues including landscape, as outlined in the Distinctive section of the Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking on page 19 of the Proposed Plan. This Policy will be used in conjunction with many other policies to ensure there is a quality Placemaking approach to delivering new development. There may be further crossover with other policies such as sustainable transport, low and zero carbon technology and energy efficiency, flooding and drainage to name but a few. Within the Local Development Plan there will many crossovers between numerous policies depending on the application which is being assessed. It would be unreasonable to highlight links to the landscape crossover as this will be detrimental to other areas where there is policy crossover, and may not be relevant to every application assessed. The Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking outline a number of significant considerations which need to be addressed when creating a development, again some of these will not be relevant to every application.

The Aberdeen City and Shire Review Panel (RD28) is an existing Supplementary Guidance document to the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012. We intend to adopt this document as a Technical Advice Note to the Proposed Plan further to its adoption.

Additional Text

124: Part of the modification sought by the respondent is reasonable. Within the Glossary of

SPP, page 72 (CD05) green infrastructure is defines as such , ‘includes the ‘green’ and ‘blue’ (water environment) features of the natural and built environments that can provide benefits without being connected’. If the Reporter is so minded the sentence (under the section ‘resource efficient’ on page 20 of the Proposed Plan) could be amended to state the following:

‘Maximises efficiency of the use of resources through natural or technological means such as low or zero carbon energy-generating technologies, solar orientation and shelter, water saving measures including water capture and reuse, "connection to mains drainage, avoidance of" carbon rich soils, "incorporation of" SUDS and green infrastructure’  
Incorrect Appendices

85: The reference to the Appendices is a drafting error and has been corrected by the Planning Authority as a Non-Notifiable Modification (CD26).

Policy D2: Landscape

Support for the Policy

98, 116, 123: We welcome the support for the policy.

116: Please see Issue 17.

Incorrect Appendices

102: The reference to the Appendices is a drafting error and has been corrected by the Planning Authority as a Non-Notifiable Modification (CD26).

Expansion of Policy

123, 162, 163: The expansion of the Policy to meet the provision of other policies and aspirations is not reasonable. Each policy has a distinct focus. Proposed Plan Policy D2 in principle requires development to be informed by, and improve and enhance the setting and visual impact of developments. Proposed Plan Policy NE1 protects areas identified for their biodiversity, habitat and natural heritage value from development. Policy D2 also notes in bullet point 1 ‘development will be informed by the existing landscape...’ and bullet point 2 ‘development will conserve, enhance, or restore existing landscape features and should incorporate them onto a spatial landscape design hierarchy that provides structure to the site layout’. Policy NE1 states, ‘Proposals for development that are likely to destroy or erode the character and/or function of the Green Space Network will not be permitted’.

Bullet point 3 of Policy D2 does not override bullet points 1 and 2 of Policy D2 or Policy NE2. Strong landscape frameworks can be used to mitigate negative impacts of development. Yet this has to be read in the wider policy context. There is no reasonable argument to expand the text within bullet point 3 of the D2 policy to highlight the mitigation effects of landscape frameworks.

There is reference to Policy D1 in Representation 123. Policy D1 provides the overarching policy for all development to ensure there is quality of Placemaking by design, which includes consideration of a number of different issues including landscape. To highlight a link only to one areas of crossover may be detrimental to other areas where there is policy crossover.

162: Please see Issue 8

163: Please see Issue 6

Additional text

124: There is no overriding need to modify the policy to include the text “water features”. Bullet point one of the Policy stresses the existing landscape character, topography and features and other features of interest will be used to inform quality development. Water features would fall within the definition of other features of interest.

Policy D3: Big Buildings

Support for the Policy

98, 153: We welcome the support for the new Proposed Plan Policy: D3 Big Buildings. The Big Building policy has been drafted in response to consultation submitted for the Main Issues Report (RD40, Issue 11).

Historic Precedent

66: Many factors come into play when assessing Big Buildings as are outlined in the Policy and Proposed Supplementary Guidance: Big Buildings. The production of the Policy and Supplementary Guidance is a result of the consultation into the Main Issues Report. The applications mentioned, [Marischal Square \(140698\)](#) and Union Street ([130615](#) and [131135](#)) have approved planning permissions in place. These sites are not completed to date, with work underway. The success of these buildings is yet to be determined; yet interrogation of the design principles, approved drawings and the Officers Report would suggest that the buildings would have complied in principle to the policy and the associated Supplementary Guidance had these been present at the time of their determination.

Historic Scotland were consultees for the Marischal Square application and as is outlined within their response, “Express satisfaction that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse impact on the setting of Provost Skene’s House, Marischal College and Greyfriar’s Church. Indeed, state that the setting of these listed buildings and the wider setting of the Conservation Area can be positively transformed by the proposed development. Generally content that the development would sit comfortably in the existing setting, and are pleased that the scheme seeks to better integrate Provost Skene’s House with intimate vistas and connections, notably from Broad Street.” (RD43). Historic Scotland were also consultees for the Capital Cinema, 431 Union Street, Aberdeen planning and listed building applications. Comments received noted careful assessment in terms of wider visual impact on the particular area of Union Street and the conservation area would need to be achieved. (RD44)

The Big Buildings Policy does not preclude or assume refusal of Big Buildings in the city centre. As is stated in the preamble, Big Buildings can have a positive contribution to city life, an argument supported by Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage (Paragraph 1.1) in their 2007 document, ‘Guidance on tall buildings’. (RD17)

Policy content

90, 148: The Respondents have concerns about the defined location of Big Buildings and flexibility of the Policy. The most logical location for Big Buildings is within the city centre and its immediate periphery; thereby ensuring high footfall developments are located within the Regional Centre and close to existing transport hubs, all of which creates sustainable development. Alongside this it will help to create and maintain a vibrant city centre. When big buildings are located well, and are of the correct proportions and design, they can have a positive impact on a city. They can be a catalyst for change, provide greater densities and concentration of uses, bring greater accessibility to a range of amenities, and in themselves be an interesting feature in the streetscape and skyline.

The Policy is not too restrictive; it allows for a high degree of flexibility as there is no design code which must be adhered to. The Proposed Supplementary Guidance document says that consideration needs to be given to site analysis and context, visual analysis, and building design, including materials. It further outlines the principles which can be used to assess Big Building proposals outwith the city centre. It does not restrict Big Buildings to the centre and immediate peripheral area, but again reiterates the most sustainable location for Big Buildings is within the City Centre and its immediate periphery. The positive feedback on Aberdeen University Duncan Rice Library, Robert Gordon's University buildings and the housing development at Oakhill is welcomed.

There are existing clusters of large scale buildings within hospital and education community facility areas. The hospital or education facilities provide a specialised function and service to the immediate community and beyond. The hospital site comprises a core of buildings which are not at a human-scale. The definition of a 'big building' is one which exceeds the general height of the surrounding built context and/or whose footprint is in excess of the established development pattern, urban grain, or context on the site. On this site a 'big building' would be one which exceeds the existing non-human scale buildings on site. Again, this argument can be used for the buildings on the Robert Gordon Garthdee Campus, and the Modern Campus Area of University of Aberdeen (Character Area C in the Proposed Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Character Appraisal) (RD41).

136, 179: The respondents' note there should be an avoidance of the proliferation of large buildings that are uninteresting and overpowering to existing heritage, including conservation areas. The policy says that proposals for Big Buildings need thorough analysis of the context, to maintain and enhance the pattern and arrangement of the street blocks and plots, have slender vertical emphasis and silhouette. Further detail on Big Buildings is provided in the Proposed Big Buildings Supplementary Guidance (CD25). This document says that consideration needs to be given to site analysis and context, visual analysis, and building design.

The Representations appear to be written from the position that Big Buildings are always detrimental to the existing area. As is stated in the Preamble to the Policy (Proposed Plan paragraph 3.8), Big Buildings can have a positive contribution to city life, an argument supported by CABI and English Heritage in their 2007 document, 'Guidance on tall buildings'. An Aberdeen example is Marischal College. This is a big building; its floor plate is larger than the surrounding plot ratios, however due to its design, the vertical emphasis and its detailing the building does not appear bulky within its surroundings and is celebrated as a feature of Aberdeen.

The Proposed Policy and Proposed Supplementary Guidance say that visual analysis is a

critical part of the design and assessment process; including the analysis of long, medium and short views, plot ratios, mass, form, et cetera. Therefore setting will be well considered.

With regard to Old Aberdeen, as is identified within the Proposed Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Character Appraisal, there are five distinctive character areas, one of which, Character Area C, is the University Campus.

The Respondent discusses comments received by the Local Authority from Historic Scotland (RD45) in response to a consultation on the Proposed Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Character Appraisal (RD41). The Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Character Appraisal lists perceived opportunities to 'Exploration of Management Partnership Agreement with the University of Aberdeen and Historic Scotland', and 'University of Aberdeen's aspiration for its estate as set out in its strategic planning framework and underlying design principles'. The analysis with the Conservation Area Character Appraisal provides a basis from which to develop strategies to conserve and enhance the conservation area. There is no requirement for a specific Big Building policy for Old Aberdeen. All conservation areas should be treated with the same ethos, and are designated due to their special architectural or historic interest. There is no reason why one conservation area should be regarded as more significant than another.

The Big Building Policy and Supplementary Guidance can be used to assess Big Buildings outwith the city centre. Big buildings will have to be assessed against Policy D1: Quality Placemaking by Design and those within conservation areas will also be assessed against Policy D4: Historic Environment and other local, regional and national policies, not just the Big Building Policy and Supplementary Guidance. This does provide a strong framework.

153: The requirement for Big Buildings to comply with Civil Aviation Requirements is noted in the Proposed Big Buildings Supplementary Guidance. The Policy provides the principles of development and it is not necessary to outline the requirement in the Policy.

#### Incorrect Appendices/Drafting Errors

90: The reference to the Appendices is a drafting error and have been corrected by the Planning Authority as a Non-Notifiable Modification (CD26).

The drafting error in the opening sentence on page 23 has been amended to read, 'Supplementary Guidance (SG) Big Buildings supports the above policy by assuring quality of Placemaking is provided when tall and/or bulky building developments are proposed'. This is again considered to be a Non-Notifiable Modification.

#### **Reporter's conclusions:**

##### Policy D1: Quality Placemaking by Design

1. Policy D1 contains a requirement for development proposals to be accompanied by a design strategy to demonstrate how the six identified qualities of successful placemaking have been met. Stewart Milne Homes argues that this is excessive and creates confusion with the legal requirement for design and access statements.

2. Paragraph 55 of Scottish Planning Policy requires local development plans to contribute to high quality places by embedding a design-led approach, which should include specifying when design tools should be used. Though the form that design tools should take is not

tightly defined, paragraph 57 makes clear that they should focus on the six qualities of successful places. I consider that the requirement for design strategies in Policy D1 does therefore reflect national policy in this area.

3. The proposed plan does not direct what form the design strategy should take, and so I see no reason why a single document could not fulfil both the national requirement for a design and access statement (or a design statement) and the council's requirement for a design strategy. Therefore, for those development proposals that would legally be required to be accompanied by a design and access statement (i.e. 'major' developments) or a design statement (i.e. some 'local' developments, in conservation areas etc.), the requirement in Policy D1 need not entail any significant extra work by prospective developers.

4. The requirement for design strategies to accompany developments that are not covered by the national requirement for design statements would be an additional burden, but as the council states above, this need not be onerous. Though little detail is given in the proposed plan, I would anticipate that the length and complexity of any strategy to accompany more minor developments would be much less than expected in association with larger developments. Paragraph 39 of Scottish Planning Policy expects a design-led approach to be applied at all levels down to individual building level, and in this context I conclude that the requirement for design strategies is appropriate.

5. The six qualities of successful placemaking are described in some detail over pages 19 and 20 of the proposed plan. It is clear from the text of the plan that this section is intended to provide guidance about the design expectations the council has, and, by extension, what developers need to do to ensure that their proposals comply with Policy D1. I identify no confusion regarding the status of this section. Rather, I consider this guidance to be helpful, and to reflect the increased focus on delivering higher quality places contained in the Placemaking section of Scottish Planning Policy.

6. I am satisfied that the heading of this section: 'Six Qualities of Successful Placemaking' appropriately describes the material that follows. It also reflects the terminology in Scottish Planning Policy, which refers to 'the six qualities of successful places'.

7. It is the case that not every bullet point listed under the six qualities of successful placemaking will apply to every development. For instance not every development can reuse existing buildings. However paragraph 3.5 of the proposed plan is clear when it states that 'the criteria used in assessing an application will be relevant to the scale, character and nature of the proposal'. No change is therefore required in this respect.

8. Regarding the need to define the term 'placemaking', a definition is already provided in the glossary to the proposed plan. This repeats the definition contained in paragraph 36 of Scottish Planning Policy. No change is therefore required.

9. The local development plan is to be read as a whole, and it will usually be the case that the acceptability of proposed developments can only be judged through consulting a number of different policies. Cross-referencing between policies is therefore largely unnecessary, and may indeed be counter-productive if, in highlighting certain policy connections, others may be overlooked. It is the case that Policies D1 on placemaking and design, and D2 on landscape, are closely connected and may often need to be considered together. However the two policies sit next to each other in the same chapter of the proposed plan, which will assist users to consider these matters in the round. Overall I conclude that no modification

is required.

10. The reference in paragraph 3.4 of the proposed plan to the Aberdeen City and Shire Design Review Panel is brief but perfectly clear. However the council states above (and in Appendix 5 of the proposed plan) its intention to readopt the current supplementary guidance concerning the Design Review Panel as a technical advice note to the plan. I consider it would be useful to signpost the existence of this note to users of this part of the local development plan, and so I recommend a suitable modification below.

11. I have some sympathy with the views of the Aberdeen Civic Society regarding the importance of vision for successful placemaking. However such a criterion would be of a different nature to the six established factors, being more about the process that achieves high quality outcomes as opposed to the practical assessment of the form of proposed developments. To some extent these 'process' factors are captured in the first paragraph of Policy D1, which refers, for instance, to context appraisal. It is also beneficial that there is currently a direct read-across between the six qualities identified in the proposed plan and those set out in Scottish Planning Policy. On balance I therefore conclude that 'vision' should not be added to the six established qualities of successful placemaking.

12. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency requests various additions to the text describing the 'resource efficient' aspect of successful placemaking. Above, the council has stated it is content with these changes apart from the reference to 'blue' infrastructure. I accept that the definition of green infrastructure in the glossary to Scottish Planning Policy incorporates blue infrastructure (i.e. rivers, lochs etc.), but I am not convinced that this would be immediately apparent to most users of the plan. I therefore prefer to include the reference to blue infrastructure.

13. However, the requested inclusion of a reference to connection to mains drainage seems out of place in this context, which is mainly concerned with the efficient use of natural resources, rather than of hard infrastructure. In any event, the requirement to connect to the public sewer is already explicitly stated in Policy NE6 of the proposed plan, and the plan is to be read as a whole. I therefore support the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's suggested modification, with the exception of this reference to mains drainage.

#### Policy D2: Landscape

14. Firstly, the council has recognised the typographical error regarding the reference to Appendix 6, and has already corrected this through a pre-examination non-notifiable modification. No further action is required from me.

15. Regarding the suggested need to expand Policy D2 to address wider placemaking opportunities, I note that the policy already refers to a wide range of beneficial functions that the high quality landscaping of development can have, including unifying the urban form and creating local identity. In terms of wider placemaking, the boxes following paragraph 3.5 already refer to the role of green infrastructure and of landscaping in helping to foster distinctive places. The plan is to be read as a whole, and so it is unnecessary to repeat material in different policies. The user of the plan can be in no doubt of the priority that the council will give to the high quality landscaping of new developments, or of the benefits the council sees in doing this. I therefore conclude that no change is required.

16. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency suggests adding a reference to water features into the first bullet point of the policy. This bullet point includes a short list of

examples of existing landscape features that should inform quality development. There is no suggestion that this list is exhaustive, and no reasons have been given in the representation why water features should be picked out ahead of other landscape features. I doubt that a user of the plan would be in any doubt that water features such as streams and lochs should be considered under this policy. For these reasons I conclude that no change to the plan is necessary.

Policy D3: Big Buildings

17. Paragraph 3.8 of the proposed plan eloquently describes the potential benefits that appropriately located big buildings can have. Doubtless it will be the case that these benefits have not always materialised when big buildings have been developed in the past, but I consider that it is appropriate to include a policy on big buildings in the plan that allows for their construction in appropriate locations and subject to certain design criteria.

18. It is a well-established planning principle that high density development is generally most suitably located in urban centres, due to the concentration of different uses that give such centres their characteristic and necessary vitality, and the frequent role of urban centres as foci for the public transport system and road network. These considerations apply in Aberdeen, and it is not therefore surprising that the plan identifies the city centre and its immediate periphery as the most appropriate location for big buildings.

19. A range of concerns have been expressed about the impact of big buildings, in particular on conservation areas. However I consider that the policy contains a range of criteria to control the impact of big buildings on sensitive areas. These include the requirements for such buildings to complement or improve their site context and avoid interfering with established vistas. The headline policy for considering proposals in conservation areas is Policy D4: Historic Environment, which protects the special architectural or historic interest of conservation areas. The plan is to be read as a whole, and I do not therefore consider that additional references to conservation areas are required in Policy D3.

20. It is the case that certain institutions such as secondary schools and hospitals require large buildings but may not be located close to the city centre. The council argues that these buildings' potential location on existing campuses that already contain large buildings means that they might not be considered as 'big buildings' within the meaning of this policy. While I accept the narrow logic of that, I expect that most users of the plan would assume large hospitals and schools would fall within the scope of this policy, unless a specific exclusion was included. I therefore consider that such an exclusion should be included to ensure that the council's intention is properly reflected in the wording of the policy, and to clarify that large new educational and healthcare buildings on established campuses would not be required to comply with this policy.

21. The proposed plan includes a definition of 'big buildings' within paragraph 3.8. This refers to height and footprint in relation to the established context, rather than setting prescriptive limits. I consider that this is the correct approach, as what might, subjectively, be considered a big building in a suburban part of the city might not be so considered in the city centre. The perception of size is relative.

22. The matter of aviation safety is extensively covered in Policy B4 of the proposed plan and its supporting text. While aviation safety may, on occasion, be an important factor in the consideration of proposals for big buildings, the plan is to be read as a whole, and I conclude

that no references to this matter are required in Policy D3.

23. I note that the council has rectified the confused wording of the first sentence on page 23 of the proposed plan through a pre-examination non-notifiable modification. The mistaken reference to Appendix 6 in the final sentence of Policy D3 has similarly been corrected. No further action is therefore required from me.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that:

1. The following words are added at the end of paragraph 3.4: "(see relevant TechnicalAdvice Note)".
2. Under paragraph 3.5, the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point of the 'Resource efficient' box be amended to read:  
  
"maximises efficiency of the use of resources through natural or technological means such as low or zero carbon energy-generating technologies, solar orientation and shelter, water saving measures including water capture and reuse, avoidance of carbon rich soils, incorporation of SuDS, and blue/ green infrastructure"
3. The 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph of Policy D3 be amended to read: "This policy does not apply to employment land, industrial areas and established health or educational campuses."

<b>Issue 19</b>	<b>POLICY D4 &amp; D5: BUILT HERITAGE</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	Page 23-25	<b>Reporter:</b> Stephen Hall
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (reference no.):</b>		
<p>Torry Community Council (35)                  Stewart Milne Homes (85)                  Culter Community Council (98)                  Aberdeen Civic Society (136)                  NHS Grampian (148)                  Historic Scotland (165)</p>		
<b>Provision of the Development Plan to which the issue relates:</b>	To ensure the City's historic environment is protected, retained and reused	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><u>Policy D4: Historic Environment</u></p> <p><u>Support</u></p> <p>98: Support the Policy</p> <p><u>Policy Content</u></p> <p>165: Policy would benefit from a more explicit statement of the Council's policy with regard to listed buildings i.e. the retention of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas that contribute to its character. Paragraph four can be removed as this repeats the paragraph above.</p> <p><u>Policy D5: Our Granite Heritage</u></p> <p><u>Support</u></p> <p>98, 148: Support the Policy</p> <p><u>Policy Content</u></p> <p>35: The Policy must be bias towards the retention and reuse of buildings. The gradual decline and demolition by owners must not be allowed.</p> <p>136: Policies should be introduced to enforce maintenance on vacant or unoccupied buildings that may be listed or lie within conservation area. This will stop landowners allowing deterioration through neglect, and then arguing demolition is the only viable option.</p>		

148: Demolition should be permitted when it assists in the wider regeneration of an area.

165: The Main Issues Report outlined the 2012 Aberdeen Local Development Plan Granite Heritage policy "requires to be modified to provide assessment criteria for proposals where demolition is intended and also requires to be clearer on the appropriate reuse of granite in replacement proposals". A more tailored set of criteria can be found to better serve local decision making for undesignated buildings and structures that fall within this Policy. Paragraph 2 does not adequately set out criteria that cover the policy at large

Object to Policy

85: Object to the requirement to retain all buildings, and when demolition acceptable the requirement to re-use the building material onsite.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

Policy D4: Historic Environment

Policy Content

165: Reword policy to read: "The Council will protect, preserve and enhance the historic environment in line with Scottish Planning Policy, SHEP, its own Supplementary Guidance and Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plan.

There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and reuse of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas that contribute to its character. In assessing development proposals the Council support high quality design that respects the character, appearance and setting of the historic environment and protects the special architectural or historic interest of its listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology, schedule monuments, and historic gardens and designed landscapes.

The physical in situ preservation of all scheduled monuments and archaeological sites will be supported. Developments that would adversely impact upon archaeological remains, including battlefields, of either national or local importance, or on their setting will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where there is no practical alternative site and where there are imperative reasons of over-riding public need. In any such case, the applicant must at their own expense:

- take satisfactory steps to mitigate adverse development impacts; and
- where the preservation of the site in its original location is not possible, arrange for the full excavation, recording and publication/curation of the site in advance of development.

In those cases where this is not justifiable or feasible, provision should be made for excavation and record with an appropriate assessment and evaluation. The appropriate publication/curation of findings will be expected.

Further guidance can be found within the supplementary guidance and technical advice notes listed in Appendix 6".

Policy D5: Our Granite Heritage

Object to Policy

85: Revert to 2012 Aberdeen Local Development Plan Policy to encourage the retention of granite buildings only in appropriate and viable circumstances. The reference to the SHEP Test for demolition should be removed from Policy and instead, set out in the supporting text. The requirement to reuse all of the original granite as a building material with in the development site should be removed.

Policy Content

35: The policy must be bias towards the retention and reuse of buildings.

148: Policy should be amended to reflect demolition can assist in wider regeneration schemes.

165: We request that paragraph 2 of Policy D5 is amended to provide clearer assessment criteria that reflects the aims of this policy.

**Summary of response (including reasons) by planning authority:**

Policy D4: Historic Environment

Support

98: We welcome and acknowledge the support for the Policy.

Policy Content

165: The principle of the Policy relates to the historic environment which includes listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology, scheduled monuments, and historic gardens and designated landscapes. The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2014 (CD12) requires Aberdeen City to protect its built and historic environment, ensuring that development does not lead to the loss of, or damage to, built, natural or cultural heritage assets. The requirement for the Council to provide a more explicit statement regarding listed buildings narrows the focus of the Policy. The Policy is not specifically for listed buildings. It is agreed that through the Policy there is explicit guidance on scheduled monuments and archaeology, and there is also mention of the Conservation Area Character Appraisals, therefore it could be perceived the Policy is unbalanced in its approach to listed buildings, but this argument could also be applied to historic gardens and designed landscapes.

The addition of the sentence, "There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and reuse of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas that contribute to its character" to Proposed Plan Policy D4 could potentially cause conflict with the first sentence of Proposed Plan Policy D5: Our Granite Heritage which reads, "Throughout Aberdeen the Council seeks the retention and appropriate re-use, conversion and adaptation of all granite features, structures and buildings..." Making the change would mean Policy D4 would be stating only granite listed buildings and granite buildings within conservation areas that contribute to its character would have the presumption of retention and reuse while Policy D5 states this is the presumption for all granite building, features and structures. This would

create confusion with regard to the overall ethos.

The first paragraph of Proposed Plan Policy says that the Council will adhere to the national guidance of Scottish Planning Policy (CD05) and Scottish Historic Environment Policy (RD13); alongside this the Council will adhere to the localised Supplementary Guidance and Conservation Area Character Appraisals that have been produced for specific circumstances. Within these documents there is a presumption in favour of preserving, retaining and reusing the historic environment, not just those elements which have statutory designations.

We do not consider it necessary to remove paragraph 4 of the Policy. The paragraph reiterates the importance of excavation and recording assets, with the appropriate assessment and evaluation, which are being removed from their in-suit setting. It also outlines appropriate publication/curation of the findings is expected.

### Policy D5: Our Granite Heritage

#### Support

98, 148: We welcome and acknowledge the support for the Policy.

#### Policy Content

35, 136: Proposed Plan Policy D5 supports the retention and appropriate reuse, conversion and adaption of all granite buildings, the first sentence of the Policy clearly states this. The demolition of buildings with statutory status, those that are listed buildings, or those within conservation areas, have to satisfy strict criteria as outlined in the SHEP (paragraph 3.44, 3.50, 3.58) (RD13). The complete demolition of buildings without statutory status is covered in Class 70 of the General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992, as amended (CD03/RD77).

The decline of buildings into a state of despair is dealt with under Building Standards and in particular the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 (RD06). The Act introduced new discretionary powers for Local Authorities to deal with defective buildings, as they see appropriate. The Local Authority can undertake the work and recover reasonable costs from the owner. Within Class 70 of the General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 there are caveats which include, permission is required to demolish a building if a building has been rendered unsafe or uninhabitable by the action or inaction of any person having an interest in the land on which is building stands and it is practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support.

148: It is acknowledged in point 3 of paragraphs 3.44 and 3.50 of SHEP (RD13) that there can be a relationship between demolition and regeneration when the applicant has demonstrated that every effort has been made to retain the listed building and it can be shown that 'the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or to the wider community'. Although the principle of regeneration is appropriate in certain circumstances, the overarching principle of SHEP and of Policy D5 is that the retention and reuse of existing buildings and structures is more sustainable. This is our preferred approach. As SHEP paragraph 1.31 states, "...the waste caused by unnecessary demolition and replacement, with consequent loss of embodied energy, the need for landfill and the sourcing and transport of new materials, should be avoided wherever possible". The policy will not be amended to reflect that demolition can assist in

wider regeneration schemes

165: The Main Issues (MIR) Report Consultation (RD40, Issue 12) and the research carried out after the consultation helped shape the Proposed Plan Policy. The action outlined in the MIR Response report was to assess the viability of developing criteria for the granite policy. In conducting research into developing criteria based policy we focussed on Class 70 of the General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992/2011 (CD03), Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (RD09), Listed Building and Conservation Area expansion, and from this Article 4 Directions within the General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992/2011. We concluded that paragraphs 3.50 and 3.58 of SHEP (RD13) give strong criteria regarding demolition, with the caveat that retention is the always the superior approach. This is the approach we have adopted for statutory buildings. Expanding the criteria of SHEP into non statutory buildings would require an Article 4 Direction. This was investigated with the Councils' solicitors and felt to be onerous and did not fit with the ethos of the modern planning system. The result would be a large increase in the number of planning applications submitted to the planning department, thereby slowing down the process and potentially leading to a number of unauthorised works taking place. A more reasonable approach is to ensure that we are active in identifying and assisting the listing or delisting of buildings and reviewing our conservation areas to ensure they are fit for purpose. A review of conservation areas has led to the expansion of Old Aberdeen Conservation Area.

Object to Policy

85: The principle to retain all granite buildings within the City is the same approach as is currently adopted in the extant Local Development Plan 2012 (Policy D4). The first line of Policy D4: Aberdeen's Granite Heritage within the extant Plan is, "The City Council will encourage the retention of granite buildings throughout the city even if not listed or in a conservation area". This principle has not changed with the Proposed Plan. The requirement to remove the SHEP test reference from the Policy and set this out in the supporting text is not supported. The SHEP tests are national guidance, and the Council will be adhering to these, therefore they are best placed in the Policy. The principle to reuse granite material when retention and reuse of the feature, building or structure is unviable will not be removed. The principle of the Policy is to retain the distinctive material of Aberdeen, granite, preferably in situ and if this proves unviable then retain on site by use on building elevations, within landscaping and as boundary treatments.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

Policy D4: Historic Environment

1. As an initial general point, I am not attracted by policy wordings that delegate the substantive policy tests to external documents, even where these have the status of national policy. External documents such as Scottish Planning Policy do not have statutory status, may be subject to change within the lifetime of the plan, and are not tailored to local circumstances. Requiring users of the plan to refer to other documents in order to discover what the substantive policy is, is inconvenient and opaque. Though it is perfectly acceptable for the plan to point to where further detail is available, such as in supplementary guidance, I consider it far-preferable that the headline policy position be clearly set out in the statutory development plan.

2. Given that there are 1,219 listed buildings in Aberdeen, the policy towards proposals affecting these buildings will be an important component of the plan that I expect will often be used in development management decision-making. This makes it particularly important that the relevant policy tests are clearly set out in the plan. I therefore agree with Historic Scotland that the core policy test should be included, and recommend a suitable modification.

3. The council argues that making this change would create some imbalance in the absence of a similar clear policy on designated gardens and designed landscapes. However given that there is only one such designation in Aberdeen, I consider that the inclusion of more detail on the approach towards listed buildings is justified.

4. Historic Scotland also identifies some repetition within paragraphs 2 to 4 of this policy. I agree that paragraphs 3 and 4 cover much of the same ground, and that therefore paragraph 4 is largely redundant (though the reference to publication/curation of findings would need to be retained). There is no need to emphasise the importance of a point by repetition of it. However paragraphs 2 and 3 appear to cover different issues, the former addressing the acceptability in principle of development, and the latter addressing mitigation.

Policy D5: Our Granite Heritage

5. There is no dispute that the tradition of building in granite in Aberdeen is an important part of the city's character that is worthy of preservation. There are representations arguing both that the policy should provide stronger protection for granite buildings, and that the policy is excessively inflexible.

6. As with policy D4, this policy again delegates the policy tests to be applied (this time towards the demolition of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas) to an external document (the Scottish Historic Environment Policy). For the reasons set out at paragraph 1 above, I am not attracted by this approach. In particular, the second paragraph of Policy D5 does not explicitly state what the test that will be applied towards proposals to demolish listed granite buildings will be, and adds little to the existing statement in Policy D4 that the council will preserve the historic environment in line with the Scottish Historic Environment Policy. The presumption in favour of retaining and reusing listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas that contribute to their character is, in any event, clearly established in Policy D4 (as modified). The Scottish Historic Environment Policy contains more detail on Scottish Ministers' policy regarding the demolition of listed buildings, but this applies to all listed buildings, not just those built of granite. Within the first paragraph of Policy D5, the council's policy of retaining and reusing granite structures and buildings is already clearly stated. For these reasons I consider that the second paragraph of this policy adds little of substantive value to the plan.

7. However, as stated at Paragraph 117 of Circular 6/2013: Development Planning, I am not tasked with making the plan as good as it can be, but with modifying those parts that are clearly inappropriate or insufficient. While the reference to the Scottish Historic Environment Policy in Policy D5 may be unnecessary, I would not go so far as to say that it was clearly inappropriate. On this basis I conclude that no change is required.

8. Historic Scotland identifies that this policy considers only granite buildings and not the demolition of non-granite structures. However it is clear that it is Aberdeen's granite heritage that is the particular focus of this policy. While it would have been possible to have set out the council's general approach to demolition elsewhere in the plan (perhaps within Policy

D4), I do not consider that this is essential given the general statement in Policy D4 regarding the protection of the historic environment in line with the Scottish Historic Environment Policy.

9. Some representations identify circumstances where the retention of a granite building may not be the best approach, for instance if this were to render development unviable or stand in the way of regeneration. However the possibility of such circumstances is already envisaged in the third paragraph of the policy, which refers to reusing the granite where retention or reuse of the granite feature, building or structure is unviable. I therefore conclude that the policy displays some reasonable flexibility in this regard and so that no change is required.

10. Regarding the requirement to reuse all granite from any demolished features, buildings or structures within the development site, it is likely that circumstances will differ greatly from site to site. For instance, this requirement may be easier to achieve on larger sites than on more constrained higher density city centre sites. Not all reclaimed stone will be of a suitable standard for use in construction. While I am sympathetic to the many benefits of reclaiming natural stone, I therefore consider that a minor adjustment to the wording of the policy to refer instead to the reuse of as much stone as practically possible is required.

11. It is important that listed buildings are properly maintained, but the focus of the local development plan is on development issues, particularly a framework of policies to guide the determination of planning applications. Therefore I am satisfied that the local development plan is not necessarily the best document within which to describe the council's approach to ensuring that listed buildings in the city are maintained.

**Reporter's recommendations:**

I recommend that:

1. The second sentence of the first paragraph of Policy D4 be replaced with:

“There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and reuse of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas that contribute to their character. High quality design that respects the character, appearance and setting of the historic environment and protects the special architectural or historic interest of its listed buildings, conservation areas and historic gardens and designed landscapes, will be supported.”

2. The following words be added at the end of the second bullet point of the third paragraph of Policy D4: “..., and the publication/curation of findings.”

3. The fourth paragraph of Policy D4 be deleted.

4. In the third paragraph of Policy D5, the phrase “... all of the original granite ...” be replaced with “... as much of the original granite as is practically possible ...”.