Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire
(excluding the Cairngorms National Park Area)

Structure plan

2007 – 2030

Draft structure plan – June 2008

Introduction

Aberdeen City and Shire is currently an attractive place to live and work, with a high-quality environment, above-average incomes and low unemployment. However, there are significant differences in wealth and opportunity between some of the region's communities, and future events (for example, changes in North Sea oil and gas production, the effects of climate change and the reduction in worldwide resources) will threaten everyone's wellbeing if we do not take any action. By 2030, Aberdeen City and Shire will need to have adapted to a very different world. We need to face up to the challenges ahead to be able to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the region as a place to live and do business.

The purpose of this structure plan is to set a clear direction for the future development of the North East which the public and private sectors can work towards to deliver our vision.

This plan is significantly different to previous structure plans in both its layout and content. It aims to be more focused, strategic and concerned with taking action. Its content is influenced by the need for change, and it more clearly explains how we will deliver those changes.

This structure plan has been prepared under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 1983.

Layout and content of the plan

This plan focuses on what we want to change. It does not aim to cover all planning issues but only those which can best be dealt with by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils working together.

A central part of this plan are our vision, aims and spatial strategy. These are supported by a series of objectives which each have their own targets, a number of actions which need to be taken, and monitoring arrangements. Proposals are included where they are important to putting the plan into practice. We have tried to use as few technical terms as possible, but there is a glossary at the end of the plan which defines some words and phrases you may not be familiar with.

It is vital to recognise the links between the different parts of the plan. We have highlighted this not by dividing the plan into topic-based chapters but by recognising that individual topics (such as housing) relate to a number (if not all) of the objectives. This influences how the plan should be used. Both councils will use it in appropriate cases to help decide whether a planning application would take the area in the right direction. Local development plans consistent with this plan will be the main way in which decisions are made on planning applications.

Influences on the plan

We have written this plan with a wide range of international, national, regional and local influences in mind.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in 2004 and provides a framework to guide the development of Scotland to 2025. The Draft National Planning Framework 2 (DNPF2) was published in December 2007 and looks forward to 2030 with the main parts of the development strategy being shown in figure 1

below. Except for grid reinforcement to support renewable energy development, no national developments have been identified in the area.

Figure 1: Draft NPF2 Strategy Map (key will be added)
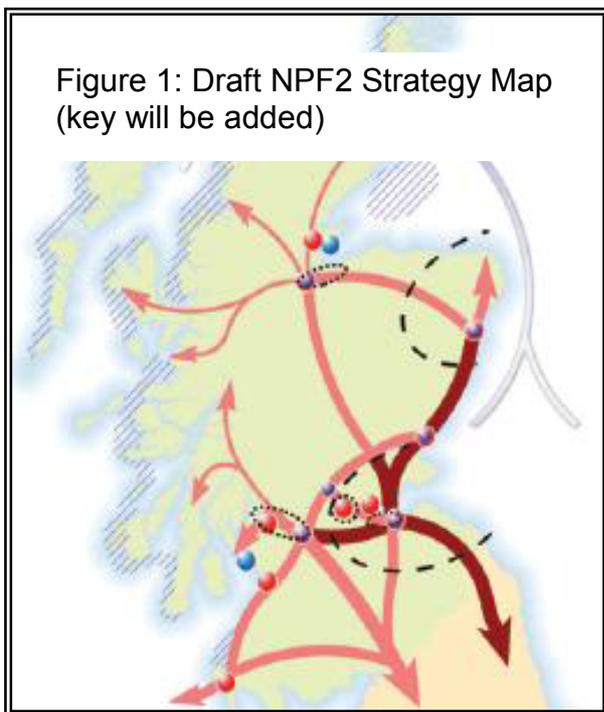
Along with the challenges associated with the changing nature of the offshore oil and gas industry (recognised in both NPF and DNPF2), the potential of the North East to build on its strengths is also recognised. As in the existing NPF, the east-coast corridor from Aberdeen to Newcastle is identified as offering opportunities to develop links with the energy and offshore industries and the universities along the route. Opportunities to develop coastal shipping connections are also identified (particularly relevant to Peterhead and Aberdeen), along with the potential investment in transport infrastructure to reduce journey times for road users and rail passengers. This is being considered as part of the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review.

The strategic development plans for Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh city regions are seen as important to strengthen the corridor. The plans in the Aberdeen and Edinburgh city regions are considered to be particular priorities.

The regional strategies and plans which have an important influence on this plan include 'Priorities for the North East' (agreed by both councils – prepared by the North East Scotland Joint Public Sector Group), the North East Scotland Transport Partnership's (Nestrans) Regional Transport Strategy and the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum's (ACSEF) Economic Manifesto.

The plan is going through a range of assessments including the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment. All of these have affected the content of the plan.

Preparing the plan

This plan has been prepared jointly by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils through the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee. It represents a shared vision for the future of the area and has been developed in a way which aims to include everyone in the process, including communities, public-sector organisations and businesses.

The vision for the plan

We need to face up to the challenges ahead to be able to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the region as a place to live and do business. A vision for a successful and sustainable future is set out below.

> "By 2030, Aberdeen City and Shire will be an even more exciting, modern and sustainable European city region and an excellent place to live, visit and do business.
>
> We will be recognised for:
>
> • our enterprise and inventiveness, particularly in the knowledge economy and in high-value markets;
>
> • the unique qualities of our environment; and
>
> • our high quality of life.
>
> We will have acted confidently and taken the courageous decisions necessary to further develop a robust and resilient economy and to lead the way towards development being sustainable, including dealing with climate change and our society being more inclusive."

To make this vision a reality, we have developed a series of aims. These provide a useful guide which both interprets the vision and focuses clearly on the role this plan will play in delivering it. This recognises that many different people and organisations will be involved in delivering this vision.

The main aims of the plan are to:

• provide a strong framework for investment decisions which help to grow and diversify the regional economy, supported by promoting the need to use resources more efficiently and effectively;

• take on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change.

To support these main aims, the plan also aims to:

• make sure the area has enough people, homes and jobs to support the level of services and facilities needed to maintain and improve the quality of life;

• protect and improve our valued assets and resources, including the built and natural environment and our cultural heritage;

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

• make the most efficient use of the transport network, reducing the need for people to travel and making sure that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices.

We are committed to all the aims as a whole. This is the only way we will be able to achieve our vision.

We will assess development proposals against these aims and balance the importance given to each of them when we come to a decision. We will do this in a confident and courageous way.

The spatial strategy

All parts of the North East are important for the future of the area. However, different areas will take different roles as a result of their current characteristics and future opportunities. This plan will set a clear direction and be specific where necessary, while giving local development plans the opportunity to respond to local circumstances. However, this plan must set out a strategy for how these issues can be considered.

Identifying where development will take place is a vital part of delivering the changes needed in the Aberdeen City and Shire area. Being clear about where we want new homes, businesses and other developments to be provides long-term certainty and confidence for communities, businesses and organisations that provide services. It allows us to make best use of the investment that we will need to maintain the quality of life in the area over the coming decades.

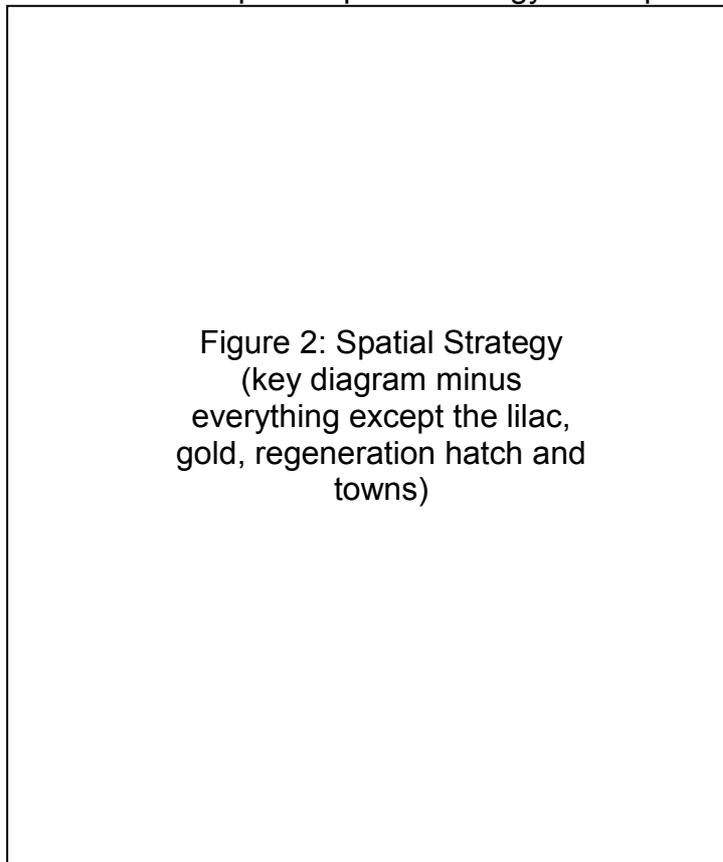We have developed a spatial strategy which promotes development in places that meet the needs of business and, at the same time, are sustainable. The strategy also recognises the need to maintain and improve the area's communities and the services they depend on.

Figure 2: Spatial Strategy
(key diagram minus everything except the lilac, gold, regeneration hatch and towns)

This strategy (see figure 2) focuses development in places where there are clear opportunities to encourage people to use public transport, which itself can be provided in an efficient way. The strategy plans for significant growth in a limited number of places, where there can be significant public and private investment in schools, community facilities and transport infrastructure without affecting people's quality of life. It also provides the flexibility to meet the needs of local communities. These areas are as follows.

1 Strategic growth areas (*[gold colour from fig2]*)

This structure plan identifies three strategic growth areas (SGAs) which will be the main focus for development in the area up to 2030.

Although these areas will carry out different roles, together they can be expected to account for around 75% to 80% of the growth over the next 20 years or more.

Development in these areas will bring about a significant need for improvements to the infrastructure, including new primary and secondary schools, improvements to roads and railways, and new water and waste-water systems. This investment is essential if we are to create successful sustainable mixed communities. The cost is

likely to be several hundred million pounds and landowners will need to fund much of this (through the increase in land values as a result of the new development).

The three strategic growth areas are as follows.

- **Aberdeen City** – around half of all new development in the city region will be within Aberdeen City. While we prefer development to take place on brownfield sites (some of these will be in the community regeneration areas), the scale of growth we expect will mean that more than half of the development will need to take place on greenfield sites. This will mean reviewing the whole green belt to make sure that it meets the requirements of this plan and Scottish Planning Policy 21: Green Belts (SPP21). Reducing travel distances and making walking, cycling and public transport more attractive to people is vital. We will need to make sure that one or two secondary schools, associated primary schools and improvements to transport infrastructure are provided to serve new development in the city.

- **Huntly to Laurencekirk** – significant development will take place in the road and rail corridor stretching 66 miles from Huntly to Laurencekirk. Much of this corridor is served by a dual carriageway and the railway lines from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Aberdeen and Aberdeen to Inverness. The Crossrail proposals aim to provide more regular journeys and extra stations to serve commuters, shoppers, students and visitors – this will be supported by development in this corridor. Bus services on this corridor are already good, although we will need to make further improvements to make these services an even more attractive choice. We will need to provide two secondary schools and associated primary schools in this area.

- **Aberdeen to Peterhead** – this area has important strategic assets (such as the ports) and will focus on diversifying and developing the economy, as well as providing infrastructure in the first half of the plan period. There will be less new housing in this area than the other two SGAs, although the amount of housing could increase in the second half of the plan period (as a result of later reviews of this plan) if the economy grows and becomes more diverse. This reflects the hopes and ambitions of local communities and ACSEF, as expressed through the 'Energetica' initiative.

All three SGAs should focus on creating sustainable mixed communities with the services, facilities and infrastructure necessary for the 21st century.

2   Local growth and diversification areas (*[lilac colour from fig2]*)

Levels of growth in individual settlements should relate to local needs, although the scale of this growth will vary from place to place. While we should aim to provide a mix of housing opportunities for everyone, we need to focus on providing smaller homes to buy or rent, and a significant amount of affordable housing. We need to give priority to developments which respect the character of the landscape and local identity.

In this area, there will continue to be pressure for housing in the countryside which is not connected to existing settlements. However, local development plans, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, should approach this by focusing new housing in, or as an extension to, existing settlements, particularly those which are well served by public transport. This will help to create and maintain successful places and be more sustainable.

There is a need for diversification and growth in the economy in this area to meet local needs, with tourist-related developments having a role to play.

3   Regeneration priority areas (*[hatch from fig2]***)**

Regeneration is also a vital part of the strategy of this plan. Inequality exists in some parts of the area, so we need to take a range of actions to help these areas meet their full potential. These actions will involve forming partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and will focus on achieving clear results.

These areas include some of the coastal communities and the largest towns in Aberdeenshire (Fraserburgh and Peterhead), as well as parts of Aberdeen (including the community regeneration areas).This offers opportunities for redeveloping brownfield sites in a way that respects local identity, improves the quality of the environment, uses high-quality design and includes a mix of uses. Improving the economy and the competitiveness of business should play a particular role in these areas, along with improving transport infrastructure – especially to Aberdeen and further south. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is an important project to help tackle these issues. The quality of the environment varies from area to area, although it should be possible to further develop tourism in some coastal locations.

Developing on brownfield sites is a particular priority because developing on greenfield sites is likely to take resources out of the town and make it more difficult to meet wider aims for regeneration.

In some cases, developments which aim to meet the needs of the Aberdeen city region may need to be on a specific site (such as a development to extract minerals). If this is not in an identified strategic growth area, we will need justification for this development against the aims, objectives and targets of the plan.

Targets
- For at least 75% of all homes built, and employment land developed, to be in the SGAs by 2030.

- For at least 50% of all homes built to be in Aberdeen City by 2030.

- For all strategic developments meeting the needs of the city region to be in SGAs.

How to meet the targets
- Local development plans (and, where appropriate, supplementary guidance) will use the spatial strategy to set policies and identify land for development.

- Planning applications should be assessed against the spatial strategy.

Monitoring
- Assess patterns in house-building (carried out each year using the housing land audit).

- Assess patterns in land used for new employment uses (carried out each year using the employment land audit).

Economic growth

Objective

To provide opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment in a range of areas that are both appropriate for and attractive to the needs of different industries, while at the same time improving the essential strategic infrastructure necessary to allow the economy to grow over the long term.

Issues

The economy of Aberdeen City and Shire is currently dominated by the oil and gas industries. While these are predicted to continue to be important to the area for the future, it is also important that we promote a diverse local economy throughout the life of this plan. A central part of this will involve putting into practice new ideas (including those from our universities and research organisations) and developing a high-speed telecommunications network. Service industries will have a role to play.

It is very important that retail services throughout the region are promoted to guarantee the vitality and viability of our town centres, particularly Aberdeen city centre, while creating opportunities for growth in the economy. We will support Aberdeen city centre to improve regional shopping facilities and, in line with Scottish Planning Policy 8, take a sequential approach to identifying sites for new retail development.

Making sure that there is enough of the right type of land for business use, in the right places, will give Aberdeen City and Shire a competitive advantage. We expect that the 'Energetica' initiative may help to deliver this in the Aberdeen to Peterhead strategic growth area. Aberdeen City and Shire already has a very well-developed role in the knowledge economy and providing high-quality business space has an important role to play in building on this.

Future development should not be allowed to limit the growth of the economy by making the region less attractive to business, particularly in relation to congestion and access to roads, ports, airports and rail facilities. This infrastructure needs to be protected and improved.

Targets

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

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

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

- For Aberdeen to be one of the top-25 retail areas in the UK by 2030.

- For all new development in SGAs to use modern, up-to-date high-speed telecommunications networks (such as fibre optics).

How to meet the targets

- Local development plans should make new land allocations available for business use in the following areas and identify strategic reserve land. They should also set out a phased release if justified.

	Minimum land available at all times (in hectares)	New land allocations 2007-2023 (in hectares)	Strategic reserve land 2024-2030 (in hectares)
Aberdeen City	60	105	70
Aberdeenshire			
Huntly to Laurencekirk	40	105	70
Blackdog to Peterhead	20	45	43
Total	120	255	183

- Identifying and maintaining an appropriate amount of business land in the local development plan for 'local growth and diversification' areas in Aberdeenshire.

- Making it a priority to complete the city-centre masterplan for Aberdeen and put it into practice.

- Working in partnership with Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen (and other appropriate research organisations) to help them make as positive a contribution as possible to the area.

- Using action programmes to identify and co-ordinate the actions needed to make land allocations available to business in line with the spatial strategy.

Monitoring

- Measuring the supply of business land (carried out each year using the employment land audit).

- Using commercially available UK retail rankings.

Sustainable development and climate change

Objective

To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses.

Issues

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

To tackle climate change, all new development must be designed and built to use resources more efficiently and be located in places where they have as little an effect on the environment as possible.

We also need to tackle both the supply of and demand for energy during the plan period. This will involve increasing the supply of energy from renewable sources and reducing demand from new developments.

The increased risk of flooding comes about through changing and more unpredictable weather patterns and rising sea levels. We will need to take account of the scale of these changes when we consider what new developments should be built and where they should be located.

The River Dee is the region's main source of drinking water and is classed as a Special Area of Conservation. This resource is under pressure and as a result, managing the use of water is important.

The area produces 136,000 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) every year, and most of this is disposed of in landfill sites. We need to make significant changes during the first half of the plan period to manage this resource in an environmentally friendly way, in line with the waste hierarchy.

Targets
- For all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2016.
- For the city region's electricity needs to be met from renewable sources by 2020.
- To avoid having to increase the amount of water Scottish Water are licensed to take from the River Dee, as a result of the new developments proposed in the plan.
- For all new developments to use water-saving technology.
- To avoid developments on land which is at risk from coastal or river flooding (as identified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency), except in exceptional circumstances.
- By 2020, for no more than 54,000 tonnes a year of BMW to be sent to landfill.

How to meet the targets
- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance) will promote a gradual move towards buildings which are carbon neutral.

- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance) will identify areas or technology which can contribute to the supply of renewable energy.

- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance) should make it a requirement for water-saving technology to be used in all new developments.

- The two councils should work together to identify and put in place appropriate residual waste management solutions.

- Prepare supplementary planning guidance to provide a context for making decisions on future planning applications for waste-management facilities which are regionally significant.

Monitoring
- Water taken from the River Dee by Scottish Water as a percentage of their licensed level (information published every year by Scottish Water).
- Measuring the amount of planned and in-use renewable energy generating technology in the area.
- Monitoring development built on land which is at a high risk of flooding.
- Measuring the amount of carbon dioxide that is released from new developments (carried out each year by Building Standards).
- Measuring the percentage of waste which is recycled or composted (carried out by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency using information from the Landfill Allowance Scheme).
- Measuring the amount of BMW sent to landfill (carried out every three months by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency using information from the Landfill Allowance Scheme).

Population growth

Objective

To increase the population of the city region and achieve a balanced age range to help maintain and improve people's quality of life.

Issues

The population of the city region was 440,000 in 2006. Since 1995, the population has fallen slowly each year until the last few years. A falling population has a negative effect on investors' confidence, the ability of the public and private sectors to provide services and facilities, and residents' quality of life. However, as well as the total size of the population, the age range of the population also presents challenges in the years ahead. If, as predicted, the number of people who are of working age (16 to 65) falls, this will have a significant effect on the economy of the area and the way in which services are provided for an increasingly elderly population.

A falling population will not help us achieve our vision and aims. We need at least a stable population but to fully make the vision a reality, we need the population to grow to allow the economy of the area to fulfil its potential.

Increasing the population by 40,000 over 24 years will be a significant challenge for the North East and we will only achieve it if we work towards our aims and objectives with our partners. The latest forecasts suggest that this is a reasonable target. A longer-term ambition would be to see the population rise to 500,000.

If the population grows to the levels we are aiming for, we will need to increase the number of homes which are built each year (currently 2,200).

Targets
- To increase the population of the city region by 9% to 480,000 by 2030.
- To increase the population of people who are of working age (16 to 65) by 15% by 2030.
- To build at least 2,500 new homes each year by 2014 through the development plan.
- To build at least 3,000 new homes each year by 2020.

How to meet the targets
Both planning authorities will need to act in a number of ways for us to achieve this objective and meet the above targets.
- Making quick progress in preparing local development plans in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- Making land available for homes through local development plans, in line with the spatial strategy and schedule 1 of this plan.
- Making land available for housing as quickly as possible at the start of the structure plan period, following appropriate levels of consultation.
- Using action programmes, planning gain and possibly compulsory purchase powers to focus attention on delivering new housing, employment and commercial uses and providing the necessary infrastructure.

As well as these, there are also other actions we need to take to meet this objective. These actions are covered under other objectives which focus on the quality of development and will help to make the North East an even more attractive place to live, visit and do business. In this way, providing land for housing (and increasing the population) is one part of a strategy to increase the quality of life in the area. Providing new housing which doesn't meet the requirements of the spatial strategy or meet the standards set out under other objectives will not be supported by this plan.

Meeting these targets will also depend on factors which are not related to the development plan or under the control of the planning authorities. These factors include the health of the global and local economy, the price of oil, Bank of England base rates, the response of the house-building industry and how the area is marketed to potential residents from the rest of Scotland or further afield.

Monitoring
- Assessing patterns in the total population of the North East (carried out each year by the General Register Office for Scotland).
- Measuring changes in the population in the North East compared to the other city regions in Scotland, as well as other places in the rest of the UK and further afield.
- Assessing patterns in house-building in the North East (carried out each year using the housing land audit).
- Measuring how many new homes are built in the North East compared to the other city regions in Scotland and other places in the rest of the UK and further afield.
- Assessing what land is available for new homes (carried out each year using the housing land audit).
- Assessing progress with local development plans in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (carried out each year using development plan schemes).
- Measuring the number and percentage of the population of working age (carried out each year by the General Register Office for Scotland).

Quality of the environment

Objective

To make sure new development maintains and improves the region's important built, natural and cultural assets.

Issues

The built, natural and cultural environment is a valuable resource, but one which needs to be protected. The way in which sites are chosen, and high-quality design, will make sure that development does not lead to the decline of the North East's built, natural and cultural assets.

Biodiversity, wildlife habitats and landscape can be vulnerable to new development. As a result, we need to focus on maintaining and improving them, especially where there are plans for development.

The quality of water courses in the area does not currently meet the standards set by the Water Framework Directive. River Basin Management Plans are being prepared in partnership to deal with these issues.

The green belt around Aberdeen will continue to play a vital role in protecting the character and landscape setting of the City. However, it will need to change to meet the growth this plan hopes to achieve. It must guide development to appropriate places while protecting the most important areas.

Sites and areas valued for their contribution to the built and historic environment are just as sensitive and should be protected from the negative effects of development.

Targets

- To make sure that development improves and does not lead to the loss of, or damage to, built, natural or cultural heritage assets.
- For all water courses in the structure plan area to achieve 'good ecological status' under the Water Framework Directive by 2015.
- To carry out a green-belt boundary and policy review by 2010.

How to meet the targets
- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance) will make sure the North East's natural environment and historic sites and buildings continue to be protected and improved.
- Both councils will take part in the River Basin Management Planning process, particularly as it relates to new development.
- Both councils will take account of biodiversity, landscape and other sensitive areas in identifying land for development, preparing masterplans and assessing development proposals.
- The green-belt review should be carried out jointly by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils as part of their local development plan processes.

Monitoring
- Measuring the percentage of water courses that achieve 'good ecological status' (carried out by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency).

- Assessing how development has directly or indirectly led to the loss of the built, natural and cultural assets (by carrying out reviews through local development plans).

- Assessing how much development has been granted planning permission against green-belt policies (using appeal decisions and Scottish Minister notifications).

- Assessing if the findings from the green-belt review have been put into practice (carried out each year).

Sustainable mixed communities

Objective

To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to.

Issues

Too often in the past, new development has not been sustainable, mixed or focused on meeting the needs of the community. We must not allow this to continue. If we are to achieve our vision, we must set the highest standards for urban and rural design, the mix of housing, using land more efficiently and re-using previously developed land.

Our future communities must be mixed in terms of the type and size of homes, as well as their tenure and cost. We also need to make sure that new homes are designed to a high standard and that they respect and improve the existing qualities of the area. If we want to allow people to have a choice of where they want to live, developments must provide a wide range of options, from starter homes to large detached houses. Having a variety of homes and residential environments will help to improve urban design in the city, towns and rural areas. New housing which does not meet the targets set out below will not be supported by this plan.

It is important that new development meets the needs of the whole community. With an ageing population and smaller households, new development will need to meet the changing needs of society over its whole life.

Land brought forward for development must be used efficiently and brownfield sites and regeneration areas should be given priority. Through this process, we should create opportunities for new development that will close the gap between the wealthy and most disadvantaged areas of the region.

New development needs to focus on communities. In the strategic growth areas, services and facilities for the community must be a part of the development. This plan will not support house-building that fails to provide these services and facilities which help make successful and sustainable communities.

In the same way, a focus on communities means that new housing and developments for employment and commercial use should be integrated (well related to each other) to improve people's quality of life and opportunity. This should be a particular focus in masterplans prepared for larger development areas.

To create sustainable mixed communities, retail services must be one of the main considerations in preparing masterplans and development briefs for new development. We will take a sequential approach to new retail development. However, we will also support existing retail centres to make sure that the needs of the community are met now as well as in the future.

This plan has a clear objective for population growth in the North East and increasing the level of house-building. However, this will only be acceptable if the development is of the highest quality.

Targets

- To increase the range and quality of housing and the residential environment in the 'community regeneration areas'.

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

- For all housing development of over one hectare in SGAs to be in line with approved supplementary guidance and generally have no less than 30 dwellings per hectare.

- For the quality and design of new developments in the city region to be nationally recognised (including developments recognised under the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative – Framework Document to be published by the Scottish Government in summer 2008).

- For new housing to meet the needs of the whole community by providing at least 25% of affordable housing (see the note below) and an appropriate mix of types and sizes of houses, in line with local development plans and approved supplementary guidance.

How to meet the targets

- Local development plans will take account of these targets when deciding how and where to set aside land for development.

- Everyone involved in the process needs to show a commitment to quality and set the highest standards throughout the development process.

- Using supplementary guidance to provide more detail on the appropriate mix of properties, urban-design principles and community facilities.

- Start a design review process for masterplans and the most significant planning applications.

- Working with partners to bring forward appropriate proposals for development (in line with this plan) through the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative.

Monitoring

- Measuring how many properties there are in each hectare for sites of over one hectare which have been granted planning permission in strategic growth areas (carried out each year using the housing land audit).

- Measuring the percentage of new housing on brownfield sites in Aberdeen (carried out each year using the housing land audit).

- Recording and monitoring progress in redeveloping the 'community regeneration areas'.

- Building up a detailed picture of new housing development, including the sizes, types and tenure of properties (carried out each year using the housing land audit).

Note: The two councils, and their partners, will shortly begin preparing a 'housing need and demand assessment'. We expect to take account of the findings from this assessment before we publish the final structure plan, and these may affect this section and other sections of the plan (particularly 'Population growth').

Accessibility

Objective

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

Issues

It is widely accepted that there are negative environmental, economic and social effects associated with road transport, including air and noise pollution and congestion.

This plan will help to promote the link between land use and transport to make sure that all new development is conveniently located to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Improving bus and train services will make sure that people will be encouraged to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport.

Walking and cycling – the most environmentally friendly forms of transport – should also be encouraged as this will help to achieve important health, social and environmental benefits.

Improving access to the North East is also essential to developing a strong economy and providing better links. The spatial strategy will help to promote accessibility by making sure that future development also allows for improvements in the rail and road networks. This will help to improve bus and train services and encourage people to use them.

Targets

- For all developments to meet the accessibility standards set out in the local transport strategies by 2013.

- For major employment and service developments in strategic growth areas to show that they are easy to access by walking, cycling or using public transport. The travel plans produced for these developments should reduce the need for people to use cars.

- To reduce the percentage of journeys which are made by car.

How to meet the targets

- Local development plans will identify and protect land from development to make sure that transport proposals identified in the local and regional transport strategies can be developed. Transport proposals needed due to development promoted in the plan will be identified in supplementary guidance.

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

- The action programme will, at an early stage, identify the necessary requirements to make sure that developments can be accessed by walking, cycling and public transport.

- Approved supplementary guidance will include layouts and design for new developments which can be accessed easily by walking, cycling and public transport.

Monitoring

- Using transport assessments and information about planning applications will help us monitor the accessibility of developments.

- Measuring the reduction in the percentage of journeys which are made by car.

Putting this plan into practice

This structure plan provides a vision that aims to develop the economy, maintain and improve the quality of our environment and provide a high quality of life up to 2030. The scale of the changes needed and the challenges set by the vision, especially in relation to sustainable development and climate change, should not be underestimated.

This plan sets the framework for other plans and strategies, and promotes targets to achieve our aims. This plan will be put into practice through local development plans and supplementary guidance. These will be prepared separately by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council and must be consistent with this plan.

However, local development plans will not have the long-term vision of the structure plan. There may be action that needs to be taken now to allow proposals to be included in future local development plans. We will develop an action programme to support this plan. This will identify a number of steps needed to put the plan into practice, including:

• identifying timescales for major investments;

• preparing masterplans; and

• preparing supplementary guidance to help development to take place.

The programme will identify who is to take action, when this will need to happen and how it will be funded. This will give the people concerned the confidence to make decisions on investment. The action programme will be monitored regularly and reviewed at least every two years.

Providing infrastructure

To make changes on the scale proposed in this plan, we will need to invest in the infrastructure of the structure plan area, particularly if we want to maintain people's quality of life. The existing roads, sewers and schools will not be able to cope with the demands extra development will bring. We will also need to invest in facilities and services for communities. These two needs have to be carefully considered very early in the land-development process, even before land is identified in local development plans.

Developers will have to accept the need for contributions towards necessary infrastructure, services and facilities within their own site. However, in cases where development has wider effects, we will have to secure extra contributions. We also expect that the increase in land value, as a result of granting planning permission, will fund a large percentage of the new infrastructure needed, although the public sector will also need to make an important contribution. We will need to secure a higher percentage of the increase in land values than we have in the past, to be able to create sustainable mixed communities.

Proposals

A range of projects have been proposed that will help us achieve our vision for the North-East. While some are well under way, others are at an early stage. These include:

- initiatives by Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen to strengthen our knowledge economy;

- major proposals to regenerate some of the city region's most disadvantaged areas;

- a new community stadium – a regionally important facility which will bring economic, social and cultural benefits (two possible locations currently being investigated are shown on the key diagram);

- the 'Energetica' initiative being promoted by Scottish Enterprise (and ACSEF) for the Aberdeen to Peterhead SGA;

- the city centre masterplan, which includes proposals to make part of Union Street an area for pedestrians only;

- putting the Aberdeen airport masterplan into practice;

- road and rail improvements (such as Crossrail) to make environmentally friendly methods of transport more attractive – including reducing journey times to Edinburgh, Glasgow and beyond;

- the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to provide better access and connections to other places and to allow environmentally friendly methods of transport to be provided;

- a third crossing of the River Don (and other associated measures) to deal with congestion and allow growth in and to the north of the city; and

- a new prison (in the Peterhead area).

Monitoring and reviewing this plan

We recognise that things will change over time, both in response to the direction this plan promotes and events we were not able to predict. Monitoring must take place to assess our progress in meeting the plan's aims and objectives.

We currently use housing land and employment land audits to collect information on the rate of development, where the development is taking place, and whether we are meeting our land supply targets. We also monitor new retail proposals in this way. Each objective of this plan identifies ways of monitoring progress towards achieving our aims and we will produce a monitoring report each year to assess our progress in meeting the targets.

Significant changes in society, the economy, environment and population will only become clear over the longer term, but will also need to be monitored to make sure the plan's objectives are appropriate. Monitoring these will, in practice, be a continuous process. However, we will only report on them as part of the monitoring statement that we produce for the five-yearly review of the plan.

The first review of this plan will involve replacing it with a strategic development plan. The Scottish Government want to see strategic development plans in place as early as possible and we can expect to replace this plan by 2013.

Schedule 1: Housing Allowances

	Effective Land Supply 2007	Constrained	2007 – 2016	2017 – 2023	2024 – 2030	Total		Total (1)	Total (2)
Aberdeen City – B/F*	1,882		4,000	3,000	3,000	10,000		10,000	10,000
Regeneration Areas*	0	0	2,000	2,000	1,000	5,000		5,000	5,000
Aberdeen City – G/F*	1,161		12,000	5,000	4,000	21,000		21,000	21,000
Aberdeen City	**3,043**	**503**	**18,000**	**10,000**	**8,000**	**36,000**		**36,000**	**36,000**
Huntly – Pitcaple	365	340	300	500	200	1,000		800	1,000
Inverurie – Blackburn*	1,891	0	1,000	1,500	4,000	6,500		1,000	10,000
Portlethen – Stonehaven*	982	0	2,600	2,400	1,000	6,000		13,500	8,000
S of Drumlithie - Marykirk	235	180	500	400	100	1,000		1,200	1,200
Peterhead – Hatton	623	407	600	800	600	2,000		2,000	2,000
Ellon – Blackdog*	174	25	400	1,400	600	2,400		0	500
Local Growth (AHMA)*	2,652	331	1,700	1,500	1,500	4,700		5,100	1,100
Local Growth (RHMA)	2,210	1,737	4,400	4,000	4,000	12,400		12,400	12,200
Small Sites (AHMA)	265								
Small Sites (RHMA)	685								
Aberdeenshire	**10,082**	**3,020**	**11,500**	**12,500**	**12,000**	**36,000**		**36,000**	**36,000**
AHMA (*)	**9,007**	**859**	**23,700**	**16,800**	**15,100**	**55,600**		**55,600**	**55,600**
RHMA	**4,118**	**2,664**	**5,800**	**5,700**	**4,900**	**16,400**		**16,400**	**16,400**
Aberdeen City and Shire	**13,125**	**3,523**	**29,500**	**22,500**	**20,000**	**72,000**		**72,000**	**72,000**

Glossary

Action programmes

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

Adaptation

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

Affordable housing

Housing which is made available at a cost below full market value to meet an identified need. It includes homes rented from the council and housing associations and, in some cases, homes sold or rented from the private sector.

Allocations

Areas of land identified in a local development plan for development.

Biodegradable municipal waste

Waste such as food, grass cuttings, paper and cardboard collected by councils from households (and some businesses).

Biodiversity

The variety of life and richness of all living things in the natural world.

Brownfield sites

Land, normally in towns and villages, which has been built on or used in the past for some purpose. Brownfield land does not include private or public gardens, sports pitches, woodlands or open spaces used for leisure and recreation purposes. The grounds of institutions (such as schools or hospitals) that are no longer used are not considered as brownfield sites.

Carbon neutral

Development which limits the amount of energy used and creates as much renewable energy as it uses each year for heating and electrical appliances.

Community regeneration area

Specific neighbourhoods in Aberdeen City that the Scottish 'index of multiple deprivation' recognises as needing action to tackle disadvantage.

Compulsory purchase

This gives local authorities the power, by law, to buy land and buildings which are needed to deliver important projects.

Diversify

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

Dwellings per hectare (dph)

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

Energetica

A development concept between Aberdeen and Peterhead that is being promoted by Scottish Enterprise and the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum to improve the economy and promote the energy industry.

Green belt

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

Greenfield sites

Land on which no building has taken place.

Grid reinforcement

Upgrading the electricity supply network, which includes overhead power lines and substations.

Hectare

An area of land equal to 10,000 square metres (100 x 100 metres) or 2.471 acres.

High-value markets

The goods and services across many different market sectors that are considered to be of higher value (for example, luxury ice cream, high-quality clothing, oil support or computing technology services).

Infrastructure

The parts of cities, towns or villages that make them work. This includes water, drainage, electricity and phones, as well as roads, schools, community halls, medical centres, libraries, bus stops and so on.

Key diagram

A way of showing the main elements of the strategy of a structure plan in a visual way. It is not a map.

Knowledge economy

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

Local development plan

These will replace local plans and are prepared by every local authority. They contain detailed policies and sites that have been chosen for development in line with the approved strategic development plan and after a lot of consultation with local communities. The local development plan, along with the strategic development plan, will be the main way for planning applications to be assessed.

Mitigation

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

National development

A project in the National Planning Framework which the Scottish Government agrees is needed and wants to see built.

National Planning Framework

A document that sets out the Scottish Government's development priorities and identifies national developments.

Non-renewable resources

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

Planning gain

Money or infrastructure (see above) provided by developers and landowners to allow essential projects to be built that are directly linked to development proposals. Planning gain will normally be part of a legal agreement.

Renewable resources

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

Residual waste

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

Scottish Planning Policy

Statements of the Scottish Government's policies on national land use and other planning matters, such as housing, transport and green belts.

Sequential approach

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

Strategic

Important issues which need both councils to work together.

Strategic development plan

These will replace structure plans and will be prepared only by strategic development planning authorities. They set out a plan for their area and must concentrate on the main land use and development matters in that area. These, along with the local development plan (see above), will be the main way for planning applications to be assessed.

Strategic infrastructure

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

Strategic reserve

Areas of land identified in a local development plan for possible future development.

Supplementary guidance or supplementary planning guidance

These documents support a plan by setting out details of how the policies or proposals should be put into practice. These can include masterplans, development briefs and design briefs. They may also include other policy statements on a wide range of issues.

Sustainable

Something that will last because it has tackled its current and longer-term environmental, social and economic effects and does not rely on non-renewable resources.

Sustainable development

A widely used definition of this is 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. It means that development should take full account of its implications on the local community and economy and on the environment both locally and globally.

Tenure

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

Vitality and viability

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

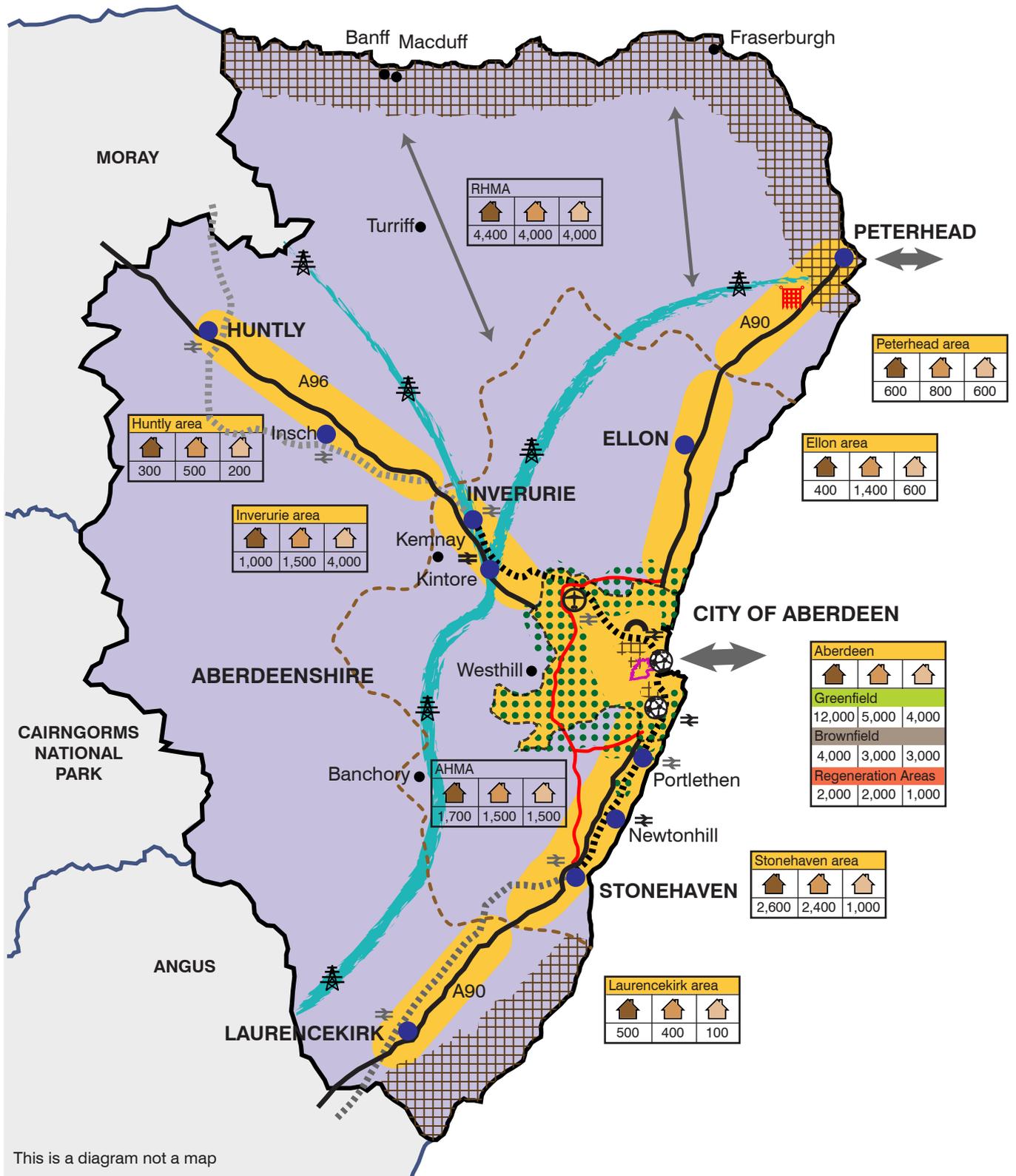### Waste hierarchy

A way of thinking about waste which focuses on reducing waste in the first place through re-using, recycling, and recovering energy. Waste disposal in landfill sites is at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Water courses

Places where water is found such as rivers, flooded areas around rivers, lochs, boggy wet land, water held under the ground, canals, coastal waters and ponds.

KEY DIAGRAM

MORAY

Banff Macduff

Fraserburgh

PETERHEAD

Turriff

RHMA		
4,400	4,000	4,000

A90

HUNTLY

A96

Insch

Huntly area		
300	500	200

Peterhead area		
600	800	600

ELLON

Ellon area		
400	1,400	600

INVERURIE

Kemnay

Inverurie area		
1,000	1,500	4,000

Kintore

CITY OF ABERDEEN

ABERDEENSHIRE

Westhill

Aberdeen		
Greenfield		
12,000	5,000	4,000
Brownfield		
4,000	3,000	3,000
Regeneration Areas		
2,000	2,000	1,000

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

Banchory

AHMA		
1,700	1,500	1,500

Portlethen

Newtonhill

Stonehaven area		
2,600	2,400	1,000

STONEHAVEN

ANGUS

Laurencekirk area		
500	400	100

A90

LAURENCEKIRK

This is a diagram not a map

KEY					
▬	Strategic Growth Areas	▪▪▪	Housing Market Area	↔	Better Linkages
▬	Local Growth & Diversification	●●●	Greenbelt	🏠	Housing Allowances 2007-16
▦	Regeneration Priority Areas	▬	Western Peripheral Route	🏠	Housing Allowances 2017-23
▪▪▪	Crossrail Proposal	⌒	Third Don Crossing	🏠	Housing Allowances 2024-30
▪▪▪	Railway	▬	Aberdeen City Centre	⚽	Potential Community Stadium Sites
⇌	Existing Railway Stations	〰	Electricity Grid Reinforcement	▦	New Prison - In the Peterhead area
⇌	Proposed Railway Stations	↔	Ports	●/●	Towns over 3,000 people