



EIGHT-PAGE FEATURE ON WHAT'S NEW IN OUR CITY

energising ABERDEEN

June 2008

YOUR CHANCE TO SCOOP A TOP PRIZE!

SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS

Draft Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan maps out vision for growth

A NEW draft document mapping out how the region should develop over the next 20 years is going out for public consultation.

People across the area are being asked to give their views on the draft Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan in consultations which start on Friday (June 27) and run for 11 weeks into early September.

Planning officials will host a series of public meetings in the area's main population centres from 18 August to 12 September, where local people will be able to ask questions about the plan and tell officials their own ideas about how the region should develop.

Copies of the plan, which are also available on CD, are going out to community councils and a whole range of stakeholder organisations. They are also being placed in libraries and information points. And a new website has been launched – www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk – to allow people to learn more about the vision laid out in the plan.

Strategic Development Plan officers have drawn up the draft document to ensure the region maintains its attractiveness and continues to develop sustainably over the next two decades.

The 28-page plan maps out the framework within which new homes, businesses, transport infrastructure and facilities will grow and prosper – and stresses that the design and construction of all new development must be of the highest possible quality.

The plan proposes the creation of Strategic Growth Areas stretching from Laurencekirk to Peterhead and from Aberdeen to Huntly. It focuses too on the need to regenerate coastal communities in the north and south of the area. And the whole plan is underpinned by the need to develop sustainably to make sure the high quality of our precious environment is not harmed.

The plan says: "By 2030,

Aberdeen City and Shire will need to have adapted to a very different world. The challenges ahead need to be faced up to so as to maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the region as a place to live and do business."

- In short, the plan aims to:
- deliver a robust framework for investment for economic growth and diversity;
 - address the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change;
 - ensure the region has enough people, homes and jobs to support the services needed to enhance quality of life;
 - protect and enhance the natural and built environment;
 - create sustainable mixed communities, employing top-quality design and construction;
 - make the most efficient use of the transport network to ensure travel is minimised, and make walking, cycling and public transport attractive.

Three Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) have been pinpointed as the prime focus for 75-80% of development by 2030:

Aberdeen City is earmarked for 50% of all new development over the plan period. The Huntly to Laurencekirk corridor is lined up for significant development at key points along the route of the railway and the A96/A90. Aberdeen to Peterhead is pinpointed as a prime area for economic diversification.

Further growth is proposed in Regeneration Priority Areas (RPAs) to ensure they realise their potential.

Outside the SGAs and the

RPAs, the draft structure plan envisages modest growth in existing settlements.

Key to the plan is sustainability and the need to address climate change. New developments will have to use resources more efficiently and reduce the region's global footprint, with the aim of all new buildings achieving zero net carbon dioxide emissions by 2016.

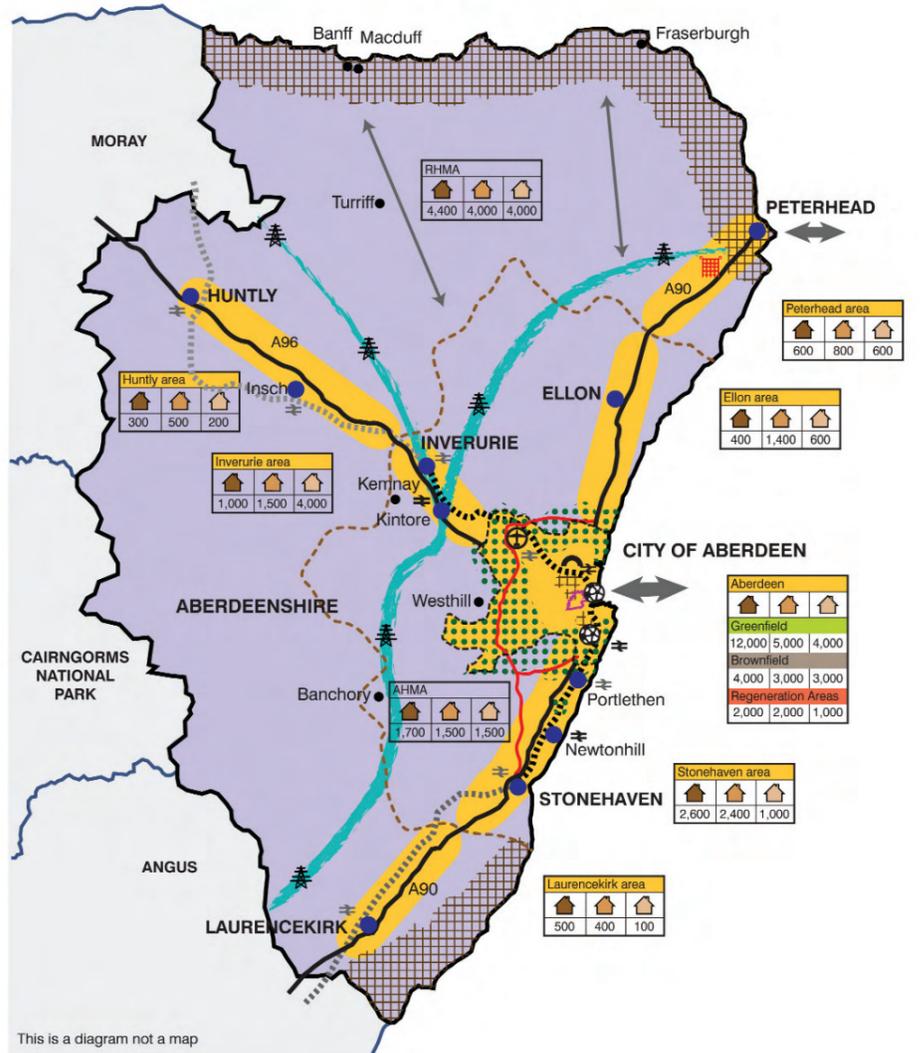
The draft structure plan, however, envisages the area's population growing from 443,000 to 480,000 by 2030.

Achieving that growth will require a significant number of new homes – and the draft plan proposes more than 67,300 – some 36,000 in Aberdeen and 31,000 in Aberdeenshire.

The plan also recognises that the capacity of roads, schools and sewers must increase to accommodate the proposed new development, and that investment is needed in community facilities.

And the document points out that completing key developments already in the pipeline will be vital to delivering the structure plan vision, including:

- Aberdeen city centre redevelopment and Union Street pedestrianisation;
- the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route;
- rail improvements (increased frequency and new stations), and improvements at the Haudagain roundabout and the Bridge of Dee;
- the 3rd Don Crossing;
- a community stadium;
- continued joint work by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, the



city's universities and other bodies to contribute to the knowledge economy. From September to December this year the Strategic

Development Plan team will develop a final plan in light of the consultation responses. It is expected that a Finalised Structure Plan will be submitted

to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2008 or early 2009 for approval. See pages 4 and 5 for more details.





ACSEF welcomes draft structure plan

THE structure plan is of huge significance to the future economic development of Aberdeen City and Shire.

It will determine the general distribution, amount and timing of future development, especially industrial and residential land.

As the public/private partnership driving the economic development agenda for the region, Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum welcomes the final draft structure plan and believes it shares the same vision for economic growth.

The structure plan aims to ensure the region is an exciting, modern and environmentally sustainable European city region that is inclusive, enjoys the highest quality of life and is recognised worldwide for its leadership in renewable energy, technological and intellectual excellence, and unique environmental qualities.

Newly appointed ACSEF chairman Tom Smith said: "It therefore sets the framework for future land use that will attract and retain businesses of all sizes."

ACSEF, which has been

heavily involved in the consultation process to date, believes the draft structure plan will allow for growth in the economy and will be largely well received by the private sector.

Mr Smith added: "The views of the business community, whether through ACSEF, Scottish Enterprise or the Chamber of Commerce and other organisations, as well as directly from private developers, have been fed into the plan.

"There is a real need for some bold decisions to be made at both local and national political

levels so that we are not constrained by a shortage of land for growth and prohibitively high property prices. We are delighted that this is reflected in the positive approach to growth demonstrated by the draft plan.

"ACSEF is delighted that the plan rises to the challenges ahead by taking a radical departure from previous structure plans in terms of allowing for ambitious growth and being much more focused on delivery.

"The partners in the local economic forum have an appetite and a desire to grow the

region in terms of population, economic activity and diversity. The final structure plan must allow for future potential growth and must work to help us encourage further investment by indigenous growing businesses, inward investment by new businesses to the region and start-up companies.

"With quality of life being a strategic priority for ACSEF to deliver its vision for 2025, we must ensure that in future development, the need for economic growth and employment opportunities,

connectivity and sustainability are mutually supportive.

"It is inevitable that strategic development will, in some areas, encroach on the current Green Belt and there will be considerable environmental challenges. But by taking an approach that includes more sustainable methods of transport, a sensible mix of housing and a sensitivity to the countryside, we will be able to deliver economic growth, uphold our quality of life and ensure long-term prosperity for the overall benefit of everyone in the region."

