

Appendix 1: Provisional Draft Structure Plan

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee

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

2007 - 2030

Provisional Draft Structure Plan – March 2008

Introduction

Aberdeen City and Shire is currently an attractive place to live and work, with a high-quality environment, high average incomes and low unemployment. However, there are disparities 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 impact of climate change and global resource depletion) will threaten the prosperity of all if no action is taken. 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.

The purpose of this structure plan is to set a clear direction for the future development of the North East to which the public and private sectors can work towards in a co-ordinated way, helping to deliver the vision.

This plan represents a radical departure from previous structure plans in both its form and content. It seeks to bridge the gap to strategic development plans by being more focused, strategic and action-orientated. Its content is more clearly driven by the need for change, with greater clarity around the nature of that change and how it will be delivered.

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 seek to be comprehensive but to only address those issues which require a strategic approach.

Central to this plan is its vision, aims and spatial strategy. These are supported by a series of objectives with associated targets, delivery mechanisms and monitoring arrangements. Policies and proposals are included where they are critical to the implementation of the plan. The use of technical terms has been kept to a minimum.

It is vitally important to recognise the links between the different elements of the plan. This has been emphasised by not dividing the plan into topic-based chapters but recognising that individual topics (such as housing) relate to a number (if not all) of the objectives. This has implications for how the plan should be used and development management will use the plan in appropriate cases to assist in determining the extent to which an application moves the area in the right direction. Local development plans consistent with this plan will be the primary tool in the determination of planning applications.

Influences on the plan

This plan has not been written in isolation but has been subject to a wide range of international, national, regional and local influences.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in 2004 and provides a framework to guide the spatial development of Scotland to 2025. Draft National

Planning Framework 2 (dNPF2) was published in December 2007 and looks forward to 2030 with the main elements of the development strategy being shown in Figure 1 below. With the exception of 'grid reinforcement to support renewable energy development', no national developments have been identified in the area.

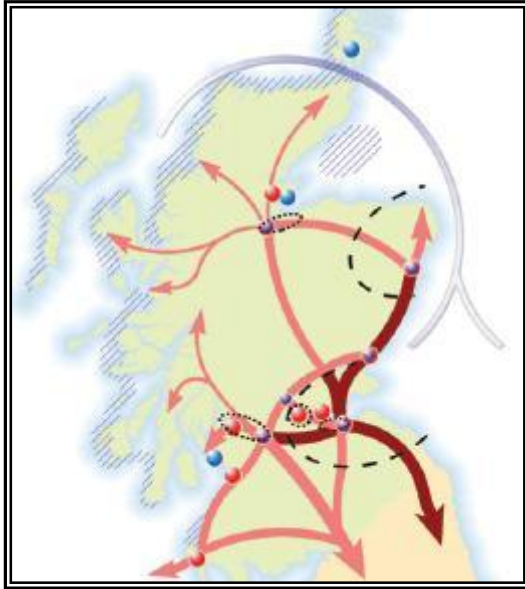


Figure 1: Draft NPF2 Strategy

Along with the challenges associated with the maturing nature of the off-shore 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 knowledge economy links associated with the energy and off-shore 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 road and rail journey times (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 mechanisms to take forward the strengthening of the corridor, with such plans in the Aberdeen and Edinburgh city regions seen as being particular priorities.

Those strategies and plans at a regional level which provide an important context to 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 has also been subject to a range of assessments including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment. All of these have impacted on the content of the plan.

Preparation of 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, developed in an inclusive way and involving a wide range of stakeholders including communities, public sector organisations and businesses in the process.

The Vision for the Plan

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. A vision for a prosperous 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, 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; for the unique qualities of our environment; and for 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 addressing climate change, and our society being more inclusive.

In order to realise this vision a series of aims have been developed. These provide a useful guide which both interprets the vision and focuses explicitly 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.

This plan primarily aims both to:

- deliver a robust framework for investment decisions which facilitates economic growth and diversification of the regional economy, supported by promoting the more efficient use of resources; and
- address the substantial and urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change.

It also aims to:

- a) enable the area to have enough people, homes and jobs to support the level of services and facilities needed to maintain and enhance quality of life;
- b) protect and enhance our valued assets and resources, including our built, natural and cultural environment;
- c) facilitate the creation of sustainable mixed communities and associated infrastructure which utilise the highest standards of urban and rural design and cater for the needs of the whole population; and
- d) make the most efficient use of the transport network, ensure that the need to travel is minimised and that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices for the users of new development.

The plan's vision will only be achieved by showing commitment to all the aims as a whole.

Development proposals will be judged against the extent to which they help to meet these aims. However, we recognise that confident and courageous decisions will be

required in balancing the weight to be given to each of the aims in assessing the merits of development proposals.

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. It is not the place of this plan to be overly prescriptive on this issue, leaving local development plans some latitude to respond to local circumstances. However this plan must set a strategic context within which these issues can be considered.

Identifying where development will take place is a key element of delivering the changes needed in the Aberdeen City and Shire area. Being clear about where we want to promote the construction of houses, businesses, and other developments provides long-term certainty and confidence for communities, businesses, and those providing services. It allows the best use to be made of the investment that will be needed to maintain the quality of life in the area over coming decades.

A spatial strategy has been developed which seeks to address the need to promote development in locations that caters for the needs of business and, at the same time, are environmentally sustainable. The strategy also recognises the needs of communities of all sizes across the area to sustain themselves and the services that they depend upon.

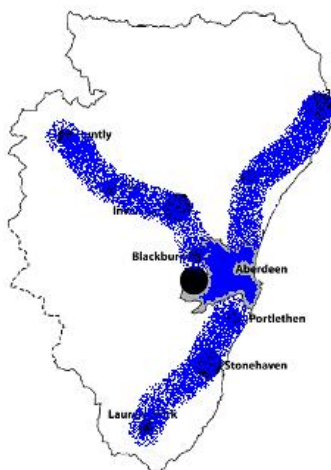
This strategy concentrates development in locations where there are clear opportunities to achieve a shift to public transport, which itself can be provided in an efficient manner. It promotes strategic growth in a limited number of locations, and of a scale that can justify significant public and private investment in the schools, the community facilities and the transport network required to accommodate growth without adversely impacting on quality of life. It also provides the flexibility to meet the needs of local communities.

KEY DIAGRAM HERE – this will be a ‘map’ of the structure plan area which shows the three spatial perspectives identified below, the proposals which are key to the delivery of the plan and give an indication of the scale of growth expected in different parts of the area (from Appendix 2). It will also identify the importance of external air and sea links from Peterhead and Aberdeen. This diagram has yet to be prepared.

The spatial strategy identifies three spatial perspectives:

1) Strategic Growth Areas

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



Although these will fulfil different roles, together they can be expected to accommodate around 75-80% of the growth over the next 20+ years.

Development in these areas will give rise to significant infrastructure requirements ranging from new primary and secondary schools to road and rail improvements and new water / waste water infrastructure. This is likely to cost several hundred million pounds and landowners will be

required to finance much of this provision (via the uplift in land values resulting from development being permitted) which is essential if the places created function in a sustainable way.

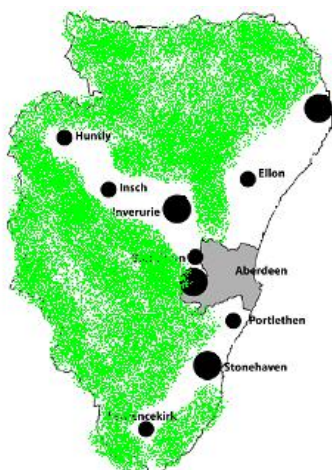
The three strategic growth areas are:

- **ABERDEEN CITY** – around half of all new development in the city region will be allowed for within Aberdeen City. While preference will be given to brownfield sites (including the ‘community regeneration areas’), the scale of growth anticipated will mean that more than half will need to be accommodated on greenfield sites. This will necessitate a review of the greenbelt, which should be carried out with Aberdeenshire to ensure that the whole greenbelt is fit for purpose, remains robust and in line with the policy direction of Scottish Planning Policy 21: Green Belts (SPP21). Reducing travel distances and maximising the attractiveness of walking, cycling and the use of public transport is critical. One or two secondary schools and associated primary schools will need to be delivered in areas of new development to facilitate growth in Aberdeen, as well as improvements to the transport infrastructure.
- **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 / Glasgow to Aberdeen and Aberdeen to Inverness. The rail proposals which will be facilitated by development in this corridor will see increased frequency of journeys, increased capacity and additional stations on the railway to serve commuters, shoppers, students and visitors. In addition to the railway, bus services on this corridor are also already good, although further improvements will be required to make such services an even more attractive choice. Once again, two secondary schools and associated primary schools will require to be delivered in this area.
- **ABERDEEN TO PETERHEAD** – the focus in this area will be economic growth and diversification. The scale of new housing in this area will be more modest than the other two areas, although this could be supplemented in the second half of the plan period (through subsequent reviews of this plan) if the economic diversification is achieved and the area generates more demand.

In all three SGAs there should be a focus on delivering sustainable mixed communities with the services, facilities and infrastructure for the 21st century.

2) Local Growth & Diversification

Levels of growth in individual settlements should relate to local needs, although the scale of this will vary from place to place. While a mix of housing opportunities



should be provided, an emphasis should be given to smaller homes for sale or rent, with high levels of affordable housing. Housing opportunities which allow older people to remain in their communities should also be provided. Priority should be given to developments which respect the character of the landscape setting and local identity. In this way, not only will new development be integrated into existing settlements but also help create and maintain successful places.

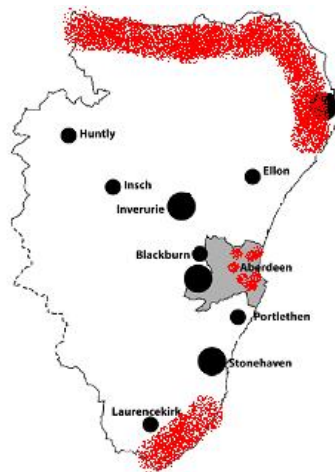
There will continue to be pressure for housing in the countryside in this area which is unconnected to existing settlements. Local development plans, in line with SPP3 and SPP15 should have an approach to such development which places a strong emphasis on housing in or adjacent to existing settlements, particularly those well served by public transport.

In those areas also identified as priorities for regeneration, particular emphasis should be given to an approach which seeks the re-development of brownfield sites (for housing, employment and retail uses as appropriate) before consideration is given to greenfield sites. The release of greenfield sites is likely to drain resources out of the town and make it more difficult to meet wider regeneration objectives.

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

3) Regeneration Priority Areas

Realising the potential of the North East cannot be achieved by merely focusing on successful and thriving places alone. Regeneration and / or economic renewal is an essential component of the spatial strategy of this plan.



Some parts of the area have not been performing to their potential for some time and require concerted action on a range of fronts to address sometimes deep-seated inequality. Such action will need to take the form of partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors and be focused on achieving tangible results.

This area includes many of the coastal communities in the North East and some of the largest towns in Aberdeenshire (Peterhead and Fraserburgh) as well as parts of Aberdeen (particularly but not exclusively the 'community regeneration areas'). It offers opportunities for brownfield redevelopment respecting local identity, improving environmental quality and using high-quality design. Improving economic performance and competitiveness should play a particular role in these areas, along with improvements to infrastructure which improve connectivity – especially to Aberdeen and further south. While in some areas environmental quality is low, in some it is very high – with the potential to further develop coastal tourism related roles.

Developments proposed to serve the needs of the Aberdeen City region are required to locate within the strategic growth areas. Developments of this nature which fall outwith these areas will not be in accordance with the plan, unless they can demonstrate a physical need for a specific geographic location (such as the presence of a natural resource).

Targets

- By 2030, no less than 75% of all homes and employment floorspace will have been built in the SGAs.
- By 2030, no less than 50% of all homes will have been built in Aberdeen City.
- All strategic growth serving the needs of the City region to be within SGAs.

Delivery

- Local Development Plans (and, where appropriate supplementary guidance) will allocate land and formulate policies in line with the spatial strategy.
- Decisions on planning applications should be informed by the spatial strategy.

Monitoring

- Trends in new housing completions (annual, Housing Land Audit).
- Trends in take-up of new employment land (annual, Employment Land Audit).

1 – Economic Growth

Objective

To provide opportunities which encourage economic development and employment growth in a range of locations that are both appropriate for and attractive to the diverse needs of different industries while at the same time enhancing the strategic infrastructure essential to support sustainable economic growth.

Issues

The economy of Aberdeen City and Shire is currently dominated by the oil and gas industry. While these are forecast to continue to be important to the area for the foreseeable future, it is very important that we promote diversity within the local economy throughout the life of this plan. The development of new ideas from our Universities and research establishments, and their transfer to industry is likely to be central to this, as will high-speed telecommunications infrastructure. Service industries will also have a role to play. Retailing needs to be supported so as to maintain and enhance the attractiveness of retail provision from a regional perspective.

Ensuring that there is sufficient land for development, of an appropriate type, in the right places, and with excellent connectivity, will provide Aberdeen City and Shire with a competitive advantage.

There is the need to ensure that other aspects of development over the next 25 years do not disadvantage future economic growth by adversely impacting on the attractiveness of the area to business, particularly in relation to accessibility, congestion and access to ports, airports and rail facilities.

Targets

- Maintain a marketable supply of at least 60ha of employment land at all times in a range of locations within Aberdeen City.
- Maintain a marketable supply of at least 60ha of employment land at all times in a range of locations within strategic growth areas in Aberdeenshire.
- At least 20ha of the marketable employment land supply should be of a standard to attract high quality uses or be suitable for company headquarters.
- Improve the retail ranking of Aberdeen in a Scottish / UK context to be in the top [25] in the UK by 2030.
- All new development in SGAs to be served by fibre-optic (or equivalent) communications infrastructure.

Delivery

- Local development plans will be expected to allocate the following areas of employment land and to identify strategic reserve land for employment uses.

	Minimum land available	2011-2020	Strategic reserve
Aberdeen City	60ha	105ha	70ha
Aberdeenshire			
Huntly – Laurencekirk	40ha	105ha	70ha
Potterton - Peterhead	20ha	45ha	43ha
	120ha	255ha	183ha

- Appropriate quantities of employment land will need to be identified in the Local Development Plan in Aberdeenshire in ‘Local Growth and Diversification’ areas.
- Give priority to progressing the City Centre Masterplan to completion and subsequent implementation.
- Work in partnership with Aberdeen and Robert Gordon Universities (and other appropriate research establishments) to assist where possible in helping them reach their potential and maximise their positive contribution to the area.
- Action programmes will identify the infrastructure and other elements needed to take forward employment land allocations in line with the spatial strategy.

Monitoring

- Supply of marketable employment land (annual, Employment Land Audit).
- Commercially available UK retail rankings.

2 – Sustainable development and climate change

Objective

To lead the way towards becoming a city region which reduces the consumption of unsustainable resources, reduces carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and adapts to the implications of climate change.

Issues

Addressing the challenges of sustainable development and climate change are some of the most serious we will face over the period covered by this plan. While measures to mitigate the effects of climate change are vital, adaptation measures are also required to avoid the worst consequences of the climate change already set in motion by past actions.

New developments will have to be constructed in and use resources more efficiently in order to reduce their vulnerability to climate change (e.g. droughts, floods and storms) and the region's global footprint.

Both the supply and demand for energy needs to be tackled during the plan period. This will involve increasing the supply of sustainable heat and electricity while at the same time improving the environmental performance (resources efficiency) of buildings in their construction and during their occupation (e.g. energy efficiency).

The increased risk of flooding comes about through more erratic weather patterns, rising sea levels and changing seasonal weather patterns. Both the direction and scale of change in these will need to be factored into the location and characteristics of new development.

The use of water efficient technologies is important, as the River Dee is the region's main source of drinking water and the Water Framework Directive requires all water bodies to achieve 'good ecological status' by 2015. At present the River Dee does not meet this classification. Its designation as a 'Special Area of Conservation' makes the issue of water abstraction even more critical.

The city region produces far too much waste and it is currently still managed in an unsustainable way – with too much still being disposed of in landfill sites – 136,000 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) in 2006/07 as well as commercial and industrial waste. A step-change will be needed during the first half of the plan period to manage waste in a sustainable way in accordance with the waste hierarchy. Potentially significant fines from the European Union will be one consequence of failure to address this issue.

Targets

- To be regionally self-sufficient in electricity from renewable sources by 2020.
- All new buildings to achieve zero net carbon dioxide emissions by 2016.
- All new development to integrate water-saving technologies.
- Water abstraction for development proposed in the plan should not give rise to a need to increase the licensed abstraction from the River Dee.
- No new development is constructed on land at risk from coastal or fluvial flooding as identified in the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's (SEPA) indicative flood risk map except in exceptional circumstances or where no alternative exists.
- Reduce BMW sent to landfill to no more than 54,000 tonnes p.a. by 2020.

Delivery

- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance where appropriate) will be expected to identify areas and technologies with the potential to contribute to the supply of renewable energy.
- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance where appropriate) should promote the move towards zero-carbon buildings.
- Local development plans (and supplementary guidance where appropriate) should require the use of water-efficient technologies in all new development.
- Progress the joint procurement of remedial waste treatment solutions.
- Prepare supplementary planning guidance to provide a strategic context to the determination of any future planning applications for waste management facilities of a strategic scale.

Monitoring

- new development does not prevent the River Dee achieving 'good ecological status' by 2015.
- New development constructed on land at high risk from flooding (annual, monitoring report).
- Net CO₂ emissions from new residential developments (annual, Building Standards)
- Percentage of municipal solid waste recycled / composted (quarterly, SEPA Landfill Allowance Scheme Data)
- Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) landfilled (quarterly, SEPA Landfill Allowance Scheme Data)

3 – Population Growth

Objective

To increase the population of the city region and achieving a balanced age structure in order to maintain and enhance quality of life.

Issues

The population of the city region (443,000 in 2006) is modest by UK and international standards. From a peak in 1995, the population declined slowly year on year until the last few years. A falling population impacts negatively on investor confidence, the ability of the public and private sectors to deliver services / facilities and the quality of life experienced by residents. However, in addition to the total size of the population, the age structure of the population also presents challenges in the years ahead. The forecast decline in the working age population would have significant impacts on the economy of the area and the delivery of services to an increasingly elderly population.

A falling population is inconsistent with the achievement of our vision and aims. A stable population is the minimum requirement but to fully realise the vision, population growth is required to enable the economy of the area to fulfil its potential.

Increasing the population by almost 40,000 over 24 years will be a significant challenge for the North East and it will only be achieved if an integrated approach is taken to delivering it. However, the latest forecasts suggest that this is an objective which is reasonable to aim for. A longer-term ambition (beyond the horizon of this plan, but subject to review every five years) would be to see the population rise to 500,000.

The achievement of this population growth will require an increase in housebuilding from the recent levels of 2,200pa.

Targets

- Increase the population of the city region by 9% to 480,000 by 2030.
- Increase by 15% the working age population (16 – 65) by 2030
- Housing completions of at least 2,500pa by 2014 through the development plan.
- Housing completions of 3,000pa by 2020.

Delivery

A number of delivery mechanisms under the control of the planning authorities will be required to facilitate the delivery of this objective and the associated targets:

- The allocation of land for housebuilding through local development plans in accordance with the spatial strategy and Schedule 2 [This currently contains one worked up option and two possible alternatives].
- Rapid progress with the preparation of local development plans in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Release land for housing as quickly as possible at the start of the structure plan period, consistent with appropriate levels of consultation and scrutiny.
- The pro-active use of action programming, planning gain and potentially compulsory purchase powers to focus attention on, co-ordinate and help

deliver the required infrastructure and overcome constraints to the delivery of new housing.

In addition to the direct delivery mechanisms, there are also a number of indirect actions which will contribute towards meeting this objective. These are covered under other objectives but focus on the quality of the development and associated infrastructure which will help to make the North East an even more attractive place to live, visit and do business. In this way, the provision of land for housing (and increasing the population) is one part of an integrated strategy to increase the quality of life and sustainability of the area, and not an end in itself. The provision of new housing which doesn't accord with the spatial strategy or meet the standards set out under other objectives will not be in accordance with this plan.

However, meeting these targets will also depend on factors and actions external to the development plan and the control of the planning authorities. These range from the health of the global and local economy, the price of oil, Bank of England base rates, the capacity of the housebuilding industry and the marketing of the area to potential residents from the rest of Scotland or further afield.

Monitoring

- Trends in the total population (including the components of that change – natural change and migration) of the North East (annual, GRO(S) Mid-Year Population Estimates).
- Population change in the North East compared to the other city-regions in Scotland as well as comparators in the rest of the UK and further afield.
- Trends in new house completions and net additions to the stock in the North East (annual, Housing Land Audit).
- New house completions in the North East compared to the other city-regions in Scotland as well as comparators in the rest of the UK and further afield.
- Availability of land – effective land supply – for housebuilding (annual, Housing Land Audit).
- Progress with local development plans in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (annual, development plan schemes).
- Proportion of the population of working age (annual, GRO(S) Mid-Year Population Estimates)

4 – Environmental Quality

Objective

To ensure development maintains or enhances the quality, availability and accessibility of the region's important environmental (natural and historic) assets.

Issues

The natural and historic environment is a valuable and finite resource. It is important that development does not lead to the progressive decline of the northeast's natural and historical assets.

Habitats have become more fragmented and focus should be given to their enhancement and augmentation. It is important that local natural heritage designations and the Aberdeen Green Belt are fit for purpose, do not unduly constrain growth and guide development to appropriate locations.

The historic environment is also just as sensitive to development. Development can have both direct and indirect impacts on archaeological remains and historic buildings (e.g. the increase in vehicles can affect the setting and stability of historic buildings and pollutants from vehicles can cause structural degradation).

Targets

- Reduction of inappropriate development on designated natural heritage and historic sites that lead to their permanent or significant loss.
- All water bodies in the structure plan area achieving 'good ecological status' under the Water Framework Directive by 2015.
- Review greenbelt boundaries and policy by 2010 to maintain a robust policy framework.

Delivery

- Local Development Plans (and supplementary guidance) will be expected to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the North East's natural, built and cultural environment.
- The Green Belt should be reviewed jointly by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils as part of their local development plan processes.

Monitoring

- Proportion of water bodies achieving 'good ecological status' (SEPA).
- Extent of permanent or significant loss to natural, built and cultural environment from development direct or indirectly;
- Number of significant departures from green belt policies (appeal decisions and Scottish Minister notifications).
- Implementation of greenbelt review (annual, development plan schemes).

5 - Sustainable mixed communities

Objective

To ensure that new development meets the needs of the whole community both now and in the future and makes the area a more attractive choice for residential or business re-location.

Issues

Too often in the past, new development has not been sustainable, diverse or community focused. This must not be allowed to continue. If we are to achieve our vision, we need to cultivate a reputation for (and expectation of) quality and this can only be done by setting the highest standards for urban and rural design, the mix of accommodation provided, the efficiency with which land is used and the re-use of previously developed land.

There is a need to ensure that the communities built in the future are mixed in terms of house type, size, tenure and affordability, with the consistent use of high quality design which respects and enhances the existing qualities of the area. It is not appropriate to build exclusively large detached homes in some parts of the city region and small flats in another. Enabling people to have choice of residential location implies that developments must foster diversity. Starter homes, to large detached homes are all required and should be provided. Such diversity of house type and residential environment will also facilitate improvements in urban design in both the city and rural areas. The provision of new housing which doesn't meet the targets set out below will not be in accordance with this plan.

It is equally important that new development meets the needs of the whole community and not just particular elements of the population. With an ageing population and smaller household sizes, new development must reflect these drivers to ensure that new development is not just profitable on day one but also is able to meet the changing needs of society over its whole life.

Land brought forward for development must be used efficiently and brownfield sites given priority. It is particularly important to improve the identified regeneration areas, ensuring that the gap is closed between the most prosperous and most disadvantaged areas of the region.

New development needs to be delivered with a community focus. Services, facilities and associated community infrastructure must be integral to the delivery of development in the strategic growth areas. This plan does not support the construction of housing without appropriate provision for these other elements which go to make a successful and sustainable community.

Retailing uses will be expected to reflect the hierarchy outlined in Schedule 1. It is important to respect the vitality and viability of existing retail centres, particularly where alternative accessible locations are limited.

As a result, although this plan has a clear objective to grow the population of the North East and targets to increase the level of housebuilding, this will only be acceptable if the development delivered is of the highest quality, development that the whole community can be proud of.

Targets

- Increase the range and quality of housing opportunities and the residential environment within the identified 'Community Regeneration Areas'.

- 40% of all new housing in Aberdeen City should be on brownfield sites.
- All housing development of over 1ha in strategic growth areas should be delivered in accordance with Masterplans at an average net density of no less than 30dph (dwellings per hectare).
- National recognition for the quality and urban design of new developments in the city region [including developments recognised under the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative – Framework Document to be published by the Scottish Government in spring 2008]
- Through the provision of new housing, meet the needs of the whole community and encourage diversity by providing a minimum of [25%]* affordable housing and through masterplans indicating an appropriate mix of house types and sizes.

Delivery Mechanisms

- Development plan allocations to take these targets into account in the quantities and locations of land allocated for development.
- All 'actors' in the process need to show a commitment to quality and a determination to set the highest standards throughout the development process.
- The use of supplementary guidance and / or masterplans to provide more detail on the appropriate mix of dwellings, density, urban design principles and community facilities required.
- Institute a design review process for masterplans and the most significant planning applications.
- Work with partners to bring appropriate proposals for development through the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative.

Monitoring

- Net density of residential developments of sites in excess of 1ha granted planning permission in strategic growth areas (annual, Housing Land Audit).
- Percentage of new housing on brownfield sites in Aberdeen (annual, Housing Land Audit).
- Progress with the re-development of the identified 'Community Regeneration Areas'.
- Build up a more rounded picture of new housing development including dwelling size, type and tenure (annual, Housing Land Audit processes).

** It is anticipated that the two Councils, with partners, will shortly commence the preparation of a 'Housing Need and Demand Assessment'. The findings of this assessment will be taken into account prior to the publication of the finalised structure plan and may impact on this and other sections of the plan.*

6 – Accessibility

Objective

To ensure that all new developments contribute towards reducing the need to travel by being highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, such modes being an attractive choice.

Issues

It is widely accepted that there are adverse environmental, economic and social impacts associated with road transport including air and noise pollution. Ensuring the delivery of development that facilitates walking and cycling, which are the most sustainable modes of transport, can help achieve important health and social as well as environmental benefits. The effective integration of land use with transport helps reduce the need to travel and encourage modal shift.

Improvements to the provision of public transport can help to improve accessibility and ensure that people use more environmentally sustainable forms of transport. The spatial strategy will help to promote accessibility through the integration of land use with transport to ensure that all strategic development provides convenient access to public transport.

Improving the accessibility of the North East is also essential to developing a robust and resilient economy and strengthening internal and external linkages. The spatial strategy will help to promote accessibility by ensuring the appropriate direction, timing and scale of future development to allow for improvements in the rail and road networks. This will also help to enhance both rail and road based public transport services.

Targets

- By 2013 all developments should comply with accessibility standards set out in the Local Transport Strategies.
- Major employment/service developments within strategic development areas are required to demonstrate that they are easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport. Travel plans produced for such developments will minimise private car use.
- Reduce the proportion of journeys which are undertaken by the use of the private car.

Delivery

- Local development plans will be required to identify and protect the land from detrimental development to ensure that transportation proposals identified in the Local and Regional Transport Strategies can be developed. Transportation proposals arising from development promoted in the plan will have to be identified in Supplementary Guidance.
- The spatial strategy will direct development to areas that are accessible to a greater choice of transport modes and to more environmentally sustainable forms of transport.
- The action programme will identify at an early stage, the necessary requirements to ensure that strategic developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

- Masterplans will incorporate layouts and design that will deliver new developments which are highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

Monitoring

- Transport assessments and planning application data will be used to monitor accessibility.
- The reduction in the proportion of journeys which are undertaken by the use of the private car will be measured.

Implementation

This structure plan concerns itself with delivering change over the period to 2030. It will deliver a vision that primarily aims both to facilitate economic growth and addresses the challenges of sustainable development and climate change. The scale of the changes required, and the challenges set by the vision we have for the area should not be underestimated

This plan sets the framework for other plans and strategies, and promotes an approach that is based on action being taken to achieve its aims at an appropriate level. It will be delivered through specific actions and policies within the local development plans. Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council prepare these separately. A primary function of this plan is to coordinate these plans. To achieve this, local development plans are required to be consistent with it.

However, local development plans will not have the long-term vision of the structure plan. There may be actions that require to be undertaken now in order to give the confidence to allow proposals to be included in future local development plans. An action programme will be developed to support the plan. This will identify the steps required to allow implementation of the spatial strategy. This will include a range of actions such as: identifying the timing required for major investment in infrastructure; the agreement of a masterplan, of which a particular local plan allocation may only be a small part; or the preparation of further guidance to assist the delivery of development. The action programme will identify who is to undertake the action, by when, and how the action will be funded and will be reviewed at least every 2 years. This will provide the confidence for investment decisions.

Delivering Infrastructure

Change on the scale proposed will require investment in the infrastructure of the Aberdeen City and Shire Area, particularly if quality of life is to be maintained. Capacity in existing roads, sewers and schools cannot absorb additional development of the scale proposed. Investment will also be required in community infrastructure, the facilities and services that ensure the places we create are sustainable communities. These two needs have to be given serious consideration very early in the land development process, even before the allocation of land in Local Development Plans.

It is anticipated that development will not only have to consider the need for infrastructure within its own site, but make a proportionate contribution to common elements that will be necessary over the whole life of the plan. It is also anticipated that the increase in land value gained by the granting of planning permission will fund the majority of the new infrastructure required. A greater proportion of this value will be needed than has been the case historically, in order to achieve the aim of sustainable mixed communities.

Proposals

A range of projects have been proposed that will assist with the delivery of the plan's vision and spatial strategy: For example initiatives by both Robert Gordon's and Aberdeen Universities will strengthen the City's knowledge economy; there are major proposals for the regeneration of some of the City's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods; The "Energetica" concept, and the city centre masterplan with its proposals for pedestrianisation of Union Street and improvements at the airport will facilitate economic growth; a third crossing of the River Don (and associated infrastructure measures) would allow growth to occur in and to the north of the City; road and rail improvements will enhance the attractiveness of sustainable travel

modes and a new community stadium will provide a significant regional facility economic and social benefits. Last but not least the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will provide accessibility, connectivity, and facilitate the provision and use of environmentally sustainable travel modes.

Monitoring and Review

It is recognised that things will change over time, both in response to the direction promoted by the plan, and in response to unforeseen events. Monitoring must take place to assess progress in implementation of the policies and whether this progress is achieving the plan's aims and objectives.

Currently information on implementation is collected, principally through the housing land and employment land audits. These inform us of the rate and location of development, and whether the quantitative land supply targets are being met. New retail proposals are also monitored in this way. Ways of monitoring progress towards the aims of the plan have been identified in previous sections. An annual monitoring report will be produced to allow progress towards the targets to be assessed.

Monitoring of the wider, social, demographic, economic and environmental context of the plan is also necessary to ensure that the issues that the plan is seeking to resolve are appropriate. These changes are likely to take longer to become apparent. While monitoring for change in these elements will, in practice, be a continuous process, it will only be reported as part of monitoring statement produced as part of the five yearly review of the plan.

The first review of this plan is likely to be its early replacement by a strategic development plan. The Scottish Government would wish to see strategic development plans in place as early as possible, and we can anticipate the replacement of this plan in 2012 / 2013.

Schedule 1: Retail Hierarchy

	Policy Approach		
	Vitality and Viability	New Development	General principles for Sequential Approach
Regional Centre	✓	Support all retail development; primary location for all developments serving city-wide or regional market – particularly for comparison goods.	Preferred location for large-scale comparison (General comparison & bulky goods). Preferred location for very large convenience/comparison units. Preferred location for all convenience if market area to be served includes City Centre.
Principal Town Centres & District Centres	✓	Support all retail developments (where market area is town/area and not city-wide or regional).	Appropriate for large-scale comparison after City centre. Preferred location for moderate comparison and all convenience where market area covers town centre.
Other Town Centres and District Centres	✓	Local retail provision only.	Preferred location for all convenience where market area covers town centre.
Local / Neighbourhood Centres		Local shopping provision – primarily convenience and retail services.	
Other Shopping Facilities: Retail Parks	✗		Appropriate for large scale bulky comparison if City Centre/Town Centre sites not available – potential in medium – long term for general comparison with minimum threshold for unit size.
Rural shops and other local shops	✓	Support for small-scale local provision (anticipated low demand). Support for local convenience, comparison and services to support new large scale residential developments.	

Schedule 2: Housing Allowances

Alternatives
(1) (2)

	Effective Land Supply 2007	Constrained	2007 – 2016	2017 – 2023	2024 – 2030	Total	Total	Total
Aberdeen City – B/F*	1,882		4,000	3,000	3,000	11,900	11,900	11,900
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	19,100	19,100	19,100
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 – Potterton*	174	25	0	1,400	600	2,000	0	500
Local Growth (AHMA)*	2,652	331	2,100	1,500	1,500	5,100	5,100	1,100
Local Growth (RHMA)	2,210	1737	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