

**ABERDEEN  
CITY AND  
SHIRE**

*Strategic Development  
Planning Authority*

# MAIN ISSUES REPORT

## Monitoring Statement

# 2035

October 2011

# Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan



Area covered by the  
Aberdeen City and Shire  
Strategic Development Plan

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority published a Main Issues Report for consultation on 7 October 2011. The deadline for responses is 6 January 2012. The following documents were published in support of the Main Issues Report and are available from the Strategic Development Planning Authority or can be downloaded from its website:

Monitoring Statement

Housing Need and Demand Assessment

Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Structure Plan Risk Assessment

Transport Background Paper

Climate Change Study

Habitats Regulation Assessment

SEA Interim Environmental Report

# **Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report**

## **Monitoring Statement**

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## 1. Background

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) is responsible for preparing and keeping under review a strategic development plan (SDP) for their area under the terms of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.

Scottish Government Circular 3/2008 contains the Scottish Ministers' determination of SDP areas. This was published in November 2008 following the submission of a proposal by the SDPA which itself was subject to public consultation between July and August 2008.

The strategic development plan area includes the whole of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire except that part of Aberdeenshire within the Cairngorms National Park. This is shown in Map 1.

At the current time, there is a structure plan in place for the same area which was approved by Scottish Ministers in August 2009. However, we must have a new style SDP submitted to Scottish Ministers within four years, i.e. before August 2013. In order to do this we have to start now.

The first stage in producing a SDP involves preparing a 'main issues report' (MIR) and consulting widely on its contents. The role of the MIR is to concentrate on the key changes that have happened since the last plan and consider the authority's big ideas for the region. Since approval of the structure plan, a baseline monitoring report has been produced and the plan has been supported by an action programme.

**Map 1: Strategic development plan area**



## 2. Purpose

This monitoring statement is a chance to present up-to-date monitoring information and look at how the structure plan has performed. From this it will be possible to see where changes should be made or a different approach taken. These proposed changes will be explored in the MIR, with our preferred and alternative approaches set out. It will also allow us to monitor and report other key indicators about changes to the population, economy, built environment and infrastructure of the north east. The main information about the environment can be found in the strategic environmental assessment and habitats regulation assessment, which are published separately.

This document is part of a set of documents supporting the MIR itself; these also include a:

- housing need and demand assessment;
- strategic environmental assessment;
- habitats regulations assessment;

- equalities and human rights impact assessment;
- transport background paper;
- risk assessment; and
- climate change study.

The SDPA are required to monitor the changes in the main physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area as well as the impact of the policies and proposals contained within the existing structure plan.

<p><b>Act 2006</b> – s4(9) and (10) <b>Circular 1/2009</b> – paras 11,12,36 &amp; 37 <b>Scottish Planning Policy</b> – paras 20 &amp; 21</p>
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The [Baseline Monitoring Report](#) was published in March 2010 and this current monitoring statement builds upon that earlier work to form part of the information base for the review of the plan.

This monitoring statement focuses on the impact of the plan on area and population-wide indicators and on how far the objectives and vision of the previous plan have been realised. The monitoring statement is an important means of identifying the issues for discussion in the main issues report.

### **3. Review of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2009**

The structure plan was approved by Scottish Ministers on 14 August 2009 and since that time Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have been working to implement the spatial strategy, objectives and development allowances through their own local development plans (LDPs).

This means that the plan has not had a lot of opportunity to influence development on the ground to date, but it will do so as the LDPs are adopted, policies come into effect and sites begin to get delivered.

There is therefore a presumption that significant change to the structure plan without substantial justification would be premature. However, that doesn't mean that the plan form and content must remain untouched. The review below and comments from other people and organisations will raise issues that will be explored in the MIR.

For each part of the plan a number of questions have been posed to guide the review; these are explored in more detail below. Page numbers in sections 3.1-3.10 refer to pages in the structure plan.

## **3.1 The vision for the plan (p.7)**

### **3.1.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

The vision for the plan; its aims and policy can be found on p.7 of the plan and are reproduced in Appendix A.

#### Approach - the vision statement

The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Circular 1/2009 (Appendix B) both require a strategic development plan to contain “a statement of how the development of the area could and should occur and the matters that might be expected to affect that development.”

It is clear from the structure plan vision statement that efforts have been made to reflect these requirements in the current vision. It looks toward 2030 and anticipates the key characteristics of the city region and the areas for which it will be recognised. It further outlines how this will be achieved, highlighting economic, social and environmental priorities at a strategic level.

#### Approach - the aims

There is a distinction in the structure plan between two ‘main’ and four ‘supporting’ aims. Main aims are providing a strong framework for investment decisions and taking on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change.

The four supporting aims are:

- population growth, provision of homes, jobs, services and facilities;
- the protection and improvement of the environment
- creation of well designed, mixed communities; and
- efficient use of the transport network.

These broad headings all fit with the ‘matters’ referred to in primary and secondary legislation for a strategic development plan and reflect all of the relevant subject policies found within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requiring a strategic approach. The six aims lead directly to the objectives of the plan.

#### Approach - the policy

The inclusion of a single policy in the structure plan was largely a tactical decision and this differs significantly from previous structure plan policies in that it is essentially a means of saying that any development proposal must be determined on its merit, but that the decision-maker must consider and give weight to all parts of the plan.

Circular 1/2009 (para. 14) does not preclude the inclusion of policies in a SDP, but equally makes no reference to the need for them either, unlike the requirements placed on structure plans. It does state that “the principal topics for SDPs are expected to be land for housing, business, shopping and waste management development, strategic infrastructure (including transport, water supply and waste water) and strategic greenspace networks (including green belts).

### **3.1.2 What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?**

Since the approval of the structure plan, the three other SDPAs have published their main issues reports, which include proposed visions (Appendix C). These vary from the short and snappy SESplan sentence (24 words) to the longer, more specific TAYplan (49 words) and GCV SDPA (51 words) statements. The Aberdeen City & Shire Structure Plan vision statement is 100 words.

In all the vision statements there are common themes around economic prosperity, sustainability and quality place-making. Aberdeen City & Shire, TAYplan and GCVSDPA take these themes slightly further, widening the appeal of the regions and in our case adding a paragraph outlining how the vision is to be met, i.e. by acting confidently and taking the courageous decisions necessary.

What is also apparent is the generic nature of these statements. With the exception of TAYplan, which has a specific aspiration for regeneration, the others could easily be interchanged without significant loss of message. This may weaken the intended message.

### **3.1.3 Does this section fit with the two Single Outcome Agreements and the vision of the North East Scotland Joint Public Sector Group?**

#### Single Outcome Agreements (SOA)

Each council has a SOA in place that lays down a series of local priorities for action in the context of the Scottish Government's national aspirations – and spells out how the councils and their community planning partners will work together to meet agreed targets. A number of shared issues, outcomes and measures are included in the City and Shire SOAs.

Clearly the SOA and responsibilities of the community planning partners extend well beyond the remit of land use planning. However, issues identified under the 'wealthier' and 'greener' sections are of direct relevance. To a lesser degree, issues around the ageing population and healthy weight can be seen in a planning context and a more general need for access to services and facilities can be recognised in the 'healthier' section.

#### North-East Scotland Joint Public Sector Group

The name of this group has changed recently and is now called the North East Scotland Chief Executives Forum (NESCEF); membership comprises Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Council, NHS Grampian, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Enterprise. There has been no recorded change to the last known position with regard to the vision of group of "creating opportunities to deliver excellent services within our communities" or the mission of "improved delivery through integrated and efficient services".

The four identified priorities for the group are detailed below and direct linkages are made between these and the Scottish Government's 15 national outcomes.

- Social responsibility
- Harm reduction

- Infrastructure development
- Public protection

The clearest connections with development planning are with ‘infrastructure development’, which is concerned with economic growth and investment, sustainable design and access to services, protection of the built and natural environment and resource use.

#### **3.1.4 *Is this section still appropriate and fit for purpose?***

The vision for the plan section meets the statutory requirement in that it provides the necessary ‘statement’ and in addition does this in a way that is promotional and bold without being over-ambitious. It would however have to be capable of being ‘rolled forward’ to 2035. The aims are akin to the ‘matters’ referred to in legislation and gives coverage to the main subjects as set out in Scottish Planning Policy, although some topics (minerals, coastal and retail planning) are excluded or perhaps implicit.

The inclusion of the policy does not contribute a significant amount to the plan. Given the comments elsewhere in this monitoring statement, it will be necessary to consider whether this single policy should be removed in favour of a small number of specific strategic policies, or if no policies whatsoever should be included. Either approach is allowed for in legislation.

The main change since the structure plan was approved are the visions proposed by the other three SDPAs in their main issues reports. These show a great deal of similar themes, although ours is longer as it goes into detail about how it will be met. The main criticism could be that they are largely interchangeable, none are really unique or place specific and suffer from generic blandness.

The single outcome agreements provide another useful checklist that locally agreed priorities are enshrined at the strategic planning level. Many of the issues are implicit, but are sufficient for the vision of the plan section. The NESCEF priority concerning infrastructure development is already well reflected in the structure plan and does not raise any new issues.

#### **3.1.5 *Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

A number of issues raised in this section could be considered:

- The vision of the plan is entirely satisfactory in that it meets statutory requirements and picks up themes from other key strategic documents. However, given its length and lack of place specificity there may be value in it be subject to minor review. In any event, the date would have to reflect the SDP, i.e. 2035.
- The aims provide a useful link from the vision to individual objectives, but also add an additional layer to the plan that could be removed to simplify its content as these could easily be covered by the objectives themselves.
- There is a question in the value of the policy to the structure plan and whether it should be removed. The MIR would then be open to consider if explicit policy material is necessary, or whether the messages could be conveyed strongly enough in the specific parts of the plan, building on the approach in the existing plan.

## **3.2 Spatial Strategy (p.9-11)**

### **3.2.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

The spatial strategy promoted in the structure plan emerged through a significant amount of consultation. From a wide range of potential options, eight were finally determined for further analysis. Transport stakeholders were involved in this process and the eight options subject to technical evaluation, engagement and consultation.

From this process, a clear preference emerged for development in Aberdeen, supported by development of the edge of city communities, or along the main road and rail corridors. An assessment based on 21 criteria took place and a high-level appraisal was undertaken against the operational objectives of the regional transport strategy using a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) type approach.

From these discussions, Aberdeen City and Huntly to Laurencekirk corridor were established as strategic growth areas (SGAs). These were augmented by a 'new transport corridor' between Aberdeen and Peterhead, which was a component in two of the original eight options and was seen as fundamental to the success of the Energetica project. The remaining areas were designated for local growth and diversification, reflecting less accessible areas or communities more distant from Aberdeen where demand for growth is generally lower.

The final element to the spatial strategy are the regeneration priority areas (RPAs). Figure 2 of the structure plan shows these along the entire north coast from the Moray boundary to Peterhead and in the south-east, from around Inverbervie to the Angus border. There are clear and longstanding issues in some of the northern towns and these have benefitted from funding opportunities targeting built and natural environment, social and economic priorities. In the southern RPA, regeneration concerns are less prominent and are more related to access to services and social issues.

### **3.2.2 *What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?***

In terms of changes that have taken place since the structure plan was prepared, these can be considered under legislation, implementation and evidence base headings.

For the spatial strategy in particular, it is clear from the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 that came into force on 28 February 2009 that a SDP must include a spatial strategy; defined as "being a broadly based statement of proposals as to the development and use of land within the strategic development plan area". Circular 1/2009 also requires a SDP to contain a spatial strategy and provides a very similar definition.

There have been other legislative changes recently, particularly the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which places obligations on development plans and required a land use strategy by March 2011. In addition, the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 will establish marine planning regions. Whilst these will have an impact on the SDP as a whole, there is no specific bearing on the spatial strategy.

The spatial strategy is an enduring part of the plan that attracts significant interest given the influence it has over other plans and strategies, as well as the potential impact on communities. Each council, developers, agents and communities have been working with the plan for a reasonable time now and it has been very valuable to receive comments from these groups and add them to our own experiences within the SDPA.

In several cases, comments may well be polarised on the same issue;

- SGAs are arbitrary and unhelpful / SGAs are useful to focus development and provide longer-term certainty;
- unsure what is local growth / useful to have the flexibility to determine what local growth means;
- there should / should not be a southern RPA.

The structure plan is clear that one of the main means of implementation will be through the two LDPs as they will identify sites for development within the SGAs and local growth and diversification areas (LG&DAs).

During consultation on the draft structure plan, concern was raised about the exclusion of a small number of settlements from the SGAs; namely Fraserburgh (community led), Newmachar, Westhill, Drumoak and Banchory (developer led).

It is clear that there are conflicting opinions over the form the spatial strategy should take and a number of these concerns are based on specific interests, whether community or developer led. This does not mean that they are less valid, but that the SDPA must balance these with the interests of the wider area to produce a robust SDP.

Following approval of the structure plan and during the preparation of the LDPs, a wealth of additional information has been gathered. This includes the Cumulative Transport Appraisal of the LDPs, the extensive information produced through the Future Infrastructure for Services (FIRS) groups and the housing need and demand assessment.

The SDPA has also ensured it remains informed on a diverse range of topics including waste, climate change, renewables infrastructure, the land use strategy and marine planning. Knowledge of these issues is potentially significant in identifying main issues or new proposals, although they may not directly affect the spatial strategy.

### **3.2.3 *What is the current baseline position for the targets?***

The spatial strategy section of the structure plan contains three targets, these are:

- For at least 75% of all homes built, and employment land developed, to be in the strategic growth areas by 2030.
- For at least 50% of all homes built to be in Aberdeen City by 2030.
- For all developments meeting more than local need to be in strategic growth areas, unless another area can be justified.

These targets are annotated as SG/T1, SG/T2 and SG/T3 respectively.

Table 1 illustrates the structure plan target, the baseline position taken from the Monitoring Report (March 2010) and updated data for 2011 where available. In terms of new homes built it shows that there is still progress to be made to achieve target SG/T1. However, these are long-term aspirations and once again the LDPs are pivotal to

implementing this part of the structure plan. No data on employment land completions in SGAs or the location of strategic developments were recorded.

Should the spatial strategy and targets remain in their current form for the SDP, additional monitoring over time will determine whether progress toward the target for 2030 is being made.

**Table 1: Spatial strategy targets and progress**

Target	% to be achieved	2010 baseline %	2011 update
<b>SG/T1</b>	75% (homes) 75% (emp)	56.3% (homes) no data (emp)	49.6% (homes) 81% (emp)
<b>SG/T2</b>	50%	27%	19.5%
<b>SG/T3</b>	All strategic developments	no data	3*

Sources: Baseline Monitoring Report / Housing & Employment Land Audits 2011

\* This figure is for the number of proposals identified on p.26 of the structure plan that have reached the planning application stage and on which the SDPA have made strategic planning observations.

### **3.2.4 Is progress being made?**

Table 1 provides an update, which shows that for SG/T1 there has been a reduction in the percentage of homes built in the SGAs to just under 50% whilst the latest data shows that 81% of employment land developed in Aberdeen City & Shire was in the SGAs, this is above the 75% target. It must be noted though that this only accounts for allocated greenfield sites in local plans.

For SG/T2, the percentage of homes built in Aberdeen has fallen from 27% to 21%. This reduction in housing figures in T1 and T2 are due to completions in Aberdeen City decreasing, as in Aberdeenshire they have remained at almost the same level. Both figures are compared against overall completions in the structure plan area as found in the 2011 Housing Land Audit.

For SG/T3, the SDPA has had an input into several major planning applications and has commented on three of the proposals in the structure plan, all of which lie within the SGAs.

It should be noted that the structure plan action programme identifies the two LDPs as the main mechanisms for the delivery of SG/T1 and SG/T2. Development management is identified with having the lead role in achieving SG/T3. Since publication of the baseline monitoring report in March 2010, both proposed LDPs have been published and submitted to Scottish Ministers for examination. As the LDPs move toward adoption and sites are released, the influence of the structure plan will start to be felt.

### **3.2.5 Are the objective, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?**

The spatial strategy section of the structure plan differs from the six policy themed sections in that it does not contain an objective and is arguably more prescriptive. There is limited latitude for the LDPs to deviate from the strategy, although there is flexibility for them to work within the boundaries it sets. With LDPs at an advanced stage and sites identified to 2023, this suggests that the spatial strategy has yet to be fully tested and put in place and that fundamental changes should not take place at this time.

This section has shown that the spatial strategy determined for the structure plan was well-considered and received a high degree of consensus during initial and subsequent consultation periods. The combined approach with SGAs and LG&DAs appears sound and there would appear to be no reason for shifting from this established framework.

The RPAs provide a useful focus for regeneration activities, although it may be worth considering defining the areas in Aberdeenshire better and being more explicit about the justification of the southern RPA. There are increased challenges delivering regeneration projects in the RPAs in both councils as budgets come under greater pressure and funding opportunities diminish. As a result, being clearer about priorities will be important.

The spatial strategy may also benefit from identifying key strategic sites such as Elsick and Grandhome, or distinguishing Energetica from other SGAs.

In terms of the above question, there may be value in the final target in this section being removed and inserted within the main text as this can be considered through the development management process and input from the SDPA. In common with other sections of the plan, there have been challenges in bringing together the targets and monitoring arrangements and this requires greater thought. There needs to be a clear means of monitoring the necessary data and links back to the targets; a new way of presenting data in housing and employment land audits will help with this.

### ***3.2.7 Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

A number of issues raised in this section could be considered:

- Should the SDP define the extent of the RPAs in Aberdeenshire and be more explicit about the justification or priorities for the southern RPA?
- Should the SDP identify key strategic sites such as Elsick and Grandhome and define the Energetica SGA differently?
- The final target could be removed and placed in the text without loss of intent and greater thought is needed to ensure links between the targets and monitoring arrangements.

### **3.3 Economic growth (p.13)**

#### **3.3.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

The structure plan makes it clear that diversifying the economy and providing enough of the right type of land for business in the right places will give the north east a competitive advantage. This, along with other objectives for population growth and accessibility, aims to ensure Aberdeen City and Shire will continue to have a strong and growing economy.

The plan calls for a diversification of the economy through research and development via the service and knowledge industries. Growth in the service sector was highlighted as important, in particular retail and tourism.

The settlement strategy is to include mixed use allocations with specific employment targets set out in accordance with the strategy including high-quality business space. The development of a high speed communications network and the improvement and safeguarding of transport infrastructure is called for.

#### **3.3.2 *What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?***

The preparation of the structure plan took place within the context of a period of global and regional economic growth. The problems created by the previous structure plan's (NEST 2001) restrained approach to economic growth and employment allocations had become apparent during that plan's implementation. These factors, and a pursuit of a sustainable growth agenda, resulted in the increase in employment allocations promoted within the current structure plan.

Since the approval of the structure plan there has been a downturn in the global economy. The north east has not been immune to this recession and many challenges remain. Amongst these are the recent announcement in the budget to introduce a windfall tax on north sea oil producers and cuts to public sector expenditure.

The recession has had a negative effect on the implementation of the strategy in terms of the actual take up of land and the progress of employment land from constrained and marketable towards 'immediately available' status. However, the opportunities provided by the large scale of allocations in the Proposed LDPs are just as pertinent when considered within a 20 year timeframe. Expanding and contracting cycles within such timeframes are to be expected and the structure plan has been successful in providing the policy requirement for an increase in the supply of employment land throughout the area.

Several recent reports have highlighted evidence of the resilience of the regional economy and positive prospects for the future. These include, [Cities Outlook 2011](#), which identifies Aberdeen as one of five cities to watch in the UK, due to being better-insulated from the economic impact of the spending squeeze, and having high potential to create private sector jobs. The report also cites lower vulnerability to public sector job losses and spending cuts, and suggest that given the right powers and freedoms could make an even bigger contribution to the national economic recovery.

Experian have also produced a [report](#) on the resilience of Scottish local economies, which identified Aberdeen City and Shire as the most economically resilient part of Scotland and performing well when compared with the rest of the UK.

Ernst & Young have produced a special [report](#) on the economic impact of spending cuts on local authority areas; this is based on the importance of public sector jobs and procurement to an area. It concludes that Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are amongst the areas best positioned to respond to reduced public sector spending and adapt to an export led recovery.

Other studies, by Oil & Gas UK, Experian and Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce also highlight the ability of the region to recover more quickly than many other parts of Scotland or the UK from recession. These informed opinions give additional weight to the need for land use planning to facilitate sustainable economic growth whenever possible.

One part of this it through the provision of sufficient marketable employment land and the 2009 structure plan and emerging LDPs contain substantial allocations of employment land and advocate a more positive approach to employment led development than was the case in previous development plans. However, discussions with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and other economic development interests suggests that there may be more that development plans can do to promote economic growth. These include greater focus on deliverability and facilitating development, perhaps even prioritising specific areas and more emphasis on connectivity. In terms of proposals, it is recognised that many of these will make a significant contribution to the competitiveness and attractiveness of the area once delivered. However, these must be kept up-to-date and where appropriate new proposals added.

There is considerable recent data available on economic activity, employment, unemployment and productivity that can provide useful indicators of the general economic health of the north east. These are included in Appendix E and summarised below.

**Table 2: Summary of Appendix E data**

	<b>Aberdeen City</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
<b>Economic activity rate</b>	81.2%	82.9%	82.1%	77%
<b>Employment rate</b>	79.1%	79.8%	79.4%	71.2%
<b>No. of jobs (1999-2008)</b>	+7.2%	+16%	+10.1%	+12%
<b>Unemployment (February 2011)</b>	2.5%	3.8%		7.4%
<b>Claimant count (June 2011)</b>	2.3%	1.5%	1.9%	4.1%

**Source: Various, see Appendix E**

This data shows that for a range of important indicators, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are in a better position than Scotland as a whole. This taken with the findings of the various reports mentioned above, appears to point toward the north east being in a strong position as the global recession abates. However, the sectoral composition data in Appendix E shows the region has 55% of the Scottish workforce engaged in 'utilities mining', whereas for most other sectors, the north east contribution

is 10% or less. This is evidence of the dominance of the oil and gas industry in this sector, although clearly significant amounts of manufacturing, hotel, transport, finance, business and admin jobs support this industry.

### 3.3.3 What is the current baseline position for the targets and is progress being made?

To achieve the objective for this section, five targets were set in the structure plan and these were reported in the baseline monitoring report (March 2010). New data for the targets is now available and shown below.

#### ECG/T1 - Employment land availability and distribution (City)

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

Table 3: Availability of employment land in Aberdeen

	Established	Constrained	Marketable	Immediately Available	Under Construction
2006	239	181	40	34	1
2007	235	171	53	27	7
2008	225	171	42	24	10
2009	217	103	91	31	2
2010	211	103	88	28	3

Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Employment Land Audit

**The marketable supply of employment land in Aberdeen City currently stands at 88ha, 46% above the structure plan target, but slightly down on the 2009 figure. However, only 28ha of this is immediately available.**

Table 4: Distribution of employment land in Aberdeen

LOCATION	SERVICED	Marketable Supply (ha)	Immediately Available (ha)
Lochside / Newlands, Loirston	Yes	5.7	0
Gateway Business Park, Cove	Yes	6.9	6.9
Peterseat, Altens	Yes	8.4	8.4
Altens East / Doonies	Part	7.1	7.1
Berryhill, Murcar	No	54.4	0
Dyce Drive	Yes	1.3	1.3
Raiths, Dyce	Yes	2.8	2.8
Wellheads West, Dyce	Yes	1.3	1.3
		<b>87.9</b>	<b>27.8</b>

Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Employment Land Audit 2010

**Land currently available for employment uses is distributed in three distinct areas across Aberdeen. Communities to the west have more limited opportunities for living and working in close proximity at present. There is no change in this respect since 2009.**

Further opportunities for employment land development have been identified within the Aberdeen City Proposed LDP (2010) in response to the structure plan. Assuming their approval, once they are physically prepared for development they will form part of the 'immediately available' supply of employment land. The allocations at Kingswells, Countesswells and Deeside will greatly assist with the need for a more even distribution of employment sites within the City.

**Table 5: Greenfield employment allowances and allocations (Aberdeen)**

	2007-23	2024-30	Total
Bridge of Don / Grandhome	5	27	32
Dyce, Bucksburn and Woodside	36	18.5	54.5
Kingswells and Greenferns	61	--	61
Countesswells	10	--	10
Deeside	5	--	5
Loirston and Cove	13	24	37
<b>Aberdeen City total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>199.5</b>
<b>Structure plan allocations</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>175</b>

Source: Aberdeen City Proposed Local Development Plan (2010)

Table 5 shows that the allocation of employment land in the Aberdeen City LDP exceeds the structure plan requirement. This is primarily due to the inclusion of 34.5ha of land at Rowett North.

### ECG/T2 - Employment land availability and distribution (Aberdeenshire SGAs)

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

**Table 6: Availability of employment land (Aberdeenshire SGAs)**

	Established	Constrained	Marketable	Immediately Available	Under Construction
2006	272	118	155	39	10
2007	271	112	157	30	8
2008	266	104	162	24	3
2009	246	99	146	20	2
2010	266	96	160	26	0

Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Employment Land Audits

The marketable supply of employment land in the Aberdeenshire SGAs currently stands at 160ha, over 150% above the structure plan target and an increase on the 2009 figure. Of this total, only 26ha is immediately available.

**Table 7: Distribution of employment land in Aberdeenshire SGAs**

LOCATION	No. of sites	Marketable Supply (ha)	Immediately Available (ha)
Huntly to Pitcaple SGA	3	6	1
Inverurie to Blackburn SGA	7	19	7
Portlethen to Stonehaven SGA	5	47	0
S. of Drumlithie to Laurencekirk SGA	1	1	1
Peterhead to Hatton SGA	8	55	17
Ellon to Blackdog SGA	4	32	0
		<b>160</b>	26

Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Employment Land Audits

The data suggests a very uneven spatial distribution of employment sites. There is a currently good supply in the Peterhead to Blackdog SGA in terms of both sites and hectares available. Conversely, the Huntly to Laurencekirk corridor, particularly at the north and south extremities, appears to be experiencing a shortage. This has not changed since 2009.

**Table 8: Summary of Proposed Aberdeenshire LDP employment land allocations**

	2007-23	Strategic reserve	Total
Huntly – Pitcaple	9.5	70	176
Inverurie - Blackburn	32.5		
Portlethen – Stonehaven	53		
S. of Drumlithie - Laurencekirk	11		
<b>Huntly – Laurencekirk total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Structure plan allocations</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>175</b>
Peterhead - Hatton	18.8	43	89.3
Ellon - Blackdog	27.5		
<b>Peterhead – Blackdog total</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>89.3</b>
<b>Structure plan</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>88</b>

Source: Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2010)

Table 8 shows where further opportunities for employment land development have been identified within the Aberdeenshire Proposed LDP (2010). These proposed allocations are consistent with the structure plan target and its settlement strategy. Assuming their approval, once they are physically prepared for development they will form part of the ‘immediately available’ supply of employment land. The allocations strategy will also help address the need for a balanced distribution of sites focussing on the SGAs.

Within the Peterhead to Blackdog SGA, Scottish Enterprise have acquired 12ha at Upperton for the Energetica Industry Park. This is anticipated to support other harbour and energy related initiatives in the SGA.

Existing sites in the two council areas and the new allocations will provide a considerable supply of employment land in a wide range of locations.

### **ECG/T3 - Standard of employment land available (City & Shire SGAs)**

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

There was no data to accompany this target in the baseline monitoring report. It was proposed to commence monitoring of major planning applications through the application consultation process and Infrastructure Services (Shire) and Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee (City) agendas. In addition, the policy material and allocations within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire LDPs will provide significant indicators of progress.

Aberdeenshire LDP aims to deliver employment land of a ‘world class’ standard in the Energetica Corridor, which falls within the Blackdog to Peterhead SGA. In the other SGAs, specific requirements for 5ha of high class employment land suitable for company headquarters are made in both Inverurie and Elsick new settlement.

Within Aberdeen City, a number of sites are anticipated to meet the standard for attracting high-quality businesses or be suitable for company HQs; specific reference is made on site OP40 (Kingswells).

**The requirement for specific sites to be identified for high quality business land was introduced in the structure plan and this has been reflected in the Proposed LDPs, with the minimum figure exceeded.**

## ECG/T4 - Retail rankings for Aberdeen City

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

Table 9: Summary of retail rankings

	Latest ranking and year	Future ranking and year
Experian <sup>1</sup>	20 (2009)	14 (2014)
Venuescore <sup>2</sup>	20 (2009)	14 (2014)
MHE <sup>3</sup>	17 (2008)	N/A
CACI	22 (2010)	N/A

Source: <sup>1</sup> [Experian](#), <sup>2</sup> [Venuescore](#) and <sup>3</sup> [MHE retail rankings](#)

**The latest rankings suggest that on several measures, Aberdeen City is already achieving a top-25 position.**

Despite the overall placing of Aberdeen in the rankings, there is a recognition that more needs to be done to improve several aspects of the retail offer, shopping environment and connections in the city centre. One of the main initiatives looking at this is the creation of a [Business Improvement District](#) (BID), which was agreed by majority ballot recently. The revenue raised by the BID has the potential to be a catalyst for investment and partnership working between the public and private sector.

Ongoing work on the City Centre Development Framework and projects such as City Gardens, Townscape Heritage Initiative, Broad Street redevelopment will all have a significant bearing on perceptions of the central area and how it functions.

## ECG/T5 - High-speed telecommunications

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

The Scottish Government published "Scotland's Digital Future: A Strategy for Scotland in March 2011. This sets out an ambition to ensure everyone in Scotland has access to next generation broadband by 2020 and to make significant progress by 2015. It recognises that in many cases the market alone will not deliver next generation broadband due to actual or perceived costs; this is particularly the case in rural areas. The government commits to looking at how to work with industry to carry out more detailed analysis of the extent of the current and planned next generation broadband network across Scotland to identify priority areas for future intervention. The provision of an improved digital network is also recognised as vital to a low carbon sustainable economy.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are among 34 areas of the UK with no current access to superfast broadband, even though broadband take-up rates are amongst the highest.

	Average sync speed (Mbit/s)	Percentage not receiving 2Mbit/s	Superfast broadband	Broadband Take-up
Aberdeen City	7.4	12.20%	0%	74%
Aberdeenshire	6.1	15.20%	0%	72%
Scotland	7.6	13%	41%	65%

Source: [Ofcom \(2011\)](#)

**Table 10: Broadband exchange bandwidth (Q.1 2011)**

	Aberdeen City		Aberdeenshire		Aberdeen City and Shire	
	Telephone exchanges	Household coverage	Telephone exchanges	Household coverage	Household coverage	Coverage
<b>Fibre to the premises (up to 100 Mb/s)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Fibre to the cabinet (up to 40 Mb/s)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>21st Century Network (up to 24 Mb/s)</b>	8	94,564*	0	0	94,564	46%
<b>Standard ADSL (up to 8 Mb/s)</b>	4	12,819	91	97,860*	110,679	54%
<b>Total</b>	12	107,383	91	97,860	205,243	100%

Source: BT Openreach / SamKnows.com

\* The Aberdeen Kingswells exchange was upgraded to 21CN in Feb. '11, this exchange also serves Westhill in Aberdeenshire. Therefore the proportion of households in each local authority cannot be determined accurately.

**Out of the 103 telephone exchanges in the area, only 8 operate at speeds of up to 24 Mb/s, while no fibre to the cabinet or fibre to the premises have been deployed to date. This is a slight increase on 2010 figures and means that almost half of households are now served by 21CN exchanges; however these are almost exclusively in Aberdeen.**

### ***3.3.4 Are the objective, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?***

The objective as it relates to economic growth is still relevant and would not have to be revisited. In terms of targets, the existing targets are concerned with the quantity and quality of employment land and success of Aberdeen City centre as a retail destination. These issues remain of importance and fit well with the targets in other sections to monitor completions in SGAs and the requirement to consider the mix of uses on sites. There is nothing to suggest that the SDP should prescribe employment land allocations in local growth and diversification areas; this is for the Aberdeenshire LDP to do.

In terms of targets, the first three must remain as priorities and have been used to inform allocations and policy within the two emerging LDPs. However, there is more that a strategic plan can do to facilitate sustainable economic growth. The SDP may wish to make a distinction between the Energetica corridor and other SGAs reflecting the ongoing work on the delivery plan and promotion by Scottish Enterprise.

Monitoring has shown that Aberdeen has achieved a top-25 position in retail rankings using different methodologies from different organisations. It will therefore be necessary to consider a new target to monitor city centre vitality and viability.

The SDPA has had dialogue with communications providers in an attempt to influence investment decisions on high speed communications. However, this has proven to be a complex issue although discussions are continuing; Scotland's Digital Future: A Strategy for Scotland will provide some focus in this respect. The need for developers to install suitable infrastructure continues although the benefit may not emerge for some time yet. It would therefore be appropriate to consider whether this should remain as a

target, or whether another approach could be taken to encourage and secure this infrastructure.

Monitoring arrangements concerning the employment land audit remain valid and will be greatly assisted by the presentation of new data for strategic growth areas. The commercially available retail rankings have proven problematic, but should be available through our work with Experian. Data on the telephone exchange network is available, but site specific information for developments is not collated at present. It will therefore be necessary to review the monitoring arrangements for the latter two targets when reviewing the targets themselves.

### ***3.3.5 Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

All indications are that the economy of the north east is relatively robust and has fared better than other parts of Scotland and the UK during recession. As a result, it would appear counter-productive to consider the reduction of the quantity of marketable employment land. The focus should be on:

- facilitating delivery of sites thus allowing for investment in the north east;
- presentation of the Energetica initiative and how it differs from other employment opportunities and SGAs;
- consider reviewing the retail target and monitoring to include viability;
- update high speed telecommunications target and monitoring.

### **3.4 Sustainable Development and Climate Change (p.15-16)**

#### **3.4.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

Sustainable development and climate change are drivers which significantly influenced the whole structure plan, including the plan's vision. Although one of the plan's objectives specifically addressed these issues, each of the other objectives and many of the proposals are heavily influenced by these drivers for change.

The Structure Plan objective in relation to Sustainable Development and Climate Change is *"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."*

The structure plan emphasises the scale of the challenges related to sustainable development and climate change, recognising that "by 2030 Aberdeen City and Shire will need to have adapted to a very different world" (para 1.1). The plan highlights the importance of reducing the causes of climate change in the long term (mitigation) whilst also limiting the consequences of climate change in the short-term (adaptation). The aspirations of the sustainable development and climate change objective, along with other objectives for quality of the environment, sustainable mixed communities and accessibility are aimed at ensuring Aberdeen City and Shire will develop in the most sustainable way possible whilst meeting the needs of the whole community.

The plan calls for all new developments to be designed and built in such a way that facilitates the efficient use of resources. The requirement to tackle both the supply of and demand for energy is also stated in the plan. The levels of energy supplied from renewable sources must be increased and the demand on energy from new developments must be reduced. Issues of changing and increasing risks of flooding, the production and handling of waste and the management of the River Dee as the region's main water source are key in achieving the targets set out in this section of the plan.

In terms of the plan's proposals, upgrading the electricity grid and Peterhead power station were the two most directly connected to this objective. However, as stated above, sustainable development and climate change also influences many of the other objectives, targets and actions in the plan.

#### **3.4.2 *What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?***

The climate change agenda has moved forward significantly since the structure plan was prepared between 2007 and 2009. This particularly relates to the degree of urgency, legal and policy context and implementation mechanisms. A number of these changes are summarised below. In addition, a 'Climate Change Study' has also been prepared as a background paper for the Main Issues Report. Among other things this study identifies the climatic changes likely to occur in Aberdeen City and Shire over the next 60 years and contains an assessment of the current structure plan in terms of the extent to which it is 'climate proof'.

It is not the purpose of this section to comprehensively address the changes that have taken place but to concentrate on those of most relevance to the SDP.

### *Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009*

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 echoes the ambitions of the UK Climate Change Act 2008 and contains a legal requirement for Scotland to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses by at least 80% by the year 2050, with an interim target of a 42% reduction by 2020. Targets include for 100% of Scotland's electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2020 and for an overall reduction in the environmental impact of Scotland's consumption and production activities.

The Act places a duty (s44) on all public bodies to exercise their functions in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emission reduction targets, deliver adaptation programmes and the way it considers most sustainable. [Statutory guidance](#) has been published by the Scottish Government to facilitate the implementation of this part of the Act.

Water consumption and efficiency duties are placed on Scottish Water by s74 which requires them to promote such activities.

The Act also places one specific requirement on local development plans in s72. This requires LDP policies which stipulate the installation and operation of low and zero carbon generating technologies in all new buildings.

### *The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009*

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 aims to deliver a more sustainable and modern approach to flood risk management than previously followed. The Act has been written to take account of the needs of modern society and the potential impacts of climate change.

Specific measures within the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 include:

- A framework for coordination and cooperation between all organisations involved in flood risk management
- Assessment of flood risk and preparation of flood risk management plans
- New responsibilities for SEPA, Scottish Water and local authorities in relation to flood risk management
- A revised, streamlined process for flood protection schemes
- New methods to enable stakeholders and the public to contribute to managing flood risk, and;
- A single enforcement authority for the safe operation of Scotland's reservoirs

Subsequent changes to the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 make it a requirement for strategic development plans to take account of any approved flood risk management plan or finalised local flood risk management plan relating to its area.

### *Scottish Planning Policy (SPP 2010)*

The consolidated [SPP](#) document highlights the statutory duty that is placed on development plans to contribute to sustainable development and includes statutory guidance on this requirement in paragraphs 34 - 40. The consolidated Planning Policy document states that "the planning system should promote development that supports

the move towards a more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable society” (para 35). It further recognises that the planning system has an important role in supporting the achievement of sustainable development through its influence on the location, layout and design of new development. the design of new development should address the causes of climate change by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. Design and masterplanning should include features that provide effective adaptation to the predicted effects of climate change.

SPP also recognises the significant role that the planning system must play in adopting a spatial strategy which promotes a more sustainable pattern of growth for an area. This role should aim to facilitate the generation of power and heat from low carbon sources and to achieve waste management targets. Planning authorities should support the development of a diverse range of renewable energy technologies, guide development to appropriate locations and provide clarity on the issues that will be taken into account when specific proposals are assessed.

#### *The Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2009)*

The [Framework](#) was published in 2009 and sets the strategic direction for Scottish Government actions in terms of climate change. The Framework calls for effective, co-ordinated planning in order to ensure that Scotland is as prepared and as resilient as possible to the future impacts of climate change. As many adaptation decisions are taken at a local level, the framework calls for action across all sectors. The framework outlines the key challenges and activity required to address adaptation within the 12 sectors:

- Water Environment and Resource
- Forests and Forestry
- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience
- The Built Environment
- Business and Industry
- Health and Wellbeing
- Agriculture
- Spatial Planning and Land Use
- Transport
- Energy
- Marine and Fisheries
- Emergency and Rescue Services

#### *The Climate Change Delivery Plan (2009)*

The [Delivery Plan](#) sets out how Scotland will meet the statutory targets required by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Plan sets out the action that must be taken in the short, medium and long term to achieve the required emission reductions. The Delivery Plan focuses on the every day actions and real life changes that must be made in order to achieve the ambitious targets.

Both the [Low Carbon Economic Strategy for Scotland](#) and the recently published [Government Economic Strategy](#) emphasise the economic advantages to Scotland of the ‘green economy’.

### **3.4.3 *What is the current baseline position and is progress being made?***

To achieve the objective for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, the current structure plan set six targets. The sections below take each of these in turn, establishing the current position, whether progress is being made and identifying any issues which should either be raised in the MIR of the proposed plan itself.

## **SDCC/T1 - Carbon neutrality in all new buildings**

For all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2016.

### **Current position for the target**

The Scottish Government has set ambitious targets for reducing and ultimately eliminating emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) for new development within specific thresholds. In addition, as a result of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, the role of planning policy can be seen as a main vehicle in preventing further adverse change and adapting to current challenges.

At present, both councils adopt the use of standard suspensive conditions as promoted in PAN84; these differ depending on whether the application is for full or planning permission in principle. The policy goes further than 2007 building standards by 15% in the City and 30% in the Shire, through the requirement of installation of low and zero carbon generating technologies. Developers submit relevant ratings on carbon emissions and these are verified by building standards officers.

Aberdeenshire Council do not currently monitor this target. However, Building Standards do keep information on building certificates (after completion). This shows that the energy performance requirements have been adhered to, but as the SG is relatively new, only a few have been subject to the SG requirements from the design stage to completion.

Aberdeen City Council has monitored this target from August 2009 (Structure Plan approval date) to August 2010. Data collected through the Development Management process shows that during this period there have been 34 applications that have been approved which are required to comply with the SG. Of these 34, 25 have been deemed to comply with the SG.

### **Is progress being made?**

The energy performance of new buildings has improved significantly over time, largely driven by building standards but also planning policy. The 2010 Building Standards represent a significant (30%) improvement on the 2007 standards and the Scottish Government are proposing further revisions in 2013 and 2016. Whether these will require carbon neutrality by 2016 in their own right remains to be seen. It is currently proposed to announce the 2013 Standards by the end of 2011 and the target is for a 75% improvement for domestic properties and a 60% improvement on non-domestic properties. A further review is planned in 2016.

However, s72 policies could make a contribution and the introduction of sustainability labeling through s7 of the Building Standards offers further potential. This would enable planning authorities to promote sustainable construction via supplementary guidance which is both consistent and verifiable.

Both councils have had supplementary guidance in place since 2009 that requires more stringent levels for most residential and non-domestic development. These phase CO<sub>2</sub> reductions at levels beyond that set by building standards to achieve carbon neutrality by 2016. Within Aberdeen City a 74% compliance rate (25 out of 34 applications) has been achieved within the first year of the structure plan being adopted.

## SDCC/T2 - Electricity needs from renewable sources

For the city region's electricity needs to be met from renewable sources by 2020.

### Current position for the target

National targets have been established by the Scottish Government to ensure 31% of Scotland's electricity comes from renewable sources by 2011 and 100% by 2020. The 31% figure was reached ahead of target in 2009 and significant progress is being made toward 100%. The structure plan target for Aberdeen City and Shire to generate 100% of its net electricity use from renewable sources by 2020 is equally ambitious.

Table 11 shows the amount of electricity use for all users (domestic and business) in Aberdeen City and Shire. It can be seen that demand fell between 2005 and 2006 and again between 2008 and 2009. Between these periods demand remained reasonably constant. Overall, between 2005 and 2009 demand fell by 4.5%. In the same period, the estimated capacity of all renewable projects has increased to 7.7% of total electricity consumption in 2009. If it is assumed that electricity consumption did not rise in 2010, renewable energy would have contributed approximately 11% of demand.

**Table 11: Electricity consumption and installed renewable capacity**

	Electricity Consumption (GWh) <sup>1</sup>	Installed Capacity (MW) <sup>2</sup>	Estimated Output (MW) <sup>3</sup>	Estimated Output (GWh) <sup>4</sup>	Percentage Achieved
2005	2,760	26	8	68.3	2.5%
2006	2,700	40	12	105.1	3.9%
2007	2,709	56	17	147.2	5.4%
2008	2,716	57	17	149.8	5.5%
2009	2,636	77	23	202.4	7.7%
2010	N/A	109	33	289.1	N/A

*Sources referenced below*

These figures are likely to underestimate the total generation of renewable energy because they do not take into account small-scale projects or technologies other than wind. Scottish Natural Heritage also record the capacity of renewable schemes at various stages of development. The growth of renewables in Scotland remains dominated by onshore wind, and this is the case in Aberdeen City and Shire.

**Table 12: Total Generating Capacity of Renewables Schemes**

	Pre-application or Scoping	Application	Approved	Installed	Refused	Withdrawn	TOTAL
On-shore wind	120	84	208	109	170	101	792
Off-shore wind	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Hydro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bio-energy	16	0	0	0	0	0	16
Marine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>908</b>

*Source: SNH January 2011*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/regional/electricity/electricity.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bwea.com/ukwed/index.asp>

<sup>3</sup> A conversion factor of 0.3 has been used to estimate actual power generation.

<sup>4</sup> A conversion factor of 8.760 has been used to convert MW to GWh.

Schemes which have been granted consent but which are not yet constructed account for a further 124.7MW, which when constructed would increase the installed capacity to 482 GWh representing approximately 32% of Aberdeen City and Shire's electricity requirements. In addition to the consented projects there is also 351 MW of potential renewable energy in the planning system ranging from scoping, pre-application and applications which if developed would raise the level to 64% of the electricity requirement in Aberdeen City and Shire.

**Table 13: Progress in meeting renewable energy targets**

	<b>Estimated Output (GWh)</b>	<b>Cumulative Progress</b>
<b>Operational</b>	289	11% <sup>5</sup>
<b>Consented</b>	836	32%
<b>Application</b>	1,057	40%
<b>Pre-application</b>	1,677	64%

*Source: SNH January 2010*

In 2010 it is estimated that renewable energy accounted for 11% of total electricity demand. However, considering consented projects increases this to 32%.

### **Feed-in Tariff**

The 'Feed-in-Tariff' was introduced on April 2010 to provide a stimulus to small scale (less than 5MW) low carbon electricity generation throughout the UK. The scheme guarantees a premium price for all electricity generated for up to 25 years.

By the end of 2010, a total of 90 schemes had been approved in Aberdeen City and Shire with a combined installed capacity of 1.46MW. Of this total, 90% was produced by wind, 6% by solar photovoltaics and 4% by hydro schemes.

Given that this was approved in the first nine months of the scheme, it is anticipated that the contribution of micro renewables through this scheme will contribute considerably over the next few years. More information on FITs can be found at the following links

[www.ofgem.gov.uk/Media/FactSheets/Documents1/fifts\\_energy%20prices%20update%20FS.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Media/FactSheets/Documents1/fifts_energy%20prices%20update%20FS.pdf)  
[www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/fits/Pages/fits.aspx](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/fits/Pages/fits.aspx)

The structure plan promotes a strategy designed to tackle the urgent challenges posed by climate change and the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> generated by the area is a key objective in the strategy. Estimates produced for the UK government suggest that Aberdeen City and Shire released approximately 4.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2008, with Aberdeenshire accounting for 61% and Aberdeen City 39%. The high per capita emissions for Aberdeenshire result from high emissions from industrial and commercial gas users, as well as greater transport and landuse emissions. Over the four years that figures have been estimated the totals have not fluctuated greatly with the City figures showing a slight decline, and Aberdeenshire no clear pattern.

<sup>5</sup> Estimated, assuming no change in electricity consumption between 2009 and 2010. Figures for 2010 are due to be released in December 2011.

**Table 14: CO2 emissions by local authority**

	Year	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Road Transport	LULUCF <sup>6</sup>	Total	Population ('000s mid-year estimate)	Per Capita Emissions (t)
<b>Aberdeen shire</b>	2005	966	658	686	221	2,530	233.4	10.8
	2006	1,247	676	685	238	2,846	236.3	12.0
	2007	926	665	688	310	2,589	239.2	10.8
	2008	897	716	661	549	2,822	241.5	11.7
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	2005	1,024	575	332	34	1,965	205.9	9.5
	2006	916	578	336	33	1,863	206.9	9.0
	2007	881	564	329	33	1,807	209.3	8.6
	2008	867	576	325	35	1,804	210.4	8.6
<b>Structure Plan Area</b>	2005	1,990	1,232	1,018	255	4,495	439	10
	2006	2,163	1,254	1,021	272	4,709	443	11
	2007	1,807	1,229	1,017	343	4,396	449	10
	2008	1,764	1,292	986	584	4,626	452	10
<b>Scotland</b>	2005	18,945	13,842	11,354	4,396	39,745	5,095	7.8
	2006	19,826	13,911	11,233	4,017	40,953	5,117	8.0
	2007	19,093	13,583	11,362	3,674	40,364	5,145	7.9
	2008	19,796	13,773	11,026	3,572	41,024	5,168	7.9

Source: DECC (2010) Local and Regional CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Estimates for 2005-2008

### Is progress being made?

Around 32MW of installed capacity came on-stream during 2010 including an 18MW contribution from the Tullo Wind Farm near Laurencekirk. This takes total installed capacity to 109MW, 11% of the electricity consumed in Aberdeen City and Shire. If all consented schemes were built, renewable energy would supply 32% of net electricity consumption in the area. It is possible that 50% will be reached in the next few years if consented schemes are built and a number of key schemes in the pipeline are delivered (these include the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre and the Clashindaroch and Mid-Hill windfarms). Additional schemes and greater penetration of other renewable technologies will be required to meet the 100% target. Reduced electricity consumption and micro-renewables could also play a significant role.

However as most projects are fairly small (though data is lacking for some) and the capacity of the electrical grid is thought to be considerably constrained at the current time the overall generating capacity has remained fairly constant. Continued monitoring of this position will demonstrate continued progress toward achieving the target by 2020.

### **SDCC/T3 - River Dee water abstraction**

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.

### Current position for the target

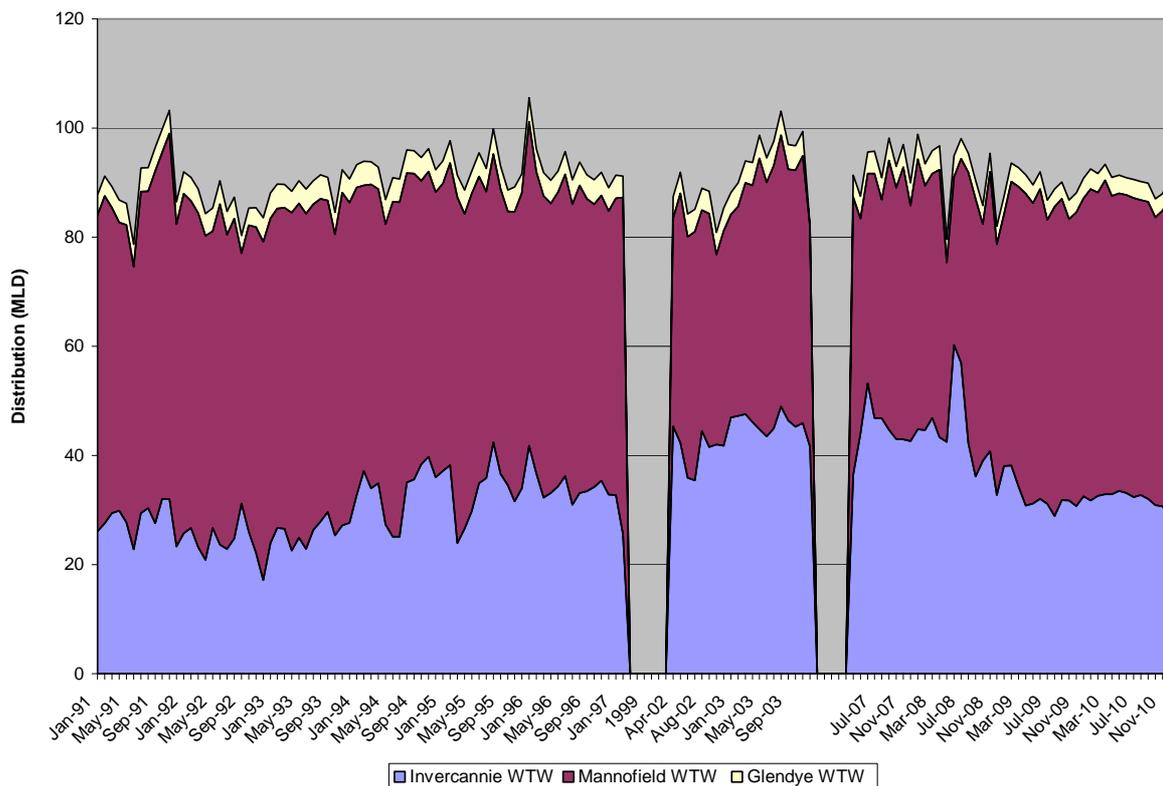
The River Dee supplies water to Aberdeen City, Deeside, Donside, north to Ellon and south to Stonehaven. Scottish Water abstract surface water at Invercannie (Banchory) and Inchgarth (Aberdeen). Further abstraction from Glen Dye (within the Dee

<sup>6</sup> Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry

catchment) currently takes place, although this is to be phased out in 2011/12. Scottish Water are currently permitted to abstract up to 145 megalitres per day (MLD), however, the average amount taken is around 90MLD.

Data provided by Scottish Water shows that the amount of water distributed from treatment works served by the River Dee has remained fairly constant over the period from 1991-2011 despite the significant number of new households and employment sites developed (see Figure 1). This is not quite the same as water abstracted, as some loss can occur in the treatment process. No data was available from March 1997 - March 2002 or from January 2004 – March 2007.

**Figure 1: Water distributed by main treatment works**



Source: Scottish Water 2011

The level of abstraction is agreed and regulated by SEPA in consultation with SNH and a number of factors could alter the amount Scottish Water are permitted to abstract. SEPA regulate abstraction under a controlled activities regulations (CAR) license in place since 2007. It is not anticipated that this license will reduce the permitted abstraction level prior to 2014, although this is a possibility in the longer term if it emerges that adverse impacts are occurring. Another variable may be any emerging patterns of climate change affecting flow or water quality. Finally, rates of development in the wide area supplied by the Dee cannot accurately be predicted and therefore increased demand calculated.

### Is progress being made?

Scottish Water continue to make progress on leakage reduction and in some cases new development will necessitate rectifying existing problems. Also, over the next few years advances in water saving technologies should make more efficient use of resources and become standard in new developments.

Scottish Water are consistently within their permitted level of abstraction from the River Dee by a significant margin. Historical evidence would suggest that cumulative development over the past two decades has had little impact on the level of abstraction and consequently evidence suggests that the licensed amount will not have to be increased in the short to medium term.

#### **SDCC/T4 - Water saving technology**

For all new developments to use water-saving technology.

#### **Current position for the target**

The promotion of water-saving technologies in new development is relatively new in Scotland, although the statutory role given to Scottish Water in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 should help to move this forward. In addition to reducing water consumption, water efficiency measures also reduce energy consumption used to treat, distribute and heat water, as well as dispose of waste water.

Neither the councils, Scottish Water or SEPA have been particularly active in this area and consequently data is limited. Water efficiency is not currently a topic covered by building standards in Scotland.

A number of development proposals are emerging which explicitly address the issue of water efficiency through the use of dual flush toilets, aerated taps and shower as well as water butts for outdoor use. However, given that land allocations under the structure plan have yet to receive planning permission, it is not surprising that this is not yet widespread.

#### **Is progress being made?**

As set out above, there is currently no data to monitor this target. However, although water efficiency measures are not currently a topic covered by building standards, the Scottish Government is exploring their incorporation into the standards in 2013.

At the end of 2010 the Scottish Government consulted on Sustainability Labelling within Building Standards and this came into force in May 2011. This identifies enhanced water efficiency standards for new domestic buildings. Although there will be no national requirement to meet these standards at the current time, developers could voluntarily meet these and gain recognition for this through the labelling scheme.

The guidance is also designed to encourage consistency between planning authorities that use supplementary guidance to promote higher measures of sustainable construction in their areas. By making reference to this standard, local aspirations can be met by the selection of clear national benchmarks which can be assessed through the Building Standards legislation. In this context, there may be scope to make use of the sustainability labeling system to implement the structure plan target.

**SDCC/T5 - Development on land with an unacceptable flood risk**

To avoid developments on land which is at an unacceptable risk from coastal or river flooding (as defined by the 'Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map for Scotland' or through a detailed flood risk assessment), except in exceptional circumstances.

**Current position for the target**

Flooding is an issue that will become increasingly important due to the increased risk that is predicted from climate change in terms of unpredictability of storms and rising sea levels. It follows that this increased risk must be managed in the future development of Aberdeen City and Shire. Current monitoring of development of land at unacceptable flood risk is not gathered by either Local Authority, and so the provision of a current position for this target is problematic. Previous discussions with both councils (as identified in the Baseline Monitoring Report) had identified a mechanism for future monitoring of this target involving SEPA's 'Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map for Scotland' and the development management database. However, so far neither Council has gathered any data for the monitoring of this target.

**Is progress being made?**

This target is not currently subject to rigorous monitoring. The introduction of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, will force Local Authorities to become more involved and proactive in terms of flood risk management. A robust monitoring mechanism should be put in place for both authorities that will ensure that this target is met.

**SDCC/T6 – Waste**

By 2020, for no more than 54,000 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to be sent to landfill each year.

The structure plan recognized that the Scottish Government's waste policy was under review at the time the plan was prepared and that the first SDP would reflect the new framework. As such, it focused largely on municipal waste, biodegradable municipal waste and recycling / composting rates.

**Current position for the target**

Latest figures from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency indicate that the current level of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) sent to landfill for the structure plan area is 118,109 tonnes.

The Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) aims to reduce the negative effects of landfilling waste and sets targets and timescales for reducing the amount of BMW sent to landfill up to 2020. Latest available data for 2009/10 shows 13,597 tonnes of BMW was landfilled in excess of the allowance. Currently the structure plan area is failing to meet the allowances set by the Landfill Allowance Scheme by an average of 10% over the last 5 years (see Table 15).

**Table 15: BMW landfilled (tonnes)**

	2004/ 05	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	% Change 2004/05- 2010/11	Structure Plan Target 2020
<b>Aberdeen</b>	74,927	68,936	69,931	67,322	63,333	55,654	49,277	-34%	N/A
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	83,686	81,092	69,204	70,286	68,355	65,864	68,832	-21%	N/A
<b>Aberdeen City and Shire</b>	158,613	150,028	139,135	137,608	131,688	121,518	118,109	-18%	54,000
<b>Landfill Allowance Scheme Allowance</b>	N/A	147,572	122,664	117,766	112,851	107,921	N/A	N/A*	50%

Source: SEPA Landfill Allowance Scheme

**Table 16: MSW recycled / composted**

	2004/ 05	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2020 target
<b>Aberdeen</b>	11%	18%	21%	22%	23%	26%	32%	-
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	10%	12%	21%	29%	31%	33%	32%	-
<b>Aberdeen City and Shire</b>	10%	15%	21%	26%	27%	30%	32%	-
<b>Scotland</b>	17%	24%	28%	31%	34%	36%	38%	70%

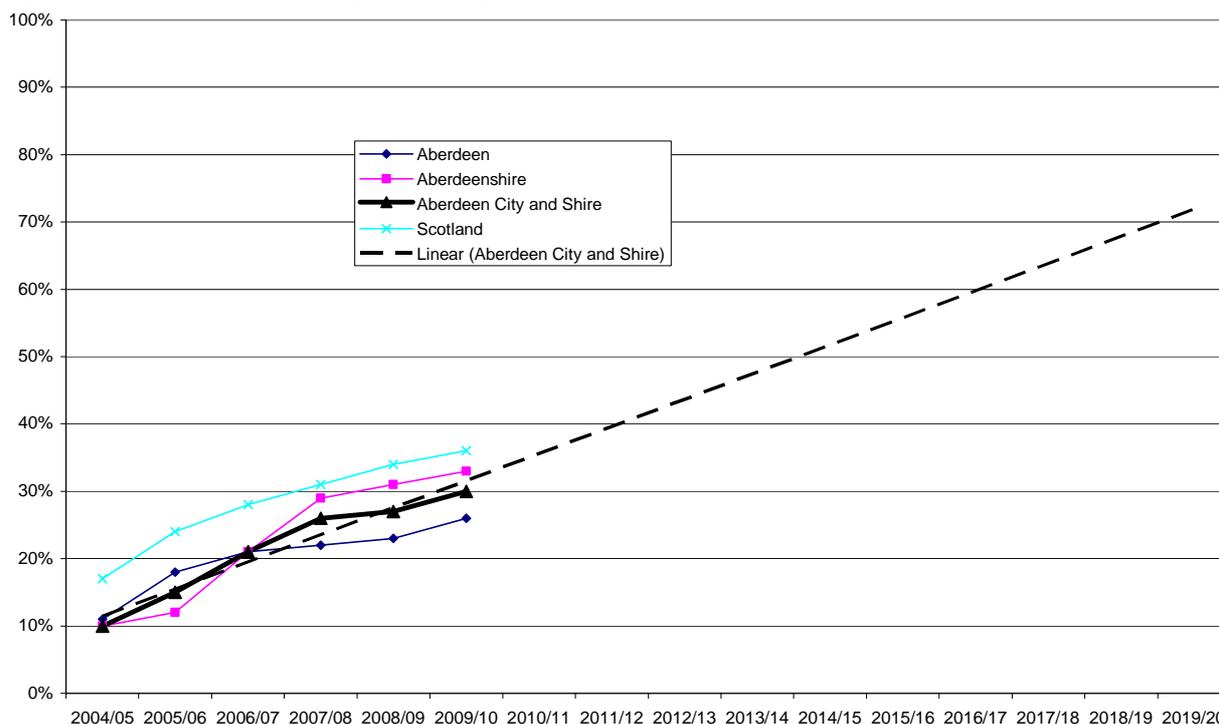
Source: SEPA Landfill Allowance Scheme

Data for the year to March 2011 (Table 16) shows a further rise in recycling levels of municipal solid waste (MSW) to 32% in Aberdeen City, although a slight fall in Aberdeenshire. This can be compared with 38% for Scotland as a whole.

### Is progress being made?

During 2010/11 32% of MSW was recycled or composted with the rest going to landfill, this represents an improvement from 26% at the time the structure plan was being prepared. Over the last six years both councils have made progress in increasing levels of recycling, increasing the level from 11% to 32% in Aberdeen City and 10% to 32% in Aberdeenshire. This progress should be viewed in the context of national targets set within Scotland's Zero Waste Plan (2010) which aims for a recycling and composting rate of 70% by 2020. In this context both regionally and nationally we still have far to go to meet this target. BMW sent to landfill within Aberdeen City and Shire has reduced year-on-year for the last five years and by 18% overall over this period. However, this reduction has not kept pace with the allowances set by the Landfill Allowance Scheme.

**Figure 2: Levels of recycling (with projection)**



Source: SEPA Landfill Allowance Scheme

The delays in the Scottish Government and SEPA clarifying their policy position has meant that it has not been possible to progress the strategic SPG in advance of the MIR. However, the revised Annex B to the Scottish Government’s Zero Waste Plan now allocates capacities for the SDPA in relation to landfill as well as additional infrastructure requirements for both sorted and non-sorted waste streams. This will necessitate a need to consider a change to the waste section of the plan.

**Table 17: Additional operational waste management infrastructure capacity required to meet the Zero Waste Plan targets and ten year rolling landfill capacity required**

	Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Area
<b>Additional infrastructure capacity required for source segregated recyclables<sup>7</sup> and source segregated organic wastes for composting and anaerobic digestion (t)</b>	230,000
<b>Additional infrastructure capacity required for treating unsorted wastes including mechanical sorting, thermal and biological treatment<sup>8</sup> (t)</b>	320,000
<b>10 year rolling landfill capacity required (t)</b>	6,500,000

Source: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/211199/0114026.doc>

[www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste\\_data/site\\_capacity\\_infrastructure/landfill\\_capacity\\_reports.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_data/site_capacity_infrastructure/landfill_capacity_reports.aspx)

Landfill capacity at 31 December 2008, the base date for the Zero Waste Plan target, was 6.03 million tonnes. It can be seen from Table 18 that landfill capacity as at 31 December 2009 had fallen to 5.3 million tonnes, somewhat below the Annex B target of

<sup>7</sup> e.g. such as clean Material Recovery Facility

<sup>8</sup> e.g. dirty Material Recovery Facilities, Mechanical Biological Treatment, Mechanical Heat Treatment and Energy from Waste

6.5 million tonnes. However, it is understood that the capacity reported for Stoneyhill (1.9 million tonnes) may be an over-estimate.

**Table 18: Landfill capacity in Aberdeen City and Shire (as at 31 December 2009)**

Site Name	Permit / Licence Issue Date	Total Capacity on Permit (tonnes) 2009	2009 TOTAL TONNES LANDFILLED	Remaining Capacity as at 31/12/09 (tonnes)	Date for ceasing infill as at 31/12/09	STATUS 2009
Crows Nest, Banchory	16/03/2006	435,000	23,986	40,000	Sep-2010	Active
Savoch, Newton of Savoch	15/01/2007	100,000	5,076	92,586	N/A	Active
Loch Hills Quarry, Parkhill, Dyce, Aberdeen	18/04/2007	1,500,000	9,471	1,463,333	N/A	Active
Park Quarry, South Deeside Road, Aberdeen	12/12/2006	N/A	21,364	980,000	Jan-2016	Active
Bankhead, Portlethen	23/07/2007	156,000	11,032	113,304	Dec-2016	Active
Wester Hatton Landfill, Aberdeen	30/08/2005	3,500,000	0	0	N/A	Not Active
Hill of Tramaud, Bridge of Don	24/10/2005	720,000	97,719	150,000	Mar-2011	Active
Stoneyhill Landfill Site	07/07/2004	5,400,000	230,027	1,932,739	Dec-2014	Active
Bodychell Sand & Gravel, Memsie, Fraserburgh	29/04/2004	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	Not Active
Easter Hatton Farm, Balmedie, Aberdeenshire	15/12/2005	1,950,000	94,194	527,737	Apr-2014	Active
			<b>492,868</b>	<b>5,299,699</b>		

In addition to the sites above, two sites have received planning permission since the end of 2009 with a combined capacity of 3.1 million tonnes. An additional site (Wester Hatton) is subject to an appeal for a time extension for its planning permission. In total, these would add an additional 5.6 million tonnes, doubling the capacity in the area and taking it well over the 10 year capacity identified in Annex B of the Zero Waste Plan (see Table 19).

**Table 19: Landfill sites with permissions (or currently subject to appeal) since 31 December 2009**

Site Name	Comment
Howe of Bythe	Planning permission granted for up to 1.8 million tonnes. A PPC permit application is currently being considered by SEPA.
Easter Hatton	Planning permission granted for an additional 1.29 million tonnes capacity.
Wester Hatton	Appeal ongoing for a time extension for this inactive landfill site. If permitted, this would provide an additional 2.5 million tonnes capacity to those identified in Figure x above.
<b>Potential additional capacity</b>	<b>5.59 million tonnes</b>

### **3.4.4 Are the objectives, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?**

The objective and targets within the sustainable development and climate change section are still very valid and appropriate. They echo the aspirations of national

targets, policy and legislation and are required if the region is to be well equipped to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The actions and monitoring arrangements for this section are on the whole still appropriate. However there are instances where a review and amendments may need to be made to ensure that all of the targets can be met. These particular instances are outlined below.

### **3.4.5 *Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

The policy change in relation to waste management will need to be discussed in the MIR, with a new approach developed for the strategic development plan.

The upgrade to the East Coast transmission line has a potentially important role to play in enabling grid connections for renewable energy in Aberdeen City and Shire. However, increasing export potential is also key.

Opportunities are affected by sustainability labelling to identify clear implementation mechanisms for energy and water efficiency in new development. These could be explored further in the MIR.

## **3.5 Population Growth (p.17-18)**

### **3.5.1 What approach was taken by the structure plan?**

The Structure Plan promoted population growth over the life of the plan and was particularly concerned with growth in the working age population. The plan targeted an increase in the population of the area to 480,000 by 2030 and had a longer term aspiration of 500,000. A 15% rise in the working age population was also targeted. However, the plan recognised that meeting these targets depended on a range of factors, including many not under the control of the planning system.

### **3.5.2 What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?**

Since the Structure Plan was prepared the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) has issued three key data updates:

- Mid-year Population Estimates (2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010);
- 2008-based Population Projections for Council Areas and Strategic Development Plan Areas; and
- 2008-based Variant Population Projections for Council Areas and Strategic Development Plan Areas.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils have also prepared a set of forecasts which look at the effect of different migration assumptions on the City and Shire, both individually and combined.

According to [GROS' Mid-2010 Population Estimates](#), the population of both City and Shire increased between 2009 and 2010, with Aberdeen City experiencing the second largest percentage growth of all Scottish Local Authorities. The trend observed since 2004 of increasing populations in both City and Shire therefore continues. There was a corresponding increase in the Structure Plan Area with the mid-year estimate being higher than the 2008 projection for 2010.

The updated figures continue to show positive increases in the Aberdeen City & Shire SDP Area child and working age populations, but these are dwarfed by the very large increase in people of pensionable age, the highest of all the SDP Areas. This increase is substantially above the expected Scottish figure of 31%. The increase in people of working age is less than anticipated in the Baseline Monitoring Report.

### **3.5.3 What is the current baseline position and is progress being made?**

The 2010 mid-year population estimate for the SDP Area is 459,770. This represents an increase of 19,750 over the 2006 baseline population (440,020). First signs therefore are that population growth is taking place and GROS project that this will continue over the life of the Structure Plan. GROS projections imply that the target of 40,000 population growth could be reached by 2019 and that the longer term ambition of a population rise to 500,000 could be realised by 2030.

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Please note: where GROS' population projections are discussed, figures are taken from the principal projections. GROS' projections are trend based, not policy based forecasts. As such they assume that past trends will be continued into the future and do not take account of the effects of any local or central government policy affecting population.

However a considerable part of this growth is amongst people of pensionable age. The further aim of increasing the working age population by 15% is more problematical. It should also be remembered that GROS projections are based on migration figures to 2008 and reflect the strength of migration before that date. The change in both the economic situation and political attitude to migration since then could result in changes to migration assumptions which would result in a lower population projection.

**PG/T1 – Population change**

To increase the population of the city region to 480,000 by 2030.

In 2010 the estimated population of the Aberdeen City and Shire SDP area was 459,770. This represents an increase of almost 20,000 since 2006, a growth rate double the Scottish figure. The population of the area declined between 1995 and 2003 (by almost 10,000 people) but has risen by 21,070 since then as shown in Table 20.

**Table 20: Population change (2000-2010)**

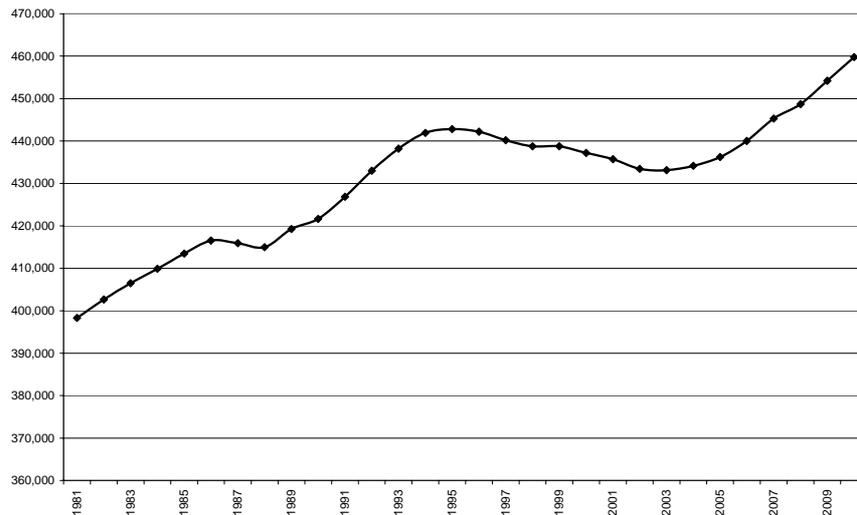
	2000	2005	2006 BASELINE	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	213,340	205,910	206,880	209,260	210,400	213,810	217,120
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	227,020	233,430	236,260	239,160	241,460	243,510	245,780
<b>SDP Area</b>	437,188	436,245	440,024	445,278	448,693	454,183	459,770
<b>Scotland</b>	5,062,940	5,094,800	5,116,900	5,144,200	5,168,500	5,194,000	5,222,100

The overwhelming majority of the population increase has resulted from migration, with natural increase representing a small proportion of the total. Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire have benefited in recent years from increased migration, with that from Eastern Europe (the A8 countries) being particularly noticeable. However, this disguises the differences between City and Shire migration patterns as overseas migration is more important to the City but the largest group of migrants into the Shire come from the rest of Scotland according to 2009/10 figures.

Since 1990, the total population has changed in distinct phases (

Figure 3), reaching a peak in 1995, before declining until 2004, and is currently on an upward trend reaching new records for the area every year since 2007.

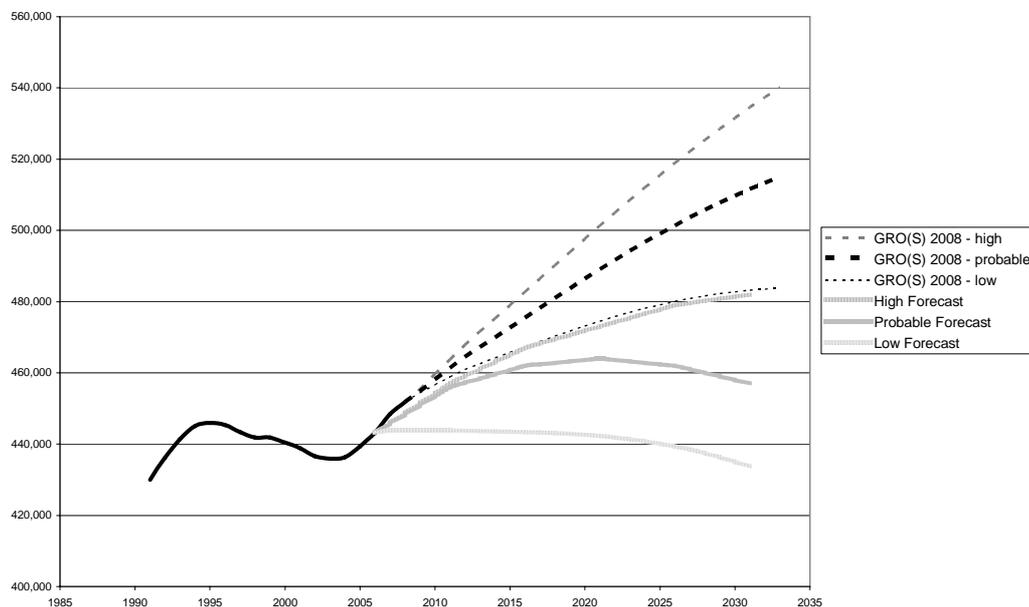
**Figure 3: Population Estimates 1990-2010**



Source: [General Register Office for Scotland](#)

Projections produced by the GROS and forecasts prepared by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils both suggest that the population of the region will continue to increase significantly over the next 20 years, with the GROS projecting a population of 511,630 by 2033 according to 2008 based SDPA probable projections. However, the Housing Need and Demand Assessment used an alternative projection<sup>9</sup>, with the population rising to 498,439 by 2033. This was based on a more realistic migration scenario to the one used by the GROS.

**Figure 4: Population forecasts and projections**



Source: [General Register Office for Scotland](#) and [Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Forecasts 2008-2033](#)

The population of the structure plan area has increased as a result of high levels of in migration over the last 5 years, and projections / forecasts suggest that the population will increase significantly over the next 20 years with the structure plan target achievable before 2030.

<sup>9</sup> [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=34458&sID=332](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=34458&sID=332)

## PG/T2 – Population structure

To increase the population of people who are of working age (16 to 65) by 15% by 2030.

In line with much of Scotland the population structure of Aberdeen City and Shire has aged over the last ten years. A rapidly aging population has significant implications for both service provision and the economic performance of the region, and results in the need to attract and retain people of working age to the region, as highlighted in the structure plan target.

Table 21 shows that the population of working age (16-64) has risen from the 2006 benchmark of 295,427 to 310,145 in 2010 (an increase of 14,718 or +5.0%). However, there is some way to go before the target of 339,741 is met.

**Table 21: Changes to the age structure in the SDP area**

	2000	2005	2006 BASELINE	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>All Ages</b>	437,188	436,245	440,024	445,278	448,693	454,178	459,758
<b>0-15</b>	83,745	79,199	78,957	79,123	78,983	79,956	80,628
<b>16-24</b>	52,773	50,717	51,477	52,635	52,846	54,455	55,673
<b>25-44</b>	133,485	124,300	124,456	125,330	124,811	126,155	127,014
<b>45-64</b>	106,339	116,920	119,494	121,704	122,360	125,367	127,458
<b>65+</b>	64,018	68,204	68,756	69,628	69,693	71,387	72,127
<b>16 - 64</b>			<b>295,427</b>				<b>310,145</b>

The 2008 based projections (probable) suggest that by 2033 the population of the structure plan area will increase by 14%. The number of people of pensionable age will increase by 48%, noticeably above the Scottish figure of 31%. It should be noted that Aberdeenshire has the largest projected rise in this age group in Scotland and this will have major implications for the region. The population of working age is projected to rise by 7%, well above the national figure of just over 2%. Additionally, while at a national level the number of under 16's is projected to decline over the period, in Aberdeen City and Shire this age group could increase by 4%.

**Table 22: Projected changes in population by age bands (2008-2033)**

	Aberdeen City and Shire		Scotland
	No.	%	%
<b>0 – 15</b>	3,220	4%	-1.5%
<b>16 – retirement</b>	19,650	7%	2.2%
<b>Over retirement</b>	40,070	48%	31.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,940</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

Source: [General Register Office for Scotland](#) (2008 based) principle projections

The latest 2008-based GROS data allows comparison between Aberdeen City and Shire and the three other Scottish SDP areas. When compared to the other Scottish city regions Aberdeen City and Shire is projected to increase more than both TAYplan and Glasgow and Clyde Valley SDPs, and some 2.4% lower than the increase predicted in the SESplan area.

**Table 23: SDPA Population Change (2008-2033)**

	Total Population 2008	Population change 2008-2033	Children (0-15 years)	Working ages	Pensionable ages
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire SDP Area</b>	448,690	14%	4%	7%	48%
<b>Glasgow &amp; Clyde Valley SDP Area</b>	1,752,950	0%	-9%	-4%	23%
<b>SESPlan SDP Area</b>	1,213,910	17%	9%	13%	38%
<b>TAYPlan SDP Area</b>	475,190	8%	2%	2%	28%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (2008 based)probable projections

**The working age population is projected to increase by 19,650 (7%) by 2033.**

In terms of households, GROS 2010 figures show that household numbers in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are continuing to rise. The rate of increase over the 2001-2010 period is greater than in Scotland as a whole, with the increase in Aberdeenshire being particularly significant (Table 24 below).

**Table 24: Household growth**

	1991	2001	2003	2004	2008	2009	2010	Change 01-10	
								Number	%
Aberdeen City	89,949	96,944	97,924	98,635	102,899	103,438	103,677	6,733	6.9
Aberdeenshire	80,473	90,902	93,727	95,597	101,516	102,626	103,770	12,868	14.2
Aberdeen City & Shire	170,422	187,846	191,651	194,232	204,415	206,064	207,447	19,601	10.4
Scotland	2,042,809	2,195,033	2,229,535	2,249,160	2,331,250	2,344,436	2,357,424	162,391	7.4

Source: Household estimates for Scotland by local authority area, June 1991-2010, GROS

Figures reveal that the number of households has been increasing at a faster rate than the population. During the last decade there has been a sustained increase in numbers of households and a significant fall in average household size. This is a trend that is expected to continue, with average household size dropping to 2.02 by 2023; the same as the Scottish average (Table 25).

**Table 25: Forecast average household size (2008-2031)**

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033
Aberdeen City	1.96	1.90	1.86	1.82	1.77	1.72
Aberdeenshire	2.36	2.31	2.25	2.20	2.16	2.12
Aberdeen City and Shire SDP Area	2.16	2.11	2.06	2.02	1.98	1.93
Scotland	2.18	2.12	2.06	2.02	1.97	1.93

Source: GROS Projected average household size, by local authority area, 2008 – 2033  
GROS Household projections for Aberdeen City & Shire SDP area, by type of household, 2008-2033

The projected number of households in the SDP area will rise to 257,500, according to GROS' 2008 household projections. This will represent an increase of more than 54,000 on the 2008 figure.

**Numbers of households are increasing and estimated to rise significantly over the plan period.**

### **PG/T3 and PG/T4 - House completions**

To move towards building at least 2,500 new homes a year by 2014 through the development plan.

To move towards building at least 3,000 new homes a year by 2020 through the development plan.

In order to meet the needs of the increasing population as well as to accommodate the fall in household size, the level of house building must increase. The 10-year average completion rate up to 2006 was approximately 2,200pa. With this in mind the structure plan set a staged target to increase the level of house building to 2,500 by 2014 and 3,000 by 2020. Table 26 below shows the level of housebuilding between 2006 and 2011.

**Table 26: Housing completions (2006-2011)**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011*</b>
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	878	739	520	387	293	512
<b>Aberdeenshire (AHMA)</b>	799	715	672	739	583	513
<b>Aberdeen Housing Market Area</b>	1,677	1,454	1,192	1,226	876	1,025
<b>Rural Housing Market Area</b>	549	624	675	739	629	459
<b>Structure Plan Area**</b>	<b>2,226</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>1,867</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>1,484</b>

Source: *Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2011*

\*Anticipated completions

\*\*Does not include Cairngorms National Park

It can be seen that the global financial crisis and recession has had a significant impact on new house building. Although completions rates have fallen since 2006, they have not fallen to the same extent as elsewhere in Scotland.

Achieving the structure plan targets for house building will be challenging, especially considering the impact of the financial crisis in the housing market and construction industry. However, land must be made available to enable homes to be built to provide for the future population growth and the planning system must ensure that it supports their development. In 2011 the SDP area has an established land supply of approximately 18,325, with 8,610 making up the five year effective supply.

**Table 27: Housing Land Supply (2011)**

	<b>Established</b>	<b>5Yr Effective</b>	<b>Post 5Yr Effective</b>	<b>Constrained</b>
<b>Aberdeen Housing Market Area</b>	11,224	5,245	1,288	4,691
<b>Rural Housing Market Area</b>	7,101	3,365	1,493	2,243
<b>Structure Plan Area Total*</b>	18,325	8,610	2,781	6,934

Source: [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2011](#)

\*Does not include Cairngorms National Park

It is currently not possible to compare the completions within the SDP areas using figures from the local housing land audits, however, it is anticipated that this data will be available over the coming year, and this will be reflected within subsequent monitoring reports. A comparison of the relative completion rates can be examined by using the

local authority<sup>10</sup> completion returns to the Scottish Government, adjusted to completions per 1000 households, to enable direct comparison.

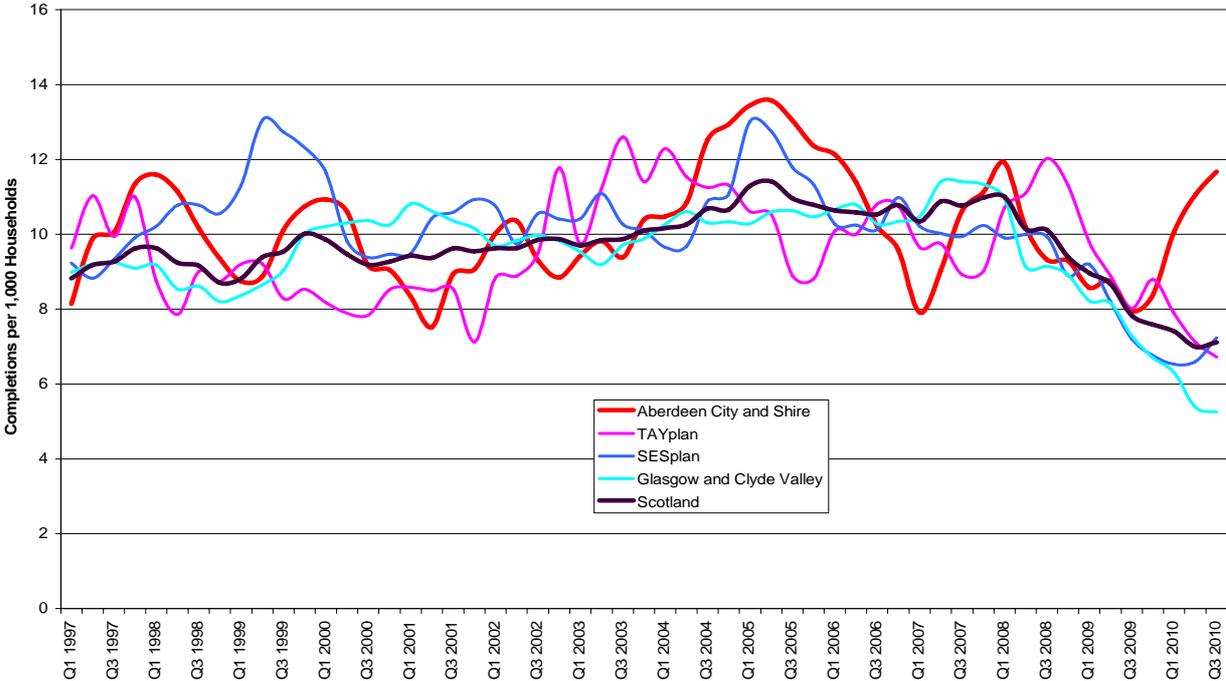
Table 28 shows that the Aberdeen City and Shire SDP area has, over the past five years, experienced the greatest average level of household completions, with it being the only SDPA reporting a rate above the national average. The effect of the economic downturn can be traced in the decline in completions from 2007/08, with only Aberdeen City and Shire (and to a lesser extent SESplan) picking up in 2009/10.

**Table 28: SDP area house completions (per 1,000 households)**

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	5yr average
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire</b>	12.7	8.2	12.1	8.6	10.1	10.3
<b>Glasgow &amp; Clyde Valley</b>	10.9	10.6	11.1	8.3	6.3	9.4
<b>SESplan</b>	9.1	9.5	8.5	8.0	6.5	8.3
<b>TAYplan</b>	10.4	9.9	10.9	9.9	7.9	9.8
<b>Scotland</b>	11.0	10.6	11.1	9.2	7.3	9.8

Source: [Scottish Government returns, Affordable Housing Investment database, GROS mid year household estimates.](#)

**Figure 5: SDP area house completions (per 1,000 households)**



During 2010, the rate of completions in Aberdeen City and Shire has been significantly higher than those in the other three SDP Areas in Scotland (which account for 75% of the population) or for Scotland as a whole.

**Aberdeen City & Shire SDPA has achieved the highest level of completions per household when compared nationally and with the other Scottish SDPAs.**

As with the previous comparisons the figures for TAYplan and SESplan are calculated using the household split from the GROS (2008) household estimates, backcast over the period. Furthermore, the figures for Aberdeen City and Shire, TAYplan and Glasgow and Clyde Valley include figures from the national parks.

In terms of progress with local development plans, both councils have made quick progress, submitting proposed plans for examination in under two years from the approval of the structure plan in August 2009.

	<b>Aberdeen City Council</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council</b>
<b>Main Issues Report Published</b>	October 2009	May 2009
<b>Proposed Plan Published</b>	September 2010	June 2010
<b>Proposed Plan Submitted for Examination</b>	May 2011	March 2011
<b>Adoption Target Date</b>	March 2012	December 2011

*Source: Development Plan Schemes*

Progress with both plans has been either in line with the indicative timetable contained in Scottish Government Circular 1/2009 or slightly behind it. This is particularly impressive given the scale of change (particularly in land allocations) required as a result of the strategy of the structure plan.

Land has been allocated through both plans in line with Schedule 1 of the structure plan. Both plans are accompanied by action programmes which set out the issues that need to be resolved to bring land forward for development.

#### **3.5.4 Are the objectives, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?**

Consideration should be given to the possibility that the targeted population growth could be reached within the lifetime of the plan and may be exceeded by the end of it. However this to some degree depends on assumptions that are made about migration levels and these may be vulnerable to changing economic and political circumstances. The housing need and demand assessment considers many of these issues in more detail.

Objective - to increase the population and achieve a balanced age distribution would appear to be robust.

Targets - the latest population projections from the Scottish Government suggest that the target to increase the population of the city region to 480,000 by 2030 could be met as early as 2019 (GROS central projection) or by 2022 (revised). The projections also indicate that the aspirational target contained in the structure plan to see the population rise to 500,000 may be achievable within the lifetime of the plan itself if current trends continue.

In light of the recent evidence and Scottish Government projections there is merit in reviewing these population growth targets and assessing their implications for the housebuilding targets. However, the targets for new housebuilding were based on moving towards a 40% increase in housebuilding in line with Scottish Government policy and are therefore likely to remain robust.

The target relating to working age population should refer to the 16 – 64 age band rather than 16 – 65 as this would better reflect the current notional retirement age.

Actions - three of the four actions associated with this objective relate to the progress with local development plans and the release of land through that process. These are likely to be less relevant when both councils have up-to-date local development plans in

place which are consistent with the structure plan. As a consequence the actions will need to be reviewed through the MIR and proposed plan.

Monitoring - the monitoring arrangements seem to have worked well with the exception of the comparisons with the rest of the UK and further afield. Consideration will need to be given as to whether to instigate this monitoring or remove the commitment from the plan.

### ***3.5.5 Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

Issues arising from the monitoring of the population growth objective are likely to be debated in the Main Issues Report, particularly those relating to the population growth target, its implications for housebuilding targets and the actions required to deliver these.

## **3.6 Quality of the environment (p.19-20)**

### **3.6.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

The plan identifies a series of specific issues which will make a significant contribution towards achieving the stated objective. The protection of the built, natural and cultural environment of the area must be encouraged through appropriate means of site selection and an aspiration towards a high standard of design generally. Given the vulnerability of the natural environment to the effects of development, focus should also be given to maintaining and improving areas of biodiversity, wildlife and landscape value. Natura 2000 sites and the Cairngorms National Park merit particular attention.

Over the lifetime of the plan, the quality of the region's water bodies should be improved, with River Basin Management Plans intended to achieve the quality standards of the Water Framework Directive. In order to accommodate the levels of growth set out in the structure plan, some new development will be directed to greenfield sites on the edge of existing settlements. To allow development to be directed to some of the most appropriate locations, a green belt review was identified as a key requirement.

### **3.6.2 *What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?***

In the time since the preparation of the structure plan, the Scottish Government has replaced the previous topic-based Scottish Planning policy (SPP) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) series with a single consolidated and abbreviated SPP, outlining the expectations the Scottish Government has of the planning system. The introduction of a single SPP resulted in the deletion of NPPG 14: Natural Heritage, and SPP 23: Planning and the Historic Environment.

In addition, both planning authorities have made progress towards the production and adoption of new LDPs, these are key to ensuring that the aims of the structure plan are reflected at a local level. Both plans have been subject to extensive consultation and contain policies and guidance that place a strong emphasis on context and place-making, also including specific policies in relation to the protection of built heritage, landscape and natural heritage.

The identification of sites appropriate for future development through the LDPs followed a bid process with sites put forward by landowners or developers. These were assessed against various criteria, providing a clear indication of those capable of supporting development without compromising any existing value, including any built or natural heritage interests. In addition, both Proposed LDPs have been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

In a recent pilot, Aberdeen City Council entered into a six month trial with Historic Scotland, whereby alterations and smaller extensions to category B listed buildings will no longer require notification, provided certain criteria are met. The pilot has now ended and a review is pending with the possibility it may be implemented on a permanent basis. Aberdeenshire Council have also indicated an interest in joining the scheme.

The first generation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for Scotland, as required under the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive, has now been approved, adopted and published. The 'Scotland' area plan includes the entire structure plan area, and was adopted and published by SEPA on 22 December 2009. The plans will be reviewed and updated in 2015, with the condition of waters reviewed annually by SEPA. It is understood that as of November 2010, the publication of updated data for the North East Scotland Advisory Group is imminent, though this will require some further collation as the boundary for the Area Advisory Groups differ from the authority areas.

### 3.6.3 What is the current baseline position and is progress being made?

To achieve the stated objective for quality of the environment, three specific targets were set in the structure plan:

#### QE/T1 – Built, natural and cultural assets

To make sure that development improves and does not lead to the loss of, or damage to, built, natural and cultural heritage assets.

Table 29 below, which has been updated since the Baseline Monitoring Report, indicates the number and extent of natural heritage designations in the structure plan area. Table 30, also shown below, sets out the built and cultural heritage designations across the area. These assets are of great value to the north-east and it is important that whenever possible development does not result in the loss of, or damage to, these existing designations.

Progress has been made through the publication of Proposed LDPs, with both plans taking account of the natural, built and cultural heritage assets in formulating local policy. In terms of the impact of development on individual sites, discussions are ongoing to establish a more robust and tangible basis for comparison and assessment of progress.

Table 29: Natural heritage designations

		Aberdeenshire		Aberdeen City	
		Number of sites	Area (hectares)	Number of sites	Area (hectares)
International	Ramsar Site	4	1,239	0	n/a
	Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	19	35,196	1	155
	Special Protection Areas (SPA)	10	29,926	0	n/a
National	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	82	39,814	4	47
	National Nature Reserves (NNR)	6	13,768	0	n/a
Local	Sites of Interest to Natural Science (SINCS)	79	n/a	16	n/a
	Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	2	28	4	126
	Scottish Wildlife Trust reserves	4	n/a	0	n/a
	District Wildlife	0	n/a	70	n/a

<b>Sites</b>				
<b>RSPB Reserves</b>	3	n/a	0	n/a
<b>Ancient Woodland</b>	2,584	45,000	140	n/a

**Table 30: Built and cultural heritage designations**

	Number of sites		
	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen City and Shire
<b>Listed Building</b>	1,212	3,793	4,927
<b>Listed Buildings at risk</b>	26	228	254
<b>Conservation Areas</b>	11	49	60
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</b>	44	581	625
<b>Sites and Monument Record</b>	699	17,631	18,330

It is recognised that it is difficult to monitor the impact of individual proposals on any given asset, as assessment of potential impact is subjective and cannot be easily quantified for monitoring purposes. Simply comparing the number of designations year-on-year will indicate only if designations have been revoked and will not provide any qualitative assessment of the impact of a development proposal.

#### **QE/T2 – Quality of Water Bodies**

To avoid new development preventing water bodies achieving ‘good ecological status’ under the Water Framework Directive.

It is important that development does not prevent water bodies in the structure plan area achieving at least ‘good’ ecological status in order for the area to both reach the targets in the Water Framework Directive and the quality of the environment objective in the structure plan. Monitoring of Scotland’s water quality is carried out on a yearly basis by SEPA in order to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, which works on six-year cycles. SEPA submitted their first classification to the EU in 2009, with the next classification in 2015. Annual reporting allows us to monitor progress closely, although it should be noted that local authority boundaries differ from that of the Area Advisory Group (AAG) and SEPA have committed to providing data for development plan monitoring purposes. Both councils are involved in the work of the AAG and there must also be a link with the North East Scotland Area Management Plan 2010-2015, which has its own target for 98% of waterbodies to achieve good or high ecological status by 2027.

SEPA have provided accurate data based on detailed analysis of their most recent classification tables (Table 28). This shows that the number of water bodies achieving ‘good ecological status’ or better is currently 113. This represents 45% of total water bodies achieving ‘good’ or ‘high’ standards. 31% of water bodies are in the ‘moderate’ category and 24% are of ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ quality.

**Table 31: Number of water bodies and their ecological status**

Status Class	Total	River	Loch	Transitional	Coastal	Groundwater
<b>High</b>	16	5	-	4	7	-
<b>Good</b>	97	52	1	1	6	37
<b>Moderate</b>	78	76	-	1	1	-
<b>Poor</b>	41	32	2	-	-	7
<b>Bad</b>	20	19	1	-	-	-

Source: SEPA 2011

There have been a small number of changes from the baseline position, with fewer water bodies achieving good ecological status or above. However, this is partly as a result of the more accurate analysis of the specific features on the part of SEPA and the weight of these findings will increase with comparison against subsequent years' data.

**QE/T3 - Green belt Review**

To carry out a green belt boundary and policy review by 2010.

The position in the baseline monitoring report was derived from data on planning applications granted in the green belt. This paid no regard as to whether they were departures or not, a great many probably accorded with the development plan. It is a matter of record that the green belt and policies pertaining to it were reviewed by both councils in the preparation of their LDPs. Therefore, no update on the baseline figure is being pursued. Instead, the gross amount of land allocated for development that was previously designated green belt is shown in Table 32 below. For Aberdeen City this is also shown as a proportion of land remaining as green belt.

**Table 32: Changes in green belt coverage**

Aberdeen City (total area 18,830ha)		Aberdeenshire
Net change in green belt area	% of City remaining green belt*	Net change in green belt area
-1,161ha	57.1%	+1,129ha

\* It should be noted that this figure does not include land within the built up area that is designated as 'urban green space' in the City Proposed LDP.

The progression of the LDP process for both authority areas has involved a review of current green belt policy and boundaries. Progress has been made, with the LDPs informed by the review and greenfield development directed to the most appropriate locations; as such the structure plan target has been achieved. At present the findings of these reviews are not yet fully in effect, as the LDPs are not yet adopted and sites and policies may change.

**3.6.4 Are the objectives, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?**

In general, the objective and targets remain valid. However, it is suggested that monitoring arrangements with respect to the assessment of the impact of development upon the built, natural and cultural assets of the region should be revisited. At present, the brief for monitoring is unclear, stipulating only a review through the Local Development Plan process. The means of monitoring should be more tightly defined, outlining what form and intended scope of the review process. Habitats Regulation Assessments would be one means of monitoring qualitative changes to SACs and SPAs; these are prepared for appropriate proposals.

The target identified in relation to the ecological status of water bodies remains of relevance, and is a requirement if Scotland is to achieve the aims of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The stated outcome of the WFD is for all water bodies to achieve 'good ecological status' by 2015, whilst the area management plan targets 98% by 2027. The SDP could therefore consider phrasing this target differently, with all new development supporting water bodies achieving this status during the lifetime of the plan or similar wording.

The necessary review of the green belt has taken place in preparing the Proposed LDPs. If there is no requirement to increase allowances, it is unlikely a review in the lifetime of the next SDP will be necessary.

### **3.6.5 *Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

This section forms an important part of the structure plan and complements work done in the strategic environmental assessment and habitats regulations assessment. The principles of protecting important designations and supporting efforts to improve the quality of water bodies should remain. The main consideration in this section should be:

- the need for the green belt target if the scale and location of development is not proposed to change.

Other Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan may be:

- reviewing the monitoring arrangements for the first target to allow better quality data to be gathered; and
- the target for water quality could be amended to be more proactive in achieving good status, or better in the life of the plan.

### **3.7 Sustainable mixed communities (p.21-22)**

#### **3.7.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

In order to achieve the objective of creating sustainable mixed communities, the structure plan has identified a number of key issues. There is an emphasis on learning from poor quality development in the past and promoting the highest standards for future communities, through high quality design, efficient use and re-use of land and encouraging a mix of uses. New development must provide a genuine mix, in terms of house size and type as well as cost and tenure; this variety will provide real choice for residents. New communities must also be inclusive, providing for the needs of the whole community, including gypsies / travellers, and allowing for the changing needs of society and an ageing population.

Brownfield sites and regeneration areas are identified as priorities for new development. In developing sites, the principal focus should be on communities, with a need to ensure that all new development is accompanied by services and facilities to support new and existing communities. Integration of new and existing communities, as well as employment areas, is identified as key to improving quality of life and opportunities. In seeking to create sustainable mixed communities, careful consideration shall be given to retail services in preparing masterplans or development briefs. Existing retail centres should be supported to ensure that the needs of existing communities are met.

#### **3.7.2 *What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?***

In the time since the preparation of the structure plan, the Scottish Government has replaced the previous topic-based Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) series with a single consolidated and abbreviated SPP, outlining the expectations the Scottish Government has of the planning system. The introduction of a single SPP in February 2010 resulted in the deletion of all previous topic-based SPPs and NPPGs, including SPP3: Planning for Homes. However, the main themes and policy priorities remain and have been added to with Designing Places and Designing Streets.

In addition, both planning authorities have made progress towards the production and adoption of new LDPs, these are key to ensuring that the aims of the structure plan are reflected at a local level. In August 2010 Aberdeen City Council published the Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study, which provides an assessment of the potential of previously developed areas to accommodate further housing development, with the overall aim of meeting the structure plan's housing requirements.

The delivery of new homes in the designated regeneration areas of both council areas has proven more difficult than foreseen; this has primarily been as a result of the withdrawal of various funding opportunities and constraints on the councils' capital plan. As a result, councils are having to explore other funding options and opportunities for delivering as many projects as possible. For Aberdeen City, this has had an impact on the ability to meet the structure plan schedule 1 allowance.

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, working in partnership, submitted a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) in March 2011. The Scottish Government requires HNDAs to be the basis for development plans and local housing

strategies, with SPP identifying the benefit of better alignment between these two documents. The HNDA was assessed as 'robust and credible' by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis in May 2011.

The councils have formed a design review panel, this was proposed in the structure plan and will facilitate informed debate and allow feedback to be given on proposals which raise particular design issues. The first meeting of the design review panel took place on 1 November 2010.

Through the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI), a site at Grandhome, Bridge of Don was the subject of a national charrette exercise, endorsed by the Scottish Government. This intensive process began in March 2010 and involved public meetings and presentations, community and key agency involvement, and an open design workshop. The outcomes of the charrette process were included in the SSCI Charrette Series Report of October 2010. It is anticipated that the output from the charrette will be used to inform a design framework, which can then be used to develop more detailed masterplans relating to the different phases. It should be noted that other sites are also benefitting from more focussed, design led approaches, including Chapelton of Elsick (DPZ), Cromleybank, Ellon and Cove, Aberdeen (Princes Foundation for the Built Environment).

The Scottish Government has launched a new charrette programme called the SSCI Mainstreaming Programme, which involves a further series of charrettes across the country, linking new projects with specialist charrette facilitator teams. The programme is designed to assist projects to adopt and deliver design-led approaches to development and to help embed charrette style working in Scottish practice. 12 projects were submitted from which three were chosen, none of which are in Aberdeen City or Aberdeenshire.

### **3.7.3 What is the current baseline position and is progress being made?**

To achieve the stated objective for sustainable mixed communities, six specific targets were set, the baseline position for each of these targets and any progress made is detailed below.

#### **SMC/T1 – Regeneration Priority Areas**

To increase the range and quality of housing and the residential environment in the 'regeneration priority areas'

At the baseline monitoring report there was no data to monitor this target, but sources such as major planning applications and masterplans were identified. A range of sites are identified in the Aberdeenshire Proposed LDP at Fraserburgh, Banff, Inverbervie and St Cyrus, each of which will provide new housing opportunities when they are developed. Aberdeenshire Council have approved a 'Framework for Regeneration in Aberdeenshire' since approval of the structure plan, this identifies key strategic objectives as well as under physical, economic and social headings. A range of possible project ideas are highlighted and priorities for different areas.

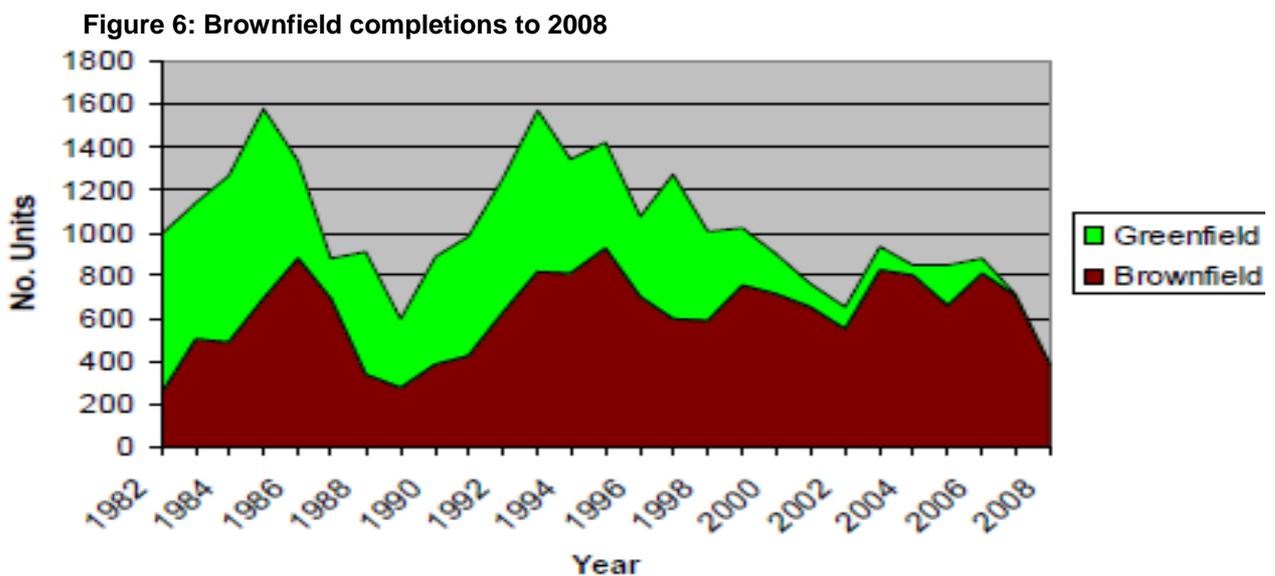
In Aberdeen, two phase one projects will deliver 60 new homes, phase two around 35 homes and phase three potentially 31 homes, all in the RPAs. These 126 units will create new opportunities and redevelop sites that are no longer required for their previous use.

### SMC/T2 – Brownfield sites

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

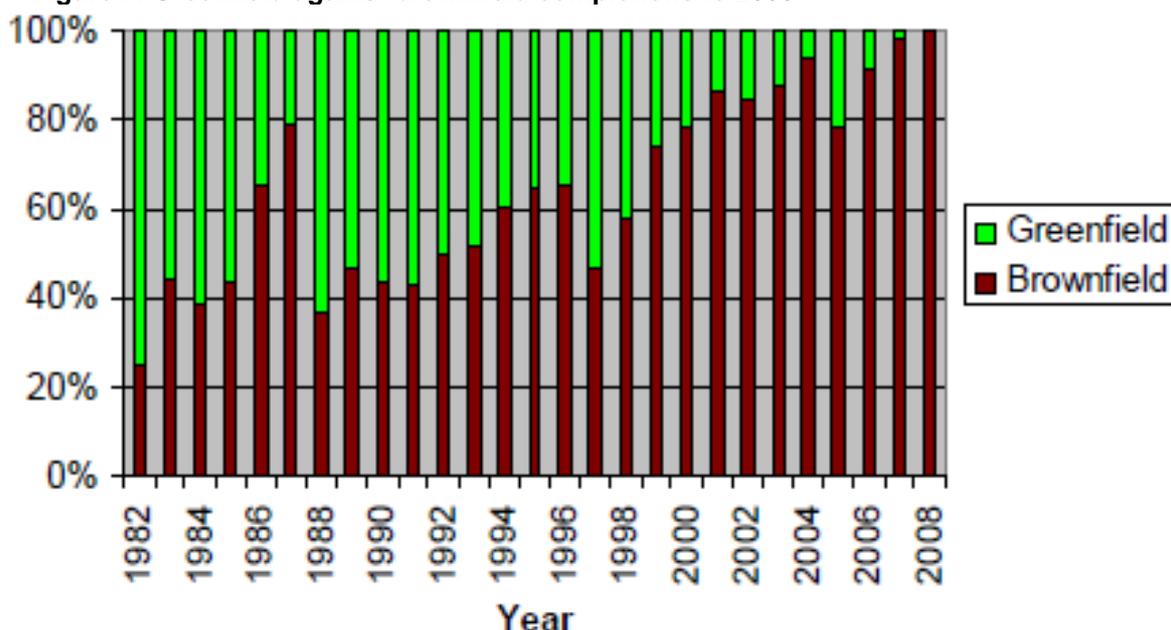
The Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study, published in August 2010, provides details of brownfield and greenfield housing completions up to and including 2008. This shows historical trends and current capacity for known potential sites and concludes that between 5,000 and 8,500 new homes could be accommodated on brownfield sites; these in addition to effective supply sites. The study also illustrates a recent drop in the number of brownfield completions, with a 20-year low in 2008 (Figure 6). Greenfield completions have dropped consistently from 1997, with very few completions in 2007 and none in 2008 (Figure 7). These figures reflect the shortage of sites in Aberdeen and the overall dip in development as a result of the global economic recession. The proportion of brownfield completions has risen over time, reaching 100% in 2008.

While only brownfield completions were recorded in 2008, the release of sites through the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008) and the emerging LDP will increase the number of greenfield sites developed in Aberdeen. This will begin to redress the balance between greenfield and brownfield to a figure nearer the target as there will be an increasing proportion of greenfield sites as part of the established housing land supply.



Source, Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2010

Figure 7: Greenfield against brownfield completions to 2008



Source: Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2010

It is recognised that there has been a lack of greenfield opportunities in Aberdeen in recent years. However, sites have always been available and Table 33 illustrates the established greenfield supply in the city since 2007 and how it was supplemented in 2009 by new sites entering through the adopted local plan. Figures for Aberdeenshire are provided for comparison. The most recent data shows that brownfield land in Aberdeen makes up 65% of the established supply.

Table 33: Proportion of established housing land supply on greenfield (GF) and brownfield (BF)

	2007		2008		2009		2010	
	GF	BF	GF	BF	GF	BF	GF	BF
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	201 (8%)	2,244 (92%)	533 (23%)	1,836 (77%)	1,328 (42%)	1,829 (58%)	1,414 (35%)	2,627 (65%)
<b>Aberdeenshire (part)</b>	4,672 (90%)	533 (10%)	4,246 (88%)	559 (12%)	4,408 (91%)	426 (9%)	4,080 (92%)	355 (8%)
<b>Aberdeen Housing Market Area</b>	4,873 (64%)	2,777 (36%)	4,779 (67%)	2,395 (33%)	5,736 (72%)	2,255 (28%)	5,735 (64%)	3,226 (36%)
<b>Rural Housing Market Area</b>	5,360 (88%)	737 (12%)	5,381 (89%)	685 (11%)	5,090 (89%)	617 (11%)	5,036 (87%)	752 (13%)
<b>Structure Plan Area</b>	10,233 (74%)	3,514 (26%)	10,160 (77%)	3,080 (23%)	10,826 (79%)	2,872 (21%)	10,767 (73%)	3,982 (27%)

Source: Baseline Monitoring Report/ Housing Land Audit 2010

The most recent information available (2008) on housing completions, contained in the Aberdeen Urban Brownfield Capacity Study, demonstrates that the target of 40% of new development on brownfield sites is currently being exceeded to the detriment of greenfield sites. The release of greenfield sites in 2008 and those that emerge from the first LDP will result in significantly different findings in future. The breakdown of established housing land supply provided in the Housing Land Audit indicates that the proportion of brownfield land available for development is sufficient to meet the target set, though future monitoring will identify the true figures.

**SMC/T3 – Use of Supplementary Guidance for larger sites**

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

The baseline monitoring report states that, for a sample of planning applications made in 2009 on sites of over 1ha in strategic growth areas, the average housing density was 54.9 dwellings per hectare (dpha), in excess of 30 dpha target. An important point to note is that the average in Aberdeen City was 93 dpha, although these were 100% brownfield, whereas developments in the Aberdeenshire area achieved an average of 16.7 dpha and were 100% greenfield.

In Aberdeen there have been a number of applications for planning permission submitted since the baseline monitoring report was produced, several on greenfield sites. Analysis of these seven proposals shows that the average density was 48.2 dpha, significantly reduced from the baseline figure, which were all brownfield sites. Several proposals meet the 30dpha requirement, but these are brownfield sites. All greenfield sites are between 20-28dpha.

In Aberdeenshire, a search of applications on sites greater than one hectare in SGAs provided a sample of ten proposals; these were predominately greenfield sites, although some were infill. The average density of these proposals amounted to 13.5 dpha, with only one getting near the target figure. This result represents a reduction on the baseline figure of 16.7 dpha.

Therefore using the same methodology as the baseline monitoring report, the average density across both councils in 2010 was 30.9 dpha against a target of 30 dpha. This improvement from the baseline position is solely as a result of the inclusion of a number of greenfield sites in Aberdeen, but gives a much more representative figure of the mix that should emerge through the two LDPs.

Supplementary guidance to support the City LDP sets out circumstances where development frameworks, masterplans and planning briefs will be required; these could range from small sites up to large areas in multiple ownership. Policy H3 of the City Proposed LDP requires that all residential developments of over 1ha shall meet a minimum density of 30 dpha (net). Aberdeenshire takes a similar approach to the requirement for supplementary guidance and identifies these in the settlement statements for sites and areas. However, they do not stipulate that certain proposals should achieve the 30 dpha target.

**SMC/T4 – National recognition for new development**

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

The baseline monitoring report outlined a number of awards and successes throughout the region. Since this time, there has been success for local developers and architects at the Scottish Homes Award, RIBA 2010 Awards and at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning, where a Scotia development at Rothienorman, Aberdeenshire took the overall award.

## Scottish Homes Award

- FINALIST FOR APARTMENT OF THE YEAR Stewart Milne Homes, Ythan View, Ellon, Aberdeenshire
- FINALIST FOR ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE AWARD – JAMStudio Ltd, Little Maldron Mill, Torphins, Aberdeenshire
- WINNERS FOR CONVERSION OF THE YEAR - JAMstudio Ltd, Little Maldron Mill, Torphins, Aberdeenshire
- FINALIST FOR HOME OF THE YEAR - Stewart Milne Homes, The Noblewood, Leathan Mews, Portlethen, Aberdeenshire

## Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) 2010 Awards

- Aberdeen Regional Sports Village, Reiach and Hall
- 'House on the Hill', Paterson Architects

Significant progress has been made with proposals being taken forward for sites in existing plans and the Proposed LDPs. This includes the SSCI at Grandhome, the DPZ charrette process for the proposed new settlement at Chapelton of Elsick and Princes Foundation for the Built Environment producing masterplans for sites in Ellon and Cove. Each of these signifies progress in the approach to designing proposals, partnership working and engaging with the communities. Each also has the potential to be an exemplar project for the north east and is to be commended. Of course, none of these projects are yet delivered and it will be necessary to see the final product on the ground and whether future awards result.

### **SMC/T5 – Meeting the needs of the community**

For new housing to meet the needs of the whole community by providing appropriate levels of affordable housing (likely to be in the range of 20%-30% - the housing need and demand assessment will help provide the final figure) and an appropriate mix of types and sizes of homes, in line with local development plans and approved supplementary guidance

The proposed Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Local Development Plans both require that all housing developments of five or more units shall contribute no less than 25% of the total number of units as affordable housing. Supplementary Guidance on affordable housing has also been prepared by both authorities for proposed adoption alongside the plans themselves and delivery of affordable housing should continue to be monitored. Both authorities have prepared supplementary guidance in relation to gypsy and traveller caravan sites, while the proposed Aberdeen LDP includes a specific policy (H4) in relation to obtaining an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes on sites of 50 units or more.

The development plan was supported by the housing need and demand assessment (2010), which provided the Proposed LDPs with a basis for their affordable housing policy and percentage requirement. An amended HNDA to support the main issues report was signed off in May 2011. This identified a higher level of housing need (38%). Such levels present particular challenges at a time when Scottish Government funding has fallen significantly.

The proposed LDPs for both authorities have incorporated policy and guidance to meet the needs of the community. Provision is made for appropriate levels of affordable

housing, while requirements for masterplanning include reference to ensuring appropriate housing mix. Significant progress has been made, though further monitoring of the plans will be necessary to ensure that these targets are met in the adopted documents.

#### **SMC/T6 – Encouraging a mix of uses**

For local development plans and all masterplans to fully consider the scope for a mix of uses on a site

The proposed Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire LDPs both set out aims to provide sustainable mixed communities. These documents state that, in order to help deliver mixed communities, large sites should include a mix of housing, employment and other uses. Analysis of the allocations in the Proposed LDPs shows that there are a significant number of sites designated 'M', this amounts to 45 mixed use sites across all areas of Aberdeenshire. In Aberdeen, five of the larger sites in the masterplanned zones contain mixed housing and employment allocations. These mix of allocations are backed up in the respective proposed supplementary guidance documents relating to the masterplanning process.

#### **3.7.4 *Are the objectives, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?***

It is clear that the regeneration environment has altered significantly as a result of external and internal funding pressures that have had a negative impact on the ability to deliver the scale of new homes envisaged in the structure plan. This, along with findings in the spatial strategy section, requires the main issues report to look again at the numbers in schedule 1. Whilst the target itself remains generally appropriate; it may be too subjective and lack the focus necessary to effectively monitor progress.

Monitoring has shown quite clearly that there has been no recent difficulty in achieving the 40% brownfield target due to the lack of greenfield sites. This situation has been slightly rectified by the release of sites in 2008 and should continue to be monitored as LDP sites come forward. The Brownfield Urban Capacity Study concludes a further 5,000 – 8,500 units could be accommodated on brownfield sites in addition to effective housing land supply. Whilst there has been no recent problem achieving the target, with the supply of greenfield sites increasing it may be worth adding an “at least” to the target ensure a brownfield contribution in the longer term.

Each council has produced supplementary guidance that is broadly consistent with the structure plan, requiring briefs, masterplans and frameworks for appropriate developments. However, in Aberdeen the criteria is set at the same thresholds as for major developments; i.e. sites of 2ha or 50 units. In terms of density, Aberdeen have explicitly stated that 30 dpha is a net figure, whilst Aberdeenshire have made no such statement; this aspect of the target may require clarification.

In light of the HNDA, the strategic development plan will need to identify the rise in need and identify an appropriate policy response.

The structure plan target to ensure larger sites provide a mix of uses has been carried through into the LDPs with a high number of mixed use sites explicitly identified. Some masterplans and proposals are beginning to come forward reflecting this. There is no

evidence at this time that such mixed uses will affect the viability of sites or their attractiveness; quite the opposite.

### **3.7.5 *Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

Within this section there are a small number of issues that may simply require minor alterations for use in the SDP.

- A focus on the ability to increase the range and quality of housing and the residential environment in the RPAs;
- the target concerning delivery of brownfield units and amending this to require “at least” 40% of homes in Aberdeen to be delivered this way and
- the thresholds and density of development in the SGAs must be clarified as there is some divergence in the LDPs, clarification of a single best, or different approach in the two councils must be considered.

Whilst not an issue for the main issues report, the SDP may wish to be clearer with the awards that are most relevant to the north east in recognising new development. A few minor amendments have been suggested in this section. However, those relating to the delivery of regeneration and affordable housing being potentially the most significant.

## **3.8 Accessibility**

### **3.8.1 What approach was taken by the structure plan?**

In terms of transport issues and accessibility, the structure plan is very much supportive of and guided by the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The focus of the plan is on ensuring development occurs in places where there are clear opportunities to encourage people to use public transport, walk and cycle.

Transport was a key consideration in the development of the spatial strategy and the Accessibility section of the structure plan focuses on issues of accessibility, economy and environment. A number of major transport projects are also identified in the plan.

The plan recognises the environmental impacts of road transport and promotes development that encourages greater use of walking and cycling as more environmentally friendly modes of transport. It also recognises the role transport can play in developing a strong economy and providing better links.

The objective and targets of the structure plan in relation to accessibility are in line with the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy and the structure plan looks to the RTS for the detail in terms of transport issues.

### **4.8.2 What has changed since the structure plan was prepared?**

The key changes that have taken place in relation to transport and accessibility both nationally and in the North East since the structure plan was prepared are:

- the introduction of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and associated Delivery Plan;
- work to assess the cumulative impact of the structure plan on the region's transport network; and
- the publication of the Scottish Government's Cycling Action Plan for Scotland.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 created a statutory framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Scotland by setting an interim 42% reduction target for 2020 and an 80% reduction target for 2050. The transport sector accounts for about 26% of total Scottish emissions.

While all other sectors have seen a reduction in emissions from the baseline year (1990); transport emissions (including international aviation and shipping) have continued to rise. Meeting the challenging targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act will require a significant contribution from the transport sector. The Climate Change Act includes the following outcome in relation to transport: "Almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050 with significant progress by 2030 through wholesale adoption of electric cars and vans, and significant decarbonisation of rail by 2050."

The Climate Change Delivery Plan, also published in 2009, sets out the high level measures required in each sector to meet the targets set out in the Act. This delivery plan identifies a number of measures in the transport sector which will contribute to delivery of the targets and which are relevant to the Strategic Development Plan. These include:

- improvements in energy efficiency of petrol and diesel vehicles, and increasing uptake of hybrid and electric engines with supporting infrastructure;
- smarter measures including reduced travel and modal shift to less carbon-intensive modes of transport e.g. public transport and active travel;
- demand management including road space reallocation;
- changes to the pattern of development to reduce the need to travel; and
- sustainable biofuels.

Since the structure plan was prepared the SDPA has done a significant amount of work in partnership with Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Transport Scotland to consider the various changes in land use and identify the cumulative transport impacts associated with the scale and distribution of proposed development proposals.

The study identified a number of locations on the strategic transport network where improvements will likely be needed to accommodate the impacts associated with the development plans. Subsequent work has focussed on identifying how such interventions can be funded and delivered through supplementary guidance.

The structure plan highlighted a significant number of transport related projects in the 'putting the plan into practice' section. These projects and specific interventions were each included for the contribution they will make to facilitating development and promoting sustainable travel modes and modal shift. However, new strategic transport intervention areas have emerged from the cumulative study and these should find a home in the SDP via consultation in the main issues report.

The Scottish Government published its Cycling Action Plan for Scotland in June 2010. Currently 1% of journeys by Scottish residents are made by bicycle and this action plan sets a target to see this increase tenfold to 10% by 2020. This is a very ambitious target and there is uncertainty over whether it can be achieved. It does however emphasize the step change that is expected in the levels of cycling across the country in the coming years. Land use plans will have a significant role to play in this by ensuring that developments are located in areas and with the infrastructure that enables cycling to be an attractive option.

### **3.8.3 What is the current baseline position for the targets?**

The Accessibility section of the structure plan contains three targets. These targets and their current baseline positions are detailed below.

#### **ACC/T1 – Accessibility**

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

Accessibility data is collected that indicates proximity of households to bus stops in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. In the first baseline monitoring report this was reported as set out in Table 34 below. At this point there is no more up to date information from the Scottish Household Survey.

**Table 34: Percentage of residents within stated distance of a bus stop**

	Up to 3 mins	4 to 6 mins	7 to 13 mins	14 mins +	No bus service	Don't know
Aberdeen City	63	28	6.4	1.1	0	1.4
Aberdeenshire	47.1	23.7	11.4	13.6	3	1.3

Source: [Scottish Household Survey 2007](#)

Table 35 shows how the population within 1.6km and 5km of certain railway stations has increased in many cases. The re-opening of Laurencekirk Station is the most significant entry, but also the overall increases in population within 1.6 and 5km of a station.

**Table 35: Population within set distances of railway stations**

Station	2001		2009	
	Population within 1.6km	Population within 5km	Population within 1.6km	Population within 5km
Aberdeen	43,321	163,789	46,557	165,390
Dyce	5,813	22,825	5,541	22,691
Huntly	4,627	5,175	4,536	5,169
Insch	1,725	3,120	2,203	3,859
Inverurie	8,923	12,247	8,622	12,869
Laurencekirk			2,725	3,424
Portlethen	7,160	13,303	7,767	13,872
Stonehaven	9,981	10,527	11,045	11,664
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,550</b>	<b>230,986</b>	<b>88,996</b>	<b>238,938</b>

Source: population at datazone level from SNS

In terms of the final indicator under this heading, there has been an update in the most recent publication of Scottish Transport Statistics; this shows a slight increase in car ownership across the area.

**Table 36: Car ownership**

	Private cars		Car ownership per head of population	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Aberdeen City	91,000	91,200	0.41	0.43
Aberdeenshire	133,900	134,900	0.52	0.55
Aberdeen City & Shire	224,900	226,100	0.47	0.49

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2010

### ACC/T2 – Travel Plans

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

There is currently no data to monitor this target. Whilst it is known that 15 travel plans have been submitted for Aberdeen and five for Aberdeenshire, there is no basis for requiring these to be subject to ongoing monitoring.

### ACC/T3 – Reducing car use

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

Although there has been a more recent edition of the Scottish Household Travel Diary in 2009, the data split by local authority level is not yet available. The baseline result is therefore still shown in Table 37 below.

**Table 37: Modal split for all journeys 2007-08**

	Aberdeen City (%)	Aberdeenshire (%)	Aberdeen City and Shire (%)
Walking	26	14	20
Driver (car / van)	49	67	58
Passenger (car / van)	10	13	11
Bicycle	1	1	1
Bus	11	3	7
Taxi	1	0	0
Rail	1	0	1
Other (motorbike etc)	2	1	1

Source: [Scottish Household Survey: Travel Diary 2007/2008](#)

#### **3.8.4 Is progress being made?**

There is very little update from the baseline data at present and as such it is not possible to ascertain if progress is being made at this time.

#### **3.8.5 Are the objectives, targets, actions and monitoring arrangements still appropriate?**

The lack of updated data perhaps indicates the challenging nature of the monitoring arrangements that have been put in place for this section. A great deal of data is already gathered and Nestrans in particular publishes a significant amount of data annually under economy, accessibility, environment and spatial planning headings to monitor progress on the regional transport strategy. It is worth considering where useful secondary data can be utilised without compromising the monitoring arrangements of the plan.

Neither Aberdeen City nor Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy shows an appropriate accessibility target. However the RTS does contain one that combines distance to a bus stop with the frequency of the bus service. It is suggested that this indicator be used in future in order to align with RTS monitoring and as it is the more commonly reported format for this data in the Scottish Household Survey and Bus and Coach Statistics. This proposed indicator essentially shows the same information as previously but it is grouped in a slightly different way. It is also made more relevant by the inclusion of bus service frequency. The baseline data for 2007/08 can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Transport-Travel/LA0708> and is published every two years.

The rail accessibility data is valuable given the emphasis in the structure plan on modal shift and the spatial strategy, which focuses significant levels of development on corridors where rail is a viable option. Despite a small number of reductions, the overall trend is for higher proportions of the population to have access to a rail station.

Car ownership – this indicator remains relevant, however it would perhaps be more relevant to show car ownership per household, rather than per head of population.

It has not been possible to identify a baseline for the second target, but it is suggested that the i-trace system will provide some meaningful data on the number and implementation of travel plans. There has been some limited use of this system since the baseline report, but still insufficient to give meaningful data, especially for the same sites over time. If it were possible to enforce monitoring of travel plans annually or biennially this would assist greatly.

This indicator is still relevant and should continue to be included. However, if the SDP ends up addressing the issue of new technologies and low carbon vehicles, consideration could be given to adding a target relating to the percentage of the vehicle fleet made up of zero or low carbon vehicles and the number of electric charging points in each council area.

### **3.8.6 *Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

In summary, the overall approach to accessibility and transport remains valid, but the monitoring arrangements require some considerable revision if they are to going to be successful in checking progress. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the strategic transport intervention areas that have been identified from the cumulative impact study as SDP proposals. The other area of significance could be the requirement to monitor travel plans over time to make them more meaningful documents and behaviour changing tools.

Beyond this, changes are less significant and require less discussion. The SDP will have to consider aligning some of the indicators with the regional transport strategy where appropriate and determining where new over secondary data is required. The inclusion of monitoring of low carbon vehicles and charging infrastructure should be considered.

### **3.9 Putting this plan into practice (p.25-26)**

#### **3.9.1 *What approach was taken by the structure plan?***

The structure plan has a clear structure, from the introduction and national policy, through to the vision and aims, the spatial strategy, leading on to the six objectives, which are accompanied by targets and monitoring arrangements. The concluding section 'putting this plan into practice' is therefore in a logical place in the structure plan towards the end.

The section aims to explain how the aspirations and targets will be achieved, whether through processes and outputs (local development plans, supplementary guidance, an action programme, environmental assessment etc.), or actions (partnership working or securing higher developer contributions).

A number of regionally significant proposals are also included, such as several transport interventions, as well as other public and private sector promoted projects. Most proposals are very specific, whilst others, such as "better links between Aberdeen and the communities on the north coast of Aberdeenshire" and "major proposals to regenerate some of the city region's most disadvantaged areas" are less well defined. Finally, the need for monitoring and what this will entail is set out along with the requirement to prepare a strategic development plan by 2013.

The section does provide some useful points of clarification, however, the most useful paragraphs are para. 5.5 and 5.8 which have been relied upon in implementing the structure plan and the majority of the proposals, which are regionally significant.

Other paragraphs are arguably of less value; this applies in particular to para. 5.1, 5.6, 5.9, whilst para. 5.10-5.12 could be shortened. Para. 5.13 will clearly not be required in the strategic development plan, although it may look forward to the next SDP post - 2013.

#### **3.9.2 *What has changed since the structure plan was prepared in terms of context and background information?***

Since the structure plan was prepared, the most significant factor in putting the plan into practice has been the publication of the Proposed LDPs in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. These plans are vital in building on the framework the structure plan has set and the experience of these teams in implementing the plan is captured elsewhere.

In addition, an action programme has been published and regularly updated. These documents provide a very useful measure of progress on specific targets by objective and the relevant sections of this report recommend where changes may be required.

The evidence base has been improved, particularly on likely transport requirements. In addition, the experience of planning and other colleagues in each council attempting to implement the structure plan is now largely known.

A great deal of work has also been done through the Future Infrastructure Requirements for Services (FIRS) groups within each council. Based on preferred sites in the Proposed LDPs, this has given a much clearer indication of the scale of developer

contributions required for a whole range of infrastructure, which has allowed developers greater certainty on the viability of sites.

However, there are a number of issues to resolve to determine the most effective and equitable means of securing contributions and delivery of necessary infrastructure to allow development to proceed. These range from the relatively simple requirements that have been in place for a number of years, to new requirements for contributions towards strategic transport interventions. Work is also underway in both councils to explore innovative mechanisms for securing funding from other sources, i.e. tax incremental funding, an arms length development company and upfront funding. Each of these potential sources must be examined fully to overcome public and private sector funding deficits in the short to medium term.

### **3.9.3 *What is the current baseline position and is progress being made?***

This section of the structure plan has been monitored largely through the work done on the action programme and has not featured in the baseline monitoring report. As a result, apart from progress with the LDPs and appraisal of the proposals that can be found below, no other change in position is recorded.

### **3.9.4 *Are the proposals still appropriate? Should any be added or deleted?***

Given that the SDP will be approved in 2013-14 and have a five year shelf-life, it would appear reasonable to review the list of proposals to ensure that it is not dated by projects constructed or at an advanced stage.

The action programme has been closely monitoring the structure plan proposals and has up-to-date information on the progress of each. This shows that several projects are moving forward, such as:

- the Third Don Crossing;
- new park and rides sites;
- putting the Aberdeen airport masterplan into practice;
- the Energetica initiative;
- improving facilities at Peterhead Harbour;
- the new community stadium in Aberdeen;
- the new prison at Peterhead; and
- upgrades to the electricity grid.

The progress on these projects provides an opportunity consider their continuing inclusion in the next plan. However, there will be benefit in retaining these to demonstrate their importance until fully delivered.

Some proposals may have made significant progress, but are now subject to delay, others have simply not progressed as quickly as expected, these include:

- the AWPR
- dualling between Balmedie and Tipperty;
- improvements at Haudagain roundabout;
- replacing the Inveramsay bridge and further A96 improvements;
- road and rail improvements, such as Crossrail\*;
- better links between Aberdeen and the north coast communities\*;
- involvement in university, college and research initiatives\*;
- the city centre masterplan, including pedestrianisation of Union St.;

- activity in regeneration priority areas\*; and
- upgrading of Peterhead power station.

These projects should largely remain; however, those marked with a \* should be considered for explicit coverage in the relevant section of the plan.

The third category of proposal must be where new or recently emerged projects have come to the attention of the SDPA, or where an aspirational and potentially regionally significant project can be identified. In an attempt to identify these, the SDPA has been engaging with key agencies, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders. From these discussions, the following initial list has been compiled, although this is not exhaustive and could be added to:

- offshore supergrid connected to Scandinavia and mainland Europe;
- carbon capture and storage facilities (Peterhead (Boddam) and St Fergus) and associated infrastructure;
- offshore renewables;
- national renewables infrastructure plan (NRIP) as it applies to the north-east; and
- transport interventions identified through cumulative transport assessment.

These projects should be considered for inclusion in the revised list of proposals. It may also be worth considering presentation of the projects depending on whether they are short, medium, long-term, or indeed whether they represent aspirational thinking at present.

### **3.9.5 *Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

In conclusion, it would be entirely valid to retain a section in the SDP on 'putting this plan into practice'. However, the form and content of this could be revised taking account of the suggestions above and any cross-cutting issues raised in other sections. The main issue for this section must be a wider discussion on the delivery of sites, this requires a full examination of the key elements that affect site deliverability and opportunities for funding from within and outside the councils.

There are also links with the delivery of strategic transport interventions mentioned in the previous section. There is a need to review the list of proposals, this may result in some being removed, some being included in the relevant sections within the new plan and additional projects being added. A format to present the projects according to timescales etc. could also be devised.

Changes of a more minor nature relate to the paragraphs identified in section 3.9.1 and these could be removed or shortened.

### 3.10 Schedule 1 (p.27)

#### 3.10.1 What is the current housing land supply (1 January 2011)?

Table 38 shows the extent of the effective and constrained housing land supply for the two housing market areas (HMAs) as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011.

**Table 38: Effective and Constrained Housing Land Supply 2011**

	5 Year Effective	Post 5 yr Effective	Constrained
Aberdeen City	1,833	556	1,756
Aberdeenshire (part)	2,957	732	2,935
Aberdeen HMA Small Sites	455	-	-
<b>Aberdeen HMA</b>	<b>5,245</b>	<b>1,288</b>	<b>4,691</b>
Aberdeenshire Rural HMA	2,576	1,537	2,243
Rural HMA Small Sites	745	-	-
<b>Rural HMA</b>	<b>3,321</b>	<b>1,537</b>	<b>2,243</b>
<b>Structure Plan Area</b>	<b>8,566</b>	<b>2,825</b>	<b>6,934</b>

*Source: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2011*

Table 39 shows that there is 2.7 years worth of effective land supply in the Aberdeen HMA and 5.2 years of effective supply in the Rural HMA when compared with the structure plan housing requirement.

**Table 39: Housing Requirement and Housing Land Supply 2011**

	Structure Plan Housing Requirement	Effective Supply 2010	Number of Years Supply
<b>Aberdeen HMA</b>	9,887	5,245	2.7
<b>Rural HMA</b>	3,184	3,321	5.2

*Source: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2011*

#### 3.10.2 How and why has the land supply changed since 2007?

Table 40 shows the change in the land supply since 2007. There has been a 7% decrease in the effective housing land supply across the structure plan area. This is made up of a 20% decrease in the Aberdeen HMA (1,624 units) and an 18% increase in the Rural HMA (740 units).

In the Aberdeen HMA, 4,640 units have been built since 2007. New sites have entered the supply (windfall sites and, in 2011, some sites from the proposed Aberdeenshire LDP), but not in sufficient numbers to replace those completed resulting in a net decrease.

In the Rural HMA, the effective supply decreased steadily from 2007 to 2010, partly due to take up on sites but also as a result of increasing market uncertainty and a slowing of demand. In 2011 however, the effective supply increased by 17% as a result of the inclusion of some new sites from the proposed Aberdeenshire LDP.

Across the Structure Plan Area, the economic downturn since 2007 has inevitably had a significant impact on the housing market. From a housing land supply perspective, increased uncertainty has meant that many sites which had previously been expected to come forward within five to seven years have now moved into the constrained supply. Partly as a result of this, the constrained supply has increased in recent years.

**Table 40: Change in Effective and Constrained Land Supply by Structure Plan Area 2007- 11**

	Effective Supply*			Constrained Supply		
	2007	2011	Change 2007-2011	2007	2011	Change 2007-2011
<b>Brownfield</b>	1882	858	-1,024	463	1208	745
<b>Regeneration Areas</b>		324	324		42	42
<b>Greenfield</b>	1161	1,207	46	40	506	466
<b>Small Sites</b>		135	135			
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	<b>3,043</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>-519</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1756</b>	<b>1253</b>
<b>Huntly-Pitcaple</b>	365	225	-140	340	207	-133
<b>Inverurie-Blackburn</b>	1891	1,191	-700	0	329	329
<b>Portlethen-Stonehaven</b>	982	824	-158	0	1861	1861
<b>Drumlithie-Laurencekirk</b>	235	738	503	180	10	-170
<b>Peterhead-Hatton</b>	623	760	137	407	311	-96
<b>Ellon-Blackdog</b>	174	345	171	25	545	520
<b>Local Growth (AHMA)</b>	1802	1,329	-473	331	200	-131
<b>Local Growth (RHMA)</b>	2210	2,390	180	1737	1715	-22
<b>Small Sites (AHMA)</b>	265	320	55			
<b>Small Sites (RHMA)</b>	685	745	60			
<b>Aberdeenshire**</b>	<b>9232</b>	<b>8,867</b>	<b>-365</b>	<b>3020</b>	<b>5178</b>	<b>2158</b>
<b>AHMA</b>	<b>8157</b>	<b>6,533</b>	<b>-1624</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>4691</b>	<b>3832</b>
<b>RHMA**</b>	<b>4118</b>	<b>4,858</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>2664</b>	<b>2243</b>	<b>-421</b>
<b>City &amp; Shire</b>	<b>12,275</b>	<b>11,391</b>	<b>-884</b>	<b>3523</b>	<b>6934</b>	<b>3411</b>

\*Includes 5 year and Post 5 yr effective

\*\*2011 figures exclude CNPA

### 3.10.3 What allocations were made by the two LDPs against the allowances?

A summary of the allocations made by the Aberdeen Proposed LDP and the Aberdeenshire Proposed LDP against the Structure Plan allowances is given in Tables 41 and 42.

**Table 41: Aberdeen City Proposed LDP Housing Allocations**

Area	Period	Structure Plan Allowance	Proposed LDP Allocation
Brownfield	2007-2016	4,000	5,895-9,494
	2017-2023	3,000	-
	2024-2030	3,000	-
Regeneration Areas	2007-2016	500	1,106
	2017-2023	2,000	-
	2024-2030	2,500	-
Greenfield	2007-2016	12,000	11,993
	2017-2023	5,000	5,050
	2024-2030	4,000	3,440
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	<b>2007-2016</b>	<b>16,500</b>	<b>18,994-22,593</b>
	<b>2017-2023</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>5,050</b>
	<b>2024-2030</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>3,440</b>

Source: Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (September 2010)

In Aberdeen City, land is identified for all three periods on greenfield sites with the requirement met in full for the first two periods and land identified to meet most of the requirement in the period 2024-2030. Potential development on brownfield sites is given as a range dependent on final site density. Brownfield sites (including those in regeneration areas) are identified for the first period only although the numbers identified are well in excess of the structure plan requirement so will be assumed to also meet some of the requirement for the second period. Aberdeen City Council will continue to monitor progress on regeneration plans and an allowance for development has been made in the Aberdeen Proposed LDP.

**Table 42: Aberdeenshire Proposed LDP Housing Allocations**

Area	Period	Structure Plan Allowance	Proposed LDP Allocation
Huntly-Pitcaple	2007 to 2016	300	302
	2017-2023	500	496
Inverurie-Blackburn	2007 to 2016	1,000	1,000
	2017-2023	1,500	1,500
Portlethen-Stonehaven	2007 to 2016	2,200	2,200
	2017-2023	2,400	2,400
South of Drumlithie-Laurencekirk	2007 to 2016	500	500
	2017-2023	400	400
Peterhead-Hatton	2007 to 2016	800	800
	2017-2023	800	800
Ellon-Blackdog	2007 to 2016	800	810
	2017-2023	1,500	1,510
Local Growth (AHMA)	2007 to 2016	1,000	1,000
	2017-2023	1,350	1,354
Local Growth (RHMA)	2007 to 2016	4,200	3,238
	2017-2023	4,000	3,269
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	2007 to 2016	10,800	9,850
	2017-2023	12,450	11,729

*Source: Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan (July 2010) Schedule 1 New Housing Land Allocations*

In Aberdeenshire, the Proposed LDP allocations have been made for the period up to 2023; therefore no allocations for the period 2024-2030 are shown. The allocations given meet the structure plan requirement for all six SGAs and for Local Growth in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA). In the Rural HMA, the allocations made are slightly below the structure plan requirement. The remainder will be made up of houses built on small sites in the countryside which account for a significant proportion of house completions in the Rural HMA.

### **3.10.4 What progress has been made in releasing these sites?**

Both council's Proposed LDPs have been submitted to Scottish Ministers for Examination with recommendations expected by the end of 2011 with the final plans to be published in 2012.

Some sites have already entered the five year effective housing land supply with the remaining allocations expected to enter the supply in 2012. The two authorities are continuing to work closely with developers and infrastructure providers on Action Programmes to ensure that potential constraints to sites coming on stream are resolved

and sites can start delivering housing units as soon as possible after consents are granted.

### ***3.10.5 What amendments might be required to meet expected housing requirements?***

The two authorities produced new population and household forecasts in late 2010 based on the GROs 2008 based projections for the period 2008-2033 and an updated housing requirement. This formed part of the 2011 update of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

The requirement is similar but slightly lower than the structure plan housing requirement over the same period. The structure plan housing allowances exceed the existing housing requirement (72,000 units over the period to 2030 compared with a requirement of 56,304) so there will not be a need to increase the allowances in order to meet the new requirement.

Time periods will need to be revised to give 2011 as the base year. The most recent population and household forecasts (and the housing requirement derived from these) cover the period up to 2033 so allowances should be made at least up until then. Alternatively it could be extended to 2035 to give a full 25 year period although the forecast requirement would then have to be estimated for the last two years. Within this period, three phases would have to be identified.

### ***3.10.6 Matters to be considered in the Strategic Development Plan***

No significant changes to Schedule 1 are considered necessary, although it will need to be updated to reflect the current land supply and amendments made to the time periods for the three phases of the plan.

## Appendix A – Extracts from Structure Plan 2009

### Vision

“By 2030, Aberdeen City and Shire will be an even more attractive, prosperous 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 creating a more inclusive society.”

### Aims

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; and
- 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.

### Policy

In assessing development proposals, we will balance the importance given to each aim in coming to a decision, taking into account the spatial strategy, objectives and targets of the plan.

## Appendix B - Statutory requirements regarding structure plan / strategic development plan visions

### 7 Form and content of strategic development plan

(1) A strategic development plan is a plan in which is set out—

(a) a vision statement, being a broad statement of the strategic development planning authority's views as to how the development of the strategic development plan area could and should occur and as to the matters (including the matters mentioned in subsection (4)) which might be expected to affect that development.

*Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006*

### FORM AND CONTENT

13. Section 7(1) of the Act requires SDPs to contain:

(1) A vision statement. This is a broad statement of how the development of the area could and should occur and the matters that might be expected to affect that development, including:

- the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area;
- the principal land uses in the area;
- the size, composition and distribution of population in the area;
- the infrastructure of the area (including communications, transport and drainage systems and systems for the supply of water and energy);
- how that infrastructure is used; and
- any anticipated change in these matters.

14. Vision statements should provide a realistic expression of what the plan area could be like in 20 years time and a useful springboard for the spatial strategy.

*Circular 1/2009: Development Planning*

## Appendix C – Proposed visions from the other SDPAs

**SESplan proposed vision:**

The South East of Scotland will be a sustainable and competitive City region with residents benefiting from economic prosperity in a high quality place.

**TAYplan proposed Vision:**

Our vision is of TAYplan as a sustainable region which is beautiful, vibrant, clean and green where the regeneration and growth of Dundee city region has made it a great place for people to live, work, invest and visit that does not create an unacceptable burden on the planet.

**Glasgow and the Clyde Valley proposed vision:**

The Glasgow city-region to be one of the most dynamic, economically competitive and socially cohesive city-regions in Europe. A city-region which prospers and through effective public and private sector partnership working at all levels, includes all of its people in its success. A place of quality where people choose to live.

*Source: Main Issues Reports*

## Appendix D – Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council Single Outcome Agreements

National priority	Regional profile from Aberdeen City and Shire Agreements
<b>Wealthier</b>	Areas being measured in the SOA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ transport</li> <li>▪ support for business</li> <li>▪ attracting skilled people</li> <li>▪ planning process</li> <li>▪ tourism</li> <li>▪ quality of life</li> </ul>
<b>Greener</b>	Areas being measured in the SOA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ transport</li> <li>▪ waste management</li> <li>▪ global footprint</li> </ul>
<b>Safer</b>	Areas being measured in the SOA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ child protection</li> <li>▪ substance misuse</li> <li>▪ crime</li> </ul>
<b>Healthier</b>	Areas being measured in the SOA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ dental health / early years</li> <li>▪ healthy weight / early years</li> <li>▪ substance misuse</li> <li>▪ mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>▪ smoking</li> <li>▪ breastfeeding / early years</li> <li>▪ health inequalities / anticipatory care</li> <li>▪ responding to the ageing population / shifting the balance of care</li> </ul>

## Appendix E – Economic growth data

### Economic Activity and Employment Rates

The [Annual Population Survey 2009](#) shows there are 248,100 economically active people in Aberdeen City and Shire. The economic activity rate is 82.1% which is higher than the Scottish average of 77%. Within the SDPA, the Aberdeenshire figure is 82.9 and Aberdeen City is 81.2%. The Scottish average is 77%.

The economic downturn which began in 2008 is unlikely to have had an impact on economic activity rates, as people may move from employment to unemployment but are not likely to have become economically inactive.

There are 240,200 people employed in the area (year up to March 2010), giving an employment rate of 79.4%. This breaks down to 79.8% in Aberdeenshire and 79.1% in Aberdeen City. The Scottish average is 71.2%.

The latest official report on this '[Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2009](#)' (July 2010) compares the 2008 to the 2009 data. It showed that of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland, the employment rate fell in 25 of those. Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City were amongst the 7 local authorities that experienced a growth in their employment rates between 2008 and 2009. Using the latest data available for the year up to March 2010 (which has not yet been compiled in an annual report format) it is evident that employment rates have fallen in the period across Scotland and this has affected Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire as well, although not the same extent as the Scottish average.

### Job Distribution and Sectoral Composition

The most recent data available on the job distribution and sectoral composition of the Aberdeen City and Shire economy is available from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) 2008 (published in 2010). This does not provide information on the current situation, but can provide context and a baseline for future monitoring.

According to the ABI 2008 there are 176,163 jobs in Aberdeen City and 86,095 in Aberdeenshire. From 1999 to 2008 the number of jobs in Aberdeen City and Shire increased by 10.1%. In Aberdeenshire the total increased by 16% and in Aberdeen City a more modest 7.2%. In comparison, the number of jobs in Scotland grew in this period by 12%.

**Table 1: Sectoral Composition by area in 2008**

Industry	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen City and Shire	Scotland
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	92	2,077	2169	40,992
Manufacturing	12,053	12,039	24092	210,454
Utilities Mining and Quarrying	20,322	3,106	23428	42,615
Construction	6,430	7,750	14180	143,983
Wholesale and retail trade	20,890	15,051	35941	364,850
Hotels and catering	11,799	5,474	17273	173,042
Transport storage and communications	9,432	3,926	13358	123,499
Financial and business	44,509	12,233	56742	462,641

services				
Public services, admin and defence	17,747	10,451	28198	347,656
Health and social work	26,535	9,595	36130	379,336
Other service activities	6,354	4,393	10747	131,375
Total	176,163	86,095	262258	2,420,443

Source: ABI (2010)

## Unemployment

The latest unemployment statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2009-10 shows an average 3.0% unemployment rate across the SDPA area (International Labour Organisation rate), compared to Scottish average of 7.4%. This has increased slightly against the same period one year before. According to the survey, Aberdeenshire had an unemployment rate of 3.8% compared to Aberdeen City 2.4%.

The claimant count figures for June 2011 are Aberdeen City and Shire 1.9% compared to a Scottish average of 4.1%. This is up from 1.7% in August 2009 and is comparable in terms of proportional increase to the Scottish 2009 average of 4%. Proportionally, the SDPA and Scottish levels have stabilised and only slightly increased after both nearly doubled between 2008 and 2009. In contrast to the APS figures, Aberdeen City JSA rate of 2.3% remains above Aberdeenshire at 1.5%.

The differing recent indicators on Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City unemployment rates may be a 'blip' or may reflect an emerging trend of recent closures in Aberdeenshire's manufacturing sector.

## Cities Outlook 2011

The Centre for Cities published 'Cities Outlook 2011' in January 2011. This study explores the impact of the recession and shape of recovery across 63 UK cities. For Scotland it gathers data at the local authority level, but as it has a city focus, only provides data for Aberdeen.

Aberdeen features in several tables, showing public sector job losses expected to be amongst the smallest measured against the percentage of all jobs. With regard to employment generally, Aberdeen holds joint 2<sup>nd</sup> position (78.5%) and top position for the smallest percentage increase in unemployment claimants (Feb. '08 – June '09) and second smallest (Mar. '10 – Nov. '10). Aberdeen also has the 7<sup>th</sup> smallest welfare bill per capita.

The report further highlights that Aberdeen is one of only two cities in the UK with a positive 'churn rate' and indeed holds the number one spot. This is a calculation of the difference between business births and deaths as a percentage of total business stocks and means that more businesses were created than lost in 2009. Aberdeen is in fourth position, with regard to qualifications and 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of wages, also registering fourth position in earnings growth (2006-2010).

In summary, the report concludes that Aberdeen holds the number one position for cities with the highest potential to grow. This is based on an assessment of the following factors:

- Claimant count (Nov. '10)
- Employment rate (July '09 – June '10)

- Potential public sector job losses by 2014-15
- Residents with high level qualifications (2009)
- Business stock per 10,000 population (2009)

### Productivity

The most recent data detailing the productivity of the Aberdeen City and Shire economy published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is for 2008. Data is available at the NUTS2 (sub-regional) and NUTS3 (local) level, allowing direct comparison with other Scottish regions and areas. Although data is available for all 24 local areas, only the cities are included below.

This shows that the north-east (which comprises Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire) had a Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of £27,388. This is compared to £20,031 for Scotland as a whole and ahead of the three other NUTS2 regions. Edinburgh and Glasgow are subsumed within the wider Eastern Scotland and South Western Scotland areas. These areas have high levels of in commuting and as a result have inflated levels of productivity compared with areas that are net exporters of labour.

**Table 2: Headline GVA per head (2009)**

<b>NUTS1 - regional</b>	<b>SCOTLAND £20,031</b>			
<b>NUTS2 - sub-regional</b>	N.E. Scotland £27,388	E. Scotland £21,061	S.W. Scotland £18,587	H & I Scotland £15,426
<b>NUTS3 - local</b>	Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire £27,388	Angus & Dundee £17,909	Glasgow City £28,906	
<b>NUTS3 - local</b>		Edinburgh City £34,562		

Source: ONS

Overall, Scottish GVA was £103.5 billion in 2008, with almost £12.4 billion of this generated in Aberdeen City and Shire. GVA per head in Aberdeen City and Shire was 27% above the UK average in 2009 and north-east Scotland was the only one of the 133 UK sub-regions to record a growth in GVA.

**Table 3: Headline GVA - £ million (2009)**

<b>NUTS1 - regional</b>	<b>SCOTLAND £103,532</b>			
<b>NUTS2 - sub-regional</b>	N.E. Scotland £12,376	E. Scotland £41,691	S.W. Scotland £42,583	H & I Scotland £6,883
<b>NUTS3 - local</b>	Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire £12,376	Angus & Dundee £4,527	Glasgow City £16,888	
<b>NUTS3 - local</b>		Edinburgh City £16,301		

Source: ONS

#### Notes on GVA calculations

1. ONS Regional GVA estimates are based on a different methodology from the Scottish GDP index, and so are not entirely comparable. There is also a time lag of a year.
2. GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom.
3. GVA is used in the estimation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is a key indicator of the state of the whole economy. In the UK, three theoretical approaches are used to estimate GDP: 'production', 'income' and 'expenditure'. When using the production or income approaches, the contribution to the economy of each industry or sector is measured using GVA.
4. Measurement of GVA excludes UK Continental Shelf activity

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