Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2029

Evidence Report
September 2026

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Aberdeen –

Part of the Scottish Cities Alliance



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1. Introduction

1.1 Aberdeen City Council has started the production of its next Local Development Plan (LDP) for the city. This will be the fourth Local Development Plan for Aberdeen, but the first LDP produced under new processes for plan-making set out by the Scottish Government in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD314).

1.2 Aberdeen City is facing challenging pressures to balance the needs and demands of economic growth, whilst adapting and mitigating against the effects of climate change and addressing growing inequalities. The next LDP must help address these challenges. The LDP will set out a Spatial Strategy and a policy framework to help guide and shape future development and change, whilst also enabling greater climate and environmental resilience and protecting and enhancing our high quality natural, built and historic environments.

1.3 The next Local Development Plan will build on, and ultimately replace, the extant Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044), and will be prepared in the context of other Aberdeen City Council plans and strategies, such as our Local Outcome Improvement Plan (CD043) and Locality Plans (CD165, CD166, CD167). National policies included in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (CD001) will not be repeated in the new LDP, and the Plan will be focused on providing policies and guidance that reflect local issues and context.

What is an Evidence Report?

1.4 This Evidence Report, the first stage in new Plan production, has been prepared in accordance with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD314), the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended (CD315), the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (CD022), National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023) (CD001) and the Scottish Government Local Development Planning Guidance (2023) (CD316).

1.5 The Evidence Report aims to ensure that the next LDP is robust, well-informed, and aligned with national and regional planning frameworks. The purpose of the Evidence Report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the data, information, and strategies that will inform the preparation of the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen. It is worth noting however, that evidence available here reflects a snapshot in time – the evidence may change between the time the Evidence Report is submitted to Gatecheck, and the time of preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan.

1.6 Aberdeen City Council agreed the content of the Evidence Report and gave approval to submit to the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) for Gatecheck at its meeting on 02 July 2025. The Evidence Report was subsequently submitted to the DPEA on 31 July 2025.

1.7 The Gatecheck decision was issued by the DPEA on 23 October 2025. The Reporter's assessment was that the Evidence Report contains extensive and relevant information, and demonstrates widespread engagement and consultation. However, they found that evidence on some fundamental matters was either missing or insufficiently explained, and as such retuned the Evidence Report on the basis that it does not contain sufficient information to enable preparation of the next local development plan.

1.8 In particular, the Reporter found the Evidence Report submission was required to provide fuller explanation on the Local Housing Land Requirement. In addition information on infrastructure capacity and condition in relation to transport, education and healthcare, and developer obligations was also needed.

1.9 The evidence provided in the remaining topics was deemed to be generally sufficient. The Reporter did note that as the Evidence Report was being returned, updated information could also be provided on information gaps and some general issues.

1.10 The Reporter's assessment report contained the detailed reasons for return and set out a list of recommendations for improvement. Since receipt of the Reporter's Recommendations, further guidance on preparing an Evidence Report has also been produced by the Scottish Government. A revised Evidence Report has therefore been prepared to address the Reporter's Recommendations and to take account of the updated Scottish Government guidance. Table 1.1 sets out the further detail with respect to these updates, and any consequential changes made to the Evidence Report in light of the Reporter's Recommendations. A change log is also provided at Appendix B which outlines a finer grain of detail on the changes.

1.11 **An evidence deadline of 30 July 2026 has been set for the updated information in the resubmission. As a result, any updated or new evidence published after this date has not been included in the revised Evidence Report, but may be used to inform the next stages of local development plan preparation. Where there have been no Reporter's Recommendations or consequential changes to a Chapter or the evidence contained within, the information within the Evidence Report remains as it was for the original submission in July 2025. This approach was agreed with the DPEA at a meeting on 19 February 2026.**

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
Core Recommendations	Provide an indicative LHLR that is up-to-date and reflects the confirmed position of the planning authority, as set out in the latest Local Housing Strategy.	Chapter 9 provides an up-to-date indicative LHLR based on the 2025 Local Housing Strategy.
Core Recommendations	Provide a transparent and robust rationale for the indicative LHLR, clearly explaining how it has been derived.	Chapter 9 has been amended to outline the data used to determine the LHLR. This includes the HNDA, HLA, LHS and other evidence based on site delivery.
Core Recommendations	Clarify how wider housing needs have been considered in setting the LHLR.	Additional text has been added to Chapter 9 outlining wider housing needs, addressing wheelchair accessible homes, ineffective housing stock, second homes, and vacant properties. The impact of these on how the LHLR has been considered is also outlined.
Core Recommendations	Present an analysis of housing delivery, including factors likely to affect future delivery rates.	Chapter 9 has been modified to include text on factors likely to affect future delivery, including past delivery and future capacity. Economic and local factors have also been outlined.
Core Recommendations	Summarise stakeholder views and identify any agreements or disputes relating to the LHLR.	Text has been updated in Chapter 9 Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statement of Agreement / Disagreement. This outlines broad support from the housebuilding and development industry in the revised LHLR.
Core Recommendations	Present baseline data on the capacity, condition and deliverability of infrastructure relating to transport, education, and healthcare.	Chapter 10 has been updated to include information on capacity, condition and deliverability of infrastructure relating to education and healthcare. Chapter 11 has been updated to include information on capacity, condition and deliverability of infrastructure relating to transport.
Core Recommendations	Link the assessment of infrastructure capacity directly to the indicative LHLR, in support of an infrastructure first approach.	Chapter 9 has been updated to include text on the Future Housing Spatial Strategy which includes an approach to infrastructure. Chapter 10 has included text linking infrastructure capacity to the indicative LHLR.

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
Core Recommendations	Identify infrastructure delivery challenges and provide supporting evidence.	Text has been updated to in Chapter 10 to outlines the challenges and provide evidence.
Core Recommendations	Set out the current and intended future approach to school roll forecasting.	The current methodology and approach for school roll forecasting have been added to Chapter 10.
Core Recommendations	Explain how evidence on the conditions of schools will be applied going forward.	The School Estates Plan includes information on school condition and recommend actions. The School Estates Plan is updated annually. Chapter 10 has been updated to include text on this.
Core Recommendations	Provide an overview of cross-boundary infrastructure issues, including implications for delivery and developer contributions.	Chapter 10 outlines cross boundary issues relating to education and GP Practices, and discusses implications for delivery and developer contributions.
Core Recommendations	Clarify remaining work and stakeholder roles in completing the infrastructure evidence base.	Text has been added to Chapter 10 and 11 to note where further work and information from stakeholders and their roles are required.
Core Recommendations	Specify what additional evidence is required to support a developer contributions policy.	Text has been added to Chapter 10 and Chapter 11 on the current approach to developer contributions, and Chapter 3 provides an overview of the challenges in securing developer obligations. The forward planning regarding a review of the policy is noted within Chapters 10 and 11. Consequential changes have been made to Chapter 17.
Core Recommendations	Ensure clearer alignment between Topic 3 and other infrastructure-related content within the evidence report.	Text has been added to Chapter 9, 10 and 11 to outline the alignment between infrastructure, housing and sustainable transport.
Annex A: Housing	Confirmation that the evidence base is current and relevant, with specific reference to the most up-to-date HNDA, HLA and LHS. The applicable documents should be submitted or suitably hyperlinked, along with an explanation of their continued relevance.	Chapter 9 has been updated to include the Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030, the Local Housing Strategy Evidence base, and the Housing Land Audit 2025. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023-2042 as per the original submission is up to date. The relevance of these documents to determine the evidence base around housing and the local housing land requirement is continued with the chapter.

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
Annex A: Housing	A clear explanation of how the above have informed the indicative LHLR, including relevant extracts to support the analysis.	Chapter 9 has been amended to outline the data used to determine the Local Housing Land Requirement. This includes the HNDA, HLA, LHS and other evidence. Extracts have been included to support the final LHLR figure.
Annex A: Housing	How wider housing needs, including the implications of targets for wheelchair accessible homes and proposals to address ineffective housing stock, second homes, and vacant properties, has been considered in setting the indicative LHLR.	Additional text has been added to Chapter 9 outlining wider housing needs, addressing wheelchair accessible homes, ineffective housing stock, second homes, and vacant properties. The impact of these on the LHLR has been noted.
Annex A: Housing	A more detailed analysis of past delivery performance, including the causes of under-delivery and an assessment of future housing completions, with attention to factors likely to affect delivery.	Chapter 9 has been modified to include text on past delivery, causes of under-delivery and future capacity / completions. Economic and local factors have also been outlined.
Annex A: Housing	Evidence of stakeholder support for the indicative LHLR, summarising relevant correspondence and engagement with stakeholders directly involved.	Chapter 9 has been modified in respect of post submission engagement.
Annex A: Housing	A summary of any disputes, concerns, or differing views regarding the indicative LHLR, and how these have been considered and addressed in the Evidence Report.	Chapter 9 has been modified in respect of post submission engagement.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Education	Include a description of the methodology used for school roll projections and how they will be monitored and updated throughout the plan preparation process.	Text has been added to Chapter 10 of the Evidence Report which outlines the methodology, monitoring and updating process for school roll forecasts.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Education	Provide details of planned or programmed improvements to the school estate that may affect capacity.	Text has been added to Chapter 10 from the School Estates Plan. Further detail has been added to outline school condition and suitability, and the sufficiency and efficiency of the school estate. A RAG assessment has been completed for Primary and Secondary Schools.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Education	Identify potential interventions (e.g. catchment reviews, school extensions or new school proposals) and their implications for future capacity.	Text has been added to Chapter 10 outlining actions relating to mitigation to address capacity for each school. Implications for future capacity are also outlined.

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
Annex B: Infrastructure – Education	Outline intended collaboration with the council's education service and other stakeholders (including the adjacent authority) to agree on school capacity thresholds that may trigger developer contributions.	Text has been added to Chapter 10 outlining the current cross boundary infrastructure and capacity, and the school review catchment process being undertaken by Aberdeen City Council Education colleagues. The current developer contributions thresholds and calculation have been added to the paper. Commentary on the ongoing collaboration with the Council's Education service has also been added.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Education	Support any intention to seek developer contributions with robust evidence, in line with the requirements of Circular 3/2012.	A summary of the current approach for gathering developer contributions for primary and secondary education from the existing Supplementary Guidance has been added to Chapter 10. Text has also been added to highlight the approach to future obligations.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Education	Consider all education stages, including early years, primary, secondary, additional support needs, and further/higher education.	Further information has been added to Chapter 10 to consider all education stages noted.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Healthcare	Provide more detailed and up-to-date information on healthcare infrastructure, in collaboration with NHS Grampian.	Text has been added on monitoring capacity and a Red Amber Green assessment for NHS Grampian GP surgeries has been completed and added to Chapter 10.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Healthcare	Clarify the next steps for addressing any remaining evidence gaps related to new healthcare infrastructure provision.	Chapter 10 identifies remaining healthcare evidence gaps and gives indication of how they will be addressed.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Healthcare	Link any assessment of healthcare infrastructure to the indicative LHLR.	Chapter 10 has been amended to include an assessment of the Red Amber Green assessment for NHS Grampian assets and text outlining short-, medium- and long-term planning mitigation measures and implications for the spatial strategy and LHLR.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Healthcare	Consider how delivery challenges – such as potential funding constraints within NHS Grampian – might be addressed.	Chapter 10 now includes text on the background to NHS Grampian Infrastructure funding, and the timelines presented by the Scottish Government on health board strategic infrastructure plans, and new

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
		funding streams. Text had been added on mitigating capacity pressures.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Healthcare	Support any intention to seek developer contributions with robust evidence, in line with the requirements of Circular 3/2012, or explain how this will be addressed going forward.	A summary of the current approach for gathering developer contributions for healthcare from the existing Supplementary Guidance has been added to Chapter 10. Text has also been added to highlight the approach to future obligations.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Provide further detail on the latest positions of NESTRANS and Transport Scotland.	Chapter 11 has been modified in respect of post submission engagement.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Clarify the types of information to be gathered to inform the CTA.	Chapter 11 has been amended to include the types of information gathered to inform the CTA.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Offer a clearer explanation of known transport investment, associated timescales, and constraints.	Known transport investments for differing transport infrastructure are noted, with funding, timescales and implications outlined in Chapter 11.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Highlight the potential transport implications for the proposed plan, particularly in relation to identifying a deliverable housing land supply.	A new section has been added to Chapter 11 outlining the implications of transport, housing delivery and opportunities for housing allocations.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Explain cross-boundary transport issues and outline next steps.	Chapter 11 has been amended to include further text on cross-boundary issues and the CTA timetable has been outlined.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Support any intention to seek developer contributions with robust evidence, in line with the requirements of Circular 3/2012.	A summary of the current approach for gathering developer contributions from the existing Supplementary Guidance has been added to Chapter 11. Text has also been added to highlight the approach to future obligations.
Annex B: Infrastructure – Transport	Improve integration between the relevant topics on Delivery of Homes, Infrastructure, and Sustainable Transport to ensure a coherent and aligned approach.	Chapters 9, 10 and 11 have been rewritten to outline the cross cutting and interrelated nature of these topics.
Annex C - Chapter 3: Assessment of current local	General evaluation of outcomes, and challenges encountered in delivering housing and business space and on planning obligations	Further text has been added to Chapter 3 assessing the suitability of the plan's vision, the delivery of housing, employment, other opportunity sites and the city centre masterplan sites, and the

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
development plan		challenges faced in delivering these. An overview of the current planning obligation policy and supplementary guidance is outlined, with the challenges associated with these noted. Text has also been added to highlight the approach to future obligations.
Annex C - Chapter 4: Main issues arising from evidence / key areas of change	Summary of the current Delivery Programme as a critical component of the plan-making process and implications for the forthcoming Delivery Programme.	Chapter 4 has been amended to provide an overview of the current Delivery Programme and its relationship to the extant LDP, as well as any implications for the development of the forthcoming Delivery Programme.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	General - prioritise key areas of work planned for the next 12 months and consider the timing of the proposed plan's publication. Report on any work not concluded in time for the report's resubmission and how this will be completed.	Any work completed between initial submission to the Gate Check and resubmission has been included in the Evidence Report. The following areas have been updated: Business and Industry Land Audit 2025: Text in Chapter 8 has been updated from the Business and Industry Land Audit 2023, and subsequent text added into Chapter 3 for the assessment of the current Local Development Plan. Flood Risk Data: Text has been added to Chapter 12 outlining datasets on Flood Studies and Flood Schemes which were published on Aberdeen City Council's Open Spatial Data Portal in November 2025. Future healthcare service needs and interventions: Text has been added to Chapter 17 noting further information can be found within Chapter 10. Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy: Chapter 14 has been updated, with Chapter 10 updated as a consequential modification. The Local Heat and

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
		Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan was approved and has now been published. Monitoring of NPF4 Policy 27: Chapter 15 has been updated to reflect a review of all drive-throughs, takeaways, bookmakers and other gambling locations has been completed. The information was published on internal GIS systems. This data will be reviewed on an annual basis. Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future (YPYPYF): Chapter 8, 9,10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17 have been amended to include text explaining that the results of the consultation will provide implications for the Proposed Plan. Local Outcome Improvement Plan: Chapters 9, 11, 12, 16 and 17 have been updated to note the new Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This has led to consequential changes to Chapter 16 to update the Population Needs Assessment and remove the Full Outcomes Framework. A further consequential change is to Chapter 17, as the Locality Plans have also been updated. The information gap section has been updated as per the following. Tasks to be completed by the end of 2026 comprise: Article 4 Directions: Chapter 16 has been updated. Consultation is complete, with the recommendations being put to Committee in August 2026.

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
		Brownfield Urban Capacity Study: Text has been added to Chapters 8 and 9 to note the study will be completed by December 2026. Existing Site and Land Use Zonings Audit: Chapters 8, 9 and 15 have been amended to outline that this work will be completed by Autumn 2026. Housing Land Audit: Chapters 8 and 9 have been updated to note the Housing Land Audit 2026 is underway. Text has also been added on the most recently published Housing Land Audit 2025. Local Living GIS Tool: Text has been added to Chapter 16 noting consultants have been appointed. Retail Centre Health Checks: Chapter 15 text updated to reflect the progress and conclusion date. Business Land Proposal: Chapter 9 now includes reference to the proposal. Text in Chapter 8 has been amended. The information gap section has been updated as per the following. Tasks to be completed by the end of March 2027 comprise: Additional Support Need School capacities: Chapter 10 has been updated. Core Paths Plan: Chapter 10 and 11 have been updated to outline the timeline for the Core Paths

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
		Plan update, as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. Cumulative Transport Appraisal: Text has been added to Chapters 10 and 11, noting consultants have been appointed, and the project will be completed by February 2027. Developer Obligations update: Chapter 10 includes updated text to website changes providing information on Developer Obligations, and notes further planned work. Forestry and Woodland Strategy: Chapters 10, 13 and 17 have been updated to outline the timelines for the Forestry and Woodland Strategy, as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. Green Belt Review: Chapter 8 has been updated to outline the timeline for the Green Belt Review, as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. Natural Environment Strategy: Chapters 8, 10, 11, 13 and 17 have been updated to advise that an agreement with the James Hutton Institute is now in place for the production of the Natural Environment Strategy, and to provide the timeline for production. NHS Grampian Strategic Infrastructure Priorities: Chapter 10 has been updated with a timeline for NHS priorities. Chapter 17 has been amended as a consequential modification. Open Space Strategy: Chapters 10 and 17 have been updated to note the timeline for the Open

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
		Space Strategy, as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. Supported Accommodation Capacity: Chapter 10 has been updated to include text on supported accommodation. An information gap relating to capacity has been outlined. There are further information gaps that will be completed along the same timetable as the development of the Proposed Plan. Aberdeen City Blueprint: Chapter 10 has been updated to outline the result of the work with Scottish Water and SEPA. Air Quality Action Plan: Chapter 11 and 17 updates note the Air Quality Action Plan is being reviewed in the context of updated timings of the Local Transport Strategy. Local Transport Strategy: Chapters 10 and 11 have been updated to outline the revised draft Local Transport Strategy will be aligned with the timetable for producing the Proposed Plan.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Updated census and population data – the projections included in the evidence report should be sufficiently robust to support the indicative LHLR. Include any uncertainties and potential implications for the plan.	Census and population data has been updated in Chapter 17. This includes 2024 population projections. Chapter 9 has been updated to include this data with regard to the LHLR. Chapter 10 and chapter 4 have been updated as a consequential change.

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Natural Heritage Strategy - purpose of the strategy, the role of stakeholder involvement, and how it relates to Nature Networks, Open Space Strategy, Forest and Woodland Strategy, and Green Belt Review.	Text has been added to Chapter 13 providing further information on the Natural Heritage Strategy – now known as the Natural Environment Strategy. Text has been added to Chapter 8, 10, 11 and 17 referring readers to Chapter 13 for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Green Belt Review – to be undertaken prior to agreeing the proposed plan. The focus, as described in paragraphs 8.23 and 8.24, should ensure sufficient evidence will be in place to inform site selection and the spatial strategy.	Chapter 8 has been updated to confirm the Green Belt Review will be competed as part of the Natural Environment Strategy. The Strategy will be drafted by March 2027, before any agreement on the Proposed Plan.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Brownfield Urban Capacity Study – to be completed prior to agreeing the proposed plan. Importance in assessing the contribution of brownfield and infill sites to the LHLR.	Text has been added to Chapters 8 and 9 to note the study will be completed by December 2026. This will be prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Windfall sites – details on past windfall sites and how the proposed urban capacity study may inform future windfall assumptions.	Chapter 9 has been amended to provide further information on windfall development and the impact it has on the Local Housing Land Requirement. Text has been added to Chapter 8 noting the link between the windfall sites and the urban capacity study.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Community Facilities - baseline data on their current distribution, condition and capacity to inform any intention to seek developer contributions. Set out links with the Local Living GIS tool.	Community Facilities are noted in Chapter 10. Further text has been added to this chapter on distribution, condition and capacity, and the current and potential approach to developer obligations. Further text has also been added to Chapter 16 – Place, setting out links to the Local Living GIS tool.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy – whether the delay has any implications for the proposed plan.	Chapter 14 has been updated to summarise the approved Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Programme, and the implications of this for the Proposed Plan.

Reference and Issue	Reporter Recommendation	Update
		Chapter 10 has been updated as a consequential change, to note the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy has been approved.
Annex C - Information gaps – specific Topic Papers	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) – include the action points agreed with SEPA and its final position on the SFRA.	Chapter 12 has been updated to outline that flood defences and flood studies are mapped and are available as open data source. SEPA are satisfied with the SFRA.
Appendix 1: Site Assessment and SEA Checklist Appendix 2: Example of Effectiveness and Deliverability Checklist	How the checklists will be used as part of the site appraisal process, whether these are final versions, and how stakeholders have been involved in their development. How the site appraisal process will be integrated with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), whether any high-level constraint sifting process is proposed, and include SEA scoping responses.	Appendix 1 has been updated to provide further narrative on the use of the checklists and stakeholder involvement. The checklist has been updated to the final agreed version as per the SEA scoping responses. Text has been added to outline the integration process and provide explanation that all sites will be assessed.

Table 1.1 Reporter's Recommendations and Council Actions to update the Evidence Report

Approach to Producing the Evidence Report

1.12 The production of the Evidence Report has included the following key stages:

- **Engagement and Evidence Gathering**: gathering place based and locally relevant information, evidence and data for the City and its residents from a wide range of internal and external sources. This included an extensive Place Standard exercise to understand the lived experience of the city's residents and communities.
- **Topic Paper Preparation and Consultation**: collation of evidence sources into ten individual 'Topic Papers', early drafts of which were consulted on with both key agencies and Council services in February 2025, prior to a wider consultation exercise with key stakeholders and the general public between 24 March and 18 May 2025.
- **Evidence Report Preparation:** preparation of the Evidence Report, informed by both the background research and the feedback received through consultation.
- **Evidence Report Resubmission:** preparation of the final Evidence Report, informed by the Reporter's Recommendations on the previous version, new guidance produced by Scottish Government, and updated engagement with key stakeholders.

Engagement

1.13 Engagement with key stakeholders and the general public has formed a key part of Evidence Report preparation. Section 16B of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, prescribes a number of requirements for preparing the Evidence Report, including:

- That the views of the public, children and young people, and key agencies are sought.
- That the Evidence Report includes a statement on how the views of the public, children and young people, disabled people, gypsies and travellers, and community councils have been sought, and how these issues have been taken into account.
- That the Evidence Report sets out how the Council has invited local communities to prepare Local Place Plans, and what assistance it has provided.

1.14 The Engagement Statement (Section 7) and Engagement Tracker (Appendix 3) detail how the views of the groups specified in the Act have been sought and considered, as part of a wider engagement strategy informed by the Participation Statement in the Development Plan Scheme. This is described further in Section 7, however the main elements were as follows:

- **Corporate Dialogue and Input:** early engagement with senior managers across different Council services to collate place specific information to be included in the Evidence Report.
- **Early Draft Topic Paper Consultation:** early drafts of the evidence to be included in the Topic Papers were consulted on with key agencies, key stakeholders and Council services in February 2025. This consultation included a request for any additional evidence sources or relevant information for inclusion.
- **'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' Engagement Exercise:** working with a number of different Council services and community planning partners, a single 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' engagement exercise was held between 24 March and 18 May 2025. This exercise focused on people and place rather than different Council documents and strategies, and included specific children and young peoples' engagement materials. Individual sessions were also held with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community and disabled people, as well as representatives of community councils.
- **Draft Topic Paper Consultation:** public consultation on the ten draft topic papers, incorporating a view of the evidence on each topic, as well as an invitation to identify gaps or areas of dispute.
- **Workshops and Other Targeted Work with Key Stakeholders:** an ongoing series of sessions with key stakeholders such as Homes For Scotland, Transport Scotland, NHS Grampian and others to discuss the review of the Local Development Plan and relevant evidence for the preparation of the next Plan.
- **Additional Targeted Stakeholder Consultation:** targeted sessions with key stakeholders to inform the revised Evidence Report, informed by the Reporter's Recommendations on an earlier version.

1.15 The Planning Authority has also prepared a range of resources for communities regarding Local Place Plans, and is raising awareness for any community groups interested in preparing a Local Place Plan both via online information (such as at: Place Planning | Aberdeen City Council) and by attendance at groups such as the Community Council Forum.

1.16 NPF4 also underscores the need for local development plans and their delivery programmes to follow an integrated, infrastructure-first approach. The Aberdeen City Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS) Group was reestablished by the Council in early 2025 to aid the Evidence Report and LDP preparation. The group includes a broad range of representatives from across the Council, and infrastructure and service providers, including, but not limited to, NHS Grampian, the Integrated Joint Board, Scottish Water, SSEN Transmission and SSEN Distribution, Transport Scotland and SEPA. Regional partners such as Aberdeenshire Council and NESTRANS are also part of the group.

Structure and Content

1.17 In preparing the Evidence Report, the Council has had regard to the relevant legislation and national guidance. This report is therefore presented as a proportionate summary of the evidence, and not a compendium of all available information.

1.18 The report is contextualised in Section 2 by a broad profile of Aberdeen as a place, outlining the City in terms of demographics, the economy, environment and communities and health. Section 3 then evaluates whether the current adopted plan, the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023, has delivered on its outcomes and allocations. It identifies lessons to be learnt in the preparation of the next plan and considers the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

1.19 Section 4 summarises the main issues arising from the evidence, and key areas of change. It identifies a number of issues and demographic challenges to be addressed in the production of the next Local Development Plan. These very broadly include:

- Aberdeen's demographics, health and ageing population;
- Climate change challenges;
- The development of nature networks and review of the green belt;
- The composition and condition of the housing stock;
- The school estate;
- The transport system and other infrastructure, including energy requirements;
- The city's open spaces, biodiversity and historic environment;
- Aberdeen's cultural assets and the role of the city centre; and,
- Our economic wellbeing and prosperity.

1.20 Section 5 of the report outlines the Areas of Agreement / Dispute from the consultation responses. It summarises the key statements of agreement and dispute over the sufficiency of the evidence and the Council's response to these matters. Work has been ongoing to try and resolve as many of the disputes as practicable, however it has not been possible to resolve all disputes, and the reasons behind this are highlighted in this section. The areas of agreement and dispute relating to specific topics are also repeated in the individual Topic Papers (Sections 8 – 17).

1.21 Section 6 then sets out legislative requirements, and Section 7 details our Engagement Strategy. As noted above, the development of this Evidence Report has been aided by a collaborative approach to data and spatial gathering and analysis with Key Agencies and other stakeholders.

1.22 The 'Topic Papers' form the main content of the Evidence Report (Sections 8 – 17). Table 1.2 relates the Topic Paper sections to the National Planning Framework

(NPF4) policy themes, indicating how these themes have been grouped and covered.

Evidence Report Section	Topic Paper Heading	NPF4 Policy Area
8.	Spatial Strategy	Green Belt
		Brownfield, Vacant & Derelict Land & Empty Buildings
		Coastal Development
		Business & Industry
9.	Delivery of Homes	Quality Homes
10.	Infrastructure	Infrastructure First
		Blue & Green Infrastructure
		Digital Infrastructure
11.	Sustainable Transport	Sustainable Transport
12.	Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation	Climate & Nature Crisis
		Climate Mitigation & Adaptation
		Flood Risk & Water Management
13.	Nature and Biodiversity	Biodiversity
		Natural Places
		Forestry, Woodland & Trees
		Soils
14.	Energy and Resources	Energy
		Zero Waste
		Heating & Cooling
		Minerals
15.	Centres of Business and Culture	City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres
		Retail
		Tourism
		Culture & Creativity
16.	Place	Historic Assets & Places
		Design, Quality & Place
		Local Living & 20 Minute
17.	Wellbeing and Communities	Play, Recreation & Sport
		Health & Safety
		Community Wealth Building

Table 1.2: Topic Paper Areas and related National Planning Framework 4 Policies.

1.23 The structure of Sections 8 – 17 broadly follow the headings set out in the Template included within Annex G of the Scottish Government's Local Development Planning

Guidance (May 2023) (CD316), however an additional section to highlight the context provided by National Planning Framework 4 has also been included:

- Legislative Context
- National Planning Framework 4
- Links to Evidence
- Summary of Evidence
- Summary of Stakeholder Engagement
- Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan
- Statement of Agreement / Dispute

2. Aberdeen Today

The Population of Aberdeen

2.1 At 30 June 2026, Aberdeen City had an estimated population of 231,780, a population change of +1.06% from 2023. This equates to 4.2% of Scotland's total population. In terms of population size, Aberdeen City is the 8th largest local authority in Scotland. There were more females (118,231) than males (113,549) in the city with females making up 51.0% of the population.

2.2 The Aberdeen growth rate between 2023 and 2024 is higher than the Scottish average, which sits at 0.7%. The projected change is not consistent across all age groups. In Aberdeen City, decreases are projected in the 16-24 year olds age group (-8.93%). Increases are projected for the other age groups, with the largest increase being in the 75 years and over age group (25%). In terms of size, however, 25-44 years is projected to be the largest age group with the 75+ years group projected to remain the smallest group.



Figure 2.1 Children at Aberdeen Beach

2.3 Population change is driven by two main components: (1) natural change (births minus deaths) and (2) net migration (the sum of migration to/from Scotland and internal migration). It also includes other changes (e.g. changes in prisoner and armed forces population), although these tend to make up a smaller proportion of changes. In 2023-2024 Aberdeen had the 5th highest level of net migration of the 32 Scottish Council areas, with a net total of 2,680 people. This is a decrease from the 2022-2023 figure of 5,420 people. Migration to the city varies by age, with most movement being in younger adults. In 2023-2024, average positive net migration was highest in 15 to19 year olds (females 493, males 230) and the age group with the lowest level of net migration was 60-65.

2.4 A falling and ageing population poses a number of challenges to an area and can, without intervention, lead to economic decline. It can also increase pressure on public services by reducing the number of people able to fund those services, whilst also increasing the need for services and care, specifically for children and older people. Given that the falling birth rate has been a reality for a number of years, if the city's population is to be sustained or grow in the short and medium term, this must be driven by migration; by attracting people to and keeping them in the city.

2.5 Like many other areas, a growing number of people in the city are recorded as having a limitation to work, exacerbating the balance between those in work and those who are not.

> The next Local Development Plan can help to address this by making sure Aberdeen is an attractive place for people to live and to ensure that sufficient land is allocated for new housing and employment opportunities.

Education and Lifelong Learning

2.6 Life circumstances of children affect their educational attainment, and that educational inequality can lead into inequalities of health and wellbeing in early adulthood and beyond. In Aberdeen there is evidence of increases in the number of children living in poverty, having a disability, with additional support needs, and entering school with at least one developmental concern. Whilst across a range of measures, attainment shows a positive trend, the most striking feature is the impact of family affluence / deprivation on children's experiences and outcomes, including educational attainment and positive destinations post school education. The Skills Development Scotland Participation measure provides information on the current position of all children and young people between the age of 16 to 19 years, where they remain in school or have since left. In 2024, 90.1% of 16-19 year olds were participating in education, employment or training – similar to 90.2% in 2022/23.

> The next Local Development Plan can help to address this by ensuring a sound provision of affordable housing and putting policies in place to ensure new development is well connected to employment and training by sustainable and active travel opportunities.

Economic Stability

2.7 A healthy economy is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of a population. Simply put, people who experience economic inequalities have poorer health and wellbeing. People who are economically secure have better health and wellbeing.

2.8 Aberdeen's economy over the last few decades has been heavily tied to oil prices (see Figure 2.2). Aberdeen is however currently undergoing an economic transition toward a low-carbon economy, with a clear focus on developing greater diversity across business sectors. Energy remains a key component in this, though more on developing the renewables sector, with tourism, and financial and business services sectors also important in the mix.

2.9 The unemployment rate in the city in June 2024 was measured at 4.4%, which is above the Scottish level of 3.5%. However, the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits matched the Scotland figure. In 2023 it was estimated that almost 1 in 6 households in Aberdeen had no one within the household working, but households with low income, or likely to be experiencing financial instability, are also important. It is estimated that 3 out of 5 (57%) households experiencing relative poverty will be within working households.

> The next Local Development Plan can help to address this by ensuring a healthy supply of land for employment and by putting policies in place to ensure new development is well connected to employment and training opportunities by sustainable and active travel opportunities.

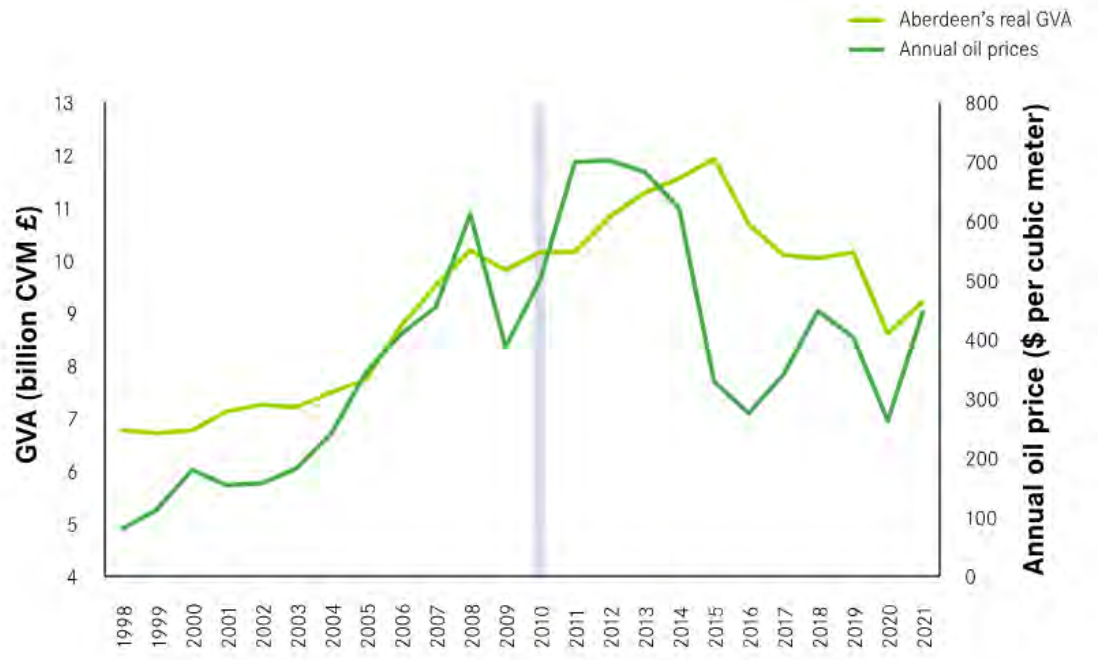


Figure 2.2: Aberdeen's Gross Value Added (GVA) in relation to global oil prices
Source: Centre for Cities (2024) *Aberdeen's lost decade: What went wrong?* [Online]. Available at: https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/aberdeens-lost-decade-what-went-wrong/ (Accessed: April 2025).

Communities and Housing

2.10 The availability, location, type, and quality of housing is important, moreover it is essential to have somewhere to live which is affordable, warm, and secure. Many are facing housing challenges including fuel poverty; those who require specialist housing provision as a result of ill-health or disability; and those who, for a range of

reasons, are without a secure place to live. Feeling safe within your home, your place, and your community are also important factors in wellbeing.

2.11 Being able to participate in one's community is key to enabling and maintaining a sense of influence and control. Through ongoing use of the Place Standard Tool, we have a picture of how the city's communities see themselves in relation to many of the factors that relate to their place and health and wellbeing (CD042).

> The next Local Development Plan can help to address this by ensuring a pipeline of residential opportunities are available across the city, with a mix of both house types and market and affordable / specialist provision.



Figure 2.3 Residential Development at Tillydrone

Neighbourhood and Environment

2.12 We know that where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. How places are designed and built, and how they develop and are kept in good order, are really important in creating health and sustaining wellbeing for individuals, for families, and for communities.

2.13 For good health and wellbeing it is recommended that people are able to access a green space within 300 metres of their home, and the Council has a key role in ensuring access to greenspaces and woodland and in protecting the quality of local blue spaces (water and river sides). It remains up to individuals, families and communities to be encouraged and supported to make use of the city's green and blue spaces.

2.14 The natural environment, sustainability and climate change also do, and increasingly will, impact on life in the city. Direct effects associated with climate change include increased mortality and ill-health associated with excess heat and cold, and loss associated with flooding and damage to properties. Climate change is also likely to exacerbate inequalities associated with air pollution, access to greenspaces, fuel, and food poverty.

> The next Local Development Plan can help to address this by setting out a sustainable strategy for the City's future, including protection of existing green spaces and natural resources.

Health & Social Care

2.15 Giving every child the best start in life and ensuring they are supported as they develop into young people is essential in creating good population health and wellbeing throughout life. Because of the way in which deprivation affects health, the lower someone's social position is, the worse their health. So early action can help to reduce health inequality.

2.16 For both women and men, increased life expectancy has stalled, and healthy life expectancy is declining. Both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy vary across Aberdeen, with people from areas with higher deprivation having shorter lives and being more likely to live with poorer health for longer. 1 in 4 adults describe themselves as having a limiting, long-term illness.

> The next Local Development Plan can help to address this by supporting the development of sustainable communities and enabling people to live well locally.

The Social Determinants of Health & a Marmot City

2.17 The Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen (HDRC Aberdeen) is one of the first wave of Health Determinants Research Collaborations funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research. HDRC Aberdeen is led by Aberdeen City Council, in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, NHS Grampian, and Public Partners. The HDRC in Aberdeen currently has funding for five years, until October 2027.

2.18 The Council has a significant and diverse range of functions, powers and duties which play a role in shaping the social determinants of health. The social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence people's health outcomes. They have been described as 'the causes of the causes'. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping daily life that include the broad social and economic

circumstances which together influence the health of the population. Many factors combine to affect the health of individuals and communities.

2.19 Within these social determinants, socioeconomic factors such as poverty, employment and education have the largest impact on health outcomes, suggesting that greatest contribution to population health can be made outside the health sector. Addressing these social determinants of health appropriately is, therefore, fundamental for improving health and reducing longstanding inequities in health.

2.20 The extant Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) was the first plan to group a number of policies under a specific Health and Wellbeing topic area, and the first plan to introduce a Health Impact Assessment, a policy specifically designed to assess the impact of certain new developments on the health of the population.

2.21 In the next Local Development Plan 2028, this initial work looking at health, alongside the nature and climate emergencies, will be much expanded. In particular, working with Public Health Colleagues at NHS Grampian and the Health Determents Research Collaboration, it is intended to once again take a ‘health in all policies’ approach. This aims to ensure all policies within the plan look to improve health outcomes wherever possible, and limit any negative impacts where they are identified.

2.22 In this way, the next Local Development Plan also has a unique opportunity to both influence, and be developed in the context of, the collaboration announced in February 2025 between Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and Public Health Scotland and Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director of University College London’s Institute of Health Equity. The aim of this collaboration is to strengthen local plans to reduce health inequalities and improve wellbeing in communities, thus enabling people to live longer, healthier lives by addressing the root causes of health inequalities and preventing illness before it starts. Table 2.1 relates the Evidence Report topic areas to the Marmot Principles.

		TOPIC PAPER									
		SPATIAL STRATEGY	DELIVERY OF HOMES	INFRASTRUCTURE	SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT	CLIMATE CHANGE, MITIGATION & ADAPTATION	NATURE & BIODIVERSITY	ENERGY & RESOURCES	CENTRES OF BUSINESS & CULTURE	PLACE	WELLBEING AND COMMUNITIES
MARMOT PRINCIPLE	Give every child the best start in life		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
	Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
	Create fair employment and good work for all	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure a healthy standard of living for all	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes		✓		✓					✓	
	Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓

Table 2.1: Cross Reference of Topic Papers and Marmot Principles

3. Assessment of Current Local Development Plan

3.1 As part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, the Planning Authority is required to evaluate whether the current adopted plan, the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) (adopted June 2023), has delivered on its outcomes and allocations. It is important to note that this evaluation does not include specific content on policy or spatial strategy matters for the next Local Development Plan – these will be developed during its preparation. We are also required to identify any lessons learnt that will inform the preparation of the next Plan, and to consider the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

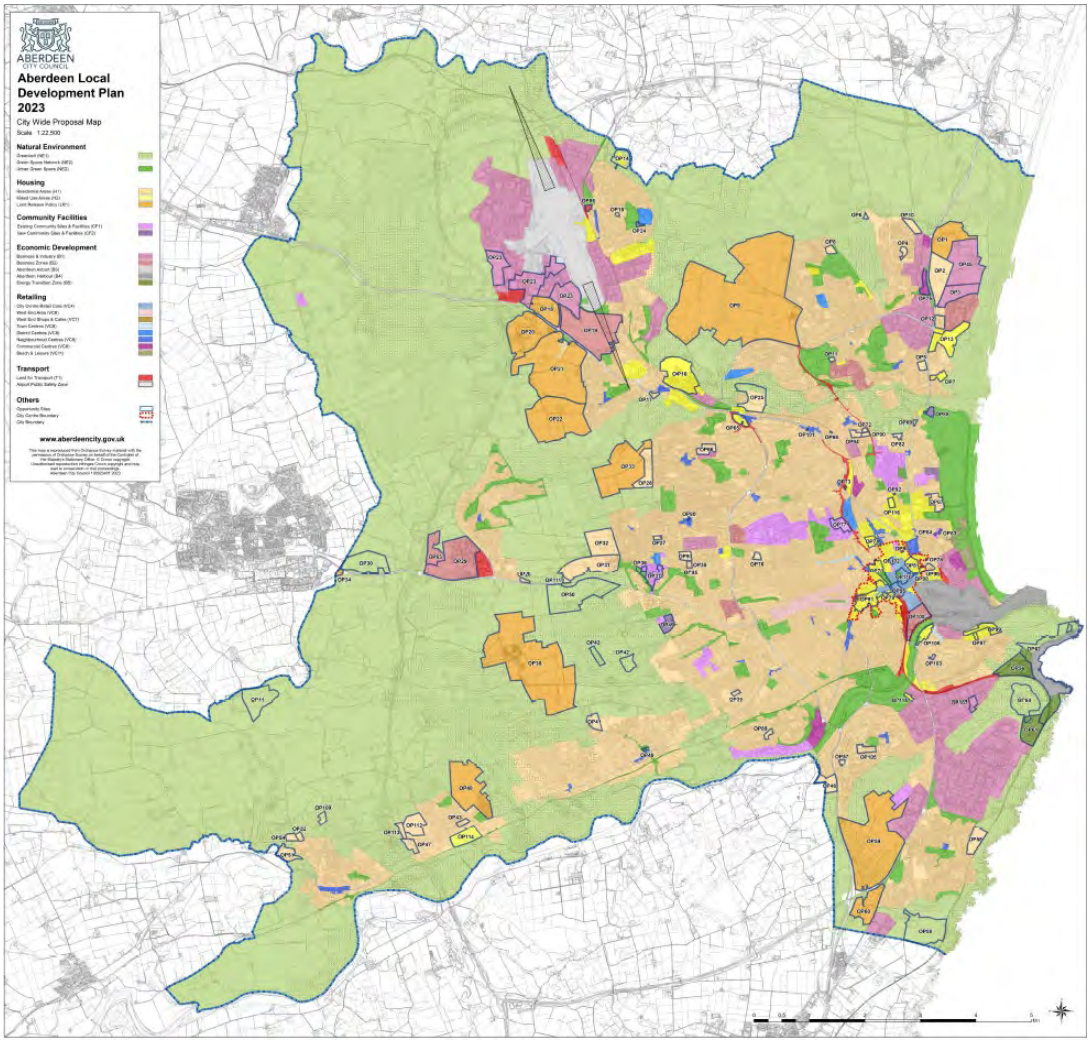


Figure 3.1: Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 Proposals Map (CD292)

3.2 The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) was developed in the context of a new and emerging planning system in Scotland. The Plan took account of changes such as the removal of statuary supplementary guidance, and was co-designed with NHS Grampian to reflect the strengthening relationship between

planning and health within the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD314). Given the timing of the 2023 Plan, a pragmatic approach did however have to be taken.

3.3 National Planning Framework 4 (CD001) was adopted following the Examination of the Proposed Plan but prior to its adoption and, as a result, some terminology referred to in the extant Plan varies from the new policy framework. Importantly, the extant Plan was prepared to be consistent with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020, but references to the Strategic Development Plan were minimised by Scottish Government prior to permitting the Council to adopt the Plan, with references only retained to explain the source of data and requirements.

3.4 NPF4 (CD001) now forms part of the statutory Development Plan, and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2028 will take into account the National Planning Framework and any adopted Regional Spatial Strategy as it is developed.

Delivery of LDP 2023 Outcomes / Objectives

3.5 The 2023 Local Development Plan represents Aberdeen City Council's land use strategy for Aberdeen for 10 years from 2022. Therefore, delivery of the plan is very much a work in progress. The original 2023 Delivery Programme was updated in September 2025. Please see Chapter 4 for more information on the Delivery Programme.

3.6 The 2023 Local Development Plan has a Vision, a Spatial Strategy and a policy framework. A summary of how the LDP is meeting the 9 main policy themes it identified is set out via the paragraphs below. The LDP was created with a 'health in all policies' approach, and all policies within the Plan were assessed against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Public Health Priorities for Scotland and the Aberdeen City Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

3.7 The aim of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 is to support the Council's vision of creating a sustainable and socially equitable future for the city, as the home to its residents, as the regional centre of the North East, and as one of Scotland's most important economic engines. This vision, alongside the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020 (now revoked) and National Planning Framework 4, was used to develop the spatial strategy and policy approach for the extant Plan. Table 3.1 notes the vision and the policy approach taken in the Local Development Plan to support the vision. An explanation on allocation of sites, spatial strategy and further policy assessment is also contained within this chapter.

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 Policy	Vision			
	A sustainable and socially equitable	The home to its residents	The regional centre of the North East	One of Scotland's most

	future for the city			important economic engines
LR1 – Land Release Policy	x	x	x	x
LR2 - Delivery of Mixed Use Communities	x	x		x
WB1 – Healthy Developments	x	x		
WB2 – Air Quality	x	x		
WB3 – Noise		x		
WB4 – Specialist Care Facilities	x			
WB5 – Changing Places Toilets	x			
NE1 – Green Belt	x			
NE2 – Green and Blue Infrastructure	x	x		
NE3 – Our Natural Heritage	x	x		
NE4 – Our Water Environment		x		
NE5 – Trees and Woodland	x	x		
D1 – Quality Placemaking	x	x	x	x
D2 – Amenity	x	x		
D3 – Big Buildings	x	x	x	x
D4 – Landscape		x		
D5 – Landscape Design		x		
D6 – Historic Environment	x	x		
D7 – Our Granite Heritage	x	x	x	
D8 – Windows and Doors	x			
D9 – Shopfronts	x		x	x
R1 – Minerals			x	x
R2 – Degraded and Contaminated Land		x		

R3 – Waste Management Facilities	x			
R4 – Energy from Waste	x			
R5 – Waste Management Requirements for New Developments	x			
R6 – Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency	x			
R7 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments	x		x	x
R8 – Heat Networks	x			
H1 – Residential Areas	x	x		
H2 – Mixed Use Areas		x		
H3 – Density		x		
H4 – Housing Mix and Need	x	x		
H5 – Affordable Housing	x	x		
H6 – Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites	x	x		
H7 – Student Accommodation Developments	x	x	x	
H8 – Houses in Multiple Occupation and Overprovision	x	x		
CF1 - Existing Community Sites and Facilities		x	x	
CF2 – New Community Facilities	x	x		
VC1: Vibrant City	x	x	x	x
VC2: Tourism and Culture		x	x	x

VC3: Network of Centres		x	x	
VC4: City Centre and Retail Core			x	x
VC5: City Centre Living		x		
VC6: West End Area		x		
VC7 – West End Shops and Cafes		x		
VC8 – Town, District, Neighbourhood and Commercial Centres	x	x		
VC9 – Out of Centre Proposals	x			
VC10 – Local Shop Units		x		
VC11 – Beach and Leisure	x			
VC12 – Retail Development Serving New Development Areas		x		
I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations	x	x		
T1 – Land for Transport	x	x	x	x
T2 – Sustainable Transport	x			
T3 – Parking	x			
CI1 – Digital Infrastructure	x	x		x
CI2 – Telecommunications	x			x
B1 – Business and Industrial Land	x	x	x	x
B2 – Business Zones	x	x	x	x
B3 – Aberdeen International Airport			x	x

and Perwinnes Radar				
B4 – Aberdeen Harbours			x	x
B5 – Energy Transition Zones	x		x	x
B6 – Pipelines, Major Hazards and Explosives Storage Sites	x			

Table 3.1 Cross check of Aberdeen City Council vision and ALDP2023 Policies.

3.8 In meeting the vision of the Council, the land release and placemaking policies contribute to all four vision themes, making them important cross cutting strategic connectors. They support sustainability, inclusivity, regional importance and economic growth simultaneously. There is broad policy coverage to meet the aims of a sustainable and socially equitable future for the city, and a home to its residents, with regional focus and the economic aspects concentrated in city centre, transport, infrastructure and business-related policies.

3.9 Between adoption of the 2023 LDP and 31 May 2025 there were 30 valid appeals submitted to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) and 55 applications submitted to the Local Review Body. 15 of the DPEA cases overturned the original decision and allowed the appeal. The Local Review Body dismissed 14 appeals. A high proportion of recommendations to the Local Review Body have been overturned, 74.5% since the adoption of the Plan to 31 May 2025. Drawing comparison to national averages using 2023-2024 data highlights 65.4% of Aberdeen City decisions were overturned at Local Review Body, compared to a national average of 40.8% for the same time period. A review of planning appeals and local review body applications has not drawn any particular pattern over the fairly short time period. The particular circumstances of each case were the reason for overturning appeals, rather than a fundamental flaw within the policy wording. An improvement action has been identified within the National Planning Improvement Framework Assessment 2025 relating to Local Review Body. The actions are to monitor and review the Local Review Body, including promoting the attendance of 5 members, careful consideration of all refusals by Team Leaders, and refreshing Local Review Body specific elected member planning training. The outcome is to increase the percentage of decisions in accordance with recommendation.

3.10 The most used policies within appeals have been H1: Residential Areas, D1: Quality Placemaking by Design, D2: Amenity with the Local Development Plan – which are also the three most used policies in all applications. The National Planning Framework 4 policies most frequently used are NPF14: Design, Quality and Place, NPF7: Historic Assets and Places, and NPF2: Climate Mitigation and Adaption. There will be continued monitoring of all appeal decisions for the duration of the adoption of the 2023 LDP.

Delivery of Allocations

3.11 The vast majority of housing and employment land allocations in the 2023 LDP were carried forward from previous LDPs, where a number of large, mixed use land release sites were previously allocated, particularly under the 2012 Plan. At the time of allocation, it was anticipated many of these sites would be multi phased and take a number of years to complete, as has been the case.

3.12 Strategic reserve land for housing and employment was also identified in the 2023 Plan but did not make up part of the housing or employment allocations. A total of 111 Opportunity Sites were identified in the 2023 LDP, and comprise the following make up (table 3.2):

Land Use	Number of Opportunity Sites
Residential / Residential Led Mixed Use Development:	70
Employment:	10
Other use(s):	23
City Centre Masterplan Sites:	8

Table 3.2. Make up of ALDP2023 Opportunity sites

3.13 The LDP 2023 was prepared on the basis of the Strategic Development Plan that was part of the statutory development plan at that time, and which set out a Housing Land Requirement of 21,450 for 2016 to 2032. Proposals are progressing or are in the pipeline for much of the land that will accommodate this requirement, and most of the requirement was identified to be met through established sites, with a focus on sites that are deliverable within the timeframe to 2032. The Examination Report into the Proposed Strategic Development Plan in January 2020 stated that a further 938 units were required to be added to the Local Development Plan Housing Allowances for the period 2020-2032. In response, 1100 housing units were added and split between new residential allocations. Strategic allocations beyond 2033 continued to be identified for 3,440 homes at Greenferns, Grandhome and Newhills.

3.14 The Housing Land Audit 2025 (CD:327) (HLA 2025) demonstrated that in the 10 year period from 2015 – 2025 the average housing completion rate in Aberdeen was 992 homes per year, with 1,061 units completed in financial year 2023/2024, and 1,015 completed in 2024/2025. The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic (when activity was severely limited) can be seen in 2020. Using the HLA 2025, a breakdown of completions on allocated sites can be gained through assessment of windfall sites. Using data from 2015 – 2025, 7,891 homes have been completed on allocated sites with 2,240 gained through windfall. Table 3.3 sets out these data, however it should be noted that, due to the change in presenting information in the HLA from calendar to financial years, the first quarter of 2023 is shown within the 2022 figure as an approximate.

Year	Total no. of completed housing units	Total no. of completed housing units from allocated sites	Total no. of completed housing units from windfall
2015	756	665	91
2016	793	587	206
2017	1,140	906	234
2018	1,177	951	226
2019	897	758	139
2020	817	720	97
2021	1,448	874	574
2022	812 (+215 of Q1 2023) 1,027 approx	764 approx	263 approx
2023/2024	1,061	765	296
2024/2025	1,015	901	114
Total	10,131	7,891	2,240

Table 3.3 Housing Completions in Aberdeen City 2015-2024/25

3.15 Recent delivery of housing in Aberdeen has resulted in a number of positive outcomes, including a substantial pipeline of sites, significant recent completion rates, continued affordable housing provision, and the successful reuse of empty homes and brownfield land to help meet need. Recent delivery has also supported wider objectives such as regeneration, placemaking and providing a broader mix of housing types across the city. However, a number of challenges have also been encountered over the past few years. These include the impact of the pandemic, rising construction costs, infrastructure constraints, viability issues on brownfield sites, delays in bringing forward constrained sites, and uncertainty in the pace of delivery over the plan period. As discussed in Chapter 2, Aberdeen's economy remains heavily tied to global oil and gas prices, and delivery of housing has also been impacted by changes to the energy sector as a result. Please see Chapter 9 - Housing for more information.

3.16 Stalled sites information was shared from Homes for Scotland via the Scottish Government to Local Authorities in January 2025. Two stalled sites (Cordyce School and Maidencraig North) were identified in Aberdeen. Both sites are Opportunity Sites with mainstream and onsite affordable housing provision. The reason for delay was noted to be lack of funding / non-commitment of funding for the affordable homes. Both sites are in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (CD301) with start date and supplier on board. The HLA 2025 (CD327) notes that these sites are now under construction.

3.17 Table 3.4 outlines the progress of housing or residential led mixed used opportunity sites in the extant Plan.

Site Reference	Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Date Allocated	Site Status	Indictive Capacity ALDP	No. of Housing Units Consented	Completions to date HLA 2025
Bridge of Don and Grandhome							
OP2	Cloverhill	24.8	2023	Under Construction	550	536	366
OP4	North Denmore	1.7	2023	No Consent	30	N/A	0
OP5	Balgownie Centre	2.25	2028	No Consent / Approved Masterplan	171	N/A	0
OP6	WTR Site	0.57	2023	No Consent	20	N/A	0
OP7	Aberdeen College Gordon Centre	3.1	2012	No Consent	122	N/A	0
OP8	East Woodcroft North	2.2	2008	No Consent	60	N/A	0
OP9	Grandhome	323	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	4700	4700	370
OP10	Dubford	4.2	2012	No Consent / Approved Masterplan	99	N/A	0
OP11	Balgownie Area 4	0.5	2023	No Consent	15	N/A	0
OP12	Silverburn House	4.0	2023	Under Construction	125	67	0
OP13	AECC	18.4	2017	Consented / Approved Masterplan	498	333	0
Dyce, Bucksburn and Woodside							
OP14	Former Cordyce School	7.9	2023	Under Construction	100	91	0
OP15	Former Carden School	0.37	2012	No Consent	20	N/A	0
OP16	Davidsons Mill	29.5	2017	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	900	900	633
OP17	Former Bucksburn Primary School	0.94	2023	No Consent	52	N/A	0

Site Reference	Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Date Allocated	Site Status	Indictive Capacity ALDP	No. of Housing Units Consented	Completions to date HLA 2025
OP20	Craibstone South	42.9	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	1000	700	180
OP21	Rowett South	106.85	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	1700	1700	437
OP22	Greenferns Landward	69.6	2012	Pending Decision / Approved Masterplan	1000	1000	0
OP25	Woodside	19.1	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	300	400	301
Kingswells and Greenferns							
OP26	Old Skene Road	1.2	2023	No Consent	14	N/A	0
OP27	Greenferns Infant School	0.91	2012	No Consent	68	N/A	0
OP28 / OP33	Greenferns	74	2017	Pending Decision / Approved Masterplan	1070	1470	0
OP31 / OP32	Maidencraig	52.6	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan.	750	825	257
OP111	Skene Road	0.9	2017	No Consent	15	N/A	0
Countesswells							
OP38	Countesswells	165.1	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	3000	3000	764
Deeside							
OP39	Braeside Infant School	1.04	2012	Consented	57	57	0
OP40	Cults Pumping Station	0.69	2012	No Consent	38	N/A	0
OP41	Friarsfield	5.6	2008	Complete / Approved Masterplan	280	301	301
OP43	Milltimber Primary School	9.2	2012	No Consent	102	N/A	0

Site Reference	Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Date Allocated	Site Status	Indictive Capacity ALDP	No. of Housing Units Consented	Completions to date HLA 2025
OP47	Edgehill	4.4	2012	Pre – Application	5	5	0
OP48	Oldfold	48.9	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	550	580	309
OP51	Peterculter Burn	7.4	2012	Consented	19	44	0
OP52	Malcolm Road	1.5	2017	No Consent	8	N/A	0
OP54	Craigton	2.45	2023	No Consent	10	N/A	0
OP109	Woodend	2	2017	Pending Decision	19	19	0
OP112	West of Contlaw Road	12.5	2017	Under Construction	10	30	26
OP113	Culter House Road	2.4	2017	Under Construction	8	11	3
OP114	Milltimber South	11.5	2017	Consented	50	99	0
Loirston & Cove							
OP46	Royal Devenick Park	8.36	2023	No Consent	150	N/A	0
OP57	Craighill Primary School	0.86	2012	Under Construction	87	87	0
OP58	Stationfields	9.8	2008	Partially Complete (Consent complete on part of site / no consent on remainder)	150	167	167
OP59	Loirston	119.2	2012	Under Construction / Approved Masterplan	1500	1067	29
OP103	Former Torry Nursery School	0.53	2017	Consented	45	87	0
OP105	Kincorth Academy	3.94	2017	Under Construction	194	195	0
OP115	34-40 Abbotswell Road	1.03	2017	Complete	41-77*	130	130
City Centre & Urban Area							
OP35	Summerfield House	1.1	2023	No Consent	99	N/A	0
OP37	Woodend Hospital	7.1	2023	No Consent	213	N/A	0
OP65	Haudagain Triangle	4.0	2012	No Consent	300	N/A	0

Site Reference	Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Date Allocated	Site Status	Indictive Capacity ALDP	No. of Housing Units Consented	Completions to date HLA 2025
OP66	Granitehill	4.8	2023	No Consent	300	N/A	0
OP68	1 Western Road	0.07	2012	Consented	22	22	0
OP69	152 Don Street	0.63	2023	Under Construction – retail use	50	0	0
OP72	Aberdon House	0.64	2012	Completed	40	40	40
OP74	Broadford Works	3.6	2008	No Consent / Approved Masterplan	460	N/A	0
OP76	Former Raeden Centre	1.48	2023	No Consent	80	N/A	0
OP77	Cornhill Hospital	6.04	2008	Under Construction	242-453*	331	226
OP78	Fredrick Street	0.1	2023	No Consent	10	N/A	0
OP79	Crown House	0.1	2012	Completed	7-9.5*	12	12
OP82	Dunbar Halls of Residence	1.64	2008	No Consent	92	N/A	0
OP83	Urquhart Building	0.28	2023	No Consent	25	N/A	0
OP87	Pittodrie Stadium	6.0	2012	No Consent	450	N/A	0
OP89	Kaimhill Outdoor Centre	1.5	2023	Completed	35	35	35
OP90	St Machar Primary School	1.01	2012	Completed	30	30	30
OP92	St Peter’s Nursery	0.09	2012	No Consent / Approved Masterplan.	7	N/A	0
OP93	Former Summerhill Academy	3.3	2012	Completed	132-248*	369	369
OP97	Victoria Road Primary School	0.67	2012	No Consent	55	N/A	0
OP98	VSA Gallowgate	0.08	2012	No Consent	8	N/A	0
OP101	Woodside Congregation Church	0.07	2012	No Consent	5	N/A	0
OP116	Froghall Terrace	1.7	2012	No Consent	206	N/A	0

Table 3.4: Overview of ALDP 2023 Housing and Residential led mixed use development sites.

*no capacity noted in the LDP 2023. Approximate capacity based on density figures from the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2019 (City Centre 70-95 units per ha, Urban 40-75 units per ha).

3.18 Progress is concentrated in a relatively small number of large strategic locations while many smaller sites remain undeveloped. Major greenfield allocations such as Grandhome, Countesswells, Loirston, Rowett South, Craibstone South and Davidsons Mill account for the bulk of consented capacity and recorded completions, indicating that overall supply is being driven by a few large masterplanned developments. In contrast, a substantial number of smaller urban and brownfield sites have no completions recorded, suggesting ongoing barriers to delivery despite identified infrastructure capacity. Several sites show completions above or close to indicative site capacity. Overall, housing delivery on allocated sites is progressing, but it is uneven, with reliance on major strategic sites and a long tail of undeveloped allocations that may require further intervention, review, or updated assumptions in the next Local Development Plan.

3.19 Table 3.5 provides an overview of the status of employment land allocations and the residential led mixed use developments with an employment aspect in the 2023 LDP.

Site Ref	Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Date Allocated	Purpose / Use	Update / Build Status
Bridge of Don and Grandhome					
OP1	Murcar	27.8	2012	Strategic Reserve 2033-2040	No planning consent.
OP3	Findlay Farm	16.4	2008	Business and Industry – Use Class 4, 5, and 6.	No planning consent.
OP9	Grandhome	5	2012	Residential led mixed use development, with employment land.	Approved Masterplan. PPiP identifies employment land. No Msc for employment land.
OP45	Berryhill	43.7	2023	Business and Industry – Use Class 4, 5, and 6.	Not built out.
Dyce, Bucksburn and Woodside					
OP18	Craibstone North & Walton Farm	20	2012	18.5 ha is Strategic Reserve 2033-2040	Not built out.
OP19	Rowett North	34.5	2008	Business Zone – Use Class 4	Approved Masterplan. Not built out.

OP23	Dyce Drive	65	2008	Business and Industry – Use Class 4, 5, and 6.	Not fully built out.
Kingswells and Greenferns					
OP29	Prime Four	50	2017	Business Zone – Use Class 4	Approved Masterplan. Not fully built out.
OP63	Prime Four Extension	13	2017	Business Zone– Use Class 4	Approved Masterplan/ No Consent.
OP33	Greenferns	10	2017	Residential led mixed use development, with employment land.	Approved Masterplan / No Consent.
OP34	East Arnhall	1	2017	Land release	No Consent.
Countesswells					
OP38	Countesswells	10	2012	Residential led mixed use development, with employment land.	Approved Masterplan. PPiP identifies employment land. No Msc for employment land.
Deeside					
OP48	Oldfold	5	2012	Residential led mixed use development, with employment land.	Approved Masterplan. PPiP identifies employment land. No Msc for employment land.
Loirston and Cove					
OP59	Loirston	11	2012	Residential led mixed use development, with employment land.	Approved Masterplan. PPiP identifies employment land. No Msc for employment land.
OP60	Charleston	20.5	2012	Strategic Reserve 2033-2040	No Consent

Table 3.5: Overview of ALDP 2023 Employment and Residential led mixed use development sites.

3.20 There is a mixed picture of employment and mixed-use land delivery across Aberdeen, with a significant proportion of sites either still undeveloped, only partly built out, or lacking detailed consent. Several of the largest allocations − such as Dyce Drive, Prime Four, Prime Four Extension, Berryhill and Rowett North − remain not fully built out despite some having approved masterplans, suggesting that allocation alone has not consistently translated into delivery. A partial explanation may be the economy in Aberdeen being heavily tied to fluctuating oil and gas prices and less confidence in the sector. A recurring pattern can also be seen in a number of residential-led mixed use sites, including Grandhome, Countesswells, Oldfold, Loirston and others, which identify employment land in principle, but have no detailed proposals or planning approval for that employment component, raising concerns about whether employment provision will come forward as intended. In summary, while there is a broad supply of allocated land across multiple locations, the main issue is not allocation but implementation, with delivery of employment land in particular appearing uneven and often delayed.

3.21 The 2023 LDP has an employment land allocation of 105 hectares to 2032, with a strategic reserve of 70 hectares to 2040 from Murcar, Craibstone North and Walton Farm, and Charleston. The 2025 Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Business and Industry Land Audit (CD366) identified that Aberdeen has 275 hectares of undeveloped business and industry land, of which 157 hectares is marketable, 107 hectares is immediately available and 117 hectares is constrained. The constrained sites comprise large scale residential led mix use developments, where housing is expected to be the primary focus for developers, and employment sites where there is a lack of ready infrastructure and/or lack of planning history.

3.22 Looking to wider patterns relating to office and industrial land in Aberdeen, the demand for office space has dropped since 2023, with deals focusing on smaller spaces. Grade A office space is in demand, but city centre Grade A office space availability and take up has been low. Overall, the availability of existing office space continues to significantly exceed demand, with uncertainly for the progression of new build projects.

3.23 The market for industrial space is stronger than that for office space with overall lower supply levels. However, much of the existing stock is understood to be dated or nearing the end of its ‘useful’ life. Demand exists for larger, energy efficient, modern premises with overhead cranes and secure yards yet high construction costs are continuing to have an impact on the development of new build space.

3.24 Overall, the supply of existing industrial space had continued to outweigh demand, although supply of good quality stock is more limited. Any improvement in the industrial property market is still seen as dependent on activity and confidence levels in the energy sector. Please see Chater 8 - Spatial Strategy for more information.

3.25 Alongside housing and employment allocations, the extant LDP 2023 also allocates a number of other uses as opportunity sites as shown below in Table 3.6:

Site Ref	Site Name	Site Size (ha)		Purpose / Use	Update / Build Status
Bridge of Don and Grandhome					
OP75	Denmore Road	4.56	2017	Commercial Centre for Bulky Goods Retailing	No Consent.
Dyce, Bucksburn and Woodside					
OP24	Central Park	0.71	2023	New Community Sites and Facilities – Medical Centre.	No Consent.
OP86	Dyce Railway Station	1.1	2017	Land for Transport – expand car park.	No Consent.
Kingswells and Greenferns					
OP30	Kingsford	24.5	2023	New Football Stadium and Training Facilities	Training Facilities operational.
Deeside					
OP42	Hazlehead Equestrian Centre and Hotel	9.2	2023	Equestrian Centre and Hotel	No Consent.
OP44	North Lasts Quary	8.01	2008	Mineral Extraction	Operational.
OP49	Grove Nursery	5.9	2012	New Community Facilities - social enterprises specialising in nursery, horticultural and/or allotments	Operational.
OP50	Skene Road	49.7	2008	Phased Cemetery	No Consent.
Loirston and Cove					
OP55	Blackhill Quarry	32.76	2008	Mineral Extraction	Operational.
OP56	St Fittick's Park	18.2	2023	Energy Transition Zone	Masterplan Approved. Consent Approved.
OP61	Doonies	16.3	2023	Energy Transition Zone	Masterplan Approved. Consent Approved.
OP62	Bay of Nigg	55	2017	Aberdeen Harbour	Masterplan Approved. Operational.
OP64	Former Ness Tip	20.5	2017	Solar Farm	Consent Approved.

OP107	East Tullos Gas Holder	3.12	2017	Energy from Waste	Operational.
City Centre and Urban Area					
OP36	Charlie's House	1.5	2017	Children's Respite Centre and Interactive Garden.	Consent Approved.
OP73	Balgownie Machine Centre	0.2	2012	Land reserved for Berryden Corridor Improvements	Consent Approved.
OP80	Mastrick Clinic	0.12	2023	Uses to support Neighbourhood Centre	No Consent.
OP84	Resources Centre	0.16	2023	Small scale retail, commercial or office use.	No Consent.
OP85	King Street	2.0	2008	Mosque, community facilities and open space	No Consent.
OP88	Shore Porters Warehouse	0.02	2008	Mixed Use	No Consent.
OP94	Tillydrone Primary School	2.11	2008	New Primary School	Completed.
OP99	Old Torry	6.6	2008	Mixed Use	Partly Built Out.
OP102	George Street / Crooked Lane	0.96	2017	Retail Development	Consent Approved.

Table 3.6: Overview of ALDP 2023 Other Opportunity Sites.

3.26 As illustrated by Table 3.6, the strongest delivery amongst the other opportunity sites can be seen on large strategic sites linked to infrastructure, energy and mineral extraction. Sites such as Bay of Nigg, Blackhill Quarry, North Lasts Quarry and East Tullos Gas Holder are already operational, while St Fittick's Park, Doonies and the Former Ness Tip have approved masterplans or consent in place. This suggests that major sites aligned with economic development, harbour activity and energy transition have been more successful in moving forward than other types of allocation.

3.27 In contrast, many smaller and more locally focused sites remain stalled, with a repeated pattern of 'no consent' across community, retail and service uses. Examples include Denmore Road, Central Park, Dyce Railway Station, Mastrick Clinic, Resources Centre, King Street and Shore Porters Warehouse. Table 3.6 also shows that site size does not necessarily determine progress, as some large sites such as Skene Road and Hazlehead Equestrian Centre and Hotel remain undeveloped, while smaller sites like Tillydrone Primary School and Charlie's House have been completed or approved. Overall, the pattern suggests that strategic priority and delivery context are more important than scale alone.

3.28 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CCMP 2015) (CD046) was approved in 2015, and provides a long term live programme of interventions across the city centre and over multiple phases. To support delivery of the CCMP 2015, the LDP 2023 allocated 8 City Centre Masterplan Intervention Areas as Opportunity Sites. The Intervention Areas are mixed use, comprising residential, retail, hospitality, and leisure uses, and encompass buildings in both private and public ownership, along with public realm and streetscape improvements. Many of the redevelopment projects in the CCMP are capital projects for Aberdeen City Council. Please see Chapter 9 - Place for more information on the CCMP 2015. The progress of the CCMP intervention area opportunity sites is outlined below, in Table 3.7:

Site Ref	Site Name	Site Size (ha)	Masterplan focus	Update / Build Status
OP70	Denburn Valley	6.5	A revitalised Union Terrace Gardens establishes itself as a key destination and the linking thread to a new residential quarter.	Union Terrace Gardens redevelopment complete.
OP81	Queen's Square	5.4	A new city centre neighbourhood with a strong urban character. An exemplar of the best of urban living in a sensitive historic context.	Council decision to refocus the project to greenspace. Demolition of the former Grampian Police HQ is now part of the project and began progressing in 2026.
OP91	Union Street West	15.3	A focus for the wider business sector, from new businesses with a Made in Aberdeen focus, to spin-outs from the energy sector. Union Street West emerges as a much stronger business address.	Music Hall redevelopment completed and open.
OP95	Station Gateway	4	The critical remodelling of the key gateway to the city centre, with new business and commercial developments, providing city centre users and visitors with a radically transformed arrival experience, leading seamlessly northwards to Union Street.	No significant progress to date.

OP96	Castlegate and Castlehill	2.6	A focus for visitors and tourists, taking in the best of Aberdeen's townscape, including Castlegate, Union Street and links to the harbour to the south and the beach to the east.	Public Realm and streetscaping improvements began March 2026. Heritage & Place Programme launched in 2026.
OP100	North Dee Quarter	12.7	New riverside quarters connected by a pedestrian bridge and a much improved riverside park and promenade. To the north, an urban business district.	No significant progress to date
OP106	Torry Waterfront	5	New riverside quarters connected by a pedestrian bridge and a much improved riverside park and promenade. To the south, a residential neighbourhood that maximises its relationship to the river.	Live consent for residential and retail, riverside park/open space and associated infrastructure.
OP110	Heart of the City	5.4	Reinstating the central role of Union Street in the life of the city, establishing stronger retail linkages north and south and creating a destination not just for shopping but for many city activities.	Public realm improvements to central Union Street ongoing to Autumn 2026. Redevelopment of Aberdeen Market underway, expected to open autumn 2027. Art Gallery Redevelopment competed and open.

Table 3.7: Progress of CCMP Opportunity Sites.

3.29 As noted, the build out of CCMP projects was always planned to be phased, with catalytic, high impact, flagship projects (Union Terrace Gardens, Art Gallery, Music Hall, Market and Union Street Central) aiming to lead to further regeneration and a better connected public realm. Capital Project funding has been directed towards Council owned core redevelopment projects. This has also been supported by public private funding opportunities, such as the City Centre Upper Floors project, a targeted regeneration initiative led by the Business Improvement District, Aberdeen Inspired, and focused specifically on bringing vacant or underused city centre upper floors back into active use. Further progress on privately owned sites within the CCMP is welcomed to meet and help achieve the aims of the CCMP.

The Role of Developer Obligations

3.30 The deliverability of sites within the extant LDP 2023 is supported by developer obligations where necessary. Developer obligations assessments are carried out by a Developer Obligations Team within the Council's Planning Service. Contribution requirements will vary from site to site. The exact contribution required for each site will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3.31 The existing Supplementary Guidance: Planning Obligations (CD230) of the Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) sets the parameters for collecting developer obligations for housing sites of more than 5 units, and commercial developments where the floor space exceeds 1,000 square meters. Developer obligations for housing are sought for transport, core paths network, education, healthcare facilities, open space, community facilities, and sports and recreation. Developer obligations for commercial sites are sought for transport, core paths network, and open space.

3.32 Proposals for utilising developer obligations are presented by the relevant service to the Council's Developer Obligations Working Group for approval. The Developer Obligations Working Group provides strategic oversight of developer contributions, ensuring lawful, transparent and effective use. It coordinates allocation and spend decisions, monitors balances and delivery, addresses policy and process issues, manages risks, supports consistent decision-making, and aligns contributions with corporate priorities and plans. The group meets each month and is chaired by the Chief Officer for Strategic Place Planning and comprises a core group of Council Chief Officers and other relevant staff.

3.33 Since adoption of the 2023 LDP, developer obligations have been successfully gathered on all areas noted, and spend has supported internal and external reconfiguration works to community centres, schools, healthcare facilities, and improved provision of core paths, transport infrastructure, sport and recreation facilities and open space. Please see Topic Papers 3: Infrastructure and Topic Paper 4: Sustainable Transport for more information on current developer obligations.

3.34 Developer obligations are tied to development coming forward. As is noted above, there are however micro-economic external factors, national and international economic and market conditions beyond the Council's control that continue to affect development viability. This has a direct impact upon securing developer obligations.

Appropriateness of Spatial Strategy

3.35 The Spatial Strategy in the 2023 LDP was informed by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020 and is consistent with the Spatial Strategy employed by the preceding 2012 and 2017 LDPs. It explains the Council's overall view of where development should go and the principles behind that. It sets a clear strategy for development in Aberdeen to prioritise urban brownfield sites over greenfield opportunities, and to protect the landscape setting of the city through the green belt.

3.36 The Spatial Strategy identifies future development sites and the scale of development expected on each site. Planning consents and completions since adoption of the 2023 LDP have been in accordance with the spatial strategy. There have been no significant departures from the plan since its adoption. Housing Land Audits (CD012) have shown recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in increased completions in 2021, 2022, 2023/24 and 2024/2025. Completion rates in the 10 years between 2015-2025 averaged at 992 per annum.

3.37 As explained above, there has however been a decreasing trend in the take up of employment land over the past few years, and a proportion of the take-up within employment land has involved non business and industry uses, such as student accommodation and drive-throughs. Take up of office space is also down, with an increase in 2022 which was more in line with the 5-year average. Grade A space in the city centre has decreased, with limited availability of larger suites. Outwith the city centre the higher quality office stock continues to be popular, with limited availability at Prime Four and Aberdeen International Business Park. Demand for industrial space has however increased over recent years, with 2023 marking the largest volume of transactions since the downturn in the oil and gas sector in 2015 (CD020). Forbes state that in 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, just 4.7% of UK employees worked from home, but this had risen to 25% by Spring 2022. By Autumn 2024, more than one quarter of working adults (28%) were hybrid working.

3.38 Progress on currently allocated housing, employment and other opportunity sites will be reviewed in 2026 to identify if any existing allocations need to be removed or reallocated as preparation of the next Local Development Plan continues. For residential sites in particular this will ensure that there is a deliverable housing land supply for the Housing Land Requirement of the next LDP.

Health and Wellbeing

3.39 This chapter in the 2023 LDP aims to ensure the health and wellbeing of people and communities in Aberdeen, by focussing on the positive impact well designed places can have on physical and mental health and on social interactions. Focusing on the social determinants of health, alongside more regulatory processes related to health, the chapter places health and wellbeing as a primary consideration within planning.

3.40 This section of the Plan pulls together five policies (Policies WB1 – WB5) relating to health and wellbeing. Three of the policies are new to the 2023 Plan (i.e. were not carried forward from the 2017 LDP) - Healthy Developments, Specialist Care Facilities and Changing Places Toilets - while two other policies, on Air Quality and Noise, were covered within previous local development plans. The Healthy Developments policy (WB1) has been used in a variety of applications to identify impacts to physical and mental health, such as: change of use into a children's nursery and associated play space, conversion of units into a gym and formation of household waste and recycling centre.

3.41 Moving forward, there is a question over the continued need for the Changing Places Toilets policy (WB5), as this is now covered with Building Standards Regulations. An assessment of the impact of the Specialist Care Facilities policy (WB4) should also be undertaken in due course since, at the time of writing, a lack of relevant applications means that use of this policy has been limited. The Air Quality and Noise policies also play an ongoing and important role in supporting health.

3.42 There are three non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents which support this section on Air Quality, Noise and Health Impact Assessments.

Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

3.43 This part of the Plan looks to safeguard our natural environment, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, enhance biodiversity, and provide a range of benefits for nature, the planet and people.

3.44 The five policies within this section (Policies NE1 – NE5) protect sites and species, safeguard Aberdeen's landscape setting and enhance Aberdeen's blue and green infrastructure. The policies cover Green Belt, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Our Natural Heritage, Our Water Environment, and Trees and Woodland. The policies have been beneficial in ensuring that nature related issues are taken into consideration in the design and development of applications. The protective nature of the policies also support the Spatial Strategy through directing development to the right places.

3.45 There are four non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support these policies, covering Natural Heritage, Trees and Woodlands, Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality and Open Space and Green Infrastructure.

Quality Placemaking

3.46 Quality placemaking and design are themes that should run through all developments. Placemaking within the 2023 Local Development Plan aims to create places that are sustainable, well-designed, and that meet people's needs, while maintaining Aberdeen's distinctiveness.

3.47 Aberdeen's landscape also has a role in defining its identity and setting. The City's development has been shaped by the two river valleys, coast and arc of hills to the west. The use of granite as a primary building material within Aberdeen has led to the City's distinct appearance. The historic environment comprises listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and sites within the Inventory of Designed Landscapes. The policies in the Quality Placemaking section of the 2023 LDP ensure that development is designed to enhance Aberdeen through promoting and protecting its landscape character, historic assets and environment.

3.48 Nine policies are located within this plan section - five on placemaking (Policies D1 – D1) and four covering the historic environment (Policies D6 – D9). Four policies are new to the 2023 Plan - Amenity, Landscape Design, Windows and Doors and Shopfronts. The remaining policies are a continuation in principle from previous plans. The policies, used in conjunction with internal processes such as weekly design surgeries and conservation surgeries, have resulted in improvements to the quality of information provided in planning applications. There is a specific policy on the retention and reuse of granite, a locally distinctive building material (Policy D7 – Our Granite Heritage). The D1 – Quality Placemaking policy has historically been the most used policy in previous local development plans and continues to be so via the 2023 LDP.

3.49 There are 16 policy related non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support the Quality Placemaking section:

- Energetica
- Temporary Buildings
- Amenity & Space Standards
- Sub-division and Redevelopment of Residential Curtilages
- Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside
- Development Along Lanes
- Materials
- Aberdeen Placemaking Process (CD113)
- Big Buildings
- A Guide to Planning Consents for the Aberdeen Multis
- Landscape
- Stonecleaning
- Repair and Replacement of Windows and Doors
- Shops and Signs
- Repair and Reinstatement of Cast Iron Railings
- Outdoor Seating

3.50 There are also a number of adopted Planning Briefs, Masterplans and Development Frameworks which provide strategic guidance to site development across the city:

- Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4). (CD090A, CD090B, CD090C, CD090D)
- Dubford Development Framework (CD091)
- Former Davidson's Mill Development Framework and Masterplan (CD092)
- Friarsfield Development Framework (CD093)
- Grandhome Development Framework (Part 1 and Part 2) (CD094A & CD094B)
- Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan (CD095)
- Prime Four Business Park Development Framework (CD096)
- Loirston Development Framework (CD097)
- Maidencraig Masterplan (CD098)
- Newhills Development Framework (CD099)
- Oldfold Development Framework and Masterplan (CD100)

- Persley Den (CD101)
- New AECC Site at Rowett North (CD102)
- Existing AECC Site at Bridge of Don (CD103)
- Energy Transition Zone Masterplan (CD104)
- Aberdeen Harbour Development Framework (CD105)
- Balgownie Centre, Bridge of Don Planning Brief (CD106)
- Bon Accord Baths Planning Brief (CD107)
- Broadford Works Design Brief (CD108)
- Denburn Valley Planning Brief (CD109)
- River Don Corridor Framework (CD110)
- Robert Gordon University City Centre Planning Brief (CD111)
- St Peters Nursery Site Redevelopment Brief (CD112).

Using Resources Sustainably

3.51 Using resources in a sustainable way will limit the impact on the environment and help to meet climate change targets. The Using Resources Sustainably section of the 2023 Plan focusses on Minerals, Contaminated Land, Waste, and Renewable Energy, and comprises eight policies (Policies R1 – R8). A policy on Heat Networks (R8) was introduced within this Plan, and the introduction of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy will help with the implementation of this policy. The Low and Zero Carbon Building & Water Efficiency policy (R6) has since been superseded by the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 and the introduction of the New Build Heat Standards 2024.

3.52 There are two non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support this section – Resources for New Development and Waste Management Requirements for New Developments. Two more are proposed to come forward during the lifetime of the Plan, one on Heat Networks and Energy Mapping and another on Renewable Energy.

Meeting Housing and Community Needs

3.53 To ensure sustainable communities there needs to be a wide choice of housing types and tenures to cater for all sections of the population, and supported by appropriate community facilities. Amenity should also be maintained and enhanced to support a high quality of life.

3.54 Ten policies (Policies H1 – H8 and CF 1 – 2) are included in the Meeting Housing and Community Needs section of the 2023 LDP, covering a range of different housing and community facility requirements. Policies on Development in Residential Areas, Affordable Housing, Housing Density and Gypsy and Traveller Sites have been in previous Local Development Plans. Two new policies were introduced in the 2023 plan, and these relate to Student Accommodation Developments (H7) and Houses in Multiple Occupation (H8). Community facilities are supported by the policies in the Plan, alongside the circumstances under which such facilities can be redeveloped.

3.55 There are seven non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support this section, Affordable and Specialist Housing, Householder Design Guide, Children's Nurseries, Gypsy Traveller Sites, and Student Accommodation with two new for the 2023 LDP, Houses in Multiple Occupation and Overprovision guidance, and the Short Term Let guidance (CD065).

The Vibrant City

3.56 Ensuring the future of the city centre and other retail and neighbourhood centres within Aberdeen helps with the provision of a wide range of services to support those who live, work and are visiting the city. Aberdeen City Centre plays an important role in the commercial, economic, social, civic and cultural life of Aberdeen and the wider North East. The over-riding principle of the Vibrant City policies (Policies VC1 – VC12) is the primacy of the Town Centre First approach. It promotes the city centre as a place to visit, interact, shop, work, live, play and spend time. Three new policies were introduced in the 2023 LDP relating to Vibrant Cities (VC1), Tourism and Culture (VC2), and City Centre Living (VC5). In addition, the West End Area policy (VC6) was re-written for the 2023 LDP to encourage a greater mix of uses with the aim of restoring vibrancy and vitality to the area.

3.57 There are three non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) documents to support this section of the plan, Hierarchy of Centres, Harmony of Uses and Serviced Apartments.

Delivering Infrastructure, Transport and Accessibility

3.58 This section of the 2023 Plan contains five policies, covering Developer Obligations (I1), Transport Infrastructure (T1 – T3) and Digital Infrastructure (CI1 – CI2). The policy on Sustainable Transport (T1) pulled together two policies from the 2017 Plan, and a new policy on Parking (T3) was introduced as part of the same exercise. Policy I1 and its supporting text provide detail on the matters which developer obligations may be required to address, and the circumstances where obligations may be sought. Details relating to the methodologies to be used in calculating developer obligations is set out in adopted Supplementary Guidance on Planning Obligations (CD230) which forms part of the development plan. There is one non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance which also supports this section, on Transport and Accessibility.

Supporting Business and Industrial Development

3.59 Maintaining a ready supply of employment land in the right places is vital to Aberdeen retaining its position as a competitive and sustainable business location. Aberdeen is home to Aberdeen International Airport and Aberdeen's North and South Harbour, all of which provide a critical role in Aberdeen's economy and strategic transport routes to the rest of Scotland and beyond. Aberdeen South

Harbour was identified as a National Development in National Planning Framework 3; this has continued into National Planning Framework 4 with the added inclusion of North Harbour into the designation.

3.60 There are six policies in the Supporting Business and Industrial Development section (Policies B1 – B6), which cover business and industrial land zonings, safeguarding the harbours and airport land, and safeguarding pipelines and potentially hazardous sites. The policies zone business and industrial land and support its development. Some of these zonings have recently been subject to planning applications relating to differing uses, including drive-throughs. One new policy was introduced into the ALDP 2023, and this was on Energy Transition Zones (B5). All other policies in this section were rolled forward from previous LDPs. There is one non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance relevant to this section, relating to Aberdeen International Airport and Perwinnes Radar (CD309).

Lessons Learned

3.61 Table 3.8 notes some early lessons learned from the 2023 LDP, alongside considerations for the next Local Development Plan. These are broken down into the topic area structure of the 2023 Plan (CD044). Further monitoring of the 2023 LDP Spatial Strategy and policies will also continue during the preparation of the next Local Development Plan. The adoption of National Planning Framework 4 (CD001) means that there are now areas where NPF4 and the 2023 Plan have duplicate policies. Consideration will therefore be given to the need to maintain local policies that repeat national policies. Many of the issues highlighted here are discussed further in the relevant topic papers within Sections 7 – 17 of this Report.

Topic Area ALDP 2023	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2029
Spatial Strategy	The focus on brownfield and city centre regeneration has sought to concentrate development within the city settlement boundary to support and increase use of existing facilities, services, infrastructure, transport links, and employment opportunities. There are masterplan sites with the city, many of which have rolled over from 2012 Plan. These sites are to be mixed use and provide facilities in line with local living. These sites have planning permission granted.	Have a spatial strategy and vision that meets the development requirements of National Planning Framework 4 policy direction. The current spatial strategy recognises Aberdeen as the regional hub for North East Scotland. It focuses on regenerating brownfield land whilst recognising that development sites should be provided in a range of locations including urban edge locations where appropriate. This approach

Topic Area ALDP 2023	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2029
	The strategy has been useful as it has directed development to allocated sites and with windfall sites this has supporting the overall vision for the city.	has worked well for many years and is considered sound.
Health and Wellbeing	Policy usage is low for some of the policies. This is potentially due to the specialised nature of the policies or due to the fact other legislation has a remit. Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments) is being used to assess planning applications and flag both physical and wellbeing implications to proposals.	With the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 we will need to consider whether the general policies within this section are still required. There may be a need for more targeted, locally specific policies, based on the work with the Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaboration and Marmot Places. Consider how the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes can influence the development of the next plan.
Natural Environment	Policies are well used on the whole. Further non-statutory guidance may be needed on biodiversity. Open Space non-statutory guidance to be updated on completion of Open Space / Natural Environment Strategy.	With the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 we will need to consider whether the general policies within this section are still required. Implication of Green Belt Review, Trees and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Strategy, Nature Networks (all part of forthcoming Natural Environment Strategy) will also have to considered.
Placemaking	The policies are used frequently in determining applications. Policies D1 (Placemaking) and D2 (Amenity) are the most frequently used across all	There are a number of very local policies included which are not replicated within National Planning Framework 4. Consideration will need to

Topic Area ALDP 2023	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2029
	applications. Policies relating to the historic environment are also widely used. The design policies are frequently used as a point of negotiation on planning applications.	be given to the retention of these policies. Implications of Play Sufficiency Assessment will have to be considered.
Resources	Contains some very specific policies that have been seldom used. Policy R6 section on Low and Zero Carbon Buildings has been superseded by new legislation. There is no guidance on hydrogen or battery storage renewables. Applications of these nature are becoming more prevalent in Aberdeen.	Water abstraction is a specific matter to Aberdeen which has to be considered. Consider if local policy or strategic view is required on renewable energy development in Aberdeen.
Housing and Community Need	Policy H1 (Residential Areas) is used frequently, and reflects the volume of householder applications submitted. A review of Short Term Lets within the city may be required to established if there are more hot spots. Constrained sites are linked to ownership and land use, with a small percentage liked to infrastructure.	Due consideration given to the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) from National Planning Framework 4. Review of all sites within the extant plan is required to consider deliverability. Much of the supply is likely to be deliverable.
Vibrant City	Number of policies supporting vibrant, vitality and mix use within the city centre. The city centre affordable housing waiver has supported an increase on city centre living.	Network of Centres may need to be updated to reflect the recommendation within the Retail Study.
Infrastructure and Transport	Developer obligations have continued to make a significant contribution to the funding of infrastructure projects.	With the removal of Supplementary Guidance, there needs to be consideration to how to provide appropriate policy on Developer Obligations.

Topic Area ALDP 2023	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2029
	There is still a high degree of car dependency in the area. New initiatives coming on stream, such as Aberdeen Rapid Transit, may help support modal shift, along with a bedding in of new transport interventions (Low Emission Zone and Bus Priority Infrastructure). Car Parking policy and active travel policy within the Plan support this.	Local policies may still be required to support modal shift in transport.
Business and Industrial Development	There is a substantial employment land allocation, with the majority being marketable. There has been a decrease in take up of employment land over recent years. There has been a creep of other uses into employment land allocations, particularly in locations next to arterial routes.	No employment allocation identified in the National Planning Framework 4. Consider what the employment land need is for Aberdeen, and in what locations. A review of existing sites will be completed by Autumn 2026.

Table 3.8: Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 Lessons Learned

3.62 In summary, a range of policies from the extant Local Development Plan 2023 have not been used or have been used infrequently since its adoption on 20 June 2023. Consideration will be given on whether these policies should be retained in the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan, or if other policies can be amended to take account of the matters raised in these policies. A number of these policies are specialised in nature, and so the policy may be required even if it has yet to be used, or infrequently used. There are also a number of very local policies included in the extant Plan which are not replicated within National Planning Framework 4. Consideration will also need to be given to the retention of these policies.

4. Main Issues arising from Evidence / Key Areas of Change

4.1 The evidence sources identify a number of issues and demographic challenges to be addressed in the production of the next Local Development Plan. These are summarised below, with the main issues collated in line with NPF4's trio of broad policy aims seeking to create:

- Sustainable places
- Liveable places
- Productive places

Demographic Challenges

4.2 The National Records of Scotland (NRS) includes various data projections that can potentially inform future demographic changes or trends. Although this information is useful, it must be kept in mind that these are projections based on current and historical data and cannot, therefore, be interpreted as definitive.

- The Mid-2024 population projections, estimate the population of Aberdeen as 231,780.
- The population of Aberdeen is anticipated to experience an increase of 4.8% (between the years of 2022 - 2032).
- The '0-15' age group is expected to see the largest population decrease between the years of 2022-2032 (-3.3%).
- The largest population increase is anticipated to be in the '75 and over' demographic, with an increase of 25.5% between the years of 2022 and 2032.
- According to the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) (CD298), in Aberdeen City the largest projected increase is in single adult households (+4.4%). The largest percentage increases are in older households, particularly those aged 75+, with projected increases of 18.8% in Aberdeen City.
- The percentage of Aberdeen's population that will be of pensionable age is forecast to increase to 17.4% between 2022 and 2032,
- The percentage of the population that will be of working age is expected to remain around 68% over the same period.

4.3 The expectation is that Aberdeen will experience an increase in the proportion of elderly people within its population in the future. This will likely result in a greater reliance on all medical facilities and service, and accessible and/or adaptable housing in the future. The population increase forecast over the following years, (primarily driven by migration rather than the birth rate), will also exacerbate existing housing demand.

Sustainable Places

- Climate change poses challenges for Aberdeen City through increased temperatures, irregular precipitation patterns (and more frequent periods of sustained precipitation), increased sea levels and more frequent instances of extreme weather events such as storms and floods. There is also an increased risk of coastal erosion along Aberdeen's eastern coastline.
- Climate change also raises the possibility of future droughts which could result in water shortages. In particular, water abstraction from the River Dee could become even more problematic and this will have cross boundary implications with Aberdeenshire.
- Possible water shortages may also impair the growth of crops and increase the risk of wildfires starting in woodlands and forests. All of these outcomes pose potential risks to public health and safety, as well as the economic and ecological vitality of Aberdeen.
- Within the most urban areas of Aberdeen, increased temperatures could risk creating heatsinks. This may require the provision of adequate planting when redeveloping brownfield sites in order to provide more areas of shade and shelter that can help lower temperatures. It may also require us to experiment with and/or promote the use of alternative surfaces for pavements, roofs and areas of civic space.
- A regional Coastal Adaptation Plan (CAP) is currently being developed within Aberdeen to better understand the implications of coastal change within Aberdeen. This would inform on future measures that can be taken to build resilience to variations in the coastline caused by climate change.
- The Granite City Forest Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan (CD134) shall help inform the approach for the protection of existing woodland resources, as well as guide some future planting and the ecological and biodiversity enhancement of existing resources in Aberdeen. This will be superseded in the future once the Council's Forest and Woodland Strategy, (which meets all legislative requirements), has been adopted. Work is underway to create this.
- The Council will need to consider its preferred approach for carbon offsetting (where necessary), as well as whether to use the biodiversity credits system. This will follow the publication of guidance from the Scottish Government on the mechanisms for offsetting biodiversity requirements.
- The Council may need to outline measures to prevent or mitigate the risks of soil compaction arising from potential developments to align with the new requirement outlined in NPF4.
- The Council may also need to create specific policies addressing hydrogen production, due to the potential demand for such facilities as part of the shift away from fossil fuel dependency. In addition to this, battery storage associated with renewable energy developments may also require specific policies to inform its siting and design requirements.
- The Council will need to develop a Nature Network as part of the effort to protect 30% of Scotland's land, coast and freshwaters by 2030. Particular focus will need to be directed towards connecting existing stand-alone areas

of woodland and quality open space with corridors of green space to better facilitate the movement of species between areas.

- A Green Belt Review is being actioned as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. This will consider whether the existing green belt designations are still functioning as a means of preventing coalescence between Aberdeen and its suburbs, as well as considering how the green belt serves to protect or enhance the visual amenity and identity of these settlements. This review will also provide a further opportunity to consider how to connect to other existing areas of meaningful greenspace so as to establish a more cohesive Nature Network throughout the city.

Liveable Places

- There are high levels of disrepair within Aberdeen City's housing stock. There have been significant improvements for the social housing stock, but issues remain within other sectors that will need to be addressed.
- There is significant pressure on social housing stock. The retraction of national subsidies for affordable housing also means that there will be an even greater need for on-site affordable housing contributions within housing developments as opposed to taking commuted sums of funding. This may necessitate consideration of whether to increase the size of allocations on some sites to facilitate the additional necessary provision.
- A shortage of 1-bedroom properties within Aberdeen compared to an overprovision of 2-bedroom properties indicates disparities within the supply and demand in Aberdeen.
- Housing types offered will need to diversify in future to be more accommodating to a wider variety of demographics, and there will need to be an increase in the provision of specialised accommodation to account for the projected ageing population, as well as those with illness or disability that require more accessible properties.
- Additional gypsy traveller sites are required within Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Despite potential locations being identified in the Local Development Plans of both local authorities, there has been a lack of progress in the delivery of these sites.
- 7 of Aberdeen's 11 secondary schools are expected to be operating above optimal capacity by 2030. Aberdeen's School Estate Plan (CD124) will be used to help inform where operational requirement can be made available, as some areas of the city have declining pupil numbers leading to excess unused capacity.
- A lack of available investment for new, extended or altered healthcare facilities is likely to prove a significant challenge in the coming years with funds accrued from Developer Obligations alone being insufficient to finance future projects. NHS Grampian is working with the local authority to identify and address the spatial implications of this.
- A joint Cumulative Transport Appraisal with Aberdeenshire Council will inform the Local Development Plan and its Spatial Strategy. This will be led by

NESTRANS and advised upon by Transport Scotland. It will be used to identify what pressures are on the existing network.

- The findings of the A96 corridor review may also have implications on site selection in the next Local Development Plan. Further spatial implications may arise where there is any need for additional safeguarding of land required for future rail, harbour or airport expansions or alterations. The same safeguarding considerations would also be required in the event of any hydrogen fuelling stations, or projects associated with a new hydrogen strategy coming forward.
- The Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) Framework and Delivery Plan will be used to inform the future strategy for heat distribution across the city and inform the Local Development Plan.
- To preserve historic assets within Aberdeen, Scotland's Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (CD074) will influence the production of policies on built heritage in the Local Development Plan. Existing non-statutory planning guidance on local issues such as granite, cast-iron railings, and shopfronts will likely need to be replicated in the new Local Development Plan, due to the specificity of these issues not being adequately covered by the policies of NPF4.
- Local Living will be defined via an assortment of evidence sources, such as the Active Travel Action Plan (CD194), Open Space Strategy (CD135), Play Sufficiency Assessment (CD133 part one and part two) and the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 (CD047, CD048, CD049, CD050, & CD051).
- Aberdeen has a waiting list for allotments that is currently 218% greater than the number of plots available. There may need to be consideration of how more allotment sites can be delivered to address current demand. This would help achieve the objectives set out within Granite City Growing (CD151) (Aberdeen's Food Growing Strategy), as well as Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Food Growing (CD153).

Productive Places

- A review of the current City Centre Retail Core zoning may be required in light of revised permitted development rights.
- There has been a significant increase in ground floor vacancy rates in the city centre, with the Bon Accord Centre and Union Street particularly badly affected. The vacancy rates are higher than the UK average if ranked on floorspace (as opposed to the number of vacant units).
- There may be a need for express policies addressing the siting of drive-throughs within the next Local Development Plan. Efforts to promote local living may be undermined if there is a proliferation of inappropriately located developments of this nature.
- Work is ongoing on Union Street to improve the urban realm and deliver on part of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CCBMP) (CD045). Works are also ongoing at the beach to deliver a class-leading beach park and events field. These developments, as well as enhancing the functionality

and desirability of these locations, can also contribute towards efforts of attracting and sustaining tourism to the city.

- There is currently a broad level of quantitative retail deficiency for bulky comparison goods (and market demand has been identified).
- NPF4 now requires that Local Development Plans include a landbank of construction aggregates that covers at least a 10-year period. North Lasts Quarry and Blackhills Quarry have extant consents lasting until 2047 and 2050 respectively, with both receiving extended consents that ensured a land bank of permitted reserves for a period exceeding 10 years.
- Aberdeen has experienced a higher number of visitors and expenditure by visitors year on year (between 2019-2023) and hotel occupancy and average room rates have returned to (or exceeded) pre-Covid-19 levels. There are however trends of increasing business costs, recruitment challenges and implications arising from short-term lets legislation. A visitor levy scheme is being developed following royal assent of The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024, and this may offer an avenue of revenue to sustain additional demand in the future.
- Aberdeen City has not yet achieved 100% coverage across the city with full fibre broadband connections. As of June 2026 93.1% coverage has been achieved (compared to the Scottish average of 86.5%). The Local Development Plan will still need to account for and facilitate the delivery of the telecommunications infrastructure to achieve this objective.
- There remains a need for Aberdeen to transition away from oil and gas related industries in order to achieve net zero targets. The promotion of renewable energy production, hydrogen production and storage and carbon capture and storage can potentially replace these, however, this will necessitate re-training of existing workforces and investment to achieve.
- There has been a decline in the uptake of employment land in Aberdeen over the past 10 years. Although partially attributable to the UK's departure from the EU, the downturn in the oil industry and the Covid-19 pandemic; there has also been a loss of employment land to alternative land uses. A revision of the Spatial Strategy may be necessary to manage and control further loss of employment land.

4.4 Further to the above, the Delivery Programme (CD343) is a critical component in the development plan process. The extant Delivery Programme lists the infrastructure outlined as necessary to underpin the implementation of the Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044, CD292, CD310). The Delivery Programme is a "live" document and was last updated in September 2025. It outlines the infrastructure commitments and requirements for each opportunity site within the Local Development Plan 2023; this includes housing sites, non-housing sites and city centre masterplan sites. Further to this, key infrastructure and policy actions are also monitored and updated. Where known, timescales, locations and key partners are specified with the Delivery Programme.

4.5 The extant Local Development Plan and the Delivery Programme are intended to help inform the Council's Capital Plan and to help focus corporate and national

investment in the appropriate place, to maximise this infrastructure and deliver appropriate development. The Capital Programme Delivery: Project Update 2026 outlines the current progress of capital projects related to the Local Development Plan such as Countesswells Primary School and the B999 Road Junction Improvements.

4.6 The early section of the Delivery Programme is structured in accordance with seven masterplan zones, as shown on pages 36-38 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 ((CD044, CD292, CD310), and outlines infrastructure requirements for these zones. This extends to infrastructure on walking and cycling, public transport, roads, water, education, health and other site-specific infrastructure.

Masterplan Zone	Opportunity Sites included
Dunford and Murcar	OP1 Murcar OP2 Cloverhill and OP45 Berryhill OP10 Dubford
Grandhome	OP8 East Woodcroft OP9 Grandhome
Newhills Expansion and Dyce Drive	OP18 Craibstone North and Walton Farm OP19 Rowett North OP20 Craibstone South OP21 Rowett North OP22 Greenferns Landward
Greenferns	OP33 Greenferns
Maidencraig	OP31 Maidencraig South East OP32 Maidencraig North East
Countesswells	OP38 Countesswells
Loirston	OP59 Loirston OP60 Charleston

Table 4.1: Masterplan Zones and Opportunity Sites

4.7 Within the seven masterplan zones, the extant LDP and Delivery Programme are clear that developers are expected to work together to prepare masterplans on multi-developer sites and coordinate the planning and delivery of associated infrastructure requirements. Masterplans have now been adopted for all multi-developer sites in the masterplan zones listed in Table 4.1, above - see Chapter 3 for the list of adopted masterplans. The approach of clustering development and associated infrastructure into masterplan zones helps to monitor sites spatially, thereby viewing infrastructure primarily through a place based lens. This approach may be continued within the forthcoming Delivery Programme.

4.8 The Delivery Programme uses the latest published Housing Land Audit to identify build out rates for housing sites. This extends to beyond the ten year period of the Local Development Plan. The housing pipeline is broken into short term (1-3 years), medium term (4-6 years), long term (7-10 years) and post 10 year to 2035 / 2036 and beyond.

4.9 A forthcoming Proposed Delivery Programme will be developed alongside the Proposed Plan and will look to carry forward best practice measures from the

current approach. The forthcoming Delivery Programme will continue to be linked to the most up to date published Housing Land Audit. The annual Housing Land Audit will monitor the delivery of housing land to inform the pipeline and the actions to be taken in the delivery programme. These could include following a masterplan style approach, ensuring the Delivery Programme has links to the Council's Capital Programme, ensuring a deliverable housing land pipeline, while setting out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the Spatial Strategy, making reference to National, Regional and Local strategies and using stakeholder engagement. For allocation in the Proposed Plan, sites should be free of constraints as far as possible.

4.10 The Proposed Delivery Programme will be important in ensuring facilities and infrastructure are delivered timeously alongside new development. Best practice will be sought on how to present the Delivery Programme for the Proposed Plan from the Local Development Plan Guidance and any future further publications. The current approach comprises a PDF of a spreadsheet. Alternative presentation methods could be explored to enhance clarity and ease of understanding.

5. Position Statement – Areas of Agreement / Dispute

5.1 This section summarises the key statements of agreement and disputes over the sufficiency of the evidence and the Council's response to these matters.

5.2 The Evidence Report has been split into 10 themed topic areas that provide a summary of the evidence base for each topic (Report Sections 8 – 17). The topic areas are grouped to broadly reflect the policy areas within NPF4. Each topic area provides a summary of evidence relating to the policy areas within NPF4, as set out in Table 5.1 below, areas of dispute from the initial and re-submission are also noted.

Evidence Report Section	Topic Paper Heading	NPF4 Policy Area	NPF4 Policies	Disputes Noted
8.	Topic Paper 1 Spatial Strategy	Sustainable Places Productive Places	Policy 8 Green belts Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings Policy 10 Costal development Policy 26 Business and industry	Three organisations and three individuals
9.	Topic Paper 2 Delivery of Homes	Liveable Places	Policy 16 Quality homes	Four organisation and one individual
10.	Topic Paper 3 Infrastructure	Liveable Places	Policy 18 Infrastructure first Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure Policy 24 Digital infrastructure	One organisation and one individual
11.	Topic Paper 4 Sustainable Transport	Sustainable Places	Policy 13 Sustainable transport	
12.	Topic Paper 5 Climate Change,	Sustainable Places	Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis	One organisation

	Mitigation and Adaptation	Liveable Places	Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation Policy 22 Flood risk and water management	and one individual
13.	Topic Paper 6 Nature and Biodiversity	Sustainable Places	Policy 3 Biodiversity Policy 4 Natural places Policy 5 Soils Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees	One organisation and one individual
14.	Topic Paper 7 Energy and Resources	Sustainable Places Liveable Places Productive Places	Policy 11 Energy Policy 12 Zero waste Policy 19 Heating and cooling Policy 33 Minerals	One individual
15.	Topic Paper 8 Centres of Business and Cultures	Productive Places	Policy 27 City, town and commercial centres Policy 28 Retail Policy 30 Tourism Policy 31 Culture and creativity	One organisation and one individual
16.	Topic Paper 9 Place	Sustainable Places Liveable Places	Policy 7 Historic assets and places Policy 14 Design, quality and place Policy 15 Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods	One organisation and one individual
17.	Topic Paper 10 Wellbeing and Community	Liveable Places Productive Places	Policy 21 Play, recreation and sport Policy 23 Health and safety Policy 25 Community wealth building	One individual

Table 5.1: National Planning Framework 4 Topic Areas and Policies

5.3 The aquaculture industry is not active within Aberdeen City, and therefore the topic areas do not cover NPF4 Policy 32 Aquaculture. As Aberdeen City is an urban authority, NPF4 Policy 17 Rural homes and Policy 29 Rural development are also not covered.

Topic Area 1: Spatial Strategy

5.4 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of Spatial Strategy:

- Regional Spatial Priorities;
- Greenbelts;
- Brownfield Development;
- Coastal Development; and,
- Business and Industry.

5.5 The evidence includes an overview of the Aberdeen City and Shire Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (CD002), outlining its purpose as a “bridging document” that supports the transposition of the Spatial Strategy from the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan of 2020 into the National Planning Framework 4.

5.6 With regards to evidence for the greenbelt and brownfield development, the intentions for a greenbelt review are set out, as are the implications of Scotland’s third Land Use Strategy in determining the spatial extent of the greenbelt. A number of documents which pertain to the landscape and its character are included. Reference is made to the AECOM Nature Network Corridor Map and the Aberdeen Green Belt Review 2010 (CD009). Maps and tables are included as supporting information which set out the following: The Housing Land Audit 2024 (CD012), 2020 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study Sites (CD014) and 2023 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey Sites (CD010). Brownfield and Greenfield development trends in Aberdeen are explored. Reference is made to the Council’s commitment to deliver a more up to date Brownfield Urban Capacity Study to follow on from the 2019 study. The latest Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (CD011) is referred to with a breakdown of the headline figures. A brief reference is also made to the number and type of sites on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland which can be found in Aberdeen.

5.7 With regards to coastal development, reference is made to coastal zoning within the extant 2023 LDP and the Scottish Government Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance (2023) (CD015). This includes a breakdown of its aims, noting also that a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is being developed in Aberdeen at the present time. The ‘Flooding and Coastal Change’ theme from Aberdeen Adapts (CD016) is set out. Baseline data on sea level rises under high and low emission scenarios are set out with the broad consequences for Aberdeen briefly explained. Reference is made to Dynamic Coast, and its identification of implications for Aberdeen, though this document is signposted for further exploration under the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Area.

5.8 With regards to business and industry, the evidence references statistics on Gross Value Added per head for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, median weekly wages, employment by sector within Aberdeen and nationally, statistics on the percentage and number of working age people in employment, the main growth sectors within the North East, business and industry land supply and its take up and statistics for office and industrial space. Reference is made to a number of other relevant national and regional strategies and funds, together with statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) – Work and Local Economy/Facilities and Services (CD042).

5.9 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland and 4 individuals agreed with the evidence in this section and stated that no evidence had been missed. NatureScot and NESTRANS have confirmed they do not dispute the evidence but have provided further comments and several amendments have been made to the Strategy Topic as a result. Three individuals did not agree with its contents.
- Homes for Scotland and Bancon Homes have raised disputes on the Green Belt Review and Brownfield Urban Capacity Study. They have also provided further comments and amendments to the Strategy Topic have been made as a result.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland raised several comments which are being treated as a dispute, although it has been possible to address some of these comments within the Strategy Topic.
- 3 members of the public disagree with the evidence used. One states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves. Two further members of the public did not reply to follow up email.

Topic Area 2: Delivery of Homes

5.10 The mapped locations of the 2023 LDP housing allocations and the 2025 Housing Land Audit sites (CD327) (both with colour coding indicating remaining capacity) are set out within the evidence. Mapping of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data for housing is included to give an indication of where the most deprived areas of the city are situated.

5.11 The Evidence Report summary sets out the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement within NPF4 and Aberdeen's figure of 7000 units over 10 years. It covers the demographic context of Aberdeen. Summaries are provided relating to Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023-2028 (CD298). Chapter 2 relates to the key demographic issues for the local housing market, Chapter 3 relates to housing quality, stock pressures and size/type/tenure/location of social housing. Chapter 4 refers to outcomes and includes all tenure housing estimates based on 4 scenarios and sets out the

reasoning for using the growth scenario to calculate the housing land requirement. Chapter 5 refers to specialist housing provision. A map showing the location of the single Travelling Persons site is also included.

5.12 The report notes that the current Local Housing Strategy dates from 2025 to 2030 (CD331), and was approved in August 2025. The Local Housing Strategy sets the Housing Supply Target at 880 dwellings per annum.

5.13 The following are summarised: details on existing supply from the 2025 Housing Land Audit, greenfield and brownfield development trends, windfall development trends, headline figures from the city's 2024 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey submission and the 2020 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (CD014) and data relating to affordability based up the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 (CD301). Maps of the Strategic Housing Investment Sites are also included.

5.14 Further areas discussed are: wheelchair accessible housing, short terms lets, Houses in Multiple Occupation, the self-build register, reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Place Standard assessment.

5.15 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- Thirteen responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland) 3 from housing developers, (Bancon Homes, Mac Mic Group, Barratt/David Wilson Homes), and 7 members of the public. Of those listed, 6 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and others provided further evidence sources and comments.
- NatureScot, NHS Grampian and 5 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- A member of the public raised a dispute. No response has been received to follow up emails.
- Homes for Scotland and Bancon Homes have raised disputes on the draft Local Housing Strategy and Brownfield Urban Capacity Study. They have also provided further comments and amendments to the Delivery of Homes Topic as a result.
- Bancon have raised a dispute about the density figures in the current Brownfield Urban Capacity Study.
- Homes for Scotland and Bancon have raised a dispute regarding the use of the Existing Need in Scotland and Aberdeen Reports commissioned by Homes for Scotland.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland raised several comments which are being treated as a dispute, although it has been possible to address some of these comments within the Delivery of Homes Topic.
- Mac Mic Group raised several comments and it has been possible to address these comments within the Delivery of Homes Topic. Mac Mic Group is supportive of the Homes for Scotland position.

Topic Area 3: Infrastructure and Communication

5.16 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of Infrastructure and Communication:

- Infrastructure First;
- Blue and Green Infrastructure; and,
- Digital infrastructure.

5.17 With regards to evidence for infrastructure first, a map of Aberdeen's cemeteries is included. Water, drainage and sewerage systems are briefly explored, including a map of available water capacity in Aberdeen and its immediate surrounds. Planned works by Scottish Water, the key Scottish Water infrastructure and the issue of water abstractions from the River Dee are highlighted. Gas infrastructure is briefly covered with reference to Scottish Gas Network Aberdeen Vision Project 2020 (CD290). Scottish and Southern Electricity Transmission lines and distributions lines are mentioned, with a map of the main overline and underground cables for the city included. Waste and recycling is covered with a map of the main waste and recycling centres and recycling points shown. The following areas are mentioned but signposted for more robust discussion in their more relevant topic area sections: local living, play recreation and sport, transport infrastructure and the district heat network.

5.18 The current capacities of healthcare facilities across the city are set out. NHS Grampian responded to explain its circumstances relating to constraints over funding new facilities in the short term while it works upon a Programme of Initial Agreement. The current capacities of primary schools and secondary schools are set out using data from the 2024 School Roll Forecast (CD346). Reference is made to the School Estate Plan (CD124) with details of revisions to this caused by the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete and its removal as a priority. Reference to the Schools' Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2026 (CD126) and the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Delivery Plan 2024 – 2026 (CD127) are also included within the evidence.

5.19 With regards to evidence for blue and green infrastructure, details of the Open Space Audit 2024 (CD136 & CD137) are included with key findings. NatureScot's documents: Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention, Maximising the Benefits of Green Infrastructure in Social Housing (CD234) and Nature Networks Framework (CD235) are referenced. It is noted that AECOM have developed a nature networks map to guide local authorities. Furthermore, it is noted that Aberdeenshire Council are currently working on their own blue and green network mapping which will affect Aberdeen City Council strategies. The following areas are also mentioned but signposted for more robust discussion in their more relevant topic area sections: food growing strategy, green space network, play recreation and sport, greenbelt, local nature conservation sites, trees and woodland, core paths, parks and gardens. For blue infrastructure a number of documents have been referenced which relate to flood risk, effects of climate change upon coastal changes, water quality and

availability, carbon and peatland mapping, bathing water quality and management of the water environment.

5.20 With regards to evidence for digital infrastructure, a map has been included which shows locations of telecommunications masts from Aberdeen City Council's planning records from the past 20 years. Statistics on 4G and 5G coverage are noted. Areas of the city which have the poorest access to superfast broadband are noted. Statistics on coverage of full fibre gigabit coverage are noted.

5.21 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NHS Grampian and 3 members of the public responded to the public consultation, agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.
- Scottish Water and SEPA were satisfied with the paper and did not dispute the evidence. They made comments which included suggested changes to the paper, and these changes were accepted.
- Shell UK Limited, Bancon and NatureScot provided further commentary but did not dispute the paper.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that they do not agree with the evidence within the Topic Paper. They wish to maintain all disputes previously raised for the initial Evidence Report Submission.
- One member of the public disagrees with the evidence and has stated that there is too much to read. They have not responded to follow up correspondence during the resubmission process.

Topic Area 4: Sustainable Transport

5.22 This topic area sets the Council's commitment to undertaking a joint Cumulative Transport Appraisal with NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council. Mapped locations of transport infrastructure (car parks, bus station, train stations, park and ride facilities) are included. A number of national transport strategies are referenced. The four main behaviours from Transport Scotland's Reducing Car Use for a Healthier, Fairer and Greener Scotland (CD177) are set out. Relevant recommendations from Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Project Review 2 Final Summary Report (CD180) are included. The NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188) is referenced which explores forecasting of transport statistics based upon 'with policy' and 'without policy' scenarios. The NESTRANS Reducing Car-km and Carbon Emissions Executive Summary (CD190) is referenced which explores the qualitative and quantitative impacts of measures the region can implement to influence car usage.

5.23 The six priorities of the NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2040 (CD185) are set out. Details of the 29 intervention 'options' to achieve these priorities are set out. The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021 (CD191) is referenced and its draft update 2023-2030 is currently undergoing review following public consultation (CD192). The eight overarching objectives are set out within the evidence as are

the 14 outcomes that it intends to achieve up to 2030, with more specific outputs also set out.

5.24 A number of active travel documents are referenced, such as Transport Scotland's Active Travel Framework (CD181), Aberdeen City Active Travel Action Plan (CD194) and Aberdeen Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (CD195), and an overview of the aims of these respective documents is set out. The site specific projects of the Aberdeen Multi-Model Corridor Studies are listed. Core paths and rights of way are discussed and a maps of both within Aberdeen are included. A number of statistics relating to active travel are included within the evidence from the 2023 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study (CD186).

5.25 With regards to public transport, data on rail and bus travel is included. A summary of train station facilities is provided. A map is included which shows 2023 Local Development Plan land reserved for transport. A map showing weekday bus routes is included. Statistics from NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study (CD186) give an indication of bus patronage trends, including usage of park and ride facilities. Private car use statistics are also included after this section. A brief summary of Aberdeen Rapid Transport, a commitment included within National Planning Framework 4, is included which shows a map of potential routes through Aberdeen. Improvements and planned appraisals funded by Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund and the City Region Deal are set out. The locations of bus priority infrastructure are also mapped.

5.26 With regards to car parking, controlled parking zones are mapped with total city centre parking totals noted. Public vehicle charge points are mapped and discussed. Car club locations are also mapped. The Ports and Airport are briefly discussed with relevant sources included. A list of SEPA requested sources is also set out. Statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan are referenced for this topic paper regarding the following themes: moving around, public transport and traffic and parking.

5.27 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- Transport Scotland, NESTRANS, NHS Grampian, Nature Scot and 3 members of the public responded, agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper, and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.
- Transport Scotland and NESTRANS sought some minor changes to the document which were accepted.
- NatureScot, Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed that they did not dispute the Topic Paper but have provided further comments.
- The one individual who disputed the previous Evidence Report removed their dispute, and confirmed their correspondence should be noted a comment.

Topic Area 5: Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation

5.28 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects:

- Climate and Nature Crisis, Climate Mitigation and Adaptation; and,
- Flood Risk and Water Management.

5.29 With regards to climate and nature crisis/climate mitigation and adaptation, a number of strategies and documents are included. The themes from Scotland's Climate Change Plan are set out as, are the key sectors and actions from the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032 (CD023)**.** The 23 objectives from 5 adaptation outcomes are included from Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2024 – 2029 (CD024). Key statistics relating to Scotland's carbon emissions are set out from the Climate Change Committee Report to Parliament 2023 (CD247). Future climate impacts in an Aberdeen context are set out from Aberdeen Adapts (CD016) while the city's strategic priorities to support energy transition are included within the evidence from Net Zero Vision and Prospectus for Aberdeen (CD029), Net Zero Route map Aberdeen (CD030), and the Council Climate Change Plan 2021 – 2025 (CD031). Projected climate implications are included from Met Office statistics (CD032). A statistical breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions per sector in Aberdeen have been included using UK Greenhouse Gas Data (CD033). Peatland mapping and soils data are also included.

5.30 With regards to flood risk and water management, the responsibilities of local authorities are listed from The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (CD034). Key outcomes for flood resilient places are listed from the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 (CD024). Particularly vulnerable areas to flooding in Aberdeen are discussed from the Flood Risk Management Plan North East Local District Plan (CD287). The evidence notes that Aberdeen does not have a surface water management plan but is working with Scottish Water and SEPA to provide a Strategic Growth Agreement for natural remedies in terms of blue/green infrastructure to alleviate surface water flooding pressures. A number of SEPA sources are included that cover water scarcity, flood maps, recommended riparian corridors (CD039), guidance on land use planning and the water environment (CD254).

5.31 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Mac Mic Group and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- SEPA, NatureScot, and Bancon Homes confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments and evidence sources which have been added to the topic paper.
- Homes for Scotland dispute the site methodology and provided an alternative.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns

raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 6: Nature and Biodiversity

5.32 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects:

- Biodiversity;
- Natural Place;
- Soils; and,
- Forestry and Woodland.

5.33 With regards to biodiversity, it is noted that the Council is to complete an annual Natural Environment Report which will succeed the Biodiversity Duty Report. The evidence notes the commitment to protect 30% of land and seas for nature set out within Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan (CD286)**.** Key Scottish statistics are listed from the State of Nature Report 2023 (CD218). A number of national lists, maps and overlays relating to biodiversity data are referenced within the evidence as well as local spatial sources such as the Green Space Network. The location of Aberdeen's one Special Area of Conservation and one Special Protection Area is noted. The evidence notes where the highest concentrations of invasive species are found in the city. Information relating to specific species which require protection and support are included within the evidence.

5.34 With regards to natural places, the main issues facing coastlines and freshwater are set out within multiple evidence sources. The location of Aberdeen's four Sites of Specific Scientific Interest are included, as are Aberdeen's four Local Nature Reserves and 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites. Statistics from the consultation on the 'Natural Space' theme from the Place Standard Assessments are included (CD041 & CD042).

5.35 With regards to soils, the Aberdeen sites of prime agricultural land are included, as are sites where class 1, 3 and 5 peatland can be found. There are a number of listed spatial datasets relating to soils in the evidence alongside other projects and documents of relevance.

5.36 With regards to forestry, woodland and trees, the objectives and priorities of Scotland's Forestry Strategy (CD223) are listed. It is noted that Aberdeen has 3 recorded sites of Class 2a Ancient Woodland and 8 Class 3 sites, and these are included within a map. The four strategic priorities of the Aberdeen's Forest and Woodland Strategy are identified. Other sources of spatial data and guidance are listed.

5.37 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NHS Grampian, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

- NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Mac Mic Group confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments.
- SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper and note further comments.
- Bancon Homes have raised a dispute in relation to Prime Agricultural Land.
- One individual respondent agreed there were no pieces of information missing, but noted there was a lot of read.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 7: Energy and Resources

5.38 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects:

- Energy;
- Heating and Cooling;
- Minerals; and,
- Zero Waste.

5.39 With regards to energy, targets, challenges and outcomes are set out within the evidence from Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (CD170) and Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy (CD202). Aberdeen's Energy Transition Zone, including the Hydrogen Campus and Hydrogen Hub, is outlined. Aberdeen's onshore wind spatial framework is outlined. Aberdeen's three important offshore wind developments are listed alongside the identification of Scotland's National Marine Plan (CD173) as a key consideration for future offshore wind projects. Main national sources for hydrogen are set out as are the 4 hydrogen projects in Aberdeen and the objectives of the Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy (CD203). The two locations of solar arrays are listed, as well as OP64, which is a site allocated for a solar array in the extant Local Development Plan. The most recent application history relating to battery storage is also included.

5.40 With regards to heating and cooling, the key outcomes from the Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy (CD206) are listed as are the city's four Combined Heat and Power Network schemes and the seven heat networks in the city.

5.41 With regards to minerals, demand and supply statistics are included from the Aggregate Demand and Supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2035 (CD208), the 2019 and 2022 Mineral Planning Surveys (CD209). The locations of the two active quarries in Aberdeen are also listed.

5.42 With regards to zero waste, the key actions from Making Things Last: A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland (CD211) and the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030 consultation (CD213) are set out. Waste consumption statistics are included from SEPA's Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary. The Aberdeen context is outlined in the Aberdeen City Waste Strategy (CD215) and

the Net Zero Aberdeen: Circular Economy Strategy (CD216). The evidence notes that there are 4 public household waste recycling centres in Aberdeen. Other key facilities include the NESS Energy from Waste Facility, the TECA Anaerobic Digestion Plant and Altens East Materials Recovery Facility.

5.43 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NatureScot, NHS Grampian, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments and evidence sources which have been added to the topic paper.
- One individual respondent agreed there were no pieces of information missing, but noted there was a lot of read.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 8: Centres of Business and Cultures

5.44 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects:

- City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres;
- Retail;
- Tourism; and,
- Culture & Creativity.

5.45 With regards to city, town, local and commercial centres, the evidence notes details from the Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 (CD047, CD048, CD049, CD050 & CD051) which assessed retail capacity, turnover and opportunities. The hierarchy of extant Local Development Plan centres are set out, and a map of these sites is included. The types of uses found within these centres and statistics on footfall are touched upon based on a retail centre health check from 2023 (CD052). Feedback from householder surveys from the retail study are included. The brands and locations of drive throughs are set out in a table and mapped. Feedback from the 'Work and Local Economy' theme of the Place Standard Assessments is included. The main works from the City Centre and Beach Masterplan are listed (CD046).

5.46 With regards to retail, a summary of details of retail and service provision in Aberdeen are set out alongside statistics from the Retail Study (CD047, CD048, CD049, CD050 & CD051) which includes a breakdown of quantitative and qualitative retail deficiencies. A list of projects and schemes is included which seek to improve the outlook of retail services in the city centre. The key projects and services undertaken by the Aberdeen Business Improvement District are listed.

5.47 With regards to tourism, the main recent projects in Aberdeen are listed including the new Aberdeen South Harbour which facilitates the docking of cruise vessels. Visitor statistics are included from the Aberdeen City STEAM Report (CD060, CD061) as well as hotel occupancy rates. The major tourist sites and hotels/guest houses are mapped. The objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy (CD058), Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023-2026 (CD059) and the National Tourism Strategy (CD056) are listed, as are brief descriptions of other relevant strategies and funds. The Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report (CD062) notes Tourism as a key growth sector.

5.48 With regards to culture and creativity, it is noted that the Culture and Investment Programme will replace the current grant schemes for arts and culture and that the Council has begun to invest in cultural assets via the Place Based Investment Fund. The main cultural and creative locations in Aberdeen are listed and mapped. National budgets for culture are included. Ambitions from the Culture Aberdeen Strategy (CD070) and the projects under Creative Learning Aberdeen are listed. Key statistics for visitors are listed from the Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review.

5.49 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Bancon and 3 members of the public agreed that all key pieces of evidence had been considered in this section. One member of the public considered that the evidence used was highly relevant.
- NatureScot provided comments relating to the importance of blue green infrastructure which had already been addressed in Topic Paper 3 Infrastructure and Communications.
- McDonalds Restaurants did not dispute the evidence presented but did not agree with the evidence presented. McDonalds Restaurants believed that we had missed key pieces of evidence in preparing the topic paper. However, no additional evidence sources were suggested. We are minded to treat this as a dispute.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 9: Place

5.50 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects:

- Historic Assets and Places;
- Design, Quality and Place; and,
- Local Living.

5.51 With regards to evidence for historic assets and places, reference is made to documents produced by Historic Environment Scotland. Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment (CD073) is a 5 year national strategy for the historic environment. Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (CD074) is a policy document which supports decision making. Further evidence hosted by Historic Environment Scotland's interactive portal is referenced. Datasets include conservation areas, policies, places of worship, buildings at risk register, designated sites, and grants (5 live projects in Aberdeen are set out in a table). It is noted also that the Council's Historic Environment Record service host a full database of the 6,262 known sites of historic and archaeological interest in Aberdeen. A number of other elements are referenced: the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CD087), Aberdeen City Heritage Trust, Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, Heritage and Place Programme, Article 4 Directions (removal of permitted development rights for replacing windows within three conservation areas) (CD089A & CD089B) and Place Standard Assessments (CD041 & CD042).

5.52 Regarding the evidence for design quality and place, reference is made to the Place Standard Assessments (CD041 & CD042), which have taken place online and across Aberdeen with many of the results set out. Details of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD046) and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan refresh 2022 (CD045) are included. Reference is made to Aberdeen Planning Guidance Aberdeen Placemaking Process (CD113) and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs. Reference is made to Local Place Plans. Reference is made to the Planning Performance review (CD114, CD115 & CD116) and a table showing recent results where value was added by the development management process in Aberdeen.

5.53 With regards to evidence for local living, a list is made of all the factual or spatial data sources that the Council has relating to the 5 categories of the local living framework. Reference is made to a number of national sources such as Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood Planning Guidance (CD120), Climate Exchange – 20 minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context (CD117), and Nationwide equity assessment of the 20-minute neighbourhood in the Scottish context (CD118). The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal – Excel Results (CD119) are also set out which indicates the percentage of homes in Aberdeen which have access to various amenities. Headline figures from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 are reported within the evidence. NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling (CD186) is briefly covered indicating Aberdeen specific data relating to travel mode choice. The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1 (CD048) is referenced which sets out observations regarding the accessibility of retail services in the city. The Population Needs Assessment 2023 (CD122) , Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (CD043) and Full Outcomes Framework are referenced. The locations of public toilets and public water taps are also included as maps.

5.54 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Bancon confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments which have been added to the topic paper.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland raised several comments which are being treated as a dispute, although they are general comments in nature.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 10: Wellbeing and Community

5.55 The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects:

- Play, Recreation and Sport;
- Health and Safety; and,
- Community Wealth Building.

5.56 With regards to evidence for play, recreation and sport, a rundown of the number of facilities in Aberdeen (both public and private) and their nature is given. The Facility Planning Model (CD129) is referred to and the key statistics in determining future demand for 3 court halls, swimming pools and full-size synthetic pitches is given. Specific identified investment is set out from the Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy (CD130). Key actions relating to physical activity and play for children are listed from the Children's Services Strategic Plan (CD131). Themes relating to play are listed from the Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy (CD132). Tree and Woodland strategic implementation (CD134) is touched upon. Key statistics relating to quality and accessibility of play and recreation spaces are included, taken from the Open Space Strategy 2011-2016 (CD135) and the Open Space Audit 2024 (CD136). Statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement plan (CD043) are referenced for this topic paper regarding the Play and Recreation theme.

5.57 With regards to evidence for health and wellbeing, the determinants of health and wellbeing are diagrammatically represented along with the aims set out in Health Priorities for Scotland (CD138) and a list of the most affected groups relating to suicide in Scotland with acknowledgement that this is in part influenced by factors relating to placemaking and planning. Statistics on obesity are included from the Scottish Government's 'A Healthier Future' (CD141). Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map data for the bottom 20% health deprived areas are included. Supporting statistics and aims from NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership are included. National Records for Scotland data on demographics gives a breakdown on life expectancy in Aberdeen and a table is included showing the leading causes of death in the city. Other related elements that are set out include locations of food growing sites (such as allotments), issues

of air quality (including the 3 air quality management areas) and excessive noise, land contamination and public safety and hazards (including Aberdeen Airport Public Safety Zone, pipeline notification zone and quarries). The results of the themes 'Feeling Safe' and 'Influence and Sense of Control' from the Place Standard exercise have also been set out.

5.58 With regards to community wealth building, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map data for the bottom 20% deprived areas, income and employment deprived areas are included. Aberdeen employment statistics from the Office of National Statistics are included. Key activities that the Council is engaged in to promote community wealth building is set out within Committee Report COM/22/279 (CD160 & CD160A). The evidence notes that there have been 6 community asset transfers in Aberdeen since the introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. It is noted that the Council has a list of all non-housing property assets with details of requests for sites on the Community Assets Transfer webpage. Relevant statistics and priorities from the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Aberdeen North, Central and South Locality Plan are referenced.

5.59 The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows:

- NatureScot, NHS Grampian, sportscotland and 2 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- Homes for Scotland, Bancon and Shell UK Limited confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments and evidence sources which have been added to the topic paper.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Engagement Following Resubmission

5.60 Summaries of stakeholder engagement following resubmission of the Evidence Report can be found in Chapter 9 Delivery of Homes, Chapter 10 Infrastructure and Chapter 11 Sustainable Transport.

6. Legislative Requirements

6.1 The matters identified in Section 15(5) of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997(CD315) , as amended, which the Council must set out its view on in the Evidence Report, and which must be taken into account in preparing the new LDP's spatial strategy, and the corresponding Sections of the Evidence Report are set out below (table 6.1):

Section 15(5) of the 1997 Act, as amended	**Section of the Evidence Report**
The principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district	All topic papers (Sections 8 – 17)
The principle purposes for which the land is used	All topic papers (Sections 8 – 17)
The size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district	Delivery of Homes (Section 9) Infrastructure (Section 10) Wellbeing and Communities (Section 17)
The housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people	Delivery of Homes (Section 9)
The desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement	Delivery of Homes (Section 9)
The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and the use of land on those health needs	Wellbeing and Communities (Section 17)
The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and the use of land on those education needs	Infrastructure (Section 10) Wellbeing and Communities (Section 17)
The extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population	Not relevant
The capacity of education services in the district	Infrastructure (Section 10)
The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including, in particular but not	Centres of Business and Cultures (Section 15) Place (Section 16)

limited to, live music venues) in the district	
The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education systems)	Infrastructure (Section 10) Sustainable Transport (Section 11) Energy and Resources (Section 14)
How that infrastructure is used	Infrastructure (Section 10) Sustainable Transport (Section 11) Energy and Resources (Section 14)
Any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to any of the matters mentioned above.	All topic papers (Sections 8 – 17)

Table 6.1: Legal Requirements of Evidence Report

7. Engagement

7.1 The development of this Evidence Report has been aided by a collaborative approach to data and spatial gathering and analysis with Key Agencies and other stakeholders, as well as consultation and engagement with a wide range of organisations and the general public. This section summarises the consultation and engagement activity that has been undertaken and sets out how the Council has sought views in the preparing of the Evidence Report and how these views have been taken account of. The consultation and engagement undertaken has included a range of activities, including online surveys, in person events, meetings and consultation on the Topic Papers. Appendix 3 includes a comprehensive Engagement Tracker to support this section, the Annex B.

7.2 The main elements of the Engagement Strategy were as follows:

- Corporate Dialogue and Input;
- Early Draft Topic Paper Consultation and Draft Topic Paper Consultation;
- Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future Engagement Exercise;
- Workshops and Other Targeted Work with Stakeholders; and
- Additional Targeted Stakeholder Consultation to inform resubmission.

Additional Consultation to Inform Resubmission

7.3 Additional consultation was held to inform this resubmission, further to the extensive engagement and consultation undertaken and is detailed below from 7.15 ‘Initial Consultation and Engagement’.

7.4 Informed by the Reporter’s recommendations, the Council undertook further targeted sessions and dialogue to inform this Evidence Report prior to resubmission. This focused on the matters identified by the Reporter as requiring further explanation or additional evidence, including the Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR), infrastructure capacity and condition, education and healthcare matters, as well as developer obligations, sustainable transport and cross-boundary infrastructure issues.

7.5 Further meetings were held and correspondence was exchanged with Key Agencies and stakeholders including; NHS Grampian, NESTRANS, Transport Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council Services (education and estates) and FIRS. This included discussion of healthcare infrastructure, the Cumulative Transport Appraisal, transport investment and cross-boundary transport issues, housing and infrastructure evidence and housing figures. This is recorded in the summary activity log, table 7.1 below, and in the relevant topic papers.

7.6 All draft revised chapters; Chapter 09 - Delivery of Homes, Chapter 10 - Infrastructure and Chapter 11-Transport were circulated to FIRS. The FIRS

membership includes, Key Agencies, infrastructure providers, stakeholders, Aberdeenshire Council and internal council services, see table 7.6 for full membership details.

7.7 Key Agencies, development industry representatives and stakeholders who had previously submitted disputes, were issued relevant draft revised chapters.

7.8 The revised Chapter 09 - Delivery of Homes and Chapter 10 - Infrastructure were shared with the development industry through Homes for Scotland. Comments were received via email and meetings.

7.9 Officers offered and subsequently held specific meetings with members of the development industry. Two meetings were held with; THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes (21 July) Homes and with Homes for Scotland and representative members (4 August).

7.10 Those contacted were invited to provide written comments, confirm whether they were content with the revised evidence, and discuss any remaining statements of agreement or disagreement.

7.11 Comments received through this process have informed the development of this Evidence Report. Where matters could be addressed through factual correction, additional explanation or refinement of wording, these have been incorporated into this Evidence Report. Any remaining unresolved matters are recorded in the relevant topic paper statements of agreement and dispute.

7.12 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council Internal Audit Team reviewed the Reporter's recommendations, together with the Council's approach to addressing the recommendations, as well as undertaking a review of the reworked papers and front section (Chapters 1-7 and 9,10,11).

7.13 Table 7.1 below summarises meetings and engagement activity that was held over the period November 2025 - August 2026.

Who	What	Date
Strategy Board	Meeting / update	12/12/2025
NHS	Meeting	12/12/2025
Stantec; Aberdeenshire Council	Meeting	16/12/2025
Aberdeenshire Council	Forum	17/12/2025
FIRS	Update	18/12/2025
Nestrans	Meeting	19/12/2025
NHS	Meeting	19/12/2025
NHS	Meeting	12/01/2026
Internal Audit	Meeting	15/01/2026
Education	Meeting	15/01/2026

Nestrans	Meeting	15/01/2026
Nestrans / Aberdeenshire Council / Cumulative Transport Assessment	Meeting	20/01/2026
Aberdeenshire Council	Forum	21/01/2026
NHS	Meeting	26/01/2026
NHS	Meeting	17/02/2026
DPEA	Meeting	19/02/2026
Nestrans	Meeting	19/02/2026
FIRS	Meeting	24/02/2026
NHS	Meeting	11/03/2026
Nestrans / Aberdeenshire Council / Cumulative Transport Assessment	Meeting	12/03/2026
Nestrans / Aberdeenshire Council / Cumulative Transport Assessment	Meeting	16/03/2026
Developer Obligations	Meeting	19/03/2026
FIRS	Meeting	24/03/2026
Aberdeenshire Council	Forum	26/03/2026
Strategy Board	Meeting / update	04/06/2026
Nestrans	Meeting	09/06/2026
NHS	Meeting	30/06/2026
Nestrans / Aberdeenshire Council / Cumulative Transport Assessment		30/06/2026
All FIRS members (membership can be found table 7.6). Homes for Scotland, THE, Barratt and David Wilson Homes North, Bancon, Iceni, Mac and Mic Group.	Consultation papers were issued	02/06/2026
SEPA (FIRS)	Response received	03/07/2026
Scottish Foresty (FIRS)	Response received	06/07/2026
Internal Audit	Response received	08/07/2026
Transport Scotland	Response received	09/07/2026
Scottish Water (FIRS)	Response received	15/07/2026
NatureScot (FIRS)	Response received	20/07/2026
THE obo Barratt / David Wilson Homes	Meeting	21/07/2026
SSEN (FIRS)	Response received	29/07/2026
HES	Response received	31/07/2026

Iceni obo Mac and Mic Group	Response received	31/07/2026
Waste (FIRS)	Meeting	31/07/2026
Larner McGrath obo Bancon Homes	Response received	31/07/2026
Aberdeenshire Council (FIRS)	Response received	31/07/2026
NHS	Meeting	31/07/2026
NHS	Response received Annex B form	31/07/2026
Transport Scotland	Meeting	04/08/2026
Education	Meeting / Email exchange	04/08/2026
Homes for Scotland	Meeting	04/08/2026
Transport Scotland	Annex B form	06/08/2025
DPEA	Meeting	14/08/2026
Elected member briefings	Meeting	14/08/2026 17/08/2026
Community Council Forum	Meeting	17/08/2026
Full council	Council	18/08/2026
Nestrans	Annex B form	31/08/2026

Table 7.1 Activity Log

Annex B: Completed Template

7.14 The section below includes the completed Annex B template.

Stakeholder	Summary of how consulted	Summary of issues raised and Planning Authority view on implications for the plan
The Public at Large	The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise was the main tool to engage the public at large. See section 7 paragraphs, 7.15, 7.26, 7.27 -7.31, 7.32 - 7.36, 7.41 and 7.42-44 for further detail.	A small number of issues were raised, these are identified across the topic papers where relevant. Where there are statements of agreement or disagreement these have also been highlighted in the relevant topic papers.
	The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise (children's survey) and specialised events were used to	No issues were raised

	engage with children and young people. See section 7 paragraphs, 7.15, 7.26, 7.27 -7.31, 7.32 - 7.36, 7.41 and 7.45 - 7.55 for further detail.	
Disabled People	The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise and specialised events/ outreach programme were used to engage with this named group. See section 7, paragraphs 7.15, 7.26, 7.27 -7.31, 7.32 - 7.36, 7.41, 7.56 - 7.57 for further detail.	No issues were raised
Gypsies and Travellers	The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise and specialised events/ outreach programme were used to engage with this group. See section 7, paragraphs 7.15, 7.26, 7.27 -7.31, 7.32 - 7.36, 7.41 and 7.58 - 7.59 for further detail.	No issues were raised
Community Councils	The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise, email, specialised events, community council were used to engage with this group. See section 7, paragraphs 7.15, 7.26, 7.27 -7.31, 7.32 - 7.36, 7.41, 7.60 - 7.62 for further detail.	No issues were raised

Transport Scotland

Key Agency	Transport Scotland
Main views raised	Initial comments on a draft Sustainable Transport Topic Paper were provided to the Council in November 2024, focussing on

	providing further information on relevant STPR2 Recommendations, the Nestrans Evidence Review Report where further information on the baseline network should be provided and transport appraisal process, where it was recommended further detail should be provided on discussions with Transport Scotland. Further comments were provided in February 2025, where it was reiterated the Nestrans Evidence Review Report text still focussed on the 2040 'with policy' scenario and there needed to be more focus on the baseline evidence which will cover how the infrastructure is currently used and any current capacity and condition information. Also, reference to the National Transport Strategy 2 should be included. Transport Scotland submitted its final response to the previously submitted Topic Paper in May 2025, which stated that it was almost sufficient with only further information required to be included on the baseline pinch points, asset management data and household survey data. All of our earlier comments have been addressed.
Implications for the proposed plan	Transport evidence will help inform the spatial strategy, site appraisal process and infrastructure first approach.
Is the agency content with the evidence?	Overall Sufficiency of Evidence Report The Sustainable Transport Evidence Report Topic Paper 4/Chapter 11 (referred to as The Paper) is considered sufficient in accordance with LDP Guidance Policies 13 and 18, which are key considerations for Transport Scotland in the Evidence Report process relating to its assets, projects and strategies. The Paper sets out baseline data on the strategic transport network, clearly sets out the commitment to undertaking a transport appraisal, and sets out data relating to the capacity, constraint and condition of the A90 AWPR and A96 trunk roads and rail stations within Aberdeen needed to satisfy the requirements of Policies 13 and 18.
Areas of agreement	Chapter 11 – Sustainable Transport The Paper references appropriate evidence sources including NTS2, Climate Change Plan update, STPR2, RTS, LTS and appropriate cross boundary studies including; the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal Preliminary Options Appraisal, undertaken in 2018/2019 to identify opportunities for further development and consideration; and the Aberdeen – Laurencekirk multi modal corridor study, which is a cross-boundary study. A requirement of LDP Guidance Policy 13, the Paper sets out a clear and very thorough commitment to undertaking a transport

	appraisal, which is being called a Cumulative Transport Appraisal and undertaken jointly with Aberdeenshire Council. This will inform the proposed plan, with a proposed methodology set out that has been discussed and agreed with Transport Scotland. Work has been progressing on the appraisal with Transport Scotland engagement throughout. The Paper also clearly displays a commitment to reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable forms of travel in line with the NTS2 sustainable travel and investment hierarchies and car kms reduction policy. The Paper references appropriate recommendations from STPR2, including Recommendation 12 - Aberdeen Rapid Transit, 16 - Perth-Dundee-Aberdeen rail corridor enhancements, 18 – Integrated journeys at ferry terminals, 24 and 42 - relating ferry vessel and port infrastructure, 25 - Rail decarbonisation and 44 – Rail freight. Aberdeen Rapid Transit is a key scheme being taken forward from STPR2 and is also a National Development in NPF4, as well as the Port of Aberdeen. The Paper explains the outline business case for ART is ongoing with funding secured from the City Region Deal and expected Outline Business Case available by the end of 2026/27 financial year. The A96 dualling scheme is also set out with the latest Transport Scotland position and implications for the plan. To help inform the Evidence Report, Nestrans commissioned a multi-modal transport and land use modelling exercise with the full results detailed within the Transport Evidence Review report (CDP188), utilising the Aberdeen Sub Area Model 2019 (ASAM19), to derive baseline transport information for both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Transport Scotland has focussed on the baseline 2023 scenario within the Paper where data is presented on: public transport flows and traffic flows on a number of road corridors including the A90, A92 and A96. Information is also presented on key pinch points. The traffic flow data shows the highest flows on the A944 and A93 local roads with the highest flows on the trunk road network on the A90, which has been split into different sections. There is a dependence on private cars, with almost 83% of the mode share involving a car. Key pinch points on the trunk road network include at the A90 slip road at Craibstone, A96/Dyce Drive signalled junction, and slight delays experienced at the A96 Kingswells junction. There are numerous pinch points within the city centre on the local road network. The Paper details that capacity constraints identified through the modelling exercise and forthcoming Cumulative Transport Appraisal should directly inform site selection and spatial strategy development.

	Further data is presented within the Transport Evidence Review report (CDP188) with more detailed traffic flows for the A96 corridor showing 62,783 vehicles used the A96 daily. The highest flows are from Aberdeen to the city centre area and vice versa, with flows dissipating heading west after Inverurie in Aberdeenshire. Cars make up a significant amount of the total traffic flows. Car kilometres travelled in the 2023 baseline show total approximately 1million kms and the average network speeds are approximately 60kph. Transport and travel statistics from Transport Scotland Household survey and Scottish Transport Statistics are included, as well as a multitude of other data sets, enabling a detailed understanding of multi modal transport use and travel patterns in the area. The Paper also sets out information on its 2 rail stations, detailing 2022 – 2023 passenger data, service frequency and facilities for both. Aberdeen Station had 5011 daily boardings and Dyce had 957 in 2023. The Paper details Transport Scotland is reviewing rolling stock procurement for the replacement of high speed trains that operate on the Intercity route from Aberdeen. The City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal recommended that Nestrans undertake an outline business case to confirm preferred option for new station sites between Aberdeen and Dyce, (drawing on the work of the Aberdeen North-West Station Review) and, to continue to work with Transport Scotland and Network Rail to implement plans to improve the rail network connecting Aberdeen to both the Central Belt and Inverness. The reopening of the former Formartine & Buchan railway line to Fraserburgh and Peterhead, or alternatively just to Ellon, was appraised in 2016 by Nestrans and both options found to be financially unviable. The Paper sets out a new Sustainable Transport Study is being undertaken at present to reappraise feasibility of rail connections to Fraserburgh and Peterhead. The Paper also details use of and services at Aberdeen International Airport and work ongoing at Aberdeen Harbour, a national development which is being funded as part of the City Region Deal. There is information provided on trunk road condition from Transport Scotland’s Scottish Transport Statistics and accident data also from STS 2025 and Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2024 figures.

Outstanding issues	In relation to paragraph 11.324, we do not consider the CTA to be a 'gap' as its outcomes are not intended to be known at the Evidence Report stage. The CTA work will clearly inform the Proposed Plan, as set out within LDP Guidance.
Actions for the proposed plan stage	Transport Scotland thanks the Council for its engagement to date and looks forward to continued engagement on the transport appraisal and forthcoming Proposed Plan. Please include this response within the Evidence Report.

Nestrans

Key Agency: North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans)	
Main views raised	• Nestrans provided comments on the transport evidence base, including transport infrastructure capacity, sustainable travel, the Regional Transport Strategy, cross-boundary transport movements and the proposed approach to transport appraisal. The importance of ensuring that transport evidence informs the emerging spatial strategy and future site assessment was highlighted.
Implications for the proposed plan	• The transport evidence will help inform the spatial strategy, site appraisal process and infrastructure-first approach. Further transport appraisal work will be required at the Proposed Plan stage to assess development options and identify any necessary mitigation.
Is the agency content with the evidence?	• Nestrans was consulted throughout preparation of the Evidence Report and provided comments which informed revisions. The Council has taken account of the issues raised in preparing the final Evidence Report.
Areas of agreement	• Importance of an infrastructure-first approach. • Need for transport evidence to inform the spatial strategy. • Continued joint working through the plan-making process. • Requirement for transport appraisal to support the Proposed Plan.
Outstanding issues	• Any remaining matters relating to transport capacity, strategic impacts, mitigation requirements and infrastructure delivery will be considered further through transport appraisal and preparation of the Proposed Plan.
Actions for the proposed plan stage	• Continue engagement with Nestrans and other transport partners. • Progress the cumulative transport appraisal. • Use transport evidence to inform site assessment and the spatial strategy. • Consider infrastructure delivery and any developer contribution implications, where justified.

NHS Grampian

Key Agency	NHS Grampian
Main views raised	• General comments/minor changes to wording
Implications for the proposed plan	• Healthcare evidence will help inform the spatial strategy, site appraisal process and infrastructure first approach
Is the agency content with the evidence?	• Yes
Areas of agreement	• Chapter 10 – Infrastructure Paper, Healthcare Section
Outstanding issues	• None
Actions for the proposed plan stage	• Continued engagement • Consider infrastructure delivery and any developer contribution implications, where justified

Aberdeen City Council - Corporate Landlord - School Estate Team

Key Agency	Aberdeen City Council - Corporate Landlord - School Estate Team
Main views raised	• General comments/minor changes to wording
Implications for the proposed plan	• Education evidence will help inform the spatial strategy, site appraisal process and infrastructure first approach
Is the agency content with the evidence?	• Yes
Areas of agreement	• Chapter 10 - Infrastructure Paper, education section
Outstanding issues	• None
Actions for the proposed plan stage	• Continued engagement • Consider infrastructure delivery and any developer contribution implications, where justified

Initial Consultation and Engagement

7.15 Figure 7.1 below summarises what additional engagement took place with the key agencies, equalities groups, public at large and other stakeholders, and what engagement took place with each group.

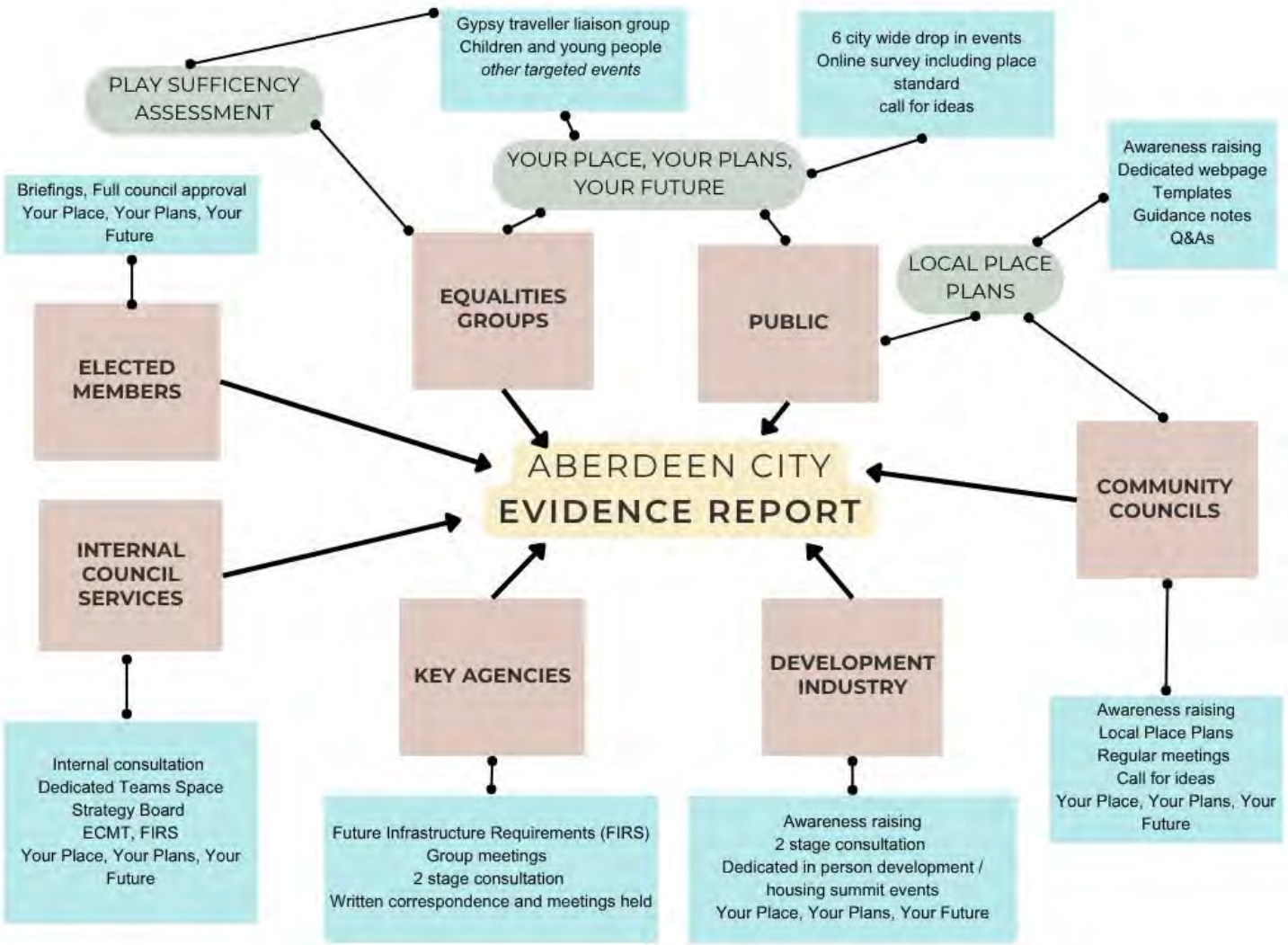


Figure 7.1: Diagram of Engagement

Corporate Dialogue and Input

7.16 Across 2024 and 2025 sessions were held with the Council's internal Strategy Board, which comprises senior officers from across the Council who produce city strategies and is chaired by the Chief Executive. Strategy Board have been regularly updated on progress of the Local Development Plan and the Evidence Report. Drafts of the topic papers were also submitted to the Strategy Board for awareness and comment.

7.17 A hybrid workshop was also carried out with the Council's Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT), based on the Architecture and Design Scotland Place skills for plan-making approach. ECMT is attended by all Chief Officers from across the Council. Conversations focused on identifying key projects and intervention in Aberdeen and future scenario forecasting on "what Aberdeen will look and feel like in 2040?"

7.18 Internal consultations with other Council services were also undertaken at officer level in order to prepare the Evidence Report. As the Evidence Report will inform the Proposed Local Development Plan, it is important that there is alignment between the evidence base and the visions and strategies that other services have. This process assisted in identifying gaps in evidence and in ensuring that there was visibility of the Topic Papers right across the organisation.

7.19 A presentation and workshop on "Place and Health" were carried out with academics, health professionals, general public, third sector organisations, and public sector practitioners at the Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaboration Conference. The workshop focussed on the lived experience of Aberdeen by seeking views from the audience.

Elected Member Involvement

7.20 A report was taken to Full Council on 4 July 2024 to inform Elected Members of the Evidence Report for the Local Development Plan 2028, and to seek authority to carry out consultations and produce the Report. Members were also invited to attend briefing sessions prior to the Evidence Report subsequently being reported back to Full Council on 02 July 2025.

Topic Paper Preparation and Consultation

7.21 To provide a basis for the Evidence Report, and to help establish the views of stakeholders on the evidence, in late 2024 / early 2025 we collated evidence sources into ten individual 'Topic Papers' and shared these with a reference group. This is set out in Table 7.2, below.

Topic Paper	Reference Group Organisation
Topic Paper 1 – Spatial Strategy	Aberdeenshire Council Chambers of Commerce Marine Directorate Ryden Homes for Scotland Scottish Enterprise Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Flooding/Coastal Team)
Topic Paper 2 – Delivery of Homes	Homes for Scotland Housebuilders (Bancon, Barratt/David Wilson Homes, Cala, Malcom Allan) Registered Social Landlords (Hillcrest) Consultants (Rydens, Savills) NHS Grampian Grampian Regional Equality Council Disabled Persons Housing Service Aberdeen City Council (Education, Developer Obligations, Affordable Housing, Roads, Building Standards, Development Management)
Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure	Aberdeenshire Council ABZ Safeguarding First Bus Nature Scot NESTRANS Network Rail NHS Grampian Port of Aberdeen Scottish Water SEPA Sport Scotland Transport Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Corporate Landlord, Roads Development Management, Transport Strategy and Programmes, Environmental Services, Education, Waste, Environmental Policy)
Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Transport	Aberdeenshire Council ABZ Safeguarding First Bus

	Nature Scot NESTRANS Network Rail NHS Grampian Port of Aberdeen Scottish Water SEPA Sport Scotland Transport Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Corporate Landlord, Roads Development Management, Transport Strategy and Programmes, Environmental Services, Education, Waste, Environmental Policy)
Topic Paper 5 – Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation	SEPA Scottish Water Nature Scot NESTRANS Aberdeen City Council (Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation)
Topic Paper 6 – Nature and Biodiversity	Forestry Scotland The Hutton Institute Nature Scot Marine Directorate SEPA Woodland Trust Aberdeen City Council (Development Management/Climate and Environment Policy/ Environmental Manager/ Flooding
Topic Paper 7 – Energy and Resources	University of Aberdeen Aberdeen Heat and Power Nature Scot SEPA Scottish Water British Geological Society Aberdeen City Council (Waste, Energy, Hydrogen)
Topic Paper 8 – Centres of Business and Culture	Opportunity North East Aberdeen Inspired Our Union Street

	Port of Aberdeen Federation of Small Businesses NESCOL University of Aberdeen Robert Gordon University Scottish Enterprise Visit Aberdeen APDC Aberdeen City Council (Economic Development, Cultural Policy, Regeneration, Business Development, Development Management)
Topic Paper 9 – Place	Archaeology Service – provided by Aberdeenshire Council. Architecture and Design Scotland Historic Environment Scotland NESTRANS Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation/ Development Management / Transport Strategy and Programmes / Education / Families and Communities / Environmental Manager)
Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities	NHS Grampian Public Health Consultant Sport Aberdeen Sportscotland Health and Safety Executive Aberdeen City Council (Environmental Health / Community Wealth Building / Community Planning / Community Learning and Development, Development Management).

Table 7.2 Topic Papers and Key Contact Organisations.

7.22 Due to their interconnected nature, the Topic Papers were developed as a suite of documents so that they could be presented and shared at the same time. This allowed the papers to be read across as a whole if desired.

7.23 In July 2024, stakeholders were identified in relation to each of the Topic Paper areas and contact was made to establish key points of contact to form review groups, Table 7.2. During summer 2024 correspondence with review group contacts was used to assist in identifying relevant data and information sources for inclusion in the draft topic papers.

7.24 Between 27 January and 23 February 2025, early draft Topic Papers were circulated to stakeholders. These comprised external groups (statutory key agencies, agencies, and organisations) and internal departments within Aberdeen City Council who had agreed to be part of review groups (Table 7.3). The early drafts were also shared with members of the Future Infrastructure Requirements for Services Group (FIRS) (see paragraph 7.26 and Table 7.6 for further detail on FIRS). The following overarching questions asked at this stage were:

- *Thinking about the future, what do you think are the key pieces of information or issues relating to your organisation's interests that should be considered as part of the preparation of the next Local Development Plan?*
- *What key investment does your organisation expect to make in the Aberdeen City Council area which the Council should consider in preparing the next Local Development Plan?*

For each of the 10 Topic Papers the following questions were also asked:

- *Are there any further evidence sources that you think need to be considered or further explained?*
- *What do you think are the implications for the next plan based on the` evidence presented?*

Topic Paper	**Early Draft Consultee**
Topic Paper 1 – Spatial Strategy	Response received from: Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce Aberdeenshire Council Marine Directorate Ryden Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Coastal)
Topic Paper 2 – Delivery of Homes	Response received from: Aberdeenshire Council Disabled Persons Housing Service Grampian Regional Equality Council Homes for Scotland Housebuilders (Bancon, Barratt/David Wilson Homes, Cala) Aberdeen City Council (Education, Developer Obligations, Affordable Housing,

	Roads, Building Standards, Development Management)
Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure	Response received from: Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations Aberdeen International Airport Aberdeenshire Council Cellnex UK Civil Aviation Authority Cycle Forum O2/Vodaphone Ofcom OpenReach Sportscotland SSEN Three Transport Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Developer Obligations, Roads Engineering)
Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Transport	Response received from: Aberdeen Harbour Board Aberdeenshire Council First Bus Homes for Scotland Network Rail Port of Aberdeen Stagecoach
Topic Paper 5 – Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation	Response received from: NatureScot Scottish Water SEPA Aberdeen City Council Development Management, Climate and Sustainability, Roads Projects)
Topic Paper 6 – Nature and Biodiversity	Response received from: Hutton Institute Marine Directorate

	Scottish Forestry Woodland Trust for Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Development Management)
Topic Paper 7 – Energy and Resources	Response received from: Aberdeen Heat and Power BGS British Geological Survey HSE Leiths University of Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council (City Growth, Energy, Waste, NESS)
Topic Paper 8 – Centres of Business and Culture	Response received from: Aberdeen Harbour Board Aberdeen Inspired Aberdeen Solicitors and Property Centre Federation of Small Businesses Invest Aberdeen NESCOL ONE Our Union Street Robert Gordon University University of Aberdeen Visit Aberdeenshire Aberdeen City Council (Development, Management, City Growth, Cultural Policy, City Development, Commercial Development,)
Topic Paper 9 – Place	Response received from: THE obo Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland Historic Environment Scotland Homes for Scotland NHS Grampian Bancon Homes Network Rail NatureScot

	Archaeology Service Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation)
Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities	Response received from: NHS Grampian Bancon Homes Network Rail Sportscotland Aberdeen City Council (Environmental Policy / Environmental Health)

Table 7.3 Topic Papers Early Draft Consultees

7.25 This stage was undertaken to ensure the content was correct before the wider public consultation. Comments on the early draft Topic Papers therefore fed directly into the production of the draft Topic Papers that were released for public consultation.

7.26 The draft Topic Papers then formed part of the wider 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' public consultation exercise between 24 March and 18 May 2025, as detailed further below. This was open to all, and the purpose of this element of the consultation was to help identify any gaps in evidence or potential areas of disagreement. A summary of comments received as part of the draft Topic Paper consultation can be found in the 'Statements of Agreement / Dispute' for each Topic Paper (Sections 8-17 of this report).

Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future

7.27 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' was a city-wide conversation using 'place' as a lens, which provided the opportunity to share views on the city thematically and to shape multiple local plans and strategies at once. The engagement activities ran for 8 weeks, between 24 March and 18 May 2025.

7.28 To support people to participate and reduce the ask on communities, Community Planning Aberdeen partners joined up to hold one engagement to inform a number of strategic plans including: the Local Housing Strategy, the Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan, the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan, the Local Development Plan (LDP) Topic Papers, the Visitor Levy Proposal, the Children's Services Plan, and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans. This "one stop shop" approach offered a platform to get more people involved in the engagement process through a wider dialogue on place.

7.29 The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' survey (CD138), was based on the Place Standard tool (Figure 7.2, below), and was designed to help participants think about practical needs and feelings about their place. It was designed to gather:

- scoring and comments on what is good now and what improvements could make our city and neighbourhoods better in the future, much of which will help inform the drafting of next Local Development Plan;
- whether people agreed with priorities and actions in our current draft strategies (Local Housing Strategy, Community Learning and Development, Health and Social Care Strategic Plan, Visitor Levy and Play Sufficiency Assessment)
- whether the evidence used to prepare the Topic Papers was sufficient.



Figure 7.2: The 14 Place Standard themes

7.30 The joint engagement enabled us to:

- Put people at the heart of the process.
- Assess and identify areas for improvement to support healthy, happy lives.
- Align priorities across all strategies and plans, resulting in greater cohesion.
- Empower communities to engage through consistent use of a single tool.
- Respond to community insights in a more joined-up way.
- Inform our knowledge of where to dig deeper and provide targeted sessions responding to initial results.

7.31 It was understood that different people will have different needs and we provided a range of ways to participate. We reached out to people to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to share their views, including those that are seldom heard, and those who may be experiencing any form of inequality or disadvantage. Between 24 March and 18 May 2025, we:

- ran an online survey from our digital platform and a separate survey designed for children and young people.

- held 6 facilitated drop-in locality events (Refer: Table 7.5), with specific activities designed by the Aberdeen Youth Movement and Aberdeen Ambassadors for children and young people.
- went to 98 groups/schools/locations across Aberdeen through our outreach programme, Figure 7.7 (CD319).

Draft Topic Papers

7.32 For those interested in the evidence base to inform preparation of the next Local Development Plan, a separate area of the consultation focused specifically on the ten draft Topic Papers (Figure 7.3). Participants were asked whether they agreed with the evidence base presented in the Topic Papers, or whether anything was missing.

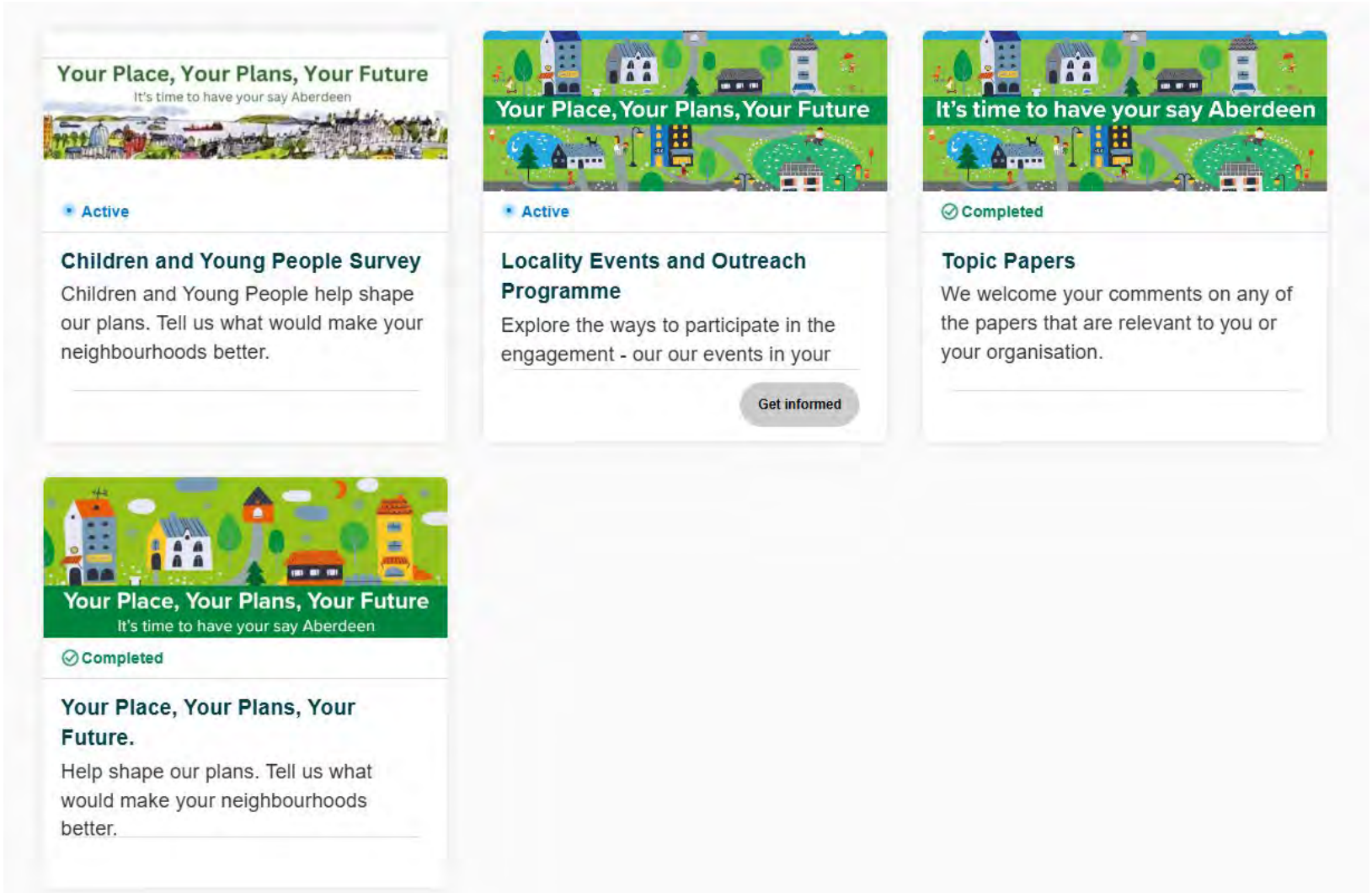


Figure 7.3: Snapshot of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future Commonplace digital engagement platform

Responses

7.33 As a result of the collective efforts across the Council, in total there were 2,087 participants to the 'Your Place, your Plans, Your Future' exercise, of which 1,500 were adults and 587 were children and young people (Refer: Table 7.4). This is an uplift of 344% compared to last the Place Standard engagement exercise held by the Council in 2023. A total of 13,433 comments were received across each of the 14 themes, providing a rich source of evidence about the city and its neighbourhoods.

7.34 A detailed report on the 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' (CD318) has been prepared which summarises all comments by topic, locality, priority neighbourhood, SIMD, age, sex and ethnicity.

Survey Type	Responses
Public	1500
Children and Young People	587
Topic Papers	23

Table 7.4 Number of survey responses by survey type

Date	Event	Location	Time	Invitees
Thursday 27 March 2025	Aberdeen South Locality Event	Greyhope Community Hub Tullos Circle Torry AB11 8DL	10:00-12:00	Public and local networks /groups
Thursday 27 March 2025	Aberdeen Central Locality Event	Rosemount Community Centre Belgrave Terrace AB25 2NS	14:00-16:00	Public and local networks /groups
Saturday 26 April 2025	Aberdeen Central Locality Event	Aberdeen Sports Village Linksfield Road AB24 5RU	10:00-12:00	Public and local networks /groups
Saturday 26 April 2025	Aberdeen South Locality Event	Airyhall Library Springfield Road AB15 7RF	14:00-16:00	Public and local networks /groups
Saturday 10 May 2025	Aberdeen North	King's Church King's Way Bridge of Don	10:00-12:00	Public and local networks /groups

	Locality Event	AB23 8BL		
Saturday 10 May 2025	Aberdeen North Locality Event	Get Active @ Northfield Kettlehills Crescent AB16 5TL	14:00-16:00	Public and local networks /groups

Table 7.5 Calendar of staffed Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future, drop in events.

7.35 The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' survey and supporting events (Table 7.5) were supported by the following publicity:

- **Aberdeen City Council Website**: the Council website included direct links to the survey and explained why citizens might want to take part. The website also included information on drop-in events, the outreach calendar and where to access downloadable versions of the surveys.
- **Aberdeen Community Planning Website:** the Community Planning website also included direct links to the survey and explained why citizens might want to take part. The website also included information on drop-in events, the outreach calendar and where to access downloadable versions of the surveys.
- **Internal Aberdeen City Council Intranet:** regular communication and Chief Officer blogs on the internal website linked to the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future engagement page and detailed information on the choice of surveys and ways to get involved. This recognised the high numbers of Council staff who work in and / or are residents of the city.
- **Social Media:** Social media was used extensively to promote Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future. The launch was announced on the Council Facebook and 'X' feeds, with a total reach of 5,000. Thereafter followed multiple posts on both platforms to remind people of the surveys, of the ways to participate and events, paid promotion was also used to raise the numbers of views. This resulted in a cumulative reach of 19,200.
- Additionally separate social media channels were used by different partners, such as the Tenant Facebook Network and the Community Planning Facebook pages.
- **Email correspondence** to all Aberdeen City Council tenants (14,700).
- **Newsletter** update sent to all Aberdeen City Council Community Planning Consultation Hub subscribers (766)
- 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' article included in the March edition of the biannual tenant newsletter 'Newsbite'.
- **Video:** A video was developed to promote the engagement and shared widely across social media platforms https://youtu.be/iRpcYQSbKyc
- **Posters:** Branded posters were placed in key public buildings, libraries, supermarkets, sheltered housing and shops to alert the public to the surveys and drop-in events. The poster included a QR link to the surveys (see Figure 7.4).

- **QR Codes** were used on printed materials at events to allow people to scan directly through to the surveys online and to find out more about the Topic Papers.
- **Pop-up banners:** Branded banners were prepared and used to advertise and to signpost to the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey. These were used at all events and displayed at the Marischal College main entrance.
- **Post Cards:** Post card versions of the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey were distributed and used at drop-in and the 98 outreach events (see Figure 7.5).
- Pop-up Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future table (staffed) at Marischal College reception on 9, 16 and 23 April 2025.
- All materials were also consistently branded (see Figure 7.6).

Specific awareness raising on the Topic Papers also included:

- Email correspondence to all community councils.
- Email correspondence to all members of the Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service group (FIRS).
- Email correspondence to all key contacts in Topic Paper reference groups.
- Newsletter update sent to all Local Development Plan news subscribers (186).



Figure 7.4 Photos of posters and digital posters in place

7.36 A facilitator's guide was provided to support staff and group leaders in conducting the engagement with their service users, and groups. Facilitation event materials included copies of the 2023 LDP, draft Local Housing Strategy and electronic copies of the Topic Papers.



Figure Figure 7.5 (above): Post card version of the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey

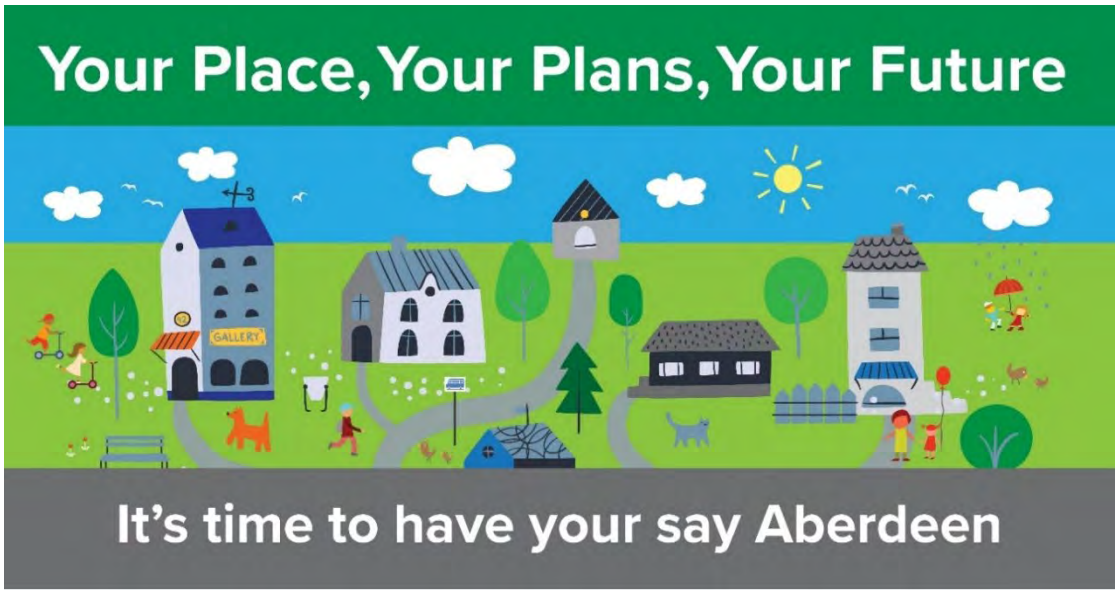


Figure 7.6: (above): Example branding from Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future



Figure 7.7: Picture from an in-person drop event

Meetings with Stakeholders

7.37 The Council, through workshops, meetings and other targeted work, has also engaged directly with stakeholders on the preparation of the Evidence Report. This has included individual sessions or dialogue with key agencies, established groups such as the Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS), workshops and meetings with individual organisations as well as with representative bodies such as Homes for Scotland**.**

Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS)

7.38 The FIRS group comprises statutory key agencies and internal stakeholders from a number of relevant Council departments (see Table 7.6). Meetings are held online every eight weeks or as agreed, and the purpose of the groups is to:

- Address challenges related to new developments in Aberdeen.
- Focus on the local development plan process, particularly the allocation of new sites and development across the city.
- Identify infrastructure needs and potential solutions to get ahead of challenges.

Early meetings in 2025 focused on the Topic Paper and Evidence Report production. Meetings will continue beyond the Evidence Report stage.

Type	Member
Key Agencies	Historic Environment Scotland Marine Directorate Nature Scot Nestrans NHS Grampian Scottish Enterprise Scottish Forestry Scottish Water SEPA Transport Scotland
Council Service	Affordable Housing Building Standards Development Management Economic Development Education Environmental Policy Estates and Property Local Development Plan Planning Obligations Roads Transportation
Other	Aberdeenshire Council SSEN (Distribution) SSEN (Transmission)

Table 7.6 Table of FIRS membership

Housing Workshops

7.39 Housing Workshop 1 (In person) - This half day event held on 30 October 2024 included house builders, developers, Registered Social Landlords and members of the construction industry (Refer: Table 7.7). The session focussed on setting the scene in terms of infrastructure within the city. Presentations were given on the Council Capital Programme, School Estates, Planning, Local Housing Strategy, NHS Infrastructure, and Development Industry perspective. A question-and-answer panel session followed with comments relating to developer obligations, housing viability and deliverability, affordable housing and delivery mechanisms.

7.40 Housing Workshop 2 (In person) - A follow up in person half-day event held 29 April 2025, with attendance from across the housebuilding and development industry (Refer: Table 7.7). This event provided an opportunity to further discuss and feedback on the draft Topic Papers and the draft Local Housing Strategy in a workshop setting.

Type	Attendee
Housebuilders	Bancon Homes Barratt / David Wilson Dandara Mac and Mic Group
Register Social Landlords	Castlehill Hillcrest Langstane Housing Association Places for People
Consultants	Berryhill Brodies Burness Paull Create Studio Architecture Halliday Fraser Munro Ryden Savills Shepherd THE
Other	Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Affordable Housing) Aberdeenshire Council Chamber of Commerce Homes for Scotland The Grandholme Trust

Table 7.7: Attendees Across both Housing Workshops

Groups Specified in the Act

7.41 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, requires the Council to seek the views of identified groups, including the public at large, children and young people, disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers, Community Councils and Key Agencies. Appendix 3 sets out the full engagement undertaken as part of the Evidence Report process.

Public at Large

7.42 The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise described above was the main tool to engage the public at large. The large number of individual comments across each of the Place Standard themes were collated and summarised and will be used in the next stages of the plan preparation as part of the 'Call For Ideas'.

7.43 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' also included the stand-alone Topic Paper survey. The feedback from this survey has been correlated, where appropriate, into the relevant Topic Paper (Sections 8 – 17 of this report). Where there are statements of agreement or disagreement these have also been highlighted.

7.44 The public response to the Topic Paper element of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future engagement was low, with 8 completed submission in total, despite there being 572 visitors to the Topic Paper area of the online engagement platform. Feedback has indicated that people didn't find the Topic Papers an engaging way to gather people's thoughts, and that approaches like the Place Standard Tool or a document like the Main Issues Report was preferable.

Children and Young People

7.45 Youth participation groups, Aberdeen Youth Movement and the Young Ambassadors took a leading role in designing and delivering engagement approaches for children and young people to have their say in 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future'. The City's Young Ambassadors group created activities focused on under 12s for locality events and Aberdeen Youth Movement brought the consultation to 5 secondary schools in the city, aiming to empower young people to have a direct voice in shaping their communities. Through interactive sessions and surveys, students were encouraged to share their thoughts on public spaces, things to do and the services and interactions that effect their daily lives. By involving young people in this meaningful way, the Aberdeen Youth Movement is fostering civic engagement and helping build more inclusive, youth friendly future for Aberdeen City.

7.46 In person engagement for children and young people was predominantly delivered by young people, this included Aberdeen Youth Movement's secondary school roadshows at Lochside, St Machar, Northfield, Dyce and Aberdeen Grammar, ensuring that our young people in priority areas had opportunities to get involved and so that all 3 localities were included.

7.47 In person locality events also provided bespoke children and young people's activity, with workshops involving primary school pupils at Greyhope and Gilcomstoun. These workshops also involved Play Sufficiency engagement, with the Young Ambassadors delivering sessions alongside colleagues form the Council's Creative Learning team and consultants Streets UK. Other drop-in activity took place at Aberdeen Sports Village, with many families attending Saturday morning events, Airyhall Library, Get Active Northfield and Kings Church. A total of 527 children and young people participated in these events.

7.48 The children and young person's survey was shared alongside the adult survey on Common Place, it was also shared with all city secondary school pupils and parents and carers via Groupcall and shared across youth participation networks. It was recognised that with the timescales available in person engagement would be the best way to capture children and young people's voices, with young people giving us feedback that a well-designed app would be a more engaging way of hearing from this age group than an on-line survey in the future. This is something we will explore as we develop and improve engagement with young people.

7.49 The 3 higher education institutions in the city: University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College, were also contacted through their representatives on the Community Planning Aberdeen Management Group.

The representatives then shared links to the surveys through their internal platforms.

7.50 While the survey for children and young people broadly followed the format used for the overall 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' survey, the layout was altered to make it more 'child friendly'. The 14 theme questions were split into 4 topics (table 7.8):

Theme	Prompt
How I get around my local place	Personal transport routes Public transport options Traffic and parking
The places I go and the things I do there.	Streets, Squares and Buildings Nature Fun play spaces
What helps me to live well in my local place?	Types of buildings and services Mix and type of jobs and work Housing and homes
What makes me feel safe or unsafe in my local place?	How included you feel Cared for and well-kept Safe and secure Levels of pride you feel

Table 7.8: Child & Young Person Themes and Prompts

7.51 Children and young people were asked to score each of the 14 themes using a 3 point scale:

- 1 – Not good (needs improving)
- 2 – Okay (needs some improvement)
- 3 – Great (it's good or as good as can be)

7.52 In addition to the 'scale' question, for each theme the participants were asked two additional questions to capture what they felt were positive aspects of their place and what they felt could be improved. These questions asked:

- What is good now?
- What would make it better?

7.53 For each of these questions a list of choices was provided (these differed by question). An additional text box was also provided for each question for participants to give their own ideas.

7.54 In addition to the theme questions, the survey included three questions which asked participants for their thoughts on ‘Places to Play’ to help contribute to the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Again, a list of choices was given and the children and young people could choose as many as they wished.

7.55 Additional engagement on the Play Sufficiency Assessment included:

- An online survey on play aimed at parents and carers
- In person play workshops with an outdoor nursery, two primary schools and two secondary schools, including a specialist ASN wing
- A bespoke play-based workshop for children with additional support needs, plus their families and caregivers.

Disabled People

7.56 Through ‘Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future’ the Council also offered online sessions for individuals with disabilities who may require additional support to engage in our consultation effectively. Two dedicated sessions were held on:

- 16 April 2025 - 10am-12pm
- 7 May 2025 - 6.30-8.30pm

7.57 Additionally, the outreach programme (CD319) included a number of targeted facilitated events, such as:

- British Sign Language (BSL): 8 May 2025, 1:30-3:30pm, Marischal College.
- Grampian Regional Equality Council event - 24 April 2025, 4:00-5:30pm, Aberdeen Arts Centre, 33 King St, Aberdeen AB24 5AA.
- Outreach at locations such as vaccination centres, GPs, jobs fairs, food banks.
- Facilitated sessions held with a range of specialist groups, including sheltered housing, Alzheimer’s carers group, and the Men’s Shed.

Gypsies and Travellers

7.58 There is one official Gypsy/Traveller site in the Aberdeen City Council area, located at Clinterty Park, near the border with Aberdeenshire. The residents were made aware of the ‘Your Place, Your Plan Your Place’ consultation through posters and other engagement materials placed in the central facilities on the site and through the Council’s Gypsy/Travellers Liaison Officer.

7.59 A facilitated drop-in session was held at Clinterty Park site on 15 April 2025. The event was supported by the officers from Housing service, the Local Development Plan team, the Health and Social Care partnership and the Gypsy/Travellers Liaison Officer. The session offered the opportunity to have a dialogue in a familiar setting. Although the attendance at the drop-in was low, officers felt that the event was worthwhile offering direct engagement with the community. Efforts will be made to

build on this and continue to increase the dialogue in later stages of the plan development.

Community Councils

7.60 We regularly contact community councils with updates on matters relating to the Local Development Plan, such as progress and forthcoming opportunities to get involved. In additional to this, the Team presented at Community Council Forum meetings on 19 September 2024 and 6 February 2025, and to Community Council Planning and Transport Sub Group meetings on 21 April and 19 May in order to provide Local Development Plan progress updates, information on the role of the Evidence Report (and how to take part in the consultation) and to advertise the opportunity to prepare Local Place Plans (CD320).

7.61 Community Councils were invited to complete the surveys and to make submissions to both the 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' engagement and the specific Topic Paper Surveys, and to attend and help advertise the drop-in events table, detailed earlier in this section (Table 7.5).

7.62 Two dedicated 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' Community Council Forum events and awareness raising sessions were held on 7 April 2025 (online) and a facilitated event on 12 May 2025 (Hybrid).

Key Agencies and Stakeholders

7.63 The Council has engaged in a number of ways with key agencies in preparing the Evidence Report. The purpose of this engagement has been to keep these organisations informed of the progress with Local Development Plan, to seek relevant information from them, and to seek levels of agreement with evidence that the Council intended to present in the Evidence Report.

7.64 As described above, key agencies have been engaged through the FIRS Group and the 2-stage Topic Paper Consultation. Additionally, meetings have been held with a number of organisations, as highlighted in Table 7.9.

Key Agency	**Activity**
Architecture & Design Scotland	Member of Topic Reference Group. Meeting held September 2024.
Historic Environment Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Marine Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group.
Nature Scot	Member of FIRS Member of Topic Reference Group

	Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text. Meeting held June 2025.
Nestrans	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text. Meeting held June 2025.
NHS	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Attended Housing Summit October 2024. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Scottish Enterprise	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group.
Scottish Water	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
SEPA	Member of FIRS Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Sportscotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Transport Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.

Table 7.9: Summary of key agency activity.

Local Place Plans

7.65 Local Place Plans (LPPs) are community led plans, introduced by the Planning etc. (Scotland) 2019 Act as part of the Scottish Government's wider planning reforms to improve and increase community engagement in planning. The invitation to produce a local place plan was advertised via newspaper press release and an email was sent to all local community councils by the Council's Community Council Liaison

officer on 12 July 2024. The opportunity was also highlighted by newsletter on 08 August, by Aberdeen City Council's social media accounts on 03 September 2024, and by the Local Development Plan social media accounts on 04 September 2024.

7.66 Meetings were also held via Microsoft Teams in the evening of 19 September 2024, and 06 February 2025 to talk with Community Councils about the new Local Development Plan process and Local Place Plans. A further in person session was held on 21 April 2025 with the Community Council Forum Planning and Transport Sub Group to raise awareness and answer any questions about Local Place Plans.

7.67 A dedicated "Place Planning" page (see here) has been created on the Aberdeen City Council webpage, which outlines resources and templates to help with the creation of a local place plan. A dedicated email address has also been created to help capture any local place plan queries. We have had 1 note of interest in producing a Local Place Plan, but no valid or registered Local Place Plans at this time. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

Call for Ideas / Call For Sites

7.68 As part of the 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' described above, a total of 13,433 comments were received across each of the 14 Place Standard themes, gathering scoring and commentary on what is good now and what improvements could make our city and neighbourhoods better. This has provided a rich source of evidence and lived experience about the city and its communities and neighbourhoods. An initial Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future Report was produced (CD318), which summarises all comments by topic, locality, priority neighbourhood, SIMD, age, sex and ethnicity. This information and the further detailed analysis that is currently being processed will be used to inform the Proposed Plan going forward.

7.69 The optional 'Call for Ideas / Call For Sites' consultation phase is recommended to be carried out after the Gate Check Review. A further 'Call for Ideas / Call For Sites' period will run between July – October 2025 to supplement the information already provided through 'Your Place, Your plans, Your Future' exercise.

Engagement Following Resubmission

7.64 Summaries of stakeholder engagement following resubmission of the Evidence Report can be found in Chapter 9 Delivery of Homes, Chapter 10 Infrastructure and Chapter 11 Sustainable Transport.

8. Topic Paper 1 – Spatial Strategy

Requirements addressed in this section:

8.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used.

National Planning Framework 4

Regional Spatial Priorities

8.2 To deliver sustainable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans (LDPs) in this area should plan infrastructure and investment to support the transition from oil and gas to net zero, whilst protecting and enhancing blue and green infrastructure and decarbonising connectivity.

8.3 To deliver liveable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should focus on continued regeneration and encourage more local living to sustain the skilled workforce and improve local liveability.

8.4 To deliver productive places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should support continued economic diversification and innovation.

Green Belts

8.5 LDPs should consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities.

8.6 Green belts will not be necessary for most settlements but may be zoned around settlements where there is a significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside.

8.7 Green belts should be identified or reviewed as part of the preparation of LDPs. Boundary changes may be made to accommodate planned growth, or to extend, or alter the area covered as green belt. Detailed green belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans.

Brownfield Development

8.8 LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.

Coastal Development

8.9 LDP spatial strategies should consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change. This should recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and islands areas, and take a precautionary approach to flood risk including by inundation.

8.10 Spatial strategies should reflect the diversity of coastal areas and opportunities to use nature based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets.

8.11 LDP spatial strategies should identify areas of developed and undeveloped coast and should align with national, sectoral and regional marine plans.

8.12 LDPs should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size and quality in terms of accessibility and services. This allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

National Developments

- Urban Mass / Rapid Transit Networks (Aberdeen)
- Aberdeen Harbour (Aberdeen)
- Pumped Hydro Storage (All Scotland)
- Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure (All Scotland)
- Circular Economy Materials Management Facilities (All Scotland)
- National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network (All Scotland)
- Digital Fibre Network (All Scotland)

Links to Evidence

Regional Spatial Priorities:

- CD002 Aberdeen City and Shire Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (Co-produced by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils – September 2020) PDF

Green Belt:

- CD003 Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026
- CD009 Aberdeen Green Belt Review 2010 (PDF)
- CD004 Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023 – Landscape
- CD005 Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Character Assessment, February 2021
- CD006 Aberdeen Landscape Study – Coastal Character Assessment, February 2021
- CD007 Aberdeen Landscape Study – Peri-Urban Study, February 2021
- CD008 Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, February 2021

Green Belt - Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
AECOM Nature Networks Corridor Map	3 July 2025
NatureScot – Scottish Landscape Character Type Maps and Description	16 October 2024

Brownfield Development:

- CD010 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023
- CD011 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land 2024 – excel (PDF)
- CD012 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2024
- CD327 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2025
- CD014 Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2020
- CD046 Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015
- CD045 City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022

Brownfield Development - Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland	17 October 2024
Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey Site Register	14 May 2025
Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey GIS Map	14 May 2025

Coastal Development

- CD173 Scotland's National Marine Plan – A Single Framework for Managing our Seas
- CD015 Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance - Scottish Government, February 2023
- CD016 Aberdeen Adapts Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2022
- CD017 Aberdeen Adapts Evidence Base

Coastal Development - Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Dynamic Coast	3 July 2025
SEPA Coastal Flood Maps	16 October 2025

Business & Industry

- CD018 Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- CD058 Regional Economic Strategy – A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland`
- CD019 Ryden Scottish Property Review 2024
- CD366 Business & Industry Land Audit 2025
- CD021 Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023
- CD042 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement - Summary Report 2023

Business & Industry – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Economic Statistics for Industry Sectors in Scotland	14 May 2025
City Region Deals - Cities and regions - gov.scot	14 May 2025
Energy Transition Fund	14 May 2025
Aberdeen's lost decade: What went wrong? | Centre for Cities	14 May 2025
Aberdeen City Data Observatory - Economy	14 May 2025

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

8.13 Aberdeen will endeavour to promote and support sustainable, liveable and productive places. The retention and appropriate management of green belts can limit the risk of urban sprawl into the countryside, while providing nature corridors that are integral to the health and vitality of the city. Identification and re-use of brownfield sites will help support the vitality of the city by bringing disused or vacant sites back into active use that can meaningfully provide housing or business opportunities to local communities. Business and industry will also be supported as the need to diversify Aberdeen's economy and transition away from a dependency on revenues from the oil industry towards a net-zero future. Supporting this, coastal development will also offer opportunities that will seek to establish the city as a leader in hydrogen, and renewable energy technologies, as well as sustaining a busy port and balancing these demands with the protection and preservation of marine species and habitats along the coastline.

8.14 These broader topic areas will be addressed in more detail in the following order:

- Indicative Regional Spatial Priorities
- Green Belts
- Brownfield Development
- Coastal Development
- Business and Industry

8.15 It is not the intention of this chapter to repeat the full content of other chapters. It should be read in conjunction with other chapters, including:

- Topic 2: Delivery of Homes
- Topic 3: Infrastructure and communication
- Topic 4: Sustainable Transport
- Topic 5: Climate, Mitigation and Adaptation
- Topic 6: Nature and Biodiversity
- Topic 7: Energy and Resources
- Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture
- Topic 9: Place
- Topic 10: Wellbeing of Communities

Regional Spatial Priorities

Aberdeen City and Shire Interim Regional Spatial Strategy (CD002)

8.16 This functions as a “bridging document” that supports the transposition of the Spatial Strategy from the (now defunct) Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan of 2020 into the National Planning Framework 4 (CD001). It is intended as the primary bellwether for strategic planning across the City Region. It offers a “spatial reference for the implementation of other City Region and local level plans and strategies such as the Regional Economic Strategy (CD058), the City Region Deal and Regional Transport Strategy (CD185) (see Figure 8.1).

8.17 The document covers the Local Authority areas of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, with the exception of those parts of Aberdeenshire that are situated within the Cairngorms National Park. Delivery of its’ objectives will require collaboration with other key stakeholders and communities.



Figure 8.1: Excerpt from the Interim Regional Spatial Strategy illustrating the Strategy across the north-east of Scotland

Green Belt

Green Belts around Aberdeen

8.18 A green belt around Aberdeen was first established in 1958 and has evolved and changed over its lifespan. Successive development plans have used green belts to support their spatial strategies. The current Aberdeen green belt covers all of the countryside within the Council's boundary.

8.19 There have been periodic changes to its boundary, generally in order to accommodate new development. A boundary review took place in 1986 and was formalised in the 1991 Aberdeen District Wide Local Plan. Further changes were made to accommodate the allocations in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008, and to incorporate former 'Countryside Around Towns (GB2)' and 'Lower Don Policy Areas' into the green belt.

8.20 The Local Development Plan 2012 was required to make major housing allocations, and extensive boundary changes were made to accommodate new settlements all around the city. A Green Belt Review (CD009) which looked at the detailed boundaries of these areas was produced as a background document to this Plan.

8.21 The 2017 and 2023 Local Development Plans (CD044) had much smaller housing requirements, and although new sites were identified on former green belt areas in both Plans, they were relatively small in nature and no formal review of the green belt took place at these times.

8.22 The Aberdeen Green Belt has been successful in several respects:

- It has prevented coalescence between Aberdeen and settlements and suburbs along lower Deeside, the northern and southern corridors and to the west of the city along the A944.
- It has focussed development into Aberdeen and encouraged the redevelopment of brownfield sites there.
- It has helped to prevent inappropriate development in the countryside close to Aberdeen.
- It has protected large areas of countryside such as the coast, woodland, river valleys and Hazlehead for recreational use. In doing so, uncontrolled urban sprawl has largely been avoided and some of the primary landscape elements which protect the setting of Aberdeen – the coastal strip, two major river valleys and backdrop of surrounding hills – have been protected.

Green Belt Review

8.23 Aberdeen City Council is committed to undertaking a Green Belt Review prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan. The green belt review will be actioned as a part of the creation of the Council's Natural Environment Strategy. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy. The review of the green belt is scheduled to be completed by March 2027, so that any proposed amendments or alterations to the existing Greenbelt can be

reflected (and justified) in the Proposed Plan. This would ensure that the proposed plan utilises a contemporary review of the green belt in order to inform its spatial strategy and possible land allocation decisions. The review will focus on the following issues:

1. Development Pressures – Green belts have been used to control otherwise unrestricted growth around places with high development pressure. We will examine development bids for previous LDPs to indicate the level of development interest around Aberdeen. This in turn will inform the continuing need for a green belt.
2. Landscape Setting and the identity of settlements – how does the green belt contribute to protecting and enhancing the character, landscape, natural setting and identity of Aberdeen and its surrounding settlements?
3. Nature Networks – what contribution does the green belt make to support nature networks to tackle climate change, to tackling biodiversity loss and to protect nature networks from a recreational and ecological point of view?
4. Other planning constraints – are there any other assets or features that are protected by green belt?
5. Directing development to the right places – how can we use green belts to make sure that development happens in the right places through for instance the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods and sustainable communities?

8.24 In carrying out a review of the green belt, several other factors need to be recognised:

- All of the countryside outwith Aberdeen's urban area is identified as green belt. There are no other 'countryside' designations. This means that any development requirements that cannot be identified on sites within the urban area will have to be in locations that are currently green belt and adjustments to its boundary could be needed.
- The Aberdeen green belt extends beyond the city boundary and into Aberdeenshire. Here it extends to Blackdog, Potterton, Hatton of Fintray, Blackburn, Westhill, Drum, Kirkton of Maryculter, and Banchory Devenick southwards to as far as Muchalls. Aberdeenshire Council are currently reviewing their part of the green belt as part of their Local Development Plan review. At the time of writing, they are suggesting some adjustments to the outer boundaries but none of these will have a significant impact on the City's green belt area.

Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026 (CD003)

8.25 Scotland's long-term vision for sustainable land use focuses on emission reduction targets, Net-Zero goals, biodiversity loss, and climate change impacts. It emphasizes careful land use to support the population while protecting natural

habitats, promoting peatland restoration, forestry creation, and enhancement of wildlife habitat. Onshore wind generation and food production are also considered. The strategy can help underpin future policy for the ongoing designation of green belt, as well as promote efforts to improve its connectivity to other areas of green space within Aberdeen, to further the vitality and resilience of these natural spaces. It also offers potential opportunities for future woodland expansion and enhancement which can result in improvements to public health, environmental benefits, improved air quality and increased carbon sequestration capabilities.

NatureScot – Scottish Landscape Character Type Maps and Description

8.26 The Landscape Character Studies that formed the basis of this data was originally mapped between 1994 and 1999 and were expanded and updated in 2019.

8.27 There are several differing landscape types within the Aberdeen City Council area, see Figure 8.2 which outlines indicative landforms. Very broadly, there are pockets of ‘Upland and Hills’ located towards the west and north-west of the city near Westhill and Dyce. There are two main areas identified as ‘Valley’ types: the River Don Valley – extending from Stoneywood to Hatton of Fintray, and the River Dee valley stretching from Cults in a south-westerly direction past Peterculter and into Aberdeenshire. The remainder of the outskirts of the city are characterised as ‘Lowland’, with Beaches, Dunes and Links along the northern portion of the coastline with the North Sea, and Cliffs and Rocky Coast, along the southern portion of the Aberdeen coastline. Unsurprisingly for a city authority, much of the core of the city is identified as ‘Urban’ landscape.

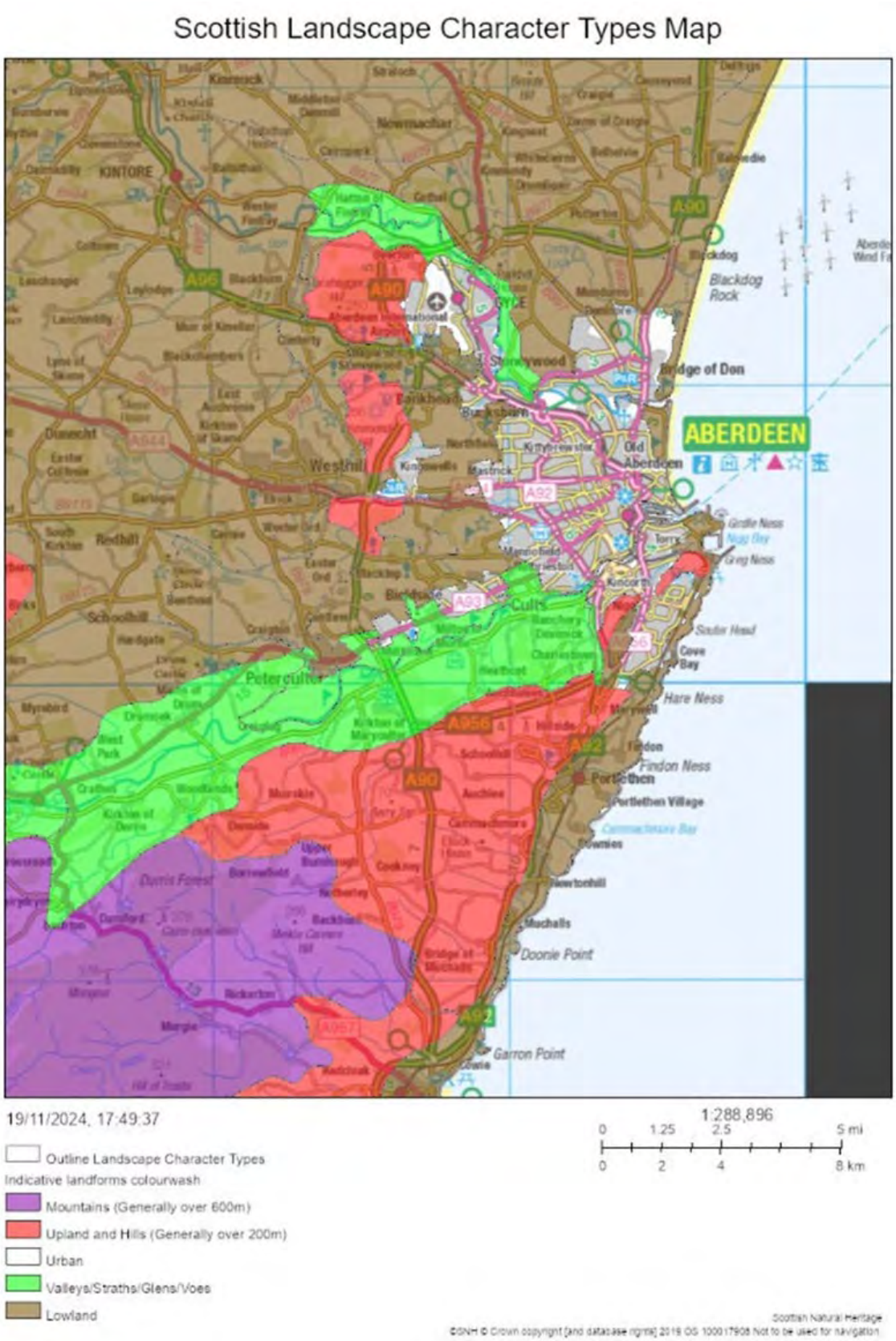


Figure 8.2: Screenshot showing the Scottish Landscape Character Types around Aberdeen

Aberdeen Landscape Study (CD005)

8.28 The Aberdeen Landscape Study provides a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character, coastal character, peri-urban areas, and landscape sensitivity in Aberdeen City. The Landscape Character Assessment describes, classifies, and maps areas of land to explain their distinctive characteristics and determine their value. Nine Landscape Character Types were identified, which can help inform decisions on green belt extent and site allocations for development. The Coastal Character Assessment (CD006) categorizes Aberdeen's coastline by examining maritime influences, coastal edge nature, and hinterland identity, identifying six Coastal Character Areas with management guidelines to address distinct pressures and threats, and suggest future enhancements.

8.29 The Peri-Urban Study (CD007) identifies 15 peri-urban areas subject to development pressure, detailing landform, land cover, land use, and designations. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (CD008) gauges landscape sensitivity to development, identifying 32 units unsuitable for residential, business, or industrial land uses, and informing spatial strategies and planning applications. These assessments provide valuable insights for future decision-making on land allocations and potential areas for protection or enhancement.

Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023 – Landscape (CD004)

8.30 This non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) is primarily intended to provide assistance in the interpretation of the Local Development Plan 2023 Policies D4 – Landscape and D5 – Landscape Design. It includes design principles, technical advice, and outlines the general expectations of proposed developments with regard to planting schedules and landscaping schemes as well as provides a consolidated summary of the various Aberdeen Landscape Studies.

AECOM Nature Networks Corridor Map

8.31 This map viewer identifies Nature Networks Corridors throughout Scotland to connect 30x30 sites with other environmental assets. Corridors are scored from 0-7 based on establishment cost, with Aberdeen's scores ranging from 1 to 4. It helps inform Nature Networks in Aberdeen City (see Figure 8.3) and guide habitat enhancement efforts. Nature Networks will inform the spatial strategy and will be part of a Natural Environment Strategy, which will be completed by March 2027. They are discussed further in Infrastructure and Nature and Biodiversity Topic Papers. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.

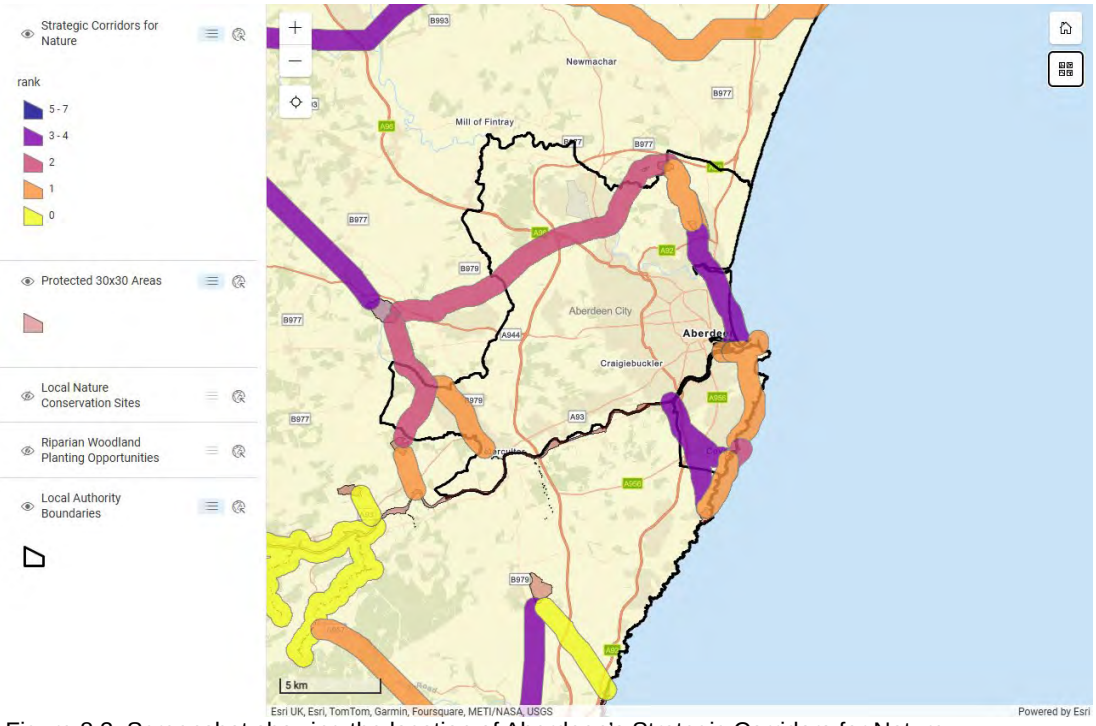


Figure 8.3: Screenshot showing the location of Aberdeen's Strategic Corridors for Nature

Brownfield Development

Brownfield and Greenfield Development Trends

8.32 Housing Land Audits (HLA) can be used to provide evidence of past trends with respect to the split between brownfield and greenfield development levels within the City, as is shown in the Housing Topic Paper.

8.33 Table 8.1 shows that 67% of all housing development in the City from 2012 to 2025 has taken place on greenfield sites, and 43% has taken place on brownfield sites. Brownfield development has played in significant role in helping to meet housing needs within the City over the thirteen years. Looking to the future, the 2025 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit (CD327) identifies that some 74% of the remaining housing site capacity in the City is on greenfield sites, with 26% on brownfield sites. This is reflective of the large greenfield housing land allocations that are identified within the 2023 Local Development Plan (CD044), albeit the Local Development Plan also seeks to promote brownfield development.

Type of Development	Total No. of Units Completed 2012 – 2025	Percentage of Total Development 2012 – 2022
Brownfield	5,609	43%
Greenfield	7,329	67%

Table 8.1: Quantity of housing development constructed on Brownfield and Greenfield sites in Aberdeen City between the years of 2012 and 2025.

Brownfield Urban Capacity Study Sites

8.34 A Brownfield Urban Capacity Study is underway to inform the spatial strategy of the next Local Development Plan. It will identify potential brownfield housing sites and estimates the number of housing units these sites are likely to produce. The updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study will also help inform any future windfall assumptions by identifying the scale, type, location and likely deliverability of brownfield and infill opportunities that may reasonably come forward over the plan period (please see Chapter 9: Delivery of Housing for more information on windfall sites). A map showing the existing 2020 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (CD014) sites, with colour coding to show remaining capacity of each site, can be found below (Figure 8.4).

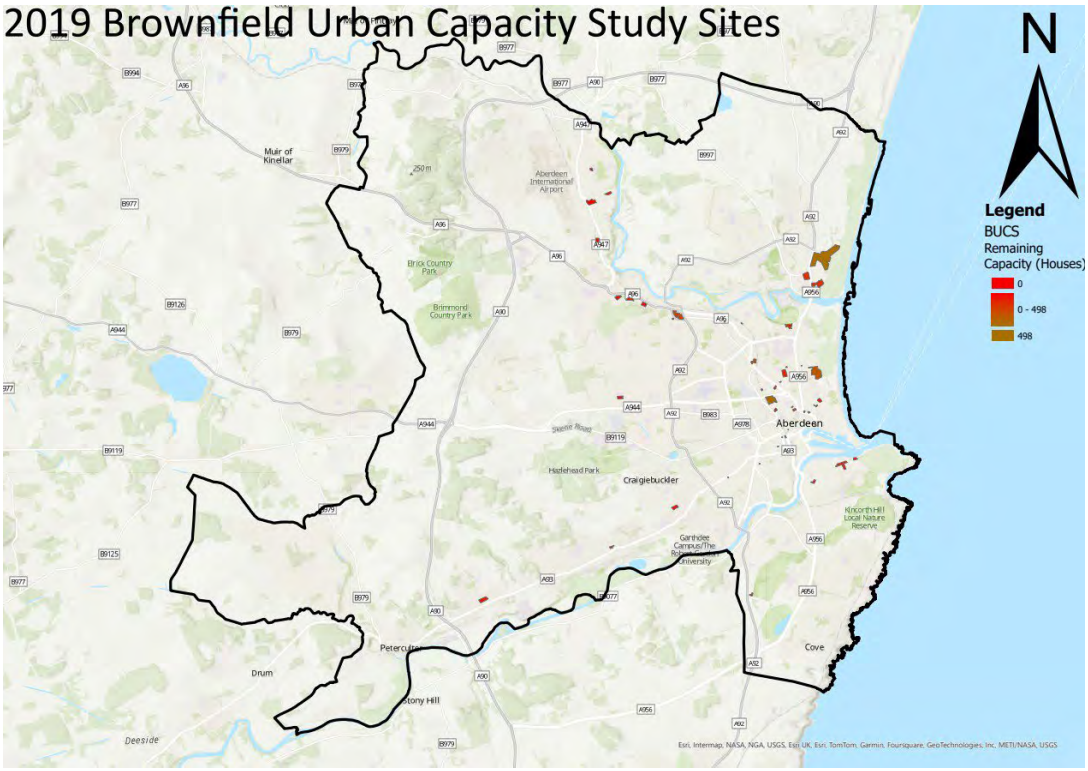


Figure 8.4: Map showing the location of Brownfield Urban Capacity Study Sites (2020)

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (CD10)

8.35 The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is updated annually. It involves reporting the annual change in the take-up of brownfield land and recording new sites which have become vacant or derelict. These are mapped and various details are recorded for them, including the former use of the land. Sites identified in the SVDLS can be used to inform the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and ultimately the Proposed Plan.

8.36 The 2024 SVDLS (CD11) return was submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2024. It lists 74 sites that cover a cumulative area of nearly 144ha. At the time of writing, the Scottish Government had not published the annual SVDL 2024 datasets.

8.37 The 5 largest sites constitute approximately 35.6% of the total area of SVDLs 2024 sites and these are as follows (Table 8.2):

Site Name and Address	Site Size	Area of City
Silverburn Park, Exhibition Avenue	17.6ha	Bridge of Don
Former Stoneywood Papermill	15.4ha	Stoneywood
Former Shell Building, 1 Altens Farm Road	10.7ha	Altens
Former Cordyce Residential School, Riverview Drive	8.2ha	Dyce
Peterseat Drive 1	7.3ha	Altens

Table 8.2: Table identifies the five largest sites recorded in the Aberdeen's Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023 and their respective sizes and locations.

8.38 Within this, 47 sites are vacant, 17 sites are derelict and 10 are vacant with buildings. The sites are fairly well distributed across the city, with concentrations in and around the industrial estates at Altens/Tullos, around the industrial estates near Aberdeen International Airport/Dyce, around Ellon Road, Bridge of Don and some wider more spaced-out scatterings at Auchmill Road. As table 8.3 below shows, the top 3 previous uses in Aberdeen for vacant and derelict land are manufacturing (17%), offices (17%) and recreation/leisure (15%).

Previous Use	Area (hectares)	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	3.19	2
Business Class	5.24	4
Community & Health	4.81	3
Education	20.51	14
Manufacturing	24.82	17

Mineral Activity	5.37	4
Offices	23.63	17
Other	1.04	1
Other General Industrial	9	6
Recreation & Leisure (excluding passive open space)	21.97	15
Residential - Hotels, Hostels etc	1.96	1
Residential - Housing	3.87	3
Retailing	1.98	1
Storage	1.47	1
Unknown	12.32	9
Utility Services	2.03	1

Table 8.3: Key for the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2024

The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland

8.39 The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland. It includes the location and details of all recorded at risk buildings within Aberdeen City. At the time of writing there are 58 sites in Aberdeen on this register.

8.40 Of these 58 sites, 55 are currently at risk and 3 are undergoing restoration (as of January 2025). Only 7 of the sites are unlisted, and 17 are Category ‘A’- Listed. 29 sites are classed as being in poor condition, 6 are in very poor condition and 3 are classed as ruinous. All but one of the ‘At Risk’ sites are urban locations, with the exception being ‘B’-Listed Waulkmill Bridge in Peterculter.

8.41 Sites identified on the register can inform a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and ultimately the Proposed Plan.

8.42 The Buildings at Risk Register has been paused while Historic Environment Scotland consider long-term options for its future in light of the main findings, conclusions and options of the Buildings at Risk Register review.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD046) / City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022 (CD045)

8.43 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CCMP&DP) was approved in 2015, and outlines a 25-year development strategy for Aberdeen City Centre. The CCMP&DP looks to increasing the mix of uses within the city centre. In August 2022 a refresh of the CCMP&DP was approved. The review does not replace or supersede the CCMP&DP 2015. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan incorporates interventions and linkages to and from Aberdeen beach to the city centre, and a new intervention area, George Street. It follows the principles of the CCMP&DP 2015, but has a public realm and project focus.

8.44 The CCMP&DP outlines seven intervention areas shown in Table 8.4. These aim to increase the mix of uses in the city centre. This includes increasing residential use,

creating better linkages and ensuring there are areas of employment through the provision of offices and retail uses and cultural assets.

Intervention Area	Masterplan Focus
Denburn Valley	A revitalised Union Terrace Gardens establishes itself as a key destination and the linking thread to a new residential quarter
Heart of the City	Reinstating the central role of Union Street in the life of the city, establishing stronger retail linkages north and south and creating a destination not just for shopping but for many city activities.
Queen's Square	A new city centre neighbourhood with a strong urban character. An exemplar of the best of urban living in a sensitive historic context.
Union Street West	A focus for the wider business sector, from new businesses with a Made in Aberdeen focus, to spin-outs from the energy sector. Union Street West emerges as a much stronger business address.
Station Gateway	The critical remodelling of the key gateway to the city centre, with new business and commercial developments, providing city centre users and visitors with a radically transformed arrival experience, leading seamlessly northwards to Union Street
Castlegate / Castlehill	A focus for visitors and tourists, taking in the best of Aberdeen's townscape, including Castlegate, Union Street and links to the harbour to the south and the beach to the east
North Dee / Torry Waterfront	New riverside quarters connected by a pedestrian bridge and a much improved riverside park and promenade. To the north, an urban business district; to the south, a residential neighbourhood that maximises its relationship to the river.

Table 8.4: Intervention Areas from the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme

8.45 Please see the Place topic paper and Centres of Business topic paper for more information on the city centre masterplans.

Coastal Development

National and Regional Marine Plan (CD173)

8.46 A comprehensive overarching framework for all marine activity in Scotland's waters. It will enable sustainable development and use of Scotland's marine area in a way which will protect and enhance the marine environment whilst promoting both existing and emerging industries. Aberdeen is noted specifically within the document with regard to oil and gas, recreation and tourism, and shipping, ports, harbours and ferries. The National Development of Aberdeen Harbour is also noted and these issues will need to be considered when producing the Proposed Plan. There is no regional marine plan for the north east of Scotland.

Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CD015)

8.47 The Scottish Government Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance 2023 (CD015) is designed to help local authorities in planning for our future climate at the coast and to support long term adaptation and resilience of coastal communities. The aims of the guidance are as follows:

1. Promote the resilience of our natural coastline and begin the process of adaptation to climate change;
2. Set out a process for a proactive approach to coastal adaptation planning that will maximise opportunities and minimise risk from climate change impacts;
3. Ensure our collective coastal adaptation journey starts now and;
4. Support local authorities to begin the process.

8.48 At the time of writing, a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is being developed in Aberdeen to understand how coastal development can adapt to anticipated changes resulting from climate change. This will include projections of different climate change scenarios to understand how Aberdeen's coast will change. It is anticipated the Plan will be published over the coming year.

Dynamic Coast

8.49 Dynamic Coast, Scotland's Coastal Change Assessment has identified areas at risk of future erosion. This includes small areas along Aberdeen's soft coastal areas, north of the River Don that may be susceptible to future erosion. This can have implications for identifying sites in the Proposed Plan.

8.50 Further discussion on this data source can be found in the Natural Places section of the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

8.51 SEPA's Coastal Flood mapping indicates that the entire Aberdeen coastline presents a 'high' likelihood of flooding, particularly along the beach, the River Don, and the River Dee. It shows areas of coastline that are susceptible to natural erosion. This is

most evident along the northern areas of Aberdeen's coast, along the beach, and north of the River Don. It shows a northerly movement of sediment along the coast. This can have implications for identifying sites in the Proposed Plan. Further information concerning flood risk and management is outlined in the Climate topic paper.

Coastal Zoning

8.52 Within the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044), coastal areas are zoned as either developed or undeveloped and are shown on the constraints map. The principle of these zonings is well established. The boundaries may need to be re-examined due to the development of the Aberdeen South Harbour at Bay of Nigg. A small area of Undeveloped Coast lies within the Aberdeen South Harbour which would appear to be an anomaly now that the harbour has been built. There are no areas of remote coast in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen Adapts

8.53 Aberdeen Adapts 2022 is a framework for city-wide progress towards climate adaptation. It identifies 'Flooding and Coastal Change' as one of five main focal themes for climate adaptation in Aberdeen.

8.54 The Aberdeen Adapts Evidence Base (CD017) indicates that there will be a rise in sea level under all emission scenarios, with a mean increase of 0.56m under a high emission scenario and a mean increase of 0.36m under a low emission scenario. Additionally, flooding and coastal erosion are increasingly likely as the risk of tidal surges and wave overtopping heightens.

8.55 It identifies that although a dynamic coastline is a natural process, coastal inundation has potential consequences for natural habitats and defences, such as the coastal dune ridge north of the River Don. Additionally, changes in sedimentation pattern may lead to erosion at the coast or sedimentation processes in adjacent areas to existing coastal defences. This can have implications for identifying sites and zoning land in the Proposed Plan.

Business & Industry

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (SNSET) (CD018)

8.56 The SNSET outlines national goals for business and industry, and identifies five interconnected key policy programmes of action (entrepreneurial people and culture; new market opportunity; productive businesses and regions; skilled workforce; a fair and more equal society) to drive improvements in Scotland's economy by 2032. Success in delivering these would mean a strong economy, where good, secure and well-paid jobs and growing businesses have driven a significant reduction in poverty, particularly child poverty. There is a role for all, from government to business, trade unions, third sector and the people of Scotland. This can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Regional Economic Strategy – a sustainable economic future for the NE of Scotland (CD058)

8.57 The Regional Economic Strategy outlines the regional strategy for creating suitable conditions for economic growth throughout the North East. The regional economy has faced significant challenges, in regards to leaving the European Union, following the COVID-19 pandemic and to changes in the oil and gas sector.

8.58 It identifies 5 overarching objectives:

- To establish the North East as a pioneer of the energy transition, by delivering an 80% reduction in carbon emissions per head;
- Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional employment from the region's growth sectors;
- Maintain a healthy, sustainable, working age population through increasing economic participation rates;
- Become a Real Living Wage region with 95% of overall employment offering a real living wage or higher; and
- Protect and enhance the natural capital of the region by aligning to national ambitions to manage 30% of the region for people and nature by 2030.

8.59 The objectives are supported by four work programmes detailed below (Table 8.5).

Work Programme	Overview
A thriving, innovative driven economy	Growth across our key sectors will be driven by innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalisation so that high quality jobs are created. Investment in decarbonisation will be maximised through unlocking private capital for investment in the transition.

An outstanding natural environment:	Our natural environments and biodiversity will be preserved, protected and restored, to ensure we retain their value and integrity, allowing them to continue providing all the essential services we need to support and strengthen our economy, people and places. The region remains a stunning, healthy and productive place to live, work and visit, and accessible to all. The North East's nature underpins many industries providing sustainable raw materials to businesses, supplying a world renowned food and drink sector, strengthening the health and wellbeing of our people and the natural beauty that is the most cited reason for visiting by tourists – outdoor activity, natural environment, marine and adventure tourism are all unique features that the North East can capitalise on.
A healthy and skilled population:	There will be investment in education, skills, technology and employment opportunities that help residents benefit from the transition to net zero. Individuals will be able to access high-quality education and training at all life stages. This, combined with a focus on Fair Work and a reduction in inequality, will ensure that all residents and communities are equipped to fulfil their potential, contributing to an improvement in wellbeing and ultimately life expectancy.
A strong community and cultural identity:	There is a vibrant culture and creative sector that is championed to enhance our distinctiveness with a successful arts and cultural sector that capitalises on new investments such as P&J Live or Aberdeen Art Gallery

Table 8.5: Four 'programme areas' developed in response to a number of new challenges and opportunities that the North East economy faces.

North East Scotland Investment Zone (NESIZ)

8.60 North East Scotland was confirmed as an Investment Zone in June 2023, encompassing Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The NESIZ will receive up to £160 million over ten years, supporting economic growth in green energy and digital technology sectors. The region aims to create high-value jobs and support the transition away from oil and gas. The area has extensive experience in offshore energy and a significant tech cluster, contributing to economic growth and innovation. This can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Aberdeen City Data Observatory

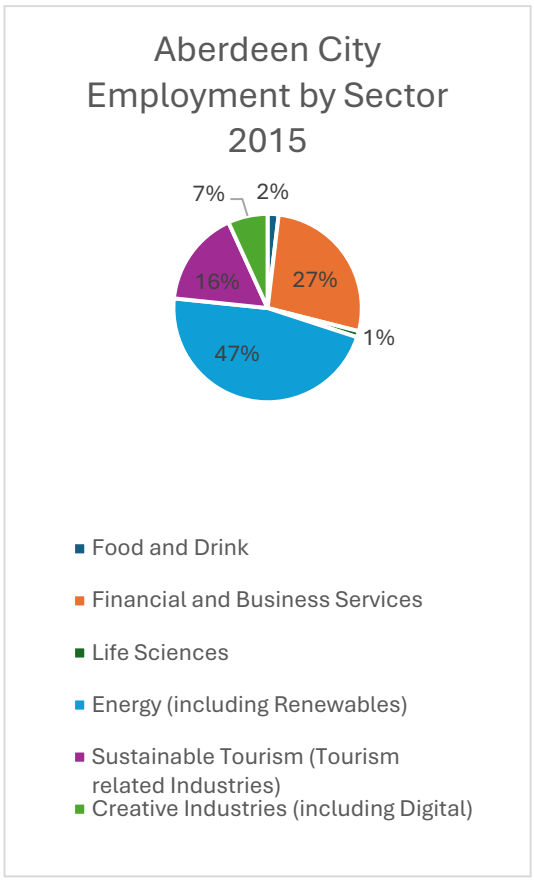
8.61 Within the Data Observatory, the Aberdeen City Employment by Sector (Figures 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7) show the number of people employed within the six largest sectors in Aberdeen between 2015 and 2023. As of 2023 within Aberdeen, the largest proportion of people (44%) are employed within the Energy (including Renewables) sector. The second largest sector is Financial and Business Services at 25%.The third largest sector is Sustainable Tourism (20%), which includes tourism related

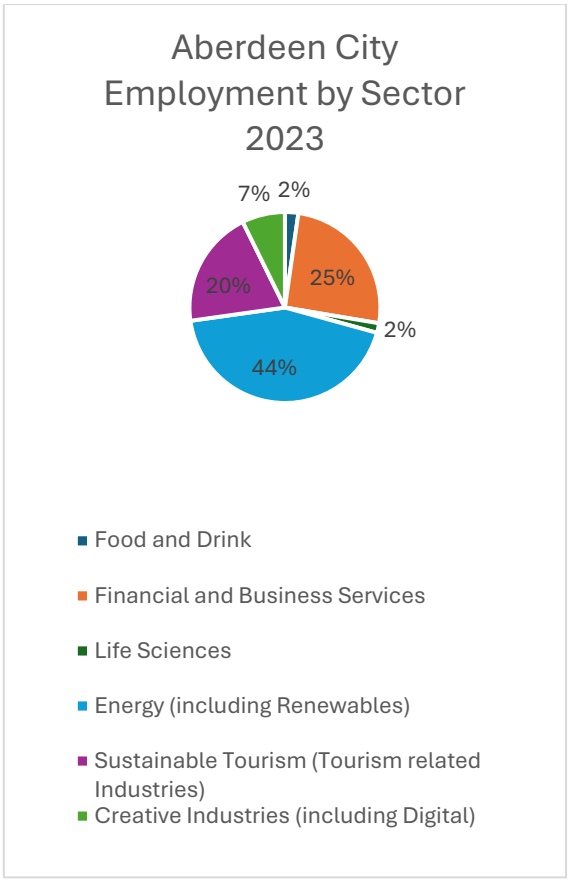
industries. This sector has been among the most stable sectors of employment. No other sector of employment within Aberdeen exceeds 10%.

8.62 Comparing Aberdeen to Scotland (Figures below 8.8,8.9 and 8.10), it is noticeable that Sustainable Tourism (32%) and Financial and Business Services (29%) are by far the largest employment sectors as of 2023 at a national level. While Aberdeen is broadly comparable with Scotland in the Financial and Business Services (at 25% in Aberdeen vs Scotland's 29% in 2023), Aberdeen's Sustainable Tourism industry only accounts for 20% of employment compared to Scotland's 32%.

8.63 The main differences will likely be reflective of Aberdeen being primarily an urban local authority situated on the coast. In addition to this, as the 'Energy capital of Europe', its role in employing people within the oil and gas industries are an outlier, rather than representative of an opportunity available throughout Scotland. While this employment sector is contracting due to the desire to reduce the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels, investment in renewable energy such as wind turbines and solar farms has partially counteracted this.

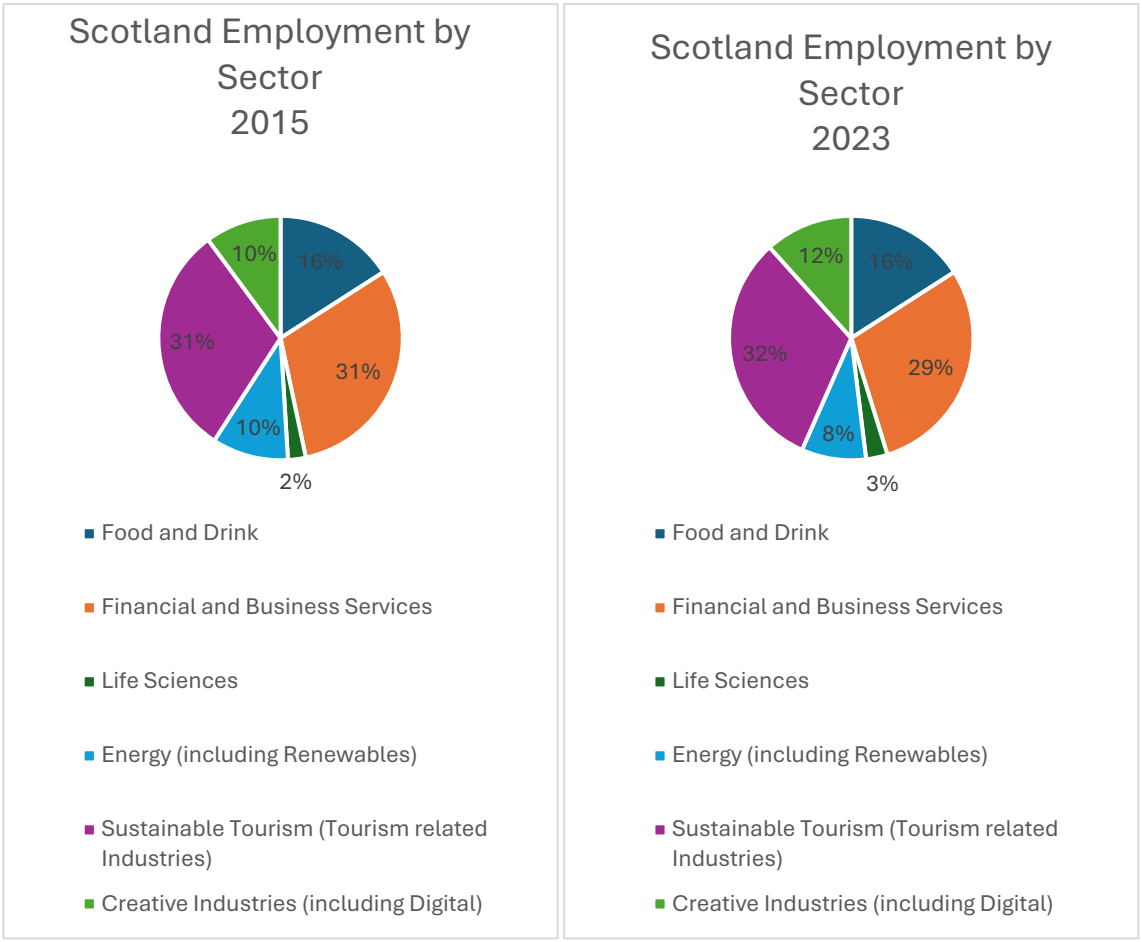






Figures 8.5,8.6 and 8.7: Aberdeen City – Employment by Sector – 2015-2023





Figures 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10: Scotland – Employment by Sector – 2015-2023

8.64 National Planning Framework 4's spatial planning priorities relate to economic growth, economic diversification, innovation, a transition from oil and gas to net zero, regeneration and a retained workforce. This emphasises the importance Aberdeen and the North East have for Scotland's wider net zero objectives. It will have a significant effect on the nature of the Aberdeen employment market for both existing and emerging businesses and industries, which may have differing land allocation requirements.

8.65 The GVA per head in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire saw a rising trend until 2015 and a falling trend to 2020 as a result of the oil and gas downturn (see Figure 8.11). In comparison, the Scottish line remained steady until 2019 (COVID-19). Aberdeen City and Shire have followed a similar growth trend to the national figures since 2020.

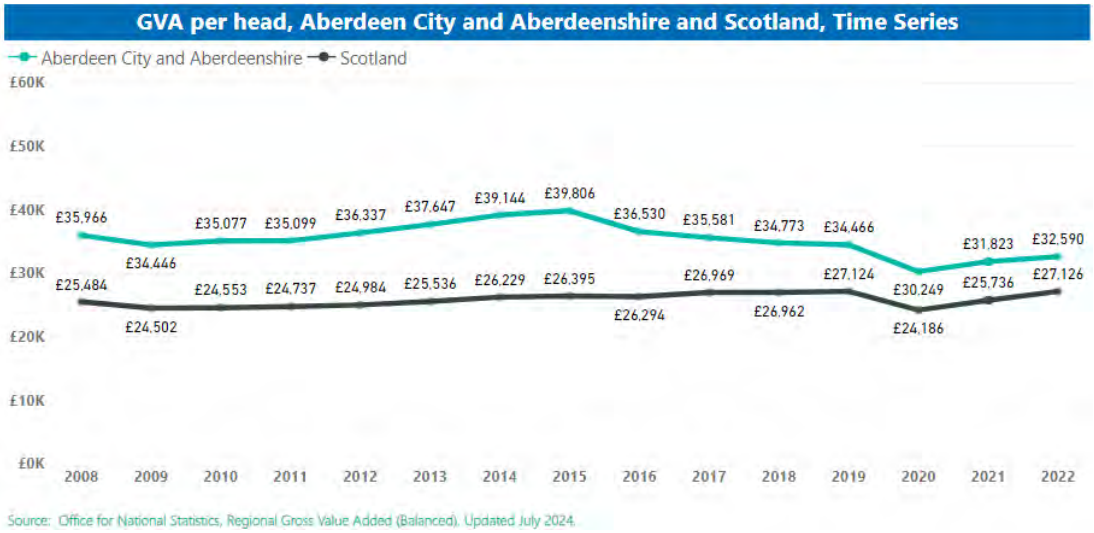


Figure 8.11: Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire 2008-2022

8.66 A similar trend is seen in business births and deaths shown by Figure 8.12 below. Between 2010 and 2015 business births exceeded business deaths quite considerably. Only two years since has seen business births higher than deaths (2018 and 2019) before COVID-19 pandemic impacted on businesses yet again. 2023 shows only a small difference between births and deaths and indicates stabilisation is occurring.

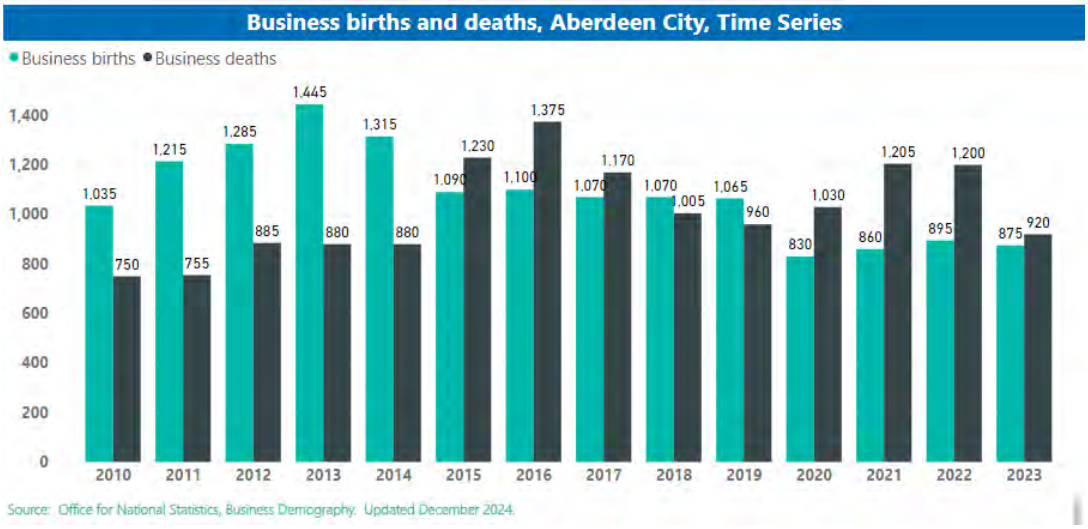


Figure 8.12: Business births and deaths in Aberdeen 2010-2023

8.67 Wages in Aberdeen have historically been higher than the Scottish average. However, as Figure 8.13 below shows, after the oil and gas downturn and COVID-19, wages have evened out across gender and location since 2022.

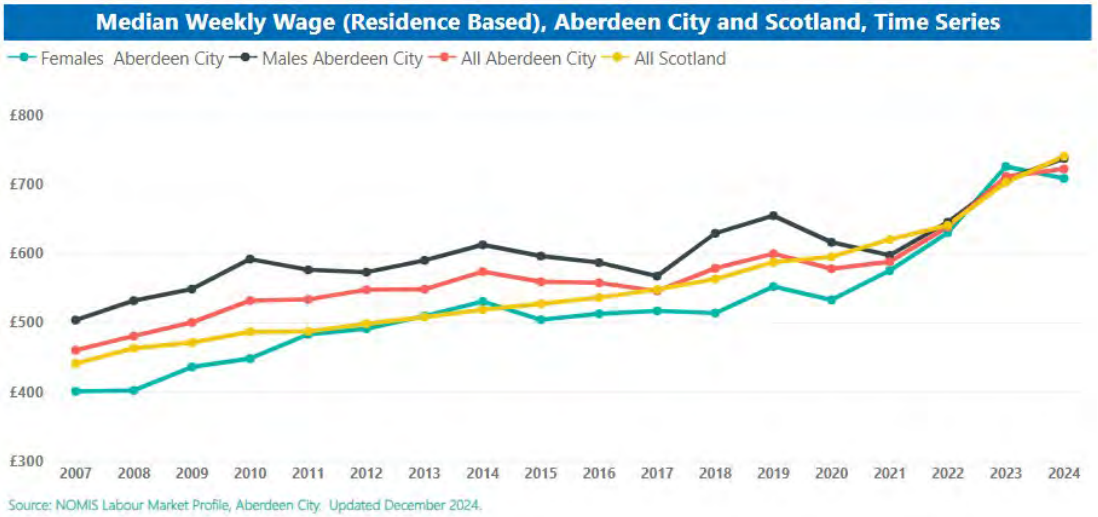


Figure 8.13: Median Weekly Wage – Aberdeen City, Scotland and by Gender 2007 - 2024

8.68 The energy sector in Aberdeen is dominated by oil and gas industries, however there is an emerging renewable energy sector. There are current transitions to sustainable sources of energy such as solar, hydrogen, wind, combined heat and power in line with the Scottish Governments net zero targets.

Energy Transition Fund

8.69 The £62m Energy Transition Fund is available to support projects, to protect existing jobs and create new jobs in the North East. Its main focus is on the Global Underwater Hub and Net Zero Solution Centre projects, A Hydrogen Hub, The Acorn Project and An Energy Transition Zone adjacent to Aberdeen South Harbour. The energy transition fund aligns with the Aberdeen City Region Deal and its support for retraining and skills development. Planning for the future has seen relocation of activity from Aberdeen Harbour to the South Harbour – both of which are key assets in the region's blue economy.

City Region Deal

8.70 The Aberdeen City Region Deal commits the UK Government and Scottish Government to invest up to £250m. The deal, aims to encourage investment in innovation, internationalisation, digital connectivity, and infrastructure across the region. Investments include £90 million to support an Oil and Gas Technology Centre, and £15 million towards new innovation hubs focusing on research, development and growth in the life sciences and food and drink sectors. Key projects include the Aberdeen South Harbour (completed in 2023), BioHub (opened in 2023), SeedPod (under construction, due for completion in 2025), Net Zero Technology Centre (formerly the Oil and Gas Technology Centre), 5G digital technology and transport projects. This can be examined when considering employment land, sites and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 (CD021)

8.71 The report highlights the need for a long-term strategic approach to secure a successful transition to renewable energy. This requires diversification, attracting and retaining skills, investing in infrastructure, making Aberdeen an even better place to live and work and implementing a successful regional economic strategy. This can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan. Employment rates in Aberdeen dropped at a steeper rate post oil price decline in 2015 than in the rest of Scotland. Whilst the rate has started to recover, it remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (Figure 8.14):

- Employment rate pre-pandemic (2019): 79.4%
- During pandemic (2020): 71.8%
- Post pandemic (2024): 77.4%



Figure 8.14: Extract from Data Observatory showing Employment Rate in Aberdeen and Scotland over time.

8.72 Demographic changes in the region will impact upon the North East economy with the average age of residents increasing throughout Scotland. In the North East there has been a decline in working age population from 328,000 in 2015 to 315,000 in 2021 equating to a 4% decline. Compared to Glasgow and Edinburgh, where the rate has increased by 5%, the North East has the lowest working-age population since 2008 (Figure 8.15).

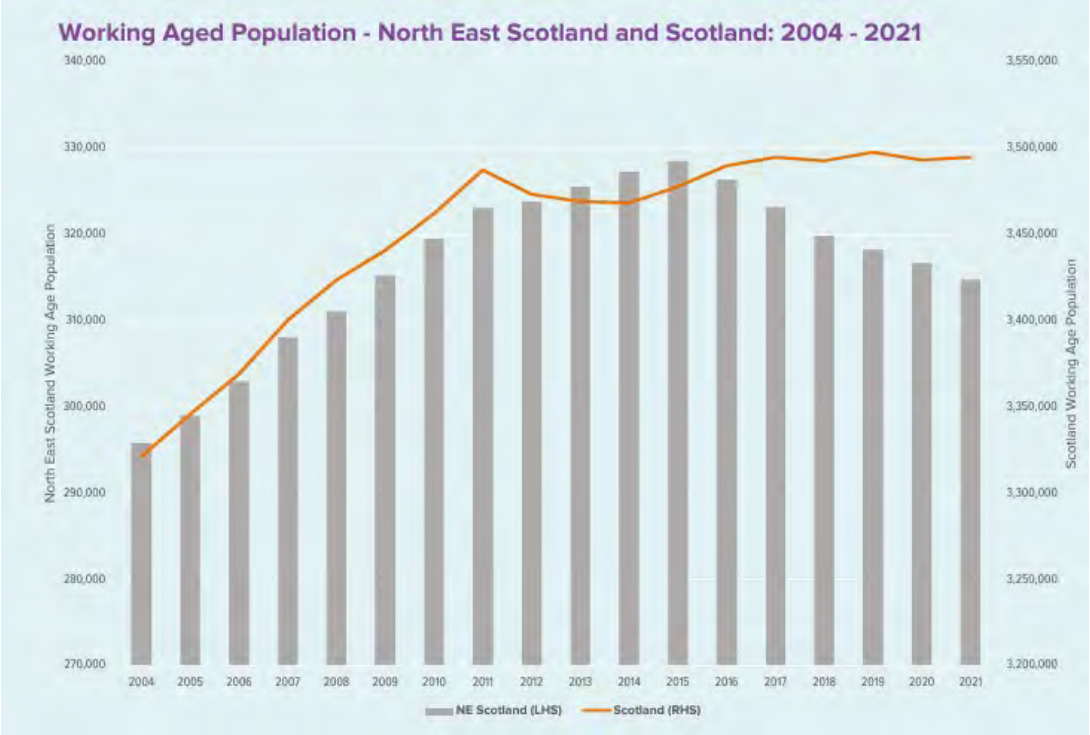


Figure 8.15: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Working Aged Population Rate in North East and Scotland over time.

8.73 Other notable factors compounding this issue include national cost of living increases and economic effects of COVID-19, but also local housing market house price falls, local rent increases and a higher claimant figure post pandemic (Figure 18.16).

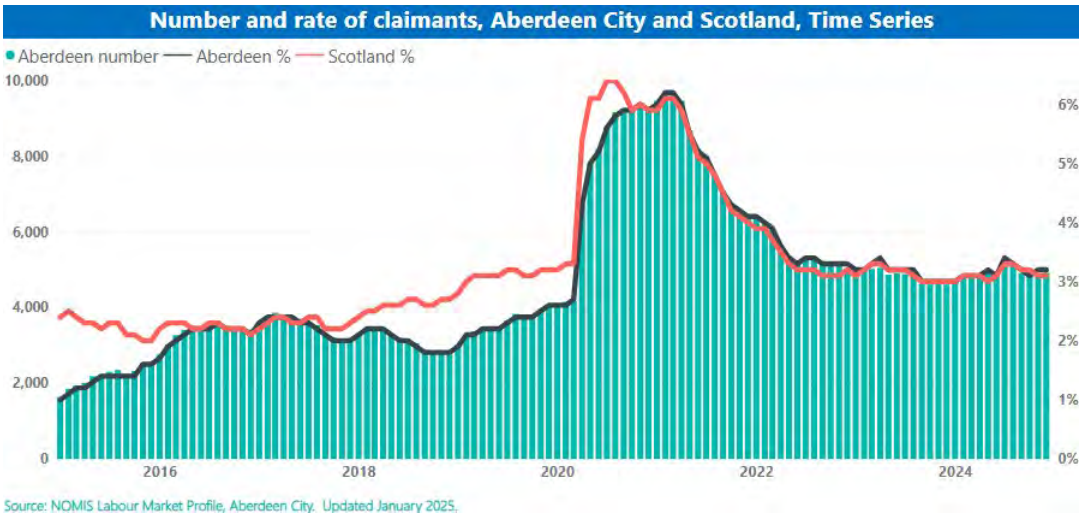


Figure 8.16: Number and rate of claimants in Aberdeen and Scotland.

8.74 Demographic changes, pressures and skills shortages can have knock on effects on the ability for businesses to obtain staff. The report notes that 83% of North East companies have reported challenges in recruiting suitable staff. In line with the Regional Economic Strategy ambitions to diversify the North East economy away from oil and gas will require to take account of demographic changes, labour shortages and rising costs and prices. Diversification towards other sectors that

have strong growth potential (identified in Figure 8.17 below) will be fundamental in achieving the aspirations of the Regional Economic Strategy.

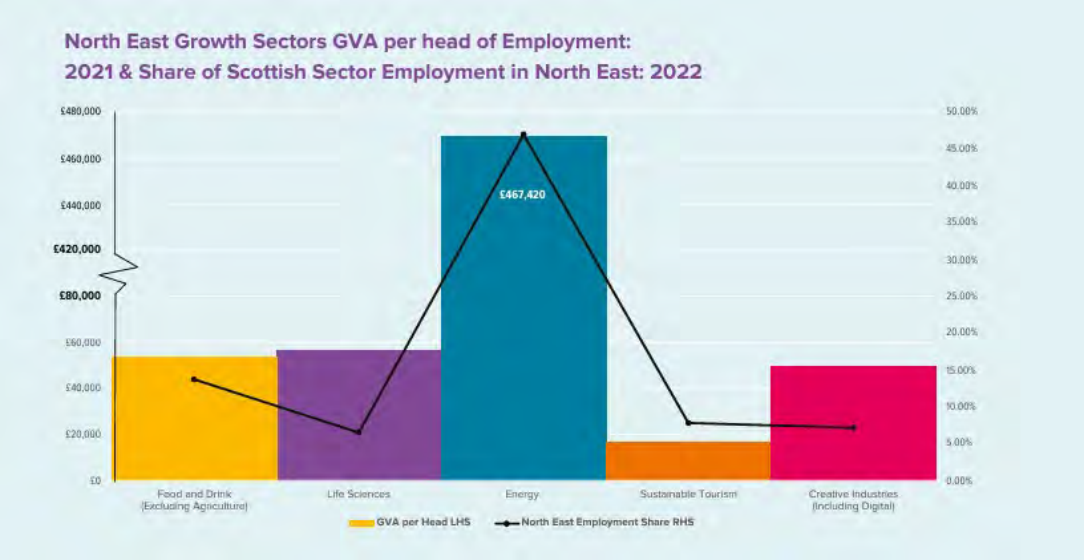


Figure 8.17: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Growth Sectors GVA per head of Employment in North East

Employment Land Supply

8.75 Analysis of current and potential demand for employment land through specific policies and allocations will be required to align with National Planning Framework 4 and focus on economic prosperity and just transition. The biannual Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Business and Land Audit 2023 (CD020) monitors the location, size, planning status and any existing constraints (marketability, infrastructure, land use etc) of sites within the existing business and industry land supply. The audit monitors the supply and availability as well as the take up of land. Previous audits can be used to identify any trends. National Planning Framework 4 does not state a specific land requirement target for business and industry land allocations.

The Business and Industry Land Audit (CD366)

8.76 There are 275 hectares of undeveloped business and industry land designated in Aberdeen City. Around 60% of that is constrained as it is not expected to be capable of coming forward within the short to medium term. The established land supply increased by 8% from 2023, as a number of small sites were added, alongside new Opportunity Sites (OP56 and OP61). Many of the small sites are immediately available. The Marketable land supply fell by 18% from 2023, while the Immediately Available, and Constrained land supply increased by 155%, and 89%, respectively as Figure 8.18 below shows.

	2023	2025	Change
Established	254	275	+8%
Constrained	62	117	+89%
Marketable	192	157	-18%
Immediately Available	42	107	+155%
Under Construction	5.2	4.2	-19%

Figure 8.18: Aberdeen City Business and Industry Land Supply 2021 and 2025.

8.77 As shown in Table 8.6 below, in Aberdeen City there has been a decreasing trend in take up of employment land over the past 12 years, which can be attributed to the decision to leave the European Union, the downturn in the oil industry and effects of COVID-19 pandemic. A proportion of the take up has involved non business and industry uses such as retail and “drive-thru” restaurants/take-aways. This is further discussed in Topic Paper – Centres of Business and Culture. There is currently no analysis available regarding overall loss of business land (hectares) to other uses.

8.78 Without a specific land requirement target, future site allocations will require to look towards the Regional Economic Strategy and North East Scotland Investment Zone to ensure that the potential to meet economic objectives for Aberdeen City and the wider region is maximised.

2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25
17	15.9	15.3	3.4	0	12	0	4.5	0	1.14	2	0

Table 8.6: Aberdeen City past 12 year completion in Hectares.

Office Space

8.79 Take up of office space is down in Aberdeen, however this is a similar picture in Edinburgh. Office supply at the end of 2024 totalled 1.85 sq. ft with a notable 16% reduction compared to 2023 (see Figure 8.20).

8.80 In comparison to 2023, the office take up in Aberdeen has decreased by 29% across 70 transactions. Most deals were less than 5,000sq.ft. Normally office take up is boosted by some substantial larger deals, however, the largest deals in 2024 were OEG Energy Group at ABZ Business Park at 16,591sq.ft and Sword Group at Hill of Rubislaw at 16,460 sq.ft.

8.81 Grade A take up in the city centre has been low, however there is a lack of availability. Redevelopment of properties in the West End has been fairly subdued. A number of vacant West End buildings have been sold for residential conversions, as pricing for vacant buildings now making this viable in some instances. Outwith the city centre accounted for 40% of take up in one third of the transactions. PrimeFour and the north of the city, at ABZ Business Park and Aberdeen Energy and Innovation Parks, fared better than the south. Grade A rents have remained at

£32.50 per sq. ft. However, rents could rise for the higher quality stock due to lack of speculative new developments.

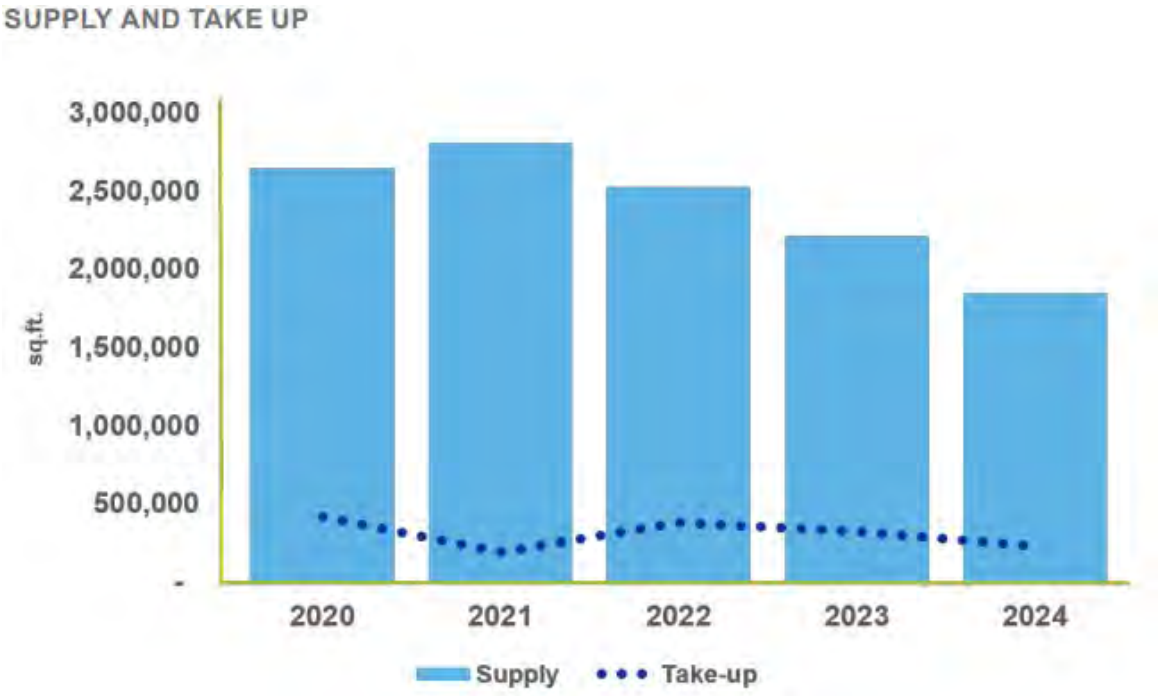


Figure 8.20: Supply and Take Up of Office Space in Aberdeen 2019-2023 (Ryden Scottish Property Review 2024)

8.82 It is important to recognise that post COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations continue to work a hybrid or flexible model and this can impact upon space requirements of an organisation.

Industrial Space

Supply

8.83 Due to financial factors including interest rate rises and increased build costs, speculative development in Aberdeen has been limited. Supply has fallen from its peak of 3.2million sq.ft to 2.0million sq.ft. However, a large portion of this supply is old stock or of premises less active at the current time. A number of substantial design and build requirements are in the market at present from companies seeking buildings with high BREEAM and energy performance (EPC) ratings. These occupiers are having to commit to long term leases at new rental highs for the Aberdeen market and the prospects are good for further medium to long term rent inflation.

Demand

8.84 2025 marked the third strongest year in Aberdeen's industrial market since the 2015. Take up for the year totalled 775,249sq.ft, across 72 deals, with the average

deal size being 10,767 sq.ft. 2023 marked the largest volume of transactions since the downturn in the oil and gas sector in 2015.

8.85 A lack of quality stock is constraining the market so demand is higher than the take-up figures reflect. In particular the market is strong for good quality industrial units over 10,000 sq.ft which benefit from secure yards and overhead craneage.

8.86 These issues can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Place Standard Assessment (CD042)

8.87 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this is found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas.

8.88 The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations (see Table 8.8). An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

8.89 The facilities and services, and work and local economy themes of the Place Standard are relevant here, both scoring 3.9 out of 7.

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for future
Facilities and Services	- Good provision of shops, within easy access (All) - Support services were good with a range of services available (All), particularly those for the elderly and the vulnerable, and children (Central) - Publicly funded facilities (community centres, libraries, school, play parks) are good. (All) - Good activities for children. (All) - Good provision and access to all services and shops (South) - Park facilities were good locally. (South)	- Increases/improvements to health and community health services (All) - Improvements and increases to publicly funded services, such as maintaining and reopening particularly libraries (All) - Improve activities for children and young people (North) - Improve road safety and crossing. (North) - Improvements to, and increased funding for, support services, such as food banks and services to help the vulnerable and elderly. (Central) - Access to affordable food (Central) - Encouraging investment and incentives for businesses to open locally (South) - Improvements to community health services and support services, and the homeless, elders, and young people (South, North) - Improve public transport to the GP (South) - Do not develop existing green space (South) - Increasing access to and the provision of shops, including bigger food shops (Central) - More investment needed to improve local facilities and services that the community want (Central)
Work and Local Economy	- Good training opportunities, volunteering opportunities and availability of jobs. (All) - Local businesses and independents opening (Central) - Range of retail services (Central)	- Type and range of job opportunities available locally (North and Central) - Improve employment support and training (North and Central) - Volunteering opportunities (North) - Training especially for retraining and skills development (South and Central)

		- Empty buildings grants and incentives(South and Central)

Table 8.8: Summary of respondents' views on good and improvable aspects of their place for the future.

8.90 The children and young people results on work and local economy are shown in Table 8.9 below.

Theme	What is good now?	What would make it better?
Work and Local Economy	Volunteering (20.8%) Jobs for my family (17.9%) Jobs nearby (14.2%)	Training to learn new things (29.3%) Jobs nearby (27.4%) Jobs for my family (17%)
Facilities and Services	Good shops (22.6%) School (22.6%) Doctors (12.3%)	Clubs (22%) Doctors (20.8%) School (16%)

Table 8.9: Summary of young person/children's responses to what is good or could be improved about their places. Information is specific to the Work and Local Economy and Facilities and Services criteria

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

8.91 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

8.92 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in September 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on the Spatial Strategy. This included:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Chambers of Commerce
- Marine Directorate
- Ryden
- Homes for Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise
- Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Flooding/Coastal Team)

8.93 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in Autumn 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

8.94 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter.

8.95 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 13 responses in total were received on this topic paper, 5 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, NESTRANS) 2 from housing developers (Bancon Homes, and Barratt / David Wilson Homes North Scotland), and 7 members of the public.

8.96 Of those listed, 5 did not agree with the evidence prepared (Homes for Scotland, Barratt / David Wilson Homes North Scotland and 3 members of the public), and 1 provided further evidence sources (NatureScot). Bancon Homes agreed with the data sets provided in the Strategy Section but had other disputes and comments.

Stakeholder Comments

8.97 The following stakeholders provided further comments on the Spatial Strategy.

8.98 A meeting was held with NatureScot on 6 June 2025. They confirmed they have no dispute with the paper but do note the follow comments:

- NatureScot agree that the Green Belt Review text which focusses on Nature Networks, should consider biodiversity assets and welcome the consideration of climate change alongside nature networks, however, we recommend that tackling biodiversity loss is also included. Aberdeen City Council agrees with this and has included biodiversity loss in this section.
- NatureScot welcome the inclusion of the AECOM Nature Networks Corridor Map although we understand that there are challenges applying this at a city-level. Aberdeen City Council notes and acknowledges these challenges.
- NatureScot state that the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section is a useful summary however, it is quite general – it should be specific to Aberdeen and the evidence set out earlier in the topic paper. Aberdeen City Council accept that parts of this section are general in nature. However, there are still several studies required to be undertaken together with the call for sites stage. The Proposed Plan will be written over the next 15 months, during which time new issues can emerge, so it is not considered necessary to be too prescriptive at this stage.
- NatureScot states this paper considers green belt, brownfield, coastal development, and business & industry but it is not clear why other spatial elements are not considered for example, the blue green network, nature networks and core paths. Aberdeen City Council's response is that the topic papers closely follow the policies set out in NPF4 where they relate to Aberdeen and explains why the spatial strategy topic paper considers these sub-topics. Blue green networks, nature networks and core paths are considered in more detail in other topic papers such as Sustainable Transport and Nature and Biodiversity. However, we agree that they should also be considered here so have added reference to them in the Spatial Strategy Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section.
- NatureScot state that the National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network is not considered in this topic paper. Aberdeen City Council acknowledge that

the National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network needs to be mentioned in this Topic and will do so in the Spatial Strategy Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan – together with cross referencing to the Sustainable Transport Topic.

8.99 NESTRANS have confirmed that they agree with the evidence used in this Topic Paper and that no evidence has been missed. NESTRANS comment that the response mentions the need to use enhanced data to support progressive policies around land allocation. This is not a dispute on the evidence rather than the need for enhanced narrative as the LDP develops.

8.100 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland confirmed that they dispute the sections of the paper (see Statements of Disagreement) and provided the following commentary:

- Homes for Scotland suggest that the Evidence Report should refer to the Scottish Flood Defence Asset Database (SCDAB). The Council acknowledges that it is important to know the location of flood defences but that the SFDAB is not accessible by the general public. However, Local Authorities have access, so the Database is part of the Strategic Flood Risk Appraisal which accompanies this Evidence Report. This means it can be taken into account when making new land allocations.
- Homes for Scotland point out that Aberdeen City Council declared a Housing Emergency last year but neither this, nor the declaration of a national Housing Emergency are referenced in the draft Topic Paper. The Council has updated discussion on the housing emergency in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper which is the proper place for it. The Spatial Strategy paper is more concerned with where development in general should or should not be located, rather than what the actual type of development should be.
- Homes for Scotland comment that new homes are key to the social, health, wellbeing and economic success of Aberdeen as well as being a key component in addressing the on-going housing emergency. The new Local Development Plan will be in place for 10 years therefore decisions now have to be both positive and ambitious. Decisions that inform the next local development plan will inform the duration and severity of the housing emergency. Where appropriate, Homes for Scotland note that they, and their members, would be happy to engage with the Council as it finalises evidence for the topic papers. The Council acknowledges and accepts these comments and are happy to continue engaging with Homes for Scotland as well as other parts of the development industry for the duration of the LDP process.
- Homes for Scotland state that it is vital for the next LDP to consider both sustainable and marketable locations for new developments. If a sustainable site is not in a marketable location, it is unlikely to be delivered, and the housing requirement will not be met. The Council acknowledges that marketability is an important issue, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of

sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.

- Homes for Scotland agree that sites should be re-assessed, to understand whether they are viable for residential development. Brownfield and SVDLD sites represent various challenges such as market demand, the large amounts of upfront investment required, perceived market risk, economic uncertainty and fragmented ownership. Limited confidence can be placed in these sites delivering a notable proportion of the new homes required to exceed the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR), particularly given the number of sites which are in active use. In reference to Vacant and Derelict sites, allocating a site for housing is not in itself a sufficient catalyst for development. Viability requires to be more fully understood here.
- Homes for Scotland supports the sustainable reuse of brownfield land but if not viable, it should not be allocated regardless of whether it is a brownfield or greenfield site. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.
- An exercise should be carried out to understand why sites that have been allocated for housing have not come forward. Viability matters require to be fully understood, given that every allocated site will need to be deliverable in the emerging LDP. HFS and our members would be willing to share our knowledge on these issues. The Council would welcome any collaboration on this issue and is happy to work together to find ways of overcoming barriers to development.

8.101 A meeting was held with Bancon Homes on 18 June 2025. Bancon Homes confirmed that they dispute the sections of the paper (see statements of disagreement) and provided the following commentary:

- Bancon Homes point out that high density development is not always the correct design or market solution. The Authority and Development Industry should work collaboratively to arrive at a density that is appropriate for each location. The Council acknowledges these comments and would accept that whilst high density development has sustainability advantages, it is not always appropriate in every case.
- Bancon Homes are, as discussed above, supportive of a strategy that undertakes a comprehensive review of the Greenbelt in order to identify suitable locations for new development. In doing so, it should actively consider where allocations can be made that would broadly comply with NPF4 namely through the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the creation of sustainable communities. The Council welcomes the support given for a green belt review and has added reference to 20-minute neighbourhoods and

sustainable communities to point 5 of the commentary on the Green Belt Review in paragraph 8.23.

- A strategy that places all of the allocations on brownfield sites is not going to be successful and will prohibit many people from being able to reside in their chosen area or be able to live in a home that is fit for purpose and meets their needs. This will only serve to fuel the housing emergency currently faced. The Council does not suggest all allocations should be on brownfield sites – housing allocations should be provided in a range of locations.
- Bancon Homes would also note that given the complexities in taking forward brownfield sites the authority should, in order to arrive at a deliverable Local Housing Land Supply, allocate new land. Not only would this guarantee delivery but it would provide new housing in areas where people want to live. Brownfield Sites tend to be cited in city centre or industrial locations to the north and south of the city, not necessarily where people want to live. Likewise, their location can dictate that the type of home tends to be higher density flatted properties and this is not always what the market need is. To respond to both the local and national housing emergency it is paramount that new allocations are made in areas where people want to live and a variety of house type is accommodated. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan and that a range of sites would be desirable. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.
- Bancon Homes have no issue in regard to the Coastal Zoning strategy however, respectfully request the right to comment on this further once the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan has been published for consultation.
- Bancon Homes recognise there is an emerging renewable energy sector in Aberdeen and this is expected to be strengthened further through the transition to net zero as well as the location of GB Energy into the city. Furthermore the £62m Energy Transition Fund is available to support projects to protect existing, and create new, jobs in the North East this will inevitably lead to more job creation which will help to support the local economy. To support and sustain this investment it is vital that new housing both affordable and private is delivered in areas where people want to live. The Council acknowledges these comments.

8.102 An email was sent to Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date, therefore the comments have been classed as disputes and are set out in the disputes section below.

8.103 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to a member of the public who disputed the paper, and on 24 June 2025 an email was sent to two further members of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy and National Developments

8.104 The Aberdeen City and Shire Interim Regional Spatial Strategy (or any subsequent RSS if approved) will be used to inform the spatial strategy of Proposed Plan.

8.105 National Developments within National Planning Framework 4 (Aberdeen Harbour and the Aberdeen Rapid Transit Network) will have to be considered in terms of the spatial strategy.

Green Belts

8.106 We will use the information from the Green Belt Review to inform the Proposed Plan. The continuing role of green belt as part of the spatial strategy will be considered, taking into account the policy outcomes in National Planning Framework 4.

8.107 A detailed, site-specific review of the boundaries of the green belt will need to be undertaken.

8.108 Consideration will need to be given to whether any land previously designated as green belt should be released to meet future development requirements.

8.109 Consideration should be given to whether any new areas of green belt should be designated to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of Aberdeen.

8.110 The role of Aberdeen's green belt in supporting nature networks and helping tackle climate change, as highlighted in National Planning Framework 4, will require to be considered.

8.111 With a detailed green belt policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the need for a local green belt policy in the Proposed Plan.

8.112 We will consider how the vision of Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026 can help achieve the policy outcome and intent of the green belt as outlined on National Planning Framework 4.

8.113 We will consider the role the landscape character assessment, the coastal character assessment, the peri-urban study and the sensitivity assessment will play in any green belt review.

8.114 We will consider the role that the blue green network, nature networks and core paths will play in any green belt review, the identification of new allocations and the

development of new nature networks. These are considered in detail in the Sustainable Transport and Nature and Biodiversity Topic Papers.

8.115 The spatial strategy for the Proposed Plan will be informed by the National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network (also referred to in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper) and in the site selection process.

Brownfield Development

8.116 The continuing role of the use of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings as part of spatial strategy will have to be considered, taking into account the policy outcomes in National Planning Framework 4.

8.117 It is proposed to continue and further develop this approach before identifying greenfield sites for development. The biodiversity value and contribution brownfield land can make to nature recovery, and productive greenspace will be considered when assessing the appropriateness of allocating and considering such sites for development.

8.118 Information contained in the most recent annual return to the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Survey, the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and the City Centre Masterplan's will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

8.119 Consideration will be given on if, and how, the impact of the Historic Environment Scotland review of the current Buildings at Risk Register might be reflected in the policy framework and development strategy for the Proposed Plan.

8.120 An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution that brownfield and infill sites within the city can make to meeting the local housing land requirement.

8.121 An Existing Site Audit will be required to assess the suitability and deliverability of existing allocations and the contribution they make to meeting the Local Housing Land Requirement.

8.122 The assessment of potential new sites for the Proposed Plan should take into consideration deliverability issues.

8.123 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

Coastal Development

8.124 The Proposed Plan will seek to incorporate relevant aims of the national marine plan and any regional marine plan when published. The National Development at Aberdeen Harbour will be identified within the Proposed Plan.

8.125 The impacts of climate change with regard to flooding and coastal erosion, and long term adaptation and reliance will be considered when developing the spatial strategy.

8.126 The spatial strategy should reflect the diversity of coastal areas and opportunities to use nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets.

8.127 A review of the current coastal zonings, developed and undeveloped, will need to be undertaken for the Proposed Plan.

8.128 With a detailed coastal development policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the need for a local coastal development policy in the Proposed Plan.

8.129 The Proposed Plan will take into account any relevant findings from the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan when it is published.

Business and Industry

8.130 A review of the current business and industrial land and business zones will need to be undertaken by the end of 2026 to inform the Proposed Plan, to understand if existing sites may require to be re-allocated, or if more economic land should be allocated, and for what type of uses.

8.131 The location of any new economic allocations in relation to communities, access to services and all forms of travel and transport services will need to be considered. In this context it may be appropriate in some cases to consider a wider mix of uses.

8.132 Information contained in the Regional Economic Strategy, North East Investment Zone, and the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Business and Land Audit will be used to inform the land requirements for business and industrial land in the Proposed Plan.

8.133 The spatial priorities for the North East from National Planning Framework 4 will have a significant effect on the nature of the Aberdeen employment market for both existing and emerging businesses and industries, which may have differing land allocation requirements.

8.134 With a detailed Business and Industry policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the need for local Business and Industrial Land, and Business Zones Policies.

Marmot Places

8.135 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. Table 8.10 below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential Implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 8.10 Marmot Principles

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

8.136 NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland and 4 individuals agreed with the evidence in this section and stated that no evidence had been missed.

8.137 NatureScot and NESTRANS have confirmed they do not dispute the evidence but have provided further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

8.138 Two individuals did not agree with the evidence but provided no further information, and did not respond to a follow up email.

8.139 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he does not have the knowledge to confirm why. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

8.140 The following Homes for Scotland comments are being noted as disputes:

- Homes for Scotland state that they would expect a Green Belt Review should be completed (and made available for comment) before the Evidence Report is submitted to the Gate Check. HFS dispute any approach that does not include a robust review of all land to be potentially designated as green belt, prior to the Gate Check. Without doing a green belt review at this stage, Homes for Scotland consider that the Council will be unable to confidently state they are aware of the potential links to the Site Assessment Methodology and the various Spatial Strategy documents that they refer to. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the Green Belt Review at this stage but acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- Homes for Scotland assert that a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study should be carried out now, such that the findings can be reviewed as part of the evidence gathering process. There is a dearth of information contained within the draft Topic Paper, as it pertains to brownfield land. For example, other Local Authorities have included important data sets as part of their draft Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land Topic Papers, including the breakdown by ownership for each site, and planning histories. Many other Local Authorities have also included visual representations of the scale of these types of land availabilities over time. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study at this stage, particularly as the Call for Sites stage is yet to be undertaken. However, we acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.

8.141 The following Bancon Homes comments are being noted as a disputes:

- Bancon Homes take issue with a strategy that seeks to retain areas of Greenbelt around the City and request that this is fully reassessed as part of any Greenbelt review. Both the City and National Government have declared a housing emergency and new allocations within the Greenbelt will be necessary to address this and meet any Local Housing Land Target. If new allocations are to be successful and deliver much needed new homes it is paramount that they are allocated in areas where people wish to live. The Council considers that housing allocations should be provided in a range of locations. It is felt unnecessary to produce the Green Belt Review at this stage but acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- Bancon Homes are supportive of a LDP that identifies opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings however in doing so any LDP must be mindful that there are multiple constraints and challenges in bringing forward a brownfield site, not only should there be policy support in the form of reduced developer obligations and flexibility on space and parking standards but there must be

the recognition that these sites are unlikely to contribute to the Local Housing Land Requirement and therefore should not be included. Instead, they should be windfall allocations. As the LDP will be a 10 year old plan it must be flexible and ensure that there is policy support to take forward brownfield sites that come forward within the life of the plan yet are not identified as such. The Council considers brownfield development to be sustainable. It assists regeneration and it will be important to explore every mechanism available to aid its delivery. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.

8.142 The following Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comments are being noted as disputes:

- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes point out that the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is included as evidence in the Topic Paper, but no link is provided to this document. The relevance of the RSS is questioned – and that Aberdeen, being the economic centre of the region should be ambitious about securing growth. The Council agrees that we should be ambitious – the interim RSS is referred to for historical context.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes provide comments on the history of the Green Belt and its effects on new developments. They suggest that demand for family housing remains greater than that of flatted accommodation and a restrictive approach would not support a growing economy. Detailed green belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans and therefore a thorough review is required. The Council agrees the need for a Green Belt Review and acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that Aberdeen should be a focus for meeting housing needs and demand as it will reduce travel demands and provides the opportunities to make the most sustainable use of land. The Green Belt has been used as a tool to restrict development in Aberdeen and a review of the boundaries should be undertaken to consider where there may be appropriate opportunities for greenfield development to support a sustainable development strategy. The Council agrees the need for a Green Belt Review and acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment on Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy stating that delivery of housing within Aberdeen close to a wide range of employment opportunities, services and facilities has significant benefits in land use terms and development can also help to increase urban woodland connections, public access and open space and deliver biodiversity net gains. These would all be achieved in the implementation of NPF4 policies. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that The AECOM Nature Networks are an indication of what could be, and can be used as a starting

point for local authorities to explore what their own Nature Networks could be. They should be used as a starting point for a more refined local analysis. The Council acknowledges these comments.

- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that it will be important that the urban capacity study considers each brownfield site and the expected delivery based on the specific circumstances. To be effective there needs to be a viable development and demand for the location and type of housing required. This needs to be considered in relation to the current costs to development and values. For example, there are some areas of Aberdeen where the cost to build will exceed the value of the property. Flatted developments are particularly challenging with low values, demand and also no desire from the Housing Service to fund flatted developments to contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the city. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic. However, brownfield development is sustainable and assists regeneration and it will be important to explore every mechanism available to aid their delivery.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that with many large industrial brownfield sites having been or in the process of redevelopment it is to be expected that there will be a decrease in the availability of suitable and viable brownfield opportunities. The Council states that as old brownfield sites get developed, new ones emerge and this will be examined in the next Brownfield Urban Capacity Study.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that providing a generous supply of deliverable housing land will be an important part of meeting the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy. Appropriate housing land and supply in the right locations can deliver the type and size of housing needed to attract a working age population. Historically a lack of housing supply has led to constraints in economic growth and pressure in the affordability of housing. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that development projects within the city centre boundary have a direct effect on city centre regeneration and delivery of an increased resident population in close proximity and accessible by a range of transport modes will assist in increased footfall and investment. This is particularly relevant as there is a move to make the city centre more pedestrian focussed and access from surrounding communities in Aberdeenshire to the City Centre decreases. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that the spatial strategy should focus on the strands of future development that will create the right conditions for investment in Aberdeen. An important strand to this will be delivery of housing to meet the needs of economically active people. There will be a range of housing needed to meet these needs, but the greatest demand is for family housing in locations that are close to areas of

employment. The Council acknowledges these comments and is happy to work with the housebuilding industry to address them.

- Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes comment that based on the evidence presented there is a clear indication that there is more than a sufficient supply of marketable employment land in Aberdeen based on trends. There should be flexibility in supply of employment land maintained, but there will be opportunity to consider the development of alternative uses on land allocated for business and industrial land on a case by case basis. The Council acknowledges these comments and will consider any proposals to repurpose or rezone land when assessing sites and areas for the Proposed Plan.

Information Gaps

8.143 The LDP team are currently preparing the Housing Land Audit for 2026, in a joint exercise with Aberdeenshire Council. A final report is expected to be published in Autumn 2026. Consideration will be given to the data contained in the 2026 HLA when drafting the Proposed Plan.

8.144 An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make to the housing supply. This will be completed by December 2026 and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

8.145 A Green Belt Review will be undertaken as part of the Natural Environment Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will include a Green Belt review. A draft strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

8.146 An Existing Site Audit will be required to assess the suitability/deliverability of existing allocations in Local Development Plan 2023. This will be completed by Autumn 2026 and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

8.147 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

9. Topic Paper 2 – Delivery of Homes

Required Information

9.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(1A)	The Local Development Plan (LDP) must include targets for meeting the housing needs of people living in the part of the district to which it relates.
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,
Section 15(5)(ca)	the housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people
Section 15(5)(cb)	the availability of land in the district for housing, including for older people and disabled people
Section 15(5)(f)	any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to these matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (eb)
Section 16(2) (ab)	In preparing the LDP, the planning authority are to have regard to the list published under section 16E of persons seeking to acquire land in the authority's area for self-build housing.
Section 16B(3) (a) - (c)	The Evidence Report is to: • set out the planning authority's view on the matters listed in section 15(5) (see above) • set out –

	• a summary of the action taken by the planning authority to support and promote the construction and adaptation of housing to meet the housing needs of older people and disabled people in the authority's area • an analysis of the extent to which the action has helped to meet those needs • set out – • a summary of the action taken by the planning authority to meet the needs of Gypsy/Travellers in the authority's area • an analysis of the extent to which that action has helped to meet those needs

Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023

Section	Requirement
Regulation 9(2)(e)	In preparing the LDP, the planning authority must have regard to: • any local housing strategy
Regulation 24(c)	A Delivery Programme is to set out the following matters: • the expected sequencing of, and timescales for, delivery of housing on sites allocated by the LDP

National Planning Framework 4

9.2 Policy 15 (Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods) and Policy 16 (Quality homes) of NPF4 provide the following guidance for Local Development Plans:

9.3 Local Development Plans (LDPs) are expected to identify a Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) for the area they cover. This is to meet the duty for a housing target and to represent how much land is required. To promote an ambitious and plan-led approach, the Local Housing Land Requirement is expected to exceed the 10 year Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) set out in Annex E.

9.4 Deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with local living including, where relevant, 20-minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure first approach. Diverse needs and delivery models should be taken into account across all areas, as well as allocating land to ensure provision of accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople where need is identified.

9.5 The LDP Delivery Programme is expected to establish a deliverable housing land pipeline for the Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR). The purpose of the pipeline is to provide a transparent view of the phasing of housing allocations so that interventions, including infrastructure, that enable delivery can be planned: it is not to stage permissions. Outlining when land will be brought forward, phasing is expected across the short (1-3 years), medium (4-6 years) and long-term (7-10 years). Where sites earlier in the deliverable housing land pipeline are not delivering as programmed, and alternative delivery mechanisms identified in the delivery programme are not practical, measures should be considered to enable earlier delivery of long-term deliverable sites (7-10 years) or areas identified for new homes beyond 10 years. De-allocations should be considered where sites are no longer deliverable. The annual Housing Land Audit (HLA) will monitor the delivery of housing land to inform the pipeline and the actions to be taken in the delivery programme.

9.6 This topic paper should be read in conjunction with the following papers: Infrastructure First Chapter 10, and Spatial Strategy Chapter 8 as there are relevant policy statements relating to these areas. Notably, Policy 18 (Infrastructure First) of NPF4 is closely linked to the provision of placemaking infrastructure.

Links to Evidence

- CD010 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (2023)
- CD294 NPF4 - Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire MATHLR Assessment Report (Draft NPF4 – Housing Land Requirement Explanatory Report)
- CD295 Scottish Government Housing to 2040 Report
- CD296 Chief Planner's Letter: Planning for Housing (June 2024)
- CD297 Chief Planner’s Letter of 22 November 2023
- CD298 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3: 2023-2028
- CD013 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2024
- CD327 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2025
- CD373 Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030
- CD374 Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy Evidence Base
- CD301 Aberdeen City Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 (PDF)
- CD014 Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (2019)

- CD302 Aberdeen City Council Self-Build Housing Register (July 2025 Update)
- CD041 Aberdeen City Community Planning Aberdeen Engagement Report
- CD303 Planning and the Housing Emergency – Delivery Plan
- CD304 Aberdeen City Council - Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee – Minute of Meeting – 5 September 2024
- CD328 Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: Gypsy Traveller Sites
- CD329 Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: Student Accommodation
- CD330 RAAC update - Aberdeen City Council - Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee - Report -
- CD371 Aberdeen City Council; Housing Emergency Action Plan
- CD375 DPEA; Guidance Note 26, Evidence Report and Gate Check
- CD333 Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Directorate: Local Development Plans Evidence Reports and Gate Checks Action Plan and Advice
- CD376 Aberdeen City's Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan
- CD318 Community Planning Aberdeen, Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future; Engagement Results Report 2025
- CD372 Scottish Government, Housing Land Audit; Guidance
- CD0045 City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022
- CD324 Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026 – 2036
- RD001 Existing Housing Need in Scotland by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co (PDF)
- RD002 Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen City by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co (PDF)
- RD006 Scottish Government blog titled: Updated evidence in the Local Development Plan (LDP) process
- RD007 Development Viability - Housing. Homes for Scotland 2026
- RD008 Homes for Scotland : Scottish Land Supply Analysis
- RD009 Homes for Scotland SME Research
- RD010 Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) practitioner guide 2026
- RD011 100 days of a new SNP Government
- CD378 Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy Housing Supply Target Methodology Paper

Delivery of Homes – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Airbnb Scotland Survey 2023 on numbers and distribution of Airbnb homes across Scotland	4 May 2026
Online Register of HMO Licence Applications and HMO Licences	14 May 2026
Houses in Multiple Occupation Concentrations – Interactive Online Map (updated on a monthly basis)	6 April 2026
Online Register of STL Licence Applications and STL Licences	6 April 2026

Planning Permission in Principle for erection of 19no. self-build dwelling houses with associated landscaping, access and infrastructure - Woodend, Culter House Road, Aberdeen Peterculter (planning ref. 210889/PPP) (insert planning ref. into search field to view decision notice and approved plans)	14 May 2026
National Records for Scotland Mid-2023 population estimates (2024)	6 April 2026
National Records for Scotland Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2023 (2024)	6 April 2026
Aberdeen City Demolition safest option for RAAC-affected homes	14 May 2025
National Records of Scotland Mid-2024 population estimates (2025)	6 April 2026
National Records of Scotland Subnational Population Projections 2022-based (2025)	6 April 2026
National Records of Scotland Projected Population of Scotland 2024-based (2026)	4 May 2026
National Records of Scotland Household projection (2018 based)	4 May 2026
National Records for Scotland Household projection (2022 based)	4 May 2026
Scottish Government; Excel Tables: Conversions and demolitions	4 May 2026

Summary of Evidence

Purpose and Scope

9.7 This section sets out an overview of the core documents and evidence relevant to this topic paper. The aim is to provide a summary of the currently available policy, data, factors and trends that will be used to inform the next local development plan. It includes information on housing delivery, completion rates, population and household projections, local housing need and demand, housing land supply as well as the future housing land requirements. Each section will also note what implications there are in terms of creating the next local development plan and where information gaps need to be addressed. Evidence is grouped together under the following related headings:

- Summary of Evidence
- Purpose and Scope
- Summary of Stakeholder Engagement
- Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan
- Statement of Agreement / Dispute

9.8 The topic paper can be read in its entirety or by individual sections where each subject is broken down further into the following areas:

- Housing Market Drivers and Trends
- Housing Stock
- Demolitions
- Empty and Vacant Homes
- Housing Completions and Existing Housing Supply
- Location of 2023 Local Development Plan sites and 2025 Housing Land Audit sites
- Windfall Development Trends
- Brownfield and Greenfield Development Trends
- Vacant and Derelict Land and Urban Capacity
- Site Assessment
- Demographic Context
- Place Standard Assessment
- Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- Future Housing Land Requirement
- Future Spatial Strategy
- Housing Need and Demand
- Local Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Target

9.9 The full summary of evidence will then be discussed under 'Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan' in terms of what it means for the creation of the next local development plan, what implications the evidence has and/or any lack of information, and how this will be addressed.

9.10 The Council has a responsibility to encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality affordable and sustainable homes, in the right locations, providing choice across tenures meeting the diverse housing needs of people and communities in Aberdeen. The evidence base to support these aims must set out trends relating to the housing market and housing completions, demographics and needs, and information on brownfield sites in the city.

Policy Context and Housing Emergency

9.11 **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)** (CD001). The Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) is the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of homes, that is to be provided by each planning authority in Scotland for a 10-year period. The Scottish Government expects the MATHLR figure to be exceeded by the Local Housing Land Requirement contained within the Local Development Plan in order to promote an ambitious and plan-led approach. The Scottish Government takes an evidence-based approach to calculating the MATHLR that considers existing need, household projections and levels of housing completions between 2010 and 2019. There is also a flexibility percentage (25%) that is applied which represents a contingency of land to allow for changes in sites going forward. The MATHLR for Aberdeen City is set at 7,000 over a 10-year period or 700 houses per year on average.

9.12 **Housing to 2040** (CD295) sets out the Scottish Government's long-term housing strategy. It seeks to support affordable housing supply, increase standards across all tenures and address empty homes, energy efficiency and fuel poverty. It also supports town centre living, 20-minute neighbourhoods and a place-based approach to development which is also reflected in NPF4.

9.13 **The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2026-2036** (CD324) sets out a partnership-led strategy to tackle the root causes of inequality and improve outcomes across the city. Our vision is for Aberdeen to be *"a city where everyone can thrive, regardless of background or circumstance."* The LOIP is structured around core themes (or priority areas) and associated outcomes, which translate the vision into measurable change by 2036. These cover: Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, Economic Stability, Communities and Housing, Neighbourhood and Environment, Health and Social Care.

9.14 **The Aberdeen Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030 (LHS)** (CD373) sets out 7 priorities (summarised below):

1. Adequate supply of housing
2. Placemaking with communities
3. Improving access to housing (Homelessness prevention)
4. Promote independent living in communities
5. Promote health through housing
6. Improve housing quality and energy efficiency
7. Supporting a well-managed private rented sector

9.15 The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency in May 2024 and the Planning and the Housing Emergency – Delivery Plan was published in November 2024 (CD303), thereafter, a number of local authorities have also declared housing emergencies. Aberdeen City declared a Housing Emergency on 5 September 2024 (CD304), recognising the specific pressures facing housing and homelessness services in Aberdeen. An accompanying Housing Emergency Action Plan has been produced (CD371). This plan addresses how to tackle homelessness and increase housing supply in the short and medium term, increase maintenance programmes on housing stock and support the response to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) affected housing in Balnagask, Torry.

Housing Market Drivers and Trends

9.16 A Housing Need and Demand Assessment is an evidence-based study that estimates how many homes are required in an area, and what types of homes are needed, now and in the future. The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire 2023-2028 (HNDA) (CD298) was signed off by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) as "robust and credible" in January 2024. All local authorities are required to prepare a HNDA on a 5-yearly cycle, the next HNDA will need to be approved prior to 2029.

9.17 Chapter 2 of the HNDA (CD298) presents an extensive range of data on key drivers of the local housing market in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and identifies a number of issues for the local housing market that will need to be considered during preparation of the new Local Development Plan. The key issues are outlined in Table 9.1 below.

Topic	Key Issues Identified in HNDA
Demographic issues for local housing market	• Following a prolonged period of strong population growth, both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire saw decreases in population from 2015 in response to local economic circumstances. • Compared to Scotland, both areas have seen an above average increase in older age groups and a decrease in young adults. • Population projections indicate a higher rate of increase in population in Aberdeenshire than Aberdeen in future years. The main increases are in older age groups. • After a long period of positive net in-migration up to 2014, there was a reversal of this trend from 2015, and both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire saw negative net migration for a few years. There remains uncertainty over the future direction and pattern of migration trends following Covid-19 and Brexit. • Aberdeen City has an average household size of 2.02 persons. Household size has been declining and this trend is projected to continue. • The number of households is projected to increase by 3% in Aberdeen City by 2028. This may be a conservative estimate of household growth as recent migration trends indicate a higher level of growth is more likely. • In Aberdeen City the largest projected increase is in single adult households (+4.4%). The largest percentage increases are in older households, particularly those aged 75+, with projected increases of 18.8% in Aberdeen City.
Economic issues for the local housing market	• Following a prolonged period of economic growth in North East Scotland, there was a significant decline between 2014 and 2017 due to the downturn in oil and gas prices. However, economic performance remains above the average in Scotland and the rest of the UK. • Employment in the region remains focused on activities related to oil and gas, although this has begun to decline. • Unemployment rates in the area have historically been much lower than in Scotland but in Aberdeen City this has changed in recent years with unemployment now at similar rates to Scotland (3.3% in Aberdeen City, 3.2% in Scotland). There was a recent rise in claimants for

	Universal Credit housing costs in Aberdeen City, from 14.1% in 2018 to 19% in 2022, an increase of more than one third. • In Aberdeen City, there are 29 datazones out of 283 that fall within the 20% most deprived in Scotland and 1 datazone within the 5% most deprived. 35% of datazones fall within the 20% most deprived for the housing domain. • The downturn in the price of oil in 2014 has had a significant negative impact on the region's economy. While recent oil price increases may provide a boost in the short term, the focus is now on energy transition and developing a sustainable and resilient diversified economy which capitalises on new technologies. There remains some uncertainty about the type and scale of employment opportunities likely to result from this. • The delivery of new housing continues to be negatively impacted by a significant increase in construction costs since late 2020 and shortages of key materials.

Table 9.1: Summary of Key Local Housing Market Drivers from the HNDA

9.18 The HNDA (CD298) identifies that the local housing market is undergoing structural change, driven by demographic ageing, declining household size and uncertainty in migration trends. The population profile is shifting towards older age groups and single-person households, with increasing demand for smaller and more accessible homes. Economic factors have influenced these trends. The downturn in the oil and gas sector has contributed to population and labour market shifts, while the transition to a more diversified economy introduces uncertainty around future employment and migration patterns. At the same time, rising housing-related benefit claims and concentrations of deprivation indicate increasing affordability pressures, supporting evidence of a sustained requirement for affordable housing. Supply-side constraints, including rising construction costs and material shortages, continue to affect delivery.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.19 The findings from Chapter 2 of the HNDA indicate that the next LDP will need to adopt a flexible and deliverable approach to housing supply, ensuring that the Local Development Plan can accommodate uncertainty, support a changing housing mix, and respond effectively to affordability pressures and demographic change.

Housing Stock

9.20 Chapter 3 of the HNDA (CD298) profiles the physical characteristics of the existing housing stock, identifying any stock pressures, stock management issues, etc. in the City. The information in this chapter does not feed into the estimates of future

additional housing need but it will help to inform decisions on housing stock and housing-related policies. Although the information in this chapter is perhaps more relevant to the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) (CD373), it may also influence the LDP and other local planning guidance. A summary of the key issues which may need to be taken into account during production of the LDP and other local planning guidance are outlined below, in Table 9.2.

Topic	Key Issues Identified in HNDA
Housing quality	• There are high levels of disrepair in Aberdeen City's housing stock. This has improved significantly for the social housing stock but remains an issue for other sectors.
Housing stock pressures	• There is significant pressure on social housing stock. On 31 March 2022, there were 4,750 applicants on the waiting list in Aberdeen City (3,321 with a housing need). • 70% of Aberdeen City applications with a housing need require a one-bedroom property and 12% require a two-bedroom property. 38% of Aberdeen City properties are bedsit or one-bedroom, and 45% are two-bedroom. • This suggests that in the future there will be a shortage of one-bedroom properties, as there is a significant disparity between the demand levels and the stock available. • It seems likely there will be a surplus of two-bedroom properties available, due to the number of applications being far below the actual stock level. • Aberdeen City is currently experiencing levels of low demand for two-bedroom tenement flats and multi-storey blocks.
Size, type, tenure and location of future social housing supply	• New housing supply needs to be smaller and more specialist to meet changing demographics. • The local housing market is experiencing challenges around pace of construction on site. In the past 12 months, there has been a 23% average cost increase in construction materials.

Table 9.2: Summary of Key Housing Stock Issues from HNDA

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.21 The findings from Chapter 3 of the HNDA (CD298) highlight a mismatch between housing need and existing stock, requiring the next LDP to prioritise the mix of housing size, type (including specialist housing) and tenure is important to meet local needs and demographic needs (to which can be added good placemaking). Policy H4 from the extant 2023 LDP encourages an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes, however consideration will need to be given to whether local policy is required.

Demolitions

9.22 The Scottish Government recorded returns for demolitions identify that 309 dwellings were demolished in Aberdeen between 2015–2025. The Local Housing Strategy (CD373) notes that 305 of the demolitions took place between 2018/19 and 2022/23, that the vast majority were local authority stock, and that demolitions historically occurred at very low levels prior to this period.

9.23 An estimated 366 Council and 138 private addresses in the Balnagask area of Torry have Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in roof panels. These properties are to be demolished on safety grounds, and thereafter a masterplan and rebuild programme will follow. Demolition and landscaping is estimated at £20-25 million and will take around 3-4 years. Building new homes will cost an additional £130 million or more and take 5-15 years.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

The planned demolitions at Balnagask may have implications for the Proposed Plan, particularly in terms of housing land supply assumptions, delivery trajectories, and the Council's ability as housing authority to meet identified housing requirements in the medium term. It also highlights the need for the Proposed Plan to maintain flexibility, including contingency arrangements and close monitoring of progress, to ensure that any delays in redevelopment do not adversely impact overall housing delivery or regeneration objectives in the Torry area. Redevelopment at Balnagask also offers the opportunity to deliver a new, planned community that supports local living and supports improved outcomes in the area.

9.24 This evidence has been used to recognise that a proportion of new housing delivery is required simply to replace lost stock, rather than to meet new or emerging housing need. This evidence will need to be considered in the context of housing delivery and determining the Local Housing Land Requirement.

Empty and Vacant Homes

9.25 The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) (CD373) notes the figures below for the following (Scottish Government) definitions of privately empty homes:

- **Long-term empty properties:** These are dwellings that have been empty for 6 months or more and are liable for council tax. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that there were 5,793 long term empty properties in the Aberdeen City Council area in 2023 (National Records of Scotland (June 2023)).

- **Unoccupied exemptions:** These are properties which are empty and exempt from paying council tax. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that there were 2,196 unoccupied exemptions

in the Aberdeen City Council area in 2023. There is no requirement for a property to have been empty for more than 6 months before it can be included in this category (National Records of Scotland (June 2023)).

- **Second Homes:** Homes which are furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in a 12-month period but not as someone's main residence. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that there were 686 second homes in the Aberdeen City Council area in 2023 (National Records of Scotland (June 2023)).

9.26 Aberdeen City contains approximately 686 second homes. This represents a modest proportion of the city's empty housing stock (around 12%), indicating that second homes are not placing significant pressure on housing availability or affordability within Aberdeen. This contrasts with some rural and tourism-based areas of Scotland where second homes form a much larger proportion of the housing stock and can have a more pronounced impact on local housing markets. Furthermore, the HNDA notes that the number and proportion of second homes is decreasing in Aberdeen City, from a high of 905 in 2019.

9.27 Aberdeen City Council's Empty Homes Service has helped bring 952 empty residential properties overall back into use between 2020/21 and 2023/24. This helps to address housing need in the city by utilising existing housing stock and reducing pressure on new-build stock.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.28 The Local Housing Strategy (CD373) has a targeted action of 500 empty properties to be brought back into use by 2030, or 100 homes per year. Empty homes activity contributes to increasing housing supply to meet the demand for affordable and market housing in Aberdeen City. Progress on these empty homes initiatives will continue to be monitored and considered in the context of housing delivery and determining the Local Housing Land Requirement.

Housing Completions and Existing Housing Land Supply

9.29 The 2025 Housing Land Audit (HLA) (CD327) has been prepared in accordance with the updated Scottish Government Housing Land Audit Guidance (CD372) issued in January 2024, which replaces the previous PAN 2/2010 approach. The updated guidance reflects the policy direction of NPF4 and requires HLAs to align with the Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR), apply the revised deliverability definitions, and integrate with the LDP Development Plan Delivery Programme. The HLA follows a national methodology and presents housing land data in a consistent and transparent format. All subsequent HLAs will be prepared in this manner. The 2025 HLA was subject to engagement with the development industry and Homes for Scotland. A roundtable with representatives from the development industry and Homes for Scotland was held prior to finalisation and publication. In the 2025

Housing Land Audit there are no disputed sites, showing that agreement was reached on the programming and effectiveness assumptions recorded in the audit.

9.30 The 2025 HLA (CD327) provides an overview of housing land supply in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. It includes sites that are allocated for housing in the 2023 LDP and/or have planning permission for housing development. It provides information on the planning status of each site as well as other key information such as housing allocation reference (for sites that are allocated in the 2023 LDP), whether the site is greenfield or brownfield, allocated or windfall, the land supply status, and who the developer is.

9.31 The Land Supply Status Definitions are as follows:

- **Deliverable:** sites which are considered deliverable and can be realistically programmed in the ten-year period from the base date of the audit. These sites will contribute towards meeting the Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR).

- **Deliverable with constraints:** sites with constraints may be considered deliverable if action to overcome the constraint can be identified and they can be programmed within ten years from the base date of the audit and will contribute towards meeting the LHLR.

- **Deliverable with constraints (Financial Only):** the guidance states that although valid considerations, financial matters change over time and should not be the sole reason a site is not determined as deliverable. Sites which have only a 'Financial' constraint have not been programmed but will contribute towards meeting the LHLR.

- **Constrained:** sites with constraints which, at the base date of the audit, have no known prospect of being resolved. These sites are not programmed and will not contribute towards meeting the LHLR.

9.32 The HLA monitors past housing completion rates on all relevant housing sites; this enables past development trends to be examined. The HLA also provides projected future housing completion rates for each site that is considered 'deliverable' (i.e. free from significant development constraints). The 'deliverable' housing supply is divided into two categories; '10-year deliverable' and 'post 10-year deliverable'. The 10-year deliverable supply identifies the number of housing units that are expected to come forward within ten years of the base date of the HLA (the HLA includes projected annual completion rates for all housing sites within the 10 year deliverable supply). The post 10-year deliverable supply identifies housing units on effective sites which are expected to come forward beyond ten years from the base date of the HLA. Future programmed completions often appear high in the first few years from the base date of the audit then tail off in later years. In reality, completions are likely to be maintained at a steadier rate as it becomes clear which sites will come forward first and build rates are adjusted by developers in response to the local market situation.

9.33 The HLA does not provide projected future housing completion rates for constrained sites, instead it simply identifies the total number of housing units on each of these sites. The 'Total' housing land supply represents the total of both the deliverable and constrained supply, which is 19,188 units in the 2025 HLA (CD327).

9.34 The 2025 HLA (CD327) provides past completion figures for a 10 year period from 2015-2025. These are shown in Table 9.3, below. This shows actual completions over the last ten years for Aberdeen City. Due to the change from calendar to financial years the first quarter of 2023 is shown separately. As can be seen from the table, housing completion rates dipped significantly in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there was a 'bounce back' in construction activity in 2021, as a result of a number of affordable housing and flatted developments seeing higher completion rates. The average housing completion rate in Aberdeen over this 10 year period (2015-2025) amounts to circa 1,000 homes per year.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Q1	2023 /24	2024/ 25
Total no. of completed housing units	756	793	1,140	1,177	897	817	1,448	812	215	1,061	1,015

Table 9.3: Housing Completions in Aberdeen City 2015-2024/25, Source: Housing Land Audit 2025.

9.35 Based on data from the 2025 HLA (CD327) Table 9.4, below, summarises the total land supply (10-year and post 10-year), and constrained housing land supply in Aberdeen on 31 March 2025. It shows that the total established land supply amounted to over 19,000 homes. Of these, the total 'deliverable' housing land supply amounted to 15,532 homes or 81%.

	Aberdeen City
10 yr Deliverable (sites 4+ units)	6,654
10 yr Deliverable (small sites 1-3 units)	228
10 yr Deliverable Total	**6,882**
Post 10 yr Deliverable	**8,650**
Deliverable with Constraints (Financial Only)	**813**
Constrained	**2,843**
Total Land Supply	**19,188**

Table 9.4: Housing Land Supply in Aberdeen, Source: HLA 2025

9.36 Figure 9.1, below, shows programmed completions for the next ten years for sites in the HLA from 2025/26 to 2034/35. The MATHLR contained within NPF4 is defined as 'the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of housing units, that is to be provided by each planning authority in Scotland for a 10-year period'. The annualised NPF4 MATHLR figure for Aberdeen City is 700 units per year. With respect to projected future completions, Figure 9.1 indicates that sites within the existing 'effective' housing land supply (i.e. the supply from 2025/26) will deliver just under NPF4's annualised MATHLR figure throughout the period to 2034/35 at approximately 688 units per annum.

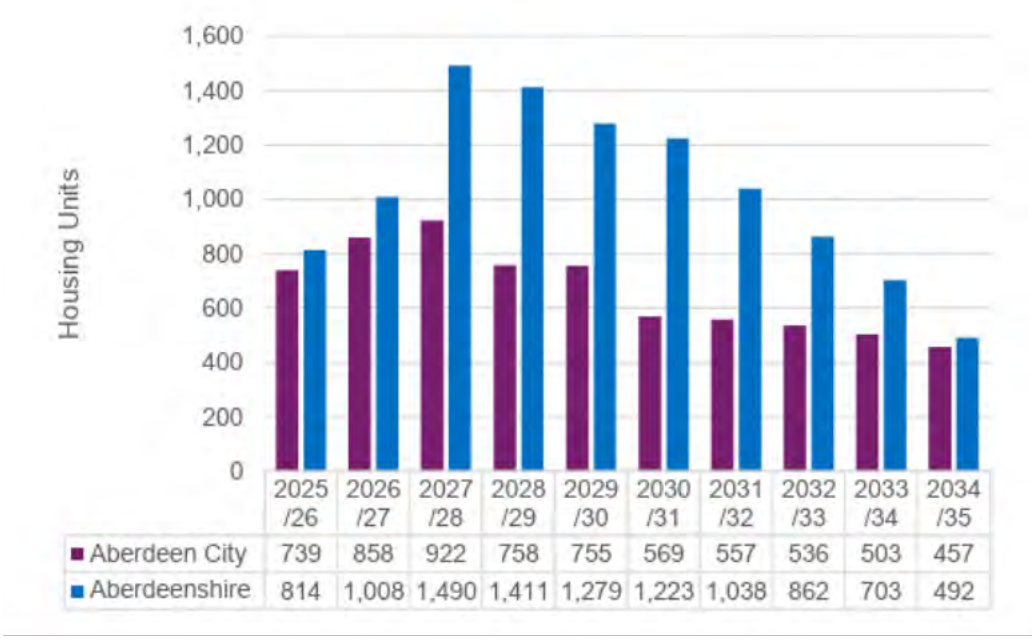


Figure 9.1: Programmed Housing Completions 2025/26-2034/35, Source: 2025 Housing Land Audit (Aberdeen City data in purple).

9.37 Or, to explain this another way, the 10 Year Deliverable Housing Land Supply in Aberdeen City sits slightly below the MATHLR at 9.8 years. See Table 9.5, 2025 Housing Land Supply and MATHLR, below:

MATHLR	10 years deliverable supply	No. of years supply	Above or below MATHLR %
7,000	6,882	9.8	-2%

Table 9.5, 2025 Housing Land Supply and MATHLR, Source: HLA 2025.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.38 The 2025 HLA demonstrates a 9.8 year housing land supply, which falls slightly below the NPF4 MATHLR over a 10 year period. It is worth highlighting that the audit programming shows that completions fall below the MATHLR target of 700 units per annum only from 2030/2031. It is also not unexpected to see a housing land supply decreasing over the lifetime of a LDP, as this indicates effective

delivery. Further, actual completion rates have been higher than MATHLR since it was adopted in 2023. That said, in setting the LHLR, these issues will need to be considered. The Proposed Plan will need to consider if identifying additional housing land allocations (in addition to windfall and removing barriers from constrained sites) is required to ensure MATHLR is exceeded and Housing Supply Targets are met.

Location of 2023 LDP sites and 2025 Housing Land Audit sites

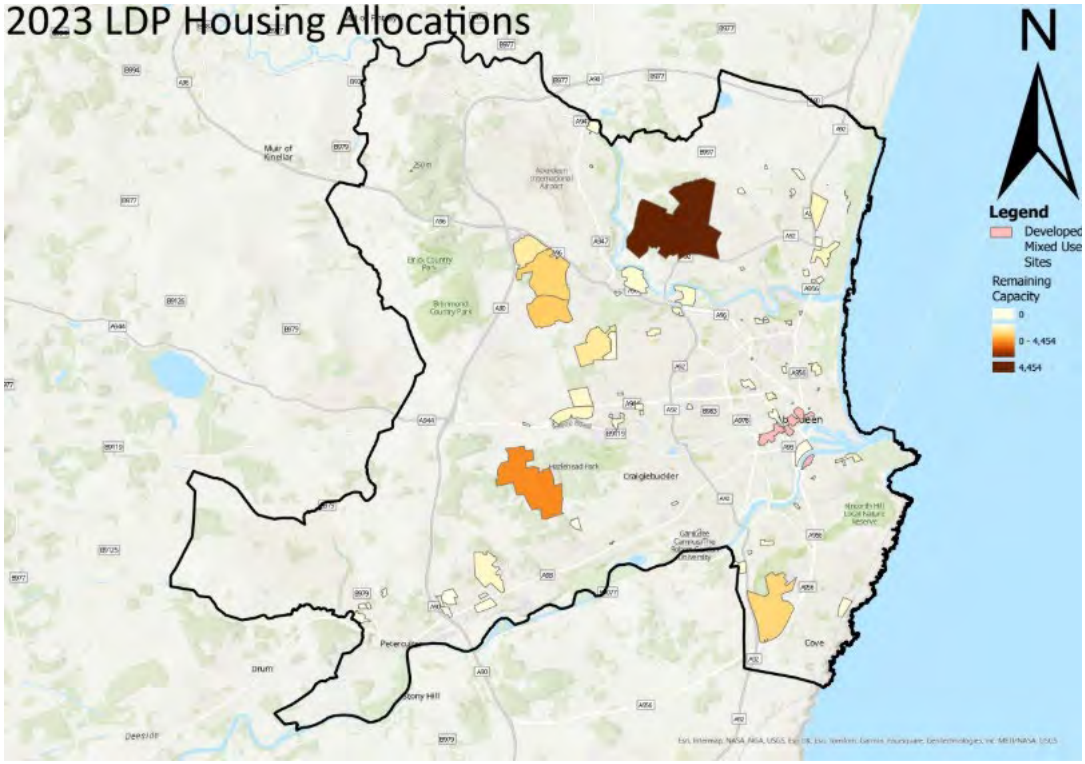


Figure 9.2: Map of Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 sites.

9.39 Maps illustrating the location of the 2023 Local Development Plan sites and 2025 Housing Land Audit (HLA) sites can be found above and below respectively. These give an overview of the capacities of current sites and the spread of sites across Aberdeen. Figure 9.2, above, demonstrates that there is significant scope for housebuilding on the larger greenfield housing allocations, particularly at Grandhome (identified in brown) and Countesswells (identified in dark orange).

9.40 The map below, Figure 9.3, is similar to the 2023 LDP map however, it also illustrates that there are a large quantity of smaller sites which are counted within the HLA which are distributed throughout the existing built-up areas of the city. This demonstrates that there is range of type, location and scale of sites that contribute to new housing delivery across the city.

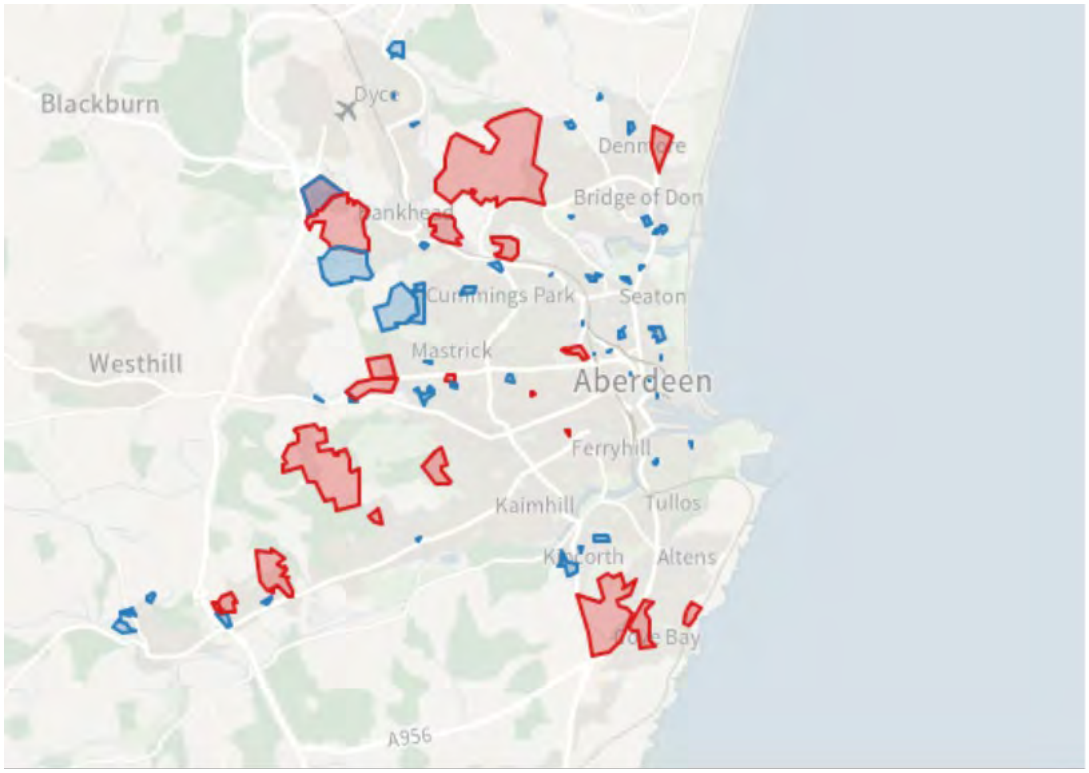


Figure 9.3: Map of the Housing Land Audit sites 2025, blue denotes allocated only, red denotes allocated sites that are under construction, Source: The Improvement Service.

Windfall Development

9.41 Detailed site-based information from previous Housing Land Audits (HLAs) can also be used to examine long-term trends in 'windfall' development (i.e. development that has taken place on unallocated sites that became available during the lifetime of previous LDPs). Table 9.6 below shows the number of housing units that have been completed on windfall sites each year from 2015 – 2025. It shows that a total of 2,240 housing units have been completed on windfall sites in Aberdeen during this period, which equates to an average rate of 224 housing units per year.

9.42 This demonstrates, whilst variable year to year, that windfall development has played a significant role in helping meet housing need in Aberdeen over the last 10 years. As an annualised average percentage, windfall has contributed the equivalent of an additional 28% to the annualised allocated site delivery figure of 777 in the same period.

Year	No. of Units
2015	91
2016	206
2017	234
2018	226
2019	139
2020	97
2021	574

2022	263
2023/24	296
2024/25	114
Total	**2,240**
Annual Average	**224**

Table 9.6: Windfall Development Levels in Aberdeen 2015-2025. Source: Housing Land Audit 2025.

9.43 The City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CD045) includes an objective of 3,000 extra people living in the City Centre by 2040. In working towards this objective, in 2024, Aberdeen Inspired was awarded funding from Aberdeen City Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund for a feasibility study on the upper floors of Union Street, with residential included as a potential use for current vacant or under-utilised spaces.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.44 This evidence demonstrates the significant role that windfall development has played in helping meet housing need in Aberdeen over the last 10 years. This evidence will help to inform any decisions about whether to include a 'windfall assumption' in the Proposed Plan (i.e. an assumption that windfall sites will continue to come forward in the future and could therefore make a contribution towards the Local Housing Land Requirement). Consideration will need to be given to wider policy drivers such as encouragement of further local living through NPF4 and also locally through the City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CD045).

Brownfield and Greenfield Development Trends

9.45 As well as providing information on overall housing completion levels, the more detailed site-based information from previous Housing Land Audits (HLAs) can also be used to provide evidence of other development trends. In particular, it can be used to examine past trends in the split between brownfield and greenfield development levels.

9.46 Table 9.7, below, shows that 57% of all housing development in Aberdeen during the period from 2012 to 2025 has taken place on greenfield sites and 43% has taken place on brownfield sites. This demonstrates the significant role that brownfield development has played in helping to meet housing needs within Aberdeen.

9.47 Looking to the future, the 2025 HLA identifies that some 74% of the overall housing land supply in Aberdeen is on greenfield sites, with 26% on brownfield sites. This is reflective of the large greenfield housing land allocations that are identified in the previous LDP. NPF4 (policy 9) (CD001) seeks to encourage the development of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings. It states that LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land.

Type of Development	Total No. of Units Completed 2012 – 2025	Percentage of Total Development 2012 – 2025
Brownfield	5,609	43%

Greenfield	7,329	57%

Table 9.7: Greenfield & Brownfield Development Split 2012 - 2025, Source: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audits 2012-2025.

Implications for the Proposed Plan.

9.48 The Proposed Plan Spatial Strategy will need to take account of NPF4 policies on Brownfield, Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhoods and Infrastructure First. The Proposed Plan will need to use the most up-to-date data available (this will be provided by the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study discussed further below) due to the emphasis in Policy 9 of NPF4 on encouraging, promoting and facilitating the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings, and helping to reduce the need for greenfield development. It will be important to consider the potential of brownfield sites in Aberdeen to absorb future housing development and that the Proposed Plan continues to promote brownfield development where suitable and practicable.

Vacant and Derelict Land and Urban Capacity

9.49 The Vacant and Derelict Land Register provides an annual update of the extent and state of vacant and derelict land within Aberdeen as part of the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS). The latest survey return for Aberdeen (in 2024) (CD011) identifies approximately 74 vacant and derelict sites within the City, amounting to approximately 144 hectares in total area. This may provide a useful source for potential redevelopment sites which could be considered for brownfield allocation in the next Local Development Plan (LDP). Any such development sites that are ultimately proposed for allocation in the new LDP will be subject to a full site assessment process, which will consider viability and issues of deliverability, in line with relevant guidance. Maps of the Vacant and Derelict Land 2024 sites and the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2019 sites can be found in Chapter 8 Spatial Strategy.

9.50 A Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2019 (BUCS) (CD014) was produced to support the preparation of the 2023 LDP. It provided an assessment of the potential of brownfield sites in Aberdeen to absorb future housing development. It identified brownfield sites that were considered potentially suitable for housing development but did not have any form of extant planning permission at the time of writing. In addition, it identified separately brownfield sites that did have an extant planning permission for housing but that were not considered effective in the 2019 Housing Land Audit. The study applied a range of indicative density range assumptions (based on site location) to estimate potential housing capacities for each of the identified sites.

9.51 The Indicative Density Ranges (IDRs) were as follows:

- Centre: 70-95 units per hectare
- Urban: 40-75 units per hectare

- Suburban: 35-55 units per hectare
- Rural: 30-40 units per hectare

9.52 By applying the various density range assumptions to the identified sites in Aberdeen, the study identified the potential for brownfield sites to accommodate a total of between 3,809 (IDR upper range scenario) and 2,227 (IDR lower range scenario) new homes. A number of these sites were subsequently allocated for development within the 2023 LDP. Under current Scottish planning policy, including NPF4 (CD001) and Scottish Government Local Development Plan Guidance (CD316), there is no automatic roll-forward of allocated sites from one LDP to the next An Existing Site Audit will be undertaken to assess the suitability and deliverability of existing allocations from the 2023 LDP and the contribution they can or cannot make to meeting the LHLR. This will in turn inform the scale of new allocations that are required for the next plan. The Audit is due to be completed by Autumn 2026

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.53 A new BUCS is currently underway to inform production of the new LDP, and this will be used to underpin any brownfield development assumptions in the new plan. In line with the new requirements of National Planning Framework 4 with respect to site deliverability, the updated BUCS will include more information on the likely deliverability of identified brownfield sites. Any brownfield development sites that are ultimately proposed for allocation in the new LDP will also be subject to a full site assessment process in line with relevant guidance.

Site Assessment

9.54 Sites will be identified from the following sources for site assessment:

- Existing site allocations in the 2023 LDP (existing site audit);
- Sites submitted through the ‘Call for Ideas/Sites’ consultations;
- Housing Land Audit;
- Open Space Strategy and Audit;
- Brownfield Urban Capacity Study
- Register of Vacant and Derelict Land;
- Employment Land Audit;
- Engagement with the Key Agencies and other consultees;
- Local knowledge of potential land and development opportunities
- Local place plans if submitted to the Council,
- Investment and capital programmes including those of Aberdeen City Council.

9.55 The Council intends to use assessment checklists as part of its site appraisal process. The site assessment checklist circulated by the Improvement Service (IS) (see Appendix 1) will be used to prepare the new LDP. In addition, spatial analysis will be supported by new digital tools, including a GIS-based Local Living tool currently being developed by external contractors, with work expected to conclude by October 2026. This tool will assist in understanding how sites perform in relation

to local living principles and access to services, and will provide supplementary evidence to inform the assessment process.

9.56 Once all the information is gathered and collated, including the scoring for Strategic Environmental Assessment, it will allow officers to make a determination on the suitability of the site for inclusion in the Proposed Plan. Information will also be requested to understand if sites are deliverable and effective. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1.

Demographic Context

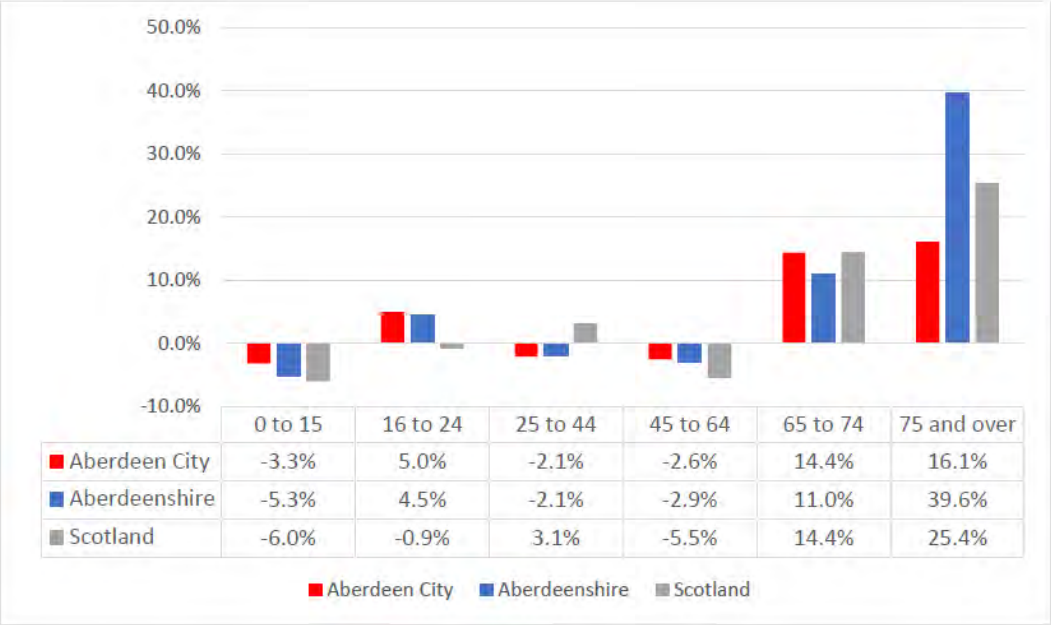
9.57 As outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the HNDA (CD298), the National Records of Scotland's (NRS) population estimates for mid-2021 show that the population of Aberdeen City grew from 222,460 in 2011 to 227,430 in 2021. This represents a growth of 4,970 (2.2%) over the 10 year period. This was lower than the percentage population growth for Scotland as a whole over the same period (3.4%). It is significant to note that the overall increase in population was not consistent over this 10 year period. Whilst Aberdeen saw consistent population increases over the first four years from 2011/12 to 2014/15, it then saw a period of population decline between 2015/16 and 2017/18. This was followed by two years of population growth in 2018/19 and 2019/20 (albeit at lower levels than in the early part of the decade), but then a further period of sharp population decline in 2020/21. This was consistent with the broader pattern seen across Scotland during the Covid-19 pandemic, which generally saw populations in cities falling.

9.58 The NRS 2018-based population projections provide a range of scenarios and under the 'principal' scenario (a scenario based upon the most likely factors) the total population of Aberdeen City is projected to increase by 1.1% over the 10 year period between 2018 and 2028. However, not all age groups are expected to change in the same way.

9.59 The NRS 2022 Subnational Population Projections, the first based on the 2022 census, set out modest population growth between 2022 and 2032 of 4.4% for the city. The growth is positive, sitting above the Scottish average. Growth is projected to be lower than high-growth areas, but is indicative of a stable and positive population change. This increase is driven in the main by migration to Aberdeen which is a similar situation to Scotland's other large cities. Again not all age groups are expected to change in the same way. The city's age structure is also projected to change and the population is expected to age with a rising proportion of older residents.

9.60 The Mid-2024 population estimates were published in 2026 and provide the most up-to-date evidence. This data estimates the population of Aberdeen as 231,780, a population change of 1.06% from 2023. This figure again represents a growth rate higher than the Scottish average, demonstrating continuing growth.

9.61 The HNDA (which uses the 2018-based population projections) sets out that the largest increases are projected in the 65-74 years and the 75 years and older age groups (which are projected to increase by 14.4% and 16.1% respectively over the 10 year period), whereas the 0-15 years, 25-44 years, and 45-64 years age groups are all projected to fall, see Figure 9.4 below, extracted from paragraph 2.12 of the HNDA. This shows a clear trend towards an ageing population in Aberdeen. The mid-2024 population estimates confirm this trend, recording a 16% increase in the 65+ group over the 2014-2024 period.



	0 to 15	16 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 74	75 and over
Aberdeen City	-3.3%	5.0%	-2.1%	-2.6%	14.4%	16.1%
Aberdeenshire	-5.3%	4.5%	-2.1%	-2.9%	11.0%	39.6%
Scotland	-6.0%	-0.9%	3.1%	-5.5%	14.4%	25.4%

Figure 9.4: Projected Percentage Change in Population by Age Groups, 2018-2028 Source: National Records of Scotland, Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2018-based)

9.62 Paragraph 2.29 of the HNDA (CD298) shows that the number of households in Aberdeen City grew from 103,423 in 2011 to 108,844 in 2021 (based on NRS 2021 estimates). This represents a growth of 5,421 (5.2%) over the 10 year period. At 5.2%, the growth in households over this 10 year period therefore exceeds the growth in population over the same period (2.2% as noted above). This is likely because the average household size in Aberdeen has been decreasing over recent years (as it has in Scotland as a whole). According to NRS 2021 data, average household size in Aberdeen stood at 2.07 in 2011 but had declined to 2.02 in 2021 (a fall of 2.4%). The 2022 based projections show a continuation in this increase of households, showing a projected increase from 111,000 households in 2022 to 116,000 in 2032.

9.63 Paragraph 2.34 of the HNDA shows that, under the principle projection scenario of the NRS 2018-based household projections, the number of households in Aberdeen is forecast to increase by 3.1% over the 10 year period from 2018 to 2028. As with population, not all household types are projected to grow in the same way. Table 9.8 below (extracted from paragraph 2.44 of the HNDA), shows that the largest projected increases are within the '1 adult' and '2+adult 1+ children' households. By

2028, single adult households are projected to remain the most common household type in Aberdeen.

		2018	2028	Change	% Change
Aberdeen City	1 adult	41,343	43,169	1,826	4.4%
	1 adult 1+ child(ren)	4,021	3,984	-37	-0.9%
	2 person all adult	35,543	36,570	1,027	2.9%
	2+adult 1+ children	18,904	19,762	858	4.5%
	3+ person all adult	7,776	7,400	-376	-4.8%

Table 9.8: Projected Change in Household Size by Household Type 2018-2028, Source: National Records of Scotland, Household Projections for Scotland (2018-based)

9.64 As outlined in paragraph 2.39 of the HNDA (CD298), the 2018-based NRS projections need to be treated with a degree of caution. They may present a rather pessimistic view of likely future trends in the population and number of households in Aberdeen. Projections are trend-based, which means that trends in the years leading up to the base date of the projections determine the forecast level of future growth. Following the oil price crash in 2014, the years from 2015 to 2018 represented a particularly difficult and atypical period for the local economy in Aberdeen. After many years of positive net migration into the area, there was a major reversal in this trend from 2015 to 2018, and this will have impacted the 2018-based projections. It is possible that future net migration, and consequent growth in the population and number of households, could be higher than the levels indicated by the 2018-based principal projections.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.65 Aberdeen City's population is estimated at 231,780 in the mid-2024 estimates, representing annual growth of 1.1%, above the national average. Growth continues to be driven by positive net migration, offsetting natural population decline. There is a continuation in the trend of households increasing and household sizes dropping. The city has a relatively strong working-age population, particularly within the 25–44 age group, but the city is also experiencing a clear ageing trend, with significant growth in the over-75 population and declines in younger age cohorts. These trends have important implications for housing, service provision and long-term demographic sustainability.

Housing Need and Demand

9.66 The HNDA (CD298) provides a range of scenario-based estimates of future housing need and demand to 2028/29. These scenarios test how changes in key variables, including migration, household growth, income and affordability, affect overall housing requirements. The scenarios are not forecasts in themselves; rather, they

provide an evidence base from which planning and housing policy judgements can be made.

9.67 The HNDA (CD298) is an evidence-base from which different policy responses can be made. Two of the main policy responses are the setting of “housing supply targets” and the split between market and affordable housing tenures. However, these decisions are not made within the HNDA itself but through the Local Housing Strategy. To facilitate this (and the required consultation and discussion), the HNDA (CD298) uses scenarios which are based on a range of assumptions for variables such as household growth, incomes and changes in house price and rental costs.

Estimating Housing Need and Demand

9.68 National Planning Framework 4 (Annex E) sets out Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirements (MATHLRs) for each planning authority in Scotland. The MATHLR is the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of housing units, that is to be provided by each planning authority for a 10 year period. The MATHLR is expected to be exceeded in each Local Development Plan’s LHLR (Local Housing Land Requirement). The Scottish Government takes an evidence-based approach to calculating the MATHLR that considers existing need, household projections (from 2018 NRS projections) and levels of housing completions between 2010 and 2019. There is also a flexibility percentage (25%) that is applied which represents a contingency of land to allow for changes in sites going forward. The MATHLR for Aberdeen City is set at 7,000 over a 10 year period or 700 houses per year on average.

9.69 The Scottish Government’s Local Development Plan Guidance (CD316 p63) states that the same evidence that was used to inform the MATHLRs can be used by planning authorities to inform their Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR). However, it also indicates that where more recent evidence is available this should be used as it enables the Evidence Report to be more up to date in looking to the future. In this context the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (CD298) is based on more up-to-date evidence, as is the Local Housing Strategy 2025 - 2030 (LHS) (CD373). These have been used in conjunction with the MATHLR to inform the overall evidence and in setting the LHLR.

9.70 Chapter 4 of the HNDA provides an estimate of future housing need and demand in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The HNDA uses NRS household projections to determine the overall scale of growth, while the tenure split between need and demand is driven by the relationship between house prices, rent levels (and expected changes over time), and incomes (and how these change over time). In order to facilitate this, the HNDA uses a number of scenarios which are based on a range of assumptions for variables such as household growth, incomes and changes in house price and rental costs. Not all of the scenarios will be equally likely but they are internally consistent.

9.71 Four economic scenarios were modelled, each with a different set of variables that were input into the HNDA tool to provide a range of estimates of future housing

need in the city. The differing variables in the scenarios included level of migration, income growth and the tenure split in the city. The HNDA tool then calculates housing affordability and provides total future housing requirements over a twenty-year period, split by tenure.

9.72 The HNDA models four different scenarios, including the default scenario of the HNDA model:

- **Scenario 1** – Tool Default. Represents the baseline demographic and affordability outlook using default HNDA Tool parameters and 2018-based household projections. 20-year requirement for Aberdeen City: 6,745 homes (average 338/year).

- **Scenario 2** – Principal Growth. Assumes a more favourable household formation and economic position than the baseline, reflecting stronger principal growth trends. 20-year requirement for Aberdeen City: 7,080 homes (average 355/year).

- **Scenario 3** – High Migration Incorporates significantly higher net migration into the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, increasing demand across all tenures. 20-year requirement for Aberdeen City: 10,650 homes (average 534/year).

- **Scenario 4** – High Migration Plus. Provides the upper-range estimate, combining high migration with more buoyant affordability and market assumptions. 20-year requirement for Aberdeen City: 12,905 homes (average 646/year).

9.73 The scenarios and their various inputs / assumptions are outlined in more detail in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.29 of the HNDA.

9.74 Table 9.9 below provides a summary of the number of additional housing units that the HNDA model indicates would be required in Aberdeen City during the 20 year period from 2023 to 2042 under the four different scenarios (based on Table 4.44 in the HNDA).

	Scenario 1 (Default)	**Scenario 2** (Principal Growth)	**Scenario 3** (High Migration)	**Scenario 4** (High Migration Plus)
Aberdeen City (20 year total)	6,745	7,080	10,650	12,905
Aberdeen City (20 year annual average)	338	354	533	646

Table 9.9: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042 – Overall Housing Requirements

9.75 Each scenario also provides a more detailed breakdown of projected annual requirements into 5-yearly bands. These breakdowns are summarised in Table 9.10

below.

	2023 – 2027 (Per Year)	2028 – 2033 (Per Year)	2033 – 2037 (Per Year)	2038 – 2042 (Per Year)	2023 – 2042 (20 Year Annual Average)
Scenario 1 (Default)	359	368	383	239	338
Scenario 2 (Principal Growth)	344	450	384	238	355
Scenario 3 (High Migration)	519	633	564	414	534
Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus)	970	633	565	413	646

Table 9.10: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042 – 5 Yearly Breakdown

9.76 The scenarios and their various assumptions are outlined in more detail in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.29 of the HNDA. All of the HNDA scenarios set out a 20 year estimates that are below MATHLR (which is set at 700 units per year for Aberdeen City).

9.77 Additional commentary on Housing Need was provided by Homes for Scotland (RD001 and RD002). Homes for Scotland suggests that the HNDA tool is significantly underestimating existing housing need in Scotland by only focusing on homeless households in temporary accommodation and overcrowded households with at least one concealed family. Although Homes for Scotland does not use an accepted methodology (like the HNDA), nor do its definitions align with HNDA definitions, and there is some ambiguity around data gathering techniques, the underestimation does align with the position set out in our LHS Housing Supply Target Methodology Paper (CD378) which has made the case for a significant and generous uplift in the HST targets.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.78 The current HNDA for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire was generated with 2018 figures and was prepared at a time when Aberdeen's population in-migration was lower overall. This was coupled with a period of downturn / depression in terms of the wider UK economy in general and the oil and gas industry in particular. The impact of the oil industry and the overall rise or fall of prosperity of the city is well known (see Aberdeen Today Chapter 2). Additionally, the HNDA only counted known migrant groups at the time of preparation and could only make assumptions

as to the impact new migrant groups, such as those from Ukraine, would make. Research by Aberdeen City Council's Refugee Project Manager indicates that in cities such as Glasgow, 70% of asylum seekers chose to remain in the city, and it is anticipated that this trend is likely to bear out in Aberdeen as a key urban centre, regionally and nationally.

It has been accepted that the current HNDA underestimates housing need in the city, by housing officers, as discussed in the LHS Housing Supply Target Methodology Paper (CD378, see paragraph 2.5). The Local Housing Strategy was developed in partnership with key stakeholders including registered social landlords (RSL), service providers, private sector, statutory bodies as well as tenants and residents, and its Evidence base was subject to engagement. The development industry has also raised similar concerns through reports commissioned by Homes for Scotland titled "Existing Housing Need in Scotland" (RD001) "Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen" (RD002), which argued that levels of existing need across Scotland and in Aberdeen are higher and more complex than is being accounted for within the HNDA tool. This stakeholder evidence has therefore been taken into consideration account as supporting the Council's position that the HNDA output should not be treated as the sole basis for setting the housing requirement.

9.79 The data and the scenarios set out in the HNDA will need to be considered alongside the requirement for the LHLR to be above the MATHLR. Scenario 4 'High Migration Plus' has been selected as the preferred scenario from the HNDA due to the belief that the existing need calculation within the HNDA tool was an underestimate of housing demand in the city. Scenario 4 also best reflects recent migration trends, economic growth ambitions and emerging evidence of unmet housing need. Lower growth scenarios are not considered appropriate as they would risk under-providing for housing need and would not align with the Council's strategic objectives as set out in the LHS. This approach ensures that the LHLR is not based solely on trend-based projections but reflects a policy-led response to future demand. This is also the scenario that has informed the development of the Housing Supply Target (HST) which was set in the recently published Local Housing Strategy (CD373).

9.80 This approach also reflects the relationship between housing delivery and Aberdeen's wider economic growth ambitions. The Council's economic growth ambitions are reflected in the selection of HNDA Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus) and in the scale of housing provision proposed through the LHLR. Aberdeen performs an important role as a regional employment centre, and future housing provision therefore needs to support anticipated population and workforce growth, rather than simply respond to past completion trends. Planning for a higher level of housing provision will help ensure that housing supply does not constrain economic activity, investment or labour market mobility. These ambitions have therefore influenced the LHLR by supporting a more positive housing requirement than the baseline HNDA output alone would indicate, while remaining grounded in the Local Housing Strategy Housing Supply Target and the delivery evidence available through the Housing Land Audit.

Housing Affordability

9.81 The Aberdeen City Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 (SHIP) (CD301) (and previous annual iterations of the SHIP) include data on past affordable housing completions. Annual affordable housing completions figures for the ten year period from 2015 to 2025 are presented in Table 9.11 below. Strategic Housing Investment Plan sites can be found below, Figure 9.5.

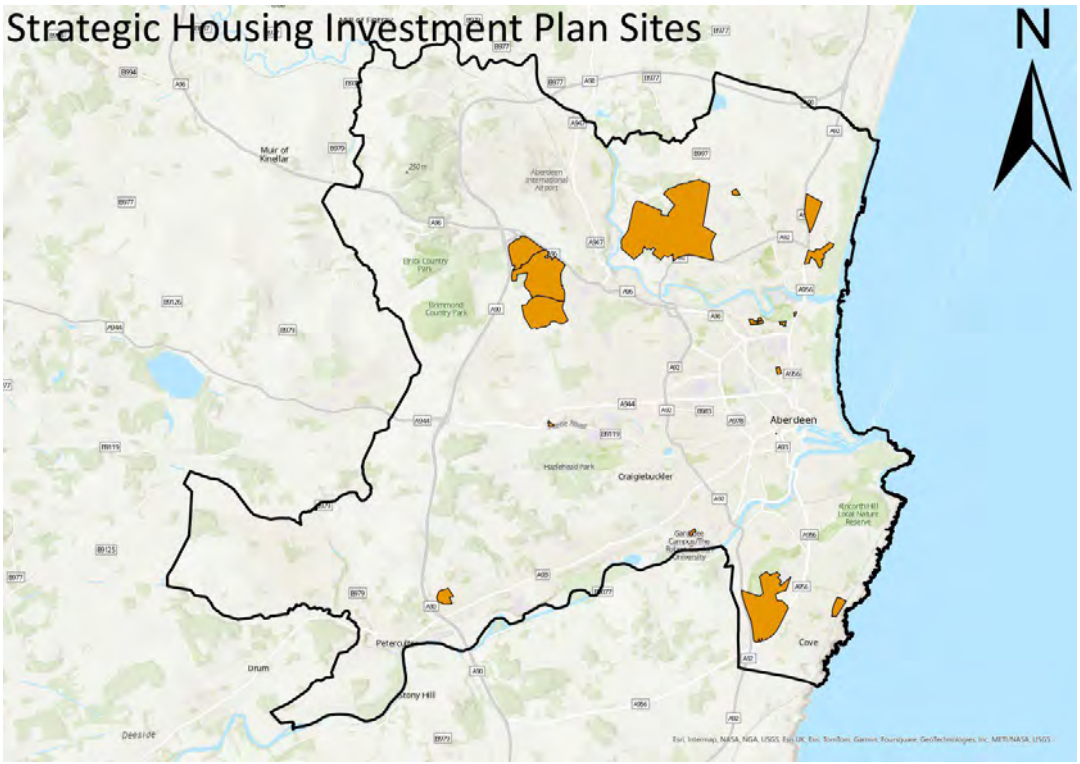


Figure 9.5: Strategic Housing Investment Plan sites

Year	No. of Homes
2015	214
2016	117
2017	368
2018	356
2019	401
2020	461
2021	692
2022	481
2023/24	806
2024/25	459
Total	**4,355**
Annual Average	**436**

Table 9.11: Affordable Housing Completions in Aberdeen 2015 – 2025 (HLA 2025)

9.82 Table 9.11 shows that a total of 4,355 affordable housing units were completed in Aberdeen during the ten year period, equating to an average of 436 affordable homes per year. Looking forward, the Housing Supply Target for affordable housing completions annual has been set at 220 homes per year, by the LHS 2025.

9.83 A Comparison with the 10-year deliverable supply in the 2025 HLA, indicates that anticipated affordable completions are currently below the delivery target. See Table 9.12, 2025 Housing Land Supply and Housing Supply Target, below:

Housing Supply Target (HST)	10 years deliverable supply	No. of years supply	Above or below HST %
8,800	6,882	7.8	-22%

Table 9.12: 2025 Housing Land Supply and Housing Supply Target. Source: HLA 2025.

9.84 Notwithstanding the significant recent progress in delivering affordable housing, Chapter 2 of the HNDA (CD298) (paragraphs 2.50 – 2.118) sets out an extensive range of data on the affordability challenges that persist within the local housing market in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. In summary, the chapter identifies a number of affordability issues and pressures that will need to be taken into account and addressed in the forthcoming LDP. The key issues are summarised in Table 9.13 below.

Affordability issues for the local housing market	• House prices in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire had been well above the Scottish average for many years. This changed from 2015 onwards when the area saw significant decreases while prices in Scotland rose steadily, and in 2020 the average price in Aberdeen City dropped below the Scottish average. • Lower quartile prices across the area remain above those in Scotland. • Average private rental prices peaked in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in 2014 before decreasing rapidly and falling below the Scottish average. • Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire was the only area of Scotland to see rents for 1 bed flats fall 2010-2022 (-11% compared to +31% for Scotland). 2 bed flats saw just a 3% increase compared to +33% in Scotland. • However, there has been a reversal of this trend since 2017 and rental prices are now increasing rapidly, particularly in Aberdeen City. • The gap between private and social rents has narrowed in recent years, 2016-2022. However, social rents, and particularly Council rents, continue to be significantly more affordable than private rents. • Median household income growth since 2015 was below the Scottish average of 11%. In Aberdeen City, there was a fall of 2% with incomes dropping below the Scottish average.

	• Lower quartile incomes in Aberdeen City are the same as in Scotland. • Lower quartile house prices are around 6-8 times higher than lower quartile incomes across the area. • Private sector rents are not affordable for those on lower quartile incomes across most of the area. • The recent fall in house prices and rent levels has only had a marginal impact on affordability because incomes have also fallen. In addition, substantial increases in mortgage interest rates and reduced supply of rental properties are both exacerbating affordability pressures.

Table 9.13 Summary of Affordability Issues and Trends in Aberdeen

9.85 In addition to presenting evidence on affordability issues, Chapter 4 of the HNDA considers affordable housing need in the context of the estimates of future housing need and demand in Aberdeen. For each of the growth scenarios, and for each of the 5-yearly time periods within the projection period, the HNDA shows the projected split between the need for open market and affordable housing. The results are summarised in Table 9.14 below. As can be seen from the table, the projected need for affordable housing as a proportion of all housing is significant in all scenarios. It exceeds 50% in all periods for Scenarios 2, 3 and 4, and for Scenario 1 it averages just below 50%.

		2023-2027 (Per Year)	**2028-2032 (Per Year)**	**2033-2037 (Per Year)**	**2038-2042 (Per Year)**	**2023-2042 (20 Year Annual Ave)**
Scenario 1 (Default)	Market	139	198	215	140	174
	Affordable	220	170	168	99	165
	Total	**359**	**368**	**383**	**239**	**338**
Scenario 2 (Principal Growth)	Market	131	177	178	105	148
	Affordable	213	273	206	133	207
	Total	**344**	**450**	**384**	**238**	**355**
Scenario 3 (High Migration)	Market	218	265	261	182	233
	Affordable	301	368	303	232	301
	Total	**519**	**633**	**564**	**414**	**534**
Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus)	Market	442	265	262	182	289
	Affordable	528	368	303	232	358
	Total	**970**	**633**	**565**	**413**	**646**

Table 9.14: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042 – Market and Affordable Split

9.86 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data for housing can be found below, Figure 9.6. This can give some indication of where the most affordable areas of the city are situated.

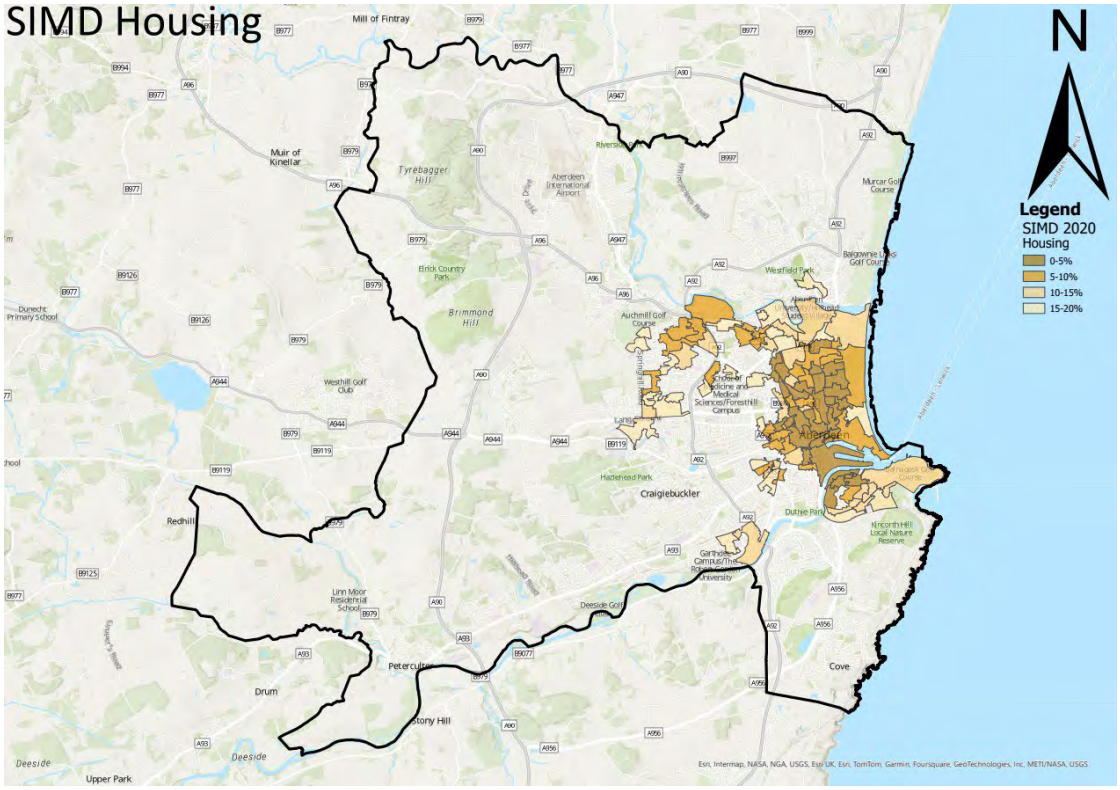


Figure 9.6: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data for housing

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.87 NPF4 Policy 16(e) states that private housing developments will only be supported where the affordable housing requirement on a site is at least 25% unless the LDP sets out circumstances where an alternative level of provision is required, based on evidence. It will be important to continue to support the delivery of affordable housing for the city moreover and ensure that a mix of tenure is available in the right places across the city. The Proposed Plan will have to take this into consideration when reviewing affordable housing policy.

Specialist Housing Provision

9.88 Chapter 5 of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (CD298) addresses specialist housing provision. It focuses on understanding, and as far as possible quantifying, the implications for providing accommodation for people with specialist needs. It considers the needs of the following key groups:

- Older people
- Disabled people
- People with a mental health condition
- People with a learning disability
- People experiencing homelessness
- People fleeing / at risk of domestic abuse

- People requiring non-permanent accommodation (including students, migrant workers, asylum seekers, care leavers, ex-offenders)
- Armed forces communities
- Minority ethnic people (including Gypsy/Travellers)
- Travelling Showpeople

9.89 A summary of the key issues, identified in the HNDA (CD298), that the Local Development Plan will likely need to address with respect to specialist housing provision is outlined in Table 9.15 below.

Topic	Key Issues Identified in HNDA
Accessible / adapted housing	• Generally, there is a lack of accessible accommodation. In Aberdeen City there has been a 47% rise in the number of applications with additional space requirements due to illness or disability. • Factors affecting the delivery of disabled adaptations include increased costs due to economic factors, equity in provision and delays in assessment. • Based on previous trends, the average annual requirement for adaptations for social rented housing in Aberdeen City is 630 and in the private sector the predicted numbers are around 140 per year. • There is an identified lack of accommodation for people with complex care needs or those with bariatric conditions. The excess build costs to cover specialist features require capital investment out with the current levels of subsidy available for affordable housing.
Non-permanent housing (e.g. for students)	• It is difficult to predict future needs with any sort of accuracy, as the number of refugees and migrants could be affected by broader economic circumstances. • There remain challenges around supply and demand of suitable housing across all sectors, particularly larger family accommodation to meet the needs of refugee families. • There is a growing trend for international students to travel with their families which results in the need for larger accommodation within the City. However, based on figures provided by further education institutions, the data from the past five years suggests a maintained level of vacant bedspaces which implies there is not currently any overall shortage of student accommodation in Aberdeen City.
Supported provision (e.g. care homes, sheltered housing)	• There is no current evidence to suggest an increased requirement for care home provision in Aberdeen City. • In Aberdeen, the Market Position Statement for learning disability and mental health identified the need for an additional 8 unit development, every 2 years plus one site per year to meet the needs of those with complex are.

	• Aberdeen City Council is currently undertaking a review of its sheltered housing and very sheltered housing service to determine future needs for this model of accommodation. The Housing for Varying Needs Working Group is nearing completion of phase 1. This will see the former sheltered housing sites identified in the previous review, transition to amenity housing with telecare in order to better meet the needs of the individuals living there. Two buildings are now 100% amenity tenants. The buildings have 35 people who still have a sheltered housing tenancy (March 2026). Consultation with tenants is required to coproduce a service that will meet the needs of the remaining sheltered housing tenants.
Site provision (e.g. sites/pitches for Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople)	• There are an estimated 2,160 Gypsy/Travellers across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Despite the need for additional sites and potential locations being identified in the previous LDPs of both Councils, there has been a lack of progress in terms of delivering further site provision. • Previous LDPs have indicated an intention to reduce the size of the Clinterty site and develop additional smaller site, with Grandhome, Newhills and Loirston being considered as viable locations. Despite this, no progress has yet been made in developing new sites.

Table 9.15: Summary of Key Issues for Specialist Housing Provision

Gypsy Travelling Showpeople Site Provision

9.90 Strategic Priority 1 of the Local Housing Strategy 2025 (LHS) (CD373) supports a sufficient supply of housing to meets the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen. This includes ensuring that the needs of the Gypsy Travelling communities are met through the provision of additional permanent and transit sites, as well as the refurbishment of existing sites. The LHS identifies a completion date of 2030 for this. Identifying sites in the LDP can support this priority.

9.91 There is currently only one official Gypsy/Traveller site in Aberdeen located at Clinterty, near the border with Aberdeenshire. New amenity blocks for Travellers at Clinterty including a kitchen, bathroom, and storage facilities were completed in 2024. The site redevelopment has increased caravan capacity whilst retaining the provision of 21 individual plots. The new amenity blocks will ensure the tenants have improved facilities that meets the needs of the community. Two of the buildings have full wheelchair accessibility. The refurbishment offers residents improved living conditions including more space for larger families, accessible facilities and a new play park. There is a waiting list for this site. A map showing the location of the Clinterty site can be found below, Figure 9.7.

9.92 The LDP 2023 requires the provision of three permanent sites of six pitches each – with one each at Grandhome (OP9), Newhills Expansion (OP19, OP20 and OP21) and at Loirston (OP59). This would provide a geographical spread of sites to the north, west and south of the city. The Gypsy/Traveller sites are identified in each of the Masterplans for the 3 areas. One site at Loirston was granted planning permission in 2015 but thus far, none have been delivered.

9.93 Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Gypsy Travellers (CD328) sets out Council guidance for consideration of proposals for permanent sites, halting sites / transit sites and sites identified in LDP Policy H6 – Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. The key planning considerations in this guidance have been extracted from an Interim Site Design Guide prepared by the Scottish Government in conjunction with Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords and in alignment with the key principles of 'Housing to 2040'.

9.94 A facilitated drop-in session was held at Clinterty Park site on 15 April 2025. The event was supported by the officers from Housing service, the Local Development Plan team, the Health and Social Care partnership and the Gypsy/Travellers Liaison Officer. The session offered the opportunity to have a dialogue in a familiar setting. Although the attendance at the drop-in was low, officers felt that the event was worthwhile offering direct engagement with the community. Efforts will be made to build on this and continue to increase the dialogue in later stages of the plan development.

9.95 Local Housing Strategy Priority 2 includes a commitment to engagement and tracking progress in engagement with vulnerable groups including gypsy travellers. Local Housing Strategy Priority 3, commits to ensuring that the needs of Gypsy/Traveller communities are met through the provision of additional permanent and transit sites, as well as the refurbishment of existing sites. Delivery will be monitored through the Delivery Programme.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.96 Although progress has been made in Gypsy/Traveller site provision, progress in delivering additional sites has been limited due to a combination of site identification challenges, delivery constraints and other housing pressures. These issues will need to be addressed through the Proposed Plan, where new sites can be considered as well as any need for local policy.



Figure 9.7: Map showing the location of Aberdeen's Traveller site at Clinterty

Student Housing

9.97 Aberdeen has three main further education institutions, and students represent a valuable and sizable section of the City's population. Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Student Accommodation H7 (CD329) sets out Council guidance for consideration of proposals for Student Accommodation Developments. The key planning considerations in this guidance are to ensure that Student Accommodation is in the most suitable location in terms of accessibility and amenity impacts on the surrounding area; that they are well managed and are appropriate in size and scale; meet the needs of the further education institutes; and that they offer appropriate accommodation.

9.98 Based on figures provided by further education institutions, and summarised in the HNDA, Table 9.18, data suggests a maintained level of vacant student bedspaces which implies there is not currently any overall shortage of student accommodation in Aberdeen City. Nevertheless, student population remains steady and there is a trend for international students to travel with families, as such it remains important that students have a high quality of choice of accommodation whilst studying in Aberdeen, and the Proposed Plan will include a local policy position to support this.

Wheelchair Accessible Housing

9.99 The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) (CD373) sets two key percentage targets for wheelchair accessible housing. 15% of all affordable homes should be delivered as

fully wheelchair accessible housing. This target is derived from the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and continues to inform affordable housing delivery expectations. 5% of all private market homes should be delivered as fully wheelchair accessible housing, reflecting an increased ambition to broaden accessible provision beyond the affordable sector.

9.100 Section 7 of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) (CD301) provides detailed evidence on the need for wheelchair accessible housing. Section 7.2 of the SHIP shows that, at the time of its writing, Aberdeen City Council had 223 wheelchair accessible properties in specialist accommodation (including sheltered and very sheltered accommodation) and 428 in 'mainstream' housing.

9.101 In 2022/23 there was a 15% increase in the overall number of people applying for wheelchair accessible housing, rising to 3,741 from 3,282 in the previous year.

9.102 The Council is committed to reducing waiting lists for accessible housing by working with its internal design team and Registered Social Landlord partners to ensure that the needs of those who are currently on the housing waiting lists for wheelchair accessible housing are met through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

9.103 There is robust information on the supply and demand for the Council's wheelchair accessible housing in the Local Housing Strategy Evidence Base (CD374). Work is ongoing to establish the supply and demand for other sectors. The Council is working with registered social landlords, developers, and Disabled Person's Housing Service (DPHS) to establish a baseline. This work is being overseen by the Independent Living & Specialist Provision Strategic Group that delivers and monitors the Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy's Joint Delivery Action Plan in relation to specialist provision housing.

9.104 Aberdeen City's Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan (CD376) identifies the challenges of an ageing population and the desire to support people in a community setting. To meet these challenges an adequate supply of good quality accessible housing needs to be in place.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.105 The Proposed Plan can continue to monitor the LHS action plan and the detailed evidence base and work with partners to ensure the targets are deliverable, monitored, and aligned with evolving need. As identified in the LHS the Council is committed to increasing the supply of wheelchair accessible housing and is aiming for 15% of homes built to be suitable for people with particular needs where this can be met within affordable housing development sites.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

9.106 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) account for a significant proportion of the available rental accommodation in Aberdeen and are particularly important in supporting the city's student population. The Council's online Register of HMO Licence Applications and HMO Licences provides an up-to-date list of all current HMO licenses and pending license applications, and this gives a clear picture of the number of properties in occupation as HMOs within Aberdeen.

9.107 Whilst HMOs play an important role in Aberdeen's housing market, the cumulative impact of large numbers of HMOs in an area can give rise to a number of issues and concerns. These can include: potential physical deterioration caused by lack of investment by absentee landlords; an increased population density in a localised area resulting in an increased demand on services, infrastructure and parking provision; and a deficiency in community cohesion as a result of transient tenants. For these reasons, Policy H8 of the 2023 Local Development Plan outlines an approach to avoiding an excessive concentration of HMOs in parts of the City. It states that proposals for new HMOs will be assessed to determine whether the cumulative concentration of HMOs would be excessive in the context of the proportion of HMOs relative to other residential properties and any resultant detriment to the established residential character and amenity of the area. It goes on to state that, within areas of concern due to excessive concentration, further HMO provision is unlikely to prove acceptable.

9.108 In order to prevent an excessive concentration of HMOs within parts of the City, the Council currently considers that the number of licensed HMOs should generally not exceed 12% of the total residential properties in any single Small Data Zone. This broadly equates to a 1:8 ratio of HMOs to other residential properties within any single Small Data Zone. This ratio is considered to represent a suitable balance between protecting the established residential character and amenity from adverse impacts resulting from high numbers of HMOs whilst also acknowledging the significant role of HMOs in meeting the housing needs of students and other sectors of the population. Small Data Zones have been identified as the most appropriate geographical area for this purpose as they are large enough for statistics to be presented accurately whilst also being small enough that they can be used to represent communities spatially. They also have shapes that respect physical boundaries on the ground wherever possible. Map data showing current HMO concentrations within Small Data Zones is published on the City Council's website (map layers; Planning, HMO Percentage in Data Zones), and this data is updated on a monthly basis.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.109 Given local issues with respect to HMO concentrations in parts of Aberdeen, there is a need to develop a local policy position in the Proposed Plan. This will be aimed at continuing to avoid excessive HMO concentrations from developing within

specific localised areas, whilst also recognising that HMOs are a component of the wider housing landscape in the city.

Short-term Lets

9.110 Short-term Lets (STLs) essentially involve the short-term provision of accommodation by a host in the course of business to a guest. Under Section 26B of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), Councils can choose to designate STL control areas. STL control areas allow authorities to consider STL proposals within specific geographically defined areas, to avoid concentrations of STLs and resulting detrimental impacts on amenity. An STL control area requires planning permission to be sought for any STLs within that area. No STL control areas have been designated to date in Aberdeen. It is for the Council to determine whether planning permission is required for any proposals to use an existing property as an STL based on the individual circumstances.

9.111 Although the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (CD298) has demonstrated a need for new open market housing in Aberdeen, and that there is also a significant need for more affordable housing it has not identified that any significant additional pressure is currently being placed on local housing need or affordability by the conversion of existing residential accommodation to STLs in the City. In this respect the situation in Aberdeen is different from other areas of Scotland where the number of STLs has placed significant pressure on the availability and affordability of housing. At present, the loss of residential accommodation resulting from changes of use to STLs is therefore considered unlikely to have any significant detrimental impact on local housing need within Aberdeen.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.112 This situation will be kept under review during production of the new Local Development Plan. The Council maintains an up-to-date online Register of STL Licence Applications and STL Licences and this will be used to maintain a clear understanding of the number of properties in occupation as STLs within Aberdeen. Any changes to this situation will be considered in the next HNDA.

Self-Build Housing and Self-Build Register

9.113 Self-build housing is where a person commissions or is personally involved in the design and construction of a dwelling intended to be their main residence. It provides choice and the ability to tailor housing to suit an individual's needs. This form of housing is supported by National Planning Framework 4.

9.114 The self-build register will provide an indication of demand for self-build housing in the plan area. Aberdeen City Council's Self-Build Register was launched in late 2023 and, at the time of writing, seven people had registered their interest in acquiring land for self-build homes.

9.115 At the Planning Development Management Committee on 20 June 2024, planning permission in principle was approved for 19 self-build housing plots at Woodend, Culter House Road, Peterculter (planning reference 210889/PPP). Given the scale of existing demand for self-build plots, it appears reasonable to expect that this planning permission is likely to meet the majority of demand for self-build housing in Aberdeen.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.116 Monthly update reports from the self-build housing register will be published on the Council's website, and the level of registered interest will be kept under review during preparation of the next Local Development Plan.

Supported Accommodation

9.117 Support accommodation is discussed in Infrastructure Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.83 - 89.

Local Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Target

9.118 Like all Scottish local authorities, Aberdeen City Council is required to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) every five years. The Council's current LHS (CD373) covers the period 2025-2030 and sets out how the Council and its partners will address local housing need and demand and contribute to national housing priorities over that period. It covers all types and tenures of housing, including social rented, private rented and owner-occupied accommodation.

9.119 The LHS has identified 7 priorities for action:

- Adequate supply of housing - We will support a sufficient supply of housing to meet the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen.
- Placemaking with communities - We will use a place-based approach to encourage lesser heard voices to shape their communities and the community offering, focusing on the unique circumstances of a particular place and involving local people in decision making.
- Homelessness - We will support a proactive housing options approach and will work collaboratively to provide a person-centred service to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- Promote independent living in communities - We will use a multi-agency approach, technology and other innovations to enable the people of Aberdeen to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible in their community.

- Promote health through housing - We are committed to reducing health inequalities by providing affordable, accessible, high quality and energy efficient homes that enhance people's health and wellbeing.
- Housing quality and energy efficiency - We will improve the condition of existing homes across all tenures and improve their energy efficiency to help to alleviate fuel poverty and address climate change and support a just transition to net zero.
- Private rented sector – We will support a well managed private rented sector

9.120 Each priority is supported by a number of key actions that Aberdeen City Council and partners will take to ensure that the vision is realised. Each priority is also accompanied by targets and outcomes that will help to monitor change and measure success.

9.121 A key requirement of the LHS is to identify a Housing Supply Target (HST) for the local authority area. In accordance with relevant Scottish Government guidance, the HST should outline the level and type of housing to be delivered over the period of the LHS. The current LHS (CD373) for Aberdeen City identifies a total HST for the five year period from 2025 to 2030 of 880 homes per annum. This is sub-divided into 660 open market homes and 220 affordable homes per annum. These HST figures were developed considering HNDA Scenario 4 'High Migration Plus', economic factors impacting supply and demand, completion rates, demolitions, and housing being brought back into use.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.122 The Local Housing Strategy sets a Housing Supply Target of 880 homes per annum. This reflects the Council's ambition and provides a key sense-check for the Local Housing Land Requirement. The inputs, data, priorities and targets set out in the LHS will need to be considered and used to inform the setting of the LHLR.

Future Housing Land Requirement

9.123 This section explains how Aberdeen City Council has derived the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR). The Council is required to define a LHLR in the LDP and DPEA LDP Guidance (CD375) notes that an indicative LHLR should be included in the Evidence Report.

9.124 The LHLR has been informed by the most up-to-date evidence currently available, including but not limited to:

- Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2023 – 2028 (CD298)
- The Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030 (CD373)

- The 2024 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit (CD012)
- The 2025 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit (CD327)
- Existing Housing Need in Scotland by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co (RD001)
- Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen City by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co (RD002)

9.125 The indicative Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) has been derived from a combination of national policy requirements, locally prepared evidence, and analysis of housing delivery trends in Aberdeen City. The MATHLR is 7,000 homes over a 10-year period (or 700 homes per annum), as set out in National Planning Framework 4. This has been considered alongside the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), the Housing Supply Target (HST) in the Local Housing Strategy, demonstrated delivery of homes through historic completion rates, Housing Land Audit programming, and long-term windfall trends. Whilst the MATHLR provides the statutory national baseline, the Council recognises that it represents a minimum requirement and is not intended to be the sole determinant of future housing provision. NPF4 and Local Development Planning Guidance make clear that planning authorities should consider wider evidence of housing need, demand and delivery when establishing the LHLR. The MATHLR has therefore been tested against local evidence noted above and is considered low.

9.126 The Council has selected HNDA Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus) as the preferred scenario. This scenario reflects Aberdeen's role as a regional employment centre, historic and emerging migration trends, economic ambitions for growth and evidence of existing housing need identified through the HNDA and subsequent housing *need studies.* The scenario represents the most appropriate basis for planning for future housing requirements and aligns with the objectives of the Local Housing Strategy. It should also be noted that Homes for Scotland commissioned the Diffley Partnership and Rettie and Co report, to produce the reports Existing Housing Need in Scotland and Aberdeen (RD001 and RD002). It is considered the reports supports the Council's judgement that the HNDA tool is likely to underestimate existing housing need and therefore reinforces the case for selecting a higher growth scenario and applying a positive approach to the LHLR.

9.127 The Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy (CD373) identifies a Housing Supply Target (HST) of 880 homes per annum. The HST is informed by the HNDA and wider evidence of housing need, including affordable housing requirements, existing unmet need and local housing market pressures. The Council considers the HST to provide an important policy and delivery sense-check on the scale of housing provision required and therefore regards it as the starting point for establishing the LHLR.

9.128 The Council considers that a generosity allowance of 20% over the HST is appropriate. This reflects the uncertainty associated with housing delivery over a 10-year period, including market fluctuations, infrastructure timing, market demand,

developer programming and site-specific constraints. As such the generosity factor ensures that sufficient land is available to meet the HST target. Historic delivery demonstrates average completions of approximately 1,000 homes per annum which is significantly higher than MATHLR. The generosity factor also lifts the LHLR to a figure that is in line with the delivery rates that the city has consistently demonstrated over the last decade, and reflects that an element of windfall development is likely to come forward in the plan period. Applying the 20% generosity to the Housing Supply Target increases the annual requirement from 880 homes to approximately 1,056 homes per annum.

9.129 The LHLR is therefore identified as 10,560 over the 10 year plan period.

9.130 LHLR Summary:

	Evidence Input	**Figure**	**Role**	**% Above MATHLR**
1	NPF4 MATHLR	700 homes per annum (7,000 homes)	National figure	
2	HNDA Scenario 4		Preferred demand scenario	
3	Revised baseline	741 homes per annum (7,414 homes)	Adjusted MATHLR (explained further below)	5.9%
4	HST target	880 homes per annum	Local housing need baseline	26%
5	Generosity allowance 20% (176 homes added to the HST target 880)	1,056 homes per annum	To ensure land supply is available to support housing delivery.	50%
6	**LHLR**	**10,560 homes**	**Final requirement**	**50%**

Table 9.16 Basis for the LHLR Summary Table

MATHLR

9.131 The Scottish Government expects the MATHLR figure to be exceeded by the LHLR contained within the Local Development Plan in order to promote an ambitious and plan-led approach. The Scottish Government take an evidence-based approach to calculating the MATHLR that considers existing need, household projections (from

2018 NRS projections) and levels of housing completions between 2010 and 2019. There is also a flexibility percentage (25%) that is applied which represents a contingency of land to allow for changes in sites going forward. The MATHLR for Aberdeen City is set at 7,000 over a 10 year period or 700 houses per year on average, see Table 9.17 below.

Existing Need (a)	Households (b)	a + b = c	Flexibility % (d)	Flexibility Amount (c x d) = e	**MATHLR** (c+e)
500	5,100	5,600	25	1,400	**7,000**

Table 9.17 MATHLR calculation, Source:NPF4

Housing Need and Demand Assessment

9.132 Scenario 4 ('High Migration Plus') from the HNDA has been selected as the preferred scenario to base the LHLR on, as it best reflects recent migration trends, economic growth ambitions and emerging evidence of unmet housing need. Lower growth scenarios are not considered appropriate as they would risk under-providing for future housing need and would not align with the Council's strategic objectives as set out in the LHS. This approach ensures that the LHLR is not based solely on trend-based projections but reflects a policy-led response to future demand. This is the scenario that has informed the development of the Housing Supply Target (HST) which was set in the current LHS (CD373).

9.133 Scenario 4 identifies an average annual requirement of 646 homes per annum, equivalent to 12,905 homes over 20 years. Applying the Scenario 4 existing need assumption to the NPF4 MATHLR calculation, produces a revised baseline of 7,414 homes over a 10-year period, compared with the published MATHLR of 7,000 homes. Providing an updated figure that has been derived with more up to date evidence, as per the Local Development Plan Guidance (CD316 p63) This provides an appropriate uplifted baseline, but not in itself a sufficient basis for the final LHLR, it requires further adjustment to ensure that the LHLR is ambitious and plan-led as required by NPF4, and not simply a predict and provide response. See Table 9.19 below.

Existing Need (a)	Households (b) MATHLR figure +0.4 as per HNDA	a + b = c	Flexibility 25 % (d)	Flexibility Amount (c x d) = e	**Revised MATHLR figure**
MATHLR + scenario 4 factoring 811	5,120	5,931	25%	1,483	**7,414**

Table 9.19 MATHLR calculation revised with HNDA Scenario 4 input

9.134 The HNDA (CD298) draws on the high migration variant of the 2018-based household projections, which estimated that Aberdeen City would have 109,940 households in 2023. However, National Records of Scotland (NRS) estimates indicate that the actual figure was 111,807 an increase of 1,084 households (around 1%) above the projection. In December 2025, NRS published the 2022-based Household Projections for Scotland. These suggest that the number of households in Aberdeen City in 2038, at the end of next LDP period could be around 4% or 5,172 higher than anticipated under the 2018-based high migration projections. While the next HNDA will adopt these updated figures as its baseline, this emerging evidence supports a more ambitious approach in setting the LHLR in the interim.

Local Housing Strategy 2025-30

9.135 The approved Local Housing Strategy 2025–2030 (CD373) is a key input into the LHLR. The strategy identifies a Housing Supply Target of 880 homes per annum, comprising 660 market homes and 220 affordable homes each year. The Housing Supply Target (HST) was developed having regard to HNDA Scenario 4, economic factors affecting supply and demand, historic completion rates, demolitions and housing being brought back into use. The LHS therefore provides an important policy and delivery sense-check by confirming that a higher level of housing provision is both necessary to meet identified need and sufficiently realistic to form the starting point for establishing the LHLR.

9.136 The Council considers that the HST demonstrates that a figure materially above the MATHLR is justified locally. It also reinforces the view that the LHLR should reflect not only trend-based demographic projections, but also wider policy objectives, housing pressures and delivery ambitions.

Past Completions and Future Capacity

9.137 Completion rates from the HLA 2025 (CD327) show that Aberdeen City delivered on average approximately 1,000 completions per year (with allocated and windfall completions combined). Historic housing delivery in Aberdeen has fluctuated in response to external factors including economic cycles, construction cost inflation, developer confidence and major events such as the Covid-19 pandemic. These factors demonstrate that delivery does not follow programmed outputs linearly and reinforces the need for a flexible and robust LHLR which reflects both market realities and long-term trends.

9.138 Delivery levels over the last 10 years have sat well above the MATHLR, and continue to be achievable in practice, providing confidence that a higher LHLR can be sustained over the next plan period.

9.139 Completion data has been used prospectively, drawing on programmed completions in the HLA2025 to assess likely future delivery. The

audit demonstrates a 9.8 year housing land supply, which falls slightly below the MATHLR over a 10-year period. It is worth highlighting, however, that audit programming shows completions fall below the MATHLR target of 700 units per annum only from 2030/31, by which point newly allocated sites from the next LDP should begin to contribute to supply. Tialhe precise number of additional allocations required will be confirmed through the Existing Site Audit and site assessment process, taking account of the deliverability of existing allocations, infrastructure requirements, market conditions, programming assumptions and the contribution from windfall and brownfield opportunities.

Windfall

9.140 Windfall development has historically made a significant and sustained contribution to housing delivery in Aberdeen City. Over the period from 2015 to 2025, windfall sites delivered a total of 2,240 homes, equivalent to an average of 224 homes per annum. This represents a substantial proportion of annual delivery and can be described as equivalent to an additional contribution of around 28% relative to average allocated site delivery. The evidence indicates that windfall delivery is a structural feature of Aberdeen's housing market rather than a one-off occurrence

Much of this windfall delivery has been associated with the redevelopment of brownfield, vacant and underused land within the existing urban area. In a mature urban authority such as Aberdeen, the Council considers it reasonable to assume that further windfall opportunities will continue to arise during the plan period, even where they are not yet specifically identified. For this reason, the Council considers that historic windfall trends supports the use of a 'Generosity Allowance' used to establish the LHLR.

Economic Factors and Local Factors

9.141 The next LDP will have a 10-year span from 2028 – 2038 and must take cognisance of the city's economic outlook and investment context. Most notably this includes (see Chapter 15 Centres of Business for more detail):

- North East Investment Zone (£80 million)
- Energy Transition Zone (ETZ)
- Ongoing investment through City Region Deal (circa £200million)
- Just Transition Fund (£500 million)

9.142 These significant initiatives and large scale investments are expected to support economic growth, employment creation and inward investment and migration, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy, and digital and technology, which in turn have the potential to increase demand for housing. At the same time, it is recognised that structural economic challenges, including an ageing population, a declining working-age cohort, and recent volatility in net migration linked to

the evolving context of the oil and gas sector, introduce some uncertainty around the scale and sustainability of future housing demand.

9.143 Economic constraints on housing supply, particularly rising construction costs, labour shortages and other pressures within the construction sector, which directly affect build-out rates and deliverability must also be considered. Evidence of increased costs for materials and wages, alongside wider cost-of-living pressures and reduced mortgage affordability, is acknowledged as a factor dampening market demand and developer confidence. Moreover, uncertainty over future public funding for affordable housing, including Resource Planning Assumptions, is identified as a key risk influencing the achievable scale of affordable housing delivery and its inter-dependency with market housing.

Indicative LHLR

9.144 The LHLR is therefore identified as 10,560 homes over the 10-year period. The LHLR has been derived from a combination of national policy requirements, locally prepared evidence, and analysis of housing delivery trends in Aberdeen City.

9.145 The LHLR sets a target that is approximately 50% above MATHLR or a total of 3,560 additional homes over the 10 year period. It is informed by a combination of delivery evidence, housing need and demand and projected supply. The LHLR is reflective of the evidence on proven deliverability, capacity, market conditions, and constraints whilst remaining ambitious considering the economic landscape. The LHLR also seeks to address the drop in the 10 year deliverable supply shown between the 2024 and 2025 HLAs (see paragraphs 9.35 – 9.37).

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.146 The Proposed Plan will have to allocate a sufficient range of deliverable sites to meet the LHLR over the period of the plan, considering the role that brownfield, windfall and empty home initiatives can offer, as well as considering measures to support housing delivery, address constraints and viability issues.

9.147 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) embeds an infrastructure-first approach, requiring consideration of existing capacity, identification of infrastructure priorities, and early assessment of delivery. Infrastructure capacity is considered in detail in Chapter 10 of the Evidence Report, and is a key determinant of growth potential. Evidence indicates that in some locations, particularly in relation to education and primary healthcare, capacity pressures are already evident. This will require us to take a comprehensive and pragmatic approach to site selection and allocating land for new development, to ensure that new development can be delivered alongside existing or new supporting infrastructure

9.148 In transport terms, current travel patterns demonstrate a high reliance on the private car, highlighting the need to support a shift towards sustainable and active travel. This aligns with the principles of local living and the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods. There is a requirement to enhance active travel infrastructure and ensure that future development contributes to reducing car dependency. Without intervention, additional housing growth is likely to increase pressure on the road network, where existing constraints have been identified. Further detail is set out in Chapter 11 Sustainable Transport of the Evidence Report.

Future Housing Spatial Strategy

9.149 NPF4 sets out six spatial principles, of which five are relevant for Aberdeen City: liveable places and productive places; just transition, conserving and recycling assets, local living, compact urban growth, rebalanced development. These principles will influence the spatial strategy for the city. Development will have to be located in sustainable locations, with higher density development helping to support and sustain community services, local living, infrastructure and public transport.

Strategic Spatial Options for residential development in the Proposed Plan:

9.150 **Brownfield:** The redevelopment of brownfield land will be an important component of the next spatial strategy. Such sites present significant opportunities for regeneration, supporting local living, re-use of assets and delivering high-quality homes and placemaking as well as community building opportunities. However, careful consideration will be required to understand the constraints affecting delivery and the viability challenges often associated with these complex sites. The Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will play a key role in informing this assessment.

9.151 **Windfall or responsive urban infill:** The pattern of urban development where change occurs in small, continuous steps - such as individual buildings, sites or streets- allowing the maturing city fabric to evolve over time in response to use demand, evidence and local conditions. There are opportunities on the right sites for this type of development to contribute to improved place cohesion and community infrastructure.

9.152 **Re-allocation:** Re-allocation refers to the potential redevelopment of existing business and industrial land for residential or mixed-use purposes. A review of business and industrial land supply, including designated business zones, will be required to inform the Proposed Plan and identify sites that may be suitable for re-allocation. This approach can help bring underutilised land back into productive use, particularly where sites are well located within the urban area and can support sustainable patterns of development.

9.153 **Strategic Growth:** Strategic growth involves masterplanned development across larger sites, or clusters of sites, typically delivered through comprehensive allocations. This approach supports the creation of well-planned communities and enables the coordinated delivery of the supporting infrastructure, services, and

facilities. It also benefits from economies of scale, making it easier to secure the infrastructure. The long delivery-frames of these scale of housing sites can mean that their contribution to the LHLR can be small and in the later stages of the LDP lifespan.

9.154 These spatial strategies will have to be considered alongside approaches for service and infrastructure delivery or mitigation (See Chapter 10 for further details):

1. Allocating development to areas where there is the capacity to accommodate infrastructure requirements. These are likely to be very limited opportunities for this scenario to occur.

2. Addressing capacity issues through adjusting existing infrastructure. For example internal reconfigurations of schools, medical centres or other community facilities may increase capacity. Changing school or medical centre catchment boundaries may free up capacity in certain areas - albeit this may be at the expense of capacity in others.

3. Enhancements to existing infrastructure could increase capacity, for example extensions to schools, medical centres and other facilities. This could potentially add significant capacity in some cases. In other cases though, it may not be physically possible to extend a building or facility due to the constrained nature of a site.

4. Providing new infrastructure through, for example building new schools etc or relocating to larger premises. It may be possible to co-locate several types of infrastructure into one facility – for instance a community school campus that incorporates other services and facilities. This in turn could ease capacity elsewhere in the wider area.

5. Using larger allocations or combined allocations clustered close together to create economies of scale may be able to deliver the larger scale infrastructure and other facilities necessary to support them and which could also be used to reduce pressure to other areas.

6. The final option would be not to allocate new developments in severely constrained areas or where the mitigation required to overcome constraints would make developments unviable.

Place Standard Assessment

9.155 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning Aberdeen. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score

out of 7, and people asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children

9.156 The Housing and Community theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4.02 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted in Table 9.20 below.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Housing and Community	• Good range and mix of housing available. (All) • Good community with good neighbours, and has a good community spirit and range of reasonable facilities. (All)	• Availability and affordable housing options (South) • General maintenance of housing, and insulated and energy efficient housing (ALL) • Disadvantaged areas should be the focus of more green and community spaces (Central) • Improvements to appearance/maintenance of neighbourhoods (All) • Anti social behaviour (adults) focus of tenants/in community (Central) • Improving community spirit/social integration/reduce isolation through increasing events and activities for all (All) • Too much house building, lack of quality and space and amenities in new developments (North) • Too many empty homes (South) • The type of housing available was not necessarily suitable for what people need i.e. not enough social housing. (South) • Increases to, and improvements for, making neighbourhoods ‘look’ better (South)

		• Some areas have too many “private lets” or “short term lets which can have a negative impact on community (Central)

Table 9.20: Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023. Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better.

9.157 The children and young people results noted: 54.2% felt they were okay, 34.7% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great. Table 9.21.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Housing and Community	Green gardens	23.6%	Green gardens	19.8%
	Houses that feel like a home	22.6%	Homes that look good	18.9%
	Homes that look good	21.7%	Houses that feel like a home	14.2%

Table 9.21: Top 3 responses for ‘What is good now’ and ‘What would make it better?’ Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Play and Recreation Extract.

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.158 The results of the Place Standard exercise, and the 2025 “Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future” (YPYPYF) engagement, provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the next Local Development Plan. This engagement, which used the nationally recognised Place Standard tool to capture views across 14 themes relating to quality of life, health and wellbeing, generated both quantitative scores and detailed qualitative feedback on what works well and where improvements are required across Aberdeen’s neighbourhoods, see Chapter 7 for full details. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the LDP to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan

9.159 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (LOIP) (CD324) outlines how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision is for “a

place where all can thrive regardless of background or circumstance". There is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city's people to live healthy lives. Five 10 year outcomes have been set to achieve the vision over five themes, see Table 9.22.

Theme	10 Year Outcome (by 2036)
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	95% of young people in SIMD 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school.
Economic Stability	Reduce to 3% the proportion of people aged 16 and above in SIMD 1 that are not in employment, and increase by 3% the employment rate of vulnerable groups.
Communities and Housing	Reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5%.
Neighbourhood and Environment	Increase proportion of people from SIMD 1 who feel they have influence and sense of control by 10%.
Health and Social Care	20% reduction in deaths in SIMD 1 from alcohol and drugs and a 20% reduction in suicide rate citywide.

Table 9.22 LOIP outcomes by theme

Implications for the Proposed Plan

9.160 The Proposed Plan can use the data in the LOIP to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen and consider how local policies or the spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related to place and communities, particularly in relation to place, communities, health and access to opportunity. The Proposed Plan can support delivery of these outcomes by directing development to sustainable locations, improving access to services, green and blue infrastructure, and supporting local living design. Of the five outcomes, the Proposed Plan can help to achieve outputs tied to Communities and Housing, Neighbourhood and Environment themes.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Initial Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

9.161 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, see Section 7.

9.162 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on Delivery of Housing.

9.163 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- Homes for Scotland
- Housebuilders (Bancon, Barratt/David Wilson Homes, Cala, Malcom Allan)
- Registered Social Landlords (Hillcrest)
- Consultants (Rydens, Savills)
- NHS Grampian
- Grampian Regional Equality Council
- Disabled Persons Housing Service
- Aberdeen City Council (Education, Developer Obligations, Affordable Housing, Roads, Building Standards, Development Management)

9.164 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper at this time.

9.165 The evidence presented within the Delivery of Homes paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders and members of Future Infrastructure for Services Group. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

9.166 In addition, further meetings were held as follows:

- Housing Summits, held in October 2024 and March 2025
- The Future Infrastructure for Services (FIRS) Group was convened in February 2025 and March 2025
- Meetings with individual housebuilders and Homes for Scotland
- Meetings with NatureScot and NESTRANS

9.167 An 8 week public engagement exercise then took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 13 responses were received on the paper at this time - 3 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland) 3 from housing developers, (Bancon Homes, Mac Mic Group and Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland), and 7 from members of the public. Of those listed, 6 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and others provided further evidence sources.

9.168 NatureScot noted no disputes with the evidence and support the preparation of an updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) and that brownfield development sites that are proposed will be subject to a full site assessment process. NatureScot advised that initial text on approaches to accommodating any additional growth being ‘influenced’ by NPF4 principles (such as compact growth, local living and infrastructure first (was not robust enough. As such, this has been revised to be ‘guided’ by NPF4 principles.

9.169 Homes for Scotland, Bancon, Mac Mic Group, Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland note that the Housing Emergency has not been referenced / given

due prominence in the Topic Paper. This has now been included, both in the body of this paper and in the ‘Implications for the Plan’ section.

9.170 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland confirmed that they dispute the sections of the paper, as detailed in the ‘Statement of Disputes’ and additionally provided the following commentary:

- That continued engagement with the housebuilding industry is welcome.

9.171 The Council acknowledges and welcomes these comments and are happy to continue engaging with Homes for Scotland as well as other parts of the development industry throughout the duration of the LDP process. Homes for Scotland also note:

- At a time when a national and local housing emergency has been declared, future Local Development Plans have longer, 10-year, timelines, and there is a much-restricted ability to fill any shortfall in homes delivered with windfall sites; it is imperative that future LDPs reflect and respond accordingly. An accurate, dependable, and up-to-date evidence base is therefore essential.
- New allocations will be required to address falling completions (as per HLA 2024), the aging demographic, and negative net migration.
- An ambitious new build housing programme would help address the high levels of disrepair in the city housing stock.

9.172 The Council acknowledges that these are issues that will be considered in developing the housing land requirement and are happy to continue engaging with Homes for Scotland as well as other parts of the development industry through the LDP process. Homes for Scotland:

- Note that an updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be undertaken to inform production of the new LDP, and that this will be used to underpin any brownfield development assumptions in the new plan. HFS require to be consulted on this document

9.173 The Council acknowledges this comment. The Council will continue dialogue with the housebuilding industry as well as other parts of the development industry for the duration of the LDP process. Homes for Scotland:

- Note that current assumptions made on indicative densities for brownfield sites, and that these densities are ambitious and challenging to deliver.
- Draw attention to the complexities of taking forward brownfield sites and state they should not be relied upon when seeking to meet the LHLR. Policy 16 of NPF4 makes achieving planning permission on unallocated sites more challenging than was previously the case.
- Homes for Scotland also highlight market challenges associated with the delivery of brownfield sites

9.174 The Council acknowledges these comments and accept that, whilst high density development has sustainability advantages, it is not always appropriate in every case. The Council does not suggest all allocations should be on brownfield sites – housing allocations should be provided in a range of locations. The Council agrees that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan.

9.175 Mac Mic Group agree generally that there is a lack of accessible accommodation, and note that new housing supply needs to be smaller and more specialist to meet changing demographics. They note that future housing delivery can contribute towards affordable housing provision and provide new accommodation to the meet housing needs of Aberdeen City. The Council acknowledges these comments.

9.176 Mac Mic Group highlight the following Homes for Scotland report 'The Social and Economic Benefits of Home Building in Scotland', and additionally note that housing plays an important positive socio-economic role. The Council notes these points and has no further comments.

9.177 Bancon note that the government continues to emphasise the importance of housing in supporting foreign direct investment as investors realise the importance of sufficient housing being available alongside major investment in jobs. They note that the role of housing in supporting the National Strategy for Economic Transformation was specifically addressed in the Chief Planner's Letter of 22 November 2023, and so this should also be considered as part of the LDP evidence base. The Council have noted these comments and added this to the evidence base.

9.178 Bancon requested the addition of material to the evidence base, and the following have been added to inform decision making on this matter: Homes for Scotland commissioned Research Existing Housing Need in Scotland by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co, Homes for Scotland commissioned Research Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co. These documents are discussed further in the 'Statement of Agreement / Dispute' section of this paper. The Council note that NRS Migration Flows have informed the HNDA, and Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation is included in the Spatial Strategy and has not been included in this paper. The 'Reflections on the Housing and Place Delivery Forum UK Collaborative Centre for Housing' blog has not been included.

9.179 Bancon welcomed the recognition of the Paper that the 2018- based NRS projections may need to be treated with a degree of caution and would agree that they may present a rather pessimistic view of likely trends in the population / number of households in Aberdeen. Given the date of the projections covering the period of the Oil Price Crash, Bancon consider that the data represents an extremely challenging period in Aberdeen and is not reflective of the current market not population growth in the City. Bancon note that they have experienced renewed confidence in the market in Aberdeen and are achieving strong sales rate;

evidencing the greater confidence and population increase in the City. The Council welcomes this insight and acknowledge these comments.

9.180 Bancon state that the discussion of population growth and demographics in the Paper is out of date due to a number of factors including COVID-19 and the financial crisis. Bancon note the next Local Development Plan will be in place until late 2030s and warn against over-reliance on 2018-based projections in the HNDA and MATHLR. These, they note, are informed by particularly adverse short-term trends and would restrict the ability of the City to grow and take advantage of opportunities. The Council acknowledge these comments and notes these pieces of evidence will be used in conjunction with all the evidence sources set out in the paper. As per Guidance Note 26 (CD375), we have endeavoured to take a 'proportionate approach' and the Topic Papers provide a summary of the base-line data and the relevant evidence that is available currently, and explain what the evidence means for the plan. Going forward, updated population and census data is expected imminently and will be considered when developing the Proposed Plan. In addition, there is the ability to review the LDP mid-term if deemed necessary due to new data or wider conditions.

9.181 Bancon note that Draft Topic Paper 8 - Business and Culture discussed the Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023, published in January 2024. The report outlines the continuing need for a long-term strategic approach to secure a successful transition to renewable energy and, to support future success regionally, investment in sustainable new homes will be necessary. Additionally, in arriving at the Housing Supply Target, Bancon Homes asks the Council to take cognisance of the economic aspirations of the City and the North East Region. They note that GB Energy is to be head-quartered in Aberdeen, creating over 1000 jobs, and that the Energy Transition Zone, which benefits from an approved Masterplan, is the largest dedicated energy transition industrial complex in Scotland. The ETZ seeks to take advantage of the new adjacent Aberdeen South Harbour and is expected to directly support 2,500 green jobs by 2030, alongside a further 10,000 transition related jobs. Bancon state that significant investment in employment needs to be supported by an appropriate housing supply response and give a recent example of Highland Council Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan to highlight this. The Council acknowledge and note these comments.

9.182 Bancon consider that past completions, as cited in the 2024 HLA, would offer further support for a target well in excess of the HNDA outputs and the MATHLR. Despite housing completion rates dipping significantly in 2020, as a result of the lockdowns imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, Bancon note that average housing completion rates in Aberdeen over the 10 year period (2015-2024, inclusive) amount to approximately 1,026 homes per year. This, they note, is significantly higher than an annual housing rate of 700 homes per year which would be the case if the MATHLR were not increased. Likewise, they note it is also higher than the Principle Growth Scenario cited in Table 4: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042. The High Migration Plus Scenario in the HNDA for 2023-27 is also lower than recent average completions of 1,026 per annum. Bancon therefore consider that the MATHLR is very low when compared with historic housing

completions and note that it is on projections which showed a 1.1% population growth over 10 years, whereas population growth in the last year for which figures are available was 1.6%. Furthermore, Bancon consider that the HNDA (which informs the MATHLR) underestimates market demand. They therefore consider it unsurprising that forward programming exceeds it but that does not mean that the land supply is sufficient. The Council acknowledge and note these comment and, as per Guidance Note 26 (CD375), we have endeavoured to take a 'proportionate approach'. The Topic Papers provide a summary of the base-line data and other information from the relevant evidence that is available currently and explain what the evidence means for the plan. The Council recognises the indicative LHLR is a provisional figure and acknowledges the limitations of finalising it at this stage.

9.183 Bancon highlight that adoption of the LDP is not planned until 2028. They note that, by this time, over four years will have passed since the base date (1/1/24) of the current housing land supply and it will have reduced by the number of completions in that period. They also note that Aberdeen has several large strategic sites which will not be complete by 2038. These are noted as constrained sites and the number of sites deemed constrained may increase as the NPF4 test of deliverable is stricter than the comparable provisions in SPP. They note that the supply considered deliverable in the 10 year plan period is what will count. The Council note these are issues that will be considered during the development of the LHLR and the Proposed Plan. Moreover an existing site audit will be completed by Autumn 2026, the annual HLA will be carried out in the next 12 months.

9.184 Bancon Homes note that the Housing Supply Target (HST) will be determined by the LHS which was out for public consultation at the same time as the Draft Topic Papers. The LHS proposed the HST at 700 homes per annum, which Bancon consider too low. They consider that any figure based upon 2018-based projections is likely to be a significant underestimate. Any LHLR must therefore be primarily focused on achieving the Councils and wider stakeholders vision of a growing prosperous city which delivers the homes needed. Bancon consider the target should be forward looking rather than inadvertently projecting forward disappointing trends from the second half of the 2010s. The Council acknowledges these comments and notes that indicative Housing Supply Target is a provisional figure and notes that it will be finalised through the consultation on the Local Housing Strategy.

9.185 A meeting was held with Bancon on 18 June 2025, after an email of 6 June that confirmed they had formal disputes to the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper. These disputes are summarised in the Statement of Disputes section of the paper.

9.186 An email was sent to Mac Mic Group on 11 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. They confirmed by email on 27 June their support of the Homes for Scotland responses / disputes noted below.

9.187 An email was sent to Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No

response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as disputes.

9.188 An email was sent on 24 June 2025 to a member of the public who disputed the paper. No response had been received to date; therefore the comment has been classed as a dispute.

Resubmission, Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

9.189 Further engagement took place between November 2025 and July 2026. A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, see Section 7.

9.190 A draft version of the updated Topic Paper was sent out on 02 July 2026 to stakeholders who had made comments or had disputes to the previous version of the chapter and to all Aberdeen FIRS members.

9.191 A response was received from Scottish Forestry by email 06 July 2026 with no comments on this paper.

9.192 A response was received from SEPA by email 03 July 2026 with no comments on this paper.

9.193 A response was received from Natscot with no comments on this paper 20 July 2026.

9.194 A response was received from HES by email 30 July 2026, who noted support for the brownfield approach in this paper.

9.195 A response was received from SSEN 29 July 2026 with no comments on this paper.

9.196 A response was received from Scottish Water 15 July 2026, who welcomed the opportunity to review and respond on the paper. Scottish Water noted support for a Infrastructure First approach, and a commitment to continue to engage with Aberdeen City Council as the LDP process continues to develop through to the next stages. Scottish Water also highlighted the need for a clear and early focus on green and blue infrastructure at a strategic level. Aberdeen City Council acknowledge this comment and look forward to working further with Scottish Water. The Council confirm that Infrastructure First is a core policy of NPF4 and applies to all development including retrofitting/ redevelopment.

9.197 A response was received from Homes for Scotland (HFS) by email 29 July 2026, who welcomed the opportunity to comment on the revised paper. HFS advised of additional evidence for consideration, which the Council has included in this Evidence Report. This includes analysis of sites within the 2024 HLA with reasoning as to why some sites have not been developed. The council welcomes this

information and will review this as part of the existing site audit and call for site bid processes.

9.198 HFS provided further helpful commentary on Windfall Development, Demographic Context, Future Housing Land Requirement, Housing Need and Demand and Site Assessment which has been used to inform this paper.

9.199 HFS advises further demographic analysis including age-group changes, the Council will look at this going forward.

9.200 A response was received from THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes (THE) by email 31 July 2026. THE welcomed the opportunity to meet and comment on the paper. THE acknowledged that comments previously (made on earlier papers) had been reflected in the paper and welcomed these changes. THE provided helpful commentary on LHLR, LHS and Windfall Delivery which has been used to inform this paper.

9.201 A response was received from Larner McGrath Ltd on behalf of Bancon Homes (LM) by email 20 July 2026. LM welcomed the opportunity to meet and comment on the paper. LM Welcomed the proposed increase to the LHLR (as set out in the draft topic paper), the inclusion of the LHS and recognition of increased migration and economic opportunities.

9.202 LM provided helpful commentary and wider context on factors affecting the LHLR, which has been used to inform this paper. LM noted the ongoing barriers to development and viability of brownfield sites. The Council acknowledges these are very real and pertinent issues.

9.203 A response was received from Iceni on behalf of the Mac Mic Group (Iceni) on the 31 July 2026. Iceni welcomed the opportunity to comment on the paper, and were supportive of an increase in the LHLR. Iceni also welcomed the use of recent demographic and economic evidence, the use of HNDA Scenario 4, the recognition of the housing emergency. Iceni welcomed the Council's commitment to both an existing site audit and the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study.

9.204 Iceni provide useful commentary on housing need and land supply, and deliverable land supply which have been used to inform this paper.

9.205 An in-person meeting was held with THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes on 21 July 2026. It was noted that the paper chapters had improved and particularly in relation to housing figures, evidence sources, context and trends. Moreover, the proposed uplift in the LHLR was welcomed.

9.206 A Teams meeting was held with Homes for Scotland (HFS) members on 4 August 2026. It was stated that the papers had greatly improved. This was in relation to; the acknowledgment of the housing emergency, housing figures, evidence sources (such as current LHS (CD373) and HLA 2025 (CD327) and the completion data associated with this, context and wider trends. It was noted that there was 'excellent

evidence' set out in the paper. In addition, the proposed increase to the LHLR (as set out in the draft topic paper) was both recognised as positive step forward in terms of ambition and proven track record of delivery in the city and was welcomed by the HFS members.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

9.207 The next LDP can use the data in the LOIP to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen and consider how local policies or the spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related to place and communities and increase sustainable travel.

9.208 The next LDP will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

9.209 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

9.210 Both the population and the number of households in Aberdeen is projected to continue to rise, as can been seen in the housing need and demand figures in the HNDA and the MATHLR. In addition, it is predicted household sizes will continue to reduce and that the population will continue to age. The Proposed Plan will need to address these demographic changes and trends.

9.211 The LHLR has been set at 10,560, a 50% uplift on the MATHLR figure. This is a confident approach to growth based on the wider economic aspirations for the area, proven delivery through completion figures and windfall trends going back 10 years whilst being cognisant of the local context, environmental and infrastructure constraints to growth which exist in the area and the wider macro issues affecting growth nationally. The Proposed Plan will have to identify enough housing land to meet this requirement, and allocate a sufficient range of deliverable sites to meet the LHLR over the period of the plan, also considering the role that brownfield, windfall and empty house initiatives can offer.

9.212 A number of approaches to delivery of houses must be identified. Though the Proposed Plan, approaches to accommodating any additional growth in the City will be guided by NPF4 principles such as compact growth, local living and infrastructure first as well as the local context, deliverability and other relevant considerations.

9.213 The future spatial strategy of the LDP will build on and evolve the current approach. A range of potential options for accommodating additional growth have been identified, including a focus on brownfield redevelopment, the re-allocation of land, incremental windfall or responsive urban infill, and larger-scale strategic growth. The selection and balance of these approaches will be guided by the principles set out in NPF4, including compact growth, local living and an infrastructure-first approach, alongside local opportunities, constraints and evidence.

9.214 An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make to meeting the LHLR. This is now underway. Issues of deliverability, viability and service and infrastructure capacity will be considered as part of this study.

9.215 The 2025 HLA demonstrates that there is a significant pipeline of deliverable housing to come forward but that it tails off at 9.8 years. An Existing Site Audit will be undertaken to assess the suitability and deliverability of existing allocations from the 2023 LDP and the contribution they can or cannot make to meeting the LHLR. This will in turn inform the scale of new allocations that are required for the next plan. The Audit is due to be completed by Autumn 2026.

9.216 The Infrastructure First, Transport, Place, Wellbeing and Communities Papers with and Site Selection Methodology will guide housing growth to the best available and appropriate areas of the city. It is understood that there will be impact from development in terms of services and infrastructure and that challenging decisions will be required to be taken regarding these matters. The capacity of infrastructure to accommodate new development must be considered when allocating land for housing.

9.217 The housing crisis has been acknowledged both nationally and locally in Aberdeen City. How the housing crisis presents in Aberdeen is specific to the City and its communities in terms of Affordable, Specialist and Other Housing, and the following implications take cognisance of this.

Affordable Housing

9.218 Although the city has benefited from significant delivery of affordable housing in recent years, there remains high levels of affordable housing need. It is proposed to continue with the current requirement for 25% of homes to be affordable for all developments of 5 or more. This is in accordance with NPF4 Policy 16. A tailored local policy position will be required to ensure that affordable housing contributions are targeted toward meeting local housing need in the city and to set out any exceptional circumstances where a lower contribution will be acceptable.

Specialist Housing Provision

Accessible

9.219 Given the evidence from the HNDA on the ageing nature of Aberdeen's population, with the largest population growth being expected in older age groups, there is a need to develop a local policy position within the Proposed Plan to reflect this. Older people are more likely to either live alone, or in a household where all occupants are aged 65 or over, and the Proposed Plan will therefore need to support suitable housing options to address these needs.

Student Accommodation

9.220 Aberdeen has three main further education institutions, and students represent a valuable and sizable section of the City's population. Based on figures provided by further education institutions, and summarised in the HNDA, data from the past five years suggests a maintained level of vacant student bedspaces which implies there is not currently any overall shortage of student accommodation in Aberdeen City. Nevertheless, it remains important that students have a high quality of choice of accommodation whilst studying in Aberdeen, and the Proposed Plan will include a local policy position to support this.

Wheelchair Accessible

9.221 Given the scale of local need for wheelchair accessible homes and the targets set in the Local Housing Strategy (CD373), there is a need to develop a local policy position in the Proposed Plan aimed at increasing the level of wheelchair accessible housing. This will need to apply to both affordable housing and open market housing.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

9.222 Given the particular local issues with respect to HMO concentrations in parts of Aberdeen, there is a need to develop a local policy position in the Proposed Plan aimed at continuing to avoid excessive HMO concentrations from developing within specific localised areas of the City.

Short-Term Lets (STL)

9.223 At present, the loss of residential accommodation resulting from changes of use to STLs is considered unlikely to have any significant detrimental impact on local housing need within Aberdeen. This situation will be kept under review during production of the new LDP. The Council's online Register of STL License Applications and STL Licenses will be used to maintain a clear and up-to-date understanding of the number of properties in occupation as STLs within Aberdeen.

Self-Build Housing

9.224 The recent grant of planning permission in principle for 19 plots at Woodend, Culter House Road, Peterculter (planning reference 210889/PPP) is likely to meet demand for self-build housing in the longer term, based on the limited number of people who have registered their details on the Self-Build Housing Register. This would suggest that there is no particular need for detailed LDP policies aimed at self-build housing. Monthly update reports from the Self-Build Housing Register will be published on the Council's website, and the level of registered interest will be kept under review

during preparation of the next LDP. Should there be a significant increase of interest this may require the introduction of specific local policies.

Marmot Principles

9.225 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. Table 9.23 below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	X
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 9.23: Marmot principle matrix

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

Initial Submission Agreement on Evidence

Agreement on Evidence

9.226 NHS Grampian, NatureScot and five members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

Disputes with Stakeholders

9.227 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, stating “there are plenty of homes available in the market for sale”.

9.228 There are a number of areas of clear dispute between the Council, Homes for Scotland and housebuilders/developers in relation to the following matters:

Local Housing Strategy

9.229 Homes for Scotland consider that the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) should be completed before the Evidence Report is submitted. They consider that the Council should delay submission of the Evidence Report to the Gate Check until the new LHS has been finalised.

9.230 Bancon welcome that further work is being undertaken on the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) but also considers the LHS should be updated before the Evidence Report is submitted.

9.231 The current LHS covers the period 2018-2023, and has been referenced in this paper. The draft of the new LHS was out for consultation alongside the Topic Paper as part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future exercise. Now that this has been undertaken and feedback returned, an indicative Housing Supply Target will be developed. The final LHS will be presented to committee in August 2025, and we will keep the DPEA up to-date with its progress.

Brownfield Urban Capacity Study

9.232 Homes for Scotland and Bancon consider that a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) should be carried out now, so that the findings can be reviewed as part of the evidence gathering process. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the BUCS at this stage, particularly as the Call for Sites stage is yet to be completed. However, we acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.

9.233 Both Homes for Scotland and Bancon dispute the density figures that are noted in the existing Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS).

Existing Housing Need in Scotland and Aberdeen Reports

9.234 Additional information has been provided by Homes for Scotland to support alternative approaches to the identification of housing need in Aberdeen, and the Council has agreed to include these documents in the evidence base in order to inform decision making on this matter.

9.235 The research commissioned by Homes for Scotland challenges the methodology of the HNDA process and focusses on concealed and unmet housing need. Homes for Scotland and housebuilders therefore take a different view from the Council on the definition and calculation of existing housing need.

9.236 The Council welcomes further information and data from Homes for Scotland and the housebuilding industry, however it disagrees with the interpretation and use of the Report survey results.

9.237 Aberdeen City Council have relied upon the HNDA as a key evidence document in this topic paper, and note that the methodology followed guidance produced by Scottish Government. The HNDA has been subject to extensive stakeholder engagement and has been signed of as ‘robust and credible’ by the Scottish Government’s Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA)

Housing Land Audit

9.238 Homes for Scotland consider that the data based on the 2024 Housing Land Audit (HLA) table 2.7 is incorrect due to the requirement to undertake an existing site audit. The Council considers that the 2024 HLA gives a good indication of current supply. We note that in the next 12 months an existing LDP site audit will be undertaken which will provide an assessment of the deliverability of the currently allocated LDP sites, and this, with the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study, will feed into the calculation of the level of new allocations required in the Proposed Plan. The study will also inform the next iteration of the HLA.

9.239 An email received from Homes for Scotland on 18 June 2025 noted that the published Housing Land Audit 2024 City Sites document states the “10-Year Deliverable Supply” is 8,661 homes. The “Post 10 Year Deliverable Supply” is said to be 7,847 homes. However, HFS note that this information is not provided on an annualised basis, so it cannot be determined what proportion of this Post 10 Year figure is considered to be deliverable in the relevant 10-year period of the emerging Local Development Plan. HFS consider that 8,661 is the only clear figure which can be used to assess the deliverable supply, and note that this figure will be reduced by the time the new LDP is adopted (the Housing Land Audit 2024 document indicates an approximate delivery of 1,100 homes per annum over the next three years). Sites disputed by HFS are indicated in the Aberdeen City Housing Land Audit 2024 document, at Appendix D. The total Number of Deliverable Units for these sites is 2,770 homes. It is Homes for Scotland’s view that these sites should be discounted from the deliverable supply. Given the recently published national Housing Land Audit Guidance, HFS also consider that the Evidence Report would be better underpinned by an updated HLA document for 2025.

9.240 As per Guidance Note 26 (CD375), the Council have endeavoured to take a 'proportionate approach' and the Topic Papers provide a summary of the base-line data and other information from the relevant evidence that is available currently and explain what the evidence means for the plan going forward. The 2024 HLA is the current document, and work on the 2025 HLA is underway aligning with an established base date of 1st of April.

9.241 The following points from Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland are also being noted as disputes:

9.242 THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland note that, in the analysis of housing completion rates, the Draft Topic Paper comments that there was a dip in completions due to lockdowns in 2020 followed by a bounce back in

completions. They highlight that, following this bounce, construction prices increased significantly through 2021/ 2022, with a major impact on the delivery of development during this period. As such, they consider it difficult to interpret too much from the last 5 year trends of completions based on the issues affecting delivery. The Council acknowledges that marketability is an important issue, alongside other considerations such as viability and deliverability, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability is vital and underpins much of NPF4 and will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites for the Proposed Plan.

9.243 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that there should be a detailed housing delivery pipeline with assumptions on delivery rates published with the LDP, and they would encourage consultation with the development industry on this to ensure that this is deliverable. The Council note that the detail of the pipeline is dealt with through the Delivery Programme, and other monitoring documents such as the HLA, which also provide the opportunity for regular consultation with the development industry on delivery.

9.244 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland comment that it will be important that the urban capacity study considers each brownfield site and expected delivery based on the specific circumstances. To be effective, they consider there needs to be a viable development and demand for the location and type of housing required. This should be considered in relation to the current costs to development and value, e.g. there are some areas of Aberdeen where the cost to build will exceed the value of the property. They note that flatted developments are particularly challenging, with low values, demand, and also no desire from the Housing Service to fund flatted developments to contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the city. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites, moreover brownfield development is sustainable and assists regeneration and the Council understand it will be important to explore the levers available to aid the delivery of brownfield sites.

9.245 Mac Mic Group note that the Draft Topic Paper sets out average housing completion rates in Aberdeen over the 10-year period amount to approximately 915 homes per year. They consider that the indicative LHLR, must, therefore, exceed 9,150.

9.246 The topic paper should also address the need to re-assess all existing allocations within the LDP. The Council note these comments, and confirm that an existing site audit will be completed by Autumn 2026.

9.247 Mac Mic Group also note their support the Homes for Scotland responses / disputes noted above.

Resubmission

Agreement on Evidence

9.248 A response was received from HES by email 30 July 2026, who noted support for the brownfield approach in this paper.

9.249 Larner McGrath on behalf of Bancon homes, supported the more ambitious LHLR.

9.250 THE on behalf of Barratt / David Wilson Homes North, supported the more ambitious LHLR.

9.251 Iceni on behalf of Mac Mic Group supported the more ambitious approach LHLR.

9.252 Homes for Scotland supported the more ambitious LHLR.

9.253 At the Homes for Scotland meeting 4 August 2026, there was agreement that the LHLR should be increased, and other numbers / calculation methods were suggested. The LHLR in this paper is broadly aligned with the housebuilding industry feedback.

Disputes with Stakeholders

9.254 There are a number of areas of dispute that remain between the Council, Homes for Scotland and housebuilders/developers in relation to the following matters:

Brownfield Urban Capacity Study

9.255 Homes for Scotland and Bancon consider that a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) should be carried out now, so that the findings can be reviewed as part of the evidence gathering process. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the BUCS at this stage, particularly as the Call for Sites stage is yet to be completed. However, we acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.

9.256 Both Homes for Scotland and Bancon dispute the density figures that are noted in the existing Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS). Density figures will be reviewed as part of the BUCS.

Existing Housing Need in Scotland and Aberdeen Reports

9.257 Additional information has been provided by Homes for Scotland to support alternative approaches to the identification of housing need in Aberdeen, and the Council has agreed to include these documents in the evidence base and these have been used to inform this version of the housing paper.

9.258 The Council would note that research commissioned by Homes for Scotland challenges the methodology of the HNDA process and focusses on concealed and unmet housing need. Homes for Scotland and housebuilders therefore take a different view from the Council on the definition and calculation of existing housing need.

9.259 The Council welcomes further information and data from Homes for Scotland and the housebuilding industry, however it disagrees with the interpretation and use of the Report survey results.

9.260 Aberdeen City Council have relied upon the HNDA as a key evidence document in this topic paper, and note that the methodology followed guidance produced by Scottish Government. The HNDA has been subject to extensive stakeholder engagement and has been signed of as 'robust and credible' by the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA)

9.261 The following points from Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland are also being noted as disputes:

9.262 THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland note that, in the analysis of housing completion rates, the Draft Topic Paper comments that there was a dip in completions due to lockdowns in 2020 followed by a bounce back in completions. They highlight that, following this bounce, construction prices increased significantly through 2021/ 2022, with a major impact on the delivery of development during this period. As such, they consider it difficult to interpret too much from the last 5 year trends of completions based on the issues affecting delivery. The Council acknowledges that marketability is an important issue, alongside other considerations such as viability and deliverability, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability is vital and underpins much of NPF4 and will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites for the Proposed Plan.

9.263 Following the latest engagement and further to the above THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes North state: *It is welcomed that there has been further data on housing completions included and alongside the LHS data these additions address this comment. However there remains a trend for average completions of 1,000 homes per annum and the LHLR does not reflect this reality.* The Council acknowledges and notes that this feedback has been used to inform the LHLR in this paper, which now reflects this level of delivery.

9.264 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that there should be a detailed housing delivery pipeline with assumptions on delivery rates published with the LDP, and they would encourage consultation with the development industry on this to ensure that this is deliverable. The Council note that the detail of the pipeline is dealt with through the Delivery Programme, and other monitoring documents such as the HLA, which also provide the opportunity for regular consultation with the development industry on delivery.

9.265 Following the latest engagement and further to the above THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes North state: *This remains a comment that has not been addressed. However, it is acknowledged that the picture on the pipeline may change due to the timescales for preparation of a Proposed Plan and it will be appropriate to consider this alongside the Proposed Local Development Plan.*

9.266 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented that it will be important that the urban capacity study considers each brownfield site and expected delivery based on the specific circumstances. To be effective, they consider there needs to be a viable development and demand for the location and type of housing required. This should be considered in relation to the current costs to development and value, e.g. there are some areas of Aberdeen where the cost to build will exceed the value of the property. They note that flatted developments are particularly challenging, with low values, demand, and also no desire from the Housing Service to fund flatted developments to contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the city. Following the latest engagement and further to the above THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Homes North state. *At this time there is no detail on how brownfield and will be assessed. The comment was highlighting that there is a need to consider brownfield sites in greater detail as to the location and market, site costs, and type of housing necessary to redevelop. The current BUCS places an arbitrary figure on brownfield land and this information the HLR and HLA, without consideration of the financial, market and physical viability aspects. Many brownfield sites even with public support will simply not find a market that can meet the build costs and risks involved in redevelopment. Whilst redevelopment of these sites should be encouraged, it cannot be relied upon.* The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are key issues for the delivery of sites. They are taken alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations go forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites, moreover brownfield development is sustainable and assists regeneration and the Council understand it will be important to explore the levers available to aid the delivery of brownfield sites.

Information Gaps

9.267 **Housing Land Audit 2026 (HLA).** The LDP team are currently preparing the HLA for 2026, in a joint exercise with Aberdeenshire Council. A final report is expected to be published in Autumn 2026. Consideration will be given to the data contained in the 2026 HLA when drafting the Proposed Plan.

9.268 **Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS).** Work has started on this with an internal project brief agreed in May 2026. The LDP team will conduct the study which is programmed to be completed by December 2026. BUCS will be used to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make. This will also be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

9.269 **Existing Site and Land Zonings Audit.** This audit is being conducted by the LDP team alongside the Calls for Sites audit. Work begun in June 2026 and is expected

to be concluded in Autumn 2026. This work will be used to inform the proposed plan and understand the contribution that existing sites will make to the LHLR.

9.270 **Business Land Proposal**. A review of the current business and industrial land and business zones will be undertaken by the end of 2026 to inform the Proposed Plan, to understand if existing sites may require to be re-allocated, or if more economic land should be allocated, and for what type of uses.

9.271 **Local Living GIS Tool.** External contractors have been appointed to provide a GIS-based Local Living tool. Work on this is expected to be concluded by October 2026.

9.272 **RAAC update**. An update on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) to the Communities Housing and Public Protection Committee is expected by the end of October 2026.

9.273 **Local Place Plans**, may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

10. Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure

Requirements addressed in this section:

10.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district, the principal physical, cultural, economic,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,
Section 15(5)(d)	the infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities);
Section 15(5)(e)	how that infrastructure is used;
Section 15(5)(cd)	the health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs
Section 15(5)(ce)	the education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs;
Section 15(5)(cg)	the capacity of education services in the district.

Other Relevant Legislation

Section	Requirement
The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 Regulation 9(2)(e) Have regard to: • The national waste management plan • Any regional transport strategy; and • Any local transport strategy • Any open space strategy published under section 3G(3) of the Act.	

Other Statutory Requirements

- Core Paths Plan (Access Rights)
- Food Growing Strategy

National Planning Framework 4

Infrastructure First

10.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Delivery Programmes should be based on an integrated 'infrastructure first' approach and should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

10.3 The LDP and Delivery Programme should align with relevant national, regional and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy. Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment

Blue and Green Infrastructure

10.4 LDPs should be informed by relevant, up-to-date audits and/or strategies, covering the multiple functions and benefits of blue and green infrastructure. The spatial strategy should identify and protect blue and green infrastructure assets and networks; enhance and expand existing provision including new blue and/or green infrastructure. This may include retrofitting. Priorities for connectivity to other blue and/or green infrastructure assets, including to address cross-boundary needs and opportunities, should also be identified.

10.5 LDPs should encourage the permanent or temporary use of unused or under-used land as green infrastructure. Where this is temporary, this should not prevent future development potential from being realised. LDPs should safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks.

Digital Infrastructure

10.6 LDPs should support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

Links to Evidence

Infrastructure First

- CD346 Aberdeen City 2024 Based School Roll Forecasts
- CD044 Aberdeen City 2023 Local Development Plan
- CD343 Aberdeen City 2023 Local Development Plan Delivery Programme 2025 Update
- CD012 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2024
- CD327 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2025
- CD337 Aberdeen City Condition and Suitability Schools Data (PDF)
- CD041 Aberdeen City Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report
- CD338 Aberdeen City Early Learning and Childcare Guide: 2025-2026 (PDF)
- CD127 Aberdeen City ELC Delivery Plan 2024-2026
- CD342 Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services Committee 25 November 2024
- CD339 Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services Committee 24 June 2025
- CD340 Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services Committee 8 September 2025
- CD341 Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services Committee 25 November 2025
- CD353 Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Independent Living and Specialist Housing Provision Market Position Statement 2024-2034
- CD144 Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Primary Care Improvement Plan
- CD334 Aberdeen City Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
- CD335 Aberdeen City Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy Delivery Plan
- CD351 Aberdeen City Primary Schools Catchments and Capacities Map (PDF)
- CD345 Aberdeen City Programmed and Constrained Housing Per School Catchment Table (PDF)
- CD124 Aberdeen City School Estate Plan 2022
- CD347 Aberdeen City School Estates Plan 2023 Update
- CD348 Aberdeen City School Estates Plan 2024 Update
- CD349 Aberdeen City School Estates Plan 2025 Update
- CD126 Aberdeen City Schools' Accessibility Plan 2023-2026
- CD350 Aberdeen City Schools Overlap Map (PDF)
- CD352 Aberdeen City Secondary Schools Catchments and Capacities Map (PDF)
- CD230 Aberdeen City's Supplementary Guidance 2023: Planning Obligations

- CD354 Aberdeen City Victorian Schools Programme Outline Business Case
- CD355 Aberdeenshire 2024 School Roll
- CD041 Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement Report 2023
- CD318 Community Planning Aberdeen's Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future, Full Engagement Results
- CD319 Community Planning Aberdeen's Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future Outreach Programme (PDF)
- CD362 Condition of Community Centres and Learning Centres (PDF)
- CD069 Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Summary – 2016-2026
- CD344 NHS Grampian GP Practice Registration Availability
- CD336 NHS Grampian Red/Amber/Green (RAG) Assessment of Medical Practices (PDF)
- CD380 NHS Grampian GP Surgeries, Clinics and Hospitals Map (PDF)
- CD146 NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan Update 2020 - 2030 (PDF)
- CD320 Presentations from Community Council Forums (PDF)
- CD210 Scotland's Zero Waste Plan 2010
- CD357 Scottish Government Director's Letter (2024) 02
- CD358 Scottish Government Director's Letter (2025) 15
- CD361 Scottish Government Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting
- CD356 Scottish Government Planning Circular 4/2025 (Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements)
- CD359 Scottish Government Primary Medical Services Directions 2004
- CD360 Scottish Government Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy
- CD288 Scottish Water Water Treatment Works Capacity Info 2025 (PDF)
- CD289 Scottish Water Waste Water Treatment Works Capacity Info 2025 (PDF)
- CD290 SGN Aberdeen Vision Project 2020
- CD129 Sportscotland Facility Planning Model 2023 Summary Reports (PDF)

Infrastructure First – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Aberdeen City Planning 231516/DPP	25 August 2026
Aberdeen City Council Developer Obligations	25 August 2026
National Records of Scotland Mid-2024 population estimates (2025)	25 August 2026
SEPA Flood Maps	15 April 2026
SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps	25 March 2026
SEPA Water Scarcity	29 May 2026
SEPA Water Condition Maps	23 December 2025
SEPA Water Levels	27 August 2026
Scottish Water Latest in Your Area Map	16 August 2026
SSEN Transmission Open Data Portal	04 May 2026
National Energy System Operator	09 August 2026
NHS Grampian Plan for the Future 2022 - 2028	18 February 2026

National Records for Scotland Aberdeen City Council Area Profile	23 August 2026
ScotPHO Profiles	18 June 2026
Aberdeen City Council Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	14 March 2026
Aberdeen City Community Centres	27 August 2026
Aberdeen City Learning Centres	27 August 2026
Major Investments in Aberdeen as Council sets Budget 2026/2027	24 June 2026
Aberdeen Heat and Power	10 March 2026
Aberdeen City Council Supported Accommodation	08 May 2026
Press and Journal Article: SSEN Willowdale Substation	06 July 2026
SSEN Willowdale GSP	06 July 2026
Scottish Water Aberdeen Merchant Quarter	25 August 2026

Blue and Green Infrastructure

- CD010 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023
- CD011 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land 2024 – excel (PDF)
- CD231 Scottish Government Green Infrastructure Design and Placemaking (2011)
- CD037 SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning
- CD036 SEPA The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 - 2027
- CD287 SEPA Flood Risk Management Plan North East Local Plan District
- CD232 CREW – Moderating Extremes in Water Availability in Scotland - A Review of the Role of Functioning Wetlands
- CD233 CREW - Assessing Climate Change Impacts on the Water Quality of Scottish Standing Waters
- CD234 NatureScot Research Report 1046 – Maximising the benefits of green infrastructure in social housing
- CD235 NatureScot A Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland
- CD136 Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report
- CD016 Aberdeen Adapts Climate Adaptation Framework 2022
- CD135 Aberdeen City Open Space Strategy 2011-2016
- CD196 Aberdeen City Core Paths Plan 2009
- CD151 Aberdeen City Granite City Growing 2020
- CD312 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (PDF)
- CD313 Aberdeen City Local Nature Conservation Sites 2013
- CD134 The Granite City Forest - Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-2025
- CD236 Aberdeen City Natural Environment Strategy Net Zero Aberdeen

Blue and Green Infrastructure – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
AECOM Nature Networks Corridors Map Viewer	23 May 2025
Scotland's Environment: Habitat Map of Scotland	23 May 2025

SEPA Flood Maps	23 May 2025
SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps	30 May 2025
SEPA Water Environment Hub	30 May 2025
SEPA Water Classification Hub	30 May 2025
SEPA Scotland's Bathing Waters	30 May 2025
SEPA Data Publication	2 June 2025
SEPA Water Scarcity	23 May 2025
SEPA Find Scottish Water Levels Information	25 August 2026
Dynamic Coast	23 May 2025
Scotland's Soils Carbon and Peatland Map 2016	23 May 2025
NatureScot Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention Projects	6 June 2025
Aberdeen City Parks and Gardens	6 January 2025
Aberdeen City Green Space Network	11 December 2024
Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey Site Register	6 June 2025
Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey GIS Map	6 June 2025

Digital Infrastructure

- CD291 Aberdeenshire Council – Aberdeen City Region Deal - Joint Committee Report – Digital Connectivity Updates
- CD317 Delivering on our commitment to Scotland

Digital Infrastructure – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - Broadband Access Indicator 2020	18 September 2024
Digital Scotland R100 – Data Insights	5 August 2024
OFCOM Connected Nations and Infrastructure Reports	5 August 2024
Wireless Infrastructure Group	3 June 2025
Scottish Government Data Insights	3 June 2025
OFCOM Planned Network Deployments 2025	6 June 2025

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

10.7 This chapter sets out the baseline position relating to infrastructure capacity across Aberdeen. Setting out the evidence base the local planning authority, together with other infrastructure providers, can identify where there are constraints, where there is useable spare capacity and where there is potential for improvement projects to inform future growth plans to be set out in Aberdeen's next Local Development Plan. The structure of this section is as follows:

- Infrastructure First
- Blue and Green Infrastructure
- Digital Infrastructure

Infrastructure First

10.8 An Infrastructure First approach puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking. Development has an impact upon the capacities of facilities and infrastructure such as schools, medical centres, transport infrastructure, utilities and play and recreation space. Understanding capacities of these elements will influence where future housing and other allocations are to be situated spatially in Aberdeen. Capacity and any additional needs for infrastructure should be considered when allocating sites for development. Cross boundary infrastructure has to be considered. Some primary and secondary schools are located in the Aberdeen City administrative area, but serve pupils in Aberdeenshire and vice versa. These are covered by the school roll forecast. Water abstraction is a further cross boundary issue. This is discussed within the paper.

Transport Infrastructure

10.9 Transport evidence is addressed in the Sustainable Transport topic paper. This includes discussion on National Developments, Aberdeen Rapid Transit and Aberdeen South Harbour.

Developer Obligations

10.10 Scottish Government Circular 4/2025 Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements (CD356) reflects the post-NPF4 planning system, promoting an “infrastructure first” approach by encouraging local development plans to clearly identify infrastructure requirements, cumulative impacts, and methodologies for developer contributions. The Circular reinforces that planning obligations should only be used where they are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms and must satisfy the established policy tests of necessity, planning purpose, direct relationship to the development, proportionality, and overall reasonableness. The guidance also emphasises the importance of viability considerations, transparency in negotiating and monitoring obligations, and clear links between development and required infrastructure. In addition, it explains the role of Good Neighbour Agreements, which are voluntary agreements between developers or landowners and community bodies to manage aspects of development and land use, while clarifying that they cannot require financial payments and should not be used as a substitute for planning obligations.

10.11 Current Supplementary Guidance (SG) on developer obligations forms part of the extant Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Aberdeen City Council Planning Guidance Planning Obligations (2023) (CD230) expands on the following policy in the current Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Planning

Obligations. It also relates to and expands on the following Local Development Plan policies: Policy H5 – Affordable Housing and Policy T1 – Land for Transport.

10.12 The existing Supplementary Guidance sets the parameters for collecting developer obligations relating to transport, core path network, education, healthcare facilities, open space, community facilities and sports and recreation. Developer obligations relating to education, healthcare facilities, open space, community facilities and sports and recreation are discussed within this topic paper. Please see the Sustainable Transport paper for developer obligations relating to transport and the core path network. Developer obligations are principally managed independently by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, with any cross-boundary requirements being identified through Local Development Plan site allocation, or Development Management procedures. National and regional agencies such as NHS Grampian, NESTRANS, and Transport Scotland are also consulted at these stages to identify any cross-boundary needs. Aberdeen City Council also uses its Future Infrastructure Requirements (FIRs) forum with these stakeholders to discuss specific needs.

10.13 Proposals for utilising developer obligations are presented by the relevant service to the Council's Developer Obligations Working Group for approval. The Developer Obligations Working Group provides strategic oversight of developer contributions, ensuring lawful, transparent and effective use. It coordinates allocation and spend decisions, monitors balances and delivery, addresses policy and process issues, manages risks, supports consistent decision-making, and aligns contributions with corporate priorities and plans. The group meets each month and is chaired by the Chief Officer for Strategic Place Planning and comprises Council Chief Officers and other relevant officers.

10.14 In April 2026 the Council updated its website to provide information on the Developer Obligations process. Further work is presently ongoing to improve the accessibility and presentation of information relating to obligations. Information on obligations relating to specific sites or proposals can be found using the online public planning register.

10.15 With the removal of supplementary guidance, an appropriate approach to developer obligations will be required within the Proposed Plan. Relevant services and stakeholders will be involved in any necessary updates to the contribution methodology or application as necessary.

Utilities Infrastructure

Water Supply, Drainage and Sewerage Systems

10.16 Scottish Water are required to identify and provide new strategic capacity for water and wastewater to meet demand of all new housing development and the domestic requirements of commercial and industrial development. Future growth investment may be required dependent on the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from treatment works. The Scottish Water website includes a latest in your area page which highlights investments.

10.17 Scottish Water model future growth scenarios based on local authority-provided housing development planning data and Scottish Government population projections. The model calculates expected future population at each water and wastewater treatment works across Scotland. When the demand for water or wastewater capacity exceeds the remaining available capacity at a treatment works then investment is required to investigate this and to understand the level of risk to service existing customers when connecting new developments to the network. Whilst the need for growth investment may be identified through this modelling work, Scottish Water will only invest once confident that development is committed.

10.18 The water treatment works located at Mannofield is capable of serving 250,000 customers in the area. Scottish Water confirmed that there is currently capacity available at Mannofield and, since 2025 (see CD288), now currently capacity at Invercannie also. For waste water works, Scottish Water confirmed there is capacity at Anguston SEP, Nigg, Overton Green SEP and Persley with potential future investment required at Advocates Row SEP and Holemill (see CD289). Scottish Water have provided maps showing the catchments for water treatments works and wastewater treatment works.

Figure 10.1. Water Treatment Works Catchments 2026 provided by Scottish Water.

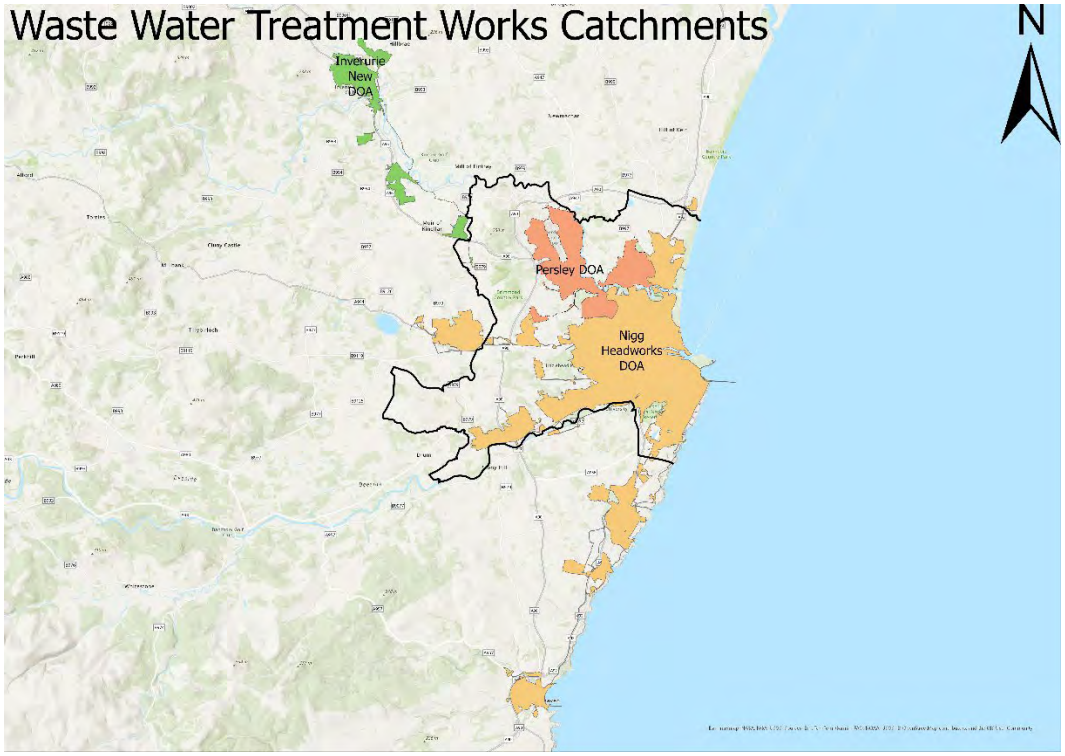


Figure 10.2 Waste Water Treatment Works Catchments 2026 provided by Scottish Water.

10.19 With regards to Water Treatment Works (WTW) capacities, the RAG statuses can be defined as follows:

For water the criteria are:

> If the WTW *'Dry Year Peak Balance + Headroom'* <0, then it is categorised as 'Potential Future Investment Required'.
> And where *'Dry Year Peak Balance + Headroom'* >0, then it is categorised as 'Capacity Currently Available'.

For Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) the criteria are:

> If the WWTW has >3% of its design capacity available and is >10 Housing Units in capacity then it has been categorised as 'Capacity Currently Available'.
> Or if the WWTW has less than 3% available capacity but has >10 Housing Units capacity available (generally the larger WWTWs) then it has also been categorised as 'Capacity Currently Available'.
> If the WWTW has >3% available capacity but less than 10 Housing Units in capacity available (generally smaller septic tanks), then it has been categorised as 'Potential Future Investment Required'.
> Or if the WWTW has less than 3% of its design capacity available and is <10 Housing Units in size then it has also been categorised as 'Potential Future Investment Required'.

10.20 The above criteria information is a high-level snapshot of current capacity of Scottish Water's treatment works for initial screening and development planning purposes. Factors such as the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from the treatment works may impact Scottish Water's ability to service them and therefore potential future growth investment may be required.

10.21 A 2024 James Hutton Institute Water Capacity map is shown in Figure 10.3. It gives an indication of water scarcity in the area. Additionally, the SEPA Water Scarcity Report 2024 outlines water scarcity for wider river catchments in the North East of Scotland.

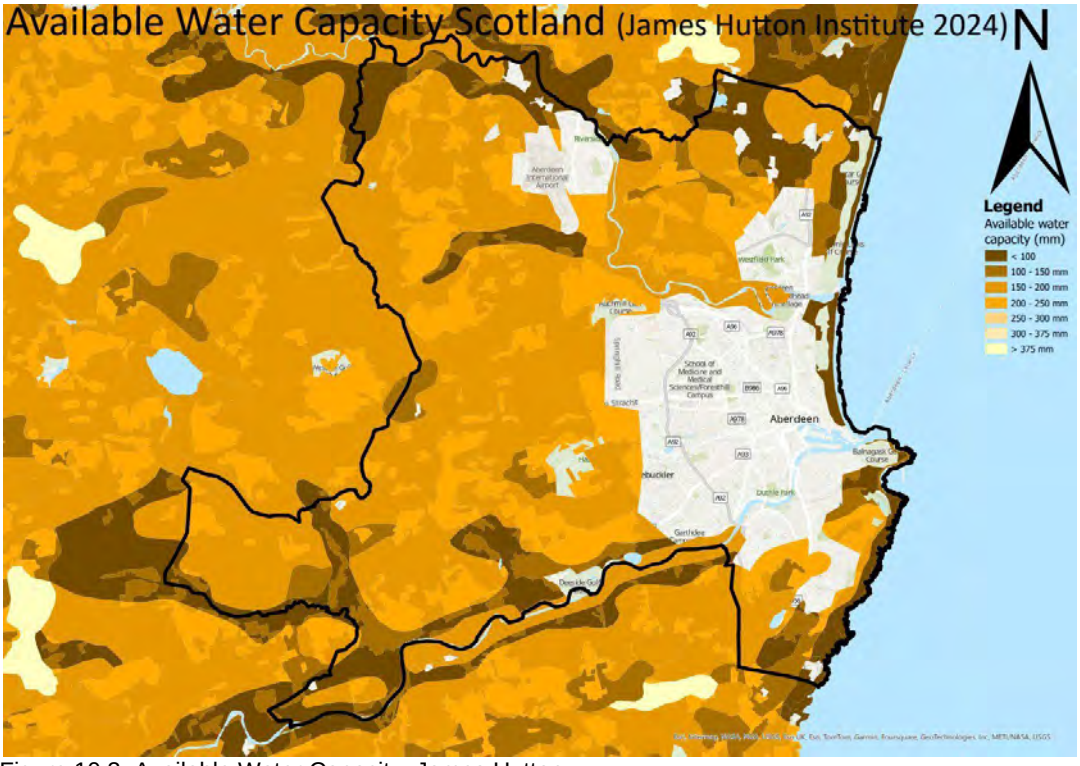


Figure 10.3: Available Water Capacity, James Hutton.

10.22 The River Dee is the only river in Scotland for which there are concerns regarding the impacts of water abstractions. The river flows through Aberdeenshire before entering Aberdeen City. SEPA has 8 stations on the River Dee which measure water levels. Real time water level data can be found on their website www.sepa.org.uk/waterlevels. Discussions and the consenting process between the Council, Aberdeenshire Council, SEPA and Scottish Water will have potential implications on the spatial strategy as new developments will require new abstractions within the River Dee catchment.

10.23 Scottish Water is preparing to undertake improvements in the city centre at Merchant Quarter to reduce the risk of flooding from sewers in the area. Interventions to the pumping station at York Place, surface water management in the area and sewer enhancement are planned, details can be found at Aberdeen Merchant Quarter - Scottish Water.

Gas

10.24 Infrastructure planning for the gas network is largely reactive as capacity cannot be prebooked. Where the existing infrastructure would not meet the requested capacity of a new site, reinforcement will be required. Under the Scottish Government's New Build Heat Standard, as of 1 April 2024, new domestic and commercial properties which require a building warrant can no longer install gas boilers. This is part of the Scottish Government's plan to transition to zero-emission heating systems in all buildings by 2045. Instead of gas boilers, new homes are required to install climate-friendly alternatives like heat pumps or heat networks.

10.25 SGN Aberdeen Vision Project 2020 (CD290) sets out the plan for a new hydrogen pipeline between St Fergus and Aberdeen which could supply the Aberdeen region gas distribution system and enable a phased transition to hydrogen, first blending up to 20% by volume and then 100% conversion. Blending to 20% is believed to be possible with no change for domestic appliances. Blending to 20% then conversion to 100% hydrogen could be arranged on a regional basis, with hydrogen injection via key nodes to convert Aberdeen in a phased manner. Network analysis of the Aberdeen region has suggested that the conversion of Aberdeen to 100% hydrogen is possible if the reinforcement required is incorporated into current work plans for the existing pipelines.

10.26 Funding of some £200m has been confirmed to progress the Acorn Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) scheme, the scheme is seen as a key strand in decarbonising Scotland and supporting the energy transition. The Acorn project located at St Fergus in Aberdeenshire would take greenhouse gas emissions and store them in depleted gas reservoirs under the North Sea. With waste CO2 being piped from central Scotland to St Fergus using redundant pipelines which previously carried natural gas south.

10.27 Further general information at a UK level relating to gas and electricity infrastructure can be found on the National Energy System Operator website.

Major Accident Hazard Pipelines

10.28 Major Accident Hazard Pipelines are located within Aberdeen. These are referenced within the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper under the Health and Safety section. Evidence includes maps of the pipelines and the extent of their consultation zones for the Health and Safety Executive.

District Heat Network

10.29 District heating is an efficient means of supplying heat, usually in the form of hot water, to homes and/or businesses from a locally generated source via a network of pre-insulated underground pipes. There are several Council operated and private networks across Aberdeen, Aberdeen Heat and Power are the organisation responsible for the Council's network. The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (CD334) and accompanying Delivery Plan (CD335) was approved by the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee in September 2025 and has now been published. This subject is evidenced within the Heating and Cooling section of the Energy and Resources Topic Paper.

Electricity Supply - SSEN Transmission

10.30 Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN-T) is the only electrical transmission operator in the North of Scotland. SSEN Transmission owns, operates and maintains the high-voltage electricity Transmission network in the North of Scotland. Their network includes 132kV, 275kV and 400kV substations, overhead lines, onshore underground cables and sub-sea cables. They operate separately from SSEN-T Distribution, who are responsible for the more localised electricity distribution network. A map of SSEN-T's existing overhead and underground line/cable network in and around Aberdeen is found below, Figure 10.4.



Figure 10.4: SSEN-T existing network of overhead lines and underground cables

10.31 SSEN-T own and operates the following substation infrastructure in Aberdeen:

- Redmoss 132 kV substation
- Persley 275kV substation
- Woodhill 132kV substation
- Willowdale 132kV substation
- Craigiebuckler substation
- Clayhills 132KV substation

10.32 SSEN Transmission are working to expand and upgrade the national transmission grid (Pathway to 2030) in the north of Scotland to meet additional capacity needs and to facilitate new renewable energy generation in the national grid system. A plan showing the works undertaken under the Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) programme is included below, at Figure 10.5. Proposed works are outside or on the edge of the city, so it is unlikely there will be implications for the next plan.

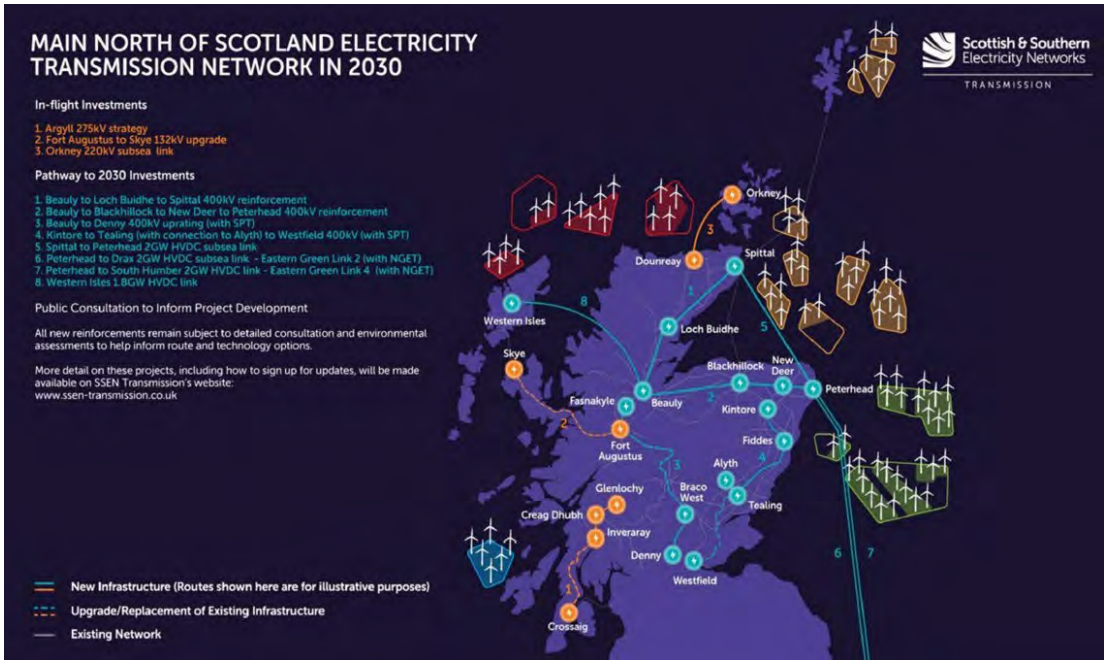


Figure 10.5: Diagram illustrating the Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) Programme, SSEN

10.33 SSEN Transmission are currently progressing plans for a larger substation at their Willowdale site to ensure Aberdeen has a resilient supply of electricity for the next 40-50 years and are seeking to submit a planning application in the next 12 months. As part of these plans it is likely that the substation at Clayhills (South College Street) will be removed entirely.

10.34 Existing 132kV underground transmission cabling which runs under Springfield Road, Kings Gate and North Anderson Drive will need to be replaced in the next LDP period, with a new cable connecting Craigiebuckler and Woodhill substations.

10.35 The National Electricity System Operator are developing a UK spatial plan for new network infrastructure and opportunities for battery storage. The operation of existing and planned electricity transmission infrastructure can be adversely affected by new developments in the immediate vicinity. Issues can include:

- Developments encroaching into operational corridors
- Damage to underground cables and overhead lines
- Damage to pylon foundations
- Blockages to access tracks during construction
- Fire risk from battery storage units

Electricity Supply – SSE Distribution

10.36 Aberdeen is located within the Grampian region of the distribution network. Work to transform and futureproof the electricity network to meet legislated Net Zero targets is underway. The National Grid Energy Systems Operator (ESO) Future Energy Scenarios (FES) estimate that (winter) peak demand will be 123–147 GW in 2050

to deliver Net Zero compliance, more than the current winter peak demand which is 58.3 GW.

Waste and Recycling Facilities

10.37 Since mid-2023, the Council's non-recyclable waste has been processed at the NESS Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at East Tullos. There are currently no plans for new landfill sites or Energy from Waste plants in the Council area. A map showing the locations of existing waste facilities (Council owned recycling and waste centre sites and local recycling sites) can be found in Figure 10.6. The Council gained approval for a new household waste and recycling centre in Bridge of Don in 2023 (231516/DPP) to replace the existing facility on Scotstown Road. Further information on this subject, including information on Scotland's Zero Waste Plan 2010 (CD210), can be found within the Energy and Resources Topic Paper.

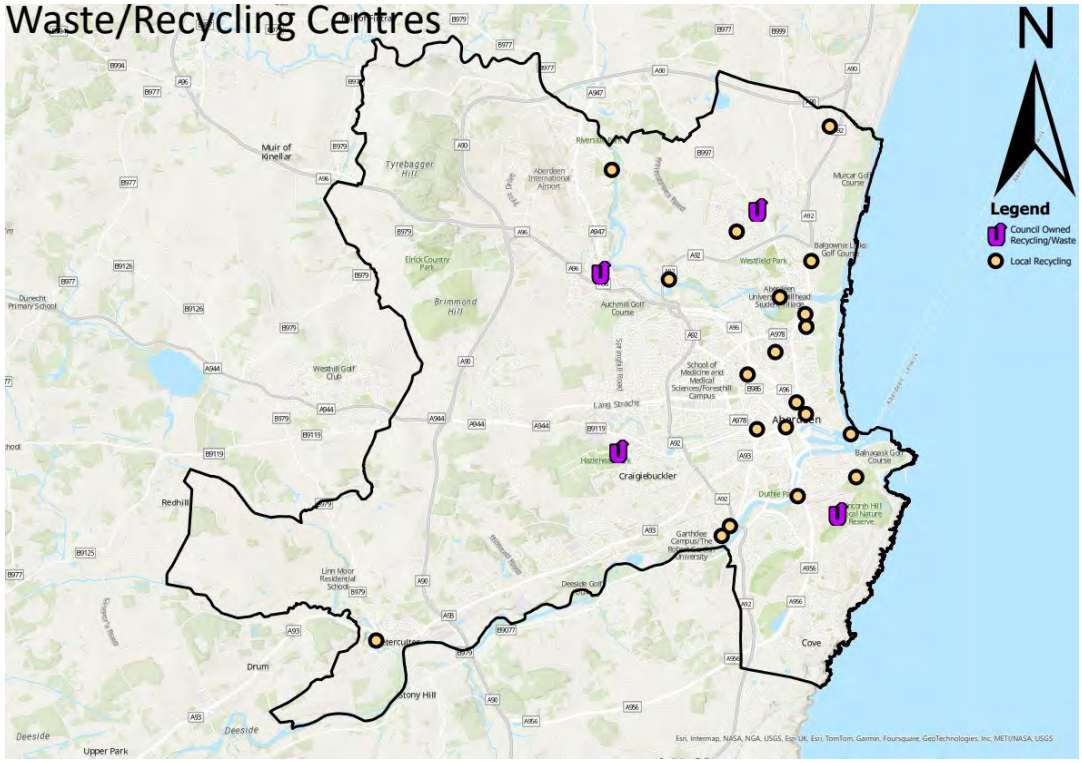


Figure 10.6: Location of existing waste facilities.

SEPA LDP Evidence Sources

10.38 There are a number of SEPA evidence sources related to flood hazard and water management. Information on these can be found within the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper, and the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Healthcare

Public Health Evidence

10.39 The mid-2024 population estimates (NRS) estimate a population of 231,780 in Aberdeen City. Aberdeen has a higher than Scottish average proportion of people aged 16‑64 years, and a lower proportion of people aged 65 and over, reflecting a

comparatively working-age population structure. The 25–44 age group is the largest cohort, while the 75 and over age group is the smallest (NRS). In 2022–2024 in Aberdeen, life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 81.3 years for women and 77.3 years for men. Healthy life expectancy in Aberdeen is 59.0 years for women and 58.8 years for men (ScotPHO).

10.40 Within these figures there is also a disparity between life expectancy and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles. The life expectancy for a female in West End North is 86.3 years, while for a female in Woodside it is 72.0 years. For men, life expectancy in Braeside, Mannofield, Broomhill and Seafield North is 83.1 years, while in Woodside this is 69.4 years. (ScotPHO / NRS). The SIMD datasets outline that Aberdeen is a City with areas within the 5%, 10 % and 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland, while also having large areas within the least deprived 10%. The SIMD identifies 29 datazones within Aberdeen that are classed as being within the 20% most deprived in Scotland. 104 datazones in Aberdeen are classed as the least deprived. The Wellbeing and Community Paper provides more information on public health evidence and the implications for the Proposed Plan.

Healthcare Infrastructure Provision

10.41 NHS Grampian Board area covers the local authority areas of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. There are 5 NHS run hospitals in Aberdeen, 27 GP Practices across 30 locations, 50 pharmacies, 45 dental surgeries and 16 opticians. The hospitals are focussed on the main Aberdeen Royal Infirmary campus at Foresterhill, with others outlying to the east and west of the city.

10.42 A ‘GP Surgeries, Clinics and Hospitals Map’ (CD380) has been prepared which shows the distribution of these facilities across Aberdeen. Practices are also listed in a document titled ‘Aberdeen City GP Practice Registration Availability’ (CD344). A link to this is also provided as it is subject to regular update.

10.43 With regards to the capacity of the other types of healthcare infrastructure listed above, NHS Grampian advised information on pharmacies, dental practices and opticians, as many are under private ownership. The NHS and the Council will continue to work together to investigate options for monitoring, assessing, or reviewing this infrastructure capacity.

NHS Grampian Strategies

10.44 NHS Grampian’s Plan for the Future is the Board’s overarching organisational strategy that sets the long-term direction for health and care services across Grampian. The plan describes NHS Grampian’s approach to;

- Improving population health and wellbeing
- Creating a more sustainable health and care system
- Balancing prevention and ‘enabling wellness’ with the provision of timely healthcare services that ‘respond to illness’.

- Transforming how and where services are delivered

10.45 NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan Update 2020-2030 (CD146) provides some insight into NHS Grampian's physical infrastructure and its development plans for the period. With regard to Aberdeen, long term solutions are required for re-provision of in-patient accommodation, theatre services and other care and facilities services to the Foresterhill Health Campus, in addition to site appraisals being undertaken at Woodend Hospital and Cornhill Hospital. Asset responsibilities are listed on page 12 of the Update. Future investment needs are set out on pages 17–18.

10.46 The Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) Primary Care Improvement Plan (CD144) sets out the intentions of ACHSCP around modernising primary and community care in Aberdeen.

Wider Context of Mitigation for GP Practices

10.47 Across Scotland pressures upon GP practices are increasing. A growing and ageing population brings additional pressures to services. The delivery of new, extended and altered healthcare facilities to accommodate additional patients generated from residential development will continue to be a challenge.

10.48 Developer Contributions do not meet the full costs of increasing the capacity of premises and there is very limited upfront capital funding available. NHS Grampian (and all other NHS boards in Scotland) are reliant on capital funding from the Scottish Government, particularly for large scale strategic projects. National funding has decreased in recent years therefore where possible NHS Grampian will need to work with existing assets and resources to create additional capacity.

10.49 The 'Scottish Government Director's Letter (2024) 02' (CD357) introduced the new approach to strategic infrastructure planning and investment across NHS Scotland. Each NHS Board is required to prepare and submit a Programme Initial Agreement (PIA) which sets out a deliverable, whole-system service and infrastructure change plan for the next 20–30 years. Individual capital projects will not be considered for investment by the Scottish Government until a PIA has been approved by the respective NHS Board and the Scottish Government.

10.50 The 'Scottish Government Director's Letter (2025) 15' (CD358) updates the aforementioned letter. It considers the challenges for strategic infrastructure plans and invites Health Boards to develop and submit, by March 2027, up to three strategic infrastructure priorities supported by a strategic assessment aligned to local and national planning processes, including the recently published Population Health Framework and Service Renewal Framework. It is important that the process of prioritisation is based on a robust risk assessment, reflecting population health and the areas of greatest strategic clinical need, supporting ambitions in places and pathways.

10.51 NHS Grampian's multi-agency Integrated Planning Group will lead this intensive piece of work with a view to having initial recommendations available for consideration by December 2026. In addition, the Scottish Government have

recently indicated they are considering the introduction of a separate funding route to progress primary and community care developments. NHS Grampian state that they welcome this and are awaiting further information on what may be proposed.

10.52 In some cases current capacity pressures on GP services may be managed in the short or even short/medium term by means of internal reconfiguration to create space for more GPs. However, this will continue to be a challenge. In the event that NHS Grampian does not obtain approval from Scottish Ministers for its Strategic Assessments there is potential for conflict (in particular for the areas rated red in the RAG table (CD336)) between the Council's obligation to deliver housing that meets the Local Housing Land Requirement figure and the obligation for GP practices to accept new patients within their determined boundaries. Consequently timely approval from Scottish Ministers is key to avoiding profound longer term implications for the next LDP with respect to new housing allocations. This urgency is most acute in red rated general medical practice areas (see Table 10.1).

10.53 Balancing patient numbers across different practices by means of changes to GP Practice boundaries is a further potential means of mitigating capacity pressures however, this does significantly relieve capacity pressures in the short or mid-term, it is only in the long term that it yields a reduction in people on the practice list size due to deaths and migration that are out of the new boundary area. It is also not straightforward to implement. On this matter, NHS Grampian and the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership advised the following:

> *'GP Practices are contracted to accept patients within a pre-determined boundary area. Changes to areas must be agreed by the local GP Subcommittee following an agreed process to maintain patient care. Patients are entitled to Primary Care GP services and may have a choice where there is more than one practice accepting patients that covers their postcode. In areas where capacity is stretched, however, some practices will close direct patient registrations meaning that new patients would be required to be assigned to practices by the Practitioner Services national team supported by the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP)'*

10.54 This process is outlined in the document titled 'Aberdeen City GP Practice Registration Availability' (CD344). A link to this is also provided as it is subject to regular update.

<u>NHS Grampian Monitoring of Healthcare Capacity and NHS Grampian RAG Status of GP Services Overview</u>

10.55 NHS Grampian monitors the capacity of medical practices through patient registration and space requirements (set out in the Scottish Government Primary Medical Services Directions 2004 (CD359)). This sets out the floor area allowances for GP Practice, and this helps to determine whether existing facilities require expansion or new facilities are needed to accommodate increased demand from new development. It is important to note that floorspace allowances within the Premises Directions do not take account of all the additional services the practices

are expected to provide in accord with the 2018 General Medical Services (GMS) Contract.

10.56 NHS Grampian uses an indicative ratio of one practitioner per 1,500 patients, based on guidance from the Scottish Medical Practices Committee.

10.57 In order to provide more detailed and up-to-date information on healthcare infrastructure, NHS Grampian have undertaken a 'Red/Amber/Green (RAG) Assessment of NHS Grampian Medical Practices' (CD336). In addition to the information mentioned above, it has been informed by the 2023 Aberdeen City Local Development Plan (CD044) housing allocations and other known housing developments detailed in the Housing Land Audit 2025 (CD381). The RAG status also takes into account the ability to deliver the mitigation measures within the required timeframe due to the steps required to attain national funding (outlined in paragraphs 10.48 to 10.51).

10.58 General Medical Practice Areas are based on groupings of sites from the 2023 Aberdeen City Local Development Plan (CD044) and the Aberdeen City 2025 Housing Land Audit. Some practices within each area are managing their lists and therefore the closest practice to a proposed development may not be available to register at. General Medical Practice Areas are the best way of understanding capacity of GP practices in Aberdeen on a spatial level which can be linked to currently allocated and active housing sites.

10.59 It should be noted that within Aberdeen City there is usually large spatial overlap between the various general medical practice areas set out in the RAG table. The first columns in tables 10.1 and 10.2 give some spatial description of the areas that are covered in each case.

10.60 Regarding the mitigation measures identified within the RAG Assessment for short term mitigation measures, NHS Grampian's timescales will be determined as and when housing developments come forward and the availability of funding. The timeline for longer term mitigation measures will be determined by the availability of funding and in some, if not most, cases. It will require financial support from Scottish Government. Any new significant development allocated in the next Local Development Plan could impact on the RAG status and proposed mitigation.

10.61 None of the practices in the table are categorised as green. It should to be noted that even if locations were to have green RAG status, developer obligations may still be required. This is because their status does not take account of any additional services that may be provided from these locations that may also impact on floor area requirements. The RAG status is informed by floor area allowance and that mitigation from developer obligations can only be used to create additional physical capacity and address floor area shortfalls arising from new development.

Red Rated RAG Statuses of GP Services

10.62 There are seven practice areas categorised as red found in the table below:

Area and General Medical Practice Area	Remaining Additional Patients From Housing Land Audit Allocations	Short/Medium/Long Term Issues
Bridge of Don & Grandhome (10,814 additional patients projected)		
Scotstown Medical Group Catchment includes all areas north of the River Don and section of Aberdeenshire including Balmedie and areas near Newmachar, Pitmedden and Foveran.	See accumulated total	Operating beyond design capacity. Room for further extension for GP practice and clinic. Short Term - Internal alterations required to increase clinical and admin capacity. Medium Term - Extension required Long Term - If further development sites come forward land adjacent to the existing site or a new brownfield site may be options to allow for a new Health Centre to increase capacity and incorporate the Clinic services.
Oldmachar Medical Practice (2 sites) Catchment includes most areas north of the River Don, inner city from Royal Infirmary, north City Centre and to Footdee. Also includes section of Aberdeenshire including Balmedie and Potterton.	See accumulated total	Both premises operating at capacity. Long Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required for more GPs, support staff and other primary care support services.
Danestone Medical Practice Catchment includes all areas north of the River Don and Dyce and Persley. Also includes section	See accumulated total	Operating far beyond design capacity. The adjacent former Police Office was purchased to allow the premises to be extended Short / Medium Term - The former Police Office is to be converted to accommodate 5 additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required

of Aberdeenshire including Balmedie, Potterton and Whitecairns.		Long Term - A new Health Centre required within the Grandhome development or possibly the relocation of the Danestone Practice to a new larger facility.
Dyce, Bucksburn and Woodside		
Gilbert Road Medical Group Catchment includes Bucksburn, Stoneywood, Craibstone and small area of Aberdeenshire which includes Blackburn.	668	Operating beyond design capacity. There are no opportunities to extend. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - New GP Health Centre (including land) to accommodate more GP's, support staff and other primary care support services. Could be jointly occupied by Bucksburn Practice.
Bucksburn Medical Practice Catchment includes Bucksburn, Stoneywood, Dyce, Craibstone and area of Aberdeenshire which includes Blackburn and Newmachar.	6,143	It is noted that this is a 'single handed practice'. This means that the GP holds the primary care contract and has overall responsibility for the delivery and management of the service, although other clinical and administrative staff may also be employed within the practice. Operating beyond design capacity. May be some expansion space although this is a single handed practice. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - New GP Health Centre (including land) to accommodate more GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required. Could be jointly occupied by Gilbert Road Practice.
Kingswells & Greenferns		
Covered by existing practices. Also served by Northfield and Mastrick Clinics Catchment includes much of city between the Rivers Don and Dee out to Hazlehead Park, Northfield and	2,925	Four medical practices in this area, all operating beyond design capacity. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - New GP Health Centre (including land) to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services.

the periphery of Cults.		
Loirston & Cove		
Kincorth Medical Practice (Kincorth and Cove centres) Catchment includes Kincorth, Loirston, Cove and a section of Aberdeenshire countryside to the north of Portlethen.	3,156	Cove Centre operating at capacity. Short / Medium Term – For both premises, internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Cove - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Kincorth - A new brownfield site will need to be identified with capacity to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required

Table 10.1: Red Rated RAG Statuses of GP Services.

10.63 In addition to GP practices, communities are also served by various Health Clinic. Alterations may also be required at these locations to increase Primary Care services capacity across the city. These Clinics are: Bridge of Don Clinic, Inverurie Road Clinic, Tillydrone Clinic, Mastrick Clinic, Airyhall Clinic and Aberdeen Health Village.

Implications of Red Rated RAG Status for the Proposed Plan

10.64 In each instance the short or short/medium term plan is for internal alterations to increase clinical and administrative capacity with the exception of Danestone Medical Practice where the short/medium term plan is to convert the former post office for an additional 5 GPs, support staff and other primary care support.

10.65 The general medical practice areas with the highest projected additional patients from existing housing allocations are in Bridge of Don and OP9 Grandhome. They include the general medical practice areas of the Scotstown Medical Group, the Oldmachar Medical Practice and the Danestone Medical Practice. There are 10,814 additional patients anticipated, 8,617 of which would come from the Grandhome development; OP9 within the extant plan. A proportion of this number from Grandhome is likely to arise beyond the lifetime of the next LDP. Housing in the Blackdog and Balmedie areas of Aberdeenshire also use these practices and new allocations in these areas would at present contribute financially to these practice areas. The Scotstown Medical Practice is operating beyond its capacity. In the medium term an extension is proposed and in the longer term a new larger Health Centre may be sought which would include clinic services. The Oldmachar Medical Practice includes sites at Jesmond Drive and King Street which are both at capacity. In the longer term internal alterations are required to increase clinical and admin capacity. The Jesmond Drive site could be extended to increase capacity by 50%. The Danestone Medical Practice is operating well beyond its capacity. In the longer term a new health centre is required within OP9 Grandhome or possibly the relocation of the Danestone Practice to a new facility big enough to support the

existing population as well as serving the proposed new community in Grandhome. There are longer term plans to extend facilities or build facilities in each of the three practice areas which could address capacity pressures. If these plans are realised then these practice areas would become, from a healthcare infrastructure perspective, more favourable for additional housing allocations. If these plans are not realised then additional housing allocations become more difficult to justify.

10.66 The Bucksburn Medical Practice area has the second highest projected additional patients from existing housing allocations at 6,135 patients. It is working well beyond its capacity. While the premises could be extended it is unlikely given it is a single handed practice. In the longer term a new health centre is proposed, jointly occupied with the Gilbert Road Practice, which would include other primary care support services. If this long term plan is realised then this practice area would become, from a healthcare infrastructure perspective, more favourable for additional housing allocations. If this plan is not realised then additional housing allocations become more difficult to justify.

10.67 The Kincorth Medical Practice includes centres at Kincorth and Cove. It has 3156 projected additional patients from existing housing allocations. Kincorth is working beyond capacity with no room for expansion and in the longer term a new site needs to be identified for a larger centre which would include other primary care support staff. Cove is at capacity and the is a longer term plan to is for further internal alterations.. If these long term plans are realised then this practice area would become, from a healthcare infrastructure perspective, more favourable for additional housing allocations. If these plans are not realised then additional housing allocations become more difficult to justify.

10.68 At Kingswells and Greenferns, the area is covered by four existing practices and has 2,925 projected additional patients from existing housing allocations. All of these practices are working beyond capacity. In the long term a new GP Health Centre is required which would include other primary care support staff. If this long term plan is realised then this practice area would become, from a healthcare infrastructure perspective, more favourable for additional housing allocations. If this plan is not realised then additional housing allocations become more difficult to justify.

10.69 The Gilbert Road Medical Group has a projected 635 additional patients from existing housing allocations. It is working beyond its capacity and there is no room for extension. In the long term a new Health Centre including other primary care support staff is proposed which could also incorporate Bucksburn Medical Practice. If this long term plan is realised then this practice area would become, from a healthcare infrastructure perspective, more favourable for additional housing allocations. If this plan is not realised then additional housing allocations become more difficult to justify.

Amber Rated RAG Statuses of GP Services

10.70 There are ten practice areas categorised as amber found in the table below:

Area and General Medical Practice Area	Remaining Additional Patients From Housing Land Audits Allocations	Short/Medium/Long Term Issues
Dyce, Bucksburn and Woodside		
New Dyce Medical Practice Catchment includes Dyce and section of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar.	295	There is limited space on site and a new Health Centre on a new site will be required. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - New Health Centre (including land) to accommodate eight existing GP's with capacity to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required. A site for this has been identified in the 2023 LDP as OP24 at Central Park, Dyce.
(Woodside) City Centre & Urban Areas		
Woodside Medical Group Catchment includes area south of the River Don to Northfield, Woodend Hospital, Rubislaw and area to the north of Westburn Road/Lang Stracht.	1,301	The Woodside facility opened in June 2014 and is now running at design capacity. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - If further development sites come forward. An extension to existing facility will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services.
Kingswells & Greenferns		
Kingswells Medical Practice Catchment includes Countesswells, Kingswells, and Brimmond Country Park and its surrounds.	28	The Kingswells Medical Practice provides services from a Health Centre at Kingswells that opened in July 1999 and is now working beyond the design capacity Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required
New Development Area Covered by Existing Practices	1,295	There are a 5 Medical Practices who cover this area or in part. All of these practices premises are working beyond the design capacity. This

Includes OP27 Greenferns Infant School, OP31 Maidencraig South East, OP32 Maidencraig North East, OP111 Skene Road, Maidencraig.		includes the Kingswells Medical Practice who provide services from a Health Centre at Kingswells that opened in July 1999. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required.
Countesswells		
New Development No Practice - Area Covered by Various City Centre Practices	4,450	There are a number of Medical Practices who cover this area in part or whole, however, the Kingswells Medical Practice are the closest and are currently taking on patients from the Countesswells development. There is also a new Clinic operating within the Countesswells development. Short Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Medium Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required Long Term - New Health Centre as part of this development to serve the new settlement. Increase capacity to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required.
Deeside (1,319 additional patients projected)		
Cults Medical Group Catchment includes Craigiebuckler and Bridge of Dee, greenbelt area beyond Countesswells to area south of Westhill (Aberdeenshire), Milltimber and section of Aberdeenshire south of the River Dee which includes Maryculter and Woodland of Durris.	See accumulated total	The existing practice at Cults is presently under pressure with their existing property at capacity with limited scope for expansion. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required.

Camphill Medical Practice Catchment includes Cults to Peterculter and significant area of greenbelt to the north. Includes sections of Aberdeenshire south west of Peterculter and small portion of Banchory Devenick.	See accumulated total	The Camphill Medical Practice is a small specialised practice based in the Camphill Murtle Estate in Bieldside. The practice is also providing services for the Compass project site on Craigton Road Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required.
Peterculter Medical Practice Catchment includes Bieldside, Peterculter and large section of countryside (most in Aberdeenshire) which covers Drumoak and Maryculter.	See accumulated total	The Peterculter Medical Practice property at Coronation Road is now running at design capacity. Short / Medium Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - Extension to existing facilities will be required to accommodate additional GP's, support staff and other primary care support services required.
City Centre & Urban Areas / Loirston & Cove		
Torry Medical Practice Catchment includes Torry	665	The Torry Neighbourhood Centre opened in 2002 and is running at capacity and there is no expansion space on site to extend the building. Short / Medium / Long Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity. Long Term - If significant development, (OP59: Loirston) is approved then a new site and Health Centre will be required to support the population growth.
City Centre & Urban Areas		
Area Covered by Various City Centre Practices	7,731	Majority of City Centre premises area working at capacity with limited opportunities for expansion at the majority of the facilities Short / Medium / Long Term - Internal alterations required at existing facilities to increase clinical and admin capacity.

Table 10.2: Amber Rated RAG Statuses of GP Services.

Implications of Amber Rated RAG Status for the Proposed Plan

10.71 In each instance it is the short or short/medium term plan to carry out internal alterations to increase clinical and administrative capacity. This would also work as a long term plan for the various city centre practices and Torry Medical Practice. The long term plan for most other practices is an extension to increase capacity, with the exception of New Dyce Medical practice where a replacement larger health centre is planned at OP24 Central Park Dyce, OP38 Countesswells where a new health centre is planned, and a new Torry Health Centre (if significant development is built out at OP59 Loirston).

10.72 The amber rated practice areas with the largest projected additional patients are in the city centre and the development at Countesswells. There are thirteen practices in the city centre area, the majority of which are at capacity with limited scope for expansion. There is a projected 7,731 additional patients from existing housing allocations for the areas covered by city centre practices. Dividing the patients between the multiple practices there (7731/13 = 595) puts them under less acute capacity pressure than elsewhere which is the reason for the amber rating. When dividing 595 patients per practice by the figure of 1,500 (patients per GP) this works out as approximately 0.4 additional GPs required per practice which demonstrate why the rating is amber – internal reconfiguration could realistically address capacity issues in the short to medium term. It should be noted that the actual impact on GP practices will vary across practices and will be determined by housing development location, actual housing unit sizes and the impact of affordable housing.

10.73 OP38 Countesswells is a significant greenfield housing development which is underway. The current housing is served by a number of medical practices in the city centre with the closest being the GP practice at Kingwells. There is a projected 4,450 additional patients from this housing allocation and the medium term plan is for extensions to existing facilities with a longer term plan for a new health centre to serve the development.

10.74 There are three amber rated practice areas where projected additional patients sit around the 1,300 mark.

- The general medical practice area that includes Cults Medical Group/Camphill Medical Practice/Peterculter Medical Practice has a projected 1,319 additional patients from existing housing allocations. All of the practices in this area are experiencing capacity pressures.
- The Woodside Medical Group practice area is running at capacity and there is a projected 1,301 additional patients from existing housing allocations.
- The medical practices which cover the Maidencraig/Skene Road area are Elmbank Group Practice, Westburn Medical Group, Kingswells Medical Practice, Bucksburn Medical Practices. There is a projected 1,295 additional patients from existing housing allocations in this practice area.

10.75 There are far fewer projected patients for the three remaining amber rated practice areas.

- The Torry Medical Practice area is running at capacity and there is no space for expansion while there is a projected 665 additional patients from existing housing allocations.
- The New Dyce Medical Practice area has limited space for expansion while there is a projected 295 additional patients from existing housing allocations. Financial contributions are also sought for this practice area from housing in the Newmachar area of Aberdeenshire which uses this practice.

10.76 If the longer term plans for the amber rated medical practices (either extensions to facilities or replacement facilities or new facilities) noted in paragraph 10.71 are realised then these practice areas would become, from a healthcare infrastructure perspective, more favourable for additional housing allocations. Otherwise significant additional housing allocations become more difficult to justify, albeit smaller additional allocations may be possible without mitigation.

Cross Boundary GP Practices

10.77 Aberdeen City Council note that there is cross-boundary infrastructure across both Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. As such, both Councils have collaborated on specific infrastructure sections of the Evidence Report where cross-boundary infrastructure has been identified. This includes the section on Health Care. Where GP practices include a catchment overlap into Aberdeenshire Council's area, this is described in tables 10.1 and 10.2. In terms of implications for the next plan, the Council's will continue to work together to ensure that possible housing delivery in these areas of overlap is considered from an infrastructure first perspective. At present developer obligations are principally managed independently by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, with any cross-boundary requirements being identified through Local Development Plan site allocation, or Development Management procedures.

Healthcare Methodology within Aberdeen City's Supplementary Guidance 2023: Planning Obligations (CD230)

10.78 Aberdeen City Councils' 'Supplementary Guidance 2023: Planning Obligations' (CD230) sets out the current approach to planning obligations. A contribution will be required from new residential developments where the capacity of existing facilities will be exceeded as a result of the development, or where an existing capacity issue is worsened as a result of the proposed development, in line with the 'Scottish Government Circular 4/2025 (Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements)' (CD356). Site specific requirements are also identified in page 37 - 38 of the Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) within the Infrastructure Requirements for Masterplan Zones section and in the Aberdeen City Delivery Programme 2025 Update (CD343). New facilities or extensions to healthcare facilities are noted in all 10 masterplan zones. NHS Grampian are consulted on all relevant planning applications to determine whether a contribution is required for healthcare facilities related to the development.

10.79 Aberdeen City Council requires developer contributions toward healthcare facilities to mitigate any capacity issue created as the result of a new development, or where an existing capacity issue is exacerbated by a new development.

10.80 In policy terms, healthcare facilities can include General Medical Services (GMS), Health and Social Care Partnership Services (HSCP), Dental Services, Community Pharmacies and opticians. Scottish Health Planning Notes and GP Premises Directions provide national guidance on standards and specification for healthcare facilities.

10.81 The baseline capacity is identified as the recommended number of patients (1,500 per General Practitioner (GP)) and although guidance refers to a GP, this can also include other Healthcare Professionals. There are two contribution rates that may be applied, depending on the level of mitigation required. Contributions may be sought for a permanent extension, or internal reconfiguration works to provide additional capacity. On masterplan sites there may be a requirement for GP, HSCP, Dental and/or Community Pharmacy facilities to be provided on site. This provision, where required, may be sought in-kind or through a financial contribution.

Summary of Existing, Successful and Proposed DO Contributions

10.82 Planning obligations can be used to mitigate the impact of new development on infrastructure, in line with the Scottish Government's Planning Circular 4/2025: Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements (CD356). Supplementary Guidance 'Policy I1 : Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations' sets out when a contribution may be required and the relevant rates.

10.83 The policy is applied to all qualifying development proposals (five or more new homes) to determine whether a contribution is required. Whilst Aberdeen City Council administers the relevant planning policy and related processes (monitoring and invoicing, etc), NHS Grampian are the lead stakeholder for the utilisation of the contributions.

10.84 Developer contributions are sought to increase capacity at the following GP practices, wards or general medical practice areas;

- Bridge of Don
- Dyce / Bucksburn / Danestone
- Gilbert Road Medical Practice
- Scotstown Medical Practice
- Tilydrone / Seaton / Old Aberdeen
- Woodside Medical Practice

10.85 With regards to cross-boundary health infrastructure, there are no historic issues on this issue to set out. The Council will continue to communicate with Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian with regards to healthcare infrastructure capacity (which crosses boundaries) in order to ensure that housing allocations on both sides of the local authority boundary take into account the current capacity situations.

Healthcare Infrastructure Condition

10.86 Information relating to condition is not available. Premises condition is not needed to determine whether developer obligations are required or not and therefore there are no implications for the Proposed Plan.

Supported Accommodation

10.87 The Council manage 54 sites of supported accommodation. These sites can be found mapped here - Supported Accommodation Sites in Aberdeen.

Sites include:

- Amenity housing - residences with modifications for people with particular needs
- Sheltered Housing – designed for people of pensionable age, usually in grouped developments with a common area and shared facilities with a Senior Personal Carer available for emergencies.
- Very Sheltered Housing – designed for people of pensionable age who are more frail. Includes additional bathroom facilities, 24 hours cover on site and daily lunch.
- Extra Care Housing – provided at Coronation Court in Peterculter, is housing for people of varying needs and is supported by 24 hours cover on site.

10.88 Further information with regards to supported accommodation is available in the document Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership's (ACHSCP) 'Independent Living and Specialist Housing Provision Market Position Statement 2024-2034' (CD353). It includes information on the needs of older people, people living with disabilities, people living with substance and alcohol use, people subject to justice orders and people experiencing homelessness.

10.89 The Market Position Statement states that it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand for Very Sheltered Housing in Aberdeen to meet the increasing complex needs of an older population. To this end, ACHSCP, ACC, and relevant partners have initiated early discussions to progress a proposal to increase the volume of very sheltered housing units in the city whilst reducing the number of sheltered housing units. This aligns with the focus set out in the Market Position Statement (referred to above) to help enable people to live within their own homes. It is anticipated that there is scope for additional independent providers in Aberdeen to meet the needs of self-funding residents over the long term.

10.90 The Market Position Statement states that there has been a significant trend towards a reduction in demand for care homes in Aberdeen which aligns with national trends. There are 30 such facilities in the city which are mapped on page 9 of the document.

10.91 The Market Position Statement states that it is anticipated that there will be a growing need for care and support with mental health and learning disability requirements in Aberdeen as life expectancy increases within the relevant population.

10.92 The Council is seeking figures from partners within the ACHSCP with respect to take-up and capacities of the aforementioned supported accommodations and more detail of future plans. This is currently an identified information gap which will be addressed in the coming year.

10.93 Supplementary Guidance 2023: Planning Obligations (CD230) refers, under the Healthcare Facilities section, to Health and Social Care Partnership Services. Due to the gap in information, the precise implications are currently unknown for the Proposed Plan. There is the potential for sites, or portions of sites, to be required for supported accommodation.

Aberdeen City Council Education

10.94 The following section sets out information regarding Aberdeen City Council schools' estate only and does not include private schools.

10.95 The Council's General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/2027 included a total of more than £300million to be invested in the city's schools' estate over the next five years, including a new Northfield Academy campus planned for 2033. More than £50m will also go towards Victorian school refurbishments,£33.5m for Aberdeen Grammar, £10m for Broomhill Primary and £8m for Ashley Road Primary, alongside ongoing upgrades across the wider estate.

School Estates Plan

10.96 Aberdeen City Council's 'School Estate Plan 2022' (CD124) sets out the recommended actions to be undertaken to develop the school estate over the next ten years and beyond. The action plan itself is on pages 31 - 42 however there are annual updates which include new priorities and changes to timescales. The most up to date action plan can be found in the Annual Update 2025 (CD349). This update informs tables 10.4 and 10.6 below, cross referencing proposed actions with the school estate and its capacities. For reference, the Annual Update 2023 (CD347) and Annual Update 2024 (CD348) are included.

10.97 The School Estate Plan 2022 is organised into themes; The Quality Of Our Learning Environments, The Sufficiency and Efficiency Of Our Estate, and Working With And For Local Communities. These are cross referenced with the 10 guiding principles of 'Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy' (CD360).

The Quality Of Our Learning Environments

10.98 The Council's school buildings are regularly surveyed, to assess both the physical condition of the buildings and also their suitability for delivering high-quality learning and teaching. The relative accessibility of buildings is also considered, within the assessment of the building's suitability.

10.99 With regards to school condition and suitability (meaning suitability for delivering high-quality learning and teaching including accessibility), these are evaluated on a nationally agreed four-point scale, as follows: A – Good, B – Satisfactory, C – Poor, D – Bad.

10.100 The school estate is scored in the Plan and the most up to date condition and suitability report is included, 'Condition and Suitability Schools Data' (CD337). The main findings are as follows for condition: 26 schools rated A, 42 schools rated B, 2 schools rated C. The main findings are as follows for suitability: 22 schools rated A,

26 schools rated B, 19 schools rated C, 3 schools rated D. The schools rated D for suitability are Harlaw Academy, Hazlehead Academy and Ferryhill Primary. There are works underway relating to all 3 schools to address this. Given the general good quality of accessibility of the school estates there are no significant implications for the Proposed Plan.

The Sufficiency and Efficiency of Our Estate

10.101 The Plan notes that decisions are required to create new capacity in places and reduce over-provision where required. It notes that the school estate is diverse with buildings dating from the mid-1800s through to recently completed schools. With regards to older buildings, there are implications for running costs, energy efficiency and adaptability. The general makeup of the capacity and classroom size of the school estate is outlined. The Plan states that school resources (staffing and finance) are largely allocated according to school roll in keeping with national guidance. The smaller schools can be affected by course availability and opportunities due to economies of scale and therefore new primary schools are recommended to be 434 capacity with 14 classrooms and new secondary schools 1000 capacity minimum.

10.102 The Plan discusses changing demographics in Aberdeen, methodology of the school roll forecast, overall school capacity numbers and new (from 2017 LDP) housing development. Table 5 includes a list of housing sites with 100+ remaining units to be built and the affected catchments. New schools, their capacity and construction timetables are included.

Working With And For Local Communities

10.103 The Plan notes that nine of Aberdeen's school buildings incorporate community learning centres whilst Cults Academy and Lochside Academy also include community sports facilities operated by Sport Aberdeen for public use.

10.104 A 'Place Based Planning' approach to designing new schools is outlined that will support 20 minute neighbourhoods by incorporating a range of community services on one site. The community campus model is discussed, with the key principles listed on page 29 of the School Estates Plan 2022. (CD124)

10.105 Annex A of the Plan sets out priorities for future development from the 2018/2019 School Estates Review. Profiles for each secondary catchment area are provided which includes the primary schools within each secondary catchment. Running costs and CO2 data are included in graphs and a commentary on the main issues are included (page 48-72). Annex B includes a typical project timeline.

<u>Assessment of Projected School Capacities Overview</u>

10.106 The 'Aberdeen City 2024 School Roll Forecast' (CD346) is the main body of evidence which informs the evidence report with respect to school capacities. It was published in August 2025 and is based on the actual pupil numbers in schools as of September 2024. It was informed by the 2024 Aberdeen City Housing Land Audit (CD012). School Roll Forecasts are monitored and updated annually and provide an indication of the schools likely to have capacity to absorb additional development

and those likely to require mitigation (in the form of reconfiguration, extension etc) if physically possible. The 2025 School Roll Forecast will be published by September 2026.

10.107 The Council's 'School Estate Plan 2022' (CD124), which is updated annually, states that 'To ensure that spaces in schools can be used flexibly and for their intended purpose to support curriculum delivery, whilst also avoiding unnecessarily high running costs associated with low occupancy, the optimum scenario is for all schools to operate between 80% and 95% of their available capacity.' 95% capacity is also currently the threshold by which a "capacity issue" is identified under Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations from the 2023 Local Development Plan (supported by Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance), and where a contribution will be required from developments to mitigate against overcapacity.

10.108 Schools that match or exceed the 95% capacity threshold in their projections will therefore require further investigation in order to understand what provision, if any, is in place to accommodate further pupils either from development allocated in the current LDP or potentially from new housing sites in the next LDP.

10.109 A 'Schools Overlap Map' (CD350) has been prepared which shows the positions of secondary and primary education catchment areas in relation to one another. Annex A from the School Estate Plan 2022 also sets out these spatial relationships.

10.110 The 2024 School Roll Forecast gives forecast capacity figures up to 2032. Current Development Plan Scheme timetabling has the Proposed Plan to be adopted in 2028 and therefore 2028 is the year which is useful for us to focus on.

10.111 As noted in section 3.5 of the School Estate Plan 2022, school roll forecasts are informed by a range of data:

- The most recently available actual pupil numbers for each school
- Birth rate data from the NHS
- Inward and outward migration to and from Aberdeen, based on historical trends
- Trends in pupils' staying on rates in S5 and S6
- Historical patterns of movement of pupils to schools outwith their catchment zones
- Planned new housing in each area of the city, and the additional pupils these are likely to generate

10.112 It should also be noted that there is potential for changes to school catchments within this intervening period which could affect capacities. It is not currently possible to generate a useful forecast to 2038 (2028-2038 plan period) given the 2024 School Roll Forecast uses the current most up to date information. Children who will be attending primary school have not yet been born and there is no reliable way to predict their numbers. We do however have the programmed and constrained housing numbers (from the 2025 Housing Land Audit) for each school

catchment between 2028 and 2038 and between 2032 and 2038, 'Programmed and Constrained Housing Per School Catchment Table' (CD345). When multiplied by

10.113 the pupils/household figure for each school (as set out in the school roll forecast), it gives some useful additional context to report in terms of linking housing sites to school catchments beyond the timescales of the school roll forecast. The pupils per household figure sits within the ranges 0.05 to 0.2 for secondary schools and 0.1 to 0.5 for primary schools. The ratios tend to be higher in suburban areas and lower in inner city areas due to demographics and the type of housing likely to be built in those areas.

10.114 Overall the evidence will give some indication of:

- Whether there are school capacity constraints that will affect the deliverability of existing housing site allocations from the current Local Development Plan for the next plan period and;
- How school capacities will create opportunities and constraints with regards to potential future spatial decisions for housing allocations for the next Local Development Plan, given the importance of an infrastructure first approach.

Assessment of Projected Secondary Schools Capacities

10.115 Table 10.3 sets out the capacity figures for the 11 secondary schools in Aberdeen operated by Aberdeen City Council. Planned increases to each school capacity are only factored into the School Roll Forecast once the additional capacity is in place, or where capital works have been approved with a budget in place and there is a clear timescale for delivery. There are no Roman Catholic secondary schools in Aberdeen.

Secondary School Name	School Roll September 2028 Forecast Capacity Percentage	School Roll September 2028 Forecast Available Spaces	School Roll September 2032 Forecast Capacity Percentage	School Roll September 2032 Forecast Available Spaces
Aberdeen Grammar	129%	-349	116%	-190
Bridge of Don Academy	117%	-130	133%	-247
Bucksburn Academy	101%	-9	101%	-7
Cults Academy	98%	33	88%	177
Dyce Academy	101%	-10	99%	6
Harlaw Academy	127%	-276	133%	-329
Hazlehead Academy	89%	182	115%	-232
Lochside Academy	92%	107	99%	8

Northfield Academy	70%	307	68%	330
Oldmachar Academy	105%	-47	111%	-110
St. Machar Academy	109%	-96	110%	-100

Table 10.3: Capacity figures for the secondary schools in Aberdeen.

10.116 Table 10.3 above indicates that there are potential capacity issues at 8 of 11 secondary schools by 2028, and 9 secondary schools by 2032. The severest capacity issues are forecast at Harlaw Academy and Bridge of Don Academy. There are also significant capacity issues forecast for Aberdeen Grammar, Hazlehead Academy, Oldmachar and St. Machar Academies. Bucksburn, Dyce and Lochside Academies are forecast to be more marginally above 95% capacity.

10.117 For additional context, the Programmed and Constrained Housing Per School Catchment Table (CD345) shows that there could also be further significant pupil intake from housing post-2032 to 2038 for catchments at Bucksburn Academy (80 pupils) and Hazlehead Academy (59 pupils) in particular if the programmed figures of the 2025 Housing Land Audit prove to be accurate. Lesser totals are programmed at Oldmachar Academy (45 pupils) and Lochside (36 pupils) with additional totals far less significant at the other secondary schools. There are also additional constrained numbers for the period, albeit relatively low, with a possibility that a proportion of these will also be delivered. Again, the effects of changes to information contained in paragraph 10.115 upon longer term forecast capacity are unknown.

10.118 The table below gives an indication of the actions that are set out in Council documents for each secondary school in the city. The School Estates Plan 2022 (CD124) and annual updates are covered in more detail in paragraphs 10.96 to 10.105. The Aberdeen City Victorian Schools Programme sets out the proposals to manage and upgrade 10 of the city's older schools which have common suitability issues with regards to access and availability of spaces. Preferred options, Victorian School Programme Outline Business Case (CD354), have been presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee and approved within the Capital Programme for the 2026/27 Council budget.

Secondary School Name	Actions Noted Within the School Estates Plan (2025 Update) and the Victorian Schools Programme
Aberdeen Grammar	Officers are continuing to work closely with colleagues at the school to identify opportunities for repurposing space and creating additional capacity. Further work on this is planned for the next academic year, to provide increased capacity from August 2026. Improvements for this school within the Victorian Schools Programme (CD354) will provide further increases in space for specialist learning and teaching.
Bridge of Don Academy	The School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025 (CD349) includes the requirement for a feasibility study (programmed to commence April 2027) and stakeholder engagement to be undertaken to address capacity issues at Grandhome, Bridge of Don and Oldmachar. There are current capacity pressures at the two existing academies. The masterplan for the

	Grandhome development includes provision for a new secondary school. If this goes ahead then there will be spare capacity at the existing academies.
Bucksburn Academy	As instructed (item 10.7) by Education and Children's Services Committee (CD339) 24 June 2025, Aberdeen City Council officers are currently in discussion with Aberdeenshire Council officers regarding proposals to change the catchment area for Dyce Academy so that it no longer includes areas of Aberdeenshire. Such a change, subject to public consultation, would mean that the freed up capacity at Dyce could be used to alleviate future capacity pressure at Bucksburn Academy. Outcomes from the discussions with Aberdeenshire Council were reported to the Education and Children's Services Committee 25 November 2025 (CD341). Aberdeen City Council has an instruction to plan a joint consultation with Aberdeenshire Council to exclude the Aberdeenshire areas from Bucksburn Academy and Dyce Academy catchments – this is due to happen at the end of 2026. Meantime, the 2024 School Roll Forecast includes a recent extension to Bucksburn Academy and the figures show a resulting additional 300 pupil capacity for 2028.
Cults Academy	Reconfiguration works have been carried out over the last year to provide additional capacity in the school, funded by relevant developer contributions, to accommodate new development in the catchment.
Dyce Academy	See for Bucksburn Academy.
Harlaw Academy	Construction work for the extension of Harlaw Academy is underway. This will provide additional space for dining and physical education to support operational capacities at the school. The expected completion date is Summer 2026.
Hazlehead Academy	There are concerns about condition and suitability of the current Hazlehead Academy. The new school building at Hazlehead is currently under construction. 2024 School Roll indicates capacity to be increased for 2028 when the new school operational.
Lochside Academy	Academy built in 2018. No objectives for remodelling in the School Estates Plan 2025 Update. The 2024 School Roll Forecast (CD346) shows Lochside will remain just under 100% capacity until at least 2032. Any requirements for remodelling or extension will be considered in future updates to the school estate plan.
Northfield Academy	A report on the outcomes of the Northfield Asset Review, which includes options for addressing the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the Academy building, was reported to Education and Children's Services Committee 8 September 2025 (CD340). A new campus building was considered with an outline business case submitted to the Capital Board. The project was included in the capital programme as part of budget setting for 2026/27. The new capacity would be for 100 pupils, down from 1041 at present.
Oldmachar Academy	See for Bridge of Don Academy.
St. Machar Academy	No current plans to increase capacity. Works to improve the outdoor space at St Machar Academy were carried out in Spring / Summer 2025, and are now complete.

Countesswells	A new secondary school at Countesswells was included as part of the Countesswells Masterplan (CD:090A, 090B, 090C, 090D). However, the 2025 School Estates Plan Update references the objective to; 'Improve the condition and suitability of the Hazlehead Academy building and ensure there is sufficient secondary school provision to serve Hazlehead and Countesswells.' The 2025 School Estates Plan Update also references Council decision to; '…implement changes to the existing Countesswells and Hazlehead secondary school catchment areas, …to create a new catchment area which will be served by the new Hazlehead Academy, with effect from 1 August 2027'.
Grandhome	The 2025 School Estates Plan Update references the requirement for a new secondary school at Grandhome which is also is included as part of the Grandhome Masterplan (CD:094A, 94B).

Table 10.4: Secondary School Actions Noted Within the School Estates Plan (2025 Update) and the Victorian Schools Programme.

Analysis of Secondary School Evidence and Implications for the Proposed Plan

10.119 In each case where the possibility of catchment review is discussed, it should be noted that the Council must demonstrate the educational benefits of making changes to catchments and any proposed changes are subject to statutory public consultation.

10.120 The data shows the most significant capacity issues are forecast at Harlaw Academy and Bridge of Don Academy. Works that are underway will only marginally increase capacity at Harlaw Academy and there is no scope to further increase capacity due to spatial constraints. Space could theoretically be freed up by means of catchment review. From a secondary school infrastructure perspective, retention of existing housing allocations and/or new housing allocations is more likely to be challenging within the Harlaw Academy catchment area.

10.121 Capacity issues will be considered at Bridge of Don Academy as part of the feasibility study referenced in the School Estates Plan Update 2025 (CD349) to be undertaken in 2027. Further capacity pressures come largely from new development at OP9 Grandhome, and the Masterplan incorporates a new secondary school within the site, with funding supported through developer obligations and delivery linked to housing completions. The Bridge of Don area is therefore likely to be a favourable area for retention of existing housing allocations. However, the forthcoming feasibility study will look into the most efficient way for the Council to manage pupil rolls in this part of the City, and accommodate potential new housing allocations.

10.122 There are lesser, though still significant, capacity issues projected for Aberdeen Grammar, Hazlehead Academy, Oldmachar Academy and St. Machar Academy. Officers are investigating the scope for increasing pupil capacity at Aberdeen Grammar and £33.5m has been allocated in the Council's Capital Programme for

refurbishment. This will also provide opportunities to address the pressures on the school's capacity, although the school site is constrained and this will limit the amount of extra capacity which can be provided. The project is in the early design stages and the refurbishment is expected to be completed by summer 2029. It is not currently known the precise effect this will have, therefore, from a secondary school infrastructure perspective, it is unknown what level of housing allocations the Aberdeen Grammar catchment can absorb. If works do not proceed then, in this context, it may be a more difficult location for housing allocations without mitigation of catchment review.

10.123 For Hazlehead Academy, when deliverable programmed numbers between 2032 and 2038 are accounted for, long term forecasting points to a significant capacity problem. This will be mitigated with the construction of a replacement school with a larger capacity (1,127 pupils to 1,600 pupils). Capacity pressures will remain however given the significant amount of development occurring at Countesswells. If there is a further future catchment review then it is likely to be aimed at relieving this pressure. As a result, from a secondary school capacity perspective, this could be a difficult catchment for new housing opportunity sites.

10.124 Oldmachar Academy, like Bridge of Don Academy, is subject to the planned feasibility study relating to an anticipated future excess of spare capacity after a new secondary school is built at Grandhome. The implications are therefore likely to match those set out for the Bridge of Don Academy catchment in section 10.120 above.

10.125 There are no plans within the School Estates Plan to increase capacity at St. Machar Academy. Capacity issues at St. Machar Academy will be explored in future updates as the Schools Estates Plan is prioritised on schools with greatest need of intervention. If works to increase capacity are given budgetary approval to proceed then the St. Machar Academy catchment, from a secondary school perspective, could be a favourable area for the retention of existing housing allocations and/or new housing allocations. If works do not proceed then, in this context, it may be a more difficult location for housing allocations without mitigation of catchment review.

10.126 Dyce Academy, Bucksburn Academy and Lochside Academy are all projected to be at or near full capacity by 2032. For Dyce Academy, plans to mitigate this pressure are underway with the committed catchment review linked to Bucksburn Academy and Aberdeenshire. Adjustment to its catchment would be likely to reduce its school roll significantly (Newmachar and Kingseat in Aberdeenshire account for around 40% of the roll at Dyce) though it will take a number of years to realise the full impact. A smaller amount of pupils would be added from areas that currently attend at Bucksburn Academy. If the catchment review is implemented then the Dyce Academy catchment could become a more favourable area, from a secondary school perspective, for the retention of existing housing allocations and/or new housing allocations. If the review results in no changes then in this context significant housing allocations in the catchment become more challenging.

10.127 Bucksburn Academy is projected to be at full capacity by 2032 even after an additional 300 pupil spaces are to be available in 2028. There is also a possible high intake when deliverable programmed numbers between 2032 and 2038 are

accounted for. Plans to mitigate this pressure are underway with the committed catchment review linked to Dyce Academy and Aberdeenshire which would enable some rebalancing of pupil intakes between the schools. If the catchment review is implemented then the Bucksburn Academy catchment could become a more favourable area, from a secondary school perspective, for the retention of existing housing allocations and/or new housing allocations. If the review results in no changes then in this context significant housing allocations in the catchment become more challenging.

10.128 For Lochside Academy, any requirements for remodelling or extension will be considered in future updates to the school estate plan. The housing site at Loirston, OP59 in the 2023 LDP, is expected to be the main driver for increases to the school roll. With an extension to capacity the Lochside Academy catchment could become a more favourable area, from a secondary school perspective, for new housing allocations. Without an extension or catchment review, further significant housing allocations become more challenging.

10.129 There is forecast to be available capacity at Cults Academy and Northfield Academy and therefore, from a secondary school capacity perspective, these would be favourable catchments for the retention of existing housing opportunity sites and future housing opportunity sites. A replacement building for Northfield Academy has been proposed and is subject to future committee approval and budget availability.

10.130 If the vast majority of future housing allocations were to be concentrated around one particular greenfield area then a new secondary school may have to be built to accommodate pupils from those developments, though this may be at odds with an infrastructure first approach as set out in NPF4. It is noted however from the Secondary Schools Map (CD352) that some peripheral areas of the city have catchments for secondary schools which are less constrained capacity wise than those closer to the city core (though also noted that some of these areas are catchments for schools which are in Aberdeenshire).

10.131 Developer contributions are sought and/or held for works to increase capacity at the following secondary schools within the current plan period;

- Aberdeen Grammar
- Bucksburn Academy
- Countesswells Secondary School (new school)
- Cults Academy
- Grandhome Secondary School (new school)
- Harlaw Academy
- Hazlehead Academy
- St. Machar Academy

10.132 A ‘Secondary Schools Catchments and Capacities Map’ (CD352) has also been prepared which is overlayed with the 2023 Local Development Plan opportunity housing sites and the remaining 2025 HLA sites (which are not opportunity sites) in order to set the spatial context.

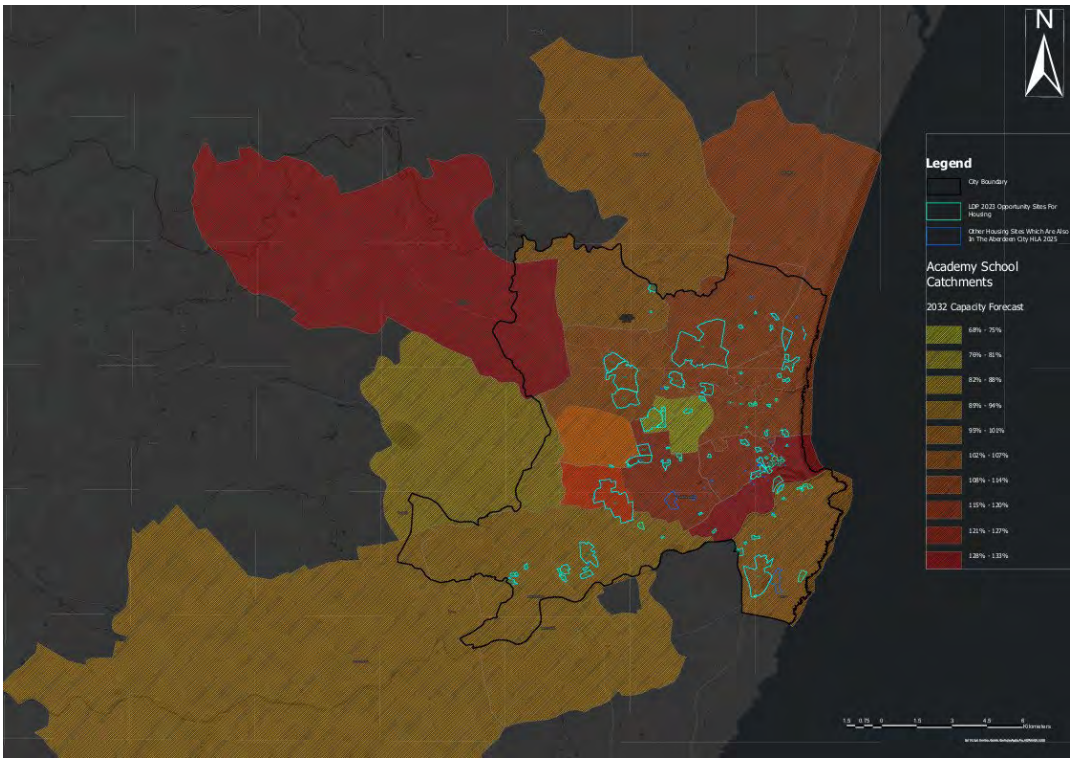


Figure 10.7 Secondary school catchments.

Assessment of Projected Primary Schools Capacities

10.133 Table 10.5 sets out the capacity figures for primary schools. The effective overall capacity in the 2024 School Roll Forecast takes into account any changes to capacity due to building works listed in table 10.4.

10.134 There are 3 Roman Catholic primary schools in Aberdeen. The catchments of these schools extend into Aberdeenshire. These are Holy Family RC (located in the Fernielea primary catchment), St. Joseph's RC (located in the Ashley Road primary catchment) and St. Peter's RC (located in the Seaton primary catchment). These have 2024 School Roll 2028 forecasting for available pupil spaces at 41 (81% capacity), 72 (83% capacity) and 246 (43% capacity) respectively. For 2032 forecasting the figures are at 49 (78% capacity), 83 (81% capacity) and 249 (43% capacity) respectively.

10.135 The Schools Estate Plan Action Plan (CD124) notes that there is an issue relating to the suitability of St. Joseph's School and the excess capacity of denominational schools in the city. The 2025 Action Plan notes that officers continue to monitor numbers and no action is to be taken until the refurbishment of St. Peter's School is complete.

10.136 The proposed works at St. Peter's School include retention of Old Aberdeen House due to its granite structure and the suitability of the spaces to become classrooms. The building will be retrofitted to be brought up to modern standards for condition and suitability and will house 14 classrooms, a GP room and a nurture room, allowing the school to function as a 2 stream school. A new extension will support the classrooms with staff spaces, an indoor sports hall and dining hall.

Primary School Name	School Roll September 2028 Forecast Capacity Percentage	School Roll September 2028 Forecast Available Spaces	School Roll September 2032 Forecast Capacity Percentage	School Roll September 2032 Forecast Available Spaces
Abbotswell	81%	57	60%	116
Airyhall	79%	93	67%	142
Ashley Road	79%	91	75%	107
Braehead	82%	53	65%	101
Bramble Brae	48%	113	42%	127
Brimmond	99%	4	115%	-67
Broomhill	94%	27	85%	67
Charleston	117%	-49	133%	-97
Cornhill	79%	98	68%	145
Countesswells	79%	89	92%	35
Culter	48%	238	42%	264
Cults	82%	103	65%	196
Danestone	60%	137	55%	153
Dyce	69%	167	64%	191
Fernielea	65%	151	65%	150
Ferryhill	89%	52	92%	40
Forehill	135%	-94	149%	-132
Gilcomstoun	137%	-103	134%	-94
Glashieburn	51%	209	57%	182
Greenbrae	94%	20	80%	68
Greyhope	74%	113	66%	146
Hanover Street	99%	4	111%	-32
Hazlehead	95%	19	84%	60
Heathryburn	80%	60	75%	72
Kaimhill	86%	52	72%	103
Kingsford	78%	81	74%	94
Kingswells	94%	27	81%	85
Kirkhill	91%	31	82%	63
Kittybrewster	70%	102	68%	111
Loirston	76%	112	64%	165
Manor Park	63%	107	55%	130
Middleton Park	64%	86	68%	76
Mile End	90%	52	71%	147
Milltimber	90%	42	76%	102
Muirfield	38%	212	32%	233
Quarryhill	67%	122	63%	135
Riverbank	52%	246	43%	292
Scotstown	100%	0	73%	79
Seaton	66%	82	62%	91
Skene Square	97%	15	100%	-2
Stoneywood	114%	-61	107%	-32

Sunnybank	90%	36	80%	73
Tullos	53%	171	43%	208
Westpark	50%	182	67%	121
Woodside	78%	96	69%	134

Table 10.5: Capacity figures for primary schools.

10.137 Table 10.5 above indicates that there are likely to be capacity issues at 9 primary schools by 2028, and 7 primary schools by 2032. The severest capacity issues are forecast at Charleston, Forehill and Gilcomstoun.

10.138 For additional context, the Programmed and Constrained Housing Per School Catchment Table (CD345) also shows that there could be further significant pupil intake from housing post 2032 to 2038 for catchments at Countesswells (135 pupils), Forehill (135 pupils), Brimmond (80 pupils), Charleston (75 pupils) and Westpark (60 pupils) in particular, if the programmed figures of the 2025 Housing Land Audit prove to be accurate. A lesser total is programmed for Scotstown (32 pupils). The majority of other schools have no programmed deliverable sites within their catchment for the period, or very low numbers. There are also high additional constrained numbers for the period at Charleston (260 pupils), Scotstown (88 pupils), Sunnybank (73 pupils), Manor Park, Heathryburn (both 60 pupils), Skene Square (58 pupils) with a possibility that a proportion of these will also be delivered. Again, the effects of changes to information contained in paragraph 10.136 upon longer term forecast capacity are unknown.

Primary School Name	**Actions Noted Within the School Estates Plan (2025 Update) and the Victorian Schools Programme**
Abbotswell	N/A
Airyhall	N/A
Ashley Road	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Braehead	No further action in the short to medium term is anticipated.
Bramble Brae	N/A
Brimmond	Officers intend to launch a consultation on establishing a new school at Bucksburn/Newhills.
Broomhill	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Charleston	If the development at Loirston Loch (OP59) is built out then a new primary school will be required. Officers anticipate that work on a feasibility study will likely need to commence from 2028/29, to identify options for mitigating a rise in pupil numbers at Charleston due to build out at Loirston Loch.
Cornhill	N/A

Countess-wells	The first primary school at Countesswells has been delivered and opened in Summer 2023. Officers continue to monitor numbers however there is sufficient capacity forecast to 2032. A second primary school is on hold until such time in the future that it would be necessary.
Culter	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme (subject to committee approval). Officers to continue to assess opportunities for making use of any excess space at the school. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Cults	N/A
Danestone	Due to over-provision of pupil places, feasibility study to commence which will incorporate options for future primary school provision in the Oldmachar catchment.
Dyce	N/A
Fernielea	N/A
Ferryhill	Construction work for the refurbishment and extension of the main school building is now under way to address insufficient dining space and issues with building layout
Forehill	Officers are instructed to undertake a feasibility study on the establishment of a new primary school to serve Grandhome to relieve forecast pressure.
Gilcomstoun	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme (subject to committee approval). Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Glashieburn	See for Danestone
Greenbrae	N/A
Greyhope	N/A
Hanover Street	N/A
Hazlehead	Officers continue to monitor numbers and there is sufficient capacity forecast to 2032.
Heathryburn	Sufficient capacity forecast to 2027. The review of all schools in the Northfield catchment will ensure appropriate balance of provision across Westpark and Heathryburn in the short to medium term and in the longer term to accommodate pupils generated by the planned Greenferns development.
Kaimhill	N/A
Kingsford	N/A
Kingswells	N/A
Kirkhill	N/A
Kittybrewster	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Loirston	N/A
Manor Park	N/A

Middleton Park	See for Danestone
Mile End	Officers continue to monitor numbers however given pupil numbers are likely to peak in 2025.
Milltimber	N/A
Muirfield	N/A
Quarryhill	N/A
Riverbank	New Riverbank School opened at Tillydrone
Scotstown	In the longer term, sites allocated for new housing within the Scotstown School catchment area could lead to an increase in pupil numbers, however this is beyond the timescales of the 2024 School Roll Forecast.
Seaton	N/A
Skene Square	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Stoneywood	N/A
Sunnybank	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.
Tullos	N/A
Westpark	The review of all schools in the Northfield catchment will ensure appropriate balance of provision across Westpark and Heathryburn in the short to medium term and in the longer term to accommodate pupils generated by the planned Greenferns development.
Woodside	Included within the Victorian Schools Programme. Some works relate to accessibility improvements. No works relate to increased classroom capacity.

Table 10.6: Primary School Actions Noted Within the School Estates Plan (2025 Update) and the Victorian Schools Programme.

Analysis of Primary School Evidence and Implications for the Next Plan

10.139 In each case where the possibility of catchment review is discussed, it should be noted that the Council must demonstrate the educational benefits of making changes to catchments and any proposed changes are subject to statutory public consultation.

10.140 The data shows the most significant capacity issues are forecast at Charleston, Forehill and Gilcomstoun. The first two also have high numbers of programmed housing within their catchments between 2032 and 2038. A new primary school is planned at Loirston which will alleviate capacity pressures at Charleston, as is likely the case at Forehill with two primary schools planned at Grandhome. Assuming these primary schools are delivered on these large greenfield allocations, the catchments for Charleston and Forehill will significantly reduce and available capacity will increase. The reduced catchments could, from a primary school perspective, be a favourable area for housing allocations. If new schools are not

built then, in this context, they may be a more difficult locations for significant housing allocations without mitigation of catchment reviews.

10.141 The other school with significant capacity issues is Gilcomstoun and there are no planned works to increase the school capacity, nor is it feasible to do so. Without review of Gilcomstoun Primary school's catchment there would be difficulties from a primary school infrastructure perspective in allocating significant housing within the catchment.

10.142 When deliverable programmed numbers between 2032 and 2038 are accounted for potentially later forecasting for Brimmond could be significantly high however, as noted in the School Estates Plan Update 2025, officers intend to launch a consultation in the next year on establishing one or more new primary school at Bucksburn/Newhills. Proposals to be consulted on will require to include any plans for establishing the new school within temporary accommodation, prior to a new school building being completed. Assuming one or two primary schools are delivered on these large greenfield allocations (OP20, OP21, OP22), the Brimmond catchment will significantly reduce and available capacity will increase. The reduced catchment could, from a primary school perspective, be a favourable area for housing allocations. If at least one new school is not built then, in this context, it may be a more difficult location for significant housing allocations without mitigation of catchment review.

10.143 By 2032, Countesswells Primary is forecast to be 92% capacity and there are 135 pupils to be added within the catchment between 2032 and 2038 if the deliverable programming from the 2025 Housing Land Audit is accurate. The School Estates Plan Action Plan notes that there is a commitment to monitor numbers at the school and should action be required in the future to ensure extra capacity, recommendations will be included in an appropriate future update to the School Estates Action Plan. If the second primary school is built to accommodate children from further built out housing then the current Countesswells Primary School catchment will reduce in area and available capacity will increase. The reduced catchments could, from a primary school infrastructure perspective, be a favourable area for housing allocations. If the second Countesswells school is not built then, in this context, it may be a more difficult location for significant housing allocations without mitigation of catchment review. If the numbers reduce slightly at the current Countesswells Primary School, or at least remain the same then limited further housing allocations in the area may not exacerbate this particular issue beyond reasonable levels.

10.144 Skene Square Primary, Hanover Street Primary, and Stoneywood Primary are projected to be at or over capacity by 2032. In each case there are no current plans to increase capacity. Hanover Street Primary is being monitored and any required mitigations will be explored in future updates to the school estate plan. The planned review of catchment area at Dyce Academy could address pressure at Stoneywood Primary (see paragraphs 3.14 to 3.17 (page 134) of Education and Children's Services Committee November 2025 (CD341)). Skene Square is part of the Victorian Schools programme and there is a plan to refurbish the school from 2029/2030. This will provide opportunities to increase the capacity of the school

although the constrained school site will limit the extent of new capacity which can be provided. There is less pressure on this Skene Square compared to the other two mentioned. If the mitigations mentioned are realised then spare capacity could mean, from a primary school infrastructure perspective, that those catchments become favourable for housing allocations otherwise its makes housing allocations in the catchments more difficult without catchment review. For the Skene Square catchment, given its not projected to be over capacity, some limited housing allocations may be feasible without intervention depending on how numbers look in the future.

10.145 There is forecast to be available capacity at the majority of primary schools with 9 schools forecast (by 2032) to be under 60% capacity, 25 to be under 70% capacity, 33 to be under 80% capacity. 42 primary schools are forecast (by 2032) to be under 95% capacity, most of which have reasonable spare capacity. As things stand from a primary school capacity perspective, these would likely be favourable catchments for the retention of existing housing opportunity sites and future housing opportunity sites.

10.146 In the event that new large housing allocations are agreed on more remote greenbelt sites for the next LDP, it would be likely that new primary schools would need to be included as part of those masterplanned sites to accommodate further pupils who could otherwise cause peripheral city primary schools to exceed capacity. Large allocations that need new primary schools would not align with the infrastructure first approach and infrastructure investment hierarchy, as set out in NPF4. It is noted however from the Primary Schools Map (CD351) that some peripheral areas of the city have catchments for primary schools which have reasonable spare capacity.

10.147 Developer contributions are sought and/or held for works to increase capacity at the following primary schools within the current plan period;

- Ashley Road Primary School
- Brimmond Primary School
- Countesswells (New School)
- Cove/Loirston (New School)
- Cults Primary School
- Fernielea Primary School
- Ferryhill Primary School
- Gilcomstoun Primary School
- Grandhome (New School)
- Hanover Primary School
- Hazlehead Primary School
- Kaimhill Primary School
- Kingswells Primary School
- Middlefield Primary School
- Newhills (New School)
- Scotstown Primary School
- Skene Square Primary School

- Stoneywood Primary School
- Sunnybank Primary School

10.148 A ‘Primary Schools Catchments and Capacities Map’ (CD351) has also been prepared which is overlayed with the 2023 Local Development Plan opportunity housing sites and the remaining 2025 HLA sites (which are not opportunity sites) in order to set the spatial context.

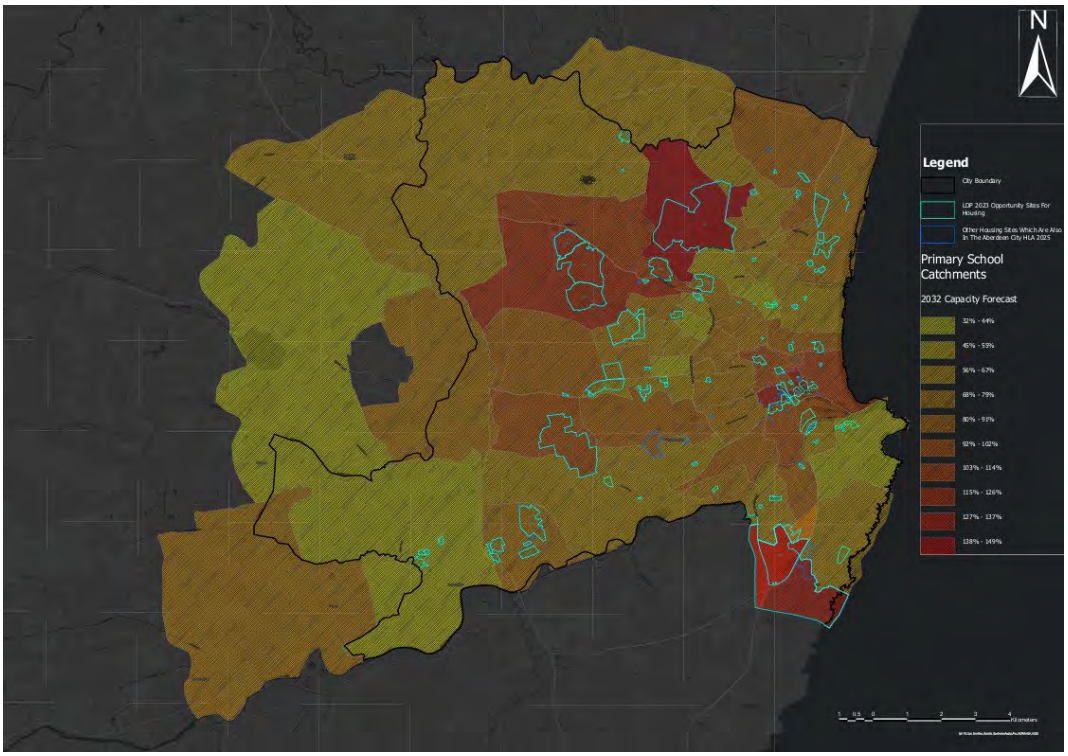


Figure 10.8 Primary School Catchments

Areas with Capacity Issues at Both Secondary and Primary Schools

10.149 When viewing the Secondary (CD352) and Primary (CD351) School Catchment maps it is evident that the area where a 2032 forecast overcapacity primary school and secondary school overlap is the Hanover Street Primary School (111%) and Harlaw Academy (133%) catchments. There is limited scope to increase capacity at Harlaw Academy and no currently planned increase in capacity for Hanover Street Primary. Currently the same applies to the overlapping Bridge of Don Academy (133%) and Forehill Primary School (149%) catchments however both are subject to feasibility studies to address capacity as set out in the School Estates Plan Action Plan and therefore there is likely to be a solution to address this which could make further housing allocations more feasible from a school infrastructure perspective.

Cross Boundary School Issues

10.150 Aberdeen City Council note that there is cross-boundary infrastructure across both Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. As such, both Councils have collaborated on specific infrastructure sections of the Evidence Report where cross-boundary infrastructure has been identified. In terms of implications for the next plan, the Council’s will continue to work together to ensure that possible housing delivery in

these areas of overlap is considered from a schools infrastructure first perspective. At present developer obligations are principally managed independently by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, with any cross-boundary requirements being identified through Local Development Plan site allocation, or Development Management procedures.

10.151 As shown in the Secondary and Primary School Catchment Maps (CD352, CD351), there are schools operated by Aberdeen City Council which currently overlap within the authority boundary of Aberdeenshire Council. Bridge of Don Academy, Dyce Academy, and Cults Academy are the secondary schools which overlap. The first two are subject to catchment review to rezone pupils from Aberdeenshire as discussed earlier. Cults Academy has a sizeable but rural area of Aberdeenshire connected to its catchment without any settlements and therefore there are unlikely to be major issues with regards to housing allocations from Aberdeenshire Council. Culter Primary and Dyce Primary also overlap however these have forecasts for significant spare capacity and therefore there are not likely to be any issues arising from housing allocated by Aberdeenshire Council in those catchments.

10.152 There are also schools which Aberdeenshire Council operate within their authority area which pupils from Aberdeen City currently use. For secondary education this includes Banchory Academy to the southwest, Westhill Academy to the west and Kemnay Academy to the northwest. The areas of overlap within Aberdeen City are peripheral greenfield areas. For primary education this includes, Drumoak to the southwest, Westhill and Skene both to the west and Kinellar to the northwest. The areas of overlap within Aberdeen City are peripheral greenfield areas. There are no current Aberdeen City housing opportunity sites within any of these catchment areas nor any Housing Land Audit sites. From Table 10.7 below it is clear that housing allocations for the next plan in Aberdeen within the Kemnay Academy catchment could be very difficult to justify from a secondary school perspective.

10.153 The conditions and forecast capacities (from ‘Aberdeenshire Council 2024 School Roll’ (CD355)) for these schools are found in the table below:

School Name	Condition (2024)	2029 Forecast Capacity
Banchory Academy	Satisfactory (B)	91%
Westhill Academy	Satisfactory (B)	87%
Kemnay Academy	Satisfactory (B)	133%
Drumoak Primary	Good (A)	70%
Westhill Primary	Satisfactory (B)	72%
Skene Primary	Satisfactory (B)	37%
Kinellar Primary	Good (A)	61%

Table 10.7: Condition and Forecast Capacity of Aberdeenshire Schools with Aberdeen City Pupils.

Current Methodology for Calculating School Roll Forecasts

10.154 The 2024 School Roll Forecast accounts for committed development over the current LDP plan period. It was informed by the 2024 Housing Land Audit. The current methodology will remain the same in future years. The basic method

involves rolling forward year by year each class roll. After this has been done, six additional factors are considered;

- Intake to primary schools – Community Health Index data provided by NHS Grampian gives information on the numbers of pre-school age children by year of birth within each school catchment area. Beyond the first four years intakes are based on recent trends taking into account changes in the projected number of births in Aberdeen.
- Transfer from primary to secondary - Not all pupils transfer to their zoned secondary school and an estimate is made of the proportion of the P7 rolls at feeder primary schools that will go into S1 at each secondary school.
- Pupils staying beyond statutory leaving age – The percentages of pupils transferring from S4 to S5 and S5 to S6 have been calculated for each secondary school for the last few years and staying on ratios have been predicted based on these trends.
- Migration – Detailed data on migration is difficult to obtain and proxy measures are used to take this factor into account. This is done by controlling the total school roll to the school age population contained in the population projections for Aberdeen, which take migration into account. This controlling factor is applied across all schools.
- Housing – Intake from pupils from new housing is considered. Sites that have been granted planning permission and are in the Housing Land Audit (for 2024 School Roll the 2024 Draft HLA was used) are included, together with housing sites identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
- Out of zone movements – the forecasting method takes into account the effect of out-of-zone movements, as some parents may choose to enrol their child at an alternative school to the one they are zoned for - this is done by adjusting the P1 intake for each primary school to reflect recent trends.

Education Methodology within Aberdeen City's Supplementary Guidance 2023: Planning Obligations (CD230)

10.155 Aberdeen City Council's 'Supplementary Guidance 2023: Planning Obligations' (CD:230) sets out the current approach to planning obligations.

10.156 Page 13 of the Supplementary Guidance sets out the circumstances of when contributions will be sought for education. Some contributions, such as for education, are based on a Standard Housing Unit Equivalent (SHUE), which is taken as a three-bedroomed house. A proposed development's SHUE is calculated using the proposed housing mix, as follows:

Number of Bedrooms	SHUE Calculation Figures
1	0.6
2	0.8
3	1 'Standard Sized House Unit Equivalent'
4	1.2
5	1.4
6	1.6

Table 10.8: SHUE calculations figures for education.

10.157 Contributions will be sought from all residential developments within the catchment of a primary and/or secondary school which is operating at over 95% of its planning capacity, or where the school roll is forecast to exceed 95% of its planning capacity as a result of the development, or cumulatively along with other identified developments in the school catchment. Capacity is defined by the most up to date school roll. The planning capacity is defined as “A physical, theoretical measure of the total number of pupils which could be accommodated in a school based on the total number of teaching areas, the size of those spaces and the class size maxima”.

10.158 The contribution is calculated as ‘the maximum number of pupils over 95% capacity’ multiplied by the ‘relevant rate’.

10.159 The maximum number of pupils over the 95% planning capacity threshold is calculated through a comparison of the school roll with and without the proposed development. A baseline school roll forecast excluding the development is run and then the SHUE of the development is entered into the housing section of the school roll forecasts. Depending on the size and likely phasing of the proposed development, the SHUE may be entered into the forecast in a single year, or phased into the forecast over a number of years to review the impact on the school roll. The maximum number of pupils over the 95% planning capacity threshold in a 5-year period is then taken. The ‘pupils per household ratio’ is based on the published roll of the zoned school or in some circumstances where a new school is required as a result of development an average across existing zoned schools or the nearest zoned school.

10.160 The relevant rate is based on the mitigation required for the impact on the school, so there are different rates for new build provision, school extension, and reconfiguration of existing classrooms. Where a contribution is required for new build provision, a proportionate land value element will also be sought as this forms part of the overall project cost. A ‘per pupil rate’ for the land value element will be based on the total land value cost, which may require an independent valuation to be undertaken.

Primary Education	
Required Mitigation	**Rate per Pupil**
New Build (Two Stream School)	£37,160 plus proportionate land value
New Build (Three Stream School)	£40,865 plus proportionate land value
Permanent Extension	£27,300*
Reconfiguration	£3,655
Secondary Education	
Required Mitigation	**Rate per Pupil**
New Build (1,000 pupil capacity)	£43,600 plus proportionate land value
New Build (1,350 pupil capacity)	£43,556 plus proportionate land value
Permanent Extension	£39,414*
Reconfiguration	£3,655

Table 10.9: Mitigation and rate per pupil

* Base date for indexation of permanent extension mitigation rates is Q4 2019

10.161 On larger residential developments where the development, as a whole or as part of a masterplan, generates the need for a new school, the developer will be required to provide an appropriate sized school site based on the following: Two Stream Primary School (up to 434 capacity) 1.2 hectares; Three Stream Primary School (up to 651 capacity) 1.8 hectares; Academy (up to 1,200 capacity) 6.2 hectares. Land provided is to be reasonably flat and serviced at the developer's expense.

Additional Support Needs (ASN)

10.162 The 'Aberdeen City Schools Accessibility Plan 2023-2026' (CD126) notes that by 2022/23 676 learners in Aberdeen schools were recorded as disabled and 39.8% of children and young people are identified as having an additional support need. The Plan seeks for all newly constructed schools in Aberdeen to be fully wheelchair accessible, although notes that some older buildings cannot easily be made fully accessible for those with limited mobility. The plan recognises the need to assess and take action where necessary to improve accessibility for those with other disabilities, such as sensory impairments, and autism. Under the Review and Evaluation section at the end of the document, an Action Plan is included. Page 3 of the Action Plan includes goals to improve the physical environment. The Plan also highlights the potential for changes to school spaces to accommodate further pupil capacity impacting the availability of spaces to support learners with ASN, for example outdoor space, sensory rooms and areas for therapy which allow dignity.

10.163 The sites in Table 10.10 below offer ASN education in Aberdeen. Capacities are based upon most recent available data which is 2024/25 school session. In each case a working capacity is determined by school staff based upon needs of the children and available staff to support. The Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2025 (CD340) instructed officers to undertake future asset reviews, which will provide an opportunity for officers to highlight pressures on capacity for individual schools and to include recommendations within the school estate plan on how best to address these. A report to the Education and Children's Services Committee in November 2024 (item 10.4) (CD341) gives some wider context about the range of types of provision in place across the city, from specialist schools to support provided in mainstream settings. Reference is made to Scottish Government Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting (CD361) which explains the duty that local authorities have to provide education for all children, including those with ASN, in a mainstream school, unless certain exceptions apply.

School	Capacity
Orchard Brae School (adjacent to Heathryburn School) - ASN education for pupils aged 3 – 18	All classrooms have a maximum capacity of 8-10 pupils. There are 3 classrooms in the early years village, 5 classrooms in the junior/middle school village, 5 classrooms in the upper school village. Class size 8 pupils for each classroom.

Mile End Primary School – Mainstream school with ASN wings	All classrooms P1 to P7 have a maximum capacity of 10 pupils. There are 3 classrooms in the P1-3 department, 4 classrooms in the P4-7 department. There is also a classroom for 8 pupils in the community wing. Classes at full capacity.
Bucksburn Academy – Mainstream schools with ASN wings	There are 8 classrooms with a maximum capacity of 10 pupils. There are 2 classrooms with a maximum capacity of 8 pupils. Classes at full capacity.

Table 10.10: ASN education in Aberdeen.

10.164 In addition to the schools listed in table 10.10, the Linn Moor School and Campus (north of Peterculter) is a social care charity led facility offering specialised education.

ASN Implications for the Proposed Plan

In terms of Implications for the Proposed Plan these are likely to be limited given the presumption in favour of including those with ASN within a mainstream school setting.

Early Years Education

10.165 The Aberdeen City Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Delivery Plan 2024-2026 (CD127) sets out the strategic direction for the delivery of ELC in Aberdeen. The strategic priorities outlined in the Plan are:

- **Priority 1:** Realising the benefits of the expansion to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare for children and families.
- **Priority 2:** Progressing the expansion of our childcare offer, including building a future system of school age childcare and a new early learning and childcare offer for one and two year olds.
- **Priority 3:** Ensuring that the delivery of our priorities is supported by a sustainable, diverse and thriving sector and profession.
  Priority 4: Ensuring that our ambitions are underpinned by fair funding and outcomes frameworks, robust data and organisations that work together to support good outcomes for children and families.

10.166 The Early Learning and Childcare Guide: 2025-2026 (CD338) sets out the locations which are eligible for Early Learning Childcare in Aberdeen on pages 19 – 22. There are 18 locations within Aberdeen Grammar catchment, 5 locations within Bridge of Don Academy catchment, 5 locations within Bucksburn Academy catchment, 7 locations within Cults Academy catchment, 3 locations within Dyce Academy catchment, 11 locations within Harlaw Academy catchment, 9 locations within Hazlehead Academy catchment, 9 locations within Lochside Academy catchment, 8 locations within Northfield Academy catchment, 6 locations within Oldmachar Academy catchment, 14 locations within St. Machar Academy catchment. The capacities of nurseries are determined primarily by the number of staff posts, due to

the statutory staff to pupil ratios which is the restricting factor rather than floorspace. Developer Obligations cannot go towards staff costs to address any capacity issues. It should be noted that the early years infrastructure is satisfactory at the time of writing and therefore there are no significant implications for the Proposed Plan as things stand.

10.167 The Aberdeen City ELC Delivery Plan 2024-2026 (CD127) sets out the strategic direction for early learning delivery in Aberdeen. It includes satisfaction survey responses.

Further Education

10.168 There are 2 Universities in Aberdeen; University of Aberdeen (the buildings of which are principally located around Old Aberdeen) and Robert Gordon University (the buildings of which are principally located in the southern part of the city at Garthdee). The North East Scotland College is another key institution to the northeast of the city centre, with additional premises at Altens. The Aberdeen College of Performing Arts is also situated near the harbour area. There are presently no major capital projects planned for these institutions known to the Council. On that basis there are no implications for the proposed plan with regards to further education.

Play, Recreation and Sport

10.169 The sports facilities located in Aberdeen, run by both private and public organisations, comprise 123 Sports Halls, 30 fitness studios, 30 squash courts, 25 swimming pools, 12 athletic tracks, 1 curling rink, 30 golf courses, 23 bowling greens, 61 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, 205 pitches of all types. Facilities associated with Play, Recreation and Sport are covered in detail in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper, which includes information upon Sportscotland Facility Planning Model 2023 Summary Reports (CD129).

10.170 The existing Supplementary Guidance: Planning Obligations (CD230) of the Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) sets the parameters for collecting developer obligations relating to local Sports and Recreation facilities. For residential developments, proposals which involve the creation of 5 or more homes are assessed for obligations.

10.171 A financial contribution for sports facilities will be required where the proposed development will have an impact on existing sports and recreation facilities and require enhancement of those facilities to maximise their use or provision of new facilities. Similar to healthcare facilities, planning applications are assessed by the relevant agency, SportAberdeen, who manage such facilities as Aberdeen City Council's relevant Arms-Length External Organisation (ALEO). SportAberdeen are responsible for utilisation of developer obligations in delivering projects that deliver required capacities.

10.172 To date, developer obligations have enabled several projects which improve sports and recreation provision for communities across the city, including sports pitches, tennis courts, swimming, golf, and ski facilities.

10.173 Further review will be required to decide on an appropriate policy position relating to developer obligations for Sports and Recreation in the Proposed Plan. The Developer Obligation Working Group and key stakeholders will review the current methodology and rates to inform any policy position within the Proposed Plan.

Other Infrastructure

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

10.174 Locations of cemeteries and burial grounds are detailed on the Council's website. Aberdeen City Council is responsible for 17 cemeteries, with new burial lairs available at Hazlehead, Newhills and Dyce cemeteries. There is no strategy in place currently which sets out a need for additional cemetery or burial space in Aberdeen.

Community Centres

10.175 There are currently 20 community centres owned by Aberdeen City Council and manged by independent third party organisations made up of local volunteers. These organisations operate entirely autonomously from the Council. Further to the 20 community centres there are three centres (Kincorth Community Centre, Froghall Centre, and Woodside Fountain Centre) that are managed in a similar manner; the buildings are owned by Aberdeen City Council but are independently operate by community groups (a community centre association Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a Development Group, and a Community Project). Voluntary organisations are responsible for day-to-day operations, including determining opening hours, organising activities, and setting fees for those activities. The Council provides annual development grants to the 20 voluntary organisations to support the operational costs associated with running the community centres, and offers in-kind contributions towards expenses such as fuel bills, repairs, and maintenance. The Council covers in-kind contributions but does not provide development grants to Kincorth Community Centre or Froghall Centre. Fersands and Fountain Community Project, who operate Woodside Fountain Centre, do not receive a 'development grant' as such, but do receive grants from the Council to fund the services they provide to the local community.

10.176 The condition of community centres is assessed using a four-tier ranking system, ranging from A to D. Currently, all 23 buildings are ranked at condition B, indicating they are in satisfactory shape, functioning well, but exhibiting some minor signs of wear. Details on each centre's condition is provided in the Condition of Community Centres and Learning Centres (CD362).

10.177 Aberdeen has 12 learning centres managed by Aberdeen City Council, with activities provided by the council or third-party organisations. The Centre Operations Officer is responsible for daily operations, including opening hours and scheduled activities. Further to these 12, two centres (Tillydrone Community

Campus, managed by a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and Greyhope Community Hub) also provides learning centres uses.

10.178 The condition of the 14 Learning Centres is rated on a four-tier system from A to D. Most centres are graded B, meaning they are satisfactory, functioning properly with only minor signs of wear. Six centres (Beacon Centre, Greyhope Community Hub, Hazlehead Learning Centre, Kaimhill Learning Centre, Mile End Community Centre and Seaton Community Centre) received an A rating, indicating they are in good condition and operating efficiently. Details on each centre's condition is provided in Condition of Community Centres and Learning Centres.

10.179 The capacity of the Community Centres and Learning Centres is determined by the maximum occupancy of the community facility, the sizes and functions of individual rooms, as well as an understanding of who they serve and how frequently these spaces are booked. This assessment is made through collaboration with centre managers, evaluating waiting lists, and existing demand for each facility. In meeting demand from new developments, consideration is also given to community facilities not in Aberdeen City Council ownership and run by third sector organisations such as village halls, church halls and scout huts. This information, along with information from assessment of gaps in local services from neighbourhood community needs profiles, such as Locality Plans, is used to assist developer obligations.

10.180 The distribution of all Aberdeen City Council owned community centres and learning centres can be viewed by the following map:

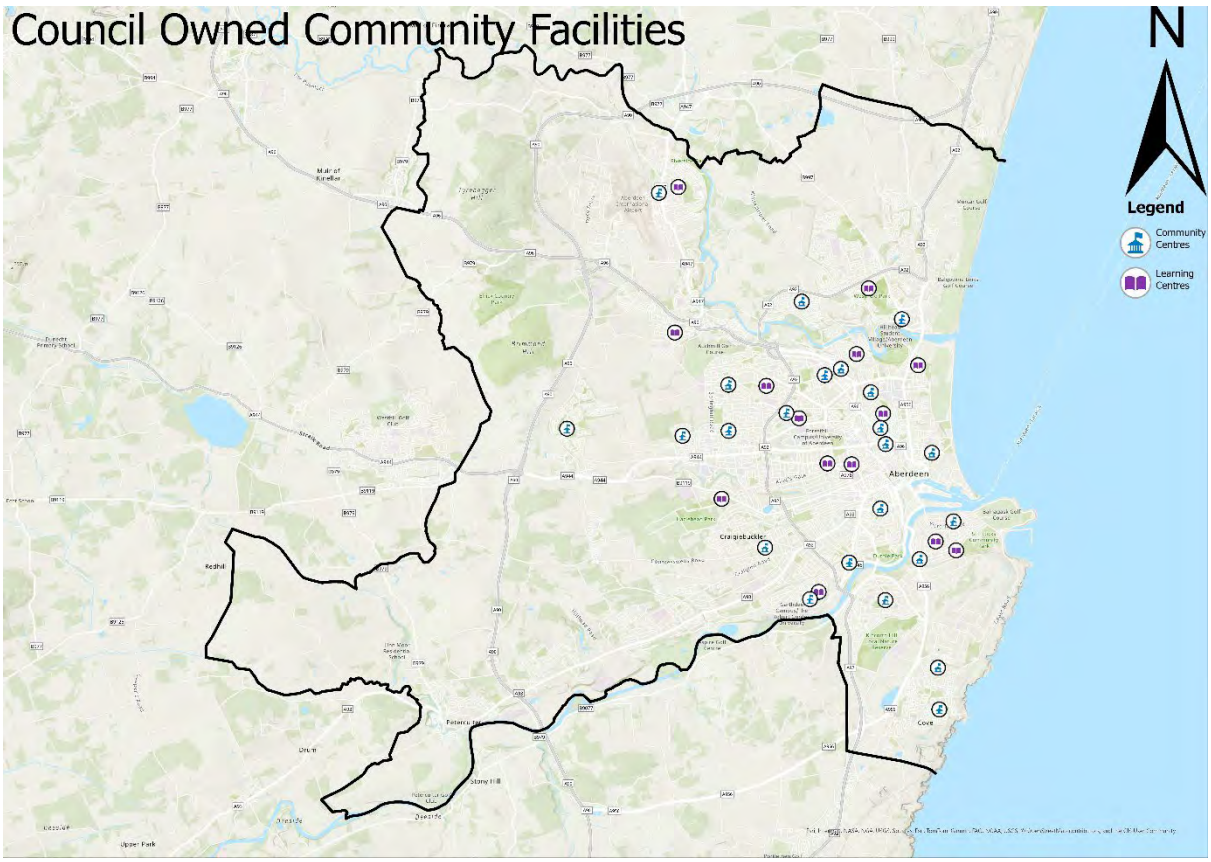


Figure 10.9 Council owned community centres and learning centres.

10.181 The existing Supplementary Guidance: Planning Obligations (CD230) of the Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) sets the parameters for collecting developer obligations. For residential developments, proposals for the creation of 5 or more homes are assessed for developer obligations toward Community Facilities. Community facilities are defined within the Supplementary Guidance: Developer Obligation (CD230) as community centres and learning centres.

10.182 Where there is deemed to be an impact on current provision from new development, the Council will seek contributions towards the creation of additional accommodation or reconfiguration of existing community facilities. To date, developer obligations have supported internal and external reconfiguration works at facilities across the city as a result of identified capacity issues.

10.183 Further review will be undertaken with the relevant services to determine whether updates to the contribution methodology or application are necessary for community facility obligations in the Proposed Plan.

Place Standard Assessment

10.184 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning (CD041). More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations.

10.185 The Facilities and Services theme of the Place Standard is relevant to this Topic Paper. The results are as follows: A score of 3.86 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below, table 10.11. Text in brackets, e.g. North, Central etc, refers to Locality Plan areas.

Place Standard Theme	**“Good” now**	**“Improve” for the future**
Facilities and Services	• Good provision of shops, within easy access (All) • Support services were good with a range of services available (All),	• Increases/improvements to health and community health services (All)

	particularly those for the elderly and the vulnerable, and children (Central) • Publicly funded facilities (community centres, libraries, school, play parks) are good. (All) • Good activities for children. • Good provision and access to all services and shops (South) • Park facilities were good locally. (South)	• Improvements and increases to publicly funded services, such as maintaining and reopening particularly libraries (All) • Improve activities for children and young people (North) • Improve road safety and crossing. (North) • Improvements to, and increased funding for, support services, such as food banks and services to help the vulnerable and elderly. (Central) • Access to affordable food (Central) •Encouraging investment and incentives for businesses to open locally (South, •Improvements to community health services and support services, and the homeless, elders, and young people (south, north) • Improve public transport to the GP (South) •Do not develop existing green space (South) • Increasing access to and the provision of shops, including bigger food shops (Central) • More investment needed to improve local facilities and services that the community want (Central)

Table 10.11: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

10.186 The children and young people results on facilities and services noted: 53.7% felt they were okay, 35.2% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great. The top three responses were as follows:

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Facilities and Services	Good shops	22.6%	Clubs	22.6%
	School	22.6%	Doctors	20.8%

	Doctors	12.3%	School	16%

Table 10.12: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

10.187 The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

Blue and Green Infrastructure

10.188 Blue and green infrastructure plays an important role in the management of rainwater runoff, flooding and sea level rise. Improving the resilience of Aberdeen to increased flooding due to climate change is a key objective. Places should be designed in a manner which utilises water as a resource rather than contributing to water runoff. There is overlap of this subject within other Topic Papers – please also refer to Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper; Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper, and Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024 (CD136)

10.189 An open space audit is used to assist with protecting and improving green spaces through the planning process and by supporting blue green infrastructure. The audit gives an understanding of the principal physical (what spaces and where they are), social (accessibility of open space, ratings of open space), and environmental (Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) etc) characteristics of the district and the principal purposes for which the land is used in relation to open space/blue and green infrastructure. The Open Space Audit will be used to update the current Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The strategy will be completed by March 2027. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.

10.190 The Audit outlines the multiple health, wellbeing, economic, and environmental benefits of Aberdeen's open spaces. A breakdown of what types of open space can be found in which areas of the city as well as their quality and accessibility is also included. Key findings from the audit are available in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper under the Open Space section.

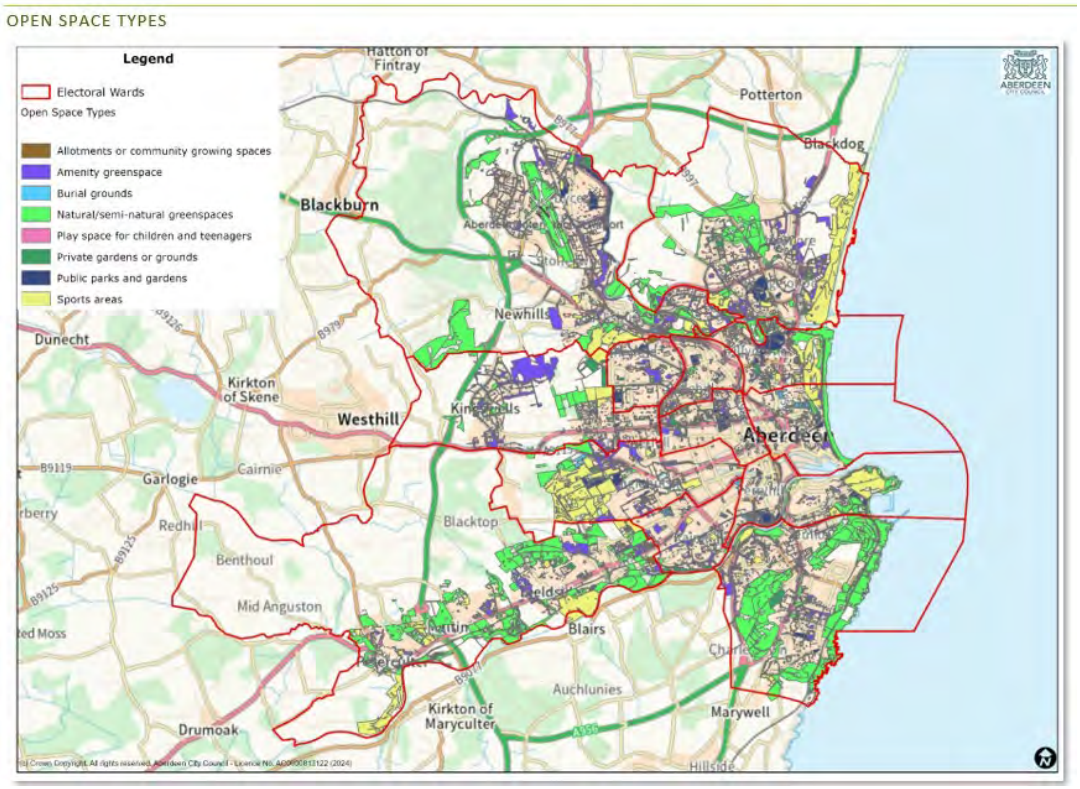


Figure 10.10: Open space types in Aberdeen.

10.191 The recent audit found that:

- 3,902 hectares of open space was surveyed (21% of the total Aberdeen area).
- The citywide average is 300 hectares of open space per ward.
- The average open space quality score in Aberdeen was 14.3 out of 25.
- The accessibility, quality and quantity of open spaces varied across different wards and open space types.
- Open space is not equally distributed across the city with some wards having limited access to green space and certain types of open space provision.

10.192 The breakdown of the different types of open space from the recent audit is shown in Figure 10.11.

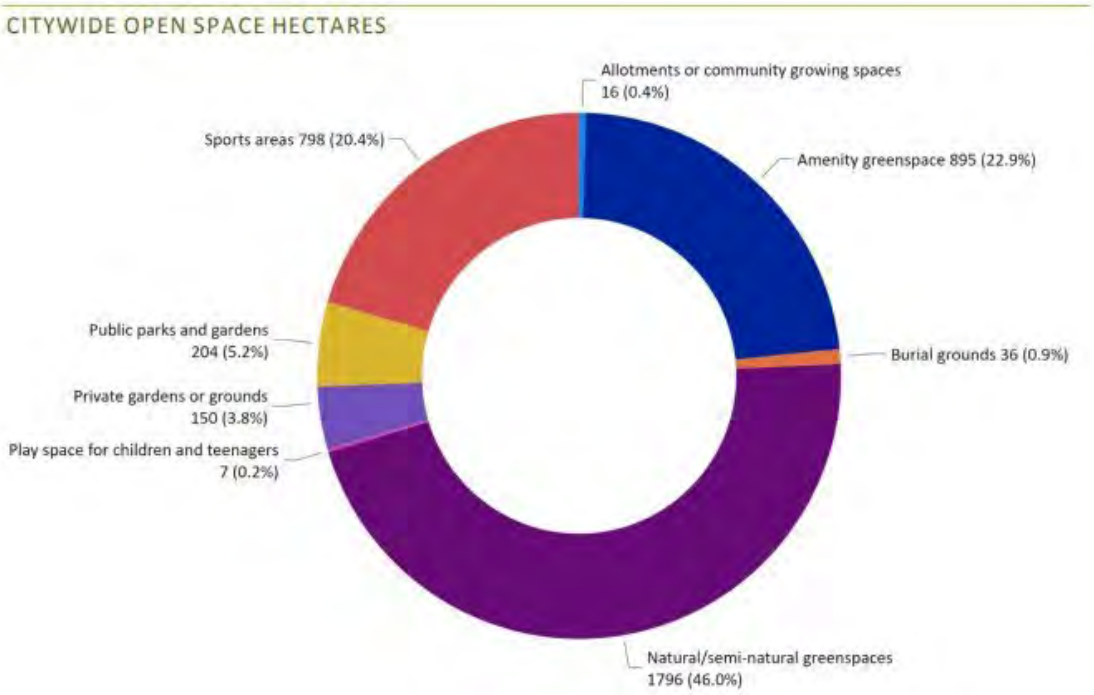


Figure 10.11: Breakdown of type of open space, Open Space Audit.

10.193 The breakdown by ward from the recent audit is shown in Figure 10.12:

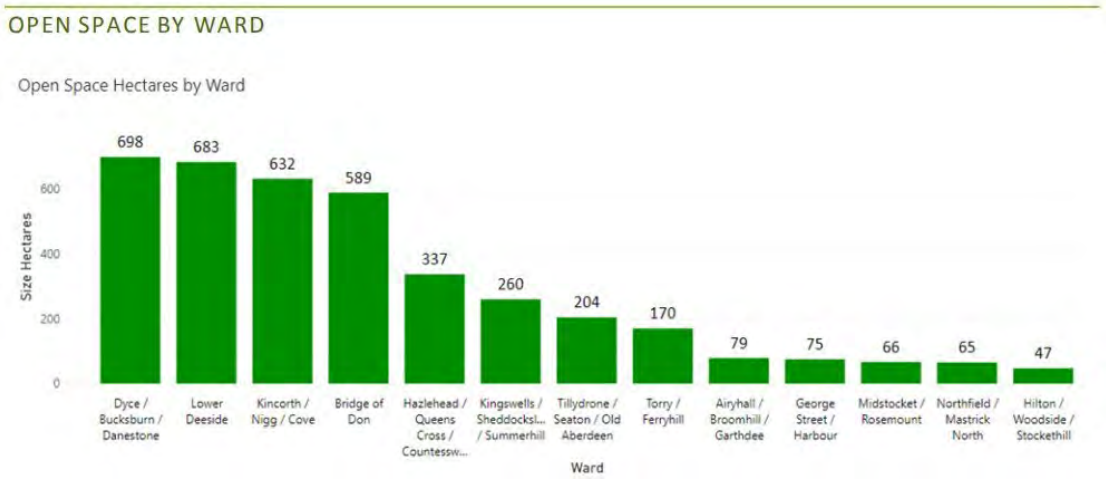


Figure 10.12: Open Space by Ward, Open Space Audit.

10.194 The average quality scores by open space type from the recent audit is shown in Figure 10.13:

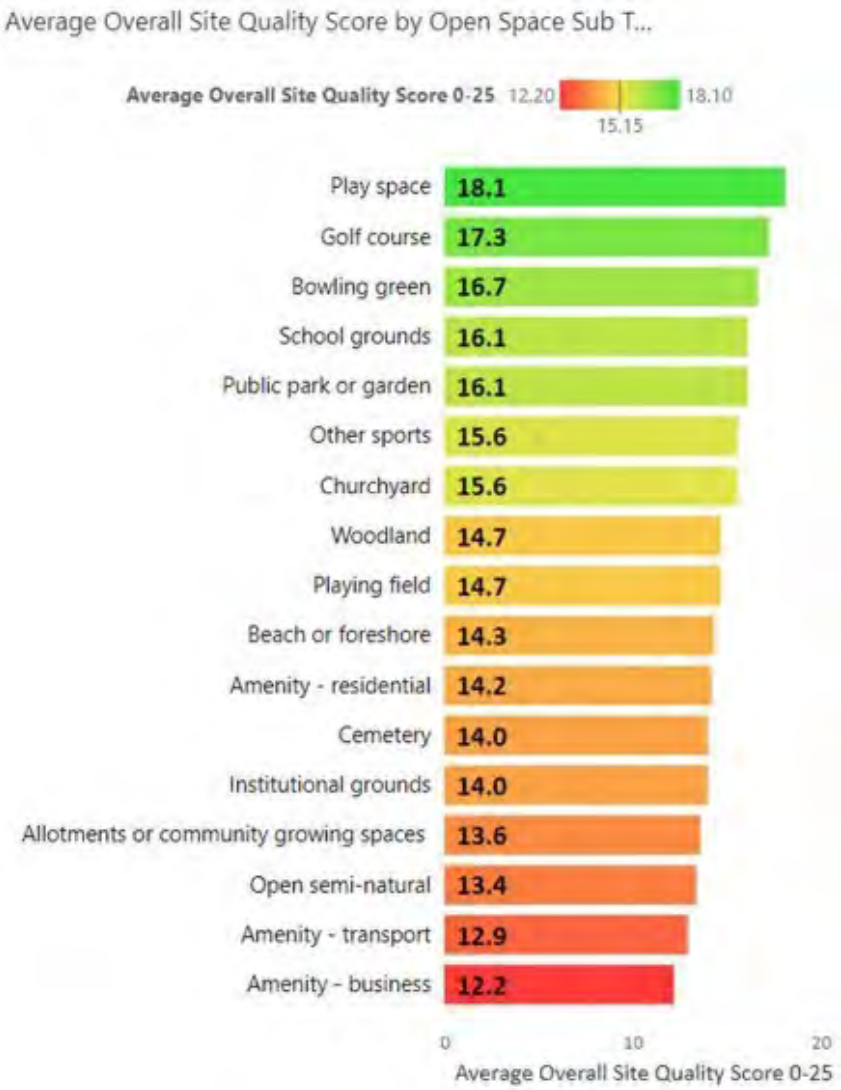


Figure 10.13: Open Space quality score by open space type, Open Space Audit.

10.195 The audit defines accessibility standards for open space in accordance with those set out in the Open Space and Green Infrastructure Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023. The thresholds are as follows: major open space (>5ha) is 1,500m, natural/semi natural greenspaces (>5ha) is 2000m, natural/semi natural greenspaces (>2ha) is 400m, outdoor sports areas is 1,200m, allotments are 800m.

10.196 For equipped play spaces, accessibility thresholds are listed as follows: local area for play is 100m, local equipment area for play is 400m, neighbourhood equipped area for play is 1,000m. The accessibility of space per ward from the recent audit is as follows, figure 10.14.

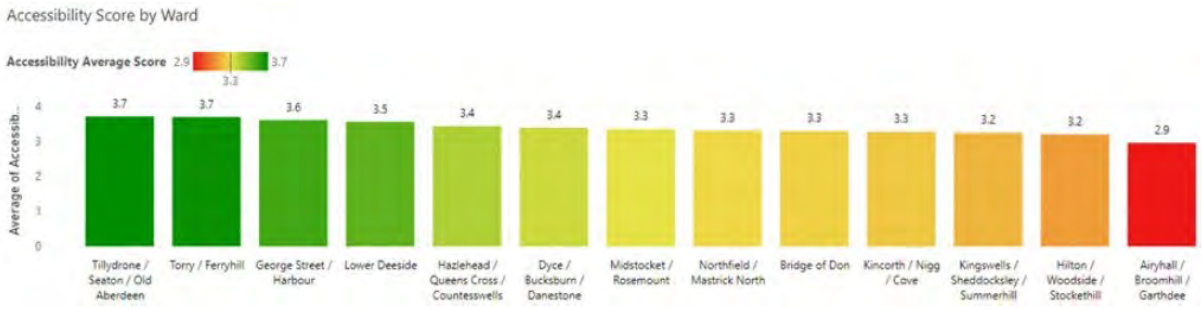


Figure 10.14: Accessibility of Open Space by Ward, Open Space Audit.

10.197 The main headlines from the recent audit are as follows:

- 63% of households in Aberdeen are within the 1500 metres of a major open space, a decrease from the 70% recorded in the previous audit. This could be attributed to new developments on the edge of the city and no new major parks having been created.
- 45% of households are within 400 metres of a natural / semi-natural greenspace greater than 2 hectares in size.
- 82% of households have access to an equipped play space, an increase from the 70% recorded in the previous audit.
- 99% of households are within 1,200 metres of an outdoor sports area.
- 49% of households are within 800 metres of an allotment site.

10.198 The existing Supplementary Guidance: Planning Obligations (CD:230) of the Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044) sets the parameters for collecting obligation relating to open space. For residential developments, obligations are asked for all proposals which involves the creation of 5 or more homes. For Commercial Developments, the parameter is all developments where the floor space exceeds 1,000 square metres.

10.199 Delivering open space on site is the Council's preferred option. However, when open space cannot be delivered on site, commuted sums for off-site provision will be sought. These funds would be utilised towards the creation of new open space or the enhancement of open space provision within the local area. The most recent Open Space Audit is used to assist with the requirement for an obligation.

10.200 To date, developer obligations have been secured in all wards within the city. Proposals for utilising developer obligations are presented by the relevant service to the Council's Developer Obligations Working Group for approval. Spend has been directed to community gardens, upgrade of open space and playparks, amongst other enhancements.

10.201 Further review will be undertaken with the relevant services to determine whether updates to the contribution methodology or application are necessary relating to Developer Obligations for Open Space obligations in the Proposed Plan.

Play Sufficiency Assessment (CD133)

10.202 Facilities associated with Play, Recreation and Sport are covered in detail in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper. This includes information on the Play Sufficiency Assessment. The assessment has been informed by consultation with children, parents and carers, play-based workshops, a bespoke play-based workshop for children with additional support needs and their families / caregivers, a formal play space quality assessment and information from the Open Space Audit 2024 for informal play spaces.

NatureScot Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention

10.203 This program focused on creating and improving green infrastructure in Scotland's towns and cities. Communities in these areas benefit from the improvement and creation of green infrastructure that helps to deliver successful multifunctional places, address inequalities, provide opportunities for better health and support sustainable economic growth. Projects were located within the 20% most deprived urban areas of Scotland with 2 projects located in Aberdeen; Middlefield Greenspace and Regeneration Project, and Foresterhill. The projects were realised in 2023.

10.204 Middlefield Greenspace and Regeneration Project, this project centres on the green space in and around the Middlefield area of the Granite City, an area first developed for housing back in the 1930s. A new high-quality outdoor recreational space addresses flooding concerns and has been created for residents to relax, socialise, and exercise in the very heart of the community. The transformation includes a variety of active travel routes, play areas, outdoor learning opportunities, wildflower meadows, and picnic areas.

10.205 NHS Grampian is transforming the grounds of Scotland’s largest hospital complex Foresterhill. The 50 hectares site includes Aberdeen’s Royal Infirmary, Children’s and Maternity hospitals. Through the introduction of green travel corridors, wildflower meadows and a sustainable drainage system they will aid the well-being of patients, staff and the wider community.

NatureScot Maximising the Benefits of Green Infrastructure in Social Housing (CD234)

10.206 This research explores opportunities to deliver multiple benefits through the good design and maintenance of Green Infrastructure associated with new and existing social housing in Scotland. The focus is on Green Infrastructure within the footprint of social housing but also the role of adjacent Green Infrastructure used by tenants. The report makes a number of recommendations, including the need to design-in green infrastructure more explicitly at the start of the housing delivery process.

10.207 Within the report is a case study of the East Tullos Burn Improvement Project at Torry, Aberdeen. The burn had suffered from poor water quality (pollution from industrial estate to the east), litter problems and poor accessibility with paths flooding. With the help of the local community, plans were drawn up that featured a new meandering course for the burn, a wetland pond area, plants and trees, and improved access around the area. The work has been completed with local school

children doing the finishing touches by planting the remaining flowers on the site. The site has become significantly more attractive after its improvement, with significantly more locals and visitors using the site now compared to before. It has also become a wildlife haven, with many birds and insects using the wild meadows as a natural habitat. Furthermore, the quality of water in the burn has also improved.

Nature Network Corridors

10.208 Nature Network Corridors are strategic routes that link up key sites of biodiversity including Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs). Policy 3 Biodiversity of NPF4 requires LDPs to '…promote nature recovery…by facilitating the creation of nature networks.' Policy 3a) requires development proposals to build and strengthen nature networks and the connections between them. NatureScot's Nature Networks Framework sets out Scotland's Nature Network – Vision for 2030 as follows: 'By 2030 Scotland will have evolving, flexible and resilient Nature Networks connecting nature-rich areas allowing wildlife and natural processes to move and adapt to land use and climate change pressures. The networks will help build people's connection to nature, providing biodiversity-rich spaces that deliver local benefits, and meet the priorities of local communities for nature.'

10.209 In order to achieve this vision it will be imperative that networks are considered across Council boundaries, which means communication with Aberdeenshire Council on this subject is important.

10.210 The initial Nature Network Corridor map for Scotland developed by AECOM uses a methodology that identifies potential ways of connecting all of Scotland's 30x30 sites, the term given to the ambition by the Scottish Government to protect 30% of Scotland by natural heritage protections by 2030. This provides an initial indication of what Scotland's Nature Networks might look like, these are ranked according to 'cost', using a 'least cost' method, '0' being the corridors of lowest cost, and '5-7' being the corridors with highest cost. This information is not definitive however it gives a good guide to local authorities. A Natural Environment Strategy is being developed for Aberdeen, this will include information on nature networks. The strategy will be completed by March 2027. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.

Vacant and Derelict Land Surveys

10.211 Unused or under-used land can be used as permanent or temporary used as green infrastructure . The Vacant and Derelict Land Surveys can be used to identity unused or under-used land. The 2024 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (CD011) has been submitted to the Scottish Government. More detail including the locations of sites can be found in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

Aberdeenshire Blue-Green Infrastructure Mapping

10.212 The Aberdeenshire Council Evidence Report states that there is an ongoing process of compiling blue-green infrastructure mapping based upon a number of

relevant datasets (SEPA, NatureScot, Open Space Polygons). This spatial information will be used in conjunction with our own Open Space Strategy in order to understand potential opportunities for improved blue and green infrastructure connectivity between Local Authority borders. Aberdeenshire Council have informed us this information will be available later in 2025.

Food Growing Strategy

10.213 Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020 is Aberdeen's first food growing strategy and has been co-produced with a range of community groups and key stakeholders. It sets out a vision that seeks to ensure access to food-growing opportunities so that everyone can reap the associated benefits to health, environment and community. Food Growing is a sub-set of the Open Space Audit, data of which is available in the Open Space Audit section above. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure but is covered in the Wellbeing of Community Topic Paper. The next Food Growing Strategy will form part of the new Natural Environment Strategy. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.

Green Space Network

10.214 The Green Space Network is a spatial layer in the Local Development Plan. It is a strategic network connecting various habitats and species, urban and rural green spaces to each other and the communities around them. It offers a wide range of social, health economic and environmental benefits. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Play, Recreation and Sport

10.215 Play areas, recreational spaces and sports pitches are important spaces to facilitate physical exercise and social interaction for all age groups. A Play Sufficiency Assessment (CD133) has been prepared. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure as covered in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.

Green Belt

10.216 The aim of the green belt is to maintain the distinct identity of Aberdeen, and the communities within and around the city, by defining their physical boundaries clearly. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Local Nature Conservation Sites

10.217 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) are identified by Local Authorities in Scotland to safeguard biodiversity and geodiversity of at least local importance. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Trees and Woodland

10.218 Trees and woodland are an essential element of our urban environment. It is widely recognised that trees provide many benefits and are a key component of urban infrastructure making our city more attractive and pleasant. Benefits include positive contribution to health, improved air quality, noise reduction, carbon storage and natural habitat. A draft Strategic Implementation Plan for Forestry and Woodland has been adopted by the Council (CD134). Although this document addresses a number of the components of a forest and woodland strategy, it does not satisfy planning legislation on this matter. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated the strategy will be completed by March 2027. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper and Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.

Aberdeen Core Paths Plan 2009 (CD196)

10.219 The Aberdeen Core Paths Plan 2009 (CD196) forms a key part of outdoor access provision and helps to support wider national, regional and local policy objectives on health, recreation, education, economic development, social inclusion, community development, sustainable transport and tourism. Local Development Plans should safeguard core paths and active travel routes and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access to wider networks as a key policy outcome. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.

Parks and Gardens

10.220 Aberdeen has a wide range of parks and green spaces. In total Aberdeen has 14 public parks and gardens as well as countryside parks, nature reserves, trails and 3,000 acres of publicly owned accessible woodlands. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Blue Infrastructure

10.221 Within Aberdeen, the coast and the two main rivers, the River Don in the north and the River Dee in the south, are the primary blue infrastructure. Other water bodies and tributaries to note include Corby Loch, Rubislaw Quarry, North Burn of Rubislaw, Inchgarth Reservoir and Loirston Loch. In addition to the coastal area these also form important parts of the blue infrastructure framework. Coastal Development ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

10.222 Flood Risk and Water Management implications are required at site selection stage and consent stage, with a focus on ensuring that development avoids areas of flood risk as a primary principle, and where this is not viable, to mitigate and reduce the risk and vulnerability to flooding. Aberdeen Adapts 2022 (CD016) outlines the

challenges on infrastructure posed by climate change; increase flood risk, coastal erosion and watercourse flooding, and the key plans and strategies that will inform areas of risk. Flood Risk and Water Management ties in closely with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper. There is a section concerning the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (CD312).

10.223 A new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is required as part of the new Local Development Plan. A draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (CD312) had been prepared that has subsequently been amended to address a number of action points raised by SEPA following consultation. Flood defences and flood studies with Aberdeen City Council's boundary, have been mapped and are publicly accessible via Aberdeen City Council's Open Spatial Data. The SFRA will be updated with sites during the Development Plan adoption process. This is covered in the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper.

10.224 'SEPA Evidence Sources by NPF4 Policy Topics' sets out the SEPA evidence and external evidence sources it seeks to cover blue and green infrastructure. The link to the aquaculture map for Scotland does not have implications for Aberdeen. Much of the evidence listed focuses specifically on blue infrastructure and will be used to inform the spatial strategy of the next Local Development Plan. Please see the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper and Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information. This evidence is as follows:

- The Local Flood Risk Management Plan North East Local Plan District 2022-2028 (CD287) - This includes Flood Risk Management Plan datasheets for potentially vulnerable areas (Aberdeen City North, Aberdeen City South, Peterculter, Cove and Nigg Bay).
- Dynamic Coast – A range of sources which relate to coastal changes which are a result of projected climate change.
- CREW Assessing climate change impacts on the water quality of Scottish Standing Waters (CD233) – This document sets out the expected patterns of change to the UK water environment which may influence decision for the next plan.
- CREW Moderating Extremes in Water Availability in Scotland: A Review of the Role of Functioning Wetlands (CD232) – This includes a quantity of technical information which cab inform land use planning. Aberdeen has some wetland habitats around its rivers and in locations such as Seaton Park. The provided documents will inform the next plan in terms of protections of these sites and opportunities for expansion where possible.
- Habitat Map of Scotland and the Carbon and Peatland map 2016 – Includes an array of data relating to ground conditions which can have implications for water runoff.
- SEPA The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 (CD036) – This document sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment across Scotland. This includes water quality, fish migration, physical condition amongst other things.

- SEPA Water Classification hub 2021, which will be updated in 2025 – This is the information that underpins The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027.
- SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning Version 5 (CD037) - This guidance sets out required allowances for climate change that must be used for flood risk assessment following the adoption of National Planning Framework 4. This is primarily a technical paper, and the information is designed to inform flood risk assessments, which in turn inform land use planning.
- Scotland's Bathing Waters – This concerns up to date monitoring on water quality for bathing. It includes bathing profiles for Aberdeen and Aberdeen Harbour (Black Sands) which outline potential pollution sources, mitigation measures being undertaken, information on reporting and responding to pollution incidents.
- SEPA Water Scarcity – This webpage includes a water scarcity report (and previous reports) which references the north east (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire). The page contains general guidance in relation to water abstraction during significant water scarcity event. This information will have some tangential relevance to the preparation on the new plan.
- SEPA Coastal maps – Coastal mapping, see Spatial Topic Paper for more details.
- SEPA Data Publication – A wide array of data sources related to the environment which can be used to inform the next plan. SEPA have specifically highlighted the following sources to the Council in relation to blue infrastructure:

    1. Recommended riparian corridor layer –this provides evidence and advice on the recommended width a blue corridor should be if it is to both protect the water feature and provide multiple benefits.
    2. Riparian vegetation enhancement opportunities, with for example, the Den Burn identified as a high priority.
    3. Obstacles to fish migration – which identifies issues on both the Don and the Den waterways.
    4. Water Environment Fund projects –for example the East Tullos Burn project.
    5. Geomorphic Risk layer.
    6. Scottish Wetland Inventory layer.

10.225 SEPA, Scottish Water and Aberdeen City Council worked collectively on a sustainable growth agreement, the 'Aberdeen City Blueprint', which sought to develop a joint decision-making approach to manage rainwater more effectively and in ways that bring about wider benefits beyond reduced flooding. The outputs of the project should provide specific evidence in planning for Blue Green Infrastructure for surface water management. This work has concluded and resulted in Scottish Water working with the Scottish Government to bring about legislative changes relating to surface water flooding and infrastructure mechanisms.

10.226 Within SEPA's 'Evidence Sources by NPF4 Policy Topics' paper, there are 3 NPF4 Policy Areas which include reference to 'Nature Networks'. These are Biodiversity, Natural Places and Forestry and Woodland. Table 10.13 below includes all sources of data which relate directly to the water environment under these 3 policy headings.

Evidence Source	NPF4 Policy	Summary
SEPA Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Management Maps	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	SEPA maps showing areas which can, or are likely to, flood from rivers, the sea. and surface water.
SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning (CD037)	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	Guidance on land use planning and flood risk based on SEPA's interpretation of national planning policy and duties and requirements under relevant legislation.
SEPA Water Scarcity Data	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	Mapping and data on water scarcity in Scotland
SEPA Water Classification Hub	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	Interactive maps which show condition status of Scotland's surface waters, ground waters, protected areas, bathing waters and shellfish waters (not relevant to Aberdeen).
SEPA The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 (CD036)	Biodiversity,	A framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment across Scotland.
SEPA Data Publication datasets	Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodland and Trees.	Includes data on Scottish Wetland Inventory, river and coastal catchments, water environment classification data, obstacles to fish migration, geomorphic risk layer, riparian vegetation planting opportunities, Water Environment Fund existing completed and potential locations, river anthropogenic modification index, riparian vegetation condition layer.
Carbon and Peatland Map and Scottish Bare Peat Viewer	Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodland and Trees.	The types of peat shown on the Carbon and Peatland Map are: • carbon-rich soils • deep peat • priority peatland habitat

		Scottish Bare Peat Viewer shows the larger extents of bare peat as classified from Sentinel 2 imagery collected in the summer of 2018. Data not relevant to Aberdeen at present.
Habitat Map of Scotland (HabMoS)	Biodiversity,	The national repository for habitat and land use data. It includes mapping of land cover, coastal and vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, sand dune vegetation, native woodland.
Information on past flooding events held by LA and SEPA	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	SEPA and the Council's records and knowledge of historic flooding.
Moderating Extremes in Water Availability: A Review of the Role of Functioning Wetlands (CD232)	Biodiversity,	A review of Scotland's wetlands in moderating extremes in water availability. The report considers current and future buffering capacity to high and low water flows.
Dynamic Coast	Natural Places.	Webpage for Dynamic Coast project which aims to provide the strategic evidence base on the extent of coastal erosion in Scotland by: 1. Improving the evidence on coastal change 2. Improving the awareness of coastal change 3. Supporting decision-makers to ensure Scotland's coast and assets can adapt to our future climate. Page includes research summary and national overview.
Aberdeen Adapts Climate Adaptation Framework 2022 (CD016)	Natural Places.	There is a section within which outlines Flooding and coastal change. The Framework sets out the challenges: 1. Manage increased risk of flooding rivers, surface water and coastal. 2. Manage our outdoor spaces in ways that can help reduce the extent of flooding, providing space for flood water and absorbing rainfall through greenspace. 3. Reduce pressure on drainage systems. 4. Adapt buildings that are already at risk, so they are less likely to be damaged by flood water and easier to clean up if flood water does occur.

		5. Build understanding of and reduce levels of urban creep adding to risks of surface water flooding. 6. Increase understanding of the dynamics of soft coastal areas. 7. Strengthen coastal areas from inundation, wave overtopping and erosion. 8. Implement actions at a pace with change. Goals are listed as follows; Manage and minimise flooding, Increase in nature based solutions, Protecting watercourses and coastline. Objectives are listed as supporting grey and green flood protection measures, Expand the use of blue green infrastructure in new development and regeneration, Develop a shoreline management plan, building on existing studies, to protect people, places, nature and heritage at the coast, Strong catchment planning to help protect water quality and quantity, as well as reduce impacts from temperature, flooding and pollution on aquatic life.

Table 10.13: SEPA recommended Nature Network sources

Digital Infrastructure

10.227 Broadband connectivity and mobile signal are the key elements that underpin digital infrastructure and communication. It is important that businesses and people in Aberdeen have access to up-to-date digital services. Digital infrastructure is a crucial element in supporting economic, cultural and social activity, in assisting service delivery and allowing flexible, hub and home-based working practices which can reduce travel. There is a responsibility for planning authorities to support the roll out of digital infrastructure, while balancing this against the need to ensure that the infrastructure does not result in unnecessary visual impacts.

10.228 The Aberdeen City local authority geography is well covered by 4G, 5G and broadband. The map below, Figure 10.15 shows all approved but unbuilt and existing ground based telecommunications masts which support 4G and 5G coverage within the city boundary.

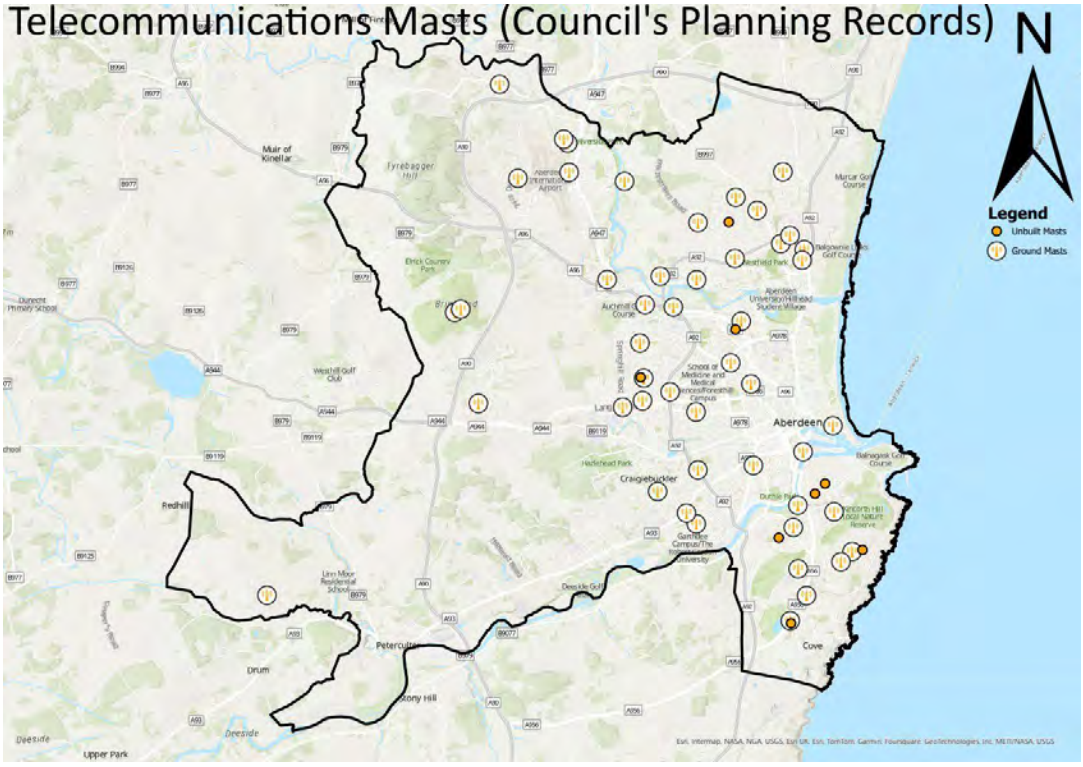


Figure 10.15: Location of Telecommunication Masts. Orange dots represent approved but unbuilt ground masts, yellow circles existing ground masts.

4G and 5G Coverage

10.229 The Ofcom 2023 update report shows that 4G coverage by all providers is available at some 99.57% of premises in the City (outdoors) and 96.14% of premises (indoors). 4G indoor coverage from at least one provider is available at 99.99% of premises within the City and 96.28% of premises in the City have 5G high confidence coverage from at least one provider.

10.230 Wireless Infrastructure Group in partnership with Aberdeen City Council has deployed wireless infrastructure using a network of small cells attached to lampposts and traffic lights to improve mobile coverage and capacity across Aberdeen's city centre. O2 is the first mobile operator to launch its services using the infrastructure. O2 will initially run advanced 4G services but the fibre-connected small cells pave the way for 5G by enabling even faster speeds, lower latency and better coordination between cells than traditional network methods. See link for more information; Small cells for Aberdeen | Wireless Infrastructure Group.

10.231 Mobile phone networks are provided and operated in the UK by four main commercial providers, known as Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). They are; EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. Information on these networks is commercially sensitive and not known to Aberdeen City Council. Some indication of coverage is provided online at www.nperf.com however this information is based on computer modelling only. The Wireless Infrastructure Providers (WIPs) that provide fixed line connectivity are City Fibre, Openreach and Virgin Media O2.

Superfast Broadband Coverage

10.232 The Scottish Government funded 'Delivering on our Commitment in Scotland (2020)' document outlines the progress made through the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Rest of Scotland (RoS) programme to connect homes and businesses to fibre broadband infrastructure through commercial deployment. A summary of the changes in fibre broadband coverage and speed from 2012 to 2018 are noted below, table 10.14.

Location	Assumed % of premises connected to fibre broadband through commercial deployment (starting point) (OMR 2012)	End of contract 1 coverage ≥ 24Mbps	End of contract 1 coverage
Aberdeen	72.4%	97.1%	97.9%
Glasgow	75.5%	98.7%	98.8%
Edinburgh	89.1%	98.6%	98.8%
Dundee	95%	99.2%	99.4%
Rest of Scotland	71.1%	94.8%	98.2%

Table 10.14: Summary fibre broadband coverage and speed from 2012 to 2018.

10.233 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 v2 outlines the percentage of premises without access to superfast broadband (at least 30Mb per second (Mbps)) download speed in Scotland. The data zones with poorest access to superfast broadband in areas of Aberdeen are shown below, table 10.15.

Area	Data Zone	Percentage Without access to 30Mbps
George Street - 04	S01006648	58.6%
Culter - 07	S01006512	53.8%
George Street - 02	S01006646	42.0%
City Centre West - 05	S01006586	41.1%
Oldmachar West - 06	S01006767	41.0%
Oldmachar East - 07	S01006774	39.9%
Oldmachar East - 02	S01006769	39.4%
Bucksburn South - 01	S01006738	32.5%
Kingswells - 01	S01006732	32.1%
Tillydrone - 04	S01006678	31.8%
Cove North - 01	S01006619	31.1%
City Centre East - 01	S01006587	30.2%
Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber East - 02	S01006519	30.0%

Dyce - 06	S01006754	29.37%
Hazlehead - 04	S01006550	28.1%
Oldmachar West – 01	S01006762	26.1%
Hazlehead – 03	S01006549	26.0%
Old Aberdeen - 01	S01006671	26.0%
Denmore - 03	S01006787	25.8%
Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber West- 05	S01006517	25.7%

Table 10.15: Data zones with poorest access to superfast broadband.

10.234 Reaching 100% (R100) is a Scottish Government programme to enable access to superfast broadband (speeds of at least 30Mbps) to every home and business in Scotland by 2021. The R100 contract for the North was signed in December 2020 and overall contract build is currently expected to be complete 2027-28. As noted in the City Region Deal Joint Committee Report, within the Aberdeen City Region (CD291), over 4,200 premises have now been connected to full-fibre FTTP broadband through the R100 programme. Over 12,000 connections are still planned between 2024 and 2028. This equates to a 26% completion rate as of January 2024.

10.235 The programme relies on fibre optic cables from properties to the exchange and availability and/or capacity at the exchange. The availability or capacity at an exchange is a commercial matter. However, the next LDP can ensure that the infrastructure is installed so that new homes and businesses can be served by superfast broadband should this become available in their area. Consultation with BT will inform whether sites and/or routes require to be safeguarded through the next LDP for future exchanges and associated equipment.

Full Fibre and Gigabit Coverage

10.236 Table 10.16 shows the breakdown for full fibre and gigabit-capable network coverage and includes projections to January 2028. Ofcom's Planned Network Deployment data for 2025 can be found following the link: Connected Nations - Planned Network Deployments 2025 - Ofcom

Aberdeen City Dataset	**Total Number**
All Premises	131,689
All Matched Premises	131,577
Number of Prem. With Full Fibre Availability	119,667
Number of premises with Full Fibre availability (Urban)	113,079
Number of premises with Full Fibre availability (Rural)	6,588
Number of premises with Gigabit availability	119,667
Number of premises with Gigabit availability (Urban)	113,079
Number of premises with Gigabit availability (Rural)	6,588
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2026 (HC plans only)	120,495

Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2027 (HC plans only)	122,588
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (HC plans only)	125,424
Number of urban properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by Jan 2028 (HC plans only)	118,241
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2026 (all plans)	121,087
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2027 (all plans)	124,334
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	128,731
Number of urban properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	120,663
Number of properties expected to have Full Fibre coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	128,731
Number of planned properties for which funding is through public funds	482
Number of gigabit-capable operators anticipated to be operating in the area by January 2028 (all plans) [min, max]	(1,5)
Number of properties for which 2 or more gigabit-capable operators are anticipated to be present by January 2028 (all plans)	100,353
Number of properties for which 3 or more gigabit-capable operators are anticipated to be present by January 2028 (all plans)	313
Number of postcodes without any gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	62

Table 10.16: Full fibre and Gigabit Coverage, Aberdeen City. 2025 data.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Initial Submission Summary of Stakeholder Engagement.

10.237 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy (Section 7).

10.238 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in July 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Infrastructure, Transport and Communications. This paper was split in two in September 2024; becoming the Sustainable Transport Paper and the Infrastructure and Communication Paper. The following text relates to the Infrastructure and Communication Paper.

10.239 An early draft form of the Topic Paper was presented to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request for comments on the emerging draft and or confirmation that they agreed with the evidence sources cited or had suggestions

for further additions. Comments upon the drafts and further information sources were noted and added to the paper where appropriate.

10.240 The evidence presented within this paper was then circulated in an updated draft during January 2025 to a number of key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This included:

- NHS Grampian
- Scottish Water
- SEPA
- Sport Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- Cellnex UK
- Aberdeen International Airport
- Civil Aviation Authority
- OfCom
- 02/Vodaphone
- Three
- Cycle Forum
- Aberdeen City Council (Developer Obligations, Education, Environmental Policy, Roads Project and Engineering)

10.241 A 8 week public engagement then took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 14 responses in total were received on this paper, 5 from organisations (Scottish Water, SEPA, NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Shell UK Limited) 2 from a housing developer, (Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland, Bancon Homes), and 6 members of the public. Of those listed, 5 stated that evidence was missed and 5 stated that they did not agree with the evidence.

10.242 In addition further meetings were held this included:

- Housing Summits, held in October 2024, March 2025
- FIRS Group convened in February 2025, March 2025
- Meetings with individual housebuilders and Homes for Scotland
- Meetings with NatureScot and Nestrans

10.243 Scottish Water submitted further information on treatment works capacities in Aberdeen. We have included this information and explanatory text within the Paper.

10.244 An email was sent to Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as dispute.

10.245 An email was sent on 24 June 2025 to a member of the public who disputed the paper. No response was received to date; therefore the comment has been treated as a dispute.

10.246 SEPA stated that they are likely to be content with the sufficiency of evidence subject to the recommended additions (and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – referenced in the Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper). It welcomes inclusion of a section on blue infrastructure within this Topic Paper. It notes that this section includes all evidence sources listed on its Planning Advice Note on achieving sufficiency of evidence.

- SEPA sought additional text within the Implications section relating to blue and green infrastructure and how it will influence the site assessment and selection process. We have included text which explains that blue and green infrastructure, and any related strategies, will be taken into account as part of the site selection process.
- SEPA sought further information, in line with Planning Advice Note, on water environment information/data for nature network planning. There are 3 NPF4 Policy areas in the Planning Advice Note which reference nature networks, and all evidence sources under these Policy areas which relate to water have now been included within a table in the text. There is a corresponding paragraph of text in the Summary of Implications section which sets out briefly the implications of each evidence source.

10.247 NatureScot offered some positive commentary on the inclusion of blue and green infrastructure in the paper and consideration of nature networks and brownfield sites as a part of this. They are positive about inclusion of Aberdeenshire Council's Nature Network being included in order to support habitat connectivity and alignment with NPF4. They have expressed opinion that the implications section should be more specific to Aberdeen. They cite the example where we have stated capacity and condition of infrastructure will influence chosen allocations in the spatial strategy and believe it would be useful for the paper to set out what these implications were. The Summary of Implications has been updated to be more specific.

10.248 Homes for Scotland state that we have not missed any evidence. They confirmed on the 16th June 2025 that they do not dispute the evidence in the Topic Paper. Bancon Homes emailed (6th June 2025) to confirm that they do not dispute the evidence in the Topic Paper. They state that we have missed evidence and that they do not agree with the evidence used in the Topic Paper. They reference the following for inclusion:

- Scottish Government planning guidance for local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods - This is covered in the Place Topic paper and we do not believe it necessary to reference again in this paper.
- Homes for Scotland Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen – this has been included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- NHS Scotland Measuring Use of Health Services by Equality Group - Bancon state this should be included as it outlines the use of health services according to demographic groups. We consider this document to have limited value from a planning perspective. It is a document which focusses on the

duties of the NHS to deliver its equalities outcomes. It does not appear to include evidence which could inform the next Local Development Plan.

- 2018-based Population Projections by Council Area in Scotland, (2018) National Records for Scotland. Population statistics for mid-2023 are included within the Housing Topic Paper and it is not considered necessary to duplicate in this paper.
- 2022 Census Health information – This information is referenced in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.
- NHS Scottish Public Health Observatory – PHO profiles are referenced in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper

10.249 Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland both stated the importance of new homes upon the social, health, wellbeing and economic success of the region and Homes for Scotland stated that there is a housing emergency which should underpin site selection, an opinion which is noted but does not require action in the Evidence Report.

10.250 Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland both made comments regarding their opinions on the principle of charging Developer Obligations to homebuilders in relation to healthcare facilities and other comments relating to healthcare. With regards to the application of an infrastructure first policy, healthcare infrastructure is defined within 'The Planning Circular 4/2025: Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements' (CD356) as including:

> "health *and social care services – including both services provided in the community directly by Health Boards and services provided on their behalf by contractors such as GPs, dentists and pharmacists".*

10.251 The Council is therefore satisfied that it is appropriate to collect obligations to address the impact of housing development upon GP services even in instances where such services are privately owned.

10.252 Planning applications are assessed by NHS Grampian to determine site-specific or cumulative impacts of new development upon the relevant healthcare infrastructure. A contribution is sought on the basis of the proposed impact, in line with the tests of Circular 4/2025.

10.253 Bancon Homes also made comment in relation to the academies which are likely to exceed 95% capacity by 2030 and their opinion that growth should be directed towards sites at Cults and Peterculter where there is capacity. It is not the role of the Evidence Report to make decisions on such matters, only to present evidence and highlight gaps in the existing evidence. Homes for Scotland made a number of comments in relation to Schools. They proposed a sequential approach to addressing education capacity constraints, including interim mitigation measures, catchment reviews, school extensions, and pupil product modelling. The Council can confirm that a sequential approach is already used which includes the measured mentioned.

10.254 Shell UK Limited confirmed by email 5 June 2025 that it does not dispute the Topic Paper. It stated that we have missed evidence. They have stated that the paper should include reference to the Major Accident Hazard Pipelines as being important to the Infrastructure Topic. In response we have referenced the Major Accident Hazard Pipeline evidence which is included within the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper under the Health and Safety section.

10.255 Shell UK Limited commented that NPF4 Policy 18 requires development plans to take account of potential impacts on infrastructure including cross boundary infrastructure and therefore the Topic Paper should reference nationally significant pipelines infrastructure. The reference to the information in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper is deemed to be sufficient. National Pipeline infrastructure will have limited implications for Aberdeen City. While we are satisfied to reference the Major Accident Hazard Pipeline it is not infrastructure which, if not delivered, could prevent development coming forwards.

Resubmission Summary of Stakeholder Engagement.

10.256 Further engagement took place between November 2025 and July 2026 with NHS Grampian, Aberdeen City Council (Education Department, Community Learning and Development, Developer Contributions Team), and Aberdeenshire Council through regular forum meetings. A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, see Section 7.

10.257 A draft version of the updated Topic Paper was sent on 02 July 2026 to stakeholders who had made comments or had disputes to the previous version of the chapter, and to all Aberdeen FIRS members.

10.258 Through FIRS correspondence, SEPA observed the text relating to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has not been updated to reflect the current position. The text has been updated to note SEPA provided a statement of support for the SFRA on 26 February 2026.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Infrastructure First

10.259 NPF4 states that LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Infrastructure First is defined as “putting infrastructure consideration at the heart of placemaking”. The LDP Guidelines state that this involves the consideration of infrastructure implications at every stage of the plan making process, and in particular at the early stages when initial thinking is being given to opportunities and challenges for an area and how it may evolve in the future. It is worth repeating paragraph 41 of the LDP Guidelines at this point; “An

infrastructure first approach, as set out in the glossary of NPF4, is key to plans that deliver. This means, in preparing LDPs:

- putting infrastructure considerations at the heart of spatial planning;
- infrastructure 'thinking' should be an integral part of the plan preparation process, from the outset;
- ensuring a robust evidence base including on infrastructure capacity and condition;
- infrastructure considerations should inform site selection and the evolution of the spatial strategy, not be a by-product of it; and
- LDPs and their Delivery Programmes should be clear about infrastructure need and how it will be delivered, so that ambitions are realised.

10.260 This Evidence Report sets out a robust evidence base in respect of Aberdeen's infrastructure capacity and condition. This is set out in detail in this Topic Papers on Infrastructure and also Sustainable Transport in particular, although the infrastructure first theme is integral throughout the Evidence Report. This in turn feeds into the site selection process whereby our Site Assessment and SEA Checklist considers the impact that proposals may have on infrastructure. Site assessments include consideration of impacts upon infrastructure for education, healthcare, transport (road network, public transport, path network), water/wastewater, drainage, green and blue infrastructure and energy utilities. Where impacts are identified the SEA can signpost potential mitigation (see Appendix 1).

10.261 The infrastructure elements of Site Assessment and SEA Checklist can be informed by the information provided by the Evidence Report and relevant Core Documents referenced therein. Further evidence will also be provided by the Connectivity Analysis and through updated studies such as the Cumulative Transport Appraisal, Natural Heritage Strategy and so on.

10.262 Evidence shows that there is limited spare capacity, particularly in respect of transport, education and health infrastructure. In terms of schools, all of Aberdeen's academies are forecast to be at or over capacity in 2032 apart from Cults Academy (88%) and Northfield Academy (68%). Seven primary schools are forecast to have capacity issues in 2032. Similarly, all medical practices around Aberdeen have capacity issues with the most severe pressure being felt in areas around Bridge of Don, Bucksburn and Kincorth. Further housebuilding (arising from new allocations or unexpected windfalls) could have an impact on these and other infrastructure facilities.

10.263 This will require us to take a comprehensive and pragmatic approach to site selection and allocating land for new development, to ensure that new development can be delivered alongside existing or new supporting infrastructure. A variety of approaches will be required, with some examples given below.

Health, Education and other Services and Facilities

10.264 For Health, Education and other Services and Facilities, a sequential approach to infrastructure first could be used to explore the following options, either individually or in-combination;

1. Allocating development to areas where there is the capacity to accommodate infrastructure requirements. As noted above, there are likely to be very limited (if any) opportunities for this scenario to occur, in which case we would look at the next option.
2. Some capacity issues may be overcome through adjusting existing infrastructure. For example internal reconfigurations of schools, medical centres or other community facilities may increase capacity. Changing school or medical centre catchment boundaries may free up capacity in certain areas - albeit at the expense of capacity in others. Where these options are exhausted, we would look at the next option.
3. Enhancements to existing infrastructure could increase capacity, for example extensions to schools, medical centres and other facilities. This could potentially add significant capacity in some cases. In other cases though, it may not be physically possible to extend a building or facility due to the constrained nature of a site. In these instances we would look to the next option.
4. Providing new infrastructure through for example building new schools etc or relocating to larger premises. It may be possible to co-locate several types of infrastructure into one facility – for instance a community school campus that incorporates other services and facilities. This in turn could ease capacity elsewhere in the wider area.
5. Using larger allocations or combined allocations clustered close together to create economies of scale may be able to deliver the larger scale infrastructure and other facilities necessary to support them and which could also be used to reduce pressure to other areas.
6. The final option would be not to allocate new developments in severely constrained areas or where the mitigation required to overcome constraints would make developments unviable.

10.265 The evidence on existing infrastructure, both spatially and in terms of capacity and condition, will have implications on any chosen allocations within the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan. Timelines for changes to infrastructure, where known, will also inform decision making. The Proposed Plan must consider infrastructure constraints faced in the city and in planning future development needs to identify the key investment priorities.

10.266 Evidence and stakeholder input will also inform the Proposed Plan in terms of safeguarding sites for new schools, health facilities, transport, water and drainage infrastructure, community facilities etc. The Proposed Plan will need to consider implications for the Council estate and assets. Consideration to be given to the ability to fund new capital projects as well as consolidation, modernisation and opportunities for co-location on the existing estate.

10.267 The current supplementary guidance on developer obligations will need to be reviewed. With the removal of statutory supplementary guidance, consideration will need to be given to the use of a local policy and / or planning guidance to support National Planning Policy.

10.268 Where possible, the planning authority will identify how, when and by whom infrastructure will be delivered. Early engagement with stakeholders will help identify opportunities for shared resources such as community hubs. It will be necessary for the Proposed Plan to understand and identify which sites may be required to contribute to which facilities via developer obligations.

10.269 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

Blue and Green Infrastructure

10.270 The spatial strategy will seek to protect, enhance and expand blue and green infrastructure. Consequently the sites selection process will take existing blue and green infrastructure, the potential linkages between such areas, and any relevant strategies relating to blue and green infrastructure, into account.

10.271 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies on blue and green infrastructure.

10.272 The Proposed Plan will be informed by the Natural Environment Strategy. Nature Networks, including the requirement for 30 x 30 for biodiversity improvement will impact on land use designations. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

10.273 The Open Space Audit 2024 and Open Space Strategy will help form an understanding of the current quantity, quality and spreads of assets, and identify areas of improvement. The Proposed Plan may seek to redress any deficiencies. The Open Space Strategy may identify opportunities for connections, which can inform and influence the spatial strategy.

10.274 The current supplementary guidance on developer obligations will need to be reviewed. With the removal of statutory supplementary guidance, consideration will need to be given to the use of a local policy and / or planning guidance to support National Planning Policy.

10.275 Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing across the city, and take into account the aims of the Aberdeen City food growing strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory

and non-statutory functions. It will update the Core Paths Plan. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

10.276 The findings from the Play Sufficiency Assessment will also have an impact on policy/site requirements of the Proposed Plan.

10.277 The Core Path Plan can inform and influence the spatial strategy. Sites which are accessible by existing active travel routes, such as core paths, will have an accessibility advantage at site assessment stage.

10.278 SUDS and water management are critical elements of blue and green infrastructure, consideration will need to be given to policy approaches, so that issues of flood risk, water quality and amenity are embedded in the Proposed Plan. In addition the risk of flooding will form an important part of the site assessment for considering site for inclusion in the Proposed Plan.

10.279 The SEPA evidence sources listed under NPF4 Policies which reference nature networks (Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry Woodlands and Trees) will all influence how the next plan seeks to protect and enhance the water environment in relation to nature network across Aberdeen.

Digital Infrastructure

10.280 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies on digital infrastructure.

10.281 The Proposed Plan will seek to consider how it can enable equity in broadband access and speeds.

Marmot Principles

10.282 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X

Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 10.17: Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Initial Submission Agreement on Evidence

10.283 NHS Grampian, Nature Scot and 3 members of the public responded to the public consultation and agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.

10.284 Scottish Water were satisfied with the paper and did not dispute the evidence. They made comments which included suggested changes to the paper, changes which were accepted.

10.285 Nature Scot, Bancon Homes, Homes for Scotland and Shell UK Limited confirmed that they did not dispute the Topic Paper but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

10.286 Email correspondence with SEPA on 13 and 20 June, and a meeting of 20 June confirmed SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper.

Initial Submission Disputes with Stakeholders

10.287 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that they do not agree with the evidence within the Topic Paper. They have not responded to further correspondence and therefore their comments are taken as a dispute.

- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that the Topic Paper should provide guidance in relation to water abstraction from the River Dee. The Evidence Report is a collection of evidence with implications for the next plan summarised from that evidence. It is not the role of the Evidence Report to provide guidance upon any subject.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland have commented that the evidence presented on healthcare does not provide a clear understanding of what is to be planned for and what is to happen with existing contributions. In our initial response we stated: 'NHS Grampian have been clear on the current situation - new infrastructure is dependent upon Scottish Government capital funding in addition to developer contributions, and a Programme Initial Agreement (PIA) is required to access capital funding. The current focus is upon utilising existing assets, creating additional capacity within existing premises. NHS Grampian have confirmed they will work with Aberdeen City's Local Development Plan team to provide current information of status of

healthcare premises.' Following comments from the Reporter (paragraphs 2.23 to 2.28) the Topic Paper has been updated to include a far more comprehensive view of healthcare infrastructure in Aberdeen, its capacity status and how developer contributions are sought to address capacity issues. Updated comments also explain the basis for the principle of collecting developer contributions for GP services.

- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented that there are a number of schools expected to exceed maximum capacity. They are seeking information upon existing related developer obligations in order to understand where there is expected investment in the school estate. We are committed to uploading this information onto the Council's website in the next year in order to improve transparency for developers.
- They also commented that the Council are consulting on plans for a new Hazlehead Academy which should be referenced within the evidence. It is noted that under the objectives and recommendations section of the School Estates Plan it is a proposed action to '…assess the feasibility of creating new secondary school provision to serve communities of Hazlehead and Countesswells…' We have included a section on the consultations that have taken place.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented, with respect to the reference that green and blue infrastructure will be important to manage surface water runoff, that the evidence should be clear that greenfield and brownfield development has the opportunity to reduce surface water runoff also. We do not dispute this comment but consider it self-evident and therefore specific comment is unnecessary.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented upon the content of Policy 3 from NPF4, that development proposals are required to build and strengthen nature networks and the connections between them. They seek reference to the role development plays in providing benefits. In response we have now referenced Policy 3 within the relevant section. There is some commentary around the reference to AECOM Nature Network data as a starting point for Local Authorities to explore what nature networks may exist. There is also some commentary around the nature of the Green Space Network in Aberdeen, that not all of it provides recreational or biodiversity benefits and that some development sites can help its further delivery.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented upon the evidence claim that much of the greenbelt is publicly accessible. They state that much of the greenbelt is in private ownership and has limited recreational value. It is not necessary to include these references given that most people will be aware that the greenbelt is largely in private ownership and that recreational value is limited generally to the enjoyment of being outdoors in nature.

10.288 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence and stated that there is 'too much to read'. The Council notes these comments and appreciates that the Topic Papers present a vast amount of information.

Resubmission Agreement on Evidence

10.289 SEPA have noted 3 July 2026 they continue to provide a statement of agreement with the revised topic paper. It requested an update to the evidence around the strategic flood risk assessment, which has been undertaken in line with updates to topic paper 12.

10.290 Scottish Water provided email correspondence on 15 July 2026, updating previous evidence following the delivery of the recent growth project at the Invercannie water works. They also provided map data in relation to both water works and waste water works.

10.291 It is noted that Scottish Water have also commented upon Blue and Green Infrastructure with respect to the Delivery of Homes topic paper, submission 15 July 2026. The comments relate to the delivery of this infrastructure, this information being available before site allocation and whether an infrastructure first approach to Blue and Green Infrastructure covers only new development or considers also existing places that require retrofit. All of Scottish Water's comments are noted. Issues relating to water and drainage capacity are considered as part of the site selection process for the proposed plan.

10.292 There are further comments from Scottish Water in relation to building water efficient homes and these are also noted.

10.293 SSEN Transmission submitted comments 31 July 2026 seeking an update to their substation plans and plans for replacement underground cabling. The text has been amended to reflect this new updated evidence.

10.294 NHS Grampian submitted comments 31 July 2026 confirming they are content with the evidence subject to proposed minor text amendments which have since been implemented.

10.295 The Council's Families and Communities Corporate Landlord (Education) provided suggested word changes to the topic paper 20 July 2026 and these have been implemented. Further comments were agreed upon 3 August 2026 and then implemented after discussions with Developer Obligations team.

10.296 The Council's Waste Services confirmed 28 July 2026 that the key considerations are present within the topic paper

10.297 NatureScot submitted its response to the topic paper 20 July 2026. It has not raised a dispute with the evidence or found key evidence missing from the paper. They made some general comments about the layout of the paper and clarity around implications.

10.298 As part of the engagement with FIRS group, a number of consultees responded to the topic paper without specific comment; Historic Environment Scotland, CEPS, SSEN Whole Systems and Scottish Forestry.

10.299 Homes for Scotland provided a response 31 July 2026. It does not outline a formal dispute with this topic paper. It included a list of suggested evidence sources which the Council may consider using in the preparation on the next LDP.

- Homes for Scotland have highlighted their opposition to the principle of charging the homebuilding industry for the provision of healthcare facilities. This is noted, however the Planning Circular 4/2025 Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements (CD356) sets out in its annex that infrastructure applies to 'health and social care services – including both services provided in the community directly by Health Boards and services provided on their behalf by contractors such as GPs, dentists and pharmacists'.
- Homes for Scotland highlight that work undertaken by the Scottish Futures Trust (provided in their submission) has the potential to alleviate capacity pressures at many of the schools listed under pressure. The links provided do not contain a significant amount of detail around the use of sensors to track building usage however they are noted.
- Homes for Scotland requested denominational and non denominational pupil product for housing. Forecasting for the three Catholic Primary School has been provided. The comments have been noted.
- Homes for Scotland requested that National Records for Scotland 2022 population data us used to calculate the school roll forecasts. The latest National Records for Scotland population data was used to prepare the 2024 school roll forecast.
- Homes for Scotland made comment that alongside matters relating to BGI, other factors such as marketability and deliverability must be considered in order to ensure housing needs are met.

10.300 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland have made comment regarding whether it is now the intention of the Council that there would not be a new academy delivered within the Countesswells site. The comment is noted.

Resubmission Disputes with Stakeholders

10.301 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland responded to say that while discussions were productive and positive, they wished to maintain all disputes raised previously.

- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland are seeking guidance in relation to water abstraction from the River Dee, and without this information a dispute is maintained.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland note that following the comments from the Reporter (paragraphs 2.23 to 2.28) the topic paper has been updated to give more information on healthcare infrastructure capacity and how developer contributions are sought to address capacity issues as well as an explanation for the principle for collecting developer contributions for GP services. They note the constraints around investment and the importance of understanding investment priorities and opportunities for use of existing assets and that without this information a dispute is maintained.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland are seeking information relating to existing developer obligations in relation to the school estate and without this information a dispute is maintained.

- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland are seeking confirmation that blue and green infrastructure will be important to manage surface water runoff, without which they intend to maintain a dispute.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland referenced their previous dispute in relation to NPF4 Policy 3, that development proposals are required to build and strengthen nature networks and the connections between them. They intend to maintain this dispute.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland referenced their previous dispute in relation the ownership and recreational value of the greenbelt. They intend to maintain this dispute.

Information Gaps

10.302 In April 2026, Aberdeen City Council updated its website to provide information on the Developer Obligations process. Further work is ongoing to improve the accessibility and presentation of information relating on obligations.

10.303 Transport Infrastructure is referenced under the infrastructure first section of this Topic Paper, and covered in detail in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper. Information gaps include the Cumulative Transport Appraisal and the 2023-2030 Local Transport Strategy. Nestrans is currently leading a Cumulative Transport Appraisal on behalf of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council which is being delivered by an external consultant. This is expected to conclude by the end of February 2027. A draft Local Transport Strategy was consulted upon between November 2023 and January 2024. A revised draft Local Transport Strategy will be produced by the Transport Strategy and Programmes team aligned with the timetable for producing the Proposed Plan. For more information gaps relating to transport infrastructure, please refer to the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.

10.304 NHS Grampian are still to develop and submit, by March 2027, up to three strategic infrastructure priorities. NHS Grampian's multi agency Integrated Planning Group will lead this intensive piece of work with a view to having initial recommendations available for consideration by December 2026.

10.305 The Scottish Government have recently indicated they are considering the introduction of a separate funding route to progress primary and community care developments.

10.306 The ASN school capacities noted in the evidence are based upon most recent available data which is 2024/25 school session.

10.307 There is no available information at present in relation to supported accommodation capacities. The Local Development Plan team will engage with Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership Services to update capacities for supported accommodation by March 2027.

10.308 It is acknowledged that the Aberdeen Core Paths Plan dates from 2009. Work is underway to update this, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will update the Core Paths Plan. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

10.309 There is work underway to update the Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Open Space Audit 2024 will be used to inform the Open Space Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will update the Open Space Strategy. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

10.310 A Forestry and Woodland Strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will produce a Forestry and Woodland Strategy. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

10.311 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

11. Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Transport

Required Information

11.1 The following information is required regarding the issue addressed in this section:

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(d)	the infrastructure of the district (including transport systems);
Section 15(5)(e)	how that infrastructure is used;

Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023

Section	Requirement
Regulation 9(2)(e)	Have regard to: • any regional transport strategy; and • any local transport strategy.

National Planning Framework 4

11.2 Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport) of NPF4 provides the following guidance for Local Development Plans (LDPs):

11.3 *"LDPs should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. The spatial strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services."*

11.4 *"LDPs should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. This could include low traffic schemes, shared transport options, designing–in speed controls, bus/cycle priority, pedestrianisation and minimising space dedicated to car parking. Consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development; local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes; and the accessibility for users of all abilities."*

11.5 *"LDPs should be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. Plans should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan's infrastructure first approach. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk road or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required."*

11.6 This topic paper should be read in conjunction with the Infrastructure First paper as there are relevant policy statements relating to this area. Notably, Policy 18 (Infrastructure First) of NPF4, is closely linked to the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure. Policy 18 is discussed in the preceding topic paper and will be referenced throughout this paper as well.

11.7 Annex B – National Developments Statements of Need sets out the 18 national developments which will significantly influence spatial strategies. Aberdeen Rapid Transport is included under the Urban Mass/Rapid Transport Networks section.

11.8 Annex C – Spatial Planning Priorities sets out information intended to guide preparation of Local Development Plans. Aberdeen Rapid Transport is mentioned with regards to prioritising sustainable transport in Aberdeen.

Links to Evidence

- CD175 Transport Scotland National Transport Strategy 2
- CD176 Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Projects Review
- CD363 Transport Scotland's Rail Recharged: Scotland's Fleet Transition Strategy
- CD177 Transport Scotland Reducing Car Use for a Healthier Fairer and Greener Scotland
- CD178 Transport Scotland Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030
- CD 179 Transport Scotland Development and Delivery of Active Freeways
- CD 180 Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Final Report Summary
- CD259 Transport Scotland A96 Corridor Review Draft Summary Report 2024
- CD260 Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2023
- CD261 Transport Scotland Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland - A Renewed Policy Statement
- CD286 Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030
- CD120 Scottish Government Planning Guidance – Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods
- CD183 Scottish Government Cleaner Air for Scotland 2
- CD181 Transport Scotland Active Travel Framework (2020)
- CD182 Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021 Household Survey
- CD364 Aberdeen City Voice Travel and Transport Edition 2025
- CD325 Aberdeen City Council's Climate and Nature Plan 2026-2030
- CD184 Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
- CD283 Stagecoach Bus Route Maps
- CD269 NESTRANS Active Travel Action Plan (AcTrAP) 2014-2035
- CD270 NESTRANS North East Specialised Goods Vehicle Counts 2024
- CD185 NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy for the North East of Scotland 2021
- CD271 NESTRANS Aberdeen City Region Deal - STA Preliminary Options Appraisal Report Executive Summary

- CD186 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling
- CD187 NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Evaluation Report 2024
- CD188 NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review Final Report
- CD189 NESTRANS LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis
- CD190 NESTRANS Reducing Car-km & Carbon Emissions Executive Summary
- CD273 NESTRANS Assessing the State of the Bus Network In Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
- CD275 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Our Vision 2024 Update
- CD276 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Strategic Business Case
- CD277 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Routeing Analysis
- CD278 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Detailed Options Appraisal
- CD279 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Options Appraisal Case for Change
- CD280 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Market Research
- CD281 NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Benefits
- CD282 NESTRANS Public Document Pack - Meeting of the Board - 16 February 2023
- CD272 NESTRANS Public Document Pack - Meeting of the Board - 26 June 2024
- CD274 NESTRANS Public Document Pack - Meeting of the Board - 19 February 2025
- CD321 SUSTRANS Travel to School in Scotland Hands Up Scotland Survey 2025
- CD377 SUSTRANS Travel to School in Scotland (PDF)
- CD041 Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement
- CD263 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey 2023
- CD191 Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021
- CD192 Aberdeen City Draft Local Transport Strategy 2023-2030
- CD198 Aberdeen City Committee Report CR7E/24/258
- CD193 Aberdeen City Electric Vehicle Framework 2020-2030
- CD194 Aberdeen City Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026
- CD195 Aberdeen City Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan 2019
- CD196 Aberdeen City Core Paths Plan 2009
- CD197 Aberdeen City Mobility Strategy Net Zero Aberdeen
- CD069 Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan Summary 2016-2026
- CD324 Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026 -2036
- CD041 Aberdeen City Community Planning Aberdeen Engagement Report
- CD265 Aberdeen City Committee Report Aberdeen Rapid Transit Recommended Network Routing
- CD264 Aberdeen City Committee Report Active Travel to School
- CD154 Aberdeen City Air Quality Action Plan 2011 (PDF)
- CD266 Aberdeen City Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee Public Document Pack, Strategic Car Parking Review 2025 (Page 839)

- CD267 Aberdeen City Urgent Business Committee Decision Sheet 18 Dec 2024
- CD268 Aberdeen City Finance and Resources Committee Paper 8 May 2024
- C365Aberdeen City Aberdeen Walking and Cycling Index 2025
- CD322 Aberdeen City Strategic Car Parking Review 2025
- CD323 Scottish Government Scotland's Climate Change Plan 2026 - 2040 Annex 2 Sectoral Annexes
- CD326 NESTRANS Regional Active Travel Network (RATN)
- CD230 Aberdeen City Council Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance
- CD343 Aberdeen Local Development Plan Delivery Programme 2023: 2025 Update

Sustainable Transport – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Transport Scotland Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2024	22 July 2026
Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2025	22 July 2026
Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2024 Household Survey Data	17 June 2026
CO2 Emissions Tool	22 February 2026
National Atmospheric Emissions Map	19 May 2026
SUSTRANS Hands Up Scotland Survey	7 April 2026
SUSTRANS Aberdeen Walking and Cycling Index	22 April 2026
Public Health Scotland - Road Space Reallocation in Scotland	6 December 2025
Walking and Cycling Index Data Tool	8 May 2026
The National Cycle Network	12 May 2026
Office of Rail and Road Estimates of Station usage	11 December 2025
DEFRA Air Quality Action Plans	13 March 2026
Scotland's Environment Air Quality Management Areas	21 May 2026
Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society	7 February 2026
First Bus Aberdeen Bus Route Maps	7 February 2026
Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme	4 April 2026
Getabout A to B in Aberdeen City and Shire	4 May 2026
Aberdeen International Airport Destinations Map	6 May 2026
NESTRANS Regional Active Travel Network	21 May 2026
NESTRANS North East Bus Alliance	11 April 2026
NESTRANS Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study	11 June 2026
NESTRANS Park and Ride Webpage	11 April 2026
NESTRANS Bus Infrastructure Fund – North East Bus Alliance Award	18 June 2026
Nestrans Studies (includes corridor studies)	11 June 2026
Aberdeen City Find a Car Park	2 April 2026

Aberdeen City Cycle Maps	16 May 2026
Aberdeen City Community Transport	11 June 2026
Aberdeen City Scheme promoting active and safe school travel set to launch	11 June 2026
Aberdeenshire Council Multi-million-pound EV charging infrastructure partnership announced	11 May 2026
Aberdeen City Council approves ambitious Budget plan	12 April 2026
Aberdeen City Council Aberdeen e-bike Hire Scheme	16 June 2026
Scotland's Census 2022 - Workplace and Daytime Tables	28 June 2026
Scotland's Census 2022 – Origin – Destination Tables	17 May 2026
Ramblers Scottish Paths Map	15 April 2026
Aberdeen City Council Capital Programme Budget Meeting 5 March 2025	30 May 2026
Aberdeen City Council Electric vehicle charging points	23 May 2026

Summary of Evidence

Purpose and Scope

11.9 This section sets out an overview of the core documents relevant to this topic paper. The aim is to provide a summary of the current available policy, data, and project work that will be used to inform the next local development plan. Each section will also note what implications there are in terms of creating the next local development plan and where information gaps need to be addressed. Evidence is grouped together under the following related headings:

- Summary of Evidence
  - Purpose and Scope
  - National Policy Context
  - Regional Policy Context
  - Local Policy Context
  - Active Travel
  - Public Transport
  - Road
  - Air & Sea
  - Accident Data
- Summary of Stakeholder Engagement
- Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan
- Statement of Agreement / Dispute

11.10 The topic paper can be read in its entirety or by individual sections where each subject is broken down into the following areas:

- Background Data

- Existing Infrastructure
- Specific Policy
- Current / Planned Investment / Projects
- Funding
- Implications

11.11 Each section provides a detailed overview of current available information by tying together data-driven background such as travel behaviour, patterns, mode usage, etc. This is then tied to existing infrastructure and related to existing policy goals. Then, planned investment provides an overview of next steps currently underway and how these are or will be funded, such as through developer obligations, local, regional, or national funding streams. A brief summary of mode specific implications then wraps up each section.

11.12 The full summary of evidence will then be discussed under 'Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan' in terms of what it means for the creation of the next local development plan, what implications the evidence has and / or any lack of information, and how this will be addressed.

11.13 The relationship between transport and land use planning has important implications for a place. It is a key aspect in influencing travel behaviours which determine carbon emissions generated by movement of people and freight. The Aberdeen City local authority area currently has a higher level of private car ownership compared to the Scottish average. Transport Scotland's Renewed Policy Statement (CD261) around achieving car use reduction states that there are revised targets to reduce car use being developed by the Scottish Government, informed by advice from the Climate Change Committee and other relevant evidence. How transport is organised has a strong effect upon the health outcomes of the people of Aberdeen and the resilience of local economies around the city. Transport policy touches directly upon how places are designed and whether places prioritise pedestrian experience before movement of private vehicles.

National Policy Context

National Transport Strategy

11.14 Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) (CD175) sets out the vision in order to achieve a sustainable, inclusive, safe, and accessible transport system. This would help deliver a healthier, fairer, and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses, and visitors. The vision is underpinned by four priorities with three associated outcomes for each:

- Reduces inequalities (provide fair access to services we need, be easy to use for all, be affordable for all)
- Takes climate action (help deliver our net zero target, adapt to the effects of climate, promote greener, cleaner choices)
- Helps to deliver inclusive economic growth (get people and goods where they need to get to, be reliable, efficient and high quality, use beneficial innovation)

- Improves our health and wellbeing (be safe and secure for all, enable us to make healthy travel choices, help make our communities great places to live)

11.15 NTS2 (CD175) promotes the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (Figure 11.1) in decision making by promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people. It also promotes efficient and sustainable freight transport for the movement of goods, particularly the shift from road to rail.

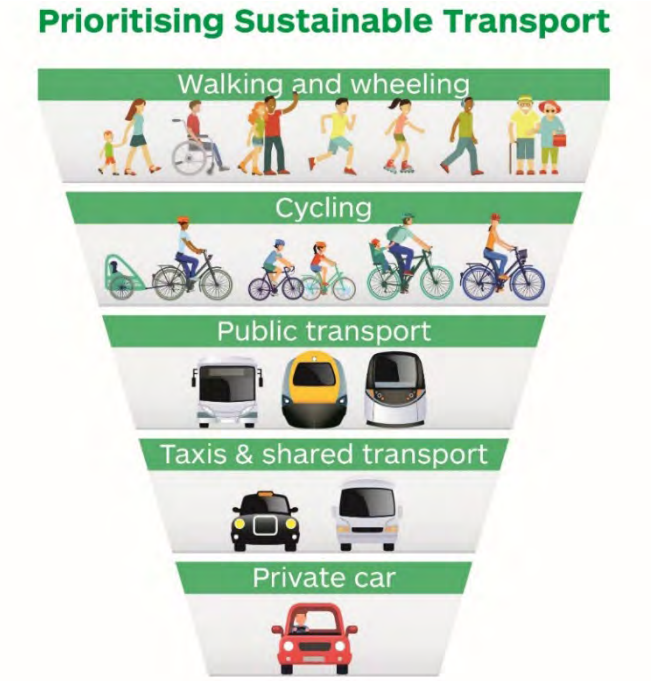


Figure 11.1 Sustainable Travel Hierarchy

11.16 NTS2 (CD175) also promotes the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy to inform future investment decisions and ensure transport options that focus on reducing inequalities and the need to travel unsustainably are prioritised. The focus is then on maintaining and safely operating existing assets (taking due consideration of the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change). Following this it should be considered how to make better use of existing capacity, such as innovative solutions. Only once these options have been followed then targeted infrastructure improvements will be considered.

Reducing Car Use

11.17 Transport Scotland's Reducing Car Use for a Healthier, Fairer and Greener Scotland (CD177) document, outlines a route map to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030. It should be noted this target has since been revised, see Transport Scotland Reviewed Policy Statement (CD261), and Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040 (CD323) (which, on page 34, sets a target to reduce annual car mileage by at least 4% by 2030 based on a 'business as usual' forecast baseline). The original document acknowledges that transport accounts for 29% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, with cars making up 38% of those emissions. It states that technological solutions alone will not accommodate net zero goals. The document outlines the following four main behaviours:

- Reducing the need to travel
- Living well locally
- Switching modes
- Combining or sharing car trips

11.18 The document sets out its guiding principles. Firstly, that the work is collaborative between local government, regional transport partnerships, public sector organisations and businesses. Secondly, that it is a national ambition that will require bespoke, place-based approaches to create the conditions for travel behaviour change in communities. Thirdly, the work is underpinned by a commitment to a just transition which includes principles of community wealth building, supporting people to make alternative travel choices that help strengthen local economies while ensuring that those least able to pay are not unfairly burdened and that existing inequalities are tackled, not exacerbated.

11.19 The document notes that it will not be possible to reduce car kilometres by 20% by focussing on a single trip type such as commuting, or a single behaviour such as switching from car to walking or cycling for short journeys. A holistic framework of interventions is therefore required to reduce car use. This topic paper is therefore set up to follow sustainable transport hierarchy with each mode section ordered to provide an outline of the existing issues and proposed solutions.

11.20 The following interventions are set out to be taken between now and 2030, and are grouped by the four main behavioural interventions:

Interventions to reduce the need for travel:

- Intervention 1a: Finalising and adopting the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) by summer 2022
- Intervention 1b: Extending superfast broadband to 100 per cent of premises
- Intervention 1c: Mapping digital connectivity alongside transport
- Intervention 1d: Issuing a refreshed Fair Work First Action Plan in Spring 2022
- Intervention 1e: Progressing the Work Local Challenge Programme
- Intervention 1f: Delivering the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy's actions to reduce the need to travel

Interventions to help people live well locally:

- Intervention 2a: Finalising and adopting the NPF4 by summer 2022
- Intervention 2b: Delivering the Housing to 2040 actions to build stronger and more vibrant communities
- Intervention 2c: Continuing to embed the Place Principle, and promote the use of the Place Standard Tool
- Intervention 2d: Delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods; improved town and city centres and a 'loves local' culture
- Intervention 2e: Developing guidance and an appraisal framework for Mobility Hubs
- Intervention 2f: Introducing a safer speed limit of 20mph on appropriate roads in built up areas by 2025

Interventions to help people switch modes:

- Intervention 3a: Publishing the Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan for Active Travel in Scotland in 2022
- Intervention 3b: Increasing investment in active travel
- Intervention 3c: Investing £50 million on Active Freeways (see also CD179)
- Intervention 3d: Improving access to cycles and the transportation of cycles
- Intervention 3e: Continuing to take action on road safety, in line with Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 (CD 178) which includes a renewed focus on pedestrians and cyclists
- Intervention 3f: Introducing Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow in Spring 2022:
- Intervention 3g Continuing our work on review of transport governance
- Intervention 3h: Commissioning a Fair Fares Review
- Intervention 3i: Providing nationwide free bus travel for Scotland's young people aged under 22 from January 2022
- Intervention 3j: Continuing to provide long-term capital investment to bus transport
- Intervention 3k: Introducing a Community Bus Fund
- Intervention 3l: Establishing a National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board
- Intervention 3m: Investing in the maintenance and enhancement of the rail network
- Intervention 3n: Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals
- Intervention 3o: Pavement parking ban enforcement and other car parking interventions
- Intervention 3p: Developing Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) regulations and guidance
- Intervention 3r: Delivering the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy's actions to increase active travel and the use of public and community transport to NHS sites
- Intervention 3s: Continuing the £300,000 annual investment in the Eco-Schools Scotland Programme as part of the Learning for Sustainability Programme

Interventions to help people to combine trips or share journeys:

- Intervention 4a: Testing the viability of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) in Scotland
- Intervention 4b: Re-promoting the benefits of car-sharing and car-clubs post-pandemic

As noted in Transport Scotland's Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement (CD261), the Scottish Government and COSLA remain committed to reducing reliance on private car travel, recognising that a transition to zero-emission vehicles alone will not be sufficient to achieve wider climate objectives. The Policy Statement acknowledges that Scotland is unlikely to achieve the previous target of reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030 and confirms that revised targets will be developed through Scotland's carbon budget framework. The policy direction remains focused on reducing car dependency through application of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, investment in sustainable transport and place-based measures that reduce the need to travel. The Proposed Plan should therefore continue to support development patterns which facilitate local living and reduce dependency on private vehicles.

National Investment

11.21 Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Project Review (CD176 and CD180) is a review of the strategic transport network's performance and is designed to inform investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042) by providing evidence-based recommendations on which Scottish Ministers can base future transport investment decisions.

11.22 Relevant recommendations that relate to Aberdeen City have been included in each sub-section of this topic paper relating to specific travel modes.

SEPA

11.23 The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have provided a list of evidence sources for each National Planning Framework 4 policy. With regards to Sustainable Transport, a CO2 emissions tool and a UK emissions map have been included.

11.24 Parts of Aberdeen City are under an Air Quality Management Area. It is noted that sustainable transport measures will have positive impacts on local air quality and as a result contribute significantly to the NPF4 'Liveable Places' theme. In addition to SEPA's evidence sources, the Scottish Government's Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 (CD183) is shaped around ten themes which are relevant to air quality, including placemaking and transport. The themes include specific actions which seek to improve air quality. Aberdeen City Council is also currently working to update the Air Quality Action Plan 2011 (CD154). See the Wellbeing and Community topic paper for further information.

Regional Policy Context

Regional Transport Strategy

11.25 Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for the North East of Scotland, covering Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Its role is to plan and deliver long-term strategic transport improvements that support the economy, environment, and quality of life across the region. This includes:

- Developing and implementing a Regional Transport Strategy
- Active travel projects (walking, wheeling, cycling)
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit programme (ART). A national development in NPF4, it is a proposed new mass rapid transport service designed to provide high

quality, fast, frequent and reliable public transport across two cross city routes within Aberdeen City Region. ART will support the region's economic growth, social inclusion, and net-zero carbon ambitions by improving access to jobs, education, health, and leisure as well as supporting the transformation of our city centre.

- Regional monitoring and modelling, including Cumulative Transport Assessment (CTA)
- Strategic road, rail, and bus improvements

11.26 The Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2040 (RTS) (CD185) sets out the transport strategy for the North East of Scotland. The RTS is supported by the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal (STA) (CD271). The STA was undertaken in 2018/2019 to identify opportunities for further development and consideration.

11.27 This was initiated as a means to collate and rationalise the current and future problems and opportunities within the transport system, and to act as the mechanism to facilitate the delivery of transport projects to support the Regional Economic Strategy. As part of the STA, an Initial Appraisal: Case for Change study was completed in 2018 and involved extensive data analysis and consultation to identify the range of problems and opportunities across the region.

11.28 The RTS (CD185) follows six key priorities which set the tone and direction for the strategy. These are:

- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity
- Zero fatalities on the road network
- Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organization standards for emissions from transport
- Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net zero by 2045
- Accessibility for all
- A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes.

11.29 Option generation and sifting exercises were undertaken in 2018/19, and this process identified a list of 42 options recommended for further development and consideration. The second phase of the STA commenced from the 42 shortlisted options. The STA 'Preliminary Options Appraisal' stage of the study developed, refined and appraised the 42 options further, reducing the individual options to 29, against which recommendations on appropriate pathways for their further development and delivery were made.

11.30 The 29 options within the STA can be split into five broad option categories. These comprise:

- City Connectivity – ensuring sustainable connectivity to/from and within the regional centre
- Rural Connectivity – providing sustainable and proportionate travel choices across the region's more rural hinterland

- Strategic Connectivity – linking the region effectively to the rest of Scotland and internationally
- Safety – moving towards a zero fatalities target
- Demand Management Measures – to manage resources effectively and encourage the use of sustainable modes

11.31 Within the five categories, each option is defined as either 'core' (large scale options designed to instigate substantive change) or 'supporting' (smaller scale options, less likely to bring about substantive change in their own right, but nevertheless important in supporting the core measures and overall priorities). The emerging overall package of options to be taken forward from the STA can be seen as a transport package to begin transitioning the northeast region to a post-carbon, more prosperous, safer, and more equitable future. The options presented within the appraisal are presented and discussed further under the related transport mode sub-heading within this topic paper.

11.32 The RTS sets out a range of policies and actions, which are consistent with the STA options and seek to achieve the six overarching priorities. The policies and actions are structured under 18 headings and will require Nestrans to work in partnership with local authorities, Transport Scotland, operators, communities, third sector organisations and the private sector to deliver.

11.33 A summary of the headings is set out below, but for brevity the detailed policies and actions are not repeated here – they can be viewed in full within section 11 of the RTS:

- Increasing the number of people travelling actively for health and the environment
- Developing the rail network
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit
- Improving the region's bus network
- Maximising the benefits of park and ride
- Managing demand
- Reducing emissions from transport
- Encouraging behavioural change
- Maintaining and improving the region's transport network
- Facilitating the movement of freight
- External air and sea connections
- Road safety and casualty reduction
- Improving accessibility in rural areas
- Improving access to health
- The affordability of transport
- Improving access to the transport network for all
- Planning and designing places for people
- The future impact of new technologies

Regional Transport Evidence Review

11.34 In 2023 Nestrans commissioned a multi-modal transport and land use modelling exercise, utilising the Aberdeen Sub Area Model 2019 (ASAM19), to derive baseline transport information and data for the 'Nestrans Transport Evidence Review Final Report' (CD188) for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The reporting from this exercise (see also Nestrans Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189)) presents relevant transport data from the modelling work and demonstrates the predicted impacts and constraints across the transport network - presenting both current day baseline and forecast information.

11.35 Transport Model for Scotland 18A contains forecasts of cross boundary travel between the North East and the rest of Scotland, which have been applied to Aberdeen Sub Area Model 19 (ASAM19). The evidence review demonstrates the level of change in strategic travel movements to / from the North East to understand any associated cross boundary constraints. ASAM19 is a long established strategic multi-modal model covering the North East of Scotland and is calibrated to represent 2019 traffic and travel conditions. ASAM19 forecasts transport impacts by deriving changes in accessibility through the delivery of proposed transport investment and policy, and assessing the impact from changes in population, employment, development build-out and traveller behaviour. The forecasting capability of ASAM19 includes a 2019 Baseline, a 2023 'present day' baseline scenario and future year scenarios of 2030 and 2040. The forecasting reflects anticipated development growth and transport investment and policy commitments to represent two alternative scenarios:

- 'without policy' - motorised transport without current transport policy i.e. private car km growth; and
- 'with policy' - motorised transport with current transport policy to meet national transport policy ambitions i.e. reduction in private car km.

11.36 These scenarios represent similar transport investment and infrastructure commitments but differ in content in terms of varying transport behaviours and policy outcomes, including variations in the level of:

- Development and population growth;
- Home / remote working and commuting trips;
- Business trips / teleconferencing;
- Car availability;
- Electric vehicle fleet and impact on vehicle operating costs; and
- Increasing vehicle operating costs to reflect the policy commitment of reducing car vehicle kilometres by 20% by 2030

11.37 The 2023 Baseline scenario includes the recent delivery of the Haudagain Link Road, and the impact of the closure of Union Street to general traffic between Market Street and Union Terrace (i.e. providing a bus and taxi only route). Bus routes along key radial corridors reflect Autumn 2022 timetabling. The delivery of Kintore rail station and 'rail revolution' service improvements are also represented, along with a model update to rail service stopping patterns at Arbroath. The 2023

Baseline scenario was updated to reflect recent (post-Covid) behavioural trends which have impacted travel patterns (more remote working).

11.38 The 2030 and 2040 scenarios represent the following transport investment:

- Phase 1 of Gyratory at South College St & North Esplanade;
- City Centre Master Plan (CCMP; as per summer 2023 configuration): bus only access on Guild Street, Market Street & Bridge Street, and Schoolhill and Union Terrace restrictions;
- Laurencekirk A90 / A937 Interchange;
- Berryden Dual Carriageway;
- A96 Dualling Inverurie to Inverness (Note, commitment by Scottish Government to fully dual remains but it will not be complete by the original anticipated timeline of 2030);
- Coast Road improvements to access South Harbour;
- A90 Bruntland Rd Closure & Badentoy Traffic Signals;
- A92 Murcar / B999 Roundabout Upgrade;
- Upgrade of Parkway / Whitestripes Roundabout to signalised intersection;
- A92 / Parkway Traffic Signals; and
- Access points to various proposed development (Prime Four, Grandhome, Loirston, Craibstone, Cloverhill).

11.39 The model scenarios did not include Aberdeen Rapid Transit, Aberdeen Beachfront or active travel schemes given there was not the necessary degree of commitment at the time of undertaking the scenarios.

11.40 Both 'with policy' and 'without policy' forecasts show a 2% increase in population for Aberdeen up to 2030, and 5% increase to 2040 with policy and 7% increase without policy. City and Shire combined likewise shows a 2% increase in population up to 2030, 3% increase to 2040 with policy and 4% increase without policy. Mode shift forecasts are displayed in Table 11.1 below:

SCENARO	YEAR	ROAD	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	ACTIVE TRAVEL
Without Policy	2023-2030	5%	0%	-2%
	2023-2040	11%	0%	-6%
With Policy	2023-2030	-6%	8%	6%
	2023-2040	-9%	18%	6%

Table 11.1 Modal shift forecast

11.41 Predicted changes to road trip movements and public transport movements within and between authorities (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray) are set out in the report. The changes are predicted for 2040 using the 'with policy' and 'without policy' scenarios.

11.42 The Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188) includes baseline information and forecasting in relation to private travel and public transport and therefore information, analysis and implications on these aspects can be found under the relevant headings for Bus, Rail and Road.

Modal Shift

11.43 The Scottish Government was committed to reducing the number of car-km travelled on Scotland's roads by 20%, in comparison with a 2019 baseline, by 2030. As noted before, this target is being revised as discussed in Transport Scotland's Renewed Policy Statement (CD261). For the purpose of this paper, we have assumed there were considered to be different options to achieve the previous target in the Nestrans region which have differing implications for inclusion and equality. Nestrans' 'Reducing Car-km and Carbon Emissions: Options for Nestrans Region Executive Summary' (CD190) report summarises the findings of a review which has considered the targets in the specific context of the baseline and trends of the North East of Scotland and has considered the quantitative and qualitative impacts of measures which might influence car use or emissions per km.

11.44 The review is intended to help Nestrans and its partners identify ways to achieve the target reductions in car-km and carbon emissions from car use in a way that accords with the needs and aspirations of the region and its people.

11.45 The report finds that action outwith the current control and funding ability of regional partners is required in order to meet the Government's target. It finds that constraining car use is likely to face opposition, with significant impacts on those living in rural areas or on lower incomes. The report finds that the extent of these adverse impacts could be reduced if significant improvements to alternatives to car use (including improved public transport and active travel facilities) which are relevant to all of the region's residents were provided in advance of traffic restraint measures being introduced.

Cumulative Transport Appraisal

11.46 In accordance with requirements (p.120) of the Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance (CD316), a Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) is currently being led by Nestrans on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council to inform transport needs and cross boundary issues for both local authorities' next local development plans. The CTA is being progressed jointly by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans, with Transport Scotland participating throughout, and will form a shared evidence base for both Local Development Plans (LDPs).

11.47 The CTA is a joint, strategic transport appraisal that evaluates the combined (cumulative) impacts of multiple planned developments and land-use changes on the wider transport network. Instead of analysing sites individually, it assesses how all development proposals together will affect travel demand, congestion, infrastructure requirements, and sustainable transport outcomes across a whole region rather than assessing individual sites in isolation. The CTA examines how all existing, committed and proposed developments collectively influence the following:

- Overall travel demand and travel patterns

- Congestion, delays, queuing and network performance
- Public transport viability, service coverage and reliability
- Walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities and barriers
- Future infrastructure requirements
- Climate, environmental and car-kilometre reduction objectives
- Place-based outcomes and support for 20-minute neighbourhood principles

11.48 To deliver a complete and robust CTA, additional shared inputs, decisions and datasets are required. These reflect the scale and complexity of the appraisal, regulatory changes, and the need for consistency across the region.

11.49 Land Use and Development Information. The CTA relies on accurate, region-wide development information, including:

- Existing LDP allocations and current build-out assumptions
- Committed but not yet delivered developments
- Emerging development options and alternative spatial strategies for both councils
- Phasing information for forecast years (e.g. 2028-2038)
- Existing and proposed housing and employment sites
- Assumptions on a limited number of internalised trips within larger developments (schools, shops, amenities)
- Car parking standards and policies influencing mode share
- Accessibility to local amenities supporting 20-minute neighbourhood aspiration.

11.50 This information forms the basis for representing development in regional models and for assessing its cumulative impact on the transport system across boundaries.

11.51 Baseline Transport Network Conditions. Evidence is required covering all transport modes, including:

- Road network conditions: flow, delays, congestion hotspots, queue lengths
- Public transport: bus and rail routes, service frequencies, journey times, reliability
- Freight and commercial movement patterns
- Road safety: collision and risk patterns

11.52 This shared understanding provides the foundation for assessing where cumulative impacts will occur and where cross-boundary interventions may be required.

11.53 To assess cumulative impacts, the CTA will use regional modelling, supported by additional spatial analytical tools. Inputs required include:

Strategic Model Inputs

- Updated planning data for regional transport models (ASAM19)
- Model zone allocations reflecting both councils' emerging development packages
- Updated trip rates and distribution
- Representation of committed transport schemes (e.g. road infrastructure, public transport improvements)

Connectivity and Accessibility Evidence

In addition to strategic transport models, more granular datasets will support analysis of:

- Accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling
- Connectivity to jobs, services, education and green space
- Relative accessibility of different settlements or candidate sites
- Comparative travel times by different modes
- Local amenity proximity (supporting “living locally”)

11.54 These tools help refine spatial strategies, assess cross-boundary impacts early and support site-level sifting.

11.55 Transport Scotland will continue to support and guide the development of the Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA), including agreement on modelling assumptions, appraisal methodology and the treatment of relevant national transport policies and targets.

11.56 Continued engagement between Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Nestrans and Transport Scotland is required throughout the process to ensure a shared understanding of transport impacts, infrastructure requirements and mitigation measures. This collaborative approach will help ensure consistency across authority boundaries and provide a robust evidence base for both Local Development Plans. The CTA will assess the transport implications of the emerging preferred spatial strategies being prepared by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. These preferred strategies are being developed through the respective plan-making processes, informed by the professional judgement of planning officers, available evidence, and ongoing engagement with elected members, key agencies and other stakeholders. As this process progresses, limited refinements or variations to the emerging preferred strategies may be tested where necessary to understand transport impacts, infrastructure requirements, mitigation measures and overall deliverability. This approach will ensure that the transport evidence remains aligned with the preparation of both Proposed Plans whilst maintaining a proportionate and consistent appraisal framework.

11.57 Evidence is required to assess the transport implications of the emerging preferred spatial strategies for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire in a way that is transparent, consistent and auditable. This includes:

- A jointly agreed set of Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) linked to policy (e.g. NPF4, RTS, LTS, and LDPs);
- Associated indicators, for example:
    - Mode-share;
    - Car-kilometres;
    - Congestion and time lost;
    - Connectivity to key destinations; and
    - Flow-to-capacity ratios at critical network locations.

- Representation of the emerging preferred spatial strategies within the regional transport model;
- Inclusion of major regional proposals as sensitivity tests (e.g., Aberdeen Rapid Transit); and
- Testing of reasonable refinements or variations to the emerging preferred strategies, where required, to understand cumulative impacts, infrastructure requirements, mitigation measures and overall deliverability.

11.58 For the preferred spatial strategies, the CTA must gather:

- Agreed reference cases and forecast years
- Definitions of:
    - Acceptable network performance;
    - Environmental impact thresholds; and
    - Requirements for mode share improvements;
    - Long-list and short-list of mitigation options.
    - Economic, environmental, accessibility and safety appraisal inputs;
    - A developer contribution framework informed by cumulative impacts; and
    - Sensitivity testing of assumptions and uncertainties.

11.59 Given the cross-boundary nature of the work, structured joint engagement is required, including:

- Workshops to scope the detailed CTA assessment (complete);
- Workshops to confirm Transport Planning Objectives and mitigation option lists (on-going);
- Regular Steering Group sessions with all partners (on-going);
- Full involvement of Transport Scotland at key decision points (on-going); and
- A clear audit trail of decisions, changes and assumptions (on-going).

11.60 This will ensure transparency and consistency across both Councils' Evidence Reports and ultimately, their Local Development Plans. Whilst the CTA is not intended to undertake a comparative appraisal of multiple alternative spatial strategies, it will provide an evidence-based assessment of the emerging preferred spatial strategies and any reasonable refinements required through the development planning process. This will enable transport impacts, infrastructure requirements and potential mitigation measures to be understood and addressed before finalisation of the Proposed Plans.

11.61 The CTA represents a major cross-boundary evidence-gathering exercise that will underpin both Councils' Local Development Plans and future transport strategies. The assessment requires:

- A shared, consistent dataset across land-use, transport, environmental and policy domains;
- Clear alignment with national policy and emerging guidance;
- Strategic and local transport modelling and analytical tools;
- Agreed assumptions, scenarios and performance thresholds;

- Multi-modal mitigation identification and testing; and
- Structured governance and the continued involvement of Transport Scotland.

This collective evidence base will ensure that development planning and transport infrastructure planning are aligned, proportionate, deliverable and regionally coherent.

11.62 The timeline to complete the CTA is:

- Stage 1: Inception (April - June 2026)
- Stage 2: Modelling, Assessment and Refinement of Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategies (April-October 2026)
- Stage 3: Scoping of Detailed Assessment (September – November 2026)
- Stage 4: Assessment of Preferred Land Use Proposals (November 2026 – February 2027)

Local Policy Context

Local Transport Strategy

11.63 The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2016-2021 (CD191) sets out the policies and interventions adopted by the City Council to guide the planning and improvement of the local transport network over the five-year period from 2016 to 2021. At the time of adopting the 2016 LTS, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) was still to be completed. The 2016 LTS focuses its attention on delivering a range of actions to achieve a series of newly formed outcomes for Aberdeen and ensuring that complementary measures, which 'lock in' the benefits of the AWPR, could be maximised.

11.64 Following adoption of the Regional Transport Strategy 2040 (CD185), an update of the LTS was undertaken. A draft LTS 2023-2030 was published for consultation in late 2023 until January 2024 (CD198). A revised draft LTS is currently being prepared. Production will align with the timetable for producing the Proposed Plan.

11.65 The draft LTS 2023-2030 (CD192) sets out eight overarching transport planning objectives:

- **TPO1 – Climate and Environment:** Reduce the negative impact of transport on the climate and the environment in Aberdeen.
- **TPO2 – Health:** Improve transport opportunities in Aberdeen that help enable and promote healthy lives and give access to healthcare.
- **TPO3 – Safety:** Improve the safety of the Aberdeen transport network and reduce safety issues for users.
- **TPO4 – Economy:** Ensure more efficient movement of people and goods across, into and from both Aberdeen city and the whole region.
- **TPO5 – Accessibility / Inclusivity / User-friendly:** Improve the user-friendliness of the Aberdeen transport network, making it more accessible and inclusive.
- **TPO6 – Resilience:** Ensure the Aberdeen transport network is more resilient and can react to unplanned circumstances and extreme weather.
- **TPO7 – Technology**: Ensure Aberdeen has a transport network that can better adapt to changes in technology and capitalises on existing technological opportunities.

- **TPO8 – Modal shift**: Reduce the need to travel and reduce dependency on the private car in Aberdeen.

11.66 The Draft LTS also outlined 14 outcomes intended to be achieved in the period to 2030:

- Reduction in number of journeys by car drivers in Aberdeen to less than 50% by 2030.
- A reduction in car-km travelled in Aberdeen by 20% compared with 2019 baseline.
- Reduced PM10s and Nox emissions from transport and removal of Air Quality Management Areas in Aberdeen.
- A 75% reduction in greenhouse gases from transport in Aberdeen compared with the 1990/95 baseline.
- 20% of the total cars and vans in Aberdeen being zero emission.
- 50% reduction in adults killed and seriously injured and 60% reduction in children killed or seriously injured using the transport network.
- A more resilient transport network for Aberdeen.
- Improved journey time reliability for all modes in Aberdeen.
- Improved mental and physical health of the residents of Aberdeen and improved access to healthcare.
- Improved accessibility to transport in Aberdeen for all.
- Improved interchange opportunities between modes in Aberdeen.
- Improved information about the Aberdeen transport network being available to users and planners.
- A transport network which is able to benefit from improvements in technology for Aberdeen.
- A transport network which is well maintained for Aberdeen.

11.67 The above TPOs and outcomes are supported by the following outputs, stated in the Draft LTS:

More EV charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure and supporting measures in Aberdeen.	More high quality active travel infrastructure in Aberdeen.
An Aberdeen Parking Framework.	Maintenance of existing facilities in Aberdeen.
Improved sustainable transport links to, from and within Aberdeen city centre.	Aberdeen Rapid Transit and faster, more frequent and more reliable public transport options.
Safety improvements in Aberdeen.	More Car Club cars, more Car Club locations and more people signed up as Car Club members.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) development in Aberdeen.	Development and delivery of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan.
Behaviour Change schemes and campaigns (education, information, awareness raising) in Aberdeen.	More hire bikes, locations and more people signed up as bike hire members. More bike refurbishment schemes.
Enforcement of the Aberdeen Low Emission Zone (LEZ).	Reallocation of road space in Aberdeen.
Climate adaption measures built into new transport infrastructure.	More interchange points between modes of transport.

11.68 The draft LTS consultation results were brought to committee in September 2024. The draft LTS is to be refreshed in light of the comments received from the public consultation and guidance issued by Transport Scotland on the production of Local Transport Strategies. The refreshed draft will focus on being place-based, with more reference to health, inequality and economy, and greater emphasis on accessibility. Once adopted, the new LTS will be an important source of evidence and a key input into the next Local Development Plan.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan

11.69 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (LOIP) (CD324) outlines community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision is for "a place where all can thrive regardless of background or circumstance". There is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city's people to live healthy lives. Ten-year outcomes have been set to achieve the vision over five themes (see Table 11.2 below).

Theme	**10 Year Outcome (by 2036)**
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	95% of young people in SIMD 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school.
Economic Stability	Reduce to 3% the proportion of people aged 16 and above in SIMD 1 that are not in employment, and increase by 3% the employment rate of vulnerable groups.
Communities and Housing	Reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5%.
Neighbourhood and Environment	Increase proportion of people from SIMD 1 who feel they have influence and sense of control by 10%.
Health and Social Care	20% reduction in deaths in SIMD 1 from alcohol and drugs and a 20% reduction in suicide rate citywide.

Table 11.2 LOIP outcomes by theme

11.70 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes in the LOIP related to sustainable travel.

11.71 The above sections covering national, regional, and local policy contexts have provided an overview of transport policy and how this informs infrastructure delivery. To give an indication of how these policies relate to specific types of transport modes and what additional local policies are in place to support development the following headings are grouped by mode type based on the sustainable transport hierarchy.

Active Travel

Background Data

11.72 The 2023 Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study (CD186) noted the following for residents in the North East (Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City) for walking (figure 11.3):

Nine out of ten residents in the region walked at least once a week. Younger residents were more likely to walk every day than older residents

Frequency of walking	16-to-34-year-olds	35-to-59-year-olds	60 and over	All residents
Every day	71%	61%	54%	62%
At least weekly, not every day	23%	30%	33%	28%
Less than weekly	1%	3%	5%	3%
Never	4%	7%	7%	6%
Base (16 did not give their age)	**314**	**417**	**255**	**1001**

Other Findings:

48% of residents whose day-to-day activities were limited due to a health condition walked every day; but this was less than those without these limitations (67%).

Of those residents who walked every day, 14% walked to work (main mode); a further 20% walked for part of their journey to work.

One in five North East residents felt they could switch from car to walking to travel to work (21%); this was higher amongst residents of Aberdeen City (25%) than Aberdeenshire residents (15%).

Figure 11.3 North East Scotland 2023 walking statistics

11.73 The study notes that in Aberdeen, 40% of residents have access to a pedal or e-bike, 9% cycled every week, and 25% cycled at least once a year. The Walk Wheel Cycle Trust Aberdeen Walking and Cycling Index 2025 (CD365) notes that every year walking and cycling in Aberdeen results in the prevention of 605 serious long-term health conditions, £217.9 million in economic benefit for individuals in the region, 9,900 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions saved, and up to 57,000 cars taken off the road every day.

11.74 The Aberdeen City Voice Transport and Travel Edition 2025 (C364) is a survey that goes out to a panel of city residents, and then to the general public on an annual basis. Panellists were asked to answer the questions with their local neighbourhood in mind, with the results noted below.

2025	Mean Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't know	Base
Can you easily walk and wheel around using good quality routes? (move around walk)	5.1	6.4	3.8	5.3	8.3	24.2	31.8	18.9	1.1	264
Can you easily cycle around using good quality routes? (move around cycle)	4.4	8.4	3.8	8.4	9.6	14.9	14.2	8.4	32.2	261
Do buildings, streets and spaces create and attractive place that is easy to get around? (streets and spaces)	5.0	5.7	3.4	7.6	13.3	23.2	29.7	16	1.1	263

Table 11.3 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 Place Satisfaction Results (%)

11.75 The survey data also show how often people use each mode of transport to travel into the city. In terms of active travel modes, the results for 2025 were as follows:

Mode	Every day	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once or Twice a Month	Less Than Once or Twice a Month	Never
Walk	15%	18.1%	7.5%	8.7%	10.2%	40.6%
Cycle Standard	1.2%	2.4%	2.8%	3.2%	4.9%	85.4%
Cycle eBike	0%	2%	0%	0.8%	1.6%	95.6%
Wheeling	0.4%	0.4%	1.2%	0%	1.6%	96.3%

Table 11.4 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 Mode Usage

11.76 Finally, the survey also identifies the usual reported method of travel into the city centre as well as for other trips. In terms of active travel mode, the results for 2025 were as follows:

Mode	Work/ Place of Education	City Centre Day	City Centre Night	Other Journeys
Walk	6.8%	19.9%	14.2%	8.8%
Cycle Standard	1.3%	2.5%	0.4%	2.6%
Cycle eBike	0%	0%	0%	0.4%
Wheeling	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2.8%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%

Table 11.5 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 City Centre Mode Usage

11.77 The Sustrans Hands Up Scotland Survey 2025 (CD321) looks at how pupils across Scotland travel to school and nursery. The 2025 statistics (CD377 table 1.2) and (CD377 table 3.3) showed that of the 19,094 pupils surveyed across all Aberdeen City school types (excluding nursery), 57.3% chose an active travel method to travel to / from primary school, 52.8% chose an active travel method to travel to/from secondary school. Of the 2,194 pupils surveyed for nurseries, 38.4% used active travel methods for travel.

11.78 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments (CD041) for Community Planning. More information on this is found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assesses places and is split into fourteen themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of seven, and people are asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present in all three areas.

11.79 The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the 2025 Place Standard exercise (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

11.80 The results of the Place Standard Assessment (CD041) gave the topic of ‘moving around’ a mean score of 3.86 out of 7. The comments were as follows (table 11.6):

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future

Moving Around	• Suitability and availability of good paths for walking. (All) • Good public transport and transport links, especially frequent bus services. (All) • Good cycling routes (All) • Improved pedestrianization, as well as reductions in congestion (Central)	• Improve maintenance to pavements, and reduce clutter, better gritting in winter (All) • Improve maintenance to roads – potholes, drains, lighting (All) • Improve public / active travel choice and infrastructure (increase routes and frequency (North and Central) • Improve access – dropped kerbs (South) • Improve cycle route, safer cycle lanes and better signage (South) • Improve connections between walking routes (South) • Increase pedestrian crossings (South)

Table 11.6 Place Standard Assessment (Moving Around) - Scoring

11.81 Comments from children and young people gave an overall rating of 23.4% ‘not good’, 66% ‘okay’, and 10.6% ‘great’.

11.82 The following were the top three responses to the engagement:

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Moving Around	Plants and nature	16%	Bright lighting	22.6%
	Interesting walking and wheeling routes	15.1%	Feeling safe	19.8%
	Signs to find your way	14.2%	Interesting walking and wheeling routes	15.1%

Table 11.7 Place Standard Assessment (Moving Around) - Top Responses

Existing Infrastructure

11.83 Aberdeen's active travel infrastructure consists of a network of informal paths, core paths, cycleways, and greenways. There is a map of recommended cycle routes throughout the city however many of the routes are not dedicated separate cycle paths or roads with cycle lanes (Figure 11.4).

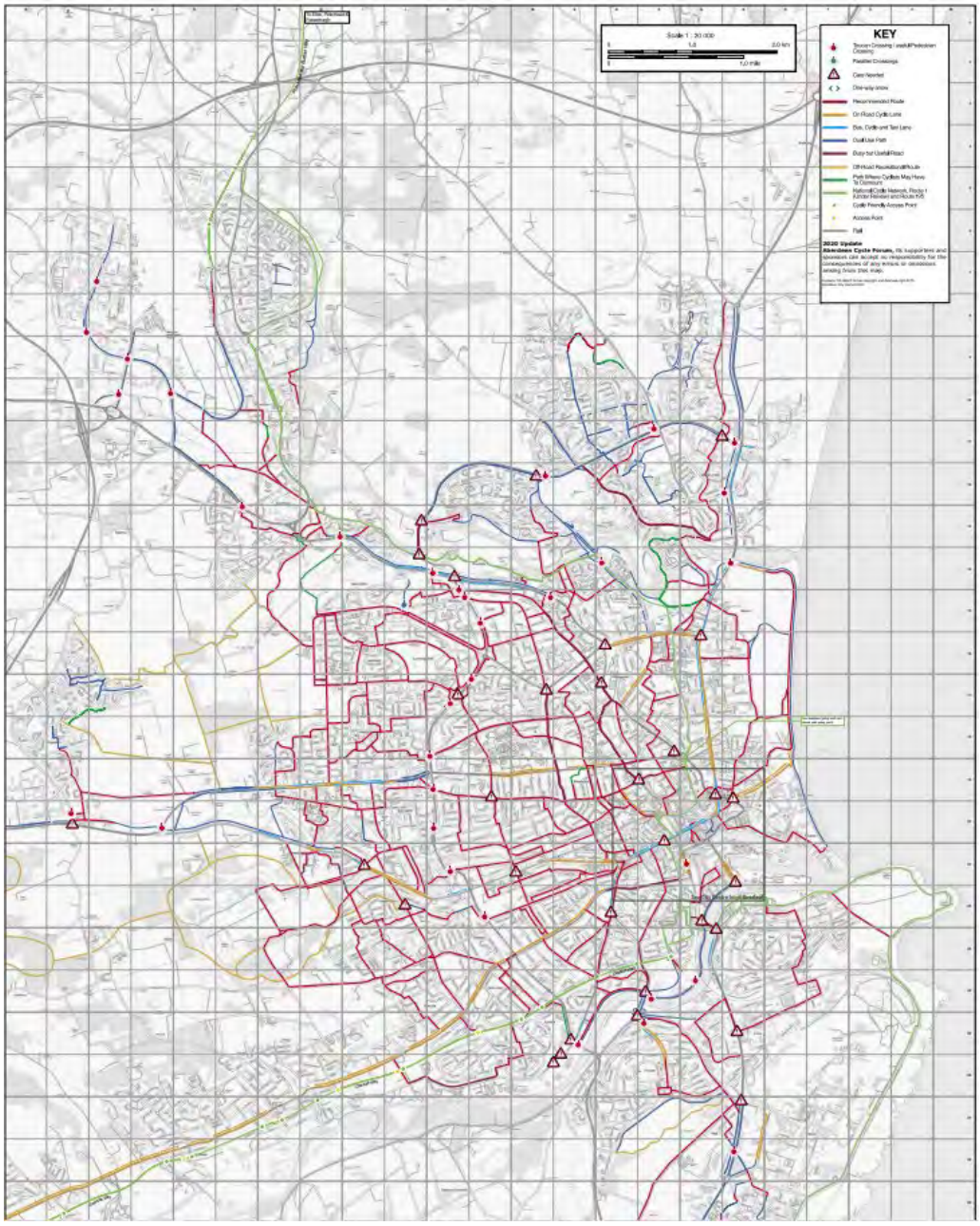


Figure 11.4 Aberdeen City Cycle Map 2020

11.84 There are two National Cycle Network routes which pass through the city. Route 1 passes from the south through the city to the northwest while Route 195 utilises the former Deeside Railway line heading west along the River Dee.

11.85 The Council's Core Paths Plan 2009 (CD196) and network map identifies a network of paths across the city that provide reasonable access throughout the surrounding

area. The plan is largely made up of existing paths and also identifies aspirational paths.

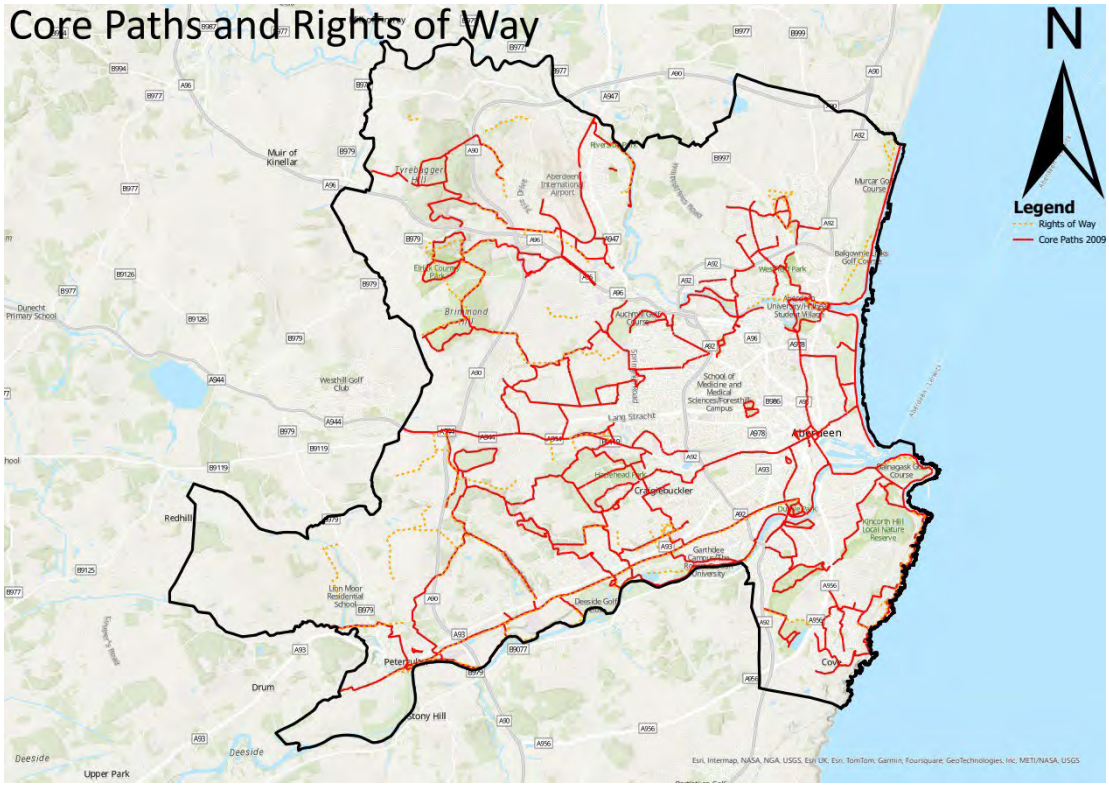


Figure 11.5 Core Paths Plan 2009

11.86 Informal paths will also play an important role in supplementing provision of core paths. The Council has some data on paths which were included during the public consultation on the Core Paths Plan. This data is called Paths Record.

11.87 The Council did have a contact in place with an ebike provider with locations throughout the city, but this is no longer in place. In late February the provider intimated that they would be withdrawing all their operations from the UK, and by default Aberdeen, by the end of February the ebikes had been taken off the streets (See Finance and Resources Committee Paper 8 May 2024) (CD268). The Council has since found a new provider. Voi are an established e-bike hire company. For May 2026, there were 8965 rides with 3449 active riders who covered a distance of 34,500km over 198,700 minutes.

Active Travel Policy

11.88 This section includes additional policies relating to active travel that supplement the overarching national, regional, and local policy strategies for sustainable transport.

11.89 Transport Scotland's Active Travel Framework (CD181) brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland for travel. It has been produced collaboratively by Transport Scotland and key delivery partners, with input from Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and local authorities. Its 2030 vision is that Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys. The framework model identifies five high level outcomes that will

contribute to realising this vision and achieving the strategic objectives for active travel policy at both a national and local level. This is a useful resource, however on a more local level the Aberdeen Active Travel Plan, which will be in the Local Transport Strategy, will offer more specific input into the new local development plan.

11.90 The current Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 (CD194) identifies the actions and interventions to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive, and to increase active journeys in the city in order to make Aberdeen a healthier, more attractive and economically vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

11.91 Nestrans also has an Active Travel Action Plan 2014–2035 (CD269) for the region. In addition, Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have completed the Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) (CD326), which identifies a strategic network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes across the North East. The RATN provides an important evidence base for future active travel investment and should inform future priorities for infrastructure delivery, developer obligations and site assessment through the Proposed Plan. It is expected that the RATN will inform the updated Local Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and future active travel investment priorities across the region.

11.92 The City Council adopted its first Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) (CD195) in late 2019. The SUMP is a long-term transport strategy for the City Centre, which identifies projects that will be progressed by the Council and partners to make it easier and more attractive for people to travel by sustainable means. It was developed in the context of other projects concerning transport in the City Centre, including the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and City Centre Beach Masterplan (CCBMP), the Roads Hierarchy Review, Low Emission Zone Options Appraisal, and development of a revised approach to car parking. The SUMP seeks to:

- Support Aberdeen's transition to a low carbon and low emission future
- Support the city centre living objectives of the CCMP by developing of a safe and sustainable city centre which people can access and move around with ease and which is a pleasant place to live and spend time in
- Complement and further develop the transport elements of the CCMP
- Support the revised Roads Hierarchy, particularly the principles of discouraging through-traffic and improving accessibility for people walking, cycling and using public transport
- Identify infrastructure required to support the successful delivery of a bike hire scheme and Low Emission Zone.
- Support the ongoing City Region Deal project to identify and appraise external transport connections to Port of Aberdeen's South Harbour.

11.93 For more information on the CCBMP, please refer to the Place Topic Paper under the Design, Quality and Place section.

11.94 Section 13.2 of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan (CD286) seeks to ensure every new transport and active travel infrastructure project incorporates elements of

blue-green infrastructure, and seek opportunities for its enhancement and expansion.

11.95 Public Health Scotland host a number of papers which look at the evidence of whether road space reallocation can contribute to health and assess the potential impacts on health within Scotland. They also make recommendations for future action.

Current / Planned Investment / Projects

11.96 On a national level, Transport Scotland recommends the following investments relating to active travel as part of its Strategic Transport Project Review (CD176 & CD180):

- Recommendation 2: Active Freeways and Cycle Parking Hubs, Development of active freeways on high-demand corridors in Scotland's largest cities.

11.97 On a regional level, the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report of the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal (CD271) sets out the following active travel related infrastructure investment options (table 11.8):

Option	Description	Recommended Delivery Pathway	Potential Next Steps
1	Upgrade existing active travel routes	LTS/LA; RTS; CRD	STAG-based feasibility and engineering work to consider the implementation of continuous segregated active travel corridors into the city centre to inform subsequent business cases / funding applications. Local authorities to take the lead and continue to progress ongoing active travel focussed corridor studies.
2	Increase provision and quality of active travel routes across the region	LTS/LA; RTS	

Table 11.8 Preliminary Options Appraisal (City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal) - Active Travel

11.98 The above options relate to infrastructure delivery within the Aberdeen City area. Two additional options were included in the CRD Options Appraisal Report that relate to supporting options covering cycle hire schemes and "softer measures" encompassing initiatives to encourage and enable greater active travel use. As these second options relate more to policy initiatives and not infrastructure development, they will not be the focus of this section.

11.99 To support options 1 and 2, several projects are currently at various stages of development. Most notably are the multi-modal corridor assessments currently underway to identify improvements on key corridors between the AWPR and the city centre. These studies have been identified in the draft LTS to support the vision for how the transport network should look like by 2030 (see figure 11.6 below).

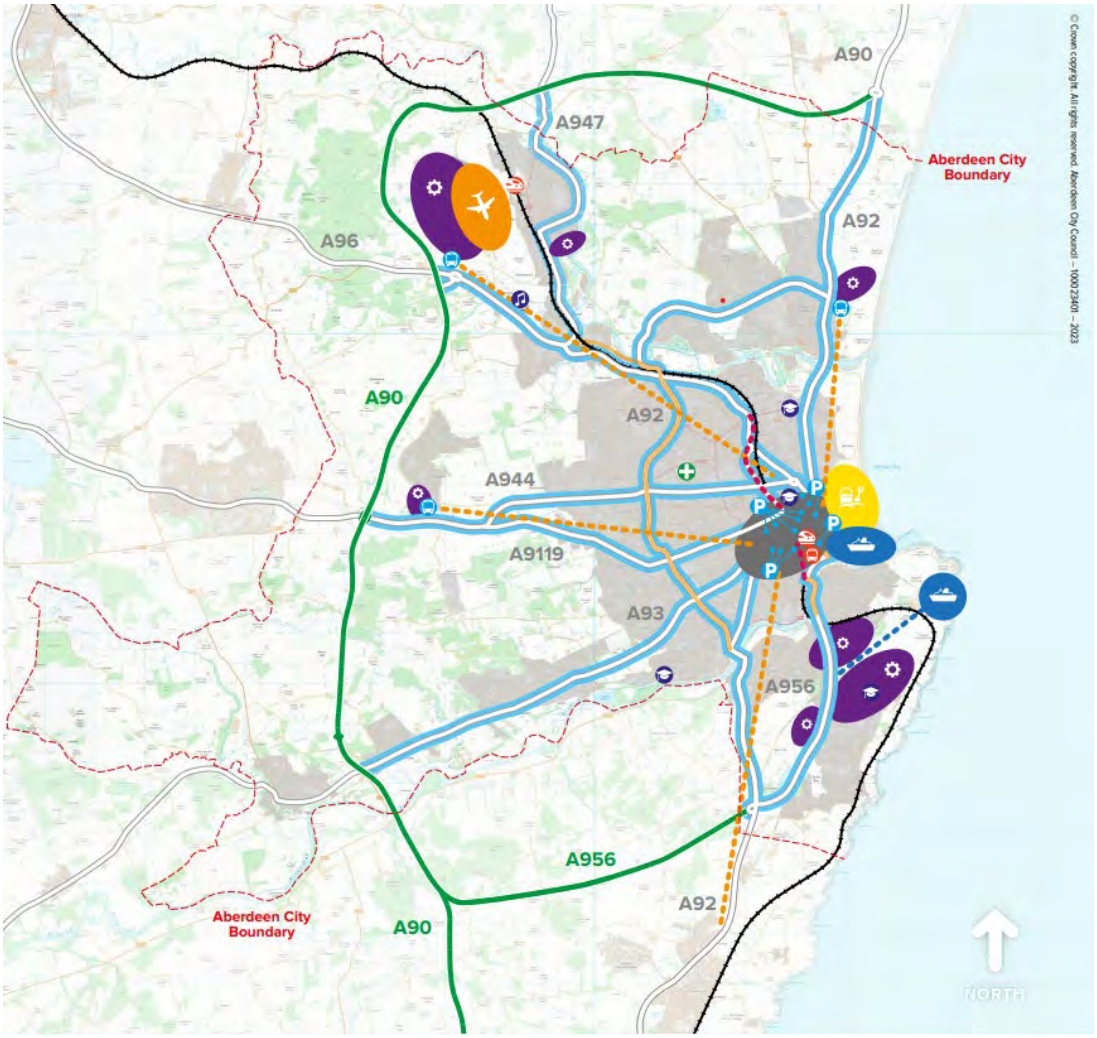


Figure 11.6 Draft Local Transport Strategy Multi-Modal Corridors

11.100 The corridor studies are closely linked with additional work related to public transport provision and the ART Business Case. Active travel developments are therefore likely to be delivered in conjunction with public transport delivery along these routes.

11.101 In addition to the multi-modal corridor studies, works are also progressing to address missing community links as well as upgrading key points along existing infrastructure. The below table outlines current projects, their status, and funding source. These projects affect more than a single development or area. For projects relating to individual developments, the Delivery Programme (CD343) provides an overview of the status and source of funding for each.

Topic	Project	Status	Funding
Multi-Modal Corridors	A93	Further progress is paused indefinitely following both public and stakeholder concerns.	Nestrans
	A947	Study has been completed. An Outline Business Case is approved with a view to take forward further design and	Nestrans

		delivery from 2026/27. Funding has been secured to date with a further application to take forward some outcomes.	
	A956	Study complete with some elements moving to delivery however this is resource and funding dependent. Some elements of this corridor are related to the ART development which falls under separate delivery project.	Nestrans
	A944 / B9119	Study complete with outcomes taken forward as part of the ART Business Case. A complementary piece of work will consider elements that do not fall within ART work.	Nestrans; Transport Scotland (via Bus Partnership Fund)
	A92	Study complete with outcomes taken forward as part of the ART Business Case. A complementary piece of work will consider elements that do not fall within ART work.	Nestrans; Transport Scotland (via Bus Partnership Fund)
	A96 Missing Links	Work ongoing however progress constrained due to land ownership and resourcing.	Nestrans
New Connections	Craibstone P&R to TECA Quiet Route	Currently undergoing design work. Next phase to determine implementation.	Nestrans
	A92 Murcar North – Blackdog Cycle Track	Detailed design ongoing, completion of design anticipated Autumn 2026.	AWPR NMU; Nestrans
	Marywell Cycle Route	Currently awaiting approval of funding.	Nestrans
	Farburn / Wellheads Cycle Link Stage 1	Work ongoing however progress constrained due to land ownership.	Nestrans
Upgrades	Ashgrove Connects	Currently at consultation and design phase.	Nestrans
	Core Paths Improvement	Currently identifying scope of core path improvements with physical works beginning after 2026.	Bus Lane Enforcement; Developer Obligations

Table 11.9 Active Travel Projects

Funding

11.102 In addition to funding from public sources, funding is also sought via developer contributions in certain circumstances. The Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance (CD230) sets out specific instances where mitigation

measures may be required for a development. In relation to active travel, the following instances are relevant:

Mitigation Measures	
Footway Crossings	The Council will charge the developer for the cost of the construction. The cost will vary from site to site depending on the works required, such as alterations to street furniture, utilities and width of crossing.
Cycling / Walking Routes	Developers will be required to provide safe routes for cyclists and walkers, this may include both on and off-site cycle parking infrastructure improvements and the supply of secure cycle parking. Contributions towards the Core Path Network in the vicinity of the development may also be sought.
Safer Routes to Schools	Developers will be required to provide safe routes to schools through the provision of measures outlined in Local and National policy such as Designing Streets and exclusive cycle / pedestrian paths.
Cycle Hire Scheme	May apply to all residential developments of 3 or more units where full secure cycle parking and storage provision is limited.

Table 11.10 Developer Obligation Mitigation Measures - Active Travel

11.103 It should be noted that a requirement for developer obligations and any potential mitigation measures is site specific and will depend on a number of factors. Additionally, while the guidance outlines methodologies for assessing planning applications, the Council promotes delivery of transport-related infrastructure by the developer wherever possible. An infrastructure-first approach will be taken to plan for requirements as a result of new development through LDP allocations, Masterplans, and the Delivery Programme.

11.104 The above outlines the active travel areas where developer obligations are sought, however a trigger for such measures will depend on specific factors, further outlined in the supplementary guidance (CD230). Over the course of the current Local Development Plan, the developer obligations relating to active travel that have been sought for are shown in the following table:

Developer Obligations Sought to Date	When and Where	Related Project / Investment

Core Path Network	All residential and commercial developments where: • There is no provision of Core Paths or links to Core Paths Network; or • Where a developer proposes provision of, or improvements to, the Core Paths Network and the Council, as Access Authority, considers such measures to be inadequate.	Site specific core path improvements. Developer contributions are tied to specific core paths relating to site. Core Paths Improvement Project (see Table 11.9)
Cycling	See Table 11.10 relating to transport mitigation measures.	No contributions have been used to date.
Pedestrian Facilities	See Table 11.10 relating to transport mitigation measures.	Contributions have been utilised for specific footpath improvements as well as wider projects including the City Centre and Beach Masterplan contributing toward active travel connections as a result of increased development.

Table 11.11 Active Travel Developer Obligations Sought

11.105 Further review will be undertaken with the relevant Council services to determine whether updates to the contribution methodology or application are necessary for Transport-related obligations in the Proposed Plan.

Implications

11.106 The following is an overview of the implications that the evidence summarised above has for the development of the next local development plan relating to active travel.

11.107 A new Core Path Plan is being developed as part of the Natural Environment Strategy. It will require further discussion with internal teams to determine proposed or indicative areas of development and potential spatial and land-use implications. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the

Natural Environment Strategy. Core Paths can be mapped in the Local Development Plan.

11.108 The completion of the Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) provides a more comprehensive evidence base for active travel infrastructure across the North East. The Proposed Plan should use the RATN to inform site assessment, strategic connectivity requirements and future infrastructure safeguarding. Development sites that connect directly to existing or planned active travel corridors should be viewed favourably as they are more likely to support modal shift and reduce dependence on private vehicle travel. The ongoing programme of multi-modal corridor improvements, Aberdeen Rapid Transit and active travel investment demonstrates that future transport investment will be concentrated on a number of strategic corridors. The Proposed Plan should align growth with these corridors and ensure that new development supports and strengthens sustainable travel connections rather than creating additional dependence on private vehicles.

11.109 The Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) should be considered during site assessment and spatial strategy development. Opportunities should be taken to safeguard, deliver or enhance relevant sections of the network through development allocations and developer contributions where appropriate.

11.110 Section 13.2 of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030 seeks to ensure new active travel infrastructure projects incorporate elements of blue-green infrastructure, and seek opportunities for its enhancement and expansion. This could have implications for design standards set out for the new local development plan and for expanding and connecting the Aberdeen Green Space Network to other locally and nationally important habitats. Further information can be found under the Blue and Green Infrastructure sections of Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure.

11.111 The papers produced by Public Health Scotland with respect to reallocation of road space in Scotland will have implications for the new plan as they lend some evidential weight to improved health outcomes being resultant from reduced use of motor vehicles and increased active travel, albeit with potential unintended adverse impacts such as displacing traffic to other areas. The direct implications for the new plan would specifically relate to design standards in new development.

11.112 The current use of developer obligations ensures developments are supporting active travel policies through site-specific infrastructure provision in line with NPF4. It is expected that these developer obligations will continue to be identified within the proposed plan.

11.113 Public funding streams for large-scale infrastructure projects seeking to enhance connectivity across the city are generally sought with additional external funding applications, some of which are currently in progress. The multi-modal corridor projects are also tied to ART development, which is currently funded separately through the City Region Deal.

11.114 Therefore, planned infrastructure investment for active travel is anticipated to continue and this will require land-use, and policy considerations for the next step of local development plan creation.

Public Transport

11.115 The following section covers bus, rail, and park & ride facilities under the umbrella of public transport.

Background Data

11.116 The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review (CD188) reported a 2023 baseline showing that public transport passenger flows accounted for 31% of total (7,970) journeys for the city centre with 28% (8,718) for Aberdeen.

11.117 The Aberdeen City Voice Transport and Travel Edition 2025 (CD364) survey goes out to a panel of city residents, and then to the general public on an annual basis. Table 11.12 below shows place satisfaction results.

2025	Mean Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't know	Base
Does public transport meet your needs? (public transport)	4.8	8.7	5.7	9.5	13.3	18.6	19.3	20.5	4.5	264

Table 11.12 Aberdeen City Voice - Does public transport meet your needs?

11.118 2025 data (CD364) in Table 11.13 below shows how often people use each mode of transport to travel into the city.

Mode	Every day	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once or Twice a Month	Less Than Once or Twice a Month	Never
Bus	3.4%	17.6%	15.3%	19.5%	28.4%	15.7%
Park and Ride	0%	2.7%	1.9%	2.2%	4.1%	89.1%
Train	0%	0.8%	0%	0.8%	4%	94.4%

Table 11.13 Aberdeen City Voice - Frequency of mode (to/from city centre)

11.119 2025 data (CD364) in Table 11.14 below shows how people usually travel into the city centre and for other trips.

Mode	Work/ Place of Education	City Centre Day	City Centre Night	Other Journeys
Bus	6%	28.4%	25%	13.6%
Park and Ride	0%	0.4%	0%	0%
Train	0.4%	1.3%	2.2%	0%

Table 11.12 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 - Frequency of mode (city centre and surrounds)

11.120 Transport Scotland's Transport and Travel in Scotland 2024 Household Survey includes a number of datasets broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, annual net household income, equivalised income, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, and urban/rural classification.

11.121 The 2024 survey found that 15% of employed adults work from home from a sample of 160, compared to 24.7% across Scotland. It is recorded that 10% of respondents stated that the bus was their usual method of travel to work, while 1% said the train was. Table 11.15 shows data from 2021-2024 surveys. It shows that the percentage of people in Aberdeen not using the bus (in the last month of being surveyed) has fluctuated between approximately half up to 61%, while the percentage of regular bus users tends to return a varying percentage in the high teens, low/mid twenties since the passing of pandemic restrictions. Those using the bus once a week sits consistently between 7.7% and 10%.

	Local bus Every day, or almost every day	Local bus 2 or 3 times per week	Local bus About once a week	Local bus About once a fortnight, or about once a month	Local Bus NOT used in past month
2024	6.6%	11.3%	7.7%	13.4%	61%
2023	12%	12%	9%	18%	49%
2022	5%	11%	8%	25%	51%
2021	4%	9%	10%	17%	61%

Table 11.15 Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021-2024 Household Survey, Aberdeen City bus use in last month for over 16s, sample size 300.

11.122 Table 11.16 shows data from 2021-2024 surveys. It shows that consistently a comfortable majority of respondents recorded their satisfaction with public transport in Aberdeen while consistently a minority under a quarter recorded dissatisfaction.

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
2024	23%	41%	14%	11%	11%
2023	16%	40%	25%	13%	6%
2022	21%	39%	17%	17%	5%
2021	26%	41%	17%	10%	5%

Table 11.16 Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021-2024 Household Survey, Aberdeen City public transport satisfaction for over 16s, sample size 270.

11.123 Table 11.17 shows data from 2021-2024 surveys. It shows that there is a growing perception that the buses in Aberdeen are unpunctual with only 54% respondents agreeing the buses were on time in the 2024 survey. There is a growing perception that the service is not stable/changeable. Understanding of ticketing and routes remains relatively high, as is satisfaction with cleanliness and safety, though increasing disagreement regarding safety in the evenings. 3 out of the last 4 years only 55% of respondents felt bus services in the city were value for money.

	2024	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**
buses are **on time**	54%	56%	76%	76%
the **service is stable** and isn't regularly changing	59%	68%	78%	78%
buses are **clean**	73%	72%	90%	90%
buses are **environmentally friendly**	75%	73%	69%	53%
I feel personally **safe and secure** on the bus during the day	87%	88%	99%	99%
I feel personally **safe and secure** on the bus during the evening	62%	61%	81%	81%
it is **simple deciding the type of ticket** I need	81%	69%	92%	92%
finding out about **routes** and **times** is **easy**	73%	69%	81%	81%
it's **easy changing** to other forms of transport	61%	51%	57%	57%
the fares are **good value**	55%	35%	55%	55%

Table 11.17 Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021-2024 Household Survey, Aberdeen City percentage that agree with statements for over 16s, sample size 160.

11.124 Table 11.18 shows data from the 2024 survey. It shows commuting and shopping are the major reasons for travel in Aberdeen.

Main Purpose of Travel	
Commuting	20%
Business	1%
Education	7%
Shopping	26%
Visit Hospital or Other Health	1%
Other Personal Business	6%
Visiting friends or relatives	10%
Eating or drinking	2%

Sport or Entertainment	8%
Holiday or day trip	1%
Other Journey	1.2%
Escorting someone	1%
Went Home	8%
Went for a walk	8%

Table 11.18 Transport and Travel in Scotland 2024 Household Survey, Aberdeen City main purpose of travel.

11.125 Most of this information may be used as the basis for other existing documents and strategies that feed into the new plan process. The data presents an insight into behaviour patterns nonetheless.

11.126 The Sustrans Hands Up Scotland Survey 2025 (CD321) looks at how pupils across Scotland travel to school and nursery. The 2025 statistics showed that of the 19,094 pupils surveyed across all Aberdeen City school types (excluding nursery), 13.8% use the bus to travel to / from school. Of the 2,194 pupils surveyed for nurseries, 2% used the bus for travel.

11.127 The 2023 Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study (CD186) noted that in Aberdeen:

- 4% of residents took the bus to the supermarket
- 22% of residents took a bus to the town or city centre
- 11% of residents took a bus for personal business
- 11% use the bus for day trips

11.128 The travel study noted that for commuters in Aberdeen, 25% of workers who drove to work felt switching to the bus would be easy; 55% felt it would be difficult; 15% felt it would be impossible; and 4% felt it would be neither easy nor difficult.

11.129 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey (CD263) and Assessing the State of the Bus Network in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (CD273) include a number of survey statistics on personal safety at the bus stop/on the bus, information at the bus stop/on the bus, condition of the bus stop, comfort of the bus, service frequency, wait times, ease of boarding, seat availability, and a number of other areas.

11.130 The results of the Place Standard Assessment (CD041), see paragraph 11.79 for more information, gave the topic of ‘public transport’ a mean score of 3.98 out of 7. The comments are as follows (table 11.19):

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future

Public Transport	• The frequency and reliability of bus services. (Central) • The accessibility of the bus services. (Central) • Greener buses (North and Central) • Cleanliness and good upkeep of buses (South) • Traffic management has prioritised buses and made them a more attractive option (North)	• Increase frequency, timing, direct routing and reliability of public transport (All) • Affordability of public transport - transport poverty (All)

Table 11.19 Place Standard Assessment (Public Transport) - Scoring

11.131 Comments from children and young people gave an overall rating of 19.6% ‘not good, 56.5% ‘okay’, and 23.9% ‘great’.

11.132 The following were the top three responses to the engagement:

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Public Transport	Free bus travel	33%	Reduced cost of buses for the adults in my life	24.5%
	Stops or Stations nearby	21.7%	Timetable information	19.8%
	Travel apps	11.3%	Shelter from the weather	17.9%

Table 11.20 Place Standard Assessment (Public Transport) - Top Responses

Existing Infrastructure

Bus

11.133 In 2023/24 the Council recorded that there were 1,286 bus stops in Aberdeen. A map (Figure 11.7) showing the existing quantity of weekday buses in Aberdeen from the largest mainstream providers (First Bus and Stagecoach) can be found below.

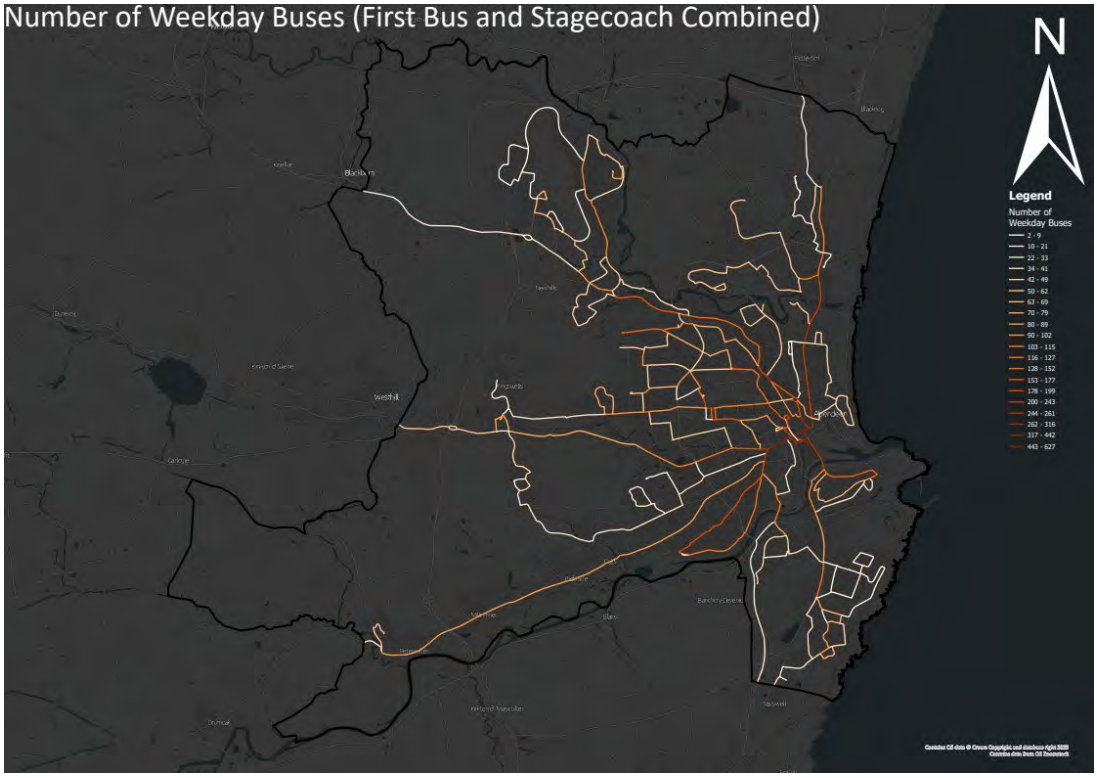


Figure 11.7 Map showing number of weekday buses, compiled by the Planning Service in 2023

11.134 First Bus and Stagecoach (CD283) route maps are included within the evidence list. There are also long-distance coach operators Scottish Citylink, Flixbus and Ember providing regular service to destinations to the south, toward Braemar / Cairngorms (west), and toward Inverness (north-west).

11.135 The Council also operate community transport services between 10:00 and 14:30, Monday to Friday providing a door-to-door service within the city for those who are unable to use conventional bus services such as the elderly or disabled. Journeys can start and finish anywhere within the area of pick-up and all services will travel to the city centre and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Request for travel between different areas of the city are subject to availability.

11.136 As part of the City Centre Masterplan, bus priority measures were implemented limiting through-traffic to buses only on certain routes (see Figure 11.8). The removal of general through-traffic from these roads will also lead to an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly considering the large volume of pedestrians travelling between Union Street and the Union Square rail, bus, and shopping centre. There are further bus priority measures located outwith the city centre, again used to enhance bus reliability and travel time.

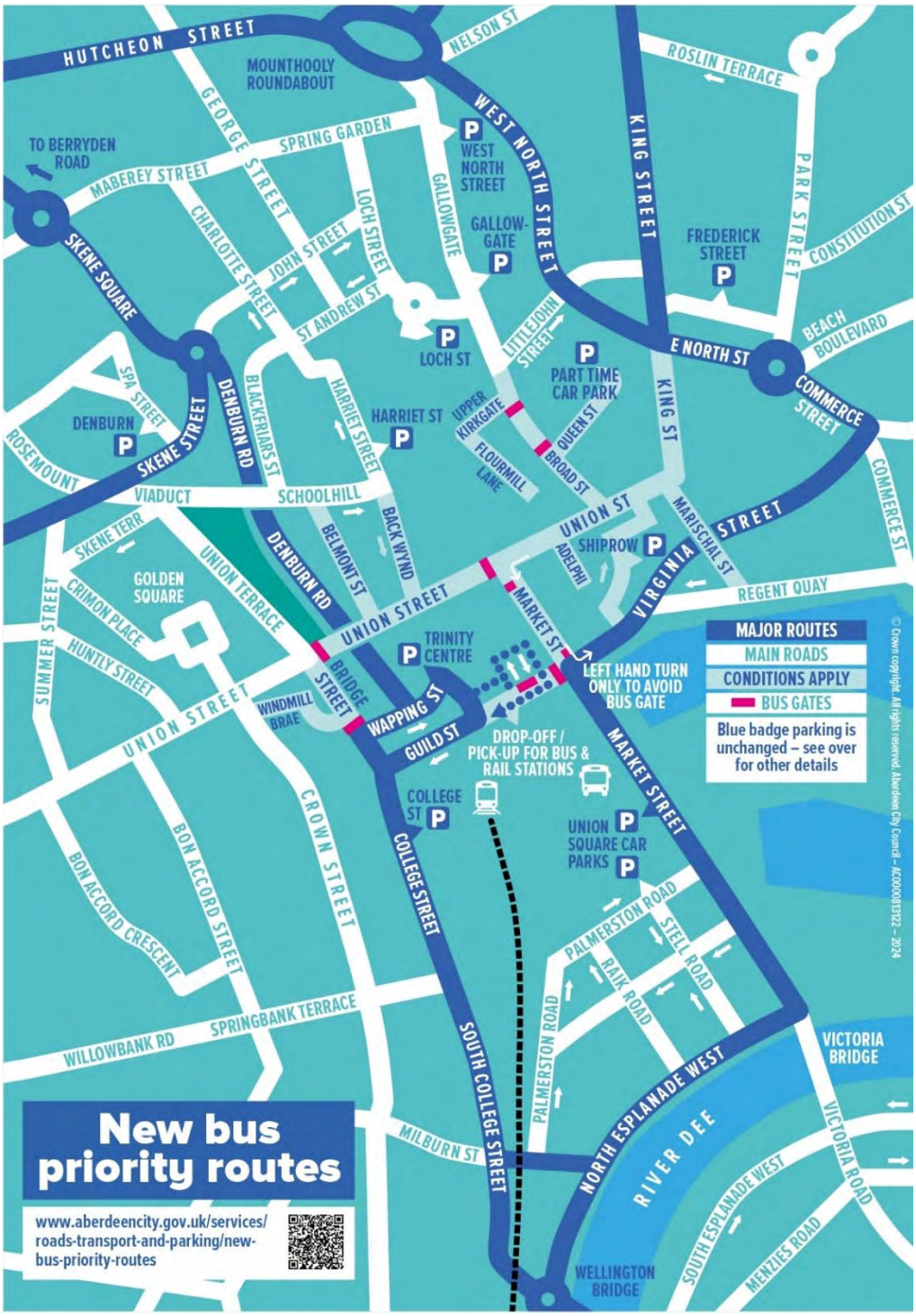


Figure 11.8 New City Centre Bus Priority Route.

11.137 The city centre bus priority measures were made permanent at the 18 December 2024 Urgent Business Committee (CD267) with the Council approval of the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023. A statutory appeal was raised against the Council in connection with an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) being made permanent. This has since been determined in the Council's favour.

Rail

11.138 Aberdeen City has two railway stations within its boundary. Aberdeen Station is central, adjacent to the bus station and within 5 minutes' walk of Union Street which has the highest frequency of bus routes and stops in the city. The station is connected by core paths from the north, south, east and west. Dyce Station is connected to an off-road core path which connects Wellhead Drive in the south to the Formartine and Buchan Way heading north. Both these stations can be found mapped in figure 11.9. There are regular buses which stop near the station. Potential changes to the A947 corridor near the station are covered in this document under 'Multi-Modal Corridor Studies'.

11.139 From Aberdeen Station there is 1 train per hour to Edinburgh and 1 train per hour to Glasgow, both via Dundee. There is 1 train every 2 hours to Inverness via Elgin. There are a number of trains that serve Inverurie to the north west in Aberdeenshire and Montrose to the south in Angus. There are 3 trains a day to London via Edinburgh and a London sleeper train 6 days a week. The Nestrans LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189) states, from its 2023 baseline data, that Aberdeen Station has 5011 daily boardings while Dyce Station has 957. Table 11.21 below provides a summary of facilities available at Aberdeen and Dyce Stations.

	Aberdeen Station	**Dyce Station**
Passengers (Entries and Exits April 2022 – March 2023)	1,961,414	260,000
Platforms	5	2
Seated Area	Yes, waiting room	Yes, shelters on platforms
Ticket Office	Yes, and machines	Machines only
Wi-Fi	Yes	Yes
Accessibility	Category A Station - Step free access to both platforms Staff help available 7 days a week.	Category A Station - Step free access to both platforms
Toilet	Yes, inc. accessible, baby changing and showers	No
Cycle Storage	80 sheltered stands	16 sheltered stands, lockers
EV Charge Spaces	2	2
Accessible Parking Spaces	10	3
Car Park Spaces	188	59

Table 11.21 Aberdeen and Dyce Station Information

11.140 There are rail freight terminals at Craiginches (north and south), Waterloo Quay, and Raiths Farm in Dyce.

Park & Ride

11.141 Aberdeen City has three park and ride sites – Bridge of Don, Craibstone and Kingswells. Nestrans conducts annual surveys at all sites across Aberdeen City and Shire to understand travel habits. Of the three sites, only Kingswells is served directly by bus with both Craibstone and Bridge of Don not directly served, but park and stride remain an option. In August 2023, First Bus 1B service was rerouted to no longer stop at Bridge of Don with the annual count taking place after the service was withdrawn.

11.142 Details of the three Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (Ellon and Newtonhill) park and ride facilities can be found on the Getabout webpage (Getabout | A to B in Aberdeen City and Shire). Nestrans state on their webpage that a new facility at Portlethen is still a priority and is included within the proposed ART network. Table 11.22 below shows the facilities at the Aberdeen sites.

Facility	Number of Parking Spaces	Waiting Room Facilities	Cycle lockers	EV charge points
Bridge of Don	650	Lit, heated, seating, accessible toilet	Stands and bookable lockers	0
Craibstone	996	Lit, heated, seating, accessible toilet, shower facilities	Stands and bookable lockers	12
Kingswells	915	Lit, heated, seating, accessible toilet	Stands and bookable lockers	6

Table 11.22 Park & Ride Details

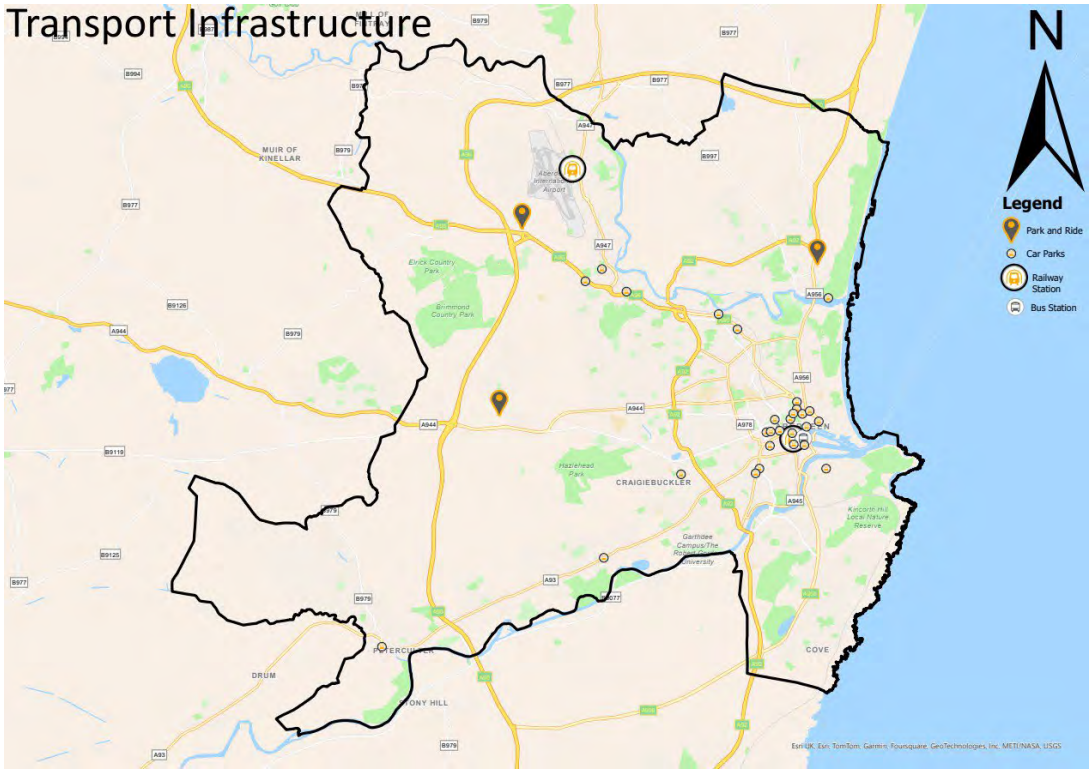


Figure 11.9 Park & Ride locations compared to other infrastructure

11.143 A State of the Network report in February 2025 (CD274) that includes total patronage from Kingswells Park and Ride (2019 – 2023), showed the positive growth in usage with patronage in 2023 slightly above pre covid levels (2019). Nestrans board meetings from 16 February 2023 (CD282) and 26 June 2024 (CD272) include findings from past annual park and ride surveys.

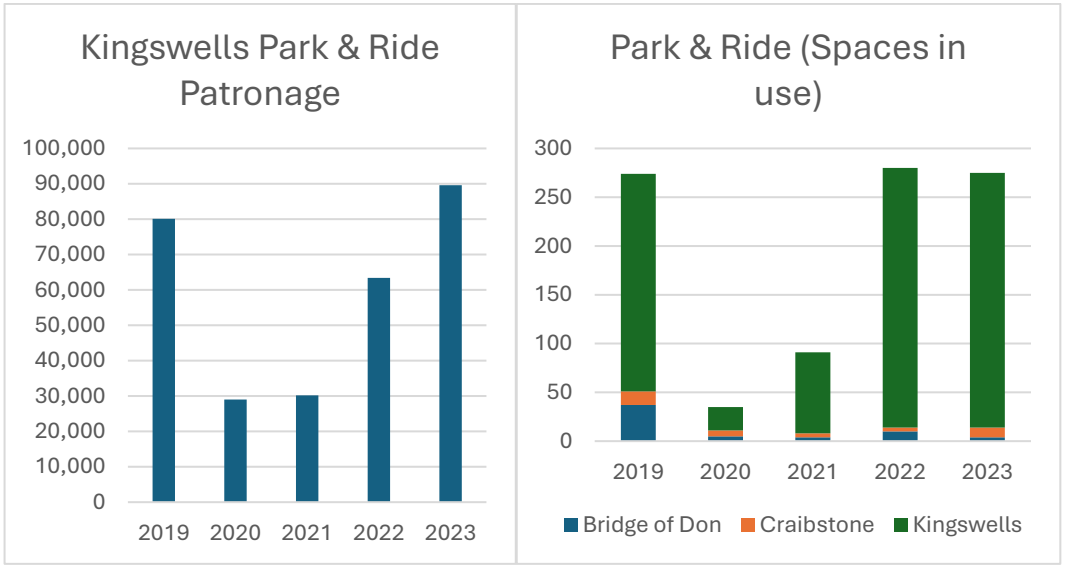


Figure 11.10 Park & Ride Usage, figures provided by Nestrans based on data from CD274 (table 4.15 within) and annual park and ride surveys respectively.

Public Transport Policy

11.144 For public transport policies relating to Aberdeen City, these are largely covered within the local, regional, and national policy sections of this paper. However, a few additional documents relate to public transport in terms of policy influence and these are highlighted below.

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan & City Centre & Beach Masterplan

11.145 Aberdeen City Council introduced its first Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) (CD195) in December 2019. This plan lays out a long-term strategy to make travelling in the city centre easier and more appealing by encouraging walking, cycling, public transport and other cleaner ways to get around.

11.146 The SUMP builds on other transport projects in Aberdeen, such as the City Centre Masterplan, a review of road use, planning for a Low Emission Zone, a new approach to car parking, and ideas for a bike hire scheme.

11.147 The plan aims to help Aberdeen become a low-carbon city, make the city centre a safer and better place to live and visit, improve transport options, discourage unnecessary traffic, and support new projects like bike hire and better connections to Aberdeen South Harbour.

11.148 In conjunction with the SUMP, the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CCBMP) is a largescale infrastructure project designed to reorganise the priority of transport modes in the city centre specifically via Union Street. Additional details of the CCBMP can be found under the Design, Quality and Place section of Topic Paper 9 – Place.

Regional Transport Review

11.149 As mentioned under the Regional Transport Review section of this topic paper, a with and without policy scenario model was conducted to assess forecasted transport patterns for Aberdeen.

11.150 The Nestrans LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189) includes baseline data public transport flows over a 24 hour period for a number of transport corridors into Aberdeen. A simplified version is set out below (table 11.23):

Corridor	Aberdeen Total	City Centre Total	Mode Share Aberdeen	Mode Share City Centre
A96	8,718	7,970	28%	31%
A944 & A93	9,371	7,953	19%	30%
A90 North	8,382	7,681	28%	31%
A90 South	8,352	8,198	23%	32%
A947	7,626	7,487	30%	30%
A90 South/A92	8,125	8,043	28%	32%

Table 11.23 Public Transport Corridor Mode Share

11.151 The Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188) sets out public transport movements (bus and rail) on page 24 and 25 of the review. The report finds that in

a ‘with policy’ scenario by 2040 there would be increased patronage across all regions, with more considerable increases within Aberdeen, and to/from Aberdeenshire. Only Northern movements to/from Aberdeen see a small decrease in public transport trips.

11.152 For the ‘without policy’ scenario, by 2040 overall public transport patronage reduces to/from several areas, including a small total reduction in trips to/from Aberdeenshire (with on overall region-wide change). The exception to this trend is Aberdeen, and more specifically public transport trips within Aberdeen, and between Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire where a moderate increase is seen.

11.153 Table 11.24 shows forecasts using the ‘with policy’ scenario for bus and rail. It shows a considerable and relatively consistent increase in patronage for both bus and rail.

Scenario:	Total Daily Boardings			% change vs Baseline		
With Policy	Bus	Rail	Total	Bus	Rail	Total
2023 Baseline	88,173	14,996	103,169			
2030 Policy	96,695	17,160	113,855	10%	14%	10%
2040 Policy	106,114	18,481	124,595	20%	23%	21%

Table 11.24 Bus and Rail forecasts ‘with policy’. From CD188 Page 26.

11.154 Table 11.25 shows forecasts using the ‘without policy’ scenario for bus and rail. It shows a very marginal increase in patronage for both bus and rail, albeit rail travel up by 8% by 2040 against the 2023 baseline.

Scenarios:	Total Daily Boardings			% change vs Baseline		
Without Policy	Bus	Rail	Total	Bus	Rail	Total
2023 Baseline	88,173	14,996	103,169			
2030	88,857	15,163	104,020	1%	1%	1%
2040	88,188	16,245	104,433	0%	8%	1%

Table 11.25 Bus and Rail forecasts ‘without policy’. From CD188 Page 26.

11.155 The report shows forecasted capacities for park and ride facilities for both scenarios. The analysis suggests there is sufficient parking capacity at all the bus-based park and ride sites in all scenarios, with demand during the Inter Peak period following a similar pattern.

11.156 The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review (CD188) assesses public transport network impacts. The Appendix Database (CD189) includes maps (city and regional) which demonstrate the public transport network impacts at AM and PM peaks for both ‘with policy’ and ‘without policy’ on pages 143 to 150. The change is calculated by subtracting the 2023 baseline data from the 2040 forecasts. The general pattern that a slight reduction in bus passengers on the A96 and A92 bus service corridors inbound to Aberdeen is forecast for the ‘without policy’ scenario. For the ‘with policy’ scenario, bus passengers are seen to increase more

considerably, particularly along the King Street, A96, A944/B9119, Holburn Street and Wellington Road corridors. Passenger demand to/from Aberdeen Royal Infirmary is also shown to increase.

11.157 With regards to the public transport impact maps noted above, the general pattern is that rail travel will increase under both scenarios by 50-100 passengers per hour on both the Inverness line and East Coast main line.

11.158 Rail passenger crowding is set out in the Transport Evidence Review (CD188) on pages 32-33.

Current / Planned Investment / Projects

11.159 On a national level, Transport Scotland recommends the following investments relating to active travel as part of its Strategic Transport Project Review (CD176 & CD180):

- **Recommendation 13:** Aberdeen Rapid Transit, a bus based rapid transit system which will focus on specific corridors through the city providing quicker and easier travel.
- **Recommendation 16**: Perth-Dundee-Aberdeen rail corridor enhancements which comprises the Aberdeen Central Bel Service Improvements Project and the Aberdeen Central Belt Decarbonisation Project (neither of which are dependent on each other).
- **Recommendation 25**: Rail decarbonisation. This involves replacing diesel trains with cleaner technology to help meet net zero targets. Electrification would improve journey times and reliability for freight and passenger trains. It would facilitate longer trains and better acceleration.
- **Recommendation 44:** Rail freight terminals and facilities. An updated market study for rail freight growth in Scotland is sought including a review of rail freight terminals and hubs to confirm how to meet long-term requirements to shift freight from road to rail.

11.160 Transport Scotland announced in September 2024 that ScotRail would be commencing a rolling stock procurement exercise for the replacement of its high speed trains fleet that operates Intercity route from Aberdeen. Pages 27-29 of Transport Scotland's Rail Recharged: Scotland's Fleet Transition Strategy (CD363) set out the context of this decision. The outcome of this procurement will determine the extent of electrification required on Aberdeen – Central Belt routes. Design works for future electrification have been undertaken to inform an outline business case for decarbonising the Aberdeen – Central Belt.

11.161 In relation to the above rail projects, the release of funding is contingent on a positive decision by the Transport Scotland investment decisions-makers to the Outline and Final Business Cases. Timescales for delivery remain under review.

11.162 On a regional level, the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report of the City Region Deal (CRD) Strategic Transport Appraisal (CD271) sets out the following public transport related infrastructure investment options:

Option	Description	Recommended Delivery Pathway	Potential Next Steps
5	Improve bus services and network	LTS/LA; RTS	Nestrans, with support from the North East Scotland Bus Alliance, to lead a study to investigate how the new powers embodied in Transport Act could be used to provide a catalyst to generating a step change in bus provision and operations across the region. This would be informed by a region-wide bus network review including a 'rural connectivity audit' – considering current provision version rural community needs. Recognition must be made of the financial burden that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have on public transport patronage, the funding available to support bus operations across the region, as well as capital spending schemes.
6	Demand responsive services	LTS/LA; RTS	
7	New railway stations on existing lines	LTS/LA; RTS; CRD; STPR/TS	Nestrans, in partnership with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, to undertake an Outline Business Case to confirm preferred option for the station sites between Aberdeen and Dyce, (drawing on the work of the Aberdeen North-West Station Review). Outline Business Case to confirm preferred option for the station sites between Aberdeen and Laurencekirk, taking forward the recommendations form the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor Study. This would support the development of a strong 'commuter line' between Montrose, Aberdeen, Dyce, and Inverurie. Monitoring of rail passenger demand is required in the short term to understand the impacts of home working borne out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Medium to long term changes in travel behaviour and the use of the rail network would need to be appropriately reflected in any business case developed.
8	New railway lines and associated stations		It is unlikely that railway line re-openings can be justified under existing Treasury criteria and transport appraisal criteria. Alignments should be protected in case there are substantial changes in appraisal

			guidance in the future, and the viability of opportunities should be kept under review in the light of policy development. Nestrans will continue to review changes to treasury guidance and transport appraisal criteria and other opportunities affect the case for rail line re-opening.
9	Strategic Public Transport Corridor Scheme (s)	LTS/LA; RTS; CRD; STPR/TS	Nestrans, in partnership with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and the North East Scotland Bus Alliance to undertake a STAG-based study of Bus Rapid Transit and other mass transit options to serve strategic locations and corridors across the Aberdeen travel to work area. This would in turn provide the Strategic Case for the subsequent Business Case. Funding could also be sought through Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund.
10	Park & Ride Facilities	LTS/LA; RTS; CRD; STPR/TS	Park & Ride sites and smaller mini-interchange hubs to be further considered within the framework of corridor studies and rural accessibility analysis.
11	Improved Transport Hub	LTS/LA ; RTS	Nestrans to support the work of Aberdeen City Council in the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan including investigating the potential for improved accessibility between the rail / bus station and the harbour.
14	Access for all across all public transport (including taxi) modes	LTS/LA; RTS	Nestrans, partnership with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, to undertake audit of existing mobility issues across all public transport modes and core urban realm across the region, to establish the specific problems and issues. To be progressed in partnership with bus and rail bodies including the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and ScotRail, as well as the regional Getabout partnership.
29	Improve Inter-City Rail Connections	RTS; CRD; STPR/TS	Nestrans to continue work with Transport Scotland and Network Rail to implement plans to improve the rail network connecting Aberdeen to both the Central Belt and Inverness, including consideration of rail freight opportunities.

Table 11.26 Transport related infrastructure investment options

11.163 The above options (Table 11.26) relate to infrastructure delivery within the Aberdeen City area. Two additional options were included in the CRD Options Appraisal Report that relate to supporting options covering ticketing, marketing, and information accessibility.

11.164 Below are the projects currently underway that seek to address the options outlined above as part of the CRD Strategic Transport Appraisal. Note that the first topic of Multi-Modal Corridors has already been mentioned relating to active travel, however these projects are primarily related to the build-out of public transport infrastructure and also tied to the Aberdeen Rapid Transit project, of which further details are provided below.

Topic	Project	Status	Funding
Multi-Modal Corridors	A93	Further progress is paused indefinitely following both public and stakeholder concerns.	Nestrans
	A947	Study has been completed. An Outline Business Case is approved with a view to take forward further design and delivery from 2026/27. Funding has been secured to date with a further application to take forward some outcomes.	Nestrans
	A956	Study complete with some elements moving to delivery however this is resource and funding dependent. Some elements of this corridor are related to the ART development which falls under separate delivery project.	Nestrans
	A944 / B9119	Study complete with outcomes taken forward as part of the ART Business Case. A complementary piece of work will consider elements that do not fall within ART work.	Nestrans; Transport Scotland (via Bus Partnership Fund)
	A92	Study complete with outcomes taken forward as part of the ART Business Case. A complementary piece of work will consider elements that do not fall within ART work.	Nestrans; Transport Scotland (via Bus Partnership Fund)
New Connections	Aberdeen Rapid Transit	Project is ongoing and currently at Outline Business Case stage.	Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund; Aberdeen City Region Deal (Nestrans)
	Mobility Hubs	Work to be presented to Aberdeen City Region Deal	Nestrans

		Joint Committee and Nestrans Board. Following this, work to establish business case.	
	Local Rail Stations	Nestrans progressing a Business Case	Nestrans
Upgrades	Urban Traffic Management Control	Ongoing; tied to the ART project	Transport Scotland; Bus Infrastructure Fund
	King Street / St Machar Drive Improvements	Constrained due to funding and internal resource. Likely future funding bid for construction.	Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund

Table 11.27 Projects from the CRD Strategic Transport Appraisal – Public Transport

11.165 Additional work outwith the city boundary includes the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi-Modal Corridor Study which covers an area south of Aberdeen City in Aberdeenshire. This project is however closely related to existing city work and will also fall under cross-boundary and cumulative transport considerations. The options for public feedback relating to this work are:

- Active travel infrastructure to connect communities along the corridor from Stonehaven to Aberdeen
- A mobility hub facility to the south of Aberdeen
- Bus priority measures on approach to Aberdeen
- Providing a foundation for Aberdeen Rapid Transit
- Creation of a new rail station in Cove and Newtonhill

11.166 Consultation results have been used to inform the public acceptability assessment of the option packages within the Nestrans Detailed Options Appraisal Report (CD278). This corridor work is currently being led by Nestrans with further technical documents available as reference and relating to Aberdeen Rapid Transit work (CD275, CD276, CD277, CD279, CD280, CD281).

11.167 Regarding proposals for additional railway stations, the Regional Transport Strategy (CD185) states that additional stations between Dyce and Laurencekirk (to the south of the city, in Aberdeenshire) would need 'options brought forward and business cases developed to ascertain viability'. A balance would have to be struck in terms of enabling further access to the railway while not jeopardising network capacity or restricting the speeds of express services. Consideration of possible station locations will require to link to Local Development Plan allocations, with a view to proposed developments being well served by rail as well as existing residential and industrial areas.

11.168 The reopening of the former Formartine & Buchan railway line to Fraserburgh and Peterhead, or alternatively just to Ellon, was appraised in 2016 by Nestrans and both options found to be financially unviable. A new Sustainable Transport Study is being undertaken at present to reappraise feasibility of rail connections to Fraserburgh and Peterhead.

11.169 Regarding rail freight terminals at Craiginches (North and South), Waterloo Quay, and Raiths Farm, Nestrans recognise that commercial and other practical considerations currently limit the attractiveness of this mode to specific flows of freight such as bulk goods and supermarket multi-modal flows.

Aberdeen Rapid Transit

11.170 Supporting national and regional policies regarding public transport corridor schemes, the main and largest project currently underway is that for Aberdeen Rapid Transit.

11.171 The delivery of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) is a key policy to encourage increased bus patronage set out in the Regional (CD185) and Local Transport Strategies (CD191, CD192), National Planning Framework 4 (CD001) and Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Project Review 2 (CD175). A map of the proposed routes can be found below, in Figure 11.11.

11.172 ART is anticipated to cover two key corridors linking Craibstone, the Airport and The Events Complex Aberdeen/P&J Live to Altens and Portlethen via the city centre and Westhill/Kingswells to Bridge of Don via the city centre. Each of these corridors is anchored at each end by one of the region's existing or proposed park and ride sites.

11.173 Aberdeen Rapid Transit is planned to prioritise routes that connect people to the places they want to go to: key education, employment, healthcare, retail and leisure destinations, the airport and rail station, as well as the city centre. Aberdeen Rapid Transit will provide fast, frequent and reliable services, which could be delivered through a combination of dedicated bus lanes, off board fare collection, and fast and efficient boarding and alighting. It intends to provide high-capacity and high-quality vehicles, and journey times competitive to the private car, to provide an attractive way to travel, being accessible and easy to use.

11.174 Funding has been secured from the Aberdeen City Regional Deal to further develop the business case for ART including detailed consideration of infrastructure requirements, options for how and who would run Aberdeen Rapid Transit and identify funding options to deliver Aberdeen Rapid Transit (see Committee Report Aberdeen Rapid Transit Recommended Network Routing (CD265)). NESTRANS host a number of documents relating to the business case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit on its webpage (which are listed at the beginning of this paper). A strategic business case has been prepared and it is anticipated that an outline business case will be available by end of the financial year 2026/27.

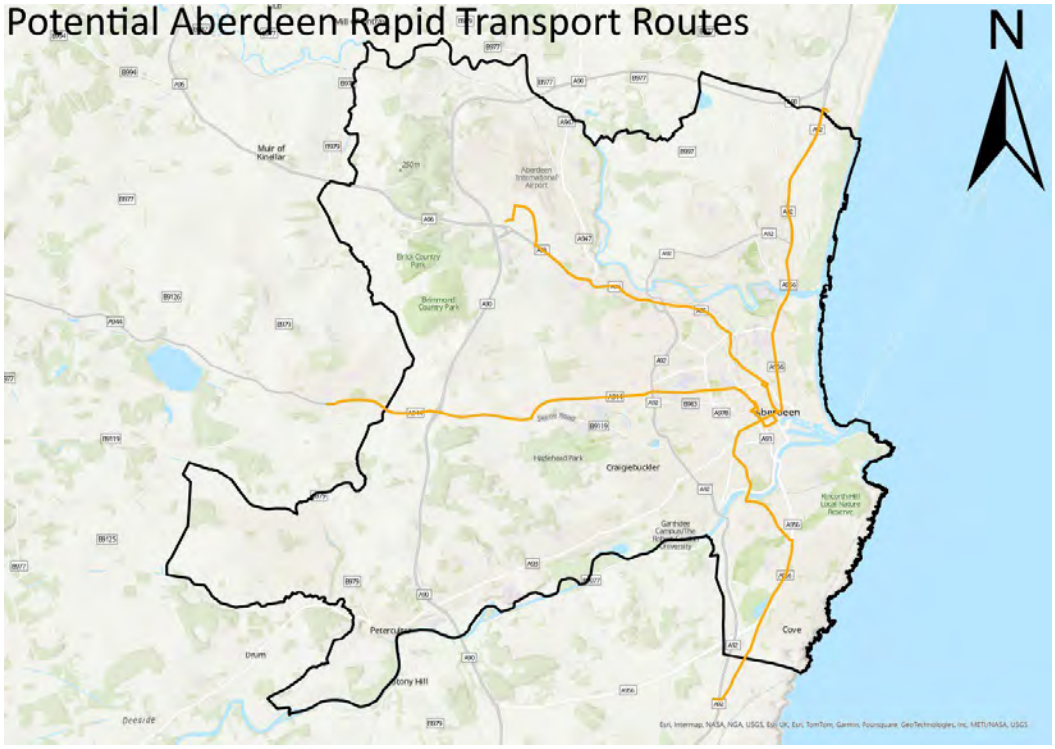


Figure 11.11 Map of potential routes for Aberdeen Rapid Transport.

Funding

11.175 On a national level, funding for transport infrastructure is provided largely via the (now extant) Scottish Government Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). At the time of writing, the bus Partnership Fund has supported the projects listed in Table 11.28.

11.176 In December 2023, Transport Scotland announced a pause in the Bus Partnership Fund programme during 2024/25. As North East partners see merit in continuing with the development of these projects, in February 2024 the City Region Deal Joint Committee approved an allocation of £1,740,000 between 2024/25 and 2026/27 for progressing work on Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) and the associated corridor studies. This has allowed progress to continue, despite the pause in funding nationally, with a Programme Level Outline Business Case for ART currently being developed.

11.177 In March 2025 Transport Scotland invited those bus partnerships which previously had work ongoing as part of the BPF to submit proposals to be considered for funding through a new Bus Infrastructure Fund. As set out in Nestrans' news bulletin, Bus Infrastructure Fund – North East Bus Alliance Award, Aberdeen City Council submitted a bid on behalf of the North East Bus Alliance and has successfully been awarded a total of £995,000 for three projects.

	Bus Infrastructure Fund Bid
1	Urban Traffic Management Control System upgrade for bus priority (£490,000) – to upgrade the city council's Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) system to facilitate and develop its functionality in order to provide priority for buses at traffic signals.

2	Design work for upgrade of St Machar Drive/King Street Junction from roundabout to signals with bus priority (£50,000) – Replace the existing 4-arm roundabout at the junction of A956 King Street / School Road / St Machar Drive and its associated staggered pedestrian crossing facilities, with a new traffic signal-controlled junction incorporating Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) facilitating bus priority at the signals and improved safety for walking, wheeling and cycling. Detailed design and associated works to enable the project to be construction ready in 2026-27.
3	Upgrade and expansion of Real Time Passenger Information across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (£455,000) – Implement upgrade and expansion of bus stop real time passenger information (RTPI) provision at key locations across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Table 11.28 Bus Infrastructure Fund Bid

11.178 In addition to funding from public sources, funding is also sought via developer contributions in certain circumstances. The Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance (CD230) sets out specific instances where mitigation measures may be required for a development. In relation to active travel, the following instances are relevant:

Mitigation Measures	
Public Transport Priority	Developers may be required to provide or fund public transport priority measures. These include, but are not limited to, bus lanes, bus-only sections of road, and bus priority traffic signals.
Supported Bus Services	Developers may be required to enter into a legal agreement which enable upfront payments to fund new bus services or to underwrite a new service for an agreed period of time. This may involve a completely new service and / or extending / improving an existing service. New and upgraded facilities may be required in order to deal with increased demand on public transport services, these may include the provision of, or upgrade of, bus stops, bus shelters and real time information systems.
Bus Permits / Tickets	May apply to all residential developments of 3 or more units where full parking provision is limited.
Travel Plans	Travel plans are likely to be required for major developments. Within the Travel Plan, it will be necessary for the developer to provide details of target aspirations, monitoring arrangements, and any actions that may trigger a revision of the Travel Plan. Travel Information Packs may be required alongside, or in lieu of, a full Travel Plan.

Table 11.29 Developer Obligation Mitigation Measures – Public Transport

11.179 It should be noted that a requirement for developer obligations and any potential mitigation measures is site specific and will depend on a number of factors. Additionally, while the guidance outlines methodologies for assessing planning

applications, the Council promotes delivery of transport-related infrastructure by the developer wherever possible. An infrastructure-first approach will be taken to plan for requirements as a result of new development through LDP allocations, Masterplans, and the Delivery Programme. Transport requirements will vary from site to site. The exact contribution required for each site will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

11.180 The above outlines the areas where developer obligations are sought for public transport, however a trigger for such measures will depend on specific factors, further outlined in the supplementary guidance (CD230). Over the course of the current Local Development Plan, developer obligations relating to public transport have been sought for the following:

Developer Obligations Sought to Date	When and Where	Related Project / Investment
Bus Facilities Contribution	See Table 11.29. relating to mitigation measures.	Site specific developer contributions for improvements to bus stop, station, and park & ride facilities.
Bus Services	See Table 11.29. relating on mitigation measures.	For the provision of school bus services, and public bus services to related development.
Road Improvements	Note additional funding stream for DO of 'Road Improvements' may include measures that impact public transport such as road layout changes.	Bus lane priority measures

Table 11.30 Public Transport Developer Obligations Sought

11.181 Further review will be undertaken with the relevant Council services to determine whether updates to the contribution methodology or application are necessary for Transport-related obligations in the Proposed Plan.

Implications

11.182 The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review demonstrates that meaningful reductions in car use and associated carbon emissions are unlikely to be achieved without significant investment in public transport and supporting policy interventions. The evidence shows substantially stronger public transport outcomes under the "with policy" scenario than under the "without policy" scenario. The Proposed Plan should therefore prioritise development in locations capable of being served by attractive, frequent and reliable public transport. Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) represents the most significant planned public transport intervention affecting Aberdeen and is embedded within national, regional and local transport strategies. The Proposed

Plan should support the delivery of ART by prioritising development opportunities along existing and proposed ART corridors, safeguarding infrastructure requirements where appropriate and ensuring that new development contributes towards the viability of the network.

11.183 The evidence indicates that the existing Park & Ride network has sufficient capacity under all assessed scenarios. This suggests that the Proposed Plan should seek to maximise use of existing strategic transport assets and support development patterns that improve utilisation of these facilities, particularly through integration with Aberdeen Rapid Transit and other public transport improvements.

11.184 Future site selection should consider accessibility to existing and proposed public transport infrastructure, including bus corridors, rail stations, Park & Ride facilities and Aberdeen Rapid Transit. Sites requiring substantial new public transport infrastructure to achieve acceptable levels of accessibility may present greater delivery risks than those capable of utilising existing networks. Additional project work run by regional and national bodies (see Harbour or Rail Improvements) will require close collaboration with multiple stakeholders to determine land-use needs.

Road

11.185 The following section covers car club usage, private vehicle usage, EV infrastructure, and freight needs.

Background Data

Behaviour

11.186 The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review (CD188) reported a 2023 baseline showing that private car usage dominated traffic flows in the city. Of the 21,178 daily vehicle flows measured, 17,386 were by car through the city centre while for the whole city 22,870 of 29,129 were by car.

11.187 The Aberdeen City Voice Travel and Transport Edition 2025 (CD364) survey goes out to a panel of city residents, and then to the general public on an annual basis. Table 11.31 below shows place satisfaction results.

2025	Mean Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't know	Base
Do traffic and parking arrangements allow you to move around safely and meet your needs? (traffic and parking)	4.9	7.2	4.6	7.6	12.9	21.3	25.9	16.7	3.8	263

Table 11.31 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 - Traffic and parking arrangements

11.188 2025 data (CD364) in Table 11.32. below shows how often people use each mode of transport to travel into the city.

Mode	Every day	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once or Twice a Month	Less Than Once or Twice a Month	Never
Taxi	0%	2.4%	2.8%	9.5%	37.7%	47.6%
Motorbike/ Moped etc	0%	1.2%	0%	0%	0.8%	98%
Car Club	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	1.2%	0.8%	98%
Non-Plug in Car/Van as Driver	6.4%	17.6%	8.8%	7.2%	9.2%	50.8%
Plug in Car/Van as Driver	2%	3.7%	0.8%	1.2%	0.8%	91.4%
Non-Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	0%	8.1%	8.5%	12.6%	10.6%	60.2%
Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	0.4%	1.2%	1.6%	2.4%	3.7%	90.7%
Other	0%	1.8%	0%	1.2%	3%	94%

Table 11.32 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 - Frequency of mode (to/from city centre)

11.189 2025 data (CD230) in Table 11.33 below shows how people usually travel to their places of employment, education, and the city centre.

Mode	Work/ Place of Education	City Centre Day	City Centre Night	Other Journeys
Car Club Vehicle	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Non Plug in Car/Van as Driver	22.6%	23.3%	17.7%	49.1%
Non Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	2.1%	4.7%	5.2%	7%
Plug in Car/Van as Driver	3%	3.8%	2.2%	5.7%
Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	0.4%	0%	0.9%	1.3%
Motorbike/Moped etc	0%	0%	0%	0%
Taxi/Minicab	0.4%	0.4%	6%	0.9%
Other	2.8%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%

Table 11.33 Aberdeen City Voice 2025 - Frequency of mode (city centre and surrounds)

11.190 Transport Scotland's Transport and Travel in Scotland 2024 Household Survey noted on page 16 that the average (mean) amount which an adult driver spent on vehicle fuel 'in the last month' was £122.The average (mean) spent by an adult on parking (including non-drivers) was £0.90 per week. For those who drove, the figure was £1.30.

11.191 The Sustrans Hands Up Scotland Survey 2025 (CD321) looks at how pupils across Scotland travel to school and nursery. The 2025 statistics showed that of the 19,094 pupils surveyed across all Aberdeen City school types (excluding nursery), 22.1% used private motorised travel to / from school. Of the 2,194 pupils surveyed for nurseries, 56.3% used private motorised travel.

11.192 The results of the Place Standard Assessment (CD041), see paragraph 11.79 for more information, gave the topic of 'traffic and parking' a mean score of 3.36 out of 7. The comments are as follows:

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Traffic and Parking	• Decent provision of parking spaces and well signposted (All) • There are environmentally friendly options available (car clubs and park and ride. (North) • Less congestion as a result of taking cars out of the city centre, as well as there being good access to the City (South) • Able to get around easily by car (North)	• Improve car parks – safety, lighting, signage, maintenance (North and South) • Availability and cost of car parking, particularly in the city centre (All) • Enforcement of illegal, parking, obstructions and speeding offences (All) • LEZ is not welcome and will have a negative impact on those with disabilities (North) • Reducing car use as there is too much traffic and congestion (Central) • Remove the bus gates (Central)

Table 11.34 Place Standard Assessment (Traffic and Parking) - Scoring

11.193 Comments from children and young people gave an overall rating of 30.4% 'not good, 63% 'okay', and 6.5% 'great'.

11.194 The following were the top three responses to the engagement:

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Traffic and Parking	Places to cross	18.9%	Better places to cross	23.6%
	Quiet streets	16%	Less speeding	19.8%
	None of these	13.2%	More bike lanes	17.9%

Table 11.35 Place Standard Assessment (Traffic and Parking) - Top Responses

11.195 According to Transport Scotland's Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 (CD260), Aberdeen City has 414 private cars (478 including all other private vehicles) per 1,000 people. This is more than the average across Scotland's four largest cities which is 304 private cars (388 including all other private vehicles) per 1,000 people. Nestrans' Reducing Car-km and Carbon Emissions: Options for Nestrans Region (CD190) notes that there are around 7,500 car-km driven annually for each resident in the northeast region, though car-km per person is 75% greater in Aberdeenshire than Aberdeen City.

11.196 The Nestrans LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189) includes 2023 baseline data traffic flows over a 24-hour period for a number of transport corridors in Aberdeen. A simplified version of the data is set out below (table 11.36).

Corridor	Aberdeen Total	City Centre Total	Aberdeen Total car only	City Cen Total car only
A96	29,129	21,178	22,870	17,386
A944 & A93	51,363	22,579	40,214	18,470
A90 North	27,440	21,342	21,044	17,489
A90 South	34,696	21,575	27,498	17,728
A947	23,053	20,813	18,023	17,126
A90 South/A92	26,912	21,043	21,219	17,319

Table 11.36 Corridor Mode Share (Car)

11.197 For Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, the percentage mode share for 2022 demonstrates the current dependence upon private cars. See Figure 11.12, below, from the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy Evaluation Report 2024 (CD187). The estimates show that, compared to both the 2019 baseline and 2020 data, car driving is down from 74.5% in 2020 to 69.7% in 2022. Furthermore, bus travel has seen a return to the 2019 baseline (an estimated 12% of distance travelled).

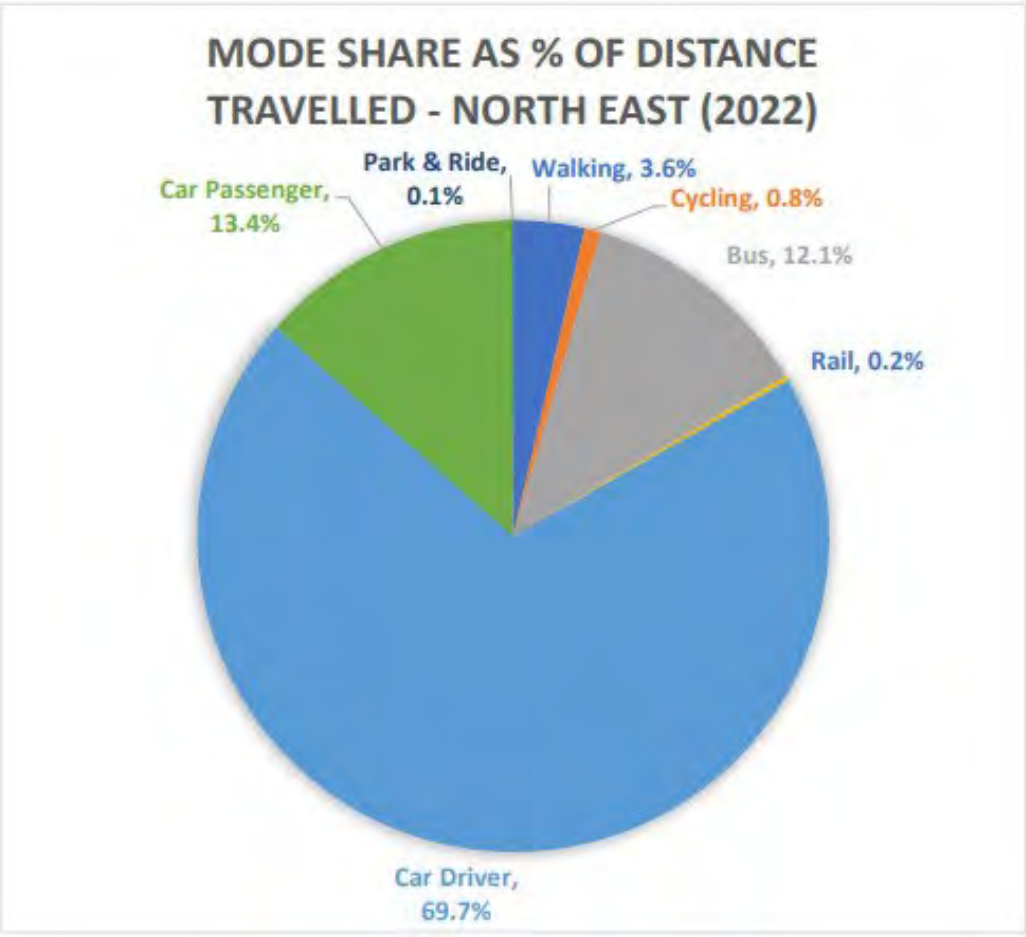


Figure 11.12 Mode share as % of distance travelled (North East)

11.198 The 2023 Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study (CD186) notes that 88% of residents in Aberdeen used a car at least once a week for travel and 85% of residents have access to a car. This percentage differs according to areas, however with 71% of residents who live in an area of highest deprivation having access to a car or van, compared to 91% of residents in the least deprived area.

11.199 The Nestrans Travel Study (CD186) also notes the following for Aberdeen:

- 69% of residents use a private car to travel to work at least once a week.
- 77% of residents use a private car to travel to the supermarket at least once a year.
- 54% of residents use a private car to travel to city centre or town centre at least once a year.
- 65% of residents use a private car to travel to escort children to school at least once a year.
- 69% of residents use a private car to travel for personal business at least once a year.
- 72% of residents use a private car to travel for day trips at least once a year.

Road Usage & Traffic

11.200 There are numerous 2023 baseline maps which show journey times for road traffic and public transport from various settlements around Aberdeen in the Nestrans

Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188) and the Nestrans LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189). The documents also include road journey time graphs in both directions for A92 Stonehaven/Bridge of Dee and A944 Skeen Road Switchback.

11.201 Cumulative journey times in both directions along the A944 Skene Road switchback to Westhill are shown in figure 11.15. It indicates a two-minute delays experienced at the AWPR Interchange approach westbound in all periods.

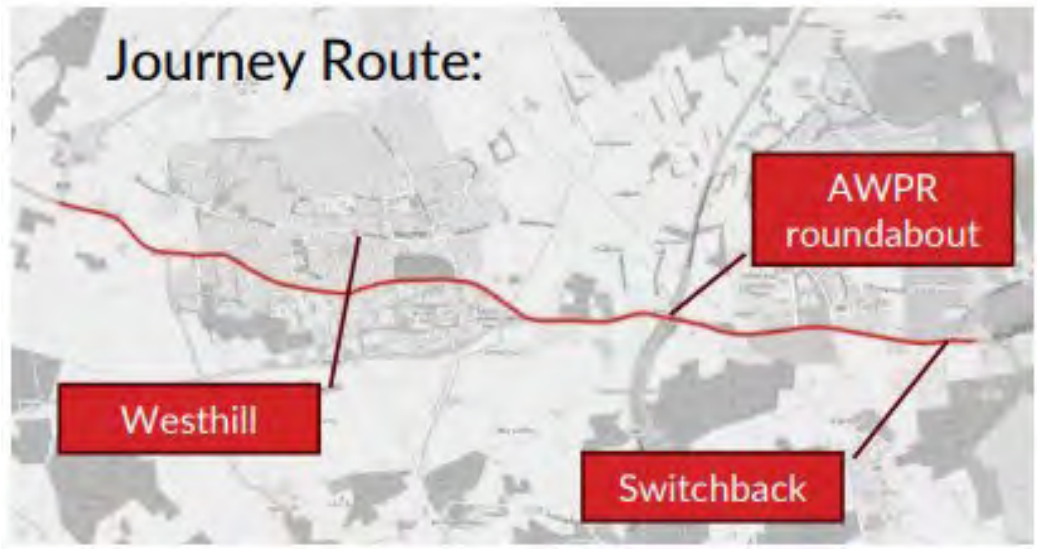


Figure 11.13 A944 Skene Road Switchback. Source CD188

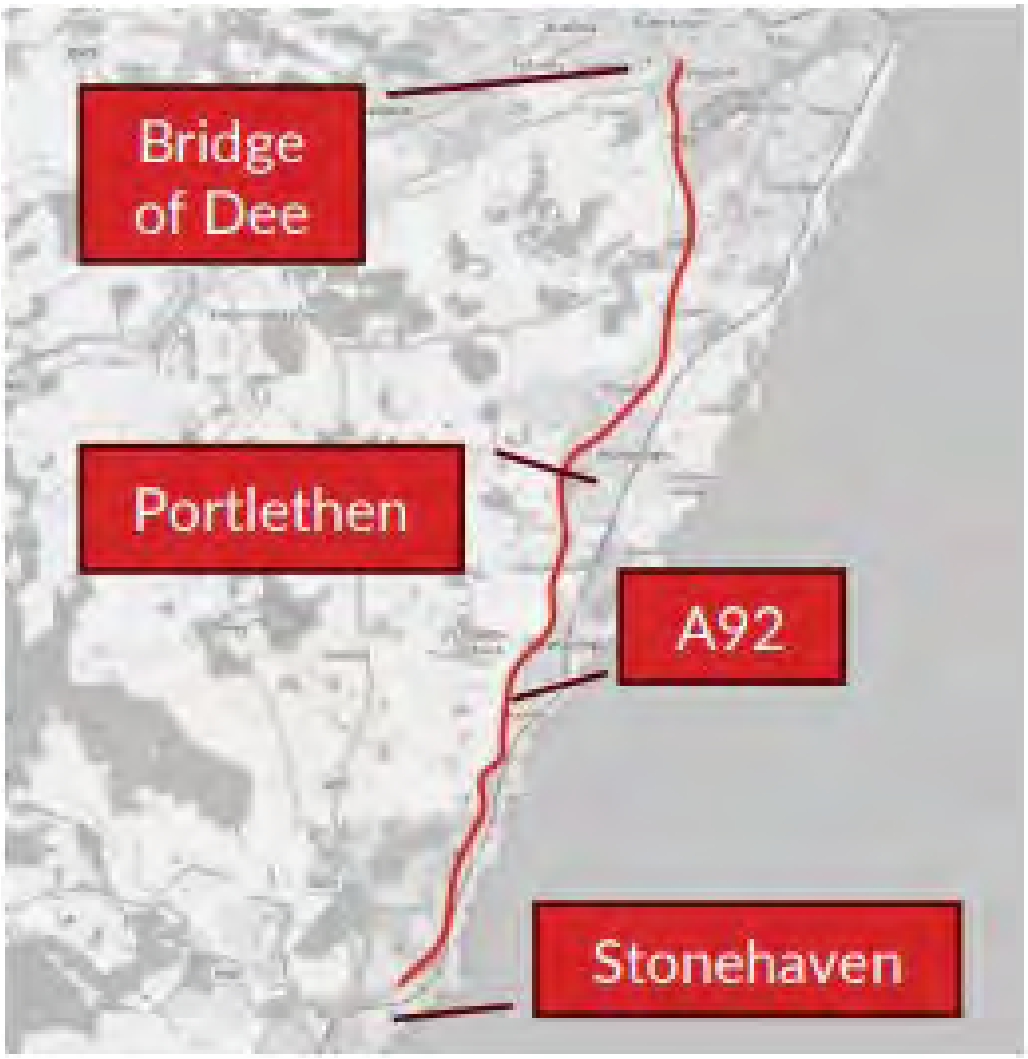


Figure 11.14 A92 Stonehaven/Bridge of Dee. Source CD188



Figure 11.15 A944 Westbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min). Source CD188



Figure 11.16 A944 Eastbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min). Source CD188

11.202 Cumulative journey times in both directions along the A92 Stonehaven/Bridge of Dee are shown below. The A92 South route from Bridge of Dee to Stonehaven currently shows that travel northbound to the city during the morning peak and southbound travel away from the city during the PM Peak have longer journey times than the Inter Peak by 60-80 seconds.

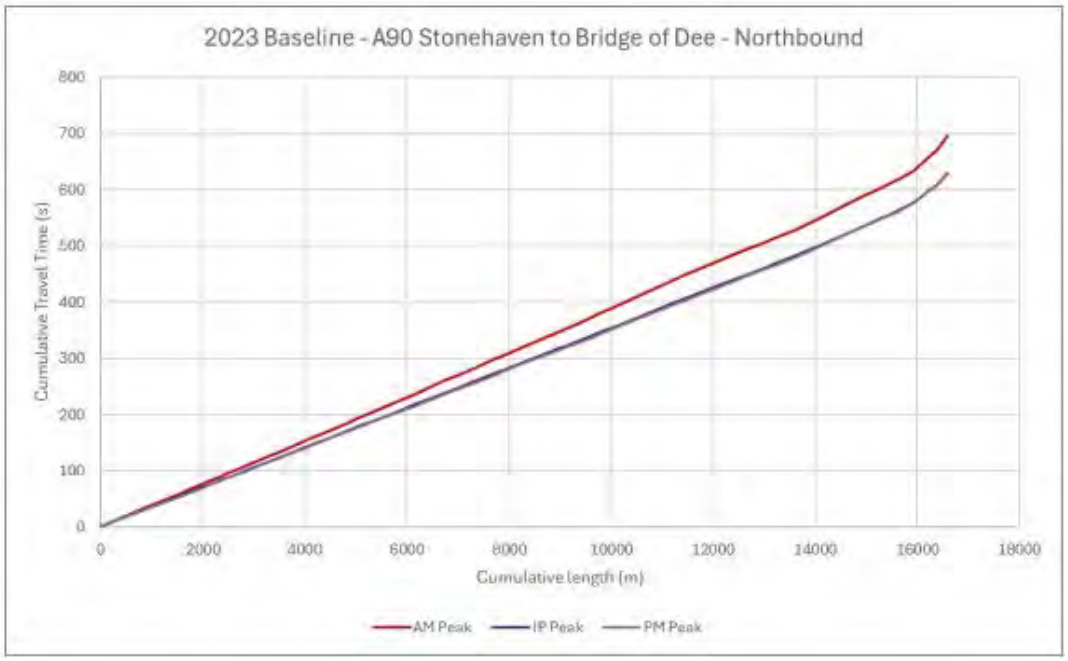


Figure 11.17 A90 Northbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min). Source CD188

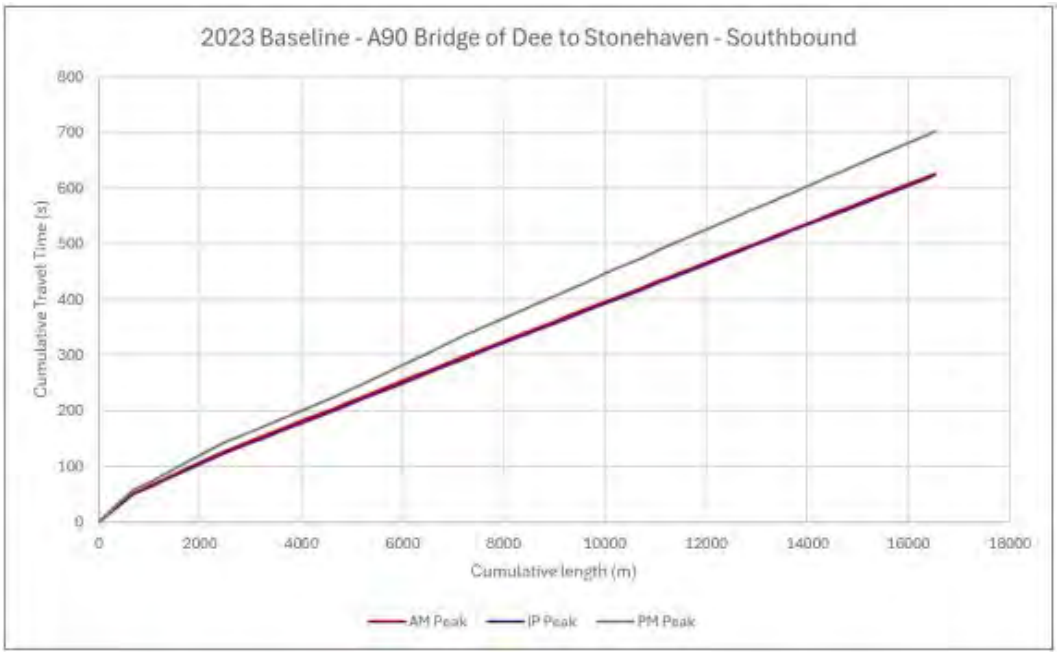


Figure 11.18 A90 Southbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min). Source CD188

11.203 The map below, Figure 11.19, from the Nestrans LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189) shows the pinch points within the Aberdeen road network. The most significant pinch points (over 120 second delay) are:

- at the signalled junction between the A947 (Oldmeldrum Road) and the B977 to the north of Dyce
- at the signalled junction between the A944 (Westburn Road) and the A978 (Westburn Drive) at the southwest corner of Westburn Park.
- at the signalled junction between the A92 (Anderson Drive) and the A93 (Great Western Road) and the Mannofield area.

11.204 Additional significant pinch points (between 70 and 90 second delay) are:

- at the A90 sliproad at Craibstone and the nearby signalled junction between the A96 and Dyce Drive/Craibstone Drive.
- at the signalled junction between the A93 (North Deeside Road) and Baillieswells Road/Bieldside Station Road at Bieldside.
- at the signalled junction between the A944 (Hutcheon Street) and the B986 (Berryden Road/Caroline Place) south of the Berryden Retail Park.
- at the junction between the A956 (Virginia Street/Commerce Street), the continuation of Commerce Street, and Castle Terrace to the north of Aberdeen Harbour and to the east of the city centre.
- at the signalled junction between the A956 (Market Street/Trinity Quay) and the continuation of Market Street and Guild Street, close to the bus terminal.

11.205 There is otherwise a very high concentration of lesser pinch points in and around the city centre. There is a high concentration of lesser pinch points along A-road corridors into the city (Anderson Drive, King Street, Wellington Road, Lang Stracht,

etc.) and at the junctions between major roads (Haudagain Bypass, A944/A92 junction, St. Machar Drive/Tillydrone Avenue, Mounthooly Park roundabout, etc.)



Figure 11.19 2023 Baseline Maximum Vehicle Delay AM peak. Source CD189.

11.206 According to Transport Scotland's Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 (CD260), Aberdeen has 1,037km of roads in total (1.8% of Scottish total), 33km of trunk road, 129km of A roads, 42km of B roads, 96km of C roads, 737 of local authority unclassified and 1,004km of local authority roads in total. Of these roads, in 2022-23 for Aberdeen 3% of A roads, 3% of B roads, 3% of C roads, and 5% of unclassified roads were in 'red condition'. 17% of A roads, 22% of B roads, 16% of C roads, and 24% of unclassified roads were in 'amber condition. Totals for all roads are 4% red and 22% amber condition.

Electric Vehicle Charging

11.207 The Aberdeen Electric Vehicle Framework 2020 to 2030 (CD193), published January 2021, forecasts electric vehicles in Aberdeen (table 11.37). These forecasts are under the business-as-usual scenario, good practice scenario, and exemplar scenario.

Table 6-1 Aberdeen City EV Uptake

			2025		2030	
			Total	% of vehicles	Total	% of vehicles
Aberdeen	BAU	BEV	840	0.8%	1,920	1.7%
		PHEV	730	0.7%	1,030	0.9%
		Total	***1,570***	***1.5%***	***2,950***	***2.6%***
	Good Practice	BEV	2,350	2.3%	8,970	8.0%
		PHEV	2,060	2.0%	4,830	4.2%
		Total	***4,410***	***4.3%***	***13,800***	***12.2%***
	Exemplar	BEV	3,010	2.9%	12,910	11.4%
		PHEV	2,630	2.5%	6,950	6.2%
		Total	***5,640***	***5.4%***	***19,860***	***17.6%***

Table 11.37 Battery Electric Vehicles and Plug in Hybrid Electric Vehicles

11.208 In October 2025, Aberdeen City Council – along with Aberdeenshire, Moray and Highland Councils – signed a contract with EZO. This will see EZO manage, maintain and replace, where appropriate, public EV chargers which the Council is responsible for. It will also see huge expansion of chargers across all four areas over the next few years. This means all Chargeplace Scotland chargers managed by the Council will switch over to EZO's network. This process started in November 2025 and will continue until spring 2026. The Council's website shows mapped points for electric vehicle charging.

11.209 Scottish Government new Building Regulations include mandatory standards for EV charge points. The Aberdeen Electric Vehicle Framework (CD193) informs the future plans and supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles in Aberdeen over the next 5-10 years. It includes the numbers and types of charge points needed to support the forecasted increase in electric vehicles and the most suitable locations. The Framework seeks to tackle perceived barriers to electric vehicle ownership. This includes how to best cater for those without off street parking, such as exploring piloting a residential charging trial within the city. The Framework is also intended to demonstrate to other organisations how much growing demand there is for electric vehicle charging and to therefore encourage others to install electric vehicle charge points. The Framework was approved in February of 2021. It is also backed up by an extensive Evidence Base and Baseline report.

Freight

11.210 Nestrans produced a specialist goods vehicle count for the north east (CD270) which gives an idea of road freight traffic numbers. The count points were located at the A956 at Cove, the A90 Toll of Birness to the north in Aberdeenshire, and at Inverurie to the north west in Aberdeenshire. In total, 3,663 HGVs were observed over the 12-hour count across all sites, 1817 at Cove, 1008 at Toll of Birness and 838 at Inverurie. There are a number of statistics relating to the count such as count spread throughout the day, types of vehicles, commodity type, observed slow moving vehicles and tailbacks, estimated tonnage.

11.211 The summary noted that the A90/A952 has a clear importance to sectors such as the Offshore sector, especially given that it is a key route between Aberdeen and Peterhead. The A96 at Inverurie is used more by General Hauliers, as it is the main link between the key settlements of Aberdeen and Inverness. Palletised, grouped freight moved by 3rd party Hauliers, is a key flow at all locations, whilst the Offshore sector represents a key flow and is a significant region-specific driver of the value of freight. There were some issues regarding platooning and dangerous overtaking that were seen to be primarily caused by slow moving agricultural vehicles, as well as queuing at specific times.

Existing Infrastructure

11.212 The main routes into the city centre are the A956 (Ellon Road/King Street) from the north, the A956 dual carriageway (Wellington Road) from the south, the A96 (Auchmill Road/Great Northern Road/Powis Place) which comes from the northwest linking to Inverness, the A944 (Lang Stracht/Westburn Road/Hutcheon Street) from the west, and the A93 (North Deeside Road/Great Western Road) from the southeast linking to the Deeside settlements in Aberdeenshire.

11.213 The A92 (Anderson Drive) is a dual carriageway which acts as a radial route through the city joining the crossing at the south of the River Dee (Bridge of Dee) and the crossing at the north over the River Don (Persley Bridge). This has been superseded as a city bypass by the A90 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) several kilometres to the west of the A92. The AWPR is approximately 35km long and joins Stonehaven in the south to Blackdog in the north. These routes are shown in Figure 11.20.

11.214 In addition to the park-and-ride facilities mentioned in the previous section, the city also has several car parking locations in the city centre which can be found in the Council's 'Find a Car Park' webpage. These are free or pay-and-display car parks which are generally larger in size. There are many other car parks throughout the city of smaller size as well, including other Council run sites.



Figure 11.20 Road Network of Aberdeen

11.215 The city centre has around 7,000 private non-residential parking spaces (primarily at shopping centres) and over 13,000 council owned pay-and-display spaces (12,000 on-street). To manage parking demand, the city has controlled parking zones (CPZ). The map of CPZs can be found below at Figure 11.21. The CPZs manage demand through a cost to park and restrictions to on-street parking. The CPZs are situated in areas where there is high trip generation. A strategic car parking review for Aberdeen was undertaken in 2019 (CD266), with an updated Strategic Car Parking Review 2025 (CD322) now prepared as an update. It will inform the new Local Transport Strategy. At present there is a presumption in

favour of no parking for new developments within the city centre. Areas within the ‘inner city’, which corresponds to roughly the area covered by the CPZ, have tighter parking measures for new development compared to ‘outer city’ areas.

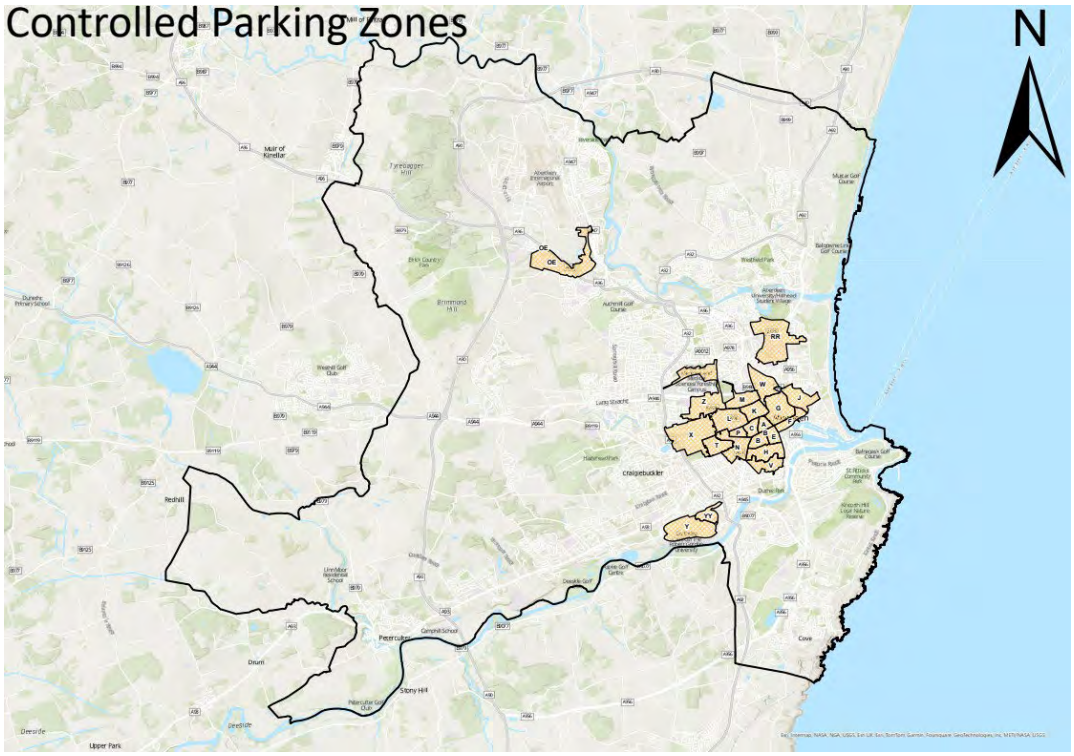


Figure 11.21 Controlled Parking Zones

11.216 The Council has a contract with a car club operator which have dedicated bays around the city. The current locations can be found below (Figure 11.22):

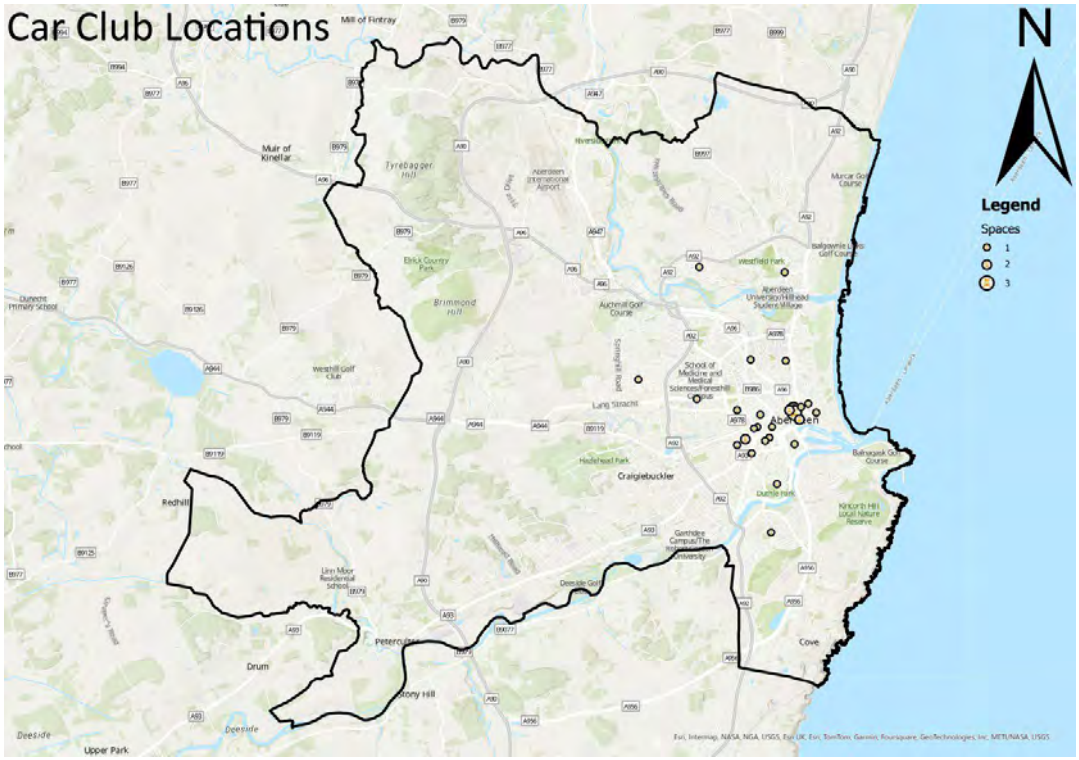


Figure 11.22 Car Club Locations

11.217 The 2023 draft Local Transport Strategy (CD192) continues to support the formation of new bays and associated infrastructure, and the Aberdeen Planning Guidance for Transport & Accessibility promotes car clubs as an option for developers.

Road Policy

11.218 The Aberdeen Net Zero Mobility Strategy (CD197) aims to "*decarbonise transport and increase update of low and zero carbon technology."* Aberdeen City Council's Climate and Nature Plan 2026-2030 (CD325) sets out timescales for the decarbonising of the Council's fleet. The Council is currently progressing the transition of its fleet to zero-emission vehicles and supporting infrastructure. The Council will shift from fossil fuel vehicles to zero emission fleet by 2035. A key indicator will be, by 2030, a 25.9% reduction in our fleet emissions (overall) from the 2015/16 baseline.

Regional Transport Review

11.219 The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188) sets out on page 20 the change in road trip movements across the region from 2023 to 2040. The report finds that 'with policy' commitments, there is a reduction in road trips more generally by 2040, particularly within Aberdeen (down 10%) and Aberdeenshire (down 1%). Road traffic between Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire remains relatively constant, whilst longer distance movements continue to rise (higher trips into and out of Aberdeen to Moray, 147% and 127% respectively, higher trips into and out of Aberdeen to Angus would increase 12% and 17% respectively), albeit at a reduced rate compared to a 'without policy' scenario. Only the Northern movement (A96

towards Inverness) continues to see an overall increase in traffic movements, suggesting that the impact of the A96 scheme is restricting policies in further reducing overall road trip making.

11.220 The report finds that 'without policy' commitments there is an overall trend showing road trip movements broadly increasing by 2040 within and between all regions (with the exception of trips within Aberdeenshire and Angus). It is projected to increase 10% more for movements within Aberdeen. Considerably higher traffic growth would be anticipated between Aberdeen and the other local authority areas compared to the 'with policy' scenario. More considerable traffic growth is forecast for longer distance movements to/from Moray and Angus (Moray into Angus up 294%, Angus into Moray up 301%). The most significant overall growth is to/from areas further North, along the A96 corridor – suggesting that the delivery of the A96 Dualling scheme induces longer distance traffic growth.

11.221 Information by types of road trips (business, commutes, education, retired) for both scenarios can be found in the tables on pages 69-70 of the Nestrans LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189). 24-hour average day totals for each area are found on page 74 of the same report.

11.222 Further context to support the above can be found in the figures on page 22 of the Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188). These show change in daily road movements between areas in both scenarios from 2032 to 2040.

11.223 Changes in vehicle kilometres to 2030 and 2040 from the 2023 baseline for both scenarios are explored on page 23 of the Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188). In the 'without policy' scenario, car traffic is shown to increase relatively substantially over time, increasing car kms by around 13% by 2030 and 33% by 2040. Traffic growth is slightly lower within the morning and evening peak periods, which reflects lower growth in commuter activity. The data shows that the 'with policy' scenario results in significantly reduced car kms by 2030 (by -18%). Car kms are then shown to recover to some extent by 2040 which is likely to be caused by A96 dualling.

11.224 The report shows forecasted congestion heat maps for both scenarios. For more information refer to the Nestrans Appendix Database of Transport Analysis (CD189) in the evidence list. It is evident that in the 'with policy' scenario, there will be increased wait times along the A96 and the junction between it and the A90 at Craibstone, otherwise wait times are not too dissimilar to the baseline data.

11.225 Changes in traffic speed to 2030 and 2040 from the 2023 baseline for both scenarios are explored on page 24 of the Evidence Review Report. Average (region-wide) speeds are shown to improve by 2030 for both scenarios. This reflects improvements in road infrastructure, and associated increased capacity and higher speed routes from delivery of major transport interventions – i.e. A96 Dualling, Berryden Dual Carriageway and various local junction improvements. Traffic speeds within the peak periods are seen to reduce slightly in the 'without policy' scenario, as further traffic growth erodes some of the benefits of the new road schemes. By 2040, the 'with policy' scenario generates a more substantial

increase in network speed due to the further reduction in road trips (i.e. reducing business & commuting trips), and subsequent congestion relief.

11.226 Pages 116 and 117 from the Appendix Database (CD189) show mapped vehicle delay data for 2030 and 2040 in the 'without policy' scenario and pages 118 and 119 shows mapped vehicle delay data for 2030 and 2040 in the 'with policy' scenario.

11.227 With respect to the 'without policy' scenario by 2030, the most notable additional delays compared to the baseline in figure 11.19 (above) are forecast around the A96 and A90 junction at Craibstone, the Bridge of Dee crossing, junctions to the east and south of the city centre, junctions along St. Machar Drive/ Great Northern Road/Berryden Road, junctions along Anderson Drive and the western end of the Lang Stracht. The quantity of additional shorter delays is notable, particularly along each main corridor into the city. The 2040 'without policy' map (CD189; pg122) shows an intensification of this pattern of delays in the same general areas.

11.228 With respect to the 'with policy' scenario by 2030, the map (CD189; pg123) is not drastically different from the baseline (Figure 11.19). The Westburn Road/Argyle Crescent junction is forecast to improve but there would be slightly longer delays around the A96 and A90 junction at Craibstone and junctions along St. Machar Drive/ Great Northern Road/Berryden Road in particular. The map shows some additional shorter delays particularly along each main corridor into the city. The 2040 'with policy' map (CD189;pg124) shows an intensification of this pattern of delays in the same general areas, though notably there will be more significant delays at Bridge of Dee, east of the city centre and Craibstone regardless.

11.229 Network Delay Heatmaps (2023 AM Peak) from the Appendix Database (CD189; pg102) give more additional context. The baseline map is on page 102, 2040 'without policy' on page 103 and 2040 'with policy' on page 104. This confirms a general pattern whereby the 'with policy' mapping shows a slight intensification of delays and the 'without policy' showing a significantly more marked increase. These maps are also discussed on page 27 of the Transport Evidence Review (CD188).

11.230 Further context on regional road trips into Aberdeen can also be found in the Appendix Database (CD189). The diagrams show the 'with policy' scenario additional trips (2040 minus baseline) on page 91, and the same for the 'without policy' scenario on page 92. The narrowest banding represents 75 road trips. Desire lines are provided to illustrate the general distribution of travel movements between areas. Further information describing the current baseline level of road flows between settlements is provided in Section 4.2 of the Nestrans Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188). As noted elsewhere, regional traffic growth would be lower in the 'with policy' scenario.

11.231 The Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CD188) sets out data and analysis of vehicle kilometres on page 23. In the 'without policy' scenario, car traffic is shown to increase relatively substantially over time, increasing car kms by around 13% by 2030 and 33% by 2040. Traffic growth is slightly lower within the morning and evening peak periods, which reflects lower growth in commuter activity. The 'with policy' scenario results in significantly reduced car kms by 2030 (by -18%). Car kms

are then shown to recover to some extent by 2040. The delivery of the A96 Dualling scheme would provide considerably faster and more reliable car journey times along the A96 corridor to/from Inverness. The additional traffic movements forecast along this route will also impact car kms forecasts, and is likely off-setting the reduction in car kms from the 'with policy' scenario.

11.232 Data on parking at park-and -ride and rail station car parks for the 2023 baseline, 'with policy' and 'without policy' scenarios are included in the Appendix Database (CD189) on pages 154 to 157. For 'without policy' there would be consistent growth in number of cars parked through time. More significant growth under 'without policy' scenarios is potentially due to car availability and higher level of commuting trips. For the 'with policy' scenario there would be an initial moderate decrease in 2030 then moderate growth to 2040.

11.233 Whether or not the policy levers are implemented will have an effect on the spatial strategy of the next local development plan as well as possible implications for policies.

11.234 With respect to forecasting road trips, whether or not policies are implemented will have some significant effect upon trips within Aberdeen and to and from Aberdeen to other areas. If policies are implemented then this is likely to preserve or free up traffic capacity across the network which reduces the potential for conflict at specific junctions when a spatial strategy is to be determined. 'Without policy' being applied means that there would be a significant increase of journeys, which puts capacity pressure on the network and increases the chance of conflict when determining a spatial strategy. The duelling on the A96 is the one policy which would appear to be in part the reason for additional trips in and out of Aberdeen from that corridor. Whether or not the A96 is duelled therefore also affects the network and therefore the spatial strategy in that area.

11.235 With respect to traffic delay data and heatmap delay data, 'with' and 'without' policy scenarios show a relatively stark contrast in fortunes. Proposed development in certain locations could exacerbate capacity issues at certain junctions. If policies are not implemented then the areas set out in paragraph 11.227 may be more difficult for sizable allocations that would generate traffic from a roads capacity perspective. If policies are implemented then there is generally more capacity across the network and less specific spatial conflict for siting of sizable allocations, though there are problematic junctions in both cases which will require a careful spatial strategy approach.

11.236 In addition to the above, allocations will have more general effects upon the wider transport system. Whether or not policies are implemented could affect arguments for a specific spatial strategy to act as mitigation for road capacity constraints. For example, large housing allocations on peripheral greenfield sites will likely generate significant traffic along transport corridors heading to and from the city centre for employment or recreation. In contrast, allocations for housing closer to the city centre will likely generate less traffic as people can travel by walking, cycling or by using public transport that would be more readily available in many cases.

11.237 Whether or not policies are implemented could also affect arguments for strengthening policies around design and local living as set out in NPF4 Policy 14 and Policy 15 respectively. If it is anticipated that the capacity of the transport network will become significantly constrained in certain locations, then allocations in these locations may have to have stricter design guidelines to ensure that the sustainable travel hierarchy is promoted.

Current / Planned Investment / Projects

11.238 On a national level, Transport Scotland recommends the following investments relating to road travel as part of its Strategic Transport Project Review (CD176 & CD180):

- A96: Proposal for a dualling of the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness.

11.239 On a regional level, the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report of the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal (CD271) sets out the following road travel related infrastructure investment options (Table 11.38):

Option	Description	Recommended Delivery Pathway	Potential Next Steps
16	A90(S): Aberdeen to Perth	LTS/LA; RTS; STPR/TS	As a Trunk Road, the principal mechanism for delivery of future investment will be via STPR, with due regard to NTS2 investment hierarchy. Nestrans and Tactran have a joint interest in securing improvements to the safety, consistency and performance of this strategic route. Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to the Central Belt. Continue with work to develop a suitable scheme to provide improved connectivity to the new Aberdeen South Harbour at the Bay of Nigg, and associated improvements on A956 Wellington Road corridor.
17	A92: Blackdog to Stonehaven (inc. new River Dee Bridge)	LTS/LA; RTS; CRD	As a local road, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to continue to manage the performance of the route and associated principal radials in line with investment hierarchy. Specific requirements to consider the function of the route in line with revised Roads Hierarchy, City Centre Masterplan, associated interventions on A956 Willington Road/Link to Aberdeen South

			Harbour, and the performance/function of specific junctions. Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to the Central Belt and north of Aberdeen (noting on-going planning for the A96 dualling).
18	A947	LTS/LA; RTS	As a local road, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council undertake further work and risk analysis to examine the most appropriate schemes in line with investment hierarchy. Includes ongoing development of the A947 Route Action Plan and Dyce area interventions into timed and costed Delivery Plans and including options for an improved link between the A947 and A96 (dependent upon final agreed alignment of A96 dualling).
20	A944 / B9119: Aberdeen west to Aberdeenshire boundary with Moray	LTS/LA; RTS; CRD	As a local Road, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to undertake further work and risk analysis to examine the most appropriate schemes on this route in line with investment hierarchy. Early consideration required of multi-modal connectivity and route performance, as well as wider development pressures between Aberdeen and the Westhill area.
21	A93: Aberdeen to Braemar	LTS/LA; RTS	As a local road, local authorities to continue to manage the performance of the route in line with investment hierarchy.
22	Long Term Asset Management Strategy	LTS/LA; RTS	Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to revisit the existing asset management and mitigation plans for both councils to consider whether the plans fully consider the management and maintenance of the road network and structures in light of the changing climate and financial pressures.
23	Community road safety measures	LTS/LA; RTS	Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to further investigate the potential to introduce 20mph zones in all

			urban environments building on experience from elsewhere.
24	LEZ/ZEZ (inc. consideration of freight restrictions)	LTS/LA; RTS; STPR/TS	Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans, in partnership with Transport Scotland, to continue work developing the potential Aberdeen city centre LEZ and consider the case for other potential schemes.
25	EV and Hydrogen vehicle charging/refuelling strategy and implementation	LTS/LA; RTS	Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to work with Nestrans to extend the network of publicly available charging points.
27	Congestion Zone charging		Nestrans to progress a regional Demand Management Study in partnership with both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to appraise the options in more detail. The scope of this study would include: the potential to raise parking charges and / or extend the current 'controlled' parking areas; introduce a workplace parking levy; and / or a congestion charging zone through the development of a viable Business Case exploring potential alternative charging models.
28	Parking Demand Management	LTS/LA; RTS	

Table 11.38 Preliminary Options Appraisal (City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal) – Road Projects

11.240 Below are the projects currently underway that seek to address the options outlined above as part of the CRD Strategic Transport Appraisal (CD271). Note that the first topic of Multi-Modal Corridors is also included under active travel and public transport as the projects affect all modes of transport.

Topic	Project	Status	Funding
Multi-Modal Corridors	A93	Further progress is paused indefinitely following both public and stakeholder concerns.	Nestrans
	A947	Study has been completed. An Outline Business Case is approved with a view to take forward further design and delivery from 2026/27. Funding has been secured to date with a further application to take forward some outcomes.	Nestrans
	A956	Study complete with some elements moving to delivery however this is resource and funding dependent. Some	Nestrans

		elements of this corridor are related to the ART development which falls under separate delivery project.	
	A944 / B9119	Study complete with outcomes taken forward as part of the ART Business Case. A complementary piece of work will consider elements that do not fall within ART work.	Nestrans; Transport Scotland (via Bus Partnership Fund)
	A92	Study complete with outcomes taken forward as part of the ART Business Case. A complementary piece of work will consider elements that do not fall within ART work.	Nestrans; Transport Scotland (via Bus Partnership Fund)
New Connections	Berryden Corridor Improvement Project	Work ongoing with construction scheduled for 2026/2027.	ACC
Upgrades	B999/Shielhill Road Junction Improvement	Improvement of road layout and design to ease traffic congestion	ACC; Developer Obligations; Nestrans
	Aberdeen South Harbour Link Road	Work ongoing with construction scheduled for 2026/2027.	Aberdeen City Region Deal; Developer Obligations

Table 11.39 Road Projects

11.241 It should be noted that a majority of road related infrastructure projects are also tied to other sustainable transport development projects. The benefit therefore is captured by those taking all modes.

A96

11.242 In addition to the above local projects, on a national level the A96 dualling project is relevant. However, it is unclear at this stage what impact it will have on the upcoming LDP as advice from Transport Scotland indicates work on portions of the A96 nearest Aberdeen are not expected to begin within the next 10 years. The A96 Corridor Review (CD259) provides additional details on the options outcomes of the STAG process. A refined package of these options includes the following:

- Active Communities
- Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities
- Investment in Demand Response Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
- Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements on the Aberdeen-Inverness Railway Line
- Elgin Bypass
- Keith Bypass

11.243 In February 2025, Nestrans submitted a response to the consultation on the A96 Corridor Review. A written and survey response was approved for submission at 19 February 2025 NESTRANS Board meeting (CD274). The submissions made clear that the refined package and wider appraisal had taken place with a lack of local/regional input, which was concerning given the deliverability of many of the measures would need to be locally/regionally driven. Currently there has been no decision made on what will progress in the immediate future for this corridor recognising that the Scottish Government remains committed to dualling the A96 from Aberdeen to Inverness.

Funding

11.244 As noted under the project summary, funding for road related projects includes developer obligations, the Council, Nestrans, and national sources.

11.245 Developer obligations funding is sought in specific certain circumstances. The Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance (CD230) sets out specific instances where mitigation measures may be required for a development. In relation to active travel, the following instances are relevant:

Mitigation Measures	
Road Improvements and Public Realm	The provision of, or upgrading, roads, bridges or other infrastructure may be required, either within or outwith the development site or both, and planning conditions / legal agreements will be secured accordingly.
Alterations to Existing Roads	There may be instances where the Council may wish to take on this construction. This may be fully funded by the developer.
Traffic Signals	Developers may be required to provide for the installation of new traffic signals, controlled pedestrian crossings and the upgrading / refurbishment of existing traffic signal infrastructure.
Lighting	Any development which requires new roads or the upgrading of existing roads will be expected to fund the installation of new lighting or the upgrading of existing lighting infrastructure where appropriate.
Traffic Calming Measures	Development may generate the need for traffic calming measures outlined in local and national policy, such as Designing Streets, which the developer may be liable to fund.
Car Clubs	May apply to all residential developments of 3 or more units and any other developments where full parking provision is limited and where

	the shortfall of parking is not mitigated by other forms of transport.

Table 11.40 Developer Obligation Mitigation Measures – Roads

11.246 It should be noted that a requirement for developer obligations and any potential mitigation measures is site specific and will depend on a number of factors. Additionally, while the guidance outlines methodologies for assessing planning applications, the Council promotes delivery of transport-related infrastructure by the developer wherever possible. An infrastructure-first approach will be taken to plan for requirements as a result of new development through LDP allocations, Masterplans, and the Delivery Programme. Transport requirements will vary from site to site. The exact contribution required for each site will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

11.247 The above outlines the topic areas where developer obligations are sought, however a trigger for such measures will depend on specific factors, further outlined in the supplementary guidance (CD230). Over the course of the current Local Development Plan, developer obligations relating to public transport have been sought for the following:

Developer Obligations Sought to Date	When and Where	Related Project / Investment
Road Improvements	See Table 11.40. relating to mitigation measures.	On-site and surrounding area specific traffic and road improvements. Examples include road and lane improvements, additions; roundabout configurations; signalling; and contribution to the Local Transport Fund for public transport improvements. See also projects in Table 11.39.
Traffic Regulation Orders	See Table 11.40. relating to mitigation measures.	For costs relating to on-street parking provision, lay-by requirements, and funding car club locations.

Car Club	See Table 11.40. relating to mitigation measures.	For the provision of car club vehicles and spaces. Notably in developments or areas where reduced or no parking is expected.

Table 11.41 Developer Obligations relating to public transport.

11.248 Further review will be undertaken with the relevant services to determine whether updates to the contribution methodology or application are necessary for Transport-related obligations in the Proposed Plan.

Implications

11.249 The evidence demonstrates that continued growth in car travel would place additional pressure on a number of existing congestion hotspots, including the Craibstone area, Bridge of Dee corridor, city centre radial routes and key strategic junctions. The Proposed Plan should therefore seek to minimise the need for additional vehicle trips through both spatial strategy and policy interventions. This could include favouring developments that support local living.

11.250 The evidence indicates that development located within existing urban areas and locations well served by public transport and active travel infrastructure is likely to perform more favourably against transport, climate and accessibility objectives than development reliant on private car travel. This supports the continued application of local living and 20-minute neighbourhood principles through the Proposed Plan.

11.251 Capacity constraints identified through the Transport Evidence Review and forthcoming Cumulative Transport Appraisal should directly inform site selection and spatial strategy development. Sites generating significant cumulative impacts on constrained parts of the network should be carefully assessed against deliverable mitigation measures and sustainable transport alternatives. The Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study (CD186) noted a disparity in car access and areas of high deprivation. This disparity will have potential policy and spatial strategy implications for the new Local Development Plan, in particular with the implementation of Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (CD120). New developments which complement 20 minute neighbourhoods are more likely, subject to other considerations, to be considered favourably in the Proposed Plan

11.252 Current parking standards are set out in the Aberdeen Planning Guidance for Transport & Accessibility (CD379). It is also expected that a framework will be developed to consider car parking provision across the city as part of the new Local Transport Strategy. The draft LTS (CD192) notes guaranteed parking at the end of a journey influences car ownership. Control and enforcement of car parking are set out as essential in the draft LTS for managing demand, congestion, and environmental impacts. Detailed local parking policy and parking standards will be reviewed and adopted in new Transport Aberdeen Planning Guidelines.

Air & Sea

Aberdeen International Airport

11.253 Aberdeen International Airport serves over 3 million passengers a year. It employs c. 85 people directly and supports more than 3,400 jobs. The airport has international services to Norway (Bergen, Stavanger), Denmark (Copenhagen), Netherlands (Amsterdam), and Ireland (Dublin) as well as serving holiday destinations. Domestic services include London (Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton), Wick, Orkney and Shetland. There are more than 100 destinations in total and a destination map is included in the evidence list to this topic paper (see additional online resources).

11.254 The current delivery programme (CD343) states that the airport can accommodate predicted growth in passenger numbers within its existing footprint. However, the document also mentions that aspirations remain for a possible runway extension. Developments at the airport are possibly subject to change in the future due to new ownership.

11.255 The airport is served by a 24hour bus service connecting the airport to the city centre, harbour, and settlements to the south of the city. The airport is under consideration as a stopping point for the ART public transport project which could terminate at Craibstone park and ride nearby.

11.256 A map of the airport and its safety zones (which are shown in more detail in the 2023 ALDP) can be found below (Figure 11.23). Further information on health impacts can be found in Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities.

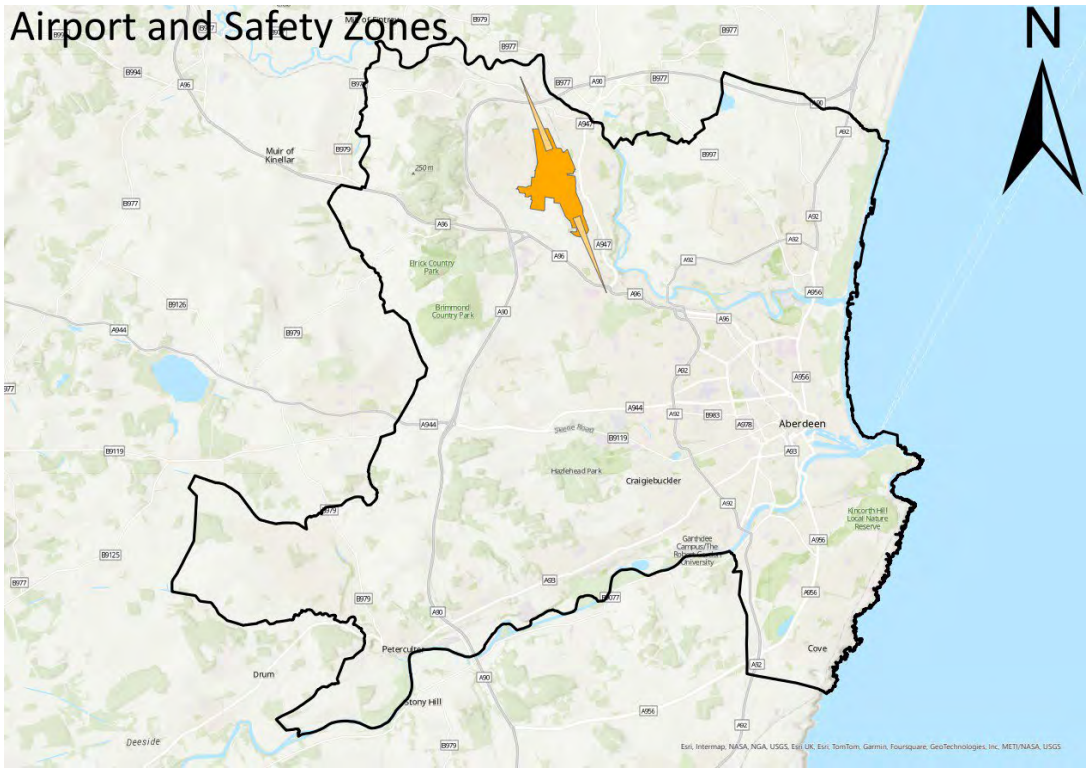


Figure 11.23 Airport and Safety Zones

Aberdeen Harbour (North/South)

11.257 The Port of Aberdeen is identified as a national development in National Planning Framework 4. The port's South Harbour will act as a cluster of port accessible offshore renewable energy research, manufacturing, support services, and cruise ships. The North Harbour caters for the Aberdeen to Kirkwall/Lerwick passenger ferry as well as providing berthing and handling facilities for freight, oil, gas, and other sectors.

11.258 Transport Scotland recommends the following investments as part of its Strategic Transport Project Review (CD176 & CD180):

- **Recommendation 18:** Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals. Improvements in timetable information, signing, ticketing, and other facilities required to deliver a seamless and integrated journey between different travel modes to improve accessibility.
- **Recommendation 24:** Ferry vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation in order to improve the resilience, reliability, capacity, accessibility, and standardisation of ferries and to decarbonise ferry travel.
- **Recommendation 42:** Investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation. This could involve shore power supplies to vessels, to support ferry vessel renewal and replacement and progressive decarbonisation.

11.259 The External Transportation Links to Aberdeen South Harbour (ETLASH) project is currently being progressed by Aberdeen City Council as Local Roads Authority and aims to improve access to the new Aberdeen South Harbour at the Bay of Nigg. The project is jointly funded by both the UK and Scottish Governments as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

Accident Data

11.260 Table 11.42, below, shows Transport Scotland Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2024 figures:

2014-18 Average Aberdeen City	**Killed**	**Serious Casualties**	**All Severities**
	2	27	53
2020-24 Average Aberdeen City	**Killed**	**Serious Casualties**	**All Severities**
	2	37	86

Table 11.42: Aberdeen City Pedestrian casualties.

11.261 According to Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2025, reported collisions by police force division in Aberdeen City are in Table 11.43 below:

Collisions in total	**Year**

70	**2024**
93	**2023**
67	2022
61	2021
71	2020
118	2019
137	2018
155	2017
175	2016
229	2015
273	2014
349	2013

Table 11.43: Aberdeen City Reported Collisions of all Types.

Implications

11.262 Land required for Aberdeen Airport and Aberdeen North and South Harbours will be identified on the Proposed Plan proposals maps and safeguarded for those purposes. The Airport Safety Zones can also be identified in the Proposed Plan.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Initial Submission

11.263 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

11.264 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in July 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Infrastructure, Transport and Communications. This paper was split in two in September 2024; becoming the Sustainable Transport Paper and the Infrastructure and Communication Paper. The following text relates to the Sustainable Transport Paper.

11.265 An early draft form of the topic paper was presented to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request for comments on the emerging draft and or confirmation that they agreed with the evidence sources cited or had suggestions for further additions. Comments upon the drafts and further information sources were noted and added to the paper where appropriate.

11.266 The evidence presented within this paper was then circulated in an updated draft during January 2025 to a number of key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This included:

- Transport Scotland
- Nestrans
- Network Rail
- Aberdeen Harbour Board

- Aberdeen International Airport
- Aberdeen City Council (Roads Engineering, Transport Strategy and Programmes)

11.267 A full public and targeted 8-week engagement took place between 24th March and 18th May 2025. Twelve responses in total were received, five from organisations (Transport Scotland, NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Nestrans), one from a housing developer (Bancon Homes), and seven from members of the public. Of those listed, three stated that evidence was missed and two stated that they did not agree with the evidence.

11.268 An email was sent on 10th June to a member of the public who disputed the paper.

11.269 A meeting was held with Nestrans on 2nd June 2025 in order to discuss their first response to the public engagement. There have also been a number of meetings concerning the ongoing Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA), with meetings occurring on 30th April and 14th May since a preferred bidder was chosen to undertake the work on behalf of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Meetings were also held with FIRS.

11.270 The evidence presented within the Sustainable Transport paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

11.271 Transport Scotland submitted a response which stated that the Topic Paper was ‘almost sufficient’. It also sought descriptions of key pinch points from the Baseline map for clarity. It sought further information upon the condition of the roads network in the AMD section. It also sought a proportionate display of the actual data which was listed for The Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021 Household Survey. We have incorporated all these requested changes to improve the paper.

11.272 Nestrans have confirmed that we have not missed any evidence and that they agree with the evidence we have used. Nestrans offered 3 suggestions to improve the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper. Firstly, they commented that the Scottish Government’s position on the A96 should be made clearer and that a narrative on the local/regional response to this would be helpful. Secondly, they commented that there should be clearer presentation on the work Systra undertook on Nestrans behalf to understand travel behaviour and further context to explain origin and findings are clear. Thirdly they sought more narrative on the park and ride facilities in terms of current service provision and the ambition to better utilise. These updates have been made to the paper, and further dialogue with Nestrans is currently ongoing through the development of the next Local Transport Strategy.

11.273 NatureScot have not disputed any of the Topic Papers. They suggested that the order of subjects mirror that of the sustainable transport hierarchy with sustainable means of travel coming before those of private car. For clarity, and to set the scene, the paper was ordered to include firstly the spatial context, then the statistical context followed by the national, regional and local transport strategies before going into specific modes of transport. Starting with active travel and public transport before moving back to other matters would present a muddled format. It should be

noted that for evidence relating to specific transportation, active travel is followed by public transport and finally private vehicles. We have now included an image showing the sustainable transport hierarchy under the national policy section as a way to demonstrate its importance within the context of the paper.

11.274 NatureScot also suggested that the summary of implications should be more specific to Aberdeen. We note that most of the points within the implications section relate specifically to Aberdeen or regional/local strategies already. They also mention a need for understanding how the Proposed Plan will specifically be informed by the delivery of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan in relation to sustainable transport. We have expanded upon this area to give specific examples.

11.275 Bancon Homes confirmed that it did not dispute the Topic Paper. They state that we have not missed any evidence but that they do not agree with the evidence we have used. It states that the 2009 Core Paths Plan is not up to date and that this document should be updated. It is not the purpose of the evidence report to create new data, rather to report the data that is available and any gaps that may exist. It is noted that core paths that have been built since 2009 will not be included within this dataset. Bancon Homes have provided some general commentary on what they would like to see in a new Development Plan, what they would like the Council to do and how new development can meet objectives from the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of strategic and non strategic functions. It will update the Core Paths Plan. The strategy is expected to be completed by March 2027.

11.276 There is comment from Bancon Homes that they are surprised there is limited comment within the paper relating to local living. Local Living has been referenced in the Sustainable Transport paper but is a topic within the Place Topic Paper and consequently we consider duplication of discussion undesirable.

11.277 Comment has been made by Bancon Homes that there is limited discussion upon the role of new housing development to provide new active travel links which are overlooked, that new development of sufficient scale could deliver new local facilities, and that new homes are fibre enabled. There is commentary on the current expectation that new development will provide active travel links and that large scale sites should be mixed use within the Place Topic Paper under the subheading ‘Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Placemaking Process and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs.’ Statistics on full fibre coverage are included within the Infrastructure Topic Paper under the subheading ‘Full Fibre and Gigabit Coverage.’ We are satisfied that duplication of evidence is unnecessary however we agree that these points should be included within the implications section of the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper, referencing NPF4 requirements for the ‘Connected’ theme within the 6 Qualities of Successful Places and Policy 24: Digital Infrastructure.

11.278 Homes for Scotland state that we have missed evidence within the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper but that they agree with the evidence we have used. They are specifically seeking Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data on

geographical accessibility. We have included this map data (Figure 11.24). There is limited commentary upon this map in isolation, it shows the peripheral sites of the city to be the least accessible for services as might be expected.

11.279 Homes for Scotland provided general commentary which is in line with the comments made by Bancon Homes. They state that a Transport Appraisal must be concluded prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan, and this is something that will be done. They state that the topic paper should recognise the need for evidence to be kept up to date and the topic paper does this at present.

Resubmission

11.280 Further engagement took place up until August 2026 with Nestrans, Transport Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council. Meetings focussed on providing responses to the reporters recommendations and working on the CTA. Meetings were held on 16 and 18 December 2025, 15 January 2026, 19 and 24 February 2026, 12 and 16 March 2026, 09 and 30 June 2026. The final outcome of these discussions is outlined in the Agreement of Evidence section below.

11.281 A draft version of the updated Topic Paper was sent on 02 July 2026 to stakeholders who had disputes to the previous version of the chapter, and to Aberdeen Future Infrastructure Requirement for Services (FIRS).

11.282 Comments were received from Nestrans and Transport Scotland providing further clarity on the CTA process. Transport Scotland also provided an update to the car km reduction target and further additional text to ensure clarify on the paper. The comments were added to the paper. A meeting was held on 04 August to outline final comments, before the final draft of the paper was sent to Nestrans and Transport Scotland. Final comments were received from Transport Scotland on 6 August 2026 and Nestrans on 31 August 2026.

11.283 A response was received from SEPA by email on 03 July 2026 with no comments on this paper.

11.284 A response was received from Scottish Forestry by email on 06 July 2026. They have no comments on this paper.

11.285 A response was received from Scottish Water by email on 15 July 2026. Comment noted the relationship between sustainable transport and support for blue and green infrastructure. Aberdeen City Council acknowledge this comment and look forward to working further with Scottish Water.

11.286 A response was received from NatureScot by email on 20 July 2026 with no comments on this paper.

11.287 A response was received from SSEN Whole Systems on 29 July 2026, and from SSEN Tranmission on 31 July. No comments were received for this paper.

11.288 On 30 July 2026, Aberdeenshire provided email comments to further strengthen the chapter with relation to next steps and investment.

11.289 A response was received from HES by email on 30 July 2026 with no comments on this paper.

11.290 The member of the public who disputed the previous paper made further comment on the previous public consultation process noting it was not statistically viable based on the response rate. Further comments noted the draft updated paper made no assessment of affordability based on Aberdeen City Council's current financial position and the cost of living crisis. In response, chapter 7 of the Evidence Report outlines the engagement process, which involved multiple in-person events, drop in events, focussed workshops and an online presence. The engagement provided quantitative and qualitative data to support the production of the Evidence Report. The purpose of the Evidence Report is to provide baseline data. In drafting the Proposed Plan, deliverability and viability are key considerations. The Delivery Programme will set out timelines, funding sources and the responsibilities required to deliver the content of the next Local Development Plan.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

11.291 The Cumulative Transport Appraisal will provide an important part of the transport evidence base supporting preparation of the Proposed Plan. The CTA will be used to assess the cumulative transport implications of emerging development options and the preferred spatial strategy, identify transport infrastructure requirements and inform mitigation measures where necessary. The Proposed Plan will be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach and set out the transport infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy. A summary of infrastructure projects currently in process is included above under the City Region Deal (CRD), Draft Local Transport Strategy (LTS)(CD192), and Delivery Programme (CD343). The delivery programme contains specific and smaller scale interventions needed as part of developments. The CRD and LTS documents outline city-wide infrastructure plans. These are further summarised below with additional detail relating to current status, funding, and their use. While not all information is currently available, significant projects such as corridor studies, key road capacity improvements, and active travel connections, and core paths are all at various stages of development. As site assessments take place and the CTA project is completed, this will further support the information requested relating to capacity, constraint, and investment information.

11.292 The transport evidence consistently demonstrates that development patterns have a significant influence on travel behaviour, network performance and carbon emissions. Sites that are well connected to existing centres, public transport and active travel infrastructure are likely to make a stronger contribution to sustainable transport objectives than sites which are primarily dependent on private vehicle travel. The Proposed Plan should therefore use transport accessibility and connectivity as key considerations when developing the spatial strategy and assessing development sites.

11.293 The Core Path Plan can inform and influence the spatial strategy. Sites which are accessible by existing active travel routes, such as core paths, will have an accessibility advantage at site assessment stage.

11.294 The Proposed Plan must align with the relevant strategic goals of National Planning Framework 4, National Transport Strategy 2 (CD175), Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (CD185 / CD187) and Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (CD192).

11.295 In practical terms, alignment with these strategies is likely to require a focus on reducing car dependency, increasing opportunities for active travel and public transport use, supporting local living principles and directing growth towards locations where sustainable travel choices are already available or can be delivered efficiently. Whilst national car kilometre reduction targets are currently being revised by the Scottish Government, the policy direction remains clear in seeking to reduce dependency on private vehicle travel and support greater use of sustainable modes. The proposed Plan should therefore continue to support development patterns and infrastructure priorities which contribute towards this wider objective.

11.296 Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 (CD175) sets out 4 priorities to achieve its vision.

- Reduce inequalities – the Proposed Plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to services, and areas where income is lowest where people may find travel difficult financially, and understand the makeup of the city in terms of an aging population and accommodation of individuals who have a disability. Spatial and policy decisions must be informed by this information and address existing related inequalities. Allocations could wherever possible, be used to support existing infrastructure or promote new provision in deprived communities.
- Takes climate action - the Proposed Plan must consider how the transport system in Aberdeen works as a whole, proximity of housing to services and centres and the planned and existing active travel links and public transport links between these, including likely routes of the Aberdeen Rapid Transit. It must account for all relevant Aberdeen transport strategies. Spatial and policy decisions must promote the sustainable transport hierarchy in Aberdeen to reduce carbon output caused by travel. Climate change will be taken into consideration when carrying out the site assessments and SEA. Development can be directed to areas which promote 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- Helps deliver inclusive economic growth - the Proposed Plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to centres and areas of employment, or areas where income is lowest where people may find travel difficult financially, and make spatial decisions (employment and housing allocations) and policy decisions (facilitating local economic growth) which offer inclusive growth.
- Improves our health and wellbeing - the Proposed Plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which do not have safe (from traffic and crime) and comfortable (useable for people of all abilities) active travel links to the services, facilities, workplaces and open spaces that people need to get to day to day. The plan must aim to enable active travel. Of particular importance is understanding the spatial relationship between healthcare services and places. Spatial and policy (how places are designed to put

people first) decisions will need to enable people to make the healthy travel choices required to improve health and wellbeing.

11.297 Transport Scotland: Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland (CD177) sets out 4 behaviours that need to be addressed in order to meeting targets.

- Reducing the need to travel – the Proposed Plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to services and consider the potential to address this through spatial and policy decisions. For instance, development can be directed to areas which promote 20 minute neighbourhoods and transport corridors with strong active travel and public transport. Digital infrastructure can support working remotely, the plan can consider how to support its implementation, for instance by adopting policies which require digital connectivity.
- Living well locally - the Proposed Plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to services and seek policies to support services in these areas and at the heart of new housing allocations. The plan must consider existing and proposed active travel and public transport including Aberdeen Rapid Transit and how the connectivity between places and centres operates within the city.
- Switching modes - the Proposed Plan must consider how the transport system in Aberdeen works as a whole, proximity of housing to services and centres and the planned and existing active travel links and public transport links between these, including likely routes of the Aberdeen Rapid Transit. It must account for all relevant Aberdeen transport strategies. Spatial and policy decisions must promote the sustainable transport hierarchy in Aberdeen to reduce carbon output caused by travel.
- Combining or sharing car trips - the Proposed Plan must consider where existing car club locations are situated and where else they might be sought.

11.298 The results of the Nestrans Transport Evidence Review (CD188) forecast the following:

- A substantial increase in housing and population is represented over time, with considerable new development and subsequent travel activity focussed around the periphery of Aberdeen;
- Changes in trip movements forecast over time vary by mode, with road traffic continuing to grow in the ‘without policy’ scenario. The delivery of transport policy generates a considerable increase in public transport passengers and active travel trips, and subsequent reduction in road traffic movements;
- The delivery of transport policy produces an 18% reduction in car kms across the North East by 2030. Car kms subsequently increase over the longer term horizon between 2030 and 2040;
- The introduction of the A96 Dualling scheme generates an increase in average traffic speeds across the network. The investment also increases road traffic demand along this corridor, and subsequently constrains and off-sets some of the impact of policies aimed at reducing car kms.

- Transport policy commitments provide a further increase in traffic speeds across the network to 2040;
- Traffic congestion is shown to continue in several areas, including the city centre, key radials and at access points along the A90 and A96 strategic routes. Congestion is lower within the with policy scenario, but continues to impact network operations for motorists and bus services at many locations; and
- Public Transport passenger volumes remain relatively constant in the ‘without policy’ scenario, and increase substantially in the With Policy scenario. By 2030, sections of the rail network become crowded during the peak periods, with some rail station car parks also at or approaching capacity.

11.299 The comparison between the 'with policy' and 'without policy' scenarios demonstrates that transport and land use interventions materially influence future travel patterns and network performance. The evidence indicates that continued growth in car travel would increase congestion, place additional pressure on key junctions and corridors and make achievement of climate objectives more challenging. Conversely, investment in sustainable transport and development patterns which support modal shift result in more favourable transport outcomes. These findings should be reflected in the spatial strategy and site selection process.

11.300 The Proposed Plan can broadly support national and regional transport policies through the following actions:

- Identify transport proposal which support the ‘with policy’ scenario by safeguarding transport proposals on the proposals map;
- Identifying urban brownfield sites to reduce impacts on infrastructure as far as possible;
- Direct development to areas which will support 20 minute neighbourhoods and transport corridors with strong active travel and public transport connections;
- Avoid development in areas which will exacerbate car use and increase congestion.

11.301 The papers produced by Public Health Scotland with respect to reallocation of road space in Scotland will have implications for the new local development plan as they lend some evidential weight to improved health outcomes being resultant from reduced use of motor vehicles and increased active travel, albeit with potential unintended adverse impacts such as displacing traffic to other areas. The direct implications for the new plan would specifically relate to design standards in new development.

11.302 Section 13.2 of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030 (CD286) seeks to ensure every new transport and active travel infrastructure project incorporates elements of blue-green infrastructure, and seek opportunities for its enhancement and expansion. This could have implications for design standards set out for the new local development plan and for expanding and connecting the Aberdeen green

space network to other locally and nationally important habitats. These can be identified in new Aberdeen Planning Guidance.

11.303 The Proposed Plan will be informed by the National Planning Framework 4 National Spatial Strategy (spatial principles) - local living and compact urban growth, and by National Planning Framework 4 Regional Spatial priorities for the North East, Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART), National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network and Aberdeen Harbour.

11.304 Aberdeen Rapid Transit represents the most significant planned public transport intervention affecting Aberdeen and is identified within national, regional and local transport strategies. The Proposed Plan should support delivery of ART through alignment of growth with existing and proposed ART corridors, safeguarding infrastructure requirements where necessary and ensuring that major development opportunities strengthen the viability of the network.

11.305 Policy 13 Sustainable transport is included in National Planning Framework 4 and consequently consideration will need to be given on whether a policy relating to transport will be required for the next local development plan.

11.306 The Proposed Plan will take account of the delivery of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan. Improved active travel infrastructure will have some affect upon alleviating traffic from private cars by offering more sustainable options for travel. This in turn has the potential to influence transport policy decisions. Public realm improvements and the Aberdeen Market are likely to have implications for the city centre, its surrounding neighbourhoods and the beachfront as they will make these areas more attractive places for people to live, work and visit. These changes will influence travel behaviour which has the potential to influence transport policy decisions.

11.307 Aberdeen City Voice Data (CD364) results will have implications for the next local development plan. This is Aberdeen specific data which shows where improvement is required for facilitating more sustainable methods of travel. This could lend weight to policy decisions, potentially around how design standards are set with regards to low or no car development.

11.308 The Proposed Plan will use data from the ‘Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future’ (CD041) wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

11.309 The findings of the A96 Corridor Studies will have implications for the Proposed Plan. The findings of the studies will be incorporated into the Transport Appraisal and to ensure that development proposed within the Local Development Plan supports the delivery of any transport interventions which are taken forward.

11.310 To ensure development is directed to locations with access to the most sustainable modes of transport, site selection assessments will include consideration of:

- Public transport availability and future planned public transport provision;
- Active travel infrastructure;
- Proximity to existing centres and clusters of existing services and facilities;
- Proximity to existing areas of employment;
- Any capacity constraints on the road networks; and,
- EV charging infrastructure.

11.311 The Regional Active Travel Network (CD326) provides an important evidence base for strategic walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure across the North East. The Proposed Plan should take account of the RATN when assessing development opportunities, safeguarding infrastructure corridors and identifying opportunities for developer contributions towards strategic active travel improvements.

11.312 The Proposed Plan will be informed by the 'Connected' theme within the 6 Qualities of Successful Places (NPF4 Policy 14) which supports well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency. This includes specifically designing for active travel, connectivity, convenient connections and pedestrian experience.

11.313 The Proposed Plan will be informed by NPF4 Policy 24: Digital Infrastructure which requires LDPs to support the delivery of digital infrastructure. This will have some effect upon the need to travel if new housing includes access to full fibre.

11.314 The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review (CD188 / CD189) shows that by 2040, in both 'with' and 'without' policy scenarios, there will be increased traffic flows between Angus and Moray, meaning increased traffic on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which may have implications for the spatial strategy of the new LDP.

11.315 As noted in further detail in Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities, there are several areas of Aberdeen City that fall within the 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD). Figure 11.24 below illustrates the areas of the city which fall within the lowest 20% for accessibility of services, which are mostly around the periphery of the city. When considered in conjunction with other SIMD data relating to income, a spatial picture emerges of the areas of the city which may be most affected by transport poverty. It is noted that accessibility are key priorities set out in:

- Transport Scotland: National Transport Strategy 2 (CD175) - Reduce inequalities by providing fair access to services, access which is easy and affordable to use for all.
- NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2040 (CD185) – Accessibility for all.
- Draft Local Transport Strategy 2023-2030 (CD192) - Accessibility/ inclusivity/ user-friendly. Improve the user-friendliness of the Aberdeen transport network, making it more accessible and inclusive.

11.316 Overall, the evidence suggests that the most sustainable and deliverable pattern of development is likely to be one which focuses growth in locations with strong existing or planned active travel and public transport connections, supports delivery of Aberdeen Rapid Transit and the Regional Active Travel Network, minimises

additional pressure on constrained parts of the transport network and contributes towards wider climate, health and accessibility objectives.

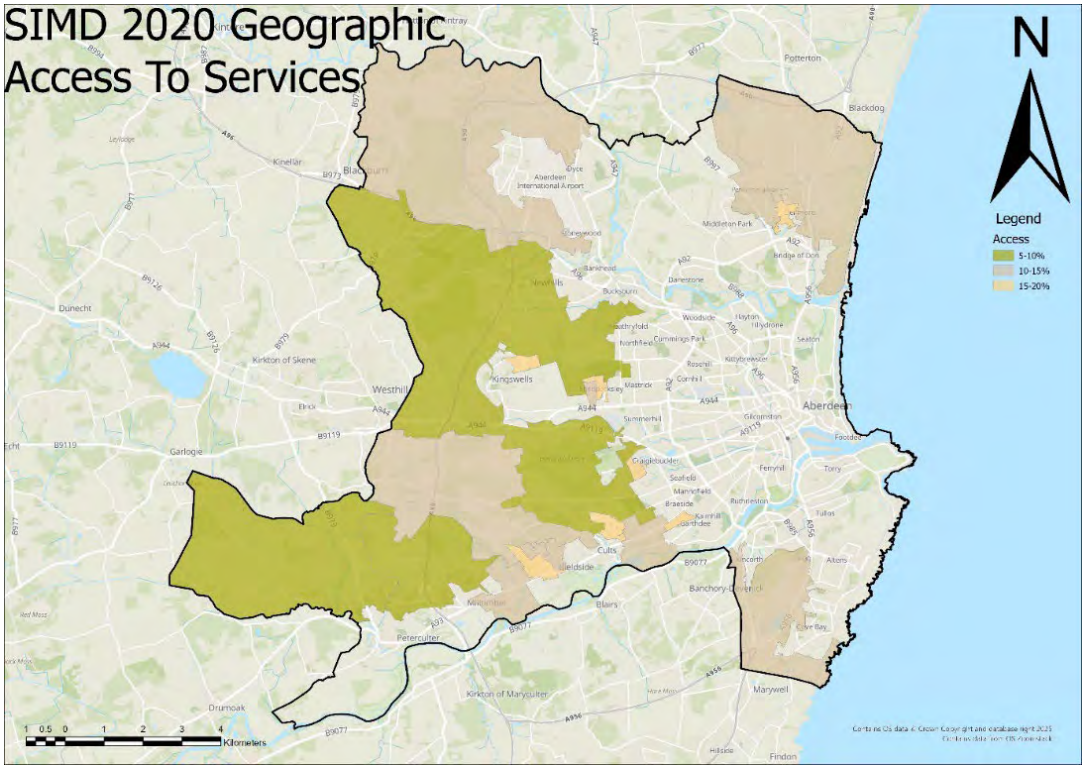


Figure 11.24 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 Geographic Access to Services

11.317 Allocations could wherever possible, be used to support existing infrastructure or promote new provision in deprived communities.

Housing Delivery & Site Assessments

11.318 The Cumulative Transport Appraisal will provide a framework for assessing the cumulative transport impacts of emerging development options and preferred allocations. The outcomes of the appraisal will assist in understanding the transport implications of different scenarios and identifying any infrastructure or mitigation requirements associated with the preferred spatial strategy. As identified within the summary of evidence, certain key multi-modal corridors in the city have greater capacity than others. Paragraphs 11.203 -11.205, under the road usage and traffic section, sets out the main traffic pinch points in the road network. Delay points are included in the map in figure 11.19. The Nestrans Transport Evidence Review (CD188) looks at the implications of both ‘with policy’ and ‘without policy’ scenarios. The implications for the plan have been set out, including in relation to housing allocations. The multi-modal corridor projects are ongoing and at various stages of development, except for the A93 which will not be brought forward at present. As noted, the CTA tool will thus also enable the assessment of future capacity and determine the deliverability of housing sites specifically.

11.319 Allocations for housing, business and employment made by Aberdeenshire Council will also affect the capacity of the road network in Aberdeen and will influence Aberdeen’s spatial strategy for housing.

11.320 It should also be noted that whilst the new LDP creation process no longer rolls forward all existing opportunity (OP) sites, a re-evaluation of these and existing HLA sites will also occur alongside submitted sites for assessment. These are all to be assessed using the standard template (see Local Development Planning Guidance). Our approach to site selection and allocating land for new development must ensure development is directed to locations with access to the most sustainable modes of transport. The Site Assessment and SEA Checklist considers the following criteria:

- Public transport availability and future planned public transport provision;
- Active travel infrastructure;
- Proximity to existing centres and clusters of existing services and facilities;
- Proximity to existing areas of employment;
- Any capacity constraints on the road networks; and
- EV charging infrastructure.

11.321 Without mitigation or intervention, some transport corridors may present limits on the amount of housing allocated to them. Other corridors however, for examples those with good public transport and/or potential ART enhancements, may provide opportunities for sustainable housing allocations. The potential impact of allocation in Aberdeenshire will also need to be considered. Depending on where developments go there will be varying impacts of the main cross border radial routes into Aberdeen. When selecting sites and formulating the spatial strategy for the next LDP a number of broad options can be considered either individually or in combination going forward.

11.322 With consideration of the above there are a number of options for the next local development plan with regards to housing allocations and their potential impacts on the transport system. Options could be;

1. Implement site specific mitigation through planning obligations,
2. Use larger or combined allocations to create economies of scale to deliver necessary (or larger) transport mitigation and/or their own walkable neighbourhoods,
3. Locating housing developments close to existing services and facilities to reduce travel demand,
4. Do not develop new housing in constrained areas or where mitigation would make developments unviable.

11.323 The Proposed Plan can broadly support national and regional transport policies through the following actions;

- Identify transport proposal which support the ‘with policy’ scenario by safeguarding transport proposals on the proposals map;
- Identifying urban brownfield sites to reduce impacts on infrastructure as far as possible;

- Direct development to areas which will support 20 minute neighbourhoods and transport corridors with strong active travel and public transport connections;
- Avoid development in areas which will exacerbate car use and increase congestion.

Cross Boundary Issues

11.324 Given that Aberdeen City is encircled by Aberdeenshire, there is significant cross boundary travel within the region as Aberdeen serves as a major economic centre of employment, facilities and retail provision. Similarly, travel between Aberdeen City and other cities/regions in Scotland requires crossing through Aberdeenshire, resulting in a significant share of car-kilometres in the region.

11.325 Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have an ongoing close working relationship and work together regularly. For transport, and in preparation for the next LDP, both Councils are together progressing work on transport appraisals for the north east region as part of the Cumulative Transport Assessment (CTA). The CTA will serve to inform both site-specific and regional areas where challenges to transport accessibility may require addressing.

11.326 In addition to CTA work, both Councils are also involved in work relating to Aberdeen Rapid Transit as the indicative routes will cross council boundaries. Nestrans (as regional transport partnership which covers both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire) is also in collaboration.

11.327 Developer obligations are principally managed independently by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, with any cross-boundary requirements being identified through Local Development Plan site allocation, or Development Management procedures. National and regional agencies such as NHS Grampian, NESTRANS, and Transport Scotland are also consulted at these stages to identify any cross-boundary needs. Aberdeen City Council also uses its Future Infrastructure Requirements (FIRs) forum with these stakeholders to discuss specific needs. Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council have collaborated on specific infrastructure sections of the Evidence Report where cross-boundary issues have been identified. These include the sections on Transport, Education and Health Care. Over the course of the Evidence Report, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council policy planning teams have regularly met to ensure that cross boundary matters are considered. This forum is expected to continue as both authorities move into site appraisal, plan preparation and beyond.

Delivery of Transport Projects

11.328 The primary regional transport investments are listed below and are likely to have a significant impact on the transport system in and around Aberdeen. Details can be found in the Regional Transport Evidence Review (CD188) which is summarised from paragraphs 11.34. Implementation of the projects is ongoing, and it is anticipated that they will be delivered during the lifetime of the next Local Development Plan.

- Phase 1 of Gyratory at South College St & North Esplanade;

- City Centre Master Plan (CCMP; as per summer 2023 configuration): bus only access on Guild Street, Market Street & Bridge Street, and Schoolhill and Union Terrace restrictions;
- Laurencekirk A90 / A937 Interchange;
- Berryden Dual Carriageway;
- A96 Dualling Inverurie to Inverness;
- Coast Road improvements to access South Harbour;
- A90 Bruntland Rd Closure & Badentoy Traffic Signals;
- A92 Murcar / B999 Roundabout Upgrade;
- Upgrade of Parkway / Whitestripes Roundabout to signalised intersection;
- A92 / Parkway Traffic Signals; and
- Access points to various proposed development (Prime Four, Grandhome, Loirston, Craibstone, Cloverhill.

Progress on other transport projects can be found in the respective sections of this Topic Paper with broad summaries in the Tables noted below;

- Active Travel Projects – see Table 11.9 for summary of projects, current status and funding.
- Public Transport Projects (including Aberdeen Rapid Transport) – see Table 11.27 for summary of projects, current status and funding.
- Road Projects - see Table 11.39 for summary of projects, current status and funding.

Marmot Principles

11.329 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	X

Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 11.44: Marmot Principles.

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Initial Submission

Agreement on Evidence

11.330 Transport Scotland, Nestrans, NHS Grampian, Nature Scot and 3 members of the public responded to the public consultation and agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.

11.331 Transport Scotland and Nestrans sought some minor changes to the document which were accepted, as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

11.332 NatureScot, Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed that they did not dispute the Topic Paper but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

11.333 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used but states he "does not have the knowledge to confirm why". A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Resubmission

Agreement on Evidence

11.334 The member of the public who previously disputed the paper confirmed they wish their response to be treated as further comments. The comments are discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

11.335 Transport Scotland have provided a number of written responses for the Council between the date of the Reporter's comments and their final response 6 August 2026 as part of its engagement. This final response confirms that they satisfied with the content of the topic paper. It gives a comprehensive chronological account of engagement with the Council, it confirms that the topic paper is sufficient in terms of LDP Guidance Policies 13 and 18, and its sets out the main transport issues and opportunities within the paper while reaffirming its support for this evidence.

11.336 Nestrans have submitted a number of responses to the Council through its engagement, the latest of which confirms that the topic paper is sufficient.

11.337 As part of the engagement with FIRS group, a number of consultees responded to the topic paper without specific comment; Historic Environment Scotland, SSEN Whole Systems, SSEN Transmission and Scottish Forestry.

11.338 SEPA provided a response 3 July 2026 which confirms that it had no specific comments to make upon the topic paper.

11.339 NatureScot provided a response 20 July 2026 which confirms that it had no specific comments to make upon the topic paper.

11.340 Scottish Water made some general comments 15 July 2026 in relation to the importance of green networks in managing surface water runoff.

11.341 Aberdeenshire Council contributed comments 30 July 2026 in relation to the topic paper and these comments have been noted.

Disputes with Stakeholders

11.342 There were no disputes with the topic paper.

Information Gaps

11.343 A Cumulative Transport Appraisal process is currently being led by Nestrans on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council to address cross boundary issues. Transport Scotland are part of the working group and have fed into the development of the brief. A consultant has been procured. The Cumulative Transport Appraisal is expected to conclude by the end of February 2027. The results of the Cumulative Transport Appraisal are not intended to be known at Evidence Report stage. Its inclusion within this section is to provide clarity that it will inform the Proposed Plan.

11.344 It is acknowledged that the Aberdeen Core Paths Plan dates from 2009. Work is underway to update this, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will update the Core Paths Plan. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

11.345 The Air Quality Action Plan is currently being reviewed in the context of updated timings of the Local Transport Strategy.

11.346 A draft Local Transport Strategy was consulted upon between November 2023 and January 2024. A revised draft Local Transport Strategy will be produced by the Transport Strategy and Programmes team aligned with the timetable for producing the Proposed Plan.

11.347 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

12 Topic Paper 5 – Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation

Requirements addressed in this section:

12.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)	The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.
Section 15(5)	The principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district.
Section 3F	Policies regarding low and zero-carbon generating technologies in new buildings.

Other Relevant Legislation

Section	Requirement
The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 Regulation 9 Have regard to: any river basin management plan; any flood risk management plan; and any local flood risk management plan.	

National Planning Framework 4

Climate and Nature Crisis

12.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) must address the global climate emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the spatial strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration in the area.

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

12.3 The LDP spatial strategy should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The six spatial principles should form the basis of the spatial strategy, helping to guide development to, and create, sustainable locations. The strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions.

12.4 LDPs should support adaptation to the current and future impacts of climate change by taking into account climate risks, guiding development away from vulnerable areas, and enabling places to adapt to those risks.

Flood Risk and Water Management

12.5 LDPs should strengthen community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change, by avoiding development in areas at flood risk as a first principle. Resilience should also be supported by managing the need to bring previously used sites in built up areas into positive use; planning for adaptation measures; and identifying opportunities to implement improvements to the water environment through natural flood risk management and blue green infrastructure.

12.6 Plans should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources and make use of relevant flood risk and river basin management plans for the area. A precautionary approach should be taken, regarding the calculated probability of flooding as a best estimate, not a precise forecast. For areas where climate change is likely to result in increased flood exposure that becomes unmanageable, consideration should be given to alternative sustainable land use.

Links to Evidence

Climate and Nature Crisis and Mitigation and Adaptation

- CD184 Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
- CD247 Is Scotland Climate Ready? CCC Report
- CD248 The Just Transition and Climate Change Adaptation (March 2022)
- CD023 Securing a Green Recovery Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018 - 2032 Update
- CD024 Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024 – 2029
- CD025 Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland 2023 Report to Parliament (2024)
- CD249 Evidence for the Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3): Summary for Scotland
- CD026 Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy to 2045
- CD250 Climate Projections for Scotland Summary - Adaptation Scotland
- CD027 ESPON – Quantitative Greenhouse Gas Assessment tool for Spatial Planning
- CD028 National Planning Framework 4 Research Project: Lifecycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions of NPF4 Proposed National Developments Assessment Findings

- CD016 Aberdeen Adapts Climate Adaptation Framework 2022
- CD017 Aberdeen Adapts Evidence Report
- CD029 A Climate-Positive City at the Heart of the Global Energy Transition; A Vision and Prospectus for Aberdeen
- CD030 Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap
- CD031 Council Climate Change Plan 2021 -2025
- CD032 Met Office Climate Report for Aberdeen City (11/12/2024)
- CD033 UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2022 - GOV.UK
- CD252A Aberdeen City Annual Emissions Inventory Report (2021)
- CD252B Aberdeen City Annual Emissions Inventory Report (2021) Reference Sheet
- CD324 Community Planning Aberdeen: Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036

Climate and Nature Crisis and Mitigation and Adaptation– Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Scotland's Climate Change Plan	6 November 2024
Adaptation Scotland	11 November 2024
Low Emission Zones Scotland	11 November 2024
Scotland's Environment Web	12 November 2024
ESPON GGIA tool	12 December 2024
Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage	12 November 2024
Nature Scot's Carbon and Peatland Map (2016)	12 December 2024

Flood Risk and Water Management

- CD034 The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009: Delivering Sustainable Flood Risk Management
- CD035 National Flood Resilience Strategy (2024)
- CD253 SEPA Position Statement: Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes
- CD254 SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance
- CD255 SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities
- CD287 SEPA Flood Risk Management Plan North East Local Plan District
- CD036 The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 – 2027
- CD037 SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning
- CD038 Mapping Flood Disadvantage in Scotland 2015: Main Report
- CD039 SEPA Recommended Riparian Corridor Layer for use in Land Use Planning
- CD257 SEPA Riparian Vegetation Management (2009) (PDF)
- CD312 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (PDF)

Flood Risk and Water Management – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
Position Statement: Elevated buildings in areas of flood risk	20 October 2024
SEPA Flood Risk Management Plans	5 August 2024
Land Use Planning - Flood Maps - SEPA	5 August 2024
SEPA Flood Maps	5 August 2024
SEPA Data Publication	15 December 2024
SEPA Flooding Portal	15 December 2024
SEPA Water Scarcity Report	24 March 2025
Water Environment Hub	15 December 2025
Recommended Riparian Corridor Map	24 March 2025

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

12.7 There is a climate and nature crisis. Planning can influence how we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, protect and enhance our natural assets, and support a fair and inclusive transition to a low-carbon economy. Resilience regarding the water environment supports the current and future impacts of climate change. This will be discussed in further detail below.

12.8 This section is structured as follows:

- Climate and Nature Crisis and Mitigation and Adaptation
- Flood Risk and Water Management

Climate and Nature Crisis and Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD184)

12.9 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a statutory duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD184) aims to ensure that that Scotland's contribution to climate change will end within a generation, being fully net-zero by 2045 with emissions reducing by 75% by 2030 (compared to a 1990 baseline). This key piece of planning legislation encourages local authorities to deliver these targets. The next Local Development Plan will consider how it can support Aberdeen in reaching these goals.

‘Is Scotland Climate Ready?’ Climate Change Committee report (2022) (CD247)

12.10 This report (CD247) to the Scottish Government sets out the Climate Change Committee’s assessment of progress in adapting to climate change in Scotland. Its findings reveal that progress in delivering adaptation has stalled. It recommends that the Scottish Government produce clear, time-bound, quantitative targets to drive sufficient action across the full range of government activities. It identifies four priorities for strengthening Scotland’s adaptation response, this includes:

- Learning from local excellence. Examples of good local adaptation actions across communities in Scotland should be used to inform response;
- Extending the focus on Net Zero to include climate adaptation;
- Building climate resilience in a fair way. The benefits of adaptation should be felt across the whole of society, and;
- Raising ambition now.

12.11 Ensuring that Aberdeen is aligned with Scottish Government targets, the Council can incorporate these priorities for climate adaptation as we consider the next Local Development Plan.

Scotland’s Climate Change Plan

12.12 Scotland’s Climate Change Plan provides a high level overview of Scotland’s climate change policies and actions. These are divided into six key themes as identified below:

- Net Zero Target: Scotland aims to achieve net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045.
- Climate Change Plan: The Climate Change Plan update reflects increased ambition and sets out actions to meet the targets.
- Adaptation and Resilience: Emphasizes the need to adapt and build resilience to climate change impacts.
- Just Transition: Focuses on ensuring a fair transition to a net zero economy, benefiting all sectors of society.
- Public and International Engagement: Involves engaging with businesses, communities, and international partners to tackle climate change.
- Legislation: Includes the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and its amendments, which set the framework for emissions reduction targets and climate action.

12.13 The production of the next Local Development Plan will seek to consider these themes and apply them to future development in Aberdeen.

The Just Transition and Climate Change Adaptation (2022) Climate Change Committee (CD248)

12.14 This report (CD248) addresses the Scottish Government, providing advice concerning the role of adaptation within a ‘Just Transition’. It highlights how the

distributional consequences of both climate impacts and adaptation actions can be addressed as part of policy making. The key messages of the document demonstrate that fairness in adaptation is intrinsically linked to a Just Transition. It highlights that climate impacts and adaptation actions will have unequal effects across the population. Finally, it states that effective and fair adaptation will require distributional effects to be considered throughout the policy cycle. The next Local Development Plan will consider the outcomes of this report as it seeks to support a Just Transition in Aberdeen.

Securing a Green Recovery Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018 - 2032 Update (CD023)

12.15 Forming an update to 'Scotland's Climate Change Plan', this document outlines Scotland's strategy for achieving ambitious climate targets while promoting a green recovery from COVID-19 (CD023). This Plan reiterates Scotland's ambitious target to achieve net zero by 2045 and, it emphasizes the integration of climate action with economic recovery post-COVID-19.

12.16 Key Sectors and Actions:

1. Electricity:
   - Increase renewable energy capacity.
   - Enhance grid infrastructure to support renewable integration.
2. Buildings:
   - Improve energy efficiency in homes and public buildings.
   - Promote the use of low-carbon heating systems.
3. Transport:
   - Encourage the adoption of electric vehicles.
   - Invest in public transport and active travel infrastructure.
4. Industry:
   - Support industrial decarbonization through innovation and technology.
   - Implement carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects.
5. Waste and Circular Economy:
   - Reduce waste generation and increase recycling rates.
   - Promote circular economy practices to minimize resource use.
6. Land Use and Agriculture:
   - Enhance carbon sequestration through forestry and peatland restoration.
   - Support sustainable agricultural practices.

12.17 Cross-Cutting Themes:

- Just Transition: Ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy is fair and inclusive.
- Engagement: Involve communities, businesses, and stakeholders in climate action.
- Monitoring and Reporting: Regularly assess progress and adapt strategies as needed.

12.18 Notably, the plan references the 75% carbon emissions reduction by 2030, set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This has since been amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024, which introduced modifications to the interim targets. However, the target of achieving net zero emissions by 2045 remains.

12.19 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate the key actions of this update as it seeks to aid delivery of net zero ambitions, and continue to integrate climate action with economic recovery post pandemic. It will also consider the themes outlined in the plan update to ensure delivery of these goals is just and inclusive across Aberdeen.

Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2024 – 2029 (CD024)

12.20 The Scottish Government produced the Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CD024) under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. It is a requirement to produce an adaptation plan every 5 years in response to the Climate Change Committee's independent assessment of climate risks in the UK . The UK Climate Change Committee publish a monitoring and evaluation framework to help measure progress towards meeting the aims in the adaptation plan. The Scottish Government also publish annual progress reports on climate change adaptation: Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme: progress report 2023 to 2024.

12.21 The Adaptation Plan (CD024) sets out a long term vision and defines Scotland's priorities for action over the next five years. The Adaptation Plan is structured in five chapters, covering five outcomes to deliver a climate resilient Scotland. Under each outcome are objectives where key policy actions are set out, as shown in Figure 12.1:

Outcomes and objectives for adaptation

Five adaptation outcomes; 23 objectives	
Nature Connects	
Nature connects across our lands, settlements, coasts and seas.	
NC1: Nature-based solutions	NC2: Landscape scale solutions
NC3: Development planning	NC4: Nature networks
NC5: Marine, coastal and the blue economy	NC6: Natural carbon stores and sinks
Communities	
Communities are creating climate-resilient, healthy and equitable place.	
C1: Regional and place-based collaborations	C2: Locally-led adaptation
C3: Community resilience	C4: New and existing buildings
C5: Culture and historic environment	C6: Coastal communities
Public Services & Infrastructure	
Public services are collaborating in effective and inclusive adaptation action.	
PS1: Public body duties and capacity	PS2: Public service and infrastructure resilience
PS3: Scotland's water resources	PS4: Transport system
Economy, Business & Industry	
Economies and industries are adapting and realising opportunities in Scotland's Just Transition.	
B1: Business understanding of climate risk	B2: Support for farming, forestry, fishing and aquaculture sectors
B3: Innovation opportunities	B4: Economic development and supply chains
International Action	
Scotland's international role supports climate justice and enhanced global action.	
IA1: Supporting vulnerable communities globally	IA2: International Advocacy
IA3: Knowledge advocacy	

Figure 12.1 : Adaptation Outcomes and Objectives from Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme, 2024 (CD024).

12.22 The next Local Development Plan will look to the policy actions mention in this plan as it seeks to ensure climate adaptation in Aberdeen is aligned with government targets.

Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland 2023 Report to Parliament (2024) (CD025)

12.23 This report (CD025) has been prepared by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) as an annual update to the UK Parliament, reporting on Scotland's progress towards their climate goals.

12.24 The report monitors Scotland's progress in reducing emissions and assesses the policies in place for delivering future emissions reduction. The report is in

accordance with Sections 9 (1) and (2) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Scottish Government's response to the Climate Change Committee's 2023 report highlights several key points:

- Scotland's emissions halved between 1990 and 2022, while the economy grew by 67%, showing that tackling climate change and economic growth can go hand in hand.
- The second half of the journey to net zero will be more challenging, requiring a just transition in areas like agriculture, transport, and heat in buildings.
- Positive progress includes the extension of free bus travel to under-22s and planting nearly 75% of all new forests in the UK last year.
- The Scottish Government announced an accelerated package of new climate action measures, including the development of approximately 24,000 additional electric vehicle charging points by 2030 and a new integrated ticketing system for public transport.

12.25 The report goes on to identify next steps, of which the following have a relationship to local development planning, and can be used to inform development of the next Local Development Plan:

- The transport sector requires practical delivery plans in areas including charging infrastructure, car demand reduction and decarbonisation of aviation and shipping.
- Policy plans must address barriers to enable woodland creation and peatland restoration rates to scale up significantly.
- Stronger action is needed to increase recycling rates and reverse recent increases in waste incineration.

Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report: Summary for Scotland (2021) (CD249)

12.26 This Independent Assessment used to help inform the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) (CD249) assesses 61 risks and opportunities from climate change to Scotland, including to business, infrastructure, housing, the natural environment, our health and risks from the impacts of climate change internationally. It outlines what the risks and opportunities associated with climate change are for Scotland, their urgency scores, the evidence for this and the benefits for further action in the next five years. Appreciation of the risks and opportunities identified in this report can help to inform the next Local Development Plan to ensure that recognition of climate change risk is understood and actioned in Aberdeen when directing future development.

Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan (CD026)

12.27 This strategy (CD026) sets out a clear ambition: for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. The vision for Scotland is to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across land, freshwater and seas by 2045. The natural environment, habitats, ecosystems and species, will be diverse, thriving, resilient and adapting to climate change.

12.28 Six detailed outcomes are identified which will help define what success will look like in terms of land and seascapes; on land; in rivers, lochs and wetlands; and, in marine and coastal environments.

- Accelerate restoration and regeneration;
- Protect nature on land and at sea, across and beyond protected areas;
- Embed nature-positive farming, fishing and forestry;
- Protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats;
- Invest in Nature; and,
- Take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss.

12.29 Included within the Strategy is a commitment to protecting 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 as part of the 30 by 30 policy. The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate these outcomes identified to support the restoration and regeneration biodiversity in Aberdeen in alignment with wider government strategy.

Adaptation Scotland

12.30 The Adaptation Scotland programme provides advice and support to help Scotland be prepared and resilient to the effects of climate change. Within their 'Climate Projections for Scotland - Summary' report (CD250), they outline the following anticipated changes to our climate: average temperatures will increase across all seasons; typical summers will be warmer and drier; typical winters will be milder and wetter; intense; heavy rainfall events will increase in both winter and summer; sea levels will rise; reduced frost and snowfall, and; weather will remain variable and may become more variable. Additionally, they highlight 15 key impacts of climate change already observed in Scotland and are likely to become more prevalent over the coming years. Aberdeen Adapts, Aberdeen City Council's climate adaptation framework, outlines the impacts for the city. This is discussed in further detail later in this Topic Paper.

Low Emission Zones Scotland

12.31 Low Emission Zones (LEZ) will help to protect public health by improving air quality, as well as delivering various health, environmental and economic benefits, including:

Health:

- cleaner air can have health benefits for everyone, especially for old and very young people and for those with existing heart and lung conditions.
- in 2010, the UK Government's Department of Health's Expert Advisory Committee, the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP), estimated that poor air quality shortens average life expectancy in Scotland by three to four months (compared to six to seven in England and Wales). Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected (Health Protection Scotland, 2014).

Environment:

- can help reduce pollution from vehicle emissions.
- help to accelerate the uptake of lower emission vehicles – and cleaner vehicles. Also benefit all areas the vehicles travel through – not just the LEZ.
- encourage people to consider using more public transport and active travel methods instead of driving.

Economy

- can help improve air quality and protect public health within towns and cities. This makes them more attractive places to live, work and to visit.

12.32 Aberdeen's low emission zone was introduced on 31 May 2022, with enforcement beginning 01 June 2024, and covers an area of the city centre highlighted in the Council's online map. The LEZ was introduced to address air pollution in the city centre, mainly nitrogen dioxide (NO2), caused by road traffic. See the Wellbeing and Community paper for more information.

Scotland's Environment

12.33 The Scotland's environment website hosts 229 mapping overlays that can be applied to an interactive map. The data hosted is shared by a variety of contributing partners such as Marine Scotland, Nature Scot, SEPA and the Scottish Land Commission. The map can therefore provide targeted information and datasets for Aberdeen which will be useful in preparing the next Local Development Plan.

ESPON Quantitative Greenhouse Gas Assessment tool for Spatial Planning (CD027)

12.34 This project is part of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, which aims to support the development of evidence-based spatial planning policies across Europe. The main objective of the project is to create a robust, simple, and proportionate methodology that allows planning authorities at national, regional, and local levels to quantify and forecast the influence of spatial planning policies on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CD027). The resultant Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment (GGIA) tool quantifies data on GHG emissions and projects future scenarios for use in spatial planning. Key points from the report include:

- The European Union is committed to reducing GHG emissions by 55% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

- The project aims to collect consistent and comparable GHG baseline emissions data at various administrative levels to assess the urban and land-use share of GHG emissions relevant for spatial planning policy.
- The methodology will help model the efficacy of spatial plans and possible alternatives, aiding in cross-country, inter-regional, and inter-municipality comparisons.
- The project will enhance the scientific understanding of how planning authorities can prioritise relevant GHG mitigation strategies and build political will for climate action.

12.35 Data from this assessment and the GGIA tool can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan to further understand changing GHG emission levels.

National Planning Framework 4 Research Project: lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of NPF4 proposed national developments: assessment findings (CD028)

12.36 This document provides an in-depth analysis of the lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with proposed national developments in Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (CD028). The assessment aims to support the Scottish Government's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. Key points from the report include:

- The assessment covers various proposed national developments, evaluating their potential GHG emissions throughout their lifecycle, from construction to operation and decommissioning.
- It identifies opportunities for reducing emissions through design, construction practices, and operational efficiencies.
- The report emphasises the importance of integrating low-carbon and renewable energy solutions into national developments to minimise their environmental impact.
- It also highlights the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of GHG emissions to ensure that the proposed developments align with Scotland's climate targets.

12.37 The report evaluates several proposed national developments in Scotland, two of which are affiliated with Aberdeen:

- Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks: This development aims to facilitate a shift towards sustainable transport in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, as well as their wider regions. It focuses on reducing transport-related emissions and supporting accessibility for all. This is outlined further in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.
- Aberdeen Harbour: This project involves the expansion and improvement of facilities at Aberdeen Harbour to support the energy transition and enhance its role as a key port for the offshore energy sector.

12.38 These developments are part of Scotland's broader strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve net-zero targets. The report provides detailed assessments of the potential lifecycle GHG emissions associated with each of these projects and identifies opportunities for reducing emissions through design, construction practices, and operational efficiencies.

Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage (SCCS)

12.39 SCCS provides useful information, publications and datasets relating to carbon capture and storage (CCS) and, the journey to Net Zero. The website identifies CCS projects around the world, one of which is 'The Scotland Net Zero Infrastructure (SNZI) programme'. The project summary below outlines the important role the North East of Scotland has to play in achieving a Net Zero future for Scotland.

12.40 The Scotland Net Zero Infrastructure (SNZI) Programme involves:

- Collaborators: Includes Pale Blue Dot, SSE Thermal, National Grid, Petrofac, LNG9/GB-Tron, University of Strathclyde, and NECCUS.
- Projects:
  - Detailed engineering for Acorn CCS and Hydrogen projects.
  - New CCS-equipped power station at Peterhead.
  - Re-use of onshore pipelines for CO2 transport.
  - Carbon capture design for a new gas-fired power station in Grangemouth.
  - Design of CO2 tanker ships for coastal emitters.
- Investments and Developments:
  - £1.23m investment for Scotland's Net Zero Roadmap project.
  - Establishment of the UK Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre at Heriot Watt University.
  - Potential for over £3 billion in onshore and offshore developments.
- Advantages for Scotland:
  - Utilises existing infrastructure and CO2 storage potential.
  - Leverages large-scale renewable energy build-out.
  - Ensures a Just Transition for the skilled workforce.

12.41 This programme positions Scotland as a leader in industrial decarbonisation and net zero efforts. Notably, the Acorn project has received an influx of £200 million to fund progression of the CCS scheme in Aberdeenshire. The next Local Development Plan will consider these datasets as it endeavours to support progression of CCS in Scotland as Aberdeen continues to pursue net zero emissions.

NatureScot's Carbon and Peatland Map

12.42 The Carbon and Peatland map 2016 can be used to identify locations of carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. Classes 1 and 2 are identified as

being a nationally important resource and areas that are likely to be of high conservation value. The restoration of peatland can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, due to peatland's capacity to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

12.43 This resource can aid Local Authorities in identifying areas that require protection when considering development. This can help identify areas in Aberdeen that require protection to inform the next Local Development Plan.

12.44 Within Aberdeen, small areas of Class 1 land can be found on land adjacent to Gough Burn (north-west of Kepplestone) and at Leuchar Moss (south-east of Garlogie). There is no Class 2 within the city boundary. There is only one recorded location of Class 3 land (referring to Leached Soils), which is of poorer quality than Class 1 and 2 land, and is largely covered by the southern edge of the Prime Four Business Park at Kingswells. There are multiple areas of Class 5 (Organic Soils) within Aberdeen located at Grandhome Moss, land at Burn of Mundurno, Lily Loch, Corby Loch, South Mains of Charleston, and land to the South-East of Lochside Academy. The types of peat shown on the map are:

- carbon-rich soils
- deep peat
- priority peatland habitat

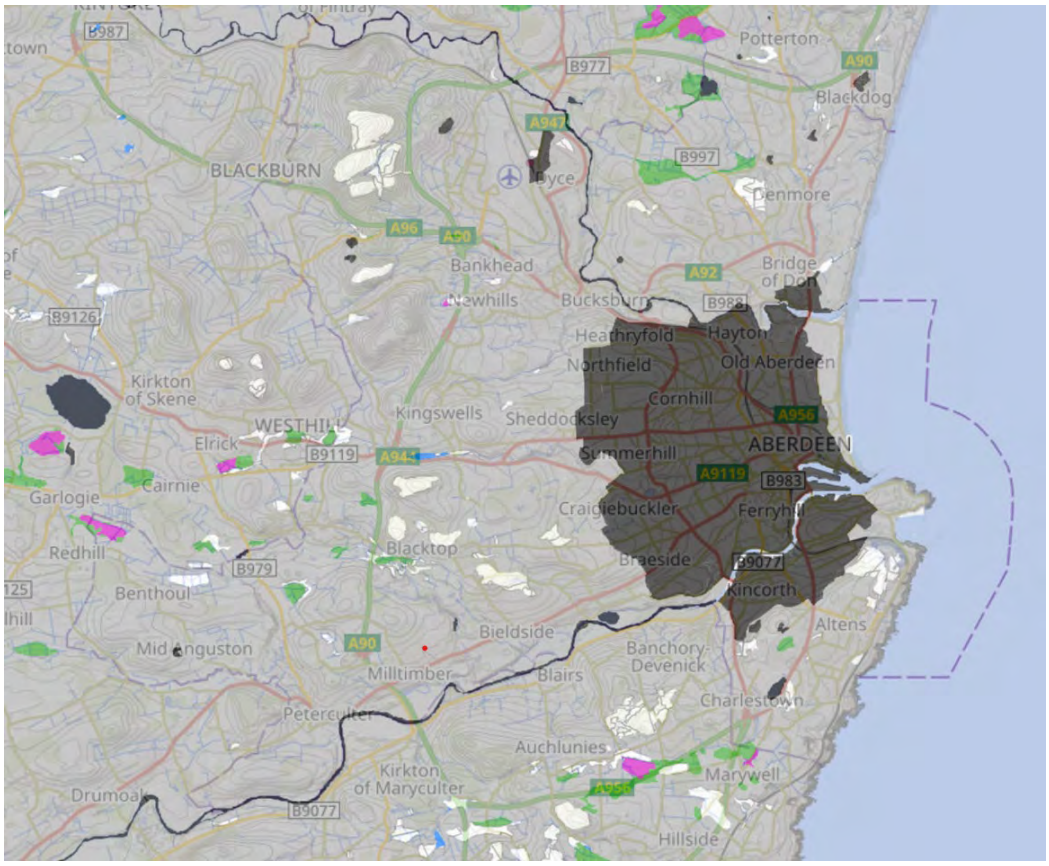


Figure 12.2: A snapshot of Aberdeen taken from Scotland's Carbon and Peatland Map 2016. Can be found at : Scotland's Soils - soil maps

For further information on soils see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Adapts (CD016)

12.45 Aberdeen Adapts (CD016) is a collaborative framework for city-wide working on adaptation. It incorporates the views of local organisations and communities. Page 10 highlights projected climate impacts for Aberdeen and shares the evidence base used to inform the document.

12.46 Future Climate Impacts indicated for Aberdeen include:

- A reduction in summer rainfall which could affect water quality and availability.
- An increase in autumn/winter rainfall. This won't mean more rainy days, but when it does rain it will be much heavier.
- There will be an increase in temperatures across all seasons.
- In winter there will be less snow, ice and frost days, although there could still be an extreme snowfall event.
- In summer there will be an increase in temperatures and what we consider a heatwave could occur more frequently.
- There will be a rise in sea level.

> *"An assessment of climate risks has been produced in a separate Evidence Base for Aberdeen Adapts. This takes on board information relevant to Aberdeen from UK Climate Projections UKCP18 and relevant risks identified in the Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment. The Evidence Base is a live document and identifies climate risks relevant to Aberdeen, actions already taking place; and in line with the UK approach, indicates where more action is needed, where further investigation is required, where action should be sustained and areas that need monitored."* (Aberdeen Adapts, 2022, pg. 10).

12.47 The Evidence Base report (CD017) sets out climate risks and opportunities relevant to Aberdeen for the following categories:

- Buildings and heritage;
- Transport & infrastructure;
- Water, energy & communications;
- Species, habitats & landscape;
- Soil;
- Trees and woodlands;
- Watercourses and coastline;
- Communities;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Economy; and,
- Food.

12.48 The report includes additional information of challenges and opportunities for research and awareness. It summarises the current policies and actions relating to adaptation in Aberdeen and, it identifies ways to strengthen resilience to climate change. These actions can be taken on board and considered in the next Local Development Plan, ensuring that Council strategies are aligned in the pursuit of climate adaptation in Aberdeen.

A Climate-Positive City at the Heart of the Global Energy Transition; A Vision and Prospectus for Aberdeen (CD029)

12.49 This document (CD029) emphasises the city's role in leading the shift from fossil-based energy systems to renewable energy sources, leveraging its expertise in the oil and gas industry to support this transition.

12.50 The strategy identifies several priority actions to support the energy transition, including investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport, such as:

- Investing in Renewable Energy: This includes expanding the use of offshore wind, hydrogen, and other renewable energy sources. The goal is to leverage Aberdeen's existing expertise and infrastructure to become a leader in renewable energy production.
- Enhancing Energy Efficiency: The strategy emphasises the importance of improving energy efficiency in buildings and infrastructure. This involves retrofitting existing buildings and ensuring new developments meet high energy efficiency standards.
- Developing Sustainable Transport: The plan includes initiatives to promote sustainable transport options, such as electric vehicles, public transport, and active travel. This aims to reduce emissions from the transport sector and improve air quality in the city.
- Supporting Innovation and Technology: Aberdeen aims to foster innovation and technology development in the energy sector. This includes supporting research and development projects, as well as creating an environment that encourages the growth of new energy technologies.
- Building a Resilient Economy: The strategy highlights the need to build a resilient economy that can adapt to the challenges of the energy transition. This involves supporting businesses and workers in the transition to new energy industries and ensuring that the benefits of the transition are shared widely.

12.51 Overall, the Aberdeen Energy Transition Vision 2020 provides a roadmap for the city's transition to a sustainable and climate-positive future. Consideration of this when developing the next Local Development Plan will be essential to supporting the delivery of net zero emissions across each sector in Aberdeen.

Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap (CD030)

12.52 The Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap (CD030) and the supporting six themed strategies set out the approach for the journey to a net zero city, aiming to build on the existing foundations of Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision. The six themed strategies are as follows:

- Buildings and heat: reducing energy demand, energy efficiency and transitioning to low and zero carbon heat.
- Circular economy: making better use of valuable resources.
- Energy Supply: increasing decentralised energy, developing green hydrogen, offshore wind; alongside expanding skills and supply chains.
- Mobility: Reducing the demand for travel, moving to low and zero emission vehicles and boosting active travel.
- Natural Environment: Protecting and enhancing nature across the city, contributing to an overall reduction in emissions from land and to increase carbon stores.
- Empowerment: Setting the means and mechanisms for input, participation and collaboration vital to a just transition for the city.

12.53 Net Zero Aberdeen (CD030) sits alongside Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework 2022 (CD016). In driving forward to meet city net zero ambitions, we need to build in resilience, taking action to prepare for inevitable changes in climate. The next Local Development Plan can work alongside these strategies in delivering net zero targets for example, supporting the Buildings and Heat strategy (CD206) through encouraging connectivity to Heat Network Zones in new development.

Aberdeen City Council Climate Change Plan 2021 – 2025 (CD031)

12.54 The Council Climate Change Plan 2021-2025 (CD031) sets a net zero target for Aberdeen City Council's own assets and operations and drives a significant increase in actions to reduce carbon emissions and to build resilience. Delivery of the plan will make an active contribution to the Council's wider net zero city commitment. The Plan identifies the Council's targets for a net zero future:

> *"We will achieve net zero corporate carbon emissions* by 2045 at the latest with interim targets of: - a reduction of at least 48% by 2025 - a reduction of at least 75% by 2030 (against Council 2015/16 reporting baseline) This plan will be reviewed in 2025 and thereafter every 5 years, or earlier taking into account changes to legislation strategy and guidelines."* (Council Climate Change Plan 2021 - 2025, Pg. 4).

12.55 The document provides a table which highlights five themes covering council assets and operations and a list of outcomes. These are identified as:

- Buildings: Council Buildings and Council Housing;
- Mobility: Fleet and Staff Travel;
- Operations: Street Lighting, Internal Waste, Nature Based Action;

- Leadership and Governance: Process, Procurement and Decision Making; and,
- Awareness and Behaviour Change: Communications, Participation and Training.

12.56 Under these themes the document identifies a number of projects which the Council will undertake to satisfy the outcomes identified within the five themes to move towards their net zero target. The Local Development Plan is one of a number of Plans and Strategies that will be used to deliver these projects, for example the 'Mapping of Blue / Green Infrastructure Opportunity Sites' project.

Met Office Climate Report for Aberdeen City (CD032)

12.57 The Met Office generated climate report for Aberdeen City provides an overview of climate change forecasting at a local level (CD032). A summary is as follows:

Current Climate:

- Eastern Scotland experiences the highest summer temperatures and significant rainfall variations.
- Recent decades have seen increased temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns.

Climate Change Impacts:

- Heat: Increased energy demand for cooling.
- Sea Level Rise: Higher risk of coastal flooding.
- Heavy Rainfall: Increased flooding risks.
- Health: Greater risk of heat stress.
- Drought: Potential water supply issues.
- Transport: Disruptions due to extreme weather.
- Environment: Threats to biodiversity.
- Energy: Infrastructure risks from flooding.

Future Projections:

- Warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.
- Increased frequency of extreme weather events.
- Sea level rise will continue, affecting coastal areas.

Local Climate Indicators:

- Projected increases in summer and winter temperatures.
- Changes in precipitation patterns, with potential for more intense rainfall events.

Sea Level Rise:

- Continued rise expected, with significant impacts on coastal infrastructure and communities.

Action and Adaptation:

- Emphasises the need for both mitigation (reducing emissions) and adaptation (preparing for impacts).

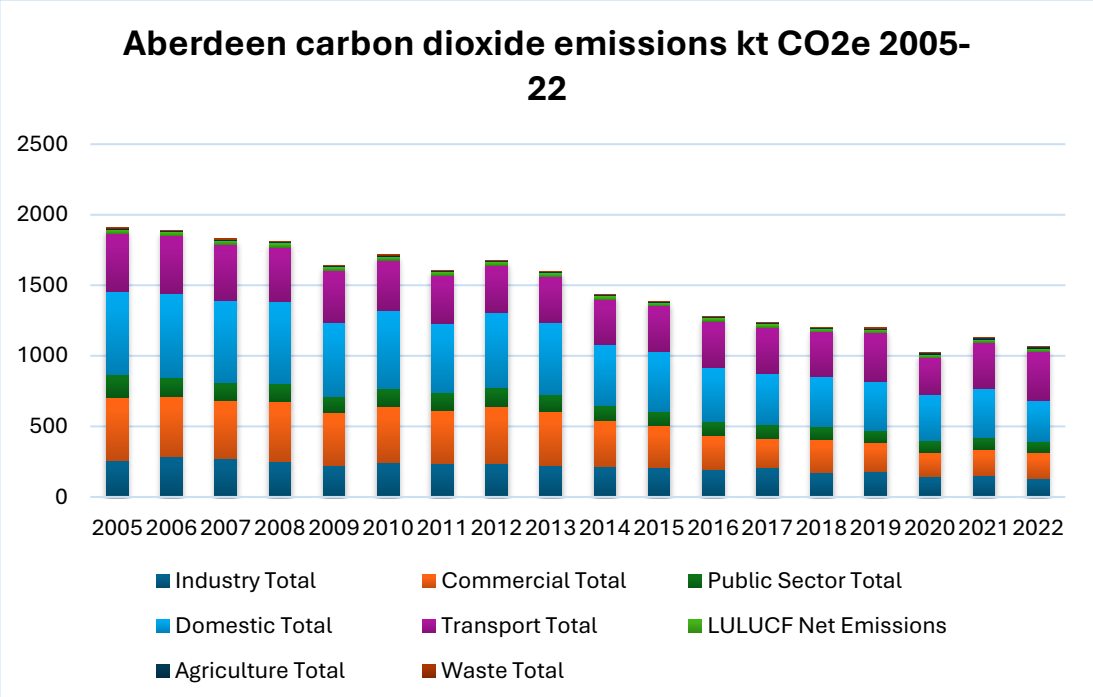
- Encourages local authorities, businesses, and the public to take proactive steps.

12.58 This report highlights the importance of understanding and preparing for climate change impacts specific to Aberdeen City. This in-depth view of climate change impacts will be essential in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan, ensuring that our approach to development is informed by a comprehensive understanding of anticipated climate projections.

Aberdeen Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Data (CD033)

12.59 UK greenhouse gas statistics show that greenhouse gas emissions in Aberdeen City have been on a downward trend from 2005 to 2022 (published June 2024) (CD033), shown in Figure 12.3 below. The data confirms the key sources of GHG emissions are the transport and domestic sectors, shown in Figure 12.4 below.

Figure 12.3: Bar graph showing the trend of carbon dioxide emissions by sector in Aberdeen from 2005-2022. Taken from Aberdeen Greenhouse Gas Data (CD033)



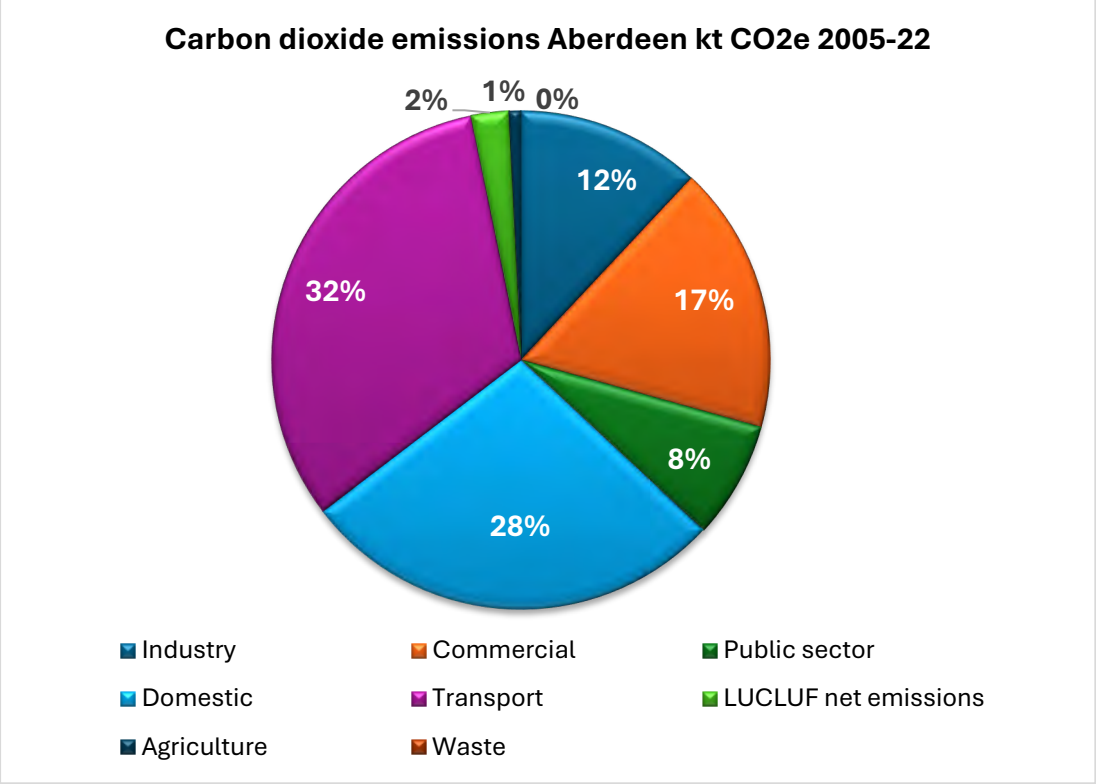


Figure 12.4: Pie chart showing the breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions by sector in Aberdeen from 2005-2022. Taken from Aberdeen Greenhouse Gas Data (CD033).

12.60 The next Local Development Plan will seek to consider this data as it endeavours to pursue net zero emissions, recognising how it can support a reduction in emissions across each sector. This will be particularly important in addressing the sectors that contribute highly to Aberdeen's overall emissions, such as transport and domestic emissions.

Aberdeen City Annual Emissions Inventory Report (2021) (CD252A)

12.61 The Annual Emission Inventory Report from the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service provides a comprehensive overview of 2021 area-wide emission categories within the ClimateView official board for the Aberdeen City area (CD252A and CD252B). Among the key takeaways outlined in the report, it is highlighted that between 2020 to 2021 there was a 3% increase in emissions. Regarding energy consumption, it is noted that from 2005-2021, energy consumption has reduced at a much slower rate with fluctuations in part related to the variation in retail price of natural gas and electricity. As the rate of grid decarbonisation slows, achieving further emission reductions will require a decrease in consumption. This Aberdeen specific data can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan, assisting in highlighting areas where the Local Development Plan can support emissions reduction.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (CD324)

12.62 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (LOIP) (CD324) outlines community planning partners who will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision is for “a place where all can thrive regardless of background or circumstance”. There is a commitment to tacking poverty and inequality and supporting the city’s people to live healthy lives. Five 10-year outcomes have been set to achieve the vision over these five themes as outlined in Table 12.2.

Theme	10 Year Outcome (by 2036)
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	95% of young people in SIMD 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school.
Economic Stability	Reduce to 3% the proportion of people aged 16 and above in SIMD 1 that are not in employment, and increase by 3% the employment rate of vulnerable groups.
Communities and Housing	Reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5%.
Neighbourhood and Environment	Increase proportion of people from SIMD 1 who feel they have influence and sense of control by 10%.
Health and Social Care	20% reduction in deaths in SIMD 1 from alcohol and drugs and a 20% reduction in suicide rate citywide.

Table12.2 LOIP outcomes by theme

12.63 Of the five outcomes, the Proposed Plan can help to achieve outputs tied to Neighbourhood and Environment theme; these being

- Number of new pocket parks/areas for growing food and proportion of land for nature.
- Percentage of people walking, cycling and wheeling.
- Number of community energy initiatives.

12.64 The next Local Development Plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related climate change.

Flood Risk and Water Management

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009: Delivering Sustainable Flood Risk Management (CD034)

12.65 The guidance (CD034) reminds Local Authorities of their responsibilities around flood risk management under the Act. These responsibilities include:

1. Flood Risk Assessment:

    - Conduct assessments to identify areas at significant risk of flooding.
2. Flood Risk Management Plans:
    - Develop and implement local flood risk management plans in coordination with SEPA and other stakeholders.
3. Flood Protection Schemes:
    - Design, construct, and maintain flood protection schemes to reduce flood risk.
4. Surface Water Management:
    - Manage surface water to prevent flooding, including the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).
5. Public Engagement:
    - Engage with communities to raise awareness about flood risks and involve them in flood risk management planning.
6. Emergency Response:
    - Prepare and implement emergency response plans for flood events.

12.66 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate these responsibilities and action points as it directs future development in Aberdeen.

National Flood Resilience Strategy (2024) (CD035)

12.67 This report was produced as a response to the national climate emergency and seeks to offer a strategy to steer Scotland toward a flood resilient future (CD035). The report highlights that flooding is the costliest hazard caused by climate change in Scotland of which the frequency and severity of flooding is increasing. Future Projections state that by 2080, nearly 400,000 properties in Scotland will be at risk of flooding.

12.68 This strategy forms part of the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 (SNAP3) (CD024), which is included in the Climate Mitigation and Adaptation section above.

12.69 It identifies three key areas of focus:

- People: Involving communities in flood resilience decision-making.
- Places: Adapting land management and placemaking for flood resilience.
- Processes: Integrating flood resilience into planning and increasing collaboration.

12.70 The report confirms that Aberdeen is at high risk of flooding, particularly from coastal and river sources. The report identifies key outcomes to enable flood resilient places including:

1. **Community Engagement**: Active involvement of local communities in flood resilience planning and decision-making processes.

2. **Enhanced Land Management**: Implementation of adaptive land use practices and natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risks.
3. **Infrastructure Upgrades**: Improvements to urban drainage systems and the introduction of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water effectively.
4. **Advanced Data Utilization**: Use of data analytics and real-time monitoring to enhance flood risk mapping and predictive modelling for better planning and response.
5. **Long-term Resilience**: Focus on building long-term flood resilience through collaborative efforts and strategic planning.

12.71 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate these key outcomes as it endeavours to strengthen flood resilience throughout Aberdeen, particularly around those areas most at risk of flooding.

Position Statement: Elevated Buildings in Areas of Flood Risk

12.72 Aberdeen City Council acknowledges SEPA's guidance for elevated buildings in areas of flood risk and understands that it applies only where such structures are used to enable development that would not otherwise be acceptable according to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 22. The next Local Development Plan can incorporate consideration of this guidance.

Position Statement: Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes (CD253)

12.73 Aberdeen City Council acknowledges SEPA's position relating to proposed development on land protected by a formal flood protection scheme (CD253). The document sets out how to take account of a flood protection scheme, with a summary of how to apply this in decision making. The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this guidance.

SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance (CD254)

12.74 This document (CD254) offers SEPA's guidance regarding flood risk and land use vulnerability. It outlines the categories of 'vulnerability' in relation to flooding and explains the relative vulnerability of different land uses. The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this guidance as it seeks to protect areas vulnerable to flood risk in Aberdeen.

SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities (CD255)

12.75 This document (CD255) applies to development at risk of flooding or in a flood risk area, as defined in NPF4. It provides standing advice across three categories of development: where there is no land raising or loss of floodplain capacity, development proposals at flood risk solely from surface water, and development proposals at flood risk solely from groundwater. The next Local Development Plan

will seek to incorporate consideration of this advice document to support areas in Aberdeen at risk of flooding.

SEPA Flood Risk Management Plans

12.76 This provides background information to the Flood Risk Management Strategy that each district is required to produce. Scotland has been separated into 14 Local Plan Districts, based on river catchments and coastal areas that cross administrative boundaries, Aberdeen City is captured within the North East Local Plan District. The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this as it seeks to support flood risk management in Aberdeen.

SEPA Flood Risk Management Plan North East Local Plan District (CD287)

12.77 The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (CD034) places a duty on responsible authorities to manage flood risk on a plan-led, risk based, sustainable way. North East Local Plan District covers Aberdeen (CD287). It sets out the long term ambition for flood risk management. The actions are described and prioritised in six year planning cycles. Aberdeenshire are the lead local authority for the are responsible for providing the flood risk management plan for Aberdeen.

12.78 There is river, surface water and coastal flood risk in the Local Plan District, with the main risk coming from river and surface water flooding. Significant flooding from the sea and from smaller watercourses and surface water has also occurred, most notably in Aberdeen, with many towns and villages also affected by flooding.

12.79 Potentially vulnerable areas (PVAs) were designated in 2018 based on the potential current or future risk from all sources of flooding. They provide more specific local actions to manage flood risk in target areas. There are four PVA's in Aberdeen: Aberdeen City – North, Aberdeen City – South, Peterculter, Cove and Nigg Bay.

12.80 Aberdeen City – North is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to the risk of flooding from surface water, small watercourses and the River Don to Bridge of Don, Dyce and Kingswells (north). There is a history of flooding to parts of the potentially vulnerable area from these sources, including recent flooding from surface water and small watercourses. Identified priority actions include flood studies, surface water management plans, flood scheme or works design, community engagement, flood scheme or works implementation, sewer flood risk assessment, shoreline management plan (coastal adaptive plan), flood defence maintenance.

12.81 Aberdeen City – South is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to the risk of river, coastal and surface water flooding to Aberdeen. Coastal flood risk is likely to increase due to sea level rise caused by climate change. Riverside Drive floods from the River Dee due to high tides. Surface water flooding affected Aberdeen on a number of occasions, causing roads to flood. The Merchant Quarter was particularly affected in the past. Identified priority actions include flood defence maintenance, flood scheme or works design, community engagement, flood

scheme or works implementation, flood study, flood warning maintenance, strategic mapping improvements, shoreline management plan (coastal adaptive plan), sewer flood risk assessment, surface water management plan.

12.82 Peterculter is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to river flooding from the Culter Burn, and surface water flooding. Recent flooding occurred due to river and surface water flooding. Identified priority actions include data collection, community flood alert, sewer flood risk assessment, surface water management plan, flood warning maintenance.

12.83 Cove and Nigg Bay is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to the risk of surface water flooding in the Cove Bay and Nigg Bay areas of Aberdeen. Identified priority actions include surface water management plan, and sewer flood risk assessment.

The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 – 2027 (CD036)

12.84 SEPA has prepared a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Scotland for 2021 to 2027 which sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment (CD036). This RBMP builds on previous RBMPs published in 2009 and 2015, setting revised objectives for the period from 2021 to the end of 2027 and providing a programme of actions for achieving the objectives. 2027 is a significant date in the RBMP process. Over the past two cycles SEPA have been working towards having all feasible and proportionate actions in place by 2027 to achieve good or better condition for Scotland's water environment. This evidence source is explored further in the Nature and Biodiversity topic paper.

12.85 The Council has not prepared its own River Basin Management Plan but is seeking to mitigate the impact on the water environment and help halt species decline by seeking to deliver high quality, multifunctional blue-green spaces in new developments and promoting natural solutions such as rain gardens to deal with surface water.

Surface Water Management Plan

12.86 Aberdeen City Council do not have a localised Surface Water Management Plan however, the organisation is working closely with Scottish Water and SEPA to provide a Strategic Growth Agreement (SGA). The SGA provides recommendations for sufficient natural remedies in terms of blue/green infrastructure to alleviate the pressures of surface water flooding in identified areas of risk. A final draft of the SGA is hoped to be published soon and so, whilst it cannot be considered within this evidence report, due consideration will be given to the SGA and all other relevant sources when drafting the next Local Development Plan.

12.87 Evidence gathered regarding the effects of climate change on coastal communities are explored in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning (CD037)

12.88 The guidance sets out required allowances for climate change that must be used for flood risk assessment (CD037). It allows planning authorities in Scotland to underpin their land use planning decisions with the best evidence available. Allowances are "*a prediction of anticipated change in peak river flow, peak rainfall intensity or sea level rise caused by future climate change. The type of allowance used will depend upon the type of flooding being considered and, for river (fluvial) flooding, the size of catchment or location."* These allowances are made in available in map form. See a screenshot from the map below (Figure 12.5):

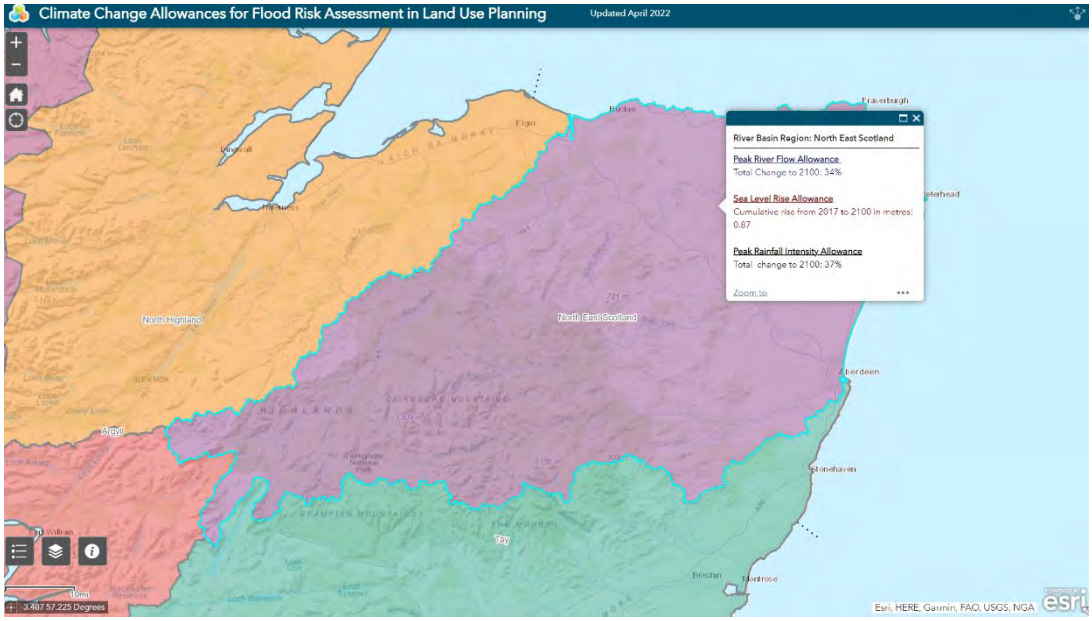


Figure 12.5: A snapshot taken from SEPA's Climate Change Allowances for Flood Rish Assessment in Land Use Planning maps, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the peak river flow allowance, sea level rise allowance and, peak rainfall intensity allowance within the North East River Basin Region. Found at: (Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning (arcgis.com))

SEPA Flood Maps

12.89 SEPA provide interactive maps which show the locations and different types of flooding in the Aberdeen area and the likelihood at which they are predicted to happen on an annual basis. These maps will be used as a screening tool to identify where a proposed development may be at risk of flooding as sites are considered at the next stage of local development plan production.

12.90 The map below (figure 12.6) is a screen shot from the SEPA flood map of Aberdeen. The dark tones of navy (river flooding), green (coastal flooding), and purple (surface water flooding), represent a high likelihood of flooding, predicted at 10% chance of flooding every year. SEPA have provided guidance on how to use the flood maps effectively to ensure new development is not located in an area of high risk of flooding (see Land use planning - Flood Maps | SEPA).

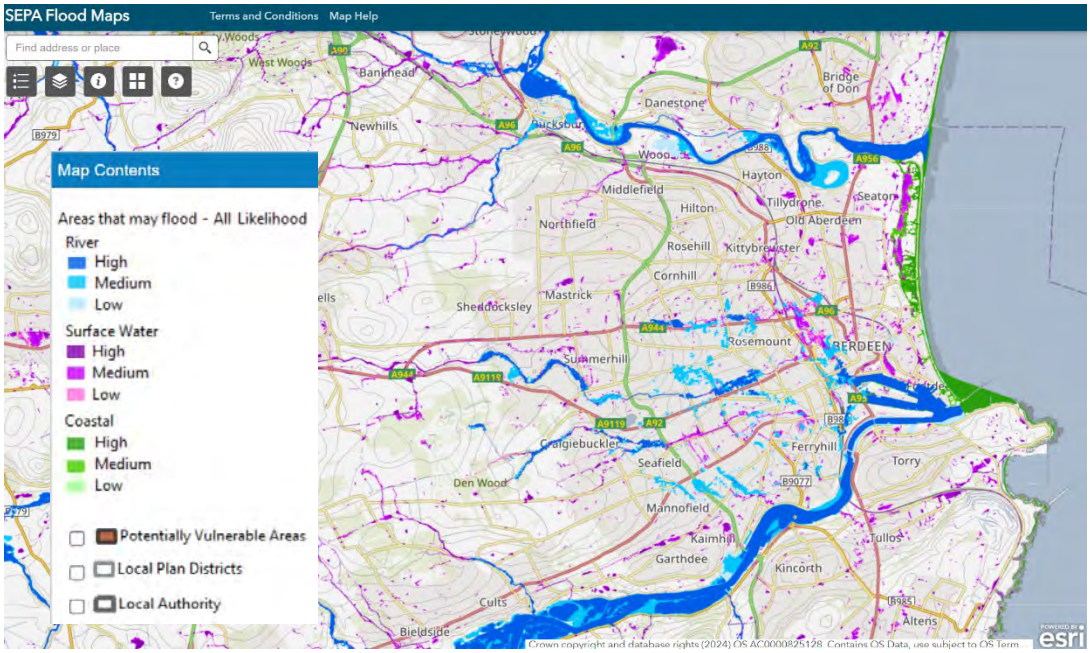


Figure 12.6: A snapshot taken from SEPA's flood maps only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that SEPA holds regarding the likelihood of flooding in Aberdeen on an annual basis.

12.91 The map includes data from a number of additional filters including: depth and velocity, groundwater, flood defences, impacts of flooding, natural flood management, and natural susceptibility to coastal erosion. These extra data sets are noted and will be considered in the drafting of the proposed Local Development Plan.

12.92 SEPA produce a wide range of maps and datasets around flooding. All maps are available at SEPA's online Environmental Data portal. Additionally, SEPA provide datasets detailing past flood events, with details including river flow data, water level data, and rain gauge data. These are available at SEPA's online Flooding portal.

SEPA Water Scarcity Report

12.93 SEPA's Water Scarcity Reports provide regular updates on the status of water resources in Scotland, particularly during periods of low rainfall. In this particular report dated 10th October 2024, Aberdeen is showing as 'Normal Conditions'. This report acknowledges the SEPA Water Scarcity Reports. This evidence source is explored further in the Nature and Biodiversity topic paper.

Mapping Flood Disadvantage Tool and Report (CD038)

12.94 The Mapping Flood Disadvantage in Scotland 2015: Main Report (CD038) identifies and maps the neighbourhoods in Scotland that are most disadvantaged by flooding. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social vulnerability to flooding and the resulting flood disadvantage across Scotland.

12.95 Key points from the report include:

- Social Vulnerability to Flooding: The report assesses social vulnerability to flooding by considering various factors such as personal, social, and environmental characteristics that influence how different communities are affected by flooding.
- Flood Disadvantage Mapping: The research maps the neighbourhoods most disadvantaged by flooding, highlighting areas where high social vulnerability coincides with high flood exposure.
- Policy Context: The report provides a policy context, discussing how the findings can inform flood risk management and social policy in Scotland.
- Case Studies: The report includes case studies from local authorities such as Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee City, and Scottish Borders, providing detailed insights into the specific challenges and responses in these areas.

12.96 Aberdeen specific conclusions include:

- In Aberdeen City surface water flooding is likely to affect the highest proportion of residential properties.
- The assessment of the levels of social vulnerability has revealed that just below 8% of all data zones are classified as having an extremely high or acute vulnerability to flooding. These are mainly located in large urban areas (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen).
- The highest number of data zones with acute and extreme flood disadvantage with respect to river flooding are found in Edinburgh, Stirling and Highland, followed by Falkirk and Aberdeen.
- Glasgow presents the highest concentration of surface water flood disadvantage, with one-third of the extremely disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This is followed by City of Edinburgh and Aberdeen City.

12.97 By leveraging the findings from the report, the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen can develop, where necessary, comprehensive and inclusive flood risk management policies that not only reduce the physical risk of flooding but also address the social vulnerabilities of its communities.

Water Environment Hub

12.98 The Water Environment Hub is an online data tool for exploring the current river basin management plan for Scotland. It provides information on the health, impacts, action to be taken, and planned future condition for Scotland's water environment, including rivers. The web page shows all of the information for river basin planning, including information on each waterbody, pressures, measures, and objectives set by SEPA.

12.99 Below is a snap shot taken from the Water Environment Hub for Aberdeen City (See Figure 12.7). The interactive maps identify the water bodies within the area and

their condition. Links to each water body provide further information as to their condition and actions/objectives to improve their quality.

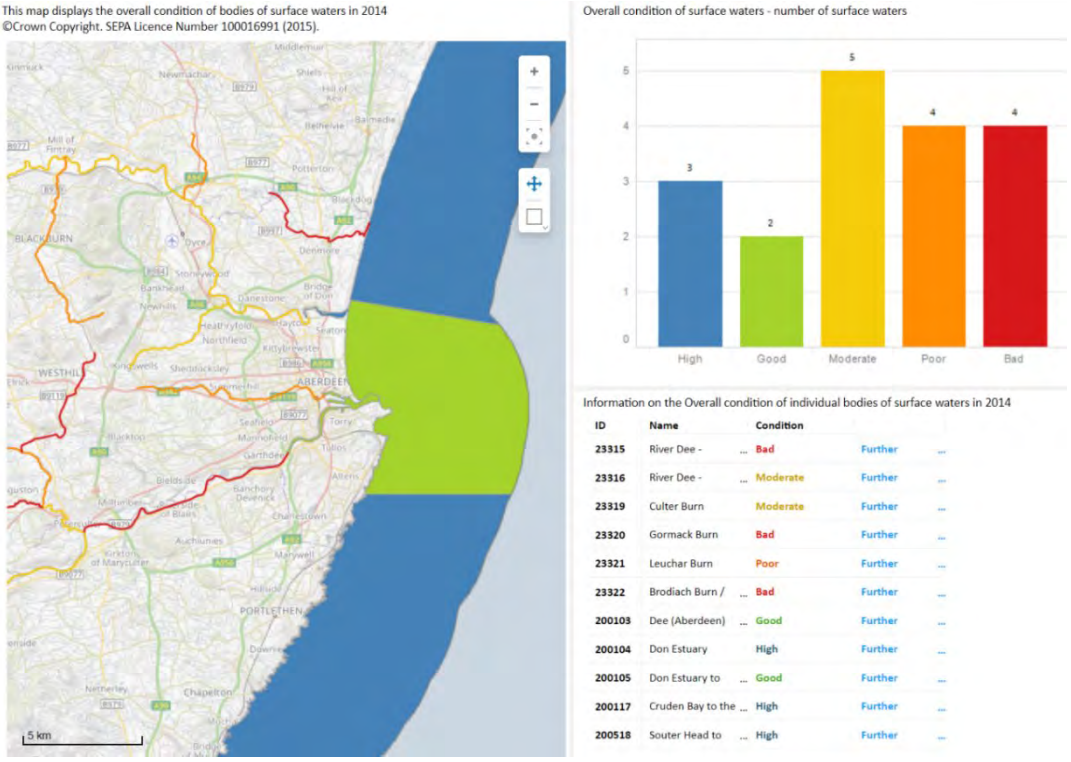


Figure 12.7: A snapshot taken from The Water Environment Hub, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that the Water Environment Hub holds regarding the condition of surface waters in Aberdeen.

12.100 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate this data as it supports management of water environments, recognising the importance of understanding the condition of specific water bodies in Aberdeen.

SEPA Recommended Riparian Corridor Layer for use in Land Use Planning (CD039)

12.101 Functioning riparian (river bank) corridors can help increase the resilience of a place. This document provides guidance on the recommended width of riparian corridors to protect water features and provide multiple benefits, such as contributing towards the resilience of a place to the impacts of climate change, and help address the nature crisis, providing environmental benefits, and a wide range of public services (CD039). These areas are also an important element of blue green infrastructure and nature networks. This document can be used to incorporate recommendations for riparian corridors in Aberdeen to inform the next Local Development Plan.

12.102 The document provides guidance on the recommended minimum corridor widths for each channel bank, provided in Table 12.3 below.

Channel width	Recommended corridor width on each channel bank
< 2 m	10 m
2 to 15 m	15 m
> 15 m	30 m

Table 12.3: Outlines SEPA's guidance on channel bank widths. Taken from SEPA's Recommended Riparian Corridor Layer for Land Use in Planning document (CD039).

12.103 A GIS layer has been created which indicates the minimum space needed along rivers (i.e. riparian corridor width scaled to river width) to give rivers space to adapt to changes in flood frequency and magnitude (see Figure 12.8). The GIS layer shows the minimum proposed riparian corridor widths scaled to the width of the watercourse, which if left undeveloped increase climate resilience by giving rivers space to adapt to changes in flood frequency and magnitude and provide a wide range of benefits.

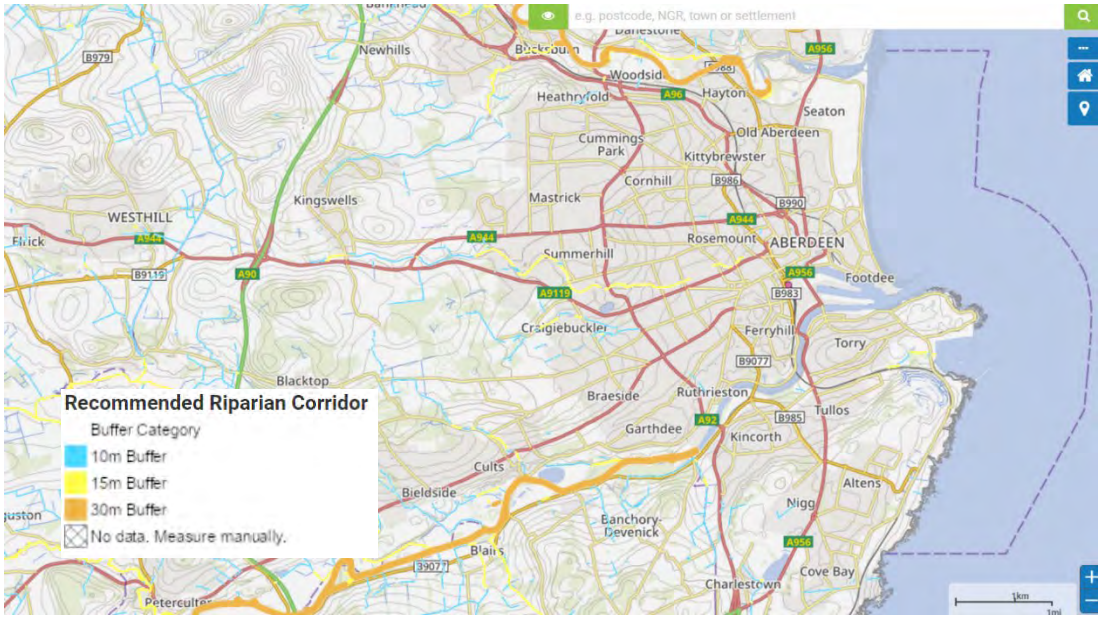


Figure 12.8: A snapshot taken from SEPA's 'Recommended Riparian Corridor' map, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that SEPA holds regarding the recommended riparian corridors in Aberdeen. Can be found at: Map | Scotland's environment web

12.104 The map below (Figure 12.9) provides an up-close view of the same map, showing channels in the Gardee and Kincorth areas of Aberdeen. Using the map legend above, it is clear to see where SEPA have recommended specific channel bank widths on specific channels.

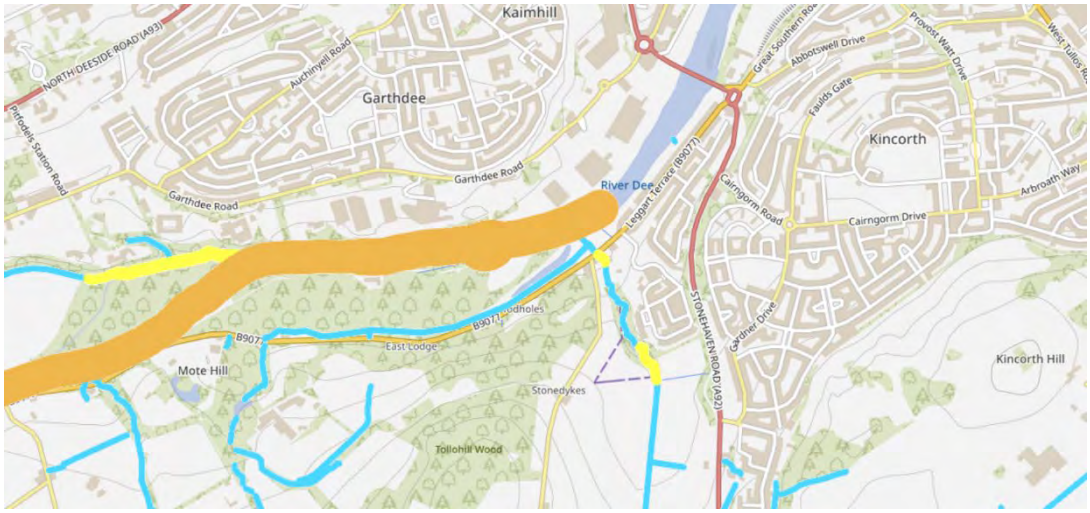


Figure 12.9: A snapshot taken from SEPA's 'Recommended Riparian Corridor' map, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that SEPA holds regarding the recommended riparian corridors in Aberdeen. Can be found at: Map | Scotland's environment web

12.105 Additionally, SEPA provides guidance on riparian vegetation planting opportunities. It offers further guidance for natural flood management along riverbanks (CD257).

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (CD312)

12.106 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is designed to inform the development planning process and to reduce flood risk by avoiding areas at significant risk of flooding (CD312). It is a strategic overview of flood risk to the development plan area and involves the collection, analysis and presentation of all existing and readily derivable information on flood risk sources. It is to be produced in consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) as well as other Council services.

12.107 The Council is responsible for producing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Aberdeen City Council produced a draft SFRA that has subsequently been amended to address a number of action points raised by SEPA following consultation. Flood defences and flood studies with Aberdeen City Council's boundary, have been mapped and are publicly accessible via Aberdeen City Council's Open Spatial Data. The SFRA will be updated with sites during the Development Plan adoption process.

12.108 Flooding incidents have been mapped but will not be made publicly available at this stage, as the records may allow individual addresses to be identified and therefore raise General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) concerns. The data is available internally to Council teams to support improved access and use.

12.109 Aberdeen City Council and SEPA are not aware of any other Scottish local authority that currently makes flooding incident records publicly available. SEPA have confirmed they are satisfied with the SFRA.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

12.110 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

12.111 In summary, initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group for the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper.

12.112 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- Nature Scot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- NESTRANS
- Aberdeen City Council (Climate and Environment, Climate and Sustainability, Flooding)

12.113 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or to suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

12.114 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

12.115 A full public and targeted 8-week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (Nature Scot, SEPA, Homes for Scotland), 2 from housing developers, (Bancon Homes and Mac Mic Group), and 4 members of the public. Of those listed, 4 stated that evidence was missed and 3 stated that they did not agree with the evidence. Following further discussion, it was confirmed that none of the respondents disputed the evidence presented.

12.116 The following expands upon responses received during engagement:

12.117 In their email of 13 June 2025, SEPA made a number of comments on the SFRA. The Council have amended the SFRA and have addressed these comments.

- SEPA also made recommendations to include mapping information in the SFRA. Further clarification was provided in an email of 20th June and at a meeting held the same day. The Council have agreed to update the SFRA by

the end of August, to include mapping information on flooding, watercourses and available flood studies and protection schemes. Potential gaps in the mapping information and the actions needed to overcome them are explained in the SFRA.

- SEPA seeks further text within the Implications section relating to the use of the River Basin Management Plan 3 and how it will influence the plan preparation process. We have included further text explaining that the River Basin Management Plan 3, and any related SEPA resources, will be taken into account as part of the site selection process.

12.118 In their email of 26 February 2026 SEPA confirmed they were satisfied with the SFRA.

12.119 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland stated that they agreed with the evidence presented in this Topic Paper (aside from one dispute set out in the Statement of Agreement/Dispute section below) and have provided further commentary;

- Homes for Scotland indicated that there are missing pieces of evidence for this Topic Paper. They recommended inclusion of the following; Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019, 'Is Scotland Climate Ready?' Climate Change Committee report, 'The Just Transition and Climate Adaptation' Climate Change Committee report, 'Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report: Summary for Scotland', 'SEPA Position Statement on Development Protected by Formal Flodd Protection Schemes', 'SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance', and 'SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities'. Each of these recommendations are welcome and have been included in the Topic Paper.
- Homes for Scotland recommend inclusion of the 'HM Government National Risk Register', this offers a high level overview of various risks for governing bodies to consider. This has not been included as the 'Third Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report', added to the Topic Paper, provides greater detail over the issues relevant to the Topic Paper. The 'Using Climate Scenarios to Support Today's Decision Making' was recommended for inclusion. This resource highlights a tool that may be beneficial for future climate scenario testing. The Council welcomes the suggestion, however it is not considered relevant to this Topic Paper and has not been included.
- The 'Flood Risk Management Strategy (Forth Estuary Local Plan District)' was recommended for inclusion. The suggestion is welcome, however, the relevant 'Local District Plan (North East)' is already captured within the Topic Paper. The 'Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning' was recommended, and is already included in the Topic Paper.
- The 'New Build Heat Standard' was recommended, and is already included within the 'Energy and Resources' Topic Paper. The 'Fourteenth Annual Report on the Operation of Section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) 2009' was recommended for inclusion, and has been included within the 'Energy and Resources' Topic Paper.

- Homes for Scotland recommended use of the ‘Homes for Scotland Site Assessment Methodology’ and ‘Homes for Scotland Deliverability Checklist’. However, the Council have selected the Key Agencies Joint Local Development Plan Site Assessment and the SEA Checklist which has been achieved through consensus. These can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Evidence Report.
- Homes for Scotland suggested that in areas where there are planning permissions granted and Flood Risk Assessments have been submitted, these Flood Risk Assessments should form part of the data sets. Although these planning permissions have been granted, it is not possible to guarantee their delivery and therefore, inclusion of this data is not considered relevant.

12.120 Homes for Scotland also provided further commentary, as noted below:

- They outlined the importance of protecting biodiversity and integrating sustainable biodiversity improvement measures into their developments. They detailed their use of permeable boundaries for wildlife movement to strengthen habitat connectivity. The Council welcomes these points and has no further comment.
- The presence of biodiversity on sites promoted for development should not preclude the site from being considered as suitable for being developed. They highlighted that biodiversity and nature networks can be incorporated into new development, creating quality places that provide assets for the local community. They highlighted need for balanced decision making and stated that all factors are to be considered when allocating sites for the next Plan. The Council welcomes this comment, however the site selection process considers a level of detail that is not anticipated for discussion at the Evidence Report stage of Plan preparation.
- They highlighted the importance of considering marketability and deliverability, when selecting sites for development. This ensures that housing is built where there is demand, helping to meet the Council’s housing requirements. The Council welcomes this comment, however the site selection process considers a level of detail that is not anticipated for discussion at the Evidence Report stage of Plan preparation.
- They emphasised the need to minimize the impact of development on organic soils and peat. They stated that future policies must recognise that there are tools available to minimise the impact of development on peat and high organic matter rich soils, such as use of a Construction Environment Management Plan. The Council notes this comment and suggests the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper be consulted, the ‘Summary of Implications’ section mentions efforts to protect disturbance to soils from development.
- Homes for Scotland members are committed to reducing climate change impacts by installing energy-efficient systems and promoting local living. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- Location of new development is important for supporting local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods. They proposed that the Council prepare a plan outlining where Aberdeen’s 20-minute neighbourhoods are currently located

to assist developers in identifying existing amenities or additional amenity need when responding to the call for sites. Where conflicts emerge with site assessment criteria, they suggested the Council should engage with the promoter to identify mitigation opportunities. Some sites will be unsuitable due to significant constraints. The Council acknowledges this comment, however further detail on local living can be found in the Place, and Sustainable Transport Topic Papers.

- Home building can positively influence local living factors, such as through providing full fibre connectivity to support working from home, and including active travel connections. The Council notes these points and has no further comments.
- There is a national housing emergency. In accordance with NPF4, climate change will be considered alongside other policies in determining applications or allocating sites. The Chief Planner letter (2024) notes the need for decision makers to weigh up all relevant policies in reaching a balanced decision. While discussion concerning this area of decision making is welcome, further detail regarding the Chief Planner letter (2024) is included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- Building Standards regulations are the appropriate means of driving sustainability factors for new developments. The Council welcomes this comment and further text has been added to the Energy and Resources Topic Paper to outline this.
- SEPA are working with Local Planning Authorities to look at compensatory storage to allow sites to be developed. They stated that Aberdeen City Council should partake in this strategic approach to identify opportunity for compensatory storage. They added that this is paramount for applying an Infrastructure First approach. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.
- Call for ideas housing proposals should be mapped and overlayed with flood extents to allow homebuilders to identify opportunity for flood mitigation through compensatory storage. This may be beneficial to sites where land that is not initially identified for development becomes developable if alternative land is used for sustainable flood management. Any maintenance and associated programming of flood storage, and associated planting, would be undertaken by a factor and agreed through planning conditions. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.
- The SEPA Flood Hazard Maps and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment help identify areas at risk of flooding. There may also be opportunity to incorporate mitigation or flood resilience into development proposals by using compensatory flood storage. Incorporating flood depth on public GIS mapping could help identify areas that might be suitable for housing subject to mitigation. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.
- Concerning the identified Potentially Vulnerable Areas to flooding in the Topic Paper, future policy should recognise that there are tools available that can mitigate existing and future flood risk. The Topic Paper should outline that

preparation of a Construction Environment Management Plan can assist in this. This can be used when allocating or consenting development, providing a degree of control, if the document is not implemented enforcement powers should be exercised. We welcome this comment and support such mitigation measures. Consideration of a Construction Environment Management Plan is available and at the discretion of the developer.

- Responding to the Scottish Government's 'Flood Resilience Strategy: consultation' Homes for Scotland noted that flood resilient solutions may not always be appropriate if the principles of the Scottish Government's Just Transition are applied. They query the flood resilient approach detailed in the consultation. The Council notes these points and has no further comments.
- Aberdeen City Council should encourage partnership between local landowners/managers, farmers, crofters, and housebuilders/developers where there can be improvements to a settlement's long-term flood resilience. Collaboration is key to delivering solutions to deliver new homes. The Council welcomes these points and has no further comments.

12.121 Mac Mic Group initially raised a dispute with the evidence used to prepare this topic paper. Since then, subsequent correspondence with the respondent (on 27 June 2025) has resolved the matter. The respondent no longer disputes the topic paper. They provided two additional pieces of evidence recommended for inclusion in the Topic Paper. Recommendation of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 is welcome and has been included. The recommendation of including the Chief Planner letter (2024), noting that all NPF4 policies must be read and applied as a whole before being weighted by the decision maker to reach a balanced planning judgement, was not included. While discussion concerning this area of decision making is welcome, inclusion of the Chief Planner letter (2024) was not considered necessary for the purposes of this Topic Paper. Discussion regarding the Chief Planner letter (2024) is included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.

12.122 Mac Mic Group also provided further commentary, as noted below:

- Mac Mic Group agreed that Aberdeen City should aim to create high quality, multifunctional blue-green spaces in new developments and promote natural solutions like rain gardens for surface water management, as reflected in the Topic Paper. The Council welcomes this and have no further comment.
- Mac Mic Group agreed that new housing developments can be sustainably built using durable, energy-efficient materials, renewable energy technologies, and sustainable urban drainage systems. The design of new homes should maximize energy efficiency and generation, and development layouts should be permeable and connected to existing areas and amenities. The Council welcomes this and has no further comment.
- Mac Mic Group stated that they disagreed with the notion that areas of significant flood risk should be entirely avoided for site allocations in the next Plan. They added that developers conduct due diligence, including technical assessments, to identify viable sites, which is sufficient for determining where sites can be delivered successfully. Additionally, they stated that local

authorities and developers must adapt and use innovative engineering to ensure future development does not increase risk of flooding. In line with NPF4 policy 22 part (e), Aberdeen City should promote innovative drainage and flood mitigation engineering. They echoed the Homes for Scotland response that encourages incorporation of mitigation measures such as compensatory flood storage to increase flood resilience. This could be enhanced using public facing GIS mapping to identify areas potentially available for housing, subject to mitigation. They added that they support the Homes for Scotland response to this Topic Paper. The Council welcomes this discussion however its application is not considered necessary at the evidence report stage of Plan preparation.

12.123 Nature Scot stated that they disagreed with the evidence presented, however, following further discussion they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence. Nature Scot indicated that this topic paper had missed one piece of evidence; the 'Dynamic Coast' database, however they stated that this has been referenced in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper. Therefore, it has not been included in this Topic Paper.

12.124 Nature Scot provided commentary around the issue of local living, as noted below:

- They highlighted that NPF4 promotes the principles of local living, and stated that this should influence the Spatial Strategy for the next Plan. They outlined the benefits of local living for decreasing reliance on cars and reducing emissions. They stated that to help minimise a development's lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, the development should only be planned where there are, or will be, easily accessible links to public transport and to active travel networks. While discussion around this issue is welcome, it is considered more relevant to other Topic Papers. Further, detail concerning local living opportunity, car usage, and active travel in Aberdeen is outlined in the Sustainable Transport and Place Topic Papers.

12.125 Bancon Homes stated that they disagreed with the evidence presented, however, following further discussion at a meeting held on 18th June they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence, and provided the following commentary;

- Bancon Homes indicated that there are missing pieces of evidence for this topic paper. They recommend inclusion of the 'SEPA Position Statement on Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes', 'SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance', and 'SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities'. These recommended sources are welcome and have been included in the Topic Paper.
- Additionally, they recommended inclusion of the 'Scottish Government Flood Resilience Strategy: Consultation', however an updated version of this is already in the Topic Paper.
- Concerning the Flooding section of the topic paper, Bancon Homes acknowledges the four 'Potentially Vulnerable Areas' identified in Aberdeen City but emphasises that this flood risk does not affect the entire area and

should not prevent new development, provided that a Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the site is not at risk. The Council welcomes this comment and notes that the site assessment process for the next Plan will clarify where Flood Risk Assessments are required for future development.

- Bancon Homes suggested that Aberdeen City Council, in collaboration with SEPA and landowners, should explore opportunities for compensatory flood storage as part of a strategic approach. This could allow development in areas initially deemed unsuitable due to flood risk. By overlaying housing proposals with flood extents, homebuilders could contribute to flood mitigation solutions. This approach could facilitate development in areas initially deemed unsuitable due to flood risk, by incorporating sustainable flood management. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.

12.126 Three individuals identified no missing pieces of evidence for inclusion in the Topic Paper. Three individuals agreed with the evidence presented. Among them, one individual stated that “Climate change is the biggest threat to our future”. In relation to the evidence presented, another individual stated “It is accurate”.

12.127 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Climate and Nature Crisis and Mitigation and Adaptation

12.128 The Proposed Plan should recognise its role in tackling the climate and nature crisis and consider how it can build resilience to current and future place-based climate risk in Aberdeen.

12.129 The Proposed Plan should consider the need for sustained reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions in Aberdeen. This will require a whole systems approach, with implications and influence across topic papers.

12.130 The Proposed Plan will need to consider a policy approach to implement National Planning Framework 4 and deliver carbon offsetting if required in Aberdeen.

12.131 The Proposed Plan should reflect the required spatial outcomes necessary to pursue Aberdeen’s commitment to reach net zero emissions and support the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap strategies.

12.132 The Proposed Plan should manage and mitigate wider impacts of climate change, including infrastructure risks, community resilience, air quality and food availability in Aberdeen.

12.133 The Proposed Plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to

improve equality and address the outcomes related to the LOIP, and climate and nature crisis.

Flood Risk and Water Management

12.134 The Proposed Plan should consider the impacts of climate change and flooding in the development of the spatial strategy to ensure long term climate adaptation and resilience is prioritised in Aberdeen.

12.135 The Proposed Plan should take into account the probability of flooding and must ensure that the necessary level of information is available as part of site assessments to ensure the avoidance of flood risk in Aberdeen.

12.136 The Proposed Plan should consider the outputs of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Aberdeen to inform the development planning process and reduce flood risk.

12.137 The Proposed Plan should consider SEPA resources such as the latest River Basin Management to inform the site selection process for Aberdeen.

Marmot Places

12.138 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. Table 12.4 below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 12.4 Marmot Principles

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

12.139 NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Mac Mic Group, and three members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented. Further, three members of the public indicated that no evidence sources had been missed.

12.140 SEPA, Nature Scot, and Bancon Homes confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

12.141 An individual respondent stated that “Climate change is the biggest threat to our future”. In relation to the evidence presented, another individual stated “It is accurate”.

Disputes with Stakeholders

12.142 Homes for Scotland have indicated that they dispute the use of the selected Key Agencies Joint Local Development Plan Site Assessment and the SEA Checklist outlined in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Evidence Report. They recommended use of the ‘Homes for Scotland Site Assessment Methodology’ and ‘Homes for Scotland Deliverability Checklist’. However, the Council deem the selected Site Assessment and SEA Checklist sufficient as these have been achieved through consensus across Key Agencies.

12.143 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic paper themselves.

Information Gaps

12.144 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

13. Topic Paper 6 – Nature and Biodiversity

Requirements addressed in this section:

13.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,

National Planning Framework 4

Biodiversity

13.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in line with the mitigation hierarchy. They should also promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by: facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity; restoring degraded habitats or creating new habitats; and incorporating measures to increase biodiversity, including populations of priority species.

Natural Places

13.3 LDPs will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes in their area.

Soils

13.4 LDPs should protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils, including land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use.

Forestry, Woodland & Trees

13.5 LDPs should identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks. The spatial strategy should identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodlands and trees in the area, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of a range of types to provide multiple benefits. This will be supported and informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

Links to Evidence

Biodiversity

- CD026 Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland
- CD286 Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030
- CD305 Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill (As Introduced)
- CD218 State of Nature Report 2023
- CD237 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBIP) 4 - year strategic plan 2022-2026
- CD217 Biodiversity Duty Report
- CD220 Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)
- CD258 Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note 3 – Wildlife Hazards Around Aerodromes

Biodiversity – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Scotland	15 July 2025
Scottish Biodiversity List	15 July 2025
Scotland's Environment Web	15 July 2025
Nature Networks Toolbox	03 January 2025
Biodiversity Records Data (NatureScot)	15 July 2025
Biological Recording in Scotland (BRISC)	15 July 2025
NESBReC	04 October 2024
NatureScot SiteLink	15 July 2025
Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels	08 May 2025
Important Invertebrate Areas (Buglife)	08 May 2025
Wetland Bird Survey (British Trust for Ornithology)	08 May 2025
Swift Mapper	08 May 2025
Species on the Edge	03 January 2025

Natural Places

- Dynamic Coast – Coastal Erosion in Scotland – (CD306 Research Summary and CD307 The National Overview)
- CD233 CREW - Assessing Climate Change Impacts on the Water Quality of Scottish Standing Waters

- CD173 Scotland's National Marine Plan – A Single Framework for Managing our Seas
- CD036 The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027
- CD227 The State of the East Grampian Coast
- CD221 The National Scenic Areas (Consequential Modifications) Order 2010
- CD222 The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000: National Parks
- CD136 Open Space Audit
- CD041 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report

Natural Place – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
Marine Protected Areas	05 January 2024
SEPA Water Scarcity Report	04 October 2024
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance: Ramsar Sites	04 January 2024
Wild Land Areas Map (NatureScot)	04 January 2024
Special Areas of Conservation	15 July 2025
Special Protection Areas	15 July 2025
Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI)	15 July 2025
Local Nature Reserves	15 July 2025
Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS)	7 August 2026
Aberdeen City Parks and Gardens	7 August 2026
Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 – Part 10 – Miscellaneous – Section 50	22 July 2025
Find a Country Park	25 July 2025
Regional Parks	25 July 2025

Soils

Soils – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
Land Capability for Agriculture in Scotland	17 November 2023
Peatland ACTION Project	04 October 2024
Carbon and Peatland Map 2016	04 October 2024
Scottish Bare Peat Viewer	04 October 2024
Scotland's Soils website	04 October 2024
Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutions (SEFARI) – Healthy Soils for a Green Recovery	04 October 2024
SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps	04 October 2024

Forestry, Woodland and Trees

- CD223 Scotland's Forestry Strategy
- CD228 Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal
- CD226 National Inventory of Woodland and Trees
- CD134 The Granite City Forest – Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-25

- CD224 Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment
- CD225 The Right Tree in the Right Place – Planning for Forestry and Woodlands
- CD136 Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report

Soils – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
Native Woodland Survey of Scotland	04 October 2024
Ancient Woodland Inventory	13 June 2025
Tree Preservation Orders	17 July 2025
Ancient Tree Inventory	13 June 2025
Scottish Forestry Open Data	25 October 2024
Biological and Environmental Evaluation Tools for Landscape Ecology (BEETLE)	14 January 2025

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

13.6 Biodiversity and the natural environment, including soils, forestry, woodland and trees are vital for ensuring a healthy planet, and helping Scotland to achieve its net zero targets. The protection, conservation, restoration and enhancement of natural places can play a critical role in flood control and drought resilience, as can the use of nature based solutions.

13.7 The preservation and enhancement of biodiversity opportunities will ensure that ecosystems are more diverse and species-rich, which will build resilience to changing climatic conditions. Additional benefits can include enhanced soil quality, natural control of agricultural pests (thereby benefiting agriculture), and higher quality landscapes that can also attract tourism to Aberdeen and drive a sustainable local economy. There are also public health benefits of access to high-quality natural open spaces and landscapes, which are addressed in more detail in the Health and Wellbeing Topic Paper.

13.8 In summary, the inter-relationship between the NPF4 policies identified above necessitates the holistic approach set out in this topic paper. There is an urgent need to address the twin crises of nature loss and climate change, and the restoration and enhancement of our natural habitats and landscapes will support delivery of the aims of NPF4.

13.9 The section is structured as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Natural Places
- Soils
- Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Biodiversity

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland (CD026)

13.10 This strategy outlines the ambition "for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045." It seeks to ensure that the natural environment, ecosystems and species will be diverse and thriving and resilient to climatic variations. Regenerated biodiversity will bolster the economy and support communities to thrive.

13.11 It is supplemented by six-year delivery plans (the first of which was published in tandem with the overall strategy on 27 November 2024). The LDP will aim to support the national ambitions outlined within this strategy and, in the process, deliver improvements to local biodiversity.

Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030 (CD286)

13.12 The Strategy includes 31 priority actions intended to stop and/or reverse biodiversity loss. These actions are part of an overarching series of outcomes that intend to protect nature on land and sea, protect and support the recovery of vulnerable species and habitats, attract investment in nature, and tackle indirect drivers of biodiversity loss (among others).

13.13 Also included within the Strategy is a commitment to protecting 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 as part of the 30 by 30 policy. Currently, 18.2% of Scotland's land and freshwater is afforded protection.

13.14 The LDP will seek to support actions identified within this delivery plan in order to combat biodiversity loss at a local level (thereby supporting the national effort).

Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill (CD305)

13.15 Published on 19 February 2025, the Bill consists of four main parts. These include:

- Part 1 – Targets for improving biodiversity
- Part 2 – Power to modify or restate Environmental Impact Assessment legislation and habitats regulations
- Part 3 – National Parks
- Part 4 – Deer Management

13.16 Parts 3 and 4 are likely to be less relevant to Aberdeen given the absence of any national parks, and the predominantly urban nature of the local authority boundary. Parts 1 and 2 will influence future biodiversity targets for inclusion within a subsequent Local Development Plan. However, depending on when new statutory targets are agreed upon it may be too late to account for in the Proposed Plan (due 2027), and instead be accounted for in the subsequent Local Development Plan.

State of Nature Report 2023 (CD218)

13.17 A headline report detailing the best estimate of the status of nature within Scotland, based on all current data. It measures species abundance, distribution and the extinction risk for native species and summarises the changes in each of these criteria.

13.18 As of the 2023 report:

- There is a recorded average decrease in species abundance (across 407 terrestrial and freshwater species) of 15% since 1994.
- There has been a 49% decline in the average abundance of Scottish seabirds since 1986.
- There has been an average 15% increase in the distribution of invertebrate species since 1970.
- Since 1970, there have been decreases in the distribution of flowering plants (by 47%), bryophytes (by 62%) and lichens (57%), this is compared to the 27% of flowering plants, 25% of bryophytes and 34% of lichens that have experienced increases in distribution.
- 11% of the 7,508 species in Scotland that have been assessed using the IUCN's Red List criteria are classified as being threatened with extinction from Great Britain.

13.19 The report speculates that the declines in biodiversity may be due to a warming climate, overgrazing and overfishing, as well as the intensification of agricultural and forestry land uses. Some species are increasing in number however, with a warming climate creating a wider range of habitat for some species.

13.20 There may be scope within Aberdeen to target particular species or habitats for protection that are (or have historically been) present within the Local Authority boundary. The presence of pine marten can deter grey squirrels, which could in turn assist populations of red squirrels. Northern brown argus and water voles are also species that Aberdeen potentially has the habitat to support.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Scotland

13.21 This forms part of Scotland's environment web network and hosts data on UK species and habitats collated from various sources. It can be used for carrying out detailed data analysis due to the specificity of some of the available data sets. Furthermore, it facilitates the interrogation of "species records, habitat, climate and soil information, geographical boundaries and to use extremely powerful mapping tools through a single portal." It can also be used as a resource to help inform on the distribution of particular species over an area.

13.22 In preparing the next Local Development Plan, such information can be used to make informed decisions on areas of land that may be in need of additional protection in future, due to the presence of particular species. This can also tie into

wider strategic considerations of how (and where) to establish more effective nature corridors that better support habitats and species.

Scottish Biodiversity List

13.23 This catalogues a list of the habitats, plants and species that are deemed to be of the greatest importance for future biological conservation efforts in Scotland. The list also includes broad categories of action which can be implemented or used to inform wider strategies to protect and preserve those species and/or habitats. Despite being a national list, the records included can be checked against records within Aberdeen in order to establish which habitats and species we have. Accordingly, the LDP can influence priorities for habitat improvement in order to sustain and support populations of these species going forward.

Scotland's Environment Web

13.24 The website hosts 229 mapping overlays that can be applied to an interactive map. The data hosted is shared by a variety of contributing partners such as Marine Scotland, NatureScot, SEPA and the Scottish Land Commission. These include, but are not limited to, overlays showing protected areas for drinking water, air quality monitoring sites, country parks, core paths, woodland inventories, wetland inventories, Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site can be used as a core resource with which to find data sources on a variety of ecological assets including a number of the ones discussed below. As such, it can be used to inform LDP decisions over the spatial strategy, decisions over future land allocations or designations, as well as identifying potential opportunities to enhance linkages between existing areas of woodland or green space.

North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBIP) 4- year strategic plan 2022-2026 (CD237)

13.25 This partnership between representatives of local authorities, statutory bodies, environmental charities, research institutes, landowners and environmental partnerships operates on the principle of delivering under three objectives:

- Delivery through collaboration
- Information exchange
- Awareness and positive action

13.26 Likewise, a number of strategic priorities have been agreed by the members - a number of these will be relevant to the development of the Local Development Plan.

13.27 These include, but are not limited to:

- Encourage and influence businesses, land managers and developers to go above and beyond the legal minimum to protect and promote biodiversity by proving evidence of its benefits.

- Map out future strategic priorities, focusing and prioritising our efforts to where we are most likely to have a meaningful impact.
- Continue to promote the value of biodiversity to placemaking.

Nature Networks Toolbox

13.28 This resource includes case studies, examples of best practice as well as guidance on the management of habitats and species. It also provides links to tools and data sources that can assist in formulating a nature network. It can be utilised as a consolidated hub of information for Aberdeen City Council (ACC) to inform future policy decisions on nature networks and woodland strategies. Please also see the Infrastructure and Communication Paper for more information on Nature Networks. A Natural Environment Strategy is currently being developed for Aberdeen (due to complete by March 2027), this will include information on nature networks.

Natural Environment Strategy

13.29 The Natural Environment Strategy will bring together the Forest and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Strategy, the Green Belt Review, Nature Networks, Nature Conservation Strategy, Food Growing Strategy, Water Environment, Core Path Plan Review and an Outdoor Access Strategy into one holistic document. Further topic areas may be added in future. This approach is being pursued due to the overlap between a number of the objectives and overarching policies and legislative requirements that exist across a number of these documents.

13.30 In collating these documents into a broader Natural Environment Strategy, the Council expects to better assess the broader implications of future Proposed Plans, policies, and planning decisions by using this document to assess the possible impacts on the natural environment collectively rather than in isolation. The Natural Environment Strategy will be produced in collaboration with the James Hutton Institute and will be completed by March 2027.

13.31 The production of a Forest and Woodland Strategy would necessitate consultation with Scottish Ministers, organisations which have an interest in forestry and woodlands, and any other persons the Local Authority deems appropriate (in order to satisfy the requirements of Section A159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997).

13.32 Consequently, the Council intends to consult with Scottish Ministers, NatureScot, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, SEPA, Scottish Water, and Historic Environment Scotland on the Natural Environment Strategy, along with other stakeholders. This would ensure that the legislative requirements of consultation for a Forest and Woodland Strategy are met, as well as ensuring that these organisations have the opportunity to input and influence the wider Natural Environment Strategy (NES), or simply comment specifically on the strategy that interests them under the NES umbrella.

Biodiversity Duty Report (CD216)

13.33 Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

13.34 Aberdeen City Council's Biodiversity Duty Report 2021-2023 outlines how the Council has fulfilled its biodiversity duty over the period 2021 to 2023. In relation to specific planning measures, the report highlights the current work streams that Aberdeen City Council are undertaking to protect and enhance biodiversity, tied to the extant Local Development Plan and its associated guidance.

Biodiversity Records Data

13.35 A list of national and local biodiversity data sources can be found via NatureScot's webpage on where to find data. The most relevant local data source for Aberdeen City is the North-East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC), and information can be supplemented with information found on Biological Recording in Scotland (BRISC). This also includes links to the Butterfly Conservation, British Dragonfly Society and the Bat Conservation Trust (among others). These data sources can be utilised to help identify the type of habitats present on specific areas of land, as well as recorded sightings of protected or vulnerable species within those areas. This information can potentially be used to identify target areas for intervention or improvement in habitat quantity and/or quality within the LDP in order to support populations of locally or nationally important species.

NESBReC – Species Distribution Maps

13.36 NESBReC can provide data at a regional level that would identify sightings of protected species, as well as general habitat classifications. Recognising the repeated and frequent presence of Protected Species could help inform future management strategies for those species and guide decisions on any future land allocation in the next Local Development Plan. Other local level information on particular species may be obtainable through BRISC (Biological Recording in Scotland).

NatureScot SiteLink

13.37 SiteLink provides data and information on Protected Areas throughout Scotland. Information on designations from local to national and international levels can be found, as well as detail on the boundaries, features and condition of those sites. This resource can be used to identify and recognise sites of local, regional or national significance that can be targeted for protection and/or future enhancements within the next Local Development Plan.

Natural Environment Report

13.38 The Natural Environment Report is to be an annual report produced by Aberdeen City Council that will essentially succeed the Biodiversity Duty Report. It is anticipated that it would be of similar value and function in informing future policy decisions. Please refer to the Biodiversity Duty Report for further information in this regard.

Green Space Network

13.39 The Green Space Network is a strategic network connecting various habitats and species, urban and rural green spaces to each other and the communities around them. It offers a wide range of social, health, economic and environmental benefits. Green Space Networks are identified within, and protected by, the Local Development Plan.

13.40 Aberdeen City's Green Space Network is comprised of a number of 'cores' which represent the largest areas of green space within the city. These are supplemented by 'links' which are generally corridors of green space that act as linkages to larger or more expansive areas of green space. 'Links' may be along streams, rivers and other waterbodies, follow tree belts or include paths and wildlife corridors that provide some form of habitat value. Finally, there are also 'stepping stones' which reflect more isolated pockets of green space. These would ideally link up to other green spaces as part of a wider network but may be fragmented due to topographical factors or intervening land uses. Despite this, they are recognised as still having a role to play in supporting habitats and species, and can contribute toward a Green Space Network.

Invasive Non-Native Species (CD220)

13.41 There are concentrated areas where Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) are prevalent in Aberdeen. These are primarily located along the banks of the River Dee and Don, as well as their tributaries. Other areas with concentrations of invasive weeds include Bucksburn, Newhills, Burn of Mundurno and Den Wood. As INNS are recognised as a top driver of biodiversity loss, control of their spread is essential as a means of preventing further loss of habitat.

13.42 The Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2023 includes reference to ongoing actions taken by the Council's Countryside Ranger Service to combat the spread of INNS. Data on the location and types of INNS enable the Council to take targeted action to address this, and the LDP can influence measures to control their spread.

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

13.43 A partnership project that seeks to monitor and preserve the red squirrel population in Scotland. The website includes an interactive map showing the plotted locations of all recorded sightings of red (and some grey) squirrels in Scotland within the current year.

13.44 This resource can be used to monitor the locations of sightings and infer where there may be established populations of red squirrels. This in turn aids the Local Authority in making more informed decisions on future actions relating to habitat enhancement, preservation or enlargement, e.g. through the next Local Development Plan.

Important Invertebrate Areas

13.45 Important Invertebrate Areas (IIAs) are home to nationally or internationally significant invertebrate populations and habitats. There is one IIA within Aberdeen: Dee IIA. The broad IIA catchment area appears to cover the majority of Aberdeen before extending south-west and west, roughly forming a corridor around the A90 and A93 heading towards Banchory.

13.46 In future this resource will allow us to view the species, habitats and threats within the Dee IIA, and enable the Council to make better informed judgements on future land allocations and designations within that area, for example through the next Local Development Plan. This can also aid in targeted support addressing habitat and biodiversity loss as well as building resilience to climate change.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) (British Trust for Ornithology)

13.47 WeBS monitors the populations and trends of the UK's internationally important non-breeding waterbirds. Once per month, wetland sites are counted for waterbirds including ducks, geese, swans, waders, rails, divers, grebes, cormorants and herons. Gulls and terns may also be included within counts in some areas. These records contribute towards an annual report which highlights trends, indices and headline figures. This data source can provide more specific data on waterbirds than may be available in other resources, and the annual update reports ensure that the data is contemporary. Such information can be invaluable in determining whether proposed developments would impact upon such populations of birds and help inform what measures can be taken by the Council to better understand and protect those habitats. From a local perspective, this resource can be used to provide information pertaining to potential development around Loirston Loch.

Swift Mapper

13.48 Swift Mapper is built upon a prior Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Swift Survey. It has been developed with the assistance of various partners (including RSPB, Action for Swifts, Swift Conservation, and others).

13.49 This is a conservation mapping tool that hosts records of swift sightings on an interactive map. The four types of records collected include the recorded sightings of occupied nests, previously occupied nests, nest boxes and screaming parties. This data can be used as a preliminary indication as to whether there are patterns in the sightings of swifts within an area and help inform future conservation efforts. The LDP would support biodiversity preservation and enhancement measures, and such data may be used to inform where targeted action is needed.

Species on the Edge

13.50 A programme involving NatureScot and seven other nature conservation charities that seeks to improve the fortunes of 37 priority species along Scotland's coast and islands. It has identified seven different landscape-scale projects for action. The East Scotland Coast area includes Aberdeen City's coastline, with a particular focus on supporting the following species:

- Arctic tern (Sterna paradisaea)
- Bordered brown lacewing (Megalomus hirtus)
- Common tern (Sterna hirundo)
- Little tern (Sternula albifrons)
- Northern brown argus (Aricia artaxerxes)
- Purple oxytropis (Oxytropis halleri)
- Small blue butterfly (Cupido minimus)

13.51 None of the proposed project sites are within the city boundary, although several approximate project locations are to be situated between Stonehaven and Marywell. There is potential for a more co-ordinated effort to protect these species and their associated habitats. To that end, Aberdeen City Council is currently in discussions with Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils to develop a Coastal B-Line for pollinators. The aim is to bolster and support populations of small blue and northern brown argus for the city, with northern brown argus populations already having been recorded along the coast at Cove.

13.52 The LDP can contribute to ongoing efforts to preserve these species by promoting the preservation of local biodiversity within Aberdeen and potentially identifying areas where enhancements can be made.

Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note 3 – Wildlife Hazards Around Aerodromes (CD258)

13.53 Produced by the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST), this document outlines how wildlife can impact on flight safety due to 'wildlife strikes'. This primarily relates to birds colliding with aircraft. The document advises on the types of development that can attract birds and therefore potentially pose a hazard to air traffic. The LDP will have cognisance of this document if proposals within the airport safeguarding zone come forward in future.

Natural Places

Dynamic Coast – Coastal Erosion in Scotland (CREW - Scotland's Centre for Expertise for Waters) (CD306 & CD307)

13.54 This report on coastal erosion in Scotland, updated in 2021, indicates that coastal erosion affects 46% of soft shorelines in Scotland. This is an increase of 8% since the prior 2017 report.

13.55 Aberdeen's entire eastern Local Authority boundary is coastal, therefore data on the management of coastal erosion is important for the future planning for how to combat the loss of coastline due to flooding events, storms or landslips. There are existing groynes along Aberdeen beach that partially combat the loss of material and provide some resilience, but the impact and adequacy of these measures would need to be monitored to inform future decision making on how to preserve the visual amenity and ecological value of the coastline in the long-term.

Assessing Climate Change Impacts on the Water Quality of Scottish Standing Waters (CREW – Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters) (CD233)

13.56 This report identifies the vulnerability of Scottish standing waters to the impacts of climate change, and how increases to water temperature and variations in nutrient concentrations could impact upon their future functionality and capacity to support biodiversity. Although the data gathered does not appear to include any lochs or lakes within the Aberdeen City boundary, it is still possible to extrapolate the findings to inform on future decisions on the management of bodies of standing water. The LDP can have cognisance of the issues impacting standing waters in Scotland and apply the lessons from elsewhere to help prevent deterioration of water quality in Aberdeen's waters.

Marine Protected Areas

13.57 Marine Protection Area designation types include Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs), Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) with marine components, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) with marine components, Nature Conservation MPAs and national MPAs in Scotland.

13.58 Aberdeen's coastline includes the southern portion of the Special Protection Area for Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch. The northern, and significantly larger, portion of the designation falls within Aberdeenshire Council's administrative area. The area is primarily designated due to its importance in the support of breeding populations of birds, in particular waterfowl.

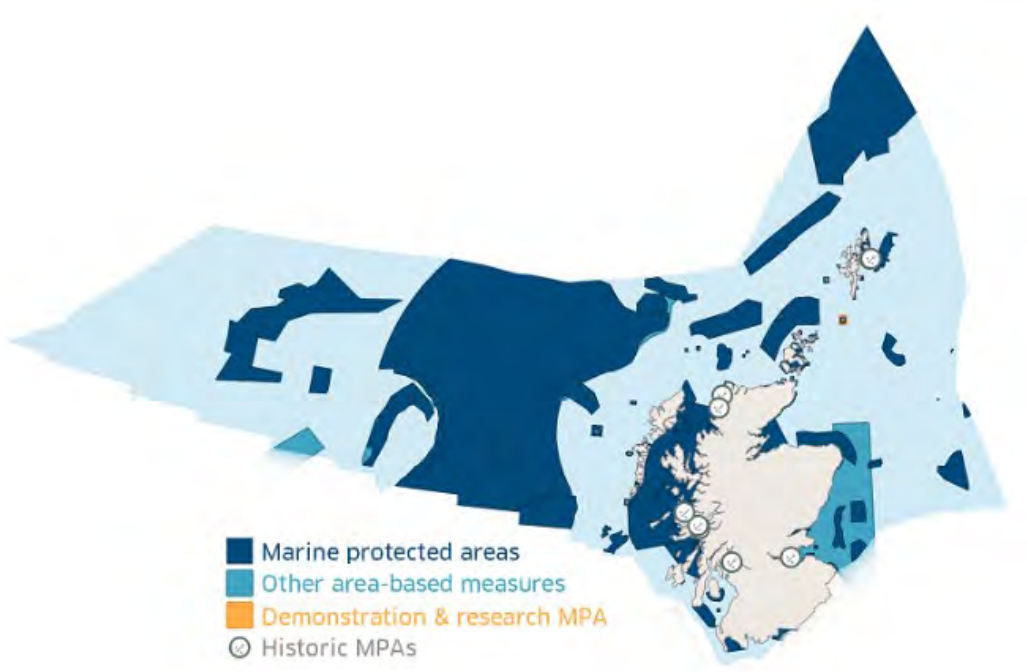


Figure 13.1: The Scottish Government map below shows the location of Scotland's Marine Protected Areas network

13.59 The nearest other SPA to the City boundary is that of Fowlsheugh near Stonehaven. Although outwith the City boundary, it is not implausible that select future development within the city could impact upon an area designated due to its importance for a number of bird species congregating there through breeding season. The LDP will therefore have cognisance of the proximity to neighbouring SPA's when making any allocations or designations.

River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 (CD036)

13.60 The river basin management plan for Scotland can support decision making on Natural Places by offering data on the pressures impacting water quality within Aberdeen's water courses. It seeks to promote the enhancement of water courses, remove man-made barriers to fish migration and improve the ecology within the rivers.

13.61 The Den Burn and River Don have impacted physical condition and water quality, and the Bucks Burn similarly has impacted water quality primarily through rural diffuse pollution. Both the River Don and Den Burn are identified as poor for fish barriers. There is currently a project to restore 2.3km of the Den Burn and re-meander an open section within the city. The project aims to improve biodiversity, connect people to nature and promote active travel. The LDP would seek to

encourage proposals that aim to restore and enhance Aberdeen's watercourses and improve their ecological value.

The State of the East Grampian Coast (CD227)

13.62 This report compiles and assesses a wide range of social, economic, and environmental data related to the East Grampian coast (extending from Kinnaird Head in Fraserburgh, to the mouth of the River Esk by St Cyrus). It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of the coastline, identify trends, and highlight areas requiring improvement, and compare these (where possible) to the Scottish average. It serves as a baseline for future decision-making and coastal management, offering recommendations and action points to address identified issues. It also aims to inform stakeholders, guide the work of the East Grampian Coastal Partnership, and ensure the sustainable use and preservation of the coastal environment for future generations. The State of the Coast (SOTC) is working towards updating this information at present. Consequently, any future publications with updated data can be used to better inform strategies for the protection of particular species, habitats and/or coastal features, e.g. through the next Local Development Plan.

SEPA Water Scarcity Report

13.63 This data source can be used to monitor areas of water scarcity within Scotland at fairly regular intervals. Times of moderate and significant scarcity (if regular) would be a cause for concern and could indicate that future development pressure would present a threat to existing ecosystems. Water abstraction can be restricted in such circumstances which can impact upon irrigation schemes and fish farming operations.

13.64 The Don and Dee rivers are the two most substantive rivers running through Aberdeen City, which also extend through neighbouring Local Authority boundaries. Consequently, any scarcity experienced by Aberdeenshire (for example) may have an indirect impact on Aberdeen City as a result. The Autumn 2024 Scarcity Report notes Scotland has seen drier than normal conditions this autumn which has resulted in low river levels. Water storage in both lochs and groundwater is generally normal for this time of year, however, the dry autumn has resulted in some locations being low or very low.

13.65 Further information on Water Scarcity can also be found within the Blue Green Infrastructure section of the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper.

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance: Ramsar sites

13.66 Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention to promote their conservation and sustainable use. There are no RAMSAR sites in Aberdeen.

The National Scenic Areas (Consequential Modifications) Order Designation (CD221)

13.67 National Scenic Areas (NSAs) are areas that have been identified as having outstanding scenic value in a national context, and as such require special protection measures through the planning system. There are no NSAs in Aberdeen.

NatureScot Wild Land Areas map

13.68 Wild land areas are the most extensive areas of high wildness. They are identified as nationally important, but are not a statutory designation. An interactive map showing the 42 wild land areas within Scotland, following a NatureScot survey in 2014. There are no wild areas in Aberdeen.

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000: National Parks (CD222)

13.69 These are executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) established under the provisions of the above act. Scotland currently has two national parks: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, and Cairngorms National Park. On 29 May 2025, the Scottish Government opted not to proceed with the designation of a new national park that was proposed in Galloway.

13.70 There are unlikely to be any changes to National Parks, or designations of new National Parks, that will directly impact upon Aberdeen City due to its geographic distance from any of the respective park boundaries.

Special Areas of Conservation

13.71 The only Special Area of Conservation (SAC) site within Aberdeen City's boundary is the River Dee, which terminates at the river mouth on the east coast of Aberdeen into the North Sea. This SAC is protected due to its role in supporting populations of Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Pearl Mussels and Otters.

13.72 However, a number of other sites within Aberdeenshire have the potential to be impacted by development within the city. The nearest of these sites include Garron Point (north of Stonehaven), Red Moss of Netherley, and Sands of Forvie. The LDP will ensure that the River Dee SAC is appropriately identified and seek to ensure that developments within or adjacent SAC's will not have a detrimental impact on them.

Special Protection Areas

13.73 There is one Special Protection Area (SPA) within the Aberdeen City Boundary. The Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA extends down the east coast of Aberdeen as far at Footdee, and nearly as far north as Cruden Bay (within Aberdeenshire). The SPA has a site area of 7062.03ha, with the majority of that site

area located within Aberdeenshire. It also overlaps with another SPA for Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast, which continues north-east, almost as far as Peterhead.

13.74 The nearest other Special Protection Areas to Aberdeen are the Loch of Skene (a 121.76ha site to the west of Westhill), and Fowlsheugh (a 1303.34ha site to the south of Stonehaven). Each of these sites is located entirely within the neighbouring Aberdeenshire Council local authority boundary. The LDP will seek to preserve its section of the Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA. This will involve communication with neighbouring Aberdeenshire Council on any actions of proposals that could potentially impact on this.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

13.75 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are areas of land and water that are deemed to be the best examples of natural heritage resulting from a combination of their flora, fauna, geology, geomorphology or any outstanding examples of these criteria individually. Aberdeen's four SSSI's are displayed below (north and south).



Figures 13.2 & 13.3: These show the northern and southern boundaries of Aberdeen City Council respectively, (marked by the red line), with SSSIs shown in the green hatched areas.

13.76 The four SSSIs within Aberdeen City are:

- Corby, Lily and Bishops Lochs
- Cove Bay
- Nigg Bay
- Scotstown Moor

13.77 The LDP will seek to ensure that these sites are appropriately protected and, where applicable, enhanced in order to preserve their status.

Local Nature Reserves

13.78 Aberdeen has four local nature reserves. These include:

- Den of Maidencraig
- Donmouth
- Kincorth Hill
- Scotstown Moor

13.79 These are shown by the areas outlined in dark red below, with the lighter red line showing the extent of Aberdeen City's administrative boundary.



Figure 13.4: This map shows the location of all four of Aberdeen's Local Nature Reserves outlined in dark red, with the city boundary shown in a lighter shade of red

Local Nature Conservation Sites

13.80 There are also a further 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) within Aberdeen City. A review of these sites will be underway in 2025 which will include the prospective removal of Old Manse Wood. Consideration will be given to the addition of new LNCSs in 2026.

13.81 These sites are identified as having local importance for their biodiversity and geodiversity, with the designation of LNCS providing a means of safeguarding them. Among the 45 sites within Aberdeen City are ten that cross boundaries into the neighbouring Local Authority (Aberdeenshire Council). These are:

- Site no.4 – Balgownie/Blackdog Links

- Site no.8 – River Dee Corridor
- Site no.9 – River Don Corridor
- Site no.14 – Corby Loch
- Site no.18 – Den of Leggart
- Site no.57 – Culter Burn
- Site no.61 – Kinaldie Den
- Site no.61 – Culter Compensation Dam
- Site no.65 – Leuchar Moss
- Site no.67 – Aberdeen – Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line

13.82 The LDP will promote the protection and enhancement of LNCS' as well as give consideration on how these can contribute towards a larger interconnected network of quality habitats.



Figure 13.5: Map showing the locations of the Local Nature Conservation Sites within Aberdeen (marked by the green-coloured polygons).

Country and Regional Parks

13.83 Regional Parks are designated by Local Authorities, with support from Nature Scot using Section 48A of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967. Such designations enable the coordinated management of recreation and other land uses such as farming and forestry. Regional parks often include landscapes of regional

importance. They may also provide important havens for wildlife. Aberdeen City has no regional parks.

Parks and Gardens

13.84 Aberdeen has 14 public parks and gardens within the Local Authority area. It also has numerous nature reserves, trails and 3000 acres of publicly accessible woodland. A total of 8 locations within Aberdeen also hold Green Flag Awards.

13.85 While the parks provide relaxation, leisure and play opportunities, they also provide areas of greenspace and habitat potential within urban spaces and can support various types of insects, small mammals and birds. These spaces contribute towards the wider Green Space Network, and provide more expansive spaces between linkages such as hedgerows, tree belts and other narrow wildlife corridors.

Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report (CD136)

13.86 The Aberdeen Open Space Audit is used to assist with protecting and enhancing green spaces through the planning process and by supporting blue and green infrastructure policies. The audit provides key information on the types, quality and accessibility of open and green spaces in Aberdeen.

13.87 This resource can be used to help inform future decisions on the formation of nature networks by providing a tool that can be used to view the distribution and pattern of types of green space throughout Aberdeen City. Combined with the use of other mapping overlays, it can be used to ascertain the quantity, accessibility, and quality of provision of green spaces across the city or at an electoral ward level.

13.88 The Audit also includes biodiversity and habitat connectivity scores at site and ward level. The data could be used to identify corridors of greenspace and potentially identify locations where gaps could be bridged in future to create more effective nature corridors.

13.89 The Audit Public Survey also highlighted that 82% of respondents said they would like to see more green spaces managed in a more natural way for the benefit of wildlife and nature in Aberdeen. Respondents also highlighted the critical role that green spaces play in promoting overall health and well-being, with physical exercise or health reasons, to be in nature and to socialise given as the top three reasons why people use open spaces

13.90 The assessments undertaken as part of the audit also give an indication as to the quality of available open space which could influence future decisions on what and where future enhancements to existing spaces are directed, as well as any areas of land that could be protected or reserved going forward. Please see the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper for more information.

Place Standard Assessments

13.91 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with "all" noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

13.92 The Natural Space theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4.71 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below. Text in brackets, e.g. North, Central, All etc, refers to Locality Plan areas.

Place Standard Theme	**"Good" now**	**"Improve" for the future**
Natural Spaces	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. These generally include parks, the beach and riverside walks. (All)	• Improvements to the maintenance of green and blue spaces (All) • Increasing cleanliness – more bins and be strict on irresponsible dog owners (All) • Better accessibility to and increasing number of green spaces available (South and Central) • More seating (North) • More public convenience (North) • More wild flowers, more food growing and allotments (Central)

Table 13.1: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023. (CD041)

13.93 While the majority of these comments resonate more clearly with the topic of Play, Recreation and Sport (included within the Wellbeing of Community Topic Paper), improvements to the maintenance of green and blue spaces, improving accessibility

to such spaces and increasing the quantity of wild flowers are targets that directly relate to this Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

13.94 The children and young people results noted: 60% felt they were okay, 14.3% felt they were not good, and 25.7% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Natural Space	Parks	38.7%	Better parks	44.3%
	Trees	34%	Welcome animals	34%
	Woods	32.1%	More trees	24.5%

Table 13.2: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023 (CD041)

13.95 The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

Soils

Prime Agricultural Land

13.96 Land capability for agriculture provides information on the types of crops that may be grown in different areas dependent on environmental and soil characteristics. Soil classes range from Class 1 (land capable of producing a wide range of crops) to Class 7 (land of very little agricultural value). Land within Class 3 is subdivided to provide further information on potential yields; Classes 4 and 5 are further divided to provide information on grasslands; Class 6 is divided on the quality of the natural vegetation for grazing. Four of the classes have sub-divisions within them however, Class 1 land is recognised as having the highest potential flexibility of use, with Class 7 the poorest flexibility. Prime Agricultural Land is defined as being Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3.1 land.

13.97 As a primarily urban Local Authority, Aberdeen has comparatively little Prime Agricultural Land. Notwithstanding this, there is Class 3.1 land to the east and south-east of Blackburn, around Inchgarth Reservoir, and along part of the north bank of the River Dee in the following locations:

- South-East of Milltimber
- South of Murtle Estate
- Bieldside
- Cults

13.98 The local development plan will seek to protect known areas of undeveloped and unallocated Prime Agricultural Land in order to preserve a limited ecological resource. Proposals to develop other areas of Prime Agricultural Land would be considered against the criteria outlined within Policy 5 Soils of the NPF4.

Peatland and Carbon-rich soils

13.99 Peatland Action is a national programme undertaken by NatureScot and funded by the Scottish Government that supports peatland restoration activities across Scotland. It offers funding for restoration activities that may include installation of peat dams or peat hag re-vegetating (among other techniques) that can stabilise eroded peat and increase water levels.

13.100 The restoration of peatland can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, due to peatland's capacity to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

13.101 The Carbon and Peatland map 2016 can be used to identify locations of carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. Classes 1 and 2 are identified as being a nationally important resource and areas that are likely to be of high conservation value.

13.102 Within Aberdeen, small areas of Class 1 land can be found on land adjacent to Gough Burn (north-west of Kepplestone) and at Leuchar Moss (south-east of Garlogie). There is no Class 2 within the city boundary. There is only one recorded location of Class 3 land (referring to Leached Soils), which is of poorer quality than Class 1 and 2 land, and is largely covered by the southern edge of the Prime Four Business Park at Kingswells.

13.103 There are multiple areas of Class 5 (Organic Soils) within Aberdeen located at Grandhome Moss, land at Burn of Mundurno, Lily Loch, Corby Loch, South Mains of Charleston, and land to the South-East of Lochside Academy. The LDP will have cognisance of these locations when considering bid sites, land allocations or potential land designations.

Scottish Bare Peat Viewer

13.104 This map shows larger extents of bare peat as classified from Sentinel 2 imagery obtained in Summer 2018. There is only one pixel (covering an area of 10m x 10m) within Aberdeen City Council's boundary. This is located within a field to the south of Newmill Hill Forest and 1.5km south-west of Peterculter. The LDP will have cognisance of any identified areas of Bare Peat that are identified with this resource in future and seek to protect any areas of a meaningful scale that could represent an ecological resource.

Scotland's Soils website

13.105 The mapping portal includes soil maps, capability maps, thematic maps, point data and risk maps. Some of these data sets can be viewed elsewhere (such as the land capability for agriculture), although the risk maps are particularly relevant for the identification of risk profiles for areas of soil erosion and compaction.

13.106 The subsoil compaction risk map outlines the vulnerability of subsoils to be compacted by traffic. As most of Aberdeen is an urban developed area, much of the city is excluded due to the focus of the mapping on Scotland's cultivated agricultural land area. Almost all of the area within the City boundary that has data is either classified as extremely or very vulnerable.

13.107 The topsoil compaction risk map indicates the risk of topsoil being compacted due to the passage of machinery (primarily on cultivated land). The risk profile of low/medium/high is based on the drainage class of the soil and its texture. The LDP can utilise these maps to inform future decisions over which areas or sites may require mitigation as part of any potential development. They could also be used to inform decisions on where future interventions to combat soil erosion should be targeted.

Soil Compaction/Sealing

13.108 The Topsoil compaction risk map seems to show that the areas of highest risk are located primarily along the coastline, and south-west of the city of Aberdeen. Most of the surrounding land appears to be at low or moderate risk.

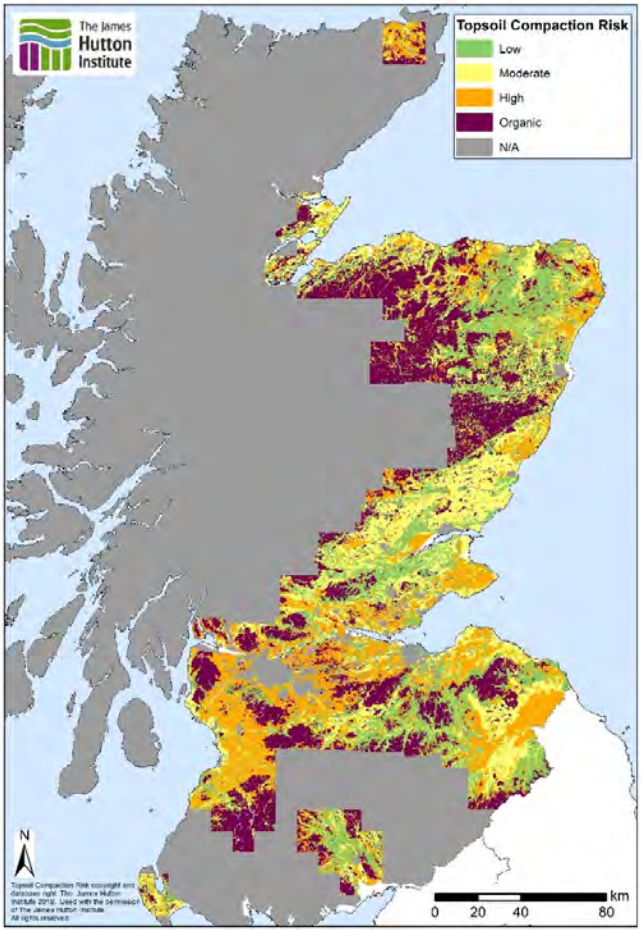


Figure 13.6: Map from the James Hutton Institute showing the topsoil compaction risk of soils in Scotland

13.109 The risk of subsoil compaction is considerably greater however, with much of the surrounding area of Aberdeen City identified as being “extremely vulnerable” to subsoil compaction.

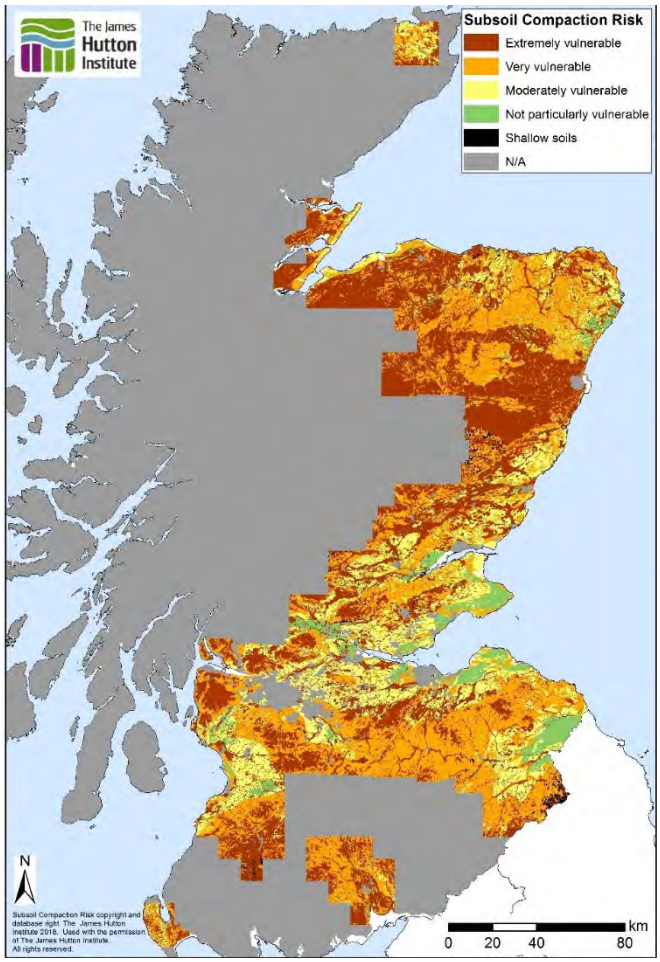


Figure 13.7: Map from the James Hutton Institute shows the Subsoil Compaction Risk of soils within Scotland.

13.110 The map on soil erosion risk indicates the risk of bare soil, with an organic surface layer, being eroded under sustained periods of precipitation. As is the case with the other map layers, the majority of the city does not feature data due to the urban environment, however, the majority of land within the remainder of the City administrative boundary is at medium risk, with a notable area of low risk along the northern half of the City’s coastline. The LDP can utilise these maps to inform future decisions over which areas or sites may require mitigation as part of any potential development. They could also be used to inform decisions on where future interventions to combat soil erosion should be targeted.

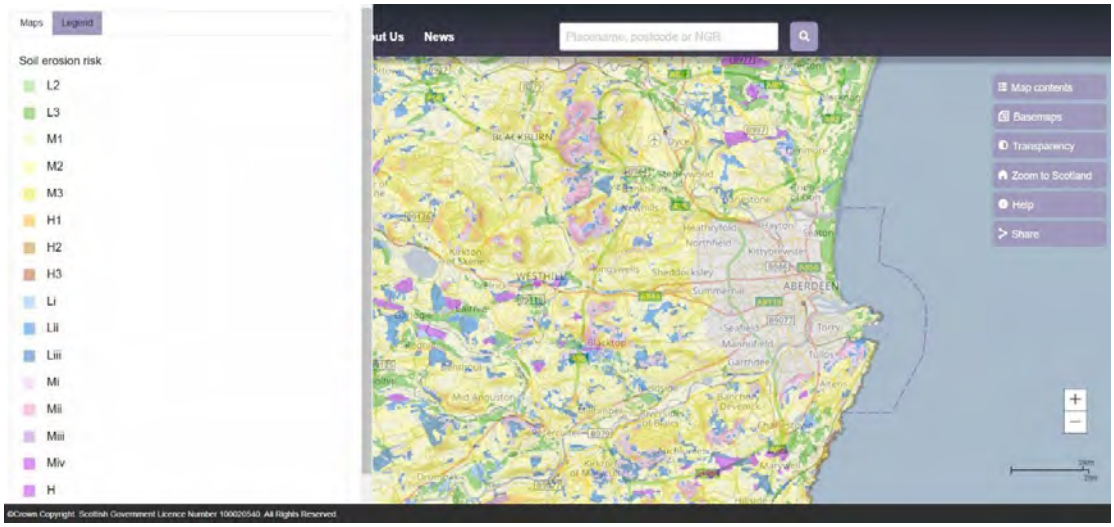


Figure 13.8: Scotland's Soils mapping portal, with the soil erosion risk categories shown in the legend on the left-hand side.

SEFARI – Healthy Soils for a Green Recovery

13.111 This research project seeks to obtain further information and insight on Scottish soils in order to better understand their ecological benefits. This in turn helps to inform work towards formulating strategies to mitigate degradation of the soils, prevent the loss of soils that are ecological assets, and assist in the enhancement of soil health. The project is undertaken in collaboration with the project partners: James Hutton Institute (JHI) and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). This project could inform the LDP's approach to tackling soil erosion, soil compaction, and help reinforce its messaging over the importance of healthy soils.

SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps

13.112 These maps are used to gauge the vulnerability of the land to surface, coastal or pluvial flooding events. While these would primarily be used to inform of where not to develop land through the Local Development Plan (due to the increased risk profile within certain areas of the city), it can also be used to identify where there is capacity for controlled flooding as part of mitigation and resilience measures. Understanding the potential areas most likely to be impacted by flood events will also assist wider strategic efforts to restore degraded habitats that may partially contribute to flooding events. These maps will also inform the production of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Scotland's Forestry Strategy (CD223)

13.113 In 2070, Scotland will have more forests and woodlands, sustainably managed and better integrated with other land uses. These will provide a more resilient, adaptable

resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities.

13.114 Objectives:

- Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a healthy and high quality environment
- Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances

13.115 Priorities:

- Ensuring forests and woodlands are sustainably managed
- Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land-use objectives
- Improving efficiency and productivity, and developing markets
- Increasing the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands
- Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands
- Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

13.116 The LDP will seek to preserve and enhance existing woodland and promote new planting. It will echo the intending objectives of the national forestry strategy in its approach.

Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal (CD228)

13.117 Used to guide policy decisions when considering the removal of woodland in Scotland, it emphasises a strong presumption against woodland removal, and identifies that woodland loss should "be allowed only where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits." It provides guidance on mitigation measures, in instances where woodland is to be removed as well as identifying criteria to be used in the assessment of the acceptability of woodland removal. Future Council Local Development Plan policy on forest and woodlands would align closely with the approaches outlined within this document.

National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (CD226)

13.118 This Forestry Commission Report published in 2003 is comprised of two surveys: The Main Woodland Survey (MWS) and the Survey of Small Woodland and Trees (SSWT). While there are more contemporary data sources, it is still useful as a means of tracking patterns of change in woodland cover, woodland type, principal species and forest ownership in the decades since the report was published. It also has value as a means of tracking the progress in the reinstatement of native species within Scottish woodlands as opposed to faster growing and commercially

preferred species such as Sitka Spruce. This can be used to aid with monitoring changes of woodland cover over a longer timescale and help inform the LDP's future targets of woodland enhancement or creation projects.

Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and Ancient Woodland Inventory

13.119 An inventory of the location, type, condition, and extent of native woodlands in Scotland that was launched in 2014. 22.5% of woodlands were surveyed (or 4% of Scottish land area). It identified that the main threats to the condition of native woodland is excessive herbivore impact (such as deer), as well as the competition from non-native shrub and tree species.

13.120 The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland has a data explorer which allows users to examine:

- Woodland type (native/nearly-native/PAWS (plantations on ancient woodland sites*)/Open land habitat)
  *"they are ancient semi-natural woodlands on which the original, "natural" woodland was cleared, and replaced by a plantation of either native or exotic species." (Forest Research)
- Species structures (identifies specific species found within that woodland as well as their state of maturity and their approximate stocking density)
- Habitat components (colour codes woodlands by dominant woodland composition, while showing percentage breakdown of that composition – e.g. pinewood/birchwood/wetland/blackthorn scrub/non-native/clear fell etc.)
- Canopy structures (outlines in percentage the composition of the canopy – e.g. mature/pole immature/shrub/regeneration etc.)
- Herbivore impact (identifies source of herbivore impact – e.g. deer/hare/rabbit/livestock etc).
- Invasive species (identifies invasive species within the woodland and approximate densities as a percentage of the woodland)
- Other traits (may include things like diseases/dumping/fire damage/windthrow etc.)

13.121 The data can help inform future targeted woodland enhancement, expansion or creation as part of the LDP.

Ancient Woodland

13.122 There are 109 records on the Ancient Woodland Inventory within Aberdeen.

13.123 Aberdeen has 3 recorded sites of Class 2a woodland. This is defined as woodland that is semi-natural woodland which was recorded on maps in 1860, and has been continuously wooded up to the present day. It has no Class 1a sites (which are distinct from 2a sites in appearing in maps from 1750).

13.124 The vast majority of recorded sites are identified as Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO). 12 sites are identified as plantation from maps of 1750 (and therefore being Class 1b sites), and a further 82 sites appear on the 1860 maps (resulting in Class 2b categorisation).

13.125 There are 8 Class 3 sites, which are sites that do not appear as wooded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps, but do appear as woodland on the older Roy maps (of 1750). Such sites "have, at most, had only a short break in continuity of woodland cover and may still retain features of Ancient Woodland." Such sites in Aberdeen are located to the north of Peterculter, to the South-East and East of Dyce, and immediately north of the Hillhead Student Village (on the south bank of the River Don).

13.126 The LDP will seek to preserve areas of Ancient Woodland in line with national policy and the Scottish Government's Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal.

13.127 The spread of these sites can be viewed on the map below.

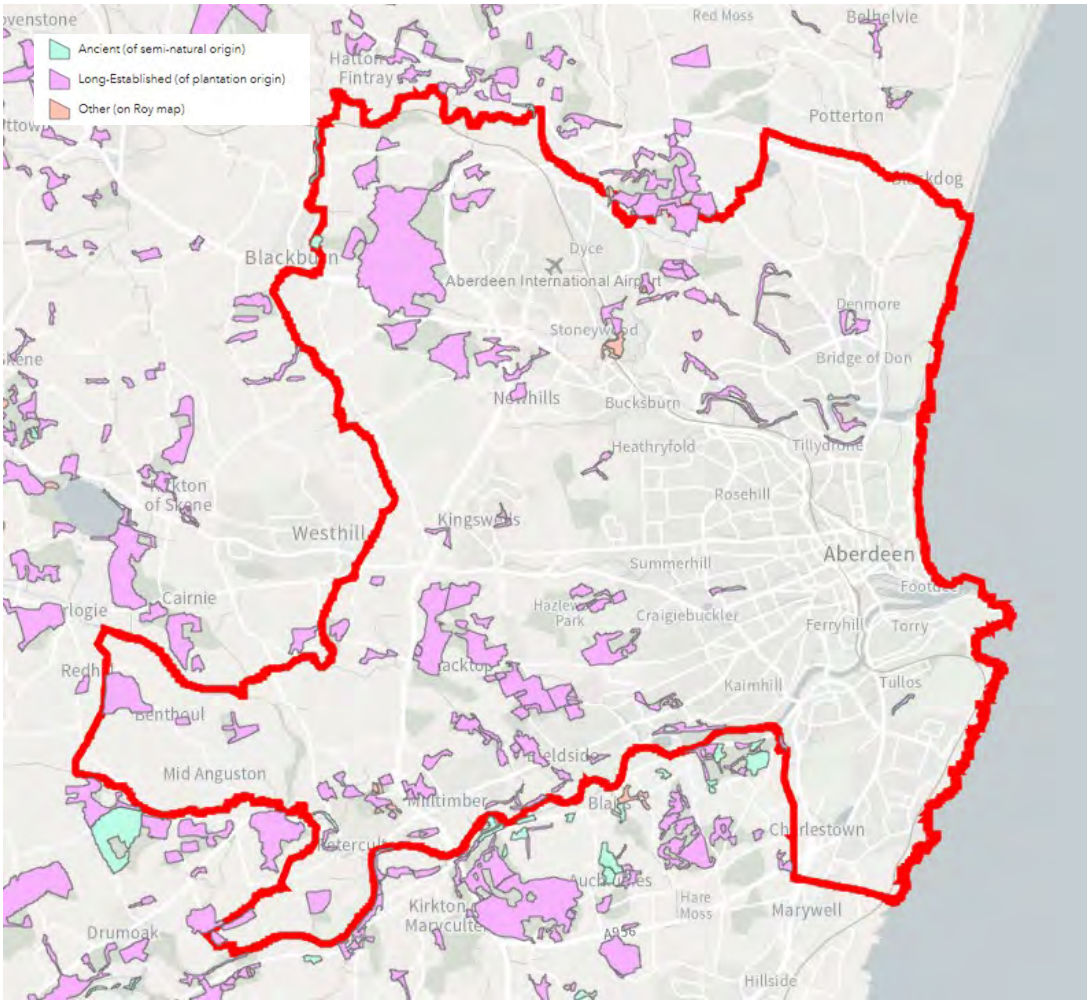


Figure 13.9: Map showing the authority boundary of the city of Aberdeen in red, and all areas of ancient woodland within the city.

Tree Preservation Orders

13.128 Aberdeen has 168 recorded Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). TPOs are shown in the blue hatched areas below. The 11 Conservation Areas within Aberdeen (coloured areas) also afford protection to trees within their respective boundaries. This information outlines the areas of trees and woodland that are deemed to be of greatest significance to the city. There is a greater proliferation of sites along the A93 corridor south-west out of the city, however other recorded sites could offer opportunities for greater connectivity in green corridors in future, as stepping stones within a wider network.

13.129 The LDP will recognise the higher value placed on trees protected by such designations and will explore how to better connect some of these sites where opportunities are available.

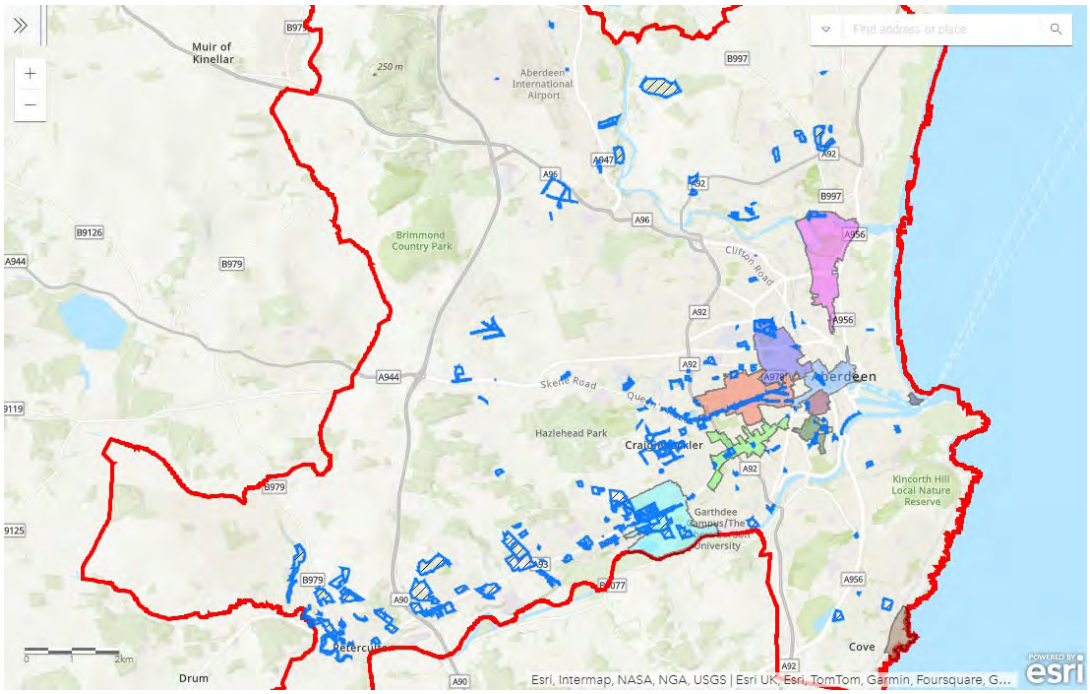


Figure 13.10: The above shows the location of Aberdeen's TPOs in the blue hatched polygons, with the city boundary outlined in red.

Ancient Tree Inventory

13.130 A resource managed by the Woodland Trust that allows members of the public to submit records of specimens of Notable, Veteran, or Ancient trees anywhere within the UK for plotting on an interactive map. Records include detail on the location of the tree, species of tree, girth size of the tree and whether it is in public or private ownership. Submissions require validation from Woodland Trust verifiers. This data source could potentially identify trees deemed locally significant or important in the Local Development Plan, that are not presently afforded protection via a Tree Preservation Order or Conservation Area designation.

The Granite City Forest – Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-2025 (CD134)

13.131 The Plan covers the period 2019 – 2044, and seeks to expanding woodland coverage within the city boundary to 600 hectares in area over the next 25 years, and a further 300 hectares by 2070. It is expected to be updated every 5 years.

13.132 The overall strategy includes four strategic priorities:

1. Promoting the role of our trees and woodlands in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
2. Expanding the Granite City Forest.
3. Protecting our trees and woodlands.
4. Contributing to the City's green infrastructure and the well-being of our people.

13.133 Sites have been identified in the Aberdeen and ranked as preferred, potential, potential with sensitivities, sensitive and unlikely to be suitable. The categories are broad-brush and further investigations will be required to screen out areas that are clearly not suitable for planting and others, such as built-up areas, which might be suitable for street trees.

13.134 Although this document addresses a number of the components of a forest and woodland strategy, it does not satisfy planning legislation on this matter. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated a draft strategy will be completed by March 2027. This document will nevertheless have an influence on how the LDP targets woodland expansion and improving the proportion of woodland coverage within Aberdeen.

Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment (CD224)

13.135 A policy statement that seeks to communicate how forests and woodlands contribute to Scotland's historic environment. It endeavours to promote appreciation of the contribution woodlands and forests have towards our cultural heritage, as well as their value as tourist attractions. This includes encouraging the support and conservation of "significant evidence of the historic environment in Scotland's woodlands, including historic landscapes". Such elements can include burial mounds, hillforts, saw pits, charcoal hearths, remnants of farmsteads among other features. The LDP will acknowledge the historic and cultural impact some trees and woodlands have at a local level and encourage preservation of woodlands that form a key component of the wider historical context of a place.

The Right Tree in the Right Place – Forestry Commission Scotland (CD225)

13.136 Part 3 of this guidance replaces Circular 9/1999 on Indicative Forestry Strategies (IFSs) which has since been withdrawn. This document otherwise provides a policy context for woodland and rural development, as well as advice on how to prepare forestry and woodland strategies. It also includes advice on the benefits provided by

woodland, and offers guidance for development management decisions on proposals involving the loss of woodland. This document would inform the production of the Council's forthcoming Forest and Woodland Strategy, which in turn will influence the LDP.

Scottish Forestry Open Data

13.137 This portal hosts twenty datasets covering a variety of topics ranging from areas approved for long-term forest management plans, data on tree health and species conservation, felling licences and restocking obligations (among other datasets).

13.138 The LDP can utilise this data source to inform future decisions on woodland planting, enhancement where species diversity and tree health is demonstrably poor. It could also inform decisions over the location of future new woodland or forestry planting.

Biological and Environmental Evaluation Tools for Landscape Ecology (BEETLE)

13.139 The tool is intended to assist and support management actions as opposed to the prediction of species dispersal or viability. Such tools can be used to gauge the impact of management interventions within a prescribed woodland or landscape environment, when combined with additional "environmental, economic and social information." The tools do rely on assumptions, although these are based on accepted ecological theories. Examples of the use of BEETLE are provided via the Forestry Research website which includes case studies in Falkirk and Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. The data source will inform the LDP's approach to tackling habitat fragmentation and biodiversity decline as well as guiding efforts to strengthen existing habitat networks.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

13.140 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

13.141 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in July 2024, inviting them to be a part of the working group on the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper. Key stakeholders for this paper included:

- Forestry Scotland
- The Hutton Institute
- NatureScot
- Marine Directorate
- SEPA
- Woodland Trust
- Aberdeen City Council (Development Management/Climate and Environment Policy/ Environmental Manager/ Flooding)

13.142 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in October 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

13.143 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to a number of to the key stakeholders and FIRS. They also had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

13.144 A full public and targeted 8-week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 11 responses were received for this paper, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, SEPA, Homes for Scotland) 2 from housing developers (Bancon Homes, and Mac Mic Group), and 5 members of the public.

13.145 Homes for Scotland have no dispute with the paper but do note the following:

- Add the Ancient Tree Inventory and Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note. The Council notes these have been added to the paper: Add the Protection afforded to certain Ramsar features - policy amendment proposals: consultation; Defining Scotland's Future Infrastructure (2020); Chief Planner letter June 2024; Historic Environment Scotland Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The Council note there are no Ramsar features in Aberdeen and the paper is at an early consultation stage. Historic Environment Scotland guidance is included within the Place Topic Paper. Chief Planner Letter is noted in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper. NPF4 glossary does not mention housing within its list of eligible forms of essential infrastructure. The suggestions have not been taken forward in the paper as they are noted elsewhere, the papers should be read as a whole with limited need for duplication across multiple papers.
- Homes for Scotland members have a commitment to protecting biodiversity and sustainability, including incorporating biodiversity improvement measures into new developments. The Council note the comments.
- The presence of biodiversity and trees and woodland should not preclude a site from being considered for development; woodland management plans and nature networks can be incorporated. Engagement during call for sites can address concerns. Marketability and deliverability are also important site considerations. The Council note biodiversity is one consideration when determining the site suitability, mitigation measures cannot universally override the extant biodiversity value of every site. The Council agree trees and woodland should not be seen as a significant constraint on allocation but emphasised that designated woodlands, such as Ancient Woodland, would have more extensive requirements to merit consideration. Consideration of all relevant policies will be required when reviewing bid sites or allocations. The Council notes the deliverability of sites is a fundamental part of the planning process, and is supported by the Delivery Programme and the housing pipeline as part of NPF4. Call for sites has historically asked questions on deliverability and will continue to do so.

- Guidance on species selection for tree planting would be useful. The Council would advise that current Aberdeen Planning Guidance ‘Landscape’ already provides detail of suitable species for planting, and this can be viewed in conjunction with Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note 3.
- Guidance on compensatory planting would be useful. The Council note this is better addressed to future stages of the Proposed Plan development.

13.146 A meeting was held with Home for Scotland on 17 June 2025 to discuss various topic paper. This paper was not among the ones that they identified they wished to dispute.

13.147 SEPA note they are likely to be content with the sufficiency of evidence subject to recommended additions (and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – please see the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper). The additions comprise:

- ensuring Aberdeen City Council’s Natural Environment Strategy includes important water environment as referenced in SEPA’s Planning Advice Note on Achieving Sufficiency of Evidence, and include this in the topic papers that cover Nature Networks. The Council will ensure the Natural Environment Strategy includes important water environment data as referenced in the Planning Advice Note. The Infrastructure and Communication Paper has been updated to outline these data sources, and a cross reference made within this paper.
- the Implications for the Proposed Plan should also include reference to the protection of blue infrastructure, and consider how the nature network will inform site selection/assessment process. The Council has actioned these points.

13.148 Email correspondence with SEPA on 13 and 20 June, and a meeting of 20 June confirmed SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper.

13.149 Mac Mic Group agreed with the evidence, note the Homes for Scotland submission, and provide the following comments:

- See the Homes for Scotland response for additional pieces of evidence. The Council has addressed the Homes for Scotland response above.
- The inclusion of the Chief Planner’s Letter from June 2024 which notes all NPF4 policies must be read and applied as a whole before being weighted by the decision maker to reach a balanced planning judgement. The Council note this is included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- New developments can incorporate future development to enhance existing green networks and tree surveys can be used to manage dead or diseased trees. The Council note the comment.
- The Proposed Plan should actively identify areas of biodiversity loss to reverse and enhance nature networks within new development. The Council note the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill (2025) Part 1 Targets for

improving biodiversity' could provide further guidance on how this is to be undertaken.

- New development can enhance or improve access to existing or neighbouring designations; this may improve low scoring Local Biodiversity Sites. The Council note the comment. Biodiversity is one the criteria of the site assessment process and will be factored in when allocating future sites.
- Homes for Scotland members are committed to protect and enhance biodiversity but housing plays an important socio-economic role, providing significant infrastructure investments and investment in energy efficiency homes, local living and net zero. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.

13.150 NatureScot submitted the following comments:

- Ancient Woodland Inventory, despite being discussed within the topic paper, is not listed within the data sources. The Council have added this to the evidence course list.
- There are duplicated links within the Forestry, Woodland and Trees Section. The Council have removed these.
- The 'Purpose and Scope of Evidence Report' section could provide more detail and further emphasises the value of nature and biodiversity in its role tackling the nature loss and climate change crises. The Council have provided additional text, which NatureScot identified satisfied this request.
- The 'Summary of the Proposed Implications for the Proposed Plan' should include more information "specific to Aberdeen and the evidence set out earlier in the topic paper. The Council have provided additional text

13.151 In a meeting of 6 June 2025, NatureScot confirmed they did not wish to dispute the topic paper.

13.152 Bancon confirm there are no evidence sources missing but do raise the following comments:

- Pollution risk for development near the River Dee SAC can be controlled by a Construction Environment Management Plan. The Council note Construction Environment Management Plan can be used to overcomes potential development impacts within the vicinity of an SAC. The inclusion of conditions requiring Environment Management Plan may still require carefully of land allocations or designations.
- The policy implementations of the Forestry, Woodlands and Trees data need clarified. The Council note policy implications are addressed in the Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan under the heading Forestry, Woodland and Trees. This now includes some additional text which was added to address comments made by NatureScot.
- Forestry, woodlands and trees should not be a barrier to development, they can be incorporated into developments and contribute to the creation of

quality places. The Council note the presence of trees on a site will not veto all proposals for development.

- Scottish Government's Policy on Woodland Removal to highlight "that the loss of woodland will only be supported where a clear public benefit can be demonstrated", a definition of public benefit is required. The Council note the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal definition - Public benefits include social, economic and environmental benefits, the latter including carbon considerations.
- Guidance on compensatory planting would be useful. The Council note this is better addressed to future stages of the Proposed Plan development.

13.153 A meeting was held with Bancon on 18 June where they noted the above were not be treated as disputes. Remark on Prime Agricultural Land is to be regarded as a dispute and are discussed under Statement of Agreement/Dispute.

13.154 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to a member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

General

13.155 Aberdeen is developing a Natural Environment Strategy (NES) to integrate policies and deliver outcomes for nature, climate, people, and place. This strategy aims to consolidate existing plans into a coherent, evidence-based framework aligned with statutory requirements and community needs.

- The project involves a collaborative framework between Aberdeen City Council and the James Hutton Institute, employing a Theory of Change, policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring indicators.
- The NES covers thematic areas including trees, blue-green infrastructure, biodiversity, soils, parks, land use, green belt and outdoor access, with cross-cutting themes of climate change and equity.
- The timeline targets a November 2026 draft report to the Net Zero, Environment & Transport Committee, followed by consultations and preparation for a Phase 2 Spatial Delivery Plan.
- Final publication of the Natural Environment Strategy is anticipated in Spring 2027.

Biodiversity

13.156 The Proposed Plan will be informed by the Natural Environment Strategy. Nature Networks, including the requirement for 30 x 30 for biodiversity improvement will have influence on the spatial strategy. Nature Networks will be considered as part of the site selection criteria.

13.157 Policy 3 Biodiversity within NPF4 appears to take a firmer stance on securing enhancements of biodiversity on sites subject to national or major development. The emphasis on biodiversity enhancement will impact on development proposals; and this should be factored into the site selection criteria.

13.158 Development of the Nature network including the protection and enhancement of blue and green infrastructure will impact on land use, existing policy, and legislation.

13.159 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies.

13.160 The Proposed Plan will recognise the value food growing has on biodiversity. Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing. Such biodiversity gains may be limited due to the more controlled environment these occupy however, such land uses are also of public benefit and support efforts to promote healthy living within Aberdeen.

13.161 Biodiversity improvements will also be delivered through other policy and strategy mechanisms i.e. Forestry and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Strategy etc.

Natural Heritage

13.162 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy will identify and protect Aberdeen's local, regional, national and international designated and protected sites.

13.163 Aberdeen has 4 SSSIs that would need to be accounted for when making policy decisions. It also has 4 Local Nature Reserves and 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites. Although no RAMSAR sites are within Aberdeen, the Loch of Skene and Ythan Estuary & Meikle Loch designations are within a sufficient proximity of the city boundary to merit consideration.

13.164 Development that could impact on migrating birds (for example), may plausibly have an impact on these designations despite not being immediately adjacent to the city boundary, as species like pink-footed geese can have 10km foraging ranges from roosting sites.

13.165 There will likely need to be a greater focus on establishing linkages between existing areas of greenspace and habitat. The promotion of wildlife friendly corridors connecting existing spaces would ensure existing areas become more resilient and help prevent further fragmentation of sites.

13.166 The Proposed Plan site selection process will be informed by designated sites; this should be included in site selection criteria.

13.167 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies.

Forestry, Woodland and Trees

13.168 The Proposed Plan will be informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy, which is being developed as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will update the Forestry and Woodland Strategy. A draft strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027. Relevant information may also include inventories, such as the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and the Ancient Woodland Inventory, alongside records such as Tree Protection Orders, to help identify trees and woodlands of high nature conservation in the plan area.

13.169 The Proposed Plan should look for opportunities to improve and strengthen existing woodland, and should identify place-based opportunities for woodland expansion and enhancement. The spatial strategy can prioritise opportunities to improve and strengthen existing woodland fragments, before establishing completely new woodlands due to the extended time it takes for this habitat to realise its biodiversity potential.

13.170 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies.

13.171 The Proposed Plan will use data from the ‘Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future’ wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

Soils

13.172 The Proposed Plan will protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development.

13.173 The increased emphasis on protection of soils will impact on development proposals and should be considered as part of the site selection process.

13.174 Site selection will be informed in part by the location of valued soils to be maintained, protected and/or enhanced and restored. Consideration may be made to wider benefits that soils offer to sustainable land-use. Benefits include carbon sequestration, natural flood alleviation, blue-green infrastructure and supporting biodiversity and nature networks.

13.175 There isn’t a clear pattern or concentrated area of carbon rich soils or peatland within the Aberdeen City authority boundaries. Although some modestly sized areas

do exist within the Authority, these are not of a scale or part of a connected network that merit tailored local policies to protect them. It is considered that Policy 5 of NPF4 sets out sufficient expectations to limit and deter development in these locations unless essential, and no alternative sites are available.

13.176 Either the wording of a policy or further planning guidance will likely be required on soil compaction as part of the next Local Development Plan. NPF4 specifically identifies that development must be designed and constructed in a manner that protects soil from damage via compaction, erosion or soil sealing. The maps of topsoil and subsoil compaction risk, accessible from the James Hutton Institute's collection of Risk Maps, could potentially inform a strategy where the Council identifies areas of particular sensitivity, where additional supporting information may be required for any development proposals in those locations. In addition to this, it would be worthwhile the Council outlining minimum expectations with regard all development sites in order to minimise compaction or soil sealing risks.

Marmot Principles

13.177 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 13.3: Marmot Principles

Statements of Agreement/Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

13.178 NHS Grampian, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

13.179 NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Iceni confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

13.180 SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

13.181 One individual respondent agreed there were no piece of information missing but stated there was “too much to read, and still not clear what is the key message”.

Disputes with Stakeholders

13.182 A further member of the public disagrees with the evidence used but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow-up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic paper themselves

13.183 Bancon require more information on how development proposals on prime agricultural land will be considered, to ensure housing delivery in light of the housing crisis. The Council note NPF4 Policy 5 sets protection of valued land as a priority and outlies a hierarchy for consideration of development proposals. The approach provides significant certainty.

Information Gaps

13.184 There is currently no Forestry and Woodland Strategy, although this is being developed as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy, Forestry and Woodland Strategy and Open Space Strategy. A strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

13.185 There is also a lack of information on how local authorities are to address soil compaction and erosion in their consideration of sites during the production of the Proposed Plan.

13.186 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic area. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

14. Topic Paper 7 – Energy and Resources

Requirements addressed in this section:

14.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issues addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(d)	the infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities)
Section 15(5)(e)	how that infrastructure is used

National Planning Framework 4

Energy

14.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development.

Heating and Cooling

14.3 LDPs should take into account the area's Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). The spatial strategy should take into account areas of heat network potential and any designated Heat Network Zones (HNZ).

Minerals

14.4 LDPs should support a landbank of construction aggregates of at least ten years at all times in the relevant market areas, whilst promoting sustainable resource management, safeguarding important workable mineral resources, which are of economic or conservation value, and take steps to ensure these are not sterilised by other types of development.

Zero Waste

14.5 LDPs should identify appropriate locations for new waste management infrastructure to support the circular economy and meet identified needs in a way that moves waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible.

Links to Evidence

Energy

- CD184 Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
- CD170 Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
- CD244 Climate Change Act – Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report
- CD245 NESO Beyond 2030
- CD171 Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022
- CD172 Scottish Government Offshore Wind Policy Statement
- CD173 Scotland's National Marine Plan - A Single Framework for Managing Our Seas
- CD174 Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy
- CD169 Initial Plan Framework Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind for Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation (INTOG)
- CD246 Offshore Wind Energy in Scottish Waters: Regional Locational Guidance
- CD199 Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement
- CD200 Development of early, clean hydrogen production in Scotland
- CD201 Hydrogen Action Plan
- CD202 Net Zero Aberdeen - Energy Supply Strategy
- CD008 Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, February 2021
- CD104 Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Energy Transition Zone Masterplan
- CD203 Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy & Action Plan 2015-2025

Energy – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
marine.gov.scot	6 August 2024
ScotWind leasing round | Crown Estate Scotland	12 August 2024
Scotland Hydrogen Assets (arcgis.com)	6 October 2024
ETZ | Hydrogen (etzltd.com)	6 October 2024
Anaerobic Digestion at Aberdeen (adatab.org)	6 October 2024

Heating and Cooling

- CD204 Scottish Government Heat in Buildings Strategy: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in Scotland's Buildings
- CD205 Consultation on a New Social Housing Net Zero Standard in Scotland
- CD023 Securing a Green Recovery Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018 - 2032 Update
- CD206 Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy
- CD334 Aberdeen Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
- CD335 Aberdeen Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy: Delivery Plan

Heating and Cooling – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
New Build Heat Standard - gov.scot	22 October 2024
Scotland Heat Map	22 October 2024
GHiGs Settlement Dashboard	22 October 2024
District heating | Aberdeen City Council	7 August 2026
Heatnet: delivering low carbon district heat | Aberdeen City Council	22 October 2024

Minerals

- CD207 AMPS 10th Annual Mineral Planning Survey 2022
- CD208 Aggregates demand and supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2035
- CD209 Collation of the results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland

Zero Waste

- CD210 Scotland's Zero Waste Plan
- CD256 Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024
- CD212 Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury Report
- CD251 Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury - Second Report – Decarbonisation of Residual Waste Infrastructure in Scotland
- CD213 Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030 Consultation
- CD214 SPP Waste Capacity Infrastructure data
- CD215 Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014-2025
- CD216 Net Zero Aberdeen: Circular Economy Strategy
- CD211 Making Things Last – A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland

Zero Waste – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
SUEZ in UK Aberdeen's Recycling Centre	27 October 2024
Anaerobic Digestion @ Aberdeen	27 October 2024
NESS Energy From Waste - Aberdeen - Indaver	28 October 2024
Household Waste Generated and Managed 2023	28 October 2024

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

14.6 Navigating the transition towards a sustainable, low-carbon future requires careful consideration of Aberdeen's energy and resources. Aberdeen, known for its historic linkages to the oil and gas industry, is now at the forefront of energy transition initiatives. The Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap outlines the city's approach towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, through rapid decarbonisation across all sectors with changes to the ways in which both power and heat is generated and used. As such, investment in low-carbon energy opportunities and strategic assessment of current resource availability is central to achieving an energy system that delivers affordable, resilient and clean energy supplies for Aberdeen's households, communities and businesses. The use of energy and resources in planning will play a vital role in delivering an energy system that provides maximum community and economic benefits that are aligned with Scotland's net zero ambitions.

14.7 This section is structured as follows:

- Energy
- Heating and Cooling
- Minerals
- Zero Waste

Energy

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD184)

14.8 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a statutory duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD184) aims to ensure that Scotland's contribution to climate change will end within a generation, being fully net-zero by 2045 with emissions reducing by 75% by 2030 (compared to a 1990 baseline). The next Local Development Plan will consider how it can support Aberdeen in reaching these goals.

Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (CD170)

14.9 The strategy provides the vision for Scotland's future decarbonised energy system (CD170). It outlines a route map of actions towards the Scottish Government's targets for 2030.

14.10 Targets include:

- Delivery of greater than 20GW of additional renewable electricity onshore and offshore by 2030

- 5GW of hydrogen production by 2030, and 25GW of hydrogen production by 2045
- Oil and gas production levels expected to be around 35% of 2019 levels by 2035
- 2GW of community and locally owned energy
- Phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030
- The equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity use to come from renewable sources

14.11 The next Local Development Plan will seek to consider these targets as it pursues the transition to net zero in Aberdeen in alignment with wider government strategy.

Climate Change Act Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report (CD244)

14.12 Section 3F of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as introduced by Section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009), required all Local Authorities to include "policies requiring all developments in the local development plan area to be designed so as to ensure that all new buildings avoid a specified and rising proportion of the projected greenhouse gas emissions from their use, through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies."

14.13 The Scottish Government undertook annual reporting on the legislation to consider its operation, effectiveness, and continuing need. The fourteenth iteration of this report (CD244) determined that updated national planning policies now go further than Section 3F and consider lifecycle as well as in-use emissions. Work is commencing to prepare a repeal Order for consideration by the Scottish Parliament. As such, the next Local Development Plan will no longer include Section 3F policies. Building Standards requirements will provide sustainability targets for all new developments.

Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy (CD202)

14.14 The Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy (CD202) outlines Aberdeen's approach towards developing low-carbon energy choices for Aberdeen citizens. It identifies the key challenges, and risks within Aberdeen's energy transition.

14.15 The Strategy sets out the challenges for the city as follows:

1. Support national grid decarbonisation and ensure that all new and existing city networks are zero carbon.
2. Ensure affordable energy and reduce fuel poverty in the move to net zero.
3. Support network growth for local decentralised and micro-renewable systems across all energy sectors.
4. Support growth of green hydrogen production and usage, including local demand and export.

5. Capitalise on North Sea skills from industries to grow the supply chain and net zero economy.
6. Secure maximum economic benefit and output from Scotwind leasing round and Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation (INTOG) projects.
7. Support Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) development, financing, ownership, and funding models appropriate for new types of energy projects.

14.16 The Strategy outlines the following outcomes:

Key Outcomes	About the Approach
Fuel Poverty	Work with generators and utilities to ensure that prices do not rise for those in fuel poverty or at risk of it
	Support the creation of an “at risk of fuel poverty” register
Decentralised energy	Develop decentralised energy master plans to cover area-specific opportunities including existing and new projects
	Work with generators and utilities to develop decentralised generation/consumption projects
	Identify and promote opportunities for community ownership/participation
Green Hydrogen	Deliver Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub (AHH) production and distribution infrastructure
	Develop integrated training and accreditation offer (AHH)
	Marketing campaign to promote Aberdeen as a global centre of excellence in hydrogen (AHH and partners)
Micro Renewables	Undertake an assessment of micro renewable deployment opportunities at commercial, residential, and industrial and public sector sites
	Define technologies and ownership and funding options
Skills Transition	Explore facilities/policy needed to secure jobs in Aberdeen
	Produce integrated training and accreditation offer to be marketed globally (AHH and partners)
Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage	Support local projects
	Encourage transfer of skills, expertise and assets from our oil and gas industry
	Develop small-scale CCS deployment opportunities in Aberdeen
Offshore Wind	Offshore Wind and Floating Offshore Wind Centres of Excellence
	Support transfer of skills from oil and gas and supply chain development programmes
	Innovation and commercialisation

	Secure maximum local content in Scotwind 1 and 2
Investment	Development of ownership, investment, and funding models suitable for new types of projects
	Support investor understanding of new types of energy project
	Access public funding sources for new technology and project development, skills and training
Supply Chain	Support the supply chain in diversification and accessing new business
	Ensure that the supply chain is linked to skills, training, skills transfer and project opportunities
	Support the supply chain in the development of marketable new technology, products and services
	Promote international business opportunities to the supply chain and promote supply chain capabilities in new markets

Table 14.1: Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy (CD202) Outcomes

14.17 The Strategy sets out the following theme 'synergies'.

Mobility	Link to green hydrogen, carbon capture/utilisation and storage
Energy Supply	Link to fuel poverty, decentralised energy, green hydrogen, micro renewables
Circular Economy	Link to decentralised energy (Energy from solid waste and wastewater)
Natural Environment	Link to decentralised energy, green hydrogen, micro renewables and carbon capture/storage (embed green infrastructure)
Empowerment	Skills transition and green jobs across; carbon capture, utilisation and storage, offshore wind and supply chain (green jobs)

Table 14.2: Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy (CD202) Theme Synergies

14.18 In preparing the next Local Development Plan the strategy will be used to inform future development. This is important for recognising Aberdeen-specific opportunity for low-carbon energy development across each of the themes highlighted.

The Aberdeen Landscape Sensitivity Study (2021) (CD008)

14.19 The Aberdeen Landscape Sensitivity Study (CD008) can assist in understanding appropriate locations for energy development. The Study sets out which areas of the city's landscape are sensitive to residential, business and industrial development. The study will be used to effectively inform development plans and provide robust evidence in assessing development applications.

Energy Distribution and Transmission

14.20 The National Grid Electricity System Operator Ltd published recommendations for the electricity network infrastructure, detailing what must be done to accommodate the rapidly changing mix of electricity generation sources. The 'Beyond 2030' report (CD245) outlines the necessary steps and investments to ensure a reliable, clean, and efficient electricity system for Great Britain beyond 2030.

14.21 SSEN Distribution functions as the Distribution Network Operator covering Aberdeen City. Its sister organisation, SSEN Transmission is the owner and operator of all high-voltage electricity network assets within the city council area. Details of Aberdeen's electricity supply are covered in the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper.

Energy Transition Zone

14.22 Aberdeen's Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) is identified within the current Local Development Plan 2023 as designated land wherein there will be a presumption in favour of the development, production, assembly, storage and/or distribution of infrastructure required to support renewable energy related industries.

14.23 The Energy Transition Zone masterplan document (CD104) supports the delivery of sites OP61, OP62 and OP56 which are allocated in the 2023 LDP as land for ETZ. The masterplan also includes the area within which OP64 sits, this site being allocated as a solar farm (see hydrogen and solar sections).

14.24 The ETZ is the largest dedicated energy transition industrial complex in Scotland, focused on delivery of energy through hydrogen, offshore wind, carbon capture and storage. The ETZ seeks to take advantage of the new adjacent Aberdeen South Harbour. It is expected to directly support 2,500 green jobs by 2030, alongside a further 10,000 transition-related jobs.

Wind Energy

Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement (CD171)

14.25 The Scottish Government's Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022) (CD171) sets out Scotland's ambition to achieve a minimum installed capacity of 20GW of onshore wind by 2030. This information is noted however Aberdeen has no current provision for onshore wind energy developments.

Scottish Government Offshore Wind Policy Statement (CD172)

14.26 The Scottish Government Offshore Wind Policy Statement (2020) (CD172) sets out Scotland's ambitions to achieve 8-11GW of offshore wind in Scottish waters by 2030. The next Local Development Plan will seek to consider this as it looks to

guide offshore wind development in Aberdeen that is aligned with wider government targets.

Scotland's National Marine Plan (CD173)

14.27 Scotland's National Marine Plan (2015) (CD173) provides the framework for managing Scotland's marine resources. Future development of offshore wind projects will need to give consideration to the strategic development zones and grid infrastructure planning identified within the plan. Additionally, consideration will be given to the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy (2020) (CD174), and any future iterations, and the Initial Plan Framework for Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation (2022) (CD169). These documents identify sustainable plan options for commercial-scale offshore wind energy in Scotland while identifying potential risks and constraints.

14.28 Further, the National Marine Plan interactive provides spatial information about the Scottish marine environment. These strategic plans and datasets can be used to identify various types of information about Aberdeen's marine environment which will be considered in the development of the next Local Development Plan.

Offshore Wind Energy in Scottish Waters: Regional Locational Guidance (CD246)

14.29 This guidance from the Scottish Government sets out regional spatial baseline data for the sectoral marine plan for offshore wind energy. It describes the information used in the planning and assessment process. The 'East' region considers the area of coast that stretches beyond Aberdeen's coastline. Responsibility for Offshore Marine Areas (12-200 nautical miles) sits with Scottish Ministers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. However, awareness of this information should be considered to inform Aberdeen's next Local Development Plan.

Aberdeen Offshore Wind Developments

14.30 Aberdeen has three important offshore wind developments in the nearby area; Hywind, EOWDC and Kincardine Floating Offshore Wind Farm. The ScotWind sites numbers one to six directly east of Aberdeen also provide significant new potential. 12 of the 20 offshore wind sites, which were leased by Crown Estate Scotland in January 2022, are situated within 100 nautical miles of Aberdeen. These 12 sites have a potential capacity of 17GW.

14.31 Included within the Energy Transition Zone Masterplan (CD104), and the Aberdeen Net Zero Energy Supply Strategy (CD202), is space for a planned Offshore Wind Campus. Situated on brownfield land at the eastern edge of Altens, the Offshore Wind Campus would provide a cluster of commercial, manufacturing, test and demonstration, and innovation facilities anchored by the National Floating Wind Innovation Centre (FLOWIC). The Campus will support the growth of a strong offshore wind supply chain as well as opportunities for complementary energy transition activities.

Hydrogen

Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement (CD199)

14.32 The Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement (2020) (CD199) outlines Scotland's commitment to ensuring hydrogen plays a key role within Scotland's energy transition. Recognising the growth of the hydrogen market globally, the policy statement encourages investment in technology to support capacity for deployment of green hydrogen and the generation of new economic opportunities in Scotland.

14.33 The "Development of Early, Clean Hydrogen Production in Scotland" (2021) (CD200) document from Scottish Enterprise provides further assessment of Scotland's potential for early adoption of hydrogen production opportunities. It highlights the increased demand for blue and green hydrogen production and identifies sites across Scotland suitable for further development of hydrogen production.

14.34 The next Local Development Plan will need to consider these documents as it seeks to support growth of hydrogen production opportunities in Aberdeen.

Hydrogen Action Plan

14.35 The Hydrogen Action Plan (2022) details the Scottish Government's plan to ensure hydrogen plays an increasingly important role in Scotland's energy system. It commits to a target of achieving 5GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030, and 25GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2045. Additionally, it aims to support the growth of Regional Hydrogen Energy Hubs. Of the 13 Regional Hydrogen Hubs identified, 1 is located in Aberdeen.

Hydrogen Projects in Aberdeen

14.36 Scotland's Hydrogen Assets map identifies 4 hydrogen projects in Aberdeen (The Events Complex Aberdeen, Kittybrewster Refuelling station, Aberdeen H2 Hub, Aberdeen City Hydrogen Energy Storage). The Energy Transition Zone Masterplan states the following with regards to hydrogen: 'Hydrogen is rapidly emerging as central to the future net zero economy. Aberdeen and North East Scotland has already emerged as a leading hub of hydrogen activity, with current and planned projects expected to generate 200 MW+ by 2025-27, and potential for up to 1GW of production by 2030-32. The city's wealth of experience in the oil & gas sector is capable of being re-utilised for hydrogen-based activity, with identified potential for up to 29,000 jobs in the sector by 2040. There is already significant interest and planned activity in the Zone to support hydrogen production, distribution, and use – including BP, ERM Dolphyn, and Vattenfall among others who are seeking to base leading edge technologies and projects within Aberdeen.'

Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy

14.37 The Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025) (CD203) states that the Aberdeen Local Development Plan must consider and support hydrogen technology. The strategy sets out the following key objectives:

	Objective	Action
1	Vehicle Deployments	A range of local stakeholders deploy hydrogen vehicles.
2	Renewable Hydrogen	Hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources is widespread throughout the region.
3	Refuelling Infrastructure	An accessible, convenient, and safe refuelling infrastructure network is deployed across the City and beyond.
4	Non-Transport Applications	Non-transport applications are tried and tested including stationary power.
5	Supply Chain / Market Development	A robust, local hydrogen supply chain is developed which utilises the areas existing energy expertise.
6	Communication and Education	A greater understanding and acceptance of hydrogen technologies encourages widespread adoption.
7	Policy and Regulation	Hydrogen technologies are embedded in all relevant areas of policy and supported at a national level.

Table 14.3: Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan (CD203) Key Objectives

14.38 It sets out in the following table the locally available production pathways which might supply hydrogen refuelling stations:

Source	Chemistry	Description	Local availability
Steam methane reforming	Methane reformation $CH_4 + H_2O \leftrightarrow CO + 3H_2$ Water gas shift (WGS) reaction $CO + H_2O \leftrightarrow CO_2 + H_2$	Methane reformation to produce syngas and subsequently H_2 following the WGS reaction is the most common H_2 production pathway	No large centralised SMR production nearby Peterhead CCS CO_2 pipeline could facilitate a new 'green' SMR H production facility
Renewable energy & water electrolysis	Water electrolysis (WE) $2H_2O \leftrightarrow O_2 + 2H_2$	WE systems split water into H_2 and O_2 Cheap electricity can be sourced from local renewable generators	Significant grid-constrained renewables
Waste gasification	Municipal solid waste gasification $CH_xO_y + \alpha O_2 + \beta H_2O \leftrightarrow \gamma CH_4 + \delta CO_2 + \mu CO + \sigma CH_xO_y + \rho H_2O + \varepsilon H_2$	Plasma reactors used to convert non-recyclable landfill waste into syngas which is treated for impurities Syngas can be combusted for electricity generation, or purified to give H_2	Currently no active projects in the region New waste processing plant coming online c. 2020
Chemical plant by-product	Brine electrolysis $2NaCl + 2H_2O \leftrightarrow 2NaOH + H_2 + Cl_2$ Naptha (ethane) cracking $C_2H_6 \rightarrow C_2H_4 + H_2$	Many processes in the chemical industry produce H_2 as a by-product Often this H_2 is recycled on-site via combustion	Mossmorran ethylene cracking plant is the major regional producer
Anaerobic digestion (AD)	Overall Process $(CH_2O)_n \rightarrow \frac{n}{2}CH_4 + \frac{n}{2}CO_2$ Methane reformation $CH_4 + H_2O \leftrightarrow CO + 3H_2$	Bacteria used to convert biodegradable waste into biogas (CH4 and CO_2) CH4 product can be reformed to produce H_2	Small AD projects, inc. at AECC development due to come online in 2018

Table 14.4: Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan (CD203) Locally Available Production Pathways

14.39 The hydrogen refuelling infrastructure mentioned within the strategy is undergoing maintenance. Operation of Aberdeen's hydrogen buses, introduced in 2021, has been paused since July 2024. This is due to upgrades to refuelling stations located in Kittybrewster and Cove.

ETZ Hydrogen Campus

14.40 Included within the Energy Transition Zone Masterplan (CD104) is space for a planned Hydrogen Campus. The Hydrogen Campus is planned to support the significant low carbon hydrogen production growth opportunity across the region. Green Hydrogen Test and Demonstration Facilities will form the transformational anchor project to provide "on demand" hydrogen to industrial users and accelerate commercialisation and innovation. The high-quality campus design will be suitable for attracting new high-value manufacturing opportunities and supporting supply chain companies.

Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub

14.41 BP Aberdeen Hydrogen Energy Limited is a joint venture between BP and Aberdeen City Council formed in March 2022 which intends to deliver a scalable green hydrogen production, storage and distribution facility in the city powered by renewable energy. The Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub project is central to Aberdeen City Council's H2 vision to expand the supply and demand for hydrogen in support of the city's net zero vision. It aims to harness the natural resources, skills and capacity in the North East of Scotland to create jobs in an exciting new energy sector that builds on our oil and gas heritage. A planning application (230299/DPP) was approved in June 2023 for a hydrogen production and vehicle refuelling facility at Hareness Road, with an associated solar farm by Coast Road. It has not as of yet been implemented. It is intended for this facility to act as a refuelling site for vehicles. There are also existing refuelling stations at Cove (dispenses 130kg hydrogen per day, stores up to 150kg hydrogen onsite) and Kittybrewster (dispenses 360kg hydrogen per day, stores up to 420kg hydrogen onsite) which both produce hydrogen onsite via electrolysis using a green electricity tariff.

14.42 The Aberdeen Hydrogen booklet (2021) includes the following diagram to illustrate the phases of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub.

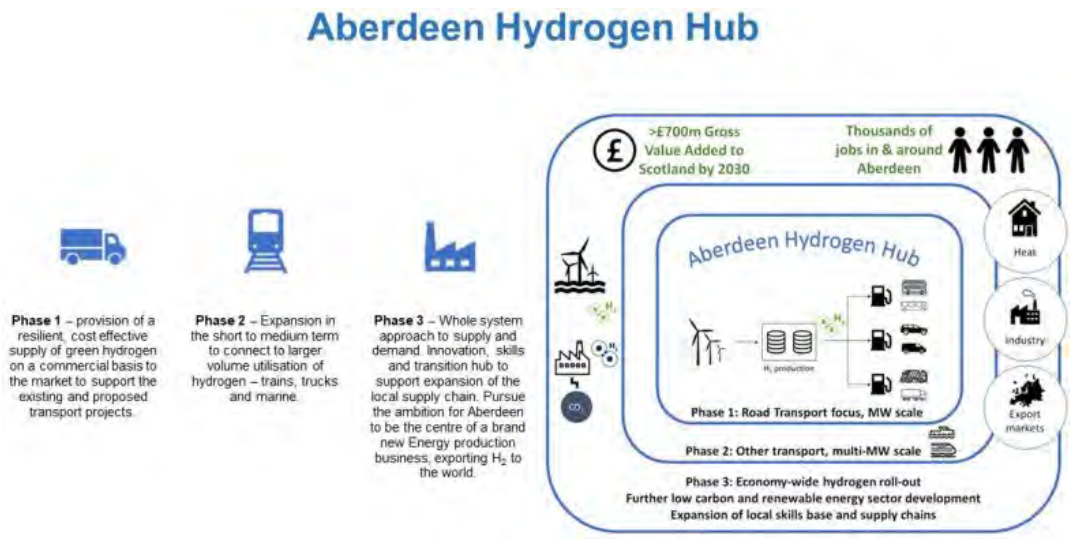


Figure 14.1: Illustration of phases of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub

Energy from Waste

14.43 The city's Energy from Waste plant was developed on the former gas holder site in East Tullos. The facility is designed to treat non-recyclable waste from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Council areas and generates electricity which is sold back to the National Grid and heat is supplied to the local Torry Heat Network. This is outlined in further detail under the 'Zero Waste' section of this Topic Paper.

Biogas

14.44 There is an anaerobic digestion plant at The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA) which has been developed by Aberdeen City Council. The facility meets the heat and power demands of the TECA facility. Some gas is exported to the grid. Some gas is also used as an energy source for hydrogen systems to power city buses. This is outlined in further detail under the 'Zero Waste' section of this Topic Paper.

Solar Energy

14.45 The vast majority of solar power developments in Aberdeen come from domestic scale installations. In terms of ground mounted solar arrays, these are limited due to Aberdeen being an urban authority.

14.46 There is a significant ground array at the Mannofield Water Treatment Works (St. John's Terrace) operated by Scottish Water. OP64 is an allocated site within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 for a solar farm and an application has been approved at this 49ha site (230299/DPP). This seeks to implement a ground mounted solar PV system at the Ness Landfill site. There is a 54ha solar array built at Chapel Works, Bucksburn. An EIA screening was also sought in 2023 for a solar array covering a total area of 85.9ha at Perwinnes Hill, Bridge of Don (230797/ESC). Evidence suggests there has been, so far, limited appetite for large scale ground mounted solar array farms within Aberdeen City's boundary, though the interest in developing two very large sites recently may suggest that could change.

Battery Energy Storage Systems

14.47 A number of planning applications have come forward seeking approval for battery storage schemes within Aberdeen City's authority boundary. These are all applications (5.4ha total) that have been submitted between September 2023 and July 2025. This is displayed in the following table:

Planning ref.	Location	Capacity	Note
240313/DPP	1.8ha site at Craigshaw Drive	>20MW	Includes EV charging.
231336/DPP	1ha site at Rigifa Farm, Cove Road	Up to 49.9MW	
231134/DPP	0.7ha site at Persley Croft Parkway	Up to 49.9MW	

Table 14.5: Aberdeen City BESS Planning Applications

14.48 In addition to this, Proposal of Application Notices have been submitted for the following:

Planning ref.	Location	Capacity	Note
230869/PAN	Aryburn Farm, Dyce	33MW	Further consultation required.
211081/PAN	Raiths Industrial Estate, Kirkton Drive / Pitmedden Road, Dyce	50MW	Further consultation required.
201599/PAN	Farburn Place, Dyce	Unlisted	Further consultation required.

Table 14.6: Aberdeen City BESS Proposal of Application Notices

14.49 Furthermore, screening opinions have been sought for the following:

Planning ref.	Location	Capacity	Note
230797/ESC	Perwinnes Hill, Bridge of Don	45MW	Includes 84MW Solar Arrays. EIA not required (screening opinion).
170822/ESC	Mains of Charleston, Old Stonehaven Road	Unlisted	Includes 6MW Solar Arrays. EIA not required (screening opinion).

Table 14.7: Aberdeen City BESS Proposals for Screening Opinions

Heating and Cooling

14.50 The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (CD184) sets the target for Scotland to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with interim targets of a 75% reduction by 2030 and 90% by 2030.

Heat in Buildings Strategy: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in Scotland's Buildings (CD204)

14.51 Scotland's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) (CD204) outlines the Scottish Government's plan to achieve the net zero target set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 and Climate Change Plan. It outlines the Scottish Government's ambition to see a 68% reduction in emissions from buildings by 2030 against a 2020 baseline as set out in the Climate Change Plan Update (CD023). It aims to see at least 22% of heat in buildings to be directly supplied from renewable sources by 2030. The strategy calls for deployment of zero emissions heating systems and increased use of 'No and Low Regrets Strategic Technologies' to heat Scotland's homes.

14.52 As part of the strategy, the Scottish Government's New Build Heat Standard (NBHS) (2025) requires all new buildings to install climate-friendly heating systems instead of oil and gas boilers. This applies to all systems used for heating and cooling, and hot water. This is expected within all new buildings, and some conversions where the building warrant was sought on or after 1 April 2024. While this sits within the remit of Building Standards, consideration of this will be required when developing the next Local Development Plan.

14.53 Further, the Scottish Government has proposed a new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) (2023) (CD205). At the time of writing, the Social Housing Net Zero Standard has been consulted on and is being considered. This new standard will replace the second Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH2). Following a review of EESSH2, the new SHNZS seeks to implement refined requirements that are more aligned with Scottish Government's net zero targets. Similarly, these standards will need to be considered when developing the next Local Development Plan.

Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy (CD206)

14.54 The Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy recognises the centrality of energy use in Aberdeen's buildings towards the pursuit of net zero targets (CD206). In Aberdeen, the built environment comprises 19% of Aberdeen's emissions. The strategy aims to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 through rapid decarbonisation across all sectors through changes to the ways in which power and heat are generated and used. Additionally, it states a commitment to 'Plan expansion in infrastructure for existing and new heating networks, such as the Aberdeen Heat & Power (AHP) model. Expanding connections to different property types and to privately owned domestic and commercial properties.'

14.55 Key Outcomes identified in the Strategy include:

- Improved energy performance data
- Improved plans, policies, and standards
- Improved energy efficiency of buildings
- Improve energy management controls
- Expand low and zero emissions heating
- Increased connections to decentralised energy
- Reduced fuel poverty

Scotland Heat Data

14.56 The Scottish Heat Map provides estimates of annual heat demand. Demand is given in kilowatt-hours per year (kWh/yr). Areas of higher heat demand are predominantly concentrated around central areas of Aberdeen. In particular, greatest heat demand is recorded near Old Aberdeen, Bridge of Don and Gilcomston.

14.57 Greenspace Scotland provides data regarding heat usage and offers spatial data reflecting the suitability of a given area for the use of heat networks in locations across Scotland. This is demonstrated in the Green Heat in Greenspaces settlement profile. It states that Aberdeen's total heat demand sits at 2,642,706 MWh per year. Aberdeen achieves a 'high' ranking for suitability for district heat networks.

Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021

14.58 The Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 requires local authorities to carry out a review of potential areas for the installation of heat networks. Targets outlined within the Act require the combined supply of thermal energy by heat networks to reach 2.6 TWh of output by 2027 and 6 TWh of output by 2030. In September 2025 Aberdeen City Council published its Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan, which identifies areas suitable for heat network zones and sets out priority locations for future heat network development.

Aberdeen Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

14.59 Aberdeen City Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan every five years. The first Aberdeen Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan (LHEES) was approved in September 2025 and provides a long-term framework of how buildings can be made more energy efficient and their heat sources decarbonised. It sets out a baseline of existing building stock and identifies early, low-regret measures across four main priorities for Aberdeen:

- Priority A Heat network development
- Priority B Building level decarbonisation
- Priority C Improving building energy efficiency
- Priority D Alleviating fuel poverty

14.60 The strategy articulates several challenges which need to be overcome in meeting these priorities, including:

- Certain tenure types such as owner-occupied, private rented and mixed-tenure, combined with historic buildings make significant fabric upgrades challenging.
- An underdeveloped supply chain for energy efficiency and heating upgrades.
- Expansion of existing heat networks, particularly the modifications required in property and ground infrastructure as well as new contractual agreements.
- Consumer uncertainty about new technologies.
- Market disincentives, such as the unit price differential between gas and electricity.

14.61 Reflecting the requirements of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021, the Delivery Plan identifies potential heat network zones. There are nine priority heat network

zones, collectively focused on areas of high heat density, including poorly heated flatted properties where residents are at risk of fuel poverty, alongside locations with significant non-domestic heat demand that can provide a stable load and support the efficient operation and viability of heat networks. In addition, a further four heat network zones are identified as suitable for longer-term development, representing smaller-scale opportunities where further detailed assessment will be required to consider viability, including potential connections to existing networks, available system capacity, and design considerations such as heat sources and infrastructure requirements.

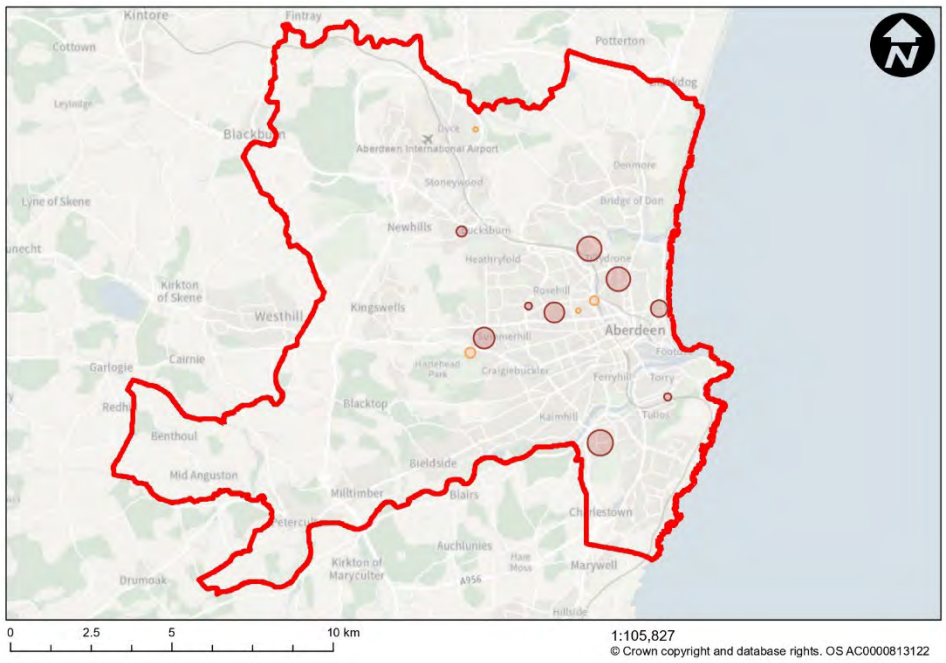


Figure 14.2: Location of priority heat network zones (red circles) and four additional heat network zones (orange circles)

14.62 The Aberdeen LHEES sets the direction for decarbonising heat and improving the energy efficiency of buildings across the city, providing a clear framework for reducing emissions and tackling fuel poverty. The next Local Development Plan will consider how it can contribute to the priorities it identifies.

City Combined Heat and Power Network

14.63 The City Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Network is a project that seeks to build a city-wide heat network. It currently provides energy efficient, low cost, low carbon heating in 52 multistorey blocks, 2 sheltered housing blocks and 31 public and commercial buildings in the city. The schemes are managed by Aberdeen Heat and Power Co Ltd (AHP) and export electricity to the national grid or to local buildings and to the district heat network energy centres. They provide more affordable energy tariffs and maintenance costs and reduce the CO2 emissions to properties connected within the schemes.

14.64 There are seven CHP operating schemes at:

- Stockethill
- Hazlehead
- Seaton
- Tillydrone
- City Centre
- Wellheads
- Sillerton Lane

14.65 Buildings connected to the schemes have seen emissions reduced by approximately 56%, while reducing residents' fuel bills by up to 50%.

Heatnet

14.66 Aberdeen City Council is a project partner in the delivery of Interreg Heatnet NWE, a European-funded project, which aims to increase the provision of district heating networks and affordable warmth within North West European countries. As part of the Heatnet NWE project, Aberdeen City Council is completing a pilot project in Torry. An existing district heating network within this area currently serves three multistorey blocks. The pilot will expand this existing network, linking in three municipal buildings; Balnagask House, Provost Hogg Court and Deeside Family Centre. Nicol of Skene have been appointed to deliver the project.

Aberdeen Heat Networks

14.67 There are a number of heat networks across Aberdeen. See details below:

Location	Description
Tillydrone	Tillydrone Energy Centre supplies 7 multi-storey blocks and 79 new build properties with heat, as well as Riverbank new and existing schools, Tillydrone Nursery, St Machar Academy, Lighthouse Family Centre, Lads' Club Tillydrone, St George's Church and Tillydrone Health Hub. The Tillydrone Energy Centre currently uses around 1,277 MW of natural gas taken from the grid per month, but can be converted to use alternative renewable supplies as these become available in the future. It generates an average monthly output of 702MW in heat and 362MW in electricity. The goal is to eventually supply all properties in the Tillydrone Energy Centre catchment area as well as connecting to other energy centres to create an even more robust, low carbon heat network.
Hazlehead	Hazlehead Energy Centre delivers heat and power to

	Hazlehead Academy, heat to 4 multi-storey blocks, a sheltered housing scheme, and Aberdeen City Council-owned premises within Hazlehead Park. The Hazlehead Energy Centre currently uses around 742MW of natural gas taken from the grid per month, but can be converted to use alternative renewable supplies as these become available in the future. It generates an average monthly output of 423MW in heat and 131MW in electricity. Development plans for a new Low Carbon Energy Centre utilising waster heat and heat pumps are at an advanced design stage.
Seaton/Ice Arena (City Centre)	Seaton Energy Centre delivers heat to 14 multi-storey blocks, The Town House, Marischal College, Aberdeen Sports Village and Aquatic Centre, Aberdeen Beach Leisure Centre, Aberdeen Health Village, Aberdeen Central Mosque, North East Scotland College, Aulton Football Pavillion and the Beach Ballroom.

Table 14.8: Aberdeen City Heat Networks

Torry Energy from Waste Heat Network

14.68 Aberdeen City Council has developed a Heat Network in the Torry area of the city to connect both domestic and public buildings. The network utilises very low carbon waste heat from energy from waste plant in Tullos. Phase 1 & 2 of the project has recently been completed and connections continue. Future plans are to expand the heat transmission line into the city centre to connect to the current AHP heat network, this will allow the full capacity of waste heat to be utilised. Further opportunities to enhance the waste heat capacity are being investigated as the area around Torry continues to be developed.

Minerals

AMPS 10th Annual Mineral Planning Survey 2022 (CD207)

14.69 Across the UK, analysis of reserve replenishment rates and annual sales illustrates declining reserve trends (CD207). Given the growing demand for aggregates to support the delivery of major infrastructure projects, the pressure on reserve availability and supply can be expected to increase. This needs to be closely monitored, given the time required for any corrective action to take effect. The future supply of essential minerals cannot be assumed and it requires effective planning, management and monitoring to ensure sustainable and cost-effective supply.

14.70 As of the end of 2021 the rolling 10-year average for replenishment of sand & gravel and crushed rock reserves was 63% and 52% respectively. The report (CD207) indicates that aggregate sales (both sand and gravel and crushed rock) in Scotland were greater than permitted reserves between 2012 and 2021.

14.71 Data from this report (CD207), and future iterations of this report, will be required to inform the next Local Development Plan as it seeks to ensure reserves are available to meet demands of future development.

Aggregates Demand and Supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2035 (CD208)

14.72 The Mineral Products Association's report, 'Aggregate Demand and Supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2025' (CD208), indicates that between 3.8 and 4.1 billion tonnes of aggregates will be required in the UK between 2022 and 2035 to support construction needs. This compares to a total of 3.2 billion tonnes of aggregates supplied in the previous 14-year period, between 2008 and 2021. It suggests that approximately 250 million tonnes of aggregates are used each year in the UK, and a further 20 million tonnes in Northern Ireland.

14.73 The report (CD208) concludes that less than one third of total aggregates demand, 28% in 2021, is supplied from recycled and secondary sources, the remainder requires the extraction of primary aggregates. It states that approximately 90% of all aggregates are used by the construction industry. Recycled and secondary sources of aggregates will provide a valuable source of supply, however they cannot fulfil the demands of construction activity. Therefore, significant tonnages of primary extraction will be expected to provide the majority of supply and meet overall demand. Primary aggregates are projected to supply between 68% and 72% of total demand by 2035.

14.74 There is no national mechanism to provide an overall assessment of future construction aggregate needs. However, the next Local Development Plan will need to consider data from this report as it looks to ensure resources are managed effectively to secure provision for future development in Aberdeen.

Collation of the Results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland (2023) (CD209)

14.75 The Aggregate Minerals Survey by Scottish Government and British Geological Survey (BGS) provides an understanding of national and regional sales, inter-regional flows, transportation, consumption and permitted reserves of primary aggregates (CD209). It demonstrates that the total permitted reserves in active and inactive sites in Scotland for aggregates use as at 31/12/2019 were 1298 Mt, of which crushed rock accounted for 95% (1229 Mt), and sand and gravel accounted for 5% (69 Mt). As of 2019, sand and gravel reserves were equivalent to approximately eighteen years' output with crushed rock reserves equivalent to approximately seventy-two years.

14.76 Of the 1298 Mt permitted reserves of primary aggregates in active and inactive sites in Scotland in 2019, the North East reserve was 145.6 Mt.

14.77 The North East distribution area comprises Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. As of 2019, the permitted reserve of active and inactive sites was 145,567 thousand tonnes (11% of Scotland's total).

14.78 Of the 20.8 Mt of sand and gravel and crushed rock sold in 2019 in Scotland, 1.6 Mt (8%) was from North East Scotland. The majority of which was transported by road, however a small proportion was transported by water. Of the 13.7 Mt consumed in 2019 in Scotland 1.5 Mt was in North East Scotland.

14.79 The following table reflects a summary of exports and imports of primary aggregates in 2019 in the North East and Scotland. (Table adapted from Table 8 (page 29 of report) (CD209)).

	Export (Thousand tonnes)		Imports (Thousand tonnes)	
Region	**Sand and gravel**	**Crushed rock**	**Sand and gravel**	**Crushed rock**
North East Scotland	85	52	0	19
Scotland	1142	8482	608	1902

Table 14.9: Collation of the Results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland (2023), North East and Scotland Imports and Exports of Primary Aggregates (CD209)

14.80 Notably, while the above table indicates there are no sand and gravel imports to North East Scotland, the British Geological Survey confirms that sand and gravel are currently imported to north east Scotland and Aberdeen. However, there is no available data to confirm quantities of this.

14.81 Based on 2019 sales levels, active sites are estimated to contain sufficient reserves to provide 13 years of sand and gravel supply in Scotland and 10 years in north east Scotland. For crushed rock, reserves are estimated to provide 70 years of supply in Scotland and 121 years in north east Scotland.

Aberdeen Context

14.82 Aberdeen has a small hinterland within its administrative boundaries and thus opportunities for quarrying are much more limited here than they would be in a rural authority. There are two active hard rock quarries at Blackhills, Cove (Easting 394655 Northing 799895) and North Lasts, Peterculter (Easting 382700 Northing 804025) and both have historically been identified and reserved for mineral extraction in Local Development Plans.

14.83 North Lasts Quarry has been in operation since the late 1970s and an extension granted in 2017 has permission until 30th April 2047. This application was recommended for approval on the basis that it would ensure a landbank of permitted reserves for a period exceeding 10 years (30 years in total).

14.84 Blackhills Quarry was granted an extension in 2015 until 28 November 2050. This application was recommended for approval on the basis that it would ensure a land bank of permitted reserves for a period exceeding 10 years.

14.85 There are two operational sites for Aberdeen Harbour (Easting 397545 Northing 805860) and Aberdeen South Harbour (Easting 397000 Northing 804730). However, Aberdeen City Council is only responsible for the inland infrastructure associated with these harbour operations and Marine Scotland is responsible for licensing (and monitoring) any operations such as dredging.

Coal, Onshore Gas and Peat

14.86 The north east does not have a history of coal extraction, nor are there any Petroleum, Exploration and Development Licences (PEDL) in place for onshore unconventional oil and gas. Peat extraction does not take place within the Local Authority boundary.

Aggregates

14.87 The required of landbank of permitted reserves for construction aggregates in the North-East is satisfied by the recent permissions to extend the operations of two quarries within the administrative area. This is further supported by materials imported from quarries located in neighbouring local authorities in the North-East. There are sufficient mineral and aggregate resources available to meet demand. The effective Scottish Government moratorium on unconventional oil and gas remains in place.

Zero Waste

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan (CD210)

14.88 Scotland has taken significant steps towards achieving zero waste. In 2010, the Scottish Government launched the Zero Waste Plan (CD210), which set a number of targets including recycling 70% of all waste and sending no more than 5% of waste to landfill by 2025. Additionally, the 'Making Things Last: A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland' (2016) (CD211) provides priority points for action to move towards a more circular economy. These targets and priority points will be considered as Aberdeen supports the transition to zero waste and a circular economy.

14.89 The Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 (CD256) underlines Scotland's commitment to a circular economy based on sustainable consumption, production, and resource management. The Act provides a legislative framework to support Scotland's transition to zero waste and a circular economy, increasing reuse and recycling rates, and modernising and improving waste and recycling services. This will need to be considered in the development of the next Local Development Plan to ensure Aberdeen supports the transition to zero waste and a circular economy.

14.90 The 'Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury - Incineration in the Waste Hierarchy: Independent Review for Scotland' (2022) (CD212) identified fourteen recommendations for the

Scottish Government, industry and local authorities. The review indicates that planned incineration capacity in Scotland would be sufficient to manage current and projected residual waste at a national level to 2050. A second report was published: 'Decarbonisation of Residual Waste Infrastructure: Report' (2023) (CD251). This report provides a further 9 recommendations focusing on decarbonising residual waste. The recommendations from this report will be considered in the development of the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen to guide future waste management and support the decarbonisation of residual waste.

Circular Economy and Waste Routemap to 2030 Consultation (CD213)

14.91 Actions outlined in the 'Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030' (CD213) are designed to align with and support the provisions in the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 (CD256). The Route Map is structured around four strategic action areas:

- Reduce and Reuse;
- Modernise Recycling;
- Decarbonise Disposal; and
- Strengthen the Circular Economy.

14.92 The Route Map prioritises several key areas: reducing food waste from both households and businesses; enhancing recycling efforts in household and commercial sectors; establishing new circular economy targets; minimising the environmental impact of waste that cannot be reused or recycled; and promoting responsible production and consumption practices. This includes a focus on reducing the use of single-use items and encouraging the reuse of products.

14.93 The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this strategy to strengthen Aberdeen's circular economy and reduce unnecessary waste. This will allow Aberdeen to be aligned with wider government strategy in this area.

SEPA Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary

14.94 SEPA's 'Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary' reflects data regarding Scotland's consumption. It demonstrates that the total amount of household waste generated in Scotland in 2023 was 2.30 MT which represents a decrease of 26,000 tonnes (1.1%) from 2022. This is the lowest recorded amount of Scottish household waste generated since 2011. Whilst the overall Scottish household waste recycling rate has marginally increased from 43.3% in 2022 to 43.5%, the overall amount of household waste recycled has fallen by 0.8% to 1.00 MT in line with reduction in household waste generated. The long-term trend of household waste landfilled continues with a 30.2% decrease from 2022 to a total amount of 409,000 tonnes in 2023. In 2023, 894,000 tonnes was diverted from landfill. The majority of diverted waste from landfill was managed by incineration (746,000 tonnes or 83.5%).

14.95 Similarly, the carbon impact of Scottish household waste generated and managed in 2023 decreased by 3.2% from 2022. In 2023, the carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) per person in Scotland was 0.98 TCO2e.

14.96 This data can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan as it considers waste management in Aberdeen, with recognition of trends to support waste management that has minimal carbon emissions impact.

Aberdeen City Waste Strategy (CD215)

14.97 The 'Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014-2025' (CD215) sets out the future requirements for waste management policy, infrastructure and services for the city. It sets themes, goals and objectives that will transition waste management towards a system reflecting the waste hierarchy. Currently Aberdeen City Council operate a fortnightly collection of general waste, mixed recycling and garden/food waste to all eligible domestic properties. Business waste collections are also undertaken by Aberdeen City Council. Where kerbside collection is not possible, on-street facilities, household waste recycling centres and recycling points are available for public use.

14.98 A new Waste Strategy is being developed, which will set the scene for coming years and take account of changing regulatory requirements.

Net Zero Aberdeen: Circular Economy Strategy (CD216)

14.99 The 'Net Zero Aberdeen Circular Economy Strategy' (CD216) presents the model for systematic change that will benefit the local economy, help to drive social change and contribute to the delivery of net zero ambitions. It highlights the importance of maximising the value from waste by recycling at the end of life. It seeks to look at ways to reduce levels of waste generated and find better ways to reuse, remanufacture and recycle waste produced in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen Data

14.100 According to Regional Capacity calculations for Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (CD214), in 2018, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire had a ten-year capacity of existing landfill infrastructure of 2,940,000 tonnes, and a ten-year landfill required capacity of 1,700,000. Notably, Biodegradable Municipal Waste cannot be landfilled after 2025 due to the Scottish BMW landfill ban. It is noted that this dataset is dated, however it is the most up-to-date information with this detail.

14.101 The household waste generated and managed change data for Aberdeen between 2022 and 2023 is displayed in the table below. (Table adapted from SEPA's 'Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary 2023' Table S1).

Local Authority	Generated (tonnes)	Recycled (tonnes)	Recycled (%)	Other Diversion From Landfill (tonnes)	Other Diversion From Landfill (%)	Landfilled (tonnes)	Landfilled (%)	Carbon Impact (TCO2e)
Aberdeen 2022	88,802	37,091	41.8	22,007	24.8	29,706	33.5	227,309
Aberdeen 2023	89,314	37,314	41.8	41,070	46.0	10,930	12.2	219,570
Change	+512	-223	+0	+19,063	+21.2	-18,776	-21.3	-7,739

Table 14.10: Aberdeen Generated Household Waste 2022 and 2023, adapted from SEPA's 'Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary 2023'

Household Waste Recycling Centres in Aberdeen City

14.102 There are four public household waste recycling centres across Aberdeen in Bridge of Don, Bucksburn, Hazlehead and Tullos. The centres accept a range of household waste and recycling items. All of the facilities operate 363 days a year closing only on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. From Hazlehead the "Reuse Shop" operates and sells pre-loved items donated by Aberdeen residents. All facilities are currently operated by SUEZ in partnership with Aberdeen City Council. Business and trade waste is not accepted at these facilities.

14.103 At the time of writing, construction has commenced to replace the existing Bridge of Don household waste recycling centre at a new location on Claymore Drive, a site identified within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. The facility is anticipated to provide improved layout and facilities that accept a broader range of recyclable materials and will include reuse facilities. Construction is expected to be completed in spring 2025.

Altens East Materials Recovery Facility

14.104 In 2017 the Altens East Materials Recovery Facility opened. The plant is capable of processing 20 tonnes of mixed recycling an hour and is part of Aberdeen City Council's Zero Waste Project aimed at increasing recycling rates and reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill. The plant is operated by SUEZ. However, in 2022 the facility was seriously damaged by a fire. This has meant that Aberdeen's dry recycling is currently being transported to Hartlepool. A rebuild project commenced in March 2024 and, whilst the exterior of the plant will look the same, the rebuild will see newer technology and improved efficiency at the plant. It is anticipated that the rebuilt plant will be fully operational in 2025.

TECA Anaerobic Digestion Plant

14.105 In 2019, an energy centre (combined cooling, heat and power (CCHP)) went live at The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA). It utilises a variety of technologies to provide power, heat and cooling to TECA including a hydrogen fuel cell installation. An anaerobic digestion plant uses both agricultural and food waste to produce biogas which is then conditioned providing 100% renewable energy as gas to the natural gas grid or TECA energy centre. The system uses a series of large tanks which are kept sealed and odour free. Inside the tanks, the material is gently stirred to make sure the microorganisms can turn waste into renewable energy.

NESS Energy from Waste Facility

14.106 In December 2023 the NESS Energy from Waste Facility, located in East Tullos, became fully operational. The plant processes non-recyclable waste from Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils and produces electricity for the national grid and heat for a district heating network. The facility is capable of processing 150,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste per year for the three council areas combined. The councils will not only meet their requirements under the landfill ban legislation, but reduce carbon emissions (compared to landfill) and provide low-cost heating for schools, care facilities and housing in the vicinity. Income generated from the electricity that is produced for the national grid will also assist in offsetting the cost of waste disposal.

14.107 Waste enters the bunker where it is fed into a combustion chamber. Electricity and heat are generated and sent to the national grid and to local heat networks. Waste from Aberdeenshire and Moray is transported by bulk haulage via the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the remainder is directly delivered by the City Council's refuse collection fleet.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

14.108 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report. In summary, initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group for the Energy and Resources Topic Paper.

14.109 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- University of Aberdeen
- Aberdeen Heat and Power
- SSEN
- Nature Scot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- British Geological Society
- Aberdeen City Council (Waste, Energy, Hydrogen)

14.110 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or to suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

14.111 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

14.112 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (Nature Scot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland) 1 from a housing developer, (Bancon Homes), and 5 members of the public. Of those listed, 2 stated that evidence was missed and 4 stated that they did not agree with the evidence.

14.113 Bancon Homes stated that they disagreed with the evidence presented, however, following further discussion they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence. They agreed that all key evidence has been provided. The following comments are related to the ‘Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan’ section of the Topic Paper.

14.114 Bancon Homes noted that while Heat Network Zones will be a consideration during the Proposed Plan site selection process, this should not preclude the Proposed Plan’s ability to direct development to the right locations. They emphasise that a balanced planning judgement should be made when allocating sites for residential development. While this engagement around the level of influence Heat Network Zones will have on site selection for the Proposed Plan is welcome, the site selection process considers a level of detail that is not anticipated for discussion at the Evidence Report stage of Plan preparation.

14.115 Homes for Scotland disagreed with the evidence presented. however, following further discussion they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence.

- Homes for Scotland stated that the Spatial Strategy for the Proposed Plan should consider both sustainable and marketable locations for new development. They highlighted that grid capacity should not dictate development location. The Council welcomes this discussion however its application is not considered necessary at the evidence report stage of Plan preparation.
- Homes for Scotland have stated that Planning requirements should not exceed the prevailing Building Standards regulations. The Scottish Government's Climate Change Act Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report indicates that the latest regulations surpass Section 3F requirements, making them unnecessary. The Section 3F requirement instructed local development plans to include policies that require new buildings to be designed to avoid a specified and rising proportion of greenhouse gas emissions from their use through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies. A repeal Order for Section 3F is being prepared for the Scottish Parliament. Homes for Scotland has recommended including the Scottish Government's Climate Change Act Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report in the Topic Paper. This recommendation is welcome and the evidence has been included within the 'Energy' section of this topic paper. Further text has been added to capture the changes in the requirements of LDP regarding Section 3F policies.
- Homes for Scotland have stated that due to changes to Building Standards regulations from April 2024, all new homes no longer include gas boilers, and therefore are likely to have either a ground or air source heat pump installed. They suggest that the introduction of this technology, along with increased instalments of EV charging points will result in increased electricity usage. Resultantly, the electricity network will require upgrades and potentially additional sub-stations. Information concerning electricity supply in Aberdeen is outlined in the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper.
- Homes for Scotland highlighted the 'Beyond 2030' report, a national blueprint for a decarbonised electricity system across Great Britain. This evidence has now been included in the Topic Paper, however, further detail concerning gas and electricity infrastructure is outlined in the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper. Additionally, further information concerning EV charging points is identified in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.
- Concerning the 'Heating and Cooling' section of the Topic Paper, Homes for Scotland suggested that it is unreasonable to design developments for future heat network connections due to the involvement of multiple landowners, uncertainty over how this would be carried out, and potential additional costs. Additionally, home owners may be unwilling to convert from existing energy providers. They encourage the Council to collaborate with the energy District Network Operator to align network upgrades with future housing supply. This is currently being progressed, as the Council works with Aberdeen Heat and

Power to develop the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan.

- Homes for Scotland recommended the inclusion of the Climate Change (Scotland) 2019 Act, and this has been included under the 'Energy' section of this Topic Paper. They also recommended inclusion of the 'Is Scotland Climate Ready?' (2022) report from the Climate Change Committee. This was additionally recommended for use in the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper and has been included there.

14.116 Four individuals identified that there are no missing pieces of evidence, Two individuals stated that they agreed with the evidence presented. Of those, one individual added "It is relevant and accurate".

14.117 One individual did not indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the evidence, however they stated: "No clear communications, not easy to understand the point". The Council notes these comments and appreciates that the Topic Papers present a vast amount of information. This is not recognised as a dispute.

14.118 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Energy

14.119 The Proposed Plan should consider a tailored local policy approach to maximise renewable, and low-carbon energy opportunities in Aberdeen.

14.120 The Proposed Plan should support development of renewable, and low-carbon energy opportunities, which may include identifying energy opportunities in Aberdeen.

14.121 With a detailed energy policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

Heating and Cooling

14.122 The Aberdeen LHEES sets the direction for decarbonising heat and improving the energy efficiency of buildings across the city, providing a clear framework for reducing emissions and tackling fuel poverty. The Proposed Plan will consider how it can contribute to the priorities it identifies

14.123 The Proposed Plan should consider the location of Heat Network Zones, as identified in Aberdeen's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy to inform heat

distribution across the City. It should support the development of future heat generation schemes that seek to connect to the network.

14.124 The Heat Network Zones identified in Aberdeen will be a consideration during the Proposed Plan site selection process.

14.125 With a detailed heating and cooling policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

Minerals

14.126 The Proposed Plan should identify and safeguard the locations of important workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value in Aberdeen.

14.127 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

Zero Waste

14.128 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

14.129 The Proposed Plan will take account of the forthcoming Waste Strategy. The Proposed Plan will consider how to support Aberdeen's Circular Economy Strategy.

Marmot Places

14.130 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilitiesand control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X

Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 14.11 Marmot Principles

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

14.131 NatureScot, NHS Grampian, and two members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

14.132 Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Engagement section above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

14.133 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic paper themselves.

Information Gaps

14.134 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

15. Topic Paper 8 – Centres of Business and Culture

Requirements addressed in this section:

15.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,

National Planning Framework 4

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

15.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should support sustainable futures for city, town and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres. They should, where relevant, also support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate.

15.3 LDPs should identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision.

15.4 LDPs should be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities. They should also consider and, if appropriate, identify any areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel.

15.5 LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development.

Retail

15.6 LDPs should consider where there may be a need for further retail provision. This may be:

- where a retail study identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area; or
- when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living.

15.7 LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported.

Tourism

15.8 LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account. The spatial strategy should also identify areas of pressure where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities, and where further development is not appropriate.

Culture & Creativity

15.9 LDPs should recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts.

Links to Evidence

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

- CD040 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and Use Classes) (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023
- CD041 Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement Report - 2023
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044 Written Statement, CD292 Proposals Map, CD293 City Centre Map)
- CD045 City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022
- CD046 Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015
- CD047 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary
- CD048 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- CD049 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2
- CD050 and CD051 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices (Volume 3A and Volume 3B)
- CD052 Aberdeen Retail Centre Health Checks 2023

Retail

- CD053 Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan 2022
- CD047 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary
- CD048 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- CD049 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2
- CD050 and CD051 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices (Volume 3A and Volume 3B)

Tourism

- CD054 The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024
- CD055 Visit Aberdeenshire Quarterly Business Monitors – April 2024 (PDF)
- CD056 National Tourism Strategy: Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for A Sustainable Future
- CD057 Destination Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire: A Framework for Growth 2022 - 2030
- CD058 Regional Economic Strategy – A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland
- CD059 Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023 - 2026
- CD060 Aberdeen City STEAM Report 2019 – 2022 (PDF)
- CD061 Aberdeen City STEAM Report 2019 - 2023 (PDF)
- CD062 Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023
- CD063 Aberdeen City Finance and Resources Committee Report 12 February 2025 CR&E/25/028
- CD064 A Visitor Levy for Aberdeen: Proposal for Consultation
- CD065 Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Short Term Lets

Tourism – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Visit Scotland Regions: Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Speyside	25 July 2024
Planning Application 211263/DPP	6 August 2024
Planning Application 200033/DPP	6 August 2024
Planning Application 210984/DPP	6 August 2024
Aberdeen City Data Observatory	6 August 2024

Culture & Creativity

- CD066 Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982
- CD067 A Human Rights Bill for Scotland: Guide to the Consultation
- CD068 Scotland's Creative Learning Plan
- CD069 Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026
- CD070 Culture Aberdeen – A Cultural Strategy for the City of Aberdeen 2018-2028

- CD062 Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023
- CD063 Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review 2023-24
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044 Written Statement, CD292 Proposals Map, CD293 City Centre Map)
- CD047 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary
- CD048 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- CD049 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2
- CD050 and CD051 Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices (Volume 3A and Volume 3B)
- CD072 Aberdeen City Cultural Market Analysis (PDF)

Culture and Creativity – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Culture Counts Spending Tracker	15 August 2024

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

15.10 Supporting Aberdeen's centres through a town centre first approach, while supporting retail, tourism, culture and creative industries, will ensure positive economic, social and cultural benefits to the residents of Aberdeen, while ensuring sustainability is paramount.

15.11 This section is structured as follows:

- City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres
- Retail
- Tourism
- Culture & Creativity

15.12 Land use planning has no influence over issues such as recruitment, weather, national taxation, energy, food or petrol prices. However, there is a role for land use planning in putting in place a policy framework and/or land allocations to ensure that significant footfall generating developments are located following a town centre first principle.

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 (CD047, CD048, CD049, CD50 & CD051)

15.13 In recognition that Aberdeen serves as the regional centre, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils commissioned a joint retail study in 2023 to assess retail

capacity, turnover, and opportunities for both local authority areas. The study aimed to gather data for the Evidence Report for the upcoming Local Development Plans, requiring robust empirical data on retail expenditure patterns and identifying any deficiencies or potential for retail growth until 2038.

15.14 The study also considered National Planning Framework 4 (CD001) and Local Development Planning Guidance, identified prime locations for retail opportunities, forecasted future retail trends, conducted household surveys, and assessed each centre listed in current Local Development Plans. Additionally, it included an analysis of commercial leisure trends due to their close relationship with retailing.

Network of Centres

15.15 The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (CD044, CD292, & CD293) sets out the current network of centres. This consists of a regional centre (City Centre including the Retail Core), two town centres, five district centres, thirty-two neighbourhood centres and five commercial centres.

Regional Centre	Town Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre			Commercial Centre
City Centre	Rosemount	Danestone	Bieldside	Haudagain	Rosemount	Garthdee
	Torry	Dyce	Braehead Way	Holburn	Sclattie Park	Kittybrewster Retail Park
		Middleton Park	Bucksburn	King Street	Scotstown	Links Road/ Boulevard Retail Park
		Rousay Drive	Byron	Kingswells	Seafield	Denmore Road
		Berryden	Chattan Place	Kittybrewster / Clifton	Seaton	Bridge of Don Retail Park
			Cornhill	Lang Stracht	Sheddocksley	
			Cove	Leadside Road	St Swithin Street	
			Cults	Mastrick	Urquhart Road	
			Culter	Hayton	Victoria Street, Dyce	
			George Street	Mannofield	Woodside	

Table 15.1: Network of Centres – Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

15.16 The locations of each centre are shown below.

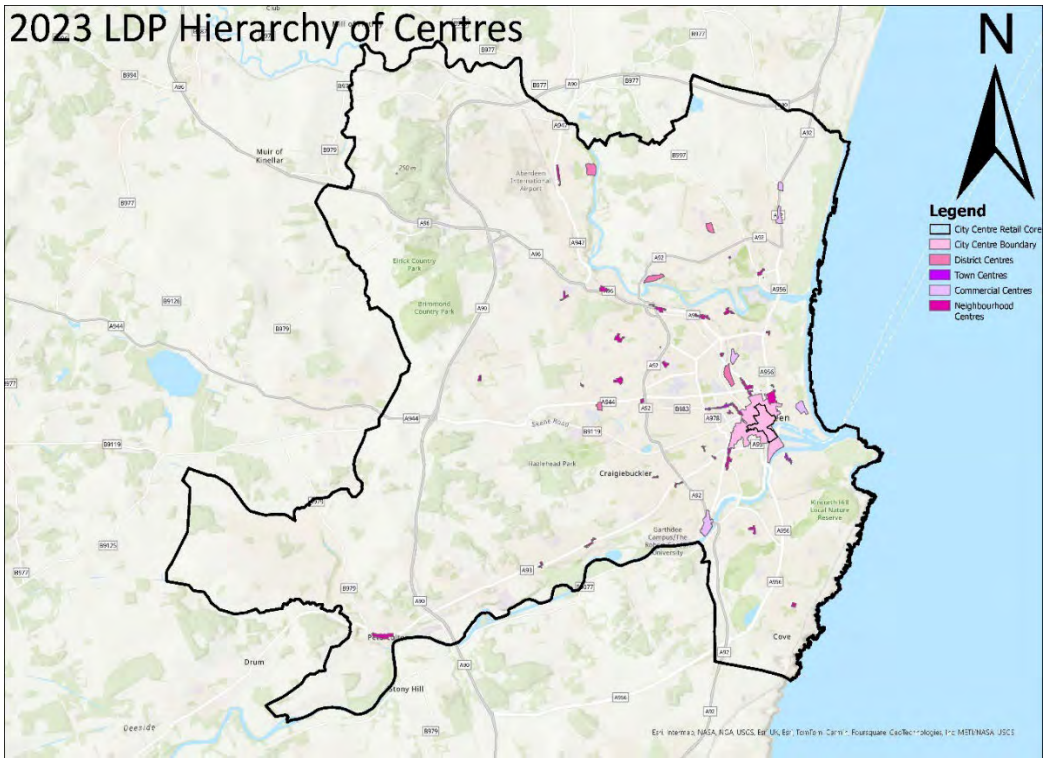


Figure 15.1: Network of Centres – Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

15.17 The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 reviewed the network of retail centres, recommending reclassification of King Street neighbourhood centre as a district centre due to its larger floorspace and significant turnover compared to other neighbourhood centres. Additionally, a moderate boundary extension at Haudagain Neighbourhood Centre was suggested to include adjacent retail sites. No other changes were recommended.

15.18 The recommended network of centres is outlined in Table 15.2.

Regional Centre	Town Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre			Commercial Centre
City Centre	Rosemount	Berryden	Bieldside	Haudagain	Sclattie Park	Bridge of Don Retail Park
	Torry	Danestone	Braehead Way	Holburn	Scotstown	Denmore Road
		Dyce	Bucksburn	Kingswells	Seafield	Garthdee
		King Street	Byron	Kittybrewster / Clifton	Seaton	Kittybrewster Retail Park
		Middleton Park	Chattan Place	Lang Stracht	Sheddocksley	Links Road/ Boulevard Retail Park
			Cornhill	Leadside Road	St Swithin Street	
			Cove	Mastrick	Urquhart Road	
			Cults	Hayton	Victoria Street, Dyce	
			Culter	Mannofield	Woodside	
			George Street	Rosemount		

Table 15.2: Recommended network of centres

Retail Centre Health Checks (CD052)

15.19 Retail Centre Health Checks are part of an ongoing programme of monitoring undertaken by the Local Development Plan Team on a biannual basis. The Health Checks provide data as an evidence base for use in other studies and strategies, supporting the preparation and implementation of the Local Development Plan (particularly City Centre, Network of Centres, Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods) and for assessing the impact of proposed retail development on existing retail centres.

15.20 The Retail Centre Health Check 2023 (CD052) provides information on the vitality and viability of Aberdeen's City Centre and other retail centres using indicators like vacancy rates, diversity of uses, retailer representation, accessibility, and pedestrian footfall. The results show that these centres continue to support a variety of retail, service, and leisure uses. The City Centre was divided into six survey areas for the health check.

15.21 Pedestrian counts in seven locations in the City Centre showed steady movement on a Saturday morning, with Guild Street, Union Street (south side), and George Street having the highest numbers. This aligns with the concentration of retail goods shops between George Street and Union Square. However, the Thursday evening count showed a 34% decrease in pedestrian numbers, suggesting late-night shopping may be less popular or unavailable.

15.22 In common with trends across Scotland, Aberdeen's City Centre has seen a shift from traditional retail to leisure, service uses, and offices, while maintaining convenience shopping to support local living. The City Centre offers various food, drink, and entertainment options, with a notable café culture. There is potential for City Centre living, through upper floor conversions along Union Street and the City Centre Masterplan Intervention Areas.

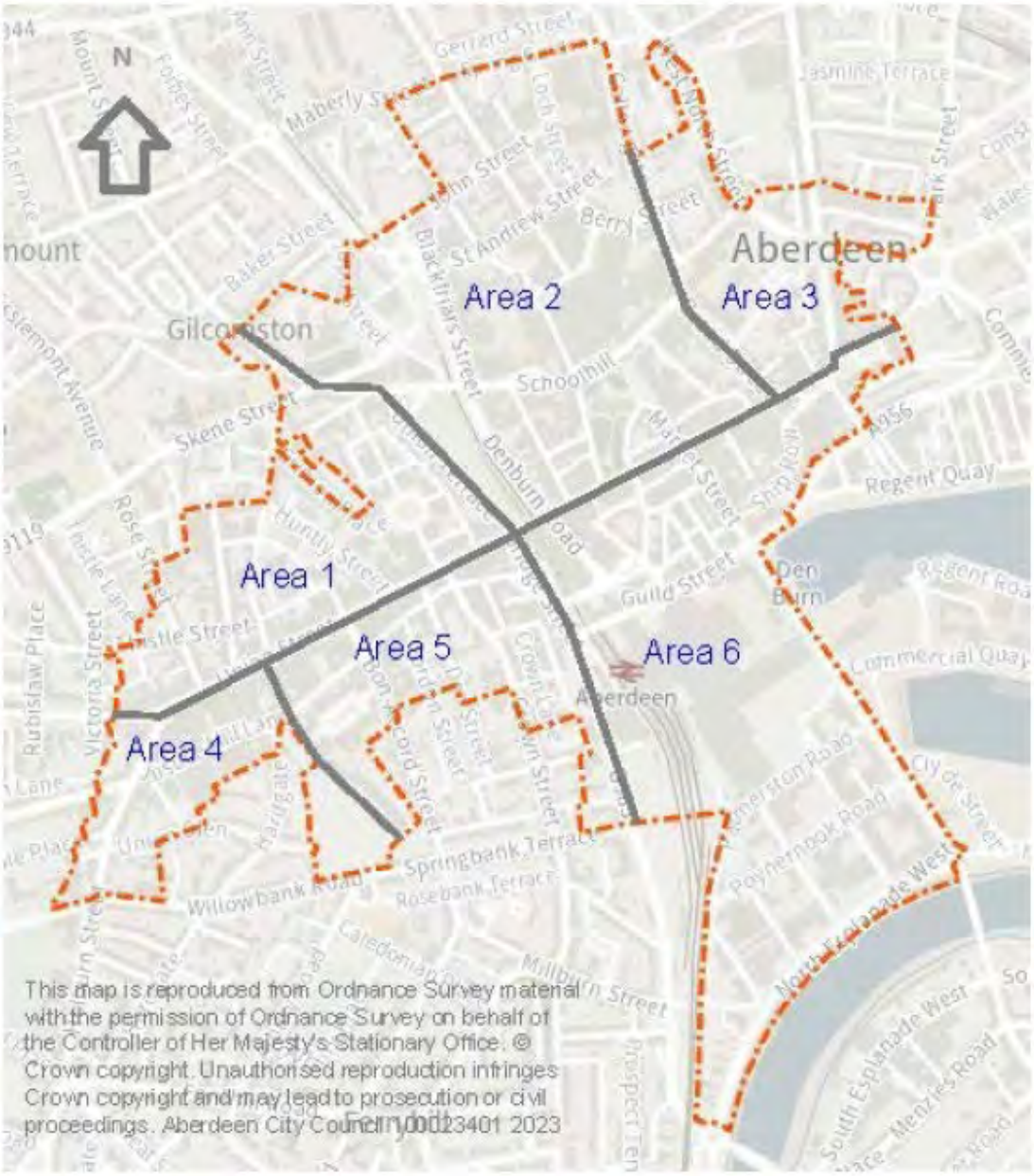


Figure 15.2: Retail Centre Health Check Survey Areas

Diversity of Uses and Vacancies

15.23 The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study Volume 2 (CD049) highlights a diverse range of uses within Aberdeen's City Centre, including retail, retail services, commercial leisure/entertainment, public services, and other uses. Retail services and commercial leisure are vital to the City Centre economy and are expected to remain in demand long term.

15.24 Retail Centre Health Checks 'Table 3' (CD052) shows leisure as the most prevalent use in the City Centre, with areas 1, 2, and 4 having a proportional split of key classifications. Area 3 has the highest percentage of leisure and lower levels of traditional retail and retail services. Area 5 has high leisure and financial/business services, while Area 6 has higher "Other" uses due to the fishing and oil industries in the area. Around 45% of units in four areas consist of convenience, comparison, retail services, financial & business services, and leisure uses. Vacant units are consistent across five areas, with Area 4 having the highest vacancy rate at 23%. Overall, leisure is the highest use at 31%, and vacancies are at 16%.

GOAD Classification	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Convenience	9	14	1	4	3	14
Comparison	32	43	3	12	9	22
Retail Services	47	52	4	23	20	28
Financial & Business Services	34	10	2	6	34	37
Leisure	58	80	30	23	77	66
Health & Medical	13	10	3	2	6	1
Religious Services	7	3	4	1	3	5
Public Service	3	3	8	2	6	3
Other	2	4	3	4	5	16
Vacant	37	46	11	23	25	29
Total Occupied Units	205	219	58	77	163	192
Total Units	242	265	69	100	188	221
(% vacant)	15%	17%	16%	23%	13%	13%

Table 15.3: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check summarising GOAD Classification per Area

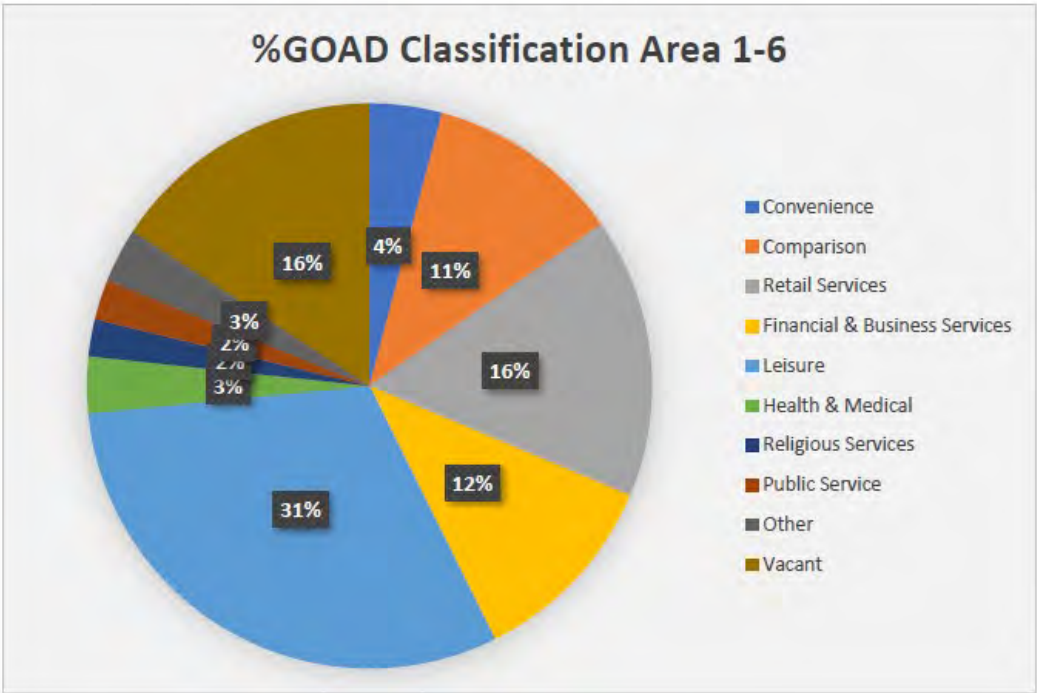


Figure 15.3: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check showing GOAD Classification of City Centre overall.

GOAD Classification	The Academy (Area 2)	Bon Accord (Area 2)	Galleria (Area 5)	Former St Nicholas (Area 2)	Trinity Centre (Area 6)	Union Square (Area 6)
Convenience	0	0	1	3	1	1
Comparison	0	23	0	11	15	42
Retail Services	0	3	2	3	2	7
Financial & Business Services	0	0	1	1	1	0
Leisure	4	9	4	0	0	31
Health & Medical	0	2	0	0	0	0
Religious Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service	0	0	0	0	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vacant	1	16	1	4	7	8
Total Occupied Units	4	37	8	18	21	81
Total Units	5	53	9	22	28	89
(% vacant)	20%	30%	11%	18%	25%	9%

Table 15.4: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check summarising GOAD Classification per Shopping Centre.

15.25 As part of the Retail Centre Health Check, a GOAD survey revealed varying vacancy rates among Aberdeen's shopping centres, with Union Square having the lowest at 9% and Bon Accord Centre the highest at 30%. Table 15.4 demonstrates a lack of diversity within all shopping centres.

15.26 The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study Volume 2 (CD049) noted a significant increase in vacant units and floorspace, primarily due to the closures of John Lewis and Debenhams, which have impacted footfall and concentrated vacancies in the former John Lewis/Bon Accord area. Footfall has reduced since 2012, and major development plans for Bon Accord Centre and Union Square have not been implemented.

Clustering of non-retail uses

15.27 The Retail Centre Health Check (CD052) found no significant issues with the clustering of betting shops, high interest money lenders, or takeaways in the City Centre. There are 11 betting shops (1%), 2 high interest money lenders (0.18%), and 34 takeaways (3%) in the areas monitored, with Area 5 having the highest number (12) of takeaways. These uses will continue to be monitored. The analysis of takeaways does not include restaurants or cafes that offer takeaway services in addition to traditional “sit-in” offer. In addition, specific analysis will be undertaken on takeaways within the local authority boundary area.

15.28 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study Volume 1 (CD048) noted difficulty in identifying specific categories of uses (pay-day loans, hot-food carry-outs etc.) but acknowledged their importance as local facilities in smaller centres. Local policies in emerging local development plans might address clustering, although defining a cluster/concentration is challenging.

Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 (CD047)

15.29 A retail study was finalised in 2023 to inform preparation of the Evidence Report to subsequently inform the preparation of the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan. It derived key information for the Evidence Report, as required by National Planning Framework 4.

15.30 The Retail Study identifies the City Centre as the principal concentration of retail/service uses, accounting for significant portions of retail floorspace, turnover, and total units within the wider study area. Despite its regional importance, the City Centre does not dominate provision, though it is much larger than other locations like Inverurie town centre. The City Centre accounts for approximately 40% of the city's retail turnover, with varying percentages across different types of retail goods.

15.31 Town centres have a smaller share of retail/service floorspace and turnover compared to District and Commercial Centres, with combined overall turnover less than the City Centre. Limited changes in retail/service floorspace were observed, with some centres increasing in turnover while others declined slightly.

Householder surveys

15.32 Household surveys were conducted as part of the Retail Study, where respondents were asked about the City Centre and the two town centres.

City Centre

15.33 Views on the City Centre were slightly positive, especially regarding the comparison goods offer, despite an increase in vacant units. Parking was considered difficult and expensive, but public transport access was seen as easy.

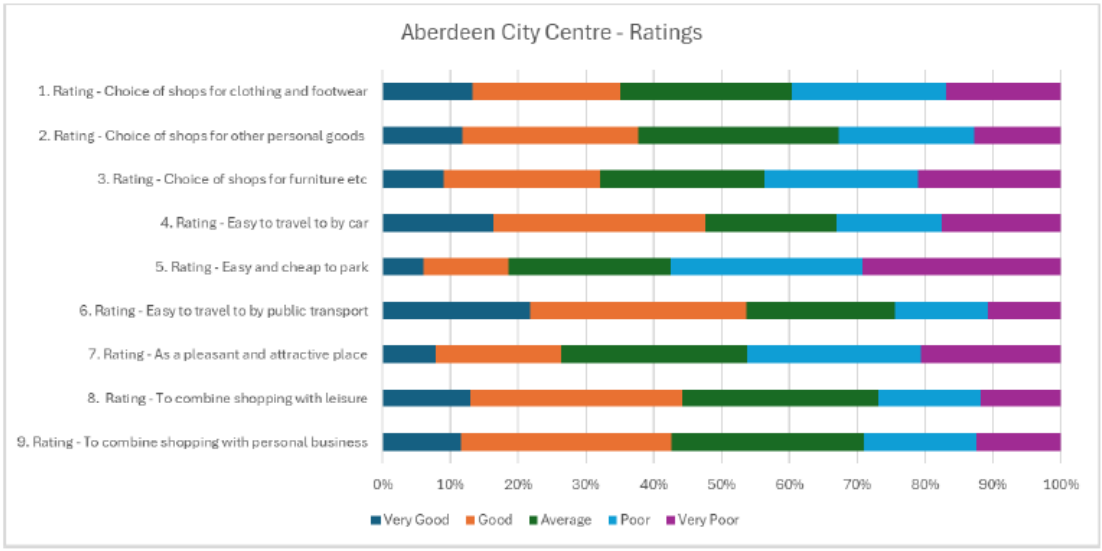


Figure 15.4: Householder Survey – City Centre – Ratings

Rosemount Town Centre

15.34 Overall, the views expressed were slightly positive, but there were perceived weaknesses in the poor offering for general and bulky comparison goods.

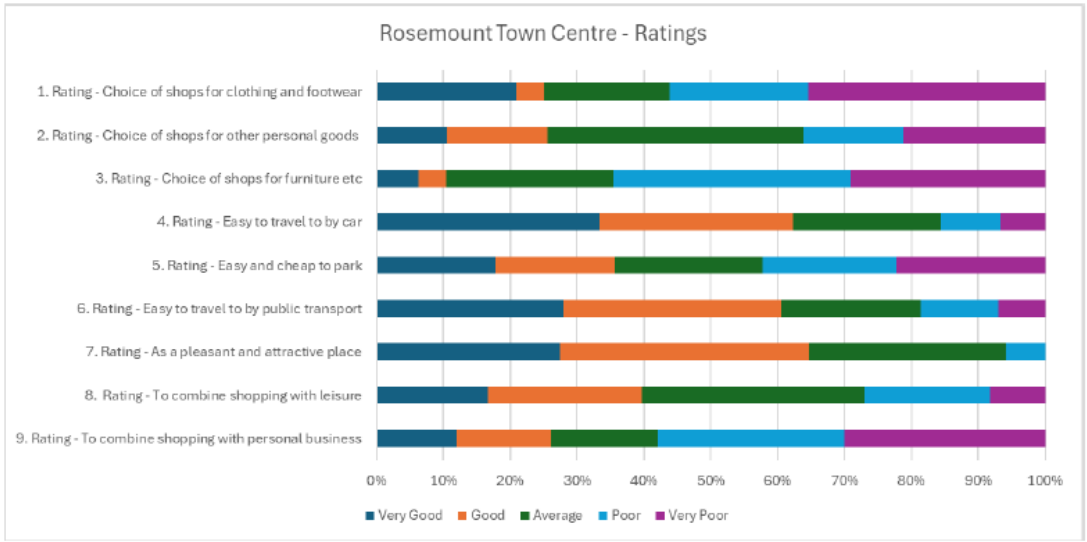


Figure 15.5: Householder Survey – Rosemount Town Centre – Ratings

Torry Town Centre

15.35 Despite its limited size, the centre was viewed positively by visitors despite higher vacancy rates, limited retail goods, and a decline in comparison shopping.

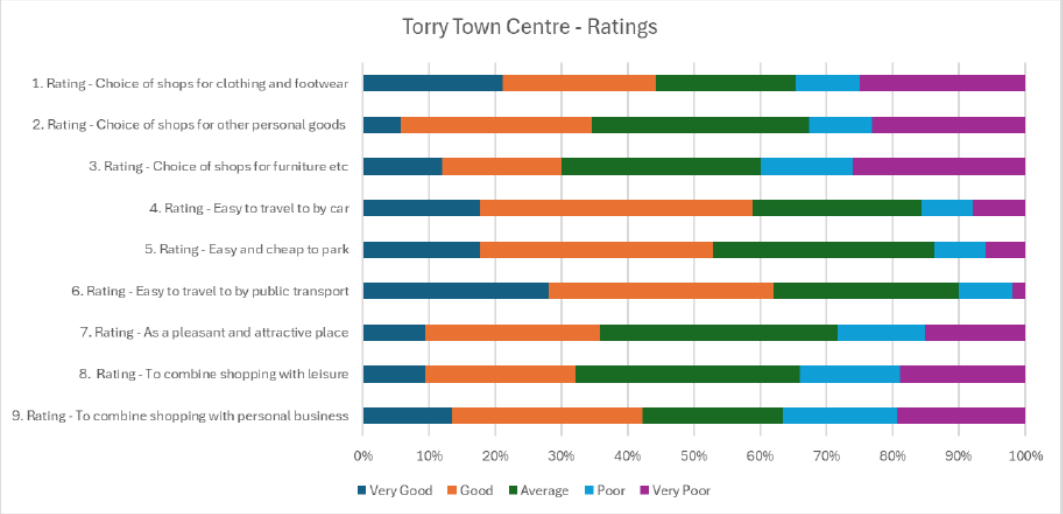


Figure 15.6: Householder survey – Torry Town Centre – Ratings.

Drive-Throughs

15.36 Aberdeen has 15 drive-throughs, mostly located on radial routes near the A96, A956, and A92. Exceptions include drive throughs in retail centres at Berryden, Kittybrewster, and the Beach & Leisure area. Table 15.5 and Figure 15.7 set out the locations of the Drive Throughs.

McDonald's	KFC	Tim Hortons	Burger King	Costa	Starbucks	Popeyes
Bucksburn	Haudagain Neighbourhood Centre	West Tullos Ind Est	Berryden District Centre	Bridge of Don Commercial Centre	Bridge of Don	West Altens Ind Est
Kittybrewster Commercial Centre	Bridge of Don		Beach and Leisure	West Tullos Ind Est	West Altens Ind Est	
West Tullos Ind Est			West Altens Ind Est			
Bridge of Don						

Table 15.5: Location of Drive-Throughs.

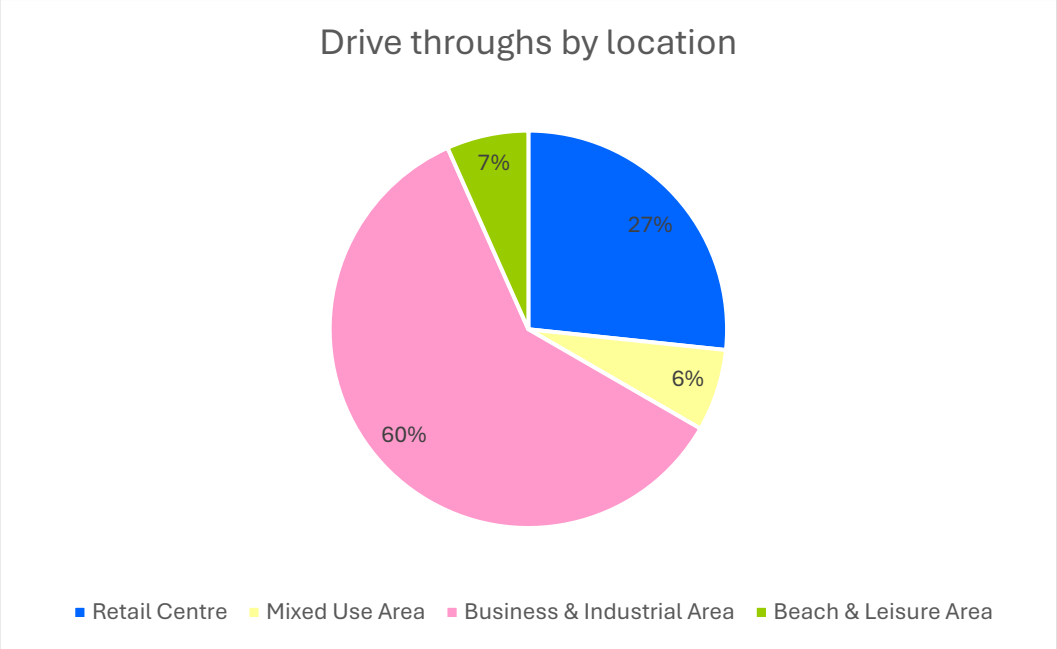


Figure 15.7: Location of Drive-Throughs by location

15.37 Spatial distribution is set out in Figure 15.8 below. Notably, most are not close to residential areas and generally require crossing busy roads. Consideration should be given to whether these locations positively contribute to local living and whether local policies should be included in future Local Development Plans to guide the determination of future applications.

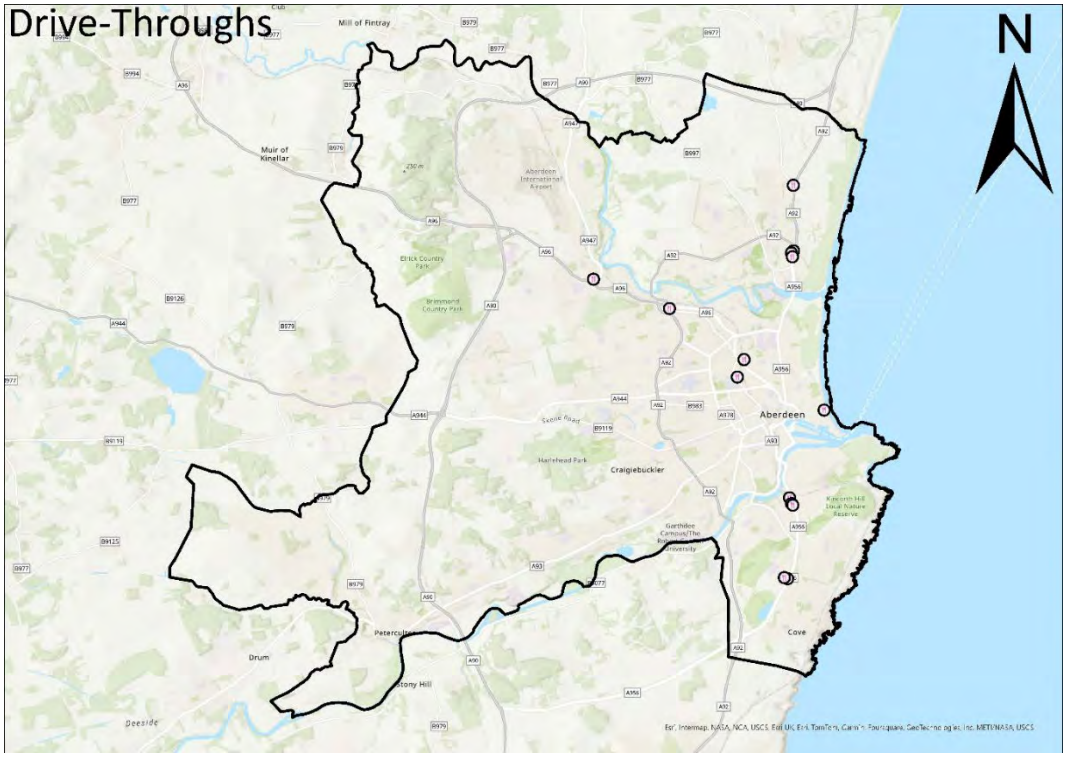


Figure 15.8: Distribution of Drive-Throughs

Place Standard Assessments

15.38 A Place Standard exercise was carried out with adults and children. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assesses places and is split into fourteen themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of seven, and people are asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with "all" noting where these comments were present in all three areas. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations.

15.39 The Work and Local Economy theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 3.91 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below.

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Work and Local Economy	• Good training opportunities, volunteering opportunities and availability of jobs. (All) • Local businesses and independents opening (Central) • Range of retail services (Central)	• Type and range of job opportunities available locally (North and Central) • Improve employment support and training (North and Central) • Volunteering opportunities (North) • Training especially for retraining and skills development (South and Central) • Empty buildings grants and incentives (South and Central)

Table 15.6: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's "Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023" (CD041).

15.40 The children and young people results on work and local economy noted: 62.3% felt they were okay, 32.1% felt they were not good, and 5.7% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Work and Local Economy	Volunteering	20.8%	Training to learn	29.3%

			new things	
	Jobs for my family	17.9%	Jobs nearby	27.4%
	Jobs nearby	14.2%	Jobs for my family	17%

Table 15.7: Top 3 responses for ‘What is good now’ and ‘What would make it better?’ Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen’s “Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023” (CD041)

15.41 The results of the Place Standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

City Centre and Beach Masterplan

15.42 Aberdeen City Council approved a comprehensive document in 2015 (CD046) outlining a 25-year vision for transforming the City Centre. The masterplan focuses on creating a living, vibrant, connected, and resilient city through various projects and interventions, including new residential and mixed-use areas, an improved retail and leisure offer, enhanced connectivity, and sustainability efforts. It is used to inform decisions by the Council and other stakeholders undertaking development in the City Centre. The masterplan has potential to support tourism and the visitor economy in alignment with the objectives of the extant Local Development Plan 2023 to energise the City Centre. In August 2022 a refresh was approved, alongside the development of a new Beach Masterplan (CD045), but does not replace nor supersede the masterplan approved in 2015. The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the aims of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme (CD046) and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CD045).

15.43 The Masterplan outlines projects to boost economic growth and benefit Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire communities. Key projects include changes to Union Street, a new city market, revitalising the beach area, Queen Street proposals, and West End improvements. The goal is to increase footfall and dwell time for visitors and residents whilst enhancing the City Centre's prosperity. The beach development plans focus on enhancing both the built and natural assets of the area, which is already a tourism focus in its own right. Phase 1 includes creating a beach park, a large events field, and improving Broadhill as a natural landmark, and construction is currently underway.

15.44 Work began in April 2024 to improve the City Centre streetscape and urban realm by widening pavements on a section of Union Street. Other recent interventions include bus priority measures on Bridge Street, Market Street, and Guild Street, and a low emission zone (LEZ) in the City Centre to enhance air quality and promote sustainable transport. Construction on the new market commenced in 2024 with aspirations for the building to become a destination venue for the City Centre. It received £20 million funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.

15.45 Online and in-person stakeholder engagement has been undertaken in relation to the George Street Area (2022) and associated mini masterplan (2023), Queen Street Urban Park and Castlegate (2024).

City Region Deal

15.46 The Aberdeen City Region Deal, signed in 2016, committed the UK and Scottish governments to invest up to £250m to support economic regeneration in the region. The deal aims to encourage investment in innovation, internationalisation, digital connectivity, and infrastructure across the region. Investments include £90 million to support an Oil and Gas Technology Centre, and £15 million towards new innovation hubs focusing on research, development and growth in the life sciences and food and drink sectors. Key projects include the Aberdeen South Harbour (National Planning Framework 4 – National Development 14 completed in 2023), BioHub (opened in 2023), SeedPod (opened in 2025), Net Zero Technology Centre (formerly the Oil and Gas Technology Centre), 5G digital technology and transport projects.

15.47 The extant Local Development Plan 2023 identifies how projects have been funded through the City Region Deal. The Proposed Plan may continue to identify specific allocations and/or land zonings to reflect projects which are facilitated by the City Region Deal.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and Use Classes) (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023 (CD040)

15.48 The General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 and the Use Classes (Scotland) Order 1997 were amended on 31 March 2023 to introduce changes that provide greater flexibility in changing the use of certain buildings. A new use class, Class 1A, replaces Class 1 and Class 2, allowing changes between retail, business, financial/professional services, food and drink, and other high street uses without planning consent. Additionally, buildings can change to use class 3 (food and drink) from class 1A. Rights for betting shops, payday loan shops, and hot food takeaways to change to use class 3 have also been introduced, along with the placement of furniture on public roads adjacent to class 3 premises, pubs, and bars. These changes aim to support the vitality and vibrancy of town centres. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 largely supported these changes in principle, although consent would have been required, and the "Retail Core" designation may need to be reviewed in future plans.

Retail

15.49 The principal requirement for the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils' Retail Study was to provide robust data on retail expenditure patterns and identify deficiencies or capacity for retail growth until 2038. It includes identifying locations for retail opportunities, forecasting future retail trends, conducting household surveys, and assessing centres in the Local Development Plans. An assessment of trends in commercial leisure is also included due to its close interrelationship with retailing. The retail industry is impacted by social, economic, and technological factors, leading to higher vacancy rates due to brand consolidation and the rise of internet shopping/click and collect. Aberdeen City, as the regional centre for the North East, has the highest gross floor space in the region at 667,887 sqm and a turnover of £1,656.24m. See Figure 15.9.

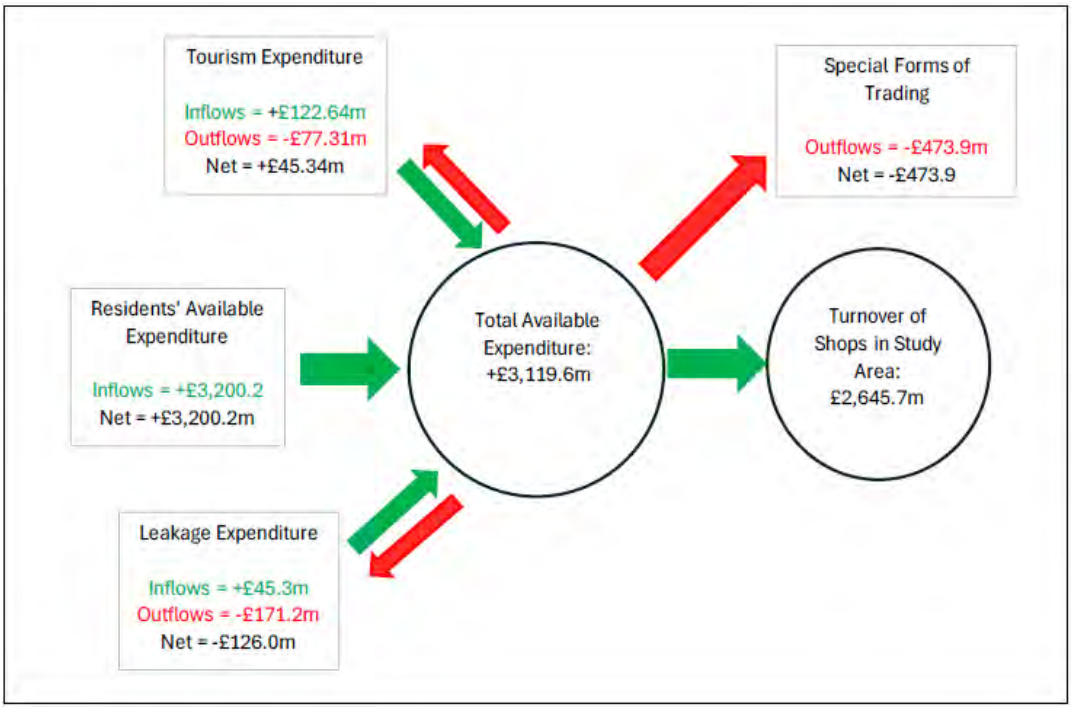


Figure 15.9: Extract from Retail Study showing retail expenditure flows and turnover for the North East Region in 2023.

Summary of Retail and Services Provision in Aberdeen City 2023

Type	Number	Gross Floor Space (sqm)
Retail Goods Shops	856	429,296
Retail Services	1054	148,158
Vacant	200	68,752
Total	2110	667,887

Table 15.8: Type of retail and service provision by number and area

15.50 Across Aberdeen City, in terms of number of units, there is a 9% vacancy rate and the split between retail goods shops and retail services is 41%/50%. Vacancy rates by number of units and gross floor space:

Centre	No. units	No. %	Gross floor space (sqm)	Gross floor Space %
City Centre	111	11%	55,300	17%
Town Centre	22	14%	1,483	10%
District Centre	6	11%	1,333	2%
Commercial Centre	3	8%	2,463	2%
Remainder	58	6%	8,173	5%
Total	200	9%	68,752	10%

Table 15.9: Vacancy rates by retail centre

15.51 Table 15.9 above demonstrates that town centres had the highest vacancy rates in terms of units at 14%. However, by gross floor space it was the City Centre with the highest rate of vacancies at 17%.

Retail goods shops – retail type and turnover

Group of Centres		Convenience	Comparison	Bulky Goods	All
City Centre	GFA (sqm)	47,033	114,658	11,267	172,958
	Turnover	£152.29m	£475.34m	£65.07m	£692.69m
Town Centres	GFA (sqm)	3,619	2,838	932	7,388
	Turnover	£18.29m	£9.29m	£2.83m	£30.41m
District Centres	GFA (sqm)	26,412	26,269	5,830	58,511
	Turnover	£171.01m	£96.23m	£44.17m	£311.4m
Commercial Centres	GFA (sqm)	20,170	24,083	47,714	91,967
	Turnover	£119.98m	£83.73m	£118.94m	£322.66m
Remainder of Aberdeen	GFA (sqm)	50,534	26,500	21,438	98,472
	Turnover	£223.07m	£44.33m	£31.68m	£299.08m
Total	GFA (sqm)	**147,768**	**194,347**	**87,181**	**429,296**
	Turnover	**£684.63m**	**£708.93m**	**£262.69m**	**£1,656.24m**

Table 15.10: Retail goods shops by type and turnover

15.52 Principal retail destinations in Aberdeen City Centre, including Union Square, Bon Accord Centre, Trinity Centre, and the former John Lewis, have recently been sold. The future of the City Centre depends on decisions made by the new owners, with a significant land parcel in the northern retail core owned by one entity.

Retail Deficiencies and Capacity

15.53 The Retail Study 2023 updated the Strategic Retail Model and analysed demand and supply for retail expenditure and turnover up to 2038. It examined quantitative

and qualitative retail deficiencies by comparing expenditure and average turnover for the study area, individual councils, and market areas.

Convenience Goods

15.54 There was no significant quantitative retail deficiency identified to support additional convenience goods floorspace for the study area as a whole. However, additional floorspace could address local deficiencies in Loirston/south Aberdeen. Significant new convenience floorspace is, however, expected to adversely impact existing food stores in the study area.

General Comparison Goods

15.55 Although no overall quantitative deficiency was found in the study area, a deficiency was identified in the City Centre where market demand is unlikely to address it. Comparison retail will remain attractive but will not replace the lost floorspace. Significant investment outside the City Centre could undermine its long-term growth.

Bulky Comparison Goods

15.56 Broad levels of quantitative retail deficiency for bulky goods as well as market demand was identified.

Leisure Space

15.57 Commercial leisure space is expected to grow significantly in the City, Town and District Centres due to long term demand. This has potential to offset the decline in comparison goods retailing. There is also significant potential for additional leisure space to support tourism growth.

<u>Local Accessibility to Retail and Related Services</u>

15.58 The Retail Study found that some residential areas (both existing and major new housing areas) lack easy walking access to retail and local services, which is not aligned with the 20-Minute Neighbourhood principle in National Planning Framework 4. Recommendations were made for new retail/service provisions in major housing proposals to improve local accessibility, including areas such as Grandhome (OP9), Newhills (OP20-22), Maidencraig (OP28, 31-33), Countesswells (OP38), and Loirston (OP59).

<u>Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan (CD053)</u>

15.59 Aberdeen City Council approved the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan in 2022 with the principle aim to repopulate vacant units on Union Street. The initiative supports small businesses to open up pop up shops, test the market/products, encourages entrepreneurism, reuses previously vacant units,

increases dwell time and spending in the local economy whilst linking with Community Wealth Building (see also Topic Paper Wellbeing and Community).

Empty Shops Grant Scheme

15.60 In 2023 Aberdeen City Council launched a £1million fund for City Centre regeneration to support the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan. The fund offers grant awards of up to 50% of project costs towards eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration of vacant shops on Union Street to enable reoccupation by new businesses and tenants.

15.61 The core objectives of the Union Street Empty Shops Grant Scheme are to:

- Reduce the number of vacant shops on Union Street through supporting eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration for new uses - be that retail, cultural, hospitality or office space;
- Leverage private investment in vacant shops on Union Street to bring them back into use; and
- Support new business start-ups and entrepreneurs, and create new employment opportunities, through enabling the provision of suitable premises on Union Street.

15.62 All grants awarded from the fund must be paid out be the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust

15.63 At the time of writing, discretionary grants are available towards Building Repair, Shopfront and Community Heritage Grants within designated priority areas of Aberdeen City Centre. Types of work that can be applied for include general structural repairs, timber repairs, re-roofing and high level repairs, stonework repairs, windows, doors, external joinery, shop fronts, professional fees, thermal improvements. There will be types of work that will not be supported including internal works, alterations, redecoration, stone cleaning, general maintenance/running costs. Topic Paper 9: Place provides further detail on policy implications regarding historic assets within emerging Local Development Plans.

Heritage Grants Schemes

15.64 Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage & Place Programme aims to develop vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. Applicants are encouraged to also apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for match funding. Grant eligible activities include third-party grants for building repairs, public realm and greenspaces, community heritage activities and traditional skills training. Aberdeen City has developed a proposal for the eastern half of Union St, including Castle and Justice Streets. The

Council was awarded development phase grant from HES and NLHF, to allow the proposal to be developed in detail. The Delivery Phase bids were submitted in February 2025 and outcomes are expected by the end of June. It is anticipated that, if the bids are successful, the 5-year scheme would commence in September, allowing for funder's embargo of decisions and grant paperwork to be completed. This programme replaces the Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) which operated between 2017 and 2023. Please see the Topic Paper 9: Place for further information.

Our Union Street

15.65 Launched in 2023 and based on 10,000 ideas submitted by local residents, Our Union Street is a community-led organisation with the purpose to regenerate, repopulate and reinvigorate the Granite Mile. The aim is for Union Street to be a safe, busy, energetic, thriving thoroughfare that compares favourably with the best of the UKs small cities. It sets out 17 key themes to be addressed via 5 key action areas:

- Brighten the street
- Fill the units
- Use the space
- Tell the story
- Engage the people

15.66 Investment funding will include fit out grants for new businesses and free rents and rates. Also part of the programme of investment is an international food and drink market (under construction), Union Terrace Gardens (complete), streetscape improvements (underway), Art Gallery redevelopment (complete), Ultimate Masterclass Festival and street art festival Nuart. Free and discounted professional services are also available. Volunteers are also undertaking maintenance and clean-up operations. Engagement with key stakeholders located within the City Centre will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Aberdeen Business Improvement District

15.67 Aberdeen Business Improvement District (BID), known as 'Aberdeen Inspired', is led and funded by the City Centre business community. Established in 2011 and renewed for a third 5-year term in 2021, the BID aims to reinvigorate the City Centre with four themes: Safe and Welcoming City Centre, Promoting our City Centre, Attractive City Centre, and Helping Your Business. Key projects include the Nuart Festival, Christmas Village, Restaurant Week, Umbrella Project, SPECTRA Festival of Light, Tall Ships Races, Aberdeen Gift Card, Curated in the Quad, suspended illuminated signage, floral enhancements, Purple Flag award, deep cleaning of Union Street, and various advocacy and partnership initiatives. Engagement with key stakeholders located within the City Centre will help inform

preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Tourism

Context

15.68 Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire attract visitors with their coastlines, castles, historic and cultural offerings, and golf courses. Aberdeen International Airport provides domestic and international flights and hosts the heliport for the North Sea Oil and gas industry. The city boasts a rich history, art galleries, museums, sculptures, monuments, parks, gardens, historic buildings, towns, and the beach. Further information can be found in the Culture & Creativity section below.

15.69 Union Terrace Gardens and the Port of Aberdeen South Harbour (National Planning Framework 4 - National Development 14) are two notable projects in recent years. Union Terrace Gardens was refurbished to improve accessibility, add amenities and restore historic features, reopening in 2022 with multiple awards. The Port of Aberdeen, completed in 2023, now accommodates cruise ships and supports economic diversification. The Port of Aberdeen received 43 cruise calls between May and October 2023, 58 in 2024 and 64 scheduled for 2025.

15.70 In 2022, Aberdeen experienced 1.3 million overnight trips by international and GB visitors, and 5.9 million day trips by GB residents, with a total spend of £747 million. The city is a popular destination for conferences, exhibitions, and meetings, benefiting from its strong academic and industrial base, and has significant tourism links with Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands due to the oil industry.

15.71 VisitAberdeenshire is the main tourism agency for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Their Quarterly Business Monitors (CD055) have identified various trends over the past year, including rising business costs, recruitment challenges, weather impacts on trading performance, the cost of living crisis, increased international visitors, and short-term lets legislation.

15.72 Based on VisitScotland data collected in 2023, Aberdeen had a 41%/59% split of domestic and international overnight visitors, with retirees or older couples making up 72% of the visitors. The most popular accommodation was serviced accommodation, and 64% of visitors were repeat visitors. The main attractions were the scenery/landscape and history/culture, with museums/art galleries and architecture/buildings being the top activities. In alignment with the town centre first approach most tourist attractions are located in or near the City Centre – see Figure 15.10.

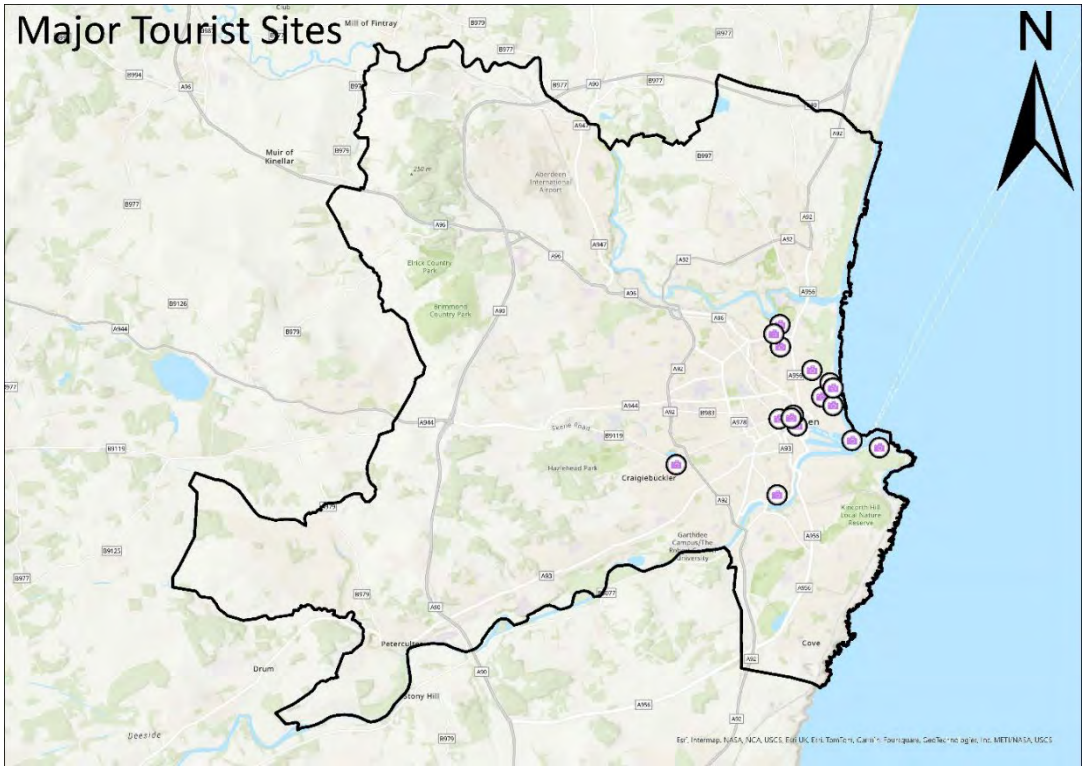


Figure 15.10: Distribution of Major Tourist Sites

15.73 The hotel market in Aberdeen is linked to tourism and the oil and gas industry/business market, leading to a cluster of hotels in Dyce. Most accommodation is in the City Centre, with some hotels recently converted to student housing. Aberdeen Planning Guidance on short-term lets (CD065) supports the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. Limited opportunities for caravan/camping sites exist due to Aberdeen's small hinterland.

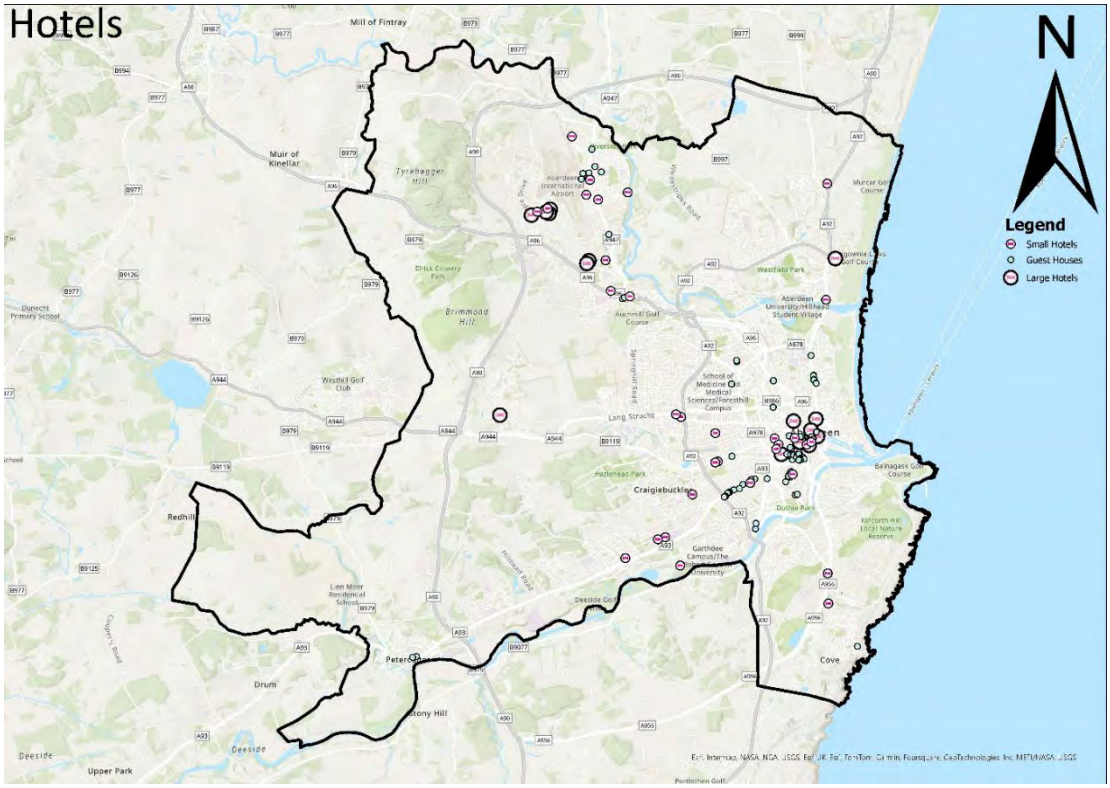


Figure 15.11: Distribution of Hotels

Aberdeen City STEAM Report

15.74 STEAM is a tourism economic impact modelling process which quantifies the local economic impact of tourism through a variety of sources. Data for Aberdeen indicates positive trends relating to local economic impact of tourism. Table 15.11 below shows that Aberdeen is year on year experiencing a higher number of visitors and higher expenditure by visitors which is resulting in a higher economic impact and number of persons employed. Comparative Headlines STEAM data 2019 – 2023 (CD061):

	2023	2022	2019	2019 v 2023 (%)
Direct expenditure (£Millions)	468.27	384.31	278.61	+68.1 %
Economic Impact (£Millions)	700.58	574.61	416.15	+68.3 %
Day Visitor Numbers (Millions)	1.490	1.327	1.182	+26.1 %
Staying Visitor Numbers (Millions)	1.856	1.457	1.257	+47.7 %
Direct Employment (FTE)	5,663	5,214	4,623	+22.5 %
Total Employment (FTE)	8,349	7,710	6,647	+25.6 %

Table 15.11: Extracted from Aberdeen City Steam Report for 2019-2023 (CD061) and Aberdeen City Steam Report for 2019-2022 (CD060)

15.75 Hotel occupancy and average room rates in Aberdeen have returned to, and now exceeded, pre-COVID19 levels in line with higher visitor numbers.

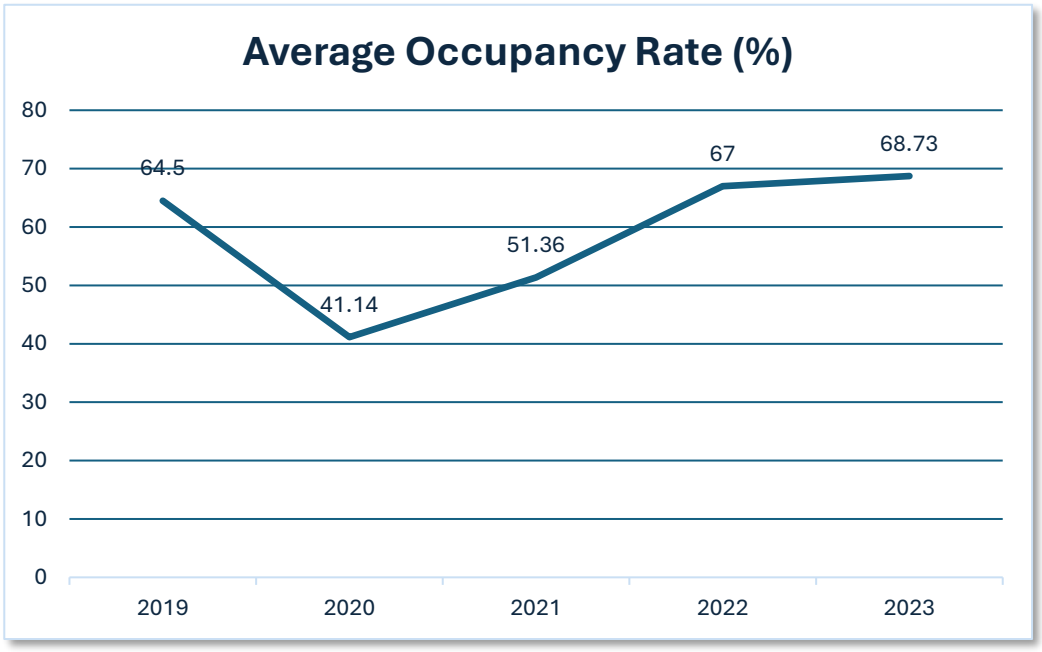


Figure 15.12: Aberdeen Occupancy Rate 2019 – 2023, Extract from Aberdeen Data Observatory

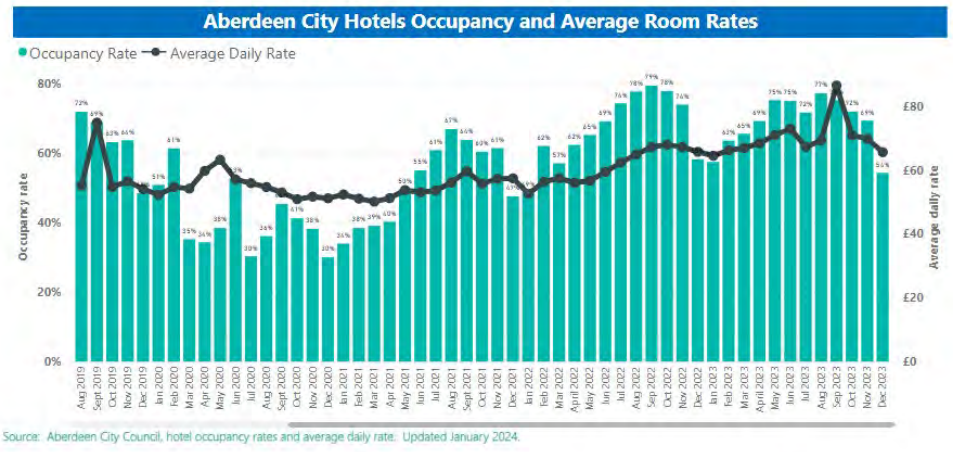


Figure 15.13: Aberdeen City Hotel Occupancy and Average Room Rates, Extract from Aberdeen Data Observatory.

The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 (CD054)

15.76 The Act received Royal Assent on 5 July 2024 and gives discretionary powers to Local Authorities in Scotland to charge a fee or tax on overnight stays in some types of accommodation. It allows councils to invest more in tourism facilities and services that benefit visitors and residents. The rate set is discretionary and could result in different rates for different areas or purposes. A draft Visitor Levy Scheme for Aberdeen was approved for consultation, lasting twelve weeks, at a meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on 12 February 2025. The consultation

(CD064) ran until July 1st 2025. The Proposed Plan may need to consider whether any spatial planning implications, or local policy provision may arise from introduction of a Levy.

Just Transition Fund

15.77 The fund is a £500m ten-year commitment to support projects across the North East and Moray which contribute towards the region's transition to net zero. Within Aberdeen City, funding has been secured by One North East and towards the North East Adventure Tourism project to create a new pump track at Transition Extreme's beachfront site. The Proposed Plan may identify specific allocations and/or land zonings to reflect projects which are facilitated by the Just Transition Fund.

Destination Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire: A Framework for Growth 2022-2030 (CD057)

15.78 VisitAberdeenshire, supported by Scottish Enterprise, has created a framework to make Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Scotland's leading visitor destination by 2030. The plan emphasizes sustainable growth for the environment, society, and economy, and includes principles of leadership, people & skills, and partnerships. It aims to support the transition to a net zero economy, provide employment opportunities, and make the region competitive. The principles of the framework will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

15.79 The north-east aims to lead tourism growth in Scotland by encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more, while building on its reputation for innovation and high-quality experiences. Extensive consultation with private and public sectors informed recommendations that align with market trends. Future action plans will focus on investment and innovation, with input from key partners and experts to achieve targets by the end of the decade. Data demonstrates that visitor numbers and spending are already increasing.

Regional Economic Strategy: A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland (CD058)

15.80 Published in 2024, the strategy provides a shared vision and ambition for the future of north east Scotland to align commitment, investment and action for economic growth and diversification. The principles of the strategy will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

> *"Our vision is for a regional economy that enables us to thrive. It is leading a just energy transition, diversifying our economy, enabling entrepreneurship and innovation, and delivering a wellbeing economy for our people – a post fossil-fuel future. By 2035, our economy will be leading the transition to and production of future energy solutions, new green energy and will be diversifying through growth in our digital technology, food and drink, tourism, life sciences and creative sectors."*

15.81 There are 5 strategy objectives to support delivery of the vision, as shown in Table 15.12:

	Objective	How will we measure success?	Most recent baseline	Target by mid-point review (2029)
1)	To establish the North East as a pioneer of the energy transition, by delivering an 80% reduction in carbon emissions per head	• Co2 emissions/ capita • Renewables jobs (work required to establish these data at regional level)	4.8 tCO2e per person North East: 2020	3 tCO2e per person
2)	Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional GVA from region's growth sectors.	• Regional GVA as a percentage of Scottish GVA • Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional employment from the region's growth sectors.	11.3% North East: 2020 27.5%	≥ 11.3% 30.3%
3)	Maintain a healthy, sustainable, working age population through increasing economic participation rates	• Economic Activity Rate 16-64 and 16-24 • Economic Activity Absolute 50+	16-64 Rate: 78.7% 16-24 Rate: 64.1% 50+ Absolute: 86,900 North East: July 21–June 22	16-64 Rate: 80.1% 16-24 Rate: 66.5% 50+ Absolute: 90,376
4)	Become a Real Living Wage region with 95% of overall employment offering a real living wage or higher.	• % of employees earning above the real living wage	84% North East: 2021	≥ 90%
5)	Protect and enhance the natural capital of the region by aligning to national ambitions to manage 30% of the region for people and nature by 2030	• % of region's area managed for people and nature	20%	30%

Table 15.12: Extract from Regional Economic Strategy – 5 Strategy Objectives

15.82 Four work programmes will support delivery of the high-level strategic objectives:



1 A thriving, innovation driven economy:

Growth across our key sectors will be driven by innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalisation so that high quality jobs are created. Investment in decarbonisation will be maximised through unlocking private capital for investment in the transition.

2 An outstanding natural environment:

Our natural environments and biodiversity will be preserved, protected and restored, to ensure we retain their value and integrity, allowing them to continue providing all the essential services we need to support and strengthen our economy, people and places. The region remains a stunning, healthy and productive place to live, work and visit, and accessible to all. The North East's nature underpins many industries providing sustainable raw materials to businesses, supplying a world renowned food and drink sector, strengthening the health and wellbeing of our people and the natural beauty that is the most cited reason for visiting by tourists – outdoor activity, natural environment, marine and adventure tourism are all unique features that the North East can capitalise on.

3 A healthy and skilled population:

There will be investment in education, skills, technology and employment opportunities that help residents benefit from the transition to net zero. Individuals will be able to access high-quality education and training at all life stages. This, combined with a focus on Fair Work and a reduction in inequality, will ensure that all residents and communities are equipped to fulfil their potential, contributing to an improvement in wellbeing and ultimately life expectancy.

4 A strong community and cultural identity:

There is a vibrant culture and creative sector that is championed to enhance our distinctiveness with a successful arts and cultural sector that capitalises on new investments such as P&J Live or Aberdeen Art Gallery and forthcoming Levelling Up investments to create a new museum in Peterhead and expansion of Macduff Marine Aquarium.

Figure 15.14: Extract from Regional Economic Strategy – 4 Work Programmes

Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023 – 2026 (CD059)

15.83 Aberdeen City Council has updated the Events 365 Plan to 2026 to support regional economic and tourism strategies. Despite challenges from COVID-19, changing audience expectations, rising costs, and budget pressures, the plan aims to deliver diverse events year-round, activate new City Centre venues, and grow the number and scale of events. It seeks to provide clarity and certainty for the sector and business community, ensuring opportunities can be maximized and affirming Aberdeen's ambition as an events, conferencing, tourism, and leisure destination. Spatial planning implications of the plan will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

15.84 The document outlines eight objectives aimed at positively impacting Aberdeen's economy, businesses, and venues by making the city a stage, inspiring creativity, connecting Aberdeen to the world, shaping the city's creative and sporting future, promoting skills and volunteering, increasing wellbeing and active lifestyles, encouraging sustainable travel, and measuring and reporting impacts and outcomes.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 (CD062)

15.85 Published in January 2024, the report on Aberdeen's economy emphasizes the need for a long-term strategic approach to successfully transition to renewable

energy. Key areas for achieving success include diversification, attracting and retaining skills, investing in infrastructure, improving the quality of life, and implementing a regional economic strategy. Despite improvements in business confidence, City Centre footfall, and employment in 2023, these metrics still lag behind pre-pandemic levels. Sustainable Tourism is highlighted as a potential growth sector for future employment, with a Destination Tourism Strategy Action Plan underway and a newly reformed Tourism Forum. Spatial planning implications arising from the report will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

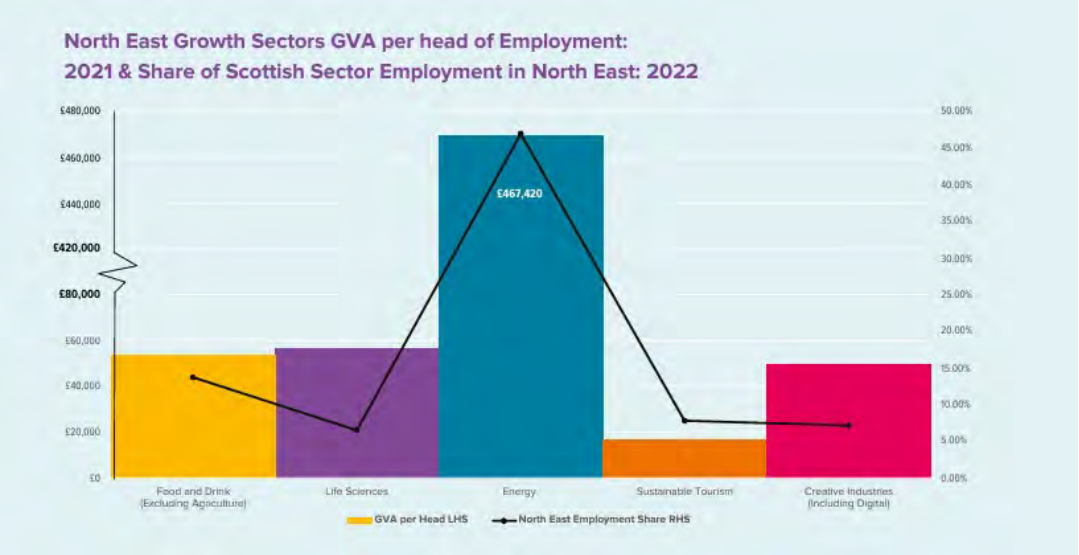


Figure 15.15: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Growth Sectors GVA per head of Employment in North East

National Tourism Strategy: Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism For A Sustainable Future (CD056)

15.86 Launched in March 2020, Scotland's tourism strategy aims to be a leader in 21st-century tourism by promoting responsible tourism that benefits communities, businesses, and visitors. The strategy includes commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045, improve community wellbeing, and ensure tourism contributes to economic prosperity. It emphasizes sustainable growth and a strategic approach to managing tourism effectively. Spatial planning implications arising from the strategy will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Culture & Creativity

15.87 Aberdeen, known for its nicknames such as the Granite City and Energy Capital of Europe, has a unique culture where traditions and contemporary creative activities coexist. Aberdeen City Council values the arts for their intrinsic worth and benefits, such as improving citizen wellbeing, attracting tourism, and encouraging new businesses. There is a strong desire to retain and nurture emerging talent to enrich the city's culture. Continued investment and supportive policies are necessary to sustain a vibrant cultural and creative atmosphere.

15.88 National Planning Framework 4 Policy 31 supports job and investment opportunities in the creative sector, culture, heritage, and the arts, aligning with local outcomes like the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (CD069) and the Cultural Strategy 2018-2028 (CD070). COVID-19 has disrupted delivery of the Culture Aberdeen Strategy but has also led to lower rents, making business spaces more accessible to practitioners that may previously have been unavailable or prohibitive.

15.89 The Culture Investment Programme replaced Aberdeen City Council's previous grant schemes for arts and culture in 2025, supporting sustained creative or cultural activities. Additionally, the Council is investing in community and cultural assets through the Place Based Investment Fund, which focuses on community-led regeneration, town centre revitalisation, community wealth building, and 20-minute neighbourhoods.

15.90 Theatrical, comedy and music events are on offer at a variety of venues across the city:

- Cinemas: Cineworld (Beach & Union Square), Vue and Belmont (currently closed but work underway to reopen).
- Museums: Gordon Highlanders Museum, Maritime Museum, Tolbooth, Zoology Museum, and Provost Skenes House.
- Art Galleries: Aberdeen Art Gallery and Peacock Visual Arts.
- Stage, screen & music: Aberdeen Music Hall, His Majesty’s Theatre, Tivoli Theatre, The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Lemon Tree and Aberdeen Arts Centre.
- Other: Aberdeen Science Centre, Deemouth Artists Studios, Anatomy Rooms, Langstane Studios, Eagle House Studios.

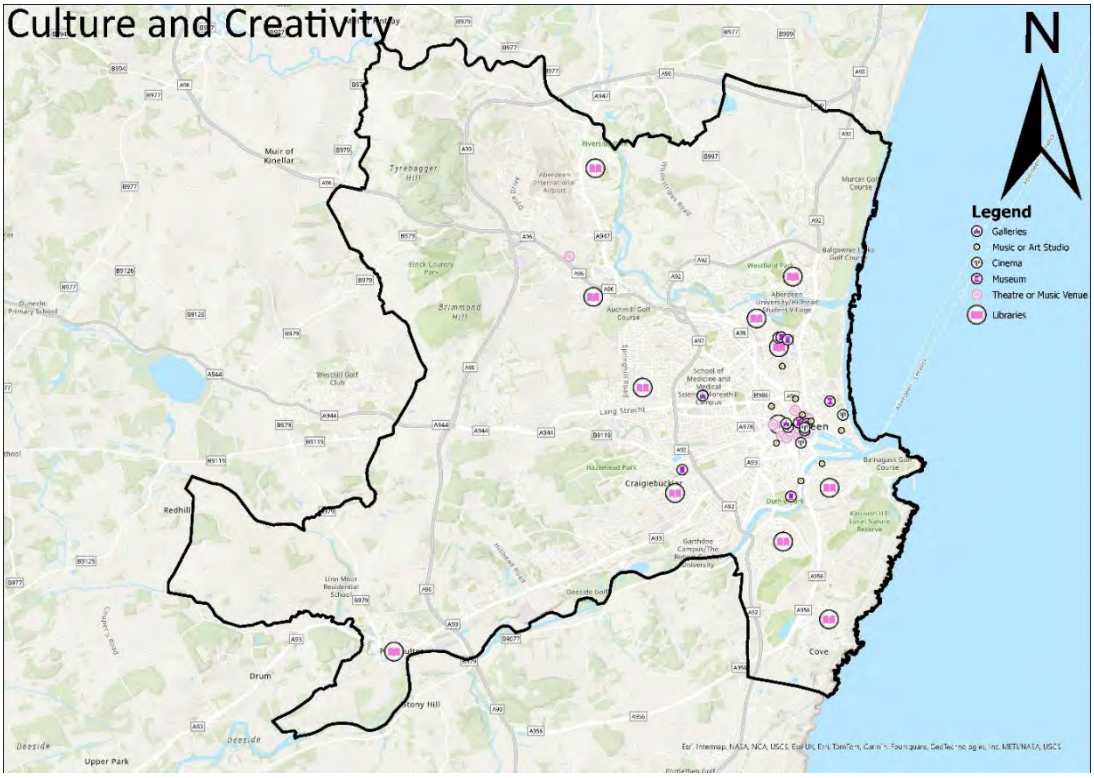


Figure 15.16: Distribution of culture and creativity locations

Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982 (CD066)

15.91 Under section 14 the Council has a duty to “ensure that there is adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities”. Spatial planning implications arising from the Act will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Human Rights Bill

15.92 The Scottish Government has proposed a Human Rights Bill to incorporate various rights into Scots law, aiming to protect economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights similar to civil and political rights. It will hold public bodies and private organisations delivering public services accountable for actions that fail to uphold people's rights, with plans to introduce the Bill to Scottish Parliament before the end of the current parliamentary session in 2026 (CD067). Spatial planning implications arising from the Bill will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Scotland’s Creative Learning Plan (CD068)

15.93 Scotland's Creative Learning Plan, first published in 2013, aims to enhance creative learning opportunities across Scotland by fostering partnerships and government support. The plan emphasises the importance of creativity in education and seeks to embed it at the core of Scottish education. In October 2023, the First Minister announced that the Scottish Government will invest at least £100 million more annually in culture and the arts by the financial year 2028/29.

Spatial planning implications arising from the plan will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Culture Counts Spending Tracker

15.94 Figures 15.17 and 15.18 visualise changes in Scottish Government culture budgets over time and provides an indication of funding available to local authorities. Provision of funding will inevitably impact upon the ability of local authorities to improve their culture offerings. Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

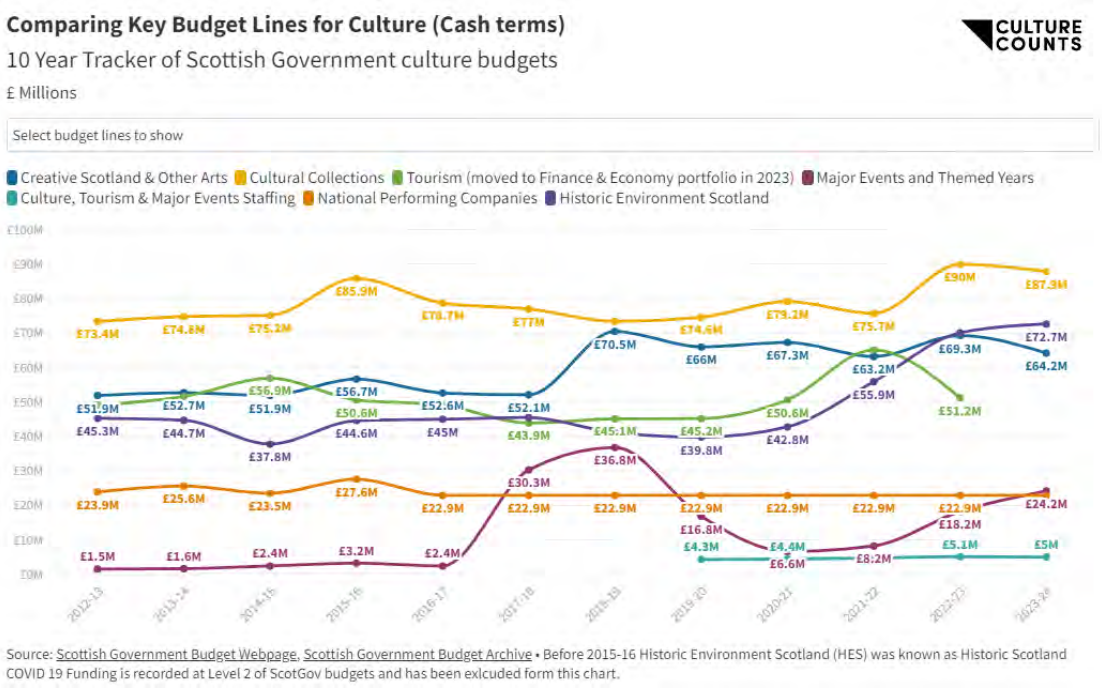
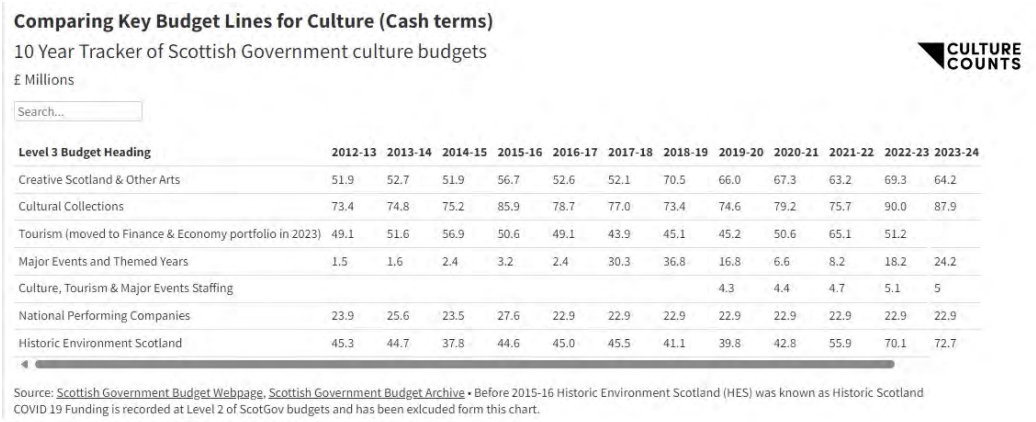


Figure 15.17: Culture Counts SpendingTracker



Level 3 Budget Heading	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Creative Scotland & Other Arts	51.9	52.7	51.9	56.7	52.6	52.1	70.5	66.0	67.3	63.2	69.3	64.2
Cultural Collections	73.4	74.8	75.2	85.9	78.7	77.0	73.4	74.6	79.2	75.7	90.0	87.9
Tourism (moved to Finance & Economy portfolio in 2023)	49.1	51.6	56.9	50.6	49.1	43.9	45.1	45.2	50.6	65.1	51.2	
Major Events and Themed Years	1.5	1.6	2.4	3.2	2.4	30.3	36.8	16.8	6.6	8.2	18.2	24.2
Culture, Tourism & Major Events Staffing								4.3	4.4	4.7	5.1	5
National Performing Companies	23.9	25.6	23.5	27.6	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9
Historic Environment Scotland	45.3	44.7	37.8	44.6	45.0	45.5	41.1	39.8	42.8	55.9	70.1	72.7

Figure 15.18: Comparison of key Scottish Government budget lines for Culture

Aberdeen City – Cultural Market Analysis (CD072)

15.95 A Cultural Market Analysis conducted by Charlotte Wilson Research Services in 2024 for Aberdeen City Council revealed that cultural attendance in Aberdeen City and surrounding areas is higher than the Scottish average. This includes attendance at cinemas, art galleries, street art events, comedy shows, and concerts. The increased attendance may be due to recent investments in cultural venues such as the Art Gallery, Music Hall, and Provost Skene's House, with the Art Gallery being named Scotland's building of the year in 2021. Spatial planning implications arising from the analysis will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process in addition to engagement with key stakeholders regarding local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (CD069)

15.96 States that “vital to diversifying the economy is the retention of the talent and transferable skills that currently exist within our businesses and educational institutions, as well as the creation of opportunities for upskilling/reskilling so that residents are able to move into, within and between economic opportunities that become available.” This will include the retention of students attending the city’s universities and college. Spatial planning implications arising from the plan will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Culture Aberdeen

15.97 An independent network of the city’s cultural organisations and also the title of the area’s Cultural Strategy. The network and strategy have in common a collaborative spirit and shared responsibilities.

- Aberdeen’s Remembering Together Project will create a COVID-19 memorial in Bon Accord Gardens using upcycled local granite
- The North East Culture Collective (NECC) was a Cultural Aberdeen project funded by Creative Scotland until March 2024, aiming to explore new models of cultural engagement.

15.98 It outlines five key ambitions for the next 10 years to enhance Aberdeen’s cultural sector: releasing creativity, becoming Scotland's creative lab, making the city a stage, connecting to the world, and shaping the future through collaboration and cultural leadership. Spatial planning implications arising from the strategy will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Creative Learning | Aberdeen City Council

15.99 A city-wide service prioritising projects based on need and collaborating with others using arts, culture, and creativity. Initiatives include the Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards (VACMA) in partnership with Creative Scotland, a professional development program for established creatives, creative learning networks,

creative residencies, and ABZWorks workshops to empower young people interested in art and design.

Creative Funding Awards | Aberdeen City Council

15.100 Offers cultural organisations with not for profit status, community groups, charities and individual artists or creatives the opportunity to apply for support to develop and/or deliver creative activity.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 (CD062)

15.101 Published in January 2024, the report discusses Aberdeen's economy, noting challenges for the Creative Industries and Culture. Despite difficulties, there is cautious optimism as employment in the creative industries has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, reaching its highest since 2016. The region hosts over 10% of Scotland's creative industry companies, and the repurposing of empty shop units by RGU/Look Again is seen positively. Spatial planning implications arising from the report will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review 2023-2024 (CD071)

15.102 The annual review showcases the impact of Aberdeen's cultural and creative life, economy, and sustainable future through various venues like the Art Gallery, Maritime Museum, Provost Skene’s House, Archives, and Treasure Hub. Highlights include 319,765 admissions, 15,337 participants in public programs, 543 new objects acquired, and a royal visit by Queen Camilla. The Gordon Highlanders Museum won the "Best Visitor Attraction" award at the Aberdeen City and Shire Thistle Awards 2024. Spatial planning implications arising from the annual review will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

15.103 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

15.104 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024 who were invited to be part of the Centres of Business and Culture Topic Paper review group. In September 2024 a list of suggested key evidence was outlined to the review group with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or provide further additions.

15.105 The evidence presented within this paper was then circulated in draft form during January 2025 to a number of key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This included:

- Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, City Regeneration and Environment)
- VisitAberdeenshire
- Theatres Trust
- Aberdeen Inspired
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Invest Aberdeen
- Our Union Street
- One North East
- Aberdeen Solicitors and Property Centre
- Aberdeen Harbour Board
- Higher education establishments: North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University and University of Aberdeen

15.106 All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

15.107 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses to this topic paper were received. 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Heritage Environment Scotland, McDonalds Restaurants, 1 from a housing developer (Bancon Homes) and 4 members of the public. Of those 9 respondents, 2 did not agree with the evidence used and 2 considered that key pieces of evidence were missed.

15.108 An email was sent on 5 June 2025 to McDonalds Restaurants Limited to request confirmation if the comments received were intended to be classed as disputes. At the time of writing no response has been received.

15.109 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

15.110 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 identifies key issues and recommendations that need to be considered, including updates to the network of centres and addressing qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

15.111 Significant developments that generate footfall should be located according to the town centre first approach and sequentially assessed against the network of centres.

15.112 We will consider the appropriateness and implications of continuing with an approach which defines a “City Centre Retail Core” zoning in light of national changes to the Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights and

evaluate the value of maintaining active ground floor frontages by restricting residential uses etc on ground floors.

15.113 We will reflect plans and strategies to support the regeneration and revitalisation of the network of centres, including projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan and City Region Deal.

15.114 We will consider ways to enhance leisure, entertainment, tourism, and cultural activities to complement the retail offerings in the City Centre.

15.115 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

15.116 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

Retail

15.117 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 identifies key issues and recommendations that need to be considered, including updates to the network of centres and addressing qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

15.118 Recommendations for retail provision in new neighbourhoods and expansion areas (such as Countesswells and Grandhome) should be considered and reflected in the Proposed Plan, supporting local living and neighbourhood shopping.

15.119 There is a need for a plan-led approach to address convenience shopping based on 20-minute neighbourhood principles in NPF4. We will review the necessity of new local centres to serve new developments or existing population areas that are distant from services, depending on the spatial strategy and any new housing land allocations.

15.120 We will consider if a local position is required to prevent increase in the number of, and clusters of, hot food takeaways/betting shops/high interest money lenders. There may not be a case for the Proposed Plan to take further action in relation to these uses, but this will need to be considered in its preparation. There is a case for the Proposed Plan to consider further policy control on hot take away uses to preserve residential amenity, but this will have to be balanced against the need to maintain vibrancy and occupancy rates in town centres. The location of nearby uses, such as schools, will need to be included in this consideration. A review of all drive-throughs, licenced takeaways, bookmakers and other gambling locations was completed in December 2025. The information was published on internal GIS systems. This data will be reviewed on an annual basis. Continued monitoring of

hot food takeaways and drive-throughs will be used to inform the Proposed PlanConsideration to specific site allocations/land zonings and/or a specific policy framework to assess proposals will form part of the drafting of the Proposed Plan.

15.121 Consider whether express policies should be included in the Proposed Plan to provide a framework for determination of drive-through proposals. The evidence suggests these are largely located on radial routes near the A96, A956, and A92.

15.122 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Tourism

15.123 NPF4 Policy 30 requires Local Development Plans (LDPs) to support the tourism sector's recovery, growth, and resilience. The Proposed Plan should ensure this while safeguarding the assets in Aberdeen that attract tourists.

15.124 We will consider the need for new tourism facilities and accommodation, and potential policy framework that supports appropriate developments in suitable locations. Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Culture & Creativity

15.125 The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations for tourism and culture opportunities, with specific allocations proposed where necessary.

15.126 The Proposed Plan should support existing arts and cultural venues in line with NPF4 Policy 31. It must consider registered Local Place Plans and their cultural aspirations and potential policy framework that supports appropriate developments in suitable locations.

15.127 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Marmot Principles

15.128 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise	

their capabilities and have control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	x
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	x
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 15.13 Marmot Principles

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

15.129 NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Bancon Homes and 3 members of the public agreed that all key pieces of evidence had been considered.

15.130 NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Bancon Homes and 3 members of the public agreed with the evidence used to prepare the topic paper. 1 member of the public considered that the evidence used was “highly relevant”.

15.131 NatureScot have confirmed that they have no dispute, however consider that the “Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan” section “does not recognise the importance of attractive blue green infrastructure within and linking centres of business and culture, to help promote footfall and dwell time, boosting retail and tourism”. The Council agree about the importance of attractive blue green infrastructure and this is outlined in Topic Paper 3 Infrastructure and Communication “Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan” where it is stated “The spatial strategy will seek to protect, enhance and expand blue and green infrastructure.” The suite of Topic Papers, and subsequent Proposed Plan, should be read as a whole and we do not believe there is a need for duplication across multiple Topic Papers.

Disputes with Stakeholders

15.132 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves

15.133 McDonalds Restaurants Limited did not agree with the evidence used to prepare the topic paper. Therefore, it has been treated as a dispute.

15.134 McDonalds Restaurants Limited stated that they “do not dispute the evidence presented”, however they feel that the evidence was limited in scope. They noted that the topic paper provided insight into existing drive-throughs and set out that consideration should be given as to whether these locations positively contributed towards local living. In addition to contribution to local living, McDonalds Restaurants consider that broader economic and social benefits should be taken into account. However, the respondent also stated that the topic paper does not make clear the approach that the Council will take in assessing the need for new drive-through development.

15.135 McDonalds Restaurants Limited offer their assistance to work with Aberdeen City Council to discuss potential site allocations, develop an up-to-date evidence base and a criteria based policy for drive-through developments to reflect and respond to the need and demand for drive-through development across the area through a positive policy environment. McDonalds Restaurants advocate that the Local Development Plan should include site allocations and a criteria-based policy on drive-through developments formed in collaboration with landowners and industry leaders. It is considered that the approach and criteria based policy sought by the respondent is outwith the purpose of the evidence report (which is to provide a summary of evidence, what that evidence means for the Proposed Plan and identify any potential gaps in evidence).

Information Gaps

15.136 An Existing Site and Land Zonings Audit will be required to assess the suitability of existing zonings. This will be completed by Autumn 2026 and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

15.137 An updated Retail Centre Health Check will be required for continued monitoring and suitability of the existing hierarchy of centres. A Retail Centre Health Check is currently being undertaken by the Local Development Plan team and is expected to be concluded by September 2026 and, alongside the Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023, will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

15.138 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic area. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

16. Topic Paper 9 – Place

Requirements addressed in this section:

16.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(2(a)	a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences
Section 15(2) (b)	a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.

Other Relevant Legislation

Act
Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

National Planning Framework 4

Historic Assets and Places

16.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places.

Design, Quality, Place

16.3 LDPs should be place-based and created in line with the Place Principle. The spatial strategy should be underpinned by the six qualities of successful places. LDPs should provide clear expectations for design, quality and place taking account of the local context, characteristics and connectivity of the area. They should also identify where more detailed design guidance is expected, for example, by way of design frameworks, briefs, masterplans and design codes.

16.4 Planning authorities should use the Place Standard tool in the preparation of LDPs and design guidance to engage with communities and other stakeholders. They should also where relevant promote its use in early design discussions on planning applications.

Local Living

16.5 LDPs should support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. Communities and businesses will have an important role to play in informing this, helping to strengthen local living through their engagement with the planning system.

Links to Evidence

Historic Assets and Places

- CD073 Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment
- CD074 Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)
- CD075 Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence including the Designation Report October 2024 and Buildings at Risk Data October 2024 (PDF)
- CD076 Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD077 Bon Accord and Crown Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD078 City Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD079 Cove Bay Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD080 Ferryhill Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD081 Footdee Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD082 Great Western Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD083 Marine Terrace Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD084 Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD085 Pitfodels Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD086 Rosemount and Westburn Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- CD087 Conservation Areas Strategic Overview Management Plan
- CD088A Heritage and Place Programme Committee 29 March 2023 / CD088B Appendix 1 / CD088C Appendix 2 / CD088D Appendix 3
- CD308A Heritage and Place Programme Committee 07 August 2024 - Report / CD308B Appendix 1 / CD308C Appendix 2 / CD308D Appendix 3
- CD089A Article 4 Directions Committee 19 September 2024 / CD089B Appendix 1
- CD041 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report

- CD042 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement - Summary Report 2023

Historic Assets and Places – Additional Online Resources	Date Accessed
Aberdeen City Heritage Trust	18 September 2024
Historic Environment Scotland portal	5 August 2024
Aberdeen City Historic Environment Record.	5 August 2024
Buildings at Risk Register	5 August 2024

Design, Quality and Place

- CD243 Creating Places - A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland
- CD041 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report
- CD042 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report
- CD046 Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015
- CD045 City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022
- CD090A -D Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (CD090A Part 1, CD090B Part 2,CD090C Part 3, CD090D Part 4)
- CD091 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Dubford Development Framework
- CD092 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Former Davidson's Mill Development Framework and Masterplan
- CD093 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Friarsfield Development Framework
- CD094 A – B Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Grandhome Development Framework (CD094A Part 1 and CD094B Part 2)
- CD095 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan
- CD096 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Prime Four Business Park Development Framework
- CD097 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Loirston Development Framework
- CD098 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Maidencraig Masterplan
- CD099 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Newhills Development Framework
- CD100 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Oldfold Development Framework and Masterplan
- CD101 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Persley Den
- CD102 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: New AECC Site at Rowett North
- CD103 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Existing AECC Site at Bridge of Don
- CD104 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Energy Transition Zone Masterplan

- CD105 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Harbour Development Framework
- CD106 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Balgownie Centre, Bridge of Don Planning Brief
- CD107 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Bon Accord Baths Planning Brief
- CD108 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Broadford Works Design Brief
- CD109 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Denburn Valley Planning Brief
- CD110 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: River Don Corridor Framework
- CD111 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Robert Gordon University City Centre Planning Brief
- CD112 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: St Peters Nursery Site Redevelopment Brief
- CD113 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Placemaking Process
- CD114 Aberdeen City Planning Performance Review 2020-2021
- CD115 Aberdeen City Planning Performance Review 2021-2022
- CD116 Aberdeen City Planning Performance Review 2022-2023

Design, Quality and Place – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Aberdeen Local Place Plans	06 February 2025

Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

- CD117 Climate Exchange - 20-minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish context
- CD118 Nationwide equity assessment of the 20-min neighbourhood in the Scottish context: A socio-spatial proximity analysis of residential locations.
- CD119 The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (PDF)
- CD120 Scottish Government – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood Planning Guidance
- CD186 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling
- CD048 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- CD041 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report
- CD042 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report
- CD121 Email and data from Corporate Landlord (PDF) (17 July 2024)
- CD046 Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015
- CD045 City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022
- CD090A -D Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (CD090A Part 1, CD090B Part 2,CD090C Part 3, CD090D Part 4)
- CD091 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Dubford Development Framework

- CD092 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Former Davidson's Mill Development Framework and Masterplan
- CD093 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Friarsfield Development Framework
- CD094 A – B Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Grandhome Development Framework (CD094A Part 1 and CD094B Part 2)
- CD095 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan
- CD096 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Prime Four Business Park Development Framework
- CD097 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Loirston Development Framework
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- CD110 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: River Don Corridor Framework
- CD111 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Robert Gordon University City Centre Planning Brief
- CD112 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: St Peters Nursery Site Redevelopment Brief
- CD367 Community Planning Aberdeen: Population Needs Assessment 2025
- CD324 Community Planning Aberdeen: Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036

Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020v2 data zones	11 June 2024
Community Planning Aberdeen: Full Outcome Framework	11 June 2024
Climate Exchange Maps	11 June 2024
Great British Public Toilet Map	11 June 2024
Changing Places Toilets	11 June 2024
"Top up Taps" Water Refill Locations Map	11 June 2024

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

16.6 Aberdeen's historic environment is based on many years of human occupation, with buildings ranging from a number of eras. Aberdeen has several historic designations and is known as the 'Granite City' due to the abundance of the stone as a building material. Placemaking and retaining the character of Aberdeen has been at the forefront of plan making and decisions for many years, along with development designed in such a way that people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by sustainable and active travel methods. This will be discussed in further detail below.

16.7 This section is structured as follows:

- Historic Assets
- Design, Quality and Place
- Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Historic Assets and Places

16.8 Aberdeen has a rich built heritage that gives the city its unique sense of place and identity, with its moniker being the Granite City or the Silver City. The historic environment projects Aberdeen's cultural identity, contributes to economic development and regeneration, supports growth of our tourism and leisure, helps connects people and places, and contributes to sustainability by conserving resources. Aberdeen's historic assets span many centuries, styles and locations, and provide a tangible and intangible link to the city, its past, present and future while providing a link to place and placemaking. Aberdeen has conserved its historic environment within its previous Local Development Plans through local policy, supported by conservation surgeries and topic leads within the Planning service's Masterplanning, Design and Conservation team.

Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment (CD073)

16.9 The 2023 Historic Environment Scotland document sets out Scotland's 5-year national strategy for the historic environment. The historic environment is a national asset, and it creates jobs, enriches communities, and helps to tell Scotland's story to the world. The three priorities set out are delivering the transition to net zero, empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places, and building a wellbeing economy. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of this strategy and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that Aberdeen's heritage can bring.

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (CD074)

16.10 The Historic Environment Scotland policy document supports good decision-making regarding changes to the historic environment. It includes six policies which identify how the historic environment should be managed, and it reflects the Scottish Government's desire to protect, conserve, and enhance built heritage assets. HEPS is supported by the "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" series which should be used to inform proposals. The Policy and managing change documents will be used to inform any potential local policy or planning guidance document within the Proposed Plan to ensure Aberdeen's historic assets are protected, conserved and enhanced.

Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence includes Designation Report October 2024 and Buildings at Risk Data October 2024 (CD075)

Overview

16.11 As of 13/09/2024, there are 1,241 designated sites and places in the Aberdeen City Council area (this number is still correct as of 17/06/2025). These can be found on the Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) interactive portal (and are also found in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Council's GIS system).

Conservation Areas

16.12 Aberdeen's eleven conservation areas all have unique conservation area character appraisals. HES note the value of these to support informed development management decision making as well as aiding in HES advice when consulted on conservation area consent applications.

Policies

16.13 Historic Environment Scotland has welcomed Aberdeen's previous historic environment policy framework which includes thematic policy on granite heritage as well as specific content on windows and doors.

Places of Worship

16.14 Eighteen places of worship are being considered for disposal by Church of Scotland within Aberdeen by 2027. Twelve are listed. A proactive approach to considering the long-term options for such buildings falling out of use and look to the challenges and opportunities that these sites may offer in terms of the communities in which they are situated and the services that they require is encouraged.

Buildings at Risk Register

16.15 Aberdeen has close to sixty entries on the Buildings at Risk Register (54 are noted in the HES report – while 58 are noted on the website on 17/06/2025). The majority

are located within the City Centre, and with this there are clusters around certain sites; Woolmanhill Hospital, and Broadford Works. A number of the notations on the Buildings at Risk register are former industrial, institutional, or ecclesiastical assets. There are fewer Buildings at Risk in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Deciles 1-3 in Aberdeen than the national average. Close to 50% of the buildings on the register have featured for 10 years or more. Three buildings are currently under repair.

16.16 The Buildings at Risk Register has been paused while Historic Environment Scotland considers long-term options for its future in light of the main findings, conclusions and options of the Buildings at Risk Register review.

Grants

16.17 Since 2019, Historic Environment Scotland have received 63 expressions of interest from a range of projects and regeneration schemes in Aberdeen. Between 2014 and 2023, 17 projects totalling £2,847,452 were completed. There are 5 projects that are live or have been awarded grant but not commenced, totalling £2,786,559. These are outlined in Table 16.1.

Grantee	Project Name	Grant Awarded	Financial Year Awarded
Aberdeen City Council	Union Street CARS	£1,177,104	2017-2018
Aberdeen City Council	Aberdeen Union Street CARS Supplementary	£233,254	2021-2022
Aberdeen City Heritage Trust	ACHT Funding 2023 o 2026	£901,100	2022-2023
Aberdeen City Council	Silver City Heritage and Place Programme 2024 -2029	£43,175	2023-2024
University of Aberdeen	The CITADEL Project: Pictish Elite Centre, Phase II	£431,926	2023-2024

Table 16.1: Live or not yet commenced projects from Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence includes Designation Report October 2024 and Buildings at Risk Data October 2024 (CD075)

Designated Sites

16.18 The 1,241 designated sites and places in Aberdeen are broken down into the following categories:

- 38 Scheduled Monuments.

- 1,201 Listed Buildings of which 69 are Category A, 671 are Category B and 461 are Category C.
- Two sites within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (Duthie Park and the Piper Alpha Memorial Garden / North Sea Memorial Rose Garden).
- There are no Inventory Historic Battlefields designated.

16.19 The next local development plan will consider the requirement for local policies related to its historic environment based on the adoption of NPF4, the content of the conservation area character appraisals and an assessment of extant local policies. The future of the buildings at risk register and disposal of Church of Scotland places of worship will be monitored.

Historic Environment Scotland Portal

16.20 The Listed Buildings in Aberdeen are mostly concentrated around the City Centre and Old Aberdeen. There are 11 conservation areas in Aberdeen, most are located in the city centre, and areas of Georgian expansion, with older historic villages also part of the 11. The two sites within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (Duthie Park and the Piper Alpha Memorial Garden / North Sea Memorial Rose Garden) are located within the west of the city. The Scheduled Monuments within the city are mostly located around the periphery and range from prehistoric standing stones to 20th Century military assets. The portal will be used to understand if there are historic designations during site assessments for the next local development plan so that heritage implications can be highlighted from the outset.

Aberdeen City Historic Environment Record

16.21 The full version of the database is held and maintained by the Archaeology Service and contains information on over 6,262 known sites of archaeological and historical interest within Aberdeen City ranging from prehistoric flints to World War II air raid shelters and pillboxes. The information consists of a computerised database linked to a GIS with further physical records of maps, photographs, articles and reports. Note the database is not exhaustive and only covers currently known sites. The record will be used to understand if there are historic sites during site assessment's for the next local development plan so that heritage implications can be highlighted from the outset.

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CD076, CD077, CD078, CD079, CD080, CD081, CD082, CD083, CD084, CD085, CD086, CD087)

16.22 Aberdeen's eleven conservation areas are concentrated primarily within the city centre, with others located elsewhere in Footdee, Cove, Pitfodels and Old Aberdeen. The conservation areas all have conservation area character appraisals, and an overview management plan. Conservation Areas have been used to designate areas which are of special historic or architectural interest the character

and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Aberdeen's conservation areas contribute to the distinctive character of the city and add to the quality of life in Aberdeen. The conservation area boundaries are mapped on the extant Local Development Plan 2023 constraints map (CD310). The conservation area character appraisals and overview management plan can be found on Aberdeen City Council's website and listed above (CD087). The next local development plan will consider the requirement for local policies related to its historic environment based on the adoption of NPF4, the content of the conservation area character appraisals and management plan.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust (ACHT)

16.23 ACHT has been active within Aberdeen for more than two decades. The ACHT offers heritage lectures and makes available a limited number of discretionary grants. The Trust operates Building Repair, Shopfront and Community Heritage Grants. These support property owners and communities to explore, interpret and look after their heritage. The ACHT will feed into the wider aims of the next local development plan relating to protecting and enhancing Aberdeen's heritage.

Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)

16.24 Aberdeen has a long history of supporting repair and replacement within the historic environment, through Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes. The current Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme ended in May 2025 with the final report being sent to Historic Environment Scotland by August 2025. The Union Street CARS has awarded over £2.4 million in grant funding. The CARS project focussed on the central spine of Aberdeen, Union Street and aimed to:

- Promote an integrated approach to retail and housing led regeneration that builds on Union Street's assets: built heritage, city centre location and mixed use character
- Reverse the decline and improve the quality of the built environment and quality of life for residents of the city
- Improve the quality and appearance of shop fronts on Union Street.

16.25 This was through building repair programmes, community engagement and traditional skills training for laypeople and those in the construction industry. The output of CARS improved the quality of Aberdeen's historic environment and will feed into the wider aims of the next local development plan relating to protecting and enhancing Aberdeen's heritage.

Heritage and Place Programme (CD088A – D, CD308A-B)

16.26 As of March 2023 Aberdeen City Council has been within the development phase of the Heritage and Place Programme, with submission to the delivery phase ongoing. As of 07 August 2024, Aberdeen City Council approved the proposed governance structure for the Heritage and Place Programme. The Heritage and Place

Programme is an area-based funding programme that aims to contribute to the development of vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland, through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. The focus for the Heritage and Place programme is regeneration of the east end of Union Street which has high levels of vacancy, resultant deterioration and a lack of investment compared to other areas. Should additional funding be approved, then the Heritage and Place Programme will feed into the wider aims of the next local development plan relating to protecting and enhancing Aberdeen's heritage.

Article 4 Directions (CD089)

16.27 A public consultation is due to start in late summer 2025 on the introduction of new Article 4 Directions on the removal of permitted development rights for replacing windows within three conservation areas; Bon Accord/Crown Street, the City Centre and Old Aberdeen, and the cancellation of Article 4 Directions on Burnbanks Village. The outcome of the consultation may have implications for local planning policy within the next Local Development Plan. The extant plan (CD044) has a policy on "windows and doors" which applies to listed buildings and public elevations of buildings in conservation areas.

Place Standard Assessments (CD041, CD042)

16.28 A Place Standard exercise was carried out with adults and children. More information on this is found below in the Design, Quality and Space section. The Place Standard assesses places and is split into fourteen themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of seven, and people are asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with "all" noting where these comments were present in all three areas. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations.

16.29 The results of the Place Standard exercise in 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

16.30 The Streets and Spaces theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below (Table 16.2).

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Streets and Spaces	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. (All) • High quality and attractive historic environment. (All) • Parks across the city are good (All) • Well maintained, attractive and clean (South)	• Maintenance and upkeep of streets (e.g. footpaths, lighting, dog mess, litter bins, flooding) and look of spaces (planting, trees) (All) • More trees (North and Central) • More places to sit (North) • More public conveniences (North and South) • Increasing number of green spaces available (North and Central) • Improve run down/derelict buildings (South and Central) • Improve the number of playing areas for kids and young people (Central)

Table 16.2: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Streets and Spaces extract. (CD041)

16.31 The children and young people results on streets and spaces noted: 68.8% felt they were okay, 18.6% felt they were not good, and 12.9% felt they were great. The top three responses were as follows (Table 16.3):

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Streets and Spaces	Public gardens	34.9%	Less uneven surfaces	30.2%
	Art work	21.7%	Less dull places	28.3%
	Special buildings	18.9%	Public gardens	24.5%

Table 16.3: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Streets and Spaces extract. (CD041)

Design, Quality and Place

16.32 Masterplanning and design to ensure quality of place and placemaking has been a driver for Aberdeen for well over a decade. New places and new additions to existing areas in Aberdeen are designed with a placemaking process at heart. Aberdeen embedded design, quality and place within its previous Local Development Plans through local policy, a number of weekly masterplanning and design surgeries, and pre-application processes with topic specialist leads in Development Management.

Creating Places: A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland (CD243)

16.33 The 2013 Scottish Government document notes that an approach to good places and good design adds value by enhancing quality of life through physical value; functional value; viability; social value and environmental value. Good design and good places also provide benefits to people and communities; sustainable development; design; health outcomes; culture and identity; and landscape and the natural environment. The six qualities of successful place have been updated since the adoption of this document, but Creating Places still provides insight into good places and good design. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of this policy and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that good design can have to Aberdeen.

Place Standard Assessments (CD041, CD042)

16.34 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part online and in six in-person Place Standard assessment events for Community Planning. Alongside completing the scoring of themes, participants were asked to identify things they thought were good and things they felt needed to be improved about their local area.

16.35 The Place Standard assessments covered the whole city. The results are broken into North, South and Central. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The breakdown of the mean scores in order of most positive to least positive across all areas of Aberdeen are noted in Table 16.4 below.

Order	Place Standard Theme	Mean Score
1	Natural Space	4.71
2	Identity and Belonging	4.1
3	Feeling safe	4.09
4	Play and Recreation	4.08
5	Housing and Community	4.02
6	Streets and Spaces	4.00

7	Social Interaction	3.98
8	Public Transport	3.93
9	Work and Local Economy	3.91
10	Moving Around	3.86
11	Facilities and Services	3.85
12	Care and Maintenance	3.61
13	Traffic and Parking	3.36
14	Influence and Sense of Control	3.27

Table 16.4: Place Standard Score Results in order of most positive to least positive– all areas.

Central		**North**		**South**	
Theme	**Mean**	**Theme**	**Mean**	**Theme**	**Mean**
Natural Space	4.6	Natural Space	4.9	Natural Space	4.7
Play and Recreation	4.2	Identity and Belonging	4.2	Feeling Safe	4.3
Identity and Belonging	4.1	Streets and Spaces	4.2	Work and Local Economy	4.2
Social Interaction	4.1	Housing and Community	4.2	Moving Around	4.1
Public Transport	4.0	Feeling Safe	4.1	Identity and Belonging	4.0
Feeling Safe	4.0	Play and Recreation	4.0	Housing and Community	4.0
Streets and Spaces	3.9	Work and Local Economy	4.0	Play and Recreation	4.0
Facilities and Services	3.9	Care and Maintenance	3.9	Social Interaction	4.0
Housing and Community	3.9	Social Interaction	3.9	Facilities and Services	4.0
Moving Around	3.8	Public Transport	3.9	Streets and Spaces	4.0
Work and Local Economy	3.7	Moving Around	3.8	Public Transport	3.9
Care and Maintenance	3.4	Facilities and Services	3.7	Care and Maintenance	3.6
Influence and Sense of Control	3.1	Traffic and Parking	3.6	Traffic and Parking	3.5
Traffic and Parking	3.1	Influence and Sense of Control	3.3	Influence and Sense of Control	3.4

Table 16.5: Place Standard Score Results in order of most positive to least positive– separate areas.

16.36 Within the comments section a total of 11,394 comments were received across each of the 14 themes, combining all ‘good’ now comments, and all ‘improve’

comments received by respondents who completed both the online consultation and attended the six in person events. The results are as follows (Table 16.6):

The top 5 themes for 'good' comments were:	The top 5 themes for 'improve' comments were:
Moving around	Moving around
Public Transport	Public Transport
Streets and Spaces	Traffic and Parking
Natural space	Streets and Spaces
Play and recreation	Natural space

Table 16.6: Place Standard Comment Results

16.37 The comments received as part of the qualitative aspect of the Place Standard exercise have been broken down and grouped within the 14 themes. Comments were expressed on the good aspects of Aberdeen, and on areas that could be improved. Those most specifically relevant to the theme of Place have been included below. Summaries of responses for the following criteria can be found in the corresponding Topic Paper listed below.

- Play and Recreation - Health and Wellbeing.
- Natural Spaces - Nature and Biodiversity
- Public Transport/Traffic and Parking/Moving Around - Sustainable Transport
- Work and Local Economy - Business and Culture/Spatial Strategy
- Facilities and Services - Spatial Strategy
- Housing and Community - Delivery of Homes

16.38 The locality area where these comments come from has been noted in brackets.

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Streets and Spaces	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. (All) • High quality and attractive historic environment. (All) • Parks across the city are good (All) • Well maintained, attractive and clean (South)	• Maintenance and upkeep of streets (e.g. footpaths, lighting, dog mess, litter bins, flooding) and look of spaces (planting, trees) (All) • More trees (North and Central) • More places to sit (North) • More public convenience (North and South) • Increasing number of green spaces available (North and Central) • Improve run down/derelict buildings (South and Central)

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
		• Improve the number of playing areas for kids and young people (Central)
Social Interaction	• Good facilities and activity at a local level to meet people's needs (e.g. community centre) (All) – North noted pubs and clubs / south also mentioned library, local clubs, shops / Central noted cafes, greenspaces, beach) • Good local magazine advertising local events and activities. (South)	• Increasing the number of places and opportunities to meet and socialise (e.g. range of activities and timings of these) (All) • Improve promotion and communication of activities/events (All) • Reopen closed library (South and Central) • increasing opportunities for children (Central)
Identity and Belonging	• Welcoming neighbours (All) • Feeling part of the community (All) • Good access to a range of activities and things to do. (North and Central) • A safe, desirable place to live (South) • A high level of pride about the area (South) • Support from local businesses in times of crisis (Central)	• More activities and opportunities to improve and encourage a sense of community (All) • Provide more community spaces to meet (South) • Including more information on what's on locally on AC webpage (Central). • More local and voluntary groups (Central). • Funding for community projects and services (Central).
Feeling Safe	• Feel safe in own neighbourhood and in Aberdeen more generally. (All) • Low crime rate, police presence and good lighting (All)	• Community Safety/anti-social behaviour in adults (All) • Maintenance of streets and spaces – better lighting/less graffiti (All) • Traffic offences/reduction in speeding (All) • Improve the City Centre – feels unsafe, anti-social behaviour, crime, loitering and drinking – (Central) • Reduce the number of derelict and boarded up

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
		shops and buildings (Central)
Care and Maintenance	• Good care and maintenance of public spaces (All) • Good care and maintenance of green spaces, parks (North) • Good care and maintenance of homes, shared spaces, and public buildings. (North and Central) • Good and well run facilities and services – recycling (South)	• Enhancing public spaces, - trees, hedges, gutters, drains, fallen leaves, litter (All) • Ensuring pavements and roads are better maintained (All) • More and better public conveniences required (North and Central) • Improve recycling services (Central)
Influence and Sense of Control	• Good awareness of and access to Council officers and elected officials. (All) • Positive community participation and engagement with officers, community councils, councillors. (All)	• Improve awareness of opportunities to get involved in decision making and feedback (All) • Improve awareness of community meetings and consultations (North and South) • Make being able to contact officials and receive feedback easier (North and South) • Having more voice and opportunities to be listened to, respected, and taken seriously regarding local issues. (South and Central) • Improvements are needed when issues are reported (Central)

Table 16.7: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023 (CD041, CD042)

16.39 The survey for children and young people, asked about the same fourteen themes, however rather than a 7-point scale, this survey had a 3-point scale:

1 – Not good (needs improving)
2 – Okay (some improvement needed)

3 – Great (it's good or as good as can be)

16.40 There were 106 responses. The most common response for all themes was 'Okay'. A breakdown of the responses from children on the selected criteria more directly relevant to Place is included in Table 16.8 below.

Place Standard Theme	Not Good	Okay	Great
Streets and Spaces	18.6%	68.6%	12.9%
Social Interaction	32.7%	50.9%	16.4%
Identity and Belonging	26.4%	62.3%	11.3%
Feeling Safe	31.5%	50.0%	18.5%
Care and Maintenance	33.3%	57.4%	9.3%
Influence and sense of control	31.5%	57.4%	11.1%

Table 16.8: Overall score from Children and Young People Place Standard Assessment. Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023 (CD041, CD042)

16.41 Participants were also asked two additional questions to capture what they felt were positive aspects of their place and what they felt could be improved.

16.42 With regard to the What is good now?' and 'What would make it better? Respondents were able to place the choices in either 'What is good now?' or 'What would make it better? and therefore we see some themes being identified in both columns, which shows a variation in view on those areas.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Streets and Spaces	Public gardens	34.9%	Less uneven surfaces	30.2%
	Art work	21.7%	Less dull places	28.3%
	Special buildings	18.9%	Public gardens	24.5%
Social Interaction	There are child friendly spaces	30.2%	Places to hang out	29.3%
	Meeting friends	19.8%	Child friendly spaces	24.5%
	Cafes	17%	Places to meet friends	23.6%
Identity and Belonging	Food	18.9%	Festivals	29.3%
	The people	17.9%	Music	16%
	Local museums	14.2%	Culture	15.1%

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Feeling Safe	Feeling safe during the day	38.7%	Less anti-social behaviour	34%
	Lighting	16%	Feeling safe at night	32.1%
	Play spaces	15.1%	Brighter/more lighting	22.6%
Care and Maintenance	Places to recycle	22.6%	Less dog poo	33%
	None of this	19.8%	Less things left unfixed	31.1%
	Clean and tidy	14.2%	Less vandalism	24.5%
Influence and sense of control	Feeling included	21.7%	By making sure I am taken seriously	30.2%
	None of these	21.7%	By making it easy to take part (26.4%)	26.4%
	My views are important	19.8%	By making sure I feel included	24.5%

Table 16.9: Top 3 responses for ‘What is good now’ and ‘What would make it better?’ Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

16.43 The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD046) / City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022 (CD045)

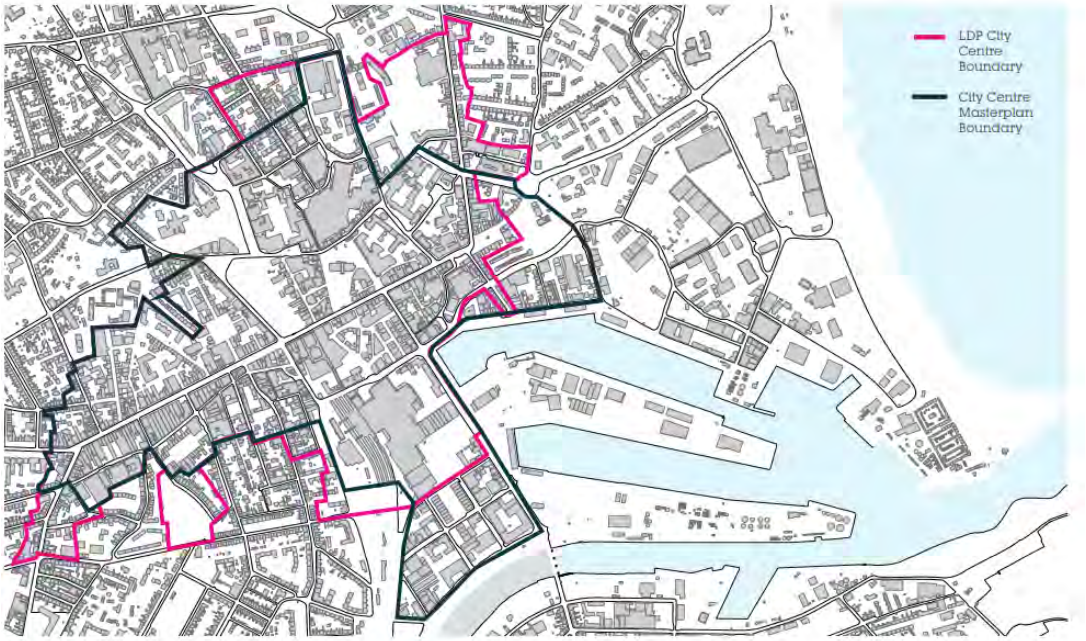


Figure 16.1: Map of the CCMP&DP boundary. Extract from the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD046)

16.44 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CCMP&DP) (CD046) was approved in 2015, and outlines a 25 year development strategy for Aberdeen City Centre. The CCMP&DP respects the historic design and quality of Aberdeen, and recognises its distinctiveness of place, but looks to ensure a bright future by increasing the mix of uses within the city centre, highlights local distinctives and ensures resilience.

16.45 The objectives of the Masterplan and Delivery Programme are to:

- create a bold vision with respect to the continued development of Aberdeen as a vibrant, attractive, prosperous, sustainable and smart 21st century energy city of international repute; and
- produce an innovative, ambitious, and distinctive design proposal for the heart of Aberdeen that will act as a key transformational agent for the city, which integrates with the broader framework for the centre, embeds the principles of sustainability and which has sufficient flexibility to provide long- term relevance.

16.46 The CCMP&DP is structured around a vision of “Aberdeen a city centre for a global city”; a purpose of “energising the city centre to deliver prosperity and better quality of life for all” and seven intervention areas. The CCMP&DP is used to inform decision by the Council and other stakeholders undertaking development in the City Centre.

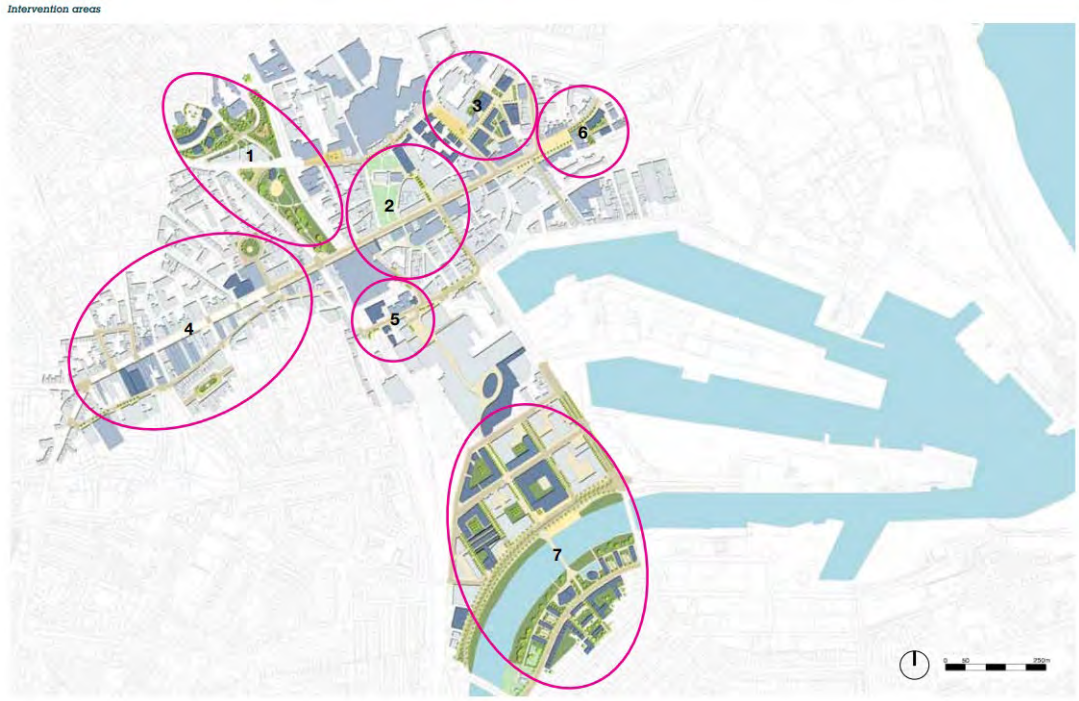


Figure 16.2. Graphic of intervention areas within the CCMP&DP 2015

16.47 Successful projects to date include the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Music Hall and Aberdeen Art Gallery (both within Intervention area 4), and Union Terrace Gardens (within intervention area 5).

16.48 In August 2022 a refresh of the CCMP&DP was approved (CD045). The review does not replace or supersede the CCMP&DP 2015. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan incorporate interventions and linkages to and from Aberdeen beach to the city centre, and a place –specific masterplan for the George Street was approved by Council in 2023 providing local analysis on current place. Movement and environmental qualities, and proposes eight transformational projects to deliver sustainable change and build community capacity and ownership within a comprehensive and targeted programme of engagement.

16.49 The City Centre and Beach Masterplan is defined by a number of key projects, each with their own character, uses, relationships, connections and contribution to the wider Masterplan. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan prioritises people within the urban environment, and aims to provide a revitalised focus on the city centre, with a mix of uses, activity and spaces for all ages to enjoy. The location of the key projects are as follows:

01 Union Street Central Public Realm 02 Aberdeen Market 03 Aberdeen Market to Guild Street Public Realm 04 Belmont Quarter 05 Schoolhill + Upperkirkgate 06 Union Street West 07 West End	08 George Street 09 Queen Street 10 Union Street East 11 Castlegate 12 Union Street Facade Works 13 Beach Boulevard 14 Beach Projects

Table 16.10: Key Project locations for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CD046)

16.50 The objectives and interventions of the City Centre Masterplan and the Beach and City Centre Masterplan go beyond the scope of just the local development plan. The documents may have implications on potential opportunities sites and the spatial strategy of the next local development plan, or local policy relating to the city centre and beach.



Figure 16.3: Plan showing key projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CD046)

Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Placemaking Process and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs (CD090A-D, CD091, CD092, CD093, CD094, CD095, CD096, CD097, CD098, CD099, CD100, CD101, CD102, CD103, CD104, CD105, CD106, CD107, CD108, CD109, CD110, CD111, CD112, CD113)

16.51 The placemaking process guidance is to plan for the creation of successful places. There is an expectation to produce quality places that are well-designed, sustainable and successful, and that help to deliver new housing and communities of the right type, in the right places, and which stand the test of time. The document supports NPF4 (CD001) Policy 14 and Policy 15 and embeds the Place Principle in planning decision making.

16.52 The Aberdeen Placemaking (CD113) process outlines the process expected for creating a development framework, masterplan or development brief. Context, identity, connection and engagement are outline as the key themes for creating placemaking documents, while working in conjunction with the Council's Masterplan, Design and Conservation team and other stakeholders. This is to ensure the services and facilities required to deliver these sites are considered and explored early within the developments design process.

16.53 There are a number of adopted long term placemaking documents (CD090 – CD112) covering a range of development scales from large mixed used communities, to business and industrial land, through to the redevelopment of single buildings. The documents provide an overview of the places to be created based on the context of the specific site, while ensure distinctiveness and identity, and good internal and external connections. Phasing and infrastructure requirements are outlined.

16.54 The large scale mixed use sites are to be developed with a number of exceptions. The sites are required to: provide a long-term vision; be inclusive mixed-use communities, with a range of community facilities and services; be a place with its own unique identity and sense of place shaped by and responding to existing character and adjacent communities; be a place that is efficient and self-sustaining with low energy demands and promotes healthy community lifestyles; be a place with a varied and interesting urban form, supported by high quality architectural, urban and landscape design; incorporate existing landscape and built features sensitively into sites; provide a full range of building typologies and tenures that will create a diverse and inclusive community structure, offering housing choice and opportunities for all sectors of the community; be active travel focussed and follow the transport hierarchy of pedestrian first; be a place that includes an extensive green network across the site and that extends and links to the existing Core Path and habitat networks; be a place where people can live, work and play without relying on private transport, with each neighbourhood area designed so that residents can access schools, shops, employment opportunities within walking distance of their home; ensure all streets will be designed to create a legible

hierarchy within the development. Streets will be designed firstly as places and will connect to existing places.

16.55 These principles adhere to the expectations of creating good design, quality and place, and have been developed with the principles of ensuring the communities located within them have access to their daily needs within a short walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport distance.

16.56 The adopted documents provide parameters relating to placemaking and quality, design and place for Aberdeen which need to be considered in the next local development plan.

Local Place Plans

16.57 Local Place Plans are a new way for communities to become engaged with the planning system. Local Place Plans are community led. The invitation to produce a local place plan was advertised via newspaper press release and an email was sent to all local community councils via the Community Council Liaison officer on 12 July 2024, by newsletter on 08 August, by Aberdeen City Council's social media accounts on 03 September 2024, the Local Development Plan social media accounts on 04 September 2024. Meetings were subsequently held via Microsoft Teams in the evening of 19 September 2024, and 06 February 2025 to talk with Community Councils about the new Local Development Plan process and Local Place Plans. To date one notice of interest in producing a Local Place Plan has been submitted. There are no valid or registered Local Place Plans. Local Place Plans can help to inform the next local development plan by outlining potential local policies or opportunity sites.

Planning Performance Review (CD114, CD115, CD116)

16.58 The Local Development Plan (CD044) encourages sustainability by supporting development that is designed to a high-quality and which demonstrates the six qualities of a successful place. The contribution officers make to successful place in terms of "added value" for planning applications is recorded. The Development Management process "added value" to 48% of all applications in 2020-2021 (CD114), 51% of applications in 2021-2022 (CD115) and 59% of applications in 2022-2023 (CD116). The applications with no "added value" were considered acceptable as submitted and no changes were necessary to the proposal. Where value was added the most common enhancements and improvements were related to various design aspects. The "added value" has been possible due to the implementation of the policies within the local development plan and, in particular, those relating to placemaking and design and the specialists employed to engage, negotiate and deliver with colleagues and a range of stakeholders and interested parties. The Planning Performance Review highlights the value of local design policies. The next local development plan will need to consider the requirement of the local design policies in light of National Planning Framework 4.

Year	Criteria	Percentage
2020-2021	Layout	37%
	Design	24%
	Historic Environment – internal and external	20%
	Materials	11%
	Shopfronts and Adverts	8%
2021-2022	Design	49%
	Amenity	15%
	Natural Environment	9%
	Road safety	7%
	Other	20%
2022-2023	Design	49%
	Amenity	16%
	Natural Environment	8%
	Road safety	6%
	Other	21%

Table 16.11: Summary of "Value Added" from 2020-223 (CD114 – CD116)

Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

16.59 Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods can help to deliver the healthy, sustainable, and resilient places required to support a good quality of life and balance our environmental impact.

Climate Exchange – 20-minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context (CD117)

16.60 The project uses 5 overarching categories to capture the features, infrastructure, and quality of services and experience that make up a 20 minute neighbourhood: Movement, Space, Resources, Civic and Stewardship. Together these dimensions are used to explore to what extent neighbourhoods across Scotland display characteristics that meet the 20-minute neighbourhood definition. In assessing local living a number of quantitative and qualitive indicators were used, based on the 5 overarching categories. The study used an 800 metre radius as the distance to services, noting this is the norm for those without mobility challenges. The radius does not take into account the networks of streets, or locational issues such as main roads, rivers crossing, railway lines and topographical issues which may sever routes.

16.61 Aberdeen specific data outlined in the map below is a combination of the quantitative and qualitative features. The light yellow illustrates neighbourhoods where the lowest relative scores were identified, while those in dark purple demonstrate the presence of a larger set of features and indicators. The Proposed Plan can used the data provide within the study to develop an understanding of categories used to determine local living in Aberdeen.

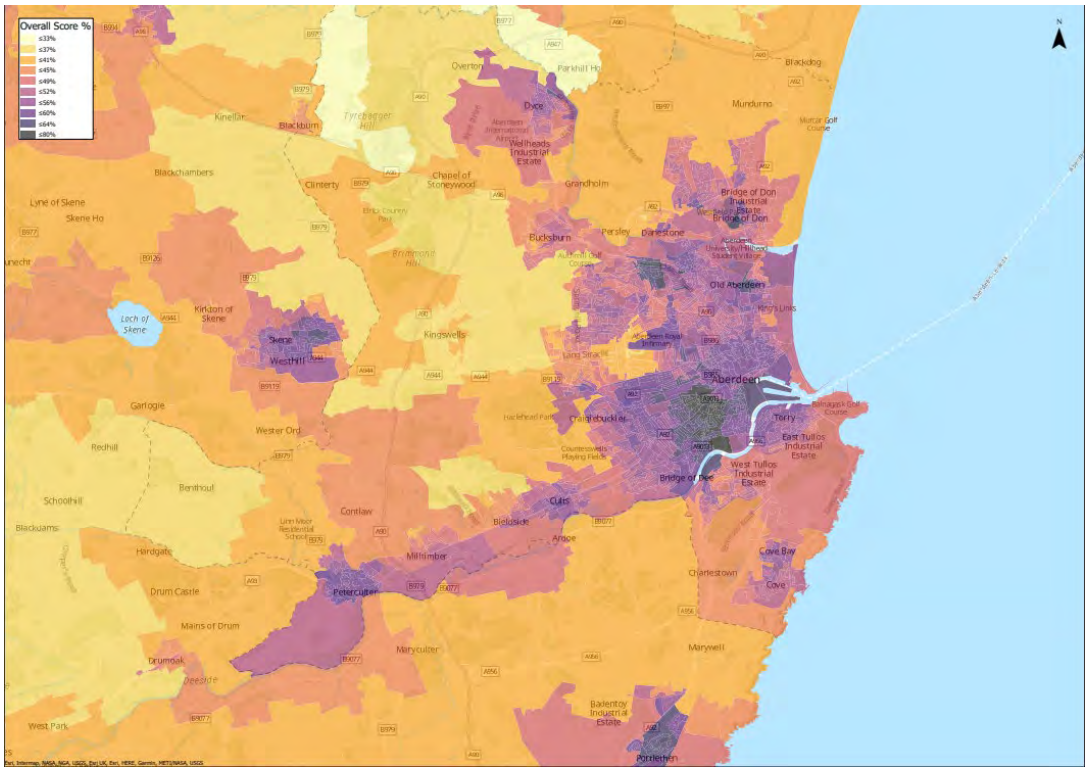


Figure 16.4: Combined quantitative features and qualitative indicators overall. Extract from Climate Exchange – 20 minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context

<u>Nationwide equity assessment of the 20-min neighbourhood in the Scottish context: A socio-spatial proximity analysis of residential locations (CD118)</u>

16.62 The study aims were to:

- create 20 minute neighbourhood catchment areas for health, transport, education, social and recreational domains;
- describe the number of residential locations within 20 minute neighbourhood domain catchment areas; and
- describe variation in access to 20 minute neighbourhood domains by area-level socioeconomic status and urbanicity.

16.63 The 10 domains used in this study were; healthy food retail; public transport; primary health care; community health resources; education; financial; accessible public open spaces; recreational, sports pitches and facilities; social and cultural locations, and eating establishments. An 800 metre buffer was used to determine access to facilities, and road and path network analysis was used that takes account of access barriers such as railway lines, rivers etc.

16.64 Overall the study noted, one in five residential locations had access to all ten 20 minute neighbourhood domains (Urban: 28%, Rural: 5%). There was variation in proportion of residential locations that has access to at least one facility by

domains; 91% had access to at least one public transport stop and 84% a public open space. There was poorer access to primary care services (42%) and healthy food retailers (50%). Across all domains, access to at least one facility was greater within the most deprived areas. The Proposed Plan can used the data provided within the study to develop an understanding of categories use to determine local living in Aberdeen.

16.65 The excel data for Aberdeen for the study has been shared. The results are noted in the Scottish Living Locally Data Portal section below.

The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (CD119)

16.66 Building on the above study, the Scottish Living Locally Data Portal examined access to 12 local living facilities, along with the 10 facilities noted above two more were added – superfast broadband and high frequency public transport. The result for Aberdeen's data zones show the percentage of homes with access within 20 minutes to each of the facilities. The Proposed Plan can used the data provide within the study to develop an understanding of categories use to determine local living in Aberdeen.

Facility	**% of homes with access within 20 minutes**	**Facility**	**% of homes with access within 20 minutes**
Health Foods	68.35	Financial	89.60
Public Transport	98.71	Pharmacy	76.84
High frequency public transport	64.17	Accessible public open space	90.65
Primary healthcare	58.38	Social and cultural	87.84
Recreational resources	94.31	Eating establishments	68.55
Primary school	82.02	Superfast broadband	95.7

Table 16.12: % of homes on Aberdeen with access to services with 20 minutes

Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhood Planning Guidance (CD120)

16.67 The guidance aims to encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods which prioritise

environmental, social and economic sustainability. Local living can support positive outcomes around climate actions, health inequalities, local economy and liveability and quality of life. Good placemaking and local living allows choice, reduces car travel, provides active travel, promotes local work opportunities and, local growing opportunities, and reduces social isolation - to name but a few benefits. Good placemaking also provides opportunities to support public reform and improve outcomes for communities

.

16.68 A Local Living Framework is presented to help understand and provide a consistent structure to consider how local living can be supported in places. Structured around 14 themes, within 5 overarching categories of Movement, Space, Resources, Civic and Stewardship, the themes provide the key considerations in order to help support local living. The Framework is designed to complement tools and resources already available for placemaking and design, including the Place Standard Tool and the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

16.69 The delivery of local living is also recognised as needing to be incremental, iterative and evolves. A three step approach to delivering local living follows three continuous and repeated steps:

1. Understand context - understanding the context of the place through the use of quantitative and qualitative information.
2. Collaborate, plan, design - developing collaborative models of working to inform place based planning and design processes.
3. Implement and review - aligning investment, developing delivery capacity, and supporting new ways of working.

16.70 The Evidence Report is the first step in understanding the context of Aberdeen.

<u>Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 (SIMD)</u>

16.71 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a relative measure of deprivation based upon postcode data. If an area is identified as ‘deprived’, this can relate to people having a low income but it can also mean fewer resources or opportunities. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks all data zones in Scotland from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976).

16.72 The most recent SIMD release was in 2020. Based on overall rankings of deprivation (i.e. All Domains), Aberdeen City’s position worsened between 2016 and 2020. The number of datazones in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland was 29, and the number of datazones in the 20-40% most deprived areas of Scotland was 65.

16.73 13 of Aberdeen’s neighbourhoods are recognised as deprived on this basis: Torry, Tillydrone, Seaton, Woodside, Middlefield, Cummings Park, Northfield, Heathryfold, Mastrick, Kincorth, Ashgrove, George Street and Stockethill.

16.74 Conversely, Aberdeen still has a relatively high number of datazones in the 20% least deprived areas of Scotland with 104. (It should be noted that SIMD is an area-based measure of relative deprivation - not everyone living in a deprived area is deprived, and not everyone who is deprived lives in a deprived area.) The next local development plan can use the SIMD data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

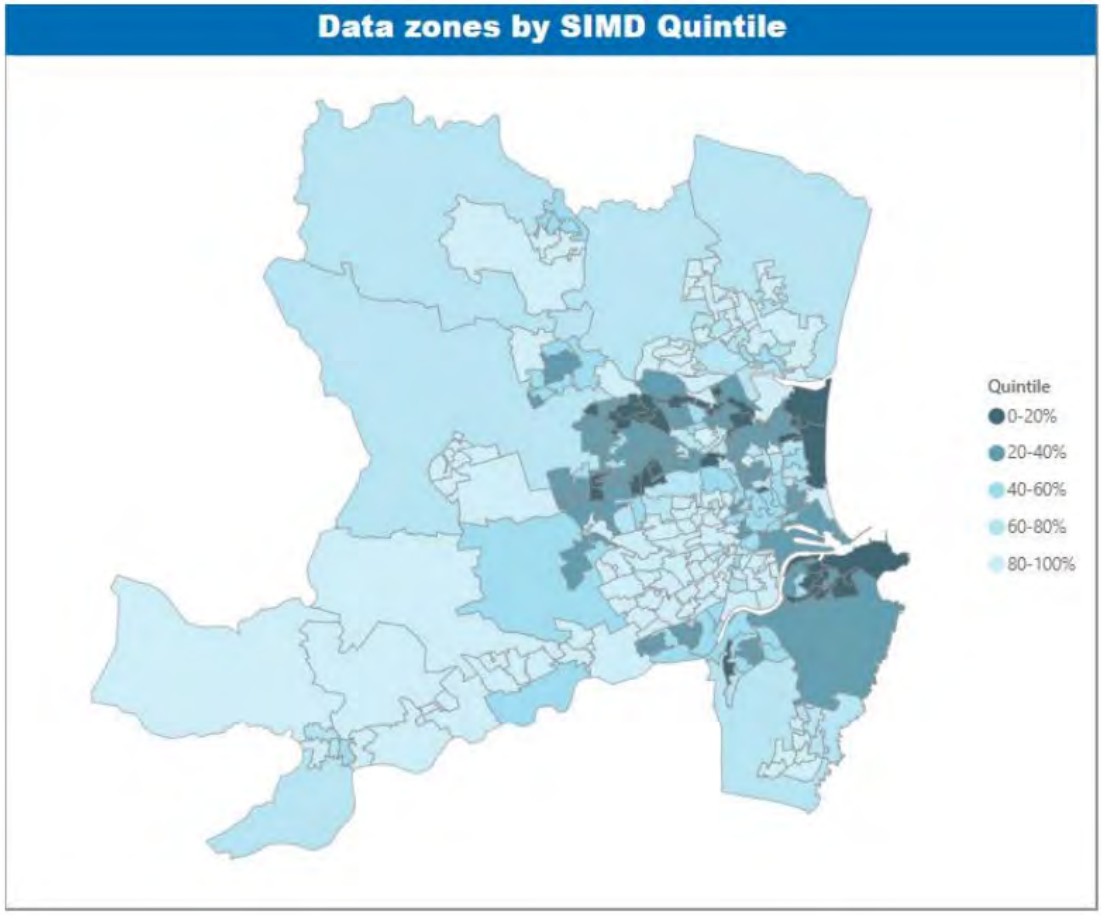


Figure 16.5: SIMD 2020 data for Aberdeen. Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020V2 [22]

NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling (CD186)

16.75 The Comprehensive Travel Study aims to provide insights into post-pandemic travel patterns and attitudes in the North East and to support monitoring for the Regional Transport Strategy (CD185). The results of this survey detail the methods and reasons for an individual's travel and around Aberdeen and their local area. It also highlights barriers to changing modal shift – which could be highlighted when assessing local living and using the local living tool to understand areas. Aberdeen specific data comprises: walking and car are the most modes of transport, followed by bus; more residents with protected characterises used a bus at least weekly; 85% have access to a car or van; car is the main mode used by most residents for all journey purposes, 24% trip-chain, with shopping the trip most residents' trip-

chain; 42% have access to a bike; 93% walk at least once a week; 9% use a pedal bike, 2 % use an e-bike at least once a week; 25% use a bus at least once a week. Full results of the survey are discussed further within the Sustainable Transport Section of the evidence report. The next local development plan can use the survey results to understand the barrier to local living relating to transport and consider how local strategies can work together to overcome these.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1 (CD048)

16.76 In recognition that Aberdeen serves as the regional centre for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire authority areas, a joint Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council retail study was commissioned in 2023 (CD047 – CD051). It was tasked with assessing retail capacity, turnover and opportunity in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The key purpose of the study was to derive information concerning retail and related land uses that would be used for the Evidence Report for the preparation of the next Local Development Plans for the two Councils. The study examined access to retail facilities through a local living lens.

16.77 The study used an 800-metre buffer as the distance to services, there was no road and path network analysis. The methodology focussed on:

- A minimum no. of 4 retail and retail/leisure service units, provided at least one of these units retails convenience goods in a clearly defined urban location
- Otherwise minimum no. of 5 retail/service units.
- All supermarkets (minimum ca. 700 sq m GFA)
- All identified town centres
- All identified retail parks

16.78 The review of local accessibility identified that there are few residential areas that are not within easy walking distance of facilities and shops providing a reasonable range of shopping and other local services. The City Centre and older established areas of Aberdeen have the highest concentration of access within an 800-meter buffer. The major new proposed housing areas, (a number of which have commenced development), are not within easy walking distance of a minimum level of provision to existing facilities. It is noted that these sites are proposed to provide mixed used town centres which will include retail provision to serve local need. The next local development plan will seek to ensure adequate retail provision is provided within new developments to provide local living.

Place Standard Assessments (CD041, CD042)

16.79 Quantitative and qualitative data can be gathered on the experience, views and thoughts of Aberdeen's residents from the output and analysis of the Place Standard Assessment. The output of the most recent exercise is noted in the Design, Quality and Place section above. The 14 themes within the Place Standard are relevant to local living. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can

be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise from 2023 and the results of place standard exercise from 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD046) / City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022 (CD045)

16.80 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CD046) and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022 (CD045) are discussed within the Design, Quality and Place section in more detail. In summary, they provide a strategic overview to reinvigorate the city centre and beach, outline intervention areas and projects to fit the scale of a regional city centre, and also aim to encourage more homes in the city centre, increase the mix of uses, provide area to linger all while reworking the historic urban landscape in a respectful way. The priority is to encourage the reimagination of the city centre to ensure it creates a people first environment. The objectives and interventions of the City Centre Masterplan and the Beach and City Centre Masterplan go beyond the scope of just the local development plan. The documents may have implications on potential opportunities sites and the spatial strategy of the next local development plan, or local policy relating to the city centre and beach.

Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Placemaking Process and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs (CD090A-D, CD091, CD092, CD093, CD094, CD095, CD096, CD097, CD098, CD099, CD100, CD101, CD102, CD103, CD104, CD105, CD106, CD107, CD108, CD109, CD110, CD111, CD112)

16.81 More detail is available on these within the Design, Quality and Place section above. In summary, the placemaking process outlines the expected approach to be taken when developing a place based site specific document. The adopted development frameworks, masterplan and development briefs cover a range of development scales and types, from large long term greenfield mixed use developments to single, brownfield units. The sites all have a part of play in ensuring local living, either in ensuring the creation of this on new development sites or ensure it is retain or retrofitted within brownfield sites. The adopted documents provide parameters relating to placemaking and quality, design and place for Aberdeen which need to be consideration in the next local development plan.

Population Needs Assessment 2025 (CD367)

16.82 The Population Needs Assessment 2025 provides an up to date evidence base for Aberdeen's Locality Outcome Improvement Plan (CD324), is it structured round the five theme of the Locality Outcome Improvement Plan; Children, Families and Lifelong learning; Economic Stability; Communities and Housing; Neighbourhood and Environment, and Health and Social Care . The Population Needs Assessment is a high-level analysis of key groups, priorities, and challenges across public services, including service performance and information available from a citizen perspective. The Population Needs Assessment 2025 provides a snapshot of the current experience of the people of Aberdeen and although not framed in the same way as the Local Living Framework, does capture data on a number of elements on a city wide scale. The data from the Population Needs Assessment is discussed in the Topic Paper on Wellbeing and Communities. The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (CD324)

16.83 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (LOIP) (CD324) outlines community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision is for "a place where all can thrive regardless of background or circumstance". There is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city's people to live healthy lives. Ten-year outcomes have been set to achieve the vision over five themes.

Theme	10 Year Outcome (by 2036)
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	95% of young people in SIMD 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school.
Economic Stability	Reduce to 3% the proportion of people aged 16 and above in SIMD 1 that are not in employment, and increase by 3% the employment rate of vulnerable groups.
Communities and Housing	Reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5%.
Neighbourhood and Environment	Increase proportion of people from SIMD 1 who feel they have influence and sense of control by 10%.
Health and Social Care	20% reduction in deaths in SIMD 1 from alcohol and drugs and a 20% reduction in suicide rate citywide.

Table 16.13 LOIP outcomes by theme

16.84 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related to the LOIP through placemaking.

Local Living in Aberdeen

16.85 Understanding local living in Aberdeen will require an examination of the existing lived experience through mapping. External contractors have been appointed to provide a GIS-based Local Living tool. Work on this is expected to be concluded by October 2026. A road and path network analysis will be used and data points mapped. The intended outcome will show the access to local living facilities and services for all of Aberdeen. This will provide spatial data on the differing levels of access across the city. This data produced will allow a greater understanding of where there is sufficiency of access to daily needs within communities. The data will enhance the results of national research studies noted above and the retail study. It is anticipated the mapping of data will take a number of months to complete. Consideration is being given toward the mapping of these datasets, with further refinement through the review of other local living mapping tools of other Local Authorities.

Categories	Themes	Factual or Spatial Datasets
Movement	Moving Around	Core Paths, Cycle Routes, Rights of Way, Cycle infrastructure
	Public Transport	Train Stations, Bus Stops, Car Clubs, Bus Routes
	Traffic and Parking	Cycle Parking, Vehicle Parking, Speed Limits
Space	Streets and Spaces	Urban Green Space, Listed Buildings, Brownfield Sites, Civic Space
	Natural Space	Greenbelt, Urban Green Space, Green Space Network, Sites of Special Scientific Interest , Local Nature Conservation Sites, Local Nature Reserve, River Dee Special Area of Conservation, woodlands, parks
	Play & Recreation	Playparks, Leisure Facilities, Private Leisure, Allotments, Community Gardens, Sports (Bowling Greens, Golf, Playing Fields, Tennis Courts, Other), Art Gallery, Museums
Resources	Facilities and Services	Public Toilets, Water refill locations, Primary & Secondary Schools, College, University, Library, Nursery, Supermarkets and Convenience Shops, Hospital, Clinics, GP, dentists, Pharmacies, Care Homes

	Work & Local Economy	Business & Industry, Business Zones, Airport & Harbour, City Centre Retail Core, West End Area, West End Shops & Cafes, Town Centres, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Commercial Centres, Beach & Leisure
	Housing & Community	Heat Networks
	Social Interaction	Places of Worship, Community Halls, City Centre Retail Core, West End Shops & Cafes, Town Centres, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Beach & Leisure, Pubs/Cafes/Restaurants (Outside of Centres), Community Facilities[1], Urban Green Space
Civic	Identity & Belonging	Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Gardens & Designed Landscapes
	Feeling Safe	Police Stations, Brownfield Sites, SEPA Flooding Maps,
Stewardship	Care & Maintenance	Dog Bins, Waste Recycling Centres, Recycle Points
	Influence & Sense of Control	Allotments, Community Gardens

Table 16.14: Data to be inputted to the Aberdeen Local Living tool

16.86 Further to the quantitative data above, the assessment and output from the Place Standard exercise will be considered, thereby allowing the qualitative data to further enrich the results of the data.

16.87 The Aberdeen Local Living tool will use the Local Living Framework structured around the 14 themes, within 5 overarching categories of Movement, Space, Resources, Civic and Stewardship to assess the current local living experience in Aberdeen. The Local Living tool will highlight any gaps in local living provision. This could be used to inform the content of the spatial strategy of the next local development plan.

Public Convenience (CD121)

16.88 There are 10 Aberdeen City Council run operational standalone public convenience located in Aberdeen. 8 are located within areas of open space, while 2 are located within Council run car parks.

[1] Community Facilities are defined in Aberdeen as community centre and learning centres. These are considered to be part of the make up of local living and as such will be identified within the Local Living Tool.

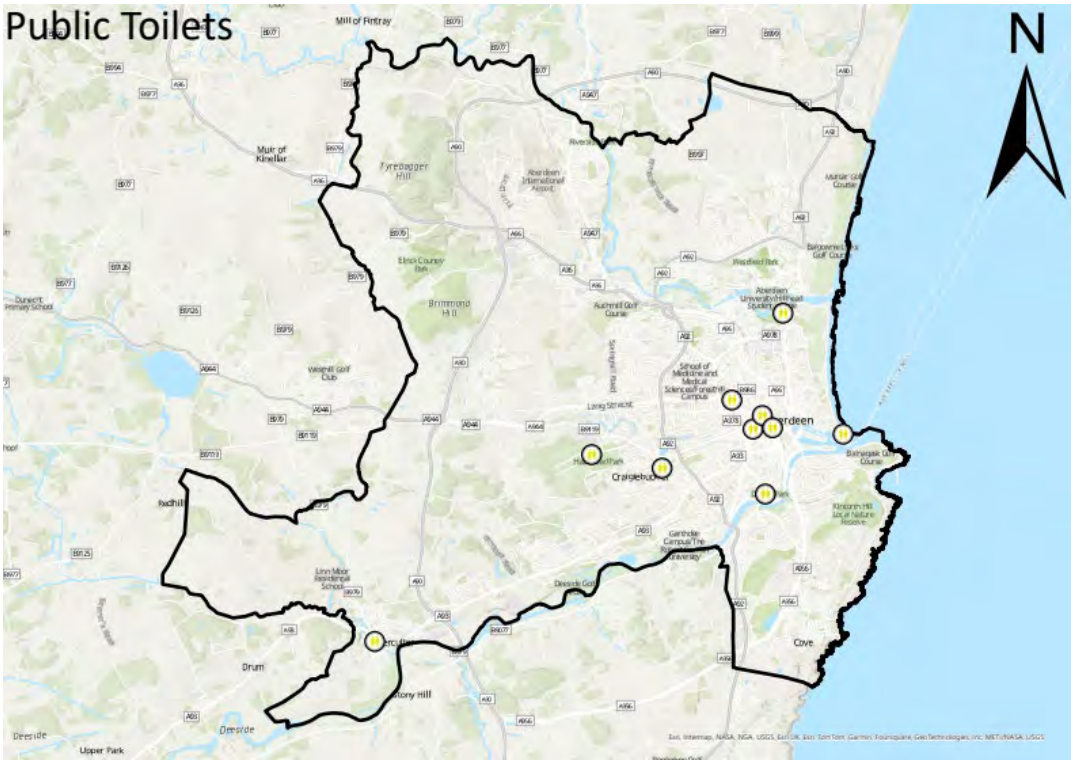


Figure 16.6: Locations of Aberdeen City Council run operational standalone public convenience.

16.89 Further to this, the Great British Public Toilet Map identifies 21 locations for public toilets in Aberdeen including the eight detailed above. The remainder are public conveniences within retail and other business premises that permit public use without purchase obligations. There are 11 Changing Places Toilets located in Aberdeen, eight of which are in publicly owned leisure, healthcare and Council buildings, with three in private ownership. The data on public conveniences will be used to inform the Proposed Plan's statement on the planning authority's policies and proposals on provision of public convivences.

Water Taps

16.90 Scottish Water has installed 2 'Top up Tap' standalone water refill facilities in public spaces across Aberdeen, Hazelhead Park and St Nicholas Street. The data on water refill stations will be used to inform the Proposed Plan's statement on the planning authority's policies and proposals on provision of water refill locations.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

16.91 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

16.92 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Wellbeing of Community. The Wellbeing of Community paper was split in two in October 2024; becoming the Place Paper, and the Wellbeing and Communities Paper. The following text relates to the Place Paper.

16.93 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- Archaeology Service – provided by Aberdeenshire Council.
- Architecture and Design Scotland
- Historic Environment Scotland
- NESTRANS
- Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation/ Development Management / Transport Strategy and Programmes / Education / Families and Communities / Environmental Manager)

16.94 A meeting was held with Architecture and Design Scotland on 02 September 2024 to understand how they could input in the Aberdeen Evidence Report. They provided information in Place Skill and Plan Making website as an aid to developing the evidence report in a follow up email on 13 September 2024.

16.95 A list of suggested key evidence was outline to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

16.96 The evidence presented within the Place paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders and FIRS. They also had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

16.97 The Archaeology Service noted they were happy with the content of the paper at this stage.

16.98 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 10 response in total were received for this paper, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Homes for Scotland) 2 from a housing developers (Bancon Homes, and Barrett and David Wilson Homes North Scotland) and 4 members of the public. Of those listed, 4 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and 1 other provided a further evidence source.

16.99 NatureScot note “Creating Places” should have been included as an evidence source, as although published in 2013 it includes useful information. Creating Places has been added as a further evidence source. A further suggestion relates to making the Summary of Implications section more Aberdeen specific and less generic. This has been actioned. In a meeting of 6 June 2025, NatureScot confirmed they have no dispute with the paper.

16.100 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland outline they have no dispute with the paper but do note the follow comments:

- Small brownfield sites would historically be developed by small to medium enterprises, the numbers of which have declined due to global financial crisis

and viability issues, and therefore cannot be relied upon to deliver small brownfield sites a part of the spatial strategy. Flexible developer contributions are required, and the allocation of other additional, larger sites to off-set under delivery of smaller sites. The Council notes brownfield sites are important in terms of solutions to support local living, and although more challenging to develop, they sit at the heart of government plans for redevelopment under NPF4 as well as City Centre living strategies. Deliverability of sites is fundamental to the planning process as is highlighted by the Delivery Programme.

- Listed buildings and scheduled monuments should not be seen as a significant constraint on allocation. NPF4 Policy 7b) iv) is also noted to highlight demolition can be supported when it delivers significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community. The Council agree listed building and scheduled monuments should not be seen as a significant constraint on allocation. Many of the allocations within the extant plan contain designated buildings or sites. NPF4 is part of the development plan. We note within the implications of the plan section that consideration needs to be given to the requirement for local historic assets and place policies with the adoption of NPF4.
- Marketability and deliverability must be considered along with heritage, to address housing needs and the housing emergency. The Council notes the deliverability of sites is a fundamental part of the planning process, and is supported by the Delivery Programme and the housing pipeline as part of NPF4. Call for sites has historically asked questions on deliverability and will continue to do so. The housing emergency is addressed within the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- Housing plays an important socio-economic role. Homes for Scotland members have made significant infrastructure investments and investment in energy efficiency homes, local living an net zero. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- There are design aspects that fall within the remit of other regulatory regimes such as building standards. The LDP can and should only seek to address Design, Quality and Place where it has scope, and that there should be inbuilt flexibility within the approach given the current housing crisis. The Council note the ongoing issues that are being faced nationwide and that design covers may different services. NPF4 outlines the criteria expected within regard to design, quality and place and creating successful places. The housing crisis is addressed through Topic Paper: Delivery of Homes.
- Viability requires to be a fundamental consideration of these policies and it should be recognised that NPF4 is supportive of housing on the city periphery, and new home can add critical mass to support services and make a positive contribution to local living. The Council note viability and delivery is considered through the Delivery Programme. The Council site assessments process will and has historically asked for information on deliverability of sites.
- The Topic Paper refers to an 800 metre buffer which was used as the distance to services, noting this is the norm for those without mobility challenges. This reference to 800m requires to be more fully explained. The Council notes this

reference is to an existing external studies that have been undertaken and provide an understanding of Aberdeen. The Topic Paper notes the Council have purchased a road and path network analysis GIS tool which will be used to understand the local living picture in Aberdeen and will determine a more nuanced and local picture. The tool can be set to different travel modes using either a timeframe or a buffer.

- Local living approached must be applied flexibility taking into account local context. Implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods in the periphery of the City required improvements that HFS members can assist with through their developments. Larger-scale housing developments may be able to create and support local living. The Council agree large scale development should create and support local living, and that new developments have the potential to do so wherever they are located within Aberdeen. All applications are based on their own merit with regard to the development plan, which includes local living as noted in NPF4.
- If a proportion of the Local Housing Land Requirement will be provided within town centres there needs to be consideration of viability and placemaking principles, with available and deliverable sites and policy interventions such as Compulsory Purchase Orders set out from the start. The Council is aware sites are required to be deliverable. The Council site assessments process will and has historically asked for information on deliverability of sites. The Delivery Programme will also be fundamental to this process.

16.101 A meeting was held with Bancon on 18 June 2025, after an email of 6 June confirmed the comments to the paper were a dispute. At the meetings is was agreed the comments were not a dispute. Bancon outline the follow comments:

- The masterplan and design approach has been successful in Aberdeen to date. Early masterplan are not flexible enough to allow them to respond to market changes. Going forward a masterplan approach should be retained with local policies that allow for flexibility in response to market changes, although a different system this would be in keeping with the aspirations for Masterplan Consent Areas. The Council notes masterplans provide the framework for what is expected within a site, and are developed in conjunction with stakeholders, communities, the development industry and the Council. The Council notes ongoing issues that are being faced nationwide. NPF4 lays out clear goals for what is expected for new developments in terms of placemaking, and successful places through policy 17: Design, Quality and Place.
- The local and national housing crisis is not referenced, and as such project viability is important. Housing plays an important socio-economic role, providing significant infrastructure investments and investment in energy efficiency homes, local living and net zero. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- The Topic Paper refers to an 800 metre buffer which was used as the distance to services, noting this is the norm for those without mobility challenges. The paper fails to acknowledge that the ability to access public transport services

and access to high speed broad band contributes to the principles of local living. The Council notes the Topic Paper outlines a number of reports that look at local living. The percentage of Aberdeen with accessibility to high speed broadband and access to public transport, and high frequency public transport within 20 minutes is noted in the paper, in table 17.12.

16.102 An email was sent to Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as disputes.

16.103 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Historic Assets and Places

16.104 The Proposed Plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment and Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that Aberdeen's heritage assets can bring.

16.105 The Proposed Plan will continue to protect and enhance historic assets in Aberdeen which include listed buildings, conservation areas, sites within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites. Historic assets will be identified within site assessments for the Proposed Plan.

16.106 With a detailed historic assets and place policy now included in National Planning Framework 4 , consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local historic assets and place policies. The final committee decision on the Article 4 Direction may indicate the need for a local policy on windows for three conservation areas. The Conservation Area Character Appraisals are adopted non-statutory guidance, consideration will be given if there are local policies required based on the content of these documents.

16.107 Consideration will be given on if, and how, the impact of the HES review of the current Buildings at Risk Register might be reflected in the policy framework and development strategy for the Proposed Plan. As noted by HES, neighbouring infrastructure and redevelopment projects contained within the LDP, and LDP policies, need to be designed in a way that would support and not hinder redevelopment of Broadford Works and Woolmanhill Hospital sites.

16.108 A proactive approach to considering the long-term options for places of worship falling out of use and look to the challenges and opportunities that these sites may

offer in terms of the communities in which they are situated and the services that they require is encouraged.

16.109 Aberdeen's high quality and attractive historic environment has been identified as is good at present, but there is improvement needed with the central and south locality areas to improve run-down / derelict buildings. Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can support the improvement, such as looking to the Buildings at Risk Register and the vacant and derelict land survey, and supporting the work of Aberdeen City Trust and the Heritage and Place Programme.

Design, Quality, Place

16.110 The Proposed Plan should be place-based and created in line with the Place Principle.

16.111 The Proposed Plan Spatial Strategy should be underpinned by the six qualities of successful places outlined in national policy and guidance: 1, Healthy; 2. Pleasant; 3. Connected; 4. Distinctive; 5. Sustainable; and 6. Adaptable

16.112 With a detailed design, quality, place policy now included in National Planning Framework 4 consideration will need to be given on the need for a local design, quality, place policy. Consideration will be given on the guidance set out in Creating Places, and if this lead to the requirement of local policy.

16.113 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy, policy and placemaking. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities. The Proposed Plan will look to address all topic areas to ensure the lower rated topics are significantly improved and the higher rated topics are maintained/ improved. Areas of intervention may also be identified.

16.114 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the aims of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, and by adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs, should these sites be taken forward within the Proposed Plan.

16.115 The content of any registered Local Place Plan will be taken account of when developing the spatial strategy, policy and placemaking within the Proposed Plan.

Local Living

16.116 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy will need to consider how it can support local living by considering housing together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops and health and social care to reduce the need to

use unsustainable methods of travel, to prioritise quality of life, help tackle inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing, and respond to the climate emergency.

16.117 Consideration will need to be given on the content of National Planning Framework 4 Policy. The Proposed Plan policy framework will need to consider how these matters are addressed.

16.118 Spatial strategy and associated site briefs and masterplans will need to help support local living within settlements. The approach should account for the local context, variation of settlement patterns, and it should respect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place.

16.119 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy, policy and placemaking. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities. The Proposed Plan will look to address all topic areas to ensure the lower rated topics are significantly improved and the higher rated topics are maintained/ improved.

16.120 The Proposed Plan strategy and policy will be informed by the SIMD 2020 data. This may inform areas of intervention when overlapped with the Aberdeen Local Living GIS tool.

16.121 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the aims of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, and adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs. These will be viewed with a local living lens.

16.122 The Proposed Plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related to the LOIP, and placemaking.

16.123 The results of the Aberdeen local living GIS tool will highlight any gaps. This results of this could inform the Proposed Plan spatial strategy with the tool being used in conjunction with the site assessment matrix to assess proposed development sites.

16.124 The data on public conveniences and water refill stations will be used to inform the Proposed Plan's statement on the planning authority's policies and proposals on provision of public convivences and water refill locations.

Marmot Principles

16.125 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight

Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	X
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 16.15 Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

16.126 NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

16.127 NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Bancon confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

16.128 Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland comments are being noted as a dispute and outline the follow comments:

- The placemaking approach in Aberdeen to date has been successful in creating high quality residential developments that have delivered a range of housing and affordable housing. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- The role economic factors such as local economy, disposable income, population and demography, will affect the potential to bring listed buildings back into productive use and these should be incorporated into the evidence

on place. The Council focus within the Topic Paper is to identity the principle built heritage characterises of the district. In looking to allocate sites in the 2028 plan deliverability will be assessed, and the Delivery Programme will also be of importance in bring these sites forward.

- Aberdeen is well placed to create places that benefit from local living, and larger-scale housing developments may be able to create and support local living. The Council agree large scale development should create and support local living, and that new developments have the potential to do so wherever they are located within Aberdeen.
- To ensure local living requires an increase in population density that can be delivered through new housing developments, which will have a positive impact on use and patronage of services and facilities. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- Affordability, availability and quality of housing attract people to Aberdeen. The continued master planned approach to new residential areas would be successful in delivering significant improvements such as increased greenspace. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.

16.129 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Information Gaps

16.130 The final recommendation on the Article 4 Direction is due to be reported back to committee in August 2026. Should any Article 4’s be approved, these will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for final approval. The results of this may require the need for a local policy on windows and doors within the Proposed Plan.

16.131 External contractors have been appointed to provide a GIS-based Local Living tool. Work on this is expected to be concluded by Autumn 2026. The tool can be used to understand gaps in the city and will be useful for site assessment.

16.132 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

17. Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities

Requirements addressed in this section:

17.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 16D(1)	a planning authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in preparing an Evidence Report.
Section 15 (5)	the size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district, the health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs, the infrastructure of the district (including health care facilities); and how that infrastructure is used.
Section 15(5)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,

Other Relevant Legislation

Regulation
The Town and Country Planning (Play Sufficiency Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023
The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 Regulation 9 (2) Have regard to: any open space strategy / Have regard to: location of Control of Major Accident Hazard establishments and / or pipelines
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

National Planning Framework 4

Play, Recreation and Sport

17.2 LDPs should identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages. This should be based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community and informed by the planning authority's Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy. These spaces can be incorporated as part of enhancing and expanding blue and green infrastructure, taking account of relevant agencies' plans or policy frameworks, such as flood risk and/or water management plans. New provisions should be well-designed, high quality, accessible and inclusive.

Health and Safety

17.3 LDP spatial strategies should seek to tackle health inequalities particularly in places which are experiencing the most disadvantage. They should identify the health and social care services and infrastructure needed in the area, including potential for co-location of complementary services, in partnership with Health Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

17.4 LDPs should create healthier places for example through opportunities for exercise, healthier lifestyles, land for community food growing and allotments, and awareness of locations of concern for suicide.

17.5 Spatial strategies should maintain appropriate distances between sites with hazardous substances and areas where the public are likely to be present and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

Community Wealth Building

17.6 LDPs should be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area. Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities; identify community assets; set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality; and seek to provide benefits for local communities.

Links to Evidence

Play, Recreation and Sport

- CD128 Sportscotland Evidence Report Data (PDF)
- CD129 Sportscotland Facility Planning Model 2023 Summary Reports (PDF)
- CD130 Active Aberdeen Partnership: Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2026 (PDF)
- CD131 Children's Services Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- CD132 Play Policy and Strategy 2018 (PDF)
- CD133 Play Sufficiency Assessment (Part 1 & Part 2)

- CD134 The Granite City Forest - Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-2025
- CD136 Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report
- CD137 Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Public Survey Report
- CD 135 Open Space Strategy 2011 - 2016
- CD041 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report
- CD042 Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh - Engagement Summary Report 2023

Health and Safety

- CD138 Public Health Priorities for Scotland
- CD139 National Guidance on Action to Address Suicide at Locations of Concern
- CD140 Place and Wellbeing Outcomes
- CD141 A Healthier Future Scotland's Diet and Healthy Weight Delivery Plan
- CD142 Relationship Between Food Environment and Planning System - Research Summary
- CD143 Licensing Scotland Act 2005
- CD145 NHS Grampian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023
- CD147 Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 -2023
- CD148 Annual Performance Report 2023-2024 AHSCP
- CD149 Strategic / Delivery Plan 2022 -2025
- CD367 Population Needs Assessment 2025
- CD150 Committee Report CFS/24/188: Healthy Weight
- CD324 Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036
- CD151 Aberdeen City Granite City Growing 2020
- CD152 Annual Allotment Report 2023-2024 (PDF)
- CD153 Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Food Growing
- CD154 Aberdeen City Air Quality Action Plan 2011 (PDF)
- CD155 Air Quality Annual Progress Report 2024
- CD156 Aberdeen Agglomeration Noise Action Plan
- CD157 Committee Report OPE/19/125: Environmental Noise Action Plan Update
- CD158 Contaminated Land Strategy
- CD159 SEPA Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory 2022
- CD041 Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement Report 2023
- CD042 Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement Summary Report 2023
- CD238 Aberdeen Airport - Annual Noise Report 2023

- CD239 Aberdeen Airport - Noise Action Plan 2018-2023
- CD240 Aberdeen Airport - Noise Action Plan 2024-2028
- CD311 Aberdeen City – Quarries and 1KM Buffer Zones (PDF)
- CD310 Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 – Constraints Map
  **This shows Pipeline Locations and Notification Areas*
- CD309 Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Airport and Perwinnes Radar
  **Airport Public Safety Zones can be found on pages 11-12*
  **Airport Noise Contours can be found on pages 13-15*
  **Perwinnes Hill Radar Monitor Safeguarding and Technical Site Safeguarding and maps can be found on pages 16-18.*
- CD241 UKOPA Guidance: Local Authority Planners information regarding On Shore Pipelines and Associated Installations
- CD159 SEPA Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory

Health and Safety – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
National Records for Scotland Aberdeen City Council Area Profile	25 June 2026
National Records for Scotland Mid-2024 population estimates (2025)	6 April 2026
Census - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)	25 June 2026
ScotPHO Profiles	25 June 2026
Locality Outcomes Data	25 June 2026
Aberdeen City Data Observatory	25 June 2026
Statistics.gov.scot	23 September 2024
Scottish Health Survey 2023 Dashboard	14 January 2025
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation	18 June 2024
SEPA Waste Capacity Sites	18 June 2024
SEPA Special Sites	10 August 2026
Low Emission Zone Map	18 June 2024
Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning Methodology	27 May 2025
Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning – public safety advice	27 May 2025
The Coal Authority Development High Risk Areas	23 September 2024
NHS Find a service	18 June 2024

Community Wealth Building

- CD058 Regional Economic Strategy – A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland
- CD160 Committee Report COM/22/279: Community Wealth Building
- CD160A Committee Report COM/22/279: Community Wealth Building Committee Report: Appendix 1- Actions to Support an Aberdeen Community Wealth Building Approach

- CD161 Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy
- CD162 Joint Procurement Strategy Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland Council
- CD163 The Community Assets Transfer Annual Report 2023
- CD164 Current Assets (March 2025)
- CD324 Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036
- CD368 North Locality Plan 2026-2036
- CD369 Central Locality Plan 2026-2036
- CD370 South Locality Plan 2026-2036
- CD168 Community Learning and Development Plan Interim Plan 2024-25 Final
- CD242 Community Learning and Development Plan 2025 Consultation

Community Wealth Building – Additional Online Resources	**Date Accessed**
Community Asset Transfer webpage	31 July 2024
NOMIS Labour Market Profile - Aberdeen City	31 July 2024
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation	31 July 2024

Summary of Evidence

Policy Context - Purpose and Scope

17.7 Aberdeen will continue to encourage, promote and facilitate choice within its environments to ensure that people can engage in activities to ensure good physical and mental health. This will include ensuring the environment is not harmful to people, and look to reduce inequalities found in life expectancy and good quality years of life expectancy. This will also include environments where local communities have a stake in, access and benefit from the wealth generated by local economies. This will be discussed in further detail below.

17.8 This section is structured in the following order:

- Play, recreation and sport
- Health and safety
- Community Wealth Building

Play, Recreation and Sport

Sportscotland Evidence Report Data and Sportscotland Facility Planning Model (CD128, CD129)

17.9 The facilities located in Aberdeen, run by both private and public organisations, comprise 123 Sports Halls, 30 fitness studios, 30 squash courts, 25 swimming

pools, 12 athletic tracks, 1 curling rink, 30 golf courses, 23 bowling greens, 61 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, 205 pitches of all types. The Facility Planning Model (CD129) is a potential tool for identifying deficiencies in facility provision as well as the availability of data from the facilities database. It predicts likely patterns of demand for facilities, it does not predict actual usage, as this is determined by a wide range of factors such as management and programming. The facility planning model will be used to understand if there are potential deficiencies, and can be used to help inform future sports and recreation activities.

Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy (CD130)

17.10 Aberdeen has a good network of specialist sports facilities which enable residents to access a wide range of sports participation and performance opportunities. The report identifies investment is required to Northfield Swimming Pool, Jesmond Sports Centre and Sheddocksley Sports Centre, which had been actioned, and the Alex Collie Sports Centre has been established as a centre for gymnastics. The Beach Leisure Centre is subject to a redesign as part of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CD045) . See Place Topic Paper. The investment sites identified could be used to help to inform the future sports and recreation infrastructure to be planned for Aberdeen.

17.11 For developer obligations relating to sport and recreation, please see the Infrastructure paper.

Children's Services Strategic Plan (CD131)

17.12 The plan notes six strategic stretch outcomes. The second is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and families. Within the stretch outcomes, five priorities are noted. Two of the priorities could be assisted by the Local Development Plan. These are to increase levels of physical activity, and increase the provision of child friendly environments within local communities.

17.13 Key actions are noted for this:

- Increase the percentage of young people participating in physical activity out with the curriculum from 22% in 2022 to 35% in 2026.
- Increase the range of accessible options for children and young people with sensory and physical impairments.
- Ensure a more equal distribution of gender participation in physical activity.

17.14 The next local development plan will seek to help facilitate the key actions of the strategic plan through placemaking principles, the spatial strategy, or a local policy or guidance relating to play / open space.

Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy (CD132)

17.15 The purpose of the strategy is to reaffirm a commitment to play, celebrate achievement, set priorities for continuing to improve the quality of current and future play opportunities; and to highlight the links between play and other local and national policies and strategies for improving outcomes for children and young people. Four themes are presented; Play in the home, Play in Early Learning & Childcare and School, Play in the community, Positive support for play (table 1). The Local Development Plan can support these through placemaking, or a local policy or guidance relating to play.

Theme	**Aim**	**We will:**
Play in the home	Our homes and family environments are places where our children and young people enjoy plentiful play opportunities, indoors and out, appropriate to their age, stage, ability and preferences.	1.1 Support families in exploring the benefits of play 1.2 Promote family friendly neighbourhoods and opportunities to reclaim streets for play 1.3 Encourage intergenerational opportunities for play
Play in Early Learning & Childcare and School	All of our children and young people enjoy high quality play opportunities, particularly learning via outdoor free play in stimulating spaces with access to nature, on a daily basis in all early learning and childcare settings and school.	2.1 Encourage all settings to adopt and promote the Play Policy and Strategy, demonstrating that they value play and understand the vital role this has in supporting children's holistic development 2.2 Promote play friendly approaches in all settings and in all weathers 2.3 Balance benefit and risk to enable challenge and learning through play for all children, building resilient and confident individuals 2.4 Encourage the development and use of more natural play spaces
Play in the community	All our children and young people have sufficient time and space for playing within their community and have contact with nature and outdoor spaces in their everyday lives. Play is valued, encouraged and supported in communities.	3.1 Promote play opportunities to improve health and wellbeing 3.2 Make community and public green spaces clean, inclusive and accessible to all 3.3 Empower communities to 'come out and play'

Positive support for play.	Aberdeen provides a positive environment for play through: a professional workforce and strong and visionary leadership; a well-resourced third sector and infrastructure; and a supportive and informed media.	4.1 Promote Aberdeen as a City of Play 4.2 Embed children's right to play in policies and strategies 4.3 Communicate effectively to ensure all children and young people understand that this policy is for them 4.4 Nurture partnership working to support play throughout the city

Table 17.1: Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy theme and actions. Extract from the Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy (CD132).

Play Sufficiency Assessment (CD133)

17.16 The assessment has been informed by consultation with children, parents and carers, play-based workshops, a bespoke play-based workshop for children with additional support needs and their families / caregivers, a formal play space assessment and information from the Open Space Audit 2024 (CD136) for informal play spaces.

17.17 The general quantity of provision of play space ranged from 8 to 20 play spaces depending on ward. The majority of residential areas are within a 10-minute walk of a formal equipped play space with all wards. Thirty-two percent of these formal equipped play spaces had issues identified with the accessibility of their entrance or layout. The majority of spaces score well for 'quality of place' and score better on 'quality of play' for younger children (0-11 year olds) than for young people (12-17 year olds). The average 'Overall Play Quality' for the City was 74%.

17.18 Just over half of the spaces (54%) included inclusive physical play opportunities for younger children (0-11 year olds) whilst just under a third (30%) provided inclusive physical play opportunities for young people (12-17 year olds). Generally the level of risky or challenging play was low, with just below a third of spaces (32%) providing what was considered average or higher risk/challenging play.

17.19 The highest quantities of additional formal and informal play space were generally located in the largest wards, on the edges of the City where access to either the countryside, woodlands or coastline is available. The lowest quantities of additional formal and informal play space were generally located in the smaller wards, in City centre locations.

17.20 The play sufficiency assessment may have an impact on the spatial strategy and policy/site requirements of the Proposed Plan.

The Granite City Forest - Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan (CD134)

17.21 Covering 2019 – 2044, the plan seeks to expand woodland coverage within the city to 600 hectares over the next 25 years, and a further 300 hectares by 2070. The strategy includes four strategic priorities: Promoting the role of our trees and woodlands in mitigating and adapting to climate change; Expanding the Granite City Forest; Protecting our trees and woodlands, and Contributing to the City's green infrastructure and the well-being of our people.

17.22 Sites have been identified based on their suitability for planting, ranging from preferred to unlikely to be suitable. Further investigations will be needed to screen out areas that are not suitable for planting and others, such as built-up areas, which might be suitable for street trees.

17.23 Although this document addresses a number of the components of a forest and woodland strategy, it does not satisfy planning legislation on this matter. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated the strategy will be completed by March 2027. The strategy will help to inform the spatial strategy of the next local development plan. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy.

Open Space Audit 2024 (CD136, CD137)

17.24 More information can be found in the Infrastructure Topic Paper. However, the key findings from the Open Space Audit are summarised below.

17.25 3,902 hectares of open space was surveyed, equating to 21% of the total Aberdeen area. The citywide average is 300 hectares of open space per ward, ranging from a high of 698 hectares and a low of 47 hectares. The breakdown of open space is shown in Table 17.2.

Category	Area (hectares)	Percentage of open space
Natural / semi natural greenspaces	1,796	46%
Amenity greenspaces	895	23%
Sports areas	798	20%
Public parks and garden	204	5%
Private gardens or grounds*	150	3.8%
Burial grounds, allotments and play spaces	59	2%

Table 17.2: City wide open space hectares *which includes school grounds and institutional ground areas. These are not always fully accessible at all times but can still be important functional and usable spaces.

17.26 The average citywide open space quality score is 14.3 out of 25, with Accessibility and Place indicators the highest scoring while Health & Physical Activity, and Biodiversity quality indicators were the lowest scoring areas.

17.27 Public parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and sports areas are the most accessible public spaces used in daily life. On average 41% of respondents visited greenspace and open space areas several times a week. Most people stayed on average for 1-2 hours.

17.28 A total of 580 responses to the survey were received. 79% of respondents reported being satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of Aberdeen's greenspace and open space areas however some open space types had a lower satisfaction rating than others.

Type of greenspace and open space	% reported being satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied
Parks	86%
Woodlands	82%
Natural or semi-natural areas	82%
Children's play areas	75%
Allotments and community food growing spaces	68%
Walking/cycling routes	64%
Amenity spaces	64%

Table 17.3: % reported being satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied with greenspace and open space

17.29 Respondents were asked the top three reasons why they use, visit or enjoy the city's open spaces. The most common reasons given were:

Reasons	%
Physical exercise or health reasons (e.g. walking or jogging etc.)	75%
To be in nature	71%
To meet friends or family or to socialise	53%
To get out of the house or office (e.g. for a break)	47%
For mental health reasons	31%

Table 17.4: Top three reasons why they use, visit or enjoy the city's open spaces

17.30 When asked what would encourage respondents to use or visit Aberdeen's greenspace or open spaces more often the most common reasons given were:

Improvements	%
If they had better facilities (e.g. benches or toilets)	49%
If they were better managed for wildlife (e.g. wildlife enhancements such as tree and wildflower planting, long grass, wetlands, shrubs etc.)	45%
If there were more adequate paths for walking or cycling	36%
If they had less or no dog fouling	30%

If they were better connected to other spaces	25%
If they had less or no litter	25%
If there was better information about them (e.g. information panels or signage)	20%
If they had better lighting	19%

Table 17.5: what would encourage respondents to use or visit Aberdeen's greenspace or open spaces more often

17.31 Regarding food growing, 54% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to see more food-growing opportunities within green and open spaces across Aberdeen. 65% of respondents reported being satisfied with the quality of allotments and community food growing spaces. This is the third lowest satisfaction rate of all the open space types and could be attributed to the current high demand and long waiting lists for allotments. The next local development plan can use the results of the audit to help shape the spatial strategy.

Open Space Strategy 2011-2016 (CD135)

17.32 There is work underway to update the Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated a strategy will be completed by March 2027. Please see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information on the Natural Environment Strategy. The Open Space Strategy will be updated in line with data from the Open Space Audit 2024 (CD136, CD137). The Open Space Strategy's main purpose is to ensure the city has enough accessible and good quality open space. The Strategy revolves around four themes: people, health, the economy and the environment.

17.33 The Strategy has eight objectives; Create, protect and enhance Green Space Network; Improve the quality of open spaces; Provide well maintained and managed open spaces, balancing available resources with community demand; Improve access to and within open spaces; Increase the value and use of open spaces for health, education, play and lifelong learning; Seek business, community and other agency involvement; Recognise the economic, environmental and social value of open spaces; Maximise opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change and further biodiversity. The strategy will help to inform the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan.

17.34 For developer obligations relating to open space please see the Infrastructure paper.

Place Standard Assessments (CD041, CD042)

17.35 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in-person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assesses places and is split into fourteen themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of seven, and people are asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and

central, with “all” noting where these comments were present in all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

17.36 The Play and Recreation theme, and the Natural Spaces theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: For play and recreation a score of 4.08 out of 7 was achieved, for natural spaces, a score of 4.71 was achieved. The comments submitted are noted below.

Place Standard Theme	**“Good” now**	**“Improve” for the future**
Play and Recreation	• Availability of play areas and play parks, parks and outdoor spaces and community centres (All).(South and Central also noted sports facilities, cultural spaces) • Lots of activities / lots of events for all ages (North and South)	• Upkeep/retaining existing facilities/reinstating facilities (All) • Increase accessibility, availability, awareness of, number of, and types of activities for all, (All) • More activities for adults (South) • Maintenance/upkeep of play parks/outdoor space (All) • Increased activity, space provision and cost for children and young people / teenagers (North and South) • More outdoor sport/culture/play activities in parks and at the beach. (Central) • Showers, changing rooms at the beach (Central)
Natural Space	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. (All)	• Improvements to the maintenance of green and blue spaces (All) • Increasing cleanliness – more bins and be strict on irresponsible dog owners (All) • Better accessibility to and increasing number of green spaces available (South and Central) • More seating (N) • More public convenience (North) • More wild flowers, more food growing and allotments (Central)

Table 17.6: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Play and Recreation Extract.

17.37 The children and young people results (Table 17.7) noted for play and recreation: 54.2% felt they were okay, 34.7% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great. For natural spaces 60.0% felt they were okay, 25.7% felt they were not good, and 14.3% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Play and Recreation	Play parks	29.3%	Mix of activities	32.1%
	Easy to find spaces	19.8%	Sports areas	30.2%
	Making your own fun	19.8%	Organised fun stuff	27.4%
Natural Spaces	Parks	38.7%	Better parks	44.3%
	Trees	34%	Welcome animals	34%
	Woods	32.1%	More trees	24.5%

Table 17.7: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Play and Recreation Extract (CD041).

17.38 The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the Place Standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

Health and Safety

17.39 The relationship between planning and health and wellbeing has been realigned through National Planning Framework 4 (CD001). The places where we live, work and spend our leisure time impact on our health and wellbeing. Planning for good health does not simply mean people have access to medical facilities,

infrastructure, and care. Environments that encourage and support good physical and mental health and wellbeing will lead to a better quality of life.

17.40 Figure 17.1 identifies the wide range of determinants that influence our health and wellbeing, from our individual characteristics to the global ecosystem. These are the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors that indirectly influence health and wellbeing. They include what we eat and drink; where we live and work; and the social relationships and connections we have with other people and organisations. Some, such as age and family history of illness, cannot change or are difficult to change, while others are influenced by the social, economic and physical environment we live in and can be changed by policy interventions.

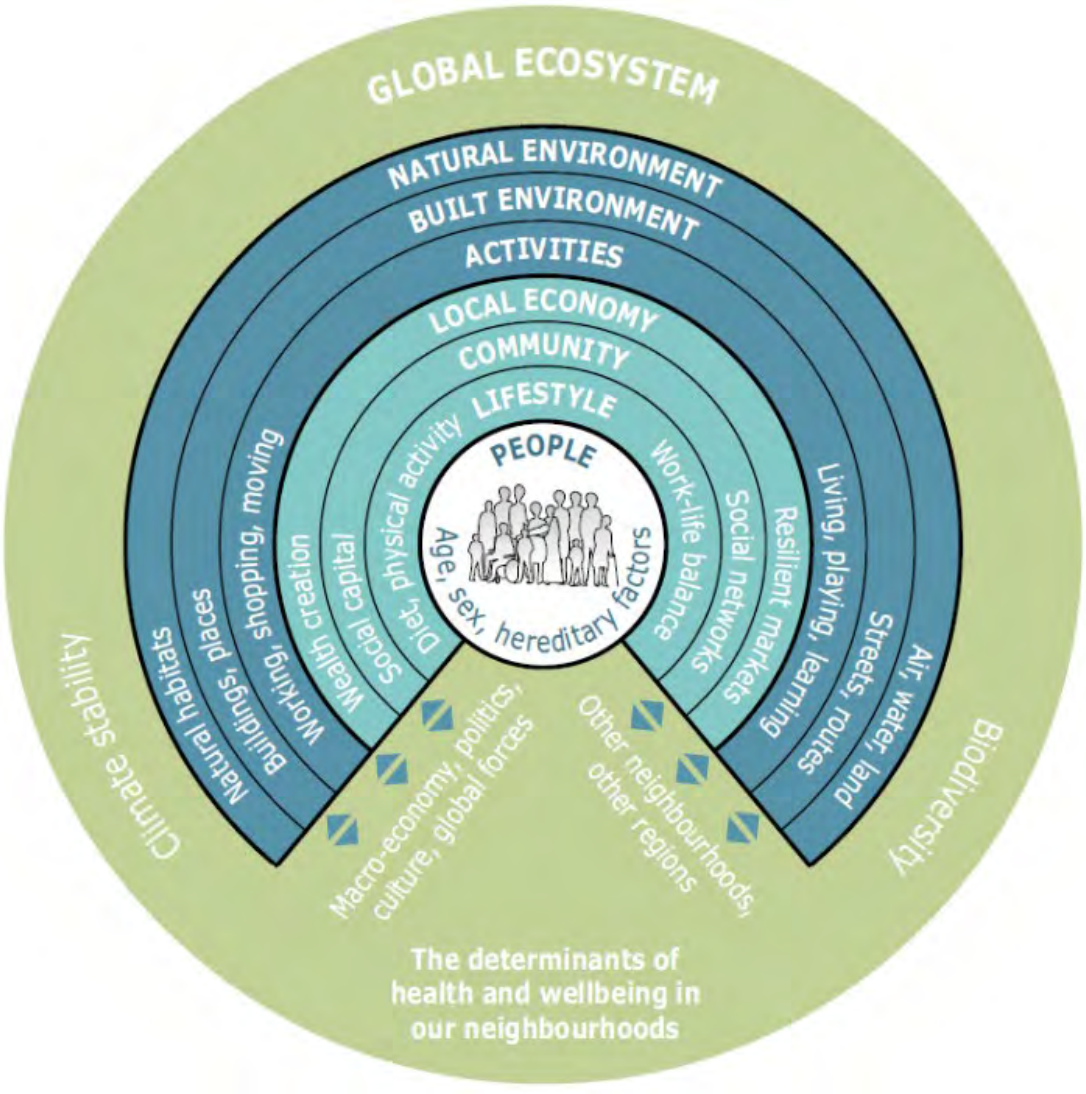


Figure 17.1: The determinants of health and well-being in our neighbourhoods (Source: Human ecology model of a settlement, Barton and Grant, 2006)

Scottish Government: Health Priorities for Scotland (CD138)

17.41 In Scotland it should be possible for everyone to be as healthy as they can be, and to thrive. Our home and community are the primary source where health is created. Again, placemaking is paramount for wellbeing creation and can help to achieve the six health priorities for Scotland:

- A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- A Scotland where we flourish in our early years
- A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all
- A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active.

17.42 The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of this document and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that good placemaking can have to the health of Aberdeen.

National Guidance on Action to Address Suicide at Locations of Concern (CD139)

17.43 Local Development Plans should have an awareness of locations of concern for suicide. Locations of concern have been considered for Aberdeen. It is not within the public interest to identify those locations within the evidence report. Of the factors and characteristics that are known to contribute to raised suicide risk (Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan) - deprivation, poverty, and social exclusion; isolation and homelessness could be influenced by planning and placemaking. The next local development plan could consider how to address locations of concern or design of developments to reduce risk.

Place and Wellbeing Outcomes (CD140)

17.44 A framework of themes to ensure place, people and planet thrive. They promote and support the impact of the places where we live, work and relax to deliver equality, net zero emission and climate resilience. The outcomes are interlinked and a place based approach is the basis for their delivery. The five themes within the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes are the same framework noted for the Local Living Framework (please see Place Topic Paper). The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes are:

- Movement – active travel; public transport; traffic and parking
- Spaces – streets and spaces; natural spaces; play and recreation
- Resources – services and support; work and economy; housing and community
- Civic – identity and belonging; feeling safe
- Stewardship – care and maintenance; influence and control.

17.45 Place and Wellbeing Outcomes should be embedded into the planning system and the decision-making process on policy and implementation. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of the place and wellbeing outcomes.



Figure 17.2: Place and wellbeing outcomes. Extract from Improvement Service Report (CD140)

A Healthy Future (CD141)

17.46 Scotland has the highest overweight and obesity levels in the UK. The vision is to create a Scotland where everyone eats well, and we all have a healthy weight. A pledge has been given to halve childhood obesity by 2030. It is noted within the report, a far higher proportion of people in the most deprived communities (around 32% of adults) are obese compared to those in more affluent areas (20% of adults). The gap may be widening for children. Obesity is the second-biggest preventable cause of cancer. Being overweight and obese is also the most significant risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, and can result in increased risk of other conditions including cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

17.47 The document identifies 5 outcomes, of which outcome 2 "the food environment supports healthier choices" has links to planning. A number of the actions within the

document relate to interventions around advertising, support systems and clinical settings. Action 2.12 identifies Scottish Government research into the relationship between the food environment and the planning system, which is to feed into a review of the Scottish Planning system. The next local development plan will consider how it can support healthier choices in the food environment, possibly through policy or guidance.

Relationship between food environment and planning system (CD142)

17.48 The research explores how the planning system could be used, alongside other measures, to encourage healthier choices and discourage unhealthy ones with regard to the area around schools. The conclusions of the research were used to inform National Planning Framework 4 (CD001) Policy 27. See topic paper Centres of Business and Culture for more information.

Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (CD143)

17.49 The relationship between mortality, alcohol, deprivation and place in Grampian is noted within the NHS Grampian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 (CD145). Alcohol sales are subject to the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (CD143). The Act has five objectives:

- preventing crime and disorder;
- securing public safety;
- preventing public nuisance;
- protecting and improving public health; and
- protecting children and young persons from harm

17.50 The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (CD143) and The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 both identify an objective of improving health. Although licensing and planning are separate statutory functions, there are examples within Aberdeen of existing co-working between the two services e.g. short term lets, houses of multiple occupation. This relationship could be explored further in relation to alcohol and may have impacts for the next plan in terms of local policy or guidance.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

17.51 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a “relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones)”. If an area is identified as deprived this can relate to people having low incomes but can also mean fewer resources or opportunities, SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived relating to 7 factors, namely income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks data zones from the most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). The datasets outline that Aberdeen is a City with areas within the 5%, 10 % and 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland, while also having large areas within the least deprived 10%.

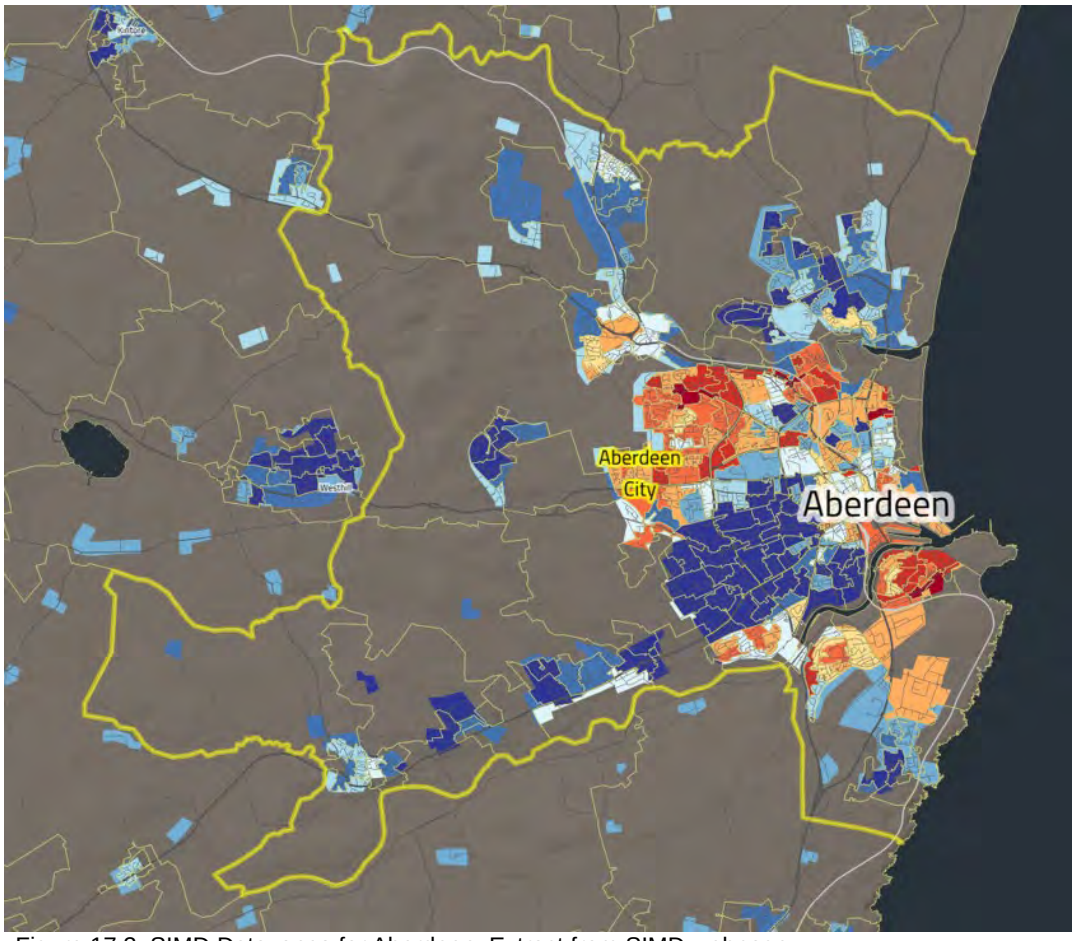


Figure 17.3: SIMD Datazones for Aberdeen. Extract from SIMD webpage.

17.52 The SIMD identifies 29 datazones within Aberdeen that are classed as being within the 20% most deprived in Scotland. 104 datazones in Aberdeen are classed as the least deprived.

17.53 The next local development plan can use the SIMD data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

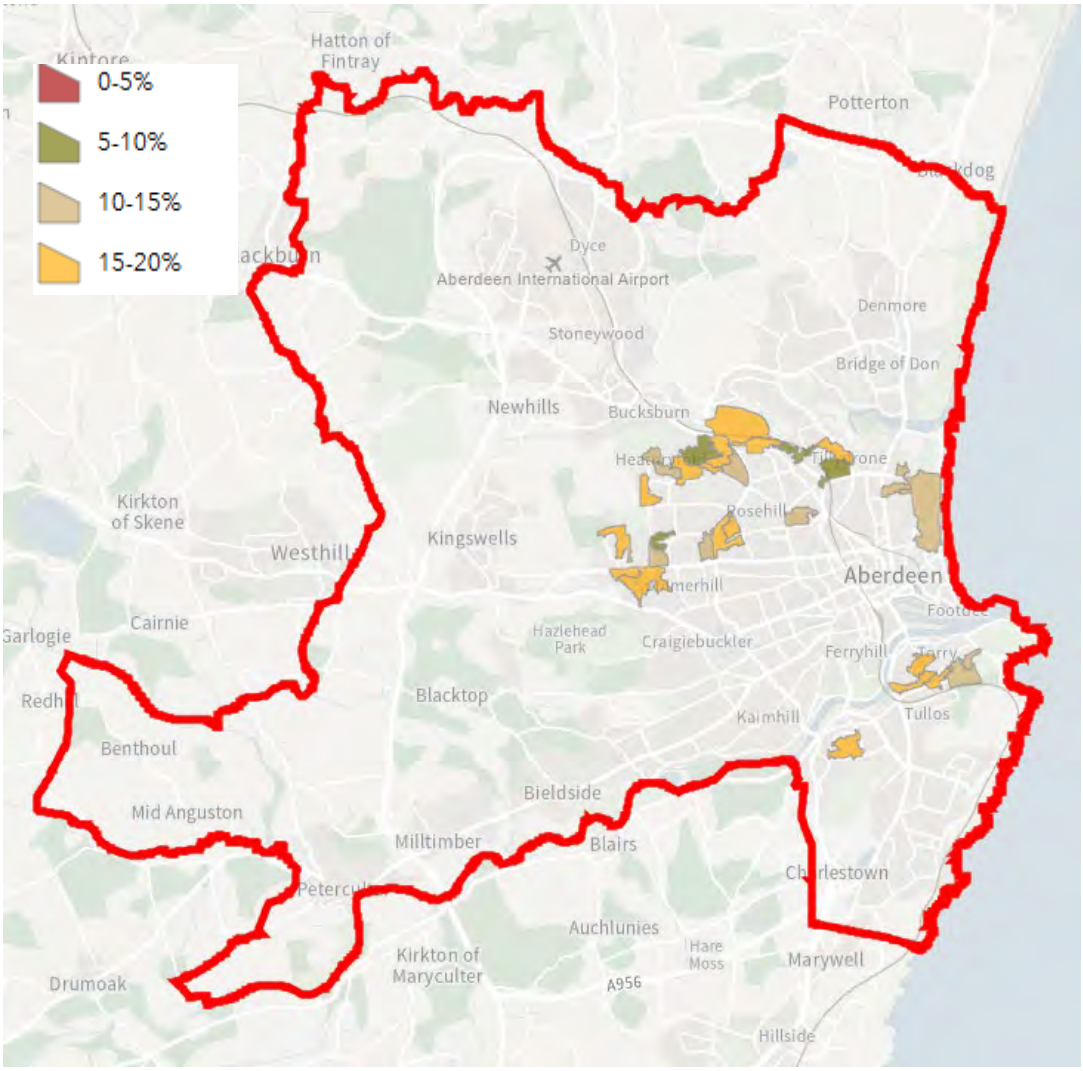


Figure 17.4: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area and health. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

NHS Grampian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 (CD145)

17.54 The document provides data on the Grampian NHS region. The report outlines there is an ageing population, many people are living with multiple health conditions, and a greater proportion of the working age population is experiencing ill-health. The number of years people can expect to live in good health is decreasing and this is affecting some communities more than others. People who live in the most deprived areas are spending a much greater proportion of their life in poor health than their peers who live in the least deprived areas.

17.55 Headlines from the report are:

- Life expectancy has decreased. The greatest deterioration is seen in those groups already experiencing the worst mortality rates and lowest life expectancy. In more deprived areas life expectancy has been going down.
- Healthy life expectancy, is a measure of how many years of life people spend in good health and has been decreasing for both men and women in

Grampian since 2015-17. The greatest drop in healthy life expectancy locally has been for women in Aberdeen City, where a drop of 3.3 years was seen between 2019-2021.

- People in the poorest areas spend more of their life in poorer health than their peers in the wealthiest areas.
- Men spend fewer years in good health compared to women, women experience a longer period in poor health.
- Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death. The mortality rates for these causes are about 1.5 times higher in the poorest compared to the wealthiest areas. Some of the largest differences in mortality rates are observed for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (the most deprived areas have a rate 3.3 times higher than the least deprived areas), alcohol-related (2.7 times), accidents (2.4), suicide (2.4) and liver disease (2.3). A much greater inequality than all of these is seen for drug-related deaths, where rates are 7.2 times higher in the most deprived areas.
- Rates of child poverty are increasing. In Aberdeen during 2014/15 this figure was 18.7% but by 2022/23 the figure was 21.8%.
- The drug misuse death rate increased in the city between 2011 to 2021, from 29 to 62, but decreased in 2022 to 42.

17.56 The report notes social and economic factors (wider determinants of health), health behaviours and the environment people live in account for at least 80% of the observed health inequities in the population. The physical environment, the places and communities people live in and with shape health. The next local development plan should consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2023 (CD147)

17.57 The Strategy aims to support the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing, through the aims of prevention, self-management, recovery, dignity and rights, and support for carers. The next local development plan can support prevention through placemaking, and the promoting of choice to allow for lifestyles and behaviours associated with positive mental health and wellbeing.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic / Delivery Plan 2022 – 2025 (CD149) and Annual Performance Report 2023-2024 (CD148)

17.58 The strategy outlines four strategic aims: caring together; keeping people safe at home; preventing ill health; and achieving fulfilling, healthier lives. The strategy notes achieving fulfilling, healthier lives requires partnership working, and goes on to highlight the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership will work with partners to promote the inclusion of open space in new developments and active travel. The aims of the strategy will help to inform good placemaking with the next local development plan, which may have an impact on spatial strategy and local policy.

Census / ScotPHO profiles / National Records of Scotland / Community Planning: Localities Outcomes Data / Scottish Health Survey 2023/ Population Needs Assessment (CD122)

17.59 The Mid-2024 population estimates were published in 2026 and provide the most up-to-date evidence. This data estimates the population of Aberdeen as 231,780 a population change of 1.06% from 2023. This figure again represents a growth rate higher than the Scottish average, demonstrating continuing growth. There were more females (118,231) than males (113,549) in the city with females making up 51.0% of the population. (NRS).

17.60 Compared to Scotland, Aberdeen has a higher proportion of people aged 16-64 years (66.5% compared to 63.3%) and a lower proportion of people age 65+ years (17.2% compared to 20.5%), with under 15 year-olds similar (16.3% compared to 16.2%) (ONS). In terms of overall size, the 25-44 age group was the largest and the 75 and over age group was the smallest (NRS).

17.61 In 2024 there were 1,923 births in Aberdeen a decrease of 8.1% from 2,092 births in 2023 (NRS). In 2022-2024 in Aberdeen life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 81.3 years for women and 77.3 years for men, this is generally in line for the Scottish average (81.1 years and 77.1 years respectively). Life expectancy at birth is higher in Aberdeen than at Scotland level (NRS). Healthy years life expectancy in women in Aberdeen is 59.0 years (Scottish average is 59.4 years), while for men this is 58.8 years (Scottish average 59.1 years) (NRS).

17.62 Within these figures there is also a disparity between life expectancy and SIMD quantiles. The life expectancy for a female in West End North is 86.3 years, while for a female in Woodside it is 72.0 years. For men, life expectancy in Braeside, Mannofield, Broomhill and Seafield North is 83.1 years, while in Woodside this is 69.4 years. (ScotPHO / NRS / Localities Outcomes Data)

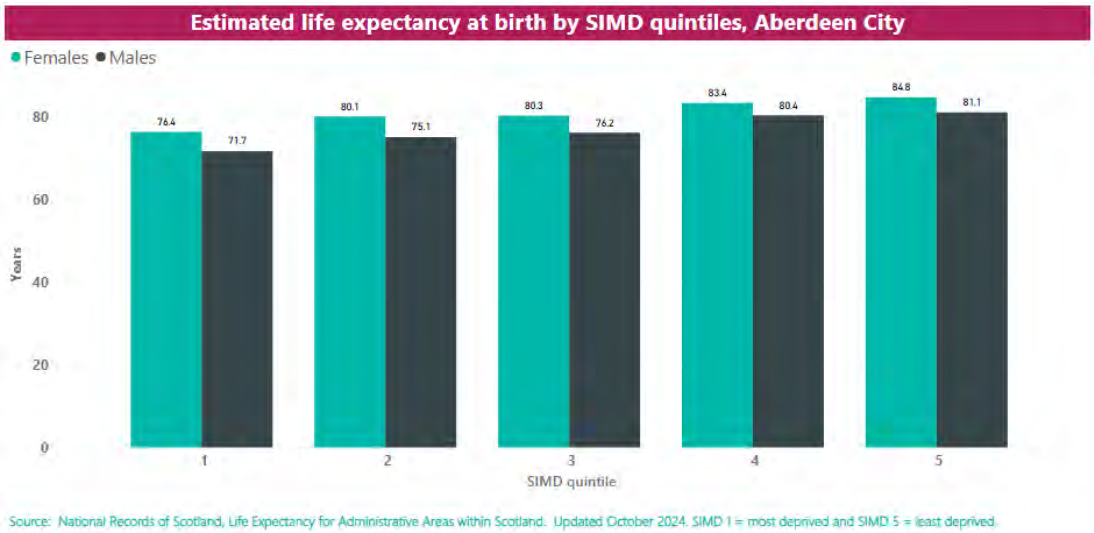


Figure 17.5: Estimated life expectancy at birth by SIMD quintiles, taken from Aberdeen City Data Observatory.

17.63 In 2024 there were 2,170 deaths in Aberdeen, a decrease from the 2,255 deaths in 2023. Of these 2,170 deaths, 1,068 (49.2%) were female and 1,102 (50.8%) were male. Aged 90 and over saw the highest number of total deaths (NRS).

17.64 The leading cause of death in Aberdeen for 2024 are outlined in Table 17.8.

Males	**Females**
Ischaemic heart diseases (12%)	Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease (13.7%)
Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease (6.9%)	Ischaemic heart diseases (8.4%)
Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (5.2%)	Cerebrovascular disease (7.8%)
Chronic lower respiratory disease (5.2%)	Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (6.5%)
Cerebrovascular disease (5.1%)	Chronic lower respiratory disease (5.9%)

Table 17.8: Leading cause of death in Aberdeen 2024. Extract from National Records of Scotland.

17.65 Rates of suicide within Aberdeen are not seen as statistically significant from Scotland (14.4 versus 17.5) (NRS). There are a higher number of male than female deaths from probable suicide (NRS / Aberdeen City Data Observatory).

17.66 Adult healthy weight data for Aberdeen sits at 38% of the population, while for Scotland this is 33%, therefore the healthy weight of adults in the city is better than the national average (ScotPHO). This however does mean that 62% of the adult

population of Aberdeen and 67% of the adult population of Scotland are not of a healthy weight. For children, data is collected on healthy weighty in primary one. The results here note 69.9% of children in Aberdeen have a healthy weighty in primary one, while the national level is 69.8%. (ScotPHO). Again, this means that approximately 30% of the children in primary one are not of a healthy weight.

17.67 Looking to the Scottish Health Survey 2025, Aberdeen notes no significant difference from Scotland in relation to alcohol consumption, dental health, food insecurity, long term conditions, general mental wellbeing, physical activity (summary activity levels), respiratory conditions, smoking status, and provide unpaid caring. Where Aberdeen is significantly higher than Scotland relates to Self-assessed general health being very good / good. Where Aberdeen is noted as being significantly lower than Scotland is in the self-assessed general health as fair, and non-limiting long term conditions.

17.68 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (CD324)

17.69 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (LOIP) outlines community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision is for “a place where all can thrive regardless of background or circumstance”. There is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city’s people to live healthy lives. Ten-year outcomes have been set to achieve the vision over five themes.

Theme	10 Year Outcome (by 2036)
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	95% of young people in SIMD 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school.
Economic Stability	Reduce to 3% the proportion of people aged 16 and above in SIMD 1 that are not in employment, and increase by 3% the employment rate of vulnerable groups.
Communities and Housing	Reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5%.
Neighbourhood and Environment	Increase proportion of people from SIMD 1 who feel they have influence and sense of control by 10%.
Health and Social Care	20% reduction in deaths in SIMD 1 from alcohol and drugs and a 20% reduction in suicide rate citywide.

Table 17.9: LOIP outcomes by theme

17.70 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality, and increase healthy life expectancy.

Aberdeen Healthy Weight (CD150)

17.71 A whole system approach has been identified in Aberdeen as a way to tackle childhood obesity. Referencing a whole systems approach used in Amsterdam it is noted that through a “health in all policies approach” policy levers were utilised to support the healthy weight agenda. As a result, a range of changes were made to policies concerning the built environment. In Aberdeen a 6 phase programme has been proposed, with the Amsterdam framework as a focus for influences. Aberdeen is at the start of the Healthy Weight Whole System Approach. The local development plan may be able to assist with the objectives of the whole system approach through spatial strategy, local policies or guidance.

Food Growing Strategy (CD151)

17.72 The document supports nurturing an inclusive city which offers more opportunities for people to grow their own food, and supports opportunities for community-based activity for those who live in, work in and visit Aberdeen to achieve healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.

17.73 Within Aberdeen there are 3 private allotments, 11 community growing spaces, 3 community orchards, and 14 educational institutions with food growing opportunities. The existing city-wide situation is largely in line with the Scottish average. Spatially there is an uneven distribution of existing food-growing opportunities across the city (figure 6) with some communities enjoying above average provision in their vicinity and others having none. The Aberdeen food-growing survey showed that a lack of time and not knowing how to grow food are perceived as the greatest barriers to ‘growing your own’ locally.

17.74 The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of this strategy and consider how it can support food growing; this may be through a local policy or guidance.

Annual Allotments Report (CD152)

17.75 There are 573 allotment plots overseen by Aberdeen City Council on 21 sites. Allotment waiting list stood at 1,251 people (this means that the allotment waiting list at that time was 218% of the number of plots available). The next local development plan will consider how it can support food growing through allotments; this may be through a local policy or guidance.

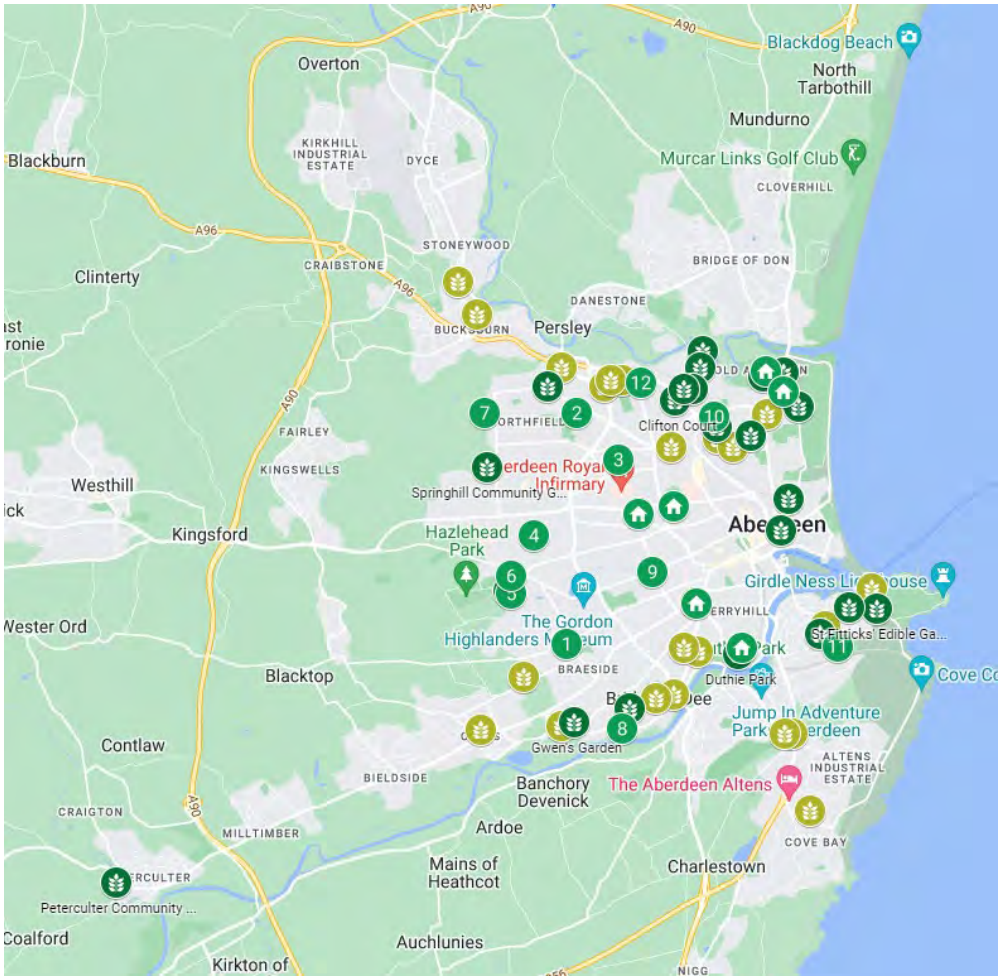


Figure 17.6: Food growing areas in Aberdeen.

Food Growing Aberdeen Planning Guidance (CD153)

17.76 Supports the implementation of Granite City Growing by outlining the benefits of food growing spaces, provides examples of best practices, types of growing spaces and food growing provision expectations for local and major developments. The adopted document provides parameters to support food growing. Consideration will be given if there are local policies required based on the content of the document.

Environment

17.77 The following section notes environmental issues that may have a detrimental impact on human health and affect quality of life due to exposure, and the plans and strategies in place to monitor and, where required improve, situations.

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency Evidence Report Pack

17.78 The report pack highlights information the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency holds for Aberdeen. The Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (CD159) is a Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and has the primary purpose of making publicly available officially reported annual releases of specified pollutants to air and

water from SEPA-regulated industrial facilities. The Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory identifies 40 sites within Aberdeen. These are located throughout the city and relate to commercial, industrial, waste and hospital sites. There are 46 waste sites noted in Aberdeen, 39 of which are operational and 7 non-operational landfill sites. There are no specialist sites in Aberdeen. A specialist site is contaminated land which meets one of the descriptions in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Other contaminated land is discussed later in this section. The inventory will be used to understand if there are noted sites during site assessments for the next local development plan so that implications can be highlighted from the outset.

Air Quality Action Plan 2011 (CD154)

17.79 The main pollutants of concern in Aberdeen are nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), related to road traffic emissions. Aberdeen has three Air Quality Management Areas, located on arterial traffic routes:

- City Centre
- Anderson Drive
- Wellington Road

17.80 Measures to improve air quality in Aberdeen are broken into six themes (table 9). Within the “Planning and Policies” section – planning guidance has been produced on air quality. Measures in the “Modal Shift and Influencing Travel Choice” theme are relevant to the next Local Development Plan in terms of placemaking principles, local living and site assessment.

Theme	Measures
Modal Shift and Influencing Travel Choice	Increase Bus Use Improve Cycling and Walking Provision Travel Plans Improve public awareness of air quality issues Car Clubs / Carpool Scheme Crossrail Rail Freight
Lower Emissions and Cleaner Vehicles	Green Vehicle procurement and Fuel / Charging Infrastructure Eco - driving Emissions Testing & Idling Enforcement Taxis Low Emission Zone
Road Infrastructure	Pedestrianisation Road Building / Junction Alteration
Traffic Management	Intelligent Transport System (ITS) High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Freight and Commercial Vehicle Access

Planning and Policies	Produce Supplementary Planning Guidance Integration of AQAP with Local Transport Strategy (LTS) and Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Integration of AQAP with Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP) Road Hierarchy Car Parking Policies National Lobbying
Non-Transport Measures	Control Biomass Installations Industry Permitting Tree Planting Shipping

Table 17.10: Themes of the Air Quality Action Plan 2011.

Air Quality Annual Progress Report (CD155)

17.81 There were no exceedances of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), particulate matter PM10 or particulate matter 2.5 objectives at any monitoring location across the city, indicating improved air quality. The Anderson Drive and Wellington Road Air Quality Management Areas will be reviewed for potential removal, while the City Centre Air Quality Management Areas will be amended to remove particulate matter PM10 objectives but remain valid for NO2.

17.82 The establishment of recent vehicle access restrictions in the city centre have resulted in significant improvement in air quality. The vehicle restricted measures comprise a series of bus gates, whereby private vehicles are not permitted, and a low emission zone (figure 7). Site assessments for the next local development plan will consider environmental concerns.

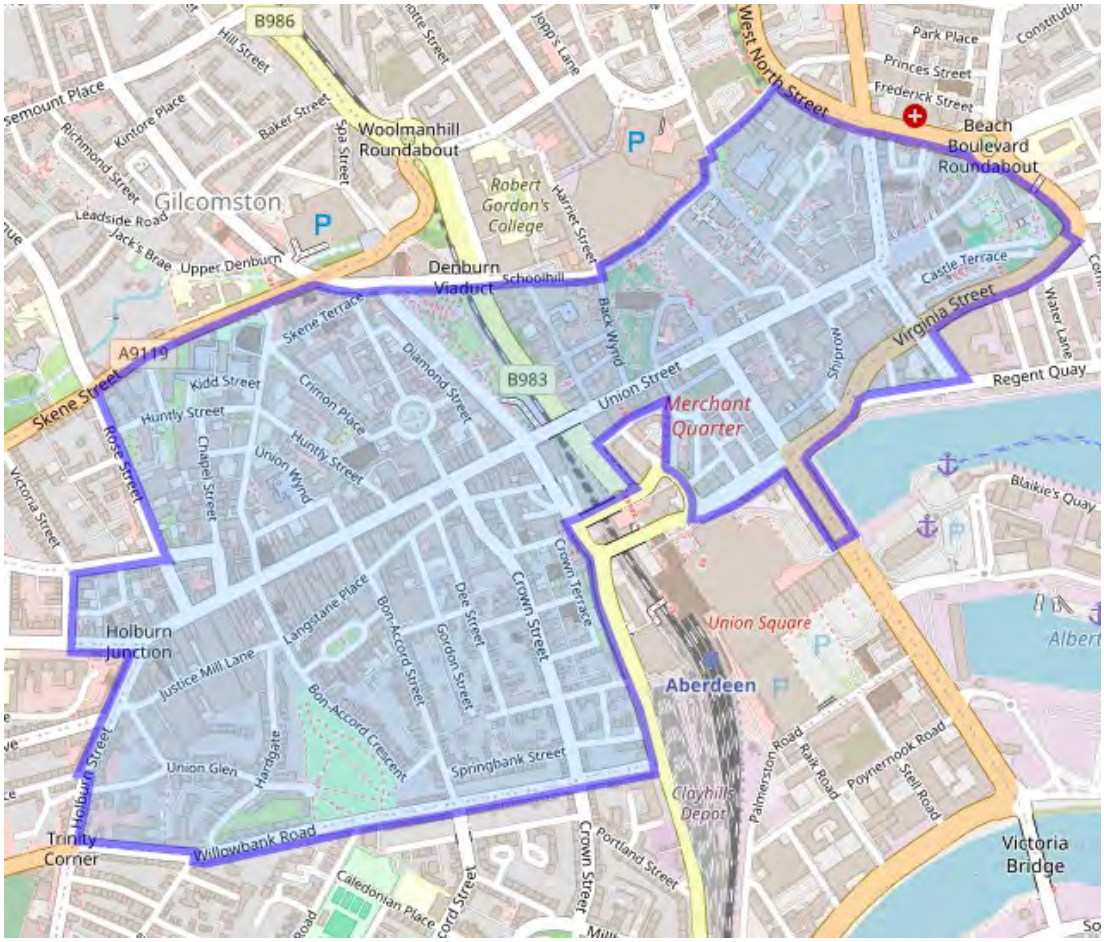


Figure 17.7: Aberdeen's Low Emission Zone.

Aberdeen Agglomeration Noise Action Plan and Environmental Noise Action Plan Update (CD156)

17.83 The Plan identifies Candidate Noise Management Areas (areas where people are most likely to be annoyed by noise) and Candidate Quiet Areas (where noise quality is good and requires preservation). The Plan identifies Twenty Candidate Noise Management Areas related to roads, two related to rail and six Candidate Quiet Areas. The update report reassesses the Candidate Noise Management Area and Candidate Quiet Areas within Aberdeen and identifies fourteen Candidate Noise Management Area and five Candidate Quiet Areas, detailed below. These have been approved. Site assessments for the next local development plan will consider environmental concerns.

Area	Name	Type
Noise Management Area	Union Street	Road
Noise Management Area	Victoria Road	Road
Noise Management Area	King Street at Castle Street	Road
Noise Management Area	Auchmill Road	Road
Noise Management Area	Broomhill Road	Road
Noise Management Area	Holburn Street	Road

Noise Management Area	Market Street	Road
Noise Management Area	King Street at Don Street	Road
Noise Management Area	King Street at St Machar Drive	Road
Noise Management Area	Whinhill Road	Road
Noise Management Area	Wellington Place	Road
Noise Management Area	Alford Place	Road
Noise Management Area	North Esplanade West	Rail
Noise Management Area	Riverside Drive	Rail
Quiet Areas	Seaton Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	West Field Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	St Fitticks Community Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	Loirston County Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	Hazlehead Park	N/A

Table 17.11: Candidate Noise Management Area and Candidate Quiet Areas within Aberdeen

Land Contamination (CD158)

17.84 Contaminated land is present in Aberdeen due to land use and links to industry. The contaminated land strategy outlines the legal duty the Council has to inspect areas of land and to secure remediation. The strategy notes the relationship between planning and contaminated land, and the statutory consultee function Environmental Health have with regard to planning applications. Contaminated land sites are mapped on the Council's internal GIS system, this covers sites related to planning applications and areas that are potentially contaminated as per the investigation of the contaminated land strategy. Site assessments for the next local development plan will considered environmental concerns.

Hazards

17.85 The following section notes hazards that may have a detrimental impact on human health and affect quality of life due to exposure, and the plans and strategies in place to monitor and, where required improve, situations.

Public Safety and Safeguard (CD309)

17.86 Aberdeen International Airport is located within Aberdeen's local authority area. Public safety zones are areas of land at the end of the airport runway within which development is restricted, to control the number of people on the ground at risk in the event of an aircraft accident on take-off or landing. Within these zones, there is a general presumption against certain types of development which would result in an increase in the number of people living, working or congregating in these zones. Public safety zones are based on individual risk contours calculated for each airport, upon which a person remaining in the same location for a period of a year would be subjected to the given level of risk of being killed as a result of an aircraft accident.

17.87 The extent of the public safety zones area is shown in red and corresponds to the 1 in 100,000 individual risk contours. The area shown in blue being subject to the maximum tolerable level of individual third party risk, being 1 in 10,000 per year. The public safety zones are mapped on the Council's internal GIS system and with the Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Airport and Perwinnes Radar (CD309).

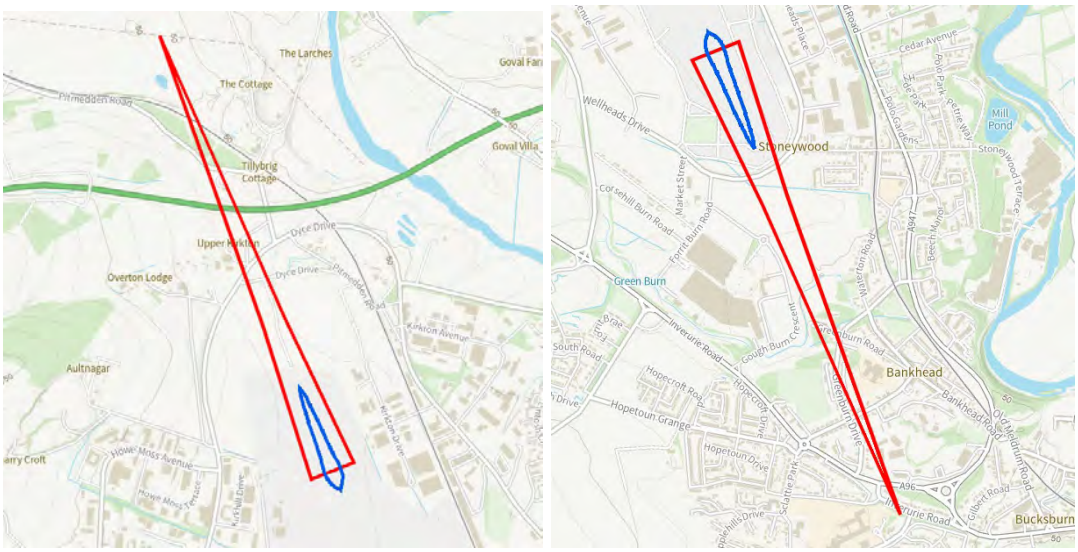


Figure 17.8 & 17.9: Aberdeen Airport Public Safety Zone. Extract from Aberdeen City Council internal GIS system.

17.88 Safeguarding is a concern for Aberdeen International Airport and Perwinnes Radar (CD309). Safeguarding ensures developments or activity do not adversely affect the safe operation of landing or departing aircraft from the Airport, or the operational capability of the radar. The Proposed Plan will direct inappropriate development away from public safety zones.

Airport Noise (CD238, CD239, CD340, CD309)

17.89 Aberdeen Airport Annual Noise Report 2023 (CD238) details measures to mitigate noise disturbance to residents, and produced data on performance against noise mitigation targets, and complaints. The Aberdeen Airport Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 (CD239) aims to manage and, where practical, reduce the adverse effects of aviation related noise. A draft 2024-2028 Noise Action Plan (CD340) is with Scottish Ministers for formal adoption. Further updates are expected in June 2025.

17.90 Further to this, noise contours maps for Aberdeen International Airport are produced by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). These are used in the determination of planning applications to consider the impact on noise on residential amenity. The noise contours maps are mapped within the Council's internal GIS system and with Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Airport and Perwinnes Radar (CD309). Site assessments for the next local development plan will considered environmental concerns.

Location of Major Accident Hazards

17.91 Major Accident Hazard Pipelines are located within Aberdeen. These are subject to pipelines notification zones. Further major hazard sites are identified in Aberdeen. There are no Hazardous Substance Consents currently active in Aberdeen. The pipelines, pipeline notification zone and major hazard sites are mapped within the Council's internal GIS system. The pipelines and pipeline notification zone is also present on the Aberdeen City Council Local Development Plan constraints map (CD310). There are two active quarries in Aberdeen. These are subject to a 1 kilometre buffer zones with regard to development and Health and Safety Executive consultation(CD311). The Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning advice and guidance, and the UKOPA (CD241) highlight the need to consider the acceptability of development in the proximity of facilities with, amongst others, hazardous substances or major pipelines. Further information on Pipelines can be found within the Infrastructure paper. The Proposed Plan will direct inappropriate development away from major accident hazard pipelines.



Figure 17.10: Pipelines and Pipeline notification zones in Aberdeen.
Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

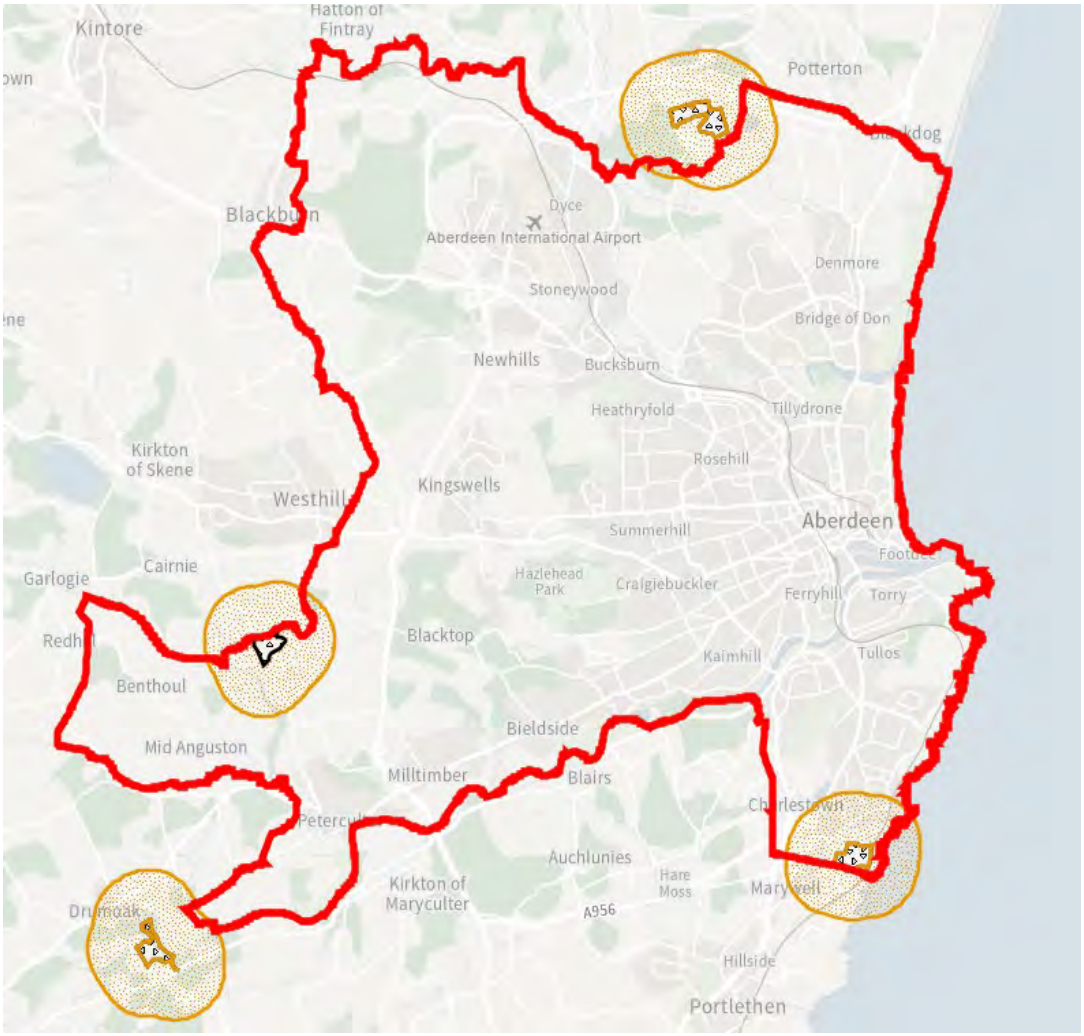


Figure 17.11: Quarries and 1 kilometre buffer zones.
Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

Coal Authority Development High Risk Areas

17.92 There are no Development High Risk Areas in Aberdeen, as can be seen from the Coal Authority dataset.

Place Standard Assessments (CD041, CD042)

17.93 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

17.94 The feeling safe and influence and sense of control themes of the Place Standard are relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4.09 out of 7 was achieved for feeling safe, and 3.27 influence and sense of control.

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Feeling Safe	• Feel safe in own neighbourhood and in Aberdeen more generally. (All) • Low crime rate, police presence and good lighting (All)	• Community Safety/anti-social behaviour in adults (All) • Maintenance of streets and spaces – better lighting/less graffiti (All) • Traffic offences/reduction in speeding (All) • Improve the City Centre – feels unsafe, anti-social behaviour, crime, loitering and drinking – (Central) • Reduce the number of derelict and boarded up shops and buildings (Central)
Influence and Sense of Control	• Good awareness of and access to Council officers and elected officials. (All) • Positive community participation and engagement with officers, community councils, councillors. (All)	• Improve awareness of opportunities to get involved in decision making and feedback (All) • Improve awareness of community meetings and consultations (North and South) • Make being able to contact officials and receive feedback easier (North and South • Having more voice and opportunities to be listened to, respected, and taken seriously regarding local issues. (South and Central) • Improvements are needed when issues are reported (Central)

Table 17.12: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Feeling safe, and Influence and Sense of Control Extract.

17.95 The children and young people results on feeling safe noted: 50.0% felt they were okay, 31.5% felt they were not good, and 18.5% felt they were great. For influence and sense of control: 57.4% felt they were okay, 31.5% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Feeling Safe	Feeling safe during the day	38.7%	Less anti-social behaviour	34%
	Lighting	16%	Feeling safe at night	32.1%
	Play spaces	15.1%	Brighter/more lighting	22.6%
Influence and sense of control	Feeling included	21.7%	By making sure I am taken seriously	30.2%
	None of these	21.7%	By making it easy to take part (26.4%)	26.4%
	My views are important	19.8%	By making sure I feel included	24.5%

Table 17.13: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

17.96 The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, please see Chapter 7 for full details) provide a valuable, place-based evidence source to inform the Proposed Plan. An initial findings report has been prepared, Engagement Results Report 2025 (CD318), providing a synthesis of community priorities and spatial issues at both city-wide and locality levels. Alongside further analysis, this evidence can help the Proposed Plan to refine its spatial strategy and potentially identify interventions within locality areas, particularly in relation to access to services, quality of the built environment, and community infrastructure.

Infrastructure

17.97 Aberdeen is part of NHS Grampian which covers the local authority areas of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. There are 9 NHS run hospitals in Aberdeen, 30 GP surgeries, 50 pharmacies, 42 dental surgery and 10 opticians. The hospitals are focussed on the main Aberdeen Royal Infirmary campus, with others outlying to the east and west of the city. The infrastructure topic paper provides further information on this area.

Community Wealth Building

17.98 Community Wealth Building seeks to transform our local and regional economic systems to enable local communities and people to own, have a greater stake in, access and benefit from the wealth our economy generates.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

17.99 The datasets outline that Aberdeen has areas within the 5%, 10 % and 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland, while also having large areas within the least deprived 10%. The data relating to the 0-20% most deprived in terms of education, employment, and income are mapped below (Figure 11, 12, 13). The locations which are the most deprived are also those within the 0-20% most deprived in terms of education, employment and income.

17.100 The next local development plan can use the SIMD data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

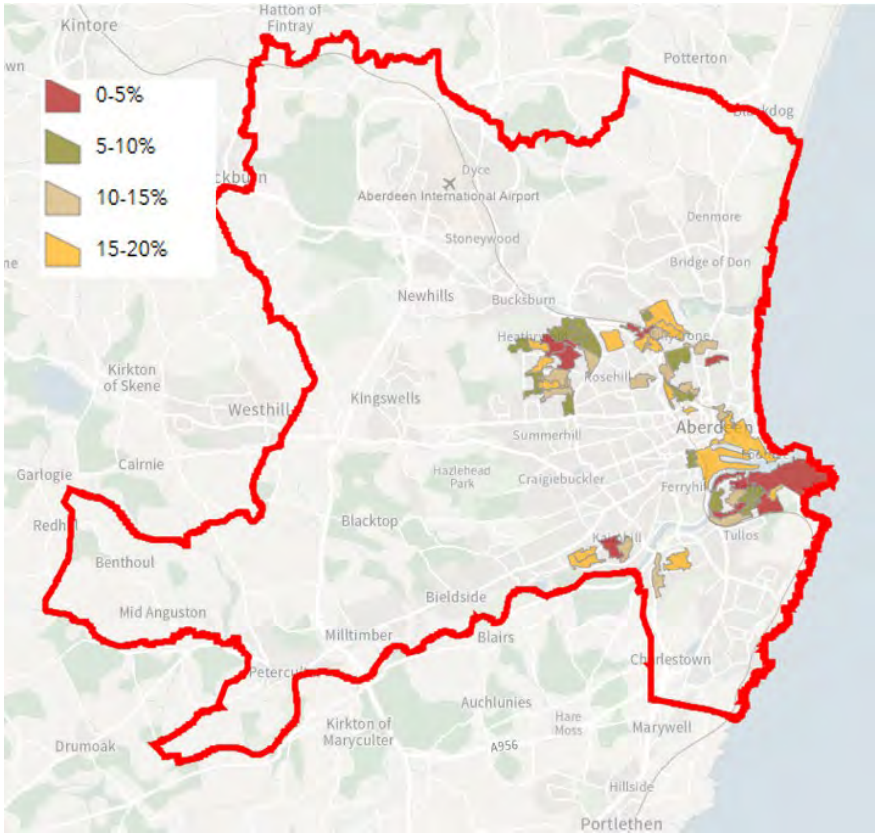


Figure 17.12: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area -education. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

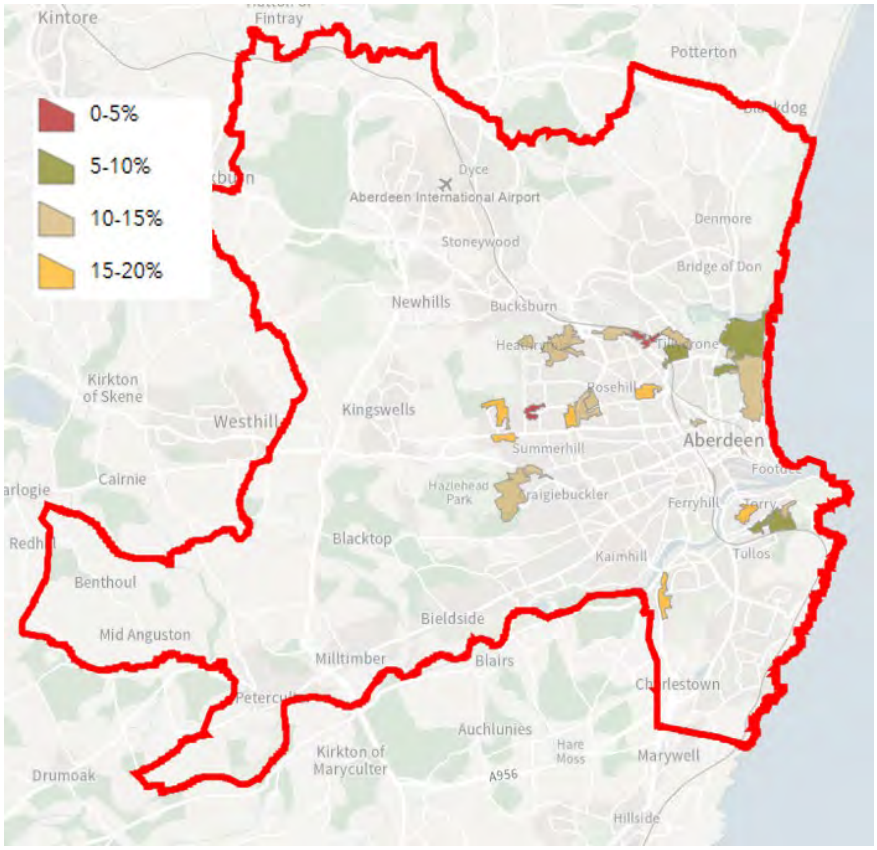


Figure 17.13: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area -employment. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

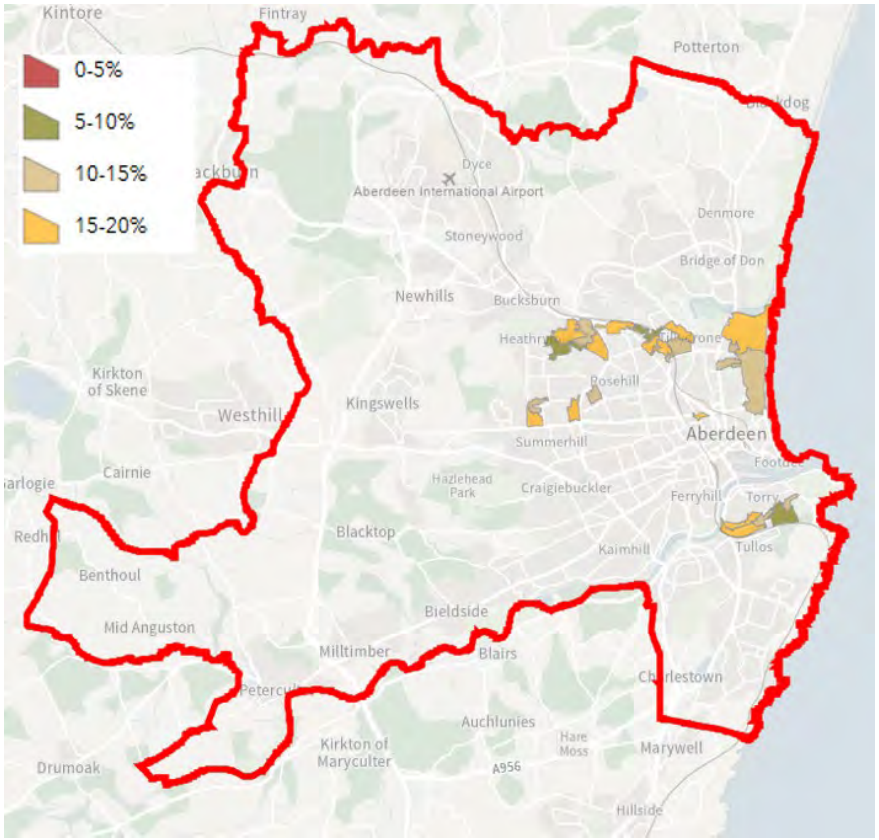


Figure 17.14: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area -income. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

Regional Economic Strategy (CD058)

17.100 Sets the vision for a regional economy that enables the region to thrive, leading a just energy transition, diversifying the economy, enabling entrepreneurship and innovation, and delivering a wellbeing economy for people – a post fossil-fuel future. By 2035, the regional economy will be leading the transition to and production of future energy solutions, new green energy and will be diversifying through growth in digital technology, food and drink, tourism, life sciences and creative sectors. Five objectives are outlined with four programmes (A thriving innovation driven economy; An outstanding natural environment; A healthy and skilled population; Strong community & cultural identity) noted to meet the vision and objectives.

17.101 Community wealth building is identified as a national policy priority and with programme 3: A healthy and skilled population. The key employment sectors in the North East by value are: energy sector, financial and business services, food and drink, tourism, creative industries, digital industries and life sciences. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of this strategy.

Local Economic Statistics

17.102 NOMIS is a service provided by Office for National Statistics. It publish statistics related to population, society and the labour market at national, regional and local levels. Data on employment for Aberdeen is as follows:

- In 2022, there were an estimated 158,000 jobs in Aberdeen City of which 111,000 (70.3%) were full-time and 47,000 (29.7%) were part-time. The most common sectors/industries were Human Health and Social Work Activities (17.1 % of jobs), Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (12.7%), Mining and Quarrying (12.7%) and Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (9.5%)
- In the year July 2023 - June 2024, over a third (35.3%) of those in employment in Aberdeen City were in Professional Occupations compared to 26% in Scotland. The proportion of those employed in other occupations is similar to or lower than Scotland, with the exception of those in caring, leisure and other service occupations which are higher in Aberdeen City than in Scotland, and skilled trades occupations which are lower than Scotland.
- 80.5% of Aberdeen's working age population (16-64 years) was classified as economically active compared to 77.3% in Scotland. A slightly higher proportion of males (80.6%) than females (80.3%) were economically active. The proportion of females and males who are economically active is higher than for Scotland (75% and 79.7% respectively).
- 19% of Aberdeen's working age population were economically inactive. Of those who were economically inactive, 32.8% were students, 28% were long-term sick, 18.4% were looking after home/family and 11.8% were retired. Over three-quarters (88%) of those who were economically inactive did not want a job. The statistics provide an understanding of current employment status.

Committee Report COM/22/279 (CD160) and appendix (CD106A) / Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy (CD161) / Joint Procurement Strategy (CD162)

17.103 Community wealth building in Aberdeen is a place based economic development approach with short, medium and long-term actions for implementation which embeds a community wealth building approach across council services. The Council identifies as an anchor institution and seeks to influence and encourage other anchors organisations to adopt community wealth building pillars thereby maximising the local economic impact and outcomes, as shown through the Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy and Joint Procurement Strategy.

17.104 This approach will support improvement in wider priority outcomes within the Council Delivery Plan and the Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Key activities that currently align to the community wealth building pillars include:

- Spending - the Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy sets out how securing positive local outcomes can maximise social, economic and environmental benefits in public procurement, adding value that is good for the local area;
- Workforce - Business Gateway has a dedicated member of staff working in the city's locality areas to support new and existing businesses;
- Workforce - provision of seed finance for people of employability programmes seeking to set up in business.
- Aberdeen Responsible Business – through Community Planning Aberdeen we are engaging anchor businesses across the City to support better outcomes for communities through shared delivery of the LOIP. From becoming a Real Living Wage employer, to providing employability opportunities for priority groups to becoming net zero to mitigate against climate change, businesses are taking forward a range of projects which add value to the City.
- Community Empowerment – through Community Planning Aberdeen we are working with anchor organisations and communities to improve outcomes by working together to maximise community assets to deliver shared priorities within the Community Empowerment Strategy, LOIP and Locality Plans
- Land and Property – Promotion and support for Asset Transfer Request Processes with communities.

17.105 Actions to support an Aberdeen Community Wealth Building approach through the land and property pillar are outlined within the Community Asset Transfer webpage. The next plan will seek to understand how community wealth building can be incorporated into planning using the key aims of the documents.

Community Assets Transfer Annual Report 2023 (CD163)

17.106 Under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, community groups can request to take over publicly owned land or buildings if they feel they can make

better use of them for the local community. The Act gives community bodies the right to make an Asset Transfer Request for ownership, lease, management or use of a publicly owned building or land, regardless of whether they are occupied by the Council or considered surplus to requirements. 1 application was received during 2022/2023, with 5 previous assets transfer requests from previous years. The next plan will consider how it can highlight community asset transfer opportunities.

Current Assets 2025 (CD164)

17.107 A list of all of Aberdeen City Councils non-housing assets which includes a number of built and natural assets such as shops, parks, schools, amenity land, office units, industrial units, libraries, allotments, car parks, war memorials churchyards, and more. The Aberdeen City Council Community Asset Transfer webpage also notes:

- Agreed requests - Tillydrone Community Centre
- Completed requests - Tillydrone Library and Family Centre, and Wallace Tower
- Request under consideration - Torry Youth and Leisure Centre
- New requests - Westfield Park, Bridge of Don
- Assets available for Community Assets Transfer - Balnagask Circle – Former Torry Children's Services

17.108 The next plan will consider how it can highlight community asset transfer opportunities.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (CD324)

17.109 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036 (LOIP) outlines community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision is for "a place where all can thrive regardless of background or circumstance". There is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city's people to live healthy lives. Ten-year outcomes have been set to achieve the vision over five themes.

Theme	10 Year Outcome (by 2036)
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	95% of young people in SIMD 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school.
Economic Stability	Reduce to 3% the proportion of people aged 16 and above in SIMD 1 that are not in employment, and increase by 3% the employment rate of vulnerable groups.
Communities and Housing	Reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5%.
Neighbourhood and Environment	Increase proportion of people from SIMD 1 who feel they have influence and sense of control by 10%.

Health and Social Care	20% reduction in deaths in SIMD 1 from alcohol and drugs and a 20% reduction in suicide rate citywide.

Table 17.14: LOIP outcomes by theme

17.110 As community wealth building in Aberdeen focuses on an economic development approach with short, medium and long-term actions, of the five outcomes, the Proposed Plan can help to achieve outputs tied to economic stability.

17.111 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related to the LOIP through placemaking.

17.112 The LOIP is supported by three locality plans covering all 37 neighbourhoods in the city, that are split into the north, south and central. Locality plans help to plan for and deliver improved outcomes and seeks to make things better for the community. The next local development plan will seek to support the outcomes of the LOIP, which may be achieved through spatial strategy or local policy or guidance.

Locality Plan 2026-2036 (CD368, CD369, CD370)

17.113 The North Locality Plan (CD368) covers 14 neighbourhoods within Aberdeen to the north of the city. Within the 14, five are classed as Priority Locality Areas – please see map below – Locality 1 area. These are Northfield, Mastick, Cummings Park, Middlefield and Heathryfold.

17.114 The Central Locality Plan (CD369) covers 16 neighbourhoods within Aberdeen, all located within the middle of the city. Within the 16, six are classed as Priority Locality Areas – please see map below – Locality 2 area. These are Tillydrone, Woodside, Seaton, George Street, Stockethill and Ashgrove.

17.115 The South Locality Plan (CD370) covers nine neighbourhoods within Aberdeen, all located to the south of the city. Within the nine, two are classed as Priority Locality Areas – please see map below – Locality 3 area. These are Torry and Kincorth.

17.116 Community wealth building in Aberdeen focuses on an economic development approach with short, medium and long-term actions The economy stability aim of the Locality Plans has the following priorities:

- Reduce the number of people living in poverty for all three areas.
- Support local employers to find staff (identified for the north locality plan).
- Improve and create employment opportunities (identified for the south locality plan).

17.117 The next local development plan will seek to support the outcome of the locality plan, which may be achieved through spatial strategy or local policy or guidance.

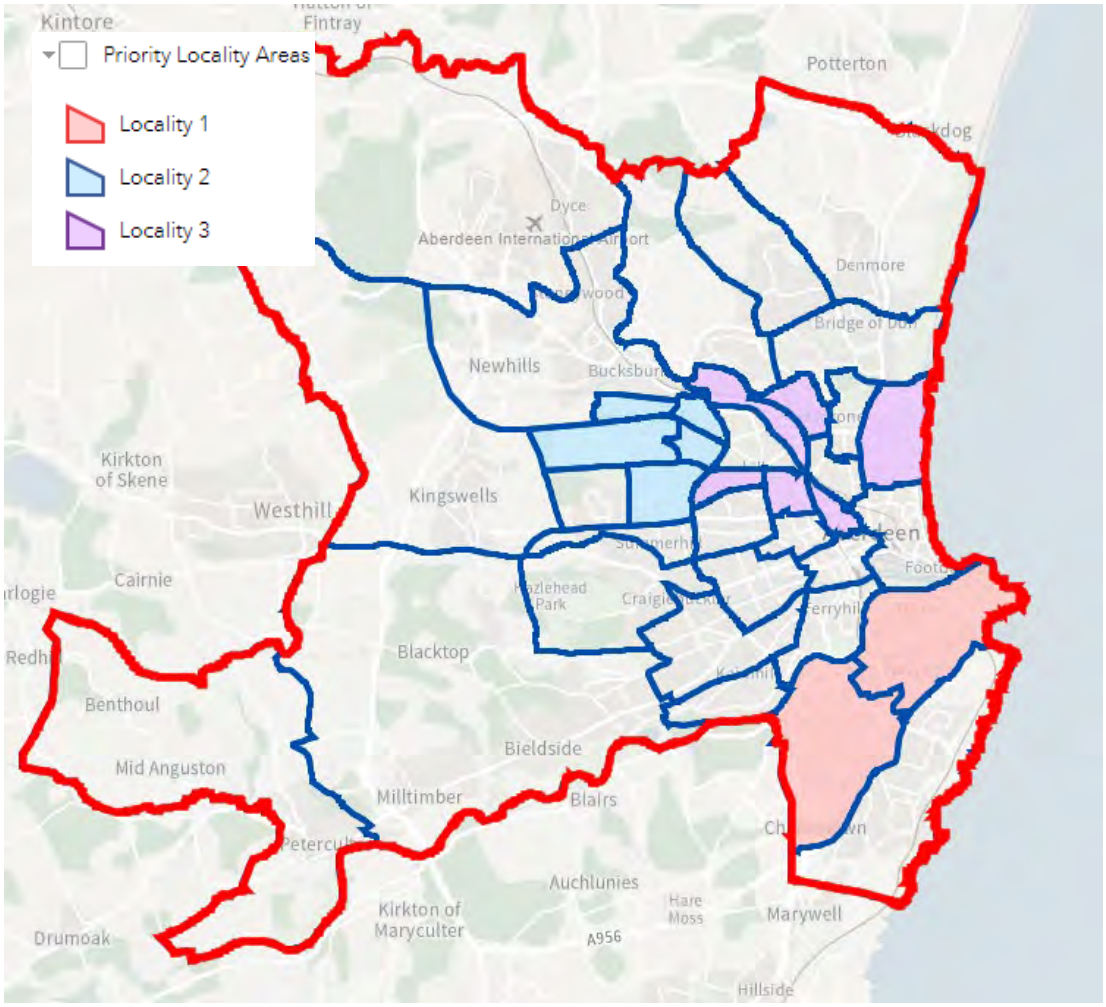


Figure 17.15: Aberdeen Neighbourhoods and Priority Locality Areas. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

Aberdeen Community Learning and Development Plan (CD168)

17.118 An interim plan covers 2024 / 2025, with a review planned for 2025. The plan identifies established youth work outcomes and emerging priorities, established adult and family outcomes and emerging priorities, and established community development outcomes and emerging priorities.

17.119 The Plan supports the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans and through the community development outcomes, will support the creation and development of social enterprise and community wealth building. This will be measured by the number of social enterprise and community asset transfers. The Community Learning and Development Plan (CD242) completed an eight week public consultation on 18 May 2025. The results of which may have implications for the Proposed Plan in terms of community wealth building.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

17.120 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

17.121 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Wellbeing of Community. The Wellbeing of Community paper was split in two in October 2024; becoming the Place Paper, and the Wellbeing and Communities Paper. The following text relates to the Wellbeing and Community Paper.

17.122 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- NHS Grampian Public Health Consultant
- Sport Aberdeen
- Sportscotland
- Health and Safety Executive
- Aberdeen City Council (Environmental Health / Community Wealth Building / Community Planning / Community Learning and Development, Development Management).

17.123 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

17.124 The evidence presented within the Wellbeing and Community paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders and FIRS. They also had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

17.125 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 response in total were received for this paper, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Sportscotland, Homes for Scotland) 1 from a housing developer, (Bancon Homes) 1 from an agent on behalf of an oil producer (Shell UK Limited), and 3 member of the public. Of those listed, 1 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and 2 others provided further evidence sources.

17.126 Sportscotland identified discussions are taking place on an audit on spaces, places and services which is being carried out through the Active Aberdeen Partnership. Sportscotland, Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council are in the partnership. This work will help to inform the Proposed Plan, and a sentence has been added to the implications for the plan section to note awareness of the audit.

17.127 Shell UK Limited identify additional data sources which have been added to the paper, and recommend that the Council takes into account and consults with the HSE and the owner/operator of the Major Accident Hazard Pipelines as part of the subsequent site assessment process, and include a specific site selection criteria

which essentially safeguards Major Accident Hazard Pipelines from new development, unless the proposal is compliant with HSE advice and guidance. Cross referencing should be made to the infrastructure paper. These have been actioned.

17.128 Homes for Scotland identified additional evidence sources, 3 of which have been added to the paper (Aberdeen Airport Annual Noise Report 2023, Aberdeen Airport Noise Action Plan 2018-2023, and the Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning Guidance). A fourth evidence source, the Scottish House Condition Survey 2023, was suggested as a benchmark to evidence the improvement in quality of new homes. Although this suggestion is welcomed, it covers all of Scotland. The Scottish House Condition Survey produce local authority estimates based on 3 year averages, the next one to be produced is 2026 due to COVID impacting on previous years methodology. This may be more informative to the Proposed Plan than the 2023 survey.

17.129 Homes for Scotland also provided further commentary as noted below:

- Aberdeen City Council should consider selling off areas of low scoring open space as defined by the Open Space Strategy, Forestry and Woodand Strategy, and Play Sufficiency Assessment. The Council consider this is going beyond an implication for the Proposed Plan, and into corporate decision making and planning;
- Scottish House Condition Survey to be used to benchmark new homes against previous homes. We consider the 3 year local authority audit may be a more effective tool to understand the local picture. This is due in 2026;
- Ensure Airport noise data is part of site assessment. The Council consider it will be, and the implications for the plan section includes environmental considerations, including noise. This has been updated to noted airport noise;
- Community wealth building requirements should not be imposed upon house builders through the planning process as most have their own procurement process. The Council consider National Planning Framework 4 asked for Community Wealth Building to be considered as part of the planning process and as such we are required to consider how this will be actioned at an Aberdeen level;
- The provision of homes is a key component in meeting the Marmot Principles. The Council agree. The Delivery of Homes Topic Paper covers this relationship.

17.130 Bancon Homes agree all key evidence has been provided and note the following comments:

- Housing can improve a person’s home life, can provide new homes in the right location and can bring forward affordable housing. It is therefore important to allocate enough land for residential development in areas where people wish to live as this brings multiple health benefits and also avoids health inequality and social isolation, as people can live within a community

that they know. The Council agree homes can gave a positive impact on health and wellbeing, and consider the allocation of homes is discussed within the “Deliver of Homes” paper. The Proposed Plan will endeavour to embed the place and wellbeing outcomes to focus decision making, as is outlined in the “implications for the plan” section.

- The local development plan can make a make a tangible difference by supporting the development/ creation/ improvement of natural spaces and improving connectivity between blue and green infrastructure. This will support health and wellbeing, facilitates local living and connectivity to reduce social isolation. The Council agree the local development plan can have a positive impact on natural spaces and blue / green infrastructure, which can also have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. The Proposed Plan will endeavour to embed the place and wellbeing outcomes to focus decision making, as is outlined in the “implications for the plan” section.
- Health eating can be achieved through the LDP supporting proposals for new/ extended community food growing/ allotments. New development sites can provide factored “community growing areas”, these will provide health, wellbeing and biodiversity benefits. The Council consider the “implications for the plan” section notes this as consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing, and take into account the aims of the food growing strategy.

17.131 An email was sent on 10 June to member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Play, Recreation and Sport

17.132 The Sportscotland Model could be used to help to inform the future sports and recreation infrastructure to be planned for Aberdeen, in conjunction with detailed analysis, local engagement, and budget considerations. The Proposed Plan will be informed by any audit prepared by the Active Aberdeen Partnership on places, spaces and services related to sport and recreation.

17.133 The open space audit, and open space strategy and play sufficiency assessment will help form an understanding of the current quantity, quality and spreads of assets, and identify areas of improvement.

17.134 The Proposed Plan will seek to achieve the aims of the children’s services strategic plan, and the play policy and strategy. This could be achieved through placemaking principles, the spatial strategy, or a local policy or guidance relating to play / open space.

17.135 The open space audit, and the open space strategy, trees and woodland strategy will help to inform the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan.

17.136 The play sufficiency assessment and open space audit and strategy may have an impact on the spatial strategy and policy/site requirements of the Proposed Plan.

17.137 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

Health and Safety

17.138 With a detailed health and safety policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local health and wellbeing policies.

17.139 The Proposed Plan will continue to recognise the link between health, wellbeing, and place, and look to address inequalities. The spatial strategy will seek to ensure this through site selection. The extant plan was developed with a health in all policies approach, with local polices accessed against the health priorities for Scotland. Consideration will be given on continuing a health in all policies approach in the Proposed Plan.

17.140 The Proposed Plan will not publish information on the locations of concern for suicide, but will take account of these locations and will consider if a policy is required on how to ensure new development is designed safely and with suicide risk in mind, as well as the proximity of such developments to these locations of concern.

17.141 The Proposed Plan will endeavour to embed the place and wellbeing outcomes to focus decision making.

17.142 The Proposed Plan will look to address the issues raised through the NHS and Health and Social Care reports by ensuring development follows good placemaking principles. This will require a review of local placemaking policies, with an awareness of National Planning Framework 4 Policy.

17.143 The Proposed Plan will look to support any objectives the come out of the Aberdeen Healthy Weight Whole Systems Approach.

17.144 Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing, and take into account the aims of the food growing strategy.

17.145 Environmental considerations relating to noise including airport noise, air quality, contaminated land will be a consideration during Proposed Plan site selection.

17.146 The Proposed Plan will direct inappropriate development away from Major Accident Hazard Pipelines , and public safety zones. Site selection criteria will safeguard Major Accident Hazard Pipelines from new development, unless the proposal is compliant with HSE advice and guidance.

17.147 The Proposed Plan will use data from the 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future' wide-ranging conversation to inform the spatial strategy and policy direction. This engagement provides a valuable evidence base on community priorities, perceptions of place, and aspirations for future growth across the city. The insights gathered will help to shape place-based approaches, support local living objectives, and ensure that the Plan responds meaningfully to the needs and experiences of communities.

Community Wealth Building

17.148 The Proposed Plan will need to take into account the aims of Regional Economic Strategy Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy, Community Learning and Development Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans in relation to aspirations for community wealth building.

17.149 Consider how the Proposed Plan can reduce inequalities, and enable equity - and how this can be delivered through the planning process. A local policy or further guidance may be required.

17.150 To consider how to highlight community asset transfer opportunities (CD163, CD164) and link to Local Place Plans

Marmot Places

17.151 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X

Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 17.15. Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

17.152 NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Sportscotland and two members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

17.153 Homes for Scotland, Bancon and Shell UK Limited stated they do not dispute the evidence but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

17.154 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Information Gaps

17.156 There is work underway to update the Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Open Space Audit 2024 will be used to inform the Open Space Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will update the Open Space Strategy. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027.

17.157 A Forestry and Woodland Strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. The Council is working with the James Hutton Institute to produce a Natural Environment Strategy. This will encompass a number of statutory and non-statutory functions. It will update the Forestry and Woodland Strategy. The strategy is expected to be complete by March 2027,and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

17.158 The Air Quality Action Plan is currently being reviewed in the context of updated timings of the Local Transport Strategy. Please see chapter 11 for more information on the Local Transport Strategy.

17.159 Gaps remain in the exact future service needs/interventions and exactly where interventions are required for health service. It is recognised that Aberdeen's health and social care services are currently experiencing significant challenges/pressures and fiscal uncertainty. As a result, providers have found it challenging to ascertain future needs and provisions which span the lifespan of the LDP. The Council will continue to liaise with health and social care partners throughout the Proposed Plan stage to further understand these details. Further engagement has been undertaken with NHS Grampian on future healthcare service needs and potential interventions. The Local Development Plan team will continue engagement with NHS Grampian as they undergo work to agree strategic infrastructure priorities by March 2027. Chapter 10 on infrastructure provides further commentary on this issue.

17.160 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

18. Conclusion

18.1 In conclusion, this Evidence Report provides a comprehensive overview of the key data, information, and strategies that will inform the preparation of the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen City. The report aims to ensure that the next LDP is robust, well-informed, and aligned with national and regional planning frameworks. By addressing the key areas outlined in this report, Aberdeen City's next Local Development Plan can achieve sustainable development, enhance the quality of life for residents, and promote economic growth.

18.2 Aberdeen City Council approved the original content of this report at its meeting on 02 July 2025, and the Approved Evidence Report was submitted to the DPEA on 31 July 2025.

18.3 The DPEA issued the Gatecheck decision on 23 October 2025. Although the Evidence Report was found to contain extensive relevant information and broad engagement, it was returned because key evidence was missing or insufficiently explained. Further detail was required on the Local Housing Land Requirement, infrastructure capacity and condition for transport, education and healthcare, and developer obligations. Evidence on other topics was generally sufficient, with scope to update information gaps and general issues.

18.4 A revised report was approved by Aberdeen City Council at its meeting on 19 August 2026. and the Evidence Report was resubmitted to the DPEA on 21 September 2026.

Appendix 1: Site Assessment and SEA Checklist

The Council will use the assessment checklists for its site appraisal process. The site assessment checklist circulated by the Improvement Service (IS) will be used to prepare the Proposed Plan. The site assessment and SEA checklist is final and is included within the SEA Scoping Report (CD381). The Consultation Authorities (NatureScot, SEPA and Historic Environment Scotland) were consulted in accordance with legislative requirements, and some minor amendments were adopted following their comments.

The site assessment and SEA checklist, and the effectiveness and deliverability checklist (Appendix 2) formed the questionnaire used in the Call for Sites consultation which completed in October 2025. The site assessment and SEA checklist comprises a material assets section where answers to the effectiveness and deliverability checklist are to be included. The SEA and site assessment process will be integrated, as the site assessment and SEA checklist will be used to assess the site on its suitability for inclusion in the Proposed Plan and the SEA for the site.

The site assessment and SEA checklist will be used to assess every site submitted through the Council's Call for Sites consultation, sites "rolled forward" from the extant Plan and sites identified through the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and the Scottish and Vacant and Derelict Land Survey. Chapter 9 provides more information on the resources that may be used to identify sites for allocation. Where existing allocations have remained constrained or without planning consent for more than one local development plan the site will be removed as an allocated site unless new information comes forward. Completed opportunity sites will not be assessed but will be rezoned. Existing allocations with planning consent, or were new sites in the extant Plan will be assessed to determine if they should re-allocated in the next local development plan. Existing allocations where a bid is submitted will be assessed. This approach is informed by the Local Development Plan Guidance which specified that existing allocations should not automatically roll forward without being assessed.

No high-level sifting process is proposed; all sites will be assessed in this manner. Once all the information is gathered and collated, including the scoring for SEA, it will allow officers to make a determination on the suitability of the site for inclusion in the Proposed Plan. Completing an assessment for all sites also provides transparency and equity in decision making. The site inclusion process will be influence by the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy, NPF4, key agency input and the results of the site assessment and SEA process.

In addition to be being completed by officers, the site assessment will be circulated to internal and external statutory and technical consultees to add knowledge from their respective remits.

Site Name:	**Source of site suggestion:** All landowners/interested parties identified/aware?	**Current site reference**	**Site History/Previous planning applications, existing local plan policies and proposals, historic reference numbers:**
Settlement:	**GIS Site Ref:** **Previous ref:**	**Outside settlement boundary?**	
OS Grid Ref:	**Site Size (ha):**	**Is the site an allocation in the adopted LDP; sites proposed through call for ideas or any other sites with potential?** No Yes ref. Yes but different boundary	**Summary Description (topography, features, boundaries, neighbouring issues, access, exposure, aspect etc.** **Site visit/GIS observations:**
Current Use e.g. is the site brownfield, vacant and derelict land, greenfield, agricultural?	**Proposed Use:**	**Relevant policies/proposals from LDP or NPF4:**	
Insert Location Plan:		**Insert Photographs if available:**	

Topic – water Related SEA topics – population and human health, material assets, climatic factors	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
Could the proposal affect the condition of the water environment (water quality, physical condition, water resources, and the migration of wild fish)? See RBMPs for further detail on water condition.	Flood risk and water management Coastal development Blue and green infrastructure					
Could the proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example, result in the need for watercourse crossings or a large-scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse?	Flood risk and water management Coastal development Blue and green infrastructure					
Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?	Infrastructure first					

Can the proposal connect to the public water mains? If not, is there a sustainable water source that is resilient to the periods of water scarcity?	Flood risk and water management Infrastructure first					
Are there wetlands or boggy areas on the site?	Flood risk and water management					
For large scale developments, are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?	Infrastructure first					

Flood Risk Relative to the floodplain, as defined in NPF4 could the proposal be at risk of flooding (from any source) or result in additional flood risk elsewhere? If flood risk is not fully understood, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken. Specify which of the following flood sources are applicable: fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater or coastal.	Flood Risk and Water Management Coastal development					
Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?	Flood risk and Water management					

Topic – Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Related SEA topics – soils, water, climatic factors…	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
To what extent will the proposal conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity?	Biodiversity Natural Places					
To what extent will the proposal facilitate the creation of nature networks and improve ecological connectivity?	Natural places Biodiversity					
International Designations - SAC/SPA, Ramsar, World Heritage Sites. To what extent will the proposal affect these sites including via connectivity?	Natural places Biodiversity					
National Designations To what extent will the proposal affect national designations – e.g. SSSI, NNR	Natural places biodiversity					
To what extent will the proposal affect other designations - and locally important designations such as LNRs.	Natural places Biodiversity					

To what extent will the proposal affect Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands in the Ancient , Semi Natural and Long Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands	Natural places Biodiversity					
Protected Species–e.g. bats, otters, etc - can it be ascertained if protected species will be affected and will a site survey be required?	Natural places Biodiversity					
To what extent will local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal?	Soils Natural place Biodiversity					
How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?	Biodiversity Tackling the climate and nature crisis Forestry, trees and woodland.					

Topic – Climatic Factors Related SEA topics – population, human health, water, biodiversity, material assets, soils, air, cultural heritage, landscape	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
To what extent will the proposal involve sediment extraction/reclamation or changes in coastal processes that could result in coastal flooding?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Coastal development					
To what extent will the proposal promote and enable adaptation to climate change?	Climate mitigation and adaptation					
To what extent does the proposal use nature based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure First Blue and Green infrastructure					

To what extent does the proposal maintain and enhance resilience of existing and planned grey and green infrastructure?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure first Blue and Green infrastructure					
To what extent does the proposal have good proximity to services and good access to existing or proposed public transport and active travel network?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure First.					

Topic – Air Quality Related SEA topics – climatic factors, soils, population and human health	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
Could the proposal lead to Local Air Quality Management thresholds being breached in an existing Air Quality Management Area?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Health and Safety					
Could the proposal lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	Health and safety					
Does the proposal introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. combined heat and power, an industrial process, large scale quarry etc.)?	Health and safety					

Will the proposal lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site with noise/odour issues or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA (e.g. conflict with Aberdeen Airport noise contours, or new housing adjacent to a large manufacturing factory)	Health and safety					

Topic – population and human health Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
Is the proposal within the vicinity of a major accident hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline?	Health and safety					
Will the proposal affect service infrastructure: Education capacity - Secondary School Catchment Area/ Primary school catchment area Health provision/GP capacity	Infrastructure First					

To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	Design, Quality and place local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Blue and green infrastructure Play, recreation and sport					
To what extent will the proposal affect core path links or other key access networks such as cycle paths, coastal paths and rights of way?	Sustainable Transport Design, quality and place Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods Infrastructure first					

Will the proposal have the opportunity to incorporate new or enhance existing blue and/or green infrastructure providing multiple benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, management of surface water?	Blue and Green infrastructure Infrastructure First					

Topic – Soils Related SEA topics – landscape, cultural heritage, water, biodiversity, flora and fauna, material assets.	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
Does the proposal make use of a brownfield site or contaminated and vacant and derelict land? If on brownfield, is the site naturalised?	Soils Brownfield, vacant and derelict land					
Are there any contaminated soils issues on the site and if so, will the option employ remedial actions to ensure the site is suitable for use (as defined in PAN 33)?	Soils					
Is the proposal on peat or carbon rich soils and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat or carbon rich soils?	Soils Climate mitigation and adaptation					
Does the proposal result in the loss of prime agricultural land or land that is culturally or locally important for primary use as identified by the LDP?	Soils					

Topic – Landscape Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, population and human health	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
National landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – including NSAs, Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					
Regional and local landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					

Non designated landscape features and key landscape interests Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as current settlement boundaries, existing townscape and character of surrounding area and its visual qualities?	Natural Places					
To what extent will the proposal affect features of landscape interest, including the distinctive character of the landscape and the qualities of wild land?	Natural places					

Topic – Cultural Heritage Related SEA topics – Climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, landscape	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
Does the proposal protect or enhance the site or setting of: • World Heritage Sites* • Scheduled Monuments • Listed buildings • Inventory battlefields • Inventory gardens and designed landscapes • Conservation Areas • Undesignated historic environment assets • Streetscapes and settlement patterns monuments	Historic assets and places Natural Places					

Does the proposal promote or enable the retention, maintenance and sustainable use or re-use of historic buildings and infrastructure? This may include: -Buildings at Risk** -Vacant or under-used historic environment assets -The condition of the historic environment as a place to live, work and visit	Historic assets and places Zero waste Infrastructure first Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings City, town, local and commercial centres Rural development					

Does the proposal: Make the historic environment more climate resilient and/or help to reduce emissions from the historic environment? Support the repair and appropriate retrofit of historic buildings? Support the transition to green energy supply in historic buildings? Include adaptation measures to make the historic environment assets and places more resilient to the effects of climate change (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding etc)? In essence, will the proposal be likely to affect: The energy efficiency or energy supply of historic environment assets?	Historic assets and places Tackling the climate and nature crises Climate mitigation and adaptation Design, quality and place Infrastructure first Quality homes Flood risk and water management Rural homes					

The vulnerability of historic environment assets to current or future impacts of climate change?						
Does the proposal promote and enable access, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment? Consider whether the policy or proposal: Enables the historic environment to support creation of high-quality places and spaces? Promotes sustainable, responsible tourism, recreation and cultural activity?	Tourism Culture and creativity Design, quality and place Play, recreation and sport Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods					

Topic – Material Assets – Deliverability/ sustainability constraints Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, population and human health.	**NPF4 Policy Topic**	**Scoring pre-mitigation**	**Mitigation**	**Enhancement**	**Scoring post-mitigation**	**Comments/conclusions**
Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe? Other site servicing constraints, e.g. electricity pylons, underground gas pipelines etc.						
Site aspect – does the site make best use of solar gain? Is the site protected from prevailing winds?	Design Quality and place Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Heat and Cooling					
Is the site in an area of heat network potential or a designated Heat Network Zone (HNZ)?	Climate Mitigation and adaptation Heat and cooling					

Vehicular Access constraints or opportunities - Is the network capable of accommodating active travel, public transport, other shared modes, and private vehicle traffic generated?	local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Sustainable transport Infrastructure First					
Is the site close to a range of facilities? Can these be accessed by public transport or active travel?	local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Sustainable transport City, town, local and commercial centres Infrastructure First					
Does the proposal minimise demand for primary resources by reusing an existing building?	Zero waste					

For waste infrastructure and facilities (except landfill and EFW) does the proposal comply with the criteria listed in NPF4 policy 12 d)?	Zero waste					

Other Considerations

Please note any other issues which may be relevant to the assessment of the candidate site.

For example:

- Any restrictive covenants relating to the use of the land/ buildings contained within the proposed candidate site?
- Is the candidate site on Common Good Land?
- Is there a requirement to prepare place-based development briefs or masterplans?

Scoring – two columns have been added in the event that is it useful for planning authorities to quickly identify environmental effects from a proposal on a site. Where adverse effects have been identified, it may then also be useful to consider any obvious mitigation measures that might reduce these adverse effects. The second scoring column then allows at a quick glance to see what residual effects might remain following mitigation. There are many scoring techniques currently in use and an example of one option could be:

++	+	0	-	--
Significantly positive	positive	neutral	adverse	Significantly adverse

Explanation of the key SEA topics (please note the SEA objectives are suggested examples only)

Water
SEA objective – To protect and enhance the ecological status of the water environment

Water Drainage Constraints
The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) has the overall objective of ensuring that all inland and coastal waters within defined river basin districts reach at least good status by 2027. Achieving this requires measures to be put in place and action to be taken to i) prevent deterioration and ii) promote improvements in the water environment.

Information on the current status of a water body, pressures affecting it, measures required to address those pressures, and deadlines for achieving those measures can be extracted from SEPA's water environment hub. This tool should be used to identify existing pressures on water bodies and the site assessment should identify whether or not policies and proposals are likely to exacerbate existing pressures, create new problems and offer opportunities for enhancement. For example, if there are already morphological pressures on a water body then further engineering could trigger a further downgrade. Control of non-native invasive bank-side / in-stream plant species is an example of enhancement where an invasive non-native species pressure has been identified for a water body.

Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs)
GWDTEs are types of wetland which are specifically protected under the Water Framework Directive. SEPA holds a list of GWDTEs within all designated sites (SSSIs, SPAs, and SACs). To identify non-designated GWDTEs a habitat survey (Phase 1) would be required. At the site assessment stage we do not require a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, but we do require information on location of wetlands and boggy areas. This information can be collected by looking for the boggy ground symbol on GIS and / or a site visit.

Flood Risk
Development plan preparation should be informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Scottish Government's Development Planning Guidance states that SFRAs are designed to inform the development planning process, primarily to avoid increasing overall flood risk by avoiding areas of flood hazard. The SFRA can be used as a screening tool to identify whether flood risk is fully understood at site assessment stage, and therefore whether further detailed site-level Flood Risk Assessment is required prior to a site being included in the Proposed Plan, to ensure that only sites that are in accordance with NPF4 are allocated SEPA has produced Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Guidance which explains how this assessment can be carried out.

For SEA purposes if flood risk is found to be an issue, mitigation could be the removal of the site (or part thereof found to be at risk) from allocation.

SEA guidance on water provides advice on how to take water into account in SEA.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
SEA objective – Protect and enhance designated wildlife sites, wider biodiversity interests, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses

International Designations
If there is a likely significant effect then it is important to state why and what site may be affected (including Ramsar sites). The information gathered for this Site Assessment will help inform the 'screening' stage of the HRA – i.e. identify likely significant effects on a Natura site. **Policies or proposals likely to affect a Natura site should be flagged up for assessment in terms of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.** Guidance on where designated sites are and what their qualifying interests relate to can be found on NatureScot's website Sitelink - https://sitelink.nature.scot/home. In addition, the majority of Natura sites are underpinned by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs all have a site management statement which provides useful information on site condition and management pressures and will help to establish what is important and why and therefore help identify likely significant effects.

National designated sites
Again, see the above comments regarding site management statements for Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are examples of the best wildlife sites in Scotland. These are managed for wildlife but also allowing for enjoyment by public. Guidance on NNRs can be found at: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/national-designations/national-nature-reserves

Other Designated Sites
Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are locally important for natural heritage, designated and managed by local authorities to give people better opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature close to where they live. Similarly Local Nature Conservation Areas flag-up to planners and developers where there are natural feature of some merit. In this way it gives planners and developers early indication of sensitive sites and opportunities for enhancing the local environment. The local Biodiversity Officer should be able to provide advice here.

Non designated features and key wildlife habitats
- trees and woodland, including ancient and semi- natural inventory sites
- species rich grassland, moorland, heathland, wetlands and watercourses including burns

Links to Ancient Woodland Inventory (within SNHi) and the Forestry Commission's Native Woodland Survey of Scotland are detailed below.

www.nature.scot/doc/guide-understanding-scottish-ancient-woodland-inventory-awi

http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss

Protected Species
Although protected areas can safeguard species within their boundaries, some animals and plants are so threatened or vulnerable that they need legal protection wherever they occur. For further information on Protected species click here.

Local Geodiversity sites
These sites provide examples of geology and geomorphology of regional and local importance, where the geodiversity resource can be conserved, so that people can enjoy and find out more about it. These sites can contribute to the quality of local environments and provide opportunities for recreation and informal education.

Geological Conservation Review sites come from an assessment of nationally and internationally important sites for geology and geomorphology. The site boundaries for these and un-notified GCR sites are available through SNHi: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/local-designations/geological-conservation-review-sites

Local geodiversity sites are selected by voluntary geoconservation bodies such as local Geodiversity groups and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) groups. Geology and other natural history enthusiasts, wildlife trusts, museums, geological societies, teachers, planners and site owner, participate in the running of RIGS groups. More information on RIGS.

Nature Networks
A Nature Network connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people**.**
Connectivity is an essential part of nature. It is necessary for functioning and healthy ecosystems, key for the survival of animal and plant species, and is crucial to ensuring genetic diversity and adaptation to pressures such as climate change.
To ensure Scotland's nature can thrive, nature-rich areas must be connected through a series of networks linking them all together.

Air Quality
SEA objective – To improve or avoid adverse impacts to air quality and reduce emissions of key pollutants.

The impact of allocations on local Air Quality Management thresholds should be considered. For example, where an area is already close to exceeding air quality objectives, where an area is at risk of becoming an AQMA, or where sensitive development such as a hospital or residential use is proposed close to a busy road or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA. Such allocations may lead to an increase in the exposure of people to poor air quality.

SEA guidance on air provides advice on how to take air into account in SEA.
http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/147606/advice-for-responsible-authorities-on-sea.pdf
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Population and Human Health
SEA Objective – To protect and enhance quality of life including maintaining and improving opportunities to access public open space and the natural and historic environment

Our surroundings are a key factor in determining our health and sense of well-being. Development plans set the context for clear development management decisions which will help deliver high quality green networks and protect and enhance natural heritage assets. Green Networks in Development Planning explains the background to green networks, their multi-functionality and provides development planning advice in respect of green networks. Planning authorities should also seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore links which have been broken; Integrated Habitat Networks can be used here alongside green networks to ensure local biodiversity is maintained and enhanced

Human health can be affected by environmental factors which include pollution (e.g. emissions to air, soil or water from industrial processes including energy and waste management), flooding and climate change. Consideration of these issues, particularly in relation to location of sensitive development types, in site assessment will help to ensure that human health and wellbeing are integral to the plan.
http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/planning/strategic-environmental-assessment
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Soil
SEA objective – To maintain or improve soil quality, quantity and function and prevent any further degradation of soils
To protect carbon rich soils and restore peatlands

Soils provide the following seven key functions:
- providing the basis for food and biomass production
- controlling and regulating environmental interactions (regulating water flow & quality)
- storing carbon and maintaining the balance of gases in the air
- providing valued habitats and sustaining biodiversity
- providing a platform for buildings and roads
- providing raw material
- preserving cultural and archaeological heritage

The assessment should consider the impacts of development on the relevant soil functions for the site. SEPA provides information on regulations that apply to soil and good practice guidance which is available at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/soil.

The Scottish Soil Framework provides a general framework to promote the sustainable, management and protection of soil consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland. SEA guidance on soil provides advice on how to take soil into account in SEA.
http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/147606/advice-for-responsible-authorities-on-sea.pdf
The James Hutton Institute (formerly Macaulay) provides information on soil maps which are available from Scotland's Soils website.

Landscape
SEA objective – conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value of the area and protect and enhance designated landscape areas

Designated Landscapes
Our fine scenery provides an inspiring backdrop for all who live in Scotland. Images of our unspoilt landscape also helps to market our tourism and film industries and world-renowned products such as whisky.
Our finest landscapes have been designated as either National Scenic Areas or National Parks. These include some of Scotland's most famous areas, from the Cuillin Hills to the Cairngorms.

Non-Designated Landscapes
High quality landscapes encourage us to venture into the outdoors. Having greenspace in our towns and cities, and easy access to our surrounding landscapes, brings vital benefits to our health and well-being.
Each part of Scotland has a distinctive character, which helps to build our sense of place – both in our own localities and as a nation. Together, our diverse landscapes and townscapes provide a living canvas of Scotland's history, reflecting ways of life and traditions deeply engrained in our culture. Some landscapes are valued for their wild land quality.

Climatic Factors – Climate Change Mitigation
SEA objective – To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to the consequences of climate change

The Scottish Government's guidance Consideration of Climatic Factors within Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) provides useful guidance on how to determine whether a PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects.
https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/

Material Assets – Waste
SEA objective – To reduce waste and promote the sustainable use of resources

The Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan sets out a vision of a zero waste Scotland where waste is treated as a valuable resource and not as a burden.

For allocations for the location of waste management facilities consideration should be given to the potential for adverse impacts which may arise from locating other new development in the vicinity of proposed / existing waste sites and on the potential risk the proposal would pose to people or property. The local authority Environmental Health department is best placed to advise on site specific considerations.

Cultural Heritage (including the historic environment)

SEA Objective – To protect and promote the historic environment

SEA Sub Objectives:
- To protect and enhance historic environment assets and their settings
- To promote and enable the retention of historic environment assets
- To make the historic environment more climate resilient and to reduce emissions from the historic environment

- To promote and enable access, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment

Settlement level:
Consideration should be given to the likely implications and opportunities for the historic environment arising from the spatial strategy. This will involve considering the likely significant effects for historic environment assets (and their settings), and places.

Strategic considerations:
Our historic environment is not only a finite resource that requires protection but one that also delivers the places and spaces that are key to our everyday lives, cultural identity and sense of place. Our historic built environment provides us with much of our housing stock, offices, infrastructure, public buildings and parks and gardens and therefore our use, maintenance and adaption of these assets is key to a sustainable future and our health and wellbeing.

Scotland's new strategy for the historic environment Our Past, Our Future (OPOF) was published in April 2023. The strategy sets the direction of travel for the historic environment sector and identifies the priority areas of action to focus work to support this mission. The 3 priorities are *Delivering the transition to net zero, Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places* and *Building a wellbeing economy*. The importance of the contribution that the maintenance, reuse and adaptation of our historic environment can make in preventing waste and reducing carbon emissions is recognised under the transition to net zero priority.

Scotland's current landscape is the product of natural processes and human activity operating over many centuries, and both natural and historic aspects should be considered when developing policies and proposals at the landscape scale. Proposals should protect and promote the overarching importance of the historic environment to a sense of place. They should take account of the capacity of settlements and surrounding areas to accommodate development without damage to their cultural and historic significance. This reflects the policies contained within both the National Planning Framework and The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS). HEPS is a policy statement for decision making for the whole of the historic environment for use at all levels. All the policies and principles in HEPS are likely to be relevant to strategic decisions around the allocation of land depending on context, with HEP2, HEP4 and HEP5 highlighting the importance of sustainable decision making and planning for the future use of historic assets and places.

Historic Environment Scotland's Portal holds locational information on national designations (including downloadable datasets) including designation records, scheduled monument consents and decisions. The relevant council area Historic Environment Records will also be a key resource for information on historic environment baseline including for non-designated assets.

Appendix 2: Example of Effectiveness and Deliverability Checklist

The site assessment and SEA checklist (Appenix1), and the effectiveness and deliverability checklist (Appendix 2) formed the questionnaire used in the Call for Sites consultation which completed in October 2025. The site assessment and SEA checklist comprises a material assets section where answers to the effectiveness and deliverability checklist are to be included. The SEA and site assessment process will be integrated, as the site assessment and SEA checklist will be used to assess the site on its suitability for inclusion in the Proposed Plan and the SEA for the site.

Site Details		
Name of the site		
Site address		
OS grid reference		
Site size (in hectares)		
Current land use		
Neighbouring land use(s)		
Designated in Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	If yes, please specify:	
Land type	Previously Developed ☐	Greenfield ☐
Include an Ordnance Survey plan (1;1250, 1:2500 or 1:5000). The site boundary should be outlined in red and show proposed points of access etc.		
Your Details		
Name		
Organisation (if applicable)		
Address		
Telephone/Mobile number		
Email address		
Ownership		
Are you	Sole Owner ☐	Part Owner ☐
	Agent ☐	Developer ☐
	Register Social Landlord ☐	Option to Purchase ☐
	No legal Interest ☐	
If not sole owner, state owner(s) and provide contact details		
Do these owners know this site is being proposed for development	Yes ☐	No ☐
If 'Option to Purchase', please provide details (timescale, area of site etc.)		
Are there any legal factors which may prevent, or restrict, development? (e.g. wayleaves, restriction on land use, rights of wat, ransom	Yes ☐	No ☐
	If yes, please specify:	

strips, access issues, visibility splay ownership etc.)			
Indicative Proposal			
Brief description of proposal use			
If residential, what number of units is proposed use?			
If other uses, what is the proposed site area (ha) or floorspace (sq. m)?	Business and Offices		
	General industrial		
	Storage and Distribution		
	Retail		
	Other (please specify)		
Delivery			
What year do you expect development to start?			
Projected delivery timeframe from LDP adoption in 2028	Short (2028-2031) ☐	Medium (2032-2034) ☐	Long (2035-2038) ☐
Indicative residential completions per year	Y1 -	Y2 -	Y3 -
	Y4 -	Y5 -	Y6 -
	Y7 -	Y8 -	Y9 -
	Y10 -	Y11 -	Y12 -
Planning History			
Any previous planning history or consents in the last 10 years?	Yes ☐	No ☐	
	If yes, please specify:		
Has contact been made with the Planning Authority in relation to the proposal?	Yes ☐	No ☐	
	If yes, please specify:		
Potential Constraints			
Is the site affected by any physical constrains (e.g. substations, pylons, underground cables, rivers/burns etc.)?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't know ☐
	If yes, please specify:		
Is any part of the site at risk from flooding?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't know ☐
	If yes, have any assessments been carried out:		
Is the site subject to any potential contamination issues?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't know ☐
	If yes, please specify:		

Appendix 3: Engagement Tracker

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
22 November 2023	Participation Statement Engagement	Online Survey	Citizen Space	-	LDP	Public / Community Councils / key Agencies
29 May 2024	Invitation to create Local Place Plans	Website	Website	-	LPP, LDP	Community Councils / Community Bodies
04 July 2024	Report taken to Full Council to inform Elected Members of the Evidence Report, and to seek authority to carry out consultations and produce the Report.	Committee Report	Council Chamber	10:30	LDP	Elected Members
12 July 2024	Invitation to create Local Place Plans	Press release	Newspaper	-	LPP	Community Councils /

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
						Community Bodies
12 July 2024	Invitation to create Local Place Plans	Email from CC Liaison officer to all CCs	Email	-	LPP	Community Councils / Community Bodies
02 August 2024	Topic Papers Initial contact with Key Agencies and other key contacts	Email to invite contacts to be part of the working group	Email	-	LDP Evidence Report	Key Agencies and other pertinent organisations
07 August 2024	Development Plan Scheme	Report to Committee	Town House	10:00	Development Plan Scheme	Elected Members
08 August 2024	Invitation to create Local Place Plans / Development Plan Scheme	Newsletter	Email and archived Online	-	LPP / LDP	Public / Community Councils /
28 June 2024 to 27 August 2024	Topic Paper initial contact with Key Agency contacts	Email	Email	-	LDP Evidence Report	Key Agencies
02 September 2024	Topic Paper Engagement	Teams Meeting	Online	11:00 -12:00	LPP	A&DS

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
03 September 2024	Invitation to create Local Place Plans	Social Media – ACC	Online	-	LPP	Community Councils / Community Bodies
04 September 2024	Invitation to create Local Place Plans	Social Media – LDP	Online	-	LPP	Community Councils / Community Bodies
17 September 2024	Topic Paper initial contact with Key Agency and other contacts	Email outlining potential evidence sources	Email	-	LDP Evidence Report	Key Agencies and other pertinent organisations
19 September 2024	Local Place Plans / Local Development Plan	Community Council Forum	Online	18:30-20:30	LPP / LDP Evidence Report	Community Councils
03 October 2024	Topic Paper review group and evidence source review	Email	Email		LDP Evidence Report	Key Agencies
30 October 2024	Housing Summit 1	Presentation and Q&A	In person, Town House	14:00-17:00	LDP Evidence Report	Development Industry, Housebuilders, RSLs, Legal processionals
04 November 2024	Place and Health	Presentation and Workshop	Aberdeen Health Determinants	13:50-14:50	LDP	Academics, health

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
			Research Collaboration Conference			professionals, general public, third sector organisations, public sector practitioners
27 January – 23 February 2025	Engagement on Topic Papers Early Drafts	Private Commonplace tile	Online	4 weeks	LDP Evidence Report	Key Agencies and other pertinent organisations e.g. housebuilders, Homes for Scotland
27 January – 23 February 2025	Engagement on Topic Papers Early Drafts	Teams site	Online	4 weeks	LDP Evidence Report	Cross council services e.g. Affordable Housing, Education, Roads
29 January 2025	Local Development Plan Evidence Report	Planning Service	Hybrid	14:00-16:00	LPP Evidence Report	Aberdeen City Council Development Management
06 February 2025	Local Development Plan	Community Council Forum	Online	18:00 -20:00	LPP Evidence Report	Community Councils (25 attended)
07 February 2025	Local Development Plan	ECMT	Hybrid	09.00 – 11.00	LDP Evidence Report	Extended Corporate Management Team

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
18 February 2025	Local Development Plan Evidence Report	FIRS Meeting	Hybrid	14:00-16:00	LDP Evidence Report	FIRS
15 April 2025	Local Development Plan Evidence Report	Gypsy traveller consultation drop-in event	In person, Clinterty site	11:00-13:00	LDP Evidence Report	Gypsy traveller community
20 March 2025	Local Development Plan Evidence Report / Draft Topic Papers	Meeting	In person	14:00 – 16:00	LDP Evidence Report	Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC)
24 March - 19 May 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Public Survey	Online	8 weeks inclusive	LDP	All
24 March - 19 May 2025	Draft Topic Papers	Public Survey	Online	8 weeks inclusive	LDP / Evidence Report	All
26 March 2025	Local Development Plan Evidence Report Topic Paper and "Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	FIRS Meeting	Online	10:00 –12:00	LDP Evidence Report	FIRS
27 March 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your	Aberdeen South Locality Event	Greyhope Community Hub	10:00-12:00	LDP	Public and local networks /groups

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
	Future – In Person Drop In Event		Tullos Circle, Torry, AB11 8DL			
27 March 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future – In Person Drop In Event	Aberdeen Central Locality Event	Rosemount Community Centre, Belgrave Terrace, AB25 2NS	14:00-16:00	LDP	Public and local networks /groups
21 April 2025	Local Development Plan	Community Council	In person, Town House	17:00 – 19:00	LDP, Evidence Report, LPP	Community Council, Planning and Transport Sub Group
26 April 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future – In Person Drop In Event	Aberdeen Central Locality Event	Aberdeen Sports Village Linksfield Road, AB24 5RU	10:00-12:00	LDP	Public and local networks /groups
26 April 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future – In Person Drop In Event	Aberdeen South Locality Event	Airyhall Library, Springfield Road, AB15 7RF	14:00-16:00	LDP	Public and local networks /groups
29 April 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future -	Workshops and Q&A Topic Papers	In person, Town House	14:00-17:00	LDP Evidence Report	Development Industry, Housebuilders,

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
	Housing Summit 2	Local Housing Strategy				RSLs, Legal processionals
30 April	Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA)	Meeting	Online	15:00 – 16:30	LDP CTA	Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council Transport Scotland
7 May 2025	Local Housing Strategy / Housing Supply Target	Meeting	Online	11:00-12:30	LHS LDP Evidence Report	Homes for Scotland, Retties, Bancon
10 May 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future – In Person Drop In Event	Aberdeen North Locality Event	King's Church, King's Way, Bridge of Don, AB23 8BL	10:00-12:00	LDP	Public and local networks /groups
10 May 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future – In Person Drop In Event	Aberdeen North Locality Event	Get Active @ Northfield, Kettlehills Crescent, AB16 5TL	14:00-16:00	LDP	Public and local networks /groups
12 May 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future – In Person Drop In Event	Community Council Forum	Town House	18:30-20:30	LDP	Community Councils

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
13 May 2025	LDP Evidence Report, Local Place Plans	Meeting	Marischal College	14:00 – 15:00	LDP, LPP	Community Council, Planning and Transport Sub Group, Chair
19 May	Local Development Plan	Community Council	In person, Town House	17:00 – 19:00	LDP, Evidence Report, LPP	Community Council, Planning and Transport Sub Group
24 March – 18 May 2025	Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future	Outreach events	See outreach calendar	See outreach calendar	LDP	Local networks /groups
02 June 2025	Evidence Report Draft Topic Papers	Meeting	Online	10:00-11:00	LDP	NESTRANS
04 June 2025	Evidence Report Submission	Meeting	Online	13:00-14:00	LDP	DPEA
06 June 2025	Evidence Report Draft Topic Papers	Meeting	Online	11:00 – 12:00	LDP	NatureScot
16 June 2025	Draft Topic Papers	Meeting	Online	09:30-11:30	LDP	Homes for Scotland and Members
18 June 2025	Draft Topic Papers	Meeting	Online	09:30-11:30	LDP	Bancon

Date	Topic	Engagement Activity	Venue	Time	Fulfilled requirement (e.g. LDP, LPP, IIA)	To whom
w/c ing 23 June 2025	Evidence Report	Invitation to attend briefing sessions	Online / In Person	Various	LDP	Elected Members
02 July 2025	Evidence Report reported to, and approved for submission by, Full Council	Committee Report	Council Chamber	10:30	LDP	Elected Members

Details of stakeholder engagement following resubmission of the Evidence Report can be found in Chapter 7, Table 7.1.