

PROPOSED ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 RESPONSE FORM

As part of the production of the Local Development Plan, a 'Main Issues Report' was published in January 2019. The responses from these consultations have helped to inform the content of the Proposed Local Development Plan ("the Proposed Plan").

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan will direct decision-making on land-use planning issues and planning applications in Aberdeenshire for the 10-year period from 2021 to 2031. The Proposed Plan was agreed by Aberdeenshire Council in March 2020 as the settled view of the Council. However, the Proposed Plan will be subjected to an independent examination and is now open for public comment.

This is your opportunity to tell us if anything should be changed in the Proposed Plan, and why.

When writing a response to the Proposed Plan it is important to specifically state the modification(s) that you would wish to see to the Plan.

This is the only remaining opportunity to comment on the Proposed Plan. The reasons for any requested changes will be analysed and reported to Scottish Ministers. They will then appoint a person known as a Reporter to conduct a public examination of the Proposed Plan, focusing particularly on any unresolved issues and the changes sought.

Ministers expect representations (or responses) to be concise (no more than 2000 words) and accompanied by limited supporting documents. It is important to ensure that all of the information that you wish to be considered is submitted during this consultation period as there is no further opportunity to provide information, unless specifically asked.

Please email comments to ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or send this form to reach us by 17 July 2020.

We recommend that you keep a copy of your representation for your own records.



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If you wish to contact one of the area planning offices, please call 01467 534333 and ask for the relevant planning office or email planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.



Please use this form to make comments on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020. If you are making comments about more than one topic it would be very helpful if you could fill in **a separate response form for each issue you wish to raise**.

Please email or send the form to reach us by 31 July 2020 at the following address:

Post: Planning Policy Team, Infrastructures Services
Aberdeenshire Council, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB

Email: ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Please refer to our **Privacy Notice** at the end of this form for details of your rights under the Data Protection Act.

YOUR DETAILS

Title:	Mr
First Name:	David
Surname:	Wardrop
Date:	22.07.20
Postal Address:	Wardrop Strategic Planning Limited, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Postcode:	[REDACTED]
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]

Are you happy to receive future correspondence only by email? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you responding on behalf of another person? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes who are you representing? Taylor Wimpey (East Scotland) Ltd

☐ Tick the box if you would like to subscribe to the Aberdeenshire LDP eNewsletter:

An acknowledgement will be sent to this address soon after the close of consultation.

YOUR COMMENTS

Please provide us with your comments below. We will summarise comments and in our analysis will consider every point that is made. Once we have done this we will write back to you with Aberdeenshire Council's views on the submissions made. We will publish your name as the author of the comment, but will not make your address public.

Modification that you wish to see (please make specific reference to the section of the Proposed Plan you wish to see modified if possible, for example Section 9, paragraph E1.1):

Taylor Wimpey formally object to the non allocation of land to the North of Thistle Drive Portlethen (the subject lands) for residential uses for circa 300 new private and affordable homes and associated greenspace.

Reason for change:

This objection should be considered alongside Homes for Scotland submissions, which are endorsed by Taylor Wimpey, in respect of wider 'Shire level Housing Land supply which argues that more land than is identified within proposed ALDP 2021 is needed to ensure delivery of new homes and market choice; particularly within the Kincardine and Mearns part of the 'Shire Housing Market Area.

As will be set out further in this objection and the supporting document, the land allocation, supported by officers through the MIR and draft Proposed Plan stages, represents a logical and deliverable residential land allocation which has no technical impediments to prevent the delivery of a high quality development with considerable areas of greenspace.

Accordingly, it is submitted that land to the North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen is allocated for residential development for circa 300 new homes.

Background

Following submissions to the initial Call to Sites stage of this emerging LDP, this 17.3ha site was included by officers within their response to the MIR and associated draft proposed LDP as a new residential land allocation. Identified within the draft proposed ALDP as Site KN027, it was identified as having a capacity of 300 new homes.

Consistent with the submissions made by Taylor Wimpey, officers considered that the subject lands are sustainably located for new residential development; where development would not undermine Green Belt objections; and, that there were no capacity or technical reasons that would prevent the successful delivery of these new homes of which, in line with Council policy, 75 homes will be affordable housing homes.

Against this proposed allocation, the Kincardine and Mearns Committee voted to recommend the removal of the subject lands. The reason(s) for this have not been made available.

Following this, the Kincardine and Mearns Committee's recommendations, along with those of the other 5 area committees, were then considered by the Infrastructure and Services Committee (ISC) on 3rd November 2019. This committee narrowly voted by 8 votes to 6 to support the Kincardine & Mearns Committee's recommendation to remove the subject lands against an amendment for their retention as 'reserve land'

The key issue is understood not to relate to site specifics but instead to whether the subject lands were needed to allow the wider proposed LDP housing land allocations to meet the requirement set out in the proposed Aberdeen and 'Shire SDP. Committee were advised that with a circa 1,000 unit 'buffer' then, no, the site was not required.

Consideration of the ISC recommendations by the Full Council was postponed from December 2019 to allow the outcome of the SDP's examination, particularly on housing numbers, to be known. Following the publication of the Report of Examination on the proposed SDP at the end of January 2020, Aberdeenshire Council met on the 5th of March to consider the proposed LDP.

By this time, the Report of Examination had included an increase in the Housing Land Allowance within the 'Shire part of the Aberdeen and 'Shire Housing Land Supply by circa 1,000 additional residential homes.

By this time, and despite this fundamental change in the strategic housing context, Site OP27 had been deleted from the proposed ALDP.

Strategic Context

Aberdeen and 'Shire SDP

The allocation of the site is wholly consistent with the spatial strategy set out within both the current Aberdeen and Shire SDP and the emerging replacement SDP which currently sits with Scottish Ministers. Portlethen lies within the Aberdeen – Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area where the SDP proposes significant new development in the northern part of this corridor.

This spatial direction is taken forward into the replacement SDP which reiterates that in para 3.38 that *"We are proposing significant new development in the northern part of this Strategic Growth Area early in the Plan period."* This continues in para 3.39 that *"The opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the "Fastlink" will enhance the desirability of many towns in this Strategic Growth Area, as these locations become more accessible from destinations across the City Region. Stonehaven, **Portlethen** [my emphasis], Chapleton and Newtonhill are towns which should see particular benefits.*

This commitment has informed the preparation of the proposed ALDP 2021 and consequently led to officers identifying the subject lands at Portlethen for circa 300 new homes including 75 affordable homes as a key part of delivering this spatial strategy. This is particularly so given the identification of Portlethen as a High Priority Area within the Council's Local Housing Strategy 2018-23.

Housing Land Supply

This proposed allocation was also set against a proposed SDP Housing Land Allowance that had informed the proposed ALDP housing land allocations with an overall allocation of circa 1,000 units in excess of the SDP's Housing Land Allowance.

With the increase in the proposed SDP's Housing Land Allowance included within the Report of Examination, this housing land supply 'buffer' of circa 1,000 homes, will decrease to just circa 80 homes; with the removal of the subject lands a key part of this significant reduction. As referenced within Homes for Scotland's submissions to the proposed ALDP 2021, this 'buffer' very quickly becomes a significant deficit and therefore shortfall.

Whilst this is set out in more detail within Homes for Scotland's submissions on this issue, which Taylor Wimpey support, it is submitted that the reintroduction of the subject lands will go some way to restoring the level of housing land supply which was considered by officers to be required during their preparation of the proposed ALDP 2021 and, indeed, as required to address the significant housing land shortfall now identified within the submissions made by Homes for Scotland to the proposed ALDP 2021.

The principal new housing land allocation within the northern part of the Laurencekirk to Aberdeen Strategic Growth Area is at Chapelton of Elsick with Stonehaven and Laurencekirk to the south. Output at Elsick remains far lower than had previously been programmed with an average output over the last 3 years at 45, 19 and 38 homes. With over 4,000 homes still to be delivered, it is submitted that this is far from ideal and that additional output is required to provide choice and to assist in the delivery of new private and affordable homes and for the housing land supply to be met. By contrast, Taylor Wimpey, with a potentially different offer, anticipate a 60 home pa output commencing in 2021.

As recognised by officers through the proposed allocation of the subject lands within ALDP 2021, to deliver on the SDP's intention for significant development in the northern corridor within the early part of the SDP, land in addition to Elsick is needed. As set out below and, in more detail, within the Site Brochure submitted in support of this objection, Portlethen and, in particular, the subject lands, are extremely well placed to achieve this.

Site Specifics

The subject lands are highly sustainably located to the immediate north of Portlethen and lie on the village centre side of the A92 with easy access to shops, GP Surgery, public transport (including the train station) and to Portlethen Primary and Secondary schools.

Within the MIR, the subject lands are considered to *"form a logical extension to the settlement....and would fit into the landscape."* In addition, consideration of the current Green Belt designation of the subject lands has been undertaken where it is concluded that Green Belt

principles would not be undermined by a form of development proposed here by Taylor Wimpey. It is noted that officers reached this same conclusion as part their wider SEA of New Allocated and Alternative Sites undertaken as part of the LDP process.

The Site Brochure which accompanies and supports this formal objection, provides an indication of the form of the design led development of the subject lands. Over 5ha of this 17.3ha site is proposed as landscaped green space, including allotments, which will be of use and benefit to those living adjacent to the subject lands as well as to those new residents.

The Brochure also provides information on a wide range of matters including design development, ecology and technical infrastructure. In addition, the Brochure covers connectivity and access with a Transport Statement, which accompanies and supports this objection and which informed the Site Brochure, providing a useful overview of such matters.

Summary and Conclusions

The subject lands were identified by officers in their response to the Call for Sites and Main Issues Report stages of the emerging LDP as a new housing allocation for circa 300 new homes. This was a position informed by wider housing land supply requirements as well as by site specific considerations.

It is understood that the subject lands were only removed as new housing land allocation as a consequence of the residential units not being required. No reasons other than this are known or have been made available. Setting this to one side, it is encouraging that officers and Councillors are in agreement with Taylor Wimpey in respect of the suitability of the subject lands for the development form indicated.

The subject lands were included at various stages in the emerging LDP. Indeed, they were included within the draft proposed LDP for 300 homes at a point in time prior to the Report of the Examination of the SDP increasing the Housing Land Allowance by circa 1000 homes. Whilst others, including Homes for Scotland, will get into the details of the housing figures, it seems to make little sense to remove a proposed site and with it circa 300 homes at the point the allowance is increased significantly.

This part of the Aberdeen – Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area is overly reliant on one housing site (at Elsick). Within the overarching requirement to allocate sufficient land within the Housing Market Area, the subject lands were identified for residential development to provide more choice, both locationally and developer, as a means of pursuing the current and emerging SDP's spatial strategy that envisaged significant growth within the northern part of the Strategic Growth Area.

The allocation of the subject lands can also secure the delivery of 75 much needed affordable homes. It is submitted that this is a critical contribution given the settlement's identification as a High Priority Area within the Local Housing Strategy.

Consistent with the overview provided within the MIR that *"the proposed site forms a logical extension to the settlement"*, Taylor Wimpey respectfully seek the restoration of the subject lands within ALDP 2021 as a residential land allocation for circa 300 new homes, including 75 affordable homes and associated green space to allow their delivery within the early part of the plan period.

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Members of the public are being given this final opportunity to comment on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The reasons for any changes that the Council receives will be analysed and reported to Scottish Ministers. They will then appoint a person to conduct a public examination of the Proposed Plan, focusing particularly on the unresolved issues raised and the changes sought.

Your name and respondent identification number (provided to you by Aberdeenshire Council on receipt of your

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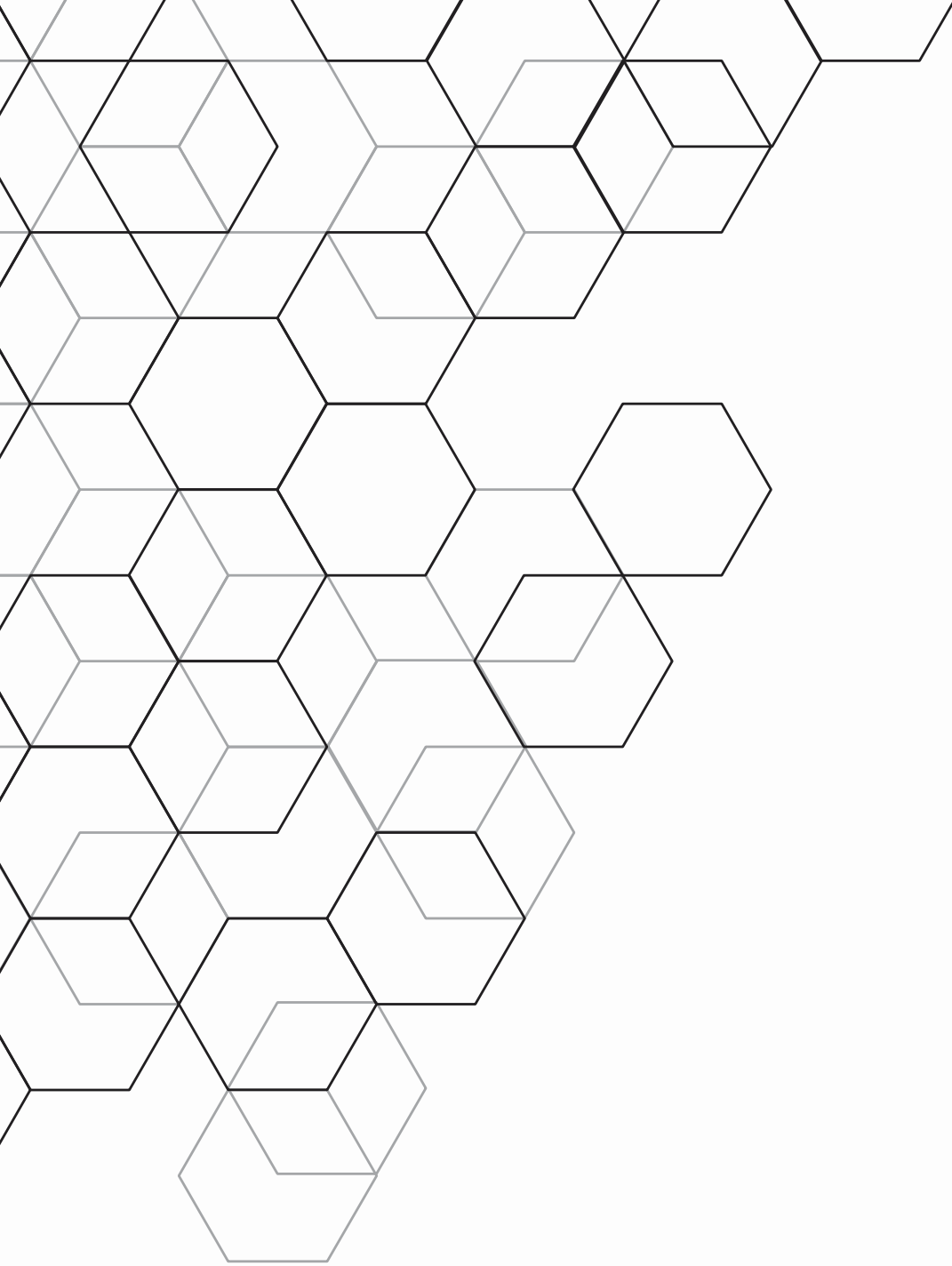
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July 2020

Land to the North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen
Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021



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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This submission has been prepared by Optimised Environments Ltd (OPEN) on behalf of Taylor Wimpey in support of their objection to the non-allocation of land to the north of Thistle Drive, Portlethen within the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (ALDP) 2021. It concerns the proposed allocation of land for residential development at Hillside, Portlethen.

The Council site reference is KN027 “Land to the North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen”.

The work within this document builds on a fresh approach to the site and new technical work which has been undertaken since the last time this site was promoted.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen



Figure 2: Site Plan

1.2 Site description

The site is located to the north of Portlethen. It is bounded to the west by the A92, the main road into Aberdeen from the south, although separated for much of its edge by a landscape strip and the site of a former filling station. The southern boundary meets the existing developed edge of the town, including industrial land adjacent to the A92 and an established residential area off Thistle Drive. The northern edge bounds with a strip of individually developed detached properties and the eastern edge consists of the main northern railway line that links Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The railway line separates the site from having a close relationship to the coast although its proximity is evident in many of the views from the higher ground.

The site is undulating and extends to 17.3 hectares. It is mostly greenfield although part of the northern area is brownfield having previously been used for sand and gravel quarrying. The land largely consists of rough grazing with a field pattern marked by drystone walling which crosses the site. Two distinctive burns cross through the site, one of which is edged by a more formalised path although several desire lines across the whole site area show the land is widely used for walking.

1.3 This Document

This document has been set up to logically present the case for locating development at Portlethen and reports on the findings of technical study which has been undertaken regarding access and transportation, ecology, utilities, drainage and design. These aspects have all been summarised within this main document.

Particular note has been taken of the Site Assessment process undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council (Site Reference KN027) and the community comments raised during the preparation of this submission. The aim is to demonstrate that a well-considered development here can offer a logical expansion to the town and work with the existing landscape features to provide an attractive place in which to live.

2. Planning Context

2.1 National Planning Framework

NPF 3 aims to facilitate new housing development where there is continuing pressure for growth. House building makes an important contribution to the economy. Planning can help to address the challenges facing the housing sector by providing a positive and flexible approach to development. In particular, provision for new homes should be made in areas where economic investment is planned or there is a need for regeneration.

Following the Planning (Scotland) Bill receiving royal assent in July 2019, the preparation of National Planning Framework 4 has commenced with a 2021 implementation date anticipated. Until then, NPF 3 will remain in place. Given the Council's intention to have the examination stage of ALDP 2021 concluded prior to the publication of NPF4, the current NPF3 will remain material.

2.2 Scottish Planning Policy (2014)

According to SPP "Planning should take a positive approach to enabling high-quality development and making efficient use of land to deliver long-term benefits for the public while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources." (paragraph 2) Within SPP, Outcome 1 seeks "a successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places."

Importantly, the SPP introduces a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development.

The SPP recognises NPF 3 aim of seeking to strengthen the role of the city regions and towns. The SPP sets out how this should be delivered by locating the right development in the right place. The SPP continues by noting that "Delivering high-quality buildings, infrastructure and spaces in the right locations helps provide choice over where to live and style of home, choice as to how to access amenities and services and choice to live more active, engaged, independent and healthy lifestyles."

The SPP requires that Development plans should:

- be consistent with the policies set out in this SPP, "including the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development";
- "positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the plan area in a way which is flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances over time";

- be up-to-date, place-based and enabling with a spatial strategy that is implemented through policies and proposals; and
- "set out a spatial strategy which is both sustainable and deliverable, providing confidence to stakeholders that the outcomes can be achieved."
- SPP also requires that planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach. This requires spatial strategies within development plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development appropriate to the area.

Both the NPF and SPP recognise that planning's purpose is to create better places. The SPP comments that "Placemaking is a creative, collaborative process that includes design, development, renewal or regeneration of our urban or rural built environments. The outcome should be sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet people's needs."

Planning should direct the right development to the right place. To achieve this spatial strategies within development plans should promote "a sustainable pattern of development appropriate to the area." The SPP sets out a range of criteria against which decisions should be guided. In doing so, planning should support development that is designed to a high-quality, which demonstrates the six qualities of successful place comprising:

- Distinctive
- Safe and Pleasant
- Welcoming
- Adaptable
- Resource Efficient
- Easy to Move Around and Beyond

In respect of housing, the SPP requires local development plans in city regions to allocate a range of sites which are effective or expected to become effective in the plan period to meet the housing land requirement of the strategic development plan up to year 10 from the expected year of adoption. They should provide for a minimum of 5 years effective land supply at all times. In allocating sites, the SPP requires planning authorities to be confident that land can be brought forward for development within the plan period and that the range of sites allocated will enable the housing supply target to be met.

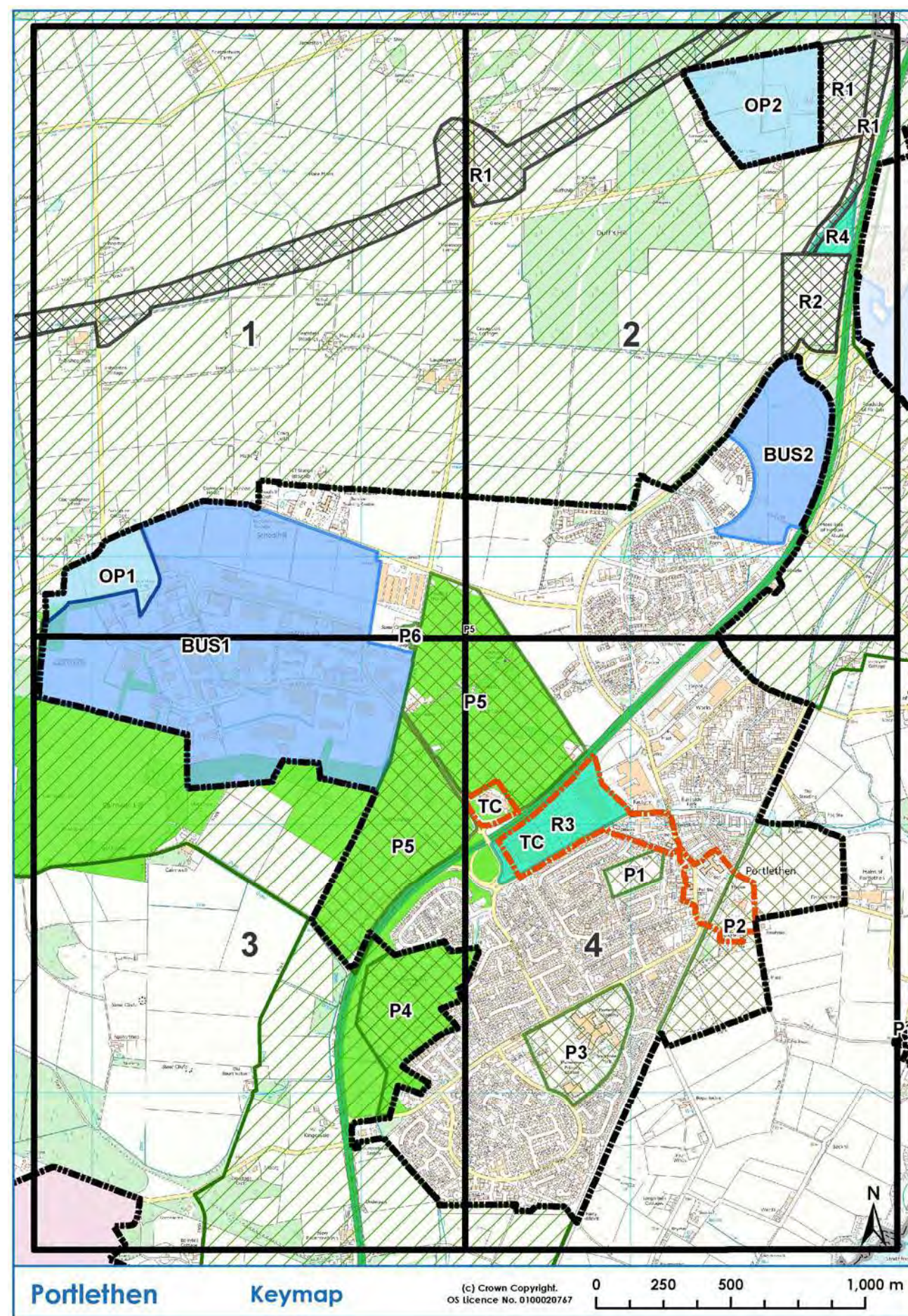
Other than delivering housing, the SPP confirms that the planning system should:

- consider green infrastructure as an integral element of places from the outset of the planning process;
- assess current and future needs and opportunities for green infrastructure to provide multiple benefits;
- facilitate the provision and long-term, integrated management of green infrastructure and prevent fragmentation; and,
- provide for easy and safe access to and within green infrastructure, including core paths and other important routes.

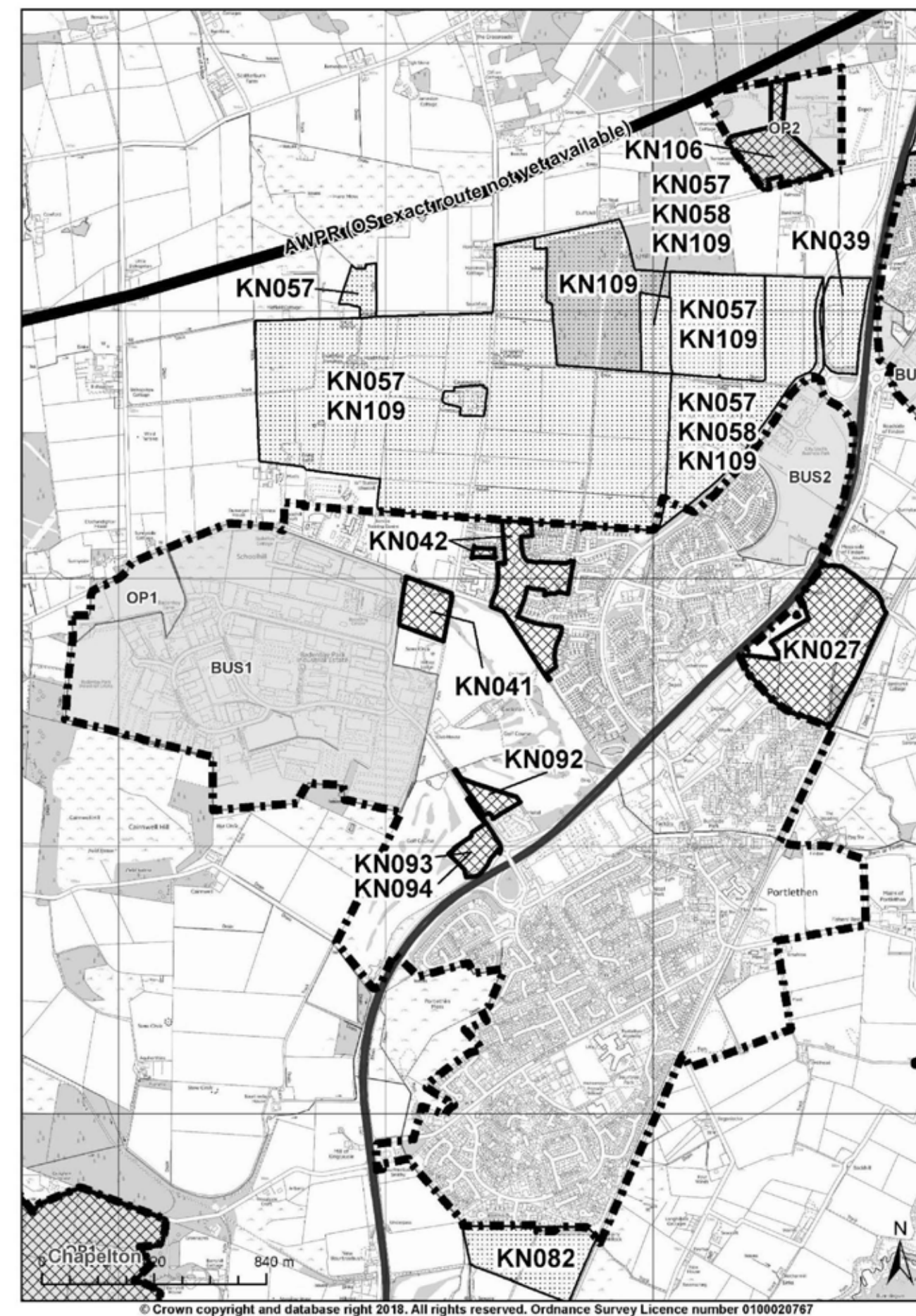
In doing this, the SPP requires that local development plans should seek to enhance existing and promote the creation of new green infrastructure. This should be done through a design-led approach, applying standards which facilitate appropriate provision, addressing deficits or surpluses within the local context. The standards delivered through a design-led approach should result in a proposal that is appropriate to place, including connections to other green infrastructure assets.

Settlement Features

Protected Land	
P1	To conserve Nicol Park as an amenity for the town.
P2	To conserve the area for playing fields, conserve the woodland and protect the setting of the parish church.
P3	To conserve the playing fields, Bourtree Park and conserve community facilities.
P4	To conserve Portlethen Moss as an amenity for the town and forming part of the green network.
P5	To conserve the golf course as an amenity for the town and forming part of the green network.
P6	To conserve the setting of the stone circle as an amenity for the town.
Reserved Land	
R1	Safeguarded for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.
R2	Safeguarded for a Park and Ride facility.
R3	Reserved for town centre uses and urban enhancement.
R4	Reserved for a lorry park.
Other Designations	
BUS1	Safeguarded for employment uses. There is a core path on the boundary of the site and connections could be made to this.
BUS2	Safeguarded for employment uses.
TC	Portlethen town centre.
GB	Aberdeen greenbelt.



Aberdeenshire LDP 2017



Kincardine and Mearns Settlement Plan
 Figure 3: Local Development Plan Extracts
 Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen

2.3 Strategic Development Plan

As the replacement Strategic Development Plan 2021 is currently with Scottish Ministers and is therefore not yet approved, the current Strategic Development Plan, approved in 2014, remains material until such time as the replacement Strategic Development Plan is formally approved.

Approved in 2014, the SDP notes that “We need to face up to the challenges and grasp the opportunities ahead to be able to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the region as a place to live, visit and do business.” In seeking to achieve this, the SDP sets out that “We will have acted confidently and taken the courageous decisions necessary to further develop a robust and resilient economy and to lead the way towards development being sustainable, including dealing with climate change and creating a more inclusive society.”

The main aims of the plan are to:

- “provide a strong framework for investment decisions which help to grow and diversify the regional economy, supported by promoting the need to use resources more efficiently and effectively; and to
- take on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change.”

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

- “make sure the area has enough people, homes and jobs to support the level of services and facilities needed to maintain and improve the quality of life;
- protect and improve our valued assets and resources, including the built and natural environment and our cultural heritage;
- help create sustainable mixed communities, and the associated infrastructure, which meet the highest standards of urban and rural design and cater for the needs of the whole population; and
- make the most efficient use of the transport network, reducing the need for people to travel and making sure that walking, cycling and public transport are attractive choices.”

The SDP concludes by confirming that “We are committed to all the aims as a whole. This is the only way we will be able to achieve our vision.”

As is set out further in this masterplan report and within the accompanying documents the proposed allocations at Portlethen for private and affordable/accessible housing are wholly in accordance with the SDP’s aims and can be considered to help in the identified outcomes being achieved.

Strategic Growth Areas: Aberdeen to Laurencekirk

This area is the key corridor linking the region with central and southern Scotland as well as the rest of the UK by road and rail. Its main settlement is Stonehaven where the Highland Fault Line marks the boundary between Highland and Lowland Scotland, which can be seen in the geology and landscape of the area.

The SDP proposes significant new development in the northern part of this corridor early in the plan period. A significant new settlement is planned south of Portlethen at Chapelton of Elsick which has the potential to set the standard for future new development in Aberdeen City and Shire and beyond. This will have significant infrastructure requirements, including a new secondary and associated primary schools.

The SDP establishes the following housing land allowance for the Portlethen – Stonehaven part of the Aberdeen – Laurencekirk strategic growth area.

Strategic Growth Area	Existing (to 2016) allowances	2017-2026	2027-2035
Portlethen - Stonehaven	2,200	2,400	1,000

The SDP understands that in these areas there will be a significant need for new and improved infrastructure including open space and improvements to roads as well as walking, cycling and bus networks. The SDP seeks to explore opportunities to put in place a strategic walking and cycle network which builds on the current networks being developed in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire towns by linking these together. This is to be done in a way which creates opportunities for improvements to the natural environment by linking habitats, species and open space in green networks.

In doing this the aim of the SDP is to provide a strategic policy context that affords the best opportunities to create “successful sustainable mixed communities.” The SPP acknowledges that the financial costs are considerable and that a significant part of the cost will have to be paid for by developers and landowners.

A key part of creating sustainable communities is the provision of a mix of the type and size of homes, as well as their tenure and cost. There is also the need to make sure that new homes are designed to a high standard and that they respect and improve the existing qualities of the area. The SDP confirms that developments must provide a wide range of options, from starter homes to

large detached houses and that providing affordable housing is also critical to delivering sustainable mixed communities.

More generally, the SDP acknowledges that if the population grows to the levels aimed for, there will need to be “an increase in the number of homes which are built each year.”

It is also worth noting the SDP’s position regarding sustainable development and climate change. The SDP’s objective is for “To be a city region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change and limits the amount of non-renewable resources it uses.” A key element in achieving this is the identification of sustainably located land for housing where walking is a real choice.

In conclusion, the NPF 3, SPP and the SDP all provide a context that offers support for an allocation at Portlethen for private and affordable/accessible residential development.

2.4 Emerging Replacement Strategic Development Plan

Following the conclusion of the examination of the proposed Strategic Development Plan, a report was submitted to Ministers on the 17th January 2020. Their decision is currently awaited.

The main outcome of the Report of Examination is the recommended modification to the respective Local Development Plans’ housing allowances. This sees, for the period 2020 – 2032, an increase from 8,335 new houses to 10,214 new houses; and increase of 1,879 homes. The consequence for ALDP 2021 is that the Housing allowance within the ‘Shire over this period will increase from 4,168 new homes to 5,107 new homes.

It is worth noting that in preparing the proposed draft plan in 2019, including site identification, and in taking this through the various local area, Infrastructure Services and full Council meetings, the allocations included within the proposed ALDP were made against this lower housing allowance backdrop. The consequence of this is that officers clearly identified the need to allocate land well in excess of the numbers required to specifically meet the allowance with the proposed SDP.

As a consequence of the increased housing allowance included within the proposed SDP Report of Examination, this ‘buffer’ has reduced from 1,019 units to just 80 units. Despite the potentially significant outcomes of the

Report of Examination, it is worth noting that no additional allocations were identified by officers.

Turning to site specifics, the following key messages remain consistent between the proposed SDP and the outcomes of the Report of Examination.

Portlethen is located within the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area where the proposed SDP states in paragraph 3.38 “We are proposing significant new development in the northern part of this Strategic Growth Area early in the Plan period.”

The proposed SDP does recognise that some new development will need to take place on greenfield sites in order to help deliver the Councils’ Vision and future strategy for growth. “Reducing travel distances and making walking, cycling and public transport more attractive to people will be important considerations, particularly for any new greenfield development sites that are proposed.”

The proposed SDP sets out to promote the link between land use and transport to make sure that “all new development is conveniently located and designed in such a way as to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport”. It correctly recognises that walking and cycling are the most environmentally friendly forms of transport and should be encouraged as a way to achieve important health, social and environmental benefits. The proposed SDP seeks to “help ensure sustainable land use patterns to reduce the need to travel and promote improved connections between both local and strategic active travel networks and public transport.”

2.5 ALDP 3 Main Issues Report

In respect of the town, within Appendix 2 Part 2 Appendix Kincardine and Mearns Settlements of the MIR the following is set out for Portlethen.

Portlethen

Portlethen is mainly set between the A92 and the Aberdeen railway line, but there has been more recent development at Hillside and Badentoy Industrial Park, to the west of the A92. There is a good mix of property types within Portlethen including bungalows, single storey, and more modern detached homes. The town is relatively densely built with fairly limited open space within the main part of the town although the town does benefit from a large

area of open space to the south west in Portlethen Moss.

The town has a good provision of services, but they are scattered across three different retail centres. The lack of a place for people to meet in the town centre is an issue for the local community, and extending the town centre west of the A92 for a mix of uses may help to address this issue. Concerns have also been expressed over the poor location and limited scale of play and recreation equipment, and that existing equipment is mostly for the pre-school age group.

Portlethen is situated in the Aberdeen housing market area and the strategic growth area and as a result there is strong development pressure for both residential as well as employment. Portlethen is an important town for providing services to the surrounding smaller villages. Providing employment opportunities is particularly important for the town and this can be achieved over the life of the Plan through development of the two employment sites. There are also local road infrastructure requirements that will need to be upgraded over the life of the Plan, which provides better connections to the Badentoy Industrial Estate. In addition, the A92 Findon junction is substandard and at capacity, which will impact on future development, especially to the north west of the town.

Planning Objectives

- i. To help contribute to the overall sense of place in the community.
- ii. To enhance the role of the settlement as a service centre.
- iii. To meet housing need in the wider strategic growth area as defined by the Aberdeen
- iv. City and Shire Strategic Development Plan.
- v. To support local services and facilities, including Fishermoss Primary School.
- vi. To preserve the amenity of the settlement
- vii. To provide opportunity for employment.

The subject land is identified, as one of three sites, as having “some potential

for development and may be considered to be an officers’ preference.” It is identified as site KN027 for 300 homes. The MIR’s overview is as follows.

The proposed site forms a logical extension to the settlement. While it is within the Aberdeen City Green belt, is visually prominent from the A92 and parts of it are at risk from flooding from local watercourses, the site is relatively flat, contained and would fit into the landscape as the site is situated opposite the Hillside development. Access through the site from the Findon Junction to the north east of Portlethen would be a desirable outcome and may need upgrading.

The visual impact could be mitigated by strategic landscaping, and towards the south, land next to the A92 is not proposed for development. To mitigate the visual impact further and reduce coalescence issues, the southern half of the site should come forward first. Issues related to the education estate would require to be resolved. A Flood Risk Assessment would be required.

This submission provides further information in support of the subject land's identification as a new residential land allocation within ALDP 3.

2.6 Proposed ALDP 2021

As set out earlier, the site was included by officers within their response to the MIR and associated draft proposed LDP as a new residential land allocation. Identified within the draft proposed ALDP as Site KN027, it was identified as having a capacity of 300 new homes.

Against this proposed allocation, the Kincardine and Mearns Committee voted to recommend the removal of the site.

Following this the Kincardine and Mearns Committee’s recommendations, along with those of the other 5 area committees, were then considered by the Infrastructure and Services Committee (ISC) on 3rd November 2019. This committee narrowly voted to support the Kincardine & Mearns Committee’s recommendation to remove the site against an amendment to retain the site as ‘reserve land’ by 8 votes to 6.

Consideration of the ISC recommendations by the Full Council was postponed from December 2019 to allow the outcome of the SDP’s examination, particularly on housing numbers, to be known. Following the publication of the Report of Examination on the proposed SDP at the end of January 2020, Aberdeenshire Council met on the 5th of March to consider the proposed LDP. By this time, Site OP27 had been deleted from the proposed ALDP.



Figure 4: Portlethen Local Context
Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen

1:20000 @ A3 

3. Place: Portlethen



The railway station in Portlethen



The largest retail park within Portlethen which contains an Argos, B+M, an Asda and a Nursery



A cluster of convenience shops and takeaways near Bourtree Park



The Jubilee Hall within the central core of Portlethen



Views out to the coast from near the site

3.1 Portlethen Today

Portlethen lies 10 miles north of Stonehaven and nine miles south of Aberdeen and is connected to both settlements by the A92. It is also connected to these by rail. By rail it takes thirteen minutes to get from Portlethen to Aberdeen, and to Stonehaven it takes around 8 minutes.

Robust transport links and ease of access to employment centres, cultural and leisure activities, have contributed to the growth of Portlethen in the recent years (11%) between 2011 and 2016. The recorded population in 2016 was 8,622.

Portlethen contains a wide range of facilities and has an active community council as well as a number of community halls.

There is also an employment base within Portlethen including an industrial estate containing a number of different businesses. The nearby Badentoy Industrial Park on the other side of the A92 contains many additional major employers. To the east is the Survivitec Marine facility at Findon. The major Aberdeen employment hub is a short drive time away.

Surrounding Portlethen there are numerous small towns and villages such as Stonehaven and Banchory, which contain attractive leisure and cultural resources of their own.

3.2 History and Growth

There are limited historical accounts concerning the area which is contemporary Portlethen, however, 8 miles south of the site, Dunnottar castle stands on a cliff edge, once a medieval fortress, and a location involved in many historic tales of war and nobility.

Closer to the site, running almost parallel to the current dual carriageway, cutting between contemporary Portlethen and Hillside, the historic Causey Mounth lies; a raised stone trackway, which was once used by soldiers and travellers to cross the expanse of hill and moor between Aberdeen and Drummochter. It likely carried some of the traffic visiting Dunnottar up to the highlands as well.

Later, the Mounth expanded to become a connection between the highlands and the lowlands, thought to have been “traversed by William Keith, 7th Earl Marischal and the Marquess of Montrose when they commanded a covenanting army of 9,000 men in the first battle of the Civil War in 1639” (Burnham, 2007).

The remains of an old burial stone circle lies within close proximity of this historic track, to the north west of it, at Craighead.

Portlethen as we know it today grew as people moved into housing erected around the train station in the 1960’s, during the first North Sea oil boom. Before this, the area was sparsely populated, primarily because most of the land was used for farming, and because populous clustered next to Portlethen bay, and made their living from fishing. Up until 1957, only farmhouses, independent houses and industrial facilities were dotted within the countryside near the site. Originally, ‘Portlethen’ was a cluster of houses next to Portlethen Bay; a small fishing village.

Many thought the harbour had great potential and it was described as ‘one of the safest on the coastline, good for loading and unloading vessels, and to exact tolls and duties’. There were plans proposed for its expansion, but these were not realised. In 1815, ‘Portlethen’ (the village and a large majority of its surrounds) were advertised for sale, and included within the package was a corn mill and the Portlethen Moss; thought to contain a rich vein of coal. No one purchased it and it remained in original ownership.

The creation of a railway line from Brechin to Aberdeen in 1850, and the addition of a station north of the original Portlethen village, enabled whatever produce was created in the area to be spread throughout Scotland, and likely served the needs of the corn mill, quarry owners and various large agricultural producers in close proximity well. The station grew a small hub around it, and

was positioned further inland than Portlethen village. Just next to the station, Portlethen Parish Church was erected.

In historical maps dating back to 1865, two main streets, Cookston Road and Bruntland Road existed as main corridors radiating out from Portlethen railway station. These roads are still apparent today and growth has concentrated around them.

In the 1960’s, larger areas of housing began to grow alongside these corridors. By 1980, a number of new homes had been erected, to the north east and south west of the first major housing development next to the station.

Significant development of new housing in the past fifty years has been confined to areas between the main road (now the A92) and the railway, to the north east and south west sides of the railway station.

The last 150 years can be tracked through analysing the historic maps from first edition Ordnance Survey to the present day. Change is summarised as follows;

- **1865:** No significant settlement form exists where contemporary Portlethen lies. A road exists where the current dual carriageway lies, and the Brechin to Aberdeen railway line. The land in between is sparsely populated by farms and industrial facilities (i.e. ; the Corn Mill, the Quarry). A small cluster of housing and the Church lie near the railway station in Portlethen, which was opened in 1850.
- **1897:** Not much has changed other than the addition of a few new houses.
- **1957:** The area remains sparsely populated. Some of Portlethen Moss is lost due to the growth of the Clashfarquhar estate.
- **1968:** Some new housing is built to the North West of the railway station, alongside Cookston Road. This spurt of growth coincides with the discovery of oil fields in the North Sea in 1964, and the subsequent growth of Aberdeen and the shire when people moved into the region to take jobs involving the excavation of the new found resource.
- **1980:** More housing is erected on either side of Cookston Road, to the NE and the SW, and a new primary school is built.
- **1989:** Industry starts to appear north of the new housing development and the primary school, parallel with the newly upgraded, dualled road, to support the needs of the oil industry. A secondary school is built to serve the growing population. Development is confined within the borders that the road and the railway create, due to a special landscape area to the

south east of the railway line and the designation of the Greenbelt North of Thistle Drive.

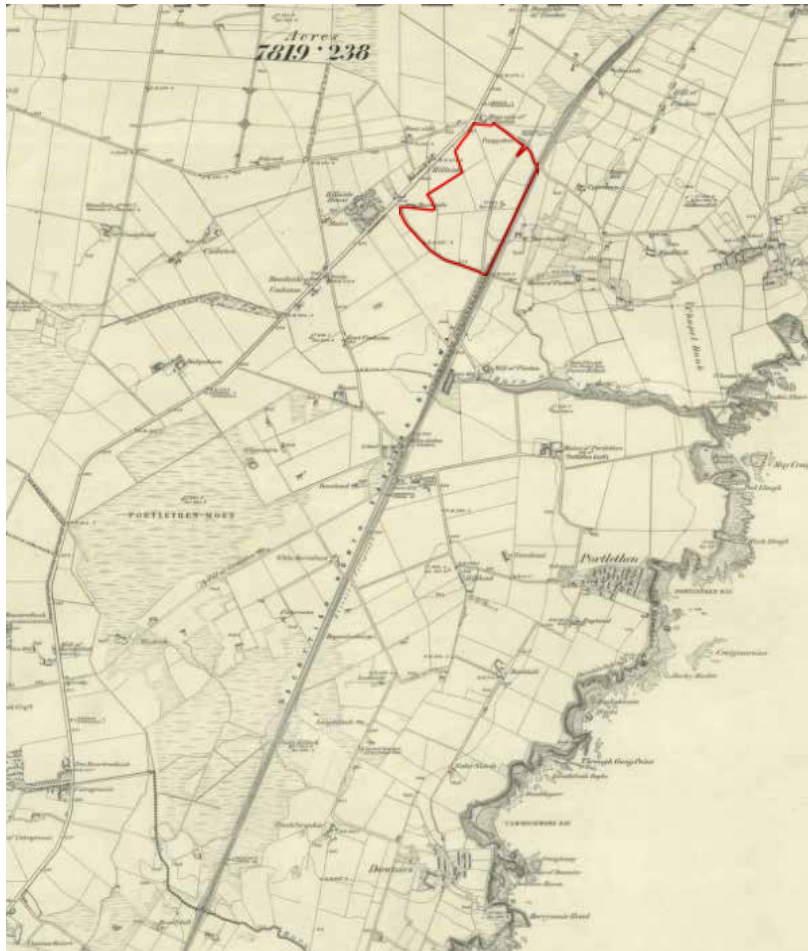
- **1989 Onwards:** Up until 1995, very little significant further growth occurs. After 1995, the Badentoy industrial park evolves within a site to the north of the A92, and the land south east of the railway line remains protected, as is designated as a Special Landscape Area. New housing in Hillside is also built during this time period.

Summary

Development of the Land to the North of Thistle Drive would follow the growth pattern which has evolved over the past few hundred years where development has arisen between two major transport arteries, and to the north east and south west of the original settlement around Portlethen railway station. Continued growth within the confounds of the two major transport arteries in the area would enable convenient connection to major settlements around it.



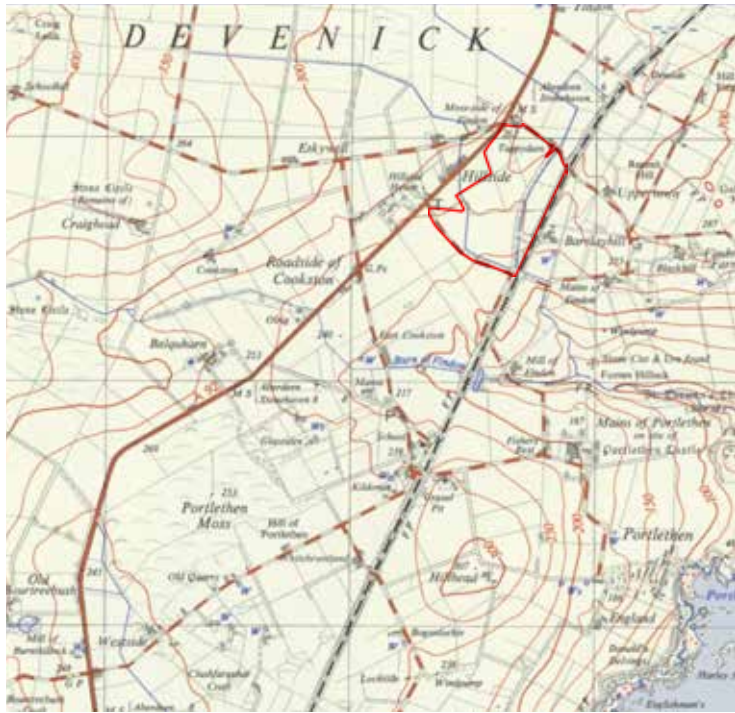
A historic photograph of Portlethen railway station



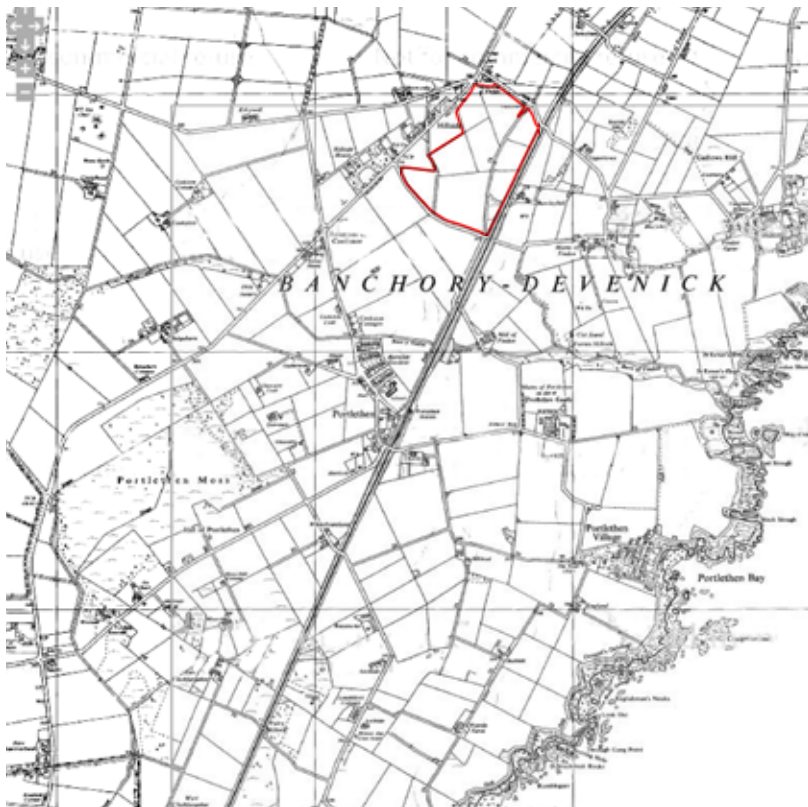
Portlethen 1865 Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland



Portlethen 1897 Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland



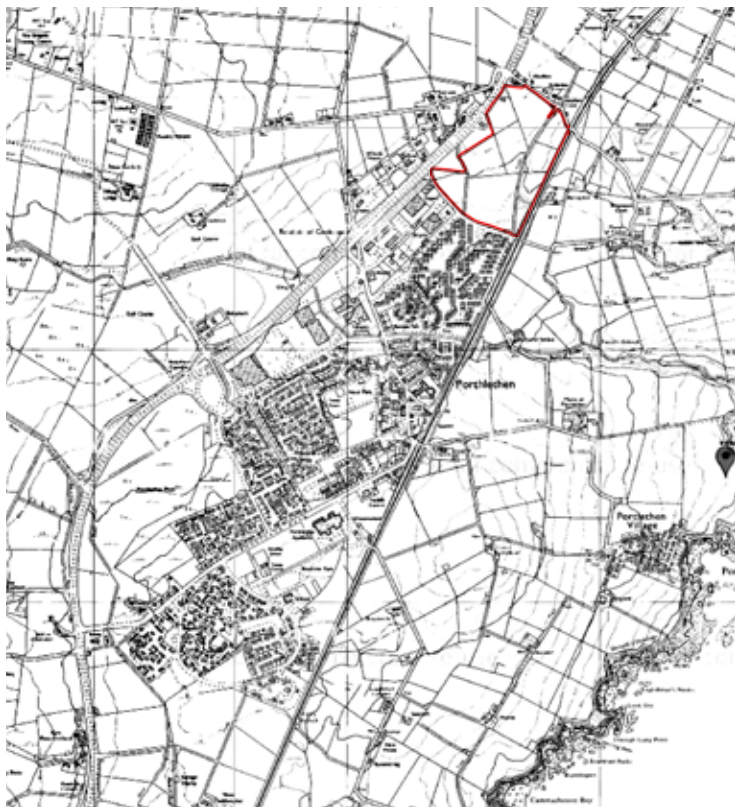
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3.3 Setting

Portlethen's location is on the very edge of the coastal zone, as defined within the adopted ALDP, due to its proximity to the North Sea coastline. The stretch of coastline to the east of Portlethen is valued for its “rugged scenery of weathered coastal cliffs and atypical raised beach features, which form an important setting to the numerous coastal villages and towns as well as an important natural habitat”. A large stretch of coastline with the designation of ‘special landscape character’ runs continuously from St Cyrus and Lochside to Marywell, incorporating the landscape to the east of Portlethen.

Aberdeenshire's policy is to protect the coastal character by encouraging development outwith this coastal edge. The council encourages growth within the boundaries of existing settlements present in the area to prevent damage to views towards the sea over land and views from the sea towards the region, as well as to prevent damage to the biodiversity and ecology which exists within this coastal edge.

Portlethen is different from the other coastal towns and villages seen near this distinctive coastal edge. It is not embedded within sloping cliffs or set around a bay, like Stonehaven or Gourdon, and it has a limited visual relationship with the sea due to its location within a slight dip in the land as it rises approaching the cliff edge. It is physically separated from the coast by the railway line which acts as a barrier. This is evidenced on the adjacent landform diagram. Furthermore, Portlethen cannot boast a distinct coastal vernacular architecture, such as that present in Stonehaven, as most of the settlements fabric has been built within the last 60 years.

Summary

Whilst Portlethen lies very close to the coast, it does not feel distinctly ‘coastal’. It feels more like a suburb of the rapidly expanding Aberdeen, given the new build housing and absence of a robust town centre. However, its proximity to an area of high aesthetic and ecological value should be respected and utilised as far as possible; the proposed development site gives an opportunity to “round off” the settlement and reinforce a positive identity from the A92.



View from Findon Road, east of the site looking toward Portlethen

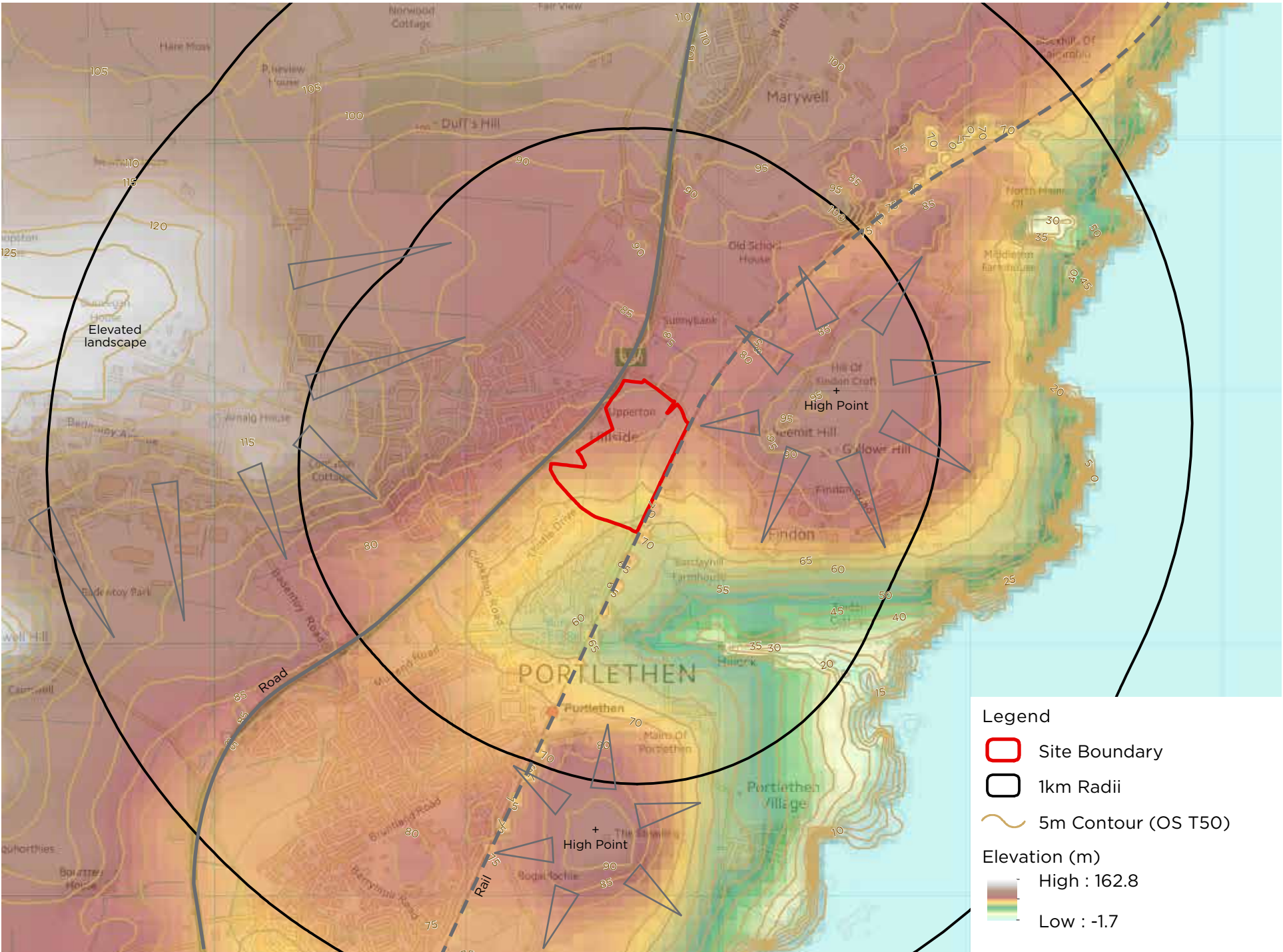


Figure 6: Landform Diagram

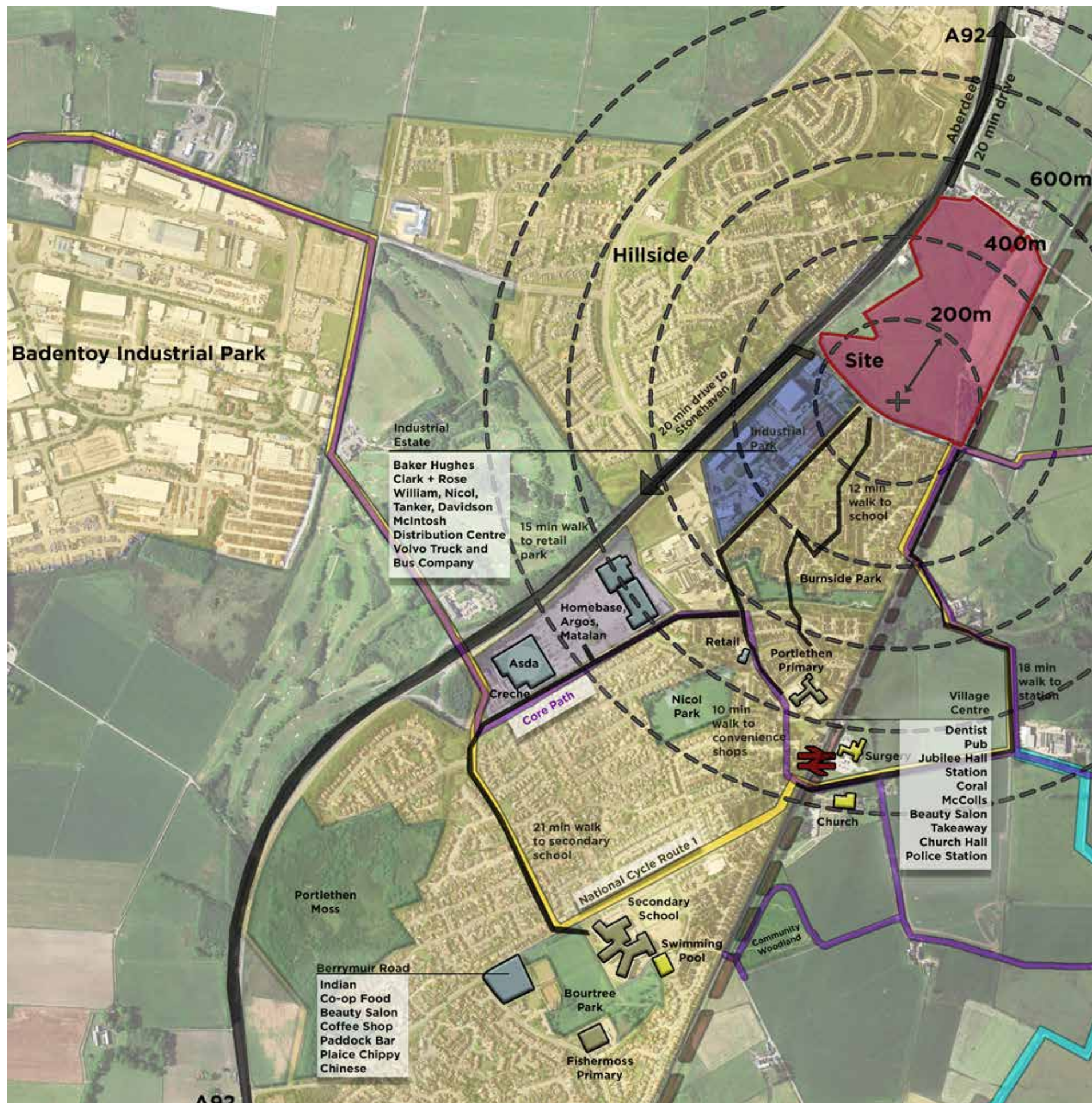


Figure 7: Facilities Diagram

NB: 400m equates to 5 minute walking distance

3.4 Facilities

Portlethen is home to more than 8,500 residents, and several facilities exist to support this population.

There are three primary schools and one secondary school. Portlethen Primary School is within 15- 20 minutes walk of the site.

There are both small and large shops in Portlethen; one cluster of small shops and takeaways exists next to Bruntland Road Community Learning Centre, another cluster exists near the railway station, and another, consisting of much larger superstores, is located within a retail park off Muirend Rd.

The Asda supermarket within the retail park is within 15 minutes walking distance of the site. Furthermore, a dentist, the Portlethen Medical Centre, a swimming pool and the train station lie a twenty minute walk away.

The train station offers regular services to Aberdeen and Stonehaven, and the service takes under 15 minutes.

There are high quality natural leisure resources in Portlethen; woodland, and access to coastal walking routes. A MUGA also exists near the secondary school, which many sports clubs use to train. Further analysis of the open space resource is within section 3.5 of this report.

Good rail and road links allow access to larger surrounding settlements (Aberdeen and Stonehaven) which offer diverse cultural and leisure opportunities.

Summary

Overall, there is a good standard of facility provision within the town. Due to the incremental growth of the settlement these are disparate rather than being within a single defined centre. An increased population may support the growth of new businesses and services within Portlethen and stimulate the existing economy.

New development should seek to consolidate urban form and support existing businesses through well designed and well connected access links.

3.5 Open Space Analysis

This section evaluates the existing open space network within Portlethen.

Large Open Spaces

There are five large, green, open spaces within Portlethen as the diagram illustrates. Three are traditional parks containing play equipment and grassy fields, and the others are natural open space. Two of the parks, Bourtree and Nicol, contain sports pitches and courts. All of these resources can be reached in under 25 minutes by foot, from the site.

The Portlethen Open Space audit, carried out in 2010, reported in 2011 that equipment and boundary treatments within the parks are in need of repair or upgrade.

There are two main natural open spaces, the Portlethen Moss and the Portlethen Community Woodland. Community groups are involved in their conservation and upgrade.

Green Network

There is a network of green open spaces formed by footways running through green spaces next to housing linked with footpaths which run alongside green verges and tree lined corridors.

These routes form part of a safe, traffic free pedestrian access into the central area of Portlethen from the site.

There are numerous coastal paths and nature walks in and around Portlethen, notably attractive are the cliff walks, around May Craig and Cammachmore Bay.

Green Space Provision Council Guidance

The council's priority with regards to the incorporation of open space within new developments is to create SUDS, incorporate green network alongside new streets and to preserve, enhance and create existing and new low maintenance woodland spaces that are ecologically interesting.

Summary

There are currently a variety of natural and man-made open spaces within Portlethen which are well used, however. The open space audit notes that investment is required.

In line with the council's objectives, there is an opportunity to ensure that new development at Portlethen contributes to the existing green space network. The council has already identified opportunities for strategic landscape planting next to the A92; other constraints allow opportunities for provision of local resources such as allotments and circular connected walking routes.

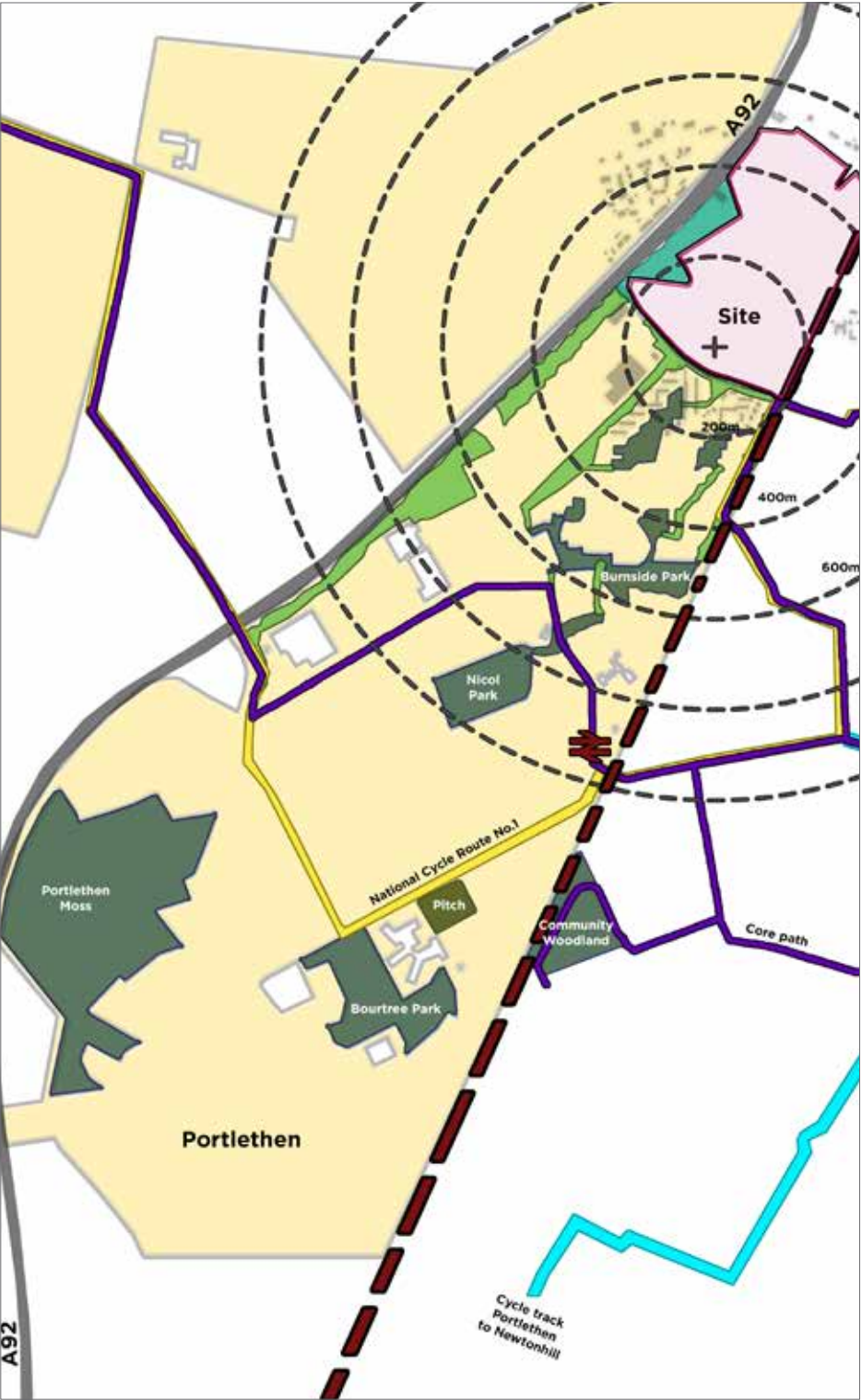


Figure 8: Existing green space network within Portlethen



Figure 9: Images of the Open Space provision within Portlethen

Nicol Park
600m from site, 13min walk

Facilities
Skatepark
Play Equipment
Informal kick-around space
Tennis Court
Basketball Court

**Portlethen Green Space
Audit Recommendations
(2011)**
Improve run down tennis courts and the basketball court which are in poor condition

Burnside Park
400m from site, 7min walk

Facilities
Some play equipment
Poorly overlooked open space / mainly backs of houses look onto this area

**Portlethen Green Space
Audit Recommendations
(2011)**
Provide picnic areas, bins, more dog bins and a sports pitch

Portlethen Community Woodland
1300m from site, 26 min walk

Facilities
Scenic woodland walks
High biodiversity area
Panoramic views around the site
Childrens play equipment

Bourtree Park
1200m from site, 23min walk

Facilities
Some play equipment
Walking routes through park
Managed space, adjacent to shops, cafes and school
Tennis Courts

**Portlethen Green Space
Audit Recommendations
(2011)**
Repair tennis court fence, maintain courts.

Portlethen Academy
1000m from site, 21min walk

Facilities
One multi-purpose, large, 2G pitch (only purpose pitch in Portlethen)

Integrated Green Space
Immediately surrounding site and continuing to central resources
Many of the housing developments enclose or look into communal green open space which is shared with their neighbours

Portlethen Moss PLM076 Nature Reserve (Scottish Wildlife Trust)
1400m from site, 28min walk
An area of natural raised acidic bog which supports a variety of plant and animal species

Facilities
Footpaths and nature watching area

**Portlethen Green Space
Audit Recommendations
(2011)**
Provide interpretive signage and dog bins

3.6 Designations

The diagrams show the policy designations for the environment and dedicated routes within the local area.

The proposed development site is located within the green belt. The greenbelt has been eroded within this area and is examined in more detail within section 7. To the east and south of Portlethen lies a Special Landscape Area. This partially encroaches into the site area and serves as protection to the rail corridor but mainly protects the Aberdeenshire coastal edge.

The rapid late twentieth century growth is evidenced in the lack of listed buildings or Conservation Areas. There are only two listed buildings: Findon Mill and Portlethen Parish Kirk, both Category C and divorced from the main settlement by the railway line.

Portlethen has good strategic infrastructure and active travel links. The Core Path plan gives easy and extensive access to the attractive coastline. National Cycle Route 1 is also a Core Path, and connects to the south-eastern edge of the site; this also provides access to other leisure and long distance routes close to the town.

Summary:

The site is urbanised by the proximity to the A92 and containment by development on all sides. The poor quality of the farmland and illegal dumping in the small woodland all serve to give an impression of edge of settlement rather than green belt. A green framework will soften the transition between urban and rural and redress the hard urban edge given by the industrial area and the higher density housing at Thistle Drive.

Legend

Site Boundary

1km Radii

Greenbelt

Listed Building

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Findon Moor SSSI

Special Landscape Area

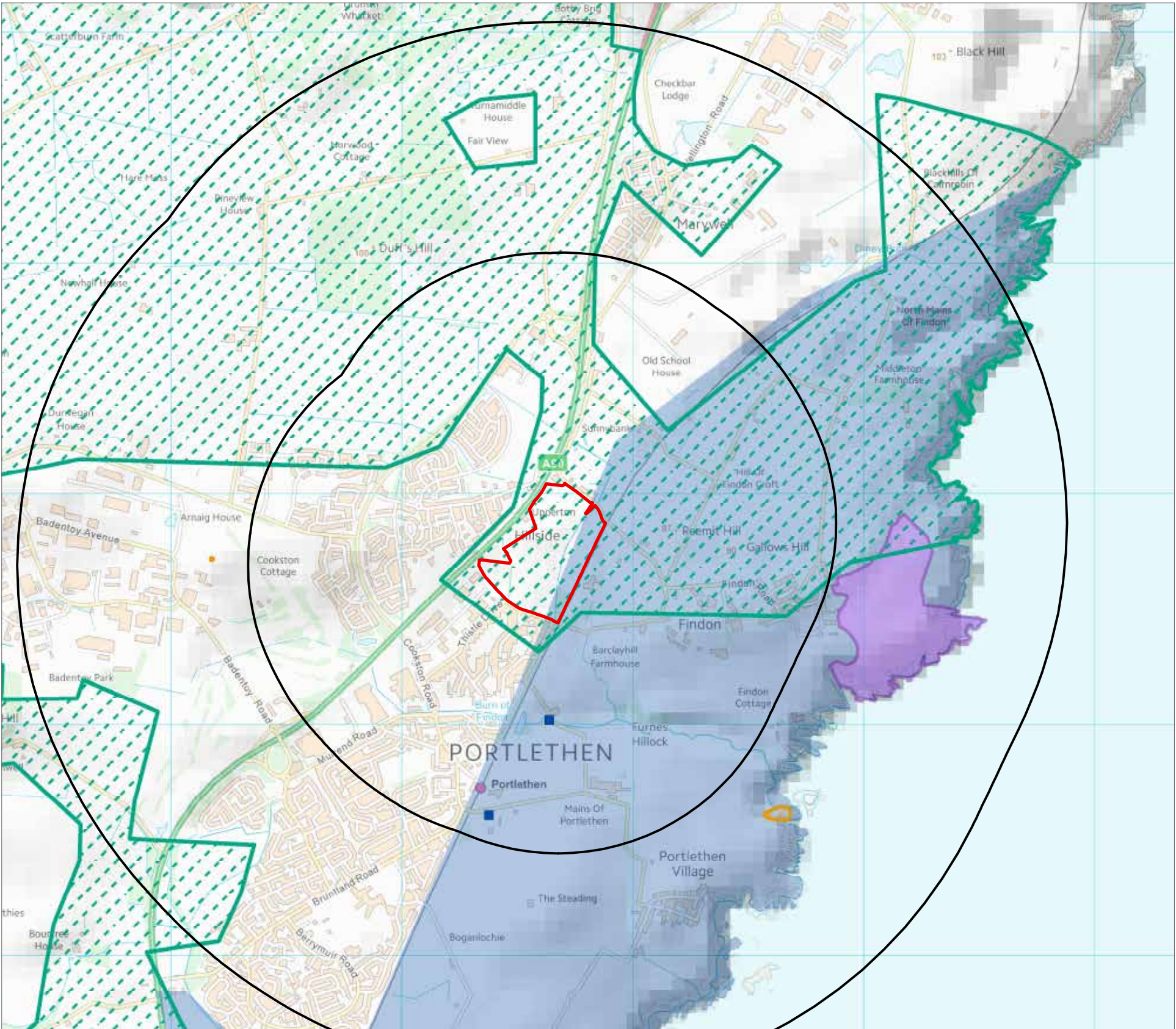
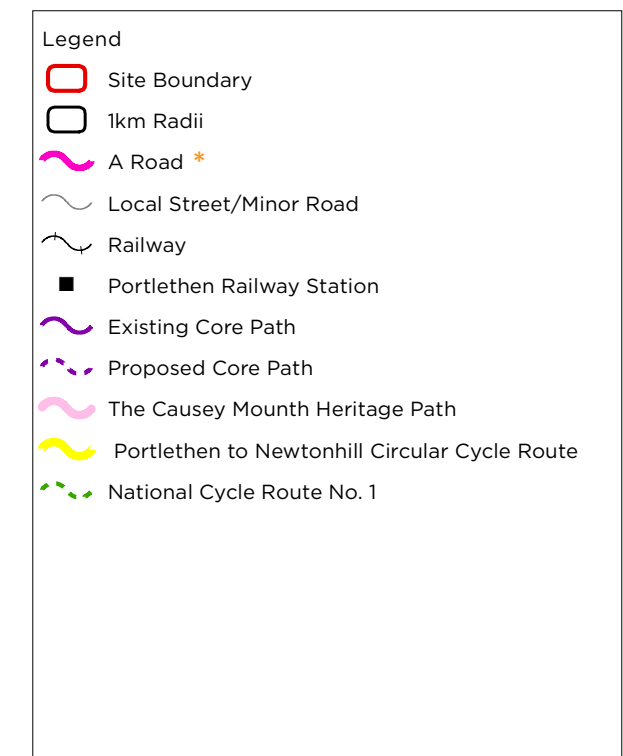
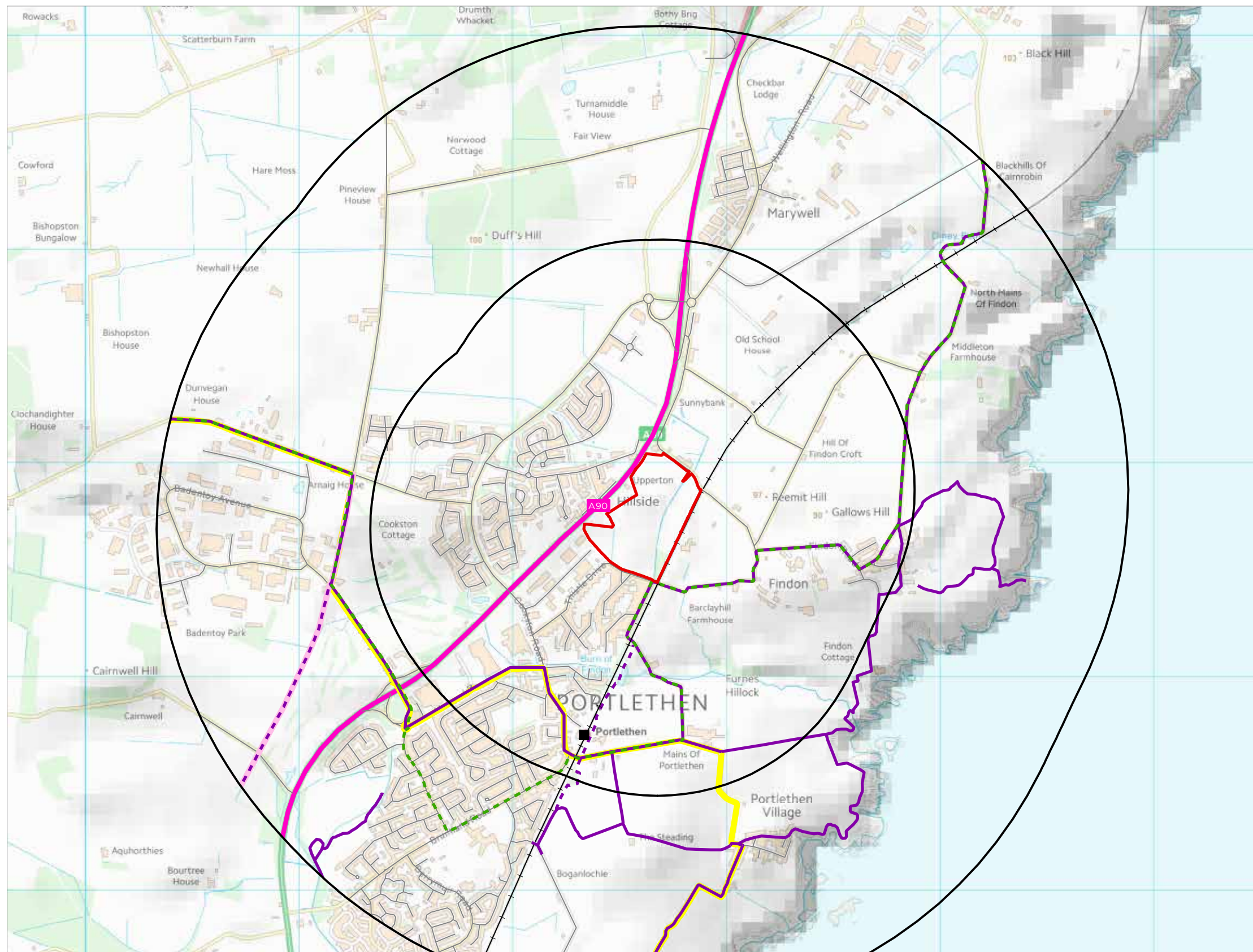


Figure 10: Designations



* Recently re-named the A92 following the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

Figure 11: Designated path and route network
Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen

4. The Site

4.1 Introduction

This section of the submission looks in detail at the proposed development site, how it fits with the landscape and its local context. The following two sections then examine its connectivity and the technical aspects of the site.

4.2 Topography

The site gently slopes from north to south. A detailed survey has been carried out which has generated the “Landform” and “Slope Analysis” figures which clearly demonstrate the site topography. The site elevation is 86m AoD at the highest point and 64m AoD at its lowest.

The site falls gently and consistently from the North West corner towards the South East corner, by the railway. The overall fall is approximately 22m, over a length of approximately 500m, resulting in an average grade of 1:25, (4%).

There is a shallow dip between east and west portions of the site, which a burn cuts through on its way to a site low point in the south. Localised areas around the two burns have steeper slopes where the burns are incised. Otherwise, gradients gentle within the site and appropriate for development.

Summary

Development of the site will require some cut and fill earthworks in order provide development platforms appropriate for residential development, but the south facing aspect gives good opportunity to create attractive spaces for living.

4.3 Local Context

Surrounding Uses

The sites peripheries contain a number of different uses. To the North, houses line the road overlooking the site, to the West and East the railway line and the A92 stretch along the sites edges. In the south, the established urban settlement edge consists of housing and the Portlethen Industrial Estate.

Houses along Thistle Drive and the undesignated access road to the North only partially overlook the site, due to limited openings in their facades and due to foliage around their boundaries.

To the east, on the other side of the railway, there is a private steading, and the access road to this steading runs for a small stretch through the south east corner of the site.

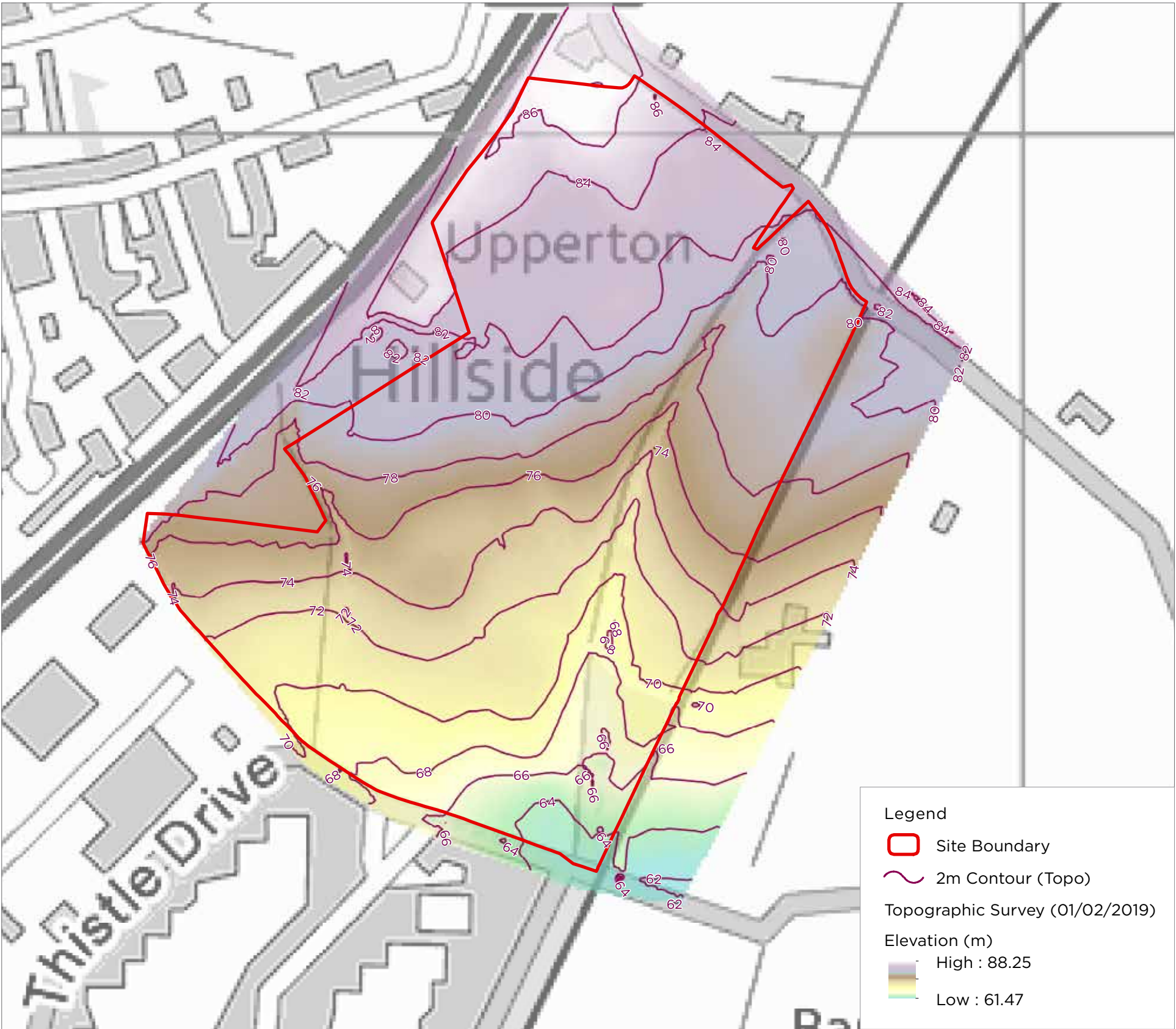


Figure 12: Site Landform



Figure 13: Site Slope Analysis

The buildings within the industrial estate on the sites southern edge do not overlook the site and the uses are unlikely to create intrusive noise and activity, as the estate is inward looking and relatively self-contained. Views into the estate are obstructed to the east and west by high hedges along the areas boundary.

Between the site and the A92, a former disused petrol station lies. Views towards this from within the site are partially shielded by trees.

Settlement Form and Building Typologies within Portlethen

The current form of Portlethen lacks definition due to most of the urban area being established incrementally in the 1960's and the 1970's in response to the housing demand which arose as the oil industry rapidly expanded in Aberdeen. The place lacks a distinctive central core, with facilities in what would normally form a town centre, lacking visual connection. Two industrial estates exist in the area, both largely self-contained.

To the south, a number of the housing areas are arranged as Cul-de-sacs. More centrally, streets are conventional and connected to the wider street network. The streets generally lack street trees and there is no uniformity in boundary treatment throughout the settlement.

There are few examples of distinctive architecture and design present within the town, with a few attractive older buildings around the historic station core.

There are few mixed use areas within Portlethen. Houses are generally clustered, as are shops and industrial facilities and there are no flats above shops or flatted higher blocks within the area. Most housing exists in the form of detached housing, although around Thistle Drive housing is a mix of single and two storey with the majority being semi-detached and short terraces.

Density rarely rises above 40 dwellings per hectare throughout.

Summary

The surrounding site uses mean appropriate methods to mitigate noise and negative outlooks will have to be adopted.

Any development of the site will have to respond sensitively to the immediate existing context; new development must be designed to ensure existing houses around the site's periphery do not have their privacy compromised through overlooking of new development towards old, or by traffic build up around new accesses into the site, or car light pollution at night, noise and reduced quality pedestrian environments.

In terms of design quality, it is important to recognise the form and aesthetic of what exists in Portlethen presently and to make a positive addition to this.

4.4 Site Features

The site is approximately 17.3hectares and situated on a south facing slope with local undulation. It is grazing land but there are currently there are no livestock on the site, although there are horses in the fields on the western edge of the site which is in separate ownership.

The main features on the site are drystone walling and small watercourses. These are shown on the accompanying site features plan. The walling is a distinctive characteristic of the local area and the condition of the walls varies across the site; some have deteriorated, but much of it is in good condition. This feature, common to Kincardine and Mearns, has been picked up within the AWPR.

Whilst there are no buildings on the site these are notable landscape features. One tree lined path which runs through the site on the eastern side is particularly attractive, and is partially metalled and partially a dirt track. This is next to one of the two burns which cross through the site and which are of different characters. The burn to the east has been formed with stone sides in places, making it appear more like a Lade. The other burn cuts across the south-west corner of the site and is more informal with a less attractive character. The two burns meet at the south-east corner of the site and pass under the railway line. Local features are illustrated on the accompanying graphic ‘Site Character’.

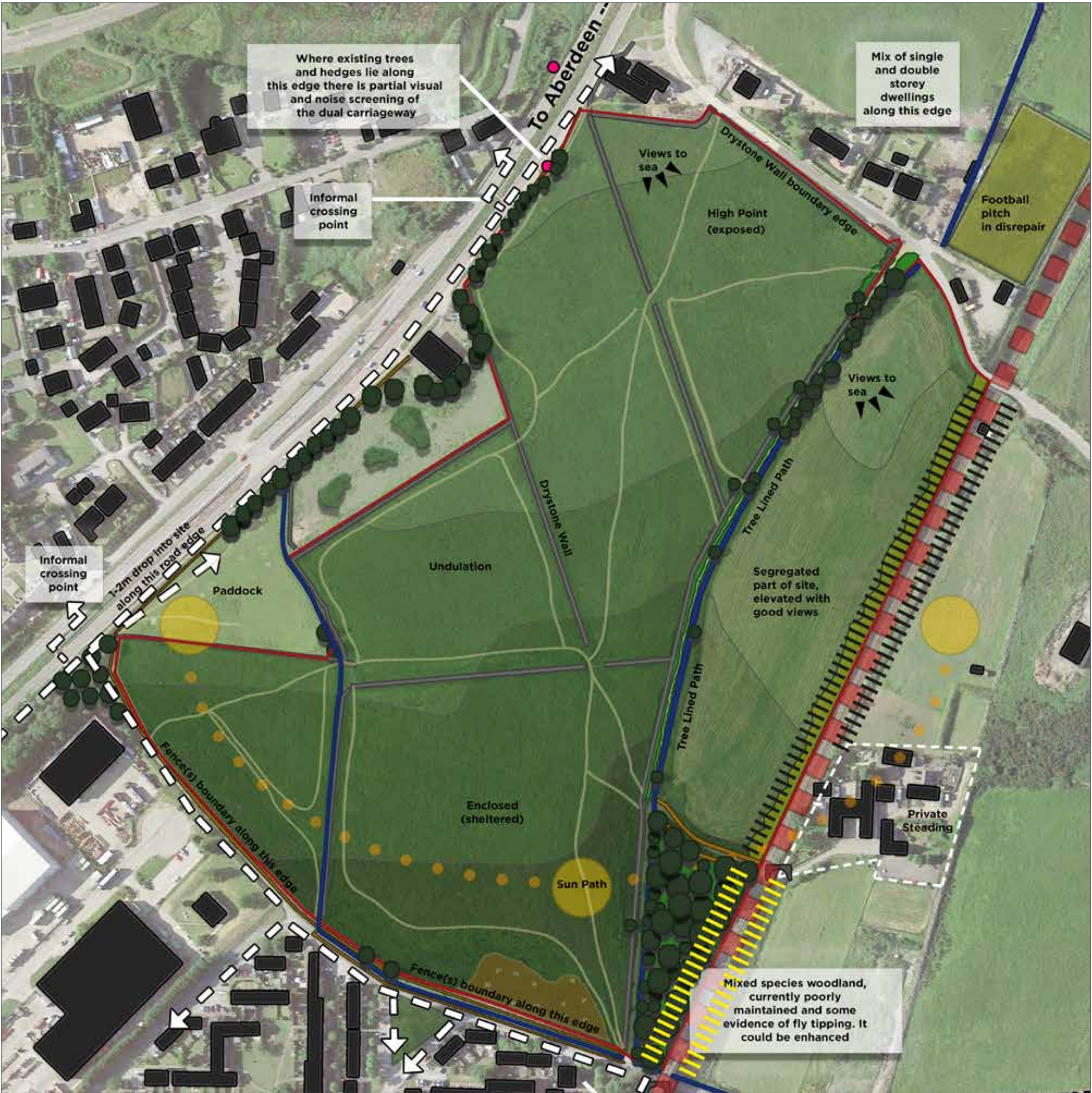
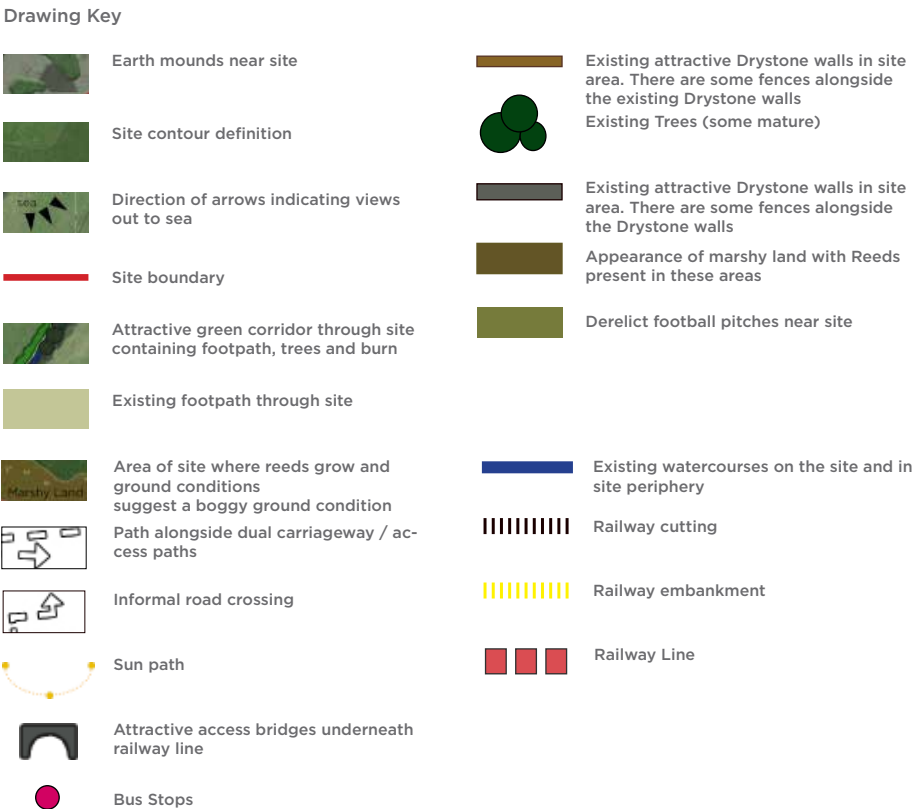


Figure 14: Site Features



1. Numerous intact drystone walls throughout site



2. Tree lined footpath through site



3. Drystone wall material on the site available from decayed Drystone walls



4. The railway bridges are distinctive gateways into the site



5. Access road to the south has a distinctive woodland edge



6. North to South watercourse running through the site alongside a footpath



7. Watercourse running North West to South through the site



8. Bus stops with a regular service to Aberdeen and services to Perth, Arbroath and Dundee, close to the site



9. Direct access to country roads into Aberdeen and to Findon, which are good cycling routes, and access to established national cycle routes



10. Woodland in the South West corner of the site



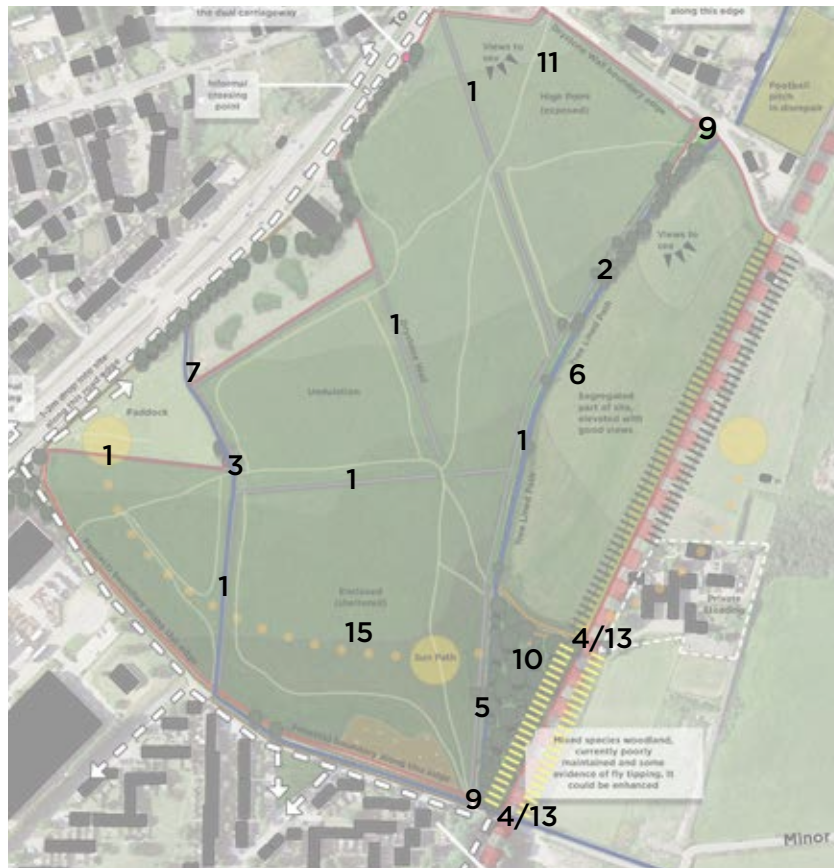
11. There are long views out to the sea from high points on the site



12. Coastal walking routes close to the site



13. Direct access from site to a national cycle route



The walls and fences which exist around the site have openings allowing pedestrian access, and there are several desire lines as well suggesting the site is traversed by dog walkers and ramblers (marked up on the accompanying Site Features plan).

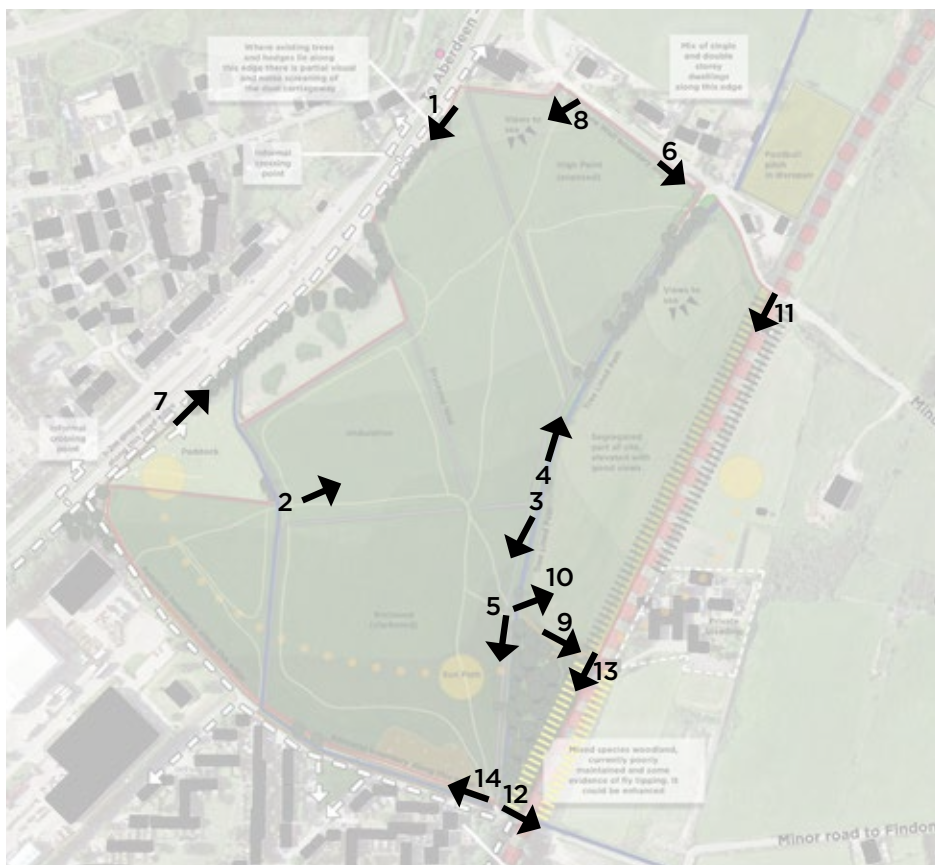
The site is contained to the East by a railway line and to the West by the A92. The railway line towards the south-eastern part of the site is elevated above the level of the site and therefore occludes views out to sea in this area. There is partial foliage and tree screening of the A92.

Whilst there are no protected tree belts or clusters within the site, there is a small, poorly maintained woodland area in the south east corner of the site. There is evidence of illegal fly tipping of garden and equine waste.

Summary

Aberdeenshire's planning policy encourages the retention and improvement of areas which have the potential to be biodiverse, furthermore, they are keen to see green corridors created or those which exist strengthened. The tree lined footpath and the woodland within the site both have the potential to be enhanced to become thriving natural places. Retaining as many of the existing features as possible will add significantly to place identity.

Figure 15: Site Character



Photograph key plan



1. Bus stop on dual carriageway edge



2. Views to northern edge from south west corner



3. Views towards Portlethen from high point within the footpath corridor running through the site



4. Looking up to the north from the lower part of the footpath corridor



5. Views from the most southern part of the footpath corridor towards Thistle Drive

4.6 Views and Visibility

View to the site

Portlethen has a linear settlement form contained by the railway and the A92. Whilst there is a low point to the settlement form just to the south of the site, hence the railway line entering the site from the south on embankment, the majority of the town sits at a similar elevation. Hence there are few views into the site from the town; these are localised from the edges of the site.

The highest part of the site is within the northern area, behind the former filling station on the A92 and this part of the proposed site is visible from the road.

To the east of the town, east of the railway line, are two highpoints. Closest to the site is the high point near Findon and there are views to the site which take in some of Portlethen, seen as a relatively low-lying settlement within the landscape with the exception of the large structures associated with the industrial estate.

Development on Thistle Drive has direct views into the site; most although not all homes are orientated toward the site. Development on the northern road is directly orientated toward the site but set back within generous gardens most of which have mature planting within them occluding views.

Views from the site

The best and most attractive views from the site are from the north of the site southwards toward the sea, but there are also good south-western views from further within the northern area at localised points which take in Portlethen and the visually prominent Portlethen Parish Church. Views to the north are significantly affected by the constant motion of traffic on the A92 and the massing of the adjacent industrial estate. Within the eastern part of the site views are contained by the railway embankment, existing woodland and by landform.

Summary

The site is not visually prominent within the landscape although there are views towards the more elevated parts of the site, particularly from the coastal reaches and the A92. These can be redressed through screening along the A92, which will also benefit new residents, and ensuring a green framework extends through the site and breaks up urban form.

Site development will impact properties on Thistle Drive and a combination of good design layout and screening will be required in order to provide mitigation.



6. Northern boundary looking east



10. View of road towards private steading and elevated edge of site



7. Dual carriageway edge near paddock



11. Eastern edge of site looking south along railway cutting



8. Northern boundary edge of site near farmhouse next to dual carriageway



9. Bridge under railway to private steading along eastern edge
Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen



12. Bridge under Thistle Drive



13. View along railway embankment along eastern
edge of site



14. Looking west along south edge up Thistle Drive

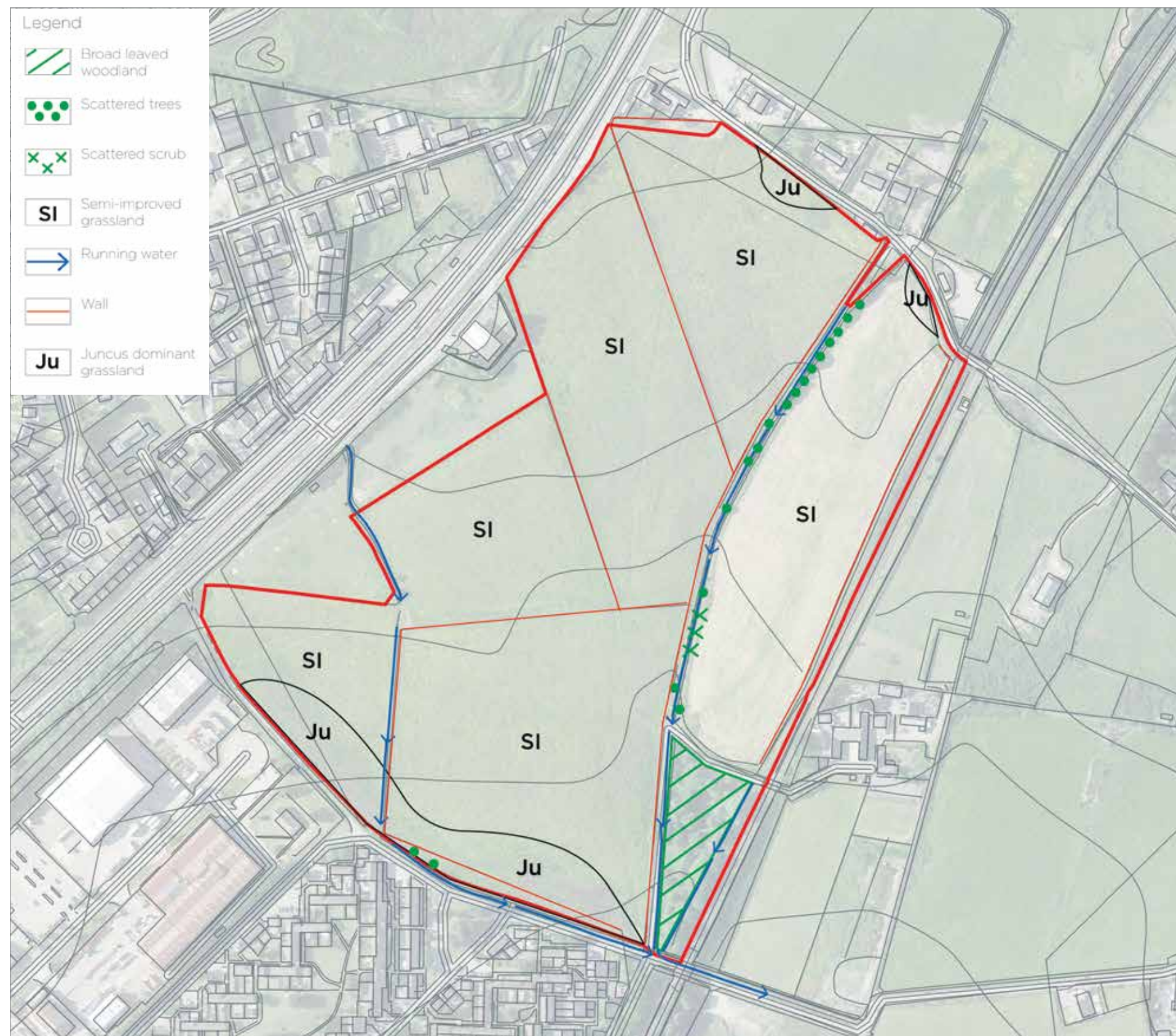


Figure 17: Ecology

4.7 Ecology

Ecological Solutions was commissioned to undertake an ecological examination of the site and her findings are summarised below. The full report is submitted separately as part of this submission.

No part of the Portlethen site has been identified as internationally, nationally or locally important for nature conservation reasons. The nearest SSSI to the site, Findon Moor SSSI, lies just over 1km to the east of the site. The nearest LNCS to the site, Findon LNCS, is approximately 1km to the east of the site.

The majority of the site is not considered to have significant intrinsic ecological interest being species poor grassland. The watercourses and woodland have the potential, with management to be more ecologically interesting.

A number of Schedule 1 bird species have been recorded in the area. Trees with suitable crevices for bat roosts are present in the woodland on-site. Bats and their roosts are protected by European legislation. It is essential that:

- Enabling works are undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive);
- Further bat survey work is undertaken prior to any work on the mature trees on-site; and,
- Collaboration between the landscape architect, engineers and ecologist takes place to ensure that any proposed plans are appropriate from an ecological point of view taking account of the Aberdeenshire Council Planning Advice.

Summary

The proposed development site does not have a high ecological value.

Biodiversity can be improved by bringing site features into active management and increasing the levels of planting across the site.

5. Connectivity

5.1 Introduction

This section summarises the connectivity of the surrounding area with the site by describing the existing foot, cycle, public transport and road transit systems which exist around it.

5.2 Pedestrian Network

Formal Paths

Numerous footpaths connect the site with the centre of Portlethen, and its resources such as Portlethen railway station, shops, restaurants, parks and bus stops. The intermittent pavement running along Thistle Drive along the southern boundary of the site connects the site with its surrounds, leading to Cookston road and to informal footpaths running through the backs of housing via Ninian Place and Claymore Avenue. A core path runs past the south east corner of the site.

Informal Paths

An informal footpath through the site begins on the sites south western edge, off Thistle Drive, and goes west connecting Thistle Drive with the pavement running adjacent to the A92, which goes north along the western edge of the site. This footpath is used to access the paddocks on the sites western fringe. At the northern tip of this pavement running along the A92, bus stops can be accessed on either side of the A92, which are served by services running to both Aberdeen, Arbroath, Dundee and Perth. Within the site there are no formal footpaths, but an informal footpath/ track going south to north adjacent to a burn, which connects Thistle Drive with the undesignated road in the north. There are numerous desire lines running throughout the site.

5.3 Cycle Routes

Many of the undesignated roads around the site can be shared with cyclists, and run into Porthlethen centre and to Findon. National cycle route 1 runs past the sites south eastern corner. In a northerly direction this cycle route runs towards Aberdeen and in a southerly direction it runs past Portlethen, going as far south as Colchester. This route is also part of the North Sea Route.

5.4 Public Transport

Buses

There are bus stops on Cookston road, a five minute walk south of the site. These stops are served by services 7/7a/7b and 7c, which run between Stonehaven and Aberdeen. Services largely operate half hourly Monday to sat and hourly on a Sunday.

Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen

Rail

Portlethen station is accessible, situated within 900m of the site. Services to Aberdeen, Montrose,Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow run regularly from this station, generally hourly. At peak times, services to Aberdeen run more frequently.

5.5 Local Road Network

Thistle Drive, a residential road, exists along the southern edge of the site and leads to Cookston road which goes to into central Portlethen, the Hillside area and into Badentoy Industrial Park. An undesignated road exists along the sites northern edge, and this can be accessed via a T junction off the A92. This road leads to Findon and Cove. The A92 goes to Aberdeen in a Northerly direction and Dundee in a southerly direction.

Transport Summary

Useable foot and cycle routes and core paths lie close to the site and provide linkages to nearby facilities. Existing public transport services, both bus and rail, are already accessible within Portlethen. Finally, the site lies within a short distance of the main road network, notably the A92, which provides access to the wider network of North East Scotland.

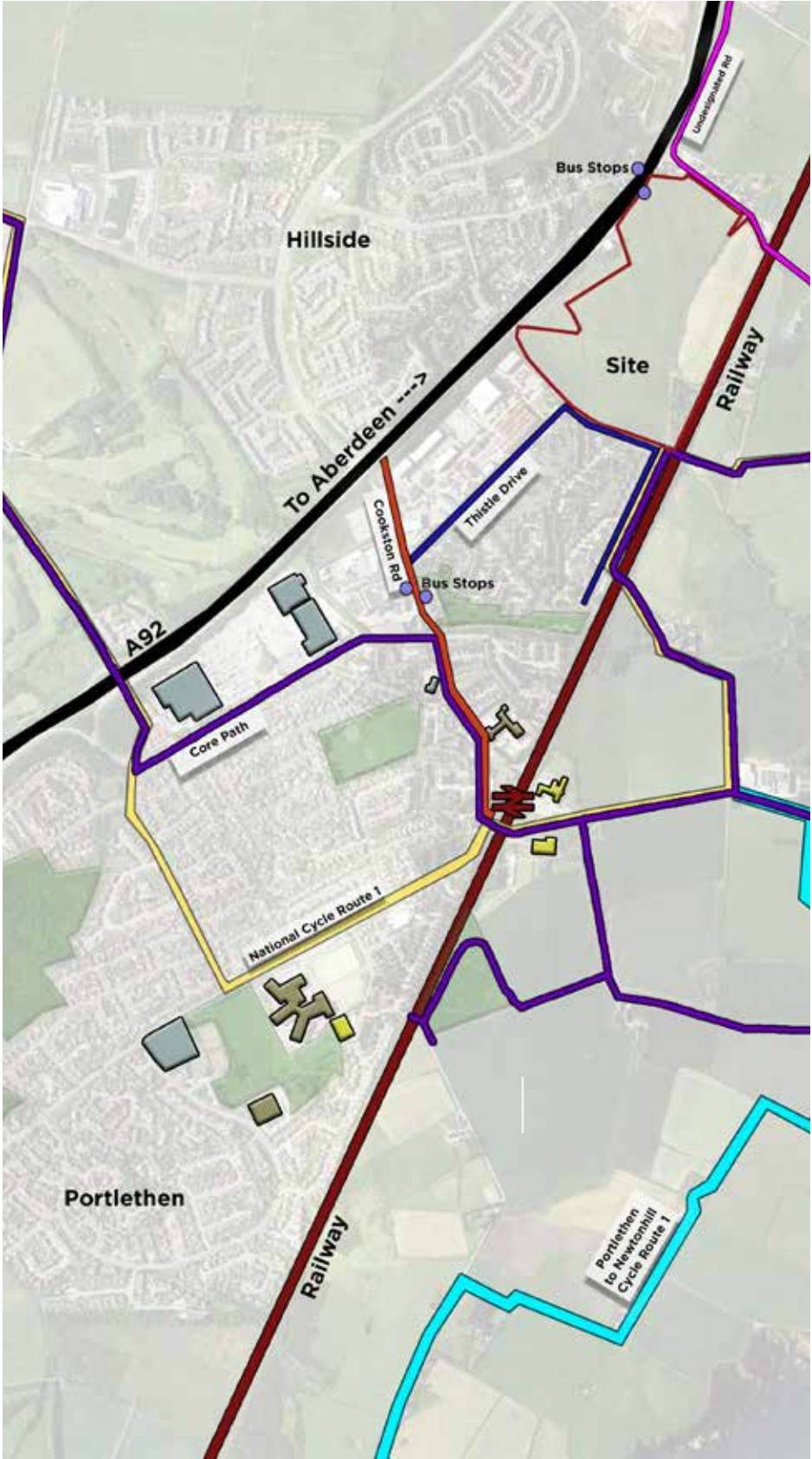
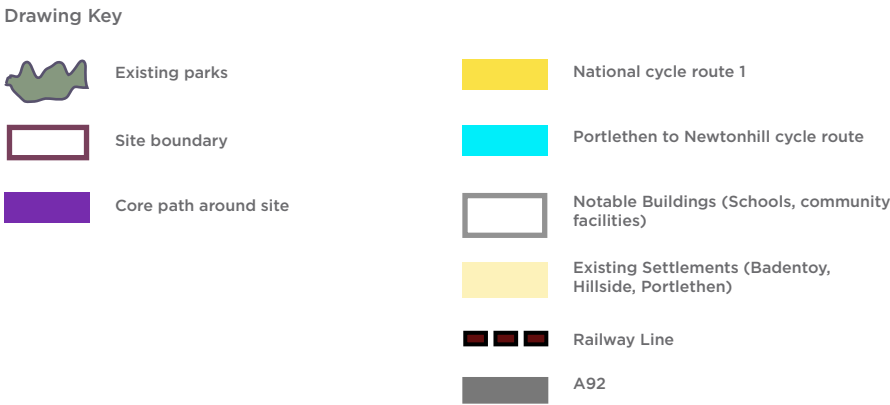


Figure 18: Connectivity

6. Technical

6.1 Introduction

Ironside Farrar has been commissioned by Taylor Wimpey to advise on technical constraints issues associated with the allocation of a site in Portlethen, Aberdeenshire for housing development.

This section considers the site conditions and possible technical constraints and hence the ability of the site to be developed in physical terms. It also considers technical aspects of development in relation to Scottish Planning Policy. The following have been reviewed:

- Ground conditions
- A summary of flood risk at the site
- An overview of existing site utilities
- Commentary on development drainage strategy
- Commentary on development landform strategy

The following data sources have been referred to:

- Existing public utility records
- Pre-Development Enquiry (PDE) response provided by Scottish Water
- British Geological Survey (BGS) mapping
- Hillside, Portlethen – Housing Site. Technical Due Diligence. Peter Brett Associates – July 2016
- SEPA flood mapping

6.2 Ground Conditions

The site location is bounded to the west by the A92 dual carriageway, to the east by the Aberdeen to Edinburgh railway line and to the north and south by local access roads.

The site is understood to have been in agricultural use throughout recent history and with potential sands and gravels extraction on the eastern side. There are two watercourses that run through within the site boundary and exit at the south eastern end of the site. Development stand off/buffers of approximately 10 metres either side of the watercourse channels will be necessary.

An access track connects access roads at the northern and southern boundaries also providing access to the Barclayhill farm property on the eastern side of the railway via an underpass.

The site topography generally slopes from north to south with heights ranging from approx. 87m aod in the north to 64m aod in the south. A full topographical survey has been undertaken for the site.

The majority of the site can be considered as part of the Banchory Till Formation from BGS records. Previous reporting from Peter Brett Associates (PBA) notes that boreholes records within Portlethen would suggest that the areas is mostly made up of stiff clays and silty sands.

A former sand and gravel pit has been identified as Hillside Pit within the site and noted on the BGS records as infilled ground. The area in question is located within the eastern portion of the site between the main access track and railway line. Further ground investigation will be required to determine the location and make up of any made or infilled ground.

A contamination risk assessment will be carried out in relation to former land uses, including concerning the former petrol filling station to the immediate west of the site alongside the A92 dual carriageway. The filling station is no longer in use and is outwith the site boundary and sits at an elevated level above the site. Further ground investigation would be required to determine if there were any contaminants within ground strata and their sources/impacts.

6.3 Utilities

Gas Supply

A low pressure gas supply is located to the south of the site boundary. This supply could be used to supply domestic properties pending dialogue on capacity with SGN. The site can therefore be considered to be effectively supplied by gas servicing.

Telecoms Supply

BT Openreach are obliged under their operating licence to ensure properties have access to telecom supplies and will fund extension of off-site infrastructure to a site boundary.

Current BT network lines, chambers and underground ducting are located to the north, west and south of the site boundary.

The site can therefore be considered to be effectively supplied with a telecoms connection.

Electrical Supply

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) are the principal power network operator for the area and will make power supplies available for this site. The site

is located in close proximity to major power servicing infrastructure for Portlethen.

An existing overhead electricity line of 11kV crosses the site, this will require to be diverted and placed below ground clear of the development areas. No particular constraints are considered in relation to a power connection for the site.

Water Supply

There are existing Scottish Water distribution mains both north and south of the site and a further 450mm Ductile Iron Trunk Main running through the north eastern area of the site. An area 6m either side of this main will require to remain undeveloped to allow future access to the main if and when required.

A Pre-Development Enquiry (PDE) has been submitted to Scottish Water for development of 350 residential units. In the response from Scottish Water it is noted that connection for water supply could be made to either the 6” distribution mains to the north and south of the site or to the 450mm trunk distribution main. There is currently sufficient capacity at the local water treatment works however a Network and Hydraulic Water Impact Assessment (WIA) is required to be undertaken for a development of this scale and to determine if there is available capacity within the existing Scottish Water network and/or the mitigation works required to service the site with a water supply.

The site can therefore be considered to be effectively supplied with water servicing.

In summary the site is considered to represent an appropriate allocation on the basis of effective utility and site servicing capabilities.

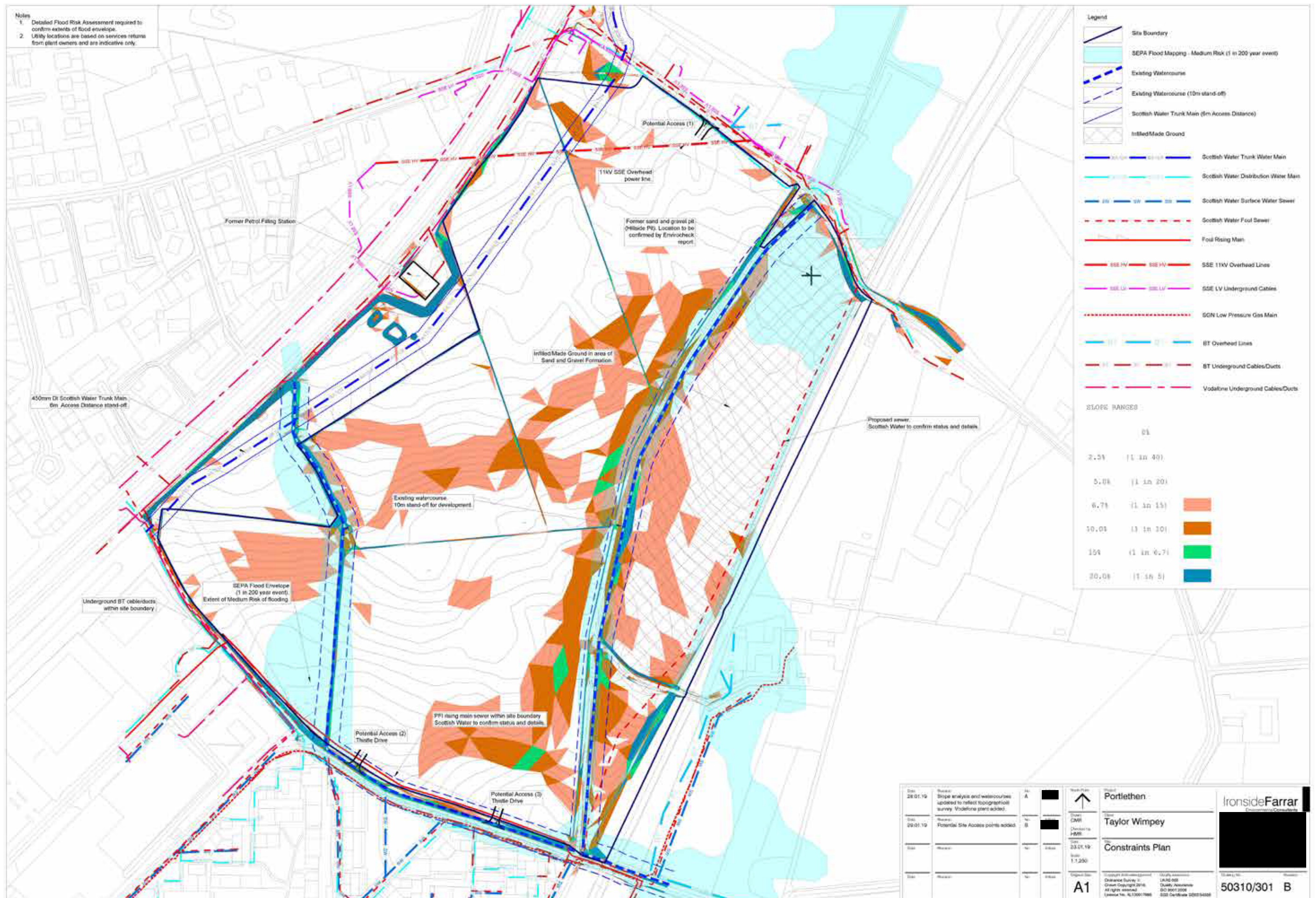


Figure 19: Technical Constraints
Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen

6.4 Drainage

Foul Drainage

It is proposed to discharge the foul water from the development by gravity to a 300mm diameter foul sewer that runs within the eastern boundary of the site. The low point for this connection will be in the south eastern corner of the boundary. There is also a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) rising main sewer running within the southern site boundary.

Within the response provided to the PDE by Scottish Water it is noted that there is sufficient capacity within the local waste water treatment works however a Network and Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) are required to be undertaken for a development of this scale and to determine if there is available capacity within the existing Scottish Water network and/or the mitigation works required to service the site for foul drainage.

Pending these investigations the site can therefore be considered as effectively drained of foul water to the existing Scottish Water system.

Surface Water Drainage

The two unnamed watercourses that run through the site afford adequate opportunity for a full site SUDS provision in accordance with SEPA, Scottish Water and Aberdeenshire Council requirements. A site SUDS system designed in accordance with the CIRIA SUDS Manual and the Scottish Water publication Sewers for Scotland (4th Edition) will be possible and the following criteria can be achieved:

- Development proposals to include a surface water management train based approach and source control measures included.
- Attenuation of development site run off to a green field run off equivalent.
- Permissible discharge to the existing watercourse at the south eastern corner of the site will be limited to a greenfield pre development run off rate of approximately 32.7l/s.
- Surface water treatment via a detention basin placed adjacent to the existing watercourses as they exist the site area will attenuate run off up to the 1 in 200 year return event +30% allowance for climate change and a 10% allowance for urban creep.

6.5 Flooding

- The SEPA flood mapping identifies portions of the site as being within the 1 in 200 year return event (medium risk of flooding) flood envelope. This area includes both watercourse corridors, an area in the north eastern corner of the site and Thistle Drive, as well as the existing access road to the south of the site.
- As a result of the SEPA flood mapping a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been commissioned and is being undertaken by Kaya Consulting Ltd. This will determine an accurate flood envelope for the site and in turn the impact of this on development areas and access options will be considered.

There are no proposals to develop within the flood envelope/functional flood plain. The emerging site masterplan will exclude development from the updated flood envelope once the detailed FRA has been concluded.

- As detailed layouts are prepared the finished floor levels will be set in accordance with best practice and Scottish Planning Policy. Scottish Planning Policy in relation to Managing Flooding and Drainage establishes a series of general principles based on a precautionary approach, avoidance of the functional flood plain and flood reduction measures and the response to these principles will be identified upon completion of the detailed Flood Risk Assessment.

Legend

- 1. Actively manage and enhance woodland for biodiversity, informal play. Stop fly tipping
- 2. Enhance burn, walling existing feature. Create linear park
- 3. Opportunity to create new informal woodland as part of green network. Strengthen rural edge of greenbelt
- 4. Create woodland screen : consider road users and new residents. Define settlement edge
- 5. Distinctive corridors based on existing features and allowing level changes
- 6. Improved riparian edge



Figure 20: Design Principles
Land North of Thistle Drive, Portlethen

7. Design Development

7.1 The Main Issues Report

The Main Issues Report includes a site assessment of sites being promoted through the Call for Sites process, Site KNO27. This has been reviewed as part of the design development process.

Some of the key themes which are identified as unknown within the assessment, and which can be clarified at this stage through the design stage so far include:

Biodiversity Enhancement

- There is an opportunity to restore the habitat of the small area of woodland to the south-east;
- Drystone walling will be a feature of the new development;
- A basin rather than a pond is proposed due to local soil conditions and significant impact on landtake;
- Verges are proposed along the Principal Street which could be a wildflower mix;
- Use of native plants throughout will include nectar rich species;
- Buffer strips are proposed along watercourses.

Landscape Impact

- The south-east Aberdeenshire coast Special Landscape Area partially encroaches on the eastern edge of the site, although this is marginal dependant on data sets. The boundary appears to be including the Edinburgh to Aberdeen railway line. Consideration has been given to this with creation of a robust landscape strip along the edge including a small copse at the northern end;
- It is agreed that the site has a logical capacity for development given its landscape setting and defined features around its edges.

Flood Risk

- As a result of the SEPA flood mapping a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been commissioned and is being undertaken by Kaya Consulting Ltd. This will determine an accurate flood envelope for the site and in turn the impact of this on development areas and access options will be considered.
- There are no proposals to develop within the flood envelope/functional flood plain. The emerging site masterplan will exclude development from the updated flood envelope once the detailed FRA has been concluded.

Education

- Capacity at Portlethen Primary School has been confirmed by the Council's education department. Assessment of secondary education will require further review once an allocation has been made and an application submitted.

Active Travel

- Active travel opportunities are being considered fully within ongoing design development; the site is well-located for links to the wider network and these have been maximised through internal connections;

Aberdeen Green Belt

- The site is within the Aberdeen Green Belt which also extends into Portlethen and the existing development on Thistle Drive. It takes in part of the City South business park on the other side of the A92, as well as some of the fragmented industry and businesses within the Green Belt to the north. It can be concluded that the Green Belt is not defensible at this location and should be reviewed to reflect the changing urban environment south of Aberdeen;
- Focus in development design principles has therefore been on providing a defined edge to the north that will effectively “round-off” Portlethen and give a robust northern boundary that consolidates the existing and fragmented edge which bleeds into the landscape.

Community Engagement

- This has commenced, with a preliminary meeting with the Community Council in February.

7.2 Physical Constraints

Work on physical constraints is ongoing and will continue to develop through increased study.

The adjacent constraints plan has formed the basis for the Development Framework, with the appropriate burn corridors retained, no development within the Flood Risk Area and the appropriate stand-offs for the watermain being respected. This submission is supported by an ecological study which found little of biodiversity interest on the site.

Ongoing work will include noise studies, a Flood Risk Assessment and analysis of the area of made ground on the site.

7.3 Composite: Development Principles

The graphic highlights the development principles which have been established as a result of planning policy, the ambition for the new Local Development Plan, site and context appraisal, transport appraisal and technical study.

There is a good opportunity for a new development which provides a positive northern completion to the town and which will be well-contained by the railway to the east and the A92 to the west.

The constraints lend themselves to the design of a high-quality landscape framework which will add significantly to local biodiversity and make use of locally distinctive features which characterise this part of Kincardine and Mearns. It will be designed to be welcoming for all to use, as this is already a popular location for local walkers.

Most importantly this needs to avoid exacerbating further fragmentation by being fully integrated into the existing urban form and therefore the town itself.

8. Proposal

8.1 Development Framework

The Development Framework plan responds to the site constraints outlined within section 7 and the analysis within sections 3 and 4.

It is illustrated within the accompanying graphic.

Further technical work will be required as proposals progress, which may shape the plan further.

The site is 17.3 Hectares of which around 12Ha are currently assessed as developable. This will provide an opportunity for new housing between 250 and 300 new homes.



Figure 21: Proposed Development Framework



Figure 22: Layout Principles

8.2 Layout Principles

Overarching principles of “place” and “community” as follows have been considered within the proposed development framework

- Ensuring the best possible fit for new development within the landscape and as part of the expansion of Portlethen;
- Enhancement of amenity value through maximising the existing natural assets and adding positively to these to create a green network;
- Exploiting opportunities for sustainable living and recreation within green space;
- Optimising built form and space to create attractive and safe places to live and move through.

Site specific principles which have been applied to the plan are shown on the Development Principles Plan and are summarised as follows:

- Maximise opportunities for a sustainable plan, starting with making sure the site connects well into the surrounding path and street network: this should feel like a natural extension to Portlethen;
- Create a legible street network that maximises opportunity to link with Portlethen and an attractive environment in which to live;
- Use of street trees, and stone dyking (reusing existing site-won stone) and strong lines can create legibility and echo the distinct field boundaries within the site at present;
- Creation of a linear park to enhance local biodiversity, provide a recreational resource for the town as a whole and utilise physical and hydrological constraints;
- Retain and enhance the existing woodland and bring it into active management;
- Provide a variety of density and housing type that provides a natural expansion from the existing urban form and is sensitive to existing development around the edge;
- Provide robust planting within the northern area to reinforce the green belt edge and protect against noise and visual distraction;
- Provide play and potential opportunities for growing;
- Consider the views from the road and the railway

8.3 Connections and Movement

The main access points are shown in the adjacent diagrams, off Thistle Drive and the undesignated road to the North. Subject to a future Transport Assessment of the wider network the two access points will connect via a primary road running north to south through the site. Traffic calming measures will be proposed such as:

- street trees;
- “squareabouts”: areas of public realm connected to the green corridors through the site reducing driver certainty to slow speed;
- Taking direct access off the unclassified road along the north.

The general principle is for streets which are connected and with minimal cul-de-sacs, taking opportunity through design to enhance legibility and place identity.

Pedestrian and Cyclists

Main pedestrian access into the site will exist in the form of footways running parallel with both or one side of the proposed main access points into the northern and southern edges of the site (off Thistle Drive and the undesignated road to the north) or via the footpath network associated with the two burns.

Footways will run alongside the entire length of the primary street north to south. A verge separating path from road will be planted with trees; a connecting path network throughout the proposed development site will connect to this.

A number of leisure paths are proposed allowing circular walks through the site and access to the wider countryside.

Cyclists

Cyclists will be able to access the new proposed street network from the proposed accesses to enter the site in line with Designing Streets. From the proposed street network, access to Thistle Drive, and therefore easy access to National Cycle Route 1 will be possible.

Public Transport

The proposed footpath and pavement network throughout and around the site allow easy access to the bus stops on Cookston Road. An attractive and direct access to bus stops on the A92 is shown on the plan. A connecting path network allows good connection to Portlethen train station.

The proposed transport network is shown on the accompanying Movement diagram.

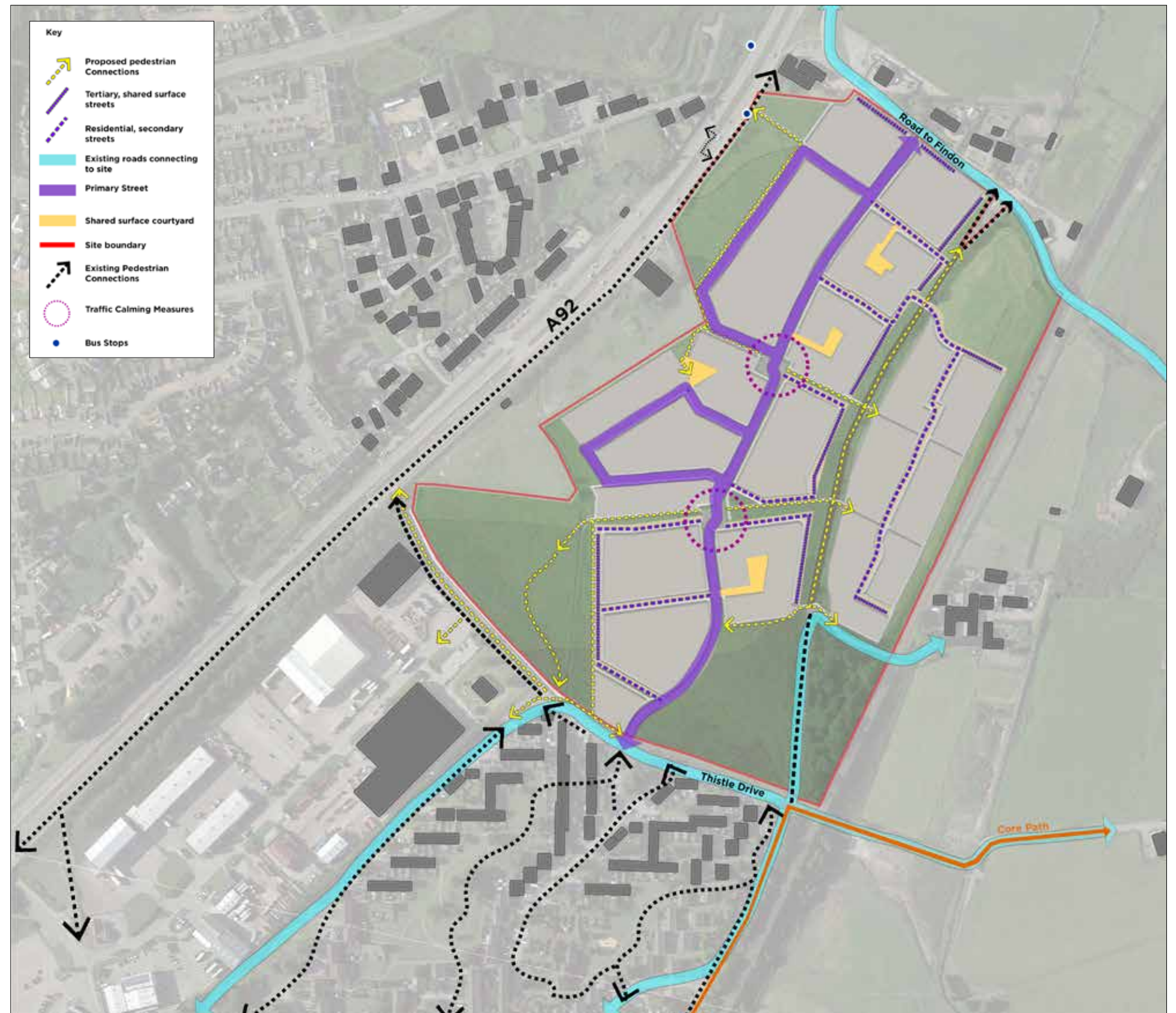


Figure 23: Proposed Connectivity



Figure 24: Layout Principles

8.4 Green Space Strategy

The accompanying diagram highlights the green space strategy for the proposed development site.

The site is at a transition point of urban edge and rural hinterland. It is currently mainly poor grazing land, with some fragmented tree planting, a small woodland in poor condition and two watercourses which are under-utilised as assets.

Development gives an opportunity to enhance these features and incorporate them into a blue and green network across the site that links features together and gives enhanced biodiversity; the site constraints are beneficial in this regard.

The woodland to the south-east will be brought under active management, and will link to a new woodland corner in the north-east of the site via an enhanced green corridor (linear park) along the eastern water course. This will link to a planted-up SuDS basin within the low point of the site.

A planted edge along the southern boundary will expand to form part of an enhanced wetland and riparian landscape area around the western burn, with a tree-lined edge to the western boundary linking to a woodland band within the north-western corner. Two linear green strips cross the site from west to east, connecting at either end with landscape, allowing topographical change that works with existing levels and providing orientation.

Development of this strategy will meet with the other objectives for establishing a successful and integrated development: allowing connectivity for active travel, fitting development within the landscape, protecting views from the railway and the road and improving local biodiversity.

Legend

1. Local park
2. SuDS
3. Existing woodland brought under active management
4. Area subject to flood management for biodiversity
5. Linear park encompassing existing features, managed, enhanced and with seating
6. Substantial screening block defining urban edge where the site meets the A92
7. Localised screening
8. Linear green connections adding to place identity
9. Enhanced landscape design along northern boundary

8.5 Landform Strategy

Cut and fill earthworks are considered feasible utilising existing site materials reducing therefore the requirement for imported materials.

A slope of 1(v):25(h) is considered feasible for the site with a general fall of 1(v):24(h) existing on site from the north western to the south eastern corner of the site, a fall of around 24m overall. Localised earthworks for individual plots will be necessary.

Height band and slope analysis have been completed to determine current slope constraints within the site. Although some areas in close proximity to the main access track running north to south through the site will require earthworks the majority of the site is currently shallower than a 5% slope.

An overall fall from north to south will be maintained to aid with the foul and surface water drainage strategies.

8.6 Drainage and Utilities Strategy

Surface Water and Foul Drainage

An initial concept SUDS design has been undertaken to determine an approximate size of basin required for attenuation purposes. This will be located in the south eastern corner of the site with an outfall being connected to the existing watercourse at that location. This is the preferred discharge method for surface water of Scottish Water. Further ground investigation works will be required in order to determine the suitability of infiltration features within the site.

The site is served by a 300mm dia. foul sewer that runs along the eastern boundary within the site to which foul gravity connections will be made.

Utilities

As detailed in part 6.3 the site is well served with existing services in the immediate area.

Dialogue with the public utility providers, including Point of Connection (POC) applications will be necessary to establish capacity, diversion and reinforcements required to make services available for the site.



View from allotments overlooking play area

9. Access Strategy

9.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides initial comments on potential access to the development site.

9.2 Development access

Pedestrians

Pedestrians will be able to access the development site making use of the existing footway and footpath network to the south of the site. Direct connectivity with the existing network can be made.

The site can link easily with the Meldrum Mains footways.

Additional (recreational) path links are available using the informal network that lies within the undeveloped areas of ground to the southwest of the site and along the eastern edge of the site. Section 3 of this report looks at local facilities that can be sustainably accessed from this site.

PAN75 Planning for Transport considers that 1600m is the threshold for walking to local facilities whereas 'Transport Assessment Guidance considers journey times of 20- 30 minutes (up to 2400m). The sites lie within a 1600m walk of the majority of the local facilities within the local area including:

- Portlethen primary school;
- Portlethen Academy;
- local retail provision;
- Portlethen rail station; and
- employment opportunities in a range of local sites.

Cyclists

Cyclists will be able to utilise all of the new pedestrian accesses. Internally, cycle and foot links can be planned into the site layout which will afford connections to the National Cycle Network.

Any required upgrades to core paths / cycle routes in the environs of the site would be examined in detail in a formal Transport Assessment.

Public transport

The site is located close to an established bus route on Cookston Road which provides regular services linking with Aberdeen. Any improvements to the underfoot quality of existing linkages to and from the bus route could be examined within a Transport Assessment.

9.3 Road access

The site is able to be accessed from the south from Thistle Drive and/or from the north all by means of simple T junctions. Sketches contained within the accompanying Transport Appraisal illustrate how these might be provided and are the basis for the Development Framework plan.

Note that it is anticipated that were the site to be developed, the exiting 40mph limit on the northern frontage would be extended eastwards or extended eastwards and lowered (to 30mph).

Travelling south from the site using Thistle Drive, traffic would arrive at the T junction of Thistle Drive / Cookston Road. Should a later Transport Assessment show this junction requires improvement, then space appears to exist to enable conversion to either a mini roundabout or traffic signals.

The final development layout would largely determine how traffic would arrive at Findon junction to the north. Travelling via Cookston Road, traffic would arrive (during the AM period) at the western Findon roundabout. In the event the site was made completely permeable, then traffic would be more likely to arrive at the eastern Findon roundabout. In the event the site was made completely permeable, then traffic would be more likely to arrive at the eastern Findon roundabout plus a link via the site would in all likelihood encourage a degree of existing traffic along this route.

Whilst Findon is a busy junction at peak times, modelling these alternatives using the Councils traffic model is likely to reveal whether one or other of these alternatives is more favourable, and the final permeability of the road layout within the site could be reflective of the outcomes of such modelling.



Proposed Primary Street



Proposed Green Corridor

10. Placemaking and Community

Taylor Wimpey do much more than build homes – they seek to put the communities in which they work in at the heart of what they do. They create jobs and provide affordable housing, green networks, community centres, parks and other facilities that benefit local residents across the UK.

The aim is to build sustainable developments that provide high-quality homes, housing choice, appropriate facilities and attractive environments for the communities that live in them.

Development at Thistle Drive in Portlethen can offer the following benefits:

- Investment in existing site features and improvement to how Portlethen is perceived from the outside;
- Provision of connected green space which allows access to all and which can slow traffic on the road along the northern boundary;
- Provision of growing space available to the community;
- Contribution toward improved educational facilities;
- Ensuring continued integration with the existing settlement so that the extension feels like a part of Portlethen and not a disconnected place;
- Ensure good connections in order to maximise opportunities for supporting a healthy economy within Portlethen, through increased population and increased footfall and usage;
- Housing choice; many of Taylor Wimpey's standard units are smaller offering greater inclusivity;
- The site would be zoned to Portlethen Primary School. Subject to build out rates and phasing there should be sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate the early phases of development, and potentially the whole site. Contributions would be made to the improvement of primary and secondary facilities to successfully accommodate pupils from this development.

Good placemaking is achieved through reflecting the local context in the layout, block size and street structure and in working with the site features to create new development which meets the six guiding principles for successful development set out by the Scottish Government.

Distinctive

The development will be distinctive in the standard and quality of open space and public realm within the proposed development site. This will be reinforced by retaining where possible, and re-using where not, the significant extent of drystone walling across the site; the Development Framework indicates the locations for this. The main investment would be along the linear park which would be the most distinctive feature of the new development.

Easy to Move Around and Beyond

The proposal achieves this through providing access through the site, connecting to the existing street network at both north and south, and from this generating a clear street hierarchy. Access to local facilities has been properly considered and allowed for within the street and path network.

Welcoming

Development will address both of the existing roads, and the primary street will be a traditional design of road and footway, making this feel like an expansion and therefore welcoming. The green framework meets the entry points of the site and will be an attractive approach at both sides. Woodland to the north gives a robust edge to the settlement from the A92.

Safe and Pleasant

Traffic speeds will be kept naturally slow through their design. The extent of landscape and planting will be an attractive environment in which to live and move through and use of native species will improve biodiversity. All open space will be overlooked by development ensuring a good level of natural surveillance.

Adaptable

The Development Framework reflects a block structure which establishes sound principles. One that can be adapted as the design proposals progress, being flexible to respond to local market conditions when it comes to construction.

Resource Efficient

Taylor Wimpey build resource efficient houses, and the site layout seeks to work with the existing landform. The preliminary proposals foster biodiversity which will significantly improve what is currently on the site. Appropriate SuDS will be designed to minimise environmental impact.



View over SuDS basin towards development

11. Summary

This document supports Taylor Wimpey's formal objection to the non-allocation of land for residential purposes on land to the north of Thistle Drive, Portlethen.

The land is in the control of Taylor Wimpey who assembled a comprehensive team at the outset in order to set guiding principles, establish site constraints and reach an effective Development Framework that is robust enough to adapt to further technical work into a deliverable masterplan.

The site area extends to 17.3 Hectares of which 12Ha are currently assessed as developable with capacity for up to 300 new homes.

The site is contained to the east by a railway line, and to the west by the A92. It will close off the northern end of the town and define the edge where currently it bleeds into the landscape. It is within reasonable proximity to the town's facilities. There are good opportunities for sustainable transport solutions that will benefit commuters, those using local facilities, those working in the numerous local industries, and those seeking leisure in the countryside.

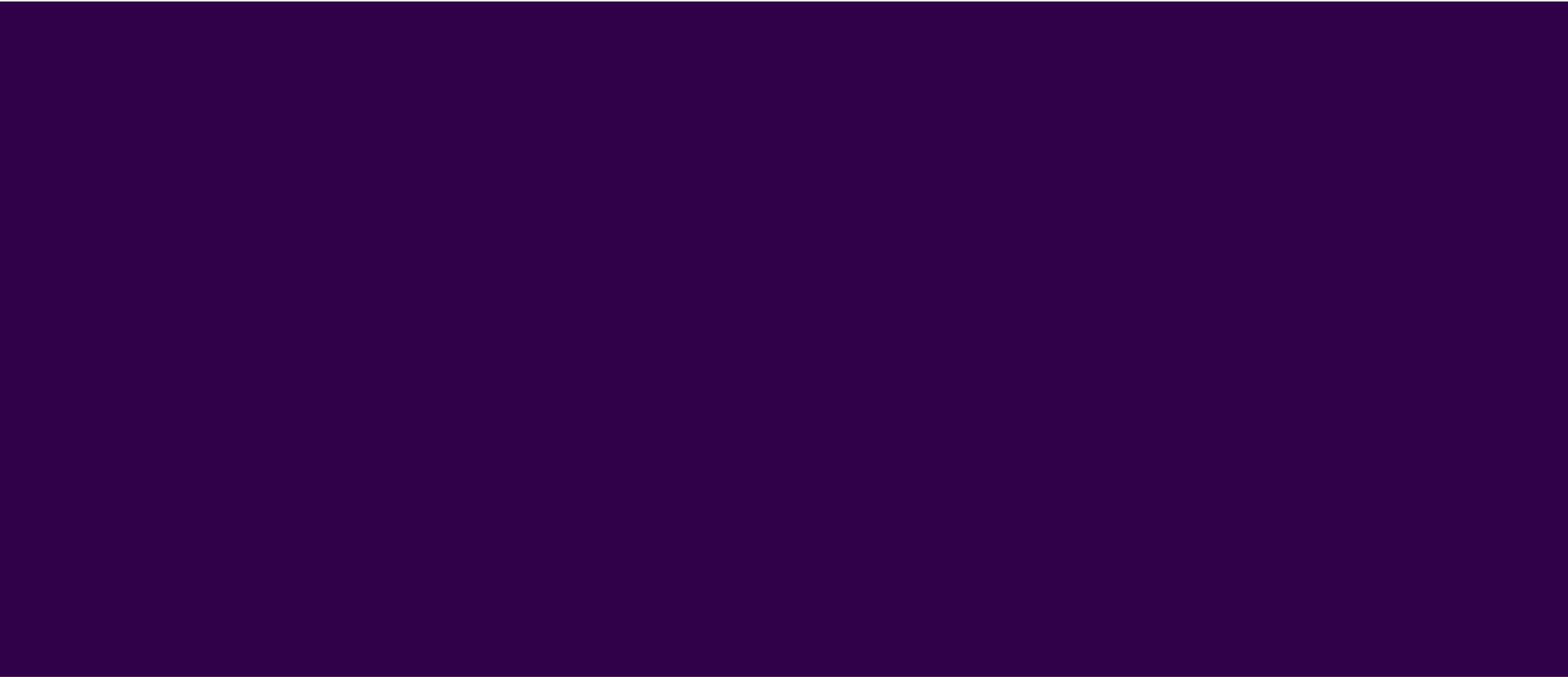
Preliminary technical assessments have been carried out. Whilst there are constraints, opportunities exist for these to become features of the development. Consequently, a Development Framework has been drawn up which demonstrates that a Masterplan at Portlethen can accord with national policy for successful places.

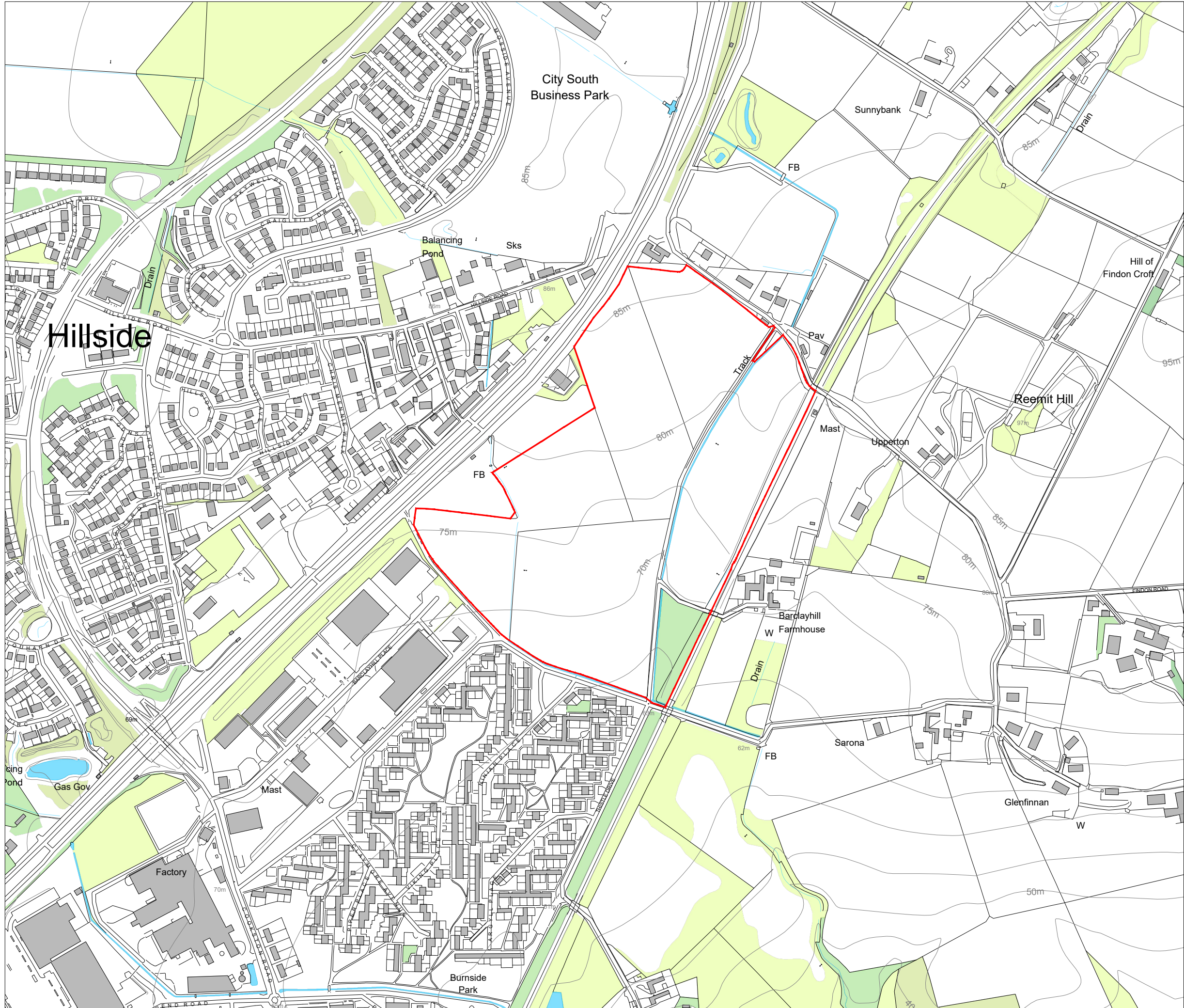
Taylor Wimpey is a committed house builder who are keen to build here, has already started engagement with the local community and who are keen to support local facilities that will benefit the development area and the town as a whole.



[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
[Redacted]





Hillside

1. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other drawings and specifications.

2. Do not scale off this drawing. Written dimensions to be taken only.

3. Any discrepancies found between this drawing and other drawings and specifications in the construction documents must be referred to the Landscape Architect prior to work commencing.

4. This drawing must not be copied in whole or in part without prior written consent of Optimised Environments Ltd.

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KEY

Site Boundary (17.3ha)

Issue	Revision	Initial	Date

Client

Taylor Wimpey

Project

Portlethen

Drawing Title

Site Boundary

Scale Bar

50m 100m 150m 200m 250m

North

Scale: **1:5000@A3** Date: **10.07.2020**

By: Status: **INFORMATION**

Checked: Approved:

Drawing Number

181270_RLB_Portlethen

Rev

-

Computer File: P:\2018\181270_Portlethen\CAD\SHEET



**Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020
Proposed Plan**

**Potential for Development
Transport and Access Appraisal Report**

**Land adjacent to Thistle Drive
Portlethen (KN027)**

July 2020

Prepared for:

Taylor Wimpey

Prepared by:

Transport Planning Ltd



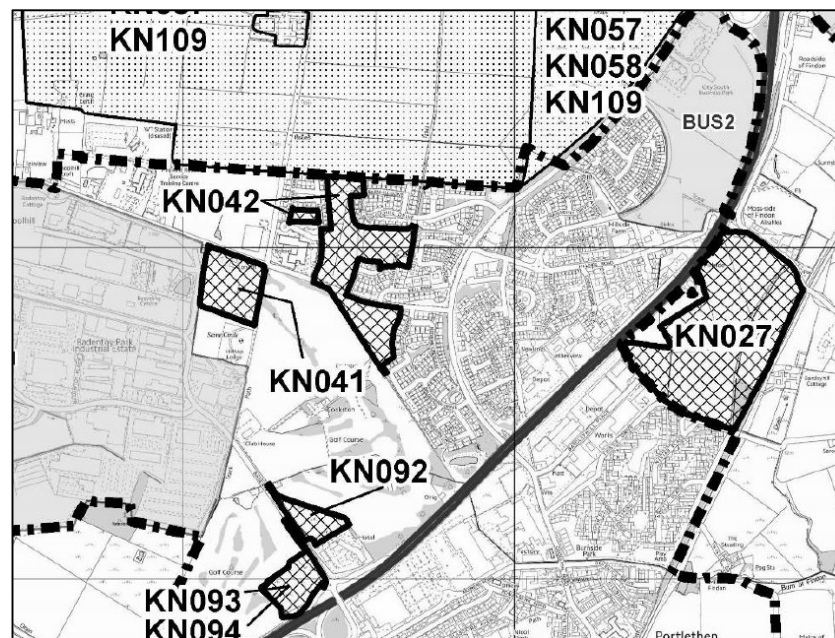
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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 Transport Planning Ltd has been appointed to advise on transport related issues associated with the potential allocation of a site for residential development at Portlethen.
- 1.2 TPL understands that the proposals would comprise residential housing development of circa 250 - 300 homes of mixed tenure.
- 1.3 The site is located to the north east of Thistle Drive, Portlethen, extending north as far as the unclassified road linking to the A92 and east as far as the railway line.
- 1.4 The site is roughly rectangular in shape and extends to approximately 17 Ha in total though the developable area is less than this. Directly adjoining the southern edge of the site is Portlethen, it is therefore bounded to the south by developed ground which already accommodates residential properties.
- 1.5 Figure 1 in Appendix A illustrates the site location.
- 1.6 As illustrated below, the site was listed as candidate site KN027 within the Main Issues Report (MIR) settlement analysis of January 2019 and again in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA report) of New Allocated Sites and Alternative Bid Sites – Kincardine and Mearns document that accompanies the Proposed Plan where the site is identified as an alternative site for 300 homes.



Extract from Main Issues Report settlement analysis showing KN027 “Land North of Thistle Drive, Hillside, Portlethen

- 1.7 The text in relation to KN027 (MIR) notes:- “Access through the site from the Findon Junction to the north east of Portlethen would be a desirable outcome and may need

upgrading, as Transport Scotland has highlighted that recent Transport Assessments have shown that the Findon A92 junction is at capacity”.

1.8 As part of the transport appraisal within the site assessments, it is identified that the Findon junction has capacity constraints which could affect development of the site.

1.9 What is said is “No capacity at Findon exists due to BUS designation and unless it can be removed nothing can be done – PP granted for 50000m2 of office space but it is not built. AWPR does not help.

Retaining wall and houses need to be removed to upgrade the junction

Transport Scotland notes that “further development is proposed to the north west of the town. Any further development in this area will require improvements to the trunk road junction as it is substandard and at capacity.” This could affect the site given its scale”.

1.10 Advising that a residential development area should have a connecting road within it is unusual. However, there may be ways in which the site could be developed to provide a through linkage from north to south either:-

- by means of a circuitous route that is unattractive as a ‘rat-run’ or,
- perhaps more appropriately, is able to be laid out with a bus gate to enable public transport penetration of the site from north to south.

1.11 Additionally, general access ‘facing south’ would mean there is less likelihood of traffic impacts at Findon as traffic exiting south of the site from Thistle Drive onto Cookston Road would have a choice of routes to reach the A92, avoiding Findon if they so desired by travelling to Badentoy junction before joining the A92.

1.12 In addition, as bus services and rail services which link to Aberdeen already exist within Portlethen, the site does lend itself to generating trips by alternative travel modes.

1.13 As such it is likely that developing a site where sustainable travel choices are already available and where peak hour road capacity is constrained would result in a greater propensity for sustainable travel modes to be used, plus the site could be arranged in such a way as to make travel to and from the Findon east roundabout less desirable.

1.14 Within the SEA report it is noted “However, the Findon junction off the A90 is at capacity and would need upgrading. If the site is allocated, the need to upgrade the junction will be stated as part of the development requirements for the site.” And whilst this comment is recognised, the commentary above still applies.

Report content

1.15 This short report considers the potential allocation site in terms of existing accessibility. Following this introduction the remainder of the report will consider the following:

- Existing Transport Network: describes the existing transport infrastructure in and around the potential allocation site; and

- Potential for Development on Allocation Site: provides information on the potential development area in terms of its potential links to the existing transport network and any associated transport infrastructure.

2. EXISTING TRANSPORT NETWORK

Introduction

2.1 This section of the report discusses the existing transport network surrounding the potential allocation area. In line with current best practice, the accessibility of the site has been considered using the following hierarchical approach:

- pedestrians;
- cyclists;
- public transport; and
- private car.

Pedestrians and cyclists

2.2 Whilst there are not currently any formal pedestrian routes within the site area, Thistle Drive to the south has footway provided either intermittently along its eastern side, shown in the photo below, and/or footpath links through the existing housing.



Looking south along Thistle Drive

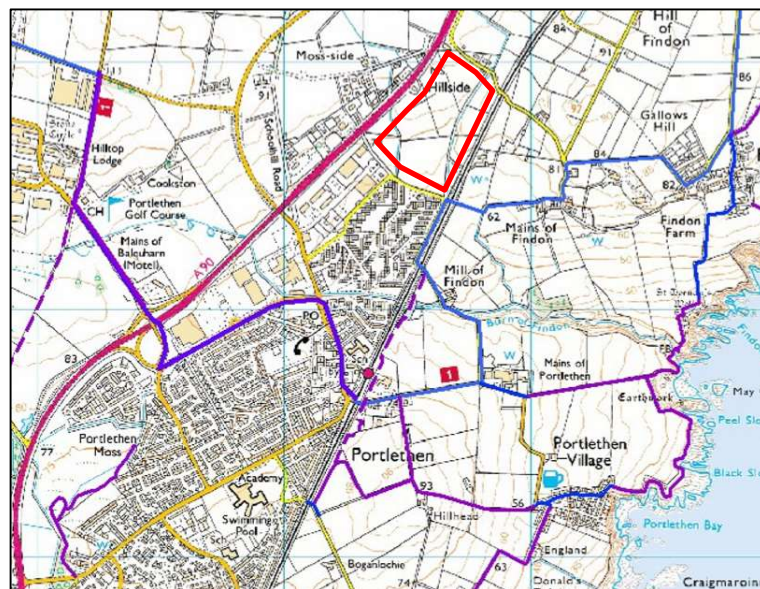
2.3 These footway and footpath links extend southwards along Thistle Drive and through the housing on e.g. Ninian Place and Claymore Avenue towards Cookston Road and the centre of Portlethen.

2.4 Additional informal path routes run north west along the southern site boundary and also through the site towards its eastern edge from south to north, as shown below.



Path along eastern edge of site

- 2.5 Core paths pass close to the south east corner of the site (also part of National Cycle Route 1) as shown in the core paths plan extract below.



Extract from Aberdeenshire Council core paths plan

- 2.6 These core paths connect the site with Portlethen railway station and the Badentoy area to the west of the A92.
- 2.7 As well as NCR 1, several other road routes in the area are lightly trafficked and suitable for shared use with cyclists.
- 2.8 The connections available enable access within 1600m (as laid out in Planning Advice Note 75) to facilities including education and shopping. Figure 2 in Appendix A illustrates the connectivity of the site.



Cycle storage at Portlethen station

- 2.9 The site is likely to lie within the catchment area of Portlethen Primary School. The school serves the bulk of the Portlethen area to the east of the A92. The school lies within around a 10 minute walk of the site.
- 2.10 In relation to secondary education, Porthlethen Academy also lies within walking distance of the site around a 15-20 minute walk to the south.

Public transport

Bus services

- 2.11 Bus stops are located on Cookston Road within directly south of the site along Thistle Drive.
- 2.12 Prior to the Covid outbreak, the bus stops were served by Stagecoach service 7/7A/7B/7C which runs between Aberdeen and Stonehaven. The services generally operated on a half hourly basis throughout the day with an hourly service on a Sunday.

Rail services

- 2.13 Portlethen station is accessible from the site being located around 900m south of the site. This station has regular services connecting with destinations including Aberdeen with services on a broadly hourly basis throughout the day with additional services at peak times.

Existing road network

- 2.14 Thistle Drive, which is a residential road connecting through to Cookston Road, forms the southern boundary of the site and Thistle Drive is subject to a 30mph speed limit. Cookston Road then connects either north towards Hillside and towards the west side of Findon junction with the A92 or south into Portlethen.



General view of Thistle Drive with site on right

- 2.15 Muirend Road heads south from Cookston Road to the retail park and as an alternative route to the A92 via the Badentoy junction.
- 2.16 To the north of the site there is an unclassified road which is rural in nature. This connects northwards to the A92 via Findon grade separated junction to the north of Portlethen.
- 2.17 To the immediate north west of the site, there is a 90 degree bend on this road and in the vicinity of this bend, the speed limit currently changes from 40mph to derestricted (60mph) with the derestricted section passing across the site frontage.



40/60 speed limit change / site on left

- 2.18 These linkages connect Portlethen with the A92 and in turn offer connections with the wider network of north east Scotland including the A90 and onward connection to the A96.

Summary

- 2.19 Usable foot / cycle routes and core paths lie close to the site and provide onward linkages to nearby facilities.
- 2.20 Existing public transport services, both bus and rail, are already available within Portlethen.
- 2.21 Finally, the site lies within a short travel distance of the main road network, notably the A92 which provides access to the wider network of north east Scotland.

3. POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT ON ALLOCATION SITE

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the report provides initial comments on potential access to the development site.

Development access

Pedestrians

- 3.2 Pedestrians will be able to access the development site making use of the existing footway and footpath network to the south of the site. Direct connectivity with the existing network can be made.
- 3.3 The site can link easily with the Meldrum Mains footways.
- 3.4 Additional (recreational) path links are available using the informal network that lies within the undeveloped areas of ground to the southwest of the site and along the eastern edge of the site.
- 3.5 Figure 2 contained within Appendix A indicates the existing local facilities available in the area surrounding the site.
- 3.6 PAN75 Planning for Transport considers that 1600m is the threshold for walking to local facilities whereas 'Transport Assessment Guidance considers journey times of 20 – 30 minutes (up to 2400m). The sites lie within a 1600m walk of the majority of the local facilities within the local area including:
- Portlethen primary school;
 - Portlethen Academy;
 - local retail provision;
 - Portlethen rail station; and
 - employment opportunities in a range of local sites.

Cyclists

- 3.7 Cyclists will be able to utilise all of the new pedestrian accesses. Internally, cycle and foot links can be planned into the site layout which will afford connections to the National Cycle Network.



Site frontage on Thistle Drive showing cycle signage

- 3.8 Any required upgrades to core paths / cycle routes in the environs of the site would be examined in detail in a formal Transport Assessment.

Public transport

- 3.9 The site is located close to an established bus route on Cookston Road which provides regular services linking with Aberdeen. Any improvements to the underfoot quality of existing linkages to and from the bus route could be examined within a Transport Assessment.

Road access

- 3.10 The site is able to be accessed from the south from Thistle Drive and/or from the north all by means of simple T junctions. Sketches contained in Appendix B illustrate how these might be provided.
- 3.11 Note that it is anticipated that were the site to be developed, the exiting 40mph limit on the northern frontage would be extended eastwards or extended eastwards and lowered (to 30mph).
- 3.12 Travelling south from the site using Thistle Drive, traffic would arrive at the T junction of Thistle Drive / Cookston Road. Should a later Transport Assessment show this junction requires improvement, then space appears to exist to enable conversion to either a mini roundabout or traffic signals.
- 3.13 The final development layout would largely determine how traffic would arrive at Findon junction to the north. Travelling via Cookston Road, traffic would arrive (during the AM period) at the western Findon roundabout. In the event the site were made completely permeable, then traffic would be more likely to arrive at the eastern Findon

roundabout plus a link via the site would in all likelihood encourage a degree of existing traffic along this route.

- 3.14 Whilst Findon is a busy junction at peak times, modelling these alternatives using the Councils traffic model is likely to reveal whether one or other of these alternatives is more favourable, and the final permeability of the road layout within the site could be reflective of the outcomes of such modelling.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

- 4.1 Transport Planning Ltd was appointed to advise on transport related issues associated with the potential allocation of a site for residential development to the north of Portlethen, Aberdeenshire.
- 4.2 TPL understands that the proposals would comprise residential housing development of circa 250 - 300 homes of mixed tenure.
- 4.3 The site is located within walking (and cycling) distance of local services and public transport services.
- 4.4 The development proposal will contain opportunities to link the internal network of the site to existing travel networks.
- 4.5 Vehicular access can be taken to the site from Thistle Drive and/or the minor road that abuts the sites northern boundary.

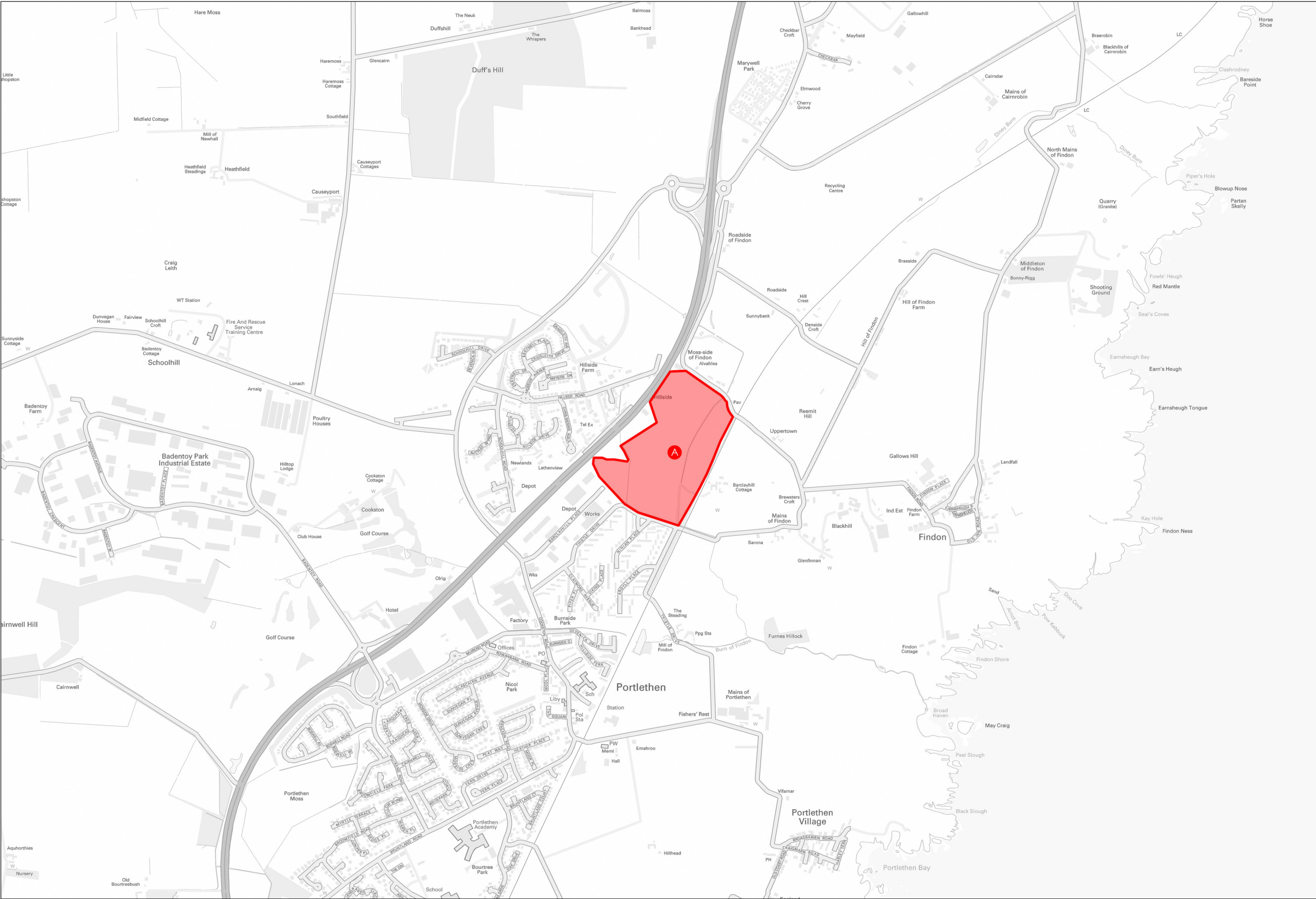
Conclusion

- 4.6 This report has assessed the transport issues surrounding the proposed development and it is concluded that there are no transport related reasons why the site should not be allocated for residential development.

APPENDIX A

Figure 1 – site location plan

Figure 2 – site accessibility plan



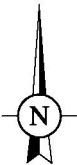
Portlethen,
Aberdeenshire

Site Location Plan

Key

A

Site of Proposed
Development



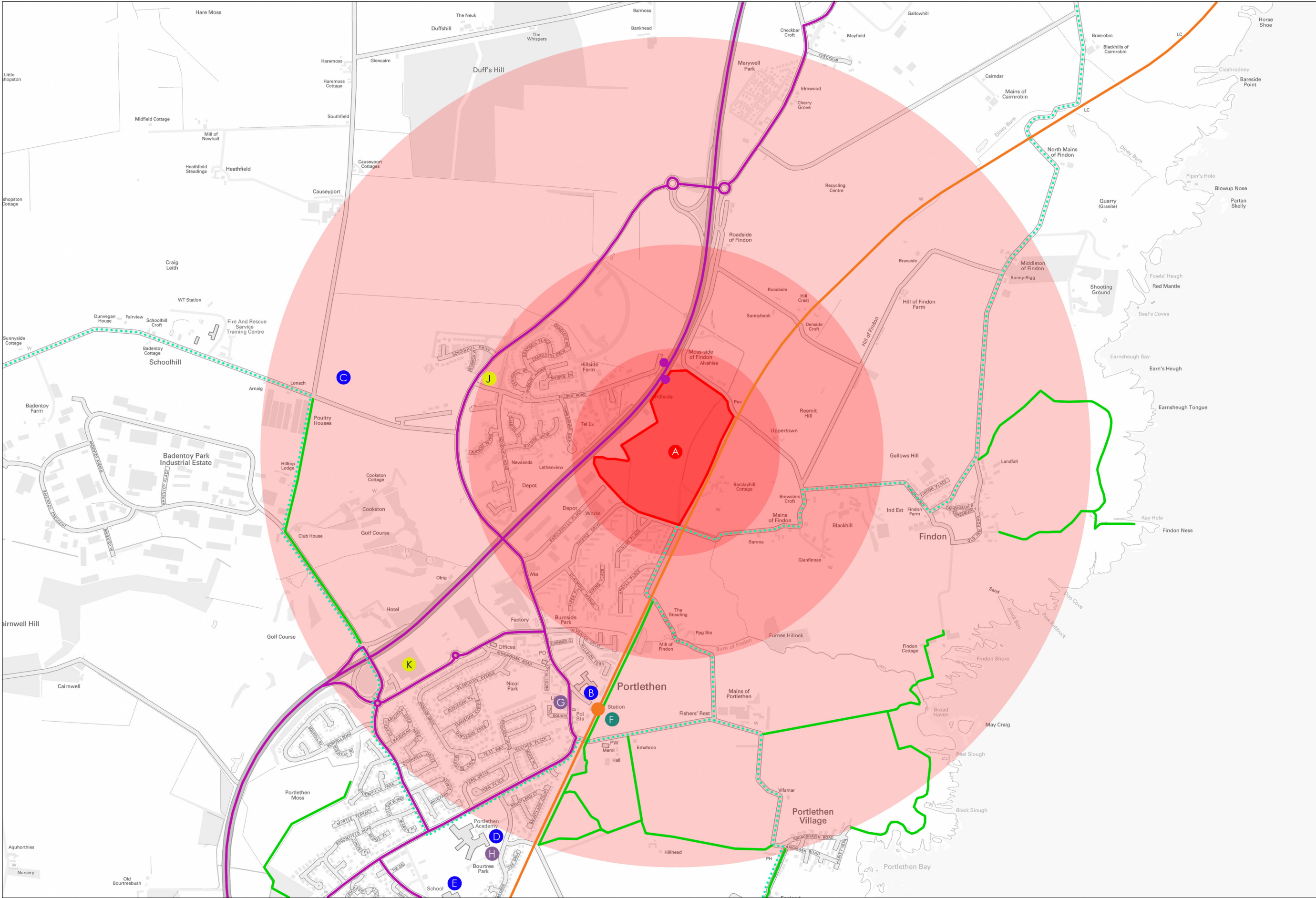
Portlethen, Aberdeenshire

Taylor Wimpey

Site Location Plan

Drawing Number: TP577 Figure 1		Scale: NTS @ A3
Drawn by: [Redacted]	Date: July 2020	Checked by: [Redacted]

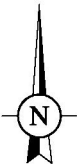




**Portlethen,
Aberdeenshire**

Accessibility Plan

- Key**
- A** Site of Proposed Development
 - B** Portlethen Primary School
 - C** Hillside School
 - D** Portlethen Academy
 - E** Fishermoss Primary School
 - F** Portlethen Medical Centre
 - G** Portlethen Library
 - H** Portlethen Swimming Pool
 - J** Co-op Foodstore
 - K** Asda Superstore
 - Core Path
 - Cycle Route
 - Bus Stop/Route
 - Railway Station/Line
 - 400m Isochrone from Site
 - 800m Isochrone from Site
 - 1600m Isochrone from Site



Portlethen, Aberdeenshire

Taylor Wimpey

Accessibility Plan

Drawing Number: TP577 Figure 2		Scale: NTS @ A3
Drawn by: [Redacted]	Date: July 2020	Checked by: [Redacted]



APPENDIX B

Sketches

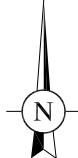


Proposed
Development
Site

R 6.0m

6.0m
T-Junction
Access Road

4.5x90m
Visibility Splay



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Portlethen, Aberdeenshire

Potential Priority Site Access - North

Taylor Wimpey

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TP577/SK/001

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Date:

July 2020

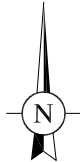
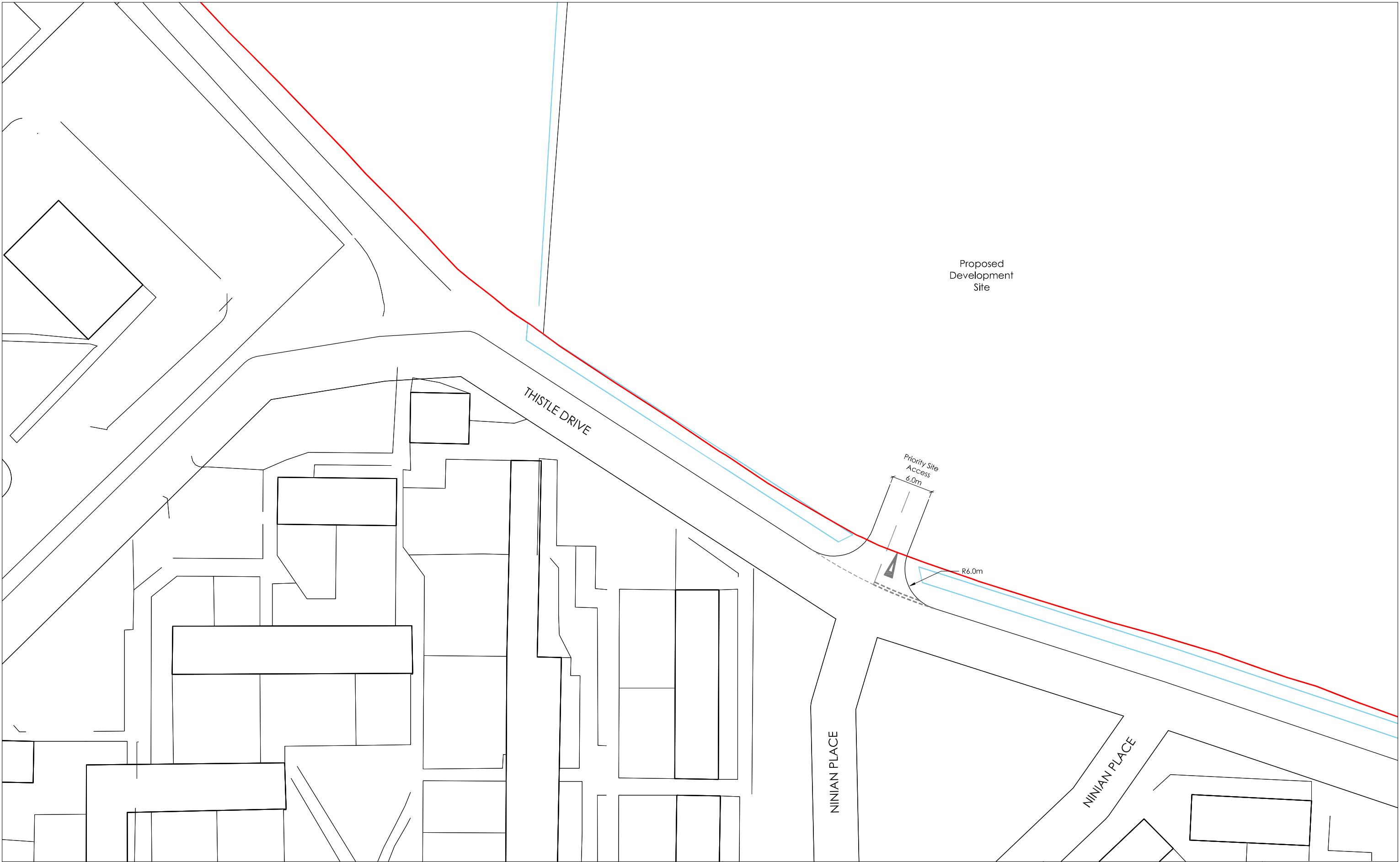
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TRANSPORT
PLANNING



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Portlethen, Aberdeenshire

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Potential Priority Site Access - South

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