

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 31 July 2020*.

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

**UPDATE 16 June 2020: Consultation period was extended from 17 July 2020 for a further two-week period.*



ACCESSIBILITY

If you need information from this document in an alternative language or in a Large Print, Easy Read, Braille or BSL, please telephone 01467 536230.

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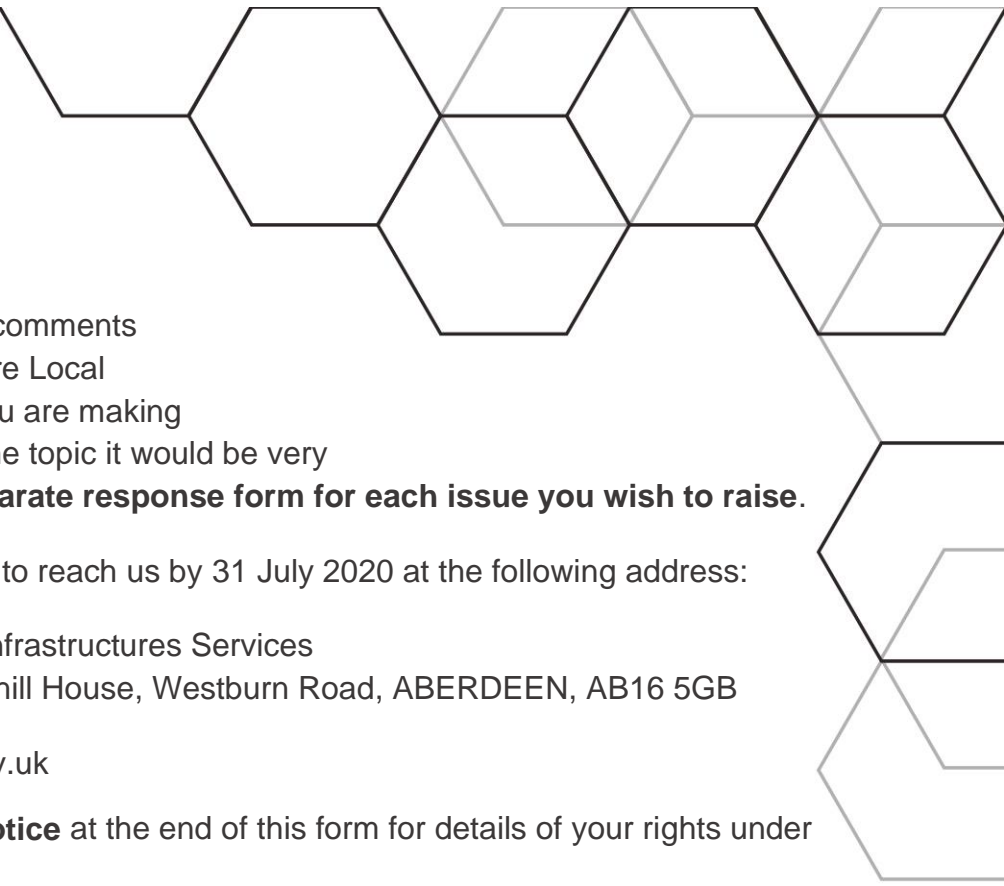
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Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan
Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB

Tel: 01467 536230
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Web: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldp
Follow us on Twitter @ShireLDP

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:	Daniel
Surname:	Harrington
Date:	31/07/2020
Postal Address:	██
Postcode:	████████
Telephone Number:	██████████
Email:	██

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?

☒ 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):

Modification to be made to Appendix 6 Housing Land Allocations and Appendix 7d Settlement Statements for Garioch (Blackburn)

Remove site OP1 allocated in Blackburn from both the settlement statement and the housing land allocations in Appendix 6.

The spatial strategy Section 5 should be amended to address the shortfall in housing land supply and fit with the Spatial Strategy and land at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn allocated for 300 units in the Local Development plan (Appendix 6 and 7d) to provide effective land in accordance with the SDP spatial strategy as identified in the enclosed site location plan.

Reason for change:

Reason for change is detailed within the accompanying report and supporting information as listed below:

1. Representation to Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan
2. GGO1 – Site Location Plan
3. GGO 2 – Supporting Planning Statement
4. GGO 3 – Development Strategy
5. GGO 4 – Response to Main Issues Report

Summary of Representation

This Representation has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in response to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 (PALDP) and requests modifications to the Local Development Plan to be made.

This representation covers the following two issues for the PALDP and provides a concise response:

1. Allocate land at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn for development of 300 homes. On the land as identified on the Location Plan (Document GGO1)
2. Allocation OP1 in Blackburn is a historic allocation and is not considered to be deliverable. The site should be removed from the PALDP and removed from the contribution towards meeting the Strategic Development Plan Housing Allowances.

There is a defined requirement for the Local Development Plan to identify land capable of becoming effective within the period to 2032. From a review of the allocations this is not considered to have been achieved. It is a requirement of Circular 6/2013 that allocations have been considered for their effectiveness and there is a clear understanding of how these allocations will be delivered.

It is considered that the additional housing allowances for the Aberdeen Housing Market Area as set out in Appendix 6 of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 (PALDP) are not consistent with the strategy of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and do not provide sufficient confidence that there will be an effective supply of housing land over the plan period to 2032. In Blackburn there has been no effective supply for 21 years and there is a demand in this location for development. Section 5 Spatial Strategy should be amended to reflect this.

Blackburn is a main settlement within the strategic growth areas and arguably the only town that can deliver housing in the A96 corridor in the short to medium term. The allocation of OP1 in the Proposed Plan for Blackburn (Appendix 7d) is not considered to be deliverable for the allocation proposed and has remained constrained largely since its allocation in 2012.

Stewart Milne Homes submitted a proposal for land at Hillhead of Glasgoego through the Council's call for sites in 2018, this was referenced as GR033, which can:

- Provide a deliverable site to meet housing allowances in the plan period
- Provide housing to support the local community and meet affordable housing needs
- Create a high quality development that is well connected to the existing settlement

The land at Hillhead of Glasgoego can effectively contribute towards housing supply targets, supports and benefits from existing services and employment available in Blackburn and will deliver a high quality development in the right location.

Given the shortfall in the housing allowances and the failure of the allocations to conform to the Spatial Strategy of the Strategic Development Plan the Proposed Plan should be modified to allocate land at Hillhead of Glasgoego within Appendix 6 and 7d of the PALDP.

PRIVACY NOTICE



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT

The Data Controller of the information being collected is Aberdeenshire Council.

The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at Town House, 34 Low Street, Banff, AB45 1AY.

Email: dataprotection@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Your information is being collected to use for the following purposes:

- To provide public comment on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The data on the form will be used to inform Scottish Ministers and individual(s) appointed to examine the Proposed Local Development Plan 2020. It will inform the content of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021.

Your information is:

Being collected by Aberdeenshire Council	X
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The Legal Basis for collecting the information is:

Personal Data	
Legal Obligations	X

Where the Legal Basis for processing is either Performance of a Contract or Legal Obligation, please note the following consequences of failure to provide the information:

It is a Statutory Obligation under Section 18 of the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, for Aberdeenshire Council to prepare and publish a Proposed Local Development plan on which representations must be made to the planning authority within a prescribed period of time. Failure to provide details requested in the 'Your Details' section of this form will result in Aberdeenshire Council being unable to accept your representation.

Your information will be shared with the following recipients or categories of recipient:

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

submission) will be published alongside a copy of your completed response on the Proposed Local Development Plan website (contact details and information that is deemed commercially sensitive will not be made available to the public).

In accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 where the appointed person determines that further representations should be made or further information should be provided by any person in connection with the examination of the Proposed Plan the appointed person may by notice request that person to make such further representations or to provide such further information.

Your information will be transferred to or stored in the following countries and the following safeguards are in place:

Not applicable.

The retention period for the data is:

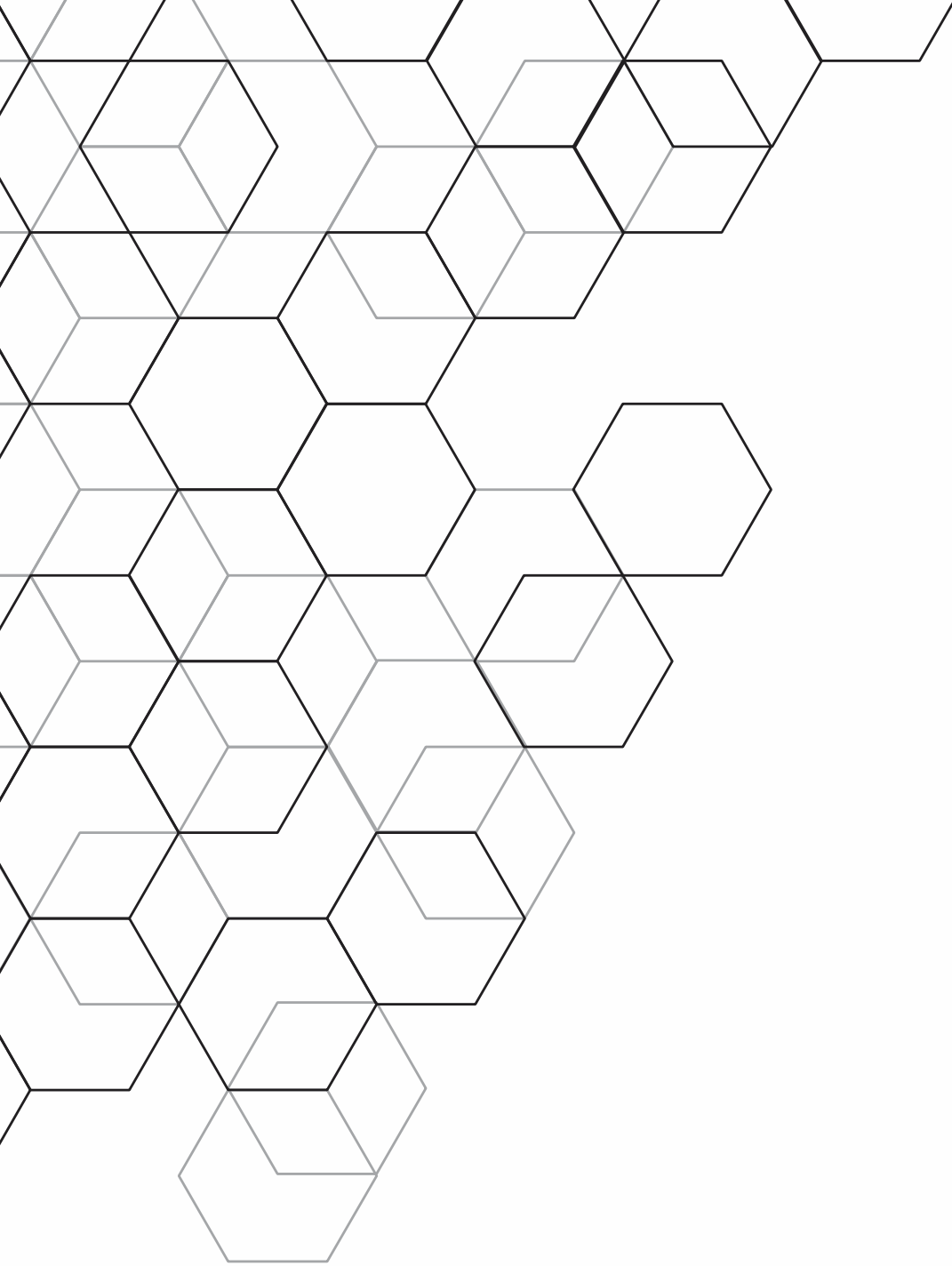
Aberdeenshire Council will only keep your personal data for as long as is needed. Aberdeenshire Council will retain your response and personal data for a retention period of 5 years from the date upon which it was collected. After 5 years Aberdeenshire Council will review whether it is necessary to continue to retain your information for a longer period. A redacted copy of your submission will be retained for 5 years beyond the life of the Local Development Plan 2021, possibly until 2037.

The following automated decision-making, including profiling, will be undertaken:

Not applicable.

Please note that you have the following rights:

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- to request access to your personal data;
- to data portability, where the legal basis specified above is:
 - (i) Consent; or
 - (ii) Performance of a Contract;
- to request rectification or erasure of your personal data, as so far as the legislation permits.





Hillhead of Glasgoego

Representation to Proposed Aberdeenshire Local
Development Plan

THE-2000

Stewart Milne Homes

July 31, 2020

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1 SUMMARY

This Representation has been prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in response to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 (PALDP) and requests modifications to the Local Development Plan to be made.

This representation covers the following two issues for the PALDP and provides a concise response:

1. Allocate land at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn for development of 300 homes. On the land as identified on the Location Plan (Document GGO1)
2. Allocation OP1 in Blackburn is a historic allocation and is not considered to be deliverable. The site should be removed from the PALDP and removed from the contribution towards meeting the Strategic Development Plan Housing Allowances.

It is considered that the additional housing allowances for the Aberdeen Housing Market Area as set out in Appendix 6 of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 (PALDP) are not consistent with the strategy of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and do not provide sufficient confidence that there will be an effective supply of housing land over the plan period to 2032. In Blackburn there has been no effective supply for 21 years and there is a demand in this location for development.

Stewart Milne Homes submitted a proposal for land at Glasgoego through the Council's call for sites in 2018, this was referenced as GR033, which can:

- Provide a deliverable site to meet housing allowances in the plan period
- Provide housing to support the local community and meet affordable housing needs
- Create a high quality development that is well connected to the existing settlement

2 PROPOSED ALLOCATION AND EMERGING PLANS

Hillhead of Glasgoego is located to the west of Blackburn fronting the old main road along which Blackburn was historically developed from. The site outlined in red on Document GGO1 and Figure 1 extends to 42.6 ha and this land is under option to Stewart Milne Homes. The Old Turnpyke Road runs through the site connecting the farm buildings to the B979 and adjacent to Kinellar Primary School. The farmland extends west to Kingsfield Road and includes the first fields beyond Kingsfield road. The northern boundary is well defined by a tree belt which is publicly accessible. Blackburn has access to the A96 trunk road and close access to the AWPR at Dyce. The town has a business park, providing a range of employment opportunities and with close connections to Dyce, Kintore and Inverurie, Blackburn is in a prime location.

The Development Strategy (Document GGO3) is for the development of the site indicated as GR033 in Figure 1. Areas 1 and 2 are under option and provide future opportunities, although the allocation of these sites is not sought for this plan period.

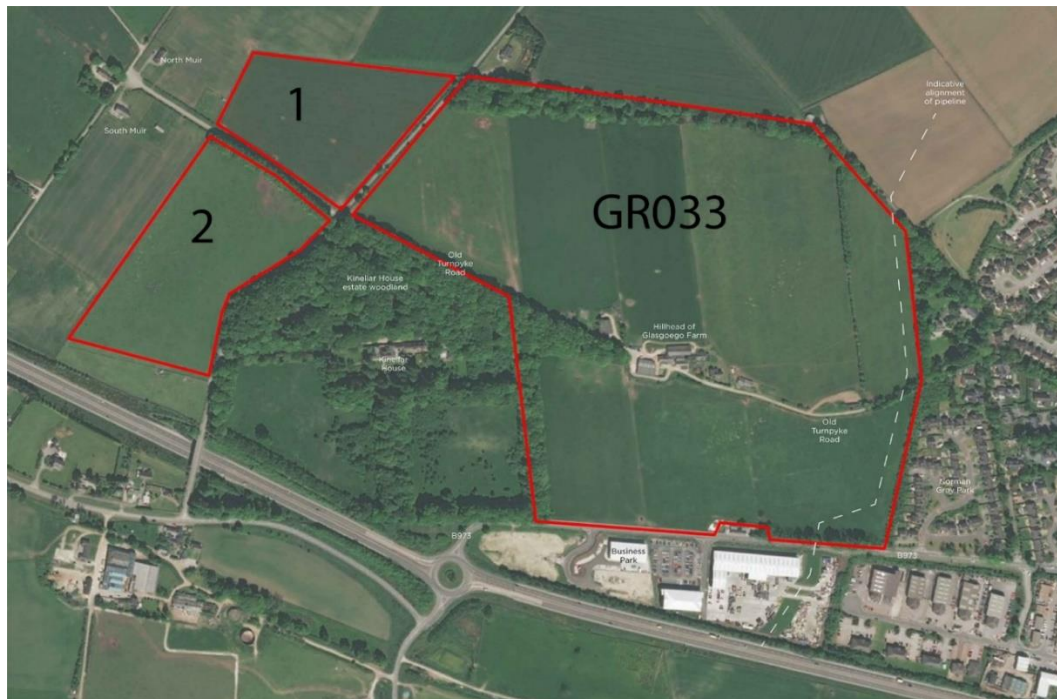


Figure 1: Site Location

The proposal is to create a sustainable extension to the existing settlement of Blackburn providing a variety of housing including the integration of 25% affordable housing. The proposal is for approximately 300 dwellings with open space and landscaping. The upper slopes of the site will be kept free of development and a hilltop park with fantastic views of the surrounding rolling agricultural landscape will be created. The fields to the west of Kingsfield Road are to remain undeveloped at this time.

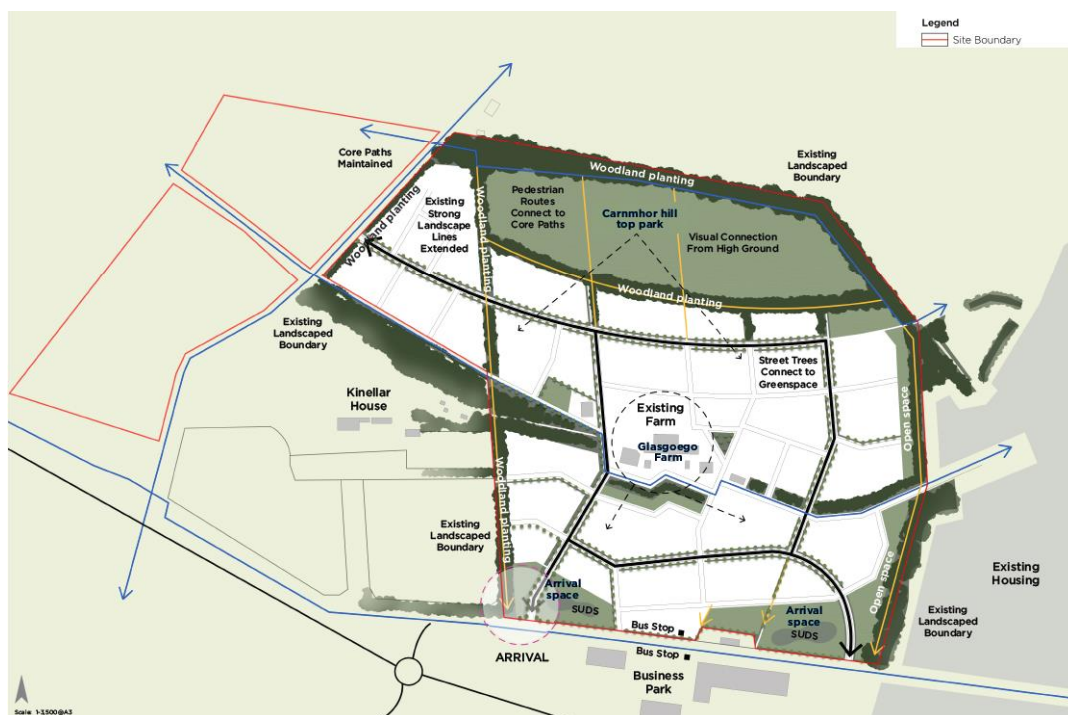


Figure 2: Development Strategy

The development would be phased and initially development would start towards the south east of the site, closest to the existing settlement. Following this initial phase the development would extend westwards and northwards.

The site has a frontage along the Main Road, from which access can be obtained. Kingsfield Road passes through the land holding towards the west of the site. This allows for multiple points of access to be provided all of which can be delivered within the ownership control. The topography of the site has been considered in the Development Strategy and whilst the detailed design has yet to be undertaken there is the ability within the land identified for access to achieve appropriate gradients and ensure that permeability is maximised.

Additional footpath connections will be available to maximise pedestrian permeability and the core path connection along Old Turnpyke Road will be maintained and improved. The detail of the proposal is set out in the Development Strategy (Document GGO3).

3 PROPOSED PHASING AND DELIVERY OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The development of the site in its entirety would be phased over the period of the Local Development Plan. The table below provides a summary of the development lead in and phasing.

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
	PPiP	AMSC	20	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35

The site would require two access points due to its scale of 300 homes. A Transport Appraisal to ascertain potential access points to the Glasgoego site have been undertaken and concluded that there were several access options available at the site to provide vehicular access. This assessment has informed the development strategy for the site as set out in Document GGO2.

A desktop review of services has been undertaken and these improvements are factored into appraisals for development along with other policy requirements such as affordable housing and open space.

Stewart Milne Homes is one of the UK's leading independent homebuilding, construction and development companies. Stewart Milne are committed to ever more sustainable, innovative and efficient development. Core to Stewart Milne's business is housing and the delivery of a range of housing to meet the needs and requirements of the area. Stewart Milne Homes continue to deliver housing across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire on a range of sites. Currently developments are progressing within the Region at: Kingswells, Cove, Countesswells, Drumoak, Stonehaven, Crathes and Alford. These developments consist of a range of tenures and scale of development.

Importantly Stewart Milne have a track record in the delivery of successful major residential developments providing confidence that this site will be delivered within the plan period if it is allocated for development.

4 ASSESSMENT BY ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

In the final review of the Main Issues Report responses the Council stated in relation to Hillhead of Glasgoego that *“Revisions made to the bid are welcomed as a means to attempt to make the site more acceptable. It is considered that there are still a number of constraints associated with the site that require to be overcome before the site could be taken forward as an Officers’ preference. At this time, the focus of future expansion should be towards the east of the settlement. Sensitive development to the west of Blackburn should only be reconsidered when there is a need for further major development sites to be allocated in the settlement.”*

The response to the ‘constraints’ is contained within Document GGO4, which deals with; scale of development, agricultural land, trees, incorporation of core path and HSE advice related to consultation zone for gas pipeline. This demonstrates that there are no constraints to development and the comments made regarding the development of this site can be mitigated or are outweighed by the benefits of the proposal and its location. Blackburn is a main settlement within the strategic growth areas and arguably the only town that can deliver additional housing in the Aberdeen to Inverurie corridor in the next plan period. The site can effectively contribute towards housing supply targets, supports and benefits from existing services and employment and will delivery development in the right location.

5 HOUSING ALLOWANCE REQUIREMENTS AND LOCATION

There is a defined requirement for the Local Development Plan to identify land capable of becoming effective within the period to 2032. It is a requirement of Circular 6/2013 that allocations have been considered for their effectiveness and there is a clear understanding of how these allocations will be delivered. As set out in a separate representation on the housing allowances it is considered that this has not been achieved.

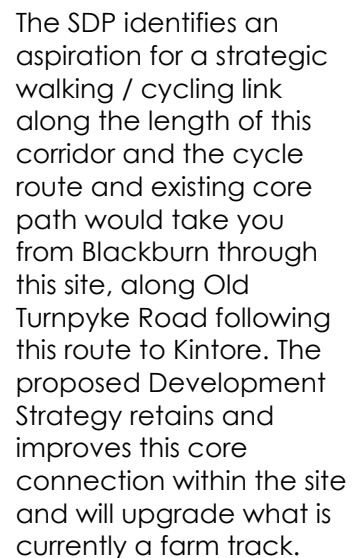
The distribution of the effective land supply has moved away from the strategy set out to maximise the benefits of strategic infrastructure with large allocations being identified in locations, which are not considered to be consistent with the Spatial Strategy of the SDP.

6 BLACKBURN’S FIT WITH SPATIAL STRATEGY

There are significant allocations in Inverurie and Kintore within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area part of the Aberdeen to Huntly Corridor that remain undeveloped. The allocation in Kintore has released the additional 400 homes, but whilst part of a long term plan for this settlement these additional units will not be delivered in the plan period and are not able to contribute towards the SDP housing allowances.

The strategy for growth identified in the National Planning Framework for Scotland and the SDP identify that much of new housing growth in the region will be in strategic growth areas that include the corridor between Aberdeen and Huntly. The SDP identifies that *“This strategy focusses development in places where there are clear opportunities to encourage people to use public transport.”* There is a target for 75% of all homes to be developed in the strategic growth areas. It is acknowledged within the Strategic Development Plan that there will be a need for investment in infrastructure within these corridors and by focusing growth and providing deliverable allocations in these corridors these improvements can be made to the benefit of the region.

bound and west bound services and these bus stops are located within 400m of the majority of the development areas.



The existing allocation of 50 homes at site OP1 in the Local Development Plan has constrained the supply of new housing in Blackburn over the past 8 years and its continued allocation is blocking the allocation of sites that will be developed to meet local housing need and demand. There have been no completions in Blackburn since 2009, 21 years. Blackburn is now a high priority settlement for affordable housing within the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan, but without any realistic opportunities for housing development.

Table 1 - Aberdeen Housing Market Area	
High Priority	Medium Priority
Banchory	Balmedie
Blackburn	Kintore
Ellon	Newmachar
Inverurie	Oldmeldrum
Newtonhill	
Portlethen	
Stonehaven	
Westhill	

Blackburn is a popular location and there is housing need in the settlement. Blackburn assists in the delivery of the SDP spatial strategy.

The OP1 site in Blackburn has failed to be brought forward since it was identified in 2012 for 50 homes. The site has now been increased to an allocation of 240 homes.

In the determination for a Certificate of Alternative Development for an undefined residential development (APP/2015/3117) the Planning Authority advised that *"In this case, the application site cannot be independently accessed from the B979 Main Road through Blackburn, nor the adjacent residential area to the south-west and it would not be desirable to utilise the unclassified Caskieben to Hatton or Fintray road."* A single point of access was assumed. The Allocation in the PALDP states that *"A buffer strip is required to **preserve** nature conservation value of the Black Burn and woodlands of the Sycamores and Caskieben Road."* [emphasis added]. It also advises that *"two points of access are required"* Given the constraints and issues highlighted it is unclear how the Council envisage that a development of more than 50 units could be delivered.

The Caskieben Road is unsuitable for a main site access given the locations of its junction with the B979 immediately to the north of the A96(T) roundabout and alternatives through third party land are not part of the site proposed by the landowner.

Focusing development on this side of the village provides a limited scope for the future development of the settlement and contribute towards future phases of the SDP. The west of the existing settlement provides far greater opportunity for future expansion with ample development opportunity to the north west also. Directing development towards the west of the settlement provides a more natural extension which can continue to provide development opportunities for the future.

Scottish Planning Policy Paragraph 119 requires that planning authorities are "confident that land can be brought forward for development within the plan period" and in Paragraph 122 that "sites are allocated to "ensure the continued deliver of new housing". The allocation as proposed would require policy departures to deliver and despite allocation since 2012 there has been no progress made towards delivery and it is considered that there can be no confidence in this site can or will be brought forward for development.

The allocation site should be removed from the Local Development Plan and replaced with allocations that can contribute towards the effective supply and delivery of housing within this Strategic Growth Area.

8

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSED MODIFICATION

There is a defined requirement for the Local Development Plan to identify land capable of becoming effective within the period to 2032. From a review of the allocations this is not considered to have been achieved. It is a requirement of Circular 6/2013 that allocations have been considered for their effectiveness and there is a clear understanding of how these allocations will be delivered.

The distribution of the effective land supply has moved away from the strategy set out to maximise the benefits of strategic infrastructure with large allocations being identified in locations, which are not considered to be consistent with the Spatial Strategy of the SDP.

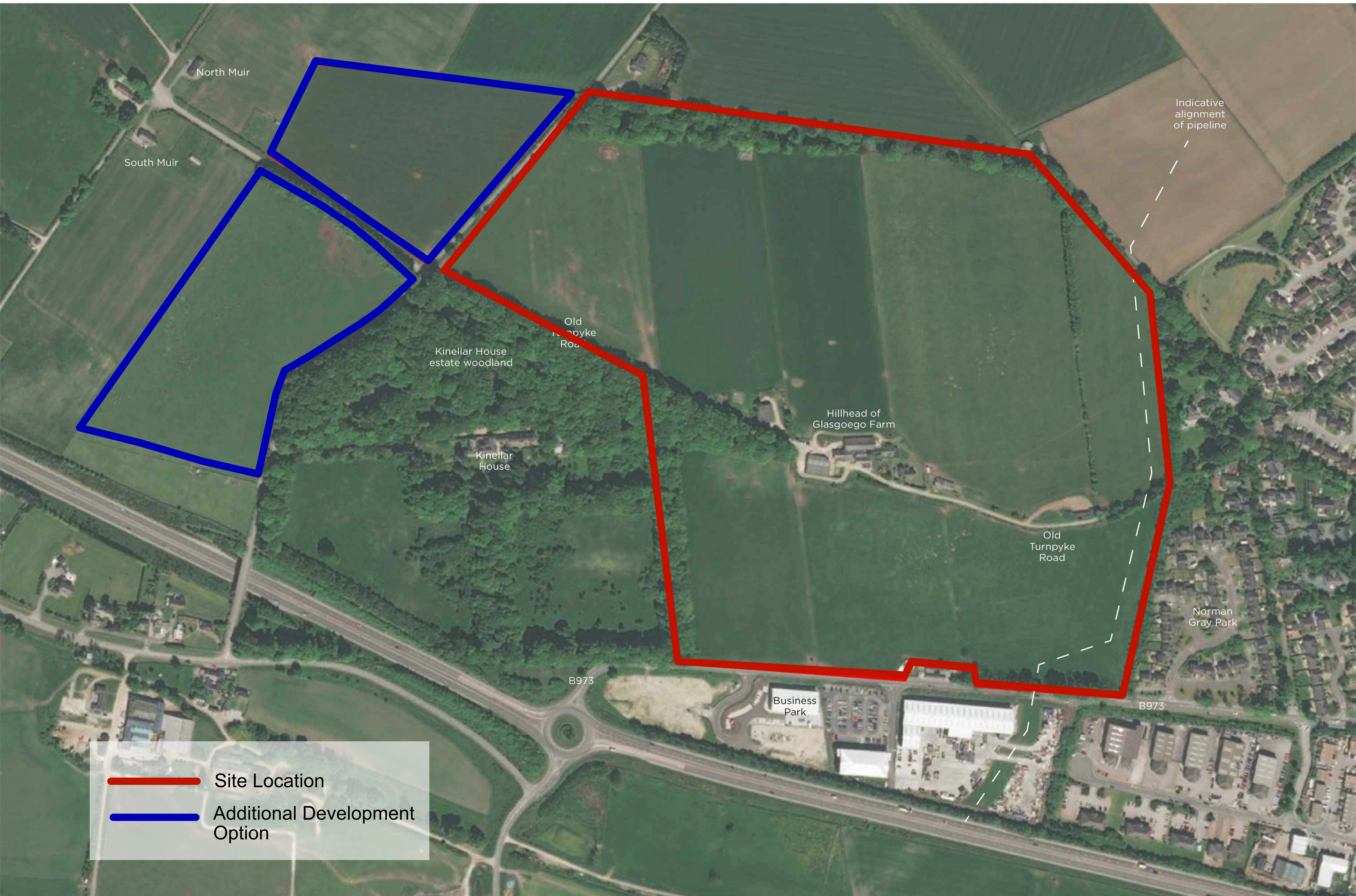
Blackburn is a main settlement within the strategic growth areas and arguably the only town that can deliver housing in the A96 corridor in the short to medium term. The allocation of OP1 in the PALDP is not considered to be deliverable for the allocation proposed and has remained constrained largely since its allocation in 2012.

The land at Hillhead of Glasgoego can effectively contribute towards housing supply targets, supports and benefits from existing services and employment and will deliver a high quality development in the right location. The spatial strategy should be amended and land at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn allocated for 300 units in the Local Development plan period to provide effective land in accordance with the SDP spatial strategy.

GGO1 – Site Location Plan
GGO 2 – Supporting Planning Statement
GGO 3 – Development Strategy
GGO 4 – Response to Main Issues Report

GGO1 – Site Location Plan

Proposed Site Boundary



North Muir

South Muir

Kinellar House
estate woodland

Kinellar
House

Old
Turnpyke
Road

Hillhead of
Glasgoego Farm

Old
Turnpyke
Road

Norman
Gray Park

B973

Business
Park

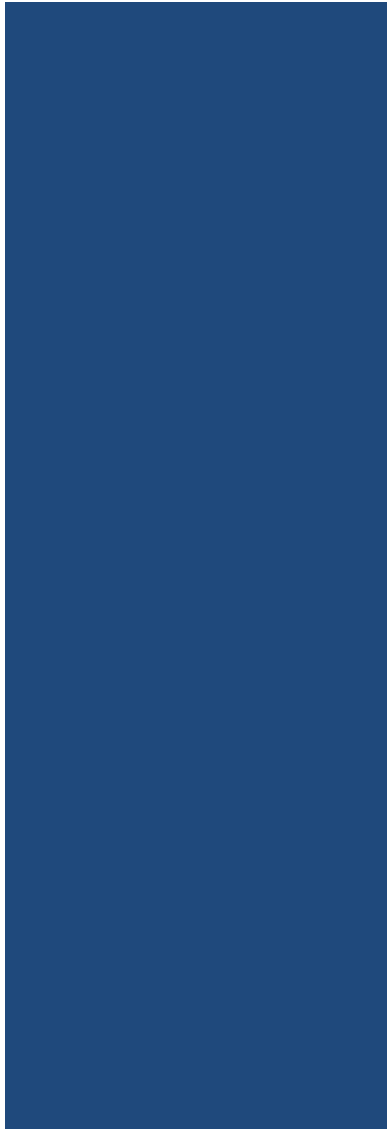
B973

Indicative
alignment
of pipeline

Site Location

Additional Development
Option

GGO 2 – Supporting Planning Statement



Supporting Bid Statement

Land at Hillhead of Glasgoego



Stewart Milne Homes
19 March 2018

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1 INTRODUCTION

This development bid for land at Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm to the west of Blackburn has been prepared as a part of the participation process for the review of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and is promoted by Stewart Milne Homes.

Stewart Milne Homes is one of the UK's leading independent homebuilding, construction and development companies. Stewart Milne are committed to ever more sustainable, innovative and efficient development. Core to Stewart Milne's business is housing and the delivery of a range of housing to meet the needs and requirements of the area. Stewart Milne Homes continue to deliver housing across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire on a range of sites. Currently developments are progressing within the Region at: Kingswells, Wellington Road, Countesswells, Drumoak, Stonehaven, Crathes and Alford. These developments consist of a range of tenures and scale of development.

Importantly Stewart Milne have a track record in the delivery of successful major residential developments providing the Council with confidence that this site will be delivered within the plan period if it is allocated for development.

This report has been prepared in support of the completed bid form to provide Aberdeenshire Council with details on how this development fits with the strategy for development and provides an assessment of the effects of the development on the environment, built heritage, flooding, education and transportation.

Further information on the detail of the proposed development is contained within a Development Strategy report prepared by Optimised Environments (OPEN).

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

Hillhead of Glasgoego is located to the east of Blackburn fronting the old main road along which Blackburn was historically developed from. The site outlined in red extends to 42.6 ha and this land is



Figure 1: Site Location

under option to Stewart Milne Homes. The Old Turnpyke Road runs through the site connecting the farm buildings to the B979 and adjacent to Kinellar Primary School. The farmland extends west to Kingsfield Road and includes the first fields beyond Kingsfield road. The northern boundary is well defined by a tree belt which is publicly accessible.

Blackburn has access to the A96 trunk road and once completed will have close access to the AWPR at Dyce. The town has a business park, noted as BUS

on Figure 2, providing a range of employment opportunities and with close connections to Dyce, Kintore and Inverurie, Blackburn is in a prime location.

Development bids have been submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for this land previously. Reference G114 in 2009 initially where the site was identified as possible for development and then again more recently in 2013 reference GA045, where there was not an overall requirement to identify additional land and site OP1 had only recently been allocated. Stewart Milne Homes were not promoting the site at that time and in preparing this bid these concerns have been considered in preparing this submission. There was concern regarding the landscape and visual impact of the development and a landscape appraisal has now been undertaken to demonstrate a considered response to the setting of Blackburn and views from the surrounding area. This assessment is contained within the Development Strategy document submitted with this bid. There was also concern regarding the gas pipeline that passes through the site and further information is contained within this statement explaining how this will be addressed through the development.

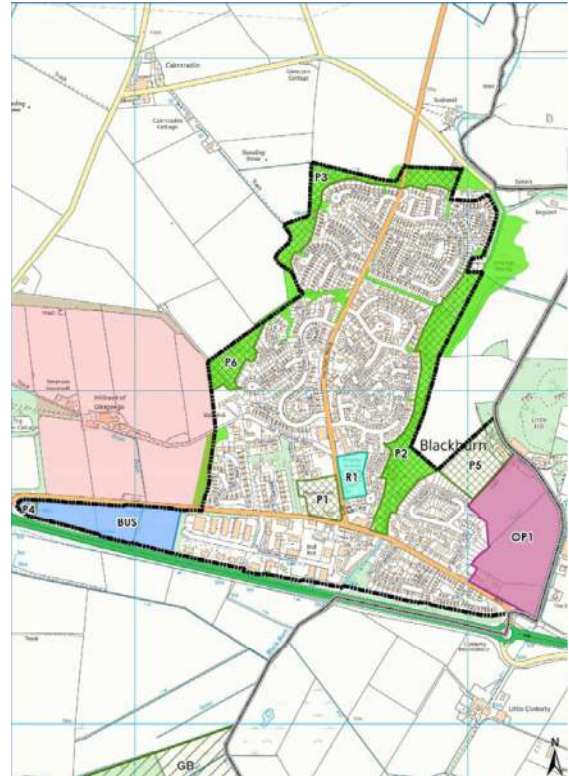


Figure 2: Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Extract

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is to create a sustainable extension to the existing settlement of Blackburn providing a variety of housing including the integration of 25% affordable housing. The proposal is for approximately 300 dwellings with open space and landscaping. The upper slopes of the site will be kept free of development and a hill top park with fantastic views of the surrounding rolling agricultural landscape will be created. The fields to the west of Kingsfield Road are to remain undeveloped at this time.

The development would be phased and initially development would likely start towards the south east of the site, closest to the existing settlement. Following this initial phase the development would extend westwards and northwards.

The site has a frontage along the Main Road, from which access can be obtained. Kingsfield Road passes through the land holding towards the west of the site. This allows for multiple points of access to be provided all of which can be delivered without any legal difficulties. The topography of the site has been considered in the Development Strategy and whilst the detailed design has yet to be undertaken there is the ability within the land identified for access to achieve appropriate gradients and ensure that permeability is maximised.

Additional footpath connections will be available to maximize permeability and the core path connection along Old Turnpyke Road will be maintained and improved.

4 FIT WITH DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY

4.1 Location for Growth

The strategy for growth identified in the National Planning Framework for Scotland and the Strategic Development Plan identify that much of new housing growth in the region will be in strategic growth areas that include the corridor between Aberdeen and Huntly. The Strategic Development Plan identifies that "This strategy focusses development in places where there are clear opportunities to encourage people to use public transport." There is a target for 75% of all homes to be developed in the strategic growth areas. It is acknowledged within the Strategic Development Plan that there will be a need for investment in infrastructure within these corridors and by focusing growth and providing deliverable allocations in these corridors these improvements can be made to the benefit of the region.

There are further transport improvements being made to this corridor with significant investment being made to the railway network. There is currently an upgrade project being delivered in phases to increase services and reduce journey times. Phase 1 is underway and will deliver more commuter services to both Aberdeen and Inverness through redoubling the track between Aberdeen and Inverurie, upgrading signalling systems between Nairn and Elgin. Future phases of the project will help support an hourly service between Aberdeen and Inverness, with an average journey time of around 2 hours. Phase 2 includes the provision of a new railway station in Kintore further improving the accessibility and attractiveness of this corridor.

Blackburn is located with good access onto the A96 corridor and benefits from good access to a range of existing employment opportunities within the settlement, and business and industrial areas in Dyce, Kintore and Inverurie. Figure 3 indicates the wider bus connections that Blackburn benefits from. The site itself has an existing bus stop on the southern edge providing both east bound and west bound services

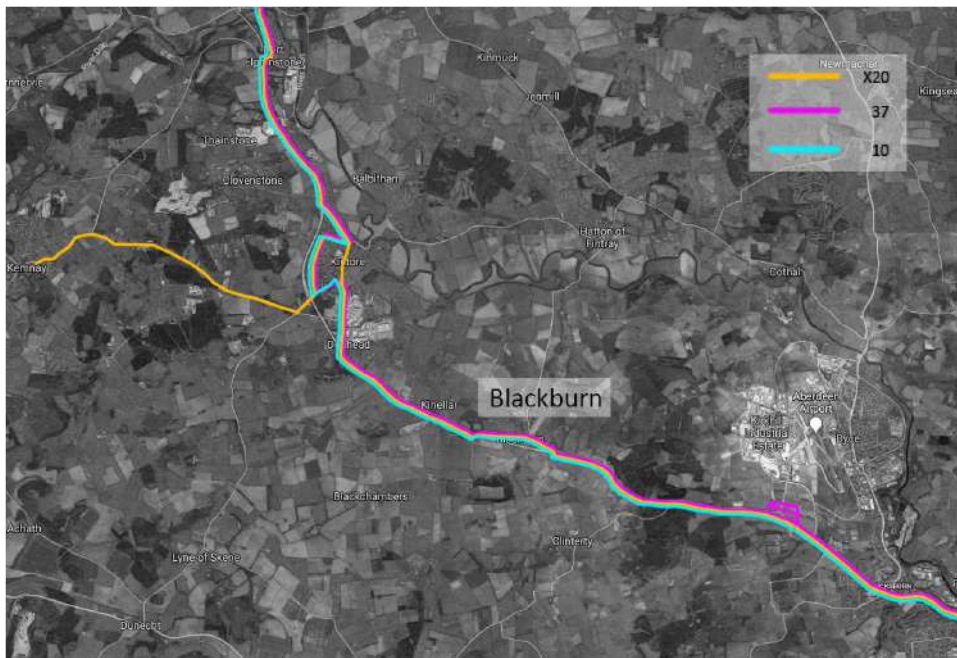


Figure 3: Bus Routes

and these bus stops are located within 400m of the majority of the development areas.

The Strategic Development Plan identifies an aspiration for a strategic walking / cycling link along the length of this corridor and the cycle route and existing core path would take you from Blackburn through this site, along Old Turnpyke Road following this route

to Kintore. The proposed Development Strategy retains and improves this core connection within the site and will upgrade what is currently a farm track.

4.2 Need for Housing Land in Blackburn

Within the Strategic Development Plan it is identified that the housing allowances for the Inverurie to Blackburn corridor were to be focused beyond 2027 with an allowance identified of 4,000 homes for this period. This was to allow for some of the improvements in the strategic transport network to progress. Much of the difficulties are around Inverurie. Development in Blackburn can assist in contributing towards the supply of land within this next phase of the Strategic Development Plan and also capitalise on the connectivity that will be offered within this growth corridor.

The Inverurie to Blackburn corridor has identified 12.7% of the total Aberdeen Housing Market Area allowances as identified within the Strategic Development Plan. This is the most of any corridor and recognises the demand for housing within this area. This is also highlighted by the fact that both Inverurie and Blackburn are high priority settlements for affordable housing within the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

According to the 2017 Housing Land Audit the land supply within the Blackburn to Inverurie corridor is focused on Inverurie and Kintore, as shown in Table 1 below. Within the existing Strategic Development Plan there is an allowance for 3,691 units from 2011 to 2026 and a further 4,000 units in the final phase. With an effective land supply of 3,512 units there is a need to provide additional effective land for the next plan period, 2021 to 2031.

Table 1: Inverurie to Blackburn Land Supply			
Settlement	Remaining Effective supply	Completions since 2011	Totals
Inverurie	1,922	754	2,676
Kintore	772	63	835
Blackburn	0	1	1
Total	2,694	818	3,512

Source: Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2017

The Council have concerns about the level of development in Inverurie until the congestion problems in Inverurie are resolved. There is a commitment for the A96 route to be dualled from Aberdeen to Inverness, but there remain uncertainties about the improvements provided by this and the timescales, which may not see this provided until towards the end of the next plan period (2031). This is currently limiting development in Inverurie until such time as the solutions have been designed. With the need to identify additions to the housing supply within this strategic growth area this leaves Kintore and Blackburn as the only options within this section of the corridor. Kintore already has a major settlement expansion planned with 807 homes allocated providing a long term supply of land for housing. There are also limited further options in Kintore with the A96 to the west and the River Don to the East. Blackburn, however, has no effective land supply and is an ideal location to integrate a new housing development.

The existing allocation of 50 homes at site OP1 in the Local Development Plan has constrained the supply of new housing in Blackburn over the past 7 years and its continued allocation is blocking the allocation of sites that will be developed to meet local housing need and demand. The Site OP1, Caskieben, is identified as constrained within the 2017 Housing Land Audit for ownership reasons and there is no identified strategy for the site becoming effective. There is a need for the Council to monitor and review these types of allocation to ensure that the effective land supply can be maximised. Continued allocation of developments that are not being progressed will cause difficulties in asset planning for the Council as there can be no certainty to allow projects such as new schools to be progressed. The proposed

development at Hillhead of Glasgoego by Stewart Milne Homes will be delivered within the plan period and firm plans for investment can be made relying on the development.

For the size of the settlement Blackburn the land supply for housing within Blackburn is particularly constrained. Aberdeenshire Council provide small area population estimates and Table 2 compares the remaining effective land supply in settlements with similar populations.

Table 3: Comparison of Land Supply		
Settlement	Population Estimate	Total effective Supply 2017 to 2028
Insch	2,057	60
Newmachar	2,267	418
Balmedie	2,178	150
Oldmeldrum	2,818	99
Alford	2,654	129
Inverbervie	2,195	216
Laurencekirk	2,534	466
Blackburn	2,602	0
Source: Aberdeenshire Small Area Population Estimates Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2017		

The Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report (2018) has identified that there will be a requirement for additional allocations for the period 2021 to 2031 and there is a focus on ensuring that any new proposals are deliverable. To ensure this is the case there needs to be a market for the development in the identified location, a financially viable proposal and a desire to develop the site. In taking an option out for the development of this site Stewart Milne Homes are committed to the development of this site and given the scale of the existing settlement there is an existing market need and demand for housing within Blackburn where there is no effective supply of housing land. With Stewart Milne's track record in the delivery of housing this is a site that can be delivered quickly and contribute towards the housing supply within the early years of the next plan period.

5 ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

5.1 Landscape and open space

Blackburn developed around the Main Road and over recent years development has extended northwards mainly to the west of the Blackburn on land rising up from the Main Road. Blackburn is not located within a Special Landscape Area and the closest Special Landscape Area is around Bennachie. Within the assessment of the site in the Examination for the 2017 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan there was concern raised about the landscape impact due to the topography of the site. At that time there was no landscape and visual assessment or detail for the proposals for the Council or for the reporter to make an appraisal of the significance of this impact. The supporting Development Strategy includes an appraisal of the landscape impact and has resulted in the creation of discrete compartments of development with strategic landscaping which will contain development within and integrate it with the surrounding landscape character.

The town is surrounded by open agricultural land, but the settlement does lack good quality public open spaces. The Development Strategy provides details on the areas dedicated to open space confirming that the Council's policy of 40% open space can be achieved within the development. Towards the west of Blackburn there is more limited open space. The park at the end of Averon Park is not currently well integrated with the settlement and the proposed development will link this space with the Carnmohr hill top park and the tree belts. These areas of open space will be accessible to the wider area through Old Turnpyke Road, the residential areas around Averon Park and from the Main Road.

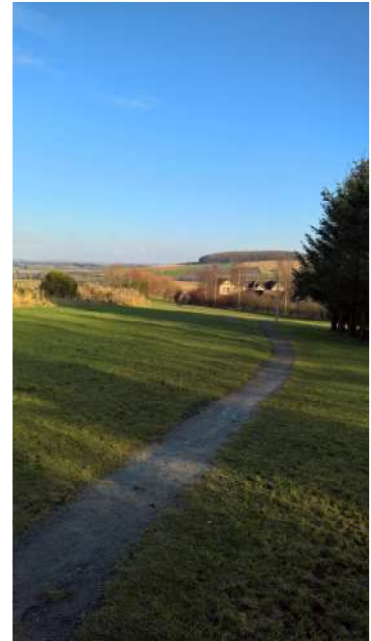


Figure 4: Open Space at Averon

5.2 Gas Pipeline

A gas pipeline operated by Transco passes through the site. The pipeline has associated consultation zones within which HSE provide guidance regarding the acceptable levels of development depending on the risk associated with the hazard and the proposed use. There are options that could be considered to keep the pipeline in its current location through reduced densities. However, it is considered that a more successful development would be created by relocating this pipeline further to the west. This pipeline is the same pipeline that passes through the west of Westhill and Stewart Milne Homes, working with the pipeline owner, relocated this outwith the Broadshade development site. This forms part of the appraisal for the development and the development is viable accounting for these costs.

5.3 Education

The site is located within the catchment of Kemnay Academy and Kinellar Primary School. Kinellar Primary School is currently being rebuilt with pupils temporarily being relocated to Midmill School in Kintore. The



new school is due to be complete for the 2018/19 school term. The replacement Kinellar Primary School will have a capacity of 484 pupils when it opens as identified within The Council's report to Education & Children's Services Committee on 1 February 2018 providing a review of Primary School capacities. The school was rebuilt on the existing site due to difficulties in trying to obtain land within OP1 as identified in the Local Development Plan.

Figure 5: New Kinellar Primary School

There has been no progress on the development of OP1 since its allocation in the 2012 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. An application for a certificate of alternative development was submitted to the Council in 2015. This was in relation to the land identified for a school whilst there were proposals for Compulsory Purchase prior to the decision to rebuild the school on the existing site. There have been no applications or proposal of application notices submitted to the Council to progress this development over the 6 years it has been allocated. It is suggested that this position is reviewed and account of this is then factored into the school roll forecasts.

The school roll for Kinellar Primary School is forecast to decline over the period to 2022. There had been a major increase in capacity associated with new development, but with the increased capacity to 484 this will be resolved. Capacity in 2022 is forecast at 361 pupils, beyond this period forecasts are more difficult to predict, but with no other new developments within the catchment it would be likely that there is sufficient capacity for the proposed development at Hillhead of Glasgoego during the period 2021 to 2031.

Kemnay Academy has a working capacity of 1,000 pupils at present and the school is forecast to be over capacity with planned development and demographic changes. There will need to be options considered to secure long term capacity of Kemnay Academy that serves Kemnay, Kintore, and Blackburn. Land is reserved in Kintore P7 for education use and identified within the Masterplan for Kintore OP1 for a secondary School. A second secondary school to accommodate Kemnay, Blackburn and Kintore will assist in taking pressure off from Kemnay Academy. The proposed development at Blackburn will contribute towards education provision as necessary and increased delivery within these settlements will assist in making the delivery of a new academy viable.

5.4 Historic Environment

Overall there are no features on the site or close to the site that would be negatively affected in any way by the proposals.

Kinellar House is a Category B Listed Building and sits within mature woodland, which is recorded as the remains of a 17th to 19th century designed landscape. The house is well screened from the surrounding area by the existing woodland and the development at Glasgoego will have no effect on the setting of this building or result in the loss of any of the woodland. The landscaping proposals within the Development Strategy set out how the landscaping will respond to this.

The existing Glasgoego farmstead is located at the centre of the site. There is no particular historical value attached to the buildings other than the link to the agricultural nature of the site. The buildings may provide an opportunity for redevelopment as a part of the proposals, but this is not defined at this stage.

There is evidence of rig and furrow within the landscaping to the north of the site covering a small area of land. This is located within the trees that will be retained in the development and any evidence that remains of these agricultural practices will be protected.

There is a record of two stone axes from Cairntradlin having been discovered within the centre of the site that are held in Marischal Museum, Aberdeen. Through the development an initial archaeological investigation can be undertaken should the Council's Archaeology service feel that it is appropriate.

5.5 Natural Environment

The site is agricultural land and for the majority of the site there is no significant environmental value. There are no designations of protection and the agricultural land does not provide a priority habitat. There are existing landscape features on the site that will be retained and the proposals will enhance these features through strategic landscaping to increase the biodiversity value of the site.

The land is classified as having capability for agriculture of 3.1 and being capable of producing a wide range of crops. All of the land surrounding Blackburn and the land to the south of the A96, extending to Westhill is of the same classification. Blackburn is located within the strategic growth area and there is a need for additional housing allocations to be made to meet housing needs. The planned approach to identifying limited and deliverable sites that the Council is adopting will ensure that the loss of prime agricultural land as a result of development is not significant. The soil data does not indicate that this is an area of potential for carbon-rich soils.

The development will involve the relocation of the gas pipeline from within the development land. An agreed route will require to be identified through detailed design, but with no environmental designations surrounding the site there is not likely to be any effects on existing habitats. The process of removing and laying a new pipeline would result in short term and temporary effects during construction with temporary restrictions to the core path. However, with improvements being made to this route the effect will be positive overall.

5.6 Affordable Housing

Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018 identifies Blackburn as a high priority settlement for affordable housing. This has been based on the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and the waiting list data that the Council hold. However, despite this priority there are no sites within the Strategic Housing Investment Plan that are identified for affordable housing. There is only one allocation in Blackburn, but as discussed previously, there has been no progress made on this development and the Council are unable to commit funding to delivery of affordable housing on this site. The allocation of the land at Glasgoego will provide affordable housing integrated with the development. Stewart Milne Homes will work with the Council's Housing Service to identify the most appropriate mix of housing to meet the needs of the local population.

5.7 Flooding and Drainage

The site is not at risk of flooding and there are no water courses that pass through the site. Surface water drainage will require to be designed to treat and attenuate surface water and working with the levels of the site these will be located along the main road, the lowest point of the site, and these will be designed to create a feature to the development.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In response to Aberdeenshire Council's call for sites, plans have been prepared in support of a residential allocation at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn. The site is located within the strategic growth area where there is a regional and national policy to focus growth and investment in infrastructure. The site is located on the western edge of Blackburn and will form a sustainable extension to the settlement.

The Council identified concerns regarding the landscape impact of the proposals and the implications of the gas pipeline in assessing the proposals through previous submissions for inclusion within the Local Development Plan. The Landscape appraisal undertaken demonstrates how the development can respond positively to the setting by utilising the existing site features and creating a hill top park on the northern edge. The proposals will enhance the existing landscape following existing boundaries and roads that will minimise the visual impact of development.

Blackburn is a main settlement within the strategic growth areas and there is a need and demand for housing. There are no effective sites within Blackburn that limit the development potential. Following a review of the proposals against the Council's Bid form no further issues of concerns have been identified and it is considered that the allocation of this site in Blackburn will provide the following benefits.

- Contribution towards the delivery of strategic housing targets and local growth.
- Development in a sustainable location with close access to local services and public transport.
- Provision of affordable housing within a settlement that is identified as high priority by Aberdeenshire Council within the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
- The development provides the opportunity to create new open spaces that will link to existing open space, will be accessible to the wider community and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity.
- Provide a stronger settlement edge opposite the business land to the west end of Blackburn.
- The development will provide improved green links along Old Turnpyke Road (Core Path) that provides connection to Kintore remote from the A96.

The site is within the control of Stewart Milne Homes and there is a commitment to the delivery of this site. The site is in control of a single party and ownership extends to the site boundaries ensuring that this development can be delivered quickly to meet the Council's housing targets.

GGO 3 – Development Strategy



Land at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

Development Strategy, Response to Aberdeenshire

Local Development Plan 2021 - Call for Sites

Client: Stewart Milne Homes (SMH)

Revision: A

Date: March 2018



fig. 1: Photo looking west across Blackburn to the site.

Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document describes the opportunity that the site at Glasgoego, presents for a well-located and deliverable expansion to Blackburn. This document has been prepared to support a formal response to Aberdeenshire Council Call for Sites and help inform the preparation of the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2021-2031.

Aberdeenshire Council is inviting applications from anyone who would like to apply to have land allocated for housing, business or mixed use development within the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) for the period 2021 to 2031 and beyond. This document has been prepared by Optimised Environments Limited, 'OPEN' on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) land interest at Glasgoego, Blackburn. This development strategy document has been prepared to provide the justification and rationale for the allocation of land at this location.

SMH controls 42 hectares (103 acres) of land to the west of Blackburn (the site area), shown on Figure 2 and has appointed OPEN to explore the potential for locating development in this location. This development strategy document presents OPEN's response to the site to help inform SMH representation and help Aberdeenshire Council to identify suitable development sites for inclusion in the next LDP.

Following a study of the landscape capacity and landscape and visual analysis of the wider site area OPEN believes there is capacity within the landscape setting to accommodate development in keeping with the setting of the existing settlement. The potential development site at Glasgoego, identified on Figure 2, measures 42ha and has the capacity to accommodate around 300 new homes as part of a new residential allocation.

This document has been prepared to demonstrate the rationale for locating development in this location, explain the landscape capacity opportunities, describe the proposed structure of development and outline the key benefits development in this location could offer Blackburn.

1.2 Document structure

This document describes the proposed site location and its surrounding context, and includes a visual and physical appraisal of the site and its environs providing an analysis of the landscape setting. Through this appraisal, the study then identifies the landscape capacity of the site to accommodate change and concludes with a concept and high level Development Framework to demonstrate the opportunities and benefits of development on the site at Glasgoego, Blackburn.

The document is structured as follows;

Introduction

Site context

The site

Development strategy

Summary

The document demonstrates that the landscape character and quality of the setting of Blackburn will not be compromised through careful sited and structured development and indeed that an opportunity exists to not only identify suitable development areas but also to enhance aspects such access to open space, access routes and the character of the south western edge of Blackburn. Following a master planning approach, which considers the wider site area, this approach emphasises landscape capacity, site appraisal, design quality, innovation and sustainability as the key factors which can achieve this objective.

1.3 Site overview

The site which covers some 42 hectares is located to the west of Blackburn, north of the B973 Main Road and extends to include two fields west of Kingsfield Road to the north of Kinellar. The site comprise a number of agricultural fields surrounding Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm, to the north and south Old Turnpyke Road.

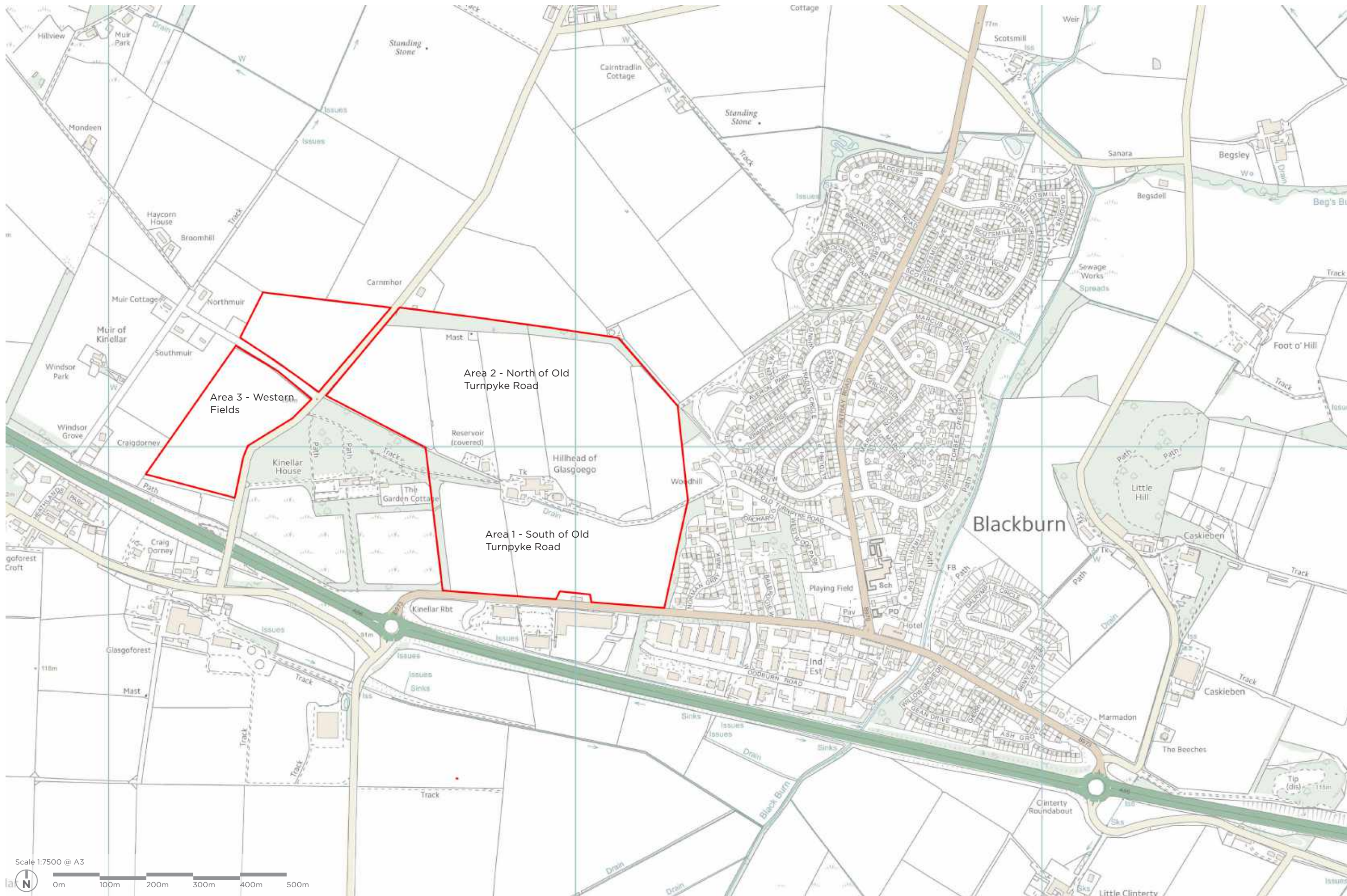
The site can be best described in three main parts, land south of Turnpyke Road, land to the north of Turnpyke Road and the western fields.

The land south of Old Turnpyke Road comprises three south facing fields bounded by the B973 to the south. The agricultural fields are bounded by woodland on the existing settlement edge to the east and mature estate woodland surrounding Kinellar House to the west.

To the north of Turnpyke Road and Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm, the second part of the site comprises a number of agricultural fields which extend from the farm track north to the belt of existing trees which align the crest of the hill which Blackburn is set below.

To the west of Kingsfield Road are two fields which fall either side of a minor road and comprise the final part of the total site area.

The total site area is shown on figure 2 within which the full area is under the control of SMH.



2. Site context

2.1 Aberdeenshire LDP 2017

Vision (Extract from LDP)

Blackburn is a successful commuter town situated on the A96, which also benefits from a significant industrial estate providing local employment opportunities. The location of the town, and the demand for housing in Aberdeen, has driven development within the settlement but placed pressure on existing facilities, particularly the primary school. Much of Blackburn is surrounded by prominent hillsides, whilst the A96 provides a physical boundary to the south of the settlement. Proposals to construct a new primary school are in progress. The council had intended that the new school would be erected on a site on the east side of the town and that the site of the existing school would be reserved as a redevelopment opportunity. At a late stage in the preparation of this plan, the council decided that the new school should be on the site of the existing school and on land on the west side of Fintray Road.

The landscape setting of Blackburn should be conserved and improved. Footpaths should be improved and extended, with a long-term objective of providing a walking route around the whole of the town.

Flood Risk

Part of sites BUS, R1 and OP1 have a small watercourse running through or adjacent to the site. A flood risk assessment may be required.

Oil and Gas Pipelines

Part of the settlement is within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consultation distance associated with one or more oil or gas pipelines in the vicinity. Developments within this distance must comply with Policy P4: Hazardous and potentially polluting developments and contaminated land, and with the HSE “Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations”.

Allocated site - Caskieben (OP1)

Allocation 50 Homes.

This site was previously allocated as site M1 in the 2012 LDP. A masterplan will be required to demonstrate integration with the existing town and the school. A buffer strip and proposals for enhancement of the nature conservation value of the Black Burn to extend the green network to this area, and up to the woodlands of “Sycamores” and Caskieben Road, should be pursued as part of the open space obligations for the site. A flood risk assessment may be required.

Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

Settlement Features

Protected Land

- P1 To conserve the playing fields as an important local amenity.
- P2 To conserve the landscape/setting, which contributes to the green network.
- P3 To conserve the landscape/setting, which contributes to the green network.
- P4 To provide a landscape buffer.
- P5 This site was to have been reserved for provision of a replacement primary school: see “Vision”, above. Determining the future use of site P5 will require a review of development opportunities at Blackburn.
- P6 To conserve the landscape/setting, which contributes to the green network

Reserved Land

- R1 This site was to have been reserved as a development opportunity: see “Vision”, above. The council now intends to use the site and other nearby ground for erection of a new primary school.

Other Designations

BUS Safeguarded for employment uses. A core path runs along the northern boundary. A high-pressure gas transmission pipeline crosses part of the site. The design of development must take into account need to safeguard the pipeline and safety advice from the Health and Safety Executive.

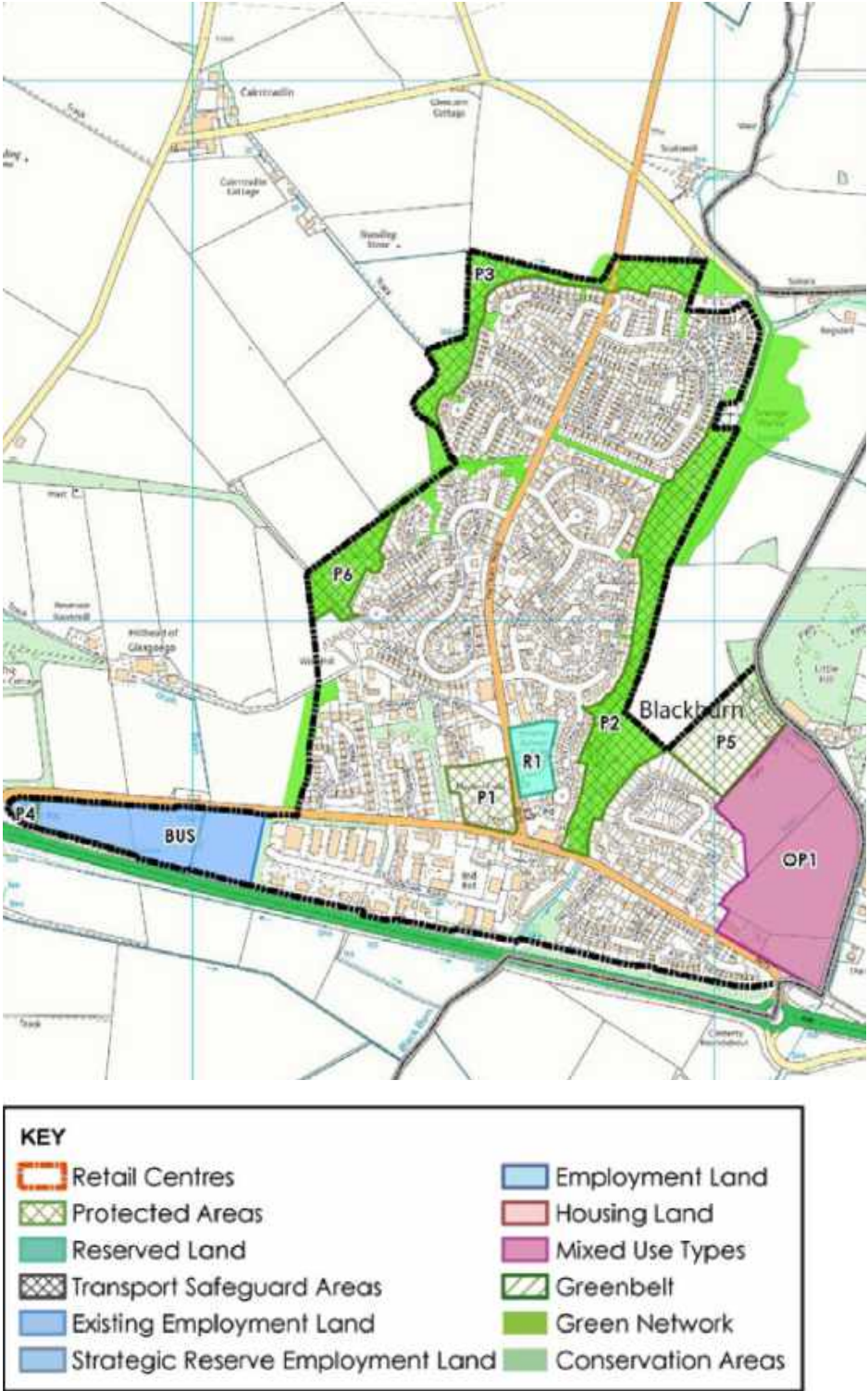


fig. 3: Extract from Aberdeenshire LDP 2017.

2.2 Landscape character

The landscape character of Aberdeenshire is recorded and classified in Scottish Natural Heritage's publication 'South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment', SNH Review No 102, (Environmental Resources Management, 1998). The site lies at the eastern edges of the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 12 – Central Wooded Estates, the key characteristics of which are described as follows:

- 'Rolling landscape of low hills and wide valleys.
- Strong woodland structure associated with numerous estate policies, adding rich and diverse texture.
- Clumps of trees atop mounds and hillocks, often bounded by circular stone walls; mature shady beech avenues; conifer plantations distributed amongst broadleaves.
- Mixed farmland with varying size and pattern of fields.
- Mosses within lowland hollows where birch and Scots pine predominate.
- Numerous and varied archaeological features, including henges, carved stone balls, recumbent stone circles and pictish monuments.
- Numerous towns and villages, many subject to recent residential expansion.
- Frequent settlement with a variety of sizes and styles of architecture; local vernacular stone buildings with conversions and extensions, modern bungalows and houses.
- Long views across open farmland contrast with sudden enclosure by woodland as one passes through area.'

2.3 Landscape designations

There are no landscape designations on or close to the site with the closest Special Landscape Area (SLA) 7.5km to the west of the proposed site on the hills and forest of Bennachie.

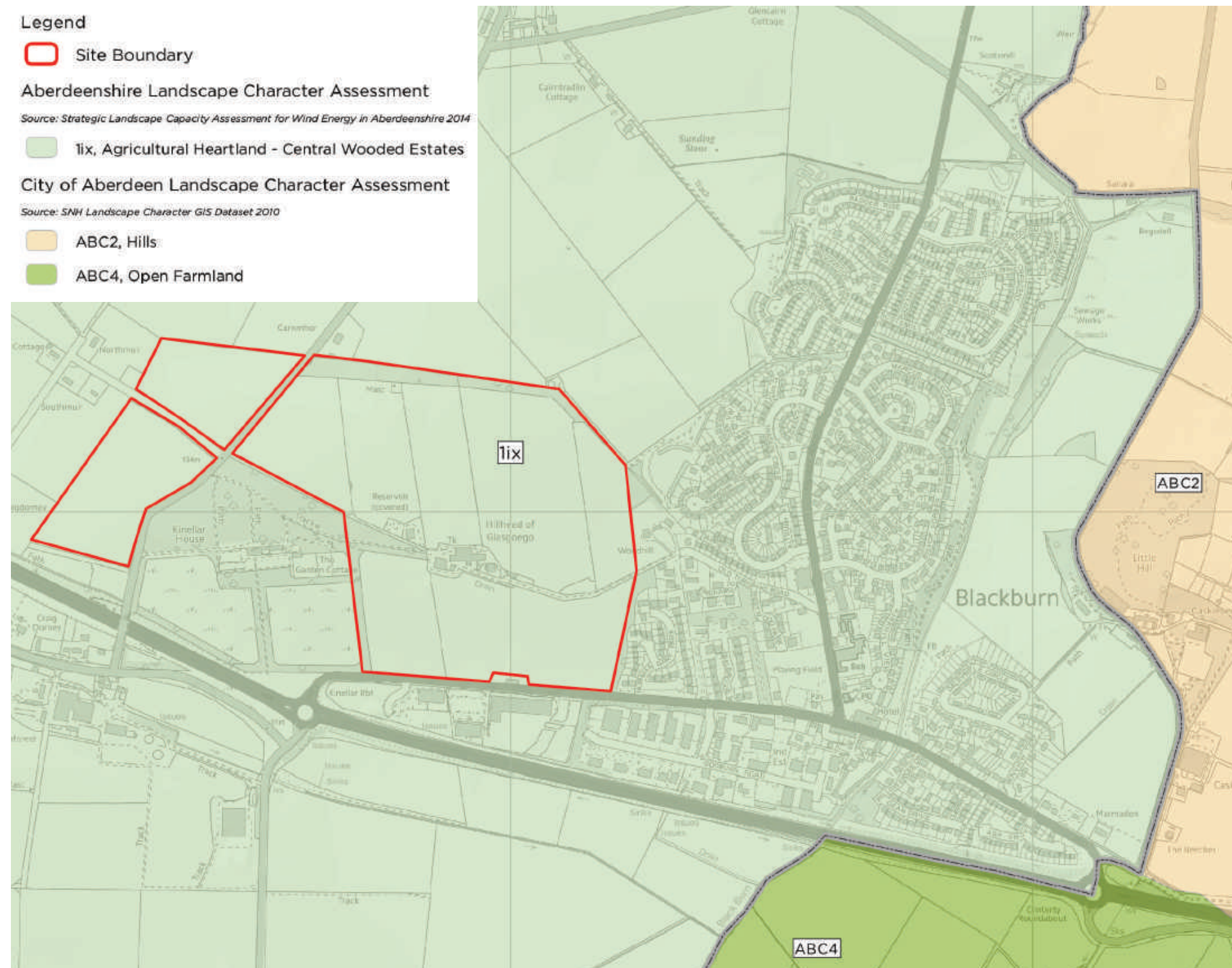


fig. 4: Landscape Character

2.4 Landscape setting and context

The location and landscape setting of the site on the edge of Blackburn has been the key consideration when looking at the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change and any new development opportunities. Section 3.4, the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, contains a review of the landscape setting and identifies opportunities for development within the site.

Figure 5 opposite illustrates how the site area extends from the B973 north to the crest of Carnmhor Hill with much of the northern part of the site extending above the height of the existing settlement. The low point of the site is located to the south east next to the existing settlement at around + 84m AOD. The highpoint of the site is located on the northern edge at around + 155m AOD.

The land to the south of Old Turnpyke Road falls at a consistent gradient from the farm track to the B973. Whilst the gradient is relatively steep it does not pose a constraint to development with many existing residential areas within Blackburn on similar slopes. The south facing slope does provide benefit through the southerly aspect and views to the south.

To the north of Old Turnpyke Road the land rises relatively steeply at first becoming more gradual to the north and west of the area. The existing settlement rises to around 130m AOD with woodland to the north providing a backdrop to the development. The woodland that crosses Carnmhor Hill at the high point provides a distinct feature within the area, connecting the town to the surrounding landscape and acting to contain the site to the south.

The fields to the west are lower lying and relatively well contained by the surrounding woodland areas.

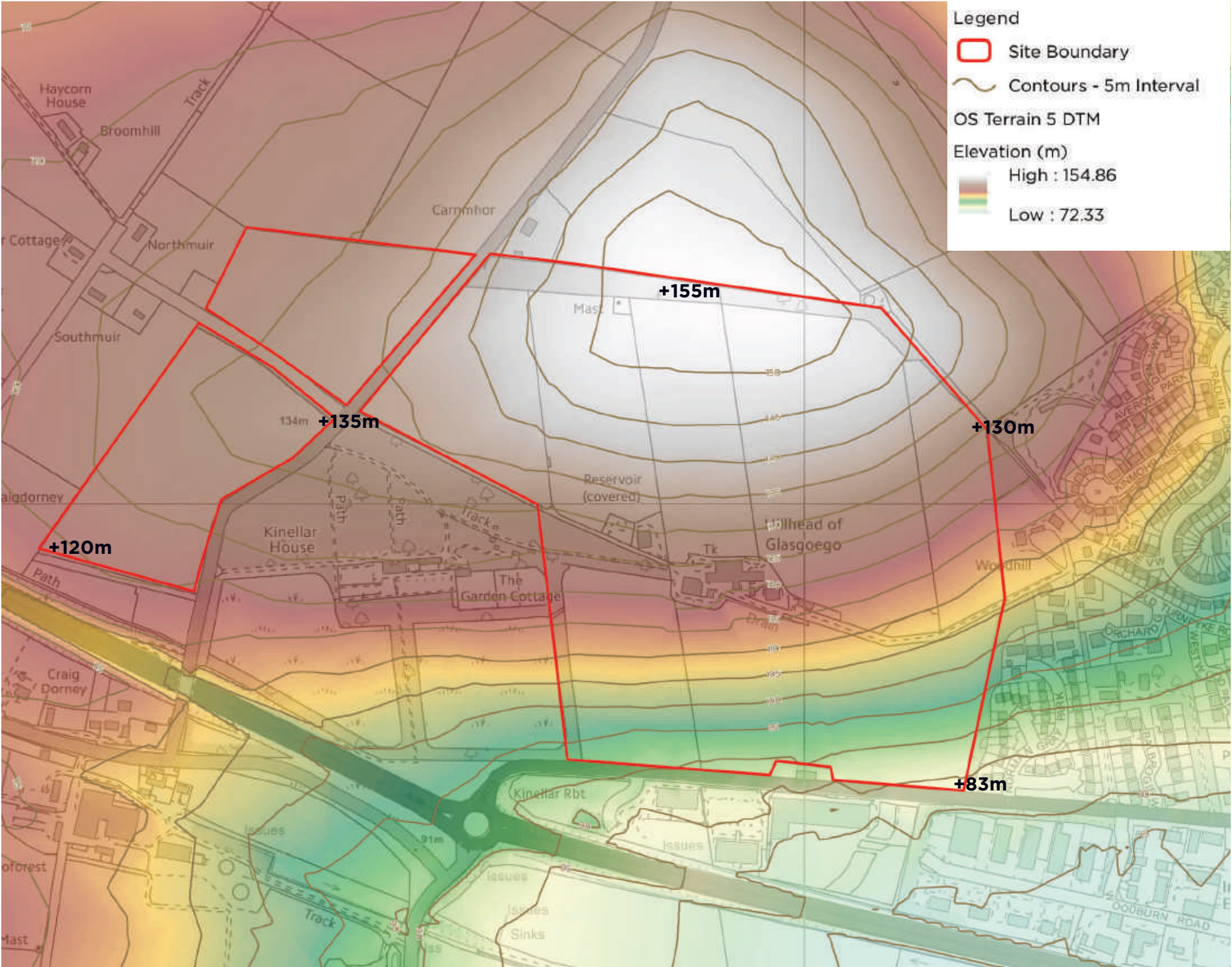


fig. 5: Landscape setting and topography.



fig. 6: Blackburn 1885-1900



fig. 7: Blackburn 1920-1940



fig. 8: Blackburn 1952-1961

2.4.1 Structure and historic growth

The plans above and opposite illustrate how Blackburn has grown over time.

The historic settlement of Blackburn was originally located around the junction of the B973 Fenichie Brae and B793 Main Road. Located between Tyrebagger Hill to the east and Carnmhor Hill to the west the settlement grew around the junction and Black Burn.

The oldest parts of the settlement are located on the lower slopes of Carnmhor Hill around the junction and to the west of the Black Burn. Over time the settlement has grown north on either side of the B973 keeping to the lower slopes. The development of the A96 to the south has allowed the settlement to grow along the B973 both to the east and west infilling the land between the two roads.

By keeping development on the lower slopes of the hills this has ensured the settlement has remained sensitively located within the wider landscape without extending on the higher more visible land. The settlement has grown in such a manner as to follow the topography set within an established woodland structure along the Black Burn valley.

Further to the topography, the character of the area is also defined by a strong and established landscape structure of field boundaries and woodland belts. These features clearly define boundaries and impose a formal structure to the landscape such as where the woodland passes straight over Carnmhor Hill or where woodland surrounds Kinellar House.

Some of the landscape features have over time been enveloped within the settlement as it has grown such as the north south woodland belts which define the residential areas adjacent to the site.

The woodland structure including belts of woodland surrounding development and woodland groups are a key characteristic of the landscape and integral to the setting of the town.



fig. 9: Blackburn 1992

2.5 Urban context

Figure 10 on the opposite page identifies the site in relation to the centre of Blackburn with some of the key facilities and amenities also identified. The existing path network and walking distances (400m and 800m) from the site are also identified to illustrate how well connected and accessible the eastern parts of the site are to the existing settlement.

The proximity and ease of access from the site to the centre of Blackburn (the school, community centre and shops) is a key opportunity for sustainable development in the area. The plan illustrates that much of the site is within 800m or approximately 10minutes walk of the centre of Blackburn, which would make these areas attractive for the development of a walkable community. The B973 Main Road and the Core Paths to the south and Old Turnpyke Road provide safe and direct connections to the amenities within Blackburn.

The plan illustrates how Blackburn has already extended west to the south of the B973, providing a variety of business and commercial sites. Whilst this is not residential development it does represent built development within the settlement envelope and change the character of the approach to Blackburn along the B973. The business and commercial development now represents the edge of Blackburn to the west with the perception of entering the settlement as you approach on the B973 now opposite Kinellar House.

Local Facilities

Figure 10 opposite identifies the local facilities in relation to the site area.

1. Primary school
2. Kinellar Play Park
3. Kinellar Community Hall
4. Post Office
5. Blackburn mini-market
6. Pharmacy
7. Coffee Shops

2.5.1 Aberdeenshire Open Space Audit

The text below is extracted from the Open Space Audit for Blackburn and has been used to inform the proposals for the site.

Green Network Links

Habitat links are best at the south end of Blackburn, although many larger spaces are in any case located at the edge of the settlement. It is important that any new open space has links to the surrounding countryside.

The Avern path network received a high score in terms of usage levels and attractiveness and provides an excellent amenity area for the local community. Blackburn is the interface between a proposed Core Path between Aberdeen City Kirkhill Forest area, and links westward to Kinellar Hall Wood, and beyond to Kintore, Port Elphinstone and Inverurie

Open Space Requirements

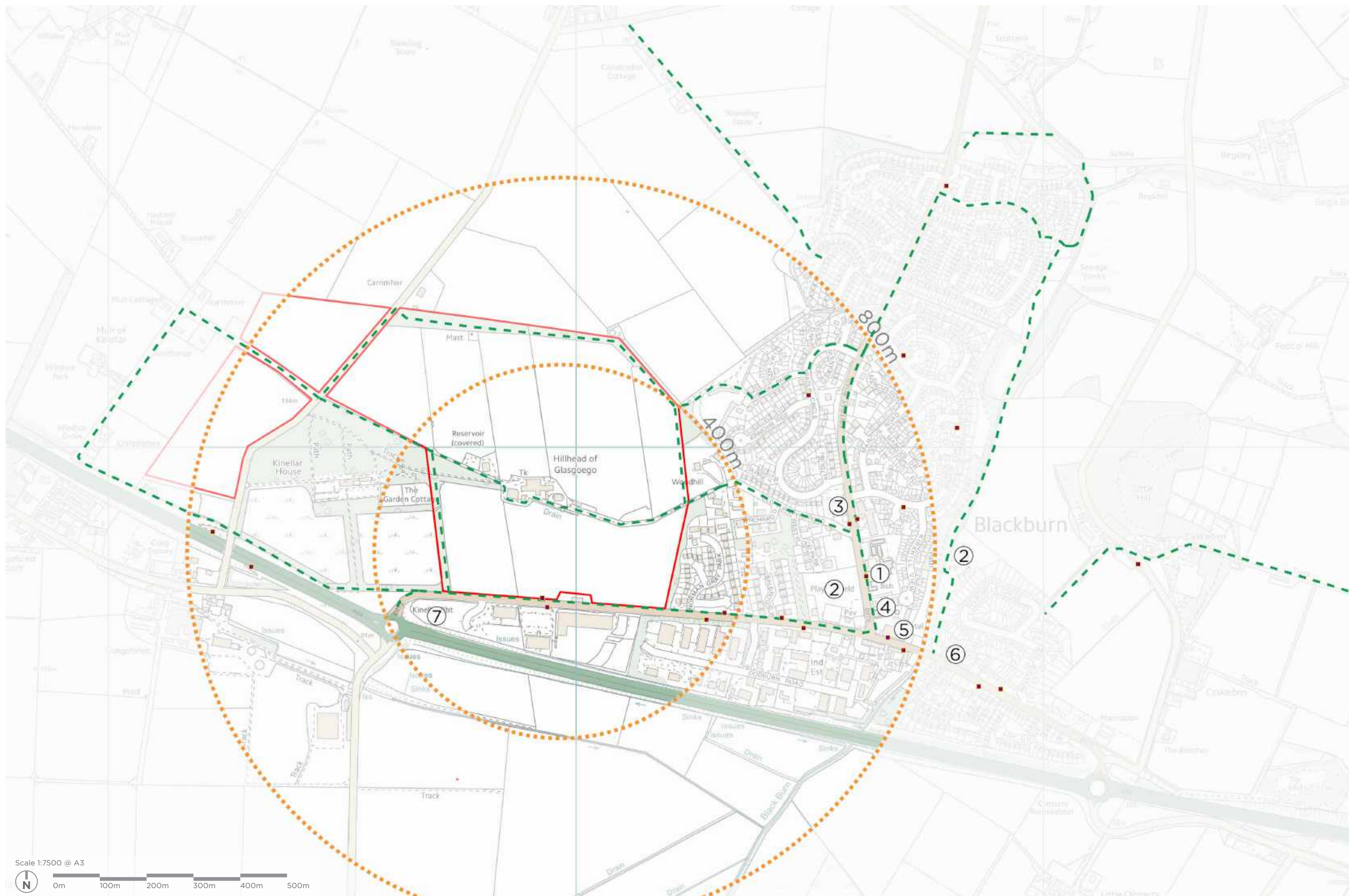
A wide range of open space is available in Blackburn, but with this, opportunities can be identified for improvement to equipment and grounds, or else a reappraisal of the function of a site.

Blackburn Park is well used, but with significant evidence of anti-social behaviour, including litter, and debris in the stream. Adjustments are suggested to make the zip slide more usable.

In terms of additional equipment, there is scope for increasing the access to some sites, such as Keith Gardens amenity area, with the installation of seating; further consultation with the local community is recommended to clarify the best option in this respect.

Improvements and additions to the play frame at Gean Park may be desirable, but the site does not fall within the Council's ownership and responsibility and would require community input.

Although Blackburn appears to have a significant proportion of amenity space, much of this is industrial or transport amenity land (adjacent to the A90), and as such does not serve a particular community function. Elsewhere, much of the amenity space is formally planted, with paths for (dog) walking. Overall, the principle requirement in Blackburn is for bringing about improvements to existing parks and open spaces through community action, and some fundraising or grant applications for new activities if appropriate.



2.6 Local character

As a general principle development should be in keeping with the character of the settlement and local area. The existing housing areas to the east of the site are relatively recent additions to Blackburn where the retention of the historic woodland has defined two distinct character areas.

Until recently the woodland had provided the setting to a limited number of large residential plots surrounded by fields which now provide the sites for the new residential areas described below, see figures 6 to 9, the historic plans.

To the north accessed from Old Turnpyke Road are a limited number of large detached plots and small groups of properties which as a result of the very low density approach has allowed the existing woodland and trees to be retained and define the character of the area.

To the south accessed from the B973 are two new housing areas at Balbrogie Woods and Norman Gary Park. Whilst the housing within these areas is of a higher density and more standard in form and layout it is still set within the established landscape structure where the woodland running north to south has defined clear areas for development on the south facing slopes.

The site area is located immediately adjacent to these housing areas, however, due to the urban nature and design of the town as a series of ‘pockets’ and cul de sacs separated by woodland there is little opportunity to integrate the site directly into these areas. The site may not be able to integrate directly through connected streets, however, as a result of the location and landscape setting there are good opportunities to integrate with the surrounding areas through woodland areas, areas of public open space and the very good path network.



Old Turnpyke Road.



1- Orchard Grove off Old Turnpyke Road. Detached housing at approximately 8 units per hectare.



fig. 11: Density analysis of adjacent housing areas.



2- Norman Gray Park overlooking the B973. Detached housing at approximately 16 units per hectare.



3- Balbrogie Woods housing. Detached housing at approximately 14 units per hectare.



fig. 12: Site area in context

2.7 Access and connectivity

Located on the edge of Blackburn the majority of the site is easily accessible and very well connected to the existing network of paths, public transport links and streets. These are shown on the plan opposite and described in more detail below.

To the west of Kingsfield Road, the western fields have good connections to the path and road network however at approximately 1.5km from the centre of Blackburn are considered remote.

Walking and cycling

There currently exists a well-established network of footpaths within the area surrounding the site, allowing easy access to the centre of Blackburn, local facilities and the wider path network. Most of the southern part of the site is within 800m (10min walk of the town centre and a such would presents a viable and sustainable extension to the town and not a remote suburban development.

As shown on Figure 13 opposite, there are three Core Path routes identified running east - west across the site area including a routes following Old Turnpyke Road and the B973 to the south of the site. Development within the site area would help deliver the long-term objective of connecting the various routes and provide a walking route around the whole of the town.

Public transport

There are a number of existing bus stops located on the B973 to the south of the site with all of the southern part of the site and some of the northern part within 400m (approximately 5 minute walk) of the bus stop. The bus stops here offers connections to both local town services and strategic bus services with direct connections to Aberdeen and Inverurie.

Existing roads

The site is located immediately north of the B973 which provides a direct link to the town centre of Blackburn only 400m to the north east and the A96 junction to the west. Access could be taken directly from the B973 to the south of the site with additional access possible from Kingsfield Road to the west.

There are no opportunities to provide direct street connections to the existing residential areas to the western edge of the existing settlement.



B973 looking west.



B973 looking east.



Kingsfield Road and Old Turnpyke Road (Core Path).



Existing Core Path within woodland to the north of the site.



Old Turnpyke Road (Core Path).



B973 and Core Path alignment.

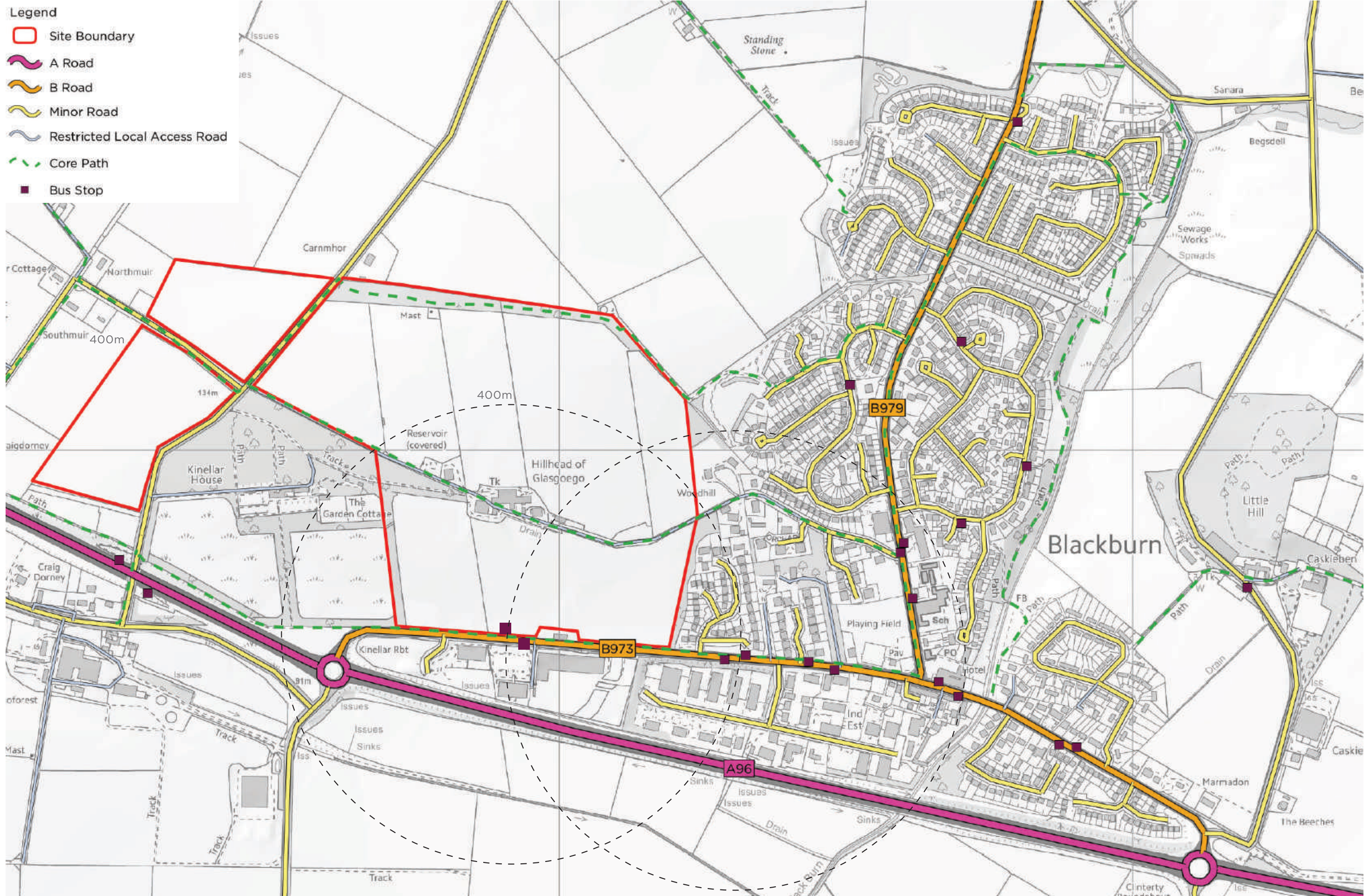


fig. 13: Existing access and connectivity

3. The Site

3.1 Site description

The site area is identified on figures 14 and 15 opposite. The site is currently retained for agricultural with clearly defined boundaries. The site area occupies the south facing slopes of elevated land to the west of the existing Blackburn settlement within fields that surround the grounds of Kinellar House.

Topography

The topography across the site is favourable to development, sloping gradually from north to south. The site falls from a high point of +150m at the centre of the northern boundary to a low point of +90m in the south east corner. The site also falls to the west, with the west, falling from +150m to +120m in the west next to Kinellar. The main part of the site faces south providing a favourable aspect and good views. Parts of the site around Old Turnpyke Road and to the south are steeper but do not provide a constraint to development.

Buildings/ Setting of Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm

The existing buildings at Hillhead of Glasgoego are the only buildings within the site area. These buildings have a prominent location on the hillside and should be retained or re-used as a landmark. Old Turnpyke Road which provides access to the farm and also forms part of the Core Path Network is a strong feature within the landscape, dividing the site and connecting Blackburn to Kinellar House estate and the surrounding landscape.

There is a covered reservoir to the west of the farm which provides a constraint to development. There is also a mast at the high point of the hill.

Trees / Woodland

There are a number of individual trees and woodland areas within and surrounding the site area which combined provide a structure which characterises the area and as such must be retained where possible. As a general principle all of the existing trees should be protected and existing areas of woodland enhanced as these provide the established boundaries and structure for development. The existing areas of woodland and trees (including mature trees along the B973) have been identified for retention on the proposals plan.

Flood Risk

No flood risk areas are identified within the site area on the SEPA Flood Plans.

Gas Pipeline

There is a gas pipeline which passes through the site, the approximate alignment is identified on figure 15. Development within the consultation distance associated with the gas pipelines must comply with Policy P4: Hazardous and potentially polluting developments and contaminated land, and with the HSE "Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations". However the proposal would be to reroute the pipeline bringing it up to an urban standard with a stand off of 6m.

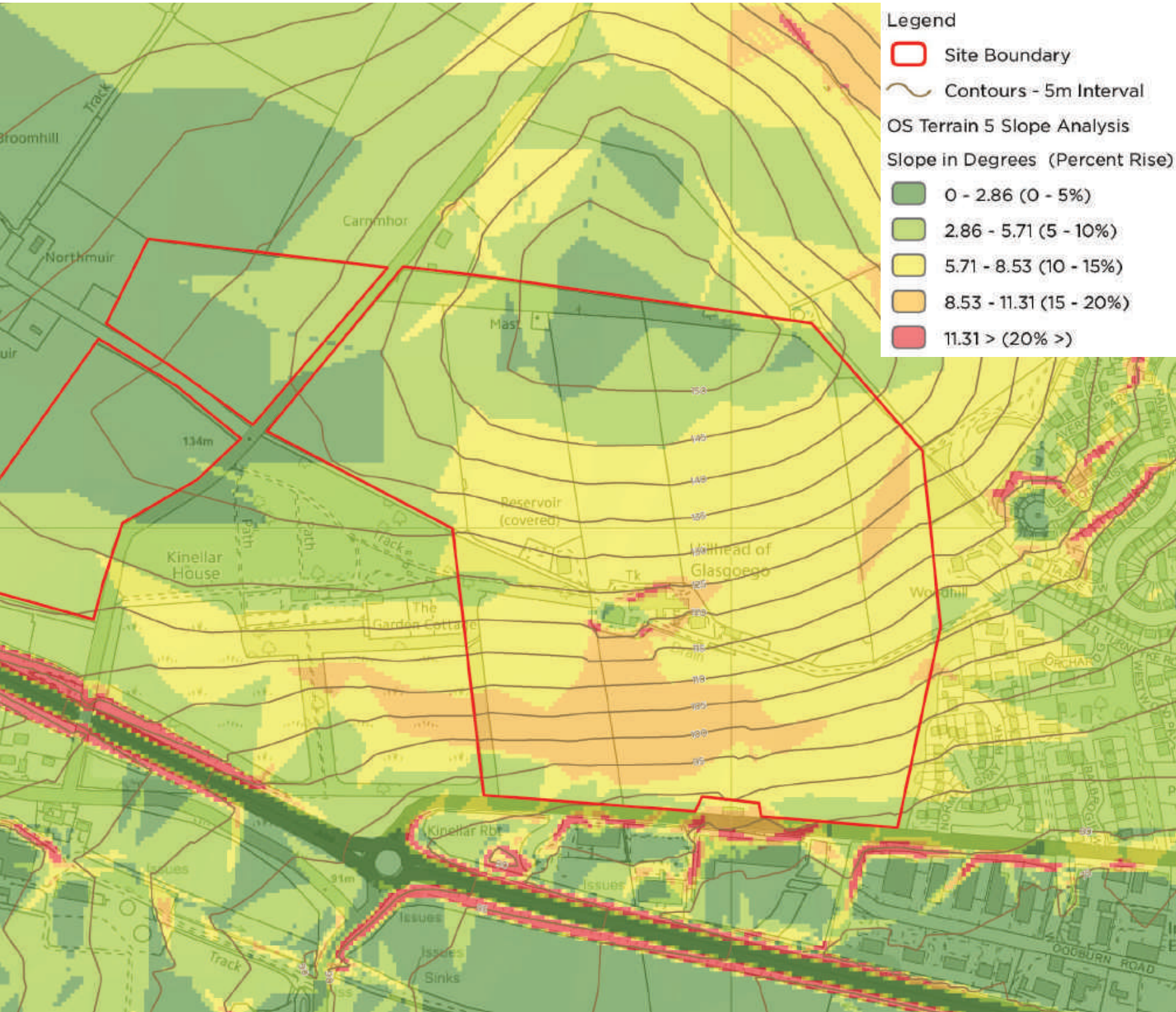


fig. 14: Site topography.



fig. 15: Site area.

3.2 Site boundaries and features

As a result of the long term agricultural use the site has remained relatively unchanged over the years with the key aspect that define the site being the boundaries, the woodland structure and Glasgoego Farm. The following section provides a short description of each of those features including the opportunities and constraints these pose to landscape capacity.



Looking north and east into the site from Kingsfield Road.

Western boundary

The western boundary of the site is defined by Kingsfield Road. Currently the open nature of the boundary allows views into the site area from the minor road. The western part of the site is visible however the settlement of Blackburn is not as it is located on lower land to the east.

The opportunity existing to connect the woodland areas to the north of the site and south around Kinellar House to provide a better defined boundary. In providing a woodland edge this would better contain the site visually, provide shelter, ecological and recreational benefits to the area.



Core Path route through the woodland.



The woodland provides a robust boundary across the hill.

Northern boundary

The northern boundary of the site is defined by a woodland strip which aligns the crest of Carnmhor Hill. As a result of the elevation and setting the woodland provides a prominent feature in views from the surrounding landscape as a backdrop to Blackburn.

The woodland provides a robust broadleaved woodland boundary to the north connecting the western edge of the site across to Blackburn. The woodland provides a route for a Core Path connecting Kingsfield Road to Blackburn and is a popular recreational route.



Eastern boundary to Norman Gray Park, defined by new woodland planting.



Mature woodland edge to the north of Old Turnpyke Road.

Eastern boundary

The eastern boundary provides an interface with the existing settlement of Blackburn. To the south of Old Turnpyke Road this is defined by a strip of new woodland planting following an original field boundary and which has been designed as an edge to the residential area of Norman Gray Park. To the north the woodland is more mature and provides a robust boundary to the existing properties that abut the site connecting to the northern boundary.



B973 looking east.



The farm buildings form a prominent feature within the site area.



Mature woodland associated with Kinellar House.



B973 looking east.

Southern boundary

The southern boundary of the site is defined by the edge to the B973. The road provides a defined edge with new development to the south extending the settlement boundary to the west in line with the woodland surrounding Kinellar House. The sites slopes up from the road edge allowing clear views in the site with the farm buildings prominent. To the east the character of the boundary changes with a line of mature trees following the fence line.



Old Turnpyke Road forms part of the Core Path network and passes through the farm connecting Blackburn to Kingsfield road to the west.

Glasgoego Farm and Old Turnpyke Road

The buildings at Glasgoego farm, including the farm house and a number of out buildings form a small group around a yard. The buildings are in varying condition but are typical stone built with slate roofs. The farm is accessed via Old Turnpyke Road both from the east and west which acts to split the site area with fields to the north and south. The elevated location of the farm on the hill side makes it a prominent feature within the site area and allows good views to the south. Old Turnpyke Road forms part of the Core Path network connecting Blackburn to Kingsfield Road on the western edge of the site. None of the buildings or structures are listed.



Mature woodland along Old Turnpyke Road.

Woodland structure

The strong woodland structure surrounding the site and associated with Kinellar House is a key characteristic of the landscape. Mature woodland defines the western, northern and eastern boundaries acting to define the site area. The woodland areas to the west and north are accessible via an existing network of paths. Tree cover within the site area is limited with some trees along Old Turnpyke Road and following a field boundary to the east of the site. A line of mature trees follow the fence line along the B973 on the southern boundary of the site. Any development within the area should seek to reinforce and enhance the woodland structure to further define the site area, provide shelter, recreational and ecological routes and add character.

3.3 Photos of the site

The following pages contain a number of photos of the site area both from distant viewpoints and the immediate surroundings with key features labelled to help describe the site and its context. The viewpoints are identified on figure 16 opposite.

Viewpoints 3,4,5,6 and 7 are not identified on the plan opposite as these are located out with the extents of the plan.

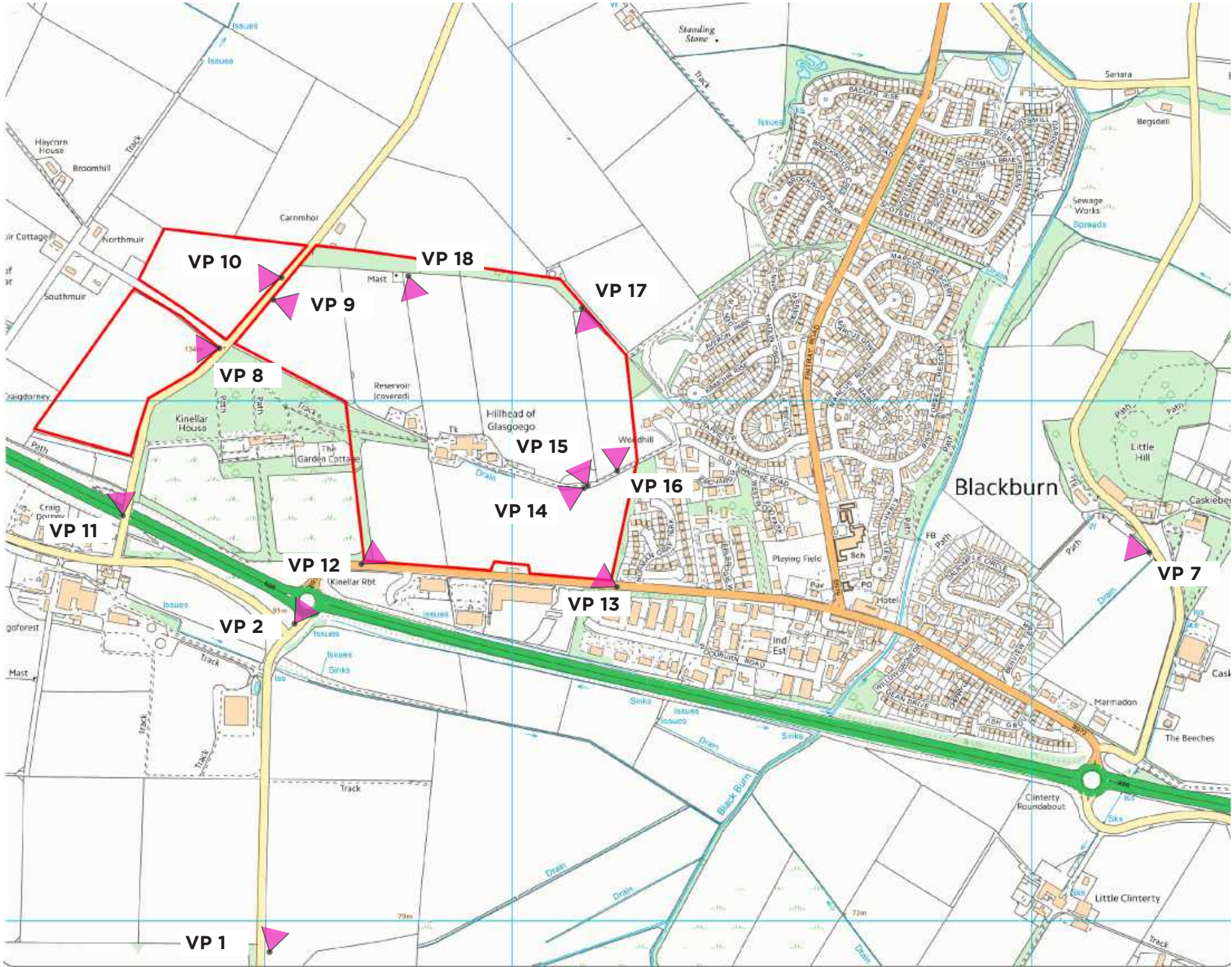


fig. 16: Photo viewpoints.



Viewpoint 1: Wogle Farm.



Viewpoint 2: A96/Kinellar Roundabout.



Viewpoint 3: View from A96 at Bishopton.



Viewpoint 4: Hillcrest.
Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn





Viewpoint 5: View from Auchinclech



Viewpoint 6: View from minor road at Woodland.
Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

ttle Hill

Tyrebagger Hill



A96

Kinellar House and
estate woodland

Business Park

Glasgoego
Farm

Northern woodland
boundary

Old Turnpyke
Road

Norman Gray Park

Centre of Blackburn





Viewpoint 7: View from Little Hill.



Viewpoint 8: View of Kinellar (Muir) site area.



Viewpoint 9: View of northern part of the site.

Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

Northmuir



Viewpoint 10: View from Kinellar (Hillhead) site area.

A96

Site area

Kingsfield Road



Viewpoint 11: View of Kinellar (Muir) site from A96 over bridge.

Estate woodland surrounding
Kinellar House

Old Turnpyke Road

Kingsfield Road





Estate woodland at Kinellar

Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm

Viewpoint 12: View looking east along the B973.



B973

Mature trees on southern boundary

Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm

Viewpoint 13: View looking west along the B973.

Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

Alignment of Old
Turnpyke Road

Eastern boundary/
Norman Gray Park

B973

Tyrebagger Hill

Business Park

Brimmond Hill



Norman Gray Park

Mature trees to B973



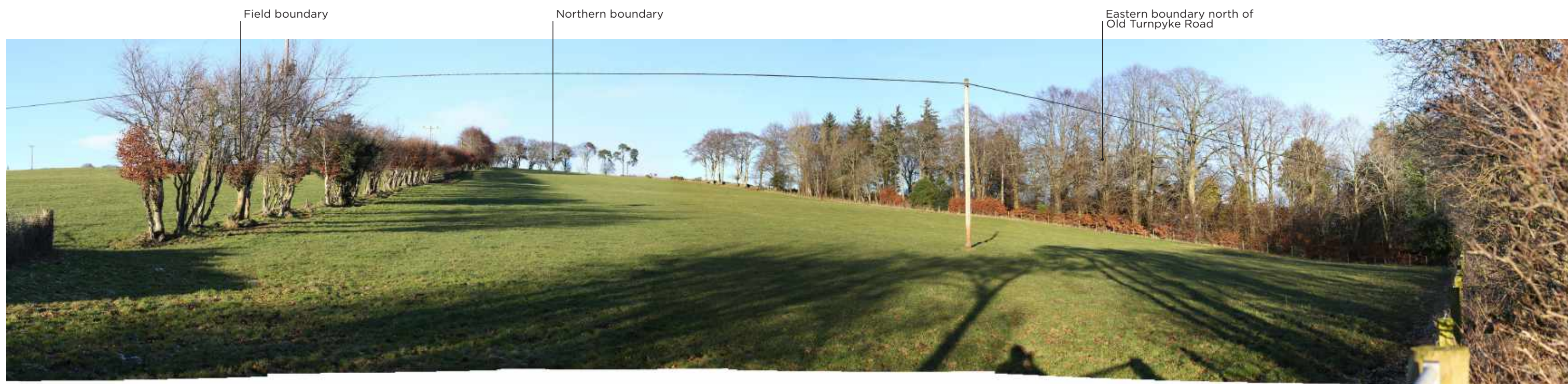


Viewpoint 14: View looking south from Turnpyke Road.



Viewpoint 15: View looking north west from Old Turnpyke Road.

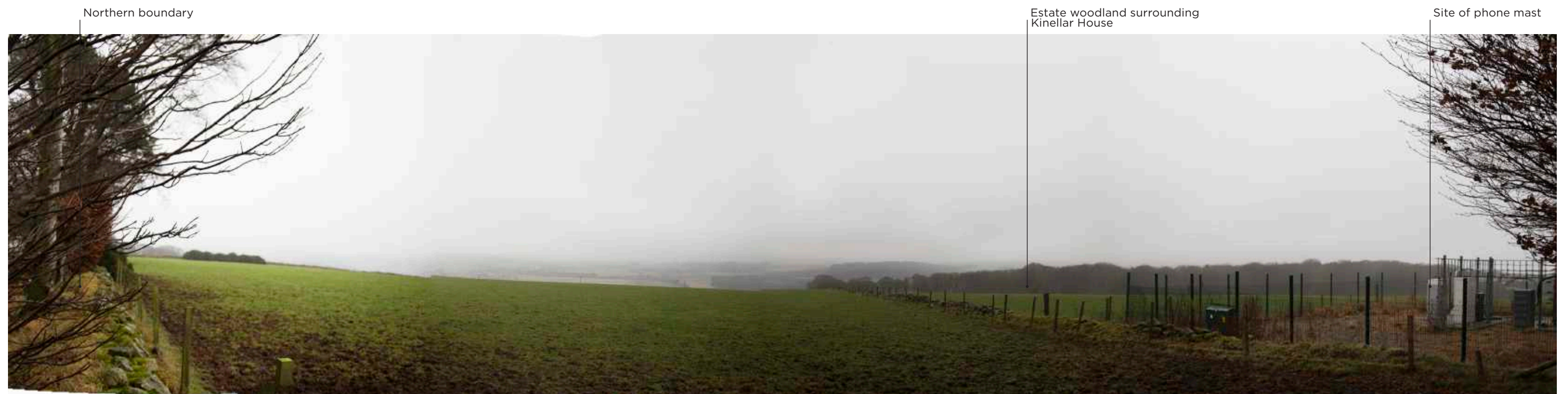
Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn



Viewpoint 16: View looking north east from Old Turnpyke Road.



Viewpoint 17; View south towards Blackburn from the northern boundary.



Viewpoint 18; View south across the site from the high point adjacent on the northern boundary.

Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

3.4 Landscape and visual appraisal

Section 3.3 of this report shows representative views into and from the potential site from the surrounding landscape and other parts of the Blackburn settlement. The landscape and visual analysis presented in this section of the report, whilst representing a cross section of receptor types and sensitivities in the area, is intended as a preliminary appraisal and does not constitute an LVIA.

3.4.1 Landscape Context

The site is agricultural and of rural character with clearly defined field boundaries. The site area occupies the south facing slopes of elevated land to the west of the existing Blackburn settlement within fields that surround the grounds of Kinellar House. The topography of the site varies between approximately 90m AOD on its southern edge along the B923 to 150m AOD in the north, at the top of the hill. The existing settlement of Blackburn is centred around the intersection of the B973 and B923 roads with residential development extending to the north along the B973. There are no landscape designations on or close to the site with the closest Special Landscape Area (SLA) 7.5km to the west of the proposed site on the hills and forest of Bennachie.

The landscape character of Aberdeenshire is recorded and classified in Scottish Natural Heritage’s publication ‘South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment’, SNH Review No 102, (Environmental Resources Management, 1998). The site lies at the eastern edges of the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 12 – Central Wooded Estates, the key characteristics of which are described as follows:

- ‘Rolling landscape of low hills and wide valleys.
- Strong woodland structure associated with numerous estate policies, adding rich and diverse texture.
- Clumps of trees atop mounds and hillocks, often bounded by circular stone walls; mature shady beech avenues; conifer plantations distributed amongst broadleaves.
- Mixed farmland with varying size and pattern of fields.
- Mosses within lowland hollows where birch and Scots pine predominate.
- Numerous and varied archaeological features, including henges, carved stone balls, recumbent stone circles and pictish monuments.
- Numerous towns and villages, many subject to recent residential expansion.

- Frequent settlement with a variety of sizes and styles of architecture; local vernacular stone buildings with conversions and extensions, modern bungalows and houses.
- Long views across open farmland contrast with sudden enclosure by woodland as one passes through area.’

Specific guidance is also listed in the character assessment, the key aims relating to new built development include the following:

Aim: To conserve wooded character.

- Broadleaf woodlands which are managed to conserve a mix of species and resist conifer domination will help to maintain a well balanced woodland structure.

Aim: To conserve the setting of estates and archaeological features.

- Woods, shelterbelt and drystone dykes enhance the setting of estates and archaeological features; maintenance and enhancement of these will help create a more unified landscape structure.

Aim: To integrate new development in the landscape.

- Native broad leaf trees may be used to integrate and contain new housing estates and soften the edge of urban developments.
- In exposed locations, simple styles and forms of housing are more appropriate, especially where they may compete with views of more distinguished landmarks; development should avoid exposed locations especially where such visual conflict might occur.
- Use (or re-use) of local stones can help to integrate buildings in the landscape; conversion of old derelict buildings should also be encouraged.
- Sites for quarrying should maximise use of existing woodland and landform screening, and projects should employ appropriate site restoration subsequently.

3.4.2 Visual Context

Due to the south facing aspect of the site, the majority of views towards the site area are found to the south (see viewpoints 1,2,4,5,6,12 & 13). The landscape to the south is of a rural character with similar landform undulations to that of the site providing elevated views north across the agricultural landscape. It has regular small settlement clusters and farm steadings that are organised along the minor road network that crosses these undulations. Views north to the site area from the surrounding landscape differ subtly depending on the angle of view towards Blackburn and the elevation relative to the site area [e.g. view locations south and east (see viewpoints 3,4,6 & 7) have a better vantage into western and raised parts of the site as the Kinellar woodland does not provide a screening element as it does for views to the south and west (see viewpoints 1,2,11 & 12), also views from locations which are lower or closer to Blackburn would not perceive as much potential development located on higher ground due to line of sight and the convex nature of the landform (see viewpoints 1,2 & 12)].

Views were checked from the north, however, views of the site area from surrounding landscape to the north are restricted by the local topography of the south facing slope on which the site is located. Mature woodlands along the northern edges of the site further restrict views from the north. Distant views from the east are restricted by the forest covered Tyrebagger Hill and more locally are limited to a few elevated locations on the A96 near Bishopston and overlooking the Blackburn settlement from Little Hill. Views of the site from the west are restricted to distant views of the compartments of the site area that lie to the west of Kinellar House including from within elevated parts of the Kintore settlement. Existing views of the Blackburn settlement are limited by these same topographical features in combination with the wooded settlement edges to the north and along the A96 road corridor.

The western edges of the proposed development area outlined in the Development Framework would however be seen on the wooded horizon from Kintore and surrounding area where views allow (properties in Kintore were visible from the western edges of the proposed development area from the minor road (see viewpoints 8 & 10), however, a clear view from publicly accessible parts of Kintore looking east towards the site was not able to be found during site work. This is not to say a suitable location does not exist and that such a view could be found as part of a more detailed LVIA, nevertheless,

it is clear from the level of intervisibility that unobstructed views from Kintore properties to this western part of the site do exist, see also viewpoint 9). More distant views from Mither Tap and the Bennachie Hills are also possible, although, there is little visual reference to the existing Blackburn settlement from this area and distinguishing the Kinellar Hill from other parts of the wooded rural landscape that surrounds it is not immediately apparent. Views to the wider landscape from the Blackburn settlement are relatively limited and tend to be inward looking with the majority of the settlement focussed within the lower lying area west of the Black Burn, between Little Hill and the elevated landform of the site area. Where outward looking views are possible from southern Blackburn, close to where the proposal site is located, or from within the site (see viewpoints 14,15 & 16 on old Turnpyke Road & 17 on the Kinellar Hill ridge), they tend to be south facing towards Hill of Keir and Auchronie Hill.

3.4.3 Conclusion

Due to the south facing aspect of the proposal site the majority of visibility of this site is seen from the landscape to the south with many close proximity views along the A96 and B973 roads that pass to the south of the site. The greatest level of landscape change related to future housing development located on this site would therefore be evident in views from the south where increases in built development to the west of the existing Blackburn settlement would be most noticeable. This proposal site would add a large area of housing development, where visible, to the west of the existing settlement edge of Blackburn.

Existing wooded strips, field boundary trees, established hedgerows and larger areas of woodland combine to create a landscape structure which provides the potential to integrate future housing development within the field compartments created by this pattern of landscape elements. The 'Indicative Development Framework' illustrates a preferred approach to structuring this new area of settlement expansion by encouraging the built elements of proposed development to fit within the existing landscape pattern in a series of compartments, enhanced by a landscape structure that aligns with existing field boundaries. The main structural landscape elements of small woodlands, open spaces and avenue planting would also provide visual connection to the woods at Kinellar House, the strip of woods on top of Kinellar Hill and the existing wooded western edge of Blackburn. The proposed development would be visually held between these two wooded areas in views from the south and although representing a large addition to the settlement extent, this site area benefits from topographical screening which moderates the degree to which new built development is experienced to the east, north and west.

Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn

The introduction of a woodland strip to the west of the site would protect views of the proposed development from western settled areas such as from Kintore and also from more distant views from the west such as from Mither Tap and the Bennachie Hills. The Indicative Development Framework layout works with the existing contours of the site limiting development to the area lower than the 135m contour against the western settlement edge of Blackburn and below the 145m contour at the western edges of the site. This setting back from the highest area of the site allows the existing profile of the hill landform on top of Kinellar Hill, that is often viewed as a skyline feature, to remain intact and for views from the north to remain unaffected (see Figure 16 which shows the developable area considered in the Indicative Development Framework and the more elevated part of the site area considered less suitable for development).

This introduction and strengthening of landscape structure planting (particularly along the northern, western and southern boundaries of the area proposed as further development) would soften future development encouraging a natural fit with the surrounding pattern of woodland east and west whilst introducing a soft landscape buffer to the commercial / light industrial units to the south. As a result, these indicative proposals have the ability to respect the key aim – ‘to integrate development into the landscape’, as listed in the Aberdeenshire landscape character assessment.

In conclusion therefore, the proposal site benefits from topographical screening which moderates the degree to which new built development is experienced in the wider landscape in views from the east, north and west. There are potential adverse visual effects as a result of an increase in settlement characteristics to the west of Blackburn and although this could appear noticeable in contrast to the visually discreet existing Blackburn settlement, this effect would be limited to views from the south. A strong planting and woodland framework and mix of residential densities across the compartments such as in the Indicative Development Framework should be encouraged to create varied form in these views from the south which are more susceptible to the visual changes described. Bands of woodland located on similar contours to the existing woodland structure would also help to settle the development proposal into its immediately surrounding wooded context, provide a sense of containment at its edges and break up the extent of development visible by partially intervening in views from the south. Strengthening of the existing landscape structure in this way would help to integrate with the Central Wooded Estates existing landscape characteristics.

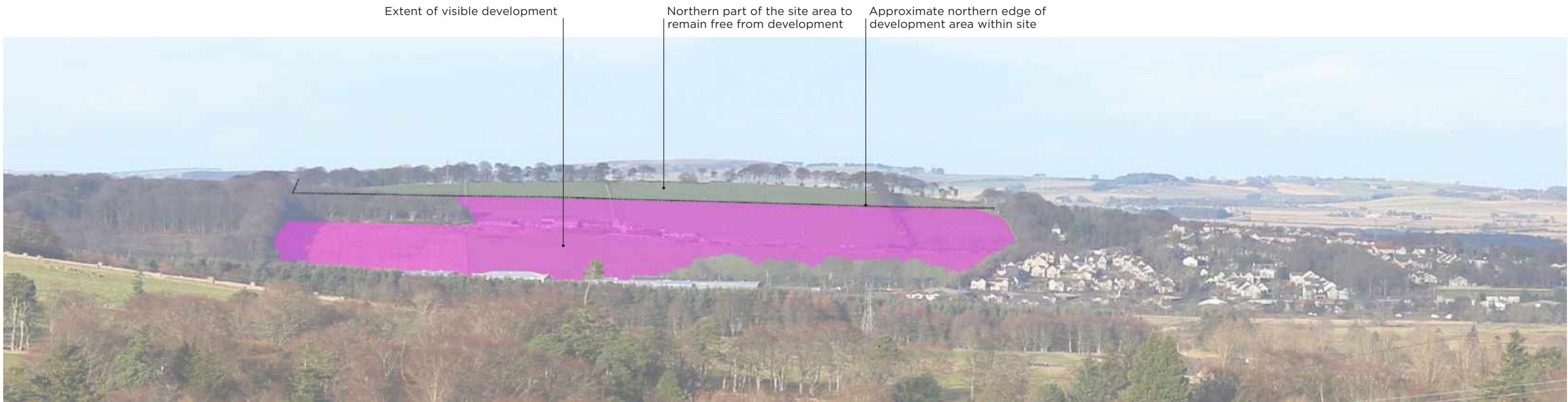


fig. 17: Representative view to Blackburn from Auchinlech with the proposed development area highlighted.

3.5 Site opportunities/constraints

The key physical opportunities and constraints which influence the site are as follows:

- Proximity to the centre of Blackburn, the school, shops and community facilities. Any development on the site should seek to maximise this opportunity and ensure good connections to the existing settlement;
- The western fields of the site are considered remote from the centre of Blackburn and therefore considered not suitable for development;
- Development could extend west along the B973 following the established pattern of development as demonstrated to the south of the B973 with good access to existing infrastructure;
- Development along the B973 will provide the opportunity to improve the approach to Blackburn reducing the impact of the business park to the south;
- The existing mature trees to the east must be protected and retained;
- The main site area benefits from good proximity to bus stops and good access to the B973 and A96;
- The existing farm buildings provide an opportunity within the site area for redevelopment and will provide a landmark within the site area;
- The majority of the site area would provide development areas which benefit from a south facing aspect;
- The topography and aspect provide the opportunity for open views south from the site;
- Development must not extend north beyond the alignment identified in the LVA and must retain an area of open space to the north free from any development;
- There are steeper parts of the site may require a sensitive approach to design and lower density development;
- Existing wooded strips, field boundary trees, established hedgerows and larger areas of woodland surrounding Kinellar House combine to create a landscape structure which provides the potential to integrate future housing development within the field compartments created by this pattern of landscape elements;

- Development will need to ensure existing trees are protected;
- Development will provide a variety of areas of public open space which would benefit the community including a hill top park which would also act to protect the landscape setting;
- The existing path network is a key asset and provides numerous local routes and links to the wider network, local amenities and public transport connections. The design will be developed to ensure a permeable layout is created that links to the existing path network;
- The site will provide the opportunity to connect and enhance the green network surrounding Blackburn;
- Development within the site area would help deliver the long-term Aberdeenshire LDP objective of providing a walking route around the whole of the town; and
- The gas pipeline which passes through the site area will require to be re-aligned and protected by a suitable buffer.

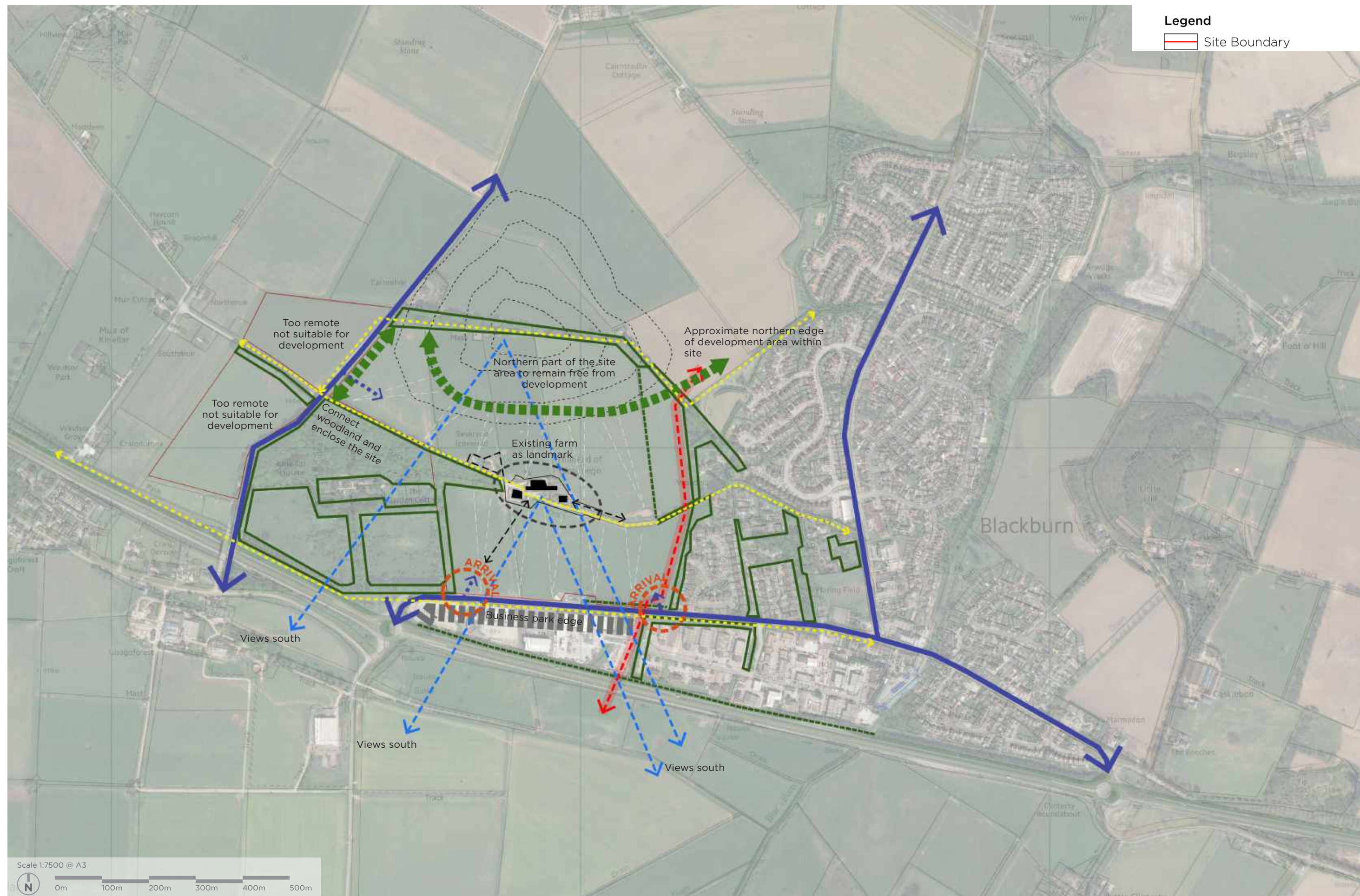


fig. 18: Site analysis.

4. The opportunity

4.1 Site opportunity

An approach and concept for the development of the Blackburn site has been developed in response to the analysis and appreciation of the site and setting described in the previous sections of this document.

In response to the site analysis the opportunity exists to provide a sustainable expansion to Blackburn which would not adversely affect the existing landscape character and setting. Figures 19 and 20 opposite illustrate the potential development areas and development concept for the site. The plans identify an area for development which is of an appropriate scale relative to the town and would ensure the more prominent upper slopes of the hill are kept free from development.

Development in the area identified also provides the opportunity to better define the entrance to the town from the west along the B973. The landscape structure should be such as to enhance the setting and provide opportunities such as improved Core Path connections, better access to open space and green network connections.

The following sections of this document will further describe the opportunities and strategy for development within this area.

4.2 Potential development area

Through the analysis of the site area including the LVA process the parts of the site with suitable capacity to accommodate development have been identified. The areas with capacity for development and those that should remain free from built development are identified on figure 18 above and are described opposite.



fig. 19: Developable areas.

Overall site area = 42.6 hectares

Area 1 = 7.50ha

Suitable for built development

Area 2 = 9.10ha

Suitable for built development

Area 3 = 2.90ha

Suitable for built development

Area 4 = 5.20ha

Area to remain undeveloped to protect the landscape setting and provide an area of public open space.

Area 5 = 3.80ha

Area to remain undeveloped at this time.

Area 6 = 5.30ha

Area to remain undeveloped at this time.

The site of the existing farm highlighted measures approximately 1.00ha and would also provide the opportunity for development.

Within the site area there is approximately 19.50 hectares of land available for development. Through applying appropriate densities and in keeping with the density of areas to the east the site could therefore provide around 300 residential units.

4.3 Design approach and concept

The character of the site is strongly defined by its south facing slopes. The key consideration in the design approach has been to ascertain an appropriate settlement extent to the north to ensure development would read coherently as an extension of Blackburn and protect Carnmhor Hill from impact by keeping the top of the hill free from development.

In addition the key site features - Old Turnpyke Road which bisects the site, the field boundaries that run perpendicular to it, and the strong surrounding woodland belts forms an important setting for the site.

This richness of landscape setting along with the existing buildings around Hillhead of Glasgoego on the site provides an excellent opportunity for the creation of a new development with a diverse range of character areas which are connected by a clear set of spatial relationships and hierarchy. The approach to development at Glasgoego is based on designing a layout structure that fits with the landscape and utilises and enhances the existing site features to best effect. The site layout aims to direct a wide range of housing types and open spaces to the most appropriate parts of the site, ensuring that the features are fully maximised to contribute to the creation of the place and that development is context driven.

The site features combined with the opportunities identified in the previous section lead to a simple and logical conceptual layout for the development of the site.

The key elements of the concept are illustrated in the diagram opposite, identifying the main principles that underly the initial development framework a listed below:

1. Creation of a hill top park on Carnmhor Hill on the northern edge of the site;
2. New woodland belt defining the edge of the settlement to the north and containing the hill top park;
3. Enhanced landscape along old Turnpyke Road;
4. Enhanced landscape along the site edge bounding Main Road B973; and
5. Creation of two arrival spaces from Main Road to the site.



fig. 20: Site concept.

5. Development strategy

5.1 Site principles

This section of the document sets out an initial development framework, demonstrating how development at Blackburn could be structured. The framework is illustrated opposite and the structuring principles for the spatial strategy are defined in the following text.

Landscape features

The site has a number of specific features which contribute to character, visual containment and landscape interest; these features should be retained and integrated within development proposals and include:

South facing sloping topography;

Old Turnpyke Road which winds through the centre of the site dividing the site into lower and upper slopes;

Distinctive field boundaries running north-south defined by hedgerows;

- Existing tracks lined either side by stone dykes - one runs east-west across the ridge line and another running north-south;
- Buildings at Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm; and
- Existing woodland belts and trees.

Additionally, the adjacent existing landscape resources of the Black Burn Park and Kinellar Park the west of the site should be accessible to new residents at Glasgoego by providing clear routes from within the site to existing connections on the boundary edge.

Landform and orientation

The site is largely on a south facing slope offering ideal conditions for development to maximise passive solar gain. The overriding strategy for the design of the development arrangement is to work in harmony with the natural topography and take advantage of the unique opportunities it affords in terms of aspect and orientation. The layout has been considered to ensure streets and spaces follow the existing contours of the site thereby minimising earth works as far as possible. Streets will predominantly run in terraces east to west across the hillside and in tiers up the slope, maximising views from properties. Houses will also be designed and arranged to maximise passive solar gain.

Working with landform and existing features should drive design, ensuring best housing fit and that the site maximises its existing qualities to create a distinctive character.

Connections and integration

The development should be readily accessible to residents, visitors and the existing population by providing clear routes from within the site to existing connections on the boundary edge. All spaces should be linked by an integrated network of streets and spaces.

Key connections have been shown to:

- Promote pedestrian movement between the site and the existing core path network;
- Promote integration with Blackburn;
- Provide a variety of connections to the existing network wherever reasonable in order to maximise the permeability of the site;
- Develop a clear street hierarchy and a permeable block structure and
- Promote pedestrian connections to existing bus stops.

Development must be designed and arranged to overlook and address open space, paths and streets.

Views

The development blocks have been laid out to respond to the contours of the site and landscape features to ensure that several key views are created - for example the primary street is aligned to terminate with a view of the Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm.

Careful consideration has been given to ensuring views to Hill of Keir and Auchronie Hill are enhanced whilst protecting the top section of the site around Carnmhor Hill from negative visual impact.

These views will help create both a legible and attractive place. Excellent long views to the sea are offered from the higher ground on the crest of Carnmhor Hill from where existing and new residents will be able to enjoy them from the proposed park setting.

Arranging streets and buildings to filter views, terminate vistas and pass through sub spaces will help create a legible, attractive and interesting place. Open spaces should be designed to maximise and enhance this experience.

Spatial experience

Development blocks have been arranged to ensure that an interesting spatial experience is created. Core spaces, civic spaces and a hierarchy of different streets will create a varied and legible urban form. This basic structure can then be further articulated by additional requirements and guidance such as building height, landmarks and building typology as design progresses.

Spatial experience

Development Blocks have been laid out to ensure that an interesting spatial experience is created. Different types of open space and a hierarchy of different streets will create a varied and legible urban form. This basic structure can then be further articulated by additional requirements and guidance such as building heights, landmarks and building typologies as the design progresses.

The site arrangement must respond to the distinctive landscape features within it and both urban and rural boundary edge conditions.

The southern and eastern sections of the site must be designed to respond positively to the housing to the east and provide an attractive and welcoming edge to the Main Road B973 as well as be responsive to the topography and existing trees. .

The southern slopes below Old Turnpyke Road which contain two access point to Main Road B973 and two pedestrian access will be the denser and busier section of the site with more people coming and going from this area. Arrival spaces are located either side of the entrances and these are overlooked by housing to create a positive welcome to the site. Both routes are associated with generous landscape strips to establish a quality, leafy feel to the site environment. To the east the main entrance road will gently curve across the contours towards Hillhead of Glasgoego farm at the heart of the development. Different characters of streets will extend perpendicular from this route. To the west, shared surface private lanes will access larger homes tucked into the corner of the woodland associated with Kinellar House, while to the east, streets will connect in grids and loops with housing openly and actively addressing them.

When this stretch of primary street reaches the farm buildings at Hillhead of Glasgoego, it turns directly northwards to continue along the route of an existing field boundary to the top of the site from where it heads west to Kingsfield Road.

The character in this area is quieter, contained between woodland belts and bordering the park at the crest of Carnmhor Hill. The eastern section hidden behind the woodland north of Kinellar House would be particularly private and tranquil.

Low density housing set against the woodland with path links through it to the parks denotes the edge of the settlement and transition to the countryside beyond.



fig. 21: Development Framework.

5.2 Land use and density

Land use and density principles

The suggested proposal is that the site would suit a residential development of around 300 homes. The indicative site layout, figure 21, on the opposite page shows an initial approach to site layout and density for discussion and future testing purposes. Analysis and conceptual consideration of the site suggests a total site area of 42.60 hectares with around 19.50 hectares indicated for residential use

Approach to residential density

The density of development should respond to the existing topography and utilise layouts which minimise earth-modelling/platforming as far as possible by following the natural contours of the site. Densities will generally fall across the site with higher densities to the south and east, closer to the main road, public transport network and existing housing, and lower towards the north and west of the site, in response to the transition to the more rural edge and the woodland around Kinellar House. Careful consideration of the density and arrangement of housing on the northern slopes will ensure that development is visually integrated with Blackburn when viewed from a distance to the south. By following the contour line of the existing residential development to the east and extending the band of woodland that contains it to sweep around the hillside a unified green background will assist with bedding housing into the hillside. A range of housing types will ensure that uniform densities are avoided and that a varied urban form is created.

Appropriate density

Development would strive to meet the current Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan target of 30 dwellings per hectare or above as an average across the site, however the topography and character of the site dictate that a range of densities will be used to further test the capacity of the site as design progresses.

Affordable housing

The development will provide affordable housing at the level outlined in the LDP, currently 25%. This will be fully integrated into new development and be indistinguishable from other forms of housing.

Hillhead of Glasgoego Farm Buildings

Subject to detailed review at a later stage, Hillhead of Glasgoego farm buildings may offer scope for conversion and renovation to residential use. Regardless of the extent of existing building conversion, this area will be designed in such manner as to retain the cluster arrangement character of the existing buildings.

Phasing

The site has been designed to grow in an organic and phased manner. It envisages the site would grow from the south east to the north west, with the southern slopes first, followed by the upper slopes. This would allow development to utilise existing infrastructure from the offset and ensure the provision of path links and open space as the site develops.



fig. 22: Land-use and density.

5.3 Landscape strategy

Well designed open space helps establish a strong sense of identity and creates opportunities for social interaction and recreation. This section describes how and where this could be provided at Glasgoego.

Working with the existing landform and minimising visual impact on the upper slopes of the site have been the key considerations in the design of the landscape proposals. Being mindful of these factors and working with other site features such as the existing farm buildings, the track of Old Turnpyke Road, existing woodland and some field boundaries has led to the development of a series of key spaces, around which the housing has been arranged. These spaces are highlighted on the streets and spaces diagram on the opposite page.

Provision of open space

Guidance given in the Aberdeenshire Parks and Open Space Standards Appendix 2 has been followed in developing the proposals. Further the finding of the Open Space audit (see p10) has also informed the landscape strategy presented.

The plan at this stage is indicative, however the size, mix and location of spaces has been developed to meet the Aberdeenshire Open Space Standards. The site includes a wide variety of types of spaces including play spaces, SuDS areas, woodland areas, green links and open space all providing a valuable ecological and recreational resource

As shown, the site provides a total of 13.82ha of public open space including SuDS, woodland and green links. This does not include local spaces which are yet to be designed. This figure represents 41% of the 33.70ha site (total area less the western fields) and therefore meets Aberdeenshire Council's expectation that developments generally provide 40% of the site area as public open space.

Local open spaces

Local space is distributed throughout the framework area and generally associated with retained landscape features, at key junctions or other linking spaces which support pedestrian and cycle movements.

Woodland

The site has few trees within its body - a strong field boundary to the east and some within the hedgerow bounding Old Turnpyke Road. It is however contained by thick woodland belts on its boundary to the north and east, north of Turnpyke Road and to the west, south of Old Turnpyke Road by

woodland associated with that around Kinellar House.

There are also some trees lining Main Road B973. The intention is to create a robust landscape structure by enhancing and linking these elements with new woodland within which the development can comfortably sit. In doing so the aim is to establish 3 main, strong bands of planting running east-west across the site to bed development into the hillside - one along the Main Road B973, along Turnpyke Road through the centre of the site and wrapping around the northern extent of development in line with the existing woodland containing Blackburn.

New woodland belts are proposed which are influenced by the location of those immediately outwith the site. For example the woodland associated with Kinellar House will extend along the north western edge of the site bounding Kingsfield Road to contain the site at this point. Similarly the existing woodland on the northern side of Old Turnpyke Road outwith the site, will extend westwards. The aim is to extend the existing woodland to provide shelter and containment to pockets of development.

A new linear woodland belt will follow the existing contours in the northern section to provide a backdrop to the whole development. A specific contour of 130 has been selected which will visually connect with woodland containing the existing residential settlement to the east. This new woodland belt will then rise to the north- west tip of the site to link with the existing woodland. In doing so this continuous woodland belt will sweep continuously from Blackburn around Glasgoego helping to integrate the two areas.

New bands of tree planting are proposed to bound streets edges and paths, along and across the site contours, to further lessen the impact of development and provide a strong setting and sense of place.

Extending tree planting along the Main Road B973 and within the open space around the proposed SuDS will also assist in reducing traffic noise.

Trees will be managed with an environmental and habitat bias, ensuring appropriate regeneration of the woodland together with public safety.

Connecting and enhancing green networks

The site is bounded on all its edges by woodland which is then connected to a network of tree lined streets and open spaces creating a continuous green network around and through the site into Blackburn and the surrounding countryside. This will allow for the transit of wildlife and provide an extremely attractive environment for residents.

Through connecting the surrounding woodland areas and areas of open space the site area would help deliver the long-term Aberdeenshire LDP objective of providing a green network and walking route around the whole of the town.

Key spaces

These spaces should be designed so that they are addressed appropriately by development ensuring passive surveillance.

1. The major open space proposed at Glasgoego is the large hill top park which is formed at the highest of the site. The park is defined by the site contours and contained on all sides by existing and proposed woodland belts to create an oval shaped space. This park will connect directly into the existing Core Path network therefore providing easy, attractive off-road connection to it for the existing residents as well as the new community. This will also act to connect the existing open space to the east. This park will become a popular destination for all user groups who can enjoy the benefits of having a large enclosed south facing space on their doorstep with attractive long views over the site to Hill of Keir and Auchronie Hill. As such this space should include opportunities for formal and imaginative play plus plenty of seating areas. The park is approximately 6.0ha and is proposed as a natural, low maintenance meadow.
2. Large SuDS parks are located adjacent both entrances to the site from the Main Road B973. These core spaces provide several functions - hydrology, ecology and recreation in addition to providing an attractive setting for the development behind the main road.
3. These parks will create a welcome arrival to the site and will be fronted by housing. While it is envisaged that the large hilltop park will facilitate most active recreational requirements, these south facing spaces will attract people looking for a quieter spot to stop as they walk through and around the site or even wait for a bus. They should therefore provide seating and possibly artwork.
4. The SuDS space to the south east links into a green corridor which runs uphill along the eastern edge of the site connecting to the hill top park. A new woodland belt south of Old Turnpyke Road would continue the line of the existing woodland north of the road to form an attractive edge along this route and contain the rear gardens of properties which currently back on to it. Passing through this woodland will also create a distinct sense of arrival to the site for those entering from Old Turnpyke Road from the east.
5. An area of open space is proposed opposite Hillhead of Glasgoego immediately south of Old Turnpyke Road to ensure the setting and views of the farm buildings are protected and provide a local space at the centre of the site.



fig. 23: Landscape strategy.

5.4 Access and connectivity strategy

The access and connectivity strategy aims to allow pedestrians and cyclists to move through the site and beyond using a permeable network of paths. Glasgoego should be a sustainable extension to Blackburn where people can live without relying heavily on private transport.

The indicative layout of the site maximises the connectivity between the existing residential development to the east and the proposed housing and open space, with pedestrian linkages throughout the site and through to the main road, the B973, to the south. Access to Aberdeen is supported by efficient public transport allowing residents and workers to benefit from an easy commute to the city and the wider area.

Pedestrians

The pedestrian network is designed to actively encourage walking as a viable transport option and also as a recreational pursuit. Pedestrian links should be developed to meet the needs of the new community, existing residents and visitors in terms of connecting to key existing destinations such as the primary school, community centre and local shop as well as the existing outdoor amenities at Kinellar Park and Burn Park. In addition to the vehicular entrances to the site, two separate footpath connections will link the site and the Main Road B973.

Pedestrian routes have been designed to link with the existing core paths which run through and around the site and link the proposed housing and open space.

The existing walking routes will be enhanced through landscape treatment and immediate access to well designed open space. Multiple safe and attractive walking routes will be available to residents.

Pathways, pavements and shared surfaces all combine to create the pedestrian network, and where possible they are closely linked with areas of existing woodland, proposed tree belts and along open spaces to create pleasant walking experiences.

Development within the site area would help deliver the long-term Aberdeenshire LDP objective of providing a walking route around the whole of the town.

Cyclists

Cyclists will be accommodated on the street network (on road). The streets and cycleways will also allow a variety of cycle routes connecting the new community to the local and wider area and will provide routes to significant destinations such as the school, shop, employment and leisure facilities.

Public transport

The route of public transport provision in the area is illustrated on the plan opposite and demonstrates that the vast majority of development is within 400m of existing bus stops with frequent services connecting the site to the city centre, and Inverurie and local town destinations in between. Pedestrian connectivity to existing stops should be considered as a priority.

Vehicular access

Vehicular access to the site will be provided via two new junctions on to the Main Road B973 and one new junction to Kingsfield Road which bounds the west of the site. The indicative locations for the junctions are shown on the plan opposite and have taken cognisance of the entrances to the facilities on the opposite side of the B973. The exact locations of the junctions has not been determined at this stage but will be developed in due course through consultation with Aberdeenshire Council. Providing more than one access point to the site ensures the development is permeable and well connected.

Street network

The internal layout of the site has been designed to take full cognisance of ‘Designing Streets’. The layout will be ‘Distinctive’, ‘Safe & pleasant’, ‘Easy to move around’, ‘Welcoming’, ‘Adaptable’ and ‘Resource efficient’.

The primary street network should connect the new access points, through two simple interconnecting loops around the site ensuring a clear and permeable structure.

Off the primary street network a simple connected network of secondary streets should provide a permeable structure through the site for access to residential areas. The street layout has been designed to terminate with views of woodland and open spaces.

Further to the primary and secondary network identified, vehicle access should look to utilise shared surface areas, courtyards and minor streets to provide access to properties to allow active frontages to houses addressing pedestrian routes and spaces. This will also assist in creating a varied and interesting urban form in the development.

Shared use surfacing should be introduced wherever possible and appropriate to ensure that suitable safe and direct pedestrian / cycle routes are available and help in providing a permeable layout where possible.

All parking should be designed to be accommodated within the development area so not to impact upon surrounding areas. It must also be integrated into the overall street design to ensure car parking does not dominate the streetscape.



fig. 24: Access strategy.

6. Summary

6.1 Potential benefits to Blackburn.

The Glasgoego site is in a prime location, ideally situated to take advantage of excellent transport connections to Aberdeen whilst offering an enviable countryside location.

The vision presented throughout this document is to make the most of the intrinsic site qualities, utilising them to establish a neighbourhood at Glasgoego that is vibrant and rich in character.

In summary the potential benefits to Blackburn and Aberdeenshire by enabling residential development at the Glasgoego site are as follows:

- Sustainable, logical growth utilising existing infrastructure effectively;
- Access to new well designed open spaces and path networks offering enhanced recreational benefits;
- A stronger settlement edge and more attractive arrival to Blackburn from the west along the Main Road B973;
- Opportunities for enhanced biodiversity;
- A different housing offer and the opportunity to help fulfill housing demand;
- The opportunity to support existing community facilities; and
- High quality development designed as a site specific response from SMH who have a proven track record in delivery of this type of development in the North East. The ongoing delivery of Countesswells is a current example of residentially led mixed use development being implemented by SMH in a sensitive landscape setting.

6.2 Response to Aberdeenshire call for sites

The response to the Aberdeenshire Council call for sites set out in this document underpins SMH's view that appropriate development at Glasgoego can be accommodated within the sensitive landscape setting and the parameters identified within the LDP.

Further, this development strategy presented in this document illustrates how development at Glasgoego could provide a sustainable expansion to Blackburn and make a unique and positive contribution to housing choice within the local area.

In summary Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) believes that the site at Glasgoego has the capacity to accommodate around 300 new homes which will allow flexibility for the creation of an attractive and distinct urban form. A variety of house types will offer choice for different sections of the community, including affordable housing; therefore providing real opportunity for proper sustainable growth of Blackburn.

The proposals also demonstrate how a robust masterplan and sensitive development on the site can benefit the wider area in terms of providing attractive open space, green linkages and connections and enhancing biodiversity on the site.

As such SMH are fully committed to delivering a high quality development, complementary to the existing setting and request the inclusion of the site within the emerging Local Development Plan for a residential development.

The plan opposite illustrates the site in the wider context to give a flavour of the potential character of the site and how it could respond to and benefit its surrounding context.

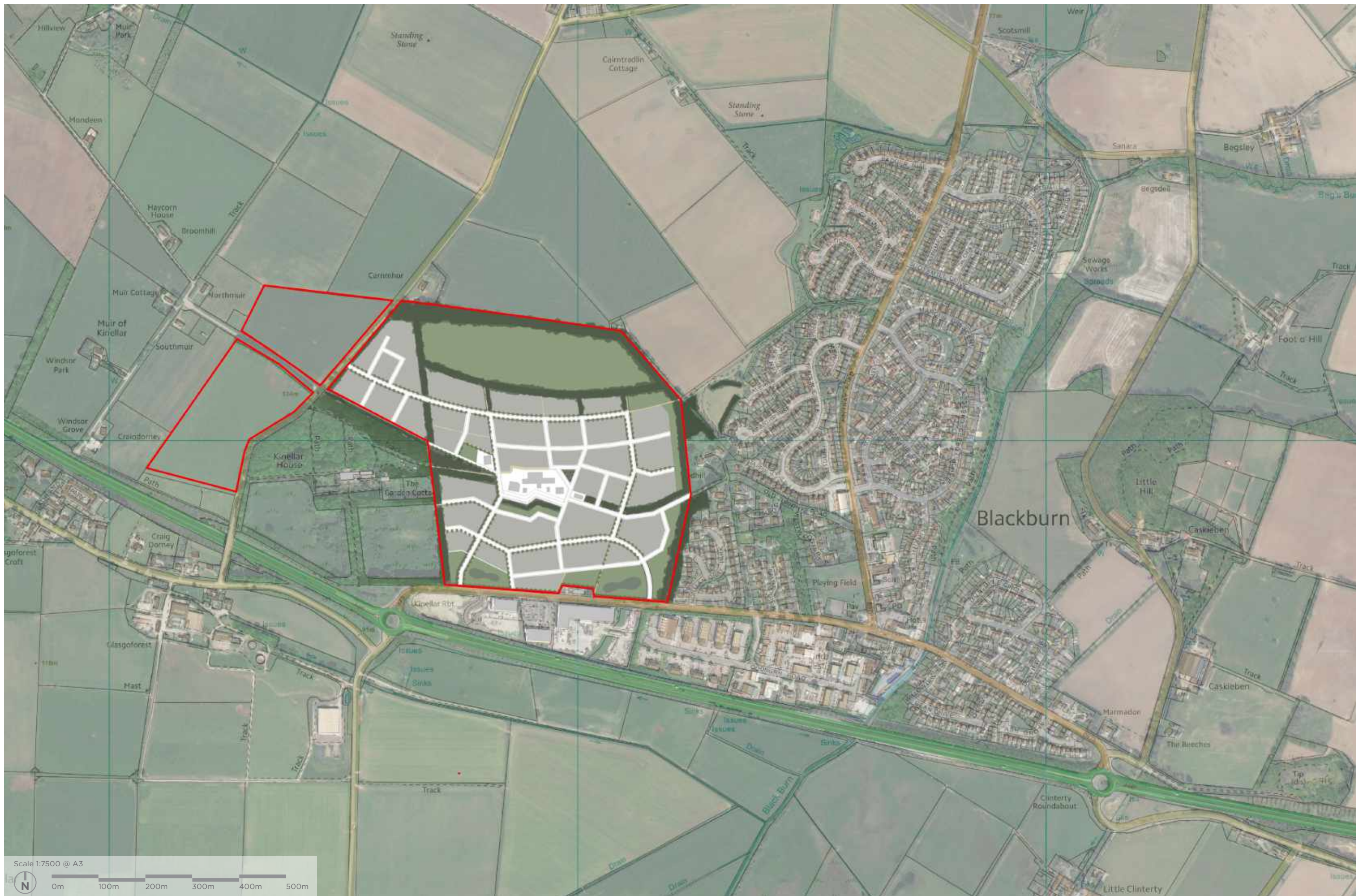


fig. 25: Development framework in context.

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GGO 4 – Response to Main Issues Report

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021: Main Issues Report 2019

Main Issues Report Response Form

Important Information: Please Read

The Main Issues Report (MIR) is a key stage in preparing the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 (LDP 2021). The MIR sets out options for how the LDP 2021 could be improved both in terms of the policies that Aberdeenshire Council will use to determine planning applications as well as identifying land allocations for development. The MIR has been published along with a Monitoring Report and Interim Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. These, along with other supporting documents are available at: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/plans-and-policies/ldp-2021/main-issues-report/>.

Comments are sought on the MIR and Interim Environmental Report, or indeed any other matter that you feel that we need to consider, by 5pm on Monday, 8 April 2019. Responses can be emailed to us at ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or received via post, Planning Policy Team, Infrastructure Services, Aberdeenshire Council, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB.

Please note that in order for comments to be considered as valid you must include your contact details.

We will use these details to confirm receipt of your comments and to seek clarification or request further information as required. Should you have any concerns regarding the holding of such information please contact ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk. Anonymous comments will not be considered as part of the consultation process. Petitions will only be noted in the name of the person submitting the document.

All comments received will be carefully assessed and will be used to inform the preparation of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. There will be a further opportunity to comment on the Proposed Plan when it is published in December 2019.

Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (optional)	Norr
On behalf of (if relevant)	Stewart Milne Homes
Address	[REDACTED]
Postcode	[REDACTED]
Telephone (optional)	[REDACTED]
E-mail (optional)	[REDACTED]



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Fair processing notice

Please tick to confirm your agreement to the following statements:

☒

By submitting a response to the consultation, I agree that Aberdeenshire Council can use the information provided in this form, including my personal data, as part of the review of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. This will include consultation on the Main Issues Report (including any subsequent Proposed Plan).

I also agree that following the end of the consultation, i.e. after 8 April 2019, my name and respondent identification number (provided to you by Aberdeenshire Council on receipt of your submission) can be published alongside a copy of my completed response on the Main Issues Report website (contact details and information that is deemed commercially sensitive will not be made available to the public).

The data controller for this information is Aberdeenshire Council. The data on the form will be used to inform a public debate of the issues and choices presented in the Main Issues Report of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021. It will inform the content of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

Aberdeenshire Council will only keep your personal data for as long as is needed. Aberdeenshire Council will retain your response and personal data for a retention period of 5 years from the date upon which it was collected. After 5 years Aberdeenshire Council will review whether it is necessary to continue to retain your information for a longer period. A redacted copy of your submission will be retained for 5 years beyond the life of the Local Development Plan 2021, possibly until 2037

Your Data, Your Rights

You have got legal rights about the way Aberdeenshire Council handles and uses your data, which include the right to ask for a copy of it, and to ask us to stop doing something with your data.

If you are unhappy with the way that Aberdeenshire Council or the Joint Data Controllers have processed your personal data then you do have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Officer, but you should raise the issue with the Data Protection Officers first. The Data Protection Officers can be contacted by writing to:

- [REDACTED], Data Protection Officer, Aberdeenshire Council, Business Services, Town House, 34 Low Street, Banff, AB45 1AY

If you have difficulty understanding this document and require a translation, or you need help reading this document (for example if you need it in a different format or in another language), please phone us on 01467 536230.

Which document(s) are you committing on?	Main Issues Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Draft Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Environmental Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your comments

This submission has been submitted on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes in response to Aberdeenshire's Main Issues Report (MIR) which was published in January 2019 and also responds to the draft proposed Local Development Plan (LDP). Our client submitted a site through the Council's call for sites in 2018, this was GR033 Land at Hillhead of Glasgoego in Blackburn where a development of 300 residential dwellings on 42.6 ha of land was proposed. The site was considered not to be a preferred option of the Planning Officers. This submission will contest that conclusion and seek to show that GR033 is an effective site which is appropriate for development within the Strategic Growth Area that can assist in achieving the Council's Housing Supply Target. Feedback from the MIR has been evaluated and it is considered that the site is suitable and ultimately it is hoped that the site will be included in the final proposed LDP for Aberdeenshire.

Attached to this response is a further plan showing in further detail how the core path will be incorporated within the proposal.

A summary of the comments made in the assessment and responses are set out in the table below and a more full explanation follows.

Comment	Summary Response
Scale of development proposed	The land to the west of the site has been separated from the proposal for the release of the development. The site is well connected and the scale of development is in keeping with the size of Blackburn and is considered appropriate.
Prime agricultural land	There is only a very small portion of the site designated as prime agricultural land and the majority is classified as 3.2. The amount of prime agricultural land that would be lost as a result of the proposal would be de minimis.
Possible loss of trees	Trees form an important part of the character of the development strategy and will be retained and augmented through additional landscaping and planting.
Presence of core path running through the site	The core path will be retained and the presence of the core path provides benefits to the development for active travel and this also provides a direct link to the primary school.
HSE consultation Zone	The consultation zone is not an absolute constraint to development and has been factored into the proposal. This should not influence the choice of the most appropriate site for growth.
Western part only to come forward on the basis of GR005	This land to the west has been separated from this proposal and it is proposed as a future opportunity.

Site History

The site at Hillhead of Glasgoego was identified in the 2006 Aberdeenshire Local Plan as future housing land by the Council. These future sites are noted as counting toward later housing allocations. This indicated areas of search for future housing land and the “likely direction of future growth”. This location to the west of Blackburn benefits from direct access to the area of employment, bus routes and also pedestrian connections to the primary school within the centre of the village. The site at this time was considered as the most suitable location for future development in Blackburn and it is considered that this remains the case.

As well as the western direction of future growth for Blackburn it must be highlighted that land to the south and east of the settlement is greenbelt which will limit future development. This coupled with the greater opportunity to the west clearly indicates that this is where expansion of the village should take place.

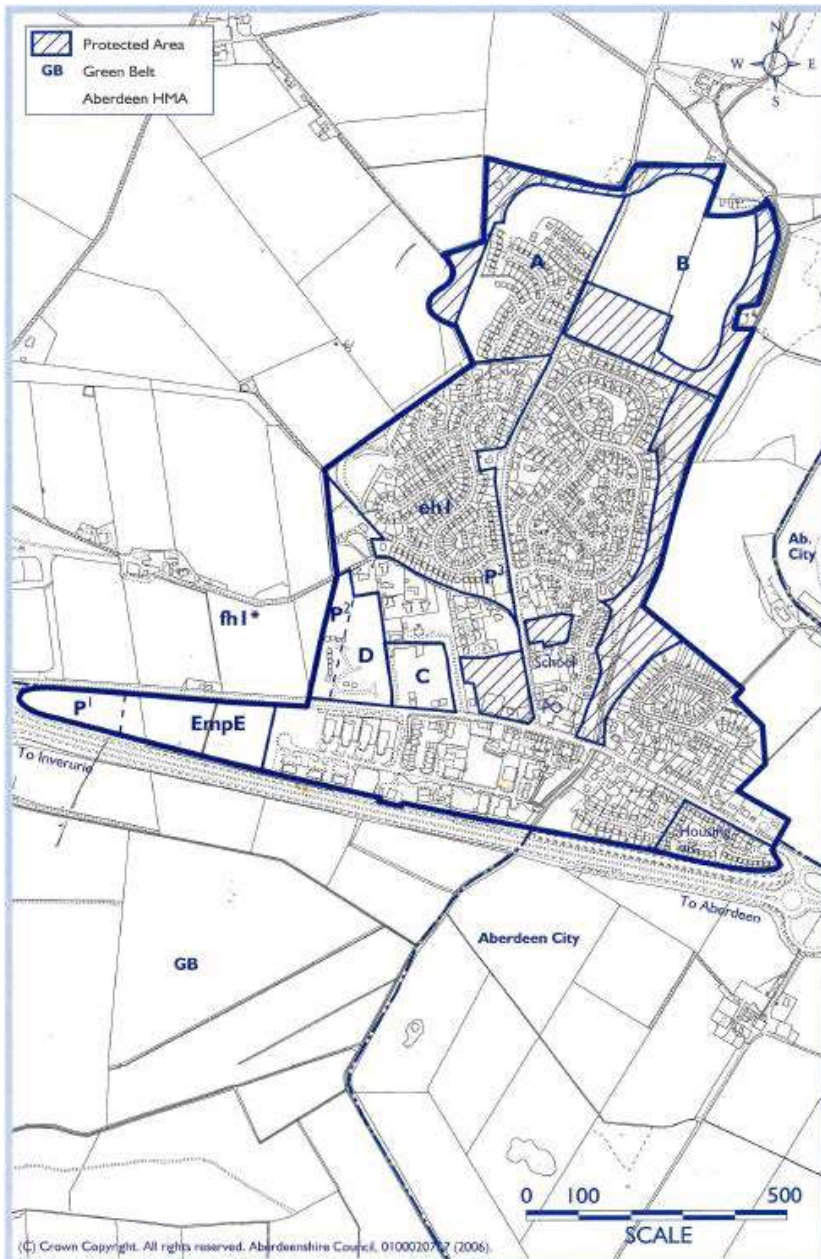


Figure 1: ALP 2006 Extract

The MIR provides some feedback from the Planning Officers who considered the site. The first point which is outlined concerns the scale of the proposed development with the Officer noting the proposed scale is a constraint. It is also commented that the western portion can only proceed on the basis of GR005 which is the land around Kinellar House. The development site promoted within this submission is for a stand-alone development of GR033 as indicated in Figure 1. Sites 1 and 2 in figure 1 are requested to be considered as separate bids and as a future development opportunity. The bid remains for 300 units, however, these will only be developed on the site within the revised GR033 site. This was as originally considered and there is no effect on the viability of the proposal that is under consideration.

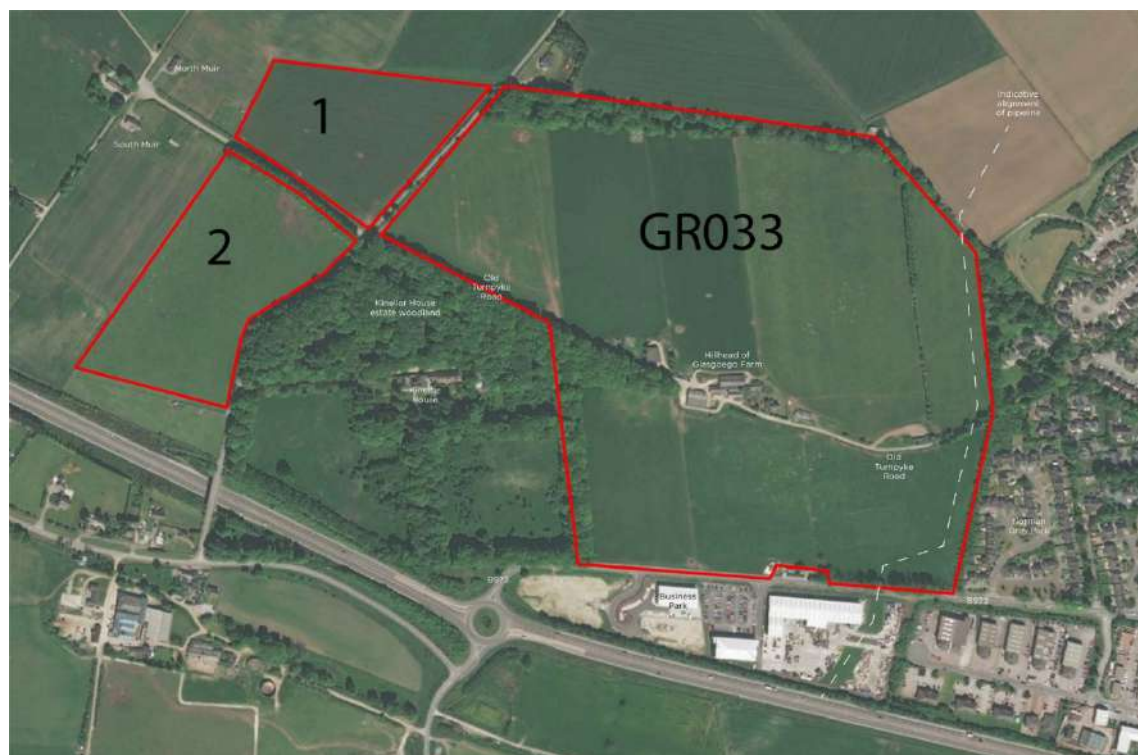


Figure 2: Revised Site Plan

The comment on the scale of development does not highlight what in particular the concern is. The development proposes 300 homes on the edge of the existing settlement of Blackburn, which has a population of more than 2,000 residents. The Development Strategy submitted with the proposal outlines the landscape considerations that have informed the proposal for development and it is considered that the scale of the proposal is not out of keeping with the surrounding area and it benefits from good links to the existing settlement and the services provided. There is an allocation for the east side of Blackburn identified as an officers' preference, identified for 268 homes, and not a dissimilar scale.

Access

The site would require two access points due to its scale of 300 homes. Fairhurst completed a Transport Appraisal to ascertain potential access points to the Glasgoego site. The report concluded that there were several access options available at the site to provide vehicular access. The report identified several potential access points which would provide the development with options. The report also noted that the site had good access to services within the settlement such as primary school and bus stop provision. The access to the site is not a concern issue and the Fairhurst report confirms that suitable access can be provided without issue.

Trees

The MIR highlights the loss of trees that could potentially occur. The majority of the existing trees on the site sit on the boundary with very few located in the body of the site. The promoter has been eager to ensure that existing woodland belts and trees, which are a key landscape feature of the area, are retained to the highest possible extent. The development strategy submitted with the bid outlines the approach with regards trees and their desire to minimise the impact is evident. This is especially evidenced where they seek to join on to existing green space to create green space networks. This position is consistent with the proposed green

space networks in the draft proposed LDP. As a principle trees within the site are to be retained and the existing areas of woodland and trees (including mature trees along the B973) have been identified for retention on the proposals plan. The trees will provide character to the development, create a sense of place and will be a valuable feature for the development.

Core Path

The presence of a core path running through the site is highlighted, however, its presence was fully recognised in the development framework. From Figure 3 it can be seen that four core paths interact with the site. Each of these is maintained in the proposal, the developer recognises the importance of core paths and has carefully factored these into the design of the site as they have been linked with the proposed pedestrian routes. This link will ensure there is no public loss for those who utilise the paths and enhancements of the pedestrian network within the site will ultimately lead to net public gain. These connections with existing core path provision in the area make this an attractive proposition whereby residents would be able to easily link up with existing routes. There would be ample connection to the existing settlement which would promote sustainable means of transport such as walking to key destinations such as the primary school. It is considered that the proposal in this submission is far more advanced than that of similar bids in the village. Further information on the Core Paths at the site can be found in the attached Core Paths Network Plan.

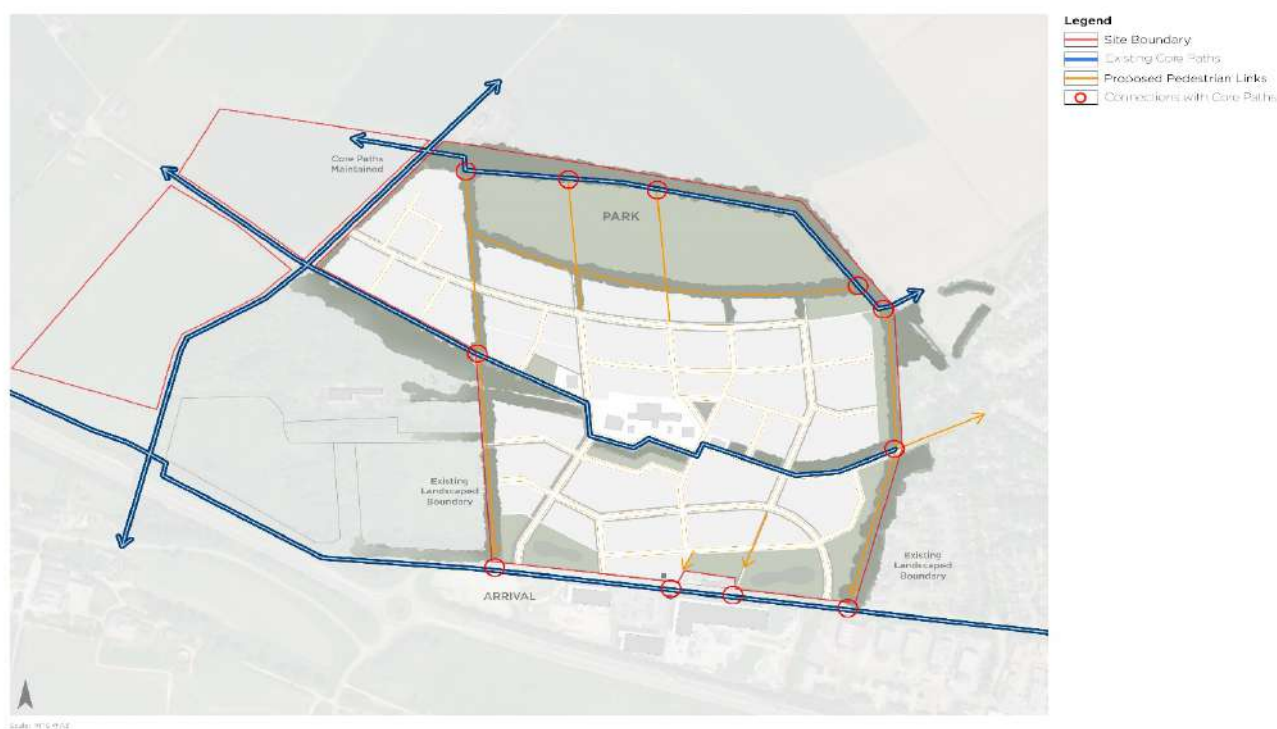


Figure 3: Core Paths Plan

HSE Consultation Zone

The pipeline which runs through the site is highlighted as a concern for the proposal. The fact that the site lies within this Health and Safety Executive pipeline vicinity is acknowledged in the development strategy. Policy P4 of the draft proposed LDP outlines the position on developments which fall within the vicinity of hazardous sites. The policy clearly outlines that development is possible where the risk of a pipeline can be remedied with no risk to the public then this should not act as a barrier to development. The promoter of the site is an extremely experienced housing developer with particular experience of building homes on sites which have pipelines running through them. Previous developments have been sufficiently mitigated whereby the pipeline has been rerouted to accommodate the development. Specifically this occurred at Broadshade in Westhill to allow development to proceed. This rerouting approach would be consistent with

policy P4 and has been factored in to the viability of the development and does not present an obstacle. This point was outlined as part of the original bid submission at the call for sites and is reiterated here. The developer has built on similar land which has required the rerouting of pipelines running through the site and a constraint of this nature should not lead to a negative conclusion on site GR033. Such a constraint if it can be overcome should not influence the choice of the most appropriate location for development.

Agricultural Land

The land is largely classified as having capability for agriculture of 3.2 and is not prime agricultural land as identified within the Main Issues Report. There are two scales of map the national scale and the partial cover. Following discussion with the James Hutton Institute it is clarified that The 1:250,000 (national scale) map was always intended as a reconnaissance map that covers the whole country while the 1:50,000 (partial cover) map focused primarily on the cultivated land closer to population centres where it could be of value in planning. There is a small section of land at the Main Road identified as 3.1, but this has largely been taken by the development of the business park. The land to the east and north of Blackburn is classified as 3.1, prime agricultural land and with alternative options in this case it is considered that development to the West of Blackburn would be more appropriate.

Fit with Settlement Strategy

Settlements such as Inverurie, where a total of 11 allocations forecast development of 2,159 houses, are constrained in the short to medium term until the A96 dualling project has been completed. The average housing completions in this settlement from 2013-17 were 147 per annum, whilst this high rate of delivery is acknowledged it is put forth that this cannot be sustained. Inverurie currently struggles with traffic congestion in the town and future development will only exacerbate this problem and will be unsustainable. Growing the town by a further 1,046 homes over a five year period in line with the forecast completions in the 2018 Housing Land Audit will not be manageable. The preferred option for the dualling is to be announced this year, but with the procedure of raising orders and a construction period to follow it is unlikely that this will be complete within the first five years of the next plan period. This will significantly affect the delivery of the housing requirements.

On a smaller scale, Kintore has been afforded significant housing allocation with 800 units proposed to be allocated in the draft plan and the ability of this settlement to deliver this level of development is also contested. Kintore is forecast to grow by 600 homes across five years, this rate of delivery in a village which had 74 house completions in the previous five years is not realistic. For the previously mentioned reasons, the approach proposed in the Aberdeen to Huntly Growth Area is opposed by this submission.

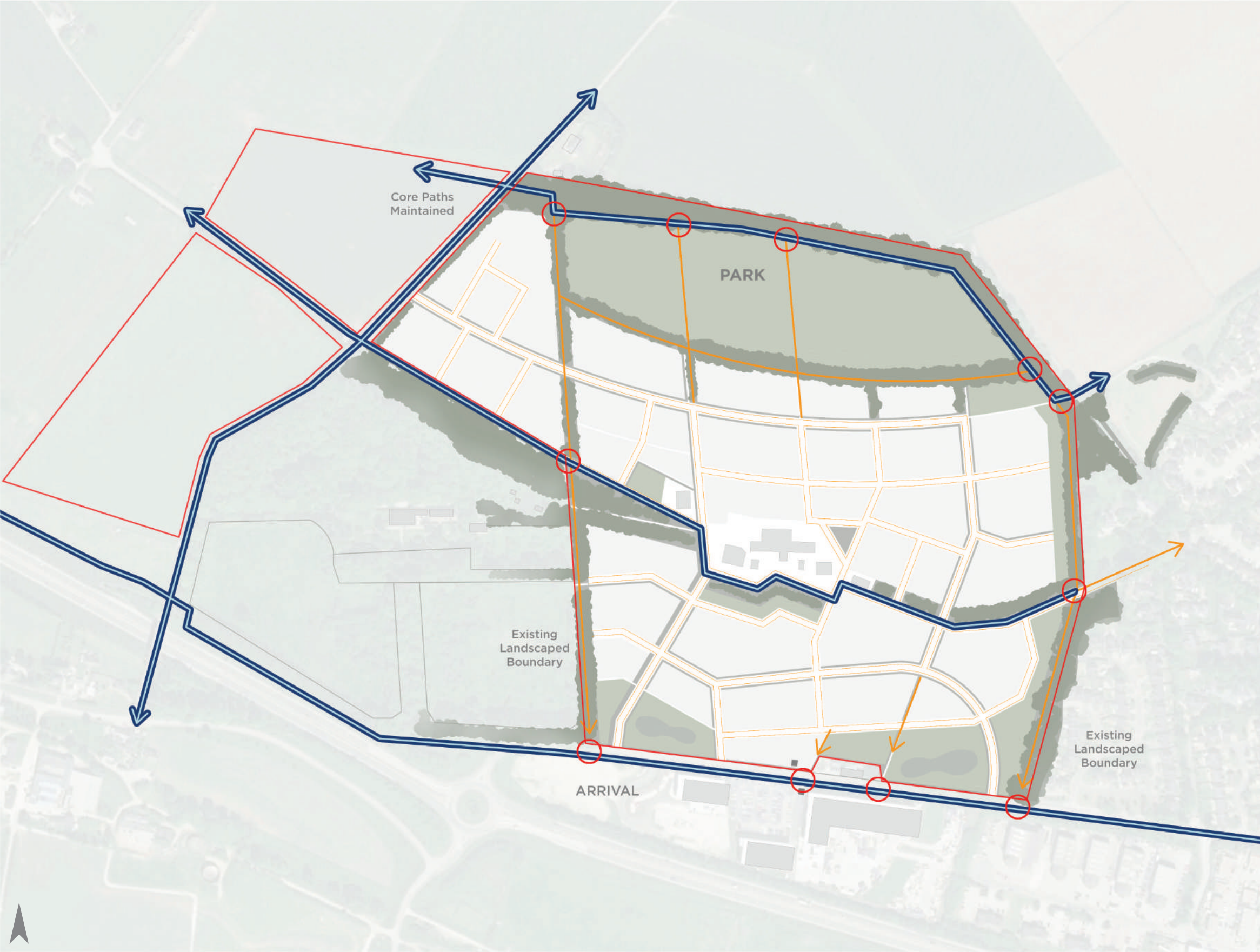
The Draft Proposed Plan states that "Within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, the area in the Aberdeen / Inverurie / Huntly Strategic Growth Area (an area identified for future strategic development options) is still constrained by uncertainty regarding the proposed dualling of the A96. Even once a preferred route is identified it would not be prudent to promote development until there is a completion date for the works to be undertaken. Currently we have no knowledge as to what the solution to this constraint is likely to be, either at Inverurie or Huntly, and this restricts opportunity for further development in this area. Development of existing opportunity sites and, where available, brownfield land remains sufficient to meet housing demand." There has only been 1 house completed in Blackburn in the last five years to constrained land supply. There is an evident solution to the problem identified in the Proposed Local Development Plan to the Constraint on the delivery of housing in Inverurie which is for the allocation of effective land in Blackburn for development.

Blackburn is within the strategic growth area and, in addition to providing an effective development, a development on the edge of the settlement provides an opportunity to deliver a quality development in the right location in accordance with the objectives of Scottish Planning Policy. Development in this location benefits from and contributes to the surrounding mix of uses in Blackburn and will provide a benefit for investment and the continuation of the local services and facilities that are located within walking distance. The proposal also takes a careful approach to the landscape impact and the incorporation of natural features within the proposal.

Summary

The extent of the proposal contained within GR033 has been reduced with the remaining land promoted for future development at this stage. It is considered that there are no constraints to development and the

comments made regarding the development of this site can be mitigated or are outweighed by the benefit of the proposal and its location. Blackburn is a main settlement within the strategic growth areas and arguably the only town that can deliver housing in the A96 corridor in the short to medium term. The site can effectively contribute towards housing supply targets, supports and benefits from existing services and employment and will delivery development in the right location. For the aforementioned reasons it is suggested that Aberdeenshire Council should reconsider the Land at Hillhead of Glasgoego and allocate the land for immediate development within the LDP, failing that the site should be identified as a Strategic Reserve. The preferred site noted in the MIR/draft proposed LDP has failed to come forward for 30 years but is still being considered. The land at Glasgoego can come forward immediately and deliver much needed housing in Blackburn.



Scale: NTS @A3

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Core Paths
- Proposed Pedestrian Links
- Connections with Core Paths

The MIR lists the presence of a core path running through the site as a constraint to development, however the development proposals presented within the document ‘Land at Hillhead of Glasgoego, Blackburn - Development Strategy, Response to Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 - Call for Sites March 2018’ have sought to demonstrate how the core paths could be fully integrated into a development without the need for realignment. The approach to proposed development at Glasgoego has been based on designing a layout structure that fits with the landscape and utilises and enhances the existing site features to best effect. The presence of the core paths is a key asset of the site - providing numerous local routes and links to the wider network, local amenities and public transport connections. This diagram seeks to reinforce how design proposals would ensure a permeable layout is created that links positively to the existing core paths and also that they will be positively addressed and overlooked to ensure they are safe and attractive routes.

Additionally, it demonstrates further that through creating woodland edges and enhancing existing landscape alongside the core paths in addition to linking them directly with areas of public open space, will improve the recreational experience for path users and help to integrate new development with the existing community. Importantly integrating the core paths into development would assist in delivering the long-term Aberdeenshire LDP objective of connecting various existing routes and provide a walking route and green network around the whole of the town.