

# 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](mailto: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.*



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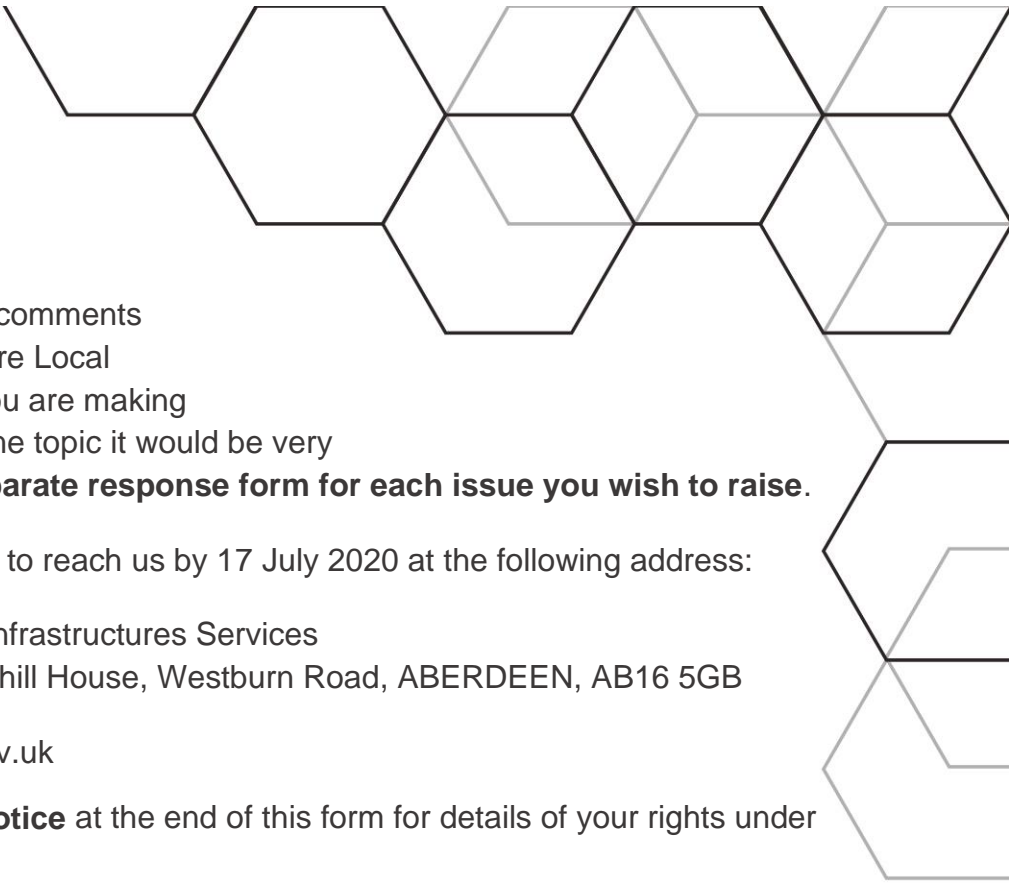
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If you wish to contact one of the area planning offices, please call 01467 534333 and ask for the relevant planning office or email [planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).



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](mailto: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

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Surname:	Fotheringham
Date:	July 2020
Postal Address:	Bancon Homes, [REDACTED]
Postcode:	[REDACTED]
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]

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

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

If yes who are you representing?

☒ 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):

Representation against non-allocation of Sites GR061 and GR062.

Sites should be allocated for up to 100 homes to the east of the combined site and up to 900 homes on the whole site (subject to transport upgrades).

## Reason for change:

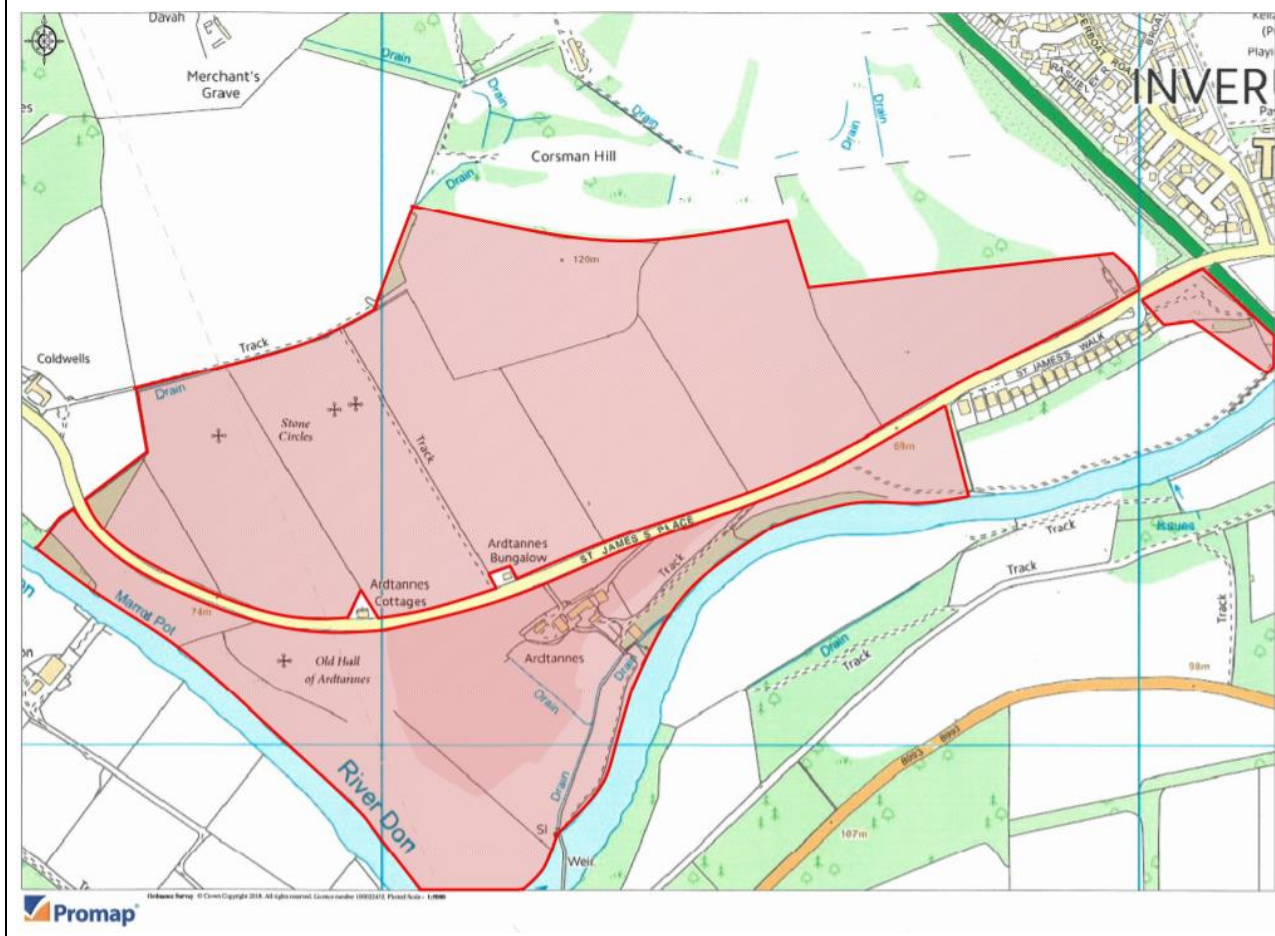
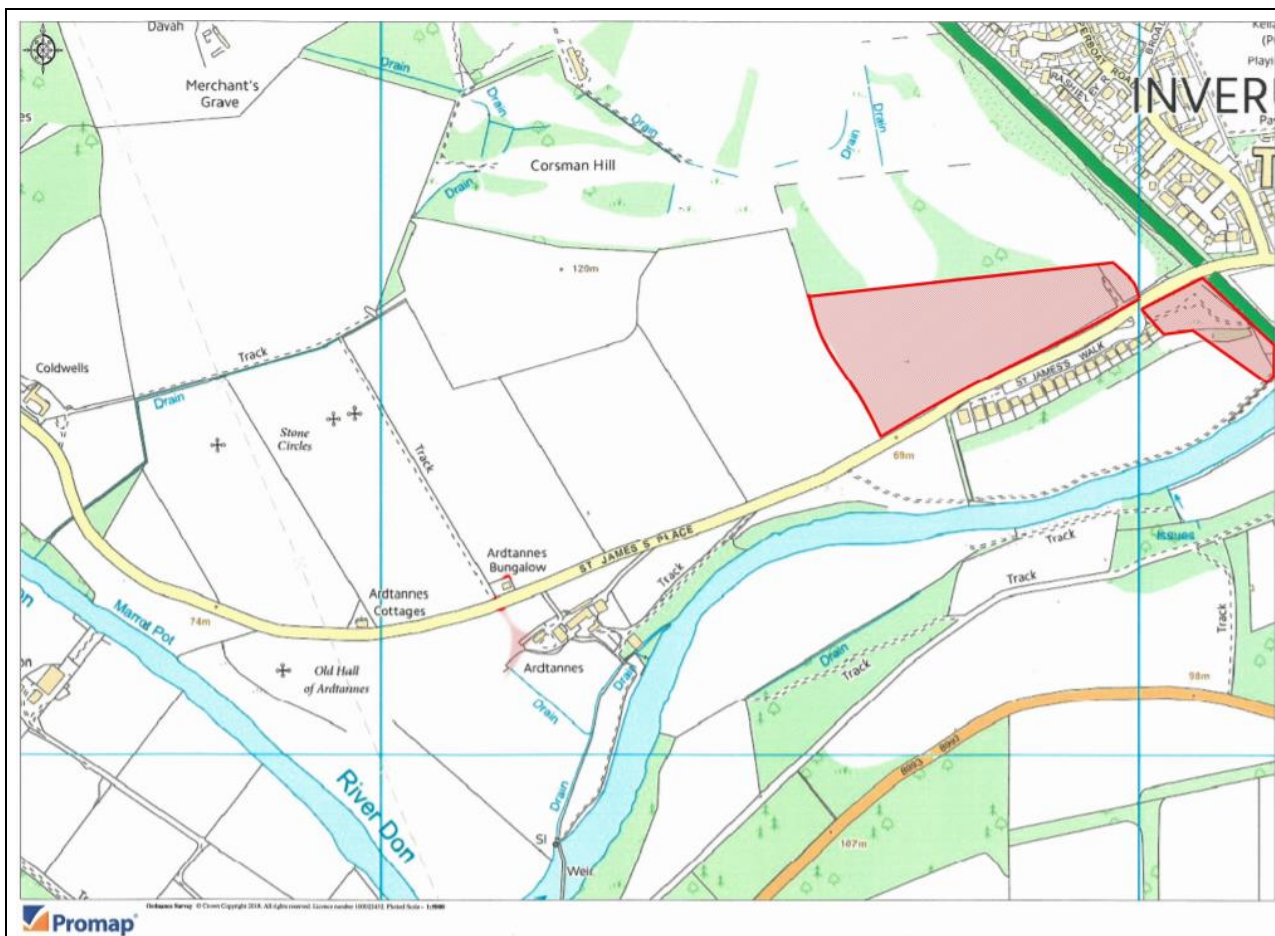
Bancon Homes continue to object to the effective embargo on greenfield housing allocations in the Blackburn to Inverurie Strategic Growth Area, based primarily on the unknown future of a proposed A96 dualling project.

The Structure Plans in 2009 and 2014 identified the strategy for delivering housing across the City & Shire and as part of that identified the requirement for housing in this Strategic Growth Area. Until this Proposed Plan, the 2012 and 2017 Local Development Plans (LDP's) instead avoided making any strategic allocations. The key local exception to this is the proposed expansion of an allocation within Inverurie from 58 units to 180 units. This and other prospective sites in the area were previously identified in the MIR as part of the Council's embargo that "further allocations were not to be made until the preferred route of the A96 dualling was confirmed." Is it the case that new strategic allocations, or selective expansions are now permitted in this corridor?

Through the examination of the above plans, Transport Scotland has been clear that the dualling project is a strategic project, and in no way designed to provide capacity for housing in particular areas. It is the role of LDP's to ensure that housing can be delivered, along with the necessary infrastructure. As in our response to the Main Issues Report (MIR), Bancon Homes submit that this has not been achieved and that the delivery of the housing land requirement has been frustrated by the approach taken. Land to the west of Inverurie was earmarked as the preferred area for long term development back in the 1998 Consolidated Aberdeenshire Local Plans, but frustratingly has been omitted from subsequent plans.

At each stage of this LDP process, Bancon Homes have submitted two bids for land to the west of Inverurie, on land at Upperboat, Ardtannes and Coldwells (see site plans 1 and 2 below) – one for 70-100 houses to the east of the area, primarily on the Upperboat site, which can be delivered in the short-term with few infrastructure upgrades required, and a second bid for up to 900 houses on the whole site, which would require a more significant upgrade to roads infrastructure. Transport Assessment work has been carried out to support this position. This was submitted as part of the bid package and is appended once more to this representation (Appendix 1).





None of the routes being considered by Transport Scotland (finalised route options were expected to be published during 2019, but this is now expected later in 2020) impact on these sites directly and therefore cannot be considered a constraint to the delivery of housing. The MIR stated that both options “cannot be considered until a preferred route for dualling the A96 has been selected and the timescale for delivery is known.” This is an unreasonable position to take, given neither of the shortlisted routes (as of early 2019) conflict with these proposals.

Furthermore, there is the possibility that when a route is selected (albeit this has been delayed) and that this Inverurie section is delivered prior to 2030, it would be delivered within the currency of this next LDP. As such the LDP should provide for development options in the same LDP.

In terms of housing land allocations, despite the position taken in the Proposed Plan (Appendix 6 Housing Land Allocations) we contend that there remains a housing land shortfall within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (HMA). A surplus of 80 units is identified in the LDP in response to the SDP Housing Supply Allowance.

However, Homes for Scotland (HfS), analyse the housing land supply within the Aberdeen HMA as being short by c.483 units (a difference of 563 units where sites are considered to be constrained or non-effective). Worryingly, there are a number of sites where the bid or previous allocation has been increased by Aberdeenshire Council (in total 287 units) including some sites where this is seemingly without request, where there is no evidence of housebuilder involvement or the site is not evidently in effective ownership.

802 units within Aberdeenshire Council’s analysis of housing land supply are from sites of 50 units or below. It is contended therefore that there is significant risk of a housing land shortfall as measured against the SDP Allowance, and this site would be effective in meeting that shortfall.

In addition, whilst not lying within the same area of Aberdeenshire but nonetheless in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA), representations have been made previously by Bancon Homes regarding the continued under-delivery of housing at Chapeltown of Elsie. We do not object to the principle of this allocation, but continue to request that Aberdeenshire Council recognise (1) the significant proportion of the effective land supply within the AHMA that Chapeltown constitutes and (2) the number of completions arising from Chapeltown continues to be well below those envisaged in either the 2012 or 2017 LDP’s.

In terms of the first point above, Appendix 6 of the Proposed Plan identifies a total housing land supply for the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA of 6,030 homes. Chapeltown is allocated for a total of 4,045 homes, with only 164 delivered as of Jan 2019 (Housing Land Audit 2019). This leaves 3,881 homes remaining, constituting 64% of the total effective housing land supply for this SGA.

In relation to the second point, the delivery of 164 units since commencement in 2015 equates to a build rate of approx. 40 units per annum. Extrapolating this out, even at a more generous 60-80 units per annum, would leave a completion total of only 1,184 units by 2031. This would leave 2,697 units undelivered during the plan period.

This further throws into focus the risks associated with Aberdeenshire Council’s assessment of effective land supply, and that without further allocations, the delivery of

homes across the AHMA will be well below that required by current and prospective residents.

It is contended therefore that there is significant risk of a housing land shortfall as measured against the SDP Allowance, and this site would be effective in meeting that shortfall.

Inverurie is a key settlement in Aberdeenshire, and continued development will support the provision of key infrastructure such as the delivery of a new secondary school and necessary improvements to the local road network.

The MIR in its assessment of sites, noted other constraints to development on these sites. Firstly, flood risk is noted. Part of the landholding is close to the river, and at a substantially lower level than the majority of the site. There is no intention to develop land within a functional floodplain, and the proposed housing numbers for the site have been calculated with the assumption that this land would not form part of the development. There is a requirement to deliver 40% of the sites as open space, and this land could contribute positively towards that. Around 80% of the site is a very great height above the flood plain, and therefore developable without constraint.

Secondly, visual impact is noted. It is assumed that a development of this scale would need to go through a masterplanning process that would include a detailed visual impact assessment, and strategic landscape planning. It is submitted that the south facing site is suitable for the level of development proposed within a suitable landscape structure that would mitigate any landscape impact satisfactorily. A landscape and visual impact assessment of the site was carried out as part of an earlier LDP bid, however this does not appear to have been considered. A copy of this 2008 report is appended to this representation (Appendix 2).

It is therefore submitted that the Inverurie West site is suitable for an immediate release of up to 100 houses, with a strategic allocation of around 900 houses and associated other uses, as per the original bid. Whilst delayed, the preferred route of the A96 dualling should be known prior to adoption of this LDP therefore an appropriate solution for accessing the strategic site can be appropriately planned.



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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.

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### The Legal Basis for collecting the information is:

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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.

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

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

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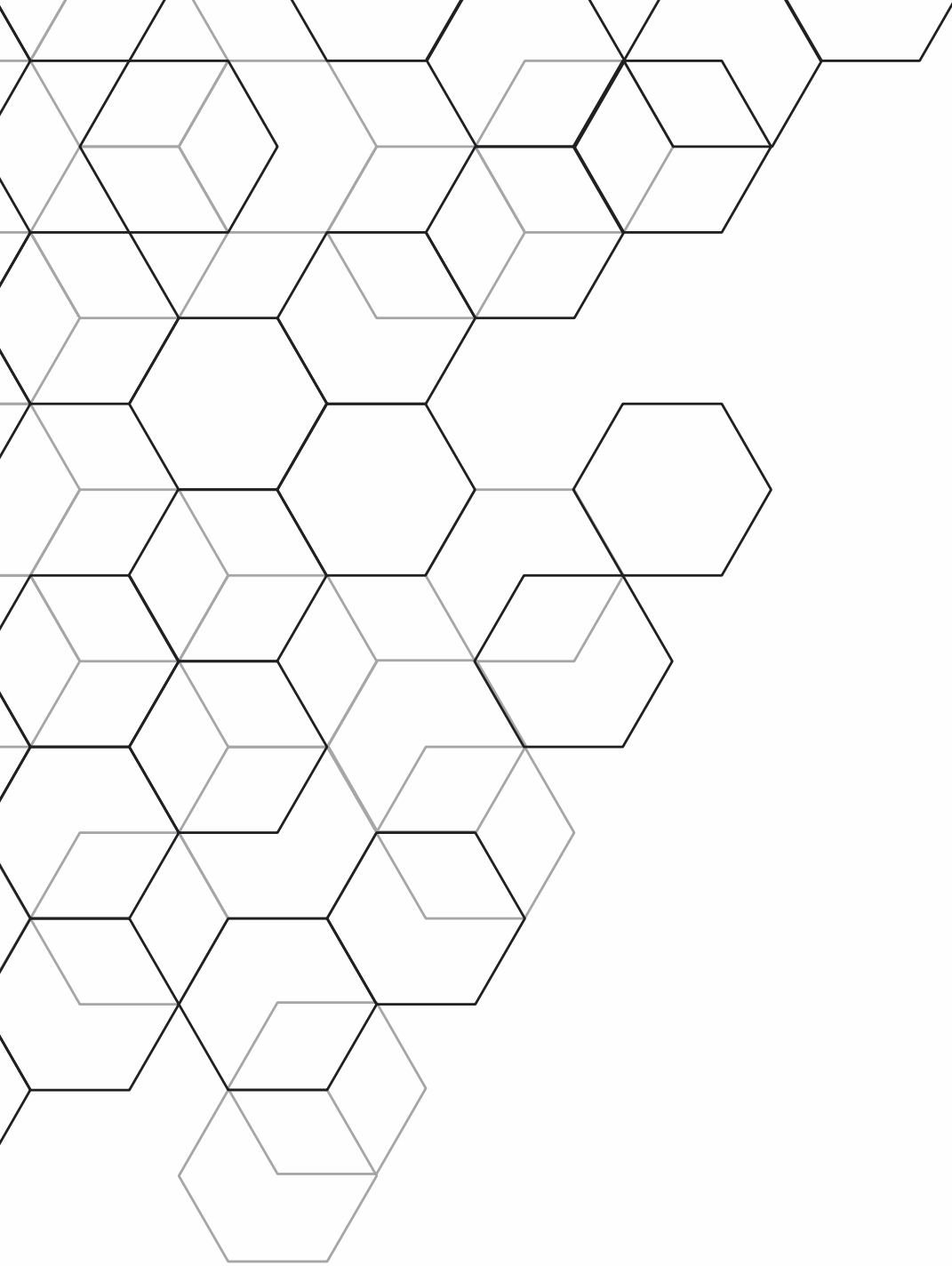
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# Inverurie Masterplan TA Executive Summary



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Approved by: [Redacted] .....  
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Director

Rev No	Comments	Checked by	Approved by	Date
1	Final	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	01/10/2010

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

Job No 60159916

Reference Executive Summary

Date Created September 2010

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## Inverurie Masterplan Executive Summary

### Background

The proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2010 sets out the ground rules for the development of land under the Land Use Planning Act. Its main purpose is to set out statements of the policies that will be used for assessing planning applications. In its proposals it also confirms the principle of development on sites across Aberdeenshire. The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan will apply from the date the council adopt it which is anticipated to be in the autumn of 2011 and will run until 2023. It will provide firm guidance for the period up to 2016, by which time it will have been reviewed by Aberdeenshire Council.

Bancon currently have an interest in a number of sites within Inverurie associated with residential development proposals and this report has identified the sites which could be brought forward in the timescales set out in the LDP along with the likely housing densities that could be accommodated. Associated infrastructure requirements which support new development have also been examined within this report.

A Comprehensive Transport Assessment (TA) report has considered the various Bancon sites in combination with other housing allocations within Inverurie in order to determine the most suitable location for housing. This has been achieved by a combination of assessing the sustainable travel characteristics of the sites, along with a micro-simulation modelling exercise that has considered a number of testing scenarios. The Transport Assessment (AECOM Ref: 60159916 – Inverurie Masterplan Transport Assessment) is available on request.

### Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan 2010

The proposed LDP is split into two phases, the first running from 2007 to 2016 with the second running from 2017 to 2023. Table 5 within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan 2010, indicates that a total of 950 dwellings have been allocated in the first phase with a further 850 dwellings are allocated in the second phase. The plan also indicates the preferred areas for development and this information has been reproduced in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Reproduced from The Aberdeenshire LDP (Table 5)			
		Inverurie – Blackburn	
		Phase 1 2007 – 2016	Phase 2 2017 – 2023
Inverurie	H1	737	
	M2	150	
	M1	45	
	H2	20	
	F		850

The above allocations are proposed by Aberdeenshire Councils as the preferred sites for development, however alternative locations are available within Inverurie which will have significant benefits. This would be particularly important in the Phase 1 period where major infrastructure improvements would not be feasible in terms of timescales or available funding. Sustainable locations which can integrate into the existing infrastructure will be of paramount importance as they will not be reliant upon private car use, and will subsequently minimise the impact upon the road network until such time as infrastructure improvements can be provided.

### **The Development Proposal**

The Bancon proposals would see four distinct areas developed around Inverurie with the following maximum housing densities:

- |               |   |                       |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Ardtannes  | - | maximum 100 dwellings |
| 2. Balhalgady | - | maximum 500 dwellings |
| 3. Conglass   | - | maximum 200 dwellings |
| 4. Keithhall  | - | maximum 700 dwellings |

The above sites have been considered in conjunction with other LDP sites and differing levels of development in order to gain an appreciation of which allocations are best suited in terms of the local road network and sustainability. A major new piece of infrastructure has also been considered in the form of a new distributor road to the east of Inverurie. The new distributor road, referred to as the Keithhall Link Road (KLR), will connect from the B9170 Oldmeldrum Road in the north, to the A96(T) Thainstone Roundabout in the south. The new road will allow a bypass route of Inverurie town centre, which will alleviate a heavily trafficked route and provide a long term future for further housing within Inverurie.

### **Accessibility**

There is a good level of existing walking, cycling, and public transport provision located adjacent to the Bancon sites. A combination of Wider Network Core Paths, Existing Proposed Core Paths, and New Proposed Core Paths, are located next to the respective Bancon sites. To facilitate safe and convenient access by walking and cycling, each site would be capable of providing the required infrastructure connections to the core path network. All footway improvements would be designed in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council's Standards for Road Construction Consent and Adoption.

Site specific infrastructure, such as bus lay-bys or layouts which can accommodate bus penetration, would be considered as individual schemes are progressed and the requirements of Aberdeenshire Council and public transport operators are incorporated. Of the sites considered, Keithhall would have a significant benefit in terms of sustainable access as it is located within a convenient 20-minute walk time of Inverurie Train Station.

A Travel Plan leaflet would be produced for the residential sites which contains a development and wider area map and include up to date public transport timetables, with a summary of local services located within the leaflet, as well as local taxi information. The leaflet will introduce the development and contains a section detailing the health / financial benefits of using modes of transport other than the car. The map will detail the location of bus stops, stations, schools and local facilities such as shops, community centres, leisure centres, libraries etc. and will indicate the time it would take to walk / cycle to these locations.



### **People trip Assessment**

In accordance with the National Policy guidance provided in the Scottish Executive publication Transport Assessment and Implementation: A Guide, a people trip assessment approach has been adopted within the Transport Assessment. The trip rates for the residential element have been calculated utilising the agreed trips rates that were within the December 2009 Inverurie Traffic Capacity Study 2, produced by SIAS, Aberdeenshire Council's Transport Consultant.

### **Development Testing Scenarios**

Modelling work has been undertaken by AECOM in respect of the Local Development Plan allocations, including the various sites controlled by Bancon Developments. The LDP is currently split into two phases, the first running from 2007 to 2016 with the second running from 2017 to 2023. 9 development scenarios have been tested overall as indicated below.

Four scenarios were modelled for Phase 1 (up to 2016). Scenarios 1 and 2 provide a direct comparison with and without a Keithhall Link Road (KLR) respectively. Scenarios 1,2,3,4 provide a comparison of allocating development to a number of different sites around Inverurie.

A further 5 scenarios were modelled for Phase 2 (2017 to 2023). Scenarios 5, 6 and 7 provide a comparison of allocating the Phase 2 development levels to a number of different sites around Inverurie with the Keithhall Link Road in place. A further test, Scenario 8, was undertaken to assess the impact of full development of the Crichtie and Thainstone sites without the inclusion of the Keithhall Link Road.

The concept of "major mitigation works" to offset the disbenefits of concentrating development at Crichtie and Thainstone was subsequently investigated in Scenario 9 which tested a single grade separated junction on the A96 Trunk Road replacing Thainstone and Port Elphinstone roundabouts. Scenario 9 resulted in significant queuing through the town. A full breakdown of the development content of the 9 modelled scenarios is shown in Table 2 below.

Capabilities on project:  
Transportation

**Table 2 – Development Content Breakdown in Paramics Testing Scenarios**

Test Scenario	Development											
	Uryside & Portstown	Harlaw Road North	Crichtie	Thainstone / Crichtie Employment	Wimpey	Ardiannes	Conglass	Conglass Employment	Balhalgardy	Keithhall	Keithhall Link Road	Emulated Grade Separated Junction
<b>Phase 1</b>												
1	550	150			250	100	100	15ha	200	150	✓	✗
2	550	150			250	100	100	15ha	200	150	✗	✗
3	550	150	200	7.5ha	250		100	7.5ha	200	50	✗	✗
4	550	150	400	15ha	250		100		50		✗	✗
<b>Phase 2</b>												
5	1100	150			250	100	100	15ha	500	700	✓	✗
6	1100	150	200	7.5ha	250	100	200	7.5ha	500	400	✓	✗
7	1100	150	400	7.5ha	250	100	200	7.5ha	300	400	✓	✗
8	1100	150	800	15ha	250	100	200		300		✗	✗
9	1100	150	800	15ha	250	100	200		300		✗	✓

## Modelling Results

### Phase 1 Summary

During the AM and PM periods the queue and journey time analysis for the 2016 Reference Case and Scenario 1 (Keithhall Link Road Provision) were generally consistent. Scenarios 2 to 4 were above the results of the reference base and produced similar results to one another for both the AM and PM periods as follows:

- 46% - 89% increase in A96 maximum average queue for the AM period
- 308% - 355% increase in A96 maximum average queue for the PM period
- 34% - 68% increase in High Street maximum average queues for the AM period
- 61% - 74% increase in High Street maximum average queues for the PM period

The results of Phase 1 modelling therefore indicated that there is a worsening of performance in transport terms, without the early provision of the Keithhall Link Road (Scenario 1).

### Phase 2 Summary

The Phase 2 results suggest that the provision of the Keithhall Link Road and associated Thainstone Roundabout improvements will offer a significant benefit to the local and trunk road networks; with the queuing outputs demonstrating that the LDP scenarios 5, 6 and 7 would better the 2023 Reference Case as follows:

- 11% - 30% decrease in A96 maximum average queue for the AM period
- 49% - 52% % decrease in A96 maximum average queue for the PM period
- 42% - 45% decrease in High Street maximum average queues for the AM period
- 17% - 22% decrease in High Street maximum average queues for the PM period

It can be seen that there would be a betterment in average queuing levels on the A96 and High Street during both the AM and PM periods with the LDP allocations in place along with the Keithhall Link Road infrastructure. This once again emphasises the importance of the Keithhall Link Road in supporting the future housing allocations within Inverurie.

The Phase 2 journey time analysis for both the AM and PM periods indicate that Scenarios 5, 6 and 7 will operate with results similar to the 2023 Reference Case, while testing without the provision of the Keithhall Link Road (Scenario 8) shows that most key routes will experience significant increases in journey times. The additional testing undertaken in Scenarios 9 demonstrates that while there is an improvement over Scenario 8, the journey times on key routes fail to offset to the 2023 Reference Case.

The results demonstrate that the Keithhall Link Road would be an essential piece of infrastructure in order to support the future housing requirements of Inverurie.

## Conclusion

Allocating Phase 1 development to the Wimpey and Keithhall sites allows early provision of a significant length of a future, full length KLR. Allocation of northern sites (including Conglass and Balhalgardy), which would benefit from a future KLR, could also provide early developer contributions. This will secure a choice of location for the viable supply and adequate variety of land for housing. The range of choice will be secured as the proposals are spread across individual sites which are each able to integrate into Inverurie, providing pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections to the existing facilities and services available.

The traffic modelling work which has been undertaken clearly demonstrates that the provision of the Keithhall Link Road and associated improvements at Thainstone Roundabout are fundamental to ensuring that the local and trunk road networks continue to operate in a satisfactory manner.

In transport terms the Keithhall Link Road will provide distinct benefits in the period 2017 – 2023. Up to 2016 there is little difference between development strategies without the Keithhall Link Road in place. While it is clear that the Keithhall Link Road cannot be provided in the short term, in transport terms it makes good sense to plan and prepare for the Keithhall Link Road as needed future infrastructure as far as possible. Allocating development to the Wimpey and Keithhall sites allows the early provision of a significant length of a future, full length Keithhall Link Road. This infrastructure will provide for the housing demands of Inverurie up to and beyond the design year 2023

**BANCON DEVELOPMENTS LTD**

**ARDTANNES, INVERURIE**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL**

**NOVEMBER 2008**

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Figure 2 – Topography

Figure 3 – Landscape Character Areas & Policies

Figure 4 – Viewpoint Locations

Figure 5 (A – F) – Viewpoint Photographs

TA Ref:	BDEE1005
LPA Ref:	
Office Address:	Turley Associates



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Bancon Developments Ltd to inform a development strategy for land at Conglas and Balhalgardy to the north of Inverurie. The site is identified on Figure 1: Site Location Plan.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to;
- Assess the landscape character; and
  - Assess the visibility of the site
- 1.3 The outcome will be an understanding of the sensitivity of the site in terms of character and views.

## ***Site Description***

- 1.4 The site stretches from Ardtannes in the south, over Corsman Hill and into the golf course, all of which is located to the west of the urban area of Inverurie and the A96. The site lies to the north of the River Don and extends westwards from the A96 corridor towards the Hill of Ardtannes. The site is currently in use for rough grazing, agricultural purposes and leisure uses. Burnhervie Road runs east to west through the southern part of the site, linking with the road network in Inverurie and the rural road network to the west of the town.

## **2. Landscape Character Appraisal**

2.1 In order to address the differing aspects of scale, the appraisal will be split into two sections addressing:

- The site's relationship with the wider area; and
- The site's relationship with the local area

### **Topography**

2.2 The topography of the site and surrounding area is indicated on Figure 2. In the western area of the site, the land slopes from north to south to meet the River Don, which forms the southern boundary of the site. The site slopes from a height of around 155m AOD at Hill of Ardtannes to 60m AOD at the River Don. Beyond the river, the land rises southwards to the Shaw Hill and Roquharold Hill, either side of the Woodend Burn.

2.3 Moving eastwards, through the site, to west of Corsman Hill, a plateau opens up, at a height of around 110m AOD. To the west of this, the land rises to meet the crest of the Hill of Ardtannes. A line of pylons traverses this local ridgeline from north to south.

2.4 To the east of Corsman Hill, the land slopes downwards and eastwards to approximately 85m AOD at the A96, which forms the eastern boundary to the site.

### ***Wider Landscape Character***

2.5 Inverurie is located within the Agricultural Heartlands landscape character type, as defined by the South and Central Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Assessment (SNH, 1998). The predominant landscape characteristics of this area are summarised as agricultural, comprising a mix of generally intensive mixed farming, on large fields.

2.6 Within the Agricultural Heartland landscape character type, Inverurie and its hinterland sit in the Central Wooded Estates landscape character area (Area 12). The topography of this area is varied, changing between broad sweeping valleys and hills to pockets of smaller scale relief. Dense woodland is a frequently recurring feature which characterises the area. This woodland creates numerous pockets of enclosed landscape character.

2.7 Key characteristics of the landscape which are of relevance to the site and surrounding land are as follows;

- Rolling landscape of low hills and wide valleys.

- Strong woodland structure ..... adding rich and diverse texture to the landscape.
  - Mixed farmland with varying size and pattern of fields.
  - Long views across open farmland contrast with sudden enclosure by woodland as one passes through the area.
- 2.8 The general description set out by the SNH South and Central Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Assessment is broadly applicable to the landscape around the Ardtannes / Corsman Hill area. The urban influence of Inverurie is largely contained by the A96 corridor, and the land to the west is used mainly for agricultural purposes, punctuated by considerable areas of woodland and pockets of development.
- 2.9 The A96 corridor, the site's eastern boundary, runs through a cutting and provides a physical edge to the existing urban area of Inverurie. At this point, the urban area is characterised by fairly low density residential development.
- 2.10 Land to the south of the site is agricultural in character. The landscape comprises a mix of rolling hills and valleys, rising gradually southwards from the River Don valley. The land reaches a high point at Roquharold Hill at around 140m AOD, which prevents long views southwards.
- 2.11 To the west of the site the land also opens up into a landscape of rolling hills and valleys, interspersed by areas of woodland and structure planting. The undulating nature of the landscape means that long views are punctuated by the rising land form.
- 2.12 To the north, the land slopes downwards from the Hill of Ardtannes towards Blackhall Road that connects with the A96 to the east. Much of the existing farmland to the north of the site will be developed from residential and commercial uses.
- 2.13 The existence of many localised hills with associated woodland results in the site being relatively well contained within the wider landscape with a primary focus on the River Don valley

### **Existing Local Character**

- 2.14 In addition to the physical separation created by the site's topography, the local landscape character of the site can be further defined by the landscape boundaries which frame the site. Figure 3 provides an overview of the landscape characteristics in and around the site. To the east, the site boundary is defined by the eastern edge of the golf course, which extends up the eastern face of Corsman Hill. This boundary is marked by fencing along which some low shrubs are planted in places. Within the golf course,

structure planting creates an attractive setting with similar characteristics to the planned woodland estates through the area.

- 2.15 The area of woodland at the crest of Corsman Hill further defines the transition from the golf course to agricultural land. The area of woodland at Hill of Ardtannes falls within the site area, and provides a clear definition to the site area. Between these two areas of woodland however, there is little landscape definition to the northern edge of the site, which rises up to meet the ridgeline at the crest of the Hill of Ardtannes. The line of pylons passes through and over this ridgeline.
- 2.16 The western edge of the site abuts an existing shelter belt which runs along the alignment of a tributary burn which flows into the River Don. This tree belt comprises a mix of mature broadleaf woodland species and forms a defensible landscape boundary to the west of the site.
- 2.17 To the south, the edge of the site is defined by the course of the River Don. There are occasional stretches of linear tree planting along the edge of the river, on both the north and southern banks, which further define this edge.
- 2.18 The structure of the landscape and physical landform of the site plays a key role in defining the landscape character and relationship between the site and the surrounding land.
- 2.19 Travelling westwards into the site from Inverurie, the land forms a valley within which the River Don flows. The form of the landscape allows for views from the east of the site towards the edge of Inverurie. This provides an urban influence on the landscape to the east of the site, including the golf course, which is further influenced by the presence of dwellings at St James's Walk.
- 2.20 Moving further westwards, the urban influence on the character of the site diminishes. The site remains enclosed by the valley, which follows the west to east course of the River Don. The continuation of the alignment of the river and adjacent slopes along the river valley continue the sense of enclosure of this valley.
- 2.21 At Ardtannes, the River Don changes its course to a localised north westerly direction. The form of the landscape alters accordingly, opening up a south-westerly aspect on the southern slope of the Hill of Ardtannes. This has a significant impact on the character of the western portion of the site, by opening it up to the wider landscape of rolling hills and valleys. As a result, the western area of the site plays a more significant role in the wider landscape than the eastern area, as it is more visible from afar.
- 2.22 The structure of the landscape at Hill of Ardtannes further demarcates the shift from the eastern to western valley within the site. Woodland planting covers the south eastern

slope of the hill, strengthening the edge between the western and eastern portions of the site. This woodland, coupled with woodland to the east at Corsman Hill provides landscape coverage over to the crest of each hill, which will protect the skyline from new development. There is currently no woodland on the higher ground between Corsman Hill and Hill of Ardtannes, therefore an appropriate limit will require to be established to ensure that any new development does not encroach on the skyline.

### ***Summary***

2.23 The purpose of the previous section was to appraise the wider and local landscape to understand the sensitivity of the landscape within the site. Key observations / principles are considered to be:

- the existing built form in Inverurie and at St James's Walk, adjacent to the site, strongly influences the eastern areas of the site;
- The western area of the site slopes north to south to meet the River Don which forms the southern boundary.
- The valley form of the landscape restricts the site from influencing a significant part of the wider character;
- This aspect changes in the westernmost sections of the site, which are more open to the wider landscape. A ridgeline running north to south through the site, broadly following the route of the pylons separates the more exposed western areas of the site from the enclosed landscape character in the east of the site; and
- The existing plantation and structure planting within the site provides further definition.



### **3. Visual Appraisal**

- 3.1 Consideration has been given to the visibility of the site in relation to surrounding receptors. Viewpoint locations are indicated on Figure 4 and photographs are included in Figures 5 (A to F).

#### **Viewpoint 1 – Golf course southern boundary**

- 3.2 Looking south from Corsman Hill, the fall of the land southwards towards the River Don Corridor is evident. Dwellings along St James's Walk are visible at the foot of the Corsman Hill. Looking southeast, buildings at Port Elphinstone are visible beyond the rooftops of the dwellings at St James's Walk. Looking directly south beyond the River Don, the land rises gradually, and is partially covered by parcels of woodland. The landform and distribution of woodland blocks views to the wider countryside directly south of the site from this viewpoint. Longer views are visible across the countryside to the southwest of the site.

#### **Viewpoint 2 - St James Walk**

- 3.3 Looking north from existing dwellings at St James's Walk, the eastern area of the site is visible and the land extends north and westwards. A cluster of woodland is visible at Corsman Hill, from which a shelter belt of mature trees extends partially southwards. This vegetation sits against the skyline, creating a landscape backdrop for part of the site from this viewpoint. A mix of young trees and shrubs are also visible along the edge of the golf course, which abuts the site to the east.

#### **Viewpoint 3 - Corsman Hill**

- 3.4 This viewpoint looks south west across the site from Corsman Hill, close to the golf course's southern boundary. From this location, the shelter belt visible from the previous viewpoint is visible in the foreground. This creates some separation between fields on either side, providing structure to the landscape. Land to the east of the shelter belt has a south easterly aspect, sloping down to meet St James's Place and the River Don corridor. Land to the west of the shelter belt levels out to a plateau extending westwards to meet woodland which covers the upper slopes of the Hill of Ardtannes, in the western area of the site.

#### **Viewpoint 4 - Dwellings at Ardtannes**

- 3.5 Views to the site from dwellings at Ardtannes are open and extend to the ridgeline at the crest of the slope between the Hill of Ardtannes and Corsman Hill. The ridgeline is punctuated by clusters of woodland which sit against the skyline. The slope of the land from north to south towards Burnhervie is visible. At the ridgeline, a row of pylons is visible and extend over the crest of the hill.

#### **Viewpoint 5 – Looking east over site from Coldwells**

- 3.6 From this viewpoint at Coldwells, the land rises steeply to the east to Hill of Ardtannes. A line of pylons is visible along the ridgeline. Sporadic structure planting is also in place along the field boundaries, which adds further definition to the ridgeline. The rising land and distribution of woodland block views eastwards, thus eliminating a visual connection between land on the east and west sides of the line of pylons.

#### **Viewpoint 6 – Looking west over River Don valley from Coldwells**

- 3.7 Looking westwards from Coldwells, views beyond the northern side of the road are blocked by the rising land and woodland cover on slope of Hill of Ardtannes. To the south, views are partially broken by an area of woodland planting along the northern bank of the River Don. Between these two areas of woodland, long views are possible to the countryside beyond as it extends westwards. This provides a visual connection between this part of the site and the open countryside to the west.

#### **Viewpoint 7 – Entrance to Home Farm**

- 3.8 This viewpoint looks eastwards along the River Don Corridor. The rise of the land to the north and south of the river is apparent. The wooded area to the west of the site at the Hill of Ardtannes is visible in the foreground, with views punctuated by some existing woodland planting along the river valley. Views to the eastern area of the site are blocked by the form of the land and existing tree cover.

#### **Viewpoint 8 – Haughton**

- 3.9 Looking north towards the site, the rise of the land from south to north is clearly visible. A plateau of land is visible in the centre of the site, beyond which the land rises more sharply to meet the crest of the Hill of Ardtannes, at a height of around 160m AOD. The crest of the hill is just visible under woodland cover to the west of the viewpoint. Structure

planting is visible in the centre of the site running from north to south, as are the line of pylons, which extend southwards over the crest of the hill.

### **Viewpoint 9 – Roquharold Cottages**

- 3.10 From this receptor views to the site are completely blocked by the rise of the land and location of woodland at Roquharold Hill. Development on the site would therefore have no visual impact on dwelling houses at Roquharold.

### **Viewpoint 10 – Dwellings at Duncan’s Forest**

- 3.11 This viewpoint looks directly south towards the site. The distinction between landform to the west and east of the site can also be clearly distinguished from this viewpoint. To the east, the land maintains a southern aspect. A line of shelter planting is visible against the crest of the hill, against the skyline. To the west, the aspect changes to a south-westerly direction, which opens the landscape up to the open countryside. The woodland area at the Hill of Ardtannes sits prominently against the skyline. Between these two areas of landscape runs the line of pylons, which extends over the ridgeline of the Hill of Ardtannes.

### **Viewpoint 11 - West of Hill of Ardtannes**

- 3.12 The Hill of Ardtannes blocks views into the site from this viewpoint. The site is therefore largely detached from the land to the northwest. The northern edge of the site is aligned with the ridgeline of the hill; therefore it will be important to ensure that development on the southern slope of the hill does not encroach on the ridgeline and become visible from the north.

### **Viewpoint 12 – Highclere Business Park**

- 3.13 This viewpoint looks directly south towards the ridgeline of Hill of Ardtannes. The site is situated on the southern slope of the hill and is not visible from this viewpoint. The areas of woodland at Hill of Ardtannes and Corsman Hill are visible to the west and east of the viewpoint, framing the route of the pylons across the hill. As with the above viewpoint, the impact that development on the southern slope may have on the northern slope should be considered when assessing an appropriate building footprint for the site.

## Summary

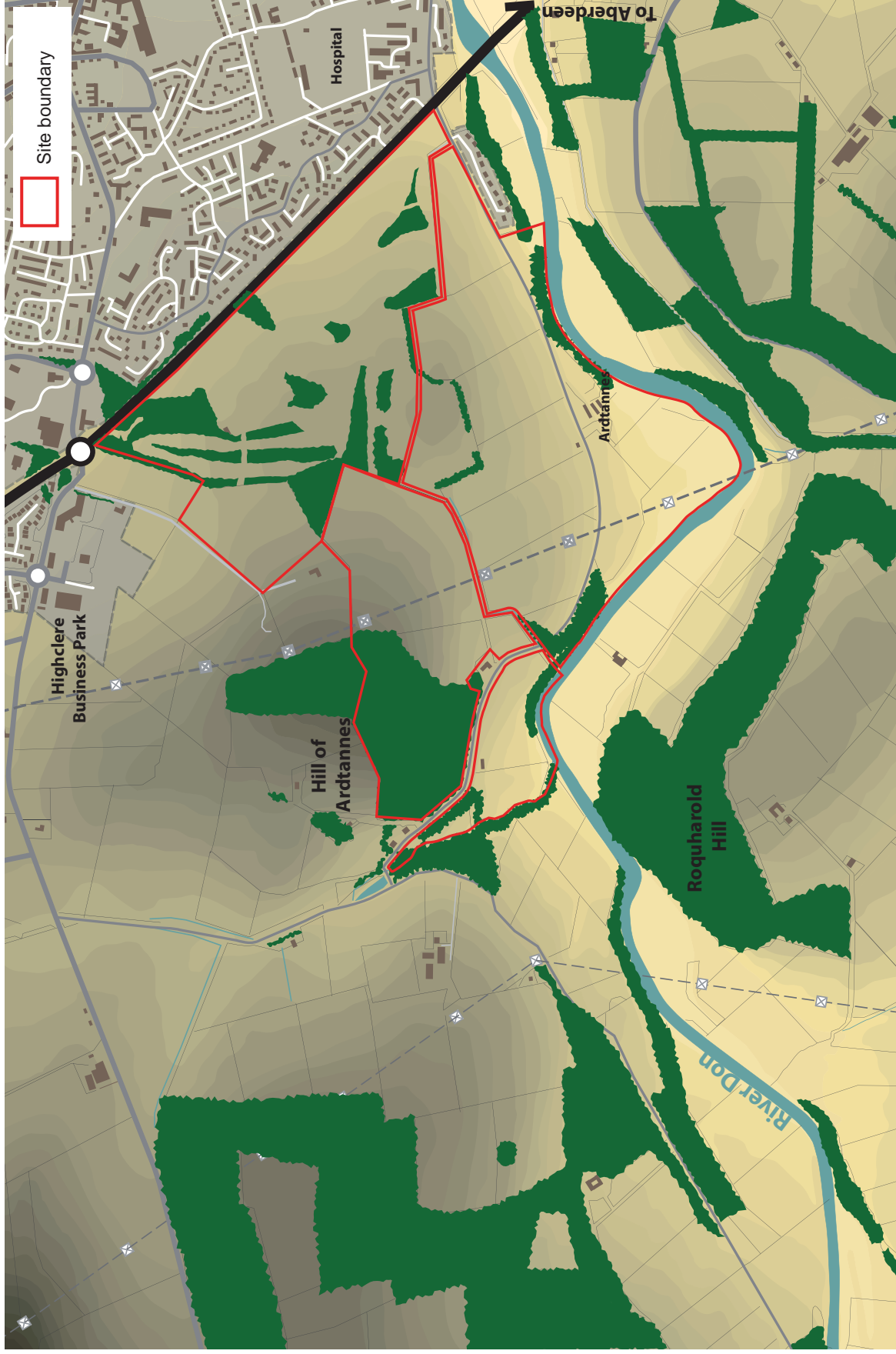
- 3.14 The purpose of the visual appraisal is to inform the spatial development of the site. To this aim, a series of governing principles can be established to guide the development of the site (built form, open space, landscape, etc). Key observations / principles include:
- Views into the site from due south are limited by the rise and fall of the land along the River Don. All receptors located to the south of Roquharold Hill are blocked from view of the site.
  - The western part of the site is more visible from surrounding receptors and the wider countryside.
  - Land on the lower slopes to the east of the site provides the visual setting for the adjacent dwellings at St James's Place and is clearly visible from these buildings.
  - The lower ground within the site is not visible from viewpoints to the west or north due to the form of the land and distribution of woodland. There is a possibility that rooftops of development on higher slopes of Corsman Hill could be visible from the north, therefore development should not extend to the skyline.

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The landscape character and visual appraisal for the site considers its sensitivity to development in terms of visual impact and landscape character. This appraisal will inform a spatial strategy for the Ardtannes / golf course area.
- 4.2 The landscape character of the site fits with the general landscape characteristics set out in the Central Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Assessment. The landscape quality is good, but is influenced to the east of the site by the existing built up area of Inverurie, which has already begun to extend westwards into the Ardtannes area and north of the golf course.
- 4.3 The local topography plays an important role in defining the potential development area within the site. A ridgeline runs from north to south through the site, followed roughly by the alignment of a row of pylons. To the east of these pylons, the landscape has a more enclosed character which has stronger connections to the urban area of Inverurie. To the west, the landscape has an open aspect along the River Don corridor to the open landscape to the west. The land to the east of the pylons is considered to be the most appropriate development area.
- 4.4 The existing landscape framework around the site helps to further define the land within the site. Existing areas of woodland on Hill of Ardtannes and Corsman Hill form a natural edge to development on the site.
- 4.5 The appraisal has identified the key ridgelines and landscape features that inform the character of the area should be preserved with other landscape features integrated into potential development areas. The enhancement of the landscape framework provides an opportunity to mitigate potential visual impacts.

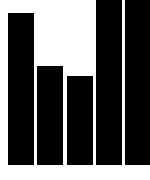


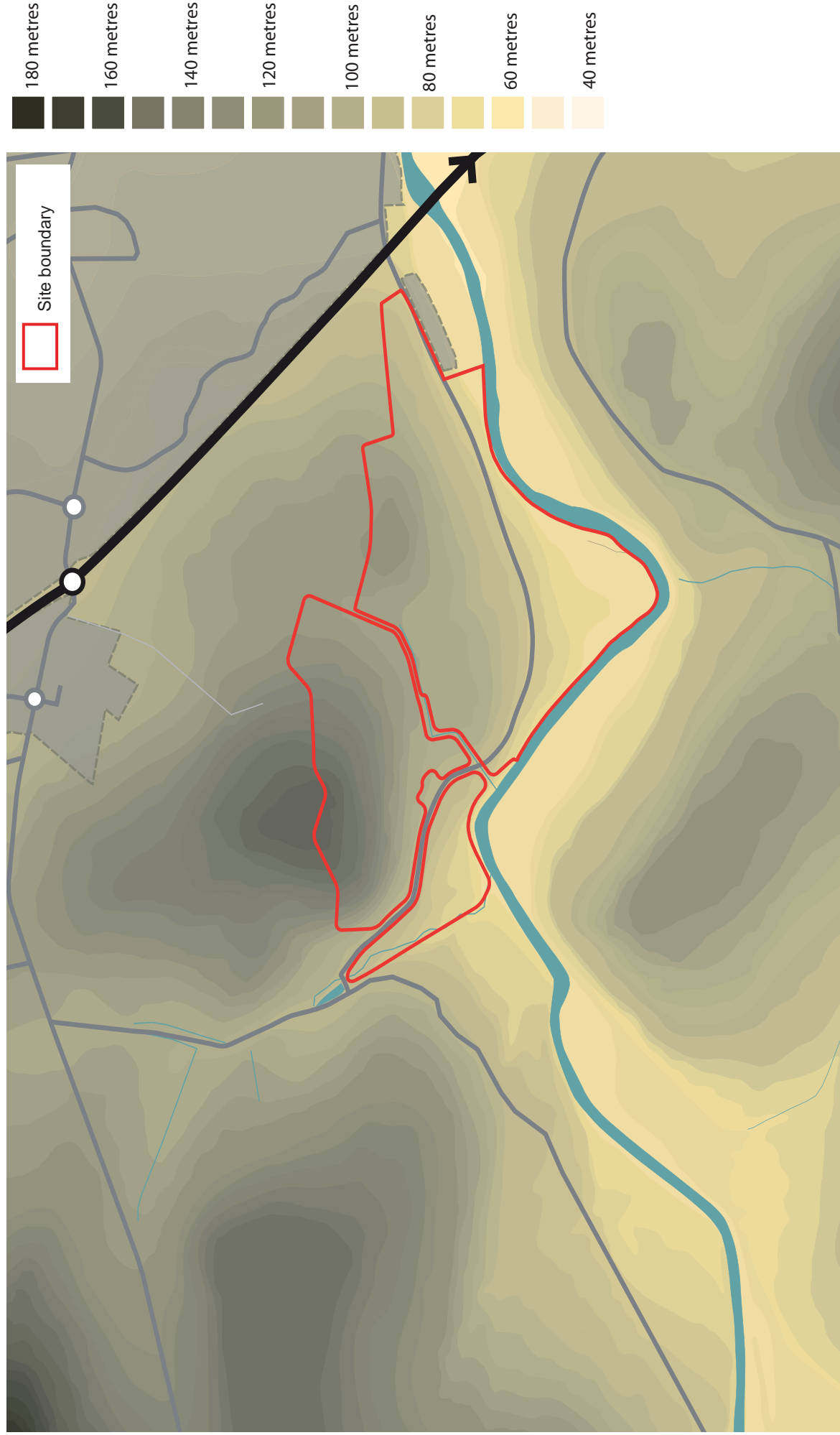
## Appendix 1 – Figures 1 - 5



Client: Bancon Developments Ltd  
Project: Ardtannes, Inverurie  
Title: Figure 1: Location Plan  
Reference: BDEE1005  
Date: November 2008  
Scale: NTS

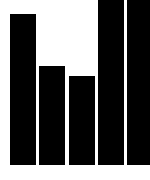
**TURLEY**ASSOCIATES

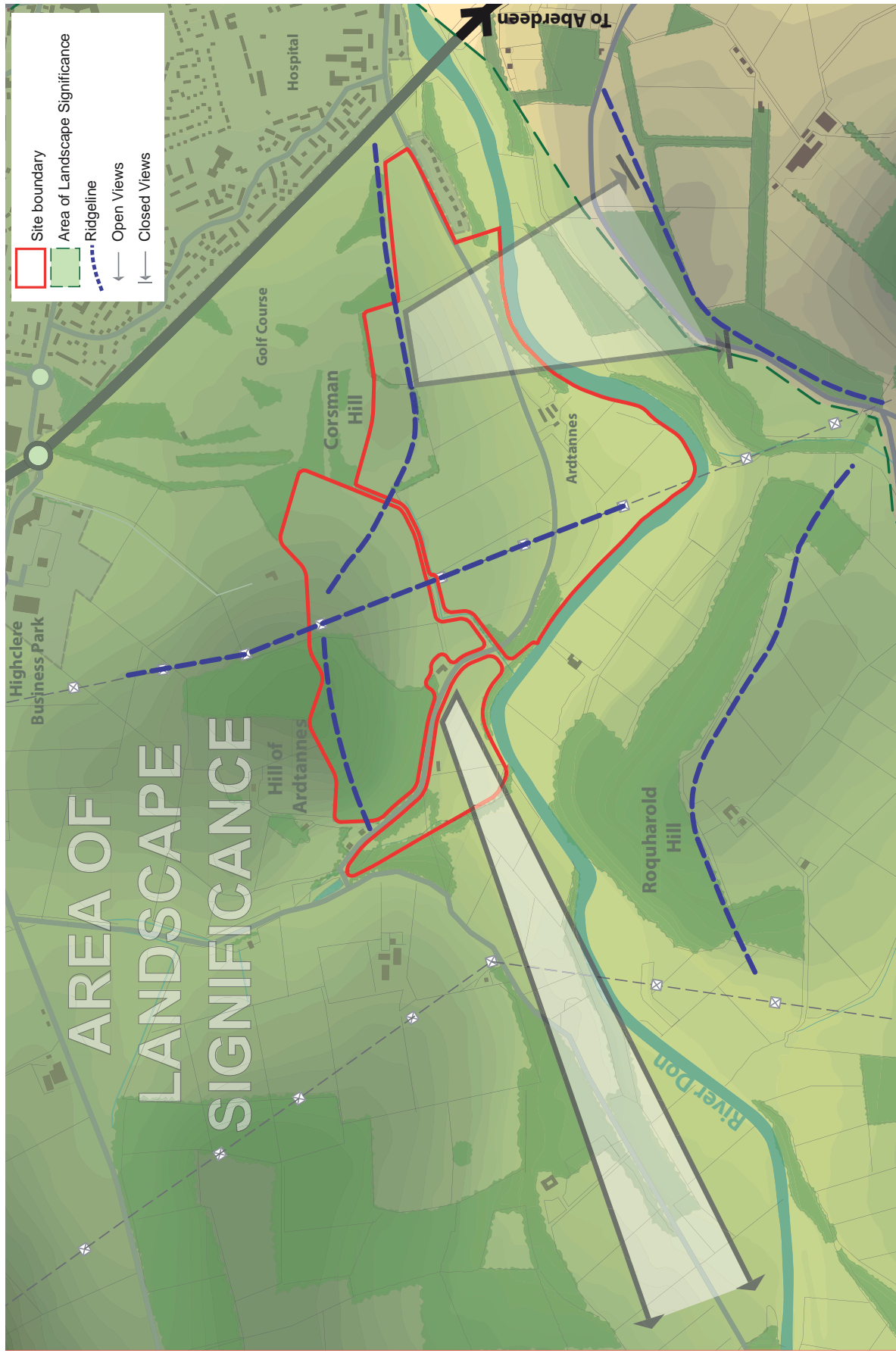




**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 2: Topography  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS

**TURLEYASSOCIATES**





Client: Bancon Developments Ltd

Project: Ardannes, Inverurie

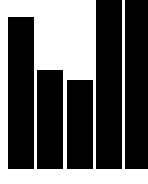
Title: Figure 3: Landscape and Visual Appraisal

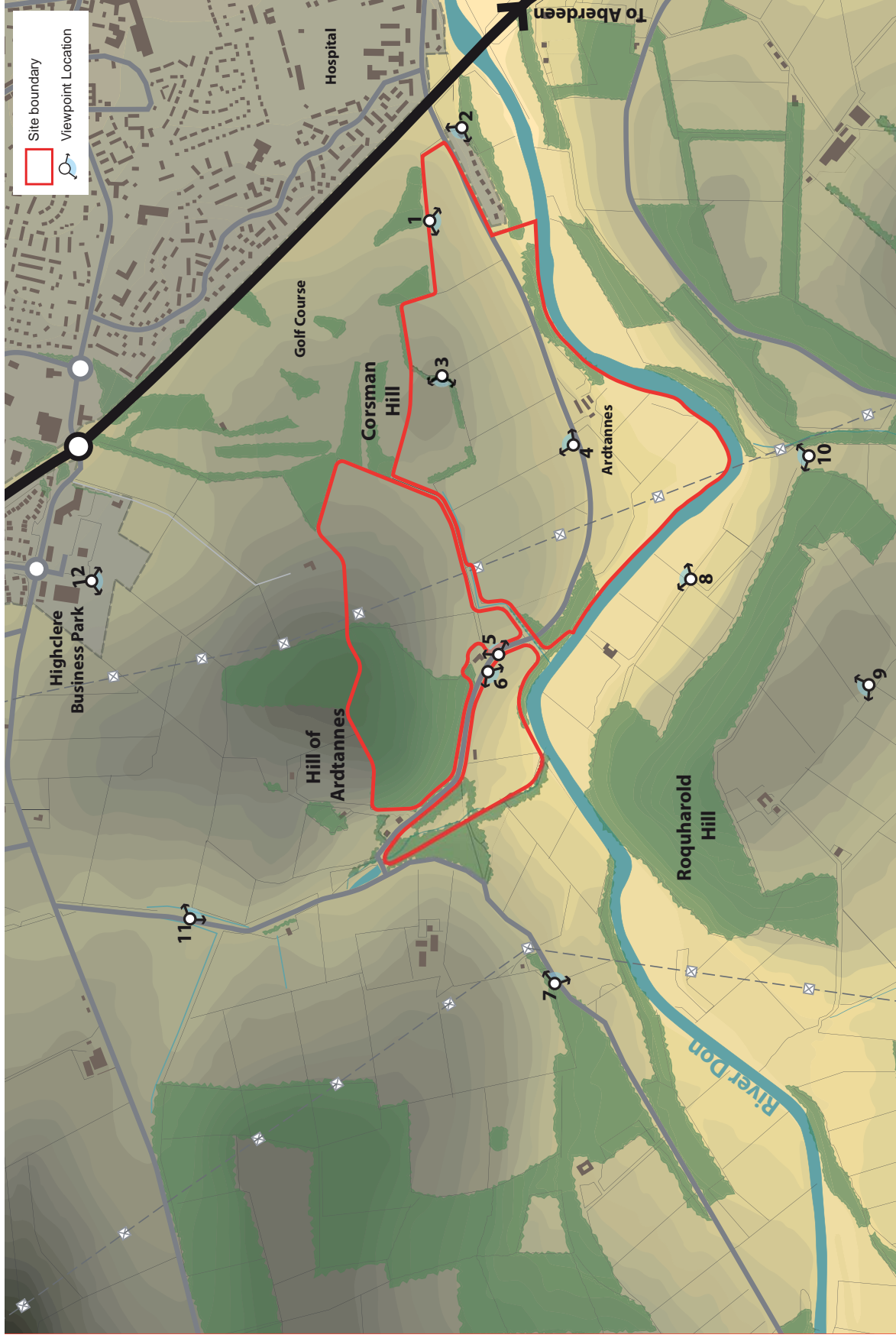
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Date: November 2008

Scale: NTS

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**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 4: Viewpoint Locations  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS





*Viewpoint 1 - North of dwellings at St James's Walk*



*Viewpoint 2 - East end of dwellings at St James's Walk*

**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 5a -Viewpoint Photographs, Ardtannes  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS



Viewpoint 3 - Corseman Hill



Viewpoint 4 - Dwellings at Ardtannes

**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 5b - Viewpoint Photographs, Ardtannes  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS





Viewpoint 5 - Looking east over site from Coldwells



Viewpoint 6 - Looking west over River Don Valley from Coldwells

Client: Bancon Developments Ltd  
 Project: Ardtannes, Inverurie  
 Title: Figure 5c - Viewpoint Photographs, Ardtannes  
 Reference: BDEE1005  
 Date: November 2008  
 Scale: NTS





Viewpoint 7 - Entrance to Home Farm



Viewpoint 8 - Haughton

**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 5d - Viewpoint Photographs, Ardtannes  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS



*Viewpoint 9 - Roquharold Cottages*



*Viewpoint 10 - dwellings at Duncan's Forest*

**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 5e - Viewpoint Photographs, Ardtannes  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS





Viewpoint 11 - West of Hill of Ardtannnes



Viewpoint 12 - Highclere Business Park

**Client:** Bancon Developments Ltd  
**Project:** Ardtannnes, Inverurie  
**Title:** Figure 5f - Viewpoint Photographs, Ardtannnes  
**Reference:** BDEE1005  
**Date:** November 2008  
**Scale:** NTS



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