

# 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.*



## 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.

Jeigu pageidaujate šio dokumento kita kalba arba atspausdinto stambiu šriftu, supaprastinta kalba, parašyta Brailio raštu arba britų gestų kalba, prašome skambinti 01467 536230.

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații din acest document într-o altă limbă sau într-un format cu scrisul mare, ușor de citit, tipar pentru nevăzători sau în limbajul semnelor, vă rugăm să telefonați la 01467 536230.

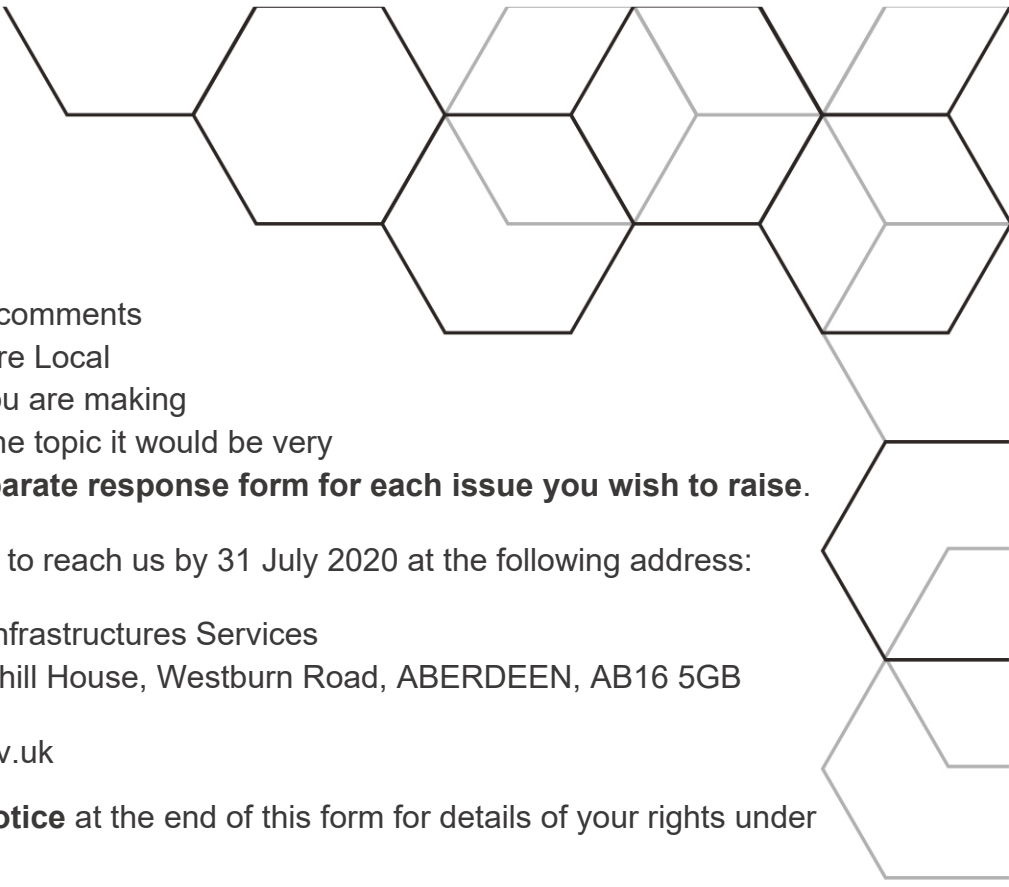
Jeśli potrzebowali będą Państwo informacji z niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, pisanych dużą czcionką, w wersji łatwej do czytania, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w brytyjskim języku migowym, proszę o telefoniczny kontakt na numer 01467 536230.

Ja jums nepieciešama šai dokumentā sniegtā informācija kādā citā valodā vai lielā drukā, viegli lasāmā tekstā, Braila rakstā vai BSL (britu zīmju valodā), lūdzu, zvaniet uz 01467 536230.

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

Tel: 01467 536230  
Email: [ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldp](http://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](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

Title:	Ms
First Name:	Christine
Surname:	Dalziel
Date:	30.7.20
Postal Address:	Barton Willmore, [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?

X 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):

Appendix 7e – Settlement Statements, Kincardine and Mearns, Stonehaven (Page 744) should be amended to include:

The land at Mains of Cowie, Stonehaven (Site KN050) should be allocated for 250 units, food retail and a primary school and the Stonehaven settlement boundary altered accordingly.

OP5 – Land at East Lodge should be removed from the LDP

Appendix 6, Table 1 should be amended to allocate more effective housing land and remove constrained sites.

**Reason for change:**

**Please refer to the attached representation for a full justification for seeking this change.**

The allocation of the site at Mains of Cowie for mixed-use development would assist the Council in meeting future housing requirements in a strong market area, deliver a new primary school to alleviate existing concerns as well as provide a much-needed site for retail within the defensible boundary of the site created by the A90/A91.

In the context of Stonehaven – which is located within the Strategic Growth Area (SGA) in close proximity to the City – we do not consider that the over-reliance on historic sites is appropriate for the forthcoming plan period.

We would therefore question why the vast majority of the sites identified for residential development in Stonehaven are located on the opposite side of the A90/A92. These sites are located far from the town centre and will undoubtedly place an over-reliance on private car travel and does not align with the sustainability principles set out in the PLDP.

There is a need to identify effective sites, so it is concerning to note the number of sites which have been identified in the PLDP which were identified as constrained in the 2019 Housing Land Audit (HLA) and which are carried forward from previous LDPs. We would seek further evidence as to why these sites are now considered to be effective and evidence that these sites will come forward within this plan period when they have not done so previously.

The proposed layout has been informed by a detailed landscape and visual appraisal. Through the Examination of the 2017 LDP, the Reporter confirmed that:

*'The site is relatively prominent, but I consider the representations made in support of this site adequately illustrate that the development could be successfully accommodated without necessarily giving rise to unacceptable effects upon the landscape setting, visual amenity or character of the town, and issues relating to movement would be capable of being satisfactorily addressed.'*

The Stonehaven Settlement Strategy notes that the town is '*an important sub-regional service centre*' and that it should be enhanced throughout the Plan period. Furthermore, the Settlement Statement confirms that Stonehaven '*plays an important role in delivering strategic housing allowances*'. As such, we do not agree with the approach of relying on historic sites alone within the same location (i.e. Ury Estate) to deliver new development across the plan period.

Of the 576 homes allocated in Stonehaven through the PLDP, 60 units form a new allocation and only 50 – at Site OP4 – are not located within Ury Estate (which itself is a historic allocation which is almost complete). As maintained through numerous LDP consultation cycles, it has been demonstrated that development at Ury Estate has not delivered at the rate anticipated within previous LDPs. There are therefore legitimate concerns that by continuing to restrict development along the corridor throughout the plan period – by virtue of the over-reliance on enabling development at Ury Estate to deliver new housing – the Housing Land Requirement (HLR) within the southern SGA will fail to be met and housing pressures in Stonehaven will continue to be exacerbated. This is particularly concerning in the context that the Ury sites have either been allocated in the 2017 LDP and / or have planning permission but have yet to be consistently delivered on site within the last plan period.

A substantial number of homes have already been allocated at Ury through the extant LDP. The 2019 HLA identified that consented/allocated units amount to 342 homes at Ury with the delivery of these extending beyond 2026. Indeed, there appears to have been increases in the number of homes proposed at Ury. The adopted LDP identifies 230 units, the 2019 HLA identifies 320 units and the PLDP shows 462 units. The average annual output from the sites at Ury (as identified in the 2019 HLA) is 35 homes per year. This demonstrates that the Council have identified 13.2 years housing land supply in one location. In order to ensure that a housing land supply is maintained – particularly within a sub-regional service centre within a SGA – housing sites should be identified in alternative locations to provide variety and choice of housing and ensure that housing will be delivered across the LDP period.

By effectively placing a moratorium on any new private housing development in the town for the next ten years, the pressure for homes in this strong market area will only increase, resulting in continuing inflated house prices and a failure to maintain the success of this sustainable mixed community. This will also have a direct impact on the delivery of affordable homes in the town, which is a key issue identified within the Stonehaven Settlement Statement.

The proposed development also offers the opportunity for the delivery of a supermarket and a primary school, both of which are identified as facilities sought for the town. It is noted within the Settlement Statement that an application for a supermarket has been approved at Ury Estate. However, it should be noted that despite Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) having been granted in 2016 and Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSC) being approved in 2019, no works on the food store are progressing on site.

The location of the supermarket site at Ury is remote from the facilities and services in Stonehaven. Despite the approval of PPP consent for a supermarket, no operator has committed to the site despite the well-documented, ongoing demand from operators for a site in the town. The link road within the site also remains incomplete, therefore the infrastructure required to facilitate the development is not in place and is reliant upon car dominated travel – against the sustainability principles identified as a priority in the PLDP.

It is maintained that the delivery of a supermarket at Mains of Cowie will lead to reduced journey lengths and times for food retail provision, provide jobs and expenditure with Stonehaven and retain shoppers within the town. The site at Mains of Cowie remains the most appropriate location for new food retail provision in Stonehaven.

Furthermore, the site offers a deliverable option for improved education facilities in the town – an identified priority for the town. Given the vast majority of the land identified for development within the PLDP forms enabling works to redevelop Ury House and that much of the land already has planning permission, the level of financial contribution likely to be raised from these sites toward education infrastructure is questioned. The education provision identified as being required within the Stonehaven Settlement Statement is therefore unlikely to be addressed.

The Mains of Cowie site offers the opportunity to deliver a new primary school and food retail within close proximity of the town centre and boundaries of the A92 corridor. Both of these facilities have long been identified as priorities for the town, and – despite planning permission having been granted some years ago for food retail at Ury Estate – have yet to be delivered, despite an identified demand for food retail provision.

The development at Mains of Cowie remains the logical choice for the sustainable growth of Stonehaven. The proposed development offers the opportunity to deliver a high quality, mixed use development in an appropriate and sustainable location. The position of the site adjacent to the railway line and A90/A92 within close proximity to the AWPR provides visual containment and the strong landscape strategy to be adopted will ensure that built form is accommodated within the site.

# 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](mailto: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
--	---

### 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:

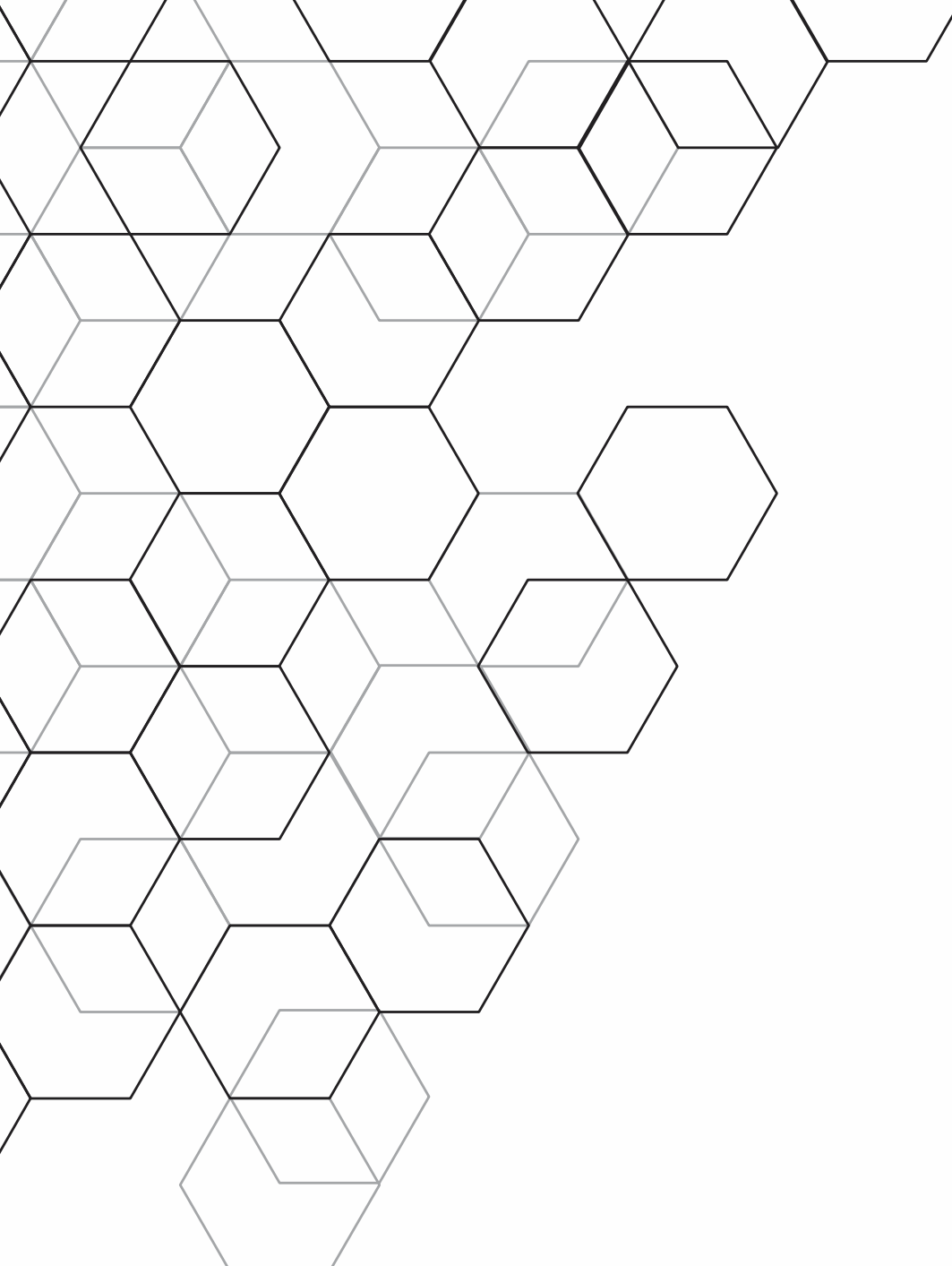
Aberdeenshire Council will only keep your personal data for as long as is needed. Aberdeenshire Council will retain your response and personal data for a retention period of 5 years from the date upon which it was collected. After 5 years Aberdeenshire Council will review whether it is necessary to continue 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:

- to withdraw consent at any time, where the Legal Basis specified above is Consent;
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (after raising the issue with the Data Protection Officer first);
- 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.





---

# Mains of Cowie, Stonehaven Mixed Use Development

## Site KN050

Representation to Aberdeenshire  
Proposed Local Development Plan 2020

Prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes

July 2020

Mains of Cowie, Stonehaven  
Mixed Use Development

Site KN050

Representation to Aberdeenshire  
Proposed Local Development Plan 2020

Prepared on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes

<b>Project Ref:</b>	30339/01	30339/01
<b>Status:</b>	DRAFT	FINAL
<b>Issue/Rev:</b>	1	1
<b>Date:</b>	July 2020	July 2020
<b>Prepared by:</b>	█	█
<b>Checked by:</b>	█	█
<b>Authorised by:</b>	█	█

Barton Willmore



Tel: █

Email: █

Ref: 30339/01

Date: July 2020

COPYRIGHT

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Barton Willmore LLP.

All Barton Willmore stationery is produced using recycled or FSC paper and vegetation oil based inks.

## CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction .....	1
2.0	Response to PLDP .....	3

**Appendix 1:** Representation to the Aberdeenshire Main Issues Report 2019 – Site KN050

**Appendix 2:** News articles regarding food retail

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This representation has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in respect of the land at Mains of Cowie, Stonehaven (Site KN050), in response to the Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan (PLDP) 2020. This representation relates specifically to the proposed allocation for retail led mixed use development.

### Modification Sought

- 1.2 Following the points discussed within this submission, we seek the following modifications:
- The PLDP should be modified to allocate more effective housing land and remove constrained sites – Stonehaven Site OP5: Land at East Lodge should be deleted;
  - Additional sites within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AMHA) should be identified in areas of demand and within the SGA – Stonehaven within the boundaries of the A90/A92 is the most appropriate location;
  - The land at Mains of Cowie (Site KN050) should be allocated for 250 units, food retail and a primary school; and
  - The settlement boundary of Stonehaven should be altered to include the site.

### Background

- 1.3 The site has been promoted through previous development plan reviews. The outcomes of the 2017 Examination of the now adopted Aberdeenshire LDP have informed the indicative Masterplan for the site, which has been the subject of an ongoing iterative design process.
- 1.4 The indicative layout for the site (as contained within Appendix 1: Representation to the Aberdeenshire Main Issues Report (MIR) 2019), has been informed by a detailed landscape and visual appraisal in accordance with recognised best practice and policy.
- 1.5 Moreover, the allocation of the site for mixed-use development would assist the Council in meeting future housing requirements in a strong market area, deliver a new primary school to alleviate existing concerns as well as provide a much-needed site for retail.
- 1.6 It should be noted that through the LDP 2017 Examination, the Reporter confirmed that:

*'The site is relatively prominent, but I consider the representations made in support of this site adequately illustrate that the development could be successfully accommodated without necessarily giving rise to unacceptable effects upon the landscape setting, visual amenity or character of the town, and issues relating to movement would be capable of being satisfactorily addressed.'*

- 1.7 Most recently, a representation was made to the Main Issues Report (MIR) 2019 which has been appended to this submission for completeness (Appendix 1).
- 1.8 In summary, the site is considered to be suitable and deliverable for mixed-use (including retail) development, as it:
- Is sustainable, accessible, and is located in an area of strong market demand;
  - Will comply with the principles of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) with regards to promoting sustainable new growth and increasing generosity and flexibility in the housing land supply;
  - Is effective and free of constraints; and
  - Is deliverable within 5 years.

## 2.0 RESPONSE TO PLDP

### Section 3: Vision for the Plan and its Purpose

- 2.1 The Local Vision as set out in Section 3 of the PLDP is supported and we agree with the intentions of Paragraph 3.11 which states:

*'The area around Aberdeen City continues to be the powerhouse of economic activity in the region and so the land allocations made in the settlements around Aberdeen City reflect this.'*

- 2.2 Whilst we fully endorse this statement, we note that this is not reflected within the allocations identified in the PLDP. In the context of Stonehaven – which is located within the Strategic Growth Area (SGA) in close proximity to the City – we do not consider that the over-reliance on historic sites is appropriate for the forthcoming plan period.

- 2.3 Indeed Paragraph 3.13 notes that the PLDP helps promote Aberdeenshire as:

*'An area that promotes sustainable development that reduces the need to travel, reduces reliance on private cars and promotes safe and convenient active travel opportunities.'*

- 2.4 We would therefore question why the vast majority of the sites identified for residential development in Stonehaven are located on the opposite side of the A90/A92. These sites are located far from the town centre and will undoubtedly place an over-reliance on private car travel.

- 2.5 It is particularly pertinent to identify effective sites (which will deliver units across the plan period) in sustainable locations given the recommendations of the Examination of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). This is considered further below.

### Section 5: The Spatial Strategy

- 2.6 We echo the concerns raised by Homes for Scotland regarding the apparent reliance that the PLDP places on constrained sites to deliver new homes in the plan period. This does not reflect the intentions of Paragraph 5.4 which states that the Council *'need to be confident that the land can be brought forward for development within the Plan period'*.

- 2.7 We wholly agree with this statement and the need to identify effective sites, so it is therefore concerning to note the number of sites which have been identified in the PLDP which were identified as constrained in the 2019 Housing Land Audit (HLA) and which are carried forward from previous LDPs. We would seek further evidence as to why these sites are now considered to be effective and evidence that these sites will come forward within this plan period when they have not done so previously.

- 2.8 Paragraph 5.3 notes that: *'While the Local Development Plan can allocate land for housing it cannot guarantee that the development industry will act to make it become part of the effective land supply'*. The PLDP identifies sites which have already been identified as constrained in the 2019 HLA and whilst the Council consider that it is for the development industry to 'make' land effective, it is the role of the PLDP to identify the most appropriate sites when assessed against sound planning merits and ability to deliver units to meet required targets.
- 2.9 It is therefore questioned why the Council have concentrated the majority of housing sites within one area – namely Ury Estate. By effectively relying on one landowner/geographical location to deliver housing across the plan period, it is unlikely that all sites will deliver within plan period given that they will be delivered consecutively rather than laterally. Indeed, this is the situation that has occurred in the previous plan period with land at Ury Estate and the various sites have extant planning permission but have not delivered housing units on the ground in the timeframe expected or needed to meet LDP requirements.
- 2.10 As noted above, Paragraph 3.11 of the PLDP acknowledges the importance of the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) to the regional economy, therefore it is crucial that a range of sites – to provide market choice and ensure units are delivered across the plan period – are allocated for development in close proximity to the City.
- 2.11 We endorse the outcomes of Homes for Scotland's analysis which removes non-effective sites in line with the outcomes of the SDP Examination. The Reporter in this instance stated (Issue 14, paragraph 26):
- 'The approach used by Homes for Scotland where the programming of sites is extrapolated beyond the period stated in the housing land audit is well-evidenced with tables showing each site in each authority and market housing area. There will be instances where sites perform better and some which deliver less than the extrapolated method shows but it reasonably carries forward the last know (and agreed) programme of delivery on each site into the future. Therefore, I consider that it can be effectively used to predict the amount of the established supply that is considered to become effective during the periods 2027 to 2032 and 2033 to 2040.'*
- 2.12 In line with these conclusions, Homes for Scotland have adjusted the PLDP housing allocations to remove sites which are identified as constrained within the 2019 HLA and those new/increased allocations which are unlikely to become effective. This exercise demonstrates that there are significant shortfalls in both housing market areas, including a shortfall of 468 units in the AHMA.
- 2.13 In order to remedy this shortfall, it is submitted that effective, sustainable sites – such as Mains of Cowie (GKN050) – within a strong market area, should be identified for development.

## Stonehaven Settlement Strategy

- 2.14 To maintain the unique success of the town and identify appropriate locations for sites within the SGA and AHMA to address the shortfall identified above, new development sites are required and failing to identify appropriate new locations for housing and commercial development will only exacerbate the pressure and demand in towns such as Stonehaven.
- 2.15 The Stonehaven Settlement Strategy notes that the town is '*an important sub-regional service centre*' and that it should be enhanced throughout the Plan period. Furthermore, the Settlement Statement confirms that Stonehaven '*plays an important role in delivering strategic housing allowances*'. As such, we do not agree with the approach of relying on historic sites alone within the same location (i.e. Ury Estate) to deliver new development across the plan period.
- 2.16 The proposed development also offers the opportunity for the delivery of a supermarket and a primary school, both of which are identified as facilities sought for the town. It is noted within the Settlement Statement that an application for a supermarket has been approved at Ury Estate. However, it should be noted that despite Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) having been granted in 2016 and Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSC) being approved in 2019, no works on the food store are progressing on site.
- 2.17 The location of the supermarket site at Ury is remote from the facilities and services in Stonehaven. Despite the approval of PPP consent for a supermarket, no operator has committed to the site despite the well-documented, ongoing demand from operators for a site in the town. The link road within the site also remains incomplete, therefore the infrastructure required to facilitate the development is not in place and is reliant upon car dominated travel – against the sustainability principles identified as a priority in the PLDP.
- 2.18 It is maintained that the delivery of a supermarket at Mains of Cowie will lead to reduced journey lengths and times for food retail provision, provide jobs and expenditure with Stonehaven and retain shoppers within the town. The site at Mains of Cowie remains the most appropriate location for new food retail provision in Stonehaven.
- 2.19 It is noted within the Settlement Statement that there is an aspiration to replace Dunnottar Primary School, however there is no site identified for such a use within the PLDP.
- 2.20 As demonstrated within the design analysis contained within the MIR representation (Appendix 1), the site offers a deliverable option for improved education facilities in the town. Given the vast majority of the land identified for development within the PLDP forms enabling works to redevelop Ury House and that much of the land already has planning permission, the level of financial contribution likely to be raised from these sites toward education infrastructure is questioned. The education provision identified as being required within the Stonehaven Settlement Statement is therefore unlikely to be addressed.



- 2.21 Of the 576 homes allocated in Stonehaven through the PLDP, 60 units form a new allocation and only 50 – at Site OP4 – are not located within Ury Estate (which itself is a historic allocation which is almost complete). As maintained through numerous LDP consultation cycles, it has been demonstrated that development at Ury Estate has not delivered at the rate anticipated within previous LDPs. There are therefore legitimate concerns that by continuing to restrict development along the corridor throughout the plan period – by virtue of the over-reliance on enabling development at Ury Estate to deliver new housing – the Housing Land Requirement (HLR) within the southern SGA will fail to be met and housing pressures in Stonehaven will continue to be exacerbated. This is particularly concerning in the context that the Ury sites have either been allocated in the 2017 LDP and / or have planning permission but have yet to be consistently delivered on site within the last plan period.
- 2.22 A substantial number of homes have already been allocated at Ury through the extant LDP. The 2019 HLA identified that consented/allocated units amount to 342 homes at Ury with the delivery of these extending beyond 2026. Indeed, there appears to have been increases in the number of homes proposed at Ury. The adopted LDP identifies 230 units, the 2019 HLA identifies 320 units and the PLDP shows 462 units. The average annual output from the sites at Ury (as identified in the 2019 HLA) is 35 homes per year. This demonstrates that the Council have identified 13.2 years housing land supply in one location. In order to ensure that a housing land supply is maintained – particularly within a sub-regional service centre within a SGA – housing sites should be identified in alternative locations to provide variety and choice of housing and ensure that housing will be delivered across the LDP period.
- 2.23 By effectively placing a moratorium on any new private housing development in the town for the next ten years, the pressure for homes in this strong market area will only increase, resulting in continuing inflated house prices and a failure to maintain the success of this sustainable mixed community. This will also have a direct impact on the delivery of affordable homes in the town, which is a key issue identified within the Stonehaven Settlement Statement.
- 2.24 As acknowledged by the Aberdeenshire Affordable Housing Forum, 75% of the affordable housing delivered in Aberdeenshire is through the affordable housing policy which highlights the vital contribution that the private sector makes to the delivery of homes in the region. With no new housing sites identified in Stonehaven through the forthcoming LDP period and the uncertainty surrounding the funding for affordable homes after 2021, the LDP is failing to give due consideration to the opportunities for sustainable growth in line with the requirements of SPP.
- 2.25 Page 746 of the PLDP identifies a number of services and infrastructure interventions that new development in Stonehaven will be required to contribute to. These include footway extensions, the Aberdeen-Stonehaven strategic cycle route, the provision of a new primary school, sports recreation and waste infrastructure. With only 60 units within the PLDP not already having

planning permission, it is clear that there will be no ability to seek contributions towards these service and infrastructure improvements unless additional sites are allocated. Furthermore, the proposed development at Mains of Cowie includes land for a primary school which has not been identified anywhere else within the PLDP.

- 2.26 In the context of the 468 units shortfall in the AHMA identified by Homes for Scotland, it is clear that further sites need to be allocated. The PLDP's reliance on historic sites which have extant planning permission is not an appropriate approach and given the importance of Stonehaven to the delivery of strategic housing in the region, alternative housing land should be allocated in the town, to give much needed flexibility to the delivery of housing in the future.
- 2.27 In respect of commercial land, the sites identified are also historic and have been carried forward from the 2017 LDP despite not having been brought forward in the last plan period. It is questioned therefore, despite having demonstrated that this site is not effective for commercial development, it is the only land identified for commercial development in the forthcoming plan period.
- 2.28 The Mains of Cowie site offers the opportunity to deliver a new primary school and food retail within close proximity of the town centre and boundaries of the A92 corridor. Both of these facilities have long been identified as priorities for the town, and – despite planning permission having been granted some years ago for food retail at Ury Estate – have yet to be delivered, despite an identified demand for food retail provision (see Appendix 2).
- 2.29 The development at Mains of Cowie remains the logical choice for the sustainable growth of Stonehaven. The proposed development offers the opportunity to deliver a high quality, mixed use development in an appropriate and sustainable location. The position of the site adjacent to the railway line and A90/A92 within close proximity to the AWPR provides visual containment and the strong landscape strategy to be adopted will ensure that built form is accommodated within the site.

### Site Assessment of KN050

- 2.30 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) undertaken to inform the PLDP has been reviewed and our response is set out below under the SEA Topics used to consider the site.
- 2.31 As discussed below, against the SEA topics, the site 'scored' mostly neutral on the post-mitigation effects.

*Air*

- 2.32 The SEA analysis states that the development would have a negative impact on air quality, however given this site is located in a far more sustainable location than the allocated sites within the PLDP, it is considered that this score is not justified.
- 2.33 Whilst it is acknowledged that there will be an increase in traffic movements as a result of new development, it is submitted that the delivery of food retail and the potential for a new primary school creates a mixed-use, sustainable site which is more accessible to both existing and future residents.

*Water*

- 2.34 We agree that there will be a neutral effect on the water capacity and surrounding water courses as a result of development on this site.

*Climatic Factors*

- 2.35 As noted within the SEA assessment, the site is located within close proximity to public transport routes and the town centre. As such, it is considered that the post mitigation effect should be neutral and not negative/neutral as scored within the SEA. The land at Mains of Cowie is significantly more sustainable and accessible than other development opportunities in Stonehaven.

*Soil*

- 2.36 Whilst the identification of the land as prime agricultural land is acknowledged. We disagree that this is a significant negative effect as scored within the SEA. Two of sites identified for development are also located on land identified as Grade 3.1 and it should be noted that due to the size and shape of the site, it does not lend itself to modern farming practices. Therefore, this issue alone is not significant enough to be a constraint to development. It should also be noted that this has not been raised as a constraint to development in the Site Assessment for the 2016 MIR (Site KM043), through the LDP 2017 Report of Examination or within the Reporters consideration of the previous appeal on the Site (PPA-110-2317).

*Biodiversity*

- 2.37 We agree that there is the opportunity to expand the green network through the proposed development. As such, we agree with the positive effect scoring awarded in the SEA.

*Landscape*

- 2.38 It is acknowledged that the Site is located within the South East Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA), and this is considered fully within the Representation to the MIR (Appendix 1). As

confirmed through the Reporters' assessment of the Site within the LDP 2017 Examination, the design approach followed will ensure that the proposed development can be accommodated on site without creating an unacceptable landscape impact. The proposed development has been considered in distinct landscape character zones in order to demonstrate the successful delivery of built form within a strong green infrastructure setting of Stonehaven and the wider countryside. Fundamentally, it is suggested that a full landscape assessment of the southern SGA should be undertaken in the context of the newly opened AWPR, given the considerable impact that this has had, on the landscape character in this location.

- 2.39 It is questioned why – having scored a negative/neutral effect in the SEA – the Council Officers have previously dismissed the site through the MIR due to the impact on the SLA. It appears that this is now considered less of a constraint on development.

#### *Material Assets*

- 2.40 Given the acknowledgement within the SEA that Dunnottar Primary School is nearing capacity and the Settlement Statement identifying a new primary school as an aspiration, it is questioned why this site did not score more positively.
- 2.41 It is noted that *'this has not been discussed with the Council's Education Service'*, but we would seek clarification of their input into the preparation of the PLDP and if they were consulted on the content. Furthermore, SMH have confirmed that the Council have previously made approaches regarding the site for a replacement Dunnotar Primary.

#### *Population*

- 2.42 We agree that there will be a positive effect on the population by virtue of the delivery of a range of housing for all sectors of society.
- 2.43 This is particularly pertinent in the context of the Settlement Strategy which states that: *'a mix of house types is important to be maintained through future development and the inclusion of affordable housing is particularly important'*. Given the over-reliance on the delivery of housing from enabling development sites (therefore questioning the level of affordable housing that can be achieved) at Ury Estate within the PLDP, it is unclear why a sustainable site which will deliver affordable housing and scored well in the SEA was not considered a preferred site and allocated in the forthcoming plan.

#### *Human Health*

- 2.44 We agree that there will be a positive effect on human health as a result of development on this site.

- 2.45 Mains of Cowie benefits greatly from being part of the town, located within the A90/A92 boundary and in close proximity to the town centre. It sits within an easy 10-15 minute walk of a wide range of local facilities. In this sense, the site is inherently sustainable – more so than the direction of development identified through the PLDP which lies across the busy dual carriageway.
- 2.46 There are numerous local services which lie within walking distance of the site as well as those which fall a little farther away but remain easily accessible. By means of comparison, the Facilities and Amenity diagram (Page 13 in Appendix 1) highlights the relative walking / cycling distances from the 'most accessible' southern parts of the sites at Ury Estate. An accessible route, and an alternative route has been provided for both. These times are broadly comparable in terms of access to Mackie Academy and the Railway Station, while accessibility times to the town centre are approximately half that for Mains of Cowie.

### *Cultural Heritage*

- 2.47 It is our consideration that the site should score neutral rather than negatively with respect of Cultural Heritage.
- 2.48 The two Category C (s) Listed Buildings on the site will be retained and protected and the setting to Cowie House (Category B) and associated boundary walls will be preserved.
- 2.49 The proposals seek to respect the visibility of the site and through careful consideration of the scale, massing and orientation of the development it is considered that there would be no adverse effects on the Scheduled Monuments in close proximity to the site.

### *Summary*

- 2.50 As demonstrated within the SEA, the site has scored well against the majority of identified topics and is deemed to have a neutral or positive effect against numerous criteria. The topics in which the site has scored negatively are not considered to be a barrier to development and can be appropriately addressed.
- 2.51 The proposed site at Mains of Cowie provides the opportunity to deliver a logical mixed-use extension to Stonehaven, located in a sustainable location within close proximity to the town centre and will deliver much needed facilities and affordable homes in an area of acute need. The land use proposed (school and food retail) will also meet long-standing aspirations for the settlement.
- 2.52 The land is controlled by SMH who have a proven track record of housing delivery in this location which demonstrates – unlike other sites identified for development in the PLDP – that the site is effective and will be delivered. This, along with the absence of infrastructure constraints, will ensure short term delivery of housing to assist the Council in meeting their

housing target and support the aims of the LDP and objectives of the Stonehaven settlement strategy.

## Appendix 1

Representation to the Aberdeenshire Main Issues Report 2019 – Site KN050

# MAINS OF COWIE STONEHAVEN

A New Mixed Use Neighbourhood

REPRESENTATION TO  
ABERDEENSHIRE M1R 2019  
(SITE REF: KN050)

April 2019

STEWART  
**Milne**  
HOMES





---

Project Ref	30339
Revision	F
Date	Apr 2019
Prepared by	[REDACTED]
Checked by	[REDACTED]

Barton Willmore



Desk Top Publishing and Graphic  
Design by Barton Willmore

Copyright

The contents of this document must  
not be copied or reproduced in whole  
or in part without the written consent of  
Barton Willmore.

**BARTON  
WILLMORE**

## CONTENTS

---

### INTRODUCTION

- 1 Scope and Content
- 2 Planning Context
- 3 The Changing Context Around Stonehaven
- 4 A Three Part Vision
- 5 Site Location and Description

### ASSESSMENT

- 6 Local Facilities and Amenities
- 7 Site Opportunities and Constraints

### DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

- 8 Indicative Masterplan
- 9 Land Use and Amount
- 10 Access and Movement
- 11 Landscape Strategy
- 12 Appearance Principles
- 13 Drainage Strategy

### SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- 14 Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

### PHASING

- 15 Phasing

## 1. Scope and Content

1.1 This Representation has been prepared and submitted by Barton Willmore, on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) in response to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2021 Main Issues Report (MIR) which was published for consultation in January 2019. This Representation relates specifically to the land at Mains of Cowie, Stonehaven (MIR Site Ref: KN050) and the proposed allocation for retail lead mixed use development.

1.2 This document sets out the full context of the Site and the proposal, as supported by an indicative masterplan, to demonstrate that the Site can accommodate an appropriately scaled retail lead mixed use proposal that will assist Aberdeenshire Council (the Council) in providing suitable development within a strategically important growth corridor.

1.3 The Site has been subject to a detailed landscape and visual appraisal in accordance with recognised best practice and policy, and is considered suitable to accommodate built development, incorporating existing landscape features and landscape mitigation measures where required.

1.4 The Site has been promoted through previous development plan reviews. The outcomes of the 2017 Examination of the now adopted Aberdeenshire LDP have informed the indicative masterplan for the Site, which has been the subject of an iterative design process.

1.5 Furthermore, careful assessment of the opportunities and constraints of the wider area has been undertaken,

and a detailed landscape and visual appraisal has informed the proposals. The indicative masterplan, which is supplied for illustrative purposes only, provides an indication as to the location and form of development within the Site and also how this would integrate with the settlement of Stonehaven and its local context.

1.6 The allocation of the Site for mixed use development would assist the Council in meeting future housing requirements, deliver a new primary school to alleviate existing concerns as well as provide a much-needed site for retail.

1.7 The Site is considered to be suitable and deliverable for retail lead mixed use development, as it:

- Is sustainable, accessible, and is located in an area of strong market demand;
- Will comply with the principles of Scottish Planning Policy with regards to promoting sustainable new growth and increasing generosity and flexibility in the housing land supply;
- Is effective and free of constraints; and
- Is deliverable within 5 years.

1.8 It is therefore respectfully requested that the Site be allocated for mixed use development in the Proposed Aberdeenshire LDP. Barton Willmore and SMH would welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals further with the Council.

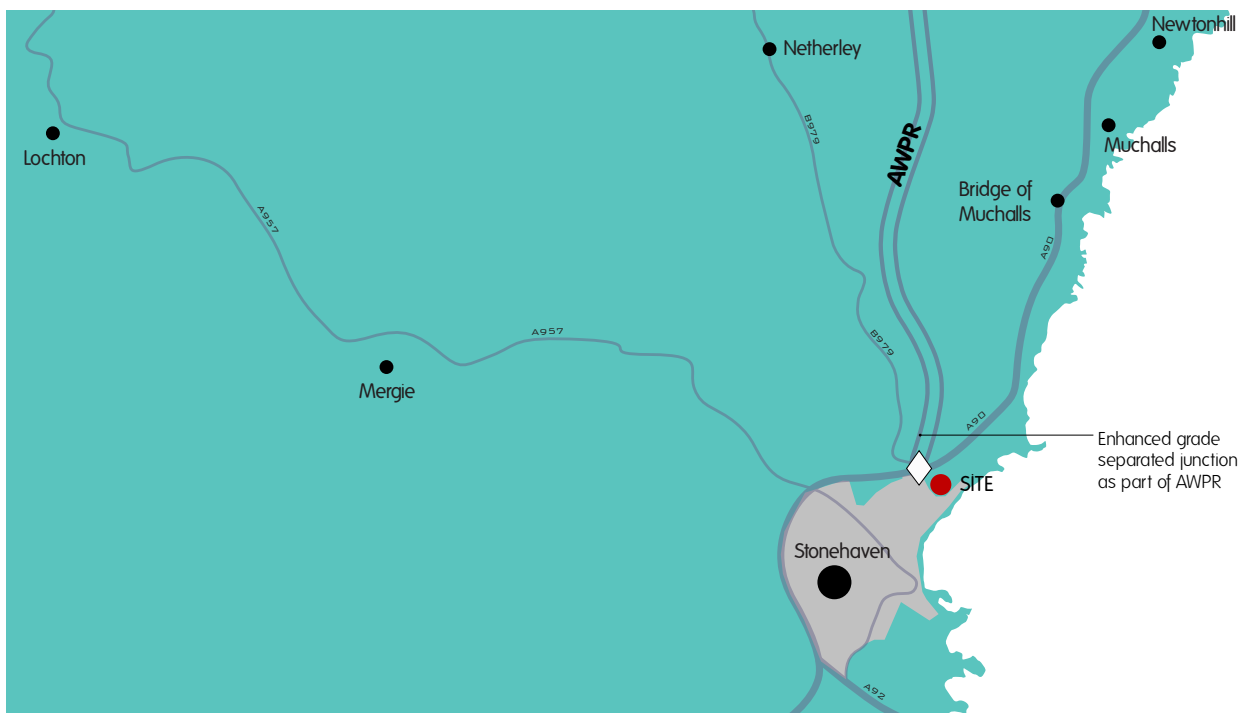


FIGURE 1 LOCATION PLAN

## 2. Planning Context

2.1 The current development plan for the Site comprises the approved Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (2014) and the adopted Aberdeenshire LDP (2017). Within the SDP, Stonehaven is identified as being within one of the three Strategic Growth Area (SGA), which form the main focus of development within the period of the Plan. This approach has been carried forward into the forthcoming Development Plan. In the Proposed SDP (August 2018), Stonehaven continues to be located within the SGA and the Aberdeenshire MIR (January 2019) states that the planning objectives for the town are:

- To help contribute to the overall sense of place in the community.
- To enhance the role of the settlement as a service centre.
- To meet housing need in the wider strategic growth area as defined by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan.
- To support local services and facilities.
- To preserve the amenity of the settlement.
- To provide opportunity for employment.
- To support community facilities and services.
- To improve existing leisure and recreation facilities

2.2 In the context of the progression of the Aberdeenshire LDP, it is important to consider that the SDP is also under review and the Proposed SDP was submitted to the Scottish Government for Examination on 20 March 2019. There are a number of unresolved objections to the Proposed SDP relating to the identification of housing land and the delivery of sites which will be subject to scrutiny by Scottish Government Reporters.

2.3 Given the strategic importance of the southern growth corridor, and the context of Stonehaven within this SGA, it is questioned why the Council have maintained their approach (carried forward from the last two LDPs) of relying almost solely on land at Ury estate to deliver housing in Stonehaven.

2.4 It is unclear how the identified planning objectives for Stonehaven as outlined above are to be achieved if the vast majority of new development is to take place on land so far from the town itself. The location is far removed from local services and facilities and will adversely impact the amenity of the settlement by virtue of extending the development envelope far beyond the defined urban enclosure created by the A90, A92 and railway line.

2.5 Furthermore, all Stonehaven housing sites identified within the MIR are under single ownership and therefore are highly unlikely to be developed concurrently. This will further exacerbate the slow down in delivery within this southern corridor. The

current approach will result in a continuing decline in housebuilding within the SGA, replicating the same issues created in previous plan periods which took a protectionist view of Chapleton.

2.6 Development at Mains of Cowie, and the mix of uses proposed will contribute to the sense of place by delivering a high quality 'gateway' to the town; will deliver housing on the ground early in the plan period in order to meet housing need within this SGA; will not only support but enhance local services and facilities; will preserve the amenity of the settlement by locating development within the defined boundaries of the A92 and railway; and will provide opportunity for permanent employment in the supermarket and primary school.

2.7 In order to help meet the objectives identified in the settlement strategy (above), it is submitted that appropriate sites for new development are required to be allocated in the LDP and that allocating sites which will take many years to deliver and offer no additional facilities will only serve to exacerbate the pressure and demand for a range of housing and services in the town.

2.8 Slow delivery, or even non-delivery of sites will also have a direct impact on the provision of affordable homes in the town. This is identified as a concern for the local community within the MIR (Stonehaven Settlement Statement). As acknowledged by the Aberdeenshire Affordable Housing Forum, 75% of the affordable housing delivered in Aberdeenshire is through the affordable housing policy which highlights the vital contribution that the private sector makes to the delivery of homes in the region. Should the LDP continue to rely solely on historic sites – and with the uncertainty surrounding the funding for affordable homes beyond 2021 – it is failing to give due consideration to the opportunities for sustainable growth in line with the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).

### MIR SITE ASSESSMENT

2.9 With regard to the Council's assessment of the Site in the MIR (Site Ref: KN050), it is submitted that many of the conclusions identified in the Council's Site Assessment are not substantiated with background information and furthermore contradict the outcomes of the LDP 2017 Examination and consideration of the Site by the Reporter through the previous appeal (Ref: PPA-110-2317).

2.10 The Council's site assessment states:

*2.11 The proposed site is situated on a plateau on the eastern periphery of Stonehaven, and would relate well physically, but due to the topography the site does not relate well with the town'.*

2.12 It is not clear how the Council consider the Site does relate to the town as no further detail has been given. However, as demonstrated within this Representation (Section 11), significant landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken to inform the proposed layout which demonstrates that enhanced structural planting and the existing landform will ensure that development is

successfully accommodated within the landscape. Furthermore, detailed analysis has been undertaken to ensure the Site is easily accessible to the town centre, that a sensitive approach to built form has been followed by limiting development on the elevated edge of the Site and that pedestrian and cycle networks are enhanced.

2.13 It should be noted that through the LDP 2017 Examination, the Reporter confirmed that:

*2.14 'The topography would present some difficulties for providing direct, easily accessible active travel routes between the site and the town centre. The site is relatively prominent, but I consider the representations made in support of this site adequately illustrate that the development could be successfully accommodated without necessarily giving rise to unacceptable effects upon the landscape setting, visual amenity or character of the town, and issues relating to movement would be capable of being satisfactorily addressed.'*

2.15 It is submitted that this is still the case. Additionally, further landscape and visual assessment work has been undertaken since the adoption of the 2017 LDP as demonstrated within this Representation, and the ability of the development to successfully assimilate within the local landform and areas of existing and enhanced structural planting is clearly established.

2.16 It is refuted that the location of the Site on prime agricultural land (Grade 3.1) is a constraint to development. Indeed, two of the sites identified as 'Officers preferred' are also located on land identified as Grade 3.1. Furthermore, this has not been raised as a constraint to development in the Site Assessment for the 2016 MIR (Site KM043), through the LDP 2017 Report of Examination or within the Reporters consideration of the previous appeal on the Site (PPA-110-2317).

2.17 It is acknowledged that the Site is located within the South East Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA), and this is considered fully within Section 11 of this Representation. As confirmed through the Reporters' assessment of the Site within the LDP 2017 Examination, the design approach followed will ensure that the proposed development can be accommodated on site without creating an unacceptable landscape impact. The proposed development has been considered in distinct landscape character zones in order to demonstrate the successful delivery of built form within a strong green infrastructure setting of Stonehaven and the wider countryside. Fundamentally, it is suggested that a full landscape assessment of the southern SGA should be undertaken in the context of the newly opened AWPR, given the considerable impact that this has had, on the landscape character in this location.

2.18 It is questioned if the 'Officers preferred' sites at Ury Estate are any 'less sensitive' given they are not afforded the same level of containment as the Site at Mains of Cowie and do not

benefit from the same relationship with Stonehaven either visually or physically.

2.19 In regards to the proposed primary school on the Site, it is confirmed that discussions have taken place with the Council's Learning Estates Team (albeit a number of years ago). Indeed the Site was identified for education provision in the 2009 MIR. Nevertheless they will presumably be consulted on the MIR and have input into the preparation of the LDP. It is therefore considered – in the context of the ongoing school capacity issues and the identification within the MIR for the need to replace Dunnotter Primary School and Mackie Academy – that the Site offers a real and deliverable option for improved education facilities in the town. Given the majority of the land identified as 'Officers preferred' sites within the MIR forms enabling works to redevelop Ury House and that much of the land already has planning permission, the level of financial contribution likely to be raised from these sites toward education infrastructure is questioned. The education provision identified as being required within the Stonehaven Settlement Statement is therefore unlikely to be addressed.

2.20 The assessment of the Site within the MIR itself recognises the 'need for a supermarket', however refers to the land adjacent to the Slug Road which has Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) for food retail use (Ref: APP/2015/3716). It should be noted that the Matters Specified in Conditions (MSC) application submitted to the Council in 2017 has since been withdrawn (Ref: APP/2017/2972). Furthermore, the PPP is due to expire in August 2019 and the MIR fails to identify this site as land for retail use. The deliverability of this site for retail use is therefore ambiguous and the fact that no occupier has been identified is notable. Given that the MIR seeks to remove site OP5 (employment land) and does not explicitly identify any land for a supermarket, it is clear that the existing demand for a supermarket will go unmet unless an appropriate site is identified.

2.21 It is maintained that the delivery of a supermarket at Mains of Cowie will lead to reduced journey lengths and times for food retail provision, provide jobs and expenditure with Stonehaven and retain shoppers within the town. It is maintained that the Site at Mains of Cowie remains the most appropriate location for new food retail provision in Stonehaven.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE MIR AND DRAFT PROPOSED LDP

2.22 The MIR does not include specific Housing Supply Target (HST) or Housing Land Requirement (HLR) information in respect of how the proposed allocations in the MIR will meet the LDP Allowances identified within the SDP. It is therefore not clear how these Allowances have been considered in the preparation of the MIR, or if the required level of housing land has been identified for development in order to meet the HLR. Fundamentally, however, there continues to be significant uncertainty in respect of the Proposed SDP and the HST identified for the plan period. Unresolved objections to the Proposed SDP have identified discrepancies with the approach

taken in respect of the HST and the deviation from the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) information. Questions over the compliance of this approach with SPP have been raised. Furthermore – in the context of the current economic recovery in the wake of the fall in oil price – the projected completions identified in the 2016 Housing Land Audit are not reflective of the actual completions in recent years. The development industry is calling for more ambitious housing targets to be set through the SDP, and the LDP should reflect this aspirational approach to housing delivery.

2.23 Whilst the Proposed SDP approach of an increased percentage differential between the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) and the Rural Housing Market Area (RHMA) to 80% / 20% is welcomed, it is noted that unresolved objections seek to increase this split further still. It is questioned if – in the context of the Aberdeen MIR having been published in March 2019, some four months after the Aberdeenshire MIR – the Council have fully assessed the RHMA / AHMA split across the two local authority areas, and if the LDP Allowances comply with the HST and HLR set within the SDP.

2.24 These issues are to be considered through the Examination of the Proposed SDP, however, the Council are urged to consider how they could best address any changes in respect of the housing land approach and the HMA splits, ensuring that deliverable and marketable sites are identified in the LDP to allow for early delivery of effective sites to stimulate the economic recovery of the region.

2.25 It is submitted that the split of circa. 60% / 40% as identified within the Draft Proposed LDP in the Aberdeenshire part of the AHMA and the RHMA is not appropriate and should be increased. As noted within the Draft Proposed LDP itself, sites within the Rural Housing Market Area (RHMA) have stalled considerably in the past and the Council have sought to re-evaluate the approach and increased allocations within the AHMA (MIR, Page 12). This approach is supported, and it has long been submitted that in order to ensure the delivery of homes in places where people want to live that more housing land needs to be identified within the AHMA. The requirement to allocate land in the most deliverable locations (i.e. the AHMA) is particularly crucial in the context of the continuing economic recovery of the region.

2.26 Evidence has continually identified that sites within the RHMA are constrained and are not being delivered. The SDP Housing Methodology Paper identifies that 45% of the identified housing supply within the RHMA is constrained and that 67% of these identified sites have a marketability issue. This is a clear indication that there are delivery issue with sites within the RHMA given the lack of demand within these locations. In order to ensure that there is a continual delivery of effective housing sites throughout the lifetime of the Plan, more deliverable sites in marketable locations should be allocated for development.

2.27 In respect of the Draft Proposed LDP considerations of the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk SGA, the Council state that the ‘there remain questions’ regarding the capacity and desirability of the town to accept additional growth. Notwithstanding this statement, the MIR identifies new sites comprising a total of 455 units north of the A90.

2.28 As has been maintained throughout previous LDP 2017 submission and the Call for Sites stage – the land at Mains of Cowie provides an appropriate opportunity for housing development well contained by the landform and infrastructure features. The A90 / A92 and railway line which lie to the north of the Site provide urbanising influences and sets the Site within the development envelope of Stonehaven, separating the Site from the rural land to the north.

2.29 Furthermore, the proposed development at Mains of Cowie offers the opportunity to not only deliver housing, but also much-needed food retail and a new primary school. This will ensure that the proposed development will deliver facilities in line with additional housing and will alleviate concerns in respect of the capacity of the town to absorb additional development.

2.30 It is not the case that the rate of delivery is ‘unexpectedly slow’ at Chapelton as stated within the Draft Proposed LDP. For many years submissions from the development industry have stated that this new community would not deliver at the rate anticipated within previous LDPs. There are serious concerns that by continuing to restrict development along the corridor throughout the plan period – as suggested through the Draft Proposed LDP – and relying almost solely on the enabling development at Ury Estate to deliver new housing for Stonehaven, the HLR within the southern SGA will fail to be met and housing pressures in Stonehaven will continue to be exacerbated. This is particularly concerning in the context that the Ury sites have either been allocated in the 2017 LDP and / or have planning permission but have yet to be consistently delivered on site within the last plan period.

2.31 The development at Mains of Cowie remains the logical choice for the sustainable growth of Stonehaven. The proposed development offers the opportunity to deliver a high quality, mixed use development in an appropriate and sustainable location. The position of the site adjacent to the railway line and A90 / A92 within close proximity to the AWPR provides visual containment and the strong landscape strategy to be adopted will ensure that built form is accommodated within the Site.

### 3. The Changing Context Around Stonehaven

#### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

3.1 The final section of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) opened in February 2019, and this has significantly changed the physical and economic context for Stonehaven, as well as the potential for retail lead mixed use development at Mains of Cowie.



3.2 The AWPR is a major infrastructure development on the outskirts of Aberdeen, the primary route of which is designated as part of the A90 road, with the older road of the same name between Stonehaven and Blackdog becoming part of the A92. Stonehaven becomes a key node along this route and effectively becomes its southern gateway.

3.3 It is anticipated that the AWPR project will bring substantial benefits to the whole of the north east of Scotland, primarily boosting the economy by generating income through increased sales and reduced costs. *“This economic impact is expected to bring over £6 billion to the area, as well as 14,000 jobs over the next three decades. Additionally, new business investment is anticipated to bring in £105 million and 600 jobs in that period.”*

3.4 Furthermore it is expected that these economic benefits combined with significantly improved transport provision will expand the labour catchment, and attracting more people to work and live in the north east, primarily around areas on the periphery of the city, which are now much more accessible.

#### LAND-USE PLANNING

3.5 Given the infrastructure investment here, there will undoubtedly be increased development pressure in close proximity to the AWPR. In fact, investment in infrastructure is seen as a key driver to facilitate sustainable economic development which is crucially supported by high quality housing in the most appropriate locations. Mains of Cowie remains such a location. It is well connected and accessible to Aberdeenshire as well as its town centre. It is well contained by the existing railway line and A92 and provides the opportunity to deliver mixed use development that, through good quality design and landscape, can mitigate any potential visual impact given its elevated location.

-  Recent Infrastructure Development
-  The Site





**MAINS OF COWIE**  
**STONEHAVEN**



## 4. A Three Part Vision

### DELIVERING A NEW NORTHERN GATEWAY

4.1 Mains of Cowie offers the opportunity to establish a new **Northern Gateway** to the town. The new grade separated junction, located approximately 200m north of the Site, connects the Site with the A90 (AWPR) and will undoubtedly bring both development pressure and significant opportunities.

4.2 In a physical sense, Mains of Cowie can support this by providing a **high quality development** in the form of a superstore, homes, landscaping and community uses.

### DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL FORM PART OF STONEHAVEN

4.3 Mains of Cowie's **close proximity to the coast** is a significant consideration and one that has driven many elements of the proposals. It means that the Site genuinely **feels part of Stonehaven**. The opportunity for direct views of the coast, the north sea and also the town centre mean that the Site is well connected and **relates well to the town**.

4.4 In addition to this, the form and design of development will reflect the characteristics of Stonehaven and east coast settlements and the main aspects of a **high quality of life** associated with the town.

### DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH WITHIN THE A92 AND RAILWAY LINE

4.5 Mains of Cowie can accommodate the **sustainable growth** of the town.

4.6 Furthermore, **mixed use** development at Mains of Cowie, which includes homes, retail, education and community uses, will also be in close proximity to the town centre, leisure facilities, schools, parks, the core path network and the coast.

4.7 Significantly, the Site would deliver a much needed retail superstore which would help address the high volume of consumer spend that leaves the town at present. It offers the people of Stonehaven a choice for a much more sustainable pattern of travel .

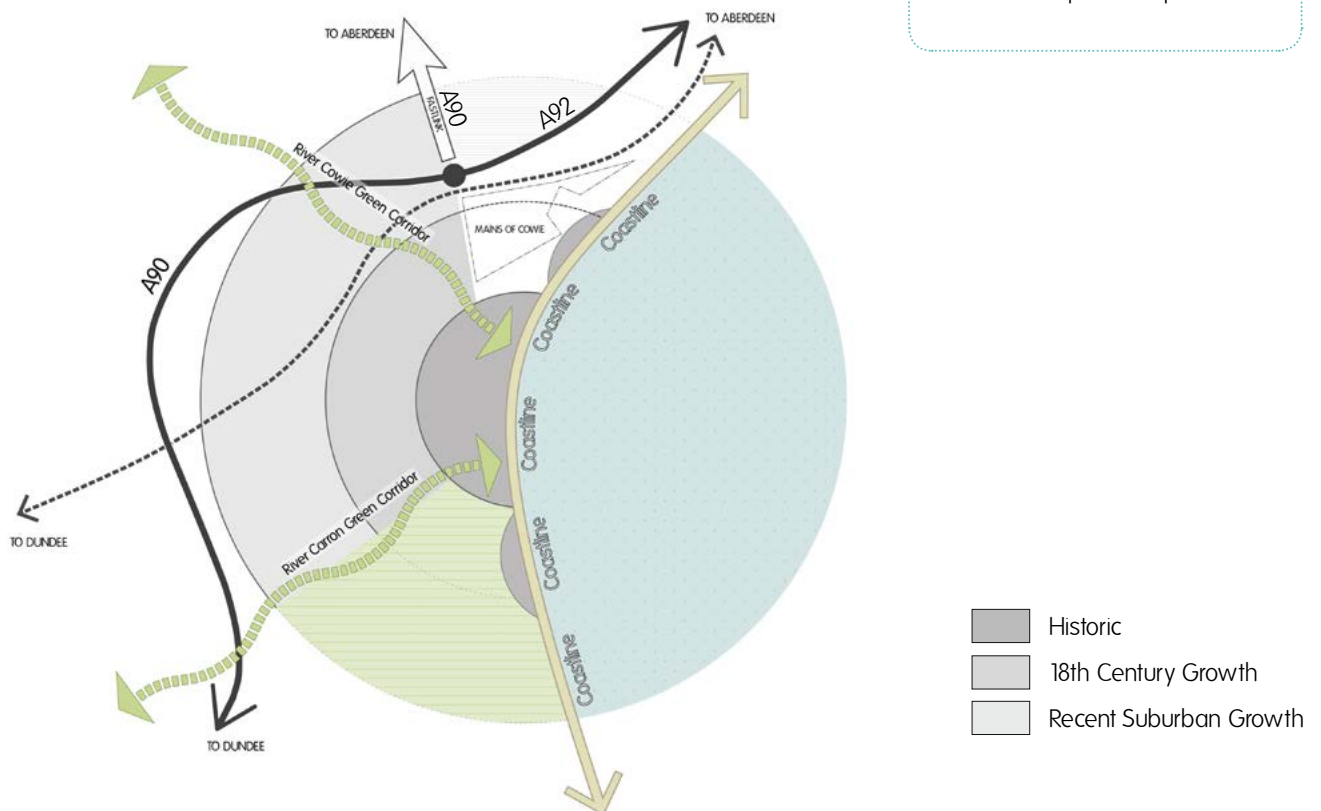


FIGURE 2 PLANNED SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

## 5. Site Location and Description

### SITE LOCATION

5.1 Stonehaven lies approximately 20km south of Aberdeen. Journey times to and around Aberdeen have recently been improved following construction of the AWPR which opened in February 2019.

5.2 Stonehaven is well connected by road and rail. The town is bounded by the A90, its northern most junction is located within 100m of the Site. The A92 provides direct access to Aberdeen (20km) to the north and the central belt via Dundee (80km) to the south. Trains connect Stonehaven to Aberdeen, Dundee and beyond.

5.3 The southern edge of the Site is located just 300m from Stonehaven town centre.

### SITE CONTEXT

5.4 The Site occupies an area of raised ground that lies adjacent to the fishing village of Cowie. It is roughly triangular in shape and bounded to the west by the B979, the north

by the East Coast main railway line and the south by an unclassified road (The Old Golf Course Road). The Site is adjacent to Cowie House at its south eastern edge while Mains of Cowie Farmhouse is incorporated within its area.

5.5 A modern residential area lies to the west of the B979, on the site of the former Glenury Distillery. The A92 and newly constructed A90 and grade separated junction for the AWPR sit to the north of the Site.

5.6 To the south of the Site and adjacent to the village of Cowie are a number of popular leisure and tourism facilities that include parks, leisure centre, skate park and an outdoor swimming pool.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

5.7 The Site is comprised of a number of agricultural fields extending to approximately 34 Ha in size. The majority of the centre of the Site is currently in arable use while the southern and western sloped fields provide land for pasture.



FIGURE 3 SITE BOUNDARY

## 6. Local Facilities and Amenities

6.1 Mains of Cowie benefits greatly from being part of the town, located within the A90 and in close proximity to the town centre and alongside established amenities. It sits within an easy 10-15 minute walk of a wide range of local facilities. In this sense, the Site is inherently sustainable.

### EASY ACCESS TO LOCAL FACILITIES

6.2 Figures 4 set out those numerous local services which lie within walking distance of the Site as well as those which fall a little farther away but remain easily accessible. The diagram also demonstrates the walking / cycling distances / times from the furthest edge of the Mains of Cowie development area to the town centre and other key facilities by using proposed and existing foot / cycle paths.

6.3 By means of comparison, the diagram also highlights the relative walking / cycling distances from the 'most accessible' southern parts of the Mains of Ury development. An accessible route, and an alternative route has been provided for both. These times are broadly comparable in terms of access to Mackie Academy and the Railway Station, while accessibility times to the town centre are approximately half that for Mains of Cowie. For clarity, foot / cycle paths up to and around the Mains of Cowie Site will be no greater than 1:20 gradients.

### WIDER FACILITIES ACROSS THE TOWN

6.4 The wider settlement of Stonehaven is very well served by facilities, all of which are within reach by bicycle or public transport.

#### Education

6.5 There are three primary schools in Stonehaven; Mill O'Forest School, Arduthie School and Dunnottar School. These schools are all within 2km of the Site.

6.6 For secondary schools, the Site is located within the catchment of Mackie Academy, which is around 1km away.

#### Employment

6.7 Spurryhillock Industrial Estate is located approximately 2km south west of the Site and is a significant employer in the area. The town centre is also a source of retail employment within a short walking distance of the Site.

#### Sports and Leisure

6.8 There are a wide range of leisure and recreation facilities in Stonehaven, including a golf course, various parks and football fields, the most significant of which is Mineralwell Park, located just 150m from the Site.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

6.9 The Site is well connected to local facilities, services and employment opportunities throughout Stonehaven via an established network of bus services. It is also possible to quickly and conveniently travel to a number of major settlements throughout the north-east of Scotland via mainline rail and regional coach services.

#### Local Bus Services

6.10 There are a number of bus services which pass the Site on the B979 Glenury Road and Old Golf Course Road (Cowie) with local services operated by Stagecoach and MW Nicoll. A bus stop is located on the B979 Glenury Road providing transport heading north from the town. This is a formal stop with shelter and timetable information for passengers. Stagecoach service 108 provides a town service circular for Stonehaven. This is picked up from a nearby stop at Mineralwell View.

#### Regional Coach Services

6.11 At present there are 14 bus services which run through Stonehaven. Major cities throughout Scotland are connected directly by Scottish Citylink, while Stagecoach Bluebird connects major settlements throughout Aberdeenshire.

#### Train Services

6.12 Stonehaven Train Station is located less than 2km south west of the Site on Arduthie Road providing frequent services to the surrounding major urban areas as well as those connected via the east coast mainline.

6.13 Stonehaven Station accommodates up to 100 official and 20 unofficial parking spaces with 3 accessible spaces. Secure sheltered cycle storage facilities are provided at the station providing an attractive incentive to encourage trips to and from the station by bicycle. Bus stops are provided in the vicinity of the station on Arduthie Road providing access to several local bus services; including many servicing the Site.

6.14 East Coast and First ScotRail operate regular rail services from Stonehaven to Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and London. The Stonehaven – Aberdeen service operates with a peak frequency of every 30 minutes on weekdays in the AM peak. Peak PM services operate approximately every 45 minutes.

6.15 The Site's location in relation to the nearby Railway Station will provide excellent opportunity for future residents to access employment opportunities provided in Aberdeen by rail. The Railway Station is located within a 20 minute walk of the Site (approximately a 10 minute cycle). It is therefore considered that rail services will offer an attractive alternative to the car when accessing Aberdeen and the surrounding areas.

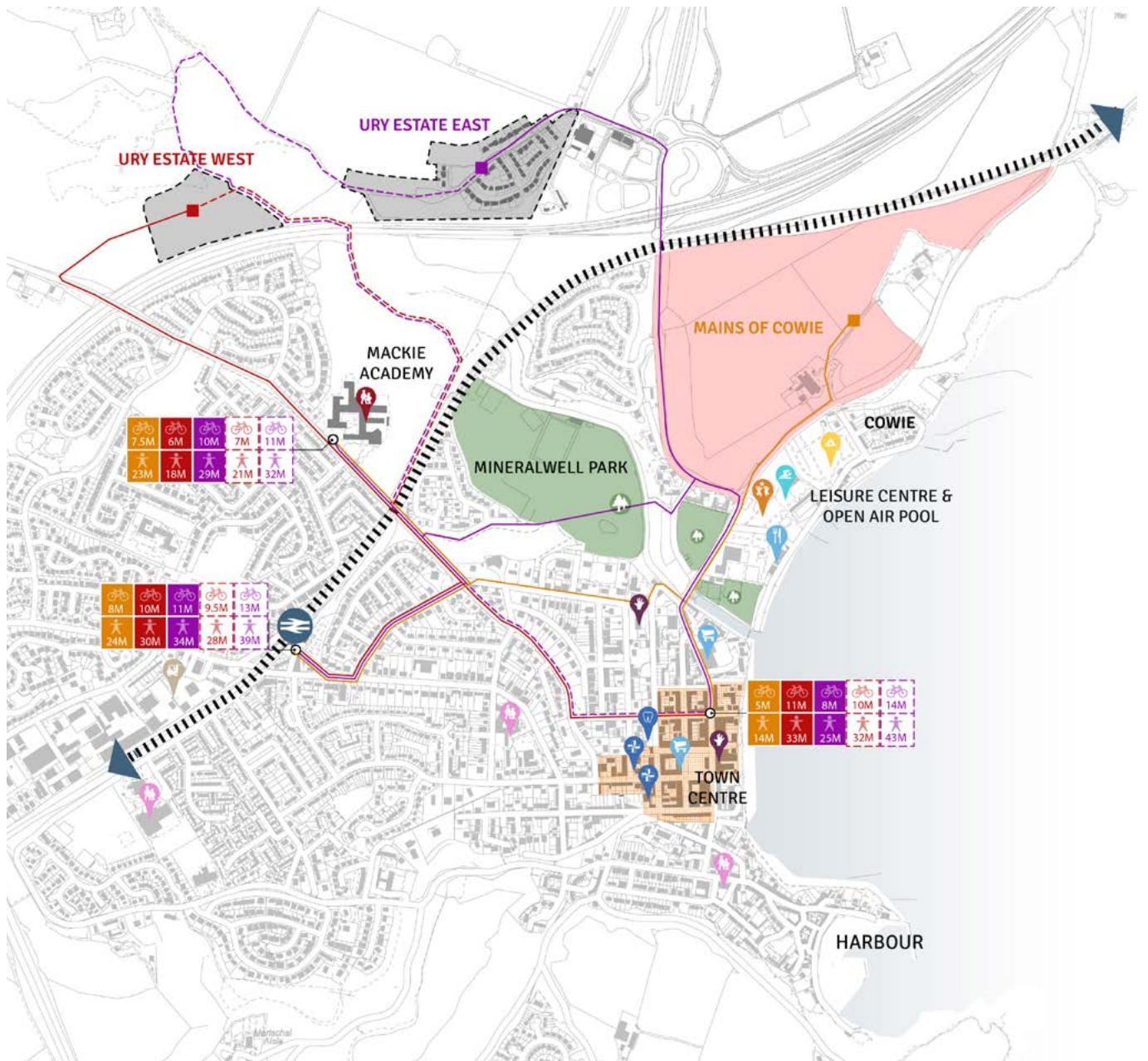


FIGURE 4 FACILITIES AND AMENITIES PLAN

- |  |                  |  |                   |  |                   |  |                            |
|--|------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
|  | Campsite         |  | Restaurant / Cafe |  | GP Surgery        |  | Accessible Walking Routes  |
|  | Outdoor Pool     |  | Primary School    |  | Industrial Estate |  | Alternative Walking Routes |
|  | Park             |  | Secondary School  |  | Town Centre       |  |                            |
|  | Community Centre |  | Dentist           |  | Railway Line      |  |                            |
|  | Skate Park       |  | Pharmacy          |  | Railway Station   |  |                            |

## 7. Site Opportunities and Constraints

7.1 A review has been made of Site opportunities and constraints based on surveys and a desktop investigation of published information. Particular account has been taken of the natural site context in the review of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (October 2017).

### TOPOGRAPHY

7.2 The topography surrounding the Site forms a backdrop to the coast and shoreline and rises from the sea level up to 25 metres AOD at the southeastern corner of the Site.

7.3 From the initial steep-sided western and southern slopes of the Site, the land rises gently north-eastward up to 30 metres AOD before rising steeply once more to a height of 50 metres AOD adjacent to the railway line.

### ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

7.4 The Site is currently accessed to the south by the Mains of Cowie access road. There is a farm track which runs between Mains of Cowie and Cowie House in the southern part of the Site.

7.5 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) through the Site. However, there is a coastal PRoW which runs parallel to the southern boundary, less than 200m from the Site. A further PRoW connects this path to Mineralwell Park and beyond along the banks of the River Cowie. The Council's Core Paths Plan also identifies a number of other paths forming a more comprehensive wider path network within the vicinity of the Site.

### AWPR

7.6 The AWPR project delivered the A90, which is located approximately 200m north of the Site boundary, just 300m from the Site's proposed northern access point on the B979. This has significantly improved the regional road network, providing fast and efficient connections with Aberdeen City and Shire.

### SOUTH EAST ABERDEENSHIRE COAST SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA

7.7 Policy E2 Landscape states that development that causes unacceptable effects on key natural landscape elements, historic features or the "composition or quality of the landscape character". The policy states that development should not significantly erode the characteristics of landscapes as defined in the SNH Landscape Character Assessments or that have been identified as Special Landscape Areas (SLA) of local importance. Supplementary Guidance 9 sets out the boundaries and qualifying criteria of the ten Aberdeenshire SLAs against which development will be assessed.

7.8 The Site falls within the South East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which extends from Aberdeen City in the north to the mouth of the North Esk in the south, and predominantly follows the railway line as a narrow, continuous strip including areas with strong coastal influence.

7.9 With respect to the eight aspects and features of the landscape that are considered worthy of recognition through the SLA designation, the "qualifying criteria" are:

- The Site is located on one of the "raised beach landforms" that provide the setting for Stonehaven, set beyond the "rugged and intricate scenery of weathered coastal cliffs" that are characteristic of most of the SLA.
- The Site is set within the topographically defined setting of Stonehaven, contained by the rising hills including Black Hill and the Hill of Megray, and by existing built development to the south and west, and does not form part of the "wider setting of larger settlements, including... Stonehaven, framed by rising cliffs on either side"
- Development of the Site would not affect the prominence or setting of the "Stonehaven War Memorial" landmark.

7.10 The methodology applied in defining the SLA boundaries, the Local Landscape Designation Review (LLDR), states that areas of "lower merit" were included when identifying physical boundaries to define the SLA; and the Guidance for Local Landscape Designations (GLLD) acknowledges that there are particular challenges when selecting boundaries close to or within the envelope of settlements.

7.11 Overall, the Site is not representative of the key characteristics of the SLA, and has poor consistency with the characteristics identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of Landscape Unit 34: Kincardine Cliffs that underpinned the SLA LLDR evaluation. Therefore, the Site is considered to have capacity for sensitive development without eroding the characteristics of the local landscape or SLA.



FIGURE 5 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- Site Boundary
  - ✱ Listed Building
  - ✱ Scheduled Ancient Monument
  - Existing Watercourse
- Core Path
  - Wider Path Network
  - ▶ Potential Points Of Access
  - Special Landscape Area

## VIEWS

7.12 One of the most striking features and greatest opportunities of the Site are the views that are afforded out to sea, along the coast and over the town.

7.13 These views embody many of the characteristics of what make Stonehaven special. Indeed, large parts of the town have been orientated and planned to take advantage of these types of view.

7.14 Development proposals at Mains of Cowie should seek to take advantage of these views at every opportunity.

## BUILT HERITAGE

7.15 The surrounding area includes numerous historic features. Scheduled Monuments within the vicinity of the Site include the remains of the Castle of Cowie, which are situated on the cliff top at the eastern edge of the field south-east of the Site, approximately 300m to the east of the Site; and the remains of St Mary's Church / Cowie Chapel which is both a Scheduled Monument and Category B Listed Building, situated on the cliff top on the southern edge of Stonehaven Golf Club, approximately 150m to the east of the Site.

7.16 Within the Site lies the Listed Building of Mains of Cowie farmhouse and steading (Category C). Located outwith the Site, Cowie House is also a Listed Building (Category B) and the associated enclosure walls and north-eastern gateway features are Category C Listed. The two Category C (s) Listed Buildings on the Site will be retained and protected and the setting to Cowie House (Category B) and associated boundary walls will be preserved.

7.17 Proposals seek to respect the visibility of the Site and through careful consideration of the scale, massing and orientation of the development it is considered that there would be no adverse effects on the Scheduled Ancient Monuments in close proximity to the Site.

## NATURAL HERITAGE

7.18 The Site is located within 200m north of Garron Point, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Garron Point is a rocky coastal promontory with cliffs and coastal grassland, it is considered that the proposed development would have no adverse effects on the SSSI.

## ECOLOGY

7.19 The Site is overall of very low ecological interest with intensive farming, both arable cultivation and intensive grazing by sheep. The lack of habitat diversity and levels of exposure on higher ground to sea winds all serving to reduce habitat and species diversity. No rare or uncommon plants are present, nor any species cited on the Scottish biodiversity list. Birds seen comprise common species typical of the habitats present but present in very low numbers over much of the area. No protected mammals are present on Site with the probable exception of bats. While the core of the Site, open, exposed and with very little suitable foraging habitat, is likely to be unattractive to bats, peripheral habitats where scrub and trees are present may be more attractive.

7.20 Where possible green corridors and ditches will be retained. Where existing features are affected, the development proposals will seek to minimise the impact and also provide alternative opportunities for habitats within the green space network.

## HYDROLOGY

7.21 There is no historical evidence of flooding problems on the Mains of Cowie Site. SEPA flood maps confirm that the main development Site and proposed road and junction area is not at risk of flooding from coastal or river sources. The main development area is situated on relatively high ground, and consequently, it is unlikely that flooding from coastal or river sources will pose any issues. Notwithstanding this, the Site is in a unique position of being able to help mitigate the existing flooding problems recently experienced in Stonehaven. The nature of the Site allows the inclusion of flood attenuation features, which would slow the rate of surface water run-off from the Site, thereby helping to alleviate the existing flooding problems recently experienced in the vicinity.

7.22 The Site drainage design includes several features such as permeable paving, swales, wetlands and ponds to ensure the Site integrates the existing watercourses in a sustainable manner, and is consistent with the aims of sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) guidance.



FIGURE 6 VIEW FROM THE WAR MEMORIAL LOOKING TOWARD SITE

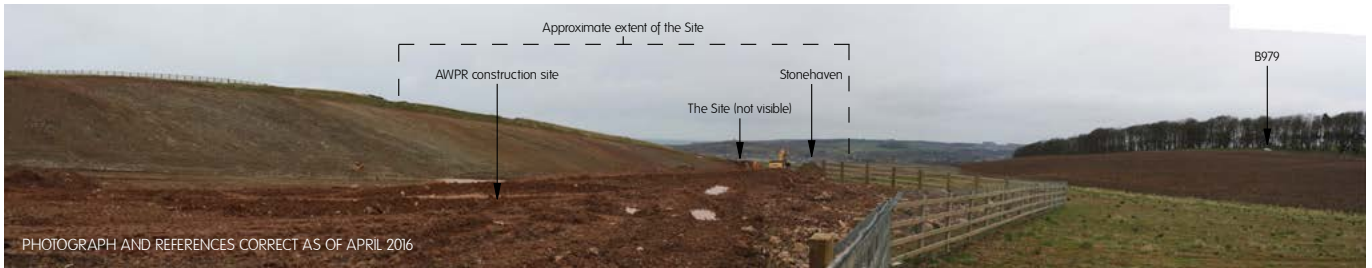


FIGURE 7 VIEW FROM AWPR IN THE VICINITY OF THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AT FORESTER'S CROFT



FIGURE 8 VIEW FROM AWPR AT THE EXISTING A90 / B979 JUNCTION



FIGURE 9 VIEW FROM B979 NETHERLEY ROAD

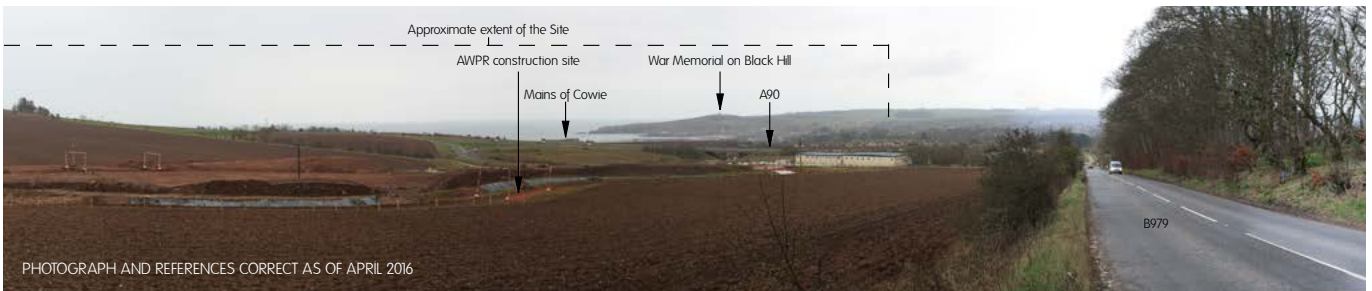


FIGURE 10 VIEW FROM B979 NETHERLEY ROAD



## LANDSCAPE

### Summary of Site Character

**7.23** The character of the Site is currently undeveloped, albeit it is set in the immediate context of residential development to the west, in the vicinity of Glenury Road; and development extending along the coastal plain to the south, in Cowie, in addition to the influence of the wider urban area of Stonehaven to the west and south-west. In addition to these urbanising influences, the north of the Site is subject to the influence of the railway line, the A90 (AWPR) and the A92. These significant infrastructure features divide the Site from the rural landscape further north and result in the Site having less of a rural character. Further urbanising influences are evident to the north-east in the form of a communications mast and associated infrastructure, as well as the built form, roadways, parking and activity associated with Stonehaven Golf Club to the north-east.

**7.24** The Site is provided with a degree of containment by landform to the north, and by woodland associated with Cowie House. The Site is also subject to the estate influence of Cowie House, in the form of the walled enclosure of the woodland associated with this property, which forms a distinctive field boundary feature. The boundaries forming the field pattern across the Site are however, otherwise poorly defined as a result of weak or absent hedgerow structure.

**7.25** Figure 12 illustrates the development potential of the Site. This divides the opportunities and constraints for development (in landscape and visual terms) in the following manner:

- Areas of high landscape/visual constraint: suitable for open space and/or mitigation.
- Areas of moderate landscape/visual constraint: suitable for development that includes retention and reinforcement of existing landscape framework to create a sympathetic development edge and respond to local landscape and townscape character.
- Areas of low landscape/visual constraint: suitable for higher density development that retains and enhances the existing landscape framework, where possible.

### Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints/Development Principles

**7.26** Key landscape and visual opportunities/constraints and development principles for the Site include the following:

- Provide a positive, locally characteristic **structural landscape setting** to built form within the Proposed Development.
- **Retain the undeveloped character of the existing slopes** forming the southern and western edges of the Site to respect and emphasise the characteristically stepped topography and maintain relatively distinct character of the settlement of Cowie.
- **Sensitive approach to development of built form on the more elevated northern edge of the Site**, avoiding development in the most visually prominent parts of the Site and limiting built form in the north-western area of the Site to two storeys, set within structural landscaping.
- **Responsiveness of road and built form alignments to contours**, to assimilate the Proposed Development into variations in topography, rather than cut across it, as the railway and A92 currently do, to the north of the Site.
- **Extension of wooded character of the curtilage of Cowie House**, as a basis for sensitively arranged structural planting across the upper parts of the Site.
- **Use of clumps of planting, rather than linear belts** of woodland, along the elevated northern edge of the Site, to provide a varied structure and accentuate variations in landform, rather than reinforce the linear dominance of the railway line.
- **Sensitive transition in character along the south-eastern edge of the Site** from a predominantly urban character to the south-west, with positive frontage of built form; to a more estate woodland character to the north-east, with built form set discreetly within woodland bounded by estate walls, also serving to minimise the influence of additional built form in the Valued View south-west from Stonehaven Golf Course.
- **Retain Mains of Cowie buildings** as a prominent and locally characteristic gateway feature on the southern edge of the Site, with landscaping and adjacent built forms providing a positive setting to the historic building cluster.
- **Provide reinforced landscape gateway** flanking B979 on arrival from A92 and A90 (AWPR) to the north.



FIGURE 11 LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- |  |                                      |  |                             |  |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
|  | Site Boundary                        |  | Special Landscape Area      |  | Views from the Site                       |
|  | Low Landscape/Visual Constraint      |  | Rights of Ways Claimed      |  | Views towards the Site                    |
|  | Moderate Landscape/Visual Constraint |  | Core Paths                  |  | Proposed Green Corridors                  |
|  | High Landscape/Visual Constraint     |  | Listed Buildings            |  | Proposed Woodland                         |
|  |                                      |  | Scheduled Ancient Monuments |  | Reinforce Existing Vegetation             |
|  |                                      |  |                             |  | Existing drainage channel with vegetation |

## 8. Indicative Masterplan

8.1 An indicative masterplan has been prepared for the Site (Figure 13). This has been informed by the development parameters set out in subsequent sections of this Masterplan Report.

8.2 The indicative masterplan is for illustrative purposes only. It seeks to demonstrate that a careful and well considered approach to layout and landscape design can deliver a high quality place as well as mitigate against visual impact.

8.3 This is supported by the comments provided by the Reporter in that while the Site is relatively prominent, the approach represented below and in the following sections adequately illustrate that the development could be successfully accommodated without necessarily giving rise to unacceptable effects upon the landscape setting, visual amenity, or character of the town.



DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS



Path network to take advantage of southerly aspect and views

Listed House in Mature Trees

'Estate planting' extended east and providing visual buffer to Cowie Village

Built form set back from Site edge to avoid any potential overlooking

Play areas

Listed Cowie Farmhouse retained

Elevated / positive frontage overlooking seafront

FIGURE 13 INDICATIVEMASTERPLAN

## 9. Land Use and Amount

### LAND USE

9.1 A mixture of uses are proposed for the Site:

- Up to 250 Residential Units;
- Community Facilities;
- Land for a Primary School;
- A Retail Superstore and Petrol Filling Station;
- Related Infrastructure, Access and Landscaping.

9.2 The distribution of the land uses and the relationship between them is shown in Figure 14.

#### Residential Mix and Tenure

9.3 The proposed development comprises residential use, delivering up to 250 dwellings with an indicative mix of house types and sizes as follows:

- Detached / semi detached houses 75%
- Affordable detached / semi detached / terraced houses 25%

9.4 This indicative mix has been generated in response to local demand and identified affordable housing need.

9.5 The mix will vary throughout the development in response to the character and urban form principles, as well as the hierarchy of street types.

9.6 The development has the potential to deliver up to 63 affordable housing units, which are possible to be delivered within a range of tenure. Both the amount and tenure mix will be agreed following further negotiations with the Council.

9.7 The proposed development will achieve on average net residential density of approximately 25 dwellings per hectare (dph). Some localised variation will be required in order to create variety in character.

#### Retail Superstore and Petrol Filling Station

9.8 The proposed development includes 1.35 Ha of land set aside for a new superstore and associated petrol filling station. This is sufficient to accommodate a retail unit of up to 4000 Sq M (gross) along with related parking and landscaping.

#### Primary School

9.9 A development of the size envisaged will require additional capacity for primary school age children.

9.10 Land for a single stream primary school of approximately 1.3 ha could be provided at the centre of the new community. A school of this size is sufficient to accommodate approximately 210 pupils which will cater for the proposed Site as well as relieve pressure on existing primary schools that are currently at or close to capacity.

#### Community Uses

9.11 The development proposal includes the potential for the conversion of the Category C listed Mains of Cowie farmhouse and associated steading buildings for the benefit of the local community and the wider town.

9.12 The farmhouse complex is located in a prominent position alongside the southern access road and set within an area proposed to be high quality local parkland. This development proposal presents an ideal opportunity to enable refurbishment and redevelopment of the listed structures in order to ensure their ongoing use.

#### Public Open Space

9.13 Proposed open space takes the form of the following:

- Three community play areas;
- Neighbourhood green spaces including a significant area given over to linear parks along the Site's 'green edges';
- Community woodland areas; and,
- Grassland fields to the north of the Site, along the rail line.



FIGURE 14 LAND USE PARAMETERS PLAN

-  Retail and Petrol Filling Station
-  Residential
-  School and Associated Facilities
-  Community
-  Infrastructure
-  Public Open Space
-  Play Area

## 10. Access and Movement

10.1 The access and movement strategy for the Site has been developed in line with current national guidance and design policy such as that set out in Designing Streets. A summary of the key design parameters are set out here.

### STREET HIERARCHY

10.2 The street hierarchy is arranged to create an individual sense of place and distinguish between different character areas across the Site.

10.3 The street hierarchy is arranged as follows:

- Access / Main Street
- Secondary Street
- Shared Streets
- Private Driveways / Lanes

10.4 The Access / Main Street is the principal vehicular and pedestrian route through the Site. These routes deliver barrier free access with the roads not exceeding a gradient of 1:20.

10.5 From the Access / Main Street a series of Secondary Streets provide the means of circulation throughout each of the different neighbourhood areas. These streets do not exceed a gradient of 1:12.

10.6 For the residential areas, Shared Streets are proposed in order to encourage pedestrian use in key areas of movement, while Private Drives / Lanes are generally located around the periphery of the Site, in order to allow small clusters of houses to positively address open space and present an attractive edge to the development.

10.7 The Retail Superstore and Petrol Filling Station will be accessed off the Main Street toward to the north west of the Site.

### VEHICULAR ACCESS

10.8 As illustrated by Figure 15, vehicular access is proposed from two points; the B979 to the north west of the Site, and from the Old Golf Course Road to the south of the Site.

### PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS

10.9 Pedestrian & cycle access is proposed from a series of points around the western and southern boundaries, as illustrated in Figure 15. The precise points and nature of these access points have been determined by :

- a landscape response to the steep landform around the town-centre and sea-front facing edges.
- the proximity of existing Core Paths along the sea-front and the River Cowie.
- the location of nearby bus stops.

10.10 It is envisaged that the Site will contribute towards a co-ordinated programme of investment in high quality pedestrian crossings for the B979 and Old Golf Course Road, while existing footpaths will be upgraded where necessary in order to ensure a safe and practical route is achievable from the Site into the town centre and vice versa.

10.11 Wherever practical and whilst ensuring security by layout design, pedestrian routes and links will also be provided through Public Open Space within the Site.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

10.12 Pedestrian routes within the Site and pedestrian access off the B979 will aid pedestrian access to existing bus services within close proximity to the Site.

10.13 The Access / Main Street will be designed to facilitate a bus route through the centre of the Site, allowing convenient access to the residential areas, as well as to the school and other community facilities.

### VEHICULAR NETWORK

10.14 The vehicular network has specific design criteria. A key aspect of the vehicle network is to achieve a maximum design speed of 20mph (32kph) on the Access / Main Street and Secondary Streets and further reductions in speed on Shared Streets and Private Drives / Lanes as a result of design led traffic calming techniques.

10.15 The primary method of traffic calming will be a combination of hard and soft landscape treatments.

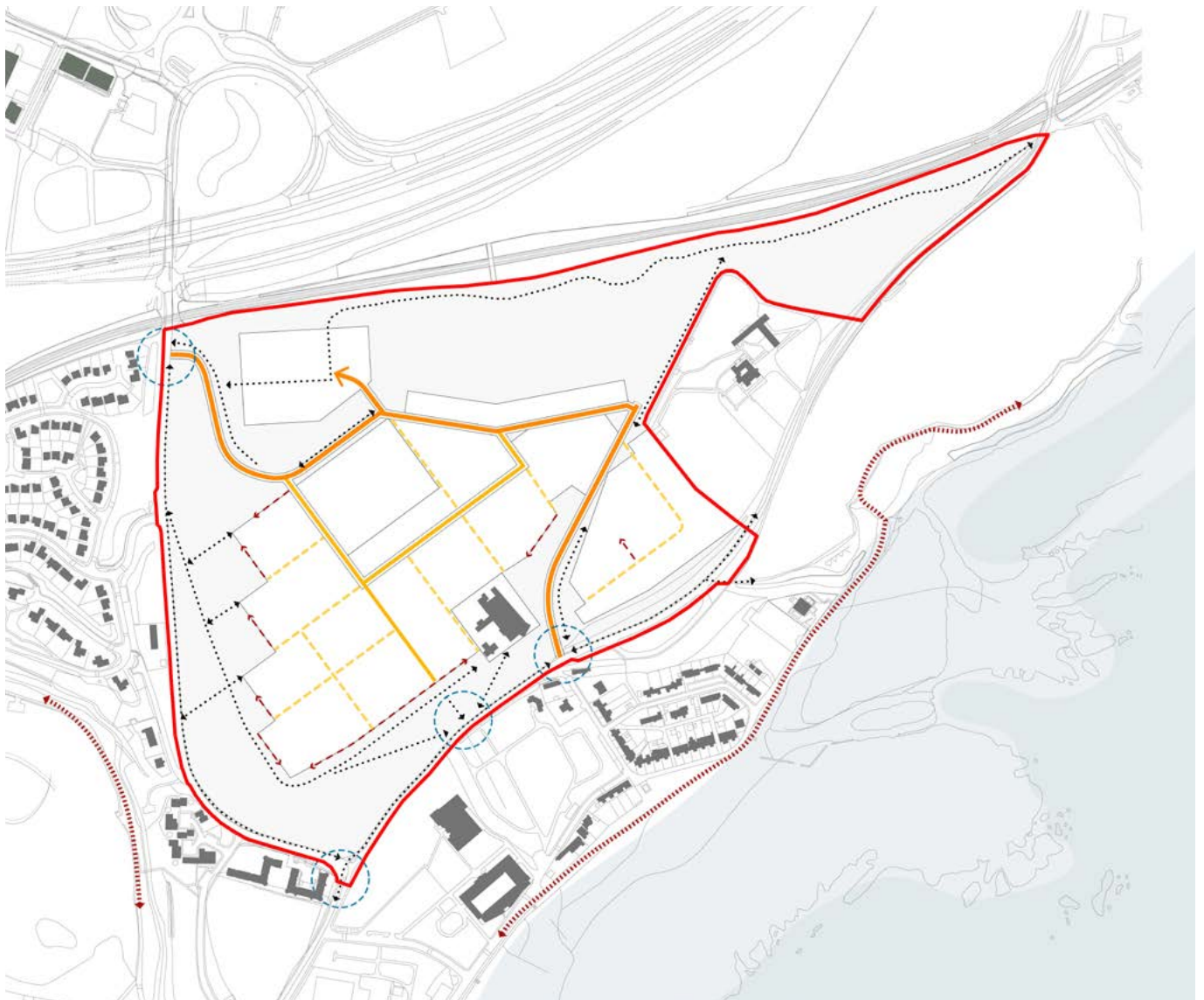










FIGURE 15 ACCESS PARAMETERS PLAN

-  Development Envelope
-  Access / Main Street
-  Secondary Street
-  Shared Streets
-  Private Drive / Lane
-  Indicative Pedestrian Routes
-  Pedestrian Gateway
-  Existing Core Path



## 11. Landscape Strategy

**11.1** The Site is identified within the South East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. Developments within this SLA are required to retain the character of the coastal area and respect and complement the coastal character. Extensive LVA work has been undertaken to inform the proposed development Site and this has informed a landscape and planting strategy for the Site that helps form strong character areas, enhance the green network, and integrate the Site within the settlement. The landscape approach to be adopted will ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the characteristics of the SLA.

**11.2** The landscape strategy shows how a character zone approach to the structural landscape would assist in positively assimilating built form into the landscape.

**11.3** Proposed areas of structural landscape reinforce and extend from the existing network green infrastructure to provide a robust setting to built form and landscape and ecological connectivity across and around the Site and with the wider countryside.

**11.4** Key overarching objectives of the landscape strategy include:

- Assimilate the proposed built development areas within the local landform and areas of retained and new strategic planting, which would be introduced to reinforce and strengthen the landscape framework of the Site;
- To provide a variety of open space including both formal and informal recreational opportunities, and linking with a wider green network across the Site and with the wider countryside;
- Create a locally distinctive and characteristic sense of place and visual appeal through the quality and variety of strategic landscape design; and
- Provide positive landscape and biodiversity management to both existing landscape features and proposed open spaces and new planting.

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ZONES

**1. Plateau Slopes:** Predominantly open wildflower grassland with scrub pockets and sparse canopy trees to provide structural diversity.

- Managed for biodiversity.
- Accessible, semi-natural public open space with pedestrian and cycle paths in addition to steps extending street pattern to connect with accessible gradient paths.
- Broad, open views over coastline.

**2. Northern Slopes:** Predominantly open wildflower grassland with clumps of native canopy trees.

- Tree clumps arranged to accentuate landform and avoid reinforcing the linear pattern of the railway cutting across the landform.
- Enhanced public access, with footpaths providing links to the town centre to the south-west and connections to the existing footpaths in wider landscape, in the vicinity of golf course and chapel to the east.
- Extensive panoramic views over coastline.
- Indicative species: pine, oak, beech

**3. Woodland Slopes:** Dense native species woodland, extending landscape structure of Cowie House across slopes to west.

- Development responds to existing contours and is assimilated by planting.
- Reinforces structural landscape gateway from AWPR.

**4. Plateau Edge - Coastal Frontages:** Relatively low density local vernacular built form, providing positive, characteristic frontage to plateau edge.

- Canopy trees provide softening of built form but allow broad views over coastline.

**5. Plateau Edge – Estate:** Positive rear façades of local vernacular built form, set beyond line of native canopy trees and existing estate wall.

- Transition from residential character to estate woodland of Cowie House, including clump of canopy trees adjoining existing woodland.
- Structural vegetation and setback create an enclosed edge to development, curtailing intervisibility between the proposed properties and Cowie Village.
- Indicative species: pine, beech, oak, sycamore.

**6. Principal Route:** Roadway and footways.

- Formally arranged native canopy trees provide legibility and sense of place, as well as softening built form.
- Incidental open spaces provide rhythm and focal points for movement and meeting.

**7. Streets:** Roadway and footways.

- Formally arranged specimen street trees provide legibility, human scale and softening of built form and vehicle parking.

**8. Lanes:** Shared surface vehicular / pedestrian / cycle routes.

- Small specimen street trees and shrubs provide intimate scale and softening of built form and vehicle parking.



FIGURE 16 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- Plateau Slopes
- Northern Slopes
- Woodland Slopes
- Plateau Edge - Coastal Frontage
- Plateau Edge - Estate
- Principal Route
- Streets
- Lanes

11.5 Figure 18 shows the illustrative Landscape Masterplan, depicting how the distinctive characteristics of each of the proposed landscape character zones could be realised, and would deliver a strong Green Infrastructure setting to the proposed development that is integrated with the existing settlement of Stonehaven and the wider countryside. The landscape proposals are based on the indicative tree and shrub species for the different required treatments, based primarily on the use of native, locally appropriate species. Key elements of these proposals, to meet the objectives above, are as follows:

- ① The existing banks on the southern and western edges of the Site will be retained as open grassland. Additional structural variety will be introduced in the form of pockets of scrub and sparse canopy trees. This will form an attractive, distinctive and accessible public open space, benefitting from expansive views over the coastline and providing a distinctive expression of local topography amid the townscape.
- ② The field will be retained on the elevated north-eastern part of the Site and, together with the northern slopes, will be established as grassland fields. Clumps of native canopy trees will be planted to accentuate variations in landform and lessen the sense of linear patterns cutting across the landform, introducing an informal character. Proposed footpaths will enable extensive panoramic views out and over the coastline, and enhance pedestrian links with the wider network of paths and routes. Planting will assist in assimilating the existing influence of the railway line and adjoining infrastructure.
- ③ Further down the slopes in the northern area of the Site, denser woodland planting will provide the immediate setting for built form. Planting in this area will reinforce the structural landscape gateway to the wider urban area of Stonehaven from the A92 and A90 (AWPR).
- ④ On the southern and western edges of the plateau forming the south-western area of the Site, a positive frontage of relatively low density local vernacular built form, with sparse canopy trees would provide a locally characteristic built edge, responding to the coastal environment and the setting of Mains of Cowie farm. SuDS features will provide variation in the landscape setting, allowing for seasonally wet marginal planting.
- ⑤ Further to the east, the plateau edge will provide a more discreet edge of built form in the form of a line of canopy trees flanking the existing wall, providing a transition to the wooded estate character of Cowie House, enabling partial views out over the coastline whilst softening the appearance of built form in views from the south, and curtailing intervisibility between the development and Cowie Village.
- ⑥ Routeways throughout the development would provide a hierarchy of surfaces and landscape treatments, notably using varying sizes, forms and species of trees to provide legibility and an attractive setting to built form. The principal route would enter the Site from the B979 to the north-west, reinforcing the urban gateway function of this locality, passing through the Site to the east and then turning south, along the retained alignment of a track extending south-west from Cowie House to join the road at the southern edge of the Site through the existing gully. Incidental open spaces along this route would provide rhythm and focal points for movement and meeting. The more localised streets and lanes would provide a more intimate sense of scale.

11.6 In addition, it is anticipated that the existing vegetation would be managed and enhanced to maximise its potential for successful establishment and fulfilment of the landscape strategy objectives, subject to detailed management proposals.



FIGURE 17 ILLUSTRATIVE LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

- Core Paths
- Wider Path Network
- Walkways
- \* Play Areas

11.7 With respect to the anticipated landscape and visual impacts, the 2019 MIR assessment simply states that the Site is considered to be “visually very prominent”. However, the Examination Reporter for the 2017 LDP reviewed the representations for the Site and felt that they “adequately illustrate that the development could be successfully accommodated without necessarily giving rise to unacceptable effects upon the landscape setting, visual amenity or character of the town”.

11.8 Near distance partial views of the Site are experienced in the context of the settlement of Stonehaven, from transport routes and residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

11.9 Where long distance views of the Site are obtained, such as from elevated locations across Stonehaven Bay from the south, the Site is seen in the context of the developed basin of Stonehaven and in close proximity to other urban influences, including the A90, B979, railway line, communications mast and golf club and existing development and houses to the south.

11.10 As illustrated in the simple, block photomontage in Figure 20, development within the Site would be contained not only by existing transport corridors, but would be visually contained by the rising ground beyond and set within existing and proposed landscape features.



..... THE SITE

..... PHOTOMONTAGE LOCATION

..... MEMORIAL ON BLACK HILL



FIGURE 19 EXISTING VIEW



FIGURE 20 PROPOSED VIEW

## 12. Appearance Principles



FIGURE 21 EXAMPLE ONE / FINDOCHTY, MORAY



FIGURE 22 EXAMPLE TWO / NEWTONHILL, ABERDEENSHIRE



FIGURE 23 EXAMPLE THREE / CRAIL, FIFE

12.1 Given that the Site's southern elevation will be the most prominent of its edges, the following section uses it as an example of an iterative design process that will ensure that Mains of Cowie is developed to the highest standard and is informed by the character of coastal settlements in Aberdeenshire and nearby areas.

### Promenade Urban Villas and Viewpoint

- Part of grouping
- Building widths increasing towards town
- Gables mark corners
- Stone / render gable marks end of composition

### Corner Villas and Coach Houses

- Part of grouping
- Gables Mark Corners
- Simple detailing and reduction in scale
- Coach Houses incorporate timber from farm



Viewpoint over town

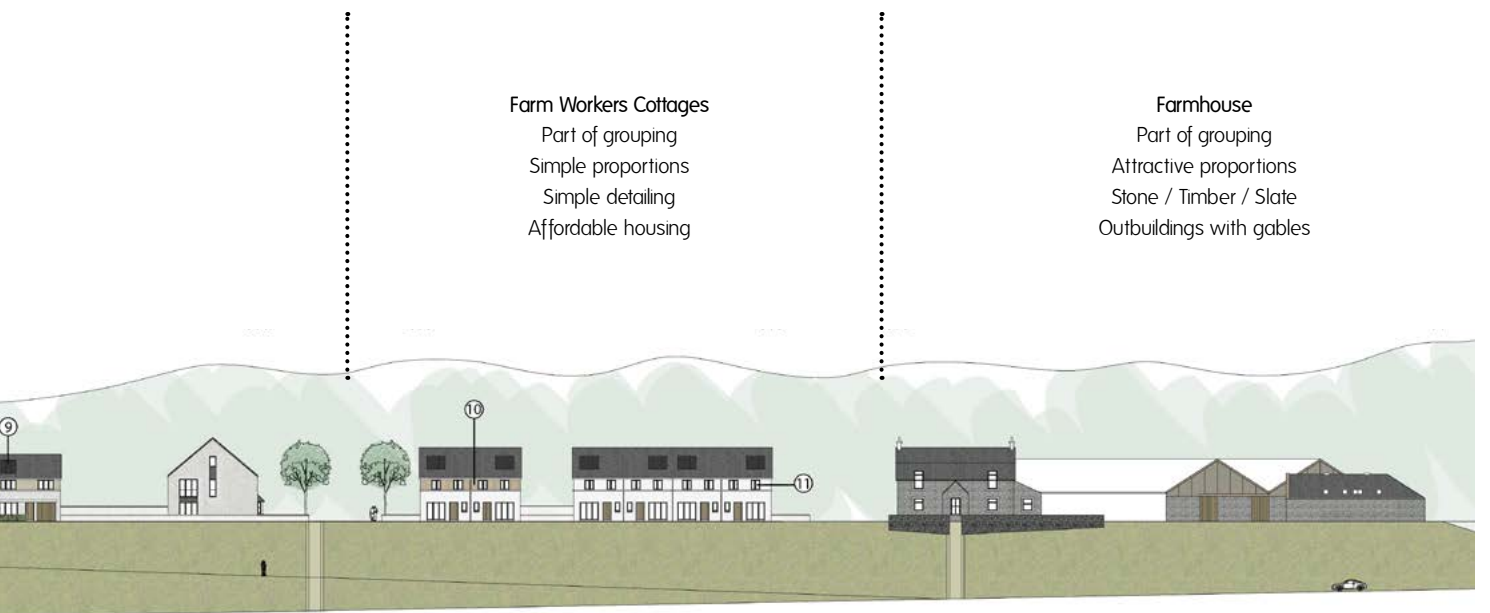
MAINS OF COWIE  
STONEHAVEN

Lane with smaller trees

12.2 This short section indicatively shows how housetypes can be arranged and their elevations adapted to suit its character area. Housing typologies have also been identified to help illustrate character and legibility.



FIGURE 24 SECTION LINE



**Farm Workers Cottages**  
 Part of grouping  
 Simple proportions  
 Simple detailing  
 Affordable housing

**Farmhouse**  
 Part of grouping  
 Attractive proportions  
 Stone / Timber / Slate  
 Outbuildings with gables

Primary Street

**MAINS OF COWIE**  
**STONEHAVEN**

Viewing Terrace and Courtyard



### 13. Drainage Strategy

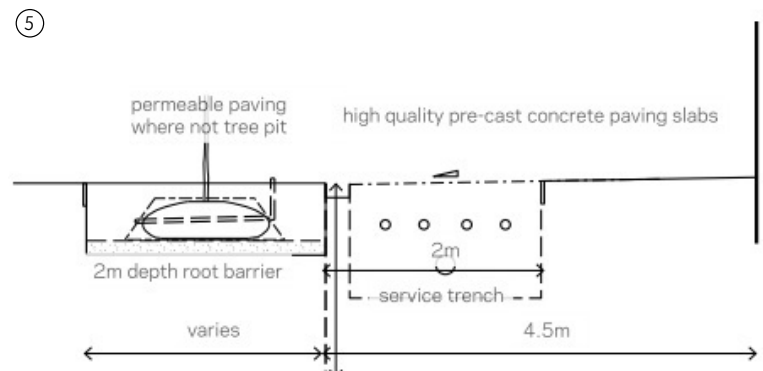
13.1 The issues of drainage including the provision for storm water in extreme weather events has been of fundamental concern in the development of the masterplan. The drainage strategy incorporated into the masterplan is a fundamental and integral part of the design approach to the development.

13.2 Measures will be incorporated to reduce the rate of surface water run-off, to at least 10% less than current greenfield run-off rates, through the use of permeable surfaces, specifically for roads and parking areas. Permeable paving construction allows surface water run-off to infiltrate through the surface layer to underlying treatment and storage media.

13.3 The existing system of watercourses and ditches will generally be retained on their current alignment wherever possible with improvements to increase capacity and nature conservation value. In addition to the existing system, SuDS will be introduced, which incorporate the existing watercourses and provide a network of new ditches, swales, wetlands and ponds.

13.4 A swale is a shallow vegetated channel designed to convey and retain surface water run-off, and which can also allow for infiltration, whilst the vegetation filters suspended solids. Wetlands act in a very similar manner to attenuation ponds, but tend to be more natural in appearance, and can be long linear shapes to fit more seamlessly into the masterplan, whilst still providing the necessary surface water treatment, store and attenuation. In this instance, linear wetlands and swales are used instead of an attenuation pond.

13.5 Additional measures such as roof design and construction to reduce run-off and recycling of rain water will also be considered. The SuDS is designed to form a highly positive element in the landscape of the development creating focal points and positive elements in the public realm, including measures to enhance the proposed new footpaths along the southern and western Site boundaries.





- Permeable Paving
- Attenuation Storage
- Swale / Bio Retention

FIGURE 25 INDICATIVE DRAINAGE STRATEGY

## 14. Sustainability And Energy Efficiency

14.1 The proposals at Mains of Cowie offer many benefits in enhancing the housing available in Stonehaven from an energy efficiency perspective.

14.2 All Stewart Milne Homes are built using timber system methods of construction to maximise the carbon benefits of this construction type.

14.3 The development will meet the current buildings regulations which require significant enhancements to reductions in carbon emissions. The key factor is the way in which these requirements are met. The development will focus on the best practice approach of reducing the amount of energy required in the first place, rather than seeking to generate energy in a carbon efficient way on Site to supply the houses.

14.4 By this we mean that we have developed building forms which are efficient and therefore have efficient ratios of external wall, roof, floor and window areas, as this is a key aspect of heat loss.

14.5 The efficient and rational forms also allow a focus on the performance of walls, floors, roof and windows to optimise key factors including insulation values, air tightness and thermal bridging. This also limits junctions and simplifies detailing which contribute significantly to delivering optimum performance.

14.6 The layout also allows a balance of variety but consistency of housetype which allows significant investment in detailed assessment of the energy strategies for each house and testing as each is built to allow a focus on achieving zero defects. The rational street layout enables a strategy to be developed to respond to building orientation which is a key factor on such an exposed Site. This will allow consideration of issues such as potential for passive solar gain, prevailing winds and optimising benefit of natural light through positioning and size of windows.

14.7 The design allows for construction to involve a significant element of off-site manufacture which also helps with quality and therefore performance.

14.8 An added benefit is a focus on good quality fabric and details to reduce heat loss, complementary to enhanced acoustic performance, a significant benefit in exposed sites.

14.9 Having created an efficient building fabric, the strategy promotes use of efficient services. Efficient boilers, low energy lighting, low energy appliances and the like.

14.10 Overall, the energy efficiency strategy seeks to complement the wider masterplan strategies for sustainable living such as reducing car use by creating good pedestrian and cycle networks to link with existing amenities.

## 15. Phasing

15.1 Figure 26 provides an indicative phasing plan for development, based on the presumption of planning permission approval in 2021.

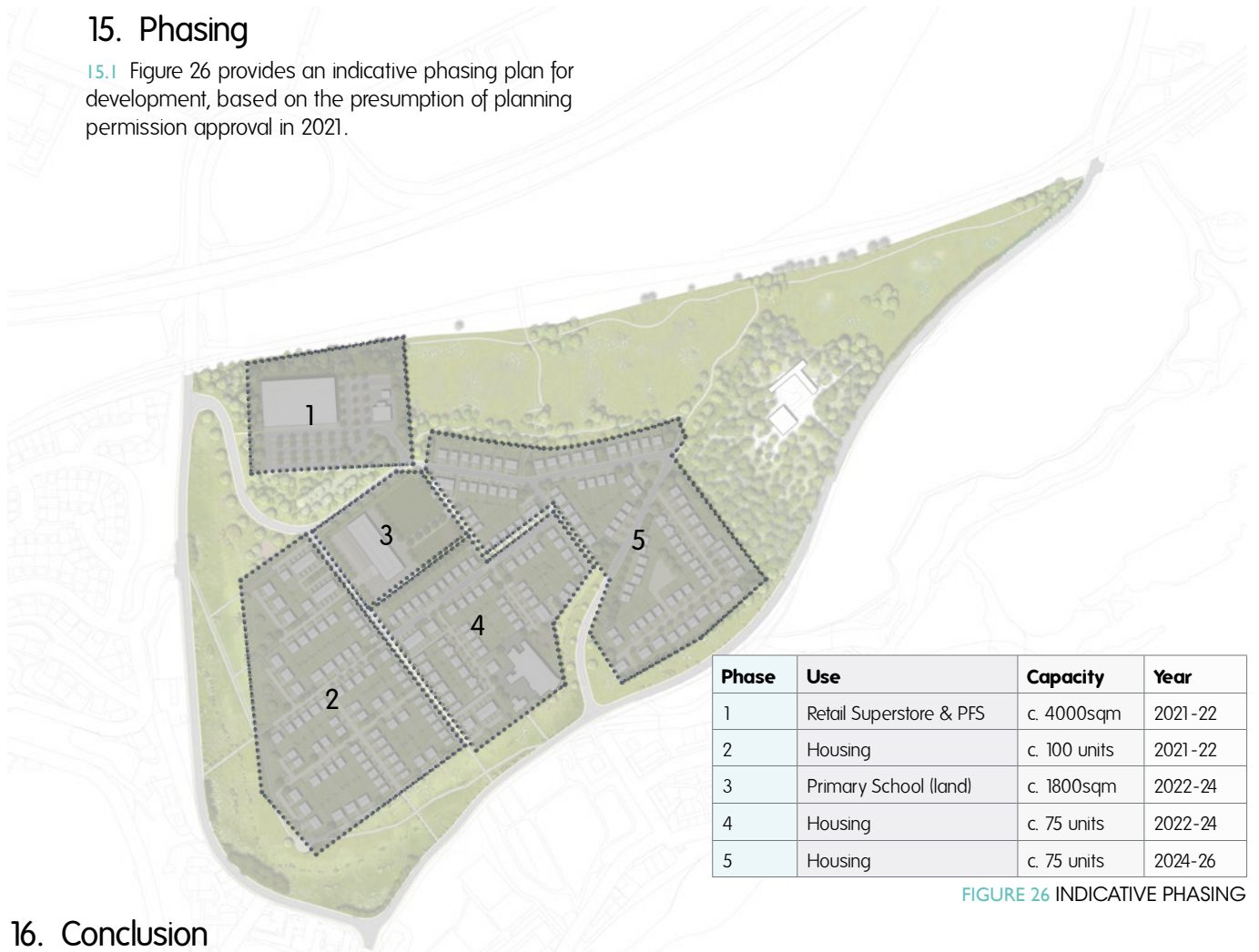


FIGURE 26 INDICATIVE PHASING

## 16. Conclusion

16.1 This representation clearly demonstrates that the Site can offer an appropriate, high quality mixed use development which could be successfully accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable effects upon the landscape setting, visual amenity, or character of the town.

16.2 The proposal will deliver much needed housing (including affordable), a primary school, a supermarket and community facilities, and is well placed approximately 200m south of the new grade separated junction which connects the Site with the A90 (AWPR). The Site's proximity ensures it is strategically placed to support sustainable economic development which is expected following the completion of the AWPR.

16.3 Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the masterplan has been informed by a strong landscape strategy and that a comprehensive and well-connected path network can be achieved. The accessibility times from the Site to local amenities and transport hubs are comparable with the Mains of Ury development to the north of the Site, while accessibility times to the town centre are approximately halved.

16.4 Accordingly, it is submitted that the Site will help to meet the objectives of the Stonehaven settlement strategy and should be allocated for residential development within the proposed LDP.



## Appendix 2

News articles regarding food retail demand

# Lidl bosses: We want to build new stores in Garthdee, Stonehaven, Mastrick and Westhill



Lidl has revealed plans for new stores in the north-east

Bosses at a major supermarket chain have revealed the locations of where they want to build new stores in the north-east.

Lidl is looking for new locations for stores and has revealed it has its eye on Garthdee, Mastrick – a relocation of the current store – Stonehaven and Westhill.

In a site requirements brochure, the supermarket giant wrote: “We’re looking for great quality locations for our new stores, to help us continue our phenomenal growth.

“Prominent locations with easy access and strong pedestrian or traffic flow.

“Freehold, leasehold or long leasehold opportunities.

“Unit sizes flexible on design and scale between 14,000sq ft and 25,500sq ft.

“1.5 acres plus for standalone stores or up to four acres for mixed-use schemes.”

Aberdeen makes up four of the 33 Scottish locations.

While the Mastrick branch is earmarked for relocation, no firm plans have yet been lodged.

A spokeswoman for Lidl GB said: “Our site requirements brochure is a document we normally send to land owners and commercial agents to help us find sites for possible stores.

“We are keen to offer our customers in the Mastrick area an improved shopping experience and therefore Mastrick is listed as an area of interest to us for relocation, however we don’t currently have anything firm in the pipeline.”

Last month, rival Aldi unveiled plans for a new supermarket on the outskirts of the city.

The discount retailer wants to build a new store on Countesswells Road, opposite the Robert Gordon’s College playing fields.

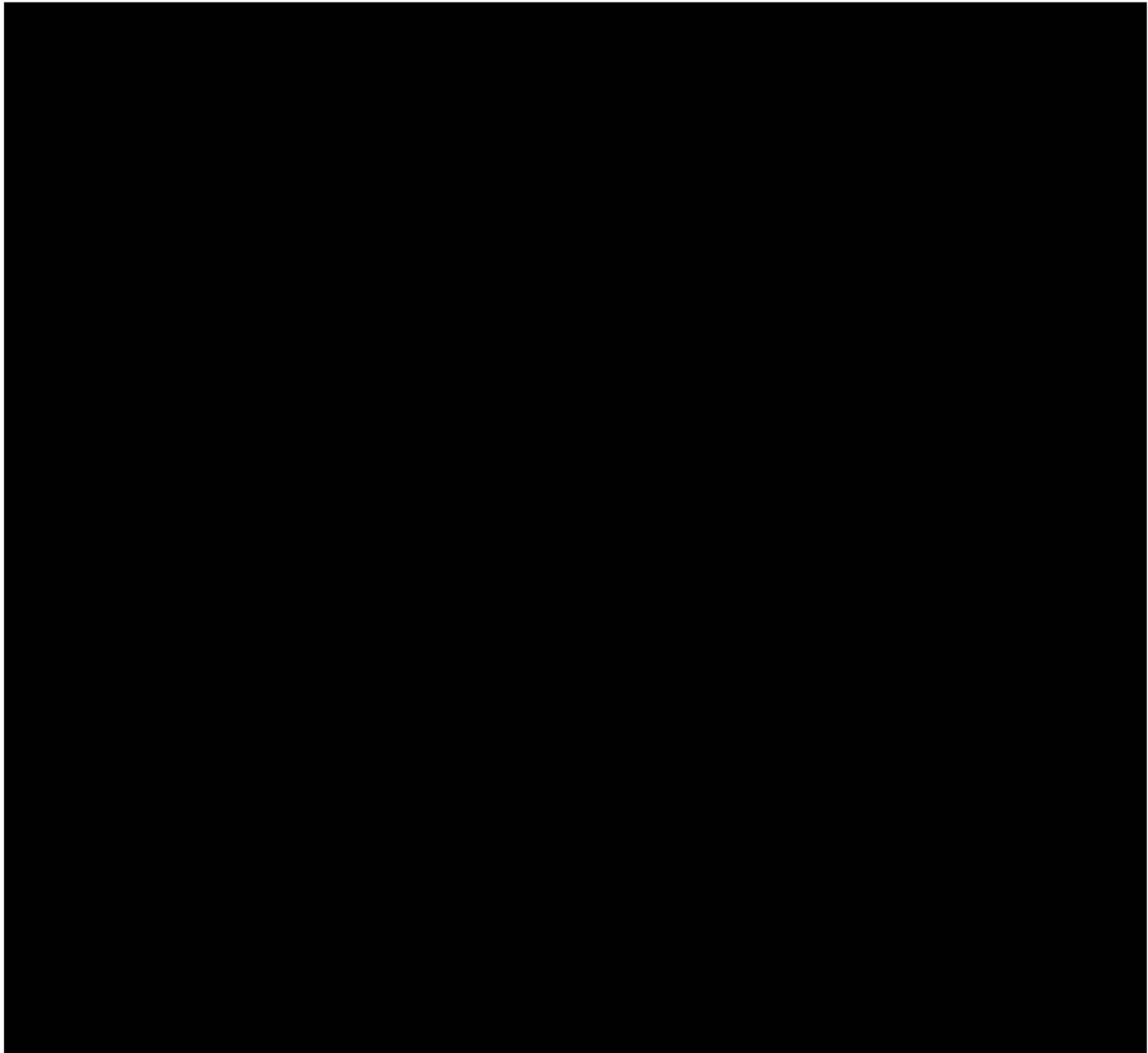
Currently it has two stores – one at the Beach Retail Park and the other at Cornhill.

No formal planning application has yet been submitted to Aberdeen City Council, but Aldi says it intends to do so.

In the meantime, it has called on members of the public to give their views on the proposals.

The plans include areas for a car park and landscaping, while paths would be constructed linking it with nearby housing developments.

Aldi says it wants to encourage customers to use active travel to get to and from the store. It hopes to open the new shop in 2022.





# Supermarket chain hopes to open four more stores in north-east



Aldi hopes to open four new stores in the north-east

A popular budget supermarket is planning to open four new stores in the north-east.

Aldi is looking for new store locations in the region, as part of an ongoing expansion drive.

It hopes to have 1,200 stores open across the UK by 2025, and has plans to open up more on 19 new locations in Scotland, including four in the north-east. This would bring its total number of supermarkets to 92.

There's plans for an additional store in the north of Aberdeen and one in the south of the city as well as new stores in Stonehaven and Fraserburgh.

Each site should be around 1.5 acres and be able to accommodate a 20,000 sq ft building with around 100 parking spaces, ideally on a prominent main road with good visibility and access.

Ciaran Aldridge, National Property Director at Aldi UK, said: "Aldi is growing rapidly and we are welcoming around a million new customers into our stores every year.

"But there are also hundreds of towns across the UK where there is not an Aldi, meaning there are hundreds of thousands of people who can't easily access the high quality, affordable food our customers love.

"We are willing to explore all opportunities, including developer-led schemes or existing retail units."

Aldi already has six supermarkets in the north-east, including in Aberdeen, Westhill, Inverurie, Peterhead and Ellon.

It will also open in Portlethen, and has plans in to create a new store at Countesswells as well.

Founded by the Albrecht family, the first Aldi store opened in 1961 in Germany. The business now employs more than 25,000 people at more 1,900 supermarkets across the world.

Most of the food on the shelves is sold under an exclusive brand and the business works with a wide range of local food growers, also selling organic fruit and vegetables.

The discount supermarket has become popular with shoppers over the years and the business has grown steadily across the UK.

