



TurnberryPlanning

Grandhome Development Framework

August 2013

The Grandhome Development Framework was first produced prior to the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. However the document remains valid, and the guidance derived from this still informs the City Council's decisions on such development in Aberdeen.

Any queries concerning the text of the document should be directed to Planning (01224 053 746 or pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk) for clarification.



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Figure i: The Grandhome masterplan

- Mixed-Use Buildings
- Office Buildings
- Single-Use Commercial
- Indicative Footprints
- Plots
- Schools
- Civic Buildings
- Existing Buildings
- Open Space
- SUDS
- Site Boundary



The Vision

The vision for Grandhome is the creation of a mixed-use urban extension of Aberdeen, adhering to the principles of place-making and responding to the traditional vernacular of the region.

The key parameters for the development are as follows:

- a total of 6,000 – 7,000 homes, of which 25% will be affordable;
- 5 hectares of employment land, including a technology park;
- seven neighbourhoods, each supported by shops and services;
- three primary schools incorporating sports pitches and community uses;
- a community campus, including an academy, library and sports centre;
- a health centre;
- a network of open spaces, connected to the wider area, including sports pitches, neighbourhood parks and habitat creation; and
- a vibrant high street to support the wider Bridge of Don area.

The vision is underpinned by six core principles:

1. Strong Sense of Place

Grandhome will have a strong Donside identity and character, rooted within the vernacular of northeast Scotland. Architecture will respond to the context and traditions of the area to remain compatible with the surrounding communities of the Bridge of Don.

2. Sustainable and Walkable Neighbourhoods

Grandhome's masterplan is made up of a series of neighbourhoods, each of which is designed so residents can access schools, shops, employment opportunities and community facilities within walking distance of their homes. By optimising the range of local facilities over time, residents will be less car dependent than other neighbourhoods, promoting a sustainable lifestyle.

3. A Well-balanced Mixed Community

Grandhome will aim to become a self-sustaining development, with housing, employment and community facilities integrated within each neighbourhood. Each neighbourhood will comprise a mix of different sizes and designs of homes at different price levels, including 25% affordable housing.

4. Green Spaces to Breathe

Grandhome will include an extensive green network, crossing the site from both north to south and east to west. Different green spaces will combine to provide a mix of formal recreation, walking areas and informal relaxation. The landscape plan also preserves key elements of the site in naturalistic, untamed areas, and creates safe corridors for local wildlife.

5. Well-Connected Streets

Grandhome is designed to follow the progressive principles of the Scottish Government's 'Designing Streets' policy. The various neighbourhood phases are designed to maximise connections using streets, promote walking and cycling, and combine together to make an attractive, traditional place.

6. A New Centre for the Bridge of Don

Grandhome will be sympathetically integrated into the surrounding community, and over time will provide a range of employment, retail and other local services including opportunities for new businesses of different sizes, strengthening the lifestyle and choices for local people.

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1. Introduction

This Development Framework forms part of the ongoing process to develop a new urban extension to Aberdeen, to cater for the city's anticipated growth over the next 10-20 years. As such, it sets out the key components of the new settlement of Grandhome and the approach to be adopted to ensure the successful development of 6,000 – 7,000 dwellings and associated uses such as offices, shops, parks, schools and community buildings. The new settlement is envisioned to be an exemplar sustainable development, and has been selected for inclusion in the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI).

The Framework provides the context within which future planning applications will be developed, and against which they will be assessed, as well as setting out how the design and consultation process has progressed to date and how it is likely to evolve.

In addition to this Development Framework, more detailed Masterplan Statements will be produced for each neighbourhood, or development phase. These Masterplans will set out in more detail how the vision in this document will be realised, confirming what uses the neighbourhoods will accommodate, how they will look, and how they will be delivered.

This document should not be read in isolation, but in the context of a wider suite of documents which have been developed throughout the consultation, planning and design development processes.

2. Site Analysis

2.1 Site Context

Grandhome is a 320ha greenfield site located 6km northwest of Aberdeen's city centre, adjacent to the Bridge of Don suburbs of Middleton Park and Danestone. The site is owned by the Grandhome Trust, a family-led entity, which has held the land for more than 400 years. The site represents one of the largest development opportunities to emerge in Aberdeen in recent years; it is situated within the Aberdeen to Peterhead economic corridor and complementary to the emerging Energetica initiative, and is also relatively close to important existing employment areas, including two specialist technology parks. The development of the site will also result in improved accessibility through related improvements to the road network serving the site, complemented by other strategic transport proposals such as the Third Don Crossing and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

This Framework considers the important role played by a small site on the south side of the Parkway, also owned by the Trust. Whilst this site falls outside the OP9 designation, its vital role in creating a pedestrian and cycle access linking the Danestone and Grandhome communities means this Framework considers the site in its broader context.

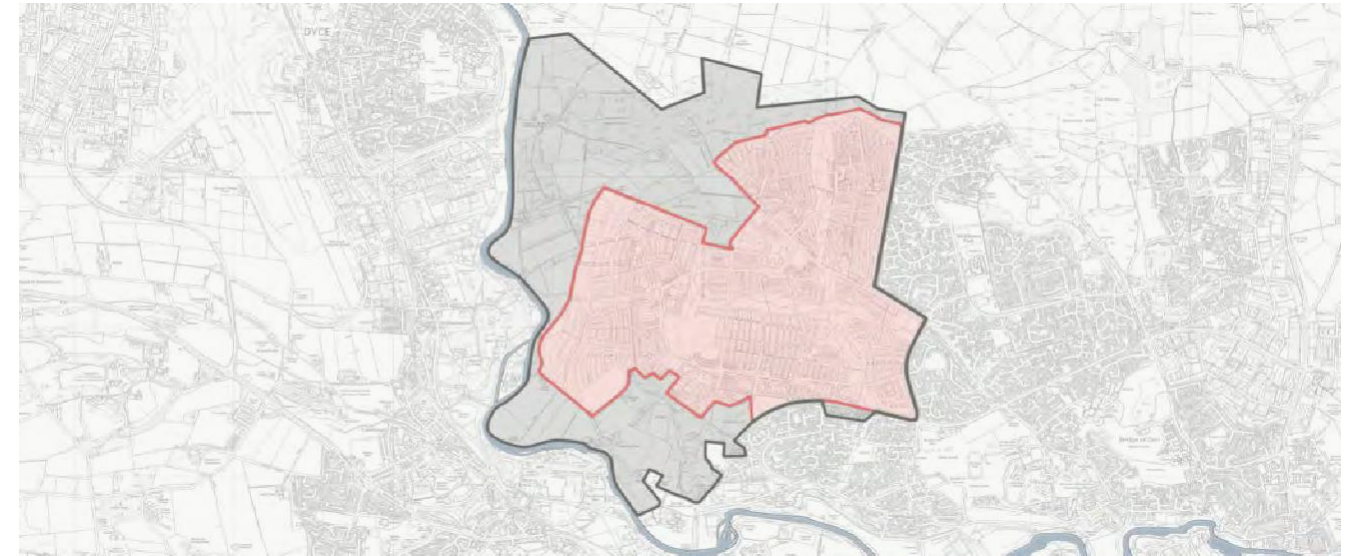


Figure 2.1 (right): The Grandhome LDP allocation, indicated within the larger site owned by the Grandhome Trust.



Figure 2.2: The Grandhome site, in regional context



Figure 2.3: Persley Quarry



Figure 2.4: The characteristic geometric field pattern with blocks of woodland planting on ridgelines



Figure 2.4: Gently undulating farmland and blocks of woodland planting



Figure 2.6: A row of pylons are a conspicuous feature in the south-east of the site

2.2 Site Description

The Grandhome site is located on the north-western fringe of the city and occupies a wedge of farmland lying between the built up areas of Bucksburn to the west and the Bridge of Don to the east and south. To the north, the site links to open, undeveloped farmland extending out over the Buchan Plateau.

To the east and south, the Grandhome site is bounded by the outer limits of Danestone and Middleton Park. These residential developments were built during the 1970s and 1980s and now have a combined population of around 22,000 residents. Within these adjacent neighbourhoods there is an assortment of community facilities including 4 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, local shops and supermarkets, doctor and dentists' surgeries, and sports facilities. However, pedestrian connections between these and the site are poor, primarily because the busy commuter routes

of Whitestripes Avenue and the Parkway (A90) act as significant barriers along the site boundary.

There are older, traditional residential communities with their own range of facilities to the west of Grandhome, but these are largely inaccessible from the site at present because of the lack of bridging points over the River Don.

The site itself is greenfield land, predominantly under agricultural use, with occasional woodland blocks, tree belts, and a number of farmsteads and dwellings. The site straddles Whitestripes Road, a secondary road that connects the Bridge of Don area to the B997 Scotstown Road, and is traversed by a high voltage power line running broadly north-south across the eastern part of the site.

Historically, development activity in the vicinity has been focussed to the west of the River Don and on the river itself which has served as an important natural resource for industries such as those at Stoneywood Mill, Davidson's Mill and Gordon's Mill.

2.3 Historic Context

An analysis of historic maps shows how Aberdeen's urban form has steadily grown outwards, particularly along and between arterial transport routes to the north-west and south-west. The development of Grandhome provides a natural extension to this existing pattern of growth.

The site has remained virtually unchanged in the past 250 years, having been maintained as primarily agricultural land, although granite and manganese quarrying also took place in locations on site. A review of historic maps charts the growth of industrial activity to the south and west of site which took advantage of the River Don's resources. The only noticeable changes within the site are the formations of field boundaries and development of road infrastructure. A small level of development has taken place on the site in the form of farm holdings and other buildings, most of which remain in situ today.

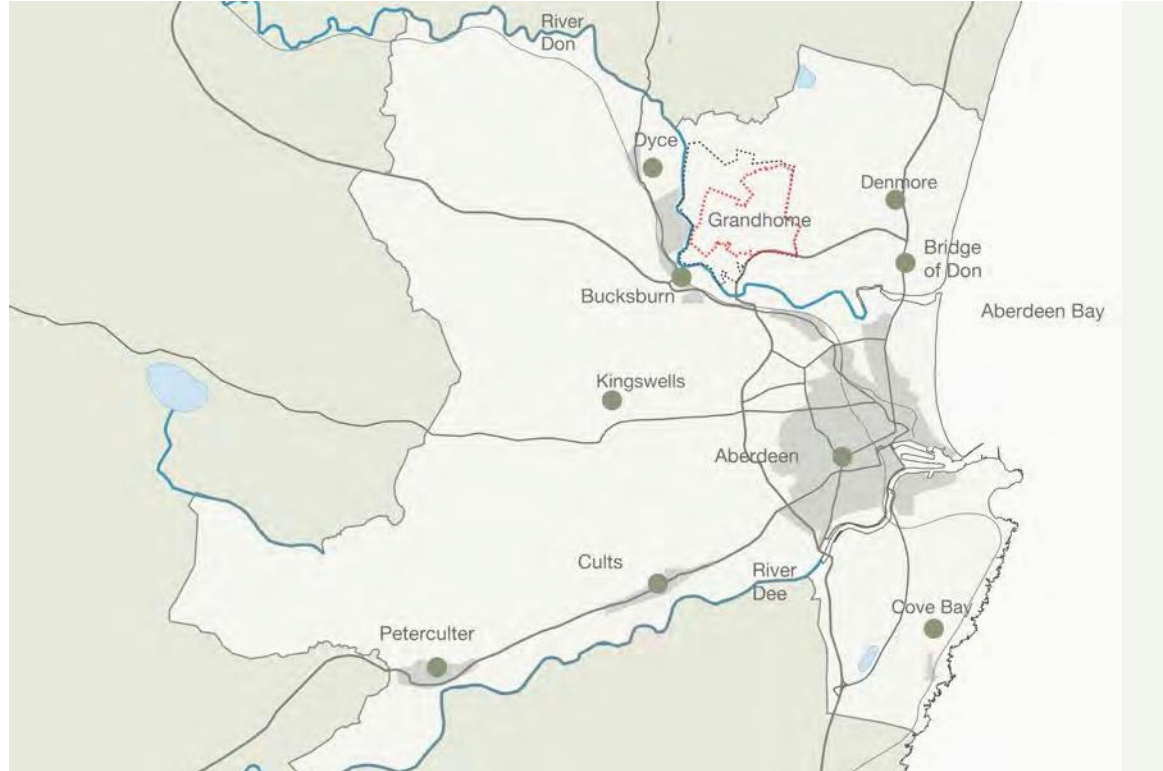


Figure 2.7: Aberdeen's built footprint in 1905.

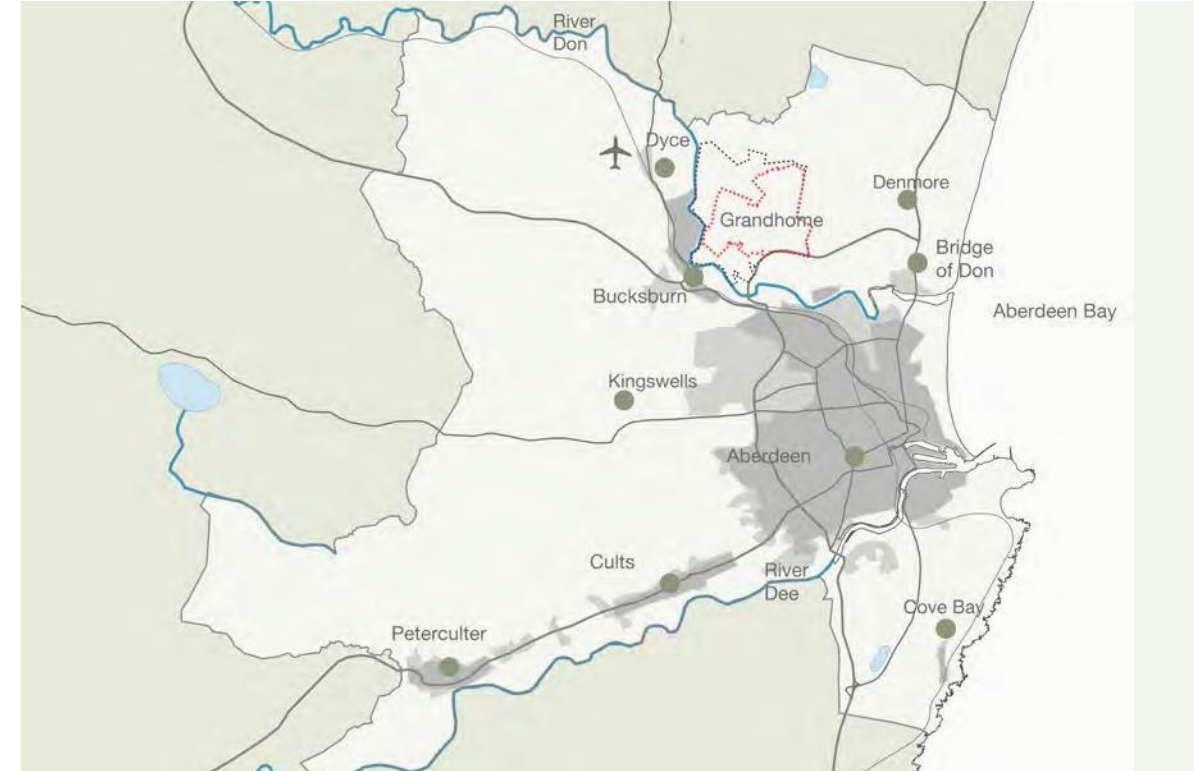


Figure 2.9: Aberdeen's built footprint in 1960.

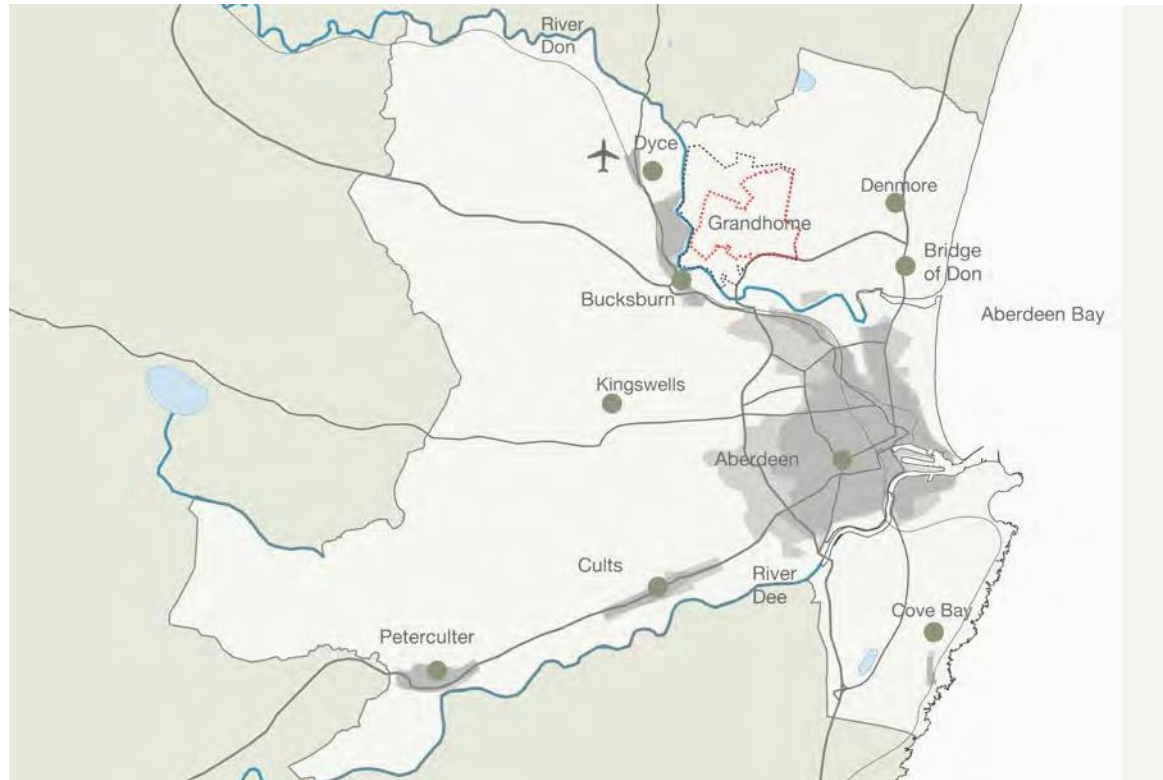


Figure 2.8: Aberdeen's built footprint in 1945.



Figure 2.10: Aberdeen's current built footprint.



Figure 2.11: The Grandhome site in 1905.



Figure 2.12: The Grandhome site in 1945.



Figure 2.13: The Grandhome site in 1960.



Figure 2.14: The Grandhome site today.

2.4 Planning Context

The spatial strategy set out in the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan designates Aberdeen City as one of three “strategic growth areas”. As such, the city is expected to accommodate at least half of the new housing and employment land likely to be required up to 2035, equating to 21,000 homes and 175ha of employment land within the plan period.

Aberdeen City Council adopted its Local Development Plan (LDP) which identifies proposals for the development and use of land until 2026 and contains the policies against which planning applications will be assessed. Grandhome is identified as an Opportunity Site (OP9) capable of accommodating 4,700 homes up to 2026, 5ha of employment land up to 2026, and a further 2,300 homes up to 2035 (see Table 1).

Site: OP9 Grandhome	Local Development Plan Period		Future Growth
	Existing to 2026	Phase 1: 2017 - 2026	Phase 2: 2027 - 2035
Housing	4,700 homes		2,300 homes
Affordable Housing	(1175 homes)		(575 homes)
Employment	5ha		

Table 1: Development at Bridge of Don and Grandhome, Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Consideration has been given to the Council’s various Supplementary Guidance and Planning Advice in the preparation of this Framework. These include:

- Energetica: *The six principles set out in the guidance overlap with the Vision of this Framework.*
- Gypsy and Traveller Sites: *The locational requirements of this guidance have influenced site selection.*
- Hierarchy of Centres: *Grandhome will be identified as a new Town Centre with supporting Neighbourhood Centres.*
- Resources for New Development: *The Sustainability Strategy to be brought forward in support of detailed planning applications will respond to this guidance.*
- Open Space: *The masterplan exceeds the requirements of the open space standards.*
- River Don Corridor Framework: *A key priority for the masterplan has been to engage into existing green networks and Core Paths.*

2.5 Site Assessment

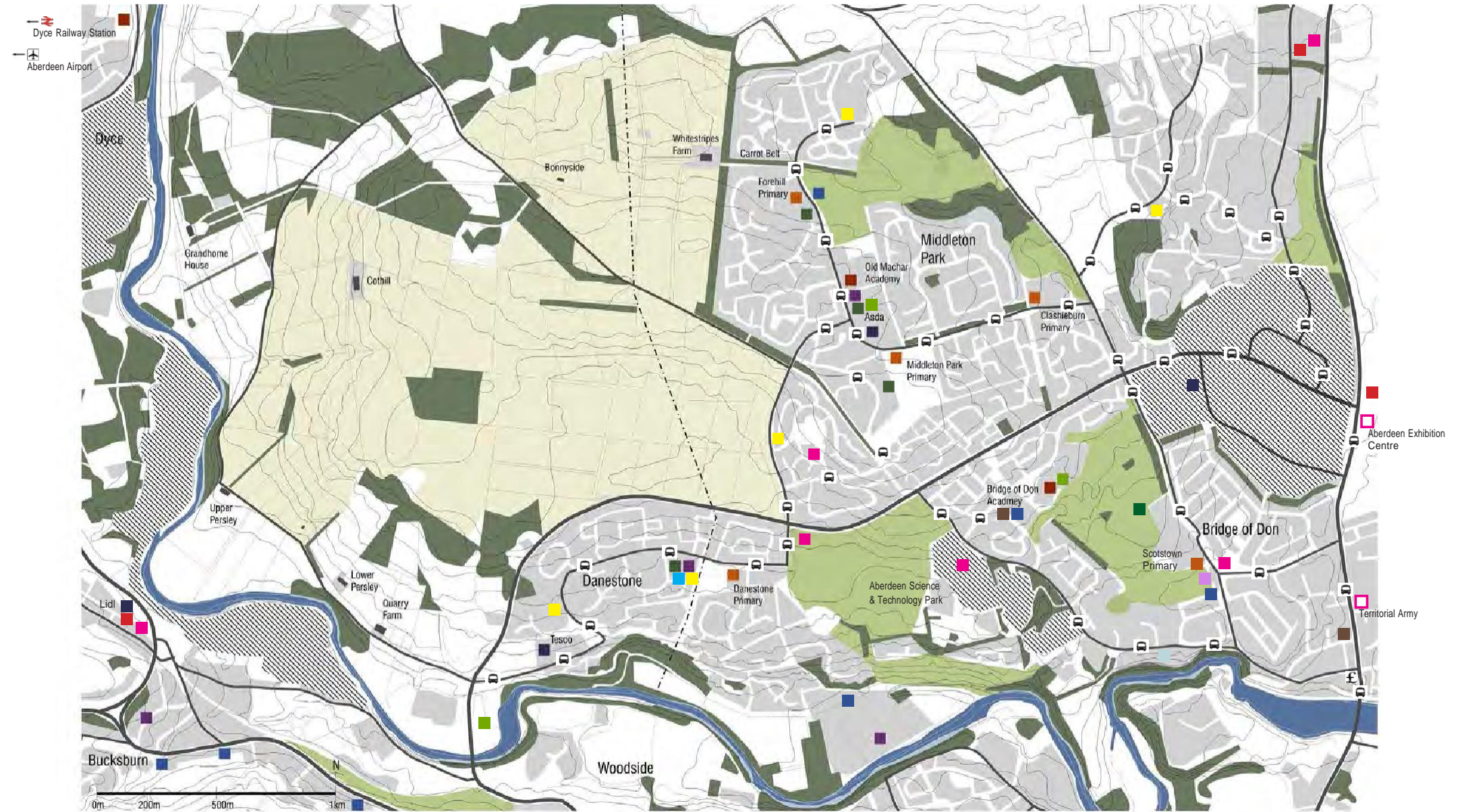
2.5.1 Regional and Local Amenities

The site is well located in terms of existing facilities and amenities. The Aberdeen Science and Technology Park and the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre are facilities of regional significance that lie within approximately 2km and 3km respectively of the site. Other amenities closer to the site include a range of shops, supermarkets, schools, sports centres, community buildings, pubs and restaurants, a post office, libraries and a police station, among others.

Key points:

- The site is well-located in terms of existing community facilities and employment locations, all of which will be taken into account in the proposed layout and phasing of the masterplan.
- Consideration will be given to how the town centre for Grandhome can benefit the wider Bridge of Don community.

Figure 2.16: Evaluation of existing local amenities



2.5.2 Paths and Cycleways

The existing Core Paths network (as identified by Aberdeen City Council [Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017]) comes close to the site in three locations - Whitestripes Farm, the corner of Whitestripes Road and Whitestripes Avenue, and near the Parkway/Whitestripes Avenue roundabout.

An existing path link runs through the site from the end of the Core Path at Whitestripes Farm westwards to Clerkhill Wood, then circles south via Cothill to Persley Quarry woods. This path continues beyond the site to connect to other established paths running east and west along the Don which have been identified by the Council as potential future Core Paths and part of the National Cycle Route.

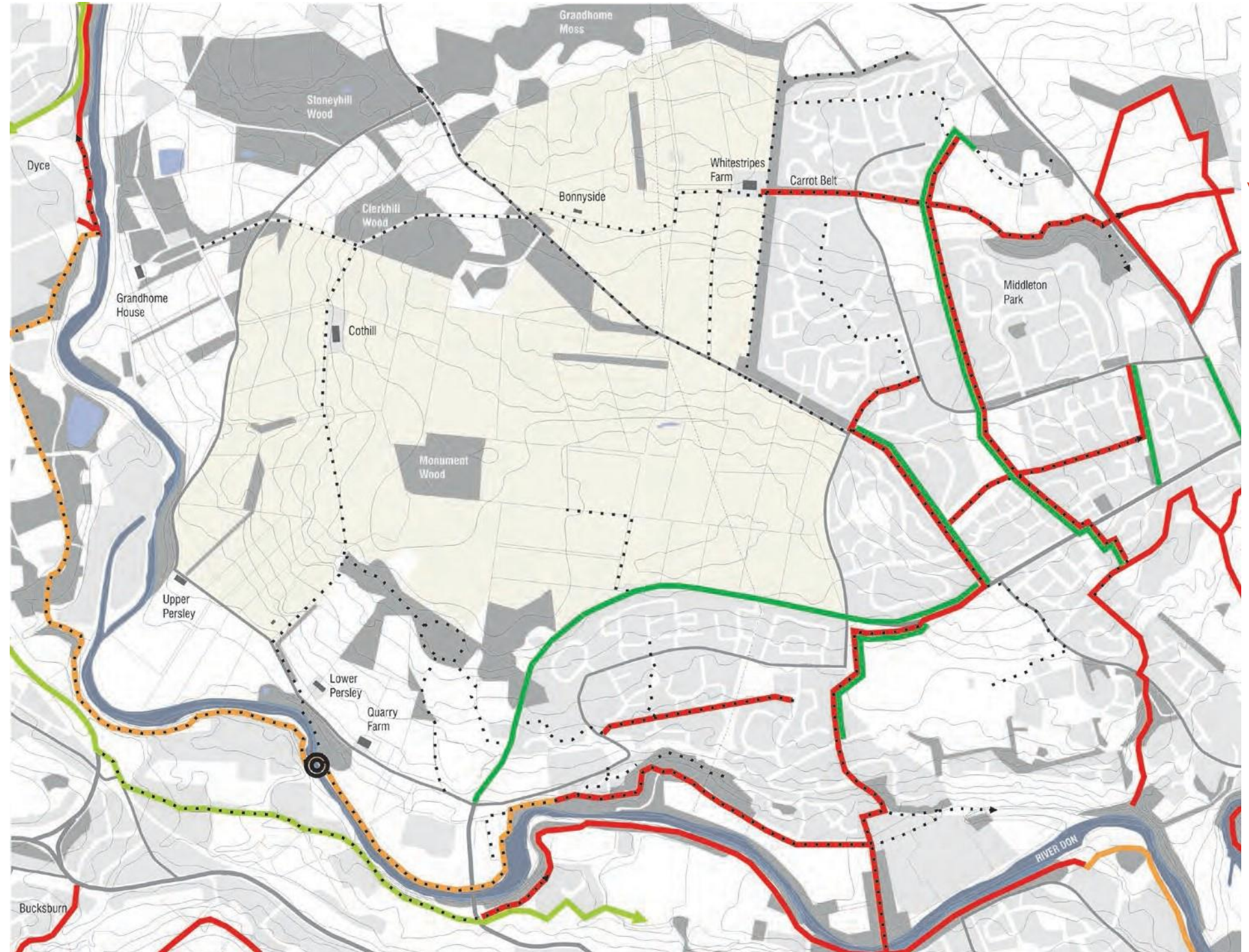
A future connection will be created in respect of the pedestrian and cycle bridge at Davidson's Mill with others potentially being created elsewhere within the Don corridor.

Key points:

- Although located on the periphery of Aberdeen, there are many opportunities to connect to the existing network of paths in the area.
- There is an opportunity for Grandhome to provide extensions and linkages to the existing Core Path.

Figure 2.17: Designated paths

- Paths* (ACC database 15/12/2009)
- Core Paths (ALDP 2017)
- Aspirational Core Paths (ALDP 2017)
- North Sea Cycle Route
- Local Cycle Route (ACC cycle paths maps)
- ⊙ Proposed new pedestrian/cycle bridge linking to Davidson's Mill development



2.5.3 Topography

The levels on the site range from approximately 30m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) close to the River Don to approximately 90m AOD at the highest point of the site, on Whitestripes Road. In broad terms, the land slopes west, south and north from that high point.


The site slopes most steeply in the western parts of the site, where it incorporates part of the east bank of the Don Valley.

To the east, the land forms a tilted bowl shape, with steep northern slopes but opening out to the east and south. At the end of the 19th century, a manganese quarry was cut into the north facing slope here, but it is now obsolete. It remains as an excavation filled with water and with various small heaps of spoil around its edge.

North of Whitestripes Road the land falls away becoming steeper towards to the site boundary. A small valley cuts into this slope running west from Whitestripes Farm, with a noticeable small ridge feature forming its northern slopes.

There are several areas within the site where slopes are steeper than 8%, normally the maximum gradient for adoptable roads. These areas are located on the western flanks of the site, on the steep northern slopes of the bowl shaped land to the east, and in several localised areas north of Whitestripes Road.

Figure 2.18: The topography plan provides an indication of ground levels and highlights areas with slopes steeper than 8%

 Areas with slopes steeper than 8%

Key points:

- The site has a varied topography which subdivides the site into defined character areas.
- The varied landform provides interest which should be exploited in the masterplan.
- There are several areas where steep gradients will constrain access and/or development.
- The higher parts of the site can be seen from elsewhere in the city.



2.5.4 Views and visibility

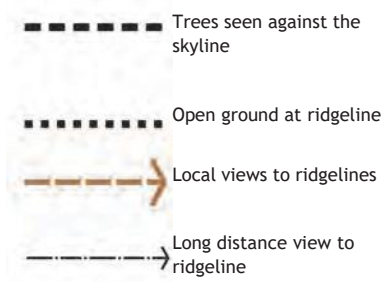
A formal, technical assessment of the visibility of the development is being carried out as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Study in the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) for Grandhome. In broad terms however, the issues relating to views and visibility can be summarised as follows:

Inward-looking views

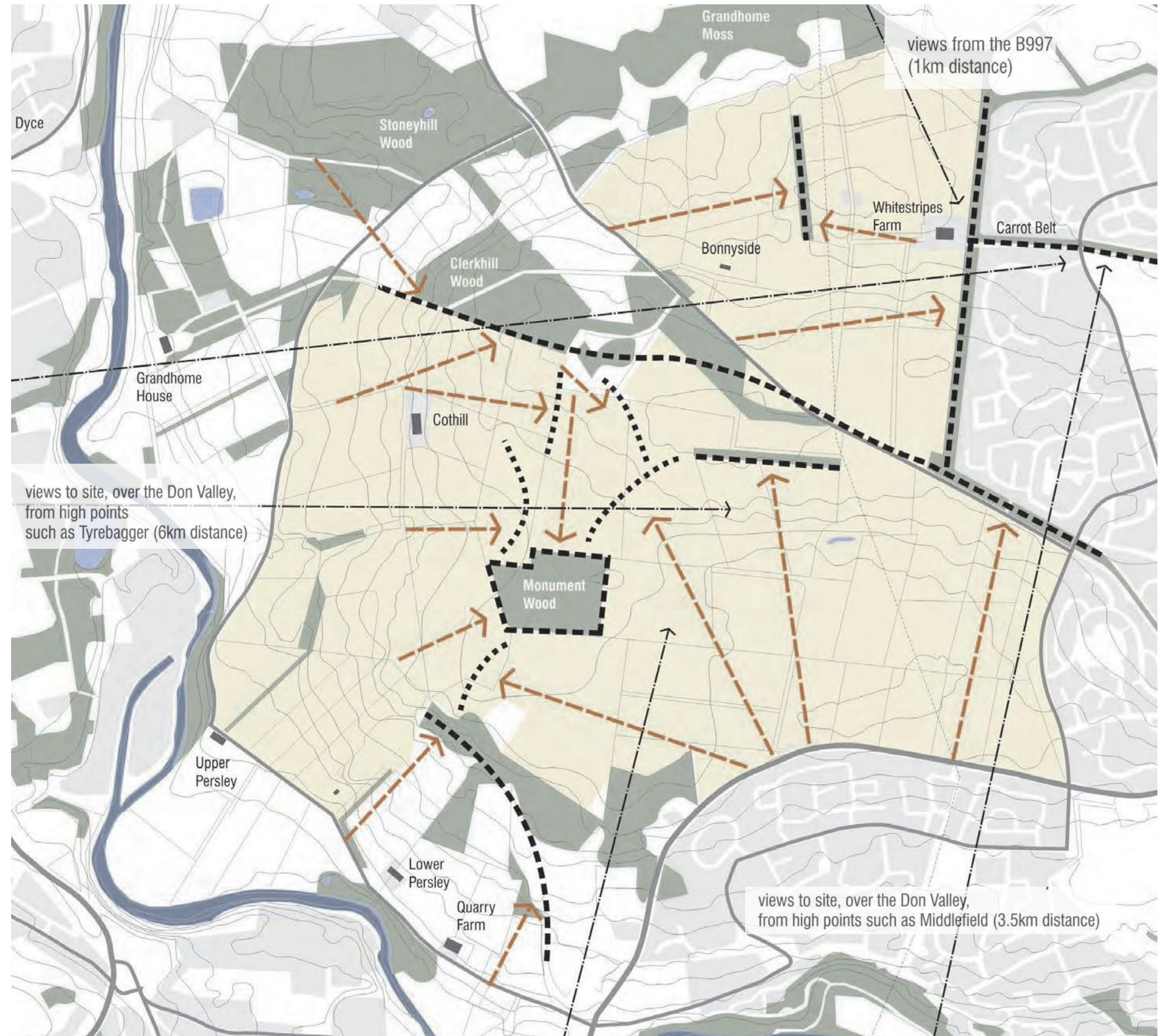
Much of the site is relatively visually discreet but the highest parts of the site can be glimpsed from various points around the city, especially from other high points above the Dee and Don valleys. Specifically, trees lining Whitestripes Road form a noticeable silhouette on the skyline in views to the site from areas of high ground on the south and west margins of the city. This includes, for example, brief glimpses of the site in the distance in views from the A96/ Inverurie approach at Tyrebagger, and from the A90 at Kincorth.

More locally, topography, low planting and trees screen many views into the site, so that views into the northern and western parts of the site, especially, are partial and sporadic. The most open, and consequently most visible part of the site is the farmland immediately north of the Parkway, where it is widely overlooked from roads on three sides: the A90, Whitestripes Avenue, and Whitestripes Road. For many of the houses in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the site, intervening topography, planting or development obscures views to the proposed new development; from further afield at Middlefield and Cummings Park for example, the development will be glimpsed on the hillside in the distance.

Figure 2.19: Inward looking views



- 1 Least Visible:**
few residents or motorists overlook the site
- 2 Moderately Visible:**
some local residents and motorists have views to the site; views often partial or glimpsed
- 3 Most Visible:**
Many residents and motorists have uninterrupted views to this part of the site from both local area and up to 6km away



Outward-looking views

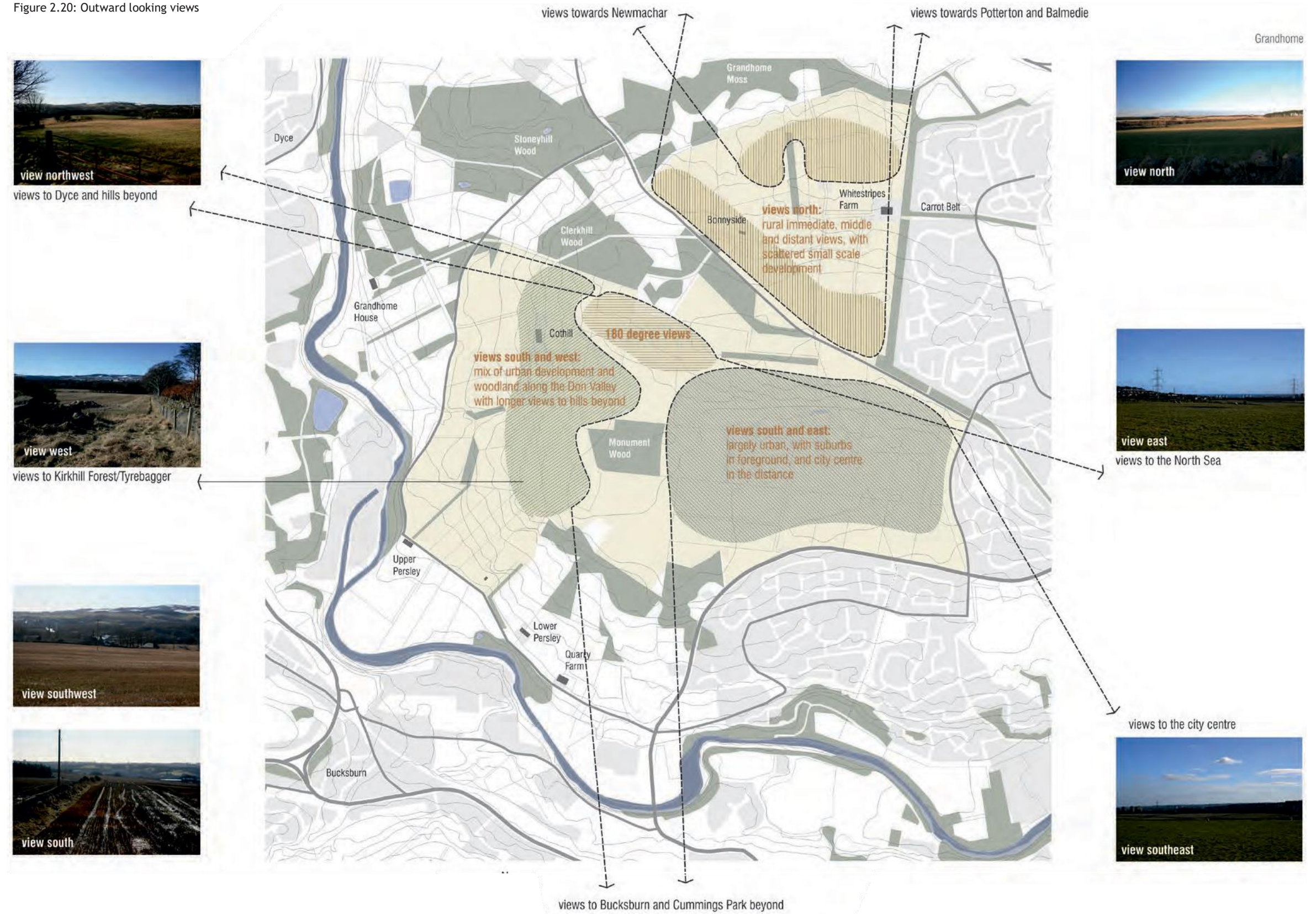
When looking outwards from the site, there are many attractive, open outlooks. To the west are long views out to hills in the distance, with a mix of urban development and wooded slopes along the Don valley in the foreground. To the south and east there are views to the suburbs and the built up city centre, but this urban view is offset by a backdrop of expansive open skies and the North Sea beyond.

From the part of the site north of Whitestripes Road the views are limited by trees to the east and west, but open to the north. These views are pleasant and rural, looking over a plateau of farmland spreading out to the horizon that is dotted with small farms and occasionally interrupted by strips of mature trees.

Key points:

- Trees form the most visible parts of the site and can be seen from various points around the city.
- The site is naturally screened from local vantage points, with the most visual impact likely to result from development of the easternmost part of the site, on land north of the Parkway.
- The proposed development will benefit from attractive outlooks to the sea, city and countryside in the distance.

Figure 2.20: Outward looking views



2.5.5 Aspect and shelter

The west-facing slopes of the Don Valley get useful afternoon sun and have the advantage of being protected from northerly winds. Extensive woodland planting in the valley provides further shelter, especially on the lower slopes of the valley.

The south and east-facing parts of the site are also pleasantly sunny but lack shelter planting and are open and exposed to cool onshore winds.

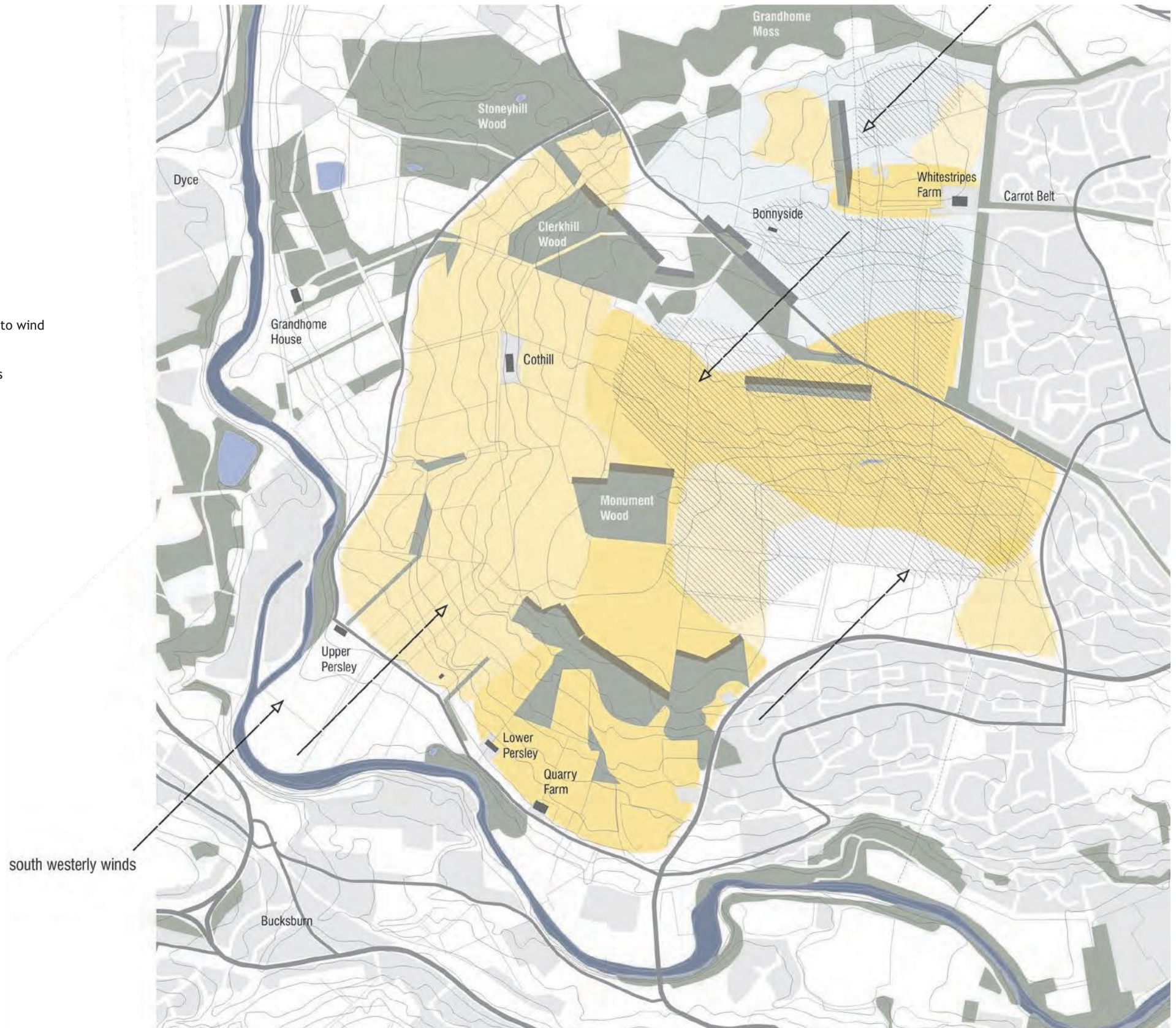
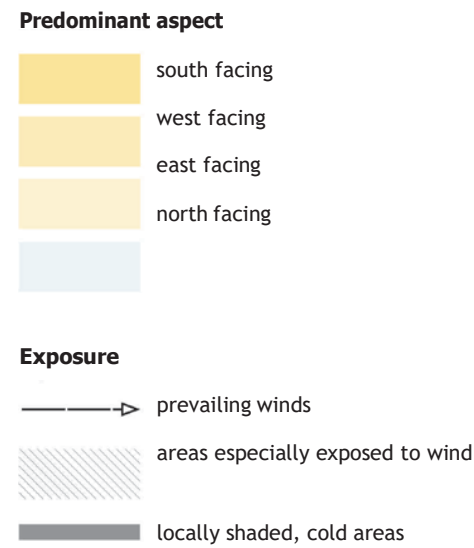
The northern parts of the site are exposed to northerly winds but the 'Carrot Belt' shelter planting along the east boundary helps to ameliorate the microclimate here. Having predominantly a north-facing aspect, this area gets less direct sunshine than more southerly parts of the site.

Woodland blocks and tree belts throughout the site provide localised areas of shelter but also cast shadow which can create cold frost pockets, especially on the north side.

Key points:

- The masterplan can be configured to exploit the effects of natural insolation and maximise shelter.
- The west facing areas of the site receive the most sun exposure, with north and east facing areas subject to cool onshore winds.
- Consideration should be given to shadows cast by woodland blocks and tree belts.

Figure 2.21: Aspect and shelter



2.5.6 Hydrology

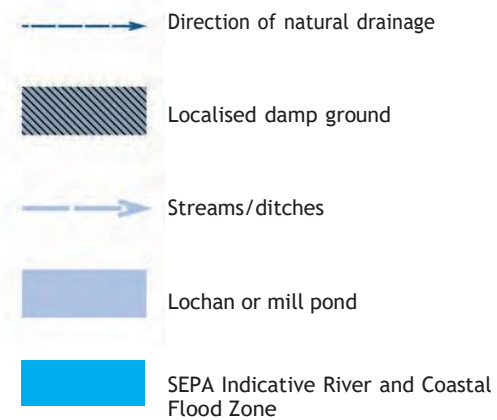
Whilst the River Don is prone to flooding, the entire Grandhome site falls outwith the SEPA Indicative River and Coastal Flood Risk zone which is focused immediately south of the site along the River Don.

Within the site boundary, the highest land, on Whitestripes Road, forms a watershed from which water drains to the north, south and west. Specifically, the site drains towards four low lying areas: towards the River Don to the west of the site, to an area of low lying ground in the bottom of the bowl shaped landform north of the Parkway, to the small valley running west from Whitestripes Farm and to Grandhome Moss beyond the north boundary of the site.

The site is generally well drained, especially where there is sufficient gradient. There are, however, some small wet patches where agricultural drainage has failed, most notably in the low lying area south of the manganese quarry.

There are few permanent water bodies, only two small streams running down the western part of the site to the River Don, plus ditches and the flooded manganese quarry in the eastern part of the site. The Council stipulate that natural buffer strips must be included when incorporating water bodies into developments. These should be a minimum of 3m either side of ditches and 6-20m along watercourses and around water bodies [Aberdeen LDP 2017, Policy NE 8 Natural Heritage; Natural Heritage Supplementary Guidance].

Figure 2.22: Hydrology



Any potential negative impacts on the River Don will be mitigated and ways to improve the ecological status of water bodies will be explored.

Key points:

- The site is generally well drained with some localised areas where agricultural drainage has failed.
- A number of water bodies are located on site which will require natural buffer strips but can be integrated with the development layout.
- The site is outwith the SEPA Coastal and River Flood Risk zone.





2.5.7 Landscape elements, scale and character

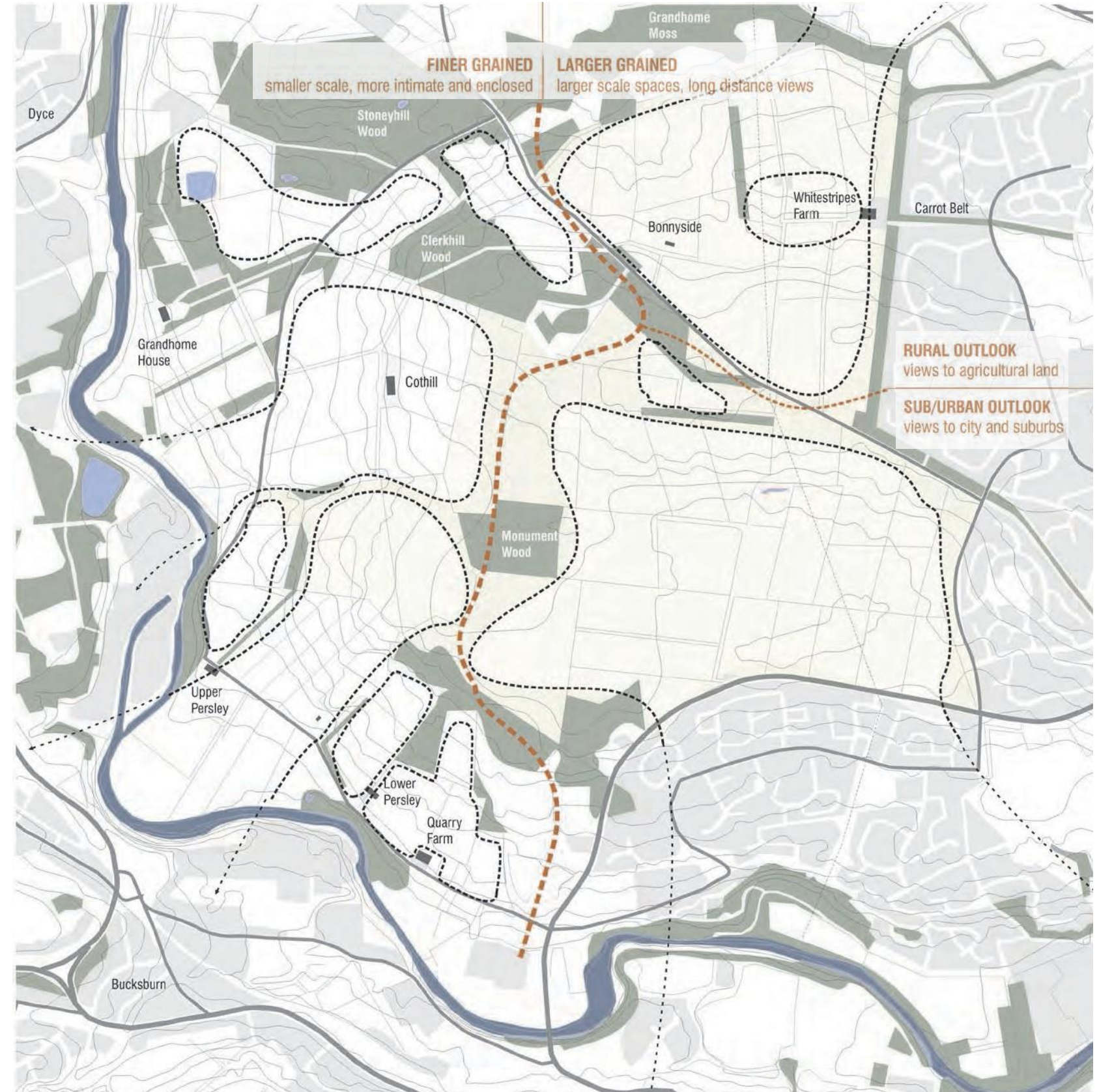
Taken as a whole, the nature of the site is distinctly rural and agricultural. The land is subdivided into an orthogonal pattern of fields enclosed by drystone dykes and fences with lines of shelterbelt planting along main roads or field boundaries, and occasional, irregularly shaped blocks of mixed woodland. Trees on ridgelines are often seen against the sky and form attractive, feathered silhouettes. Robust granite houses and clusters of farm buildings are scattered in the landscape, usually accompanied by a group of trees planted to provide shelter.

The site is not homogeneous in terms of character though, forming several distinct character zones, each with a different landscape quality and scale. At the most general level, the site divides into two main character zones; to the west of Monument Woodland on the slopes leading down to the River Don the landscape is more wooded than elsewhere on the site, with smaller, enclosed spaces and a more intimate scale. To the east the land is more open, spaces are larger, views broader, and the outlook generally much more urban in character.

The eastern half of the site further subdivides into two secondary character areas either side of the tree lined Whitestripes Road. North of this, the character is heavily influenced by long views north over a rolling mosaic of fields with large open skies above.

Figure 2.23: Landscape Character Areas

-  Enclosed Landscape Space
-  Landscape Space not enclosed



Looking east there are glimpses through the Carrot Belt shelterbelt to suburban housing, while to the west, plantation trees contain and close off longer views. Just west of Whitestripes Farm, a small valley and ridge with a pair of cottages and a stone roundel form an attractive composition within the otherwise open landscape. The overhead power line and towers that cut north-south across this part of the site add an industrial feature that is at odds with the otherwise rural character.

South of Whitestripes Road but east of Monument Wood the site is even more affected by the surrounding urban context, with its character being influenced by the city and suburbs that dominate views to the west, south and east. The power line cutting across the site here adds further to the 'urban fringe' character.

Key points:

- The site is made up of areas with distinct characters that will influence the design, density and layout of different neighbourhoods.
- Typical landscape elements such as stone walls, woodland blocks and tree belts will be retained within the scheme; interpretations of traditional features will be used in new landscapes within the development.

Figure 2.24: Landscape Character Elements

- 1. Surface Patterns**
agricultural processes leave distinctive patterns on the land
- 2. Mature Trees**
very tall beech and Scot's Pine, that are larger than human scale
- 3. Woodland**
multi-layered, diverse, naturalistic, woodland blocks
- 4. Walls**
traditional drystone dykes using stone from adjacent fields
- 5. Sky**
expansive open skies, often with long distance views
- 6. Routes**
paths and roads reinforced with walls, earth banks, avenue planting
- 7. Buildings**
scattered, robust, simple buildings in local granite
- 8. Sound**
wind in mature trees; traffic noises in the Don Valley; air traffic overhead
- 9. Colour**
yellow, green, blue, copper, grey
- 10. Pylons**
large scale engineered structures cut across the landscape
- 11. Long Distance Views**
views connect the site to the city, the rural hinterland and the North Sea



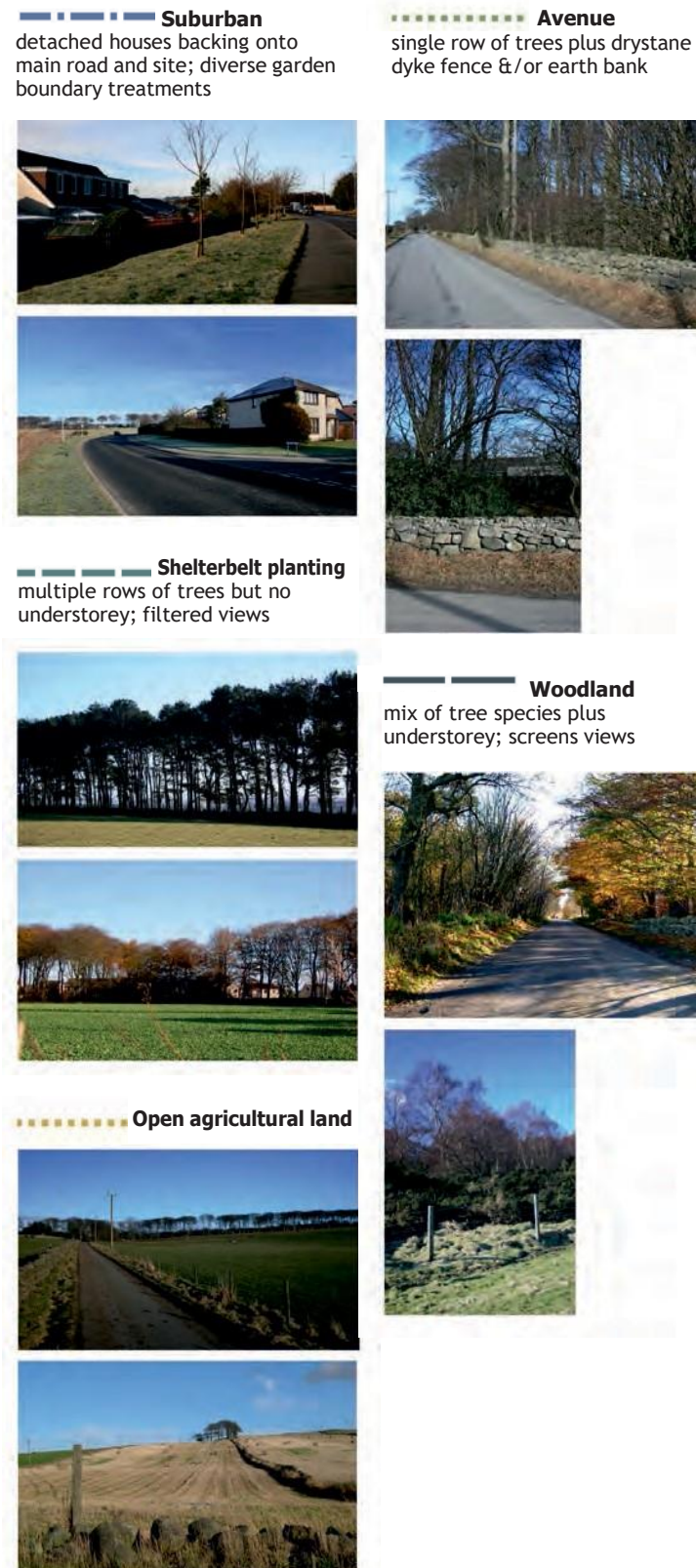
2.5.8 Edges and boundaries

A geometric network of field boundaries subdivides the site. The boundaries are marked with dykes constructed out of fieldstone and stock proof fencing, sometimes combined with belts of trees. The stone dykes make a significant contribution to the character of the site, providing references to the way the land has traditionally been worked and giving it local distinctiveness. These will be retained wherever possible, reconditioned where necessary, and integrated with the masterplan layout.

Key points:

- Traditional boundary treatments are central to the sense of place at Grandhome and will be developed as integral features of the new development.

Figure 2.25: Edges and boundaries



2.5.9 Tree quality

A full tree survey was carried out by a qualified arboriculturist in January 2012 and the findings are summarised as follows:

There are three areas within the site boundary that are protected by policy and designated ‘Ancient Woodland Inventory - Long Established Woodland (of plantation origin)’:

- part of Monument Wood, located in the centre of the southern part of the site
- a strip of land south of the Whitestripes Road
- the Carrot Belt and adjoining shelterbelt planting along Whitestripes Road

There are two other areas designated as ‘Ancient Woodland’ outside of but near the site boundary:

- Clerkhill Wood on the north boundary
- Persley Quarry woods to the immediate south of the site

An area protected by a Tree Preservation Order also lies near the site, just north of, and contiguous with, Persley Quarry wood. The trees within the site are of variable condition but all contribute usefully to some degree to both biodiversity and visual amenity. The presumption will be to retain and enhance current areas of tree planting.

Most of the trees on the site, regardless of their condition, are seen as ‘valuable’ and worth retaining in current form, for visual reasons, because they frame dwellings, form attractive silhouettes on skylines/ridges, line key routes or otherwise usefully subdivide the landscape. A few specimens and areas are of a poorer quality and may benefit from being replaced or having enhancement woodland management practices carried out.

Scottish Government policy concerning woodlands shall apply. The policy requires compensatory planting, to mitigate permanent woodland loss through economic development. Compensatory planting of at least the same area lost to development should be made a condition any planning approval.

Key points:

- It will be necessary to implement a tailored management and replanting plan to protect existing good quality trees and woodlands and improve those in poor condition.
- Special consideration should be given to protecting and enhancing Monument Wood.
- The process of developing the Grandhome site must have a net positive impact on adjoining protected or valuable habitats.

Figure 2.26: Initial evaluation of tree quality and condition (subject to more detailed evaluation during design phase)



2.5.10 Ecology + Green Space Network

An initial ecological appraisal for the Grandhome site has been undertaken in support of development and identifies that the closest areas of interest to the site are Corby, Lily and Bishop's Lochs Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are 1.9km to the north. Three Local Nature Conservation Sites are also adjacent to the site; Stoneyhill Wood, Grandhome Moss and the River Don Corridor. While the site itself does not include any statutory wildlife sites it does adjoin or contain three former District Wildlife Sites, namely Persley Quarry, Clerkhill Wood and Monument Wood. Although these sites are no longer designated, they are still offered a level of protection through the Green Space Network (GSN) policy.

Ecological surveys undertaken have included:

- Phase 1 habitat survey
- Badger sett and territory mapping
- Otter and water vole survey
- Great crested newt survey
- Breeding and wintering bird survey
- Bat activity (whole site) and emergence surveys of buildings in Phase 1 area
- Red squirrel survey

No ecological constraints or significant features were identified.

Outside of the wooded areas, most of the site is intensively farmed land and generally of no more than local habitat value with low biodiversity interest.

In response to the appraisal and in support of policy NE8 Natural Heritage the masterplan aims to enhance biodiversity by introducing landscape links between the area's more important sites and conservation features to create

Figure 2.27: The plan highlights the green space network and areas within and around the site of ecological value

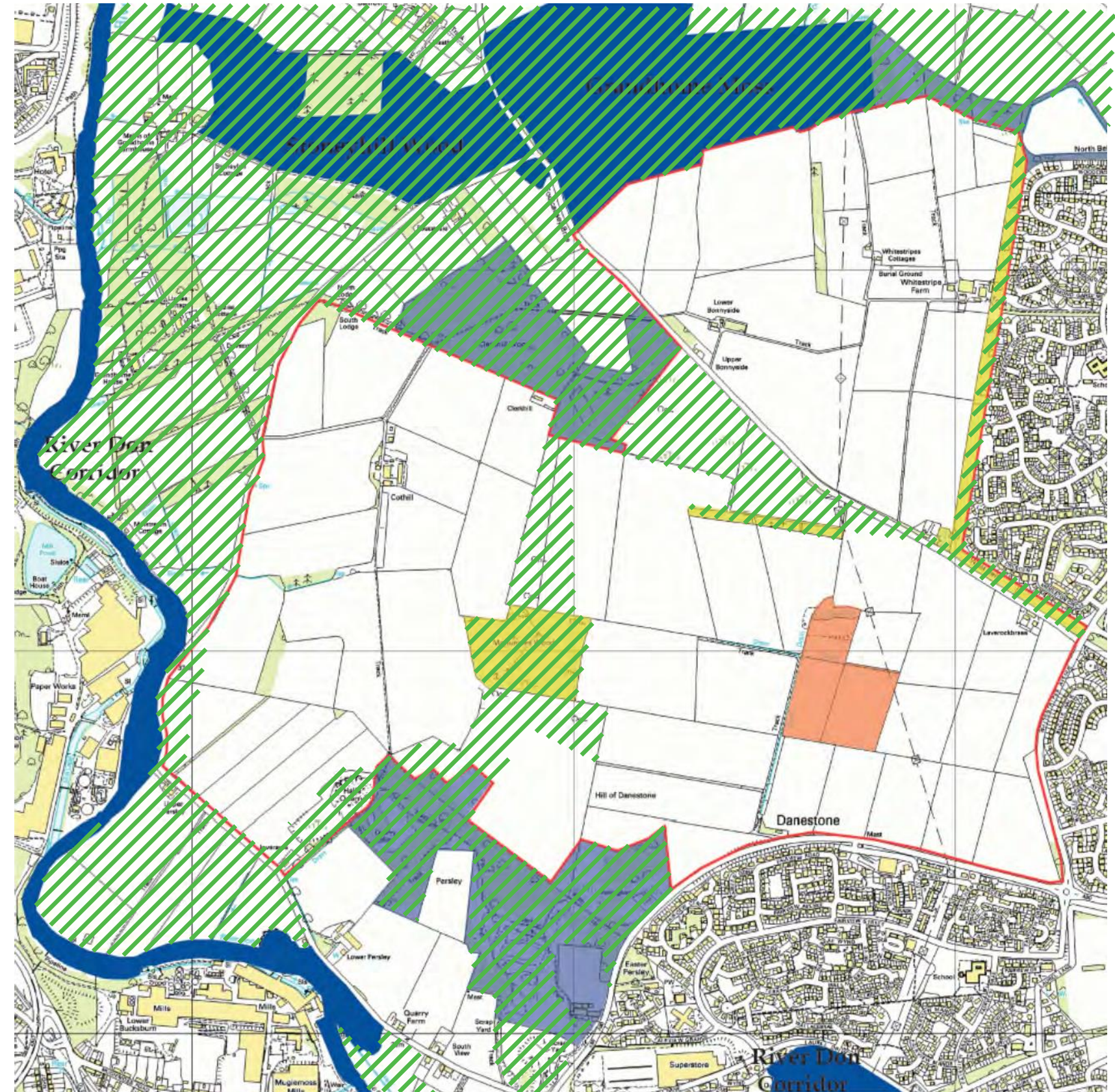


a connected network of green spaces running from the settlement's centre to the Green Belt. The proposed network will meet the objectives of the Council's GSN policy and potentially expand on it.

Further ecology surveys will be undertaken as masterplans come forward.

Key points:

- The masterplan will seek to preserve and enhance green spaces of ecological value.
- The proposed landscape network that is integral to the masterplan will meet or improve on the Council's GSN strategy.



2.5.11 Archaeology

A small number of cultural heritage assets have been identified within the site and the surrounding area ranging from low/negligible sensitivity to high sensitivity. The majority of assets within the site are categorised as low/negligible sensitivity and are located mainly across its northern, western and southwestern parts. Only one designated asset lies within the site: Grandhome South Lodge (number 7 on the plan show opposite), which is Grade B listed and is categorised as regional importance.

Two other features are located within the site and include Whitestripes Burial Ground and the crop mark of a possible henge (numbers 17 and 18 respectively), both of which are located in the vicinity of Whitestripes Farm. Two further features, both possible enclosures, are of unknown sensitivity.

A known feature of high sensitivity in terms of national and international importance is Foucausie hut circle (number 9), a scheduled ancient monument, located outside the development boundary, in Clerkhill Wood.

There are numerous other notable structures in the surrounding area, including Grandhome House and scheduled monuments associated with the former Aberdeenshire Canal.

The potential impact of the Grandhome development on all of the monuments and sites listed above, including their setting, have

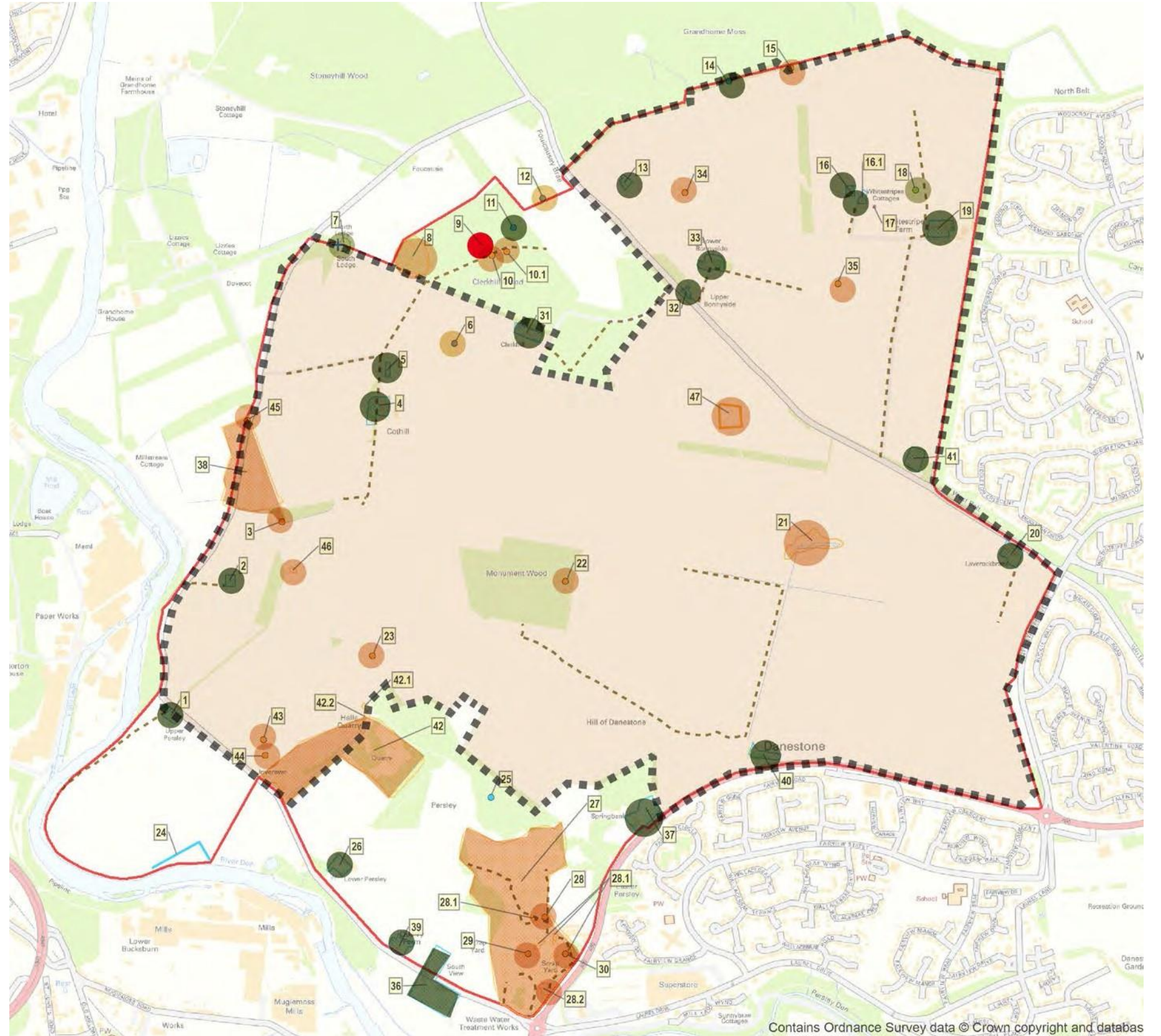
Figure 2.28: The plan identifies areas and sites of archaeological interest which are categorised in terms of their sensitivity to development.



been considered during the evolution of the Framework. These will be reviewed in more detail in the relevant Masterplans for those areas, as well as the forthcoming Environmental Impact Assessment, which will also consider potential unknown features.

Key points:

- No assets of national or international importance are located within the site.
- Two sites of regional importance have been identified which will be incorporated sensitively within the development.



2.5.12 Ground Conditions + Land Contamination

Two areas of ground disturbance and potential contamination risk have been identified within the site; a landfill occupying a former quarry (known as Hall's quarry) near Persley, and an area of Made Ground close to Whitestripes Road.

Initial investigations have found that there is no significant contamination or gassing identified at Hall's quarry. Further investigation work will be undertaken to verify any contamination risk associated with these areas and to confirm what, if any, constraint they may pose to development.

The site has been classed by the Soil Survey of Scotland Land Capability for Agriculture (LCA) map as predominantly Class 3 Division 2, i.e. land capable of supporting mixed agriculture, with soil and wetness limitations. In addition, the most steeply sloping parts of the site are defined as Class 4.2, i.e. land capable of producing a narrow range of crops. While it is possible that some better quality land may be included within the site, these areas may be too isolated for practical farming to a consistently high standard. It is considered very unlikely that land of prime quality is present on the site.

Key points:

- Two areas of ground disturbance and potential contamination risk have been identified.
- Initial investigations show there is no significant risk in either location (subject to a more detailed site investigation).
- The site is predominantly Class 3 Division 2 agricultural land and with little evidence of prime quality land.

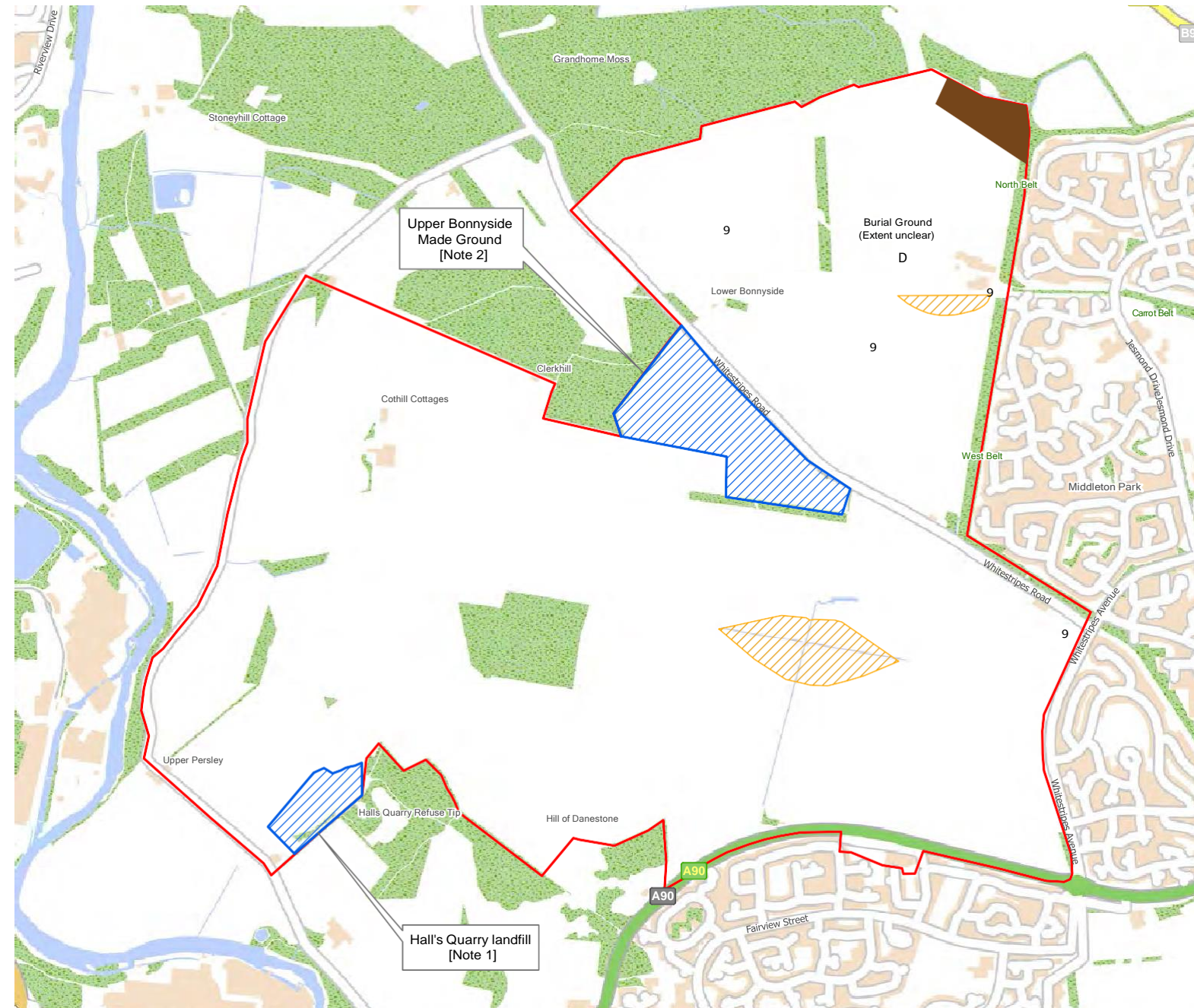


Figure 2.29: Ground conditions and Contamination Assessment Plan

- Site Boundary
- Known Made Ground
- Possible soft Clays & Silts (Approximate areas)
- Peat (Approximate area)
- 9 Well

2.5.13 Overall Environmental Constraints

A summary of key environmental constraints is outlined below. Further analysis of these constraints will be undertaken where necessary to inform the design and phasing of the development.

Natural topography and drainage: taking a light-handed approach to grading on the site will reduce the impact of development on the natural landscape and help promote workable sustainable urban drainage systems.

Existing trees and woodland areas: where possible trees will be retained whilst new trees will be planted to increase the quality and variety of planting across the site.

Landscape character: the distinctive character of the area will be interpreted and used to influence the design of the development to help develop a clear, unique and locally appropriate sense of place.

Ecology and green space: the planned green space network will link the site to surrounding countryside and Core Paths as well as aiding biodiversity across the site.

Archaeology: the location of all monuments and sites have been considered in the development of the masterplan.

Ground conditions and land contamination: further investigative works will be carried out to determine the potential for land contamination and any constraints will be addressed within the masterplan.

3. Consultation

The potential of Grandhome to meet the development aspirations set out in the Structure Plan and the emerging LDP was evident by 2008. In response, the Grandhome Trust set in motion a masterplanning and consultation process. This led to the selection of Grandhome as a Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative site in 2009, and a (SSCI) Charrette Series site shortly thereafter.

Throughout the planning and design process, consultation has been a top priority for the Grandhome Trust. The consultation processes undertaken to date are summarised within the following pages.



3.1 Consultation Approach

Grandhome Trust's commitment to the local community included early consultation, encouraging progressive learning and participation to inform the design process. The consultation has been run in tandem with, and contributes to, the on-going technical development of the site masterplan. Consultation events have included public meetings, workshops, exhibitions, the distribution of publications, as well as the 8-day design charrette.

Many parties have been consulted throughout this process and include:

- Local residents & community groups
- Aberdeen City Council officers
- Local Councillors
- Local architects
- Local universities
- Scottish national agencies
- Architecture + Design Scotland
- The Scottish Government, via the SSCI programme
- Aberdeen Civic Society

Far left and above: Figures 3.1, 3.2: Pin-ups, site tours and informal meetings at the Grandhome SSCI Charrette (in March 2010)

Left: Figure 3.3: The Grandhome pre-charrette paper, which was distributed to households throughout the area to encourage participation

3.2 Initial Consultation

In order to gauge local opinion regarding the potential development of the site, the Trust began the planning process with a series of public consultation events throughout 2009 and 2010, seeking to engage with residents and other local stakeholders to inform the production of an initial site masterplan. This subsequently led to the site's inclusion within the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI), although supplementary consultation was undertaken concurrently. Masterplanning took place alongside the preparation of the Aberdeen City LDP, providing

input at key stages. In June 2009, the Council held an LDP Development Options Open Evening; relevant issues were then re-visited in November of that year as part of the Main Issues Report Consultation.

The Trust also held two "visioning" workshops in February 2010, one for key agencies and one for the local community to help understand the issues, concerns and ideas in respect of the development of the Grandhome site.

The main issues raised throughout the initial consultation process were as follows:

- Inability of the existing road network to cater for increased demand associated with development; and
- Capacity of local schools and community facilities unable to accommodate a new development.

These concerns were taken into consideration by the design team and a series of further public consultation events were planned to help develop an inclusive site masterplan.

3.3 SSCI Charrette

Following on from the initial consultation process and representation from the Trust, Grandhome was named by the Scottish Government as one of 11 candidate projects to be included in the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative in May 2009, eventually becoming one of the three sites to be taken forward as part of the SSCI Charrette Series. This was a national community engagement exercise comprising intensive, interactive sessions, which involved local people and organisations in the early planning and design of their communities.

The masterplanning team began preparation in autumn 2009, as a prelude to the SSCI Charrette the following March 2010. The charrette was led by renowned masterplanners Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ), and comprised an 8-day participative design exercise, translating ideas into plans and drawings, and testing the masterplan as it progressed. Both members of the public and stakeholders, such as the City Council and statutory agencies attended the charrette and participated in meetings and masterplan reviews. In total, approximately 300 people attended over the course of the charrette. The final charrette masterplan was then introduced within a report distributed by the Scottish Government.

The main issues discussed with the public during the charrette were as follows:

- Roads, infrastructure, services and utilities;
- Community facilities, services and employment space;
- Environment, landscape and open space; and
- Civic facilities, architecture and design.

Discussions of these areas resulted in the following issues being addressed/actions being undertaken by the design team:

- Importance of a holistic neighbourhood design, ensuring suitable walking distances to community amenities;
- Consideration of retail centres and amenities, ensuring good connections with the existing Bridge of Don community;
- Analysis of historic house designs in Aberdeen, including unique neighbourhoods such as Footdee, to ensure future designs are respectful of the local architectural heritage; and
- Consideration of the green space network, ensuring it is connected with the Green Belt and offers desirable local amenities.

The masterplan that emerged from the charrette was revised during mid-2010 to reflect the emerging LDP, and update sessions were held in August, for Community Councils, representatives and residents. Over 20 people attended over the two events.

3.4 Design Workshop + Follow-up consultation

In early 2012, the design team convened a workshop to develop the masterplan further in conjunction with the LDP and in support of the planning process. A range of supporting work was commissioned, including topographical and arboricultural surveys, and technical studies relating to transport, utilities, landscape, ecology, archaeology and ground conditions. Unresolved issues from the SSCI Charrette and technical data from the survey work formed the basis of a revised design brief for DPZ.

After this internal workshop, the Grandhome design team then held a series of follow-up consultations in mid-2012 with the community, City Council and other statutory consultees, both to gain feedback on the changes made to the masterplan during the internal design workshop and to address specific issues, such as road access. These included:

- Community presentation (March 2012): further update on the proposals held with the local community;
- Meeting with Danestone Medical Practice (April 2012): the meeting discussed likely additional facilities and services required to meet future demand;

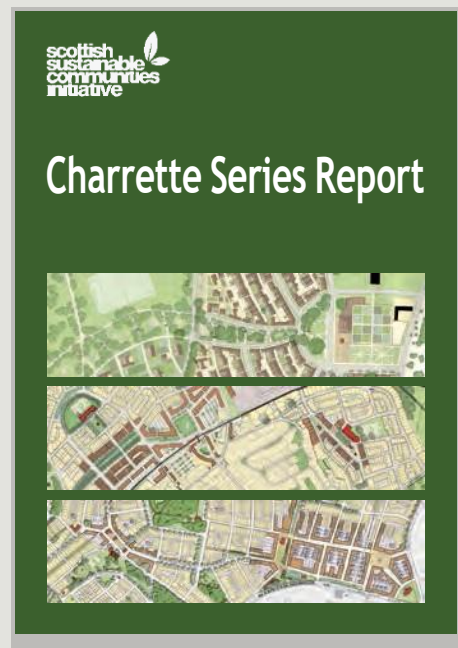


Figure 3.4: The SSCI Charrette Series report, featuring Grandhome and the two other SSCI Charrette sites

Figure 3.5: Conceptual masterplan developed during the 2010 SSCI Charrette, indicating likely neighbourhood structure and green spaces

- An EIA Scoping and Planning Review (April 2012) including Aberdeen City Council and the Grandhome Environmental team;

- A Designing Streets Review (April 2012) including Aberdeen City Council, the Scottish Government's Designing Streets team, Transport Scotland, WSP, Fairhurst & the Grandhome planning team;

- Two Transport Reviews (April and May 2012); and

- Architecture + Design Scotland (March 2012 and January 2013): a presentation of the masterplan was provided to members of A+DS in March 2012 who responded with a workshop advice note which provided comment on the key components of the masterplan and looking for further consideration of the following:

- More information on character, sense of place and identity
- Landscape strategy
- Sustainability strategy
- Connectivity
- Response to River Don Corridor Framework
- Road design and hierarch
- Development edges and boundaries
- Phasing and delivery information

A draft Framework was presented to A+DS in January 2013 to detail how these earlier comments have been considered and incorporated in the Development Framework. A positive response was received during this meeting and A+DS will continue to be involved in the phased masterplanning process.

3.5 Further Design Analysis + Case Studies

Throughout the consultation process, the issues raised by both local residents and stakeholders have been considered to inform the continued development of the masterplan. The design team have also undertaken a number of site visits to similar developments and historic precedents throughout the UK, including other best practice developments further afield. The most relevant sites visited have included:

- **Old Aberdeen, Balgownie:** The Grandhome design team has visited Old Aberdeen to study its urban design and street patterns, as well as its materials palette.
- **Footdee, Aberdeen:** The charrette team studied Footdee extensively, particularly its density and character.
- **Poundbury, Dorchester:** Although located in a very different region to Grandhome, Poundbury

proved relevant as one of the largest and most successful traditional urban extensions in the UK. While visiting Poundbury, the team took particular note of its delivery and community management models.

- **Upton, Northampton:** A recent traditional development funded through a joint venture, Upton's public spaces and successful integration of SUDs have been of interest to the design team.

3.6 Public Exhibition October 2012

The first of two pre-planning public exhibitions was held on 30th and 31st of October 2012, attracting over 220 attendees. The aim of the exhibition was to demonstrate how the masterplan has evolved taking account of key design considerations informed from further site analysis, including up to date findings from EIA technical studies.

The exhibition also provided an introduction to the Development Framework, setting out draft content.

As required under Regulation 7(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(Scotland) Regulations 2008, the exhibition presented information on the first planning applications being progressed:



Figure 3.6: Terraced houses in Old Aberdeen



Figure 3.8: A street in Old Aberdeen featuring houses of differing materials, but similar rooflines



Figure 3.7: A pedestrian pathway through a park in Poundbury



Figure 3.9: A Poundbury street featuring pedestrian-only access

- Application for Planning Permission in Principle - 4,700 home masterplan
- Application for Full Planning Permission - Phase 1 (up to 450 homes)

A preview of the exhibition was given to key statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. Invites were issued to local Community Councils, local

Councillors, local health and education providers, national transport, environment and heritage agencies, and other statutory bodies.

Members of the planning and design team were available to answer questions about the masterplan, draft Development Framework and planning application proposals.

The event was publicised in local news media, including the 'Press and Journal' and 'Evening Express'. Posters were submitted to local businesses and public facilities in the Bridge of Don and Danestone area.

Attendees were encouraged to complete a feedback form, the findings of which would be taken into consideration in the final preparation of the masterplan and planning application proposals. Key themes arising from the feedback received included:

- There was general support of the principle of development notably the creation of a new centre for the Bridge of Don;
- There was concern in respect of the perceived lack of transport infrastructure (including road capacity and public transport services) in place to accommodate any new development, particularly in light of the uncertainty around the AWPR and Third Don Crossing at that time;
- There was a strong desire for new facilities such as a cinema, community buildings, and facilities for teenagers. These facilities have subsequently been added to the plan;
- The position of the health centre has been altered to facilitate early delivery if required; and
- There were requests for particular house types e.g. bungalows and self-build development.

The invitation list for this preview session, register of attendance and minute of the discussion are attached in Appendix I.

A thematic summary of comments received during the Public Exhibition and how these have been responded to within the masterplan is attached as Appendix II.

Building on this consultation activity and subsequent to issuing a draft of this Development Framework to the Council, electronic copies were also sent out to all stakeholders invited to the preview exhibition seeking their views and comments on the document.

3.7 Consultation – Next Steps

A follow-up public exhibition will be held in early 2013 that will present more detailed designs coming forward as part of the Phase 1 planning submission. The event will provide further opportunity for the public to engage with the development of the masterplan.

The Grandhome planning team will also continue to consult with key stakeholders within national agencies and Aberdeen City Council. One focus will be the Quality Audit process, which began in November 2012, and which will continue through Spring 2013. This process will engage representatives from Aberdeen City Council in the road design process, as well as the Scottish Government. Consideration will be given to new information gleaned from public



Figure 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14: The consultation in October 2012 included both a public exhibition and a presentation on the evolution of the masterplan.



consultation feedback and up to date findings from Environmental Statement technical studies. This process will allow the design team

to progress towards a finalised masterplan for Grandhome, to be presented within the spring 2013 planning applications.

4. Masterplan Development

Grandhome Masterplan Evolution: March 2010-December 2012

There have been four main evolutions of the plan since 2010. The text on the following pages is a breakdown of the process from the beginning initial concepts in 2006 to the current plan as further outlined in this framework.



Figure 4.1: SSCI Charrette Final Masterplan, March 2010

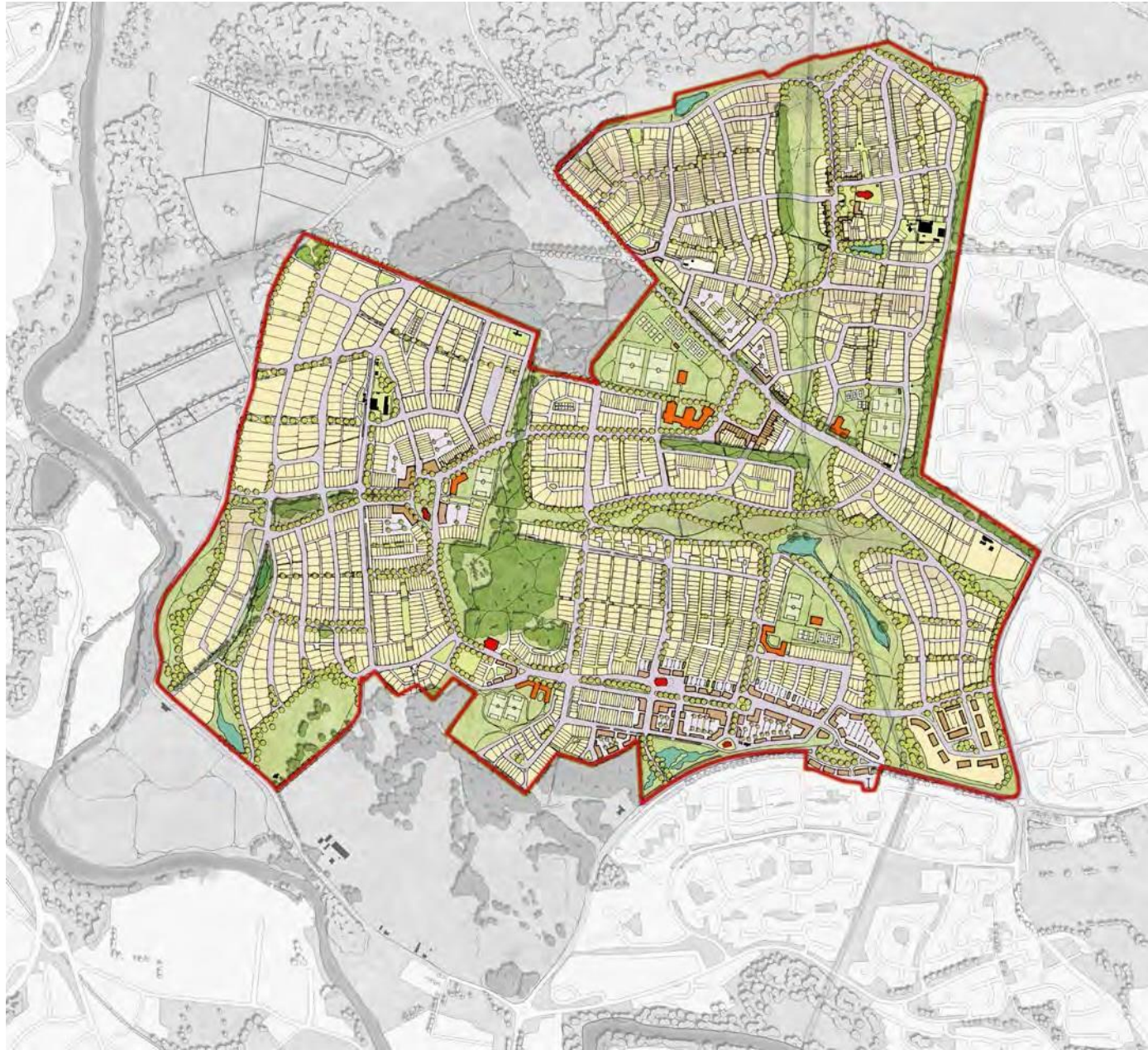


Figure 4.2: Design Development Masterplan, March 2012



Figure 4.3: Design Development Masterplan, September 2012



Figure 4.4: Design Development Final Masterplan, December 2012

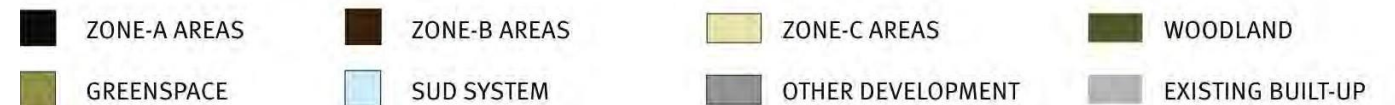
4.1 Initial Concept Studies

The Grandhome masterplan has been in development since 2008, when the Grandhome Trust first submitted the site for consideration for the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative. The Trust has always aspired to develop an exemplar scheme, comprising a network of mixed-tenure, walkable neighbourhoods. Over the past four years, this concept has developed in more detail in line with community feedback and consultation, as well as technical studies of potential infrastructural provisions and the site's environmental features.

Early studies proposed the development of a settlement with four distinct mixed-use neighbourhood cores, the southernmost of which would be a linear town centre, or high street. This concept was included in the Trust's 2008 submission to the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative, which explains the Trust's plans for a neighbourhood-based approach. The concept was examined and developed in further detail during the detailed design process at the SSCI Charrette.



Figure 4.5; An initial study of Grandhome, from the Grandhome Trust's SSCI submission



4.2 SSCI Charrette Masterplan, March 2010

4.2.1 Design Process & Principles

As a national event, the SSCI Charrette not only produced a detailed masterplan for Grandhome but also sought to promote good design and inclusive public engagement. The design team worked closely with the community and stakeholders to develop a site masterplan, which followed the Grandhome Trust's established design principles as well as community preferences. The final SSCI report, which was

released by the Scottish Government, detailed the proposals for Grandhome, as well as the design process that led the team to its conclusion.

Steps within the design process included:

- **Studying the 'traces on the land':** The design team began by studying the environmental condition of the site, in order to accommodate its natural contours and characteristics in the plan. The aim was to follow the 'traces on the land' to create a masterplan that naturally suited the site, incorporating historic trees, stone walls, and land contours.

Figure 4.6: A study of Grandhome's 'traces on the land' including topography and stone walls

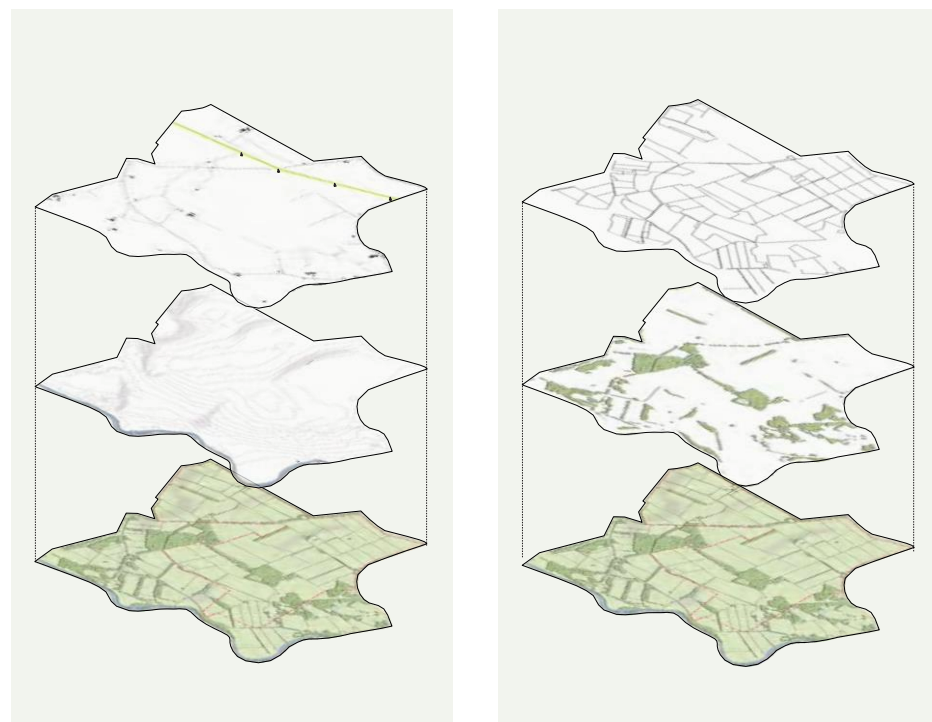


Figure 4.7: The design process: identifying Grandhome's initial neighbourhood areas within pedestrian sheds.

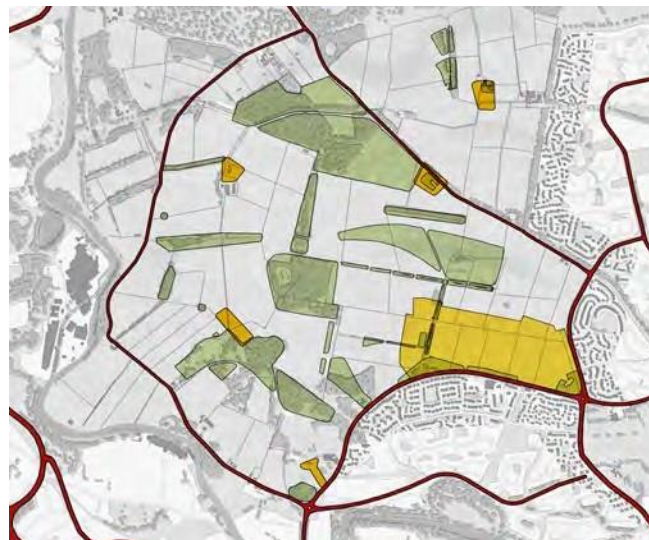


Figure 4.8: The design process: identifying neighbourhood centres (in yellow)



Figure 4.9: The design process: Proposing a connected street network

- **Locating neighbourhoods:** The design team next considered the neighbourhood structure of the plan, returning to the original concept outlined in the SSCI submission document. The designers again sought to propose the development of a number of mixed-use neighbourhoods, including a larger town centre/high street that could cater to the wider Bridge of Don. Each of these would be a five-minute walk from centre to edge, or a ten-minute walk for a linear high street. The main commercial centre, sketched in dark yellow, would border both the Parkway and Whitestripes Avenue, to offer the best visibility and access to Bridge of Don neighbours. This approach differed slightly from the 2008 design strategy, but was accepted by the community and became a critical part of the masterplan.
- **Locating neighbourhood centres:** A next step involved identifying each neighbourhood centre: the hub that would include each area's local shops, offices and community facilities. These centres were proposed roughly in the centre of each neighbourhood, following key natural features of the site, such as clusters of trees to be retained on a central green.
- **Connecting neighbourhoods with a primary thoroughfare:** The designers then linked each neighbourhood centre with a main thoroughfare loop. The strategy provided direct connections between each hub, in order to facilitate convenient movement and a local bus route.
- **Further developing the thoroughfare network:** Following the identification of a main thoroughfare loop, the designers created a well-connected network of streets and roads emanating from this, again following the traces on the land to avoid extreme topography and preserve existing natural features. The network was to at least partially follow a grid, ensuring smooth connections between areas and avoiding cul-de-sacs. Important natural landmarks, such as Monument Wood, were preserved within this grid, contributing to the settlement's green network.

4.2.2 Charrette Design Development

After the key principles explained in 4.2.1, the design team sought to develop the masterplan in more detail. The team then created a number of detailed ‘first generation’ plans. These plans generally followed the articulated principles, whilst offering more detailed strategies for the street network and residential block structure. Stakeholders reviewed these plans with the designers, providing feedback that led the plan to its final state in the charrette process.

By the end of the eight days, the design team had fully delineated a site masterplan. The masterplan proposed the following:

- A town centre and six other residential neighbourhoods, with mixed-use cores;
- A substantial high street within the town centre, bordered by mixed-use buildings with car parks shielded within the blocks;
- A substantial green network, including the preservation of Monument Wood and the hill top park;
- A well-connected thoroughfare network, including a linking road designed for a main bus loop; and
- A diversity of densities, with high density development in the town centre and more rural areas on the edge of the site.

The Grandhome Trust carried forward this masterplan through 2010 and 2011, advancing the design process as Grandhome moved close to selection within the LDP.

Figure 4.10: SSCI Charrette final masterplan, March 2010



Figure 4.11: An early detailed plan, on the drawing table



Figure 4.12: Another early plan, detailed on different sections of trace paper



4.3 Design Development: March 2012

As Grandhome moved closer to being allocated within the LDP, the design team revisited the masterplan at a workshop supported by further infrastructural and technical studies. A range of supporting work was commissioned, including topographical and arboricultural surveys, and technical studies relating to transport, utilities, landscape, ecology, archaeology and ground conditions.

The follow-up workshop revisited the charrette masterplan in light of new technical information available, as well as LDP requirements. Changes made at this time included:

- Revisions to the site boundary, which had previously sought to capture land beyond the LDP boundary;
- Land within the LDP boundary but outwith the control of Grandhome Trust is not included within this Framework. Conversely, land on the southern side of the Parkway within the ownership of the Trust has been included for the purposes of good planning as this area provides an important access point to the site and a pedestrian access to Danestone;
- Revisions to take into account constraints established after more detailed site analyses, such as those introduced above;
- Restructuring of neighbourhoods and the green space network, to accommodate a network of direct and easily accessible wildlife and green space corridors through the site, and which take account of the topography to inform the location of the neighbourhood blocks;
- Reduced retail provision, to ensure feasibility, taking into account the perceived demand from new residents and the existing community within the Bridge of Don;
- Revisions to access proposals, to ensure that all were deliverable and compatible with evolving local and national transport projects, such as the AWPR;
- Revisions to infrastructural proposals, including the treatment of the existing pylons, in line with technical infrastructural proposals and costings;
- Revisions to the number of schools and community facilities proposed, following the detailed analysis by a specialist in educational provision;
- Additional consideration of phasing in line with regional infrastructural projects and other issues; and
- Introduction of a business park, to entice corporate tenants to the area, with a particular focus on the Energetica initiative.



Site Boundary

Figure 4.13: A key change to the masterplan since the SSCI Charrette was the revision of the site boundary. The boundary now adheres to that within the LDP, and thus does not feature much of the originally proposed development on the southwestern portion of the site.



Green Space Network

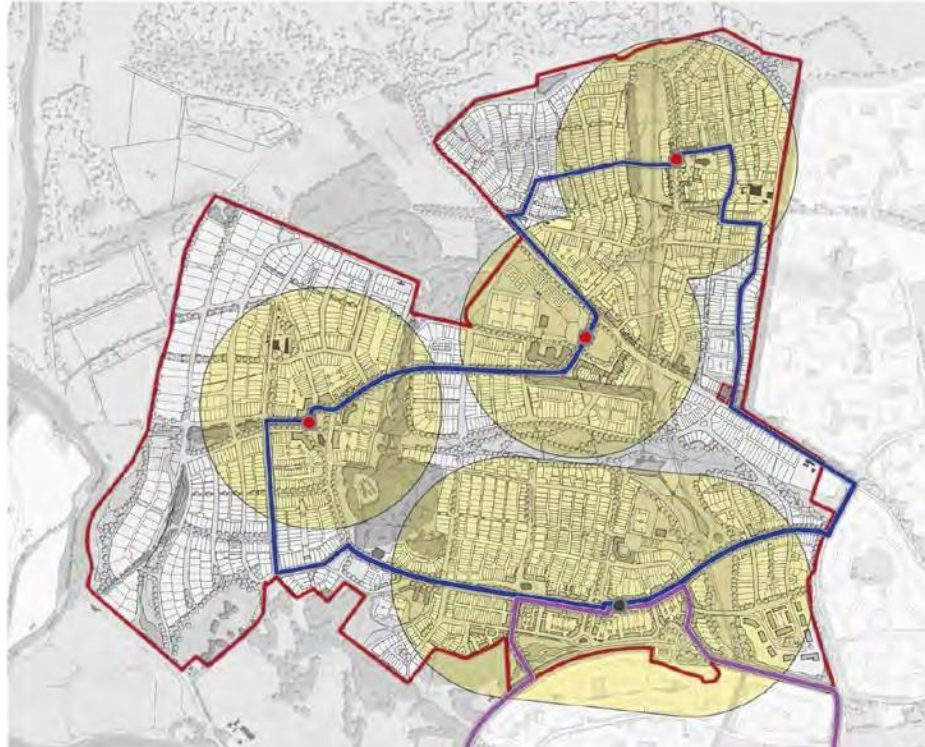
Figure 4.14: The green space network within the revised masterplan became much more permeable, providing green corridors from north to south and east to west. This green space plan not only offers more substantial parkland for the Grandhome community but also will be better suited to local wildlife.





Neighbourhood Structure + Access

Figure 4.15: The revised site boundaries led to a simplified neighbourhood structure, better able to accommodate a central bus route. The modified regional bus route could come in and out of Grandhome via the A90, rather than travelling via residential areas unlikely to accommodate regional transport.



Pylons

Figure 4.16: The revised masterplan features less retail development, a change in line with the demands of the area and the proposals of the LDP. A new addition was a proposed business park at the high visibility site between the A90 and Whitestripes Avenue, providing a site for a custom-built corporate headquarters.



4.4 Design Development: September - December 2012

As the design team moved toward the development of a planning application, further rounds of revisions were made, in consultation with key stakeholders, including Aberdeen City. These changes have addressed key infrastructural, design and planning issues arising from further studies of the site and wider area. These changes have brought the plan towards its final condition, as it will be represented within the 2013 planning applications. Key changes during this final round of revisions have included:

- **Quality Audit:** As indicated earlier, 2012 saw the kick-off of the Quality Audit process, which will guide the development of Grandhome's street network in line with Aberdeen City and Transport Scotland's requirements, as well as the principles of Designing Streets.
- **Access:** The access strategy has been proposed in line with the Council's confirmed requirements, assuming that the Parkway remains a Trunk Road in the early phases of Grandhome's development. The masterplan proposes an acceptable number of accesses onto the Parkway and Whitestripes, with these accesses designed to be memorable gateways into Grandhome. For example, the Parkway access strategy was modified to include a triangular green, offering smooth access to Grandhome and a pleasant arrival experience.

- **Education:** After confirmation from Aberdeen City on likely funding and capacity, the masterplan now incorporates three primary schools and one secondary school, as opposed to four primary schools and one secondary school. This strategic revision also led to a new 'shared campus' concept, in which the secondary school shares a campus and recreational hub with one primary school.
- **High Street:** Specific commercial uses were incorporated into the town centre, following commercial leads compatible with the Trust's aspirations. These uses included a supermarket, hotel and leisure centre.
- **Business District:** The design team continued to modify the Business District, to ensure efficient connections from the

town centre and good frontage onto the surrounding roads. 5ha were apportioned to the Business District in accordance with the site's LPD allocation. The current version has good visibility from both Whitestripes and the Parkway, as well as good linkages to the high street and its hotel, which may cater to business travellers.

- **SUDs:** Technical recommendations on SUDs were incorporated into the masterplan.
- **Phase 1:** Phase 1 has also undergone detailed design, in anticipation of the upcoming planning application. The design team has thus advanced the detailed plans for block structure, parking, frontage and housing mix, amongst other issues. A Phase 1 Masterplan Statement will be submitted alongside the full planning application for this Phase of development.

