

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2028

Evidence Report July 2025



Aberdeen – Part of the Scottish Cities Alliance



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Aberdeen City Council has started the production of its next Local Development Plan (LDP) for the city. This will be the fourth Local Development Plan for Aberdeen, but the first LDP produced under new processes for plan-making set out by the Scottish Government in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 1.2. Aberdeen City is facing challenging pressures to balance the needs and demands of economic growth, whilst adapting and mitigating against the effects of climate change and addressing growing inequalities. The next LDP must help address these challenges. The LDP will set out a Spatial Strategy and a policy framework to help guide and shape future development and change, whilst also enabling greater climate and environmental resilience and protecting and enhancing our high quality natural, built and historic environments.
- 1.3. The next Local Development Plan will build on, and ultimately replace, the extant Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2023 (CDXX), and will be prepared in the context of other Aberdeen City Council plans and strategies, such as our Local Outcome Improvement Plan (CDXX) and Locality Plans (CDXX). National policies included in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) will not be repeated in the new LDP, and the Plan will be focused on providing policies and guidance that reflect local issues and context.

What is an Evidence Report?

- 1.4. This Evidence Report, the first stage in new Plan production, has been prepared in accordance with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (CDXX), the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (CDXX), National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)(2023) (CDXX) and the Scottish Government Local Development Planning Guidance (2023) (CDXX).
- 1.5. The Evidence Report aims to ensure that the next LDP is robust, well-informed, and aligned with national and regional planning frameworks. The purpose of the Evidence Report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the data, information, and strategies that will inform the preparation of the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen. It is worth noting however, that evidence available here reflects a snapshot in time – the evidence may change between the time the Evidence Report is submitted to Gatecheck, and the time of preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan.

Approach to Producing the Evidence Report

- 1.6. The production of the Evidence Report has included the following key stages:
 - **Engagement and Evidence Gathering:** gathering place based and locally relevant information, evidence and data for the City and its residents from a

wide range of internal and external sources. This included an extensive Place Standard exercise between 24 March and 18 May 2025 to understand the lived experience of the city's residents and communities.

- **Topic Paper Preparation and Consultation:** collation of evidence sources into ten individual 'Topic Papers', early drafts of which were consulted on with both key agencies and Council services in February 2025, prior to a wider consultation exercise with key stakeholders and in general public between 24 March and 18 May 2025.
- **Evidence Report Preparation:** preparation of the final Evidence Report, informed by both the background research and the feedback received through consultation.

Engagement

1.7. Engagement with key stakeholders and the general public has formed a key part of Evidence Report preparation. Section 16B of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, prescribes a number of requirements for preparing the Evidence Report, including:

- That the views of the public, children and young people, and key agencies are sought.
- That the Evidence Report includes a statement on how the views of the public, children and young people, disabled people, gypsies and travellers, and community councils have been sought, and how these issues have been taken into account.
- That the Evidence Report sets out how the Council has invited local communities to prepare Local Place Plans, and what assistance it has provided.

1.8. The Engagement Statement (CD XX) and Engagement Tracker (CD XX) detail how the views of the groups specified in the Act have been sought and considered, as part of a wider engagement strategy informed by the Participation Statement in the Development Plan Scheme (CD XX). This is described further in Section 7, however the main elements were as follows:

- **Corporate Dialogue and Input:** early engagement with senior managers across different Council services to collate place specific information to be included in the Evidence Report.
- **Early Draft Topic Paper Consultation:** early drafts of the evidence to be included in the Topic Papers were consulted on with key agencies, key stakeholders and Council services in February 2025. This consultation included a request for any additional evidence sources or relevant information for inclusion.
- **'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' Engagement Exercise:** working with a number of different Council services and community planning partners, a single 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' engagement exercise was held between 24 March and 18 May 2025. This exercise focused on people and place rather than different Council documents and strategies, and included a specific children and young person's version of the questionnaire and engagement

materials. Individual sessions were also held with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community and disabled people, as well as representatives of community councils.

- **Draft Topic Paper Consultation:** public consultation on the ten draft topic papers, incorporating a view of the evidence on each topic, as well as an invitation to identify gaps or areas of dispute.
- **Workshops and Other Targeted Work with Key Stakeholders:** an ongoing series of sessions with key stakeholders such as the Homes For Scotland, Transport Scotland, NHS Grampian and others to discuss the review of the Local Development Plan and relevant evidence for the preparation of the next Plan.

1.9. The Planning Authority has also prepared a range of resources for communities regarding Local Place Plans, and is raising awareness for any community groups interested in preparing a Local Place Plan both via online information ([Place Planning | Aberdeen City Council](#)) and by attendance at groups such as the Community Council Forum.

1.10. NPF4 also underscores the need for local development plans and their delivery programmes to follow an integrated, infrastructure-first approach. The Aberdeen City Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS) Group was reestablished by the Council in early 2025 to aid the Evidence Report and LDP preparation. The group includes a broad range of representatives from across the Council and infrastructure and service providers, including, but not limited to, NHS Grampian, the Integrated Joint Board, Scottish Water, SSEN Transmission and SSEN Distribution, Transport Scotland and SEPA.

Structure and Content

1.11. In preparing the Evidence Report, the Council has had regard to the relevant legislation and national guidance. The report is therefore presented as a proportionate summary of the evidence, and not a compendium of all available information.

1.12. The Report is contextualised in Section 2 by a broad profile of Aberdeen as a place – outlining the City in terms of demographics, the economy, environment and communities and health. Section 3 then evaluates whether the current adopted plan, the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023, has delivered on its outcomes and allocations. It identifies lessons to be learnt in the preparation of the next plan, and considers the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

1.13. Section 4 summarises the main issues arising from the evidence, and key areas of change. It identifies a number of issues and demographic challenges to be addressed in the production of the next Local Development Plan. These very broadly include:

- Aberdeen's demographics, health and ageing population;
- Climate change challenges;
- The development of nature networks and review of the green belt;
- The composition and condition of the housing stock;

- The school estate;
- The transport system and other infrastructure, including energy requirements;
- The city's open spaces, biodiversity and historic environment;
- Aberdeen's cultural assets and the role of the city centre; and,
- Our economic wellbeing and prosperity.

1.14. Section 5 of the Report outlines the Areas of Agreement / Dispute from the consultation responses. It summarises the key statements of agreement and disputes over the sufficiency of the evidence and the Council's response to these matters. Work has been ongoing to try and resolve as many of the disputes as practicable, however it has not been possible to resolve all disputes, and the reasons behind this are highlighted in this section. The areas of agreement and dispute relating to specific topics are also repeated in the Topic Papers.

1.15. Section 6 then sets out legislative requirements, and Section 7 details our Engagement Strategy. As noted above, the development of this Evidence Report has been aided by a collaborative approach to data and spatial gathering and analysis with Key Agencies and other stakeholders.

1.16. The 'Topic Papers' form the main content of the Evidence Report (Sections 8 – 17). Table 1.1 relates the Topic Paper sections to the National Planning Framework (NPF4) policy themes, indicating how these themes have been grouped and covered.

Evidence Report Section	Topic Paper Heading	NPF4 Policy area
8.	Spatial Strategy	Green Belt
		Brownfield, Vacant & Derelict Land & Empty Buildings
		Coastal Development
		Business & Industry
9.	Delivery of Homes	Quality Homes
10.	Infrastructure	Infrastructure First
		Blue & Green Infrastructure
		Digital Infrastructure
11.	Sustainable Transport	Sustainable Transport
12.	Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation	Climate & Nature Crisis
		Climate Mitigation & Adaptation
		Flood Risk & Water Management
13.	Nature and Biodiversity	Biodiversity
		Natural Places
		Forestry, Woodland & Trees
		Soils
14.	Energy and Resources	Energy
		Zero Waste

		Heating & Cooling
		Minerals
15.	Centres of Business and Culture	City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres
		Retail
		Tourism
		Culture & Creativity
16.	Place	Historic Assets & Places
		Design, Quality & Place
		Local Living & 20 Minute
17.	Wellbeing and Communities	Play, Recreation & Sport
		Health & Safety
		Community Wealth Building

Table 1.1: Topic Paper Areas and related National Planning Framework 4 Policies.

1.17. The structure of Sections 8 – 17 broadly follow the headings set out in the Template included within Annex G of the Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance (May 2023) (CDXX), however an additional section to highlight the context provided by National Planning Framework 4 has also been included:

- Legislative Context
- National Planning Framework 4
- Links to Evidence
- Summary of Evidence
- Summary of Stakeholder Engagement
- Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan
- Statement of Agreement / Dispute

1.18. Section 18 concludes the Report.

2. Aberdeen Today

The Population of Aberdeen

- 2.1. At 30th June 2023, Aberdeen City had an estimated population of 227,750. This equates to 4.1% of Scotland's total population. In terms of population size, Aberdeen City is the 8th largest local authority in Scotland. There were more females (116,284) than males (111,466) in the city with females making up 51.1% of the population.
- 2.2. Population projections are now very dated with the most recent being 2018-based (published in 2020). Newer projections (based on Census data) are not expected to be available until Summer 2025. The 2018-based population projections show that between 2018 and 2028 the population of Aberdeen is projected to increase by 1.1% to 230,170. Over the same time period, the population in Scotland is projected to increase by 1.8%. The projected change is not consistent across all age groups. In Aberdeen City, decreases are projected in the 0-14 year age group (-5.0%), the 15-19 year age group (-7.2%) and in the 45-59 year age group (-4.3%). Increases are projected for the other age groups, with the largest increase being in the 75 years and over age group (16.1%). In terms of size, however, 30-44 years is projected to be the largest age group with the 75+ years group projected to remain the smallest group.



Figure 2.1 Children at Aberdeen Beach

- 2.3. Population change is driven by two main components: (1) natural change (births minus deaths) and (2) net migration (the sum of migration to/from Scotland and internal migration). It also includes other changes (e.g. changes in prisoner and armed forces population), although these tend to make up a smaller proportion of changes. The decrease in population between mid-2020 and mid-2021 was mainly driven by high net out-migration from Aberdeen City to other parts of Scotland and the UK (-3,470) as well as negative natural change (-135). While net overseas migration was positive (1,970), this was not high enough to offset net out-migration from Aberdeen to other parts of Scotland and the UK. Migration to the City varies by age, with most movement

being in younger adults. In 2019-21, average positive net migration was highest in 18-21 year olds and negative net migration highest for people in their early 20s and 30s.

- 2.4. A falling and ageing population poses a number of challenges to an area and can, without intervention, lead to economic decline. It can also increase pressure on public services by reducing the number of people able to fund those services, whilst also increasing the need for services and care, specifically for children and older people. Given that the falling birth rate has been a reality for a number of years, if the city's population is to be sustained or grow in the short and medium term, this must be driven by migration; by attracting people to and keeping them in the city. Like many other areas, a growing number of people in the city are recorded as having a limitation to work, exacerbating the balance between those in work and those who are not.

The next [Local Development Plan](#) can help to address this by making sure Aberdeen is an attractive place for people to live and to ensure that sufficient land is allocated for new housing and employment opportunities.

Education and Lifelong Learning

- 2.5. Life circumstances of children affect their educational attainment, and that educational inequality can lead into inequalities of health and wellbeing in early adulthood and beyond. In Aberdeen there is evidence of increases in the number of children living in poverty; having a disability; with additional support needs; and entering school with at least one developmental concern. Whilst across a range of measures, attainment shows a positive trend, the most striking feature is the impact of family affluence / deprivation on children's experiences and outcomes, including educational attainment and positive destinations post school education. The Skills Development Scotland Participation measure provides information on the current position of all children and young people between the age of 16 to 19 years, where they remain in school or have since left. In 2024, 90.1% of 16-19 year olds were participating in education, employment or training – similar to 90.2% in 2022/23.

The next [Local Development Plan](#) can help to address this by ensuring a sound provision of affordable housing and putting policies in place to ensure new development is well connected to employment and training by sustainable and active travel opportunities.

Economic Stability

- 2.6. A healthy economy is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of a population. Simply put, people who experience economic inequalities have poorer health and wellbeing. People who are economically secure, have better health and wellbeing.
- 2.7. Aberdeen's economy over the last few decades has been heavily tied to oil prices (see Figure 2.2). Aberdeen is however currently undergoing an economic transition toward

a low-carbon economy, with a clear focus on developing greater diversity across business sectors. Energy remains a key component in this, though more on developing the renewables sector, with tourism and financial and business services sectors also important in the mix.

- 2.8. The unemployment rate in the city in June 2024 was measured at 4.4%, which is above the Scottish level of 3.5%. However, the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits matched the Scotland figure. In 2023 it was estimated that almost 1 in 6 households in Aberdeen had no one within the household working, but households with low income, or likely to be experiencing financial instability, are also important. It is estimated that 3 out of 5 (57%) households experiencing relative poverty will be within working households.

The next **Local Development Plan** can help to address this by ensuring a healthy supply of land for employment and by putting policies in place to ensure new development is well connected to employment and training opportunities by sustainable and active travel opportunities.



Figure 2.2: Aberdeen's Gross Value Added (GVA) in relation to global oil prices
Source: Centre for Cities (2024) *Aberdeen's lost decade: What went wrong?* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/aberdeens-lost-decade-what-went-wrong/> (Accessed: April 2025).

Communities and Housing

- 2.9. The availability, location, type, and quality of housing is important, moreover it essential to have somewhere to live which is affordable, warm, and secure. Many are facing housing challenges including fuel poverty; those who require specialist housing provision as a result of ill-health or disability; and those who, for a range of reasons,

are without a secure place to live. Feeling safe within your home, your place, and your community are also important factors in wellbeing.

- 2.10. Being able to participate in one's community is key to enabling and maintaining a sense of influence and control. Through ongoing use of the Place Standard Tool, we have a picture of how the city's communities see themselves in relation to many of the factors that relate to their place and health and wellbeing (CD XX).

The next **Local Development Plan** can help to address this by ensuring a pipeline of residential opportunities are available across the City, with a mix of both house types and market and affordable / specialist provision.



Figure 2.3 Residential Development at Tillydrone

Neighbourhood and Environment

- 2.11. We know that where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. How places are designed and built, and how they develop and are kept in good order are really important in creating health and sustaining wellbeing for individuals, for families, and for communities.
- 2.12. For good health and wellbeing it is recommended that people are able to access a green space within 300 metres of their home, and the Council has a key role in ensuring access to greenspaces and woodland, and in protecting the quality of local blue spaces (water and river sides). It remains up to individuals, families and

communities to be encouraged and supported to make use of the city's green and blue spaces.

- 2.13. The natural environment, sustainability and climate change also do, and increasingly will, impact on life in the city. Direct effects associated with climate change include increased mortality and ill-health associated with excess heat and cold, and loss associated with flooding and damage to properties. Climate change is also likely to exacerbate inequalities associated with air pollution, access to greenspaces, fuel, and food poverty.

The next [Local Development Plan](#) can help to address this by setting out a sustainable strategy for the City's future, including protecting of existing green spaces and natural resources.

Health & Social Care

- 2.14. Giving every child the best start in life and ensuring they are supported as they develop into young people is essential in creating good population health and wellbeing throughout life. Because of the way in which deprivation affects health, the lower someone's social position is, the worse their health. So early action can help to reduce health inequality.
- 2.15. For both women and men, increased life expectancy has stalled, and healthy life expectancy is declining. Both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy vary across Aberdeen, with people from areas with higher deprivation having shorter lives and being more likely to live with poorer health for longer. 1 in 4 adults describe themselves as having a limiting, long-term illness.

The next [Local Development Plan](#) can help to address this by supporting the development of sustainable communities and enabling people to live well locally.

The Social Determinants of Health & a Marmot City

- 2.16. The Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen (HDRC) is one of the first wave of Health Determinants Research Collaborations funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research. HDRC Aberdeen is led by Aberdeen City Council, in collaboration with The University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, NHS Grampian, and Public Partners. The HDRC in Aberdeen currently has funding for five years, until October 2027.
- 2.17. The Council has a significant and diverse range of functions, powers and duties which play a role in shaping the social determinants of health. The social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence people's health outcomes. They have been described as 'the causes of the causes'. They are the conditions in which people

are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping daily life that include the broad social and economic circumstances which together influence the health of the population. Many factors combine to affect the health of individuals and communities.

- 2.18. Within these social determinants, socioeconomic factors such as poverty, employment and education have the largest impact on health outcomes, suggesting that greatest contribution to population health can be made outside the health sector. Addressing these social determinants of health appropriately is, therefore, fundamental for improving health and reducing longstanding inequities in health.
- 2.19. The extant Local Development Plan 2023 was the first plan to group a number of policies under a specific Health and Wellbeing topic area, and the first plan to introduce a Health Impact Assessment, a policy specifically designed to assess the impact of certain new developments on the health of the population.
- 2.20. In the next Local Development Plan 2028, this initial work looking at Health, and the Nature and Climate emergencies will be much expanded. In particular working with Public Health Colleagues at NHS Grampian, and the Health Determinants Research Collaboration it is intended to take a health in all policies approach. This aims to ensure all policies within the plan look to improve health outcomes wherever possible, and limit any negative impacts where they are identified.
- 2.21. In this way, the next Local Development Plan also has a unique opportunity to both influence, and be developed in the context of, the collaboration announced in February 2025 between Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and Public Health Scotland and Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director of University College London's Institute of Health Equity. The aim of this collaboration is to strengthen local plans to reduce health inequalities and improve wellbeing in communities, thus enabling people to live longer, healthier lives by addressing the root causes of health inequalities and preventing illness before it starts. Table 2.1 relates the Evidence Report topic areas to the Marmot Principles.

		TOPIC PAPER									
		SPATIAL STRATEGY	DELIVERY OF HOMES	INFRASTRUCTURE	SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT	CLIMATE CHANGE, MITIGATION & ADAPTATION	NATURE & BIODIVERSITY	ENERGY & RESOURCES	CENTRES OF BUSINESS & CULTURE	PLACE	WELLBEING AND COMMUNITIES
MARMOT PRINCIPLE	Give every child the best start in life		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
	Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
	Create fair employment and good work for all	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure a healthy standard of living for all	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes		✓		✓					✓	
	Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓

Table 2.1: Cross Reference of Topic Papers and Marmot Principles

3. Assessment of Current Local Development Plan

3.1. As part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, the Planning Authority is required to evaluate whether the previous adopted plan, the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (adopted June 2023), has delivered on its outcomes and allocations. It is important to note that this evaluation does not include specific content on policy or spatial strategy matters for next Local Development Plan – these will be developed during its preparation. We are also required to identify any lessons learnt that will inform the preparation of the next Plan, and to consider the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

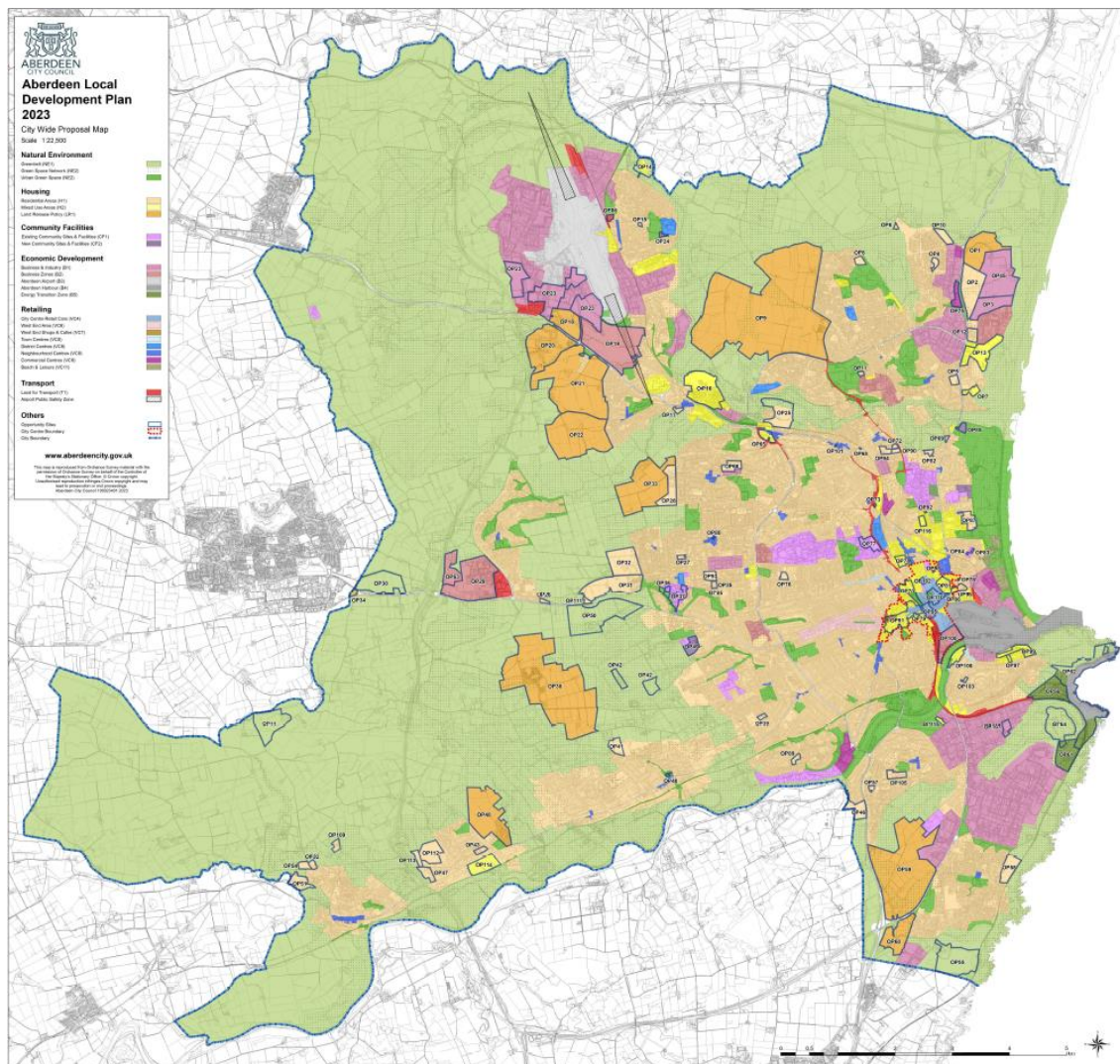


Figure 3.1: Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 Proposals Map

- 3.2. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 was developed in the context of a new and emerging planning system in Scotland. The Plan took account of changes such as removal of statutory supplementary guidance, and was co-designed with NHS Grampian, to reflect the strengthening relationship between planning and health within the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Given the timing of the 2023 Plan, a pragmatic approach did however have to be taken.
- 3.3. National Planning Framework 4 was adopted following the Examination of the Proposed Plan but prior to its adoption and, as a result, some terminology referred to in the extant Plan varies from the new policy framework. Importantly, the extant Plan was prepared to be consistent with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020, but references to the Strategic Development Plan were minimised by Scottish Government prior to permitting the Council to adopt the Plan, with references only retained to explain the source of data and requirements.
- 3.4. NPF4 now forms part of the statutory Development Plan, and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2028 will take into account the National Planning Framework and any adopted Regional Spatial Strategy as it is developed.

Delivery of LDP 2023 Outcomes / Objections

- 3.5. The 2023 Local Development Plan represents Aberdeen City Council's land use strategy for Aberdeen for 10 years from 2022. Therefore, delivery of the plan is very much a work in progress. The original 2023 Delivery Programme (CDXX) will be updated in September 2025.
- 3.6. The 2023 Local Development Plan has a Vision, a Spatial Strategy and policy framework. A summary of how the LDP is meeting the 12 main policy themes it identified is set out via the paragraphs below. The LDP was created with a 'health in all policies' approach, and all policies within the Plan were assessed against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Public Health Priorities for Scotland and the Aberdeen City Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.
- 3.7. Between adoption of the 2023 LDP and 31 May 2025 there have been 30 valid appeals submitted to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) and 55 applications submitted to the Local Review Body. 15 of the DPEA cases overturned the original decision and allowed the appeal. The Local Review Body dismissed 14 appeals. A high proportion of recommendations to the Local Review Body have been overturned, 74.5% since the adoption of the Plan to 31 May 2025. Drawing comparison to national averages using 2023-2024 data highlights 65.4% of Aberdeen City decisions were overturned at Local Review Body, compared to a national average of 40.8% for the same time period. A review of planning appeals and local review body applications has not drawn any particular pattern over the fairly short time period. The particular circumstances of each case were the reason for overturning appeals, rather than a fundamental flaw within the policy wording. An improvement action has been identified within the National Planning Improvement Framework Assessment 2025 relating to Local Review Body. The actions are to monitor and review the Local Review

Body, including promoting the attendance of 5 members, careful consideration of all refusals by Team Leaders, and refreshing Local Review Body specific elected member planning training. The outcome is to increase the percentage of decisions in accordance with recommendation.

- 3.8. The most used policies within appeals have been H1: Residential Areas, D1: Quality Placemaking by Design, D2: Amenity with the Local Development Plan – which are also the three most used policies in all applications. The National Planning Framework 4 policies most frequently used are NPF14: Design, Quality and Place, NPF7: Historic Assets and Places, and NPF2: Climate Mitigation and adaptation. There will be continued monitoring of all appeal decisions for the duration of the adoption of the 2023 LDP.

Delivery of Allocations

- 3.9. The vast majority of housing and employment land allocations in the 2023 LDP were carried forward from the 2017 LDP. The Examination Report into the Proposed Strategic Development Plan in January 2020 stated that a further 938 units were required to be added to the LDP Housing Allowances for the period 2020-2032. In response, 1100 housing units were added and split between new residential allocations at OP2 Murcar, OP12 Silverburn House, OP46 Royal Devenick Park and OP54 Craigton at Proposed Local Development Plan stage in 2020. The most recent Housing Land Audit 2024 (CDXX) demonstrated that Aberdeen has a 12.7 year housing land supply with over 80% of the 20,745 housing units classed as deliverable. This indicates that there is a healthy supply of land available for housing development through the opportunity sites identified in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 and any other windfall sites.
- 3.10. The 2023 LDP has an employment land allocation of 105 hectares to 2032, with a strategic reserve of 70 hectares to 2040. The biannual Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Business and Land Audit (CDXX), last published in 2023, identified that Aberdeen has 254 hectares of undeveloped business and industry land, of which 192 hectares is marketable, 42 hectares is immediately available and 62 hectares is constrained as it is not expected to be capable of coming forward within 5 years. Again, this indicates a clear supply is available. .

Appropriateness of Spatial Strategy

- 3.11. The Spatial Strategy in the 2023 LDP was informed by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020, and is consistent with the Spatial Strategy employed by the preceding 2012 and 2017 LDPs. It explains the Council's overall view of where development should go and the principles behind that. It sets a clear strategy for development in Aberdeen to prioritise urban brownfield sites over greenfield opportunities, and to protect the landscape setting of the city through the green belt. It identifies future development sites and the scale of development expected on each site. Planning consents and completions since adoption of the 2023 LDP have been in accordance with the spatial strategy. There have been no significant departures from

the plan since its adoption. Housing Land Audits (CDXX) have shown recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in increased completions in 2021, 2022 and 2023/24. Completion rates over the past 6 years have averaged at 1,056 per annum.

Housing Completions 2018 – 2023/2024	
2018	1,211
2019	931
2020	659
2021	1,448
2022	812
2023/2024	1,276

- 3.12. There has been a decreasing trend in take up of employment land, and a proportion of the take-up within employment land has involved non business and industry uses. Take up of office space is also down. Grade A space in the city centre has decreased with limited availability of larger suites. Outwith the city centre the higher quality office stock continues to be popular with limited availability at Prime Four and Aberdeen International Business Park. Demand for industrial space has increased, with 2023 marking the largest volume of transactions since the downturn in the oil and gas sector in 2015 (CDXX). Forbes state that in 2019, prior to the Covid pandemic, just 4.7% of UK employees worked from home, but this had risen to 25% by Spring 2022. By Autumn 2024, more than one quarter of working adults (28%) were hybrid working.
- 3.13. Progress on currently allocated housing, employment and other opportunity sites will be reviewed in 2025/2026 to identify if any need to be removed or reallocated as preparation of the next Local Development Plan continues. For residential sites in particular, this will ensure that there is a deliverable housing land supply for the Housing Land Requirement of the next LDP.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.14. This chapter in the 2023 LDP aims to ensure the health and wellbeing of people and communities in Aberdeen, by focussing on the positive impact well designed places can have on physical and mental health, and on social interactions. Focusing on the social determinants of health, alongside more regulatory processes related to health, the chapter places health and wellbeing as a primary consideration within planning.
- 3.15. This section of the Plan pulls together five policies (Policies WB1 – WB5) relating to health and wellbeing. Three of the policies are new to the 2023 Plan (i.e. were not carried forward from the 2017 LDP) - Healthy Developments, Specialist Care Facilities and Changing Places Toilets - while two other policies, on Air Quality and Noise, were covered within previous local development plans. The Healthy Developments policy (WB1) has been used in a variety of applications to identify impacts to physical and mental health, such as: change of use into a children's nursery and associated play

space, conversion of units into a gym and formation of household waste and recycling centre.

- 3.16. Moving forward, there is a question over the continued need for the Changing Places Toilets policy (WB5), as this is now covered with Building Standards Regulations. An assessment of the impact of the Specialist Care Facilities policy (WB4) should also be undertaken in due course since, at the time of writing, a lack of relevant applications means that use of this policy has been limited. The Air Quality and Noise policies also play an ongoing and important role in supporting health.
- 3.17. There are two non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents which support this section on [Air Quality](#) (CDXX) and [Noise](#) (CDXX). Additional Health Impact Assessment non-statutory planning guidance (Aberdeen Planning Guidance) is programmed for adoption later in 2025.

Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 3.18. This part of the Plan looks to safeguard our natural environment, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, enhance biodiversity, and provide a range of benefits for nature, the planet and people.
- 3.19. The five policies within the section (Policies NE1 – NE5) protect sites and species, safeguard Aberdeen’s landscape setting and enhance Aberdeen’s blue and green infrastructure. The policies cover Green Belt, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Our Natural Heritage, Our Water Environment, and Trees and Woodland. The policies have been beneficial in ensuring that nature related issues are taken into consideration in the design and development of applications. The protective nature of the policies also support the Spatial Strategy through directing development to the right places.
- 3.20. There are four non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support these policies, covering [Natural Heritage](#) (CDXX), [Trees and Woodlands](#) (CDXX), [Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality](#) (CDXX) and [Green Space Network and Open Space](#) (CDXX).

Quality Placemaking

- 3.21. Quality placemaking and design are themes that should run through all developments. Placemaking within the 2023 Local Development Plan aims to create places that are sustainable, well-designed, and that meet people’s needs, while maintaining Aberdeen’s distinctiveness.
- 3.22. Aberdeen’s landscape also has a role in defining its identity, and setting. The City’s development has been shaped by the two river valleys, coast and arc of hills to the west. The use of granite as a primary building material within Aberdeen has led to the City’s distinct appearance. The historic environment comprises listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and sites within the Inventory of Designed Landscapes. The policies in the Quality Placemaking section of the 2023 LD ensure

that development is designed to enhance Aberdeen through promoting and protecting its landscape character, historic assets and environment.

3.23. Nine policies are located within this plan section - five on placemaking (Policies D1 – D1) and four covering the historic environment (Policies D6 – D9). Four policies are new policies to the 2023 Plan - Amenity, Landscape Design, Windows and Doors and Shopfronts. The remaining policies are a continuation in principle from previous plans. The policies, used in conjunction with internal processes such as weekly design surgeries and conservation surgeries, have resulted in improvements to the quality of information provided in planning applications. There is a specific policy on the retention and reuse of granite, a locally distinctive building material (Policy D7 – Our Granite Heritage). The D1 – Quality Placemaking policy has historically been the most used policy in previous local development plans and continues to be so via the 2023 LDP.

3.24. There are 16 policy related non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support the Quality Placemaking section:

- Energetica (CDXX)
- Temporary Buildings (CDXX)
- Amenity & Space Standards (CDXX)
- Sub-division and Redevelopment of Residential Curtilages (CDXX)
- Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside (CDXX)
- Development Along Lanes (CDXX)
- Materials (CDXX)
- Aberdeen Placemaking Process (CDXX)
- Big Buildings (CDXX)
- A Guide to Planning Consents for the Aberdeen Multis (CDXX)
- Landscape (CDXX)
- Stonecleaning (CDXX)
- Repair & Replacement of Windows and Doors (CD XX)
- Shops & Signs (CDXX)
- Repair & Reinstatement of Cast Iron Railing (CDXX)
- Outdoor Seating (CDXX).

3.25. There are also a number of adopted Planning Briefs, Masterplans and Development Frameworks which provide strategic guidance to site development across the city:

- Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4). (CDXX)
- Dubford Development Framework (CDXX)
- Former Davidson's Mill Development Framework and Masterplan (CDXX)
- Friarsfield Development Framework (CDXX)
- Grandhome Development Framework (Part 1 and Part 2) (CDXX)
- Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan (CDXX)
- Prime Four Business Park Development Framework (CDXX)
- Loirston Development Framework (CDXX)
- Maidencraig Masterplan (CDXX)
- Newhills Development Framework (CDXX)

- Oldfold Development Framework and Masterplan (CDXX)
- Persley Den (CDXX)
- New AECC Site at Rowett North (CDXX)
- Existing AECC Site at Bridge of Don (CDXX)
- Energy Transition Zone Masterplan (CDXX)
- Aberdeen Harbour Development Framework (CDXX)
- Balgownie Centre, Bridge of Don Planning Brief (CDXX)
- Bon Accord Baths Planning Brief (CDXX)
- Broadford Works Design Brief (CDXX)
- Denburn Valley Planning Brief (CDXX)
- River Don Corridor Framework (CDXX)
- Robert Gordon University City Centre Planning Brief (CDXX)
- St Peters Nursery Site Redevelopment Brief (CDXX).

Using Resources Sustainably

- 3.26. Using resources in a sustainable way will limit the impact on the environment and help to meet climate change targets. The Using Resources Sustainably section of the 2023 Plan focusses on Minerals, Contaminated Land, Waste, and Renewable Energy, and comprises eight policies (Policies R1 – R8). A policy on Heat Networks (R8) was introduced within this Plan, and the introduction of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy will help with the implementation of this policy. The Low and Zero Carbon Building & Water Efficiency policy (R6) has since been superseded by the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 and the introduction of the New Build Heat Standards 2024.
- 3.27. There are two non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to help support this section – Resources for New Development (CDXX) and Waste Management Requirements for New Developments (CDXX). Two more are proposed to come forward, one on Heat Networks and Energy Mapping and another on Renewable Energy.

Meeting Housing and Community Needs

- 3.28. To ensure sustainable communities there needs to be a wide choice of housing types and tenures to cater for all sections of the population, and supported by appropriate community facilities. Amenity should also be maintained and enhanced to support a high quality of life.
- 3.29. Ten policies (Policies H1 – H8 and CF 1 – 2) are included in the Meeting Housing and Community Needs section of the 2023 LDP, covering a range of different housing and community facility requirements. Policies on Development in Residential Areas, Affordable Housing, Housing Density and Gypsy and Traveller Sites have been in previous Local Development Plans. Two new policies were introduced in the 2023 plan, and these relate to Student Accommodation Developments (H7) and Houses in Multiple Occupation (H8). Community facilities are supported by the policies in the Plan, alongside the circumstances under which such facilities can be redeveloped.

- 3.30. There are seven non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents to support this section, Affordable and Specialist Housing (CDXX), Householder Development Guide (CDXX), Children's Nurseries (CDXX), Gypsy Traveller Sites (CDXX), and Student Accommodation (CDXX) with two new for the 2023 LDP, Houses in Multiple Occupation and Overprovision guidance (CDXX), and the Short Term Let guidance (CDXX).

The Vibrant City

- 3.31. Ensuring the future of the city centre and other retail and neighbourhood centres within Aberdeen helps with the provision of a wide range of services to support those who live, work and are visiting the city.
- 3.32. Aberdeen City Centre plays an important role in the commercial, economic, social, civic and cultural life of Aberdeen and wider North East. The over-riding principle of the Vibrant City policies (Policies VC1 – VC12) is the primacy of the Town Centre First approach. It promotes the city centre as a place to visit, interact, shop, work, live, play and spend time. Three new policies were introduced in the 2023 LDP relating to Vibrant Cities (VC1), Tourism and Culture (VC2), and City Centre Living (VC5). In addition, the West End Area policy (VC6) was re-written for the 2023 LDP to encourage a greater mix of uses with the aim of restoring vibrancy and vitality to the area.
- 3.33. There are three non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) documents to support this section of the plan, Hierarchy of Centres (CDXX), Harmony of Uses (CDXX) and Serviced Apartments (CDXX).

Delivering Infrastructure, Transport and Accessibility

- 3.34. This section of the 2023 Plan covers five policies, covering Developer Obligations (I1), transport infrastructure (T1 – T3) and digital infrastructure (CI1 – CI2). The policy on Sustainable Transport (T1) pulled together two policies from the 2017 Plan, and a new policy on Parking (T3) was introduced as part of the same exercise. Policy I1 and its supporting text provide detail on the matters which developer obligations may be required to address, and the circumstances where obligations may be sought. Details relating to the methodologies to be used in calculating developer obligations is set out in adopted Supplementary Guidance on Planning Obligations (CDXX) which forms part of the development plan. There is one non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance which also supports this section, on Transport and Accessibility (CDXX).

Supporting Business and Industrial Development

- 3.35. Maintaining a ready supply of employment land in the right places is vital to Aberdeen retaining its position as a competitive and sustainable business location. Aberdeen is home to Aberdeen International Airport and Aberdeen's North and South Harbour, all of

which provide a critical role in Aberdeen's economy and strategic transport routes to the rest of Scotland and beyond. Aberdeen South Harbour was identified as a National Development in National Planning Framework 3, this has continued into National Planning Framework 4 with the added inclusion of North Harbour into the designation.

- 3.36. There are six policies in the Supporting Business and Industrial Development section (Policies B1 – B6), which cover business and industrial land zonings, safeguarding the harbours and airport land, and safeguarding pipelines and potentially hazardous sites. The policies zone business and industrial land and support its development. Some of these zonings have recently been subject to planning applications relating to differing uses, including drive-throughs. One new policy was introduced into the ALDP 2023, and this was on Energy Transition Zones (B5). All other policies in this section were rolled forward from previous LDPs. There is one non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance relevant to this section, relating to Aberdeen International Airport and Perwinnes Radar (CDXX).

Lessons Learned

- 3.37. Table 3.1 notes some early lessons learned from the 2023 LDP, alongside considerations for the next Local Development Plan. These are broken down into the topic area structure of the 2023 Plan. Further monitoring of the 2023 LDP Spatial Strategy and policies will also continue during the preparation of the Local Development Plan 2028. The adoption of National Planning Framework 4 means that there are now areas where tNPF4 and the 2023 Plan have duplicate policies. Consideration will therefore be given to the need to maintain local policies that repeat national policies. Many of the issues highlighted here are discussed further in the relevant topic papers within Sections 7 – 17 of this Report.

Topic Area	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2028
Spatial Strategy	The focus on brownfield and city centre regeneration has sought to concentrate development within the city settlement boundary to support and increase use of existing facilities, services, infrastructure, transport links, and employment opportunities. There are masterplan sites with the city, many of which have rolled over from 2012 Plan. These sites are to be mixed use, and provide facilities inline with local living.	Have a spatial strategy and vision that meets the development requirements of National Planning Framework 4 policy direction. The current spatial strategy recognises Aberdeen as the regional hub for North East Scotland. It focuses on regenerating brownfield land whilst recognising that development sites should be provided in a range of locations including urban edge locations where appropriate. This approach has worked

Topic Area	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2028
	These sites have planning permission granted. The strategy has been useful as it has directed development to allocated sites and with windfall sites this has supporting the overall vision for the city.	well for many years and is considered sound.
Health and Wellbeing	Policy usage is low for some of the policies. This is potentially due to the specialised nature of the policies or due to the fact other legislation has a remit. Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments) is being used to assess planning applications and flag both physical and wellbeing implications to proposals.	With the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 we will need to consider whether the general policies within this section are still required. There may be a need for more targeted, locally specific policies, based on the work with the HDRC and Marmot Places. Consider how the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes can influence the development of the next plan.
Natural Environment	Policies are well used on the whole. Further non-statutory guidance may be needed on biodiversity. Open Space non-statutory guidance to be updated on completion of Open Space Strategy.	With the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 we will need to consider whether the general policies within this section are still required. Implication of Green Belt Review, Trees and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Strategy, Nature Networks will have to considered.
Placemaking	The policies are used frequently in determining applications. Policies D1 (Placemaking) and D2 (Amenity) are the most frequently used across all applications. Policies relating	There are a number of very local policies included which are not replicated within National Planning Framework 4. Consideration will need to be given to the retention of these policies.

Topic Area	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2028
	to the historic environment are also widely used. The design policies are frequently used as a point of negotiation on planning applications.	Implications of Play Sufficiency Assessment will have to be considered.
Resources	Contains some very specific policies that have been seldom used. Policy R6 section on Low and Zero Carbon Buildings has been superseded by new legislation. There is no guidance on hydrogen or battery storage renewables. Applications of these nature are becoming more prevalent in Aberdeen.	Water abstraction is a specific matter to Aberdeen which has to be considered. Consider if local policy or strategic view is required on renewable energy development in Aberdeen.
Housing and Community Need	Policy H1 (Residential Areas) is used frequently, and reflects the volume of householder applications submitted. A review of Short Term Lets within the city may be required to established if there are more hot spots. Constrained sites are linked to ownership and land use, with a small percentage linked to infrastructure.	Due consideration given to the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) from National Planning Framework 4. Review of all sites within the extant plan is required to consider deliverability. Much of the supply is likely to be deliverable.
Vibrant City	Number of policies supporting vibrant, vitality and mix use within the city centre. The city centre affordable housing waiver has supported	Network of Centres may need to be updated to reflect the recommendation within the Retail Study.

Topic Area	Lessons Learned from ALDP 2023	Considerations for ALDP 2028
	an increase on city centre living.	
Infrastructure and Transport	Developer obligations have continued to make a significant contribution to the funding of infrastructure projects. There is still a high degree of car dependency in the area. New initiatives are coming on stream, such as Aberdeen Rapid Transit, may help support modal shift, along with a bedding in of new transport infrastructure (Low Emission Zone and Bus Priority Infrastructure). Car Parking policy and active travel policy within the Plan support this.	With the removal of Supplementary Guidance, there needs to be consideration the how to provide appropriate policy on Developer Obligations. Local policies may still be required to support modal shift in transport.
Business and Industrial Development	There is a substantial employment land allocation, with the majority being marketable. There has been a decrease in take up of employment land over recent years. There has been a creep of other uses into employment land allocations, particularly in locations next to arterial routes.	No employment allocation identified in the National Planning Framework 4. Consider what the employment land need is for Aberdeen, and in what locations. A review of existing sites will be completed.

Table 3.1: ALDP 2023 Lessons Learned

3.38. In summary, a range of policies from the extant Local Development Plan 2023 have not been used or have been used infrequently since its adoption on 20 June 2023. Consideration will be given on whether these policies should be retained in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2028, or if other policies can be amended to take account of the matters raised in these policies. A number of these policies are specialised in nature, and so the policy may be required even if it has yet to be used, or infrequently used. There are also a number of very local policies included in the extant Plan which are not replicated within National Planning Framework 4. Consideration will also need to be given to the retention of these policies.

4. Main Issues arising from Evidence / Key Areas of Change

4.1. The evidence sources identify a number of issues and demographic challenges to be addressed in the production of the next Local Development Plan. These are summarised below, with the main issues collated in line with NPF4's trio of broad policy aims seeking to create:

- Sustainable places
- Liveable places
- Productive places

Demographic Challenges

4.2. The National Records of Scotland (NRS) includes various data projections that can potentially inform future demographic changes or trends. Although this information is useful, it must be kept in mind that these are projections based on current and historical data and cannot, therefore, be interpreted as definitive.

- The population of Aberdeen is anticipated to experience an increase of 2.3% (between the years of 2018-2043).
- The '0-15' age group is expected to see the largest population decrease between the years of 2018-2043 (-9.4%).
- The largest population increase is anticipated to be in the '75 and over' demographic, with an increase of 50.5% between the years of 2018 and 2043.
- According to the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) (CDXX), in Aberdeen City the largest projected increase is in single adult households (+4.4%). The largest percentage increases are in older households, particularly those aged 75+, with projected increases of 18.8% in Aberdeen City.
- The percentage of Aberdeen's population that will be of pensionable age is forecast to increase by 13.8% between 2018 and 2043, although the percentage of the population that will be of working age is expected to increase by 2.3% over the same period.

4.3. The expectation is that Aberdeen will experience an increase in the proportion of elderly people within its population in the future. This will likely result in a greater reliance on all medical facilities and service, and accessible and/or adaptable housing in the future. Notwithstanding this, the projected increase in the percentage of the population that will be of working age in 2043 would be contrary to projections for Scotland as a whole. The modest population increase forecast over the following years, (primarily driven by migration rather than the birth rate), will also exacerbate existing housing demand.

Sustainable Places

- Climate change poses challenges for Aberdeen City through increased temperatures, irregular precipitation patterns (and more frequent periods of sustained precipitation), increased sea levels and more frequent instances of extreme weather events such as storms and floods. There is also an increased risk of coastal erosion along Aberdeen's eastern coastline.
- Climate change also raises the possibility of future droughts which could result in water shortages. In particular, water abstraction from the River Dee could become even more problematic and this will have cross boundary implications with Aberdeenshire.
- Possible water shortages may also impair the growth of crops and increase the risk of wildfires starting in woodlands and forests. All of these outcomes pose potential risks to public health and safety, as well as the economic and ecological vitality of Aberdeen.
- Within the most urban areas of Aberdeen, increased temperatures could risk creating heatsinks. This may require the provision of adequate planting when redeveloping brownfield sites in order to provide more areas of shade and shelter that can help lower temperatures. It may also require us to experiment with and/or promote the use of alternative surfaces for pavements, roofs and areas of civic space.
- A regional Coastal Adaptation Plan (CAP) is currently being developed within Aberdeen to better understand the implications of coastal change within Aberdeen. This would inform on future measures that can be taken to build resilience to variations in the coastline caused by climate change.
- The Granite City Forest Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan (CDXX) shall help inform the approach for the protection of existing woodland resources, as well as guide some future planting and the ecological and biodiversity enhancement of existing resources in Aberdeen. This will be superseded in the future once the Council's Forest and Woodland Strategy, (which meets all legislative requirements), has been adopted. Work is underway to create this.
- The Council will need to consider its preferred approach for carbon offsetting (where necessary), as well as whether to use the biodiversity credits system. This will follow the publication of guidance from the Scottish Government on the mechanisms for offsetting biodiversity requirements.
- The Council may need to outline measures to prevent or mitigate the risks of soil compaction arising from potential developments to align with the new requirement outlined in NPF4.
- The Council may also need to create specific policies addressing hydrogen production, due to the potential demand for such facilities as part of the shift away from fossil fuel dependency. In addition to this, battery storage associated with renewable energy developments may also require specific policies to inform its siting and design requirements.
- The Council will need to develop a Nature Network as part of the effort to protect 30% of Scotland's land, coast and freshwaters by 2030. Particular focus will need to be directed towards connecting existing stand-alone areas of woodland

and quality open space with corridors of green space to better facilitate the movement of species between areas.

- A Green Belt Review is being actioned as part of a wider Natural Heritage Review. This will consider whether the existing green belt designations are still functioning as a means of preventing coalescence between Aberdeen and its suburbs, as well as considering how the green belt serves to protect or enhance the visual amenity and identity of these settlements. This review will also provide a further opportunity to consider how to connect to other existing areas of meaningful greenspace so as to establish a more cohesive Nature Network throughout the city.

Liveable Places

- There are high levels of disrepair within Aberdeen City's housing stock. There have been significant improvements for the social housing stock, but issues remain within other sectors that will need to be addressed.
- There is significant pressure on social housing stock. The retraction of national subsidies for affordable housing also means that there will be an even greater need for on-site affordable housing contributions within housing developments as opposed to taking commuted sums of funding. This may necessitate consideration of whether to increase the size of allocations on some sites to facilitate the additional necessary provision.
- A shortage of 1-bedroom properties within Aberdeen compared to an overprovision of 2-bedroom properties indicates disparities within the supply and demand in Aberdeen.
- Housing types offered will need to diversify in future to be more accommodating to a wider variety of demographics, and there will need to be an increase in the provision of specialised accommodation to account for the projected ageing population, as well as those with illness or disability that require more accessible properties.
- Additional gypsy traveller sites are required within Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Despite potential locations being identified in the Local Development Plans of both local authorities, there has been a lack of progress in the delivery of these sites.
- 9 of Aberdeen's 11 secondary schools are expected to be operating above optimal capacity by 2030. Aberdeen's School Estate Plan (CD XX) will be used to help inform where operational requirement can be made available, as some areas of the city have declining pupil numbers leading to excess unused capacity.
- A lack of available investment for new, extended or altered healthcare facilities is likely to prove a significant challenge in the coming years with funds accrued from Developer Obligations alone being insufficient to finance future projects. NHS Grampian are working with the local authority to identify and address the spatial implications of this.
- A joint Cumulative Transport Appraisal with Aberdeenshire Council will inform the Local Development Plan and its Spatial Strategy. This will be led by NESTRANS

and advised upon by Transport Scotland. It will be used to identify what pressures are on the existing network.

- The findings of the A96 corridor review may also have implications on site selection in the next Local Development Plan. Further spatial implications may arise where there is any need for additional safeguarding of land required for future rail, harbour or airport expansions or alterations. The same safeguarding considerations would also be required in the event of any hydrogen fuelling stations, or projects associated with a new hydrogen strategy coming forward.
- The Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) Framework and Delivery Plan (CD XX) will be used to inform the future strategy for heat distribution across the city and inform the Local Development Plan.
- To preserve historic assets within Aberdeen, Scotland's Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (CDXX) will influence the production of policies on built heritage in the Local Development Plan. Existing non-statutory planning guidance on local issues such as granite, cast-iron railings, and shopfronts will likely need to be replicated in the new Local Development Plan, due to the specificity of these issues not being adequately covered by the policies of NPF4.
- Local Living will be defined via an assortment of evidence sources, such as the Active Travel Strategy (CDXX), Open Space Strategy (CDXX), Play Sufficiency Assessment (CDXX) and the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 (CDXX).
- Aberdeen has a waiting list for allotments that is currently 218% greater than the number of plots available. There may need to be consideration of how more allotment sites can be delivered to address current demand. This would help achieve the objectives set out within Granite City Growing (CDXX) and the Food Growing Strategy (CDXX).

Productive Places

- A review of the current City Centre Retail Core zoning may be required in light of revised permitted development rights.
- There has been a significant increase in ground floor vacancy rates in the city centre, with the Bon Accord Centre and Union Street particularly badly affected. The vacancy rates are higher than the UK average if ranked on floorspace (as opposed to the number of vacant units).
- There may be a need for express policies addressing the siting of drive-throughs within the next Local Development Plan. Efforts to promote local living may be undermined if there is a proliferation of inappropriately located developments of this nature.
- Work is ongoing on Union Street to improve the urban realm and deliver on part of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CCBMP) (CDXX). Works are also ongoing at the beach to deliver a class-leading beach park and events field. These developments, as well as enhancing the functionality and desirability of these locations, can also contribute towards efforts of attracting and sustaining tourism to the city.

- There is currently a broad level of quantitative retail deficiency for bulky comparison goods (and market demand has been identified).
- NPF4 now requires that Local Development Plans include a landbank of construction aggregates that covers at least a 10-year period. North Lacks Quarry and Blackhills Quarry have extant consents lasting until 2047 and 2050 respectively, with both receiving extended consents that ensured a land bank of permitted reserves for a period exceeding 10 years.
- Aberdeen has experienced a higher number of visitors and expenditure by visitors year on year (between 2019-2023) and hotel occupancy and average room rates have returned to (or exceeded) pre-Covid-19 levels. There are however trends of increasing business costs, recruitment challenges and implications arising from short-term lets legislation. A visitor levy scheme is being developed following royal assent of The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024, and this may offer an avenue of revenue to sustain additional demand in the future.
- Aberdeen City has not yet achieved 100% coverage across the city with full fibre broadband connections. If May 2026 targets for future connections are achieved, then 96.4% coverage is expected (compared to the Scottish average of 83%). The Local Development Plan will still need to account for and facilitate the delivery of the telecommunications infrastructure to achieve this objective.
- There remains a need for Aberdeen to transition away from oil and gas related industries in order to achieve net zero targets. The promotion of renewable energy production, hydrogen production and storage and carbon capture and storage can potentially replace these, however, this will necessitate re-training of existing workforces and investment to achieve.
- There has been a decline in the uptake of employment land in Aberdeen over the past 10 years. Although partially attributable to the UK's departure from the EU, the downturn in the oil industry and the Covid-19 pandemic; there has also been a loss of employment land to alternative land uses. A revision of the Spatial Strategy may be necessary to manage and control further loss of employment land.

5. Position Statement – Areas of Agreement / Dispute

5.1. This section summarises the key statements of agreement and disputes over the sufficiency of the evidence and the Council's response to these matters.

5.2. The Evidence Report has been split into 10 themed topic areas that provide a summary of the evidence base for each topic (Report Sections 8 – 17). The topic areas are grouped to broadly reflect the policy areas within NPF4. Each topic area provides a summary of evidence relating to the policy areas within NPF4, as set out in Table 5.1 below.

Topic Area	NPF4 Policy Areas	NPF4 Policies
Spatial Strategy (section 8)	Sustainable Places Productive Places	Policy 8 Green belts Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings Policy 10 Coastal development Policy 26 Business and industry
Delivery of Homes (section 9)	Liveable Places	Policy 16 Quality homes
Infrastructure (section 10)	Liveable Places	Policy 18 Infrastructure first Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure Policy 24 Digital infrastructure
Sustainable Transport (section 11)	Sustainable Places	Policy 13 Sustainable transport
Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation (section 12)	Sustainable Places Liveable Places	Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation Policy 22 Flood risk and water management
Nature and Biodiversity (section 13)	Sustainable Places	Policy 3 Biodiversity Policy 4 Natural places Policy 5 Soils Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees
Energy and Resources (section 14)	Sustainable Places Liveable Places Productive Places	Policy 11 Energy Policy 12 Zero waste Policy 19 Heating and cooling Policy 33 Minerals
Centres of Business and Cultures	Productive Places	Policy 27 City, town and commercial centres

(section 15)		Policy 28 Retail Policy 30 Tourism Policy 31 Culture and creativity
Place (section 16)	Sustainable Places Liveable Places	Policy 7 Historic assets and places Policy 14 Design, quality and place Policy 15 Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods
Wellbeing and Community (section 17)	Liveable Places Productive Places	Policy 21 Play, recreation and sport Policy 23 Health and safety Policy 25 Community wealth building

Table 5.1: National Planning Framework 4 Topic Areas and Policies

5.3. The aquaculture industry is not active within Aberdeen City, and therefore the topic areas do not cover NPF4 Policy 32 Aquaculture. As Aberdeen City is an urban authority and, consequently, NPF Policy 17 Rural homes and Policy 29 Rural development are not covered.

Topic Area 1 Spatial Strategy

5.4. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of Spatial Strategy:

- Regional Spatial Priorities;
- Greenbelts;
- Brownfield Development;
- Coastal Development; and,
- Business and Industry.

5.5. The evidence includes an overview of the Aberdeen City and Shire Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (CDXX), outlining its purpose as a “bridging document” that supports the transposition of the Spatial Strategy from the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan of 2020 into the National Planning Framework 4.

5.6. With regards to evidence for the greenbelt and brownfield development, the intentions for a greenbelt review are set out, as are the implications of Scotland’s third Land Use Strategy in determining the spatial extent of the greenbelt. A number of documents which pertain to the landscape and its character are included. Reference is made to the AECOM Nature Network Corridor Map (CDXX) and the Aberdeen Green Belt Review 2010 (CDXX). Maps are included as supporting information which set out the following: 2023 Housing Land Audit Brownfield Sites (CDXX), 2019 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study Sites (CDXX) and 2023 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey Sites (CDXX). Brownfield and Greenfield development trends in Aberdeen are explored. Reference is made to the Council’s commitment to deliver a more up to date Brownfield Urban Capacity Study to follow on from the 2019 study. The latest Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (CDXX) is referred to with a breakdown of the headline figures. A brief reference is also made to the number and type of sites on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland (CDXX) which can be found in Aberdeen.

- 5.7. With regards to coastal development, reference is made to coastal zoning within the extant 2023 LDP and the Scottish Government Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance (2023) (CDXX). This includes a breakdown of its aims, noting also that a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is being developed in Aberdeen at the present time. The 'Flooding and Coastal Change' theme from Aberdeen Adapts (CDXX) is set out. Baseline data on sea level rises under high and low emission scenarios is set out with the broad consequences for Aberdeen briefly explained. Reference is made to Dynamic Coast, Scotland's Coastal Change Assessment (CDXX) and its identification of implications for Aberdeen, though this document is signposted for further exploration under the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Area.
- 5.8. With regards to business and industry, the evidence references statistics on Gross Value Added per head for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, median weekly wages, employment by sector within Aberdeen and nationally, statistics on the percentage and number of working age people in employment, the main growth sectors within the North East, business and industry land supply and its take up and statistics for office and industrial space. Reference is made to a number of other relevant national and regional strategies and funds, together with statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) – Work and Local Economy/Facilities and Services (CDXX).
- 5.9. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;
- NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland and 4 individuals agreed with the evidence in this section and stated that no evidence had been missed. NatureScot and NESTRANS have confirmed they do not dispute the evidence but have provided further comments and several amendments have been made to the Strategy Topic as a result. Three individuals did not agree with its contents.
 - Homes for Scotland and Bancon Homes have raised disputes on the Green Belt Review and Brownfield Urban Capacity Study. They have also provided further comments and amendments to the Strategy Topic have been made as a result.
 - THE Architecture and Planning raised several comments which are being treated as a dispute, although it has been possible to address some of these comments within the Strategy Topic.
 - A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves

Topic Area 2 Delivery of Homes

- 5.10. The mapped locations of the 2023 LDP housing allocations and the 2023 Housing Land Audit sites (CDXX) (both with colour coding indicating remaining capacity) are set out within the evidence. Mapping of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data for housing (CDXX) is included to give an indication of where the most affordable areas of the city are situated.

- 5.11. The Evidence Report summary sets out the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement within NPF4 and Aberdeen's figure of 7000 units over 10 years. It covers the demographic context of Aberdeen. Summaries are provided relating to Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023-2042 (CDXX). Chapter 2 relates to the key demographic issues for the local housing market, Chapter 3 relates to housing quality, stock pressures and size/type/tenure/location of social housing. Chapter 4 refers to outcomes and includes all tenure housing estimates based on 4 scenarios and sets out the reasoning for using the growth scenario to calculate the housing land requirement. Chapter 5 refers to specialist housing provision. A map showing the location of the single Travelling Persons site is also included.
- 5.12. The report notes that the current Local Housing Strategy dates from 2018-2023 (CDXX), however a new strategy is currently being prepared following the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. It is noted that a Housing Supply Target will be a key element of the new Local Housing Strategy.
- 5.13. The following are summarised: details on existing supply from the 2023 Housing Land Audit, greenfield and brownfield development trends, windfall development trends, headline figures from the city's 2024 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey submission and the 2019 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (CDXX) and data relating to affordability based up the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 (CDXX). Maps of the Strategic Housing Investment Sites are also included.
- 5.14. Further areas discussed are: wheelchair accessible housing, short terms lets, Houses in Multiple Occupation, the self-build register, reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan place standard assessment.
- 5.15. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;
- Thirteen responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland) 3 from housing developers, (Bancon Homes, Mic and Mac Group, Barratt/David Wilson Homes), and 7 members of the public. Of those listed, 6 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and others provided further evidence sources and comments.
 - NatureScot, NHS Grampian and 5 member of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
 - Homes for Scotland and Bancon Homes have raised disputes on the draft Local Housing Strategy and Brownfield Urban Capacity Study. They have also provided further comments and amendments to the Delivery of Homes Topic have been made as a result.
 - Bancon have raised a dispute about the density figures in the current Brownfield Urban Capacity Study.
 - Homes for Scotland and Bancon have raised a dispute regarding the use of the Existing Need in Scotland and Aberdeen Reports commissioned by Homes for Scotland.
 - THE Architecture and Planning raised several comments which are being treated as a dispute, although it has been possible to address some of these comments within the Delivery of Homes Topic.

- IcenI raised several comments it has been possible to address these comments within the Delivery of Homes Topic. IcenI note that their client Mac and Mic is supportive of the Homes for Scotland position.

Topic Area 3 Infrastructure and Communication

5.16. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of Infrastructure and Communication:

- Infrastructure First;
- Blue and Green Infrastructure; and,
- Digital infrastructure.

5.17. With regards to evidence for infrastructure first, a map of Aberdeen's cemeteries is included. Water, drainage and sewerage systems are briefly explored, including a map of available water capacity in Aberdeen and its immediate surrounds. Planned works by Scottish Water, the key Scottish Water infrastructure and the issue of water abstractions from the River Dee are mentioned. Gas infrastructure is briefly covered with reference to Scottish Gas Network Aberdeen Vision Project 2020 (CDXX). Scottish and Southern Electricity Transmission lines and distributions lines are mentioned, with a map of the main overline and underground cables for the city included. Waste and recycling is covered with a map of the main waste and recycling centres and recycling points shown. The following areas are mentioned but signposted for more robust discussion in their more relevant topic area sections: local living, play recreation and sport, transport infrastructure and the district heat network.

5.18. The current capacities of healthcare facilities across the city are set out. NHS Grampian responded to explain its circumstances relating to constraints over funding new facilities in the short term while it works upon a Programme of Initial Agreement. The current capacities of primary schools and secondary schools are set out using data from the 2024 School Roll Forecast (CDXX). Reference is made to the School Estates Plan (CDXX) with details of revisions to this caused by the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete and its removal as a priority. Reference to the Schools' Accessibility Plan 2020 – 2023 (CDXX) and the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Delivery Plan 2022 – 2024 (CDXX) are also included within the evidence.

5.19. With regards to evidence for blue and green infrastructure, details of the Open Space Audit 2024 (CDXX) are included with key findings. NatureScot's documents: Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention (CDXX), Maximising the Benefits of Green Infrastructure in Social Housing (CDXX) and Nature Networks Framework (CDXX) are referenced. It is noted that AECOM have developed a nature networks map to guide local authorities. Furthermore it is noted that Aberdeenshire Council are currently working on their own blue and green network mapping which will affect Aberdeen City Council strategies. The following areas are also mentioned but signposted for more robust discussion in their more relevant topic area sections: food growing strategy, green space network, play recreation and sport, greenbelt, local nature conservation

sites, trees and woodland, core paths, parks and gardens. For blue infrastructure a number of documents have been referenced which relate to flood risk, effects of climate change upon coastal changes, water quality and availability, carbon and peatland mapping, bathing water quality and management of the water environment.

- 5.20. With regards to evidence for digital infrastructure, a map has been included which shows locations of telecommunications masts from Aberdeen City Council's planning records from the past 20 years. Statistics on 4G and 5G coverage are noted. Areas of the city which have the poorest access to superfast broadband are noted. Statistics on coverage of full fibre gigabit coverage are noted.
- 5.21. Statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement plan are referenced for this topic area regarding the Facilities and Services theme.
- 5.22. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;
- NHS Grampian and 3 members of the public responded to the public consultation and agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.
 - Scottish Water and SEPA were satisfied with the paper and did not dispute the evidence. They made comments which included suggested changes to the paper, changes which were accepted.
 - Shell, Bancon and Nature Scot provided further commentary but did not dispute the paper.
 - THE Architecture and Planning state that they do not agree with the evidence within the Topic Paper. They have not responded to further correspondence and therefore their comments are taken as a dispute.
 - One member of the public disagrees with the evidence and has stated that there is 'too much to read'.

Topic Area 4 Sustainable Transport

- 5.23. The topic area sets the Council's commitment to undertaking a joint Cumulative Transport Appraisal with NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council. Mapped locations of transport infrastructure (car parks, bus station, train stations, park and ride facilities) are included. A number of national transport strategies are referenced. The four main behaviours from Transport Scotland's Reducing Car Use for a Healthier, Fairer and Greener Scotland (CDXX) are set out. Relevant recommendations from Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Project Review 2 Final Summary Report (CDXX) are included. The NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review Final Report (CDXX) is referenced which explores forecasting of transport statistics based upon 'with policy' and 'without policy' scenarios. The NESTRANS Reducing Car-km and Carbon Emissions Executive Summary (CDXX) is referenced which explores the qualitative and quantitative impacts of measures the region can implement to influence car usage.
- 5.24. The six priorities of the NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2040 (CDXX) are set out. Details of the 29 intervention 'options' to achieve these priorities are set out. The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021 (CDXX) is referenced and its draft update 2023-2030 is currently undergoing review following public consultation (CDXX).

The eight overarching objectives are set out within the evidence as are the 14 outcomes that it intends to achieve up to 2030, with more specific outputs also set out.

- 5.25. A number of active travel documents are referenced such as Transport Scotland's Active Travel Framework (CDXX), Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan (CDXX) and Aberdeen Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (CDXX), and an overview of the aims of these respective documents is set out. The site specific projects of the Aberdeen Multi-Model Corridor Studies are listed. Core paths and rights of way are discussed and a maps of both within Aberdeen is included. A number of statistics relating to active travel are included within the evidence from the 2023 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study (CDXX).
- 5.26. With regards to public transport, data on rail and bus travel is included. A summary of train station facilities is provided. A map is included which shows 2023 Local Development Plan land reserved for transport. A map showing weekday bus routes is included. Statistics from NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study give an indication of bus patronage trends, including usage of park and ride facilities. Private car use statistics are also included after this section. A brief summary of Aberdeen Rapid Transport, a commitment included within National Planning Framework 4, is included which shows a map of potential routes through Aberdeen. Improvements and planned appraisals funded by Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund and the City Region Deal are set out. The locations of bus priority infrastructure are also mapped.
- 5.27. With regards to car parking, controlled parking zones are mapped with total city centre parking totals noted. Public vehicle charge points are mapped and discussed. Car club locations are also mapped. The Ports and Airport are briefly discussed with relevant sources included. A list of SEPA requested sources is also set out. Statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement plan are referenced for this topic paper regarding the following themes; moving around, public transport and traffic and parking.
- 5.28. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows
- Transport Scotland, NESTRANS, NHS Grampian, Nature Scot and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.
 - Transport Scotland and NESTRANS sought some minor changes to the document which were accepted.
 - NatureScot, Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed that they did not dispute the Topic Paper but have provided further comments.
 - A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he "does not have the knowledge to confirm why". A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 5 Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation

- 5.29. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of climate change, mitigation and adaptation:

- Climate and Nature Crisis, Climate Mitigation and Adaptation; and,
- Flood Risk and Water Management.

5.30. With regards to climate and nature crisis/climate mitigation and adaptation, a number of strategies and documents are included. The themes from Scotland's Climate Change Plan (CDXX) are set out as are the key sectors and actions from the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032. The 23 objectives from 5 adaptation outcomes are included from Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2024 – 2029 (CDXX). Key statistics relating to Scotland's carbon emissions are set out from the Climate Change Committee Report to Parliament 2023 (CDXX). Future climate impacts in an Aberdeen context are set out from Aberdeen Adapts while the city's strategic priorities to support energy transition are included within the evidence from Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen (CDXX), Net Zero Route map Aberdeen, and the Council Climate Change Plan 2021 – 2025 (CDXX). Projected climate implications are included from Met Office statistics. A statistical breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions per sector in Aberdeen have been included using UK Greenhouse Gas Data. Peatland mapping and soils data are also included.

5.31. With regards to flood risk and water management, the responsibilities of local authorities are listed from The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. Key outcomes for flood resilient places are listed from the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 (CDXX). Particularly vulnerable areas to flooding in Aberdeen are discussed from the Local Flood Risk Management Plan – North East (CDXX). The evidence notes that Aberdeen does not have a surface water management plan but is working with Scottish Water and SEPA to provide a Strategic Growth Agreement for natural remedies in terms of blue/green infrastructure to alleviate surface water flooding pressures. A number of SEPA sources are included that cover water scarcity, flood maps, recommended riparian corridors, guidance on land use planning and the water environment.

5.32. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;

- NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Iceni Projects, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- Homes for Scotland dispute the site methodology and provided an alternative.
- SEPA, Nature Scot, and Bancon Homes confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments and evidence sources which have been added to the topic paper.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 6 Nature and Biodiversity

5.33. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of nature and biodiversity:

- Biodiversity;

- Natural Place;
- Soils; and,
- Forestry and Woodland.

5.34. With regards to biodiversity, it is noted that the Council is to complete an annual Natural Environment Report which will succeed the Biodiversity Duty Report. The evidence notes the commitment to protect 30% of land and seas for nature set out within Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan (CDXX). Key Scottish statistics are listed from the State of Nature Report 2023 (CDXX). A number of national lists, maps and overlays relating to biodiversity data are referenced within the evidence as well as local spatial sources such as the Green Space Network. The location of Aberdeen's one Special Area of Conservation and one Special Protection Area is noted. The evidence notes where the highest concentrations of invasive species are found in the city. Information relating to specific species which require protection and support are included within the evidence.

5.35. With regards to natural places, the main issues facing coastlines and freshwater are set out within multiple evidence sources. The location of Aberdeen's four Sites of Specific Scientific Interest are included, as are Aberdeen's four Local Nature Reserves and 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites. Statistics from the consultation on the 'Natural Space' theme from the Place Standard Assessments are included.

5.36. With regards to soils, the Aberdeen sites of prime agricultural land are included, as are sites where class 1, 3 and 5 peatland can be found. There are a number of listed spatial datasets relating to soils in the evidence alongside other projects and documents of relevance.

5.37. With regards to forestry, woodland and trees, the objectives and priorities of Scotland's Forestry Strategy (CDXX) are listed. It is noted that Aberdeen has 3 recorded sites of Class 2a Ancient Woodland and 8 Class 3 sites and these are included within a map. The four strategic priorities of the Aberdeen's Forest and Woodland Strategy are identified. Other sources of spatial data and guidance are listed.

5.38. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;

- NHS Grampian, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Iceni confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments.
- SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper and note further comments.
- Bancon Homes have raised a dispute in relation to Prime Agricultural Land.
- One individual respondent agreed there were no pieces of information missing but noted there was a lot of read.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he "does not have the knowledge to confirm why". A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 7 Energy and Resources

5.39. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of energy and resources:

- Energy;
- Heating and Cooling;
- Minerals; and,
- Zero Waste.

5.40. With regards to energy, targets, challenges and outcomes are set out within the evidence from Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (CDXX) and Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy (CDXX). Aberdeen's Energy Transition Zone, including the Hydrogen Campus and Hydrogen Hub, is outlined. Aberdeen's onshore wind spatial framework is outlined. Aberdeen's three important offshore wind developments are listed alongside the identification of Scotland's National Marine Plan as an key consideration for future offshore wind projects. Main national sources for hydrogen are set out as are the 4 hydrogen projects in Aberdeen and the objectives of the Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy (CDXX). The two locations of solar arrays are listed, as well as OP64 which is a site allocated for a solar array in the extant Local Development Plan. The most recent application history relating to battery storage is also included.

5.41. With regards to heating and cooling, the key outcomes from the Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy (CDXX) are listed as are the city's four Combined Heat and Power Network schemes and the seven heat networks in the city.

5.42. With regards to minerals, demand and supply statistics are included from the Aggregate Demand and Supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2025 (CDXX), the 2019 and 2022 Mineral Planning Surveys (CDXX). The locations of the two active quarries in Aberdeen are also listed.

5.43. With regards to zero waste, the key actions from Making Things Last: A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland (CDXX) and Circular Economy and Waste Routemap to 2030 (CDXX) are set out. Waste consumption statistics are included from SEPA's Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary (CDXX). The Aberdeen context is outlined in the Aberdeen City Waste Strategy (CDXX) and the Net Zero Aberdeen: Circular Economy Strategy (CDXX). The evidence notes that there are 4 public household waste recycling centres in Aberdeen. Other key facilities include the NESS Energy from Waste Facility, the TECA Anaerobic Digestion Plant and Atlens East Materials Recovery Facility.

5.44. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;

- NatureScot, NHS Grampian, and e members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments and evidence sources which have been added to the topic paper.
- One individual respondent agreed there were no pieces of information missing but noted there was a lot of read.

- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 8 Centres of Business and Cultures

5.45. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of centres of business and cultures:

- City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres;
- Retail;
- Tourism; and,
- Culture & Creativity.

5.46. With regards to city, town, local and commercial centres, the evidence notes details from the Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024 (CDXX) which assessed retail capacity, turnover and opportunities. The hierarchy of extant Local Development Plan centres are set out, and a map of these sites is included. The types of uses found within these centres and statistics on footfall are touched upon based on a retail centre health check from 2023 (CDXX). Feedback from householder surveys from the retail study are included. The brands and locations of drive throughs are set out in a table and mapped. Feedback from the ‘Work and Local Economy’ theme of the Place Standard Assessments is included. The main works from the City Centre and Beach Masterplan are listed.

5.47. With regards to retail, a summary of details of retail and service provision in Aberdeen are set out alongside statistics from the Retail Study which includes a breakdown of quantitative and qualitative retail deficiencies. A list of projects and schemes is included which seek to improve the outlook of retail services in the city centre. The key projects and services undertaken by the Aberdeen Business Improvement District are listed.

5.48. With regards to tourism, the main recent projects in Aberdeen are listed including the new Aberdeen South Harbour which facilitates the docking of cruise vessels. Visitor statistics are included from the Aberdeen City STEAM Report (CDXX) as well as hotel occupancy rates. The major tourist sites and hotels/guest houses are mapped. The objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy (CDXX), Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023-2026 (CDXX) and the National Tourism Strategy (CDXX) are listed, as are brief descriptions of other relevant strategies and funds. The Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report notes Tourism as a key growth sector.

5.49. With regards to culture and creativity, it is noted that the Culture and Investment Programme will replace the current grant schemes for arts and culture and that the Council has begun to invest in cultural assets via the Place Based Investment Fund. The main cultural and creative locations in Aberdeen are listed and mapped. National

budgets for culture are included. Ambitions from the Culture Aberdeen Strategy (CDXX) and the projects under Creative Learning Aberdeen are listed. Key statistics for visitors are listed from the Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review.

5.50. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;

- NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Bancon and 3 members of the public agreed that all key pieces of evidence had been considered in this section. 1 member of the public considered that the evidence used was “highly relevant”.
- NatureScot provided comments relating to the importance of blue green infrastructure which had already been addressed in Topic Paper 3 Infrastructure and Communications.
- McDonalds Restaurants did not dispute the evidence presented but did not agree with the evidence presented. McDonalds Restaurants believed that we had missed key pieces of evidence in preparing the topic paper. However, no additional evidence sources were suggested. We are minded to treat this as a dispute.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 9 Place

5.51. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of place:

- Historic Assets and Places;
- Design, Quality and Place; and,
- Local Living.

5.52. With regards to evidence for historic assets and places, reference is made to documents produced by Historic Environment Scotland. Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland’s Historic Environment (CDXX) is a 5 year national strategy for the historic environment. Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (CDXX) is a policy document which supports decision making. Further evidence hosted by Historic Environment Scotland’s interactive portal is referenced. Datasets include conservation areas, policies, places of worship, buildings at risk register, designated sites, and grants (5 live projects in Aberdeen are set out in a table). It is noted also that the Council’s archaeology service host a full database of the 6,262 known sites of historic and archaeological interest in Aberdeen. A number of other elements are referenced: the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CDXX), Aberdeen City Heritage Trust, Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, Heritage and Place Programme, Article 4 Directions (removal of permitted development rights for replacing windows within three conservation areas) and Place Standard Assessments.

5.53. Regarding the evidence for design quality and place, reference is made to the Place Standard Assessments which have taken place online and across Aberdeen with many

of the results set out. Details of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CDXX) and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan refresh 2022 (CDXX) are included. Reference is made to Aberdeen Planning Guidance Aberdeen Placemaking Process (CDXX) and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs. Reference is made to Local Place Plans. Reference is made to the Planning Performance review and a table showing recent results where value was added by the development management process in Aberdeen.

5.54. With regards to evidence for local living, a list is made of all the factual or spatial data sources that the Council has relating to the 5 categories of the local living framework. Reference is made to a number of national sources such as Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood Planning Guidance (CDXX), Climate Exchange – 20 minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context (CDXX), and Nationwide equity assessment of the 20-minute neighbourhood in the Scottish context (CDXX). The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal – Excel Results are also set out which indicates the percentage of homes in Aberdeen which have access to various amenities. Headline figures from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 (CDXX) are reported within the evidence. NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling is briefly covered indicating Aberdeen specific data relating to travel mode choice. The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1 is referenced which sets out observations regarding the accessibility of retail services in the city. The Population Needs Assessment 2023 (CDXX) , Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 and Full Outcomes Framework are referenced. The locations of public toilets and public water taps are also included as maps.

5.55. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;

- NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
- NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Banon confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments which have been added to the topic paper.
- THE Architecture and Planning raised several comments which are being treated as a dispute, although they are general comments in nature.
- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Topic Area 10 Wellbeing and Community

5.56. The summary of evidence addresses the following aspects of wellbeing and community:

- Play, Recreation and Sport;
- Health and Safety; and,
- Community Wealth Building.

- 5.57. With regards to evidence for play, recreation and sport, a rundown of the number of facilities in Aberdeen (both public and private) and their nature is given. The Facility Planning Model is referred to and the key statistics in determining future demand for 3 court halls, swimming pools and full size synthetic pitches is given. Specific identified investment is set out from the Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy (CDXX). Key actions relating to physical activity and play for children are listed from the Children's Services Strategic Plan (CDXX). Themes relating to play are listed from the Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy (CDXX). Tree and Woodland strategic implementation is touched upon. Key statistics relating to quality and accessibility of play and recreation spaces are included, taken from the Open Space Strategy 2011-2016 (CDXX) and the Open Space Audit 2024 (CDXX). Statistics from the Local Outcomes Improvement plan are referenced for this topic paper regarding the Play and Recreation theme.
- 5.58. With regards to evidence for health and wellbeing, the determinants of health and wellbeing are diagrammatically represented along with the aims set out in Health Priorities for Scotland (CDXX) and a list of the most affected groups relating to suicide in Scotland with acknowledgement that this is in part influenced by factors relating to placemaking and planning. Statistics on obesity are included from the Scottish Government's 'A Healthier Future'. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map data for the bottom 20% health deprived areas is included. Supporting statistics and aims from NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership are included. National Records for Scotland data on demographics gives a breakdown on life expectancy in Aberdeen and a table is included showing the leading causes of death in the city. Other related elements that are set out include locations of food growing sites (such as allotments), issues of air quality (including the 3 air quality management areas) and excessive noise, land contamination and public safety and hazards (including Aberdeen Airport Public Safety Zone, pipeline notification zone, quarries). The results of the themes 'Feeling Safe' and 'Influence and Sense of Control' from the Place Standard exercise have also been set out.
- 5.59. With regards to community wealth building, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map data for the bottom 20% deprived areas, income and employment deprived areas are included. Aberdeen employment statistics from the Office of National Statistics are included. Key activities that the Council is engaged in to promote community wealth building is set out within Committee Report COM/22/279 (CDXX). The evidence notes that there have been 6 community asset transfers in Aberdeen since the introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. It is noted that the Council has a list of all non-housing property assets with details of requests for sites on the community assets transfer webpage. Relevant statistics and priorities from the Local Outcomes Improvement plan and the Aberdeen North, Central and South Locality Plan are referenced.
- 5.60. The key statements of agreement and dispute are as follows;
- NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Sportscotland and 2 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.
 - Homes for Scotland, Bacon and John Handley Associates Ltd confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments and evidence sources which have been added to the topic paper.

- A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

6. Legislative Requirements

- 6.1 The matters identified in Section 15(5) of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, which the Council must set out its view on in the Evidence Report and which must be taken into account in preparing the new LDP’s spatial strategy and the corresponding Schedules or Sections of the Evidence Report are set out below:

Section 15(5) of the 1997 Act, as amended	Schedule or Section of the Evidence Report
The principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district	All topic papers
The principle purposes for which the land is used	All topic papers
The size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district	Delivery of Homes (section 9), Infrastructure (section 10), Wellbeing and Communities (section 17)
The housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people	Delivery of Homes (section 9)
The desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement	Delivery of Homes (section 9)
The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and the use of land on those health needs	Wellbeing and Communities (section 17)
The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and the use of land on those education needs	Infrastructure (section 10), Wellbeing and Communities (section 17)
The extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population	Not relevant
The capacity of education services in the district	Infrastructure (section 10)
The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural	Centres of Business and Cultures (section 15), Place (section 16)

venues and facilities (including, in particular, but not limited to live music venues) in the district	
The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education systems)	Infrastructure (section 10), Sustainable Transport (section 11), Energy and Resources (section 14)
How that infrastructure is used	Infrastructure (section 10), Sustainable Transport (section 11), Energy and Resources (section 14)
Any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to any of the matters mentioned above.	All topic papers

Table 6.1: Legal Requirements of Evidence Report

7. Engagement Strategy

7.1. The development of this Evidence Report has been aided by a collaborative approach to data and spatial gathering and analysis with Key Agencies and other stakeholder, as well as consultation and engagement with a wide range of organisations and the general public. This section summarises the consultation and engagement activity that has been undertaken and sets out how the Council has sought views in the preparing of the Evidence Report and how these views have been taken account of. The consultation and engagement undertaken has included a range of activities, including online surveys, in person events, meetings and consultation on the Topic Papers.

7.2. The main elements of the Engagement Strategy were as follows:

- Corporate Dialogue and Input
- Early Draft Topic Paper Consultation and Draft Topic Paper Consultation
- Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future Engagement Exercise
- Workshops and Other Targeted Work with Stakeholders

7.3. A [report](#) was taken to Full Council, 4 July 2024, to inform elected Members of the Evidence Report for the Local Development Plan 2028 and to seek authority to carry out consultations and produce the Report. Members workshops will held ahead of the Evidence Report going to Full Council.

7.4. Figure 7.1 below summarises what engagement took place with the key agencies, equalities groups, public at large and other stakeholders, and what engagement took place with each group.

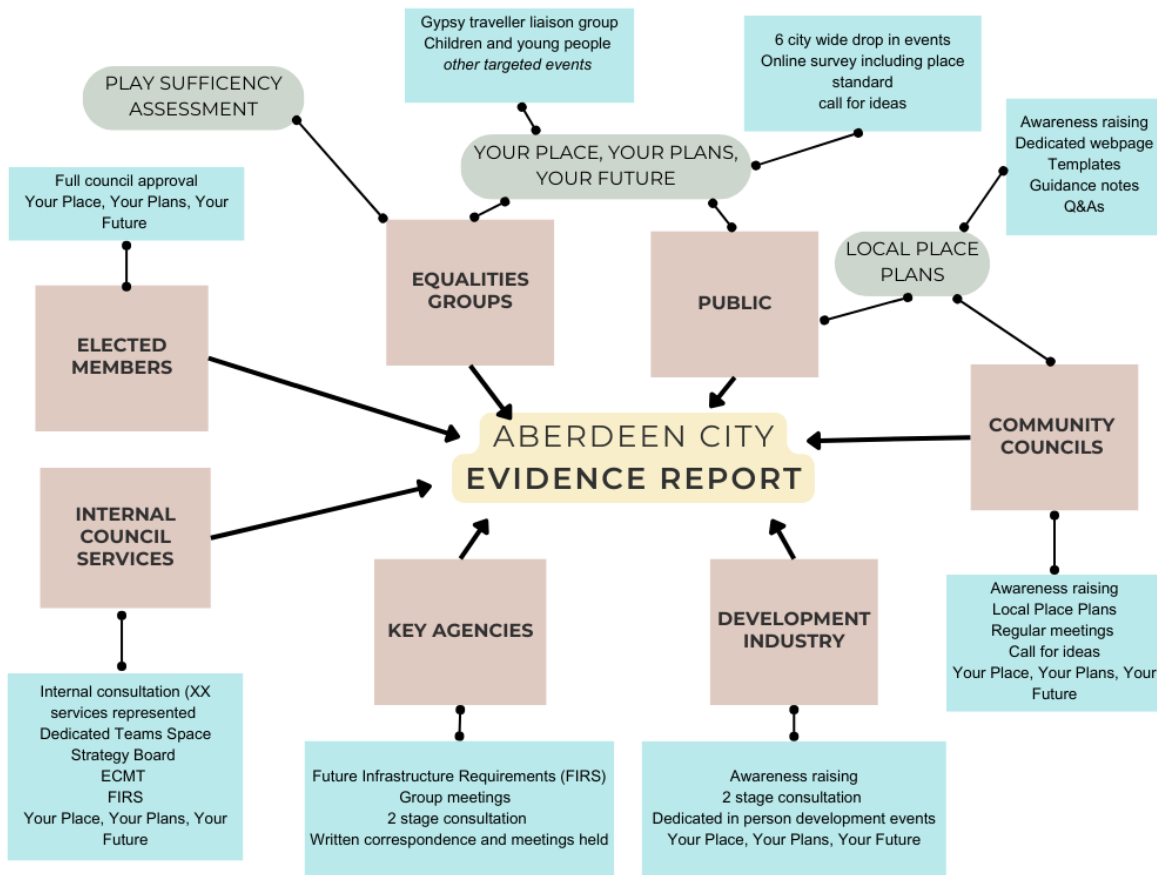


Figure 7.1: Diagram of engagement

Corporate Dialogue and Input

- 7.5. Sessions were held with the Council's internal Strategy Board, which comprises senior officers from across the Council who produce city strategies and is chaired by the Chief Executive. Strategy Board have been regularly updated on progress of the Local Development Plan and the Evidence Report. Drafts of the topic papers were also submitted to the Strategy Board for awareness and comment.
- 7.6. A workshop was also carried out at the Councils Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT) based on the Architecture and Design Scotland Place skills for plan-making approach. ECMT is attended by all Chief Officers from across the Council. Conversations focused on identifying key projects and intervention in Aberdeen, and future scenario forecasting on "what Aberdeen will look and feel like in 2040?"
- 7.7. Internal consultations with other Council services were also undertaken at officer level in order to prepare the Evidence Report. As the Evidence Report will inform the Proposed Local Development Plan, it is important that there is alignment between the evidence base and the visions and strategies that other services have. This process assisted in identifying gaps in evidence and in ensuring that there was visibility of the Topic Papers right across the organisation.

7.8. A presentation and workshop on “Place and Health” was carried out with academics, health professionals, general public, third sector organisations, and public sector practitioners at the Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaboration Conference. The workshop focussed on the lived experience of Aberdeen by seeking views from the audience.

Topic Paper Preparation and Consultation

7.9. To provide a basis for the Evidence Report and to help establish the views of stakeholders on the evidence, we collated evidence sources into ten individual ‘Topic Papers’ table 7.1, column 1:

Topic Paper	Reference Group Organisation
Topic Paper 1 – Spatial Strategy	Aberdeenshire Council Chambers of Commerce Marine Directorate Ryden Homes for Scotland Scottish Enterprise Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Flooding/Coastal Team)
Topic Paper 2 - Delivery of Homes	Homes for Scotland Housebuilders (Bancon, Barratt/David Wilson Homes, Cala, Malcom Allan) Registered Social Landlords (Hillcrest) Consultants (Rydens, Savills) NHS Grampian Grampian Regional Equality Council Disabled Persons Housing Service Aberdeen City Council (Education, Developer Obligations, Affordable Housing, Roads, Building Standards, Development Management)
Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure	Aberdeenshire Council ABZ Safeguarding First Bus Nature Scot NESTRANS Network Rail NHS Grampian Port of Aberdeen Scottish Water SEPA Sport Scotland Transport Scotland

	Aberdeen City Council (Corporate Landlord, Roads Development Managment, Transport Strategy and Programmes, Environmental Services, Education, Waste, Environmental Policy)
Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Transport	Aberdeenshire Council ABZ Safeguarding First Bus Nature Scot NESTRANS Network Rail NHS Grampian Port of Aberdeen Scottish Water SEPA Sport Scotland Transport Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Corporate Landlord, Roads Development Managment, Transport Strategy and Programmes, Environmental Services, Education, Waste, Environmental Policy)
Topic Paper 5 – Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation	SEPA Scottish Water Nature Scot NESTRANS Aberdeen City Council (Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation)
Topic Paper 6 – Nature and Biodiversity	Forestry Scotland The Hutton Institute NatureScot Marine Directorate SEPA Woodland Trust Aberdeen City Council (Development Management/Climate and Environment Policy/ Environmental Manager/ Flooding)
Topic Paper 7 – Energy and Resources	University of Aberdeen Aberdeen Heat and Power Nature Scot SEPA Scottish Water British Geological Society

	Aberdeen City Council (Waste, Energy, Hydrogen)
Topic Paper 8 – Centres of Business and Culture	Opportunity North East Aberdeen Inspired Our Union Street Port of Aberdeen Federation of Small Businesses NESCOL University of Aberdeen Robert Gordon University Scottish Enterprise Visit Aberdeen APDC Aberdeen City Council (Economic Development, Cultural Policy, Regeneration, Business Development, Development Management)
Topic Paper 9 – Place	Archaeology Service – provided by Aberdeenshire Council. Architecture and Design Scotland Historic Environment Scotland NESTRANS Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation/ Development Management / Transport Strategy and Programmes / Education / Families and Communities / Environmental Manager)
Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities	NHS Grampian Public Health Consultant Sport Aberdeen Sportscotland Health and Safety Executive Aberdeen City Council (Environmental Health / Community Wealth Building / Community Planning / Community Learning and Development, Development Management).

Table 7.1 Topic Papers and Key Contact Organisations.

7.10. Due to the interconnected nature of the Topic Papers, they were developed in tandem as a suite of documents so that they could be presented and shared at the same time. This allowed the papers to be read across as whole if desired.

7.11. In July 2024 stakeholders were identified in relation to each of the Topic Paper areas and contact was made to establish key points of contact to form review groups (table 7.1, column 2). For the Topic Papers. During summer 2024 correspondence with review group contacts were used to assist in identifying relevant data and information sources for inclusion in the draft topic papers.

7.12. Between 27 January and 23 February 2025, early draft Topic Papers and survey were circulated to stakeholders. These comprised external groups (statutory key agencies, agencies, and organisations) and internal departments within Aberdeen City Council who had agreed to be part of review groups (table 7.2). The early drafts were also shared with members of the Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS) see paragraph 7.30 and table 7.5 for further detail on FIRS. The following overarching questions were asked:

- Thinking about the future, what do you think are the key pieces of information or issues relating to your organisation's interests that should be considered as part of the preparation of the next Local Development Plan?
- What key investment does your organisation expect to make in the Aberdeen City Council area which the Council should consider in preparing the next LDP?

For each of the 10 Topic Papers the following questions were asked:

- Are there any further evidence sources that you think need to be considered or further explained?
- Are there any further evidence sources that you think need to be considered or further explained?

Topic Paper	Early Draft Consultee
Topic Paper 1 – Spatial Strategy	Response received from: Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce Aberdeenshire Council Marine Directorate Ryden Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Coastal)
Topic Paper 2 – Delivery of Homes	Response received from: Aberdeenshire Council Disabled Persons Housing Service Grampian Regional Equality Council Homes for Scotland Housebuilders (Bancon, Barratt/David Wilson Homes, Cala) Aberdeen City Council (

	Education, Developer Obligations, Affordable Housing, Roads, Building Standards, Development Management)
Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure	Response received from: Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations Aberdeen International Airport Aberdeenshire Council Cellnex UK Civil Aviation Authority Cycle Forum O2/Vodafone Ofcom OpenReach Sport Scotland SSEN Three Transport Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Developer Obligations, Roads Engineering)
Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Transport	Response received from: Aberdeen Harbour Board Aberdeenshire Council First Bus Homes for Scotland Network Rail Port of Aberdeen Stagecoach
Topic Paper 5 – Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation	Response received from: NatureScot Scottish Water SEPA Aberdeen City Council Development Management, Climate and Sustainability, Roads Projects)
Topic Paper 6 – Nature and Biodiversity	Response received from: Hutton Institute Marine Directorate Scottish Forestry Woodland Trust for Scotland Aberdeen City Council (Development Management)
Topic Paper 7 – Energy and Resources	Response received from: Aberdeen Heat and Power BGS

	British Geological Survey HSE Leiths University of Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council (City Growth, Energy, Waste, NESS)
Topic Paper 8 – Centres of Business and Culture	Response received from: Aberdeen Harbour Board Aberdeen Inspired Aberdeen Solicitors and Property Centre Federation of Small Businesses Invest Aberdeen NESCOL ONE Our Union Street Robert Gordon University University of Aberdeen Visit Aberdeenshire Aberdeen City Council (Development, Management, City Growth, Cultural Policy, City Development, Commercial Development,)
Topic Paper 9 – Place	Archaeology Service – provided by Aberdeenshire Council. Architecture and Design Scotland Historic Environment Scotland NESTRANS Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation/ Development Management / Transport Strategy and Programmes / Education / Families and Communities / Environmental Manager) Response received from: THE Architecture and Design obo Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland Historic Environment Scotland Homes for Scotland NHS Grampian Bancon Homes Network Rail NatureScot Archaeology Service Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation)

Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities	NHS Grampian Public Health Consultant Sport Aberdeen Sportscotland Health and Safety Executive Aberdeen City Council - Environmental Health / Community Wealth Building / Community Planning / Community Learning and Development, Development Management. Response received from: NHS Grampian Bancon Homes Network Rail Sportscotland Aberdeen City Council (Environmental Policy / Environmental Health)

Table 7.2 Topic Papers Early Draft Consultees

- 7.13. This was undertaken to ensure the content was correct before the wider public consultation and comments on the early draft Topic Papers fed into the production of the draft Topic papers.
- 7.14. The draft Topic Papers then formed part of the wider 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' consultation exercise between 24 March and 18 May 2025 as detailed below. This was open to all. There were are total
- 7.15. The purpose of the consultation was to help identify any gaps in evidence or potential areas of disagreement prior to preparing the Evidence Report. A summary of comments received as part of the topic paper consultation can be found in as part of the 'Statements of Agreement / Dispute' in each Topic Paper and can be found through sections 8-17 of this report.

Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future

- 7.16. 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' was a city-wide conversation using 'place' as a lens based on the Place Standard Tool, which provided the opportunity to share views on the city thematically and to shape multiple local plans and strategies at once. The engagement activities ran for 8 weeks, between 24 March and 18 May 2025.
- 7.17. To support people to participate and reduce the ask on communities, Community Planning Aberdeen partners joined up to hold one engagement to inform the various strategic plans. By integrating the engagement, we aimed to reduce the burden on communities and streamline the engagement process. The plans and strategies included the Local Housing Strategy, Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan, Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan, the Local Development Plan

(LDP) Topic Papers, the Visitor Levy Proposal, the Children’s Services Plan, and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans. It also offered a platform to get more people involved in the engagement process through a wider dialogue on place.

- 7.18. 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' provided an opportunity to gather scoring and commentary on what is good now and what improvements could make our city and neighbourhoods better. 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' also included a specific survey on the Topic Papers.
- 7.19. The ‘Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future’ survey (appendix XX), was based on the Place Standard tool, and was designed to help participants think about practical needs and feelings about their place. It was designed to gather:
- scoring and comments on what is good now and what improvements could make our city and neighbourhoods better in the future for each of the 14 Place Standard themes (Figure 7.2 below), much of which will help inform the next Local Development Plan; *and*
 - if people agree with priorities and actions in our current draft strategies (Local Housing Strategy, Community Learning and Development, Health and Social Care Strategic Plan, visitor levy and Play Sufficiency Assessment).



Figure 7.2: The 14 Place Standard themes

Draft Topic Papers

- 7.20. For those interested in the evidence base to inform preparation of the next Local Development Plan, a separate area of the consultation focused specifically on the ten draft Topic Papers. Participants were asked whether they agreed with the evidence base presented in the Topic Papers, or whether anything was missing.

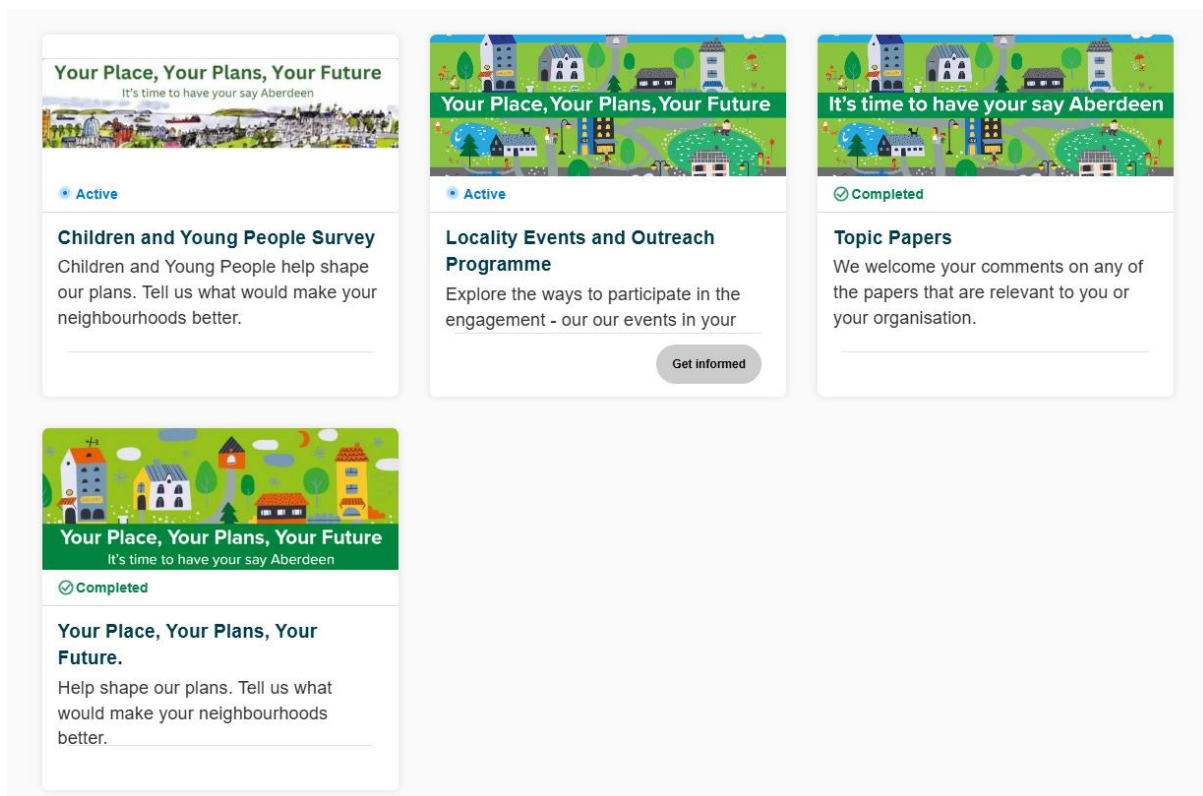


Figure 7.3: snapshot of the Commonplace digital engagement platform.

7.21. The joint engagement enabled us to:

- Put people at the heart of the process.
- Assess and identify areas for improvement to support healthy, happy lives.
- Align priorities across all strategies and plans, resulting in greater cohesion.
- Empower communities to engage through consistent use of a single tool.
- Respond to community insights in a more joined-up way.
- Inform our knowledge of where to dig deeper and provide targeted sessions responding to initial results.

7.22. It was understood that different people will have different needs and we provided a range of ways to participate and we reached out to people to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to share their views, including those that are seldom heard, and those who may be experiencing any form of inequality or disadvantage. Between 24 March and 18 May 2025, we:

- From our digital platform ran an online survey figure (appendix XX) and a separate survey designed for children and young people (appendix XX).
- Held 6 facilitated drop-in locality events, table 7.4, with specific activities designed by the Aberdeen Youth Movement and Aberdeen Ambassadors for children and young people
- Through our outreach programme we went to 98 groups/schools/locations across Aberdeen, the full outreach calendar is available (appendix XX).

Survey

7.23. As a result of the collective efforts across the Council, in total there were 2087 participants to the exercise, of which 1500 were adults and 587 were children and young people (table 7.3). This is an uplift of 344% compared to last Place Standard engagement exercise held in 2023. A total of 13,433 comments were received across each of the 14 themes, providing a rich source of evidence about the city and its neighbourhoods. A YOUR PLACE; YOUR PLANS; YOUR FUTURE – FULL RESULTS REPORT DRAFT (appendix XX) has been prepared, which summarises all comments by topic, locality, priority neighbourhood, SIMD, age, sex and ethnicity.

Survey	Responses
Public	1500
Children and Young People	587
Topic Papers	23

Table 7.3 Number of survey responses by survey type

Date	Topic	Event	Location	Timings	Invitees
Thursday 27th March 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Aberdeen South Locality Event	Greyhope Community Hub Tullos Circle, Torry, AB11 8DL	10:00-12:00	Public and local networks /groups
Thursday 27th March 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Aberdeen Central Locality Event	Rosemount Community Centre, Belgrave Terrace, AB25 2NS	14:00-16:00	Public and local networks /groups
Saturday 26th April 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Aberdeen Central Locality Event	Aberdeen Sports Village Linkfield Road, AB24 5RU	10:00-12:00	Public and local networks /groups
Saturday 26th April 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Aberdeen South Locality Event	Airryhall Library, Springfield Road, AB15 7RF	14:00-16:00	Public and local networks /groups
Saturday 10th May 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Aberdeen North Locality Event	King's Church, King's Way, Bridge of Don, AB23 8BL	10:00-12:00	Public and local networks /groups

Saturday 10th May 2025	"Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future"	Aberdeen North Locality Event	Get Active @ Northfield, Kettlehills Crescent, AB16 5TL	14:00-16:00	Public and local networks /groups

Table 7.4 Calendar of staffed Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future, drop in events.

7.24. Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey and supporting events were supported by the following publicity:

- **Aberdeen City Council Website:** Advertised Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future, the website included direct links to the survey and explained why citizens might want to take part. The website also included information on drop-in events, the outreach calendar and where to access downloadable versions of the survey.
- **Aberdeen Community Planning Website:** The Community Planning Aberdeen website advertised Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future, the website included direct links to the survey and explained why citizens might want to take part. The website also included information on drop-in events, the outreach calendar and where to access downloadable versions of the survey.
- **Internal Aberdeen City Council Website:** Regular communication and Chief Officer blogs on the internal website linked to the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future engagement page and detailed information on the choice of surveys and ways to get involved.
- **Social Media:** Social media was used extensively to promote Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future. The launch was announced on the Council Facebook and 'X' feeds, with a total reach of 5,000. Thereafter followed multiple posts on both platforms to remind people of the surveys, of the ways to participate and events, paid promotion was also used to raise the numbers of views, this resulted cumulative reach of 19,200.
- Additionally separate social media channels was used by different partners such as the Tenant Facebook Network and the Community Planning Facebook pages.
- **Video:** A video was developed to promote the engagement and shared widely across social media platforms <https://youtu.be/iRpcYQSbKyc>
- **Posters:** Branded posters were placed in key public buildings, libraries, supermarkets, sheltered housing and shops to alert the public to the surveys and drop-in events. The poster included QR link to the surveys, figure 7.4.
- **QR Codes** were used on printed materials at events, to allow people to scan directly through to the surveys online and to found out more about the Topic Papers.
- **Pop-up banners:** Branded banners were prepared and used to advertise and to signpost to the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey. These were used at all events and displayed at the Marischal College main entrance.
- **Post Cards:** Post card versions of the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey were distributed and used at drop in and the 98 outreach events, figure 7.5.

- All materials were consistently branded, see figure 7.6

Other awareness raising:

- Email correspondence to Aberdeen City Council tenants (14,700).
- Email correspondence to all community councils.
- Email correspondence to all members of the Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS).
- Email correspondence to all key contacts in Topic Paper reference groups.
- Newsletter update sent to all Local Development Plan subscribers (186).
- Newsletter update sent to all Aberdeen City Council Community Planning Consultation Hub subscribers (766)
- 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' article included in the March edition of the biannual tenant newsletter 'Newsbite'.
- Pop-up Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future table (staffed) at Marischal College reception on 9, 16 and 23 April.

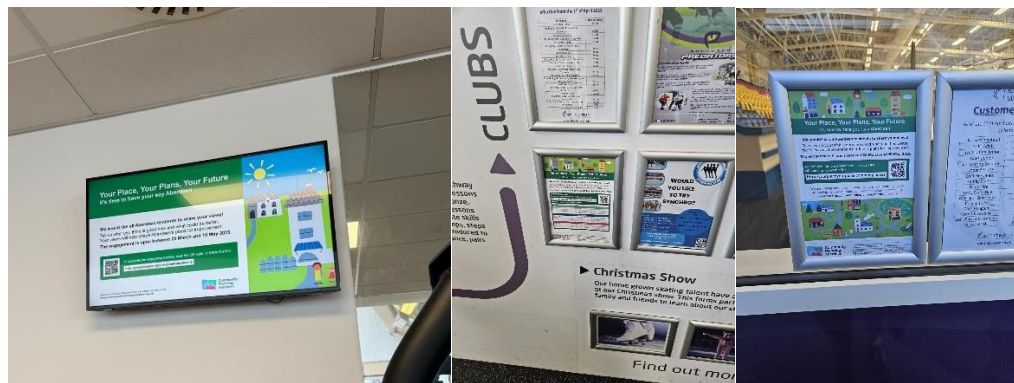


Figure 7.4 Photos of posters and digital posters in place



Figure 7.5 Post card version of the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future survey

- 7.25. Existing relationships staff, community and third sector organisations have with people can be key to supporting people to participate. As such all partners and third sector organisations, were encouraged to think about how they could support the people they work with to enable them to participate.
- 7.26. A facilitator's guide was provided to support staff and group leaders in conducting the engagement with their service users, and groups. Facilitation event materials included copies of the 2023 LDP, draft Local Housing Strategy and electronic copies of the Topic Papers.
- 7.27. A video guide to completing the survey was hosted on the Commonplace website.
- 7.28. We published our outreach programme (Appendix XX) detailing where and when events and engagement session were being held, 98 session were held in total. The offer was made to any group who wanted a facilitated session to get in touch so that could be arranged.



Figure 7.6: Example branding from Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future



Figure 7.7: Picture from an in-person drop event

Meetings with Stakeholders

7.29. The council through workshops, meetings and other targeted work has also engaged directly with Stakeholders. This included individual sessions or dialogue with key agencies, established groups such as the Future Infrastructure Requirements for

Service (FIRS), workshops and meetings with individual organisations as well as with representative bodies such as Homes for Scotland.

7.30. Future Infrastructure Requirements for Service (FIRS), The FIRS group comprises statutory key agencies and internal stakeholders from a number of relevant Council departments, table 7.5. Meetings are held every eight weeks or as agreed, and the purpose of the groups is to;

- address challenges related to new developments in Aberdeen.
- Focus on the local development plan process, particularly the allocation of new sites and development across the city.
- Identify infrastructure needs and potential solutions to get ahead of challenges

Early meetings focused on the Topic Paper and Evidence Report production. Meetings will continue beyond the Evidence Report stage.

Type	Member
Key Agencies	Historic Environment Scotland Marine Directorate Nature Scot Nestrans NHS Grampian Scottish Enterprise Scottish Forestry Scottish Water SEPA Transport Scotland
Council Service	Affordable Housing Building Standards Development Management Economic Development Education Environmental Policy Estates and Property Local Development Plan Planning Obligations Roads Transportation
Other	Aberdeenshire Council SSEN (Distribution) SSEN (Transmission)

Table 7.5 Table of FIRS membership:

Housing Workshops

7.31. Housing Summit 1 (In person) This half day event held on 30 October 2024 included house builders, developers, Registered Social Landlords and members of the construction industry table 7.6. The session focussed on setting the scene in terms of infrastructure within the city. Presentations were given on the Council Capital Programme, School Estates, Planning, Local Housing Strategy, NHS Infrastructure, and Development Industry perspective. A question-and-answer panel session followed with comments relating to developer obligations, housing viability and deliverability, affordable housing and delivery mechanisms.

7.32. Housing Summit 2 (In person) A follow up in person half-day event again with attendance from across the housebuilding and development industry, table 7.6. This event provided an opportunity to further discuss and feedback on the draft Topic Papers and the draft Local Housing Strategy in a workshop setting.

Type	Attendee
Housebuilders	Bancon Homes Barratt / David Wilson Dandara Mac and Mic Group
Register Social Landlords	Castlehill Hillcrest Langstane Housing Association Places for People
Consultants	Berryhill Brodies Burness Paull Create Studio Architecture Halliday Fraser Munro Ryden Savills Shepherd THE
Other	Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Affordable Housing) Aberdeenshire Council Chamber of Commerce Homes for Scotland The Grandholme Trust

Table 7.6: Attendees across both Housing Summits

Groups Specified in the Act

- 7.33. The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, requires the Council to seek the views of identified groups, including the public at large, children and young people, disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers, Community Councils and Key Agencies. Appendix XX sets out the full engagement undertaken as part of the Evidence Report process in a table format [Engagement Tracker.docx](#)

Public at Large

- 7.34. The 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' exercise described above, was the main tool to engage the public at large. The large number of individual comments across each of the Place Standard themes were collated and summarised, and will be used in the next stages of the plan preparation as part of the 'call for ideas'.
- 7.35. Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future also included the stand alone Topic Paper survey. The feedback from this survey has been correlated where appropriate into the relevant Topic Paper chapter and where there are statements of agreement or disagreement again these have included in the appropriate section in the relevant Topic Paper.
- 7.36. The public response to the Topic Papers was low with 8 completed submission in total, despite having 572 visitors to the Topic Paper engagement platform. Feedback has indicated that people didn't find the Topic Papers an engaging way to gather people's thoughts, and that approaches like the Place Standard Tool or a document like the Main Issues Report was preferable.

Children and Young People

- 7.37. Youth participation groups, Aberdeen Youth Movement and the Young Ambassadors took a leading role in designing and delivering engagement approaches for children and young people to have their say in Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future. The Young Ambassadors created activities focused on under 12s for locality events and Aberdeen Youth Movement hosted lunchtime roadshows at 5 of our secondary schools.
- 7.38. Aberdeen Youth Movement brought Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation to 5 secondary schools in the city, aiming to empower young people to have a direct voice in shaping their communities. Through interactive sessions and surveys, students were being encouraged to share their thoughts on public spaces, things to do and the services and interactions that effect their daily lives. By involving young people in this meaningful way, the Aberdeen Youth Movement is fostering civic engagement and helping build more inclusive, youth friendly future for Aberdeen City.

In Person Engagement

- 7.39. In person engagement for children and young people was predominantly delivered by young people, this included Aberdeen Youth Movement's secondary school roadshows at Lochside, St Machar, Northfield, Dyce and Aberdeen Grammar, ensuring that our young people in priority areas had opportunities to get involved and so that all 3 localities were included. Locality events provided bespoke children and young people's activity, with workshops involving primary school pupils at Greyhope and Gilcomstoun

also involved Play Sufficiency engagement with the Young Ambassadors delivering sessions alongside Creative Learning and Streets UK. Other drop-in activity took place at Aberdeen Sports Village, with many families attending Saturday morning events, Airyhall Library, Get Active Northfield and Kings Church. A total of 527 children and young people participated in these events.

Children and young people survey

7.40. The children and young person's survey (Appendix XX) was shared alongside the adult survey on Common Place, it was also shared with all city secondary school pupils and parents and carer via Groupcall, linked in wider CPA communication and shared across youth participation networks. It was recognised that with the timescales available in person engagement would be the best way to capture children and young people's voice, with young people giving us feedback that a well-designed app would be a more engaging way of hearing from this age group than an on-line survey. This is something we will explore as we develop and improve your engagement with young people.

7.41. While the survey for children and young people broadly followed the format used for the overall survey, the layout was altered to make it more 'child friendly'. The 14 theme questions were split into 4 topics:

- How I get around my local place
 - Personal transport routes
 - Public transport options
 - Traffic and parking
- The places I go and the things I do there.
 - Streets, Squares and Buildings
 - Nature
 - Fun play spaces
- What helps me to live well in my local place?
 - Types of buildings and services
 - Mix and type of jobs and work
 - Housing and homes
 - How 'together' and 'as a group'
- What makes me feel safe or unsafe in my local place?
 - How included you feel
 - Cared for and well-kept
 - Safe and secure
 - Levels of pride you feel

7.42. Children and young people were asked to score each of the 14 themes. However rather than a 7 point scale, this survey had a 3 point scale:

- 1 – Not good (needs improving)
- 2 – Okay (needs some improvement)
- 3 – Great (it's good or as good as can be)

7.43. In addition to the 'scale' question, for each theme, the participants were asked two additional questions to capture what they felt were positive aspects of their place and what they felt could be improved. Specifically the questions asked:

- What is good now?
- What would make it better?

7.44. For each of these questions, a list of choices was provided (these differed by question). An additional text box was also provided for each question for participants to give their own ideas. In addition to the theme questions, the survey included three questions which asked participants for their thoughts on 'Places to Play'. Again, a list of choices were given and the children and young people could choose as many as they wished

Play sufficiency

7.45. The Council sought to maximise involvement with the Play Sufficiency Assessment process by combining a series of focussed play engagement activities and specific play-related surveys with the wider 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' which included sections on Play (detailed above).

7.46. In preparing the Play Sufficiency Assessment, we have sought to engage with Children and Young People (under 18), Parents & Carers, Community Councils and the wider Public. This engagement has comprised:

- An online survey on play and other place-based criteria for public, community councils and other groups as part of the 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' multi-strategy engagement programme (detailed above)
- A young person version of the 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' online survey on play and other place-based criteria (detailed above)
- An online survey on play aimed at parents and carers
- In person play workshops with an outdoor nursery, two primary schools and two secondary schools, including a specialist ASN wing
- Multiple in-person events with schools and communities as part of the 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' multi-strategy engagement programme
- A bespoke play-based workshop for children with additional support needs, plus their families and caregivers.

Higher Education

7.47. As part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future exercise the 3 higher education institutions in the city; University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College were contacted through their representatives on the Community Planning Aberdeen Management Group. The representatives then shared links to the surveys through their internal platforms.

Disabled People

7.48. Through Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future we offered online sessions for individuals with disabilities who may require additional support to engage in our consultation effectively, 2 dedicated sessions were held on:

- 16 April, 10am-12pm
- 7 May, 6.30-8.30pm

Additionally the outreach programme included a number of targeted facilitated events:

- British Sign Language (BSL): 8 May, 1:30-3:30pm, Marischal College.
- Grampian Regional Equality Council event - 24 April, 4:00-5:30pm, Aberdeen Arts Centre, 33 King St, Aberdeen AB24 5AA.
- Outreach at locations such as vaccination centres, GPs, jobs fairs, food banks.
- Facilitated sessions held with a range of specialist groups, including sheltered housing, Alzheimer's carers group, the Men's Shed,

Gypsies and Travellers

7.49. There is one official Gypsy/Traveller site in the Aberdeen City Council, area located at Clinterty Park, near the border with Aberdeenshire. The residents were made aware of the Your Place, Your Plan Your Place public consultation through posters and other engagement materials placed in the central facilities on the site and through the Gypsy/Travellers Liaison Officer. A facilitated drop-in session was held at Clinterty Park site on 15 April 2025. The event was supported by the officers from Housing service, Local Development Plan team, Health and Social Care partnership and the Gypsy/Travellers Liaison Officer. The session offered the opportunity to have a dialogue in a familiar setting. The session also included discussion on the Local Housing Strategy. Although the attendance at the drop-in was low, officers felt that the event was worthwhile offering direct engagement with the community. Efforts will be made to built on this and continue to dialogue in later stages of the plan development.

Community Councils

7.50. We regularly contact community council with updates on matters relating to the Local Development Plan, such as progress and forthcoming opportunities to get involved. The Local Development Plan Team presented at Community Council forums on the 19 September 2024 and 18 February 2025 with Local Development Plan progress updates, about the role of the Evidence Report and Local Place Plans.

7.51. Community Councils were invited to complete the surveys and to make submissions to both the Your Place, Your Plan, Your Place and Topic Paper Surveys, and to attend drop-in events table, detailed earlier.

7.52. There were 2 dedicated Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future Community Council Forum events and awareness raising session on 7 April 2025 (online) and a facilitated event on 12 May 2025 (Hybrid).

Key Agencies and Stakeholders

7.53. The Council has engaged in a number of ways with key agencies through the Evidence Report. The purpose of this engagement has been to keep these organisations informed of the progress with Local Development Plan, to seek relevant information from them, and to seek levels of agreement with evidence that the Council

intended to present in the Evidence Report. As described above key agencies have been engaged through the FIRS Group and the 2-stage Topic Paper Consultation. Additionally, meetings have been held with a number of organisations.

Key Agency	Activity
Architecture & Design Scotland	Member of Topic Reference Group. Meeting held September 2024.
Historic Environment Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Marine Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group.
Nature Scot	Member of FIRS Member of Topic Reference Group Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text. Meeting held June 2025.
Nestrans	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text. Meeting held June 2025.
NHS	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Attended Housing Summit October 2024. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Scottish Enterprise	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group.
Scottish Water	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
SEPA	Member of FIRS Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Sport Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.
Transport Scotland	Member of FIRS. Member of Topic Reference Group. Response received to Topic Paper Consultation. Suggested amendments were incorporated into Evidence Report text.

Table 7.7: summary of key agency activity.

Local Place Plans

Local Place Plans (LPPs) are community led plans, introduced by Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act as part of the Scottish Government's wider planning reforms to improve and increase community engagement in planning. The invitation to produce a local place plan was advertised via newspaper press release and an email was sent to all local community councils via the Community Council Liaison officer on 12 July 2024, by newsletter on 08 August, by Aberdeen City Council's social media accounts on 03 September 2024, the local development plan social media accounts on 04 September 2024.

- 7.54. Meetings were subsequently held via Microsoft Teams in the evening of 19 September 2024, and 06 February 2025 to talk with Community Councils about the new Local Development Plan process and Local Place Plans. A further in person session was held on the 21 April 2025 with the Community Council Forum Planning and Transport Sub Group to raise awareness and answer any questions about Local Place Plans.
- 7.55. A dedicated "Place" page has been created on the Aberdeen City Council webpage, which outlines resources and templates to help with the creation of a local place plan. A dedicated email address has also been created to help capture any local place plan queries. To date we have had 1 note of interest in producing a Local Place Plan. There are currently no valid or registered Local Place Plans in Aberdeen City.
- 7.56. Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

Call for Ideas

- 7.57. As part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future as described above, a total of 13,433 comments were received across each of the 14 themes, gathering scoring and commentary on what is good now and what improvements could make our city and neighbourhoods better. This has provided a rich source of evidence and lived experience about the city and its communities and neighbourhoods. An initial Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future Report was produced (CDXX), which summarises all comments by topic, locality, priority neighbourhood, SIMD, age, sex and ethnicity. This information and further detailed analysis that is currently being processed will be used to inform the proposed plan going forward.
- 7.58. The optional 'call for ideas/sites' consultation phase is recommended to be carried out after the Gate Check Review. A further 'call for ideas' period will run alongside the 'call for sites' and is planned for quarter 3 of 2025.

8. Topic Paper 1 – Spatial Strategy

Requirements addressed in this section:

- 8.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,

National Planning Framework 4

Regional Spatial Priorities

- 8.2 To deliver sustainable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans (LDPs) in this area should plan infrastructure and investment to support the transition from oil and gas to net zero, whilst protecting and enhancing blue and green infrastructure and decarbonising connectivity.
- 8.3 To deliver liveable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should focus on continued regeneration and encourage more local living to sustain the skilled workforce and improve local liveability.
- 8.4 To deliver productive places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should support continued economic diversification and innovation.

Green Belts

- 8.5 LDPs should consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities.
- 8.6 Green belts will not be necessary for most settlements but may be zoned around settlements where there is a significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside.
- 8.7 Green belts should be identified or reviewed as part of the preparation of LDPs. Boundary changes may be made to accommodate planned growth, or to extend, or alter the area covered as green belt. Detailed green belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans.

Brownfield Development

- 8.8 LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.

Coastal Development

- 8.9 LDP spatial strategies should consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change. This should recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and islands areas, and take a precautionary approach to flood risk including by inundation.
- 8.10 Spatial strategies should reflect the diversity of coastal areas and opportunities to use nature based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets.
- 8.11 LDP spatial strategies should identify areas of developed and undeveloped coast and should align with national, sectoral and regional marine plans.

Business & Industry

- 8.12 LDPs should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size and quality in terms of accessibility and services. This allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

National Developments

- Urban Mass / Rapid Transit Networks (Aberdeen)
- Aberdeen Harbour (Aberdeen)
- Pumped Hydro Storage (All Scotland)
- Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure (All Scotland)
- Circular Economy Materials Management Facilities (All Scotland)
- National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network (All Scotland)
- Digital Fibre Network (All Scotland)

Links to Evidence

Regional Spatial Priorities

- Aberdeen City and Shire Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (Co-produced by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils – September 2020) PDF

Green Belt

- [AECOM Nature Networks Corridor Map](#)
- [NatureScot – Scottish Landscape Character Type Maps and Description](#)
- [Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023 – Landscape](#)
- [Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Character Assessment, February 2021](#)
- [Aberdeen Landscape Study – Coastal Character Assessment, February 2021](#)
- [Aberdeen Landscape Study – Peri-Urban Study, February 2021](#)
- [Aberdeen Landscape Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, February 2021](#)

Brownfield Development

- [Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey Site Register](#)
[Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey GIS Map](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land 2024 – excel \(PDF\)](#)
[Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2024](#)
- [Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2020](#)
[City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015](#)
- [City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022](#)

Coastal Development

- [Scotland's National Marine Plan](#)
- [Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance - Scottish Government, February 2023](#)
- [Dynamic Coast](#)
- [SEPA Coastal Flood Maps](#)
- [Aberdeen Adapts](#)
- [Aberdeen Adapts Evidence Base](#)

Business & Industry

- [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#)
- [Regional Economic Strategy 2035](#)
- [Economic Statistics for Industry Sectors in Scotland](#)
- [City Region Deals - Cities and regions - gov.scot](#)
- [Energy Transition Fund](#)
- [Aberdeen's lost decade: What went wrong? | Centre for Cities](#)
- [Ryden 89th Scottish Property Review 2024](#)
- [Business & Industry Land Audit 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City Data Observatory - Economy](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

8.13 Aberdeen will endeavour to promote and support sustainable, liveable and productive places. The retention and appropriate management of green belts can limit the risk of urban sprawl into the countryside, while providing nature corridors that are integral to the health and vitality of the city. Identification and re-use of brownfield sites will help support the vitality of the city by bringing disused or vacant sites back into active use that can meaningfully provide housing or business opportunities to local communities. Business and industry will also be supported as the need to diversify Aberdeen's economy and transition away from a dependency on revenues from the oil industry towards a net-zero future. Supporting this, coastal development will also offer opportunities that will seek to establish the city as a leader in hydrogen, and renewable energy technologies, as well as sustaining a busy port and balancing these demands

with the protection and preservation of marine species and habitats along the coastline.

8.14 These broader topic areas will be addressed in more detail in the following order:

- Indicative Regional Spatial Priorities
- Green Belts
- Brownfield Development
- Coastal Development
- Business and Industry

8.15 It is not the intention of this chapter to repeat the full content of other chapters. It should be read in conjunction with other chapters, including:

- Topic 2: Delivery of Homes
- Topic 3: Infrastructure and communication
- Topic 4: Sustainable Transport
- Topic 5: Climate and
- Topic 6: Nature and Biodiversity
- Topic 7: Energy and Resources
- Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture
- Topic 9: Place
- Topic 10: Wellbeing of Communities

Regional Spatial Priorities

Aberdeen City and Shire Interim Regional Spatial Strategy

8.16 This functions as a “bridging document” that supports the transposition of the Spatial Strategy from the (now defunct) Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan of 2020 into the National Planning Framework 4. It is intended as the primary bellwether for strategic planning across the City Region. It offers a “spatial reference for the implementation of other City Region and local level plans and strategies such as the Regional Economic Strategy, the City Region Deal and Regional Transport Strategy” (see Figure 8.1).

8.17 The document covers the Local Authority areas of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, with the exception of those parts of Aberdeenshire that are situated within the Cairngorms National Park. Delivery of its’ objectives will require collaboration with other key stakeholders and communities.

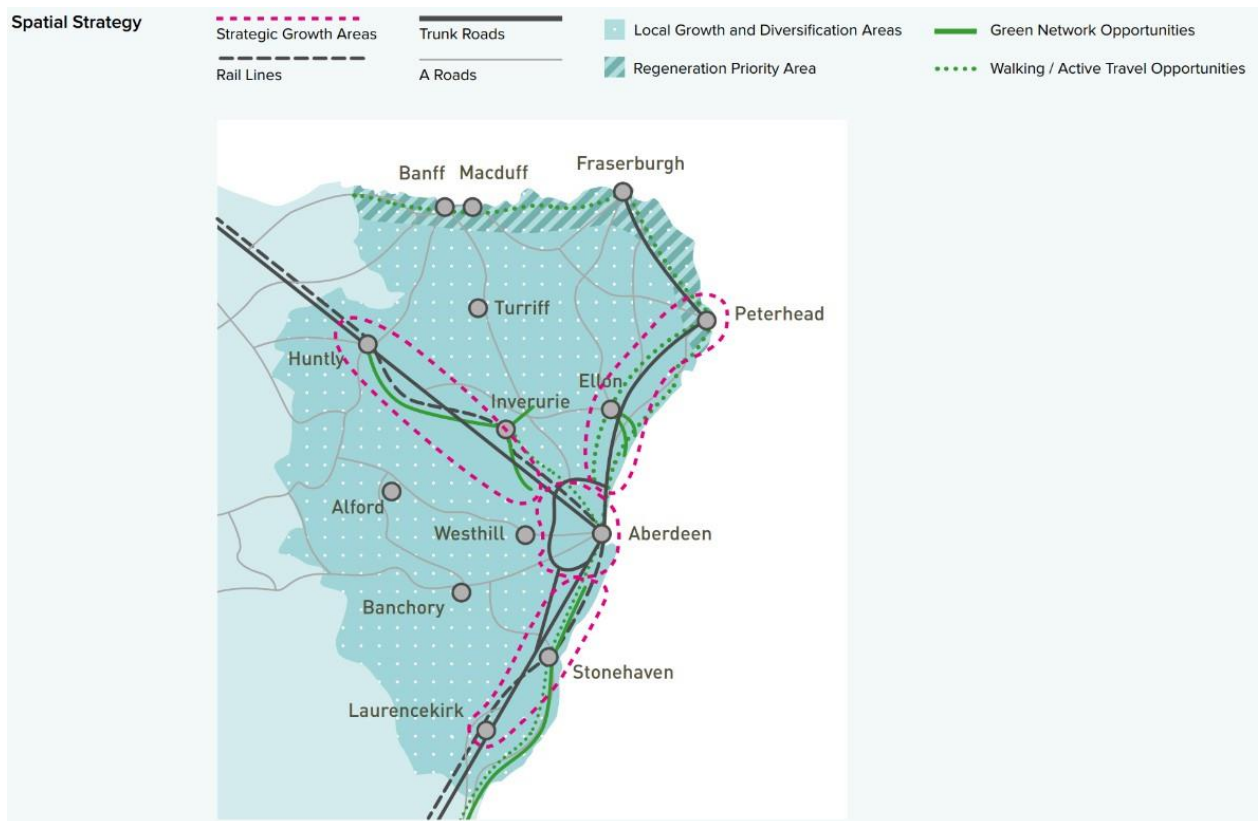


Figure 8.1: Excerpt from the Interim Regional Spatial Strategy illustrating the Strategy across the north-east of Scotland

Green Belt

Green Belts around Aberdeen

- 8.18 A green belt around Aberdeen was first established in 1958 and has evolved and changed over its lifespan. Successive development plans have used green belts to support their spatial strategies. The current Aberdeen green belt covers all of the countryside within the Council's boundary.
- 8.19 There have been periodic changes to its boundary, generally in order to accommodate new development. A boundary review took place in 1986 and was formalised in the 1991 Aberdeen District Wide Local Plan. Further changes were made to accommodate the allocations in the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008, and to incorporate former 'Countryside Around Towns (GB2)' and 'Lower Don Policy Areas' into the green belt.
- 8.20 The Local Development Plan 2012 was required to make major housing allocations, and extensive boundary changes were made to accommodate new settlements all around the city. A Green Belt Review which looked at the detailed boundaries of these areas was produced as a background document to this Plan.
- 8.21 The 2017 and 2023 Local Development Plans had much smaller housing requirements, and although new sites were identified on former green belt areas in both Plans, they were relatively small in nature and no formal review of the green belt took place at these times.

8.22 The Aberdeen Green Belt has been successful in several respects:

- It has prevented coalescence between Aberdeen and settlements and suburbs along lower Deeside, the northern and southern corridors and to the west of the city along the A944.
- It has focussed development into Aberdeen and encouraged the redevelopment of brownfield sites there.
- It has helped to prevent inappropriate development in the countryside close to Aberdeen.
- It has protected large areas of countryside such as the coast, woodland, river valleys and Hazlehead for recreational use. In doing so, uncontrolled urban sprawl has largely been avoided and some of the primary landscape elements which protect the setting of the Aberdeen – the coastal strip, two major river valleys and backdrop of surrounding hills – have been protected.

Green Belt Review

8.23 A green belt review is being actioned as part of a wider Natural Heritage Strategy. It is anticipated that it will be completed in the coming year and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan. The Review will focus on the following issues:

1. Development Pressures – Green belts have been used to control otherwise unrestricted growth around places with high development pressure. We will examine development bids for previous LDPs to indicate the level of development interest around Aberdeen. This in turn will inform the continuing need for a green belt.
2. Landscape Setting and the identity of settlements – how does the green belt contribute to protecting and enhancing the character, landscape, natural setting and identity of Aberdeen and its surrounding settlements?
3. Nature Networks – what contribution does the green belt make to support nature networks to tackle climate change, to tackling biodiversity loss and to protect nature networks from a recreational and ecological point of view?
4. Other planning constraints – are there any other assets or features that are protected by green belt?
5. Directing development to the right places – how can we use green belts to make sure that development happens in the right places through for instance the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods and sustainable communities?

8.24 In carrying out a review of the green belt, several other factors need to be recognised:

- All of the countryside outwith Aberdeen's urban area is identified as green belt. There are no other 'countryside' designations. This means that any development requirements that cannot be identified on sites within the urban area will have to be in locations that are currently green belt and adjustments to its boundary could be needed.
- The Aberdeen green belt extends beyond the city boundary and into Aberdeenshire. Here it extends to Blackdog, Potterton, Hatton of Fintray, Blackburn, Westhill, Drum, Kirkton of Maryculter, and Banchory Devenick southwards to as far as Muchalls. Aberdeenshire Council are currently reviewing their part of the green belt as part of their Local Development Plan review. At the time of writing, they are suggesting some

adjustments to the outer boundaries but none of these will have a significant impact on the City's green belt area.

Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026

- 8.25 Scotland's long-term vision for sustainable land use focuses on emission reduction targets, Net-Zero goals, biodiversity loss, and climate change impacts. It emphasizes careful land use to support the population while protecting natural habitats, promoting peatland restoration, forestry creation, and enhancement of wildlife habitat. Onshore wind generation and food production are also considered. The strategy can help underpin future policy for the ongoing designation of green belt, as well as promote efforts to improve its connectivity to other areas of green space within Aberdeen, to further the vitality and resilience of these natural spaces. It also offers potential opportunities for future woodland expansion and enhancement which can result in improvements to public health, environmental benefits, improved air quality and increased carbon sequestration capabilities.

NatureScot – Scottish Landscape Character Type Maps and Description

- 8.26 The Landscape Character Studies that formed the basis of this data was originally mapped between 1994 and 1999 and were expanded and updated in 2019.
- 8.27 There are several differing landscape types within the Aberdeen City Council area, see Figure 8.2 which outlines indicative landforms. Very broadly, there are pockets of 'Upland and Hills' located towards the west and north-west of the city near Westhill and Dyce. There are two main areas identified as 'Valley' types: the River Don Valley – extending from Stoneywood to Hatton of Fintray, and the River Dee valley stretching from Cults in a south-westerly direction past Peterculter and into Aberdeenshire. The remainder of the outskirts of the city are characterised as 'Lowland', with Beaches, Dunes and Links along the northern portion of the coastline with the North Sea, and Cliffs and Rocky Coast, along the southern portion of the Aberdeen coastline. Unsurprisingly for a city authority, much of the core of the city is identified as 'Urban' landscape.

Scottish Landscape Character Types Map

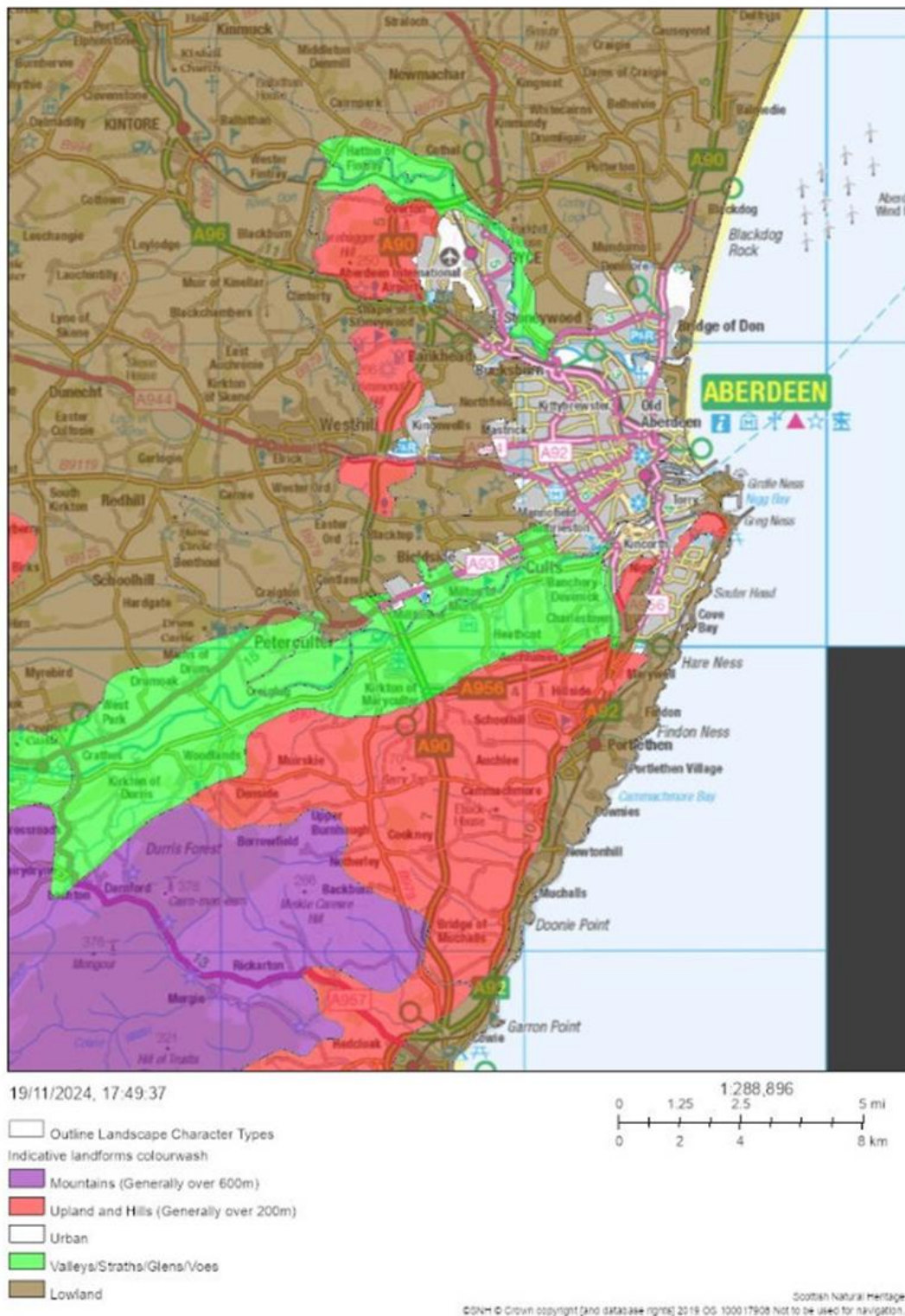


Figure 8.2: Screenshot showing the Scottish Landscape Character Types around Aberdeen

Aberdeen Landscape Study

- 8.28 The Aberdeen Landscape Study provides a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character, coastal character, peri-urban areas, and landscape sensitivity in Aberdeen City. The Landscape Character Assessment describes, classifies, and maps areas of land to explain their distinctive characteristics and determine their value. Nine Landscape Character Types were identified, which can help inform decisions on green belt extent and site allocations for development. The Coastal Character Assessment categorizes Aberdeen's coastline by examining maritime influences, coastal edge nature, and hinterland identity, identifying six Coastal Character Areas with management guidelines to address distinct pressures and threats, and suggest future enhancements.
- 8.29 The Peri-Urban Study identifies 15 peri-urban areas subject to development pressure, detailing landform, land cover, land use, and designations. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment gauges landscape sensitivity to development, identifying 32 units unsuitable for residential, business, or industrial land uses, and informing spatial strategies and planning applications. These assessments provide valuable insights for future decision-making on land allocation, potential areas for protection or enhancement

Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023 - Landscape

- 8.30 This non-statutory Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) is primarily intended to provide assistance in the interpretation of the Local Development Plan 2023 Policies D4 – Landscape and D5 – Landscape Design. It includes design principles, technical advice, and outlines the general expectations of proposed developments with regard to planting schedules and landscaping schemes as well as provides a consolidated summary of the various Aberdeen Landscape Studies.

AECOM Nature Networks Corridor Map

- 8.31 This map viewer identifies Nature Networks Corridors throughout Scotland to connect 30x30 sites with other environmental assets. Corridors are scored from 0-7 based on establishment cost, with Aberdeen's scores ranging from 1 to 4. It helps inform Nature Networks in Aberdeen City and guide habitat enhancement efforts. Nature Networks will inform the spatial strategy and will be part of a Natural Heritage Strategy, which will be completed over the coming year. They are discussed further in Infrastructure and Nature and Biodiversity Topic Papers.

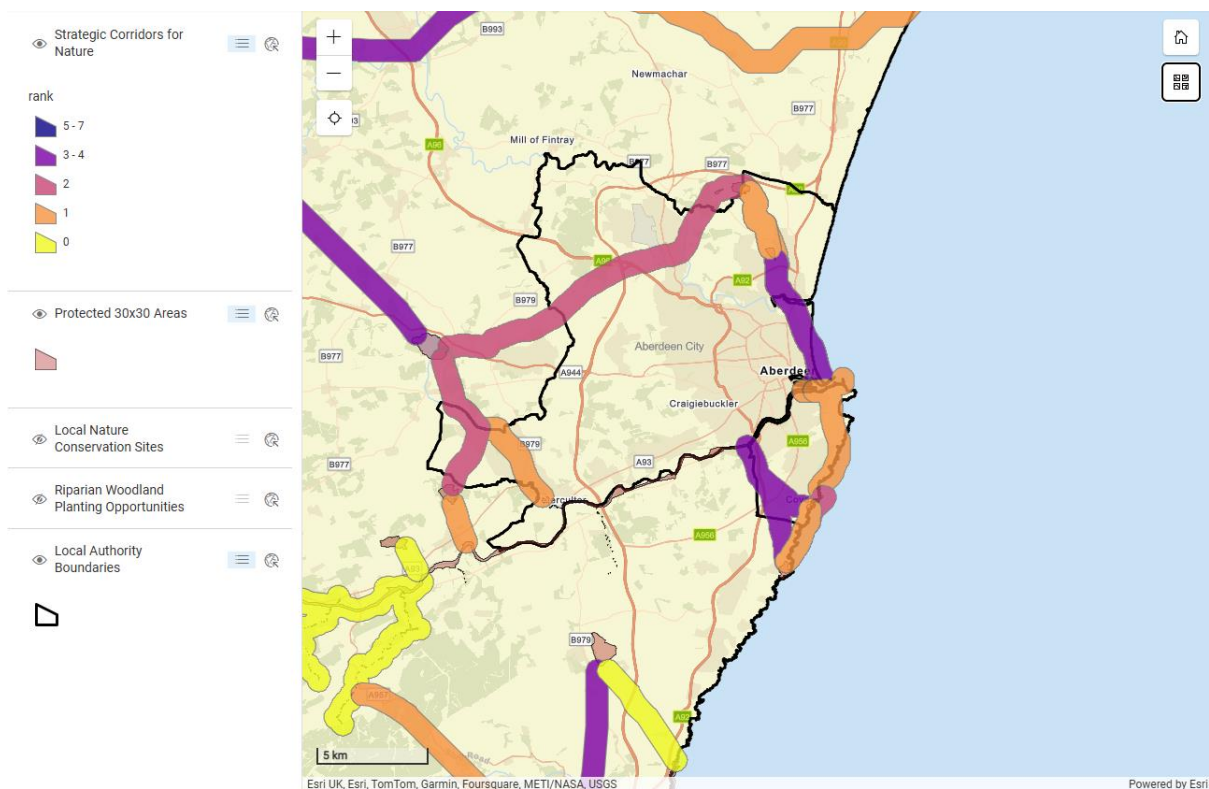


Figure 8.3: Screenshot showing the location of Aberdeen's Strategic Corridors for Nature

Brownfield Development

Brownfield and Greenfield Development Trends

8.32 Housing Land Audits (HLA) can be used to provide evidence of past trends with respect to the split between brownfield and greenfield development levels within the City, as is shown in the Housing Topic Paper

8.33 Table 1 shows that 53% of all housing development in the City from 2012 to 2022 has taken place on greenfield sites, and 47% has taken place on brownfield sites. Brownfield development has played a significant role in helping to meet housing needs within the City over the last decade. Looking to the future, the 2024 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit (CDXX) identifies that some 76% of the remaining housing site capacity in the City is on greenfield sites, with 24% on brownfield sites. This is reflective of the large greenfield housing land allocations that are identified within the Local Development Plan, albeit the Local Development Plan also seeks to promote brownfield development.

Type of Development	Total No. of Units Completed 2012 – 2022	Percentage of Total Development 2012 – 2022
Brownfield	4,663	47%
Greenfield	5,333	53%

Table 8.1: Quantity of housing development constructed on Brownfield and Greenfield sites in Aberdeen City between the years of 2012 and 2022.

Brownfield Urban Capacity Study Sites

8.34 A Brownfield Urban Capacity Study will be undertaken over the coming year to inform the spatial strategy of the next Local Development Plan. It identifies potential brownfield housing sites and estimates the number of housing units these sites are likely to produce. A map showing the existing 2019 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study sites, with colour coding to show remaining capacity of each site, can be found below (Figure 8.4).

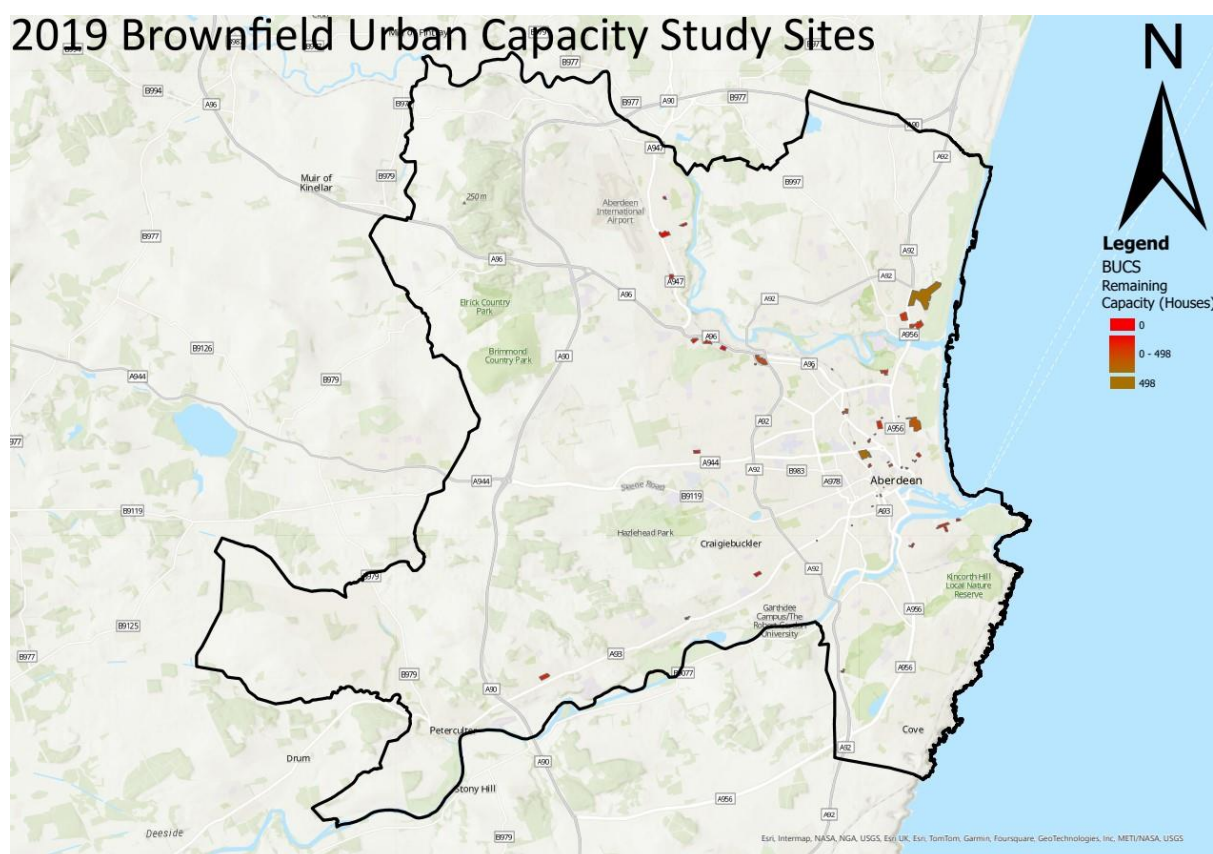


Figure 8.4: Map showing the location of Brownfield Urban Capacity Study Sites (2019)

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey

8.35 The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is updated annually. It involves reporting the annual change in the take-up of brownfield land and recording new sites which have become vacant or derelict. These are mapped and various details are recorded for them, including the former use of the land. Sites identified in the SVDLS can be used to inform the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and ultimately the Proposed Plan.

8.36 The 2024 SVDLS return was submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2024. It lists 74 sites that cover a cumulative area of nearly 144ha. At the time of writing, the Scottish Government had not published the annual SVDL 2024 datasets.

8.37 The 5 largest sites constitute approximately 35.6% of the total area of SVDLs 2024 sites and these are as follows (Table 8.2):

Site Name and Address	Site Size	Area of City
Silverburn Park, Exhibition Avenue	17.6ha	Bridge of Don
Former Stoneywood Papermill	15.4ha	Stoneywood
Former Shell Building, 1 Altens Farm Road	10.7ha	Altens
Former Cordyce Residential School, Riverview Drive	8.2ha	Dyce
Peterseat Drive 1	7.3ha	Altens

Table 8.2: Table identifies the five largest sites recorded in the Aberdeen's Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023 and their respective sizes and locations.

8.38 Within this, 47 sites are vacant, 17 sites are derelict and 10 are vacant with buildings. The sites are fairly well distributed across the city, with concentrations in and around the industrial estates at Altens/Tullos, around the industrial estates near Aberdeen International Airport/Dyce, around Ellon Road, Bridge of Don and some wider more spaced-out scatterings at Auchmill Road. As table 3 below shows, the top 3 previous uses in Aberdeen for vacant and derelict land are manufacturing (17%), offices (17%) and recreation/leisure (15%).

Previous Use	Area (hectares)	Percentage %
Agriculture	3.19	2
Business Class	5.24	4
Community & Health	4.81	3
Education	20.51	14
Manufacturing	24.82	17
Mineral Activity	5.37	4
Offices	23.63	17
Other	1.04	1
Other General Industrial	9	6
Recreation & Leisure (excluding passive open space)	21.97	15
Residential - Hotels, Hostels etc	1.96	1
Residential - Housing	3.87	3
Retailing	1.98	1
Storage	1.47	1
Unknown	12.32	9
Utility Services	2.03	1

Table 8.3: Key for the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2024

The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland

- 8.39 The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland. It includes the location and details of all recorded at risk buildings within Aberdeen City. At the time of writing there are 58 sites in Aberdeen on this register.
- 8.40 Of these 58 sites, 55 are currently at risk and 3 are undergoing restoration (as of January 2025). Only 7 of the sites are unlisted, and 17 are Category 'A'- Listed. 29 sites are classed as being in poor condition, 6 are in very poor condition and 3 are classed as ruinous. All but one of the 'At Risk' sites are urban locations, with the exception being 'B'-Listed Waulkmill Bridge in Peterculter.
- 8.41 Sites identified on the register can inform a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and ultimately the Proposed Plan.
- 8.42 The Buildings at Risk Register has been paused while Historic Environment Scotland consider long-term options for its future in light of the main findings, conclusions and options of the Buildings at Risk Register review.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 / City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022

- 8.43 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CCMP&DP) was approved in 2015, and outlines a 25 year development strategy for Aberdeen City Centre. The CCMP&DP looks to increasing the mix of uses within the city centre. In August 2022 a refresh of the CCMP&DP was approved. The review does not replace or supersede the CCMP&DP 2015. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan incorporate interventions and linkages to and from Aberdeen beach to the city centre, and a new intervention area, George Street. It follows the principles of the CCMP&DP 2015, but has a public realm and project focus.
- 8.44 The CCMP&DP outlines seven intervention areas shown in Table 4. These aim to increase the mix of uses in the city centre. This includes increasing residential use, creating better linkages and ensuring there are areas of employment through the provision of offices and retail uses and cultural assets.

Intervention Area	Masterplan Focus
Denburn Valley	A revitalised Union Terrace Gardens establishes itself as a key destination and the linking thread to a new residential quarter
Heart of the City	Reinstating the central role of Union Street in the life of the city, establishing stronger retail linkages north and south and creating a destination not just for shopping but for many city activities.
Queen's Square	A new city centre neighbourhood with a strong urban character. An exemplar of the best of urban living in a sensitive historic context.
Union Street West	A focus for the wider business sector, from new businesses with a Made in Aberdeen focus, to spin-outs from the energy

	sector. Union Street West emerges as a much stronger business address.
Station Gateway	The critical remodelling of the key gateway to the city centre, with new business and commercial developments, providing city centre users and visitors with a radically transformed arrival experience, leading seamlessly northwards to Union Street
Castlegate / Castlehill	A focus for visitors and tourists, taking in the best of Aberdeen's townscape, including Castlegate, Union Street and links to the harbour to the south and the beach to the east
North Dee / Torry Waterfront	New riverside quarters connected by a pedestrian bridge and a much improved riverside park and promenade. To the north, an urban business district; to the south, a residential neighbourhood that maximises its relationship to the river.

Table 8.4: Intervention Areas from the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme

8.45 Please see the Place topic paper and Centres of Business topic paper for more information on the city centre masterplans.

Coastal Development

National and Regional Marine Plan

8.46 A comprehensive overarching framework for all marine activity in Scotland's waters. It will enable sustainable development and use of Scotland's marine area in a way which will protect and enhance the marine environment whilst promoting both existing and emerging industries. Aberdeen is noted specifically within the document with regard to oil and gas, recreation and tourism, and shipping, ports, harbours and ferries. The National Development of Aberdeen Harbour also noted and these issues will need to be considered when producing the Proposed Plan. There is no regional marine plan for the north east of Scotland.

Coastal Change Adaptation Plan

8.47 The Scottish Government Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance (2023) is designed to help local authorities in planning for our future climate at the coast and to support long term adaptation and resilience of coastal communities. The aims of the guidance are as follows:

1. Promote the resilience of our natural coastline and begin the process of adaptation to climate change;
2. Set out a process for a proactive approach to coastal adaptation planning that will maximise opportunities and minimise risk from climate change impacts;
3. Ensure our collective coastal adaptation journey starts now and;
4. Support local authorities to begin the process.

8.48 At the time of writing, a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is being developed in Aberdeen to understand how coastal development can adapt to anticipated changes resulting from climate change. This will include projections of different climate change scenarios to

understand how Aberdeen's coast will change. It is anticipated the Plan will be published over the coming year.

Dynamic Coast

- 8.49 Dynamic Coast, Scotland's Coastal Change Assessment has identified areas at risk of future erosion. This includes small areas along Aberdeen's soft coastal areas, north of the River Don that may be susceptible to future erosion. This can have implications for identifying sites in the Proposed Plan.
- 8.50 Further discussion on this data source can be found in the Natural Places section of the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

SEPA Coastal Flood Mapping

- 8.51 SEPA's Coastal Flood mapping indicates that the entire Aberdeen coastline presents a 'high' likelihood of flooding, particularly along the beach, the River Don, and the River Dee. It shows areas of coastline that are susceptible to natural erosion. This is most evident along the northern areas of Aberdeen's coast, along the beach, and north of the River Don. It shows a northerly movement of sediment along the coast. This can have implications for identifying sites in the Proposed Plan.
- 8.52 Further information concerning flood risk and management is outlined in the Climate topic paper.

Coastal Zoning

- 8.53 Within the extant Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023, coastal areas are zoned as either developed or undeveloped and are shown on the constraints map. The principle of these zonings is well established. The boundaries may need to be re-examined due to the development of the Aberdeen South Harbour at Bay of Nigg. A small area of Undeveloped Coast lies within the Aberdeen South Harbour which would appear to be an anomaly now that the harbour has been built. There are no areas of remote coast in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen Adapts

- 8.54 Aberdeen Adapts (2022) is a framework for city-wide progress towards climate adaptation. It identifies 'Flooding and Coastal Change' as one of five main focal themes for climate adaptation in Aberdeen.
- 8.55 The Aberdeen Adapts Evidence Base indicates that there will be a rise in sea level under all emission scenarios, with a mean increase of 0.56m under a high emission scenario and a mean increase of 0.36m under a low emission scenario. Additionally, flooding and coastal erosion are increasingly likely as the risk of tidal surges and wave overtopping heightens.
- 8.56 It identifies that although a dynamic coastline is a natural process, coastal inundation has potential consequences for natural habitats and defences, such as the coastal dune ridge north of the River Don. Additionally, changes in sedimentation pattern may lead to erosion at the coast or sedimentation processes in adjacent areas to existing coastal defences. This can have implications for identifying sites and zoning land in the Proposed Plan.

Business & Industry

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (SNSSET)

8.57 Outlines national goals for business and industry, and identifies five interconnected key policy programmes of action (entrepreneurial people and culture; new market opportunity; productive businesses and regions; skilled workforce; a fair and more equal society) to drive improvements in Scotland's economy by 2032. Success in delivering these would mean a strong economy, where good, secure and well-paid jobs and growing businesses have driven a significant reduction in poverty particularly child poverty. There is a role for all, from government to business, trade unions, third sector and the people of Scotland. This can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Regional Economic Strategy – a sustainable economic future for the NE of Scotland

8.58 Outlines the regional strategy for creating suitable conditions for economic growth throughout the North East. The regional economy has faced significant challenges, in regards to leaving the European Union, following the COVID-19 pandemic and to changes in the oil and gas sector.

8.59 It identifies 5 overarching objectives:

- To establish the North East as a pioneer of the energy transition, by delivering an 80% reduction in carbon emissions per head;
- Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional employment from the region's growth sectors;
- Maintain a healthy, sustainable, working age population through increasing economic participation rates;
- Become a Real Living Wage region with 95% of overall employment offering a real living wage or higher; and
- Protect and enhance the natural capital of the region by aligning to national ambitions to manage 30% of the region for people and nature by 2030.

8.60 The objectives are supported by four work programmes detailed below (Table 8.5).

Work programme	Overview
A thriving, innovative driven economy	Growth across our key sectors will be driven by innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalisation so that high quality jobs are created. Investment in decarbonisation will be maximised through unlocking private capital for investment in the transition.
An outstanding natural environment:	Our natural environments and biodiversity will be preserved, protected and restored, to ensure we retain their value and integrity, allowing them to continue providing all the essential services we need to support and strengthen our economy, people and places. The region remains a stunning, healthy and productive place to live, work and visit, and accessible to all. The North East's nature underpins many industries providing sustainable raw materials to businesses, supplying a world renowned food and drink sector, strengthening the health and wellbeing of our people and the natural beauty that is the most cited reason for visiting by tourists – outdoor activity, natural

	environment, marine and adventure tourism are all unique features that the North East can capitalise on.
A healthy and skilled population:	There will be investment in education, skills, technology and employment opportunities that help residents benefit from the transition to net zero. Individuals will be able to access high-quality education and training at all life stages. This, combined with a focus on Fair Work and a reduction in inequality, will ensure that all residents and communities are equipped to fulfil their potential, contributing to an improvement in wellbeing and ultimately life expectancy.
A strong community and cultural identity:	There is a vibrant culture and creative sector that is championed to enhance our distinctiveness with a successful arts and cultural sector that capitalises on new investments such as P&J Live or Aberdeen Art Gallery

Table 8.5: Four 'programme areas' developed in response to a number of new challenges and opportunities that the North East economy faces.

North East Scotland Investment Zone (NESIZ)

8.61 North East Scotland was confirmed as an Investment Zone in June 2023, encompassing Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The NESIZ will receive up to £160 million over ten years, supporting economic growth in green energy and digital technology sectors. The region aims to create high-value jobs and support the transition away from oil and gas. The area has extensive experience in offshore energy and a significant tech cluster, contributing to economic growth and innovation. This can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan.

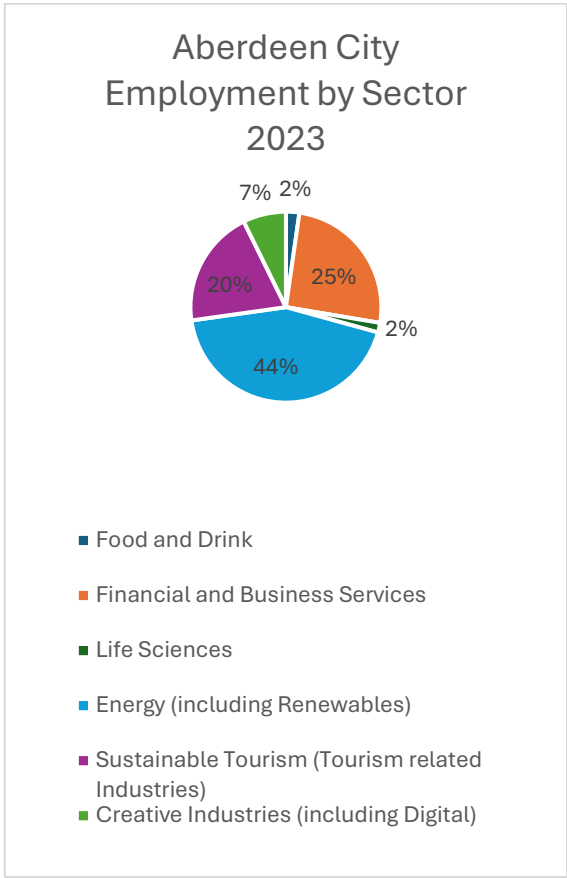
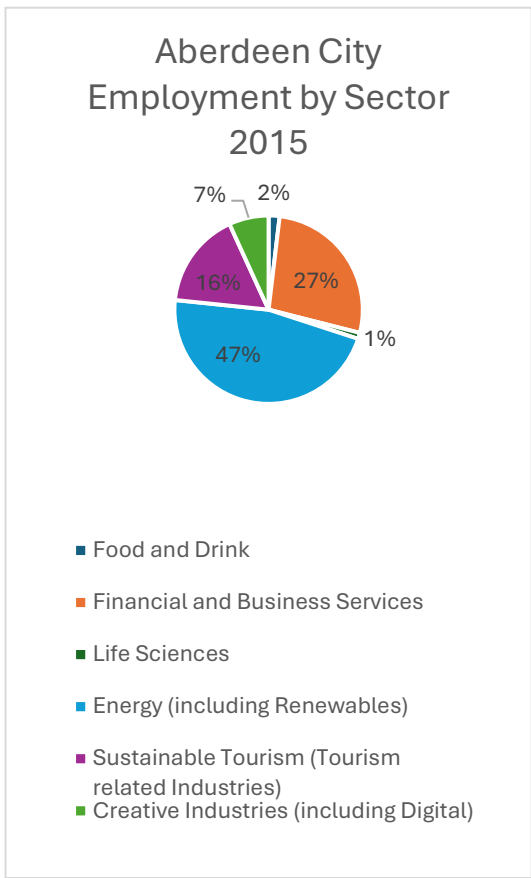
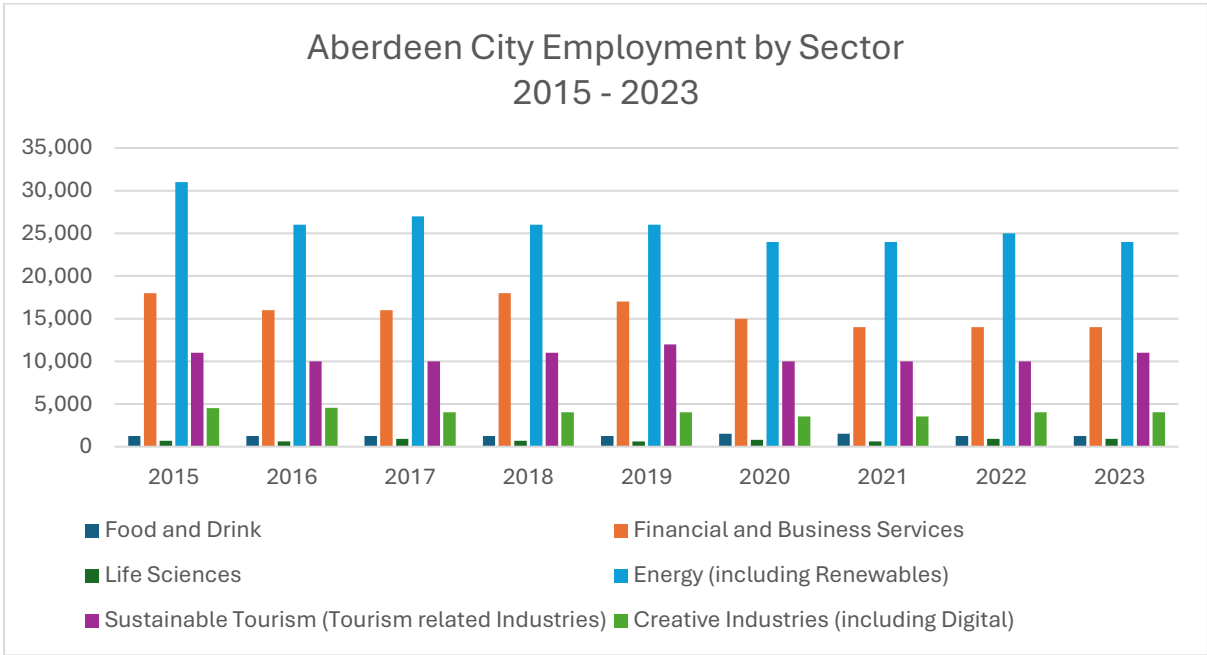
Aberdeen City Data Observatory

8.62 Within the Data Observatory, the Aberdeen City Employment by Sector (Figures 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7) show the number of people employed within the six largest sectors in Aberdeen between 2015 and 2023. As of 2023 within Aberdeen, the largest proportion of people (44%) are employed within the Energy (including Renewables) sector. The second largest sector is Financial and Business Services at 25%. The third largest sector is Sustainable Tourism (20%), which includes tourism related industries. This sector has been among the most stable sectors of employment. No other sector of employment within Aberdeen exceeds 10%.

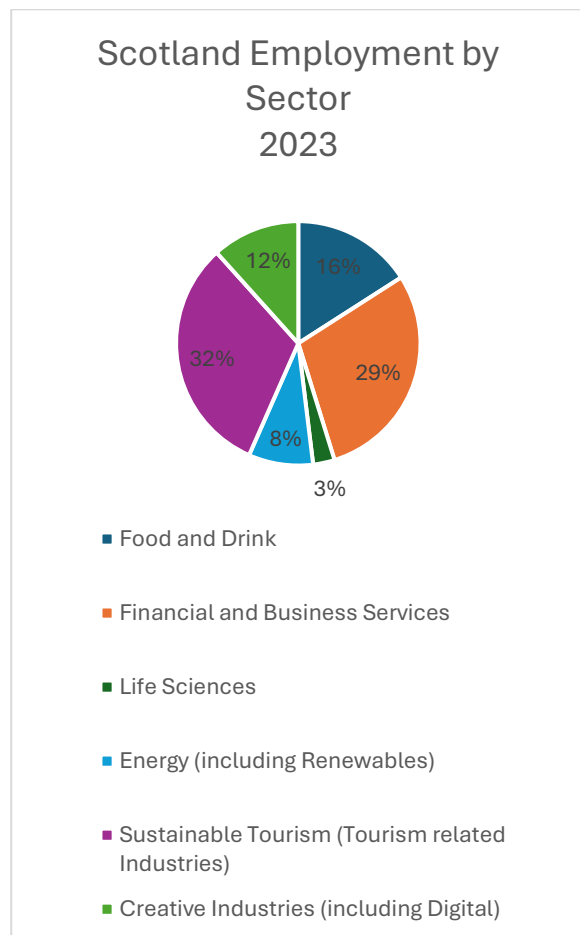
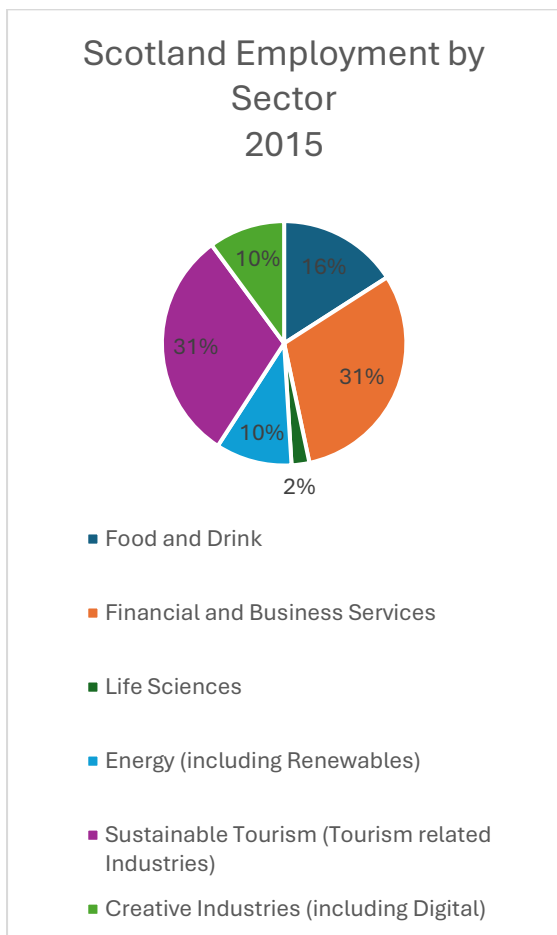
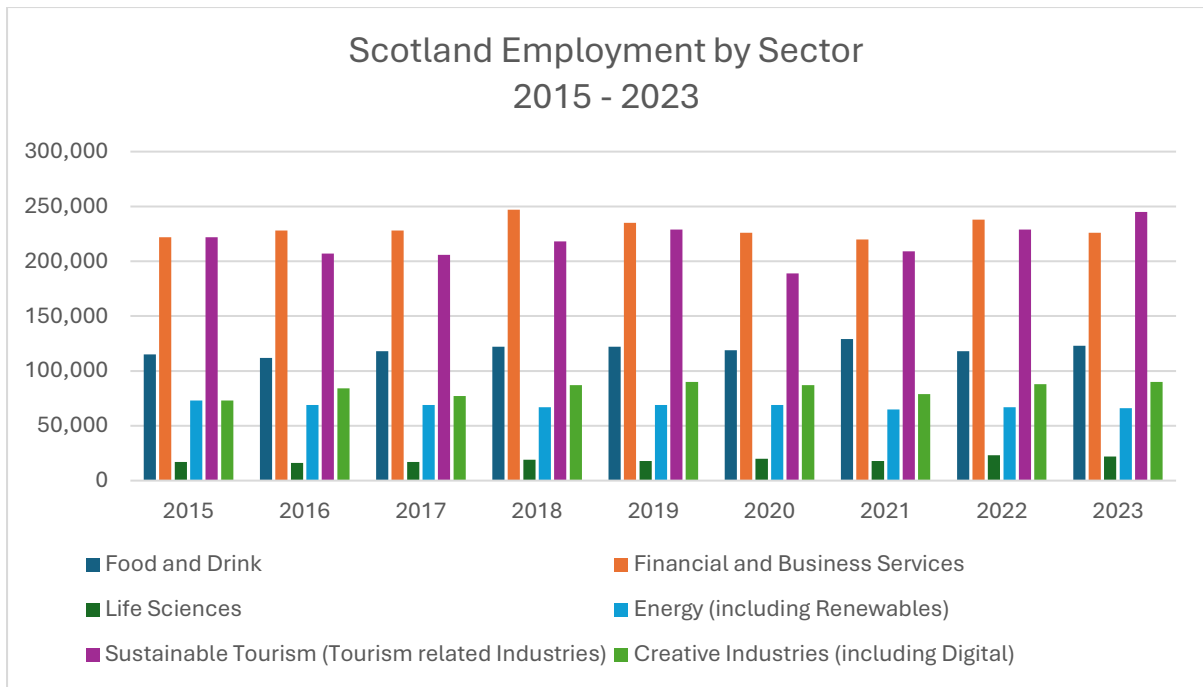
8.63 Comparing Aberdeen to Scotland (Figures below 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10), it is noticeable that Sustainable Tourism (32%) and Financial and Business Services (29%) are by far the largest employment sectors as of 2023 at a national level. While Aberdeen is broadly comparable with Scotland in the Financial and Business Services (at 25% in Aberdeen vs Scotland's 29% in 2023), Aberdeen's Sustainable Tourism industry only accounts for 20% of employment compared to Scotland's 32%.

8.64 The main differences will likely be reflective of Aberdeen being primarily an urban local authority situated on the coast. In addition to this, as the 'Energy capital of Europe', its role in employing people within the oil and gas industries are an outlier, rather than representative of an opportunity available throughout Scotland. While this employment sector is contracting due to the desire to reduce the extraction and consumption of

fossil fuels, investment in renewable energy such as wind turbines and solar farms has partially counter-acted this.



Figures 8.5,8.6 and 8.7: Aberdeen City – Employment by Sector – 2015-2023



Figures 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10: Scotland – Employment by Sector – 2015-2023

8.65 National Planning Framework 4's spatial planning priorities relate to economic growth, economic diversification, innovation, a transition from oil and gas to net zero, regeneration and a retained workforce. This emphasises the importance Aberdeen and

the North East has for Scotland's wider net zero objectives. It will have a significant effect on the nature of the Aberdeen employment market for both existing and emerging businesses and industries which may have differing land allocation requirements.

8.66 The GVA per head in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire saw a rising trend until 2015 and a falling trend to 2020 (as a result of the oil and gas downturn). In comparison, the Scottish line remained steady until 2019 (COVID-19). Aberdeen City and Shire has followed a similar growth trend to the national figures since 2020.

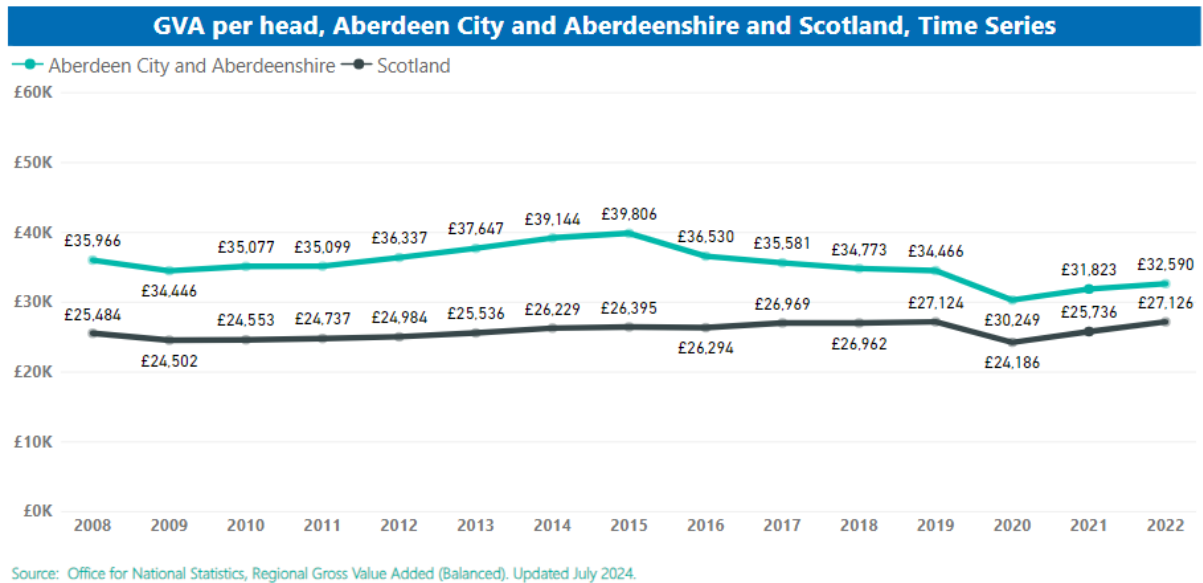


Figure 8.11: Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire 2008-2022

8.67 A similar trend is seen in business births and deaths shown by Figure 8.12 below. Between 2010 and 2015 business births exceeded business deaths quite considerably. Only two years since has seen business births higher than deaths (2018 and 2019) before COVID-19 pandemic impacted on businesses yet again. 2023 shows only a small difference between births and deaths and indicates stabilisation is occurring.

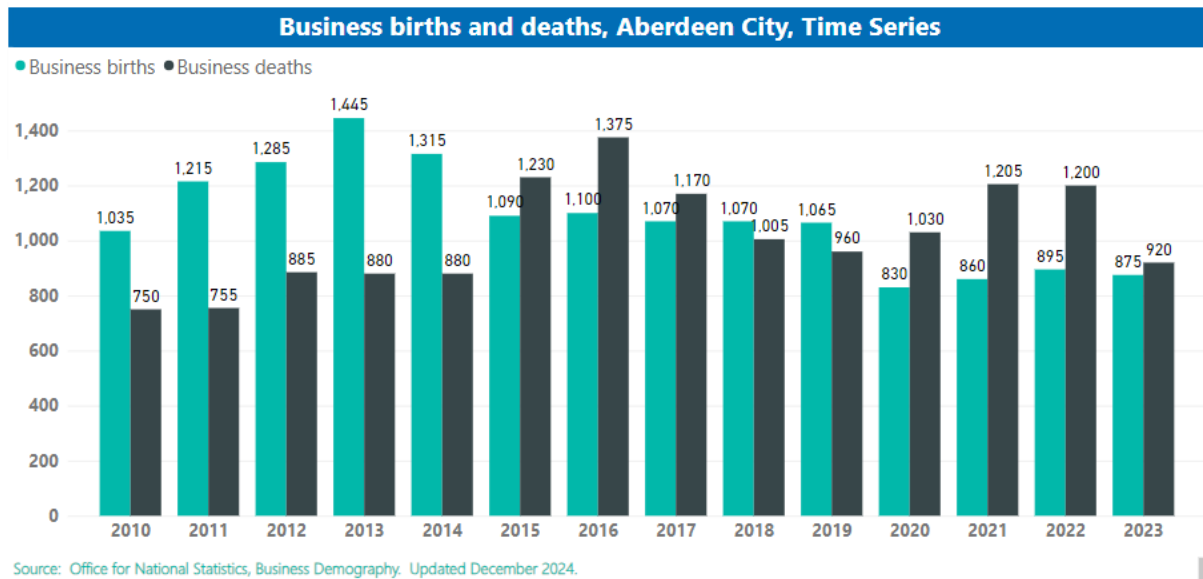


Figure 8.12: Business births and deaths in Aberdeen 2010-2023

8.68 Wages in Aberdeen have historically been higher than the Scottish average. However, as Figure 8.13 below shows, after the oil and gas downturn and COVID-19, wages have evened out across gender and location since 2022.

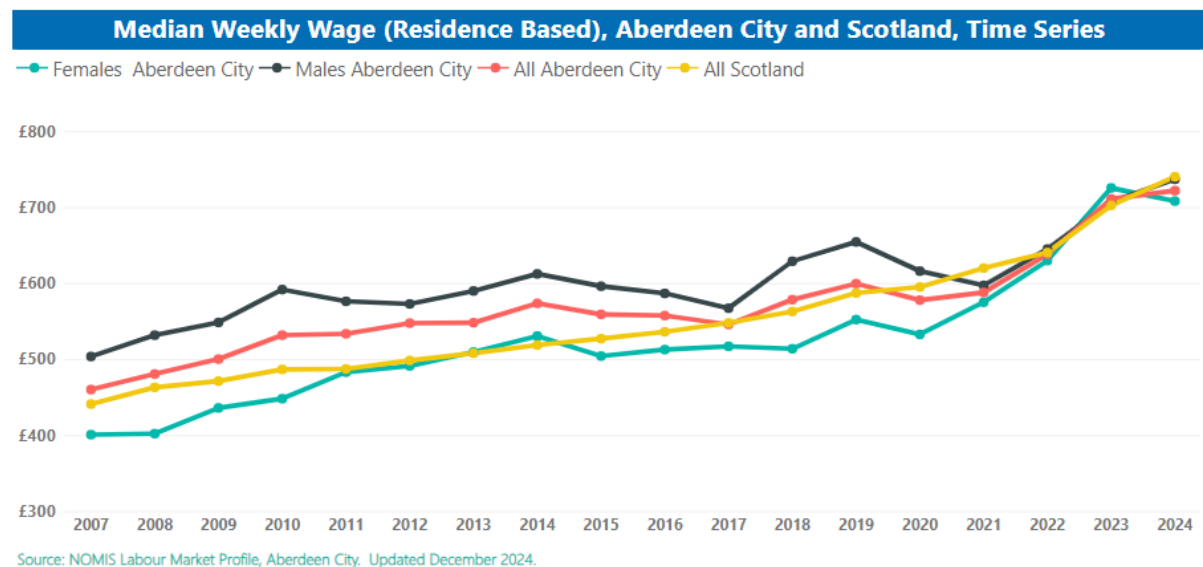


Figure 8.13: Median Weekly Wage – Aberdeen City, Scotland and by Gender 2007 - 2024

8.69 The energy sector in Aberdeen is dominated by oil and gas industries, however there is an emerging renewable energy sector. There are current transitions to sustainable sources of energy such as solar, hydrogen, wind, combined heat and power in line with the Scottish Governments net zero targets.

Energy Transition Fund

8.70 The £62m Energy Transition Fund is available to support projects, to protect existing and create new jobs in the North East. Focussing on Global Underwater Hub, Net Zero

Solution Centre projects, A Hydrogen Hub, The Acorn Project and An Energy Transition Zone adjacent to Aberdeen South Harbour. The energy transition fund aligns with the Aberdeen City Region Deal and its support for retraining and skills development. Planning for the future has seen relocation of activity from Aberdeen Harbour to the South Harbour – both of which are key assets in the regions blue economy.

City Region Deal

- 8.71 The Aberdeen City Region Deal commits the UK Government and Scottish Government to invest up to £250m. The deal, aims to encourage investment in innovation, internationalisation, digital connectivity, and infrastructure across the region. Investments includes £90 million to support an Oil and Gas Technology Centre, and £15 million towards new innovation hubs focusing on research, development and growth in the life sciences and food and drink sectors. Key projects include the Aberdeen South Harbour (completed in 2023), BioHub (opened in 2023), SeedPod (under construction, due for completion in 2025), Net Zero Technology Centre (formerly the Oil and Gas Technology Centre), 5G digital technology and transport projects. This can be examined when considering employment land, sites and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023

- 8.72 The report highlights the need for a long-term strategic approach to secure a successful transition to renewable energy. This requires diversification, attracting and retaining skills, investing in infrastructure, making Aberdeen an even better place to live and work and implementing a successful regional economic strategy. This can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan. Employment rates in Aberdeen dropped at a steeper rate post oil price decline in 2015 than in the rest of Scotland. Whilst the rate has started to recover, it remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (Figure 8.14):

Employment rate pre-pandemic (2019): 79.4%

During pandemic (2020): 71.8%

Post pandemic (2024): 77.4%

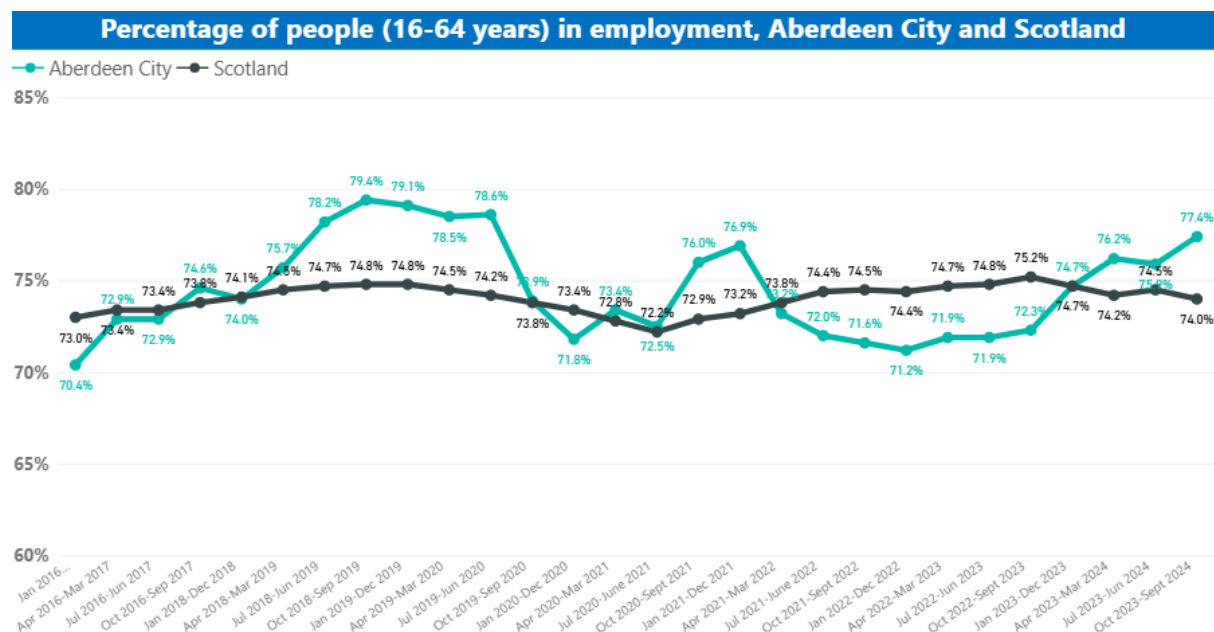


Figure 8.14: Extract from Data Observatory showing Employment Rate in Aberdeen and Scotland over time.

8.73 Demographic changes in the region will impact upon the North East economy with the average age of residents increasing throughout Scotland. In the North East there has been a decline in working age population from 328,000 in 2015 to 315,000 in 2021 equating to a 4% decline. Compared to Glasgow and Edinburgh, where the rate has increased by 5%, the North East has the lowest working-age population since 2008 (Figure 8.15).

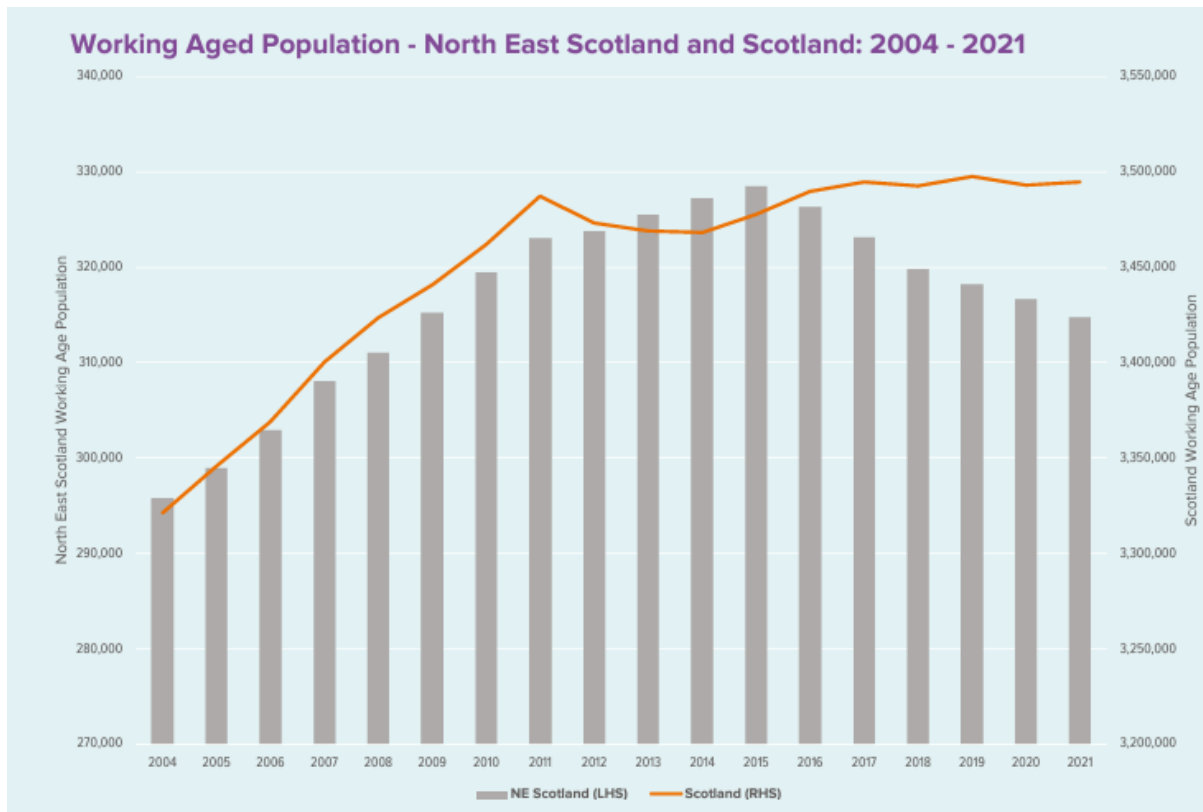
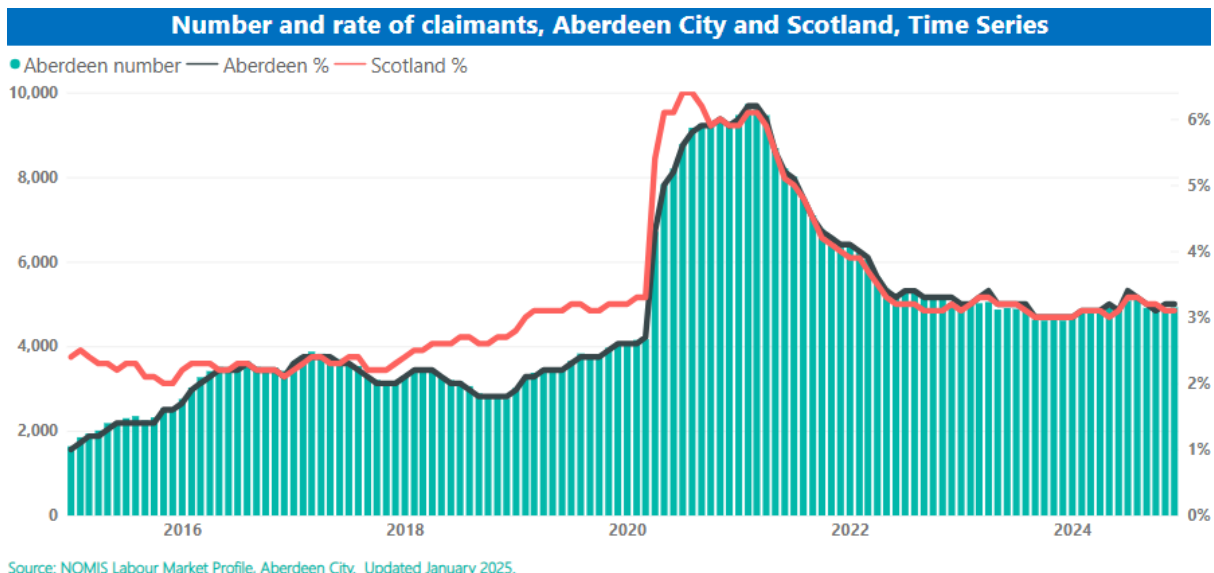


Figure 8.15: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Working Aged Population Rate in North East and Scotland over time.

8.74 Other notable factors compounding this issue include national cost of living increases and economic effects of COVID-19, but also local housing market house price falls, local rent increases and a higher claimant figure post pandemic (Figure 18.16).



Source: NOMIS Labour Market Profile, Aberdeen City. Updated January 2025.

Figure 8.16: Number and rate of claimants in Aberdeen and Scotland.

8.75 Demographic changes, pressures and skills shortages can have knock on effects on the ability for businesses to obtain staff. The report notes that 83% of North East companies have reported challenges in recruiting suitable staff. In line with the Regional Economic Strategy ambitions to diversify the North East economy away from

oil and gas will require to take account of demographic changes, labour shortages and rising costs and prices. Diversification towards other sectors that have strong growth potential (identified in Figure 8.17 below) will be fundamental in achieving the aspirations of the Regional Economic Strategy.

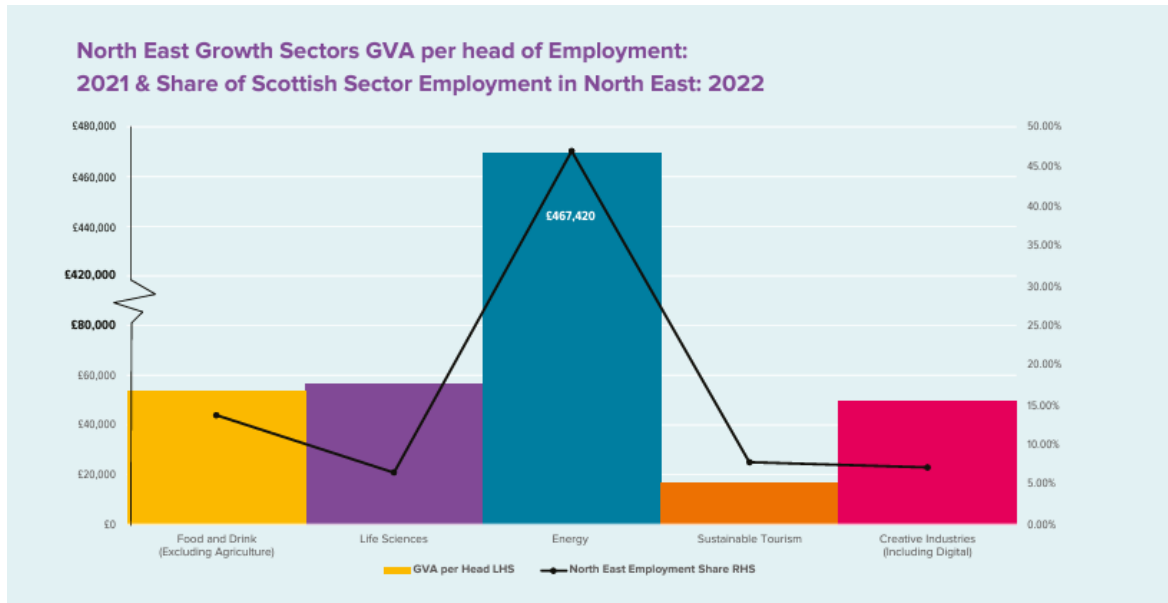


Figure 8.17: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Growth Sectors GVA per head of Employment in North East

Employment Land Supply

8.76 Analysis of current and potential demand for employment land through specific policies and allocations will be required to align with National Planning Framework 4 and focus on economic prosperity and just transition. The biannual Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Business and Land Audit 2023 monitors the location, size, planning status and any existing constraints (marketability, infrastructure, land use etc) of sites within the existing business and industry land supply. The audit monitors the supply and availability as well as the take up of land. Previous audits can be used to identify any trends. National Planning Framework 4 does not state a specific land requirement target for business and industry land allocations.

The Business and Land Audit

8.77 There are 254 hectares of undeveloped business and industry land designated in Aberdeen City. Around 25% of that is constrained as it is not expected to be capable of coming forward within 5 years. The reduction in the established land supply was mostly due to a re-allocation of a single large site at Cloverhill to housing. The Marketable, Immediately Available, and Constrained land supply also fell by 7%, 14%, and 3% respectively as Figure 8.18 below shows.

Aberdeen City Business and Industry Land Supply 2021 and 2023 in Hectares

	2021	2023	Change
Established	270	254	-6%
Constrained	64	62	-3%
Marketable	206	192	-7%
Immediately Available	49	42	-14%
Under Construction	1	5.2	

Figure 8.18: Aberdeen City Business and Industry Land Supply 2021 and 2023

- 8.78 As shown in Figure 8.19 below, in Aberdeen City there has been a decreasing trend in take up of employment land over the past 10 years which can be attributed to the decision to leave the European Union, the downturn in the oil industry and effects of COVID-19 pandemic. A proportion of the take-up has involved non business and industry uses such as retail and “drive-thru” restaurants/take-aways. This is further discussed in Topic Paper – Centres of Business and Culture. There is currently no analysis available regarding overall loss of business land (hectares) to other uses.
- 8.79 Without a specific land requirement target, future site allocations will require to look towards the Regional Economic Strategy and North East Scotland Investment Zone to ensure that the potential to meet economic objectives for Aberdeen City and the wider region is maximised.

Aberdeen City Past 10 Year Completions in Hectares

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
17	15.9	15.3	3.4	0	12	0	4.5	0	1.14

Table 3: Aberdeen City 10 Years Business and Industry Land Completions

Figure 19: Extract from Aberdeen City Business and Industry Land Completions 2013-2023

Office Space

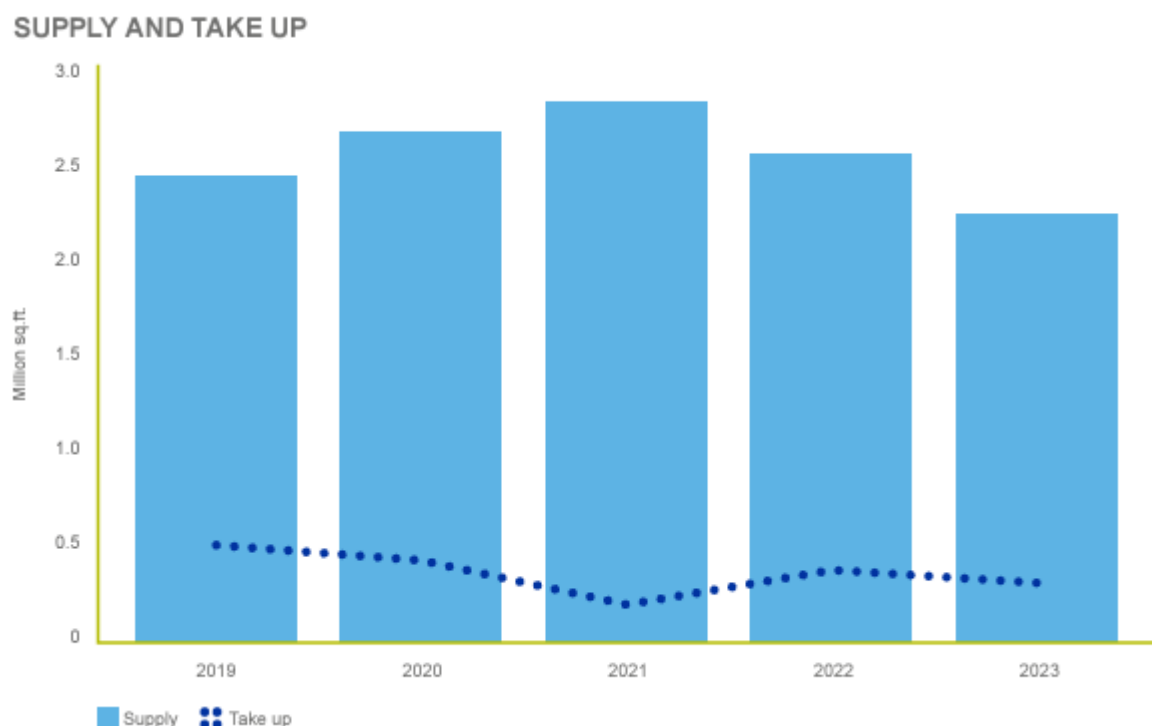


Figure 8.20: Supply and Take Up of Office Space in Aberdeen 2019-2023 (Ryden Scottish Property Review 2024)

- 8.80 Take up of office space is down in Aberdeen, however this is a similar picture in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Office supply at the end of 2023 totalled 2,217,564sq. ft with a notable 12% reduction compared to 2022. This continues the decreasing trend in vacancies which now sits at 20%.
- 8.81 In comparison to 2022, the office take up in Aberdeen has decreased by 14% across 78 transactions. Most deals were less than 5,000sq.ft. The largest deal was Harbour Energy at PrimeFour Business Park at 35,000sq.ft.
- 8.82 Grade A space in the city centre continues to decrease with limited availability of larger suites. Redevelopment of properties in the West End shows continued demand for the right office product where owners are prepared to invest in the building. Outwith the city centre the higher quality office stock continues to be popular with limited availability at PrimeFour and Aberdeen International Business Park. Although rents in Glasgow and Edinburgh have risen, Aberdeen has seen a stabilisation. Grade A rents have remained at £32.50 per sq. ft. However, rents could rise for the higher quality stock due to lack of speculative new developments.
- 8.83 It is important to recognise that post COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations continue to work a hybrid or flexible model and this can impact upon space requirements of an organisation.

Industrial Space

Supply

- 8.84 Due to financial factors including interest rate rises and increased build costs, speculative development in Aberdeen has stopped. Supply has fallen from its peak of 3.2million sq.ft to 2.0million sq.ft. However, a large portion of this supply is old stock or of premises less active at the current time. Industrial rents have grown in Aberdeen. Buildings which are of a higher quality and energy efficiency are moving quickly.

Demand

- 8.85 2023 marked the largest volume of transactions since the downturn in the oil and gas sector in 2015. 97 transactions took place and represented a 10% increase on the five-year average of space taken up. This could partially be as a result of a consistent price per barrel of oil in 2023.
- 8.86 A lack of quality stock is constraining the market so demand is higher than the take-up figures reflect. In particular the market is strong for good quality industrial units over 10,000 sq.ft which benefit from secure yards and overhead craneage.
- 8.87 These issues can be examined when considering employment land and policy in the Proposed Plan.

Place Standard Assessment

- 8.88 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on is are found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas
- 8.89 The facilities and services, and work and local economy themes of the Place Standard are relevant here both scoring 3.9 out of 7.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for future
Facilities and Services	•Good provision of shops, within easy access (All)	• Increases/improvements to health and community health services (All)

	• Support services were good with a range of services available (All), particularly those for the elderly and the vulnerable, and children (Central) • Publicly funded facilities (community centres, libraries, school, play parks) are good. (All) • Good activities for children. Good provision and access to all services and shops (South) • Park facilities were good locally. (South)	• Improvements and increases to publicly funded services, such as maintaining and reopening particularly libraries (All) • Improve activities for children and young people (North) • Improve road safety and crossing. (North) • Improvements to, and increased funding for, support services, such as food banks and services to help the vulnerable and elderly. (Central) • Access to affordable food (Central) • Encouraging investment and incentives for businesses to open locally (South, • Improvements to community health services and support services, and the homeless, elders, and young people (south, north) • Improve public transport to the GP (South) • Do not develop existing green space (South) • Increasing access to and the provision of shops, including bigger food shops (Central) • More investment needed to improve local facilities and services that the community want (Central)
Work and Local Economy	• Good training opportunities, volunteering opportunities and availability of jobs. (All) • Local businesses and independents opening (Central) • Range of retail services (Central)	• Type and range of job opportunities available locally (North and Central) • Improve employment support and training (North and Central) • Volunteering opportunities (North) • Training especially for retraining and skills development (South and Central)

		• Empty buildings grants and incentives(South and Central)

Table 8.6: Summary of respondent's views on good and improvable aspects of their place for the future.

8.90 The children and young people results on work and local economy noted: 62.3% felt they were okay, 32.1% felt they were not good, and 5.7% felt they were great. For facilities and services: 53.7% felt they were okay, 35.2% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great.

Theme	What is good now?	What would make it better?
Work and Local Economy	• Volunteering (20.8%) • Jobs for my family (17.9%) • Jobs nearby (14.2%)	• Training to learn new things (29.3%) • Jobs nearby (27.4%) • Jobs for my family (17%)
Facilities and Services	• Good shops (22.6%) • School (22.6%) • Doctors (12.3%)	• Clubs (22%) • Doctors (20.8%) • School (16%)

Table 8.7: Summary of young person/children's responses to what is good or could be improved about their places. Information is specific to the Work and Local Economy and Facilities and Services criteria.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

8.91 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

8.92 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in September 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on the Spatial Strategy. This included:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Chambers of Commerce
- Marine Directorate
- Ryden
- Homes for Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise
- Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, Flooding/Coastal Team)

8.93 A list of suggested key evidence was outline to key stakeholders in Autumn 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

8.94 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter.

8.95 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 13 responses in total were received, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland) 1 from a housing

developer (Bancon Homes), 1 from an agent representing two housebuilders (THE Architecture & Planning) and 7 members of the public.

8.96 Of those listed, 5 did not agree with the evidence prepared (Homes for Scotland, THE Architecture & Planning and 3 members of the public), and 1 provided further evidence sources (NatureScot). Bancon Homes agreed with the data sets provided in the Strategy Section but had other disputes and comments.

8.97 The following stakeholders provided further comments on the Spatial Strategy.

8.98 A meeting was held with NatureScot on 6 June 2025. They confirmed they have no dispute with the paper but do note the follow comments

- NatureScot agree that the Green Belt Review question 3 (para XXX) which focusses on Nature Networks, should consider biodiversity assets and welcome the consideration of climate change alongside nature networks, however, we recommend that tackling biodiversity loss is also included. Aberdeen City Council agrees with this and had included biodiversity loss in this section.
- NatureScot welcome the inclusion of the AECOM Nature Networks Corridor Map (p. 12) although we understand that there are challenges applying this at a city-level. Aberdeen City Council notes and acknowledges these challenges.
- NatureScot state that the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section is a useful summary however, it is quite general – it should be specific to Aberdeen and the evidence set out earlier in the topic paper. Aberdeen City Council accept that parts of this section are general in nature. However, there are still several studies required to be undertaken together with the call for sites stage. The Proposed Plan will be written over the next 15 months, during which time new issues can emerge, so it is not considered necessary to be too prescriptive at this stage.
- NatureScot states this paper considers green belt, brownfield, coastal development, and business & industry but it is not clear why other spatial elements are not considered for example, the blue green network, nature networks and core paths. Aberdeen City Council's response is that the topic papers closely follow the policies set out in NPF4 where they relate to Aberdeen and explains why the spatial strategy topic paper considers these sub-topics. Blue green networks, nature networks and core paths are considered in more detail in other topic papers such as Sustainable Transport and Nature and Biodiversity. However, we agree that they should also be considered here so have added reference to them in the Spatial Strategy Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section.
- NatureScot state that the National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network is not considered in this topic paper. Aberdeen City Council acknowledge that the National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network needs to be mentioned in this Topic and will do so in the Spatial Strategy Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan – together with cross referencing to the Sustainable Transport Topic.

8.99 NESTRANS have confirmed that they agree with the evidence used in this Topic Paper and that no evidence has been missed. NESTRANS comment that the response mentions the need to use enhanced data to support progressive policies around land allocation. This is not a dispute on the evidence rather than the need for enhanced narrative has the LDP develops.

8.100 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland confirmed that they dispute the sections of the paper (see statements of disagreement) and provided the following commentary:

- Homes for Scotland suggest that the Evidence Report should refer to the Scottish Flood Defence Asset Database. The Council acknowledges that it is important to know the location of flood defences but that the SFDAB is not accessible by the general public. However, Local Authorities have access, so the Database is part of the Strategic Flood Risk Appraisal which accompanies this Evidence Report. This means it can be taken into account when making new land allocations.
- Homes for Scotland point out that Aberdeen City Council declared a Housing Emergency last year but neither this, nor the declaration of a national Housing Emergency are referenced in the draft Topic Paper. The Council would point out that the housing emergency is discussed in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper which is the proper place for it. The Spatial Strategy paper is more concerned with where development in general should or should not be located, rather than what the actual type of development should be.
- Homes for Scotland comment that new homes are key to the social, health, wellbeing and economic success of Aberdeen as well as being a key component in addressing the on-going housing emergency. The new Local Development Plan will be in place for 10 years therefore decisions now have to be both positive and ambitious. Decisions that inform the next local development plan will inform the duration and severity of the housing emergency. Where appropriate, Homes for Scotland note that they, and their members, would be happy to engage with the Council as it finalises evidence for the topic papers. The Council acknowledges and accepts these comments and are happy to continue engaging with Homes for Scotland as well as other parts of the development industry for the duration of the LDP process
- Homes for Scotland state that it is vital for the next LDP to consider both sustainable and marketable locations for new developments. If a sustainable site is not in a marketable location, it is unlikely to be delivered, and the housing requirement will not be met. The Council acknowledges that marketability is an important issue, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.
- Homes for Scotland agree that sites should be re-assessed, to understand whether they are viable for residential development. Brownfield and SVDLD sites represent various challenges such as market demand, the large amounts of upfront investment required, perceived market risk, economic uncertainty and fragmented ownership. Limited confidence can be placed in these sites delivering a notable proportion of the new homes required to exceed the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR), particularly given the number of sites which are in active use. In reference to Vacant and Derelict sites, allocating a site for housing is not in itself a sufficient catalyst for development. Viability requires to be more fully understood here.
- Homes for Scotland supports the sustainable reuse of brownfield land but if not viable, it should not be allocated regardless of whether it is a brownfield or greenfield site. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration

during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.

- An exercise should be carried out to understand why sites that have been allocated for housing have not come forward. Viability matters require to be fully understood, given that every allocated site will need to be deliverable in the emerging LDP. HFS and our members would be willing to share our knowledge on these issues. The Council would welcome any collaboration on this issue and is happy to work together to find ways of overcoming barriers to development.

8.101 A meeting was held with Bancon Homes on 18 June 2025. Bancon Homes confirmed that they dispute the sections of the paper (see statements of disagreement) and provided the following commentary:

- Bancon Homes point out that high density development is not always the correct design or market solution. The Authority and Development Industry should work collaboratively to arrive at a density that is appropriate for each location. The Council acknowledges these comments and would accept that whilst high density development has sustainability advantages, it is not always appropriate in every case.
- Bancon Homes are, as discussed above, supportive of a strategy that undertakes a comprehensive review of the Greenbelt in order to identify suitable locations for new development. In doing so, it should actively consider where allocations can be made that would broadly comply with NPF4 namely through the creation of 20minute neighbourhoods and the creation of sustainable communities. The Council welcomes the support given for a green belt review and has added reference to 20-minute neighbourhoods and sustainable communities to point 5 of the commentary on the Green Belt Review in paragraph xxx.
- A strategy that places all of the allocations is brownfield sites is not going to be successful and will prohibit many people from being able to reside in their chosen area or be able to live in a home that is fit for purpose and meets their needs. This will only serve to fuel the housing emergency currently faced. The Council does not suggest all allocations should be on brownfield sites – housing allocations should be provided in a range of locations.
- Bancon Homes would also note that given the complexities in taking forward brownfield sites the authority should, in order to arrive at a deliverable Local Housing Land Supply, allocate new land. Not only would this guarantee delivery but it would provide new housing in areas where people want to live. Brownfield Sites tend to be cited in city centre or industrial locations to the north and south of the city, not necessarily where people want to live. Likewise, their location can dictate that the type of home tends to be higher density flatted properties and this is not always what the market need is. To respond to both the local and national housing emergency it is paramount that new allocations are made in areas where people want to live and a variety of house type is accommodated. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan and that a range of sites would be desirable. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.

- Bancon Homes have no issue in regard to the Coastal Zoning strategy however, respectfully request the right to comment on this further once the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan has been published for consultation.
- Bancon Homes recognise there is an emerging renewable energy sector in Aberdeen and this is expected to be strengthened further through the transition to net zero as well as the location of GB Energy into the city. Furthermore the £62m Energy Transition Fund is available to support projects to protect existing, and create new, jobs in the North East this will inevitably lead to more job creation which will help to support the local economy. To support and sustain this investment it is vital that new housing both affordable and private is delivered in areas where people want to live. The Council acknowledges these comments.

8.102 An email was sent to THE on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as disputes and are set out in the disputes section below.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy and National Developments

8.103 The Aberdeen City and Shire Interim Regional Spatial Strategy (or any subsequent RSS if approved) will be used to inform the spatial strategy of Proposed Plan.

8.104 National Developments within National Planning Framework 4 (Aberdeen Harbour and the Aberdeen Rapid Transit Network) will have to be considered in terms of the spatial strategy.

Green Belts

8.105 We will use the information from the Green Belt Review to inform the Proposed Plan. The continuing role of green belt as part of the spatial strategy will be considered, taking into account the policy outcomes in National Planning Framework 4.

8.106 A detailed, site-specific review of the boundaries of the green belt will need to be undertaken.

8.107 Consideration will need to be given to whether any land previously designated as green belt should be released to meet future development requirements.

8.108 Consideration should be given to whether any new areas of green belt should be designated to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of Aberdeen.

8.109 The role of Aberdeen's green belt in supporting nature networks and helping tackle climate change, as highlighted in National Planning Framework 4, will require to be considered.

8.110 With a detailed green belt policy now included in National Planning Framework 4. consideration will need to be given on the need for a local green belt policy in the Proposed Plan.

- 8.111 We will consider how the vision of Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026 can help achieve the policy outcome and intent of the green belt as outlined on National Planning Framework 4.
- 8.112 We will consider the role the landscape character assessment, the coastal character assessment, the peri urban study and the sensitivity assessment will play in any green belt review.
- 8.113 We will consider the role that the blue green network, nature networks and core paths will play in any green belt review, the identification of new allocations and the development of new nature networks. These are considered in detail in the Sustainable Transport and Nature and Biodiversity Topic Papers.
- 8.114 The spatial strategy for the Proposed Plan will be informed by the National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network (also referred to in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper) and in the site selection process.

Brownfield Development

- 8.115 The continuing role of the use of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings as part of spatial strategy will have to be considered, taking into account the policy outcomes in National Planning Framework 4.
- 8.116 It is proposed to continue and further develop this approach before identifying greenfield sites for development. The biodiversity value and contribution brownfield land can make to nature recovery, and productive greenspace will be considered when assessing the appropriateness of allocating and considering such sites for development.
- 8.117 Information contained in the most recent annual return to the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Survey, the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study and the City Centre Masterplan's will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.
- 8.118 Consideration will be given on if, and how, the impact of the Historic Environment Scotland review of the current Buildings at Risk Register might be reflected in the policy framework and development strategy for the Proposed Plan.
- 8.119 An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make to meeting the LHLR.
- 8.120 An Existing Site Audit will be required to assess the suitability and /deliverability of existing allocations and the contribution they make to meeting the Local Housing Land Requirement.
- 8.121 The assessment of potential new sites for the Proposed Plan should take into consideration deliverability issues.

Coastal Development

- 8.122 The Proposed Plan will seek to incorporate relevant aims of the national marine plan and any regional marine plan when published. The National Development at Aberdeen Harbour will be identified within the Proposed Plan.

- 8.123 The impacts of climate change with regard flooding and coastal erosion, and long term adaptation and reliance will be considered when developing the spatial strategy.
- 8.124 The spatial strategy should reflect the diversity of coastal areas and opportunities to use nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets.
- 8.125 A review of the current coastal zonings, developed and undeveloped will need to be undertaken for the Proposed Plan.
- 8.126 With a detailed coastal development policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the need for a local coastal development policy in the Proposed Plan.
- 8.127 The Proposed Plan will take into account any relevant findings from the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan when it is published.

Business and Industry

- 8.128 A review of the current business and industrial land and business zones will need to be undertaken for the Proposed Plan, to understand if existing sites may require to be re-allocated, or if more economic land should be allocated, and for what type of uses.
- 8.129 The location of any new economic allocations in relation to communities, access to services and all forms of travel and transport services will need to be considered. In this context it may be appropriate in some cases to consider a wider mix of uses.
- 8.130 Information contained in the Regional Economic Strategy, North East Investment Zone, and the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Business and Land Audit will be used to inform the land requirements for business and industrial land in the Proposed Plan.
- 8.131 The spatial priorities for the North East from National Planning Framework 4 will have a significant effect on the nature of the Aberdeen employment market for both existing and emerging businesses and industries which may have differing land allocation requirements.
- 8.132 With a detailed Business and Industry policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the need for local Business and Industrial Land, and Business Zones Policies.

Marmot Places

- 8.133 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	

Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 8.8 Marmot Principles

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

8.134 NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland and 4 individuals agreed with the evidence in this section and stated that no evidence had been missed.

8.135 NatureScot and NESTRANS have confirmed they do not dispute the evidence but have provided further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

8.136 Two individuals did not agree with the evidence but provided no further information.

8.137 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

8.138 The following Homes for Scotland comments are being noted as disputes:

- Homes for Scotland state that they would expect a Green Belt Review should be completed (and made available for comment) before the Evidence Report is submitted to the Gate Check. HFS dispute any approach that does not include a robust review of all land to be potentially designated as green belt, prior to the Gate Check. Without doing a green belt review at this stage, Homes for Scotland consider that the Council will be unable to confidently state they are aware of the potential links to the Site Assessment Methodology and the various Spatial Strategy documents that they refer to. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the Green Belt Review at this stage but acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- Homes for Scotland assert that a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study should be carried out now, such that the findings can be reviewed as part of the evidence gathering process. There is a dearth of information contained within the draft Topic Paper, as it pertains to brownfield land. For example, other Local Authorities have included important data sets as part of their draft Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land Topic Papers, including the breakdown by ownership for each site, and planning histories. Many other Local Authorities have also included visual representations of the scale of these types of land availabilities over time. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study at this stage, particularly as the Call for

Sites stage is yet to be undertaken. However, we acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.

8.139 The following Bancon Homes comments are being noted as a disputes:

- Bancon Homes take issue with a strategy that seeks to retain areas of Greenbelt around the City and request that this is fully reassessed as part of any Greenbelt review. Both the City and National Government have declared a housing emergency and new allocations within the Greenbelt will be necessary to address this and meet any Local Housing Land Target. If new allocations are to be successful and deliver much needed new homes it is paramount that they are allocated in areas where people wish to live. The Council considers that housing allocations should be provided in a range of locations. It unnecessary to produce the Green Belt Review at this stage but acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- Bancon Homes are supportive of a LDP that identifies opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings however in doing so any LDP must be mindful that there are multiple constraints and challenges in bringing forward a brownfield site, not only should there be policy support in the form of reduced developer obligations and flexibility on space and parking standards but there must be the recognition that these sites are unlikely to contribute to the Local Housing Land Requirement and therefore should not be included. Instead, they should be windfall allocations. As the LDP will be a 10 year old plan it must be flexible and ensure that there is policy support to take forward brownfield sites that come forward within the life of the plan yet are not identified as such. The Council considers brownfield development is sustainable and assists regeneration and acknowledges that it will be important to explore every mechanism available to aid their delivery. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic.

8.140 The following THE Planning and Architecture o/b/o Barrat Homes and David Wilson Homes (THE) are being noted as disputes;

- THE point out that the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is included as evidence in the Topic Paper, but no link is provided to this document. The relevance of the RSS is questioned – and that Aberdeen, being the economic centre of the region should be ambitious about securing growth. The Council agrees that we should be ambitious – the interim RSS is referred to for historical context.
- THE provide comments on the history of the Green Belt and its effects on new developments. Suggests that demand for family housing remains greater than that of flatted accommodation and a restrictive approach would not support a growing economy. Detailed green belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans and therefore a thorough review is required. The Council agrees the need for a Green Belt Review and acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.
- THE comment that Aberdeen should be a focus for meeting housing needs and demand as it will reduce travel demands and provides the opportunities to make the most sustainable use of land. The Green Belt has been used as a tool to restrict development in Aberdeen and a review of the boundaries should be undertaken to

consider where there may be appropriate opportunities for greenfield development to support a sustainable development strategy. The Council agrees the need for a Green Belt Review and acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.

- THE comment on Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy stating that delivery of housing within Aberdeen close to a wide range of employment opportunities, services and facilities has significant benefits in land use terms and development can also help to increase urban woodland connections, public access and open space and deliver biodiversity net gains. These would all be achieved in the implementation of NPF4 policies. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- THE comment that The AECOM Nature Networks are an indication of what could be, and can be used as a starting point for local authorities to explore what their own Nature Networks could be. They should be used as a starting point for a more refined local analysis. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- THE comment that it will be important that the urban capacity study considers each brownfield site and the expected delivery based on the specific circumstances. To be effective there needs to be a viable development and demand for the location and type of housing required. This needs to be considered in relation to the current costs to development and values. For example, there are some areas of Aberdeen where the cost to build will exceed the value of the property. Flatted developments are particularly challenging with low values, demand and also no desire from the Housing Service to fund flatted developments to contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the city. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites. Reference to this will be placed in the Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan section of this topic. However, brownfield development is sustainable and assists regeneration and it will be important to explore every mechanism available to aid their delivery.
- THE comment that with many large industrial brownfield sites having been or in the process of redevelopment it is to be expected that there will be a decrease in the availability of suitable and viable brownfield opportunities. The Council states that as old brownfield sites get developed, new ones emerge and this will be examined in the next Brownfield Urban Capacity Study.
- THE comment that providing a generous supply of deliverable housing land will be an important part of meeting the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy. Appropriate housing land and supply in the right locations can deliver the type and size of housing needed to attract a working age population. Historically a lack of housing supply has led to constraints in economic growth and pressure in the affordability of housing. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- THE comment that development projects within the city centre boundary have a direct effect on city centre regeneration and delivery of an increased resident population in close proximity and accessible by a range of transport modes will assist in increased footfall and investment. This is particularly relevant as there is a move to make the city centre more pedestrian focussed and access from surrounding communities in Aberdeenshire to the City Centre decreases. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- THE comments that the spatial strategy should focus on the strands of future development that will create the right conditions for investment in Aberdeen. An important strand to this will be delivery of housing to meet the needs of economically

active people. There will be a range of housing needed to meet these needs, but the greatest demand is for family housing in locations that are close to areas of employment. The Council acknowledges these comments and is happy to work with the housebuilding industry to address them.

- THE comment that based on the evidence presented there is a clear indication that there is more than a sufficient supply of marketable employment land in Aberdeen based on trends. There should be flexibility in supply of employment land maintained, but there will be opportunity to consider the development of alternative uses on land allocated for business and industrial land on a case by case basis. The Council acknowledges these comments and will consider any proposals to repurpose or rezone land when assessing sites and areas for the Proposed Plan.

Information Gaps

8.141 An updated Business and Industry Land Audit will be undertaken within the next 12 months to provide updated information on the supply and availability of employment land for business and industrial use.

8.142 An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make to the housing supply. This will be prepared in the coming year and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

8.143 A Green Belt Review will be undertaken as part of the Natural Heritage Strategy within the next 12 months.

8.144 An Existing Site Audit will be required to assess the suitability/deliverability of existing allocations in Local Development Plan 2023. This will be undertaken during the next year and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

8.145 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

9. Topic Paper 2 – Delivery of Homes

Requirements addressed in this section:

9.1. Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(1A)	The Local Development Plan (LDP) must include targets for meeting the housing needs of people living in the part of the district to which it relates.
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,
Section 15(5)(ca)	the housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people
Section 15(5)(cb)	the availability of land in the district for housing, including for older people and disabled people
Section 15(5)(f)	any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to these matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (eb)
Section 16(2) (ab)	In preparing the LDP, the planning authority are to have regard to the list published under section 16E of persons seeking to acquire land in the authority's area for self-build housing.
Section 16B(3) (a) - (c)	The Evidence Report is to: • set out the planning authority's view on the matters listed in section 15(5) (see above) • set out – ○ a summary of the action taken by the planning authority to support and promote the construction and adaptation of housing to meet the housing needs of older people and disabled people in the authority's area ○ an analysis of the extent to which the action has helped to meet those needs • set out –

	○ a summary of the action taken by the planning authority to meet the needs of gypsy/travellers in the authority's area ○ an analysis of the extent to which that action has helped to meet those needs

Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:

Section	Requirement
Regulation 9(2)(e)	In preparing the LDP, the planning authority must have regard to: • any local housing strategy
Regulation 24(c)	A Delivery Programme is to set out the following matters: • the expected sequencing of, and timescales for, delivery of housing on sites allocated by the LDP

National Planning Framework 4

9.2. Local Development Plans (LDPs) are expected to identify a Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) for the area they cover. This is to meet the duty for a housing target and to represent how much land is required. To promote an ambitious and planned approach, the Local Housing Land Requirement is expected to exceed the 10 year Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) set out in Annex E.

9.3. Deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10 year Local Housing Land Requirement in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with local living including, where relevant, 20 minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure first approach. Diverse needs and delivery models should be taken into account across all areas, as well as allocating land to ensure provision of accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople where need is identified.

9.4. The LDP Delivery Programme is expected to establish a deliverable housing land pipeline for the Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR). The purpose of the pipeline is to provide a transparent view of the phasing of housing allocations so that interventions, including infrastructure, that enable delivery can be planned: it is not to stage permissions. Representing when land will be brought forward, phasing is expected across the short (1-3 years), medium (4-6 years) and long-term (7-10 years). Where sites earlier in the deliverable housing land pipeline are not delivering as programmed, and alternative delivery mechanisms identified in the delivery programme are not practical, measures should be considered to enable earlier delivery of long-term deliverable sites (7-10 years) or areas identified for new homes beyond 10 years. De-

allocations should be considered where sites are no longer deliverable. The annual Housing Land Audit will monitor the delivery of housing land to inform the pipeline and the actions to be taken in the delivery programme.

Links to Evidence

- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey \(2023\)](#)
- [NPF4 - Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire MATHLR Assessment Report](#)
- [Airbnb Scotland Survey 2023 on numbers and distribution of Airbnb homes across Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Government Housing to 2040 Report](#)
- [Chief Planner's Letter: Planning for Housing \(June 2024\)](#)
- [Chief Planner's Letter of 22 November 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3: 2023-2028 1](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2024](#)
- [Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City Draft Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29](#)
- [Aberdeen Brownfield Urban Capacity Study \(2019\)](#)
- [Online Register of HMO Licence Applications and HMO Licences](#)
- [Houses in Multiple Occupation Concentrations – Interactive Online Map \(updated on a monthly basis\)](#)
- [Online Register of STL Licence Applications and STL Licences](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Self-Build Housing Register \(May 2024 Update\)](#)
- [Planning Permission in Principle for erection of 19no. self-build dwelling houses with associated landscaping, access and infrastructure - Woodend, Culter House Road, Aberdeen Peterculter \(planning ref. 210889/PPP\) \(insert planning ref. into search field to view decision notice and approved plans\)](#)
- [Aberdeen City Community Planning Aberdeen Engagement Report](#)
- [Aberdeen City Demolition safest option for RAAC-affected homes](#)
- [National Records for Scotland Mid-2023 population estimates](#)
- [National Records for Scotland Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2023](#)
- [Planning and the Housing Emergency – Delivery Plan](#)
- [Minute of the Meeting of COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE.](#)
- [Existing Housing Need in Scotland by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie&Co](#)
- [Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen City by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie&Co](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

9.5. The Council have a responsibility to encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality affordable and sustainable homes, in the right locations, providing choice across tenures meeting the diverse housing needs of people and communities in

¹ The HNDA was submitted to the Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) in October 2023 and was formally signed off as 'robust and credible' in mid-January 2024.

Aberdeen. The evidence base to support these aims must set out trends relating to the housing market and housing completions, demographics and needs, and information on brownfield sites in the city.

9.6. This section is structured in the following order:

- Spatial Location of 2023 Local Development Plan sites and 2023 Housing Land Audit sites
- Housing Market Drivers and Trends
- Demographic Context
- Estimating Housing Need and Demand
- Local Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Target
- Past Housing Completion Rates and Existing Housing Land Supply
- Brownfield and Greenfield Development Trends
- Vacant and Derelict Land and Urban Capacity Sites
- Windfall Development Trends
- Housing Affordability
- Specialist Housing Provision
- Wheelchair Accessible Housing
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Short-term Lets
- Self-Build Housing and Self Build Register
- Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete
- Place Standard Assessment
- Indicative Local Housing Land Requirement

Spatial Location of 2023 LDP sites and 2023 Housing Land Audit sites

9.7. Maps for the 2023 Local Development Plan sites and 2023 Housing Land Audit sites can be found below. These give a good baseline understanding of the capacities of current sites around Aberdeen.

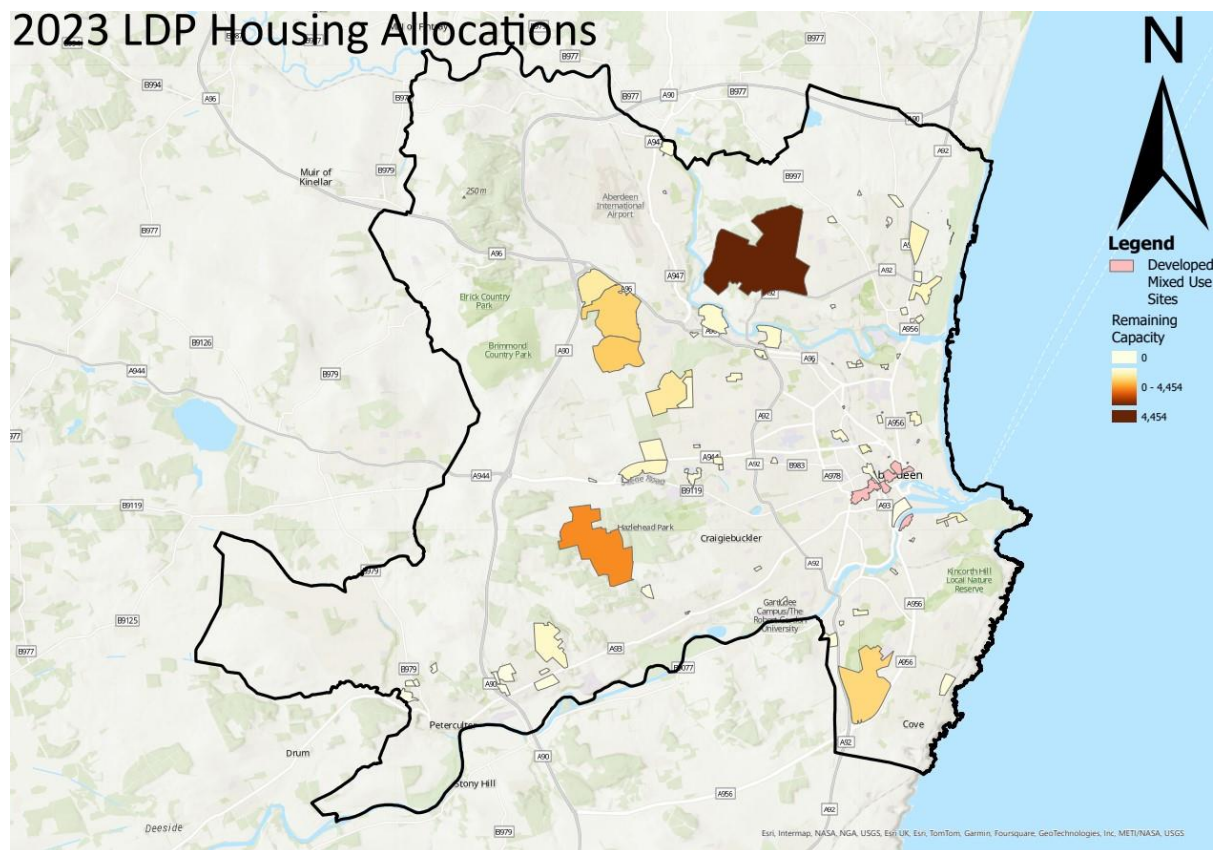


Figure 9.1: Map of Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 sites.

9.8. The above map, figure 9.1, demonstrates that there is significant scope for housebuilding on the larger greenfield housing allocations, particularly at Grandhome and Countesswells.

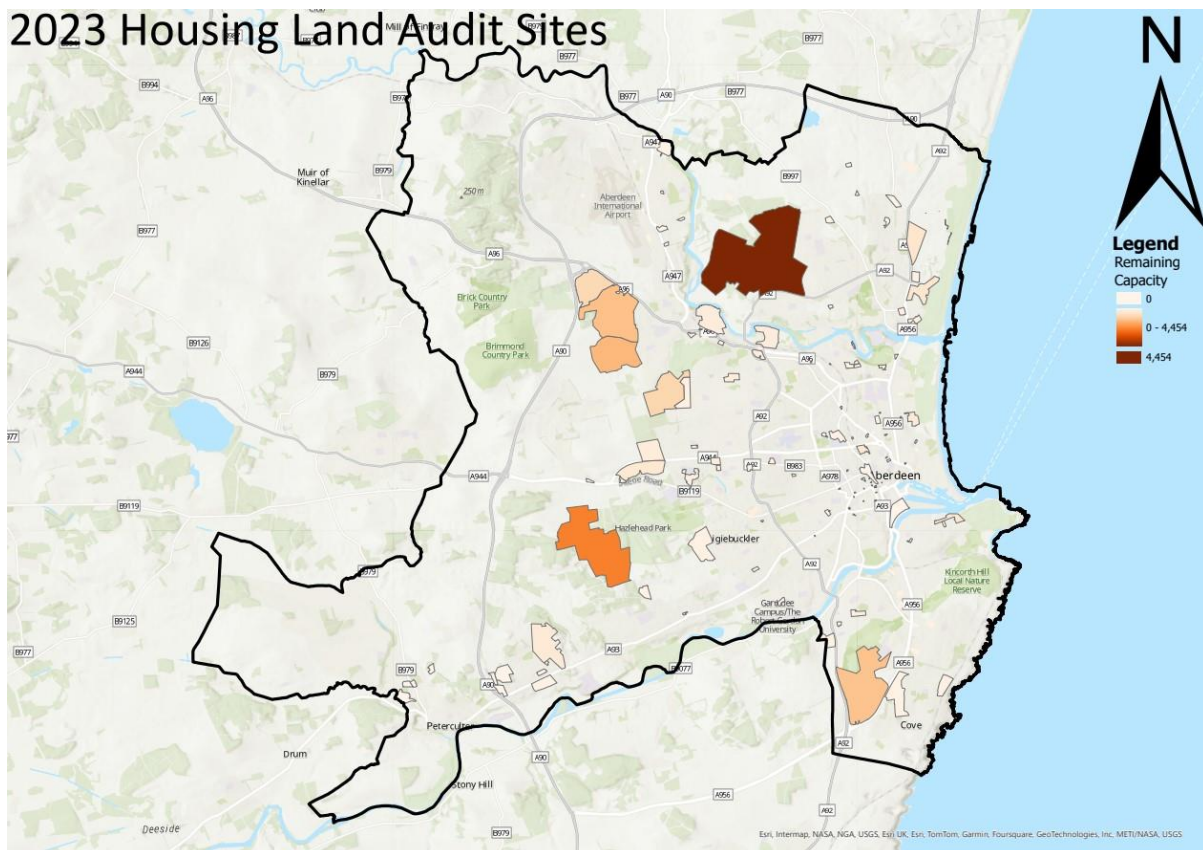


Figure 9.2: Map of the Housing Land Audit sites 2023 – 2024 is not yet available.

9.9. The above map, figure 9.2, is similar to the Local Development Plan map however it also demonstrates that there are a large quantity of smaller sites which are counted within the Housing Land Audit (HLA) which are scattered throughout the existing built areas of the city.

Housing Market Drivers & Trends

9.10. The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency in May 2024 and the Planning and the Housing Emergency - Delivery Plan was then published in November 2024, thereafter, a number of local authorities have also subsequently declared housing emergencies. Aberdeen City declared a Housing Emergency on 5 September 2024, recognising the pressures facing housing and homelessness services in Aberdeen. There was also a commitment to bring forward a Housing Emergency Action Plan. This plan will address how to tackle homelessness and increase housing supply in the short and medium term, increase maintenance programmes on housing stock and support the findings of the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) report due August 2025.

9.11. Chapter 2 of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023-2042 (HNDA) presents an extensive range of data on key drivers of the local housing market in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. It is not appropriate to reproduce all of the data here. In summary, the chapter identifies a number of issues for the local housing market that will need to be considered during preparation of the new Local Development Plan. The key issues are outlined in table 9.1 below.

Topic	Key Issues Identified in HNDA
Demographic issues for local housing market	• Following a prolonged period of strong population growth, both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire saw decreases in population from 2015 in response to local economic circumstances. • Compared to Scotland, both areas have seen an above average increase in older age groups and a decrease in young adults. • Population projections indicate a higher rate of increase in population in Aberdeenshire than Aberdeen in future years. The main increases are in older age groups. • After a long period of positive net in-migration up to 2014, there was a reversal of this trend from 2015, and both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire saw negative net migration for a few years. There remains uncertainty over the future direction and pattern of migration trends post Covid-19 and Brexit. • Aberdeen City has an average household size of 2.02 persons. Household size has been declining and this trend is projected to continue. • The number of households is projected to increase by 3% in Aberdeen City by 2028. This may be a conservative estimate of household growth as recent migration trends indicate a higher level of growth is more likely. • In Aberdeen City the largest projected increase is in single adult households (+4.4%). The largest percentage increases are in older households, particularly those aged 75+, with projected increases of 18.8% in Aberdeen City.
Economic issues for the local housing market	• Following a prolonged period of economic growth in North East Scotland, there was a significant decline between 2014 and 2017 due to the downturn in oil and gas prices. However, economic performance remains above the average in Scotland and the rest of the UK. • Employment in the region remains focused on activities related to oil and gas, although this has begun to decline. • Unemployment rates in the area have historically been much lower than in Scotland but in Aberdeen City this has changed in recent years with unemployment now at similar rates to Scotland (3.3% in Aberdeen City, 3.2% in Scotland). • There was a recent rise in claimants for Universal Credit housing costs in Aberdeen City, from 14.1% in 2018 to 19% in 2022, an increase of more than one third. • In Aberdeen City, there are 29 datazones out of 283 that fall within the 20% most deprived in Scotland and 1 datazone within the 5% most deprived. 35% of datazones fall within the 20% most deprived for the housing domain. • The downturn in the price of oil in 2014 has had a significant negative impact on the region's economy. While recent oil price increases may provide a boost in the short term, the focus is now on energy transition and developing a sustainable and resilient diversified economy which capitalises on new technologies. There remains some uncertainty about the type and scale of employment opportunities likely to result from this.

	• The delivery of new housing continues to be negatively impacted by a significant increase in construction costs since late 2020 and shortages of key materials.

Table 9.1: Summary of Key Local Housing Market Drivers from the HNDA

9.12. Chapter 3 of the HNDA profiles the physical characteristics of the existing housing stock, identifying any stock pressures, stock management issues etc. The information in this chapter of the HNDA does not feed into the estimates of future additional housing need (see section below) but it will help to inform decisions on housing stock and housing related policies. Although the information in this chapter is perhaps more relevant to the forthcoming Local Housing Strategy (LHS), it may also influence the LDP and other local planning guidance. Again, the detailed evidence is not reproduced here, but a summary of some of the key issues which may need to be taken into account during production of the LDP and other local planning guidance are outlined in Table 9.2.

Topic	Key Issues Identified in HNDA
Housing quality	• There are high levels of disrepair in Aberdeen City's housing stock. This has improved significantly for the social housing stock but remains an issue for other sectors.
Housing stock pressures	• There is significant pressure on social housing stock. On 31 March 2022, there were 4,750 applicants on the waiting list in Aberdeen City (3,321 with a housing need). • 70% of Aberdeen City applications with a housing need require a one-bedroom property and 12% require a two-bedroom property. 38% of Aberdeen City properties are bedsit or one-bedroom, and 45% are two-bedroom. • This suggests that in the future there will be a shortage of one-bedroom properties, as there is a significant disparity between the demand levels and the stock available. • It seems likely there will be a surplus of two-bedroom properties available, due to the number of applications being far below the actual stock level. • Aberdeen City is currently experiencing levels of low demand for two-bedroom tenement flats and multi-storey blocks.
Size, type, tenure and location of future social housing supply	• New housing supply needs to be smaller and more specialist to meet changing demographics. • The local housing market is experiencing challenges around pace of construction on site. In the past 12 months, there has been a 23% average cost increase in construction materials.

Table 9.2: Summary of Key Housing Stock Issues from HNDA

Demographic Context

9.13. As outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, the National Records of Scotland's (NRS) population estimates for mid-2021 show that the population of Aberdeen City grew from 222,460 in 2011 to 227,430 in 2021. This represents a growth of 4,970 (2.2%) over the 10 year period. This was lower than the percentage population growth for Scotland as a whole over the same period (3.4%). It is significant to note that the overall increase in population was not consistent over this 10 year period. Whilst Aberdeen saw consistent population increases over the first four

years from 2011/12 to 2014/15, it then saw a period of population decline between 2015/16 and 2017/18. This was followed by two years of population growth in 2018/19 and 2019/20 (albeit at lower levels than in the early part of the decade), but then a further period of sharp population decline in 2020/21. This was consistent with the broader pattern seen across Scotland during the Covid-19 pandemic, which generally saw populations in cities falling.

9.14. The NRS 2018-based population projections provide a range of scenarios and under the 'principal' scenario (a scenario based upon the most likely factors) the total population of Aberdeen City is projected to increase by 1.1% over the 10 year period between 2018 and 2028. However, not all age groups are expected to change in the same way. The largest increases are projected in the 65-74 years and the 75 years and older age groups (which are projected to increase by 14.4% and 16.1% respectively over the 10 year period), whereas the 0-15 years, 25-44 years, and 45-64 years age groups are all projected to fall, see figure 9.3 below, extracted from paragraph 2.12 of the HNDA. This shows a clear trend towards an ageing population in Aberdeen.

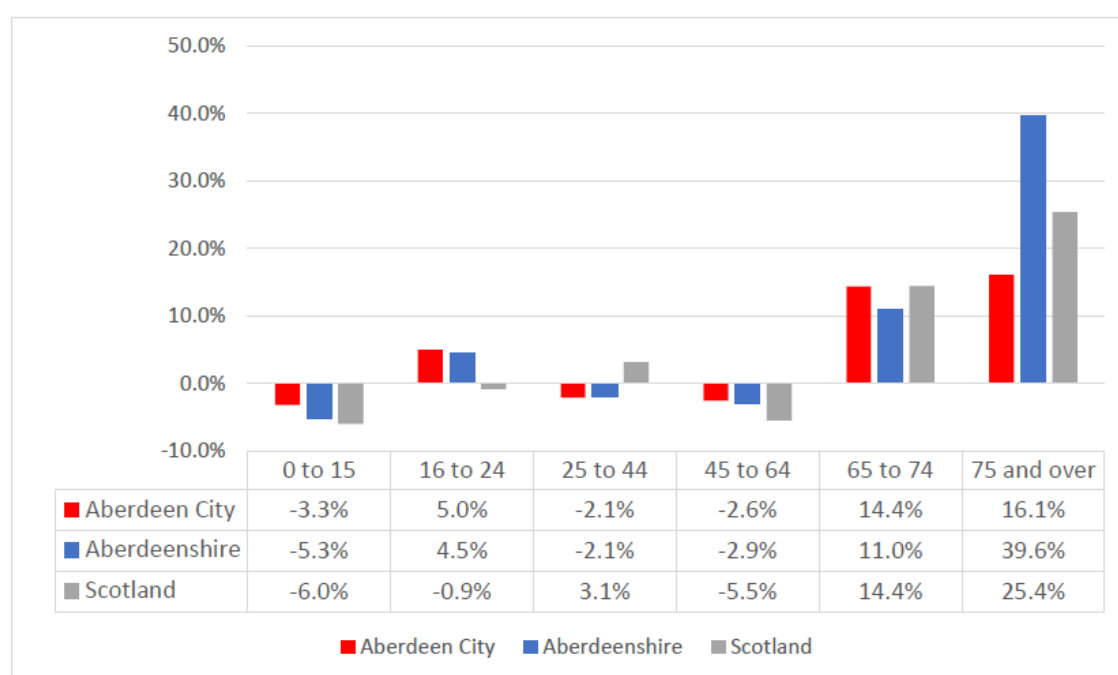


Figure 9.3: Projected Percentage Change in Population by Age Groups, 2018-2028, National Records of Scotland, Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2018-based)

9.15. Paragraph 2.29 of the HNDA shows that the number of households in Aberdeen City grew from 103,423 in 2011 to 108,844 in 2021 (based on NRS 2021 data). This represents a growth of 5,421 (5.2%) over the 10 year period. At 5.2%, the growth in households over this 10 year period therefore exceeds the growth in population over the same period (2.2% as noted above). This is because the average household size in Aberdeen has been decreasing over recent years (as it has in Scotland as a whole). According to NRS 2021 data, average household size in Aberdeen stood at 2.07 in 2011 but had declined to 2.02 in 2021 (a fall of 2.4%).

9.16. Paragraph 2.34 of the HNDA shows that, under the principle projection scenario of the NRS 2018-based household projections, the number of households in Aberdeen is forecast to increase by 3.1% over the 10 year period from 2018 to 2028. As with population, not all household types are projected to grow in the same way. Table 9.3 below (extracted from paragraph 2.44 of the HNDA), shows that largest projected increases are within the '1 adult' and '2+adult 1+ children' households. By 2028, single adult households are projected to remain the most common household type in Aberdeen.

		2018	2028	Change	% Change
Aberdeen City	1 adult	41,343	43,169	1,826	4.4%
	1 adult 1+ child(ren)	4,021	3,984	-37	-0.9%
	2 person all adult	35,543	36,570	1,027	2.9%
	2+adult 1+ children	18,904	19,762	858	4.5%
	3+ person all adult	7,776	7,400	-376	-4.8%

Table 9.3: Projected Change in Household Size by Household Type 2018-2028, National Records of Scotland, Household Projections for Scotland (2018-based)

9.17. As outlined in paragraph 2.39 of the HNDA, it is significant to note that the 2018-based NRS projections may need to be treated with a degree of caution. They may present a rather pessimistic view of likely future trends in the population and number of households in Aberdeen. Projections are trend-based, which means that trends in the years leading up to the base date of the projections determine the forecast level of future growth. Following the oil price crash in 2014, the years from 2015 to 2018 represented a particularly difficult and atypical period for the local economy in Aberdeen. After many years of positive net migration into the area, there was a major reversal in this trend from 2015 to 2018, and this will have impacted the 2018-based projections. It is possible that future net migration, and consequent growth in the population and number of households, could be higher than the levels indicated by the 2018-based principal projections.

Estimating Housing Need and Demand

9.18. As outlined above, National Planning Framework 4 (Annex E) sets out Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirements (MATHLRs) for each planning authority in Scotland. The MATHLR is the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of housing units, that is to be provided by each planning authority for a 10 year period. The MATHLR is expected to be exceeded in each Local Development Plan's LHLR (Local Housing Land Requirement). The MATHLRs are evidence based, combining past development rates with future projections and policy ambitions. The MATHLR figure for Aberdeen City is 7,000 units over a 10 year period, which equates to 700 units per year on average.

9.19. The Local Development Plan Guidance (p63) states that the same evidence that was used to inform the MATHLRs can be used by planning authorities to inform their LHLR. However, it also indicates that where more recent evidence is available this should be used as it enables the Evidence Report to be more up to date in looking to the future.

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment is based on more up to date evidence and was signed off by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis as “robust and credible” in mid-January 2024.

9.20. Chapter 4 of the HNDA provides an estimate of future housing need and demand in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The HNDA uses NRS household projections to determine the overall scale of growth, while the tenure split between need and demand is driven by the relationship between house prices, rent levels (and expected changes over time), and incomes (and how these change over time). In order to facilitate this, the HNDA uses a number of scenarios which are based on a range of assumptions for variables such as household growth, incomes and changes in house price and rental costs. Not all of the scenarios will be equally likely but they are internally consistent.

9.21. The HNDA models four different scenarios, including the default scenario of the HNDA model:

- Scenario 1 – Tool Default
- Scenario 2 – Principal Growth
- Scenario 3 – High Migration
- Scenario 4 – High Migration Plus

The scenarios and their various inputs / assumptions are outlined in more detail in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.29 of the HNDA.

9.22. Table 9.4 below provides a summary of the number of additional housing units that the HNDA model indicates would be required in Aberdeen City during the 20 year period from 2023 to 2042 under the four different scenarios (based on Table 4.44 in the HNDA).

	Scenario 1 (Default)	Scenario 2 (Principal Growth)	Scenario 3 (High Migration)	Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus)
Aberdeen City (20 year total)	6,745	7,080	10,650	12,905
Aberdeen City (20 year annual average)	338	354	533	646

Table 9.4: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042 – Overall Housing Requirements

Each scenario also provides a more detailed breakdown of projected annual requirements into 5-yearly bands. These breakdowns are summarised in table 9.5 below.

	2023-2027 (Per Year)	2028-2032 (Per Year)	2033-2037 (Per Year)	2038-2042 (Per Year)	2023-2042 (20 Year Annual Ave)
Scenario 1 (Default)	359	368	383	239	338
Scenario 2 (Principal Growth)	344	450	384	238	355
Scenario 3 (High Migration)	519	633	564	414	534

Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus)	970	633	565	413	646

Table 9.5: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042 – 5 Yearly Breakdown

Local Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Target

9.23. Like all Scottish local authorities, Aberdeen City Council is required to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) every five years. The Council's current LHS covers the period 2018-2023 and sets out how the Council and its partners will address local housing need and demand and contribute to national housing priorities over that period. It covers all types and tenures of housing, including social rented, private rented and owner-occupied accommodation.

9.24. A key requirement of the LHS is to identify a Housing Supply Target (HST) for the local authority area. In accordance with relevant Scottish Government guidance, the HST should outline the level and type of housing to be delivered over the period of the LHS. The current LHS for Aberdeen City identifies a total HST for the five year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23 of 5,240 homes. This is sub-divided into 3,404 open market homes and 1,836 affordable homes. These HST figures were based on the outcomes of a previous Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA).

9.25. Following approval of the latest HNDA, a new LHS for Aberdeen is currently being prepared. Once published, the new LHS will be a key input for the next LDP and its content will be incorporated into the Evidence Report as and when it emerges. The draft LHS was part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future wider engagement held in Spring 2025.

9.26. Based on the evidence base the LHS has identified 7 priorities for action:

- Adequate supply of housing - We will support a sufficient supply of housing to meet the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen.
- Placemaking with communities - We will use a place-based approach to encourage lesser heard voices to shape their communities and the community offering, focusing on the unique circumstances of a particular place and involving local people in decision making.
- Homelessness - We will support a proactive housing options approach and will work collaboratively to provide a person-centred service to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- Promote independent living in communities - We will use a multi-agency approach, technology and other innovations to enable the people of Aberdeen to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible in their community.
- Promote health through housing - We are committed to reducing health inequalities by providing affordable, accessible, high quality and energy efficient homes that enhance people's health and wellbeing.
- Housing quality and energy efficiency - We will improve the condition of existing homes across all tenures and improve their energy efficiency to help to alleviate fuel poverty and address climate change and support a just transition to net zero.

- Private rented sector – We will support a well managed private rented sector

9.27. Each priority is supported by a number of key actions that Aberdeen City Council and partners will take to ensure that the vision is realised. Each priority is also accompanied by targets and outcomes that will help to monitor change and measure success.

Past Housing Completion Rates and Existing Housing Land Supply

9.28. The 2024 Housing Land Audit (HLA) provides information about all housing development sites within the City that are for 5 or more housing units. It includes sites that are allocated for housing in the 2023 Local Development Plan and/or have planning permission for housing development. It provides information on the planning status of each site as well as other key information such as housing allocation reference (for sites that are allocated in the 2023 LDP), whether the site is greenfield or brownfield, and who the developer is.

9.29. The HLA monitors past housing completion rates on all relevant housing sites. This enables past development trends to be examined. The HLA also provides projected future housing completion rates for each site that is considered 'effective' (i.e. free from significant development constraints). The 'effective' housing supply is divided into two categories – '5 year effective' and 'post 5 year effective'. The 5 year effective supply identifies the number of housing units that are expected to come forward within five years of the base date of the HLA (the HLA includes projected annual completion rates for all housing sites within the 5 year effective supply). The post 5 year effective supply identifies housing units on effective sites which are expected to come forward beyond five years from the base date of the HLA (the HLA includes projected annual programming rates for years 6 and 7 for sites in the post 5 year effective supply but it does not provide programming beyond year 7 as it is difficult to forecast completion rates so far into the future). Other sites are identified as 'constrained', which means that they are subject to some form of barrier that would need to be overcome in order for development to commence – this could be a physical barrier (e.g. flood risk) or a non-physical barrier (e.g. uncertainties around development viability). The HLA does not provide projected future housing completion rates for constrained sites – instead it simply identifies the total number of housing units on each of these sites. The 'established' housing land supply represents the total of both the effective and constrained supply.

9.30. The 2024 HLA provides past completion figures for a 10 year period from 2014-2024. These are shown in table 9.6 below shows actual completions over the last ten years for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Note that due to the change from calendar to financial years the first quarter of 2023 is shown separately. As can be seen from the table, housing completion rates dipped significantly in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there was a 'bounceback' in construction activity in 2021, as a result of a number of affordable housing and flatted developments seeing higher completions rates. Average housing completion rates in Aberdeen over the 10 year period amount to approximately 983 homes per year.

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023/24
Total no. of completed housing units	686	796	835	1,176	1,211	931	659	1,448	812	215	1,061

Table 9.6: Housing Completions in Aberdeen City 2018-2022

9.31. Based on data from the 2024 HLA, table 9.7 below identifies the total established, deliverable (10 year and post 10 year), and constrained housing land supply in Aberdeen on 1 January 2023. It shows that on 1 April 2024, the total established land supply amounted to over 20,000 homes. Of these, the total deliverable housing land supply amounted to over 16,500 homes.

	No. of Housing Units
Established	20,745
10 Year Deliverable	8,871
Post 10 Year Deliverable	7,847
Constrained	4,027

Table 9.7: Housing Land Supply in Aberdeen HLA 2024

9.32. Figure 9.4 below shows programmed completions for the next ten years for sites in the HLA from 2024/25 to 2033/34. The MATHLR is contained within NPF4 and is defined as ‘the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of housing units, that is to be provided by each planning authority in Scotland for a 10-year period’ the annualised NPF4 MATHLR figure for Aberdeen City is 700 units per year. With respect to projected future completions, Figure 4 indicates that sites within the existing ‘effective’ housing land supply (i.e. the supply at 2024/25) are expected to deliver annual completion levels that would significantly exceed NPF4’s annualised MATHLR figure throughout the period to 2033/34.

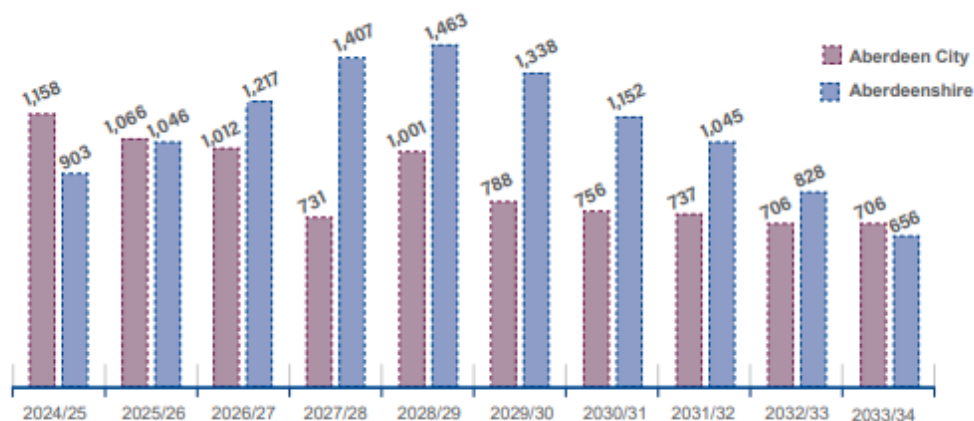


Figure 3.2 Programmed Completions 2024/25 – 2033/34 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire

Figure 9.4: Programmed Housing Completions 2024/35-2033/34 (2024 Housing Land Audit)

Brownfield and Greenfield Development Trends

9.33. As well as providing information on overall housing completion levels, the more detailed site-based information from previous Housing Land Assessments (HLA) can

also be used to provide evidence of other development trends. In particular, it can be used to examine past trends in the split between brownfield and greenfield development levels.

9.34. Table 9.8 below, shows that 53% of all housing development in Aberdeen during the period from 2012 to 2022 has taken place on greenfield sites and 47% has taken place on brownfield sites. This demonstrates the significant role that brownfield development has played in helping to meet housing needs within Aberdeen over the last decade or so.

9.35. Looking to the future, the HLA identifies that some 76% of the overall housing land supply in Aberdeen is on greenfield sites, with 24% on brownfield sites. This is reflective of the large greenfield housing land allocations that are identified in the 2023 Local Development Plan (LDP) (albeit that the LDP also seeks to promote brownfield development). National Planning Framework 4 (policy 9) seeks to encourage the development of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings. It states that LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land. It will therefore be important that the next LDP continues to promote brownfield development where possible.

Type of Development	Total No. of Units Completed 2012 – 2022	Percentage of Total Development 2012 – 2022
Brownfield	4,663	47%
Greenfield	5,333	53%

Table 9.8: Greenfield & Brownfield Development Split 2012-2022 (Source: Housing Land Audits 2013-2023)

Vacant & Derelict Land and Urban Capacity Sites

9.36. The Vacant and Derelict Land Register provides an annual update of the extent and state of vacant and derelict land within Aberdeen as part of the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVCLS). The latest survey return for Aberdeen (in 2024) identifies approximately 74 vacant and derelict sites within the City, amounting to approximately 144 hectares in total area. This may provide a useful source of evidence for potential re-development sites which could be considered for allocation in the next Local Development Plan (LDP). Any such development sites that are ultimately proposed for allocation in the new LDP will be subject to a full site assessment process, which will consider viability and deliverability, in line with relevant guidance.

9.37. Maps of the Vacant and Derelict Land 2024 sites and the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study 2019 sites can be found in the Spatial Strategy topic paper.

9.38. A Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) was undertaken in 2019 to support the preparation of the 2023 Local Development Plan. It provided an assessment of the potential of brownfield sites in Aberdeen to absorb future housing development. It identified brownfield sites that were considered potentially suitable for housing development but did not have any form of extant planning permission at the time of writing. In addition, it identified separately brownfield sites that did have an extant planning permission for housing but that were not considered effective in the 2019

Housing Land Audit. The study applied a range of indicative density range assumptions (based on site location) to estimate potential housing capacities for each of the identified sites.

9.39. The indicative density ranges (IDRs) were as follows:

- City Centre: 70-95 units per hectare
- Urban: 40-75 units per hectare
- Suburban: 35-55 units per hectare
- Rural: 30-40 units per hectare

9.40. By applying the various density range assumptions to the identified sites in Aberdeen, the study identified the potential for brownfield sites to accommodate a total of between 3,809 (IDR upper range scenario) and 2,227 (IDR lower range scenario) new homes. A number of these sites were subsequently allocated for development within the 2023 LDP.

9.41. An updated BUCS will be undertaken to inform production of the new LDP, and this will be used to underpin any brownfield development assumptions in the new plan. In line with the new requirements of National Planning Framework 4 with respect to site deliverability, the updated BUCS will include more information on the likely deliverability of identified brownfield sites. Any brownfield development sites that are ultimately proposed for allocation in the new LDP will also be subject to a full site assessment process in line with relevant guidance.

Windfall Development Trends

9.42. The detailed site-based information from previous Housing Land Audits can also be used to examine long-term trends in 'windfall' development (i.e. development that has taken place on unallocated sites that became available unexpectedly during the lifetime of previous Local Development Plans (LDP). Table 9.9 below shows the number of housing units that have been completed on windfall sites each year from 2012 to 2022. It shows that a total of 2,381 housing units have been completed on windfall sites in Aberdeen during this period, which equates to an average rate of 216 housing units per year.

9.43. This helps to demonstrate the significant role that windfall development has played in helping to meet housing need in Aberdeen over the long-term. This evidence will help to inform any decisions about whether to include a 'windfall assumption' in the next LDP (i.e. an assumption that windfall sites will continue to come forward in the future and could therefore make a contribution towards the Local Housing Land Requirement of the next LDP).

Year	No. of Units
2012	299
2013	250
2014	163
2015	124

2016	246
2017	199
2018	210
2019	111
2020	12
2021	554
2022	213
Total	2,381
Annual Ave	216

Table 9.9: Windfall Development Levels in Aberdeen 2012-2022 (Source: Housing Land Audits 2013-2023)

Housing Affordability

9.44. The Aberdeen City Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 (SHIP) (and previous annual iterations of the SHIP) include data on past affordable housing completions. Annual affordable housing completions figures for the five year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23 is presented in Table 9.10 below. This shows that a total of 2,391 affordable housing units were completed in Aberdeen during the five year period, equating to an average of 478 affordable homes per year. These completion rates exceed the Housing Supply Target of 1,836 for total affordable housing completions over this period, as outlined in the current Local Housing Strategy – see earlier section on ‘Local Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Target’ for more information).

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total no. of completed affordable housing units	356	401	461	692	481

Table 9.10: Affordable Housing Completions in Aberdeen 2018/19 – 2022/23

9.45. Notwithstanding the significant recent progress in delivering affordable housing, chapter 2 of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (paragraphs 2.50 – 2.118) sets out an extensive range of data on the affordability challenges that persist within the local housing market in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. It is not appropriate to reproduce all of the data here. However, in summary, the chapter identifies a number of affordability issues and pressures that will need to be taken into account and addressed in the forthcoming Local Development Plan. The key issues are summarised in Table 11 below.

Affordability issues for the local housing market	- House prices in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire had been well above the Scottish average for many years. This changed from 2015 onwards when the area saw significant decreases while prices in Scotland rose steadily, and in 2020 the average price in Aberdeen City dropped below the Scottish average. - Lower quartile prices across the area remain above those in Scotland. - Average private rental prices peaked in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in 2014 before decreasing rapidly and falling below the Scottish average. - Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire was the only area of Scotland to see rents for 1 bed flats fall over the last 10 years (-11% compared to

	+31% for Scotland). 2 bed flats saw just a 3% increase compared to +33% in Scotland. • However, in the last year there has been a reversal of this trend and rental prices are now increasing rapidly, particularly in Aberdeen City. • The gap between private and social rents has narrowed in recent years. However, social rents, and particularly Council rents, continue to be significantly more affordable than private rents. • Median household income growth since 2015 was below the Scottish average of 11%. In Aberdeen City, there was a fall of 2% with incomes dropping below the Scottish average. • Lower quartile incomes in Aberdeen City are the same as in Scotland. • Lower quartile house prices are around 6-8 times higher than lower quartile incomes across the area. • Private sector rents are not affordable for those on lower quartile incomes across most of the area. • The recent fall in house prices and rent levels has only had a marginal impact on affordability because incomes have also fallen. In addition, substantial increases in mortgage interest rates and reduced supply of rental properties are both exacerbating affordability pressures.

Table 9.11: Summary of Affordability Issues and Trends in Aberdeen

9.46. In addition to presenting evidence on affordability issues, chapter 4 of the HNDA considers affordable housing need in the context of the estimates of future housing need and demand in Aberdeen. For each of the growth scenarios, and for each of the 5-yearly time periods within the projection period, the HNDA shows the projected split between the need for open market and affordable housing. The results are summarised in Table 9.12 below. As can be seen from the table, the projected need for affordable housing as a proportion of all housing is significant in all scenarios. It exceeds 50% in all periods for scenarios 2-4, and for scenario 1 it averages just below 50%.

		2023-2027 (Per Year)	2028-2032 (Per Year)	2033-2037 (Per Year)	2038-2042 (Per Year)	2023-2042 (20 Year Annual Ave)
Scenario 1 (Default)	Market	139	198	215	140	174
	Affordable	220	170	168	99	165
	Total	359	368	383	239	338
Scenario 2 (Principal Growth)	Market	131	177	178	105	148
	Affordable	213	273	206	133	207
	Total	344	450	384	238	355
Scenario 3 (High Migration)	Market	218	265	261	182	233
	Affordable	301	368	303	232	301
	Total	519	633	564	414	534
Scenario 4 (High Migration Plus)	Market	442	265	262	182	289
	Affordable	528	368	303	232	358
	Total	970	633	565	413	646

Table 9.12: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042 – Market and Affordable Split

9.47. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data for housing can be found below, figure 9.5. This can give some indication of where the most affordable areas of the city are situated.

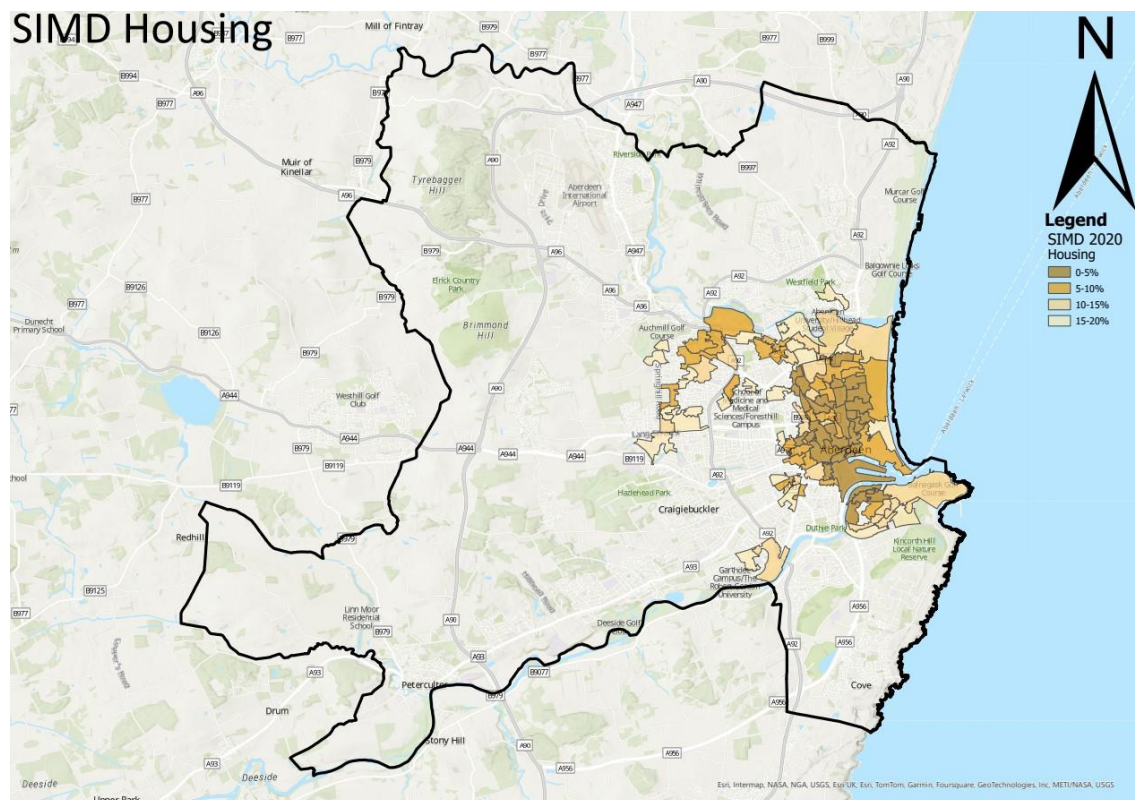


Figure 9.5: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data for housing

9.48. Strategic Housing Investment Plan sites can be found below, figure 9.6.

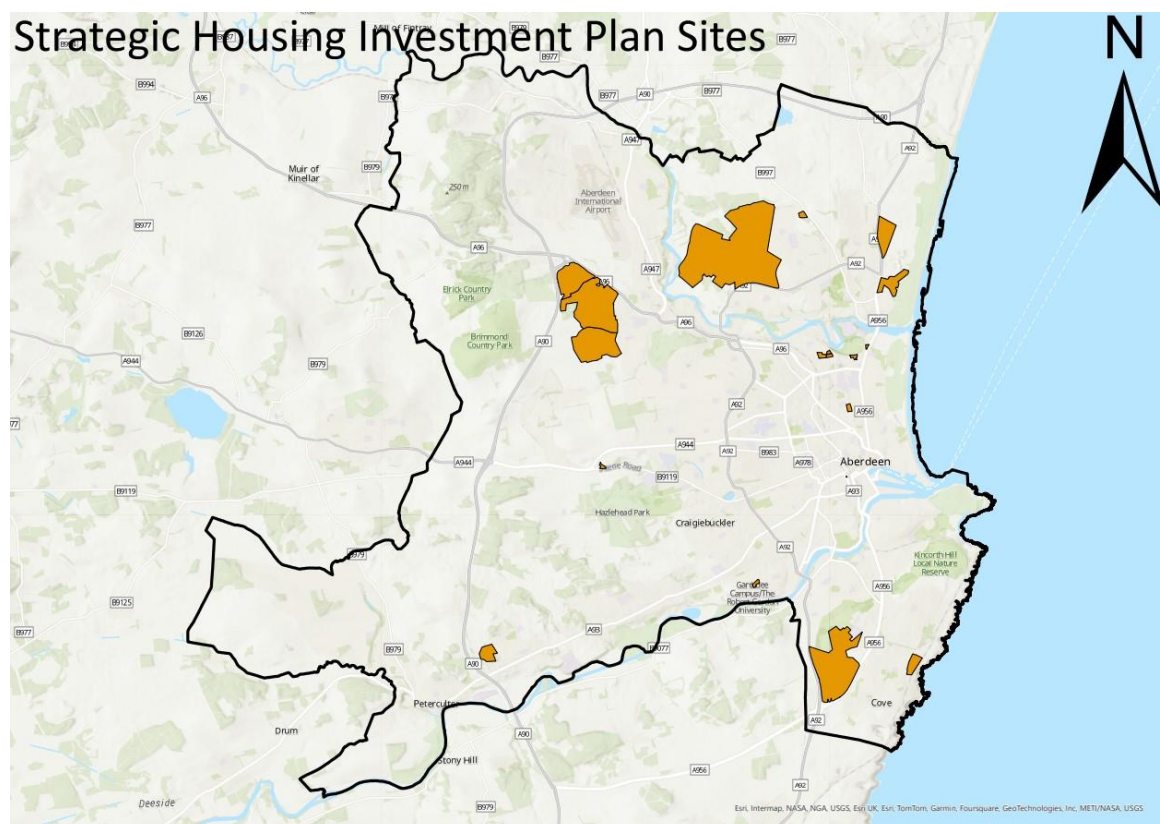


Figure 9.6: Strategic Housing Investment Plan sites

Specialist Housing Provision

9.49. Chapter 5 of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment addresses specialist housing provision. It focuses on understanding, and as far as possible quantifying, the implications for providing accommodation for people with specialist needs. It considers the needs of the following key groups:

- Older people
- Disabled people
- People with a mental health condition
- People with a learning disability
- People experiencing homelessness
- People fleeing / at risk of domestic abuse
- People requiring non-permanent accommodation (including students, migrant workers, asylum seekers, care leavers, ex-offenders)
- Armed forces communities
- Minority ethnic people (including Gypsy/Travellers)
- Travelling Showpeople

9.50. As above, the detailed evidence from the HNDA is not reproduced here, but a summary of the key issues that the Local Development Plan will likely need to address with respect to specialist housing provision is outlined in Table 9.13 below.

Topic	Key Issues Identified in HNDA
Accessible / adapted housing	• Generally, there is a lack of accessible accommodation. In Aberdeen City there has been a 47% rise in the number of applications with additional space requirements due to illness or disability. • Factors affecting the delivery of disabled adaptations include increased costs due to economic factors, equity in provision and delays in assessment. • Based on previous trends, the average annual requirement for adaptations for social rented housing in Aberdeen City is 630 and in the private sector the predicted numbers are around 140 per year. • There is an identified lack of accommodation for people with complex care needs or those with bariatric conditions. The excess build costs to cover specialist features require capital investment out with the current levels of subsidy available for affordable housing.
Non-permanent housing (e.g. for students)	• It is difficult to predict future needs with any sort of accuracy, as the number of refugees and migrants could be affected by broader economic circumstances. • There remain challenges around supply and demand of suitable housing across all sectors, particularly larger family accommodation to meet the needs of refugee families. • There is a growing trend for international students to travel with their families which results in the need for larger accommodation within the City. However, based on figures provided by further education institutions, the data from the past five years suggests a maintained level of vacant bedspaces which implies there is not currently any overall shortage of student accommodation in Aberdeen City.
Supported provision (eg	• There is no current evidence to suggest an increased requirement for care home provision in Aberdeen City.

care homes, sheltered housing)	• In Aberdeen, the Market Position Statement for learning disability and mental health identified the need for an additional 8 unit development, every 2 years plus one site per year to meet the needs of those with complex are. Work is ongoing to determine the needs for people with mental health issues. • Aberdeen City Council is currently undertaking a review of its sheltered housing and very sheltered housing service to determine future needs for this model of accommodation.
Site provision (eg sites/pitches for Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople)	• There are an estimated 2,160 Gypsy/Travellers across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Despite the need for additional sites and potential locations being identified in the LDPs of both Councils, there has been a lack of progress in terms of delivering further site provision. • Previous LDPs have indicated an intention to reduce the size of the Clinterty site and develop an additional smaller site, with Grandhome, Newhills and Loirston being considered as viable locations. Despite this, no progress has yet been made in developing new sites.

Table 9.13: Summary of Key Issues for Specialist Housing Provision

9.51. A map showing the location of Aberdeen's traveller site can be found below. Additional site have been identified at Newhills, Grandhome and Loirston but have yet to come forward.

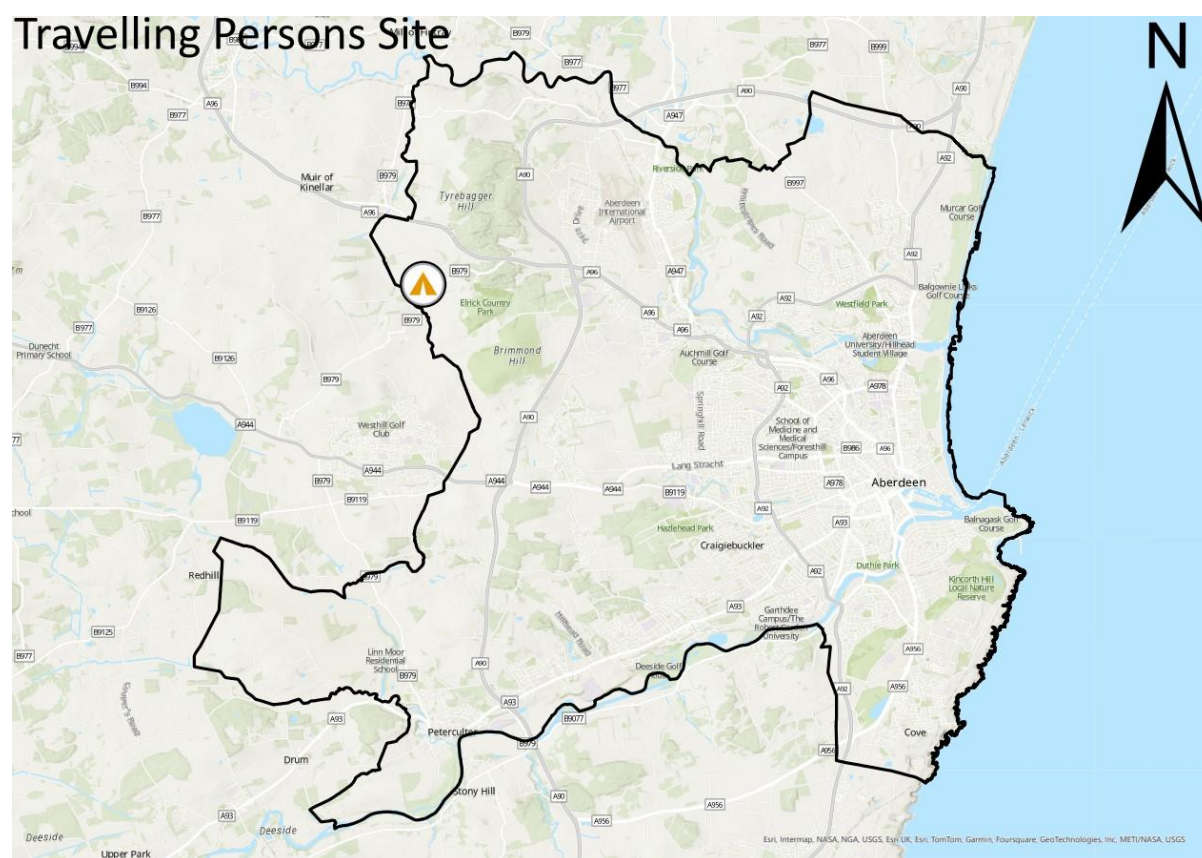


Figure 9.7: Map showing the location of Aberdeen's traveller site

Wheelchair Accessible Housing

9.52. The Council's current Local Housing Strategy identifies an affordable housing target with a minimum 15% being fully wheelchair accessible. This target will be reviewed during preparation of the new Local Housing Strategy, which is currently expected to be adopted in autumn 2025.

9.53. Section 7 of the Aberdeen City Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 (SHIP) provides detailed evidence on the need for wheelchair accessible housing. It draws on information from the HNDA, as summarised in Table 12 above. Section 7.2 of the SHIP shows that, at the time of its writing, Aberdeen City Council had 223 wheelchair accessible properties in specialist accommodation (including sheltered and very sheltered accommodation) and 428 in 'mainstream' housing.

9.54. In 2022/23 there was a 15% increase in the overall numbers of people applying for wheelchair accessible housing, rising to 3,741 from 3,282 in the previous year.

9.55. The Council is committed to reducing waiting lists for accessible housing by working with its internal design team and RSL partners to ensure that the needs of those who are currently on the housing waiting lists for wheelchair accessible housing are met through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

9.56. There is robust information on the supply and demand for the Council's wheelchair accessible housing. Work is ongoing to establish the supply and demand for other sectors. The Council is working with registered social landlords, developers, and Disabled Person's Housing Service (DPHS) to establish a baseline. This work is being overseen by the Independent Living & Specialist Provision Strategic Group that delivers and monitors the Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy's Joint Delivery Action Plan in relation to specialist provision housing.

9.57. Aberdeen City's Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan identifies the challenges of an ageing population and the desire to support people in a community setting. To meet these challenges an adequate supply of good quality accessible housing needs to be in place.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

9.58. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) account for a significant proportion of the available rental accommodation in Aberdeen and are particularly important in supporting the city's student population. The Council's [online Register of HMO Licence Applications and HMO Licences](#) provides an up-to-date list of all current HMO licenses and pending license applications, and this gives a clear picture of the number of properties in occupation as HMOs within Aberdeen.

9.59. Whilst HMOs play an important role in Aberdeen's housing market, the cumulative impact of large numbers of HMOs in an area can give rise to a number of issues and concerns. These can include: potential physical deterioration caused by lack of investment by absentee landlords; an increased population density in a localised area resulting in an increased demand on services, infrastructure and parking provision; and a deficiency in community cohesion as a result of transient tenants. For these reasons, policy H8 of the 2023 Local Development Plan outlines an approach to avoiding an excessive concentration of HMOs in parts of the City. It states that proposals for new HMOs will be assessed to determine whether the cumulative concentration of HMOs would be excessive in the context of the proportion of HMOs relative to other residential properties and any resultant detriment to the established residential character and amenity of the area. It goes on to state that, within areas of concern due to excessive concentration, further HMO provision is unlikely to prove acceptable.

9.60. In order to prevent an excessive concentration of HMOs within parts of the City, the Council currently considers that the number of licensed HMOs should generally not exceed 12% of the total residential properties in any single Small Data Zone. This broadly equates to a 1:8 ratio of HMOs to other residential properties within any single Small Data Zone. This ratio is considered to represent a suitable balance between protecting the established residential character and amenity from adverse impacts resulting from high numbers of HMOs whilst also acknowledging the significant role of HMOs in meeting the housing needs of students and other sectors of the population. Small Data Zones have been identified as the most appropriate geographical area for this purpose as they are large enough for statistics to be presented accurately whilst also being small enough that they can be used to represent communities spatially. They

also have shapes that respect physical boundaries on the ground wherever possible. Map data showing current HMO concentrations within Small Data Zones is published on the City Council's [website](#), and this data is updated on a monthly basis.

Short-term Lets

9.61. Short-term Lets (STLs) essentially involve the short-term provision of accommodation by a host in the course of business to a guest. Under Section 26B of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), Councils can choose to designate STL control areas. STL control areas allow authorities to consider STL proposals within specific geographically defined areas, to avoid concentrations of STLs and resulting detrimental impacts on amenity. An STL control area requires planning permission to be sought for any STLs within that area. No STL control areas have been designated to date in Aberdeen. It is for the Council to determine whether planning permission is required for any proposals to use an existing property as an STL based on the individual circumstances.

9.62. Although the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment has demonstrated a need for new open market housing in Aberdeen, and that there is also a significant need for more affordable housing (see earlier sections for more information), it has not identified that any significant additional pressure is currently being placed on local housing need or affordability by the conversion of existing residential accommodation to STLs in the City. In this respect the situation in Aberdeen is different from other areas of Scotland where the number of STLs has placed significant pressure on the availability and affordability of housing. At present, the loss of residential accommodation resulting from changes of use to STLs is therefore considered unlikely to have any significant detrimental impact on local housing need within Aberdeen. Nevertheless, this situation will be kept under review during production of the new Local Development Plan. The Council maintains an up-to-date online Register of STL Licence Applications and STL Licences and this will be used to maintain a clear understanding of the number of properties in occupation as STLs within Aberdeen.

Self-Build Housing and Self-Build Register

9.63. Self-build housing is where a person commissions or is personally involved in the design and construction of a dwelling intended to be their main residence. It provides choice and the ability to tailor housing to suit an individual's needs. This form of housing is supported by National Planning Framework 4.

9.64. The self-build register will provide an indication of demand for self-build housing in the plan area. Aberdeen City Council's [Self-Build Register](#) was launched in late 2023 and, at the time of writing, seven people had registered their interest in acquiring land for self-build homes.

9.65. At the Planning Development Management Committee on 20 June 2024, planning permission in principle was approved for 19 self-build housing plots at Woodend, Culter House Road, Peterculter (planning reference 210889/PPP). Given the scale of existing

demand for self-build plots, it appears reasonable to expect that this planning permission is likely to meet the majority of demand for self-build housing in Aberdeen. Nevertheless, monthly update reports from the self-build housing register will be published on the Council's website, and the level of registered interest will be kept under review during preparation of the next Local Development Plan.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

9.66. An estimated 366 council and 138 private addresses in the Balnagask area of Torry have reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in roof panels. These are to be demolished on safety grounds and a rebuild programme will follow. Demolition and landscaping is estimated at £20-25 million and will take 3-4 years. Building new homes will cost an additional £130 million or more and take 5-15 years. Detailed delivery plans, including financing, will be drawn up for consideration. The Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) report is due August 2025.

Place Standard Assessment

9.67. Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with "all" noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children

9.68. The Housing and Community theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4.02 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below.

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Housing and Community	• Good range and mix of housing available. (All) • Good community with good neighbours, and has a good community spirit and range of reasonable facilities. (All)	• Availability and affordable housing options (South) • General maintenance of housing, and insulated and energy efficient housing (ALL) • Disadvantaged areas should be the focus of more green and community spaces (Central) • Improvements to appearance/maintenance of neighbourhoods (All) • Anti social behaviour (adults) focus of tenants/in community (Central)

		• Improving community spirit/social integration/reduce isolation through increasing events and activities for all (All) • Too much house building, lack of quality and space and amenities in new developments (North) • Too many empty homes (South) • The type of housing available was not necessarily suitable for what people need i.e. not enough social housing. (South) • Increases to, and improvements for, making neighbourhoods 'look' better (South) • Some areas have too many "private lets" or "short term lets" which can have a negative impact on community (Central)

Table 9.14: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better.

9.69. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Play and Recreation Extract.

9.70. The children and young people results noted: 54.2% felt they were okay, 34.7% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Housing and Community	Green gardens	23.6%	Green gardens	19.8%
	Houses that feel like a home	22.6%	Homes that look good	18.9%
	Homes that look good	21.7%	Houses that feel like a home	14.2%

Table 9.15: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Play and Recreation Extract.

9.71. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

Indicative Local Housing Land Requirement

9.72. Evidence Reports are expected to include an indicative Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR). The indicative LHLR is expected to exceed the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) and can be informed by the same

evidence used to inform the MATHLR as set out in NPF4. The MATHLR is the minimum amount of land that is to be provided for housing development in the 10 year plan period. The Aberdeen City MATHLR is set at 7,000.

- 9.73. This section identifies a proposed indicative LHLR figure of 8,750 housing units, which is considered appropriate to meet the identified housing needs of Aberdeen City, as required by Section 15(1A) of the Act. The figure is for housing development over the 10 year period of the next Local Development Plan's expected duration. This indicative figure is subject to review based on any changes to the underlying evidence, emerging or new evidence and a review of the spatial strategy, associated policy and site assessment process. This figure may be subject to further review at the Proposed Plan stage which will form a part of the process of establishing the finalised LHLR.
- 9.74. Following consultation on the draft Local Housing Strategy (LHS) as part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation, the final draft of the LHS will be reported to Elected Members in August 2025. The draft LHS has 7 identified priorities, the first being 'Adequate Supply of Housing' to meet the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen. Action to support this will include a Housing Supply Target. The draft LHS went out to consultation with a figure of 700, with 25% (175) affordable and 75% (525) market split based on the MATHLR, however, the committee report was clear that figure was to stimulate discussion. Based on the feedback to the consultation the LHS is likely to recommend to members a higher HST, which will inform our LHLR figures.
- 9.75. The indicative LHLR of 8,750 is 25% above the MATHLR or 1,750 housing units, over the 10 year period. It takes into consideration past housing delivery completions and projected completions. In Aberdeen city the average completions rate has been 915 per year for the 10 year period to 2023. Future completions are projected to drop slightly to an average of 866 in the 10 year period 2024/25 -2033/34. Other considerations drawn from the draft LHS, the HNDA and HLA that have been taken into account, these include:
- Economic Factors Affecting Supply and Demand
 - Capacity Within the Construction Sector
 - Inter-Dependency Between Delivery of Market and Affordable Housing
 - Availability of Resources
 - Completion Rates and Recent Development Levels
 - Demolitions
 - New and Replacement Housing or Housing Brought Back into Use
- 9.76. The inclusion of the indicative LHLR in this Evidence Report aligns with the requirements of the Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance. The Council recognises the indicative LHLR is a provisional figure and acknowledges the limitations of finalising it at this stage. The Council will update the DPEA when the LHS has been through the committee process.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

9.77. A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

9.78. Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on Delivery of Housing.

9.79. Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- Homes for Scotland
- Housebuilders (Bancon, Barratt/David Wilson Homes, Cala, Malcom Allan)
- Registered Social Landlords (Hillcrest)
- Consultants (Rydens, Savills)
- NHS Grampian
- Grampian Regional Equality Council
- Disabled Persons Housing Service
- Aberdeen City Council (Education, Developer Obligations, Affordable Housing, Roads, Building Standards, Development Management)

9.80. A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper at this time.

9.81. The evidence presented within the Delivery of Homes paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders and members of Future Infrastructure for Services Group. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

9.82. In addition, further meetings were held:

- Housing Summits, in October 2024 and March 2025
- The Future Infrastructure for Services Group (FIRS) Group was convened in February 2025 and March 2025
- Meetings with individual housebuilders and Homes for Scotland
- Meetings with NatureScot and NESTRANS

9.83. A full public and targeted 8 week public engagement then took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland) 3 from housing developers, (Bancon Homes, Mic and Mac Group, Barratt/David Wilson Homes), and 7 members of the public. Of those listed, 6 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and others provided further evidence sources.

9.84. NatureScot have no disputes with the evidence and support the preparation of an updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) and that brownfield development sites that are proposed will be subject to a full site assessment process. NatureScot advised that the Summary of Implications, that the statement that approaches to accommodating any additional growth will be 'influenced' by NPF4 principles such as compact growth, local living and infrastructure first, was not robust enough. As such this has been revised to be 'guided' by NPF4 principles.

9.85. Homes for Scotland, Bancon, Icení on behalf of the Mac and Mic Group, THE on behalf of Barratt/David Wilson note that the Housing Emergency has not been referenced/given due prominence in the Topic Paper. This has been included, in the body of the paper as well as the 'Implications for the Plan' section.

9.86. A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland confirmed that they dispute the sections of the paper, as detailed in the 'Statement of Disputes' and additionally provided the following commentary:

- That continued engagement with the housebuilding industry is welcome.
- At a time when a national and local Housing Emergency has been declared, future Local Development Plans (LDPs) have longer, 10-year timelines and there is a much-restricted ability to fill any shortfall in homes delivered with windfall sites; it is imperative that future LDPs reflect and respond accordingly. An accurate, dependable, and up to date evidence base is therefore essential.

9.87. The Council acknowledges and accepts these comments and are happy to continue engaging with Homes for Scotland as well as other parts of the development industry throughout duration of the LDP process. Homes for Scotland also note:

- New allocations will be required to address falling completions (as per HLA 2024) the aging demographic and negative net migration.
- An ambitious new build housing programme would help address the high levels of disrepair in the city housing stock.

9.88. The Council acknowledges that these are issues that will be considered in developing the housing land requirement and are happy to continue engaging with Homes for Scotland as well as other parts of the development industry through the LDP process. Homes for Scotland:

- Note that an updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be undertaken to inform production of the new LDP, and this will be used to underpin any brownfield development assumptions in the new plan. HFS require to be consulted on this document

9.89. The Council acknowledges this comment. The council will continue dialogue with housebuilding industry as well as other parts of the development industry for the duration of the LDP process. Homes for Scotland:

- Note that current assumptions made on indicative densities for brownfield sites, are that these densities are ambitious and challenging to deliver.
- Draw attention to the complexities of taking forward brownfield sites and state they should not be relied upon when seeking to meet the LHRL. Policy 16 of NPF4 makes achieving planning permission on unallocated sites more challenging than was previously the case.
- Homes for Scotland also highlight market challenges associated with the delivery of brownfield sites

- 9.90. The Council acknowledges these comments and would accept that whilst high density development has sustainability advantages, it is not always appropriate in every case. Moreover, the Council does not suggest all allocations should be on brownfield sites – housing allocations should be provided in a range of locations. The Council agrees that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan.
- 9.91. Iceni on behalf of the Mic and Mac Group agree generally, that there is a lack of accessible accommodation, and note that new housing supply needs to be smaller and more specialist to meet changing demographics. Future housing delivery can contribute towards affordable housing provision and provide new accommodation to meet housing needs of Aberdeen City Council. The Council acknowledges these comments.
- 9.92. Iceni highlight the following Homes for Scotland report The Social and Economic Benefits of Home Building in Scotland, and additionally note that housing plays an important positive socio-economic role. The Council notes these points and has no further comments.
- 9.93. Bancon note that the government continues to emphasise the importance of housing in supporting foreign direct investment as investors realise the importance of sufficient housing being available alongside major investment in jobs. The role of housing in supporting the National Strategy for Economic Transformation was specifically addressed in the Chief Planner's Letter of 22 November 2023; this should also be considered as part of the LDP evidence base. The council have noted these comments and added this to the evidence base.
- 9.94. Bancon requested the addition of material to the evidence base and the following have been added; Homes for Scotland commissioned Research Existing Housing Need in Scotland by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie&Co , Homes for Scotland commissioned Research Existing Housing Need in Scotland by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie&Co. These are discussed further in the 'Statement of Agreement/Dispute' section of this paper. The Council would note that NRS Migration Flows have informed the HNDA and Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation is included in the Spatial Strategy and has not been included in this paper. 'Reflections on the Housing and Place Delivery Forum UK Collaborative Centre for Housing' blog has not been included.
- 9.95. Bancon welcomed the recognition of the Paper that the 2018- based NRS projections may need to be treated with a degree of caution and would agree that they may present a rather pessimistic view of likely trends in the population / number of households in Aberdeen. Given the date of the projections covering the period of the Oil Price Crash the data represents an extremely challenging period in Aberdeen and is not reflective of the current market not population growth in the City. Bancon Homes has experienced renewed confidence in the market in Aberdeen and is achieving strong sales rate; evidencing the greater confidence and population increase in the City and there is recent evidence to support this. The council welcomes this insight and acknowledge these comments.

- 9.96. Bancon state that the discussion of population growth and demographics in the Paper is out of date due to a number of factors including COVID-19, the financial crisis. Bancon note the next Local Development Plan will be in place until late 2030s and warn against over-reliance on 2018-based projections in the HNDA and MATHLR. These are informed by particularly adverse short-term trends, would restrict the ability of the City to grow and take advantage of opportunities. The council acknowledge these comments and notes these pieces of evidence will be used in conjunction with all the evidence sources set out in the paper. As per Guidance Note 26, we have endeavoured to take a 'proportionate approach' and the Topic Papers provide a summary of the base-line data and other information of the relevant evidence that is available currently and explain what the evidence means for the plan going forward. Going forward updated population and census data is expected imminently and will be taken into account when developing the proposed plan. In addition, there is the ability to review the LDP mid-term if deemed necessary due to new data or the wider conditions.
- 9.97. Bancon note that Topic Paper 8 Business and Culture discussed Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 Published in January 2024. The report outlines the continuing need for a long-term strategic approach to secure a successful transition to renewable energy and to support future success regionally, investment in sustainable new homes will be necessary. Additionally in arriving at the HST Bancon Homes would wish the authority take cognisance of the economic aspirations of the City and the North East Region. In addition GB energy is to be Head Quartered in Aberdeen creating over 1000 jobs and the Energy Transition Zone, which benefits from an approved Masterplan, is the largest dedicated energy transition industrial complex in Scotland. The ETZ seeks to take advantage of the new adjacent Aberdeen South Harbour. It is expected to directly support 2,500 green jobs by 2030, alongside a further 10,000 transition related jobs. Significant investment in employment needs to be supported by an appropriate housing supply response. The recent example of Highland Council Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan highlights this. Their LDP did not make provision for the new jobs associated with the Cromarty Free Port and they are now having to make land for housing available through the use of Masterplan Consent Areas as a lack of housing has been identified as a key risk to the projects success. Whilst Bancon homes accept the creation of Masterplan Consent Areas is a tool available and are supportive of its use, it is contended that a special strategy that gets the housing numbers correct at the outset is more advantageous. This is because it gives both community and the development industry certainty and can therefore be used as a tool to attract inward investment; ensuring the City fulfils its ambitions. The Council acknowledge and note these comments.
- 9.98. Bancon raise, past completions as cited in the 2024 HLA would offer further support for a target well in excess of the HNDA outputs and the MATHLR. Despite housing completion rates dipping significantly in 2020 as a result of the lockdowns imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic average housing completion rates in Aberdeen over the 10 year period (2015-2024, inclusive) amount to approximately 1,026 homes per year. This is significantly higher than an annual housing rate of 700 homes per year which would be the case if the MATHLR were not increased. Likewise, it is also higher than the Principle Growth Scenario cited in Table 4: Summary of HNDA Scenario Outputs 2023-2042. Overall Housing Requirements. Even the High Migration Plus Scenario in the

HNDA for 2023-27 is lower than recent average completions of 1,026 per annum. We note that Figure 4 shows completions and forecast programming are significantly above the MATHLR. This further supports the evidence above that the MATHLR is too low. Having regard to the land supply we note the figures in Table 7. The MATHLR is very low when compared with historic housing completions. It is based on projections which showed a 1.1% population growth over 10 years when population growth in the last year for which figures are available was 1.6%. Furthermore, as we outline below the HNDA (which informs the MATHLR) underestimates market demand. It is therefore unsurprising that forward programming exceeds it but that does not mean that the land supply is sufficient. The Council acknowledge and note these comment, and as per Guidance Note 26, we have endeavoured to take a 'proportionate approach' and the Topic Papers provide a summary of the base-line data and other information of the relevant evidence that is available currently and explain what the evidence means for the plan. The Council recognises the indicative LHLR is a provisional figure and acknowledges the limitations of finalising it at this stage.

- 9.99. Bancon highlight that adoption of the LDP is not planned until 2028. By this time over four years will have passed since the base date (1/1/24) of the current housing land supply and it will have reduced by the number of completions in that period. Aberdeen also has several large strategic sites which will not be complete by 2038. There are constrained sites and the number of sites deemed constrained may increase as the NPF4 test of deliverable is stricter than the comparable provisions in SPP. Supply considered deliverable in the 10 year plan period is what will count. The council note these are issues that will be considered during the development of the LHLR and the proposed plan. Moreover an existing site audit, the annual HLA will be carried out in the next 12 months.
- 9.100. Bancon Homes note that the HST will be determined by the LHS which is also currently out for consultation. The LHS proposed the HST at 700 homes per annum which is too low. A separate response on that paper will be submitted. In any event it is apparent that that any figure based upon 2018-based projections is likely to be a significant underestimate. Any LHLR must be primarily focused on achieving the Councils and wider stakeholders vision of a growing prosperous city which delivers the homes needed. It should be forward looking rather than inadvertently projecting forward disappointing trends from the second half of the 2010s. The Council acknowledges these comments and notes that indicative LHLR is a provisional figure and acknowledges the limitations of finalising it at this stage.
- 9.101. A meeting was held with Bancon on 18 June 2025, after an email of 6 June that confirmed they had formal disputes to the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper these are in the statement of disputes section of the paper.
- 9.102. An email was sent to Icenl on 11 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as disputes where.

9.103. An email was sent to THE on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as dispute.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

9.104. Both the population and the number of households in Aberdeen is projected to continue to rise, as can be seen in the housing need and demand figures in the HNDA and the MATHLR. In addition, it is predicted household sizes will continue to reduce and that the population will continue to age. The Proposed Plan will need to address these demographic changes and trends.

9.105. A number of approaches to delivery of houses have been identified. In the proposed plan approaches to accommodating any additional growth in the City will be guided by NPF4 principles such as compact growth, local living and infrastructure first as well as local context and considerations.

9.106. The indicative LHLR has been set at 8,750, a 25% uplift on the MATHLR figure, this is a confident approach to growth based on the wider economic aspirations for the area, but while being cognisant of the local context, environmental and infrastructure constraints to growth which exist in the area. The Proposed Plan will have to allocate sufficient range of deliverable sites to meet the LHLR over the period of the plan.

9.107. An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make to meeting the LHLR. This is programmed to be carried out over the next 12 months. Issues of deliverability and viability will be considered as part of the study.

9.108. The 2024 HLA demonstrates that there is a significant pipeline of deliverable housing to come forward in the next 10 years. An Existing Site Audit will be required to be undertaken to assess the suitability and deliverability of existing allocations and the contribution they can or cannot make to meeting the LHLR. This will inform the scale of new allocations required.

9.109. The Infrastructure First Paper and Site Selection Methodology guide housing growth to the best available and appropriate areas of the city. It is understood that there will be impact from development and that challenging decisions will be required.

9.110. The housing crisis has been acknowledged both nationally and in Aberdeen City. How the housing crisis presents in Aberdeen is specific to the city and its communities in terms of Affordable, Specialist and Other Housing, the following implications take cognisance of this.

Affordable Housing

9.111. Although the city has benefited from significant recent delivery of affordable housing, there remains high levels of affordable housing need. It is proposed to continue with the current requirement for 25% of homes to be affordable for all developments of 5 or

more. This is in accordance with NPF4 policy 16 - a tailored local policy position will be required to ensure that affordable housing contributions are targeted toward meeting local housing need in the city and to set out the exceptional circumstances where a lower contribution will be acceptable.

Specialist Housing Provision:

Accessible

9.112. Given the evidence from the HNDA on the ageing nature of Aberdeen's population, with the largest population growth being expected in older age groups, there is a need to develop a local policy position within the Proposed Plan to reflect this. Older people are more likely to either live alone, or in a household where all occupants are aged 65 or over and the Proposed Plan will therefore need to support suitable housing options to address these needs.

Student

9.113. Aberdeen has three main further education institutions, and students represent a valuable and sizable section of the City's population. Based on figures provided by further education institutions, and summarised in the HNDA, data from the past five years suggests a maintained level of vacant student bedspaces which implies there is not currently any overall shortage of student accommodation in Aberdeen City. Nevertheless, it remains important that students have a high quality of choice of accommodation whilst studying in Aberdeen, and the Proposed Plan will therefore require a local policy position to support this.

Wheelchair Accessible

9.114. Given the scale of local need for wheelchair accessible homes, there is a need to develop a local policy position in the Proposed Plan aimed at increasing the level of wheelchair accessible housing. This is likely to need to apply to both affordable housing and open market housing.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

9.115. Given the particular local issues with respect to HMO concentrations in parts of Aberdeen, there is a need to develop a local policy position in the Proposed Plan aimed at continuing to avoid excessive HMO concentrations from developing within specific localised areas.

Short-Term Lets (STL)

9.116. At present, the loss of residential accommodation resulting from changes of use to STLs is considered unlikely to have any significant detrimental impact on local housing need within Aberdeen. Nevertheless, this situation will be kept under review during production of the new LDP. The Council's online Register of STL License Applications and STL Licenses will be used to maintain a clear and up-to-date understanding of the number of properties in occupation as STLs within Aberdeen.

Self-Build Housing

9.117. The recent grant of planning permission in principle for 19 plots at Woodend, Culter House Road, Peterculter (planning reference 210889/PPP) is likely to meet demand for self-build housing in the longer term, based on the limited number of people who have registered their details on the Self-Build Housing Register. This would suggest that there is no particular need for detailed LDP policies aimed at self-build housing. Monthly update reports from the Self-Build Housing Register will be published on the Council's website, and the level of registered interest will be kept under review during preparation of the next LDP. Should there be a significant increase of interest this may require the introduction of specific local policies. The availability for land for self-build can also form part of the call for both the calls for ideas and sites exercises.

Marmot Principles

9.118. Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	X
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 9.16: Marmot principle matrix

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

9.119. NHS Grampian, NatureScot and five members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

Disputes with Stakeholders

9.120. A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, stating “there are plenty of home available in the market for sale”.

9.121. There are a number of areas of clear dispute between the Council, Homes for Scotland and housebuilders/developers in relation to the following matters:

Local Housing Strategy

9.122. Homes for Scotland consider that the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) should be completed before the Evidence Report is submitted. They consider that the Council should delay submission of the Evidence Report to the Gate Check until the new LHS has been finalized. The current LHS covers the period 2018-2023, and has been referenced in this paper. The draft of the new LHS was out for consultation alongside the Topic Paper as part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future exercise. Now that this has been undertaken and feedback returned, an indicative Housing Supply Target will be developed. The LHS will be submitted to committee in August and the DPEA will be kept up to date with progress.

9.123. Bancon welcome that further work is being undertaken on the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) but considers the LHS should be updated before the Evidence Report is submitted.

Brownfield Urban Capacity Study

9.124. Homes for Scotland and Bancon assert that a Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) should be carried out now, such that the findings can be reviewed as part of the evidence gathering process. The Council considers it unnecessary to produce the BUCS at this stage, particularly as the Call for Sites stage is yet to be undertaken. However, we acknowledge that it is one of several studies that need to be undertaken prior to agreeing the Proposed Plan.

9.125. Furthermore, Bancon dispute the existing density figures that are noted in the existing Brownfield Urban Capacity Study.

Existing Housing Need in Scotland and Aberdeen Reports

9.126. Additional information has been provided by Homes for Scotland to support alternative approaches to the identification of housing need in Aberdeen. The research commissioned by Homes for Scotland that challenges the methodology of the HNDA process and focusses on concealed and unmet housing need. Homes for Scotland and housebuilders take a different view from the Council on the definition and calculation of existing housing need.

9.127. The Council welcomes further information and data from Homes for Scotland and the housebuilding industry however it has reservations about the interpretation and use of the Report survey results. Currently Aberdeen City Council have relied up on the HNDA as a key plank of the data presented in this topic paper, the methodology which has been deemed robust and credible. The HNDA has been subject to extensive

stakeholder engagement and has been signed off as robust and credible by the Scottish Government.

Housing Land Audit

9.128. Homes for Scotland consider that the data based on the 2024 Housing Land Audit (HLA) table 7 is incorrect due to the requirement to undertake an existing site audit. As this is the current HLA, the Council considers that the 2024 HLA referenced in the housing chapter gives a good indication of current supply. We note that in the next 12 months an existing site audit will be undertaken which will provide an assessment of the deliverability of the allocated site, this with the Brownfield Urban Capacity Study will feed into the calculation of the level of new allocations required in the Proposed Plan. The study will also inform the next iteration of the HLA.

9.129. An email received from Homes for Scotland 18 June 2025, noted that, the published Housing Land Audit 2024 City Sites document notes that the “10-Year Deliverable Supply” is 8,661 homes. The “Post 10 Year Deliverable Supply” is said to be 7,847 homes. However, this information is not provided on an annualised basis, so it cannot be determined what proportion of this Post 10 Year figure is considered to be deliverable in the relevant 10-year period of the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP). 8,661 is the only clear figure which can be used to assess the deliverable supply, and this figure will be reduced by the time the new LDP is adopted (the Housing Land Audit 2024 document indicates an approximate delivery of 1,100 homes per annum over the next three years). Sites disputed by HFS are indicated in the Aberdeen City Housing Land Audit 2024 document, at Appendix D. The total Number of Deliverable Units for these sites is 2,770 homes, not 2,850 homes as previously stated. It is our view that these sites should be discounted from the deliverable supply. Given the recently published national Housing Land Audit Guidance, it is our view that the Evidence Report would be better underpinned by an updated HLA document for 2025.

9.130. As per Guidance Note 26, we have endeavoured to take a 'proportionate approach' and the Topic Papers provide a summary of the base-line data and other information of the relevant evidence that is available currently and explain what the evidence means for the plan going forward. The 2024 HLA is the current document, work on the 2025 HLA is underway aligning with an established base date of 1st of April.

9.131. The following THE Planning and Architecture o/b/o Barrat Homes and David Wilson Homes (THE) are being noted as disputes;

9.132. THE on behalf of Barratt and David Wilson Home note, that in the analysis of housing completion rates, the Topic Paper comments that there was a dip in completions due to lockdowns in 2020 followed by a bounce back in completions and highlight that following this bounce, construction prices increased significantly through 2021/ 2022 with a major impact on the delivery of development during this period. As such it is difficult to interpret too much from the last 5 year trends of completions based on the issues affecting delivery. The Council acknowledges that marketability is an important issue, alongside other considerations such as viability and deliverability, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability vital and underpins much of

NPF4 and will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites

- 9.133. THE state that there should be a detailed housing delivery pipeline with assumptions on delivery rates published with the LDP and we would encourage consultation with the development industry on this to ensure that this is deliverable. The Council would note that the detail of the pipeline is dealt with through the Delivery Programme and other monitoring documents such as the HLA, which also provide the opportunity for regular consultation with the development industry on delivery.
- 9.134. THE comment that it will be important that the urban capacity study considers each brownfield site and expected delivery based on the specific circumstances. To be effective there needs to be a viable development and demand for the location and type of housing required. This needs to be considered in relation to the current costs to development and value, e.g. there are some areas of Aberdeen where the cost to build will exceed the value of the property. Flatted developments are particularly challenging with low values, demand and also no desire from the Housing Service to fund flatted developments to contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the city. The Council acknowledges that marketability and viability are important issues, alongside other considerations, in deciding which allocations should be taken forward in the Proposed Plan. Deliverability will be one of the issues taken into consideration during the assessment of sites, moreover brownfield development is sustainable and assists regeneration and the Council understand it will be important to explore the lever available to aid the delivery of brownfield sites.
- 9.135. Iceni note that Topic Paper sets out, average housing completion rates in Aberdeen over the 10-year period amount to approximately 915 homes per year. The indicative LHLR, must, therefore, exceed 9,150. (HfS, 2025)The topic paper should address the need to re-assess all existing allocations within the LDP. The council note the comments, and the council further advise that an existing site audit will be carried out in the coming year.
- 9.136. Iceni support the Homes for Scotland responses/ disputes noted above.

Information Gaps

- 9.137. The 2025 – 2030 Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is currently being prepared consultation has been undertaken on the draft document and the updated LHS for 2025-2030 is expected to go to committee in August 2025. Thereafter it will be implemented and information within the LHS will be used to inform the development of the Proposed Plan
- 9.138. The 2025 HLA is underway, it will be out for consultation over summer with the roundtable meeting programmed for September 2025. Consideration will be given to the data contained in the 2025 HLA when drafting the Proposed Plan.

- 9.139. An updated Brownfield Urban Capacity Study (BUCS) will be required to assess the contribution which brownfield and infill sites within the city can make. BUCS study is programmed to be prepared in the coming year and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.
- 9.140. An Existing Site Audit will be required to assess the suitability and deliverability of existing allocations in Local Development Plan 2023. This work is programmed to be undertaken alongside the 'call for sites' and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.
- 9.141. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) report is expected Q4 2025. Consideration will need to be given to this report when drafting the Proposed Plan.
- 9.142. Updated census and population data is expected to come forward and will be used to inform the development of the Proposed Plan.
- 9.143. Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

10.Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure

Requirements addressed in this section:

10.1. Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district, the principal physical, cultural, economic,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,
Section 15(5)(d)	the infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities);
Section 15(5)(e)	how that infrastructure is used;
Section 15(5)(cd)	The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs
Section 15(5)(ce)	The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs;
Section 15(5)(cg)	The capacity of education services in the district.

Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:

Section	Requirement
Regulation 9(2)(e)	Have regard to: • The national waste management plan; • any regional transport strategy; and • any local transport strategy. • any open space strategy published under section 3G(3) of the Act.

Other Statutory Requirements

- Core Paths Plan (Access Rights)
- Food Growing strategy

National Planning Framework 4

Infrastructure First

10.2. Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Delivery Programmes should be based on an integrated 'infrastructure first' approach and should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

10.3. The LDP and Delivery Programme should align with relevant national, regional and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy. Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment

Blue and Green Infrastructure

10.4. LDPs should be informed by relevant, up-to-date audits and/or strategies, covering the multiple functions and benefits of blue and green infrastructure. The spatial strategy should identify and protect blue and green infrastructure assets and networks; enhance and expand existing provision including new blue and/or green infrastructure. This may include retrofitting. Priorities for connectivity to other blue and/or green infrastructure assets, including to address cross-boundary needs and opportunities, should also be identified.

10.5. LDPs should encourage the permanent or temporary use of unused or under-used land as green infrastructure. Where this is temporary, this should not prevent future development potential from being realised. LDPs should safeguard access rights and core paths, including active travel routes, and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access linked to wider networks.

Digital Infrastructure

10.6. LDPs should support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

Links to Evidence

Infrastructure First

- [Scotland's Zero Waste Plan 2010](#)
- [SEPA Flood Maps](#)
- [SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps](#)

- [SEPA Water Scarcity](#)
- [SEPA Water Condition Maps](#)
- [SEPA Coastal Flood Maps](#)
- [Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 - 2028](#)
- [Scottish Water Latest in Your Area Map](#)
- Scottish Water - Water Treatment Works capacity information (submitted via email)
- Scottish Water Waste Water Treatment Works capacity information (submitted via email)
- [SEEN Transmission Open Data Portal](#)
- [National Electricity System Operator](#)
- [NHS North Regional Asset Management Plan Update 2020 - 2030](#)
- [NHS Grampian Plan for the Future 2022 - 2028](#)
- [SGN Aberdeen Vision Project 2020](#)
- [Aberdeen City Primary Care Improvement Plan](#)
- [Aberdeen City 2023 Based School Roll Forecasts](#)
- [Aberdeen City School Estates Plan 2022](#)
- [Aberdeen City School Estates Plan Revised Timeline](#)
- [Aberdeen City Schools' Accessibility Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Aberdeen City ELC Delivery Plan 2024-2026](#)
- [Aberdeen City Cemeteries and Burial Grounds](#)
- [Aberdeen City Consultation to be Held on New School](#) (New Hazlehead Academy Campus)
- Aberdeen City Council Capital Programme
- [Aberdeen City Community Centres in Aberdeen](#)
- [Aberdeen Heat and Power](#)
- [SportScotland Facility Planning Model 2023 Summary Reports](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report
- Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report

Blue and Green Infrastructure

- [AECOM Nature Networks Corridors Map Viewer](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey Site Register](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey GIS Map](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land 2024 – excel \(PDF\)](#)
- [Scottish Government Green Infrastructure Design and Placemaking 2011](#)
- [Scotland's Environment: Habitat Map of Scotland](#)
- [SEPA Flood Maps](#)
- [SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps](#)
- [SEPA Flood Risk Management Plan](#)
- [SEPA Guidance on Climate Change Allowances for Land Use Planning](#)
- [SEPA The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 - 2027](#)
- [SEPA Water Environment Hub 2021](#)
- [SEPA Water Classification Hub](#)
- [SEPA Scotland's Bathing Waters](#)
- [SEPA Data Publication](#)
- [SEPA Water Scarcity](#)
- [Dynamic Coast](#)
- [Scotland's Soils Carbon and Peatland Map 2016](#)
- [Scotland's Environment Habitat Map of Scotland](#)
- [CREW - A Review of the Role of Functioning Wetlands](#)

- [CREW Assessing Climate Change Impacts on the Water Quality of Scottish Standing Waters](#)
- [NatureScot Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention Projects](#)
- [NatureScot Research Report 1046 – Maximising the benefits of green infrastructure in social housing](#)
- [NatureScot Nature Networks Framework](#)
- [Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 - 2028](#)
- [Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report](#)
- [Aberdeen City Adapts Climate Adaptation Framework 2022](#)
- [Aberdeen City Open Space Strategy 2011-2016](#)
- [Aberdeen City Core Paths Plan 2009](#)
- [Aberdeen City Granite City Growing 2020](#)
- [Aberdeen City Local Nature Conservation Sites 2013](#)
- [Aberdeen City Draft The Granite City Forest Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-2025](#)
- [Aberdeen City Parks and Gardens](#)
- [Aberdeen City Green Space Network](#)
- [Aberdeen City Natural Environment Strategy Net Zero Aberdeen](#)
- [Aberdeen Adapts 2022](#)

Digital Infrastructure

- [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - Broadband Access Indicator 2020](#)
- [Delivering on our Commitment in Scotland 2020](#)
- [Digital Scotland R100](#)
- [OFCOM Connected Nations and Infrastructure Reports](#)
- [Wireless Infrastructure Group](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Council City Region Deal Joint Committee Report](#)
- [Scottish Government Data Insights](#)
- [OFCOM Planned Network Deployments 2025](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

10.7. This Chapter sets out the baseline position relating to infrastructure capacity across Aberdeen. Setting out the evidence base the local planning authority, together with other infrastructure providers, can identify where there are constraints, where there is useable spare capacity and where there is potential for improvement projects to inform future growth plans to be set out in Aberdeen's next Local Development Plan. This structure of this section is as follows:

- Infrastructure First
- Blue and Green Infrastructure
- Digital Infrastructure

Infrastructure First

10.8. An Infrastructure First approach puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking. Development has an impact upon the capacities of facilities and infrastructure such as schools, medical centres, transport infrastructure, utilities and play and recreation space. Understanding capacities of these elements will influence

where future housing and other allocations are to be situated spatially in Aberdeen. Capacity and any additional needs for infrastructure should be considered when allocating sites for development. Cross boundary infrastructure has to be considered. Some primary and secondary schools are located in Aberdeen City area but serve pupils in Aberdeenshire and vice versa. These are covered by the school roll forecast. Water abstraction is a further cross boundary issue. This is discussed within the paper.

Transport Infrastructure

10.9. Transport evidence is addressed in the Sustainable Transport topic paper. This includes discussion on National Developments, Aberdeen Rapid Transit and Aberdeen South Harbour.

Water Supply, Drainage and Sewerage Systems

10.10. The water treatment works is located at Mannofield, it is capable of serving 250,000 customers in the area. Nigg waste water treatment works also serves some 250,000 customers, with another waste water treatment works at Persley.

10.11. Scottish Water are required to identify and provide new strategic capacity for water and wastewater to meet demand of all new housing development and the domestic requirements of commercial and industrial development. Future growth investment may be required dependant on the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from treatment works.

10.12. Scottish Water model future growth scenarios based on local authority-provided housing development planning data and Scottish Government population projections. The model calculates expected future population at each water and wastewater treatment works across Scotland. When the demand for water or wastewater capacity exceeds the remaining available capacity at a treatment works then investment is required to investigate this and to understand the level of risk to service existing customers when connecting new developments to the network. Whilst the need for growth investment may be identified through this modelling work, Scottish Water will only invest once confident that development is committed.

10.13. With regards to Water Treatment Work (WTW) capacities, the 'ragged status' can be defined as follows:

For water the criteria is:

If the WTW '*Dry Year Peak Balance + Headroom*' < 0, then it is categorised as 'Potential Future Investment Required'.

And where '*Dry Year Peak Balance + Headroom*' > 0, then it is categorised as 'Capacity Currently Available'.

For Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) the criteria is:

If the WWTW has >3% of its design capacity available and is >10 Housing Units in capacity then it has been categorised as 'Capacity Currently Available'.

Or if the WWTW has less than 3% available capacity but has >10 Housing Units capacity available (generally the larger WWTWs) then it has also been categorised as 'Capacity Currently Available'.

If the WWTW has >3% available capacity but less than 10 Housing Units in capacity available (generally smaller septic tanks), then it has been categorised as 'Potential Future Investment Required'.

Or if the WWTW has less than 3% of its design capacity available and is <10 Housing Units in size then it has also been categorised as 'Potential Future Invest

10.14. The above criteria information is a high-level snapshot in time of current capacity of Scottish Water's treatment works for initial screening and development planning purposes. Factors such as the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from the treatment works may impact Scottish Water's ability to service them and therefore potential future growth investment may be required. It is a requirement of Scottish Water to identify and provide new strategic capacity that will meet the demand of all new housing development and the domestic requirements of commercial and industrial development.

10.15. A 2024 James Hutton Institute Water Capacity map can be found below, figure 10.1. It gives an indication of water scarcity in the area. Additionally, the SEPA Water Scarcity Report 2024 outlines water scarcity for wider river catchments in the North East of Scotland.

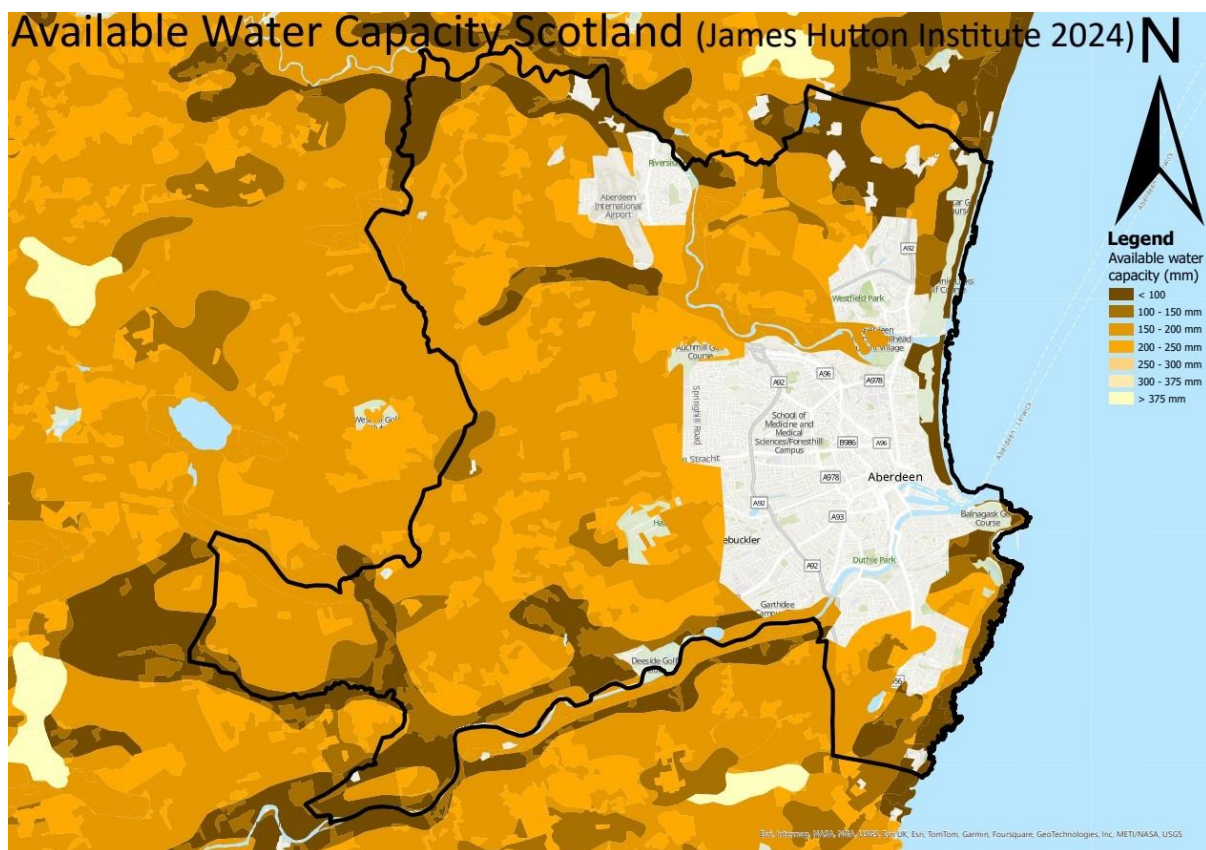


Figure 10.1: Available Water Capacity, James Hutton.

10.16. The River Dee is the only river in Scotland for which there are concerns regarding the impacts of water abstractions. The river flows through Aberdeenshire before entering Aberdeen City. SEPA has 8 stations on the River Dee which measure water levels. Real time water level data can be found on their website www.sepa.org.uk/waterlevels. Discussions between the Council, Aberdeenshire

Council, SEPA and Scottish Water will have potential implications on the spatial strategy as new developments will require new abstractions within the River Dee catchment.

- 10.17. Scottish Water are preparing to undertake improvements in the city centre at Merchant Quarter to reduce the risk of flooding from sewers in the area. Interventions to the pumping station at York Place, surface water management in the area and sewer enhancement are planned, details can be found at [Aberdeen Merchant Quarter - Scottish Water](#).

Gas

- 10.18. Infrastructure planning for the gas network is largely reactive as capacity cannot be pre-booked. Where the existing infrastructure would not meet the requested capacity of a new site, reinforcement will be required. Under Scottish Government New Heating Standards legislation, as of 1st April 2024, new domestic and commercial properties which require a building warrant can no longer install gas boilers. This is part of the Scottish Government's plan to transition to zero-emission heating systems in all buildings by 2045. Instead of gas boilers, new homes are required to install climate-friendly alternatives like heat pumps or heat networks.
- 10.19. Scottish Gas Network Aberdeen Vision Project 2020 sets out the plan for a new hydrogen pipeline between St Fergus and Aberdeen which could supply the Aberdeen region gas distribution system and enable a phased transition to hydrogen, first blending up to 20% by volume and then 100% conversion. Blending to 20% is believed to be possible with no change for domestic appliances. Blending to 20% then conversion to 100% hydrogen could be arranged on a regional basis, with hydrogen injection via key nodes to convert Aberdeen in a phased manner. Network analysis of the Aberdeen region has suggests that the conversion of Aberdeen to 100% hydrogen is possible if the reinforcement required is incorporated into current work plans for the existing pipelines.
- 10.20. Funding of some £200m has been confirmed to progress the Acorn Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) scheme, the scheme is seen as a key strand in decarbonising Scotland and supporting the energy transition. The Acorn project located at St Fergus in Aberdeenshire would take greenhouse gas emissions and store it in depleted gas reservoirs under the North Sea. With waste CO₂ being piped from central Scotland to St Fergus using redundant pipelines which previously carried natural gas south.

Major Accident Hazard Pipelines

- 10.21. Major Accident Hazard Pipelines are located within Aberdeen. These are referenced within the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper under the Health and Safety section. Evidence includes maps of the pipelines and the extent of their consultation zones for the Health and Safety Executive.

District Heat Network

10.22. District heating is an efficient means of supplying heat, usually in the form of hot water, to homes and/or businesses from a locally generated source via a network of pre insulated underground pipes. There are several Council operated and private networks across Aberdeen, Aberdeen Heat Power are the organisation responsible for the Council's network. The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan are being developed at the time of writing. It is anticipated that they will be published within the year. This subject is evidenced within the Heating and Cooling section of the Energy and Resources Topic Paper.

Electricity Supply - SSEN Transmission

10.23. Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN-T) is the only electrical transmission operator in the North of Scotland. SSEN Transmission owns, operates and maintains the high-voltage electricity Transmission network in the North of Scotland. Their network includes 132kV, 275kV and 400kV substations, overhead lines, onshore underground cables and sub-sea cables. They operate separately from SSEN-T Distribution, who are responsible for the more localised electricity distribution network. A map of SSEN-T's existing overhead and underground line/cable network in and around Aberdeen is found below, figure 10.2.



Figure 10.2: SSEN-T existing network of overhead lines and underground cables. SSEN-T own and operates the following substation infrastructure in Aberdeen:

- Redmoss 132 kV substation
- Persley 275kV substation
- Woodhill 132kV substation
- Willowdale 132kV substation
- Craigiebuckler substation
- Clayhills 132KV substation

10.24. SSEN Transmission are working to expand and upgrade the national transmission grid (Pathway to 2030) in the north of Scotland to meet additional capacity needs and

to facilitate new renewable energy generation in the national grid system. A plan showing the works undertaken under the Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) programme is included below, figure 10.3. Proposed works are outside or on the edge of the city, so it is unlikely there will be implications for the next plan.

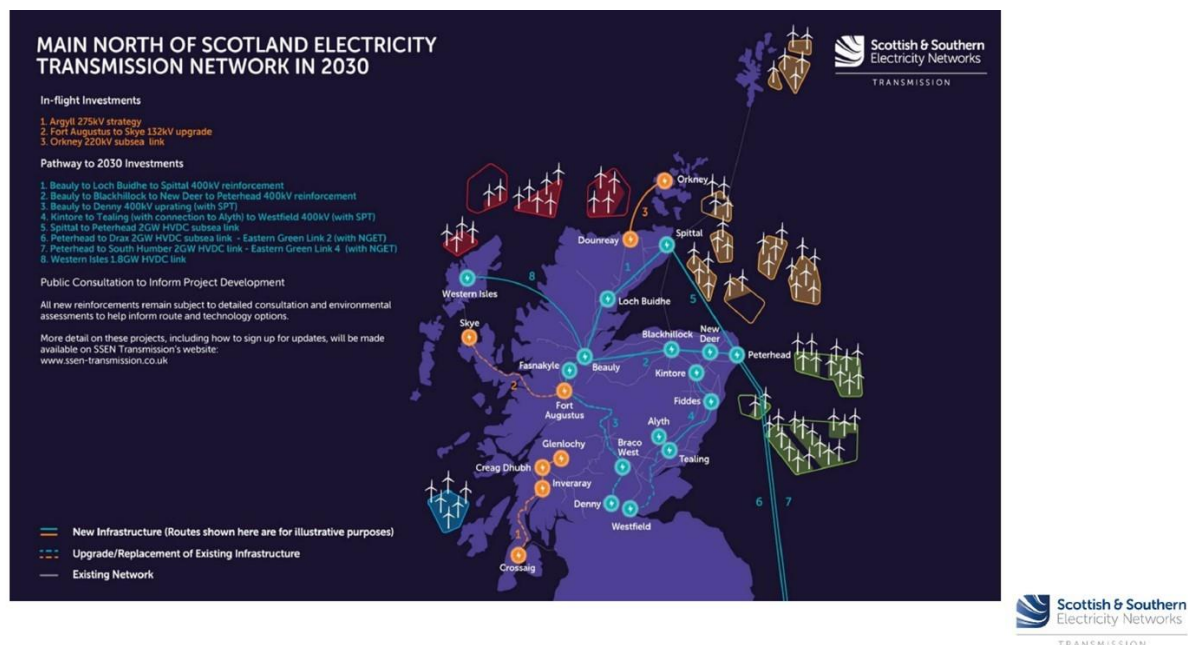


Figure 10.3: Diagram illustrating the Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) Programme, SSEN.

10.25. SSEN Transmission are planning an upgrade of the existing Willowdale substation, which has recently been granted planning permission (221537/DPP). Additional works likely to be required during the next LDP period are summarised below:

- Re-conductoring of the 275kV Persely to Kintore overhead line
- Upgrades and re-builds within existing substations
- Review of Cragiebuckler substation

10.26. The National Electricity System Operator are developing a UK spatial plan for new network infrastructure and opportunities for battery storage. The operation of existing and planned electricity transmission infrastructure can be adversely affected by new developments in the immediate vicinity. Issues can include:

- Developments encroaching into operational corridors
- Damage to underground cables and overhead lines
- Damage to pylon foundations
- Blockages to access tracks during construction
- Fire risk from battery storage units

Electricity Supply - SSE Distribution

10.27. Aberdeen is located within the Grampian region of the distribution network. Work to transform and futureproof the electricity network to meet legislated Net Zero targets is underway. The National Grid Energy Systems Operator (ESO) Future Energy

Scenarios (FES) estimate that (winter) peak demand will be 123-147 GW in 2050 to deliver Net Zero compliance, more than the (winter) peak demand which is 58.3 GW.

Waste and Recycling Facilities

10.28. Since mid-2023, the Council's non-recyclable waste has been processed at the NESS Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at East Tullos. There are currently no plans for new landfill sites or Energy from Waste plants in the Council area. A map showing the locations of existing waste facilities (Council owned recycling and waste centre sites and local recycling sites) can be found below, figure 10.4. The Council gained approval for a new household waste and recycling centre in Bridge of Don in 2023 (231516/DPP) to replace the existing facility on Scotstown Road. Further information on this subject can be found within the Energy and Resources Topic Paper.

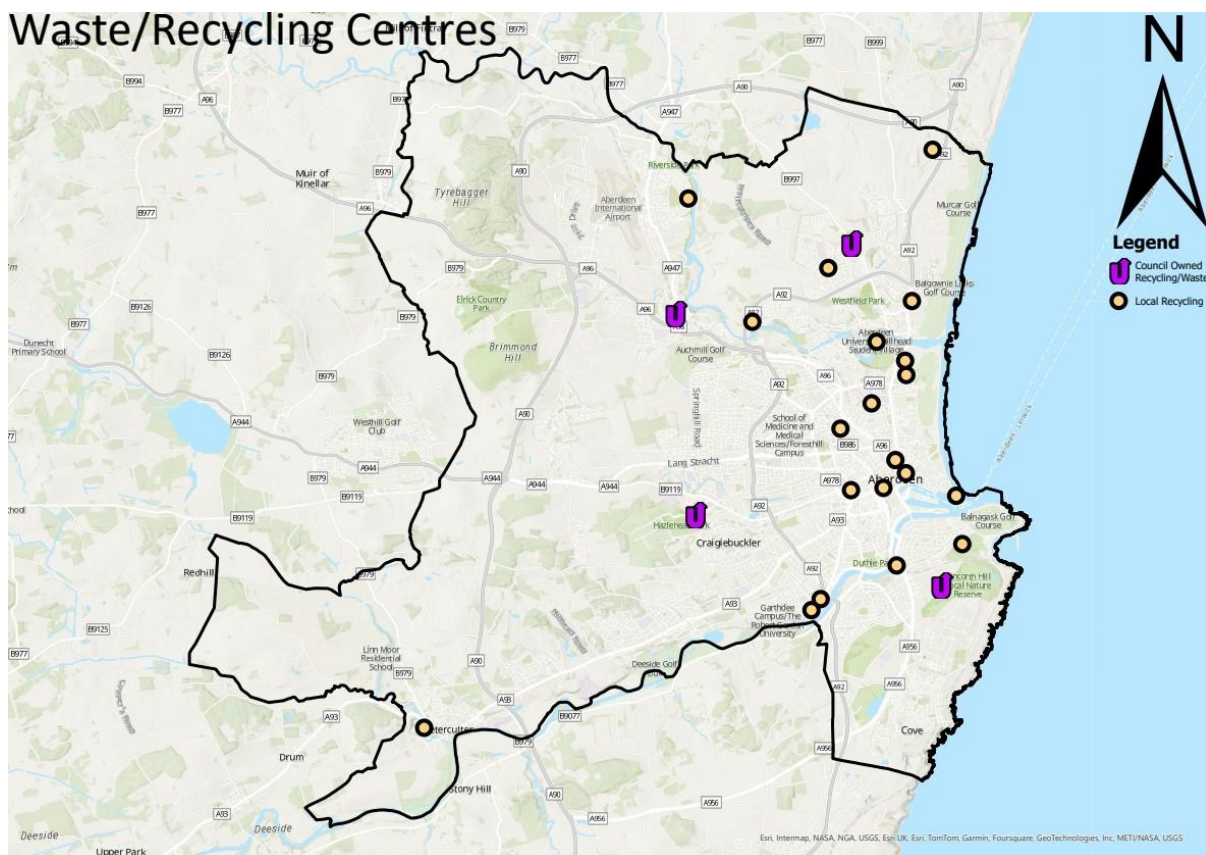


Figure 10.4: Location of existing waste facilities.

SEPA LDP Evidence sources

10.29. With regards to Infrastructure First, there are a number of sources that relate to flood hazard and water management (various), water scarcity, the water environment hub, bathing water quality, SEPA data sets (various), carbon peatland map, Scottish Wetland Inventory. Information on these can be found within the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaption Topic Paper, and the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Healthcare

10.30. NHS Grampian monitors the capacity of medical practices through patient registration and space requirements (set out in the Scottish Government Premises Directions and Scottish Health Planning Notes). This is to determine whether existing facilities require expansion or new facilities are needed with increased demand from new development. It is important to note that floorspace allowances within the Premises Directions do not take account of all the additional services the practices are expected to provide in accord with the 2018 General Medical Services (GMS) Contract. This informs, and is informed by, the NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan Update 2020-2030 and PCP Strategies and Plans.

10.31. NHS Grampian have confirmed they are happy to work with Aberdeen City's Local Development Plan team to provide current information of status of healthcare premises. NHS Grampian provided the following statement:

The deliverability of new, extended and altered healthcare facilities to accommodate additional patients generated from residential development will continue to be a challenge. Developer Contributions do not meet the full costs to increase capacity of premises and there is very limited upfront capital funding available. NHS Grampian (and all other NHS boards in Scotland) are reliant on capital funding from Scottish Government, particularly for large scale strategic projects, which has decreased in recent years.

In order to deliver new strategic infrastructure NHS Grampian has to participate in a new scheme of strategic infrastructure planning and investment across NHS Scotland. It requires each NHS Board to prepare and submit a Programme Initial Agreement (PIA) which sets out a deliverable, whole-system service and infrastructure change plan for the next 20- 30 years. This means that individual capital projects, such as new Health Centres and large extensions to existing facilities will not be considered for investment by the Scottish Government until a PIA has been approved by the NHS Grampian Board and the Scottish Government. The first planning phase to develop a 'maintenance-only business continuity investment plan' based on a risk-based assessment of the Board's existing infrastructure, is currently underway. In essence this means at the moment NHS Grampian has to work with existing assets and resources, creating additional capacity within existing premises. This means that creation of additional capacity requires short-medium term interim solutions due to limited capital budget and long timeframes of 20-30 years for large scale strategic projects.

Education

School Roll Forecasts

10.32. School Roll Forecasts provide an indication of the schools likely to have capacity to absorb additional development and those likely to require mitigation (in the form of reconfiguration, extension etc). In some cases, and where site area is limited, it may not be possible to provide additional classroom accommodation by reconfiguring or extending an existing school.

10.33. The latest school roll forecasts were published in November 2024 and are based on the actual pupil numbers in schools as of August 2023. The Council's School Estate Plan (see below) states the optimum operating capacity range for schools is between 80-95% capacity. The 2023-based forecasts indicate that 9 of the Council's 11 secondary schools are expected to be operating at over 95% capacity by 2030. These schools are detailed below, table 10.1.

Secondary School	Capacity Forecast by 2030
Aberdeen Grammar School	117%
Bridge of Don Academy	126%
Bucksburn Academy	104%
Dyce Academy	109%
Harlaw Academy	141%
Hazlehead Academy	105%
Lochside Academy	104%
Oldmachar Academy	111%
St Machar Academy	116%

Table 10.1: Academies likely to exceed 95% capacity by 2030.

10.34. School roll forecasts also indicate that 12 of the Council's 51 primary schools are expected to be operating over 95% capacity by 2028. These schools are as follows, table 10.2:

Primary School	Capacity Forecast by 2030
Brimmond	129%
Broomhill	101%
Charleston	140%
Ferryhill	99%
Forehill	110%
Gilcomstoun	116%
Hanover St	151%
Kirkhill	108%
Skene Square	119%
Stoneywood	113%
Balmedie	104%
Newmachar	102%

Table 10.2: Primary school likely to exceed 95% capacity by 2028.

School Estate Plan

10.35. Aberdeen City Council's 'School Estate Plan' and a detailed timeline for the implementation of the individual actions were approved in 2022. Declining pupil numbers in some areas of the city has led to schools having unused capacity, whilst, as indicated above, in other city locations school capacity is under pressure. Agreed actions within the School Estate Plan are intended to ensure there are sufficient school

places available in the communities where they are required, and that schools are operating as efficiently as possible, particularly where pupil populations are declining.

10.36. The first annual update to the School Estate Plan provided details of progress to date with each of the projects and priorities within the Plan, along with an indication of the timescales for carrying out the remaining projects. As a consequence of concerns raised nationally regarding the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), and the requirement for the School Estate Team to prioritise their response to these concerns from late August 2023 onwards, a number of projects within the School Estate Plan programmed to be under way in Autumn/Winter 2023 were delayed. This subsequently impacted on the planned timelines for projects which were scheduled to be undertaken in 2024. Consequently, it became necessary to reprioritise projects and revise the overall timeline for the School Estate Plan, to ensure that it can be delivered. A revised and reprioritised timeline was approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee on 20 February 2024. A summary of the revised school estates programme of works is as follows:

- Bucksburn / Newhills additional primary provision
- Northfield Associated Schools Group excess capacity
- Victorian School Building Improvements Programme, to be incorporated into the 2025 School Estate Plan
- Loirston Loch Additional Primary Provision
- St Peter's RC School Refurbishment – Underway: completion expected Spring 2027

Consultation on New Hazlehead Academy Campus

10.37. Councillors had previously agreed to construct a proposed new 1,600 capacity campus on the current Hazlehead Academy playing fields serving Hazlehead, Kingswells and Countesswells communities. Between 5 - 20 December 2024 a statutory public pre-application consultation was undertaken to seek the views of the public upon the design for a new school at Hazlehead prior to the submission of an application. A second consultation took place between 26 February and 21 March 2025.

Schools' Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2026

10.38. Aberdeen has a statutory accessibility strategy in place which helps ensure pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum. All newly constructed schools in Aberdeen are fully wheelchair accessible, although some older buildings cannot easily be made fully accessible for those with limited mobility. The plan recognises the need to assess and take action where necessary to improve accessibility for those with other disabilities, such as sensory impairments, and autism. The School Estate Plan highlights that 37.58% of children and young people in Aberdeen are identified as having an additional support need.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Delivery Plan 2024 – 2026

10.39. Aberdeen has a statutory ELC Delivery Plan to guide expansion. The strategic priorities outlined in the Plan are:

- **Priority 1:** Realising the benefits of the expansion to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare for children and families.
- **Priority 2:** Progressing the expansion of our childcare offer, including building a future system of school age childcare and a new early learning and childcare offer for one and two year olds.
- **Priority 3:** Ensuring that the delivery of our priorities is supported by a sustainable, diverse and thriving sector and profession.
- **Priority 4:** Ensuring that our ambitions are underpinned by fair funding and outcomes frameworks, robust data and organisations that work together to support good outcomes for children and families.

10.40. Due to rising demand and costs, the Council must address a funding shortfall of £34 million in 2025/26 and £54m over the next three years. The Aberdeen City Council Capital Programme has to respond to these challenges and a wide range of financial risks that remain outside the control of the Council. On 5 March 2025, following a period of public consultation, the budget plan was approved. The Council is to spend £247 million on schools over the next five years, including £121m on the new Hazlehead Academy. There is a commitment to expand facilities at Harlaw Academy, refurbish St Peter's Roman Catholic School and Ferryhill Primary, and progress an extension for Bucksburn Academy.

Play, Recreation and Sport

10.41. The sports facilities located in Aberdeen, run by both private and public organisations, comprise 123 Sports Halls, 30 fitness studios, 30 squash courts, 25 swimming pools, 12 athletic tracks, 1 curling rink, 30 golf courses, 23 bowling greens, 61 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, 205 pitches of all types. Facilities associated with Play, Recreation and Sport are covered in detail in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.

Other Facilities

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

10.42. Locations of cemeteries and burial grounds are detailed on the Council's [website](#). Aberdeen City Council is responsible for 17 cemeteries, with new burial lairs available at Hazlehead, Newhills and Dyce cemeteries. There is no strategy in place currently which sets out a need for additional cemetery or burial space in Aberdeen.

Community Centres

10.43. There are 20 community centres in Aberdeen. Although the buildings are owned by Aberdeen City Council the centres are operated by third party organisations made up of local volunteers.

10.44. The centres are at the following locations; Airyhall, Altens, Balgownie, Balnagask, Cairncry, Carnegie Hall, Catherine Street, Danestone, Ferryhill, Hanover, Hilton, Inchgarth, Kingswells, Loirston Annexe, Mastrick, Northfield, Old Torry, Powis, Ruthrieston, Sheddocksley. Link to mapped information: [Community Centres in Aberdeen | Aberdeen City Council](#) .

Aberdeen City Council Planning Guidance Developer Obligations (2023)

10.45. This Supplementary Guidance (SG) forms part of the current Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It expands on the following policy in the current Aberdeen Local Development Plan: Policy I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations. It also relates to and expands on the following Local Development Plan policies: Policy H5 – Affordable Housing and Policy T1 – Land for Transport.

Scottish Government Circular Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements

10.46. This Circular sets out the circumstances in which planning obligations and good neighbour agreements can be used and how they can be concluded efficiently.

Place Standard Assessment

10.47. Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations.

10.48. The Facilities and Services theme of the Place Standard is relevant to this Topic Paper. The results are as follows: A score of 3.86 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below, table 10.3. Text in brackets, e.g. North, Central etc, refers to Locality Plan areas.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Facilities and Services	• Good provision of shops, within easy access (All) • Support services were good with a range of services available (All), particularly those for the elderly and the vulnerable, and children (Central) • Publicly funded facilities (community centres, libraries, school, play parks) are good. (All) • Good activities for children. Good provision and access to all services and shops (South) • Park facilities were good locally. (South)	• Increases/improvements to health and community health services (All) • Improvements and increases to publicly funded services, such as maintaining and reopening particularly libraries (All) • Improve activities for children and young people (North) • Improve road safety and crossing. (North) • Improvements to, and increased funding for, support services, such as food banks and services to help the vulnerable and elderly. (Central)

		• Access to affordable food (Central) • Encouraging investment and incentives for businesses to open locally (South, • Improvements to community health services and support services, and the homeless, elders, and young people (south, north) • Improve public transport to the GP (South) • Do not develop existing green space (South) • Increasing access to and the provision of shops, including bigger food shops (Central) • More investment needed to improve local facilities and services that the community want (Central)

Table 10.3: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

10.49. The children and young people results on facilities and services noted: 53.7% felt they were okay, 35.2% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great. The top three responses were as follows:

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Facilities and Services	Good shops	22.6%	Clubs	22.6%
	School	22.6%	Doctors	20.8%
	Doctors	12.3%	School	16%

Table 10.4: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

10.50. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas

Blue and Green Infrastructure

10.51. Blue and green infrastructure plays an important role in the management of rainwater runoff, flooding and sea level rise. Improving the resilience of Aberdeen to increased flooding due to climate change is a key objective. Places should be designed in a manner which utilises water as a resource rather than contributing to water runoff.

There is overlap of this subject within other Topic Papers – please also refer to Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper; Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper, and Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024

10.52. An open space audit is used to assist with protecting and improving green spaces through the planning process and by supporting blue green infrastructure. The audit gives an understanding of the principal physical (what spaces and where they are), social (accessibility of open space, ratings of open space), and environmental (Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) etc) characteristics of the district and the principal purposes for which the land is used in relation to open space/blue and green infrastructure. The Open Space Audit will be used to update the current Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Heritage Strategy. A draft document will be completed within the next 12 months.

10.53. The Audit outlines the multiple health, wellbeing, economic, and environmental benefits of Aberdeen's open spaces. A breakdown of what types of open space can be found in which areas of the city as well as their quality and accessibility is also included. Key findings from the audit are available in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper under the Open Space section.

OPEN SPACE TYPES

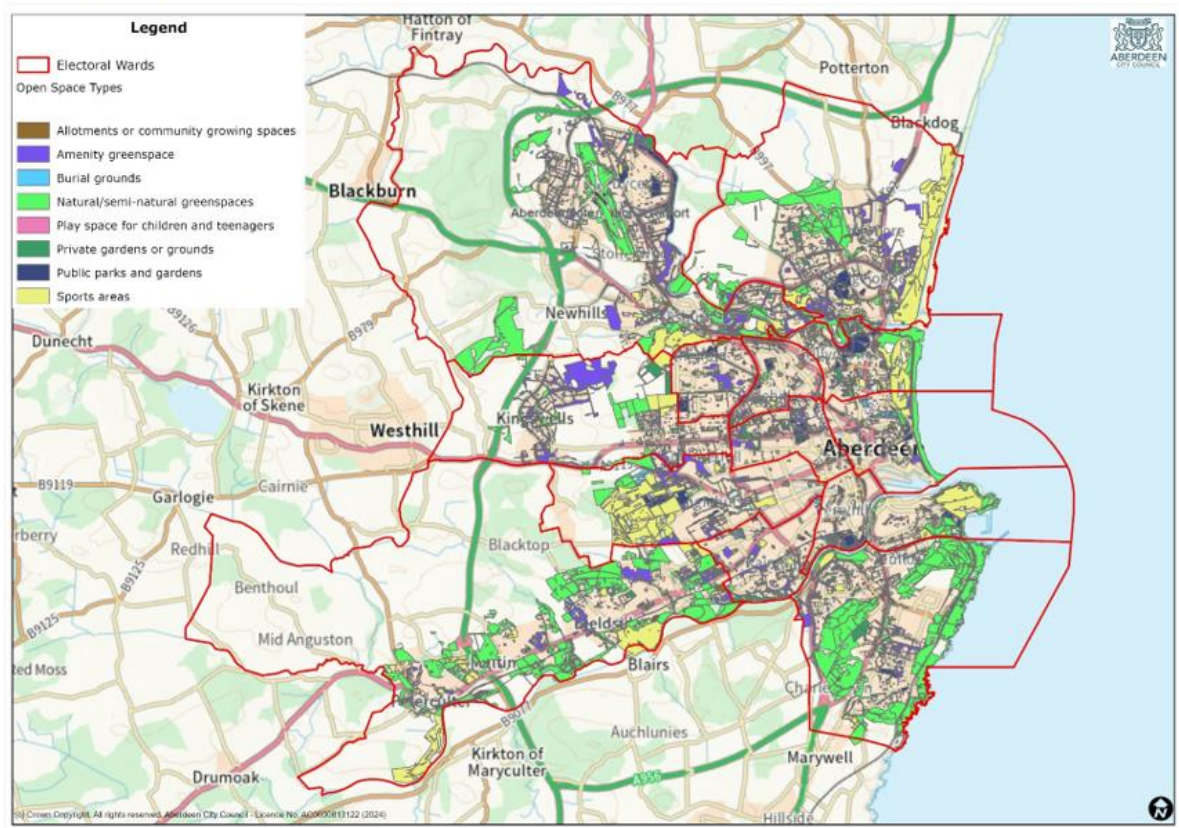


Figure 10.6: Open space types in Aberdeen.

10.54. The recent audit found that:

- 3,902 hectares of open space was surveyed (21% of the total Aberdeen area).
- The citywide average is 300 hectares of open space per ward.
- The average open space quality score in Aberdeen was 14.3 out of 25.
- The accessibility, quality and quantity of open spaces varied across different wards and open space types.
- Open space is not equally distributed across the city with some wards having limited access to green space and certain types of open space provision.

10.55. The breakdown of the different types of open space from the recent audit is as follows, figure 10.7.

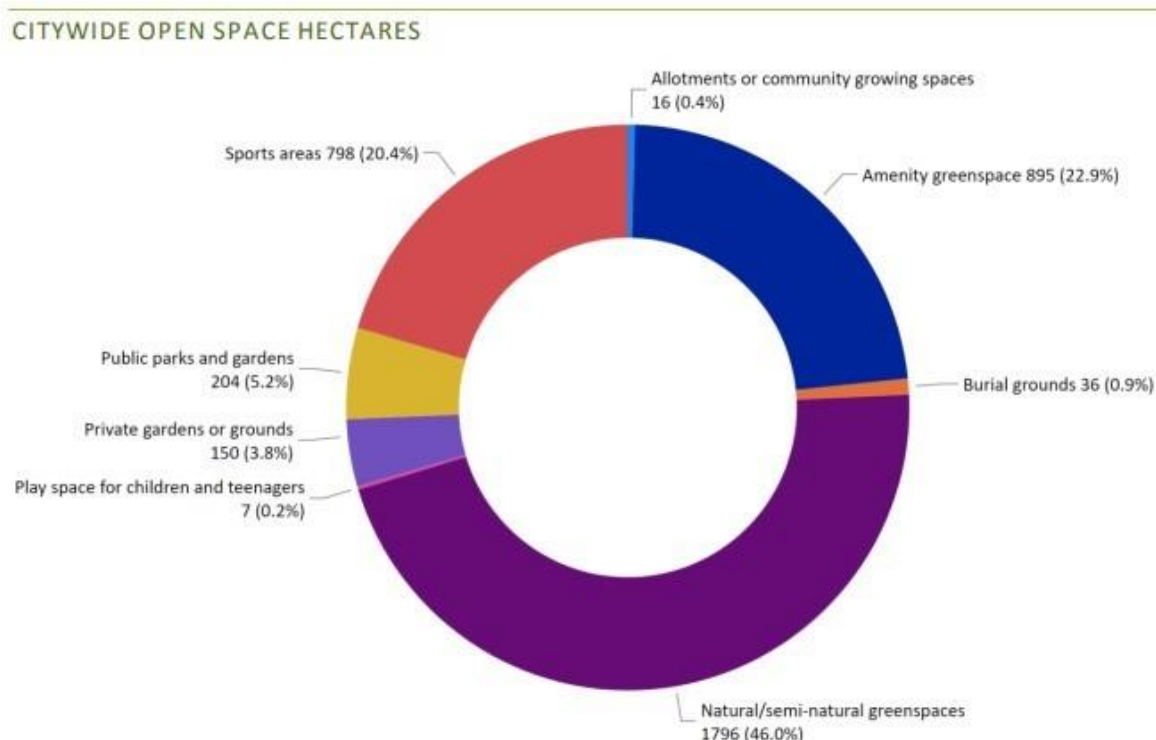


Figure 10.7: Breakdown of type of open space, Open Space Audit.

10.56. The breakdown by ward from the recent audit is as follows, figure 10.8:

OPEN SPACE BY WARD

Open Space Hectares by Ward

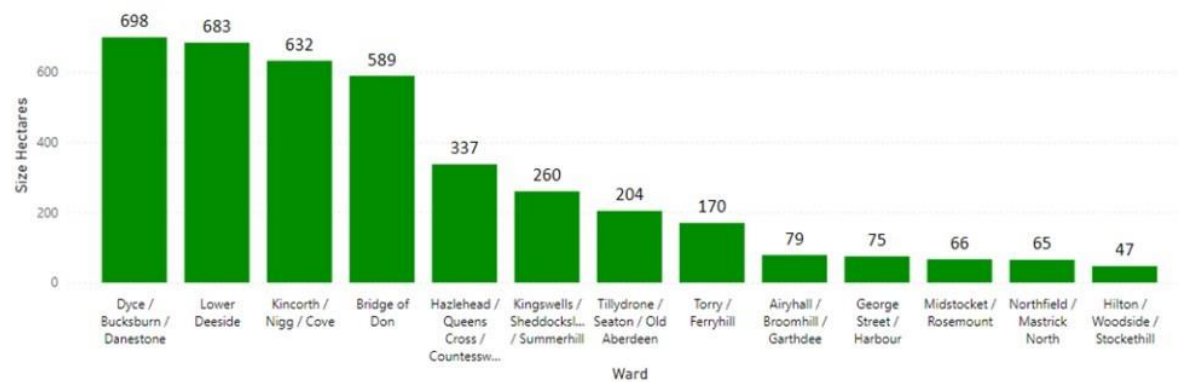


Figure 10.8: Open Space by Ward, Open Space Audit.

10.57. The average quality scores by open space type from the recent audit is as follows, figure 3.9:

Average Overall Site Quality Score by Open Space Sub T...

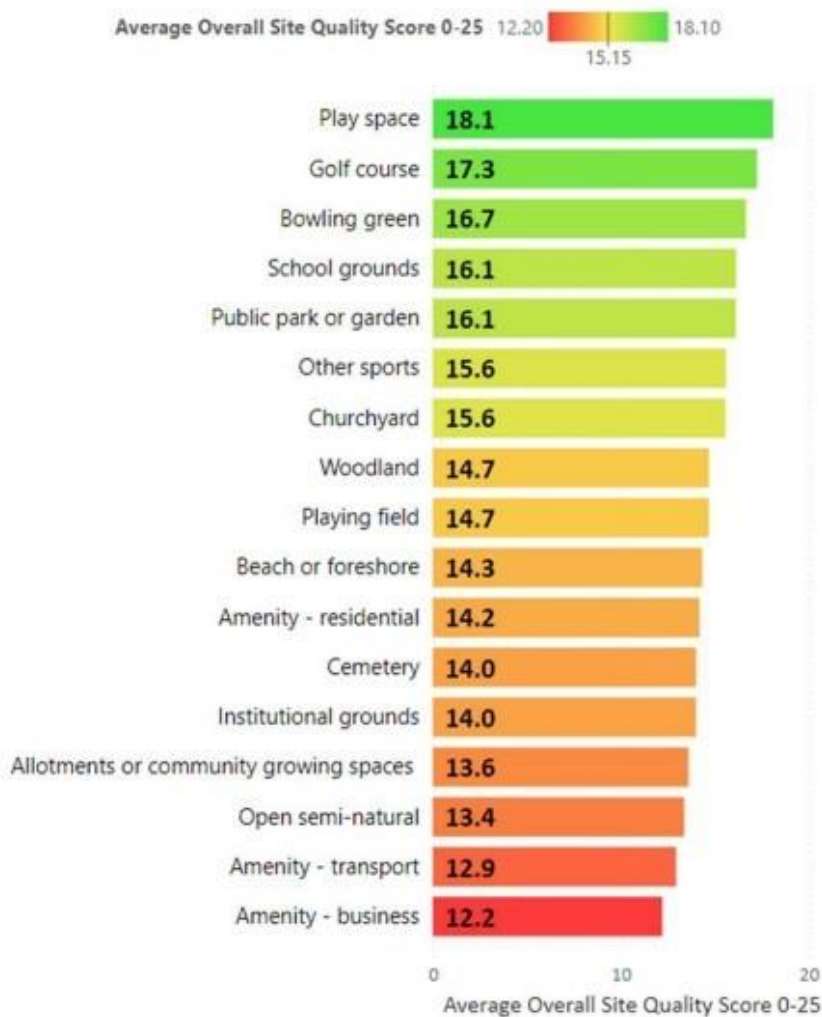


Figure 10.9: Open Space quality score by open space type, Open Space Audit.

10.58. The audit defines accessibility standards for open space in accordance with those set out in the Open Space and Green Infrastructure Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023. The thresholds are as follows: major open space (>5ha) is 1,500m, natural/semi natural greenspaces (>5ha) is 2000m, natural/semi natural greenspaces (>2ha) is 400m, outdoor sports areas is 1,200m, allotments are 800m.

10.59. For equipped play spaces, accessibility thresholds are listed as follows: local area for play is 100m, local equipment area for play is 400m, neighbourhood equipped area for play is 1,000m. The accessibility of space per ward from the recent audit is as follows, figure 10.10.

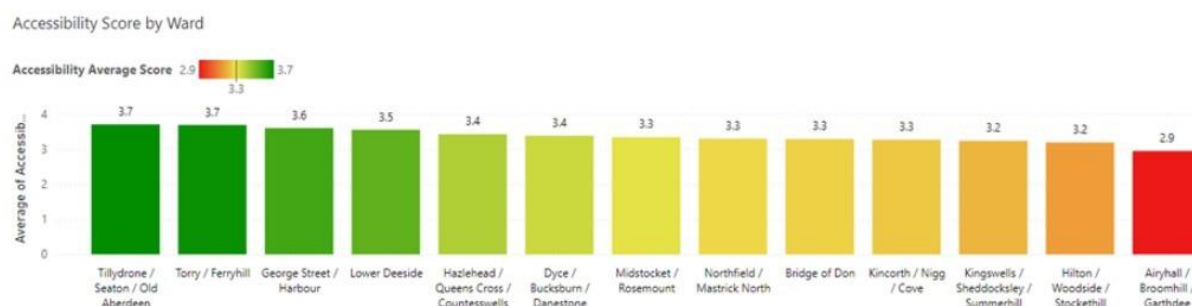


Figure 10.10: Accessibility of Open Space by Ward, Open Space Audit.

10.60. The main headlines from the recent audit are as follows:

- 63% of households in Aberdeen are within the 1500 metres of a major open space, a decrease from the 70% recorded in the previous audit. This could be attributed to new developments on the edge of the city and no new major parks having been created.
- 45% of households are within 400 metres of a natural / semi-natural greenspace greater than 2 hectares in size.
- 82% of households have access to an equipped play space, an increase from the 70% recorded in the previous audit.
- 99% of households are within 1,200 metres of an outdoor sports area.
- 49% of households are within 800 metres of an allotment site.

Play Sufficiency Assessment

10.61. Facilities associated with Play, Recreation and Sport are covered in detail in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper. This includes information on the Play Sufficiency Assessment. The assessment has been informed by consultation with children, parents and carers, play-based workshops, a bespoke play-based workshop for children with additional support needs and their families / caregivers, a formal play space quality assessment and information from the Open Space Audit 2024 for informal play spaces.

NatureScot Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention

10.62. This program focused on creating and improving green infrastructure in Scotland's towns and cities. Communities in these areas benefit from the improvement and creation of green infrastructure that helps to deliver successful multifunctional places,

address inequalities, provide opportunities for better health and support sustainable economic growth. Projects were located within the 20% most deprived urban areas of Scotland with 2 projects located in Aberdeen; Middlefield Greenspace and Regeneration Project, and Foresterhill. The projects were realised in 2023.

10.63. Middlefield Greenspace and Regeneration Project, this project centres on the green space in and around the Middlefield area of the Granite City, an area first developed for housing back in the 1930s. A new high-quality outdoor recreational space addresses flooding concerns and has been created for residents to relax, socialise, and exercise in the very heart of the community. The transformation includes a variety of active travel routes, play areas, outdoor learning opportunities, wildflower meadows, and picnic areas.

10.64. NHS Grampian is transforming the grounds of Scotland's largest hospital complex Foresterhill. The 50 hectares site includes Aberdeen's Royal Infirmary, Children's and Maternity hospitals. Through the introduction of green travel corridors, wildflower meadows and a sustainable drainage system they will aid the well-being of patients, staff and the wider community.

NatureScot Maximising the Benefits of Green Infrastructure in Social Housing

10.65. This research explores opportunities to deliver multiple benefits through the good design and maintenance of Green Infrastructure associated with new and existing social housing in Scotland. The focus is on Green Infrastructure within the footprint of social housing but also the role of adjacent Green Infrastructure used by tenants. The report makes a number of recommendations, including the need to design-in green infrastructure more explicitly at the start of the housing delivery process.

10.66. Within the report is a case study of the East Tullos Burn Improvement Project at Torry, Aberdeen. The burn had suffered from poor water quality (pollution from industrial estate to the east), litter problems and poor accessibility with paths flooding. With the help of the local community, plans were drawn up that featured a new meandering course for the burn, a wetland pond area, plants and trees, and improved access around the area. The work has been completed with local school children doing the finishing touches by planting the remaining flowers on the site. The site has become significantly more attractive after its improvement, with significantly more locals and visitors using the site now compared to before. It has also become a wildlife haven, with many birds and insects using the wild meadows as a natural habitat. Furthermore, the quality of water in the burn has also improved.

Nature Network Corridors

10.67. Nature Network Corridors are strategic routes that link up key sites of biodiversity including Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSS). Policy 3 Biodiversity of NPF4 requires LDPs to '...promote nature recovery...by facilitating the creation of nature networks.' Policy 3a) requires development proposals to build and strengthen nature networks and the connections between them. NatureScot's Nature Networks Framework sets out Scotland's Nature Network – Vision for 2030 as follows: 'By 2030 Scotland will have evolving, flexible and resilient Nature Networks connecting nature-rich areas allowing wildlife and natural processes to move and adapt to land use and climate

change pressures. The networks will help build people's connection to nature, providing biodiversity-rich spaces that deliver local benefits, and meet the priorities of local communities for nature.'

10.68. In order to achieve this vision it will be imperative that networks are considered across Council boundaries, which means communication with Aberdeenshire Council on this subject is important.

10.69. The initial Nature Network Corridor map for Scotland developed by AECOM uses a methodology that identifies potential ways of connecting all of Scotland's 30x30 sites, the term given to the ambition by the Scottish Government to protect 30% of Scotland by natural heritage protections by 2030. This provides an initial indication of what Scotland's Nature Networks might look like, these are ranked according to 'cost', using a 'least cost' method, '0' being the corridors of lowest cost, and '5-7' being the corridors with highest cost. This information is not definitive however it gives a good guide to local authorities. A Natural Heritage Strategy is being developed for Aberdeen, this will include information on nature networks. A draft document will be completed within the next 12 months.

Vacant and Derelict Land Surveys

10.70. Unused or under-used land can be used as permanent or temporary used as green infrastructure . The Vacant and Derelict Land Surveys can be used to identity unused or under-used land. The 2024 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey has been submitted to the Scottish Government. More detail including the locations of sites can be found in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

Aberdeenshire Blue-Green Infrastructure Mapping

10.71. The Aberdeenshire Council Evidence Report states that there is an ongoing process of compiling blue-green infrastructure mapping based upon a number of relevant datasets (SEPA, NatureScot, Open Space Polygons). This spatial information will be used in conjunction with our own Open Space Strategy in order to understand potential opportunities for improved blue and green infrastructure connectivity between Local Authority borders. Aberdeenshire Council have informed us this information will be available later in 2025.

Food Growing Strategy

10.72. Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020 is Aberdeen's first food growing strategy and has been co-produced with a range of community groups and key stakeholders. It sets out a vision that seeks to ensure access to food-growing opportunities so that everyone can reap the associated benefits to health, environment and community. Food Growing is a sub-set of the Open Space Audit, data of which is available in the Open Space Audit section above. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure but is covered in the Wellbeing of Community Topic Paper. The next Food Growing Strategy will form part of the new Natural Environment Strategy.

Green Space Network

10.73. The Green Space Network is a spatial layer in the Local Development Plan. It is a strategic network connecting various habitats and species, urban and rural green

spaces to each other and the communities around them. It offers a wide range of social, health economic and environmental benefits. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Play, Recreation and Sport

10.74. Play areas, recreational spaces and sports pitches are important spaces to facilitate physical exercise and social interaction for all age groups. A Play Sufficiency Assessment has been prepared as noted earlier. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.

Green Belt

10.75. The aim of the green belt is to maintain the distinct identity of Aberdeen, and the communities within and around the city, by defining their physical boundaries clearly. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Local Nature Conservation Sites

10.76. Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) are identified by Local Authorities in Scotland to safeguard biodiversity and geodiversity of at least local importance. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Trees and Woodland

10.77. Trees and woodland are an essential element of our urban environment. It is widely recognised that trees provide many benefits and are a key component of urban infrastructure making our city more attractive and pleasant. Benefits include positive contribution to health, improved air quality, noise reduction, carbon storage and natural habitat. A draft Strategic Implementation Plan for Forestry and Woodland has been adopted by the Council. Although this document addresses a number of the components of a forest and woodland strategy, it does not satisfy planning legislation on this matter. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Heritage Strategy. It is anticipated a draft document will be completed within the next year. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper and Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Core Paths Plan 2009

10.78. The Aberdeen Core Paths Plan 2009 forms a key part of outdoor access provision and helps to support wider national, regional and local policy objectives on health, recreation, education, economic development, social inclusion, community development, sustainable transport and tourism. Local Development Plans should safeguard core paths and active travel routes and encourage new and enhanced opportunities for access to wider networks as a key policy outcome. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.

Parks and Gardens

10.79. Aberdeen has a wide range of parks and green spaces. In total Aberdeen has 14 public parks and gardens as well as countryside parks, nature reserves, trails and 3,000 acres of publicly owned accessible woodlands. This subject ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Blue Infrastructure

10.80. Within Aberdeen, the coast and the two main rivers, the River Don in the north and the River Dee in the south, are the primary blue infrastructure. Other water bodies and tributaries to note include Corby Loch, Rubislaw Quarry, North Burn of Rubislaw, Inchgarth Reservoir and Loirston Loch. In addition to the coastal area these also form important parts of the blue infrastructure framework. Coastal Development ties in with Green and Blue Infrastructure, and is covered in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

10.81. Flood Risk and Water Management implications are required at site selection stage and consent stage, with a focus on ensuring that development avoids areas of flood risk as a primary principle, and where this is not viable, to mitigate and reduce the risk and vulnerability to flooding. Aberdeen Adapts 2022 outlines the challenges on infrastructure posed by climate change; increase flood risk, coastal erosion and watercourse flooding, and the key plans and strategies that will inform areas of risk. Flood Risk and Water Management ties in closely with Green and Blue Infrastructure, but is covered in the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper. There is a section concerning the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

10.82. A new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is required as part of the new Local Development Plan. A draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared and is being reviewed by SEPA. This is covered in the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper.

10.83. 'SEPA Evidence Sources by NPF4 Policy Topics' sets out the SEPA evidence and external evidence sources it seeks to cover blue and green infrastructure. The link to the aquaculture map for Scotland does not have implications for Aberdeen. Much of the evidence listed focuses specifically on blue infrastructure and will be used to inform the spatial strategy of the next Local Development Plan. Please see the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper and Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper for more information. This evidence is as follows:

- The Local Flood Risk Management Plan North East Local Plan District 2022-2028 - This includes Flood Risk Management Plan datasheets for potentially vulnerable areas (Aberdeen City North, Aberdeen City South, Peterculter, Cove and Nigg Bay).
- Dynamic Coast – A range of sources which relate to coastal changes which are a result of projected climate change.
- CREW Assessing climate change impacts on the water quality of Scottish Standing Waters – This document sets out the expected patterns of change to the UK water environment which may influence decision for the next plan.

- CREW Moderating Extremes in Water Availability in Scotland: A Review of the Role of Functioning Wetlands – This includes a quantity of technical information which can inform land use planning. Aberdeen has some wetland habitats around its rivers and in locations such as Seaton Park. The provided documents will inform the next plan in terms of protections of these sites and opportunities for expansion where possible.
- Habitat Map of Scotland and the Carbon and Peatland map 2016 – Includes an array of data relating to ground conditions which can have implications for water runoff.
- SEPA The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 – This document sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment across Scotland. This includes water quality, fish migration, physical condition amongst other things.
- SEPA Water Classification hub 2021, which will be updated in 2025 – This is the information that underpins The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027.
- SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning Version 5 - This guidance sets out required allowances for climate change that must be used for flood risk assessment following the adoption of National Planning Framework 4. This is primarily a technical paper, and the information is designed to inform flood risk assessments, which in turn inform land use planning.
- Scotland's Bathing Waters – This concerns up to date monitoring on water quality for bathing. It includes bathing profiles for Aberdeen and Aberdeen Harbour (Black Sands) which outline potential pollution sources, mitigation measures being undertaken, information on reporting and responding to pollution incidents.
- Local Flood Risk Management Plans (North East Plan) 2022-2028– This document complements the more detailed information set out in the local North East flood risk management plan. It sets out the long term ambition for flood risk management, setting objectives for tackling flooding in high risk areas in Aberdeen with identification of actions needed to work towards those objectives.
- SEPA Water Scarcity – This webpage includes a water scarcity report (and previous reports) which references the north east (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire). The page contains general guidance in relation to water abstraction during significant water scarcity event. This information will have some tangential relevance to the preparation on the new plan.
- SEPA Coastal maps – Coastal mapping, see Spatial Topic Paper for more details.
- SEPA Data Publication – A wide array of data sources related to the environment which can be used to inform the next plan. SEPA have specifically highlighted the following sources to the Council in relation to blue infrastructure:
 1. Recommended riparian corridor layer –this provides evidence and advice on the recommended width a blue corridor should be if it is to both protect the water feature and provide multiple benefits.
 2. Riparian vegetation enhancement opportunities, with for example, the Den Burn identified as a high priority.
 3. Obstacles to fish migration – which identifies issues on both the Don and the Den waterways.
 4. Water Environment Fund projects –for example the East Tullos Burn project.
 5. Geomorphic Risk layer.
 6. Scottish Wetland Inventory layer.

10.84. SEPA, Scottish Water and Aberdeen City Council are also working collectively on the 'Aberdeen City Blueprint' which seeks to develop a joint decision-making approach to manage rainwater more effectively and in ways that bring about wider benefits beyond reduced flooding. The outputs of the project should provide specific evidence in planning for Blue Green Infrastructure for surface water management. The final report is expected to be made available in the next year.

10.85. Within SEPA's 'Evidence Sources by NPF4 Policy Topics' paper, there are 3 NPF4 Policy Areas which include reference to 'Nature Networks'. These are Biodiversity, Natural Places and Forestry and Woodland. Table 10.5 below includes all sources of data which relate directly to the water environment under these 3 policy headings.

Evidence Source	NPF4 Policy	Summary
SEPA Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Management Maps	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	SEPA maps showing areas which can, or are likely to, flood from rivers, the sea. and surface water.
SEPA Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	Guidance on land use planning and flood risk based on SEPA's interpretation of national planning policy and duties and requirements under relevant legislation.
SEPA Water Scarcity Data	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	Mapping and data on water scarcity in Scotland
SEPA Water Classification Hub	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	Interactive maps which show condition status of Scotland's surface waters, ground waters, protected areas, bathing waters and shellfish waters (not relevant to Aberdeen).
SEPA The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027.	Biodiversity,	A framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment across Scotland.
SEPA Data Publication datasets	Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodland and Trees.	Includes data on Scottish Wetland Inventory, river and coastal catchments, water environment classification data, obstacles to fish migration, geomorphic risk layer, riparian vegetation planting opportunities, Water Environment Fund existing completed and potential locations, river anthropogenic modification index, riparian vegetation condition layer.
Carbon and Peatland Map and Scottish Bare Peat Viewer	Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodland and Trees.	The types of peat shown on the Carbon and Peatland Map are: • carbon-rich soils • deep peat • priority peatland habitat Scottish Bare Peat Viewer shows the larger extents of bare peat as classified from Sentinel 2 imagery collected in the summer of 2018. Data not relevant to Aberdeen at present.

Habitat Map of Scotland (HabMoS)	Biodiversity,	The national repository for habitat and land use data. It includes mapping of land cover, coastal and vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, sand dune vegetation, native woodland.
Information on past flooding events held by LA and SEPA	Biodiversity, Natural Places.	SEPA and the Council's records and knowledge of historic flooding.
Moderating Extremes in Water Availability: A Review of the Role of Functioning Wetlands	Biodiversity,	A review of Scotland's wetlands in moderating extremes in water availability. The report considers current and future buffering capacity to high and low water flows.
Dynamic Coast	Natural Places.	Webpage for Dynamic Coast project which aims to provide the strategic evidence base on the extent of coastal erosion in Scotland by: 1. Improving the evidence on coastal change 2. Improving the awareness of coastal change 3. Supporting decision-makers to ensure Scotland's coast and assets can adapt to our future climate. Page includes research summary and national overview.
Aberdeen Adapts Climate Adaptation Framework 2022.	Natural Places.	There is a section within which outlines Flooding and coastal change. The Framework sets out the challenges 1. Manage increased risk of flooding rivers, surface water and coastal. 2. Manage our outdoor spaces in ways that can help reduce the extent of flooding, providing space for flood water and absorbing rainfall through greenspace. 3. Reduce pressure on drainage systems. 4. Adapt buildings that are already at risk, so they are less likely to be damaged by flood water and easier to clean up if flood water does occur. 5. Build understanding of and reduce levels of urban creep adding to risks of surface water flooding. 6. Increase understanding of the dynamics of soft coastal areas. 7. Strengthen coastal areas from inundation, wave overtopping and erosion. 8. Implement actions at a pace with change. Goals are listed as follows; Manage and minimise flooding, Increase in nature based solutions, Protecting watercourses and coastline. Objectives are listed as supporting grey and green flood protection measures, Expand the use of blue green infrastructure in new development and regeneration, Develop a shoreline management plan, building on existing studies, to protect people, places, nature and heritage at the coast, Strong catchment planning to help

		protect water quality and quantity, as well as reduce impacts from temperature, flooding and pollution on aquatic life.

Table 10.5: SEPA recommended Nature Network sources

Digital Infrastructure

10.86. Broadband connectivity and mobile signal are the key elements that underpin digital infrastructure and communication. It is important that businesses and people in Aberdeen have access to up-to-date digital services. Digital infrastructure is a crucial element in supporting economic, cultural and social activity, in assisting service delivery and allowing flexible, hub and home-based working practices which can reduce travel. There is a responsibility for planning authorities to support the roll out of digital infrastructure, while balancing this against the need to ensure that the infrastructure does not result in unnecessary visual impacts.

10.87. The Aberdeen City local authority geography is well covered by 4G, 5G and broadband. The map below, figure 10.11 shows all approved but unbuilt and existing ground based telecommunications masts which support 4G and 5G coverage within the city boundary.

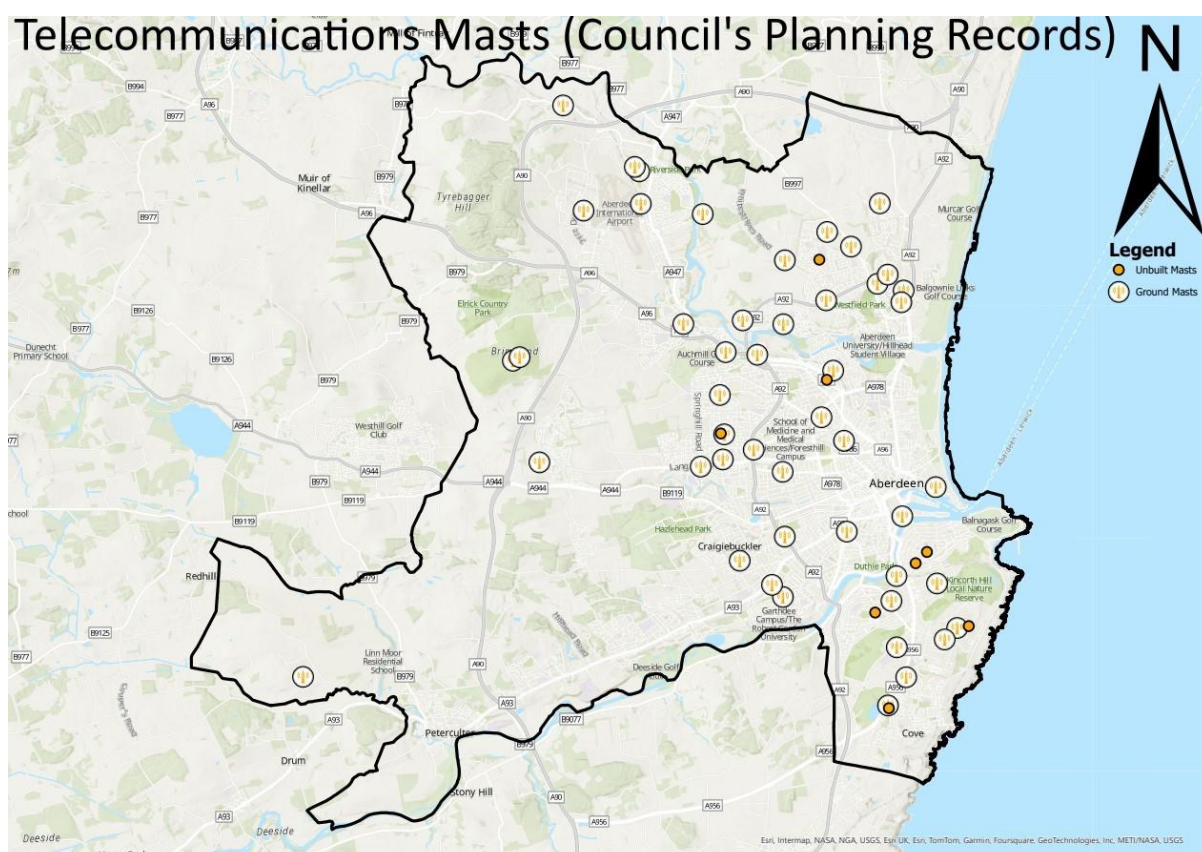


Figure 10.11: Location of Telecommunication Masts. Orange dots represent approved but unbuilt ground masts, yellow circles existing ground masts.

10.88. This map indicates the current distribution of existing or approved ground based telecom equipment.

4G and 5G Coverage

10.89. The Ofcom 2023 update report shows that 4G coverage by all providers is available at some 99.57% of premises in the City (outdoors) and 96.14% of premises (indoors). 4G indoor coverage from at least one provider is available at 99.99% of premises within the City and 96.28% of premises in the City have 5G high confidence coverage from at least one provider.

10.90. Wireless Infrastructure Group in partnership with Aberdeen City Council has deployed wireless infrastructure using a network of small cells attached to lampposts and traffic lights to improve mobile coverage and capacity across Aberdeen's city centre. O2 is the first mobile operator to launch its services using the infrastructure. O2 will initially run advanced 4G services but the fibre-connected small cells pave the way for 5G by enabling even faster speeds, lower latency and better coordination between cells than traditional network methods. See link for more information; Small cells for Aberdeen | Wireless Infrastructure Group.

10.91. Mobile phone networks are provided and operated in the UK by four main commercial providers, known as Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). They are; EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. Information on these networks is commercially sensitive and not known to Aberdeen City Council. Some indication of coverage is provided online at www.nperf.com however this information is based on computer modelling only. The Wireless Infrastructure Providers (WIPs) that provide fixed line connectivity are City Fibre, Openreach and Virgin Media O2.

Superfast Broadband Coverage

10.92. The Scottish Government funded 'Delivering on our Commitment in Scotland (2020)' document outlines the progress made through the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Rest of Scotland (RoS) programme to connect homes and businesses to fibre broadband infrastructure through commercial deployment. A summary of the changes in fibre broadband coverage and speed from 2012 to 2018 are noted below, table 10.6.

Location	Assumed % of premises connected to fibre broadband through commercial deployment (starting point) (OMR 2012)	End of contract 1 coverage $\geq$ 24Mbps	End of contract 1 coverage
Aberdeen	72.4%	97.1%	97.9%
Glasgow	75.5%	98.7%	98.8%
Edinburgh	89.1%	98.6%	98.8%
Dundee	95%	99.2%	99.4%
Rest of Scotland	71.1%	94.8%	98.2%

Table 10.6: Summary fibre broadband coverage and speed from 2012 to 2018.

10.93. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 v2 outlines the percentage of premises without access to superfast broadband (at least 30Mb per second (Mbps))

download speed in Scotland. The data zones with poorest access to superfast broadband in areas of Aberdeen are shown below, table 10.7.

Area	Data Zone	Percentage Without access to 30Mbps
George Street - 04	S01006648	58.6%
Culter - 07	S01006512	53.8%
George Street - 02	S01006646	42.0%
City Centre West - 05	S01006586	41.1%
Oldmachar West - 06	S01006767	41.0%
Oldmachar East - 07	S01006774	39.9%
Oldmachar East - 02	S01006769	39.4%
Bucksburn South - 01	S01006738	32.5%
Kingswells - 01	S01006732	32.1%
Tillydrone - 04	S01006678	31.8%
Cove North - 01	S01006619	31.1%
City Centre East - 01	S01006587	30.2%
Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber East - 02	S01006519	30.0%
Dyce - 06	S01006754	29.37%
Hazlehead - 04	S01006550	28.1%
Oldmachar West – 01	S01006762	26.1%
Hazlehead – 03	S01006549	26.0%
Old Aberdeen - 01	S01006671	26.0%
Denmore - 03	S01006787	25.8%
Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber West- 05	S01006517	25.7%

Table 10.7: Data zones with poorest access to superfast broadband.

10.94. Reaching 100% (R100) is a Scottish Government programme to enable access to superfast broadband (speeds of at least 30Mbps) to every home and business in Scotland by 2021. The R100 contract for the North was signed in December 2020 and overall contract build is currently expected to be complete 2027-28. As noted in the City Region Deal Joint Committee Report, within the Aberdeen City Region, over 4,200 premises have now been connected to full-fibre FTTP broadband through the R100 programme. Over 12,000 connections are still planned between 2024 and 2028. This equates to a 26% completion rate as of January 2024.

10.95. The programme relies on fibre optic cables from properties to the exchange and availability and/or capacity at the exchange. The availability or capacity at an exchange is a commercial matter. However, the next LDP can ensure that the infrastructure is installed so that new homes and businesses can be served by superfast broadband should this become available in their area. Consultation with BT will inform whether sites and/or routes require to be safeguarded through the next LDP for future exchanges and associated equipment.

Full Fibre and Gigabit Coverage

10.96. Table 10.8 shows the breakdown for full fibre and gigabit-capable network coverage and includes projections to January 2028. Ofcom's Planned Network Deployment data for 2025 can be found following the link: [Connected Nations - Planned Network Deployments 2025 - Ofcom](#)

Aberdeen City Dataset	Total Number
All Premises	131,689
All Matched Premises	131,577
Number of Prem. With Full Fibre Availability	119,667
Number of premises with Full Fibre availability (Urban)	113,079
Number of premises with Full Fibre availability (Rural)	6,588
Number of premises with Gigabit availability	119,667
Number of premises with Gigabit availability (Urban)	113,079
Number of premises with Gigabit availability (Rural)	6,588
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2026 (HC plans only)	120,495
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2027 (HC plans only)	122,588
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (HC plans only)	125,424
Number of urban properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by Jan 2028 (HC plans only)	118,241
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2026 (all plans)	121,087
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2027 (all plans)	124,334
Number of properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	128,731
Number of urban properties expected to have gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	120,663
Number of properties expected to have Full Fibre coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	128,731
Number of planned properties for which funding is through public funds	482
Number of gigabit-capable operators anticipated to be operating in the area by January 2028 (all plans) [min, max]	(1,5)
Number of properties for which 2 or more gigabit-capable operators are anticipated to be present by January 2028 (all plans)	100,353
Number of properties for which 3 or more gigabit-capable operators are anticipated to be present by January 2028 (all plans)	313
Number of postcodes without any gigabit-capable coverage by January 2028 (all plans)	62

Table 10.8: Full fibre and Gigabit Coverage, Aberdeen City. 2025 data.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

10.97. A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

10.98. Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in July 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Infrastructure, Transport and Communications. This paper was split in two in September 2024; becoming the

Sustainable Transport Paper and the Infrastructure and Communication Paper. The following text relates to the Infrastructure and Communication Paper.

10.99. An early draft form of the Topic Paper was presented to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request for comments on the emerging draft and or confirmation that they agreed with the evidence sources cited or had suggestions for further additions. Comments upon the drafts and further information sources were noted and added to the paper where appropriate.

10.100. The evidence presented within this paper was then circulated in an updated draft during January 2025 to a number of key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This included:

- NHS Grampian
- Scottish Water
- SEPA
- Sport Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- Cellnex UK
- Aberdeen International Airport
- Civil Aviation Authority
- OfCom
- 02/Vodafone
- Three
- Cycle Forum
- Aberdeen City Council (Developer Obligations, Education, Environmental Policy, Roads Project and Engineering)

10.101. A full public and targeted 8 week engagement then took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 14 responses in total were received, 5 from organisations (Scottish Water, SEPA, NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Shell UK Limited) 2 from a housing developer, (Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland, Bancon Homes), and 6 members of the public. Of those listed, 5 stated that evidence was missed and 5 stated that they did not agree with the evidence.

10.102. In addition further meetings were held this included:

- Housing Summits, held in October 2024, March 2025
- FIRS Group convened in February 2025, March 2025
- Meetings with individual housebuilders and Homes for Scotland
- Meetings with NatureScot and NESTRANS

10.103. Scottish Water submitted a response via email 12 May 2025 and included further information on treatment works capacities in Aberdeen. We have included this information and explanatory text within the Paper.

10.104. An email was sent to THE on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as dispute.

10.105. SEPA submitted their response via email 9 May 2025 and stated that they are likely to be content with the sufficiency of evidence subject to the recommended additions (and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – referenced in the Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper). It welcomes inclusion of a section on blue infrastructure within this Topic Paper. It notes that this section includes all evidence sources listed on its Planning Advice Note on achieving sufficiency of evidence.

- SEPA sought additional text within the Implications section relating to blue and green infrastructure and how it will influence the site assessment and selection process. We have included text which explains that blue and green infrastructure, and any related strategies, will be taken into account as part of the site selection process.
- SEPA sought further information, in line with Planning Advice Note, on water environment information/data for nature network planning. There are 3 NPF4 Policy areas in the Planning Advice Note which reference nature networks, and all evidence sources under these Policy areas which relate to water have now been included within a table in the text. There is a corresponding paragraph of text in the Summary of Implications section which sets out briefly the implications of each evidence source.

10.106. Nature Scot offered some positive commentary on the inclusion of blue and green infrastructure in the paper and consideration of nature networks and brownfield sites as a part of this. They are positive about inclusion of Aberdeenshire Council's Nature Network being included in order to support habitat connectivity and alignment with NPF4. They have expressed opinion that the implications section should be more specific to Aberdeen. They cite the example where we have stated capacity and condition of infrastructure will influence chosen allocations in the spatial strategy and believe it would be useful for the paper to set out what these implications were. The Summary of Implications has been updated to be more specific.

10.107. Homes for Scotland state that we have not missed any evidence. They confirmed on the 16th June 2025 that they do not dispute the evidence in the Topic Paper. Bancon Homes emailed (6th June 2025) to confirm that they do not dispute the evidence in the Topic Paper. They state that we have missed evidence and that they do not agree with the evidence used in the Topic Paper. They reference the following for inclusion:

- Scottish Government planning guidance for local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods - This is covered in the Place Topic paper and we do not believe it necessary to reference again in this paper.
- Homes for Scotland Existing Housing Need in Aberdeen – this has been included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- NHS Scotland Measuring Use of Health Services by Equality Group - Bancon state this should be included as it outlines the use of health services according to demographic groups. We consider this document to have limited value from a planning perspective. It is a document which focusses on the duties of the NHS to deliver its equalities outcomes. It does not appear to include evidence which could inform the next Local Development Plan.
- 2018-based Population Projections by Council Area in Scotland, (2018) National Records for Scotland. Population statistics for mid-2023 are included within the Housing Topic Paper and it is not considered necessary to duplicate in this paper.

- 2022 Census Health information – This information is referenced in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper.
- NHS Scottish Public Health Observatory – PHO profiles are referenced in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper

10.108. Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland both stated the importance of new homes upon the social, health, wellbeing and economic success of the region and Homes for Scotland stated that there is a housing emergency which should underpin site selection, an opinion which is noted but does not require action in the Evidence Report. Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland both made comments regarding their opinions on the principle of charging Developer Obligations to homebuilders in relation to healthcare facilities and other comments relating to healthcare. The role of the Evidence Report is to present available evidence and highlight gaps in the existing evidence, not to extrapolate on whether or not Developers Obligations should or should not be taken for a particular purpose or to offer opinion upon the development management statutory processes. With regards to healthcare, we are satisfied that the Topic Paper presents the information that it is required to do.

10.109. Bancon Homes also made comment in relation to the academies which are likely to exceed 95% capacity by 2030 and their opinion that growth should be directed towards sites at Cults and Peterculter where there is capacity. It is not the role of the Evidence Report to make decisions on such matters, only to present evidence and highlight gaps in the existing evidence. Homes for Scotland made a number of comments in relation to Schools, and their expectations around how the school estate should be managed. One comment relates to a suggestion as to whether a review of school catchments is feasible. These are not issues to be addressed at the evidence gathering stage either. Reference has been made to identification of the pupil product for housing in the Council area and a cohort progression model instead of the cumulative approach which overestimates the future school roles. Again, matters of methodology relating to the evidence is not a matter which should be addressed by the Evidence Report.

10.110. Shell UK Limited confirmed by email 5 June 2025 that it does not dispute the Topic Paper. It stated that we have missed evidence. They have stated that the paper should include reference to the Major Accident Hazard Pipelines as being important to the Infrastructure Topic. In response we have referenced the Major Accident Hazard Pipeline evidence which is included within the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper under the Health and Safety section.

10.111. Shell UK Limited commented that NPF4 Policy 18 requires development plans to take account of potential impacts on infrastructure including cross boundary infrastructure and therefore the Topic Paper should reference nationally significant pipelines infrastructure. The reference to the information in the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper is deemed to be sufficient. National Pipeline infrastructure will have limited implications for Aberdeen City. While we are satisfied to reference the Major Accident Hazard Pipeline it is not infrastructure which, if not delivered, could prevent development coming forwards.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Infrastructure First

- 10.112. The evidence on existing infrastructure, both spatially and in terms of capacity and condition, will have implications on any chosen allocations within the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan. Timelines for changes to infrastructure, where known, will also inform decision making. The proposed plan must consider infrastructure constraints faced in the city and in planning future development needs to identify the key investment priorities.
- 10.113. Evidence and stakeholder input will also inform the Proposed Plan in terms of safeguarding sites for new schools, health facilities, transport, water and drainage infrastructure etc. Lack of capacity, for example in some schools, could present barriers to supporting further development in some areas of the city and influence choices on future growth.
- 10.114. Ongoing engagement with NHSG will support a clearer understanding of how future population growth may impact health services and infrastructure. This includes both the physical capacity of health and social care facilities and the continued shortage of professionals. Housing allocations will need to be considered in a way that limits pressure on existing health infrastructure.
- 10.115. The proposed plan will need to consider implications for the Council estate and assets, such as schools, community centres and sports facilities. Consideration to be given to the ability to fund new capital projects as well as consolidation, modernisation and opportunities for co-location on the existing estate.
- 10.116. The current supplementary guidance on developer obligations will need to be reviewed. With the removal of statutory supplementary guidance, consideration will need to be given to the use of a local policy and / or planning guidance to support National Planning Policy.
- 10.117. Where possible, the planning authority will identify how, when and by whom infrastructure will be delivered. Early engagement with stakeholders will help identify opportunities for shared resources such as community hubs. It will be necessary for the Proposed Plan to understand and identify which sites may be required to contribute to which facilities via developer obligations.

Blue and Green Infrastructure

- 10.118. The spatial strategy will seek to protect, enhance and expand blue and green infrastructure. Consequently the sites selection process will take existing blue and green infrastructure, the potential linkages between such areas, and any relevant strategies relating to blue and green infrastructure, into account.

- 10.119. With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies on blue and green infrastructure.
- 10.120. The Proposed Plan will be informed by the Natural Heritage Strategy. Nature Networks, including the requirement for 30 x 30 for biodiversity improvement will impact on land use designations.
- 10.121. The Open Space Audit 2024 and Open Space Strategy will help form an understanding of the current quantity, quality and spreads of assets, and identify areas of improvement. The Proposed Plan may seek to redress any deficiencies. The Open Space Strategy may identify opportunities for connections, which can inform and influence the spatial strategy.
- 10.122. Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing across the city, and take into account the aims of the Aberdeen City food growing strategy.
- 10.123. The findings from the Play Sufficiency Assessment will also have an impact on policy/site requirements of the Proposed Plan.
- 10.124. The Core Path Plan can inform and influence the spatial strategy. Sites which are accessible by existing active travel routes, such as core paths, will have an accessibility advantage at site assessment stage.
- 10.125. SUDS and water management are critical elements of blue and green infrastructure, consideration will need to be given to policy approaches, so that issues of flood risk, water quality and amenity are embedded in the proposed plan. In addition the risk of flooding will form an important part of the site assessment for considering site for inclusion in the Proposed Plan.
- 10.126. The SEPA evidence sources listed under NPF4 Policies which reference nature networks (Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry Woodlands and Trees) will all influence how the next plan seeks to protect and enhance the water environment in relation to nature network across Aberdeen.

Digital Infrastructure

- 10.127. With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies on digital infrastructure.
- 10.128. The Proposed Plan will seek to consider how it can enable equity in broadband access and speeds.

Marmot Principles

10.129. Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 10.9: Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

10.130. NHS Grampian, Nature Scot and 3 members of the public responded to the public consultation and agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.

10.131. Scottish Water were satisfied with the paper and did not dispute the evidence. They made comments which included suggested changes to the paper, changes which were accepted.

10.132. Nature Scot, Bancon Homes, Homes for Scotland and Shell UK Limited confirmed that they did not dispute the Topic Paper but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

10.133. Email correspondence with SEPA on 13 and 20 June, and a meeting of 20 June confirmed SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper.

Disputes with Stakeholders

10.134. Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that they do not agree with the evidence within the Topic Paper. They have not responded to further correspondence and therefore their comments are taken as a dispute.

- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland state that the Topic Paper should provide guidance in relation to water abstraction from the River Dee. The Evidence Report is a collection of evidence with implications for the next plan summarised from

that evidence. It is not the role of the Evidence Report to provide guidance upon any subject.

- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland have commented that the evidence presented on healthcare does not provide a clear understanding of what is to be planned for and what is to happen with existing contributions. NHS Grampian have been clear on the current situation - new infrastructure is dependent upon Scottish Government capital funding in addition to developer contributions, and a Programme Initial Agreement (PIA) is required to access capital funding. The current focus is upon utilising existing assets, creating additional capacity within existing premises. NHS Grampian have confirmed they will work with Aberdeen City's Local Development Plan team to provide current information of status of healthcare premises.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented that there are a number of schools expected to exceed maximum capacity. They are seeking information upon existing related developer obligations in order to understand where there is expected investment in the school estate. We are committed to uploading this information onto the Council's website in the next year in order to improve transparency for developers.
- They also commented that the Council are consulting on plans for a new Hazlehead Academy which should be referenced within the evidence. It is noted that under the objectives and recommendations section of the School Estates Plan it is a proposed action to '...assess the feasibility of creating new secondary school provision to serve communities of Hazlehead and Countesswells...' We have include a section on the consultations that have taken place.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented, with respect to the reference that green and blue infrastructure will be important to manage surface water runoff, that the evidence should be clear that greenfield and brownfield development has the opportunity to reduce surface water runoff also. We do not dispute this comment but consider it self-evident and therefore specific comment is unnecessary.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented upon the content of Policy 3 from NPF4, that development proposals are required to build and strengthen nature networks and the connections between them. They seek reference to the role development plays in providing benefits. In response we have now referenced Policy 3 within the relevant section. There is some commentary around the reference to AECOM Nature Network data as a starting point for Local Authorities to explore what nature networks may exist. There is also some commentary around the nature of the Green Space Network in Aberdeen, that not all of it provides recreational or biodiversity benefits and that some development sites can help its further delivery.
- Barratt and David Wilson Homes North Scotland commented upon the evidence claim that much of the greenbelt is publicly accessible. They state that much of the greenbelt is in private ownership and has limited recreational value. It is not necessary to include these references given that most people will be aware that the greenbelt is largely in private ownership and that recreational value is limited generally to the enjoyment of being outdoors in nature.

10.135. A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he "does not have the knowledge to confirm why". A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves. A second member of the public disagrees with the evidence and has stated that there is 'too much to read'. The Council notes these comments and appreciates that the Topic Papers present a vast amount of information.

Information Gaps

- 10.136. Within the next year the Council is planning to include information on its website relating to existing Developer Obligations and details of where the money is planned to be spent.
- 10.137. Transport Infrastructure is referenced under the infrastructure first section of this Topic Paper, and covered in detail in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper. Information gaps include the Cumulative Transport Appraisal and the 2023-2030 Local Transport Strategy. For more information gaps relating to transport infrastructure, please refer to the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.
- 10.138. The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan are being developed at the time of writing. It is anticipated that they will be published within the year.
- 10.139. NHS Grampian intend to complete a Programme Initial Agreement (PIA) which is a deliverable, whole-system service and infrastructure change plan for the next 20- 30 years. There are currently no timescales set out for this. This is outwith the control of the Council.
- 10.140. It is acknowledged that the Aberdeen Core Paths Plan dates from 2009. There are no formal plans at the time of writing to update this plan.
- 10.141. There is work underway to update the Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Heritage Strategy. The Open Space Audit 2024 will be used to inform the Open Space Strategy. It is anticipated a draft document will be completed within the next 12 months.
- 10.142. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Heritage Strategy. A draft document will be completed within the next year.
- 10.143. SEPA, Scottish Water and Aberdeen City Council are working collectively on the 'Aberdeen City Blueprint' which seeks to develop a joint decision-making approach to manage rainwater more effectively and in ways that bring about wider benefits beyond reduced flooding. This is likely to be published in the next year.
- 10.144. Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

11.Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Transport

Requirements addressed in this section:

11.1. Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(d)	the infrastructure of the district (including transport systems);
Section 15(5)(e)	how that infrastructure is used;

Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:

Section	Requirement
Regulation 9(2)(e)	Have regard to: • any regional transport strategy; and • any local transport strategy.

National Planning Framework 4

Sustainable Transport

11.2. Local Development Plans (LDPs) should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. The spatial strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services.

11.3. LDPs should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. This could include low traffic schemes, shared transport options, designing-in speed controls, bus/cycle priority, pedestrianisation and minimising space dedicated to car parking. Consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development; local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes; and the accessibility for users of all abilities.

11.4. LDPs should be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. Plans should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan's infrastructure first approach. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk road or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required.

Links to Evidence

- [Transport Scotland National Transport Strategy 2](#)
- [Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Projects Review](#)
- [Transport Scotland Reducing Car Use for a Healthier Fairer and Greener Scotland](#)
- [Transport Scotland Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030](#)
- [Transport Scotland Development and Delivery of Active Freeways](#)
- [Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Final Report Summary](#)
- [Transport Scotland A96 Corridor Review Draft Summary Report 2024](#)
- [Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2023](#)
- [Transport Scotland Reported Pedestrian Casualties by Council Area and Severity](#)
- [Transport Scotland Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement](#)
- [Scottish Government Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030](#)
- [CO2 Emissions Tool](#)
- [National Atmospheric Emissions Map](#)
- [SUSTRANS Hands Up Scotland Survey](#)
- [SUSTRANS Aberdeen Walking and Cycling Index](#)
- [Public Health Scotland Road space reallocation in Scotland](#)
- [Walking and Cycling Index Data Tool](#)
- [The National Cycle Network](#)
- [Office of Rail and Road Estimates of Station usage](#)
- [DEFRA Air Quality Action Plans](#)
- [Scotland's Environment Air Quality Management Areas](#)
- [Scottish Government Planning Guidance – Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods](#)
- [Scottish Government Cleaner Air for Scotland 2](#)
- [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- [Transport Scotland Active Travel Framework \(2020\)](#)
- [Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021 Household Survey](#)
- [Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society](#)
- [Scottish Ramblers Path Network](#)
- [Aberdeen City Voice Travel and Transport Edition](#)
- [First Bus Aberdeen Bus Route Maps](#)
- [Stagecoach Bus Route Maps](#)
- [Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme](#)
- [Getabout A to B in Aberdeen City and Shire](#)
- [Aberdeen International Airport Destinations Map](#)
- [NESTRANS Regional Active Travel Network](#)
- [NESTRANS Active Travel Action Plan](#)
- [NESTRANS North East Specialised Goods Vehicle Counts 2024](#)
- [NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy for the North East of Scotland 2021](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen City Region Deal - STA Preliminary Options Appraisal Report Executive Summary](#)
- [NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023](#)
- [NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy Evaluation Report 2024](#)
- [NESTRANS North East Bus Alliance](#)
- [NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review Final Report](#)

- [NESTRANS Appendix Database of Transport Analysis \(document saved\)](#)
- [NESTRANS Reducing Car-km & Carbon Emissions Executive Summary](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study](#)
- [NESTRANS North East of Scotland Transport Partnership Meeting of the Board Public Document Pack](#)
- [NESTRANS Park and Ride Webpage](#)
- [NESTRANS 2023 Agenda Pack Inc. Annual Park and Ride Survey](#)
- [NESTRANS State of the Bus Network In Aberdeen and Shire](#)
- [NESTRANS Board Meeting Minutes of 19th Feb 2025](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Our Vision 2024 Update](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Strategic Business Case](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Routeing Analysis](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Detailed Options Appraisal](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Options Appraisal Case for Change](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Market Research](#)
- [NESTRANS Aberdeen Rapid Transit Benefits](#)
- [NESTRANS Detailed Options Appraisal Report \(in public pack\)](#)
- [SUSTRANS Travel to School in Scotland Hands Up Scotland Survey 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021](#)
- [Aberdeen City Draft Local Transport Strategy 2023-2030](#)
- [Aberdeen City Committee Report CR7E/24/258](#)
- [Aberdeen City Electric Vehicle Framework 2020-2030](#)
- [Aberdeen City Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026](#)
- [Aberdeen City Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan 2019](#)
- [Aberdeen City Core Paths Plan 2009](#)
- [Aberdeen City Mobility Strategy Net Zero Aberdeen](#)
- [Aberdeen City Transport Corridor Studies Overview](#)
- [Community Planning Aberdeen: Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026](#)
- [Aberdeen City Community Planning Aberdeen Engagement Report](#)
- [Aberdeen City Find a Car Park](#)
- [Aberdeen City Committee Report Aberdeen Rapid Transit Recommended Network Routing](#)
- [Aberdeen City Committee Report Active Travel to School](#)
- [Aberdeen City Cycle Maps](#)
- [Aberdeen City Community Transport](#)
- [Aberdeen City Air Quality Action Plan 2011](#)
- [Aberdeen City Aberdeen Electric Vehicle Framework 2020 to 2030](#)
- [Aberdeen City Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee Public Document Pack, Strategic Car Parking Review 2025 \(Page 839\)](#)
- [Aberdeen City Scheme promoting active and safe school travel set to launch](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Council Multi-million-pound EV charging infrastructure partnership announced](#)
- [Aberdeen City Urgent Business Committee Decision Sheet 18 Dec 2024](#)
- [Aberdeen City Finance and Resources Committee Paper 8 May 2024](#)
- [Aberdeen City City Voice Data](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council approves ambitious Budget plan](#)

- Aberdeen City Budget Meeting 5 March 2025
- Scotland's Census 2022 - Workplace and daytime tables
- Scotland's Census 2022 - Origin-Destination tables

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

11.5. The relationship between transport and land use planning has important implications for a place. It is a key aspect in influencing travel behaviours which determine carbon emissions generated by movement of people and freight. Aberdeen City local authority area currently has a high level of private car ownership, as is common in other areas across Scotland. Transport Scotland's Renewed Policy Statement around achieving car use reduction states that there are revised targets to reduce car use being developed by the Scottish Government, informed by advice from the Climate Change Committee and other relevant evidence. How transport is organised has a strong effect upon the health outcomes of the people of Aberdeen and the resilience of local economies around the city. Transport policy touches directly upon how places are designed and whether places prioritise pedestrian experience before movement of private vehicles.

11.6. This section is structured in the following order:

- Spatial Context
- Aberdeen Transport Statistics
- National Transport Strategy and documents
- Regional and Local Transport Strategies
- Active Travel
- Public Transportation
- Private Car Usage
- Port and Airport
- SEPA Evidence Sources
- Place Standard Assessment

11.7. A Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) process is currently being led by NESTRANS on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council to address cross boundary issues. Transport Scotland are part of the working group, and have fed into the development of the brief. A consultant has been procured and initial data gathering will be undertaken in the second half of 2025. The timeline to complete the CTA is:

- Stage 1: Inception (March - April 2025)
- Stage 2: Testing and Refinement of Alternative Spatial Strategies (April - September 2025),
- Stage 3: Scoping of Detailed Assessment (September – November 2025)
- Stage 4: Assessment of Preferred Land Use Proposals (December 2025 – August 2026).

Spatial Context

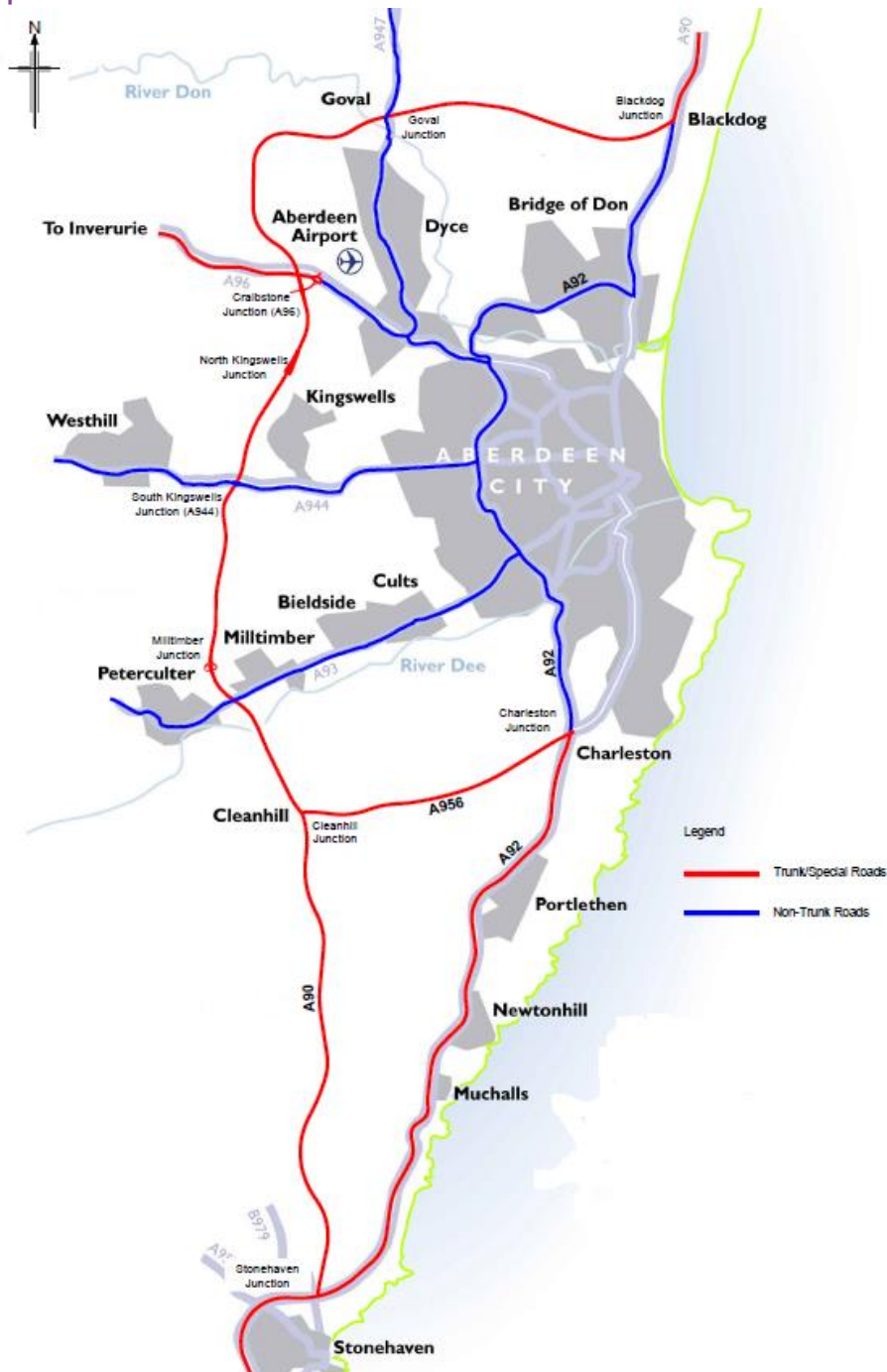


Figure 11.1: Map Showing Road Network of Aberdeen.

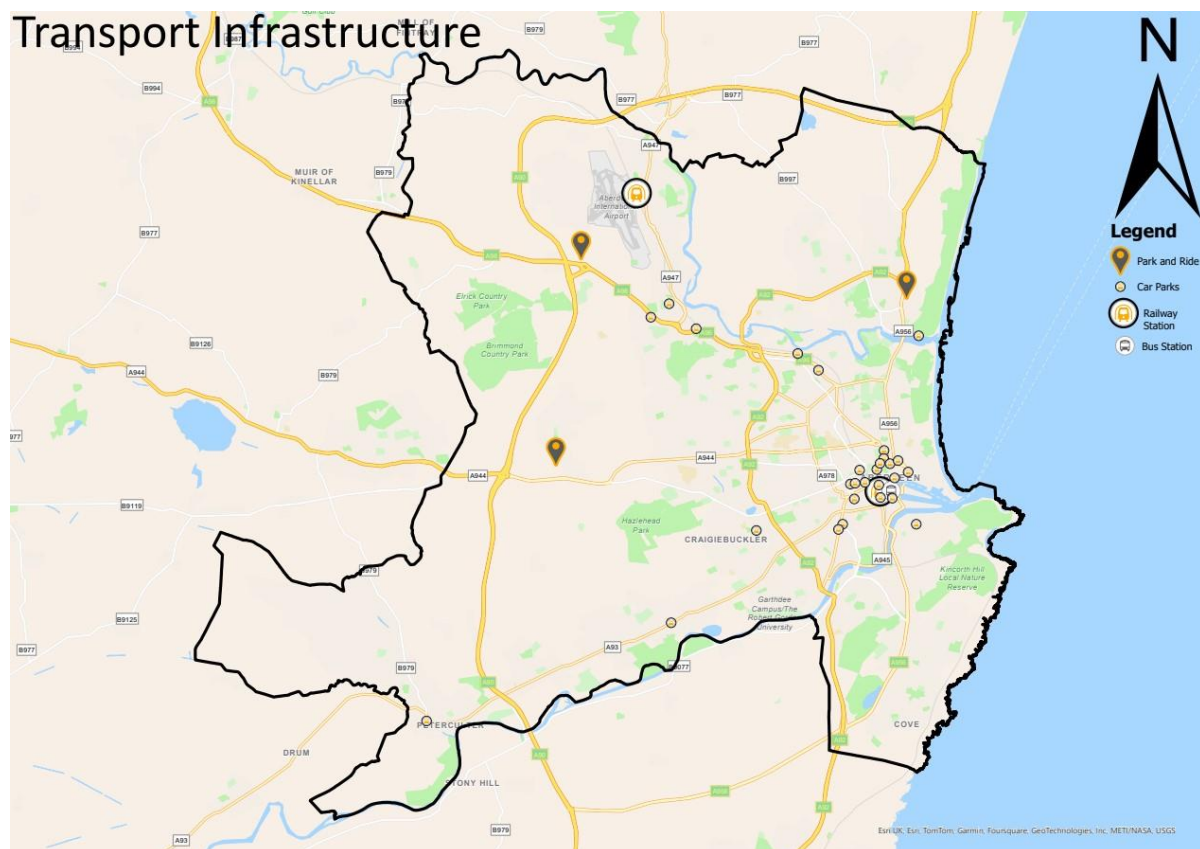
11.8. Aberdeen can be accessed by rail, road, sea and air. The city centre is situated adjacent to the west of the North Harbour and the mouth of the River Dee. The main routes into the city centre are the A956 (Ellon Road/King Street) from the north, the A956 dual carriageway (Wellington Road) from the south, the A96 (Auchmill Road/Great Northern Road/Powis Place) which comes from the north west linking to Inverness, the A944 (Lang Stracht/Westburn Road/Hutcheon Street) from the west, and the A93 (North Deeside Road/Great Western Road) from the south east linking to the Deeside settlements of Aberdeenshire.

11.9. The A92 (Anderson Drive) is a dual carriageway which acts as a radial route through the city joining the crossing at the south of the River Dee (Bridge of Dee) and the crossing at the north over the River Don (Persley Bridge). This has been superseded as a city bypass by the A90 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) several km to the west of the A92. The AWPR is approximately 35km in length and joins Stonehaven in the south to Blackdog in the north.

11.10. There are two railway stations in Aberdeen City, Aberdeen station in the city centre and Dyce station to the north west of the city, adjacent to the International Airport. The city is connected to Dundee (and central belt beyond) and Inverness by rail. The bus station is adjacent to Aberdeen train station.

11.11. There are three park and ride facilities in Aberdeen, at Craibstone to the north west, Bridge of Don to the north and Kingswells to the west. Further afield in Aberdeenshire, there are park and ride facilities at Ellon to the north and Newtonhill to the south. The car parks shown in the map below, figure 11.2, are the locations found in the Council's 'Find a Car Park' webpage. These are free or pay and display car parks which are generally larger in size – there are many other car parks throughout the city of smaller or slightly smaller size.

11.12. Aberdeen Harbour is serviced with a regular ferry service to Orkney and Shetland. Aberdeen International Airport hosts flights to over 100 destinations.



Aberdeen Transport Statistics

Road Traffic Volumes

11.13. According to Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Aberdeen City has 414 private cars (478 vehicles) per 1000 people. This is more than the average across Scotland's 4 largest cities which is 304 private cars (388 vehicles) per 1000 people. NESTRANS Reducing Car-km and Carbon Emissions: Options for the NESTRANS Region notes that there are around 7,500 car-km driven annually for each resident in the north east region, though car km per person is 75% greater in Aberdeenshire than Aberdeen City.

11.14. The NESTRANS LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendices includes 2023 baseline data traffic flows over a 24 hour period for a number of transport corridors into Aberdeen. A simplified version of the data in table, 11.1 is set out below;

Corridor	Aberdeen Total	City Centre Total	Aberdeen Total car only	City Centre Total car only
A96	29,129	21,178	22,870	17,386
A944 & A93	51,363	22,579	40,214	18,470
A90 North	27,440	21,342	21,044	17,489
A90 South	34,696	21,575	27,498	17,728
A947	23,053	20,813	18,023	17,126
A90 South/A92	26,912	21,043	21,219	17,319

Table 11.1: Private vehicle traffic flow table.

11.15. There is also baseline data public transport flows over a 24 hour period for a number of transport corridors into Aberdeen. A simplified version is set out below, table 11.2;

Corridor	Aberdeen Total	City Centre Total	Mode Share Aberdeen	Mode Share City Centre
A96	8,718	7,970	28%	31%
A944 & A93	9,371	7,953	19%	30%
A90 North	8,382	7,681	28%	31%
A90 South	8,352	8,198	23%	32%
A947	7,626	7,487	30%	30%
A90 South/A92	8,125	8,043	28%	32%

Table 11.2: Public transport traffic flow table.

Journey Times and Key Pinch Points in the Road Network

11.16. There are numerous 2023 baseline maps which show journey times for road traffic and public transport from various settlements around Aberdeen in the NESTRANS LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendices. The documents also include road journey time graphs in both directions for A92 Stonehaven/Bridge of Dee and A944 Skene Road Switchback.

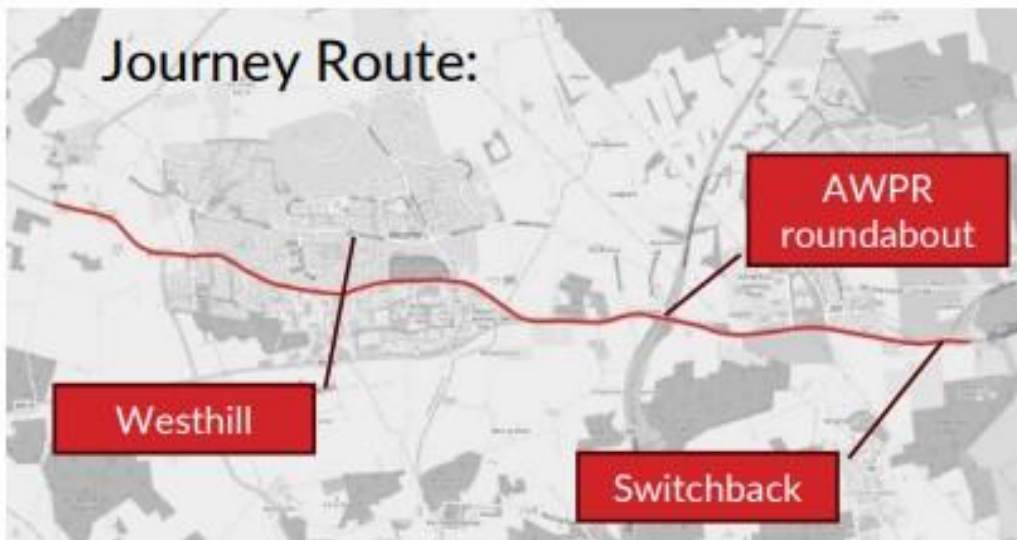


Figure 11.3: A944 Skene Road Switchback.



Figure 11.4: A92 Stonehaven/Bridge of Dee.

11.17. Cumulative journey times in both directions along the A944 Skene Road switchback to Westhill are shown in figures 11.5 and 11.6 below.



Figure 11.5: A944 Westbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min).

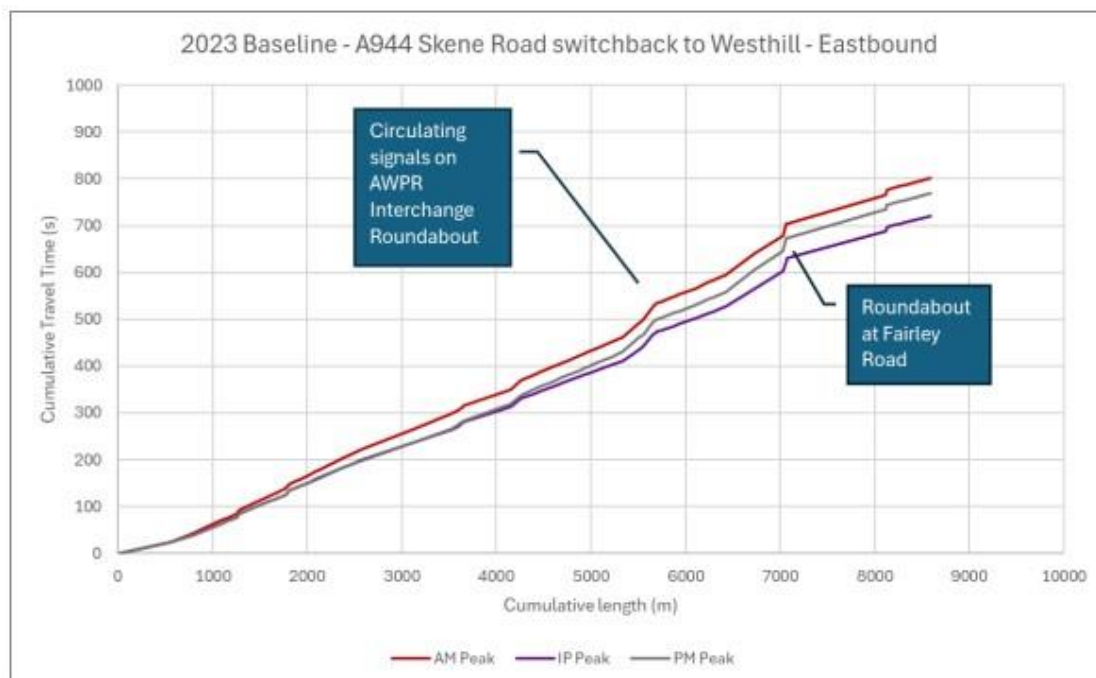


Figure 11.6: A944 Eastbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min).

11.18. Cumulative Journey times in both directions along the A92 Stonehaven/Bridge of Dee are shown in figures 11.7 and 11.8 below.

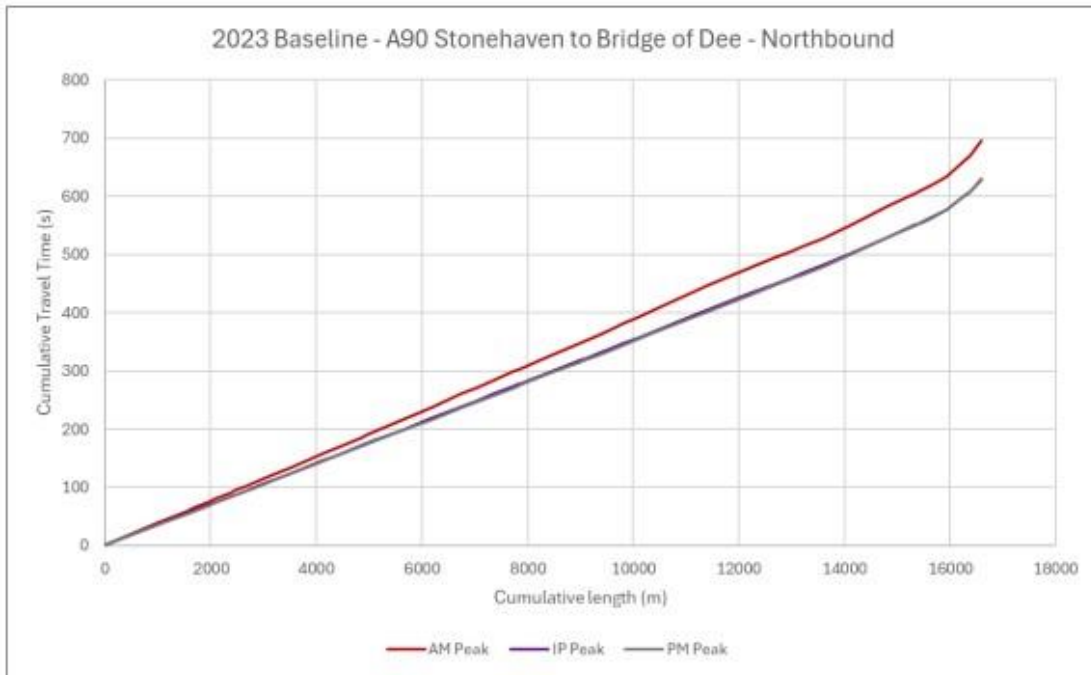


Figure 11.7: A90 Northbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min).

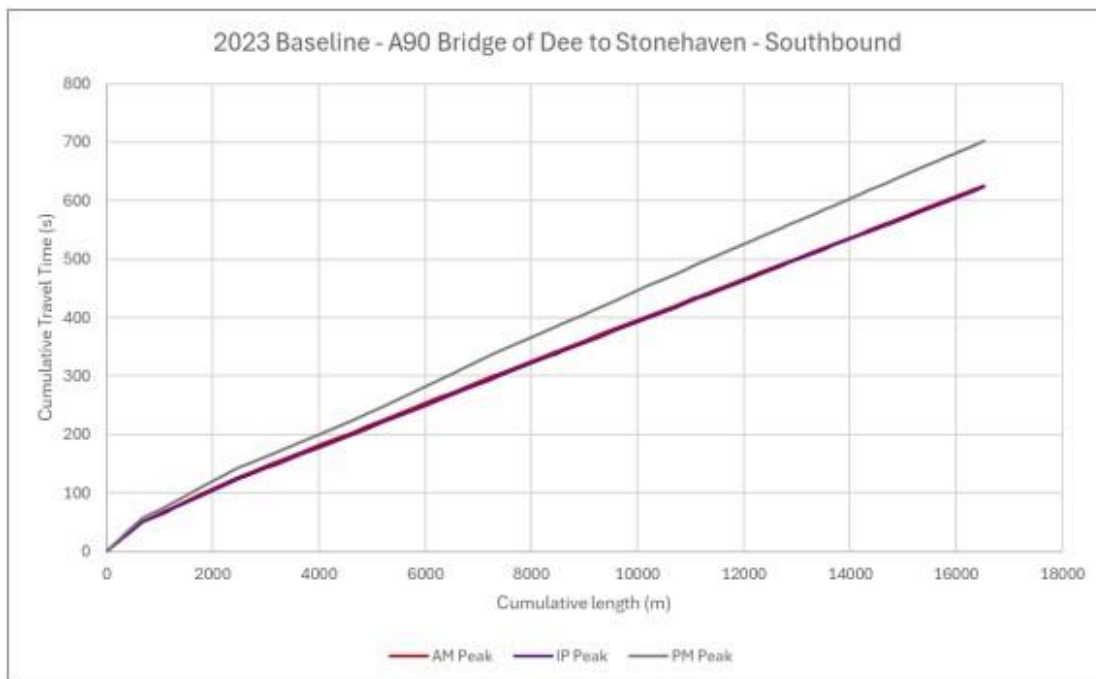


Figure 11.8: A90 Southbound Cumulative Journey Times, 2023 (min).

11.19. The map below, figure 11.9, from The NESTRANS LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendices shows the pinch points within the Aberdeen road network. The most significant pinch points (over 120 second delay) are:

- at the signalled junction between the A947 (Oldmeldrum Road) and the B977 to the north of Dyce

- at the signalled junction between the A944 (Westburn Road) and the A978 (Westburn Drive) at the south west corner of Westburn Park.
- At the signalled junction between the A92 (Anderson Drive) and the A93 (Great Western Road) in the Mannofield area.

The other significant pinch points (between 70 and 90 second delay) are:

- At the A90 sliproad at Craibstone and the nearby signalled junction between the A96 and Dyce Drive/Craibstone Drive.
- At the signalled junction between the A93 (North Deeside Road) and Baillieswells Road/Bieldside Station Road at Bieldside.
- At the signalled junction between the A944 (Hutcheon Street) and the B986 (Berryden Road/Caroline Place) south of the Berryden Retail Park.
- At the junction between the A956 (Virginia Street/Commerce Street), the continuation of Commerce Street, and Castle Terrace to the north of Aberdeen Harbour and to the east of the city centre.
- At the signalled junction between the A956 (Market Street/Trinity Quay) and the continuation of Market Street and Guild Street, close to the bus terminal.

11.20. There is otherwise a very high concentration of lesser pinch points in and around the city centre. There is a high concentration of lesser pinch points along A-road corridors into the city (Anderson Drive, King Street, Wellington Road, Lang Stracht etc) and at junctions between major roads (Haudagain bypass, A944/A92 junction, St. Machar Drive/Tillydrone Avenue, Mounthooly Park roundabout etc).

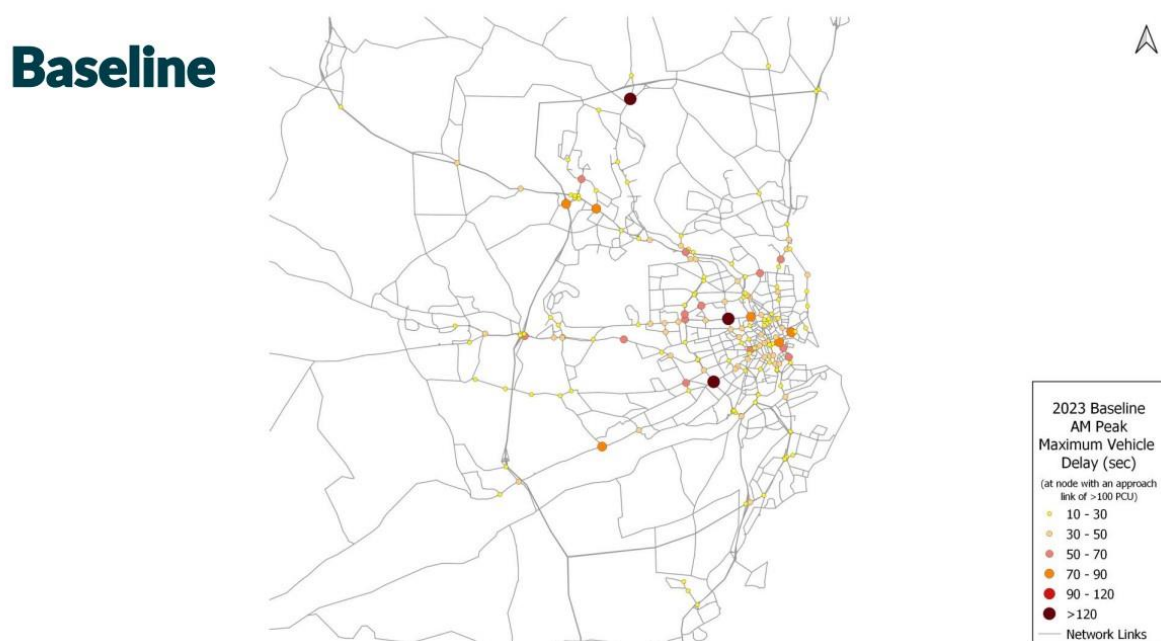


Figure 11.9: 2023 Baseline Maximum Vehicle Delay AM peak.

Asset Management Data

11.21. According to Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Aberdeen has 1,037km of roads in total (1.8% of Scottish total), 33km of trunk road, 129km of A

roads, 42km of B Roads, 96km of C Roads, 737km of Local Authority unclassified and 1004km of Local Authority roads in total. Of these roads, in 2022-23 for Aberdeen, 3% of A roads, 3% of B roads and 3% of C roads and 5% of unclassified roads are in 'red condition'. 17% of A roads, 22% of B roads, 16% of C roads and 24% of unclassified roads are in 'amber condition'. Totals for all roads are 4% red and 22% amber condition.

Accident Data

Table 11.3, below, shows Transport Scotland statistics on reported pedestrian casualties by Council area and severity,

2014-18 Average Aberdeen City	Killed	Serious Casualties	All Severities
	2	27	53
2019-23 Average Aberdeen City	Killed	Serious Casualties	All Severities
	1	21	43

Table 11.3: Aberdeen City Pedestrian casualties.

11.22. According to Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, reported collisions by police force division in Aberdeen City are in table 4 below:

Collisions in total	Year
67	2022
61	2021
71	2020
118	2019
137	2018
155	2017
175	2016
229	2015
273	2014
349	2013

Table 11.4: Aberdeen City Reported Collisions of all Types.

Transport Poverty

11.23. Figure 11.10, below, illustrate that the areas of the city which fall within the lowest 20 percentile for accessibility of services, are mostly around the periphery of the city. When considered in conjunction with other SIMD data relating to income, a spatial picture emerges of the areas of the city which may be most affected by transport poverty. It is noted that accessibility are key priorities set out in:

- Transport Scotland: National Transport Strategy 2 - Reduce inequalities by providing fair access to services, access which is easy and affordable to use for all.
- NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2040 – Accessibility for all.

- Draft Local Transport Strategy 2023-2030 - Accessibility/ inclusivity/ user-friendly. Improve the user-friendliness of the Aberdeen transport network, making it more accessible and inclusive.

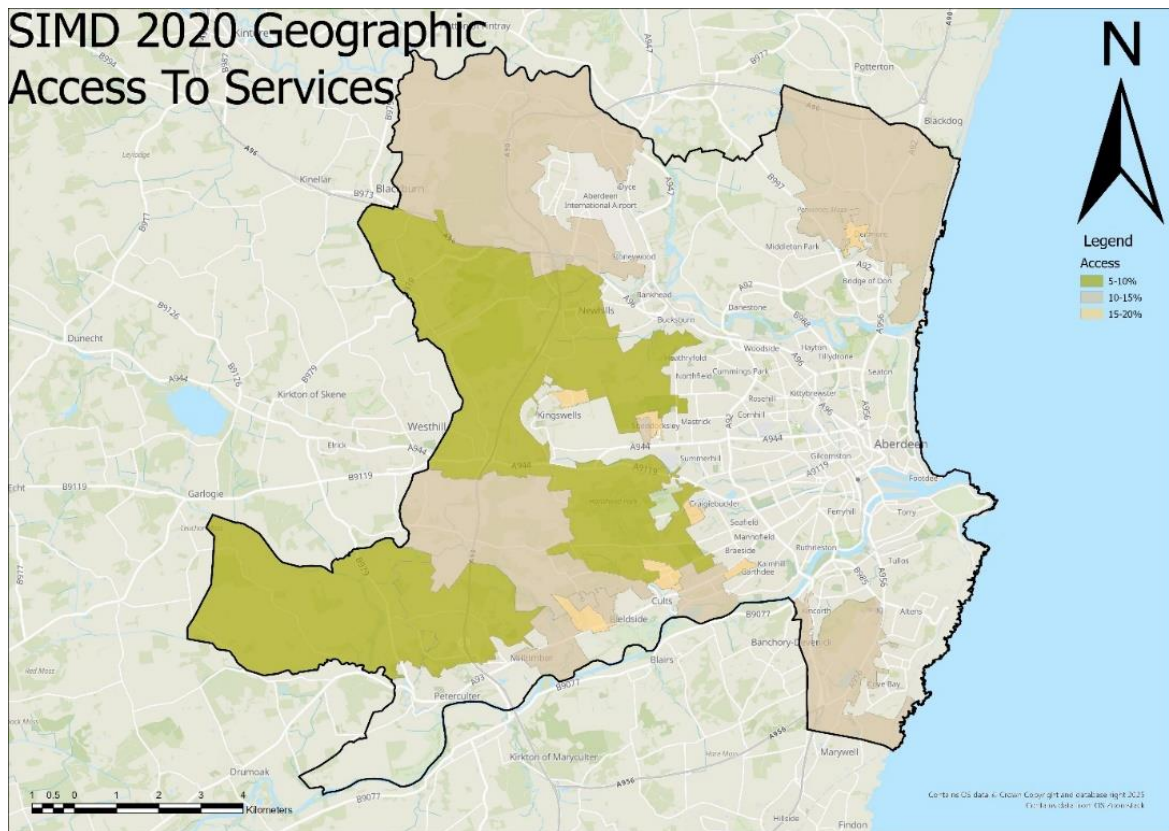


Figure 11.10; Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 Geographic Access to Services.

Census Travel Data

11.24. In June 2025 Scotland's Census released 2022 data which includes origin-destination data which describes the movement of people, including migration and travel to work or study. Also to be released is workplace and daytime population data published using alternative population bases. This is raw data at present, there is no analysis of the Aberdeen information at the time of writing.

National Transport Strategy and Documents

Transport Scotland: National Transport Strategy 2: Protecting Our Climate and Improving Lives

Prioritising Sustainable Transport

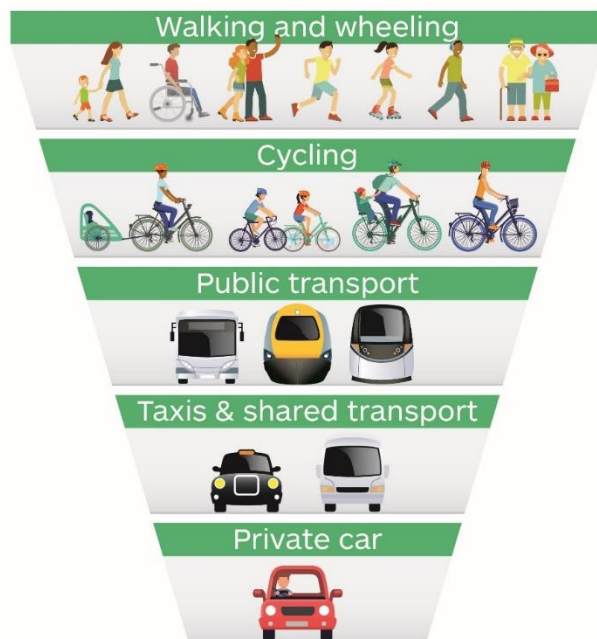


Figure 11.11: Sustainable Transport Hierarchy from NTS2.

11.25. Transport Scotland NTS2 sets out the vision in order to achieve a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping to deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors. The vision is underpinned by four priorities with three associated outcomes for each;

- Reduces inequalities (provide fair access to services we need, be easy to use for all, be affordable for all)
- Takes climate action (help deliver our net zero target, adapt to the effects of climate, promote greener, cleaner choices)
- Helps to deliver inclusive economic growth (get people and goods where they need to get to, be reliable, efficient and high quality, use beneficial innovation)
- Improves our health and wellbeing (be safe and secure for all, enable us to make healthy travel choices, help make our communities great places to live)

11.26. NTS2 promotes the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in decision making by promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people. It also promotes efficient and sustainable freight transport for the movement of goods, particularly the shift from road to rail.

11.27. NTS2 also promotes the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy to inform future investment decisions and ensure transport options that focus on reducing inequalities and the need to travel unsustainably are prioritised. The focus is then on maintaining and safely operating existing assets (taking due consideration of the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change). Following this it should be considered how to make

better use of existing capacity, such as innovative solutions. Only once these options have been followed then targeted infrastructure improvements will be considered.

11.28. To understand what this document means for Aberdeen, see Summary of Implications.

Transport Scotland: Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland

11.29. Transport Scotland have created a route map to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 (Note: target has been reviewed, see Transport Scotland Reviewed Policy Statement), 'Reducing Car Use for a Healthier, Fairer and Greener Scotland'. It acknowledges that transport accounts for 29% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, with cars making up 38% of those emissions and that technological solutions alone will not accommodate net zero goals. It sets out actions on the following four main behaviours:

- Reducing the need to travel
- Living well locally
- Switching modes
- Combining or sharing car trips.

11.30. The document sets out its guiding principles. Firstly that the work is collaborative between local government, regional transport partnerships, public sector organisations and businesses. Secondly that it is a national ambition that will require bespoke, place-based approach to create the conditions for travel behaviour change in communities. Thirdly the work is underpinned by a commitment to a just transition which includes principles of community wealth building, supporting people to make alternative travel choices that help strengthen local economies while ensuring that those least able to pay are not unfairly burdened and that existing inequalities are tackled, not exacerbated.

11.31. The document notes that it will not be possible to reduce car kilometres by 20% by focussing on a single trip type such a commuting, or a single behaviour such as switching from car to walking or cycling for short journeys. A holistic framework of interventions is required to reduce car use.

11.32. The aim of the route map is to provide interventions that empower people to choose from one or more of the sustainable travel behaviours each time they plan a trip. Each of the desired behaviours also have the potential to provide other benefits to individuals, in addition to contributing to address climate change. For example:

- Making use of sustainable online options can save time and money
- Choosing local destinations can help revitalise local communities
- Switching to walk, wheel, cycle or public transport has health benefits
- Combining trips or sharing a journey with others can improve wellbeing

11.33. The following interventions to be taken between now and 2030 are listed within the document;

Interventions to reduce the need for travel:

- Intervention 1a: Finalising and adopting the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) by summer 2022
- Intervention 1b: Extending superfast broadband to 100 per cent of premises
- Intervention 1c: Mapping digital connectivity alongside transport
- Intervention 1d: Issuing a refreshed Fair Work First Action Plan in Spring 2022
- Intervention 1e: Progressing the Work Local Challenge Programme
- Intervention 1f: Delivering the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy's actions to reduce the need to travel

Interventions to help people live well locally:

- Intervention 2a: Finalising and adopting the NPF4 by summer 2022
- Intervention 2b: Delivering the Housing to 2040 actions to build stronger and more vibrant communities
- Intervention 2c: Continuing to embed the Place Principle, and promote the use of the Place Standard Tool
- Intervention 2d: Delivering 20 minute neighbourhoods; improved town and city centres and a 'loves local' culture
- Intervention 2e: Developing guidance and an appraisal framework for Mobility Hubs
- Intervention 2f: Introducing a safer speed limit of 20mph on appropriate roads in built up areas by 2025

Interventions to help people switch modes:

- Intervention 3a: Publishing the Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan for Active Travel in Scotland in 2022
- Intervention 3b: Increasing investment in active travel
- Intervention 3c: Investing £50 million on Active Freeways
- Intervention 3d: Improving access to cycles and the transportation of cycles
- Intervention 3e: Continuing to take action on road safety, in line with Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 which includes a renewed focus on pedestrians and cyclists
- Intervention 3f: Introducing Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow in Spring 2022:
- Intervention 3g Continuing our work on review of transport governance
- Intervention 3h: Commissioning a Fair Fares Review
- Intervention 3i: Providing nationwide free bus travel for Scotland's young people aged under 22 from January 2022
- Intervention 3j: Continuing to provide long-term capital investment to bus transport
- Intervention 3k: Introducing a Community Bus Fund
- Intervention 3l: Establishing a National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board
- Intervention 3m: Investing in the maintenance and enhancement of the rail network
- Intervention 3n: Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals
- Intervention 3o: Pavement parking ban enforcement and other car parking interventions
- Intervention 3p: Developing Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) regulations and guidance

- Intervention 3r: Delivering the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy's actions to increase active travel and the use of public and community transport to NHS sites
- Intervention 3s: Continuing the £300,000 annual investment in the Eco-Schools Scotland Programme as part of the Learning for Sustainability Programme

Interventions to help people to combine trips or share journeys:

- Intervention 4a: Testing the viability of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) in Scotland
- Intervention 4b: Re-promoting the benefits of car-sharing and car-cubs post-pandemic

11.34. As noted in see Transport Scotland's Reviewed Policy Statement, work is ongoing between Transport Scotland and COSLA to finalise new reduction targets informed by advice from the Climate Change Committee and other relevant evidence. There is a direct link between this work and other national documents and the work that is being commissioned by NESTRANS on a regional level which is referenced in this paper.

11.35. To understand what this document means for Aberdeen, see Summary of Implications.

Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Project Review 2 Final Summary Report

11.36. This is a review of the strategic transport network's performance which is designed to inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042) by providing evidence-based recommendations on which Scottish Ministers can base future transport investment decisions.

11.37. Recommendation 2: Active Freeways and Cycle Parking Hubs. Development of active freeways on high-demand corridors in Scotland's largest cities.

11.38. Recommendation 13: Aberdeen Rapid Transit, a bus based rapid transit system which will focus on specific corridors through the city providing quicker and easier travel (more detail on this later in the document).

11.39. Recommendation 16: Perth-Dundee-Aberdeen rail corridor enhancements which comprises the Aberdeen Central Belt Service Improvements Project and The Aberdeen Central Belt Decarbonisation Project (neither of which are dependent on each other).

Aberdeen to Central Belt Service Improvements comprise:

- Enhancements to reduce passenger journey times and increase capacity for both passenger and freight trains between Dundee and Aberdeen.
- Track and signalling improvements at Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose and Aberdeen Stations.
- Track layout alterations at Aberdeen, potentially bringing back into use either one through platform or two bay platforms at Aberdeen Station.

Aberdeen to Central Belt Decarbonisation comprises:

- Electrification north to Aberdeen and, potentially, Inverurie

- Gauge enhancements between Dundee and Aberdeen, linked to electrification works, enabling longer, wider freight services.
- The Scottish Government is committed to decarbonising its passenger rail network and its freight rail services.
- The Decarbonisation Action Plan commits to all passenger diesel trains being replaced; the order in which that is done will depend on business cases and available budgets. A refresh of the Decarbonisation Action Plan is underway.

11.40. In relation to the above projects, the release of funding is contingent on a positive decision by the Transport Scotland investment decision-makers to the Outline and Final Business Cases. Timescales for delivery remain under review.

11.41. Recommendation 18 Supporting Integrated Journeys at Ferry Terminals.

Improvements in timetable information, signing, ticketing and other facilities required to deliver a seamless and integrated journey between different travel modes to improve accessibility.

11.42. Recommendation 24 Ferry vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation in order to improving the resilience, reliability, capacity, accessibility and standardisation of ferries and to decarbonise ferry travel. Aberdeen has ferry services to Orkney and Shetland.

11.43. Recommendation 25: Rail Decarbonisation. Involves replacing diesel trains with cleaner technology to help meet net zero targets. Electrification would improve journey times and reliability for freight and passenger trains. It could facilitate longer trains and better acceleration. Electric rolling stock also has lower operational and maintenance costs. Battery and hydrogen traction solutions would still enable decarbonisation of rail operations on routes where overhead wire electrification is less cost effective.

- Transport Scotland announced in September 2024 that ScotRail would be commencing a rolling stock procurement exercise for replacement of its HST fleet that operates on Intercity routes to Aberdeen from the Central Belt. The outcome of this procurement will determine the extent of electrification required on the Aberdeen - Central Belt routes.
- Design works for future electrification have been undertaken to inform an outline business case for decarbonising the Aberdeen – Central belt.

11.44. Recommendation 42: Investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation. This could involve shore power supplies to ferry vessels, to support Ferry vessel renewal and replacement and progressive decarbonisation.

11.45. Recommendation 44: Rail freight terminals and facilities. An updated market study for rail freight growth in Scotland is sought including a review of rail freight terminals and hubs to confirm how to meet long-term requirements to shift freight from road to rail.

NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review Final Report

11.46. In 2023 NESTRANS commissioned a multi-modal transport and land use modelling exercise, utilising the Aberdeen Sub Area Model 2019 (ASAM19), to derive baseline transport information and data for informing the LDP Evidence Reports for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The reporting from this exercise (see also NESTRANS Appendix Database of Transport Analysis in evidence links) presents relevant transport data from the modelling work, and demonstrates the predicted impacts and constraints across the transport network - presenting both current day baseline and forecast information.

11.47. Transport Model for Scotland 18A contains forecasts of cross boundary travel between the North East and the rest of Scotland, which have been applied to ASAM19. The evidence review demonstrates the level of change in strategic travel movements to / from the North East to understand any associated cross boundary constraints. ASAM19 is a long established strategic multi-modal model covering the North East of Scotland and is calibrated to represent 2019 traffic and travel conditions. ASAM19 forecasts transport impacts by deriving changes in accessibility through the delivery of proposed transport investment and policy, and assessing the impact from changes in population, employment, development build-out and traveller behaviour. The forecasting capability of ASAM19 includes a 2019 Baseline, a 2023 'present day' baseline scenario and future year scenarios of 2030 and 2040. The forecasting reflects anticipated development growth and transport investment and policy commitments to represent two alternative scenarios:

- 'without policy' - motorised transport without current transport policy i.e. private car km growth; and
- 'with policy' - motorised transport with current transport policy to meet national transport policy ambitions i.e. 20% reduction in private car km.

11.48. These scenarios represent similar transport investment and infrastructure commitments but differ in content in terms of varying transport behaviours and policy outcomes, including variations in the level of:

- Development and population growth;
- Home / remote working and commuting trips;
- Business trips / teleconferencing;
- Car availability;
- Electric vehicle fleet and impact on vehicle operating costs; and
- Increasing vehicle operating costs to reflect the policy commitment of reducing car vehicle kilometres by 20% by 2030

11.49. The 2023 Baseline scenario includes the recent delivery of the Haudagain Link Road, and the impact of the closure of Union Street to general traffic between Market Street and Union Terrace (i.e. providing a bus and taxi only route). Bus routes along key radial corridors reflect Autumn 2022 timetabling. The delivery of Kintore rail station and 'rail revolution' service improvements are also represented, along with a model update to rail service stopping patterns at Arbroath. The 2023 Baseline scenario was updated

to reflect recent (Post Covid) behavioural trends which have impacted travel patterns (more remote working).

11.50. The 2023 Baseline shows that there are 21,178 daily vehicle flows through the city centre (17,386 by car) and 29,129 daily vehicle flows through Aberdeen (22,870 by car) which shows that private car usage dominates traffic flow. Public Transport passenger flows are 7,970 (31% of total) for the city centre, 8,718 (28% of total) for Aberdeen.

11.51. The 2030 and 2040 scenarios represent the following transport investment:

- Phase 1 of Gyratory at South College St & North Esplanade
- City Centre Master Plan (CCMP; as per summer 2023 configuration): bus only access on Guild Street, Market Street & Bridge Street, and Schoolhill and Union Terrace restrictions;
- Laurencekirk A90 / A937 Interchange;
- Berryden Dual Carriageway;
- A96 Dualling Inverurie to Inverness (Note, commitment by Scottish Government to fully dual remains but it will not be complete by the original anticipated timeline of 2030);
- Coast Road improvements to access South Harbour;
- A90 Bruntland Rd Closure & Baydentoy Traffic Signals;
- A92 Murcar / B999 Roundabout Upgrade;
- Upgrade of Parkway / Whitestripes Roundabout to signalised intersection;
- A92 / Parkway Traffic Signals; and
- Access points to various proposed development (Prime Four, Grandhome, Loirston, Craibstone, Cloverhill)

11.52. The model scenarios did not include Aberdeen Rapid Transit, Aberdeen Beachfront or active travel schemes given there was not the necessary degree of commitment at the time of undertaking the scenarios.

11.53. Both 'with policy' and 'without policy' forecasts show a 2% increase in population for Aberdeen up to 2030, and 5% increase to 2040 with policy and 7% increase without policy. City and Shire combined likewise shows a 2% increase in population up to 2030, 3% increase to 2040 with policy and 4% increase without policy. Mode shift forecasts are displayed in table 11.5 below:

SCENARIO	YEAR	ROAD	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	ACTIVE TRAVEL
Without Policy	2023-2030	5%	0%	-2%
	2023-2040	11%	0%	-6%
With Policy	2023-2030	-6%	8%	6%
	2023-2040	-9%	18%	6%

Table 11.5: Modal shift forecasts.

- 11.54. Predicted changes to road trip movements and public transport movements within and between authorities (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray) are set out in the report. The changes are predicted for 2040 using the 'with policy' and 'without policy' scenarios.
- 11.55. The report finds that 'with policy' commitments, there is a reduction in road trips more generally by 2040, particularly within Aberdeen (down 10%) and Aberdeenshire (down 1%). Road traffic between Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire remains relatively constant, whilst longer distance movements continue to rise (higher trips into and out of Aberdeen to Moray, 147% and 127% respectively, higher trips into and out of Aberdeen to Angus would increase 12% and 17% respectively), albeit at a reduced rate compared to a without policy scenario. Only the Northern movement (A96 towards Inverness) continues to see an overall increase in traffic movements, suggesting that the impact of the A96 scheme is restricting policies in further reducing overall road trip making.
- 11.56. The report finds that 'without policy' commitments there is an overall trend showing road trip movements broadly increasing by 2040 within and between all regions (with the exception of trips within Aberdeenshire and Angus) It is projected to increase 10% more for movements within Aberdeen. Considerably higher traffic growth would be anticipated between Aberdeen and the other local authority areas compared to the 'with policy' scenario. More considerable traffic growth is forecast for longer distance movements to/from Moray and Angus (Moray into Angus up 294%, Angus into Moray up 301%). The most significant overall growth is to/from areas further North, along the A96 corridor – suggesting that the delivery of the A96 Dualling scheme induces longer distance traffic growth.
- 11.57. With respect to public transport movements, the report finds that in a 'with policy' scenario by 2040 there would be increased patronage across all regions, with more considerable increases within Aberdeen, and to/from Aberdeenshire. Only Northern movements to/from Aberdeen see a small decrease in public transport trips.
- 11.58. For the 'without policy' scenario by 2040 overall public transport patronage reduces to/from several areas, including a small total reduction in trips to/from Aberdeenshire (with on overall region-wide change). The exception to this trend is Aberdeen, and more specifically PT trips within Aberdeen, and between Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire where a moderate increase is seen.
- 11.59. Table 11.6 shows forecasts using the 'with policy' scenario for bus and rail. It shows a considerable and relatively consistent increase in patronage for both bus and rail.

Scenario:	Total Daily Boardings			% change vs Baseline		
	Bus	Rail	Total	Bus	Rail	Total
2023 Baseline	88,173	14,996	103,169			
2030 Policy	96,695	17,160	113,855	10%	14%	10%
2040 Policy	106,114	18,481	124,595	20%	23%	21%

Table 11.6: Bus and Rail forecasts 'with policy'.

11.60. Table 11.7 shows forecasts using the 'without policy' scenario for bus and rail. It shows a very marginal increase in patronage for both bus and rail, albeit rail travel up by 8% by 2040 against the 2023 baseline.

Scenarios:	Total Daily Boardings			% change vs Baseline		
	Bus	Rail	Total	Bus	Rail	Total
2023 Baseline	88,173	14,996	103,169			
2030	88,857	15,163	104,020	1%	1%	1%
2040	88,188	16,245	104,433	0%	8%	1%

Table 11.7: Bus and Rail forecasts 'without policy'.

11.61. The report shows forecasted congestion heat maps for both scenarios. For more information refer to the NESTRANS Appendix Database of Transport Analysis in the evidence list. It is evident that in the 'with policy' scenario, there will be increased wait times along the A96 and the junction between it and the A90 at Craibstone otherwise wait times are not too dissimilar to the baseline data.

11.62. The report shows forecasted capacities for park and ride facilities for both scenarios. The analysis suggests there is sufficient parking capacity at all the bus-based park and ride sites in all scenarios, with demand during the Inter Peak period following a similar pattern.

11.63. The Report includes a precise breakdown of figures, however the key findings of the forecasts are as follows:

- A substantial increase in housing and population is represented over time, with considerable new development and subsequent travel activity focussed around the periphery of Aberdeen;
- Changes in trip movements forecast over time vary by mode, with road traffic continuing to grow in the 'Without Policy' scenario. The delivery of transport policy generates a considerable increase in public transport passengers and active travel trips, and subsequent reduction in road traffic movements;
- The delivery of transport policy produces an 18% reduction in car kms across the North East by 2030. Car Kms subsequently increase over the longer term horizon between 2030 and 2040;
- The introduction of the A96 Dualling scheme generates an increase in average traffic speeds across the network. The investment also increases road traffic demand along

this corridor, and subsequently constrains and off-sets some of the impact of policies aimed at reducing car kms.

- Transport policy commitments provide a further increase in traffic speeds across the network to 2040;
- Traffic congestion is shown to continue in several areas, including the city centre, key radials and at access points along the A90 and A96 strategic routes. Congestion is lower within the With Policy scenario, but continues to impact network operations for motorists and bus services at many locations; and
- Public Transport passenger volumes remain relatively constant in the 'Without Policy' scenario, and increase substantially in the With Policy scenario. By 2030, sections of the rail network become crowded during the peak periods, with some rail station car parks also at or approaching capacity.

NESTRANS Reducing Car-km and Carbon Emissions: Options for the NESTRANS Region Executive Summary

11.64. The Scottish Government was committed to reducing the number of car-km travelled on Scotland's roads by 20%, in comparison with a 2019 baseline, by 2030. As noted before, this target is being revised as discussed in Transport Scotland's Renewed Policy Statement. There were considered different options to achieve the previous target in the NESTRANS region which have differing implications for inclusion and equality. This report summarises the findings of a review which has considered the targets in the specific context of the baseline and trends of the North East of Scotland and has considered the quantitative and qualitative impacts of measures which might influence car use or emissions per km.

11.65. The review is intended to help NESTRANS and its partners identify ways to achieve the target reductions in car-km and carbon emissions from car use in a way that accords with the needs and aspirations of the region and its people.

11.66. The report finds that action outwith the current control and funding ability of regional partners is required in order to meet the Government's target. It finds that constraining car use is likely to face opposition, with significant impacts on those living in rural areas or on lower incomes. The report finds that the extent of these adverse impacts could be reduced if significant improvements to alternatives to car use (including improved public transport and active travel facilities) which are relevant to all of the region's residents were provided in advance of traffic restraint measures being introduced.

Regional And Local Transport Strategies

NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2040

11.67. The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) follows six key priorities which set the tone and direction for the strategy. These are:

- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity
- Zero fatalities on the road network

- Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organization standards for emissions from transport
- Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net zero by 2045
- Accessibility for all
- A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes.

11.68. The RTS was supported by the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal (STA). This was initiated as a means to collate and rationalise the current and future problems and opportunities within the transport system, and to act as the mechanism to facilitate the delivery of transport projects to support the Regional Economic Strategy. As part of the STA, an Initial Appraisal: Case for Change study was completed in 2018 and involved extensive data analysis and consultation to identify the range of problems and opportunities across the region.

11.69. Option generation and sifting exercises were undertaken in 2018/19 and this process identified a list of 42 options recommended for further development and consideration. The second phase of the STA commenced from the 42 shortlisted options. The STA 'Preliminary Options Appraisal' stage of the study developed, refined and appraised the 42 options further, reducing the individual options to 29, against which recommendations on appropriate pathways for their further development and delivery were made.

11.70. The 29 options within the STA can be split into five broad option categories. These comprise:

- City Connectivity – ensuring sustainable connectivity to/from and within the regional centre
- Rural Connectivity – providing sustainable and proportionate travel choices across the region's more rural hinterland
- Strategic Connectivity – linking the region effectively to the rest of Scotland and internationally
- Safety – moving towards a zero fatalities target
- Demand Management Measures – to manage resources effectively and encourage the use of sustainable modes

11.71. Within the five categories, each option is defined as either 'core' (large scale options designed to instigate substantive change) or 'supporting' (smaller scale options, less likely to bring about substantive change in their own right, but nevertheless important in supporting the core measures and overall priorities). The emerging overall package of options to be taken forward from the STA can be seen as a transport package to begin transitioning the north east region to a post-carbon, more prosperous, safer, and more equitable future. A summary of the overall package of options is set out below, table 11.8 (from the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal Preliminary Options Appraisal Report Executive Summary), and this fed directly into the development of the RTS:

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
1	Upgrade existing active travel routes	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓		STAG-based feasibility and engineering work to consider the implementation of continuous, segregated active travel corridors into the city centre to inform subsequent Business Cases / funding applications. Local authorities to take the lead and continue to progress ongoing active travel focussed corridor studies.
2	Increase provision and quality of active travel routes across the region	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓			
3	Implement regional cycle hire scheme	3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Pending development of an Aberdeen City bike hire scheme (which complements the City Connectivity Package), Nestrans to undertake further investigation into the costs and benefits of smaller scale cycle hire schemes in town centres or other suitable locations across the region.
4	Softer Measures to encourage active travel	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans, through the 'Getabout' partnership and brand, to increase current 'softer measures' initiatives to encourage and enable greater active travel use.
5	Improve bus services and network	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓			Nestrans, with support from the North East Scotland Bus Alliance, to lead a study to investigate how the new powers embodied in Transport Act could be used to provide a catalyst to generating a step change in bus provision and operations across the region. This would be informed by a region-wide bus network review including a 'rural connectivity audit' – considering current provision versus rural community needs.
6	Demand responsive services	3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓			Recognition must be made of the financial burden that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have on public transport patronage, the funding available to support bus operations across the region, as well as capital spending schemes.
7	New railway stations on existing lines	1: City Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓	✓	Nestrans, in partnership with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, to undertake an Outline Business Case to confirm preferred option for the station sites between Aberdeen

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
								and Dyce, (drawing on the work of the Aberdeen North-West Station Review). Outline Business Case to confirm preferred option for the station sites between Aberdeen and Laurencekirk, taking forward the recommendations from the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor Study. This would support the development a strong 'commuter line' between Montrose, Aberdeen, Dyce and Inverurie. Monitoring of rail passenger demand is required in the short term to understand the impacts of home working borne out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Medium to long term changes in travel behaviour and the use of the rail network would need to be appropriately reflected in any business cases developed.
8	New railway lines and associated stations	-	-	-	-	-	-	It is unlikely that railway line re-openings can be justified under existing Treasury criteria and transport appraisal criteria. Alignments should be protected in case there are substantial changes in appraisal guidance in the future, and the viability of opportunities should be kept under review in the light of policy development. Nestrans will continue to review changes to treasury guidance and transport appraisal criteria and other opportunities affecting the case for rail line re-opening.
9	Strategic Public Transport Corridor Scheme(s)	1: City Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓	✓	Nestrans, in partnership with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and the North East Scotland Bus Alliance to undertake a STAG-based study of Bus Rapid Transit and other mass transit options to serve strategic locations and corridors across the Aberdeen travel to work area. This would in turn provide the Strategic Case for the subsequent Business Case. Funding could also be sought through Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund.
10	Park & Ride Facilities	1: City Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓	✓	Park & Ride sites and smaller mini-interchange hubs to be further considered within the framework of corridor studies and rural accessibility analysis.
11	Improved Transport Hub	1: City Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Nestrans to support the work of Aberdeen City Council in the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan including investigating the potential for improved accessibility between the rail / bus station and the harbour.

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
12	Improved integrated ticketing (linked to option 5)	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Working in partnership with the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, Nestrans to investigate the types of improved and smart integrated ticketing schemes that could be implemented region-wide and coordinate with national schemes.
13	Improved marketing / information about public transport services	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Building on current marketing of information in relation to public transport provision, investigate types of additional information provision that would have the greatest positive impact. To be progressed in partnership with bus and rail bodies including the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and ScotRail as well as the regional Getabout partnership.
14	Access for all across all public transport (including taxi) modes	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Nestrans, partnership with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, to undertake audit of existing mobility issues across all public transport modes and core urban realm across the region, to establish the specific problems and issues. To be progressed in partnership with bus and rail bodies including the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and ScotRail, as well as the regional Getabout partnership.
15	A90(N) / A952: Ellon to Peterhead / Fraserburgh	4: Safety 5: Strategic Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓	✓	As a Trunk Road, the principal mechanism for delivery of future investment will be via STPR, with due regard to NTS2 investment hierarchy. Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans to continue to develop evidence to augment existing business case and appraisal work, and support interface with development management processes. Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to north of Aberdeen (noting the on-going planning for the A96 dualling). Nestrans in partnership with local authorities to examine the most appropriate schemes which would provide improved access to the region's ports at Fraserburgh and Peterhead.
16	A90(S): Aberdeen to Perth	4: Safety 5: Strategic Connectivity	Core	✓	✓		✓	As a Trunk Road, the principal mechanism for delivery of future investment will be via STPR, with due regard to NTS2 investment hierarchy. Nestrans and Tactran have a joint interest in securing improvements to the safety, consistency and performance of this strategic route.

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
								Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to the Central Belt. Continue with work to develop a suitable scheme to provide improved connectivity to the new Aberdeen South Harbour at the Bay of Nigg, and associated improvements on A956 Wellington Road corridor.
17	A92: Blackdog to Stonehaven (inc. new River Dee bridge)	4: Safety 5: Strategic Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓	✓		As a local road, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to continue to manage the performance of the route and associated principal radials in line with investment hierarchy. Specific requirement to consider the function of the route in line with revised Roads Hierarchy, City Centre Masterplan, associated interventions on A956 Wellington Road/Link to Aberdeen South Harbour, and the performance/function of specific junctions. Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to the Central Belt and north of Aberdeen (noting the on-going planning for the A96 dualling).
18	A947: Aberdeen to Banff	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			As a local road, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to undertake further work and risk analysis to examine the most appropriate schemes in line with investment hierarchy. Includes ongoing development of the A947 Route Action Plan and Dyce area interventions into timed and costed Delivery Plans and including options for an improved link between the A947 and A96 (dependent upon final agreed alignment for A96 dualling).
19	A98: Aberdeenshire / Moray boundary to Fraserburgh	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			As a local road, Aberdeenshire Council to continue to manage the performance of the route in line with investment hierarchy. Includes options for Banff Bridge.
20	A944 / B9119: Aberdeen west to Aberdeenshire boundary with Moray	4: Safety	Core	✓	✓	✓		As a local road, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to undertake further work and risk analysis to examine the most appropriate schemes on this route in line with investment hierarchy. Early consideration required of multi-modal connectivity and route performance, as well as wider development pressures, between Aberdeen and the Westhill area.

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
21	A93: Aberdeen to Braemar to Aberdeenshire boundary with Perthshire	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			As a local road, local authorities to continue to manage the performance of the route in line with investment hierarchy.
22	Long Term Asset Management strategy	4: Safety	Core	✓	✓			Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to revisit the existing asset management and mitigation plans for both councils to consider whether the plans fully consider the management and maintenance of the road network and structures in light of the changing climate and financial pressures.
23	Community road safety measures	4: Safety	Core	✓	✓			Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to further investigate the potential to introduce 20mph zones in all urban environments building on experience from elsewhere.
24	Low Emission Zones / Zero Emission Zones (inc. consideration of freight restrictions)	2: Demand Management	Core	✓	✓		✓	Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans, in partnership with Transport Scotland, to continue work developing the potential Aberdeen city centre LEZ and consider the case for other potential schemes.
25	Electric Vehicle and Hydrogen vehicle charging and refuelling strategy and implementation	-	Core	✓	✓			Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to work with Nestrans to extend the network of publicly available charging points.
26	Improved network monitoring and data use	-	Supporting	✓	✓			Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to continue to develop and explore emerging technology options for traffic monitoring and management, and how these could be applied within the region.
27	Congestion Zone charging	2: Demand Management	Supporting	✓	✓			Nestrans to progress a regional Demand Management Study in partnership with both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to appraise the options in more detail. The scope of

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
28	Parking Demand Management	2: Demand Management	Core	✓	✓			this study would include: the potential to raise parking charges and / or extend the current 'controlled' parking areas; introduce a workplace parking levy; and / or a congestion charging zone through the development of a viable Business Case exploring potential alternative charging models.
29	Improve Inter-City Rail Connections	5: Strategic Connectivity	Core		✓	✓	✓	Nestrans to continue to work with the Transport Scotland and Network Rail to implement plans to improve the rail network connecting Aberdeen to both the Central Belt and Inverness, including consideration of rail freight opportunities.

Table 11.8: Packages of options from City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal.

11.72. The RTS sets out a range of policies and actions, which are consistent with the above options and seek to achieve the six overarching priorities. The policies and actions are structured under 18 headings, and will require NESTRANS to work in partnership with local authorities, Transport Scotland, operators, communities, third sector organisations and the private sector to deliver.

11.73. A summary of the headings is set out below, but for brevity the detailed policies and actions are not repeated here – they can be viewed in full within section 11 of the RTS:

- Increasing the number of people travelling actively for health and the environment
- Developing the rail network
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit
- Improving the region's bus network
- Maximising the benefits of park and ride
- Managing demand
- Reducing emissions from transport
- Encouraging behavioural change
- Maintaining and improving the region's transport network
- Facilitating the movement of freight
- External air and sea connections

- Road safety and casualty reduction
- Improving accessibility in rural areas
- Improving access to health
- The affordability of transport
- Improving access to the transport network for all
- Planning and designing places for people
- Future impact of new technologies

Local Transport Strategy

11.74. The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2016-2021 sets out the policies and interventions adopted by the City Council to guide the planning and improvement of the local transport network over the five year period from 2016 to 2021. At the time of adopting the 2016 LTS, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) was still to be completed. The 2016 LTS focuses its attention on delivering a range of actions to achieve a series of newly formed outcomes for Aberdeen and ensuring that complementary measures which 'lock in' the benefits of the AWPR could be maximised.

11.75. Following adoption of the Regional Transport Strategy 2040, an update of the LTS was undertaken. A draft LTS 2023-2030 was published for consultation in late 2023. A revised draft LTS is currently being prepared and will be re-released for public consultation in 2026.

11.76. The draft LTS 2023-2030 sets out eight overarching transport planning objectives, as outlined below in table 11.9:

TPO1 – Climate and Environment – Reduce the negative impact of transport on the climate and the environment in Aberdeen.
TPO2 – Health – Improve transport opportunities in Aberdeen that help enable and promote healthy lives and give access to healthcare.
TPO3 – Safety – Improve the safety of the Aberdeen transport network and reduce safety issues for users.
TPO4 – Economy – Ensure more efficient movement of people and goods across, into and from both Aberdeen city and the whole region.
TPO5 – Accessibility/ inclusivity/ user-friendly – Improve the user-friendliness of the Aberdeen transport network, making it more accessible and inclusive.
TPO6 – Resilience – Ensure the Aberdeen transport network is more resilient and can react to unplanned circumstances and extreme weather.
TPO7 – Technology – Ensure Aberdeen has a transport network that can better adapt to changes in technology and capitalises on existing technological opportunities.
TPO8 – Modal shift – Reduce the need to travel and reduce dependency on the private car in Aberdeen.

Table 11.9: Eight overarching transport planning objectives from the draft Local Transport Strategy.

It outlines 14 outcomes that it intends to achieve in the period to 2030 in table 11.10:

1. Reduction in number of journeys by car drivers in Aberdeen to less than 50% by 2030.
2. A reduction in car km travelled in Aberdeen by 20% compared with 2019 baseline.
3. Reduced PM10s and NOx emissions from transport and removal of Air Quality Management Areas in Aberdeen.
4. A 75% reduction in greenhouse gases from transport in Aberdeen compared with the 1990/5 baseline.
5. 20% of the total cars and vans in Aberdeen being zero emission.
6. 50% reduction in adults killed and seriously injured and 60% reduction in children killed or seriously injured using the transport network.
7. A more resilient transport network for Aberdeen.
8. Improved journey time reliability for all modes in Aberdeen.
9. Improved mental and physical health of the residents of Aberdeen and improved access to healthcare.
10. Improved accessibility to transport in Aberdeen for all.
11. Improved interchange opportunities between modes in Aberdeen.
12. Improved information about the Aberdeen transport network being available to users and planners.
13. A transport network which is able to benefit from improvements in technology for Aberdeen.
14. A transport network which is well maintained for Aberdeen.

Table 11.10: The outcomes of the draft Local Transport Strategy.

It goes on to state that the outcomes will be achieved by focusing on the following outputs (actual things to be delivered) in table 11.11:

More EV charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure and supporting measures in Aberdeen.	More high quality active travel infrastructure in Aberdeen.
An Aberdeen Parking Framework.	Maintenance of existing facilities in Aberdeen.

Improved sustainable transport links to, from and within Aberdeen city centre.	Aberdeen Rapid Transit and faster, more frequent and more reliable public transport options.
Safety improvements in Aberdeen.	More Car Club cars, more Car Club locations and more people signed up as Car Club members.
Mobility As A Service (MAAS) development in Aberdeen.	Development and delivery of the Aberdeen city centre and Beach masterplan.
Behaviour Change schemes and campaigns (education, information, awareness raising) in Aberdeen.	More hire bikes, locations and more people signed up as bike hire members. More bike refurbishment schemes.
Enforcement of the Aberdeen Low Emission Zone (LEZ).	Reallocation of road space in Aberdeen.
Climate adaption measures built into new transport infrastructure.	More interchange points between modes of transport.

Table 11.11: The outputs of the draft Local Transport Strategy.

11.77. The draft LTS consultation results were brought to committee in September 2024.

The draft LTS is to be refreshed in light of the comments received from the public consultation and guidance issued by Transport Scotland on the production of Local Transport Strategies. The refreshed draft will focus on being placed based, with more reference to health, inequality and economy, and greater emphasis on accessibility. Once adopted, the new LTS will be an important source of evidence and a key input into the next Local Development Plan.

Transport Scotland A96 Corridor Review Draft Summary Report

11.78. The A96 Corridor Review followed the four stages of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance process; case for change, preliminary appraisal, detailed appraisal, post appraisal monitoring and evaluation. As part of the appraisal, options were aligned with NTS2 to ensure consistency with current national transport strategy, in particular the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy. Following consideration at Preliminary Appraisal, 13 options were taken forward to Detailed Appraisal. As Full Dualling of the A96 is the current plan, it has also been considered as part of the Detailed Appraisal to assess its performance against current criteria. The packaging approach identified the benefits or otherwise for a series of locations throughout the A96 corridor. However, it was acknowledged that there would be added value in separating out the benefits of individual options within each package to determine which provide the greatest contribution for both local communities and the wider corridor. An assessment of the benefits and contribution of the individual options

has been undertaken, with the better performing ones combined to form an additional package, referred to as the 'Refined Package'.

11.79. The Refined Package includes eight options. Further detail for each is set out in the document. The options are as follows:

- Active Communities
- Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities
- Investment in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
- Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements on the Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line
- Elgin Bypass
- Keith Bypass
- Targeted Road Safety Improvements
- A96 Electric Corridor

11.80. In February 2025, NESTRANS submitted a response to the consultation on the A96 Corridor Review. A written and survey response was approved for submission at 19th February NESTRANS Board meeting. The submissions made clear that the refined package and wider appraisal had taken place with a lack of local/regional input, which was concerning given the deliverability of many of the measures would need to be locally/regionally driven. Currently there has been no decision made on what will progress in the immediate future for this corridor recognising that the Scottish Government remains committed to dualling the A96 from Aberdeen to Inverness.

Freight Road Traffic

11.81. NESTRANS produced a specialist goods vehicle count for the north east which gives an idea of road freight traffic numbers. The count points were located at the A956 at Cove, the A90 Toll of Birness to the north in Aberdeenshire, and at Inverurie to the north west in Aberdeenshire. In total, 3,663 HGVs were observed over the 12-hour count across all sites, 1817 at Cove, 1008 at Toll of Birness and 838 at Inverurie. There are a number of statistics relating to the count such as count spread throughout the day, types of vehicles, commodity type, observed slow moving vehicles and tailbacks, estimated tonnage.

11.82. The summary noted that the A90/A952 has a clear importance to sectors such as the Offshore sector, especially given that it is a key route between Aberdeen and Peterhead. The A96 at Inverurie is used more by General Hauliers, as it is the main link between the key settlements of Aberdeen and Inverness. Palletised, grouped freight moved by 3rd party Hauliers, is a key flow at all locations, whilst the Offshore sector represents a key flow and is a significant region-specific driver of the value of freight. There were some issues regarding platooning and dangerous overtaking that were seen to be primarily caused by slow moving agricultural vehicles, as well as queuing at specific times.

Aberdeen City Council Budget 2025/26

11.83. The Aberdeen City Council Budget 2025/26 was approved in March. To help reduce congestion, £55 million will go to the Berryden Corridor Improvement Project, with work starting next year. In the city centre, £13m will be used to enhance the Castlegate as a public space. £709m has been allocated to capital projects over the next five years.

Active Travel

11.84. Opportunities for active travel can be implemented by integration with blue and green infrastructure corridors and open spaces which include active travel accessibility. For more information please refer to the Infrastructure Topic Paper, the blue and green infrastructure section.

Road Space Reallocation in Scotland

11.85. Public Health Scotland host a number of papers which look at the evidence of whether road space reallocation can contribute to health and assess the potential impacts on health within Scotland. They also make recommendations for future action. To understand the Aberdeen context, please refer to the Summary of Implications.

Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030

11.86. Section 13.2 of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan seeks to ensure every new transport and active travel infrastructure project incorporates elements of blue-green infrastructure, and seek opportunities for its enhancement and expansion. To understand the Aberdeen context, please refer to the Summary of Implications.

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

11.87. The City Council adopted its first Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) in late 2019. The SUMP is a long-term transport strategy for the City Centre, which identifies projects that will be progressed by the Council and partners to make it easier and more attractive for people to travel by sustainable means. It was developed in the context of other projects concerning transport in the City Centre, including the ongoing City Centre Masterplan (CCMP), the Roads Hierarchy Review, Low Emission Zone Options Appraisal, and development of a revised approach to car parking. The SUMP seeks to:

- Support Aberdeen's transition to a low carbon and low emission future
- Support the city centre living objectives of the CCMP by developing of a safe and sustainable city centre which people can access and move around with ease and which is a pleasant place to live and spend time in
- Complement and further develop the transport elements of the CCMP
- Support the revised Roads Hierarchy, particularly the principles of discouraging through-traffic and improving accessibility for people walking, cycling and using public transport

- Identify infrastructure required to support the successful delivery of a bike hire scheme and Low Emission Zone.
- Support the ongoing City Region Deal project to identify and appraise external transport connections to Port of Aberdeen's South Harbour.

City Centre and Beach Master Plan (CCBMP)

11.88. For more information on the CCBMP, please refer to the Place Topic Paper under the Design, Quality and Place section. For context, see figures 11.12 to 11.15 which relate to the CCBMP.



Figure 11.12. Site Plan for 231084/DPP Erection of amphitheatre, canopy building and car park including associated landscaping, infrastructure and other associated works.



Figure 11.13. Site plan for 230704/DPP Replacement of Aberdeen Market (including redevelopment of 91-93 Union Street) with mixed use development including retail (class 1A), food and drink (class 3), leisure (class 11), and landscaping / public open space including proposed pedestrian link from Union Street to the Green, and associated works.



Figure 11.12. Union Street East Streetscape Project.



Figure 11.13. Union Street Central Streetscape Project.

Multi-Modal Corridor Studies

11.89. Several transport corridor studies are being undertaken, which consider the main corridors for movement to, from, and around Aberdeen. These studies are separate pieces of work but, by their nature, are interconnected. They are specifically considering these corridors in light of the changes to travel patterns since the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route as well as other recent developments and changes to behaviour.

11.90. The studies are looking ahead to consider future problems and issues for travel. They will identify solutions that will deliver a more inclusive, healthy and sustainable transport system and so help enable a vibrant economy, improved environment, and better quality of life. Aberdeen City Council is working with partners on the studies, including NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council.

11.91. The corridors are:

- A947 The Parkhill junction on the bypass to Bucksburn
- A96 Inverurie to Aberdeen
- A944/A9119 Westhill to Aberdeen
- A93 Banchory to Aberdeen
- A92 Park and Ride in Ellon to the Garthdee Road Corridor
- A956 Wellington Road
- A92 Bridge of Don to Bridge of Dee
- Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study

- 11.92. Bus priority infrastructure options from the Multi-modal corridor studies that align with proposed ART routes have now been incorporated within the overall ART Business Case development process, rather than continuing as standalone projects.
- 11.93. With regards to the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study, the options for public feedback are; active travel infrastructure to connect communities along the corridor from Stonehaven to Aberdeen, a mobility hub facility to the south of Aberdeen, bus priority measures on approach to Aberdeen, providing a foundation for Aberdeen Rapid Transit, creation of a new rail station in Cove, creation of a new rail station in Newtonhill. Consultation results have been analysed and have been used to inform the public acceptability assessment of the option packages within a Detailed Options Appraisal Report which will be reported to the NESTRANS board 25th June 2025. This corridor work is currently being led by NESTRANS.

Transport Scotland Active Travel Framework

- 11.94. The Active Travel Framework brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland for travel. It has been produced collaboratively by Transport Scotland and key delivery partners, with input from Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and local authorities. The framework model identifies five high level outcomes that will contribute to realising the long-term 2030 vision (Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys) and achieving the strategic objectives for active travel policy at both a national and local level. This is a useful national resource however the Aberdeen Active Travel Plan will offer more Aberdeen specific input into the new plan.

Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan

- 11.95. The Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 identifies the actions and interventions to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive, and to increase active journeys in the City in order to make Aberdeen a healthier, more attractive and economically vibrant place in which to live, work and visit.
- 11.96. A Regional Active Travel Network Review has been adopted by NESTRANS. It is expected that the outcomes of this review will inform future active travel priorities for the City and will feed into the updated Local Transport Strategy Delivery Plan, ultimately replacing the current Active Travel Action Plan and SUMP. A revised draft Local Transport Strategy is expected to be available in 2026.

Core Paths and Rights of Way and the National Cycle Network

- 11.97. A map of core paths and rights of way can be found below. The 2009 Aberdeen Core Paths Plan Provides the basic framework of routes sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area. Additionally the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society work to safeguard access rights in Scotland and their website hosts a wealth of information.

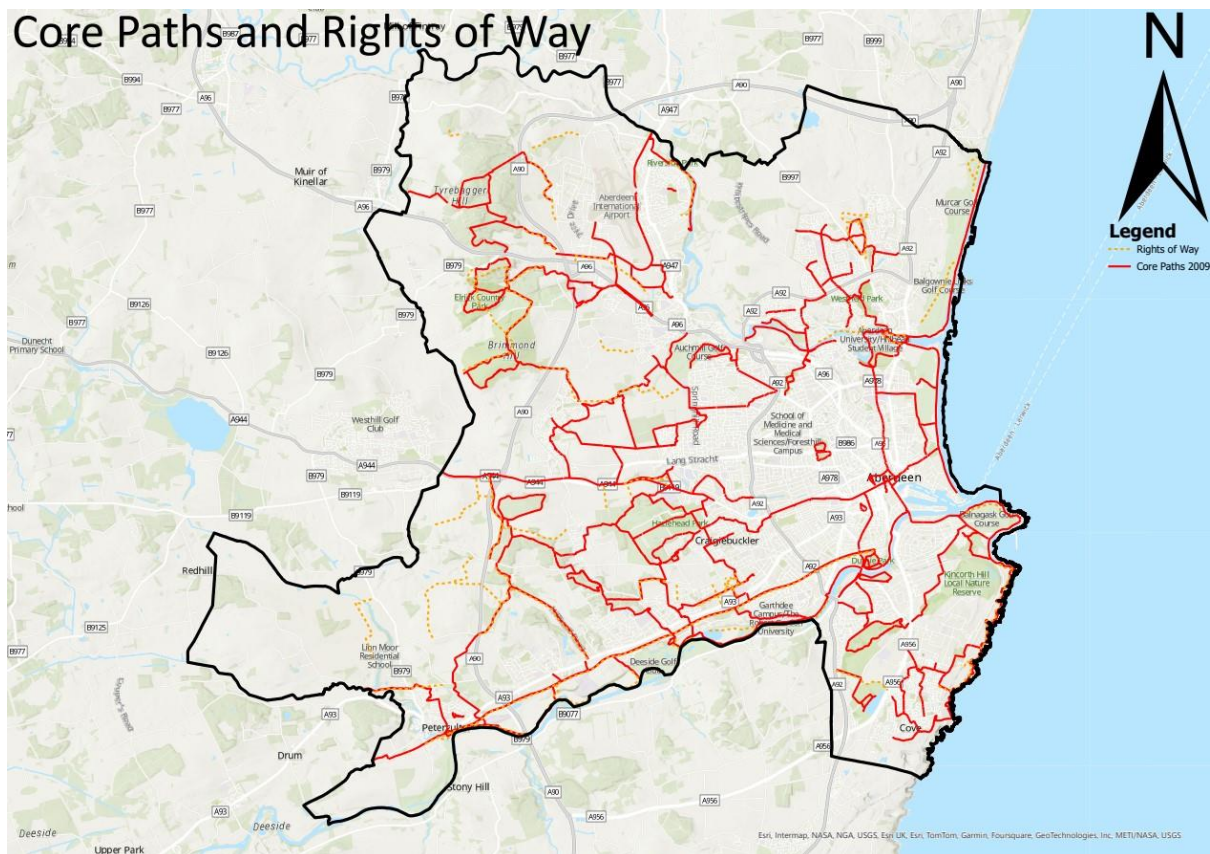


Figure 11.16: Core Paths in Aberdeen, 2009.

11.98. Informal paths will also play an important role in supplementing the provisions of core paths. The Council has some data on paths which was collated during the public consultation on the Core Paths Plan, figure 11.16. Information on informal paths can also help inform the new local development plan.

11.99. The National Cycle Network website includes a map of routes in the city. It shows Route 1 which comes from Stonehaven in the south to Newmachar in the north. This route heads north along the A90, cuts back east to the coast at Portlethen and meets the city centre via the coastal road around Altens and Torry. It passes through Old Aberdeen, Tillydrone, Bucksburn and Dyce. Route 195 begins near Duthie Park and follows a straight course parallel to the River Dee all the way out to Peterculter, Drumoak and beyond. The Council's website ([Cycling in Aberdeen | Aberdeen City Council](#)) also includes cycle maps which show existing cycle facilities such as cycle lanes, as well as cycle shops, places to lock bikes, recommended quiet routes and recreational routes around Aberdeen.

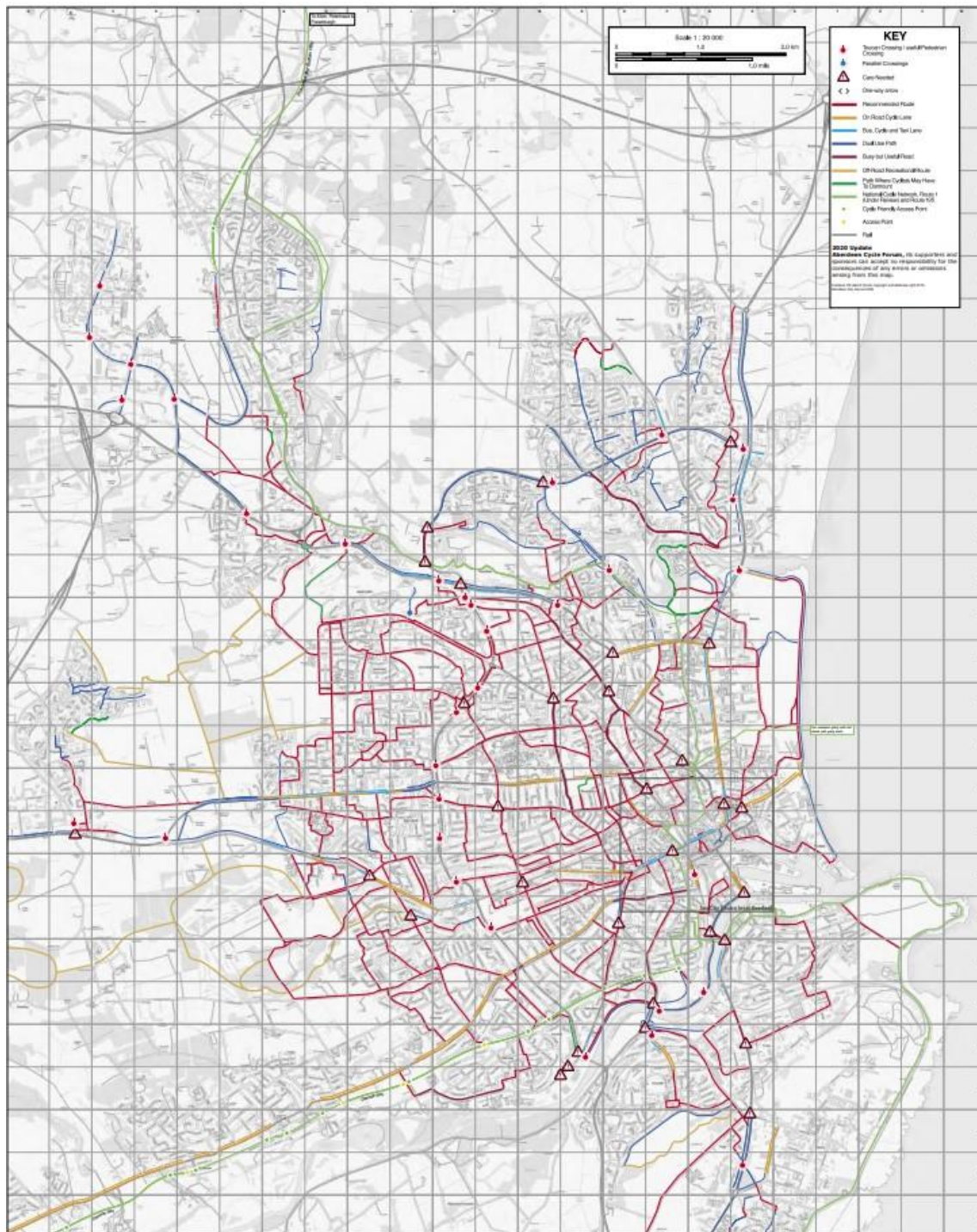


Figure 11.17: Aberdeen cycle map 2020, from Council website 'Cycling in Aberdeen'.

11.100. Figure 11.17, illustrates suggested cycle routes from the Council website. The maps were produced either by the Council or in conjunction with Aberdeen cycle forum. It includes points where care is needed (triangles) and safe crossing points (red dots).

The 2023 Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study

11.101. The 2023 Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study noted the following for residents in the North East (Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City) for walking, figure 11.18:

Nine out of ten residents in the region walked at least once a week. Younger residents were more likely to walk every day than older residents				
Frequency of walking	16-to-34-year-olds	35-to-59-year-olds	60 and over	All residents
Every day	71%	61%	54%	62%
At least weekly, not every day	23%	30%	33%	28%
Less than weekly	1%	3%	5%	3%
Never	4%	7%	7%	6%
Base (16 did not give their age)	314	417	255	1001
Other Findings:				
48% of residents whose day-to-day activities were limited due to a health condition walked every day; but this was less than those without these limitations (67%).				
Of those residents who walked every day, 14% walked to work (main mode); a further 20% walked for part of their journey to work.				
One in five North East residents felt they could switch from car to walking to travel to work (21%); this was higher amongst residents of Aberdeen City (25%) than Aberdeenshire residents (15%).				

Figure 11.18 : Extract of Walking data from 2023 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study.

11.102. The 2023 Nestrans Comprehensive Travel Study states that in Aberdeen, 40% of residents have access to a pedal or e-bike, 9% biked every week and 25% biked at least once a year. The Sustrans Aberdeen Walking and Cycling Index notes that every year walking and cycling in Aberdeen results in the prevention of 573 serious long terms health conditions, £163.4 million in economic benefit for individuals in the region, 9,400 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions saved and up to 55,000 cars taken off the road every day. The Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index Data Tool is one useful statistical source for Aberdeen specific data.

Aberdeen City Voice Data

11.103. City Voice is a survey which goes out to a panel of city residents, and then to the general public. A survey was not undertaken last year, we have data from 2017 to 2023. When compared to 2021, almost all scores have improved which lends weight to the assumption that people's needs are being met. Table 11.13 below shows place satisfaction results from 2023. Note that for each table, green shows improvement upon previous year, red worse than previous year.

2023	Average Score (Higher = more positive)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't know	Base
1. Can you easily walk	5.5	3%	3%	3%	11%	23%	30%	26%	1%	449.00

and wheel around using good quality routes? (move around walk)										
2. Can you easily cycle around using good quality routes? (move around cycle)	4.7	3%	8%	7%	11%	14%	16%	11%	31%	450.00
3. Does public transport meet your needs? (public transport)	4.9	6%	5%	8%	16%	21%	22%	19%	4%	452.00
4. Do traffic and parking arrangements allow you to move around safely and meet your needs? (traffic and parking)	4.8	7%	5%	8%	13%	23%	24%	16%	3%	451.00
5. Do buildings, streets and spaces create and attractive place that is easy to get around? (streets and spaces)	5.1	3%	2%	7%	17%	27%	28%	15%	1%	450.00

Table 11.13. Place Satisfaction Results 2023. Note that question 2 was a new question

11.104. 2023 Data in table 11.14 below shows how often people use each mode of transport to travel into the city.

Mode	Every day	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once or Twice a Month	Less Than Once or	Never

					Twice a Month	
Walk	17.1%	16%	8.1%	8.6%	13.2%	37%
Cycle Standard	0.7%	1.5%	2.9%	2.5%	5.6%	86.8%
Cycle eBike	0%	0.7%	0%	0.7%	3.6%	94.9%
Wheeling	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.5%	1%	97.1%
Bus	6.7%	21.1%	12.6%	19.5%	24.8%	15.2%
Park and Ride	0%	2.7%	1.9%	2.2%	4.1%	89.1%
Train	0%	0.5%	0.2%	1.4%	12.1%	85.7%
Taxi	0.2%	1%	2.1%	8.3%	27.1%	61.3%
Motorbike/Moped etc	0%	0.7%	0%	0.5%	1%	97.8%
Car Club	0.2%	0.5%	0%	1%	2.2%	96.1%
Non Plug in Car/Van as Driver	5.5%	16.1%	7.4%	8.6%	7.2%	55.2%
Plug in Car/Van as Driver	0.2%	1.7%	0.2%	1.2%	1.5%	95%
Non Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	3.2%	7.3%	6.6%	8.8%	13.2%	61%
Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	0.5%	0.8%	1.8%	2%	3.8%	91.2%
Other	0.9%	0.9%	0.6%	1.5%	3.7%	92.3%

Table 11.14; 2023 Question: When you travel into the city, how often do you travel using the following modes?

11.105. 2023 Data in table 11.15 below shows how people usually travel into the city centre and for other trips.

Mode	Work/Place of Education	City Centre Day	City Centre Night	Main Mode for All Journeys Not Work + Not City Centre
Walk	27.7%	21%	19.61%	12.06%
Cycle Standard	2.4%	3.26%	1.61%	4.92%
Cycle eBike	1.2%	1.15%	29.58%	4.29%
Wheeling	0.3%	1.15%	0.96%	4.29%
Bus	17.1%	33%	1.29%	8.25%
Park and Ride	1.5%	1.34%	0.96%	3.81%
Train	0.9%	1.34%	1.29%	4.44%
Car Club Vehicle	0.9%	0.77%	0.96%	3.97%
Non Plug in Car/Van as Driver	18%	16.67%	13.5%	20.16%
Non Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	7%	9%	9%	8.1%
Plug in Car/Van as Driver	3%	2.49%	1.93%	6.03%
Plug in Car/Van as Passenger	0.9%	1.92%	0.96%	3.81%
Motorbike/Moped etc	1.2%	1.15%	0%	4.29%
Taxi/Minicab	1.2%	2.87%	16.08%	3.81%

Work/Study From Home	8.5%	0.57%	0.64%	3.49%
Other	7.3%	2%	3.86%	4.29%

Table 11.15. 2023 Question: How do you usually travel?

Sustrans Hands Up Scotland Survey 2023

11.106. Sustrans Hands Up Scotland Survey looks at how pupils across Scotland travel to school and nursery. The 2023 finding are in figure 11.19 below:

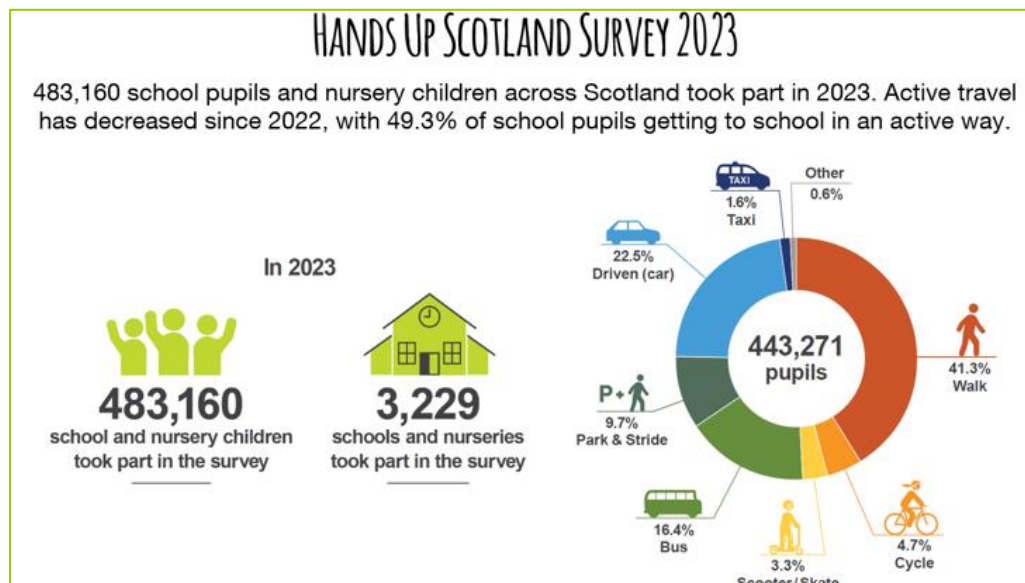


Figure 11.19: Extract from “Hands Up Scotland Survey 2023” data on travelling to school.

The Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021 Household Survey

11.107. The Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021 Household Survey includes a number of 2021 datasets which include individual breakdowns for gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, annual net household income, equivalised income, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and urban/rural classification. The data sets (16+ years of age) are as follows:

Nothing	£0 to £5	£5 to £10	£10 to £20	£20 to £50	Over £50	Mean Cost	Sample Size
89.9%	7%	1.8%	0.8%	0.4%	0.2%	£0.8	8950

Table 11.16: Weekly cost of parking all people

Nothing	£0 to £5	£5 to £10	£10 to £20	£20 to £50	Over £50	Mean Cost	Sample Size
86%	9%	2%	1%	0%	0%	£1.1	6870

Table 11.17: Weekly cost of parking drivers only

Nothing	£0 to £5	£5 to £10	£10 to £20	£20 to £50	Over £50	Mean Cost	Sample Size
84%	5%	5%	2%	3%	1%	£2.2	2970

Table 11.18: Weekly cost of public transport

Very Easy	Fairly Easy	Neither Difficult nor Easy	Fairly Difficult	Very Difficult	Don't Know	Total Easy	Sample Size
44%	33%	14%	5%	1%	1%	78%	2990

Table 11.19: How easy or difficult people find it to afford transport costs

Yes, Always	Yes, Sometimes	Yes, Occasionally	No, Never	Don't Know	Refused	Total Yes	Sample Size
11%	19%	10%	58%	2%	0%	41%	2990

Table 11.20: Do transport costs affect which method of travel is used

Days Travelled	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
None	6	5	5	5	49	34
1 Day	1	1	1	1	4	4
2 Days	3	4	4	5	4	7
3 Days	8	10	10	9	7	11
4 Days	11	11	11	11	8	9
5 Days	61	62	61	62	26	31
6 Days	7	5	6	5	2	3
7 Days	3	2	2	3	1	1
Sample Size	4650	4670	1520	1500	1440	4140

Table11. 21: Number of days people travelled to work

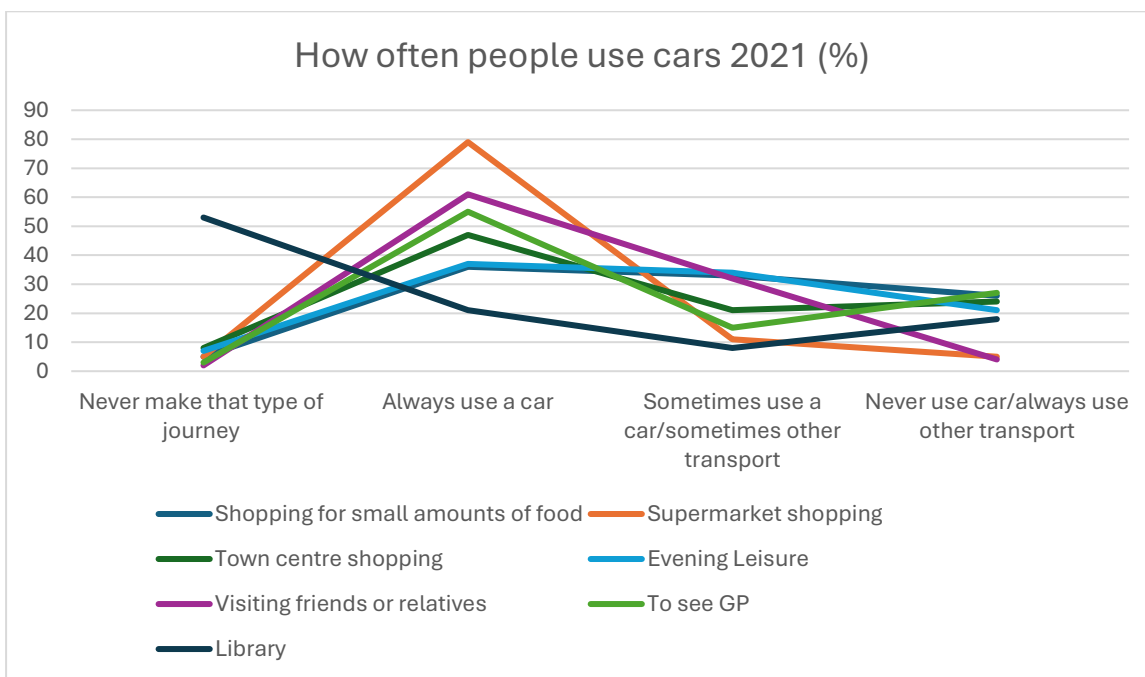


Figure 11.19: How often people use car for certain activities sample size 2260 for 2021

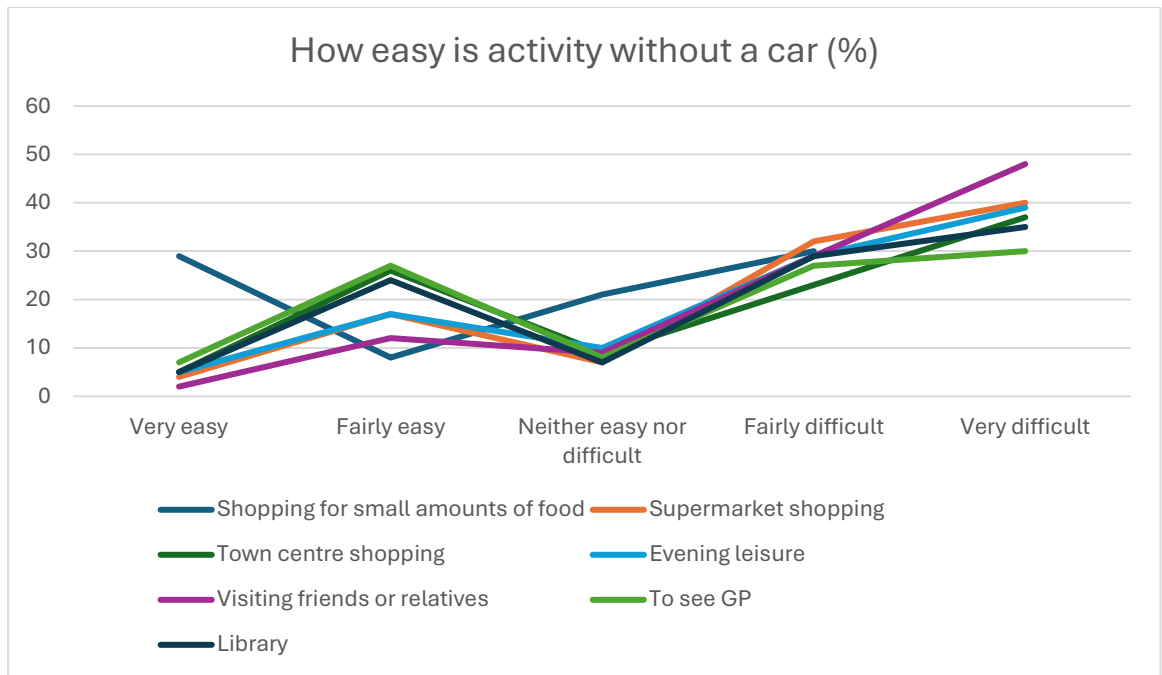


Figure 11.20: How easily people can do certain activities without a car sample size 530 for 2021

Year	Walking	Driver car or van	Passenger car or van	Bicycle	Bus	Rail (inc Glasgow Underground)	All other modes	Sample size
2017	39	14	2	5	22	18	1	280
2018	33	15	6	4	25	13	4	320
2019	38	16	5	2	27	9	4	280
2020	28	17	4	4	20	13	13	50
2021	31	20	2	3	17	13	14	190

Table 11.22: Usual method of travel to further of higher education

11.108. Most of this information may be used as the basis for other existing documents and strategies that feed into the new plan process. The data present an insight into behaviour patterns nonetheless.

11.109. There is work underway with regards to Active Travel to School in Aberdeen. Schools are set to be invited to participate in a pilot scheme aimed at improving feelings of safety, reducing traffic volumes, and promoting active travel around pick up

and drop off times. The Hands Up Scotland annual survey results for Aberdeen are shown in table 11.23 below;

	Walk	Cycle	Scoot / skate	Park and Stride	Driven	Bus	Taxi	Other
2023	46.2%	3.9%	2.0%	10.5%	20.0%	15.8%	0.7%	0.9%
2022	49.0%	3.4%	2.3%	10.8%	19.8%	13.2%	1.1%	0.4%
2021	50.5%	4.5%	2.3%	10.3%	19.1%	12.2%	0.6%	0.5%
2020	50.7%	4.6%	2.1%	11.3%	16.7%	9.7%	1.4%	0.6%
2019	47.3%	4.5%	1.6%	9.9%	21.6%	13.2%	0.9%	1.1%

Table 11.23: Hands Up Scotland Survey Results for Aberdeen.

Public Transportation

Rail Travel

11.110. Aberdeen Station is central, adjacent to the bus station and within 5 minutes' walk of Union Street which has the highest frequency of bus routes and stops in the city. The station is connected by core paths from the north, south, east and west.

11.111. Dyce Station is connected to an off road core path which connects Wellhead Drive in the south to the Formartine and Buchan Way heading north. There are regular buses which stop near the station. Potential changes to the A947 corridor near the station are covered earlier in this document under 'Multi-Modal Corridor Studies'.

11.112. From Aberdeen Station there is 1 train per hour to Edinburgh and 1 train per hour to Glasgow, both via Dundee. There is 1 train every 2 hours to Inverness via Elgin. There are a number of trains that serve Inverurie to the north west in Aberdeenshire and Montrose to the south in Angus. There are 3 trains a day to London via Edinburgh and a London sleeper train 6 days a week. The NESTRANS LDP Transport Evidence Review Appendices states, from its 2023 baseline data, that Aberdeen Station has 5011 daily boardings while Dyce Station has 957. Table 11.24, provides a summary of facilities available at Aberdeen and Dyce Stations.

	Aberdeen Station	Dyce Station
Passengers (Entries and Exits April 2022 – March 2023)	1,961,414	260,000
Platforms	5	2
Seated Area	Yes, waiting room	Yes, shelters on platforms
Ticket Office	Yes, and machines	Machines only
Wi-Fi	Yes	Yes
Accessibility	Category A Station - Step free access to both platforms	Category A Station - Step free access to both platforms

	Staff help available 7 days a week.	
Toilet	Yes, inc. accessible, baby changing and showers	No
Cycle Storage	80 sheltered stands	16 sheltered stands, lockers
EV Charge Spaces	2	2
Accessible Parking Spaces	10	3
Car Park Spaces	188	59

Table 11.24: Summary of facilities available at Aberdeen Railway Station and Dyce Station.

11.113. The Regional Transport Strategy states that additional stations between Dyce and Laurencekirk (to the south of the city, in Aberdeenshire) would need ‘options brought forward and business cases developed to ascertain viability’. A balance would have to be struck in terms of enabling further access to the railway while not jeopardising network capacity or restricting the speeds of express services. Consideration of possible station locations will require to link to Local Development Plan allocations, with a view to proposed developments being well served by rail as well as existing residential and industrial areas.

11.114. The reopening of the former Formartine & Buchan railway line to Fraserburgh and Peterhead, or alternatively just to Ellon, was appraised in 2016 by NESTRANS and both options found to be financially unviable. A new Sustainable Transport Study is being undertaken at present to reappraise feasibility of rail connections to Fraserburgh and Peterhead. It is noted that the Formartine and Buchan way is currently a highly popular active travel route just as the Deeside Way, as a former rail line, is a popular active travel route in Aberdeen City (and part of the National Cycle Network, National Route 195).

11.115. There are rail freight terminals at Craiginches (north and south), Waterloo Quay and at Raiths Farm in Dyce. NESTRANS however recognise that commercial and other practical considerations currently limit the attractiveness of this mode to specific flows of freight such as bulk goods and supermarket multi-modal flows.

Bus Travel

11.116. The 2023 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study noted that in Aberdeen:

- 4% of residents took a bus to the supermarket
- 22% of residents took a bus to the town or city centre
- 11% of residents took a bus for personal business
- 11% used the bus for day trips

- 11.117. The Travel Study noted also that for commuters in Aberdeen, 25% of workers who drove to work felt switching to bus would be easy; 55% felt it would be difficult, 15% felt it would be impossible (4% neither easy nor difficult).
- 11.118. The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction survey includes a number of survey statistics including on personal safety at the bus stop/on the bus, information at the bus stop/on the bus, condition of the bus stop, comfort of bus, service frequency, wait times, ease of boarding, seat availability and a number of other areas.
- 11.119. Since January 2022, all young people and children aged 5-21 years can apply for a card to access the Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel Scheme. Access to free bus travel can improve opportunities in various areas, such as education, leisure, and work. Free bus travel also enables young people to travel more sustainably.
- 11.120. In 2023/24 the Council recorded that there were 1,286 bus stops in Aberdeen. A map showing the existing quantity of weekday buses in Aberdeen from the largest mainstream providers (First Bus and Stagecoach) can be found below. It shows that the best bus provision can be found in the city centre particularly along Union Street, King Street up to Bridge of Don, and Holburn Terrace with a loop around Bridge of Dee. There is also reasonable provision towards Bucksburn, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Altens/north of Cove, and along the River Dee to Peterculter.
- 11.121. First Bus and Stagecoach route maps are included within the evidence list. There are also long distance coach operators Scottish Citylink, Flixbus and Ember which serve Aberdeen, and through these three operators there is a regular coach provision to destinations south of the city. Heading north west, the coach service is operated by Stagecoach and Ember, connecting the communities between Aberdeen and Inverness. The Council also operate Community Transport services between 10:00 am and 2:30pm, Monday to Friday providing a door to door service within the city for those who are unable to use conventional bus services, the elderly and disabled. Journeys can start and finish anywhere within the area of pick up and all services will travel to the city centre and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Requests for travel between different areas of the city are subject to availability.

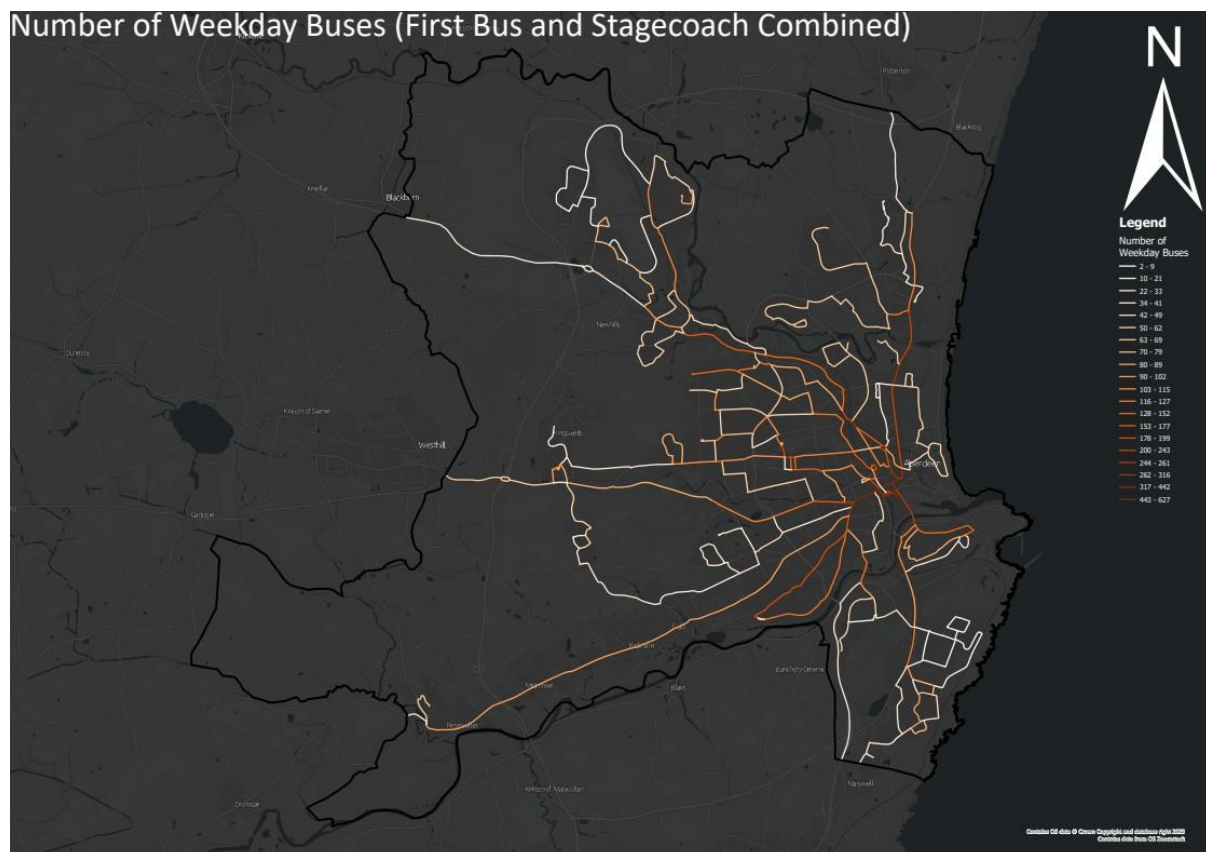


Figure 11.21: Map showing number of weekday buses, compiled by the Planning Service in 2023 using bus timetables at that time.

Park & Ride

- 11.122. Aberdeen City has three park and ride sites – Bridge of Don, Craibstone and Kingswells. NESTRANS conducts annual surveys at all sites across Aberdeen City and Shire to understand travel habits. Of the three sites only Kingswells is served directly by bus with both Craibstone and Bridge of Don not directly served but park and stride remains an option. In August 2023, First Bus 1B service was rerouted to no longer stop at Bridge of Don with the annual count taking place after the service was withdrawn.
- 11.123. The lack of a direct service has an impact on the occupancy of the sites and the figure provided shows this with the majority of cars located in Kingswells. NESTRANS published on behalf of the North East Bus Alliance, A State of the Network report in February 2025 that includes total patronage from Kingswells Park and Ride (2019 – 2023), showing the positive growth in usage with patronage in 2023 slightly above pre covid levels (2019).
- 11.124. There is a recognition on the need for utilisation of the sites to improve and the vision for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) was established as part of the Regional Transport Strategy (NESTRANS 2040) to help enable this. ART aims to deliver a high quality, competitive and efficient mode of public transport; offering an attractive alternative to private vehicle travel with the three park and ride sites all key

interchanges points on the desired network. Funding for surface repairs to Kingwells park and ride were recently approved at Net Zero Energy and Transport Committee.

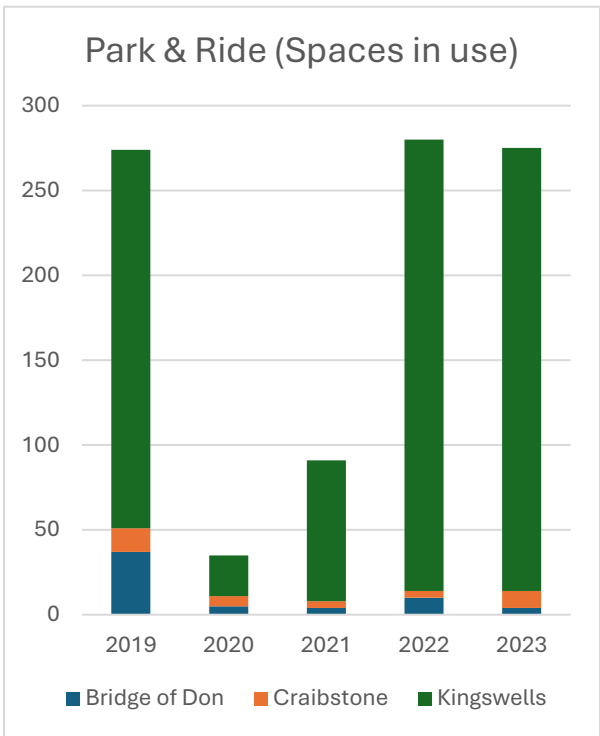


Figure 11.22: Park and Ride Spaces in Use

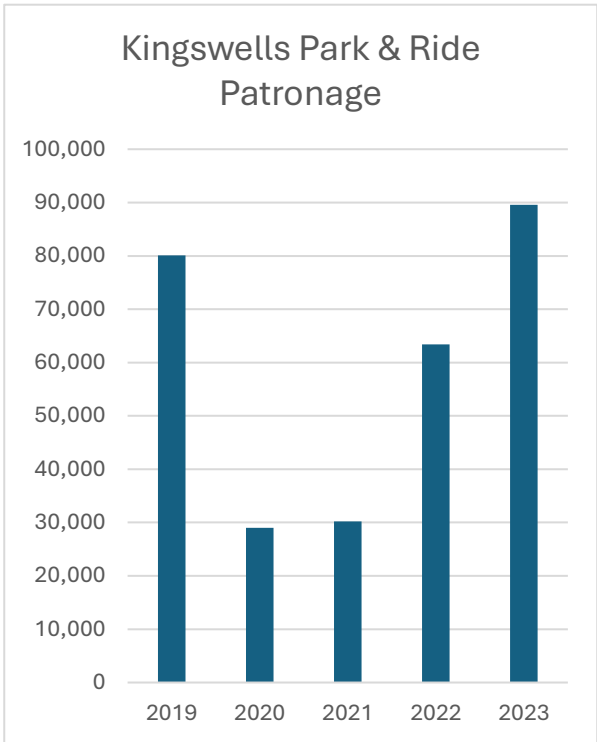


Figure 11.23: Kingswells Park and Ride Patronage.

11.125. Details of the three Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (Ellon and Newtonhill) park and ride facilities can be found on the Getabout webpage (Getabout | A to B in Aberdeen City and Shire). NESTRANS state on their webpage that a new facility at Portlethen is still a priority and is included within the proposed ART network. Table 11.25 below shows the facilities at the Aberdeen sites.

Facility	Number of Parking Spaces	Waiting Room Facilities	Cycle lockers	EV charge points
Bridge of Don	650	Lit, heated, seating, accessible toilet	Stands and bookable lockers	0
Craibstone	996	Lit, heated, seating, accessible toilet, shower facilities	Stands and bookable lockers	12
Kingwells	915	Lit, heated, seating, accessible toilet	Stands and bookable lockers	6

Table 11.25: Aberdeen Park and Ride Facilities

Aberdeen Rapid Transit

- 11.126. The delivery of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) is a key policy to encourage increased bus patronage set out in the Regional and Local Transport Strategies, National Planning Framework 4 and Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Project Review 2. A map of the proposed routes can be found below, figure 11.24.
- 11.127. ART is anticipated to cover two key corridors linking Craibstone, the Airport and The Events Complex Aberdeen/P&J Live to Altens and Portlethen via the city centre and Westhill/Kingswells to Bridge of Don via the city centre. Each of these corridors is anchored at each end by one of the region's existing or proposed park and ride sites.
- 11.128. Aberdeen Rapid Transit is planned to prioritise routes that connect people to the places they want to go to: key education, employment, healthcare, retail and leisure destinations, the airport and rail station, as well as the city centre. Aberdeen Rapid Transit will provide fast, frequent and reliable services, which could be delivered through a combination of dedicated bus lanes, off board fare collection, and fast and efficient boarding and alighting. It intends to provide high-capacity and high quality vehicles, and journey times competitive to the private car, to provide an attractive way to travel, being accessible and easy to use.
- 11.129. Funding has been secured from the Aberdeen City Regional Deal to further develop the business case for ART including detailed consideration of infrastructure requirements, options for how and who would run Aberdeen Rapid Transit and identify funding options to deliver Aberdeen Rapid Transit. NESTRANS host a number of documents relating to the business case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit on its webpage (which are listed at the beginning of this paper). A strategic business case has been prepared and it is anticipated that an outline business case will be available by end of the financial year 2026/27.

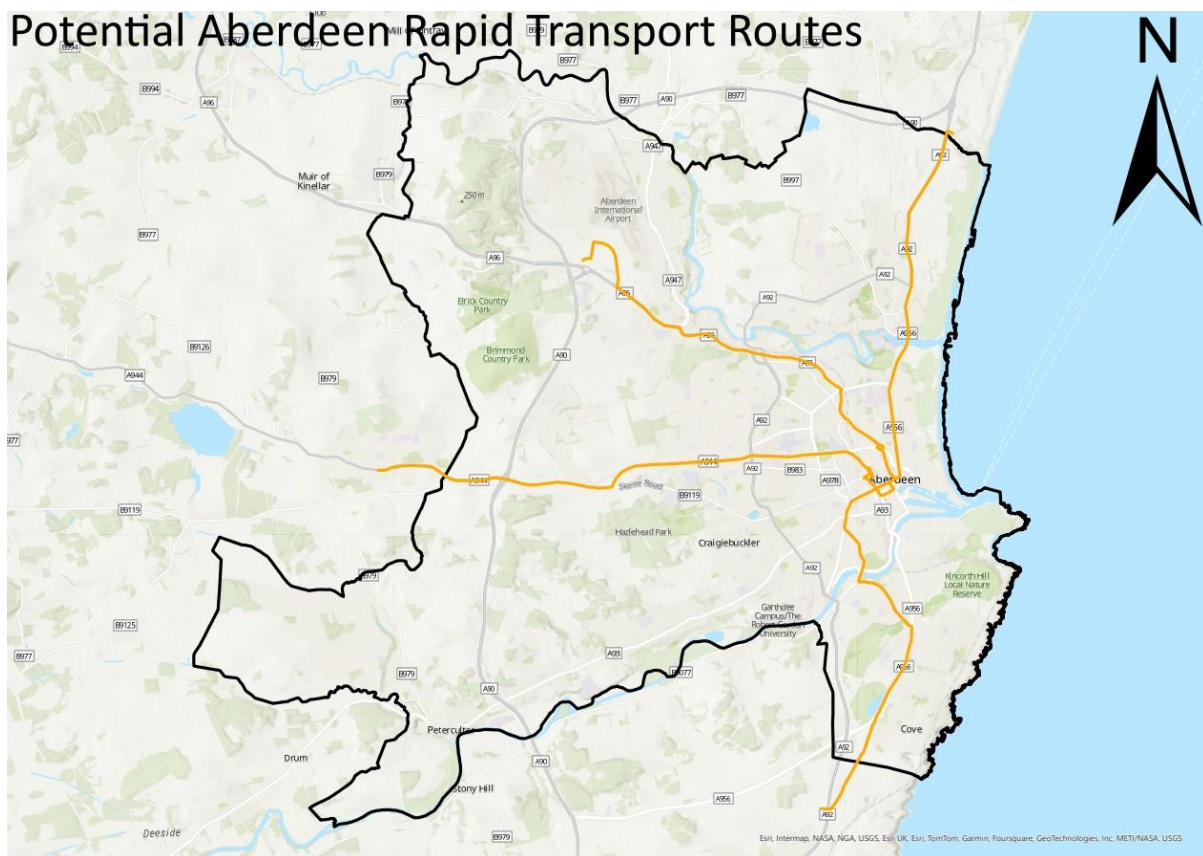


Figure 11.24: Potential Aberdeen Rapid Transit Routes (in yellow).

Bus Partnership Fund

11.130. At the time of writing, the Bus Partnership Fund had supported:

- Delivery of the South College Street Junction Improvements Project Phase 1 and associated City Centre Masterplan bus priority measures, which are an important first step towards delivery of ART;
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) appraisal and business case development;
- Appraisal and business case development for the following transport corridors:
 - Ellon to Garthdee (A90/A92 North)
 - Inverurie to Aberdeen (A96)
 - Westhill to Aberdeen (A944/A9119)
 - Anderson Drive and The Parkway (A92)
 - Laurencekirk to Aberdeen (A90/A92 South)

11.131. In December 2023, Transport Scotland announced a pause in the Bus Partnership Fund programme during 2024/25. As North East partners see merit in continuing with the development of these projects, in February 2024 the City Region Deal Joint Committee approved an allocation of £1,740,000 between 2024/25 and 2026/27 for progressing work on Aberdeen Rapid Transit and the associated corridor studies. This has allowed progress to continue, despite the pause in funding nationally, with a Strategic Business Case for ART currently being developed.

11.132. In March 2025 Transport Scotland invited those bus partnerships which previously had work on-going as part of the BPF to submit proposals to be considered for funding through a new Bus Infrastructure Fund. The North East Bus Alliance has submitted a package of four bids to the fund, totally £2,040,000, which provide early interventions for ART and improvements to real time information and accessibility across the wider bus network (at the time of writing, the outcome of this submission is not yet known):

	Bus Infrastructure Fund Bid
1	Urban Traffic Management Control system upgrade for bus priority • <i>to enable bus priority through traffic signals</i>
2	St Machar Drive / King Street junction upgrade to signals: • <i>Funding for 2025/26 to review and update the designs to include priority for buses through the junction as well as active travel and safety improvements.</i>
3	Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Improvements: • <i>Upgraded RTPI displays for stops on Union Street;</i> • <i>Upgrade of Aberdeen Bus Station RTPI infrastructure including smart summary screens and e-paper timetables at all 12 stances</i> • <i>Bridge of Don P&R new RTPI totem and e-paper timetable and displays at stops on the main carriageway.</i> • <i>Aberdeen Airport RTPI e-paper displays</i> • <i>New RTPI displays at stops on the Buchan corridor and at some remote village locations across Aberdeenshire.</i>
4	Aberdeen Bus Station Accessibility: • <i>To trial NaviLens, a solution that leverages a user's personal device to provide transport information, journey planning and wayfinding assistance to any user (particularly visually impaired users) of Aberdeen Bus Station, and surrounding interchange points at Aberdeen Train Station and the key interchange bus stops on Guild Street.</i>

Table 11.26. Bus Infrastructure Fund Bid.

Bus Priority Routes

11.133. City centre accessibility is not just about allocation of blue badges for parking, it is about offering people reliable, convenient and efficient ways of getting to the centre of Aberdeen. Bus priority measures prioritise bus travel in order to reduce congestion and therefore travel times and consequently encourage more people to use sustainable or active travel, which is one of the goals of the City Centre Masterplan. The removal of general through-traffic from these roads (see figure 11.25 with roads where conditions apply) will also lead to an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly considering the large volume of pedestrians travelling between Union Street and Union Square/railway and bus stations during the day.

11.134. There are further bus priority measures located outwith the city centre, again used to enhance bus reliability and travel time.

11.135. An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) is a method of introducing traffic management arrangements and consulting simultaneously with the measures in operation. The bus priority routes were operational while an ETRO was in place.

11.136. At the 18th December 2024 Urgent Business Committee, the Council approved the making of The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023 as a permanent Order. A statutory appeal has been raised against the Council in connection with an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order being made permanent. Having taken preliminary advice from Senior Counsel, the Council is comfortable with its interpretation of the legislation.

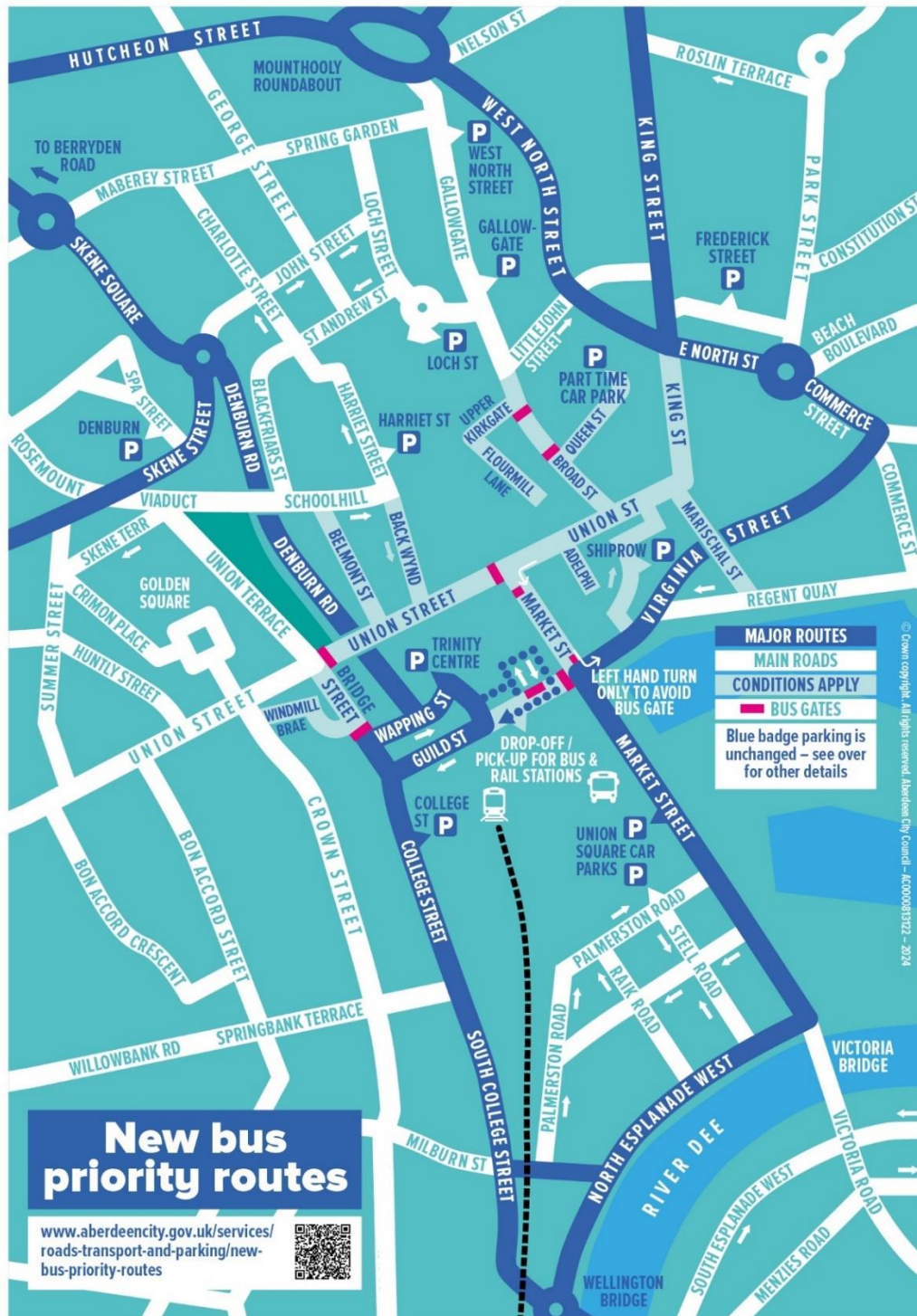


Figure 11.25; New Bus Priority Route.

Private Car Usage

Car Use

11.137. For Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (North East), the percentage mode share for 2022 demonstrates the current dependence upon private cars (see figure 22 below). Inevitably, trips made by modes such as active travel will tend to be shorter trips and

the Regional Transport Strategy seeks to encourage short trips to be made by such options. The Strategy also seeks to influence other policy documents such as Local Development Plans to enable shorter journeys to be available by ensuring compatible land uses, local retailing, jobs close to residences and other services within 20-minute neighbourhoods where viable. The estimates in figure 11.26 below show that, compared to both the 2019 baseline and 2020 data, car driving is down from 74.5% in 2020 to 69.7% in 2022. Furthermore, bus travel has seen a return to the 2019 baseline (an estimated 12% of distance travelled).

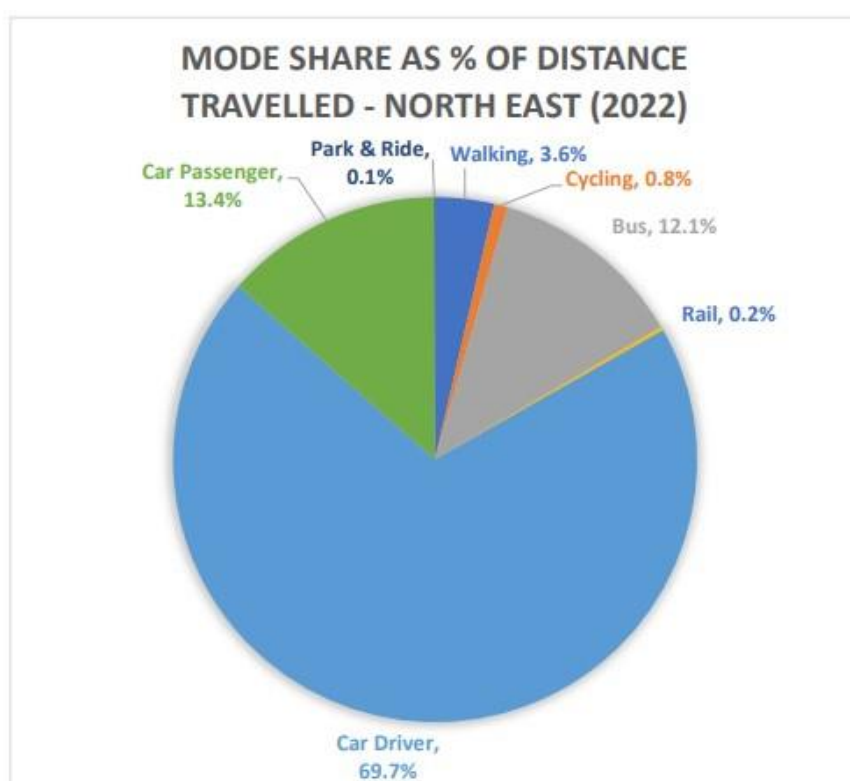


Figure 11.26: Mode Share as a % of distance travelled – North East (2022).

11.138. The 2023 NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study notes that 88% of residents in Aberdeen used a car at least once a week for travel and 85% of residents have access to a car. This percentage differs according to areas however, with 71% of residents who live in an area of highest deprivation based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation having access to a car or van, compared to 91% of residents in the least deprived areas. This disparity will have potential policy and spatial strategy implications for the new Local Development Plan, in particular with the implementation of Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

11.139. The Travel Study also notes the following for Aberdeen:

- 69% of residents use a private car to travel to work at least once a week.
- 77% of residents use a private car to travel to the supermarket at least once a year.
- 54% of residents use private car to travel to city centre or town centre at least once a year.

- 65% of residents use a private car to travel to escort children to school at least once a year.
- 69% of residents use a private car to travel for personal business at least once a year.
- 72% of residents use a private car to travel for day trips at least once a year.

Car Parking

11.140. A strategic car parking review for Aberdeen was undertaken in 2019. The data for the strategic car parking review has been refreshed and the updated review will be presented to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport in September 2025. It will inform the refresh of the Local Transport Strategy. It is expected that a parking framework will be developed to consider car parking provision across the City. Once developed, the parking framework will have implications for the next Local Development Plan.

11.141. The draft Local Transport Strategy 2023-2030 notes guaranteed parking at the end of a journey influences car ownership. Control and enforcement of car parking are set out as essential in the draft Local Transport Strategy for managing demand, congestion and the environmental impact of the car. The city centre has around 7,000 private non-residential parking spaces and over 13,000 Council owned pay and display spaces (12,000 on-street). To manage parking demand, the city has controlled parking zones (CPZ). The map of CPZs can be found below, figure 11.26. The CPZs manage demand through a cost to park and restrictions to on street parking. The CPZs are situated in areas where there is high trip generation.

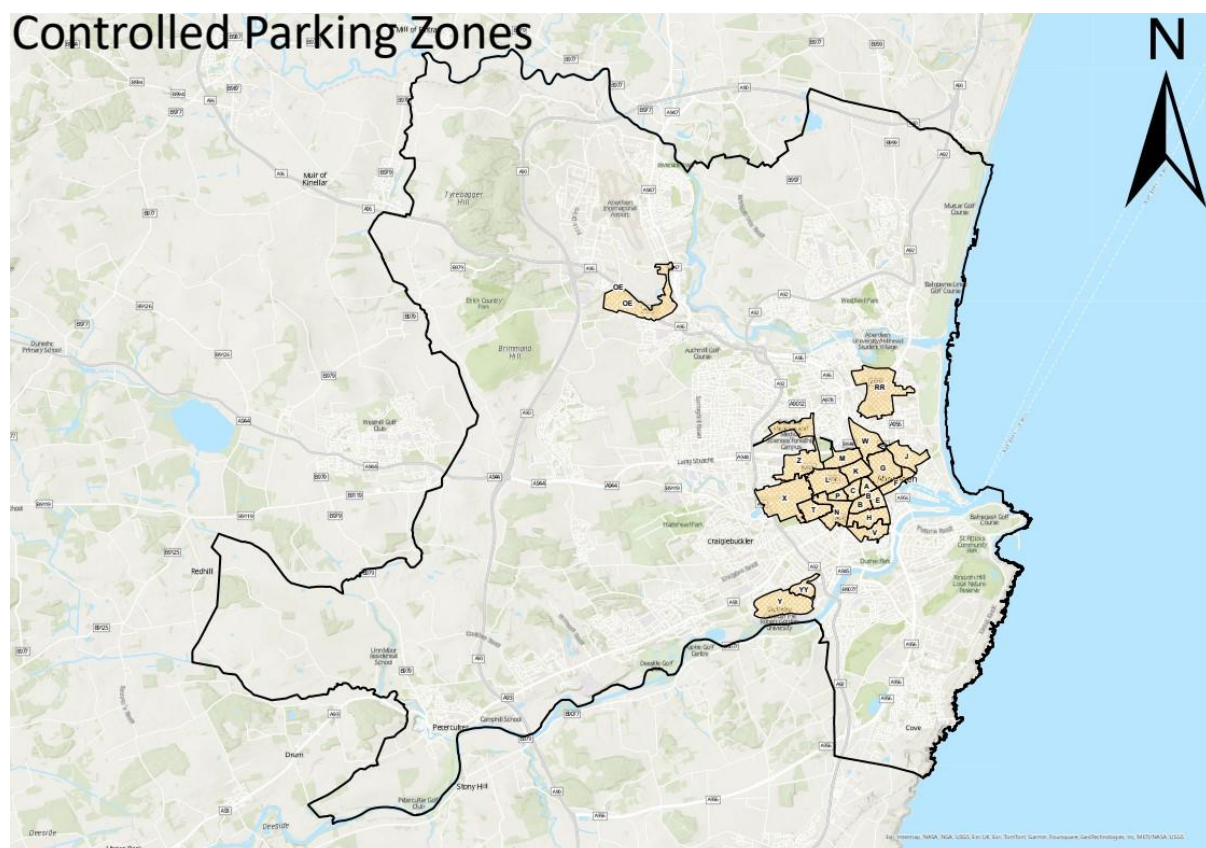


Figure 11.26: Controlled Parking Zones in Aberdeen.

11.142. Current parking standards are set out in the Transport and Accessibility Aberdeen Planning Guidance. A benchmarking exercise (unrecorded) found that the standards are similar in most regards to areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh which have medium or low accessibility which is deemed broadly appropriate given the characteristics of those cities (higher numbers of people, higher densities, more public transport options). At present there is a presumption in favour of no parking for new developments within the city centre, while areas of the 'inner city', which correspond roughly to the CPZ areas, have tighter parking measures for new development compared to the 'outer city' which takes in all other areas.

11.143. A key priority of the Regional Transport Strategy is to have a transport system that is accessible to all. Figure 11.27, below shows the number of Blue Badges issued in the North East in recent years.

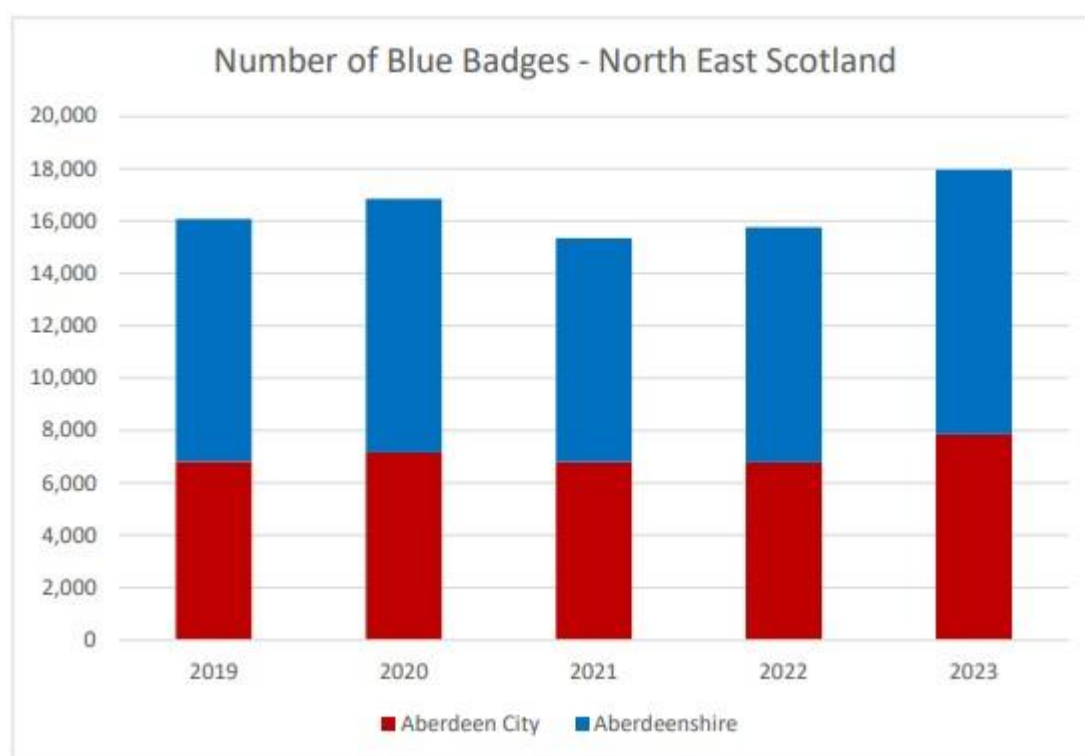


Figure 11.27: Numbers of Blue Badge holders in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Electric Vehicle Charging

11.144. The Aberdeen Electric Vehicle Framework 2020 to 2030, published January 2021, includes the table 11.27 below, forecasting Electric Vehicles in Aberdeen. These forecasts are under the business as usual scenario, good practice scenario and exemplar scenario.

Table 6-1 Aberdeen City EV Uptake

			2025		2030	
			Total	% of vehicles	Total	% of vehicles
Aberdeen	BAU	BEV	840	0.8%	1,920	1.7%
		PHEV	730	0.7%	1,030	0.9%
		Total	1,570	1.5%	2,950	2.6%
	Good Practice	BEV	2,350	2.3%	8,970	8.0%
		PHEV	2,060	2.0%	4,830	4.2%
		Total	4,410	4.3%	13,800	12.2%
	Exemplar	BEV	3,010	2.9%	12,910	11.4%
		PHEV	2,630	2.5%	6,950	6.2%
		Total	5,640	5.4%	19,860	17.6%

Table 11.27. Battery Electric Vehicles and Plug in Hybrid Electric Vehicles forecasts.

Locations of public electric vehicle charging points can be found below, figure 11.28.

Public Vehicle Charge Points

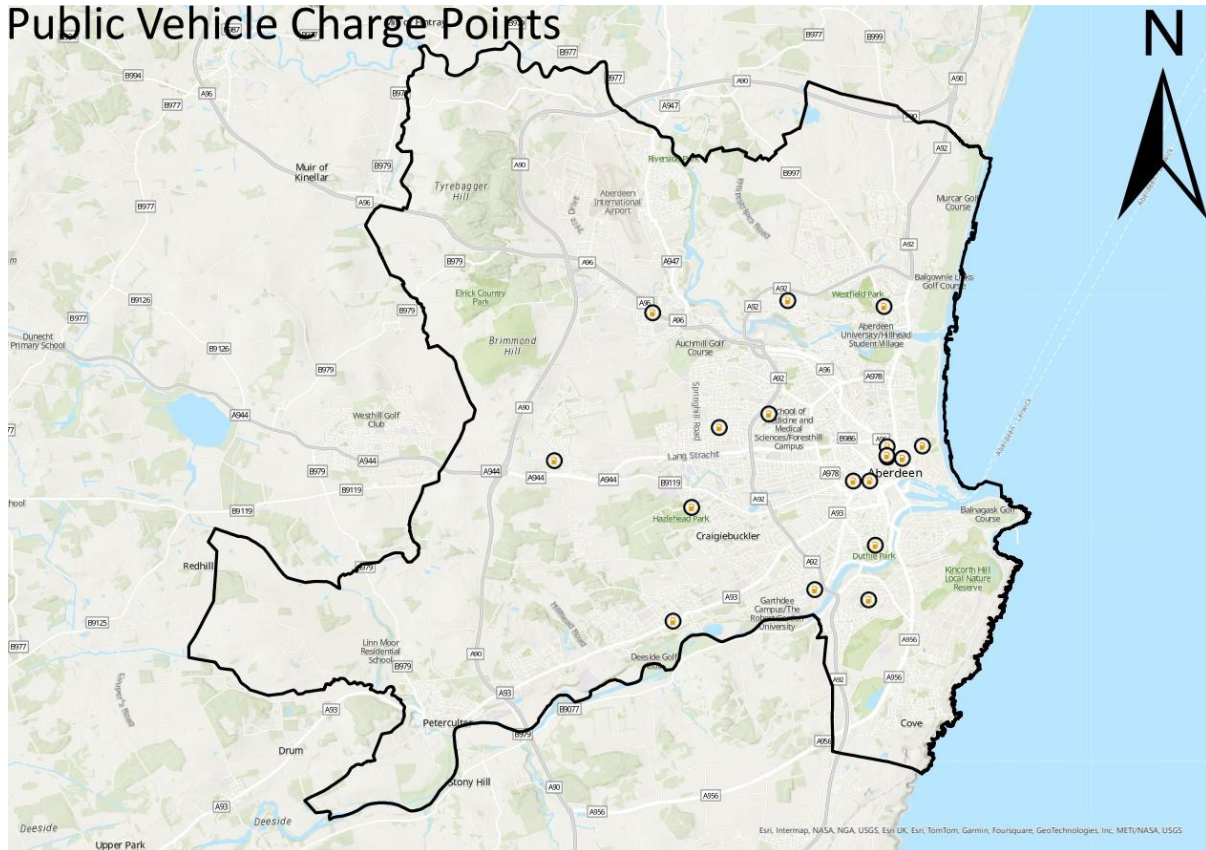


Figure 11.28: Public electric vehicle charging locations.

11.145. The Aberdeen Net Zero Mobility Strategy contains the strategic objective to “Decarbonise transport and increase uptake of low and zero carbon technology. Internally, the Council has already committed to working towards a zero emission fleet by 2025 as part of the Council Climate Change Plan (2021-2025).

- 11.146. The Scottish Government has published new Building (Scotland) Regulations which include mandatory standards for electric vehicle charge points. Every building must be designed and constructed in such a way that provision for the charging of electric vehicles is made where car parking spaces are located within the building or the curtilage of the building. Exceptions apply to non-domestic buildings where ten or fewer car parking spaces are present and for alterations to or extensions to a building other than major renovation work.
- 11.147. The Aberdeen Electric Vehicle Framework informs the future plans and supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles in Aberdeen over the next 5-10 years. It includes the numbers and types of charge points needed to support the forecasted increase in electric vehicles and the most suitable locations. The Framework seeks to tackle perceived barriers to electric vehicle ownership. This includes how to best cater for those without off street parking, such as exploring piloting a residential charging trial within the city. The Framework is also intended to demonstrate to other organisations how much growing demand there is for electric vehicle charging and to therefore encourage others to install electric vehicle charge points. The Framework was approved in February of 2021. It is also backed up by an extensive Evidence Base and Baseline report.
- 11.148. Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, The Highland Council and Moray Council have agreed to partner with EasyGo, an electric vehicle charging point provider to develop a network of charging points across the four Council areas for the next 20 years. The partnership was formally announced on 30 May 2025. The large-scale EV infrastructure project will accelerate the region's transition to Net Zero and see 570 new charging points installed across the north of Scotland by 2028, more than doubling the existing EV infrastructure and further enhancing the region's charging network. It is anticipated that the Electric Vehicle Framework may need to be refreshed after the partnership has been fully established.

Other Travel Options

- 11.149. The Council has a contract with a car club operator and car clubs have dedicated bays around the city. The current car club locations can be found below, figure 11.29

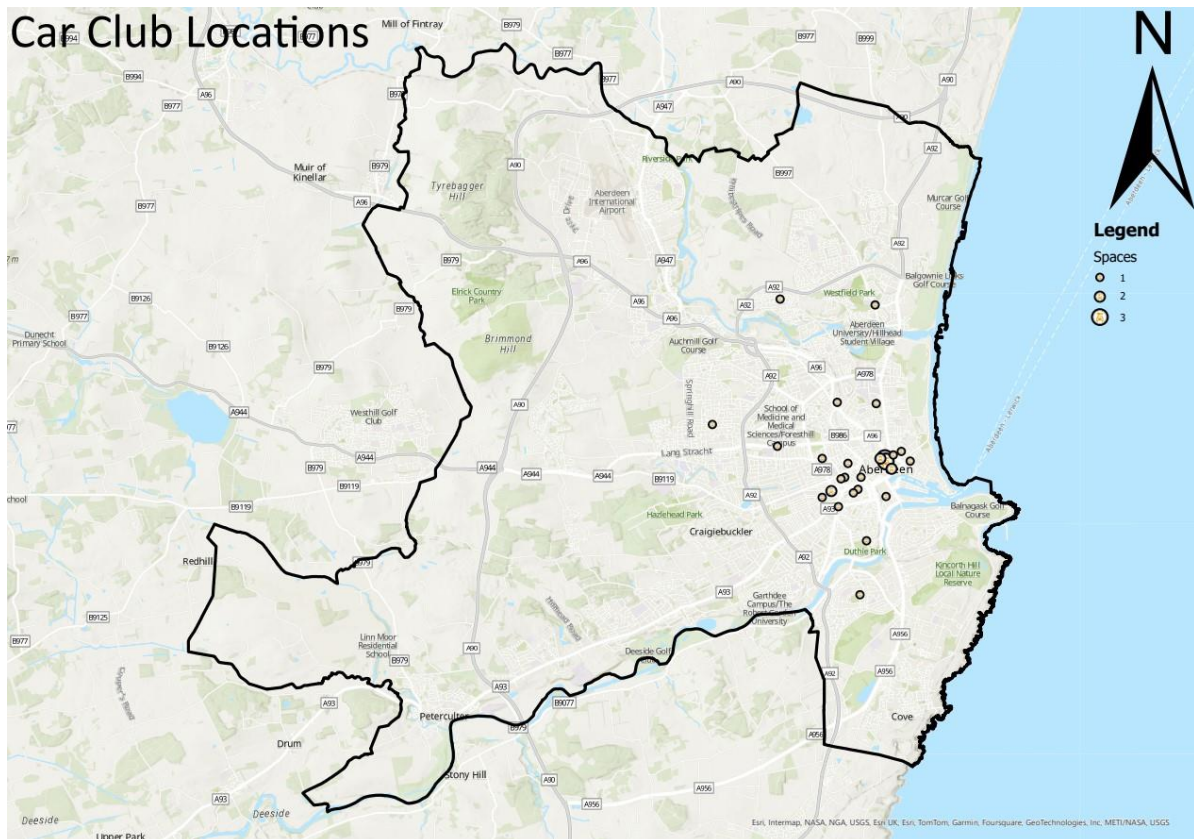


Figure 11.29: Car Club Locations in Aberdeen.

11.150. The 2023 draft Local Transport Strategy continues to support the formation of new bays and associated infrastructure and the Transport and Accessibility Aberdeen Planning Guidance promote car clubs as an option for developers.

11.151. The Council did have a contact in place with an ebike provider with locations throughout the city but this is no longer in place. In late February the provider intimated that they would be withdrawing all their operations from the UK, and by default Aberdeen, by the end of February the ebikes had been taken off the streets (See Finance and Resources Committee Paper 8 May 2024). The Council is seeking a new provider at the time of writing.

Ports and Airport

Port of Aberdeen

11.152. Port of Aberdeen is identified as a national development in National Planning Framework 4. The port's South Harbour will act as a cluster of port accessible offshore renewable energy research, manufacturing and support services, and cruise ships. The north harbour caters for passenger ferries as well as providing berthing and handling facilities for freight, oil and gas and other sectors.

11.153. The External Transportation Links to Aberdeen South Harbour (ETLASH) project is currently being progressed by Aberdeen City Council as Local Roads Authority and aims to improve access to the new Aberdeen South Harbour at the Bay of Nigg. The

project is being jointly funded by both the UK and Scottish Governments as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

Aberdeen International Airport

11.154. Aberdeen International Airport served nearly 3 million passengers in 2019. It employs circa 85 people directly and supports more than 3,400 jobs. The Airport is served by a specific bus route, and NESTRANS is exploring means of enhancing public transport connectivity through Aberdeen Rapid Transit. Destinations include Bergen, Stavanger, Copenhagen, London Heathrow/Gatwick/Luton, Wick, Orkney and Shetland. There are more than 100 destinations and a destination map is included in the evidence list for this topic paper. In the current delivery programme, it states that the Airport can accommodate the predicted growth in passenger numbers within its existing footprint. However, the document also mentions aspirations still exist for a possible runway extension. Developments at the airport are possibly subject to change in the future due to new ownership.

11.155. Linked to the airport is the current 727 bus service, operated by Stagecoach which provides connection between the airport and city centre. Some of the services also provides connectivity to the ferry terminal. The desired routing for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) currently includes the airport.

11.156. A map of the airport and its safety zones can be found below in figure 11.30. Further information can be found in Topic Paper: Wellbeing and Communities

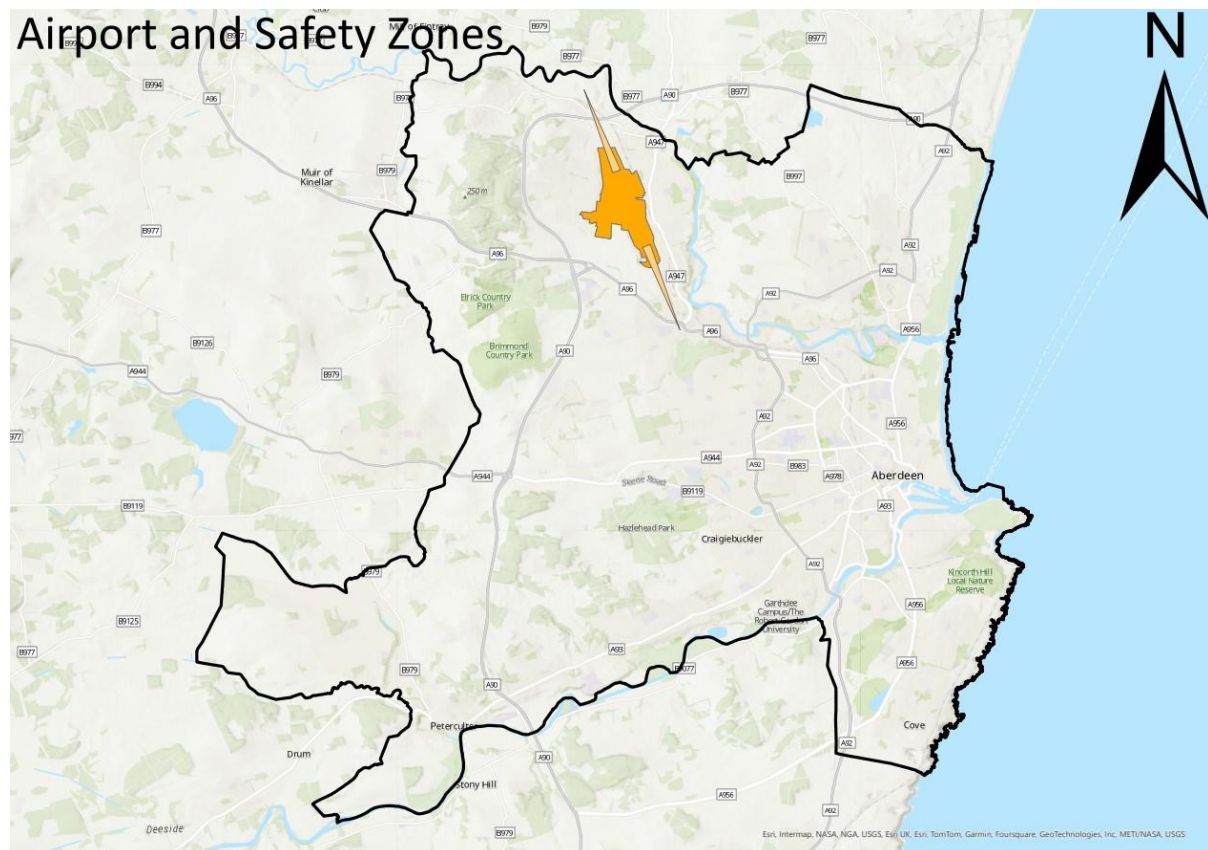


Figure 11.30: Location of Aberdeen Airport and the Airport Safety Zones.

SEPA Evidence Sources

11.157. Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have provided a list of evidence sources for each National Planning Framework 4 topic. With regards to Sustainable Transport, a CO2 Emissions tool and a UK emissions map have been included. Such information informs wider strategies and so it is not necessary to outlay in detail within the evidence report. Further communications with SEPA have highlighted the need to include further reference to air quality in view of the fact that road traffic is primarily responsible for the areas of poor quality in Aberdeen (See Air Quality Management Areas in evidence, Aberdeen City Centre AQMA). The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Air Quality Action Plan webpage has been listed as a source at SEPAs request. It is noted that sustainable transport measures will have positive impacts on local air quality and as a result contribute significantly to the NPF4 “Liveable Places” theme. In addition to these documents on air quality, the Scottish Government’s Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 is shaped around 10 themes which are relevant to air quality (including placemaking and transport). The themes include specific actions which seek to improve air quality. Aberdeen City Council are also currently working to update the Air Quality Action Plan 2011. Please see Topic Paper: Wellbeing and Community for further information on air quality.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026

11.158. The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (LOIP) outlines how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision for 2026 is Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. Through early intervention and prevention, the aim is to create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself, using a whole life approach combined with a lifelong learning approach. The measures of success in achieving the vision will be that by 2026:

- We will still have the highest GVA (Gross Value Added) per head in Scotland
- Fewer than 10% of our children are living in poverty
- We are living in good health for at least five years longer
- Our carbon emissions are 61% lower

11.159. The LOIP has four key themes to achieve the vision; Economy, People (Children & Young People, and Adults), Place and Community Empowerment, with 16 stretch outcomes. The Place Outcomes are:

- Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen’s carbon emissions by at least 61%.
- Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles.
- 26% of Aberdeen’s area will be protected for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.

11.160. The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used

to improve equality and address the outcomes related to Increase sustainable travel the LOIP .

Place Standard Assessments

11.161. Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning Aberdeen. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area.

11.162. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The traffic and parking, moving around and public transport themes of the Place Standard are relevant here. The results are as follows:

Theme	Mean Score
Public Transport	3.98
Moving Around	3.86
Traffic and Parking	3.36

Table 11.28: Scores from Place Standard Assessment.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Public Transport	• The frequency and reliability of bus services. (Central) • The accessibility of the bus services. (Central) • Greener buses (North and Central) • Cleanliness and good upkeep of buses (South) • Traffic management has prioritised buses and made them a more attractive option (North)	• Increase frequency, timing, direct routing and reliability of public transport (All) • Affordability of public transport - transport poverty (All)
Moving Around	• Suitability and availability of good paths for walking. (All) • Good public transport and transport links, especially frequent bus services. (All) • Good cycling routes (All) • Improved pedestrianization, as well as reductions in congestion (Central)	• Improve maintenance to pavements, and reduce clutter, better gritting in winter (All) • Improve maintenance to roads – potholes, drains, lighting (All) • Improve public / active travel choice and infrastructure (increase routes and frequency(North and Central)

		• Improve access – dropped kerbs (South) • Improve cycle route, safer cycle lanes and better signage (South) • Improve connections between walking routes (south) • Increase pedestrian crossings (South)
Traffic and Parking	• Decent provision of parking spaces and well signposted (All) • There are environmentally friendly options available (car clubs and park and ride. (North) • Less congestion as a result of taking cars out of the city centre, as well as there being good access to the City (South) • Able to get around easily by car (North)	• Improve car parks – safety, lighting, signage, maintenance (North and South) • Availability and cost of car parking, particularly in the city centre (All) • Enforcement of illegal, parking, obstructions and speeding offences (All) • LEZ is not welcome and will have a negative impact on those with disabilities (North) • Reducing car use as there is too much traffic and congestion (Central) • Remove the bus gates (Central)

Table 11.29: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

The children and young people results are as follows:

Place Standard Theme	Not Good	Okay	Great
Moving Around	23.4%	66.0%	10.6%
Public Transport	19.6%	56.5%	23.9%
Traffic and Parking	30.4%	63.0%	6.5%

Table 11.30: Children and Young Peoples Scores.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Moving Around	Plants and nature	16%	Bright lighting	22.6%
	Interesting walking and wheeling routes	15.1%	Feeling safe	19.8%
	Signs to find your way	14.2%	Interesting walking and wheeling routes	15.1%
Public Transport	Free bus travel	33%	Reduced cost of buses for the adults in my life	24.5%
	Stops or stations nearby	21.7%	Timetable information	19.8%
	Travel apps	11.3%	Shelter from the weather	17.9%

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Traffic and Parking	Places to cross	18.9%	Better places to cross	23.6%
	Quiet streets	16%	Less speeding	19.8%
	None of these	13.2%	More bike lanes	17.9%

Table 11.31: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?'
Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and
Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

11.163. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

11.164. A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

11.165. Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in July 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Infrastructure, Transport and Communications. This paper was split in two in September 2024; becoming the Sustainable Transport Paper and the Infrastructure and Communication Paper. The following text relates to the Sustainable Transport Paper.

11.166. An early draft form of the Topic Paper was presented to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request for comments on the emerging draft and or confirmation that they agreed with the evidence sources cited or had suggestions for further additions. Comments upon the drafts and further information sources were noted and added to the paper where appropriate.

11.167. The evidence presented within this paper was then circulated in an updated draft during January 2025 to a number of key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This included:

- Transport Scotland
- NESTRANS
- Network Rail
- Aberdeen Harbour Board
- Aberdeen International Airport
- Aberdeen City Council (Roads Engineering / Transport Strategy and Programmes)

11.168. A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 12 responses in total were received, 5 from organisations (Transport Scotland, NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, NESTRANS) 1 from a housing developer, (Bancon Homes), and 7 members of the public. Of those listed, 3

stated that evidence was missed and 2 stated that they did not agree with the evidence.

11.169. An email was sent on 10 June to a member of the public who disputed the paper.

11.170. A meeting was held with NESTRANS on the 2 June in order to discuss their first response to the public engagement. There have also been a number of meetings concerning the ongoing cumulative Transport Appraisal, with meetings occurring on the 30th April and 14th of May since a preferred bidder was chosen to undertake the work on Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council's behalf. Meetings were also held with FIRS.

11.171. The evidence presented within the Sustainable Transport paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

11.172. Transport Scotland submitted a response to the LDP inbox which stated that the Topic Paper was 'almost sufficient'. It also sought descriptions of key pinch points from the Baseline map for clarity. It sought further information upon the condition of the roads network in the AMD section. It also sought a proportionate display of the actual data which was listed for The Transport Scotland Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021 Household Survey. We have incorporated all of these requested changes to improve the paper.

11.173. NESTRANS initially submitted an emailed response to the consultation to which the Council sought a meeting to try to clarify NESTRANS's position. It was agreed at this meeting that a follow up response would be submitted to clarify matters. The email clarifying matters included 3 points that NESTRANS considered would be beneficial for the Council to consider. It followed this with suggested wording (tracked change document) for sections of this paper and an 'annex' document which included their response to the standard questions that were asked during the public consultation. r(for this paper and the spatial strategy paper), confirmation that a formal dispute is not being raised and comments that it wanted to be taken forward for drafting at the Local Development Plan Stage and for drafting of the Local Transport Strategy.

11.174. With regards to the response (the annex), NESTRANS state that we have not missed any evidence and that they agree with the evidence we have used. In respect to the Topic Paper, this response signposts to the email follow up response email and the tracked change document.

11.175. With regards to the original response (19th May 2025), most of this is covered by the subsequent annex response as being an issue for the Local Transport Strategy or a further LDP stage. We have added some text in the Topic Paper which outlines community transport operations within the city as requested in the original response. We have also included a section which discusses transport poverty and accessibility around transport which is included within this initial response from NESTRANS but not covered again in subsequent responses. We determined that this would be a useful

perspective to include within the paper given its prominence as a priority in national, regional and local transport strategies.

- 11.176. The follow up email (3rd June 2025) from NESTRANS offered 3 suggestions to improve the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper. Firstly they commented that the Scottish Government's position on the A96 should be made clearer and that a narrative on the local/regional response to this would be helpful. The tracked changes document changes the wording to say that duelling of the A96 remains a Scottish Government commitment, but that timescales are pushed back and includes new text on the local/regional response. The text from the track changes document has been accepted to update the Topic Paper to correct the factual error and give the local/regional response context.
- 11.177. Secondly they commented that there should be clearer presentation on the work Systra undertook on NESTRANS behalf to understand travel behaviour and further context to explain origin and findings are clear. Within the tracked changes document they proposed the removal of 4 of the tables (with and without policy scenarios for private cars and public transport, movements between areas by 2040) within the NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review Final Report section. They sought a 'focus on key points and not get too tied into the specific statistical outputs' in order to improve flow. The tables were removed and the paragraphs simplified in order to improve flow. A further implication has been added to the Topic Paper which outlines that increased use of the AWPR (which is forecast in both with and without policy scenarios) is likely to have implications for the spatial strategy.
- 11.178. Thirdly they sought more narrative on the park and ride facilities in terms of current service provision and the ambition to better utilise. The suggested rewrite in the tracked changes document has been accepted as it gives a more contextual insight into behaviours and the future uses of the sites. Two graphs were included by NESTRANS to show spaces in use for the three sites and patronage at the Kingswells site to replace the existing graph of counts at all regional sites. This is accepted for improved clarity. We added a table to show what facilities exist at each site as well to improve the narrative from an accessibility perspective.
- 11.179. Nature Scot confirmed by email (11th June 2025) that they have not disputed any of the Topic Papers. They suggested that the order of subjects mirror that of the sustainable transport hierarchy with sustainable means of travel coming before those of private car. For clarity, and to set the scene, the paper was ordered to include firstly the spatial context, then the statistical context followed by the national, regional and local transport strategies before going into specific modes of transport. Starting with active travel and public transport before moving back to other matters would present a muddled format. It should be noted that for evidence relating to specific transportation, active travel is followed by public transport and finally private vehicles. We have now included an image showing the sustainable transport hierarchy under the national policy section as a way to demonstrate its importance within the context of the paper.
- 11.180. Nature Scot also suggested that the summary of implications should be more specific to Aberdeen. We note that most of the points within the implications section

relate specifically to Aberdeen or regional/local strategies already. They also mention a need for understanding how the Proposed Plan will specifically be informed by the delivery of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan in relation to sustainable transport. We have expanded upon this area to give specific examples.

- 11.181. Bancon Homes confirmed that it did not dispute the Topic Paper in an email (6th June 2025). They state that we have not missed any evidence but that they do not agree with the evidence we have used. It states that the 2009 Core Paths Plan is not up to date and that this document should be updated. At the time of writing there is no official plan for the Council to prepare an updated Core Paths Plan. It is not the purpose of the evidence report to create new data, rather to report the data that is available and any gaps that may exist. It is noted that core paths that have been built since 2009 will not be included within this dataset. Bancon Homes have provided some general commentary on what they would like to see in a new Development Plan, what they would like the Council to do and how new development can meet objectives from the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2.
- 11.182. There is comment from Bancon Homes that they are surprised there is limited comment within the paper relating to local living. Local Living has been reference in the Sustainable Transport paper but is a topic within the Place Topic Paper and consequently we consider duplication of discussion undesirable.
- 11.183. Comment has been made by Bancon Homes that there is limited discussion upon the role of new housing development to provide new active travel links which are overlooked, that new development of sufficient scale could deliver new local facilities, and that new homes are fibre enabled. There is commentary on the current expectation that new development will provide active travel links and that large scale sites should be mixed use within the Place Topic Paper under the subheading 'Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Placemaking Process and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs.' Statistics on full fibre coverage are included within the Infrastructure Topic Paper under the subheading 'Full Fibre and Gigabit Coverage.' We are satisfied that duplication of evidence is unnecessary however we agree that these points should be included within the implications section of the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper, referencing NPF4 requirements for the 'Connected' theme within the 6 Qualities of Successful Places and Policy 24: Digital Infrastructure.
- 11.184. Homes for Scotland state that we have missed evidence within the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper but that they agree with the evidence we have used. They are specifically seeking Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 data on geographical accessibility. We have included this map data. There is limited commentary upon this map alone in isolation, it shows the peripheral sites of the city to be the least accessible for services as might be expected.
- 11.185. Homes for Scotland provided general commentary which is in line with the comments made by Bancon Homes. They state that a Transport Appraisal must be concluded prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan, and this is something that will

be done. They state that the topic paper should recognise the need for evidence to be kept up to date and the topic paper does this at present.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

11.186. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire share a significant number of transport considerations. A joint Cumulative Transport Appraisal, led by NESTRANS and advised upon by Transport Scotland, is currently being prepared in order to inform the Proposed Plan, particularly the spatial strategy.

11.187. The Proposed Plan will be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach and set out the transport infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy.

11.188. The Core Path Plan can inform and influence the spatial strategy. Sites which are accessible by existing active travel routes, such as core paths, will have an accessibility advantage at site assessment stage.

11.189. The Proposed Plan must align with the relevant strategic goals of National Planning Framework 4, National Transport Strategy 2, NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy and Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy.

11.190. Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 sets out 4 priorities to achieve its vision.

- Reduce inequalities – the proposed plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to services, and areas where income is lowest where people may find travel difficult financially, and understand the makeup of the city in terms of an aging population and accommodation of individuals who have a disability. Spatial and policy decisions must be informed by this information and address existing related inequalities.
- Takes climate action - the proposed plan must consider how the transport system in Aberdeen works as a whole, proximity of housing to services and centres and the planned and existing active travel links and public transport links between these, including likely routes of the Aberdeen Rapid Transit. It must account for all relevant Aberdeen transport strategies. Spatial and policy decisions must promote the sustainable transport hierarchy in Aberdeen to reduce carbon output caused by travel.
- Helps deliver inclusive economic growth - the proposed plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to centres and areas of employment, or areas where income is lowest where people may find travel difficult financially, and make spatial decisions (employment and housing allocations) and policy decisions (facilitating local economic growth) which offer inclusive growth.
- Improves our health and wellbeing - the proposed plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which do not have safe (from traffic and crime) and comfortable (useable for people of all abilities) active travel links to the services, facilities, workplaces and open spaces that people need to get to day to day. The plan must aim to enable active travel. Of particular importance is understanding the spatial relationship between healthcare services and places. Spatial and policy (how places are

designed to put people first) decisions will need to enable people to make the healthy travel choices required to improve health and wellbeing.

11.191. Transport Scotland: Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland sets out 4 behaviours that need to be addressed in order to meeting targets.

- Reducing the need to travel – the proposed plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to services and consider the potential to address this through spatial and policy decisions. Digital infrastructure can support working remotely, the plan must consider how to support its implementation.
- Living well locally - the proposed plan must consider the areas of Aberdeen which suffer from poor access to services and seek policies to support services in these areas and at the heart of new housing allocations. The plan must consider existing and proposed active travel and public transport including Aberdeen Rapid Transit and how the connectivity between places and centres operates within the city.
- Switching modes - the proposed plan must consider how the transport system in Aberdeen works as a whole, proximity of housing to services and centres and the planned and existing active travel links and public transport links between these, including likely routes of the Aberdeen Rapid Transit. It must account for all relevant Aberdeen transport strategies. Spatial and policy decisions must promote the sustainable transport hierarchy in Aberdeen to reduce carbon output caused by travel.
- Combining or sharing car trips - the proposed plan must consider where existing car club locations are situated and where else they might be sought.

11.192. The papers produced by Public Health Scotland with respect to reallocation of road space in Scotland will have implications for the new plan as they lend some evidential weight to improved health outcomes being resultant from reduced use of motor vehicles and increased active travel, albeit with potential unintended adverse impacts such as displacing traffic to other areas. Improvement of health outcomes

11.193. aligns with The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan stretch outcome for health and wellbeing, that life expectancy (time lived in good health) is 5 years longer by 2026. The direct implications for the new plan would specifically relate to design standards in new development.

11.194. Section 13.2 of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030 seeks to ensure every new transport and active travel infrastructure project incorporates elements of blue-green infrastructure, and seek opportunities for its enhancement and expansion. This could have implications for design standards set out for the new local development plan and for expanding and connecting the Aberdeen green space network to other locally and nationally important habitats.

- 11.195. The Proposed Plan will be informed by the National Planning Framework 4 National Spatial Strategy (spatial principles) - local living and compact urban growth, and by National Planning Framework 4 Regional Spatial priorities for the North East; Aberdeen Rapid Transit, National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network and Aberdeen Harbour.
- 11.196. With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies on this topic.
- 11.197. The Proposed Plan will take account of the delivery of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan. Improved active travel infrastructure will have some affect upon alleviating traffic from private cars by offering more sustainable options for travel. This in turn has the potential to influence transport policy decisions. Public realm improvements and the Aberdeen Market are likely to have implications for the city centre, its surrounding neighbourhoods and the beachfront as they will make these areas more attractive places for people to live, work and visit. These changes will influence travel behaviour which has the potential to influence transport policy decisions.
- 11.198. Aberdeen City Voice Data results will have implications for the next plan. It is Aberdeen specific data which shows where improvement is required for facilitating more sustainable methods of travel. This could lend weight to policy decisions, potentially around how design standards are set with regards to low or no car development.
- 11.199. The findings of the A96 Corridor Studies will have implications for the Proposed Plan. The findings of the studies will be incorporated into the Transport Appraisal and to ensure that development proposed within the Local Development Plan supports the delivery of any transport interventions which are taken forward.
- 11.200. The findings of the A96 Corridor Review will be used to inform Proposed Plan site selection.
- 11.201. To ensure development is directed to locations with access to the most sustainable modes of transport, site selection assessments will include consideration of:
- Public transport availability and future planned public transport provision;
 - Active travel infrastructure;
 - Proximity to existing centres and clusters of existing services and facilities
 - Proximity to existing areas of employment
 - Any capacity constraints on the road networks
 - EV charging infrastructure
- 11.202. The Proposed Plan will be informed by the 'Connected' theme within the 6 Qualities of Successful Places which supports well connected networks that make moving

around easy and reduce car dependency. This includes specifically designing for active travel, connectivity, convenient connections and pedestrian experience.

11.203. The Proposed Plan will be informed Policy 24: Digital Infrastructure which requires LDPs to support the delivery of digital infrastructure. This will have some effect upon the need to travel if new housing includes access to full fibre.

11.204. The NESTRANS Transport Evidence Review shows that by 2040, in both with and without policy scenarios, there will be increased traffic flows between Angus and Moray, meaning increased traffic on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which may have implications for the spatial strategy of the new LDP.

Marmot Principles

11.205. Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	X
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 11.32: Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

11.206. Transport Scotland, NESTRANS, NHS Grampian, Nature Scot and 3 members of the public responded to the public consultation and agreed with the evidence we've used to prepare the paper and do not believe we have missed any key pieces of evidence.

11.207. Transport Scotland and NESTRANS sought some minor changes to the document which were accepted, as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

11.208. NatureScot, Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed that they did not dispute the Topic Paper but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

11.209. A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Information Gaps

11.210. A Cumulative Transport Appraisal process is currently being led by NESTRANS on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council to address cross boundary issues. Transport Scotland are part of the working group, and have fed into the development of the brief. A consultant has been procured and initial data gathering will be undertaken in the second half of 2025. Current timescales are for completion August 2026.

11.211. It is acknowledged that the Aberdeen Core Paths Plan dates from 2009. There are no formal plans to update the plan at the time of writing.

11.212. The Council is developing its next Local Transport Strategy and a revised draft will be available in 2026

11.213. The Air Quality Action Plan is being updated, and will be published alongside the consultation for the updated Local Transport Strategy in 2026. This will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

11.214. Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

12.Topic Paper 5 – Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation

Requirements addressed in this section:

- 12.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)	The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.
Section 15(5)	The principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district.
Section 3F	Policies regarding low and zero-carbon generating technologies in new buildings.

Other Relevant Legislation

Section	Requirement
The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 Regulation 9 Have regard to: any river basin management plan; any flood risk management plan; and any local flood risk management plan.	

National Planning Framework 4

Climate and Nature Crisis

- 12.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) must address the global climate emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the spatial strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration in the area.

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

- 12.3 The LDP spatial strategy should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The six spatial principles should form the basis of the spatial strategy, helping to guide development to, and create, sustainable locations.

The strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions.

- 12.4 LDPs should support adaptation to the current and future impacts of climate change by taking into account climate risks, guiding development away from vulnerable areas, and enabling places to adapt to those risks.

Flood Risk and Water Management

- 12.5 LDPs should strengthen community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change, by avoiding development in areas at flood risk as a first principle. Resilience should also be supported by managing the need to bring previously used sites in built up areas into positive use; planning for adaptation measures; and identifying opportunities to implement improvements to the water environment through natural flood risk management and blue green infrastructure.
- 12.6 Plans should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources and make use of relevant flood risk and river basin management plans for the area. A precautionary approach should be taken, regarding the calculated probability of flooding as a best estimate, not a precise forecast. For areas where climate change is likely to result in increased flood exposure that becomes unmanageable, consideration should be given to alternative sustainable land use.

Links to Evidence

Climate and Nature Crisis, Mitigation and Adaptation

- [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- [Is Scotland climate ready? - 2022 Report to Scottish Parliament - Climate Change Committee](#)
- [Scotland's Climate Change Plan](#)
- [The just transition and climate change adaptation March 2022](#)
- [Securing a Green Recovery Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018 - 2032 Update](#)
- [Scottish National Adaptation Programme 2024 – 2029](#)
- [Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland 2023 Report to Parliament \(2024\)](#)
- [Evidence for the Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\): Summary for Scotland](#)
- [Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan](#)
- [Adaptation Scotland](#)
- [Climate Projections Scotland summary-dec21 Adaptation Scotland](#)
- [Low Emission Zones Scotland](#)
- [Scotland's Environment](#)
- [ESPON – Quantitative Greenhouse Gas Assessment tool for Spatial Planning](#)
- [ESPON GGIA tool](#)
- [National Planning Framework 4 Research Project: lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of NPF4 proposed national developments: assessment findings](#)
- [Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage](#)
- [Nature Scot's Carbon and Peatland Map \(2016\)](#)
- [Aberdeen Adapts](#)

- [Aberdeen Adapts Evidence Report](#)
- [Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen](#)
- [Net Zero Routemap Aberdeen](#)
- [Council Climate Change Plan 2021 -2025](#)
- [Met Office Climate Report for Aberdeen City \(11/12/2024\)](#)
- [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2022 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Aberdeen Emissions Inventory Report \(AEIR\) 2021 \(received as report submitted via email\)](#)
- [Community Planning Aberdeen: Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026](#)

Flood Risk and Water Management

- [The Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Act 2009: Delivering Sustainable Flood Risk Management](#)
- [National Flood Resilience Strategy \(2024\)](#)
- [Position Statement: Elevated buildings in areas of flood risk](#)
- [Position Statement: Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes](#)
- [SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance](#)
- [SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities](#)
- [Flood Risk Management Strategies | SEPA](#)
- [Flood Risk Management Plan](#)
- [Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 - 2028](#)
- [The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 – 2027](#)
- [Climate Change Allowances Guidance.docx](#)
- [Land use planning - Flood Maps | SEPA](#)
- [SEPA Flood Maps](#)
- [Environmental data | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)
- [Flooding | Beta | SEPA | Scottish Environment Protection Agency](#)
- [SEPA Water Scarcity Report](#)
- [Mapping Flood Disadvantage tool and report](#)
- [Water Environment Hub](#)
- [Recommended Riparian Corridor Layer for use in Land Use Planning](#)
- [Recommended Riparian Corridor map](#)
- [Riparian Vegetation Management SEPA](#)
- [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

- 12.7 There is a climate and nature crisis. Planning can influence how we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, protect and enhance our natural assets, and support a fair and inclusive transition to a low-carbon economy. Resilience regarding the water environment supports the current and future impacts of climate change. This will be discussed in further detail below.
- 12.8 This section is structured as follows:
- Climate and Nature Crisis, Mitigation and Adaptation
 - Flood Risk and Water Management

Climate and Nature Crisis, Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

- 12.9 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a statutory duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 aims to ensure that that Scotland's contribution to climate change will end within a generation, being fully net-zero by 2045 with emissions reducing by 75% by 2030 (compared to a 1990 baseline). This key piece of planning legislation encourages local authorities to deliver these targets. The next Local Development Plan will consider how it can support Aberdeen in reaching these goals.

'Is Scotland Climate Ready?' Climate Change Committee report (2022)

- 12.10 This report to the Scottish Government sets out the Climate Change Committee's assessment of progress in adapting to climate change in Scotland. It's findings reveal that progress in delivering adaptation has stalled. It recommends that the Scottish Government produce clear, time-bound, quantitative targets to drive sufficient action across the full range of government activities. It identifies four priorities for strengthening Scotland's adaptation response, this includes:
- Learning from local excellence. Examples of good local adaptation actions across communities in Scotland should be used to inform response;
 - Extending the focus on Net Zero to include climate adaptation;
 - Building climate resilience in a fair way. The benefits of adaptation should be felt across the whole of society, and;
 - Raising ambition now.
- 12.11 Ensuring that Aberdeen is aligned with Scottish Government targets, the Council can incorporate these priorities for climate adaptation as we consider the next Local Development Plan.

Scotland's Climate Change Plan

12.12 Scotland's Climate Change Plan provides a high level overview of Scotland's climate change policies and actions. These are divided into six key themes as identified below:

- **Net Zero Target:** Scotland aims to achieve net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045.
- **Climate Change Plan:** The Climate Change Plan update reflects increased ambition and sets out actions to meet the targets.
- **Adaptation and Resilience:** Emphasizes the need to adapt and build resilience to climate change impacts.
- **Just Transition:** Focuses on ensuring a fair transition to a net zero economy, benefiting all sectors of society.
- **Public and International Engagement:** Involves engaging with businesses, communities, and international partners to tackle climate change.
- **Legislation:** Includes the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and its amendments, which set the framework for emissions reduction targets and climate action.

12.13 The production of the next Local Development Plan will seek to consider these themes and apply them to future development in Aberdeen.

The Just Transition and Climate Change Adaptation (2022) Climate Change Committee

12.14 This report addresses the Scottish Government, providing advice concerning the role of adaptation within a 'Just Transition'. It highlights how the distributional consequences of both climate impacts and adaptation actions can be addressed as part of policy making. The key messages of the document demonstrate that fairness in adaptation is intrinsically linked to a Just Transition. It highlights that climate impacts and adaptation actions will have unequal effects across the population. Finally it states that effective and fair adaptation will require distributional effects to be considered throughout the policy cycle. The next Local Development Plan will consider the outcomes of this report as it seeks to support a Just Transition in Aberdeen.

Securing a Green Recovery Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018 - 2032 Update

12.15 Forming an update to 'Scotland's Climate Change Plan', this document outlines Scotland's strategy for achieving ambitious climate targets while promoting a green recovery from COVID-19. This Plan reiterates Scotland's ambitious target to achieve net zero by 2045 and, it emphasizes the integration of climate action with economic recovery post-COVID-19.

12.16 Key Sectors and Actions:

1. Electricity:
 - Increase renewable energy capacity.
 - Enhance grid infrastructure to support renewable integration.
2. Buildings:
 - Improve energy efficiency in homes and public buildings.
 - Promote the use of low-carbon heating systems.
3. Transport:

- Encourage the adoption of electric vehicles.
- Invest in public transport and active travel infrastructure.
- 4. Industry:
 - Support industrial decarbonization through innovation and technology.
 - Implement carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects.
- 5. Waste and Circular Economy:
 - Reduce waste generation and increase recycling rates.
 - Promote circular economy practices to minimize resource use.
- 6. Land Use and Agriculture:
 - Enhance carbon sequestration through forestry and peatland restoration.
 - Support sustainable agricultural practices.

12.17 Cross-Cutting Themes:

- Just Transition: Ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy is fair and inclusive.
- Engagement: Involve communities, businesses, and stakeholders in climate action.
- Monitoring and Reporting: Regularly assess progress and adapt strategies as needed.

12.18 Notably, the plan references the 75% carbon emissions reduction by 2030, set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This has since been amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024, which introduced modifications to the interim targets. However, the target of achieving net zero emissions by 2045 remains.

12.19 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate the key actions of this update as it seeks to aid delivery of net zero ambitions, and continue to integrate climate action with economic recovery post pandemic. It will also consider the themes outlined in the plan update to ensure delivery of these goals is just and inclusive across Aberdeen.

Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2024 – 2029

12.20 The Scottish Government produced the Climate Change Adaptation Plan under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. It is a requirement to produce an adaptation plan every 5 years in response to the Climate Change Committee's independent assessment of climate risks in the UK. The UK Climate Change Committee publish a monitoring and evaluation framework to help measure progress towards meeting the aims in the adaptation plan. The Scottish Government also publish annual progress reports on climate change adaptation: Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme: progress report 2023 to 2024

12.21 The Adaptation Plan sets out a long term vision and defines Scotland's priorities for action over the next five years. The Adaptation Plan is structured in five chapters, covering five outcomes to deliver a climate resilient Scotland. Under each outcome are objectives where key policy actions are set out, as set out in the following table:

Outcomes and objectives for adaptation

Five adaptation outcomes; 23 objectives	
Nature Connects	
Nature connects across our lands, settlements, coasts and seas.	
NC1: Nature-based solutions	NC2: Landscape scale solutions
NC3: Development planning	NC4: Nature networks
NC5: Marine, coastal and the blue economy	NC6: Natural carbon stores and sinks
Communities	
Communities are creating climate-resilient, healthy and equitable place.	
C1: Regional and place-based collaborations	C2: Locally-led adaptation
C3: Community resilience	C4: New and existing buildings
C5: Culture and historic environment	C6: Coastal communities
Public Services & Infrastructure	
Public services are collaborating in effective and inclusive adaptation action.	
PS1: Public body duties and capacity	PS2: Public service and infrastructure resilience
PS3: Scotland's water resources	PS4: Transport system
Economy, Business & Industry	
Economies and industries are adapting and realising opportunities in Scotland's Just Transition.	
B1: Business understanding of climate risk	B2: Support for farming, forestry, fishing and aquaculture sectors
B3: Innovation opportunities	B4: Economic development and supply chains
International Action	
Scotland's international role supports climate justice and enhanced global action.	
IA1: Supporting vulnerable communities globally	IA2: International Advocacy
IA3: Knowledge advocacy	

Figure 15.1 : Adaptation Outcomes and Objectives from Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme, 2024.

12.22 The next Local Development Plan will look to the policy actions mention in this plan as it seeks to ensure climate adaptation in Aberdeen is aligned with government targets.

Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland 2023 Report to Parliament (2024)

12.13 This report has been prepared by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) as an annual update to the UK Parliament, reporting on Scotland's progress towards their climate goals.

- 12.24 The report monitors Scotland's progress in reducing emissions and assesses the policies in place for delivering future emissions reduction. The report is in accordance with Sections 9 (1) and (2) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Scottish Government's response to the Climate Change Committee's 2023 report highlights several key points:
- Scotland's emissions halved between 1990 and 2022, while the economy grew by 67%, showing that tackling climate change and economic growth can go hand in hand.
 - The second half of the journey to net zero will be more challenging, requiring a just transition in areas like agriculture, transport, and heat in buildings.
 - Positive progress includes the extension of free bus travel to under-22s and planting nearly 75% of all new forests in the UK last year.
 - The Scottish Government announced an accelerated package of new climate action measures, including the development of approximately 24,000 additional electric vehicle charging points by 2030 and a new integrated ticketing system for public transport.
- 12.25 The report goes on to identify next steps, of which the following have a relationship to local development planning, and can be used to inform development of the next Local Development Plan:
- The transport sector requires practical delivery plans in areas including charging infrastructure, car demand reduction and decarbonisation of aviation and shipping.
 - Policy plans must address barriers to enable woodland creation and peatland restoration rates to scale up significantly.
 - Stronger action is needed to increase recycling rates and reverse recent increases in waste incineration.

Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report: Summary for Scotland (2021)

- 12.26 This Independent Assessment used to help inform the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) assesses 61 risks and opportunities from climate change to Scotland, including to business, infrastructure, housing, the natural environment, our health and risks from the impacts of climate change internationally. It outlines what the risks and opportunities associated with climate change are for Scotland, their urgency scores, the evidence for this and the benefits for further action in the next five years. Appreciation of the risks and opportunities identified in this report can help to inform the next Local Development Plan to ensure that recognition of climate change risk is understood and actioned in Aberdeen when directing future development.

Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan

- 12.27 This strategy sets out a clear ambition: for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. The vision for Scotland is to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across land, freshwater and seas by 2045. The natural environment, habitats, ecosystems and species, will be diverse, thriving, resilient and adapting to climate change.
- 12.28 Six detailed outcomes are identified which will help define what success will look like in terms of land and seascapes; on land; in rivers, lochs and wetlands; and, in marine and coastal environments.

- Accelerate restoration and regeneration;
- Protect nature on land and at sea, across and beyond protected areas;
- Embed nature-positive farming, fishing and forestry;
- Protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats;
- Invest in Nature; and,
- Take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss.

12.29 Included within the Strategy is a commitment to protecting 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 as part of the 30 by 30 policy. The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate these outcomes identified to support the restoration and regeneration biodiversity in Aberdeen in alignment with wider government strategy.

Adaptation Scotland

12.30 The Adaptation Scotland programme provides advice and support to help Scotland be prepared and resilient to the effects of climate change. Within their 'Climate Projections for Scotland - Summary' report, they outline the following anticipated changes to our climate: average temperatures will increase across all seasons; typical summers will be warmer and drier; typical winters will be milder and wetter; intense; heavy rainfall events will increase in both winter and summer; sea levels will rise; reduced frost and snowfall, and; weather will remain variable and may become more variable. Additionally, they highlight 15 key impacts of climate change already observed in Scotland and are likely to become more prevalent over the coming years. Aberdeen Adapts, Aberdeen City Council's climate adaptation framework, outlines the impacts for the city. This is discussed in further detail later in this Topic Paper.

Low Emission Zones Scotland

12.31 Low Emission Zones (LEZ) will help to protect public health by improving air quality, as well as delivering various health, environmental and economic benefits, including:

Health:

- cleaner air can have health benefits for everyone, especially for old and very young people and for those with existing heart and lung conditions.
- in 2010, the UK Government's Department of Health's Expert Advisory Committee, the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP), estimated that poor air quality shortens average life expectancy in Scotland by three to four months (compared to six to seven in England and Wales). Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected (Health Protection Scotland, 2014).

Environment:

- can help reduce pollution from vehicle emissions.
- help to accelerate the uptake of lower emission vehicles – and cleaner vehicles. Also benefit all areas the vehicles travel through – not just the LEZ.
- encourage people to consider using more public transport and active travel methods instead of driving.

Economy

- can help improve air quality and protect public health within towns and cities. This makes them more attractive places to live, work and to visit.

12.32 Aberdeen's low emission zone was introduced on 31 May 2022, with enforcement beginning 01 June 2024, and covers an area of the city centre highlighted in the Council's [online map](#). The LEZ was introduced to address air pollution in the city centre, mainly nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), caused by road traffic. See the Wellbeing and Community paper for more information.

Scotland's Environment

12.33 The website hosts 229 mapping overlays that can be applied to an interactive map. The data hosted is shared by a variety of contributing partners such as Marine Scotland, Nature Scot, SEPA and the Scottish Land Commission. The map can therefore provide targeted information and datasets for Aberdeen which will be useful in preparing the next Local Development Plan.

ESPON Quantitative Greenhouse Gas Assessment tool for Spatial Planning

12.34 This project is part of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, which aims to support the development of evidence-based spatial planning policies across Europe. The main objective of the project is to create a robust, simple, and proportionate methodology that allows planning authorities at national, regional, and local levels to quantify and forecast the influence of spatial planning policies on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The resultant Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment (GGIA) tool quantifies data on GHG emissions and project future scenarios for use in spatial planning. Key points from the report include:

- The European Union is committed to reducing GHG emissions by 55% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050.
- The project aims to collect consistent and comparable GHG baseline emissions data at various administrative levels to assess the urban and land-use share of GHG emissions relevant for spatial planning policy.
- The methodology will help model the efficacy of spatial plans and possible alternatives, aiding in cross-country, inter-regional, and inter-municipality comparisons.
- The project will enhance the scientific understanding of how planning authorities can prioritise relevant GHG mitigation strategies and build political will for climate action.

12.35 Data from this assessment and the GGIA tool can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan to further understand changing GHG emission levels.

National Planning Framework 4 Research Project: lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of NPF4 proposed national developments: assessment findings

12.36 This document provides an in-depth analysis of the lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with proposed national developments in Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The assessment aims to support the Scottish Government's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. Key points from the report include:

- The assessment covers various proposed national developments, evaluating their potential GHG emissions throughout their lifecycle, from construction to operation and decommissioning.

- It identifies opportunities for reducing emissions through design, construction practices, and operational efficiencies.
- The report emphasises the importance of integrating low-carbon and renewable energy solutions into national developments to minimise their environmental impact.
- It also highlights the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of GHG emissions to ensure that the proposed developments align with Scotland's climate targets.

12.37 The report evaluates several proposed national developments in Scotland, two of which are affiliated with Aberdeen:

- **Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks:** This development aims to facilitate a shift towards sustainable transport in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, as well as their wider regions. It focuses on reducing transport-related emissions and supporting accessibility for all. This is outlined further in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.
- **Aberdeen Harbour:** This project involves the expansion and improvement of facilities at Aberdeen Harbour to support the energy transition and enhance its role as a key port for the offshore energy sector.

12.38 These developments are part of Scotland's broader strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve net-zero targets. The report provides detailed assessments of the potential lifecycle GHG emissions associated with each of these projects and identifies opportunities for reducing emissions through design, construction practices, and operational efficiencies.

Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage (SCCS)

12.39 SCCS provides useful information, publications and datasets relating to carbon capture and storage (CCS) and, the journey to Net Zero. The website identifies CCS projects around the world, one of which is 'The Scotland Net Zero Infrastructure (SNZI) programme'. The project summary below outlines the important role the North East of Scotland has to play in achieving a Net Zero future for Scotland.

12.40 Scotland Net Zero Infrastructure (SNZI) Programme:

- **Collaborators:** Includes Pale Blue Dot, SSE Thermal, National Grid, Petrofac, LNG9/GB-Tron, University of Strathclyde, and NECCUS.
- **Projects:**
 - Detailed engineering for Acorn CCS and Hydrogen projects.
 - New CCS-equipped power station at Peterhead.
 - Re-use of onshore pipelines for CO₂ transport.
 - Carbon capture design for a new gas-fired power station in Grangemouth.
 - Design of CO₂ tanker ships for coastal emitters.
- **Investments and Developments:**
 - £1.23m investment for Scotland's Net Zero Roadmap project.
 - Establishment of the UK Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre at Heriot Watt University.
 - Potential for over £3 billion in onshore and offshore developments.
- **Advantages for Scotland:**
 - Utilizes existing infrastructure and CO₂ storage potential.
 - Leverages large-scale renewable energy build-out.

- Ensures a Just Transition for the skilled workforce.

12.41 This programme positions Scotland as a leader in industrial decarbonisation and net zero efforts. Notably, the Acorn project has received an influx of £200 million to fund progression of the CCS scheme in Aberdeenshire. The next Local Development Plan will consider these datasets as it endeavours to support progression of CCS in Scotland as Aberdeen continues to pursue net zero emissions.

NatureScot's Carbon and Peatland Map

12.42 The Carbon and Peatland map 2016 can be used to identify locations of carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. Classes 1 and 2 are identified as being a nationally important resource and areas that are likely to be of high conservation value. The restoration of peatland can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, due to peatland's capacity to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

12.43 This resource can aid Local Authorities in identifying areas that require protection when considering development. This can help identify areas in Aberdeen that require protection to inform the next Local Development Plan.

12.45 Within Aberdeen, small areas of Class 1 land can be found on land adjacent to Gough Burn (north-west of Kepplestone) and at Leuchar Moss (south-east of Garlogie). There is no Class 2 within the city boundary. There is only one recorded location of Class 3 land (referring to Leached Soils), which is of poorer quality than Class 1 and 2 land, and is largely covered by the southern edge of the Prime Four Business Park at Kingswells. There are multiple areas of Class 5 (Organic Soils) within Aberdeen located at Grandhome Moss, land at Burn of Mundurno, Lily Loch, Corby Loch, South Mains of Charleston, and land to the South-East of Lochside Academy. The types of peat shown on the map are:

- carbon-rich soils
- deep peat
- priority peatland habitat

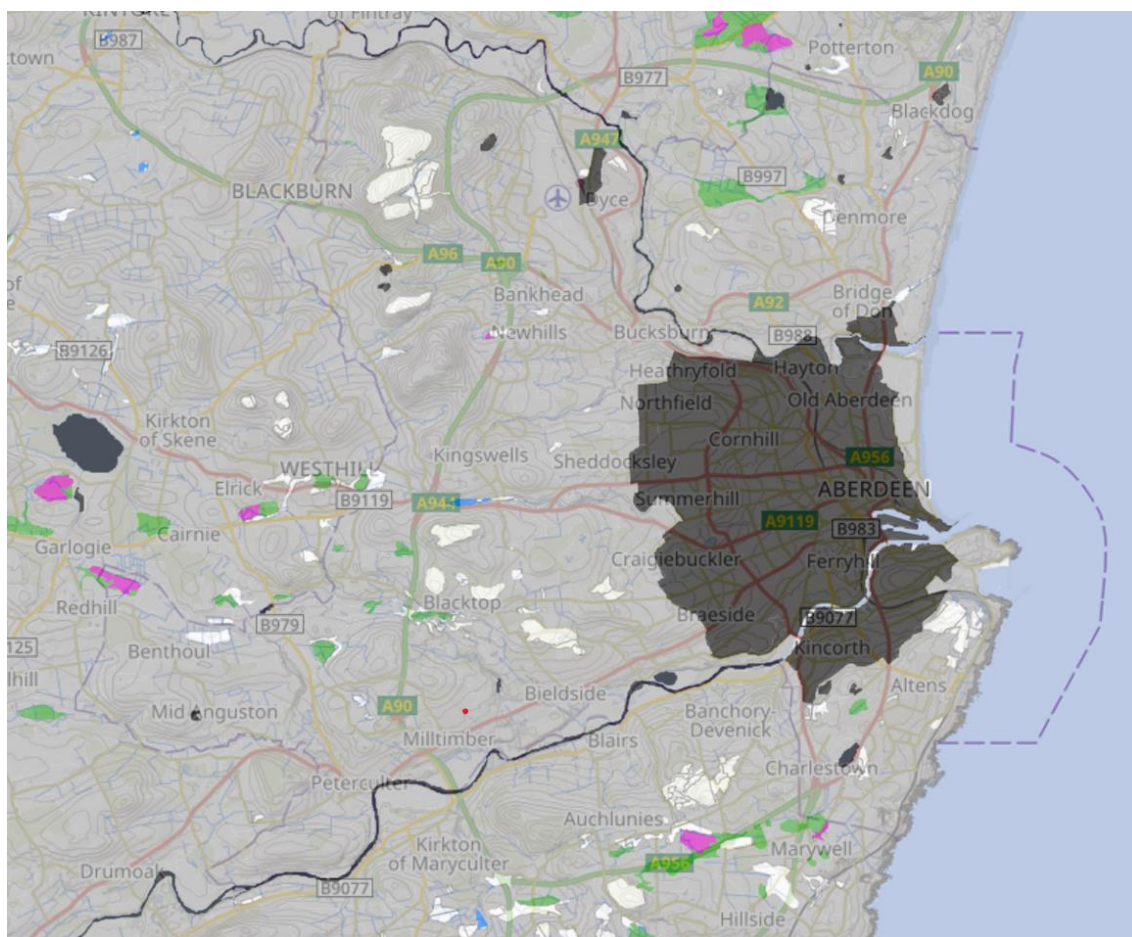


Figure 12.2: A snapshot of Aberdeen taken from Scotland's Carbon and Peatland Map 2016. Can be found at : [Scotland's Soils - soil maps](#)

12.46 For further information on soils see the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Aberdeen Adapts

12.47 Aberdeen Adapts is a collaborative framework for city-wide working on adaptation. Incorporating the views of local organisations and communities. Page 10 highlights projected climate impacts for Aberdeen and, shares the evidence base used to inform the document.

12.48 Future Climate Impacts indicated for Aberdeen:

- A reduction in summer rainfall which could affect water quality and availability.
- An increase in autumn/winter rainfall. This won't mean more rainy days, but when it does rain it will be much heavier.
- There will be an increase in temperatures across all seasons.
- In winter there will be less snow, ice and frost days, although there could still be an extreme snowfall event.
- In summer there will be an increase in temperatures and what we consider a heatwave could occur more frequently.
- There will be a rise in sea level.

"An assessment of climate risks has been produced in a separate Evidence Base for Aberdeen Adapts. This takes on board information relevant to Aberdeen from UK Climate Projections UKCP18 and relevant risks identified in the Third UK Climate

Change Risk Assessment. The Evidence Base is a live document and identifies climate risks relevant to Aberdeen, actions already taking place; and in line with the UK approach, indicates where more action is needed, where further investigation is required, where action should be sustained and areas that need monitored.” (Aberdeen Adapts, 2022, pg. 10).

12.49 The Evidence Base report sets out climate risks and opportunities relevant to Aberdeen for the following categories:

- Buildings and heritage;
- Transport & infrastructure;
- Water, energy & communications;
- Species, habitats & landscape;
- Soil;
- Trees and woodlands;
- Watercourses and coastline;
- Communities;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Economy; and,
- Food.

12.50 The report includes additional information of challenges and opportunities for research and awareness. It summarises the current policies and actions relating to adaptation in Aberdeen and, it identifies ways to strengthen resilience to climate change. These actions can be taken on board and considered in the next Local Development Plan, ensuring that Council strategies are aligned in the pursuit of climate adaptation in Aberdeen.

Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen

12.51 The vision emphasizes the city's role in leading the shift from fossil-based energy systems to renewable energy sources, leveraging its expertise in the oil and gas industry to support this transition.

12.52 The strategy identifies several priority actions to support the energy transition, including investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport, such as:

- Investing in Renewable Energy: This includes expanding the use of offshore wind, hydrogen, and other renewable energy sources. The goal is to leverage Aberdeen's existing expertise and infrastructure to become a leader in renewable energy production.
- Enhancing Energy Efficiency: The strategy emphasizes the importance of improving energy efficiency in buildings and infrastructure. This involves retrofitting existing buildings and ensuring new developments meet high energy efficiency standards.
- Developing Sustainable Transport: The plan includes initiatives to promote sustainable transport options, such as electric vehicles, public transport, and active travel. This aims to reduce emissions from the transport sector and improve air quality in the city.
- Supporting Innovation and Technology: Aberdeen aims to foster innovation and technology development in the energy sector. This includes supporting research

and development projects, as well as creating an environment that encourages the growth of new energy technologies.

- Building a Resilient Economy: The strategy highlights the need to build a resilient economy that can adapt to the challenges of the energy transition. This involves supporting businesses and workers in the transition to new energy industries and ensuring that the benefits of the transition are shared widely.

12.53 Overall, the Aberdeen Energy Transition Vision 2020 provides a roadmap for the city's transition to a sustainable and climate-positive future. Consideration of this when developing the next Local Development Plan will be essential to supporting the delivery of net zero emissions across each sector in Aberdeen.

Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap

12.54 The Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and the supporting six themed strategies set out the approach for the journey to a net zero city, aiming to build on the existing foundations of Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision. The six themed strategies are as follows:

- Buildings and heat: reducing energy demand, energy efficiency and transitioning to low and zero carbon heat.
- Circular economy: making better use of valuable resources.
- Energy Supply: increasing decentralised energy, developing green hydrogen, offshore wind; alongside expanding skills and supply chains.
- Mobility: Reducing the demand for travel, moving to low and zero emission vehicles and boosting active travel.
- Natural Environment: Protecting and enhancing nature across the city, contributing to an overall reduction in emissions from land and to increase carbon stores.
- Empowerment: Setting the means and mechanisms for input, participation and collaboration vital to a just transition for the city.

12.55 Net Zero Aberdeen sits alongside Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework. In driving forward to meet city net zero ambitions, we need to build in resilience, taking action to prepare for inevitable changes in climate. The next Local Development Plan can work alongside these strategies in delivering net zero targets for example, supporting the Buildings and Heat strategy through encouraging connectivity to Heat Network Zones in new development.

Council Climate Change Plan 2021 - 2025

12.56 The Council Climate Change Plan 2021-2025 sets a net zero target for Aberdeen City Council's own assets and operations and drives a significant increase in actions to reduce carbon emissions and to build resilience. Delivery of the plan will make an active contribution to the Council's wider net zero city commitment. The Plan identifies the Council's targets for a net zero future:

"We will achieve net zero corporate carbon emissions by 2045 at the latest with interim targets of: - a reduction of at least 48% by 2025 - a reduction of at least 75% by 2030 (against Council 2015/16 reporting baseline) This plan will be reviewed in 2025 and thereafter every 5 years, or earlier taking into account changes to legislation strategy and guidelines."* (Council Climate Change Plan 2021 - 2025, Pg. 4).

12.57 The document provides a table which highlights five themes covering council assets and operations and a list of outcomes. These are identified as:

- Buildings: Council Buildings and Council Housing;
- Mobility: Fleet and Staff Travel;
- Operations: Street Lighting, Internal Waste, Nature Based Action;
- Leadership and Governance: Process, Procurement and Decision Making; and,
- Awareness and Behaviour Change: Communications, Participation and Training.

12.58 Under these themes the document identifies a number of projects which the Council will undertake to satisfy the outcomes identified within the five themes to move towards their net zero target. The Local Development Plan is one of a number of Plans and Strategies that will be used to deliver these projects, for example the 'Mapping of Blue / Green Infrastructure Opportunity Sites' project.

Met Office Climate Report for Aberdeen City

12.59 The Met Office generated climate report for Aberdeen City provides an overview of climate change forecasting at a local level. A summary is as follows:

Current Climate:

- Eastern Scotland experiences the highest summer temperatures and significant rainfall variations.
- Recent decades have seen increased temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns.

Climate Change Impacts:

- Heat: Increased energy demand for cooling.
- Sea Level Rise: Higher risk of coastal flooding.
- Heavy Rainfall: Increased flooding risks.
- Health: Greater risk of heat stress.
- Drought: Potential water supply issues.
- Transport: Disruptions due to extreme weather.
- Environment: Threats to biodiversity.
- Energy: Infrastructure risks from flooding.

Future Projections:

- Warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.
- Increased frequency of extreme weather events.
- Sea level rise will continue, affecting coastal areas.

Local Climate Indicators:

- Projected increases in summer and winter temperatures.
- Changes in precipitation patterns, with potential for more intense rainfall events.

Sea Level Rise:

- Continued rise expected, with significant impacts on coastal infrastructure and communities.

Action and Adaptation:

- Emphasises the need for both mitigation (reducing emissions) and adaptation (preparing for impacts).
- Encourages local authorities, businesses, and the public to take proactive steps.

12.60 This report highlights the importance of understanding and preparing for climate change impacts specific to Aberdeen City. This in depth view of climate change impacts will be essential in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan,

ensuring that our approach to development is informed by a comprehensive understanding of anticipated climate projections.

Aberdeen Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Data

12.61 UK greenhouse gas statistics show that greenhouse gas emissions in Aberdeen City have been on a downward trend from 2005 to 2022 (published June 2024), shown in Figure 12.3 below. The data confirms the key sources of GHG emissions are the transport and domestic sectors, shown in Figure 12.4 below.

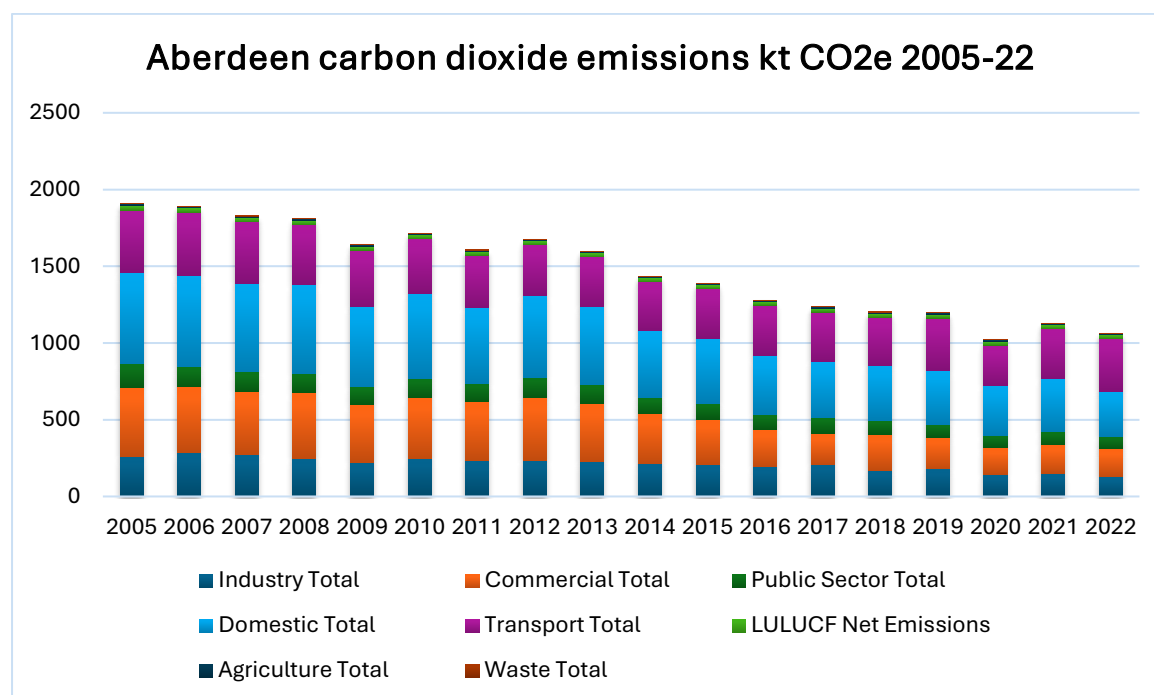


Figure 12.3: Bar graph showing the trend of carbon dioxide emissions by sector in Aberdeen from 2005-2022. Taken from Aberdeen Greenhouse Gas Data, submitted via email.

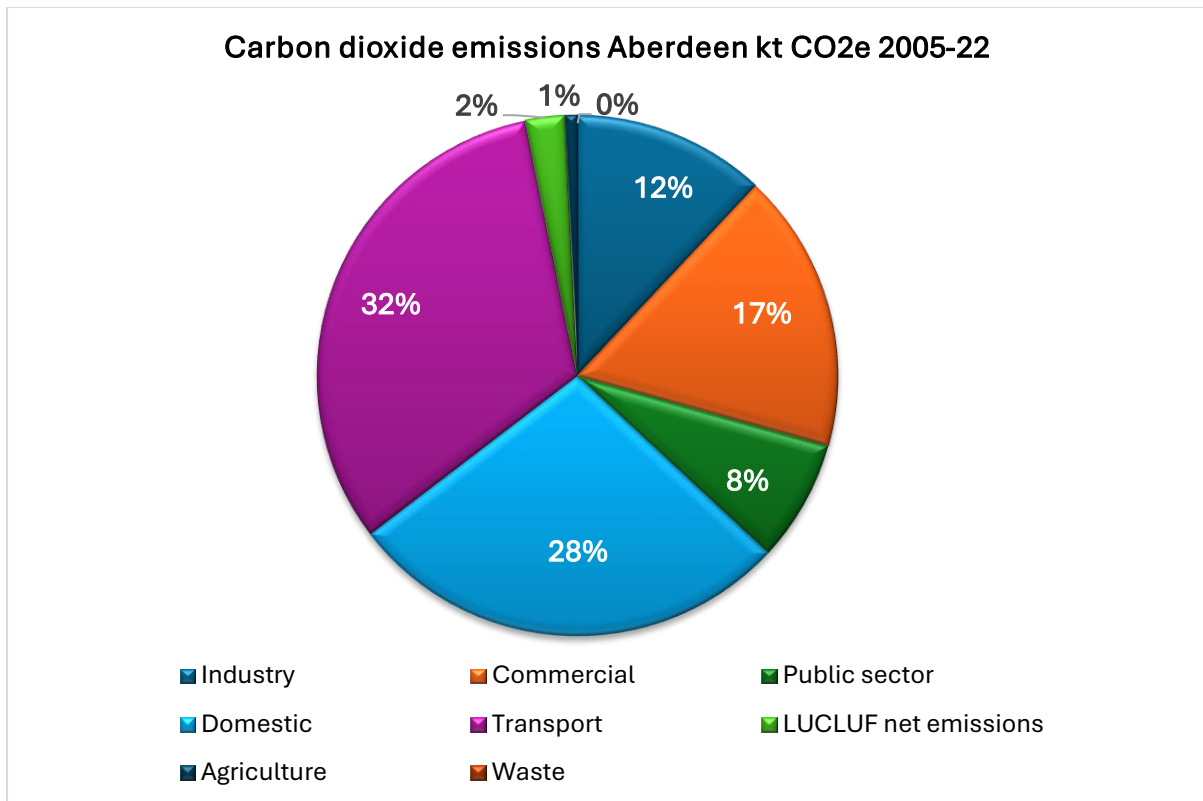


Figure 12.4: Pie chart showing the breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions by sector in Aberdeen from 2005-2022. Taken from Aberdeen Greenhouse Gas Data, submitted via email.

12.62 The next Local Development Plan will seek to consider this data as it endeavours to pursue net zero emissions, recognising how it can support a reduction in emissions across each sector. This will be particularly important in addressing the sectors that contribute highly to Aberdeen’s overall emissions, such as transport and domestic emissions.

Aberdeen City Annual Emissions Inventory Report (2021)

12.63 The Annual Emission Inventory Report from the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service provides a comprehensive overview of 2021 area-wide emission categories within the ClimateView official board for the Aberdeen City area. Among the key takeaways outlined in the report, it is highlighted that between 2020 to 2021 there was a 3% increase in emissions. Regarding energy consumption, it is noted that from 2005-2021, energy consumption has reduced at a much slower rate with fluctuations in part related to the variation in retail price of natural gas and electricity. As the rate of grid decarbonisation slows, achieving further emission reductions will require a decrease in consumption. This Aberdeen specific data can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan, assisting in highlighting areas where the Local Development Plan can support emissions reduction.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026

12.64 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (LOIP) outlines how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision for 2026 is Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. Through early intervention and prevention, the aim is to

create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself, using a whole life approach combined with a lifelong learning approach. The measures of success in achieving the vision will be that by 2026:

- We will still have the highest GVA (Gross Value Added) per head in Scotland
- Fewer than 10% of our children are living in poverty
- We are living in good health for at least five years longer
- Our carbon emissions are 61% lower

12.65 The LOIP has four key themes to achieve the vision; Economy, People (Children & Young People, and Adults), Place and Community Empowerment, with 16 stretch outcomes. The Place Outcomes are:

- Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61%.
- Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles.
- 26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.

12.66 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related climate change reduction of the LOIP.

Flood Risk and Water Management

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009: Delivering Sustainable Flood Risk Management

12.67 The guidance reminds Local Authorities of their responsibilities around flood risk management under the Act. These responsibilities include:

1. Flood Risk Assessment:
 - Conduct assessments to identify areas at significant risk of flooding.
2. Flood Risk Management Plans:
 - Develop and implement local flood risk management plans in coordination with SEPA and other stakeholders.
3. Flood Protection Schemes:
 - Design, construct, and maintain flood protection schemes to reduce flood risk.
4. Surface Water Management:
 - Manage surface water to prevent flooding, including the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).
5. Public Engagement:
 - Engage with communities to raise awareness about flood risks and involve them in flood risk management planning.
6. Emergency Response:
 - Prepare and implement emergency response plans for flood events.

12.68 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate these responsibilities and action points as it directs future development in Aberdeen.

National Flood Resilience Strategy (2024)

12.69 This report was produced as a response to the national climate emergency and seeks to offer a strategy to steer Scotland toward a flood resilient future. The report highlights that flooding is the costliest hazard caused by climate change in Scotland of which the frequency and severity of flooding is increasing. Future Projections state that by 2080, nearly 400,000 properties in Scotland will be at risk of flooding.

12.70 This strategy forms part of the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 (SNAP3), which is included in the Climate Mitigation and Adaptation section above.

12.71 It identifies three key areas of focus:

- People: Involving communities in flood resilience decision-making.
- Places: Adapting land management and placemaking for flood resilience.
- Processes: Integrating flood resilience into planning and increasing collaboration.

1272 The report confirms that Aberdeen is at high risk of flooding, particularly from coastal and river sources. Key outcomes to enable flood resilient places the report identifies for areas such as Aberdeen include:

1. **Community Engagement:** Active involvement of local communities in flood resilience planning and decision-making processes.
2. **Enhanced Land Management:** Implementation of adaptive land use practices and natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risks.
3. **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Improvements to urban drainage systems and the introduction of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water effectively.
4. **Advanced Data Utilization:** Use of data analytics and real-time monitoring to enhance flood risk mapping and predictive modelling for better planning and response.
5. **Long-term Resilience:** Focus on building long-term flood resilience through collaborative efforts and strategic planning.

12.73 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate these key outcomes as it endeavours to strengthen flood resilience throughout Aberdeen, particularly around those areas most at risk of flooding.

Position Statement: Elevated Buildings in Areas of Flood Risk

12.74 Aberdeen City Council acknowledges SEPA's guidance for elevated buildings in areas of flood risk and understands that it applies only where such structures are used to enable development that would not otherwise be acceptable according to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 22. The next Local Development Plan can incorporate consideration of this guidance.

Position Statement: Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes

12.75 Aberdeen City Council acknowledges SEPA's position relating to proposed development on land protected by a formal flood protection scheme. The document sets out how to take account of a flood protection scheme, with a summary of how to

apply this in decision making. The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this guidance.

SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance

- 12.76 This document offers SEPA's guidance regarding flood risk and land use vulnerability. It outlines the categories of 'vulnerability' in relation to flooding and explains the relative vulnerability of different land uses. The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this guidance as it seeks to protect areas vulnerable to flood risk in Aberdeen.

SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities

- 12.77 This document applies to development at risk of flooding or in a flood risk area, as defined in NPF4. It provides standing advice across three categories of development: where there is no land raising or loss of floodplain capacity, development proposals at flood risk solely from surface water, and development proposals at flood risk solely from groundwater. The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate consideration of this advice document to support areas in Aberdeen at risk of flooding.

SEPA North East Local Plan District

- 12.78 This provides background information to the Flood Risk Management Strategy that each district is required to produce. Scotland has been separated into 14 Local Plan Districts, based on river catchments and coastal areas that cross administrative boundaries, Aberdeen City is captured within the North East Local Plan District. The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this as it seeks to support flood risk management in Aberdeen.

Local Flood Risk Management Plan – North East

- 12.79 The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on responsible authorities to manage flood risk on a plan-led, risk based, sustainable way. North East Local Plan District covers Aberdeen. It sets out the long term ambition for flood risk management. The actions are described and prioritised in six year planning cycles. Aberdeenshire are the lead local authority for the area responsible for providing the flood risk management plan for Aberdeen.
- 12.80 There is river, surface water and coastal flood risk in the Local Plan District, with the main risk coming from river and surface water flooding. Significant flooding from the sea and from smaller watercourses and surface water has also occurred, most notably in Aberdeen, with many towns and villages also affected by flooding.
- 12.81 Potentially vulnerable areas (PVAs) were designated in 2018 based on the potential current or future risk from all sources of flooding. They provide more specific local actions to manage flood risk in target areas. There are four PVA's in Aberdeen: Aberdeen City – North, Aberdeen City – South, Peterculter, Cove and Nigg Bay.
- 12.82 Aberdeen City – North is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to the risk of flooding from surface water, small watercourses and the River Don to Bridge of Don, Dyce and Kingswells (north). There is a history of flooding to parts of the potentially vulnerable area from these sources, including recent flooding from surface water and small watercourses. Identified priority actions include flood studies, surface water

management plans, flood scheme or works design, community engagement, flood scheme or works implementation, sewer flood risk assessment, shoreline management plan (coastal adaptive plan), flood defence maintenance.

- 12.83 Aberdeen City – South is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to the risk of river, coastal and surface water flooding to Aberdeen. Coastal flood risk is likely to increase due to sea level rise caused by climate change. Riverside Drive floods from the River Dee due to high tides. Surface water flooding affected Aberdeen on a number of occasions, causing roads to flood. The Merchant Quarter was particularly affected in the past. Identified priority actions include flood defence maintenance, flood scheme or works design, community engagement, flood scheme or works implementation, flood study, flood warning maintenance, strategic mapping improvements, shoreline management plan (coastal adaptive plan), sewer flood risk assessment, surface water management plan.
- 12.84 Peterculter is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to river flooding from the Culter Burn, and surface water flooding. Recent flooding occurred due to river and surface water flooding. Identified priority actions include data collection, community flood alert, sewer flood risk assessment, surface water management plan, flood warning maintenance.
- 12.85 Cove and Nigg Bay is designated as a potentially vulnerable area due to the risk of surface water flooding in the Cove Bay and Nigg Bay areas of Aberdeen. Identified priority actions include surface water management plan, and sewer flood risk assessment.

The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 – 2027

- 12.86 SEPA has prepared a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Scotland for 2021 to 2027 which sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment. This RBMP builds on previous RBMPs published in 2009 and 2015, setting revised objectives for the period from 2021 to the end of 2027 and providing a programme of actions for achieving the objectives. 2027 is a significant date in the RBMP process. Over the past two cycles SEPA have been working towards having all feasible and proportionate actions in place by 2027 to achieve good or better condition for Scotland's water environment. This evidence source is explored further in the Nature and Biodiversity topic paper.
- 12.87 The Council has not prepared its own River Basin Management Plan but is seeking to mitigate the impact on the water environment and help halt species decline by seeking to deliver high quality, multifunctional blue-green spaces in new developments and promoting natural solutions such as rain gardens to deal with surface water.

Surface Water Management Plan

- 12.88 Aberdeen City Council do not have a localised Surface Water Management Plan however, the organisation are working closely with Scottish Water and SEPA to provide a Strategic Growth Agreement (SGA). The SGA provides recommendations for sufficient natural remedies in terms of blue/green infrastructure to alleviate the pressures of surface water flooding in identified areas of risk. A final draft of the SGA is hoped to be published soon and so, whilst it cannot be considered within this

evidence report, due consideration will be given to the SGA and all other relevant sources when drafting the next Local Development Plan.

- 12.89 Evidence gathered regarding the effects of climate change on coastal communities are explored in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

SEPA's guidance on Climate Change Allowances for Land Use Planning

- 12.90 The guidance sets out required allowances for climate change that must be used for flood risk assessment. It allows planning authorities in Scotland to underpin their land use planning decisions with the best evidence available. Allowances are *“a prediction of anticipated change in peak river flow, peak rainfall intensity or sea level rise caused by future climate change. The type of allowance used will depend upon the type of flooding being considered and, for river (fluvial) flooding, the size of catchment or location.”*

- 12.91 These allowances are made available in map form. See a screenshot from the map below:

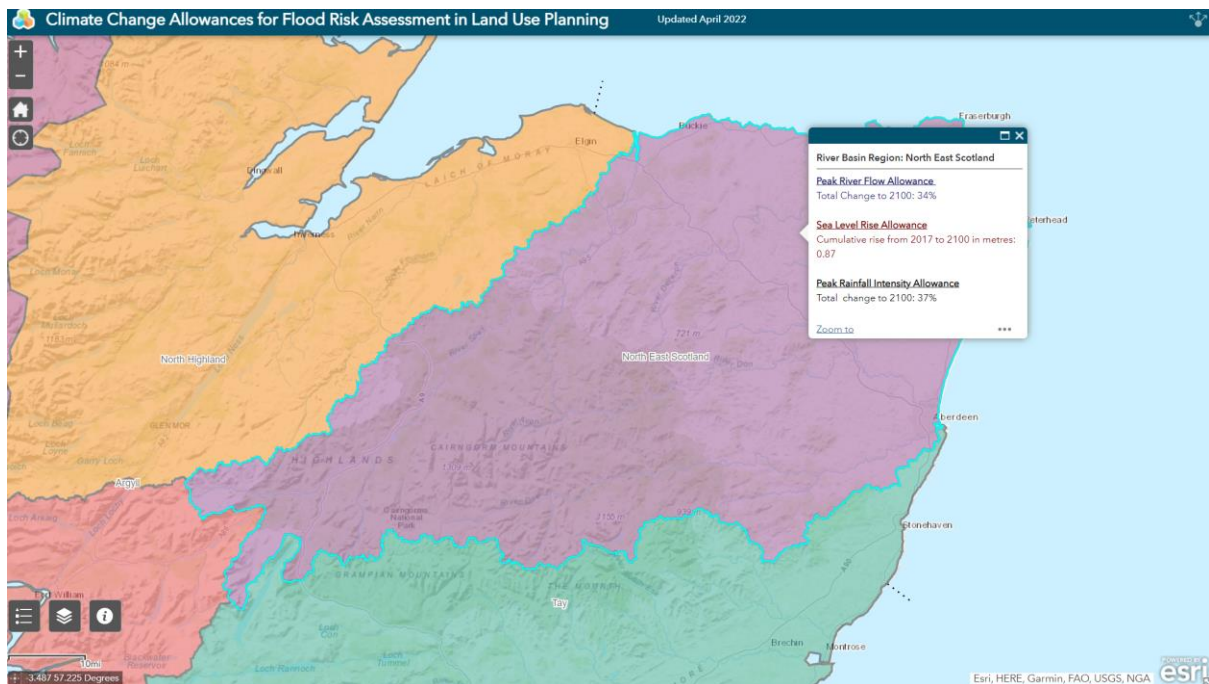


Figure 12.5: A snapshot taken from SEPA's Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning maps, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the peak river flow allowance, sea level rise allowance and, peak rainfall intensity allowance within the North East River Basin Region. Found at: [Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

SEPA Flood Maps

- 12.92 SEPA provide interactive maps which show the locations and different types of flooding in the Aberdeen area and the likelihood at which they are predicted to happen on an annual basis. These maps will be used as a screening tool to identify

where a proposed development may be at risk of flooding as sites are considered at the next stage of local development plan production.

- 12.93 The map below is a screen shot from the SEPA flood map of Aberdeen. The dark tones of navy (river flooding), green (coastal flooding), and purple (surface water flooding), represent a high likelihood of flooding, predicted at 10% chance of flooding every year. SEPA have provided guidance on how to use the flood maps effectively to ensure new development is not located in an area of high risk of flooding (see CDXX: Land use planning - Flood Maps | SEPA).

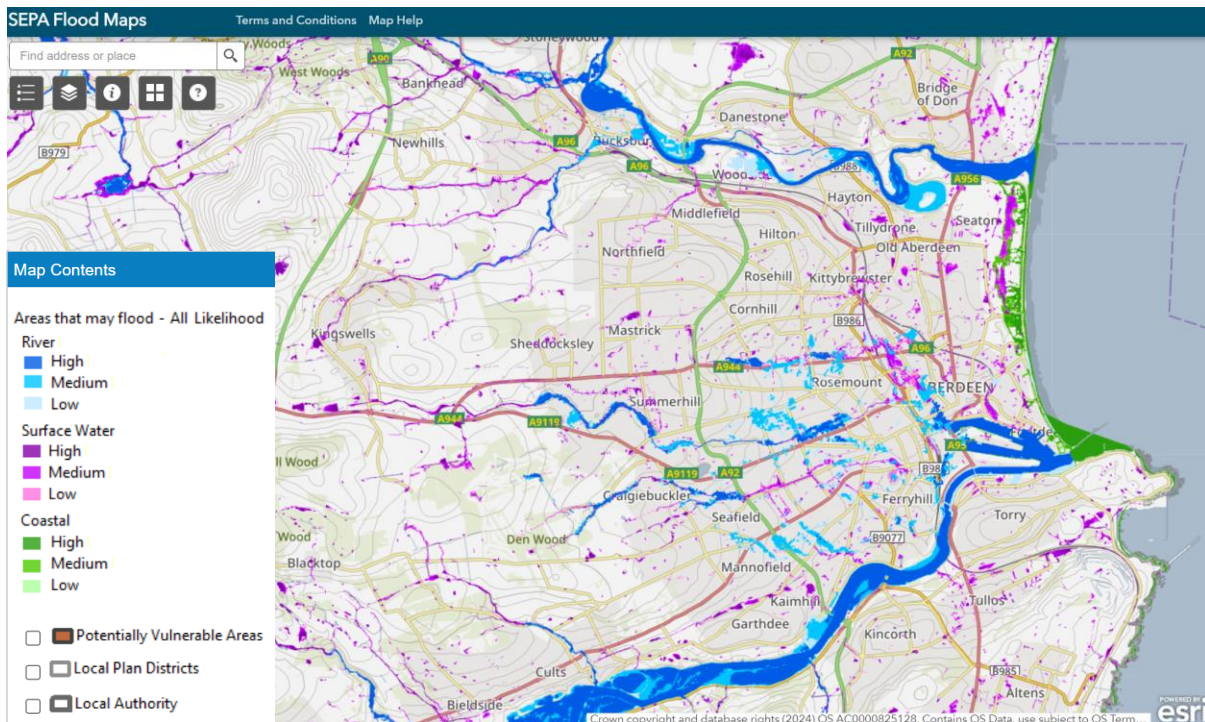


Figure 12.6: A snapshot taken from SEPA's flood maps only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that SEPA holds regarding the likelihood of flooding in Aberdeen on an annual basis. Further information and key above.

- 12.94 The map includes data from a number of additional filters including: depth and velocity, groundwater, flood defences, impacts of flooding, natural flood management, and natural susceptibility to coastal erosion. These extra data sets are noted and will be considered in the drafting of the proposed Local Development Plan.
- 12.95 SEPA produce a wide range of maps and datasets around flooding. All maps are available at SEPA's online Environmental data portal (CDXX: Environmental data | Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)). Additionally, SEPA provide datasets detailing past flood events, with details including river flow data, water level data, and rain gauge data. These are available at SEPA's online Flooding portal (CDXX: Flooding | Beta | SEPA | Scottish Environment Protection Agency).

SEPA Water Scarcity Report

- 12.96 SEPA's Water Scarcity Reports provide regular updates on the status of water resources in Scotland, particularly during periods of low rainfall. In this particular report dated 10th October 2024, Aberdeen is showing as 'Normal Conditions'. This

report acknowledges the SEPA Water Scarcity Reports. This evidence source is explored further in the Nature and Biodiversity topic paper.

Mapping Flood Disadvantage tool and report

12.97 The Mapping Flood Disadvantage in Scotland 2015: Main Report identifies and maps the neighbourhoods in Scotland that are most disadvantaged by flooding. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social vulnerability to flooding and the resulting flood disadvantage across Scotland.

12.98 Key points from the report include:

- **Social Vulnerability to Flooding:** The report assesses social vulnerability to flooding by considering various factors such as personal, social, and environmental characteristics that influence how different communities are affected by flooding.
- **Flood Disadvantage Mapping:** The research maps the neighbourhoods most disadvantaged by flooding, highlighting areas where high social vulnerability coincides with high flood exposure.
- **Policy Context:** The report provides a policy context, discussing how the findings can inform flood risk management and social policy in Scotland.
- **Case Studies:** The report includes case studies from local authorities such as Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee City, and Scottish Borders, providing detailed insights into the specific challenges and responses in these areas.

12.99 Aberdeen specific conclusions include:

- In Aberdeen City surface water flooding is likely to affect the highest proportion of residential properties.
- The assessment of the levels of social vulnerability has revealed that just below 8% of all data zones are classified as having an extremely high or acute vulnerability to flooding. These are mainly located in large urban areas (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen).
- The highest number of data zones with acute and extreme flood disadvantage with respect to river flooding are found in Edinburgh, Stirling and Highland, followed by Falkirk and Aberdeen.
- Glasgow presents the highest concentration of surface water flood disadvantage, with one-third of the extremely disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This is followed by City of Edinburgh and Aberdeen City.

12.100 By leveraging the findings from the report, the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen can develop, where necessary, comprehensive and inclusive flood risk management policies that not only reduce the physical risk of flooding but also address the social vulnerabilities of its communities.

Water Environment Hub

12.101 The Water Environment Hub is an online data tool for exploring the current river basin management plan for Scotland. It provides information on the health, impacts, action to be taken, and planned future condition for Scotland's water environment,

including rivers. The web page shows all of the information for river basin planning, including information on each waterbody, pressures, measures, and objectives set by SEPA.

12.102 Below is a snap shot taken from the Water Environment Hub for Aberdeen City. The interactive maps identifies the water bodies within the area and their condition. Links to each water body provide further information as to their condition and actions/objectives to improve their quality.

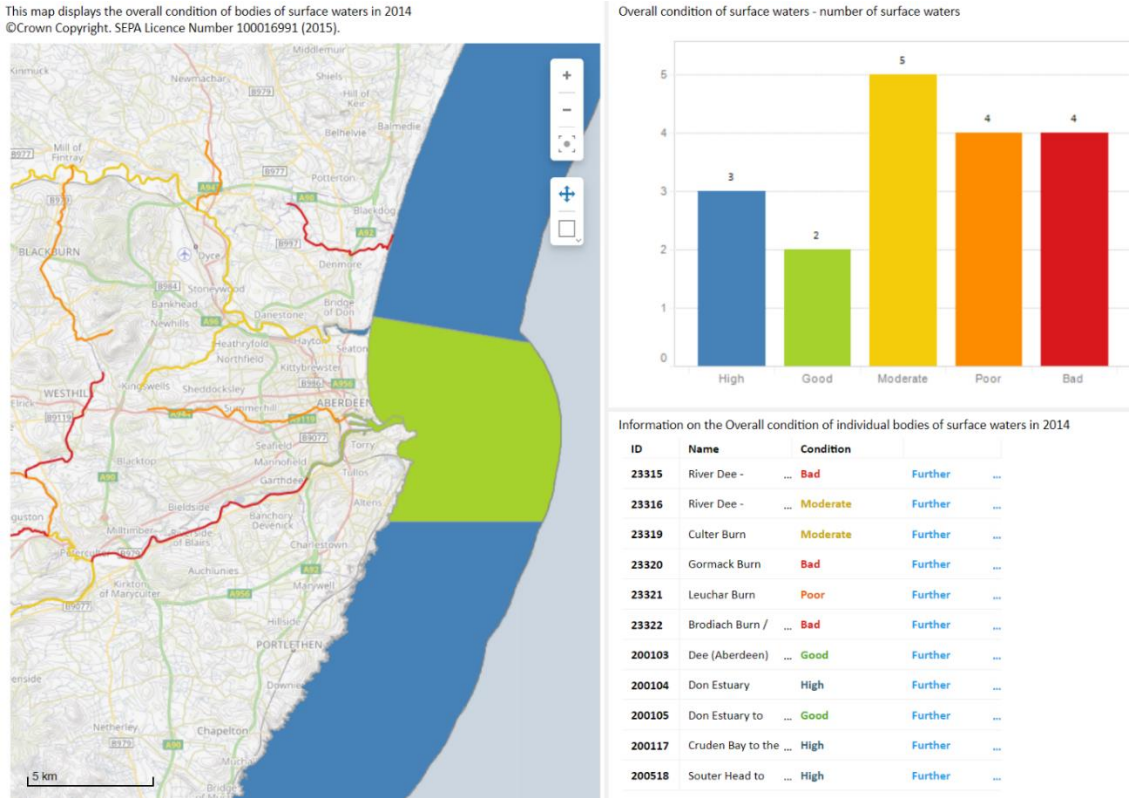


Figure 12.7: A snapshot taken from The Water Environment Hub, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that the Water Environment Hub holds regarding the condition of surface waters in Aberdeen. Further information above.

12.103 The next Local Development Plan will seek to incorporate this data as it supports management of water environments, recognising the importance of understanding the condition of specific water bodies in Aberdeen.

Recommended Riparian Corridor Layer for use in Land Use Planning

12.104 Functioning riparian (river bank) corridors can help increase the resilience of a place. This document provides guidance on the recommended width of riparian corridors to protect water features and provide multiple benefits, such as contributing towards the resilience of a place to the impacts of climate change and help address the nature crisis, providing environmental benefits, and a wide range of public services. These areas are also an important element of blue green infrastructure and nature networks. This document can be used to incorporate recommendations for riparian corridors in Aberdeen to inform the next Local Development Plan.

12.105 The document provides guidance on the recommended minimum corridor widths for each channel bank, provided in the table below.

Channel width	Recommended corridor width on each channel bank
< 2 m	10 m
2 to 15 m	15 m
> 15 m	30 m

Table 12.1: Outlines SEPA's guidance on channel bank widths. Taken from SEPA's Recommended Riparian Corridor Layer for Land Use in Planning document.

12.106 A GIS layer has been created which indicates the minimum space needed along rivers (i.e. riparian corridor width scaled to river width) to give rivers space to adapt to changes in flood frequency and magnitude. The GIS layer shows the minimum proposed riparian corridor widths scaled to the width of the watercourse, which if left undeveloped increase climate resilience by giving rivers space to adapt to changes in flood frequency and magnitude and provide a wide range of benefits.

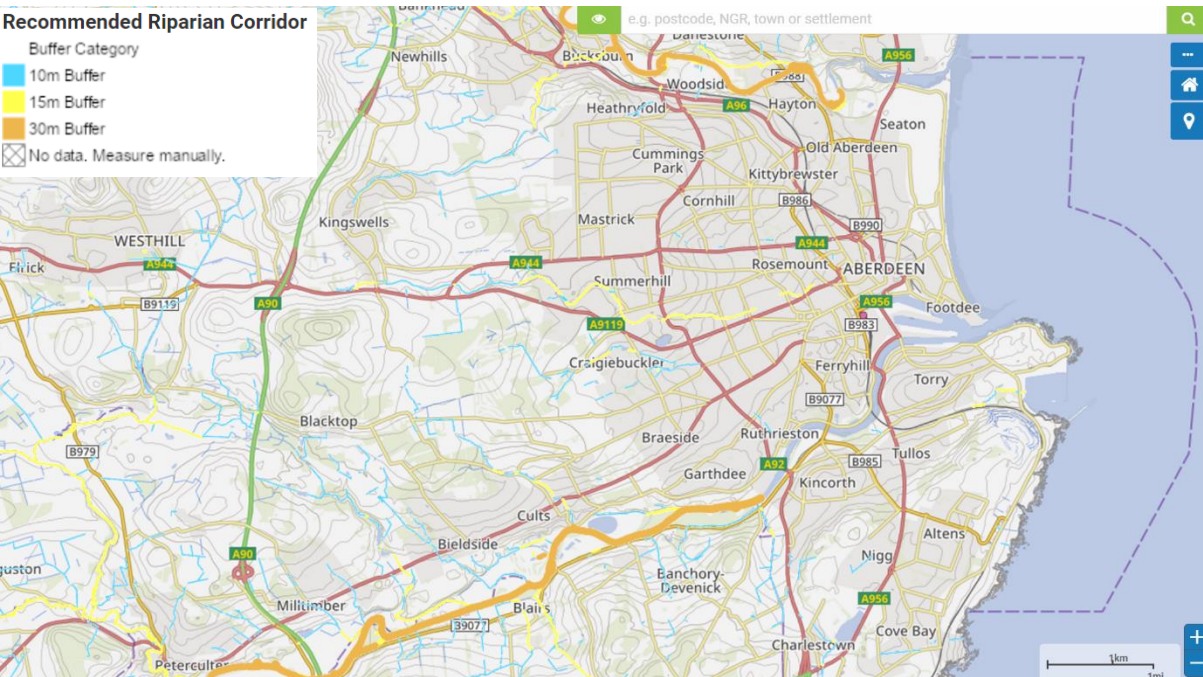


Figure 12.8: A snapshot taken from SEPA's 'Recommended Riparian Corridor' map, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that SEPA holds regarding the recommended riparian corridors in Aberdeen. Can be found at: [Map | Scotland's environment web](#)

12.107 The map below provides an up close view of the same map, showing channels in the Gardee and Kincorth areas of Aberdeen. Using the map legend above, it is clear to see where SEPA have recommended specific channel bank widths on specific channels.

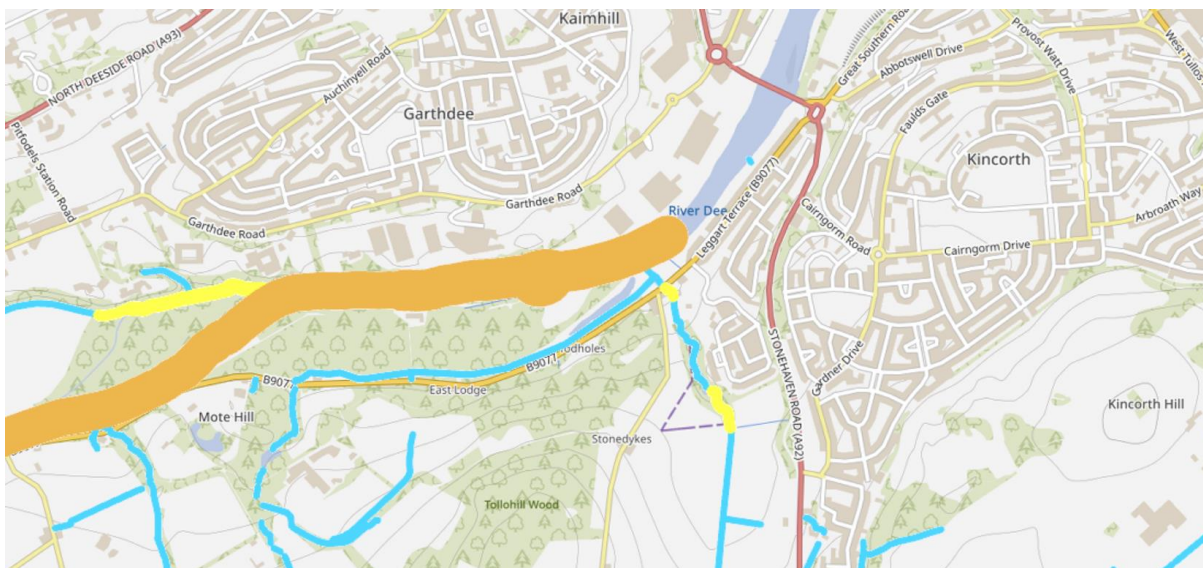


Figure 9: A snapshot taken from SEPA's 'Recommended Riparian Corridor' map, only used here for the purpose of demonstrating the information that SEPA holds regarding the recommended riparian corridors in Aberdeen. Can be found at: [Map | Scotland's environment web](https://www.sepa.org.uk/map-scotland-environment)

12.108 Additionally, SEPA provides guidance on riparian vegetation planting opportunities. It offers further guidance for natural flood management along riverbanks.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

12.109 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is designed to inform the development planning process and to reduce flood risk by avoiding areas at significant risk of flooding. It is a strategic overview of flood risk to the development plan area and involves the collection, analysis and presentation of all existing and readily derivable information on flood risk sources. It is to be produced in consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) as well as other Council services.

12.110 The Council is responsible for producing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Aberdeen City Council has produced a draft SFRA with a number of action points which have been agreed with SEPA.

12.111 Publicly accessible SFRA mapping will be provided that will include available information on flooding, watercourses and available flood studies and protection schemes. This will be hosted on the Council website with a target date of August.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

12.112 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

12.113 In summary, initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group for the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper.

- 12.114 Key stakeholders for the paper included:
- Nature Scot
 - SEPA
 - Scottish Water
 - NESTRANS
 - Aberdeen City Council (Climate and Environment, Climate and Sustainability, Flooding)
- 12.115 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or to suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.
- 12.116 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.
- 12.117 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (Nature Scot, SEPA, Homes for Scotland) 2 from housing developers, (Bancon Homes and Icen Projects), and 4 members of the public. Of those listed, 4 stated that evidence was missed and 3 stated that they did not agree with the evidence. Following further discussion, it was confirmed that none of the respondents disputed the evidence presented.
- 12.118 The following expands upon responses received during engagement:
- 12.119 In their email of 13th June, SEPA made a number of comments on the SFRA. The Council have amended the SFRA and have addressed these comments.
- SEPA also made recommendations to include mapping information in the SFRA. Further clarification was provided in an email of 20th June and at a meeting held the same day. The Council have agreed to update the SFRA in by the end of August, to include mapping information on flooding, watercourses and available flood studies and protection schemes. Potential gaps in the mapping information and the actions needed to overcome them are explained in the SFRA.
 - SEPA seeks further text within the Implications section relating to the use of the River Basin Management Plan 3 and how it will influence the plan preparation process. We have included further text explaining that the River Basin Management Plan 3, and any related SEPA resources, will be taken into account as part of the site selection process.
- 12.120 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland stated that they agreed with the evidence presented in this Topic Paper (aside from one dispute set out in the Statement of Agreement/Dispute section below) and have provided further commentary;
- Homes for Scotland indicated that there are missing pieces of evidence for this Topic Paper. They recommended inclusion of the following; Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019, 'Is Scotland Climate Ready?' Climate Change Committee report, 'The Just Transition and Climate Adaptation' Climate Change Committee report, 'Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report: Summary

- for Scotland', 'SEPA Position Statement on Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes', 'SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance', and 'SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities'. Each of these recommendations are welcome and have been included in the Topic Paper.
- Homes for Scotland recommend inclusion of the 'HM Government National Risk Register', this offers a high level overview of various risks for governing bodies to consider. This has not been included as the 'Third Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report', added to the Topic Paper, provides greater detail over the issues relevant to the Topic Paper. The 'Using Climate Scenarios to Support Today's Decision Making' was recommended for inclusion. This resource highlights a tool that may be beneficial for future climate scenario testing. The Council welcomes the suggestion, however it is not considered relevant to this Topic Paper and has not been included.
 - The 'Flood Risk Management Strategy (Forth Estuary Local Plan District)' was recommended for inclusion. The suggestion is welcome, however, the relevant 'Local District Plan (North East)' is already captured within the Topic Paper. The 'Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessment in Land Use Planning' was recommended, and is already included in the Topic Paper.
 - The 'New Build Heat Standard' was recommended, and is already included within the 'Energy and Resources' Topic Paper. The 'Fourteenth Annual Report on the Operation of Section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) 2009' was recommended for inclusion, and has been included within the 'Energy and Resources' Topic Paper.
 - Homes for Scotland recommended use of the 'Homes for Scotland Site Assessment Methodology' and 'Homes for Scotland Deliverability Checklist'. However, the Council have selected the Key Agencies Joint Local Development Plan Site Assessment and the SEA Checklist which has been achieved through consensus. These can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Evidence Report.
 - Homes for Scotland suggested that in areas where there are planning permissions granted and Flood Risk Assessments have been submitted, these Flood Risk Assessments should form part of the data sets. Although these planning permissions have been granted, it is not possible to guarantee their delivery and therefore, inclusion of this data is not considered relevant.

12.121 Homes for Scotland also provided further commentary as noted below:

- They outlined the importance of protecting biodiversity and integrating sustainable biodiversity improvement measures into their developments. They detailed their use of permeable boundaries for wildlife movement to strengthen habitat connectivity. The Council welcomes these points and has no further comment.
- The presence of biodiversity on sites promoted for development should not preclude the site from being considered as suitable for being developed. They highlighted that biodiversity and nature networks can be incorporated into new development, creating quality places that provide assets for the local community. They highlighted need for balanced decision making and stated that all factors are to be considered when allocating sites for the next Plan. The Council welcomes this comment however, the site selection process considers a level of detail that is not anticipated for discussion at the Evidence Report stage of Plan preparation.

- They highlighted the importance of considering marketability and deliverability, when selecting sites for development. This ensures that housing is built where there is demand, helping to meet the Council's housing requirements. The Council welcomes this comment however, the site selection process considers a level of detail that is not anticipated for discussion at the Evidence Report stage of Plan preparation.
- They emphasised the need to minimize the impact of development on organic soils and peat. They stated that future policies must recognise that there are tools available to minimise the impact of development on peat and high organic matter rich soils, such as use of a Construction Environment Management Plan. The Council notes this comment and suggests the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper be consulted, the 'Summary of Implications' section mentions efforts to protect disturbance to soils from development.
- Homes for Scotland members are committed to reducing climate change impacts by installing energy-efficient systems and promoting local living. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- Location of new development is important for supporting local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods. They proposed that the Council prepare a plan outlining where Aberdeen's 20-minute neighbourhoods are currently located to assist developers in identifying existing amenities or additional amenity need when responding to the call for sites. Where conflicts emerge with site assessment criteria, they suggested the Council should engage with the promoter to identify mitigation opportunities. Some sites will be unsuitable due to significant constraints. The Council acknowledges this comment however, further detail on local living can be found in the Place, and Sustainable Transport Topic Papers.
- Home building can positively influence local living factors, such as through providing full fibre connectivity to support working from home, and including active travel connections. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- There is a national housing emergency. In accordance with NPF4, climate change will be considered alongside other policies in determining applications or allocating sites. The Chief Planner letter (2024) notes the need for decision makers to weigh up all relevant policies in reaching a balanced decision. While discussion concerning this area of decision making is welcome, further detail regarding the Chief Planner letter (2024) is included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- Building Standards regulations are the appropriate means of driving sustainability factors for new developments. The Council welcomes this comment and further text has been added to the Energy and Resources Topic Paper to outline this.
- SEPA are working with Local Planning Authorities to look at compensatory storage to allow sites to be developed. They stated that Aberdeen City Council should partake in this strategic approach to identify opportunity for compensatory storage. They added that this is paramount for applying an Infrastructure First approach. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.
- Call for ideas housing proposals should be mapped and overlaid with flood extents to allow homebuilders to identify opportunity for flood mitigation through compensatory storage. This may be beneficial to sites where land that is not initially identified for development, to become developable if alternative land is used for sustainable flood management. Any maintenance and associated

- programming of flood storage, and associated planting, would be undertaken by a factor and agreed through planning conditions. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.
- The SEPA Flood Hazard Maps and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment help identify areas at risk of flooding. There may also be opportunity to incorporate mitigation or flood resilience into development proposals by using compensatory flood storage. Incorporating flood depth on public GIS mapping could help identify areas that might be suitable for housing subject to mitigation. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.
 - Concerning the identified Potentially Vulnerable Areas to flooding in the Topic Paper, future policy should recognise that there are tools available that can mitigate existing and future flood risk. The Topic Paper should outline that preparation of a Construction Environment Management Plan can assist in this. This can be used when allocating or consenting development, providing a degree of control, if the document is not implemented enforcement powers should be exercised. We welcome this comment and support such mitigation measures. Consideration of a Construction Environment Management Plan is available and at the discretion of the developer.
 - Responding to the Scottish Government's 'Flood Resilience Strategy: consultation' Homes for Scotland noted that flood resilient solutions may not always be appropriate if the principles of the Scottish Government's Just Transition are applied. They query the flood resilient approach detailed in the consultation. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
 - Aberdeen City Council should encourage partnership between local landowners/managers, farmers, crofters, and housebuilders/developers where there can be improvements to a settlement's long-term flood resilience. Collaboration is key to delivering solutions to deliver new homes. The Council welcomes these points and have no further comments.

12.122 Icen Projects stated that they agreed with the evidence presented in the Topic Paper and did not wish to raise a dispute. However, they provided two additional pieces of evidence recommended for inclusion in the Topic Paper. Recommendation of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 is welcome and has been included. The recommendation of including the Chief Planner letter (2024), noting that all NPF4 policies must be read and applied as a whole before being weighted by the decision maker to reach a balanced planning judgement, was not included. While discussion concerning this area of decision making is welcome, inclusion of the Chief Planner letter (2024) was not considered necessary for the purposes of this Topic Paper. Discussion regarding the Chief Planner letter (2024) is included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.

12.123 Icen Project also provided further commentary as noted below:

- Icen Projects agreed that Aberdeen City should aim to create high quality, multifunctional blue-green spaces in new developments and promote natural solutions like rain gardens for surface water management, as reflected in the Topic Paper. The Council welcomes this and have no further comment.
- Icen Projects agreed that new housing developments can be sustainably built using durable, energy-efficient materials, renewable energy technologies, and sustainable urban drainage systems. The design of new homes should maximize

energy efficiency and generation, and development layouts should be permeable and connected to existing areas and amenities. The Council welcomes this and have no further comment.

- Icen Projects stated that they disagreed with the notion that areas of significant flood risk should be entirely avoided for site allocations in the next Plan. They added that developers conduct due diligence, including technical assessments, to identify viable sites, which is sufficient for determining where sites can be delivered successfully. Additionally, they stated that local authorities and developers must adapt and use innovative engineering to ensure future development does not increase risk of flooding. In line with NPF4 policy 22 part (e), Aberdeen City should promote innovative drainage and flood mitigation engineering. They echoed the Homes for Scotland response that encourages incorporation of mitigation measures such as compensatory flood storage to increase flood resilience. This could be enhanced using public facing GIS mapping to identify areas potentially available for housing, subject to mitigation. They added that they support the Homes for Scotland response to this Topic Paper. The Council welcomes this discussion however its application is not considered necessary at the evidence report stage of Plan preparation.

12.124 Nature Scot stated that they disagreed with the evidence presented, however, following further discussion they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence. Nature Scot indicated that this topic paper had missed one piece of evidence; the 'Dynamic Coast' database, however they stated that this has been referenced in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper. Therefore, it has not been included in this Topic Paper.

12.125 Nature Scot provided commentary around the issue of local living, as noted below:

- They highlighted that NPF4 promotes the principles of local living, and stated that this should influence the Spatial Strategy for the next Plan. They outlined the benefits of local living for decreasing reliance on cars and reducing emissions. They stated that to help minimise a development's lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, the development should only be planned where there are, or will be, easily accessible links to public transport and to active travel networks. While discussion around this issue is welcome, it is considered more relevant to other Topic Papers. Further, detail concerning local living opportunity, car usage, and active travel in Aberdeen is outlined in the Sustainable Transport and Place Topic Papers.

12.126 Bancon Homes stated that they disagreed with the evidence presented, however, following further discussion at a meeting held on 18th June they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence, and provided the following commentary;

- Bancon Homes indicated that there are missing pieces of evidence for this topic paper. They recommend inclusion of the 'SEPA Position Statement on Development Protected by Formal Flood Protection Schemes', 'SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance', and 'SEPA Flood Risk Standing Advice for Planning Authorities'. These recommended sources are welcome, and have been included in the Topic Paper.
- Additionally, they recommended inclusion of the 'Scottish Government Flood Resilience Strategy: Consultation', however an updated version of this is already in the Topic Paper.

- Concerning the Flooding section of the topic paper, Bancon Homes acknowledges the four 'Potentially Vulnerable Areas' identified in Aberdeen City, but emphasises that this flood risk does not affect the entire area and should not prevent new development, provided that a Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the site is not at risk. The Council welcomes this comment and note that the site assessment process for the next Plan will clarify where Flood Risk Assessments are required for future development.
- Bancon Homes suggested that Aberdeen City Council, in collaboration with SEPA and landowners, should explore opportunities for compensatory flood storage as part of a strategic approach. This could allow development in areas initially deemed unsuitable due to flood risk. By overlaying housing proposals with flood extents, homebuilders could contribute to flood mitigation solutions. This approach could facilitate development in areas initially deemed unsuitable due to flood risk, by incorporating sustainable flood management. While discussion around this area is welcome, it is not considered relevant to the evidence presented.

12.127 Three individuals identified no missing pieces of evidence for inclusion in the Topic Paper. Three individuals agreed with the evidence presented. Among them, one individual stated that "Climate change is the biggest threat to our future". In relation to the evidence presented, another individual stated "It is accurate".

12.128 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Climate and Nature Crisis, Mitigation and Adaptation

12.129 The Proposed Plan should recognise its role in tackling the climate and nature crisis and consider how it can build resilience to current and future place based climate risk in Aberdeen.

12.130 The Proposed Plan should consider the need for sustained reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions in Aberdeen. This will require a whole systems approach, with implications and influence across topic papers.

12.131 The Proposed Plan will need to consider a policy approach to implement National Planning Framework 4 and deliver carbon offsetting if required in Aberdeen.

12.132 The Proposed Plan should reflect the required spatial outcomes necessary to pursue Aberdeen's commitment to reach net zero emissions and support the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap strategies.

12.133 The Proposed Plan should manage and mitigate wider impacts of climate change, including infrastructure risks, community resilience, air quality and food availability in Aberdeen.

Flood Risk and Water Management

- 12.134 The Proposed Plan should consider the impacts of climate change and flooding in the development of the spatial strategy to ensure long term climate adaptation and resilience is prioritised in Aberdeen.
- 12.135 The Proposed Plan should take into account the probability of flooding and must ensure that the necessary level of information is available as part of site assessments to ensure the avoidance of flood risk in Aberdeen.
- 12.136 The Proposed Plan should consider the outputs of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Aberdeen to inform the development planning process and reduce flood risk.
- 12.137 The Proposed Plan should consider SEPA resources such as the latest River Basin Management to inform the site selection process for Aberdeen.

Marmot Places

- 12.138 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 12.2 Marmot Principles

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

- 12.139 NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland, Icen Projects, and three members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented. Further, three members of the public indicated that no evidence sources had been missed.

12.140 SEPA, Nature Scot, and Bancon Homes confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

12.141 An individual respondent stated that “Climate change is the biggest threat to our future”. In relation to the evidence presented, another individual stated “It is accurate”.

Disputes with Stakeholders

12.142 Homes for Scotland have indicated that they dispute the use of the selected Key Agencies Joint Local Development Plan Site Assessment and the SEA Checklist outlined in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Evidence Report. They recommended use of the ‘Homes for Scotland Site Assessment Methodology’ and ‘Homes for Scotland Deliverability Checklist’. However, the Council deem the selected Site Assessment and SEA Checklist sufficient as these have been achieved through consensus across Key Agencies.

12.143 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic paper themselves.

Information Gaps

12.144 Aberdeen City Council has produced a draft SFRA with a number of action points which have been agreed with SEPA. Publicly accessible SFRA mapping will be provided that will include available information on flooding, watercourses and available flood studies and protection schemes. This will be hosted on the Council website with a target date of August. Potential gaps in the mapping information and the actions needed to overcome them are explained in the SFRA.

12.145 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

13.Topic Paper 6 – Nature and Biodiversity

Requirements addressed in this section:

13.1. Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,

National Planning Framework 4

Biodiversity

13.2. Local Development Plans (LDPs) should protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in line with the mitigation hierarchy. They should also promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by: facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity; restoring degraded habitats or creating new habitats; and incorporating measures to increase biodiversity, including populations of priority species.

Natural Places

13.3. LDPs will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes in their area.

Soils

13.4. LDPs should protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils, including land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use.

Forestry, Woodland & Trees

13.5. LDPs should identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks. The spatial strategy should identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodlands and trees in the area, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of a range of types to provide multiple benefits. This will be supported and informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

Links to Evidence

Biodiversity

- [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030](#)
- [Natural Environment \(Scotland\) Bill](#)
- [State of Nature Report 2023](#)
- [National Biodiversity Network \(NBN\) Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Biodiversity List](#)
- [Scotland's Environment Web](#)
- [North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership \(NESBIP\) 4- year strategic plan 2022-2026](#)
- [Nature Networks Toolbox](#)
- [Biodiversity Duty Report](#)
- [Biodiversity Records Data \(NatureScot\)](#)
- [Biological Recording in Scotland \(BRISC\)](#)
- [NESBReC](#)
- [NatureScot SiteLink](#)
- [Natural Environment Report](#)
- [Environmental Web Planning Application \(Aberdeen City Council Portal\) – used for identifying locations of Invasive Non-Native Species \(INNS\)](#)
- [Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels](#)
- [Important Invertebrate Areas \(Buglife\)](#)
- [Wetland Bird Survey \(British Trust for Ornithology\)](#)
- [Swift Mapper](#)
- [Species on the Edge](#)
- [Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note 3 – Wildlife Hazards Around Aerodromes](#)

Natural Places

- [Dynamic Coast – Coastal Erosion in Scotland](#)
- [Assessing Climate Change Impacts on the Water Quality of Scottish Standing Waters \(CREW – Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters\)](#)
- [Scotland's National Marine Plan](#)
- [Marine Protected Areas](#)
- [River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027](#)
- [State of the Coast – East Grampian Coastal Partnership](#)
- [SEPA Water Scarcity Report](#)
- [Convention on Wetlands of International Importance: Ramsar Sites](#)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(National Scenic Areas\) \(Scotland\) Designation Directions 2010: National Scenic Areas](#)
- [Wild Land Areas Map \(NatureScot\)](#)
- [The National Parks \(Scotland\) Act 2000: National Parks](#)
- [Special Areas of Conservation](#)
- [Special Protection Areas](#)
- [Sites of Special Scientific Interest \(SSSI\)](#)
- [Local Nature Reserves](#)
- [Local Nature Conservation Sites \(LNCS\)](#)

- [Country and Regional Parks](#)
- [Parks and Gardens](#)
- [Open Space Audit](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)

Soils

- [Land Capability for Agriculture in Scotland](#)
- [Peatland ACTION Project](#)
- [Carbon and Peatland Map 2016](#)
- [Scottish Bare Peat Viewer](#)
- [Scotland's Soils website](#)
- [Land Capability for Agriculture in Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutions \(SEFARI\) – Healthy Soils for a Green Recovery](#)
- [Carbon and Peatland Map 2016](#)
- [Scottish Bare Peat Viewer](#)
- [SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps](#)

Forestry, Woodland and Trees

- [Scotland's Forestry Strategy](#)
- [Scottish Government's Policy on Woodland Removal](#)
- [National Inventory of Woodland and Trees](#)
- [Native Woodland Survey of Scotland](#)
- [Ancient Woodland Inventory](#)
- [Tree Preservation Orders](#)
- [Ancient Tree Inventory](#)
- [The Granite City Forest – Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-25](#)
- [Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment](#)
- [The Right Tree in the Right Place – Planning for Forestry and Woodlands](#)
- [Scottish Forestry Open Data](#)
- [Biological and Environmental Evaluation Tools for Landscape Ecology \(BEETLE\)](#)
- [Scottish Forestry Open Data](#)
- [Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

13.6. Biodiversity and the natural environment, including soils, forestry, woodland and trees are vital for ensuring a healthy planet, and helping Scotland to achieve its net zero targets. The protection, conservation, restoration and enhancement of natural places can play a critical role in flood control and drought resilience, as can the use of nature based solutions.

13.7. The preservation and enhancement of biodiversity opportunities will ensure that ecosystems are more diverse and species-rich, which will build resilience to changing climactic conditions. Additional benefits can include enhanced soil quality, natural control of agricultural pests (thereby benefiting agriculture), and higher quality landscapes that can also attract tourism to Aberdeen and drive a sustainable local economy. There are also public health benefits of access to high-quality natural open spaces and landscapes, which are addressed in more detail in the Health and Wellbeing Topic Paper.

13.8. In summary, the inter-relationship between the NPF4 policies identified above necessitates the holistic approach set out in this topic paper. There is an urgent need to address the twin crises of nature loss and climate change, and the restoration and enhancement of our natural habitats and landscapes will support delivery of the aims of NPF4.

13.9. The section is structured as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Natural Places
- Soils
- Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Biodiversity

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland

13.10. This strategy outlines the ambition “for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045.” It seeks to ensure that the natural environment, ecosystems and species will be diverse and thriving and resilient to climactic variations. Regenerated biodiversity will bolster the economy and support communities to thrive.

13.11. It is supplemented by 6-year delivery plans (the first of which was published in tandem with the overall strategy on 27 November 2024). The LDP will aim to support the national ambitions outlined within this strategy and, in the process, deliver improvements to local biodiversity.

Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030

13.12. The Strategy includes 31 priority actions intended to stop and/or reverse biodiversity loss. These actions are part of an overarching series of outcomes that intend to protect nature on land and sea, protect and support the recovery of vulnerable species and habitats, attract investment in nature, and tackle indirect drivers of biodiversity loss (among others).

13.13. Also included within the Strategy is a commitment to protecting 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 as part of the 30 by 30 policy. Currently, 18.2% of Scotland’s land and freshwater is afforded protection.

13.14. The LDP will seek to support actions identified within this delivery plan in order to combat biodiversity loss at a local level (and thereby supporting the national effort).

Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

13.15. Published on 19 February 2025, the Bill consists of four main parts. These include:

- Part 1 – Targets for improving biodiversity
- Part 2 – Power to modify or restate Environmental Impact Assessment legislation and habitats regulations
- Part 3 – National Parks
- Part 4 – Deer Management

13.16. Parts 3 and 4 are likely to be less relevant to Aberdeen given the absence of any national parks, and the predominantly urban nature of the local authority boundary. Parts 1 and 2 will influence future biodiversity targets for inclusion within a subsequent Local Development Plan. However, depending on when new statutory targets are agreed upon; it may be too late to account for in the Proposed Plan (due 2026), and instead be accounted for in the subsequent Local Development Plan.

State of Nature Report 2023

13.17. A headline report detailing the best estimate of the status of nature within Scotland, based on all current data. It measures species abundance, distribution and the extinction risk for native species and summarises the changes in each of these criteria.

13.18. As of the 2023 report:

- There is a recorded average decrease in species abundance (across 407 terrestrial and freshwater species) of 15% since 1994.
- There has been a 49% decline in the average abundance of Scottish seabirds since 1986.
- There has been an average 15% increase in the distribution of invertebrate species since 1970.
- Since 1970, there have been decreases in the distribution of flowering plants (by 47%), bryophytes (by 62%) and lichens (57%), this is compared to the 27% of flowering plants, 25% of bryophytes and 34% of lichens that have experienced increases in distribution.
- 11% of the 7,508 species in Scotland that have been assessed using the IUCN's Red List criteria are classified as being threatened with extinction from Great Britain.

13.19. The report speculates that the declines in biodiversity may be due to a warming climate, overgrazing and overfishing, as well as the intensification of agricultural and forestry land uses. Some species are increasing in number however, with a warming climate creating a wider range of habitat for some species.

13.20. There may be scope within Aberdeen to target particular species or habitats for protection that are (or have historically been) present within the Local Authority boundary. The presence of Pine Marten can deter grey squirrels, which could in turn assist populations of red squirrels. Northern brown argus and water voles are also species that Aberdeen potentially has the habitat to support.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Scotland

13.21. This forms part of Scotland's environment web network and hosts data on UK species and habitats collated from various sources. It can be used for carrying out detailed data analysis due to the specificity of some of the available data sets. Furthermore, it facilitates the interrogation of "species records, habitat, climate and soil information, geographical boundaries and to use extremely powerful mapping tools through a single portal." It can also be used as a resource to help inform on the distribution of particular species over an area.

13.22. In preparing the next Local Development Plan, such information can be used to make informed decisions on areas of land that may be in need of additional protection in future, due to the presence of particular species. This can also tie-into wider strategic considerations of how (and where) to establish more effective nature corridors that better support habitats and species.

Scottish Biodiversity List

13.23. This catalogues a list of the habitats, plants and species that are deemed to be of the greatest importance for future biological conservation efforts in Scotland. The list also includes broad categories of action which can be implemented or used to inform wider strategies to protect and preserve those species and/or habitats. Despite being a national list, the records included can be checked against records within Aberdeen in order to establish which habitats and species we have. Accordingly, the LDP can influence priorities for habitat improvement in order to sustain and support populations of these species going forward.

Scotland's Environment Web

13.24. The website hosts 229 mapping overlays that can be applied to an interactive map. The data hosted is shared by a variety of contributing partners such as Marine Scotland, Nature Scot, SEPA and the Scottish Land Commission. These include, but are not limited to, overlays showing protected areas for drinking water, air quality monitoring sites, country parks, core paths, woodland inventories, wetland inventories, Marine Protected Areas, RAMSAR sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site can be used as a core resource with which to find data sources on a variety of ecological assets including a number of the ones discussed below. As such, it can be used to inform LDP decisions over the spatial strategy, decisions over future land allocations or designations, as well as identifying potential opportunities to enhance linkages between existing areas of woodland or green space.

North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBIP) 4- year strategic plan 2022-2026

13.25. This partnership between representatives of Local Authorities, statutory bodies, environmental charities, research institutes, landowners and environmental partnerships operates on the principle of delivering under three objectives:

- Delivery through collaboration
- Information exchange

- Awareness and positive action

13.26. Likewise, a number of strategic priorities have been agreed by the members - a number of these will be relevant to the development of the Local Development Plan.

13.27. These include, but are not limited to;

- “Encourage and influence businesses, land managers and developers to go above and beyond the legal minimum to protecting and promoting biodiversity by proving evidence of its benefits.
- Map out future strategic priorities, focusing and prioritising our efforts to where we are most likely to have a meaningful impact.
- Continue to promote the value of biodiversity to placemaking.”

Nature Networks Toolbox

13.28. This resource includes case studies, examples of best practice as well as guidance on the management of habitats and species. It also provides links to tools and data sources that can assist in formulating a nature network. It can be utilised as a consolidated hub of information for Aberdeen City Council (ACC) to inform future policy decisions on nature networks and woodland strategies. Please also see the Infrastructure and Communication Paper for more information on Nature Networks. A Natural Environment Strategy is currently being developed for Aberdeen, this will include information on nature networks. A draft document will be completed within the next 12 months.

Biodiversity Duty Report

13.29. Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

13.30. Aberdeen City Council’s Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 – 2023 outlines how the Council has fulfilled its biodiversity duty over the period 2021 to 2023. In relation to specific planning measures, the report highlights the current work streams that Aberdeen City Council are undertaking to protect and enhance biodiversity, tied to the extant Local Development Plan and its associated guidance.

Biodiversity Records Data

13.31. A list of national and local biodiversity data sources can be found via Nature Scot’s webpage on [where to find data](#). The most relevant local data source for Aberdeen City is the North-East Scotland Biological Records Centre ([NESBReC](#)), and information can be supplemented with information found on Biological Recording in Scotland ([BRISC](#)). This also includes links to the Butterfly Conservation, British Dragonfly Society and the Bat Conservation Trust (among others). These data sources can be utilised to help identify the type of habitats present on specific areas of land, as well as

recorded sightings of protected or vulnerable species within those areas. This information can potentially be used to identify target areas for intervention or improvement in habitat quantity and/or quality within the LDP in order to support populations of locally or nationally important species.

NESBReC – Species Distribution Maps

- 13.32. NESBReC can provide data at a regional level that would identify sightings of protected species, as well as general habitat classifications. Recognising the repeated and frequent presence of Protected Species could help inform future management strategies for those species and guide decision on any future land allocation in the next Local Development Plan. Other local level information on particular species may be obtainable through [BRISC](#) (Biological Recording in Scotland).

NatureScot SiteLink

- 13.33. SiteLink provides data and information on Protected Areas throughout Scotland. Information on designations from local to national and international levels can be found, as well as detail on the boundaries, features and condition of those sites. This resource can be used to identify and recognise sites of local, regional or national significance that can be targeted for protection and/or future enhancements within the next Local Development Plan

Natural Environment Report

- 13.34. The Natural Environment Report is to be an annual report produced by Aberdeen City Council that will essentially succeed the Biodiversity Duty Report. It is anticipated that it would be of similar value and function in informing future policy decisions. Please refer to the Biodiversity Duty Report for further information in this regard.

Green Space Network

- 13.35. The Green Space Network is a strategic network connecting various habitats and species, urban and rural green spaces to each other and the communities around them. It offers a wide range of social, health economic and environmental benefits. Green Space Networks are identified within, and protected by, the Local Development Plan.
- 13.36. Aberdeen City's Green Space Network comprises of a number of 'cores' which represent the largest areas of green space within the city. These are supplemented by 'links' which are generally corridors of green space that act as linkages to larger or more expansive areas of green space. 'Links' may be along streams, rivers and other waterbodies, follow tree belts or include paths and wildlife corridors that provide some form of habitat value. Finally, there are also 'stepping stones' which reflect more isolated pockets of green space. These would ideally link up to other green spaces as part of a wider network but may be fragmented due to topographical factors or intervening land uses. Despite this, they are recognised as still having a role to play in supporting habitats and species, and can contribute toward a Green Space Network.

Invasive Non-Native Species

13.37. There are concentrated areas where Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) are prevalent in Aberdeen. These are primarily located along the banks of the River Dee and Don, as well as their tributaries. Other areas with concentrations of invasive weeds include Bucksburn, Newhills, Burn of Mundurno and Den Wood. As INNS are recognised as a top driver of biodiversity loss, control of their spread is essential as a means of preventing further loss of habitat.

13.38. The Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2023 includes reference to ongoing actions taken by the Council's Countryside Ranger Service to combat the spread of INNS. Data on the location and types of INNS enable the Council to take targeted action to address this, and the LDP can influence measures to control their spread.

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

13.39. A partnership project that seeks to monitor and preserve the red squirrel population in Scotland. The website includes an interactive map showing the plotted locations of all recorded sightings of red (and some grey) squirrels in Scotland within the current year.

13.40. This resource can be used to monitor the locations of sightings and infer where there may be established populations of red squirrels. This in turn aids the Local Authority in making more informed decisions on future actions relating to habitat enhancement, preservation or enlargement, e.g. through the next Local Development Plan.

Important Invertebrate Areas

13.41. Important Invertebrate Areas (IIAs) are home to nationally or internationally significant invertebrate populations and habitats. There is one IIA within Aberdeen; (Dee IIA). The broad IIA catchment area appears to cover the majority of Aberdeen before extending south-west and west, roughly forming a corridor around the A90 and A93 heading towards Banchory.

13.42. In future this resource will allow us to view the species, habitats and threats within the Dee IIA, and enable the Council to make better informed judgements on future land allocations and designations within that area, for example through the next Local Development Plan. This can also aid in the targeted support for addressing habitat and biodiversity loss as well as building resilience to climate change.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) (British Trust for Ornithology)

13.43. WeBS monitors the populations and trends of the UK's internationally important non-breeding waterbirds. Once per month, wetland sites are counted for waterbirds including ducks, geese, swans, waders, rails, divers, grebes, cormorants and herons. Gulls and terns may also be included within counts in some areas. These records contribute towards an annual report which highlights trends, indices and headline figures. This data source can provide more specific data on waterbirds than may be available in other resources, and the annual update reports ensure that the data is

contemporary. Such information can be invaluable in determining whether proposed developments would impact upon such populations of birds and help inform what measures can be taken by the Council to better understand and protect those habitats. From a local perspective, this resource can be used to provide information pertaining to potential development around Loirston Loch.

Swift Mapper

- 13.44. Swift Mapper is built upon a prior Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Swift Survey. It has been developed with the assistance of various partners (including RSPB, Action for Swifts, Swift Conservation, and others).
- 13.45. This is a conservation mapping tool that hosts records of swift sightings on an interactive map. The four types of records collected include the recorded sightings of occupied nests, previously occupied nests, nest boxes and screaming parties. This data can be used as a preliminary indication as to whether there are patterns in the sightings of swifts within an area and help inform future conservation efforts. The LDP would support biodiversity preservation and enhancement measures, and such data may be used to inform where targeted action is needed.

Species on the Edge

- 13.46. A programme involving Nature Scot and seven other nature conservation charities that seeks to improve the fortunes of 37 priority species along Scotland's coast and islands. It has identified seven different landscape-scale projects for action. The East Scotland Coast area includes Aberdeen City's coastline, with a particular focus on supporting the following species:
- Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)
 - Bordered brown lacewing (*Megalomus hirtus*)
 - Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*)
 - Little tern (*Sternula albifrons*)
 - Northern brown argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*)
 - Purple oxytropis (*Oxytropis halleri*)
 - Small blue butterfly (*Cupido minimus*)
- 13.47. None of the proposed project sites are within the city boundary, although several approximate project locations are to be situated between Stonehaven and Marywell. There is potential for a more co-ordinated effort to protect these species and their associated habitats. To that end, Aberdeen City Council are currently in discussions with Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils to develop a Coastal B-Lines for pollinators. The aim is to bolster and support populations of Small Blue and Northern Brown Argus for the city, with Northern Brown Argus populations already having been recorded along the coast at Cove.
- 13.48. The LDP can contribute to ongoing efforts to preserve these species by promoting the preservation of local biodiversity within Aberdeen and potentially identifying areas where enhancements can be made.

Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note 3 – Wildlife Hazards Around Aerodromes

13.49. Produced by the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST), this document outlines how wildlife can impact on flight safety due to 'wildlife strikes'. This primarily relates to birds colliding with aircraft. The document advises on the types of development that can attract birds and therefore potentially pose a hazard to air traffic. The LDP will have cognisance of this document if proposals within the airport safeguarding zone come forward in future.

Natural Places

Dynamic Coast – Coastal Erosion in Scotland (CREW - Scotland's Centre for Expertise for Waters)

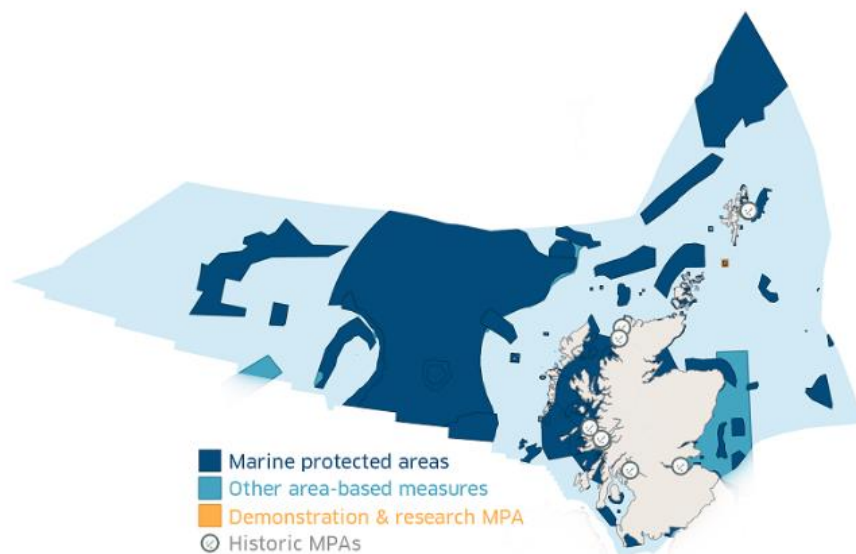
13.50. This report on coastal erosion in Scotland, updated in 2021, indicates that coastal erosion affects 46% of soft shorelines in Scotland. This is an increase of 8% since the prior 2017 report.

13.51. Aberdeen's entire eastern Local Authority boundary is coastal, therefore data on the management of coastal erosion is important for the future planning on how to combat the loss of coastline due to flooding events, storms or landslips. There are existing groynes along Aberdeen beach that partially combat the loss of material and provide some resilience, but the impact and adequacy of these measures would need to be monitored to inform future decision making on how to preserve the visual amenity and ecological value of the coastline in the long-term.

Assessing Climate Change Impacts on the Water Quality of Scottish Standing Waters (CREW – Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters)

13.52. This report identifies the vulnerability of Scottish standing waters to the impacts of climate change, and how increases to water temperature and variations in nutrient concentrations could impact upon their future functionality and capacity to support biodiversity. Although the data gathered does not appear to include any lochs or lakes within the Aberdeen City boundary, it is still possible to extrapolate the findings to inform on future decisions on the management of bodies of standing water. The LDP can have cognisance of the issues impacting standing waters in Scotland, and apply the lessons from elsewhere to help prevent deterioration of water quality in Aberdeen's waters.

Marine Protected Areas



Map showing Scotland's MPA network

Figure 13.1: The Scottish Government map below shows the location of Scotland's Marine Protected Areas network

13.53. Marine Protection Area designation types include Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs), Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) with marine components, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) with marine components, Nature Conservation MPAs and national MPAs in Scotland.

13.54. Aberdeen's coastline includes the southern portion of the Special Protection Area for Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch. The northern, and significantly larger, portion of the designation falls within Aberdeenshire Council's administrative area. The area is primarily designated due to its importance in the support of breeding populations of birds, in particular waterfowl.

13.55. The nearest other SPA to the City boundary is that of Fowlsheugh near Stonehaven. Although outwith the City boundary, it is not implausible that select future development within the city could impact upon an area designated due to its importance for a number of bird species congregating there through breeding season. The LDP will therefore have cognisance of the proximity to neighbouring SPA's when making any allocations or designations.

River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027

13.56. The river basin management plan for Scotland can support decision making on Natural Places by offering data on the pressures impacting water quality within Aberdeen's water courses. It seeks to promote the enhancement of water courses, remove man-made barriers to fish migration and improve the ecology within the rivers.

13.57. The Den Burn and River Don have impacted physical condition and water quality, and the Bucks Burn similarly has impacted water quality primarily through rural diffuse pollution. Both the River Don and Den Burn are identified as poor for fish barriers. There is currently a project to restore 2.3km of the Den Burn and re-meander an open section within the city. The project aims to improve biodiversity, connect people to nature and promote active travel. The LDP would seek to encourage proposals that aim to restore and enhance Aberdeen's watercourses and improve their ecological value.

State of the Coast – East Grampian Coastal Partnership

13.58. This report compiles and assesses a wide range of social, economic, and environmental data related to the East Grampian coast (extending from Kinnaird Head in Fraserburgh, to the mouth of the River Esk by St Cyrus). It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of the coastline, identify trends, and highlight areas requiring improvement, and compare these (where possible) to the Scottish average. It serves as a baseline for future decision-making and coastal management, offering recommendations and action points to address identified issues. It also aims to inform stakeholders, guide the work of the East Grampian Coastal Partnership, and ensure the sustainable use and preservation of the coastal environment for future generations. The State of the Coast (SOTC) is working towards [updating this information at present](#). Consequently, any future publications with updated data can be used to better inform strategies for the protection of particular species, habitats and/or coastal features, e.g. through the next Local Development Plan.

SEPA Water Scarcity Report

13.59. This data source can be used to monitor areas of water scarcity within Scotland at fairly regular intervals. Times of moderate and significant scarcity (if regular) would be a cause for concern and could indicate that future development pressure would present a threat to existing ecosystems. Water abstraction can be restricted in such circumstances which can impact upon irrigation schemes and fish farming operations.

13.60. The Don and Dee rivers are the two most substantive rivers running through Aberdeen City, which also extend through neighbouring Local Authority boundaries. Consequently, any scarcity experienced by Aberdeenshire (for example) may have an indirect impact on Aberdeen City as a result. The Autumn 2024 Scarcity Report notes Scotland has seen drier than normal conditions this autumn which has resulted in low river levels. Water storage in both lochs and groundwater are generally normal for this time of year, however, the dry autumn has resulted in some locations being low or very low.

13.61. Further information on Water Scarcity can also be found within the Blue Green Infrastructure section of the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper.

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance: Ramsar sites

13.62. Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention to promote their conservation and sustainable use. There are no RAMSAR sites in Aberdeen.

The Town and Country Planning (National Scenic Areas) (Scotland) Designation Directions 2010: National Scenic Areas

13.63. National Scenic Areas (NSAs) are areas that have been identified as having outstanding scenic value in a national context, and as such require special protection measures through the planning system. There are no NSAs in Aberdeen.

NatureScot Wild Land Areas map

13.64. Wild land areas are the most extensive areas of high wildness. They are identified as nationally important, but are not a statutory designation. An interactive map showing the 42 wild land areas within Scotland, following a NatureScot survey in 2014. There are no wild areas in Aberdeen.

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000: National Parks

13.65. These are executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) established under the provisions of the above act. Scotland currently has two national parks: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, and Cairngorms National Park.. On 29 May 2025, the Scottish Government opted not to proceed with the designation of a new national park that was proposed in Galloway.

13.66. There are unlikely to be any changes to National Parks, or designations of new National Parks, that will directly impact upon Aberdeen City due to its geographic distance from any of the respective park boundaries.

Special Areas of Conservation

13.67. The only Special Area of Conservation (SAC) site within Aberdeen City's boundary is the River Dee, which terminates at the river mouth on the east coast of Aberdeen into the North Sea. This SAC is protected due to its role in supporting populations of Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Pearl Mussels and Otters.

13.68. However, a number of other sites within Aberdeenshire have the potential to be impacted by development within the city. The nearest of these sites include Garron Point (north of Stonehaven), Red Moss of Netherley, and Sands of Forvie. The LDP will ensure that the River Dee SAC is appropriately identified and seek to ensure that developments within or adjacent SAC's will not have a detrimental impact on them.

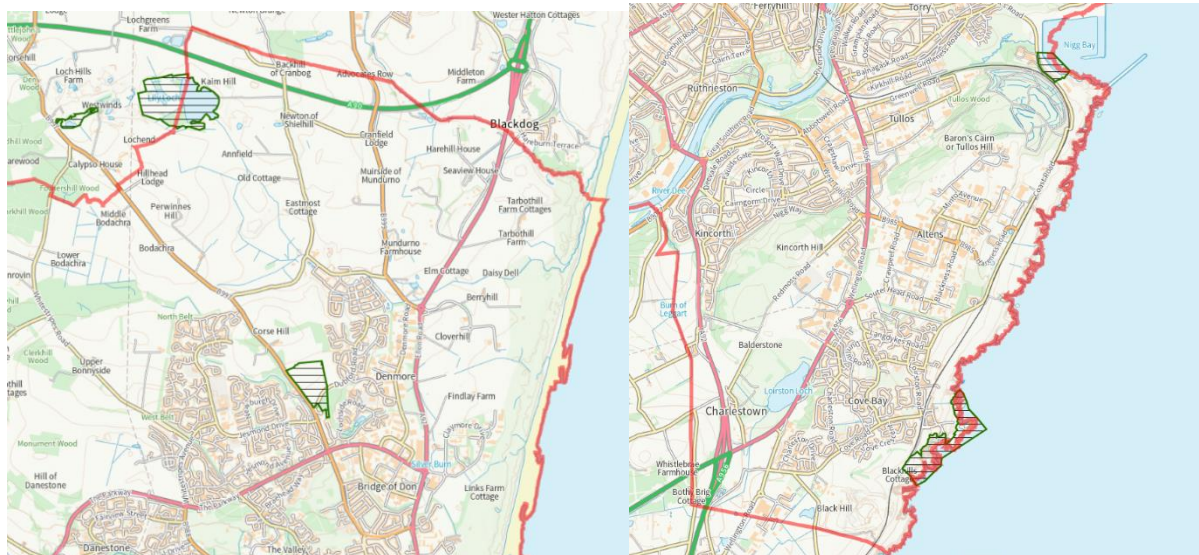
Special Protection Areas

13.69. There is one Special Protection Area (SPA) within the Aberdeen City Boundary. The Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA extends down the east coast of Aberdeen as far as Footdee, and nearly as far north as Cruden Bay (within Aberdeenshire). The SPA has a site area of 7062.03ha, with the majority of that site area located within Aberdeenshire. It also overlaps with another SPA for Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast, which continues north-east, almost as far as Peterhead.

13.70. The nearest other Special Protection Areas to Aberdeen are the Loch of Skene (a 121.76ha site to the west of Westhill), and Fowlsheugh (a 1303.34ha site to the south of Stonehaven). Each of these sites is located entirely within the neighbouring Aberdeenshire Council local authority boundary. The LDP will seek to preserve its section of the Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA. This will involve communication with neighbouring Aberdeenshire Council on any actions of proposals that could potentially impact on this.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

13.71. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are areas of land and water that are deemed to be the best examples of natural heritage resulting from a combination of their flora, fauna, geology, geomorphology or any outstanding examples of these criteria individually. Aberdeen's four SSSI's are displayed below (north and south).



Figures 13.2 & 13.3: These show the northern and southern boundaries of Aberdeen City Council respectively, (marked by the red line), with SSSIs shown in the green hatched areas.

13.72. The four SSSIs within Aberdeen City are:

- Corby, Lily and Bishops Lochs
- Cove Bay
- Nigg Bay
- Scotstown Moor

13.73. The LDP will seek to ensure that these sites are appropriately protected and, where applicable, enhanced in order to preserve their status.

Local Nature Reserves

13.74. Aberdeen has four local nature reserves. These include:

- Den of Maidenraig
- Donmouth
- Kincorth Hill
- Scotstown Moor

13.75. These are shown by the areas outlined in dark red below, with the lighter red line showing the extent of Aberdeen City's administrative boundary.

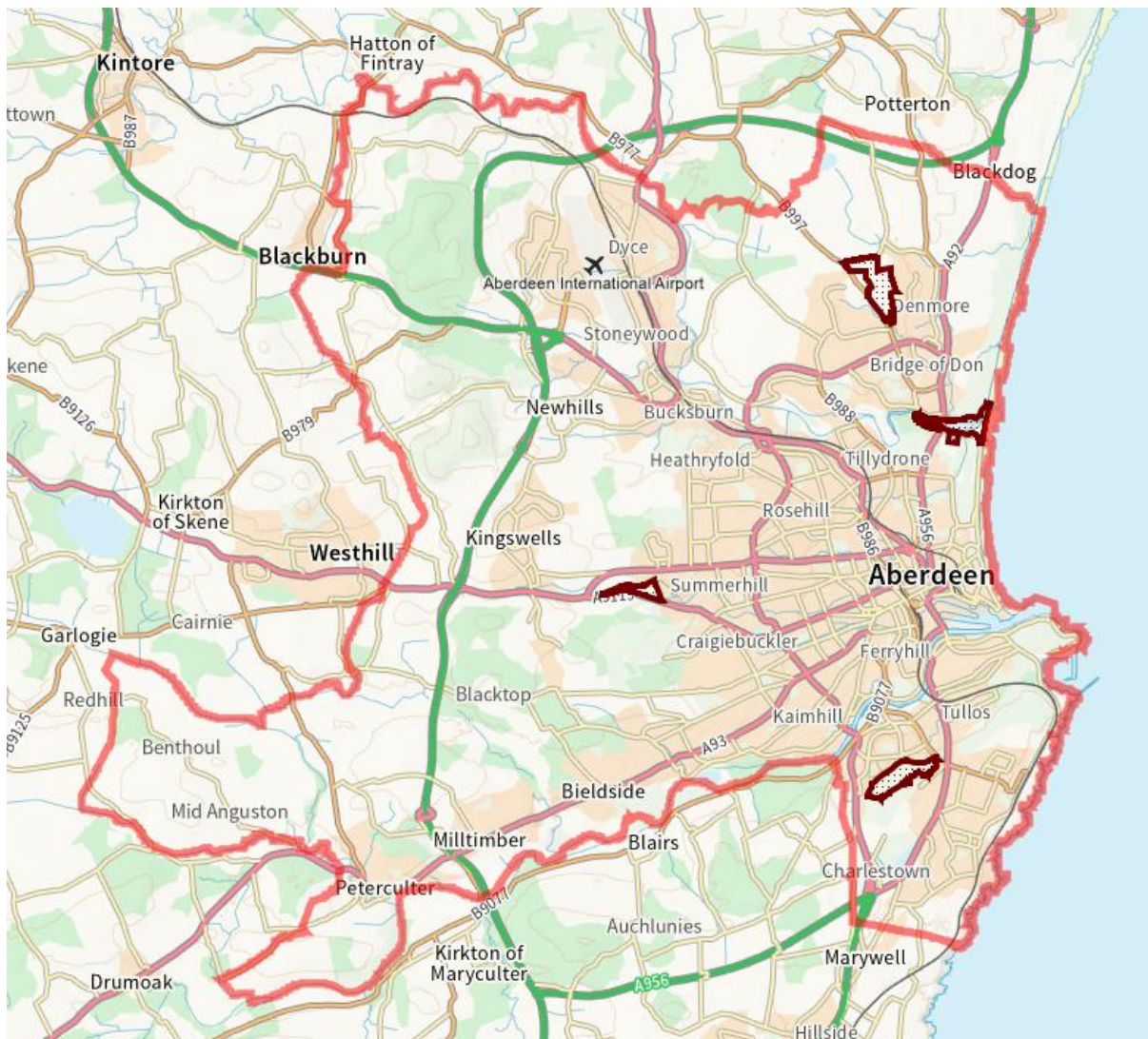


Figure 13.4: The map below shows the location of all four of Aberdeen's Local Nature Reserves outlined in dark red, with the city boundary shown in a lighter shade of red

Local Nature Conservation Sites

13.76. There are also a further 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) within Aberdeen City. A review of these sites will be underway in 2025 which will include the prospective

removal of Old Manse Wood. Consideration will be given to the addition of new LNCSs in 2026.

13.77. These sites are identified as having local importance for their biodiversity and geodiversity, with the designation of LNCS providing a means of safeguarding them. Among the forty-five sites within Aberdeen City are ten that cross boundaries into the neighbouring Local Authority (Aberdeenshire Council). These are:

- Site no.4 – Balgownie/Blackdog Links
- Site no.8 – River Dee Corridor
- Site no.9 – River Don Corridor
- Site no.14 – Corby Loch
- Site no.18 – Den of Leggart
- Site no.57 – Culter Burn
- Site no.61 – Kinaldie Den
- Site no.61 – Culter Compensation Dam
- Site no.65 – Leuchar Moss
- Site no.67 – Aberdeen – Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line

13.78. The LDP will promote the protection and enhancement of LNCS' as well as give consideration on how these can contribute towards a larger interconnected network of quality habitats.



Figure 13.5: Map showing the locations of the Local Nature Conservation Sites within Aberdeen (marked by the yellow-coloured polygons).

Country and Regional Parks

13.79. Regional Parks are designated by Local Authorities, with support from Nature Scot using Section 48A of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967. Such designations enable the coordinated management of recreation and other land uses such as farming and forestry. Regional parks often include landscapes of regional importance. They may also provide important havens for wildlife. Aberdeen City has no regional parks.

Parks and Gardens

13.80. Aberdeen has 14 public parks and gardens within the Local Authority area. It also has numerous nature reserves, trails and 3000 acres of publicly accessible woodland. A total of 8 locations within Aberdeen also hold [Green Flag Awards](#).

13.81. While the parks provide relaxation, leisure and play opportunities, they also provide areas of greenspace and habitat potential within urban spaces and can support various types of insects, small mammals and birds. These spaces contribute towards

the wider Green Space Network, and provide more expansive spaces between linkages such as hedgerows, tree belts and other narrow wildlife corridors.

Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report

- 13.82. The Aberdeen Open Space Audit is used to assist with protecting and enhancing green spaces through the planning process and by supporting blue and green infrastructure policies. The audit provides key information on the types, quality and accessibility of open and green spaces in Aberdeen.
- 13.83. This resource can be used to help inform future decisions on the formation of nature networks by providing a tool that can be used to view the distribution and pattern of types of green space throughout Aberdeen City. Combined with the use of other mapping overlays, it can be used to ascertain the quantity, accessibility, and quality of provision of green spaces across the city or at an electoral ward level.
- 13.84. The Audit also includes biodiversity and habitat connectivity scores at site and ward level. The data could be used to identify corridors of greenspace and potentially identify locations where gaps could be bridged in future to create more effective nature corridors.
- 13.85. The Audit Public Survey also highlighted that 82% of respondents said they would like to see more green spaces managed in a more natural way for the benefit of wildlife and nature in Aberdeen. Respondents also highlighted the critical role that green spaces play in promoting overall health and well-being, with physical exercise or health reasons, to be in nature and to socialise given as the top three reasons why people use open spaces
- 13.86. The assessments undertaken as part of the audit also give an indication as to the quality of available open space which could influence future decisions on what and where future enhancements to existing spaces are directed, as well as any areas of land that could be protected or reserved going forward. Please see the Wellbeing and Community Topic Paper for more information.

Place Standard Assessments

- 13.87. Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

13.88. The Natural Space theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4.71 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below. Text in brackets, e.g. North, Central, All etc, refers to Locality Plan areas.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Natural Spaces	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. These generally include parks, the beach and riverside walks. (All)	• Improvements to the maintenance of green and blue spaces (All) • Increasing cleanliness – more bins and be strict on irresponsible dog owners (All) • Better accessibility to and increasing number of green spaces available (South and Central) • More seating (North) • More public convenience (North) • More wild flowers, more food growing and allotments (Central)

Table 13.2: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023.

13.89. While the majority of these comments resonate more clearly with the topic of Play, Recreation and Sport (included within the Wellbeing of Community Topic Paper), improvements to the maintenance of green and blue spaces, improving accessibility to such spaces and increasing the quantity of wild flowers are targets that directly relate to this Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

13.90. The children and young people results noted: 60% felt they were okay, 14.3% felt they were not good, and 25.7% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Natural Space	Parks	38.7%	Better parks	44.3%
	Trees	34%	Welcome animals	34%
	Woods	32.1%	More trees	24.5%

Table 13.3: Top 3 responses for ‘What is good now’ and ‘What would make it better?’ Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

13.91. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved

within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas

Soils

Prime Agricultural Land

13.92. Land capability for agriculture provides information on the types of crops that may be grown in different areas dependent on environmental and soil characteristics. Soil classes range from Class 1 (land capable of producing a wide range of crops) to Class 7 (land of very little agricultural value). Land within Class 3 is subdivided to provide further information on potential yields; Classes 4 and 5 are further divided to provide information on grasslands; Class 6 is divided on the quality of the natural vegetation for grazing. Four of the classes have sub-divisions within them however, Class 1 land is recognised as having the highest potential flexibility of use, with Class 7 the poorest flexibility. Prime Agricultural Land is defined as being Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3.1 land.

13.93. As a primarily urban Local Authority, Aberdeen has comparatively little Prime Agricultural Land. Notwithstanding this, there is Class 3.1 land to the east and south-east of Blackburn, around Inchgarth Reservoir, and along part of the north bank of the River Dee in the following locations:

- South-East of Milltimber
- South of Murtle Estate
- Bielside
- Cults

13.94. The local development plan will seek to protect known areas of undeveloped and unallocated Prime Agricultural Land in order to preserve a limited ecological resource. Proposals to develop other areas of Prime Agricultural Land would be considered against the criteria outlined within Policy 5 Soils of the NPF4.

Peatland and Carbon-rich soils

13.95. Peatland Action is a national programme undertaken by NatureScot and funded by the Scottish Government that supports peatland restoration activities across Scotland. It offers funding for restoration activities that may include installation of peat dams or peat hag re-vegetating (among other techniques) that can stabilise eroded peat and increase water levels.

13.96. The restoration of peatland can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, due to peatland's capacity to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

13.97. The Carbon and Peatland map 2016 can be used to identify locations of carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. Classes 1 and 2 are identified as being a nationally important resource and areas that are likely to be of high conservation value.

13.98. Within Aberdeen, small areas of Class 1 land can be found on land adjacent to Gough Burn (north-west of Kepplestone) and at Leuchar Moss (south-east of Garlogie). There is no Class 2 within the city boundary. There is only one recorded location of Class 3 land (referring to Leached Soils), which is of poorer quality than Class 1 and 2 land, and is largely covered by the southern edge of the Prime Four Business Park at Kingswells.

13.99. There are multiple areas of Class 5 (Organic Soils) within Aberdeen located at Grandhome Moss, land at Burn of Mundurno, Lily Loch, Corby Loch, South Mains of Charleston, and land to the South-East of Lochside Academy. The LDP will have cognisance of these locations when considering bid sites, land allocations or potential land designations.

Scottish Bare Peat Viewer

13.100 This map shows larger extents of bare peat as classified from Sentinel 2 imagery obtained in Summer 2018. There is only one pixel (covering an area of 10m x 10m) within Aberdeen City Council's boundary. This is located within a field to the south of Newmill Hill Forest and 1.5km south-west of Peterculter. The LDP will have cognisance of any identified areas of Bare Peat that are identified with this resource in future and seek to protect any areas of a meaningful scale that could represent an ecological resource.

Scotland's Soils website

13.101 The mapping portal includes soil maps, capability maps, thematic maps, point data and risk maps. Some of these data sets can be viewed elsewhere (such as the land capability for agriculture), although the risk maps are particularly relevant for the identification of risk profiles for areas of soil erosion and compaction.

13.102 The subsoil compaction risk map outlines the vulnerability of subsoils to be compacted by traffic. As most of Aberdeen is an urban developed area, much of the city is excluded due to the focus of the mapping on Scotland's cultivated agricultural land area. Almost all of the area within the City boundary that has data is either classified as extremely or very vulnerable.

13.103 The topsoil compaction risk map indicates the risk of topsoil being compacted due to the passage of machinery (primarily on cultivated land). The risk profile of low/medium/high is based on the drainage class of the soil and its texture. The LDP can utilise these maps to inform future decisions over which areas or sites may require mitigation as part of any potential development. They could also be used to inform decisions on where future interventions to combat soil erosion should be targeted.

Soil Compaction/Sealing

13.104 The Topsoil compaction risk map seems to show that the areas of highest risk are located primarily along the coastline, and south-west of the city of Aberdeen. Most of the surrounding land appears to be at low or moderate risk.

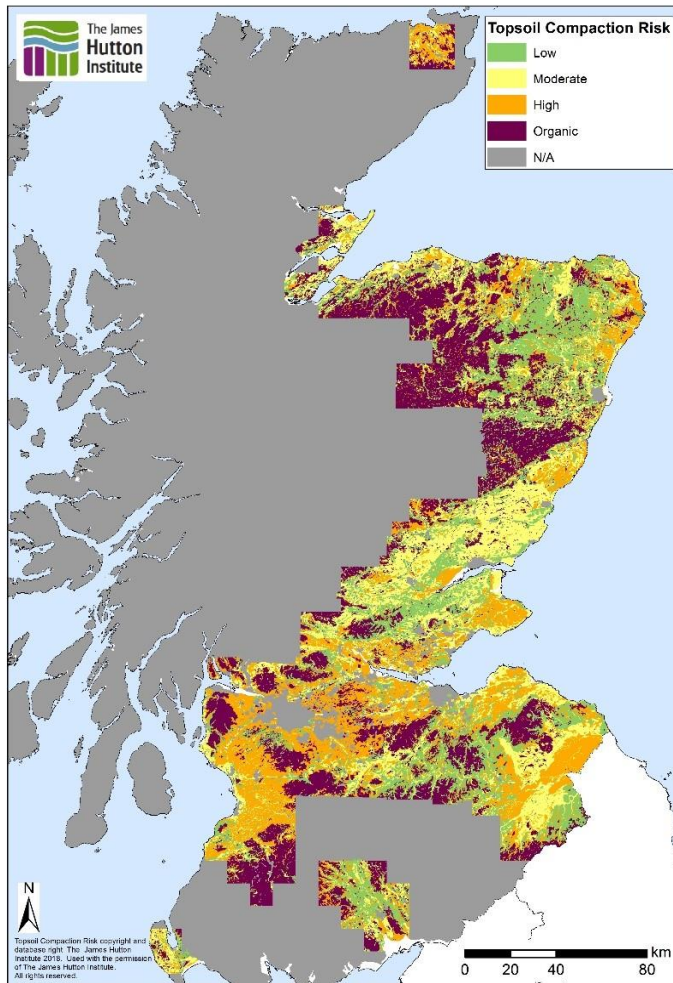


Figure 13.6: Map from the James Hutton Institute showing the topsoil compaction risk of soils in Scotland

13.105 The risk of subsoil compaction is considerably greater however, with much of the surrounding area of Aberdeen City identified as being “extremely vulnerable” to subsoil compaction.

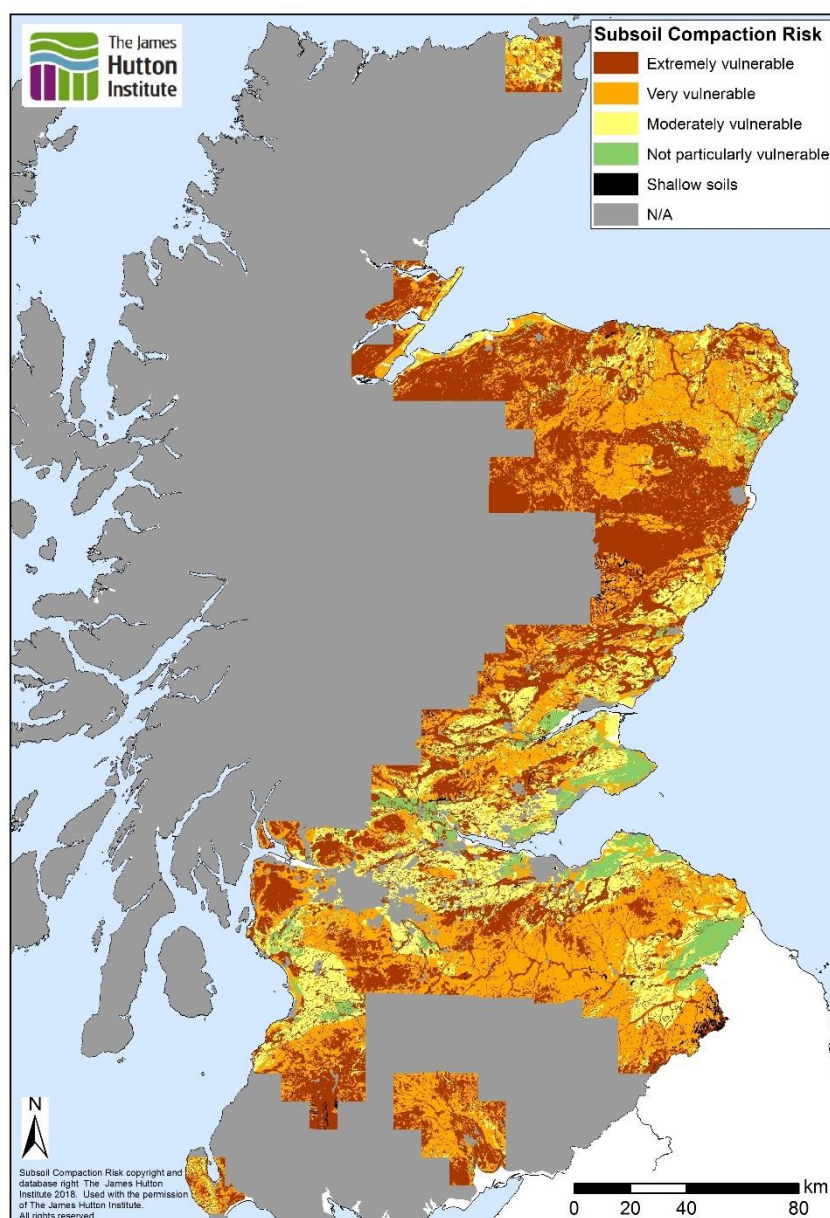


Figure 13.7: Map from the James Hutton Institute shows the Subsoil Compaction Risk of soils within Scotland.

13.106 The map on soil erosion risk indicates the risk of bare soil, with an organic surface layer, being eroded under sustained periods of precipitation. As is the case with the other map layers, the majority of the city does not feature data due to the urban environment, however, the majority of land within the remainder of the City administrative boundary is at medium risk, with a notable area of low risk along the northern half of the City's coastline. The LDP can utilise these maps to inform future decisions over which areas or sites may require mitigation as part of any potential development. They could also be used to inform decisions on where future interventions to combat soil erosion should be targeted.

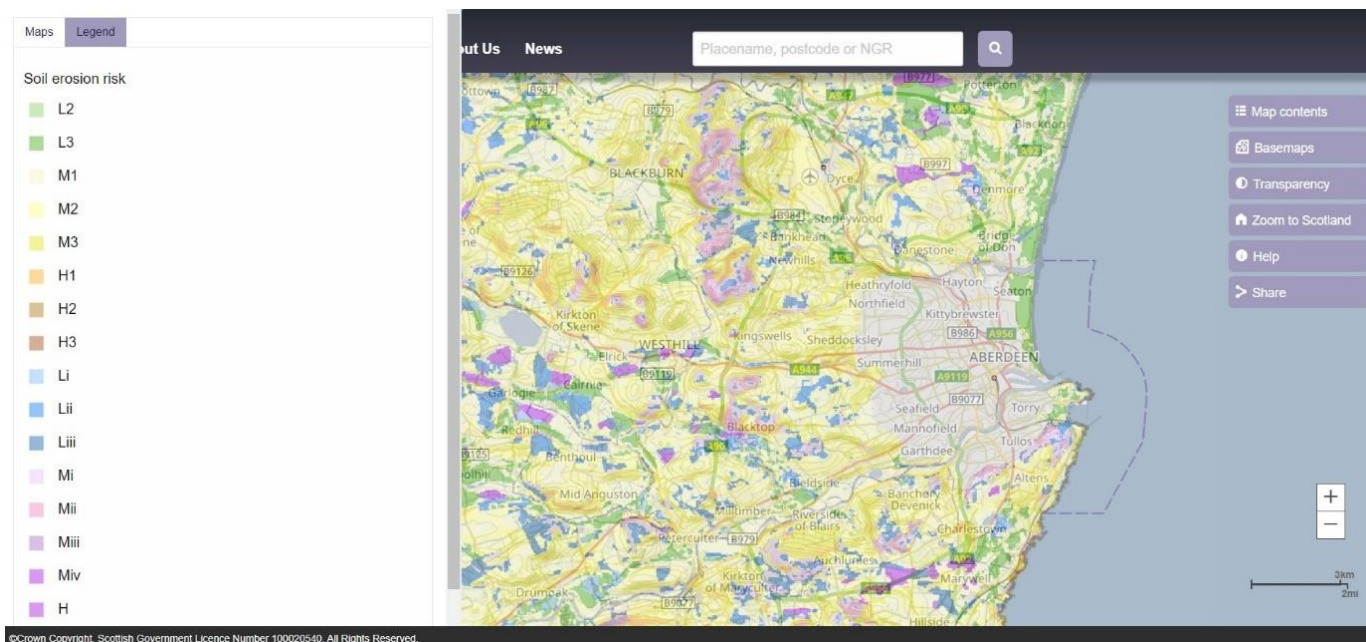


Figure 13.8: The below screenshot shows Scotland's Soils mapping portal, with the soil erosion risk categories shown in the legend on the left-hand side.

SEFARI – Healthy Soils for a Green Recovery

13.107 This research project seeks to obtain further information and insight on Scottish soils in order to better understand their ecological benefits. This in turn helps to inform work towards formulating strategies to mitigate degradation of the soils, prevent the loss of soils that are ecological assets, and assist in the enhancement of soil health. The project is undertaken in collaboration with the project partners: James Hutton Institute (JHI) and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). This project could inform the LDP's approach to tackling soil erosion, soil compaction, and help reinforce its messaging over the importance of healthy soils.

SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps

13.108 These maps are used to gauge the vulnerability of the land to surface, coastal or pluvial flooding events. While these would primarily be used to inform of where not to develop land through the Local Development Plan (due to the increased risk profile within certain areas of the city), it can also be used to identify where there is capacity for controlled flooding as part of mitigation and resilience measures. Understanding the potential areas most likely to be impacted by flood events will also assist wider strategic efforts to restore degraded habitats that may partially contribute to flooding events. These maps will also inform the production of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Scotland's Forestry Strategy

13.109 In 2070, Scotland will have more forests and woodlands, sustainably managed and better integrated with other land uses. These will provide a more resilient, adaptable

resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities.

13.110 Objectives

- Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a healthy and high quality environment
- Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances

13.111 Priorities

- Ensuring forests and woodlands are sustainably managed
- Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land-use objectives
- Improving efficiency and productivity, and developing markets
- Increasing the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands
- Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands
- Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

13.112 The LDP will seek to preserve and enhance existing woodland and promote new planting. It will echo the intending objectives of the national forestry strategy in its approach.

Scottish Government's Policy on Woodland Removal

13.113 Used to guide policy decisions when considering the removal of woodland in Scotland, it emphasises a strong presumption against woodland removal, and identifies that woodland loss should "be allowed only where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits." It provides guidance on mitigation measures, in instances where woodland is to be removed as well as identifying criteria to be used in the assessment of the acceptability of woodland removal. Future Council Local Development Plan policy on forest and woodlands would align closely with the approaches outlined within this document.

National Inventory of Woodland and Trees

13.114 This Forestry Commission Report published in 2003 is comprised of two surveys: The Main Woodland Survey (MWS) and the Survey of Small Woodland and Trees (SSWT). While there are more contemporary data sources, it is still useful as a means of tracking patterns of change in woodland cover, woodland type, principal species and forest ownership in the decades since the report was published. It also has value as a means of tracking the progress in the reinstatement of native species within Scottish woodlands as opposed to faster growing and commercially preferred species such as Sitka Spruce. This can be used to aid with monitoring changes of woodland cover over a longer timescale and help inform the LDP's future targets of woodland enhancement or creation projects.

Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and Ancient Woodland Inventory

13.115 An inventory of the location, type, condition, and extent of native woodlands in Scotland that was launched in 2014. 22.5% of woodlands were surveyed (or 4% of Scottish land area). It identified that the main threats to the condition of native woodland is excessive herbivore impact (such as deer), as well as the competition from non-native shrub and tree species.

13.116 The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland has a data explorer which allows users to examine:

- Woodland type (native/nearly-native/PAWS (plantations on ancient woodland sites*)/Open land habitat)
*“they are ancient semi-natural woodlands on which the original, “natural” woodland was cleared, and replaced by a plantation of either native or exotic species.” (Forest Research)
- Species structures (identifies specific species found within that woodland as well as their state of maturity and their approximate stocking density)
- Habitat components (colour codes woodlands by dominant woodland composition, while showing % breakdown of that composition. E.g – pinewood/birchwood/wetland/blackthorn scrub/non-native/clear fell etc.)
- Canopy structures (outlines in % the composition of the canopy – e.g mature/pole immature/shrub/regeneration etc.)
- Herbivore impact (identifies source of herbivore impact – e.g deer/hare/rabbit/livestock etc.)
- Invasive species (identifies invasive species within the woodland and approximate densities as a % of the woodland)
- Other traits (may include things like diseases/dumping/fire damage/windthrow etc.)

13.117 The data can help inform future targeted woodland enhancement, expansion or creation as part of the LDP.

Ancient Woodland

13.118 There are 109 records on the Ancient Woodland Inventory within Aberdeen.

13.119 Aberdeen has 3 recorded sites of Class 2a woodland. This is defined as woodland that is semi-natural woodland which was recorded on maps in 1860, and has been continuously wooded up to the present day. It has no Class 1a sites (which are distinct from 2a sites in appearing in maps from 1750).

13.120 The vast majority of recorded sites are identified as Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO). 12 sites are identified as plantation from maps of 1750 (and therefore being Class 1b sites), and a further 82 sites appear on the 1860 maps (resulting in Class 2b categorisation).

13.121 There are 8 Class 3 sites, which are sites that do not appear as wooded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps, but do appear as woodland on the older Roy maps (of 1750). Such sites “have, at most, had only a short break in continuity of woodland cover and may still retain features of Ancient Woodland.” Such sites in Aberdeen are located to the north of Peterculter, to the South-East and East of Dyce, and

immediately north of the Hillhead Student Village (on the south bank of the River Don).

13.122 The LDP will seek to preserve areas of Ancient Woodland in line with national policy and the Scottish Government's Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal.

13.123 The spread of these sites can be viewed on the map below.

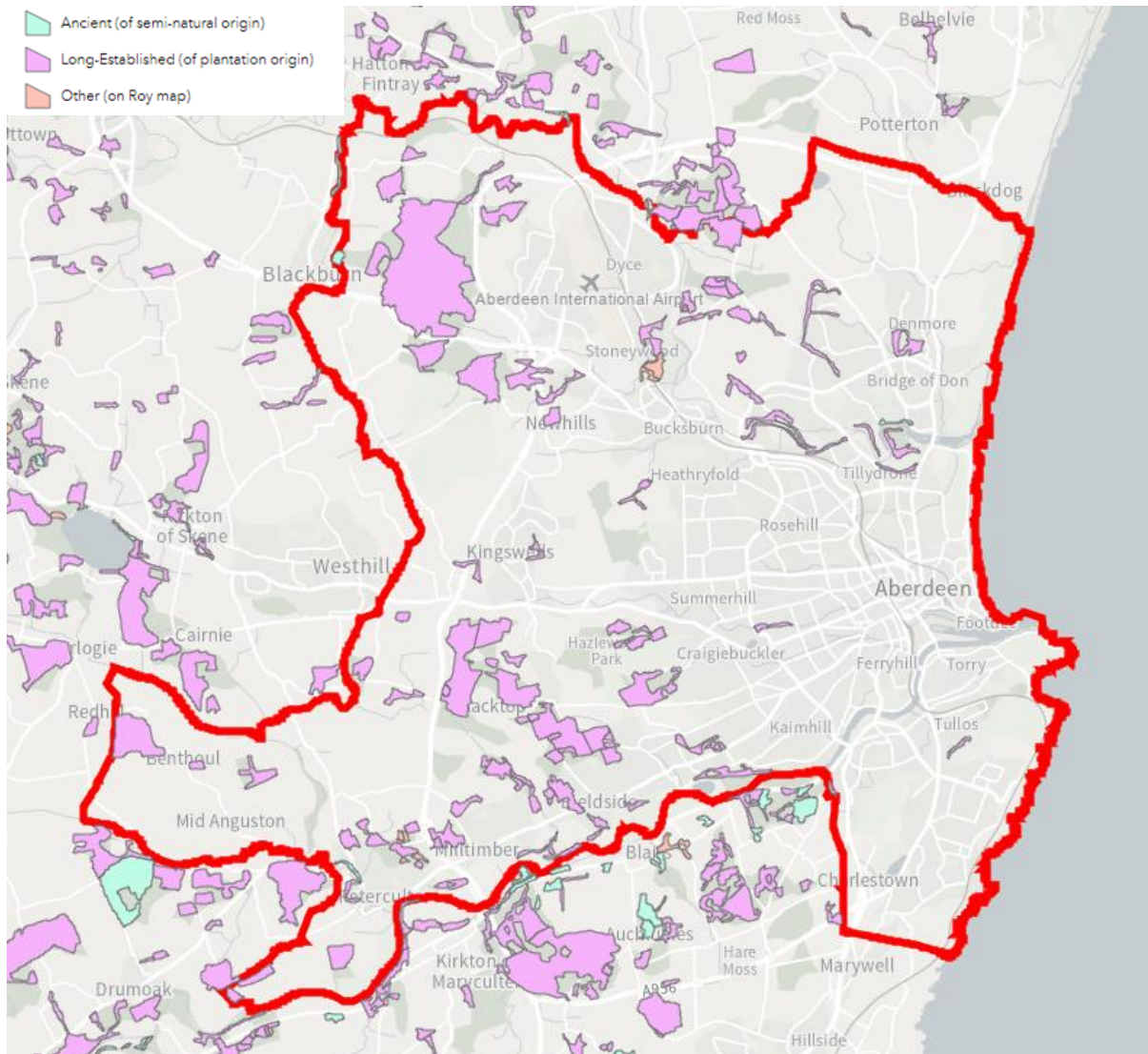


Figure 13.9: Map showing the authority boundary of the city of Aberdeen in red, and all areas of ancient woodland within the city

Tree Preservation Orders

13.124 Aberdeen has 168 recorded Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). TPOs are shown in the blue hatched areas below. The 11 Conservation Areas within Aberdeen (coloured areas) also afford protection to trees within their respective boundaries. This information outlines the areas of trees and woodland that are deemed to be of greatest significance to the city. There is a greater proliferation of sites along the A93 corridor south-west out of the city, however other recorded sites could offer opportunities for greater connectivity in green corridors in future, as stepping stones within a wider network.

13.125 The LDP will recognise the higher value placed on trees protected by such designations and will explore how to better connect some of these sites where opportunities are available.

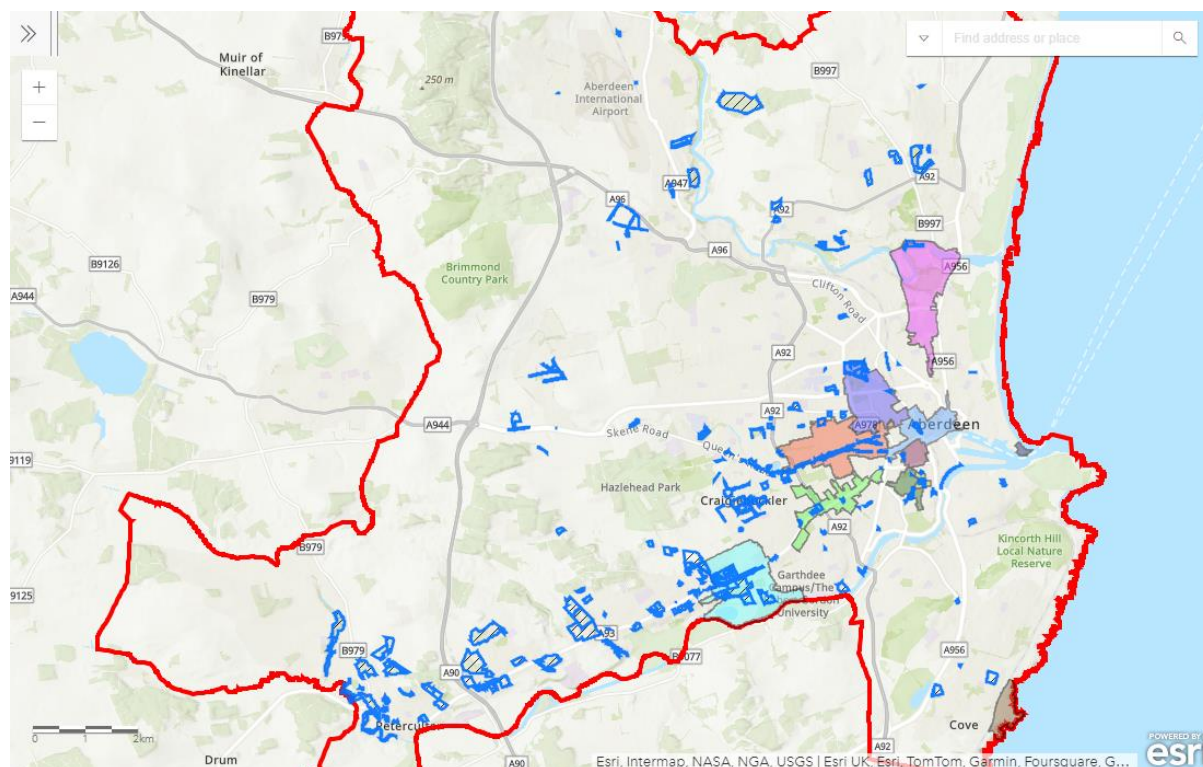


Figure 13.10: The above shows the location of Aberdeen's TPOs in the blue hatched polygons, with the city boundary outlined in red.

Ancient Tree Inventory

13.126 A resource managed by the Woodland Trust that allows members of the public to submit records of specimens of Notable, Veteran, or Ancient trees anywhere within the UK for plotting on an interactive map. Records include detail on the location of the tree, species of tree, girth size of the tree and whether it is in public or private ownership. Submissions require validation from Woodland Trust verifiers. This data source could potentially identify trees deemed locally significant or important in the Local Development Plan, that are not presently afforded protection via a Tree Preservation Order or Conservation Area designation.

The Granite City Forest – Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-2025

13.127 The Plan covers the period 2019 – 2044, and seeks to expanding woodland coverage within the city boundary to 600 hectares in area over the next 25 years, and a further 300 hectares by 2070. It is expected to be updated every 5 years.

13.128 The overall strategy includes four strategic priorities:

1. Promoting the role of our trees and woodlands in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
2. Expanding the Granite City Forest.
3. Protecting our trees and woodlands.
4. Contributing to the City's green infrastructure and the well-being of our people.

13.129 Sites have been identified in the Aberdeen and ranked as preferred, potential, potential with sensitivities, sensitive and unlikely to be suitable. The categories are broad-brush and further investigations will be required to screen out areas that are clearly not suitable for planting and others, such as built-up areas, which might be suitable for street trees.

13.130 Although this document addresses a number of the components of a forest and woodland strategy, it does not satisfy planning legislation on this matter. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated a draft document will be completed within the next 12 months. This document will nevertheless have an influence on how the LDP targets woodland expansion and improving the proportion of woodland coverage within Aberdeen.

Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment

13.131 A policy statement that seeks to communicate how forests and woodlands contribute to Scotland's historic environment. It endeavours to promote appreciation of the contribution woodlands and forests have towards our cultural heritage, as well as their value as tourist attractions. This includes encouraging the support and conservation of "significant evidence of the historic environment in Scotland's woodlands, including historic landscapes". Such elements can include burial mounds, hillforts, saw pits, charcoal hearths, remnants of farmsteads among other features. The LDP will acknowledge the historic and cultural impact some trees and woodlands have at a local level and encourage preservation of woodlands that form a key component of the wider historical context of a place.

The Right Tree in the Right Place – Forestry Commission Scotland

13.132 Part 3 of this guidance replaces Circular 9/1999 on Indicative Forestry Strategies (IFSs) which has since been withdrawn. This document otherwise provides a policy context for woodland and rural development, as well as advice on how to prepare forestry and woodland strategies. It also includes advice on the benefits provided by woodland, and offers guidance for development management decisions on proposals involving the loss of woodland. This document would inform the production of the Council's forthcoming Forest and Woodland Strategy, which in turn will influence the LDP.

Scottish Forestry Open Data

13.133 This portal hosts twenty datasets covering a variety of topics ranging from areas approved for long-term forest management plans, data on tree health and species conservation, felling licences and restocking obligations (among other datasets).

13.134 The LDP can utilise this data source to inform future decisions on woodland planting, enhancement where species diversity and tree health is demonstrably poor. It could also inform decisions over the location of future new woodland or forestry planting.

Biological and Environmental Evaluation Tools for Landscape Ecology (BEETLE)

13.135 The tool is intended to assist and support management actions as opposed to the prediction of species dispersal or viability. Such tools can be used to gauge the impact of management interventions within a prescribed woodland or landscape environment, when combined with additional “environmental, economic and social information.” The tools do rely on assumptions, although these are based on accepted ecological theories. Examples of the use of [BEETLE](#) are provided via the Forestry Research website which includes case studies in Falkirk and Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. The data source will inform the LDP’s approach to tackling habitat fragmentation and biodiversity decline as well as guiding efforts to strengthen existing habitat networks.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

13.136 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report

13.137 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in July 2024, inviting them to be a part of the working group on the Nature and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

- Key stakeholders for this paper included:
- Forestry Scotland
- The Hutton Institute
- NatureScot
- Marine Directorate
- SEPA
- Woodland Trust
- Aberdeen City Council (Development Management/Climate and Environment Policy/ Environmental Manager/ Flooding)

13.138 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in October 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

13.139 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to a number of to the key stakeholders and FIRS. They also had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

13.140 A full public and targeted 8-week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 11 responses were received for this paper, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, SEPA, Homes for Scotland) 2 from housing developers (Bancon Homes, and Icen on behalf of Mactaggart & Mickel Group), and 5 members of the public.

13.141 Homes for Scotland have no dispute with the paper but do note the following:

- Add the Ancient Tree Inventory and Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note. The Council notes these have been added to the paper: Add the Protection afforded to certain Ramsar features - policy amendment proposals: consultation; Defining Scotland’s Future Infrastructure (2020); Chief Planner letter June 2024; Historic Environment Scotland Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The Council note there are no Ramsar features in Aberdeen and the paper is at an early

consultation stage. Historic Environment Scotland guidance is included within the Place Topic Paper. Chief Planner Letter is noted in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper. NPF4 glossary does not mention housing within its list of eligible forms of essential infrastructure. The suggestions have not been taken forward in the paper as they are noted elsewhere, the papers should be read as a whole with limited need for duplication across multiple papers.

- Homes for Scotland members have a commitment to protecting biodiversity and sustainability, including incorporating biodiversity improvement measures into new developments. The Council note the comments.
- The presence of biodiversity and trees and woodland should not preclude a site from being considered for development; woodland management plans and nature networks can be incorporated. Engagement during call for sites can address concerns. Marketability and deliverability are also important site considerations. The Council note biodiversity is one considerations when determining the site suitability, mitigation measures cannot universally override the extant biodiversity value of every site. The Council agree trees and woodland should not be seen as a significant constraint on allocation but emphasized that designated woodlands, such as Ancient Woodland, would have more extensive requirements to merit consideration. Consideration of all relevant policies will be required when reviewing bid sites or allocations. The Council notes the deliverability of sites is a fundamental part of the planning process, and is supported by the Delivery Programme and the housing pipeline as part of NPF4. Call for sites has historically asked questions on deliverability and will continue to do so.
- Guidance on species selection for tree planting would be useful. The Council would advise that current Aberdeen Planning Guidance 'Landscape' already provides detail of suitable species for planting, and this can be viewed in conjunction with Aerodrome Safeguarding Advice Note 3.
- Guidance on compensatory planting would be useful. The Council note this is better addressed to future stages of the Proposed Plan development.

13.142 A meeting was held with Home for Scotland on 17 June 2025 to discuss various topic paper. This paper was not among the ones that they identified they wished to dispute.

13.143 SEPA note they are likely to be content with the sufficiency of evidence subject to recommended additions (and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – please see the Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper). The additions comprise:

- ensuring Aberdeen City Council's Natural Environment Strategy includes important water environment as referenced in SEPA's Planning Advice Note on Achieving Sufficiency of Evidence, and include this in the topic papers that cover Nature Networks. The Council will ensure the Natural Environment Strategy includes important water environment data as referenced in the Planning Advice Note. The Infrastructure and Communication Paper has been updated to outline these data sources, and a cross reference made within this paper.
- the Implications for the Proposed Plan should include also reference to the protection of blue infrastructure, and consider how the nature network will inform site selection/assessment process. The Council has actioned these points.

13.144 Email correspondence with SEPA on 13 and 20 June, and a meeting of 20 June confirmed SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper.

13.145 Icenl agreed with the evidence, note the Homes for Scotland submission, and provide the following comments:

- See the Homes for Scotland response for additional pieces of evidence. The Council has addressed the Homes for Scotland response above.
- The inclusion of the Chief Planner's Letter from June 2024 which notes all NPF4 policies must be read and applied as a whole before being weighted by the decision maker to reach a balanced planning judgement. The Council note this is included in the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- New developments can incorporate future development to enhance existing green networks and tree surveys can be used to manage dead or diseased trees. The Council note the comment.
- The Proposed Plan should actively identify areas of biodiversity loss to reverse and enhance nature networks within new development. The Council note the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill (2025) Part 1 Targets for improving biodiversity' could provide further guidance on how this is to be undertaken.
- New development can enhance or improve access to existing or neighbouring designations; this may improve low scoring Local Biodiversity Sites. The Council note the comment. Biodiversity is one the criteria of the site assessment process and will be factored in when allocating future sites.
- Homes for Scotland members are committed to protect and enhance biodiversity but housing plays an important socio-economic role, providing significant infrastructure investments and investment in energy efficiency homes, local living and net zero. The Council notes these points and have no further comments

13.146 NatureScot submitted the following comments:

- Ancient Woodland Inventory, despite being discussed within the topic paper, is not listed within the data sources. The Council have added this to the evidence course list.
- There are duplicated links within the Forestry, Woodland and Trees Section. The Council have removed these.
- The 'Purpose and Scope of Evidence Report' section, could provide more detail and further emphasises the value of nature and biodiversity in its role tackling the nature loss and climate change crises. The Council have provide additional text, which NatureScot identified satisfied this request.
- The 'Summary of the Proposed Implications for the Proposed Plan' should include more information "specific to Aberdeen and the evidence set out earlier in the topic paper. The Council have provide additional text

13.147 In a meeting of 6 June 2025, NatureScot confirmed they did not wish to dispute the topic paper.

13.148 Bancon confirm there are no evidence sources missing but do raise the following comments:

- Pollution risk for development near the River Dee SAC can be controlled by a Construction Environment Management Plan. The Council note Construction Environment Management Plan can be used to overcomes potential development impacts within the vicinity of an SAC. The inclusion of conditions requiring Environment Management Plan may still require carefully of land allocations or designations.

- The policy implementations of the Forestry, Woodlands and Trees data need clarified. The Council note policy implications are addressed in the Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan under the heading Forestry, Woodland and Trees. This now includes some additional text which was added to address comments made by NatureScot.
- Forestry, woodlands and trees should not be a barrier to development, they can be incorporated into developments and contribute to the creation of quality places. The Council note the presence of trees on a site will not veto all proposals for development.
- Scottish Government's Policy on Woodland Removal to highlight "that the loss of woodland will only be supported where a clear public benefit can be demonstrated", a definition of public benefit is required. The Council note the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal definition - Public benefits include social, economic and environmental benefits, the latter including carbon considerations.
- Guidance on compensatory planting would be useful. The Council note this is better addressed to future stages of the Proposed Plan development.

13.149 A meeting was held with Bancon on 18 June they noted the above were not be treated as disputes. Remark on Prime Agricultural Land are to be regarded as a dispute and are discussed under Statement of Agreement/Dispute.

13.150 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to a member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Biodiversity

13.151 The Proposed Plan will be informed by the Natural Environment Strategy. Nature Networks, including the requirement for 30 x 30 for biodiversity improvement will have influence on the spatial strategy. Nature Networks will be considered as part of the site selection criteria.

13.152 Policy 3 Biodiversity within NPF4 appears to take a firmer stance on securing enhancements of biodiversity on sites subject to national or major development. The emphasis on biodiversity enhancement will impact on development proposals; and this should be factored into the site selection criteria.

13.153 Development of the Nature network including the protection and enhancement of blue and green infrastructure will impact on land use, existing policy, and legislation.

13.154 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies.

13.155 The Proposed Plan will recognise the value food growing has on biodiversity. Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing. Such biodiversity gains may be limited due to the more controlled environment these occupy however, such land uses are also of public benefit and support efforts to promote healthy living within Aberdeen.

13.156 Biodiversity improvements will also be delivered through other policy and strategy mechanisms i.e. Forestry and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Strategy etc.

Natural Heritage

13.157 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy will identify and protect Aberdeen's local, regional, national and international designated and protected sites.

13.158 Aberdeen has 4 SSSIs that would need to be accounted for when making policy decisions. It also has 4 Local Nature Reserves and 45 Local Nature Conservation Sites. Although no RAMSAR sites are within Aberdeen, the Loch of Skene and Ythan Estuary & Meikle Loch designations are within a sufficient proximity of the city boundary to merit consideration.

13.159 Development that could impact on migrating birds (for example), may plausibly have an impact on these designations despite not being immediately adjacent to the city boundary, as species like pink-footed geese can have 10km foraging ranges from roosting sites.

13.160 There will likely need to be a greater focus on establishing linkages between existing areas of greenspace and habitat. The promotion of wildlife friendly corridors connecting existing spaces would ensure existing areas become more resilient and help prevent further fragmentation of sites.

13.161 The Proposed Plan site selection process will be informed by designated sites; this should be included in site selection criteria.

13.162 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies.

Forestry, Woodland and Trees

13.163 The Proposed Plan will be informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy, which is being developed as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy. Relevant information may also include inventories, such as the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and the Ancient Woodland Inventory, alongside records such as Tree Protection Orders, to help identify trees and woodlands of high nature conservation in the plan area.

13.164 The Proposed Plan should look for opportunities to improve and strengthen existing woodland, and should identify place-based opportunities for woodland expansion and enhancement. The spatial strategy can prioritise opportunities to improve and strengthen existing woodland fragments, before establishing completely new woodlands due to the extended time it takes for this habitat to realise its biodiversity potential.

13.165 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies.

Soils

- 13.166 The Proposed Plan will protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development.
- 13.167 The increased emphasis on protection of soils will impact on development proposals and should be considered as part of the site selection process.
- 13.168 Site selection will be informed in part by the location of valued soils to be maintained, protected and/or enhanced and restored. Consideration may be made to wider benefits that soils offer to sustainable land-use. Benefits include carbon sequestration, natural flood alleviation, blue-green infrastructure and supporting biodiversity and nature networks.
- 13.169 There isn't a clear pattern or concentrated area of carbon rich soils or peatland within the Aberdeen City authority boundaries. Although some modestly sized areas do exist within the Authority, these are not of a scale or part of a connected network that merit tailored local policies to protect them. It is considered that Policy 5 of NPF4 sets out sufficient expectations to limit and deter development in these locations unless essential, and no alternative sites are available.
- 13.170 Either the wording of a policy or further planning guidance will likely be required on soil compaction as part of the next Local Development Plan. NPF4 specifically identifies that development must be designed and constructed in a manner that protects soil from damage via compaction, erosion or soil sealing. The maps of topsoil and subsoil compaction risk, accessible from the James Hutton Institute's collection of Risk Maps, could potentially inform a strategy where the Council identifies areas of particular sensitivity where additional supporting information may be required for any development proposals in those locations. In addition to this, it would be worthwhile the Council outlining minimum expectations with regard all development sites in order to minimise compaction or soil sealing risks.

Marmot Principles

- 13.171 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three [Marmot Places](#) in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X

Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 13.4.

Statements of Agreement/Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

13.172 NHS Grampian, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

13.173 NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Iceni confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

13.174 SEPA are not looking to dispute the paper as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

13.175 One individual respondent agreed there were no piece of information missing but stated there was “too much to read, and still not clear what is the key message”.

Disputes with Stakeholders

13.176 A further member of the public disagrees with the evidence used but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow-up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic paper themselves

13.177 Bancon require more information on how development proposals on prime agricultural land will be considered, to ensure housing delivery in light of the housing crisis. The Council note NPF4 Policy 5 sets protection of valued land as a priority and outlines a hierarchy for consideration of development proposals. The approach provides significant certainty.

Information Gaps

13.178 There is currently no Forestry and Woodland Strategy, although this is being developed as part of the wider Natural Environment Strategy.

13.179 There is also a lack of information on how local authorities are to address soil compaction and erosion in their consideration of sites during the production of the Proposed Plan.

13.180 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic area. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

14. Topic Paper 7 – Energy and Resources

Requirements addressed in this section:

- 14.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(d)	the infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities
Section 15(5)(e)	how that infrastructure is used

National Planning Framework 4

Energy

- 14.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development.

Heating and Cooling

- 14.3 LDPs should take into account the area's Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). The spatial strategy should take into account areas of heat network potential and any designated Heat Network Zones (HNZ).

Minerals

- 14.4 LDPs should support a landbank of construction aggregates of at least 10-years at all times in the relevant market areas, whilst promoting sustainable resource management, safeguarding important workable mineral resources, which are of economic or conservation value, and take steps to ensure these are not sterilised by other types of development.

Zero Waste

- 14.5 LDPs should identify appropriate locations for new waste management infrastructure to support the circular economy and meet identified needs in a way that moves waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible.

Links to Evidence

Energy

- [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- [Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan \(2023\)](#)
- [Climate Change Act – Section 72: fourteenth annual report - gov.scot](#)
- [NESO Beyond 2030](#)
- [Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement](#)
- [Scottish Government Offshore Wind Policy Statement](#)
- [Scotland's National Marine Plan: A Single Framework for Managing Our Seas](#)
- [Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy](#)
- [Initial Plan Framework Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind for Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation \(INTOG\)](#)
- [marine.gov.scot](#)
- [ScotWind leasing round | Crown Estate Scotland](#)
- [Sectoral marine plan: regional locational guidance - gov.scot](#)
- [Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement](#)
- [Development of early, clean hydrogen production in Scotland](#)
- [Hydrogen Action Plan](#)
- [Scotland Hydrogen Assets \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- [Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy](#)
- [SensitivityStudyFinal2021.pdf \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](#)
- [ETZ_Draft_Masterplan_January_2024 \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy & Action Plan 2015-2025](#)
- [ETZ | Hydrogen \(etzltd.com\)](#)
- [Homepage - Aberdeen \(bpaberdeenhhydrogenhub.com\)](#)
- [Anaerobic Digestion at Aberdeen – Anaerobic Digestion at Aberdeen \(adatab.org\)](#)

Heating and Cooling

- [Scottish Government Heat in Buildings Strategy: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in Scotland's Buildings](#)
- [New Build Heat Standard - gov.scot](#)
- [Social housing net zero standard: consultation - gov.scot](#)
- [Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 - update - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Scotland Heat Map](#)
- [GHiGs Settlement Dashboard \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- [Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy](#)
- [District heating | Aberdeen City Council](#)
- [Heatnet: delivering low carbon district heat | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Minerals

- [10th Annual Mineral Planning Survey 2022](#)
- [Aggregates demand and supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2035](#)
- [Collation of the results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Zero Waste

- [Zero Waste Plan](#)
- [Circular Economy \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury - incineration in the waste hierarchy: independent review](#)
- [Decarbonisation of residual waste infrastructure: report - gov.scot](#)
- [Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030](#)
- [Household waste generated and managed 2023](#)
- [spp-waste-capacity-infrastructure.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)
- [SPP Waste Capacity Infrastructure](#)
- [Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014-2025](#)
- [Net Zero Aberdeen: Circular Economy Strategy](#)
- [240304 State-of-the-art technology and opportunities for young people at the heart of rebuild of Aberdeens recycling centre - SUEZ in UK](#)
- [Anaerobic Digestion @ Aberdeen](#)
- [NESS Energy From Waste - Aberdeen - Indaver](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope of Evidence Report Chapter

- 14.6 Navigating the transition towards a sustainable, low-carbon future requires careful consideration of Aberdeen's energy and resources. Aberdeen, known for its historic linkages to the oil and gas industry, is now at the forefront of energy transition initiatives. The Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap outlines the city's approach towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, through rapid decarbonisation across all sectors with changes to the ways in which both power and heat is generated and used. As such, investment in low-carbon energy opportunities and strategic assessment of current resource availability is central to achieving an energy system that delivers affordable, resilient and clean energy supplies for Aberdeen's households, communities and businesses. The use of energy and resources in planning will play a vital role in delivering an energy system that provides maximum community and economic benefits that are aligned with Scotland's net zero ambitions.
- 14.7 This section is structured as follows:
- Energy
 - Heating and Cooling
 - Minerals
 - Zero Waste

Energy

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

- 14.8 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a statutory duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 aims to ensure that that Scotland's contribution to climate change will end within a generation, being fully net-zero by 2045 with emissions reducing by 75% by 2030 (compared to a 1990 baseline). The next Local Development Plan will consider how it can support Aberdeen in reaching these goals.

Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

- 14.9 The strategy provides the vision for Scotland's future decarbonised energy system. It outlines a route map of actions towards the Scottish Government's targets for 2030.
- 14.10 Targets include:
- Delivery of greater than 20GW of additional renewable electricity onshore and offshore by 2030
 - 5GW of hydrogen production by 2030, and 25GW of hydrogen production by 2045
 - Oil and gas production levels expected to be around 35% of 2019 levels by 2035
 - 2GW of community and locally owned energy
 - Phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030
 - The equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity use to come from renewable sources
- 14.11 The next Local Development Plan will seek to consider these targets as it pursues the transition to net zero in Aberdeen in alignment with wider government strategy.

Climate Change Act Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report

- 14.12 Section 3F of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as introduced by Section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009), required all Local Authorities to include "policies requiring all developments in the local development plan area to be designed so as to ensure that all new buildings avoid a specified and rising proportion of the projected greenhouse gas emissions from their use, through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies".
- 14.13 The Scottish Government undertook annual reporting on the legislation to consider its operation, effectiveness, and continuing need. The fourteenth iteration of this report determined that updated national planning policies now go further than Section 3F and consider lifecycle as well as in-use emissions. Work is commencing to prepare a repeal Order for consideration by the Scottish Parliament. As such, the next Local Development Plan will no longer include Section 3F policies. Building Standard requirements will provide Sustainability targets for all new developments.

Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy

- 14.14 The Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy outlines Aberdeen's approach towards developing low-carbon energy choices for Aberdeen citizens. It identifies the key challenges, and risks within Aberdeen's energy transition.
- 14.15 The Strategy sets out the challenges for the city as follows:
1. Support national grid decarbonisation and ensure that all new and existing networks city networks are zero carbon.
 2. Ensure affordable energy and reduce fuel poverty in the move to net zero.

3. Support network growth for local decentralised and micro-renewable systems across all energy sectors.
4. Support growth of green hydrogen production and usage, including local demand and export
5. Capitalise on North Sea skills from industries to grow the supply chain and net zero economy.
6. Secure maximum economic benefit and output from Scotwind leasing round and Innovation to Oil and Gas (INTOG) projects.
7. Support Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) development, financing, ownership, and funding models appropriate for new types of energy projects.

14.16 The Strategy outlines the following outcomes:

Key Outcomes	About the Approach
Fuel Poverty	Work with generators and utilities to ensure that prices do not rise for those in fuel poverty or at risk of it
	Support the creation of an “at risk of fuel poverty” register
Decentralised energy	Develop decentralised energy master plans to cover area-specific opportunities including existing and new projects
	Work with generators and utilities to develop decentralised generation/consumption projects
	Identify and promote opportunities for community ownership/participation
Green Hydrogen	Deliver Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub (AHH) production and distribution infrastructure
	Develop integrated training and accreditation offer (AHH)
	Marketing campaign to promote Aberdeen as a global centre of excellence in hydrogen (AHH and partners)
Micro Renewables	Undertake an assessment of micro renewable deployment opportunities at commercial, residential, and industrial and public sector sites
	Define technologies and ownership and funding options
Skills Transition	Explore facilities/policy needed to secure jobs in Aberdeen
	Produce integrated training and accreditation offer to be marketed globally (AHH and partners)
Carbon Capture, and Utilization and Storage	Support local projects
	Encourage transfer of skills, expertise and assets from our oil and gas industry
	Develop small scale CCS deployment opportunities in Aberdeen

Offshore Wind	Offshore Wind and Floating Offshore Wind Centres of Excellence
	Support transfer of skills from oil and gas and supply chain development programmes
	Innovation and commercialisation
	Secure maximum local content in Scotwind 1 and 2
Investment	Development of ownership, investment, and funding models suitable for new types of projects
	Support investor understanding of new types of energy project
	Access public funding sources for new technology and project development, skills and training
Supply Chain	Support the supply chain in diversification and accessing new business
	Ensure that the supply chain is linked to skills, training, skills transfer and project opportunities
	Support the supply chain in the development of marketable new technology, products and services
	Promote international business opportunities to the supply chain and promote supply chain capabilities in new markets

Table 14.1: Net Zero Aberdeen: Energy Supply Strategy Outcomes

14.17 The Strategy sets out the following theme ‘synergies’.

Mobility	Link to green hydrogen, carbon capture/utilisation and storage
Energy Supply	Link to fuel poverty, decentralised energy, green hydrogen, micro renewables
Circular Economy	Link to decentralised energy (Energy from solid waste and wastewater)
Natural Environment	Link to decentralised energy, green hydrogen, micro renewables and carbon capture/storage (embed green infrastructure)
Empowerment	Skills transition and green jobs across; carbon capture, utilisation and storage, offshore wind and supply chain (green jobs)

Table 14.2: Net Zero: Energy Supply Strategy Theme Synergies

- 14.18 strategy to inform future development that is aligned with Council strategy. This is important for recognising Aberdeen specific opportunity for low-carbon energy development across each of the themes highlighted.

The Aberdeen Landscape Sensitivity Study (2021)

- 14.19 The Aberdeen Landscape Sensitivity Study can assist in understanding appropriate locations energy development. The Study sets out which areas of the city's landscape are sensitive to residential, business and industrial development. The study will be used to effectively inform development plans and provide robust evidence in assessing development applications.

Energy Distribution and Transmission

- 14.20 The National Grid Electricity System Operator Ltd published recommendations for the electricity network infrastructure, detailing what must be done to accommodate the rapidly changing mix of electricity generation sources. The 'Beyond 2030' report outlines the necessary steps and investments to ensure a reliable, clean, and efficient electricity system for Great Britain beyond 2030.
- 14.21 SSEN Distribution functions as the Distribution Network Operator covering Aberdeen City. Its sister organisation, SSEN Transmission is the owner and operator of all high-voltage electricity network assets within the city council area. Details of Aberdeen's electricity supply is covered in the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper.

Energy Transition Zone

- 14.22 Aberdeen's Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) is identified within the current Local Development Plan 2023 as designated land wherein there will be a presumption in favour of the development, production, assembly, storage and/or distribution of infrastructure required to support renewable energy related industries.
- 14.23 The Energy Transition Zone masterplan document supports the delivery of sites OP61, OP62 and OP56 which are allocated in the 2023 LDP as land for ETZ. The masterplan also includes the area within which OP64 sits, this site being allocated as a solar farm (see hydrogen and solar sections).
- 14.24 The ETZ is the largest dedicated energy transition industrial complex in Scotland, focused on delivery of energy through hydrogen, offshore wind, carbon capture and storage. The ETZ seeks to take advantage of the new adjacent Aberdeen South Harbour. It is expected to directly support 2,500 green jobs by 2030, alongside a further 10,000 transition related jobs.

Wind Energy

Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement

- 14.25 The Scottish Government's Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022) sets out Scotland's ambition to achieve a minimum installed capacity of 20GW of onshore wind by 2030. This information is noted however Aberdeen has no current provision for onshore wind energy developments.

Scottish Government Offshore Wind Policy Statement

- 14.26 The Scottish Government Offshore Wind Policy Statement (2020) sets out Scotland's ambitions to achieve 8-11GW of offshore wind in Scottish waters by 2030. The next Local Development Plan will seek to consider this as it looks to guide offshore wind development in Aberdeen that is aligned with wider government targets.

Scotland's National Marine Plan

- 14.27 Scotland's National Marine Plan (2015) provides the framework for managing Scotland's marine resources. Future development of offshore wind projects will need to give consideration to the strategic development zones and grid infrastructure planning identified within the plan. Additionally, consideration will be given to the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy (2020), and any future iterations, and the Initial Plan Framework for Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas (2022). These documents identify sustainable plan options for commercial-scale offshore wind energy in Scotland while identifying potential risks and constraints.
- 14.28 Further, the National Marine Plan interactive is a mapping software provides spatial information about the Scottish marine environment. These strategic plans and datasets can be used to identify various types of information about Aberdeen's marine environment which will be considered in the development of the next Local Development Plan.

Sectoral Marine Plan: Regional Locational Guidance

- 14.29 This guidance from the Scottish Government sets out regional spatial baseline data for the sectoral marine plan for offshore wind energy. It describes the information used in the planning and assessment process. The 'East' region considers the area of coast that stretches beyond Aberdeen's coastline. Concern for Offshore Marine Areas (12-200 nautical miles) is executive devolved to Scottish Ministers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. However, awareness of this information should be considered to inform Aberdeen's next Local Development Plan.

Aberdeen Offshore Wind Developments

- 14.30 Aberdeen has three important offshore wind developments in the nearby area; Hywind, EOWDC and Kincardine Floating Offshore Wind Farm. The ScotWind sites numbers one to six directly east of Aberdeen also provide significant new potential. 12 of the 20 offshore wind sites, which were leased by Crown Estate Scotland in January 2022, are situated within 100 nautical miles of Aberdeen. These 12 sites have a potential capacity of 17GW.
- 14.31 Included within the Energy Transition Zone Masterplan, and the Aberdeen Net Zero Energy Supply Strategy, is space for a planned Offshore Wind Campus. Situated on brownfield land at the eastern edge of Altens, the Offshore Wind Campus would provide a cluster of commercial, manufacturing, test and demonstration, and innovation facilities anchored by the National Floating Wind Innovation Centre (FLOWIC). The Campus will support the growth of a strong offshore wind supply chain as well as opportunities for complementary energy transition activities.

Hydrogen

Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement

- 14.32 The Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement (2020) outlines Scotland's commitment to ensuring hydrogen plays a key role within Scotland's energy transition. Recognising the growth of the hydrogen market globally, the policy statement encourages investment in technology to support capacity for deployment of green hydrogen and the generation of new economic opportunities in Scotland.
- 14.33 The "Development of Early, Clean Hydrogen Production in Scotland" (2021) document from Scottish Enterprise provides further assessment of Scotland's potential for early adoption of hydrogen production opportunities. It highlights the increased demand for blue and green hydrogen production and identifies sites across Scotland suitable for further development of hydrogen production.
- 14.34 The next Local Development Plan will need to consider these documents as it seeks to support growth of hydrogen production opportunities in Aberdeen.

Hydrogen Action Plan

- 14.35 The Hydrogen Action Plan (2022) details the Scottish Government's plan to ensure hydrogen plays an increasingly important role in Scotland's energy system. It commits to a target of achieving 5GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030, and 25GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2045. Additionally, it aims to support the growth of Regional Hydrogen Energy Hubs. Of the 13 Regional Hydrogen Hubs identified, 1 is located in Aberdeen.

Hydrogen Projects in Aberdeen

- 14.36 Scotland's Hydrogen Assets map identifies 4 hydrogen projects in Aberdeen (The Events Complex Aberdeen, Kittybrewster Refuelling station, Aberdeen H2 Hub, Aberdeen City Hydrogen Energy Storage). The Energy Transition Zone Masterplan states the following with regards to hydrogen: 'Hydrogen is rapidly emerging as central to the future net zero economy. Aberdeen and North East Scotland has already emerged as a leading hub of hydrogen activity, with current and planned projects expected to generate 200 MW+ by 2025-27, and potential for up to 1GW of production by 2030-32. The city's wealth of experience in the oil & gas sector is capable of being re-utilised for hydrogen-based activity, with identified potential for up to 29,000 jobs in the sector by 2040. There is already significant interest and planned activity in the Zone to support hydrogen production, distribution, and use – including BP, ERM Dolphyn, and Vatenfall among others who are seeking to base leading edge technologies and projects within Aberdeen.'

Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy

- 14.37 The Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025) states that the Aberdeen Local Development Plan must consider and support hydrogen technology. The strategy sets out the following key objectives:

	Objective	Action
1	Vehicle Deployments	A range of local stakeholders deploy hydrogen vehicles.
2	Renewable Hydrogen	Hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources is widespread throughout the region.
3	Refuelling Infrastructure	An accessible, convenient, and safe refuelling infrastructure network is deployed across the City and beyond.
4	Non-Transport Applications	Non-transport applications are tried and tested including stationary power.
5	Supply Chain / Market Development	A robust, local hydrogen supply chain is developed which utilises the areas existing energy expertise.
6	Communication and Education	A greater understanding and acceptance of hydrogen technologies encourages widespread adoption.
7	Policy and Regulation	Hydrogen technologies are embedded in all relevant areas of policy and supported at a national level.

Table 14.3: Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan Key Objectives

14.38 It sets out in the following table the locally available production pathways which might supply hydrogen refuelling stations:

Source	Chemistry	Description	Local availability
Steam methane reforming	Methane reformation $CH_4 + H_2O \leftrightarrow CO + 3H_2$ Water gas shift (WGS) reaction $CO + H_2O \leftrightarrow CO_2 + H_2$	Methane reformation to produce syngas and subsequently H_2 following the WGS reaction is the most common H_2 production pathway	No large centralised SMR production nearby Peterhead CCS CO_2 pipeline could facilitate a new 'green' SMR H_2 production facility
Renewable energy & water electrolysis	Water electrolysis (WE) $2H_2O \leftrightarrow O_2 + 2H_2$	WE systems split water into H_2 and O_2 Cheap electricity can be sourced from local renewable generators	Significant grid-constrained renewables
Waste gasification	Municipal solid waste gasification $CH_xO_y + \alpha O_2 + \beta H_2O \leftrightarrow \gamma CH_4 + \delta CO_2 + \mu CO + \sigma CH_xO_y + \rho H_2O + \varepsilon H_2$	Plasma reactors used to convert non-recyclable landfill waste into syngas which is treated for impurities Syngas can be combusted for electricity generation, or purified to give H_2	Currently no active projects in the region New waste processing plant coming online c. 2020
Chemical plant by-product	Brine electrolysis $2NaCl + 2H_2O \leftrightarrow 2NaOH + H_2 + Cl_2$ Naptha (ethane) cracking $C_2H_6 \rightarrow C_2H_4 + H_2$	Many processes in the chemical industry produce H_2 as a by-product Often this H_2 is recycled on-site via combustion	Mossmorran ethylene cracking plant is the major regional producer
Anaerobic digestion (AD)	Overall Process $(CH_2O)_n \rightarrow \frac{n}{2} CH_4 + \frac{n}{2} CO_2$ Methane reformation $CH_4 + H_2O \leftrightarrow CO + 3H_2$	Bacteria used to convert biodegradable waste into biogas (CH_4 and CO_2) CH_4 product can be reformed to produce H_2	Small AD projects, inc. at AECC development due to come online in 2018

Table 14.4: Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan Locally Available Production Pathways

- 14.39 The Hydrogen Refuelling infrastructure mentioned within the strategy is undergoing maintenance. Operation of Aberdeen's hydrogen buses, introduced in 2021, has been paused since July 2024. This is due to upgrades to refuelling stations located in Kittybrewster and Cove.

ETZ Hydrogen Campus

- 14.40 Included within the Energy Transition Zone Masterplan is space for a planned Hydrogen Campus. The Hydrogen Campus is planned to support the significant low carbon hydrogen production growth opportunity across the region. Green Hydrogen Test and Demonstration Facilities will form the transforaminal anchor project to provide "on demand" hydrogen to industrial users and accelerate commercialisation and innovation. The high-quality campus design will be suitable for attracting new high-value manufacturing opportunities and supporting supply chain companies.

Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub

- 14.41 BP Aberdeen Hydrogen Energy Limited is a joint venture between BP and Aberdeen City Council formed in March 2022 which intends to deliver a scalable green hydrogen production, storage and distribution facility in the city powered by renewable energy. The Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub project is central to Aberdeen City Council's H2 vision to expand the supply and demand for hydrogen in support of the city's net zero vision. It aims to harness the natural resources, skills and capacity in the North East of Scotland to create jobs in an exciting new energy sector that builds on our oil and gas heritage. A planning application (230299/DPP) was approved in June 2023 for a hydrogen production and vehicle re-fuelling facility at Hareness Road, with an associated solar farm by Coast Road. It has not as of yet been implemented. It is intended for this facility to act as a refuelling site for vehicles. There are also existing refuelling stations at Cove (dispenses 130kg hydrogen per day, stores up to 150kg hydrogen onsite) and Kittybrewster (dispenses 360kg hydrogen per day, stores up to 420kg hydrogen onsite) which both produce hydrogen onsite via electrolysis using a green electricity tariff.
- 14.42 The Aberdeen Hydrogen booklet (2021) includes the following diagram to illustrate the phases of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub.

Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub

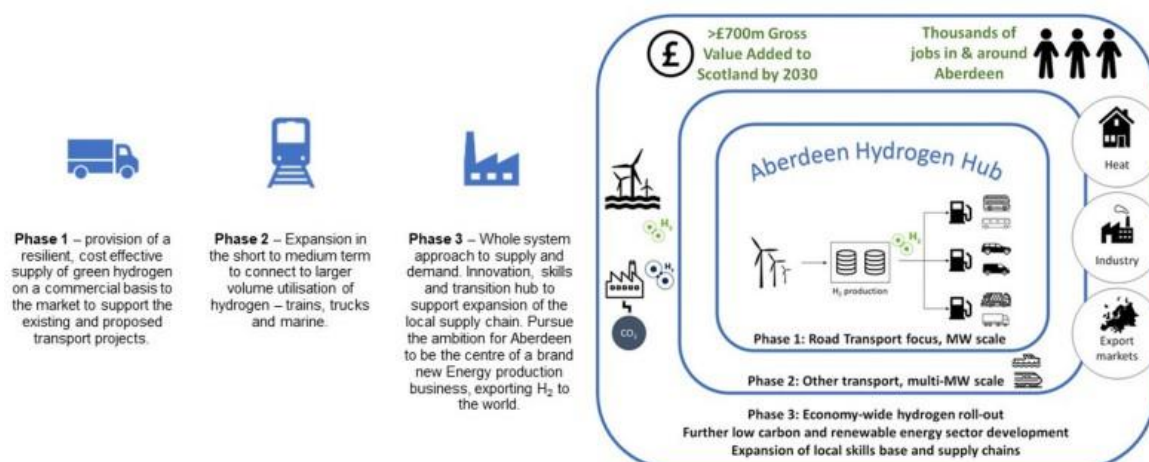


Figure 14.1: Illustration of phases of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub

Energy from Waste

14.43 The city's Energy from Waste plant was developed on the former gas holder site in East Tullos. The facility is designed to treat non-recyclable waste from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Council areas and generates electricity which is sold back to the National Grid and heat is supplied to the local Torry Heat Network. This is outlined in further detail under the 'Zero Waste' section of this Topic Paper.

Biogas

14.44 There is an anaerobic digestion plant at The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA) which has been developed by Aberdeen City Council. The facility meets the heat and power demands of the TECA facility. Some gas is exported to the grid. Some gas is also used as an energy source for hydrogen systems to power city buses. This is outlined in further detail under the 'Zero Waste' section of this Topic Paper.

Solar Energy

14.45 installations. In terms of ground mounted solar arrays, these are limited due to Aberdeen being an urban authority.

14.46 There is a significant ground array at the Mannofield Water Treatment Works (St. John's Terrace) operated by Scottish Water. OP64 is an allocated site within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 for a solar farm and an application has been approved at this 49ha site (230299/DPP). This seeks to implement a ground mounted solar PV system at the Ness Landfill site. There is a 54ha solar array built at Chapel Works, Bucksburn. An EIA screening was also sought in 2023 for a solar array covering a total area of 85.9ha at Perwinnes Hill, Bridge of Don (230797/ESC). Evidence suggests there has been, so far, limited appetite for large scale ground mounted solar array farms within Aberdeen City's boundary, though the interest in developing two very large sites recently may suggest that could change.

Battery Energy Storage Systems

14.47 A number of planning applications have come forward seeking approval for battery storage schemes within Aberdeen City's authority boundary. These are all applications (5.4ha total) that have been submitted September 2023 or later. This is displayed in the following table:

Planning ref.	Location	Capacity	Note
240313/DPP	1.8ha site at Craigshaw Drive	>20MW	Includes EV charging.
231336/DPP	1ha site at Rigifa Farm, Cove Road	Up to 49.9MW	
231134/DPP	0.7ha site at Persley Croft Parkway	Up to 49.9MW	

Table 14.5: Aberdeen City BESS Planning Applications

14.48 In addition to this, Proposal of Application Notices have been submitted for the following:

Planning ref.	Location	Capacity	Note
230869/PAN	Aryburn Farm, Dyce	33MW	Further consultation required.
211081/PAN	Raiths Industrial Estate, Kirkton Drive / Pitmedden Road, Dyce	50MW	Further consultation required.
201599/PAN	Farburn Place, Dyce	Unlisted	Further consultation required.

Table 14.6: Aberdeen City BESS Proposal of Application Notices

14.49 Furthermore, screening opinions have been sought for the following:

Planning ref.	Location	Capacity	Note

230797/ESC	Perwinnes Hill, Bridge of Don	45MW	Includes 84MW Solar Arrays. EIA not required (screening opinion).
170822/ESC	Mains of Charleston, Old Stonehaven Road	Unlisted	Includes 6MW Solar Arrays. EIA not required (screening opinion).

Table 14.7: Aberdeen City BESS Proposals for Screening Opinions

Heating and Cooling

14.50 The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets the target for Scotland to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with interim targets of a 75% reduction by 2030 and 90% by 2030, and 90% by 2040.

Heat in Buildings Strategy: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in Scotland's Buildings

14.51 Scotland's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) outlines the Scottish Government's plan to achieve the net zero target set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 and Climate Change Plan. It outlines the Scottish Government's ambition to see a 68% reduction in emissions from buildings by 2030 against a 2020 baseline as set out in the Climate Change Plan Update. It aims to see at least 22% of heat in buildings to be directly supplied from renewable sources by 2030. The strategy calls for deployment of zero emissions heating systems and increased use of 'No and Low Regrets Strategic Technologies' to heat Scotland's homes.

14.52 As part of the strategy, the Scottish Government's New Build Heat Standard (NBHS) (2025) requires all new buildings to install climate-friendly heating systems instead of oil and gas boilers. This applies to all systems used for heating and cooling, and hot water. This is expected within all new buildings, and some conversions wherein the building warrant was sought on or after 1 April 2024. While this sits within the remit of Building Standards, consideration of this will be required when developing the next Local Development Plan.

14.53 Further, the Scottish Government have proposed a new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) (2023). At the time of writing, the Social Housing Net Zero Standard has been consulted on and is being considered. This new standard will replace the second Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2). Following a review of EESH2, the new SHNZS seeks to implement refined requirements that are more aligned with Scottish Government's net zero targets. Similarly, these standards will need to be considered when developing the next Local Development Plan.

Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy

14.54 The Net Zero Aberdeen: Buildings and Heat Strategy recognises the centrality of energy use in Aberdeen's buildings towards the pursuit of net zero targets. In Aberdeen, the built environment comprises 19% of Aberdeen's emissions. The strategy aims to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 through rapid decarbonisation across all sectors through changes to the ways in which power and heat are generated and used. Additionally, it states a commitment to 'Plan expansion in infrastructure for existing and new heating networks, such as the Aberdeen Heat & Power (AHP) model. Expanding connections to different property types and to privately owned domestic and commercial properties.'

14.55 Key Outcomes identified in the Strategy include:

- Improved energy performance data
- Improved plans, policies, and standards
- Improved energy efficiency of buildings
- Improve energy management controls
- Expand low and zero emissions heating
- Increased connections to decentralised energy
- Reduced fuel poverty

Scotland Heat Data

14.56 The Scottish Heat Map provides estimates of annual heat demand. Demand is given in kilowatt-hours per year (kWh/yr). Areas of higher heat demand are predominantly concentrated around central areas of Aberdeen. In particular, greatest heat demand is recorded near Old Aberdeen, Bridge of Don and Gilcomston.

14.57 Greenspace Scotland provides data regarding heat usage and offers spatial data reflecting the suitability of a given area for the use of heating systems in locations across Scotland. This is demonstrated in the Green Heat in Greenspaces settlement profile. It states that Aberdeen's total heat demand sits at 2,642,706 MWh per year. Aberdeen achieves a 'high' ranking for suitability for district heat networks.

Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021

14.58 The Heat Networks (Scotland) Act requires local authorities to carry out a review of potential areas for the installation of heat networks. Targets outlined within the Act require the combined supply of thermal energy by heat networks to reach 2.6 TWh of output by 2027 and 6 TWh of output by 2030. At the time of writing, Aberdeen City Council have yet to publish their review of this. However, it is anticipated that this will be provided within the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy due to be published within the year.

Aberdeen Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

14.59 Aberdeen City Council is required to prepare a Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). At the time of writing, the Aberdeen City Council LHEES and Delivery Plan are being produced. The LHEES will identify Heat Network Zones, which will be incorporated into the next Aberdeen Local Development Plan in accordance with the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021. The LHEES and Delivery Plan will provide indication of where future heat networks are to be installed.

City Combined Heat and Power Network

14.60 The City Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Network is a project that seeks to build a city-wide heat network. It currently provides energy efficient, low cost, low carbon heating in 52 multistorey blocks, 2 sheltered housing blocks and 31 public and commercial buildings in the city. The schemes are managed by Aberdeen Heat and Power Co Ltd (AHP) and export electricity to the national grid or to local buildings and to the district heating networks energy centres. They provide more affordable energy tariffs and maintenance costs and reduce the CO2 emissions to properties connected within the schemes.

14.61 There are seven CHP operating schemes at:

- Stockethill
- Hazlehead
- Seaton
- Tillydrone
- City Centre
- Wellheads
- Sillerton Lane

14.62 Buildings connected to the schemes have seen emissions reduced by approximately 56%, while reducing residents fuel bills by up to 50%.

Heatnet

14.63 Aberdeen City Council is a project partner in the delivery of Interreg Heatnet NWE, a European funded project, which aims to increase the provision of district heating networks and affordable warmth within North West European countries. As part of the Heatnet NWE project, Aberdeen City Council is completing a pilot project in Torry. An existing district heating network within this area currently serves three multistorey blocks. The pilot will expand this existing network, linking in three municipal buildings; Balnagask House, Provost Hogg Court and Deeside Family Centre. Nicol of Skene have been appointed to deliver the project.

Aberdeen Heat Networks

14.64 There are a number of heat networks across Aberdeen. See details below:

Location	Description

Tillydrone	Tillydrone Energy Centre supplies 7 multi-storey blocks and 79 new build properties with heat, as well as Riverbank new and existing Schools, Tillydrone Nursery, St Machar Academy, Lighthouse Family Centre, Lads' Club Tillydrone, St George's Church and Tillydrone Health Hub. The Tillydrone Energy Centre currently uses around 1,277 MW of natural gas taken from the grid per month, but can be converted to use alternative renewable supplies as these become available in the future. It generates an average monthly output of 702MW in heat and 362MW in electricity. The goal is to eventually supply all properties in the Tillydrone Energy Centre catchment area as well as connecting to other Energy Centre's to create an even more robust, low carbon heat network.
Hazlehead	Hazlehead Energy Centre delivers heat and power to Hazlehead Academy, heat to 4 multi-storey blocks, a sheltered housing scheme, and Aberdeen City Council-owned premises within Hazlehead Park. The Hazlehead Energy Centre currently uses around 742MW of natural gas taken from the grid per month, but can be converted to use alternative renewable supplies as these become available in the future. It generates an average monthly output of 423MW in heat and 131MW in electricity. Development plans for a new Low Carbon Energy Centre utilizing waster heat and heat pumps are at an advanced design stage.
Seaton/Ice Arena (City Centre)	Seaton Energy Centre delivers heat to 14 multi-storey blocks, The Town House, Marischal College, Aberdeen Sports Village and Aquatic Centre, Aberdeen Beach Leisure Centre, Aberdeen Health Village, Aberdeen Central Mosque, North East Scotland College, Aulton Football Pavillion and the Beach Ballroom.

Table 14.8: Abeerdeen City Heat Networks

Torry Energy from Waste Heat Network

14.64 Aberdeen City Council has developed a Heat Network in the Torry of the city to connect both domestic and public buildings. The network utilizes very low carbon waste heat from EfW plant in Tullos. Phase 1 & 2 of the project has recently been completed and connections continue. Future plans are to expand the heat transmission line into the city centre to connect to the current AHP heat network, this will allow the full capacity of waste heat to be utilized. Further opportunities to enhance the waste heat capacity are being investigated as the area around Torry continues to be developed.

Minerals

10th Annual Mineral Planning Survey 2022

- 14.65 Across the UK, analysis of reserve replenishment rates and annual sales illustrates declining reserve trends. Given the growing demand for aggregates to support the delivery of major infrastructure projects, the pressure on reserve availability and supply can be expected to increase. This needs to be closely monitored, given the time required for any corrective action to take effect. The future supply of essential minerals cannot be assumed and it requires effective planning, management and monitoring to ensure sustainable and cost-effective supply.
- 14.66 As of the end of 2021 the rolling 10-year average for replenishment of sand & gravel and crushed rock reserves was 63% and 52% respectively. The report indicates that aggregate sales (both sand and gravel and crushed rock) in Scotland were greater than permitted reserves between 2012 and 2021.
- 14.67 Data from this report, and future iterations of this report, will be required to inform the next Local Development Plan as it seeks to ensure reserves are available to meet demands of future development.

Aggregates Demand and Supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2035

- 14.68 The Mineral Products Association's report, 'Aggregate Demand and Supply in Great Britain Scenarios for 2025', indicates that between 3.8 and 4.1 billion tonnes of aggregates will be required in the UK between 2022 and 2035 to support construction needs. This compares to a total of 3.2 billion tonnes of aggregates supplied in the previous 14-year period, between 2008 and 2021. It suggests that approximately 250 million tonnes of aggregates are used each year in the UK, and a further 20 million tonnes in Northern Ireland.
- 14.69 The report concludes that less than one third of total aggregates demand, 28% in 2021, is supplied from recycled and secondary sources, the remainder requires the extraction of primary aggregates. It states that approximately 90% of all aggregates are used by the construction industry. Recycled and secondary sources of aggregates will provide a valuable source of supply, however they cannot fulfil the demands of construction activity. Therefore, significant tonnages of primary extraction will be expected to provide the majority of supply and meet overall demand. Primary aggregates are projected to supply between 68% and 72% of total demand by 2035.
- 14.70 There is no national mechanism to provide an overall assessment of future construction aggregate needs. However, the next Local Development Plan will need to consider data from this report as it looks to ensure resources are managed effectively to secure provision for future development in Aberdeen.

Collation of the Results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland (2023)

- 14.71 The Aggregate Minerals Survey by Scottish Government and British Geological Survey (BGS) provides understandings of national and regional sales, inter-regional flows, transportation, consumption and permitted reserves of primary aggregates. It demonstrates that the total permitted reserves in active and inactive sites in Scotland for aggregates use as at 31/12/2019 were 1298 Mt, of which crushed rock accounted for 95% (1229 Mt), and sand and gravel accounted for 5% (69 Mt). As of 2019, sand

and gravel reserves were equivalent to approximately 18-years output with crushed rock reserves equivalent to approximately 72-years.

14.72 Of the 1298 Mt permitted reserves of primary aggregates in active and inactive sites in Scotland in 2019, the North East reserve was 145.6 Mt.

14.73 The North East distribution area comprises Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. As of 2019, the permitted reserve of active and inactive sites were 145,567 thousand tonnes (11% of Scotland's total).

14.74 Of the 20.8 Mt of sand and gravel and crushed rock sold in 2019 in Scotland, 1.6 Mt (8%) was from North East Scotland. The majority of which was transported by road, however a small proportion was transported by water. Of the 13.7 Mt consumed in 2019 in Scotland 1.5 Mt was in North East Scotland.

14.75 The following table reflects a summary of exports and imports of primary aggregates in 2019 in the North East and Scotland. (Table adapted from Table 8 (page 29 of report)).

Region	Export (Thousand tonnes)		Imports (Thousand tonnes)	
	Sand and gravel	Crushed rock	Sand and gravel	Crushed rock
North East Scotland	85	52	0	19
Scotland	1142	8482	608	1902

Table 14.9: Collation of the Results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland (2023), North East and Scotland Imports and Exports of Primary Aggregates

14.76 Notably, while the above table indicates there are no sand and gravel imports to North East Scotland, the British Geological Survey confirms that sand and gravel is currently imported to North East Scotland and Aberdeen. However, there is no available data to confirm quantities of this.

14.77 It is estimated that supply in Scotland from active sites as 13 years at 2019 sales levels for sand and gravel and 10 years for North East Scotland. It is estimated that supply in Scotland from active sites as 70 years at 2019 sales levels for crushed rock and 121 years for North East Scotland.

Aberdeen Context

14.78 Aberdeen has a small hinterland within its administrative boundaries and thus opportunities for quarrying are much more limited here than they would be in a rural authority. There are two active hard rock quarries at Blackhills, Cove (Easting 394655 Northing 799895) and North Lasts, Peterculter (Easting 382700 Northing 804025) and both have historically been identified and reserved for mineral extraction in Local Development Plans.

14.79 North Lasts Quarry has been in operation since the late 1970s and an extension granted in 2017 has permission until 30th April 2047. This application was recommended for approval on the basis that it would ensure a land bank of permitted reserves for a period exceeding 10 years (30 years in total).

- 14.80 Blackhills Quarry was granted an extension in 2015 until 28 November 2050. This application was recommended for approval on the basis that it would ensure a land bank of permitted reserves for a period exceeding 10 years.
- 14.81 There are 2 operational sites for the Aberdeen Harbour (Easting 397545 Northing 805860) and Aberdeen South Harbour (Easting 397000 Northing 804730). However, Aberdeen City Council is only responsible for the inland infrastructure associated with these harbour operations and Marine Scotland is responsible for licensing (and monitoring) any operations such as dredging.

Coal, Onshore Gas and Peat

- 14.82 The north east does not have a history of coal extraction, nor are there any Petroleum, Exploration and Development Licenses (PEDL) in place for onshore unconventional oil and gas. Peat extraction does not take place within the Local Authority boundary.

Aggregates

- 14.83 The extent of landbank of permitted reserves for construction aggregates in the North-East is satisfied by the recent permissions to extend the operations of two quarries within the administrative area. This is further supported by materials imported from quarries located in neighbouring local authorities in the North-East. There are sufficient mineral and aggregate resources available to meet demand. The effective Scottish Government moratorium on unconventional oil and gas remains in place.

Zero Waste

Zero Waste Plan

- 14.84 Scotland has taken significant steps towards achieving zero waste. In 2010, the Scottish Government launched the Zero Waste Plan, which set a number of targets including recycling 70% of all waste and sending no more than 5% of waste to landfill by 2025.
- 14.85 The Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 underlines Scotland's commitment to a circular economy based on sustainable consumption, production, and resource management. The Act provides a legislative framework to support Scotland's transition to zero waste and circular economy, increasing reuse and recycling rates, and modernising and improving waste and recycling services. This will need to be considered in the development of the next Local Development Plan to ensure Aberdeen supports the transition to zero waste and a circular economy.
- 14.86 The 'Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury - Incineration in the Waste Hierarchy: Independent Review for Scotland' (2022) identified 14 recommendations for the Scottish Government, industry and Local Authorities. The review indicates that planned incineration capacity in Scotland would be sufficient to manage current and projected residual waste at a national level to 2050. A second report was published: 'Decarbonisation of Residual Waste Infrastructure: Report' (2023). This report provides a further 9 recommendations focussing on decarbonising residual waste. The recommendations from this report will be considered in the development of the next Local Development

Plan for Aberdeen to guide future waste management and support the decarbonisation of residual waste.

Circular Economy and Waste Routemap to 2030

- 14.87 Actions outlined in the 'Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030' are designed to align with and support the provisions in the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act. The Route Map is structured around four strategic action areas:
- Reduce and Reuse;
 - Modernise Recycling;
 - Decarbonise Disposal; and
 - Strengthen the Circular Economy.
- 14.88 The Route Map prioritises several key areas: reducing food waste from both households and businesses; enhancing recycling efforts in household and commercial sectors; establishing new circular economy targets; minimising the environmental impact of waste that cannot be reused or recycled; and promoting responsible production and consumption practices. This includes a focus on reducing the use of single-use items and encouraging the reuse of products.
- 14.89 The next Local Development Plan will incorporate consideration of this strategy to strengthen Aberdeen's circular economy and reduce unnecessary waste. This will allow Aberdeen to be aligned with wider government strategy in this area.

SEPA Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary

- 14.90 SEPA's 'Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary' reflects data regarding Scotland's consumption. It demonstrates that the total amount of household waste generated in Scotland in 2023 was 2.30 MT which represents a decrease of 26,000 tonnes (1.1%) from 2022. This is the lowest recorded amount of Scottish household waste generated since 2011. Whilst the overall Scottish household waste recycling rate has marginally increased from 43.3% in 2022 to 43.5%, the overall amount of household waste recycled has fallen by 0.8% to 1.00MT in line with reduction in household waste generated. The long-term trend of household waste landfilled continues with a 30.2% decrease from 2022 to a total amount of 409,000 tonnes in 2023. In 2023, 894,000 tonnes was diverted from landfill. The majority of diverted waste from landfill was managed by incineration (746,000 tonnes or 83.5%).
- 14.91 Similarly, the carbon impact of Scottish household waste generated and managed in 2023 decreased by 3.2% from 2022. In 2023, the carbon dioxide equivalent (TCO_{2e}) per person in Scotland was 0.98 TCO_{2e}.
- 14.92 This data can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan as it considers waste management in Aberdeen, with recognition of trends to support waste management that has minimal carbon emission impact.

Aberdeen City Waste Strategy

14.93 The 'Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014-2025' sets out the future requirements for waste management policy, infrastructure and services for the city. It sets themes, goals and objectives that will transition waste management towards a system reflecting the waste hierarchy. Currently Aberdeen City Council operate a fortnightly collection of general waste, mixed recycling and garden/food waste to all eligible domestic properties. Business waste collections are also undertaken by Aberdeen City Council. Where kerbside collection is not possible, on-street facilities, household waste recycling centres and recycling points are available for public use.

14.94 A new Waste Strategy is being developed, which will set the scene for coming years and take account of changing regulatory requirements.

Net Zero Aberdeen: Circular Economy Strategy

14.95 The 'Net Zero Aberdeen Circular Economy Strategy' presents the model for systematic change that will benefit the local economy, help to drive social change and contribute to the delivery of net zero ambitions. It highlights the importance of maximising the value from waste by recycling at the end of life and contribute to the delivery of net zero ambitions. It seeks to look at ways to reduce levels of waste generated and find better ways to reuse, remanufacture and recycle waste produced in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen Data

14.96 According to Regional Capacity calculations for Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), in 2018, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire had a 10 year capacity of existing landfill infrastructure of 2,940,000 tonnes, and a 10 year landfill required capacity of 1,700,000. Notably, Biodegradable Municipal Waste cannot be landfilled after 2025 due to the Scottish BMW landfill ban. It is noted that this dataset is dated, however it is the most up-to-date information with this detail captured available.

14.97 The household waste generated and managed change data for Aberdeen between 2022 and 2023 is displayed in the table below. (Table adapted from SEPA's 'Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary 2023' Table S1).

Local Authority	Generated (tonnes)	Recycled (tonnes)	Recycled (%)	Other diversion from landfill (tonnes)	Other diversion from landfill (%)	Landfilled (tonnes)	Landfilled (%)	Carbon Impact (TCO2e)
Aberdeen 2022	88,802	37,091	41.8	22,007	24.8	29,706	33.5	227,309
Aberdeen 2023	89,314	37,314	41.8	41,070	46.0	10,930	12.2	219,570
Change	+512	-223	+0	+19,063	+21.2	-18,776	-21.3	-7,739

Table 14.10: Aberdeen Generated Household Waste 2022 and 2023, adapted from SEPA's 'Household Waste Generated and Managed Commentary 2023'

Household Waste Recycling Centres in Aberdeen City

- 14.99 There are 4 public household waste recycling centres across Aberdeen in Bridge of Don, Bucksburn, Hazlehead and Tullos. The centres accept a range of household waste and recycling items. All of the facilities operate 363 days a year closing only on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. From Hazlehead the "Reuse Shop" operates and sells pre-loved items donated by Aberdeen residents. All facilities are currently operated by SUEZ in partnership with Aberdeen City Council. Business and trade waste is not accepted at these facilities.
- 14.100 At the time of writing, construction has commenced to replace the existing Bridge of Don household waste recycling centre at a new location, Claymore Drive, a site identified within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. The facility is anticipated to provide improved layout and facilities that accept a broader range of recyclable materials and will include reuse facilities. Construction is expected to be completed in spring 2025.

Altens East Materials Recovery Facility

- 14.101 In 2017 the Altens East Materials Recovery Facility opened. The plant is capable of processing 20 tonnes of mixed recycling an hour and is part of Aberdeen City Council's Zero Waste Project aimed at increasing recycling rates and reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill. The plant is operated by SUEZ. However, in 2022 the facility was seriously damaged by a fire. This has meant that Aberdeen's dry recycling is currently being transported to Hartlepool. A rebuild project commenced in March 2024 and, whilst the exterior of the plant will look the same, the rebuild will see newer technology and improved efficiency at the plant. It is anticipated that the rebuilt plant will be fully operational in 2025.

TECA Anaerobic Digestion Plant

- 14.102 In 2019, an energy centre (combined cooling heat and power (CCHP)) went live at The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA). It utilises a variety of technologies to provide power, heat and cooling to TECA including a hydrogen fuel cell installation. An anaerobic digestion plant uses both agricultural and food waste to produce biogas which is then conditioned providing 100% renewable energy as gas to the natural gas grid or TECA energy centre. The system uses a series of large tanks which are kept sealed and odour free. Inside the tanks, the material is gently stirred to make sure the microorganisms can turn waste into renewable energy.

NESS Energy from Waste Facility

- 14.103 In December 2023, the NESS Energy from Waste Facility, located in East Tullos became fully operational. The plant processes non-recyclable waste from Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils and produces electricity for the national grid and heat for a district heating network. The facility is capable of processing 150,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste per year for the three council areas combined. The councils will not only meet their requirements under the landfill ban legislation, but reduce carbon emissions (compared to landfill) and provide low-cost heating for schools, care facilities and housing in the vicinity. Income generated from the electricity that is produced for the national grid will also assist in offsetting the cost of waste disposal.

14.104 Waste enters the bunker where it is fed into a combustion chamber. Electricity and heat are generated and sent to the national grid and to local heat networks. Waste from Aberdeenshire and Moray is transported by bulk haulage via the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the remainder is direct delivered by the City Councils' refuse collection fleet.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

14.105 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report. In summary, initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group for the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper.

14.106 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- University of Aberdeen
- Aberdeen Heat and Power
- SSEN
- Nature Scot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- British Geological Society
- Aberdeen City Council (Waste, Energy, Hydrogen)

14.107 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or to suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

14.108 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders. All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

14.109 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses in total were received, 3 from organisations (Nature Scot, NHS Grampian, Homes for Scotland) 1 from a housing developer, (Bancon Homes), and 5 members of the public. Of those listed, 2 stated that evidence was missed and 4 stated that they did not agree with the evidence. Following further discussion, it was confirmed that none of the respondents raised a dispute with the evidence presented.

14.110 The following text expands upon responses received during engagement.

14.111 Bancon Homes stated that they disagreed with the evidence presented, however, following further discussion they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence. They agreed that all key evidence has been provided. The following comments are related to the 'Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan' section of the Topic Paper.

14.112 Bancon Homes noted that while Heat Network Zones will be a consideration during the Proposed Plan site selection process, this should not preclude the Proposed Plan's ability to direct development to the right locations. They emphasise that a

balanced planning judgement should be made when allocating sites for residential development. While this engagement around the level of influence Heat Network Zones will have on site selection for the Proposed Plan is welcome, the site selection process considers a level of detail that is not anticipated for discussion at the Evidence Report stage of Plan preparation.

14.113 Homes for Scotland disagreed with the evidence presented. however, following further discussion they agreed that they did not dispute the evidence.

- Homes for Scotland stated that the Spatial Strategy for the Proposed Plan should consider both sustainable and marketable locations for new development. They highlighted that grid capacity should not dictate development location. The Council welcomes this discussion however its application is not considered necessary at the evidence report stage of Plan preparation.
- Homes for Scotland have stated that Planning requirements should not exceed the prevailing Building Standards regulations. The Scottish Government's Climate Change Act Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report indicates that the latest regulations surpass Section 3F requirements, making them unnecessary. The Section 3F requirement instructed local development plans to include policies that require new buildings to be designed to avoid a specified and rising proportion of greenhouse gas emissions from their use through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies. A repeal Order for Section 3F is being prepared for the Scottish Parliament. Homes for Scotland has recommended including the Scottish Government's Climate Change Act Section 72: Fourteenth Annual Report in the Topic Paper. This recommendation is welcome and the evidence has been included within the 'Energy' section of this topic paper. Further text has been added to capture the changes in the requirements of LDP regarding Section 3F policies.
- Homes for Scotland have stated that due to changes to Building Standards regulations from April 2024, all new homes no longer include gas boilers, and therefore are likely to have either a ground or air source heat pump installed. They suggest that the introduction of this technology, along with increased instalments of EV charging points will result in increased electricity usage. Resultantly, the electricity network will require upgrades and potentially additional sub-stations. Information concerning electricity supply in Aberdeen is outlined in the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper.
- Homes for Scotland highlighted the 'Beyond 2030' report, a national blueprint for a decarbonised electricity system across Great Britain. This evidence has now been included in the Topic Paper, however, further detail concerning gas and electricity infrastructure is outlined in the Infrastructure and Communication Topic Paper. Additionally, further information concerning EV charging points is identified in the Sustainable Transport Topic Paper.
- Concerning the 'Heating and Cooling' section of the Topic Paper, Homes for Scotland suggested that it is unreasonable to design developments for future heat network connections due to the involvement of multiple landowners, uncertainty over how this would be carried out, and potential additional costs. Additionally, home owners may be unwilling to convert from existing energy providers. They encourage the Council to collaborate with the energy District Network Operator to align network upgrades with future housing supply. This is currently being progressed, as the Council works with Aberdeen Heat and Power to develop the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan.

- Homes for Scotland recommended the inclusion of the Climate Change (Scotland) 2019 Act, and this has been included under the 'Energy' section of this Topic Paper. They also recommended inclusion of the 'Is Scotland Climate Ready?' (2022) report from the Climate Change Committee. This was additionally recommended for use in the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Topic Paper and has been included there.

14.114 Four individuals identified that there are no missing pieces of evidence, Two individuals stated that they agreed with the evidence presented. Of those, one individual added "It is relevant and accurate".

14.115 One individual did not indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the evidence, however they stated: "No clear communications, not easy to understand the point". The Council notes these comments and appreciates that the Topic Papers present a vast amount of information. This is not recognised as a dispute.

14.116 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Energy

14.117 The Proposed Plan should consider a tailored local policy approach to maximise renewable, and low-carbon energy opportunities in Aberdeen.

14.118 The Proposed Plan should support development of renewable, and low-carbon energy opportunities, which may include identifying energy opportunities in Aberdeen.

14.119 With a detailed energy policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

Heating and Cooling

14.120 The Proposed Plan should consider the location of Heat Network Zones, as identified in Aberdeen's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy when published to inform heat distribution across the City. It should support the development of future heat generation schemes that seek to connect to the network.

14.121 The Heat Network Zones identified in Aberdeen will be a consideration during the Proposed Plan site selection process.

14.122 With a detailed heating and cooling policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

Minerals

14.123 The Proposed Plan should identify and safeguard the locations of important workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value in Aberdeen.

14.124 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

Zero Waste

14.125 With a detailed policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local policies for Aberdeen.

14.126 The Proposed Plan will take account of the forthcoming Waste Strategy.

14.127 The Proposed Plan will consider how to support Aberdeen's Circular Economy Strategy.

Marmot Places

14.128 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 14.11 Marmot Principles

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

14.129 NatureScot, NHS Grampian, and two members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

14.130 Bancon Homes and Homes for Scotland confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Engagement section above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

14.131 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic paper themselves.

Information Gaps

14.132 The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan are being developed at the time of writing. It is anticipated that they will be published within the year.

14.133 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

15. Topic Paper 8 – Centres of Business and Culture

Requirements addressed in this section:

- 15.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,

National Planning Framework

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

- 15.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should support sustainable futures for city, town and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres. They should, where relevant, also support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate.
- 15.3 LDPs should identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision.
- 15.4 LDPs should be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities. They should also consider and if appropriate, identify any areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel.
- 15.5 LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development.

Retail

- 15.6 LDPs should consider where there may be a need for further retail provision. This may be:
- where a retail study identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area; or
 - when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living.

- 15.7 LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported.

Tourism

- 15.8 LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account. The spatial strategy should also identify areas of pressure where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities, and where further development is not appropriate.

Culture & Creativity

- 15.9 LDPs should recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts.

Links to Evidence

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

- [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development and Use Classes\) \(Scotland\) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023](#)
- [Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement Report - 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022](#)
- [Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices \(Volume A and Volume B\)](#)
- [Aberdeen Retail Centre Health Checks 2024](#)

Retail

- [Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan 2022](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices \(Volume A and Volume B\)](#)

Tourism

- [The Visitor Levy \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Visit Scotland Regions - Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Speyside](#)
- [Visit Aberdeenshire Quarterly Business Monitors](#)

- [National Tourism Strategy: Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for A Sustainable Future](#)
- [Destination Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire: A Framework for Growth 2022 - 2030](#)
- [Regional Economic Strategy – A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland](#)
- [Aberdeen City Events 365](#)
- [Aberdeen City Steam Report 2019 - 2022](#)
- [Aberdeen City Steam Report 2019 - 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023](#)
- [Planning Application 211263/DPP](#)
- [Planning Application 200033/DPP](#)
- [Planning Application 210984/DPP](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Short Term Lets](#)
- [Aberdeen City Data Observatory](#)

Culture & Creativity

- [Local Government and Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1982](#)
- [Human Rights Bill Consultation](#)
- [Scotland's Creative Learning Plan](#)
- [Culture Counts Budget Tracker](#)
- [Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026](#)
- [Culture Aberdeen – A Cultural Strategy for the City of Aberdeen 2018-2028](#)
- [Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review 2023-24](#)
- [Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices \(Volume A and Volume B\)](#)
- [Aberdeen City Cultural Market Analysis](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope of Evidence Report Chapter

15.10 Supporting Aberdeen's centres through a town centre first approach, while supporting retail, tourism and culture and creative industries, will ensure positive economic, social and cultural benefits to the residents of Aberdeen, while ensuring sustainability is paramount.

15.11 This section is structured as follows:

- City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres
- Retail
- Tourism
- Culture & Creativity

15.12 Land use planning has no influence over issues such as recruitment, weather, national taxation, energy, food or petrol prices. However, there is a role for land use

planning in putting in place a policy framework and/or land allocations to ensure that significant footfall generating developments are located following a town centre first principle.

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024

15.13 In recognition that Aberdeen serves as the regional centre, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council commissioned a joint retail study in 2023 to assess retail capacity, turnover, and opportunities for both local authority areas. The study aimed to gather data for the Evidence Report for the upcoming Local Development Plans, requiring robust empirical data on retail expenditure patterns and identifying any deficiencies or potential for retail growth until 2038.

15.14 The study also considered National Planning Framework 4 and Local Development Planning Guidance, identified prime locations for retail opportunities, forecasted future retail trends, conducted household surveys, and assessed each centre listed in current Local Development Plans. Additionally, it included an analysis of commercial leisure trends due to their close relationship with retailing.

Network of Centres

15.15 The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 sets out the current network of centres. This consists of a regional centre (City Centre including the Retail Core), two Town Centres, five District Centres, 32 Neighbourhood Centres and five Commercial Centres.

Regional Centre	Town Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre			Commercial Centre
City Centre	Rosemount	Danestone	Bieldside	Haudagain	Rosemount	Garthdee
	Torry	Dyce	Braehead Way	Holburn	Sclattie Park	Kittybrewster Retail Park
		Middleton Park	Bucksburn	King Street	Scotstown	Links Road/Boulevard Retail Park
		Rousay Drive	Byron	Kingswells	Seafield	Denmore Road
		Berryden	Chatton Place	Kittybrewster / Clifton	Seaton	Bridge of Don Retail Park
			Cornhill	Lang Stracht	Sheddocksley	
			Cove	Leadside Road	St Swithin Street	
			Cults	Mastrick	Urquhart Road	

			Culter	Hayton	Victoria Street, Dyce	
			George Street	Mannofield	Woodside	

Table 15.1: Network of Centres – Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

The locations of each centre are shown below.

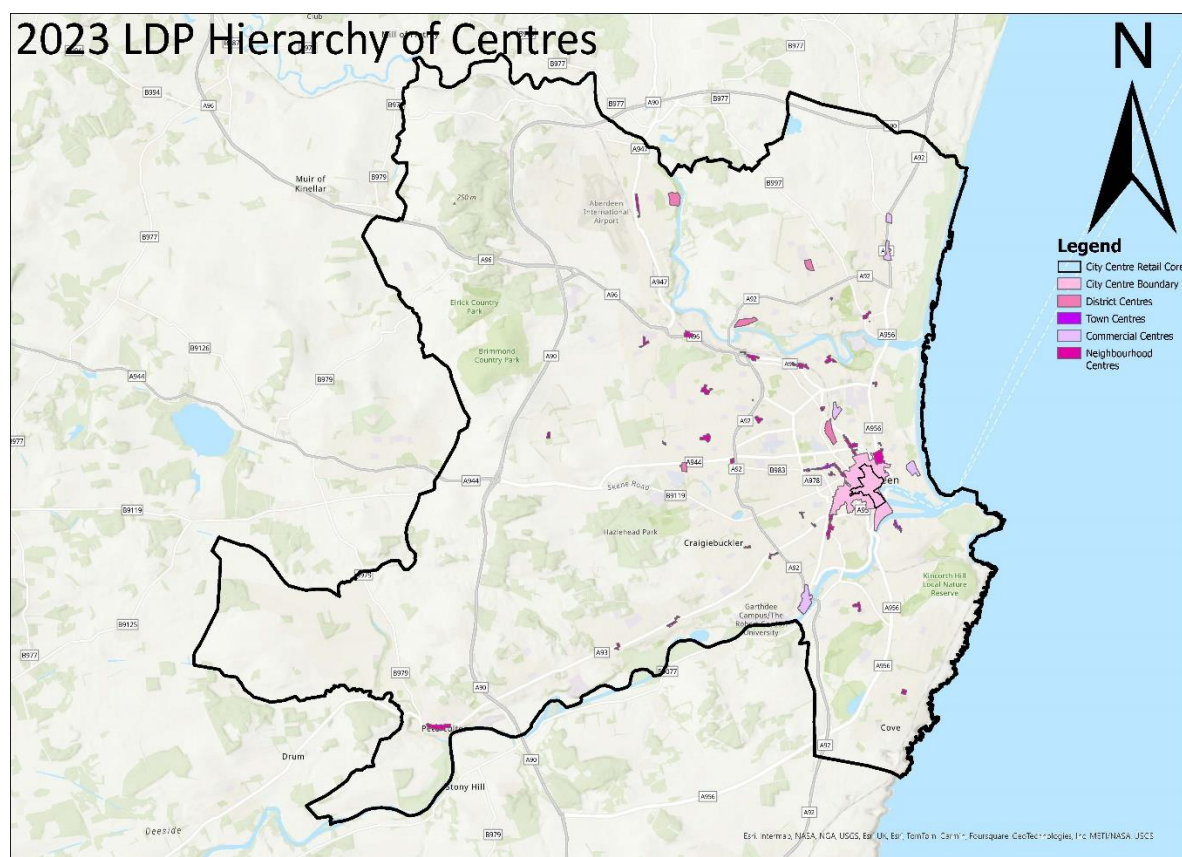


Figure 15.1: Network of Centres – Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

15.16 The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024 reviewed the network of retail centres, recommending reclassification of King Street Neighbourhood Centre to King Street District Centre due to its larger floorspace and significant turnover compared to other neighbourhood centres. Additionally, a moderate boundary extension at Haudagain Neighbourhood Centre was suggested to include adjacent retail sites. No other changes were recommended.

15.17 The recommended network of centres is as follows:

Regional Centre	Town Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre			Commercial Centre
City Centre	Rosemount	Berryden	Bielside	Haudagain	Sclattie Park	Bridge of Don Retail Park
	Torry	Danestone	Braehead Way	Holburn	Scotstown	Denmore Road
		Dyce	Bucksburn	Kingswells	Seafield	Garthdee
		King Street	Byron	Kittybrewster / Clifton	Seaton	Kittybrewster Retail Park
		Middleton Park	Chattan Place	Lang Stracht	Sheddocksley	Links Road/Boulevard Retail Park
			Cornhill	Leadside Road	St Swithin Street	
			Cove	Mastrick	Urquhart Road	
			Cults	Hayton	Victoria Street, Dyce	
			Culter	Mannofield	Woodside	
			George Street	Rosemount		

Table 15.2: Recommended network of centres

Retail Centre Health Checks

15.18 Retail Centre Health Checks are part of an ongoing programme of monitoring undertaken by the Local Development Plan Team on a biannual basis. The Health Checks provide data to provide an evidence base for use in other studies and strategies, supporting the preparation and implementation of the Local Development Plan (particularly City Centre, Network of Centres, Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods) and provides data for assessing the impact of proposed retail development on existing retail centres.

15.19 The Retail Centre Health Check 2023 provides information on the vitality and viability of Aberdeen's City Centre and other retail centres using indicators like vacancy rates, diversity of uses, retailer representation, accessibility, and pedestrian footfall. The results show that these centres continue to support a variety of retail, service, and leisure uses. The City Centre was divided into six survey areas for the health check.

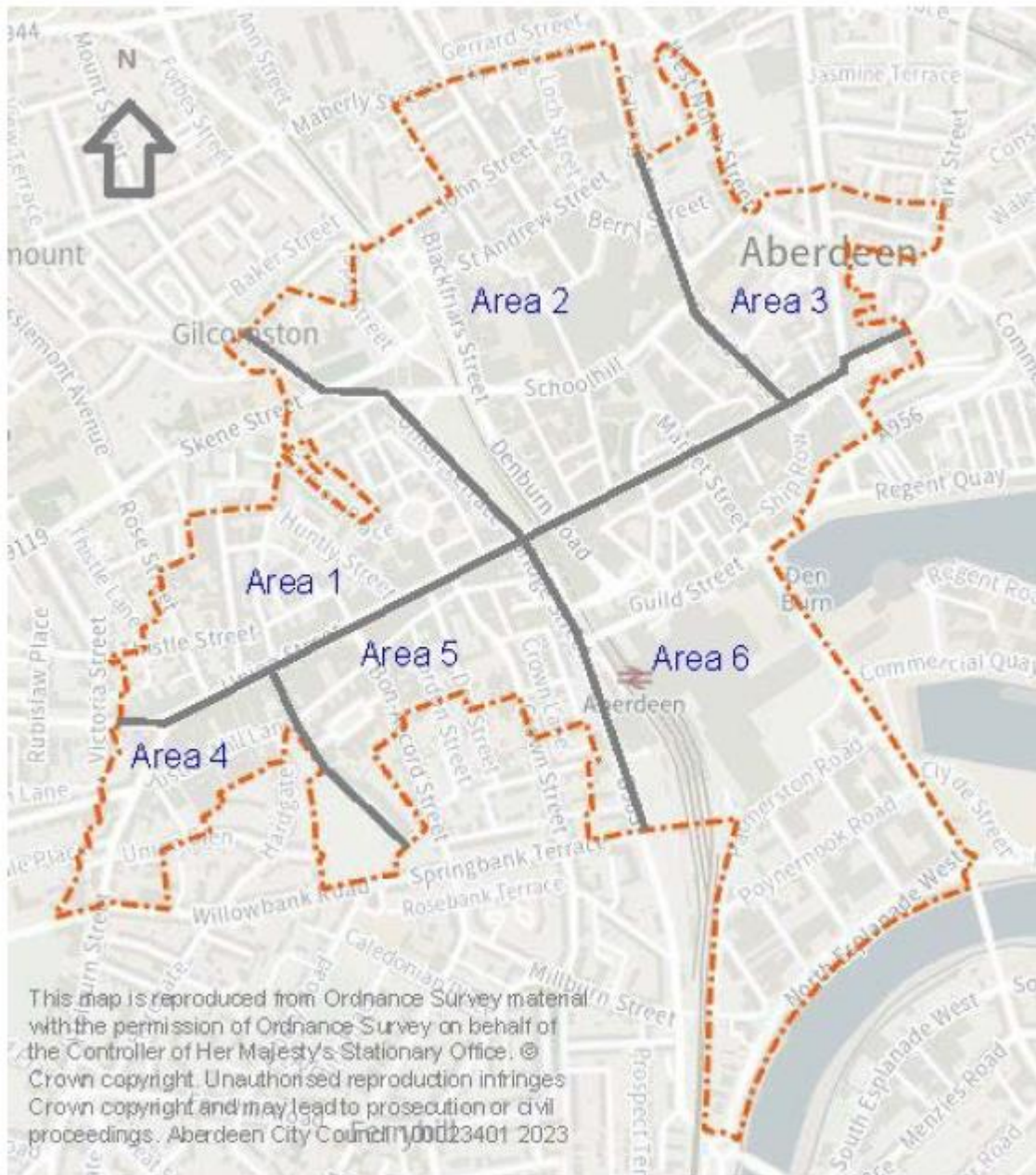


Figure 15.2: Retail Centre Health Check Survey Areas

- 15.20 Pedestrian counts in seven locations in the City Centre showed steady movement on a Saturday morning, with Guild Street, Union Street (south side), and George Street having the highest numbers. This aligns with the concentration of retail goods shops between George Street and Union Square. However, the Thursday evening count showed a 34% decrease in pedestrian numbers, suggesting late night shopping may be less popular or unavailable.
- 15.21 Common with trends across Scotland, Aberdeen's City Centre has seen a shift from traditional retail to leisure, service uses, and offices, while maintaining convenience shopping to support local living. The City Centre offers various food, drink, and entertainment options, with a notable café culture. There is potential for City Centre living, through upper floor conversions along Union Street and the City Centre Masterplan Intervention Areas.

Diversity of Uses and Vacancies

15.22 The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study Volume 2 highlights a diverse range of uses within Aberdeen's City Centre, including retail, retail services, commercial leisure/entertainment, public services, and other uses. Retail services and commercial leisure are vital to the City Centre economy and are expected to remain in demand long term.

GOAD Classification	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Convenience	9	14	1	4	3	14
Comparison	32	43	3	12	9	22
Retail Services	47	52	4	23	20	28
Financial & Business Services	34	10	2	6	34	37
Leisure	58	80	30	23	77	66
Health & Medical	13	10	3	2	6	1
Religious Services	7	3	4	1	3	5
Public Service	3	3	8	2	6	3
Other	2	4	3	4	5	16
Vacant	37	46	11	23	25	29
Total Occupied Units	205	219	58	77	163	192
Total Units	242	265	69	100	188	221
(% vacant)	15%	17%	16%	23%	13%	13%

Table 15.3: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check summarising GOAD Classification per Area

15.23 Retail Centre Health Checks 'Table 3' show leisure as the most prevalent use in the City Centre, with areas 1, 2, and 4 having a proportional split of key classifications. Area 3 has the highest percentage of leisure and lower levels of traditional retail and retail services. Area 5 has high leisure and financial/business services, while Area 6 has higher "Other" uses due to the fishing and oil industries in the area. Around 45% of units in four areas consist of convenience, comparison, retail services, financial & business services, and leisure uses. Vacant units are consistent across five areas, with area 4 having the highest vacancy rate at 23%. Overall, leisure is the highest use at 31%, and vacancies are at 16%.

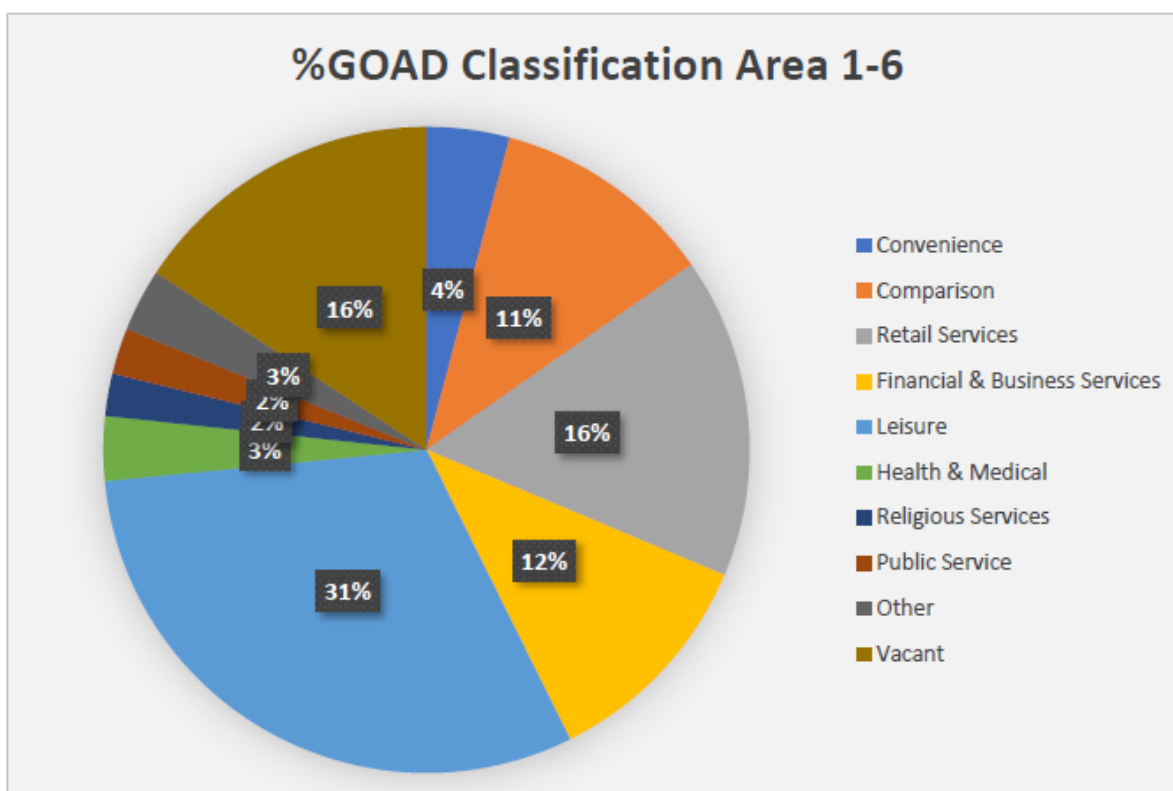


Figure 15.3: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check showing GOAD Classification of City Centre overall.

GOAD Classification	The Academy (Area 2)	Bon Accord (Area 2)	Galleria (Area 5)	Former St Nicholas (Area 2)	Trinity Centre (Area 6)	Union Square (Area 6)
Convenience	0	0	1	3	1	1
Comparison	0	23	0	11	15	42
Retail Services	0	3	2	3	2	7
Financial & Business Services	0	0	1	1	1	0
Leisure	4	9	4	0	0	31
Health & Medical	0	2	0	0	0	0
Religious Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service	0	0	0	0	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vacant	1	16	1	4	7	8
Total Occupied Units	4	37	8	18	21	81
Total Units	5	53	9	22	28	89
(% vacant)	20%	30%	11%	18%	25%	9%

Table 15.4: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check summarising GOAD Classification per Shopping Centre.

- 15.24 As part of the Retail Centre Health Check, a GOAD survey revealed varying vacancy rates among Aberdeen's shopping centres, with Union Square having the lowest at 9% and Bon Accord Centre the highest at 30%. Table 15.4 demonstrates a lack of diversity within all shopping centres.
- 15.25 The Aberdeen City and Retail Study Volume 2 noted a significant increase in vacant units and floorspace, primarily due to the closures of John Lewis and Debenhams, which have impacted footfall and concentrated vacancies in the former John Lewis/Bon Accord area. Footfall has reduced since 2012, and major development plans for Bon Accord Centre and Union Square have not been implemented.

Clustering of non-retail uses

- 15.16 The Retail Centre Health Check found no significant issues with the clustering of betting shops, high interest money lenders, or takeaways in the City Centre. There are 11 betting shops (1%), 2 high interest money lenders (0.18%), and 34 takeaways (3%) in the areas monitored, with Area 5 having the highest number (12) of takeaways. These uses will continue to be monitored. The analysis of takeaways does not include restaurants or cafes who offer takeaway services in addition to traditional "sit in" offer. In addition, specific analysis will be undertaken on takeaways within the local authority boundary area.
- 15.27 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study Volume 1 noted difficulty in identifying specific categories of uses (pay-day loans, hot-food carry-outs etc) but acknowledged their importance as local facilities in smaller centres. Local policies in emerging local development plans might address clustering, although defining a cluster/concentration is challenging.

Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024

- 15.28 A retail study was commissioned in 2013 to inform preparation of the Evidence Report to subsequently inform preparation of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2018. It derived key information for the Evidence Report, as required by National Planning Framework 4.
- 15.29 The Retail Study identifies the City Centre as the principal concentration of retail/service uses, accounting for significant portions of retail floorspace, turnover, and total units within the wider study area. Despite its regional importance, the City Centre does not dominate provision, though it is much larger than other locations like Inverurie town centre. The City Centre accounts for approximately 40% of the city's retail turnover, with varying percentages across different types of retail goods.
- 15.30 Town centres have a smaller share of retail/service floorspace and turnover compared to District and Commercial Centres, with combined overall turnover less than the City Centre. Limited changes in retail/service floorspace were observed, with some centres increasing in turnover while others declined slightly.

Householder surveys

- 15.31 Householder surveys were conducted as part of the Retail Study, where respondents were asked about the City Centre and the two town centres.

City Centre

15.32 Views on the City Centre were slightly positive, especially regarding the comparison goods offer, despite an increase in vacant units. Parking was considered difficult and expensive, but public transport access was seen as easy.

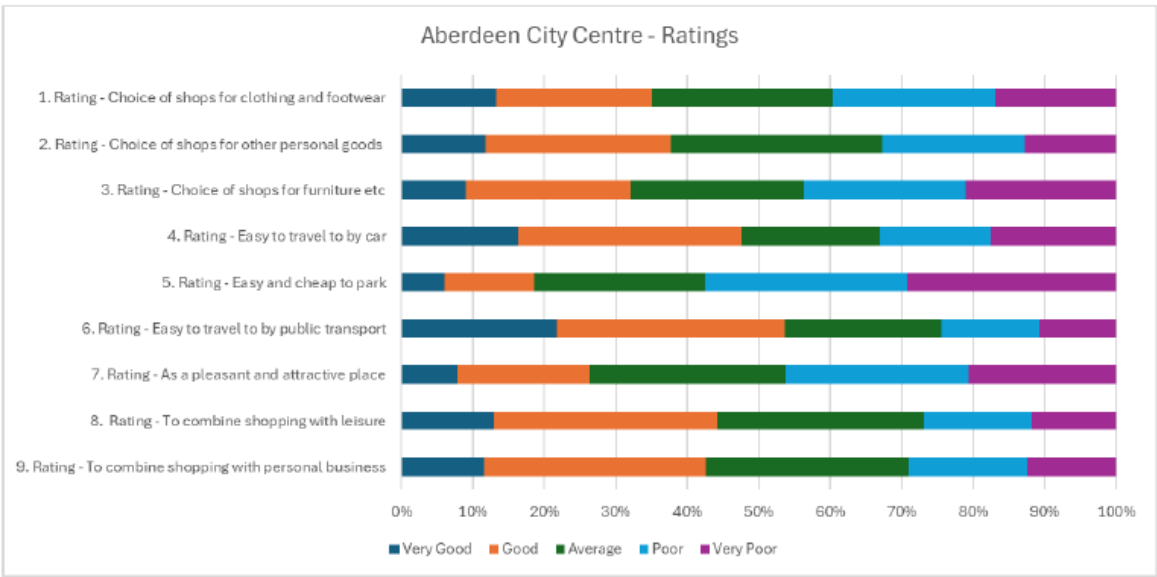


Figure 14.4: Householder survey – City Centre – Ratings

Rosemount Town Centre

15.23 Overall, the views expressed were slightly positive, but there were perceived weaknesses in the poor offering for general and bulky comparison goods.

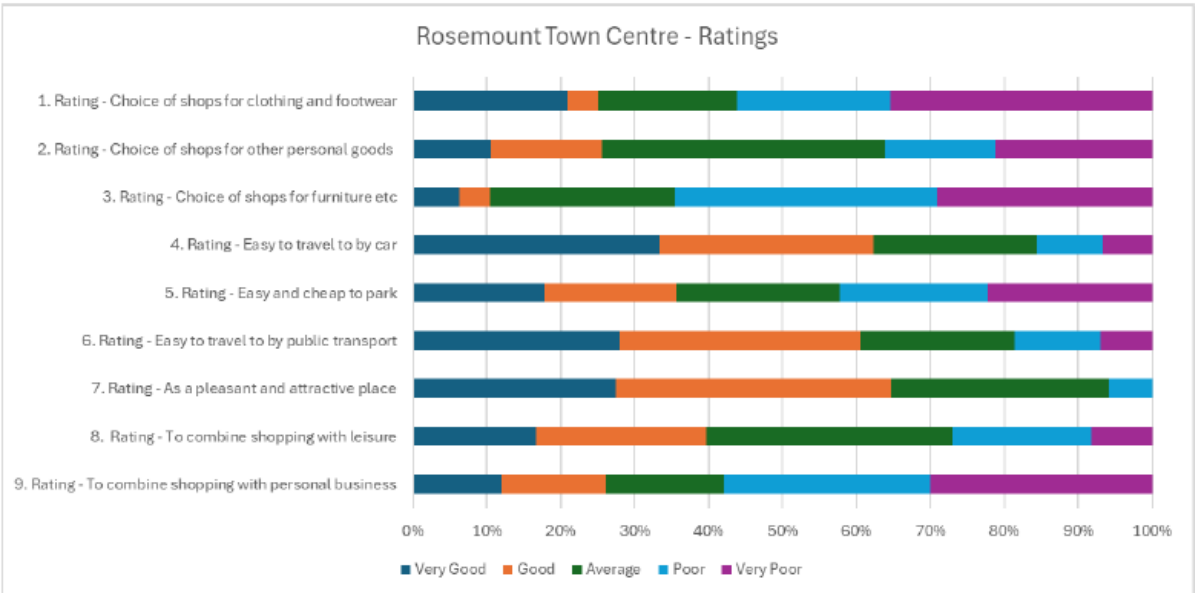


Figure 15.5: Householder survey – Rosemount Town Centre – Ratings.

Torry Town Centre

15.24 Despite its limited size, the centre was viewed positively by visitors despite higher vacancy rates, limited retail goods, and a decline in comparison shopping.

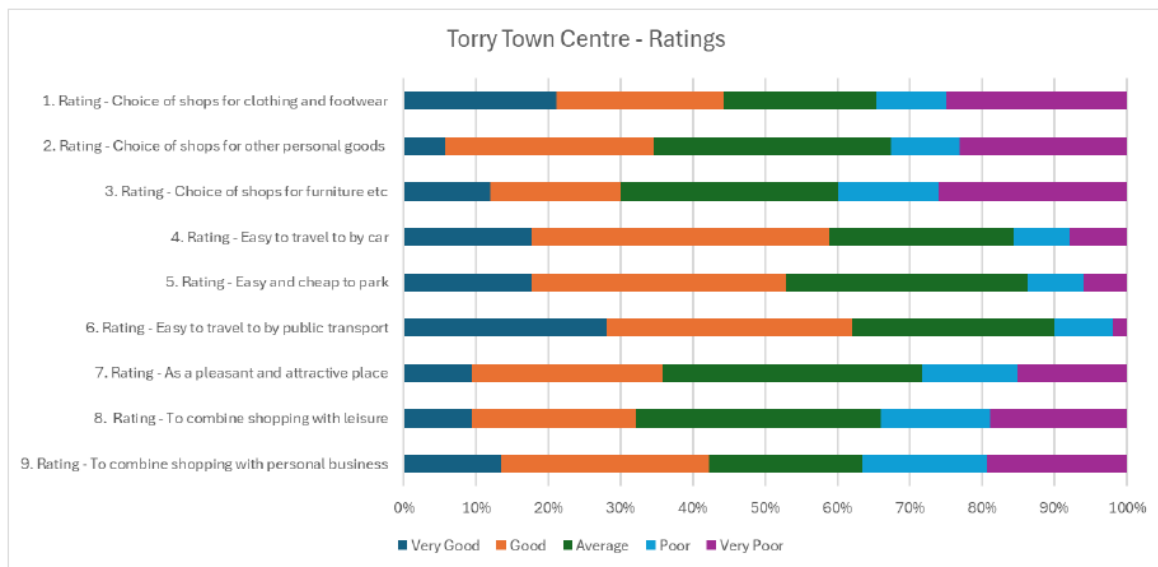


Figure 15.6: Householder survey – Torry Town Centre – Ratings.

Drive Throughs

15.25 Aberdeen has 15 drive throughs, mostly located on radial routes near the A96, A956, and A92. Exceptions include drive throughs in retail centres at Berryden, Kittybrewster, and the Beach & Leisure area. Table 15.5 and Figure 15.7 set out the locations of the Drive Throughs.

McDonalds	KFC	Tim Horton s	Burger King	Costa	Starbuck s	Popeye s
Bucksburn	Haudagain Neighbourhood Centre	West Tullos Ind Est	Berryde n District Centre	Bridge of Don Commercial Centre	Bridge of Don	West Altons Ind Est
Kittybrewster Commercial Centre	Bridge of Don		Beach & Leisure	West Tullos Ind Est	West Altons Ind Est	
West Tullos Ind Est			West Altons Ind Est			
Bridge of Don						

Table 15.5: Location of Drive Throughs.

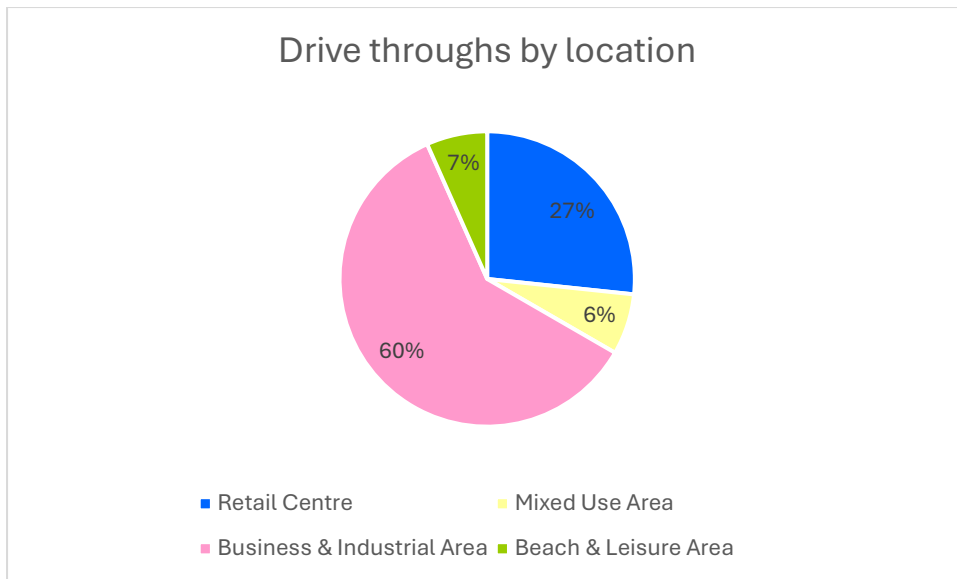


Figure 15.7: Location of Drive Throughs by location

15.26 Spatial distribution is set out in Figure 8 below. Notably most are not close to residential areas and generally require crossing busy roads. Consideration should be given to whether these locations positively contribute to local living and whether local policies should be included in future Local Development Plans to guide the determination of future applications.

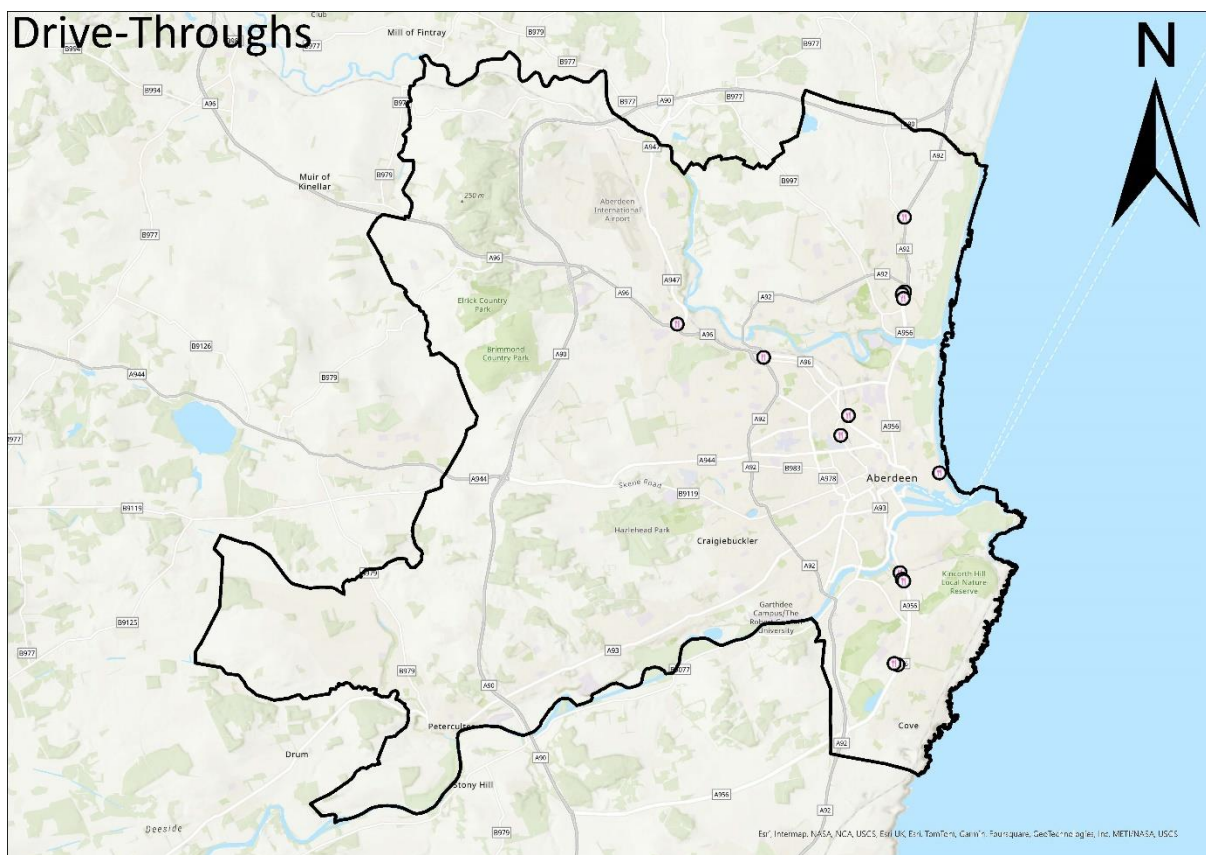


Figure 15.8: Distribution of Drive Throughs

Place Standard Assessments

15.28 A Place Standard exercise was carried out with adults and children. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

15.29 The Work and Local Economy theme of the Place Standard are relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 3.91 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Work and Local Economy	• Good training opportunities, volunteering opportunities and availability of jobs. (All) • Local businesses and independents opening (Central) • Range of retail services (Central)	• Type and range of job opportunities available locally (North and Central) • Improve employment support and training (North and Central) • Volunteering opportunities (North) • Training especially for retraining and skills development (South and Central) • Empty buildings grants and incentives (South and Central)

Table 15.6: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen’s “Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023”.

15.30 The children and young people results on work and local economy noted: 62.3% felt they were okay, 32.1% felt they were not good, and 5.7% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Work and Local Economy	Volunteering	20.8%	Training to learn new things	29.3%
	Jobs for my family	17.9%	Jobs nearby	27.4%

	Jobs nearby	14.2%	Jobs for my family	17%

Table 15.7: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's "Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

City Centre and Beach Masterplan

- 15.31 Aberdeen City Council approved a comprehensive document in 2015 outlining a 25-year vision for transforming the City Centre. The masterplan focuses on creating a living, vibrant, connected, and resilient city through various projects and interventions, including new residential and mixed-use areas, improved retail and leisure offer, enhanced connectivity, and sustainability efforts. It is used to inform decisions by the Council and other stakeholders undertaking development in the City Centre. The masterplan has potential to support tourism and the visitor economy in alignment with the objectives of the extant Local Development Plan 2023 to energise the city centre. In August 2022 a refresh was approved, alongside the development of a new Beach Masterplan, but does not replace nor supercede the masterplan approved in 2015. The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the aims of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.
- 15.32 The Masterplan outlines projects to boost economic growth and benefit Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire communities. Key projects include changes to Union Street, a new city market, revitalising the beach area, Queen Street proposals, and West End improvements. The goal is to increase footfall and dwell time for visitors and residents whilst enhancing the City Centre's prosperity. The beach development plans focus on enhancing both the built and natural assets of the area which is already a tourism focus in its own right. Phase 1 includes creating a beach park, a large events field, and improving Broadhill as a natural landmark, and construction is currently underway.
- 15.33 Work began in April 2024 to improve the City Centre streetscape and urban realm by widening pavements on a section of Union Street. Other recent interventions include bus priority measures on Bridge Street, Market Street, and Guild Street, and a low emission zone (LEZ) in the City Centre to enhance air quality and promote sustainable transport. Construction on the new market commenced in 2024 with aspirations for the building to become a destination venue for the City Centre. It received £20million funding from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.
- 15.34 Online and in person stakeholder engagement has been undertaken related to the George Street Area (2022) and associated mini masterplan (2023), Queen Street Urban Park and Castlegate (2024).

City Region Deal

- 15.35 The Aberdeen City Region Deal, signed in 2016, committed the UK and Scottish governments to invest up to £250m to support economic regeneration in the region. The deal, signed in 2016, aims to encourage investment in innovation, internationalisation, digital connectivity, and infrastructure across the region.

Investments includes £90 million to support an Oil and Gas Technology Centre, and £15 million towards new innovation hubs focusing on research, development and growth in the life sciences and food and drink sectors. Key projects include the Aberdeen South Harbour (National Planning Framework 4 – National Development 14 completed in 2023), BioHub (opened in 2023), SeedPod (opened in 2025), Net Zero Technology Centre (formerly the Oil and Gas Technology Centre), 5G digital technology and transport projects.

- 15.36 The extant Local Development Plan 2023 identifies how projects have been funded through the City Region Deal. The Proposed Plan may continue to identify specific allocations and/or land zonings to reflect projects which are facilitated by the City Region Deal.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and Use Classes) (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023

- 15.37 The General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 and the Use Classes (Scotland) Order 1997 were amended on 31 March 2023 to introduce changes that provide greater flexibility in changing the use of certain buildings. A new use class, Class 1A, replaces Class 1 and Class 2, allowing changes between retail, business, financial/professional services, food and drink, and other high street uses without planning consent. Additionally, buildings can change to use class 3 (food and drink) from class 1A. Rights for betting shops, payday loan shops, and hot food takeaways to change to use class 3 have also been introduced, along with the placement of furniture on public roads adjacent to class 3 premises, pubs, and bars. These changes aim to support the vitality and vibrancy of town centres. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 largely supported these changes in principle, although consent would have been required, and the "Retail Core" designation may need to be reviewed in future plans.

Retail

- 15.38 The principle requirement for the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils' Retail Study was to provide robust data on retail expenditure patterns and identify deficiencies or capacity for retail growth until 2038. It includes identifying locations for retail opportunities, forecasting future retail trends, conducting household surveys, and assessing centres in the Local Development Plans. An assessment of trends in commercial leisure is also included due to its close interrelationship with retailing. The retail industry is impacted by social, economic, and technological factors, leading to higher vacancy rates due to brand consolidation and the rise of internet shopping/click and collect. Aberdeen City, as the regional centre for the North East, has the highest gross floor space in the region at 667,887 sqm and a turnover of £1,656.24m. See Figure 15.9.

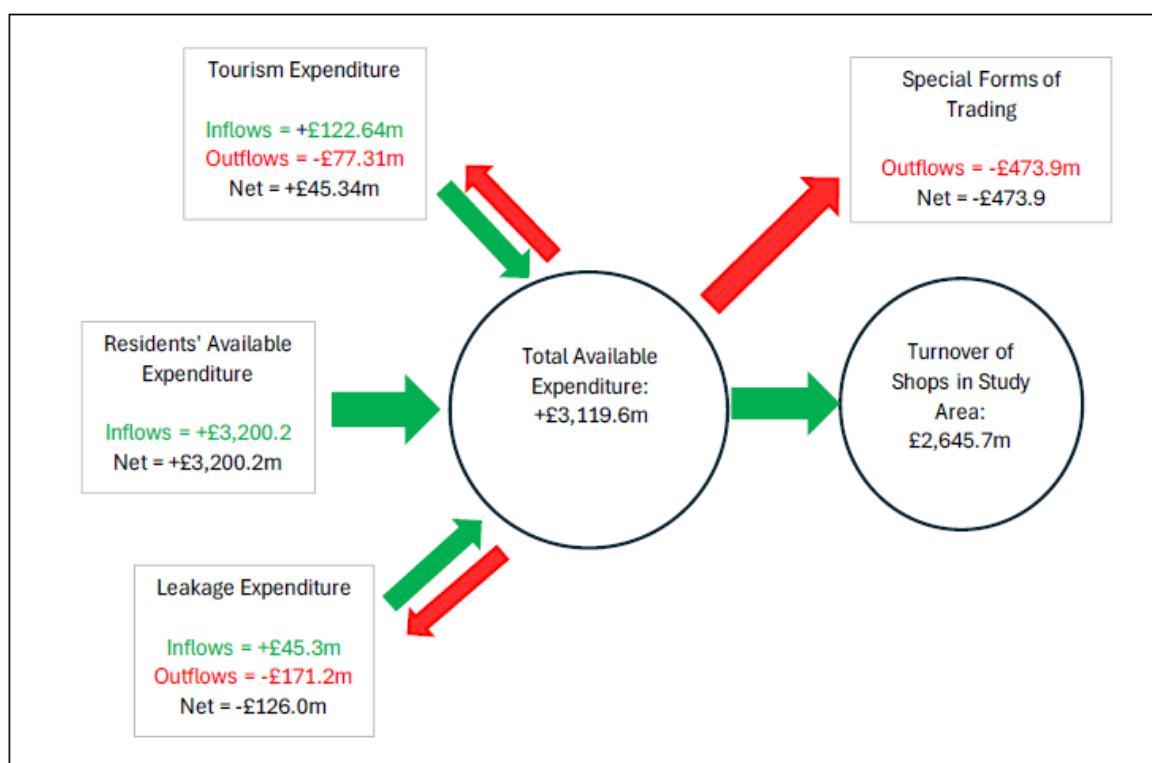


Figure 15.9: Extract from Retail Study showing retail expenditure flows and turnover for the North East Region in 2023.

Summary of Retail and Services Provision in Aberdeen City 2023

15.39 Retail and service provision – number of units.

Type	Number	Gross Floor Area (sqm)
Retail Goods Shops	856	429,296
Retail Services	1054	148,158
Vacant	200	68,752
Total	2110	667,887

Table 15.8: Type of retail and service provision by number and area

15.40 Across Aberdeen City, in terms of number of units, there is a 9% vacancy rate and the split between retail good shops and retail services is 41%/50%. Vacancy rates by number of units and gross floor space:

Centre	No. units	No. %	Gross floor space (sqm)	Gross floor space
City Centre	111	11%	55,300	17%
Town Centre	22	14%	1,483	10%
District Centre	6	11%	1,333	2%
Commercial Centre	3	8%	2,463	2%
Remainder	58	6%	8,173	5%
Total	200	9%	68,752	10%

Table 15.9: Vacancy rates by retail centre

15.41 Table 15.9 above demonstrates that town centres had the highest vacancy rates in terms of units at 14%. However, by gross floor space it was the City Centre with the highest rate of vacancies at 17%.

Retail goods shops – retail type and turnover

	Convenience		Comparison		Bulky Goods		All	
	Sqm	Turnover	Sqm	Turnover	Sqm	Turnover	Sqm	Turnover
City Centre	47,033	152.29m	114,658	475.34m	11,267	62.07	172,958	692.69m
Town Centres	3,619	18.29m	2,838	9.29m	932	2.83m	7,388	30.41m
District Centres	264,112	171.01m	26,269	96.23m	5,830	44.17m	58,511	311.41m
Commercial Centres	20,170	119.98m	24,083	83.73m	47,714	118.94m	91,967	322.66m
Remainder	50,534	223.07m	26,500	44.33m	21,438	31.68m	98,472	299.08m
Retail Goods Shops Total	147,768	684.63m	194,347	708.93m	87,181	262.69m	429,296	1656.24m

Table 15.10: Retail goods shops by type and turnover

15.42 Principal retail destinations in Aberdeen City Centre, including Union Square, Bon Accord Centre, Trinity Centre, and the former John Lewis, have recently been sold. The future of the City Centre depends on decisions made by the new owners, with a significant land parcel in the northern retail core owned by one entity.

Retail Deficiencies and Capacity

15.43 The Retail Study 2024 updated the Strategic Retail Model and analysed demand and supply for retail expenditure and turnover up to 2038. It examined quantitative and qualitative retail deficiencies by comparing expenditure and average turnover for the study area, individual councils, and market areas.

Convenience Goods

15.44 There was no significant quantitative retail deficiency identified to support additional convenience goods floorspace for the study area as a whole. However, additional floorspace could address local deficiencies in Loirston/south Aberdeen. Significant new convenience floorspace is, however, expected to adversely impact existing food stores in the study area.

General Comparison Goods

15.45 Although no overall quantitative deficiency was found in the study area, a deficiency was identified in the City Centre where market demand is unlikely to address it.

Comparison retail will remain attractive but will not replace the lost floorspace. Significant investment outside the City Centre could undermine its long-term growth.

Bulky Comparison Goods

- 15.46 Broad levels of quantitative retail deficiency for bulky goods as well as market demand was identified.

Leisure Space

- 15.47 Commercial leisure space is expected to grow significantly in the City, Town and District Centres due to long term demand. This has potential to offset the decline in comparison goods retailing. There is also significant potential for additional leisure space to support tourism growth.

Local Accessibility to Retail and Related Services

- 15.48 The Retail Study found that some residential areas (both existing and major new housing areas) lack easy walking access to retail and local services, which is not aligned with the 20-Minute Neighbourhood principle in National Planning Framework 4. Recommendations were made for new retail/service provisions in major housing proposals to improve local accessibility, including areas such as Grandhome (OP9), Newhills (OP20-22), Maidencraig (OP28, 31-33), Countesswells (OP38), and Loirston (OP59).

Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan

- 15.49 Aberdeen City Council approved the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan in 2022 with the principle aim to repopulate vacant units on Union Street. The initiative supports small businesses to open up pop up shops, test the market/products, encourages entrepreneurship, reuses previously vacant units, increases dwell time and spending in the local economy whilst linking with Community Wealth Building (see also Topic Paper Wellbeing and Community).

Empty Shops Grant Scheme

- 15.50 In 2023 Aberdeen City Council launched a £1million fund for City Centre regeneration to support the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan. The fund offers grant awards of up to 50% of project costs towards eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration of vacant shops on Union Street to enable reoccupation by new businesses and tenants.

- 15.51 The core objectives of the Union Street Empty Shops Grant Scheme are to:

- Reduce the number of vacant shops on Union Street through supporting eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration for new uses - be that retail, cultural, hospitality or office space;
- Leverage private investment in vacant shops on Union Street to bring them back into use; and
- Support new business start-ups and entrepreneurs, and create new employment opportunities, through enabling the provision of suitable premises on Union Street.

- 15.52 All grants awarded from the fund must be paid out by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust

15.53 At the time of writing, discretionary grants are available towards Building Repair, Shopfront and Community Heritage Grants within designated priority areas of Aberdeen City Centre. Types of work that can be applied for include general structural repairs, timber repairs, re-roofing and high level repairs, stonework repairs, windows, doors, external joinery, shop fronts, professional fees, thermal improvements. There will be types of work that will not be supported including internal works, alterations, redecoration, stone cleaning, general maintenance/running costs. Topic Paper 9: Place provides further detail on policy implications regarding historic assets within emerging Local Development Plans.

Heritage Grants Schemes

15.54 Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage & Place Programme aims to develop vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. Applicants are encouraged to also apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for match funding. Grant eligible activities include third-party grants for building repairs, public realm and greenspaces, community heritage activities and traditional skills training. Aberdeen City has developed a proposal for the eastern half of Union St, including Castle and Justice Streets. The Council was awarded development phase grant from HES and NLHF, to allow the proposal to be developed in detail. The Delivery Phase bids were submitted in February 2025 and outcomes are expected by the end of June. It is anticipated that, if the bids are successful, the 5-year scheme would commence in September, allowing for funder's embargo of decisions and grant paperwork to be completed. This programme replaces the Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) which operated between 2017 and 2023. Please see the Topic Paper 9: Place for further information.

Our Union Street

15.55 Launched in 2023 and based on 10,000 ideas submitted by local residents, Our Union Street is a community-led organisation with the purpose to regenerate, repopulate and reinvigorate the Granite Mile. The aim is for Union Street to be a safe, busy, energetic, thriving thoroughfare that compares favourably with the best of the UK's small cities. It sets out 17 key themes to be addressed via 5 key action areas:

- Brighten the street
- Fill the units
- Use the space
- Tell the story
- Engage the people

15.56 Investment funding will include fit out grants for new businesses and free rents and rates. Also part of the programme of investment is an international food and drink market (under construction), Union Terrace Gardens (complete), streetscape improvements (underway), Art Gallery redevelopment (complete), Ultimate Masterclass Festival and street art festival Nuart. Free and discounted professional services are also available. Volunteers are also undertaking maintenance and clean-up operations. Engagement with key stakeholders located within the City Centre will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Aberdeen Business Improvement District

- 15.57 Aberdeen Business Improvement District (BID), known as 'Aberdeen Inspired', is led and funded by the City Centre business community. Established in 2011 and renewed for a third 5-year term in 2021, the BID aims to reinvigorate the City Centre with four themes: Safe and Welcoming City Centre, Promoting our City Centre, Attractive City Centre, and Helping Your Business. Key projects include the Nuart Festival, Christmas Village, Restaurant Week, Umbrella Project, SPECTRA Festival of Light, Tall Ships Races, Aberdeen Gift Card, Curated in the Quad, suspended illuminated signage, floral enhancements, Purple Flag award, deep cleaning of Union Street, and various advocacy and partnership initiatives. Engagement with key stakeholders located within the City Centre will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Tourism

Context

- 15.58 Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire attract visitors with their coastlines, castles, historic and cultural offerings, and golf courses. Aberdeen International Airport provides domestic and international flights and hosts the heliport for the North Sea Oil and gas industry. The city boasts a rich history, art galleries, museums, sculptures, monuments, parks, gardens, historic buildings, towns, and the beach. Further information can be found in the Culture & Creativity section below.
- 15.59 Union Terrace Gardens and the Port of Aberdeen South Harbour (National Planning Framework 4 - National Development 14) are two notable projects in recent years. Union Terrace Gardens was refurbished to improve accessibility, add amenities and restore historic features, reopening in 2022 with multiple awards. The Port of Aberdeen, completed in 2023, now accommodates cruise ships and supports economic diversification. The Port of Aberdeen received 43 cruise calls between May and October 2023, 58 in 2024 and 64 scheduled for 2025.
- 15.60 In 2022, Aberdeen experienced 1.3 million overnight trips by international and GB visitors, and 5.9 million day trips by GB residents, with a total spend of £747 million. The city is a popular destination for conferences, exhibitions, and meetings, benefiting from its strong academic and industrial base, and has significant tourism links with Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands due to the oil industry.
- 15.61 VisitAberdeenshire is the main tourism agency for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Their Quarterly Business Monitors have identified various trends over the past year, including rising business costs, recruitment challenges, weather impacts on trading performance, the cost of living crisis, increased international visitors, and short-term lets legislation.
- 15.62 Based on VisitScotland data collected in 2023, Aberdeen had a 41%/59% split of domestic and international overnight visitors, with retirees or older couples making up 72% of the visitors. The most popular accommodation was serviced accommodation, and 64% of visitors were repeat visitors. The main attractions were the scenery/landscape and history/culture, with museums/art galleries and architecture/buildings being the top activities. In alignment with the town centre first

approach most tourist attractions are located in or near the City Centre – see Figure 15.10.

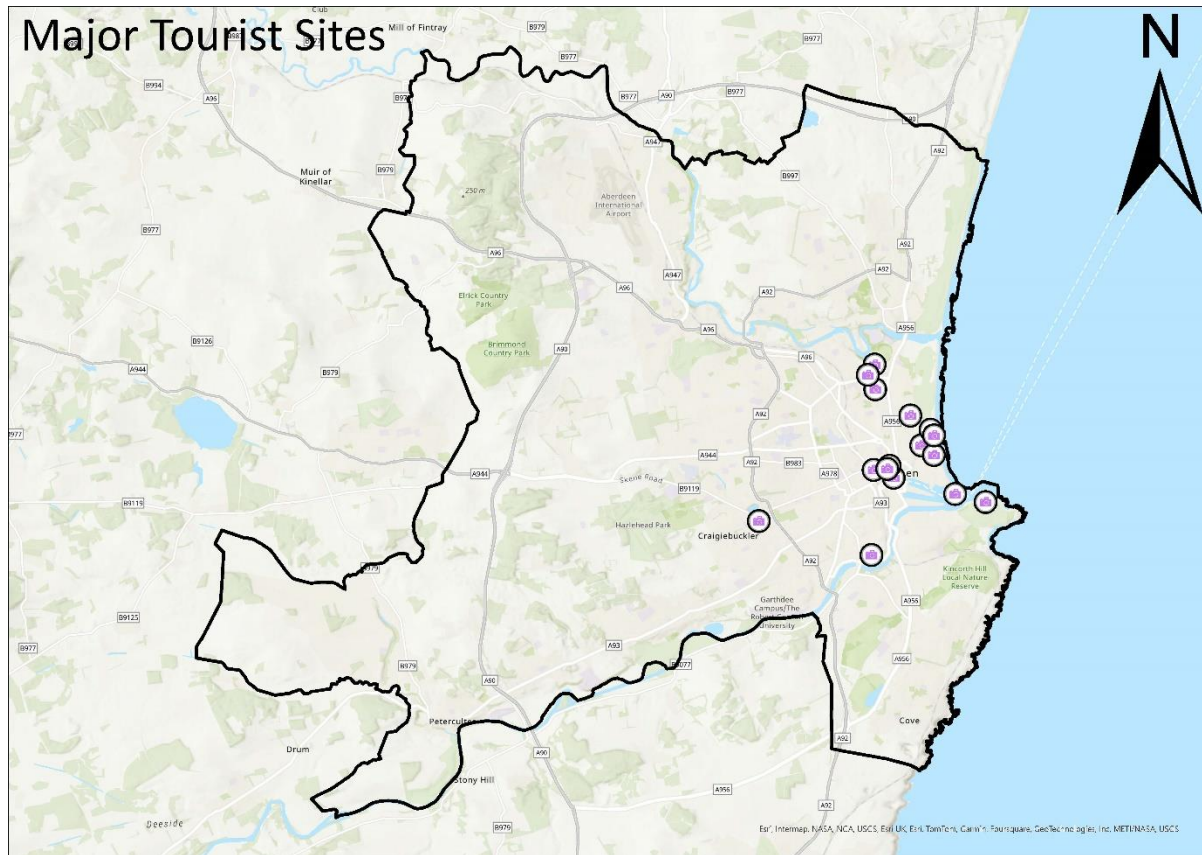


Figure 15.10: Distribution of Major Tourist Sites

15.63 The hotel market in Aberdeen is linked to tourism and the oil and gas industry/business market, leading to a cluster of hotels in Dyce. Most accommodation is in the City Centre, with some hotels recently converted to student housing. Aberdeen Planning Guidance on short-term lets supports the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. Limited opportunities for caravan/camping sites exist due to Aberdeen's small hinterland.

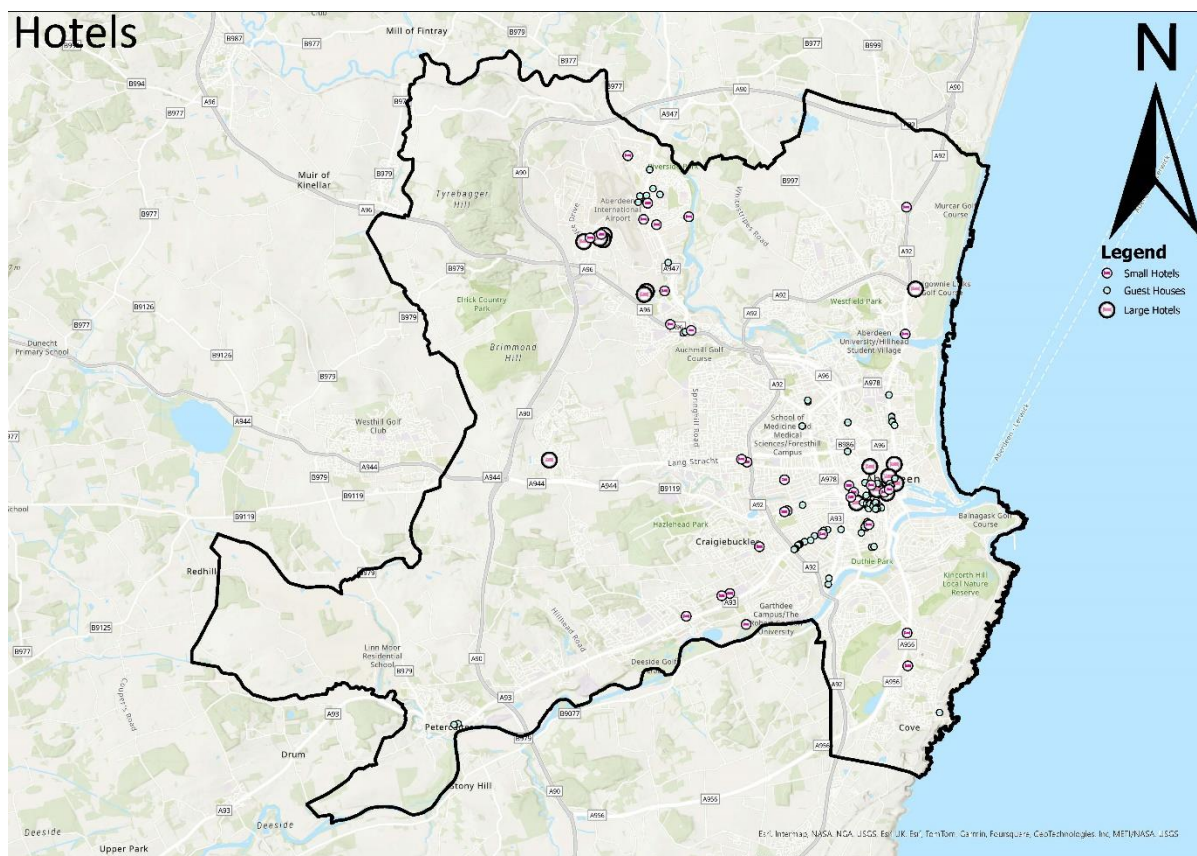


Figure 11: Distribution of Hotels

Aberdeen City STEAM Report

15.64 STEAM is a tourism economic impact modelling process which quantifies the local economic impact of tourism through a variety of sources. Data for Aberdeen indicates positive trends relating to local economic impact of tourism. Table 15.11 below shows that Aberdeen is year on year experiencing a higher number of visitors and higher expenditure by visitors which is resulting in a higher economic impact and number of persons employed.

Comparative Headlines STEAM data 2019 – 2023

	2023	2022	2019	2019 v 2023 (%)
Direct expenditure (£Millions)	468.27	384.31	278.61	+68.1 %
Economic Impact (£Millions)	700.58	574.61	416.15	+68.3 %
Day Visitor Numbers (Millions)	1.490	1.327	1.182	+26.1 %
Staying Visitor Numbers (Millions)	1.856	1.457	1.257	+47.7 %

Direct Employment (FTE)	5,663	5,214	4,623	+22.5 %
Total Employment (FTE)	8,349	7,710	6,647	+25.6 %

Table 15.11: Extracted from Aberdeen City Steam Report for 2019-2023 (CDXX) and Aberdeen City Steam Report for 2019-2022

15.65 Hotel occupancy and average room rates in Aberdeen have returned to, and now exceeded, pre-COVID19 levels in line with higher visitor numbers.

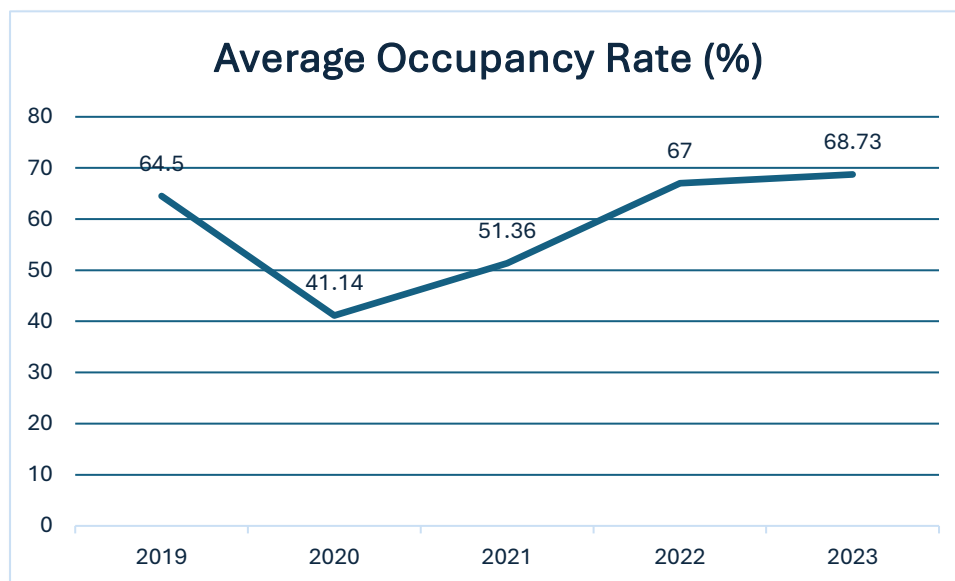


Figure 15.12: Aberdeen Occupancy Rate 2019 – 2023, Extract from Aberdeen Data Observatory

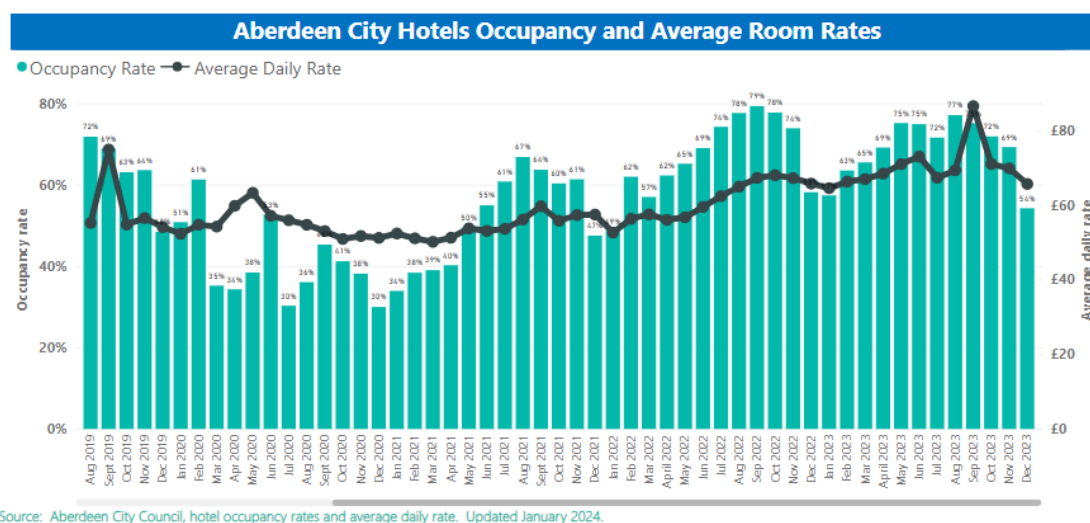


Figure 15.13: Aberdeen City Hotel Occupancy and Average Room Rates, Extract from Aberdeen Data Observatory.

The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024

15.66 The Act received Royal Assent on 5 July 2024 and gives discretionary powers to Local Authorities in Scotland to charge a fee or tax on overnight stays in some types of accommodation. It allows councils to invest more in tourism facilities and services that benefit visitors and residents. The rate set is discretionary and could result in different rates for different areas or purposes. A draft Visitor Levy Scheme for Aberdeen was approved for consultation, lasting twelve weeks, at a meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on 12 February 2025. The [consultation](#) is open until July 1st 2025. The Proposed Plan may need to consider whether any spatial planning implications, or local policy provision may arise from introduction of a Levy.

Just Transition Fund

15.67 The fund is a £500m ten-year commitment to support projects across the North East and Moray which contribute towards the region's transition to net zero. Within Aberdeen City, funding has been secured by One North East and towards the North East Adventure Tourism project to create a new pump track at Transition Extreme's beachfront site. The Proposed Plan may identify specific allocations and/or land zonings to reflect projects which are facilitated by the Just Transition Fund.

Destination Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire: A Framework for Growth 2022-2030

15.68 VisitAberdeenshire, supported by Scottish Enterprise, has created a framework to make Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Scotland's leading visitor destination by 2030. The plan emphasizes sustainable growth for the environment, society, and economy, and includes principles of leadership, people & skills, and partnerships. It aims to support the transition to a net zero economy, provide employment opportunities, and make the region competitive. The principles of the framework will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

15.69 The north-east aims to lead tourism growth in Scotland by encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more, while building on its reputation for innovation and high-quality experiences. Extensive consultation with private and public sectors informed recommendations that align with market trends. Future action plans will focus on investment and innovation, with input from key partners and experts to achieve targets by the end of the decade. Data demonstrates that visitor numbers and spending are already increasing.

Regional Economic Strategy: A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland

15.70 Published in 2024, the strategy provides a shared vision and ambition for the future of north east Scotland to align commitment, investment and action for economic growth and diversification. The principles of the strategy will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

“Our vision is for a regional economy that enables us to thrive. It is leading a just energy transition, diversifying our economy, enabling entrepreneurship and innovation, and delivering a wellbeing economy for our people – a post fossil-fuel future. By 2035, our economy will be leading the transition to and production of future energy solutions, new green energy and will be diversifying through growth in our digital technology, food and drink, tourism, life sciences and creative sectors.”

15.71 There are 5 strategy objectives to support delivery of the vision:

Objective	How will we measure success?	Most recent baseline	Target by mid-point review (2029)
1) To establish the North East as a pioneer of the energy transition, by delivering an 80% reduction in carbon emissions per head]	• Co2 emissions/ capita • Renewables jobs (work required to establish these data at regional level)	4.8 tCO2e per person North East: 2020	3 tCO2e per person
2) Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional GVA from region's growth sectors.	• Regional GVA as a percentage of Scottish GVA • Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional employment from the region's growth sectors.	11.3% North East: 2020 27.5%	≥ 11.3% 30.3%
3) Maintain a healthy, sustainable, working age population through increasing economic participation rates	• Economic Activity Rate 16-64 and 16-24 • Economic Activity Absolute 50+	16-64 Rate: 78.7% 16-24 Rate: 64.1% 50+ Absolute: 86,900 North East: July 21–June 22	16-64 Rate: 80.1% 16-24 Rate: 66.5% 50+ Absolute: 90,376
4) Become a Real Living Wage region with 95% of overall employment offering a real living wage or higher.	• % of employees earning above the real living wage	84% North East: 2021	≥ 90%
5) Protect and enhance the natural capital of the region by aligning to national ambitions to manage 30% of the region for people and nature by 2030	• % of region's area managed for people and nature	20%	30%

Table 15.12: Extract from Regional Economic Strategy – 5 Strategy Objectives

15.72 Four work programmes will support delivery of the high-level strategic objectives:



Figure 15.14: Extract from Regional Economic Strategy – 4 Work Programmes

Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023 – 2026

15.73 Aberdeen City Council has updated the Events 365 Plan to 2026 to support regional economic and tourism strategies. Despite challenges from COVID-19, changing audience expectations, rising costs, and budget pressures, the plan aims to deliver diverse events year-round, activate new City Centre venues, and grow the number and scale of events. It seeks to provide clarity and certainty for the sector and business community, ensuring opportunities can be maximized and affirming Aberdeen's ambition as an events, conferencing, tourism, and leisure destination. Spatial planning implications of the plan will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

15.74 The document outlines eight objectives aimed at positively impacting Aberdeen's economy, businesses, and venues by making the city a stage, inspiring creativity, connecting Aberdeen to the world, shaping the city's creative and sporting future, promoting skills and volunteering, increasing wellbeing and active lifestyles, encouraging sustainable travel, and measuring and reporting impacts and outcomes.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023

15.75 Published in January 2024, the report on Aberdeen's economy emphasizes the need for a long-term strategic approach to successfully transition to renewable energy. Key areas for achieving success include diversification, attracting and retaining skills, investing in infrastructure, improving the quality of life, and implementing a regional economic strategy. Despite improvements in business confidence, City Centre footfall, and employment in 2023, these metrics still lag behind pre-pandemic levels.

Sustainable Tourism is highlighted as a potential growth sector for future employment, with a Destination Tourism Strategy Action Plan underway and a newly reformed Tourism Forum. Spatial planning implications arising from the report will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

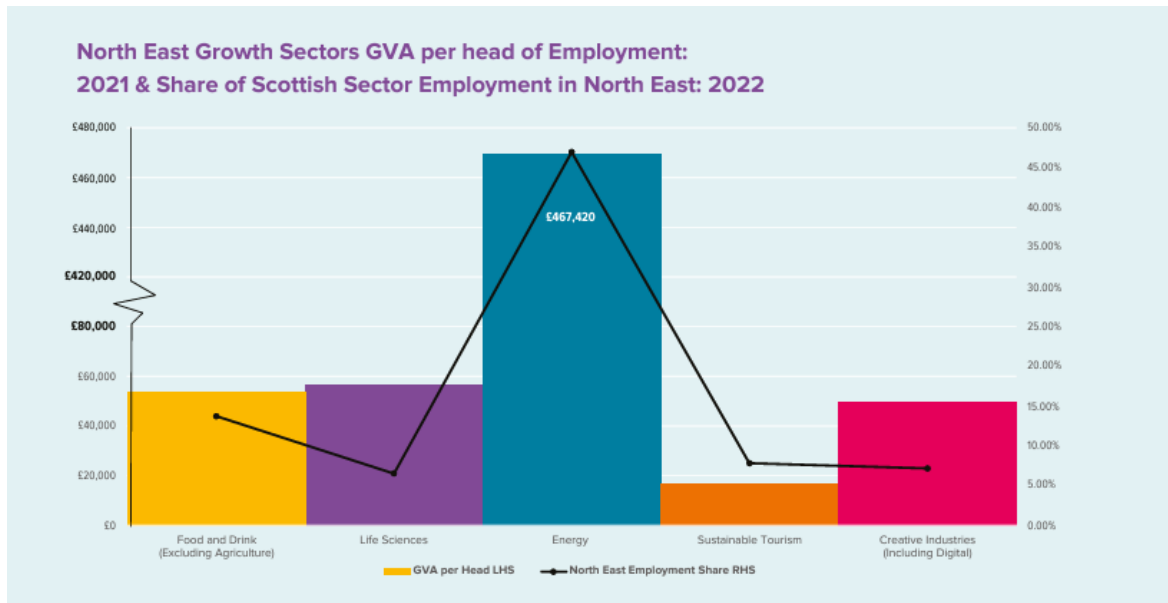


Figure 15.15: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Growth Sectors GVA per head of Employment in North East

National Tourism Strategy: Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism For A Sustainable Future

15.76 Launched in March 2020, Scotland's tourism strategy aims to be a leader in 21st-century tourism by promoting responsible tourism that benefits communities, businesses, and visitors. The strategy includes commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045, improve community wellbeing, and ensure tourism contributes to economic prosperity. It emphasizes sustainable growth and a strategic approach to managing tourism effectively. Spatial planning implications arising from the strategy will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Culture & Creativity

15.77 Aberdeen, known for its nicknames such as the Granite City and Energy Capital of Europe, has a unique culture where traditions and contemporary creative activities coexist. Aberdeen City Council values the arts for their intrinsic worth and benefits, such as improving citizen wellbeing, attracting tourism, and encouraging new businesses. There is a strong desire to retain and nurture emerging talent to enrich the city's culture. Continued investment and supportive policies are necessary to sustain a vibrant cultural and creative atmosphere.

15.78 National Planning Framework 4 Policy 31 supports job and investment opportunities in the creative sector, culture, heritage, and the arts, aligning with local outcomes like the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 and the Cultural Strategy 2018-

2028. COVID-19 has disrupted delivery of the Culture Aberdeen Strategy but has also led to lower rents, making business spaces more accessible to practitioners that may previously have been unavailable or prohibitive.

15.79 The Culture Investment Programme replaced Aberdeen City Council's previous grant schemes for arts and culture in 2025, supporting sustained creative or cultural activities. Additionally, the Council is investing in community and cultural assets through the Place Based Investment Fund, which focuses on community-led regeneration, town centre revitalisation, community wealth building, and 20-minute neighbourhoods.

15.80 Theatrical, comedy and music events are on offer at a variety of venues across the city:

- Cinemas: Cineworld (Beach & Union Square), Vue and Belmont (currently closed but work underway to reopen).
- Museums: Gordon Highlanders Museum, Maritime Museum, Tolbooth, Zoology Museum, and Provost Skenes House.
- Art Galleries: Aberdeen Art Gallery and Peacock Visual Arts.
- Stage, screen & music: Aberdeen Music Hall, His Majestys Theatre, Tivoli Theatre, The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Lemon Tree and Aberdeen Arts Centre.
- Other: Aberdeen Science Centre, Deemouth Artists Studios, Anatomy Rooms, Langstane Studios, Eagle House Studios.

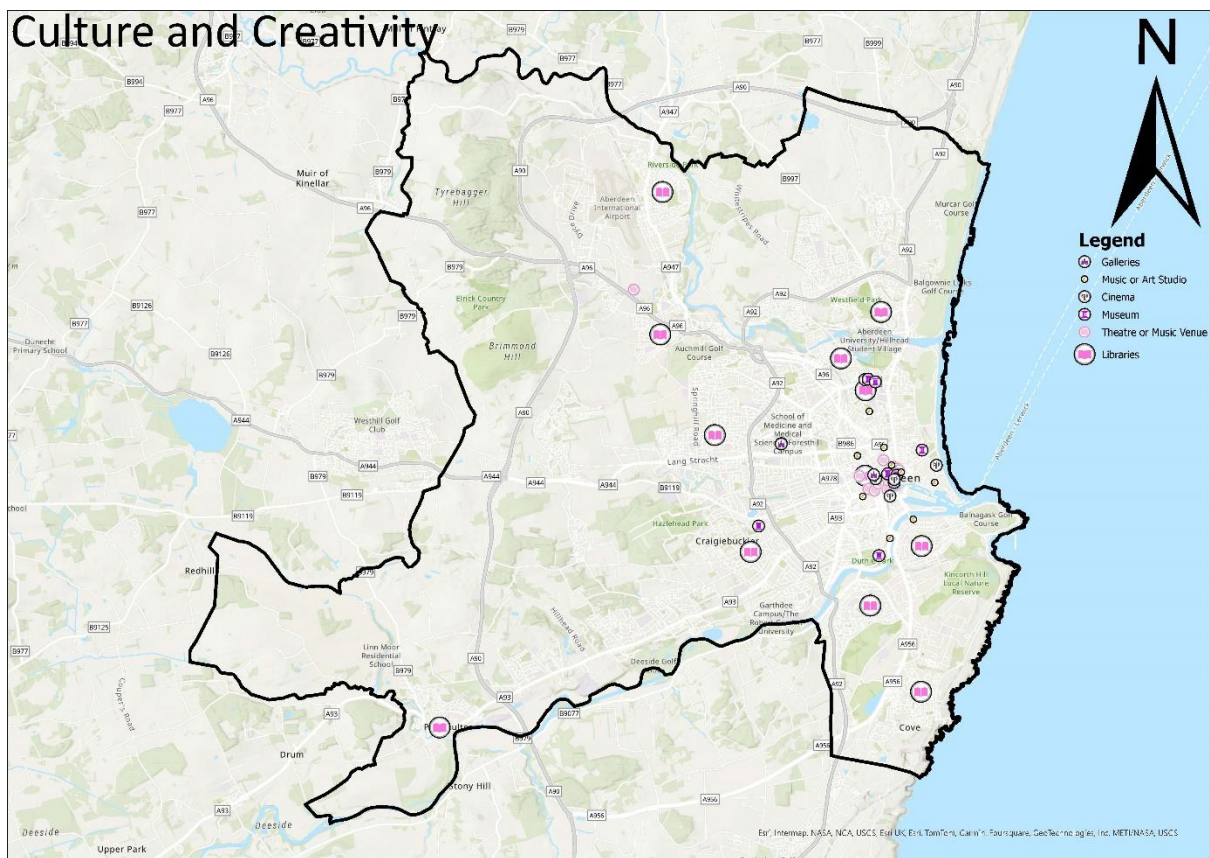


Figure 15.16: Distribution of culture and creativity locations

Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982

15.81 Under section 14 the Council has a duty to “ensure that there is adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities”. Spatial planning implications arising from the Act will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Human Rights Bill

15.82 The Scottish Government has proposed a Human Rights Bill to incorporate various rights into Scots law, aiming to protect economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights similar to civil and political rights. It will hold public bodies and private organisations delivering public services accountable for actions that fail to uphold people's rights, with plans to introduce the Bill to Scottish Parliament before the end of the current parliamentary session in 2026. Spatial planning implications arising from the Bill will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Scotland's Creative Learning Plan

15.83 Scotland's Creative Learning Plan, first published in 2013, aims to enhance creative learning opportunities across Scotland by fostering partnerships and government support. The plan emphasises the importance of creativity in education and seeks to embed it at the core of Scottish education. In October 2023, the First Minister announced that the Scottish Government will invest at least £100 million more annually in culture and the arts by the financial year 2028/29. Spatial planning implications arising from the plan will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

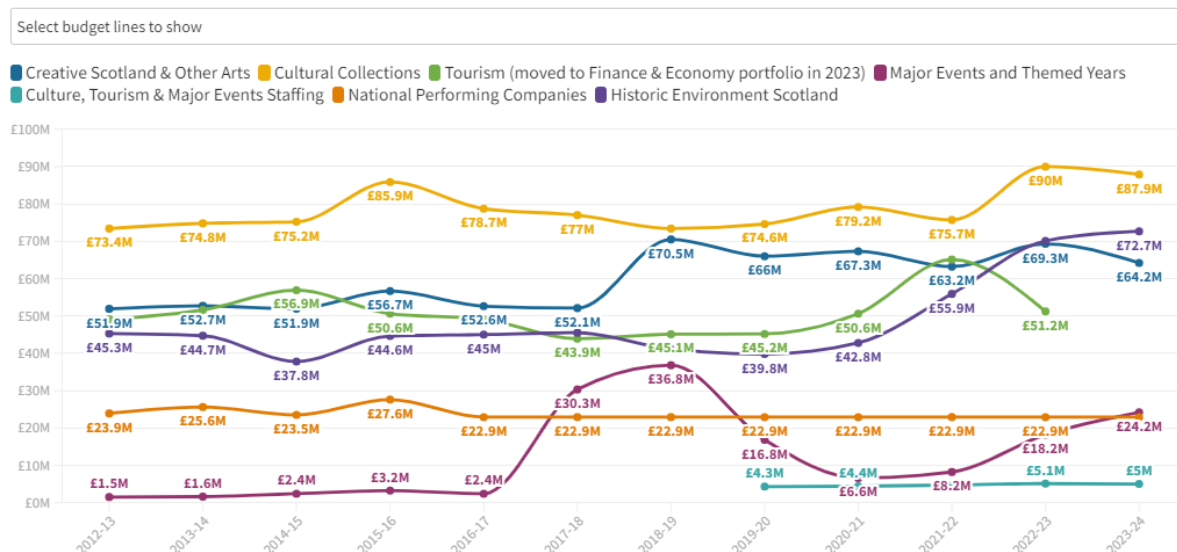
Culture Counts Budget Tracker

15.84 Figures 15.17 and 15.18 visualise changes in Scottish Government culture budgets over time and provides an indication of funding available to local authorities. Provision of funding will inevitably impact upon the ability of local authorities to improve their culture offerings. Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Comparing Key Budget Lines for Culture (Cash terms)

10 Year Tracker of Scottish Government culture budgets

£ Millions



Source: [Scottish Government Budget Webpage](#), [Scottish Government Budget Archive](#) • Before 2015-16 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) was known as Historic Scotland
 COVID 19 Funding is recorded at Level 2 of ScotGov budgets and has been excluded from this chart.

Figure 15.17: Culture Counts Budget Tracker

Comparing Key Budget Lines for Culture (Cash terms)

10 Year Tracker of Scottish Government culture budgets

£ Millions



Search...

Level 3 Budget Heading	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Creative Scotland & Other Arts	51.9	52.7	51.9	56.7	52.6	52.1	70.5	66.0	67.3	63.2	69.3	64.2
Cultural Collections	73.4	74.8	75.2	85.9	78.7	77.0	73.4	74.6	79.2	75.7	90.0	87.9
Tourism (moved to Finance & Economy portfolio in 2023)	49.1	51.6	56.9	50.6	49.1	43.9	45.1	45.2	50.6	65.1	51.2	
Major Events and Themed Years	1.5	1.6	2.4	3.2	2.4	30.3	36.8	16.8	6.6	8.2	18.2	24.2
Culture, Tourism & Major Events Staffing								4.3	4.4	4.7	5.1	5
National Performing Companies	23.9	25.6	23.5	27.6	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9
Historic Environment Scotland	45.3	44.7	37.8	44.6	45.0	45.5	41.1	39.8	42.8	55.9	70.1	72.7

Source: [Scottish Government Budget Webpage](#), [Scottish Government Budget Archive](#) • Before 2015-16 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) was known as Historic Scotland
 COVID 19 Funding is recorded at Level 2 of ScotGov budgets and has been excluded from this chart.

Figure 15.18: Comparison of key Scottish Government budget lines for Culture

Aberdeen City – Cultural Market Analysis

15.85 A Cultural Market Analysis conducted by Charlotte Wilson Research Services in 2024 for Aberdeen City Council revealed that cultural attendance in Aberdeen City and surrounding areas is higher than the Scottish average. This includes attendance at cinemas, art galleries, street art events, comedy shows, and concerts. The increased attendance may be due to recent investments in cultural venues such as the Art Gallery, Music Hall, and Provost Skene's House, with the Art Gallery being named Scotland's building of the year in 2021. Spatial planning implications arising from the analysis will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process in addition to engagement with key stakeholders regarding local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026

- 15.86 States that “vital to diversifying the economy is the retention of the talent and transferable skills that currently exist within our businesses and educational institutions, as well as the creation of opportunities for upskilling/reskilling so that residents are able to move into, within and between economic opportunities that become available.” This will include the retention of students attending the city’s universities and college. Spatial planning implications arising from the plan will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Culture Aberdeen

- 15.87 An independent network of the city’s cultural organisations and also the title of the area’s Cultural Strategy. The network and strategy have in common a collaborative spirit and shared responsibilities.
- Aberdeen’s Remembering Together Project will create a COVID-19 memorial in Bon Accord Gardens using upcycled local granite
 - The North East Culture Collective (NECC) was a Cultural Aberdeen project funded by Creative Scotland until March 2024, aiming to explore new models of cultural engagement.

Culture Aberdeen – A Cultural Strategy for the City of Aberdeen 2018-2028

- 15.88 It outlines five key ambitions for the next 10 years to enhance Aberdeen’s cultural sector: releasing creativity, becoming Scotland’s creative lab, making the city a stage, connecting to the world, and shaping the future through collaboration and cultural leadership. Spatial planning implications arising from the strategy will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Creative Learning | Aberdeen City Council

- 15.89 A city-wide service prioritising projects based on need and collaborating with others using arts, culture, and creativity. Initiatives include the Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards (VACMA) in partnership with Creative Scotland, a professional development program for established creatives, creative learning networks, creative residencies, and ABZWorks workshops to empower young people interested in art and design.

Creative Funding Awards | Aberdeen City Council

- 15.90 Offers cultural organisations with not for profit status, community groups, charities and individual artists or creatives the opportunity to apply for support to develop and/or deliver creative activity.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023

- 15.91 Published in January 2024, the report discusses Aberdeen’s economy, noting challenges for the Creative Industries and Culture. Despite difficulties, there is cautious optimism as employment in the creative industries has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, reaching its highest since 2016. The region hosts over 10% of Scotland’s creative industry companies, and the repurposing of empty shop units by RGU/Look Again is seen positively. Spatial planning implications arising from the report will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review 2023-2024

15.92 The annual review showcases the impact of Aberdeen's cultural and creative life, economy, and sustainable future through various venues like the Art Gallery, Maritime Museum, Provost Skene's House, Archives, and Treasure Hub. Highlights include 319,765 admissions, 15,337 participants in public programs, 543 new objects acquired, and a royal visit by Queen Camilla. The Gordon Highlanders Museum won the "Best Visitor Attraction" award at the Aberdeen City and Shire Thistle Awards 2024. Spatial planning implications arising from the annual review will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan preparation process.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

15.93 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

15.94 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024 who were invited to be part of the Centres of Business and Culture Topic Paper review group. In September 2024 a list of suggested key evidence was outlined to the review group with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or provide further additions. As a result the following amendments were made to the draft topic paper:

- 3 additional evidence sources were added;
- 1 evidence source was updated with newer data;
- 2 evidence sources were considered more relevant to other Topic Areas and were shared accordingly; and
- 3 evidence sources were not applicable to the Aberdeen City Council area and as such were not included.

15.95 The evidence presented within this paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to a number of key stakeholders who were deemed to have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This included:

- Aberdeen City Council (Development Management, City Regeneration and Environment)
- VisitAberdeenshire
- Theatres Trust
- Aberdeen Inspired
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Invest Aberdeen
- Our Union Street
- One North East
- Aberdeen Solicitors and Property Centre
- Aberdeen Harbour Board
- Higher education establishments: North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University and University of Aberdeen

15.96 All stakeholders had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

15.97 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 responses to this topic paper were received. 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Heritage Environment Scotland, McDonalds

Restaurants, 1 from a housing developer (Bancon Homes) and 4 members of the public. Of those 9 respondents, 2 did not agree with the evidence used and 2 considered that key pieces of evidence were missed.

15.98 An email was sent on 5 June 2025 to the agent working on behalf of McDonalds Restaurants to request confirmation if the comments received were intended to be classed as disputes. At the time of writing no response has been received.

15.99 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

15.100 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 identifies key issues and recommendations that need to be considered, including updates to the network of centres and addressing qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

15.101 Significant developments that generate footfall should be located according to the town centre first approach and sequentially assessed against the network of centres.

15.102 We will consider the appropriateness and implications of continuing with an approach which defines a “City Centre Retail Core” zoning in light of national changes to the Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights and evaluate the value of maintaining active ground floor frontages by restricting residential uses etc on ground floors.

15.103 We will reflect plans and strategies to support the regeneration and revitalisation of the network of centres, including projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan and City Region Deal.

15.104 We will consider ways to enhance leisure, entertainment, tourism, and cultural activities to complement the retail offerings in the City Centre.

15.105 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Retail

15.106 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 identifies key issues and recommendations that need to be considered, including updates to the network of centres and addressing qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

15.107 Recommendations for retail provision in new neighbourhoods and expansion areas (such as Countesswells and Grandhome) should be considered and reflected in the Proposed Plan, supporting local living and neighbourhood shopping.

15.108 There is a need for a plan-led approach to address convenience shopping based on 20-minute neighbourhood principles in NPF4. We will review the necessity of new local centres to serve new developments or existing population areas that are distant from services, depending on the spatial strategy and any new housing land allocations.

15.109 We will consider if a local position is required to prevent increase in the number of, and clusters of, takeaways/betting shops/high interest money lenders. There may not be a case for the Proposed Plan to take further action in relation to these uses, but this will need to be considered in its preparation. There is a case for the Proposed Plan to consider further policy control on hot take away uses to preserve residential amenity, but this will have to be balanced against the need to maintain vibrancy and occupancy rates in town centres. The location of nearby uses, such as schools, will need to be included in this consideration.

15.110 Consider whether express policies should be included in the Proposed Plan to provide a framework for determination of drive-through proposals. The evidence suggests these are largely located on radial routes near the A96, A956, and A92.

15.111 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Tourism

15.112 NPF4 Policy 30 requires Local Development Plans (LDPs) to support the tourism sector's recovery, growth, and resilience. The Proposed Plan should ensure this while safeguarding the assets in Aberdeen that attract tourists.

15.113 We will consider the need for new tourism facilities and accommodation, and potential policy framework that supports appropriate developments in suitable locations.

15.114 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Culture & Creativity

15.115 The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations for tourism and culture opportunities, with specific allocations proposed where necessary.

15.116 The Proposed Plan should support existing arts and cultural venues in line with NPF4 Policy 31. It must consider registered Local Place Plans and their cultural aspirations and potential policy framework that supports appropriate developments in suitable locations.

15.117 Engagement with key stakeholders will help inform preparation of local policies and consideration of land zonings in the Proposed Plan.

Marmot Principles

15.118 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	x

Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	x
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	

Table 15.13 Marmot Principles

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

- 15.119 NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Bancon Homes and 3 members of the public agreed that all key pieces of evidence had been considered.
- 15.120 NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Bancon Homes and 3 members of the public agreed with the evidence used to prepare the topic paper. 1 member of the public considered that the evidence used was “highly relevant”.
- 15.121 NatureScot have confirmed that they have no dispute, however consider that the “Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan” section “does not recognise the importance of attractive blue green infrastructure within and linking centres of business and culture, to help promote footfall and dwell time, boosting retail and tourism”. The Council agree about the importance of attractive blue green infrastructure and this is outlined in Topic Paper 3 Infrastructure and Communication “Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan” where it is stated “The spatial strategy will seek to protect, enhance and expand blue and green infrastructure.” The suite of Topic Papers, and subsequent Proposed Plan, should be read as a whole and we do not believe there is a need for duplication across multiple Topic Papers.

Disputes with Stakeholders

- 15.122 . A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves
- 15.123 McDonalds Restaurants did not agree with the evidence used to prepare the topic paper. Therefore, it has been treated as a dispute.
- 15.124 McDonalds Restaurants stated that they “do not dispute the evidence presented”, however they feel that the evidence was limited in scope. They noted that the topic paper provided insight into existing drive-throughs and set out that consideration should be given as to whether these locations positively contributed towards local living. In addition to contribution to local living, McDonalds Restaurants consider that broader economic and social benefits should be taken into account. However, the respondent also stated that the topic paper does not make clear the approach that the Council will take in assessing the need for new drive-through development.
- 15.125 McDonalds Restaurants offer their assistance to work with Aberdeen City Council to discuss potential site allocations, develop an up-to-date evidence base and a criteria based policy for drive-through developments to reflect and respond to the need and demand for drive-through development across the area through a positive policy environment. McDonalds Restaurants advocate that the Local Development Plan

should include site allocations and a criteria-based policy on drive-through developments formed in collaboration with landowners and industry leaders. It is considered that the approach and criteria based policy sought by the respondent is outwith the purpose of the evidence report (which is to provide a summary of evidence, what that evidence means for the Proposed Plan and identify any potential gaps in evidence).

Information Gaps

- 15.128 An Existing Site and Land Zonings Audit will be required to assess the suitability of existing zonings. It is expected this will be undertaken during Summer 2025 and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.
- 15.129 An updated Retail Centre Health Check will be required for continued monitoring and suitability of the existing hierarchy of centres. It is expected that this will be undertaken in September 2025 and, alongside the Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023, will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.
- 15.130 Continued monitoring of hot food takeaways and drive-throughs will be used to inform the Proposed Plan. The Call for Sites process in Summer 2025 will assist in determining demand. Consideration to specific site allocations/land zonings and/or a specific policy framework to assess proposals will form part of the drafting of the Proposed Plan.
- 15.131 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic area. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

16. Topic Paper 9 – Place

Requirements addressed in this section:

16.1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(2)(a)	a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences
Section 15(2) (b)	a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.

Other Relevant Legislation

Act
Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

National Planning Framework 4

Historic Assets and Places

16.2 Local Development Plans (LDPs) should support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places.

Design, Quality, Place

16.3 LDPs should be place-based and created in line with the Place Principle. The spatial strategy should be underpinned by the six qualities of successful places. LDPs should provide clear expectations for design, quality and place taking account of the local context, characteristics and connectivity of the area. They should also identify where more detailed design guidance is expected, for example, by way of design frameworks, briefs, masterplans and design codes.

16.4 Planning authorities should use the Place Standard tool in the preparation of LDPs and design guidance to engage with communities and other stakeholders. They should also where relevant promote its use in early design discussions on planning applications

Local Living

- 16.5 LDPs should support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. Communities and businesses will have an important role to play in informing this, helping to strengthen local living through their engagement with the planning system.

Links to Evidence

Historic Assets and Places

- [Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment](#)
- [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland \(HEPS\)](#)
- [Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence \(PDF\) including the Designation Report October 2024 and Buildings at Risk Data October 2024](#)
- [Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Bon Accord and Crown Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [City Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Cove Bay Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Ferryhill Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Footdee Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Great Western Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Marine Terrace Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Pitfodels Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Rosemount and Westburn Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)
- [Conservation Areas Strategic Overview Management Plan](#)
- [Heritage and Place Programme Committee 29 March 2023 / Appendix 1 / Appendix 2 / Appendix 3](#)
- [Heritage and Place Programme Committee 07 August 2024 – Report / Appendix 1 / Appendix 2 / Appendix 3](#)
- [Article 4 Directions Committee 19 September 2024 - Report / Appendix 1](#)
- [Aberdeen City Heritage Trust](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report](#)
- [Historic Environment Scotland portal](#)
- [Aberdeen City Historic Environment Record](#)
- [Buildings at Risk Register](#)

Design, Quality and Place

- [Creating Places: A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report](#)

- [City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015](#)
- [City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan \(Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4\).](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Dubford Development Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Former Davidson's Mill Development Framework and Masterplan](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Friarsfield Development Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Grandhome Development Framework \(Part 1 and Part 2\)](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Prime Four Business Park Development Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Loirston Development Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Maidencraig Masterplan](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Newhills Development Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Oldfold Development Framework and Masterplan](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Persley Den](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: New AECC Site at Rowett North](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Existing AECC Site at Bridge of Don](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Energy Transition Zone Masterplan](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Harbour Development Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Balgownie Centre, Bridge of Don Planning Brief](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Bon Accord Baths Planning Brief](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Broadford Works Design Brief](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Denburn Valley Planning Brief](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: River Don Corridor Framework](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Robert Gordon University City Centre Planning Brief](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: St Peters Nursery Site Redevelopment Brief](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Placemaking Process](#)
- [Aberdeen City Planning Performance Review 2020-2021](#)
- [Aberdeen City Planning Performance Review 2021-2022](#)
- [Aberdeen City Planning Performance Review 2022-2023](#)

Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

- [Climate Exchange - 20-minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish context](#)
- [Nationwide equity assessment of the 20-min neighbourhood in the Scottish context: A socio-spatial proximity analysis of residential locations.](#)
- [The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal – Excel Data](#)
- [Scottish Government – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood Planning Guidance](#)
- [NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report](#)
- [Email and data from Corporate Landlord \(PDF\) \(17 July 2024\)](#)

- City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015
- City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Countesswells Development Framework and Phase 1 Masterplan (Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4).
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Dubford Development Framework
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance : Former Davidson's Mill Development Framework and Masterplan
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Friarsfield Development Framework
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Grandhome Development Framework (Part 1 and Part 2)
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Greenferns Development Framework and Masterplan
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Prime Four Business Park Development Framework
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Loirston Development Framework
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Maidencraig Masterplan
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- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Denburn Valley Planning Brief
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: River Don Corridor Framework
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Robert Gordon University City Centre Planning Brief
- Aberdeen Planning Guidance: St Peters Nursery Site Redevelopment Brief
- Community Planning Aberdeen: Population Needs Assessment 2023
- Community Planning Aberdeen: Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020v2 data zones
- Community Planning Aberdeen: Full Outcome Framework
- Great British Public Toilet Map – <https://www.toiletmap.org.uk/>
- Changing Places Toilets – <https://www.changing-places.org/>
- “Top up Taps” Water Refill Locations Map – www.scottishwater.co.uk/your-home/campaigns/top-up-tap-map

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

- 16.6 Aberdeen's historic environment is based on many years of human occupation, with buildings ranging from a number of eras. Aberdeen has several historic designations and is known as the 'Granite City' due to the abundance of the stone as a building material. Placemaking and retaining the character of Aberdeen has been at the forefront of plan making and decisions for many years, along with development designed in such a way that people can meet the majority of their daily

needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by sustainable and active travel methods. This will be discussed in further detail below.

16.7 This section is structured as follows:

- Historic Assets
- Design, Quality and Place
- Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Historic Assets and Places

16.8 Aberdeen has a rich built heritage that gives the city its unique sense of place and identity, with its moniker being the Granite City or the Silver City. The historic environment projects Aberdeen's cultural identity, contributes to economic development and regeneration, supports growth of our tourism and leisure, helps connects people and places, and contributes to sustainability by conserving resources. Aberdeen's historic assets span many centuries, styles and locations, and provide a tangible and intangible link to the city, its past, present and future while providing a link to place and placemaking. Aberdeen has conserved its historic environment within its previous Local Development Plans through local policy, supported by conservation surgeries and topic leads within the Planning service's Masterplanning, Design and Conservation team.

Our Past, Out Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment

16.9 The 2023 Historic Environment Scotland document sets out Scotland's 5-year national strategy for the historic environment. The historic environment is a national asset, and it creates jobs, enriches communities, and helps to tell Scotland's story to the world. The 3 priorities set out are delivering the transition to net zero, empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places, and building a wellbeing economy. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the keys aims of this strategy and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that Aberdeen's heritage can bring.

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)

16.10 The Historic Environment Scotland policy document supports good decision-making regarding changes to the historic environment. It includes six policies which identify how the historic environment should be managed, and it reflects the Scottish Government's desire to protect, conserve, and enhance built heritage assets. HEPS is supported by the "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" series which should be used to inform proposals. The Policy and managing change documents will be used to inform any potential local policy or planning guidance document within the Proposed Plan to ensure Aberdeen's historic assets are protected, conserved and enhanced.

Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence (PDF) includes Designation Report October 2024 and Buildings at Risk Data October 2024

Overview

16.11 As of 13/09/2024, there are 1241 designated sites and places in the Aberdeen City

Council area (this number is still correct as of 17/06/2025). These can be found on the Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) interactive portal (and are also found in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Council's GIS system).

Conservation areas

16.12 Aberdeen's eleven conservation areas all have unique conservation area character appraisals. HES note the value of these to support informed development management decision making as well as aiding in HES advice when consulted on conservation area consent applications.

Policies

16.13 Historic Environment Scotland have welcomed Aberdeen's previous historic environment policy framework which includes thematic policy on granite heritage as well as specific content on windows and doors.

Places of worship

16.14 Eighteen places of worship are being considered for disposal by Church of Scotland with Aberdeen by 2027. 12 are listed. A proactive approach to considering the long-term options for such buildings falling out of use and look to the challenges and opportunities that these sites may offer in terms of the communities in which they are situated and the services that they require is encouraged.

Buildings at Risk Register

16.15 Aberdeen has close to 60 on the Buildings at Risk Register (54 are noted in the HES report – while 58 are noted on the website on 17/06/2025). The majority are located within the City Centre, and with this there are clusters around certain sites; Woolmanhill Hospital, and Broadford Works. A number of the notations on the Buildings at Risk register are former industrial, institutional, or ecclesiastical assets. There are fewer Buildings at Risk in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Deciles 1-3 in Aberdeen than the national average. Close to 50% of the buildings on the register have featured for 10 years or more. 3 buildings are currently under repair.

16.16 The Buildings at Risk Register has been paused while Historic Environment Scotland consider long-term options for its future in light of the main findings, conclusions and options of the [Buildings at Risk Register review](#).

Grants

16.17 Since 2019 Historic Environment Scotland have received 63 expressions of interest from a range of projects and regeneration schemes in Aberdeen. Between 2014 and 2023, 17 projects totalling £2,847,452 were completed. There are 5 projects that are live or have been awarded grant but not commenced, totalling £2,786,559. These are outlined in Table 16.1.

Grantee	Project Name	Grant Awarded	Financial Year Awarded
Aberdeen City Council	Union Street CARS	£1,177,104	2017-2018
Aberdeen City Council	Aberdeen Union Street CARS Supplementary	£233,254	2021-2022

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust	ACHT Funding 2023-2026	£901,100	2022-2023
Aberdeen City Council	Silver City Heritage and Place Programme 2024 - 2029	£43,175	2023-20204
University of Aberdeen	The CITADEL Project: Pictish Elite Centre, Phase II	£431,926	2023-2024

Table 16.1: Live or not yet commenced projects from Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence (PDF) includes Designation Report October 2024 and Buildings at Risk Data October 2024

Designated Sites

16.18 The 1,241 designated sites and places in Aberdeen are broken down into the following categories:

- 38 Scheduled Monuments.
- 1, 201 Listed Buildings of which 69 are Category A, 671 are Category B and 461 are Category C.
- 2 sites within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (Duthie Park and the Piper Alpha Memorial Garden / North Sea Memorial Rose Garden.
- There are no Inventory Historic Battlefields designated.

16.19 The next local development plan will consider the requirement for local policies related to its historic environment based on the adoption of NPF4, the content of the conservation area character appraisals and an assessment of extant local policies. The future of the buildings at risk register and disposal of Church of Scotland places of worship will be monitored.

Historic Environment Scotland portal

16.20 The Listed Buildings in Aberdeen are mostly concentrated around the City Centre and Old Aberdeen. There are 11 conservation areas in Aberdeen, most are located in the city centre, and areas of Georgian expansion, with older historic villages also part of the 11. The two sites within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (Duthie Park and the Piper Alpha memorial Garden / North Sea Memorial Rose Garden) which are located within the west of the city. The Scheduled Monuments within the city are mostly located around the periphery and range from prehistoric standing stones to 20th Century military assets. The portal will be used to understand if there are historic designations during site assessment's for the next local development plan so that heritage implications can be highlighted from the outset.

Aberdeen City Historic Environment Record

16.21 The full version of the database is held and maintained by the Archaeology Service and contains information on over 6,262 known sites of archaeological and historical interest within Aberdeen City ranging from prehistoric flints to World War II air raid shelters and pillboxes. The information consists of a computerised database linked to a GIS with further physical records of maps, photographs, articles and reports. Note the database is not exhaustive and only covers currently known sites. The record will be

used to understand if there are historic sites during site assessment's for the next local development plan so that heritage implications can be highlighted from the outset.

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

16.22 Aberdeen's eleven conservation areas concentrated primarily within the city centre, with others located elsewhere in Footdee, Cove, Pitfodels and Old Aberdeen. The conservation areas all have conservation area character appraisals, and an overview management plan. Conservation Areas have been used to designate areas which are of special historic or architectural interest the character and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Aberdeen's conservation areas contribute to the distinctive character of the city and add to the quality of life in Aberdeen. The conservation area boundaries are mapped on the extant Local Development Plan 2023 constraints map. The conservation area character appraisals and overview management plan can be found on Aberdeen City Council's website and listed above. The next local development plan will consider the requirement for local policies related to its historic environment based on the adoption of NPF4, the content of the conservation area character appraisals and management plan.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust (ACHT)

16.23 ACHT has been active within Aberdeen for more than a two decades. The ACHT offers heritage lectures and makes available a limited number of discretionary grants. The Trust operates Building Repair, Shopfront and Community Heritage Grants. These support property owners and communities explore, interpret and look after their heritage. The ACHT will feed into the wider aims of the next local development plan relating to protecting and enhancing Aberdeen's heritage.

Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)

16.24 Aberdeen has a long history of supporting repair and replacement within the historic environment, through Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes. The current Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme ended May 2025 with the final report being sent to Historic Environment Scotland by August 2025. The Union Street CARS has made over £2.4 million in grant funding. The CARS project focussed on the central spine of Aberdeen, Union Street and aimed to:

- Promote an integrated approach to retail and housing led regeneration that builds on Union Street's assets: built heritage, city centre location and mixed use character
- Reverse the decline and improve the quality of the built environment and quality of life for residents of the city
- Improve the quality and appearance of shop fronts on Union Street.

16.25 This was through building repair programmes, community engagement and traditional skills training for laypersons and those in the construction industry. The output of CARS improved the quality of Aberdeen's historic environment and will feed into the wider aims of the next local development plan relating to protecting and enhancing Aberdeen's heritage.

Heritage and Place Programme

16.26 As of March 2023 Aberdeen City Council has been within the development phase of Heritage and Place Programme, with submission to the delivery phase ongoing. As of 07 August 2024, Aberdeen City Council approved the proposed governance structure for the Heritage and Place Programme. The Heritage and Place Programme is an area-based funding programme that aims to contribute to the development of vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland, through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. The focus for the Heritage and Place programme is regeneration of the east end of Union Street which has high levels of vacancy, resultant deterioration and a lack of investment compared to other areas. Should additional funding be approved, then the Heritage and Place Programme will feed into the wider aims of the next local development plan relating to protecting and enhancing Aberdeen's heritage

Article 4 Directions

16.27 A public consultation is due to start in late Summer 2025 on the introduction of new Article 4 Directions on the removal of permitted development rights for replacing windows within three conservation areas; Bon Accord/Crown Street, the City Centre and Old Aberdeen, and the cancellation of Article 4 Directions on Burnbanks Village. The outcome of the consultation may have implication for local planning policy within the next Local Development Plan. The extant plan has a policy on "windows and doors" which applies to listed buildings and public elevations of building in conservation areas.

Place Standard Assessments

16.28 A Place Standard exercise was carried out with adults and children. More information on this is found in below in the Design, Quality and Space section. The Place Standard assesses places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people are asked for comment on what is good now and what can be improved. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with "all" noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

16.29 The Streets and Spaces theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below, (Table 16.2).

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Streets and Spaces	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. (All) • High quality and attractive historic environment. (All) • Parks across the city are good (All)	• Maintenance and upkeep of streets (e.g. footpaths, lighting, dog mess, litter bins, flooding) and look of spaces (planting, trees) (All) • More trees (North and Central) • More places to sit (North)

	• Well maintained, attractive and clean (South)	• More public convenience (North and South) • Increasing number of green spaces available (North and Central) • Improve run down/derelict buildings (South and Central) • Improve the number of playing areas for kids and young people (Central)

Table 16.2: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Street and Spaces Extract.

16.30 The children and young people results on streets and spaces noted: 68.8% felt they were okay, 18.6% felt they were not good, and 12.9% felt they were great. The top three response were as follows (table 16.3):

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Streets and Spaces	Public gardens	34.9%	Less uneven surfaces	30.2%
	Art work	21.7%	Less dull places	28.3%
	Special buildings	18.9%	Public gardens	24.5%

Table 16.3: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Street and Spaces Extract.

Design, Quality and Place

16.31 Masterplanning and design to ensure quality of place and placemaking has been a driver for Aberdeen for well over a decade. New places and new additions to existing areas in Aberdeen are designed with a placemaking process at heart. Aberdeen embodied design, quality and place within its previous Local Development Plans through local policy, a number of weekly masterplans and design surgeries, and pre-application processes with topic specialist leads in Development Management.

Creating Places: A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland

16.32 The 2013 Scottish Government document notes an approach to good places and good design adds value by enhancing quality of life through physical value; functional value; viability; social value and environmental value. Good design and good places also provide benefits to people and communities; sustainable development; design; health outcomes; culture and identity; and landscape and the natural environment. The six qualities of successful place have been updated since the adoption of this document, but creating places still provides insight into good places and good design. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the keys aims of this policy and

recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that good design can have to Aberdeen.

Place Standard Assessments

16.33 Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessment events for Community Planning. Alongside completed the scoring of themes, participants were asked to identify thing they thought were good and things they felt needed to be improved about their local area.

16.34 The Place Standard assessments covered the whole city. The results are broken into North, South and Central. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children. The breakdown of the means scores in order of most positive to least positive across all areas of Aberdeen are noted in Table 16.4 below.

Order	Place Standard Theme	Mean Score
1	Natural Space	4.71
2	Identity and Belonging	4.1
3	Feeling safe	4.09
4	Play and Recreation	4.08
5	Housing and Community	4.02
6	Streets and Spaces	4.00
7	Social Interaction	3.98
8	Public Transport	3.93
9	Work and Local Economy	3.91
10	Moving Around	3.86
11	Facilities and Services	3.85
12	Care and Maintenance	3.61
13	Traffic and Parking	3.36
14	Influence and Sense of Control	3.27

Table 16.4: Place Standard Score Results in order of most positive to least positive– all areas.

Rank	Central		North		South	
	Theme	Mean	Theme	Mean	Theme	Mean
1	Natural Space	4.6	Natural Space	4.9	Natural Space	4.7
2	Play and Recreation	4.2	Identity and Belonging	4.2	Feeling Safe	4.3
3	Identity and Belonging	4.1	Streets and Spaces	4.2	Work and Local Economy	4.2
4	Social Interaction	4.1	Housing and Community	4.2	Moving Around	4.1
5	Public Transport	4.0	Feeling Safe	4.1	Identity and Belonging	4.0

6	Feeling Safe	4.0	Play and Recreation	4.0	Housing and Community	4.0
7	Streets and Space	3.9	Work and Local Economy	4.0	Play and Recreation	4.0
8	Facilities and Services	3.9	Care and Maintenance	3.9	Social Interaction	4.0
9	Housing and Community	3.9	Social Interaction	3.9	Facilities and Services	4.0
10	Moving Around	3.8	Public Transport	3.9	Streets and Spaces	4.0
11	Work and Local Economy	3.7	Moving Around	3.8	Public Transport	3.9
12	Care and Maintenance	3.4	Facilities and Services	3.7	Care and Maintenance	3.6
13	Influence and Sense of Control	3.1	Traffic and Parking	3.6	Traffic and Parking	3.5
14	Traffic and Parking	3.1	Influence and Sense of Control	3.3	Influence and Sense of Control	3.4

Table 16.5: Place Standard Score Results in order of most positive to least positive—separate areas.

16.35 Within the comments section a total of 11,394 comments were received across each of the 14 themes, combining all 'good' now comments, and all 'improve' comments received by respondents who completed both the online consultation and attended the six in person events. The results are as follows (table 6):

The top 5 themes for 'good' comments were:	The top 5 themes that for 'improve' comments were
Moving around	Moving around
Public Transport	Public Transport
Streets & Space	Traffic and Parking
Natural space	Streets & Space
Play and recreation	Natural space

Table 16.6: Place Standard Comment Results

16.36 The comments received as part of the qualitative aspect of the Place Standard exercise have been broken down and grouped within the 14 themes. Comments were expressed on the good aspects of Aberdeen, and on areas that could be improved. Those most specifically relevant to the theme of Place have been included below. Summaries of responses of the following criteria can be found in the corresponding Topic Paper listed below.

- Play and Recreation - Health and Wellbeing.
- Natural Spaces - Nature and Biodiversity
- Public Transport/Traffic and Parking/Moving Around - Sustainable Transport
- Work and Local Economy - Business and Culture/Spatial Strategy
- Facilities and Services - Spatial Strategy
- Housing and Community - Delivery of Homes

16.37 The locality area where these comments come from has been noted in brackets.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Streets and Spaces	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. (All) • High quality and attractive historic environment. (All) • Parks across the city are good (All) • Well maintained, attractive and clean (South)	• Maintenance and upkeep of streets (e.g. footpaths, lighting, dog mess, litter bins, flooding) and look of spaces (planting, trees) (ALL) • More trees (North and Central) • More places to sit (North) • More public convenience (North and South) • Increasing number of green spaces available (North and Central) • improve run down/derelict buildings (South and Central) • Improve the number of playing areas for kids and young people (Central)
Social Interaction	• Good facilities and activity at a local level to meet people’s needs (e.g. community centre) (All) – Noth noted pubs ad clubs / south also mentioned library, local clubs, shops / Central noted cafes, greenspaces, beach) • Good local magazine advertising local events and activities. (South)	• Increasing the number of places and opportunities to meet and socialise (e.g. range of activities and timings of these) (All) • Improve promotion and communication of activities/events (All) • Reopen closed library (South and Central) • increasing opportunities for children (Central)
Identity and Belonging	• Welcoming neighbours (All) • Feeling part of the community (All) • Good access to a range of activities and things to so. (Noth and Central) • A safe, desirable place to live (South) • A high level of pride about the area (South) • Support from local business in times of crisis (Central)	• More activities and opportunities to improve and encourage a sense of community (All) • Provide more community spaces to meet (South) • Including more information on what’s on locally on AC webpage (Central). • More local and voluntary groups (Central). • Funding for community projects and services (Central).
Feeling Safe	• Feel safe in own neighbourhood and in Aberdeen more generally. (All) • Low crime rate, police presence and good lighting (All)	• Community Safety/anti-social behaviour in adults (All) • Maintenance of streets and spaces – better lighting/less graffiti (All) • Traffic offences/reduction in speeding (All) • Improve the City Centre – feels unsafe, anti-social behaviour, crime, loitering and drinking – (Central)

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
		• Reduce the number of derelict and boarded up shops and buildings (Central)
Care and Maintenance	• Good care and maintenance of public spaces (All) • Good care and maintenance of green spaces, parks (North) • Good care and maintenance of homes, shared spaces, and public buildings. (North and Central) • Good and well run facilities and services – recycling (South)	• Enhancing public spaces, - trees, hedges, gutters, drains, fallen leaves, litter (All) • Ensuring pavements and roads are better maintained (All) • More and better public conveniences required (North and Central) • Improve recycling services (Central)
Influence and Sense of Control	• Good awareness of and access to Council officers and elected officials. (All) • Positive community participation and engagement with officers, community councils, councillors. (All)	• Improve awareness of opportunities to get involved in decision making and feedback (All) • Improve awareness of community meetings and consultations (North and South) • Make being able to contact officials and receive feedback easier (North and South) • Having more voice and opportunities to be listened to, respected, and taken seriously regarding local issues. (South and Central) • Improvements are needed when issues are reported (Central)

Table 16.7: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

16.38 The survey for children and young people, asked the same 14 themes, however rather than a 7-point scale, this survey had a 3-point scale:

- 1 – Not good (needs improving)
- 2 – Okay (some improvement needed)
- 3 – Great (it’s good or as good as can be)

16.39 There were 106 responses. The most common response for all themes was ‘Okay’. The most common response for all themes was ‘Okay’. A breakdown of the responses from children on the selected criteria more directly relevant to Place is included in Table 8 below.

Place Standard Theme	Not Good	Okay	Great
Streets and Spaces	18.6%	68.6%	12.9%
Social Interaction	32.7%	50.9%	16.4%

Identity and Belonging	26.4%	62.3%	11.3%
Feeling Safe	31.5%	50.0%	18.5%
Care and Maintenance	33.3%	57.4%	9.3%
Influence and sense of control	31.5%	57.4%	11.1%

Table 16.8: Overall score from Children and Young People Place Standard Assessment.
Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and
Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

16.40 Participants were also asked two additional questions to capture what they felt were positive aspects of their place and what they felt could be improved.

16.41 With regard to the 'What is good now?' and 'What would make it better?' Respondents were able to place the choices in either 'What is good now?' or 'What would make it better?' and therefore we see some themes being identified in both columns, which shows a variation in view on those areas.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Streets and Spaces	Public gardens	34.9%	Less uneven surfaces	30.2%
	Art work	21.7%	Less dull places	28.3%
	Special buildings	18.9%	Public gardens	24.5%
Social Interaction	There are child friendly spaces	30.2%	Places to hang out	29.3%
	Meeting friends	19.8%	Child friendly spaces	24.5%
	Cafes	17%	Places to meet friends	23.6%
Identity and Belonging	Food	18.9%	Festivals	29.3%
	The people	17.9%	Music	16%
	Local museums	14.2%	Culture	15.1%
Feeling Safe	Feeling safe during the day	38.7%	Less anti-social behaviour	34%
	Lighting	16%	Feeling safe at night	32.1%
	Play spaces	15.1%	Brighter/more lighting	22.6%
Care and Maintenance	Places to recycle	22.6%	Less dog poo	33%
	None of this	19.8%	Less things left unfixed	31.1%
	Clean and tidy	14.2%	Less vandalism	24.5%
Influence and sense of control	Feeling included	21.7%	By making sure I am taken seriously	30.2%
	None of these	21.7%	By making it easy to take part (26.4%)	26.4%
	My views are important	19.8%	By making sure I feel included	24.5%

Table 16.9: Top 3 responses for ‘What is good now’ and ‘What would make it better?’ Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

16.42 The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 / City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022 (Strategic Council Document)

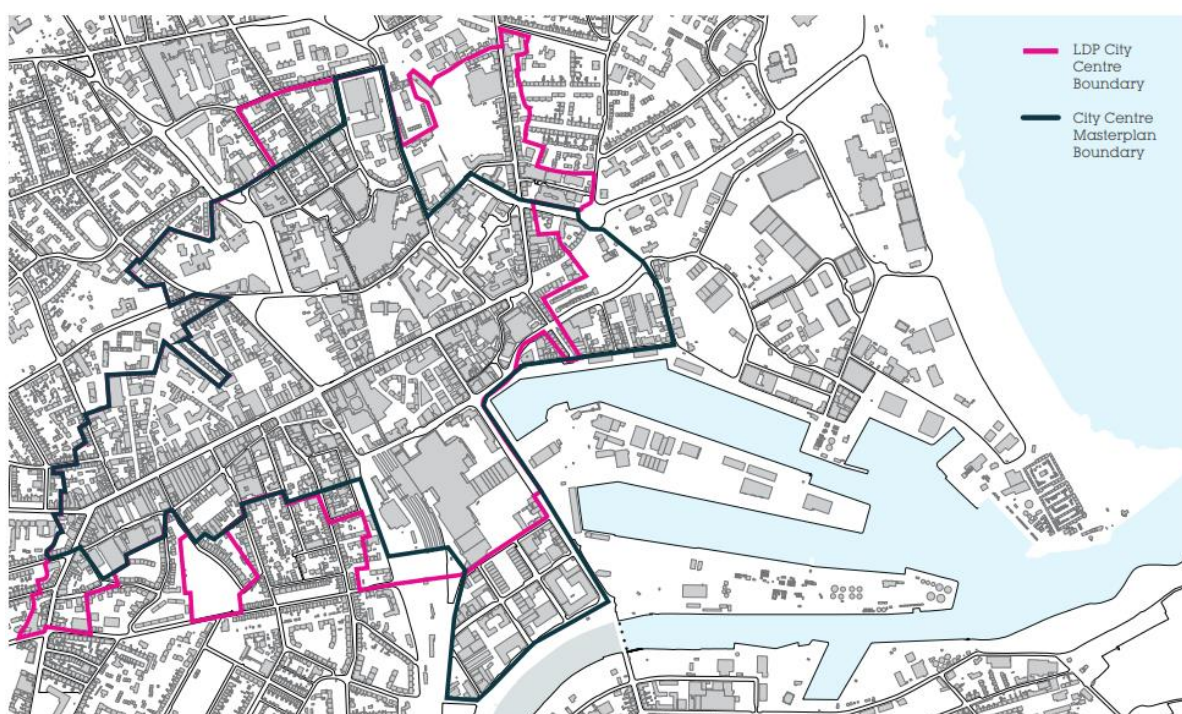


Figure 16.4: Map of the CCMP&DP boundary. Extract from the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015

16.43 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 (CCMP&DP) was approved in 2015, and outlines a 25 year development strategy for Aberdeen City Centre. The CCMP&DP respects the historic design and quality of Aberdeen, and recognises its distinctiveness of place, but looks to ensure a bright future by increasing the mix of uses within the city centre, highlights local distinctives and ensures resilience.

16.44 The objectives of the Masterplan and Delivery Programme are to:

- create a bold vision with respect to the continued development of Aberdeen as a vibrant, attractive, prosperous, sustainable and smart 21st century energy city of international repute; and
- produce an innovative, ambitious, and distinctive design proposal for the heart of Aberdeen that will act as a key transformational agent for the city, which integrates

with the broader framework for the centre, embeds the principles of sustainability and which has sufficient flexibility to provide long-term relevance.

16.45 The CCMP&DP is structured around a vision of “Aberdeen a city centre for a global city”; a purpose of “energising the city centre to deliver prosperity and better quality of life for all” and seven intervention areas. The CCMP&DP is used to inform decision by the Council and other stakeholders undertaking development in the City Centre.

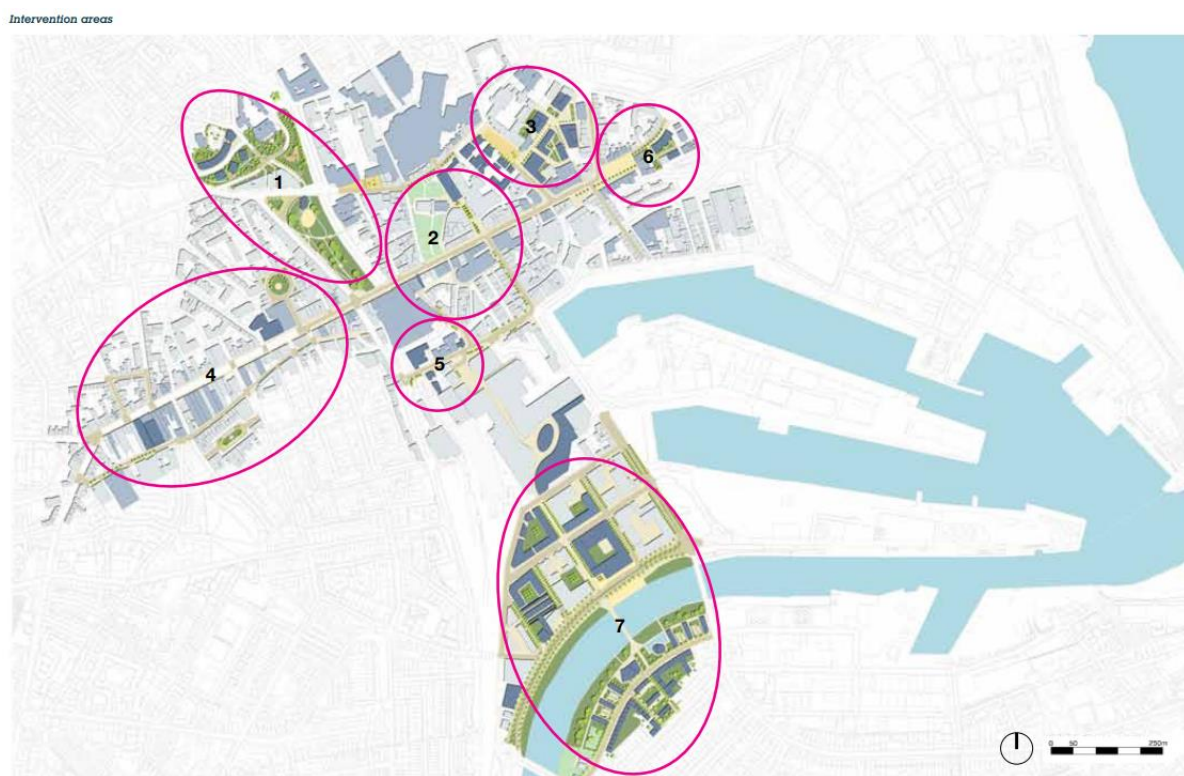


Figure 16.5. Graphic of intervention areas within the CCMP&DP 2015

16.46 Successful projects to date include the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Music Hall and Aberdeen Art Gallery (both within Intervention area 4), and Union Terrace Gardens (within intervention area 5).

16.47 In August 2022 a refresh of the CCMP&DP was approved. The review does not replace or supersede the CCMP&DP 2015. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan incorporate interventions and linkages to and from Aberdeen beach to the city centre, and a place –specific masterplan for the George Street was approved by Council in 2023 providing local analysis on current place. Movement and environmental qualities, and proposes eight transformational projects to deliver sustainable change and build community capacity and ownership within a comprehensive and targeted programme of engagement.

16.48 The City Centre and Beach Masterplan is defined by a number of key projects, each with their own character, uses, relationships, connections and contribution to the wider Masterplan. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan prioritises people within the urban environment, and aims to provide a revitalised focus on the city centre, with a mix of

uses, activity and spaces for all ages to enjoy. The location of the key projects are as follows:

01 Union Street Central Public Realm	08 George Street
02 Aberdeen Market	09 Queen Street
03 Aberdeen Market to Guild Street Public Realm	10 Union Street East
04 Belmont Quarter	11 Castlegate
05 Schoolhill + Upperkirkgate	12 Union Street Facade Works
06 Union Street West	13 Beach Boulevard
07 West End	14 Beach Projects

Table 16.10: Key Project locations for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan

16.49 The objectives and interventions of the City Centre Masterplan and the Beach and City Centre Masterplan go beyond the scope of just the local development plan. The documents may have implications on potential opportunities sites and the spatial strategy of the next local development plan, or local policy relating to the city centre and beach.



Figure 16.6: Plan showing key projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan

Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Aberdeen Placemaking Process and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs.

16.50 The placemaking process guidance is to plan for the creation of successful places.

There is an expectation to produce quality places that are well-designed, sustainable and successful, and that help to deliver new housing and communities of the right type, in the right places, and which stand the test of time. The document supports NPF4 Policy 14 and Policy 15 and embeds the Place Principle in planning decision making.

16.51 The Aberdeen Placemaking process outlines the process expected for creating a development framework, masterplan or development brief. Context, identity, connection and engagement are outline as the key themes for creating placemaking documents, while working in conjunction with the Council's Masterplan, Design and Conservation team and other stakeholders. This is to ensure the services and facilities required to deliver these sites are considered and explored early within the developments design process.

16.52 There are a number of adopted long term placemaking documents covering a range of development scales from large mixed used communities, to business and industrial land, through to the redevelopment of single buildings. The documents provide an overview of the places to be created based on the context of the specific site, while ensure distinctiveness and identity, and good internal and external connections. Phasing and infrastructure requirements are outlined.

16.53 The large scale mixed use sites are to be developed with a number of exceptions. The sites are required to: provide a long-term vision; be inclusive mixed-use communities, with a range of community facilities and services; be a place with its own unique identity and sense of place shaped by and responding to existing character and adjacent communities; be a place that is efficient and self-sustaining with low energy demands and promotes healthy community lifestyles; be a place with a varied and interesting urban form, supported by high quality architectural, urban and landscape design; incorporate existing landscape and built features sensitively into sites; provide a full range of building typologies and tenures that will create a diverse and inclusive community structure, offering housing choice and opportunities for all sectors of the community; be active travel focussed and follow the transport hierarchy of pedestrian first; be a place that includes an extensive green network across the site and that extends and links to the existing Core Path and habitat networks; be a place where people can live, work and play without relying on private transport, with each neighbourhood area designed so that residents can access schools, shops, employment opportunities within walking distance of their home; ensure all streets will be designed to create a legible hierarchy within the development. Streets will be designed firstly as places and will connect to existing places.

16.54 These principles adhere to the expectations of creating good design, quality and place, and have been developed with the principles of ensuring the communities located within them have access to their daily needs within a short walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport distance.

16.55 The adopted documents provide parameters relating to placemaking and quality, design and place for Aberdeen which need to be considered in the next local development plan.

Local Place Plans

16.56 Local Place Plans are a new way for communities to become engaged with the planning system. Local Place Plans are community led. The invitation to produce a local place plan was advertised via newspaper press release and an email was sent to all local community councils via the Community Council Liaison officer on 12 July 2024, by newsletter on 08 August, by Aberdeen City Council's social media accounts on 03 September 2024, the Local Development Plan social media accounts on 04 September 2024. Meetings were subsequently held via Microsoft Teams in the evening of 19 September 2024, and 06 February 2025 to talk with Community Councils about the new Local Development Plan process and Local Place Plans. To date one notice of interest in producing a Local Place Plan has been submitted. There are no valid or registered Local Place Plans. Local Place Plans can help to inform the next local development plan by outlining potential local policies or opportunity sites.

Planning Performance Review

16.57 The Local Development Plan encourages sustainability by supporting development that is designed to a high-quality and which demonstrates the six qualities of a successful place. The contribution officers make to successful place in terms of "added value" for planning applications is recorded. The Development Management process "added value" to 48% of all applications in 2020-2021, 51% of applications in 2021-2022 and 59% of applications in 2022-2023. The applications with no "added value" were considered acceptable as submitted and no changes were necessary to the proposal. Where value was added the most common enhancements and improvements were related to various design aspects. The "added value" has been possible due to the implementation of the policies within the local development plan and, in particular, those relating to placemaking and design and the specialists employed to engage, negotiate and deliver with colleagues and a range of stakeholders and interested parties. The Planning Performance Review highlights the value of local design policies. The next local development plan will need to consider the requirement of the local design policies in light of National Planning Framework 4.

Year	Criteria	Percentage
2020-2021	Layout	37%
	Design	24%
	Historic Environment – internal and external	20%
	Materials	11%
	Shopfronts and Adverts	8%
2021-2022	Design	49%
	Amenity	15%
	Natural Environment	9%
	Road safety	7%
	Other	20%
2022-2023	Design	49%
	Amenity	16%
	Natural Environment	8%

	Road safety	6%
	Other	21%

Table 16.11: Summary of “Value Added” from 2020-223

Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

16.58 Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods can help to deliver the healthy, sustainable, and resilient places required to support a good quality of life and balance our environmental impact.

Climate Exchange – 20-minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context

16.59 The project uses 5 overarching categories to capture the features, infrastructure, and quality of services and experience that make up a 20 minute neighbourhood: Movement, Space, Resources, Civic and Stewardship. Together these dimensions are used to explore to what extent neighbourhoods across Scotland display characteristics that meet the 20-minute neighbourhood definition. In assessing local living a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators were used, based on the 5 overarching categories. The study used an 800 metre radius as the distance to services, noting this is the norm for those without mobility challenges. The radius does not take into account the networks of streets, or locational issues such as main roads, rivers crossing, railway lines and topographical issues which may sever routes.

16.60 Aberdeen specific data outlined in the map below is a combination of the quantitative and qualitative features. The light yellow illustrates neighbourhoods where the lowest relative scores were identified, while those in dark purple demonstrate the presence of a larger set of features and indicators. The Proposed Plan can use the data provided within the study to develop an understanding of categories used to determine local living in Aberdeen.

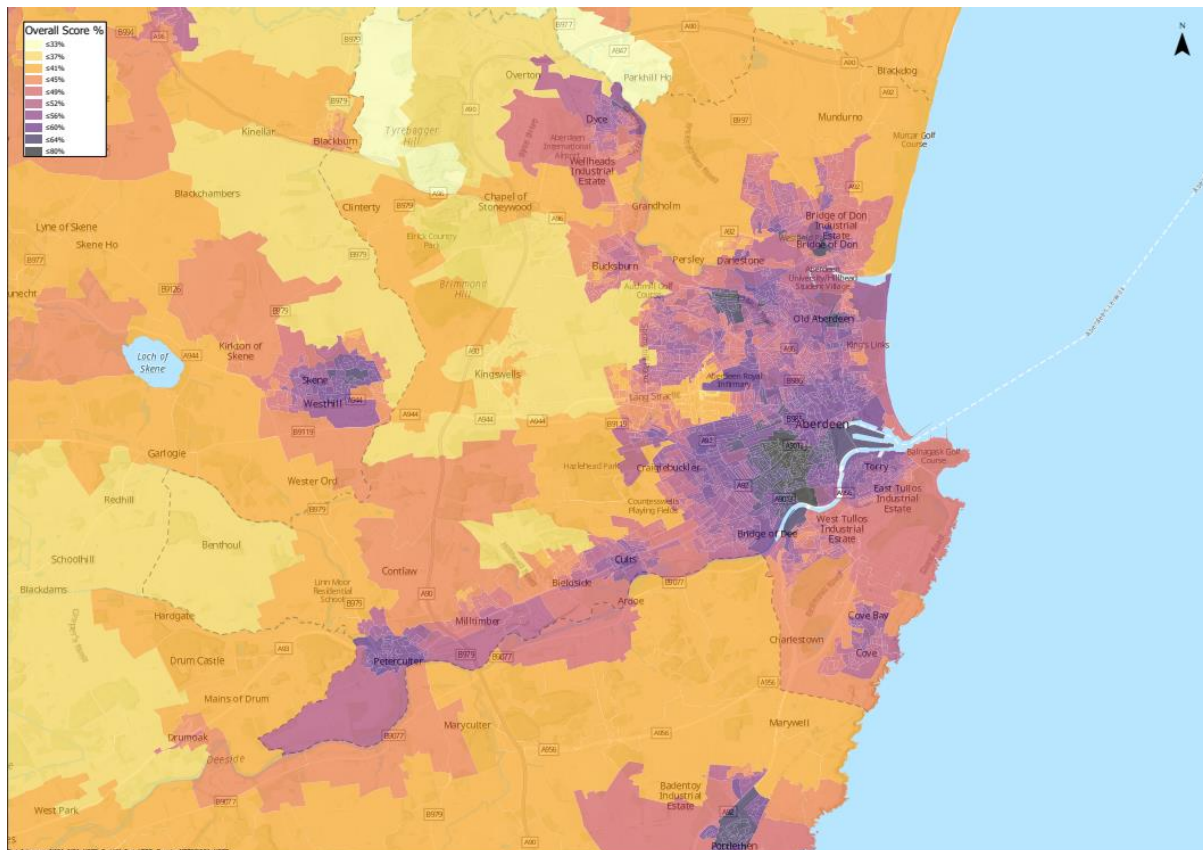


Figure 16.7: Combined quantitative features and qualitative indicators overall. Extract from Climate Exchange – 20 minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context
[https://www.climateexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/20-min-neighbourhoodA3 Overall web.pdf](https://www.climateexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/20-min-neighbourhoodA3%20Overall%20web.pdf)

Nationwide equity assessment of the 20-min neighbourhood in the Scottish context: A socio-spatial proximity analysis of residential locations

16.61 The study aims were to

- create 20 minute neighbourhood catchment areas for health, transport, education, social and recreational domains;
- describe the number of residential locations within 20 minute neighbourhood domain catchment areas; and
- describe variation in access to 20 minute neighbourhood domains by area-level socioeconomic status and urbanicity.

16.62 The 10 domains used in this study were; healthy food retail; public transport; primary health care; community health resources; education; financial; accessible public open spaces; recreational, sports pitches and facilities; social and cultural locations, and eating establishments. An 800 metre buffer was used to determine access to facilities, and road and path network analysis was used that takes account of access barriers such as railway lines, rivers etc.

16.63 Overall the study noted, one in five residential locations had access to all ten 20 minute neighbourhood domains (Urban: 28%, Rural: 5%). There was variation in proportion of residential locations that has access to at least one facility by domains; 91% had access to at least one public transport stop and 84% a public open space. There was poorer access to primary care services (42%) and healthy food retailers

(50%). Across all domains, access to at least one facility was greater within the most deprived areas. The Proposed Plan can use the data provided within the study to develop an understanding of categories used to determine local living in Aberdeen.

16.64 The excel data for Aberdeen for the study has been shared. The results are noted in the Scottish Living Locally Data Portal section below.

The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal – Excel Results

16.65 Building on the above study, the Scottish Living Locally Data Portal examined access to 12 local living facilities, along with the 10 facilities noted above two more were added – superfast broadband and high frequency public transport. The result for Aberdeen's data zones show the percentage of homes with access within 20 minutes to each of the facilities. The Proposed Plan can use the data provided within the study to develop an understanding of categories used to determine local living in Aberdeen.

Facility	% of homes with access within 20 minutes	Facility	% of homes with access within 20 minutes
Health Foods	68.35	Financial	89.60
Public Transport	98.71	Pharmacy	76.84
High frequency public transport	64.17	Accessible public open space	90.65
Primary healthcare	58.38	Social and cultural	87.84
Recreational resources	94.31	Eating establishments	68.55
Primary school	82.02	Superfast broadband	95.7

Table 16.12: % of homes on Aberdeen with access to services within 20 minutes

Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhood Planning Guidance

16.66 The guidance aims to encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods which prioritise environmental, social and economic sustainability. Local living can support positive outcomes around climate actions, health inequalities, local economy and liveability and quality of life. Good placemaking and local living allows choice, reduces car travel, provides active travel, promotes local work opportunities and, local growing opportunities, and reduces social isolation - to name but a few benefits. Good placemaking also provides opportunities to support public reform and improve outcomes for communities

16.67 A Local Living Framework is presented to help understand and provide a consistent structure to consider how local living can be supported in places. Structured around 14 themes, within 5 overarching categories of Movement, Space, Resources, Civic and Stewardship, the themes provide the key considerations in order to help support local living. The Framework is designed to complement tools and resources already

available for placemaking and design, including the Place Standard Tool and the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

16.68 The delivery of local living is also recognised as needing to be incremental, iterative and evolves. A three step approach to delivering local living follows three continuous and repeated steps:

1. Understand context - understanding the context of the place through the use of quantitative and qualitative information.
2. Collaborate, plan, design - developing collaborative models of working to inform place based planning and design processes.
3. Implement and review - aligning investment, developing delivery capacity, and supporting new ways of working.

16.69 The Evidence Report is the first step in understanding the context of Aberdeen.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 (SIMD)

16.70 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a relative measure of deprivation based upon postcode data. If an area is identified as 'deprived', this can relate to people having a low income but it can also mean fewer resources or opportunities. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks all data zones in Scotland from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976).

16.71 The most recent SIMD release was in 2020. Based on overall rankings of deprivation (i.e. All Domains), Aberdeen City's position worsened between 2016 and 2020. The number of datazones in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland was 29, and the number of datazones in the 20-40% most deprived areas of Scotland was 65.

16.72 13 of Aberdeen's neighbourhoods are recognised as deprived on this basis: Torry, Tillydrone, Seaton, Woodside, Middlefield, Cummings Park, Northfield, Heathryfold, Mastrick, Kincorth, Ashgrove, George Street and Stockethill.

16.73 Conversely, Aberdeen still has a relatively high number of datazones in the 20% least deprived areas of Scotland with 104. (It should be noted that SIMD is an area-based measure of relative deprivation - not everyone living in a deprived area is deprived, and not everyone who is deprived lives in a deprived area.) The next local development plan can use the SIMD data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

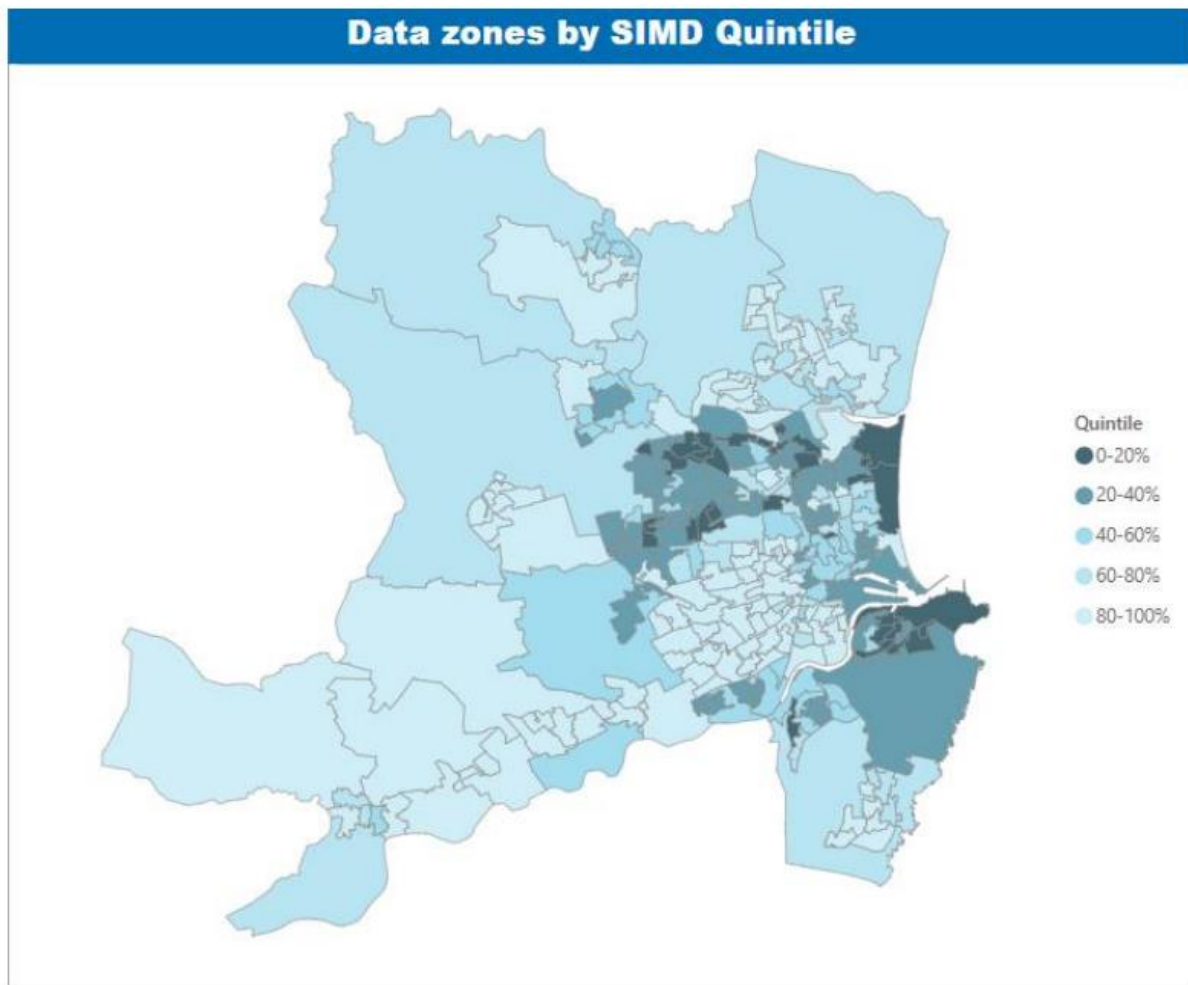


Figure 16.8: SIMD 2020 data for Aberdeen. Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020V2 [22]

NESTRANS Comprehensive Travel Study 2023 – Monitoring and Modelling

16.74 The Comprehensive Travel Study aims to provide insights into post-pandemic travel patterns and attitudes in the North East and to support monitoring for the Regional Transport Strategy. The results of this survey detail the methods and reasons for an individual's travel and around Aberdeen and their local area. It also highlights barriers to changing modal shift – which could be highlighted when assessing local living and using the local living tool to understand areas. Aberdeen specific data comprises: walking and car are the most modes of transport, followed by bus; more residents with protected characteristics used a bus at least weekly; 85% have access to a car or van; car is the main mode used by most residents for all journey purposes, 24% trip-chain, with shopping the trip most residents' trip-chain; 42% have access to a bike; 93% walk at least once a week; 9% use a pedal bike, 2 % use an e-bike at least once a week; 25% use a bus at least once a week. Full results of the survey are discussed further within the Sustainable Transport Section of the evidence report. The next local development plan can use the survey results to understand the barrier to local living relating to transport and consider how local strategies can work together to overcome these.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1

16.75 In recognition that Aberdeen serves as the regional centre for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire authority areas, a joint Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council retail study was commissioned in 2023. It was tasked with assessing retail capacity, turnover and opportunity in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The key purpose of the study was to derive information concerning retail and related land uses that would be used for the Evidence Report for the preparation of the next Local Development Plans for the two Councils. The study examined access to retail facilities through a local living lens.

16.76 The study used an 800-metre buffer as the distance to services, there was no road and path network analysis. The methodology focussed on:

- A minimum no. of 4 retail and retail/leisure service units, provided at least one of these units retails convenience goods in a clearly defined urban location
- Otherwise minimum no. of 5 retail/service units.
- All supermarkets (minimum ca. 700 sq m GFA)
- All identified town centres
- All identified retail parks

16.77 The review of local accessibility identified that there are few residential areas that are not within easy walking distance of facilities and shops providing a reasonable range of shopping and other local services. The City Centre and older established areas of Aberdeen have the highest concentration of access within an 800-meter buffer. The major new proposed housing areas, (a number of which have commenced development), are not within easy walking distance of a minimum level of provision to existing facilities. It is noted that these sites are proposed to provide mixed used town centres which will include retail provision to serve local need. The next local development plan will seek to ensure adequate retail provision is provided within new developments to provide local living.

Place Standard Assessments

16.78 Quantitative and qualitative data can be gathered on the experience, views and thoughts of Aberdeen's residents from the output and analysis of the Place Standard Assessment. The output of the most recent exercise is noted in the Design, Quality and Place section above. The 14 themes within the Place Standard are relevant to local living. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise from 2023 and the results of place standard exercise from 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 / City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022 (Strategic Council Document)

16.79 The City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015 and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan Refresh 2022 are discussed within the Design, Quality and Place section in more detail. In summary, they provide a strategic overview to reinvigorate the city centre and beach, outline intervention areas and projects to fit the scale of a regional city centre, and also aim to encourage more homes in the city centre, increase the mix of uses, provide area to linger all while reworking the historic urban

landscape in a respectful way. The priority is to encourage the reimagination of the city centre to ensure it creates a people first environment. The objectives and interventions of the City Centre Masterplan and the Beach and City Centre Masterplan go beyond the scope of just the local development plan. The documents may have implications on potential opportunities sites and the spatial strategy of the next local development plan, or local policy relating to the city centre and beach.

Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Placemaking Process and Adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs

16.80 More detail is available on these within the Design, Quality and Place section above. In summary, the placemaking process outlines the expected approach to be taken when developing a place based site specific document. The adopted development frameworks, masterplan and development briefs cover a range of development scales and types, from large long term greenfield mixed use developments to single, brownfield units. The sites all have a part to play in ensuring local living, either in ensuring the creation of this on new development sites or ensure it is retained or retrofitted within brownfield sites. The adopted documents provide parameters relating to placemaking and quality, design and place for Aberdeen which need to be considered in the next local development plan.

Population Needs Assessment 2023

16.81 The Population Needs Assessment 2023 provides an up to date evidence base for Aberdeen's Locality Outcome Improvement Plan, is structured around the three themes of the Locality Outcome Improvement Plan; economy, people and place. The Population Needs Assessment is a high-level analysis of key groups, priorities, and challenges across public services, including service performance and information available from a citizen perspective. The Population Needs Assessment 2023 provides a snapshot of the current experience of the people of Aberdeen and although not framed in the same way as the Local Living Framework, does capture data on a number of elements on a city wide scale. The data from the Population Needs Assessment is discussed in the Topic Paper on Wellbeing and Communities. The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026

16.82 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (LOIP) outlines how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision for 2026 is Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. Through early intervention and prevention, the aim is to create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself, using a whole life approach combined with a lifelong learning approach. The measures of success in achieving the vision will be that by 2026:

- We will still have the highest GVA (Gross Value Added) per head in Scotland
- Fewer than 10% of our children are living in poverty
- We are living in good health for at least five years longer

- Our carbon emissions are 61% lower

16.83 The LOIP has four key themes to achieve the vision; Economy, People (Children & Young People, and Adults), Place and Community Empowerment, with 16 stretch outcomes. The Place Outcomes are:

- Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61%.
- Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles.
- 26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.

16.84 The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality and address the outcomes related to the LOIP through placemaking.

Full Outcomes Framework

16.85 The Full Outcomes Framework compares current data from the stretch outcomes of the Aberdeen Local Outcomes Improvement Plan to baseline data. The Framework notes a comparison of the current data to the baseline data (better, worse, similar) and identified a performance trend (improving, declining, steady / fluctuation). The Full Outcomes Framework contains data linked to the 16 stretch outcomes of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. This data is helpful for monitoring.

16.86 In linking this to a local living approach, as noted in the Scottish Government's Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood document, change is incremental. Reviewing the trends and changes to the Full Outcomes Framework could help to understand the impact of a local living approach. The data for the Place Outcomes identifies: Improvements in greenhouse gas emissions, similar figures for mode of transport, improvements in experience of open space, with a decline in those who feel their neighbourhoods are well cared for. The next local development plan can use the data to monitor place based interventions.

Local Living in Aberdeen

16.87 Understanding local living in Aberdeen will require an examination of the existing lived experience through mapping. A GIS tool to complete a road and path network analysis has been purchased and data points will be mapped. The intended outcome will show the access to local living facilities and services for all of Aberdeen. This will provide spatial data on the differing levels of access across the city. This data produced will allow a greater understanding of where there is sufficiency of access to daily needs within communities. The data will enhance the results of national research studies noted above and the retail study. It is anticipated the mapping of data will take a number of months to complete. Consideration is being given toward the mapping of these datasets, with further refinement through the review of other local living mapping tools of other Local Authorities.

Categories	Themes	Factual or Spatial Datasets
Movement	Moving Around	Core Paths, Cycle Routes, Rights of Way, Cycle infrastructure
	Public Transport	Train Stations, Bus Stops, Car Clubs, Bus Routes
	Traffic and Parking	Cycle Parking, Vehicle Parking, Speed Limits
Space	Streets and Spaces	Urban Green Space, Listed Buildings, Brownfield Sites, Civic Space
	Natural Space	Greenbelt, Urban Green Space, Green Space Network, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Conservation Sites, Local Nature Reserve, River Dee Special Area of Conservation, woodlands, parks
	Play & Recreation	Playparks, Leisure Facilities, Private Leisure, Allotments, Community Gardens, Sports (Bowling Greens, Golf, Playing Fields, Tennis Courts, Other), Art Gallery, Museums
Resources	Facilities and Services	Public Toilets, Water refill locations, Primary & Secondary Schools, College, University, Library, Nursery, Supermarkets and Convenience Shops, Hospital, Clinics, GP, dentists, Pharmacies, Care Homes
	Work & Local Economy	Business & Industry, Business Zones, Airport & Harbour, City Centre Retail Core, West End Area, West End Shops & Cafes, Town Centres, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Commercial Centres, Beach & Leisure
	Housing & Community	Heat Networks
	Social Interaction	Places of Worship, Community Halls, City Centre Retail Core, West End Shops & Cafes, Town Centres, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Beach & Leisure, Pubs/Cafes/Restaurants (Outside of Centres), Community Facilities, Urban Green Space
Civic	Identity & Belonging	Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Gardens & Designed Landscapes
	Feeling Safe	Police Stations, Brownfield Sites, SEPA Flooding Maps,
Stewardship	Care & Maintenance	Dog Bins, Waste Recycling Centres, Recycle Points
	Influence & Sense of Control	Allotments, Community Gardens

Table 16.13: Data to be inputted to the Aberdeen Local Living tool

16.88 Further to the quantitative data above, the assessment and output from the Place Standard exercise will be considered, thereby allowing the qualitative data to further enrich the results of the data.

16.89 The Aberdeen Local Living tool will use the Local Living Framework structured around the 14 themes, within 5 overarching categories of Movement, Space, Resources, Civic and Stewardship to assess the current local living experience in Aberdeen. The Local Living tool will highlight any gaps in local living provision. This could be used to inform the content of the spatial strategy of the next local development plan.

Public Convenience

16.90 There are 10 Aberdeen City Council run operational standalone public convenience located in Aberdeen. 8 are located within areas of open space, while 2 are located within Council run car parks.

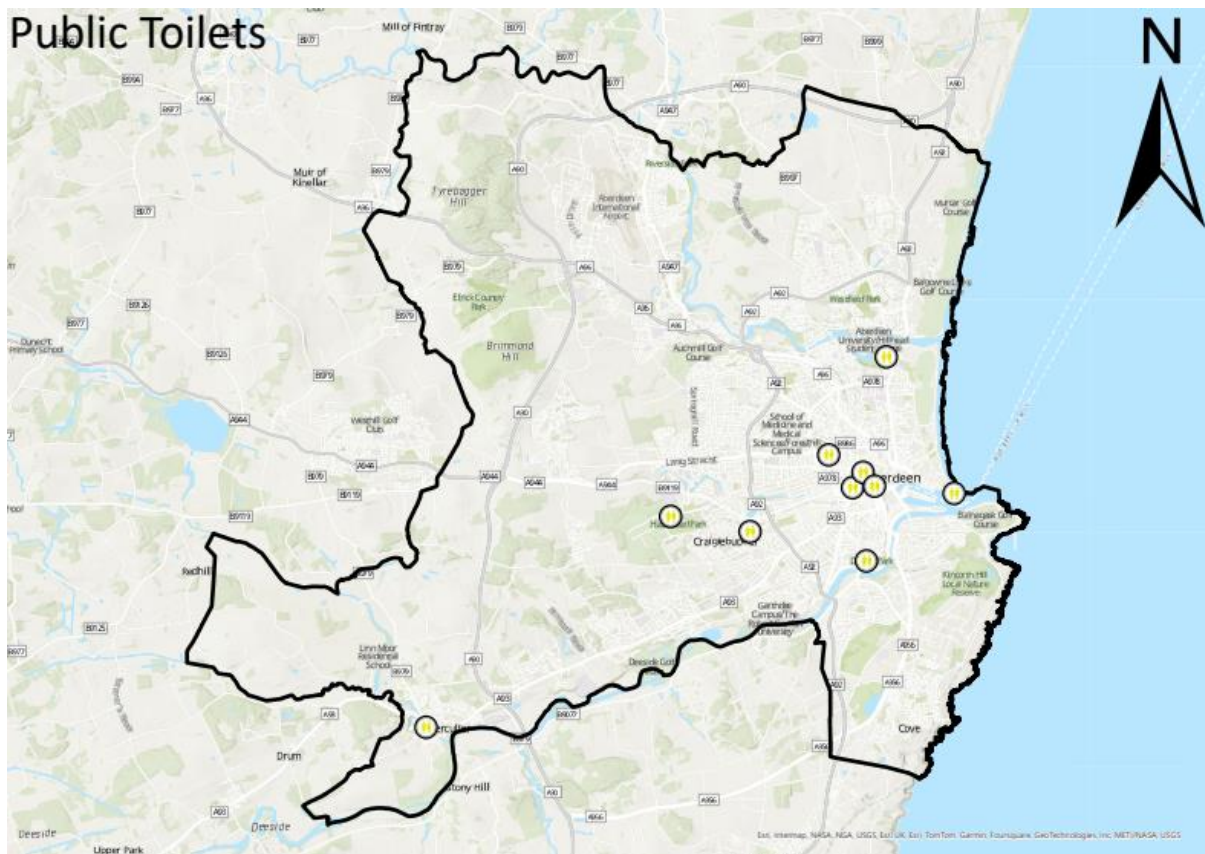


Figure 16.9: Locations of Aberdeen City Council run operational standalone public convenience.

16.91 Further to this, the Great British Public Toilet Map identifies 21 locations for public toilets in Aberdeen including the eight detailed above. The remainder are public conveniences within retail and other business premises that permit public use without purchase obligations. There are 11 Changing Places Toilets located in Aberdeen, eight of which are in publicly owned leisure, healthcare and Council buildings, with three in private ownership. The data on public conveniences will be used to inform the Proposed Plan's statement on the planning authority's policies and proposals on provision of public conveniences.

Water Taps

16.92 Scottish Water has installed 2 'Top up Tap' standalone water refill facilities in public

spaces across Aberdeen, Hazelhead Park and St Nicholas Street. The data on water refill stations will be used to inform the Proposed Plan's statement on the planning authority's policies and proposals on provision of water refill locations

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

16.93A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

16.94Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Wellbeing of Community. The Wellbeing of Community paper was split in two in October 2024; becoming the Place Paper, and the Wellbeing and Communities Paper. The following text relates to the Place Paper.

16.95Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- Archaeology Service – provided by Aberdeenshire Council.
- Architecture and Design Scotland
- Historic Environment Scotland
- NESTRANS
- Aberdeen City Council (Design, Masterplan and Conservation/ Development Management / Transport Strategy and Programmes / Education / Families and Communities / Environmental Manager)
-

16.96A meeting was held with Architecture and Design Scotland on 02 September 2024 to understand how they could input in the Aberdeen Evidence Report. They provided information in Place Skill and Plan Making website as an aid to developing the evidence report in a follow up email on 13 September 2024.

16.97A list of suggested key evidence was outline to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

16.98The evidence presented within the Place paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders and FIRS. They also had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

16.99The Archaeology Service noted they were happy with the content of the paper at this stage.

16.100 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 10 response in total were received for this paper, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, Homes for Scotland) 2 from a housing developers (Bancon Homes, and THE Architecture and Planning on behalf of Barrett and David Wilson Homes North Scotland) and 4 members of the public. Of those listed, 4 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and 1 other provided a further evidence source.

16.101 NatureScot note "Creating Places" should have been included as an evidence source, as although published in 2013 it includes useful information. Creating Places

has been added as a further evidence source. A further suggestion relates to making the Summary of Implications section more Aberdeen specific and less generic. This has been actioned. In a meeting of 6 June 2025, NatureScot confirmed they have no dispute with the paper.

16.102 A meeting was held with Homes for Scotland on 16 June 2025. Homes for Scotland outline they have no dispute with the paper but do note the follow comments:

- Small brownfield sites would historically be developed by small to medium enterprises, the numbers of which have declined due to global financial crisis and viability issues, and therefore cannot be relied upon to deliver small brownfield sites a part of the spatial strategy. Flexible developer contributions are required, and the allocation of other additional, larger sites to off-set under delivery of smaller sites. The Council notes brownfield sites are important in terms of solutions to support local living, and although more challenging to develop, they sit at the heart of government plans for redevelopment under NPF4 as well as City Centre living strategies. Deliverability of sites is fundamental to the planning process as is highlighted by the Delivery Programme.
- Listed buildings and scheduled monuments should not be seen as a significant constraint on allocation. NPF4 Policy 7b) iv) is also noted to highlight demolition can be supported when it delivers significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community. The Council agree listed building and scheduled monuments should not be seen as a significant constraint on allocation. Many of the allocations within the extant plan contain designated buildings or sites. NPF4 is part of the development plan. We note within the implications of the plan section that consideration needs to be given to the requirement for local historic assets and place policies with the adoption of NPF4.
- Marketability and deliverability must be considered along with heritage, to address housing needs and the housing emergency. The Council notes the deliverability of sites is a fundamental part of the planning process, and is supported by the Delivery Programme and the housing pipeline as part of NPF4. Call for sites has historically asked questions on deliverability and will continue to do so. The housing emergency is addressed within the Delivery of Homes Topic Paper.
- Housing plays an important socio-economic role. Homes for Scotland members have made significant infrastructure investments and investment in energy efficiency homes, local living an net zero. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- There are design aspects that fall within the remit of other regulatory regimes such as building standards. The LDP can and should only seek to address Design, Quality and Place where it has scope, and that there should be inbuilt flexibility within the approach given the current housing crisis. The Council note the ongoing issues that are being faced nationwide and that design covers may different services. NPF4 outlines the criteria expected within regard to design, quality and place and creating successful places. The housing crisis is addressed through Topic Paper: Delivery of Homes.
- Viability requires to be a fundamental consideration of these policies and it should be recognised that NPF4 is supportive of housing on the city periphery, and new home can add critical mass to support services and make a positive contribution to local living. The Council note viability and delivery is considered through the Delivery Programme. The Council site assessments process will and has historically asked for information on deliverability of sites.

- The Topic Paper refers to an 800 metre buffer which was used as the distance to services, noting this is the norm for those without mobility challenges. This reference to 800m requires to be more fully explained. The Council notes this reference is to an existing external studies that have been undertaken and provide an understanding of Aberdeen. The Topic Paper notes the Council have purchased a road and path network analysis GIS tool which will be used to understand the local living picture in Aberdeen and will determine a more nuanced and local picture. The tool can be set to different travel modes using either a timeframe or a buffer.
- Local living approached must be applied flexibility taking into account local context. Implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods in the periphery of the City required improvements that HFS members can assist with through their developments. Larger-scale housing developments may be able to create and support local living. The Council agree large scale development should create and support local living, and that new developments have the potential to do so wherever they are located within Aberdeen. All applications are based on their own merit with regard to the development plan, which includes local living as noted in NPF4.
- If a proportion of the Local Housing Land Requirement will be provided within town centres there needs to be consideration of viability and placemaking principles, with available and deliverable sites and policy interventions such as Compulsory Purchase Orders set out from the start. The Council is aware sites are required to be deliverable. The Council site assessments process will and has historically asked for information on deliverability of sites. The Delivery Programme will also be fundamental to this process.

16.103 A meeting was held with Bancon on 18 June 2025, after an email of 6 June confirmed the comments to the paper were a dispute. At the meetings it was agreed the comments were not a dispute. Bancon outline the follow comments:

- The masterplan and design approach has been successful in Aberdeen to date. Early masterplan are not flexible enough to allow them to respond to market changes. Going forward a masterplan approach should be retained with local policies that allow for flexibility in response to market changes, although a different system this would be in keeping with the aspirations for Masterplan Consent Areas. The Council notes masterplans provide the framework for what is expected within a site, and are developed in conjunction with stakeholders, communities, the development industry and the Council. The Council notes ongoing issues that are being faced nationwide. NPF4 lays out clear goals for what is expected for new developments in terms of placemaking, and successful places through policy 17: Design, Quality and Place.
- The local and national housing crisis is not referenced, and as such project viability is important. Housing plays an important socio-economic role, providing significant infrastructure investments and investment in energy efficiency homes, local living and net zero. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- The Topic Paper refers to an 800 metre buffer which was used as the distance to services, noting this is the norm for those without mobility challenges. The paper fails to acknowledge that the ability to access public transport services and access to high speed broad band contributes to the principles of local living. The Council notes the Topic Paper outlines a number of reports that look at local living. The percentage of Aberdeen with accessibility to high speed broadband and access to

public transport, and high frequency public transport within 20 minutes is noted in the paper, in table 17.12.

16.104 An email was sent to THE on 11 June and 17 June 2025 to discuss their comments and clarify if these were disputes. No response had been received to date; therefore the comments have been classed as disputes.

16.105 An email was sent on 10 June 2025 to the member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Historic Assets and Places

16.106 The Proposed Plan will seek to incorporate the key aims of Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment and Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that Aberdeen's heritage assets can bring.

16.107 The Proposed Plan will continue to protect and enhance historic assets in Aberdeen which include listed buildings, conservation areas, sites within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites. Historic assets will be identified within site assessments for the Proposed Plan.

16.108 With a detailed historic assets and place policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local historic assets and place policies. The final committee decision on the Article 4 Direction may indicate the need for a local policy on windows for three conservation areas. The Conservation Area Character Appraisals are adopted non-statutory guidance, consideration will be given if there are local policies required based on the content of these documents.

16.109 Consideration will be given on if, and how, the impact of the HES review of the current Buildings at Risk Register might be reflected in the policy framework and development strategy for the Proposed Plan. As noted by HES, neighbouring infrastructure and redevelopment projects contained within the LDP, and LDP policies, need to be designed in a way that would support and not hinder redevelopment of Broadford Works and Woolmanhill Hospital sites.

16.110 A proactive approach to considering the long-term options for places of worship falling out of use and look to the challenges and opportunities that these sites may offer in terms of the communities in which they are situated and the services that they require is encouraged.

16.111 Aberdeen's high quality and attractive historic environment has been identified as is good at present, but there is improvement needed with the central and south locality areas to improve run-down / derelict buildings. Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can support the improvement, such as looking to the Buildings at Risk Register and the vacant and derelict land survey, and supporting the work of Aberdeen City Trust and the Heritage and Place Programme.

Design, Quality, Place

- 16.112 The Proposed Plan should be place-based and created in line with the Place Principle.
- 16.113 The Proposed Plan Spatial Strategy should be underpinned by the six qualities of successful places outlined in national policy and guidance: 1, Healthy; 2. Pleasant; 3. Connected; 4. Distinctive; 5. Sustainable; and 6. Adaptable
- 16.114 With a detailed design, quality, place policy now included in National Planning Framework 4 consideration will need to be given on the need for a local design, quality, place policy. Consideration will be given on the guidance set out in Creating Places, and if this lead to the requirement of local policy.
- 16.115 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the Place Standard Surveys and engagement and address all topic areas to ensure the lower rated topics are significantly improved and the higher rated topics are maintained/ improved. Areas of intervention may also be identified.
- 16.116 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the aims of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, and by adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs, should these sites be taken forward within the Proposed Plan.
- 16.117 The content of any registered Local Place Plan will be taken account of when developing the spatial strategy, policy and placemaking within the Proposed Plan.

Local Living

- 16.118 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy will need to consider how it can support local living by considering housing together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops and health and social care to reduce the need to use unsustainable methods of travel, to prioritise quality of life, help tackle inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing, and respond to the climate emergency.
- 16.119 Consideration will need to be given on the content of NPF4 Policy. The Proposed Plan policy framework will need to consider how these matters are addressed.
- 16.120 Spatial strategy and associated site briefs and masterplans will need to help support local living within settlements. The approach should account for the local context, variation of settlement patterns, and it should respect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place.
- 16.121 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the Place Standard Surveys and engagement and address all topic areas to ensure the lower rated topics are significantly improved and the higher rated topics are maintained/ improved.
- 16.122 The Proposed Plan strategy and policy will be informed by the SIMD 2020 data. This may inform areas of intervention when overlapped with the Aberdeen Local Living GIS tool.

16.123 The Proposed Plan spatial strategy, policy and placemaking will be informed by the aims of the City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme and the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, and adopted Site Specific Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Development Briefs. These will be viewed with a local living lens.

16.124 The results of the Aberdeen local living GIS tool will highlight any gaps. This results of this could inform the Proposed Plan spatial strategy with the tool being used in conjunction with the site assessment matrix to assess proposed development sites.

16.125 The data on public conveniences and water refill stations will be used to inform the Proposed Plan's statement on the planning authority's policies and proposals on provision of public conveniences and water refill locations.

Marmot Principles

16.126 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper align with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	X
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 16.14 Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

16.127 NHS Grampian, Historic Environment Scotland, and 3 members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

16.128 NatureScot, Homes for Scotland and Bancon confirmed they have no disputes but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

16.129 THE Architecture and Planning comments are being noted as a dispute and outline the follow comments:

- The placemaking approach in Aberdeen to date has been successful in creating high quality residential developments that have delivered a range of housing and affordable housing. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- The role economic factors such as local economy, disposable income, population and demography, will affect the potential to bring listed buildings back into productive use and these should be incorporated into the evidence on place. The Council focus within the Topic Paper is to identify the principle built heritage characterises of the district. In looking to allocate sites in the 2028 plan deliverability will be assessed, and the Delivery Programme will also be of importance in bring these sites forward.
- Aberdeen is well placed to create places that benefit from local living, and larger-scale housing developments may be able to create and support local living. The Council agree large scale development should create and support local living, and that new developments have the potential to do so wherever they are located within Aberdeen.
- To ensure local living requires an increase in population density that can be delivered through new housing developments, which will have a positive impact on use and patronage of services and facilities. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.
- Affordability, availability and quality of housing attract people to Aberdeen. The continued master planned approach to new residential areas would be successful in delivering significant improvements such as increased greenspace. The Council notes these points and have no further comments.

16.130 A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Information Gaps

16.131 The final recommendation on the Article 4 Direction is due to be reported back to committee 6 months post consultation. The results of this may require the need for a local policy on windows and doors within the Proposed Plan.

16.132 The Aberdeen Local Living GIS Tool is in development. This is expected to be completed by the end Summer 2025. The tool can be used to understand gaps in the city and will be useful for site assessment.

16.133 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

17 Topic Paper 10 – Wellbeing and Communities

Requirements addressed in this section:

17.1. Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 16D(1)	a planning authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in preparing an Evidence Report.
Section 15 (5)	the size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district, the health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs, the infrastructure of the district (including health care facilities); and how that infrastructure is used.
Section 15(5)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,

Other Relevant Legislation

Regulation
The Town and Country Planning (Play Sufficiency Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023
The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 Regulation 9 (2) Have regard to: any open space strategy / Have regard to: location of Control of Major Accident Hazard establishments and / or pipelines
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

National Planning Framework 4

Play, recreation and sport

17.2. LDPs should identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages. This should be based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community and informed by the planning authority's Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy. These spaces can be incorporated as part of enhancing and expanding blue and green infrastructure, taking account of relevant agencies' plans or policy frameworks, such as flood risk and/or water management plans. New provisions should be well-designed, high quality, accessible and inclusive.

Health and Safety

- 17.3. LDP spatial strategies should seek to tackle health inequalities particularly in places which are experiencing the most disadvantage. They should identify the health and social care services and infrastructure needed in the area, including potential for co-location of complementary services, in partnership with Health Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- 17.4. LDPs should create healthier places for example through opportunities for exercise, healthier lifestyles, land for community food growing and allotments, and awareness of locations of concern for suicide.
- 17.5. Spatial strategies should maintain appropriate distances between sites with hazardous substances and areas where the public are likely to be present and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

Community Wealth Building

- 17.6. LDPs should be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area. Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities; identify community assets; set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality; and seek to provide benefits for local communities.

Links to Evidence

Play, recreation and sport

- [SportScotland Evidence Report Email \(PDF\)](#)
- [SportScotland Facility Planning Model 2023 Summary Reports \(PDF\)](#)
- [Active Aberdeen Partnership: Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2026 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Children's Services Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Play Policy and Strategy 2018](#)
- [Play Sufficiency Assessment](#)
- [The Granite City Forest - Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan 2022-2025](#)
- [Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Main Report](#)
- [Aberdeen Open Space Audit 2024: Public Survey Report](#)
- [Open Space Strategy 2011 - 2016](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report](#)

Health and Safety

- [Health Priorities for Scotland](#)
- [National Guidance on Action to Address Suicide at Locations of Concern](#)
- [Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)
- [A Healthier Future Scotland's Diet and Healthy Weight Delivery Plan](#)
- [Relationship between food environment and planning system: research summary](#)

- [Licensing Scotland Act 2005](#)
- [NHS Grampian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023](#)
- [Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 -2023](#)
- [Annual Performance Report 2023-2024](#)
- [Strategic / Delivery Plan 2022 -2025](#)
- [Committee Report CFS/24/188: Healthy Weight](#)
- [Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026](#)
- [Food Growing Strategy: Granite City Growing](#)
- [Annual Allotment Report 2023-2024](#)
- [Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Food Growing](#)
- [Air Quality Action Plan 2011](#)
- [Air Quality Annual Progress Report 2024](#)
- [Aberdeen Agglomeration Noise Action Plan](#)
- [Committee Report OPE/19/125: Environmental Noise Action Plan Update](#)
- [Contaminated Land Strategy](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement Report](#)
- [Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Engagement- Summary Report](#)
- [National Records for Scotland Aberdeen City Council Area Profile](#)
- [Census - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)
- [ScotPHO Profiles](#)
- [Locality Outcomes Data](#)
- [Aberdeen City Data Observatory](#)
- [Statistics.gov.uk](#)
- [Scottish Health Survey 2023 Dashboard](#)
- [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)
- [SEPA Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory](#)
- [SEPA Waste Capacity Sites](#)
- [SEPA Special Sites](#)
- [Low Emission Zone Map](#)
- [Aberdeen Airport Annual Noise Report 2023](#)
- [Aberdeen Airport Noise Action Plan 2018-2023](#)
- [Draft Aberdeen Noise Action Report 2024-2028](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS: Airport Public Safety Zone](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS: Airport Noise Contour](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS: Airport Safeguarding](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS: Perwinnes Radar Safeguarding](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS: Pipelines and notification zones](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS: Quarries and 1km buffer](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning Methodology](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning – public safety advice](#)
- [UKOPA Guidance: Local Authority Planners information regarding On Shore Pipelines and Associated Installations](#)
- [The Coal Authority Development High Risk Areas](#)
- [NHS Find a service <https://www.nhs24.scot/find-a-service/>](#)

Community Wealth Building

- [Regional Economic Strategy](#)
- [Committee Report COM/22/279: Community Wealth Building](#)
- [Committee Report COM/22/279: Community Wealth Building Committee Report: Appendix 1- Actions to Support an Aberdeen Community Wealth Building Approach](#)
- [Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy](#)
- [Joint Procurement Strategy Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland Council](#)
- [The Community Assets Transfer Annual Report 2023](#)
- [Current Assets \(March 2025\)](#)
- [Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026](#)
- [North Locality Plan 2021-2026](#)
- [Central Locality Plan 2021-2026](#)
- [South Locality Plan 2021-2026](#)
- [Community Learning and Development Plan Interim Plan 2024-25 final](#)
- [Community Learning and Development Plan 2025 Consultation](#)
- [Community Asset Transfer webpage](#)
- [NOMIS Labour Market Profile - Aberdeen City](#)
- [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)

Summary of Evidence

Policy context - Purpose and Scope

17.7. Aberdeen will continue to encourage, promote and facilitate choice within its environments to ensure that people can engage in activities to ensure good physical and mental health. This will include ensuring the environment that is not harmful to people, and look to reduce inequalities found in life expectancy and good quality years of life expectancy. This will also include environments where local communities have a stake in, access and benefit from the wealth generated by local economies. This will be discussed in further detail below.

17.8. This section is structured in the following order:

- Play, recreation and sport
- Health and safety
- Community Wealth Building

Play, recreation and sport

SportScotland Evidence Report and SportScotland Facility Planning Model

17.9. The facilities located in Aberdeen, run by both private and public organisations, comprise 123 Sports Halls, 30 fitness studios, 30 squash courts, 25 swimming pools, 12 athletic tracks, 1 curling rink, 30 golf courses, 23 bowling greens, 61 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, 205 pitches of all types. The Facility Planning Model as a potential tool for identifying deficiencies in facility provision as well as the availability of data from the facilities database. It predicts likely patterns of demand for facilities, it does not predict actual usage, as this is determined by a wide range of factors such as management and programming. The facility planning model will be used to understand if there are potential deficiencies, can be used to help inform future sports and recreation activities.

Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy

17.10. Aberdeen has a good network of specialist sports facilities which enable residents to access a wide range of sports participation and performance opportunities. The report identifies investment is required to Northfield Swimming Pool, Jesmond Sports Centre and Sheddocksley Sports Centre, which had been actioned, and the Alex Collie Sports Centre has been established as a centre for gymnastics. The Beach Leisure Centre is subject to a redesign as part of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan. See Place Topic Paper. The investment sites identified could be used to help to inform the future sports and recreation infrastructure to be planned for Aberdeen

Children's Services Strategic Plan

17.11. The plan notes six strategic stretch outcomes. The second is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and families. Within the stretch outcomes, five priorities are noted. Two of the priorities could be assisted by the Local Development Plan. These are to; increase levels of physical activity, and increase the provision of child friendly environments within local communities.

17.12. Key actions are noted for this:

- Increase the percentage of young people participating in physical activity out with the curriculum from 22% in 2022 to 35% in 2026.
- Increase the range of accessible options for children and young people with sensory and physical impairments.
- Ensure a more equal distribution of gender participation in physical activity.

17.13. The next local development plan will seek to help facilitate the keys actions of the strategic plan through placemaking principles, the spatial strategy, or a local policy or guidance relating to play / open space.

Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy

17.14. The purpose of the strategy is to reaffirm a commitment to play, celebrate achievement, set priorities for continuing to improve the quality of current and future play opportunities; and to highlight the links between play and other local and national policies and strategies for improving outcomes for children and young people. Four themes are presented; Play in the home, Play in Early Learning & Childcare and School, Play in the community, Positive support for play (table 1). The Local Development Plan can support these through placemaking, or a local policy or guidance relating to play.

Theme	Aim	We will:
Play in the home	Our homes and family environments are places where our children and young people enjoy plentiful play opportunities, indoors and out,	1.1 Support families in exploring the benefits of play 1.2 Promote family friendly neighbourhoods and opportunities to reclaim streets for play

	appropriate to their age, stage, ability and preferences.	1.3 Encourage intergenerational opportunities for play
Play in Early Learning & Childcare and School	All of our children and young people enjoy high quality play opportunities, particularly learning via outdoor free play in stimulating spaces with access to nature, on a daily basis in all early learning and childcare settings and school.	2.1 Encourage all settings to adopt and promote the Play Policy and Strategy, demonstrating that they value play and understand the vital role this has in supporting children's holistic development 2.2 Promote play friendly approaches in all settings and in all weathers 2.3 Balance benefit and risk to enable challenge and learning through play for all children, building resilient and confident individuals 2.4 Encourage the development and use of more natural play spaces
Play in the community	All our children and young people have sufficient time and space for playing within their community and have contact with nature and outdoor spaces in their everyday lives. Play is valued, encouraged and supported in communities.	3.1 Promote play opportunities to improve health and wellbeing 3.2 Make community and public green spaces clean, inclusive and accessible to all 3.3 Empower communities to 'come out and play'
Positive support for play.	Aberdeen provides a positive environment for play through: a professional workforce and strong and visionary leadership; a well-resourced third sector and infrastructure; and a supportive and informed media.	4.1 Promote Aberdeen as a City of Play 4.2 Embed children's right to play in policies and strategies 4.3 Communicate effectively to ensure all children and young people understand that this policy is for them 4.4 Nurture partnership working to support play throughout the city

Table 17. 1: Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy theme and actions. Extract from the Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy.

Play Sufficiency Assessment

17.15. The assessment has been informed by consultation with children, parents and carers, play-based workshops, a bespoke play-based workshop for children with additional support needs and their families / caregivers, a formal play space assessment and information from the Open Space Audit 2024 for informal play spaces.

17.16. The general quantity of provision of play space ranged from 8 to 20 play spaces depending on ward. The majority of residential areas are within 10 minutes walk of a formal equipped play space with all wards. Thirty-two percent of these formal equipped play spaces had issues identified with the accessibility of their entrance or layout. The majority of spaces score well for 'quality of place' and score better on 'quality of play' for younger children (0-11 year olds) than for young people (12-17 year olds). The average 'Overall Play Quality' for the City was 74%.

17.17. Just over half of the spaces (54%) included inclusive physical play opportunities for younger children (0-11 year old) whilst just under a third (30%) provided inclusive physical play opportunities for young people (12-17 year old). Generally the level of risky or challenging play was low, with just below a third of spaces (32%) providing what was considered average or higher risk/challenging play.

17.18. The highest quantities of additional formal and informal play space were generally located in the largest wards, on the edges of the City where access to either the countryside, woodlands or coastline is available. The lowest quantities of additional formal and informal play space were generally located in the smaller wards, in City centre locations.

17.19. The play sufficiency assessment may have an impact on the spatial strategy and policy/site requirements of the Proposed Plan.

The Granite City Forest - Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan

17.20. Covering 2019 – 2044, the plan seeks to expand woodland coverage within the city to 600 hectares over the next 25 years, and a further 300 hectares by 2070. The strategy includes four strategic priorities: Promoting the role of our trees and woodlands in mitigating and adapting to climate change; Expanding the Granite City Forest; Protecting our trees and woodlands, and Contributing to the City's green infrastructure and the well-being of our people.

17.21. Sites have been identified based on their suitability for planting, ranging from preferred to unlikely to be suitable. Further investigations will be needed to screen out areas that are not suitable for planting and others, such as built-up areas, which might be suitable for street trees.

17.22. Although this document addresses a number of the components of a forest and woodland strategy, it does not satisfy planning legislation on this matter. A forestry and woodland strategy is being developed as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated a draft document will be completed within the next 12 months. The strategy will help to inform the spatial strategy of the next local development plan.

Open Space Audit 2024

17.23. More information can be found in the Infrastructure Topic Paper. However, the key findings from the Open Space Audit are summarised below.

17.24. 3,902 hectares of open space was surveyed, equating to 21% of the total Aberdeen area. The citywide average is 300 hectares of open space per ward, ranging from a high of 698 hectares and a low of 47 hectares. The breakdown of open space is shown in table 2 below.

Category	Area (hectares)	Percentage of open space
Natural / semi natural greenspaces	1,796	46%
Amenity greenspaces	895	23%

Sports areas	798	20%
Public parks and garden	204	5%
Private gardens or grounds*	150	3.8%
Burial grounds, allotments and play spaces	59	2%

Table 17.2: City wide open space hectares *which includes school grounds and institutional ground areas. These are not always fully accessible at all times but can still be important functional and usable spaces.

17.25. The average citywide open space quality score is 14.3 out of 25, with Accessibility and Place indicators the highest scoring while Health & Physical Activity, and Biodiversity quality indicators were the lowest scoring areas.

17.26. Public parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and sports areas are the most accessible public spaces used in daily life. On average 41% of respondents visited greenspace and open space areas several times a week. Most people stayed on average for 1-2 hours

17.27. A total of 580 responses to the survey were received. 79% of respondents reported being satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of Aberdeen's greenspace and open space areas however some open space types had a lower satisfaction rating than others. Please see table 3 below:

Type of greenspace and open space	% reported being satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied
Parks	86%
Woodlands	82%
Natural or semi-natural areas	82%
Children's play areas	75%
Allotments and community food growing spaces	68%
Walking/cycling routes	64%
Amenity spaces	64%

Table 17.3: % reported being satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied with greenspace and open space

17.28. Respondents were asked the top three reasons why they use, visit or enjoy the city's open spaces. The most common reasons given were:

Reasons	%
Physical exercise or health reasons (e.g. walking or jogging etc.)	75%
To be in nature	71%
To meet friends or family or to socialise	53%
To get out of the house or office (e.g. for a break)	47%
For mental health reasons	31%

Table 17.4: Top three reasons why they use, visit or enjoy the city's open spaces

17.29. When asked what would encourage respondents to use or visit Aberdeen's greenspace or open spaces more often the most common reasons given were:

Improvements	%

If they had better facilities (e.g. benches or toilets)	49%
If they were better managed for wildlife (e.g. wildlife enhancements such as tree and wildflower planting, long grass, wetlands, shrubs etc.)	45%
If there were more adequate paths for walking or cycling	36%
If they had less or no dog fouling	30%
If they were better connected to other spaces	25%
If they had less or no litter	25%
If there was better information about them (e.g. information panels or signage)	20%
If they had better lighting	19%

Table 17.5: what would encourage respondents to use or visit Aberdeen's greenspace or open spaces more often

17.30. Regarding food growing, 54% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to see more food-growing opportunities within green and open spaces across Aberdeen. 65% of respondents reported being satisfied with the quality of allotments and community food growing spaces. This is the third lowest satisfaction rate of all the open space types and could be attributed to the current high demand and long waiting lists for allotments. The next local development plan can use the results of the audit to help shape the spatial strategy.

Open Space Strategy 2011-2016

17.31. There is work underway to update the Open Space Strategy, as part of a wider Natural Environment Strategy. It is anticipated a draft document will be completed within the next 12 months. The new strategy will be updated in line with data from the Open Space Audit 2024. The Open Space Strategy's main purpose is to ensure the city has enough accessible and good quality open space. The Strategy revolves around four themes: people, health, the economy and the environment.

17.32. The Strategy has eight objectives; Create, protect and enhance Green Space Network; Improve the quality of open spaces; Provide well maintained and managed open spaces, balancing available resources with community demand; Improve access to and within open spaces; Increase the value and use of open spaces for health, education, play and lifelong learning; Seek business, community and other agency involvement; Recognise the economic, environmental and social value of open spaces; Maximise opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change and further biodiversity. The strategy will help to inform the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan.

Place Standard Assessments

17.33. Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with "all" noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and

negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

17.34. The Play and Recreation theme, and the Natural Spaces theme of the Place Standard is relevant here. The results are as follows: For play and recreation a score of 4.08 out of 7 was achieved, for natural spaces, a score of 4.71 was achieved. The comments submitted are noted below.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Play and Recreation	• Availability of play areas and play parks, parks and outdoor spaces and community centres (All).(South and Central also noted sports facilities, cultural spaces) • Lots of activities / lots of event for all ages (North and South)	• Upkeep/retaining existing facilities/reinstating facilities (ALL) • Increase accessibility, availability, awareness of, number of, and types of activities for all, (All) • More Adults activities (South) • Maintenance/upkeep of play parks/outdoor space (All) • Increased activity, space provision and cost for children and young people / teenagers (North and South) • More outdoor sport/culture/play activities in parks and at the beach. (Central) • Showers, changing rooms at the beach (Central)
Natural Space	• Good access to, and availability of, green and blue spaces. (All)	• Improvements to the maintenance of green and blue spaces (All) • Increasing cleanliness – more bins and be strict on irresponsible dog owners (All) • Better accessibility to and increasing number of green spaces available (South and Central) • More seating (N) • More public convenience (North) • More wild flowers, more food growing and allotments (Central)

Table 17.6: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023,Play and Recreation Extract.

17.35. The children and young people result (Table 7) noted for play and recreation: 54.2% felt they were okay, 34.7% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great. For natural spaces 60.0% felt they were okay, 25.7% felt they were not good, and 14.3% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Play and Recreation	Play parks	29.3%	Mix of activities	32.1%
	Easy to find spaces	19.8%	Sports areas	30.2%
	Making your own fun	19.8%	Organised fun stuff	27.4%
Natural Spaces	Parks	38.7%	Better parks	44.3%
	Trees	34%	Welcome animals	34%
	Woods	32.1%	More trees	24.5%

Table 17.7: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Play and Recreation Extract.

17.36. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

Health and Safety

Health and Wellbeing

17.37. The relationship between planning and health and wellbeing has been realigned through National Planning Framework 4. The place where we live work and spend our leisure time impact on our health and wellbeing. Planning for good health does not simply mean people have access to medical facilities, infrastructure, and care. Environments that encourage and support good physical and mental health and wellbeing will lead to a better quality of life.

17.38. Figure 1 identifies the wide range of determinants that influence our health and wellbeing, from our individual characteristics to the global ecosystem. These are the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors that indirectly influence health and wellbeing. They include what we eat and drink; where we live and work; and the social relationships and connections we have with other people and organisations. Some, such as age and family history of illness, cannot change or are difficult to change, while others are influenced by the social, economic and physical environment we live in and can be changed by policy interventions.

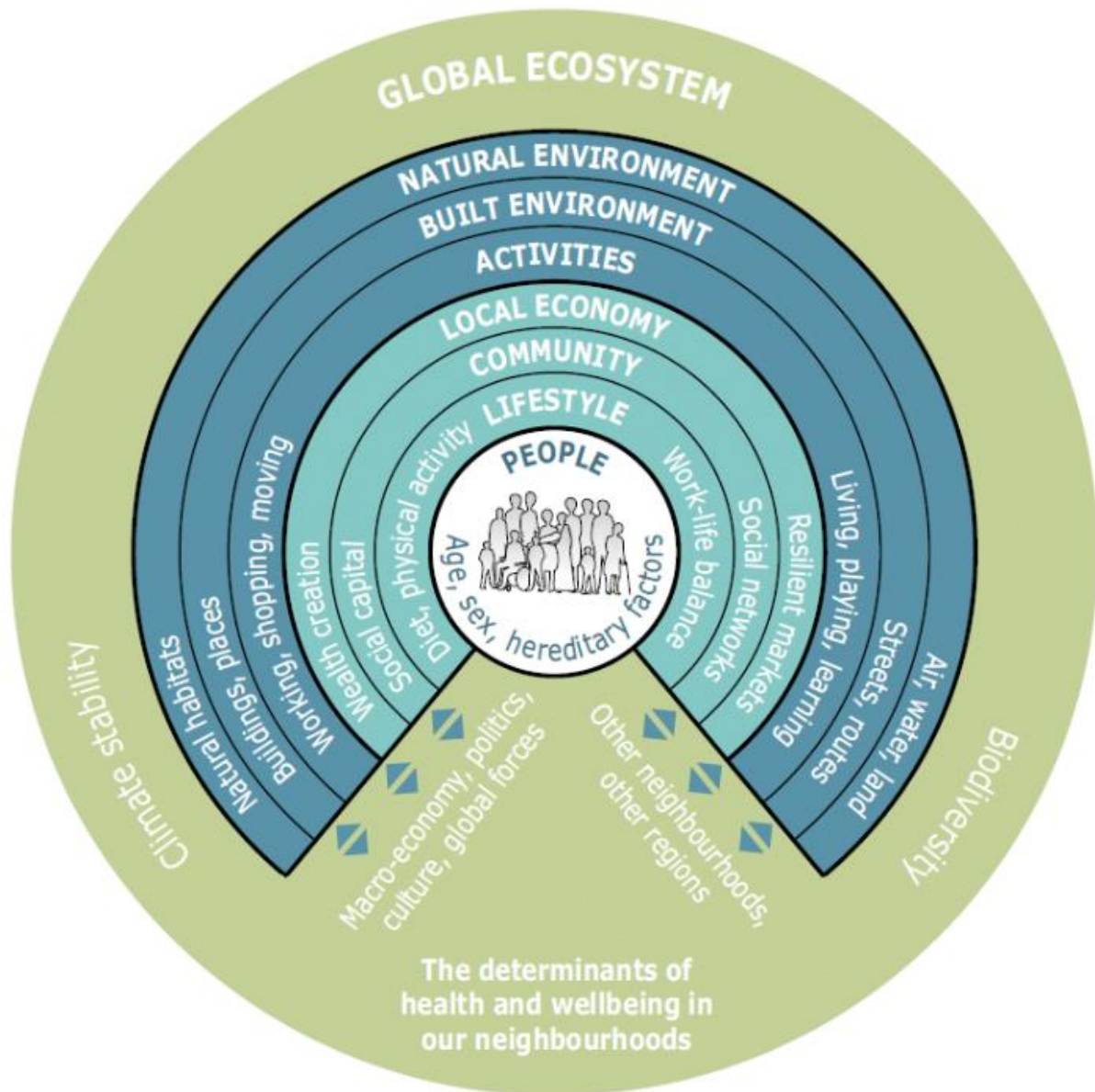


Figure 17.1: The determinants of health and well-being in our neighbourhoods (Source: Human ecology model of a settlement, Barton and Grant, 2006)

Scottish Government: Health Priorities for Scotland

17.39. In Scotland it should be possible for everyone to be as healthy as they can be, and to thrive. Our home and communities are the primary source where health is created. Again, placemaking is paramount for wellbeing creation and an help to achieve the six health priorities for Scotland:

- A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- A Scotland where we flourish in our early years
- A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all

- A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active.

17.40. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the keys aims of this document and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that good placemaking can have to the health of Aberdeen.

National Guidance on Action to Address Suicide at Locations of Concern

17.41. Local Development Plans should have an awareness of locations or concerns for suicide. Locations of concern have been considered for Aberdeen. It is not within the public interest to identity those locations within the evidence report. Of the factors and characterisers that are known to contribute to raised suicide risk ([Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan](#)) - deprivation, poverty, and social exclusion; isolation and homelessness could be influenced by planning and placemaking. The next local development plan could consider how to address locations of concern or design of developments to reduce risk.

Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

17.42. A framework of themes to ensure place, people and planet thrive. They promote and support the impact of the places where we live, work and relax to deliver equality, net zero emission and climate resilience. The outcomes are interlinked and a place based approach is the basis for their delivery. The five themes within the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes are the same framework noted for the Local Living Framework (please see Place Topic Paper). The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes are:

- [Movement](#) – active travel; public transport; traffic and parking
- [Spaces](#) – streets and spaces; natural spaces; play and recreation
- [Resources](#) – services and support; work and economy; housing and community
- [Civic](#) – identity and belonging; feeling safe
- [Stewardship](#) – care and maintenance; influence and control.

17.43. Place and Wellbeing Outcomes should be embedded into the planning system and the decision-making process on policy and implementation. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the keys aims of the place and wellbeing outcomes.



Figure 17.2: Place and wellbeing outcomes. Extract from Improvement Service webpage. <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/planning-and-place-based-approaches/shaping-places-for-wellbeing-programme/place-and-wellbeing-outcomes>

A Healthy Future

17.44. Scotland has the highest overweight and obesity levels in the UK. The vision is to create a Scotland where everyone eats well, and we all have a healthy weight. A pledge has been given to halve childhood obesity by 2030. It is noted within the report, a far higher proportion of people in the most deprived communities (around 32% of adults) are obese compared to those in more affluent areas (20% of adults). The gap may be widening for children. Obesity is the second-biggest preventable cause of cancer. Being overweight and obese is also the most significant risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, and can result in increased risk of other conditions including cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

17.45. The document identifies 5 outcomes, of which outcome 2 “the food environment supports healthier choices” has links to planning. A number of the actions within the document relate to interventions around advertising, support systems and clinical settings. Action 2.12 identifies Scottish Government research in the relationship between the food environment and the planning system, which is to feed into a review of the Scottish Planning system. The next local development plan will consider how it can support healthier choices in the food environment, possibility through policy or guidance.

Relationship between food environment and planning system

17.46. The research explores how the planning system could be used, alongside other measures, to encourage healthier choices and discourage unhealthy ones with regard to the area around schools. The conclusions of the research were used to inform National Planning Framework 4 Policy 27. See topic paper Centres of Business and Culture for more information.

Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005

17.47. The relationship between mortality, alcohol, deprivation and place in Grampian is noted within the NHS Grampian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 [below](#). Alcohol sales are subject to the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The Act has five objectives:

- preventing crime and disorder;
- securing public safety;
- preventing public nuisance;
- protecting and improving public health; and
- protecting children and young persons from harm

17.48. The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 both identify an objective of improving health. Although licensing and planning are separate statutory functions, there are examples within Aberdeen of existing co-working between the two services e.g. short term lets, houses of multiple occupation. This relationship could be explored further with relation to alcohol and may have impacts for the next plan in terms of local policy or guidance.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

17.49. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a “relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones)”. If an area is identified as deprived this can relate to people having low incomes but can also mean fewer resources of opportunities, SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived relating to 7 factors, namely income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks data zones from the most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). The datasets outline that Aberdeen is a City with areas within the 5%, 10 % and 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland, while also having large areas within the least deprived 10%.

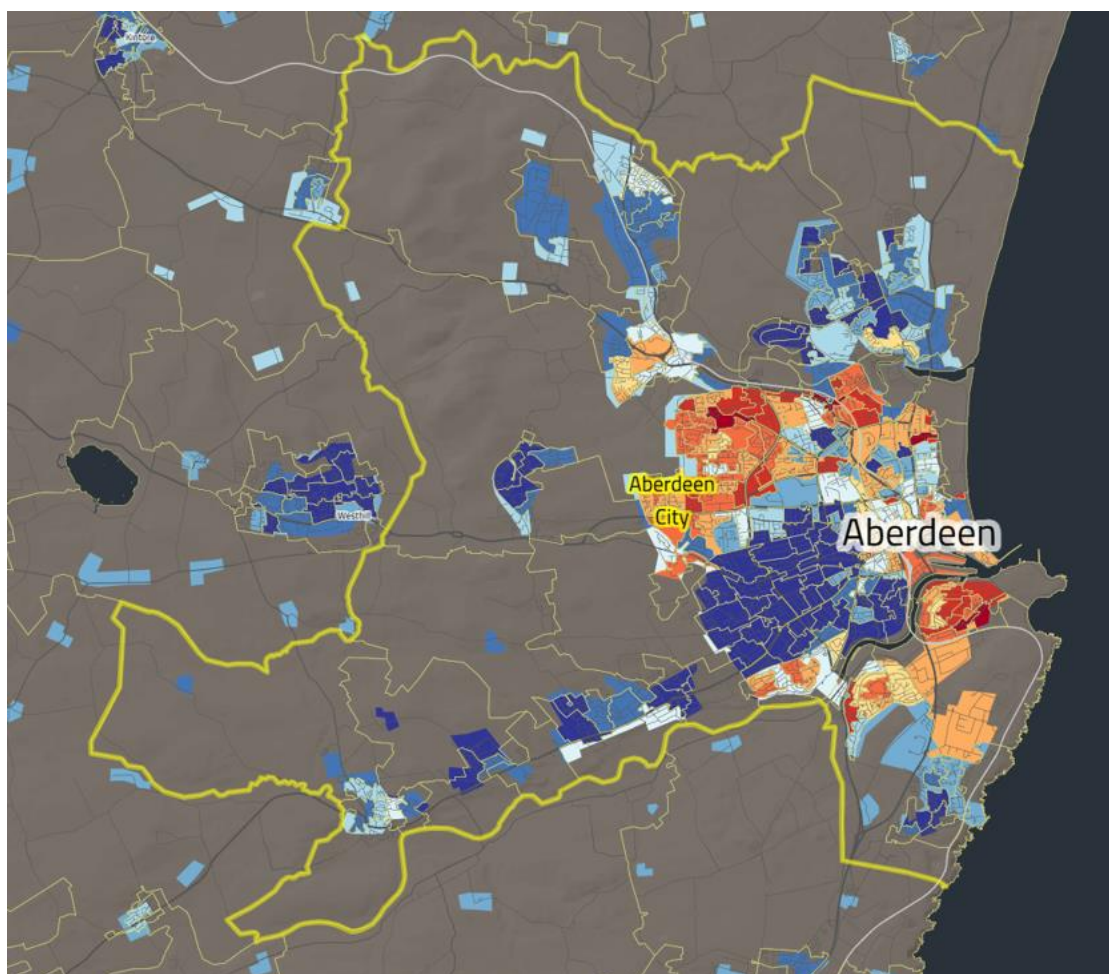


Figure 17.3: SIMD Datazones for Aberdeen. Extract from SIMD webpage.



17.50. The SIMD identifies 29 datazones within Aberdeen that are classed as being within the 20% most deprived in Scotland. 104 datazones in Aberdeen as classed as the least deprived

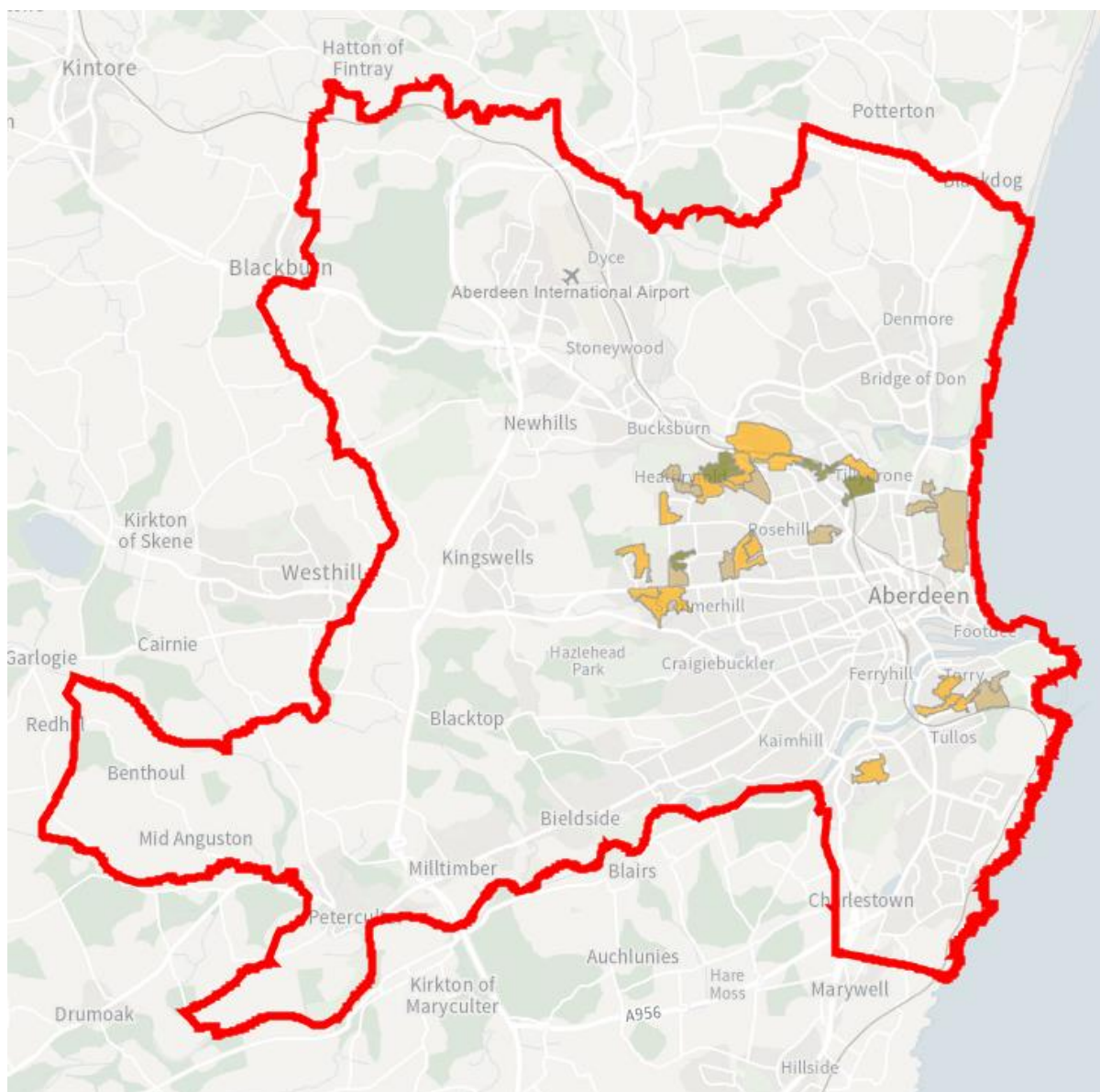
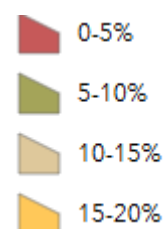


Figure 17.4: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area and health. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.



17.51. The next local development plan can use the SIMD data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

NHS Grampian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023

17.52. The document provides data on the Grampian NHS region. The report outlines there is an ageing population, many people are living with multiple health conditions, and a greater proportion of the working age population is experiencing ill-health. The number of years people can expect to live in good health is decreasing and this is affecting some communities more than others. People who live in the most deprived areas are

spending a much greater proportion of their life in poor health than their peers who live in the least deprived areas.

17.53. Headlines from the report are:

- Life expectancy has decreased. The greatest deterioration is seen in those groups already experiencing the worst mortality rates and lowest life expectancy. In more deprived areas life expectancy has been going down.
- Healthy life expectancy, is a measure of how many years of life people spend in good health and has been decreasing for both men and women in Grampian since 2015-17. The greatest drop in healthy life expectancy locally has been for women in Aberdeen City, where a drop of 3.3 years was seen between 2019-2021.
- People in the poorest areas spend more of their life in poorer health than their peers in the wealthiest areas.
- Men spend fewer years in good health compared to women, women experience a longer period in poor health.
- Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death. The mortality rates for these causes are about 1.5 times higher in the poorest compared to the wealthiest areas. Some of the largest differences in mortality rates are observed for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (the most deprived areas have a rate 3.3 times higher than the least deprived areas), alcohol-related (2.7 times), accidents (2.4), suicide (2.4) and liver disease (2.3). A much greater inequality than all of these is seen for drug-related deaths, where rates are 7.2 times higher in the most deprived areas.
- Rates of child poverty are increasing. In Aberdeen during 2014/15 this figure was 18.7% but by 2022/23 the figure was 21.8%.
- The drug misuse death rates increase in the city between 2011 to 2021, from 29 to 62, but decreased in 2022 to 42.

17.54. The report notes social and economic factors (wider determinants of health), health behaviours and the environment people live in account for at least 80% of the observed health inequities in the population. The physical environment, the places and communities people live in and with shape health. The next local development plan should consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 - 2023

17.55. The Strategy aims to support the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing, through the aims of prevention, self-management, recovery, dignity and rights, and support for carers. The next local development plan can support prevention through placemaking, and the promoting of choice to allow for lifestyles and behaviours associated with positive mental health and wellbeing.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic / Delivery Plan 2022 - 2025 and Annual Performance Report 2023-2024

17.56. The strategy outlines four strategic aims: caring together; keeping people safe at home; preventing ill health; and achieving fulfilling, healthier lives. The strategy notes achieving fulfilling, healthier lives requires partnership working, and goes on to

highlight the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership will work with partners to promote the inclusion of open space in new developments and active travel. The aims of the strategy will help to inform good placemaking with next local development plan, which may have an impact on spatial strategy and local policy.

**Census / ScotPHO profiles / National Records of Scotland / Community Planning:
Localities Outcomes Data / Scottish Health Survey 2023**

- 17.57. On June 2023, Aberdeen had an estimated population of 227,750, an increase of 1.6% from 224,250 in 2022. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.8% (NRS). This equates to 4.1% of Scotland's total population. In terms of population size, Aberdeen is the 8th largest local authority in Scotland. There were more females (116,284) than males (111, 466) in the city with females making up 51.1% of the population. (NRS)
- 17.58. Compared to Scotland, Aberdeen has a higher proportion of people aged 16-64 years (67.8% compared to 63.8%) and a lower proportion of people age 65+ years (16.4% compared to 19.6%) and under 15 year-olds (15.8% compared to 16.6%) (ScotPHO). In terms of overall size, the 25-44 age group was the largest and the 75 and over age group was the smallest (NRS).
- 17.59. In 2023 there were 2,092 births in Aberdeen an increase of 7.9% from 1,939 births in 2022 (NRS). In 2020-2023 in Aberdeen life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 80.9 years for women and 76.9 years for men, this is generally in line for the Scottish average (80.8 years and 76.8 years respectively). Life expectancy at birth is higher in Aberdeen than at Scotland level (NRS). Health years life expectancy in women in Aberdeen is 61.4 years (Scottish average is 61.1 years), while for men this is 60.2 years (Scottish average 60.4 years) (ScotPHO).
- 17.60. Within these figures there is also a disparity between life expectancy and SIMD quantiles. The life expectancy for a female in West End North is 86.3 years, while for a female in Woodside it is 72.0 years. For men, life expectancy in Braeside, Mannofield, Broomhill and Seafield North is 83.1 years, while in Woodside this is 69.4 years. (ScotPHO / NRS / Localities Outcomes Data)

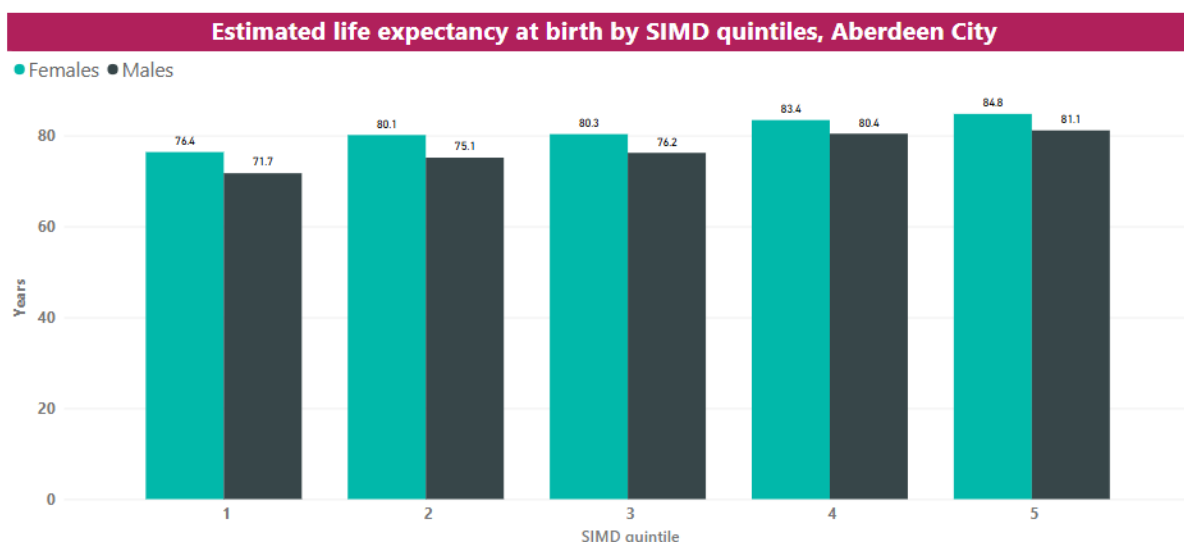


Figure 17.5: Estimated life expectancy at birth by SIMD quintiles, taken from Aberdeen City Data Observatory.

17.61. In 2023 there were 2,255 deaths in Aberdeen, an increase from the 2,248 deaths in 2022. Of these 2,252 deaths, 1,124 (49.8%) were female and 1,131 (50.2%) were male. Aged 90 and over saw the highest number of total deaths (NRS).

17.62. The leading cause of death in Aberdeen 2023 is as table 8 below:

Males	Females
Ischaemic heart diseases (12.6%)	Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease (13.4%)
Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease (7.0%)	Ischaemic heart diseases (8.3%)
Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (6.9%)	Cerebrovascular disease (8.1%)
Cerebrovascular disease (5.8%)	Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (6.6%)
Chronic lower respiratory disease (5.0%)	Chronic lower respiratory disease (5.0%)

Table 17.8: Leading cause of death in Aberdeen 2023. Extract from National Records of Scotland.

17.63. Rates of suicide within Aberdeen are not seen as statistically significant from Scotland (14.4 versus 17.5) (NRS). There are a higher number of male than female deaths from probable suicide (NRS / Aberdeen City Data Observatory).

17.64. Adult health weight data for Aberdeen sits at 38% of the population, while for Scotland this is 33%, therefore the health weight of adults in the city is better than the national average (ScotPHO). This however does mean that 62% of the adult population of Aberdeen and 67% of the adult population of Scotland are not of a healthy weight. For children, data is collected on healthy weighty in primary one. The results here note 69.9% of children in Aberdeen have a healthy weighty in primary one, while the

national level is 69.8%. (ScotPHO). Again, this means that approximately 30% of the children in primary one are not of a healthy weight.

17.65. Looking to the Scottish Health Survey 2023, Aberdeen notes no significant difference from Scotland in relation to alcohol consumption, cardiovascular conditions, life satisfaction, general mental wellbeing, physical activity (summary activity levels), respiratory conditions, smoking status, and provide unpaid caring. Where Aberdeen is significantly higher than Scotland relates to number of natural teeth (including crowns); Self-assessed general health being very good / good; no long term conditions, and physical activity where this meets MVPA & muscle strengthening recommendations. Where Aberdeen is noted as being significant lower than Scotland is in the self-assessed general health as fair, and limiting long term conditions.

17.66. The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026

17.67. The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (LOIP) outlines how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision for 2026 is Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. Through early intervention and prevention, the aim is to create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself, using a whole life approach combined with a lifelong learning approach. The measures of success in achieving the vision will be that by 2026:

- We will still have the highest GVA (Gross Value Added) per head in Scotland
- Fewer than 10% of our children are living in poverty
- We are living in good health for at least five years longer
- Our carbon emissions are 61% lower

17.68. The LOIP has four key themes to achieve the vision; Economy, People (Children & Young People, and Adults), Place and Community Empowerment, with 16 stretch outcomes. The People Outcome most related to the local development plan is:

- Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.

17.69. The next local development plan can use the data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality, and increase healthy life expectancy.

Aberdeen Healthy Weight

17.70. A whole system approach has been identified in Aberdeen as a way to tackle childhood obesity. Referencing a whole systems approach used in Amsterdam it is noted that through a “health in all policies approach” policy levers were utilised to support the healthy weight agenda. As a result, a range of changes were made to policies concerning the build environment. In Aberdeen a 6 phase programme has been proposed, with the Amsterdam framework as a focus for influences. Aberdeen is

at the start of the Healthy Weight Whole System Approach. The local development plan may be able to assist with the objectives of the whole system approach through spatial strategy, local policies or guidance.

Food Growing Strategy

17.71. The document supports nurturing an inclusive city which offers more opportunities for people to grow their own food, and supports opportunities for community-based activity for those who live in, work in and visit Aberdeen to achieve healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.

17.72. Within Aberdeen there are 3 private allotments, 11 community growing spaces, 3 community orchards, and 14 educational institutions with food growing opportunities. The existing city-wide situation is largely in line with the Scottish average. Spatially there is an uneven distribution of existing food-growing opportunities across the city (figure 6) with some communities enjoying above average provision in their vicinity and others having none. The Aberdeen food-growing survey showed that a lack of time and not knowing how to grow food are perceived as the greatest barriers to 'growing your own' locally.

17.73. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the keys aims of this strategy and consider how it will how it can support food growing; this may be through a local policy or guidance.

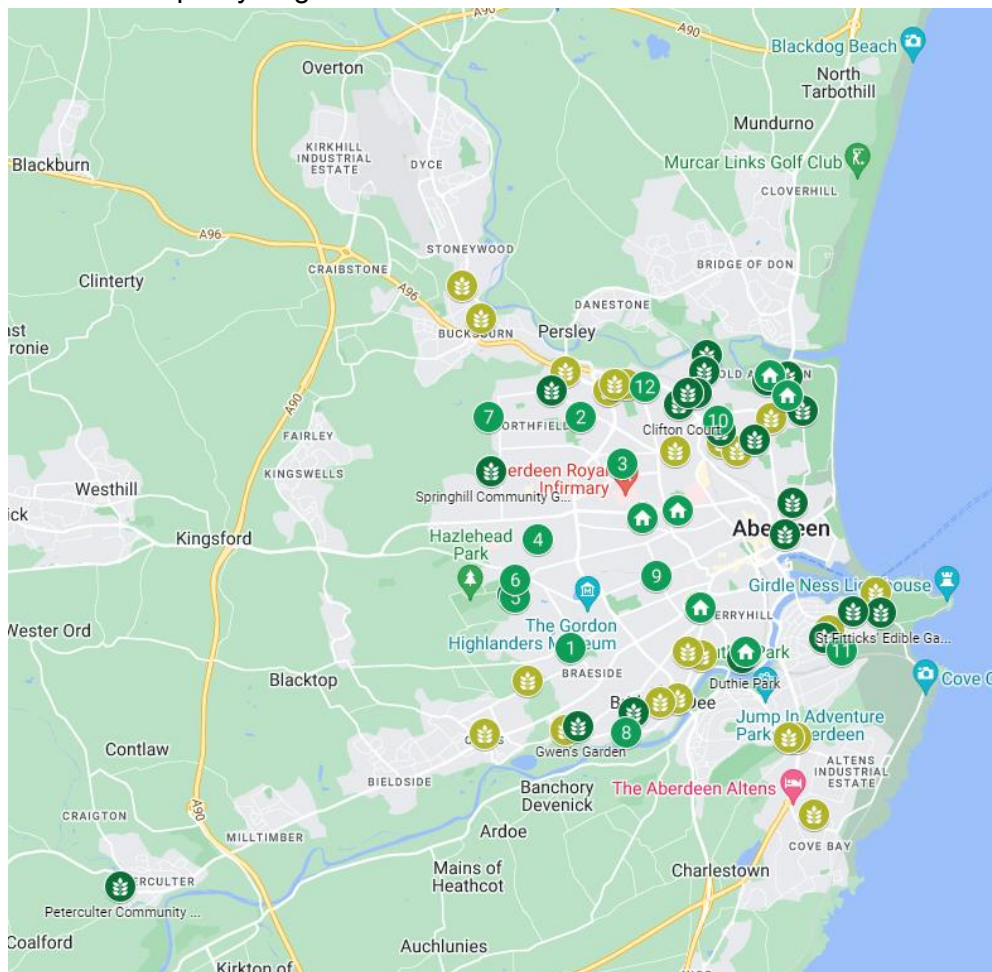


Figure 17.6: Food growing areas in Aberdeen.
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=109-qlrByYBpLLcXo77YfbGgom-AdCVV3&ll=57.15069530824975%2C-2.12771591728518&z=12>

Annual Allotments Report

17.74. There are 573 allotment plots overseen by Aberdeen City Council on 21 sites.

Allotment waiting list stood at 1,251 people (this means that the allotment waiting list at that time was 218% of the number of plots available). The next local development plan will consider how it will how it can support food growing through allotments; this may be through a local policy or guidance.

Food Growing Aberdeen Planning Guidance

17.75. Supports the implementation of Granite City Growing by outlining the benefits of food growing spaces, provides examples of best practices, types of growing spaces and food growing provision expectations for local and major developments. The adopted document provides parameters to support food growing. Consideration will be given if there are local policies required based on the content of the document.

Environment

17.76. The following section notes environmental issues that may have a detrimental impact on human health and affect quality of life due to exposure, and the plans and strategies in place to monitor and, where required improve, situations.

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency Evidence Report Pack

17.77. The report pack highlights information the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency holds for Aberdeen. The Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory is a Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and has the primary purpose of making publicly available officially reported annual releases of specified pollutants to air and water from SEPA-regulated industrial facilities. The Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory identifies 40 sites within Aberdeen. These are located throughout the city and relate to commercial, industrial, waste and hospital sites. There are 46 waste sites noted on Aberdeen, 39 of which are operational and 7 non-operational landfill site. There are no specialist sites in Aberdeen. A specialist sites contaminated land which meets one of the descriptions in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Other contaminated land is discussed later in this section. The inventory will be will be used to understand if there are noted sites during site assessment's for the next local development plan so that implications can be highlighted from the outset.

Air Quality Action Plan 2011

17.78. The main pollutants of concern in Aberdeen are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), related to road traffic emissions. Aberdeen has three Air Quality Management Areas, located on arterial traffic routes,

- City Centre
- Anderson Drive

- Wellington Road

17.79. Measures to improve air quality in Aberdeen are broken into six themes (table 9).

Within the “Planning and Policies” section – planning guidance has been produced on air quality. Measures in the “Modal Shift and Influencing Travel Choice” theme are relevant to the next Local Development Plan in terms of placemaking principles, local living and site assessment.

Theme	Measures
Modal Shift and Influencing Travel Choice	Increase Bus Use Improve Cycling and Walking Provision Travel Plans Improve public awareness of air quality issues Car Clubs / Carpool Scheme Crossrail Rail Freight
Lower Emissions and Cleaner Vehicles	Green Vehicle procurement and Fuel / Charging Infrastructure Eco - driving Emissions Testing & Idling Enforcement Taxis Low Emission Zone
Road Infrastructure	Pedestrianisation Road Building / Junction Alteration
Traffic Management	Intelligent Transport System (ITS) High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Freight and Commercial Vehicle Access
Planning and Policies	Produce Supplementary Planning Guidance Integration of AQAP with Local Transport Strategy (LTS) and Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Integration of AQAP with Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP) Road Hierarchy Car Parking Policies National Lobbying
Non-Transport Measures	Control Biomass Installations Industry Permitting Tree Planting Shipping

Table 17.9: Themes of the Air Quality Action Plan 2011.

Air Quality Annual Progress Report

17.80. There were no exceedances of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter PM₁₀ or particulate matter 2.5 objectives at any monitoring location across the city, indicating improved air quality. The Anderson Drive and Wellington Road Air Quality Management Areas will be reviewed for potential removal, while the City Centre Air Quality Management Areas will be amended to remove particulate matter PM₁₀ objectives but remain valid for NO₂.

17.81. The establishment of recent vehicle access restrictions in the city centre have resulted in significant improvement in air quality. The vehicle restricted measures

comprise a series of bus gates, whereby private vehicles are not permitted, and a low emission zone (figure 7). Site assessments for the next local development plan will considered environmental concerns.

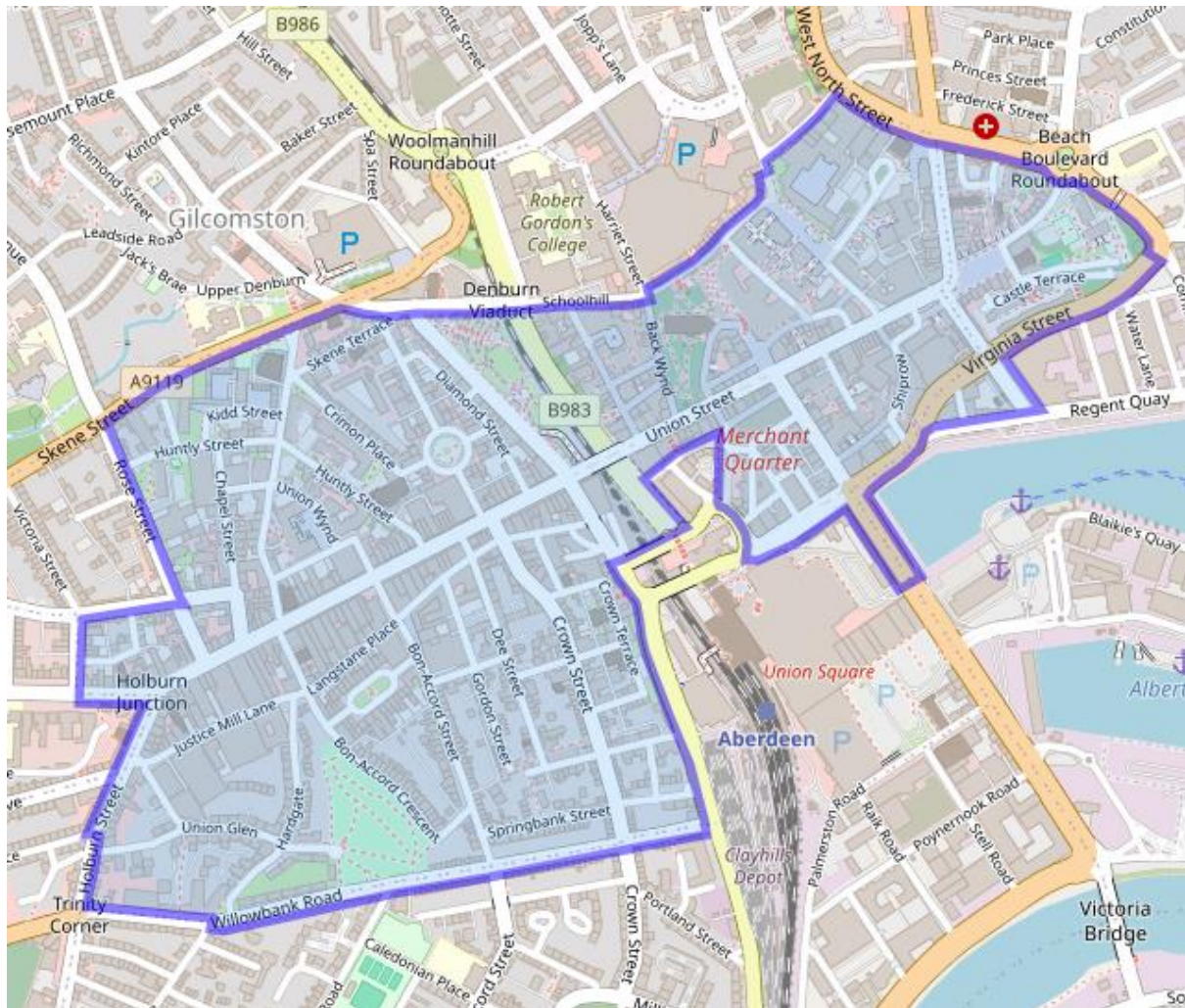


Figure 17.7: Aberdeen's Low Emission Zone.

<https://accabdn.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0e88f64e748c4315b21050683525df52>

Aberdeen Agglomeration Noise Action Plan and Environmental Noise Action Plan Update

17.82. The Plan identifies Candidate Noise Management Area these are areas where people are most likely to be annoyed by noise, and Candidate Quiet Areas, where noise quality is good and requires preservation. The Plan identifies 20 Candidate Noise Management Areas related to roads, 2 related to rail and 6 Candidate Quiet Areas. The update report reassesses the Candidate Noise Management Area and Candidate Quiet Areas within Aberdeen and identifies 14 Candidate Noise Management Area and 5 Candidate Quiet Areas, detailed below. These have been approved. Site assessments for the next local development plan will considered environmental concerns.

Area	Name	Type
Noise Management Area	Union Street	Road
Noise Management Area	Victoria Road	Road
Noise Management Area	King Street at Castle Street	Road
Noise Management Area	Auchmill Road	Road
Noise Management Area	Broomhill Road	Road
Noise Management Area	Holburn Street	Road
Noise Management Area	Market Street	Road
Noise Management Area	King Street at Don Street	Road
Noise Management Area	King Street at St Machar Drive	Road
Noise Management Area	Whinhill Road	Road
Noise Management Area	Wellington Place	Road
Noise Management Area	Alford Place	Road
Noise Management Area	North Esplanade West	Rail
Noise Management Area	Riverside Drive	Rail
Quiet Areas	Seaton Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	West Field Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	St Fitticks Community Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	Loirston County Park	N/A
Quiet Areas	Hazlehead Park	N/A

Table 17.10: Candidate Noise Management Area and Candidate Quiet Areas within Aberdeen

Land Contamination

17.83. Contaminated land is present in Aberdeen due to land use and links to industry. The contaminated land strategy outlines the legal duty the Council has to inspect areas of land and to secure remediation. The strategy notes the relationship between planning and contaminated land, and the statutory consultee function Environmental Health have with regard to planning applications. Contaminated land sites are mapped on the Council's internal GIS system, this covers sites related to planning applications and areas that are potentially contaminated as per the investigation of the contaminated land strategy. Site assessments for the next local development plan will considered environmental concerns.

Hazards

17.84. The following section notes hazards that may have a detrimental impact on human health and affect quality of life due to exposure, and the plans and strategies in place to monitor and, where required improve, situations.

Public safety and safeguard

17.85. Aberdeen International Airport is located within Aberdeen's local authority area. Public safety zones are areas of land at the end of the airport runway within which development is restricted, to control the number of people on the ground at risk in the event of an aircraft accident on take-off or landing. Within these zones, there is a general presumption against certain types of development which would result in an increase in the number of people living, working or congregating in these zones. Public safety zones are based on individual risk contours calculated for each airport, upon

which a person remaining in the same location for a period of a year would be subjected to the given level of risk of being killed as a result of an aircraft accident.

17.86. The extent of the public safety zones area is shown in red and corresponds to the 1 in 100,000 individual risk contours. The area shown in blue being subject to the maximum tolerable level of individual third party risk, being 1 in 10,000 per year. The public safety zones are mapped on the Council's internal GIS system and with the Local Development Plan.

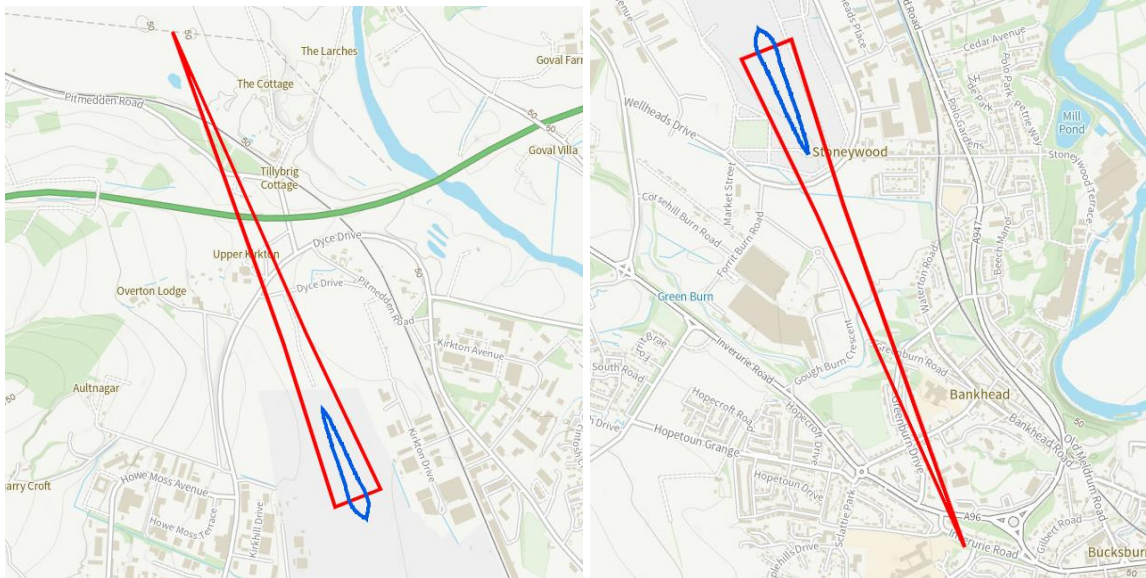


Figure 17.8: Aberdeen Airport Public Safety Zone. Extract from Aberdeen City Council internal GIS system

17.87. Safeguarding is a concern for Aberdeen International Airport and Perwinnes Radar. Safeguarding ensures developments or activity do not adversely affect the safe operation of landing or departing aircraft from the Airport, or the operational capability of the radar. The Proposed Plan will direct inappropriate development away from public safety zones.

Airport Noise

17.88. Aberdeen Airport Annual Noise Report 2023 details measures to mitigate noise disturbance to residents, and produced data on performance against noise mitigation targets, and complaints. The Aberdeen Airport Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 aims to manage and, where practical, reduce the adverse effects of aviation related noise. A draft 2024-2028 Noise Action Plan is with Scottish Ministers for formal adoption. Further updates are expected in June 2025.

17.89. Further to this, noise contours maps for Aberdeen International Airport are produced by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). These are used in the determination of planning applications to consider the impact on noise on residential amenity. The noise contours maps are mapped within the Council's internal GIS system and with Aberdeen Planning Guidance. Site assessments for the next local development plan will considered environmental concerns.

Location of Major Accident Hazards

17.90. Major Accident Hazard Pipelines are located within Aberdeen. These are subject to pipelines notification zones. Further major hazard sites are identified in Aberdeen. There are no Hazardous Substance Consents currently active in Aberdeen. The pipelines, pipeline notification zone and major hazard sites are mapped within the Council's internal GIS system. The pipelines and pipeline notification zone is also present on the Aberdeen City Council Local Development Plan Constraints map. There are two active quarries in Aberdeen. These are subject to a 1 kilometre buffer zones with regard to development and Health and Safety Executive consultation. The Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning advice and guidance, and the UKOPA highlight the need to consider the acceptability of development in the proximity of facilities with, amongst others, hazardous substances or major pipelines. Further information on Pipelines can be found within the Infrastructure paper. The Proposed Plan will direct inappropriate development away from major accident hazard pipelines.

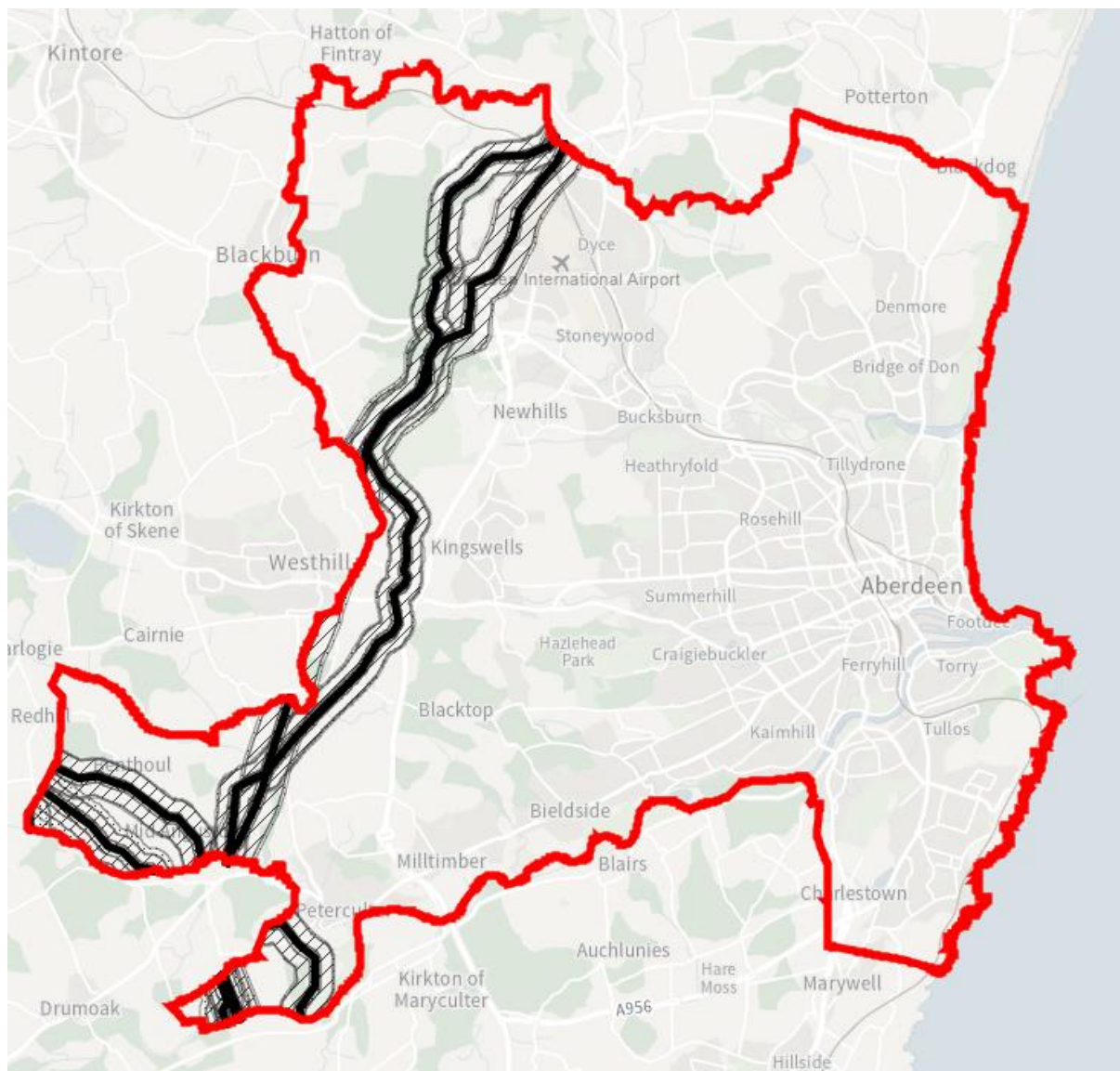


Figure 17.9: Pipelines and Pipeline notification zones in Aberdeen. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

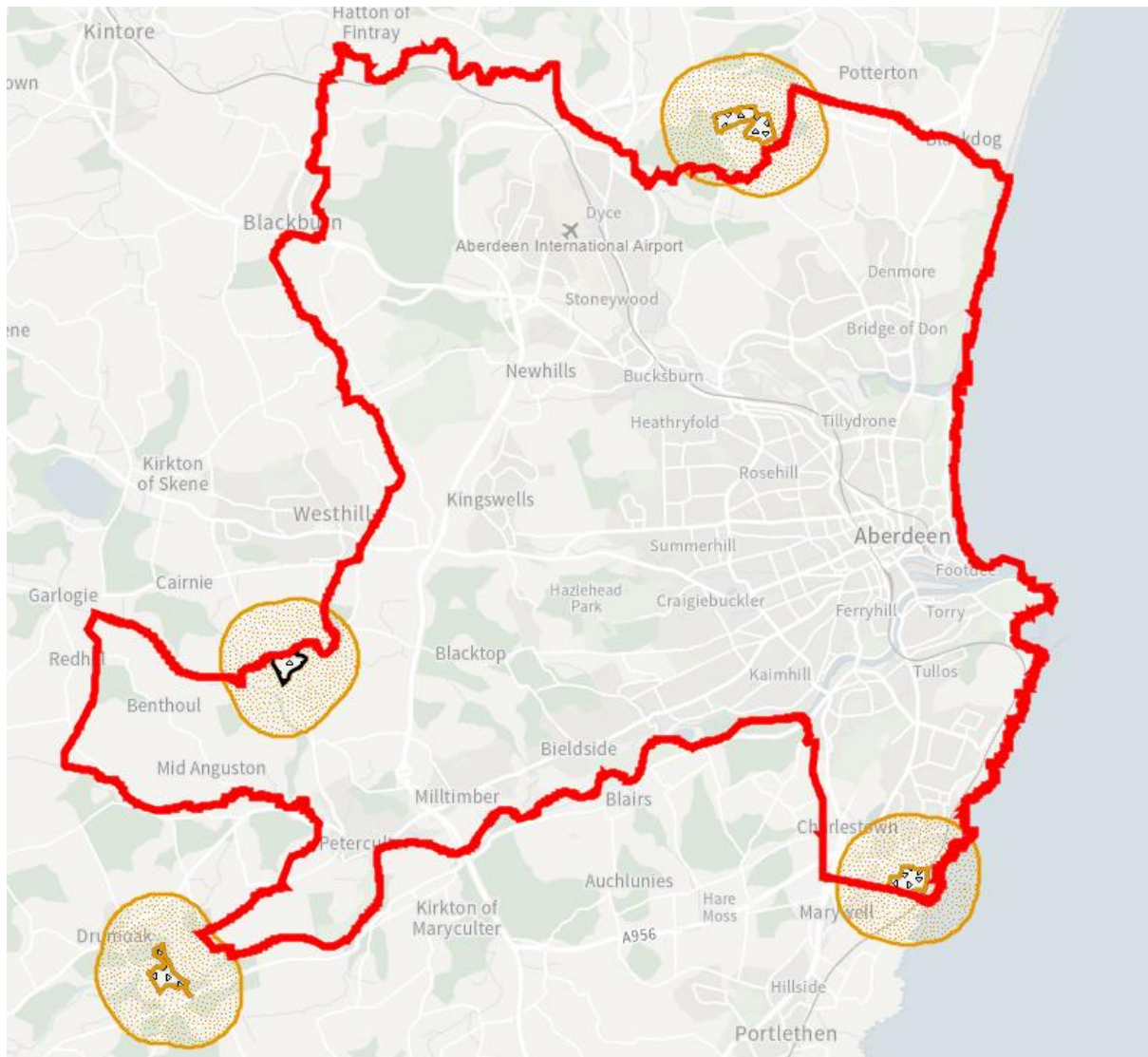


Figure 17.10: Quarries and 1 kilometre buffer zones. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.

Coal Authority Development High Risk Areas

17.91. There are no Development High Risk Areas in Aberdeen, as can be seen from the Coal Authority dataset.

Place Standard Assessments

17.92. Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. More information on this can be found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people ask for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

17.93. The feeling safe and influence and sense of control themes of the Place Standard are relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 4.09 out of 7 was achieved for feeling safe, and 3.27 influence and sense of control.

Place Standard Theme	“Good” now	“Improve” for the future
Feeling Safe	• Feel safe in own neighbourhood and in Aberdeen more generally. (All) • Low crime rate, police presence and good lighting (All)	• Community Safety/anti-social behaviour in adults (All) • Maintenance of streets and spaces – better lighting/less graffiti (All) • Traffic offences/reduction in speeding (All) • Improve the City Centre – feels unsafe, anti-social behaviour, crime, loitering and drinking – (Central) • Reduce the number of derelict and boarded up shops and buildings (Central)
Influence and Sense of Control	• Good awareness of and access to Council officers and elected officials. (All) • Positive community participation and engagement with officers, community councils, councillors. (All)	• Improve awareness of opportunities to get involved in decision making and feedback (All) • Improve awareness of community meetings and consultations (North and South) • Make being able to contact officials and receive feedback easier (North and South) • Having more voice and opportunities to be listened to, respected, and taken seriously regarding local issues. (South and Central) • Improvements are needed when issues are reported (Central)

Table 17.11: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023, Feeling safe, and Influence and Sense of Control Extract.

17.94. The children and young people results on feeling safe noted: 50.0% felt they were okay, 31.5% felt they were not good, and 18.5% felt they were great. For influence and sense of control: 57.4% felt they were okay, 31.5% felt they were not good, and 11.1% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Feeling Safe	Feeling safe during the day	38.7%	Less anti-social behaviour	34%

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Influence and sense of control	Lighting	16%	Feeling safe at night	32.1%
	Play spaces	15.1%	Brighter/more lighting	22.6%
	Feeling included	21.7%	By making sure I am taken seriously	30.2%
	None of these	21.7%	By making it easy to take part (26.4%)	26.4%
	My views are important	19.8%	By making sure I feel included	24.5%

Table 17.12: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?'
Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

17.95. The Place Standard survey results provide useful information on the lived experience of Aberdeen, and the differing themes of what is good now and what can be improved within different locations. The results of the place standard exercise and the results of place standard exercise 2025 (part of the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future consultation), which is being finalised currently, can inform the next local development plan by providing focus on potential interventions with locality areas.

Infrastructure

17.96. Aberdeen is part of NHS Grampian which covers the local authority areas of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. There are 9 NHS run hospitals in Aberdeen, 30 GP surgeries, 50 pharmacies, 42 dental surgery and 10 opticians. The hospitals are focussed on the main Aberdeen Royal Infirmary campus, with others outlying to the east and west of the city. The infrastructure topic paper provides further information on this area.

Community Wealth Building

17.97. Community Wealth Building seeks to transform our local and regional economic systems to enable local communities and people to own, have a greater stake in, access and benefit from the wealth our economy generates.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

17.98. The datasets outline that Aberdeen has areas within the 5%, 10 % and 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland, while also having large areas within the least deprived 10%. The data relating to the 0-20% most deprived in terms of education, employment, and income are mapped below (Figure 11, 12, 13). The locations which are the most deprived are also those within the 0-20% most deprived in terms of education, employment and income.

17.99. The next local development plan can use the SIMD data to highlight the areas of greatest inequality in Aberdeen, and consider how local policies or spatial strategy can be used to improve equality.

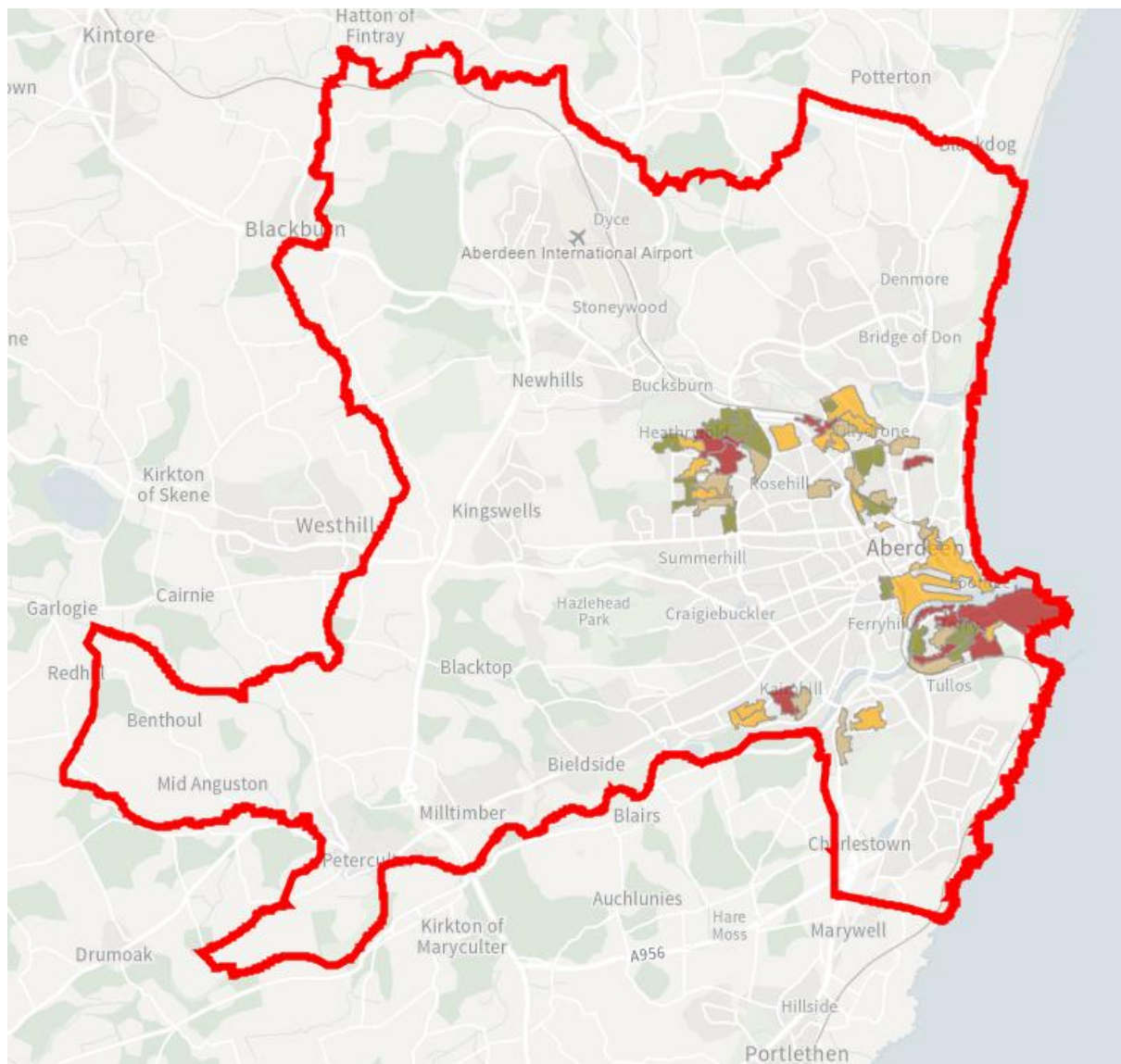
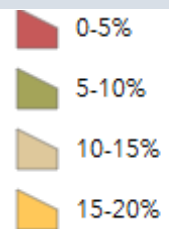


Figure 17.11: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area - education. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.



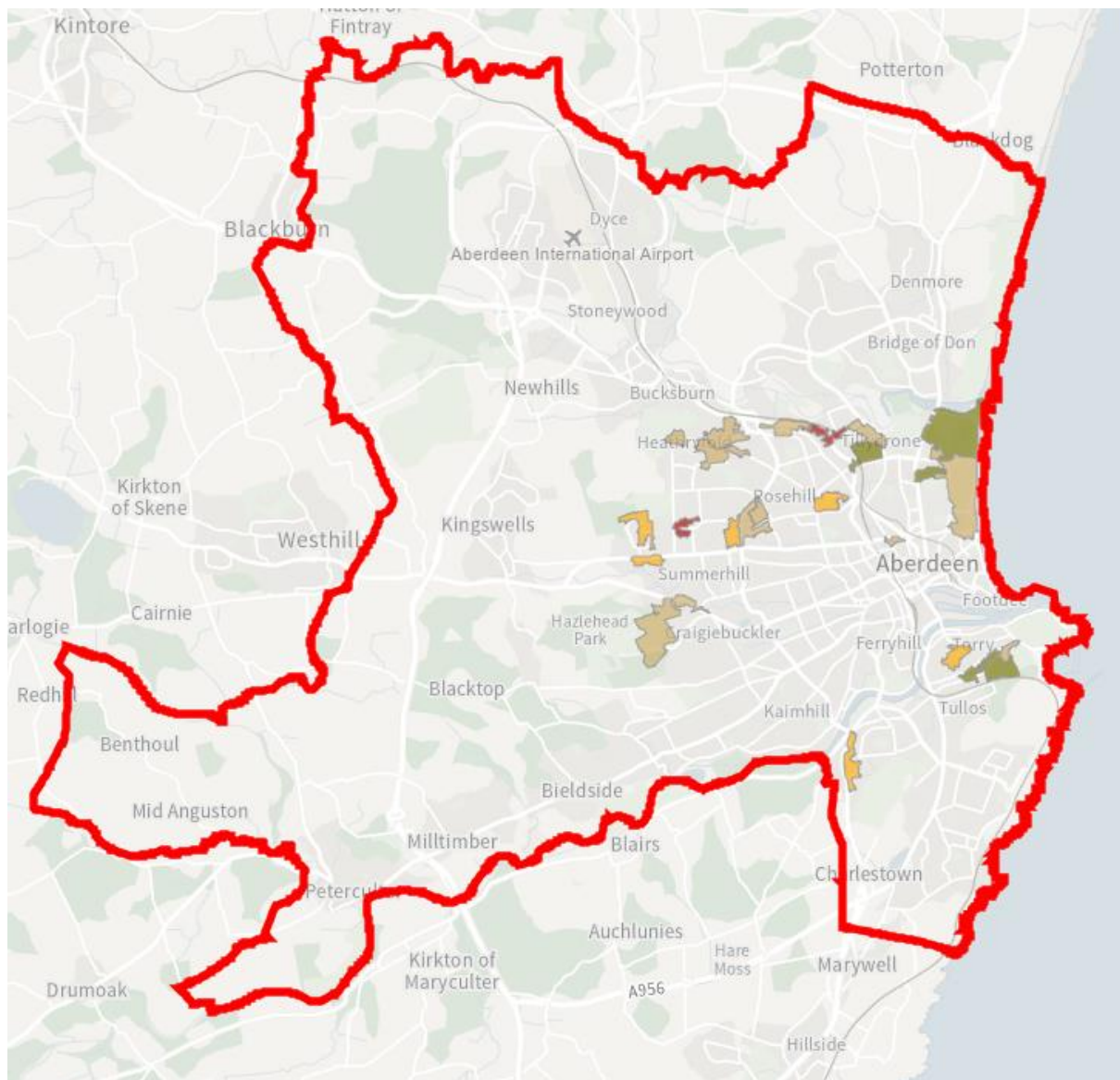
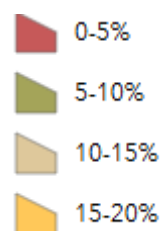


Figure 17.12: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area - employment. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.



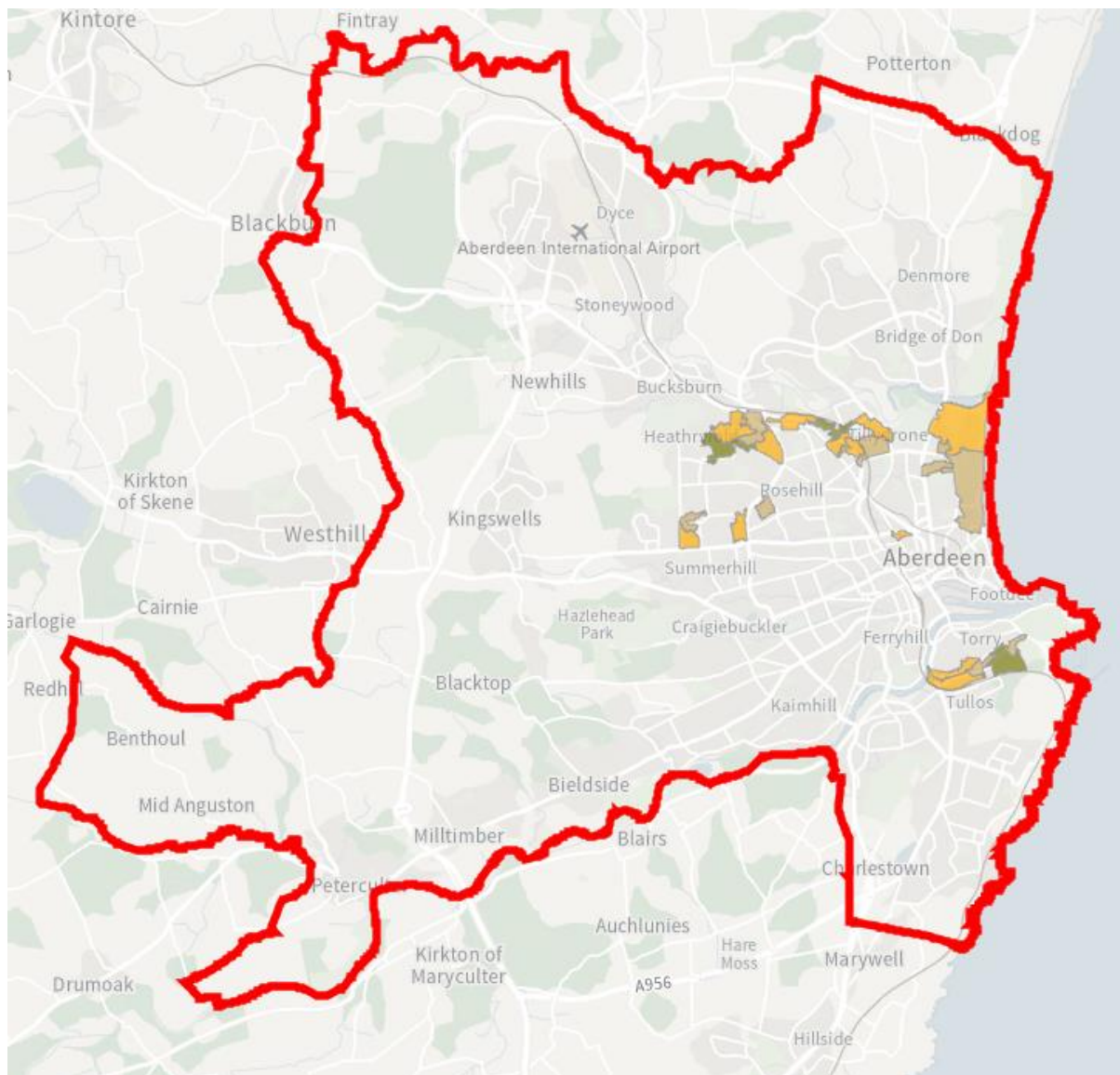
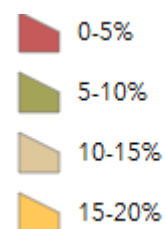


Figure 17.13: SIMD data on Aberdeen on 0-20% most deprived area - income. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.



Regional Economic Strategy

17.100 Sets the vision for a regional economy that enables the region to thrive, leading a just energy transition, diversifying the economy, enabling entrepreneurship and innovation, and delivering a wellbeing economy for people – a post fossil-fuel future. By 2035, the regional economy will be leading the transition to and production of future energy solutions, new green energy and will be diversifying through growth in digital technology, food and drink, tourism, life sciences and creative sectors. Five objectives are outlined with four programmes (A thriving innovation driven economy; An outstanding natural environment; A healthy and skilled population; Strong community & cultural identity) noted to meet the vision and objectives.

17.101 Community wealth building is identified as a national policy priority and with programme 3: A healthy and skilled population. The key employment sectors in the North East by value are: energy sector, financial and business services, food and drink, tourism, creative industries, digital industries and life sciences. The next local development plan will seek to incorporate the keys aims of this strategy.

Local economic statistics

17.102 NOMIS is a service provided by Office for National Statistics. It publish statistics related to population, society and the labour market at national, regional and local levels. Data on employment for Aberdeen is as follows:

- In 2022, there were an estimated 158,000 jobs in Aberdeen City of which 111,000 (70.3%) were full-time and 47,000 (29.7%) were part-time. The most common sectors/industries were Human Health and Social Work Activities (17.1 % of jobs), Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (12.7%), Mining and Quarrying (12.7%) and Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (9.5%)
- In the year July 2023 - June 2024, over a third (35.3%) of those in employment in Aberdeen City were in Professional Occupations compared to 26% in Scotland. The proportion of those employed in other occupations is similar to or lower than Scotland, with the exception of those in caring, leisure and other service occupations which are higher in Aberdeen City than in Scotland, and skilled trades occupations which are lower than Scotland.
- 80.5% of Aberdeen's working age population (16-64 years) was classified as economically active compared to 77.3% in Scotland. A slightly higher proportion of males (80.6%) than females (80.3%) were economically active. The proportion of females and males who are economically active is higher than for Scotland (75% and 79.7% respectively).
- 19% of Aberdeen's working age population were economically inactive. Of those who were economically inactive, 32.8% were students, 28% were long-term sick, 18.4% were looking after home/family and 11.8% were retired. Over three-quarters (88%) of those who were economically inactive did not want a job. The statistics provide an understanding of current employment status.

Committee Report COM/22/279 and appendix / Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy / Joint Procurement Strategy

17.103 Community wealth building in Aberdeen is a place based economic development approach with short, medium and long-term actions for implementation which embeds a community wealth building approach across council services. The Council identifies as an anchor institution and seeks to influence and encourage other anchors organisations to adopt community wealth building pillars thereby maximising the local economic impact and outcomes, as shown through the Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy and Joint Procurement Strategy.

17.104 This approach will support improvement in wider priority outcomes within the Council Delivery Plan and the Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Key activities that currently align to the community wealth building pillars include:

- Spending - the Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy sets out how securing positive local outcomes can maximise social, economic and environmental benefits in public procurement, adding value that is good for the local area;
- Workforce - Business Gateway has a dedicated member of staff working in the city's locality areas to support new and existing businesses;
- Workforce - provision of seed finance for people of employability programmes seeking to set up in business.
- Aberdeen Responsible Business – through Community Planning Aberdeen we are engaging anchor businesses across the City to support better outcomes for communities through shared delivery of the LOIP. From becoming a Real Living Wage employer, to providing employability opportunities for priority groups to becoming net zero to mitigate against climate change, businesses are taking forward a range of projects which add value to the City.
- Community Empowerment – through Community Planning Aberdeen we are working with anchor organisations and communities to improve outcomes by working together to maximise community assets to deliver shared priorities within the Community Empowerment Strategy, LOIP and Locality Plans
- Land and Property – Promotion and support for Asset Transfer Request Processes with communities.

17.105 Actions to support an Aberdeen Community Wealth Building approach through the land and property pillar are outlined within the Community Asset Transfer webpage. The next plan will seek to understand how community wealth building can be incorporated into planning using the key aims of the documents.

Community Assets Transfer Annual Report 2023

17.106 Under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, community groups can request to take over publicly owned land or buildings if they feel they can make better use of them for the local community. The Act gives community bodies the right to make an Asset Transfer Request for ownership, lease, management or use of a publicly owned building or land, regardless of whether they are occupied by the Council or considered surplus to requirements. 1 application was received during 2022/2023, with 5 previous assets transfer requests from previous years. The next plan will consider how it can highlight community asset transfer opportunities.

Current Assets 2025 (02 June 2025)

17.107 A list of all of Aberdeen City Councils non-housing assets which includes a number of built and natural assets such as shops, parks, schools, amenity land, office units, industrial units, libraries, allotments, car parks, war memorials churchyards, and more. The Aberdeen City Council Community Asset Transfer webpage also notes:

- Agreed requests - Tillydrone Community Centre
- Completed requests - Tillydrone Library and Family Centre, and Wallace Tower
- Request under consideration - Torry Youth and Leisure Centre
- New requests - Westfield Park, Bridge of Don
- Assets available for Community Assets Transfer - Balnagask Circle – Former Torry Children's Services

17.108 The next plan will consider how it can highlight community asset transfer opportunities.

Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 – refresh April 2024

17.109 The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 (LOIP) was refreshed in April 2024 and has been produced by Community Planning Aberdeen to outline how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The vision for 2026 is Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. Through early intervention and prevention, the aim is to create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself, using a whole life approach combined with a lifelong learning approach. The measures of success in achieving the vision will be that by 2026:

- We will still have the highest GVA (Gross Value Added) per head in Scotland
- Fewer than 10% of our children are living in poverty
- We are living in good health for at least five years longer
- Our carbon emissions are 61% lower

17.110 The LOIP has four key themes to achieve the vision; Economy, People (Children & Young People, and Adults), Place and Community Empowerment, with 16 stretch outcomes. The stretch outcomes are overarching aims that are to be achieved through improvement projects.

17.111 As community wealth building in Aberdeen focuses on an economic development approach with short, medium and long-term actions, the economy outcome of the LOIP are:

- 20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home by 2026.
- 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026.

17.112 The LOIP is supported by three locality plans covering all 37 neighbourhoods in the city, that are split into the north, south and central. Locality plans help to plan for and deliver improved outcomes and seeks to make things better for the community. The next local development plan will seek to support the outcomes of the LOIP, which may be achieved through spatial strategy or local policy or guidance.

Locality Plan 2021-2026 – refresh April 2024

17.113 The North Locality Plan covers 14 neighbourhoods within Aberdeen to the north of the city. Within the 14, five are classed as Priority Locality Areas – please see map below – Locality 1 area. These are Northfield, Mastick, Cummings Park, Middlefield and Heathryfold.

17.114 The Central Locality Plan covers 16 neighbourhoods within Aberdeen, all located within the middle of the city. Within the 16, six are classed as Priority Locality Areas – please see map below – Locality 2 area. These are Tillydrone, Woodside, Seaton, George Street, Stockethill and Ashgrove.

17.115 The South Locality Plan covers nine neighbourhoods within Aberdeen, all located to the south of the city. Within the nine, two are classed as Priority Locality Areas – please see map below – Locality 3 area. These are Torry and Kincorth.

17.116 Community wealth building in Aberdeen focuses on an economic development approach with short, medium and long-term actions. The economy outcome of the Locality Plans looks to:

- Reduce the number of people living in poverty for all three areas.
- Improve and create employment opportunities (identified for the south locality plan).

17.117 The next local development plan will seek to support the outcome of the locality plan, which may be achieved through spatial strategy or local policy or guidance.

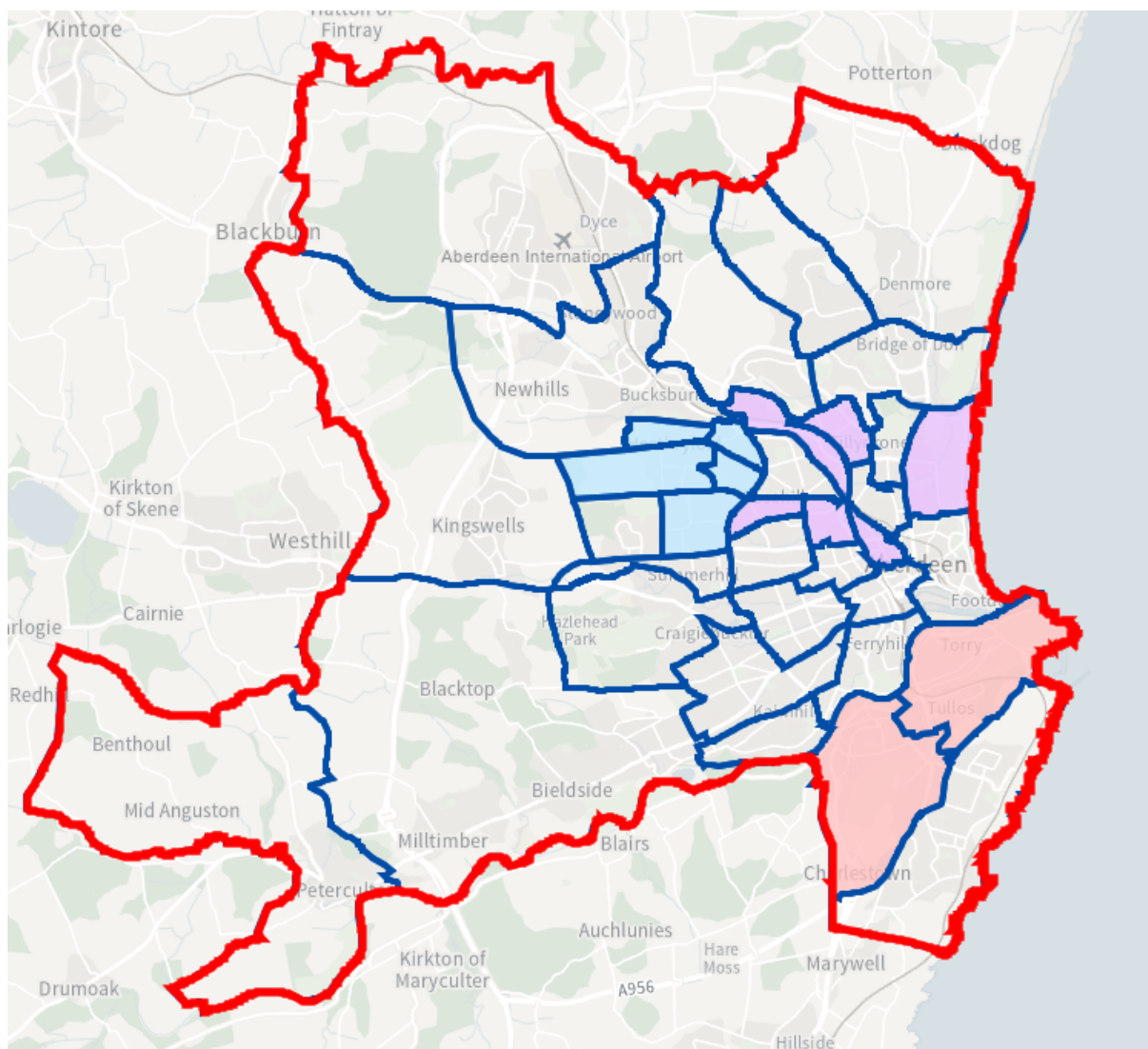
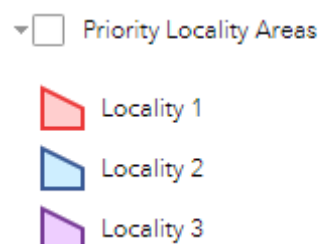


Figure 17.14: Aberdeen Neighbourhoods and Priority Locality Areas. Extract Aberdeen City Council Internal GIS.



Aberdeen Community Learning and Development Plan

17.118 An interim plan covers 2024 / 2025, with a review planned for 2025. The plan identifies established youth work outcomes and emerging priorities, established adult and family outcomes and emerging priorities, and established community development outcomes and emerging priorities.

17.119 The Plan supports the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans and through the community development outcomes, will support the creation and development of social enterprise and community wealth building. This will be measured by the number of social enterprise and community asset transfers. The Community Learning and Development Plan completed an eight week public

consultation on 18 May 2025. The results of which may have implications for the Proposed Plan in terms of community wealth building.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

17.120 A full breakdown of all stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the Evidence Report is provided within the Engagement Strategy, and the engagement report.

17.121 Initial contact was made with key stakeholders in August 2024, inviting them to be part of the working group on a wider topic paper named Wellbeing of Community. The Wellbeing of Community paper was split in two in October 2024; becoming the Place Paper, and the Wellbeing and Communities Paper. The following text relates to the Wellbeing and Community Paper.

17.122 Key stakeholders for the paper included:

- NHS Grampian Public Health Consultant
- Sport Aberdeen
- Sportscotland
- Health and Safety Executive
- Aberdeen City Council (Environmental Health / Community Wealth Building / Community Planning / Community Learning and Development, Development Management).

17.123 A list of suggested key evidence was outlined to key stakeholders in September 2024, with a request to confirm they agreed with the evidence sources cited or suggest further additions. Further information sources were noted and added to the paper.

17.124 The evidence presented within the Wellbeing and Community paper was initially circulated in draft form during January 2025 to the key stakeholders and FIRS. They also had sight of all initial draft topic papers.

17.125 A full public and targeted 8 week engagement took place between 24 March and 18 May 2025. 9 response in total were received for this paper, 4 from organisations (NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Sportscotland, Homes for Scotland) 1 from a housing developer, (Bancon Homes) 1 from an agent on behalf of an oil producer (John Handley Associates Ltd on behalf of Shell UK), and 3 member of the public. Of those listed, 1 did not agree with the evidence prepared, and 2 others provided further evidence sources.

17.126 Sportscotland identified discussions are taking place on an audit on spaces, places and services which is being carried out through the Active Aberdeen Partnership. Sportscotland, Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council are in the partnership. This work will help to inform the Proposed Plan, and a sentence has been added to the implications for the plan section to note awareness of the audit.

17.127 John Handley Associates Ltd identify additional data sources which have been added to the paper, and recommend that the Council takes into account and consults with the HSE and the owner/operator of the Major Accident Hazard Pipelines as part of the subsequent site assessment process, and include a specific site selection criteria which essentially safeguards Major Accident Hazard Pipelines from new

development, unless the proposal is compliant with HSE advice and guidance. Cross referencing should be made to the infrastructure paper. These have been actioned.

17.128 Homes for Scotland identified additional evidence sources, 3 of which have been added to the paper (Aberdeen Airport Annual Noise Report 2023, Aberdeen Airport Noise Action Plan 2018-2023, and the Health and Safety Executive Land Use Planning Guidance). A fourth evidence source, the Scottish House Condition Survey 2023, was suggested as a benchmark to evidence the improvement in quality of new homes. Although this suggestion is welcomed, it covers all of Scotland. The Scottish House Condition Survey produce local authority estimates based on 3 year averages, the next one to be produced is 2026 due to COVID impacting on previous years methodology. This may be more informative to the Proposed Plan than the 2023 survey.

17.129 Homes for Scotland also provided further commentary as noted below:

- Aberdeen City Council should consider selling off areas of low scoring open space as defined by the Open Space Strategy, Forestry and Woodland Strategy, and Play Sufficiency Assessment. The Council consider this is going beyond an implication for the Proposed Plan, and into corporate decision making and planning;
- Scottish House Condition Survey to be used to benchmark new homes against previous homes. We consider the 3 year local authority audit may be a more effective tool to understand the local picture. This is due in 2026;
- Ensure Airport noise data is part of site assessment. The Council consider it will be, and the implications for the plan section includes environmental considerations, including noise. This has been updated to noted airport noise;
- Community wealth building requirements should not be imposed upon house builders through the planning process as most have their own procurement process. The Council consider National Planning Framework 4 asked for Community Wealth Building to be considered as part of the planning process and as such we are required to consider how this will be actioned at an Aberdeen level;
- The provision of homes is a key component in meeting the Marmot Principles. The Council agree. The Delivery of Homes Topic Paper covers this relationship.

17.130 Bancon Homes agree all key evidence has been provided and note the following comments:

- Housing can improve a person's home life, can provide new homes in the right location and can bring forward affordable housing. It is therefore important to allocate enough land for residential development in areas where people wish to live as this brings multiple health benefits and also avoids health inequality and social isolation, as people can live within a community that they know. The Council agree homes can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing, and consider the allocation of homes is discussed within the "Delivery of Homes" paper. The Proposed Plan will endeavour to embed the place and wellbeing outcomes to focus decision making, as is outlined in the "implications for the plan" section.
- The local development plan can make a tangible difference by supporting the development/ creation/ improvement of natural spaces and improving connectivity between blue and green infrastructure. This will support health and wellbeing, facilitates local living and connectivity to reduce social isolation. The

Council agree the local development plan can have a positive impact on natural spaces and blue / green infrastructure, which can also have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. The Proposed Plan will endeavour to embed the place and wellbeing outcomes to focus decision making, as is outlined in the “implications for the plan” section.

- Health eating can be achieved through the LDP supporting proposals for new/ extended community food growing/ allotments. New development sites can provide factored “community growing areas”, these will provide health, wellbeing and biodiversity benefits. The Council consider the “implications for the plan” section notes this as consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing, and take into account the aims of the food growing strategy.

17.131 An email was sent on 10 June to member of the public who disputed the paper.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

Play, recreation and sport

17.132 The SportScotland Model could be used to help to inform the future sports and recreation infrastructure to be planned for Aberdeen, in conjunction with detailed analysis, local engagement, and budget considerations. The Proposed Plan will be informed by any audit prepared by the Active Aberdeen Partnership on places, spaces and services related to sport and recreation.

17.133 The open space audit, and open space strategy and play sufficiency assessment will help form an understanding of the current quantity, quality and spreads of assets, and identify areas of improvement.

17.134 The Proposed Plan will seek to achieve the aims of the children’s services strategic plan, and the play policy and strategy. This could be achieved through placemaking principles, the spatial strategy, or a local policy or guidance relating to play / open space.

17.135 The open space audit, and the open space strategy, trees and woodland strategy will help to inform the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan.

17.136 The play sufficiency assessment and open space audit and strategy may have an impact on the spatial strategy and policy/site requirements of the Proposed Plan.

Health and safety

17.137 With a detailed health and safety policy now included in National Planning Framework 4, consideration will need to be given on the continued need or amendment of local health and wellbeing policies.

17.138 The Proposed Plan will continue to recognise the link between health, wellbeing, and place, and look to address inequalities. The spatial strategy will seek to ensure this through site selection. The extant plan was developed with a health in all policies approach, with local policies assessed against the health priorities for Scotland.

Consideration will be given on continuing a health in all policies approach in the Proposed Plan.

- 17.139 The Proposed Plan will not publish information on the locations of concern for suicide, but will take account of these locations and will consider if a policy is required on how to ensure new development is designed safely and with suicide risk in mind, as well as the proximity of such developments to these locations of concern.
- 17.140 The Proposed Plan will endeavour to embed the place and wellbeing outcomes to focus decision making.
- 17.141 The Proposed Plan will look to address the issues raised through the NHS and Health and Social Care reports by ensuring development follows good placemaking principles. This will require a review of local placemaking policies, with an awareness of National Planning Framework 4 Policy.
- 17.142 The Proposed Plan will look to support any objectives the come out of the Aberdeen Healthy Weight Whole Systems Approach.
- 17.143 Consideration will be given to how the Proposed Plan can help to further support food growing, and take into account the aims of the food growing strategy.
- 17.144 Environmental considerations relating to noise including airport noise, air quality, contaminated land will be a consideration during Proposed Plan site selection.
- 17.145 The Proposed Plan will direct inappropriate development away from Major Accident Hazard Pipelines, and public safety zones. Site selection criteria will safeguard Major Accident Hazard Pipelines from new development, unless the proposal is compliant with HSE advice and guidance.

Community Wealth Building

- 17.146 The Proposed Plan will need to take into account the aims of Regional Economic Strategy, Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy, Community Learning and Development Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans in relation to aspirations for community wealth building.
- 17.147 Consider how the Proposed Plan can reduce inequalities, and enable equity - and how this can be delivered through the planning process. A local policy or further guidance may be required.
- 17.148 To consider how to highlight community asset transfer opportunities and link to Local Place Plans

Marmot Places

- 17.149 Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three [Marmot Places](#) in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight

Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	Potential implication for the Plan
Give every child the best start in life.	X
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.	X
Create fair employment and good work for all.	X
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	X
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	X
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	X
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	X

Table 17.13. Marmot principle matrix

Statement of Agreement / Dispute

Agreement on Evidence

17.150 NatureScot, NHS Grampian, Sportscotland and two members of the public responded and agreed with the evidence presented.

17.151 Homes for Scotland, Bancon and John Handley Associates Ltd stated they do not dispute the evidence but note further comments as discussed in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement above.

Disputes with Stakeholders

17.152A member of the public disagrees with the evidence used, but states he “does not have the knowledge to confirm why”. A follow up email notes concerns raised about the construction of the public consultation rather than the topic papers themselves.

Information Gaps

17.153 The Open Space Strategy has yet to be updated. The Open Space Audit 2024 will be used to inform the Open Space Strategy. This is expected within the next 12 months as part of the Natural Environment Strategy, and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

17.154 The Trees and Woodlands Strategy has yet to be produced. This is expected within the next 12 months as part of the Natural Environment Strategy, and will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.

- 17.155 The Air Quality Action Plan is being updated, and will be published alongside the consultation for the updated Local Transport Strategy in 2025. This will be used to inform the Proposed Plan.
- 17.156 Gaps remain in the exact future service needs/interventions and exactly where interventions are required for health service. It is recognised that Aberdeen's health and social care services are currently experiencing significant challenges/pressures and fiscal uncertainty. As a result, providers have found it challenging to ascertain future needs and provisions which span the lifespan of the LDP. The Council will continue to liaise with health and social care partners throughout the Proposed Plan stage to further understand these details.
- 17.157 Local Place Plans may provide further policy or spatial data relating to the above mentioned topic areas. No Local Place Plans have been received to date. Consideration will be given to any registered Local Place Plans when drafting the Proposed Plan.

18. Conclusion

- 18.1. In conclusion, this Evidence Report provides a comprehensive overview of the key data, information, and strategies that will inform the preparation of the next Local Development Plan for Aberdeen City. The report aims to ensure that the next LDP is robust, well-informed, and aligned with national and regional planning frameworks. By addressing the key areas outlined in this report, Aberdeen City's next Local Development Plan can achieve sustainable development, enhance the quality of life for residents, and promote economic growth.
- 18.2. Aberdeen City Council approved the content of this report at its meeting on 02 July 2025. An independent assessment of the Evidence Report will now be requested to determine whether there is a sufficient and robust evidence base before proceeding further to prepare a Proposed Plan. This assessment is carried out by a Reporter appointed by the Scottish Ministers.

Appendices

1	Site Assessment & SEA Checklist	Xx
2	Example of Effectiveness and Deliverability Checklist	Xx

Appendix 1: Site Assessment and SEA Checklist

Site Name:	Source of site suggestion: All landowners/interested parties identified/aware?	Current site reference	Site History/Previous planning applications, existing local plan policies and proposals, historic reference numbers:
Settlement:	GIS Site Ref: Previous ref:	Outside settlement boundary?	
OS Grid Ref:	Site Size (ha):	Is the site an allocation in the adopted LDP; sites proposed through call for ideas or any other sites with potential? No Yes ref. Yes but different boundary	Summary Description (topography, features, boundaries, neighbouring issues, access, exposure, aspect etc. Site visit/GIS observations:
Current Use e.g. is the site brownfield, vacant and derelict land, greenfield, agricultural?	Proposed Use:	Relevant policies/proposals from LDP or NPF4:	
		Relationship to Marmot Principles:	
Insert Location Plan:		Insert Photographs if available:	

Topic – water Related SEA topics – population and human health, material assets, climatic factors	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre- mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post- mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Could the proposal affect the condition of the water environment (water quality, physical condition, water resources, and the migration of wild fish)? See RBMPs for further detail on water condition.	Flood risk and water management Coastal development Blue and green infrastructure					
Could the proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example, result in the need for watercourse crossings or a large-scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse)?	Flood risk and water management Coastal development Blue and green infrastructure					
Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?	Infrastructure first					

Can the proposal connect to the public water mains? If not, is there a sustainable water source that is resilient to the periods of water scarcity?	Flood risk and water management Infrastructure first					
Are there wetlands or boggy areas on the site?	Flood risk and water management					
For large scale developments, are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?	Infrastructure first					

Flood Risk Relative to the floodplain, as defined in NPF4 could the proposal be at risk of flooding (from any source) or result in additional flood risk elsewhere? If flood risk is not fully understood, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken. Specify which of the following flood sources are applicable: fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater or coastal.	Flood Risk and Water Management Coastal development					
Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?	Flood risk and Water management					

Topic – Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Related SEA topics – soils, water, climatic factors...	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
To what extent will the proposal conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity?	Biodiversity Natural Places					
To what extent will the proposal facilitate the creation of nature networks and improve ecological connectivity?	Natural places Biodiversity					
International Designations - SAC/SPA, Ramsar, World Heritage Sites. To what extent will the proposal affect these sites including via connectivity?	Natural places Biodiversity					
National Designations To what extent will the proposal affect national designations – e.g. SSSI, NNR	Natural places biodiversity					
To what extent will the proposal affect other designations - and locally important designations such as LNRs.	Natural places Biodiversity					

To what extent will the proposal affect Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands in the Ancient , Semi Natural and Long Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands	Natural places Biodiversity					
Protected Species–e.g. bats, otters, etc - can it be ascertained if protected species will be affected and will a site survey be required?	Natural places Biodiversity					
To what extent will local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal?	Soils Natural place Biodiversity					
How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?	Biodiversity Tackling the climate and nature crisis Forestry, trees and woodland.					

Topic – Climatic Factors Related SEA topics – population, human health, water, biodiversity, material assets, soils, air, cultural heritage, landscape	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
To what extent will the proposal involve sediment extraction/reclamation or changes in coastal processes that could result in coastal flooding?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Coastal development					
To what extent will the proposal promote and enable adaptation to climate change?	Climate mitigation and adaptation					
To what extent does the proposal use nature based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure First Blue and Green infrastructure					

To what extent does the proposal maintain and enhance resilience of existing and planned grey and green infrastructure?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure first Blue and Green infrastructure					
To what extent does the proposal have good proximity to services and good access to existing or proposed public transport and active travel network?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure First.					

Topic – Air Quality Related SEA topics – climatic factors, soils, population and human health	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Could the proposal lead to Local Air Quality Management thresholds being breached in an existing Air Quality Management Area?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Health and Safety					
Could the proposal lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	Health and safety					
Does the proposal introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. combined heat and power, an industrial process, large scale quarry etc.)?	Health and safety					

Will the proposal lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site with noise/odour issues or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA (e.g. conflict with Aberdeen Airport noise contours, or new housing adjacent to a large manufacturing factory)	Health and safety					

Topic – population and human health Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Is the proposal within the vicinity of a major accident hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline?	Health and safety					
Will the proposal affect service infrastructure: Education capacity - Secondary School Catchment Area/ Primary school catchment area Health provision/GP capacity						

To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	Design, Quality and place local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Blue and green infrastructure Play, recreation and sport					
To what extent will the proposal affect core path links or other key access networks such as cycle paths, coastal paths and rights of way?	Sustainable Transport Design, quality and place Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods Infrastructure first??					

Will the proposal have the opportunity to incorporate new or enhance existing blue and/or green infrastructure providing multiple benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, management of surface water?	Blue and Green infrastructure Infrastructure First					

Topic – Soils Related SEA topics – landscape, cultural heritage, water, biodiversity, flora and fauna, material assets.	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Does the proposal make use of a brownfield site or contaminated and vacant and derelict land? If on brownfield, is the site naturalised?	Soils Brownfield, vacant and derelict land					
Are there any contaminated soils issues on the site and if so, will the option employ remedial actions to ensure the site is suitable for use (as defined in PAN 33)?	Soils					
Is the proposal on peat or carbon rich soils and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat or carbon rich soils?	Soils Climate mitigation and adaptation					
Does the proposal result in the loss of prime agricultural land or land that is culturally or locally important for primary use as identified by the LDP?	Soils					

Topic – Landscape Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, population and human health	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
National landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – including NSAs, Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					
Regional and local landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					

Non designated landscape features and key landscape interests Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as current settlement boundaries, existing townscape and character of surrounding area and its visual qualities?	Natural Places					
To what extent will the proposal affect features of landscape interest, including the distinctive character of the landscape and the qualities of wild land?	Natural places					

Topic – Cultural Heritage Related SEA topics – Climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, landscape	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre- mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post- mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Does the proposal protect or enhance the site or setting of: • World Heritage Sites* • Scheduled Monuments • Listed buildings • Inventory battlefields • Inventory gardens and designed landscapes • Conservation Areas • Undesignated historic environment assets • Streetscapes and settlement patterns monuments	Historic assets and places Natural Places					

Does the proposal promote or enable the retention, maintenance and sustainable use or re-use of historic buildings and infrastructure?	Historic assets and places Zero waste Infrastructure first Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings City, town, local and commercial centres Rural development					

Does the proposal:	Historic assets and places					
Support the repair and appropriate retrofit of historic buildings?	Tackling the climate and nature crises					
Support the transition to green energy supply in historic buildings?	Climate mitigation and adaptation					
Include adaptation measures to make the historic environment assets and places more resilient to the effects of climate change (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding etc)?	Design, quality and place					
	Infrastructure first					
	Quality homes					
	Flood risk and water management					
	Rural homes					

Does the proposal:	Tourism					
Enable the historic environment to support creation of high-quality places and spaces?	Culture and creativity					
Promote sustainable, responsible tourism, recreation and cultural activity?	Design, quality and place					
	Play, recreation and sport					
	Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods					

Topic – Material Assets – Deliverability/ sustainability constraints Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, population and human health.	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe? Other site servicing constraints, e.g. electricity pylons, underground gas pipelines etc.						
Site aspect – does the site make best use of solar gain? Is the site protected from prevailing winds?	Design Quality and place Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Heat and Cooling					
Is the site in an area of heat network potential or a designated Heat Network Zone (HNZ)?	Climate Mitigation and adaptation Heat and cooling					

Vehicular Access constraints or opportunities - Is the network capable of accommodating active travel, public transport, other shared modes, and private vehicle traffic generated?	local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Sustainable transport					
Is the site close to a range of facilities? Can these be accessed by public transport or active travel?	local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Sustainable transport City, town, local and commercial centres					
Does the proposal minimise demand for primary resources by reusing an existing building?	Zero waste					
For waste infrastructure and facilities (except landfill and EFW) does the proposal comply with the criteria listed in NPF4 policy 12 d)?	Zero waste					

Other Considerations

Please note any other issues which may be relevant to the assessment of the candidate site. For example:

- Any restrictive covenants relating to the use of the land/ buildings contained within the proposed candidate site?
- Is the candidate site on Common Good Land?
- Is there a requirement to prepare place-based development briefs or masterplans?

Scoring – two columns have been added in the event that it is useful for planning authorities to quickly identify environmental effects from a proposal on a site. Where adverse effects have been identified, it may then also be useful to consider any obvious mitigation measures that might reduce these adverse effects. The second scoring column then allows at a quick glance to see what residual effects might remain following mitigation. There are many scoring techniques currently in use and an example of one option could be:

++	+	0	-	--
Significantly positive	positive	neutral	adverse	Significantly adverse

Explanation of the key SEA topics (please note the SEA objectives are suggested examples only)

Water

SEA objective – To protect and enhance the ecological status of the water environment

Water Drainage Constraints

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) has the overall objective of ensuring that all inland and coastal waters within defined river basin districts reach at least good status by 2027. Achieving this requires measures to be put in place and action to be taken to i) prevent deterioration and ii) promote improvements in the water environment.

Information on the current status of a water body, pressures affecting it, measures required to address those pressures, and deadlines for achieving those measures can be extracted from SEPA's [water environment hub](#). This tool should be used to identify existing pressures on water bodies and the site assessment should identify whether or not policies and proposals are likely to exacerbate existing pressures, create new problems and offer opportunities for enhancement. For example, if there are already morphological pressures on a water body then further engineering could trigger a further downgrade. Control of non-native invasive bank-side / in-stream plant species is an example of enhancement where an invasive non-native species pressure has been identified for a water body.

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Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs)

GWDTEs are types of wetland which are specifically protected under the Water Framework Directive. SEPA holds a list of GWDTEs within all designated sites (SSSIs, SPAs, and SACs). To identify non-designated GWDTEs a habitat survey (Phase 1) would be required. At the site assessment stage we do not require a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, but we do require information on location of wetlands and boggy areas. This information can be collected by looking for the boggy ground symbol on GIS and / or a site visit.

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Flood Risk

Development plan preparation should be informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). [Scottish Government's Development Planning Guidance](#) states that SFRA's are designed to inform the development planning process, primarily to avoid increasing overall flood risk by avoiding areas of flood hazard. The SFRA can be used as a screening tool to identify whether flood risk is fully understood at site assessment stage, and therefore whether further detailed site-level [Flood Risk Assessment](#) is required prior to a site being included in the Proposed Plan, to ensure that only sites that are in accordance with NPF4 are allocated SEPA has produced Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Guidance which explains how this assessment can be carried out.

For SEA purposes if flood risk is found to be an issue, mitigation could be the removal of the site (or part thereof found to be at risk) from allocation.

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[SEA guidance on water](#) provides advice on how to take water into account in SEA.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

SEA objective – Protect and enhance designated wildlife sites, wider biodiversity interests, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses

International Designations

If there is a likely significant effect then it is important to state why and what site may be affected (including Ramsar sites). The information gathered for this Site Assessment will help inform the 'screening' stage of the HRA – i.e. identify likely significant effects on a Natura site. **Policies or proposals likely to affect a Natura site should be flagged up for assessment in terms of the [Habitats Regulations Appraisal](#).** Guidance on where designated sites are and what their qualifying interests relate to can be found on NatureScot's website Sitelink - <https://sitelink.nature.scot/home>. In addition, the majority of Natura sites are underpinned by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs all have a site management statement which provides useful information on site condition and management pressures and will help to establish what is important and why and therefore help identify likely significant effects.

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National designated sites

Again, see the above comments regarding site management statements for Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are examples of the best wildlife sites in Scotland. These are managed for wildlife but also allowing for enjoyment by public. Guidance on NNRs can be found at: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/national-designations/national-nature-reserves

Other Designated Sites

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are locally important for natural heritage, designated and managed by local authorities to give people better opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature close to where they live. Similarly Local Nature Conservation Areas flag-up to planners and developers where there are natural feature of some merit. In this way it gives planners and developers early indication of sensitive sites and opportunities for enhancing the local environment. The local Biodiversity Officer should be able to provide advice here.

Non designated features and key wildlife habitats

- trees and woodland, including ancient and semi- natural inventory sites
- species rich grassland, moorland, heathland, wetlands and watercourses including burns

Links to Ancient Woodland Inventory (within SNHi) and the Forestry Commission's Native Woodland Survey of Scotland are detailed below.

www.nature.scot/doc/guide-understanding-scottish-ancient-woodland-inventory-awi

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss>

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Protected Species

Although protected areas can safeguard species within their boundaries, some animals and plants are so threatened or vulnerable that they need legal protection wherever they occur. For further information on Protected species click [here](#).

Local Geodiversity sites

These sites provide examples of geology and geomorphology of regional and local importance, where the geodiversity resource can be conserved, so that people can enjoy and find out more about it. These sites can contribute to the quality of local environments and provide opportunities for recreation and informal education.

Geological Conservation Review sites come from an assessment of nationally and internationally important sites for geology and geomorphology. The site boundaries for these and un-notified GCR sites are available through SNHi: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/local-designations/geological-conservation-review-sites

Local geodiversity sites are selected by voluntary geoconservation bodies such as local Geodiversity groups and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) groups. Geology and other natural history enthusiasts, wildlife trusts, museums, geological societies, teachers, planners and site owner, participate in the running of RIGS groups. [More information on RIGS](#).

Nature Networks

A Nature Network connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people.

Connectivity is an essential part of nature. It is necessary for functioning and healthy ecosystems, key for the survival of animal and plant species, and is crucial to ensuring genetic diversity and adaptation to pressures such as climate change.

To ensure Scotland's nature can thrive, nature-rich areas must be connected through a series of networks linking them all together.

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Air Quality

SEA objective – To improve or avoid adverse impacts to air quality and reduce emissions of key pollutants.

The impact of allocations on local Air Quality Management thresholds should be considered. For example, where an area is already close to exceeding air quality objectives, where an area is at risk of becoming an AQMA, or where sensitive development such as a hospital or residential use is proposed close to a busy road or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA. Such allocations may lead to an increase in the exposure of people to poor air quality.

[SEA guidance on air](#) provides advice on how to take air into account in SEA.

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/147606/advice-for-responsible-authorities-on-sea.pdf>

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Population and Human Health

SEA Objective – To protect and enhance quality of life including maintaining and improving opportunities to access public open space and the natural and historic environment

Our surroundings are a key factor in determining our health and sense of well-being. Development plans set the context for clear development management decisions which will help deliver high quality green networks and protect and enhance natural heritage assets. [Green Networks in Development Planning](#) explains the background to green networks, their multi-functionality and provides development planning advice in respect of green networks. Planning authorities should also seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore links which have been broken; [Integrated Habitat Networks](#) can be used here alongside green networks to ensure local biodiversity is maintained and enhanced

Human health can be affected by environmental factors which include pollution (e.g. emissions to air, soil or water from industrial processes including energy and waste management), flooding and climate change. Consideration of these issues, particularly in relation to location of sensitive development types, in site assessment will help to ensure that human health and wellbeing are integral to the plan.

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/planning/strategic-environmental-assessment>

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Soil

SEA objective – To maintain or improve soil quality, quantity and function and prevent any further degradation of soils

To protect carbon rich soils and restore peatlands

Soils provide the following seven key functions:

- providing the basis for food and biomass production
- controlling and regulating environmental interactions (regulating water flow & quality)
- storing carbon and maintaining the balance of gases in the air
- providing valued habitats and sustaining biodiversity
- providing a platform for buildings and roads
- providing raw material
- preserving cultural and archaeological heritage

The assessment should consider the impacts of development on the relevant soil functions for the site. SEPA provides information on regulations that apply to soil and good practice guidance which is available at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/soil.

The [Scottish Soil Framework](#) provides a general framework to promote the sustainable, management and protection of soil consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland. [SEA guidance on soil](#) provides advice on how to take soil into account in SEA.

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/147606/advice-for-responsible-authorities-on-sea.pdf>

The [James Hutton Institute](#) (formerly Macaulay) provides information on soil maps which are available from [Scotland's Soils website](#).

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Landscape

SEA objective – conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value of the area and protect and enhance designated landscape areas

Designated Landscapes

Our fine scenery provides an inspiring backdrop for all who live in Scotland. Images of our unspoilt landscape also helps to market our [tourism](#) and film industries and world-renowned products such as whisky.

Our finest landscapes have been designated as either [National Scenic Areas](#) or [National Parks](#). These include some of Scotland's most famous areas, from the Cuillin Hills to the Cairngorms.

Non-Designated Landscapes

High quality landscapes encourage us to venture into the outdoors. Having [greenspace](#) in our towns and cities, and easy access to our surrounding landscapes, brings vital benefits to our health and well-being.

Each part of Scotland has a distinctive character, which helps to build our sense of place – both in our own localities and as a nation. Together, our diverse landscapes and townscapes provide a living canvas of Scotland's history, reflecting ways of life and traditions deeply engrained in our culture.

Some landscapes are valued for their [wild land](#) quality.

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Climatic Factors – Climate Change Mitigation

SEA objective – To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to the consequences of climate change

The Scottish Government's guidance [Consideration of Climatic Factors within Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) provides useful guidance on how to determine whether a PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects.

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/>

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Material Assets – Waste

SEA objective – To reduce waste and promote the sustainable use of resources

The Scottish Government's [Zero Waste Plan](#) sets out a vision of a zero waste Scotland where waste is treated as a valuable resource and not as a burden.

For allocations for the location of waste management facilities consideration should be given to the potential for adverse impacts which may arise from locating other new development in the vicinity of proposed / existing waste sites and on the potential risk the proposal would pose to people or property. The local authority Environmental Health department is best placed to advise on site specific considerations.

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Cultural Heritage (including the historic environment)

SEA Objective – To protect and promote the historic environment

SEA Sub Objectives:

- To protect and enhance historic environment assets and their settings
- To promote and enable the retention of historic environment assets
- To make the historic environment more climate resilient and to reduce emissions from the historic environment
- To promote and enable access, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment

Settlement level:

Consideration should be given to the likely implications and opportunities for the historic environment arising from the spatial strategy. This will involve considering the likely significant effects for historic environment assets (and their settings), and places.

Strategic considerations:

Our historic environment is not only a finite resource that requires protection but one that also delivers the places and spaces that are key to our everyday lives, cultural identity and sense of place. Our historic built environment provides us with much of our housing stock, offices, infrastructure, public buildings and parks and gardens and therefore our use, maintenance and adaption of these assets is key to a sustainable future and our health and wellbeing.

Scotland's new strategy for the historic environment [Our Past, Our Future \(OPOF\)](#) was published in April 2023. The strategy sets the direction of travel for the historic environment sector and identifies the priority areas of action to focus work to support this mission. The 3 priorities are *Delivering the transition to net zero*, *Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places* and *Building a wellbeing economy*. The importance of the contribution that the maintenance, reuse and adaptation of our historic environment can make in preventing waste and reducing carbon emissions is recognised under the transition to net zero priority.

Scotland's current landscape is the product of natural processes and human activity operating over many centuries, and both natural and historic aspects should be considered when developing policies and proposals at the landscape scale. Proposals should protect and promote the overarching importance of the historic environment to a sense of place. They should take account of the capacity of settlements and surrounding areas to accommodate development without damage to their cultural and historic significance. This reflects the policies contained within both the [National Planning Framework](#) and [The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland](#) (HEPS). HEPS is a policy statement for decision making for the whole of the historic environment for use at all levels. All the policies and principles in HEPS are likely to be relevant to strategic decisions around the allocation of land depending on context, with HEP2, HEP4 and HEP5 highlighting the importance of sustainable decision making and planning for the future use of historic assets and places.

[Historic Environment Scotland's Portal](#) holds locational information on national designations (including downloadable datasets) including designation records, scheduled monument consents and decisions. The relevant council area Historic Environment Records will also be a key resource for information on historic environment baseline including for non-designated assets.

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Appendix 2: Example of Effectiveness and Deliverability Checklist

Site Details		
Name of the site		
Site address		
OS grid reference		
Site size (in hectares)		
Current land use		
Neighbouring land use(s)		
Designated in Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	If yes, please specify:	
Land type	Previously Developed ☐	Greenfield ☐
Include an Ordnance Survey plan (1:1250, 1:2500 or 1:5000). The site boundary should be outlined in red and show proposed points of access etc.		

Your Details	
Name	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Telephone/Mobile number	
Email address	

Ownership		
Are you	Sole Owner ☐	Part Owner ☐
	Agent ☐	Developer ☐
	Register Social Landlord ☐	Option to Purchase ☐
	No legal Interest ☐	
If not sole owner, state owner(s) and provide contact details		
Do these owners know this site is being proposed for development	Yes ☐	No ☐
If 'Option to Purchase', please provide details (timescale, area of site etc.)		
Are there any legal factors which may prevent, or restrict, development? (e.g. wayleaves, restriction on land use, rights of way, ransom strips, access issues, visibility splay ownership etc.)	Yes ☐	No ☐
	If yes, please specify:	

Indicative Proposal	
Brief description of proposal use	

If residential, what number of units is proposed use?			
If other uses, what is the proposed site area (ha) or floorspace (sq. m)?	Business and Offices		
	General industrial		
	Storage and Distribution		
	Retail		
	Other (please specify)		

Delivery			
What year do you expect development to start?			
Projected delivery timeframe from LDP adoption in 2028	Short (2028-2031) ☐	Medium (2032-2034) ☐	Long (2035-2038) ☐
Indicative residential completions per year	Y1 -	Y2 -	Y3 -
	Y4 -	Y5 -	Y6 -
	Y7 -	Y8 -	Y9 -
	Y10 -	Y11 -	Y12 -

Planning History		
Any previous planning history or consents in the last 10 years?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	If yes, please specify:	
Has contact been made with the Planning Authority in relation to the proposal?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	If yes, please specify:	

Potential Constraints			
Is the site affected by any physical constraints (e.g. substations, pylons, underground cables, rivers/burns etc.)?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't know ☐
	If yes, please specify:		
Is any part of the site at risk from flooding?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't know ☐
	If yes, have any assessments been carried out:		
Is the site subject to any potential contamination issues?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't know ☐
	If yes, please specify:		

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information provided in this checklist will be treated as confidential due to its commercial sensitivity and will be used by Aberdeen City Council solely for the purposes of site assessment in relation to the preparation of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2028.