



# NEWHILLS

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Development Framework

February 2014

SUMMARY

# Newhills Expansion Area Development Framework: Summary

## Introduction

The Newhills Expansion Area Development Framework comprises three distinct sites: Craibstone South (OP29), Rowett South (OP30) and Greenferns Landward (OP31). The Newhills Expansion Area site is located on the western edge of Aberdeen, and is bounded to the north and north-east by the A96(T) Aberdeen – Inverness trunk road and by the existing residential area of Bucksburn to the east. The planned Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will form a boundary to the north-west. The remaining boundaries on the south and south-west are formed by landscaped areas and are designated Green Belt. The total site area is 2220 hectares (ha).

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) allocates the Newhills Expansion Area for the provision of 4,440 houses in the period to 2030. This is split amongst the three individual sites as follows: Craibstone South 1,000 homes, Rowett South 1,940 homes and Greenferns Landward 1,500 homes. The ALDP states that a combined masterplan is required for the three sites, and the Development Framework satisfies this requirement.

The Framework has been progressed according to the guidance within Aberdeen City Council's 'Masterplanning Process' document in order to ensure an appropriate process of consultation and feedback has been carried out. Key to the process has been the creation of a clear but flexible spatial Framework based on a vision for the overall development.

The document is set out in the following sections which are summarised on the following pages:

## Section 1: The Masterplan Process

Sets out the process which has been followed during the evolution of the Development Framework, the key landowners and promoters, the planning context, scale of development, and details the consultation and technical engagement process which has been undertaken along with recorded responses to comments.

## Section 2: The Sites

Describes the respective sites, historic development, existing buildings/site uses, the evolving context and site analysis. Key environmental considerations and existing movement networks are presented.

## Section 3: Opportunity and Vision

Outlines a high level vision for the area as a distinctive and sustainable new extension to Aberdeen City which offers a choice of neighbourhoods within easy reach of the existing centre and significant employment areas.

## Section 4: Design Development

Demonstrates the evolution and testing that has been carried out in progressing the Development Framework design. This includes early sketches, material from the public exhibitions and capacity testing.

## Section 5: The Development Framework

Illustrates and defines the key parameters and components of the Development Framework including development structure, landuse, movement, open space provision, urban design and character.

## Section 6: Phasing and Delivery

Indicates the desired direction of growth through phasing diagrams and a matrix of infrastructure requirements.

# Development Framework Area

Craibstone North /  
Walton Farm

Aberdeen International  
Airport

Dyce Drive

Stoneywood

OP29: Craibstone South

Rowett North

A96(T)

Chapel Belts

OP30: Rowett South

Bucksburn

Brimmond Hill

OP31: Greenferns Landward

Burnbrae Moss


Bucks Burn

Greenferns

Newhills Development Framework Opportunity sites and surrounding area



## Legend

 ALDP Opportunity Site

## Section 1: Masterplan process

This section sets out the purpose of the Development Framework and describes the key policy and planning context. The scale of the development is compared to other nearby settlements. The technical and community consultation process is described and the results recorded. Two public exhibitions were held in August and October 2013 with specific pre-event engagement with the relevant Community Councils. The public comments generated by those events is set out and the respective design team responses including subsequent design changes are outlined.

## Section 2: The sites

Section 2 describes the three sites and sets out the key landowners and promoters:

OP29: Craibstone South	Scotland's Rural College SRUC/ CALA Management Limited (CALA);
OP30: Rowett South	University of Aberdeen/Bon Accord Land Promotion Ltd
OP31: Greenferns Landward	Aberdeen City Council

Existing landuses and buildings are outlined including an overview of facilities to be retained. Other developments, masterplans and planning applications which are immediately adjacent to the Framework area are described.

The individual sites are predominantly farmland in active use. Craibstone



Public exhibition board, August 2013

South has been a key part of SRUC’s operations for many years, and formed part of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture prior to it forming part of then SAC in 1990, now SRUC. The Estate provides a variety of facilities on site, including veterinary laboratories, research fields, classrooms and a working farm. Those functions to be retained have had to be considered and integrated into the Framework proposals.

The overall site enjoys good links to the open space resource of Brimmond Hill and connects into the wider network of the ‘Three Hills’, a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS). The Bucks Burn corridor runs to the south of the area and is also identified as a LNCS, which incorporates Burnbrae Moss, an important wildlife site.

Given the extent of the Development Framework area, there are a range of landscape characters and habitats in evidence. The site is characterised by generally east-facing slopes which fall from high points towards the vicinity of Brimmond Hill down towards the larger-scale corridor of the River Don. Local stream corridors and associated separating ridges drain eastwards towards the Don and form a corrugated landscape which displays a number of steep north and south-facing small-scale slopes. Historically, shelterbelt planting and policy woodland areas have been planted on many of these steeper areas, although there are a number of areas within open fields where gradients greater than 10% are apparent.

Key environmental considerations are outlined which have been fundamental in the preparation of the Development Framework. These range from the protection and enhancement of biodiversity capital to the proximity to Aberdeen International Airport and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route for consideration of noise, vibration and air quality.

The existing movement network is analysed and the opportunity for new connections and the provision of new routes within the Development Framework is highlighted. This includes the full range of modes from simple pedestrian connections with existing footpaths, to full vehicular access points which accommodate traffic movements onto the local road network.



Existing site characteristics

## Section 3: Opportunity and Vision

The Newhills Expansion Area will be a distinctive and sustainable new extension to Aberdeen City which offers a choice of neighbourhoods within easy reach of the existing centre and significant employment areas. Designed as a residentially driven urban extension on the edge of the city, it will accommodate a range of housing types and tenures and include supporting uses for use by the new local population. Taking cues from the varying existing qualities of the site will ensure a number of characterful places can grow organically to become viable, sustainable and well-connected communities which are highly attractive.

The vision for the Development Framework proposes:

- A highly connected place;
- Distinctive neighbourhoods shaped by existing landscape features;
- Local services to address needs of new residents;
- Integration with adjacent employment and leisure; and
- Derive character and identity from its position as a countryside edge.

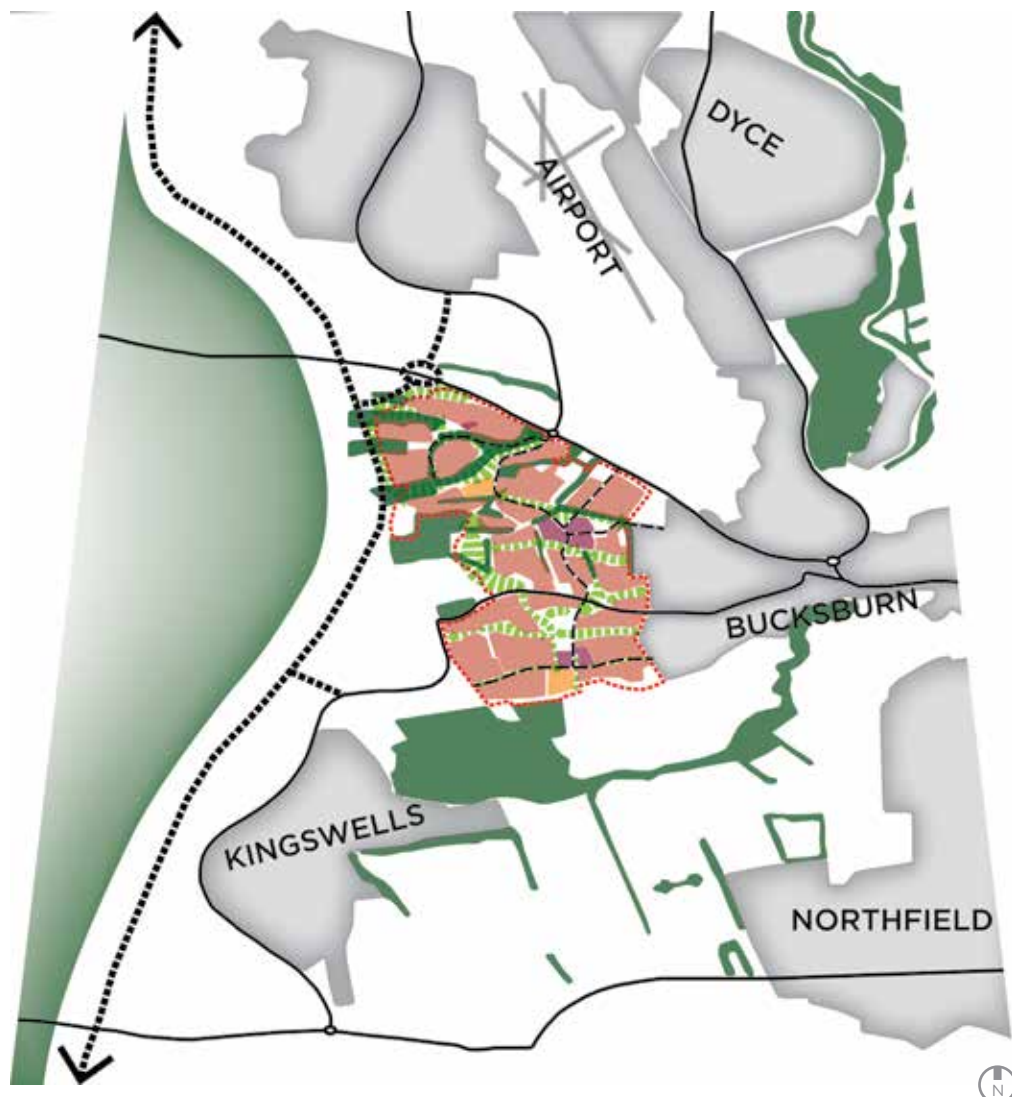


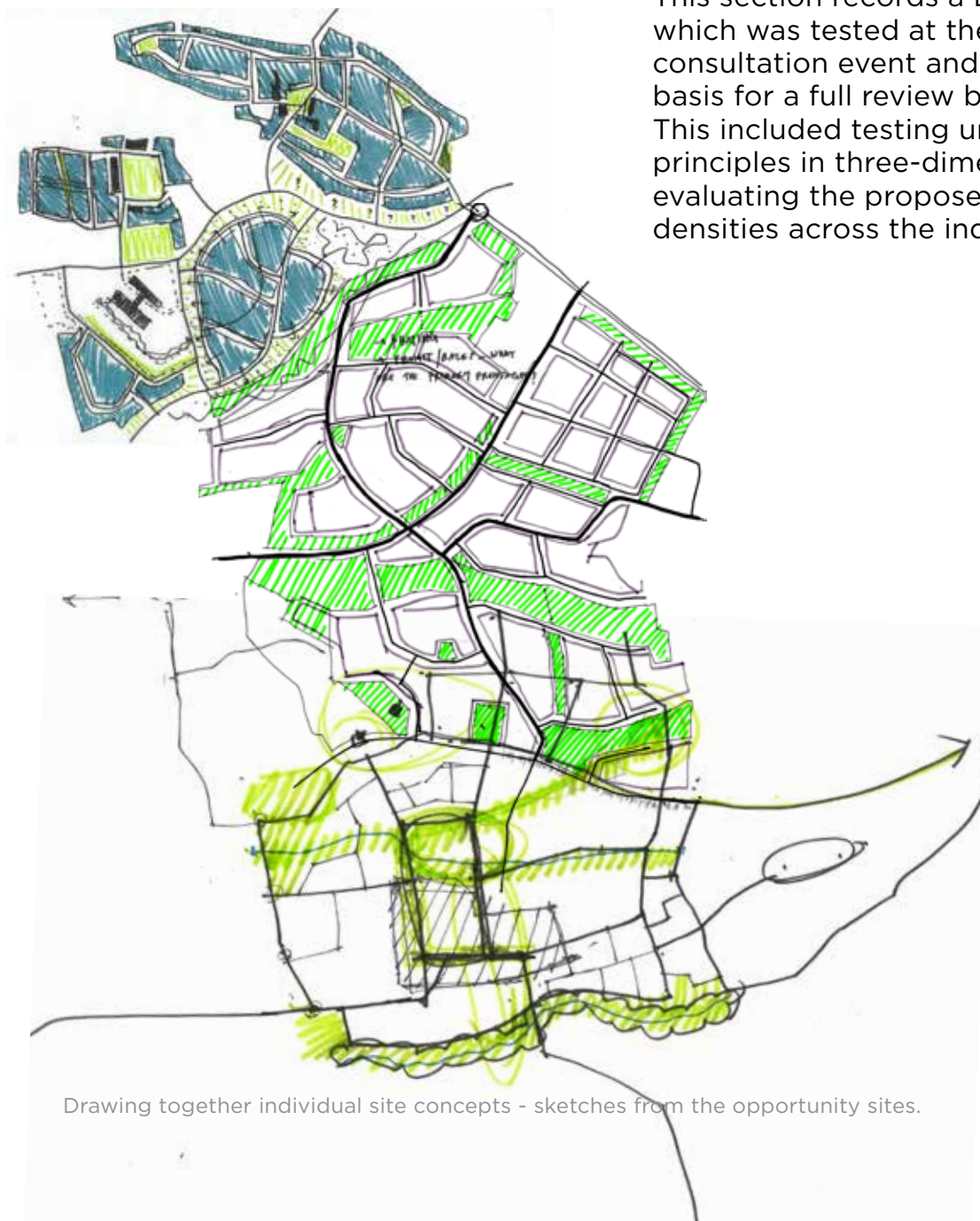
Diagram illustrating approach

## Section 4: Design development

With a site of the scale of the Newhills Expansion Area, testing options and providing alternatives for consultation has been crucial in progressing a Development Framework design which is viable and deliverable. The design testing process has progressed at a range of scales from overall principles for the site to individual block layouts. This ensures that the framework can work strategically as well as at a detail level.

Consultation was carried out using a series of questions and options posed to key stakeholders and the surrounding community. This section illustrates some of those options and the outputs of the overall process in the form of diagrams, plans and sketches. Also included are a series of capacity studies which demonstrate how emerging technical information (such as topographical survey information) has informed design of access and levels and in places impacted areas for development.

This section records a Draft Framework which was tested at the second public consultation event and formed the basis for a full review by ACC officers. This included testing urban design principles in three-dimensions and evaluating the proposed land uses and densities across the individual sites.



Drawing together individual site concepts - sketches from the opportunity sites.

## Section 5: The Development Framework

The Newhills Expansion Area Development Framework requires to bring together three different sites in a coherent and integrated way, whilst responding to the specific and differing qualities of the area's landscape and context. When the development is complete, this will be a new edge to the city and as such its important strategic location must be considered and a long term vision for the area created.

This section sets out in a series of diagrams how the Framework has been structured in relation to existing landscape features, open spaces and corridors, movement, access and spatial experience.

Detailed diagrams set out the proposals for access and connectivity relating to existing and proposed core paths and cycle networks along with vehicular movements which follow the principles of 'Designing Streets' which is Scottish Planning Policy. Prior to 2018, development at Craibstone and Rowett South can commence utilising existing access via the Dyce Drive / A96(T) roundabout for Craibstone and via the existing Forrit Brae access for Rowett South. Other access points at Hopetoun Grange and Kepplehills Road also allow development to commence at Rowett South and Greenferns Landward. Access to the A96(T) from the site is still to be determined with strategic modelling assessing the impact of these proposals on the local and strategic network. Details of the A96(T) access will be progressed through the subsequent Transport Assessments and at the appropriate detail stage.

A landscape framework illustrates open space provision which is appropriate to the place, well-considered and equitable in its distribution. Over 80 hectares of open space is identified, which is significantly above the minimum requirement of 29.5 hectares for the whole Newhills area. Around 15 hectares of outdoor sports and recreation area provision has been calculated as required for the anticipated population at Newhills. Due to the topography of the site there are limited areas of land which could potentially accommodate large-scale outdoor sports surfaces without compromising the ability to deliver the ALDP allocation. A strategy has therefore been progressed focuses on quality rather than quantity and allows the delivery smaller scale, multi-functional playing surfaces which do not require extensive areas of flat land. These areas include:

- 3.8 hectares of pitches / playing fields (excluding Forrit Brae)
- 0.5 hectares of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)
- 6 - 8.5 hectare of cross-country / long distance routes

Total: 10.3 - 12.8 hectares



Landuse and density principles illustrate how and where the Framework allocates residential units, primary school education facilities and supporting mixed-use areas across the general area. The ALDP Action Programme details the requirement for a new GP practice along with dental and community pharmacy facilities. The location of the proposed health centre is shown on the Development Framework plan (see page 46) within the Rowett South neighbourhood centre. The smaller health care facilities including the pharmacies will be accommodated within the neighbourhoods to allow provision to be spread across the site.

Additionally, the consolidated campus at SRUC will provide a variety of uses including student halls of residence, research, teaching and consultation spaces. An additional indoor sports area is provided within the SRUC campus proposals which will be open to the public.

Two options for the location of a Gypsy / Traveller Site have been identified which will allow ACC to subsequently consider them against established Council criteria. Only one site is required and an option will be fixed prior to Masterplanning stage.

The strategy for residential density varies across the respective Opportunity Sites, but there is a common principle adopted to ensure that densities generally step down from east to west to give an appropriate lower density character to the retained rural western boundary.

An initial assessment of the required surface water strategy is described along with a description of current topography and landform. Indicative character areas have been identified across the framework and two- and three-dimensional material has been developed to illustrate the proposed approaches and relevant urban design principles.



Sketch illustrating character and urban design principles

# Newhills Development Framework

Legend

- Development block
- Street
- Open space
- Woodland block
- Mixed use areas
- Ps Primary School site
- H Health centre / Dental surgery
- GT Gypsy / Travellers site option



## Section 6: Phasing and Delivery

The last section of the Framework sets out a strategy for delivering and phasing the development in an effective and comprehensive manner. This includes plans which illustrate the desired direction of growth across the overall area, the existing constraints to development due to education and roads capacity and an approach to identifying what improvements are required in order to deliver the development.

The infrastructure requirements set out in the ALDP Action Programme which include utilities, education, health and affordable housing have been fully considered by the landowners and an approach agreed as to distribution of costs.

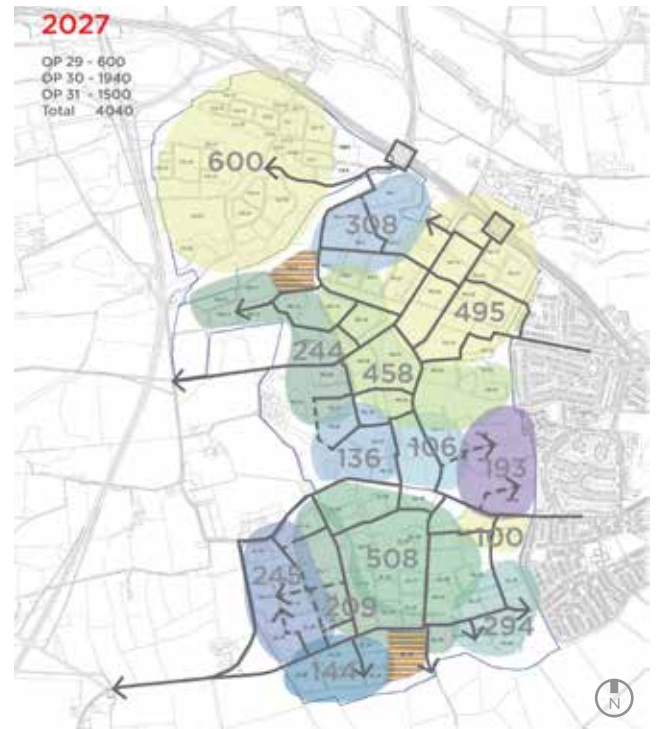


Illustration of key design principles and place-making opportunities

