

LOCAL NATURE CONSERVATION SITE REVIEW REPORT - 2025

Summary

Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) are local sites that have been assigned a non-statutory designation based on their biodiversity or geology interest. These sites may be owned privately, publicly or by Aberdeen City Council. These sites contribute to the quality of the local environment and may provide opportunities for local people to find out, and take pride in, their local biodiversity and geology whilst providing opportunities for informal recreation. These sites actively contribute to the natural capital of Aberdeen, local economy and health and wellbeing of people.

Non-statutory designated sites for biodiversity and geology are considered through the planning process as part of the Local Development Plan and whilst assessing planning applications.

In recent years a growing body of evidence has shown that the interlinked crises of climate and nature emergency should be tackled together. The Scottish Government has ambitions to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and by using a LNCS system as part of land use planning, LNCS can act as important stepping stones or connections for developing a future Nature Network within Aberdeen.

This report details the review and makes recommendations for the next steps as part of monitoring the sites and moving towards designing a Nature Network.

1.0 Introduction

Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) are local sites that have been assigned non-statutory designation based on their biodiversity or geology interest. Biodiversity sites may contribute to the quality of the local environment and may provide opportunities for local people to find out about, and take pride in, their local biodiversity. Geology sites fulfil a similar role to biodiversity sites by providing examples of geology and geomorphology of substantive regional and local importance. Their presence acts as a resource that can be conserved so that people can enjoy and find out more about earth heritage.

Local Authorities have a duty to safeguard LNCS through the [Local Development Plan](#) process and recognises that statutory and non-statutory sites can make an important contribution to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. The [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) sets out policy on land use planning and considers biodiversity and natural heritage through the process of determining planning applications. Where there is likely to be an impact which cannot be avoided the impact should be mitigated and compensated by habitat enhancement or creation on site.

The awareness of the intertwined crises of nature and climate has steadily grown in recent years and the LNCS system contributes towards improving the health and resilience of ecosystems, and the Scottish Government's ambitions for a nature positive future by 2030 as set out in the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045](#).

Local Nature Conservation Sites along with other protected and conserved areas can form the basis of a local Nature Network. Using these sites as stepping stones and corridors they play a pivotal role in creating and connecting green spaces within Aberdeen and allowing wildlife to move to adapt to a changing climate. The Scottish Government propose that every local authority by 2030 will have a [Nature Network](#) joined to [30 by 30 sites](#). To assist with this work, it is timely to review the condition of the LNCS in Aberdeen and align with new emerging policy linked to the [Nature Emergency](#). In addition, LNCS system will help Aberdeen City Council meet its [Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\) Stretch Outcome 15 target](#) and potential future statutory targets to be set out in the forthcoming Natural Environment Bill.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Habitat Desk Study

The North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC) were commissioned to carry out a LNCS habitat comparison between two data periods (2004-2006 and 2018-2021) to highlight if any differences had occurred during this time frame. The comparison included comparing changes in Broad and Priority Habitat as well as identifying any habitat loss e.g. as a result from development. The aim of this work was to aid in detecting subtle small changes that collectively can have consequences for wildlife within the City. See Appendix 1 for the full report on habitats.

2.2 Assessment review with scientific panel

To aid in assessing the sites a LNCS review, a scientific panel was setup and consisted of: specialist recorders, a geologist, County Recorders, a Researcher from Scottish Wildlife Trust, Aberdeen City Council Countryside Rangers, a retired university lecturer for Zoology, and the NESBReC. The panel met on seven occasions from September 2022 to January 2024 to discuss and share knowledge of the sites. The panel have reviewed the site scores spreadsheet along with this report and have provided valuable feedback.

As part of this review some site visits were undertaken by the panel on those sites that are less well known to help assist understanding of sites.

2.2.1 Site assessment

Each site has been assessed with the scientific panel and site scored using the criteria set out in [‘Guidance on establishing and Managing Local Nature Conservation Site Systems in Scotland’, 2006](#) and [2023 Update](#).

2.2.2 De-designation

Where the biodiversity or geology value of a site is of a standard that warrants designation, this site has been continued. However, where there has been significant change or loss the site has been de-designated as it viewed the designation is no longer relevant or suitable.

2.2.3 Boundary Changes

Five sites require changes to boundary due to being impacted by development. In the main these are minor changes. The site West Hatton will require a more substantial change as this site has been severed by the AWPR and may require to be a reiterate process as part of ongoing monitoring until a decision can be made to secure the site’s biodiversity and ecological connectivity. The site Balnagask to Cove will also require a reiterative process to boundary changes due to the on going works associated with the Energy Transition Zone and lay down areas being used on this site.

2.2.4 Consideration of new sites

Discussions were held with the scientific panel regarding the possibility of creating new sites as part of this review. Suggestions have been made and this will form the next steps as part of future work associated with the review.

2.2.4 Biological records

NESBReC carried out a data search of each LNCS site to confirm species presence of plants and animals on site. The search included protected, notable and North East Locally Important Species, plus those listed on Birds of Conservation Concern.

Biological record limitations

Depending on the type of grid reference (6, 8 or 10 figure) used to submit a record, some species records we have may have extended outside of the site and should be used with some caution. In addition, there are some shared LNCS sites which cross into Aberdeenshire, therefore some of these records may have originated from the Aberdeenshire part of the site or immediately adjacent to Aberdeen City’s boundary. However, as wildlife movement is not impeded by council boundaries it is important to look at the sites as a whole, however again some caution may need to be exercised while analysing the records.

3.Results

See Appendix 1 for NESBReC report and habitat maps and Appendix 2 for site biological records.

Summary of Review Recommendations

A total of 45 LNCS are within Aberdeen City and include biodiversity and geology sites covering 2754.29 hectares, 6.8% of Aberdeen. Following a review of the sites Table 1 summarises next steps with full details regarding individual sites and the review can be found on pages 8-52. The aim is complete next steps within 2025 and add any new LNCS’s in 2026.

Table 1

Action	Number of LNCS Sites
De-designate	1 (Old Manse Wood)
Sites at Risk (and require monitoring)	12 (Baads Moss, Balnagask to Cove, Corby Loch, Culter Compensation Dam, Den of Leggart, Hazelhead Park, Leuchar Moss, Loriston Loch, Scotstown Moor, Southlasts Mire, Stoneyhill Wood, West Hatton)

Boundary Changes	5 (Balnagask to Cove, Corby Loch, Deeside Old Railway Line, Three Hills and West Hatton)
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Old Manse Wood has been selected for de-designation as it is no longer suitable for LNCS criteria as the biodiversity value is in decline and will be lost.

Sites at risk have been selected due to being adjacent to proposed opportunity sites which may directly or indirectly impact upon the site, or is a site that has habitats that are considered vulnerable or fragile.

Sites with boundary changes are sites that have had their boundary impacted by development and require an alteration.

Any remaining LNCS not listed in Table 1 will continue to have LNCS designation and be monitored as part of a future review. Information regarding LNCS on Aberdeen City Council’s website will be updated including a booklet refresh.

For some sites it is unclear who the landowner is, and it is recommended that a land ownership search is carried out to better understand how Aberdeen City Council could best work with the landowner and secure the long term biodiversity or geology interest on site.

In the short term there will be a small loss of at least 3.46 hectares of LNCS land cover to account for de-designating Old Manse wood and carrying out minor boundary corrections on sites which have been impacted by development. Amendments to the LNCSs will be updated on the Council’s website and a revised LNCS booklet will be issued. In the medium term it is proposed to designate new LNCS’s in Aberdeen by the third quarter of 2026 to compensate for the loss of habitat and even increase the existing LNCS cover. Progress on any new LNCSs will be reported in the annual Climate and Nature Report.

Looking ahead, a future Nature Network for Aberdeen will need to be monitored by Aberdeen City Council. It is proposed by the Natural Environment Policy team that LNCS are reviewed at least once every 10 years to ensure they are still suitable for continued LNCS designation. The current LOIP target aims to have 26% of land in Aberdeen protected and/ or managed for nature by 2026 and this target is leading towards the governments ambition of 30 by 30. Currently the Scottish Government are writing the criteria of 30 by 30 sites and it is currently unknown precisely how Aberdeen City will be expected to contribute towards this target. It may be that more rural areas with less competition over land use will be expected to contribute more. Due to the strategic importance of LNCS’s it is beneficial to consider Aberdeen’s role towards this potential commitment. New LNCSs and linear habitat play an important role towards a 30 x 30 future commitment and an essential role for climate adaptation.

Glossary

LNCS	Local Nature Conservation Sites
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
UKBAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
AWPR	Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
INNS	Invasive Non Native Species
ACC	Aberdeen City Council
SBL	Scottish Biodiversity List
AC	Aberdeenshire Council
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
ALDP	Aberdeen Local Development Plan

References **(will be completed once the document is no longer draft)**

Page	Link

LNCS by Ward

Electoral Ward	Name of LNCS
Dyce/Bucksburn/ Danestone, Ward 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen-Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line • Bucksburn • Farburn wood • Kinaldie Den • River Don Corridor • Stoneyhill Wood • Three Hills • Woodlands Wood, Beidleston
Bridge of Don, Ward 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balgownie/Blackdog Links • Corby Loch • Grandhome Moss • River Don Corridor • Scotstown
Kingswells/ Sheddocksley/ Summerhill, Ward 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bucksburn • Den Of Maidencraig • Rubislaw • Three Hills • West Hatton
Northfield/ Mastrick North, Ward 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No LNCS
Hilton/ Woodside / Stockethill, Ward 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen – Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line • Hilton wood
Tillydrone / Seaton /Old Aberdeen, Ward 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen – Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line • River Don Corridor
Midstocket/ Rosemount, Ward 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen – Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line • Rubislaw
George St / Harbour, Ward 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen –Inverness & Kittybrewster Railway Line
Lower Deeside, Ward 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allan Park Pond • Baads Moss • Culter Burn • Culter Compensation Dam • Cults Den • Cults Quarry • Deeside Old Railway • Foggieton • Hillhead Road • Leuchar Moss • Moss of Auchlea • Murtle Den

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Manse Wood • Peterculter • River Dee Corridor • Rotten of Gairn • Southlasts Mire • West Cults Woodland
Hazlehead / Queens cross / Countesswells, Ward 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Den of Maidencraig • Den wood, Hazlehead • Hazlehead Park • Rubislaw • Rubislaw Quarry • Walker Dam and Rubislaw Link • Westburn of Rubislaw
Airyhall / Broomhill / Garthdee, Ward 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeside Old Railway • River Dee Corridor
Torry / Ferryhill, Ward 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeside Old Railway • River Dee Corridor
Kincorth /Nigg / Cove, Ward 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balnagask to Cove • Den of Leggart • Kincorth Hill • Loriston Loch • River Dee Corridor • Tullos Hill

Summary results for each site (overleaf)

These site descriptions are a summary, full details of each site can be found in Appendix 1.

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Aberdeen-Inverness and Kittybrewster Railway Line (Wards 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Main interests

Mainly linear habitat connectivity for commuting/feeding/roosting; neutral grassland, scrub, trees and tall ruderals. There is suitable bat roost structures and trees along the line. Badger setts are also present. Suitable habitat for reptiles and amphibians has been identified. A wide range of bird species have been recorded either adjacent or on the railway line. Species for the site include kingfisher, barn owl and short eared owl. The railway line provides a green network.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

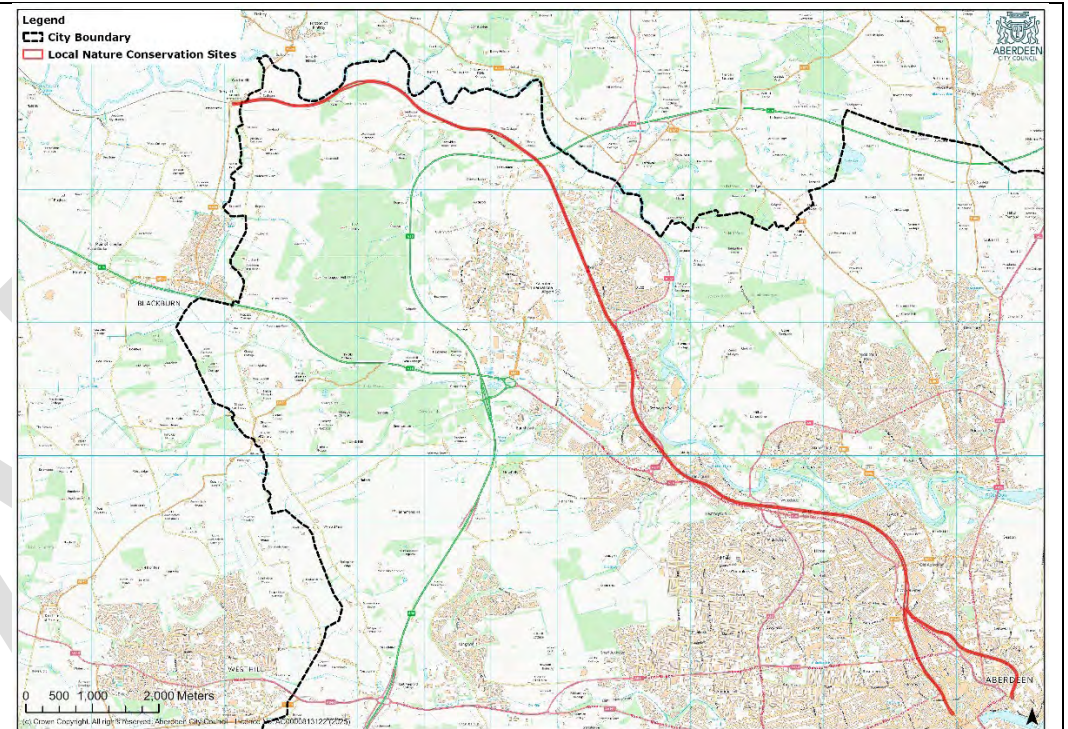
Based on Network Rail reports there are areas with Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Engage with Network Rail on the designation and what positive steps for biodiversity we can take together for this LNCS.



Allan park (Ward 9)

Main interests

Main habitat is a small pond which supports good diversity of water and marsh plants. The surrounding area is a habitat of mature Scots Pine and mixed woodlands which provides connectivity.

The site is ecologically interesting despite being mostly man made. Site records include four bat species, red squirrels, herring gull and song thrush. The site also supports three Locally Important Species of plants; water plantain, wall lettuce and greater spearwort.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Recommendation

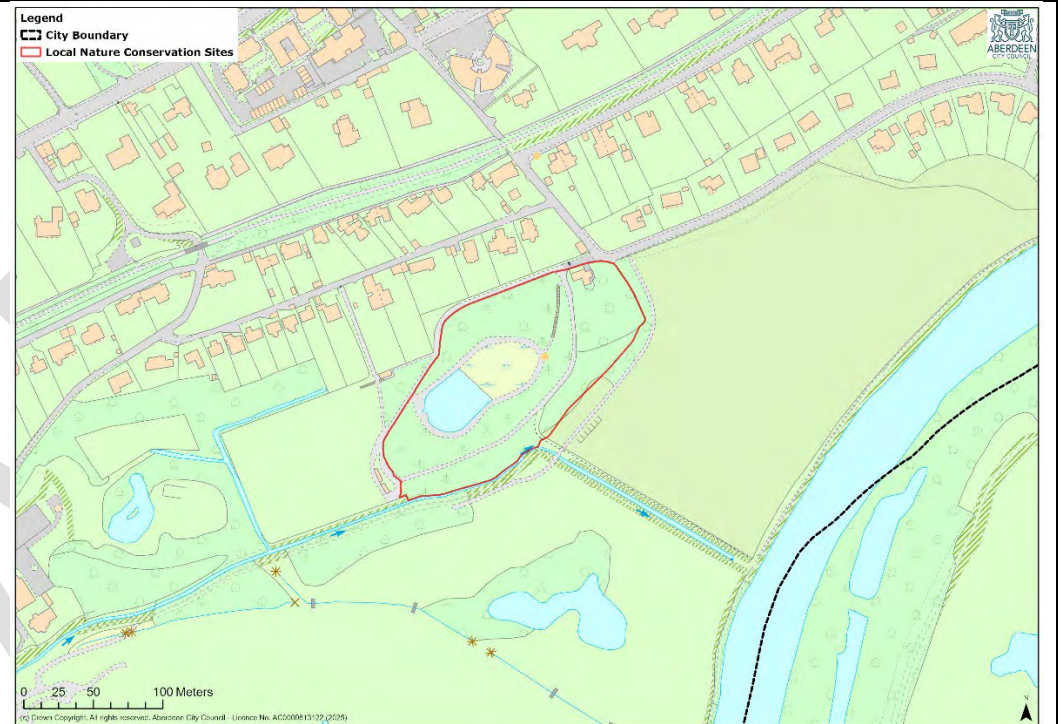
Continue with LNCS designation

Site issues/risks

There is American Skunk-cabbage, New Zealand Pigmyweed and Rhododendron ponticum present on site.

Next steps

Find out landowner and consider INNS control.



Baads Moss (Ward 9)

Main interests

Large area of lowland fen. Small areas of neutral grassland, dry heath and three ponds with Leuchar Burn to the northern boundary. Records of note Golden Plover, Snipe, Curlew, Lapwing and Peregrine. Locally Important Species Wild onion is also present.

Proposed Boundary changes

No

Recommendation

Continue with LNCS designation

Site issues/risks

This site consists of fens, with rush and pond habitats and is uncommon in this part of Scotland. It is vulnerable and fragile due to the risk of drying out due to adjacent land drainage and effects of climate change.

Next steps

Obtain land ownership details and consider regular monitoring.



Balgownie to Blackdog Links (Ward 2)

Main interests

Beach, sand dunes and fixed sand dunes, rough grassland. Areas of gorse scrub and small patches of trees. North end made of improved grassland, wet, dry heath, gorse and scrub. Habitat supports a variety of sea birds and an important site for migrant birds.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

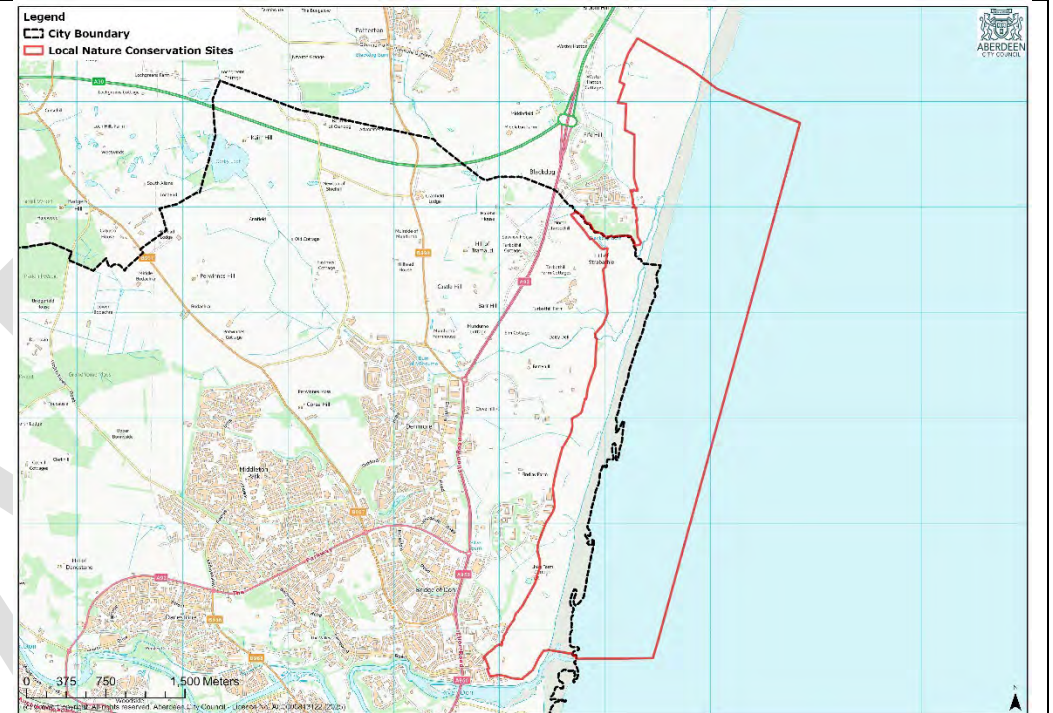
Moving sand dune habitat mean erosion and habitat changes occur naturally. Installation of dune stabilisation measures may impact on the overall functionality of the habitat and must be managed carefully through the planning system. Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed are present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Identify and engage with landowners to ensure coastal protection measures are in keeping with the fragile habitats in the LNCS area.



Balnagask to Cove (Ward 13)

Main interests

The site has a wide variety of coastal habitats and species including coastal cliffs, caves, shingle beaches, supralittoral rocks, coastal and neutral grassland. The site has species of international, national and local importance, including Black guillemot, Kingfisher, Short-eared owl, Sea pea, Scottish bluebell and Dickie's Bladder-fern. The southern side of the Nigg Bag is a geological SSSI for the Ice Age glacial deposits present in the cliffs. The coastal section as a whole comprises mostly of Dalradian metamorphic rocks with occasional; younger igneous intrusive dykes and sills, and volcanic breccias.

Proposed boundary changes

There has been severance of the site by the construction of the new South Harbour, and further alterations may be required due to the Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) Opportunity sites (OP sites).

Recommendation

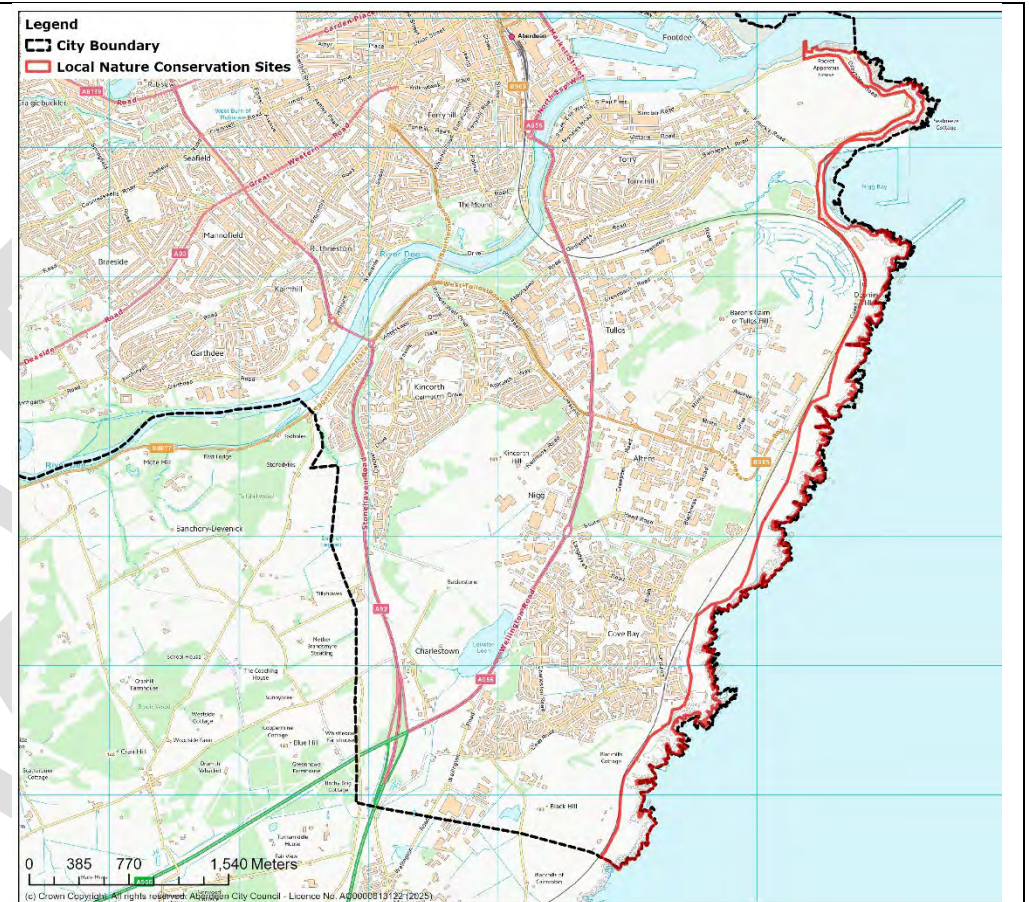
Continue with LNCS designation

Site issues/risks

Risk of the habitat being damaged and destroyed through direct development activities or from changes in the surrounding landscape (loss of habitat connectivity). Japanese knotweed, New Zealand Pigmyweed and white butterbur are present on site.

Next steps

Monitor site and work with Energy Transition Zone applicant and future developer to reinstate habitat on green roofs where possible. No boundary changes until further detail of the ETZ is more certain.



Bucksburn (Ward 1 and 3)

Main interests

The Bucksburn corridor consists of broadleaved woodland and neutral grassland with Bucksburn running through most of site. Small area of rock, bracken and a pond. Burnbrae moss has wet heath and gorse scrub. Rush and neutral pasture with a small area of planted broad leaved woodland. Site includes Red and Amber Listed Birds of Conservation concern.

Recent masterplanning ecology surveys have recorded a Leisler's and a Noctule roost in the area. This is the only confirmed Leisler's and Noctule roost records in NE Scotland.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

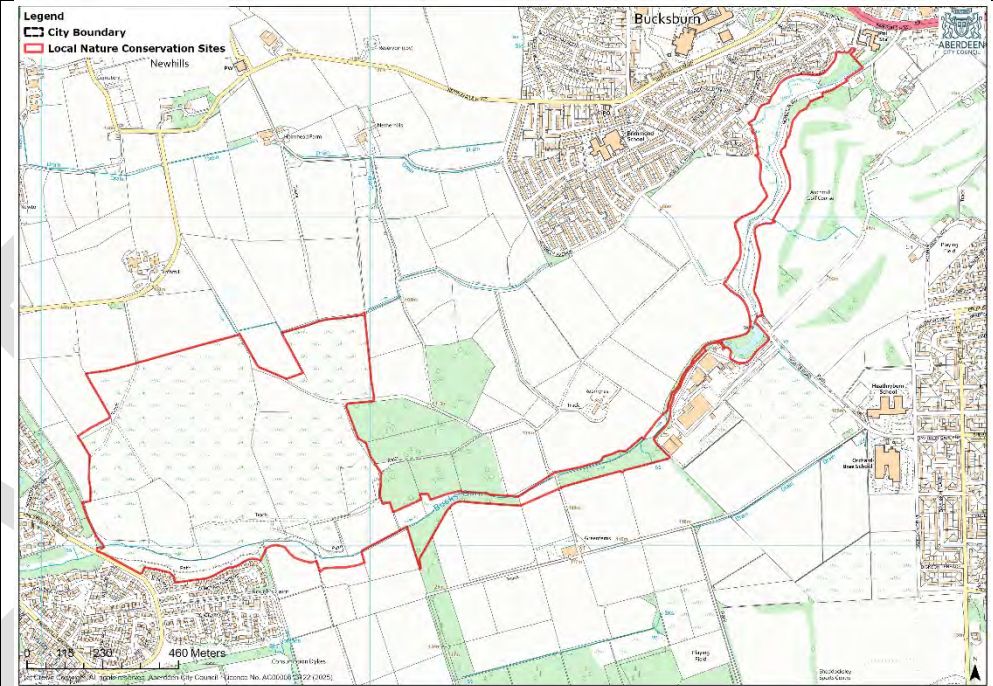
Development pressure; potential loss of hydrological links/habitat connectivity from proposed masterplans. Giant hogweed, Himalyan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Rhododendron and whitebutterbur are present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Work closely with masterplanning and development management teams to ensure that the interests of the LNCS are not impacted by the proposed Greenferns and Greenferns Landward developments.



Corby Loch (Ward 2)

Main interests

A large water body surrounded by reed beds, floating mire and scrub woodland. Neutral grassland, purple moor grass and rush pasture, lowland dry acid grassland, standing water, wet woodland. There is significant bird interest on site both breeding and overwintering and *Nathusius pipistrelle* have been recorded foraging.

Proposed boundary changes

Yes. Site has been impacted by the AWPR.

Site issues/risks

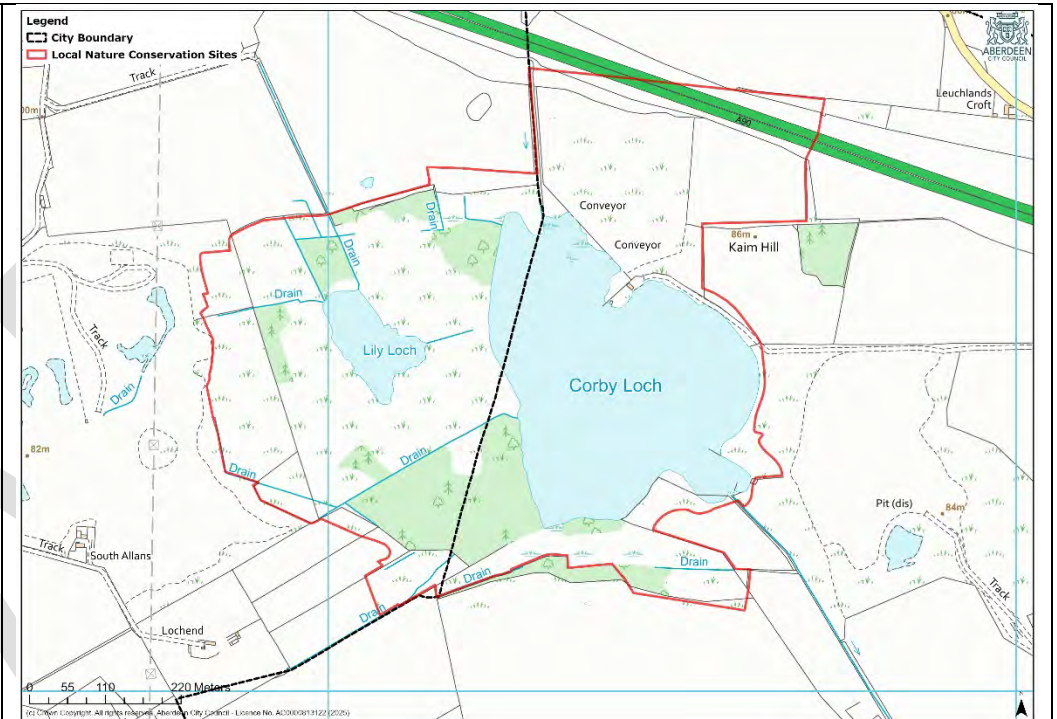
Impacts from surrounding agricultural activities and the AWPR. Vulnerable to drying out and eutrophication. Significant negative impacts from leisure activities cited as a concern by land owner. Rhododendron is present on site. Aquatic INNS present in the loch.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Consider potential connectivity between loch and AWPR SuDS ponds on opposite side of AWPR as both areas are good habitat for birds and European otter. New boundary line to the north will be needed. Site is popular with paddleboarders which can cause disturbance to breeding birds using the loch. Work with NatureScot and landowner to raise awareness around the subject.



Culter Burn (Ward 9)

Main interests

Broadleaf woodland with an unusually rich ground flora. Additional habitats include swamp, open water and neutral grassland. A rich habitat for commuting species such as Otter, Sea trout, Eel, Bats, Red squirrel, Pine marten and butterflies.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

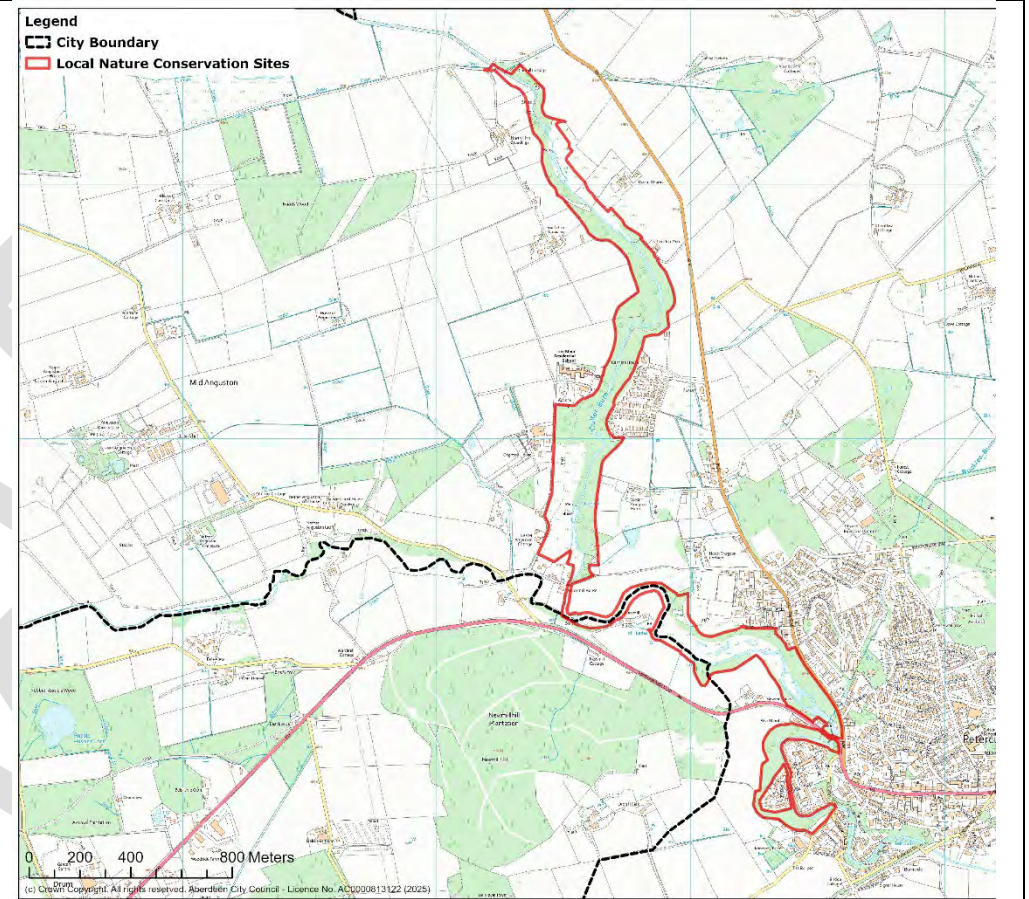
Grey squirrels present but control taking place. South end of LNCS area has major issues with flooding and may require engineering works to impact on the LNCS area in the future.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Engage with flooding team as they manage the flood risk at the south end of the designated area. There is a proposal to remove the Culter dam near the south end of the site and includes new footpath access.



Cults Den (Ward 9)

Main interests

Valley with Cults Burn flowing through site. Willow scrub, marshy grassland, mature woodland, improved pasture. Red squirrels, SUDS pond good for dragonfly and damselflies and dippers. Area known to have active badger setts.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

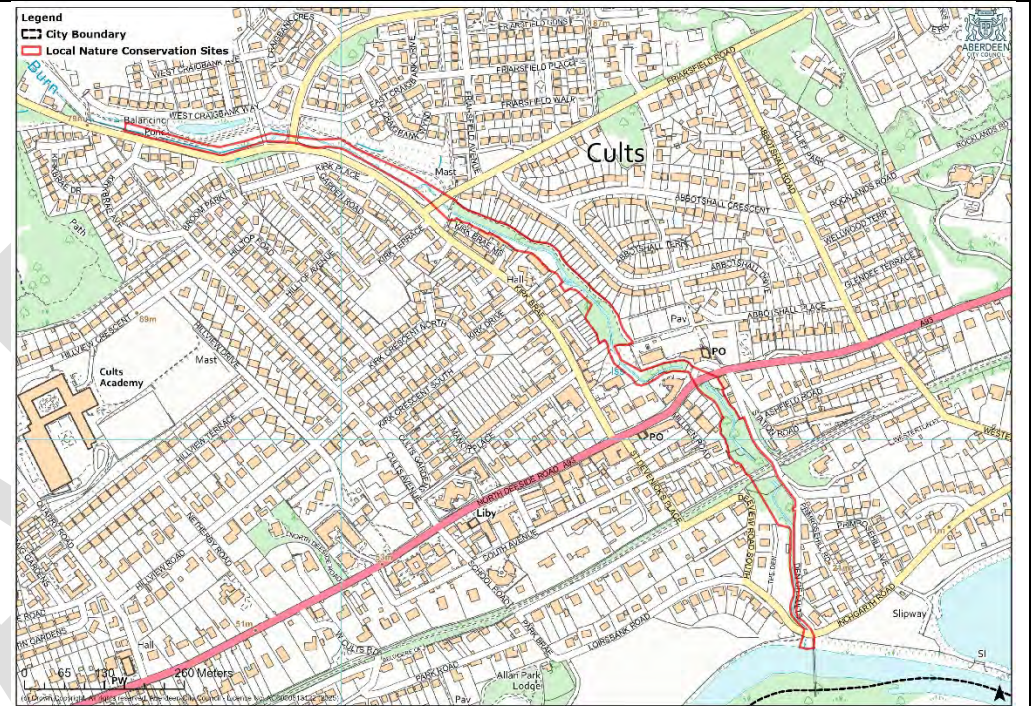
American skunk cabbage just upstream from the Shakkin' Briggie.
Japanese knotweed and white butterbur are present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Identify landowner and consider INNS control



Cults Quarry (Ward 9)

Main interests

Disused quarry colonised by lowland birch woodland, rowan and Scots pine. Small area of bracken in north. Southern area is parkland with large areas of neutral grassland with scattered trees and scrub. Broadleaf woodland surrounds parkland. Red squirrels are present. Although mostly filled in this former small granite quarry is readily accessible. The rock faces are generally weathered and partially vegetated, but some fresh surfaces are exposed and could be useful for educational purposes.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

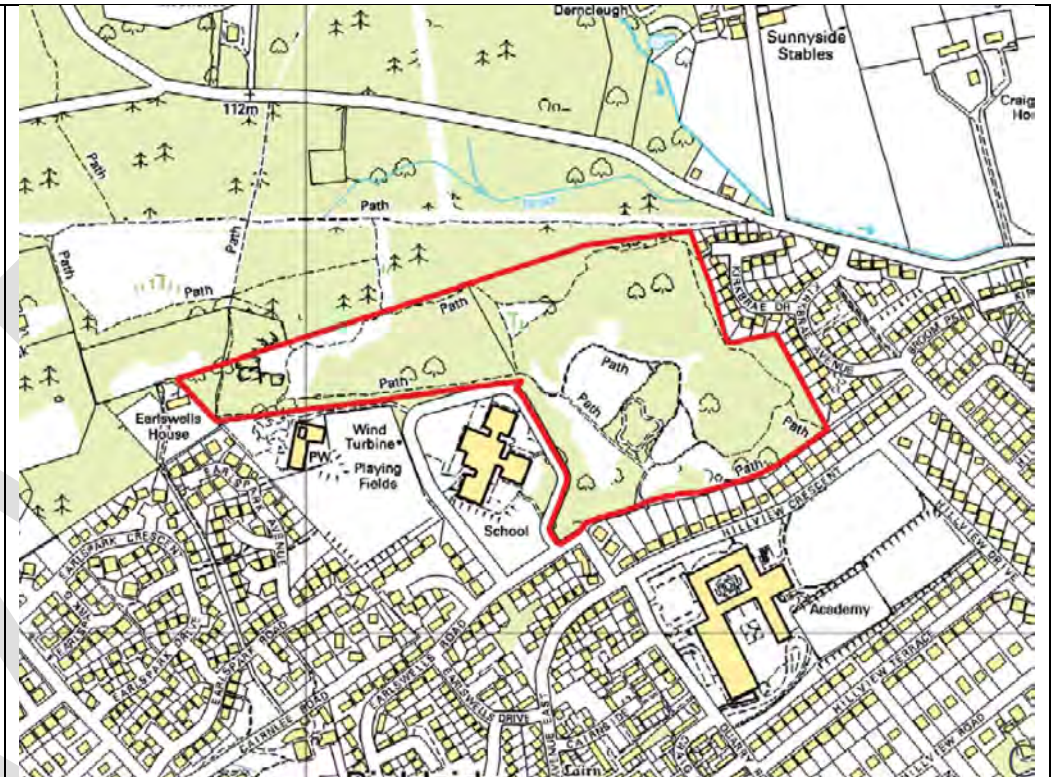
Rhododendron present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Identify landowner and consider obtaining geodiversity information for the site.



Deeside Old Railway (Ward 9,11 and 12)

Main interests

Linear site and a mixture of grassland, tall ruderal, small pockets of woodland, scattered trees and shrubs. Areas good for ferns and mosses. Site provides good connectivity for wildlife, including red squirrel and pine marten.

Proposed boundary changes

Yes

Site issues/risks

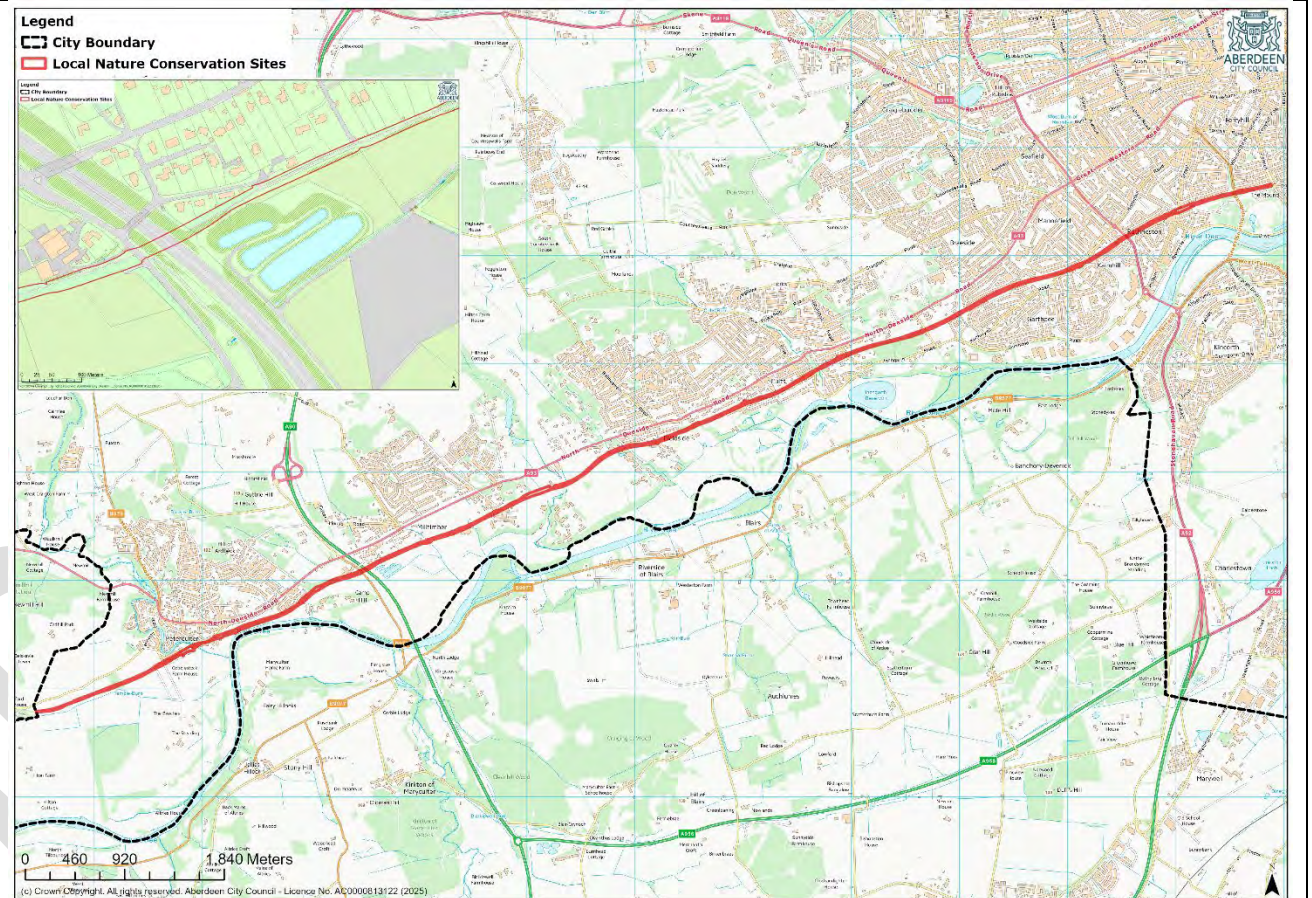
INNS; Cotoneaster, Rhododendron, Buddleia and long stretches of Himalayan balsam. A large stand of Japanese knotweed is actively controlled through spraying.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

New boundary map is required. The connectivity of the site has been impacted by the AWPR. New AWPR SuDS ponds have proven to be excellent habitat for breeding waders/waterfowl. To be considered for suitability to form a new LNCS acting as a stepping stone habitat for birds along the AWPR. Continue to engage with Aberdeen Roads Ltd and Balfour Beattie on mitigation around the AWPR.



Den of Leggart (Ward 13)

Main interests

Semi natural broadleaf woodland classified as ancient woodland of plantation origin on steep slopes containing wych elm, oak and ash. Numerous ferns and wood sorrel in ground flora, containing other ancient woodland indicator species. Patch of neutral grassland which is wet near burn. Good diversity of woodland and marsh plants nearest burn.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

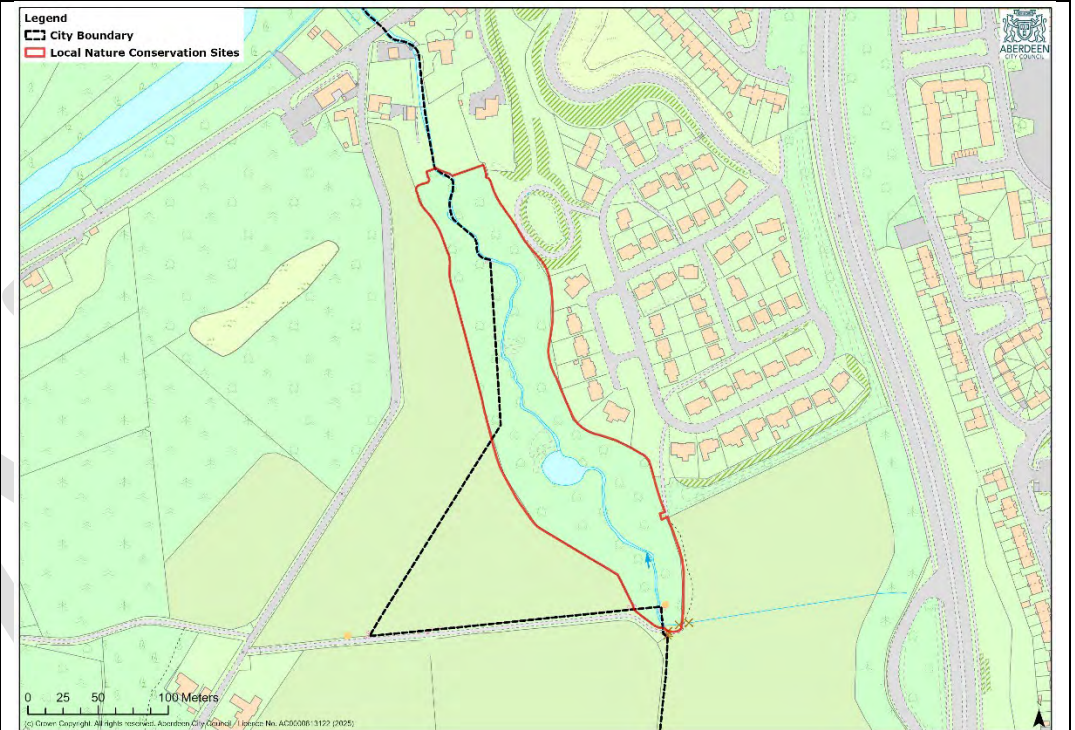
Immediate development pressure

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Under immediate development pressure. Surrounded by a opportunity site from the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) 2023. Engage with development management as proposals come forward. Boundary shared with Aberdeenshire Council. Co-ordinate condition assessment.



Den of Maidencraig (Ward 3 and 10)

Main interests

Serves as an extension of the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Small semi natural woodland thought to be ancient woodland. Site supports broadleaved woodland, purple moor grass and rush pasture, scrub woodland, neutral grassland, running water and a pond. Dominated by hazel and has a rich ground flora with patches of heathland on more open ground. Wych elm is also present.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

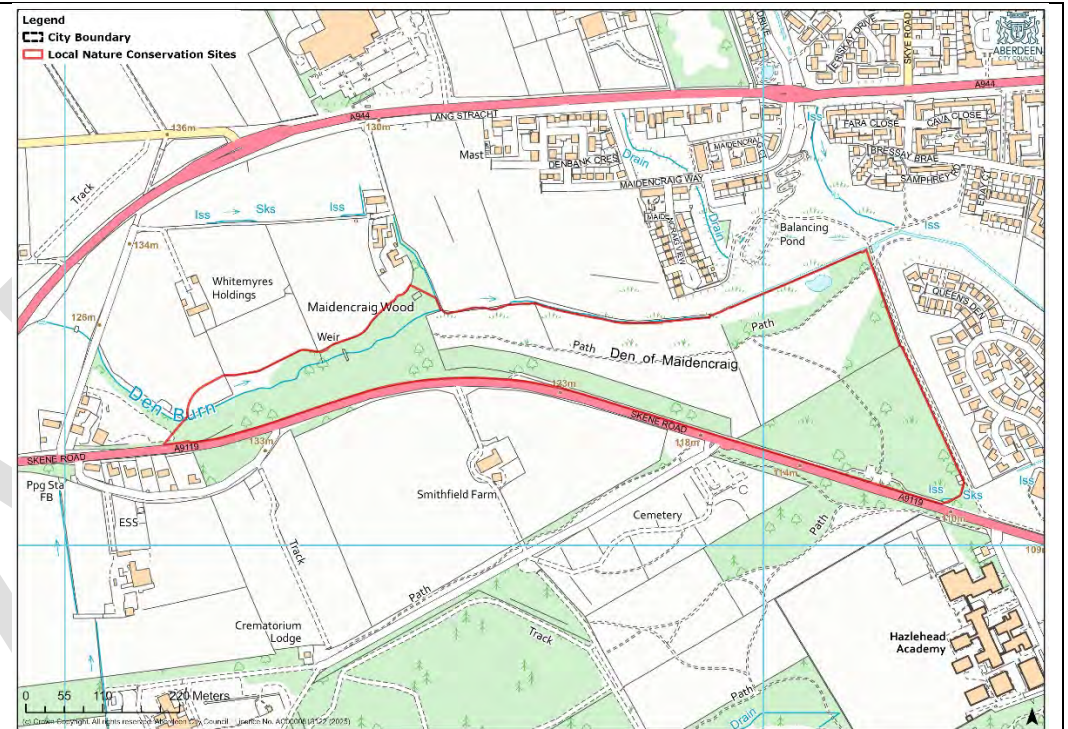
New Zealand pigmyweed has been found in the pond.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

The Den Burn Restoration project adjacent to the site will create additional habitats and connectivity to the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which will benefit wildlife. Monitoring of site should be a priority as it may warrant merging the site into the LNR in the future.



Den of Moss – Side (Ward 3)

Main interests

Mix of broadleaved wood and conifer woodland and some gorse scrub. Some areas of neutral grassland, swamp and rush pasture. Wych elm is present. Beech and yew woodland, mixed woodland, scrub woodland, marginal vegetation, coniferous woodland, neutral grassland and improved grassland. Records of several species of bats and red squirrel on site, with current habitat supporting them.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

INNS – Buddleia and grey squirrel on site

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

There is potential to join with Bucksburn LNCS in future to contribute to a larger nature network.



Farburn Wood (Ward 1)

Main interests

A small site with a mosaic of habitats. Broadleaved woodland dominated by birch and rowan with alder along the burnside. Some open areas of semi improved neutral and acid grassland.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

Forestry operations /harvesting

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Utilise the AWPR mitigation records we hold to see if there are potential for any projects.



Foggieton (Ward 9)

Main interests

Significant area of managed woodland which provides for several levels of designated species and habitats; wet woodland, lowland birch woodland, recently planted mixed woodland, recently planted broadleaved woodland, other broadleaf woodland, rush pasture, acid grassland, standing water, scrub, scrub woodland, improved grassland. All support the current notable species which include blackcap, jay, grasshopper warbler, crossbills, garden warbler and yellow hammer, pine marten and red squirrels.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

Forestry operations

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Identify land owner



Grandhome Moss (Ward 2)

Main interests

Large area of semi natural wet woodland with open areas of bog. Around the edges there are rushes, conifer woodland, neutral grassland, acid grassland and a small pond. Lesser-tussock sedge is present and a good example which is uncommon for the area. Habitat is uncommon for NE Scotland. Species recorded include red squirrels and pine martens.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

INNS present. Rhododendron and grey squirrels have been recorded in the area.

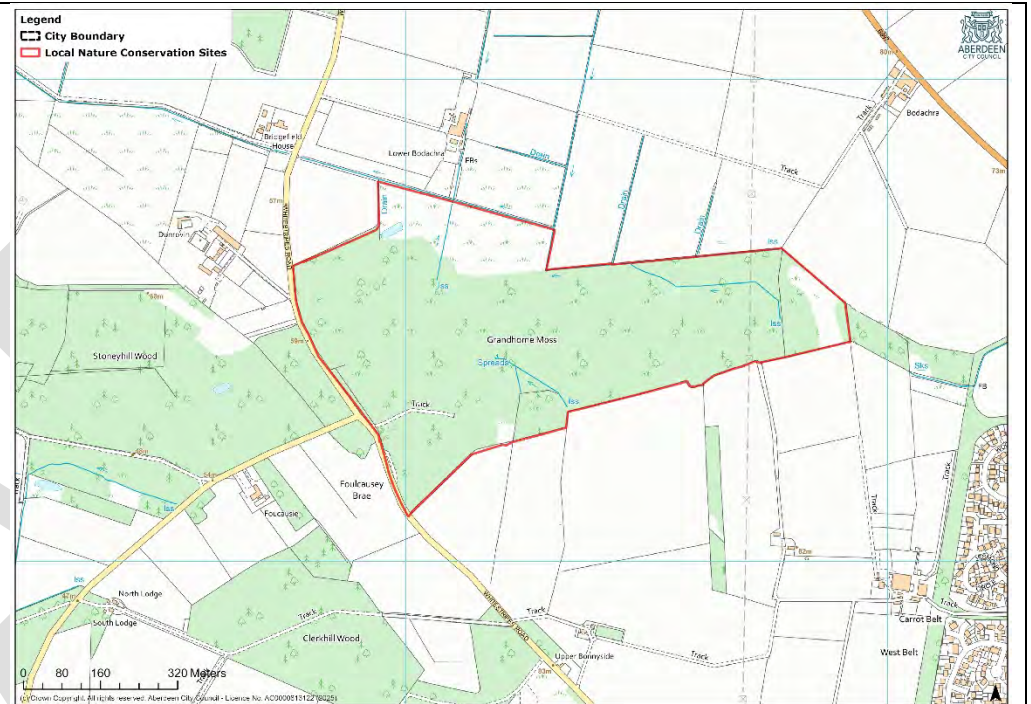
Development pressure in the south from OP allocations within the ALDP.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Landowner search to engage them to work for INNS removal/monitoring. Investigate opportunities to link with Stoneyhill Wood LNCS.



Hazlehead Park (Ward 10)

Main interests

The majority habitat is a managed golf course with dry heath roughs containing birch and Scot's pine. Surrounding woodland contains Scot's pine, other coniferous woodland, mixed woodland, improved grassland, lowland birch woodland (LBAP habitat), neutral grassland and broadleaved woodland. The site and surrounding area has numerous records of red squirrel, a great diversity of birds and fungi associated with woodland. Other notable species include Red kite and red listed Spotted flycatcher.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

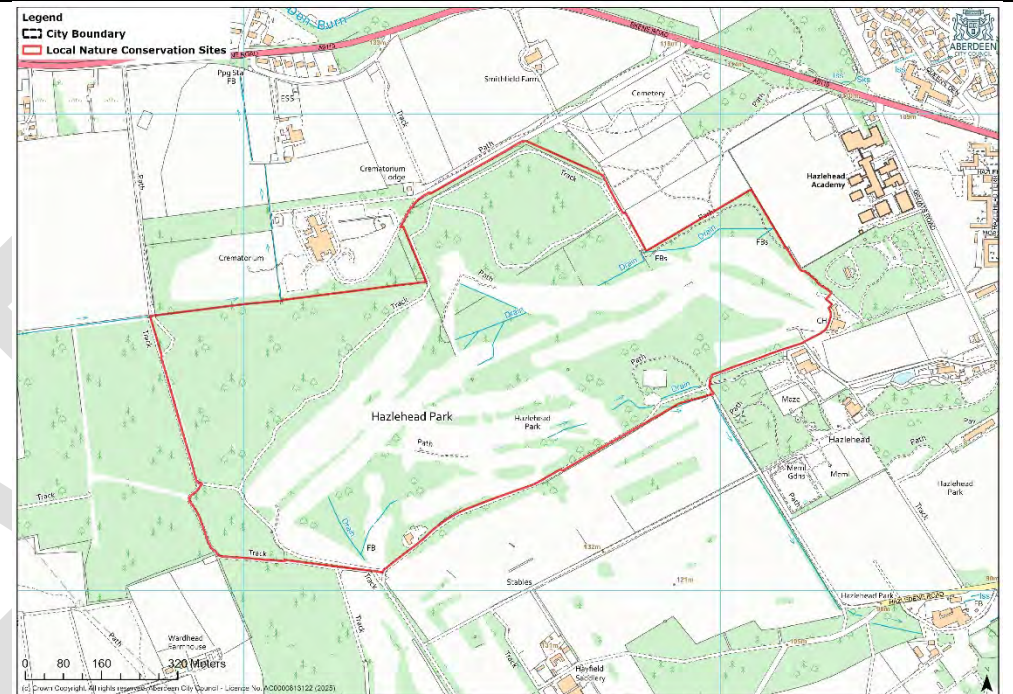
Development pressure in the north of the site from OP sites allocated within the ALDP.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Investigate the site's role in our forthcoming Nature Networks, and look at potential extension/merge with Den wood for future LNCS review.



Hillhead Road (Ward 9)

Main interests

Square block of woodland mainly beech, sycamore, lowland birch woodland and pendunculate oak. Small strip of bracken. Ferns and wood sorrel are frequent in understory indicating mature woodland soil conditions. The site sits in amongst blocks of and shares woodland characteristics with a TPO (TPO 26: Dalmuinzie Road). Red squirrels are present on site.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

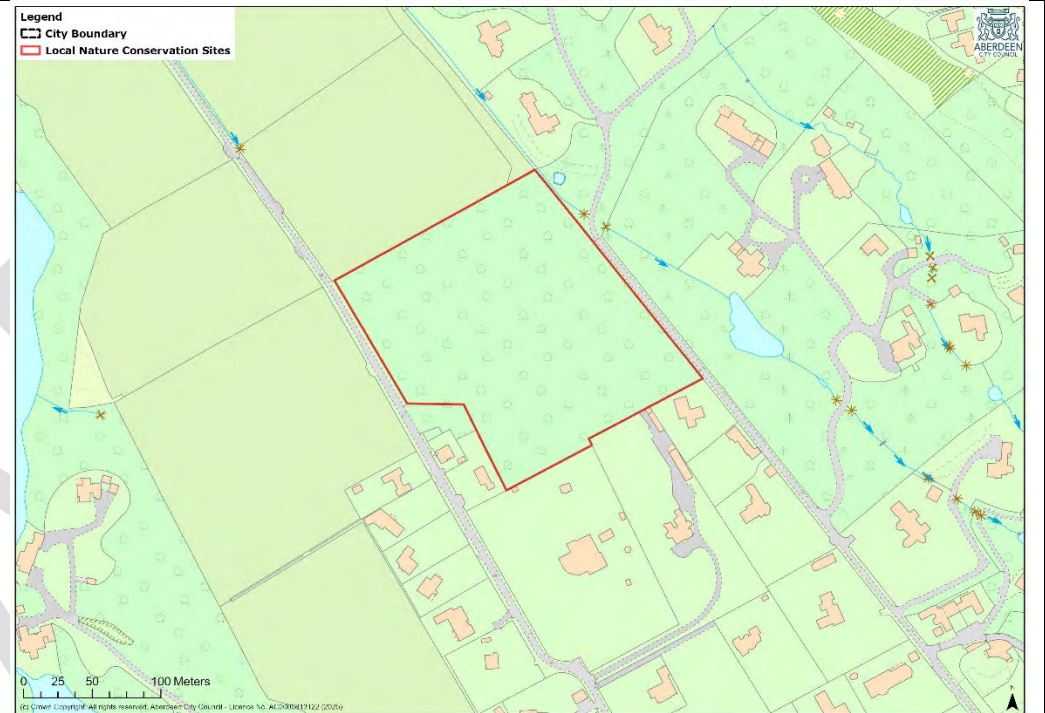
Not under immediate development pressure but half of the site is surrounded by development.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Review further at next LNCS review.



Hilton Wood (Ward 5)

Main interests

Small urban block of woodland containing mainly sycamore, beech, wych elm, horse chestnut and Norway maple.

Well used for forest school activities. Hosts a great collection of song birds. Could create scrape areas/ ponds within the site to improve biodiversity and encourage amphibians. Great natural asset in an urban area.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

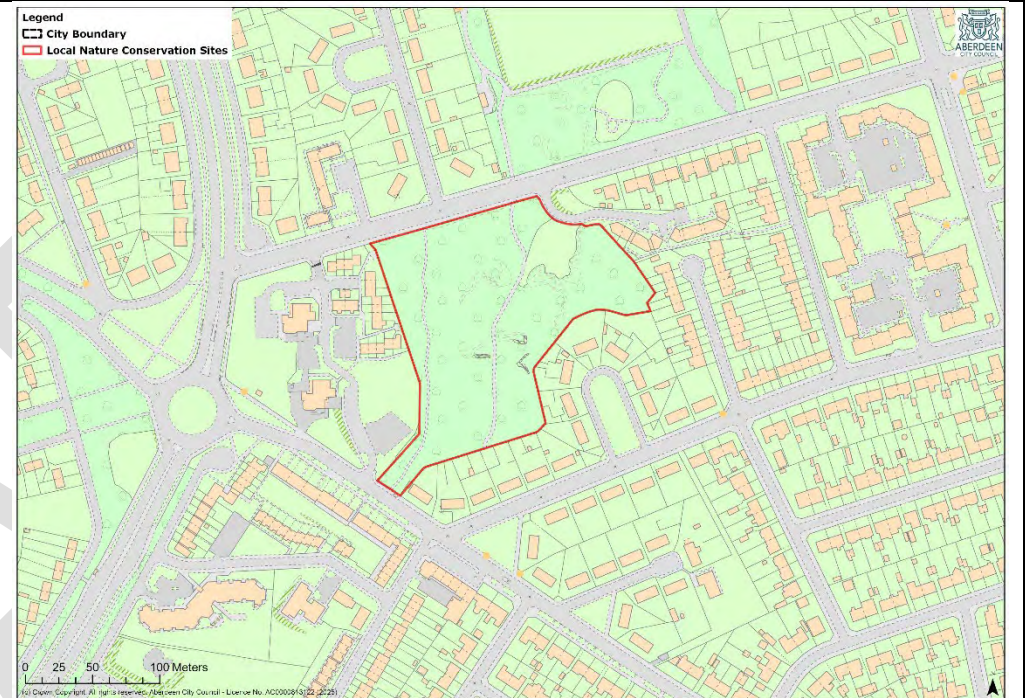
INNS; Cotoneaster and Japanese knotweed present which is being actively controlled.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Council owned site, review further at next LNCS review.



Kinaldie Den (Ward 1)

Main interests

This is a shady and damp broadleaved woodland with mostly non-native tree species and several naturalised herbaceous species running along the Black Burn. There is a mix of priority habitats and species such as red squirrel and hard shield fern which is uncommon in the north east. The site is bordered and shared with Aberdeenshire Council.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

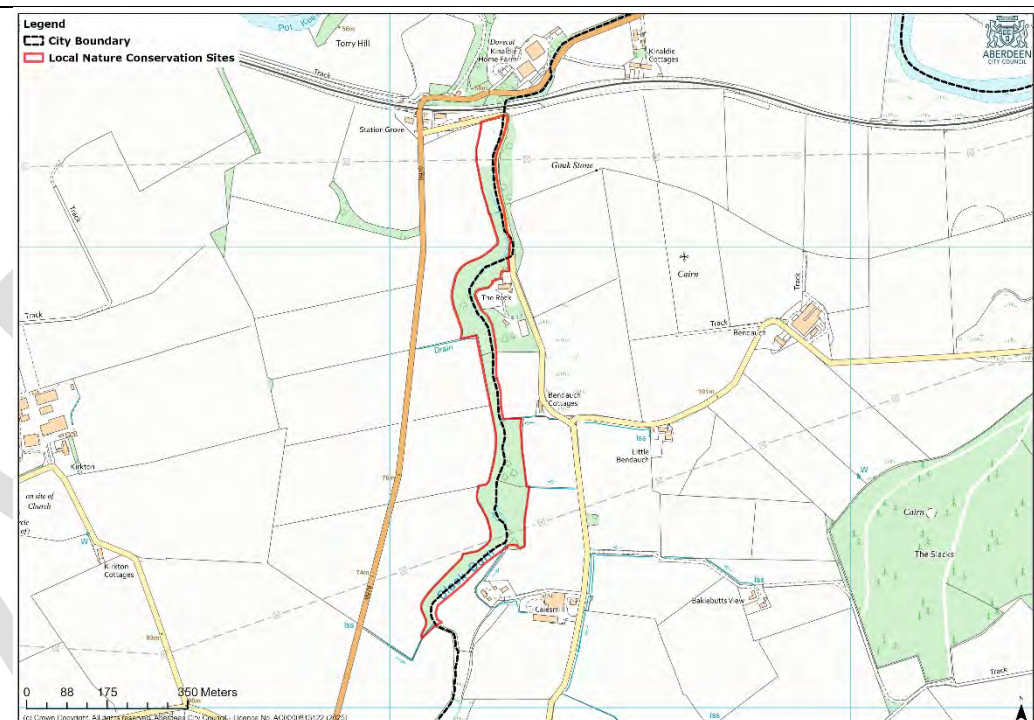
Not under any development pressure. Shared LNCS with Aberdeenshire Council; if they decide not to renew the site as an LNCS we may need to review further.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

This site is shared LNCS with Aberdeenshire Council. Co-ordinate and share condition assessments during their LNCS review.



Kincorth Hill (Ward 13)

Main interests

This area is owned and maintained by Aberdeen City Council. One of the largest remaining areas of semi-natural vegetation in the Aberdeen region. Dominated by gorse/broom and willow scrub with dry heathland on higher ground. Scattered trees, neutral grassland and small patches of wet grassland are also present. There is significant outdoor recreation activity across the site.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

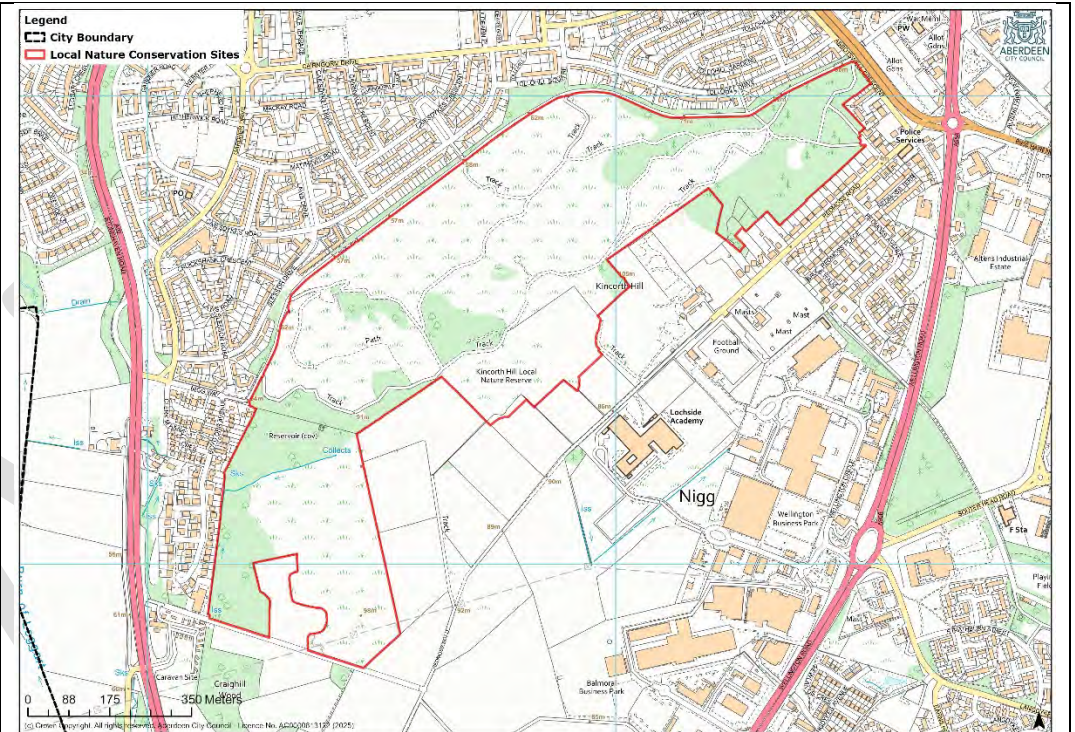
Several INNS present on site including Rhododendron, Cotoneaster spp., Giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, all which are being actively controlled through spraying. There is future development pressure to the east and south from the Energy Transition Zone ALDP OP sites.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

The site also carries an Local Nature Reserve designation, so will work to align the two designations more closely.



Leuchar Moss (Ward 9)

Main interests

The area has important UKBAP and LBAP priority habitats present including purple moor grass and rush pasture (UKBAP), bog, dry heath and acid grassland containing cotton grass. There are also small areas of scrub and wet woodland.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

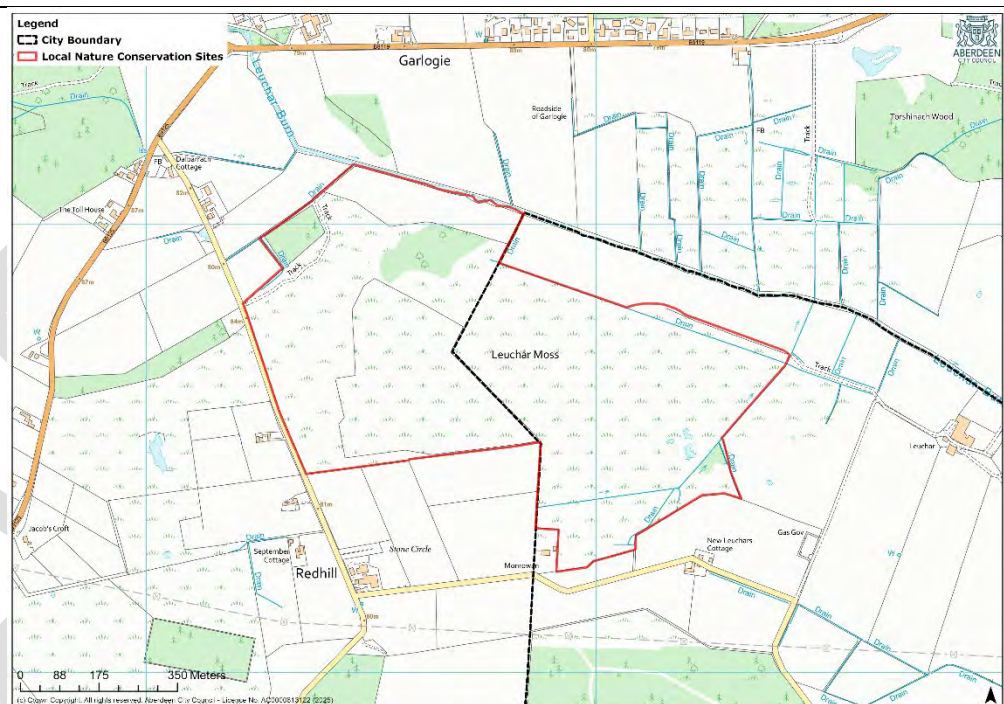
Bog habitats could dry out from adjacent changes in land management and from climate change. Joint LNCS with Aberdeenshire so may need to review if Aberdeenshire decide not to renew their designation.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

This site is shared LNCS with Aberdeenshire Council so will coordinate and share condition assessments. There is a proposal to re-meander the burn and this would have a short term negative impact but in the medium to long term this could allow the site to be more resilient to adjacent land management changes and the effects of climate change.



Loirston Loch (Ward 13)

Main interests

Large body of standing water with reed beds and marshy grassland. Good variety of aquatic and marginal vegetation present which supports overwintering birds. Significant populations of wetland birds including breeding mute swans and visiting osprey. Records of European otter (European Protected Species). A record of a rare spider species, *Tetragnatha striata* (Nationally Scarce) has been found in the reed beds. This is only the second record of this species in Scotland.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

Significant development pressure to the north and west with ALDP OP sites.

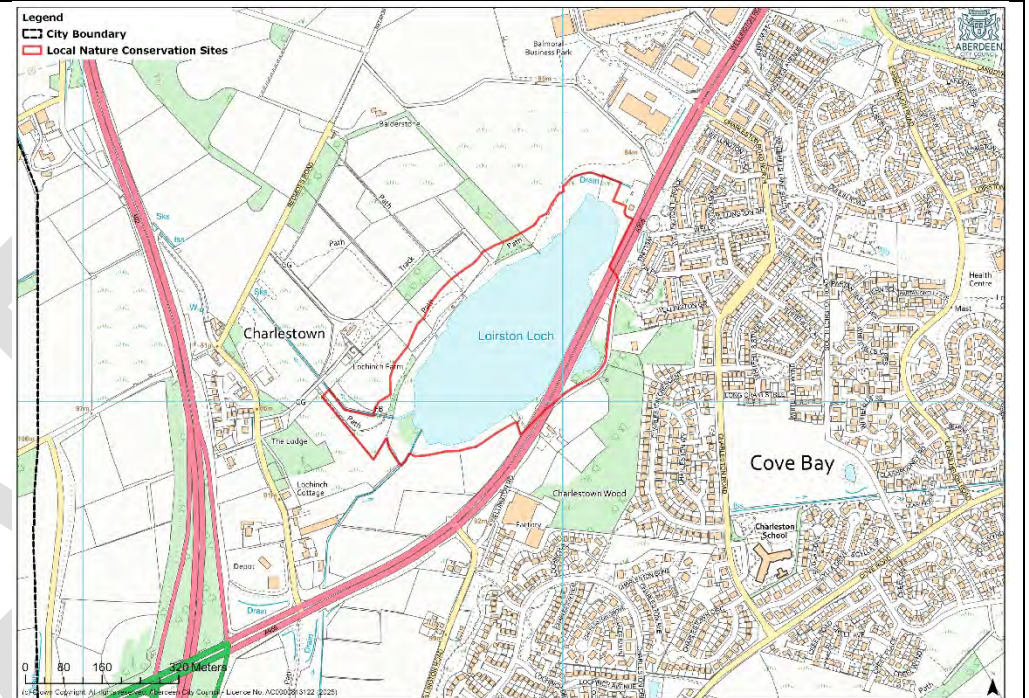
The INNS *Crassula helmsii* has been found on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Monitor and manage the impact of developments around the site through development management processes.



Moss of Auchlea (Ward 9)

Main interests

Small moss that is predominantly wet woodland and purple moor grass and rush pasture (UKBAP). Small areas of upland birch woodland, broadleaved woodland, neutral and acid grassland. Pond feature is good for wildlife.

Proposed boundary changes

Yes

Site issues/risks

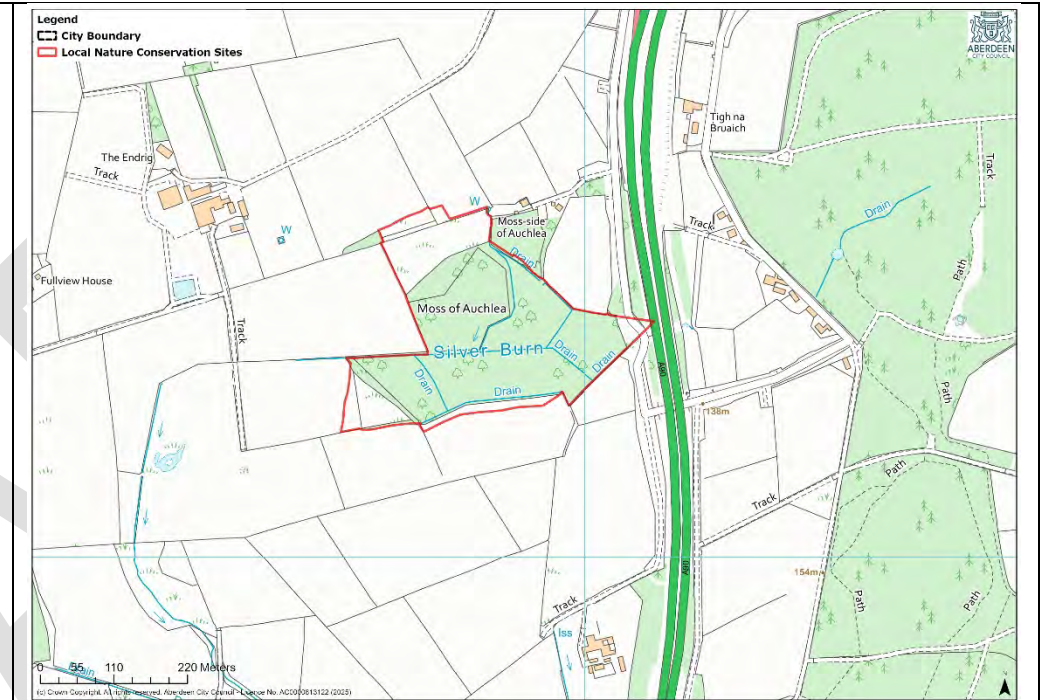
Slightly impacted by the AWPR.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Amend boundary in relation to AWPR.



Murtle Den (Ward 9)

Main interests

Large area of upland birch woodland with smaller areas of mixed woodland and coniferous woodland with good woodland understory flora. There is standing water and burn.
Access issues across the site by the public is an ongoing issue.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

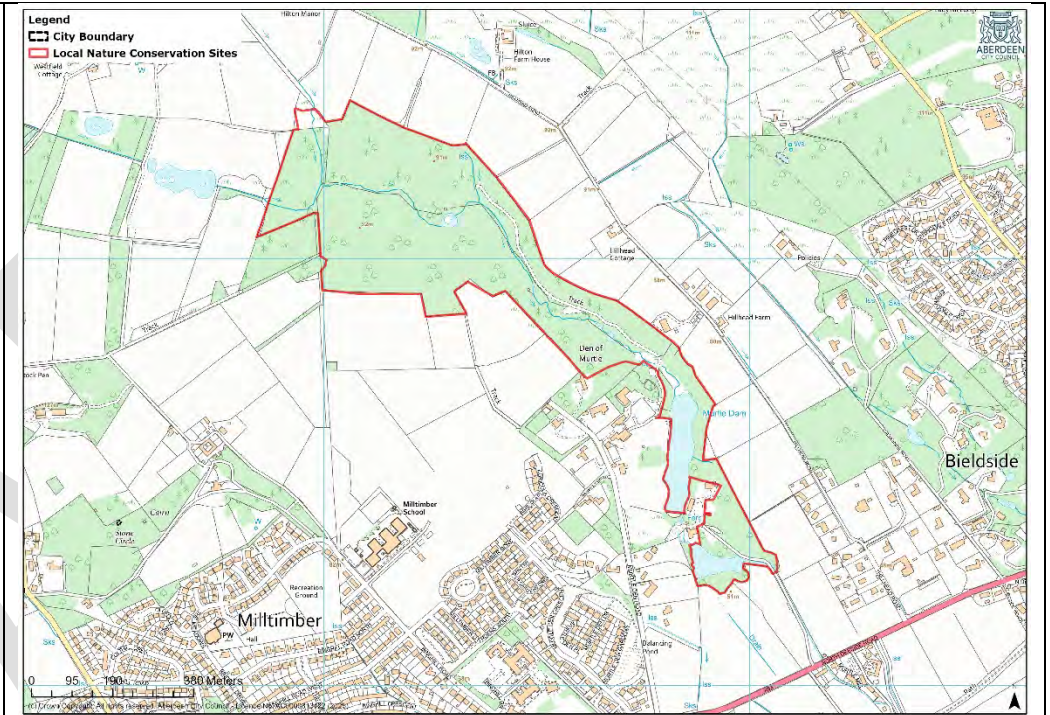
Under development pressure from nearby ALDP OP site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Identify landowners. Consider for future review to monitor impacts on LNCS from development.



Old Manse Wood (Ward 9)

Main interests

Originally designated for its mature Scot's pine woodland with good woodland understory, however the site has recently been clear-felled and replanted with a commercial tree species as a plantation. Due to the significant reduction in size, is no longer of conservation value. Wildlife access to majority of site is controlled by high chainlink fencing to deter deer browsing so there is limited wildlife value. Not under development pressure.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

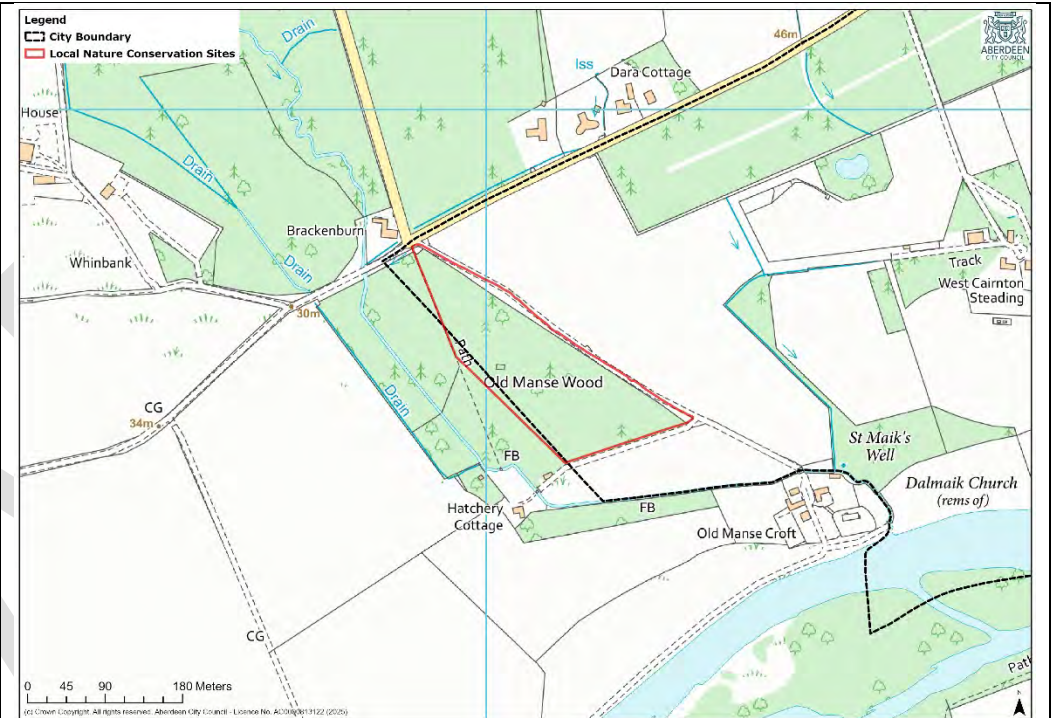
Forestry operations.

Recommendations

De-designate site as original site designation interest lost and with management change unlikely to return.

Next steps

Remove the site as a LNCS and notify owner.



Peterculter (Ward 9)

Main interests

Four sites combined (Peterculter, Guttrie Hill, Culter House Woods and Hill of Ardbeck) Site comprises of upland birch woodland, small areas of mixed woodland, other broadleaved woodland and pine woodland and other coniferous woodland. Small areas of neutral grassland with a former quarry in the north of the Hill of Ardbeck which has been colonised by ferns and shrubs. Priority habitats and species present such as red squirrel and red kite.

Part of the site is also covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) (no 181: Culter House Road).

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

Localised development pressures.

Felling of woodland, however this would be under control of felling licensing processes as well as TPO processes in part of the area. INNS present.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Development pressure to be monitored and mitigated as it arises. Link with the TPO processes to ensure up to date information for the next full LNCS review.



River Dee Corridor (Ward 9, 11, 12 and 13)

Main interests

Mainly functions as a long linear habitat corridor. Coincides with the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The River Dee is a clean, fast flowing river and within Aberdeen supports a diverse range of plants and animals. Along sections of the river bank a strip of semi-natural grassland and water margin vegetation is present. Patches of willow and alder trees occur where grazing is light or absent. The River Dee supports a number of breeding birds (Kingfisher, Dipper, Gooseander, Grey wagtail and Common sandpiper), Overwintering birds (Jack snipe and Green sandpiper) and has an interesting insect fauna. Shingle beaches in the River Dee provide spawning areas for salmon. The River Dee is also a Special Area of Conservation for the presence of the Atlantic salmon, European otter and Fresh water pearl mussel. Red squirrels and Pine martens has been seen along the habitat corridor.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

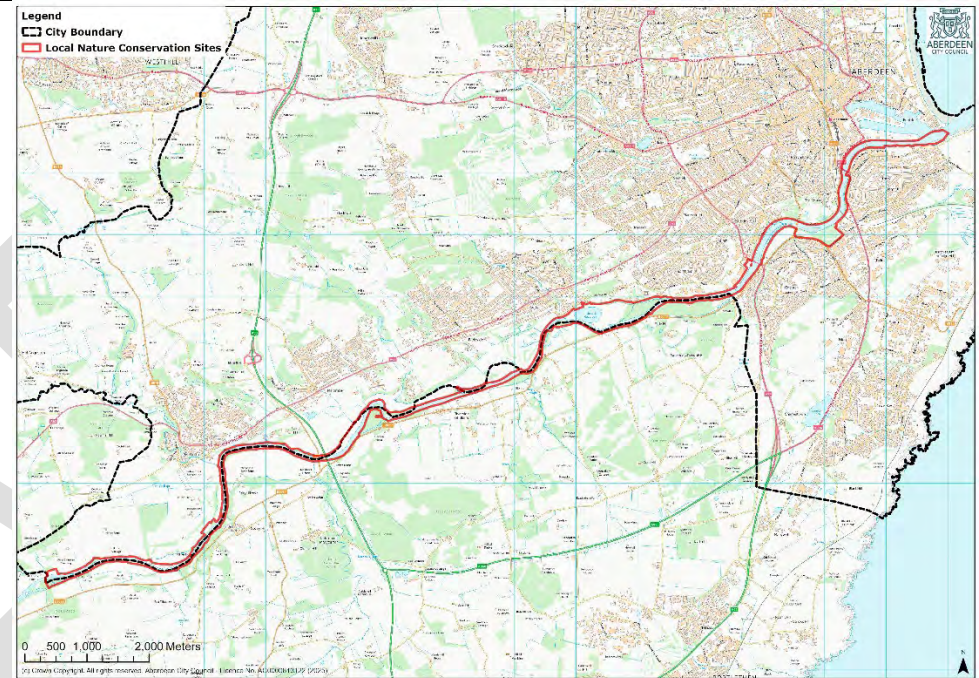
Bank erosion and INNS present. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam is being controlled in some locations. There have been occasional mink present.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Continue to engage with partners such as the River Dee Trust, Dee Catchment Partnership and the Aberdeen District Angling Association to be aware of risks and issues for the next full LNCS review.



River Don Corridor (Wards 1, 2 and 6)

Main interests

Mainly functions as a long linear habitat corridor. The River Don is a fast flowing river with a number of weirs along its length forming pools. The river has rich marginal vegetation except where it flows through intensively grazed areas. The steep sided wooded banks of the Lower Don are some of the best in the City. The water quality of the River Don has been a problem in the past but has shown considerable improvement in recent years. There are some Tree Preservation Orders particularly along the more easterly side of the River Don Corridor. The river supports a significant population of European otter and Nathusius pipistrelle bats have been recorded using the area. Kingfisher, Dipper, Grey wagtail and Common sandpiper all breed here. Red squirrels have also been recorded along the habitat corridor.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

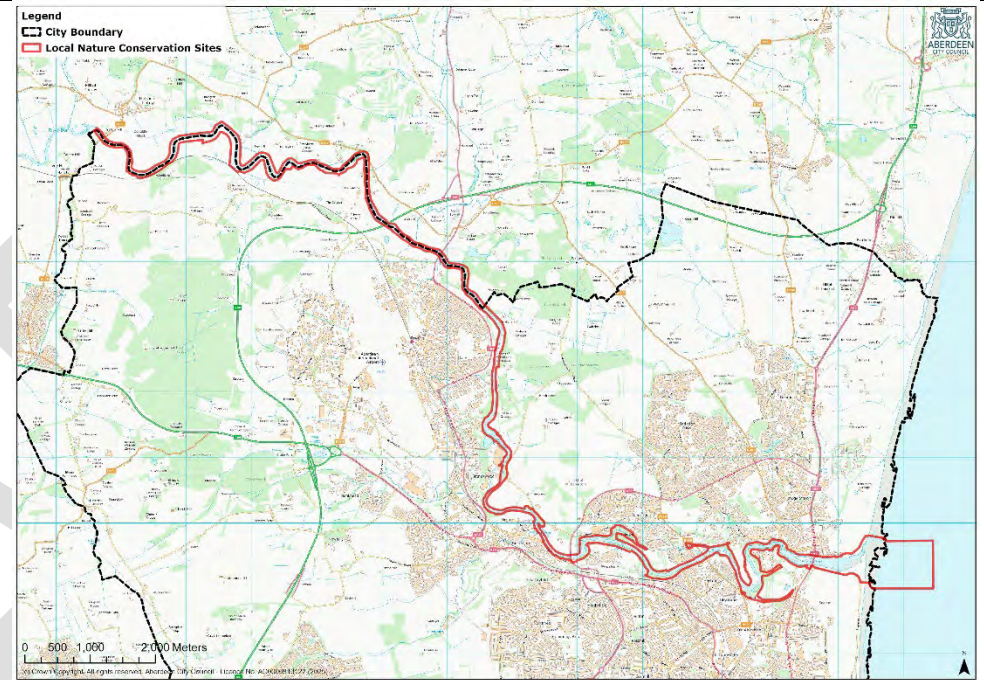
Some development pressures in the north part. The LNCS has significant issues with INNS from higher up in the catchment which would require significant work for multiple partners to tackle.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Stay engaged with major land owners/managers such as the University of Aberdeen and house builders to ensure staying ahead of risks/issues for the next full LNCS review. Development pressures to be monitored and mitigated through the development management process.



Rotten of Gairn (Ward 9)

Main interests

Area of purple moor grass and rush pasture (UKBAP) and lowland dry acid grassland with some small areas of broadleaved woodland, wet woodland and gorse scrub. Supports a good variety of marsh plants. Red kites were nesting to the west of this site. Site is important for invertebrates due to its habitats.

Proposed boundary changes

No, but site has been slightly impacted upon AWPR.

Site issues/risks

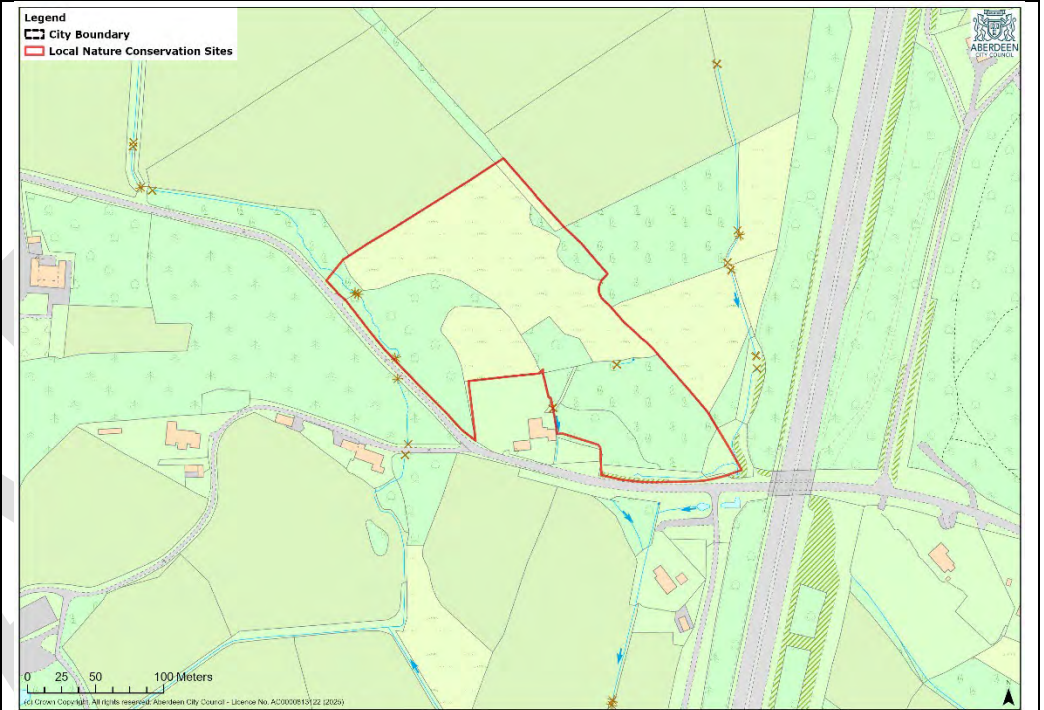
Forestry operations. An area in the southeast corner of this LNCS has been affected by the AWPR road build, with an area of wetland habitats of approximately 600m² disturbed. This has subsequently been replanted with mixed woodland.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Check AWPR mitigation for this site. Monitor site as recently planted mixed woodland matures to ensure the site's original designation is not impacted for the next full LNCS review.



Rubislaw (Wards 3, 7 and 10)

Main interests

Long linear habitat corridor through urban areas. Woodland contains a mixture of broadleaved trees and shrubs with an interesting ground flora of native plants and garden escapes. North burn of Rubislaw/Denburn runs between Maidencraig LNR, passing through tall grassland, broadleaved woodland and amenity grassland. Wetland plants are found along the margins. Rubislaw Den is a wooded valley along Denburn. The Den Burn runs from Kingswell and discharges into the harbour. It is the only burn within the city that has open sections. The area is used regularly by wintering Kingfisher. Dipper, Greywagtail and Red squirrels have also been recorded in the habitat corridor.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

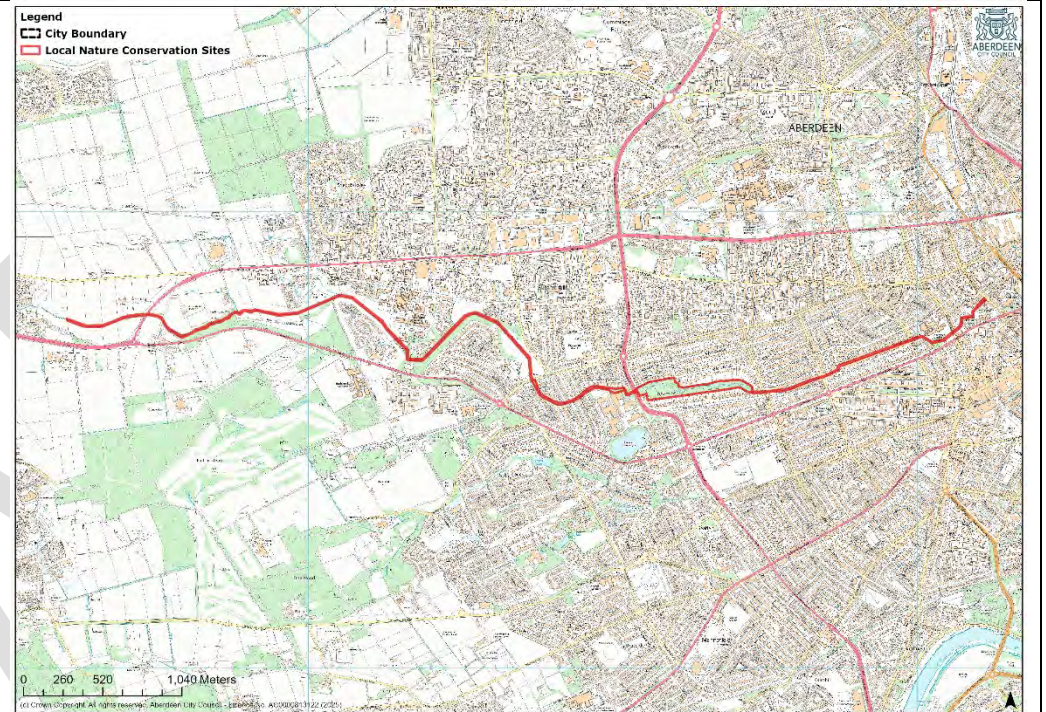
No public access to the Den makes monitoring this part of the LNCS difficult.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Monitor for next full LNCS review. The Den Burn Restoration project looks to re-meander a section of the burn from the Den of Maidencraig LNR to King's Gate in Stronsay Park. The project aims to improve biodiversity to the area and quality of the burn as a wildlife corridor.



Rubislaw Quarry (Ward 10)

Main interests

This site is a disused quarry filled with water. The rock faces are very steep and inaccessible. There are small patches of broom and gorse, and ferns are present. The flatter upper surfaces are clothed in scrubby woodland of beech and ash. A reasonable bird population has been recorded at the quarry. Nearby on the roofs and lawns of buildings are oystercatchers, redwings, and various woodland and garden birds. Badgers are active in the locality. A TPO covers part of the site (TPO 14: Queens Road). Although it is inaccessible, the former quarry is of geological interest, and also for the history of Aberdeen's granite industry.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

Development pressure.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Monitor and mitigate development pressures through the development management process.



Scotstown (Ward 2)

Main interests

Habitats include neutral grassland, broadleaved and coniferous woodland, heath, scrub, bog, ponds, fen and rush pasture. Significant invertebrate interest around the site. Part of the site is also bounded by a SSSI. The site is managed by ACC. Part of the site is covered by a TPO (TPO no 40: Lochside Road). It is one of two sites in the Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire area known for Black bog rush.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

INNS such as Cotoneaster, Rhododendron, American skunk cabbage and Himalayan balsam are present among the gorse at the southwest of the site. Sharp-flowered rush is invading some of the wetland. Multi agency INNS action is required. Past proposals for drainage and tree planting are significant threats to the wetland functions of this site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Monitor the site for natural and manmade changes for next full LNCS review, there is good scope for suitable restorations projects.



Southlasts Mire (Ward 9)

Main interests

Botanically interesting habitats include birch woodland, wet woodland, neutral grassland and purple moor grass and rush pasture (UKBAP). The mire supports rare and interesting flora and a relatively undisturbed area of habitat type uncommon in the Aberdeen area.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

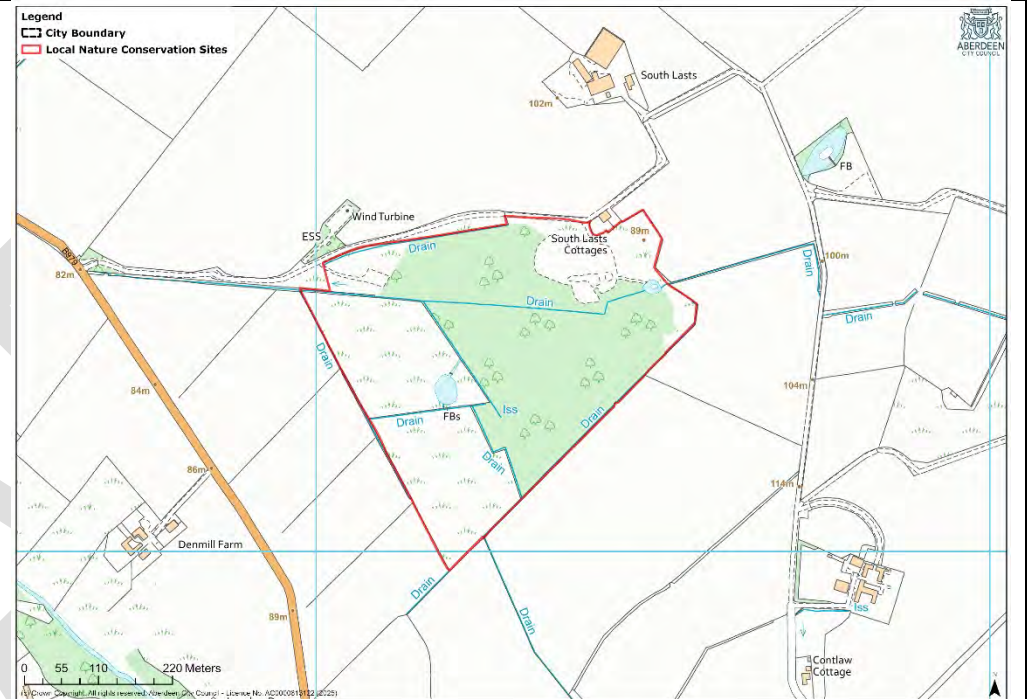
Advice from scientific panel is to not encourage access on to site due to the sensitive nature of the habitats.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

There may be scope for interested wildlife and student groups to survey and document the site interests.



Stoneyhill Wood (Ward 1)

Main interests

Habitats on site includes five different woodland types, standing water, and lowland dry acid grassland. The site wraps partially around a TPO (TPO 29: Upper Persley Road).

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

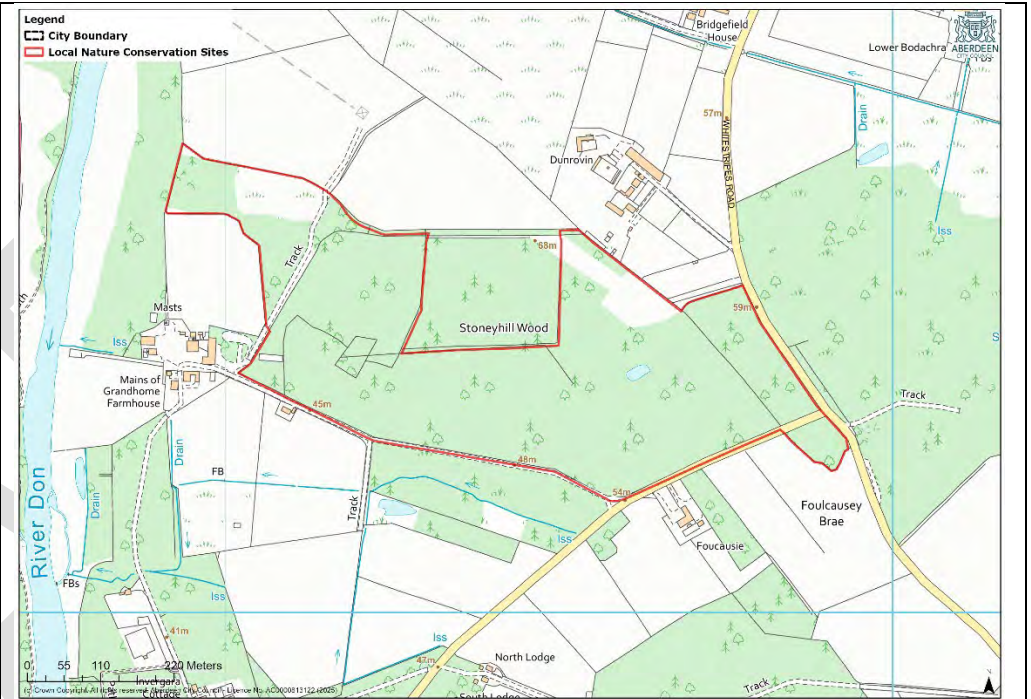
INNS; Rhododendron and Japanese knotweed is found on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Investigate if there are any links to be made to the River Don and the nearby Grandhome Moss LNCS to potentially expand the LNCS for the next review.



Three Hills (Wards 1 and 3)

Main interests

Consists of 3 hills (Brimmond, Elrick and Tyrebagger) and Gough burn. Brimmond Hill is covered in dry heathland and dense gorse scrub with birch and Scot's pine. Elrick Hill supports a mosaic of habitats with dry heathland and acid grassland on top of the hill. Bracken, birch and rowan present and a woodland at the base of the slopes. Occasional wet flushes present. Tyrebagger Hill has dry heathland on the hilltop. Willow, birch and rowan present. Gough burn is low lying area of wet heathland and marshy grassland with high diversity of marsh heath species. Patches of willow scrub are developing along Gough burn. Red squirrel and pine marten are present.

Proposed boundary changes

Yes, slightly impacted by AWPR and requires a boundary amendment.

Site issues/risks

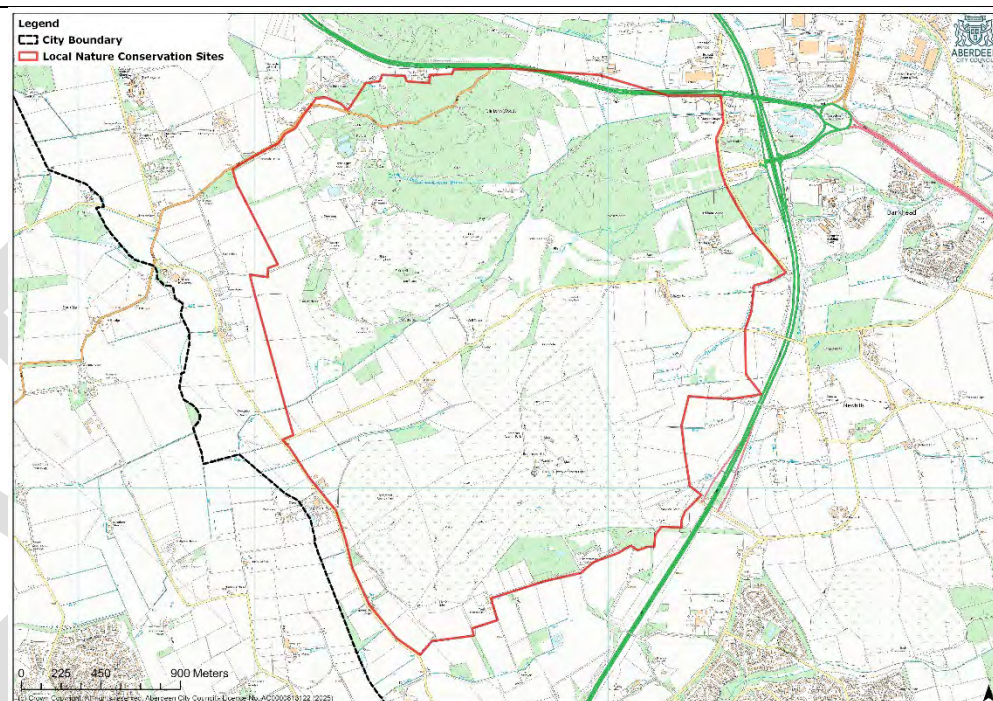
No direct severance from AWPR; main change is that an area of roughly 3,750m² of land is undergoing transition from Heathland to Scrub Woodland. This has an impact of the LNCSs original habitat designation. INNS such as Piri-piri burr present along the southwest boundary of Elrick Hill and a priority for control. Bracken present on all hills but a priority to control at Elrick Hill. Gorse present on all hills but a priority to control at Brimmond Hill.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Liaise with Aberdeen Roads Ltd and Balfour Beattie to continue to monitor transitional habitats for next LNCS review.



Tulloch Hill (Ward 13)

Main interests

Mixture of broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland, acid grassland and good example of dry heathland close to city. Small patches of lowland birch woodland (LBAP) and wet heath. There is significant public recreation over the site.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

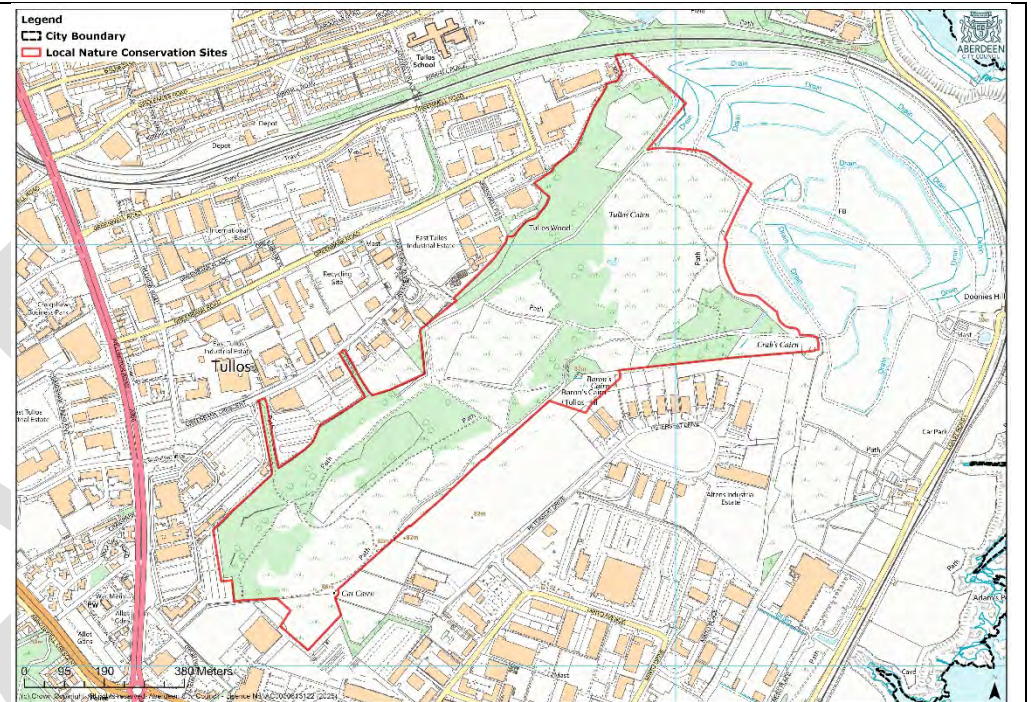
Development pressure as parts of the site are adjacent to the Energy Transition Zone OP sites identified in the ALDP. INNS present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Monitor and manage development pressure through the development management process. Liaise with ETZ Ltd as plans progress to ensure that impacts on adjacent LNCSs are minimised and enhancements/restorations are a priority.



Walker Dam and Rubislaw Link (Ward 10)

Main interests

Large pond with a small burn and areas of wet woodland. Site shows a good example of natural succession from open water to marsh and willow scrub. Contains a good range of wetland plants for a small urban site. There are also areas of broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland and improved grassland. Good recreational and educational resource. Regular site for wintering Kingfisher and breeding Little grebe and Moorhen. Dippers and red squirrel have are also present.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

Surrounded by development so may deteriorate. INNS are present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

The wetlands can be an opportunity for community groups to carry out improvement works.



Westburn of Rubislaw (Ward 10)

Main interests

Westburn of Rubislaw flows from Walker Dam through a residential area. There are areas of dry grassland, marshy grassland and woodland. Species include Kingfisher, Dipper, Grey wagtail and Stove dove.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

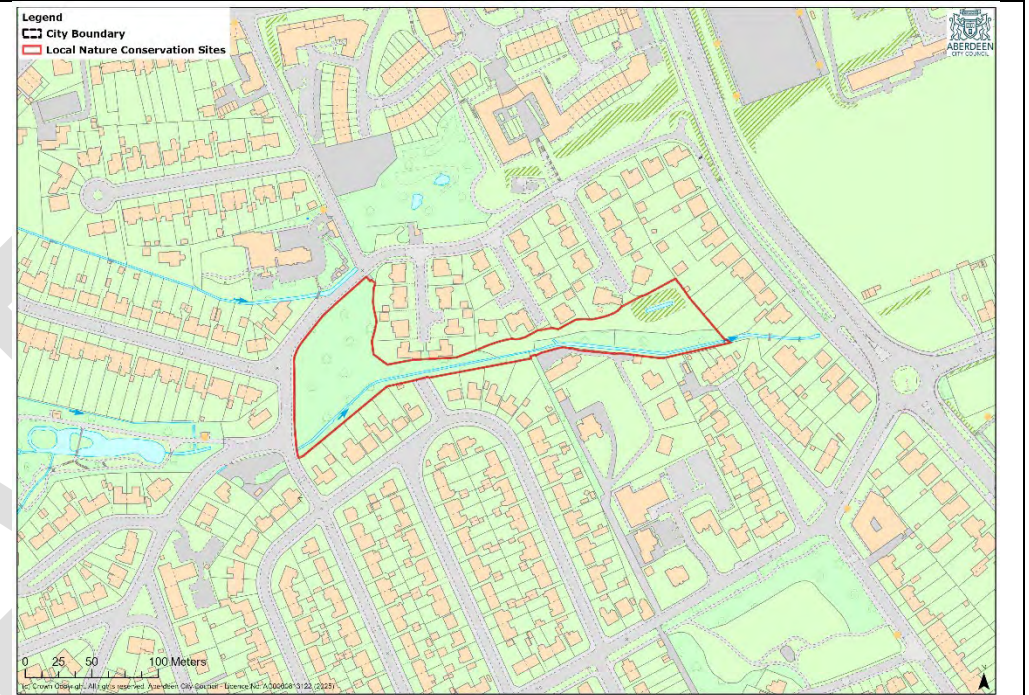
Site surrounded by development so may deteriorate. INNS present on site.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Review at next full LNCS review.



West Cults Woodland (Ward 9)

Main interests

Mixed woodland. Formerly wet woodland but has been cleared of willow although ground is still very wet in places. Red squirrels are present.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

INNS; Himalayan balsam has been recorded on site. Grey squirrels have been controlled to benefit Red squirrels.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

As no immediate risks identified, proceed to review at next full LNCS review.



West Hatton (Ward 3)

Main interests

Narrow strip of broadleaved woodland consisting of birch, rowan, oak and beech. Ground flora consists of acid grassland and woodland heathland plants. There is also a small pond with wetland plants and a small patch of gorse scrub.

Proposed boundary changes

Yes. The site has been severed by the AWPR.

Site issues/risks

This site has been cut into two distinct areas by the AWPR. 4,219m² of Broadleaved Woodland (Priority) was removed, approximately 8% of the site. Much of this is now neutral grassland (3,146m²), including the re-planted sloped embankments of AWPR carriageway.

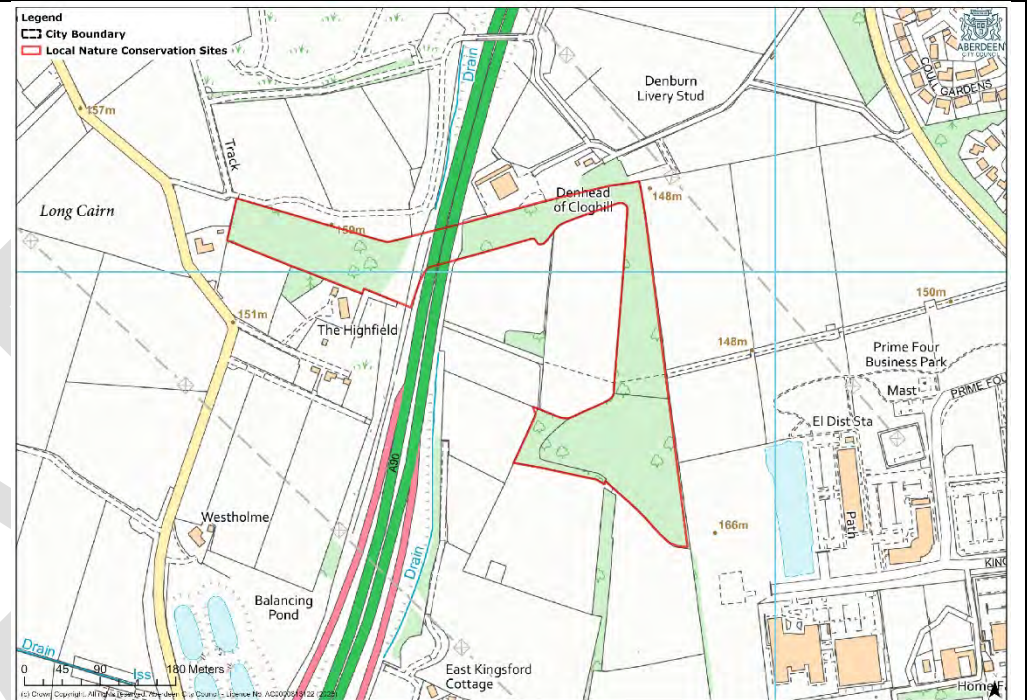
The site is additionally at risk of development pressure from OP sites identified in the ALDP.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

Further survey and mapping work is required to ascertain the status of the site for the next full LNCS review.



Woodlands Wood – Beidleston (Ward 1)

Main interests

The main habitats on site are semi natural broadleaved woodland, wet woodland, lowland birch woodland, bracken, lowland acid grassland and improved grassland. A number of priority species have been recorded including red squirrel, spotted flycatcher and the heath spotted-orchid which is locally important. The site has a connection to two other LNCS sites The River Don and the Aberdeen-Inverness Railway line.

Proposed boundary changes

No

Site issues/risks

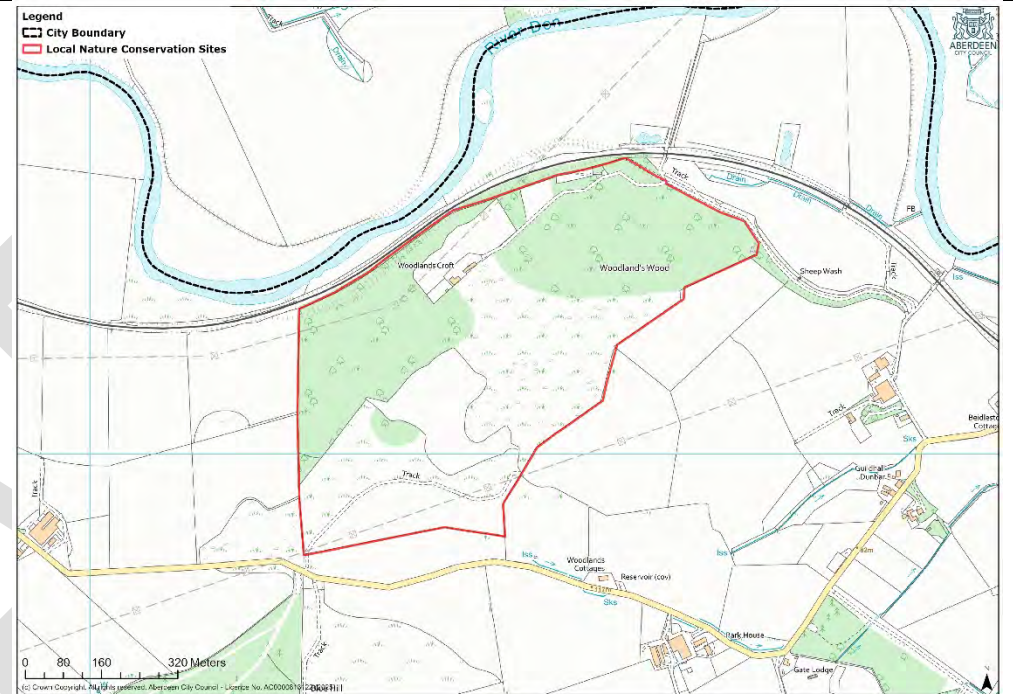
No significant risks identified.

Recommendations

Continue with LNCS designation

Next steps

As no immediate risks identified, proceed to review at next full LNCS review.



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