

Masterplan: Land to the West of Castle Park, Aboyne



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Location

Aboyne

Aboyne is the gateway to Royal Deeside, located 35 miles west of Aberdeen, 13 miles west of Banchory and approximately 11 miles east of Ballater. Aboyne has a heavily wooded backdrop and a distinctive character, with a range of facilities.

Masterplan Site: Land to the West of Castle Park

The land to the west of Castle Park which is the subject of this Masterplan lies to the north-west of the town and is identified as site M1 in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) (2012). The site comprises 14.7ha (36.3 acres) of land in agricultural use and is allocated to accommodate 175 dwellinghouses and 5ha employment land.

The land is under the ownership of Aboyne Castle Estate and will be developed in phases by AJC Homes Ltd.

1.2 Purpose of the Masterplan

This Masterplan sets the vision, context and principles for the development of the land to the west of Castle Park and will ensure that each phase of development contributes to the overall concept for the wider area. Once adopted the Masterplan will form the basis for future planning applications.

1.3 Masterplan Process

Preparation of a Masterplan is a collaborative process, including stakeholders, infrastructure providers and the local community to ensure that the resultant Masterplan established a deliverable vision which is unique to the town, respects the character of the



Figure 1: Aerial Site Plan

local area and identifies infrastructure requirements and mitigation to allow for phased development of the site.

The Masterplan aims to achieve the following:

- A high quality residential environment that meets a variety of housing needs, whilst giving due consideration to the infrastructure and safety issues;
- Successful integration of the site with the surrounding area, ensuring new development fits well in the landscape as well as providing links from the site to the wider area;
- Enhancement of the existing wetland and natural habitat

throughout the site;

- An attractive open space and opportunities for public recreation on the site;
- Well-managed community woodland adjacent to the site with easier pedestrian accessibility;
- Excellent pedestrian and cycle links throughout the site and the wider area;
- Safeguard existing features, enhance green space provision and to include proposed strategic landscaping, efficient connections to pedestrian and cycle path linkages, public transport and road networks.

1.0 Introduction

1.4 Planning Context

National Planning Context

This Masterplan complies with national planning policy and guidance, with specific reference to:

- Scottish Planning Policy (2014)
- Creating Places (2013)
- Designing Streets (2010)
- Planning Advice Note 3/2010 Community Engagement
- Planning Advice Note 83 Masterplanning

Local Planning Context

The development plan for Aberdeenshire comprises the Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (2014) and the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP)(2012).

The SDP settlement strategy classes Aboyne as a Local Growth and Diversification Area, within the Rural Housing Market Area. The plan requires the development of 12,200 houses within this area over the period ending 2035.

Within the LDP, the settlement statement for Aboyne identifies key planning objectives for the settlement:

- To meet the local housing needs;
- To sustain existing local services;
- To provide opportunity for local employment;
- To provide improved community facilities;
- To protect and enhance the role and attractiveness of the town.

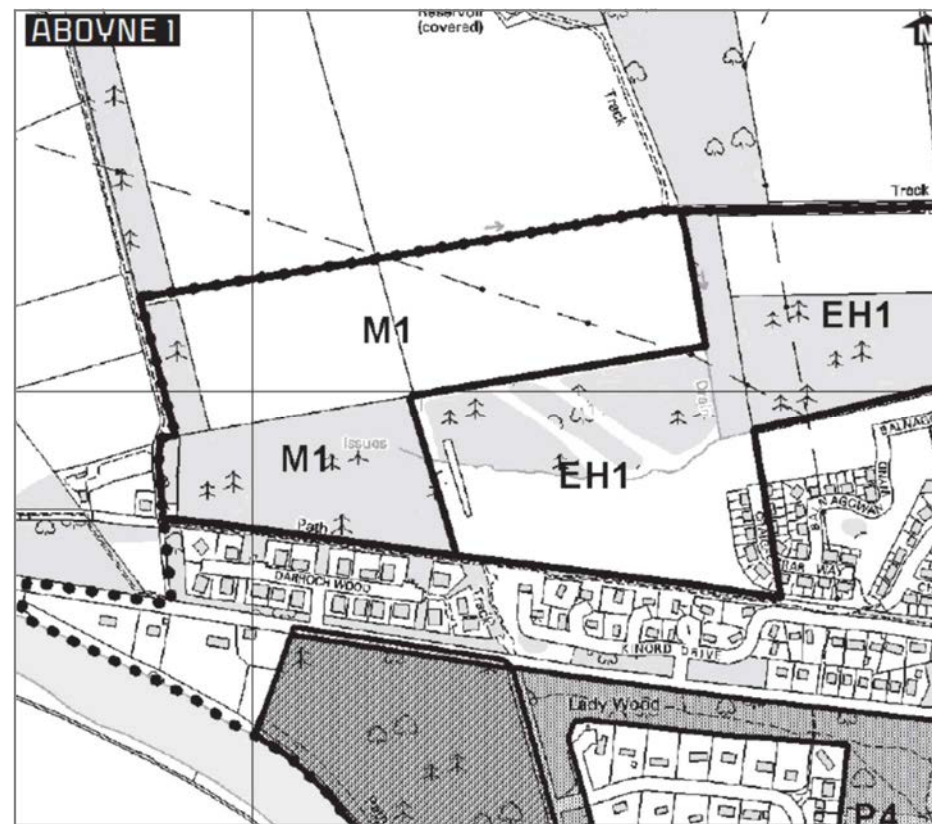


Figure 2: Extract from LDP: Aboyne Settlement Statement

The LDP encompasses the housing allocation from previous Local Plan (2006) as 135 houses to be provided at site EH1; and allocates the development of 175 houses and 5ha of employment land as site M1 to assist in the delivery of the key planning objectives for Aboyne.

The Masterplan interprets policy from LDP and its supplementary guidance, which provides the context for the development of site M1 as a continuation of the development of site EH1. Subject-specific policies include:

- Policy 5 *Housing Land Supply* and SG Housing 1: *Housing land allocations 2007 - 2016*
- Policy 6 and SG Affordable Housing 1: *Affordable*

Housing and Schedule 4 Affordable Housing Targets

- Policy 8 and SG LSD2: *Layout, Siting and Design of New Development.*
- SG LSD5: *Public Open Space*
- Policy 9 and SG Developer Contributions1: *Developer Contributions*
- SG LSD1: *Masterplanning*
- SG LSD8: *Flooding and Erosion*
- SG LSD11: *Carbon Neutrality in New Developments*

Meetings with Aberdeenshire Council

Prior to preparation of the Masterplan the development was discussed at a formal 'Major Application' meeting with relevant Aberdeenshire Council development services and statutory consultees in December 2012. At every stage of the Masterplan preparation the design team have engaged with these consultees regarding the development of the site.

The draft Masterplan document was critiqued through Aberdeenshire Council's formal 'Masterplan' Meeting process in October 2013. The concept presented sought to enhance the wetland within the site and provide community woodland to the northeast of the site. The amount of employment land shown was reduced due to a lack of demand for employment land in this location and requirement to utilise a private access road to provide a separate access required. Revisions were made in response to comments raised at this meeting.

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 Masterplan Setting

Aboyne

Aboyne is an attractive settlement, originally planned around the main street, crossroads and Square, these areas remain the community focus of the village. The settlement is characterised by the spacious nineteenth century villas lining Ballater Road, with the greater part contained within the angle formed by the A93 and the River Dee south of Charlestown Green.

During the nineteenth century the village fanned out to all points north, east and west from the semi-circular slope down to the haugh, where the railway station was constructed. Aboyne Castle policies inhibited development to the north-west, and the village has developed westwards along the main Ballater Road, with a second axis of development striking roughly south-west, to link up with the bridge across the Dee and then continuing south to the river.

The village centre retains its historic feel which carries over into the commercial property fronting the Ballater Road and Charlestown Green. There is continuity in the Aboyne Castle style of architecture, throughout the village. Chimneys tend to be chunky, splayed dormers are popular, with whimsical detailing. The setting of semi-mature/mature garden ground and wooded areas is characteristic of Aboyne, and it is particularly important that this ambience is maintained.



Figures 3,4 and 5: Traditional Commercial and Residential Properties in Aboyne

2.0 Site Analysis (cont.)

2.2 Local History / Townscape Characteristics

Aboyne is quite compact and walkable and the existing network of open space is particularly well linked at present, especially to the northwest of the town. The site is already connected to a number of paths in the west which follow the riverside of the Dee and link to the walkway along the former Deeside railway line, including the Tarland Way.

The setting of semi-mature/mature garden ground and wooded areas is evident throughout Aboyne, and it is particularly important that this ambience is maintained. Specific areas of growth can be identified within the settlement, recent development has been incremental, with residential areas lying on the edges of the town.

As the town has grown in population, new housing has introduced modern building



techniques and contemporary design, with careful consideration of the context of the settlement. In recent years the majority of private housing to the north-west of Aboyne has been developed by Bancon Homes, with the affordable housing developed by AJC Construction on behalf of Grampian Housing Association. More recent phases of development at Castle Park have been developed by AJC Homes.



Figure 6 (left): Link to Deeside Way from Charlton Park

Figure 7 (above): Modern Residential Development at Charlton Park

Figure 8 (below): Modern Residential Development at Darroch Wood

Figure 9 (Far left): Housing along Ballater Road



2.0 Site Analysis

The Masterplan Site

The Masterplan site lies to the north-west of the town, adjacent to the recent Castle Park and Charlton Park developments to the east. The site comprises 14.7 hectares (36.3 acres) of agricultural grazing land, with a burn running through the south of the site. The Deeside Way runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and the western boundary is defined by birch woodland.

2.3 Landscape Analysis

The majority of the Masterplan area is taken up by two agricultural fields, previously used in crop rotation but at present used for grazing by sheep and cattle, and an area which was previously Sitka spruce commercial woodland, now felled.

Beyond the eastern boundary is phase 4 of the Castle Park development (phase 4).

2.4 Local Landscape Characteristics

Aboyne is located in an area of the River Dee Special Area Of Conservation. It is set in woodlands, both deciduous and coniferous. There are old, long established woodlands in the River Dee Valley, and post 1945 commercial coniferous plantations on the surrounding hills.

Historically, Aboyne's housing is in areas bounded by woodland. This can be seen along the Rhu-na-Haven Road, Ballater Road, adjacent to the Bellwood, Darroch wood, and in other areas of Aboyne.

The proposed housing in this area is also surrounded by woodland. Woodlands on the south along the Deeside Way, trees on Court Hill to the north, and the long established oak woodland on the north-east. Birch woodland separates the phase 4 development from this proposal and semi-mature mixed deciduous/coniferous woodland is growing on the west side. All these areas of woodland screen the site from the neighbouring Aboyne housing areas, and from views into the area from near and far.



Figure 10: View southeast over development area.



Figure 11: View north towards Corse Hill. Trees in the centre of the photo line the northern site boundary

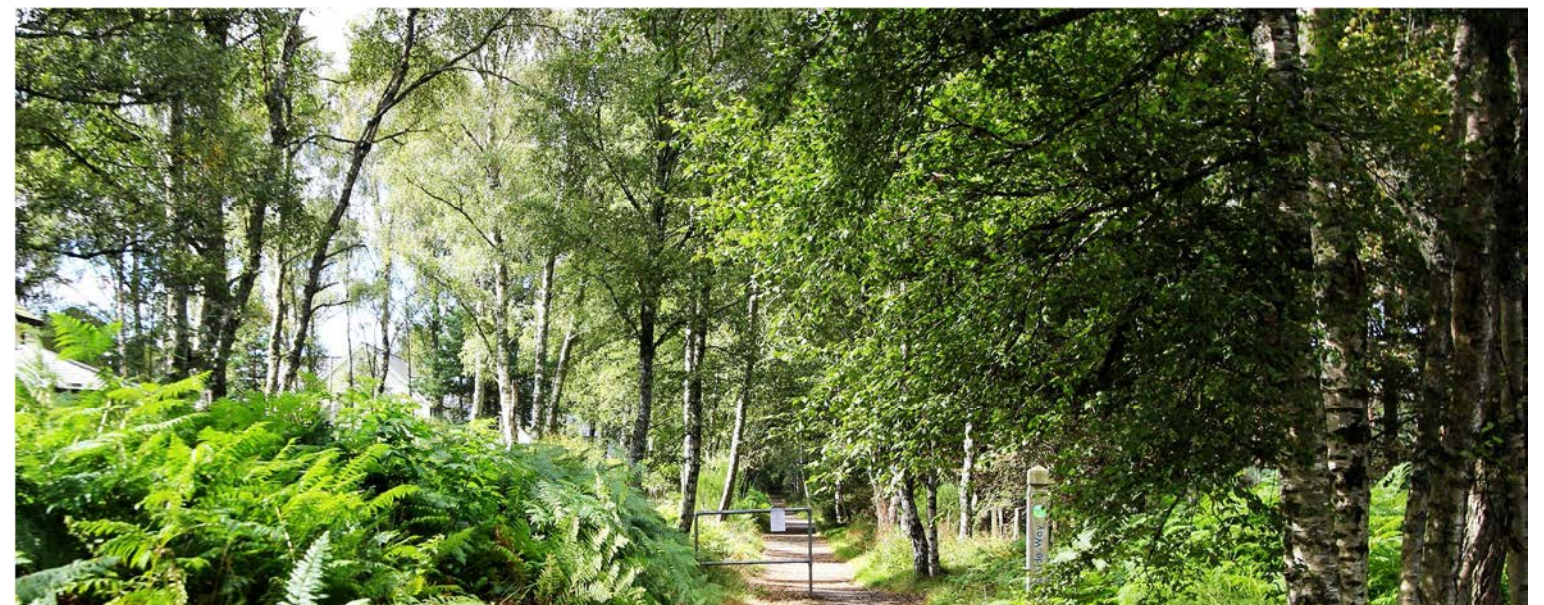


Figure 12: View west along Deeside Way, adjacent to Masterplan Site

2.0 Site Analysis (cont.)

The landscape and visual assessment shows limited glimpses and views into the area from the Deeside Way. There are no long distance views into the proposed development. Views can be seen from the north-east oak woodland but again, this is because the development area is glimpsed through the trees.

The Deeside Way runs along the south side of the proposed development. It is separated by mature birch, rowan, scots pine and sycamore. It is proposed to link the Deeside Way to the wildlife corridors, and the footpaths along both sides of the wetland area. This will give the Aboyne community access to the western woodland path, and also access to the north-east indigenous oak woodland.

Phase 4 has a riparian strip running from east to west, and this connects with the wetland area running through the southern part of this site. This will form a wildlife corridor from the previous development to the east, through to the western woodlands. Additional paths will connect with the semi-mature mixed deciduous/coniferous woodlands along the western boundary.

This will give different lengths of walks through different wildlife habitats, and will connect with the different walkways of previous development phases. These paths will also give access from this development onto the Deeside Way and then to the footpaths along the banks of the River Dee.

2.5 Accessibility

The site has excellent pedestrian connectivity with the surrounding area, benefitting from the Deeside Way running along the south of the site, development of the site should incorporate a network of pedestrian linkages to maximise the existing pedestrian connectivity.

Bus stops will be provided within the development, providing infrastructure for existing and improved services to extend to and through the site.



Figure 13: Site Connectivity

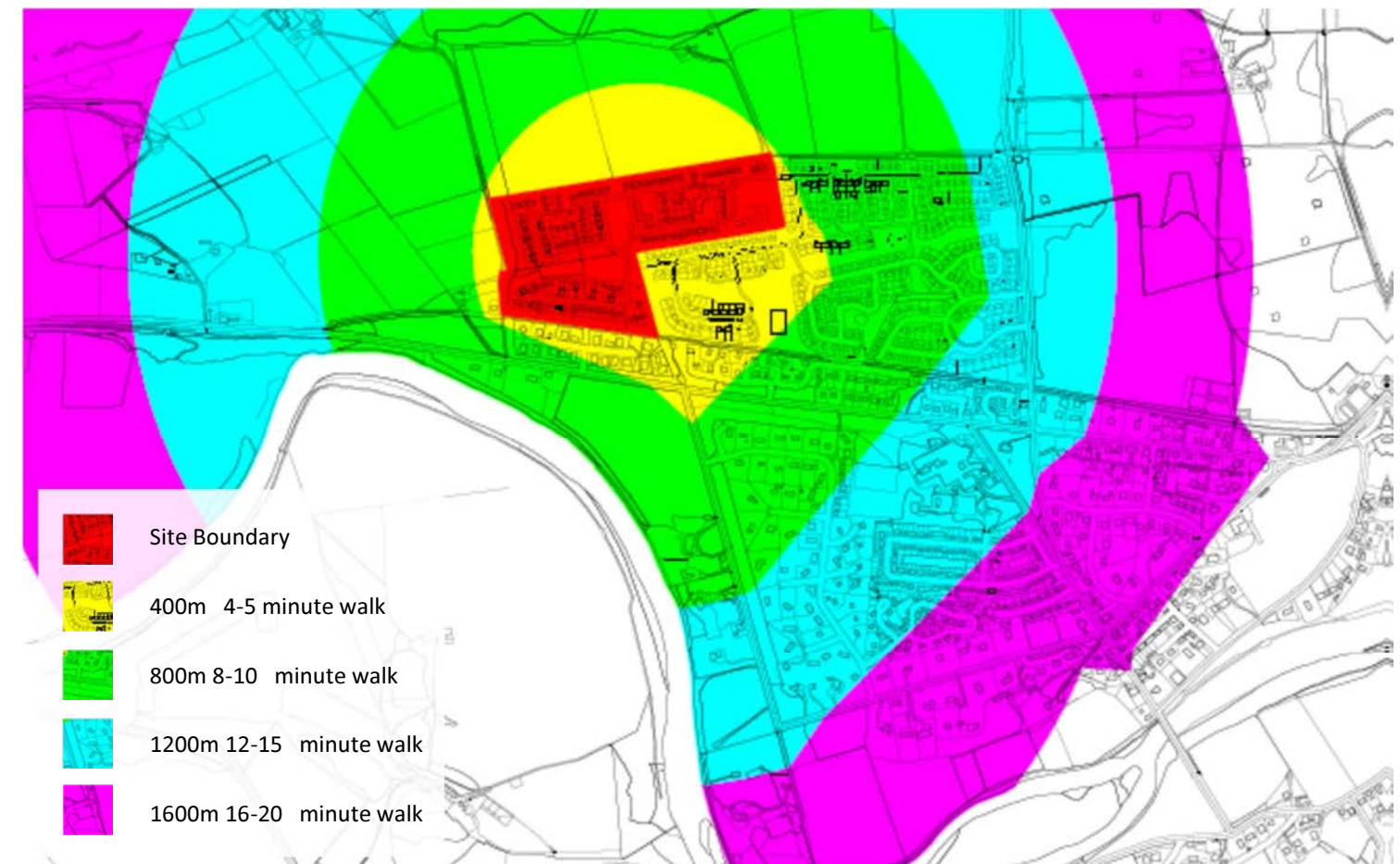


Figure 14: Walking Isochrone Diagram

2.0 Site Analysis

2.7 Ecology

The majority of the area comprises agricultural fields, at present grazing land used by sheep and cattle.

To the south of the grass fields is an area of gorse and broom where the contour falls down to the phase 4 riparian strip, with a wetland area and tall thin alder and windblown willows. Originally the ground to the south of the wetland area had a commercial spruce plantation, but this has been harvested. Housing will be situated in the grass fields and this area of felled commercial spruce woodland. These are areas of monoculture (flora and fauna) with poor species diversity.

The removal of spruce has resulted in tall thin alder trees, forced to grow to height, which are now structurally weak, collapsing and bending due to lack of main trunk strength. Areas of the alder have been cut to allow access for forestry extraction machinery, and the stumps are coppicing and forming healthy stems. This reflects the proposed woodland management of this wetland area. This area has a diverse flora, and is good habitat for ducks and waders. The wetland area will have the stream widened in areas and small stone dams constructed to give shallow ponds for insects and amphibians.



Figure 15: View west along Deeside Way.



Figure 16: Mature Beech trees along field boundary.

Wetland Area

The wetland area will be retained and managed for its wildlife and biodiversity. Extending from the wetland area to the north and south will be wildlife corridors and open landscaped areas. These will be used for indigenous tree and shrub planting, and allow pedestrian and cycle connectivity across the area. They will also connect areas of important ecology. Within the site are a number of mature beech trees. These will all be retained. A mature oak tree is also to be retained.



Figure 17: Wetland area view west



Figure 18: Wetland area.



Figure 19: Wetland - Mature oak tree to the south of the development area, with Scots pine, Area 2 in background.

Alder trees on the left and right of the oak tree.

2.0 Site Analysis

Northern woodlands

The coniferous plantation on Court Hill, which screens views from the north.



Figure 20: Trees along northern boundary, Court Hill plantation

North-east woodland

This long established oak woodland is to be connected to wildlife corridors and footpaths from other areas of the site. It will also connect to the pedestrian pathways from previous developments. New tree planting to enhance red squirrel habitat will be implemented.



Figure 21: View southwest from long established oak woodland to the northeast. The site is the green field above the golden colour of the cereal crop.

Southern woodlands.

These are scots pine, birch and sycamore. They screen views out to the houses on Ballater Road and screen views into the site from these houses and the Deeside Way. These are open woodlands with a mainly grass understory. Red squirrel have been seen in this area, and new tree planting and management will promote habitat for red squirrels.



Figure 22: View across riparian area to Scots pine woodland. The houses of Darroch Wood are screened by trees.

Eastern woodlands.

This is birch woodland adjacent to the water main and phase 4. These trees form screening, even in winter. This eastern area will be reinforced with deciduous and evergreen planting.



Figure 23: View east from farm track on west side. Site is glimpsed through the trees of this western wildlife corridor.



Figure 24: View north. Phase 4 can be seen to the right. The proposed site is to the left of the birch trees and straight in front beyond the trees.



Figure 25: East woodlands, view west from phase 4 towards the site which is behind the birch trees.

2.0 Site Analysis (cont.)

2.8 Flooding

SEPA Indicative River & Coastal Flood Maps record that the site is not at risk from river or coastal flooding, however careful management of the wetland area is required in order to manage localised impacts to neighbouring properties which were highlighted through public consultation.



Figure 26: Extract from Indicative River & Coastal Flood Map
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2.9 Contaminated Land

From analysis of the previous and adjacent land uses it is unlikely that the site carries any form of contamination. If this changes in the future it shall be investigated and mitigated in agreement with Aberdeenshire Council.

2.10 Drainage and Water

This site has been drained historically via managed water courses. An extensive Victorian culvert runs west to east

along the northern boundary which is well maintained and functions adequately. The remaining area within the site is drained via ditches and wetlands over which there are riparian rights. This informal wetland, through the existing plantation, drains through a series of shallow ditches and swales. The main flow route can be determined on site from the small defined watercourse which meanders through this area.

Suitable SUDS measures to deal with the surface water run-off from the development will be provided.

The access roads require a minimum of 2 no. levels of treatment. The roof water from the buildings and driveways will require 1 level of treatment.

The road surface water will be collected in gullies and conveyed via a piped network to a swale before discharging into a regional Detention Basin with a restricted outlet to a local ditch. It is likely that due to the site topography 3 regional Detention Basins will be required. The surface water discharge rate from the Detention Basins will be restricted to the M30 return period storm event.

Building roof and driveway surface water run-off will be collected in the surface water sewers and conveyed to a regional Detention Basin which will provide the required level of treatment.

Waste water will be collected by foul sewers and conveyed to the foul sewers in the adjacent Phase 4 development to the east.

It is anticipated that the Scottish Water water mains installed as part of Phase 4 development will be extended into the M1 site to provide a water supply.



Figure 27: SUDS Basin Integrating with Wildlife Habitat/ Open Space

3.0 Site Requirements

3.1 Design Requirements

The Masterplan design aims to create a place where people will want to live, incorporating a high standard of design, creating a development that merges seamlessly with the surrounding village.

There are 6 recognised key qualities which form the basis for good urban design, which are summarised as follows:

Safe and Pleasant – It must provide properly designed streets and public areas. These should consist of defensible spaces with natural security through passive surveillance and overlooking. There should be facilities for work rest and play for the whole community. People need to take precedence over cars and traffic speeds need to be controlled by careful design.

The development should have a clear identity which can only be created with an understanding of the historical character of the area and the surroundings. Green open spaces will be provided to provide places to breathe.

Welcoming – Traditional Scottish villages had a clear approach sequence which led the visitor to a natural centre. This approach progressed through a transition from rural to urban and is reflected in the scale of buildings, density, their proximity to each other and the change from soft to hard landscaping.

Easy to get around – Good connections to the surrounding road, cycle and footpath networks are core needs for a successful town plan. A legible and easily understood street pattern which delivers good local accessibility and links to the wider network is

essential. It is essential to create a walkable community with well-connected streets.

Flexibility – Sustainable design is good design and applies to buildings streets and public spaces as well as roads and footpaths. The fundamental requirement for sustainability is flexibility and provision must be made in design work at all levels to accommodate future needs and changing circumstances.

Resource Efficient – The use of existing infrastructure, transport networks and services are extremely important for creating sustainable communities. This site is well located on the local

road networks as well as being closely linked to the existing facilities in the village. The design of the street layout, open spaces and buildings will take account of and recognise and respect the character and topography of the landscape and recognise and respect the microclimate of this area to ensure energy efficiency.

Distinctive – Successful places have a strong individual identity. This comes from a combination of building forms, materials, scale and landscape. The strong local heritage and character of Aboyne will influence the design of any new addition to the settlement.

The Masterplan concept plan evolves as a result of ongoing consultation with the local community and stakeholders.



Figure 28: Modern Residential Streetscape

3.0 Site Requirements

3.2 Sustainability

Sustainability is a fundamental component of any design process. In developing any proposal for the area the following aspects need to be considered: Energy efficiency; Orientation; Topography; Public transport; Pedestrian and cycle paths; Drainage; Ecology.

Bright sunny streets can foster a positive sense of place and reduce heat and light requirements within developments. The sloping aspect of the site lends itself well to opportunities for views across the site and beyond to the rolling farm land.

The layout of the site will work with the natural topography of the site to minimise earthworks. The wetland area within the site will be opened up and managed to become a feature of the development, with public footpaths around and through it. The creation of habitat corridors through the site provide continuity of habitat for wildlife to move throughout the site and between the wooded areas in the south and the community woodland to the north-east of the site.

3.3 Energy Efficiency

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets the targets for carbon reduction in Scotland, with an 80% carbon saving on baseline levels (1990 levels) to be in place by 2050. The interim target to be achieved by Scottish Ministers is a 42% saving on baseline figures by 2020.

Aberdeenshire Council through planning policy SG LSD11: Carbon Neutrality in New Development, seek all developments to meet as a minimum the Bronze Active standard set out within Section 7 of the building standards Technical Hand-out incorporating the minimum building control requirements for new build housing and in addition the use of a low and zero carbon generating technology. This is currently a greater requirement than set by Building Control to achieve building warrant for new build properties. AJC Homes are committed to a fabric first approach to sustainability.

3.4 Foul and Surface Water Drainage Proposals

Foul Proposals

New foul sewers will be provided to serve the development and will be located within the new roads and areas of open ground where necessary sewers will be designed and installed in accordance with “Sewers for Scotland, Second Edition, November 2007”, published by WRc plc.

Each plot will discharge to the new foul sewer via a single disconnecting chamber located within its own curtilage.

The foul drainage for the site would discharge into the proposed foul sewer at Phase 4 to the north east of the site

Surface Water Proposals

Residential developments require 2 levels of treatment for surface water run-off from roads areas. Surface water run-off from residential roof/curtilage areas only requires a

single level of treatment. Where practicable, run-off from individual plot drives will be drained to subsoil's at source.

New surface water sewers will be provided to service the development and will be located within the new roads and areas of open ground where necessary. Sewers will be designed and installed in accordance with “Sewers for Scotland, Second Edition, November 2007”, published by WRc plc.

Each plot will discharge directly into the new surface water sewer system via a single disconnecting chamber located within its own curtilage. Run-off from the proposed access roads will be drained direct to the new sewers via traditional trapped gullies. Car parking areas will be provided with at source SUDs treatment in accordance with SEPA Management Train. This will consist of permeable paving with stone filter trenches located beneath; these measures will then discharge into the new sewers.

3.0 Site Requirements (Cont.)

3.5 Transport Strategy

Two access points from the eastern boundary of the site will provide vehicular access into the new development, as a continuation of the Castle Park development. From the outset the approved road layouts within Castle Park have been designed and built to accommodate development from this site.

Pedestrian and cycle movement is key and the site will be fully permeable from all approaches. The layout of the site considers creation of a successful place above movement, with the needs of pedestrian, cyclists and public transport considered before those of other vehicles.

The street design hierarchy identifies street structure, followed by layout and detail. Street structure should respond specifically to its context and the street network to the east, ensuring maximum pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the existing and proposed developments.

Two proposed main streets through the site will be designed to give the site a sense of arrival and place, passing through core spaces and key connections to local paths, the countryside and existing settlement of Aboyne.

Car parking provision will be provided in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council guidance. This will be integrated into the design layout following guidance within Designing Streets to ensure that cars do not dominate the streetscape.

3.6 Strategic and Local Road Network

The development will require to be designed to accommodate a bus route.

A Transport Statement was previously prepared to assess the potential traffic impacts Phase 4 would have on the A93/B9094 junction. The assessment also took into account previous Phases 1–3. The report concluded that the current junction without modification has a capacity in excess of 500 units. Therefore it is anticipated that there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate the Masterplan development.

Aberdeenshire Council Roads Department were consulted and agreed that the existing 3 no access from the adjacent developments onto the B9094 were sufficient to serve the proposed Phase 5 residential development.

4.0 The Masterplan

4.1 Evolving the Masterplan

The LDP allocates site M1 to accommodate a mix of development, including 175 houses, 5ha employment land and 40% open space. Land for employment uses has been allocated to this site since the Aberdeen Local Plan was adopted in 2006, however despite its availability and knowledge of market requirements there has been no demand for business in this area of Aboyne.

A development at the density envisaged in the LDP would be uncharacteristic of the area and Aboyne's unique townscape attributes. In discussions regarding a development that would meet the LDP allocation the Council's roads engineers requested a separate access for the commercial/ employment land be provided from the A93, at the south-west corner of the site. This is a private road and the developers do not have a right over it for these purposes. At the public consultation the neighbouring residents to the south and west were strongly against commercial development in this area and intensification of the private access and it is unlikely access would be granted for such uses.

The adjacent proposal accommodated the LDP requirements and was showcased at the public consultation event for discussion. The event also showcased an alternative proposal for a lower-density development, with less employment land, for which there was overwhelming public support.



Figure 29: Illustrative Layout from Public Exhibition, Accommodating Full LDP Allocation

4.0 The Masterplan

This alternative proposal, shown adjacent, allowed the wetland area to be opened up and habitat corridors to be created throughout the site to provide a landscaped setting which encouraged connectivity of the surrounding woodland areas through a mixed density development.

At the public consultation event it was identified that a more appropriate use of the employment element of the M1 allocation would be the provision of areas for sheltered/ high dependency housing and a care home, as discussed with the Council's Housing services. As well as catering for a recognised need, this would also provide local employment, be well connected to the existing and allocated residential development and within close proximity of the village centre.

4.2 Land Use

The plan formed the basis of the now-proposed Masterplan, which incorporates areas for a care home and potential for sheltered/ high dependency housing.

There is flexibility within the Masterplan to cater for individual smaller business premises, such as a solicitor, accountant, hairdresser, café or nursery—this would provide small and work-from-home premises that would not be at a scale that would compete with the existing services at the village centre.

The Masterplan includes woodland to the north-east of the site and provides provide 40% open space. The development seeks to achieve a minimum of 25% affordable housing for Aboyne.



Figure 30: Alternative Layout from Public Exhibition

Masterplan for Land to the West of Castle Park, Aboyne

The Masterplan illustrates how the following can be accommodated within the site:

- 164 houses of varying styles and sizes, including flats
- Land for sheltered accommodation
- Land for a nursing home
- A managed wetland area and habitat corridors linking the woodland throughout the site
- Formal areas of open green space and parkland
- Pedestrian and cycle paths throughout the site and connecting to the wider area
- Oak woodland to the north-east as a managed community facility
- Managed woodland to the west
- Safe routes to school and throughout the development.



Figure 31: Illustrative Masterplan Layout

4.0 The Masterplan (cont.)

4.3 Open Space

Within the site are areas of open space. These are associated with the wetland area, wildlife corridors, and existing woodlands. Public footpaths are designed to pass through all these areas giving a series of interconnected walkways and cycle paths.

4.4 Design Response to Surrounding Landscape

The existing woodlands and wildlife corridors will be managed as conservation areas. They will have new indigenous tree and shrub planting to maintain tree cover and biodiversity. The woodland paths will give access across the site and connect previous developments with walkways to the east and west.

Within the housing area, open space/wildlife corridors will be designed to have open areas of tree and shrub planting with grass. Some of the grass will be cut and maintained for amenity activities. Other areas of grass will be long and will encourage a more diverse flora which will increase the flora and fauna in the area.

The wetland area will maintain a connection east to west, and this wildlife/amenity corridor in the centre of the proposal will give access to wildlife across the site. Pedestrians will also be able to access the wetland area and from there, can access other areas and woodlands. The plan (page?) shows these green corridors extending to meet the Deeside Way, and the existing woodlands on the periphery of the site. From the Deeside Way, paths can be accessed which lead to the banks of the River Dee.

SUDS are placed into the landscape to contain stormwater from the houses. These will be landscaped with aquatic and marginal plants, and constructed to give nesting habitat for waders and ducks. These will discharge into the wetland area, by a series of French drains, to ensure the hydrology of the wetland area is maintained.

4.5 Landscape Character Areas

These informal green spaces and wildlife corridors, SUDS details, and network of paths, give the public access to many areas previously not available to the public. At the same time, the biodiversity of the flora and fauna will be increased by the provision of a multitude of different habitats.

1. West Woodland: This will be retained as a wildlife corridor between the River Dee and the woodlands to the north of the Deeside Way, giving access through the area from north to south.

2. South Woodland: Existing pine woodland with reinforced indigenous tree and shrub planting along the Deeside Way, forming a wildlife corridor.

3. Mixed Woodland: Area of scots pine, birch and rowan, forming a wildlife corridor and access footpath cycleway between area 2 and wetland area 4.

4. Wetland Habitat: This area follows the burn from west to east. This area will have managed alder trees, public access footpaths and cycle paths, giving access east-to-west across the development. It will also act as a wildlife corridor, connecting woodland area with the wildlife corridors to the east.

5. Eastern Wildlife Corridor: this planted area will have a large SUDS pond, indigenous tree planting and will form a combination of wildlife corridor, open space and public footpath connection between the wetland area 4 and the oak woodland 6.

6. Oak Woodland: Eastern indigenous woodland with oak, larch and scots pine, but predominantly oak. A public footpath will



Figure 32: Annotated Masterplan

connect the wetland area to the south and east-to-west-footpaths through the houses, to the woodlands to the north.

7. Public Open Space: This area will be planted with groups of trees and shrubs, giving open grass areas for play and general amenity. These will form transitional areas from the wildlife corridors and wetland areas, to the more centrally located amenity public open spaces.

8. Amenity/ Public Open Spaces: Areas of grass, planted with standard trees giving open areas of grassland for general use.

9. Wildlife Hedgerow: this runs adjacent to the northern drainage ditch. The area will have alder, beech, holly, elder, dog rose, blackthorn and honeysuckle planted along its length.

4.0 The Masterplan (cont.)

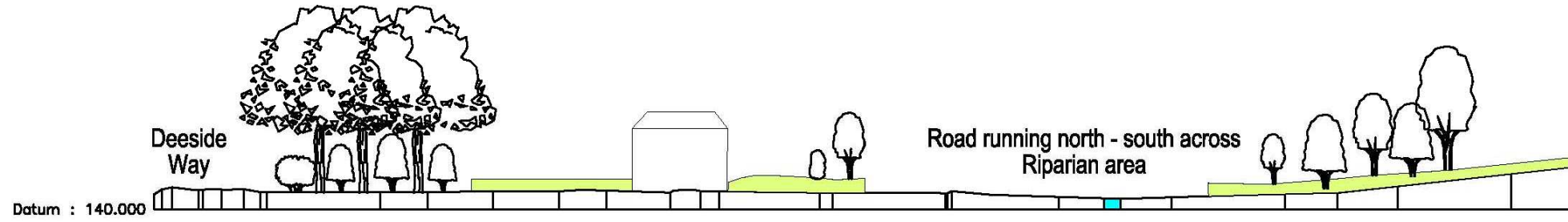


Figure 33: Section A-A through the wetland area

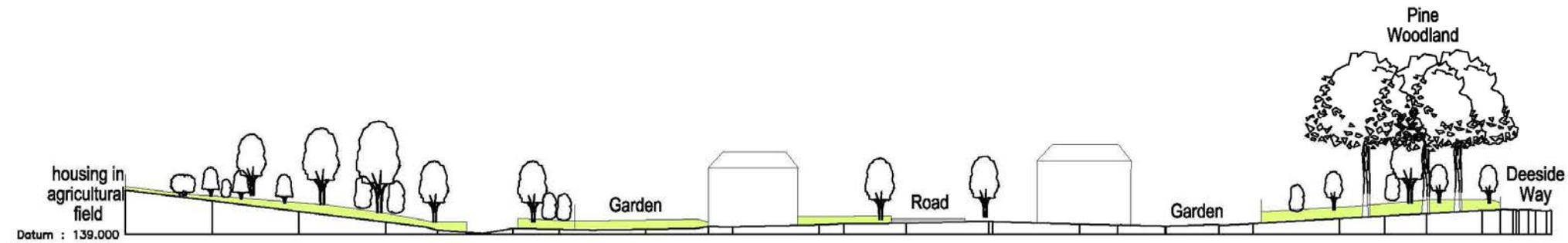


Figure 34: Section B-B through the wetland area

4.6 Connectivity

The site will be strongly linked to the existing town fringe with pedestrian routes throughout the site, creating a fully permeable layout in all directions for pedestrians and cyclists.

The internal road layout has evolved from the initial proposal for the development of the site (see figure 30). Initially the road to the north was considered to be unnecessarily long and straight; cul-de-sac design was explored but is not encouraged by recent the national policy. *Designing Streets* encourages natural traffic calming through the design of streets and squares, which intersperse the layout and break up the length of internal road to the north.

Initially only one vehicular access was proposed over the wetland area, with pedestrian walkways providing additional and ease of access the Council's roads engineers requested a second vehicular access over the wetland.



Figure 35: Masterplan with contour lines visible

4.0 The Masterplan (cont.)

4.7 Design Principles

At AJC Homes properties combine the best of the traditional and the modern. In architectural style, fine materials and sensitivity to the local environment, we seek a harmonious marriage of the old and the new. We are conscious that every house we build will be a family home. Our dedicated local workforce is outstanding for its skill, imagination and industry. Our watchword is quality. Our customers must know that they may rely on our word, that we shall deliver what we promise, and that all business shall be conducted with courtesy and professionalism. In this way we take pride in our work, and feel confident that we give our clients the level of service that they deserve.

Sustainability

AJC Homes adopts a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency, with a high quality of insulation, glazing and building materials utilised to maximise energy efficiency.

Low and zero carbon technology is constantly evolving and a range of measures such as air and ground-source heat pumps may be utilised to achieve carbon reductions.

Materials Palette

Current AJC houses are designed with the Aboyne vernacular in mind; materials include natural granite, timber windows, cedar linings & plain drydash render. The intention is to use a similar palette for this development, keeping an open mind to allow the scheme to evolve in a natural way.

Character Areas

Design of the properties for the Masterplan site will evolve from the development of Castle Park to the east, and through integration of habitat corridors throughout the site, the aim is to create a high quality development, which encompasses traditional and local design themes.



1. Lower Density: detached houses are proposed to the south of the wetland.



2. Higher Density/ Mixed Use: the likely first phase of development proposes higher density development of detached and semi-detached properties, with provision for a care home, sheltered and high-dependency flatted accommodation. This will introduce a range of properties that is not currently available within Aboyne. This area would be best suited to accommodate small business units, dependent on demand, possibly with flatted accommodation above.



3. Mixed Density: this phase of the development aims to provide a mix of detached and semi-detached homes at a range of densities.



5.0 Phasing and Delivery

5.1 Phasing

Residential

The residential dwellings will be developed as a continuation of the Castle Park development to the east, at a density of approximately 15.8 dwellings per hectare which will vary across the character areas within the site. Development is likely to commence at the north-eastern end of the site, which is intended to cater to specialist housing requirements, including affordable housing upfront and provide additional variety to the current development at Castle Park.

Employment Land

The Masterplan sets out a context for the development of houses at a lower density, and replaces the employment element with provision for a care home, sheltered housing and high dependency housing, for which there is a demand in the settlement. Whilst meeting local needs this will also provide employment and allow residents to down-size whilst remaining within their community.

Classes of employment use within the development must respect residential amenity, these include class 1 (Retail), class 2 (financial and professional services), class 3 (food and drink) and class 4 (business). The demand in the settlement is organic and demand for such businesses continues to be accommodated within the town centre, enhancing vitality at the heart of the town, and at Aboyne Castle Business Centre. Class 5 and Class 6 uses are accommodated at the Aberdeenshire Council's Aboyne Industrial Estate to the east of Aboyne.

As set out in section 4.2, the Masterplan provides the flexibility to cater for individual needs, including the provision of smaller business premises and work-from-home dwellings, which could have a separate business access. This could accommodate the requirements of sole traders and small businesses, such as a solicitor, accountant, hairdresser, café or nursery, but not compete with the existing services at the village centre.



Figure 36: AJC Homes Development at Castle Park, Aboyne

6.0 Developer Obligations

6.1 Specific Infrastructure

The waste water sewers in the adjacent Phase 4 development will require to be extended to service the development.

The water mains in the adjacent Phase 4 development will require to be extended to service the development.

New surface water sewer infrastructure including detention basins will be required to convey, attenuate and discharge surface water into local watercourses

It is not anticipated that upgrades to the existing junctions from the adjacent development onto the B9094.

The development will require to be designed to accommodate a bus route.

6.2 Developer Obligations

Developer obligations can mitigate cumulative impacts of development on infrastructure and facilities within the settlement. The amount and type of contributions will relate to the scale and impact of development, in line with Scottish Government Circular 3/2012 *Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements*. The precise level of infrastructure provision and developer contribution will be the subject of negotiation and agreement with Aberdeenshire Council, through their planning gain officer at the time that any planning application is made.

Key infrastructure requirements for each development are outlined in the Local Development Plan and accompanying Action Programme (August 2012).

Education

Contributions will be required to support the impact of additional pupils from the development on the current educational facilities. Development within the catchment area will be monitored, an extension to Aboyne Academy may be required.

Transport

2 points of access into the development are required, to be taken from Castle Park to the east.

Water

Upgrades to Tanarside WTW have taken place, the Action Programme notes that there shouldn't be any capacity issues.

Waste Water

Capacity at Aboyne WWTW will require to be increased. This is being implemented by Scottish Water now that the Growth Criteria has been met.

Health

The Action Programme Pressures exist on existing health centre capacity, NHS Grampian discussing site options with Policy.

Waste

The LDP seeks contributions to a new household waste recycling centre

6.3 Affordable Housing

The Local Development plan sets a target for 35% of development in Aboyne to comprise affordable housing, however the recently published SPP specifies that affordable housing should generally comprise no more than 25%. The type and tenure of the affordable housing provided within the M1 site will be agreed with Aberdeenshire Council's Housing service in line with the specific requirements for Aboyne at the detailed development stage.

The Council's Housing service currently seeks a range of 1-4 bedroom properties, of different type and tenure to be provided; this includes a potential requirement for specialist/ high dependency housing in Aboyne, as well as sheltered accommodation.



Figure 37: Affordable Housing at Tarland Road, Aboyne

8.0 Further Information



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Appendix 1.0— Public Consultation

A1.1 Community Consultation and Engagement

Engagement with the local community is valuable in terms of understanding the local community context and the issues and local knowledge that can be encompassed into a Masterplan at an early stage.

The Planning Advice Note 3/2010 Community Engagement provides best practice guidance and outlines that:

- Community Engagement must be meaningful and proportionate.
- Community Engagement must happen at an early stage to influence the shape of plans and proposals.
- It is essential for people or interest groups to get involved in the preparation of development plans as this is where decisions on the strategy, for growth or protection, are made.

A1.2 Community Council

As statutory consultees and community representatives, regular dialogue with Mid Deeside Community Council (MDCC) helped to raise awareness and understanding of the development at an early stage. The managing director of AJC Homes met with the MDCC at their meeting of 9 April 2103 to invite them to the public consultation strategy for the Masterplan and development process.

Some MDCC members came to a preview session of the public consultation exhibition on 18 April 2013 from 1–2pm.

A1.3 Public Consultation Event: 18 April 2013

The drop in exhibition at The Victory Hall in Aboyne ran from 2–7pm, with members of the design team on-hand to discuss the proposals. The event was advertised in the Deeside Piper the previous week and posters were distributed to local community facilities and shops.

The event showcased development aspirations for the site and a concept Masterplan for discussion. Attendance was steady with 46 registered attendees and many more unregistered in attendance. 27 feedback forms and 2 follow-up emails were received following the event. Issues raised included:

- School capacity

The results of this feedback informed discussions with key stakeholders regarding the development of the site, which along with further surveys informed the refinement of the Masterplan.



Figures 37 and 38: Community Consultation Event in the Victory Hall, Aboyne



Ryden



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astell associates