

ABERDEENSHIRE

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2016



SHAPING ABERDEENSHIRE

PROPOSED PLAN 2015

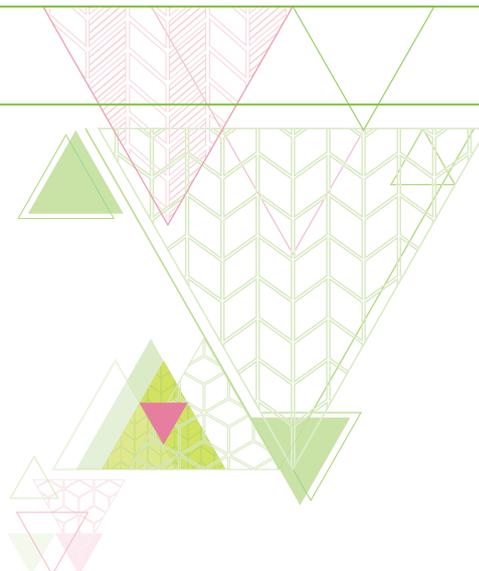
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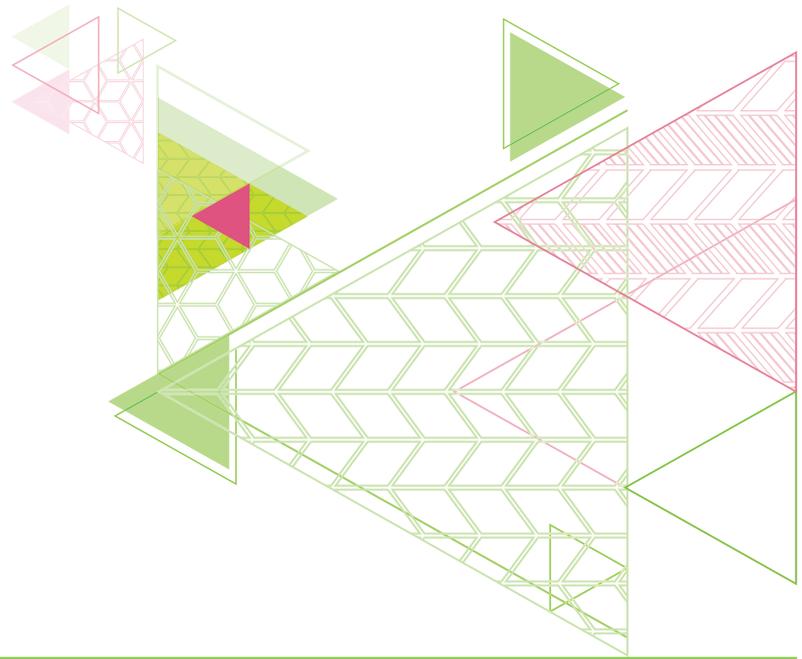
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FOREWORD

Aberdeenshire, from the mountains to the sea, is an exceptional place. This plan has an important role to play in making sure that this continues for generations to come.

As a result of wide-ranging consultation with our communities, those with an interest and the development industry, I am confident that the plan will achieve the aims of helping to develop a strong and resilient economy while maintaining our high quality of life and our exceptional environment. New development* will be sustainable, what we do and how we live today should not leave our children unable to achieve a similar quality of life in the future and should take into account the important issues of climate change and reducing carbon.

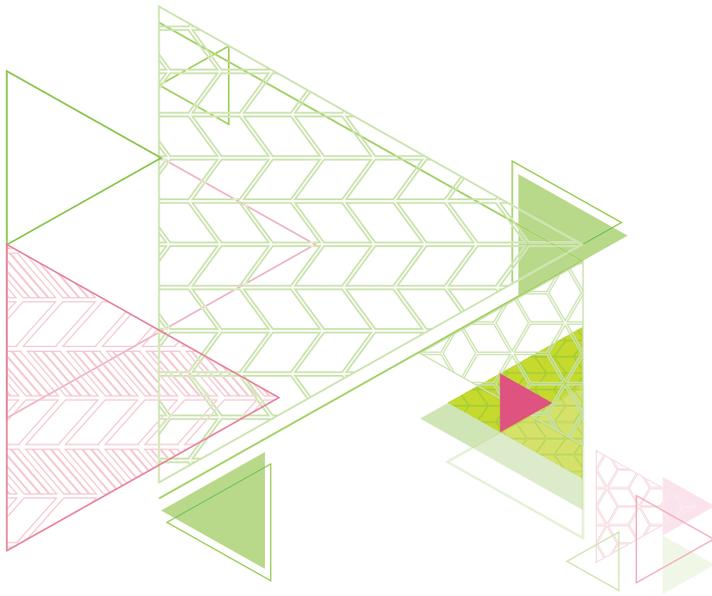
Aberdeenshire has had a fully up-to-date development plan for a number of years. This is helping us to make sure that new developments take place alongside providing facilities such as schools and other facilities and in places where the transport system is either suitable for dealing with the increased travel demand or can be improved. The benefits of development following a plan-led system are helping enormously in providing services and

scheduling transport improvements, as well as giving certainty about the future both to the communities and developers. This *local development plan*¹ will continue to give that certainty for at least the next five years.

This plan will direct decision-making on all land-use planning issues and *planning applications* in Aberdeenshire. Only on exceptional occasions and with good planning reasons will we make decisions which do not follow the policies and land allocations in this plan.

**Development is defined as the carrying out of building, mining, engineering or other operations in, on, over or under the land or the making of any material change of the use of any buildings or land.*

¹ Words in italics in the plan are explained in the glossary.



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This plan is part of a set of documents which make up the statutory development plan for the area. We share the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan with Aberdeen City, who themselves also produce a *local development plan*. The part of Aberdeenshire which is within the Cairngorms National Park has its own separate development plan.

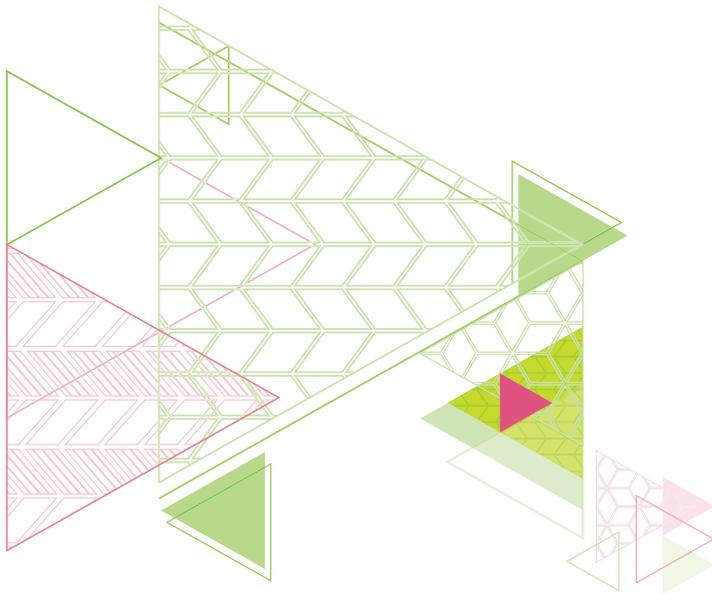
The *strategic development plan* sets out the shared vision that we have for the Aberdeen City Region – a vision that this plan must be consistent with. It tells us how much land we should set aside for development, and broadly where this should be. It sets out broad principles for development in the area.

The *local development plan* sets out the policies we will use for assessing *planning applications*. It sets out exactly where development is expected to take place over the next five years, and beyond up to 2026. We will review it in 2022 and replace it with a new plan that will consider the next 10-year period.

The *local development plan* is supported by *supplementary guidance* which provides extra detail to some of the *policies* and *proposals* of the plan. This *supplementary*

guidance has the same weight in decision-making as the plan itself. In line with Scottish Ministers' vision for development plans, *supplementary guidance* has only been used to provide additional detail to *policy* principles that are established within the plan. Where *supplementary guidance* is used, it is clearly cross-referenced in the plan.

However, in general, we would encourage you to contact your local planning and building standards office for detailed advice as all policies in the plan, and in the *strategic development plan*, can apply. You will find contact details for the six planning offices across Aberdeenshire on the back cover.



INFLUENCES ON THE PLAN

We have prepared a monitoring report that has looked at the principal things that affect the use of development land within Aberdeenshire. This has helped us identify the important issues that the plan has to tackle. These issues were highlighted in a main issues report published in October 2013, and on which we asked for comments (see *Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2016 Main Issues Report 2013*). The report also looked in detail at sites that the development industry wanted to see taken forward in the new plan (these are known as bid sites).

The *local development plan* is not the only plan we use in decision-making. We also use the *local housing strategy*, the *Local Transport Strategy* and the *Economic Development Strategy*, all of which have influenced the content of this plan.

A number of other important documents also relate to Aberdeenshire. We have written the plan to be in line with the plans of other organisations, including our neighbouring planning authorities, and national and regional strategies such as:

- the *Regional Transport Strategy*;
- the *National Waste Plan*; and
- the emerging *Flood Risk Management Plan*.

Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework have also been significant influences on the content of the plan (see '*Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan: How the proposed plan supports strategies and plans of other authorities*').

Finally it should be noted that the *Local Development Plan 2012*, the *Action Programme*, the *Housing Needs and Demand Assessment*, the *Housing Land Audit*, and the *Employment Land Audit* have all provided important sources of information we have used.

VISION FOR THE PLAN

Building on the Scottish Government's purpose "to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable growth" this plan encourages high-quality development. It promotes the efficient use of land to deliver long-term benefits for the public, while protecting and improving nature and local culture. It sets out policies and development land *allocations* that deliver the four outcomes that the Scottish Government expects: successful, sustainable places; low-carbon places; natural and resilient places; and better connected places.

We have reflected the Scottish Government's purpose in the *strategic development plan's* vision for Aberdeen City and Shire. That plan imagines an Aberdeenshire that is even more attractive, prosperous and sustainable, and which is an excellent place to live, visit and do business. The plan balances economic growth with the urgent challenges of *sustainable development* and climate change. We have included further aims that:

- deliver quality of life;
- help protect and improve our natural and cultural heritage;
- can create sustainable mixed communities; and
- make the best of our existing transport network.

This plan adopts the vision and aims of the *strategic development plan*.

We can help support the area to grow as an international centre for the oil and gas industry, to spread into the renewables sectors, and improve the knowledge

and service sectors. The area around Aberdeen continues to be the powerhouse of economic activity in the region and so land *allocations* in the *settlements* around Aberdeen City reflect this.

On the other hand there are significant challenges in terms of improving the economies of our remoter communities, particularly those that in the past depended more on the fishing and agriculture industries. This *local development plan* helps promote Aberdeenshire as an area where residents, business and social enterprises are encouraged to make their communities more self-sufficient. It provides a supportive environment for business investment. For these areas, the future may depend on people being able to work in places distant from centres through the internet or exploring existing strengths such as tourism and food and drink.

Transport and communication are basic to the quality of life in more accessible locations and the prosperity of less well-connected locations. The plan takes a balanced approach. It promotes development in locations that do not result in further traffic congestion and which are well served by public transport but also recognises that in remoter locations there may be no alternative to using cars.

Quality of life is also reflected in the need to make sure new developments are designed as effectively as possible and areas of natural and cultural heritage are protected, recognising that the 'green areas' on the doorstep are very important to how people view where they live; their 'place'.

Above all the plan tries to make sure that we are indeed delivering, as stated in Scottish Planning Policy, "the right development in the right place".

TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MIXED COMMUNITIES WITH THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF DESIGN

We need to achieve excellence in design across all developments in Aberdeenshire with a design process that makes sure planning takes place early and over the long term to provide the infrastructure which will be needed. We must consider issues including the balance and mix of uses, and the type and affordability of housing. We have included policies to tackle these important concerns.

TO TAKE ON THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

We have introduced policies and proposals to both tackle and cope with climate change. Policies say that new developments must reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Managing waste generated by development is also a central part of the policy. We have tested allocations to make sure that planning considers reducing the need to travel, encouraging active travel, and avoiding long-term risks associated with flooding. We have introduced new policies to encourage the development of renewable energy resources in a sensitive way. These policies recognise the need to balance economic growth and development with the need to protect and improve our environment.

TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Aberdeenshire provides important assets for the city region and Scotland as a whole. Our policies insist that all development must give an appropriate level of protection to internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of built heritage, archaeological and environmental importance. They must also use any opportunities to improve the natural and built environment as a whole.

TO INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

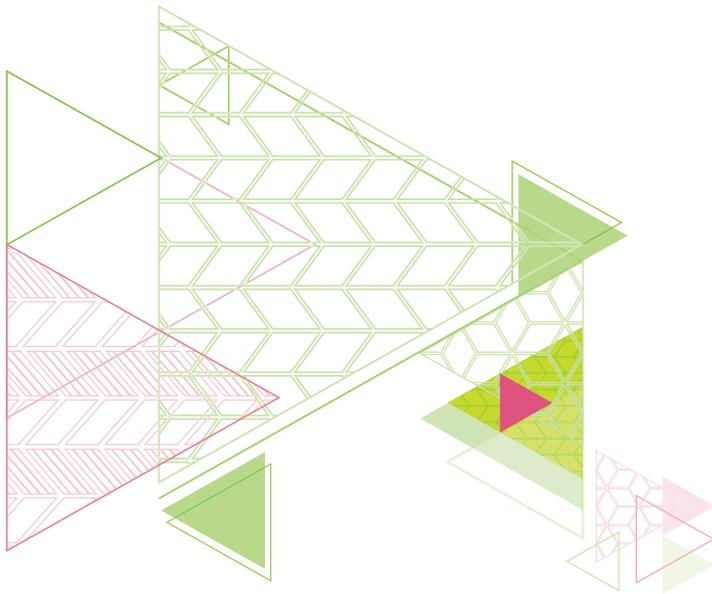
We continue to identify a range of employment sites in line with the strategic development plan spatial strategy which offer a choice of size, location, and environmental and other facilities. The range also allows flexibility to cope with uncertainty in the market. We promote the idea of providing employment land in proportion to the scale of housing proposals. We have also introduced policies to encourage employment development in rural areas and regeneration areas, and to stimulate wider economic growth, if we can identify a need, or in response to demand.

TO PROMOTE THE CREATION OF GREEN NETWORKS WITHIN AND BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS

Connected areas of green space and habitats such as parks, paths and woodlands (green networks) within and on the edge of our villages and towns can provide a range of social, ecological and economic benefits. Putting our open-space, design and infrastructure policies into practice will create and improve these green networks across the area.

TO MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF THE TRANSPORT NETWORK, REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL AND PROMOTE WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

We promote the principles included in 'Designing Streets- A Policy Statement for Scotland (2010)' for all new developments and have made land development opportunities available in places where we can encourage methods of travel other than using cars.

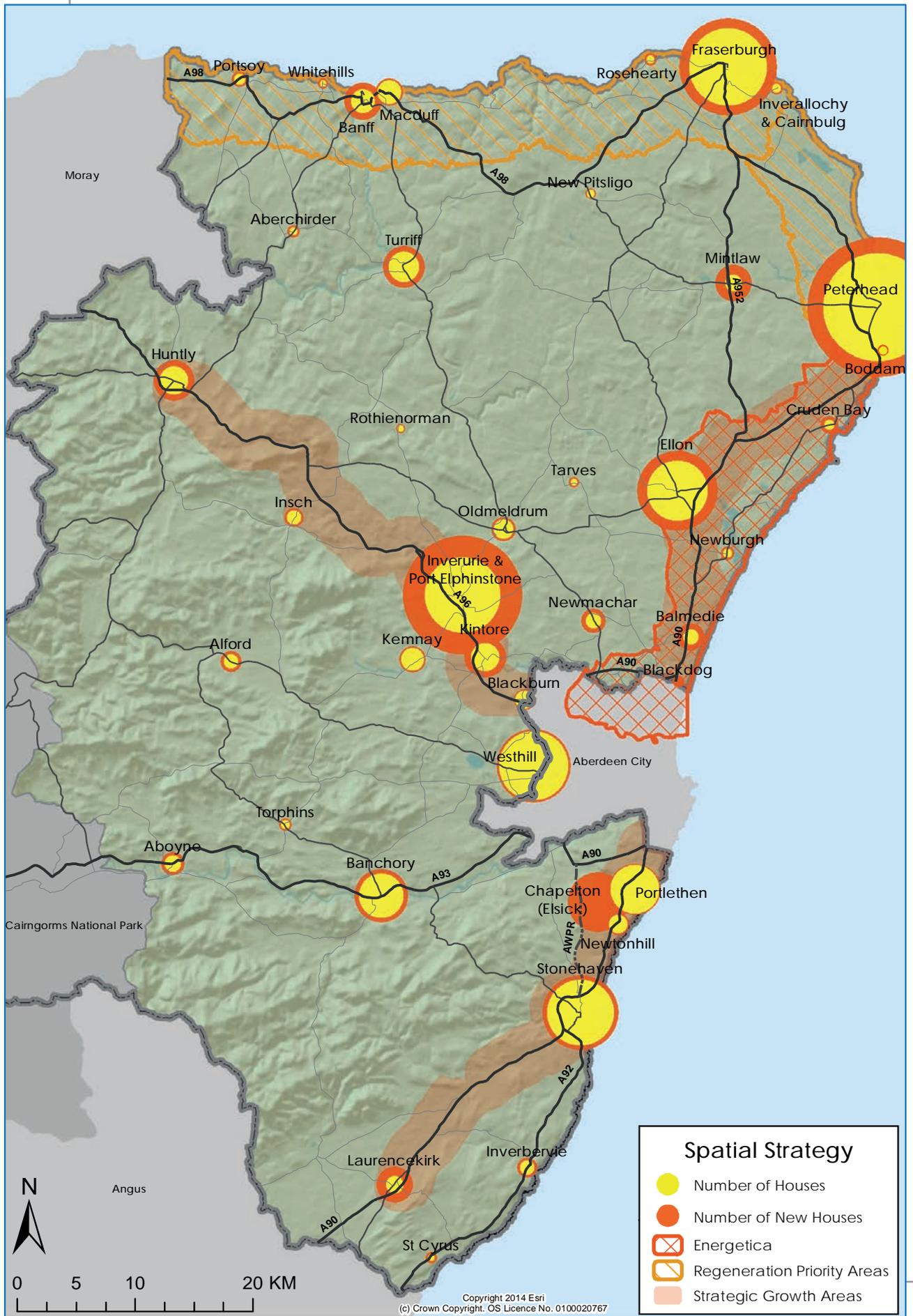


THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan defines two broad *policy areas* which we are taking forward in this plan. These are *strategic growth areas* and local growth and diversification areas. The *strategic growth areas* are centred on Aberdeen and the main public transport routes, and are those areas where 75% of the anticipated growth in the city region will take place. Local growth and diversification areas are those areas where growth will be matched to local needs. We also identify the boundary between the accessible and less accessible area around the city (this is an “intermediate” area in the definitions contained in Scottish Planning Policy), the *Energetica* area, and *regeneration priority areas* where positive steps are needed to help these areas meet their full potential.

This plan provides boundaries for these areas, as well as introducing other areas associated with specific policies. We have defined a coastal zone and an Aberdeen City *greenbelt*, both to support rural development and make sure that the right development is in the right place.

Across the six administrative areas of Aberdeenshire, the policies and *proposals* of the plan will have different effects. These will always be based on the principles of the size of the community to accommodate the development *proposals* without harm to its character or sense of place, and its needs.

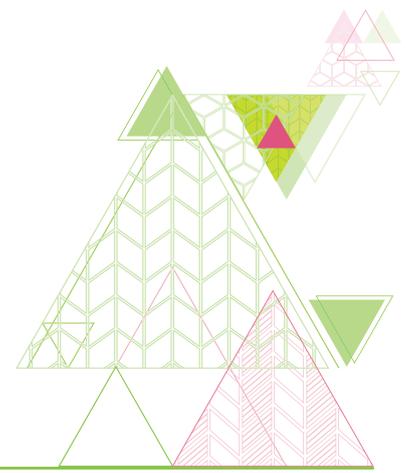


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SHAPING BANFF &
BUCHAN



SHAPING BANFF & BUCHAN

Banff and Buchan includes the important coastal towns of Portsoy, Banff, Macduff, and Fraserburgh, their related communities, and the smaller villages such as Aberchirder, Cornhill, New Byth, and Fordyce. All of these communities suffer from a fall in traditional industries.

Policies promote widespread opportunity for business development and new homes but the plan is realistic in its ability to draw new development into these areas. Other initiatives such as the 'Framework for Regeneration' and its associated action plans target the major coastal towns for improvements to the built and natural environment, and to improve opportunities for employment (see *A Framework for Regeneration in Aberdeenshire 2013*).

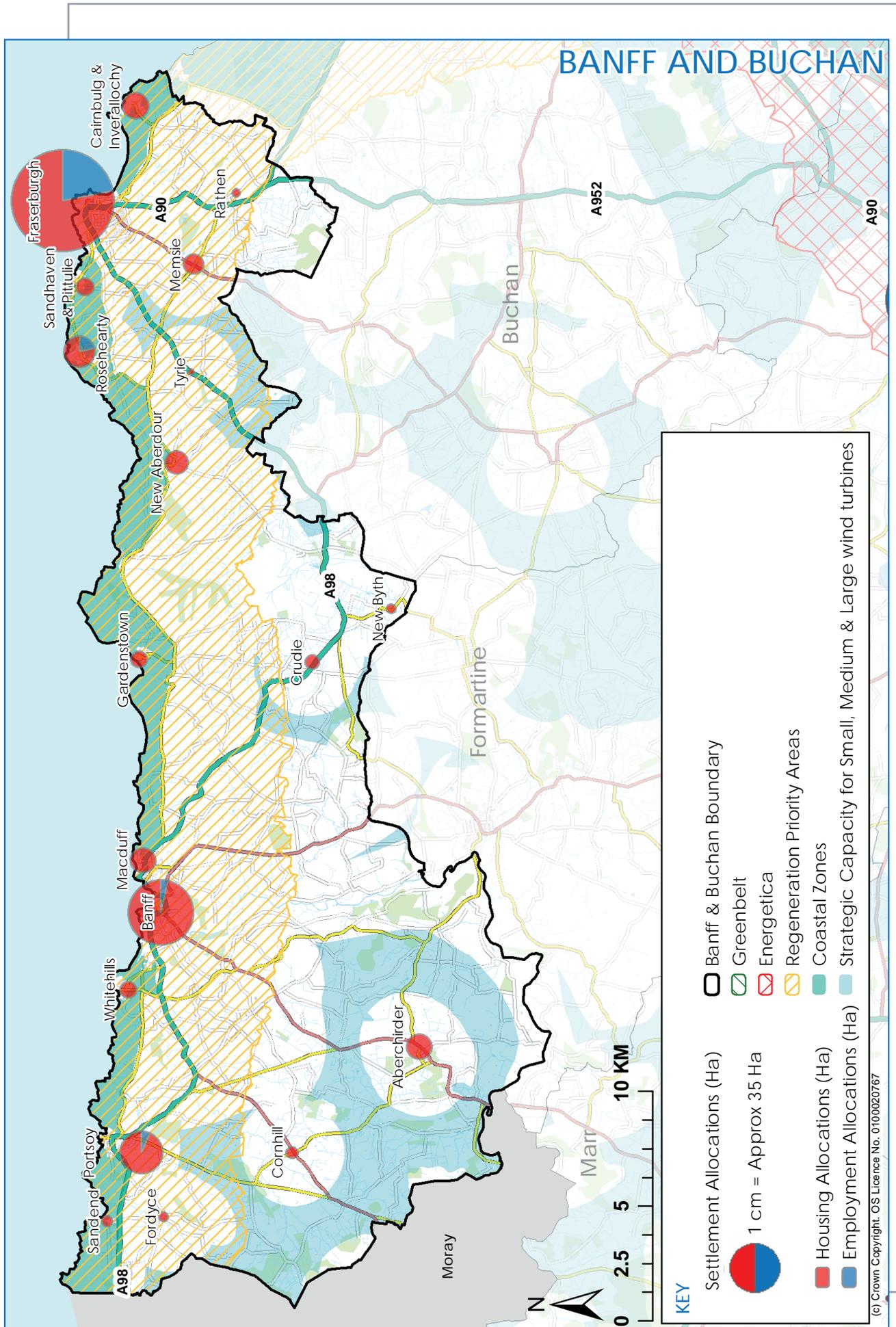
Fraserburgh in particular is being encouraged to grow based on harbour-related businesses and to develop as a service centre. Challenges faced in Banff, Macduff, and Portsoy relate to maintaining and actively using the exceptional built heritage within these towns. In each of these areas there are significant issues of distance from markets and the quality of the buildings in the old parts of the town that limit opportunities for growth, despite the capacity that each town has.

Throughout the area we are promoting new approaches to development to reflect the greater financial uncertainty associated with investment in these areas.

Often in smaller communities the scale of house building which is needed to overcome lack of water and waste water services is unlikely to be achieved. Because of this we promote development on unallocated sites near to the smaller settlements and as part of existing groups through the plan's rural development

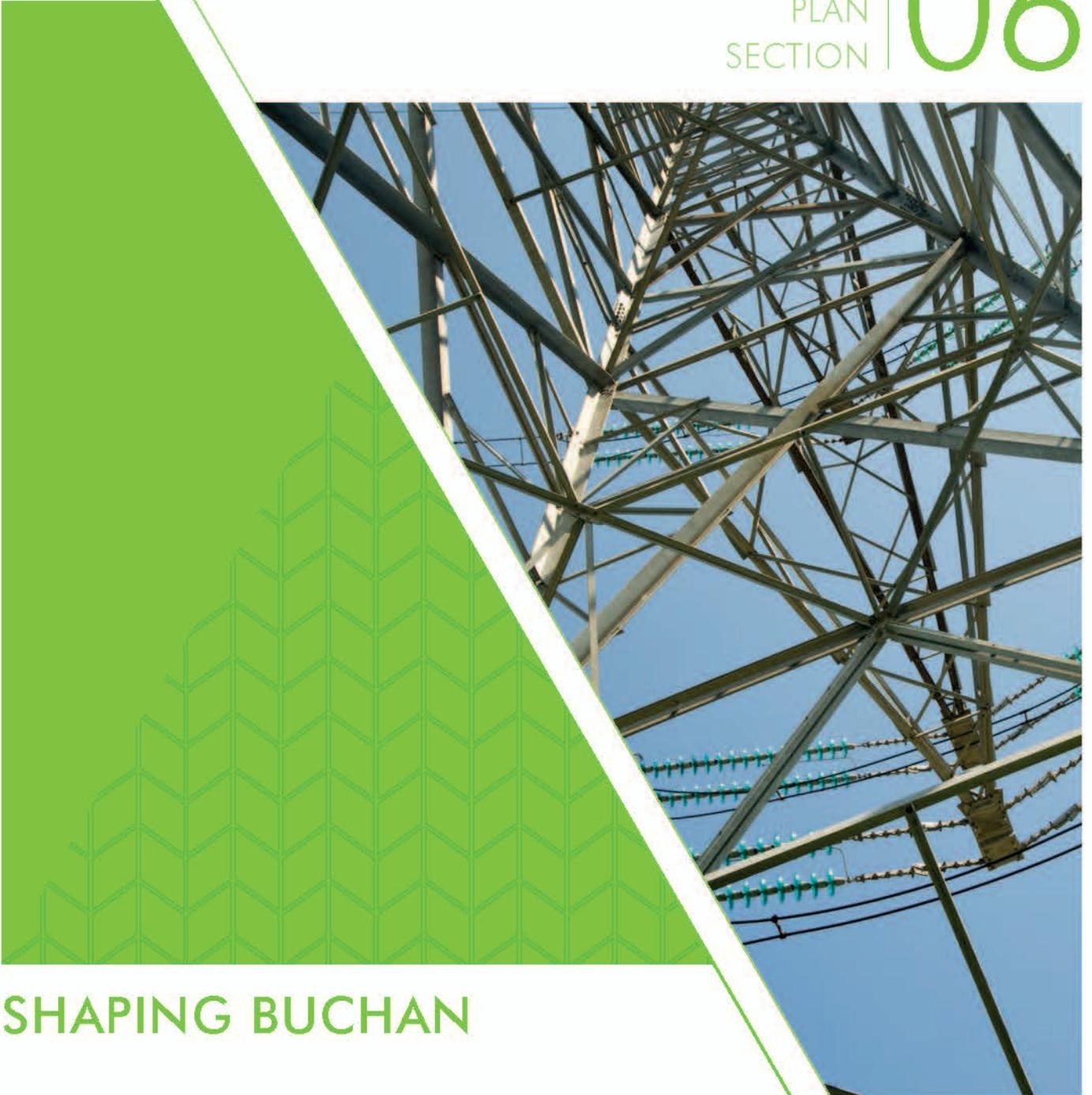
policies. There may be substantial opportunities for medium to large wind turbines and turbine groups across almost all of the area apart from the Deveron Valley and Windyheads Hill.

You can find more detail on shaping individual places within the Banff and Buchan settlement statements in appendix 8.

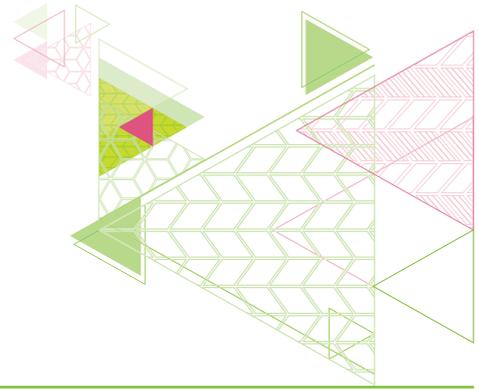


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06



SHAPING BUCHAN



SHAPING BUCHAN

Buchan supports vibrant agricultural communities as well as the deep-water port of Peterhead with the fishing and oil-related business that this brings. Communities such as Strichen, Maud and New Deer provide an important role as service centres for the rural community while Boddam, Crimond, Mintlaw, Longside and Cruden Bay also have a significant role supporting the housing needs of those working in Peterhead, the St Fergus Gas Terminal, and the wider Aberdeen City area.

Peterhead is the northern point of the Peterhead to Aberdeen *strategic growth area*, recognising the regional role that this area can play. It is also part of the regeneration area. We recognise that Peterhead is quite distant from key markets and opportunities and suffers from deprivation despite relative economic success. Peterhead is also the northern hub of the 'Energetica area', a lifestyle and leisure project designed to promote a change in the world's view of the north-east coast as a quality location for the energy industry.

Peterhead is also an important centre identified in the National Planning Framework, for developing facilities to allow for the transfer of electricity from overseas and off-shore sources to and from the National Grid, and for the equipment needed to allow carbon dioxide to be stored in depleted North Sea oilfields. We have made large land *allocations* to take advantage of these business development opportunities and the town has a significant proportion of the total housing growth expected in this *strategic growth area*.

Some *settlements* in the area show high demand for developing new homes, but attracting businesses to these areas can be more difficult. Opportunities for

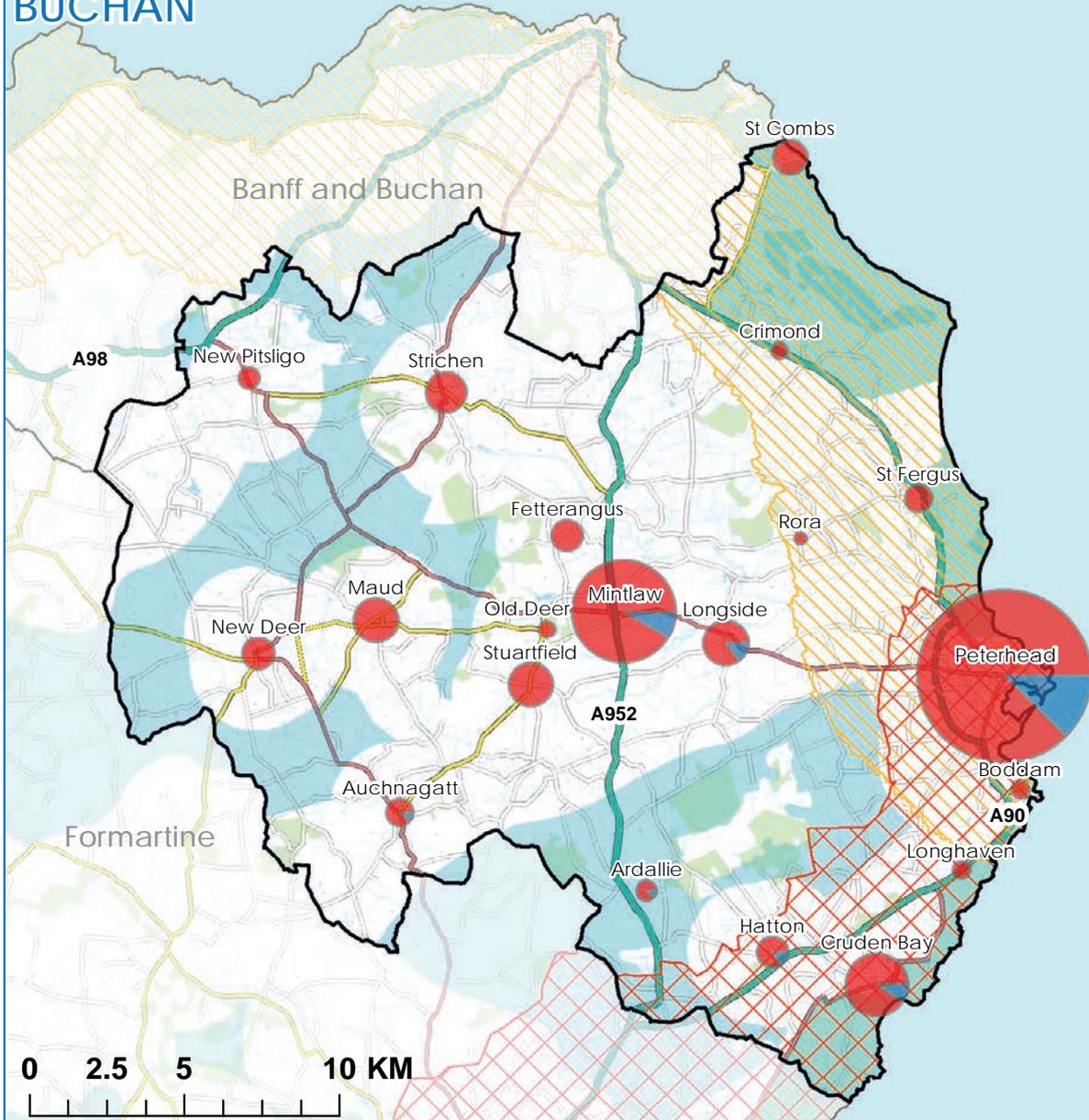
business developments are promoted in most villages, either through specific land *allocations* or through the plan's supporting policies on business development.

The need for new development to sustain inland communities, and the problems associated with the scale of demand for new homes that can be expected, mean that we must use a rural development *policy* that promotes development on unallocated sites near to the smaller *settlements* and as part of existing groups.

Most of the area may be suitable for developing medium to large wind turbines apart from Mormond Hill and the high-quality landscape between Maud and Mintlaw.

We have included more detail on shaping individual places within the Buchan settlement statements in appendix 8.

BUCHAN



KEY

Settlement Allocations (Ha)

 1 cm = Approx 35 Ha

 Housing Allocations (Ha)

 Employment Allocations (Ha)

 Buchan Boundary

 Greenbelt

 Energetica

 Regeneration Priority Areas

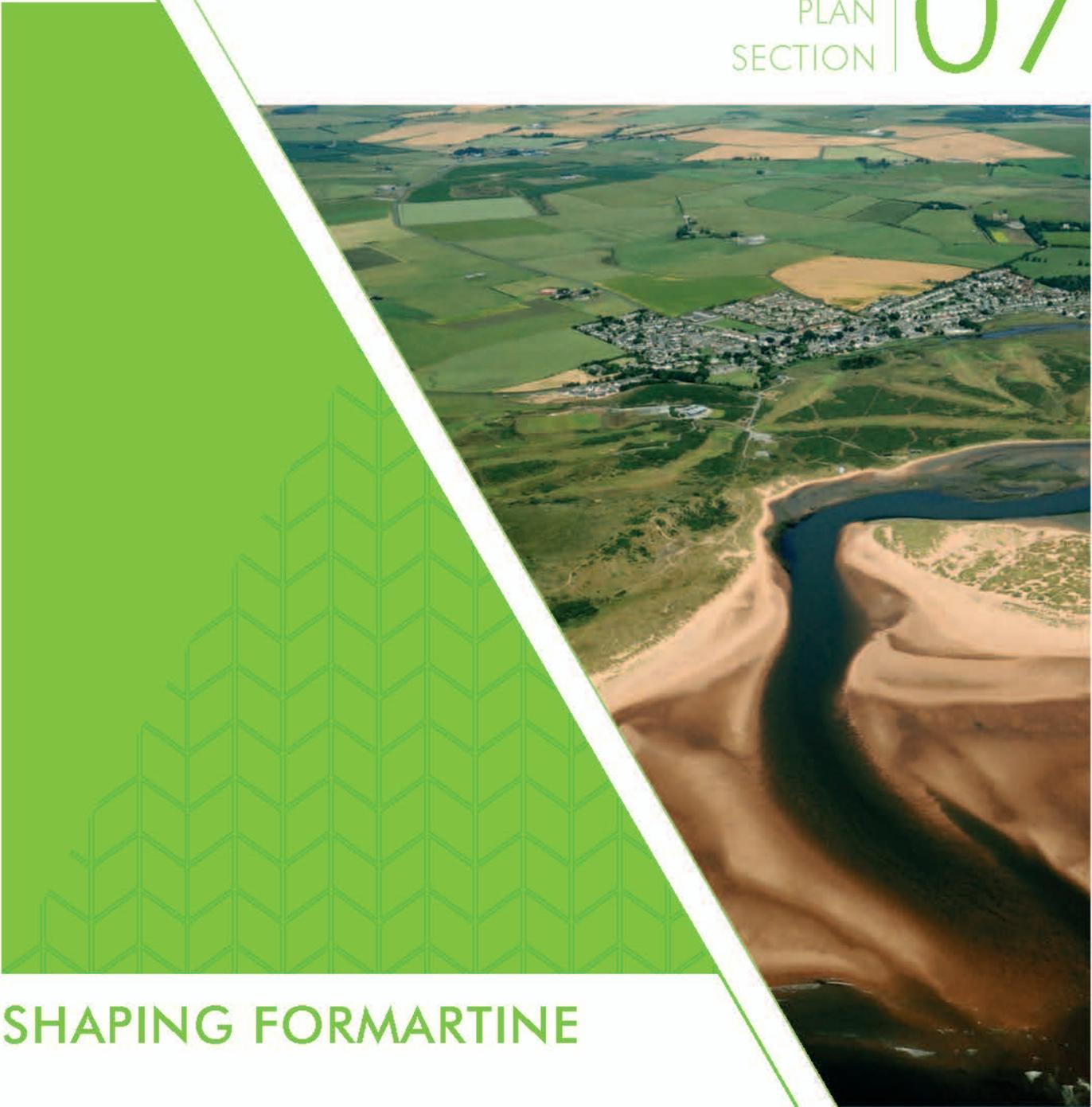
 Coastal Zones

 Strategic Capacity for Small, Medium & Large wind turbines

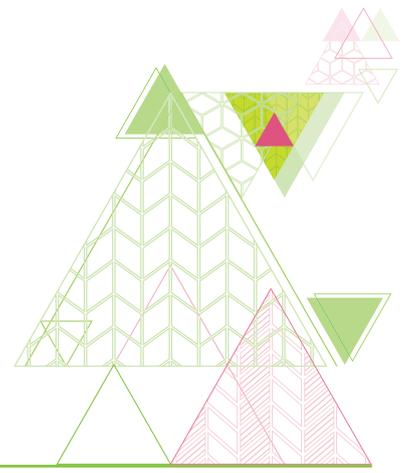


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SHAPING FORMARTINE



SHAPING FORMARTINE

Formartine can be seen as three distinct areas:

- the strategic growth and *Energetica* areas centred on the A90 and leading northwards from Aberdeen City through Balmedie and Ellon ending at Peterhead;
 - the accessible area around Oldmeldrum, Methlick, Udney, and Pitmedden; and
 - the more remote intermediate areas around Turriff, Cumminestown and Fyvie. (see section 'Shaping Development in the Countryside' for an explanation of these terms).
-

Within the *strategic growth area* there is significant demand for both homes and business land, and this demand is likely to increase with the upgrade of the A90 to a full dual carriageway as far as Ellon. Lack of public services such as schools and sewage treatment currently restricts what can be planned and, as a result, we have had to make a small number of large *allocations* to justify large scale new investment. Blackdog and Ellon will start to see significant growth over the plan period. Other communities will also see growth, but proportionate to their scale. The vision of the *Energetica* area is vitally important for this area to build the unique characteristics that will make it a distinct location for energy business. As recognised by the *strategic development plan*, achieving economic growth through the continued development of the Trump International Golf Resort is still an important part of this change.

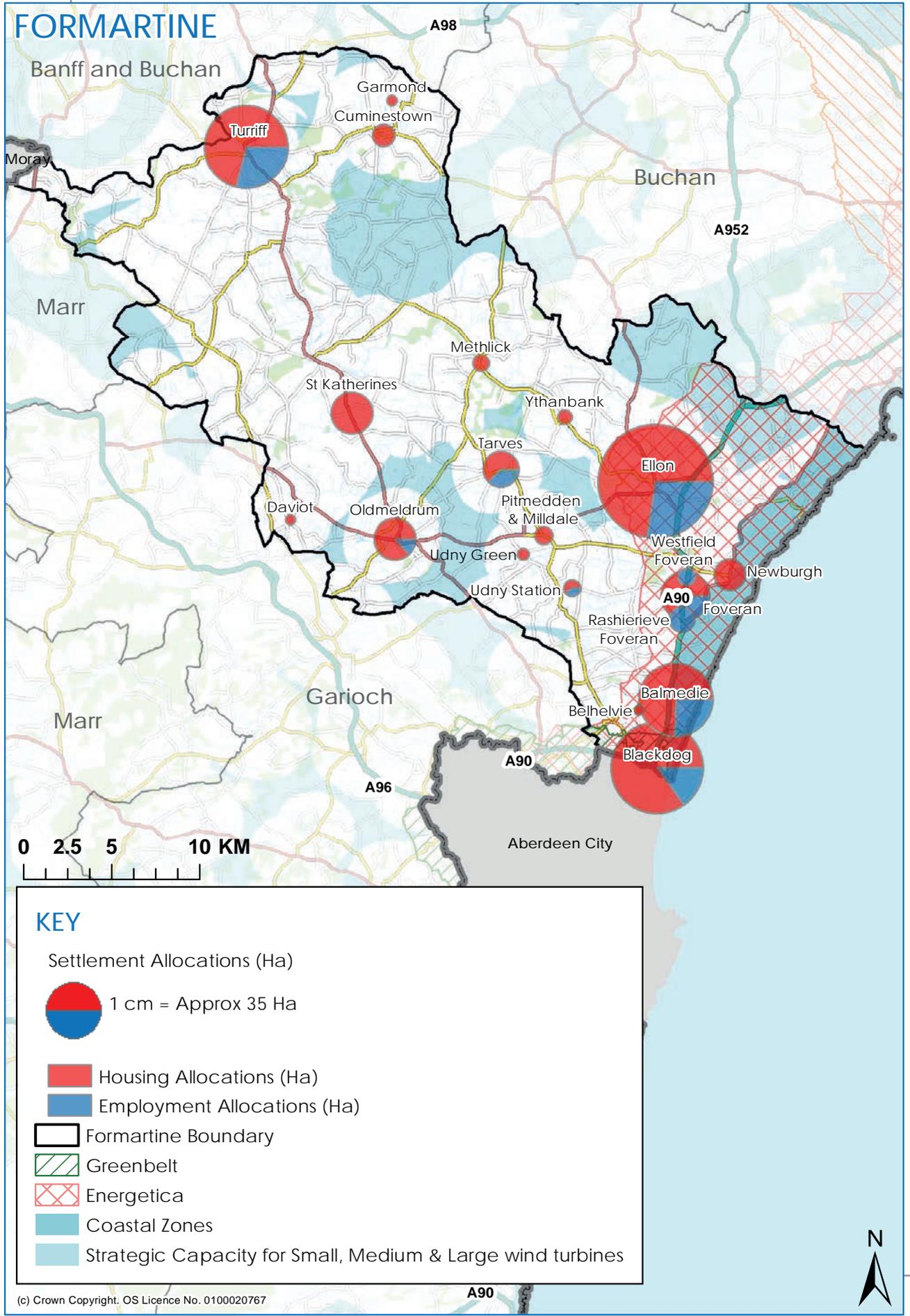
Oldmeldrum, Tarves, Udney Green, Udney Station and Pitmedden are also under a lot of pressure for development, but we have made appropriate *allocations* to meet these demands within the available *infrastructure*. Limited opportunities for rural development are also provided.

The Turriff and Fyvie areas are experiencing considerably less pressure for new development. However, Turriff in particular fulfils a role as a major service centre for the wider rural population and so we have made *allocations* to reflect this role. Our *policy* also provides opportunity for a greater level of rural development to reflect the character of the settlement pattern in the surrounding area.

Medium to large wind turbines may be appropriate across almost all of the area apart from the Ythan Valley around Rothienorman, Fyvie and stretching up to Turriff, and the sensitive landscape associated with Haddo and Ythanbank.

You can find more detail on shaping individual places within the Formartine settlement statements in appendix 8.

FORMARTINE



KEY

Settlement Allocations (Ha)
 1 cm = Approx 35 Ha

■ Housing Allocations (Ha)
■ Employment Allocations (Ha)

Formartine Boundary
 Greenbelt
 Energetica
 Coastal Zones
 Strategic Capacity for Small, Medium & Large wind turbines

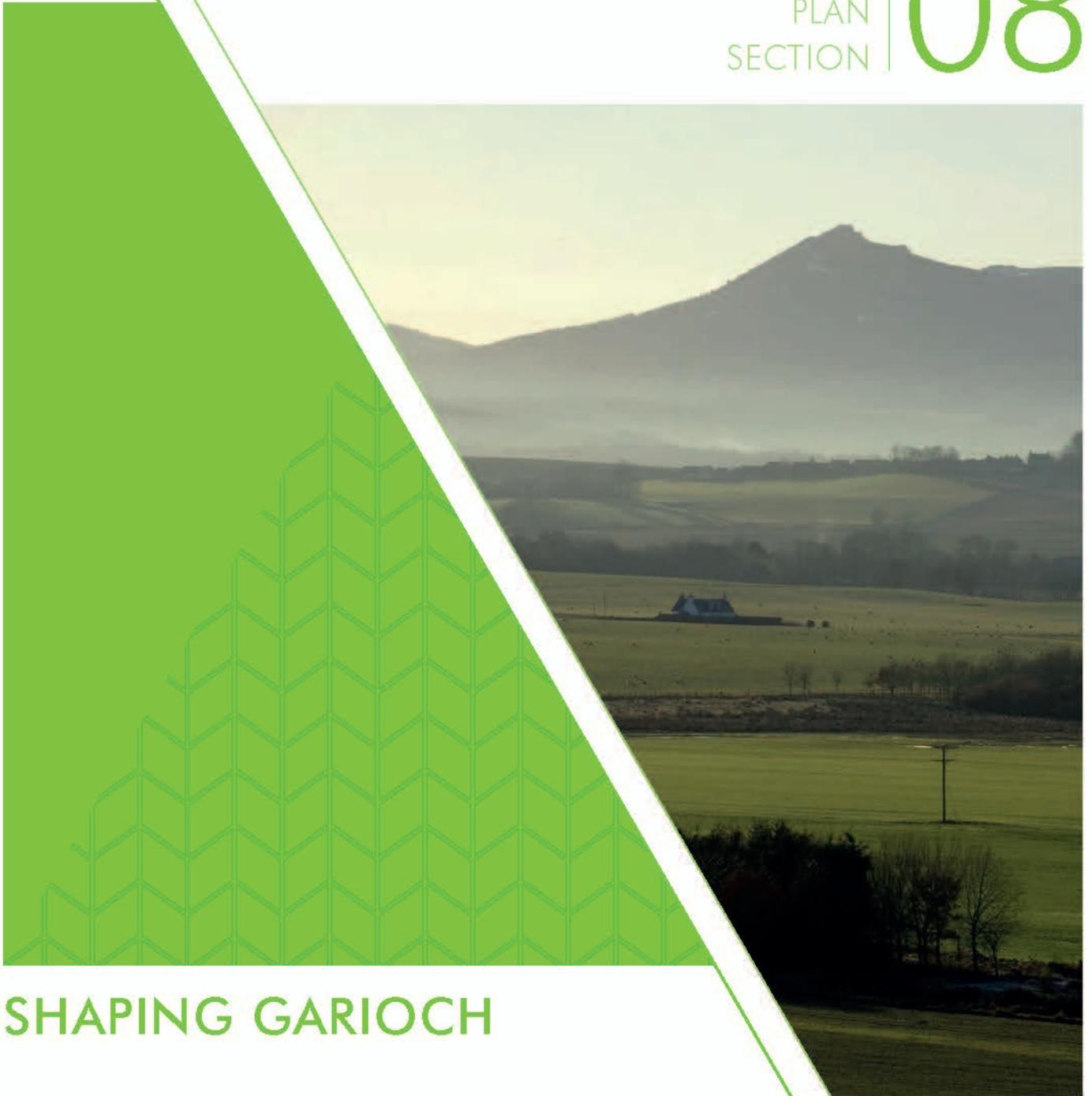
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A90

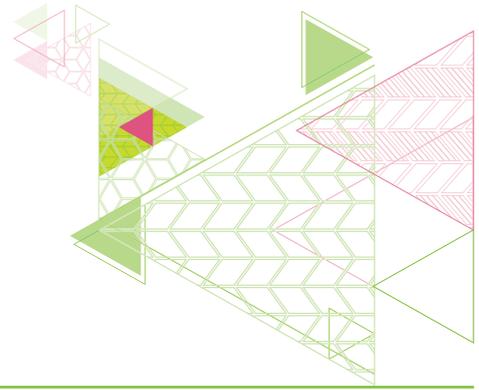


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08



SHAPING GARIOCH



SHAPING GARIOCH

Garioch, with the two centres of Inverurie and Kintore, and Westhill, represents a key development area for Aberdeenshire. It is mostly within the Huntly to Aberdeen *strategic growth area*. The area has very good connections with Aberdeen City by both road and rail.

We have made substantial land *allocations* in Inverurie and Kintore to meet demand for development. Inverurie fulfils a role as a wider service centre for a very large rural *catchment* and we are promoting continued development of this role. Kintore currently has a role that is typical of a suburb of the City itself. We are proposing two major mixed-use development areas on the south-east of the village to try to ensure that as Kintore grows it does so as a sustainable mixed community.

Villages such as Kemnay and Newmachar play a different role and development *allocations* here are more matched to meeting the needs of the communities themselves. Westhill, due to past popularity and the rapid growth of companies involved in developing underwater technology for the oil industry here, finds itself significantly restricted by overstretched *infrastructure*. However, the local need to sustain the town as a world centre of excellence for the sub-sea sector means extra business land in the community needs to be provided.

Many of the small rural communities in the area have seen sustained growth over a number of years and have very little capacity for new development without substantial investment. The scale of development needed to deliver that investment is not appropriate for the character of these communities. Outwith the pressured areas there are opportunities for rural development *proposals*.

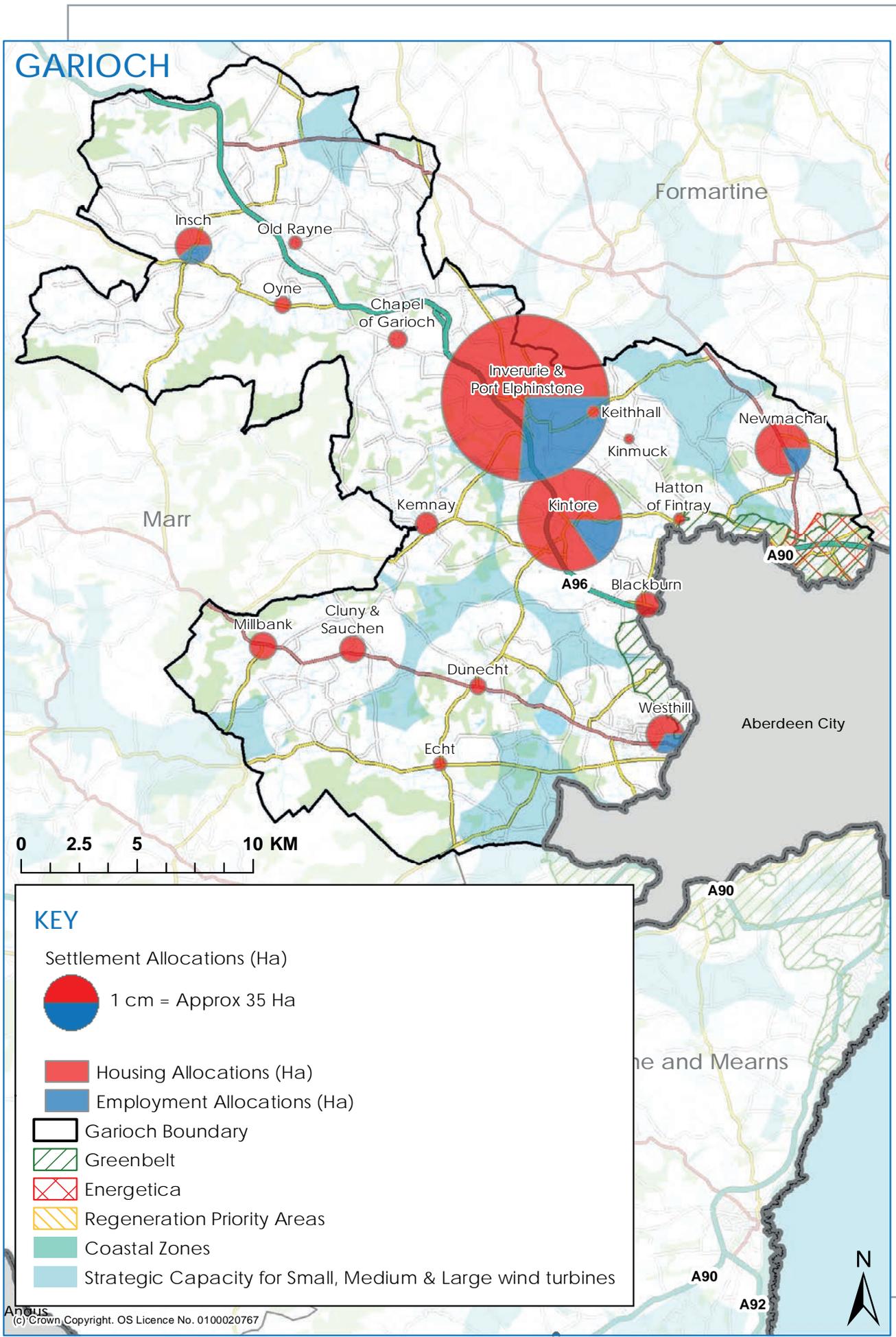
Communities such as Oyne and Insch, while no longer within the area defined in this plan as “pressured” still attract significant demand for homes (see ‘Shaping development in the countryside’ for an explanation of these terms). Business development is more difficult to attract to these areas but we are providing opportunities for this kind of development. The size of these villages makes them inappropriate for substantial new development.

While business development *proposals* are targeted at the major land *allocations* at Kintore and Inverurie almost all communities have opportunity for the growth of local business.

Bennachie, which represents an iconic local landscape feature and plays a central role in terms of tourism, recreation and leisure, has a huge role to play over much of Garioch and beyond. To protect the landscape, large wind turbines are only appropriate in the eastern part of the area, but medium-sized *proposals* may be appropriate across the area between Kemnay and the Aberdeen City boundary, or between Insch and Meikle Wartle.

You can find more detail on shaping individual places within the Garioch settlement statements in appendix 8.

GARIOCH



KEY

Settlement Allocations (Ha)

 1 cm = Approx 35 Ha

 Housing Allocations (Ha)

 Employment Allocations (Ha)

 Garioch Boundary

 Greenbelt

 Energetica

 Regeneration Priority Areas

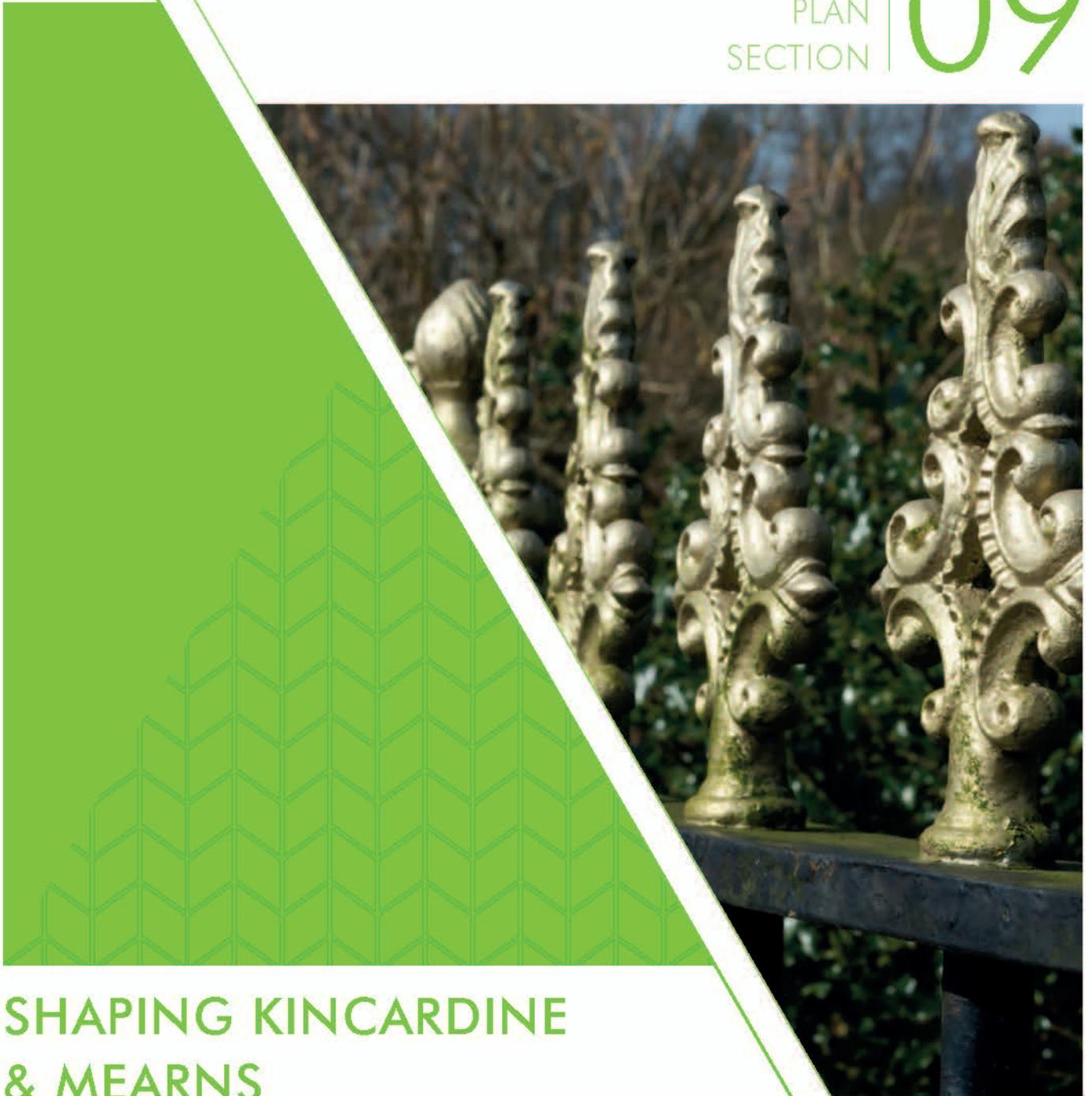
 Coastal Zones

 Strategic Capacity for Small, Medium & Large wind turbines

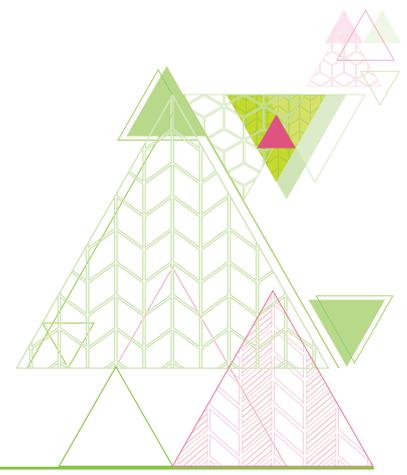
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09



SHAPING KINCARDINE & MEARNIS



SHAPING KINCARDINE & MEARNIS

Kincardine and Mearns reflects the vibrancy and demands for land associated with good connection to Aberdeen City. Portlethen, Newtonhill, Stonehaven and Drumoak all prosper as a result of their closeness to Aberdeen. The communities to the south are also heavily influenced by the high level of connection, but here the traditional character of the villages like Auchenblae, Fettercairn, and Luthermuir is protected. Despite seeing a major reduction in small boat fishing, the coastal communities of Inverbervie, Gourdon, Johnshaven and St Cyrus still have a distinctive and characteristic appeal.

The Chapelton new settlement represents a courageous *proposal* to meet the demand for housing and business land in the *strategic growth area*, while also promoting the very best ideals of urban design. Because of the size of this development, there is less need for development *allocations* in other *settlements* in the 'pressured' *Aberdeen housing market area*.

Issues associated with providing a major supermarket in Stonehaven have still not been solved, despite this being a topic in the main issues report. The lack of reasonable town-centre or edge-of-centre sites that would keep to the 'town centre first' approach set out in national planning policy results in the current plan of promoting a modest *commercial centre* at Spurryhillock as the most appropriate option.

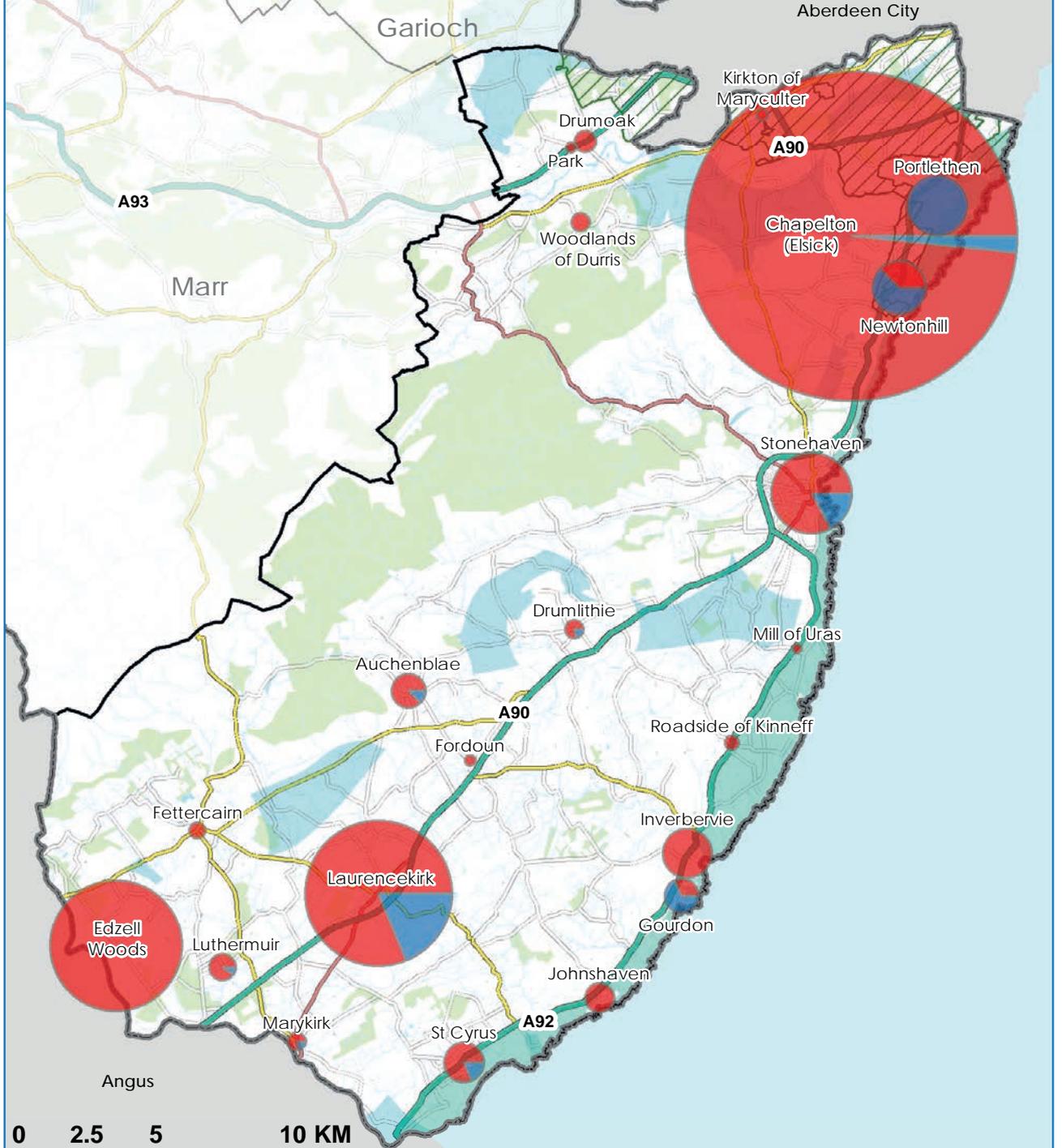
At Laurencekirk, the need for an improved junction on the A90 to the south of the village is also still not resolved, and is now having a wider effect on capacity for development as far away as Montrose. Nestrans and Transport Scotland are assessing options for improving access at this important junction but are unlikely to affect the major *allocations* made in the village, which are 'centred on the new secondary school and re-opened railway station. There is still concern that developing Laurencekirk as a sustainable settlement

could be affected by industrial and business developments on both the Fordoun and Edzell disused airstrips.

The potential for future unconventional gas extraction or *fracking* operations is still a significant concern for local communities, as a large part of the area (south of Stonehaven) has been released for licence for extracting gas. However, within a recent study carried out by the British Geological Survey (The Carboniferous Shales of the Midland Valley of Scotland: Geology and Resource Estimation) no part of Aberdeenshire has been recognised as having reserves that are likely to be enough to justify commercial extraction. Because of this, this activity is considered a remote possibility at this time. Any future *planning applications* for unconventional gas extraction or *fracking* operations could be considered properly through application of policies in the plan, including policies on protecting resources (see Policy PR1 on page 40), natural heritage (see Policy E1 on page 34) and landscape (see Policy E2 on page 35). Large wind turbines could be considered within a strip largely between the A90 and the A92.

You can find more detail on shaping individual places within the Kincardine and Mearns settlement statements in appendix 8 of the plan.

KINCARDINE AND MEARNS



0 2.5 5 10 KM

KEY

Settlement Allocations



1 cm = Approx 35 Ha

■ Housing Allocations (Ha)

■ Employment Allocations (Ha)

Kincardine and Mearns Boundary

Greenbelt

Energetica

Regeneration Priority Areas

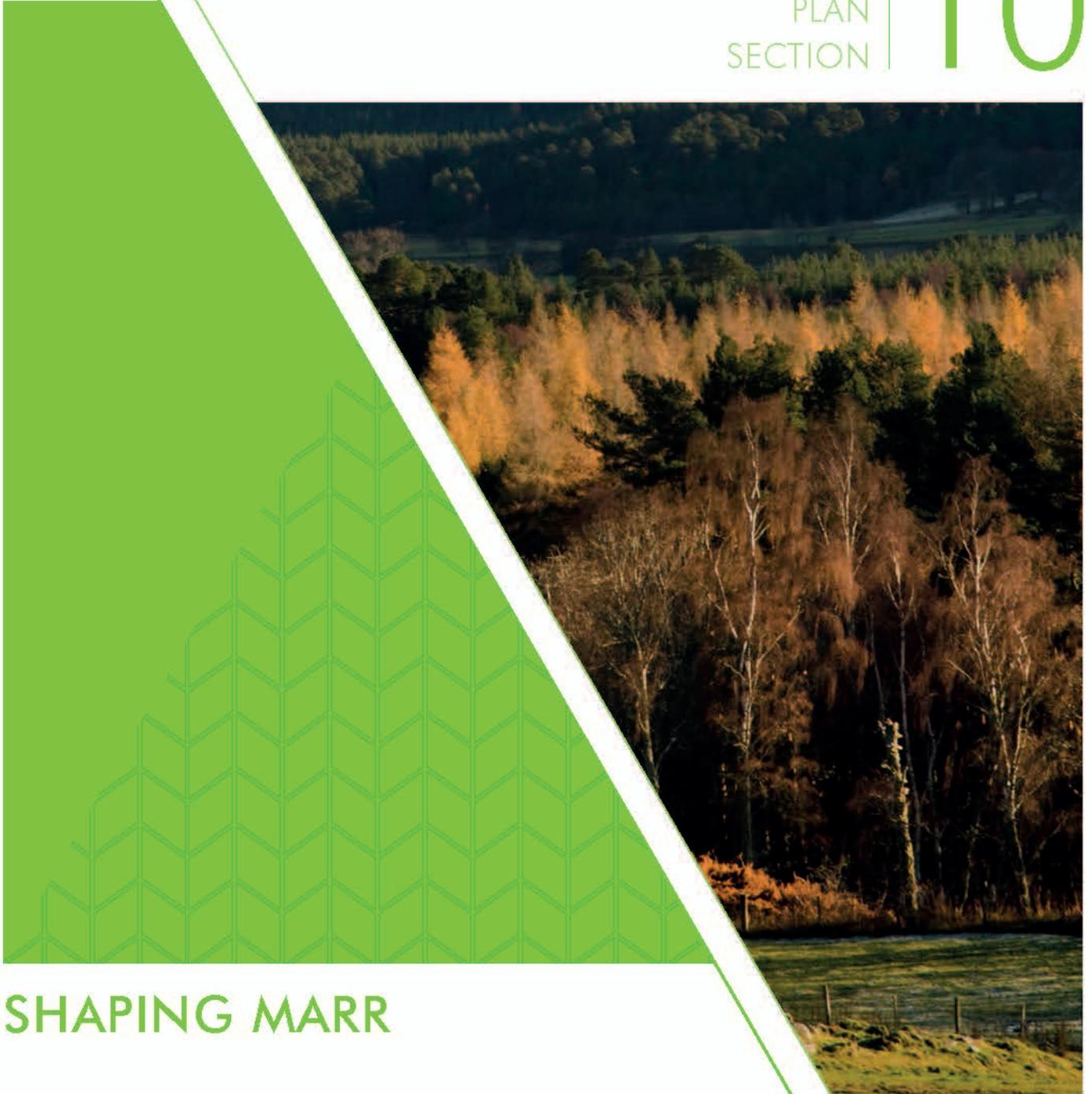
Coastal Zones

Strategic Capacity for Small, Medium & Large wind turbines

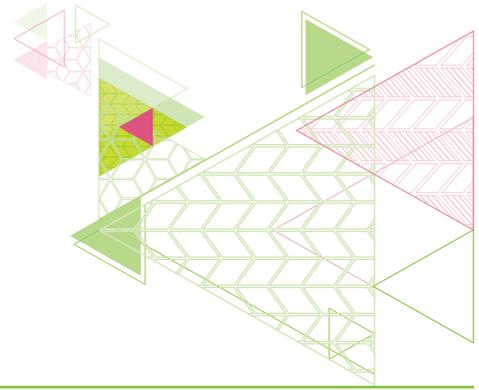


PROPOSED
PLAN
SECTION

10



SHAPING MARR



SHAPING MARR

In terms of the *local development plan* in Marr, we share responsibility with the Cairngorms National Park, with the most remote parts of upper Deeside and Donside under the planning control of that authority. Marr shows a great variety of types of places ranging from important *strategic growth area settlements* such as Huntly, through major *settlements* that in part serve the housing for those working in Aberdeen (such as Banchory and Alford) and more isolated *settlements*, such as Lumsden and Tarland that fulfil a role as centres for the rural community. Patterns of land ownership in Marr are very different from other parts of Aberdeenshire, with land ownership frequently held by ‘estates’, particularly in Deeside and Donside.

We promote significant growth in Huntly. The advantages associated with the road and rail network at this location, and the restrictions on scale and development associated with other *settlements* within the *strategic growth area*, outweigh the short-term difficulties of servicing land in Huntly. It is clear that without the confidence of a relatively large allocation, we cannot overcome the access issues to the south of the town.

Banchory is also an important town in the area which can accept significant development. Despite the popularity of this town for the development industry, there are major restrictions in terms of landscape and heritage on its growth, which has to be of a scale to meet local needs. Central to this is to identify a new site for an expanded health centre and the plan covers this.

Alford will benefit from the new Alford Community Campus, but the scale of development in the town in recent years has been, and will continue to be, relatively large for a community of its size. We need to be careful to avoid affecting the character of the community through excessive

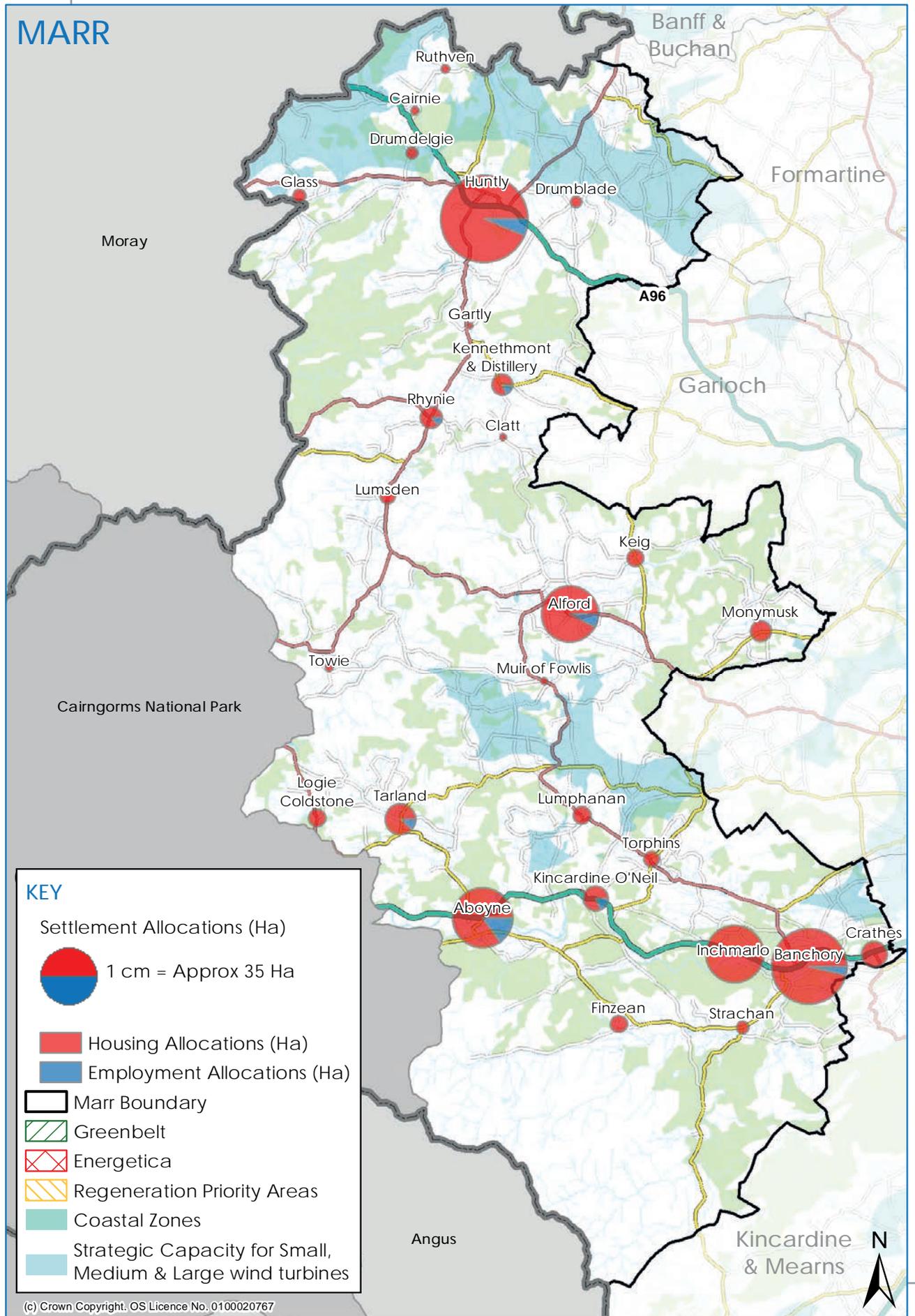
new development. There is still a need for business development to reduce the town's dependence on Aberdeen City and promote a sustainable settlement.

Otherwise we have made modest development *allocations* to meet local needs associated with the small communities of the area, to secure the right development in the right place and maintain local services.

There is no real opportunity for wind turbines within Marr except for areas to the north west and east of Huntly, and even in these areas there is only room for a small number of small wind turbines due to how they could affect existing sites.

You can find more detail on shaping individual places within the Marr settlement statements in appendix 8.

MARR



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