

# The Settlements

## 1 What are the Main Settlements?

The Plan's main settlements are places in Aberdeenshire that are listed in the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan as either a main service centre or an edge of city community.

## 2 What is their Role?

The role of the main settlements, particularly the largest of them, is to act as the main focal points for most new development in Aberdeenshire. This is in keeping with National Planning Policy Guidance, Structure Plan strategy and policies and the objectives and policies of this Local Plan. In general, these all seek to encourage sustainable development through the consolidation of land uses.

Guiding most new development towards the main settlements has a number of sustainable benefits.

- a) It brings housing, services, facilities and jobs closer together thereby helping to reduce the need to travel.
- b) It maximises the use of existing infrastructure and minimises the cost of providing new infrastructure thereby better utilising resources.
- c) It helps to reduce the pressure for development in the open countryside, thereby reducing car travel and environmental impacts.
- d) It helps promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport to get between homes, services, facilities and jobs, thereby encouraging sustainable modes of transport.
- e) It helps to encourage the use of services, facilities and work places, thereby supporting both them and the overall vitality and viability of the settlement itself.

## 3 The Scale and Form of New Development in the Main Settlements

In the main settlements, there is much more scope for the full range of house types and sizes than there is in the small settlements. However, the same principles of sympathetic development apply, albeit in a more complicated, urban context. These principles are expanded upon in the relevant policies and appendices of the Plan. During the course of the Plan period, the Council will also progressively develop supplementary guidance on the key design characteristics of each town, in particular those with conservation areas. In turn this will also help the generation of development briefs for the individual sites identified in each settlement statement.

Following approval of the Council's Area Waste Management Strategy, supplementary guidance will also be produced on the siting, design and distribution of facilities to enable the strategy to be implemented, in accord with the framework set out in Appendix 8.

## 4 What are the Rural Service Centres?

The Plan's rural service centres are towns and villages in Aberdeenshire other than the main settlements with:

- a) services, facilities (particularly bus stops, schools and shops) or work-places that could be sustained by new development;
- b) a very compact grouping of at least 6 houses; and
- c) opportunities for development which could meet both structure and local plan policies.

## 5 What is their role?

The role of rural service centres is to act as a focal point for development in rural locations. This is in keeping with National Planning Policy Guidance, Structure Plan strategy and policies, and the objectives and policies of this Local Plan. In general, these all seek to encourage sustainable development through the consolidation of land uses.

Guiding new development in rural locations towards the rural service centres has a number of sustainable benefits.

- a) It brings housing, services, facilities and work places closer together, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel.
- b) It maximises the use of existing infrastructure and minimises the cost of providing new services, thereby better utilising resources.
- c) It helps to reduce the pressure for development in the open countryside, thereby reducing impacts on the environment.
- d) It helps to encourage the use of rural services, facilities and work places, thereby supporting both them and, in turn, rural communities.
- e) It helps to provide housing choice in rural areas.

## 6 The Scale and Form of New Development in the Rural Service Centres

In the rural service centres, there is a particular onus on new development to be in character with existing traditional development. Many recent new housing developments in these settlements have not achieved this, mainly because of excessive house sizes and of residential layout which does not reflect the traditional character of the particular settlement.

Scale is also important in new development in small settlements. The numbers of units specified will generally be adhered to, because, on the one hand, they are the required minimum numbers for meeting the Structure Plan allocations, and on the other, they represent the most that the respective small settlements can accommodate within a 5 year period.

During the course of the Plan period, the Council will also progressively develop supplementary guidance on the key design characteristics of each village, in particular those with conservation areas. In turn this will also help the generation of development briefs for the individual sites identified in each settlement statement.

Following approval of the Council's Area Waste Management Strategy, supplementary guidance will also be produced on the siting, design and distribution of facilities to enable the strategy to be implemented, in accord with the framework set out in Appendix 8.

Opportunities for enabling development, such as Kingseat in Garioch Area, once implemented will become settlements and be defined as Rural Service Centres.

## 7 The Settlement Maps

The maps that show proposed changes to the use of land in the settlements follow overleaf. They mainly cover the period 2001 – 2010. However, some areas of search for future housing land cover the period 2011 – 2015. For each Area, the main settlements are followed by the rural service centres. All land outwith these settlements is defined as Countryside, except where specifically designated as Green Belt.

The land use allocations on the maps have been made mainly on the basis of:

- a) the requirement for the Local Plan to conform to the Structure Plan;
- b) 'bids' for development made by developers, landowners etc;
- c) the sustainability of new development;
- d) how capable new development is of 'fitting into' the landscape or settlement form;
- e) the requirement to reflect the Housing and Industrial schedules;
- f) availability of infrastructure and consideration of constraints.

## 8 Development Periods

Sites identified in these settlements fall into four periods:

- 1 Sites that were in the Housing Land Audit at January 2000. These are labelled on the plans either with the prefix "eh" (effective housing) or "ch" (constrained housing).
- 2 Sites that count against the structure plan provision for January 2000 – December 2005. These are labelled on the plans with a capital letter, eg A, B (for housing) or EmpC (for employment uses).
- 3 Sites safeguarded to meet indicative structure plan provision for January 2006 – December 2010. These are labelled on the plans either with the prefix "fh" (future housing) with the number of houses in brackets (15) or "fe" (future employment).
- 4 Areas of search or sites safeguarded to contribute to the indicative structure plan housing distribution from January 2011 – December 2015. These are labelled on the plans with the prefix fh\*.

