

Garioch Area Plan 2004 - 2007



GARIOCH AREA PLAN

2004-2007

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FOREWORD

The Garioch Area Plan is produced annually to give an overview of the work of Aberdeenshire Council locally. It brings a focus to the particular priorities for the Garioch Area, contained within the plethora of strategies, audits and reviews that the Council is obliged to produce.

Although the Area Plan has always been central to the work of the Garioch Area Committee and is a public document, it has not always appealed to a wide audience. This year the format has been changed to make the Plan easier to read and, under the four headings of the Aberdeenshire Community Plan (Community Well-Being, Sustainable Environment, Jobs & the Economy and Learning), projects in each community have been highlighted.

The Area Plan summarises the work of Aberdeenshire Council in the Garioch, setting out its achievements and detailing actions and projects for the coming years. It is easy to overlook what has been achieved, and the Plan identifies some, but by no means all, of the developments which have taken place. The Plan reflects many of the aspirations of local communities. Provision of facilities for young people is a concern throughout Aberdeenshire and we are fortunate in Garioch to have new skateparks this year in Insch and Kemnay, a youth café in Kemnay and plans for one in Newmachar. Further provision for young people is to be developed in Blackburn (in the new community hall), Skene and Port Elphinstone.

These projects, like many others in the Plan, have been developed in partnership with communities. Aberdeenshire Council's under-funding by the Scottish Executive is well documented and we are not in a position to provide as comprehensive a range of local services as we would like. However, we can still help to make projects happen and partnerships between the Council and other organisations are the way forward. In Garioch, Community Council grants, the Area Top-Up Fund and other grant schemes are available for communities to make improvements locally and get projects started. On a grander scale, work is ongoing in the Garioch with NHS Grampian to share premises so that health, social work and education staff can work together more closely and effectively.

As is clear in the Plan, there is much going on in the Garioch. The Plan is, however, a working document and one which benefits from the views, aspirations and suggestions of all of us who live in the Garioch. As you read the Plan, think about possible improvements to services and facilities in *your* locality - the way to get things done is to get them in the Plan!

Contact me, your local councillor, your community council or the Garioch Area Manager, Ian Fowell, and let us know what you feel is important for the Garioch and for your community.

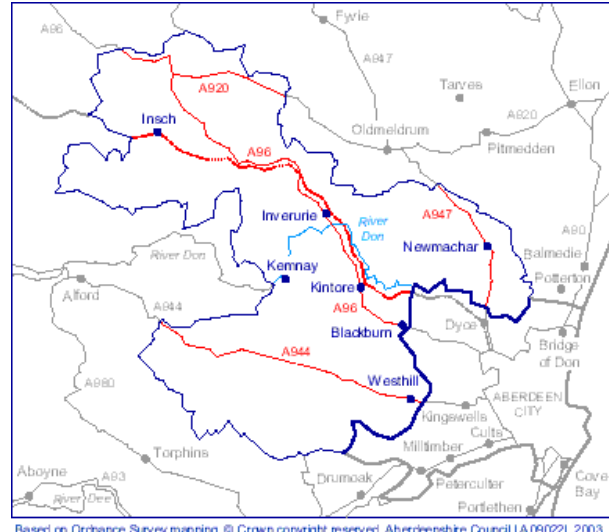
Councillor Sheena Lonchay
Chair, Garioch Area Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

The Garioch Area

Garioch has a land area of 583 sq km (225 sq miles) and comprises 9% of the total area covered by Aberdeenshire Council.

The Garioch Area has a population of 42,960 people and is situated at the very heart of Aberdeenshire. The population density is 74 persons per square km (Aberdeenshire 36 per sq km) with the population expected to grow by nearly 10% over the next decade – the fastest projected growth rate in Aberdeenshire. The Area's age profile has a higher representation of younger age groups than Aberdeenshire or Scotland, reflecting recent migration into the area because of employment opportunities in the North East. Based on the ancient Earldom of the Garioch, the area includes the ancient Royal Burghs of Inverurie and Kintore, the historic Burgh of Barony of Inch and the settlements of Kemnay, Blackburn and Newmachar. It also includes the new community of Westhill, which with a population of approximately 9,500 is our second largest settlement and still growing. Over 1,775 houses have been built in Garioch over the past five years, a higher total than any of the other Areas of Aberdeenshire, which indicates the pressure of development on communities throughout the Area.



The economy of the Area is closely integrated with the Aberdeen economy, with 2/3 of the working population of Westhill, Blackburn and Newmachar and 1/3 of the working population of Inverurie commuting to Aberdeen. However, Inverurie and Westhill are important work destinations in their own right (5,500 and 2,700 people respectively), which indicates their significance in the local economy. The traditional industries of agriculture, livestock auctions, tourism, paper manufacturing, and service industries have been supplemented by construction, oil-related services, electrical and electronic industries and other light industry. With the towns and villages surrounded by fertile agricultural land and with its landscape dominated by the familiar peaks of Bennachie, the Garioch is the thriving Heartland of Aberdeenshire whose prosperity and growth must be maintained.

Area Committee and Area Management Team

The Garioch Area is represented by an Area Committee consisting of 12 elected Members, which usually meets every three weeks. Service delivery in the Garioch Area is coordinated by an Area Management Team consisting of senior representatives of each of the Council's Services, under the chairmanship of the Garioch Area Manager.

2. Achievements Over the Past Year

During the past year, the following actions have been achieved:

- Successful Village Orderly scheme continued in Blackburn, Kemnay, Kintore, Inch, Newmachar, Port Elphinstone and Westhill.
- Successful pilot of Area Committee meeting held in Kemnay.
- New cemetery in Kirkton of Skene constructed.
- Garioch Area Partnership formed.
- Construction of new community hall started in Blackburn.
- Construction of new Medical Centre started in Westhill, to include Social Work staff.
- Planning for Real exercise started in Westhill.
- Design brief undertaken for Westhill Town Centre.
- Development of industrial land at Inverurie.
- Development brief prepared for Loco Works, Inverurie.
- Bus park completed at Inverurie Academy.
- Community House opened in Port Elphinstone.
- Construction of new primary school and community facilities started in Kintore.
- Training sessions provided for Community Councils.
- New affordable housing developments at Inverurie, Port Elphinstone, Skene and Westhill.
- New recycling points introduced at Garlogie, Hatton of Fintray and Midmar.
- Traffic calming or 20 mph zones introduced in Blackburn, Elrick, Inverurie, Kemnay, Kintore, Newmachar and Westhill.
- Youth forums established at Kemnay and Westhill.

3. Community Well-Being

This theme promotes quality of life through community well-being. It includes the provision of high quality public services, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, more choice and better public involvement in the provision of services.

Key activities under this theme are:

- helping communities to help themselves, through Planning for Real, the promotion of community facilities in Kintore and Newmachar, the development of the Garioch Area Partnership and supporting tenants' groups.
- supporting Community Councils, through close liaison and improved training.
- planning improvements to the housing market, through affordable housing, improvement of Council housing stock, extending the Care and Repair scheme and undertaking a housing needs assessment.

3.1 Projects in Current Year

Item	Actions & Projects	Timescale
3.1a	Provide a summer Village Orderly in Kemnay, Kintore, Insch, Newmachar, Blackburn & Westhill and continue part-time provision in Port Elphinstone . Explore ways to extend the Village Orderly scheme in Garioch. <i>P&ES (Environmental Health)</i>	Summer 2004 2004/2005
3.1b	Support the Planning for Real exercise in Westhill . Promote Planning for Real exercise in Insch . Investigate the possibility of running further Planning for Real events in other communities in Garioch . <i>Area Manager & All Services</i>	Westhill - Autumn 2004 Insch – 2004/05
3.1c	Carry out Housing Needs Assessment to provide data on housing needs that will be used to ensure resources are targeted effectively. <i>H&SW (Housing)</i>	December 2004
3.1d	Investigate the possibility of developing a community website for Inverurie . Encourage the development of community websites across Garioch in conjunction with the Community Council Forum. <i>Area Manager</i>	December 2004
3.1e	Explore the possible uses of the proposed community flat in the centre of Kintore . <i>Area Manager</i>	December 2004
3.1f	Progress proposals for integrated health centres in Westhill and Inverurie (to include social work services, etc). <i>Area Manager; T&I (Property); H&SW (Social Work)</i>	Throughout 2004/05
3.1g	Continue the provision of some routine health services in Newmachar . <i>H&SW(Social Work)</i>	2004/05
3.1h	Actively involve our tenants and encourage their contribution by ensuring at least two events, open to all tenants, are held over the course of the year. <i>H&SW (Housing)</i>	2004/05

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| 3.1i | Explore options for development of new community facilities in Newmachar
<i>E&R (Education); Area Manager; T&I (Property)</i> | Feb 2005 |
| 3.1j | Provide assistance to older people and those with a disability in private housing to allow them to remain in their own home by extending the Care and Repair Scheme into the Garioch area.
<i>H&SW (Housing)</i> | March 2005 |
| 3.1k | Organise one Area Committee meeting per year in a different location within Garioch .
<i>Area Office</i> | May/June 2005 |

3.2 Ongoing Actions

Item	Action	Specific Actions for 2004/05
3.2a	Further develop the role of the Area Committee by providing information on an Area basis. <i>Area Manager & All Services</i>	Improvements to reporting of performance information and information on service activities. Garioch Area Management Team to review matters that are reported to Area Committee or that are included in the Information Bulletin. Hold three meetings between the Area Committee and Garioch Area Management Team in May/June, Sept/Oct and Feb/Mar to discuss Area Plan and any other business.
3.2b	Liaise with Community Councils and support them to effectively represent the needs of the people in their area. <i>Area Manager</i>	Provide information on Community Council Project Grant Scheme. Area Manager to attend each Community Council annually. Provide advice and assistance to Community Councils as required. Debate the issue of encouraging more people to become involved in Community Councils with the Community Council Forum.
3.2c	Further develop the Community Council Forum and its liaison and networking roles. <i>Area Manager</i>	Establish annual programme of training and seminars for Community Councillors and Forum members.
3.2d	Support the Area Partnership in Garioch . <i>Area Manager</i>	Develop a 3 year work plan and report it to the Area Committee.
3.2e	Support existing tenants' groups and encourage the registration of new tenants' groups to contribute to the development of policies and the improvement of services. <i>H&SW(Housing)</i>	Ensure that existing groups continue to meet on a regular basis. Assist in the establishment of new groups
3.2f	Continuously seek to improve co-ordination of Council Services at Area level. <i>Area Management Team</i>	Improve officers' understanding of the work undertaken by other Services
3.2g	Further develop public access to information on Council Services through the internet. <i>P&ICT(ICT) &P&ES (Planning)</i>	Develop and implement a system for public access to planning applications

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| <p>3.2h Development and planning for a range of affordable housing in communities across Garioch.
Seek ways to ensure continued provision of affordable housing.
<i>H&SW (Housing)</i></p> | <p>Affordable housing developments at Newmachar, Insch, Kintore and Westhill.</p> |
| <p>3.2i Continue to develop the rolling 3-year stock improvement programme and complete the improvements identified.
<i>H&SW (Housing)</i></p> | <p>Ensure all sheltered housing communal TV facilities are upgraded to digital quality. Kitchen upgrades at Blackburn and Kirkton of Skene.</p> |
| <p>3.2j Implementation of the Joint Futures agenda for health and social work within Garioch.
<i>H&SW (Social Work)</i></p> | <p>Continue the local joint working arrangements between Social Work and Health, and work in progress regarding the configuration of primary care services. Ongoing work regarding an implementation plan for Grampian Older People strategy, which will then lead on to the development of a local action plan for the Central Area.</p> |
| <p>3.2k Develop a Community Planning Strategy for the Area jointly with Community Planning Partners.

<i>Area Manager</i></p> | <p>Hold regular meetings with Police and Health Partners. Extend Local Community Planning Proposals to include the Garioch Area Partnership and Economic Development.</p> |
| <p>3.2l Prioritise actions required to ensure services are equally accessible to all, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act
<i>T&I (Property)</i></p> | <p>Improvements at Gordon House and Inverurie Town Hall.</p> |

3.3 Projects in Future Years

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| <p>3.3a Development of a permanent respite care unit for people with learning disabilities in Inverurie.
<i>H&SW (Social Work)</i></p> | <p>2005/06</p> |
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3.4 Desired Future Projects

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| <p>3.4a Seek to provide improved public access to Council services in Westhill.</p> | <p>T&I (Property)
All Services</p> |
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4. Sustainable Environment

This theme promotes quality of life through a sustainable environment. It includes waste reduction and management, improved recycling facilities, more environmentally friendly transport arrangements and thoughtful care of the built and natural environment.

Key activities under this theme are:

- improvements to the urban environment, through the design brief for Westhill Town Centre, environmental improvements in Inverurie, the exploration of conservation areas and the introduction of traffic calming and 20 mph zones.
- improvements to the rural environment, through proposed improvements at Bennachie, refurbishment of a bridge at Burnhervie and the investigation of footpath links.
- improvements to traffic management at Inverurie and the introduction of school travel plans and a green travel plan for Council offices in Inverurie.

4.1 Projects in Current Year

Item	Actions & Projects	Timescale
4.1a	Development and implementation of a strategy for play areas and public open space across Garioch . <i>T&I (Landscape Services)</i>	Consultation Sept 2004 Area Committee Nov 2004
4.1b	Refurbishment of the Shakkin' Briggie at Burnhervie . <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Begin Summer 2004
4.1c	Complete design brief/planning guidance for Westhill Town Centre including plans for the future use of the current doctors surgery, consult on it and present it to Garioch Area Committee. <i>P&ES (Planning)</i>	Consult - Sept 2004 To Area Committee - Nov 2004
4.1d	Undertake environmental improvements around Inverurie Town Hall/Market Square. <i>Town Centre Projects Group including T&I (Landscape, Roads & Public Transport); P&ES (Environment)</i>	Agree design by Sept 2004 Implementation 2005/06
4.1e	Support development of a Park & Ride scheme on the A947 corridor. <i>T&I (Roads)</i>	Winter 2004/Spring 2005
4.1f	Establishment of conservation areas in Kintore, Echt and Dunecht . <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Expected to commence Autumn 2004
4.1g	Investigate the future use of Kintore Library site. <i>T&I (Property); E&R (ALIS)</i>	December 2004
4.1h	Investigate traffic management options for Inverurie Town Centre. <i>T&I (Roads)</i>	December 2004
4.1i	Establishment of riverside park at Uryside in association with the eastward extension of Inverurie . <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Public consultation – Summer 2005 Implement – 2005-2010
4.1j	Establish Travel Plan Group for Council properties in Inverurie . <i>Area Manager</i>	2004

4.1k	Support the Inverurie Environmental Improvement Group with path improvements along the rivers Don and Ury . <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Implementation 2004-2006
4.1l	Implementation of the Bennachie Path Project and Centre Refurbishment. <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Works to begin Autumn 2004
4.1m	Promote the development of the remainder of the Stonefield Croft site. <i>T&I (Property)</i> <i>H&SW (Housing)</i>	2004/05
4.1n	Redevelopment of the Ladeside Centre, Port Elphinstone . <i>T&I (Property)</i>	2004/06
4.1o	Provision of a path link connecting Westhill and Elrick with Kirkton of Skene . Explore the possible extension of the project to include Brimmond Hill. <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Implementation early 2005

4.2 Ongoing Actions

Item	Action	Specific Actions for 2004/05
4.2a	Implementation of waste management strategy across Garioch . <i>P&ES (Waste Management)</i>	Consult with Community Councils and developers regarding the provision of new recycling points at Dunecht, Hatton of Fintray, Meikle Wartle, Sauchen, Kemnay and Westhill . Promote recycling schemes and waste reduction. Appoint Compliance Officer to take action to discourage fly tippers Establish role of Area Waste Officer
4.2b	Continue a rolling programme of implementation and refreshment of gateways and traffic calming measures and installation 20 mph zones in settlements and schools across Garioch . <i>T&I (Roads)</i>	Introduction of traffic calming measures and/or 20 mph zones in Blackburn, Inverurie, Kintore, Auchleven, Newmachar, Insch and Westhill .
4.2c	Integrate biodiversity into projects and proposals through relevant actions in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. <i>T&I (Landscape Services)</i> <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Continue management of roadside verges for biodiversity
4.2d	Promotion and management of Arnhall Moss Local Nature Reserve. <i>P&ES (Environment)</i>	Undertake biological surveys of the site. Maintain areas of marsh, bog woodland and wildflower meadow. Continue promoting the site through press releases and public events. Explore the development of a partnership with Aberdeen City relating to Carnie Woods
4.2e	School Travel Plans. <i>T&I (Transportation)</i>	Encourage schools currently participating in Safer Routes to Schools to develop a School Travel Plan. Support new Schools who want to participate in School Travel Plan initiative. Provision of infrastructure relating to Safer Routes to School in participating schools within Garioch

4.3 Projects in Future Years

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| 4.3a | Complete feasibility study for Northern Link road around Inverurie .
<i>T&I (Roads)</i> | September 2005 |
| 4.3b | Introduce fortnightly kerbside collection of dry recyclables to 80% of Aberdeenshire households.
<i>P&ES (Waste)</i> | 2005/06 |
| 4.3c | Investigate expansion of wood collection at recycling centres in Garioch .
<i>P&ES (Waste)</i> | 2005/06 |
| 4.3d | Progress development of land at St James' Place, Inverurie .
<i>T&I (Property)</i> | 2005/06 |

4.4 Desired Future Projects

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| 4.4a | Develop new railway halt at Kintore . | T&I |
| 4.4b | Develop a planning brief for Insch town centre including plans for the use of vacant shop premises. | P&ES |

5. Jobs & the Economy

This theme promotes quality of life by encouraging growth in the local economy. It includes the creation of new jobs, the provision of opportunities for businesses to expand and new businesses to form, the promotion of business opportunities provided by information and computer technology, and the promotion of a skilled workforce.

Key activities under this theme are:

- promoting the development of employment opportunities, through the finalisation of a development brief for the Loco Works site in Inverurie, the development of a database of employment land and support for the provision of a business centre at Inverurie.
- promoting the arts, through support for the Open Studios project.

5.1 Projects in Current Year

Item	Actions & Projects	Timescale
5.1a	Prepare a development brief for the Loco Works, Inverurie with a view to establishing an overall pattern of development for the area from the Town Hall to the Harlaw Centre. <i>P&ES (Planning); Inverurie Town Team</i>	Report to Area Committee – June 2004
5.1b	Support the development of an online database of available employment land and commercial property in Inverurie . <i>T&I (Economic Development)</i>	September 2004
5.1c	Support the Open Studios Project which will see 100 artists open up their work spaces to the public throughout the North East . <i>E&R (Arts) Sally Thompson, T&I (Economic Development)</i>	Project - Sept 2004
5.1d	Investigate the possibility of facilitating a customer service training programme in Inverurie . <i>T&I (Economic Development)</i>	December 2004
5.1e	Provision of addition office accommodation near Inverurie at Crichtiebank business centre. 21 new offices will be provided by ENET with Aberdeenshire Council making a minority contribution towards the costs of the project, and offering to part fund a biomass heating system. <i>T&I (Property), T&I (Economic Development)</i>	January 2005

5.2 Ongoing Actions

Item	Action	Specific Actions for 2004/05
5.2a	Support the development of the local business community. <i>T&I (Economic Development)</i>	Promote “support to Aberdeenshire Business” funding scheme and “Farm business development scheme”. Support Inverurie and District Business Association to become independent of Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership funding.
	Development of employment land in Garioch . <i>T&I (Economic Development)</i> <i>T&I (Property)</i>	Support the development of employment land at Thainstone and Blackhall Road, Inverurie . Continue to market land at Insch

Item	Action	Specific Actions for 2004/05
5.2c	Promotion of Inverurie and surrounding area as a tourist destination. <i>T&I (Economic Development)</i>	Support to Inverurie and District Business Association to assist them in creating a website www.visitinverurie.com and promotional literature.

5.3 Projects in Future Years

There are no Garioch specific projects planned for future years at this time. Future projects will be dependant on specific issues that may arise in Garioch and subject to funding.

5.4 Desired Future Projects

5.4a	Seek ways to introduce CCTV in Inverurie (together with other towns in Aberdeenshire)	Area Manager Inverurie Town Team
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6. Learning

This theme promotes quality of life through learning and education for people of all ages. It includes lifelong learning, better schools, improved library facilities, better leisure facilities and more opportunities for voluntary work.

Key activities under this theme are:

- the development of our schools, through the construction of a new school at Kintore and the development of asset management plans for schools.
- the development of leisure facilities, through progressing proposals for the redevelopment of Inverurie Town Hall, supporting the development of skateparks, and investigating the provision of additional playing fields in Inverurie.
- the development of lifelong learning, through ICT developments, early years forums and the development of an adult learning plan.

6.1 Projects in Current Year

Item	Actions & Projects	Timescale
6.1a	Support the redevelopment of Inverurie Town Hall into an Arts and Cultural Centre including the provision of improved library services through further work on the design and funding strategy. <i>Area Manager; E & R</i>	Dec 2004
6.1b	Support the development of skatepark at Insch . <i>Area Manager; E&R (Comm. Learn)</i>	Enter into lease Dec 2004
6.1c	Progress the development of Kintore Primary through the PPP bid. <i>E&R (Education)</i>	Start on site June 2004 Prop opening Oct 06
6.1d	Manage the introduction of Meldrum Academy and the transition from Inverurie Academy. <i>E&R (Education)</i>	2004/06
6.1e	Progress Asset Management priorities for schools in Garioch . <i>E&R (Education)</i>	March 2005
6.1f	Establish Early Years Forums in Inverurie, Westhill and Kemnay . <i>E&R (Surestart)</i>	March 2005
6.1g	Offer free basic ICT training for adults in libraries throughout Garioch . <i>E&R (ALIS)</i>	2004/05
6.1h	Develop an adult learning plan for Westhill area. <i>E&R (Comm. Learn)</i>	2004/05
6.1i	Investigate the possible provision of additional playing fields for Inverurie . <i>T&I (Property); E&R (Recreation)</i>	2004/05

6.2 Ongoing Actions

Item	Action	Specific Actions for 2004/05
6.2a	Support young people in Garioch . <i>E&R (Community Learning)</i>	Establish meetings of representatives from all Aberdeenshire Youth Forums Establish groups of young people to complete a needs assessment Audit the current provision Develop and act on action plans
6.2b	Improve young peoples access to advice and information. <i>E&R (Community Learning)</i>	Produce standard basic guidance for staff for giving of advice to young people and production of records. Promote Young Scot website Improve access to IT for young people. Explore involvement of library in cataloguing information. Explore Duke of Edinburgh Award education and mentoring methods
6.2c	Develop provision for young people in Newmachar, Kemnay, Blackburn, Skene and Port Elphinstone . <i>E&R (Community Learning)</i>	Develop a youth strategy and support young people in their project to erect a youth café in Newmachar . Continue to support the youth café in Kemnay . Develop a schedule of youth activities in new hall at Blackburn . Establish youth provision in Skene Hall and Port Elphinstone .
6.2d	Finalisation of the Aberdeenshire Arts Strategy and implementation within Garioch . <i>E&R (Arts Development)</i>	Consider the implications for the Garioch Area of the finalised Arts Strategy.

6.3 Projects in Future Years

6.3a	Support local group to explore possibility of skatepark in Newmachar . <i>Area Manager; E&R (Community Education)</i>	2005/06
6.3b	Provide improved public library facilities at Westhill . <i>E&R (Library Services)</i>	2005/07

6.4 Desired Future Projects

6.4a	Provision of youth shelter and improvements to play areas in Insch .	T&I (Landscape)
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