



**CHAPELTON OF ELSICK  
PROPOSED NEW COMMUNITY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
SCOPING REPORT**

**MARCH 2011**

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## Introduction

### Strategic Context

- 1.1 The National Planning Framework 2 (2009) identifies the coastal route between Edinburgh and Aberdeen as a “key economic corridor”. Aberdeen is defined as an “international gateway” with the potential to provide a springboard both for external economic links and for the dissemination of growth within Aberdeenshire.
- 1.2 The spatial strategy proposed in the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan, 2009, expands on these themes by designating a series of “strategic growth areas” into which most development opportunities will be steered. These areas comprise Aberdeen City itself, together with the three main transport corridors radiating from it: northwards to Peterhead, north-westwards to Inverurie and Huntly, and southwards to Stonehaven and Lawrencekirk.
- 1.3 The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (Consultation Draft, 2010) sets out the landuse planning framework within which these growth areas will be delivered. The Aberdeen-Stonehaven growth area comprises a series of settlements along the transport corridor formed by the A90 and East Coast railway, together with their immediate hinterland.
- 1.4 The “main development opportunities” identified within this growth area include “the first phases of a new settlement” at Elsick, to the west of the A90 between Portlethen and Newtonhill. Table 6 within Schedule 1 of the LDP sets out the housing allocations required to meet the Structure Plan targets in Kincardine and Mearns. It identifies a need for 1,845 dwellings at Elsick in the period 2007-2016 and 2,200 dwellings in 2017-2023. The location of the new settlement is shown in **Fig 1**.
- 1.5 The land allocation required to develop a new settlement at Elsick is shown on the Kincardine and Mearns Proposals Map. A more detailed plan, together with an outline of the Council’s objectives for the settlement, is presented in the Kincardine and Mearns Settlement Statements Supplementary Guidance, 2010.

### Masterplanning and Consultation

- 1.6 As the strategic need for the new settlement at Elsick emerged, a masterplanning process was set in motion by the Elsick Development Company Limited (EDC), a family-controlled company representing the Duke of Fife and neighbouring landowners.
- 1.7 This process has involved a “charrette” – a design workshop open to the public and other stakeholders – held in September 2010. The charrette format is intended to facilitate the brainstorming of ideas and exchange of information, so that the widest possible range of expectations can be captured as the masterplan develops.
- 1.8 At the same time, various technical studies have been undertaken to underpin the design work; for example, baseline ecological research and an appraisal of access options to/from the A90. This work has included preliminary consultations with some of the key statutory consultees.
- 1.9 The outcome of the masterplanning process has been presented in the form of a post-charrette paper distributed to the local community and other stakeholders. EDC are now in a position to seek planning permission for the first phases of the development, following further public consultation.

### Purpose of this Report

- 1.10 In view of the scale of the new community, EDC have assumed that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) would be required under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations, 1999.

- 1.11 Regulation 10 provides for an applicant to request a “scoping opinion” from the planning authority, identifies the information required for such a request and specifies the timetable within which a scoping opinion must be adopted.
- 1.12 This report forms the basis of a request for a Scoping Opinion. Subsequent sections:
- provide an overview of the EIA process;
  - review the environmental context of the site;
  - describe the characteristics of the development;
  - set out the overall scope of the assessment;
  - summarise the methodology for the assessment of individual topics; and
  - set out the proposed structure of the Environmental Statement.

## 2. EIA Process

### Background

- 2.1 EIA is a structured process for identifying the potential environmental effects of a development. It has been part of the UK planning system since 1988, when Regulations implementing the provisions of EC Directive 85/337/EEC were introduced. In essence, EIA has been integrated into the planning process, whereby relevant projects must be subject to assessment before a planning application can be determined.
- 2.2 In March 1999, the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations, 1999, were introduced, implementing the requirements of amending Directive 97/11/EEC. These Regulations apply to projects which require planning permission under Part III of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1997. Replacement Regulations were issued for consultation in 2010 and are due to be published in 2011.
- 2.3 Guidance on the Regulations is provided in Scottish Executive Circular 15/1999 and Planning Advice Note (PAN) 58. A revised version of the Guidance was published for consultation purposes in March 2007, and will be issued following adoption of the new Regulations.
- 2.4 The main steps in the assessment process are as follows:
- defining the scope;
  - consulting relevant parties;
  - carrying out baseline studies;
  - predicting the potential effects;
  - assessing the significance of those effects;
  - identifying and incorporating mitigating measures;
  - assessing the residual effects; and
  - preparing the environmental statement (ES).
- 2.5 The EIA is reported in the form of an Environmental Statement (ES), which is submitted at the same time as the planning application. The information to be included in an ES is specified in Schedule 4 of the Regulations.

### Need for EIA

- 2.6 The need for EIA for developments falling within the scope of the Regulations is derived from two schedules. EIA is mandatory for “Schedule 1” projects. However, the proposed new community does not fall within this definition.
- 2.7 EIA is required for “Schedule 2” projects if, in the opinion of the determining authority, they are likely to give rise to “significant effects” on the environment. Schedule 2 projects are those of a type listed in the schedule that either are located within a “sensitive area” or exceed relevant criteria or thresholds.
- 2.8 Schedule 2 includes “urban development projects”, and the proposed settlement falls within this category. Sensitive areas comprise Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), land subject to Nature Conservation Orders, international conservation sites, National Scenic Areas, World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments and National Parks. The Elsie site does not fall within any of these designations.

- 2.9 Annex A to the Regulations advises that EIA will be more likely if the site area “exceeds 5 hectares” or if the development “*would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings)*”. The proposal exceeds both of these criteria by a substantial margin.
- 2.10 In addition, the nature of the proposal and the sensitivity of the area suggest a potential for significant effects to occur across a number of topics. The new community is therefore assumed to constitute “EIA development.”

### 3. Environmental Context

#### Land Use

- 3.1 The site of the Masterplan up to 2023 is shown on **Fig 2**. It is approximately 500 hectares in area and comprises mixed farmland and coniferous woodlands, with scattered farmsteads and dwellings. The main land uses comprise improved grassland and arable crops (cereals and oilseed rape).
- 3.2 The site includes several properties: Elswick House, Home Farm, Hayfield Cottages and East Quoscies, on the north-western part of the site; and Newhall, Wester Cairnhill and Upper Cairnhill on the southern part.
- 3.3 A number of additional properties have been excluded from, or adjoin, the site. These include: Craighuckle and Berryhill House, close to the northern boundary; the hamlet of Cammachmore, close to the eastern boundary; Lodge Croft and Chapelton, within the northern part of the site; Gillybrands, Windyedge and Nether Cairnhill, within the eastern part of the site; and properties along the A90.
- 3.4 The site is adjoined to the north, south and west by countryside of similar character, and to the east by part of the A90, beyond which lies the built-up edge of Newtonhill. Other development is anticipated to occur within the Aberdeen-Stonehaven corridor in the near future; for example, there is outline planning permission for 840 residential units at Schoolhill, Portlethen, together with an allocation for 400 units at Stonehaven.

#### Topography, Drainage and Soils

- 3.5 The topography of the site comprises a central valley running north-west to south-east between broad ridges reaching elevations of over 100m AOD. These ridges extend beyond the site boundary to form local high points at Berry Top to the west (170m) and Hill of Auchlee to the north (152m).
- 3.6 The greater part of the site lies within the catchment of the Burn of Elswick, a minor watercourse which enters the sea at Newtonhill. In addition, the southern part of the site drains towards the Pheppie Burn, which enters the sea at Muchalls. Most of the site currently gives rise to greenfield runoff rates. The SEPA Flood Map shows a zone of flood risk extending along most of the Burn of Elswick, together with the lower course of the Pheppie Burn.
- 3.7 The solid geology of the area comprises metamorphic schists, grits and slates. These are overlain by boulder clay and glacial moraine, with peat deposits in areas of impeded drainage.
- 3.8 Since most of the site has always been in agricultural or forestry use, the risk of residual ground contamination is considered to be low. Any such risk is likely to be confined to specific locations such as farm steadings (e.g. where fuel or chemicals may have been stored).

#### Landscape, Cultural Heritage and Ecology

- 3.9 The site lies within the Agricultural Heartlands landscape character type and the Kincardine Plateau landscape character area (South and Central Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Assessment, 1998). Its character derives from the combination of gently rolling terrain and a well-defined pattern of medium-sized rectilinear fields, with scattered blocks of woodland, farm buildings and residential properties. Tree cover is most extensive around Elswick House, where it forms a typical estate landscape.
- 3.10 Views towards the site are restricted by the surrounding topography and the pattern of woodlands; longer-distance views are confined to elevated areas to the south-west and east/north-east of the site. The more elevated and open parts of the site enjoy wide-ranging views, particularly eastwards towards the sea, whilst the high ground enclosing the site provides views across surrounding areas.

- 3.11 No part of the site is designated for its landscape value. However, the Aberdeenshire LDP sets aside the eastern part of the site as Green Belt, so as to separate the future settlement from proposed employment uses adjoining the A90 and to prevent coalescence with the existing communities of Newtonhill and Portlethen. In addition, the landscape of the Coastal Zone, to the east of the site, is protected.
- 3.12 The PASTMAP website indicates that several locations within the site appear on the Scottish Sites and Monuments Record. The Causey Mounth, a Medieval drover's road and trackway, crosses the eastern part of the site. Newhall is listed (Category B), whilst there are other listed buildings in the surrounding area (e.g. Boswell's Monument, Berryhill House and Cookney Church). The nearest Scheduled Monuments include the stone circles at Hill of Auchlee and at Aquorthies, to the north of the site. The nearest Conservation Area is at Muchalls, to the south-east.
- 3.13 Most of the site, as intensively managed farmland, is of limited habitat value. Interest is confined to the watercourses, woodlands and small areas of gorse scrub and boggy grassland. Some of the woodlands appear on the Ancient Woodlands inventory.
- 3.14 The site has the potential to be used by protected species such as badger, bats, otter, red squirrel, and breeding birds such as barn owl and goshawk. There are no designated habitats within the site; the nearest such area is the Red Moss of Netherley, which is a SSSI, Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve, 2km to the west.

### **Air Quality and Noise**

- 3.15 There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within Aberdeenshire; the latest update report indicates no exceedances of the UK Air Quality Strategy objective for NO<sub>2</sub> (which is likely to be the pollutant of most relevance). The nearest AQMA covers main roads within Aberdeen City Centre.
- 3.16 No specific pollution sources have been identified in the vicinity of the site. The nearest potential source is likely to be traffic on the A90, which also influences the noise climate across the eastern part of the site. Air quality and noise levels are otherwise assumed to be typical of a rural area, with the main sources comprising farming activities and traffic on local roads.

### **Access**

- 3.17 The site is crossed by two minor roads which provide access to the various farmsteads and other properties, connecting eastwards to the A90 and westwards to the B979 (Stonehaven to Peterculter road).
- 3.18 The A90 is the major trunk route connecting Aberdeen southwards to Dundee and the Central Belt. It is a dual-carriageway carrying up to 17,000 vehicles per day, of which 6-7% are HGVs. The closest points of access comprise grade-separated junctions at Newtonhill and Badentoy, together with a staggered crossroads with Bruntland Road at Bourtreebush.
- 3.19 A safeguarded corridor for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route "Fastlink" passes to the west of the site. The nearest railway station is at Portlethen, 2.5km to the north-east. The A90 is well served by bus routes.



## 4. The Proposed Development

### Background

- 4.1 The proposal is to create a mixed-use community that achieves a high degree of socio-economic and environmental sustainability, whilst contributing both to the strategic objectives of the Structure Plan and the amenity of local communities.
- 4.2 The emerging masterplan is shown in **Fig 3**. It aims to respond to the planning objectives set out in the Settlement Statement, namely:
- to provide employment opportunities;
  - to meet the demand for housing within the strategic growth area;
  - to enhance opportunities for informal recreation through the provision of open space; and
  - to provide improvements to public transport.
- 4.3 By creating compact, walkable mixed-use neighbourhoods, commitments under the emerging Local Development Plan can be accommodated within approximately half of EDC's landholding. The Masterplan process has therefore looked beyond the current plan period to determine how Chapelton might grow in the future, producing a coherent, long-term plan for the new town, but not at the expense of the concept as envisaged for 2023. The 4,045 homes and associated employment facilities will be delivered as a sustainable and cohesive community in its own right, irrespective of future allocations beyond that date.

### Key Parameters

- 4.4 The key parameters from the masterplan are as follows:
- 4,045 homes, of which 25% (1,011) would be affordable and the remainder (3,034) privately owned;
  - almost 43 hectares of employment uses, divided into two main areas: a business/distribution park at Newtonhill and a town centre at Chapelton;
  - up to four primary schools and a secondary school;
  - a community campus (including a library and indoor sports centre);
  - GP surgeries;
  - three community centres and places of worship; and
  - open space such as playing fields, community woodland and allotments, together with a hierarchy of parks and play space.

### Layout and Design

- 4.5 The masterplan has been underpinned by the following design principles:
- a high degree of connectivity with the regional transport network, especially for public transport;
  - provision of the facilities and services required to meet residents' daily needs;

- neighbourhoods to be used as the main “building blocks”, arranged around mixed-use centres;
- settlements to provide a range of character, from urban within the centres to more rural on the periphery;
- thoroughfares to be multi-use, with parking subservient to the streetscape;
- each neighbourhood to provide a range of housing types and tenures, so as to encourage social stability and diversity; and
- architectural styles to reflect local traditions and environmental influences.

4.6 The masterplan proposes a hierarchy of neighbourhoods and public spaces, linked by an organic pattern of streets and pedestrian routes. Each neighbourhood would offer a genuine mix of uses, with shops, parks, schools and other community facilities located within walking distance of the residential streets.

4.7 Three neighbourhoods are proposed: one at Chapelton, to the north of the burn, and two to the south. Chapelton would also serve as the town centre, not only meeting the needs of its immediate residents, but also providing higher-order facilities for the wider community, including employment space, a hotel and a supermarket.

4.8 The neighbourhoods will incorporate a network of open space, within easy walking distance for residents, so as to meet a wide range of recreation needs. The open space will reinforce the urban form; for example, the valley of the burn will become a “town park”, separating the northern and southern neighbourhoods, whilst retaining Elswick House and its parkland. This park will merge with the area of Green Belt defining the eastern edge of the settlement.

4.9 The need for any upgrading of infrastructure such as water supply and foul drainage is being examined. Once this is confirmed, together with the planning process to be followed, the appropriate approach to the environmental assessment of any such works will be agreed.

## Access

4.10 The modular pattern of the masterplan is designed to ensure a high degree of pedestrian access within each neighbourhood. This would be reinforced by a network of streets intended to optimise connections between the neighbourhoods, the town centre and the surrounding area.

4.11 The accommodation of bus services would be a priority, providing for longer journeys within and beyond the settlement, and connections to the A90, Portlethen Station and the proposed Findon Park + Ride Interchange (for Aberdeen). The network of thoroughfares would also provide for cycle access, including connections to regional routes and a potentially reinstated Causey Mounth trail.

4.12 Whilst the existing road network will be incorporated where possible, a number of new and upgraded highway links will be required. These are likely to include a new grade-separated junction on the A90 at Bourtreebush, modifications to the Newtonhill interchange and changes to/closure of several junctions giving direct access to properties adjoining the A90.

## Phasing

4.13 The new settlement is anticipated to be developed over a 12 year period and will be implemented in phases. The precise phasing will depend on several factors, including housing demand and the timing of infrastructure provision.

4.14 The first phase to be implemented (Phase 1a) will comprise part of the neighbourhood of Cairnhill, which forms the south-eastern section of the development. Planning permission for Cairnhill will be sought at the same time as for the overall masterplan. The area of Phase 1a is shown in **Fig 4**.

4.15 The key parameters for Phase 1a will comprise:

- between 600-800 homes, of which 25% would be affordable;
- neighbourhood facilities such as local shops, a surgery, community centre and place of worship; and
- associated open space and play areas.

## 5. Overall Scope

### Background

5.1 Schedule 4 of the Regulations states that

*“the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development” [may include] “population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors.”*

5.2 This scope is not prescriptive; it is for the applicant and the local planning authority to agree the scope of each EIA on a case-by-case basis. This process normally begins with a broadly similar range of topics, which is then refined to reflect differences in the scale and type of development, the character of the site and the sensitivity of its location.

### Assessment Topics

5.3 The table below summarises the range of topics proposed in this case, together with the relevant Schedule 4 reference and the justification for their inclusion.

Topic	Schedule 4 Reference	Justification
Agricultural Soils	<i>Soils</i>	Most of the site will be taken out of agricultural use. Planning policy resists the loss of “best and most versatile” agricultural land unless there are overriding considerations (as in this case). There is a need to confirm land quality across the site and to demonstrate how soils are to be managed and impacts mitigated.
Air Quality	<i>Air</i>	The development has the potential to generate substantial volumes of traffic, which could affect local air quality. There is a risk that nearby residents could be affected by fugitive dust impacts during construction. Emissions from any proposed point sources may need to be taken into account.
Climate Change	<i>Climatic factors</i>	Aberdeenshire Council have adopted a Sustainability Charter and Climate Change Action Plan. The development will give rise to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from sources such as traffic and energy supply, and will be expected to demonstrate how these will be minimised.
Cultural Heritage	<i>Archaeological and architectural heritage</i>	The site includes a number of cultural heritage assets. The development will involve extensive ground disturbance, which in the absence of mitigation could damage such assets. The development also has the potential to affect the settings of listed buildings and a conservation area.
Ecology	<i>Fauna Flora</i>	The site includes habitats of local interest and is known to be used by protected species. Its character and habitat structure will be changed fundamentally by the development.
Flood Risk, Drainage and Surfacewater Quality	<i>Water Population</i>	The site lies within two catchments that are prone to flooding. The development will change the natural drainage regime of the site, and will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage techniques. There is also a risk that surfacewater quality could be affected during construction and by the completed development (e.g. runoff from trafficked areas).
Geo-Environment	<i>Soils Water</i>	Whilst the risk of residual contamination is assumed to be low and localised, this will need to be confirmed. The development could affect groundwater levels and may

		pose a risk of contamination during construction and from some proposed uses (e.g. employment areas).
Landscape and Views	<i>Landscape Population</i>	The development will represent a fundamental change in site character, involving the loss of some landscape assets and the introduction of new areas of green space, woodland etc. The introduction of built development will affect the character of the local landscape and a range of views.
Noise and Vibration	<i>Population</i>	Whilst noise is not anticipated to be a constraint on the proposed uses, this will need to be confirmed. The development will introduce sources of operational noise, primarily traffic, building services plant etc. Nearby residents could be disturbed during construction.
Socio-Economics	<i>Population</i>	The development is likely to have a substantial impact on regional growth targets, housing supply and employment. It will generate additional demand for social infrastructure, which will be met within the masterplan, and has a potential to affect the local retail hierarchy.
Transport	<i>Population</i>	The development is likely to generate substantial traffic flows, which will have implications for highway capacity, including the provision of new infrastructure. There is the potential to benefit public transport (mainly bus services) through additional routes and increased demand. Pedestrian/cycle access is also likely to benefit through increased connectivity. Construction access and traffic could cause temporary delays through road closures etc.
Utilities and Waste	<i>Population</i>	The development will increase demand for energy, water supply and wastewater treatment. It will be expected to demonstrate how these demands will be minimised and what infrastructure upgrades may be required. The development will give rise to substantial volumes of construction and operational waste. It will be expected to demonstrate how these will be minimised and managed, and what impact it may have on the waste management regime.

- 5.4 Electronic interference, environmental wind and sunlight/daylight are proposed to be “scoped out” of the assessment, on the basis that no tall buildings are proposed and that any overshadowing issues can be resolved at the detailed design stage.

## 6. Scope of Topic Assessments

- 6.1 This section sets out the proposed scope for the assessment of each topic. These scopes are necessarily provisional, and will be refined and agreed where necessary with relevant parties during the consultation phase of the assessment.

### Agricultural Soils

- 6.2 The assessment is anticipated to comprise:

- soil survey and classification based on the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute (MLURI) Land Classification for Agriculture (LCA) system;
- verification and refinement of the published LCA maps;
- assessment of impact on soils to be taken out of agricultural use, focussing on any “prime quality” land; and
- preparation of an outline soil management strategy to provide mitigation for the loss of any prime land.

### Air Quality

- 6.3 The scope of the study will be agreed with the Aberdeenshire EHO. However, the core assessment is anticipated to comprise:

- appraisal of baseline air quality using sources such as national databases and Aberdeenshire Council’s local air quality management process;
- assessment of operational traffic emissions using the DMRB screening method;
- evaluation of impacts with reference to the AQ Objectives and Environmental Protection UK guidance; and
- qualitative assessment of construction dust impacts, using distance criteria and EPUK/London Councils guidance.

- 6.4 In addition, if exceedance of the Air Quality objectives is anticipated, or if significant point sources of emissions are proposed, the assessment may include:

- a more detailed assessment of traffic impacts based on dispersion modelling using ADMS-Roads 2.3; and
- an assessment of any fixed operational sources using HMIP guidance on stack height and ADMS 4.2 dispersion modelling where necessary.

### Climate Change

- 6.5 The assessment would be based on a carbon footprinting study consistent with the BSI’s PAS2020 and Defra guidance, using the GHG inventories set out in BS14064. The study would consider GHG emissions relating to traffic, space heating and energy, together with carbon embodied within construction materials. Options for carbon reduction through energy-efficiency and low- or zero-carbon technologies would be identified through the BREEAM Communities for Scotland tool and related sustainability standards.

## Cultural Heritage

- 6.6 The assessment would comprise a desk-based study and field survey in accordance with standard (Institute of Archaeologists) practice. The main information sources would comprise the National Monuments Record for Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council's Historic Environment Record, historic OS mapping, the RCAHMS aerial photographic record and the Historic Scotland database.
- 6.7 The results of the assessment would form the basis for agreeing an appropriate mitigation strategy with Aberdeenshire Council, which may include a written scheme of investigation (WSI).

## Ecology

- 6.8 A considerable amount of ecological survey work has already been undertaken on the site, and is ongoing. The main elements of the study will comprise:
- habitat mapping and target notes in accordance with JNCC guidance, and selected plant community assessment in accordance with the NVC;
  - repeat wintering and breeding bird surveys, with an emphasis on Schedule 1 species (Barn Owl and Goshawk);
  - badger sett and field sign survey, including territory mapping;
  - otter holt and water vole surveys along the Elswick Burn and other watercourses;
  - red squirrel survey; and
  - bat activity survey to identify important flyways and potential roosts.

## Flood Risk, Drainage and Surfacewater Quality

- 6.9 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) compliant with relevant policies within Scottish Planning Policy (February, 2010) will be prepared. Its main elements are anticipated to comprise:
- consultation with SEPA and Aberdeenshire Council;
  - site visit and review of historic flooding risk;
  - characterisation of potential flooding sources, zones and vulnerability of proposed uses;
  - assessment of potential changes to off-site risk;
  - recommendation of mitigation measures as necessary, taking account of climate change; and
  - preparation of an outline surfacewater drainage strategy based on sustainable drainage (SUDS) principles.
- 6.10 In addition, a qualitative assessment will be made of surfacewater pollution, taking account of site history, construction impacts, the proposed uses and drainage strategy. Mitigation will be adopted in accordance with SEPA's Pollution Prevention Guidelines. No hydraulic modelling or water quality sampling is currently proposed.

## Geo-Environment

- 6.11 A Phase 1 (desk-based) geo-environmental study will be undertaken in order to characterise potential sensitivities and risks. This will include:
- site visit/visual inspection;

- historic map regression to identify previous uses;
- review of BGS published information and borehole records to determine ground/groundwater conditions;
- review of any previous studies or records;
- an initial ground contamination assessment based on a conceptual risk model identifying potential risks to, for example, groundwater, site workers, future users and surrounding receptors; and
- recommendation of Phase 2 site investigation (SI) works as appropriate.

## **Landscape and Views**

6.12 The assessment would follow the Landscape and Visual Impact assessment (LVIA) guidance produced by the Landscape Institute/IEMA (2002) and the SNH Landscape Character Assessment Guidance. It would comprise the following tasks:

- desktop review of relevant policy and landscape character assessments;
- site visit and fieldwork to determine key landscape features, identify receptors, characterise surrounding landscape and define visibility;
- identification of the approximate extent of visibility and key views; and
- assessment of potential impacts on landscape character and visual amenity.

6.13 Annotated photographs will be prepared in order to illustrate the impact from relevant viewpoints. The indicative area of visibility, together with proposed viewpoints, is shown on **Fig 5**. These viewpoints will be agreed with Aberdeenshire Council, and will take account of any alternatives proposed by consultees.

## **Noise and Vibration**

6.14 The main tasks would comprise:

- baseline noise monitoring to a methodology agreed with the EHO;
- site suitability assessment in accordance with PAN56, with recommendations for the acoustic treatment of buildings on the basis of BS8233 where necessary;
- assessment of construction noise and vibration in accordance with BS5228;
- assessment of operational traffic noise in accordance with the CRTN methodology; and
- assessment of fixed operational sources in accordance with BS4142.

## **Socio-Economics**

6.15 The main areas to be covered would comprise:

- **Employment:** Net impact on direct/indirect/induced etc employment based on project value (for construction employment) and floorspace ratios/multipliers (for operational employment);
- **Local/Regional Economy:** Impact of increased income, consumer spend etc;



- Retail Impact: Impact on existing/future retail hierarchy (but would not constitute a full Retail Impact Assessment);
- Housing: Impact on housing supply/demand in terms of quantum, mix, any local/regional deficiencies etc;
- Social Infrastructure: Impact on demand/provision for education, health care and play space/recreation; and
- Overall Impact on Local/Regional Socio-Economic Profile: Taking account of the above, highlighting opportunities to address specific needs or imbalances, potential impact on demographics, social deprivation etc.

## Transport

- 6.16 A Transport Assessment (TA) will be carried out in support of the application, and its findings will be reported in the ES. Whilst the TA will be the subject of a separate scoping exercise involving Aberdeenshire Council and Transport Scotland, the main elements of its scope can be anticipated and are set out below.
- 6.17 The TA will be carried out in accordance with the following guidance:
- Transport Scotland's "Guide to Transport Assessment for Development Proposals in Scotland";
  - the Transport policies within Scottish Planning Policy (February, 2010); and
  - PAN75: Planning for Transport, 2005;
  - PAN66: Best Practice in handling Planning Applications Affecting Trunk Roads.
- 6.18 The TA will have regard for the various studies undertaken previously in relation to the allocation of development land at Elsick, including the A90 South Comparative Study, the NESTRANS report, the Elsick PARAMICS and Traffic Modelling reports, the Access Appraisal and the A90 Corridor Study.
- 6.19 The main tasks will comprise:
- assessment of external travel demand by mode and destination (cycle, public transport and vehicles), based on an assumed modal share which takes account of the mixed-use character of the development and the promotion of sustainable transport choice inherent in the design;
  - assessment of the implications of the "Designing Streets" approach for local traffic management and the provision of highway infrastructure;
  - assessments of network performance covering the following junctions: Newtonhill interchange, Bourtreebush interchange and the A90 south of Charleston (re the overall masterplan); and the Newtonhill interchange, A90 south of Charleston and other local routes (re Phase 1a); and
  - identification of mitigation options consistent with these network analyses and the previous strategic studies.

## Utilities and Waste

- 6.20 A Sustainability and Infrastructure Report (SIR) will assess the development's demand for services such as water and energy, together with its implications for wastewater disposal. It will set out the strategy for infrastructure provision to reflect the anticipated phasing of the development, within a

framework of over-arching sustainability principles. Appropriate demand-management measures will be taken into account, and specific requirements for new or upgraded physical infrastructure will be identified.

- 6.21 A study of energy demand profiles and supply options, taking account of efficiency measures and opportunities for renewable sources, will provide the basis for development of an energy strategy, which will in turn inform the carbon footprinting study. Whilst the SIR is not envisaged to form part of the EIA, relevant parts of it will be presented in the ES.
- 6.22 The SIR will also address the waste management implications of the development, which are anticipated to include:
- a review of the local/regional waste management regime, with the specific aim of identifying any constraints;
  - characterisation and calculation of the waste streams likely to arise during construction and operation; and
  - assessment of impact on the waste management regime, taking account of any proposed mitigation (e.g. on-site recycling/composting).

## **7. Environmental Statement**

### **Proposed Structure**

- 7.1 The Environmental Statement is anticipated to comprise three tiers of documents:
- a Non-Technical Summary (NTS);
  - a Main Report; and
  - a series of Technical Appendices.
- 7.2 The NTS is a regulatory requirement and would comprise a 10-20 page document written in a non-technical style.
- 7.3 The Main Report is seen as the core of the ES and is envisaged to comprise a 100-150 page document comprising chapters on the following:
- background;
  - EIA process;
  - policy context;
  - baseline environment;
  - development description; and
  - each of the assessment topics.
- 7.4 The Technical Appendices would comprise standalone documents required by the planning process (e.g. the TA and FRA), together with any detailed information required to support the topic chapters (e.g. surveys, calculations, mapping).
- 7.5 The tiered structure is intended to optimise the accessibility of the ES for a varied audience; for example, allowing specialists such as the EHO to go straight to the relevant topic chapters and appendices, whilst informing the public mainly through the NTS.

### **Reporting the Effects**

- 7.6 The reporting of effects will comply with the requirements set out in the regulations and guidance, and specifically will:
- consider effects relating both to the construction phase and to the completed and operational development;
  - describe the “main alternatives” considered during development of the masterplan, and explain why they were not adopted;
  - evaluate the significance of the effects;
  - categorise them on the basis of their value (positive, negative etc), sequence (direct, indirect etc), duration (short/long term) and permanence;
  - take account of mitigation, reporting both the potential (pre-mitigation) and residual (post-mitigation) effects; and
  - identify combined and cumulative effects.

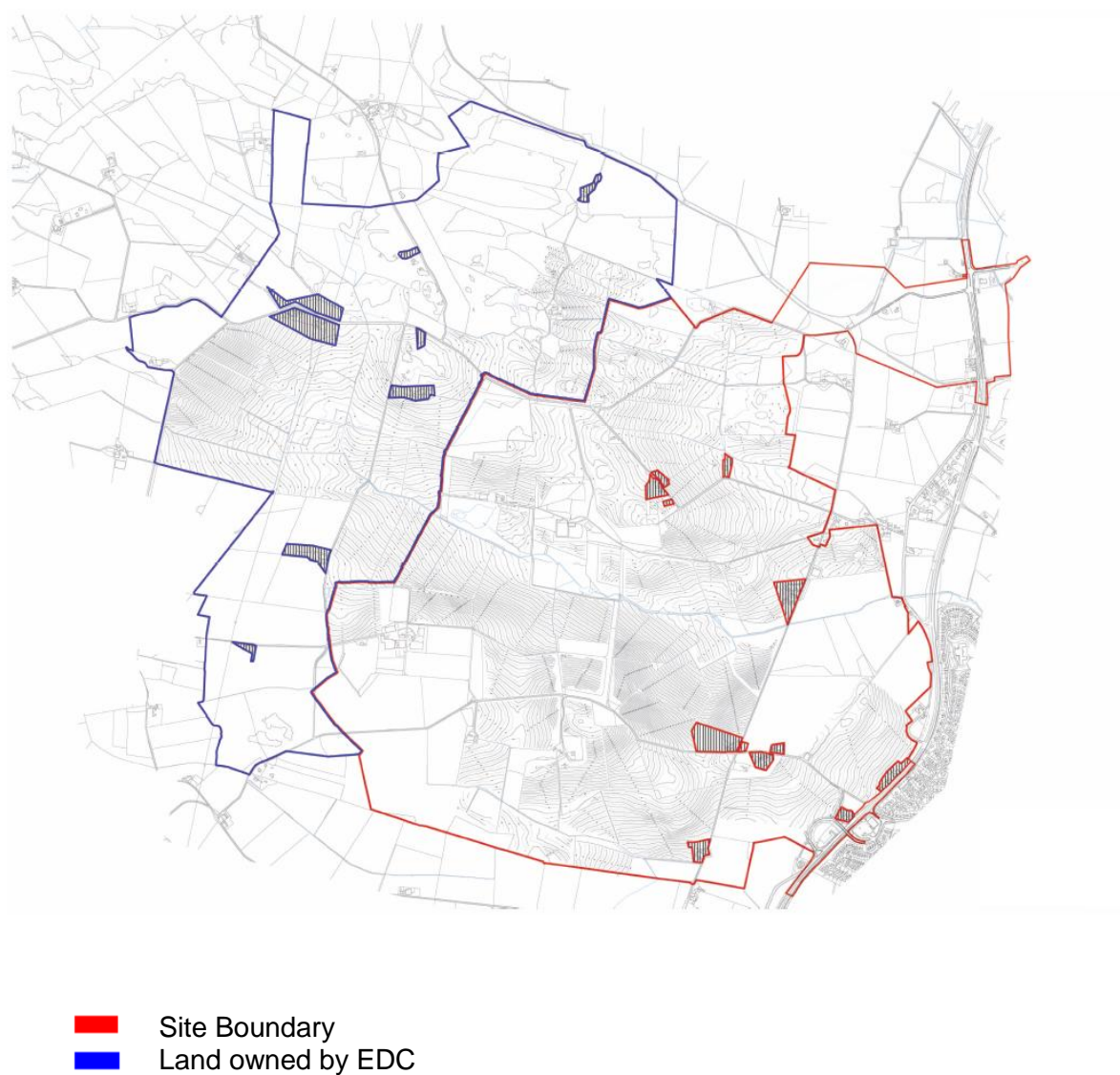
- 7.7 Where a potential for significant adverse effects is identified, mitigation will be considered. This typically takes the form of:
- measures already incorporated into the scheme (e.g. a layout that reduces car use);
  - additional measures identified through the assessment process (e.g. acoustic treatment of building facades);
  - routine measures required by regulation or standard practice (e.g. during construction); and
  - specific measures likely to be applied by planning condition (e.g. a Travel Plan).
- 7.8 The future baseline and assessment scenarios will take account of any committed or prospective developments that are of relevance. Such developments are likely to be most applicable to the TA, in terms of deriving future traffic flows, and will be agreed as part of the scoping process.

## FIGURES

**Figure 1 – Location Plan**



**Figure 2 – Site Plan**



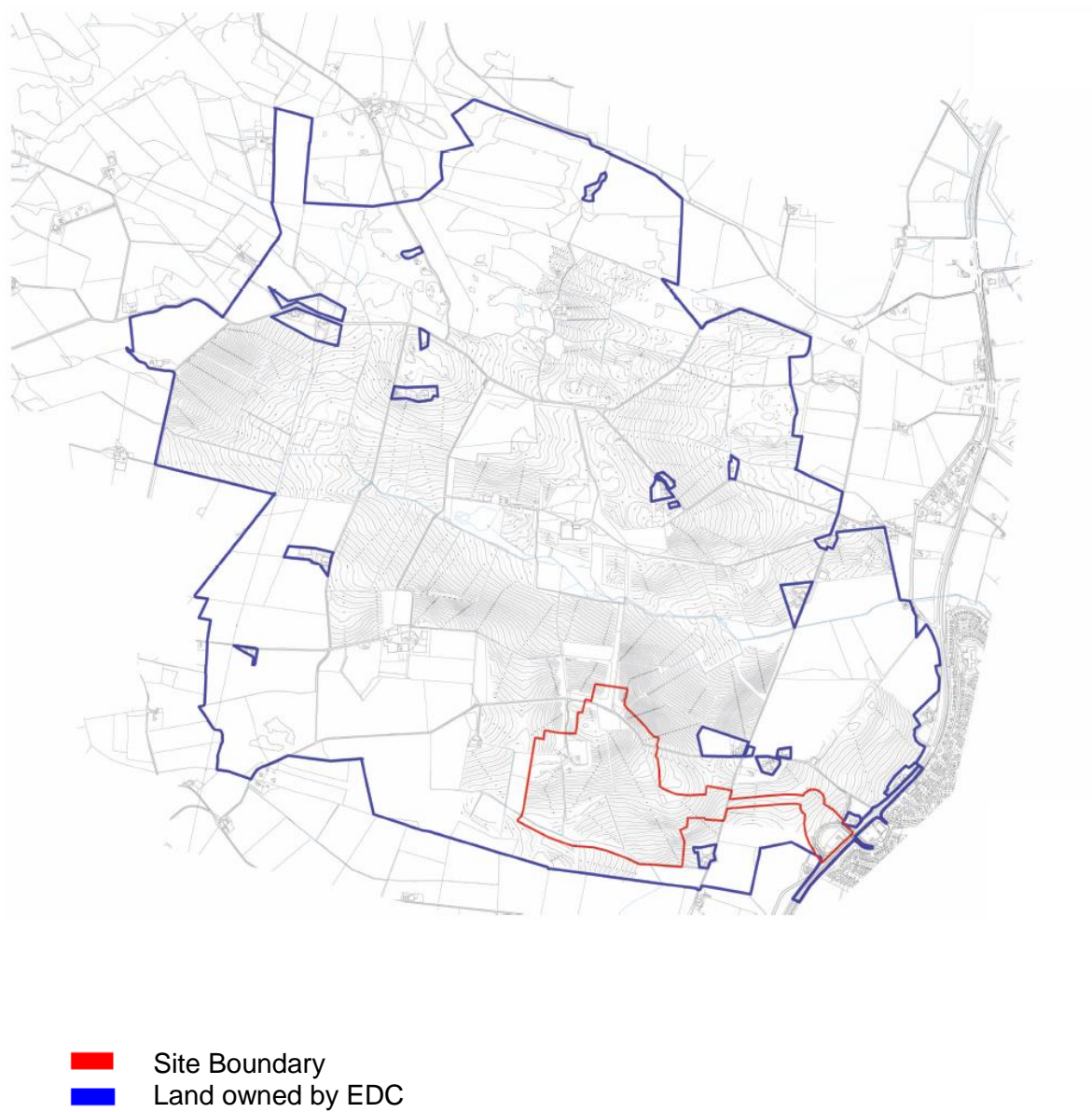


**Figure 3 – Emerging Masterplan**





**Figure 4 – Phase 1a**



**Figure 5 – Proposed View Points**

JB LA-UD

Chapelton of Elsie New Settlement - LVIA - Scoping Report



**visibility analysis and proposed viewpoint photograph locations\_indicative**