

**ABERDEEN
CITY AND
SHIRE**

Employment Land Audit 2010



**A joint publication by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and
Scottish Enterprise for Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future**

Employment Land Audit 2010

1.	Introduction	
1.1	Purpose of Audit	1
2.	Background	
2.1	Scottish Strategies and Policies	2
2.2	Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan	5
2.3	Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Plans	5
2.4	Existing Employment Land Monitoring Arrangements	6
3.	Employment Land Audit 2010	
3.1	Preparation of Audit	9
3.2	Employment Land Supply	9
3.3	Established Employment Land Supply	11
3.4	Constrained Employment Land Supply	12
3.5	Marketable Employment Land Supply	13
3.6	Immediately Available Employment Land Supply	14
4.	Analysis of Trends	
4.1	Land Take-Up and Market Activity	17
Appendix 1	Glossary of Terms	22
Appendix 2	Employment Land Supply in Aberdeen City, and map of Aberdeen City Industrial Estates	24
Appendix 3	Employment Land Supply in Aberdeenshire	26
Appendix 4	Aberdeen City and Shire: Zones 1, 2 and 3	35
Appendix 5	Aberdeenshire: Strategic Growth Areas and Regeneration Priority Areas	37
Appendix 6	Historical Development Rates in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire	39

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Audit

- 1.1.1 The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Employment Land Audit has been prepared to bring together into one source document up-to-date and accurate information on the supply and availability of employment land in the North East of Scotland.
- 1.1.2 The information has been produced to assist Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) in the preparation of economic strategy and policy making and in the implementation of action plans, as well as to alert them to areas where further research and analysis is required (see *section 2.1.2*). The statistics contained within the audit also help the two planning authorities in the monitoring of the policies and proposals included within their structure and local plans. In addition the information is of interest to companies, developers and other organisations with a requirement for or interest in employment land in the North East of Scotland.
- 1.1.3 Officials of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Enterprise together with representatives of the private sector (all members of ACSEF's Employment Land Working Group) have prepared the audit for ACSEF. Reference was also made to relevant information from the private sector. This has helped ensure the provision of a robust and comprehensive source document for employment land supply to assist in delivering the future prosperity of the North East of Scotland. The audit is produced on an annual basis, this being the tenth in the series, the first having been published in October 2001.

2. Background

2.1 Scottish Strategies and Policies

2.1.1 The Government Economic Strategy, published in November 2007, sets out the broad agenda for the Government's focus on Scotland's economy, thus creating:

“A more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth”.

Growing the economy is the top priority. A successful economy is seen as the key to future prosperity; ensuring current and future generations enjoy a better quality of life. In order to deliver sustainable economic growth, the Strategy identifies five 'Strategic Priorities' that are internationally recognised to be critical to economic growth. These are identified as:

- Learning, Skills and Well-Being
- Supportive Business Environment
- Infrastructure Development and Place
- Effective Government
- Equity

2.1.2 The Economic Manifesto for Aberdeen City and Shire was published by ACSEF in 2007 and sets out a vision and strategic priorities for the region to work towards by 2025. It identifies eight priorities, the first being for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to be the top of the Quality of Life 'league table', making this a place where people choose to work, live study and visit. The remaining seven are:

- Deliver a fully integrated transport network
- Maximise our intellectual capital - people and expertise
- Deliver city centre redevelopment
- Anchor the oil and gas industry

- Attract and develop skilled people
- Improve the efficiency of planning decision making
- Aberdeen City and Shire as the location of choice for company headquarters

For the penultimate strategic priority, success by 2025 would include having:

‘an adequate supply of land maintained for employment and housing purposes’ by 2025.

- 2.1.3 An increase in the supply of marketable employment land has therefore been highlighted as an action point for ACSEF to address and the Audit is used to inform this process.

The Scottish Government published the National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) on 12 December 2008. The NPF2 aims to guide Scotland’s spatial development to 2030 and sets out strategic development priorities to support the Scottish Government’s promotion of sustainable economic growth. The Government Economic Strategy makes clear that financial and other resources will be aligned to ensure that policy development and spending programmes are sharply focused on the delivery of that purpose and on achieving the challenging targets the Government is setting. To provide a clear focus for delivery, the Government has set the following strategic objectives:

- **Wealthier and Fairer:** enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth;
- **Greener:** improve the natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it;
- **Safer and Stronger:** help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life;
- **Smarter:** expand opportunities to succeed from nurture through to life-long learning, ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements; and
- **Healthier:** help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care.

This Framework will take forward the spatial aspects of the Government Economic Strategy, to ensure that each part of the country is able to play to its strengths in building a Scotland that is wealthier and fairer, smarter and greener, healthier, safer and stronger. Infrastructure development and place will be key priorities.

- 2.1.4 Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are applying their energy sector and offshore strengths to the development of renewable and clean energy technologies. Aberdeen is focusing on strengthening its role as Scotland's northern gateway and broadening its economic base. The City Council is focusing on improving the quality of the environment in the city centre and developing cultural and recreational facilities to create a more vibrant social scene. There is scope for attracting more tourists to the city and expanding the service sector, including financial services. The city's role as a regional media centre provides a base from which to build a larger creative sector.
- 2.1.5 In Aberdeenshire, the Energetica project envisages attractive development propositions which will impact on residential and commercial sites along the A90 corridor from Bridge of Don to Peterhead.
- 2.1.6 The Scottish Government's planning policy for economic development is set out in Scottish Planning Policy published in February 2010. This asks Councils to respond to the diverse needs and locational requirements of different sectors and sizes of businesses and take a flexible approach to ensure that changing circumstances can be accommodated and new economic opportunities realised. Removing unnecessary planning barriers to business development and providing scope for expansion and growth is seen as essential. The planning system should also be responsive and sufficiently flexible to accommodate the requirements of inward investment and growing indigenous firms. Planning authorities should ensure that there is a range and choice of marketable sites and locations for businesses allocated in development plans, including opportunities for mixed use development, to meet anticipated requirements and a variety of size and quality requirements. Marketable land should meet business requirements, be serviced or serviceable within 5 years, be accessible by walking; cycling and public transport, and have a secure planning status. The supply of marketable sites should be regularly reviewed.

The audit provides a useful tool for ACSEF to measure performance against some of the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy and the Structure Plan (see *paragraph 2.2.1*).

2.2 Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan

- 2.2.1 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in August 2009. The Plan, which sets out a strategic framework for the management of land in the North East up to 2030, requires the emerging Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Local Development Plans to identify land for business and industrial uses throughout the plan periods.
- 2.2.2 Specific amounts are stated for ‘strategic growth areas’ (see *Appendix 5*), with flexibility for Aberdeenshire Council to determine an appropriate mechanism for ‘local growth and diversification’ areas. Business and industrial development rates are to be monitored on an annual basis by ACSEF to ensure continuity of land supply. In this respect the audit contributes to the monitoring requirements of the Structure Plan.
- 2.2.3 The targets under the economic growth objective of the Structure Plan include: to make sure there is at least 60ha of land immediately available to businesses at all times in a range of places within Aberdeen City as well as 60ha in the strategic growth areas within Aberdeenshire.

2.3 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Plans

- 2.3.1 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 seeks “to provide opportunities which encourage economic development and create new employment in a range of areas that are both appropriate for and attractive to the needs of different industries...” Local plans for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are required to identify new employment land allocations and identify strategic reserve land to meet this objective.
- 2.3.2 The Aberdeen City Local Plan was adopted in June 2008. Work is currently underway on the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The Proposed Plan is due to be published for consultation on 24th September 2010 for a 12 week period.

2.3.3 The Aberdeenshire Local plan was adopted in June 2006. Preparation of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan is in progress and a proposed plan was published in July 2010.

2.3.4 The new and existing employment land sites allocated in the adopted Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Plans have been included in the audit. The audit also includes land not allocated in local plans but which has an existing planning consent and is thus included as part of the established land supply in the 2010 Employment Land Supply tables in *Appendices 2 and 3*. The audit supports the monitoring requirements of the two Local Plans.

2.4 Existing Employment Land Monitoring Arrangements

2.4.1 The Audit is a record of the employment land supply in Aberdeen City and Shire at a given date. It shows the supply of marketable land as defined by SPP. It does not provide information on the range and size of sites nor does it provide detailed information on vacant land within existing, completed sites. It is envisaged that the audit will help provide a useful cross-check with Agents' Reviews and the Scottish Property Network regarding up-to-date information on sites and properties in the area and highlight to ACSEF, areas where further work may be required. In future years, information will be provided on the range of quality and size of sites.

3. Employment Land Audit 2010

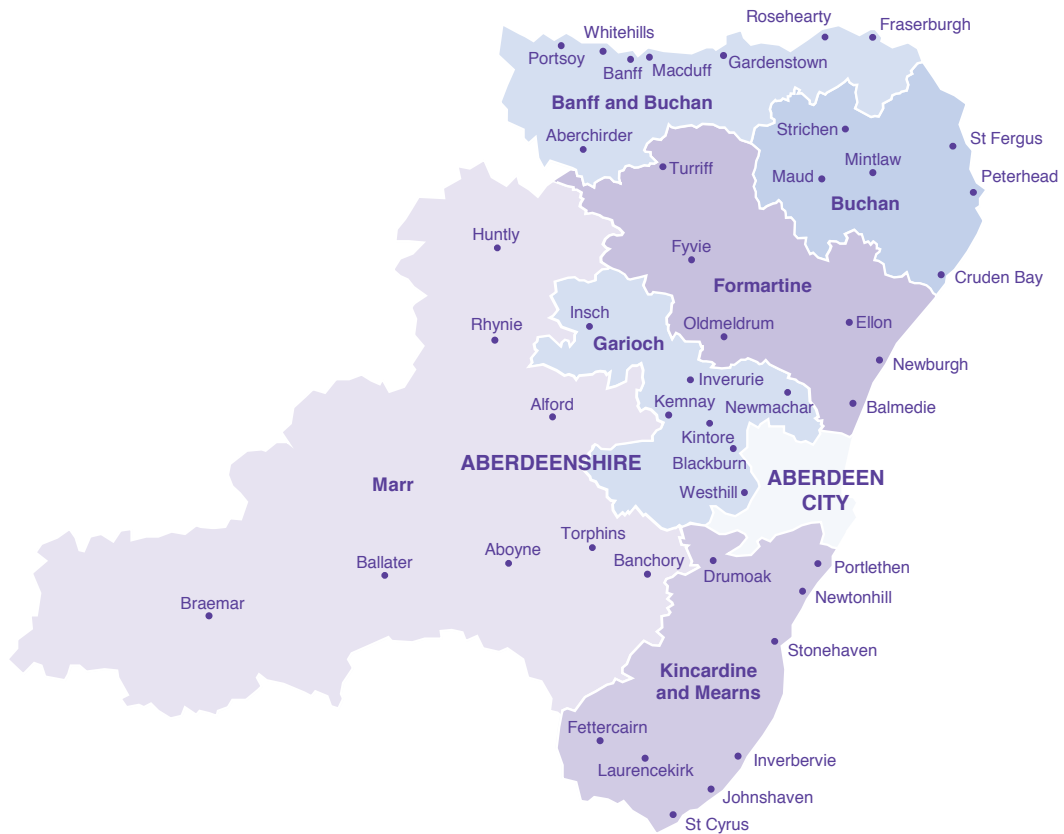
3.1 Preparation of Audit

3.1.1 The audit is prepared from information gathered by officials from both Councils, through their monitoring of planning approvals and individual site inspections. The information is kept up-to-date throughout the year and the status of sites checked and agreed with Scottish Enterprise and information published by the private sector, as appropriate. The base date for the published data is 1 April 2010. All figures are given in hectares and are net areas unless otherwise stated.

3.2 Employment Land Supply

3.2.1 Several categories of land supply are identified in the audit. *Appendix 1* provides a list of definitions used for these categories. It is important that definitions are consistent for long-term monitoring and comparative purposes. For this reason definitions are taken from the former SPP2 as these are the only source of definitions at this stage and the adopted standard for use across most Local Authorities. Information on established, constrained, marketable and immediately available employment land supply is given in full in *Appendices 2 and 3*. The information has been divided by area (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire - see *Figure 1*) and includes details of site area and location, developer, constraints and servicing status. *Appendix 4* contains information collated at 3 different geographical areas radiating from the city and referred to as zones 1, 2 and 3. *Appendix 5* presents the information for Aberdeenshire by strategic growth areas. *Appendix 6* contains information on historical employment land take-up rates in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Figure 1 - Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire



Based on Ordnance Survey mapping. © Crown copyright reserved. Aberdeenshire Council 0100020767 2010.

3.3 Established Employment Land Supply

3.3.1 The established employment land supply for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Established Employment Land Supply 2009 and 2010 (net figures in hectares)

Employment Area	2009	2010	Change
Aberdeen City	217	211	-3.0%
Aberdeenshire	349	351	+0.6%
TOTAL	566	562	-0.7%

- 3.3.2 In Aberdeen City the level of established land supply still remains high due to the allocation of land at Findlay Farm and Berryhill/Cloverhill at Bridge of Don, Stoneywood and extensions to existing sites at Dyce Drive, and Altens. The amount of established land in Aberdeen City has decreased by 6.5 hectares over the last year primarily as a result of developments currently underway on land at Aberdeen Gateway, Altens East, Science and Energy Park at Bridge of Don and Dyce Drive.
- 3.3.3 In Aberdeenshire the total area of established land has risen by 2 hectares over the last year. This is the net result of a significant addition (14ha) at Kintore (Midmill), offset by land being developed at sites in Fraserburgh and Inverboyndie as well as sites at Mintlaw and Belhelvie being no longer available for development. Demand for quality land in Aberdeen City and the surrounding towns has decreased over 2009 and is reflected in the low under construction figures. Reassessments of some sites capacities have also affected the total areas.
- 3.3.4 In addition to the sites included in the Audit there are also three further development sites allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan which could be used for employment uses. The first of these is at the former RAF base at Edzell Woods which comprises 150 hectares of land for redevelopment. The site has been allocated for mixed use within Aberdeenshire Local Plan but has been excluded from the Audit until a development brief has been produced outlining the area which could be used for employment use. Two further employment land allocations have been earmarked in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan for potential development; these are at North Collielaw and St Fergus Gas Terminal. Both sites cover large areas of land, however development must meet Policy Emp\11: Major Oil and Gas sites and therefore the sites have been excluded from this Audit.

3.4 Constrained Employment Land Supply

3.4.1 Land that is subject to constraints in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire is shown in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3 - Constrained Employment Land Supply 2009 and 2010 (net figures in hectares)

Employment Area	2009	2010	Change
Aberdeen City	103	103	0.0%
Aberdeenshire	134	130	-3.0%
TOTAL	237	233	-1.7%

3.4.2 The amount of constrained land in Aberdeen City remains the same as last year.

3.4.3 The amount of constrained land in Aberdeenshire has decreased by approximately 4 hectares since April 2009. This is mainly as a result of the sites at Mintlaw and Belhelvie being no longer available for development, offset by additions to the constrained supply at Fraserburgh. It is anticipated that infrastructure constraints at large sites at Badentoy and Marywell will be addressed in the near future. If so a further 50ha could become marketable and available for development.

3.4.4 In Aberdeen City some 49% of the established land supply is constrained whilst in Aberdeenshire the figure is 37%. This is perhaps a reflection of greater infrastructure difficulties associated with delivering sites in urbanised areas such as Aberdeen which tend to be larger than those in Aberdeenshire.

3.4.5 It should be noted that land at the Aberdeen Science and Technology and Science and Energy Parks and land at Findlay Farm at Bridge of Don whilst not marketable, due to use restrictions there, is not considered to be constrained and therefore only features as part of the established land supply (see *Glossary - Marketable Land Supply*).

3.5 Marketable Land Supply

3.5.1 The marketable land supply in 2010 is shown in *Figure 4*.

*Figure 4 - Marketable Land Supply 2009 and 2010
(net figures in hectares)*

Employment Area	2009	2010	Change
Aberdeen City	91	88	-3.0%
Aberdeenshire	215	212	-1.4%
TOTAL	309	300	-2.9%

3.5.2 Marketable land supply in Aberdeen City has fallen slightly between 2009 and 2010. The net fall in Aberdeenshire is a result of land becoming constrained at a number of small sites in Banff & Buchan, offset by an addition to the supply at Kintore (Midmill).

3.5.3 The supply of land in Aberdeen City and key Aberdeenshire settlements still gives cause for concern in terms of the choice of sites currently available. Reference is made in *section 4* of the Audit to steps being taken by ACSEF to improve the situation. Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire do currently have an adequate supply of marketable land but choice is limited in some areas. Demand for land in Aberdeenshire tends to be in those settlements concentrated around Aberdeen City such as Westhill, Inverurie and Portlethen and as a result employment land in these areas is taken up quickly while large allocations of land in the North are taken up at a slower rate.

3.6 Immediately Available Land Supply

3.6.1 The immediately available land supply for 2010 is shown in *Figure 5*.

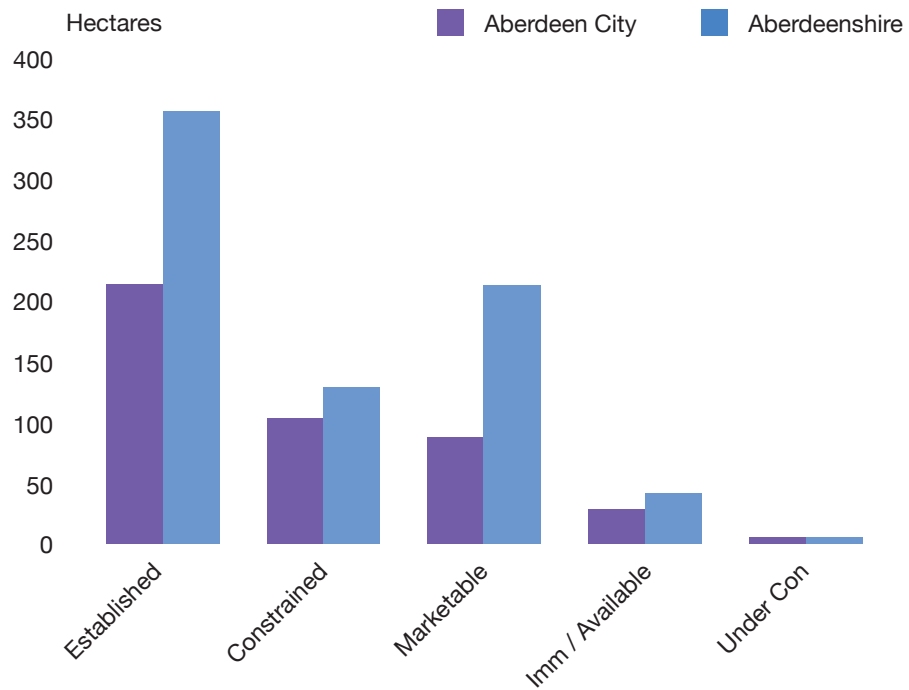
*Figure 5 - Immediately Available Land Supply 2009 and 2010
(net figures in hectares)*

Employment Area	2009	2010	Change
Aberdeen City	31	28	-10.0%
Aberdeenshire	42	47	+12.0%
TOTAL	73	75	+2.7%

- 3.6.2 The supply of immediately available land in Aberdeen City has decreased by 10% (3.3 hectares) largely as a result of developments at Aberdeen Gateway and Altens East.
- 3.6.3 In Aberdeenshire there has been an increase of similar proportion in the level of immediately available land, due entirely to the addition at Kintore (Midmill).
- 3.6.4 Some 37% of all immediately available land is located within Aberdeen City, reflecting greater demand and therefore a lesser risk attached to speculative land development in and close to Aberdeen.
- 3.6.5 The immediately available land supply falls short of the Structure Plan targets of 60ha in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. However, the new Local Development Plans will allocate significant new employment land so the immediately available land supply is expected to reach these targets in subsequent years.
- 3.6.6 Land under construction is not included in the above categories, as it is neither available nor considered as developed. On completion it will, however, be reflected in the historical development rates for next year's audit. Land under construction is identified in *Appendices 2 and 3* of the Audit. At the beginning of 2010 there were 3.2 hectares of employment land under construction in Aberdeen. In Aberdeenshire some 3.6 hectares of land were under construction.

3.6.7 *Figure 6* gives a summary of the amount of land in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire which falls into each of the supply categories.
NB: The Established Land Supply column represents the total supply of land in the corresponding area.

Figure 6 - Employment Land Supply Summary 2010



Appendix 1: Glossary

Brownfield Sites

Land which has been built on or used in the past for some development purpose. Brownfield land does not include private or public gardens, sports pitches, woodlands or open spaces used for leisure and recreation purposes. The grounds of institutions (such as schools and hospitals) that are no longer used are not considered as brownfield sites.

Constrained Employment Land Supply (Const)

This includes land for example, that has planning difficulties, land subject to ownership difficulties (eg multiple ownership/unwilling sellers), land subject of local plan objections, land with insufficient infrastructure provision, etc. This category therefore includes much of the land in the Established Employment Land Supply that is not Marketable (see below).

Development Rates

These refer to the sum of the net area of employment land that has been developed in a particular year. A site is considered to be developed once the first building has been constructed, even though further building may take place within the same site at a later date.

Employment Land

This includes land for general industrial and business/office use, storage and distribution uses, business parks and specialist technology parks including research and development uses. This comprises Classes 4 (Business), 5 (General Industrial) and 6 (Storage or Distribution) of the 1997 Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order, but is not exclusive to these uses.

Established Employment Land Supply (Estab)

This includes all undeveloped land that is allocated for industrial/business/employment use in finalised or adopted Local Plans or has a valid planning approval for these uses.

Greenfield Sites

Sites which have never been previously developed, or are fully restored derelict land.

Gross

This refers to the total area in (hectares) within the boundary of the site.

Immediately Available Land Supply (Imm/Avail)

This is marketable land that currently has planning permission, is serviced and has no other major constraints to immediate development. This definition is useful in the assessment of whether demand for land is being adequately met.

Marketable Land Supply (Market)

This is land that as well as meeting business requirements, has a secure planning status, can be serviced within 5 years, is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport as defined by SPP. It is incumbent on the two planning authorities to ensure that a supply of marketable land is available throughout their areas at any one time, as set down in the Structure Plan. Land that is subject to user restrictions or that is held as 'option land' for existing companies' own expansion cannot be considered to be marketable. Such land is not constrained.

Net

The total area of land excluding roads, landscaping etc. The net area will vary depending on both the physical characteristics of the site and surrounding land uses, as this will determine the area of land suitable for development and the extent and type of landscaping required. For sites that are complete, the net area given is the area that has actually been developed. For sites that have undeveloped land the net area is estimated. This estimate is based on the assumption that on average, 20% of available land will be taken up with roads, landscaping and so on. If relevant site information is available, this is taken into account in the estimate.

Serviced (Ser)

The area of undeveloped land for which servicing tenders have been approved for internal sewers.

Under Construction (UC)

Sites where development has commenced but has not yet been completed.

REF	LOCATION (GRID REF)	DEVELOPER	COMMENTS	SER	ESTAB	CONST	MARKET	IMM/ AVAIL	UC
MARR									
Aboyne									
M/AB/E/004	Aboyne West (3511 7989)	Private		No	3.7	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0
Alford									
M/AF/E/002b	Alford Business Park (3581 8598)	Kirkwood Homes/ Aberdeenshire Council		Part	2.9	2.0	0.9	0.9	0.0
Ballater									
M/BL/E/002	Tullich Road (3374 7960)	Aberdeenshire Council		Yes	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0
Banchory									
M/BN/E/002	Hill of Banchory (3715 7967)	Bancon Devs		Yes	7.0	0.0	7.0	4.5	0.0
M/BN/E/003	Hill of Banchory East (3719 7967)	Bancon Devs		Part	5.4	0.0	5.4	0.0	0.0
Huntly									
M/HT/E/002	Depot Road (3521 8394)	RB Farquhar	Infrastructure Restrictions	Part	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0
M/HT/E/004a	Muckle Torry Hillock North (3520 8402)	Private/Aberdeenshire Council	Infrastructure Restrictions	Yes	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
M/HT/E/005	Mart (3591 8393)	Private	Infrastructure Restrictions	No	3.3	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0
Kincardine O'Neil									
M/KN/E/001	Kincardine O'Neil - Dee Street (3591 7996)	Private		No	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
Lumsden									
M/LD/E/002	Lumsden (3561 8122)	Private		No	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0