



From mountain to sea

# Huntly

## Conservation Area Management Plan

August 2025

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Why is Huntly a conservation area?

Huntly is a good example of a planned settlement, with the grid iron pattern of the streets and The Square at its centre. This street pattern is arguably the strongest characteristic feature of Huntly, implemented in 1776 by the Duke of Gordon. The layout out has been well preserved and comprises three distinctive areas: the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, high density, terrace like housing; The Square and the Victorian and Edwardian expansion to the south. The style of buildings found in these areas differs greatly however they are bound together by the iron grid street pattern which, along with the cohesive use of materials, reflects their status and function, demonstrating the development of Huntly over three centuries.

Looking at The Square in isolation, it is exceptional in its quality of architecture and is one of Aberdeenshire's finest civic areas. The Square has historically been, and continues to be, the commercial hub of Huntly, though it has unfortunately suffered as a result of the general decline in recent years of town centres with many shops and buildings becoming vacant. However, due to the enthusiasm of the community, there have been several high-quality regeneration projects of high-profile buildings within the Square and surrounding streets, which has significantly improved the appearance and character of the Square and the wider conservation area.

The townscape, layout and character of the Huntly Conservation Area remains largely intact and reflects the historical importance and close relationship with its rural surroundings ensures that the conservation area designation is merited.

## 1.2 Buildings and spaces identified by the community as important

*\*To be completed following community consultation exercise\**

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## 2 What does conservation area status mean for you?

### 2.1 Additional planning considerations in a conservation area

There is a need for repairs and alterations, energy efficiency improvements and modern living improvements to properties within conservation areas to allow for their continued use. Due to being designated a conservation area, it is the role of the Planning Service to advise on any alterations, improvements or new development, to ensure these complement and enhance the special character of the settlement. A number of buildings within Huntly are protected by listed building status which means that alterations require Listed Building Consent.

Building and property owners within the Huntly Conservation Area should apply for planning permission for changes to the external appearance of their properties, although this does not apply to 'like for like' repairs and maintenance. Certain permitted development rights (development that can be carried out without applying for consent), are removed within conservation areas to protect the special character and appearance of the settlement. If in doubt, please check with the Planning Service before undertaking any works.

It is not always large change but rather small incremental change that can erode a settlement's special character, for example, the removal of wooden doors and windows, the erection of gates, fences, garages, sheds, porches, storage tanks, the installation of satellite antennae, signage and small but unsympathetic extensions. In isolation these may appear minor but over time can start to erode the special character and appearance of a conservation area.

Trees often contribute significantly to the character of a conservation area. It is an offence for any person to cut, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage, or destroy any tree in a conservation area unless six weeks' notice has been given to the local authority and permission is obtained.

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any unlisted building over 115 cubic metres located within the Huntly Conservation Area. Please note that it is a criminal offence to demolish any building within a conservation area without the necessary consent. There is a presumption to retain buildings that contribute positively to the conservation area, as buildings which already exist are a past investment in carbon spent during the building's construction through the extraction of materials, manufacture, transport, installation and waste generated during construction, which all form part of its embodied energy. By retaining an existing building, you are not wasting the embodied carbon in its original construction, and you are not adding to its carbon cost through the process of demolition. Therefore, the Planning Service would seek restoration and sympathetic conversion to be considered before proposals to demolish are investigated.

### 2.2 Article 4 Directions

In addition to the measures above, within the Huntly Conservation Area further controls have been placed on groups such as Statutory Undertakers and the Local Authority to bring their obligations more in line with those of the owners of domestic

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and non-domestic properties and provide consistency in planning decisions within the conservation area.

For a full list of the Article 4 Directions relevant to Huntly please see Appendix II – Article 4 Directions.



### 3 Conservation Area Management Plan

#### 3.1 What is the purpose of a Conservation Area Management Plan?

This document is designed to act as a supportive document to the Huntly Conservation Area Appraisal. The Conservation Area Management Plan provides guidance on the permissions which may be required before carrying out works and the policy and guidance on how to undertake works to a property.

Management plans are a legislative document which local authorities are required to produce for all conservation areas; however, they are tailored to fit with the requirements of a community and the specific character of the settlement. It is envisioned that this document will be of value in providing guidance to property owners on the ongoing care of their properties and how traditional buildings can be sensitively altered and retrofitted, as well as for the use of Development Management Officers in the assessment of new development that falls within the conservation area boundary to ensure consistency in decision making.

#### 3.2 Sustainability of Huntly

Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Service recognises that the historic environment is not static, and it can make a dynamic and positive contribution to those living, working and visiting the area. Historic settlements like Huntly need to continually adapt and meet the changing needs of the community, whether this be through new housing or alterations to existing properties.

Every settlement faces its own individual challenges, which for Huntly are the vacant and/or neglected buildings around The Square and surrounding streets and the negative effects this has on the settlement. This can be managed in a sustainable manner to help with the needs for modern life and ensure the continued existence of the town.

The preservation and enhancement of the historic environment can assist with these challenges as well as protect the unique appearance and character of the settlement, which once lost or damaged cannot be replaced. Buildings that already exist are a past investment in carbon spent during the building's construction including extraction of materials, manufacture, transport, installation, and waste generated during construction, which form part of its embodied energy. By retaining and upgrading an existing building, the embodied carbon in its original construction is not lost. Therefore, the continued use and adaption of these buildings is a sustainable approach.

It is the intention of the Planning Service to produce this guidance for property owners in Huntly to assist them with the continued maintenance of their properties as well as the wider settlement through the management of open spaces and character areas, all of which contribute to the overall attractive nature of the settlement. The below guidance is provided under several themes, to help ensure the continued existence of a sustainable Huntly Conservation Area for future generations.

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### 3.3 Regeneration of the Town Centre

Aberdeenshire Council's Economic Development team previously engaged with 'The Room to Thrive' strategy and Huntly was one of the key towns to be considered under the Town Centre First principle. At the time there were several properties and sites which were lying vacant or in a semi derelict state, which detracted from the unique character of the area. Since this time, some of the buildings which were identified as key sites through the strategy have since been restored and given a new purpose and now positively contribute towards the appearance of the conservation areas. There are however still other buildings within the conservation area which would benefit from redevelopment to further enhance the settlement.

#### Buildings around the Square

The former Cruickshanks building, now known as No.30, was a community project delivered by Huntly Development Trust who received external funding to restore the buildings into a flexible community led space, including a cinema, hot desking area and a café.



Square Deal is a prominent building in The Square and has a retail history over 200 years. In 2019 Deveron Projects took on the building with an aim to creating a living room for the town. Since opening Square Deal was awarded both Highly Commended in the Business and Community Enterprise category and Commended in Conservation and Building Adaptation category of the Aberdeenshire Architectural and Landscape Design Awards 2023.



Following the closure of the Clydesdale Bank in 2021 the building was converted into a restaurant, which resulted in both internal and external improvements to the building by the owner. This has had an improvement on the visual appearance of the building and The Square.



## Other regeneration of buildings around the settlement

Improvements have been carried out by the owners of 28-30 Deveron Street to improve the appearance of the building and to reinstate timber sash and case windows and lime mortar.



Two shop front enhancement schemes have been carried out on Gordon Street which has seen inappropriate shop frontages being replaced with new traditional styles which complement the conservation area.



### 3.4 Energy Efficiency and Improvements

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 commits Scotland to some of the most ambitious carbon reduction targets in the world. Several measures are available for traditionally constructed properties within conservation areas to ensure they are as energy efficient as possible and therefore extending their lifespan. This is described as the retrofit of traditional buildings and can be done in several ways. The introduction of insulation, draughtproofing or the upgrading of heating systems, when used in conjunction with each other, can successfully reduce the energy demand of a property. Before any retrofit work is carried out to a building, it is essential that it is in a good condition, and any areas of damp are dealt with. A building in a poor condition cannot be thermally efficient.

We would recommend seeking advice prior to any works being carried out to ensure the proposed method is suitable for the property and will not cause any adverse effects such as condensation or material decay, as many products available are not suited to traditionally constructed buildings.

#### **Micro renewables**

From May 2024, there has been a relaxation of permitted development rights within conservation areas regarding micro-renewables, however this does not apply to listed buildings. This has seen changes in what requires full planning permission and the requirement for Prior Notification/Prior Approval. The Recent changes are outlined in the Scottish Government's Planning circular 1/2024: householder permitted development rights:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-1-2024-householder-permitted-development-rights/pages/6/>

The introduction of micro-renewables is not the first or only way to make a building 'carbon conscious', especially one of traditional construction. Steps should be taken to reduce energy demand, through reduced heat loss, the installation of insulation, and more efficient methods of heating before investing in micro-renewables.

If you require additional information and guidance, please contact the local planning authority:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/check-if-you-need-planning-permission/>

#### **Insulation**

Unless a property is listed many retrofit measures, such as the introduction of internal wall or roof insulation, can be carried out without permission from the Planning Service. Measures which would alter the appearance of the exterior of the property, such as external wall insulation, would require permission from the Planning Service, whether the building is listed or not.

The use of breathable and vapour permeable insulation is the most effective in traditionally constructed properties as it promotes the movement of moisture through the building. Many forms of insulation do not allow for the movement of moisture and

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can result in the build-up of condensation resulting in damp to the interior. We would recommend seeking advice prior to any works being carried out to ensure the proposed method is suitable for the property.

## Windows

The preference of the Planning Service would be for the repair of original timber units over their replacement to maintain the character of the conservation area. Where windows are single glazed, it may be possible to upgrade these to incorporate slim double glazing. The replacement with a double-glazed timber unit following the previous design and style, with concealed trickle ventilation, would also be acceptable. This is to ensure the proposed window style is appropriate to the age and construction of the property. If the building is listed, the Planning Service would seek replication of the existing ironmongery in terms of appearance and material.

Modern timber windows can achieve the same performance standards of their uPVC counterparts with the advantage of being a more sustainable building material. Historic Environment Scotland provide detailed guidance and research on this topic, which can be accessed via their website under Publications:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

From May 2024, there has been a relaxation of permitted development rights within conservation areas regarding the replacement of windows, however this does not apply to listed buildings. This has seen changes in what requires full planning permission and the requirement for Prior Notification/Prior Approval. The Recent changes are outlined in the Scottish Government's Planning circular 1/2024: householder permitted development rights:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-1-2024-householder-permitted-development-rights/pages/7/>

If you require additional information and guidance, please contact the local planning authority:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/check-if-you-need-planning-permission/>



## Guidance

Historic Environment Scotland are the government agency who take a lead role in the research and guidance on improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings; a sample of their guides are noted below. These and a wider selection of guidance, case studies and research are available online from the link below. Further guidance can also be sought from the Planning Service.

Short Guide 1 – Fabric Improvement for Energy Efficiency

Short Guide 8 – Micro-renewables in the Historic Environment

Short Guide 11 – Climate Change Adaption for Traditional Buildings.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Please note that works to a building may require a building warrant. Please check with Building Standards prior to the commencement of any works.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/building-standards>

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## 3.5 Traditional Materials and Property Maintenance

### Stonework

The main building material in the historic core of Huntly is local granite which plays a significant role in shaping the appearance and character of the conservation area. This is predominately found within Gordon Street, Bogie Street and The Square., neatly tooled and used in a decorative fashion there and in the Edwardian and Victorian expansion of the town. These buildings are evidence in the advancements of skills but also wealth. Local field stone is also used widely throughout the conservation area, but found more in the residential areas, such as McVeigh Street and Old Road. Due to the lower quality of these stones they would have been covered in a lime based harl or render to protect them. Fashions to expose stonework has resulted in many buildings losing their traditional harl/render.

The use of lime mortar is preferable over the use of cement as it allows the movement and expulsion of moisture and discourages the retention of moisture build up within buildings. Lime pointing should be retained or replicated on a like for like basis matching the specification (mix) and finish of the original mortar. The Planning Service will encourage the replacement of existing cement pointing with traditional lime mortars.

The painting or applying of any cementitious or non-breathable form of coating to the face of the exposed sandstone would be discouraged as it can result in its accelerated decay. Similarly, the cleaning of stonework is discouraged unless justification is provided and then should be carried out by hand using non-ferrous brushes and a low-pressure water source.



## Harl/Render

Originally buildings constructed with poor quality rubble stonework would have been harled/rendered to protect them and to stop the deterioration of the stone. There is very little evidence of this in Huntly today due to the fashion of exposing stonework. There is a handful of traditional buildings which have a cementitious harl on them, prevalent with post war construction, which may suggest that they were previously harled in lime.

Cement-based products can accelerate the decay of soft sandstone by trapping moisture into the structure, preventing it from being able to escape leading to damp and moisture build up within the property. When the opportunity arises, the Planning Service would recommend the reinstatement of a traditional lime harl/render where any existing cement-based renders need replacing or where it can be evidenced that building was originally traditionally harled/rendered.

## Roofs

Roofs, including chimneys, stone skewes, clay ridge tiles and chimney pots have a positive impact on the traditional character of the conservation area. Within Huntly many properties have natural slate roofs, some incorporating cast iron detailing and brattishing, which significantly shape the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Planning Service would encourage the retention and reinstatement of traditional roofing in existing properties and in any new development.



## Ridges, Skews and Chimneys

Chimneys are an important feature within the conservation area, the Planning Authority will therefore seek their retention. The existing stone skews, clay ridge tiles and ceramic chimney pots have a significant impact on the townscape and should be retained or replaced on a like for like basis if considered beyond repair. There are also a few distinctive gable features within Huntly that add to its character.

## Dormers

A wide variety of dormers can be found within the Huntly Conservation Area, incorporating detailing ranging from stone pediments to decorative timber fascias and cast-iron finial elements. They not only shape the character of the individual buildings but the wider streetscape. The streetscape varies from street to street, characterised by either the uniformity or variety of dormer styles. The Planning Service would seek the retention of these traditional elements and ensure that new dormers on traditional buildings are appropriately designed to complement the character of the building and the conservation area. This would include the replication of the proportions, opening method and materials of the more traditional style dormer.

Several properties have large box dormers, which are out of character and scale with the conservation area; these would not be encouraged within new design. Replacement with smaller more traditionally proportioned dormers would be encouraged if the opportunity arises.



## Rooflights

There is a handful of original cast iron rooflights within Huntly, with many having been replaced by modern alternatives often larger in size. The retention of original cast iron rooflights, especially in 'non-living' spaces of attics and subservient structures, is encouraged.

Where new rooflights are to be introduced on traditional buildings or in new development, it is recommended they are the minimum size necessary, and are a true top hung (hinged) conservation unit with vertical proportions and subdivided into two panes by a central glazing bar. On symmetrical elevations the positioning of rooflights should be considered to create a balanced appearance of the building's frontage.

## Rainwater Goods

Cast iron gutters and downpipes are a robust material which when maintained can last for over 100 years. The material is also fully recyclable. If well maintained, they play a significant role in shaping the character of individual buildings. However, if left unpainted they will start to erode and rust rapidly. Some companies who supply cast iron rainwater goods offer pre-painted rainwater goods, removing the onus on property owners to paint them following installation. Encouragement is given to the reinstatement of cast iron gutters where they have already been replaced.

Within conservation areas alternative materials for rainwater goods can be acceptable on non-listed buildings, such as aluminium or steel in a black finish. Any repairs or replacement fittings, gutters and downpipes should be undertaken on a like for like basis.

There is a presumption against the replacement of original cast iron rainwater goods with uPVC fittings, which came into development in the 1950s as a cheap alternative to traditional rainwater goods. Not only do they have negative impact on the appearance of properties, but they have a shorter lifespan being a more fragile material, prone to accidental damage and fading due to sun exposure.



## Doors

Solid timber panelled doors with decorative joinery detailing and original door furniture, including decorative glasswork and ironmongery, make a significant contribution to the character of the Huntly Conservation Area. Ranging from simple panelled doors of the Georgian period to the high-quality decorative entranceways of the Victorian and Edwardian villas. It should be noted that a historic doorway is not solely the door but also surrounding elements such as door furniture (letter boxes, door knockers, boot scrapers, painted numbers), other exterior ironmongery and any decorative glasswork.

Very few original doors remain, with many having been replaced by modern uPVC doors of an inappropriate design. The retention of traditional doors and associated door furniture contribute to the character of Huntly, and their retention is encouraged. Replacements should respect the originals in terms of the design and construction and should reflect the doors styles found within the conservation area. The retention of original door fittings and fixings is also encouraged.



## Boundary Treatments

The numerous boundary treatments found within Huntly make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Within the core of the town and along the roads leading from The Square, most of the properties front directly onto the street. However, moving away from The Square towards the area of Victorian and Edwardian expansion, boundary treatments are a combination of low stone walling with either cast iron railings, hedge planting or a combination of both. What is notable is the visual permeability of the boundary treatments with enclosed properties still being clearly visible in the streetscape. High stone walling tends to be a characteristic of the rear of properties to delineate either garden ground or yard space. The tight narrow green space of Jake Forbes Close is characterised by shared space and lack of boundary treatments. The combination of estate style fencing and tree planting along Bleachfield Streets shows how careful consideration of boundary treatments can enhance a street scene.

The age and construction of these various elements all contribute to the interest of the townscape of Huntly, and the Planning Authority will therefore seek the retention of any traditional boundary treatments as well as support any proposal to reinstate missing architectural elements.



## Satellite Dishes and Aerials

Where satellite dishes and aerials need to be fixed to a property, they should be located in a position that is as discreet as possible so as not to negatively impact on the appearance of the building and the wider character and appearance of the conservation area. Where a satellite dish or aerial is no longer in use, its removal is encouraged. There is a significant number of satellite dishes and aerials attached to the frontages of properties within the Huntly Conservation Area which has a negative impact on the wider streetscape and the wider conservation area. The position of a property such as being set back from the road is not a relevant consideration in appraising the installation of equipment.



## Swifts

Huntly has around 25 active swift nests within the town centre and with a reduction in their numbers over the last 20 years it is important to protect them. They are generally unobtrusive when nesting. There are ways that property owners can safely accommodate swifts by using specially designed swift bricks or boxes, which can be positioned in a discreet location with minimal impact on architectural detailing or the appearance of significant buildings.

To find out more about swift locations in Huntly, you can contact the Huntly Swift Group <https://www.facebook.com/savetheaviators/> alternatively if you would like to record a new nest within Huntly you can contact biological records of northeast Scotland <http://www.nesbrec.org.uk>

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## 3.6 New Development

### Extensions

Proposals to extend a property located within the conservation area should not be considered in isolation but in context to the wider townscape. This is to ensure it respects the character, scale and proportions of neighbouring buildings. Any new extension should follow the established building line of its neighbours and use detailing and materials which are distinctive or complementary to the settlement. This could also include a high-quality contemporary approach if appropriate.



### New Build

Where a new build is proposed its design should be such that the scale, proportions, and form relate to each other and the neighbouring buildings and/or open space and the wider area; the highest possible standard of professional design is expected. The replication of traditional elements, such as dormers should complement the character of the conservation area in terms of proportions and materials.

The proposed materials used in the design of a new building should be complementary with those found in the Huntly Conservation Area, and the surrounding streetscape.

New construction does not have to be traditional in terms of its design, however the materials, scale, position and orientation must be carefully considered to ensure that they complement the conservation area, its characteristics and respect the special importance of the settlement.

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## **Ancillary Buildings**

Proposals to erect or replace an ancillary building located within the conservation area should respect the historic setting through its scale, design and materials to ensure that it respects the character of Huntly. Where a conversion of an ancillary building to a new use is proposed the Planning Service would ask that the original character of the property and pattern of the development is not lost. As with new build, conversion of ancillary structures does not have to be traditional in terms of its design, however it should complement the conservation area, its characteristics and respect the special importance of the settlement.

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### 3.7 Shopfronts and the Public Realm

Historic Environment Scotland in their report *Our Past, Our Future* (2023) outline that over 18 million people visited heritage attractions in 2019, with half of all international visitors reporting heritage as the key motivation for visiting Scotland (SHEA and VisitScotland). An online survey conducted in September 2021 by Aberdeenshire Council's Archaeology Service indicated that 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that heritage and the historic environment makes a positive difference to their lives. This increase in tourism to historic sites and locations makes an important contribution to the local economy.

VisitAberdeenshire's 2024 Annual Consumer Research (Nov 2024) reported "an 'ideal' holiday destination would meet both emotional and functional needs; being relaxing, offering value for money, quality accommodation and somewhere rich in culture and heritage". Local food and drink, walks and heritage were identified as being important activities in the responses. Also identified within VisitAberdeenshire's Consumer Research was the increase in the use of social media such as Instagram to influence holiday makers as to where to visit.

An attractive town centre and public realm can contribute towards how a town is experienced and increase visitor numbers and therefore improve the economic prosperity. Huntly itself and the surrounding areas has an abundance of attractions which would draw visitors to the town, Huntly Castle, whisky distilleries and shops and Deans Shortbread to name a few.



## Shopfronts

Traditional shop frontages make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Huntly Conservation Area and provide an insight into the wellbeing of the town in terms of current retail pressures and the impact on independent businesses.

There will be a presumption to retain all traditional shopfronts and their fittings, and encouragement will be given to restoring lost features and recovering the authentic appearance of shopfronts from historical evidence. Cornicing, glazed panels, fanlights, fascia boards, tiled flooring and other architectural detailing should be preserved wherever they survive. External lighting or retail premises is not characteristic of the shop frontages within the Huntly Conservation Area and properties will be encouraged to light the window displays internally where it is considered lighting is necessary.

Some shop frontages within Huntly are designed to be complementary with the whole building, not just the ground floor level. Where this is the case, the overall design and appearance of the building as a whole needs to be considered when alteration or reinstatement is proposed.

Where a change to residential use is considered, it can be appropriate to ensure the lower floor still reads as a shop frontage and should be carefully designed to accommodate this within the parameters of its new use.



## Street Furniture

The visual appearance of Huntly is important for both residents and visitors in making it an attractive place to live, work and visit. The sensitive nature of Huntly merits high-quality street furniture, in terms of street lighting, waste bins, bus shelters and seating, as these significantly add to the overall appearance of the conservation area.

The Square has benefited from more considered street lighting, which enhances this area of the settlement, whilst the ownership of the 10 heritage style lanterns in the centre of the Square has been taken on by the Huntly Museum and Heritage Group who aim to restore and reinstate the lanterns. Out with The Square, the current mix of lamp standards does little to differentiate the boundary of the conservation area, and it would be advantageous to consider a long-term strategy to introduce more distinctive and co-ordinated lighting that compliments the wider appearance of the designated area.

There is also evidence of the original cast street signage, unique to the settlement, which should be protected. Consequently, the bland standardised street furniture and normal proliferation of traffic signage will need to be considered and located carefully so as not to have a negative impact on the townscape of the conservation area.



## Public Areas

Due to the tight plan form of the settlement, there is little in terms of public areas within the town, apart from the impressive Square which is used by residents and visitors alike. The Square benefits from not only the exceptional architectural qualities of the built environment, with numerous buildings being protected by listed status, but also a clear central focus in the form of the Duke of Richmond Statue, the fountain and the standing stones (scheduled monument 73).

As the commercial hub of the town, The Square would benefit from an enhancement scheme which would result in the monuments being better presented and the pavements, kerbs and street furniture being upgraded to provide more seating and pedestrian areas, to highlight the unique qualities and character of the Square. The upgrade of vacant units, poor quality shop frontages, repair and maintenance issues would be encouraged to further enhance the already exceptional quality provided by the architecture and historic public realm. Cohesive heritage-focused community and economic growth projects within the conservation area could be utilised to regenerate the centre and improve its appearance and use as a civic and commercial hub.

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## 4 Enhancement Opportunities

### 4.1 Funding

There are a variety of funding opportunities available to community groups and charitable organisations which can be used to enhance the appearance of a settlement, nature restoration and biodiversity, and for other community led improvements. Due to the continuing change of funding which is available it is not possible to list these within this document, however, below are some funding bodies which might be of assistance for heritage led improvements in conservation areas:

- Historic Environment Scotland
- The Architectural Heritage Fund
- The Association for Industrial Archaeology
- Dalrymple Donaldson Fund
- SUEZ Communities Trust
- The Wolfson Foundation

Further information can be provided on current funding available to communities by contacting Aberdeenshire Council’s Economic Development team at [econdev@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:econdev@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

### 4.2 SWOT analysis

SWOT Analysis can be a useful tool to help visualise the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for a conservation area. They can be viewed alongside one another and help bring together/summarise the content of the conservation area appraisal.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Square</li> <li>• Tourist area</li> <li>• Layout of settlement – iron grid</li> <li>• Strong community groups seeking change</li> <li>• Successfully completed regeneration projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate alteration of windows, doors, external fixtures with modern materials, such as uPVC, aluminium and cement-based renders/mortars</li> <li>• Wide variety of different window and door styles detract from consistency</li> <li>• Varying styles of dormer – some large box dormers that detract from the simple proportion of the original traditional pitched roofs.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrofit of traditional properties</li> <li>• Reinstatement of lost features/materials</li> <li>• Development designed and constructed in a way to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Further development within the Conservation Area</li> <li>• Lack of investment in upkeep of properties</li> <li>• Lack of building maintenance and/or repair by property owners and engagement of local people</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design that carefully considers types of materials, finish and colours used.</li> <li>• Public realm improvements in the Square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsympathetic development that undermines character of conservation area</li> </ul>
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### 4.3 Training and outreach opportunities for residents

Resources are available from other organisations, who provide guidance and training on a range of topics that relate to traditional buildings, such as Historic Environment Scotland, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the Scottish Lime Centre Trust.

### 4.4 Recommendations for future enhancements

#### **Sites suitable for adaptive re-use or redevelopment**

As identified in the conservation area appraisal there are a small number of buildings within Huntly that are currently lying vacant or in need of repair, detracting from the unique character of the area. In recent years proposals have been brought forward for the redevelopment of some of these buildings. Further opportunities may exist in the further reuse of sites to further enhance the conservation area.

#### **Repair and maintenance strategy**

Generally, the properties within Huntly are in good condition with only small areas of improvement required. The importance of property maintenance should not be underestimated, such as replacing slipped or missing slates, repairing damaged leadwork or replacing cracked rainwater goods and planned regular maintenance such as painting timberwork and cleaning out gutters. The effects of these being unattended can lead to damage to both the internal and external fabric of the building and issues such as wet or dry rot.

An opportunity for improvement for the properties in Huntly would be the introduction of traditional materials and elements where they have been lost, such as the reintroduction of timber doors and windows and the removal of cement renders and mortar when the opportunity arises. The use of a lime based harl and mortars are encouraged when the opportunity arises to ensure the properties are functioning as intended. It may be desirable for research and survey work to be undertaken by a lime specialist to assist in this.

#### **Street scape improvements strategy**

The current lamp standards throughout the conservation area (excluding The Square) are of modern design and do not complement the appearance of the designated area. The replacement of these with heritage style lanterns when the opportunity arises

would be beneficial to denote the boundary of the conservation area and to improve the wider streetscape.

The roadways and pathways play a significant role in the overall appearance of the settlement, and it would therefore be beneficial to ensure that any works carried out by utility companies are controlled to ensure that repair works do not detract from the character of the area. Similarly, any works or upgrades to roads and pathways should be carefully considered to ensure that there is no negative impact on the conservation area and where improvements in the appearance and materials can be implemented, these should be considered.

### Climate change strategy

Scotland’s pre-1919 traditionally constructed buildings equate to around 20% of its total building stock. Around 40% of Scotland’s total carbon emissions come from domestic energy consumption. But to understand the contribution these buildings make it is important to first understand the difference between embodied and operational carbon.

Buildings that already exist are a huge past investment in carbon spent during the building’s construction including extraction of materials, manufacture, transport, installation, and waste generated during construction. These all form part of its embodied energy. By retaining an existing building, you are not wasting the embodied carbon in its original construction, and you are not adding to its carbon cost through the process of demolition.

***‘There is nothing more sustainable than a building that already exists’***



Operational carbon emissions are those generated when the building is in use i.e. heating, lighting. So, should old buildings simply be retrofitted to modern standards?

There needs to be a considered approach, as retrofitting a traditional building in a material that has a high carbon cost in production or not compatible with traditional construction could be counterproductive. The carbon cost in its

production and installation could outweigh the operational reduction in carbon emissions. HES promote a holistic approach to emissions reduction.

- 1) Reduce your heat loss – this covers aspects such as ensuring your external fabric is well maintained to avoid damp; ensuring windows and doors are in good condition or improved in a sustainable manner; and ensuring the property is well insulated.

- 2) Improve space and water heating – this can include looking at more efficient heat sources i.e. using your fireplaces, biomass, ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps or even just a more efficient boiler.
- 3) Electricity generation – this should always be carried out last; there is no point installing solar panels, wind power or hydro power until you have first undertaken steps 1 and 2.

For further guidance research and case studies on this topic please visit <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Short Guide 1 – Fabric improvement for energy efficiency

Short Guide 11 – Climate change adaption for traditional buildings

Short Guide 8 – Micro renewables in the historic environment

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## 5 Planning Policy Context

To give some background to planning, applications for any form of development or redevelopment are assessed based on planning policies. This section covers the national and local policies which shape how planning applications, which impact on the historic environment, are assessed through the planning process.

### 5.1 National and Local Strategies, Plans and Advice

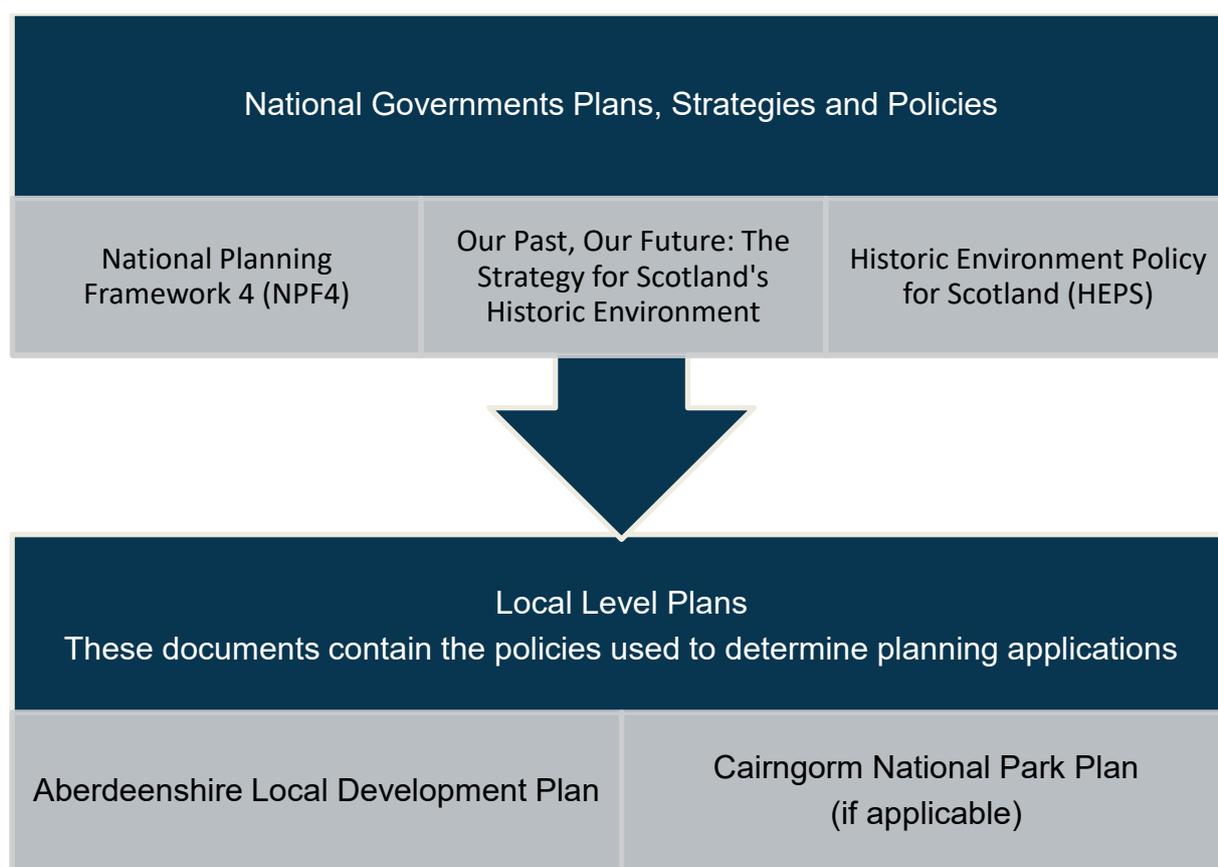


Table 1 – National and local strategies and plans



Table 2 – Planning advice which supports national and local strategies and plans

## 5.2 Aberdeenshire Council – Historic Environment Policy

The historic environment policies applied to planning applications for change in a conservation area are held within the most up to date Aberdeenshire or Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (if applicable).

## 5.3 Aberdeenshire Council – Historic Environment Team Strategy

Aberdeenshire Council recognises that protecting and improving the historic environment is important to the distinctiveness and sense of place within Aberdeenshire. Local history helps create a clear identity for the area and strengthens connections between people and places. The historic environment is important to the character of the area and to the quality of life of the people who live and work here, and it is an economic asset to the area.

The Historic Environment Team within Aberdeenshire Council assist not only with the management of development through the planning process but are also involved in a wide range of work promoting, protecting, and enhancing built heritage. The full range of the Historic Environment Team’s work is detailed in the Historic Environment Team Strategy

<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/built-heritage-strategy>

## 7 Monitoring and Review

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 requires the local authority to undertake regular reviews of the conservation area. This is an opportunity to engage with the local community, to set out plans for management and to monitor the condition of the conservation area since the last review. Conservation Area reviews seek to identify what makes a place special and assist the local authority when reviewing the boundaries, identifying possible enhancements, considering if the designation is still suitable and monitoring the success or otherwise of change management in the settlement. At the point of next review:

- The conservation area management plan will be used as a benchmarking tool in terms of what 'we' as a local authority said we would do and the overall success of the plan.
- A photographic record of the settlement will also be undertaken, to be used as a tool to monitor the condition of the conservation area since the last review point.

For further information concerning the contents of this document, contributions for its improvement or any matters concerning conservation areas or listed buildings, contact the Historic Environment Team.

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## Helpful links

Aberdeenshire Council contact planning team

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/contact/>

Find out if you live in a conservation area

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/built-heritage/conservation-area/>

Find out if your property is listed

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/>

Find Historic Environment Scotland Guidance

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Search Aberdeenshire's Historic Environment Record

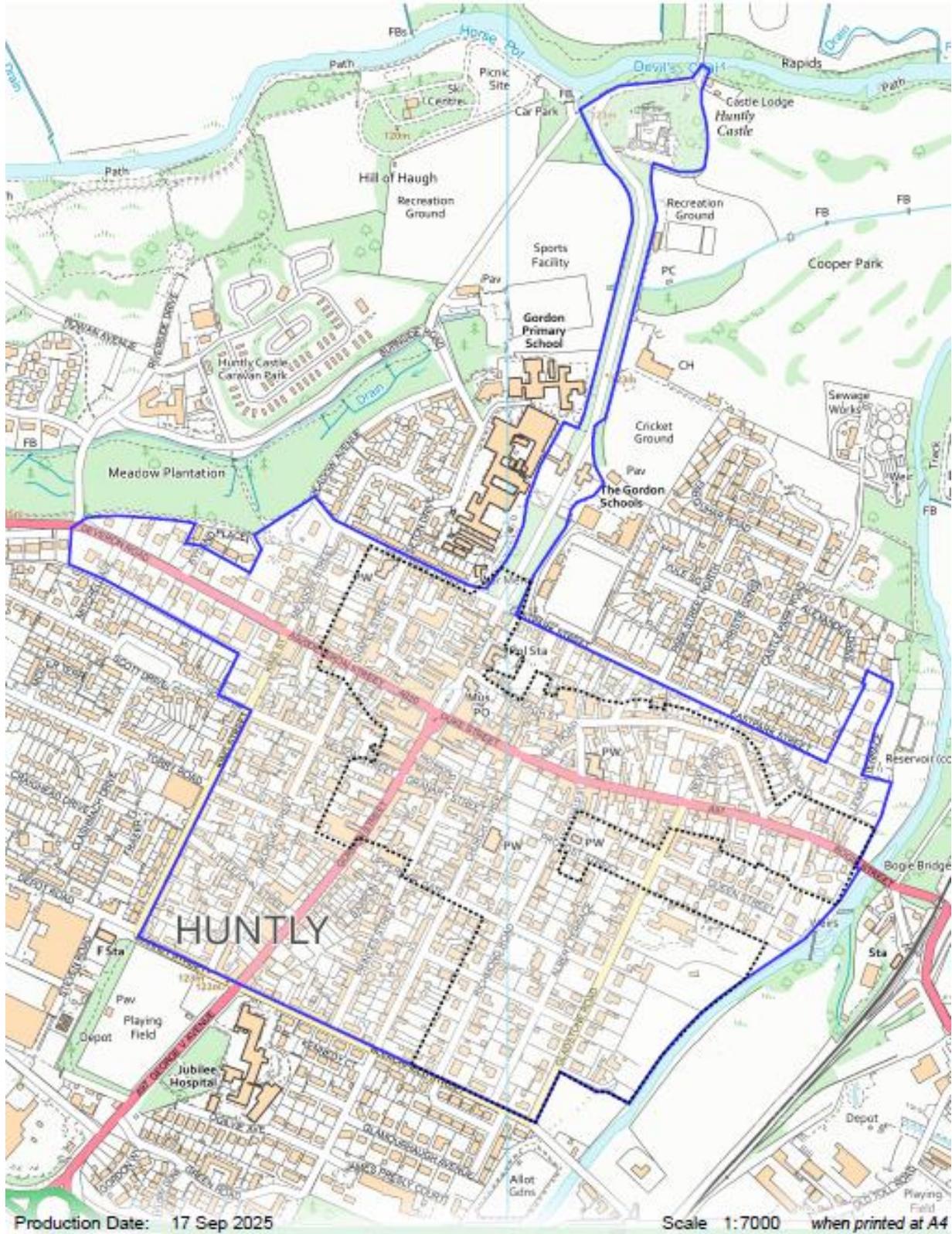
<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/default.aspx>

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## **6 Appendices**

### 6.1 Appendix I – Conservation Area Boundary Map





Existing Boundary ————  
Proposed Boundary - - - - -

## 6.2 Appendix II – Article 4 Directions

### PART 10 - REPAIRS TO SERVICES

Class 28 – The carrying out of any works for the purposes of inspecting, repairing or renewing any sewer, main, pipe, cable or other apparatus, including breaking open any land for that purpose.

### PART 12- DEVELOPMENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Class 30 – The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority of –

- (a) Any building, works or equipment not exceeding 4 metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity on land belonging to or maintained by them being building, works or equipment required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers;
- (b) Street furniture required in connection with the operation of any public service administered by them

Class 31 – Carrying out of works by a road's authority

Class 33 – Carrying out of works, within their own district, by a local authority

### PART 13 - DEVELOPMENT BY STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

Class 38 – Water undertakings

Class 39 – Development by a public gas transporter

Class 40 – Electricity undertakings

Class 43 – Universal Service Provider

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Historic Environment Team,  
Aberdeenshire Council,  
Woodhill House  
Westburn Road  
Aberdeen  
AB16 5GB