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**ROBERT GORDON**  
**UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN**

**REGENERATING ABERDEEN:**  
**A VISION FOR A THRIVING AND VIBRANT CITY CENTRE**







## FOREWORD

For centuries major cities have been enhanced by their universities. These institutions have attracted skilled people, scholarship, arts and culture, as well as enterprise and innovation. In this way the partnership between cities and universities has in countless places helped to create prosperity and employment, and secured a better quality of life.

Aberdeen has for a long time been associated with its institutions of learning. Robert Gordon University, though relatively young, has made a major impact on the city, and in turn has benefited from the association with its location. But this relationship also involves responsibilities, and it is my view that in RGU we must do all we can to ensure that Aberdeen's future is as bright as its past.

Although Aberdeen has significant advantages, many of them derived from the successful industries that it hosts, it also faces serious challenges. There is a perception that its infrastructure and amenities need some attention, and that it needs to look at how it can secure a new sense of purpose that is visible in its buildings, streets and spaces. To help in this process, I decided to establish an expert group drawn from the resources of the university, so that we could offer some well judged analysis and make some suggestions for the future. This group, convened by Dr David McClean, has now produced this report, offering well argued insight and vision. I am most grateful to the entire group for their work.

My desire to have this work undertaken was in part prompted by the process surrounding the City Garden project, which I strongly supported and which was assisted by some key RGU staff. The project was hotly debated, but whatever view anyone might take of its merits, it allowed the community to engage in this vital discussion of identity, purpose and place.

RGU's main objective is to ensure that Aberdeen rediscovers a sense of vision and ambition. Without this vision, the city could lose its own sense of purpose, and could suffer from a sense of drift. It is in this spirit that I would like this discussion paper to be read, and it is my hope that we can help to stimulate not just debate but action. There is much to be gained, just as there is much we could lose. Let us ensure that we go for opportunity and vision.



Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Robert Gordon University





## **REGENERATING ABERDEEN: A VISION FOR A THRIVING AND VIBRANT CITY CENTRE**



<b>FOREWORD</b>	
<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SECTION 1: CONTEXT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SECTION 2: KEY ISSUES</b>	<b>10</b>
The Evolving City: Historic context of Union Street	10
Economic Sustainability	10
City Centre Life	11
The City as attractive to the visitor	12
Connectivity	12
Envisioning the Future	13
<b>SECTION 3: PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>14</b>
Connectivity	14
Multiplicity of use	15
Adaptability and coherence	16
<b>SECTION 4: EXAMPLES</b>	<b>18</b>
Connectivity	18
Adaptability	19
Multiplicity of use	20
Identity	21
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>24</b>







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this discussion paper is to stimulate debate and prompt action regarding the future shape and purpose of Aberdeen's city centre. This paper argues that investment in a thriving and dynamic city centre requires consideration of the city as a whole, and is directly related to economic growth as well as cultural and social vitality.

All cities continually evolve: dynamic entities and complex systems whose needs and forms change over time. While some change is inevitably organic, maintaining a city's integrity and quality also demands strategic vision and clarity of direction. Any attempts to develop Aberdeen's city centre should consider its current form and purpose and in particular reflect the following.

- Aberdeen has a unique and evolving history, whose architecture and the layout of its streets and public spaces convey that heritage.
- A vibrant city centre that supports high quality cultural attractions is a key element that brings to and retains within the region the talent required for economic and cultural development.
- The city centre should better reflect Aberdeen's identity.
- High quality urban and architectural development can provide greater attraction to visitors.
- As a city, Aberdeen currently suffers from a lack of connectivity between the distinct areas of its centre.
- High quality development should consider future uses and adaptability and should not merely meet today's needs.

This discussion paper proposes three principles as a framework around which city centre developments might be assessed. These principles are:

1. **Connectivity:** the city as a system connects people and places. Urban development should seek to create and reinforce pedestrian links between key points in the city centre as well as linking the suburbs to the centre.
2. **Multiplicity of use:** the city centre should not have one purpose or sharply changing purposes by day and night. A city the size of Aberdeen is not like London or even Edinburgh: it cannot expect to sustain different 'neighbourhoods' in its city centre, each with its own functional niche. Thriving cities the size of Aberdeen should have many different functions that coexist alongside one another and which merge day and night time economies.
3. **Adaptability and coherence:** a thriving and attractive city centre will evolve and find ways of reflecting contemporary architectural trends against its historic background. Glasgow is a Scottish city that combines modern uses and architecture within an increasingly restored Victorian centre.

The fourth section of this document illustrates how these principles could be applied to the city centre in a variety of settings.

It draws upon examples of other cities both in the UK and beyond. It is intended that these examples will stimulate discussion and creativity.

In looking to the future, Aberdeen needs a bold vision for its continued development as a vibrant, attractive and prosperous 21st century city of international repute. Our intention is that this discussion paper will build on work already under way and help articulate that vision for the city.

In looking to the future, Aberdeen needs a bold vision or sense of direction to drive its continued development as a vibrant, attractive and prosperous 21st century city of international repute. Our intention is that this discussion paper will build on work already under way and articulate that vision for the city.





Public interest in the future of Aberdeen city centre can be seen in the strong passion aroused by the City Garden Project: 80,000 people participated in a referendum on the project. It is intended that this discussion paper will stimulate a strong local debate on the future shape and purpose of Aberdeen's city centre.



# SECTION 1: CONTEXT

Public interest in the future of Aberdeen city centre can be seen in the strong passion aroused by the City Garden Project: 80,000 people participated in a referendum on the project. It is intended that this discussion paper will stimulate a strong local debate on the future shape and purpose of Aberdeen's city centre.

The City Garden project was controversial, but it generated a debate about vision and destiny, which a thriving city needs. As was the case in the community generally, there were both supporters and opponents of the proposal in RGU (with the Principal as one of the supporters); key RGU staff were involved in the planning and in the debates. The process attracted attention for Aberdeen and showed the importance of the debate on urban regeneration and development. Since the project was dropped in August 2012 the fear has been expressed that Aberdeen could risk losing this sense of purpose.

Of course the city centre is larger than the City Garden Project, but it needs the kind of vision that this project brought to the debate. Furthermore, the city centre will never be complete: rather our city centre will evolve as the city's needs change. That is a characteristic of all cities. This discussion paper addresses the regeneration or development of the context of the whole city centre as opposed to areas, or economic functions, of the centre.

The Principal of Robert Gordon University, intending to show the commitment of RGU to use its expertise for the benefit of the Aberdeen community, assembled a multi- disciplinary group to provide this support to the city. This group included expertise in architecture, retail, tourism, transport, sustainability and the creative industries. This paper also relies on the findings of academic research carried out over the years, much of which is based on, or directly relevant to, Aberdeen and its situation.

A thriving and vibrant city centre will attract talent into our economic and creative sectors, retain home grown graduates and entrepreneurs, and enhance the reputation of Aberdeen as a tourist destination.

This paper draws upon the evidence strengths in recent local studies and initiatives. These include:

- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan
- Aberdeen City Local Development Plan
- ACSEF Economic Development Plan Structural Plan?
- Energy Cities Report
- Aberdeen Business Improvement District – Experian Baseline Report
- Centre for Cities – Cities Outlook 2011
- Six Cities Vision
- Small and Medium Sized City Regions – Experian Report
- Perth (Australia) – Town or City, Charles Landry
- The Place Race: The role of place in attracting and retaining talent in Scottish cities
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act, 2009
- NESTRANS' Regional Transport Strategy
- TIF TPSP Response, Aberdeen City Council, 2011.

This discussion paper also considers Aberdeen's position as the third, but by far the most economically significant, city in a small country. As Aberdeen is a major energy city, comparisons are made with Houston (USA); Perth (Australia); Calgary (Canada) and Stavanger (Norway).

Given that any discussion of a city centre must consider public use of space, and because such considerations cannot be made without cognisance of climate, reference is also made to cities on a similar latitude. These cities include Gothenburg (Sweden); Riga (Latvia); Stockholm (Sweden); Copenhagen (Denmark); Helsinki (Finland); Bergen and Oslo (Norway).

Where comparisons are made between Aberdeen and other cities it is done on the basis of some core similarity which allows for the direct transferability of ideas. The purpose of making such comparisons is to show that while Aberdeen may offer a pleasant urban environment, it is not necessarily, or not yet, a great city or a world-class city. As a result we can learn from those that have already made the headway Aberdeen arguably has yet to achieve.

A central contention of this paper is that investment in place and city centre is directly related to economic growth. A thriving and vibrant city centre will attract talent into our economic sectors, retain home grown graduates and entrepreneurs, and enhance the reputation of Aberdeen as a tourist destination. This in turn will support Aberdeen's standing in oil and gas, and also assist economic diversification into life sciences, tourism, creative industries, cultural activity, and food and drink; as laid out in the ASCEF structural plan.

The remainder of this paper attempts to do three things. First, to articulate the key issues which various local initiatives and public interest are attempting to address, at least in part. Secondly, to propose a set of broad strategic principles by which the city centre should be regenerated and thirdly, to demonstrate how these principles might be applied in practice to our city centre.

There are of course many different choices that can be made to improve the quality of our city centre. What is presented here is not an exhaustive list. But the central contention of this report – that there is an urgent need for ambition and vision – should drive all the options, whether those set out here or any others that may yet emerge in discussion and debate.



Bergen







Marischal College



Monkey House, Union Street



Aberdeen Market, The Green

## SECTION 2: KEY ISSUES

Aberdeen is a city with a distinct location, form, and heritage. It possesses unique potential that can however only be realized, first, through the acknowledgement of vulnerabilities and weaknesses, and then through the establishment of a bold and ambitious vision for the future that capitalises on its assets. We know that development has taken place in Aberdeen, as in most cities, that has had unfortunate and unintended consequences, but that could have been predicted. We are making no attempt to excuse this, but acknowledge the reality of the city we know, and the city that we all must work with to create a better place. This section identifies the salient problems for the city.

### The Evolving City: Historic context of Union Street

Originally proposed in 1771, Abercrombie's plan to expand the medieval city to the west of the Denburn valley was the bold move that created Union Street and defined the city centre. Such was its vision, that Union Street remains the spine and principal thoroughfare of the city. However, although the street is a commercial thoroughfare today, it was originally designed as a residential area that subsequently witnessed progressive changes of use.

The original community of the residential street soon became colonised by shops, stimulating its gradual transformation to one of mixed use, and eventually to almost exclusively commercial use. This illustrates a fundamental characteristic of cities: they are dynamic and change. This reality is important within the context of current debate about new development distorting retail patterns within the city, for example. While the Bon Accord Centre and the more recent addition of Union Square has shifted the retail 'axis' from east-west to north-south, leading to claims that Union Street has been 'destroyed', this is only true if the notion of it as a retail 'strip' is fixed in our minds. More accurately, the nature of Union Street is once again changing, but it is vital that future change is strategically planned to ensure integration of thinking, anticipate consequences, and generate or catalyse improvement.

Cities evolve, not just in terms of buildings and spaces themselves, but in terms of the functions they contain. Thus the 'Monkey House', originally the offices of an insurance broker, is now a bar, and the statue of Queen Victoria, originally resident at the head of Market Street, 'belongs' to Queen's Cross. Equally, consider Edinburgh's Georgian New Town which has seen its building (and to a lesser extent street) functions mutate from residential to commercial to retail to leisure and back again.

City identity is also subject to evolution. Technological development over time has transformed perspectives on multiple levels. Originally a regional hub for a fundamentally localised economy, the concept of Aberdeen as a multi-national city hosting a global industry might have been inconceivable a century ago. What is inconceivable now is that such development will not continue. Herein lies the challenge.

The aspiration of recognition as a world city is intrinsically connected to strength of vision, the existence of a holistic developmental strategy that responds to the broader context, and the courage to pursue this uncompromisingly in decision-making. Ambition to stand out in a highly competitive global arena demands commensurate levels of action. Aberdeen has yet to achieve this consistently.

### Economic Sustainability

The economic crisis has boldly illustrated the volatility of global commerce rendering cities that are dependent on overseas investment vulnerable to changes in international competition. This is equally true for those reliant on a single sector'.

*EU Regional Policy: Cities of Tomorrow: Challenges, visions, ways forward, 2011*

Historically, Aberdeen has been unusually fortunate in its continuing ability to capitalise economically on an abundance of valuable natural resources, whether fish, granite, or oil. This has generated a city of considerable wealth, articulated in granite in the 19th century in the form of the great institutional buildings of the city, and the leafy avenues and terraces of the West End. Today, 6 out of 10 of Scotland's largest companies have a major presence in the city<sup>1</sup>.

As finite resources dwindle, the city is challenged with developing alternative economies, through attracting investment from beyond and cultivating an attractive entrepreneurial environment to stimulate diverse activity within. The ebb and flow of economic prosperity is evident in a multitude of urban centres, but is most visible in those with heavier reliance on a single, dominant industry (Rogers and Power, 2000). This suggests that the key to a sustainable future lies in diversity, founded on the combined building blocks of an attractive, connected city, and creative governance (Florida, 2002).

It would of course be inaccurate to suggest Aberdeen's is wholly dependent on a single industry, as it is home to a major teaching hospital, two universities of repute, and one of Scotland's leading



further education colleges. The educational component, so critical to developing the skills base, is therefore in place but, just as attracting expertise presents a challenge, so too does retention of talent, and essentially for the same reasons.

Although Aberdeen may have been able to buck many economic trends over the last three decades, any notion of isolation or immunity from economic change would be misplaced. In the 1970s, Sheffield had for all practical purposes zero unemployment, a position it maintained consistently for years due ostensibly to a resilient steel industry. Then rapid change in the economic environment globally heralded dramatic decline. As it was heavily economically reliant on a single sector, Sheffield's decline was faster and deeper than neighbouring urban areas with more diverse industrial bases. Without strategic action now, there is a clear threat of a similar scenario being played out in north-east Scotland.

The role of the design of cities in achieving economic and social sustainability is fundamental. Indeed, as noted by the Urban Task Force (2005), cities dismiss this at their peril as they vie to attract businesses whose ability to locate geographically is increasingly flexible, and who therefore place ever greater value on broader factors such as the design and management of the public realm, environmental quality, access to the arts, and identity. Equally, personal choice about lifestyle is influenced less and less by employment, and increasingly by qualitative issues.

So it follows that there exists a crucial need to attract inward investment now as a means of securing the economic life-blood of the city in years to come. Equally, the quality of civic environment, amenity and infrastructure has become a powerful determinant in the ability of cities to attract and sustain such investment and talent. Indeed there is a strong relationship between these two factors, one that powerfully suggests that the time for visionary investment in the city's future is now, when Aberdeen has a relatively prosperous economy and when it can harness the resource represented by its international population.

## City Centre Life

Education, cultural infrastructure, leisure, and amenities play significant roles as factors essential to a rich, balanced lifestyle. There is now therefore a critical moment for the city; the point at which two important processes are commencing in parallel. On the one hand, we may now be entering a phase which will entail a gradual decline in oil exploration and extraction. This underscores the criticality of the second process, strategic planning, aspects of which have been developing in the city and shire in recent years. It is evident from cities around the world that long-term holistic regeneration is not achieved through a single deft move, but is the product of a series of planned actions driven by a common strategic goal. Even now, we need all the time we have.

**'The chief function of the city is to convert power into form, energy into culture, dead matter into the living symbols of art, biological reproduction into social creativity'.**

Lewis Mumford, 1968

The twentieth century city exhibited two generic pre-occupations, both of which inadvertently undermined the vibrancy of many urban centres. The first, rooted in reaction to the squalor of the Victorian city, was a pre-occupation with the periphery, in the form of suburbs, 'edge' settlements, and satellite towns. The second lay in the desire for the clean, diagrammatic spatial zoning of cities according to function (Mumford, 1992). Both blighted city centres, denying them the vibrancy brought about by inhabitation and the juxtaposition of diverse uses, events, people and behaviours.

While the centre of Aberdeen is not of a scale to support the formal creation of functional zones, the migration of its inhabitants to the periphery has had similar consequences. The significant abandonment of the city centre as a place of dwelling has created a predominantly retail quarter by day, and leisure ghetto by night, the latter without the moderating influence that inhabitation brings in the guardianship of the public domain. For too many it has become unattractive, even threatening. Urban expansion of the periphery continues unabated seemingly oblivious to the reality of future energy costs. One consequence is the startling statistic that Aberdeen has the 8th highest CO2 emission per capita of any UK city (Centre for Cities, ), the product of policy that does little to regulate commuter patterns. However, the pulse of cities is not only fed by inhabitation, but also the support of diversity of use. In the words of Jane Jacobs (1961), the great American urbanist,

**'Flourishing diversity anywhere in a city means the mingling of high-yield, middling-yield, low-yield and no-yield enterprises'.**

Jacobs alludes to the milieu created by the juxtaposition and over-lapping of commerce, markets, street artists, and the social promenade of great urban spaces such as Las Ramblas in Barcelona, or Covent Garden in London.



Aberdeen Art Gallery



Aberdeen Harbour



Belmont Street



## Aberdeen possesses a unique urban environment, but one which suffers through lack of accessibility or connectivity.

Transport Hub, Copenhagen



Through a greater sense of identity and pride associated with the city, regeneration could become the catalyst for improving the well-being for the host community.

Public cycle scheme, Oslo

## The City as attractive to the visitor

Returning to Mumford's definition of a city's purpose, how has the city's wealth and power manifested itself in its buildings and public spaces? Is there anything from the last century that begins to rival the architectural legacy of the 19th century? As Aberdeen is one of the wealthiest cities in the UK per capita<sup>2</sup>, the argument that collectively its people have not continued to develop the city as a dynamic, creative, contemporary city can be compellingly made. Some may claim that the city conveys the Doric identity of modesty and parsimony, but strengthening the identity of Aberdeen as an internationally important city must transcend any such parochial perspectives, and recognise that a bright future is contingent on the ability to compete with cities internationally for talent, tourism, and investment.

Aberdeen is the centre of a large rural hinterland, rich in resources and history, which is renowned worldwide for food and drink, its indigenous culture, dramatic history, and consequently tourism. Yet such powerful determinants of both economy and identity remain barely visible in the region's capital, thus undermining the appeal of the city as a destination. Whether it be whisky, cuisine, music, literature, or dance, Aberdeen fails to celebrate these unique and vibrant products of the region. Bordeaux celebrates wine while also branding itself a 'City of Art and History'. Milan has cultivated an identity for contemporary fashion<sup>3</sup>, despite being ostensibly a financial centre. Cities and city life are multi-dimensional, and it is precisely this that gives energy to urban living. Distinction, identity, or competitive advantage, comes from the fusion of all such dimensions, geography, climate, and people (Hall, 2002). The bid for Aberdeen to be the 'City of Culture' in 2017, could serve as a platform for promoting the multiple dimensions of our city, and for developing and promoting a richer narrative of Aberdeen and the north-east.

The Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) is a theory of regional tourism development designed to assist destination managers and others in dealing with and understanding problems that seem almost inevitably to arise with concentrated tourism development: for example, environmental despoilment, low visitor yield and social issues, (Pornphol, 2010).

In terms of leisure tourism Aberdeen can be seen to be in the final stages of the model: stagnation or post-stagnation/rejuvenation. Although business tourism in Aberdeen has been strong since 1987, the three day market (Friday – Sunday) has posed a problem for the city, as the demand for accommodation drops considerably, leaving hoteliers with an excess of supply. Applying the TALC to the Aberdeen leisure market signals that without some form of re-invention/rejuvenation the destination will suffer the negative impacts associated with an area in this stage of the cycle – none of which are good.

Writers in tourism recognise that new experiences, culture and authenticity are critical factors shaping the future of global tourism.

## Connectivity

Tourists want to sample the ethnicity of the host destination. Increasing interest in culture, food and sport are determining the personal choices people make in relation to leisure time. (Yeoman et al, 2009). Aberdeen can easily create these elements of tourist choice in a rejuvenated city.

A greater sense of identity and pride associated with the regeneration of the city could become the catalyst for not only improving the well-being for the host community, but also re-starting the TALC cycle. This would bring "new" tourists to Aberdeen, as a welcoming city that could show case its heritage and culture in a manner that fits with their expectations, and which offers a high quality leisure experience that also embraces the best of the surrounding countryside. This would be attractive indeed in the 21st century.

Aberdeen possesses a unique urban environment, but one which suffers through lack of accessibility or connectivity. Sadly, examples abound. For instance, no other city has a working harbour that so dramatically cuts into its heart, juxtaposing state-of-the-art vessels with historic architecture. Yet this remains completely uncelebrated and, for the pedestrian, offers little reason to go, is virtually inaccessible and hence forgotten (Streetscapes, 2002). Equally, the Castle Gate is a public square with the potential to become an elegant outdoor 'room' of the city, yet is blighted through lack of connectivity and the absence of a significant public amenity to draw people into the space and stimulate renewal and regeneration.

In more recent developments, in developing Union Square the opportunity to create a strong pedestrian link between the new centre and railway station and Union Street was not seized. Such examples speak of a lack of integration, penalising the pedestrian and damaging the appeal and lifeblood of the city .



Connectivity must be effective at many levels, and in relation to both pedestrian and vehicular domains. However, for the urban realm to be a vibrant public domain, the pedestrian must take precedence. Pedestrian movement forms a city's lifeblood, and the connection between places of congregation, institutions, transport hubs, and so forth are essential to a well-used, active city centre.

In Bremen, the authority has planned the urban realm so as to give equal priority to cars, trams, walkers and cyclists. In cities such as Copenhagen, Malmo and Gothenburg, planners give the highest priority to pedestrians, then cyclists, then public transport then cars. In Aberdeen, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the policy makers have been preoccupied with traffic models of the city centre rather than thinking about how people move around. On Union Street, pedestrians are crowded on to relatively narrow pavements, while most of the road space is allocated to cars and buses. For cyclists in the city centre, a broken line is painted at the side of the road and this is taken to be adequate.

Aberdeen is the headquarters of a transport multinational company, the First Group, yet buses are slow and unreliable because there is not adequate space for bus lanes. The experience in Edinburgh may have poisoned the tram in Scotland for generations. That, however, was a failure of planning and project management rather than of ambition. A French, German or other European city the size of Aberdeen would have, as a minimum, a tram line linking the two universities and Union Street, a second one linking Foresterhill and Altens and a third line linking the airport to the city centre. Furthermore the main street of such a French or German city would be occupied by trams, walkers, cyclists – and the occasional delivery lorry- only. Could Aberdeen show the rest of Scotland how to do trams properly?

Typically, part of the challenge is the difficulty of retrofitting historic cities with their relatively narrow thoroughfares. Yet the streets of Aberdeen are relatively generous in scale. However, to reallocate road space to people, bicycles, buses and even trams would take space, money and the kind of political decisiveness usually possessed only by elected mayors or ruling groups with large majorities. Yet with work finally about to start on the AWPR, Aberdeen has a once-in-a-generation opportunity not just to lock in the benefits of the Western peripheral route, but to maximise the potential for a reduction in city traffic levels. It presents an opportunity for maximising the potential of modes of transport other than the car and for getting a more equitable allocation of space for walkers, cyclists and those travelling by public transport.

It is not just travel within the Aberdeen area that is important. To attract future inward investment and tourism, more consideration and investment is required to improve Aberdeen's external links. While the rail network itself is the domain of the Scottish Government and its partners, much can be done locally to improve connections between Aberdeen railway station and Union Street. While the station has benefited from the development of Union Square, there is still a great deal of potential (to work in partnership with Network Rail and Scotrail) to improve rail travellers' first impressions of Aberdeen.

Similarly, while Aberdeen Airport works hard to build new routes to better connect Aberdeen to the outside World, the airport itself can be extremely inaccessible, particularly at busy times of the day.

### Envisioning the Future

The city is a complex evolving organism whose development requires a broad and integrated strategy. By definition, strategic planning involves medium to long-term timeframes in which decisions are made that contribute to the overall ambition. Actions cannot be taken in an isolated, piecemeal fashion, and the complexity of multiplr considerations makes any notion of a panacea unlikely. Yet it is important that developments are instigated that are catalytic, both in terms of stimulating planned change, and express real intent.

To its detriment, the city has suffered from a polarisation of opinion and debate on a number of issues that has denied opportunity for deeper discussion and analysis of possible alternatives that lie between the extremes. Visionary leadership and governance are pre-requisites for success and, as can be demonstrated by the histories of many cities, so too is the need for political commitment to the long-term scenarios that urban regeneration present.

This has obvious consequences for planning a sustainable future for the city and the region. So too does the marginal nature of Aberdeen's political landscape, where tactical political positioning can influence commitment to the kind of radical ideas and long-term visions that contemporary conditions demand.



The city is a complex evolving organism whose development requires a broad and integrated strategy.



Union Square, Aberdeen





## SECTION THREE: PRINCIPLES

We have identified three principles which collectively provide a framework with the help of which proposals for city centre regeneration can be identified and assessed. These are generic principles that could be applied to any major city's regeneration. Aberdeen's unique identity as a city sits outside these principles, but over the long term changes in economic structure, population and physical developments in the city centre will change the city's identity. If they do not, then the city centre will become fossilised as a historical artifact and fall into decline.

In addition to identifying three principles, we believe in a vision of the city centre that reflects the identity of Aberdeen. This identity is one that captures both the heritage of place and also the contemporary function of the city as the oil capital of Europe. Both this identity and how it is reflected in our city centre should be a source of pride for local citizens and an outward statement of our identity to visitors.

The three principles that have been identified are as follows:

- 1. Connectivity:** this recognises the city as a system that connects people and places. Urban development should seek to create and reinforce pedestrian links between key points in the city centre (for example, public squares, commercial centres, public institutions, transport hubs and parks) as well as linking suburbs to the centre.
- 2. Multiplicity of use:** the city centre should not have one purpose, or sharply changing purposes by day and night: i.e. a shopping centre by day and venue for drinking by night. A city the size of Aberdeen is not like London or even Edinburgh: it cannot expect to sustain different "neighbourhoods" in its centre each with their own functional niche. Thriving cities which are the size of Aberdeen should have many different functions that coexist alongside one another, and economies that merge between day and night.
- 3. Adaptability and coherence:** a thriving and attractive city centre will evolve and find ways of reflecting contemporary trends (both in terms of function and design) against its historic backdrop. Glasgow is a Scottish city that combines modern uses and architecture set against an increasingly restored Victorian centre.

### Connectivity

As retail has moved from shops on street fronts to units within shopping centres the retail activity of Aberdeen has shifted from an east-west alignment to a north-south orientation. Yet within the city centre the hierarchy of transport consists of cars and buses, and then people, with transport links that reflect the historic east-west alignment of the city. Walking between John Lewis/George Street at the north of the retail hub and T.K.Maxx or Marks and Spencer in Union Square at the southern end is not straightforward or easy, particularly if you are explaining the route to a visitor from outside the city. The topography of Aberdeen, built as it is on a series of hills connected with artificially raised streets from the late Georgian era, does not lend itself to an easy traversing of the city. Other cities, for example Italian hill towns, have introduced escalators to aid connections.

Aberdeen's wealth throughout the centuries has been linked to its harbour, developed over time through fishing, trade, shipbuilding and the oil and gas industry. The distance between the city centre and its harbour is amongst the shortest of any maritime city in the UK, yet the harbour has become increasingly cut off from the centre. The development of Union Square has opened up better views of the harbour, but many of the activities which other cities have been able to capitalise upon remain disconnected from the centre. Docks and embankments in London have over the last ten to twenty years been turned into areas where residential, leisure activities and cultural pursuits interact and overlap. Something similar has occurred in a similar timeframe at Leith in Edinburgh and is starting to develop at Newhaven further along the firth. Within Dundee the waterfront developments aim to turn sections of the Firth of Tay and the city centre into a marina by 2020. Our harbour is a ferry port as well as a fish market. We contend that opportunities exist in the spaces between Union Street/Castlegate and the harbour for development. There are also opportunities to consider how development of this area might improve connections with Duthie Park along the riverside.

Existing developments that have taken place over the last decade around Belmont Street, the Green and Merchant Quarter are good examples of adaptability and coherence, although they exist as islands within the city centre often disconnected from each other and other parts of the city centre. Each of these developments has occurred in areas of the centre that remained largely based on the medieval/early modern streets of Aberdeen. Greater connections might come from further opening up some of the old streets running underneath Union Street, for example Correction Wynd, Carnegie's Brae, Windmill Brae. Equally, opening up connections might be an opportunity to remove some of the worse examples of post-war architecture in Aberdeen, for example the Aberdeen Market on the Green.



Union Street, Bridge Street junction



Bon Accord Square



We should also consider linkages to the city centre, not merely within the city centre. It is vital to recognise that the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) is not an end in itself, but a starting point in the renaissance of transport and travel in Aberdeen. It is important that policy makers, stakeholders and the public are encouraged to be as vocal and as engaged about what happens after the AWPR has been built as they have been in lobbying for the road to be built.

The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will remove unwanted traffic from the city centre, but in order to maintain the function and vibrancy of the city centre we should avoid developing sections along the AWPR as alternative retail parks. Equally we may wish to consider whether cycle routes which connect some of the suburbs with the surrounding countryside, e.g. the Deeside railway line (starting at Duthie Park) and the Formartine and Buchan path (starting at Dyce) can be connected into the city centre to allow traffic to flow from suburbs to the city centre as well as from suburbs to the countryside. The river Dee could be explored as an alternative route of connectivity running out of the city westward. It might also be desirable to consider connectivity to the sea and beach.

While it would be extremely expensive and politically challenging, if Aberdeen is serious in its aspirations to be a world class city, we should be brave enough at least to consult on a continental European style of transport in Aberdeen to capitalise on the potential benefits of the AWPR. This would have a tram network at its heart (linking the universities, hospital and main centres of employment with the city centre) along with giving more priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the city centre.

## Multiplicity of use

It has been long understood that it is impossible to separate a place from its cultural identity. Place and culture are persistently intertwined with one another, for place is a basis of human interrelationships (out of which culture may grow) and culture is a phenomenon that has place-specific characteristics that help to differentiate one place from another (Scott, 1997).

While the centre of Aberdeen has many good quality cultural offerings, it is lacking in contemporary cultural spaces and a recognisable cultural heart. Much of what is provided within the city is managed by the City Council, and is hosted in Victorian buildings that are not conducive to casual visits or activities other than their primary purpose. Thus the city suffers both from a lack of variety of cultural provision, and a lack of attractive, modern, cultural meeting places.

By comparison, Dundee has a thriving creative and cultural scene. Dundee's current association with the arts dates back to the inception of the Blackness Public Arts Programme in 1982, which established cultural regeneration as a driver for the economic regeneration of post-industrial communities throughout the UK. This success led directly to the establishment of The Seagate Gallery, the Dundee Printmakers Workshop and Dundee Contemporary Arts. The quality of Dundee's current cultural institutions is also well recognised as having a direct influence on the recruitment of high calibre, internationally recognised professionals to the region, to work across all sectors.

Local and national press, radio and television now constantly feature the successes of Dundee's creative and cultural communities, promoting a further sense of wellbeing and pride of association in the wider community. That pride appears to have become palpably stronger over recent months since the decision was announced to build the V&A at Dundee, a highly contemporary and visionary development intended to elevate Dundee to the world stage as a cultural destination.

Dundee Contemporary Arts, the Dundee Repertory Theatre, the Sensation Science Centre, Discovery Point, the McManus Gallery and other cultural attractions and sites within Tayside all have very focused and highly successful outreach beyond their professional remits, again engaging in a celebration of cultural practice throughout the wider community, and all have attractive general catering and leisure facilities that attract a wider public than their specific audiences.

The creative and cultural community in Dundee has grown and become established in a relatively short period of time, and in doing so has developed a highly collaborative attitude, perhaps fuelled by a pioneering spirit and a true sense of mutual respect, capacity building and high aspirations. This has further attracted established practitioners, leading academics, entrepreneurs and creative companies from across Scotland, the UK, and indeed the world, who want to be involved in this community of dynamic activity, and have a desire to live in a community in which their voice is heard, has relevance, and is responded to.

The local authorities in Dundee, Perth & Kinross, and Angus have contributed immensely to establishing this community, and Scottish Enterprise Tayside has, over recent years, been strategically pro-active in their support and economic leadership of the sector.

Currently, much of the criticism of Aberdeen's city centre revolves around the fact that it has a night-time culture of drinking and clubbing which drives away both people and alternative activities. This is due in some significant measure to the increasing dominance of retail as

a key functional use of space, which has had the consequence of reducing inhabitation of the centre. However, corresponding with Jacobs' notion of juxtaposing high and low yield activity, reference to many other cities illustrates how policies of encouraging mixed use have increased the inhabitation of centres, leading to a more vibrant urban life. A strategy that aims to rejuvenate mixed use, including stimulus for alternative uses and organisations beyond the corporate or commercial, would be instrumental in bringing back vitality to Aberdeen's heart.

In a partial sense, the development of Union Square has achieved something of this multiplicity of use, albeit in a location that lacks strong pedestrian connectivity with Union Street. Here people can shop, dine or go to the cinema while also providing a hub for commuters via the train and bus stations. Union Square does this because it provides a safe and secure environment; we might do well to learn this lesson to create more ambient evening experiences along Union Street.



Deeside cycle path

**One key element in accepting a city centre with a multiplicity of use is to seek ways of increasing inhabitation of the city centre.**

Ship Row







Marischal College

Old vacant buildings present the city with a particular challenge: often they constitute important buildings in the cityscape but require investment to make them useable for alternative functions.

'Slains Castle', Belmont Street



### Adaptability and coherence

As mentioned earlier, the Green, the Merchant Quarter and Belmont Street areas are good examples of regeneration of the centre that have adapted old buildings for alternative uses. This regeneration has often been through improvements to the streets as well as key developments, e.g. the introduction of shops and cafes around the Green; the redevelopment of the Carmelite and the Belmont shopping centre. In the case of both the Green and the Merchant Quarter redevelopment has occurred simultaneously to residential developments.

Adaptability can also work on the level of the individual building as well as of an area of the centre. Old vacant buildings present the city with a particular challenge: often they constitute important buildings in the cityscape but require investment to make them usable for alternative functions. The design of the Academy Shopping Centre and the opening of the Belmont Cinema have allowed the renovation of old buildings and given them new functions and renewed purpose. Often such renovations can lead to greater access to some of the good quality Victorian and Edwardian architecture that exists in our city centre, for example the Monkey House and Archibald Simpson bars which respectively converted an insurance and bank buildings into new uses.

Nevertheless, there has been a tendency to preserve all buildings even when this has led to them being left unused for lengthy periods of time. This might be a function of post-war experiences of redevelopment of the city centre which has produced some poor architecture, for example the 1960s market, the Trinity Centre car park, or some shop fronts on Union Street around BHS. In short, those buildings that are of poor quality, are unloved and have declining use should be replaced by something relevant to the contemporary city.

We need to ensure that our new buildings are of the highest quality, freed from the conservatism that led to the pre-occupation in recent history with surrogate granite and other inferior materials, used in timid deference to the city's heritage. The architecture of Aberdeen, precise, pristine, crystalline and sharp-edged, lends itself wonderfully to a variety of rich contemporary interpretations and material palettes. Other Scottish cities have successfully developed their centres through the insertion of good modern buildings amongst their older buildings built from traditional materials, without resort to pastiche through loss of nerve. These cities are all the richer for this.

The designs presented as part of the City Gardens competition demonstrated this, regardless of how one might otherwise evaluate the project. We contend that more public design competitions could produce a better quality of modern architectural design in our city centre as well as stimulating wider and more in-depth public debate.

We should consider how we can apply the lessons of these developments to other spaces within the city centre. Urban spaces of particular need of improvement include Broad Street, the Castlegate, Golden Square and Bon Accord Square. It is argued that these spaces frequently do not have multiplicity of use and are often lacking integration with the rest of the city. For example, Broad Street is dominated by local public sector use and thus only tends to be active during office hours and is cut off from the rest of the city by the St Nicholas Centre.

Castlegate, a potentially grand terminus to Union Street, lacks purpose as an urban destination and has become increasingly blighted by its disconnection from the city and the relatively homogenous economic activity and building use around its periphery. This situation has been compounded by the vacant state of the old Esslemont and Mackintosh building.

In considering opportunities to re-develop areas such as these it might be helpful to consider the opportunities presented by adapting existing buildings to new purposes. Thus re-development of the Citadel could open up new opportunities for alternative uses of Castlegate, with potential for performance, theatre, markets, and so on. The same is true of the area surrounding Provost Skene's house with the departure of the Council from the St Nicholas building.



In considering opportunities to re-develop areas such as these it might be helpful to consider the opportunities presented by adapting existing buildings to new purposes.

Castlegate, Aberdeen





## SECTION 4: EXAMPLES

### Connectivity

Successful development of the city should adopt the perspective of the pedestrian or cyclist, enabling easy access to and between key 'node' points in the centre, such as retail centres, galleries, museums and other institutions, schools, leisure facilities, health centres, parks, transport links, and so on (Urban Connections, 2006). The provision of events or incidents en route helps to animate the journey, and increase the attraction of the city centre as a place to navigate through, explore, and spend time in.

Work undertaken in collaboration with other European cities (Laing 2004) indicated successful public spaces also required an awareness of and sensitivity to local culture and history. Evidence suggests that the blurring of distinction between pedestrian and vehicular domains tends to calm traffic rather than present a hazard to the walker. A number of innovative developments have tested this, placing the car as an intruder in a pedestrian domain rather than the reverse. Examples of successfully implemented shared space schemes in the UK is Exhibition Road (London) and Blackett Street (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), whilst the topic has been the subject of detailed study in recent years (Hamilton-Baillie 2008).

As an example, through a policy of cycle promotion, the city of Copenhagen is the only European city to halt the escalation of car usage over the last 20 years (Rogers and Power, 2000). This has yielded multiple benefits in terms of improving the appeal of the city centre, its safety, and in reducing harmful pollutants. By contrast, Aberdeen is generally hostile to cyclists despite possessing a number of generously scaled roadways, as exemplified by Union Street. While a few examples of cycle lanes exist, such as that along the North Deeside Road, city provision is very poor.

Together with routes, accessibility can be enhanced by the siting of public facilities in locations that reveal interesting aspects of the city. Aberdeen Maritime Museum is successful in this respect, forming a public 'window' onto the harbour, a place of importance to Aberdeen's history and identity, whilst offering a facility that relates to its industrial context. Other hypothetical proposals are illustrated below to suggest a diverse range of possibility:

The Port of Hamburg exploits the drama and scale of its industrial harbour on the River Elbe to create a backdrop for other facets of city life such as cafe culture, the arts, and leisure. This creates a visual seamlessness and a dynamic quality through juxtaposition and incident.

The connectivity of the city to the region, to other UK cities, and to international transport hubs is vital to its economic health. Thus the ease of connection to the railway station and the development of the airport as an international gateway is essential. Equally, for the visitor the sense of arrival and ease of transit, orientation, and navigation is influential in forming lasting impressions of the city. Consider the experience of arriving at the Gare du Nord in Paris and walking out into the city. Now consider the possibility of arriving in Aberdeen straight into Union Street and the heart of the city, a distinct possibility if Union Terrace Gardens are developed to integrate with the surrounding city fabric.



**Successful development of the city should adopt the perspective of the pedestrian or cyclist, enabling easy access to and between key 'node' points in the centre.**



Copenhagen streets



## Adaptability

One of the great successes of the city in recent years is the revitalisation of Marischal College, one of the city's great landmarks. This transformation from a seat of learning to the headquarters of the city's administration is demonstration of the evolving city and the need for adaptive re-use through changing function. Equally, the pedestrianisation of Belmont Street, incorporating the careful design of ground surfaces, has completely transformed this space from a congested vehicular thoroughfare to an attractive and popular pedestrian urban area. This can be taken further. In Holland, Hans Monderman has revealed that removing virtually all delineation and separation of vehicles and pedestrians in urban centres significantly improves safety, contrary to the assumptions of many. This can be a liberating force in the way that urban space is conceived.

Urban streets and squares are animated by the functions that border them, and over time these tend to change. The nature of the high street as a generic phenomenon is being challenged by online retail and the impact of this on commerce. Cities must adapt to address this, introducing new functions that draw in people and bring life to the city centre. Leisure, dining, galleries, and specialist retail experiences will become the lifeblood of the high street, together with street artists, markets, and performance.

Buchanan Street in Glasgow is an exemplar of a major urban thoroughfare transformed into a bustling public space, come rain or shine. The beneficial impact of this city development on the surroundings has been enormous. Equally, the majestic axis of Karl Johan Gate in Oslo enjoys an outdoor cafe culture throughout much of the year, despite its northerly latitude.

Adaptability can be demonstrated at many levels and scales within the city, and is not reliant on major intervention to catalyse positive change. For example, the Raven Row Gallery in Spitalfields, London, has imaginatively breathed new life into an existing building, changing its use whilst working with its architectural qualities, and injecting energy into the surrounding area. In its own way Aberdeen's Maritime Museum re-utilised a redundant church as part of a unique public facility that celebrates aspects of the city's heritage, and has subsequently attracted further development in the area.

Cultural transformation of identities and fortune has long been accepted as a driver of social and economic change, and has been the focus of many governmental strategies in recent years. Indeed, culture has been described as "pivotal" to economic regeneration, by the UK Government (DCMS, 2004). The north-east of England is home to a world-renowned example of such impact. The BALTIC, a converted flour mill on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, is now a major international centre for contemporary art. Originally built in 1950 by Rank Hovis, it had a mammoth silo capacity of 22,000 tonnes, and was equipped with the most modern and efficient machinery of the time. Yet it fell victim to economic change.

The BALTIC opened in its current guise as an arts centre in 2002, and attracted over 35,000 visitors in the first week. Since then, the BALTIC has presented over 40 exhibitions and has welcomed over 2 million visitors.

The building has no permanent collection, providing instead an ever-changing calendar of exhibitions and events that give a unique and compelling insight into contemporary artistic practice. This ranges from blockbuster, international exhibitions to innovative new work and projects created by artists working within the local community. Fundamentally, the BALTIC is a place where both local and international visitors can experience innovative and provocative new art, relax, have fun, learn and discover fresh ideas, in an attractive and iconic environment. It has formed a key node in the city.



BALTIC, river frontage, Newcastle



Karl Johan Gate, Oslo

St Pauls District, Sheffield







## Multiplicity of Use

A city's ability to adapt to changing circumstances and economic drivers is usually a measure of its sustainable success. Equally, the juxtaposition of building types, functions, and amenities provides the richness that typifies high quality urban environments such as Covent Garden in London or Le Marais in Paris. Such richness requires the city to be lived in, around the clock.

Closer to home, the rejuvenated Merchant City in Glasgow illustrates how a major urban quarter can be re-developed to provide a home for retail, offices, culture, leisure, and residences. This vision transformed a number of fine yet dilapidated buildings and streets into high quality public realm and one of the most prized locations in the city. Occupancy has fostered community, with benefits relating to the sense of belonging and safety in a city that has worked hard to shed its tough historic reputation. Similar urban renewal has been achieved in many locations, such as Dublin's Temple Bar, or areas of London such as Hoxton. In these locations, the stimulus provided by the arts has been of fundamental importance as a generator of community and economic strength.

Similarly, public spaces within cities may be used to stage a multitude of events, from music and dance to theatre and film, and from the planned to the impromptu. Returning to a point introduced earlier, and recognising that visitors want to experience authenticity of place through architecture, culture, food, etc, Aberdeen needs vehicles to showcase its diverse qualities and attract new tourists. Imaginative use of public space could contribute significantly to this. For instance, there is recognition that Aberdeenshire is the home of high quality food and drink: malt whisky, Aberdeen Angus beef, milk and ice cream, and fish. The city centre should reflect what is distinctive in the region, as should gateways such as the airport, hosting events to promote these, such as Taste of Scotland.

More specifically, the Castlegate presents a viable outdoor venue for performance and other cultural activity, with the potential to extend this by restoring connectivity with the Beach Boulevard. A revitalised Castlegate could become the magnet for new cultural experiences, embracing diverse activities such as a Doric food and drink festival (similar to the highly successful German Market in Birmingham), music events, theatre, and art installations. Such opportunities would provide tourist attractions, and vital leisure opportunities for the host community, (Robinson et al, 2010)



Covent Garden, London





## Identity

“Aberdeen is the powerhouse of the northeast, fuelled by the North Sea petroleum industry. Oil money has made the city as expensive as London and Edinburgh, and there are hotels, restaurants and clubs with prices to match the depth of petroleum industry pockets”.  
Lonely Planet

Aberdeen is already identified as the oil capital of Europe, cementing links with Houston and the global oil and gas industry. In terms of tourism the strapline can work against the city, with the image conjured up by many who have not visited as one of an industrial, dirty and unattractive city. This is not of course the case, but the city urgently needs to reflect the importance of oil and energy in more exciting and engaging ways. As a hub of innovation and technological prowess, the city has much to celebrate yet at present opportunities fail to correspond with the notion of the city as 'powerhouse'.

However, while acknowledging the importance of its existing reputation, the city, in developing its identity, must think beyond the economic dimension; certainly it must not rely on it. Paintings in the Art Gallery of the harbour crowded with herring boats remind us of economic transience. Importantly, the issue of identity and sense of place is inherently multi-dimensional, economics representing but a single strand.

'The generic features of small and medium- sized cities – particularly their human scale, livability, conviviality of neighbourhoods, and their geographic embeddedness and historic character – in many ways constitute an ideal of sustainable urbanism'.  
EU Regional Policy: Cities of Tomorrow: Challenges, visions, ways forward, 2011

The above quotation speaks of the identity that well considered, holistically conceived urban environments can derive from their innate characteristics, location, and sense of place. Importantly it also suggests that a city such as Aberdeen has much of the raw material for creating a city that is attractive and sustainable into the future.

In 2002, the 2nd UK Government Conference on Urban Renaissance identified 'weak market cities' of which Sheffield, referred to earlier, was one. All had a number of common characteristics that were also shared with European cities such as Bremen, Bilbao and Belfast. These characteristics were: 'a major industrial history; loss of these industries and jobs; population outflow; a crisis of leadership, economic viability and inward investment'.

In Sheffield's case, based on a strategy of partnership, between public and private sectors and harnessing European funding as well as that from Westminster, a city strategy was developed that included the revitalisation of the city centre as a key component. Subsequently, parallel urban and economic master plans were produced as an integrated strategic framework for development. Public realm projects have delivered new urban environments that have helped shift perceptions of the city from a home of heavy industry to a modern vibrant, city of learning with a strong cultural infrastructure and diverse service economy. Within its own specific context, it is time for Aberdeen to develop its own integrated strategic plan.



Street frontage, Copenhagen

**Accepting that the importance of new experiences, culture and authenticity represent the major trends in tourism, these, then, need to feature in Aberdeen city.**

Karl Johan Gate, Oslo





In looking to the future, Aberdeen needs a bold and ambitious vision for its continued development as a vibrant, attractive and prosperous 21st century city of international repute.





# CONCLUSION

We are now at a critical moment in the city's history. Aberdeen has prospered as a result of its status as Europe's oil and gas capital, but it is clear that its economy needs to develop and evolve. A major requirement for the city will be to ensure that it attracts diverse, high value, knowledge intensive investment, and that it can successfully nurture economic and cultural creativity. This in turn requires a city with the capacity to let its facilities, atmosphere and amenities attract those with skills and talents to come here, and to nurture and inspire those already here. The city's regeneration is more than a programme to make it nicer: it is a programme to make it successful.

Like other cities, Aberdeen must continue to evolve and develop through interventions that assert its identity on a global stage, and which contribute to the creation of a vibrant, diverse, culturally rich, and economically strong centre with a tangible and distinctive sense of place.

Reflecting on the cities we admire as destinations offers some important clues about the things that make them attractive. Importantly, they are typically inhabited; there is life in the city centre and levels of amenity and urban quality that attract and sustain communities. Equally they are walkable, with good connectivity between key places, and conveying the primacy of the pedestrian over the car. They also exhibit multiplicity of use, whereby at different times of the day the life of the street or square changes attracting different visitor groups for work and leisure. Lastly, they are adaptable, with high quality design from all periods that tell the unfolding narrative and evolving history of the place. These reflections lead to the same principles that have been identified within this paper, yet which are discussed in relation to the more detailed context of Aberdeen.

Whether planned as large scale visions or small, organic and incremental developments, such interventions must be united by forming part of a strategic and holistic vision and direction, and by architectural and environmental quality. We need to stimulate diversity while cultivating cohesion and reinforcing identity, and to look to other world cities for lessons about how transformation can be achieved through a combination of building on existing assets, propagating fresh ideas and activities, and challenging the status quo. Crucially, we now need both a deeper, more inclusive dialogue about our city centre's future and how its architecture and urban form can create the stage for vibrant community, economic and cultural life for the 21st century; and we need action, taken in a timely manner, to make the plans come true.

## Action points

Within its holistic consideration of the city centre, this paper proposes that priority actions include the following:

1. Adding credibility to and enriching the identity of an innovative 'energy city' with a strong civic pride. Maintaining and enhancing the urban environment to reflect Aberdeen's rich history, forward thinking, and progressive ideals, including the development of a green transport strategy incorporating cycle ways, clean public transport, and 'home zone' developments.
2. Developing a cultural vision and enabling facilities that celebrate the identity, energy, relevance and history of the city, and which reflect the future ambitions of its people in supporting a sustainable, international, cultural impact and reputation.
3. Reviewing the zoning of Union Street to include the prospect of returning parts to residential use, and redeveloping it to give prominence to pedestrian use, cyclists, and public transport.
4. Restoring city squares such as Golden Square, Bon-Accord Square and the Castlegate as vital public spaces for markets, and cultural events such as theatre and other forms of performance.
5. Enhancing connectivity (primarily pedestrian) along the north-south retail axis (George Street to Union Square) in a manner which builds upon the current multiplicity of function (e.g. John Lewis vs Aberdeen Market).
6. Creating links between Union Street and the Harbour, celebrating this unique and dramatic relationship, and facilitating the development of new public, cultural and commercial activities that have a relationship to the harbour.
7. Redeveloping areas that offer little public amenity through poor design (e.g. the Market building on the Green, and the Trinity Centre car-park) with high quality contemporary architecture and urban landscaping that contributes to the cityscape, improves connectivity, and conveys civic ambition and pride.
8. Creating a new public facility, of world-class design calibre, that celebrates our energy industries and their technological innovation, reinforces the international reputation and identity of the city, and serves as a powerful 'magnet' for Aberdeen.
9. Capitalising on the moment created by the decision to progress the WPR to review strategy relating to public / mass transport within the city. Utilise the opportunity provided by the WPR to enhance the urban realm through road space reallocation in order to give pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars (and other vehicles) equal status within the city centre.
10. Carefully controlling development along the WPR to avoid blighting of the city centre.



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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Business Insider Top 500 Companies in 2010. In: TIF TPSP Response, Aberdeen City Council, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Cities Outlook 2011, Aberdeen has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest average salary of all UK cities, and 4<sup>th</sup> highest earnings growth.

<sup>3</sup> Developed from its historic industrial roots in textiles, from where the city's name derives.



## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr Duncan Cockburn,**

University Policy Advisor

**Professor Gokay Deveci,**

Scott Sutherland School of Architecture & Built Environment

**Professor Bill Donaldson,**

Professor of Marketing, Aberdeen Business School

**Professor David Gray,**

Institute for Management, Governance and Society,

Aberdeen Business School

**Professor Paul Harris,**

Head of Gray's School of Art

**Professor Richard Laing,**

Scott Sutherland School of Architecture & Built Environment

**Dr David McClean,**

Head of Scott Sutherland School of Architecture & Built Environment

**Andrew Martin,**

Director of Scottish Centre of Tourism, Aberdeen Business School

**Dr Alan Owen,**

Director of Centre for Understanding Sustainable Practice

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UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN