

*Aberdeenshire Statistics*

# Aberdeenshire Profile

July 2010





**Aberdeenshire is a predominantly rural area in the north east of Scotland. Traditionally, it has been economically dependent upon the primary sector (agriculture, fishing, forestry) and related processing industries. Over the last 35 years, the development of the oil and gas industry and associated service sector have broadened Aberdeenshire's economic base, leading to rapid population growth.**

## Physical Characteristics

Aberdeenshire extends to 6,313 sq km (2,437 square miles), representing 8% of Scotland's overall territory. The landscape varies from the mountainous Cairngorms through rich agricultural lowlands to rugged coastline.

## Population

Based on Aberdeenshire Council's Small Area Population Estimates and Forecasts (2007 Update), the population of Aberdeenshire represents 4.6% of Scotland's total, standing at 236,260 (2006), a 1.2% rise since 2005, a 4.1% rise since 2001 and a rise of over 50% since 1971. According to the latest GROS 2009 Population Estimates Aberdeenshire's population increased from 241,460 (2008) to 243,810 in 2009.

Major towns are Peterhead (17,450), Fraserburgh (12,370), Inverurie (11,030), Stonehaven (10,760), Westhill (11,100) and Ellon (9,910). The population currently has a relatively high proportion of under 20s and fewer over-65s compared with the Scottish average, reflecting employment-driven in-migration in recent decades.

## Economy

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** is estimated at £3,201m (2008), representing 3.5% of the Scottish total. Through strong commuting flows, Aberdeenshire is also closely linked to the Aberdeen City economy (GDP £7,288, 2008) and the region as a whole is thought to contribute 11.5% to Scotland's GDP. *Source: Mackay's Consultants Economic Report.*

A significant proportion of Aberdeenshire's working residents **commute** to Aberdeen City, varying from 11.5% in Fraserburgh to 65% in Westhill.

**Average Gross Weekly Earnings** (workplace based for full time employees 2008) are £587.90. This is £32.50 higher than the Scottish average and £76.10 lower than in Aberdeen City where gross weekly earnings are £664.00.

However, a high percentage of Aberdeenshire residents work in Aberdeen. *Source: National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.*

Total **employment** in Aberdeenshire is estimated at just under 80,000. The majority of employees work within the service sector, predominantly in public administration, education and health. In the north of Aberdeenshire the primary industries of farming and fishing are still prevalent. Aberdeenshire's economy is also closely linked to Aberdeen City's and the North Sea oil industry, with many employees in oil related jobs.

The average **unemployment** (claimant count) rate for Aberdeenshire in 2009 was 1.3%. This is lower than the average rates for Aberdeen City (2.0%), Scotland (4.0%) and the UK (4.0%) in the same year. *Source: Nomis available at [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk).*

## Energy Industry

Three important centres for the energy industry are Peterhead and the nearby gas terminal at St Fergus and a power station at Boddam. Although most oil-related companies are based within Aberdeen City, a number (approximately 80) are based in Aberdeenshire, particularly in Portlethen and Westhill, which is home to the largest cluster of sub sea engineering expertise in the world.

## Fishing

Aberdeenshire is Scotland's foremost fishing area, accounting for 58% of total fish landings by tonnage and 46% by value, and provides 29% of Scotland's fisheries-related employment. *Source: Aberdeenshire Fisheries Bulletins available at [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/statistics).*

## Agriculture

Aberdeenshire has 9% of Scotland's land area but 26% of the national arable total. 9,029 people were recorded as being employed or engaged in agriculture within Aberdeenshire in June 2009 representing 2% of local employment. Aberdeenshire is perhaps best known for its livestock sector, finishing (the process of fattening calves prior to slaughter) over one quarter of Scotland's beef herd.

## Tourism

Aberdeenshire's tourist industry is growing in importance, with its major natural assets, the Cairngorms and coast, supplemented by visitor attractions based on Aberdeenshire's heritage.

A total of 3,950.47 people visited Aberdeenshire between January - December 2008. Of the visitors to Aberdeenshire, there was a decrease in the number of day visitors, from 34% in 2007 to 32% in 2008 while serviced accommodation figures rose in popularity; 34% in 2007 and 36% in 2008.

Over the year, revenue spent by visitors in Aberdeenshire totalled £226,731,000. Total expenditure by visitors increased 2.4%, with increases in all areas. *Source: Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor, STEAM.*

## Housing

Aberdeenshire has a total housing stock of approximately 100,000 dwellings, of which 71% are owner occupied, 19% rented from the local authority or a housing association, 6% rented privately and 4% in other tenures. This is a considerably higher rate of owner occupation than in Scotland as a whole (63%).

In the past 5 years, an average of 1,432 new dwellings has been built in Aberdeenshire annually. Two thirds of this new development has taken place in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (the part of Aberdeenshire which roughly forms a 20 mile radius around Aberdeen City) with the remainder concentrated in the larger settlements.

The settlements which have accommodated the greatest number of new houses over the last 5 years are Inverurie (563), Kintore (551), Blackburn (442), Ellon (378), and Westhill (363). *Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Housing Land Audit 2009 available at [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/statistics).*

The average house price in Aberdeenshire at September 2008 was £209,116, compared with the Scottish average of £134,380.

## Serving Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire Council was established in April 1996, replacing three District Councils (Banff and Buchan; Gordon; Kincardine and Deeside) and Grampian Regional Council.

In 2007 a proportional representation system of voting was introduced, along with the creation of 19 new multi-member electoral wards with 68 Councillors in total: 21 Liberal Democrats, 20 Scottish National Party (SNP), 13 Conservative, 9 Independent and 5 Democratic Independent Group.

The Council's Revenue Budget for 2010/11 totals £550 million. The Education, Learning and Leisure service takes the largest share of budget (50.5%), followed by Housing and Social Work (24.6%), Transportation and Infrastructure (8.8%), and joint services such as Fire and Police (16.1%). 20% of the revenue is raised locally through the Council Tax. Average Band D Council Tax is £1,141 (2010/11), no change on the previous year.

Aberdeenshire Council has devolved local decision making to six Area Committees: Banff and Buchan; Buchan; Formartine; Garioch; Marr; Kincardine and Mearns. These areas have very diverse characteristics, problems and opportunities.

## Aberdeenshire's Administrative Areas

### Banff and Buchan Area

Fishing and agriculture are important industries, together with associated processing and service activity. The area is relatively self-contained and in recent years has seen a small decline in population. It does, however, have marketable tourism assets in its spectacular coastline, attractive coastal villages and visitor attractions.

Economic dependency, peripherality, and the future of the Common Fisheries Policy are key issues. The 'Building Buchan: New Beginnings' action plan was initially a three year programme to address the economic challenges facing coastal communities across north Aberdeenshire over 2003/08. The initiative has helped more than 500 businesses in the area and helped re-develop substantial areas of land within the major towns.

### Buchan Area

Peterhead is the largest town in Aberdeenshire, the principal white fish landing port in Europe, and a major oil industry service centre. Equally important is the nearby gas terminal at St Fergus and Peterhead Power Station. Inland, the area is dependent upon agriculture and there has been a minor decline in rural services, balanced by community responses. Issues affecting the Banff and Buchan area also apply here.

The future of the energy and engineering sectors remains vibrant and Peterhead's role at the top of the Energetica corridor sets the tone for realising this future potential.

### Formartine Area

Formartine has experienced rapid population growth, particularly around Ellon and Oldmeldrum, and in the south east where development has spread outwith Aberdeen. By contrast, the area around Turriff retains strong dependency on the traditional agricultural economy.

The area's coastline and rural environment with Country Parks at Balmedie and Haddo and its built heritage - Fyvie Castle, Haddo House offer tourism and recreation potential and the area is home to the Trump International Golf Resort development at Menie.

### Garioch Area

Centred on Inverurie, a traditional rural market town, Garioch has also experienced rapid growth due to its proximity to Aberdeen and good transport links. Continued growth in population, services and employment is anticipated across the Area, and particularly in the A96 corridor.

The area is largely agricultural, but is strongly affected by the City's economy and the oil and gas sector. Garioch holds growing potential for tourism, in its environment and archaeological heritage.

*(continued overleaf)*

## Marr Area

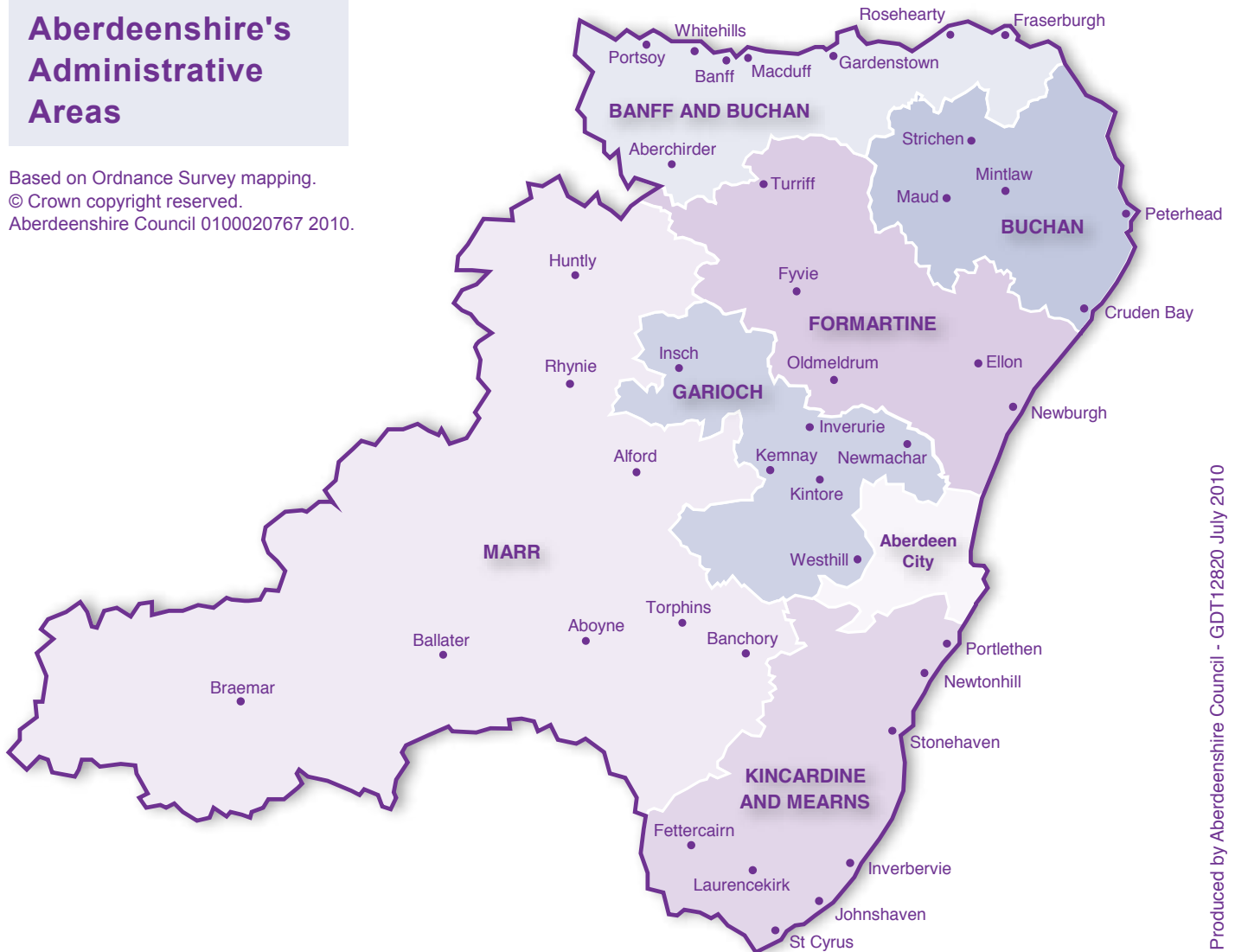
To the west, the spectacular mountain environment of the Cairngorms National Park sustains a well developed tourist industry based on heritage and outdoor pursuits. Forestry and livestock farming are key industries, particularly in remoter areas. To the east, Marr has experienced population growth due to its strong commuter links with the City.

## Kincardine and Mearns Area

Transport links with Aberdeen have encouraged very rapid population growth; the re-opening of Laurencekirk station has exceeded predictions. Portlethen and Stonehaven have greatly expanded and additional industrial and business development is anticipated. The southern part is more self-contained, with the fertile Mearns area sustaining a strong agricultural economy. Small scale tourism activity exists along its attractive coastline and former fishing villages.

### Aberdeenshire's Administrative Areas

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping.  
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Sources: Aberdeenshire Council Statistics 2006/10, Aberdeenshire Council's Small Area Population Estimates and Forecasts (2007 Update).

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