

# Introduction

## 1 What is the Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP)?

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan (also known as ALP) is the document which sets out the detailed guidance for new development in Aberdeenshire including the part within the Cairngorms National Park up to the end of 2015.

It conforms to the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan (also known as North East Scotland Together, or NEST), which sets out the broader guidance for new development in both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire up to the end of 2015.

Together, the Local Plan and the Structure Plan make up the Development Plan.

The legal basis for preparing this Plan is provided by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

## 2 What is this Plan, ALP, used for?

This Plan will mainly be used for four things. These are:

- a) Conserving and improving the environment.
- b) Providing a detailed interpretation of the Structure Plan strategy and policies.
- c) Making decisions on planning applications.
- d) Highlighting realistic opportunities for new development and investment.

## 3 What area does the Plan cover?

The Plan covers the whole area of Aberdeenshire Council including the part within the Cairngorms National Park.

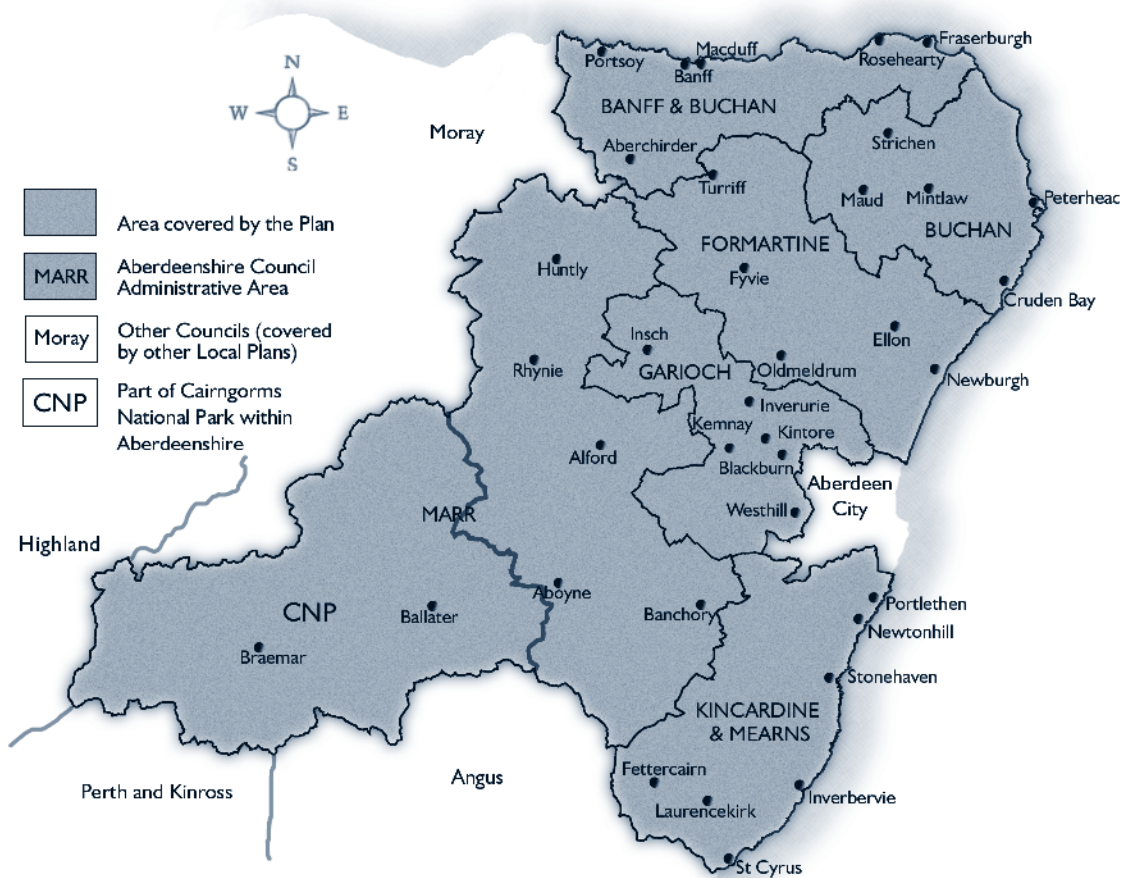


Fig I – Area covered by the Aberdeenshire Local Plan

## 4 How does this Plan relate to other Plans?

- a) The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan** – Together with the Structure Plan, the Aberdeenshire Local Plan will make up the Development Plan for Aberdeenshire including the part within the Cairngorms National Park. The Structure Plan will contain broad guidance, and the Local Plan detailed guidance, for new development up to the end of 2015.
- b) Previous Local Plans** – There are 3 Local Plans prepared to the boundaries of the former administrative areas covering what preceded Aberdeenshire i.e. Banff & Buchan, Gordon, and Kincardine & Deeside. The Aberdeenshire Local Plan (this Plan) will replace these.
- c) Other Council Plans** – Examples of other Aberdeenshire Council Plans include the Corporate Plan, the Community Plan, the Area Plans, the Service Plans, the Sustainable Development Charter and Action Plan, the Housing Plan, the Local Transport Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy etc.

On September 1st 2003 the Cairngorms National Park was formally established. A part of the Marr area, including the Rural Service Centres of Braemar, Dinnet, Bellabeg, Ballater, Strathdon, Corgarff and Roughpark, is situated within the Park's Boundary (see Marr West Main Proposals Maps for Definitive boundary).

Within the Aberdeenshire part of the Cairngorms National Park this Local Plan will seek to contribute towards the aims of the National Park:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- b) to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;

- c) to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- d) to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority will be preparing a National Park Plan and a Local Plan in due course. The latter will supersede ALP in due course. Where a proposed development raises conflict in terms of these aims, part a) is to be given greater weight.

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan and all these other documents make up a family of Plans which work together toward achieving the Council's overall Aims, i.e:

- To maintain and improve the quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire by delivering first class public services.
- To protect and improve Aberdeenshire's special environment for this and future generations of residents and visitors.
- To help sustain and develop our communities by encouraging a wide range of successful economic activities.

The main difference between the Aberdeenshire Local Plan and the other Plans is that it works towards achieving these Aims by dealing only with issues involving the use of land. Put another way, it puts forward the land use element of the Council's other Plans.

## 5 What does the Plan contain?

The Plan contains three main things:

- a) **The Objectives** – These set out what the Plan wants to achieve (Chapter 2). They provide the focus for all other information in the Plan.
- b) **The Policies** – These are the requirements for helping to deal with the main land use problems and issues affecting Aberdeenshire. As such, they help to make the Plan's Objectives possible and form the basis for making decisions on planning applications (Chapters 3-7).

Unless otherwise specified, all criteria used in each policy will apply. Also, not all policies will apply to all areas of Aberdeenshire e.g. Green Belt will only apply in Formartine, Garioch and Kincardine & Mearns. However, more than one policy may apply in any particular case. The phrase "in principle", as defined in the glossary, is used throughout the policies as a reminder of this.

The Policies are backed up by a set of Appendices, providing development guidance and other information. The Appendices are very much part of the Plan and should not be regarded as separate. They will be adopted with the Plan's other contents. They provide more detail on standards to be applied and useful background information.

Over the course of the plan the Council will also issue Guidance Notes and Development Briefs to help interpret the Plan. These will not be part of the Plan, will carry less weight than the policies and are not as prescriptive. Nevertheless, the Council will always encourage developers to take full notice of their guidance in preparing planning applications. In general, the greater the level of consultation on guidance of this kind, the greater the weight it will carry.

The local community will also be consulted wherever appropriate.

- c) **The Proposals** – These are proposed changes to the use of land shown on the proposals maps and in the accompanying text (Chapter 8 and the Main Proposals Maps). They also include actions the Council aims to take during the period of the Plan (Introductions to Chapters 3-7).

## 6 How do I use the Plan?

- a) If you want to know what the Council is trying to achieve by preparing this Plan look at Chapter 2.
- b) If you want to find out what the Council's policy and guidance is on various types of development look at Chapters 3-7 and the Appendices.
- c) If you want to see the proposals for the future use of land in Aberdeenshire's settlements look at Chapter 8.
- d) If you want to see what policies apply to the land outside Aberdeenshire's settlements look at the Main Proposals Maps.
- e) If you want a definition of any technical word or phrase used in the Plan look at the Glossary.

### Example –

**Question:** How can I find out whether or not I can build a house in the countryside?

**Answer:** Turn to the Main Proposals Maps. Find on the map where you want to build. Use the map key to find out if the site is in the Green Belt or Countryside policy area. Turn to the relevant policy in Chapter 4. These are listed on the map key. Note that other policies can also apply e.g. on house design or drainage standards.

## 7 What stage is this Plan at?

This Plan is at its adopted stage. This diagram shows the main stages the Plan has gone through on its way to its adoption.

Stage	When	Notes	Legal Status
1 - Start Preparing Plan.	March 1999	Various groups and individuals were asked for ideas for including in the Plan.	None
2 - Publish Draft Plan.	June 2000	Anyone can make representations on the Plan's contents during a ten week consultation period.	None
3 - Propose Draft Finalised Plan to Council Committees.	January -May 2002	The Draft Plan was revised based on the comments received and on the requirements of the approved Structure Plan (NEST)	None
4 - Publish Finalised Plan.	August 2002	Anyone can make objections to the Plan's contents during a six week objection period. Some of these will be resolved through negotiation.	Some status, particularly as NEST is now the approved Structure Plan.
5 - Public Local Inquiry.	August 2004	A public inquiry is held into unresolved objections.	Increasing status, particularly in light of the approved Structure Plan, but also in balance with the existing Local Plans.
6 - Publish Proposed Modifications.	Nov 2005	Anyone can make objections to the proposed modifications during a 6 week objection period.	Increasing status, particularly in light of the approved Structure Plan, but also in balance with the existing Local Plans.
7 - Publish Adopted Plan.	Mid 2006	The Adopted Plan fully replaces the previous Local Plans for Aberdeenshire.	Full legal status.
8 - Use Adopted Plan and commence monitoring.	From mid 2006	The Adopted Plan fully replaces the previous Local Plans for Aberdeenshire.	The Adopted Plan is put into full use with a view to altering it only as necessary to conform with any further review of the Structure Plan.

## 8 How will the Plan be monitored?

During the period of the Plan (2001-2015) it will constantly be monitored. This means checking to see how effective its contents are. The Plan will be looked at in relation to:

- a) How well it is working toward sustainability.
- b) New National Planning Guidance and Advice.
- c) New Strategic Forecasts and Development Audits.
- d) The views of Aberdeenshire's communities.
- e) The success of the development control process, including the numbers of departures approved.
- f) New plans, strategies and spending programmes prepared by the Council.
- g) How well the Plan is meeting the Structure Plan's aims, objectives and policies.

A monitoring survey will be published bi-annually. Where it states that the Plan is not working effectively, consideration will be given to altering the Plan accordingly.

