Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2016

Monitoring Report

June 2014
Revised ALDP Monitoring Report June 2014
The original report June 2013 included data for the period 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013. The revised
ALDP Monitoring Report includes a further year of data for the period 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires Councils to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP), which forms the basis for decision making on planning applications. It is a legal requirement that the Development Plan is reviewed and replaced on a 5 year cycle. A key component of that process is the publication of a “Main Issues Report” (MIR) which must be accompanied by a “Monitoring Report”.

The first stage in preparing the LDP is the MIR. The MIR is a tool for starting the debate and processes to structure change to the Local Authority area. The Act requires that a Monitoring Statement is prepared alongside publication of the MIR. Planning authorities must monitor:

1. Changes in the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area and
2. The impact of the policies and the proposals of the existing Plan.

Monitoring is essential for determining what the issues are for the MIR and for justifying why some parts of the existing Plan needs to change. As such, the Monitoring Statement or Report forms an important part of the evidence base for the MIR and subsequent LDP, as well as providing a clearly stated and readily understood baseline for future monitoring in order to serve efficient and high quality plan-making.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Monitoring Report is to assess the effectiveness of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan’s (ALDP’s) policies in delivering the aims of the plan and to provide an information base for the MIR and subsequent LDP.

The Scottish Government recognises that a proportionate approach to monitoring is necessary and considers that it should be proportionate to what is required to inform the particular issues being addressed in the plan.

The Planning Authority is to publish the Monitoring Report to support the identification of issues to be included in the MIR. The MIR was published in 2013. The reporting period was from 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013. The revised ALDP Monitoring Report includes a further year of data for the period 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014, showing the extent to which the evidence base has changed between the MIR and Proposed Plan stages.

1.3 Structure and Content

The main content of the report is structured under 3 main sections:

Statistical Context - Components of Change
  Physical
  Economic
  Social
  Environment

Aim Monitoring - Delivering the Vision and Aims

Policy Monitoring - Performance of the Policies
  Policies
  Departures
  Appeals

In each section significant implications for the Local Development Plan are specifically highlighted.
2. Statistical Context - Components of Change

2.1 Physical Characteristics

Land Use

Aberdeenshire covers 631,965 hectares; with just 34 hectares classified as derelict and 43 hectares classified as vacant land.¹

Aberdeenshire is one of the most mixed farming areas in the UK. It’s agricultural land covers approximately 518,000 hectares, 9% of Scotland’s total agricultural land. This is roughly divided into one third rough grazing, one third crops and one third grass.²

*The importance of the agricultural land resource is noted in the development plan and the best quality land provided with protection.*

Assets

Aberdeenshire’s assets include a public sector housing stock of some 12,900 within it’s total housing stock of some 111,000, some 3,500 listed structures, 27 Designed Landscapes, Battlefields and an Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record covering some 18,000 sites. Aberdeenshire has a well-developed asset base including social infrastructure (schools, housing, healthcare facilities); previously developed land; minerals and aggregates (quarries). There is other infrastructure for transport (road, rail, paths, pipelines and bridges) and facilities delivering clean water to homes and industry, and removing waste and sewerage. Aberdeenshire also benefits from other types of infrastructure for energy (power stations, pylons, power cables, wind turbines and pipelines); natural environment (woodland, arable land, forests and agricultural land); tourism and recreation (caravan parks and camping sites); telecommunication (telephone, masts, satellite television and broadband) and for waste management (waste collection, transfer stations and composting facilities). Aberdeenshire’s share of the world renowned North-East of Scotland expertise in oil and gas as well as in renewable energy is an additional asset.

*The development plan currently protects enhances and, where appropriate, exploits these assets. Policies are in place to augment infrastructure assets where this is necessary to support development.*

2.2 Economic Characteristics

Economy

Aberdeenshire’s economy largely depends on four sectors: agriculture and rural development, including forestry; energy, including oil and gas and renewable energy; fishing and food and drink. In addition, Aberdeenshire has an important construction industry and a substantial number of people employed in the public sector.

All the headline economic statistics show that overall Aberdeenshire enjoys considerable economic prosperity. To some degree this hides pockets of deprivation and poverty which are identified through the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)³ and some other small area statistics and these are commented on below. Generally Aberdeenshire shows low unemployment and above average incomes together with increasing numbers of employees and businesses, and new business survival rates comfortably above Scottish and UK rates.

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¹ Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2013
³ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
Whilst Aberdeenshire has been affected by the recent economic recession its impact has been cushioned to some degree by the effect of the high oil price on the local economy.

*The Local Development Plan supports economic development through both policy and land allocations.*

**Employment**

Aberdeenshire’s unemployment rate\(^4\) is currently the lowest in Scotland at 0.8%. During 2013 Aberdeenshire’s unemployment rate, as measured by job seekers claimant count, averaged 1.0%. Whilst this did represent an increase from the 2007 and 2008 rates of 0.7%, it is considerably below the Scottish and UK rates of 3.7% and 3.5% respectively.

![Unemployment Rate – Monthly Average](image)

In tandem with this, Aberdeenshire has high economic activity and employment rates: 81.9% and 78.6% respectively. For Scotland these figures are, respectively, 77% and 71% and for the UK overall, 77.3% and 71.3%\(^5\).

Total employment for Aberdeenshire, excluding farm agriculture, is shown on Table 1. The figures refer to the numbers employed in each sector and include those self-employed.\(^6\) The largest sector by employment is Manufacturing, followed by the Professional, Scientific and Technical sector, Business administration & support services, Health and Retail.

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\(^4\) Claimant count with rates and proportions, NOMIS

\(^5\) Annual Population Survey, Jan 2013 – Dec 2013, NOMIS

\(^6\) Business Register and Employment Survey, 2012, NOMIS
Table 1  Employment by VAT Based Enterprises - Aberdeenshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 : Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>2,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 : Mining, Quarrying and Utilities</td>
<td>4,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 : Manufacturing</td>
<td>12,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 : Construction</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 : Motor Trades</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 : Wholesale</td>
<td>3,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 : Retail</td>
<td>9,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 : Transport and Storage (inc Postal)</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 : Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>6,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 : Information and Communication</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 : Financial and Insurance</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 : Property</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 : Professional, Scientific and Technical</td>
<td>10,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 : Business Administration and Support Services</td>
<td>9,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 : Public Administration and Defence</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 : Education</td>
<td>7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 : Health</td>
<td>9,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 : Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Other Services</td>
<td>4,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No specific support is required for any of these sectors in the Local Development Plan.

Income Levels

In 2013 the median gross annual income\(^8\) for full time workers in Aberdeenshire was £29,665, higher than the Scottish average of £26,456 and the fourth highest out of all Scottish Local Authorities.

Median gross weekly pay in Aberdeenshire underlines the area’s comparative success; it was not the highest amongst local authorities but, at £545.40, was nearly 13% above the Scottish figure.

Business Environment

In 2012 Aberdeenshire had 11,345\(^6\) active enterprises and had seen 1,205 business births. This was the highest number of business births since 2007 and an increase of 3% on the previous year. The number of active enterprises has increased each year since 2004 and seems set to continue growing. (See Figure 2)

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\(^7\) UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2007

\(^8\) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2012 Resident Analysis

\(^6\) ONS – Business Demography 2013
Despite the growth in the number of businesses the number of total jobs fell, from 118,000 in 2011 to 116,00 in 2012, and job density, the number of jobs per person aged 16 – 64, also fell from 0.72 to 0.70\(^9\).

**Employment Land**

Average take-up of employment land is 14 hectares per annum, with the greatest activity in settlements close to Aberdeen City such as Westhill, Ellon, Kintore and Portlethen. The 2013 Employment Land Audit shows that there are currently 178 hectares of marketable employment land available in the Strategic Growth Areas of Aberdeenshire across a range of sites and locations\(^{10}\). This amount is well in excess of the Structure Plan target of 60 hectares and no further actions are required.

### 2.3 Social Characteristics

**Population**

The 2013 mid-year population estimate, produced by National Records of Scotland (NRS), showed that Aberdeenshire’s population had risen to 257,740. Aberdeenshire’s population grew by 26,490 people, or 11.5%, between 2003 and 2013, the fastest rate of growth experienced by any Scottish local authority over this period. Growth in the Scottish population over the same time was 5.1%.

During this time the age structure of the population started to change. Figure 3 shows that the older population is now a greater proportion of the total population than it was in 2003.

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\(^9\) ONS  
\(^{10}\) Employment Land Audit 2013
The major demographic trend that Aberdeenshire, along with Scotland and the UK as a whole, will have to accommodate over the next decades is the ageing of its population. The 2011 Census showed that Scotland as a whole, though not then Aberdeenshire, already had more people aged over 65 than under 15. Population projections based on 2012 figures suggest that Aberdeenshire will reach that point in 2014. Using the same projections Aberdeenshire’s over 65 population is expected to reach 74,840 (25% of total population) by 2037. The 2012-based projections for Aberdeenshire were a little lower than the 2010-based projections but the trend remains the same.

In the latest settlement population estimates produced by NRS, it was noted that Aberdeenshire has the highest number - 60 - of settlements (defined as having a population of 500 or more) of all Local Authorities.

Migration

Much of the growth in Aberdeenshire’s population is coming from inward migration. Although natural change (births minus deaths) has remained positive within the Council area, the main driver in population growth has been migration. (See Figure 4).

Please note that following the results of the 2011 Census the mid-year population estimates from 2001 to 2010 were rebased which necessarily meant that migration figures, too, were rebased. The number of net migrants into Aberdeenshire is now thought to have been higher, particularly in the first half of the decade, than was previously reported.

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11 Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2012-based), National Records of Scotland
National Records of Scotland divide migration into three types: migration from the rest of Scotland, migration from the rest of the UK and migration from overseas. The major influence on Aberdeenshire has been migration from the rest of Scotland. Migration from the rest of the UK fell steadily from 2003 onwards but started to increase again in 2011. Migration from overseas shows an opposite trend, in part reflecting the strong rise in people arriving from the A8 countries, particularly, but not exclusively, Poland. However, in contrast to migration from within Scotland or from the Rest of the UK, it has fallen over the last two years.

The chart shown in Figure 5 below shows how the different types of migration have fluctuated since 2001.

It is assumed that migration will continue to have an important effect on Aberdeenshire’s population. The extent of it may be linked to Aberdeenshire’s overall economy and how it performs over the next few years.
Housing

Aberdeenshire has a housing stock of approximately 111,000 dwellings\(^{12}\). In recent years an average of 1,184 new houses have been built annually in Aberdeenshire\(^{13}\). Aberdeenshire has the second highest number of annual house completions in Scotland after Edinburgh City\(^{14}\). The housing market remains buoyant here despite a significant slowdown in housebuilding across the rest of Scotland. A wide range of sites are available for future housing development across Aberdeenshire, capable of accommodating more than 26,000 dwellings. The average house price in Aberdeenshire is £227,634 compared with the Scottish average of £168,164\(^{15}\).

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<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen HMA (Aberdeenshire part)</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>1,133</td>
<td>1,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural HMA (excluding CNP)</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeenshire (including CNP)</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>1,216</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>1,817</td>
<td>1,765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Housing Land Audit 2014 shows that over the last five years, there were an average of 1,184 housing completions per year across Aberdeenshire, 610 in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) and 566 in the Rural Housing Market Area (RHMA).

Completion rates have been decreasing in the last few years. This is largely due to the economic downturn which has affected speculative housebuilding rates although other parts of Scotland have seen a much sharper decrease in housebuilding than Aberdeenshire. With the adoption of the ALDP in 2012, the new ALDP sites are now coming on stream boosting the supply of land. In the next five years completions are expected to increase, particularly in the AHMA.

Of all completions, 18% were on sites of less than 5 units in Aberdeenshire as a whole. In the AHMA the proportion was 11% and in the RHMA it was 26%.

Of the sites with 5 or more units, 81% of completions were on greenfield sites and 19% were on brownfield sites. Source: Housing Land Audit 2014

*These statistics are in line with expectations and do not impact on the housing delivery targets in the Strategic Development Plan.*

Affordable Housing

In the year 2011/12, consent was granted for 172 affordable housing units across Aberdeenshire. This was a decrease on previous years (Table 3 below). This total includes units contributed by developers as part of private developments as well as units which are wholly publicly funded.

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\(^{12}\) GROS Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland 2013

\(^{13}\) Housing Land Audit 2014

\(^{14}\) Scottish Government New Build Housing Statistics May 2014

\(^{15}\) Scottish Government Local Authority Housing Bulletin July 2014
Table 3 Affordable Housing Consents - Aberdeenshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Units Granted Consent</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Affordable Housing Securing Planning Consent Survey 2011/12, Scottish Government

This survey has been discontinued so there is no more up to date information.

Completions of affordable units by tenure are given below:

Table 4 Completions of Affordable Units by Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Low Cost Home Ownership</th>
<th>Social Rent</th>
<th>Shared Ownership</th>
<th>Mid Market Rent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aberdeenshire Council Housing Strategic Planning and Delivery Team

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2011 indicates that 415 new affordable units per annum will be required to meet identified need in Aberdeenshire. It is clear that at present there is a significant shortfall in the numbers of new affordable units being completed annually.

Affordable housing completions accounted for approximately 11% of all completions in Aberdeenshire in 2013. Around a quarter of these were on 100% affordable sites developed by Aberdeenshire Council or housing associations. The remainder of affordable units were built as part of larger private developments. Comprehensive data is not yet available on a site by site basis to show what proportion of each development is affordable. For those sites where we do have this information, the proportion ranges from 3% to 50% although for the majority of sites the proportion was less than the 25% required by the ALDP. Work is ongoing to improve the monitoring of affordable housing in order to more accurately assess the impact of ALDP Policy 6.

The deficit between the level of need and the extent of new supply is a significant problem that may require revision of how the Local Development Plan can support provision of affordable housing.

Poverty

It is estimated that 9% of children are living in poverty in Aberdeenshire as a whole, with higher proportions of up to 17% in the north of the area, particularly in Fraserburgh and Peterhead; a figure which is closer to the Scottish average of 19%. Aberdeenshire’s figure of 9% is the third lowest of the 32 Scottish local authorities (after Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands, both having a figure of 8%).

Fuel Poverty

Forty two percent of households in Aberdeenshire are classified as living in fuel poverty. This is an increase of 4% on the Aberdeenshire figure of 38% for the previous survey 2009/11. The figure for Scotland decreased by 3% from 30% for 2009/11 to 27% in the latest 2010/12 survey. The Aberdeenshire percentage has increased despite the energy efficiency measures installed to properties to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standard and through the Universal Home Insulation Schemes. Analysis indicates that those who are most fuel poor would require substantial increases in income and considerable reductions in fuel prices before they no longer face fuel poverty.

16 End Child Poverty Child Poverty Map of the UK February 2013
17 Scottish House Condition Survey 2010/2012
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Aberdeenshire is the sixth least deprived authority in Scotland according to the measure of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)\(^{18}\) 2012, having just a 0.4% share of the national deprivation in the 20% most deprived band. The overall pattern of deprivation in Aberdeenshire has not changed significantly since the previous SIMD 2009\(^{19}\) or, indeed, since the first SIMD in 2004 as illustrated in Fig 6 below. Deprivation in the income, employment, health, education, housing and crime domains continues to be concentrated in Banff & Buchan and Buchan, primarily in parts of Fraserburgh and Peterhead. With the exceptions of education and crime, deprivation levels have remained relatively unchanged since 2009 and the levels of deprivation in all of these domains remain well below the levels for Scotland as a whole.

There has been a relative worsening in educational deprivation since 2009. Crime deprivation also has worsened and there are six areas in Banff & Buchan and Buchan that fall within the top 5% most crime deprived in Scotland.

Aberdeenshire also has a high number of areas with access to services deprivation, reflecting the rurality of the Authority.

Aberdeenshire also has many areas with the least deprivation in Scotland. In fact, 35% of the data zone areas in Aberdeenshire fall within the 20% least deprived areas in Scotland.

Figure 6  Datazones in Most Deprived 5-20% by SIMD - Aberdeenshire

While the local pockets of deprivation are extremely concerning the land use planning system has limited opportunity to effect a resolution. The current Plan supports both higher levels of affordable housing and dedicated economic development measures in disadvantaged areas.

\(^{18}\) Scottish Government SIMD 2012
\(^{19}\) Scottish Government SIMD 2009
2.4 Environment Characteristics

Overview

Aberdeenshire’s environment is diverse. There are extensive lengths of attractive coasts, moorland edges, upland and moorland plateaux, straths, rivers and valleys. The lowland landscape is rolling and undulating, with conifers, broadleaf woodland, beech woodlands and farmland. Dwellings include farmsteads, cottages, traditional and modern houses. Aberdeenshire contains 3 Ramsar sites, 8 Special Areas of Conservation, 7 Special Protection Areas, 66 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 3 National Nature Reserves, amongst other designations. Although traffic can affect the quality of air we breathe, air quality in Aberdeenshire has consistently been within the EU objective max. of 40 μg/m³ (annual mean limit value).

The changing climate is an important aspect of our environment. Between 2009 and 2012, the total CO₂ emissions of Aberdeenshire decreased from 1,922.40 kilotons (kt) to 1,677.30kt in 2011 before rising to 1,744.40kt in 2012. There are implications of our changing climate for our society, environment and economy. We have already begun to experience extreme events, storms and flooding in some parts of Aberdeenshire, with significant effects on buildings and infrastructure and people’s livelihoods. It was estimated that there were 18 Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVA) to flooding in Aberdeenshire in 2011. See Table 5 below. In 2011 these areas covered 529 km², 1820 residential properties and 272 non-residential properties. It is estimated that the estimated potential damages of developments within PVA is likely to be £17.08 million. In addition, 2,219 properties are at risk within inland floodplains and 1,743 properties are at risk within coastal areas below 5m OD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total CO₂ Emissions (kt)</td>
<td>2,391.21</td>
<td>1,898.80</td>
<td>1,677.30</td>
<td>1,744.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita CO₂ Emissions (kt)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and Commercial CO₂ Emissions (kt)</td>
<td>841.39</td>
<td>675.4</td>
<td>593.2</td>
<td>626.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Transport CO₂ Emissions (kt)</td>
<td>674.39</td>
<td>627.3</td>
<td>610.0</td>
<td>604.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LULUCF* CO₂ Emissions (kt)</td>
<td>85.19</td>
<td>-187.0</td>
<td>-209.6</td>
<td>-229.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties at Risk Within Inland Floodplain</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>2,219</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties at Risk Within Coastal Areas Below 5m OD</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Potential Vulnerable Area (PVA) to Flooding</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Weighted Annual Average Damages Within PVA</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>£17.08m</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area (Km²) in PVA</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Properties in PVA</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Residential Properties in PVA</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁰ DECC (2015) Department of Environment and Climate Change
Issues of resilience of new development to the extremes caused by climate change and the need to assist in the transformation to a low carbon economy are significant issues that may result in greater prominence of this topic in the next Local Development Plan.

3. Aims Monitoring - Delivering the Vision and Aims

This section addresses the 6 aims of the ALDP and the various indicators identified to be used in assessing or measuring the progress of the plan in achieving these aims.

Grow and diversify the economy
Indicators: 1. Take-up of employment land – Historical development rates; 2. Changes in the sectoral composition of industry - moving away from mono culture; 3. Level of unemployment; 4. Levels of GDP and GVA; 5. No. of business start-ups.

Average annual take-up of employment land in the last 5 years has been 14 hectares across Aberdeenshire. Development has been concentrated mainly in Westhill, Ellon, Kintore and Portlethen; reflecting the fact that in the immediate vicinity of Aberdeen the commercial property sector has in recent years been outperforming the rest of the UK, with the exception of Central London.

Over the last five years the number of VAT or PAYE registered businesses in Aberdeenshire has grown by 8.7%.

Greatest growth was seen in the Professional, Scientific and Technical sector which grew by almost 50%. The Information and Communication sector grew by 10% and the Production sector, the Accommodation and Food sector, the Property sector and the Health sector all grew by around 7%. The Wholesale and Retail sectors experienced the greatest decline in numbers, both falling by around 7%. Other sectors experienced only small gains or losses.

Reflecting this, workplace analysis by occupation shows consistent growth, over the same period, in the numbers of people employed in Professional occupations and as Process, Plant and Machine operatives. It is difficult to distinguish trends for other occupational groups, but Sales and Customer Service has remained the smallest sector in terms of employment since 2004/05.

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22 UK Business: Activity, Size and Location, ONS
During 2013 Aberdeenshire’s unemployment rate, as measured by the Job Seekers claimant count, averaged 1.0%. Whilst this represents an increase from the 2007 and 2008 rates of 0.8%, it is considerably below the Scottish and UK rates of 3.7% and 3.5% respectively. (Refer Section 2.2 Economic Characteristics).

Economic output in Aberdeenshire, as measured by Gross Domestic Product was just over £3.5 billion in 2011, accounting for 3.6% of Scotland’s GDP. Gross Value Added (GVA) per employee in Aberdeenshire was £74,606 in 2010. This is almost 25% higher than the Scottish average of £59,934. GVA per employee is a measure of an area’s productivity. GVA per head for Aberdeen City and Shire in 2011 was £31,944, the second highest figure for regions in the UK after Inner London (£62,398).

In 2012 Aberdeenshire had 11,345 active enterprises and saw 1,205 business births. This was the highest number of business births since 2007 and an increase of 3% on the previous year. The number of active enterprises has increased each year since 2004 and seems set to continue growing. Although the number of businesses grew the number of jobs declined from 118,000 in 2011 to 116,000 in 2012, and job density, the number of jobs per person aged 16 – 64, also fell from 0.74 in 2011 to 0.70 in 2012. (Refer Section 2.2 Economic Characteristics).

No change is required in relation to this aim.

To take on the challenges of sustainable development and climate change


During the 2 year report period out of 257 applications for wind farms and / or medium to large wind turbines, 140 were approved. Similarly, 148 out of 171 development proposals
supporting Aberdeenshire Council’s carbon neutrality policy were approved. These approvals will potentially increase the number of renewable energy installations, increase energy production from renewables and improve energy efficiency in new developments. The policies in the ALDP are likely therefore to have significant, positive effect on climate change by reducing Aberdeenshire’s CO₂ emissions.

Although climate data for Aberdeenshire is not available for the reporting period, the trend from 2007 to 2012 indicates a mixed picture in relation to total, per capita, industrial / commercial and road transport CO₂ emissions. There is a rise from 2009 to 2010; a fall from 2010 to 2011 and a rise from 2011 to 2012. There are however 18 Potentially Vulnerable Areas in Aberdeenshire presenting many challenges from the effects of climate change (Refer Section 2.4 Environment Characteristics). Where necessary, developments have been or will be subject to drainage impact assessment and or full Flood Risk Assessment (e.g. at Mintlaw, Stuartfield, Newburgh, Blackdog and Sauchen).

Current data on air quality is not available as it is produced two years in arrears. However, data is available for 2006 and 2012. During that period there has been improvement in most indicators: smoke-related complaints have fallen from 69 to 41 in 2011 and rose to 50 in 2012 due to a fire event in a recycling plan and from a domestic bonfire; dust-related complaints have increased from 16 to 50 because of the fire events referred to; odour / fume-related complaints have fallen from 126 to 52 and the concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) has decreased slightly. In Aberdeenshire there are no properties exposed to particulate matter (PM₁₀) concentrations above EU and Scottish objectives. However, it tends to approach the EU objective in certain Aberdeenshire towns. These towns include Inverurie, Peterhead, Stonehaven and Westhill. Over the past 6 years, the emission of NO₂ has varied between 8.9 and 37.5 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³). The EU objective of 40 µg/m³ has never been exceeded. There is no evidence to suggest that the ALDP has had any significant adverse effect on air quality over the reporting period.

How waste is collected and managed affects the quality of the soil. The trend in data available from SEPA for waste for 2009/10 and 2010/11 indicates that while total municipal and industrial waste arisings are increasing, total commercial and construction / demolition waste arisings are falling. At the same time, both municipal and biodegradable municipal waste land filled is on the increase, yet municipal waste either recycled or composted is falling. Aberdeenshire’s prime agricultural land (Grade 1-3.1) is concentrated in central and southern Aberdeenshire, with Grade 2 mainly in the vicinity of Laurencekirk (approx 950 hectares). The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey contains details of vacant and derelict sites which may be available for development. In 2013, there were 34 hectares of derelict land and 43 hectares of vacant land on a range of sites across Aberdeenshire. Records available from Aberdeenshire Council’s Public Register of Contaminated Land indicate that over the monitoring period there was no evidence of land contamination necessitating summary entry, remediation statement, assessment action or special designation. The 2014 Housing Land Audit shows there is capacity for 2,015 units on brownfield sites which is approximately 8% of the total land supply. 1,161 units or 57% of these brownfield sites are within the effective supply, the remainder have some form of constraint. The 2013 Employment Land Audit shows 105 hectares of land on brownfield sites which is approximately 18% of the total land supply. This is almost entirely because of the 100 hectare allocation at Edzell and this site is currently regarded as constrained.

The 2011 Census outlined the current commuting habits of Aberdeenshire’s working and studying residents. This stated 49.7% of people drive to work, with 8.9% commuting as a passenger, 11.5% use public transport, 14.9% walk, 0.3% motorcycle, 0.8% go by bicycle and 11.3% work from home. 2.7% stated ‘other’ as their main method of travel.

Aberdeenshire Council’s current Local Transport Strategy was adopted in 2012. The overarching philosophy of the strategy has been developed to maximise the Council’s existing resources. Central to this approach the guiding principle is to encourage individuals and businesses to consider ways to travel less, travel more actively and, where vehicular travel is necessary, how journeys could be undertaken more effectively.

A key objective of the strategy is to ensure that sustainable and active travel infrastructure is incorporated into new developments at an early stage and that travel options are fully
explored, promoted and managed at a local community level with Council support. Furthermore it sets out the aim to increase levels of walking, cycling, car sharing and bus patronages through collaborations with local transport operators and communities. Monitoring of these objectives to ensure individual actions are effective met is currently ongoing, with a report due end of 2014.

Town Centre Health Checks are carried out every two years in the nine towns in Aberdeenshire which have a population over 3000. Over 30 indicators are assessed and these are grouped into seven broad categories: Retailer representation; Accessibility; Diversity of uses, Number and range of shops; Quality of town centre environment; Vacant properties; Safety and security and Pedestrian flows and Commercial performance. Each broad category contains individual indicators which each town is assessed against. The indicators are scored using a range of 1 – 5, where 1 indicates a poor performance and 3 is considered satisfactory.

The most recent checks were carried out in 2013. The overall scores show that Inverurie and Banchory have the highest average score of 3.5. This trend has been the same since the 2009 Health Checks, although the average score has slightly dropped from the 2009 and 2011 Health Checks. The results from the Heath Checks show that each of the nine towns had areas of concern with some indicators in each town scoring 2 or less. Of particular note the provision of facilities for cyclists was scored at 2 or less for all nine towns. It should be noted that no town was assessed at 1 using the indicators under Diversity of uses, Number and range of shops or Quality of town centre environment, although some towns were assessed at 2. The next round of Town Centre Health Checks will be completed in summer 2015 and will allow comparisons to be made over time, by individual town and by indicator.

The Rural Facilities Monitor has shown a continued downward trend in the number of facilities in rural areas such as shops, post offices and petrol stations since monitoring began in 1981 to 2013. However between 2008 and 2013 the rate of closures has slowed significantly. During this time there was a decrease of 8% in the number of post offices, 7% in the number of shops and 5% in the number of petrol stations. Furthermore, for the same period, there were only 2 GP surgeries closures, with no decrease in the number of banks or libraries.

Closures of key facilities can have a significant negative impact on the sustainability of rural communities and the quality of life for residents. All areas of Aberdeenshire have been affected by the closure of local services, particularly in Banff and Buchan and Buchan, where there was a total reduction in services between 2008-2031 of 19% and 25% respectively. Garioch was affected the least by closure during this period with only a 3% overall loss of local services.

*Change is required under this aim in terms of climate change.*
To make sure the area has enough development land to provide for people, homes and jobs to support services and facilities

Indicator: 1. Availability of Housing and Employment Land.

The Housing Land Audit 2014 shows that there is currently a 6.2 year supply of housing land in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (HMA) and a 6.6 year supply in the Rural HMA. The land supply has increased for the second year running as the LDP housing allocations continue to progress.

The Employment Land Audit 2013 shows that there are currently 178 hectares of marketable employment land in the Strategic Growth Areas of Aberdeenshire, well in excess of the Structure Plan target of 60 hectares.

These figures indicate that the aim of providing enough development land is currently being achieved.

*No change is required in relation to this aim.*

To protect and improve assets and resources

Indicators: 1. Development in designated nature conservation sites; 2. Loss of prime agricultural land; 3. No. of Conservation Area reviews; 4. No. of Towns Historic Initiative Reviews. (Refer to Section 2.4 Environmental Characteristics).

During the 2 year report period planning applications to which the policy on Protection of nature conservation sites has been applied were 48 in number. Out of this number, 40 were approved and 8 were refused. In the same period there were 643 applications to which the policy on Protection of the wider biodiversity and geodiversity had been applied. Of these 572 applications were approved while 71 applications were refused. Similarly, out of 87 application to which the policy on Protection and Conservation of agricultural land had been applied 68 were approved and 19 were refused. The records show that unless the proposed applications are likely to have no detrimental effects on biodiversity, they were refused. The ALDP is therefore unlikely to have had negative effects on biodiversity.

3 No. new Conservation Areas have been scheduled in the reporting period (Auchenblae, Benholm and Tarland), representing a significant addition to the existing 37 (Refer to Section 2.4 Environmental Characteristics).

Records available from Historic Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council do not indicate that the ALDP has had any adverse effects on the historic environment whose assets remains as follows: listed buildings (3,715), buildings at risk (228), conservation areas (37 (plus 3)), scheduled ancient monuments (581), gardens and designed landscapes (27), archaeological sites and monuments record (17631) as well as battlefields in the past year. Banff and Peterhead have attracted funds from the Townscape Heritage Initiative Fund.

*No change is required in relation to this aim.*

To promote sustainable mixed communities with the highest standards of design

Indicators: 1. Number of Masterplans approved; 2. Number of affordable housing units within developments; 3. Number of submissions to the design awards; 4. Number of different types, sizes and tenures of housing constructed; 5. Level of new mixed development completed and levels of local service provision.

Over the reporting period three Development Frameworks have been approved at Laurencekirk, Kintore East and Peterhead. In addition the following masterplans have also been agreed. Banff & Buchan (0) Buchan (1) : Peterhead M1, Formartine (3) : Turriff
In the year 2013/14, 120 affordable housing units were delivered across Aberdeenshire. Affordable housing completions accounted for approximately 11% of all completions in Aberdeenshire in 2013. Around a quarter of these were on 100% affordable sites developed by Aberdeenshire Council or Housing Associations. The remainder of affordable units were built as part of larger private developments.

Comprehensive data is not yet available on a site by site basis to show what proportion of each development is affordable. For those sites where we do have this information, the proportion ranges from 3% to 50% although for the majority of sites the proportion was less than the 25% required by the ALDP. Work is ongoing to improve the monitoring of affordable housing in order to more accurately assess the impact of ALDP Policy 6. We do not currently hold comprehensive information on house types and sizes. However, it is expected to be available for affordable developments from 2014. See previous section for tenure (Refer to Section 2.3 Social Characteristics).

The number of submissions to the design awards in 2008 was 181, in 2010 there were 161 and in 2012 there were 106 entries.

In Buchan there are mixed developments in Mintlaw, Peterhead and Stuartfield over 6 sites covered by Masterplans / Development Frameworks, for 1500 houses, health care centres, care homes, community centres, schools, neighbourhood retail centres, household waste management and district heating facilities. They contribute to access, footpaths, cycling and allotments. 40% of the overall Masterplan area has been reserved for open space. Developments in Formartine accommodate over 40 units of residential developments in Newburgh and a business park, light industrial park, economic centre regional foodhall, hotel, retail, village centre and biomass boiler at Blackdog. In Garioch, there are similar mixed developments for nearly 400 houses in Sauchen, Newmachar and Broadshade (Westhill). Mixed developments in Kincardine and Mearns will add over 1744 to the stock, at Elsick and Edzell.

No change is required in relation to this aim.

To make efficient use of the transport network

Indicators: 1. Proportion of new developments with higher densities to support efficient transport network; 2. Distance for residents to reach a transport “hub” and number of residents served; 3. Deliver improved public transport services. Public transport share / level of passenger numbers on buses; 4. Levels of commuting by car, cycle use and pedestrian amenity.

Data extracted from the approved Masterplans / Development Frameworks indicate that although there are variations in densities, the developments aim to achieve an overall density of 30 dwellings per hectare or above. The developments are flatted and terraced properties, semi-detached and detached houses of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms.

For the other indicators refer to the text for the indicators under the second aim To take on the challenges of sustainable development and climate change.

No change is required in relation to this aim.

4. Policy Monitoring - Performance of the Policies

Method Statement: As part of the monitoring process, Stage 1 required the identification of key policies to be monitored. The ALDP presents 14 policies supported by 53 supplementary guidances policies. The Scottish Government recognises that a proportionate approach to monitoring is necessary and considers that the monitoring should be proportionate to what is required to inform the particular issues being addressed in the plan. Through a workshop
engagement process with the Policy team, 19 key policies were identified to be the focus for monitoring. These are listed in Table 6.

## 4.1 Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALDP 19 Policies to be monitored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Policy 1 Business Development SG Bus3: Working from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Policy 1 Business Development SG Bus4: Tourist facilities and accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Policy 1 Business Development SG Bus5: Development in the Energetica Framework Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Policy 2 Town centres and retailing SG Retail1: Town centres and retailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Policy 2 Town centres and retailing SG Retail2: Retail development in the countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> Policy 3 Development in the Countryside SG Rural Development1: Housing and business development in the countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> Policy 3 Development in the Countryside SG Rural Development2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong> Policy 5 Housing land supply SG Housing1: Housing land allocations 2007 – 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> Policy 5 Housing land supply SG Housing2: Housing land allocations 2017 to 2023 and early draw down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> Policy 6 Affordable housing SG Affordable Housing1: Affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong> Policy 7 Other special housing needs SG SNH3: Gypsies / travellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong> Policy 8 Layout, siting and design of new development SG LSD2: Layout, siting and design of new development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong> Policy 8 Layout, siting and design of new development SG LSD5: Public open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong> Policy 10 Enabling development SG Enabling Development1: Enabling development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong> Policy 11 Natural heritage SG Natural Environment1: Protection of nature conservation sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong> Policy 11 Natural heritage SG Natural Environment2: Protection of the wider biodiversity and geodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong> Policy 12 Landscape Conservation SG Landscape1: Landscape character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18</strong> Policy 12 Landscape Conservation SG Landscape2: Valued views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong> Policy 14 Safeguarding of resources and areas of search SG Safeguarding2: Protection and conservation of agricultural land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section will examine the performance of these 19 policies over the first and second years of the 2 year report period; 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013 and 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014. The
analysis will cover the levels of use of the individual policies in determining planning applications and in departures and appeals. (Table 7).

Table 7 lists the key policies used in determining applications and shows the overall usage against them, decision type, plus the proportion of total overall usage.

Table 7  Key policies used in determining planning applications by decision type
1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013 and 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014
(App – Approvals  Ref – Refusals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Year 1 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013</th>
<th>Year 2 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014</th>
<th>2 year period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall usage</td>
<td>App</td>
<td>Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working from home</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist facilities and accommodation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development in Energetica Framework Area</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town centres and retailing</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail development in the countryside</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and business development in the countryside</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing allocations 2007-2016</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing allocations 2017-2023 early draw down</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies and travellers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout, siting and design of new developments</td>
<td>1349</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public open space</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Env. 1: Protection of natural</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Details of the individual applications are contained in the background papers for the monitoring report.

As a proportion of the total overall usage for the 2 year reporting period, the policy used the greatest number of times was the policy on layout, siting, and design of new developments (55.4%). This was followed by the policy on housing and business development in the countryside (15.1%). As a proportion of total overall usage, policies relating to wind farms (5.8%), landscape character (8.1%) and protection of wider biodiversity and geodiversity (9.9%) were reasonably used over the period. The rest of the key policies were negligibly used in comparison.

**Policy 1 Business development SG Bus3: Working from home**

Existing Policy Use: There has been limited use of this policy. There were 11 decisions based on ALDP Policy 1 SG Bus3 in the 2 year report period 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014. The policy was not used to refuse an application.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged for this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 1 Business development SG Bus4: Tourist facilities and accommodation**

Existing Policy Use: Policy 1 SG Bus4 has been used in 58 planning decisions in the report period. There were 52 approvals and 6 refusals.

Departures: There was one application approved as a departure where Policy 1 SG Bus4 was used as a material consideration in supporting the departure during the first year report period (KM/APP/2011/3869 4 dwellinghouses and garages and the erection of a soft play barn at Story Book Glen).

There were no departure applications from this policy during the second year of the report period.

Appeals: In the first year of the report period there were 2 appeal decisions, one dismissed (PPA/110/2114 formation of a caravan park and farm shop at Fortrie Turriff F/APP/2010/4032) and one sustained (PPA/110/2113 COU (change of use) to residential multiple occupancy Station Hotel, 18 Seaforth Street, Fraserburgh BB/APP/2011/2869).

In the second year of the report period there were 2 appeal decisions, one appeal dismissed (PPA/110/2168 resubmission of PPA/110/2114 above) and one sustained (PPA/110/2170 COU hotel to dwellings Feughside Inn, Strachan M/APP/2012/3093).
Given the specific circumstances of the departure and the appeals, no change is required to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 1 Business development SG Bus5: Development in the Energetica Framework Area

Existing Policy Use: There has been limited use of this policy to support or refuse applications specifically within the Energetica corridor. However, in the second year of the report period there has been an increase in reference to the policy. Nine decisions referred to this policy and the policy was used only in supporting these applications.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged for this policy during the 2 year report period. The policy was however referred to by the Reporter in his dismissal of the appeal PPA/110/2140 for 22 dwellinghouses and business premises for home/work units at Rashiereive, Foveran (F/APP/2012/1743).

No change is required to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 2 Town centres and retailing SG Retail1: Town centres and retailing

Existing Policy Use: There were 67 decisions that made reference to Policy 2 SG Retail1 in the report period, 61 approvals and 6 refusals.

Departures: There were no departure applications from this policy during the 2 year report period.

Appeals: There were 2 appeals against applications in the first year of the report period. One appeal was sustained and one dismissed. Appeal PPA/110/2156, 1 The Square, Torphins (APP/2012/3455) was for a change of use from a shop to a hot food take-away. The Reporter suggested that Policy 2 and its associated SG Retail 1 had not been written with villages such as Torphins in mind, and only offered 'the broadest of guidance'. The Reporter suggested that "as far as the general retail provisions of the plan are concerned, the proposal accords with the policy approach" and allowed the appeal.

The dismissed appeal PPA/110/2112 was on the former Haldanes Store, Ellon (APP/2011/1638) for the demolition of a supermarket and the erection of 63 flats and 1000 sqm. of retail units. The Reporter commented that the scale of the proposed development was excessive and does not accord with the development plan and dismissed the appeal.

In the second year of the report period there was one appeal sustained on the basis of this policy. PPA/110/2188 COU from shop to chip shop at 57 High Street Banff (BB/APP/203/1977). The officers report had recommended approval of this application to the Area Committee who had refused the application.

These decisions, taken in isolation, do not result in the need for any change to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 2 Town centres and retailing SG Retail2: Retail development in the countryside

Existing Policy Use: There was limited use of Policy 2 SG Retail2 in the first year of the report period with an increase in the second year. There were a total of 8 decisions and the policy was used only in supporting these applications.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged for this policy during the 2 year report period.

No change is required to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 3 Development in the countryside SG Rural Development1: Housing and business development in the countryside

Existing Policy Use: This policy was the second most frequently used policy in the ALDP (Policy 8 SG LSD2: Layout, siting and design of new development was the most used policy in assessing planning applications) over the 2 year report period. There were 941 decisions
based on Policy 3 SG Rural Development1: 88% of the policy use was in approving applications.

Departures: Over the 2 year report period Policy 3 SG Rural Development1 was the policy being departed from the most. Of the 124 departure decisions, 48 were recorded from this policy, representing 39% of the departures.

Appeals: Over the 2 year report period, of the 47 dismissed appeals, 19 were dismissed on the grounds of Policy 3 SG Rural Development1, representing 40% of the dismissed appeals.

Given the scale of departures against this policy this may merit review.

Policy 3 Development in the countryside SG Rural Development2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines

Existing Policy Use: There were 257 decisions based on Policy 3 SG Rural Development2 in the report period, 140 approved decisions (54%) and 117 refused decisions (46%). This policy was amongst the most frequently used policies in ALDP.

Departures: Over the 2 year report period, there have been 16 departures approved from Policy 3 SG Rural Development2 out of the 124 departures for the report period. This represents 13% of the granted departures.

Appeals: Over the 2 year report period, Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2 was the most used policy in dismissing and sustaining of appeals. This policy was in most cases used in conjunction with Policy 12 SG Landscape1: Landscape character. There were 17 appeals that were refused on the basis of this policy, this being 36% of the total appeals being dismissed.

Given the scale of departures against this policy this may merit review.


Existing Policy Use: There were 38 decisions based on Policy 5 SG Housing1 in the report period, 32 approvals and 6 refusals.

Departures: There was one application approved as a departure from this policy on the recommendation of the officers. APP/2013/0556 was considered at Area Committee for Land Adjacent to Craiglyn, Loanhead Croft, Newburgh. The application was for the Erection of a Dwellinghouse and Garage and the site falls within the M1 site of LDP.

There were no departure applications from this policy during the second year of the report period.

Appeals: In the first year of the report period there were no appeals lodged. In the second year of the report period there was one appeal sustained. PPA/110/2164 for residential development (18 houses) at the site adjacent to Udny Green School (APP/2012/1874), an EH1 site (earmarked for 15 houses).

These decisions, taken in isolation, do not result in the need for any change to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 5 Housing land supply SG Housing2: Housing land allocations 2017 to 2023 and early draw down

Existing Policy Use: There has been limited use of this policy to support or refuse applications during the report period. There were 4 decisions for approval based on this policy. This limited use is to be expected as this relates to Phase 2.

Departures: In the first year of the report period there were no departure applications from this policy. In the second year of the report period there were 2 applications approved as departures from this policy on the recommendation of the officers. APP/2012/3543 and APP/2012/3544 were considered together at Area Committee for Land at rear Muir Road, Memsie. The applications were for the Erection of 4 no. dwellinghouses and 14 No. Dwellinghouses respectively.
There were no appeals lodged for this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 6 Affordable housing SG Affordable Housing1: Affordable Housing**

In the first year of the report period, there were 2 decisions based on Policy 6 SG Affordable Housing1. In the second year, there were 39 references to this policy, 34 in applications for approval and 7 references in applications that were refused.

Departures: In the first year of the report period there were no departure applications from this policy. In the second year of the report period there were 2 applications approved as departures from this policy and Policy 7 Other special housing needs SG SNH3: Gypsies / travellers. APP/2011/3100 and APP/2011/3103 were considered together at Area Committee for Land to West of Chapelton of Elsick, Newtonhill. The application was for a New Settlement with up to 4045 Dwellinghouses, Commercial, Retail and Community Facilities, with Associated Landscaping, Open Space, Drainage and Roads Infrastructure and Services and the second application was for Phase 1A of this New Settlement, (including 802 Dwellinghouses).

 Appeals: There were no applications approved on appeal from this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 7 Other special housing needs SG SNH3: Gypsies / travellers**

Existing Policy Use: This policy has been used twice during the 2 year report period.

Departures: In the first year of the report period there were no departure applications from this policy. In the second year of the report period there were 2 applications approved as departures from this policy and Policy 6 Affordable housing SG Affordable Housing1: Affordable Housing. APP/2011/3100 and APP/2011/3103 were considered together at Area Committee for Land to West of Chapelton of Elsick, Newtonhill. The application was for a New Settlement with up to 4045 Dwellinghouses, Commercial, Retail and Community Facilities, with Associated Landscaping, Open Space, Drainage and Roads Infrastructure and Services and the second application was for Phase 1A of this New Settlement, (including 802 Dwellinghouses).

 Appeals: There were no applications approved on appeal from this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 8 Layout, siting and design of new development SG LSD2: Layout, siting and design of new development**

Existing Policy Use: This policy was the most widely used policy of the 19 key policies currently being monitored. Over 50% of planning applications have been assessed using Policy 8 SG LSD2 in both approvals (91% of applications) and refusals (9% of applications).

Departures: Over the 2 year report period this policy was the policy being departed from the second most after Policy 3 SG RD1. Of the 124 departure decisions, 22 were recorded from Policy 8 SG LSD2, representing 18% of departures.

 Appeals: There were 14 applications approved on appeal from this policy during the 2 year report period and 5 applications dismissed on appeal. This policy was the policy most cited by the Reporters in sustaining appeals.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 8 Layout, siting and design of new development SG LSD5: Public open space**

Existing Policy Use: There were 84 decisions that made reference to Policy 8 SG LSD5 in the report period, 76 approvals and 8 refusals.
Departures: In the first year of the report period reference was made to this policy in supporting a departure application (in conjunction with policy 8 SG LSD2). APP/2012/2440 a COU of public open space to dwellinghouse curtilage in Monyruy Longside was recommended for approval by the Head of Planning and Building Standards. The Buchan Area Committee upheld the departure reason given as per the officers recommendation.

There were no applications approved as departures from this policy during the second year of the report period.

Appeals: There were no applications approved on appeal from this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 10 Enabling development SG Enabling Development1: Enabling development**

Existing Policy Use: There has been limited use of Policy 10 SG Enabling Development1. There were 11 applications that made reference to the policy (in conjunction with other policies) in the report period, 6 references in applications that were being approved and 5 references in applications being refused.

Departures: In the first year of the report period, the policy was used as a supporting policy by officers in recommending refusal of an application which was then approved as a departure at ISC on the basis of Policy 1 Business development SG Bus4: Tourist facilities and accommodation. The application was KMAC/APP/2011/3869 for 4 dwellinghouses and garages and the erection of a soft play barn at Story Book Glen Kirkton of Maryculter.

There were no applications approved as departures from this policy during the second year of the report period.

Appeals: There was one application sustained on appeal from this policy during the report period; PPA/110/2118 for the erection of 8 houses at Land to South Oak End, Breda Estate, Alford. The Reporter allowed the application on the grounds of this policy.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 11 Natural heritage SG Natural Environment1: Protection of nature conservation sites**

Existing Policy Use: There has been limited use of Policy 11 SG Natural Environment1. There were 48 decisions that made reference to the policy in the report period, 40 approvals and 8 refusals.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged for this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 11 Natural heritage SG Natural Environment2: Protection of the wider biodiversity and geodiversity**

Existing Policy Use: There were 643 decisions that made reference to the Policy 11 SG Natural Environment2 in the report period, 572 approvals and 71 refusals. Of the 19 key policies monitored this policy was the third most referred to but always in conjunction with other policies, in particular Policy 3 SG Rural Development2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged for this policy during the 2 year report period.

*No change is required to the policy or supporting text.*

**Policy 12 Landscape conservation SG Landscape1: Landscape character**
Existing Policy Use: There were 434 decisions that made reference to Policy 12 SG Landscape1 in the report period, 312 approvals and 122 refusals. Over the short life of the ALDP 2012, the number of applications to which landscape polices have been applied has increased. The applications likely to have significant effects on the landscape were refused. This policy has been largely used in conjunction with the primary Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines.

Departures: There were no applications approved as departures solely from this policy during the report period.

Appeals: There was one application dismissed on appeal from this policy during the first year of the report period and no appeals lodged on the sole basis of this policy in the second year of the report period. As with departures this policy is used as a supporting policy in the appeal applications for windfarms and wind turbines.

This decision, taken in isolation, does not result in the need for any change to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 12 Landscape conservation SG Landscape2: Valued views

Existing Policy Use: There were 38 decisions that made reference to Policy 12 SG Landscape2 in the report period, 34 approvals and 4 refusals. In all instances of usage this policy is used in conjunction with Policy 3 SG Rural Development2 and Policy 12 SG Landscape1, in supporting and refusing windfarm and wind turbine applications.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged solely for this policy during the report period.

No change is required to the policy or supporting text.

Policy 14 Safeguarding of resources and areas of search SG Safeguarding2: Protection and conservation of agricultural land

Existing Policy Use: There were 87 decisions that made reference to Policy 14 SG Safeguarding2 in the report period, 68 approvals and 19 refusals.

There were no departure applications or appeals lodged for this policy during the report period. The policy was used as a supporting policy by officers in recommending refusal of an application which was then approved as a departure by Area Committee. The departure application was for a dwellinghouse in New Byth, APP/2009/2707. The main policy was Policy 3 Development in the Countryside SG Rural Development1: Housing and business development in the countryside.

No change is required to the policy or supporting text.

4.2 Departures

Over the 2 year report period (1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014) there were 143 departures, 66 in the first year of the report period and 77 in the second year of the report period. However, in the first year, 19 of the 66 departures referred to policies from the previous plan, the Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP), resulting in 47 departures from policies in the current Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. This results in a total of 124 departures over the 2 year period (47 and 77).

In the first year of the report period, the 47 departures from policies in ALDP are broken down between the 6 Areas: Banff and Buchan 22, Buchan 11, Formartine 6, Garioch 1 and Kincardine and Mearns 7. Forty-seven percent of the departures were in Banff and Buchan Area.

In the second year, the 77 departures from policies in ALDP are broken down between the 6 Areas: Banff and Buchan 24, Buchan 18, Formartine 7, Garioch 4, Kincardine and Mearns 15 and Marr 9.
These applications included major and minor business proposals, local scale housing proposals, wind farm applications and other applications (eg. building extensions and alterations). Over a third (39%) of the departures are for dwellings / housing developments in the countryside.

Table 8 Policies from ALDP being departed from in granting departure applications: 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALDP Policy</th>
<th>Number of Departures 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013</th>
<th>% Share</th>
<th>Number of Departures 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014</th>
<th>% Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy 3 SG Rural Development 1: Housing and business development in the countryside</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 4 SG STRLType2: Greenbelt</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 8 SG LSD2: Layout, siting and design of new development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 13 SG Historic Environment 1: Listed buildings and SG 2: Conservation areas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Various</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Other Various – policies refer to access to new developments, safeguarding transportation facilities, developer obligations, affordable housing, housing land allocations and gypsy/travellers)

The most commonly used policies for supporting the departure applications are Policy 3 Development in the countryside SG Rural Development 1 Housing and business development in the countryside and Policy 8 SG LSD2 Layout, Siting and Design. Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2 Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines and Policy 13 Protecting, Improving and Conserving the Historic Environment SG Historic Environment 1: Listed buildings and SG 2: Conservation areas were also used. (Details of individual departure applications are contained in the background papers).

With the diversity of Aberdeenshire, differing policies have prominence of use in the different Areas, e.g. in Kincardine and Mearns Policy 4 Special types of rural land SG STRL2 Greenbelt is used more widely.

With most of the departure applications multiple policies were used in conjunction with each other in the assessment of the application. The policy being departed from the most was Policy 3 SG Rural Development1: Housing and business development in the countryside. This policy was, in most cases, used in conjunction with Policy 8 SG LSD 2: Layout, siting and design of new development and often with Policy 13: Protecting, improving and conserving the historic environment SG Historic Environment1: Listed buildings and SG Historic Environment2: Conservation areas. Policy 4 Special types of rural land SG STRL2: Greenbelt and Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines have also been departed from. These policies were in most cases used in conjunction with Policy 12 SG Landscape1: Landscape character.

4.3 Appeals

The appeals process can assist in identifying where policy change may be required, particularly where development was approved contrary to the Local Development Plan. Table 9 shows information on appeals that were considered by the Scottish Government Reporters during the 2 year period: 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014.
Table 9 Planning Appeals Summary: 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Appeals Determined</th>
<th>Dismiss</th>
<th>Sustain/ Allow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total appeals determined 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013 (incl ALP)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Determined with ALDP policies 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total appeals determined 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014 (incl ALP)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Determined with ALDP policies 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the first year of the report period, 41 applications went to appeal with 26 dismissed and 15 allowed by the Scottish Government Reporters. Thirty-six of the appeal decisions were assessed in terms of the ALDP and 5 were assessed in terms of the previous plan ALP.

During the second year, 48 applications went to appeal with 23 dismissed and 25 allowed by the Reporters. Forty-seven of the appeal decisions were assessed in terms of the ALDP with just one assessed in terms of the previous plan ALP.

In order to analyse the information further, Table 10 below lists the main ALDP policies used to dismiss and sustain the appeals during the 2 periods. (Details of individual appeal applications are contained in the background papers).

Table 10 Local Plan policies used to dismiss / sustain appeals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALDP Policy</th>
<th>1 June 2012 and 1 June 2013</th>
<th>1 June 2013 and 1 June 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dismiss</td>
<td>Sustained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 1 SG Bus1: Development of business land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 1 SG Bus2: Office development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 1 SG Bus4: Tourist facilities and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 2 SG Retail 1: Town Centres and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retailing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 3 SG Rural Development1: Housing and</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business development in the countryside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 3 SG Rural Development2: Wind farms and</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium to large wind turbines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 3 SG Rural Development3: Other renewable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energy developments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 5 SG1 Housing Land: Housing land</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allocations 2007 – 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 8 SG LSD2: Layout, siting and design</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 10 Enabling Development1: Enabling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 12 SG Landscape1: Landscape character</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With most of the appeals multiple policies were used in conjunction with each other in the assessment of the application. The policy used the most times in the dismissal of appeals was
Policy 3 SG Rural Development 1: Housing and business development in the countryside. This policy was in most cases used in conjunction with Policy 8 SG LSD 2: Layout, siting and design of New Development. Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines was the second most used policy used in the dismissing of appeals. This policy was in most cases used in conjunction with Policy 12 SG Landscape 1: Landscape character. It can also be seen from the table that Policy 8 SG LSD2 was the policy most used in sustaining appeals.

Since the introduction of the ALDP on 1 June 2012, 61 applications have been considered by the Local Review Board (LRB) and decided on during the report period. Table 11 below provides the breakdown over the 2 year period based on the decision made. (Details of individual LRB appeal applications are contained in the background papers).

In the first year of the report period, 7 applications were considered and refused by the LRB. Five of the 7 were wind turbine applications. The policies used in refusing the wind turbine applications were Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2: Wind farms and medium to large wind turbines, Policy 8 SG LSD 2: Layout, siting and design of new development and Policy 12 SG Landscape 1: Landscape character.

During the second year of the report period, 54 applications were considered by the LRB. Forty applications were refused in line with the officers recommendations. A third of the refused applications were for wind turbines; Policy 3 SG Rural Development 2 and 48% for dwellings (Policy 3 SG Rural Development 1: Housing and business development in the countryside). Fourteen applications were granted against the officer’s recommendation. There were a variety of applications, including, wind turbines (2), single houses (4), alterations and extensions (5) and other individual applications.

Table 11 Planning Appeals to LRB Summary: 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LRB Determined</th>
<th>Refused</th>
<th>Granted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total appeals determined by LRB 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2014 (2 year period)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Determined by LRB 1 June 2012 to 1 June 2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Determined by LRB 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, the policies of the Plan have largely been supported by both the Scottish Government Reporters at appeal and the Local Review Board and can therefore generally be considered to be effective in delivering their aims.