



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire Council Development Plan Scheme 2019



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021

JANUARY 2019

Introduction

Purpose of a Development Plan Scheme

The Aberdeenshire Council Development Plan Scheme sets out the programme for the preparation of the next Local Development Plan. Its purpose is to inform communities and participants of the programme for production of the Local Development Plan. Aberdeenshire Council is required to include a “Participation Statement” within the Development Plan Scheme that sets out who we will consult with, how, and when.

Review of the Development Plan Process

The Scottish Government is currently reviewing the legislation surrounding the preparation of Local Development Plans and a new Planning Act is anticipated in 2019. A number of changes are proposed to the current Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. These include removing the need to produce a Main Issues Report and replacing it with a Draft Plan consultation, and increasing the timeframe of the Plan to 10 years. Supplementary Guidance could be removed and any such guidance could either be placed within the Plan or be produced as planning advice. There will also be an obligation to have regard to Local Place Plans to ensure stronger community engagement.

A list of existing Supplementary Guidance is attached as an Appendix for information.

Many of these changes are dependent on an additional new policy provided by the Scottish Government in the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy, or secondary legislation to be approved at a later date. It is anticipated that it will be a number of years before all of the outcomes from the revised Act can be implemented. Scottish Government will provide guidance through “transitional arrangements” on the changes from the system currently used to the new system proposed by the new Act. In the meantime, Aberdeenshire Council will continue to prepare a Local Development Plan under the legislative guidance which is current at the time.

What is a Local Development Plan?

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 is a place based land use planning document that contains the policies used by Aberdeenshire Council to determine planning applications and identifies the allocated sites on which development should take place. It covers the whole of the Aberdeenshire area, excluding the Cairngorms National Park, which has its own Local Development Plan.



Figure1: Map showing Aberdeenshire, its six areas, and the extent of the Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan is not a promotional strategy, and other documents, such as the Regional Economic Strategy and the proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan generally fulfil these functions.

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 will contain statements on the land use vision for the area. It will make recommendations for place based actions to deliver development, based on the overall spatial strategy set by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan.

What Information is used to Prepare a Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan reflects national priorities for development set out by the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy. Currently, the proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan sets out broad policy objectives that have to be co-ordinated between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. The Local Development Plan must be consistent with the Strategic Development Plan.

The Local Development Plan reflects and adopts the principles behind a wide range of other plans and strategies prepared by Aberdeenshire Council and our partners, including the Local Housing Strategy, Regional and Local Transport Strategies, Local Place Plans, and the Regional Economic Strategy.

The preparation of the Plan is supported by a number of formal information reviews. The final Plan has to be supported by an Environmental Report from a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Full consultation has to take place on an interim Report to ensure that we can demonstrate that we have fully considered impacts on the environment from the Plan. An “appropriate assessment” of possible impacts on internationally important natural habitats and species also has to be undertaken.

An Action Programme requires to be drawn up to highlight the constraints to development allocations being taken forward, and to audit who is required to take action to see development delivered. This is published to inform the Proposed Local Development Plan and finalised after the approval of the Local Development Plan itself.

Aberdeenshire Council's Commitment to Engagement

Engagement and consultation are a key part of the Plan making process. As a place based document that is designed to meet local planning needs and aspirations, the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan strives to reflect the land use changes that people would wish to see in their communities. This principally relates to new land for housing and business, and the protection of valued environmental features and areas.

Aberdeenshire Council has adopted the principles of the updated National Standards for Community Engagement. The seven standards provide a best practice approach to achieving influential community participation, ensuring that any barriers to engagement in the process are overcome based on the needs and available resources of those groups. Engagement methods will be fit for purpose and will enable participants to engage efficiently and effectively and could include charrettes and place standard events. We will ensure that those with an interest in the Local Development Plan understand the issues we are concerned with and are consulting on. We will also encourage them to work effectively with other consultees to provide useful information back to us. At the end of the process we will feed back how we have dealt with the information they have provided.



Conformity with the Participation Statement

To demonstrate how we have taken consultation on the Local Development Plan forward, a “Statement of Conformity with the Participation Statement” will be prepared for consideration by the Reporter at the Local Development Plan Examination stage.

In this we will compare what we said we would do, with what we did. We will use SP=EED[©] to evaluate each of the stages of consultation on the Plan to assess the depth of the consultation undertaken and evidence how we have performed in relation to:

- Whether the purpose of the engagement is clear and people can find out about it easily? Are opportunities to participate clearly explained and opportunities to express opinions publicised?
- Whether the timetable for the engagement process included opportunities for partners to develop their own ideas. Are partners involved in discussing how to co-ordinate their responses?
- Is the information used relevant and accurate? Is it communicated and shared, and is new information from partners sought?
- Is the engagement accessible and does it suit its intended audience? Does it fit the situation, and are there opportunities for discussion?
- Is relevant information made available and do the findings from the engagement processes allow change to be made to the Plan? Are there opportunities for new ideas to be presented and discussed?
- Are relevant groups engaged with, and does this include “hard to reach” groups, possibly with assistance and advice?
- Is the feedback received analysed? Does evaluation of the process take place on an on-going basis?
- Is there a means for lessons from the engagement to be identified, and shared with stakeholders?
- The evaluation will assess our performance in relation to whether we have been informing, consulting, and working in partnership with stakeholders at each stage of the process.

How to get involved - The Participation Statement

Who we will Consult With

We have identified six main user groups of the Local Development Plan with whom we would like to engage with during its preparation. These groups are:

- Community Councils and other established Community Groups who have a key interest in the wider future of their communities.
- Land development and building interests have a key role in ensuring that an appropriate scale of development is delivered in appropriate locations. This group broadly comprises developers, landowners and agents.
- Key agencies have a role to monitor and contribute to the content of the Local Development Plan to ensure that their interests are appropriately represented. This group includes Government Agencies such as Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.
- Special interest groups designed to promote specific topics within Aberdeenshire, e.g. Friends of the Earth, and The Ballies of Bennachie and, who will be keen to see their specific interests protected.
- Other individuals may have a specific issue that they wish to conserve or see developed. Consultation should be open to all within the community.
- Finally significant engagement is required within Aberdeenshire Council, and with organisations such as Transport Scotland, Scottish Water, and NHS Grampian to ensure that the contents of the Plan are deliverable.

Statement of Methods to be Used

A number of consultation methods will be used to ensure the above groups all have a voice in the preparation of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021.

From late 2017 and in 2018 we have already undertaken the following actions:

- Pre-engagement has taken place with Community Councils, land development and building interests, key agencies and special interest groups to ensure that any issues that they have with the existing Local Development Plan are recorded, and where possible addressed. Generally this has been done through stakeholder seminars where an overview of the content and the intent of the current Plan has been presented and options sought for improvements that could be made.
- All 68 Community Councils were offered a “Place Standard” seminar with planning staff. Organised jointly with Community Planning staff, all but two Community Councils took up this invitation. These sessions sought to identify what the local issues were within their community so as to inform the shared vision that we have for settlements and those features that should be protected or enhanced.
- Early engagement has taken place with Elected Members of Aberdeenshire Council with regard to the policies within the existing Local Development Plan 2017 and with regards to the Bids for development received. This has been carried out to capture Members’ comments at an early stage in order that they can be reflected in the Main Issues Report.
- A draft of the Bids to be included in the Main Issues Report Appendices has been made available to Community Councils.
- A programme for the possible consideration of comments by Community Councils has been made, to co-ordinate gathering their views on the Main Issues Report.

The Main Issues Report

There are a number of actions that we propose to take in order to facilitate engagement on the Main Issues Report:

January 2019

- We will introduce clear and distinctive branding on the Local Development Plan documents to make it easily identifiable.
- We will publish statutory notices in the Press and Journal newspaper and place other notices in local newspapers, giving 12 weeks for comments to be made.
- Copies of the Main Issues Report will be published on our website and made available through all public libraries in Aberdeenshire. Copies of supporting information, including a draft Proposed Local Development Plan, will be made available on our website.
- A response pro-forma will be placed on the website.
- We will contact all Community Councils to provide a copy of the formal notice and advise them of the availability of the Main Issues Report along with a response form. An offer of receiving a hard copy of the Main Issues Report will be made. Attention will be drawn to a copy of the draft Proposed Local Development Plan published on the website. Each Community Council will be offered a second visit from a Planning Officer to answer questions and provide advice on the preparation of any submissions.
- We will write to all other stakeholders advising them that the Main Issues Report and a draft Proposed Plan have been published.
- We will publish a short film to assist consultation on the Main Issues Report. This will be available to view on our website.
- We will develop the website to provide information on the Local Development Plan and the process that we are using to consult upon it. The website will be developed to promote the Main Issues Report and encourage on-line submission of representations.

January - March 2019

- The January, February, and March issues of the newsletter will be published which will each focus on key elements of the Main Issues Report.
- We will host drop in events across the major towns in Aberdeenshire to give developers an opportunity to present their development visions to communities. We will visit at least 16 venues across the Local Development Plan area to invite participation in submitting comments on the Main Issues Report.
- We will write to all stakeholders advising them of dates, times and venues for each of the drop-in sessions and publicise them via the newsletter, and the website.
- We will undertake a Youth Engagement Pilot Project to engage young people in the Main Issues Report consultation. A tailored approach for both primary and secondary schools will be developed and will deliver outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence.

By August 2019

- All representations received will have been catalogued and reviewed. An "Issues and Actions" Report will be produced to identify all comments made and published on the website.
- The Monitoring Report will be updated.

Engagement on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

The Proposed Plan is the Plan that Aberdeenshire Council would like to see taken forward to adoption, and will be the Plan debated in the Local Development Plan Examination.

December 2019

- We will publish statutory notices in the Press and Journal newspaper, and other notices in local newspapers, allowing at least 6 weeks for people to give us their views.
- We will provide appropriate updates in our newsletter.
- We will place a copy of the proposed Plan and any associated Supplementary Guidance on our website and distribute copies to the Area Offices and all libraries within Aberdeenshire. A response pro-forma will also be placed on the website.
- We will write to all Community Councils with a copy of the statutory notice, a copy of the proposed Plan and a pro-forma and will encourage and offer to help them make representations.
- We will write to all those who engaged with us on the Main Issues Report with a copy of the statutory notice, direction as to where the proposed Plan can be viewed and a pro-forma to help them make representations along with a copy of a Report on how we took account of representations made on the Main Issues Report.
- We will write to all occupiers and neighbours of new development sites, advising them of our inclusion of nearby land within the proposed Plan.
- We will write to all statutory undertakers and adjoining Local Authorities with a copy of the statutory notice, a copy of the proposed Plan and a pro-forma to help them make representations.

By September 2020

- We will acknowledge all responses made to the Proposed Local Development Plan and any Supplementary Guidance, and advise stakeholders on whether any submissions that have been made should result in a change to Aberdeenshire Councils adopted position going into an Examination.
- Summaries of the submissions made to the Proposed Local Development Plan will be prepared. These will be in the form provided by Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.
- We will submit to the Scottish Ministers:
 - The Development Plan Scheme 2020.
 - The Proposed Local Development Plan.
 - Any Supplementary Guidance proposed to be published with the Local Development Plan.
 - The Schedule 4 documents.
 - The statement of conformity with the Participation Statement taken from the 2020 Development Plan Scheme.
 - The Monitoring Report (as amended in summer 2019).
 - Copies of the unresolved representations.
 - The Environmental Report from the Strategic Environmental Assessment.
 - The proposed Action Programme.

- The Habitats Regulations Appraisal Record and associated correspondence from SNH.
- We will submit a notice in the Press and Journal newspaper stating when the Plan was submitted for Examination, making copies available in all main libraries in Aberdeenshire and publishing it on the Aberdeenshire Council website.
- We will defend the Proposed Plan at an Examination in Public, taking into account any changes deemed necessary following receipt of submissions.

Following the Local Development Plan Examination

On receipt of the Local Development Plan Examination Reporter's recommendations:

- We will amend the Plan as instructed, unless there are overriding matters that Aberdeenshire Council cannot accept.
- We will advertise our intention to adopt the Local Development Plan in the Press and Journal.
- We will print the Local Development Plan and lodge it in libraries across Aberdeenshire.
- We will publish the Local Development Plan and any Supplementary Guidance on our website.
- We will advise the Scottish Government of our intent to adopt the Local Development, as modified.
- We will publish the Action Programme.

In the next 12 months we will...

Over the course of 2019 we will report on stakeholders' views on the Main Issues Report and will prepare a Proposed Local Development Plan for formal consultation.

The Local Development Plan newsletter will be a key vehicle that we will use to keep people engaged in the preparation of the Local Development Plan. This is a self-subscribing electronic document published approximately every 4 weeks and with a disclosure check in April of each year. Currently there are 228 subscribers to this facility.

Methods of Monitoring Performance

Full records will be kept of engagement activities to inform the Monitoring Statement on conformity with the current Participation Statement that is required to be submitted to the Examination in 2020. It is unlikely that the Development Plan Scheme to be published in 2020 will vary significantly from the 2019 edition, but an update of the consultation actions undertaken during the calendar year will be provided to support the Proposed Local Development Plan at Examination.

Appendix 1

Existing Supplementary Guidance to the 2017 Local Development Plan

All Supplementary Guidance in relation to the Local Development Plan 2017 is available at <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/LDP>

Supplementary Guidance:

- 1 Affordable Housing
- 2 The Regeneration Priority Area
- 3 Energetica
- 4 The Coastal Zone
- 5 Local Nature Conservation Sites
- 6 Areas safeguarded or identified as areas of search for minerals development
- 7 Developer Obligations
- 8 Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy
- 9 Special Landscape Areas

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