



ABERDEENSHIRE
Development Plan
Scheme

2021

Aberdeenshire Council Development Plan Scheme 2021

Introduction

A Development Plan Scheme is required by section 20B of the Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, (as amended). It sets out the Authority's programme for preparing and reviewing their Local Development Plans. It must contain:

- (a) proposed timetabling,
- (b) details of what is likely to be involved at each stage of preparation or review, and,
- (c) an account (referred to as an Authority's "Participation Statement") of when consultation is likely to take place, with whom, the likely form of consultation and of the steps to be taken to involve the public in the stages of preparation or review.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has introduced a raft of measures as part of the Scottish Government's "Transforming Planning" agenda to reform the planning system. These include significant measures relating to the preparation of Local Development Plans. Full implementation of these measures will occur over time and the Scottish Government expect the Regulations and guidance relating to Local Development Plans to come into force in line with the publication of the National Planning Framework 4, a draft of which is now anticipated in Autumn 2021 with approval by the Scottish Parliament in early 2022.

Due to the uncertainty introduced by this timetable, this Development Plan Scheme cannot look forward to the next Local Development Plan, except in a most cursory manner.

The Development Plan in Aberdeenshire

The Development Plan in Aberdeenshire consists of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan and the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017.

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020 was approved by Scottish Ministers on 12 August 2020. Strategic Development Plans are no longer required by the Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 with the strategic planning role being taken up by a Regional Spatial Strategy which informs the National Planning Framework 4. On publication of the National Planning Framework 4 by the Scottish Government in early 2022 this element of the Development Plan will no longer be relevant. The National Planning Framework 4 will become part of the Development Plan.

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan was adopted on 17 April 2017. It covers all of Aberdeenshire, except for that area which is within the Cairngorms National Park which has its own Local Development Plan. The 2017 Plan is supported by 9 elements of Supplementary Guidance (see Appendix 1).

Figure 1 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Area



These two documents provide the context for deciding planning applications at the current time. It can be anticipated that a new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 will be adopted within approximately 12 months to provide an up-to-date framework.

Timetable for the production of the Local Development Plan 2021

Since 2017 work has been going on with communities and stakeholders to prepare an Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021. A Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 was published on 25 May 2020 and is progressing towards Examination by the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA). Aberdeenshire Council fully expect the Plan to be adopted within the next twelve months. The following figure sets out the stages of Plan production and notes key dates where significant actions were taken.

Figure 1 Stages of Plan Production

1. Stage	Strategic Environmental Assessment ('SEA') stage	Proposed Date
2. Pre-Main Issues consultations	Prepare SEA Scoping Report	Until January 2019
3. Publish Main Issues Report for consultation.	Publish Interim Environmental Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment	From 14 January to 8 April 2019
4. Publish Draft Proposed Local Development Plan for consultation		
5. Publish Proposed Local Development Plan for consultation	Publish Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - Environmental Report of the Proposed Local Development Plan	From 25 May 2020 to 31 July 2020
6. Submit Proposed Local Development Plan to Scottish Ministers for Examination	Publish Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - Environmental Report of the Proposed Local Development Plan consultation responses	Submitted to Scottish Ministers on 12 March 2021. The Examination is likely to take between six and nine months to complete
7. Adopt the Local Development Plan		February 2022
8. Publish Delivery Programme	Prepare Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) post adoption statement	May 2022

Shaded cells represent completed stages.

Due to the impact of the Covid pandemic this schedule illustrates a two-month extension to the Plan's development programme as set out in previous Development Plan Schemes. This was largely caused by a delay in publishing the Proposed Plan as revised consultation methods were developed to address the need for social isolation during the lockdown period, and the scale of representations received.

Stage 6 The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Examination

During the Local Development Plan Examination, the DPEA will maintain a dedicated website on which they will publish:

- All Schedule 4s submitted by the Planning Authority
- All requests for further information issued by the DPEA
- All responses received after requests for further information
- A list of documents produced by invited parties

This will be the primary source of information on the Examination.

At the end of the Examination, the DPEA will publish a Report of the Examination and advise all those who made representations to the Proposed Plan accordingly. The Council will also advise all those who previously engaged with the Planning Service on the Main Issues Report.

Early next year Aberdeenshire Council will consider the Report of Examination and take a decision on whether to modify the Plan for adoption in line with the recommendations. If this is not the case, then a different path may need to be followed.

On a decision by the Council of its intent to adopt the Plan, modified as required, the Council will:

- Publish a notice in a local newspaper noting Aberdeenshire Council's intention to adopt the Plan and advising where it may be inspected;
- Make copies of the Local Development Plan the Council would wish to adopt available in public libraries, Area Planning Offices (provided Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted) and on the Aberdeenshire Council website; and
- Notify people who made representations in respect of the Plan that the Proposed Plan has been published in the form in which the Council propose to adopt it, and where and when it can be viewed.

The Council is required to advise Scottish Ministers of its intent to adopt the Plan and, barring a direction from the Scottish Ministers, 28 days later the Plan can be formally adopted. At this point the Council will:

- Formally Publish the Plan;
- Publish the Plan on the Aberdeenshire Council website;
- Advertise its publication and availability in a local newspaper; and
- Notify people who made representations in respect of the proposed Local Development Plan of its publication and availability.

Future Local Development Plans

The timing of Regulations governing the "Transforming Planning" agenda makes it very difficult to anticipate when the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan will start. The Scottish Government advise that after the provisions of the 2019 Act are brought into force, it will be important for the first round of 'new style' Plans to be brought forward in a timely fashion. On that basis, it is envisaged that every

Planning Authority in Scotland will have a 'new style' Local Development Plan in place within 5 years of the Development Plan Regulations coming into force (when NPF4 is published). This is anticipated to be in 2027, a date that coincides with the Council's intentions to make a mid-term review of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021.

Timescales for preparing Aberdeenshire Council's next Local Development Plan will be included in a future Development Plan Scheme when further information is available from the Scottish Government. It is anticipated that work on the Local Development Plan will commence immediately after the adoption of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021, initially focussing on collecting information to produce an "Evidence Report", identified as a key early stage in new style Local Development Plans. A key part of this will be engaging with key agencies, local communities and children and young people.

The Participation Statement

As we are now entering the “Examination” stage of the Local Development Plan 2021, opportunities for wide involvement in its preparation have largely passed. It is only in response to specific questions from the Reporter from the DPEA that there will be opportunity for further engagement, and then only by invitation.

However, other activities are also being undertaken that relate to the Local Development Plan, particularly in the context of the revision of Aberdeenshire Council’s “Planning Advice” (technical documents will focus on promoting preferred methods of assessment and will have a direct focus on the information needed to comply with the approved policies of the Local Development Plan) on which targeted consultation may take place before this is adopted in early 2022. There will be no “public” consultation on these technical documents but engagement with specific stakeholders on specific topics will take place.

Engagement and consultation remain a key part of the Plan-making process. As the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan is developed the principles of the updated National Standards for Community Engagement will continue to be adopted. These 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 as far as it is practical to do so.



Appendix 1 - Supplementary guidance

1. Affordable Housing
2. The Regeneration Priority Area)
3. Energetica
4. The Coastal Zone (pdf 6.89MB)
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

