

## **REPORT TO BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2025**

### **PROPOSED ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 2025-2026**

#### **1 Executive Summary/Recommendations**

1.1 The draft Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Scheme is presented for consideration and comment. This presents the timetable and participation statement for the Local Development Plan that we anticipate would be adopted in 2029. Following public consultation, the Infrastructure Services Committee will consider an amended Development Plan Scheme for approval. As required by statute, the Development Plan Scheme sets out the timetable and proposals for stakeholder consultation for the 2025 to 2026 financial year.

**1.2 The Committee is recommended to consider and provide comments to the Infrastructure and Environment Service on the report in appendix 1.**

#### **2 Decision Making Route**

2.1 The previous Development Plan Development Plan Scheme 2024- 2025 was approved by Infrastructure Services Committee (Item 5) on 16 May 2024 following consideration at Area Committees on 6 February 2024, 13 February 2024, and 20 February 2024

#### **3 Discussion**

3.1 A Development Plan Scheme is required under section 20(B) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended to set out the Authority's programme for preparing and reviewing their LDP, and what is likely to be involved at each stage. A programme has been undertaken since 2009 of preparation of annual Development Plan Schemes. In preparing the development plan scheme the planning authority are to seek the views of, and have regard to, any views expressed by the public at large as to the content of the participation statement.

3.2 Regulation 24 requires Development Plan Schemes contain a timetable, specifying the months in which the Authority proposes to publish its next Proposed Plan and to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Government advise that, by setting the timetable and ensuring it can be adhered to, Planning Authorities should consider a range of issues. These will include their own planning and administrative resources as well as ability of key agencies and other stakeholders to feed into the process at key stages.

3.3 Within the draft Development Plan Scheme 2025- 2026 (Included as Appendix 1 to this Report) we propose the expected timetable for the preparation of the Local Development Plan 2029. The draft Development Plan Scheme provides an overview of the processes we predict we will follow and marks those key points in the programme when engagement and consultation will take place. It

focuses on the “Call for Ideas” stage of the plan making process, where invitation is made for the submission of development bids and ideas from communities, sometimes expressed through Local Place Plans. These are analysed for future presentation to Area Committees for consideration as a prelude to preparing the Proposed Local Development Plan.

- 3.4 Within the draft Development Plan Scheme 2025-2026 we have built upon the previous year’s scheme noting a further delay, of approximately three months in the original timetable introduced to ensure fair and comprehensive engagement on topics associated with Site Selection and Distribution and Infrastructure First, and ensure that we have taken on board lessons that can be learned from other Authorities who have now proceeded through their Gate Check process. We now expect that the presentation of the Evidence Report to Council will occur on 24 April 2025, with the Gate check assessment starting in June 2025. This slippage is reflected in later deadlines for future stages of the plan resulting in anticipated adoption by mid-2029. This is out with the expectation of the Scottish Government for completion of a Local Development Plan within 5 years of the publication of National Planning Framework 4 (February 2028). Whenever possible we will try to recoup this delay in the future stages of plan production.
- 3.5 The Call for Ideas can go ahead before the conclusion of the Gate check process. There are two parts to this stage of the process, a call for development bids to October 2025 and a call for community ideas before January 2026. Bids proposed by the development industry and landowners will be made public before the end of the Call for Community Ideas to allow for feedback from the general public on the proposals submitted.
- 3.6 The Call for Ideas is an opportunity for participants to collaborate with us to identify how the issues raised in the Evidence Report can be addressed at a local level. The “Virtual Town Hall” process used in the engagement on the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan in 2021 was seen as a success and received positive feedback from users. This process will be renewed, and online forms will be used to capture ideas from stakeholders. Support and guidance notes will be provided to help in this process.
- 3.7 For communities specifically, area forums are proposed to initially outline the process and means of engaging with the LDP process and, if requested, Community Councils or groups, will be able to meet with officers to help in the submission of their ideas. Appropriate online support will be available for enquiries and a telephone contact service will be established.
- 3.8 Significant activity will also be undertaken to raise the profile of the Local Development Plan in this context, including dedicated web pages on the Local Development Plan website and a social media campaign through the Councils social media feed, to make sure that there is awareness of this important part of the plan making process. Particular attention will be paid to involving young people and seldom heard groups in this process. We will try and draw an audience to the LDP and look at new and innovative ways to increase engagement as opportunities including shared best practice arise.

- 3.9 Opportunities for comment on or ideas from communities in response to development BIDS will also be available at end of this process to ensure that communities and developers are informed as early in the process as to what is being proposed for the next LDP.
- 3.10 Following the close of the Call for Ideas, analysis will take place and recommendations made to Area Committees during the quarters 1 and 2 of 2026-2027 (April – September 2026) to inform the content of the Proposed Local Development Plan.

#### 4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The Development Plan Scheme supports the following pillars within Aberdeenshire’s Strategic Priorities by promoting dialogue as to the content of the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

Pillar	Priority
Connected communities	We will work with communities and partners to enhance the sense of connection among our places. This includes supporting communities to come up with innovative solutions to ensure our places are resilient and vibrant.
Living well locally	We will encourage and support our residents to lead healthy and active lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities. We will make proactive choices that will allow us to cater to the needs of our increasingly ageing population.

- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	[IIA attached as Appendix 2]		
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing	[IIA attached as Appendix 2]		
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

- 4.4 The implementation of the Development Plan Scheme may have financial implications associated with travel costs to liaise with stakeholders

and communities associate with the reactive character of the proposals, these are not considered excessive, and no implications are identified as they will be met from within existing budgets. There are no staffing implications.

- 4.5 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. This is included as Appendix 1 and the following impacts have been identified which can be mitigated as described: -

Subject	Detail	Impact Overall	Outcome
Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Respect	Positive	The Development Plan Scheme recognises that children and young peoples' views are valued and to be respected as part of an inclusive process.
	Freedom of expression	Positive	
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	Age (Younger)	Negative	Mitigation of Impacts caused by lack of understanding can be achieved by the offer of personal assistance from staff to participate.
	Disability	Negative	

- 4.6 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the need for further detailed assessments.

- 4.7 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- [ACORP006](#) Reputation management (including social media) should the actions proposed in the Participation statement of the Development Plan Scheme be deemed inadequate by participants.
- [ISR008](#) Placemaking to meet the current and future needs of communities and supporting communities to help themselves, enabling community wealth building that supports local economic opportunities should ideas presented through the Call for Ideas stage of the Local Development Plan be dismissed without due reason.

## 5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Part 2A Section B.1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part of the Scheme of Governance to consider,

comment on, make recommendations to Services and any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts its Area.

**Alan Wood**

Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Piers Blaxter, Policy Team Leader and David MacLennan,  
Planning Service Manager  
4 February 2025

**List of Appendices –**

Appendix 1 Draft Development Plan Scheme

Appendix 2 Integrated Impact Assessment