

ABERDEENSHIRE

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2016

SHAPING ABERDEENSHIRE



EQUALITIES
ASSESSMENT

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Infrastructure Services
Section	Planning and Building Standards
Title of the activity etc.	Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance
Aims of the activity	<p>The Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan informs the development of land within Aberdeenshire. The document itself has been informed by the Main Issues Report which was published in October 2013 and went through public consultation. The Proposed Plan sets out the policies against which planning applications and development proposals are assessed. There is also a range of Supplementary Guidance which support the Proposed Plan and provide further detail on the policies. The Proposed Plan also includes proposals for development across Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>The Proposed Plan adopts the aims of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a strong framework for investment decisions which help to grow and diversity the regional economy, supported by promoting the need to use resources more efficiently and effectively; and • Take on the urgent challenges of sustainable development and climate change. <p>Using the aims of the Strategic Development Plan the Local Development Plan has used these to inform the vision for the Proposed Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote sustainable mixed communities with the highest standards of design • To take on the challenges of sustainable development and climate change • To protect and improve assets and resources • To increase and diversify the economy • To promote the creation of green networks within and between settlements • To make efficient use of the transport network, reduce the need to travel and promote walking, cycling and public transport. <p>The policies within the plan are intended to impact positively on the general population of Aberdeenshire and beyond by promoting responsible economic growth to make the area an attractive place to live, visit and do business.</p>

	<p>The Proposed Local Development Plan represents the settled view of the council setting out the authorities policies for the development and use of its land area outside the Cairngorms National Park.</p> <p>The timescale for the activity is set out in the 2015 Development Plan Scheme, itself the subject of an EIA. The Development Plan scheme allows for a six week public consultation period running through part of March and the whole of April. This will give the general public adequate time to make objection to the Proposed Plan as this is the only way to make a change at this stage in the process. Once the public consultation period is finished then the Policy Team will be preparing reviews of comments received, assembled into documents known as 'Schedule 4s' which will be presented to Scottish Ministers when the Proposed Plan is published for examination in late 2015. It is expected that the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan will be adopted in 2016.</p> <p>As outlined in the EIA for the Development Plan Scheme the Policy Team have conducted public consultation in order to try and reach groups which ordinarily may not connect with the Local Development Plan process to try and reduce the negative impacts on certain groups. We have also identified a negative benefit on some groups due to the complex language which is used in the document.</p> <p>There are some positive benefits of the process in trying to ensure that all groups are aware of the opportunities to make representations to the Local Development Plan as well as trying to keep their engagement through the whole process of the plan.</p>
Author(s) & Title(s)	Planning Policy Team

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.	
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities Evidence Matrix. • Representations to the Main Issues Report. • Information from previous Equality Impact Assessment for the Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan 2010. <p>The content of the plan was influenced by a combination of review and monitoring of the existing plan, any legislation and guidance issued throughout its development and by an early and comprehensive consultation with a range of stakeholders to ascertain issues which they wished to see addressed. Part of the process also involved the identification of new sites for development and the possible removal of sites which were not being delivered.</p> <p>No evidence of discrimination has been identified or notified to the Policy Team during the preparation of the Proposed Plan, nor through the consultation of the Main Issues Report. It is also worth noting that during the production of the last plan again no discrimination was identified.</p>
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	None.

<p>External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).</p>	<p>The Main Issues Report is the principle opportunity for engagement in the Local Development Plan process. During spring 2013, a series of meetings took place with community councils, community and stakeholder groups to consider any perceived issues. The theme of these meetings were categorised under the following headings, economic, rural, environment, infrastructure, equality and house building.</p> <p>Prior to the publication of the Main Issues Report the following actions to promote engagement were carried out;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation on possible ‘Main Issues’ was published on the Aberdeenshire Council website; • Articles in local papers were published promoting the consultation period; • Seminars with Area Committee members, invited stakeholders from environmental, transport, development, equalities and rural interest; • Questionnaire surveys of Community Councils and the General Public through Aberdeenshire Council’s ‘Citizens Panel’; • Meetings were held internally with service providing groups, such as Development Management teams and Transportation and Housing functions; • Meetings were held with the key infrastructure agencies (Transport Scotland, Scottish Water, NHS Grampian); • Landowners and developers were invited to identify the scope and nature of the land they would like to see allocated; • Other public services, and services within Aberdeenshire Council were invited to identify what land may be required for operational reasons; and • A series of Community Council Forum meetings were hosted to ensure that Community Councils had a clear picture of the nature and purpose of the proposed consultation. <p>The annual Development Plan Scheme details the timetable of the process and sets out a Participation Statement highlighting opportunities for interested parties to engage with Aberdeenshire Council on the preparation of the plan. This process complies with “Standards for Community Engagement” (2005). The participation statement identified a wide range of community groups in order to try and reach as wide an audience as possible. With respect to communities with protected characteristics the following groups were specifically identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Advisory Group • Women’s Alliance • Scottish Youth Parliament • Youth Dialogue, Aberdeenshire Council <p>Responses to the Main Issues Report were also received from a wide range of community groups including Community Councils. A large number of individual submissions were also made including those from developers on their clients behalf. Submissions were also received from Grampian Community Relations Council’s (GREC) Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Worker in relation to Gypsy/Traveller sites.</p>
	<p>The 12 week consultation period from end of October 2013 until the end of January 2014 saw a significant volume of views from different people on various topics. This information along with the other information gained through the process has been used to inform the content of the Aberdeenshire Proposed Plan.</p>

<p>External data (census, available statistics).</p>	<p>A wide range of legislation, guidance and strategic documents were considered and contributed to the development of the plan. Key documents included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Etc (Scotland) Act 2006 • Scottish Planning Policy 2014; • National Planning Framework 3; • Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan; • Aberdeen City and Shire Housing Need Demand Assessment; • Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy. <p>Significant populations with protected characteristics are to be found in Aberdeenshire. The Development Plan impacts on all communities and it is certain that there is potential for risk of discrimination against a number of protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>The scale of potential impacts is shown simply by the population census for the North East and the statistics relating to younger and older people (26% of the 2011 population were either under 16 or over 75. Looking at long term health 15.8% of 2001 residents had a long term limiting illness. It is also important to consider ethnic groups as approximately 13900 residents in 2001 were non-white British. Also looking at religion and beliefs approximately 2200 residents in 2001 were Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or another non-Christian religion.</p>
<p>Other (general information as appropriate).</p>	<p>None.</p>

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
<p>Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?</p>	<p>None.</p>

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
<p>What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the</p>	<p>Measures:</p>	<p>Timescale:</p>

back of this form.		
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Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger		Yes		
Age – Older		Yes		
Disability		Yes		
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)		Yes		
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Gender – male/female			Yes	
Pregnancy and maternity			Yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Yes	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Yes	

Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?

Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)

Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	On the back cover of all the printed documents there is a translation section which allows any user to request the document in any of the five translations on the back cover. These have been picked as they are the most commonly asked for languages within the region.	Due to the complex nature of the Proposed Plan and associated documents it may make it difficult to understand for the younger generation and for people whom English is not their first language.
	Also on the back cover there is an opportunity for members of the public to request the document in larger print which may help people whom have sight difficulties.	Due to the detailed nature of the maps this may discriminate against people with sight difficulties.
	Online publication of the document overcome problems associated with mobility disabilities.	As there are a large number of documents produced to compliment the Local Development Plan there is a heavy reliance on printed documents. The documents are displayed in the local libraries and online. This means of communication will discriminate people who have reading difficulties as well as people whom have not adopted new technologies.
		Due to the lifestyle of gypsy travellers it may mean that they miss the opportunities that the public have to engage with the plan if they are not in the area at the time of the consultation.

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?	
If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	As detailed above the Policy Team carried out public consultation on the Main Issues Report which has informed the content of the Proposed Plan. Again as detailed above several affected groups were provided with the information in order to comment. We only received comments from one of the affected groups.

Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?		
These should be included in any action plan at the	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	The availability of allowing people to request the document in one of the five translations by displaying this information on the back cover of all of the documents.	March 2015

back of this form.	Try and ensure that some of the complex language is removed from the Proposed Plan or explained in enough detail for people to understand the text of the Proposed Plan has been reviewed. It has now received a 'crystal mark from the Plain English Campaign for ease of understanding.	December 2014
	Make a higher resolution of the printed maps available on the website in order for people to zoom in and out maintaining the detail to help those with sight difficulties.	March 2015
	Ensure that the websites FAQ page is updated with information on the questions which are frequently asked in order to provide information on the complex nature of the Local Development Plan	March 2015
	There is also the possibility of providing media to explain the complex principles of the Local Development Plan and this would be made available on the website and on CD-ROM's for those without internet.	March 2015
	Continue to promote the consultation events online in order to try and reach as wide a range of the public as possible including reaching younger age groups by advertising on Facebook and encouraging engagement through Twitter.	March 2015

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?	
These should be included in the action plan.	Try to ensure that the consultation is as wide reaching as it can be with an emphasis on welcoming and gaining the views of groups with protected characteristics will be made.

Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?
The public including the protected groups have had an opportunity to make a representation to the Main Issues Report highlighting their interests. It will now however, be made clear that there is an opportunity to make further/ their first representation on the proposals set out in the Local Development Plan to address any such issues.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	None.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?		
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen
<p>Negative impacts have been identified for those with poor reading skills, learning difficulties or those whom English is not their first language. There have been steps introduced to try and mitigate these issues but due to the scale of documents produced that relate to the Local Development Plan it is unlikely that this will fully avoid any discrimination to these groups.</p>		

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.
<p>Due to the size of the Aberdeenshire Council Local Authority Area it is a demanding task to try and consult with the whole of the population. The Scottish Government set out consultation requirements which must be met and it is thought that this is currently happening. It would be unrealistic with the timescales that are placed on us by Government and the limited resources within the Policy Team to target every protected group within the authority. It is thought that a reasonable and realistic approach is set out with the resources available within the Policy Team.</p>

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.		
Sign off and authorisation	1) Service and Team	Infrastructure Services, Planning and Building Standards
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance

3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Fiona Thompson Position: Policy Planner Date: 08/12/2014 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
	Name: Piers Blaxter Position: Policy Team Leader Date: 08/12/2014 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Bruce Stewart Date: 19/12/2014	
5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Robert Gray Position: Head of Service Date: 5/01/2015	Name: Position: Date:
6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.		Date:
7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: eia@abdnshire		Date:
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO		Date:

Action Plan					
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
Target the younger people within communities by using Facebook advertising.	Winter 2014	Spring 2015	Alison Hogge	Increased engagement from younger people.	The financial costs of advertising which has been subsumed into the budget for Policy.
Produce a FAQ page for the website	Winter 2014	Spring 2015	Alison Hogge	A better understanding of the complex nature of the Local Development Plan leading to more/ better informed responses.	None
Produce media on the key principles of the Local Development Plan	October 2014	Spring 2015	Alison Hogge	Increased responses from people who would not usually connect with the Local Development Plan.	The cost of the production materials.
Ensure that the translation text is on the back covers of all of the documents produced.	January 2015	March 2015	Fiona Thompson	Increased response from protected groups.	None.
The Plain English Campaign for easier of understanding review of the text of the Proposed Plan.	December 2014	December 2014	Piers Blaxter	A more easily understood document therefore hopefully an increase in responses received.	The Plain English Campaign Review will have a financial cost but it has been subsumed into the policy budget.
Produce better quality of maps that can be displayed on the website so people can view the document in more detail	October 2014	January 2015	Jamie Dickinson	Better quality and more understandable maps leading to a better understanding of the whole document with increased responses received.	None.