

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 – Briefing Note

Aberdeenshire Council adopted the last Local Development Plan on 17 April 2017. Formation and Completion of a Local Development Plan (LDP) can take anything up to 5 years. Failing to meet this timescale means that there is risk that the plan is deemed “out of date” and controls on planning applications are relaxed. At the current time the LDP requires approximately 2½ years to prepare, and a further 2½ years to audit for competence, and then adopt.

The Scottish Government is currently thinking about a major review of the land use planning system. We have very little information as to what may be included in the Government Bill, for consideration by the Scottish Parliament, or of the secondary legislation that is likely to follow. As such we are proceeding with the preparation of a land use plan that will provide useful information about “places” that could be taken forward into a different planning system, or into the community planning arena.

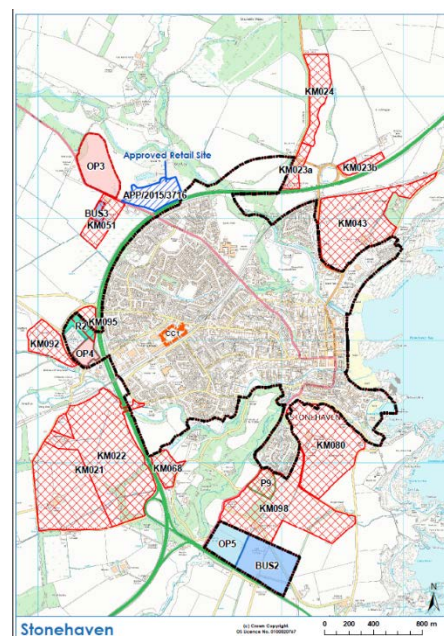
2017	Pre-planning of the Local Development Plan
2018	Main Issues Report and draft proposed plan
2019	Proposed Plan
2020	Examination
2021	Adoption

March 2022 Last date for adoption

The publication of a “Main Issues Report” (MIR) is an early obligation on the Council. Up until the publication of a MIR it is necessary for us to identify what the land use planning issues might be for places and communities. This can involve the need to review the rules that we use to decide planning applications (the “policies”). It can also require consideration of the land set aside for future development (the ‘allocations’).

Because the existing plan is so young we do not anticipate there will be a need for a major review of the policies. Generally it is after the Scottish Government has published its Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework that such action is required. In this case we expect the MIR to be a review of the current planning policies and incorporating any regional changes.

For the allocations we have found it to be good practice to invite developers and landowners to submit “bids” for land to be included in the LDP. These bids are then assessed against the general strategy of the LDP. We also assess them against known constraints to development and assess them for physical and commercial viability. Councillors are invited to consider these bid sites for inclusion within the plan as preferred sites in the Main Issues Report.



One of the key elements likely to be included in the development of a future land use plan is a “draft Proposed Plan”. We agree that the early publication of a draft early in the plans production is a good thing. In order to fully inform that draft Proposed Plan we think that it is necessary to work with communities to identify the medium to long term vision for their area. We think that the use of the “Place Standard” tool will help us in doing this. It will future proof us against any other changes that the Scottish Government may choose to bring in along with the new legislation. It allows discussions, at a community level regarding what is important to the community so this can be reflected in future plans.

Following public consultation on the Main Issues and draft Proposed Plan we will assess what has been said to us. Depending on what the Scottish Government proposes to change within the planning system Councillors will consider whether we have covered all the issues and points made within the draft Proposed Plan. It is likely that we will then publish a “Proposed Plan” for a further round of consideration as the settled view of Aberdeenshire Council. This is expected in late 2019.



All views that are formally submitted to the Proposed Plan would be assessed by a Scottish Government Reporter at a Local Plan examination. This is an aspect of the development planning process which we expect to be reviewed. A public examination can take anything from six months to a year to complete. Thereafter Aberdeenshire Council will have 3 months to amend and resubmit the Local Development Plan 2021 for formal adoption.

All of the period from the publication of the Proposed Plan in late 2019, the assessment of issues arising from that consultation, their submission for examination, and final approval of the plan represents the audit phase of the LDP 2021. In order to ensure that we can produce a plan before the 2022 deadline, we must start work now. Time has been built into the plan making process to allow slippage, and yet still allow this to happen. We are dedicated to producing the plan on time and therefore safeguarding the future development within Aberdeenshire.

25 September 2017