

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020

Sustrans Scotland's response to proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, July 2020

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute

Please note: In all statements in the documents that refer to walking and cycling we would encourage the inclusion of wheeling i.e. walking, cycling and wheeling.

Local Development Plan Policy Outcomes

- *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-blue 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*

We welcome the plans' focus on promoting Aberdeenshire as:

- *An area with a high quality of life and distinctive place. An area where new developments are designed as effectively as possible and help deliver sustainable, low carbon neighbourhoods*
- *An area that promotes sustainable development, reduces the need to travel, reduces reliance on private cars and promotes safe and convenient active travel opportunities.*
- *An area where natural and cultural heritage are protected and enhanced. We recognise the multiple benefits of local green spaces and networks as an integral component of successful placemaking.*

To make efficient use of the transport network, reduce the need to travel and promote walking, cycling, and public transport.

The commitment to having sustainable locations for development and promoting efficient use of transport, particularly public transport and active travel routes remains necessary, even with the forecast rise in alternative fuel vehicles.

We promote the principles included in "Designing Streets - A Policy Statement for Scotland (2010)" for all new developments and have made land development opportunities available in places where we can encourage methods of travel other than using cars.

Existing strategic transport infrastructure must be protected from local motor traffic. The need for sustainable transport infrastructure can sometimes require other Plan policies to be disregarded in the interests of a wider public benefit.

Appendix 3: Regeneration Priority areas

Banff, Fraserburgh, McDuff, Peterhead. Sustrans welcomes the approach of promoting an improved network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes that are interesting and engaging, can be used for every day journeys and improve connectivity between housing, retail developments quality green space and the town centres. It is noted that these improvements are not highlighted in Fraserburgh and we would seek for similar provision to be included for this area. We would also encourage wheeling to be included in the statement – network of walking, cycling and wheeling routes. The importance of inclusivity from the outset should be considered so the routes are accessible to everyone.

Appendix 8: Successful Placemaking Design Guidance

Design Guidance - The six qualities of a successful place can be defined as:

- *Distinctive - developments with a sense of local identity through the creation of a sense of place and the aesthetics of the design features and elements.*
- *Safe and pleasant - new development encourages both activity and privacy, providing security and protecting amenity.*
- *Welcoming - through ease of movement around the site, visual appeal, style, and the creation of a welcoming environment.*
- *Adaptable - to future needs through the balance of land uses, building types, density, sizes and tenures (including housing for people on modest incomes), and the flexibility to adapt to the changing circumstances of occupants.*
- *Resource efficient - in terms of waste management, water use, heating and electricity, the use of recycled materials and materials with low embodied energy, and responding to local climatic factors associated with cold winds, rain, snow and solar gain.*
- *Well connected - to create well connected places that promote intermodal shifts and active travel and are easy to move around.*

Sustrans welcomes the development of places and routes that facilitate a sense of safety by ensuring they are well-overlooked or in well-used locations and benefit from a proximity of others. Lighting improvements and improvement of sightlines should also be considered in existing developments.

We would welcome developments that facilitate the safe and independent walking, cycling and wheeling for everyone, including an unaccompanied 12 year old: ensuring access for all and equality of opportunity in public space.

With regards to connectivity, Sustrans would note that providing choices for people is vital to enabling people to change their travel habits. Provision for safe and functional cycle parking and storage, legible wayfinding and easy access to public transport are also key to enabling people to choose to walk, cycle or wheel for every day journeys. All new developments and the routes that lead to them, should reflect the street user hierarchy and prioritise the most vulnerable groups.

In addition the shift to home working, for many people, may become a long-term trend, with a greater focus on more localised 'work hubs' in local centres that offer flexible working space for those who want to work in an office environment, without the need to commute to workplaces. This will increase the importance of facilitating short journeys and a '20 minute

neighbourhood' approach, where most basic services can be reached within a 20 minute walk of home – more information on this concept can be found [here](#).

Appendix 9: Building Design Guidance

We welcome the inclusion of:

Provision for safe and functional cycle parking and storage.

Building design should incorporate provision for safe and functional cycle parking and storage. We note that secure on-street cycle parking contributes to the accessibility of cycling to all people, regardless of the type of housing they accommodate – many people do not have space to store bikes safely.

We know that a lack of cycle storage or facilities at home or work is one of the major barriers to cycling. - In fact, 21% of respondents in the UK's biggest assessment of cycling said that it's why they don't cycle, or cycle less often¹.

As noted in comment on design guidance we welcome that Buildings are:

Well connected to core paths, public transport options and amenities with a choice of travel options.

Use of sequence markers, gateways and landmarks for easy navigation, where appropriate.

Appendix 10: Standards for Open Space

Neighbourhood Streets: Designed for pedestrian use, with minimum on-street parking. Particular benefits of this type of 'home-zone' will be for the less mobile in the community and the elderly; on-street play areas overlooked by houses is of importance for young children wanting to engage in 'social play', but needing supervision; other informal play; and seating. Street trees to be included to enhance visual and biodiversity value.

We would note that any on street parking should be prioritised for disabled users.

The use of green infrastructure, such as street trees, should to be included in all designs or retrospectively introduced to existing developments. This provides several benefits not least improving wellbeing², a sense of place and of course environmental benefits³.

Green infrastructure should be developed to include climate change adaptation measures wherever possible, including sustainable urban drainage (green and blue). Projects must never negatively impact on biodiversity. A biodiversity net gain should be an objective of all development.

Appendix 15: Recycling and Waste Facilities

Domestic Waste: We comment that waste containers should not be required to be left on the footway as this reduces the footways effective width, creates clutter which can be challenging to navigate (especially for the visually impaired) and, in addition, external storage should not obstruct sight lines for people walking, cycling or wheeling.

Waste and recycling centres: Should accommodate non-motorised access and allow access to the disposal areas for pedestrians and those travelling actively without crossing traffic lanes.

¹ Findings from Bike Life UK Report 2019

https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/5942/bikelife19_aggregatedreport.pdf

² <https://www.hutton.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/projects/GreenHealth-InformationNote1-Urban-green-space-mortality-and-morbidity.pdf>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2011/11/green-infrastructure-design-placemaking/documents/0122541-pdf/0122541-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0122541.pdf>