



Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) No. SC049617

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (ALDP) 2021

RESPONSE FROM FORMARTINE RURAL PARTNERSHIP SCIO (SC049617)

RESPONSE 1. Need for greater emphasis on promoting Footpaths, Cycleways and Active Travel Networks both within communities and their vicinities and between adjacent communities.

PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020

The Formartine Partnership believes ALDP 2021 should put a greater emphasis on promoting Footpaths, Cycleways and Active Travel Networks both within communities and their vicinities and between adjacent communities.

The Proposed Local Development Plan 2020 hardly mentions footpaths and cycleways. For example:

SECTION 7 SHAPING DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE,

- **No mention** of Footpaths, Cycleways and Active Travel Networks at all.

SECTION 9 SHAPING PLACES,

- Footpaths and cycleways are **mentioned only** in a context of **new developments**:
 - Policy P2.6 Open space and Access in New developments,
 - But **not** in Policy P6 Community Facilities and Public Amenities (despite displaying the bicycle symbol which indicates their promotion).

APPENDIX 7C SETTLEMENT STATEMENTS: FORMARTINE

- **Few** settlements include **policies** which **promote** Footpaths and Cycleways,
- Settlement maps tend to show:
 - Existing paths in their vicinity, such as F&B Way, Coastal Path and Core Paths,
 - But **do not promote** paths suggested in Community Action Plans.
- Settlements which include paths are:
 - Ellon, which includes the Active Travel routes,
 - Daviot and Udney Green/Pitmedden show the footpaths recently developed by these communities themselves.
- Paths between adjacent settlements:
 - The **only route** between settlements that is mentioned is the *proposed Ellon-Balmedie strategic cycle route* which is mentioned in Balmedie. Its *extension to Bridge of Don* is mentioned in Ellon. However, this is not an entirely new construction nor is it off-road, for, between Foveran Roundabout and Balmedie Junction, it follows the Old A90, a fast 'rat run' for Aberdeen - Newburgh and Peterhead traffic avoiding the HGVs and roundabouts on the new A90.
 - There is no mention of *the Meldrum Meg Way* nor the *Haddo Link/Ythan Trail* in the relevant settlements.

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We feel that this lack of specific examples of Footpaths and Cycleways on the ground as well as policies for their promotion, leads to a significant mismatch between the Plan on the ground and the laudable Aims, Vision and Aspirations which underly ALDP 2021.

Underlying components of ALDP 2021

A. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

In SEA, Footpaths, Cycleways, Active Travel Networks and Green corridors are widely included in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report which supports the ALDP 2021:

- *They are specifically identified as fundamental Environmental Problems in Aberdeenshire (Sect 1.4),*
- *They are directly and widely invoked as **Mitigation measures** for improving Air quality and reducing Carbon release to the atmosphere, thus mitigating Climate change and increasing Biodiversity (Table 1.2),*
- *They are also directly invoked for **improving Human Health and Quality of Life (Tables 1.1, 1.3 and 1.5).***

B. PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020

Footpaths, Cycleways, Active Travel Networks and Green corridors *underly* large sections of this part of the ALDP 2021: Its **Vision; Purpose; Planning Outcomes;** and the **Promotion** of Aberdeenshire and they are central to its **achievement:**

SECTION 3: VISION FOR THE PLAN AND ITS PURPOSE

- 3.2 The Purpose of a Local Development Plan: to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest". This includes anything which: (a) contributes to **sustainable development.**

Local Vision:

SECTION 3.6 PLANNING OUTCOMES for Aberdeenshire

- **Outcome 1:** A successful, **sustainable place** – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places.
- **Outcome 2:** A **low carbon place** – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.
- **Outcome 3:** A **natural, resilient place** – helping to protect and enhance our natural and cultural assets and facilitating their sustainable use.
- **Outcome 4:** A **more connected place** – supporting better transport and digital connectivity.

Are central to the way The Local Vision of the Plan is achieved:

SECTION 3.13 THIS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN HELPS PROMOTE ABERDEENSHIRE AS:

- An area with a **high quality of life** and distinctive places, and where new developments are designed as effectively as possible to improve this and help **deliver sustainable, low carbon places.**
- An area that **promotes sustainable development** that 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, and where we recognise the multiple benefits of **local green spaces and networks** as an integral component of successful placemaking.

and Are central to the way The Outcomes of the Plan are achieved:

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SECTION 4 THE PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ITS OUTCOMES

- 4.2 To promote **sustainable mixed communities** with the highest standards of design,
- 4.3 To take on the challenges of **sustainable development and climate change**,
- 4.6 To promote the **creation of Green-blue networks within and between settlements**,
- 4.7 To make efficient use of the transport network, reduce the need to travel and **promote walking, cycling, and public transport**

RESPONSE 2. ALDP 2021 SHOULD INCLUDE RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS (CAPs)

Over the last 9 years Formartine Partnership has completed 10 CAPs covering 17 Settlements. All have placed the requirement for footpaths, both within and between settlements, high on their requests.

Residents comment that, over recent times, traffic on country roads, and in villages, has become heavier and faster, but roads have remained unchanged- often narrow, winding with blind corners and without pavements or even verges. Moving around as families, pedestrians or cyclists, they feel anxious about safety and so, forced to use vehicles if they have access to one.

In villages, residents complain that cars are speeding and creating congestion with untidy, even dangerous, parking around schools, shops, other facilities, and junctions. Again, pavements are often narrow and may be discontinuous.

it is likely that off-road footpaths and cycleways could supply a significant solution to these issues, and greatly improve the Quality of life, at a relatively minor cost.

There is a second aspect to this. CAPs are billed as the basic building blocks of both LDPs and Community Plans. Many communities have gone to great effort to produce their CAP, but difficulties in bringing them to fruition, often create frustration and cynicism. It would be most helpful if their suggestions, on Footpaths and Cycleways, could be included in the ALDP 2021 Settlement Statements, as policies to be promoted, and similarly on the maps. After all, when The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is fully operational, **Local Place Plans will** form the basic building block of LDPs and communities will themselves, be able to initiate and promote their own Local Place Plans.

Achieving more paths on the ground

RESPONSE 3. INCLUDE FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS IN DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

We believe that **Developer Contributions** should be made much more widely available for constructing Footpaths and Cycleways in the Aberdeenshire, both within Settlements and their vicinities, and between adjacent settlements. This should cover all phases of their development: feasibility, design, and construction.

We did find two examples of Developer Obligations being used for this purpose. Widening the availability of this funding should bring forward more Paths and Cycleway construction and help in achieving the aims and outcomes of ALDP 2021. It will also keep faith with Communities and CAPs.

We also discovered a statement which may explain why they have not been more widely used. Hidden away in the (very) small print of the SEA Report, Table 6.2, Page 63, Column 3. Is the statement:

- *Developer contributions will be sought towards public transport, and roads infrastructure improvements to help mitigate the traffic impact*

Surprisingly, it **does not include** footpaths and cycleways. We suspect that the relative costs of footpaths and road improvements, could provide a substantial increase in path length on the ground.

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Community and Paths Groups

Another way to achieve more path construction is to harness community groups and paths groups. Daviot Community Trust have developed several miles of path by funding raw material which are laid by volunteer members. They have even fundraised a Digger and its maintenance facility. Udney Paths Group have carried out a similar programme around Udney and Pitmedden. Formartine Partnership have constructed the Haddo link, a mile-long path in the Haddo estate, which gives an off-road route from Methlick to Haddo House and Country Park and links a continuous 8 mile stretch of the Ythan Trail from Haddo to Gight Gorge.

CONCLUSIONS

RESPONSE 1. The Formartine Rural Partnership believes ALDP 2021 should put a greater emphasis on promoting Footpaths, Cycleways and Active Travel Networks both within communities and their vicinities and between adjacent communities.

We feel that this lack of specific examples of Footpaths and Cycleways on the ground and lack of direct policies for their promotion, leads to a significant mismatch between the Plan on the ground and the laudable Aims, Vision and Aspirations which underly ALDP 2021.

We would like to see clear promoting statements added to Section 7 Shaping Development in the Countryside, Section 9 Shaping Places, and in Appendix 7c Settlement Statements: Formartine, both in the written policies and shown on the maps.

RESPONSE 2. ALDP 2021 SHOULD INCLUDE RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS (CAPs)

We believe that the suggestions on Footpaths and Cycleways in Community Action Plans, should be included in the ALDP 2021 Settlement Statements, as policies to be promoted, and as routes on the maps.

RESPONSE 3. INCLUDE FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS IN DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

We would like to see footpaths and cycleways being more widely invoked within Developer Contributions and feel strongly that including them will help to achieve more paths and cycleways on the ground and thus support the underlying aims of ALDP 2021.

ALDP 2021 aims to be delivering “*the right development in the right place*”. However, in the current version, Paths and Cycleways seem to be located in the underlying supporting statements about its Aims, Vision and Aspirations, rather than in their right place, on the ground.

1654 words

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