

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	9 May 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Place Based Strategy Framework
REPORT NUMBER	COM/23/121
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	David Dunne
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report explains the framework of place-based strategies which the Council has, and the interrelationship and interdependencies between them. It also aims to set out their role in the decision-making process and the timeline for their development and review.
- 1.2 This report also sets out a high-level programme and timeline for the review of some of the key strategies.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the details of the plans and strategies set out in the report and the indicative timelines provided; and
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer of Strategic Place Planning to keep the framework up to date and report back to this Committee annually, noting that this will be in addition to the ongoing reports to Committee required as part of each plan and strategy review.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Council produces a wide range of strategies, emblematic of the broad range of roles and responsibilities that the council holds. Many of these strategies are statutory, others are necessary for investment purposes and others are focused on delivering joint objectives with partner organisations. Regardless of their individual focus, all of the Council's plans and strategies aim to deliver sustainable positive outcomes across social, environmental and economic indicators.
- 3.2 To better explain how the matrix of plans and strategies fit together, the following paragraphs, and the attached Appendix 1, set out a brief explanation of the key plans and strategies and show how they interrelate. The *Tiers*

referred to below are simply for illustrative purposes and are not meant to indicate the importance of any one plan or strategy. As an example, the majority of the statutory documents which the Council is responsible for sit at *Tier 3* simply because the level of detail they contain makes them more a-kin to a delivery plan than a true strategy. Likewise documents at *Tier 1* and *2* are developed by the Council and partners to set out the Council's strategic direction and will influence, and be influenced by, documents above and below them. In that sense some of the documents could sit within a number of *Tiers*.

Strategy Board

- 3.3 The Strategy Board is the officer board within the Council tasked with overseeing the development of plans and strategies. The Board also coordinates responses to consultations on legislation or plans and strategies being developed at a regional or national level. The broad membership of the Board (table 1.) ensures that, as plans or strategies are developed, they face strong challenge from a wide range of senior officers. Responsible Chief Officers are required to agree timetables for the development and review of plans and strategies and to bring drafts of the documents to Strategy Board at varying stages through the process.
- 3.4 All plans and strategies are required to be presented to the Strategy Board in advance of going to Committee, and at any additional agreed stage in their development.

Membership of the Strategy Board
Director of Commissioning (Chair)
Director of Resources
Chief Officer Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership
Chief Officer City Growth
Chief Officer Integrated Family and Children's Services
Chief Officer Education
Chief Operating Officer Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership
Chief Officer Data and Insights
Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment
Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning
Strategy and Community Planning Manager
Service Manager (PMO)
Interim Chief Officer Governance / Legal Services Manager

Table 1 – Membership of the Strategy Board

Statutory Relationships

- 3.5 Many of the plans and strategies the Council has to produce under a statutory requirement have to follow legislation which is focused on the delivery of that specific theme. For example, the legislation around the Local Development Plan (LDP), our local land-use strategy, is focused on the delivery of that document and is not generally connected to other documents which may feed into it. While it may refer to other plans and strategies that should be considered when developing an LDP, its primary goal is to deliver an LDP. In that context, it is important that the strategy framework, and the Council's own procedures such as the Strategy Board, act as the bridge between the relevant documents to ensure that all of the Council's plans and strategies are focused on the same overarching goals.
- 3.6 This becomes even more critical where timelines set out in legislation differ. To continue with the example of the LDP, the Council have just completed one LDP under a 5-year cycle, whereas new legislation is forthcoming which will change this to a 10-year cycle, within which time many other Council plans and strategies will have been reviewed more than once. It is therefore critical that there are procedures in place within the overarching strategy framework to ensure all the individual strands work to deliver on the Council's wider strategic outcomes.

Process of Developing a Plan or Strategy

- 3.7 Figure 1 below sets out the process that development of a typical plan or strategy would follow, however the process for developing and adoption, as mentioned earlier, will vary depending on the role of the plan or strategy, and whether or not it's production is linked to a statutory requirement. Where plans or strategies are required by statute, the relevant legislation governing the development of the document will determine the key process which must be undertaken.



Figure 1: Process for Typical Plan/Strategy Development

National Plans and Strategies

3.8 At a national level the Council is an active consultee and contributor in the preparation of relevant national plans and strategies. While the strategic direction for the UK and Scotland is set at this national level, the Council has a strong record of working with governments and supporting the delivery and development of these through representative bodies such as COSLA, Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS), Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) etc. Although this work can put additional strain on the relevant services in terms of resourcing pressures, it is felt that this input is important to ensure Aberdeen's views are considered when national plans or strategies are being developed. As noted above, the Strategy Board leads in coordinating responses to consultations on legislation and plans/strategies being developed at the national level, thus ensuring that contributions can be co-produced between various council services rather than being developed in isolation by one individual team.

Regional Plans and Strategies

3.9 At a regional level the Council is a partner in the development of all relevant regional strategies, including the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Transport Strategy. The Aberdeen City Region has a strong history of partnership working in the development of these plans and strategies, which in turn has delivered strong outcomes such as the City Region Deal, Bus Partnership Fund, and a range of key infrastructure projects such as the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Routes. These plans and strategies also help to give strategic direction to the respective councils in preparing local plans and strategies.

- 3.10 As an example, the Strategic Development Plan, soon to be replaced by a new Regional Spatial Strategy and the National Planning Framework, identified the number of homes and the volume of employment land expected to be included within the two council's Local Development Plans. Continuing with this strong history of regional planning as a new Regional Spatial Strategy is developed will be key in continuing to promote the Aberdeen City Region as a sustainable and investable region.

Tiers of the Plan/Strategy Framework

- 3.11 To better explain how the Council's plans and strategies fit together, a means of grouping has been prepared to explain how the key plans and strategies interrelate. This system has split plans and strategies into "Tiers" for illustrative purposes only – this approach is not meant to indicate the importance of any one plan or strategy. The majority of the statutory documents which the Council is responsible for sit at Tier 3, however some key documents could sit within a number of different Tiers. Further explanation around the various Tiers is provided below, and more detail is set out in Appendix 1. Appendix 1 also sets out in a diagrammatic form the interrelationships between the Tiers and key plans and strategies.

Tier 1 – Key Overarching Strategies

- 3.12 Net Zero Aberdeen (NZA) and Aberdeen Adapts (AA), along with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), set the overarching objectives for Aberdeen's place-based strategies. While these three overarching documents are influenced by a range of other national, regional, and local documents, their role is to distil those documents and set the strategic direction for the Council. Not all the objectives within these strategies are the responsibility of the Council, and in some cases the Council has limited, if any, power to delivery them alone. In that context, the importance of partnership working to achieve our strategic goals is fundamental, and in a time of ever-reducing resources for local government, focusing what resources are available in an effective and efficiently way is crucial.

Net Zero Aberdeen

- 3.12.1 Net Zero Aberdeen is the overarching strategic route map to move Aberdeen City, as a place, to Net Zero. The route map is not a Council document and was authored by leaders from a range of industries and organisations across the city. Delivering the outcomes within the route map is the responsibility of everyone across the city and, in that context, everyone has a role to play.
- 3.12.2 All strategies and plans which the Council produces are required to feed into and help deliver our net zero objectives. The most obvious of these is the Council's own Net Zero Plan which aims to focus Council resources in the areas where the Council is a significant emitter of carbon. In parallel to this, the Council is also responsible as roads authority and planning authority for setting and implementing the strategic direction in these areas. Clearly subject specific plans have their own roles and responsibilities, but the objectives within those plans, where relevant, must also contribute to our Net Zero journey.

Aberdeen Adapts

3.12.3 Aberdeen Adapts is an adaptation framework for Aberdeen in dealing with a changing climate: *“The global climate is changing, and this is expected to accelerate in coming decades. For Aberdeen this will mean warmer, wetter winters; hotter, drier summers; a rise in sea level; and less snow, ice and frost. This framework sets the direction for adaptation, with priorities, goals and action areas that will help Aberdeen to prepare.”* While a number of the challenges which Aberdeen will face in coming years will fall to the Council to address, many others will not, and all partners and residents will play a part in making Aberdeen a resilient place. All relevant plans and strategies which the Council produces will also therefore be required to feed into our adaptation requirements.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)

3.12.4 Like Net Zero Aberdeen, the LOIP is the collective responsibility of a range of partner organisations: *“The LOIP sets out how Community Planning Aberdeen will improve outcomes for and with local people and communities. The vision set out in the LOIP is that Aberdeen will be ‘a place where all people can prosper’ by 2026. By this we mean that we want everyone in the city to have the same opportunities, regardless of their background or circumstances. To achieve this we have developed 15 goals that we are working to achieve over the next seven years. They cover three themes: Economy, People and Place, with over 100 improvement projects planned to help achieve our goals. (...) The LOIP is a ten year plan which is reviewed in consultation with partners every two to three years to make sure that we are making a difference.”* All relevant plans and strategies which the Council produces must also detail how they support the vision set out in the LOIP and the related goals.

Tier 2 – Enabling Strategies

3.13 Below Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts sit six enabling strategies, which expand on the objectives of both strategic documents. Below the LOIP sit three Locality Plans which focus delivering the LOIP’s objectives across the North, Centre, and South of the city. These enabling strategies and Locality Plans sit as Tier 2 in the framework. The six Net Zero Aberdeen strategies are:-

Mobility

3.13.1 The Mobility Strategy sets out the key strategic objectives that should be achieved across all forms of mobility and, in turn, helps shape other key documents such as the Local Transport Strategy and the Active Travel Action Plan. In that way, the Mobility Strategy looks to national and regional policy, and highlights the key drivers which are used to shape the Council’s local strategies and plans.

Mobility Key Objective – Reducing the demand for travel, moving to low and zero emission vehicles and boosting active travel.

Natural Environment

3.13.2 The Natural Environment Strategy is closely linked to Aberdeen Adapts and reads across a number of strategies while again interpreting at the local level key aspects of national policies such as the National Planning Framework 4. Under this Strategy sit a range of natural environment documents such as the Open Space Strategy and Audit, the Tree and Woodland Strategy and Granite City Growing in order to provide one comprehensive strategy on the natural environment.

Natural Environment Key Objective – Protecting and enhancing nature across the city to avoid emissions from land and to increase carbon stores.

Empowerment

3.13.3 A significant aspect of addressing the challenges of climate change is empowering people to both make changes themselves, but also to influence wider change. This is particularly important in the area of community resilience. The purpose of the Empowerment Strategy is therefore to provide and develop mechanisms for the community to feed into and influence decision makings while also providing the tools to empower communities to become resilient themselves.

Empowerment Key Objective – Setting the means and mechanisms for input, participation and collaboration vital to all the other themes.

Energy Supply

3.13.4 A crucial aspect of achieving Net Zero and reducing our impacts on climate change is decarbonising our energy supply. Equally as important is the need to improve its resilience in the context of an ever more extreme climate. Recent storm events across the northeast have shown how fragile the network can be. The recent volatility in the energy sector has also shown how exposed we are to global events such as the war in Ukraine. The purpose of the Energy Supply Strategy is therefore to explore opportunities to decarbonise while also building local resilience through decentralised means. Examples of this could include the Hydrogen Hub, Energy from Waste, Donside Hydro, Heat Network, Solar Farms and battery storage.

3.13.5 **Energy Supply Key Objective** – Increasing decentralised energy, developing green hydrogen, offshore wind; alongside expanding skills and supply chains.

Buildings and Heat

3.13.6 Transitioning away from fossil fuels and adopting low-carbon alternatives such as renewable energy sources is one of the greatest challenges we face on our journey to Net Zero. This will include retrofitting buildings with insulation, efficient heating and cooling systems, and installing renewable energy sources. Additionally, promoting energy-efficient practices such as reducing energy consumption and implementing smart energy management systems can also help to reduce carbon emissions. Overall, the Building and Heat Strategy is

crucial in addressing climate change and achieving the goal of net-zero emissions.

3.13.7 Buildings and Heat Key Objective – Reducing energy demand, energy efficiency and transitioning to low and zero carbon heat.

Circular Economy

3.13.8 The Circular Economy Strategy aims to eliminate waste and reduce resource consumption by designing and producing products that can be reused, repaired, and recycled. Instead of the traditional linear model of take-make-dispose, a circular economy focuses on creating closed-loop systems where materials and products are continuously reused and regenerated. This approach requires a shift in the way we think about resources, design products, and organize production and consumption systems. By keeping resources in use for as long as possible, a circular economy can help to reduce environmental impacts, increase resource efficiency, and create new economic opportunities.

Circular Economy Key Objective – Making better use of valuable resources.

Tier 3 – Delivery Plans and Policies

3.14 Below the 6 Net Zero enabling strategies sit a range of statutory and other local plans and strategies . Many of these are historically referred to as strategies but in most cases are too detailed, and are often too focused on delivery, to be strategies in the strictest sense. Nevertheless, these documents are vital to the delivery of a range of functions across the Council, and often form the basis for statutory decision making as well as public and private investments.

3.15 For example, the Local Development Plan (LDP) forms the basis for statutory decision making on planning applications, both in terms of the allocation of land as well as the policy framework under which social and environmental issues are protected. At the same time the LDP is the basis for hundreds of millions of pounds worth of investment through the identification of sites for a range of developments. Similarly, the Local Transport Strategy is the basis on which we allocate a range of funding and is used to seek funding for active travel and public transport projects.

Governance and Strategy Development

3.16 As noted above, the governance for the preparation of many of the Council's plans and strategies is determined by the legislation relevant to that particular topic. Irrespective of whether a plan or strategy is a statutory requirement, the preparation of all relevant plans and strategies are reported to the Council's Strategy Board before being reported to elected members through the relevant committees.

Outline Timelines

- 3.17 Table 2. below gives an indication of the timelines for some of the key plans and strategies prepared by the council. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of plans or strategies, and the timelines quoted may be subject to change.

Strategy Title		Live / Fixed	Adopted	Next Review (Approx)	Next Adoption Date
Net Zero Aberdeen		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Aberdeen Adapts		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Local Outcome Improvement Plan		F	2021	2025	2026/27
Mobility Strategy		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Building and Heating Strategy		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Circular Economy Strategy		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Energy Supply Strategy		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Natural Environment Strategy		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Empowerment Strategy		L	2022	2024/5	2025
Local Development Plan		F	2017	2024	2023(28)
Local Transport Strategy		F	2016	2021	2024
Local Housing Strategy		F	2018	2021	2024
Flood Risk Management Plan		F	2022	2027	2028
Waste Strategy		F	2015	2022	2025
Active Travel Action Plan / Network Review		F	2021	2023	2026

Table 2 – Key dates for a range of strategies.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. Preparation of individual Council plans and strategies will be met through existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As the purpose of this report is to explain the relationships between Council plans and strategies there are no direct implications arising from this report. Individual plans and strategies may be required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment to identify the likely environmental effects, and to avoid any adverse environmental effects occurring.

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure where the Council has scope of influence to contribute to place based targets.	Strengthened place-based governance approach.	M	Yes
Compliance	Failure to contribute to the delivery of national targets/ programmes.	Strengthened place-based governance approach.	L	Yes
Operational	Failure to support the governance structure.	Strengthen the strategic direction to the delivery of operation services and to focus resources accordingly.	L	Yes
Financial	Failure to focus resources on preventative spend and in a coordinated way to ensure strategic delivery.	Provide support and strategic direction for resource spend.	L	Yes
Reputational	Failure to support the governance structure.	Council Core Co-ordination Group in place for place based climate work.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Risk to the delivery of Net Zero Aberdeen & Aberdeen Adapts.	Ongoing support for the delivery of collaborative place based climate work programmes; as well as the Council project pipeline	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	There are no direct proposals within this report the purpose of the report is to explain how the policies developed by the council will aim to deliver the policy statement, where the Council has scope to do so.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The purpose of this report is to explain how the strategies which the council develops must help deliver the objectives of the LOIP and other key strategies. As such this report does not specific outcomes in itself.
Regional and City Strategies	The purpose of this report is to explain the relationship between regional and city wide strategies rather than delivering any objectives in and of itself.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. – Outline Strategic Framework for Place Based Strategies

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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