

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment & Transport
DATE	10 June 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Committee Planner Review & Place Based Strategy Update
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/142
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	David Dunne
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1, 8

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the development of some of the Council's key place-based strategies and recommends changes to the Planner for this Committee based on a mix of external factors, Officer resources and budget positions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Approve the revised Net Zero, Environment and Transport (NZET) Committee Planner (Appendix 1);
- 2.2 Note the current position on the preparation of plans and strategies set out in Section 3 of this report, and the indicative timelines provided; and,
- 2.2 Note that, following the instruction given by this Committee in June 2024 (Report Ref: CR&E/24/160), the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning will produce an annual Service Update to this Committee on the ongoing development of the plans and strategies set out in this report.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Committee Planner

- 3.1 At the last meeting of the NZET Committee (19 March 2025), the Convener, Vice Convener and the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning committed to liaising outwith the meeting to review the report on the Committee Planner to ensure that realistic dates were given for when reports could be expected back. A revised Committee Planner is attached at Appendix 1 on this basis.

- 3.2 Recommendation 2.1 of this report asks Members to approve the revised Planner (Appendix 1), noting the rationale set out where items are proposed to be removed or have new dates allocated. The proposed changes made to the planner reflect prioritisation of workload and availability of internal and external funding, but also the availability of officer resource in light of the reduction in staff numbers over the last few years.

Committee Planner

- 3.3 In May 2023 a report was presented to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee (COM/23/121) to explain the framework of place-based strategies and the interrelationship and interdependencies between them. The report also set out the role of these plans and strategies in the decision-making process and the timeline for their development and review.
- 3.4 One of the instructions from the May 2023 report was for the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to keep the strategy framework up to date. This report provides an annual update on this basis, noting the links to many of the items on the Committee Planner set out in Appendix 1 and discussed in Table 1. Future annual updates will be provided by Service Update, as instructed by Committee following the 2024 update last June (Report Ref: CR&E/24/160).

National Plan / Strategy Updates

- 3.5 Key changes in the national picture of plans and strategies over the last year are summarised below:
- [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy \(SBS\) to 2045](#) and the [Scottish Biodiversity: Delivery Plan 2024 to 2030](#) were published by the Scottish Government in November 2024. The former sets out the Government's high-level goal: to halt biodiversity loss and be Nature Positive by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity by 2045. The latter draws out priority actions needed to achieve the 2030 aim of a Nature Positive Scotland. These are significant and hefty publications and the Council is in the process of reviewing them in full to a) understand the implications and opportunities for local authorities and their wider places and b) consider how these can be built into the Council's and partners approaches going forward. For the Council, this will be predominantly through the Council Climate & Nature Plan and Net Zero Aberdeen alongside Aberdeen Adapts.
 - In November 2024, the Scottish Parliament passed the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\)\(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) which introduced the framework for a carbon budget-based approach for setting emissions reduction targets. An updated Scottish Climate Plan is expected following this in 2026. This will have implications for both the Council's Climate & Nature Plan Update and Net Zero Aberdeen.
 - [Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029](#) (SNAP3) was published by the Scottish Government in September 2024. The Plan sets out the actions that the Scottish Government and partners will take to respond to

the impacts of climate change. This Plan has implications for Aberdeen Adapts and will be considered as part of the review of that plan.

- [Scotland's National Flood Resilience Strategy](#) was published by the Scottish Government in December 2024. This sets out a vision for a flood resilient Scotland through to 2045 and beyond. This again has implications for Aberdeen Adapts and the Council's approach to flood management.
- [Scotland's circular economy and waste route map to 2030](#) was published by the Scottish Government in December 2024. This sets out a plan to deliver 11 priority actions that aim to help Scotland maximise progress towards a circular economy. This has implications for the updates to Net Zero Aberdeen Circular Economy Strategy, the Council's Climate & Nature Plan Update and Waste Strategy.
- The [Scottish Climate Intelligence Service](#) was established in 2024 as a partnership between the ECCI and the Improvement Service, jointly funded by Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities. It is a capacity-building programme with both a national digital platform and a support service co-designed with its stakeholders. This Service is critical to underpinning the skills and data needed for more robust area based emissions work and will help to improve the approach to Net Zero Aberdeen by 2045.

Regional Plan / Strategy Updates

3.6 Key changes in the regional picture of plans and strategies over the last year are summarised below:

- There have been no material changes to report on regional plans or strategies in the reporting period.

Local Strategy Framework Updates

3.7 Key changes in the local picture of plans and strategies over the last year are summarised below:

Local Outcome Improvement Plan / Locality Plans

3.8 On 29 April 2024 the refreshed Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2016-26 and three Locality Plans for North, South and Central Aberdeen were approved by the Community Planning Aberdeen (CPA) Board.

3.9 A detailed plan of community engagement activity was carried out between March and May 2025 by Community Planning Aberdeen to help inform the Local Housing Strategy, Integrated Joint Board (IJB) Strategic Plan, Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan and Local Development Plan (LDP), as well as the development/refresh of remaining strategies to be developed in 2025/2026. This consultation exercise was called "Your Place, Your Plans,

Your Future". Further targeted engagements, based on learning from this exercise, will continue throughout the remainder of 2025 to feed into the revised LOIP and Locality Plans in 2026.

Local Development Plan

- 3.10 On 19 June 2023 the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) 2023 was formally adopted by the Council and constituted as part of the statutory Development Plan. It is used to guide decisions on planning applications alongside Aberdeen Planning Guidance and Supplementary Guidance. The LDP provides a land use framework until 2032 and aims towards Aberdeen being a sustainable city at the heart of a vibrant and inclusive North East of Scotland.
- 3.11 In August 2024 Members of the Council's Finance & Resources Committee agreed an annual update on the Development Plan Scheme (DPS) - the document which sets out a planning authority's programme for preparing and reviewing their Local Development Plan. The DPS shows a target adoption date for the next Local Development Plan as being in Spring 2028, to align with a requirement from Scottish Government that every planning authority in Scotland should have a new style LDP in place within around 5 years of the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 coming into force.
- 3.12 Work on the Evidence Report to inform the next Local Development Plan commenced in 2024, with stakeholder and public consultation on the Topic Papers, which make up a key part of the report, undertaken in early 2025. Part of this consultation activity was under the umbrella of the overarching Community Planning Aberdeen "Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future" engagement.
- 3.13 In terms of next steps, Officers will report to Council in Summer 2025 asking for approval to submit the Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers for the 'Gate Check' process. An update to the annual Development Plan Scheme will also be presented to the September 2025 Finance & Resources Committee meeting for approval.
- 3.14 Based on a submission to Gate Check this Summer, and the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) meeting their 3-month target to respond, the current LDP programme shows preparation of the Proposed Plan beginning in Autumn 2025, with a draft reported to Council for approval to consult publicly in Autumn 2026. As discussed further below, it is proposed that public and stakeholder consultation on the revised draft Local Transport Strategy happen in tandem with the Proposed Plan consultation in order to give important context on how any impacts (cumulate or otherwise) on the transport network from development proposed in the next Local Development Plan by would be managed / mitigated, e.g. by active travel upgrades or projects such as Aberdeen Rapid Transit.
- 3.15 Although the Scottish Government expect Evidence Reports to clear Gate Check within 3 months, it should be noted that the timelines for Gate Check are

determined by the capacity of the DPEA, and any delays to Gate Check will impact on the LDP's programme. The DPEA have already intimated to Officers that, due to a number of other local authorities programmed to submit for Gate Check at the same time, it is possible that the 3-month target may be breached. Officers will keep this under review and liaise with the DPEA on timelines once the Evidence Report has been approved for submission.

Local Transport Strategy

- 3.16 In August 2023, the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee approved a draft Local Transport Strategy (LTS) for public and stakeholder consultation. Consultation took place between November 2023 and January 2024, with the outcomes reported back to Committee in September 2024. The report noted that many respondents used the opportunity of the consultation to comment on individual transport initiatives prevalent in the public discourse at the time, such as bus gates and the Low Emission Zone, rather than considering the city's future transport needs more widely. It also noted that the demographics of those responding to the consultation was not representative of the diversity of the people of Aberdeen as a whole.
- 3.17 In response to the report, the Committee instructed the Chief Officer of Strategic Place Planning to:
- *report back to committee via a service update the measures in place to increase the response from underrepresented groups and to align more closely to the demographic profile of the city; and*
 - *develop a marketing and engagement strategy...with the objective of increasing understanding of the impact transport has on climate change and how transport solutions could contribute to making Aberdeen a great place, to live, work, study and visit.*
- 3.18 A report in response to these instructions from Committee is also on the Agenda for today's meeting. The report proposes an approach to provide a more detailed and diverse body of evidence to inform development of a revised draft LTS, without the need for additional consultation prior to development of a revised draft document. Importantly, the report proposes to link the ongoing development of the revised draft LTS with the marketing and communications strategy for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART), given that ART will be a key element of the next LTS, and the main messages and objectives are common to both projects. A report on ART is also on the agenda for this meeting of Committee.
- 3.19 In terms of timelines, it is expected that public and stakeholder views on the options being progressed to the ART Programme Level Outline Business Case (OBC) will be sought from Autumn 2025, following the meeting of the City Region Deal Joint Committee on 12 September 2025. Work would then begin on the Programme Level OBC, with the intention being to have a robust case developed by the end of 2026. It will be important to have a revised draft Local Transport Strategy in the public domain by this time to ensure that the case for future investment in ART is well demonstrated in relevant Council plans and strategies.

- 3.20 The report on the LTS Engagement also identifies the opportunity to better align the revised draft of the LTS with the development of the emerging Local Development Plan, and specifically the Cumulative Transport Appraisal that the next LDP will be informed by. As noted above, aligning the two documents will be beneficial to ensure more a strategic, joined up, approach to development opportunities and the role of the transport system to move people around, but also to allow the continuation of the conversation around 'place' following from the "Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future" conversations earlier this year.

Local Housing Strategy

- 3.21 A draft Local Housing Strategy was approved by the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee in March 2025. Consultation on the draft strategy was undertaken under the umbrella of the overarching Community Planning Aberdeen "Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future" engagement. An updated Local Housing Strategy will be reported to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee later this year once consultation feedback has been reviewed.

NZA Buildings & Heat / Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)

- 3.22 A LHEES is a statutory requirement from the Scottish Government under the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022. Local Authorities are required to develop and publish a LHEES for their areas. The purpose of the LHEES is to define a long-term strategic framework for the improvement of the energy efficiency of buildings in the local authority's area, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the heating of such buildings. This requirement fulfils many of the objectives of the overarching citywide NZA Buildings & Heat Strategy. Aberdeen City Council has completed development of the LHEES. A report on the LHEES will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

NZA Natural Environment Strategy - Open Space Audit

- 3.23 Periodic Open Space Audits are a statutory requirement. They provide critical underpinning evidence, in the form of data and analyses on the city's open spaces, in support of the city's Natural Environment Strategy, alongside other plan and decision-making efforts such as the Local Development Plan, Policies & Guidance and Development Management. They also assist communities and other Council partners to inform their own interventions in the city's open spaces. The draft Open Space Audit Reports were presented to this Committee in June 2024. The recommendations set out in that Report are nearly all complete and a Service Update will be provided to this Committee shortly.

Outline Timelines

- 3.24 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.

Table 2: Key dates for a range of strategies

Strategy Title	Live / Fixed	Adopted	Next Review (Approx.)	Next Adoption Date (Approx.)
Local Outcome Improvement Plan	F	2021	2025	2026/7
Aberdeen Adapts Framework	L	2022	2025/6	2026
Net Zero Aberdeen (NZA) Routemap	L	2022	2025/6	2026
NZA Mobility Strategy	L	2022	2025/6	2026
NZA Building and Heat Strategy	L	2022	2025/6	2026
NZA Circular Economy Strategy	L	2022	2025/6	2026
NZA Energy Supply Strategy	L	2022	2025/6	2026
NZA Natural Environment Strategy	L	2022	2025/6	2026
NZA Empowerment Strategy	L	2022	2025/6	2026
Council Climate Change Plan	L	2021	2025/6	2026
Local Development Plan	F	2023	2024	2028*
Local Transport Strategy	F	2016	2021	2026/7*
Local Housing Strategy	F	2018	2021	2025
Flood Risk Management Plan	F	2022	2027	2028
Waste Strategy	F	2015	2022	2025
Active Travel Action Plan / Network Review (as part of LTS)	F	2021	2023	2026/7*

* Timelines may be impacted by the capacity of Reporters appointed on behalf of Scottish Ministers at both LDP Gate Check and Examination stages due to requirement for all local authorities across Scotland to complete a new Local Development Plan by Spring 2028.

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 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on a number of Council plans and strategies and items to be reported to Committee in the future, and so there are no direct implications arising from this report. Individual strategies, programmes or plans may in themselves be required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulation Appraisal to identify the likely environmental effects, and to avoid any adverse environmental effects occurring.

7. RISK

7.1 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) *taking into account controls/control actions	*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 Coordination 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 2024</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>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The purpose of this report is to explain the relationship between regional and city wide strategies and the timeline of future reporting rather than delivering any objectives in and of itself.
Regional and City Strategies	The purpose of this report is to explain the relationship between regional and city wide strategies and the timeline of future reporting rather than delivering any objectives in and of itself.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)	As an update report with no material decisions or actions, no IIA is required. I confirm this as Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Report to Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, May 2023: COM/23/121 – Place Based Strategy Framework

10.2 Report to Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, June 2024: CR&E/24/160 – Place Based Strategy Framework

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Committee Planner Update

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	David Dunne
Title	Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning
Email Address	ddunne@aberdeencity.gov.uk