



For Decision

**Title: Local Development Plan – Development Plan
Scheme 2024**

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Purpose

1. This paper presents the Development Plan Scheme (2024) for the next Local Development Plan. The Development Plan Scheme is an important communications tool. It is key to supporting deliverable and people-focussed plans by letting stakeholders know when and how they can get involved in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan and keeping them informed of progress.
2. The Park Authority must publish and submit a Development Plan Scheme to Scottish Ministers each year. The Board is therefore being asked to agree the Development Plan Scheme 2024 as set out in Annex 1.

Recommendations

3. The Board is asked to:
 - a) Agree the updated Development Plan Scheme 2024

Strategic context

4. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has brought numerous reforms to Scotland's development plan system, which are in the process of being implemented. A significant milestone in this was the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 by Scottish Ministers in February 2023. National Planning Framework 4 replaced National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy, incorporating an updated Scottish Planning Policy, containing detailed national policy on a number of topics.
5. Unlike its predecessors, National Planning Framework 4 is part of the statutory development plan (Figure 1). This means that for any place in Scotland, the statutory development plan consists of National Planning Framework 4, which covers the whole country, and the Local Development Plan for the planning authority area where the place is.

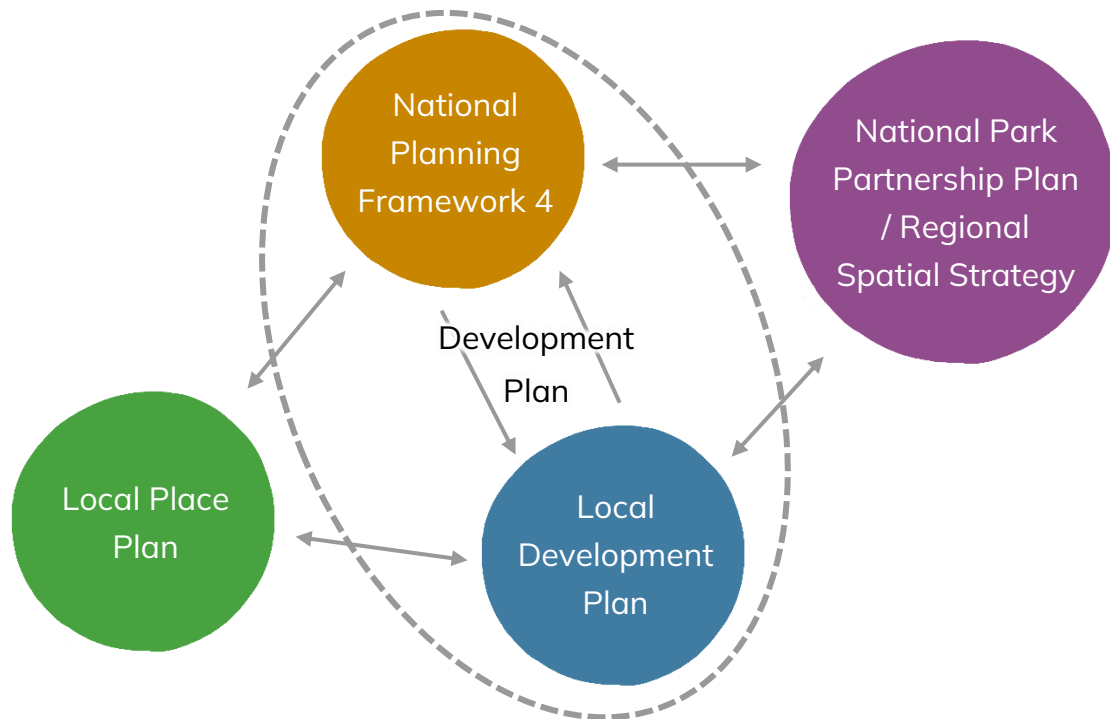


Figure 1 The Scottish Statutory Development Plan.

6. Strategic direction within the National Park is also provided by the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022. It sets out the vision and over-arching strategy for managing the National Park, as well as identifying priorities for action and an overall strategic policy framework. Furthermore, the Partnership Plan acts as the Regional Spatial Strategy for the National Park, which is intended to address strategic development and issues.
7. Scottish Government guidance states that Local Development Plans for National Parks should be consistent with the Partnership Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy. The Partnership Plan therefore provides the strategic context for the Local Development Plan, and the next Local Development Plan will help to deliver several of the Partnership Plan's policies and priorities.
8. At a local level the development plan may be influenced by Local Place Plans. These are community-led plans that focus on places within local authorities' areas, which may include particular neighbourhoods.
9. On 19 May 2023, the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations came into force. Scottish Government has indicated that it expects all



planning authorities to replace their current Local Development Plan with a new style Local Development Plan within around five years of this date. This means the Park Authority is expected to prepare and adopt its next Local Development Plan by around May 2028.

10. The Development Plan Scheme is an important part of the Local Development preparation process. It is key to supporting deliverable and people-focussed plans by letting stakeholders know when and how they can get involved in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan and keeping them informed of progress.
11. The Development Plan Scheme must be published and submitted to Scottish Ministers each year during the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

Scope of the Development Plan Scheme

12. This is the second Development Plan Scheme published in support of the next Local Development Plan. The first Development Plan Scheme was adopted at the Park Authority Board Meeting on 23 June 2023.
13. The key components of the Development Plan Scheme 2024 are its timetable and Participation Statement.
14. The timetable sets out each stage of the Local Development Plan preparation process, identifying the years and months in which it is expected to take place. In accordance with relevant guidance, the timetable presents this information in the format of financial year quarters.
15. The Participation Statement sets out when consultation on the Local Development Plan is likely to take place, with whom and its likely form, and the steps to be taken to involve the public at large. The Park Authority sought the views of community councils and associations and young people, via the Cairngorms Youth Action Team, on the content of the Participation Statement during production of the first Development Plan Scheme in 2023. The content of the Participation Statement is unchanged within the Development Plan Scheme 2024. However, the timescales for undertaking some of the consultation activities have been amended to reflect the updated timetable for preparing the Local Development Plan.



Update to the Local Development Plan's timetable

16. The Development Plan Scheme 2024 contains an update to the timetable in the previous Development Plan Scheme, published in July 2023.
17. The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 require that if the timetable included in an updated Development Plan Scheme differs from the timetable included in the previous version, the Development Plan Scheme must identify the changes to the timetable and the reasons for them.
18. The reasons for the changes to the timetable for the Local Development Plan are:
 - a) A greater volume of work required to prepare the Evidence Report than anticipated, with additional requirements emerging after the publication of Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance and Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023.
 - b) Staff posts within the planning service being vacant during the course of the year.

Strategic policy consideration

19. The Park Authority has a statutory duty to adopt and publish the Development Plan Scheme. The Development Plan Scheme in Annex 1 was prepared in accordance with Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance, which was published in May 2023.
20. The Development Plan Scheme sets out the timetable for preparation of the next Local Development Plan and a Participation Statement that sets out how and when members of the public and stakeholders will be consulted and engaged.

Strategic risk management

21. While no risk is posed by the adoption of the Development Plan Scheme itself, it is recognised that there are risks to the Local Development Plan's timetable for preparation.
22. As experienced in 2023 and 2024, the emerging requirements for evidence have been more resource demanding than originally anticipated. While it is hoped that these factors have now been understood, there remains uncertainty around the volumes of information required by key agencies and other statutory stakeholders to allow them to consider the Evidence Report sufficient.



23. The timescales for the gate check and the later examination, are not controlled by the National Park Authority. Furthermore, there remains uncertainty about the standards needed for an Evidence Report to be found sufficient at the gate check stage. To date, of the seven Evidence Reports submitted to gate check by other local planning authorities:
- Two have been found to be sufficient.
 - Two have been found to be insufficient and returned to their local authorities.
 - One has been withdrawn from gate check.
 - One is still under consideration by a reporter with a target date of 23 December 2024.
 - One is yet to be allocated to a reporter.
24. Where an Evidence Report is returned, the planning authority is required to carry out a range of tasks to bring it to sufficiency, which may include the need to redraft sections of the report, gather additional evidence, commission additional studies and carry out further engagement, as well as the statutory democratic processes. The revised version must then be resubmitted to Scottish Ministers for its gate check. While the delay caused in the preparation of the Local Development Plan in such cases will be dependent on the specific circumstances, the delay caused in all cases will be several months.
25. Certain duties relating to the preparation of Local Development Plans also fall outside the remit of the Park Authority to deliver. For example, Housing Need and Demand Assessments, Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies and Open Space Strategies are the responsibility of Local Authorities to prepare and deliver but are needed by the Park Authority to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan. While the Park Authority works closely with partners to help deliver these duties, it does not have any direct control over their management. Therefore, it is recognised that there could be an impact on the Local Development Plan's timetable should partners face difficulties in delivering these duties.
26. Any significant delay to the timetable is likely to place the ability to meet the Scottish Government's target of having an adopted Local Development Plan in place by around May 2028 at risk. The updated timetable presented in the Development Plan scheme estimates adoption of the new Local Development Plan by quarter three 2027 / 28, therefore there is limited room for further slippage.



27. The Park Authority Board will be kept up to date on the progress of the Local Development Plan's preparation and the Development Plan Scheme will be updated and published annually.

Success measures

28. At the examination stage, before considering the Proposed Plan itself, the person appointed to carry out the examination will determine whether the consultation and public involvement in the preparation of the Local Development Plan has met or exceeded the requirements set out in the Participation Statement. The Examination will not progress if the planning authority is deemed to have failed in this regard.

29. Following the examination, the measure of success is the adoption of the Local Development Plan by the Park Authority Board and its subsequent delivery.

Next steps

30. Once the Development Plan Scheme 2024 is agreed by the Park Authority Board, the Park Authority will:

- a) Publish it on the Park Authority website.
- b) Place a copy in each public library or Local Authority office in the National Park.
- c) Email copies to each Community Council or Association in the National Park.
- d) Send two copies to Scottish Ministers.

31. A further update to the Development Plan Scheme will be brought to the Board in 2025.

Supporting information

32. Annex 1 – Proposed Development Plan Scheme 2024

Links

[Development Plan Scheme 2023](#)

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