Local Development Plan

Development Plan Scheme

November 2025

Cairngorms National Park
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

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Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

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Introduction

Every Local Authority must produce a Development Plan Scheme, at least annually, as required by section 20B of the Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019), and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

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 (LDP) and keeping them informed of progress.

The Development Plan Scheme for the Cairngorms National Park LDP:

- Outlines how planning in the National Park works.
- Highlights changes to the Development Plan system that will determine how the next LDP will be prepared and used.
- Provides details on the processes and timescales for the preparation of the next LDP.
- Includes a Participation Statement that sets out how and when engagement and public consultation will take place in the preparation of the next LDP.
- Contains an invitation for communities to prepare Local Place Plans.

The last Development Plan Scheme was published in November 2024 and contained a timetable and a Participation Statement for the next LDP. This Development Plan Scheme updates the timetable for the LDP. The actions within the Participation Statement remain the same.

Click here to read the last Development Plan Scheme, published in November 2024

Cover photo © Rupert Shanks, 2024.

Planning in the National Park

In the Cairngorms National Park, arguably more than in any other part of Scotland, we adopt an almost entirely partnership approach to planning. The Park Authority and the five local authorities that cover its area – Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council, Moray Council, Perth and Kinross Council and The Highland Council – all play a key role in making the planning system work effectively.

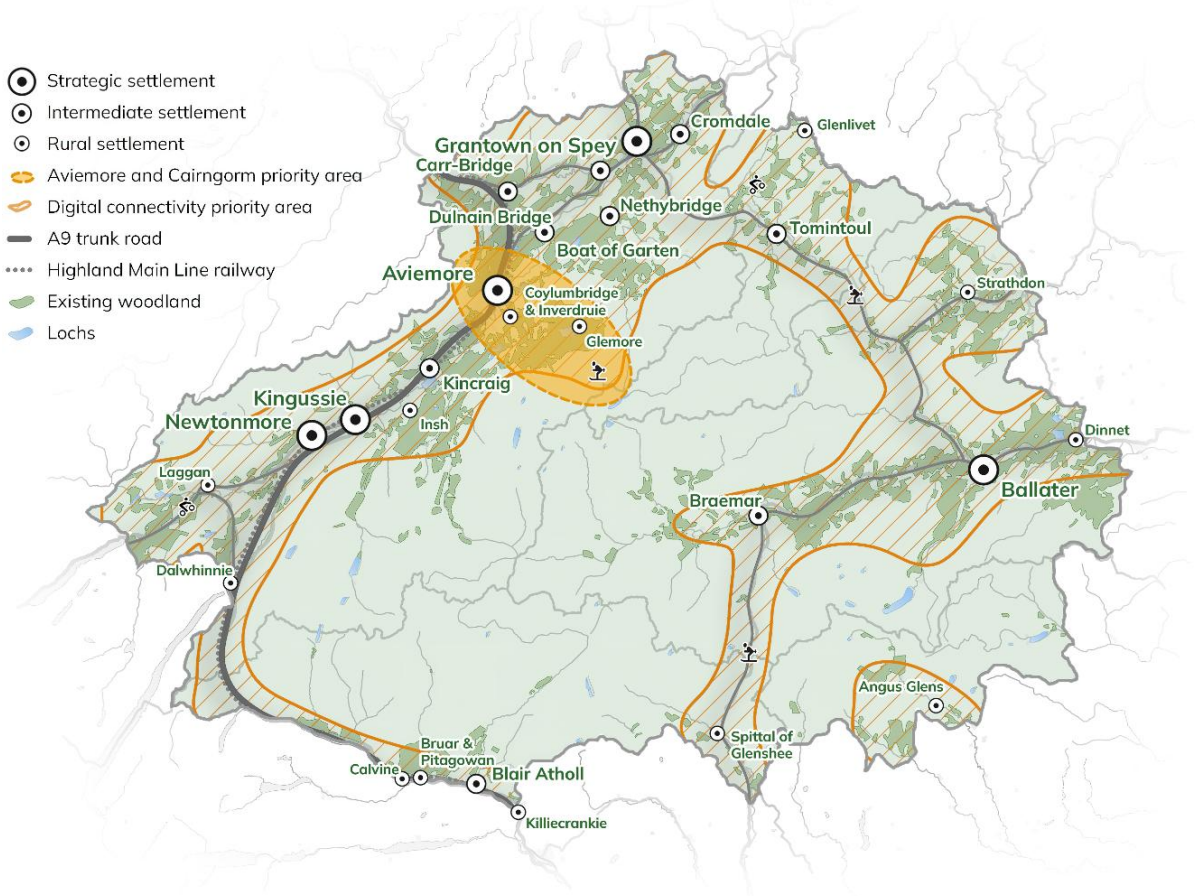


Figure 1 Strategic diagram from the National Park Partnership Plan 2022. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.

The Park Authority sets the planning policy framework for the National Park. This is achieved through the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and the LDP. All planning applications in the National Park are determined in line with this policy framework.

However, planning applications are submitted in the first instance to the relevant local authority. The Park Authority then 'calls in' and determines the most

significant planning applications for the National Park (generally around 10% of all applications), leaving the remainder to be determined by the local authorities[1].

The current Local Development Plan

The current LDP was adopted on 26 March 2021. The plan focuses on the five-year period until 2025, however, it also includes development proposals for the 10-year period until 2030, as well as providing a general indication of the likely scale and location of development as far as 20 years into the future.

The plan shares the long-term vision for the Cairngorms National Park that is set out in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan:

> *'An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together.'*

The plan is supported by a suite of topic based supplementary and non-statutory guidance which provides further information about how the policies within the plan should be interpreted and implemented:

- Housing supplementary guidance.
- Developer Obligations supplementary guidance.
- Supporting Economic Growth non-statutory guidance.
- Natural Heritage non-statutory guidance.
- Landscape non-statutory guidance.
- Renewable Energy non-statutory guidance.
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation non-statutory guidance.
- Cultural Heritage non-statutory guidance.
- Resources non-statutory guidance.
- Design and Placemaking non-statutory guidance.

Click here to access the Local Development Plan and its supporting documents

[1] You can find more information about how the planning process works in the National Park in our Planning Service Charter and our Planning Service Protocol at www.cairngorms.co.uk/living-and-working/planning/planning-guidance

Action and Delivery Programmes

Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 planning authorities were required to prepare an Action Programme. The purpose of the programme was to provide an update of the progress or position of the LDP and aims to support its delivery.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 brought in a new requirement for local authorities to publish a Delivery Programme, replacing the Action Programme. The Delivery Programme sets out how an authority proposes to implement its LDP. It is part of the project management toolkit, helping to focus development planning resources on delivery as well as plan-making. As a minimum, the Delivery Programme must set out:

- A list of actions required to deliver policies and proposals contained in the Local Development Plan.
- An explanation as to how those actions are to be undertaken.
- The timescale for the conclusion of each action.
- The expected sequencing of, and timescales for, delivery of housing on sites allocated by the Local Development Plan.

A Delivery Programme for the current Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan was published in March 2025.

Click here to read the Delivery Programme, published in March 2025

The new planning system

The development plan

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 on 13 February 2023, following approval by the Scottish Parliament in January 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.

Unlike National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy, National Planning Framework 4 is part of the statutory development plan (Figure 2). 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 LDP for the planning authority area where the place is. The statutory development plan forms the main basis for making decisions on planning applications, as planning applications must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

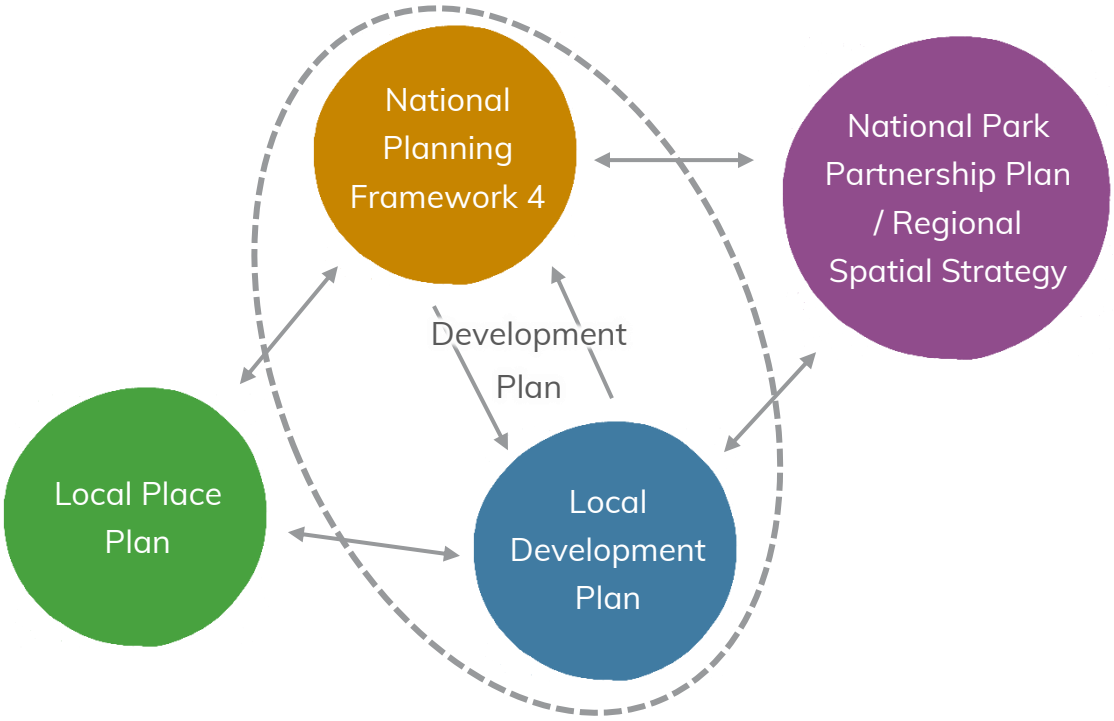


Figure 2 The Scottish Statutory Development Plan.

Strategic direction within the National Park is also provided by the Cairngorms NPPP. The Partnership Plan is the overarching management plan for the Cairngorms National Park which is approved by Scottish Ministers. 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. The current Partnership Plan was adopted in 2022, and a new Partnership Plan is expected to be produced by early 2027.

Scottish Government guidance states that LDP's for National Parks should be consistent with the Partnership Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy. The Partnership Plan therefore provides the strategic context for the LDP, and the LDP will help to deliver a number of the Partnership Plan's policies and priorities.

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.

Planning authorities have around five years from The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 coming into force to replace their current Local Development Plan with a new style LDP. This means the Park Authority is expected to prepare and adopt a new LDP by around May 2028.

The next Local Development Plan

Alongside National Planning Framework 4, the LDP will be the main document which will influence future built development in the National Park. It will address a wide range of policy issues, including housing, retail, economic development, transport, recreation, and built and natural heritage. The LDP will cover a 10-year period from around 2028 to 2038, as well as provide a general indication of the likely scale and location of development as far as 20 years beyond that.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has introduced a number of changes to the key steps of preparing a LDP. Preparation of a new-style LDP will include:

Evidence-gathering and early community and stakeholder engagement, leading to an Evidence Report.

Submission of the Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers for an independent Gate Check.

Plan preparation, leading to publication of the Proposed Plan for consultation.

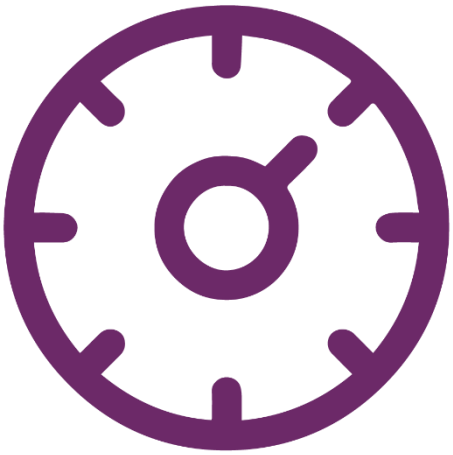
Submission of the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers for an independent Examination of outstanding issues.

Adoption and Constitution of the LDP – Constitution being the term referring to the Plan becoming part of the adopted Development Plan.

The new style LDP is to be place-based with a greater emphasis on maps, site briefs and masterplans, with minimal policy wording. The policies and proposals within the LDP are to be focused on places and locations, while National Planning Framework 4 will provide overarching thematic policies for decision making.

Local Development Plan timetable

The Development Plan Scheme sets out the timetable for the proposed LDP. This includes the proposed timings for the various stages of the LDP preparation by year and quarter.



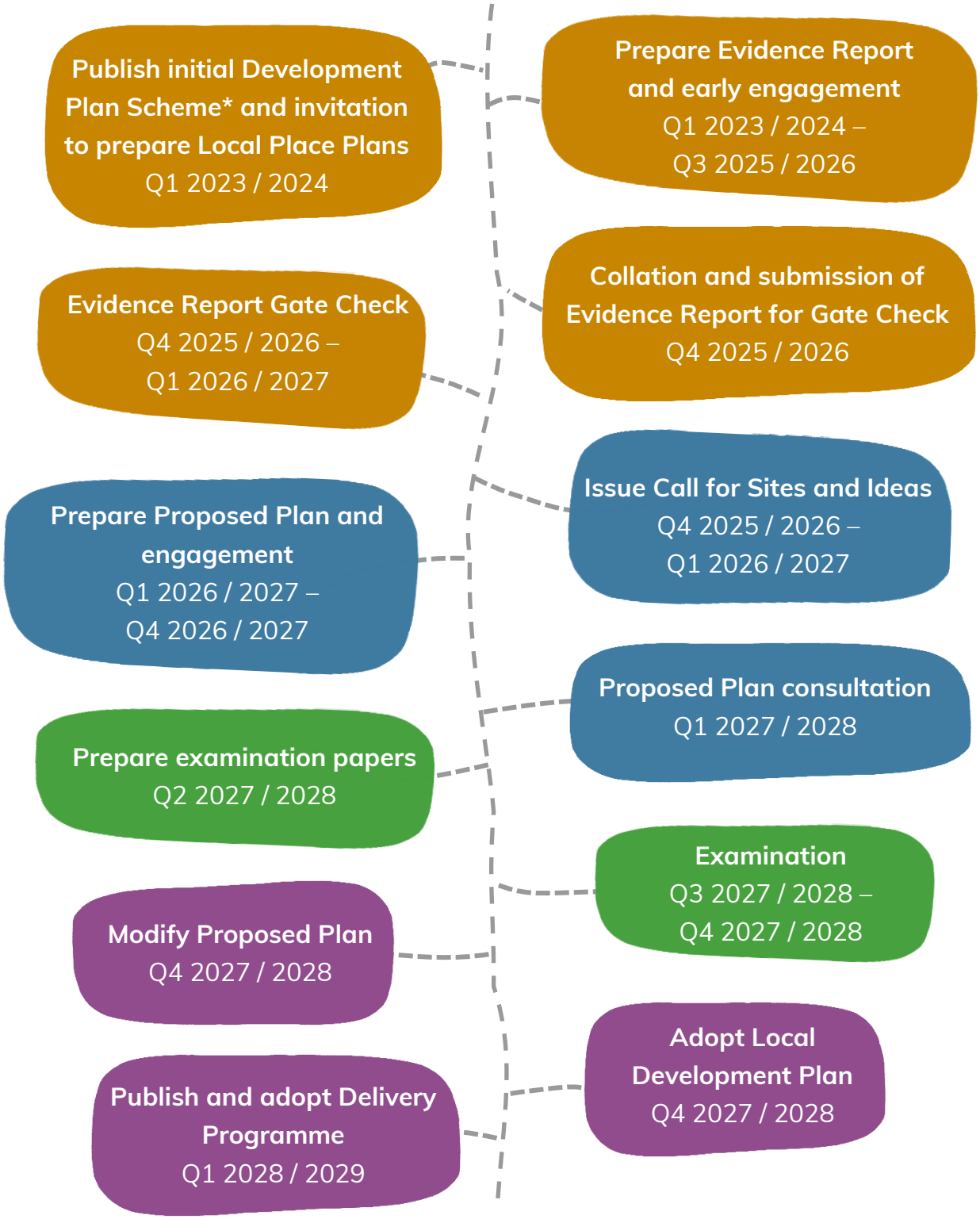
This Development Plan Scheme contains an update to the timetable in the previous Development Plan Scheme, published in November 2024.

The main reason for these changes is a greater volume of work, and therefore more time taken, to produce the Evidence Report than was previously anticipated. This additional work has been undertaken in response to initial feedback from key stakeholders and based on the recent experiences of other local planning authorities at the Evidence Report gate check stage. The additional time taken to produce the Evidence Report has knock-on implications for the timing of subsequent stages of plan production.

The timescales for publishing the LDP have also been updated to take account of the timetable for preparation of the next NPPP.

The updated timeline is set out on page 11. The changes affect the timing, but not the actions, within the Participation Statement. A detailed timetable, including information on where the changes to the timetable have occurred, is set out in in Appendix 1.

Local Development Plan timeline



* Development Plan Scheme to be updated annually following initial publication

Participation Statement

Delivering a successful LDP relies on successful engagement and consultation. The Park Authority will continue to adhere to the National Standards for Community Engagement. The standards are good-practice principles that aim to improve and support effective community engagement, which in turn improves the outcomes.

The Participation Statement outlines how the Park Authority are committed to involving the public in the preparation of next LDP.

Engagement objectives

Across specific informal and formal consultation phases, we will attempt to:

- Identify and feedback on the key issues we are facing, the big challenges we need to address and areas of consensus and conflict.
- Establish what realistic and planning related actions would make the biggest difference to tackling these.
- Reach a more diverse cross-section of stakeholders, exploring a variety of consultation methods that help reach audiences that are not typically engaged.
- Find the right balance between conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park, delivering affordable housing, supporting a sustainable, thriving economy and providing outstanding visitor experiences.
- Define the proposed planning policy for the National Park over the timeframe of the next LDP.

Audiences

Seven audiences have been identified as being critical to the success of the LDP consultation process. These audiences encompass those specifically set out in Scottish Government's LDP regulations, including children and young people, disabled people and community councils.

- Residents
- Community groups
- Young people
- Local businesses
- Landowners and managers
- Visitors to the National Park
- Under-represented groups

Summary of methods

The Park Authority will:

- Ensure people and communities are aware of the LDP process and the opportunities to comment at key stages in its production. The Park Authority will keep everyone up-to-date and informed via a range of platforms and organisations, including the Park Authority's website, consultation and social media platforms, and through key stakeholders and statutory consultees.
- Widely encourage involvement using a range of methods. This will include engagement events and publicity campaigns via a range of platforms and organisations, including the Park Authority's website, consultation platforms and social media platforms, the media, newspaper adverts and articles, and through key stakeholders, statutory consultees.
- Produce documents that are accessible, transparent and written in jargon-free language that avoids or otherwise explains necessary technical terms.
- Publish an updated Development Plan Scheme every year, setting out how and when people can get involved in the preparation process.
- Consider the use of mediation as a method of addressing potentially contentious issues.

A detailed timeline outlining the LDP's key stages and the types of engagement to take place at each stage is provided in Appendix 1.

Invitation to prepare Local Place Plans

Local Place Plans have been introduced as part of the new planning system to allow communities to prepare their own plans that can be taken into consideration during the preparation of the next LDP. They provide a new opportunity for communities to feed into the planning system by setting out their ideas, aspirations as well as proposals about how land is developed and used in their local area. Local Place Plans can build on the existing Community Action Plans that most communities across the National Park have prepared.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority wants the next LDP to be shaped by the aims and ambitions of communities across the National Park. We are inviting community councils and other community bodies to create their own community-led Local Place Plans that we would take into account in preparing the next LDP.

It is up to each community body to decide if they want to prepare a Local Place Plan, however, it is important that we make sure there is enough time for it to be submitted and checked so it can feed into and inform the next LDP at the earliest possible stage. Based on current timescales for preparing the next LDP. Local Place Plans would already need to have been submitted to the Park Authority in order to be taken account of in the next LDP, but a Local Place Plan that is completed in the future may still be taken account of in future planning decisions or a future LDP.

The Park Authority will also take account of Community Action Plans in preparing the next LDP.

Click here to find out more about preparing Local Place Plans

If you have any questions about Local Place Plans, contact us at:

planning@cairngorms.co.uk

Contact Details

If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the preparation of the next LDP, please go to:

cairngormsldp.commonplace.is

If you have any questions that you would like answered, please contact:

Planning Team
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Grantown-on-Spey
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Email: planning@cairngorms.co.uk
Website: cairngorms.co.uk

Appendix 1: Detailed timetable

Appendix 1 provides a detailed timetable for the next Local Development Plan (LDP), outlining the key stages of preparation and when engagement is planned to take place. It contains information on where changes to the timetable have occurred between this Development Plan Scheme and the previous Development Plan Scheme. It may also be revised in future Development Plan Schemes.

Local Development Plan stage / engagement activity	Previous timing	Updated timing
Prepare Evidence Report	**Q1 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26**	**Q1 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26**
Publish Development Plan Scheme (and Participation Statement) online and share via website and social media.	Q1 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Issue invitation to do Local Place Plans as part of Development Plan Scheme and promote via website, social media and Cairn newsletter.	Q1 2023/24	Q1 2023/24
Early online engagement via online consultation platform, supported by website, social media and Cairn newsletter promotion	Q2 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26
Prepare and publish Equality Impact and Fairer Scotland Assessments	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2023/24	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2023/24
Direct engagement with Community Councils and other statutory community groups.	Q2 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26
Engagement through Community Action Planning Meetings	Q1 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26
Social media advertising campaign targeting specific demographics, for example young people and the working age population, linking to online consultation platform.	Q2 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26
Stakeholder events targeted at under-represented groups	Q2 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26

Local Development Plan stage / engagement activity	Previous timing	Updated timing
Work collaboratively with Local Authorities on their engagement work on Open Space and Play Sufficiency Assessments.	Q1 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26
Engagement with children and young people through Cairngorms Youth Action Team, student councils in National Park high schools and youth clubs, sports clubs, and other youth groups.	Q1 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26
Informal sessions with Park Authority Board members.	Q2 2023/24 – Q1 2025/26	Q2 2023/24 – Q3 2025/26
Engage Key Agencies on Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report	Q1 2025/26	Q3 2025/26
Engage with Key Agencies on final the content of Evidence Report.	Q1 2025/26	Q3 2025/26
Collation and submission of Evidence Report for Gate Check	**Q1 2025/26**	**Q4 2025/26**
Webpage updates supported by social media and Cairn newsletter to provide information about the gate check and ongoing work.	Q1 2025/26	Q4 2025/26

Timescales from this point onwards are indicative as the administration of the gate check and examination sit with Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division and are therefore outwith the Park Authority's control.

Local Development Plan stage / engagement activity	Previous timing	Updated timing
Evidence Report Gate Check	**Q2 2025/26**	**Q4 2025/26 – Q1 2026/27**
Webpage updates supported by social media and Cairn newsletter to provide information about the gate check and ongoing work.	Q2 2025/26	Q1 2026/27
Publish infographic of key findings of the Evidence Report and conclusions and share via website social media and Cairn	Q2 2025/26	Q1 2026/27

Local Development Plan stage / engagement activity	Previous timing	Updated timing
newsletter and distribute to those engaged during Evidence Report stage.		
Prepare Proposed Plan	**Q3 2025/26 – Q2 2026/27**	**Q1 2026/27 – Q4 2026/27**
Issue Call for Sites and Ideas and advertise via website, social media and Cairn newsletter.	Q1 2025/26 – Q2 2025/26	Q4 2025/26 – Q1 2026/27
Hold formal consultation of at least 12 weeks via the Commonplace platform, supported by website, social media and Cairn newsletter promotion.	Q3 – 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Formal consultation on Strategic Environment Assessment Environmental Report and Habitats Regulations Appraisal with Key Agencies	Q3 – 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Social media advertising campaign targeting specific demographics, for example young people and the working age population, linking to Commonplace.	Q3 2025/26 – Q2 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Carry out direct engagement with children and young people, through Cairngorms Youth Action Team, primary and school pupils and youth clubs and organisations.	Q3 2025/26 – Q2 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Issue Neighbour Notifications.	Q3 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Hold drop in exhibitions to inform general public and stakeholders of consultation. Supported by social media campaign to promote events.	Q3 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Poster circulation in key community hotspots and countryside locations, e.g. community noticeboards, supermarkets, LICs, VICs, interpretation boards to promote drop in exhibitions and consultation.	Q3 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28
Post-consultation webpage updates supported by social media and Cairn newsletter to provide information about ongoing work and the next stage in the process.	Q3 2026/27 – Q4 2026/27	Q1 – 2027/28

Local Development Plan stage / engagement activity	Previous timing	Updated timing
Prepare examination papers	**Q3 2026/27 – Q4 2026/27**	**Q2 2027/78**
Update webpage to keep public-up-to-date on progress, supported by social media.	Q3 2026/27 – Q4 2026/27	Q2 2027/28
Examination	**Q1 2027/28 – Q2 2027/28**	**Q3 2027/28**
Host examination webpage to keep public up-to-date on progress, supported by social media and Cairn newsletter.	Q1 2027/28	Q3 2027/28
Emails or letters to those who have commented on Proposed Plan on progress and process.	Q2 2027/28	Q3 2027/28
Place material informing general public of Examination in public libraries.	Q2 2027/28	Q3 2027/28
Place statutory advert in at least one local newspaper	Q2 2027/28	Q3 2027/28
Modify Proposed Plan	**Q3 2027/28**	**Q4 2027/28**
Update webpage to keep public-up-to-date on progress, supported by social media.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Adopt Local Development Plan	**Q3 2027/28**	**Q4 2027/28**
Statutory Notices to notify anybody who commented on the Proposed Plan.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Place statutory advert in at least one local newspaper.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Update webpage to keep public informed.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Distribute copies of all documents to public libraries.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Consult all agencies referred to within the Delivery Programme.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Publish Post Adoption Statement.	Q3 2027/28	Q4 2027/28
Publish and Adopt Delivery Programme.	Q4 2027/28	Q1 2028/29

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