
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	13 March 2025
Report By:	Head of Service - Regeneration, Planning and Public Protection	Report No:	ENV011/25/SJ/NM
Contact Officer:	Neale McIlvanney	Contact No:	01475 712402
Subject:	Local Development Plan: Evidence Report and Scoping Report		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 To seek approval for the Local Development Plan 'Evidence Report' and 'Scoping Report', in order that both documents can be submitted to Scottish Government for Gate Check review.
- 1.3 The Evidence Report is the first key stage in the production of a development plan and its purpose is to set out a range of evidence gathered to inform what the content of the emerging Plan should be, whilst providing a reflection on initial consultation. The emerging Inverclyde LDP is being produced under new Scottish regulations on development planning, and this is the first Evidence Report produced by Inverclyde Council for a Local Development Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Committee approves the draft Local Development Plan Evidence Report and the Local Development Plan Scoping Report for submission to Government Gatecheck, subject to final amendments required for editorial purposes.

Neale McIlvanney
Head of Service
Regeneration, Planning & Public Protection

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The emerging LDP is being prepared under revised regulations from that of previous iterations of Inverclyde Local Development Plans. Development Plan regulations are set by Scottish Government and under the current system, the initial key stage of any LDP in Scotland is to present evidence gathered across a range of topic areas as set out in National Planning Framework 4, and that will form part of the development plan, and present this in a form that sets out anticipated requirements for the emerging Local Development Plan. This stage also includes an element of engagement across relevant stakeholders. Following production of an evidence report, Scottish Government undertake a Gatecheck to determine whether the authority has sufficient information and evidence to allow it to progress to preparation of a Local Development Plan. The Evidence Report should also be accompanied with a Scoping Report to commence the process of preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the plan.
- 3.2 Evidence gathered across the range of topics related to Local Development Plans is extensive due to the nature of development plans covering a wide range of land uses and development types, and stakeholders with interests across those topics. The Evidence report sets this out in a format, which: identifies relevant topics, includes analysis of the relationship of current LDP policies to NPF4, contains links and summaries of a wide range of evidence sources, identifies gaps in evidence that should be addressed through LDP production, summarises next steps and consultation outcomes (i.e. where stakeholders agree or disagree with evidence gathered).
- 3.3 Delegated authority is sought to submit the Evidence Report and Scoping Report to Scottish Government for Gatecheck, subject to final changes required for editorial purposes. It is intended submit the documents to Government by end March 2025. The LDP Development Plan Scheme [DPS], which sets out a timetable for progressing the Plan indicates submission within quarter 1 of 2025, so this remains on target in accordance with the DPS. Notwithstanding, as the Gatecheck process is a new component of the system, it is unknown whether the Gatecheck will complete within the DPS timescales. So far, a small number of authorities in Scotland have progressed to Evidence Report stage, with a mixed outcome of around half being authorised to proceed to LDP preparation, while the remainder have been notified of further work required to develop the evidence base. Officers will look to advance other components of the LDP during the Gatecheck process, where feasible to ensure progress remains as close to the DPS as possible, however further reports on the LDP process to Committee will identify whether the LDP timescale remains on track.
- 3.4 In terms of substantive content of the LDP Evidence Report, the topics are grouped into 3 areas of evidence gathered: Sustainable Place, Liveable Place and Productive Place, which contain the topics as shown in the following table.

LDP EVIDENCE REPORT TOPIC SCHEDULE		
Sustainable Place	Liveable Place	Productive Place
Tackling Climate Change, Nature Crisis and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Biodiversity Natural places Soils Forestry and woodland Historic assets and places Greenbelts Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land, and Empty Buildings	Design, Quality, Place and Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhoods Quality Homes Rural Homes and Rural Development Heat and Cooling Blue and Green Infrastructure and Play, Recreation and Sport Flood Risk and Water Management Health and Safety	Community Wealth Building Business and Industry City, Town, Commercial and Local Centres and Retail Tourism, Culture and Creativity

Coastal Development Energy Zero Waste Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure First	Digital Infrastructure	
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3.5 The LDP Evidence report sets out conclusion and implications for next steps in each topic area, and also summarises at the end of the document. However, the following highlights are noted below for consideration:

- The LDP system is new and National Planning Framework 4 is formally incorporated as part of development plans nationally. This means that for Inverclyde the development plan will be formed of the NPF4 (or superseded version) and the most up-to-date LDP. In this context, many of the areas for update in the LDP are unlikely to change the strategic direction of policy from current adopted and proposed LDPs for Inverclyde, given there is not any substantial conflict between the two
- As a further consequence of the development plan being formed, in part, of NPF4, there may be opportunity to remove policy content from the LDP if it would be a simple reiteration of national policies. Areas where local variance applies are still likely to have bespoke LDP policies – for example, this could include rural housing development.
- There is an identification that a number of regeneration initiatives have been delivered, are in works or in development stages. These are likely to be formed as a strategic regeneration/priority places component of the LDP, and there is likely to be strong links between economic strategy documents and LDP content in this area.
- The planning for housing system has changed since previous LDPs as a result of NPF4. Notably, this has removed the ‘sustainable development principle’ that previously existed, whereby if there was deemed to be a lack of effective deliverable land supply, there would be a presumption to support non-allocated housing land for housing development at planning application stage. Additionally, the formulation of land strategy for delivering new houses is not formed in the same way. The Evidence Report content strongly links with the Local Housing Strategy components identified housing need and demand, however the expectation is now that Government wish LDPs to establish a ‘minimum all tenure housing land requirement’ and plan to deliver in excess of that target. The Evidence Report sets out scenarios for planning on this basis, and recommends a preferred growth strategy. It should be noted that existing land availability (per housing land audit) exceeds this target, although the LDP will have to develop a strategy to support new house building given that although there is known land availability, completions for new build units (both private and RSL) have fallen significantly, which is likely to indicate a disconnect between land availability and development. This will require collaborative working with industry to identify and remove barriers to development in Inverclyde and reviewing land allocations and policy to this end. At the time of writing the LDP Evidence Report, positive engagement has been taking place with industry, which will be an ongoing aspect of the LDP (and LHS), and the current status of these discussions are reflected in the Evidence Report ‘housing schedule’. These issues will be further explored in the forthcoming intended Housing Summit.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 That Committee approves the draft Local Development Plan Evidence Report and the Local Development Plan Scoping Report for submission to Government, subject to final amendments required for editorial purposes.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

None

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.3 Legal/Risk

There is a legal duty on the Council to produce a Local Development Plan and to keep this under review. Without an up-to-date development plan, decisions on planning applications are more susceptible to successful appeals.

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

The Local Development Plan is the representation of the Council's strategic priorities and works in tandem with the Local Housing Strategy to provide a comprehensive spatial strategy for housing.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

N/A

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – an equalities impact assessment will be produced in tandem with the production of the Local Development Plan, however the Evidence Report is not in itself a policy document.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – The Evidence Report is not a policy document in itself, however in production of the Local Development Plan, all relevant associated assessments will be undertaken to inform the Plan.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – The Evidence Report is not a policy document in itself, however in production of the Local Development Plan, all relevant associated assessments will be undertaken to inform the Plan.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

None

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

X	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required and in this respect a Scoping Report is produced for approval of Committee in fulfilment of SEA requirements.
	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Evidence Report has been the subject of broad consultation across the topic areas. Summary of consultation outcomes and notification of where consultation responses indicate agreement or conflict with the evidence gathered is set out against each topic area and summarised in the Evidence Report. Further consultation will be undertaken as a regulatory requirement of future stages of the LDP.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A