

Strengthening Engagement in Local Development Planning



Context

The Development Planning team are currently preparing the new Local Development Plan (LDP) under the new system introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The first stage of this process is the compiling of an Evidence Report, which will set out a robust evidence base, informed by early consultation and engagement with communities, key agencies and a range of other stakeholders. The gathering of information which has been informed at each step by stakeholders is complete. The key task over the next few months until late Autumn is to present this information, outlining any gaps and highlighting learning points, which will all be presented to Full Council for approval before being submitted to Scottish Ministers for a new procedure known as the 'Gate Check'. Following the robust check point, continued comprehensive engagement and consultation will take place in the preparation of the Proposed Plan, at the beginning of 2025.



Digital technology has played a significant role in the engagement and consultation carried out so far for both the preparation of LDP3 and Local Place Plans, which has largely been through online surveys on the Engage Stirling platform. The Development Planning team have also created different online tools to help with consultation including Place Profiles and a Local Living tool. Furthermore, Place Profiles are available for communities to use when putting together Local Place Plans in addition to the online Resource Hub on the Stirling Council website.

Alongside the preparatory work being carried out for LDP3, communities in the Stirling Council area have been invited to shape and produce a Local Place Plans for their areas. Local Place Plans ensure communities plan for how land in their local area should be developed, enhanced or preserved, with exciting action plans to deliver on these considerations and proposals. The fact that planning authorities must then take Local Place Plans into account when preparing the Local Development Plan, allows communities increased involvement in the planning process. This is an ongoing process with finalised Local Place Plans to be submitted by 25 April 2025 to coincide with the end of the public consultation period for the Proposed Plan.

What Happened

Evidence Report

Between August and October 2023, extensive public consultation on the Engage Stirling website called “Have a Say in the Future of Your Place” was undertaken. People were invited to share their views on the issues and challenges relating to the areas where they live, work, or spend their time, as well as to highlight priorities for consideration in the preparation of LDP3.

Following the survey, a consultation analysis report was created. This was sent to Community Councils and further meetings were held with Community Councils during the first half of 2024, either in person or on Microsoft Teams, to discuss the results and receive further community feedback, specifically with regards to the topics of housing, local living and infrastructure.

Between May and June 2024, a follow-up public consultation on Engage Stirling website called “Have a Say in the Scope of the Evidence Report”. This included the following:

- An ‘Evidence Report – Scope and Content’ survey
- Three surveys looking for further feedback and information to help build up an evidence base for important policy areas: housing, local living and heritage
- A survey seeking views on a draft Site Assessment methodology
- A ‘Play, Sport and Recreation’ survey targeted at children and young people aged 0-17 as well as individuals, community groups and organisations that represent the views and experiences of children and young people



The Local Living survey included a Local Living tool created by Ken Lennox (Planning Technician) and Dorothy Irvine (Urban Design) to help with Policy 15 of NPF4.

In June 2024, to increase involvement with children and young people, the 'Play, Sport and Recreation' survey was included on the Young Scot website with Young Scot Card Holders receiving reward points for completing the survey. The survey's findings will help inform the Play Sufficiency Assessment undertaken by Richard Callendar (Senior Planning Officer).

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Local Place Plans

Between 2023 and 2024, communities in Stirling have been invited to produce Local Place Plans. Charlotte Brown (Planning Officer) has been the lead officer on this work, having carried out meetings with communities and creating an online Resource Hub on the Stirling Council website. This work has been undertaken in collaboration with Stirling Council's Communities Team, working together to empower communities and local people to shape and deliver in their local areas.

To set community bodies on the right path at the start of the process, information sessions were held with committees in February, June and September 2023 to assist them in the Local Place Plan preparation. Support was also provided through offering to 'check in' with community bodies at three stages in the preparation process. In line with the Stirling Council 10-Year Strategy – Thriving Stirling, and wider cooperate priorities, Planning is prioritising communities and recognise the importance of all communities having a say and shaping their future as well as understanding the challenges that these communities may encounter when creating Local Place Plans.

Place Profiles

Between 2023 and 2024, Place Profiles have been created using ArcGIS StoryMaps, initially for the 9 priority communities and building up to creating a Place Profile for all Community Councils in the Stirling Council Planning area. Place Profiles have been prepared to help people understand how Planning relates to the places where people live, work and spend their time. Based on the development planning themes of sustainability, liveability and productivity, they tell a story about the environmental, social and economic characteristics of each community council area. Place Profiles aim to help people engage in the preparation of Stirling's next Local Development Plan (LDP3) as well as assist communities in preparing Local Place Plans.



Areas of Collaboration

Throughout the process of the Evidence Report to date, there has been collaboration with several Stirling Council services such as Economic Development, Housing, Land Services, Education and Roads to gather evidence and views as well as the Business Planning and Data Management team who have helped with data and mapping.

Communities have been engaged, including the public through online surveys, in person and online meetings with Community Councils, an in-person meeting with members of the Youth Parliament and an online survey for Young Scot card holders.

Key agencies such as Homes for Scotland, Scottish Water, NHS Forth Valley, Nature Scot, Historic Environment Scotland, SEPA, Transport Scotland, Tactran and Scottish City Heritage Trust have all been involved with evidence gathering and consultation.

In terms of Local Place Plans, the Stirling Council Communities service have been involved, and we have also collaborated with Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park to share knowledge.

The Place Profiles have been created in collaboration with the Business Planning and Data Management team and have also been put together using data gathered from within the Planning service, such as Conservation, Archaeology, the Tree Officer as well as other services such as Roads.

Overall Result

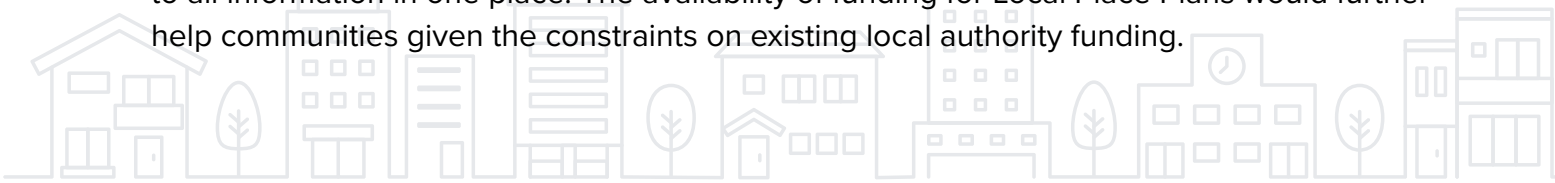
This is an ongoing process, with the Evidence Report due to go to Full Council for approval in October 2024 before going to Scottish Ministers for 'Gate Check' with the aim to begin the Proposed Plan in 2025.

Effective early engagement and communication with a wide range of stakeholders including communities, has been key to generating the best possible evidence going forward for the new LDP3. This contributes to improvement for a better Planning Process and decision-making going forward if our LDP is built upon robust evidence. The use of digital technology in terms of online surveys, Place Profile StoryMaps, Local Living tool and online Resource Hub for Local Place Plans has helped improve the understanding of Planning for communities and improved accessibility of data and information we hold within the Planning service for communities.

Lessons Learned

Local Place Plans

The creation of the Resource Hub has been beneficial in providing communities with access to all information in one place. The availability of funding for Local Place Plans would further help communities given the constraints on existing local authority funding.



Place Profiles

The Place Profiles have been useful for communities for allowing the public easy access to a wide range of data, statistics, maps and information on their area all in one place. However, for the Place Profiles to be used as evidence within the Evidence Report, the data must be captured as a moment in time whereas for the Place Profiles to be up to date for public use, they require to be regularly updated to coincide with the most recent statistics, annual audits, etc. As a result, in future, once the Place Profiles have been used as evidence within the Evidence Report, for longevity, the Place Profiles will be edited to become more dynamic in terms of mapping and statistics to allow them to be easier to update and therefore will be easier to maintain for public use.

