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**East Dunbartonshire Council**

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**PLACE NEIGHBOURHOOD &  
CORPORATE ASSETS  
COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2023**

**REFERENCE:**

**PNCA/100/23/SM**

**LEAD OFFICER:**

**DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**CONTACT OFFICER:**

**STEWART MCNALLY, TEAM LEADER, LAND  
PLANNING POLICY**

**SUBJECT TITLE:**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 3 - EVIDENCE  
REPORT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

**1.1** The purpose of this Report is to set out a programme of work for the Evidence Gathering stage of the Council's new Local Development Plan 3. The Report also seeks approval to commence work relating to the activities, events and publicity required to support public engagement on the evidence gathering process.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

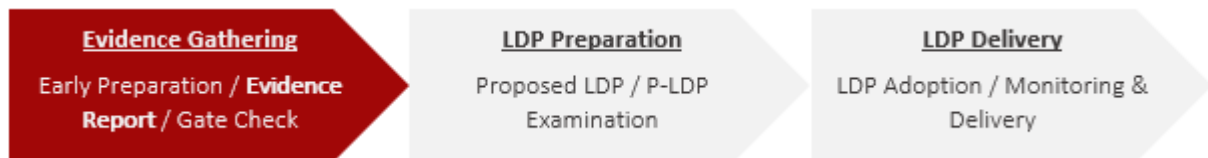
It is recommended that the Place Neighbourhood & Corporate Assets Committee:

- 2.1** notes the purpose of the Evidence Gathering stage of the Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3) and the programme of work that will support this;
- 2.2** approves the activities, events and publicity measures that are proposed as part of the 'public-at-large' engagement, as detailed in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.24 of this Report; and
- 2.3** delegates authority to officers to undertake additional targeted engagement as part of the Evidence Gathering process.

**ANN DAVIE  
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1** The Evidence Report is a new requirement in the Local Development Plan (LDP) preparation process introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and associated Development Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2023. The purpose of the Evidence Report is to improve the quality and effectiveness of a Proposed Local Development Plan (P-LDP) through the provision of a range of data captured from a wide variety of sources, analysed to best inform the production of LDP content and strategy. It must contain sufficient information to enable the Planning Authority to prepare a LDP that is place-based, people-focused and deliverable. Taking time to get this stage of development planning right is therefore very important.
- 3.2** In preparing the Evidence Report, the Planning Authority must engage those who would be affected by or could influence the Plan. These include the public-at-large, Community Councils, key agencies, children and young people, Gypsies & Travellers, older people and disabled people, and other stakeholders. The Evidence Report will be subject to independent assessment at the 'Gate Check'. This stage will be undertaken by a Reporter working on the behalf of the Scottish Government and will check that there is a sound evidence base on which to proceed to prepare a LDP.
- 3.3** The Council's Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement 2023, which was approved at the Council meeting on 28 September 2023 (Report No EDC/010/23/SM), provides full details of this and sets out the range of engagement requirements the Council is committed to throughout the LDP preparation process.
- 3.4** The position of the Evidence Report within the new LDP preparation process under the 2019 Act and Regulations is as follows:



#### **Content of the Evidence Report**

- 3.5** The Evidence Report is intended to provide an evidence base to establish the broad themes and requirements that the LDP will address. Specific locations or sites are the focus for the Proposed LDP and must not be included in the Evidence Report. Detailed site appraisal will not be appropriate at the Evidence Report stage, however the authority should establish a site appraisal methodology that will be used to inform P-LDP allocations.
- 3.6** The Evidence Report must set out the authority's views on the characteristics of the land use and population of the area including housing needs, education capacity, health and wellbeing priorities, climate change resilience, economic strength and infrastructure requirements. There are other legislative requirements for matters which must be considered in the preparation of the plan, linked to specific policy topics. In preparing the Evidence Report, the planning authority must also assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children.

### **3.7 Other key matters that must be covered by the Evidence Report include:**

- A summary of action taken by the Planning Authority to support and promote the construction and adaptation of housing to meet the housing needs of older people and disabled people, as well as an analysis of the extent to which the action has helped to meet those needs
- How the Planning Authority has invited local communities to prepare Local Place Plans and the assistance provided to local communities to assist them to prepare Local Place Plans
- The steps taken by the Planning Authority in preparing the report to seek the views of Community Councils
- The extent to which the views expressed by disabled persons, Gypsies & Travellers and children and young people have been taken into account in the Evidence Report.

### **Evidence Report Engagement**

**3.8** In preparing the Evidence Report, the Planning Authority must seek the views of those who it is anticipated will be affected by the plan, to ensure collaborative and transparent evidence gathering. In particular, the Evidence Report should include information about the lived experience of those who live and work in a place, alongside more technical data. Therefore, comprehensive public engagement is required to gather the views of local communities and other interested parties. It is proposed that the engagement is undertaken in two main phases:

- Early engagement that is publicised widely to the 'public-at-large', interested stakeholders and other specified groups.
- Targeted and continuing engagement that provides ongoing input into the evidence gathering process.

**3.9** The objectives of the Evidence Report engagement are to:

- Understand the key challenges and opportunities of the plan area.
- Gain information on people's aspirations for their area and the type of issues they may wish the LDP to address.
- Obtain qualitative evidence on the lived experience of those who live and work in a place through meaningful engagement.
- Gauge the level of agreement around the evidence base and whether further evidence should be provided or developed for particular topics (e.g. housing/infrastructure/energy/environment).
- Increase awareness of the East Dunbartonshire LDP3 process and encourage members of the public and other stakeholders to participate in future stages.

### **Timescale**

**3.10** To ensure that the overall timetable for LDP3 remains on schedule and is achievable, as set out in the approved Development Plan Scheme, the Council will need to complete the public-at-large element of the engagement by early 2024. It is proposed that formal engagement commences on Monday 27 November 2023 and runs until Wednesday 31 January 2024. This is a period of just over 9 weeks. Normally, land planning policy consultations run for 8 weeks, however extra time has been allocated to account for the engagement running over the Christmas and New Year period.

## Early Engagement Activities and Actions

**3.11** The Scottish Government encourages innovative approaches to engagement, tailored to the unique circumstances of an area and reflecting a broad range of interests. It is therefore proposed that the following activities are carried out as part of the LDP3 evidence gathering engagement:

**3.12 Publicity** – The early engagement will be publicised as widely as possible using the following methods:

- local press releases
- social media promotion including an ‘explainer video’
- distribution of posters and leaflets
- LDP newsletter
- Council website

The Land Planning Policy team will work closely with the Council’s Corporate Communications team to ensure that publicity is carried out in an accessible and effective manner.

**3.13 Online Questionnaire** – The questionnaire will be an important tool in gathering the views of those who are likely to be affected by the Plan. It will focus on broad concepts and key issues, rather than the merits of individual sites. The questionnaire will be designed to be as user friendly as possible and will help collate information in a consistent manner that will allow for identification of key trends and areas of concern. The questionnaire will be available online however paper copies will be available for those who require them.

The questionnaire will have three main sections:

- Part 1 – Main Challenges for LDP3
- Part 2 – Your Evidence
- Part 3 - Your Place (Optional)

The questionnaire will also ask participants if they would like to be considered for inclusion within an Evidence Topic Group (see paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 below).

**3.14 Drop-In Sessions** – Displays and drop-in sessions in prominent locations will provide an opportunity to seek the views of local residents and anyone with an interest in each community area. The principal purpose of the drop-in sessions is to actively encourage the participation of people who were not previously aware of the LDP engagement and widen the overall participation in the process. The displays will be set-up in highly visible areas of each venue and the team will proactively speak with members of the public to seek opinions on the priorities for the next LDP and to encourage further participation via the questionnaire and workshops.

The drop-in sessions will be held at the following venues:

Venue	Date	Time
Bishopbriggs Memorial Hall	Thursday 30 November 2023	5pm-8pm
Kirkintilloch Town Hall	Tuesday 5 December 2023	5pm-8pm

Venue	Date	Time
Bearsden Hub Lesser Hall*	Wednesday 6 December 2023	2pm-5pm
Milton of Campsie Village Hall	Tuesday 12 December 2023	3pm-7pm
Torrance Caldwell Hall	Tuesday 19 December 2023 (TBC)	5pm-8pm
Lennoxtown Hub	Tuesday 9 January 2024	5pm-8pm
Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre	Thursday 11 January 2024 (TBC)	4pm-7pm
Milngavie Community Library & Education Centre	Monday 15 January 2024	5pm-8pm

\* Subject to the reopening of the facility. If required, an alternative session will be organised and publicised.

There will be a session within each main community area in East Dunbartonshire throughout the period, across a range of weekdays and time slots.

- 3.15 Online Information Session** – It is proposed that an online information session is held, in which the Land Planning Policy team will outline key aspects of the Evidence Gathering process and invite question or discussion points from participants. The online session would provide an opportunity for anyone who was unable to attend any of the drop-in sessions to participate in the consultation exercise and engage directly with Council officers. The session will take place towards the end of the consultation period in January 2024 (date to be confirmed) via Microsoft Teams.
- 3.16 In-Person Workshop** – In addition to the drop-in sessions, it is proposed that a more structured workshop is held towards the end of the consultation process. This would be open to all to attend however it is expected that it would be of most interest to community groups and representative organisations, landowners and the development industry and key agencies. The workshop will take place in Kirkintilloch Town Hall on Tuesday 23 January 2024.
- 3.17 Engagement with Schools and Young People** – The Land Planning Policy Team will arrange sessions with local schools to ensure that young people are involved in the evidence gathering process. The timescales for delivering the sessions will be led by the schools taking various factors into account. It should be noted that the team will be attending a careers fair in St Ninian’s High School on 23 November 2023 which will help further promote the opportunities for young people to engage in the process.
- 3.18** Additionally, the Regulations specifically require youth councillors to be engaged in the preparation of the LDP. As the Council does not have youth councillors, the pupil forum will be utilised as an additional method for involving young people on top of the wider school sessions.
- 3.19** Contact will also be made with the local members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- 3.20 Equality and Minority Groups** – The engagement will be promoted to equality and minority groups, including those representing disabled persons.

The questionnaire and discussions at the engagement sessions should help to identify any particular land use issues that are experienced by groups such as disabled people.

- 3.21 Gypsy and Other Travellers** – The Land Planning Policy Team will contact organisations that represent Gypsies and other Travellers to promote the evidence gathering engagement within the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 3.22 Internal Council Services/ Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)** – Close working with relevant Council Services and the HSCP is crucial in ensuring that the plan is built on robust evidence and aligned with the key priorities of each service's work. Council report PNCA/042/23/HH, which sought approval to start work on LDP3, sets out the Land Planning Policies Team's intention to convene internal working groups to oversee work on the following:
- LDP design and presentation
  - 20-minute neighbourhoods and infrastructure
  - Any other topics as and when required
- 3.23** It should be noted that internal services will also be invited to participate in any Evidence Topic Group(s) that are relevant to their expertise and area of work (see paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 below).
- 3.24 Key Agencies and Other Bodies** – Early engagement with key agencies is crucial in ensuring that the plan will be aligned with the key priorities of each agencies' work. This includes (but is not limited to) SEPA, Nature Scot, Historic Environment Scotland, Transport Scotland, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Sport Scotland and Scottish Water. Key agencies will be contacted directly to invite them to discuss their preferred methods for engaging in the evidence gathering process; which may include individual meetings, attendance at the in-person workshop, filling out the questionnaire and/or providing comments by email.

### **Targeted and Continuing Engagement**

- 3.25** Upon conclusion of the public-at-large engagement set out above, the Land Planning Policy Team will analyse the responses and initial evidence provided. The Local Development Planning Guidance states that '*Planning Authorities are expected to undertake proactive engagement with stakeholders to ensure collaborative and transparent evidence gathering*' and that '*Planning authorities should aim to resolve any issues raised by stakeholders on the sufficiency of the evidence, before submitting to Gate Check, where possible.*' As such it is considered likely that it will be necessary to convene 'Evidence Topic Groups' to provide stakeholders with further opportunities to help shape the content of the Evidence Report as the work on it progresses.
- 3.26** The Evidence Topic Groups may take the form of attending a small number of sessions/workshops or providing further comments and information by email. The topic groups will only contribute towards the preparation of the technical evidence contained within the Evidence Report and do not replace any opportunities elsewhere in the process to be involved in preparing LDP3. The Evidence Report is not intended to include information on specific sites and there will be an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on proposed allocations at the Proposed Plan stage.

The topic groups will only be responsible for providing input on the evidence required to establish broad principles that LDP3 should address.

- 3.27** The online survey will ask respondents if they would like to be considered for inclusion within one or more Evidence Topic Groups. In order to ensure that the topic groups are proportionate and manageable, the policies and requirements in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) will be grouped together taking into account the synergies of policy outcomes and the levels of stakeholder interest shown in each topic area. Where a significant volume of interest has been expressed for a certain topic or group of topics, membership of the relevant Evidence Topic Group will be focussed on representatives of local groups and other organisations. As above key agencies and internal services will be invited to take part in the groups where appropriate.
- 3.28** In addition to the Evidence Topic Groups, it may be necessary to undertake specific topic surveys with local residents and business owners, or other forms of targeted engagement.
- 3.29** It should also be noted that during this Evidence Gathering process, the Council will be providing support to communities that have expressed a wish to prepare a Local Place Plan (LPP) for their area. The LPP is another route for communities to feed into the development planning process. Government guidance states that LPP's intending to influence an LDP should generally be in place by the time the Evidence Report is published. However, in this period as we transition over to the new planning system it is considered appropriate that community organisations are given additional time to prepare their LPP's and submit them to the Council. As such the current advice to community groups is that whilst they must advise the Council of their intention to prepare an LPP before the Evidence Report is published (expected September 2024), the LPP can be submitted to the Council up until June 2025. Further information on how Local Place Plans feed into the LDP process is provided [on the Council website](#).

### **Next Steps**

- 3.30** Work on the content of the Evidence Report is ongoing and will be undertaken alongside the public-at-large engagement and the Evidence Topic Groups. The Evidence Report will be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Planning Guidance published in May 2023; which includes advice on how LDP's can address each of the policies in NPF4 and other requirements. Meetings of the LDP Working Party will provide an opportunity to gain feedback from Elected Members on the issues emerging in the evidence gathering process and how these should be addressed in the Evidence Report.
- 3.31** As required by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the Evidence Report must be approved by full Council before it can be formally submitted to Scottish Ministers as part of the Gate Check process. Based on the current Development Plan Scheme, it is anticipated that the Evidence Report will be reported to Council in September 2024 and will be accompanied by a Report of Consultation which will set out the full programme of engagement undertaken and how responses have influenced the final version of the Evidence Report.

**3.32** Following approval of the Evidence Report and Report of Consultation, officers will prepare and collate all material for the Gate Check, in line with the Scottish Government's LDP Guidance and advice from the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). As part of the Gate Check stage, a Reporter will assess the content of the Evidence Report and will make one of the following determinations:

- That there is sufficient information for the planning authority to proceed with preparing the Proposed Plan; or
- That there is not sufficient information and recommendations for improving the Evidence Report will be provided. The planning authority would then be required to address the recommendations for improvement before they can progress to preparing the Proposed Plan.

**3.33** There is no prescribed length of time for the Gate Check stage, however it is estimated to last between six and nine months. Following completion of the Gate Check stage, currently programmed for Spring 2025, the outcome will be reported to Council and the next stages in the LDP Programme and Workplan confirmed.

## **4.0 IMPLICATIONS**

The implications for the Council are as undernoted.

**4.1** Frontline Service to Customers – LDP3 will become the principal determinant in considering all planning applications submitted to the Council alongside the National Planning Framework.

**4.2** Workforce (including any significant resource implications) – None

**4.3** Legal Implications – Preparation of LDP3 is a requirement of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. No other legal implications are anticipated.

**4.4** Financial Implications – All costs related to the development of the plan, including public engagement activities, are expected to be met from existing / identified LDP budget.

**4.5** Procurement – It is likely that external consultants will be required to carry out evidence work in support of Plan development. Normal procurement procedures will be followed to tender for any work required.

**4.6** ICT – Documents will require to be made Accessible and uploaded to the Council website following approval. Details of the public engagement period will also be made available through the Council's social media platforms, including the promotion and distribution of an online questionnaire and a newsletter.

**4.7** Corporate Assets – LDP3 will become one of the principal determinants in considering all planning applications submitted to the Council, including the Council's own applications. Therefore, the Council's own land requirements will need to be considered in developing the evidence base for LDP3.



**4.8** Equalities Implications – The requirements of equalities groups will be considered in preparing LDP3 and will be directly contacted through the evidence gathering engagement process.

**4.9** Corporate Parenting – None

**4.10** Sustainability – Sustainability will be a core consideration when developing LDP3.

**4.11** Other - None

## **5.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

The risks and control measures relating to this Report are as follows:-

**5.1** The risks and control measures relating to the LDP3 process, including the evidence gathering and engagement stage, are set out in **Appendix 4** Corporate Risk Assessment.

**5.2** Failure to complete the evidence gathering and public engagement stage within the specified time period could risk delays to the overall LDP3 timetable, as set out in the Development Plan Scheme 2023. This would put added pressure on later stages of the LDP3 preparation process and could ultimately result in reputational damage to the Council.

## **6.0 IMPACT**

**6.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH & RECOVERY** - LDPs are required to set out land allocations to meet community needs and enable a sustainable and resilient economy. Key policy themes that will form part of the evidence gathering process include the health of town and village centres, business requirements and tourism assets.

**6.2 EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS** - LDPs are required to set out land allocations to meet community needs and ensure a supportive environment for learning and skills development. Evidence gathering will involve an understanding of potential barriers to employment within the area, how these may be overcome, and what land use priorities should be taken forward to maximise the local employment rate. The implications for economic development from LDP3 identified during the consultation will indirectly result in protecting and creating local jobs.

**6.3 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE** - The engagement process is likely to identify needs and aspirations from local people and other stakeholders on how new development will sustain and create demand for educational facilities from new residents. The engagement will also provide valuable evidence in terms of informing future planning policies that support mental health improvement and help ensure that children and young people are safe and healthy. In line with LDP Guidance, this evidence will be gathered by engaging directly with local schools and a pupil forum.

- 6.4 SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES** - LDPs can play a key role in supporting the creation of safer and stronger communities through effective placemaking and the implementation of good urban design. The engagement process will aim to identify opportunities to improve the urban form, reduce vacant and derelict land and create safer public spaces. This will be achieved by liaising directly not only with local people, but by seeking input from key agencies and other organisations with specialist knowledge of how to create safer and stronger places and build community capacity.
- 6.5 ADULT HEALTH & WELLBEING** – The engagement exercise is likely to help identify opportunities to improve access to sports & recreational facilities and the natural environment, supporting healthier and more active lifestyles. This includes, for example, evidence relating to quality open space, access to nature and the availability of health & social care facilities.
- 6.6 OLDER ADULTS, VULNERABLE PEOPLE & CARERS** – LDPs have a critical role in ensuring that the particular needs of our older and more vulnerable citizens are supported to maintain their independence and enjoy a high quality of life. By engaging directly with older people and disabled groups, the evidence gathering process will help to influence relevant future policies that will support this outcome. For example, evidence is likely to include the needs and aspirations of older adults, vulnerable people and carers in terms of the availability of specialist housing and design requirements of new homes including their adaptability.
- 6.7 CLIMATE CHANGE** - The evidence gathering process will significantly inform the Council's overall land use policy strategy relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation. In particular, it will enable the Council to collate valuable evidence and data related to the forthcoming Climate Action Plan and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy. This will contribute to baseline data that will influence a future planning policy framework for addressing climate change and meeting specific climate change targets.
- 6.8 STATUTORY DUTY** - The LDP is a statutory requirement as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

## **7.0 POLICY CHECKLIST**

**7.1** Completed versions of the following are appended to the Report:-

- Appendix 1: Policy Development Checklist
- Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 3: Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Appendix 4: Corporate Risk Assessment
- Appendix 5: Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy assessment

## **8.0 APPENDICES**

**8.1 Appendix 1:** Policy Development Checklist

**8.2 Appendix 2:** Equality Impact Assessment

**8.3 Appendix 3: Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**8.4 Appendix 4: Risk Assessment**

**8.5 Appendix 5: Data Protection Impact Assessment**