

LOCAL PLACE PLANS

AN EASY-READ GUIDE



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West Dunbartonshire Council commissioned [Planning Aid Scotland](#) to prepare this guide. Thank you to all the West Dunbartonshire community group representatives who contributed to the preparation process.

GLOSSARY

Community Body

A group - as defined in planning legislation - that is eligible to prepare a Local Place Plan. This can be a Community Council or another group that meets the constitution requirements set out in the legislation.

Local Development Plan

This is prepared by the Council planning team and is the key planning document which allocates land for future uses such as new homes, green space, retail and leisure. Alongside National Planning Framework 4, it is the basis for making decisions on planning applications. In preparing a new Local Development Plan, the Council must consider all registered Local Place Plans.

Local Place Plans

These are community-led plans setting out proposals for the use and development of land. They must be prepared by a community body and they have an important role to play in informing the Local Development Plan.

Locality Plans

These are prepared by the Council communities team and have the aim of setting out measures to target and benefit local areas with the highest level of need.

National Planning Framework 4

This is prepared by the Scottish Government and is the key planning document for Scotland. It is a long-term plan looking to 2045 that sets out where development and infrastructure are needed. It contains 33 national planning policies covering a wide range of themes relating to use and development of land. Along with the Local Development Plan, it is the basis for making decisions on planning applications.

Proposal

As used in this document: an idea about the use of land or buildings featured in a Local Place Plan and which could potentially be included in the Local Development Plan.

YOUR COMMUNITY - YOUR PLACE

Learn about a new opportunity for community groups to influence the future of their local areas.

Many community groups in West Dunbartonshire are bringing positive change to local areas.

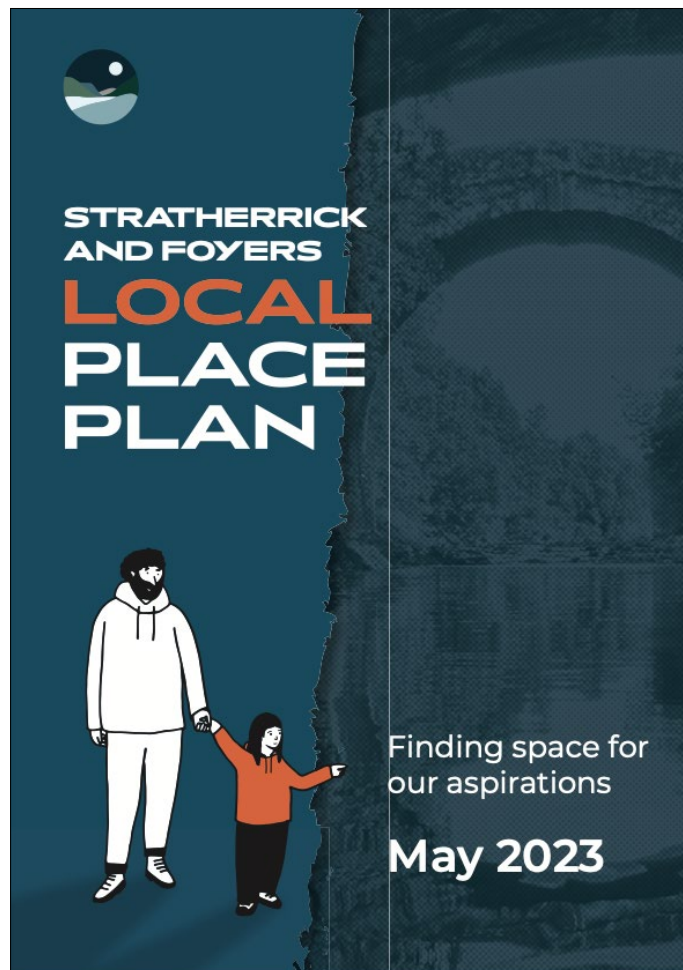
Different communities have different priorities. Some are providing activities for children and young people or elderly people, while others create a sense of community by running local events, food growing or caring for open spaces.

But have you looked in detail at your local area or considered how land or buildings are used, and thought about how they could be used differently to deliver benefits to your community?

The Scottish Government has introduced a new type of community plan to the planning system focused on future uses of land and buildings. These are called **Local Place Plans**.

Community groups can take the lead on preparing and writing **Local Place Plans** based on their own ideas. The Council is offering support to community groups so that **Local Place Plans** can become an approved part of the planning system.

Local Place Plans are an opportunity to identify **uses for land and buildings** that could help achieve what you want to see for your community. **Local Place Plans** can also identify land or buildings of special importance to the local community that you would like to be protected.



^ Stratherrick and Foyers Local Place Plan

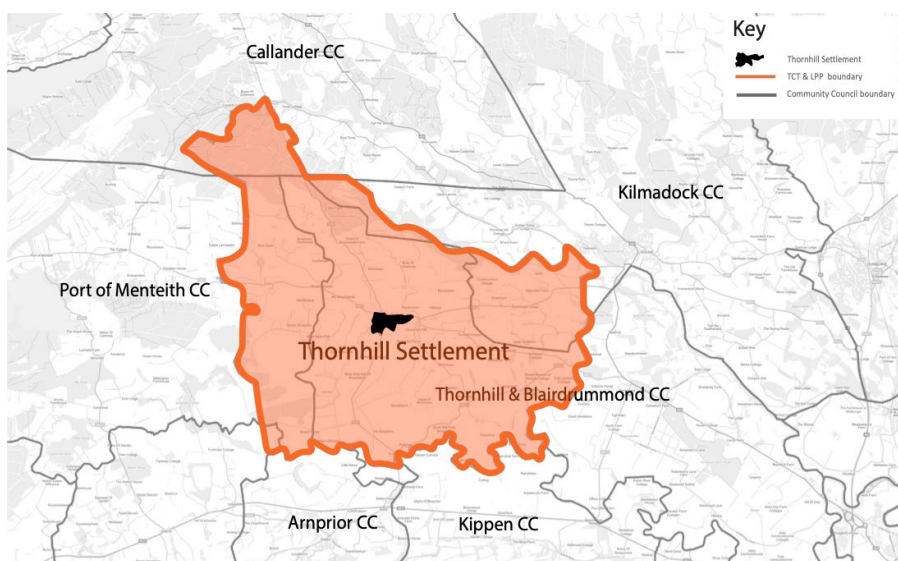
FIVE KEY BENEFITS OF A LOCAL PLACE PLAN FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

1. Local Place Plans can help meet your community's needs and give you a stronger voice in shaping the future of your area.
2. Local Place Plans are a new way to tell the Council your ideas and vision for your community.
3. If you submit your Local Place Plan early enough, the Council has to consider including your ideas in the Local Development Plan.



If you submit your Local Place Plan after the new Local Development Plan has been adopted, you can refer to the Local Place Plan in responding to planning consultations or as a basis for applying for funding for community-led projects.

4. You decide the boundary for your Local Place Plan area - it can be your town, village, Community Council area, town centre, or any area you choose (see example below).
5. Local Place Plans are about listening to your community's views. There are no rules for how much community involvement is needed, so you can decide what works best.



^ Thornhill, Stirlingshire where the community chose a Local Place Plan boundary which extended beyond the settlement into the surrounding countryside.

FIRST STEPS

Get started by viewing your local area with a fresh set of eyes.

Preparing a Local Place Plan does not need to be a complex process. They can be very short and focused documents or can also be longer and more in-depth depending on your resources and priorities.

A great starting point can be to go for a walk around your local area to look at how land and buildings are currently used by your community. This could be done as a small group, or as individuals reporting back to each other.

You could aim to identify unused or neglected places that are having a negative impact on your community and could be used differently to bring positive changes. During your walk, take notes and photos of any land or buildings that you have ideas about.



Some communities apply for funding that is available to support creating Local Place Plans, while some are doing it themselves without professional support.



Below are some questions that you could think about during your walk.

- How easy is it to get around, including for older people and people with disabilities?
- How good are open spaces and green spaces?
- Is there a good range of types of homes?
- How well does the area work for children and young people?
- Is it easy for social interaction to happen?
- Could changes be made to make the area feel safer for everyone?
- Which areas or buildings are of particular value to the local community?
- What are the key opportunities and challenges that you see?

DEVELOPING YOUR IDEAS



^ This map is an illustration of a proposal for use and development of land with an existing playing field (blue) to be extended into the adjacent land (red).

Start thinking about the content of your Local Place Plan.

A good next step is to get your community group members together to discuss what you noticed during the local area walk. Around this time, it will be a good idea to form a **steering group** to drive the Local Place Plan forward.

You could discuss current community activities, or activities that you would like to take place, and where these could happen if land or buildings were used differently.

You could also identify local land or buildings that are important to your community and which you would like to protect.

You could think more widely about what you would like to see in a Local Place Plan. You can suggest new uses of land or buildings that you feel would benefit your local area.

If you have a specific idea for the use of land or buildings, that can be included as a **proposal** in your Local Place Plan. Your Local Place Plan will need to have at least one **proposal** relating to use of land or buildings.

You could also think about any changes you would like to see to the Council's Local Development Plan.



This is the time to consider how you may want to reach out to hear ideas and views from your local community. This could be done through meetings, drop-in events or a community survey – or you could visit and chat to other local groups.

FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

1. Local Place Plans must be prepared by a “community body” - this means a Community Council or any other correctly constituted group.



Different groups may also come together to form a community body. West Dunbartonshire Council’s communities team can provide advice and help you to form a “community body”.

2. Local Place Plans must focus on how land and buildings will be used in the future or how they should be kept as they are now.

3. Ideas about the future use of land and buildings must be shown as proposals within your Local Place Plan. Proposals have to be shown on a map and have an explanation.



The Council planning team will help you get the maps you need.

4. You can include non-planning issues in your Local Place Plan. It is important to note everything that came up during community discussions.



The Council planning team will share your Local Place Plan with other Council departments, and this may help in discussions you have with these departments.

5. You can create your Local Place Plan without funding, and it can be as simple or detailed as your community needs.

IS A LOCAL PLACE PLAN RIGHT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Things to think about before you commit to going ahead.

Creating a Local Place Plan is optional but can be a valuable opportunity. So, take some time to consider the following questions when deciding if you want to go ahead.



1. Will it help bring the changes you want to see?
2. Will it help meet community needs and address on-going issues?
3. Do you have ideas for changes to the use of land or buildings that would help address the above?
4. Do you have volunteer capacity to do the work?



Are there skills or resources in your community that you could tap into?

5. Is there funding that you can apply for?

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS FOR A LOCAL PLACE PLAN?

There are a number of procedural matters you need to satisfy before submitting your Local Place Plan.

The legislation sets some requirements that you must meet before submitting your Local Place Plan to the Council.

Meeting these requirements is part of the process of getting your Local Place Plan registered as an official planning document.

Some of the main requirements are listed below. Many of them are simple procedural matters and are reasonably easy to meet.



1. Name of your community body and a copy of your constitution
2. A map showing your Local Place Plan boundary
3. A section detailing your proposals with maps for each proposal
4. Say how your Local Place Plan relates to:
 - National Planning Framework 4
 - the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan
 - The Locality Plan (if there is one for your area)



This section can be kept short. You'll need to consider if your proposals for future use of land or buildings or protecting current uses are broadly in line with these documents. Or if you are saying something should be different – explain why.

5. A short statement describing the level of community support for your Local Place Plan.



You may also want to seek wider views from the whole community at this stage, for example through a survey or public event to let people see your main proposals and give comments. However, you don't need to have full support in order to submit the plan.

6. Show that you have sent a copy of your final draft Local Place Plan to the relevant Community Council/s and to your local Councillors, and that you have offered at least 28 days for comments.



The Council planning team will meet you for a pre-submission check to ensure you have met these requirements.

COMMUNITY STORIES

Community Story 1: Thornhill (Stirling) Local Place Plan

Getting from start to finish on a limited budget

Area: Stirling Council

Prepared by: Thornhill Development Trust

Boundary: The village of Thornhill and the surrounding rural area, with an overall population of around 900

Process:

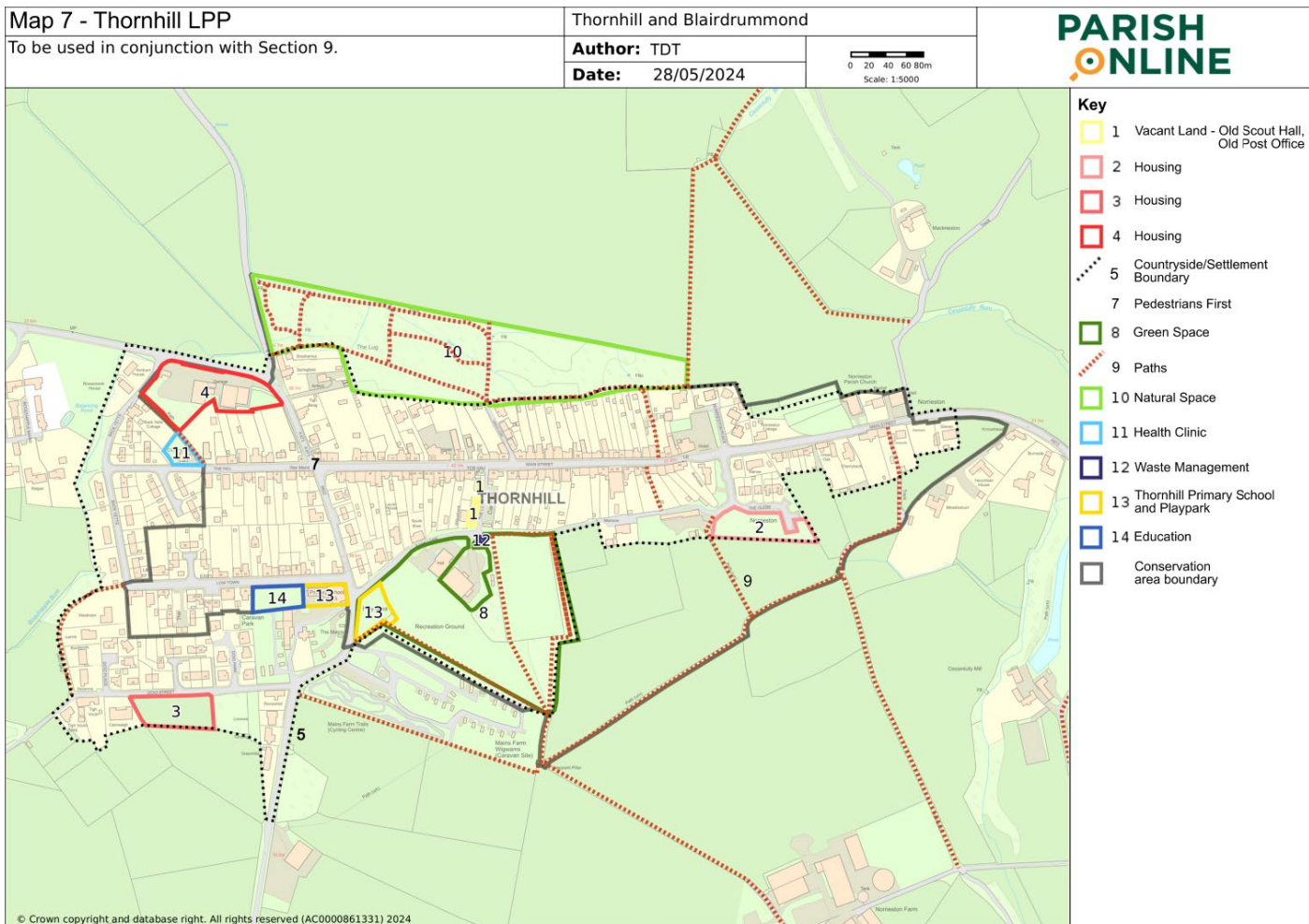
- During Covid the local community became more active, meeting regularly online to discuss future visions for Thornhill. Separately, a new planning application for 73 new homes plus employment and retail land uses energised the community to consider future use and development of land in the local area.
- Stirling Council planners offered support with two early meetings and a halfway meeting.
- The first action was sending a survey to 400 local households. Later, specific comments on the village centre were invited. The Local Place Plan opportunity was also publicised at the local gala day.
- Everyone in the area was invited to a Community Gathering to discuss potential matters for the Local Place Plan. At a follow up event, proposals were displayed in large print and participants were asked to mark whether they agreed with each proposal. Online polls were run after each meeting. Sessions with local school children were held to hear their views.
- Local volunteers ran the process up to the main community events stage. At that point, the community body decided to appoint an outside organisation to ensure impartiality and undertake specific tasks within the very limited budget.
- In the later stages, a local volunteer undertook the desktop publishing of the Local Place Plan.

Content:

The Local Place Plan identifies four big themes: Careful Development, Managing Traffic, Strengthening our Community and Supporting Local Infrastructure and Economy. It also makes 16 proposals in relation to the current and future Local Development Plan. These include proposing smaller and affordable homes to meet local needs; protecting green spaces of importance to the community; and a proposal to extend and improve the school playground.

Funding:

The community body received a small funding grant from the Council to cover holding the public events and print costs. They also undertook informal fundraising, requesting donations from the local community.



^ Map from Thornhill Local Place Plan showing proposals relating to the Local Development Plan



“Times are tough but doing this work reminded us we can make a difference by working together. Planning is a complicated business, and it might seem what happens locally is a long way from the new national planning structure (National Planning Framework 4). However, a legally registered Local Place Plan becomes a material consideration in future planning decisions for that locality - the community’s views about what happens on the land round them has a legal place in the planning process for the first time.”

COMMUNITY STORIES

Community Story 2: Stobswell Local Place Plan

Getting started

Area: Dundee City Council

Prepared by: Stobswell Forum (a Neighbourhood Representative Structure, established as an alternative to a Community Council for the area)

Boundary: The statutory boundary for Stobswell Forum – an urban area with a local high street and a population of 12,000. Parts of the area have very high levels of deprivation

Process:

- The community body is in the early stages of preparing a Local Place Plan, with work being undertaken by five local volunteers.
- A high level of community engagement has already taken place in Stobswell (17 separate consultations over the last 6 years) led by both the local community, Dundee City Council and other organisations. Although environmental improvements, including a pocket park, have been created on the main street, the community feels that more change is needed.
- They learned about Local Place Plans from a community in a different Council area. At first they were unsure if it would be the right thing for their community but reached the view that preparing a Local Place Plan would be the ideal way to combine existing requests and also hear new ideas.
- Their ultimate aim is to set a firm development strategy for a holistic community long-term vision for the area. Particular areas of focus are the main shopping street, as well as identifying, protecting and promoting key community assets, also setting environmental improvement actions that can address climate change and housing provision for all.
- Currently, the community body is holding meetings with other groups and the public to present and hear views about early ideas for Local Place Plan content. They have also gathered all relevant points from previous consultations into a single document.

- They intend to run a community review event relating to the Local Place Plan funding to allow them to bring in external support with this and later parts of the Local Place Plan process.

Content:

The Local Place Plan is still to be created.

Funding:

The community body is applying to a range of potential funding sources to bring in specialist support to deliver specific aspect of the process.

SLPP Key Themes – thoughts?

- Safety on the streets
- Health and Wellbeing
- Traffic, transport and parking
- Climate Action
- Public Green and Growing Spaces
- Thriving Shopping District
- Housing for all



^ Image from presentation being used by community body to promote Local Place Plans showing key themes for consideration



“The Stobswell Forum is excited to be the first community in the city to deliver a Local Place Plan which will help local residents have a much stronger voice in how planning decisions are implemented in the future.”

COMMUNITY STORIES

Community Story 3: Kilmaronock Local Place Plan

Creating focus and defining proposals

Area: Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority and West Dunbartonshire Council

Prepared by: Kilmaronock Community Council and Kilmaronock Community Trust

Boundary: A rural community council area with one main village and an overall population of around 1400; most of Kilmaronock lies within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park who are responsible for planning matters, while all other public services fall under West Dunbartonshire Council

Process:

- A steering group consisting of a range of local community organisations was set up to lead the work, chaired by a local resident who was not a member of any existing group.
 - A programme of activity was organised to hear the views of local people, including a community survey based on the Place Standard tool, community events and conversations with local interest groups, including businesses and young people
 - Comments from the surveys and community events were gathered into a single document. The original 14 themes were narrowed down to 8 key themes by the steering group based on analysis of responses indicating community priorities.
 - The second community event offered the chance to comment on each key theme using maps, post-its and conversations with volunteers.
 - After looking at the findings of the second community event, the steering group began writing the Local Place Plan as a basic word document.
 - An external organisation was brought in at this last stage to run the final community event, sense-check the draft Local Place Plan from an independent viewpoint and design the final document for publication.
- After the final public event the key themes were narrowed down to six based on recommendations from the external organisation and discussions with the steering group. The goal was to avoid producing an overwhelming list that would make delivery difficult.
 - Throughout the process Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park provided the mapping resources for the steering group to use for consultations and to annotate for inclusion in the final document.

Content:

The Local Place Plan is based around the final six key themes, which include: A Place with Excellent Facilities, A Climate Friendly Place with a Sustainable Environment, and A Living and Vibrant Place. Proposals for use and development of land are grouped under each theme, with a range of proposals identified on a map for each theme. These included new walking routes, a proposal to re-open a café-pub facility, and active travel hub, and land for small scale community-owned housing aimed at young families, single people and older people.

Funding:

Funding was offered by Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park which covered part of the process.

A Safe and Accessible Place



A Linked-up Place



A Climate Friendly Place with a Sustainable Environment



A Family Centred Place



A Place with Excellent Facilities



A Living and Vibrant Place



^ The 6 key themes from Kilmarnock Local Place Plan



“The process of local place planning has been a positive, collaborative experience where our community has thought deeply about the nature of our place, how to invest in what we value and address issues we are concerned about. Local residents have united around a shared vision about the kind of community we want this to be.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do we become a community body?

Any established Community Council is automatically a community body and able to submit a Local Place Plan. Other groups can become community bodies if they have a correctly written constitution that meets section 19 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2019, including matters such as:



- Majority of members should live in the relevant community
- Members must have control of the community body
- Membership is open to any member of the community
- A statement of the aims of the community body
- Any surplus funds or assets will be used for the benefit of the community

Often Development Trusts may become community bodies. The Council communities team will provide any advice you need about becoming a community body.

How can we get the local community involved?

The Community Stories section of this guide gives some examples of how community bodies have involved members of the local community in the process. Some key points to bear in mind are listed below.



- Consider setting up a steering group with members from local community groups or residents who are interested in being involved.
- Go along to existing events or group meetings to hear views of participants about the local area and the potential content of your Local Place Plan. This could include local community groups, parents' association, local churches, local business groups, heritage groups, care homes, access panels, and many more. It can be a good idea to draw a diagram of all the different groups that make up your community and then think about the best way to reach them.
- If you are running a community event, make sure that you have a safe and welcoming space for participants. Start by making sure that you have someone to welcome people on the door and answer any questions, provide refreshments, and offer a range of ways for people to give their views.
- Engaging with children and young people about their place can take special skills.
- You can also use findings from previous consultation activity you have undertaken.
- Some of the documents on page 22 provide further guidance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do we move from a set of different ideas and comments to a Local Place Plan?

A good starting point is to create a document where you can record all the information that you have collected.



- Usually, you will see some main themes coming through and it can be useful to group your information by theme.
- You could also assess which ideas could potentially be use and development of land proposals that you could include in the Local Place Plan.
- Depending on your time and resources, you may want to run a community event or survey to find out if local people agree with your proposals.

How will proposals for use and development of land be made to happen?

A Local Place Plan sets out the community's proposals for the future of the local area with regard to use and development of land. However, you do not need to include details of how your proposals could be made to happen. In addition, you do not need to own the land or building in order to include a proposal in your Local Place Plan.



- If your Local Place Plan is registered by the Council, it becomes a formal planning document, and the Council may decide to include some, or all, of your proposals in their next Local Development Plan.
- It is not the duty of the community body to make the proposals happen.
- For example, if you suggest a site for affordable homes, a housing association might express interest in developing the site, or if you would like to use land as a play park or for community food growing, the Council may be able to help deliver that.
- Some communities may seek their own funding to make proposals in their Local Place Plans happen.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can we show that our Local Place Plan relates to National Planning Framework 4, the Local Development Plan and the Locality Plan?

National Planning Framework 4 and the Local Development Plan are both relatively complex documents. The Council expects that you will pick out key points that particularly relate to your proposals.

For example, with regard to National Planning Framework 4, relevant aspects to refer to could be:



- Its three key themes (Sustainable Places, Liveable Places, Productive Places) and six Principles (see page 4), which include topics like Local Living, Compact Urban Growth and Conserving and Recycling Assets (including land and buildings).
- Its 33 planning policies covering a wide range of topics. The most wide-ranging is Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises. Others cover more specific topics.

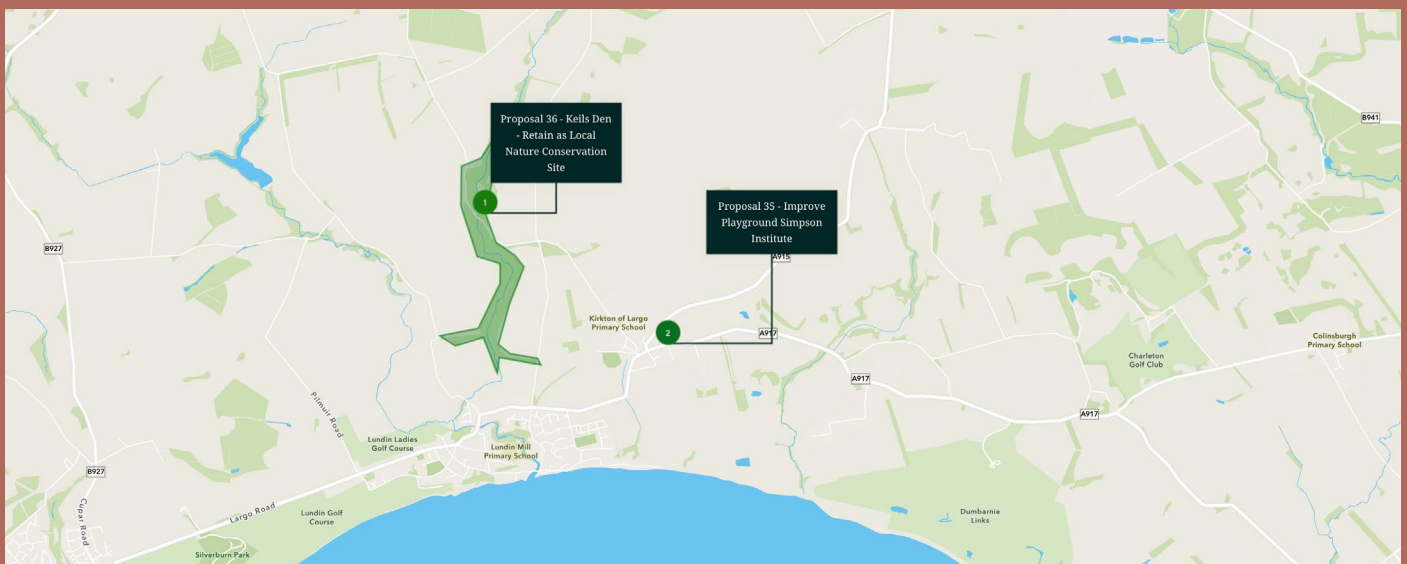
In the examples from Largo Area Local Place Plan below and on the next page, a table explains each proposal and relates it to relevant National Planning Framework 4 policies.

Proposal 36 covers preserving a local nature conservation site and is related to National Planning Framework Policy 3: Biodiversity.

Proposal 35 for improving a local play park is related to National Planning Framework Policy 1: Zero Waste*.

*note - this appears to be an error as the proposal would relate more clearly to National Planning Framework Policy 21: Play, Recreation and Sport.

The same approach applies to the Local Development Plan and the Locality Plan, if there is one for your area. You are of course also able to suggest changes to the Local Development Plan.



Map showing Largo Area Local Place Plan Environmental and Recreational Map 1

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Map Point	LPP Proposal Reference Number	Proposal	Further Detail	Designation
1	36	Retain Current Status Of Keils Den As A Local Nature Conservation Site	Keils Den is a Woodland Trust area and is of high natural, cultural, historical and social significance. Aim: Retain LNCS status the high natural value of this Keils Den, which is an ancient woodland and habitat to Red Squirrels. This proposal aims to preserve and protect this area as vital parts of the community's ecological, cultural and wellbeing heritage which is well regarded. NPF4 Link - Policy 3	LDP Nature Scot Woodland Trust
2	35	Improve, Repair And Expand Upon Playground Behind The Simpson Institute	Aim: this proposal seeks to upgrade the current playground which has been identified as below usable standard by young people and school children thereby enhancing recreational opportunities and community interaction for the younger generation and their families. NPF4 Link - Policy 12.	LDP Community Action

Proposals Environment And Recreation Map 1

Is funding needed for a Local Place Plan?

The Scottish Government envisaged that a Local Place Plan could be prepared with volunteer input alone. All three of the communities which provided stories started with no funding but in practice many community bodies who start preparing a Local Place Plan with volunteer input alone have sought professional input in the later stages to complete production of the Local Place Plan.

NEXT STEPS

We trust that this guide has been useful to you, and that you now feel clear about:

- What a Local Place Plan is
- What could be involved in writing a Local Place Plan
- What the key requirements are for a Local Place Plan
- What the positive impacts of a Local Place Plan could be
- Whether you/your community want to go ahead with a Local Place Plan

Local Place Plans are a new opportunity for community groups to set out a vision for the future of their area and influence the planning process.

If you have decided to proceed with a Local Place Plan, keep in mind that the Council Planning and Communities teams are there to help you through the process. Contact them at the below email addresses:

Development Planning and Place Team - ldp@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Communities Team - YourCommunity@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

What other resources are available to help with Local Place Plans?

West Dunbartonshire Council Local Place Plan website page:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/key-council-documents/local-development-planning/local-place-plans/>

Scottish Government Planning Circular - Local Place Plans: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-1-2022-local-place-plans/documents/>

Scottish Government Local Place Plans How to Guide DRAFT:

<https://www.ourplace.scot/home/local-place-plans>

Planning Aid Scotland Guide for Community Delivery of Local Place Plans:

<https://www.pas.org.uk/resources/>

The Place Standard - a tool to help you think about and discuss your local area through different discussion themes: <https://www.ourplace.scot/About-Place-Standard>

A Place In Childhood-- Co-creating Local Neighbourhood Plans with Children and Young People A 'How To' Guide <https://aplaceinchildhood.org/publications/>

Don't Forget ... the Council will help you with:



- Having a meeting at the start of your Local Place Plan
- Becoming a community body
- Producing maps to show your proposals for use and development of land
- Checking your Local Place Plan before you submit it and running through what you need to do before formally submitting it to the Council