



A LOCAL PLACE PLAN FOR ABOYNE

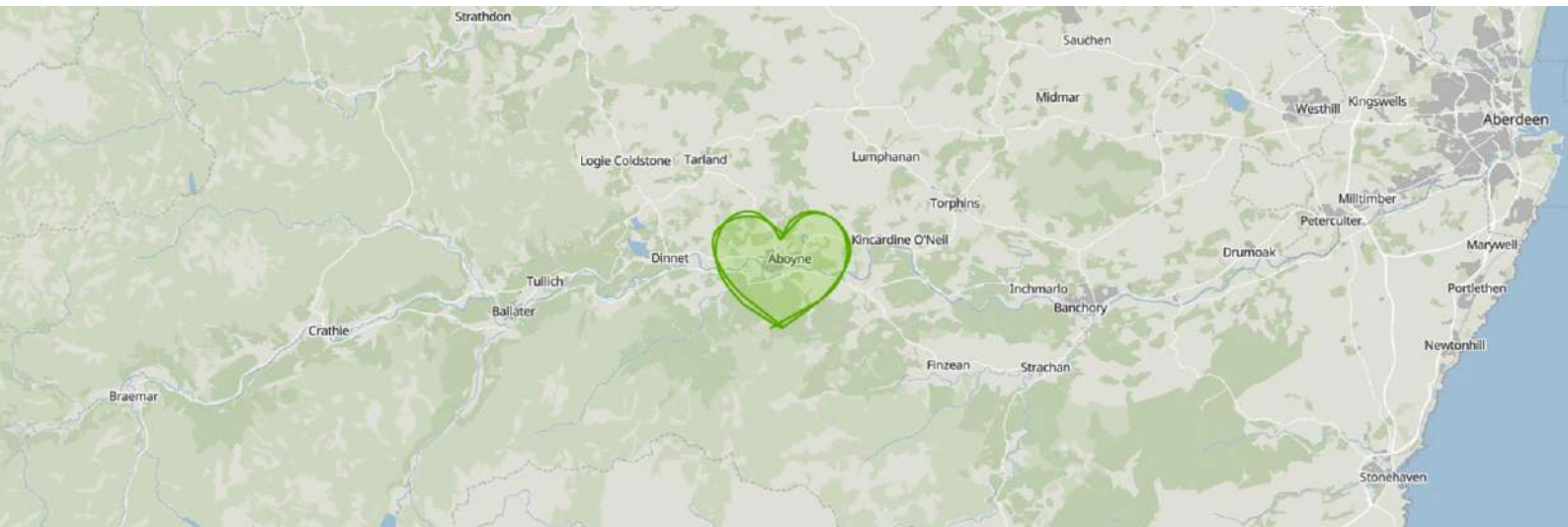
The Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside

“OUR VILLAGE, OUR VOICE, OUR
FUTURE”

Mid Deeside Community Council

December 2024

Aboyne – The Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside



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Welcome to the Local Place Plan for Aboyne!

Why have we made this plan for Aboyne?

Local Place Plans are a new type of community-led plan in Scotland. They set out proposals for the future development and use of land as desired by the community. By having a Local Place Plan for Aboyne, our community can proactively shape the future of our place.

This plan also acts as a Community Action Plan (CAP) and replaces the 2018 Aboyne CAP.

What area does this plan cover?

This plan relates to the area edged red on the map in Figure 2.

Who is this plan for?

This plan is for Aboyne's residents and all those who work in Aboyne, visit Aboyne or use Aboyne's services and facilities.

Given the interdependence between communities in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, particularly those within the Mid Deeside Community Council area and, more widely, the Marr Area, many of the Initiatives and Proposals set out in this plan are relevant to communities outside the Aboyne Local Place Plan boundary.

This plan is also for Aberdeenshire Council and developers and investors in Aboyne, helping to inform them about our community's ambitions for our place.

How will this plan make a difference?

This plan will guide Aberdeenshire Council about what our community would like to see in relation to our place in the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. This plan will also guide developers about the type of development and investment that our community desires.

This plan sets out Initiatives and Proposals to help Aboyne be a sustainable, liveable and productive place and a vibrant inclusive community. The Initiatives and Proposals can be implemented by our community in collaboration with Aberdeenshire Council and other stakeholders. This plan will also help our community to obtain external funding and other forms of investment and support for local projects.

Who has prepared this plan?

This Local Place Plan has been prepared by a sub-group of Mid Deeside Community Council, comprising representatives from Mid Deeside Community Council and the wider Aboyne community. It is underpinned by the responses of more than 400 individuals to a survey in 2023 of what our residents think of Aboyne, and follow-up discussion with community groups.

What happens next?

This plan is being submitted by Mid Deeside Community Council to Aberdeenshire Council for registration as a Local Place Plan.

This plan is intended to be a "living" document, with Initiatives and Proposals evolving over time as our community implements the plan. However, this plan should be reviewed formally in ten years.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Local Place Plan sets out proposals for the future development and use of land as desired by the community. This plan also builds upon and replaces the 2018 Aboyne Community Action Plan (CAP).

The ultimate goal of this plan is for Aboyne to be the “Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside”, a sustainable, liveable and productive place as envisioned by national planning policy, with a vibrant, inclusive community (see Section 2.1). This will be achieved by implementing a Roadmap (see Section 2.5) which is part of a wider Strategic Framework (see Section 1.4).

This plan proposes 24 interdependent and linked Initiatives (Section 3), developed through community engagement and consultation (see Figure 1 on page 7, which summarises the Initiatives within each Theme and the maps which relate to them). Each Initiative contains Proposals for developing and improving our place. The Initiatives are grouped under four Themes – Quality of Place (Section 3.1), Better Mobility (Section 3.2), Thriving Economy (Section 3.3) and Vibrant Community (Section 3.4). Maps for each Theme show the Initiatives and Proposals – see Figure 11, Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14 and Figure 15.

Mid Deeside Community Council will submit this plan to Aberdeenshire Council for registration as a Local Place Plan. However, it is for our community to work together to implement this plan to bring about the outcomes to which we aspire (Section 5). The Local Place Plan team will work with Aboyne residents, businesses and stakeholders to take forward the Initiatives set out in the Roadmap, with the aim of early and visible signs of improvements where this is within our community’s control and capability (Section 5.3). Effective communication within our community is critical to success, so an early target is to establish strong communications between community stakeholders and with residents and visitors (Initiative #22 – Improve Communications).

This plan is owned by our community. It should be a living document which our community regularly refers to and reviews. However, this plan should be formally reviewed and revised after 10 years (Section 5.2).



Figure 1: Summary of the Local Place Plan key elements – four Themes, each with an indicative map, and 24 Initiatives

Quality of Place

Initiative #1 – Re-open Aboyne Bridge

Initiative #2 – Quality Housing for All

Initiative #3 – Sustain and Improve Local Health, Education and Community Facilities

Initiative #4 – Create Spaces for Young People

Initiative #5 – Explore Community Energy Schemes

Initiative #6 – Maintain and Enhance Paths and tracks

Initiative #7 – Mitigate Flooding and River Migration

Initiative #8 – Enhance Nature and Protect Open Space

Initiative #9 – Improve Public Toilets

Figure 11: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Quality of Place

Better Mobility

Initiative #10 – Improve Public Transport

Initiative #11 – Improve Parking

Initiative #12 – Resolve Traffic Speeding Issues

Initiative #13 – Improve Pavements and Roads

Initiative #14 – Change Mobility Habits

Initiative #15 – Improve Inter-Village Travel

Figure 12: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Better Mobility

Thriving Economy

Initiative #16 – Re-establish Aboyne Business Association

Initiative #17 – Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub

Initiative #18 – Seek Ways to Increase Local Youth Employment

Initiative #19 – Protect and Exploit Aboyne's Assets

Initiative #20 – Enhance Aboyne Town Centre

Figure 13: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Thriving Economy

Figure 14: Map of Town Centre Proposals – Thriving Economy

Vibrant Community

Initiative #21 – Local Governance – working together

Initiative #22 – Improve Communications

Initiative #23 – Encourage Volunteering

Initiative #24 – Cultivate Pride in Place

Figure 15: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Vibrant Community

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is a Local Place Plan?

Local Place Plans are a new type of community-led plan introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which set out proposals for the future development and use of land as desired by the community. Once this plan is registered as a Local Place Plan with Aberdeenshire Council, it will influence future development in Aboyne in two ways:

- This plan will have an important role to play in informing the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, which sets out a long-term vision of where development should and shouldn't happen in the Aberdeenshire area and what type of development will be supported.
- Aberdeenshire Council may also take this plan into account when it makes decisions on applications for planning permission in Aboyne because this plan will be a “material consideration”.

However, this plan aims to do more – it builds upon and replaces the [2018 Aboyne Community Action Plan](#) (2018 CAP), empowering our community to take forward projects that will benefit Aboyne and the surrounding area.

1.2. What is in this plan?

This plan sets out proposals for future development in Aboyne and suggests Initiatives for the development and improvement of our place within the area shown in Figure 2 on page 9.

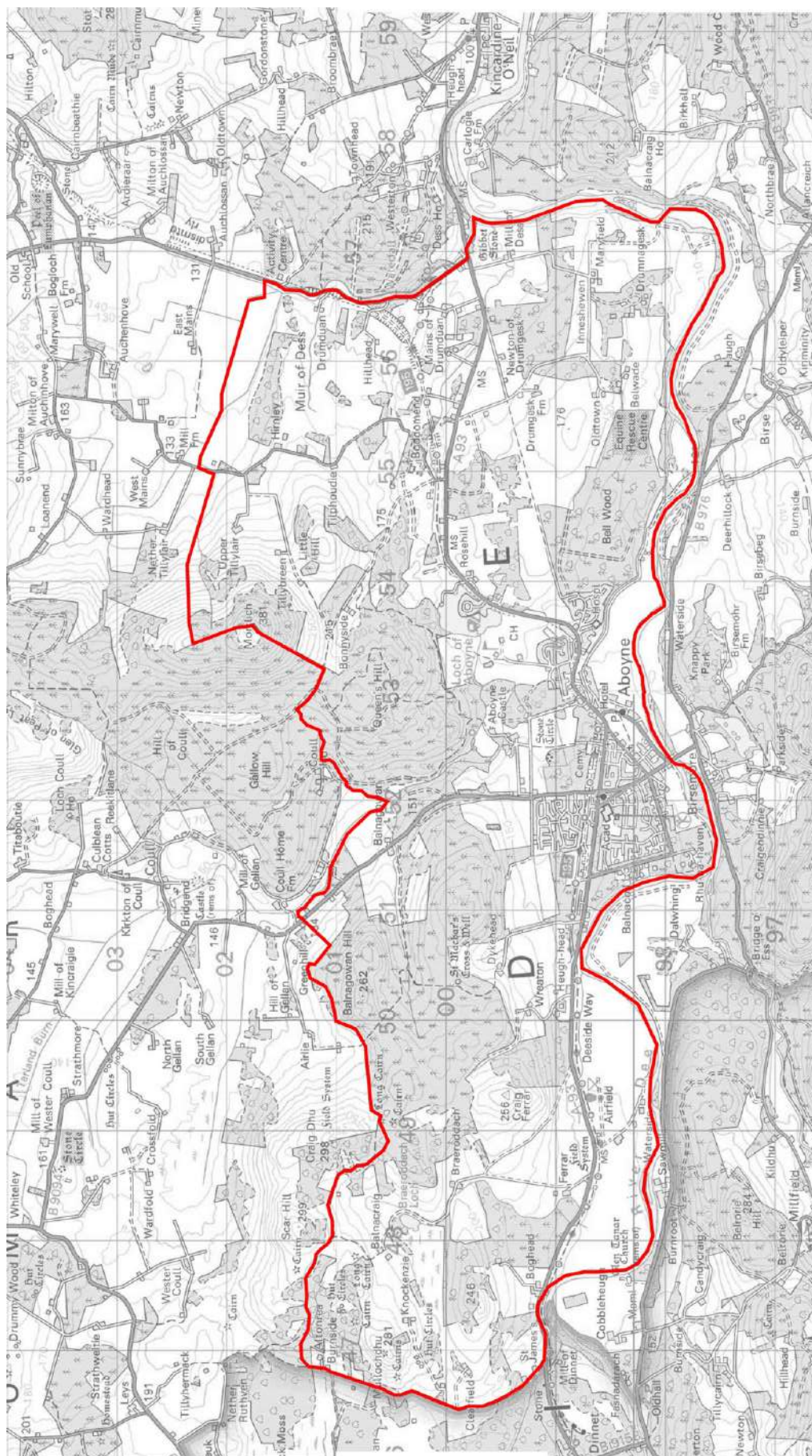
1.3. How has this plan been made?

This plan is based on an analysis of the responses to a community-wide survey conducted in the autumn of 2023, followed by engagement with community groups, businesses and landowners during 2024. More detailed information on how this plan has been made and the wider policy considerations that the plan takes into account is at Appendix 6 – Preparing this plan and Appendix 4 – National and local policy. Further information is also available at www.aboynelocalplaceplan.info.

1.4. Strategic Framework

The path to achieving the ultimate goal of this plan is encapsulated within a Strategic Framework which is set out in Section 2 – Vision and Framework, and explained further in Appendix 2 – Strategic Framework.

Figure 2: The Aboyne Local Place Plan boundary, shown in red



2. VISION AND FRAMEWORK

2.1. The Ultimate Goal

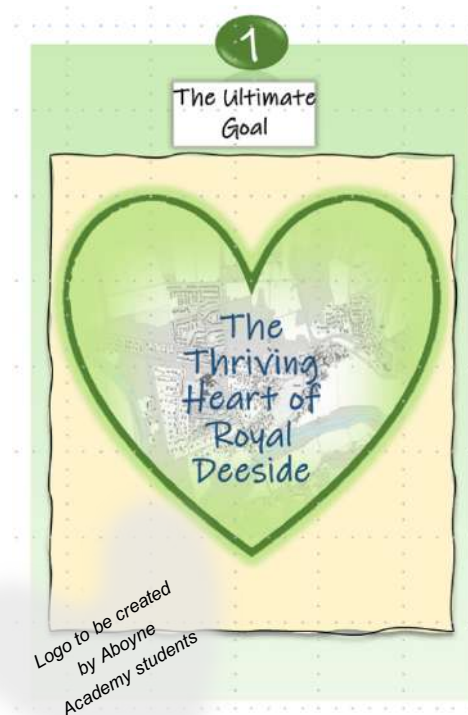


Figure 3: The Ultimate Goal (Strategic Framework Step 1)



The ultimate goal of this plan is for Aboyne to be the “Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside”, a sustainable, liveable and productive place as envisioned by the Scottish Government’s National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)¹, with a vibrant, inclusive community. For more about what this means, see Figure 4: The Desired Outcomes (Strategic Framework Step 2) below and Appendix 4 – National and local policy.

Progress can be measured against these outcomes by comparison to baselines established prior to implementing this plan.



Figure 4: The Desired Outcomes (Strategic Framework Step 2)

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

2.2. Aboyne Today

Aboyne is a beautiful village located centrally within Royal Deeside, just outside the Cairngorms National Park. At an ancient crossing of the River Dee, Aboyne is a gateway to the Highlands and a crossroads between north and south, west and east. Centred around a large village green and overlooked by majestic hills, nature is on Aboyne's doorstep. One of Aberdeenshire's "Academy Towns" with the services, facilities and amenities which come with that status, Aboyne plays an important role both locally and for the whole of Upper Deeside. It is attractive to those who want to enjoy the best of town and country – not too far from Aberdeen city and its national and international transport connections, but with easy access to all that rural Deeside has to offer. Aboyne today has many strengths but also needs to address significant challenges to thrive in the future (Figure 5: Aboyne Today – Strengths and Challenges (Strategic Framework Step 3)).



Figure 5: Aboyne Today – Strengths and Challenges (Strategic Framework Step 3)

Further background information about Aboyne today is in Appendix 5 – Aboyne in 2024.

2.3. Drivers of Change

Aboyne has significant strengths as highlighted above (Figure 5). However, as with many rural communities, Aboyne also faces challenges including an ageing population, lack of lower cost housing, high cost of living, dependence on the private car, the impact of climate and biodiversity loss, and energy transition. In addition to these pressures, since November 2023 Aboyne and surrounding communities, particularly Birsemore and Glen Tanar, have been badly impacted by the closure of Aboyne Bridge.

As a community, we have a choice – to allow negative impacts to run their course or take action to bring about positive change through our active volunteer network, maximising Aboyne’s assets in both the built and natural environment to support and grow our local economy and make our community as resilient as possible.

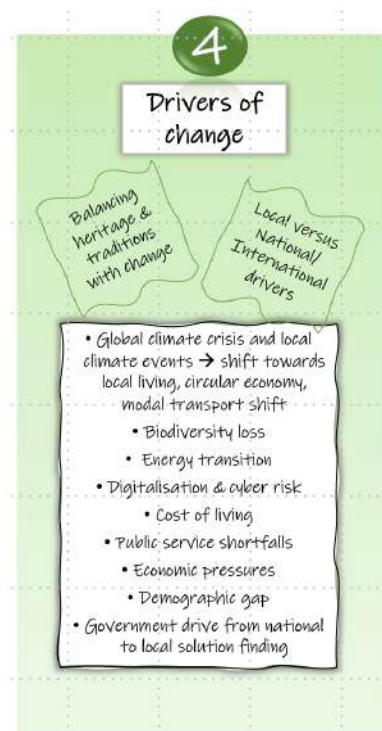


Figure 6: Drivers of Change (Strategic Framework Step 4)

2.4. Future Aboyne

In autumn 2023, the Local Place Plan team surveyed the Aboyne community to find out what they thought was good about Aboyne and how Aboyne could be made better. For more information about this survey and the rest of the team’s work to date, see Appendix 6 – Preparing this plan.

Through the 2023 survey and engagement sessions in 2024, we heard that our community would not like Aboyne to radically change but instead be a better version of what it is now:

- **Size** – Aboyne is significant in size and stature for a settlement in this location. There is no ambition for it to grow any larger than envisaged by the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 (2023 LDP).² In particular, there are concerns regarding further housing development without the prior provision of complementary infrastructure necessary to serve additional residents.
- **Function** – Although many Aboyne residents currently commute from Aboyne for work, there is no desire for our community to become a dormitory town for Aberdeen or commuter spill over from Banchory.

² <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldpmedia/LDP2021/AberdeenshireLocalDevelopmentPlan2023IntroductionAndPolicies.pdf>

- **Economy** – To boost Aboyne’s local economy we want to continue to encourage visitors to stop in Aboyne rather than pass through on their way to or from elsewhere (Aboyne shouldn’t be a “gateway” and nothing more). However, there is no aspiration that Aboyne should overly focus on tourism as a core to its appeal, in contrast to the existing strong and growing tourism provided in Ballater and Braemar.

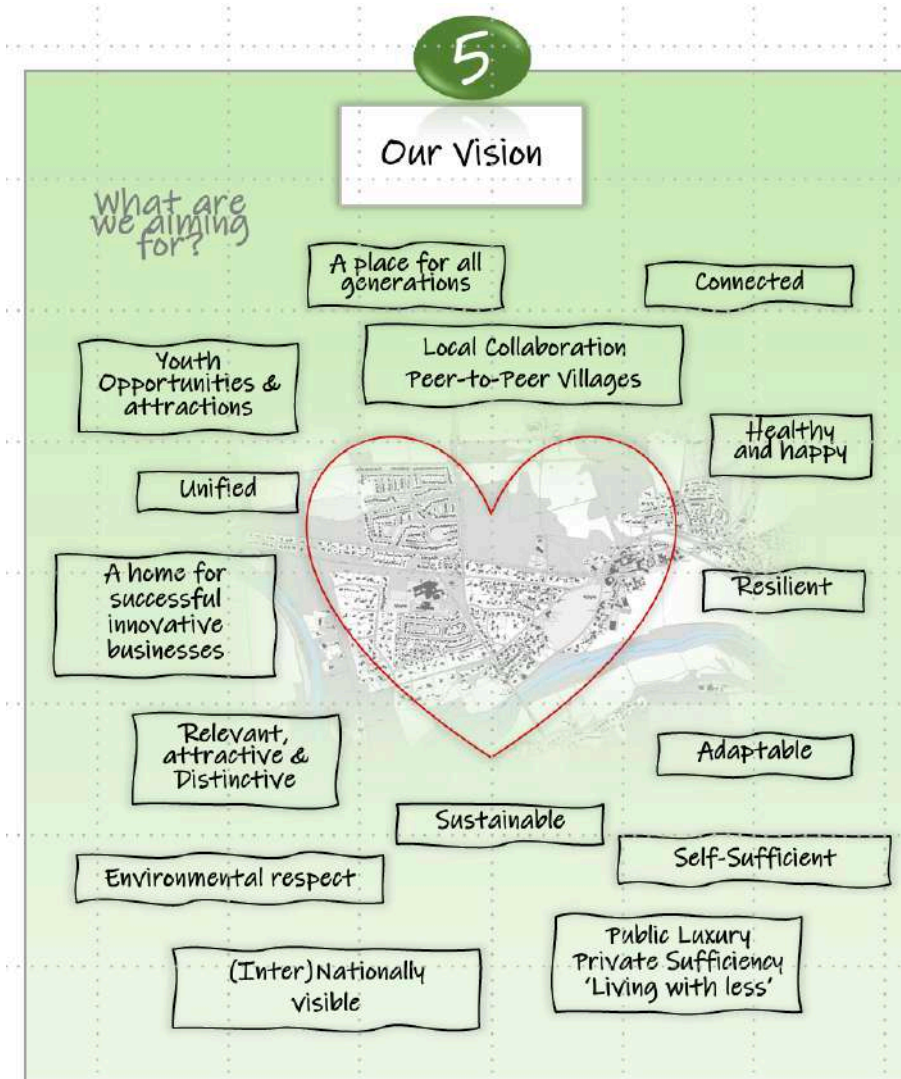


Figure 7: Our Vision for Aboyne (Strategic Framework Step 5)

Our vision is that as the Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside Aboyne will:

- Be a place for all generations, serving our ageing population well, yet offering opportunities for families and for younger people so that they want to live and work here when they leave full-time education.
- Promote health and well-being for residents and visitors – through promoting active travel and the provision locally of goods, services and facilities, green spaces and locally grown produce.

- Be economically successful – supporting local businesses and employers, boosting local employment opportunities and offering the right housing so that people who work here can live here.
- Be resilient to the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and energy transition, actively working towards achieving net zero goals.
- Be resilient to the impacts of economic change, finding ways to maintain local services, facilities and amenities despite pressures on national and local government budgets.
- Have the right balance between being attractive to visitors whilst keeping a vibrant community feel.

By working collaboratively together and with surrounding communities for mutual benefit, we can complement, connect and strengthen what Aboyne currently offers to its residents and visitors, as well as what it contributes to the wider area. By retaining and enhancing the range of services, facilities and amenities in Aboyne, improving public transport and active travel both within Aboyne and to/from surrounding communities, promoting local living and supporting the local economy, we can secure Aboyne's future as a sustainable, liveable and productive place with a vibrant inclusive community.

2.5. Roadmap

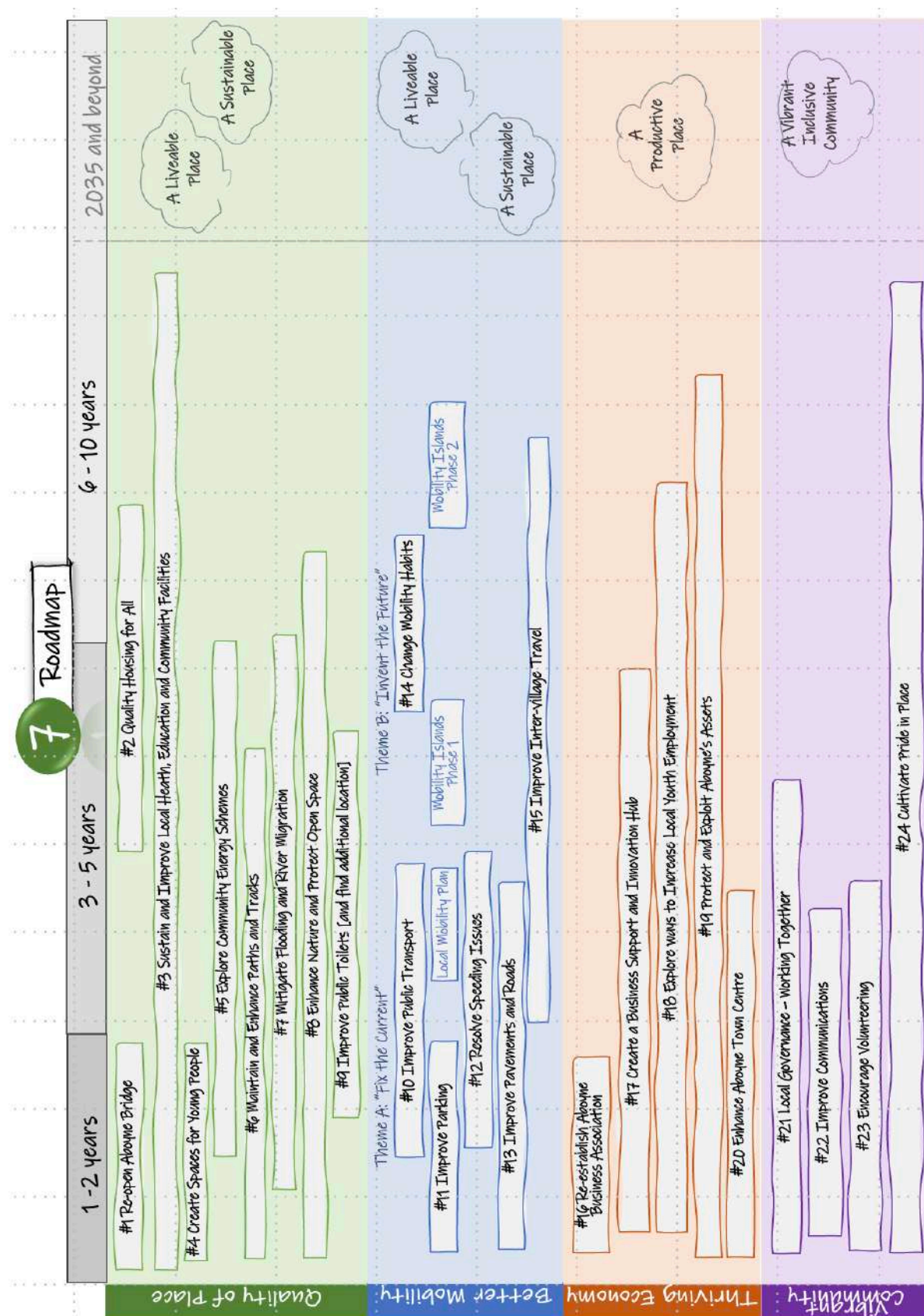
Four principal, interdependent strategic Themes emerged from the autumn 2023 survey responses:



Figure 8: The four Strategic Themes (Strategic Framework Step 6)

Within these Themes, the Local Place Plan team developed a series of 24 Initiatives, each containing Proposals to support action. Together these Initiatives form a Roadmap, envisaging short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long-term (6-10 years) actions to help achieve the vision of Aboyne as the Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside.

Figure 9: The Roadmap – four Themes, 24 Initiatives and an indicative timeline (Strategic Framework Step 7)



2.6. Implementing the Roadmap

The Roadmap (see Figure 9 on the previous page) shows an indicative timeframe for implementing this plan, setting out which Initiatives and Proposals can be implemented in the short-term (1 – 2 years), medium-term (3 – 5 years) or longer-term (6 – 10 years).

Mid Deeside Community Council will work with local stakeholders including Aberdeenshire Council, community groups, organisations and individuals in Aboyne, neighbouring community councils and other organisations to take forward the Initiatives in the Roadmap. However, as with most organisations in Aboyne, Mid Deeside Community Council is made up of volunteers not paid employees. Our community (summarised below in Figure 10) will need to work collaboratively to bring the Roadmap to life. Work must therefore start quickly on Initiatives which facilitate effective community working relationships including:

- Initiative #21 – Local Governance – working together;
- Initiative #22 – Improve Communications;
- Initiative #23 – Encourage Volunteering; and
- Initiative #16 – Re-establish Aboyne Business Association.

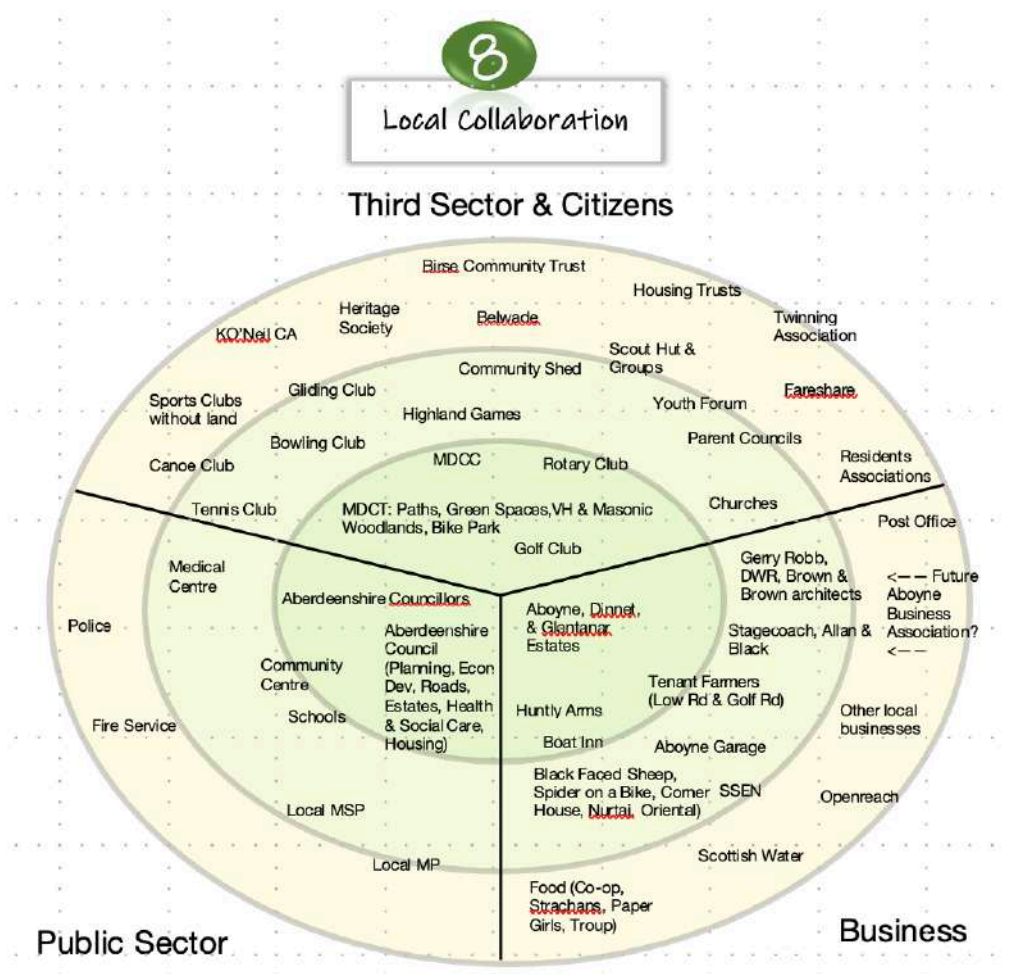


Figure 10: The potential for Local Collaboration – three primary sectors and examples of local stakeholders (Strategic Framework Step 8)

3. INITIATIVES AND PROPOSALS

24 Initiatives are grouped under the four principal Themes. For a comprehensive list of all Proposals under each Initiative see Appendix 1 – Initiatives and Proposals. This list also indicates whether a Proposal is intended to have Local Place Plan (LPP) and/or Community Action Plan (CAP) status.

3.1. Quality of Place

Initiatives in this Theme:

- Initiative #1 – Re-open Aboyne Bridge
- Initiative #2 – Quality Housing for All
- Initiative #3 – Sustain and Improve Local Health, Education and Community Facilities
- Initiative #4 – Create Spaces for Young People
- Initiative #5 – Explore Community Energy
- Initiative #6 – Maintain and Enhance Paths and Tracks
- Initiative #7 – Mitigate Flooding and River Migration
- Initiative #8 – Enhance Nature and Protect Open Space
- Initiative #9 – Improve Public Toilets

These Initiatives are mapped (where possible) on Figure 11: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Quality of Place

INITIATIVE #1 – RE-OPEN ABOYNE BRIDGE

The issue

A bridge in Aboyne has always been pivotal in connecting the communities and businesses in Birse and Glen Tanar to the south of the river with those of Aboyne and the Deeside communities to the north. Owing to concerns regarding structural integrity, the existing bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in November 2023, nominally for a period of 18 months whilst investigative works were undertaken. As at the date of this plan, Aboyne Bridge has been closed for over one year. Aberdeenshire Council has confirmed that significant structural works are required to the bridge before it can re-open to any vehicular traffic, and that the bridge might have to be replaced. No timescale has been confirmed as to when this may be achieved by. Although it has been noted that the bridge hosts essential services infrastructure and so a structure must be maintained in some form, no guarantees have yet been given that access over the bridge even by pedestrians and active travel users will be maintained.

The impact of the bridge closure on our local communities has been immense, including but not limited to:

- Residents to the south of the bridge are unable easily to access the services, facilities and amenities in Aboyne upon which they rely, including the Aboyne Schools and Community Campus, the health campus, local shops and businesses, and group activities.
- There are concerns regarding emergency services' response times.
- The significant detour over Dinnet Bridge, itself at risk, has a financial cost to those affected, impacting businesses and residents both north and south of the river, as well as an impact on carbon emissions owing to increased journey times.

The closure of Aboyne Bridge is therefore having a material impact on the mental, physical and financial health and well-being of the individuals and communities affected. The people of Aboyne and the surrounding area are unanimous that a bridge at Aboyne must be re-instated to vehicular traffic as soon as possible, in as convenient a manner and to as diverse a group of traffic as is structurally and operationally possible.



Proposals

Proposal #1

The critical infrastructure of Aboyne Bridge must be prioritised by Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government to re-open, or rebuild, if necessary, as a matter of urgency.

The object of this Proposal is to:

- Reconnect the communities of Birse and Glen Tanar with the services, facilities, amenities in Aboyne and the communities of Aboyne and those north of the river.
- Reinststate the overall road network and mitigate any mid/long-term unintended consequences for other bridges over the Dee.

The initial actions include:

- Lobbying and working closely with Aberdeenshire Council and other governmental agencies to ensure that operationally, light vehicles have access to the bridge as soon as possible and that affected communities are kept fully apprised of all progress and news regarding the bridge at each stage and regularly consulted.
- Investigate potential sources of funding to repair or replace the bridge.
- Work with Aberdeenshire Council and Historic Scotland to ensure that the listed status of the existing bridge does not prevent repair or replacement as required to reinstate vehicular access across the river at this location.

INITIATIVE #2 – QUALITY HOUSING FOR ALL

The issue

Aboyne lacks enough of the right types or size of houses at prices that people can afford. This is a particular problem for attracting key workers, an important contributor to the local economy given the proportion of Aboyne's population which is employed in the local education and health sectors. It also makes it difficult for young people to stay in Aboyne and to attract young families to the village, contributing to our ageing population.

Proposals

Proposal #2.1

Future housing development should provide a range and choice of tenure, type, size and cost, including specifically housing for key workers, first-time buyers, and local residents. It should also include a range of tenures, types and sizes of affordable housing as defined in NPF4, recognising the full range of local incomes when assessing affordability. (NPF4 defines “affordable housing” as “Good quality homes that are affordable to people on low incomes. This can include social rented, mid-market rented, shared-ownership, shared-equity, housing sold at discount (including plots for self-build), self-build plots and low-cost housing without subsidy.”)

Proposal #2.2

All new housing should ensure that the infrastructure and services needed by the people who will live in them and use the village are in place. The potential for an additional access road to the A93 serving any further housing development to the west should be investigated.

Proposal #2.3

Any new major housing development out with the current settlement boundary will not be supported.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Increase the range of different types and size of houses available in the village, especially making more housing affordable for local people to either buy or rent.

- Ensure that local infrastructure and services are enhanced to serve the local community effectively.
- Reduce the burden of traffic accessing the Tarland Road through residential streets at the eastern end of Castle Park, Kemsley Green and Charlton Park, and ensure that there is access to these houses in the event of closure of the Tarland Road.

INITIATIVE #3 – SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE LOCAL HEALTH, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The issue

Our community highly values our current health services, which they see as strong. However, there are concerns that facilities, particularly our community hospital, will be lost due to area-wide budget cuts, as happened with Aboyne's maternity ward and Minor Injuries Unit. Residents must now travel long distances to access services that used to be available locally, which is difficult and expensive for those who do not have access to a private car. Since the facilities at Aboyne serve a wide area extending to Braemar, this is a problem for residents and visitors to the whole of Upper Deeside.



Prior to the opening of Aboyne and Deeside Community Centre, the Victory Hall in the centre of the village served as the community hub, showing films, hosting a youth club, being a venue for indoor sports and dancing, and acting as somewhere for the community to gather and read local papers etc. This function was taken over by the current Community Centre when it was built approximately 50 years ago. However, the Community Centre is now struggling to serve the community in the same way. In particular, the opening hours are currently restricted and uncertain due to budget cuts, limiting access to the facilities and impacting the health and well-being of the community. There are also concerns regarding the impact of future budget cuts

on Community Centre services and facilities. The Community Centre building also requires investment in repair and maintenance, a recent example being the leaking of the theatre roof which jeopardised performances of the Christmas panto. In the longer-term, the building needs to be modernised, and the facilities updated.

It should be noted that the Community Centre is part of the Community Campus which includes Aboyne Schools and share facilities with them, in particular Aboyne Academy. It is important that investment into the Community Centre includes investment into the Community Campus as a whole, to ensure that these facilities are fit for purpose now and into the future.

Proposals

Proposal #3.1

Retain Aboyne's status as a hub for Upper Deeside by retaining and investing in all current services and facilities, including health services and facilities, the Community Campus (including the Community Centre and Aboyne Schools) and locally-based emergency services, for use by the community now and for the foreseeable future.

Proposal #3.2

Maintain and improve current community health facilities at Aboyne including Aboyne Health Centre, Aboyne Hospital and dental surgery, and re-open a minor injuries unit at the Aboyne health campus.

Proposal #3.3

Ensure the continued provision of facilities at the Aboyne and Deeside Community Centre (including but not limited to Aboyne Library and Aboyne Swimming Pool) and improve their utilisation and accessibility, including:

3.3a increasing opening hours so that services and facilities are available for use by the community every day, including evenings and weekends; and

3.3b ensuring that the whole centre is fully accessible to all users.

Proposal #3.4

Invest in the maintenance, refurbishment, improvement of the Community Campus buildings and facilities, including the Community Centre and Aboyne Schools, so that they are fit for purpose now and into the future.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Promote the physical and mental health and well-being of all members of the Deeside community.
- Safeguard all services and facilities currently based in Aboyne and which serve Aboyne and Upper Deeside, including health services and facilities (including Aboyne Health centre, Aboyne Hospital and the local dental surgery), the Community Campus

(including the Community Centre and Aboyne Schools) and emergency services, and ensure that they remain locally based and well-maintained to serve the community now and for the foreseeable future. This is particularly important given the travel time to alternative nearest services and the lack of available public transport options or dedicated transport services.

- Improve access to the Community Centre and its facilities (including but not limited to Aboyne Library and Aboyne Swimming Pool).
- Regain a sense of community ownership and use of the Community Centre.

Initial actions include:

- Work with Aberdeenshire Council, the Aberdeenshire Strategic Health and Care Partnership, Aboyne Schools and other community facility providers (including the emergency services) to understand issues facing our local community facilities and the resources/funding required.
- Work with Aberdeenshire Council, the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and voluntary groups representing service users to secure the future of current community health facilities and, in due course, re-open a Minor Injuries Unit.
- Work with Aberdeenshire Council to review the current range of services at the Community Centre and accessibility to users, and review means to increase opening hours.
- Promote current facilities and services at the Community Centre to encourage greater community use, improving the awareness of the facilities and opening hours.
- Work with Aberdeenshire Council to understand the Council's investment plan for the Community Campus and identify potential sources of funding to make shorter term improvements to the Community Campus building and facilities as well as help develop plans for future improvement.

INITIATIVE #4 – CREATE SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The issue

The autumn 2023 survey and subsequent community engagement, particularly with pupils at Aboyne Academy, revealed a high level of concern regarding opportunities for young people in Aboyne.

Three key issues were identified:

- The need to raise awareness of existing activities and opportunities for young people in Aboyne, as well as encourage the provision of additional opportunities.
- The need to provide indoor and outdoor meeting spaces aimed at younger people, mid-teens in particular.
- The need to encourage more local employment opportunities for school leavers and younger adults.

Overall, the aim is to help young people feel welcome and included in Aboyne by offering them a range of activities and spaces to meet with each other, as well as encourage them to stay

beyond completing school education by offering a range of employment opportunities, affordable housing and an attractive lifestyle. Some of the issues raised will be addressed by other Proposals in the plan. For example, Initiative #22 – Improve Communications targets the need to raise awareness of existing activities and opportunities for young people in Aboyne, as well as encourage the provision of more, whereas Initiative #18 – Seek Ways to Increase Local Youth Employment targets the need to encourage more local employment opportunities for school leavers and younger adults.

Currently, the only indoor meeting space for young people is the Aboyne Youth Hub, a sub-group of Mid Deeside Community Trust, which organises a monthly Friday night café at Aboyne-Dinnet Church Hall for teenagers whose parents have confirmed they may attend. There are no other casual meeting spaces in Aboyne specifically targeted at young people. Plans for a skatepark in Aboyne, although well progressed, were recently discontinued.

Proposals

Proposal #4

Find suitable space(s) for and promote youth activities and opportunities in Aboyne.

The object of this Proposal is to:

- Improve the health and well-being of young people in Aboyne by offering them a safe space (or spaces) to meet with friends and engage in activities which they enjoy.
- Recognise young people as important contributors to our community.
- Reduce perceived anti-social behaviour.

Initial actions include:

- Work with Aboyne Youth Hub, Aboyne Academy pupils and other young people in Aboyne to ascertain the types of spaces that will be attractive to and used by young people and the activities that should be offered.
- Work with the owners of community buildings in Aboyne to understand potential barriers to using existing spaces as a meeting place for young people and explore ways to overcome these.
- Explore opportunities for local businesses to create an offer aimed at younger people.
- Consider the benefit of appointing a community co-ordinator for activities for young people and how this could be funded and managed.

INITIATIVE #5 – EXPLORE COMMUNITY ENERGY SCHEMES

The issue

Owning, generating and using community-led renewable energy will help our community to reduce our energy costs and generate local revenue, such as through the reduction of energy bills and/or the sale of surplus energy (in particular electricity). This will enable our community to thrive, grow a sustainable economy and contribute towards the transition to net zero.

Mid Deeside Community Council has been investigating options for how this can be achieved for our community, considering a range of different forms of renewable energy in various locations. The aim is to collaborate with local landowners and other stakeholders to implement one or more options, seeking funding and grants to help take this forward.

Proposals

Proposal #5.1

With a view to progressing one or more community-led renewable energy projects in Aboyne, engage with communities in Scotland and elsewhere which have implemented community energy projects to understand how they are managed, financed, regulated and operated, and gain further understanding of how communities can benefit.

Proposal #5.2

Work with local landowners and other stakeholders to identify suitable locations for community-led renewable energy projects.

Proposal #5.3

Identify suitable partners for projects and set up the appropriate legal structure to implement, manage and operate any such projects.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Increase local consumption of renewable energy, reduce local energy bills, increase our community's sustainability and energy resilience, and contribute towards the transition to net zero.
- Raise revenue for local projects which will benefit our community, including in pursuance of this plan.

Initial actions include:

- Support the work of the Mid Deeside Community Council Local Energy Group in pursuance of the above Proposals.

INITIATIVE #6 – MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE PATHS AND TRACKS

The issue

Since 2018, the Aboyne Paths and Tracks Group have transformed the number of paths and tracks around the village of Aboyne, including recently the path from Aboyne to Glen Tanar

and a new network of accessible paths through Castle Wood to the north of the Deeside Way. The core path³ network map should now be updated to include appropriate new paths.

Residents' physical and mental health and well-being have greatly benefited from the increased opportunities for exercise provided by the new paths and tracks, which have also attracted visitors to Aboyne. Further expansion of the paths and tracks network to create additional attractive and safe routes for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists would encourage an increase in active travel. Additional publicity and signage for these routes will help raise awareness of the routes and encourage increased use.

Note that feedback from the autumn 2023 survey and engagement with Aboyne Academy pupils demonstrates how highly the community values the paths and tracks which permit access to the River Dee, which includes a core path. However, flood events and migration of the river's course continually threaten these paths, requiring them to be moved and rebuilt regularly if they are to be maintained. Initiative #7 – Mitigate Flooding and River Migration below discusses this issue.

Proposals

Proposal #6.1

Review and revise the core path network in Aboyne for accessibility, connectivity and safety. Upgrade where necessary. Update revised core path network in the Settlement Map for Aboyne in the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

Proposal #6.2

Re-open the Deeside Way to the east of Aboyne for all active travel users.

Proposal #6.3

Explore additional links through the village and beyond.

Proposal #6.4

Continue to promote paths and tracks through maps, physical markers and signs, indicating the level of accessibility and difficulty of the route for users.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Promote health and well-being and contribute to net zero targets by encouraging active travel by residents and visitors in and around Aboyne.
- Attract recreational visitors to Aboyne, increasing spend in the local economy.

³ "Core paths are paths, waterways or any other means of crossing land to facilitate, promote and manage the exercise of access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, and are identified as such in access authority core paths plan." (www.data.gov.uk)

Initial actions include:

- Working with Aboyne Paths and Tracks Group, prepare an up-to-date plan of paths and tracks in Aboyne which have core path status.
- Upgrade paths and tracks along the core path network where necessary to ensure that they are fully accessible, including resurfacing and lighting where appropriate.
- Investigate the creation of new paths and tracks which are accessible to active travel users to provide further linkages around Aboyne for safer active travel. New paths and tracks which the community have expressed an interest in developing include re-opening the Deeside Way to the east of Aboyne, a new pedestrian access along or adjacent to the access road to Aboyne Golf Club and a formal path through the garden of the Huntly Arms Hotel to the Co-op.

INITIATIVE #7 – MITIGATE FLOODING AND RIVER MIGRATION

The issue

Aboyne has felt the impacts of climate change through the storms of 2015, 2022 and 2023 but also generally through more severe, intense weather events. Mid Deeside Community Council established a resilience group to help the community respond to emergency events, but we recognise the role that our community must play in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Specific issues which impact Aboyne include:

- **River Dee migration** – the course of the River Dee changed significantly following Storm Frank in 2015 and continues to change with every extreme rainfall event. Photographs show how erosion is impacting the northern banks within the village boundary. The riverside path has been moved several times but continues to be threatened, with the path no longer being accessible in many places particularly at the west end of the village near Rhu-Na-Haven Road. This impacts the core path from Aboyne Bridge and may impact the bridge itself with time.
- **Flooding** – heavy rainfall events throughout the Dee catchment can cause flooding in Aboyne, from both the River Dee and the Tarland Burn. Storm drains are frequently blocked or overwhelmed, particularly along the Ballater Road.

Proposals

Proposal #7

Form a group to work with other local communities and organisations to determine the future impact of both flooding and migration of the River Dee on Aboyne, and then consider possible options for mitigation. Priorities initially include protecting existing housing, high use/core paths, Aboyne Bridge and infrastructure.

The object of this Proposal is to:

- Boost resilience to, and mitigate where possible, the impacts of flooding.

- Protect land and property from river migration where appropriate/necessary, but otherwise plan for how to manage the impacts.

Initial actions include:

- Form a group to work with other community councils in the Mid Deeside area to address the issue of flooding and river migration at a catchment level and to liaise with Aberdeenshire Council, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, SEPA, the Scottish Government and any other relevant organisations.
- As part of the wider group and raising funds where necessary, commission a study into the potential impact of flooding and river migration in the short, medium and longer term, to determine actions required to implement any recommendations.



INITIATIVE #8 – ENHANCE NATURE AND PROTECT OPEN SPACE

The issue

There are areas of open space in Aboyne which may be vulnerable to unplanned development, but which play an important contribution to Aboyne's green-blue network⁴ or as community open space. Such areas should be protected from development.

Aboyne has an abundance of trees which positively contribute to shading/cooling, health and well-being, and biodiversity. They need to be well-maintained to avoid unnecessary storm damage. However, where trees are removed or felled during storms they should be replaced

⁴ Green-blue networks are “connected areas of green and blue space and habitats within and on the edge of our villages and towns [which] can provide a range of social, ecological, health and economic benefits.” (Paragraph 4.6 of the 2023 LDP)

where possible with native trees to maintain the ongoing benefits of tree cover and enhance green-blue networks throughout Aboyne.



Whilst Aboyne is in a beautiful, rural area, it is subject to the same pressures on nature as the rest of the country. The community is keen to maximise biodiversity by creative planting throughout the village, particularly on publicly owned land including Aboyne Green. New development should also be expected to deliver biodiversity net gain.

The allotments at the Police Station are a treasured asset for the community. There is also a desire for a community garden within Aboyne in addition to the existing allotments.

Proposals

Proposal #8.1

In the next Local Development Plan protect the following areas shown on Figure 17: Proposed changes to the Settlement Map for Aboyne for the following purposes:

8.1a to protect the open space as a contribution to the character of the area and forming part of the green-blue network; and

8.1b include in Protected Area P6 which protects the open space as an amenity for the settlement.

Proposal #8.2

Support planting native trees and planting for biodiversity on public and private land.

Proposal #8.3

Deliver a community garden and/or community park in the centre of Aboyne.

Proposal #8.4

Protect and retain the allotments at Aboyne Police Station as a community asset.

Proposal #8.5

Explore how all new development in Aboyne could deliver biodiversity net gain.

The object of these Proposals is to improve health and well-being and increase biodiversity.

Initial actions include:

- Protect the areas shown on Figure 17 for the purposes set out in Proposal 8.1 above.
- Work with existing stakeholders to identify a suitable location within Aboyne for a community garden and/or park and assess funding options for taking the project forward.
- Work with Police Scotland to retain the allotments in the Police Station for community benefit.



INITIATIVE #9 – IMPROVE PUBLIC TOILETS

The issue

This is an important issue for young people in our community, who are concerned about the appeal, cleanliness and opening hours of the public toilets in Aboyne. There is also a desire for additional public toilets to be provided elsewhere in the village.

Proposals

Proposal #9.1

Improve the maintenance and opening hours of the existing public toilets.

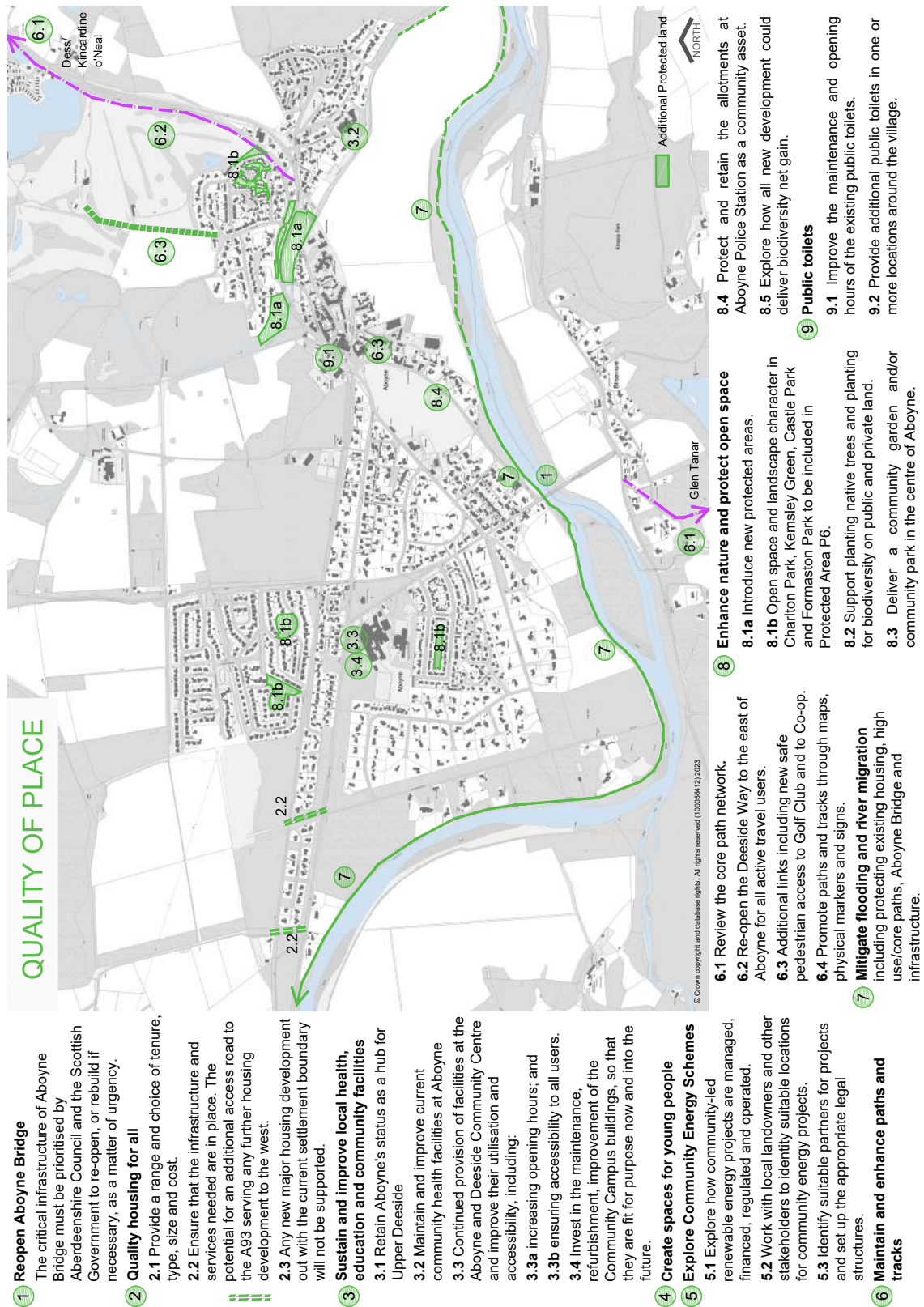
Proposal #9.2

Provide additional public toilets in one or more locations around the village.

The object of these Proposals is to improve the community's health and well-being. This will also enhance the visitor experience and thus promote Aboyne as a destination bringing benefits for the local economy.

Figure 11: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Quality of Place

The Initiatives and Proposals relating to the Quality of Place Theme are shown on the following map where possible and are set out in the surrounding legend and key.



3.2. Better Mobility

Initiatives in this Theme:

- Initiative #10 – Improve Public Transport
- Initiative #11 – Improve Parking
- Initiative #12 – Resolve Traffic Speeding Issues
- Initiative #13 – Improve Pavements and Roads
- Initiative #14 – Change Mobility Habits
- Initiative #15 – Improve Inter-Village Travel

These Initiatives are mapped (where possible) on Figure 12: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Better Mobility

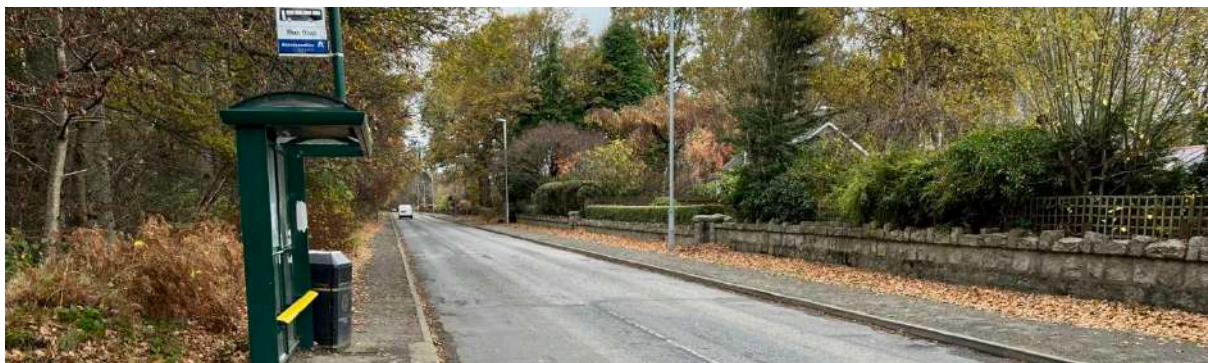
INITIATIVE #10 – IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The issue

Our local public transport service attracted most comment and concern in the autumn 2023 survey and subsequent community engagement.

Issues raised include the unreliability of the existing bus service (with buses running late, arriving at stops early or not arriving at all), the low frequency of the service, the high cost for non-concession holders, poor communications about services, the inaccessibility of many buses serving the route (including a lack of information regarding which particular services are fully accessible to all users), the use of old buses to serve our route and a complete lack of service other than east-west between Aberdeen and Braemar. Users also report that it is difficult to use buses from Aberdeen at peak times because they are filled with passengers travelling within Aberdeen (eg to Peterculter and Cults). These concerns are shared by other communities in Mid Deeside. These issues impact people's ability to travel out with the village and take-up work opportunities, causing stress and impacting health and well-being. The consequence of poor local public transport is reliance on the private car.

Many respondents, particularly younger people, asked for improvements to bus stops. Many noted that increased use of fully accessible buses on our route would benefit users with disabilities, families with young children and those with bicycles.



Proposals

Proposal #10.1

Improve public transport by:

10.1a improving and maintaining the quality, reliability and accessibility of buses with all buses being barrier free.

10.1b increasing the frequency of services; create new routes to surrounding villages.

10.1c implementing express services to and from Aberdeen in peak periods; and

10.1d reducing the cost to users of travelling on public transport.

Proposal #10.2

Investigate potential for additional bus shelters with seating and live digital information at all stops.

Proposal #10.3

Promote MDCT's dial-a-ride and volunteer hospital transfer service (A2B).

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Reduce climate impact, increase employment opportunities and improve well-being by increasing use of public transport for local and longer-distance trips.
- Make public transport the most affordable, convenient, reliable, safe, and barrier-free option for travel. When it comes to the cost of public transport, a benchmark should be ensuring that it is cheaper to use public transport than to drive a private car where a choice is available.

Initial actions include:

- Work with Aberdeenshire Council, our local bus provider Stagecoach and potential alternative providers to:
 - increase the reliability of existing services.
 - improve the frequency, quality, and accessibility of existing services.
 - improve the reliability of information provided to the community regarding timetables, live timings and which services at which times will be served by buses which are fully accessible to all users.
 - identify new routes, particularly to provide north-south connectivity; and
 - investigate options for reducing fares including the potential for different pricing mechanisms such as variable pricing for different days/times and return fares.
- Engage with Aberdeenshire Council and neighbouring community councils to experiment with new models for public transport (see Initiative #14 – Change Mobility Habits and Initiative #15 – Improve inter-village travel)
- Work with Aberdeenshire Council to upgrade existing bus stops to provide shelter, seating, live timings and where appropriate bike racks and other linked facilities which will facilitate active travel to and from bus stops.

INITIATIVE #11 – IMPROVE PARKING

The issue

With high levels of car use, influenced by poor public transport services and low uptake of active travel options, certain areas in Aboyne experience high levels of on-street parking which at times can cause concern. However, the availability of free parking is important for local businesses to attract custom, which was evidenced by survey responses and subsequent community engagement.

Areas of parking congestion in Aboyne can include the Old Ballater Road, Station Brae, Charlestown Road (often by people accessing the river or outdoors activities south of the river in addition to local businesses), the Health Centre and the Community Campus (including Aboyne Schools).

This issue has been considered for some time by Aberdeenshire Council and Police Scotland working with Mid Deeside Community Council and community members. Potential options in some locations have been proposed but resisted due to potential negative impacts on our community, particularly the vitality and viability of local businesses on which our local economy relies but which themselves rely on easily accessible parking for their customers. Creative thinking between community stakeholders and a holistic approach to changing the way that we travel are considered most likely to promote sustainable solutions. Options to consider include the use of visual prompts, physical speed controls, convex traffic mirrors and changes to staff parking arrangements.

Proposals

Proposal #11.1

Improve the safety of parking in key locations. Consider the use of visual prompts and creative solutions to promote safe and considerate parking. Key locations include: Charlestown Road; Old Ballater Road; Station Brae; Aboyne Schools and Community Centre; and Aboyne Health Centre.

Proposal #11.2

Review locations of disabled parking spaces in Aboyne to increase accessibility for users with additional needs.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Improve the safety of people walking, wheeling and cycling and improve the well-being of residents (by reducing irritation and inconvenience).
- Improve the vitality and viability of Aboyne centre by encouraging visitors and improve footfall for businesses and events.
- Ensure that more locations in Aboyne are accessible to all users.

The proposals under Initiative #10 – Improve Public Transport, Initiative #14 – Change Mobility Habits and Initiative #15 – Improve inter-village travel should also help to achieve this Initiative by reducing the need to travel by private car to, from and within Aboyne.

Initial actions include to set up a group to work with key stakeholders to:

- Carry out a detailed analysis of parking patterns in Aboyne and develop potential proposals to resolve issues (eg new parking layouts in car parks (which still provide the same number of spaces) and “soft” measures such as visual prompts, physical speed controls, convex traffic mirrors and staff parking arrangements), with particular consideration for the impact of additional parking pressures during village events.
- Review the locations of existing disabled/parent-child parking spaces and consider potential locations for additional spaces to ensure that Aboyne's services and facilities are fully accessible to all users.

INITIATIVE #12 – RESOLVE TRAFFIC SPEEDING ISSUES

The issue

Speeding is anecdotally regularly observed along the main routes in Aboyne, namely the A93 (Ballater Road), B968 (Bridgeview Road) (prior to closure of Aboyne Bridge) and the B9094 (Tarland Road). Speeding is specifically a concern at the entrances to the village and at the two pelican crossings serving Aboyne schools. This gives rise to concerns regarding the safety of active travel generally, and specifically the safety of children walking or cycling to and from school or the village centre. Concerns have also been expressed regarding the safety of crossing the A93 at the east end of the village.

Local businesses have also noted that measures to reduce speeding through the village would benefit the local economy by increasing the opportunity for visitors to pay more attention to the businesses, services and facilities that Aboyne has to offer.

Proposals

Proposal #12.1

Implement a 20 mph speed limit throughout Aboyne, including portions of the A93 at the village centre and in the vicinity of the Community Campus.

Proposal #12.2

Investigate options for visual prompts to encourage people to stick to speed limits including (without limitation) flashing signs, visual reminders and gateways at the entrances to the village.

Proposal #12.3

Investigate the need for additional pedestrian crossings, including on the A93 at the east of the village.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- improve the community's sense of safety and well-being;
- promote active travel;
- deter anti-social driving; and
- raise visitor awareness of Aboyne's business, services and facilities.

Initial actions include to form a group to:

- Assess options for visual prompts to deter speeding, including creative ways to calm traffic beyond conventional signage such as village gateways (which can serve a dual-purpose of conveying a sense of place).
- Assess options for improving existing and providing additional road crossings, considering also a locally supported “lollipop-person” to serve Aboyne schools.
- Identifying means generally to improve the safety and accessibility of Aboyne for active travel users.

It has also been suggested that traffic could be slowed in the village centre by targeted traffic management measures such as mini roundabouts at one or more of the junctions. Such options can be investigated with Aberdeenshire Council and other stakeholders.

INITIATIVE #13 – IMPROVE PAVEMENTS AND ROADS

The issue

Infrastructure and infrastructure maintenance has struggled to keep up with the progressive growth of the village over recent decades, exacerbated by constrained public budgets. The autumn 2023 survey responses highlighted the poor condition of pavements and roads as an issue for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists, with reports of pedestrians and wheelers frequently needing to use roads rather than pavements owing poor maintenance or lack of appropriately sited dropped kerbs.

Proposals

Proposal #13.1

Improve the quality and maintenance of Aboyne’s pavements in relation to:

13.1a accessibility (eg dropped kerbs at appropriate places);

13.1b foliage overgrowth; and

13.1c surface quality,

so that they are safe to use and barrier free for all users.

Proposal #13.2

Publish a map of pavements in Aboyne that are pedestrian and wheeler friendly.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- increase active travel; and
- improve safety, health and well-being.

Initial actions include:

- Form a group to work with Aberdeenshire Council to survey the condition and accessibility of pavements and roads in Aboyne and compile a priority list for improvements to be made.

- Encourage residents to maintain property boundaries to prevent overhanging foliage causing obstruction.

INITIATIVE #14 – CHANGE MOBILITY HABITS

The issue

There is clear national and local policy⁵ to move away from current transport models, which in rural areas such as ours depends largely on the private car, to more active travel (cycling, walking and wheeling), sustainable and shared mobility. Our ambition is that Aboyne will be a proactive demonstrator of this, encouraging changes to how we travel within the village but also working with Aberdeenshire Council and others to explore improved models for travel between communities in Aberdeenshire. An integrated multi-spatial view is required, exploiting digitalisation to deliver more sustainable and more liveable places through active travel and safer greener infrastructure.

Proposals

Proposal #14.1

Promote the Aberdeenshire Council car share scheme⁶.

Proposal #14.2

Establish a safe network through the village for cyclists, improving cycle lanes where possible and promote the network on a publicly available map.

Proposal #14.3

Improve facilities for cyclists around Aboyne, including additional bike racks and bike stations at key areas such as Station Square, the Community Centre and to the east of the village.

Proposal #14.4

Establish “Mobility Islands” at key points in Aboyne (for instance in Castle Park, at the Community Centre and in the Town Centre) that provide community choice and access to shared light mobility, together with complementary place-making services.

Proposal #14.5

Provide EV charging at the Upper Square car park.

The object of these Proposals is to improve community well-being by:

- accelerating the uptake of sustainable mobility; and

⁵ Aberdeenshire Council’s Passenger Transport Strategy [Proposed Action Plan, 62 proposed policies](#), and Transport Strategy 2025-35 (under consultation), cite improvement themes prioritising the shift in mobility infrastructure and habits

⁶ <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/transportation/commuting/car-share-scheme/>.

- addressing and mitigating many of the transport issues described at Initiative #11 – Improve Parking and Initiative #12 – Resolve Traffic Speeding Issues.

Initial actions include:

- Engage with Aberdeenshire Council to:
 - develop/include Aboyne as demonstrator for Mobility Islands and Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) (see Initiative #15 – Improve Inter-Village Travel). This will require a more detailed study and consultation to validate the proposals and support the co-design of the infrastructure and services;
 - explore financing and funding options for Mobility Islands and DDRT and seek stimulus (grant) funding;
 - improve cycle lanes and facilities for cyclists; and
 - provide EV charging in the Upper Square car park.
- Promote the Aberdeenshire Council car share scheme – see Initiative #22 – Improve Communications.



INITIATIVE #15 – IMPROVE INTER-VILLAGE TRAVEL

The issue

Shared and public transport out with the village will complement and support the adoption of Mobility Island services (see Initiative #14 – Change Mobility Habits) and speed the transition away from the use of private cars.

Proposals

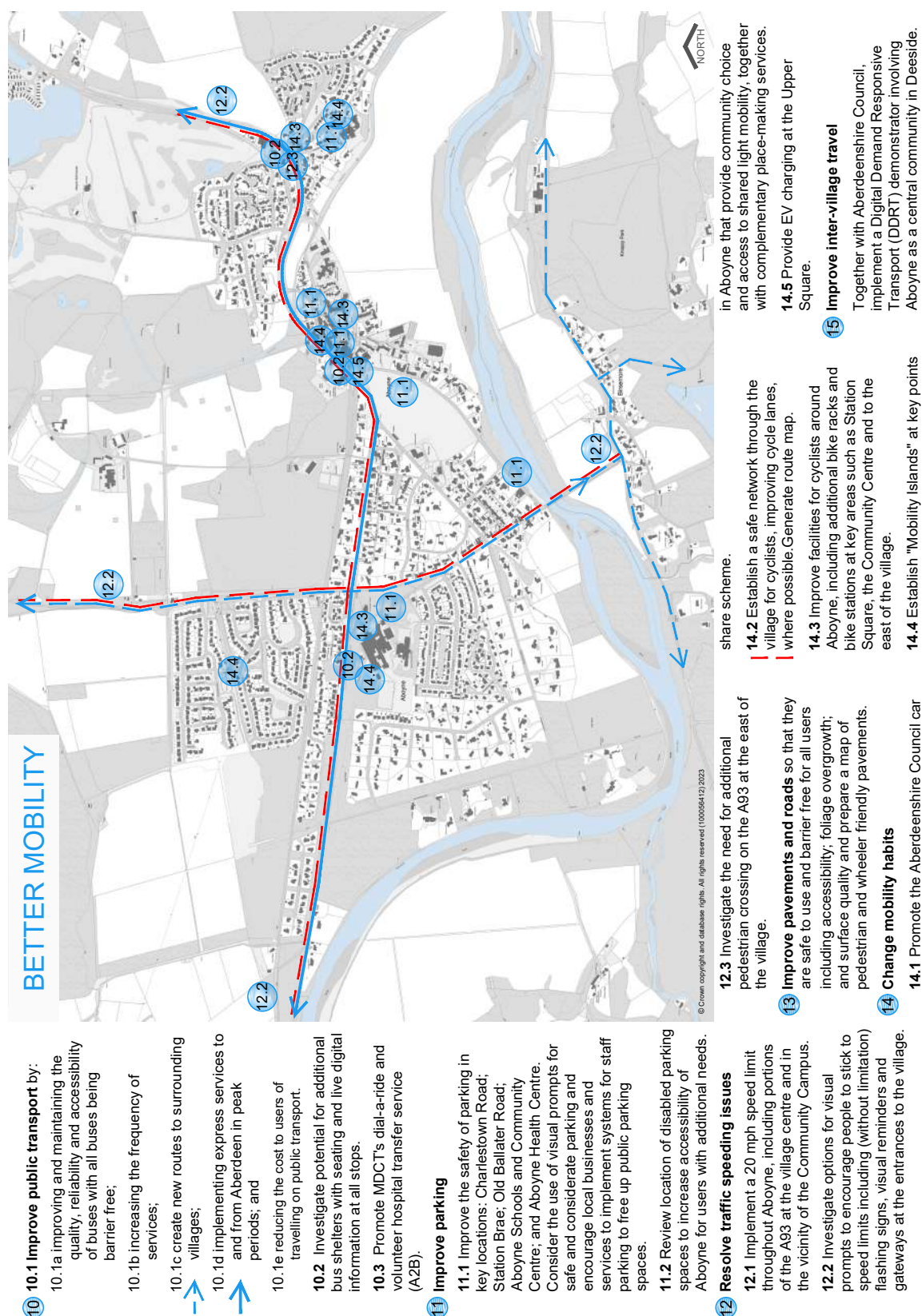
Proposal #15

Together with Aberdeenshire Council, implement a Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) demonstrator involving Aboyne as a central community in Deeside.

The object of this Proposal is to accelerate the uptake of sustainable mobility and improve community wellbeing. Initial actions are as for Initiative #14 – Change Mobility Habits.

Figure 12: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Better Mobility

The Initiatives and Proposals relating to the Better Mobility Theme are shown on the following map where possible and are set out in the surrounding legend and key.



3.3. Thriving Economy

Initiatives in this Theme:

- Initiative #16 – Re-establish Aboyne Business Association
- Initiative #17 – Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub
- Initiative #18 – Seek Ways to Increase Local Youth Employment
- Initiative #19 – Protect and Exploit Aboyne's assets
- Initiative #20 – Enhance Aboyne Town Centre

These Initiatives are mapped (where possible) on:

- Figure 13: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Thriving Economy; and
- Figure 14: Map of Town Centre Proposals – Thriving Economy

INITIATIVE #16 – RE-ESTABLISH ABOYNE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The issue

Aboyne's local economy has diminished in diversity over past decades and is presently critically fragile in places. More than 40% of employment is within the public sector (education and health). We must nourish, grow, and sustain successful diverse local businesses which meet resident and visitor needs. This will significantly increase local employment opportunities, including for younger people (see Initiative #18 – Seek Ways to Increase Local Youth Employment). Greater collaboration and facilitation amongst the business community is essential.

Proposals

Proposal #16

Re-establish an active, collaborative and productive Business Association to work collectively to encourage, support and promote a wide range of economic sectors in and around Aboyne, starting with the retail network and expanding to a broader range of businesses.

The object of this Proposal is to:

- ensure an enduring improvement in the economic prosperity of existing businesses;
- support an increase in the diversity and success of economic operators;
- support networking between business owners, operators and other stakeholders;
- assist with marketing local businesses; and
- provide a voice for local businesses.

Initial actions include:

- Support the local business network to re-establish a retail business network/association as a foundation for expansion to other business sectors.

- Identify, mobilise, and facilitate the process of provision of business mentorship.
- Identify options for an Innovation Hub and develop an outline for the preferred candidate(s).

INITIATIVE #17 – CREATE A BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INNOVATION HUB

The issue

There is a strong need to increase skills development opportunities to facilitate businesses and individuals to adapt to ever-changing needs. Business support and innovation will be particularly helpful to small businesses and start-ups, especially young people wishing to stay in the area to live and work.

Proposals

Proposal #17.1

Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub to enable business and social enterprises, entrepreneurs and start-ups through advice, services, contacts, information and technology to support development and innovation with the potential to offer common enabling services.

Proposal #17.2

Seek business “mentors/angels” through working with the significant breadth of skills and experience available in our community to offer support to local businesses.

Proposal #17.3

Take steps to attract investors to Aboyne businesses, provide investment advice and routes for businesses, including but not limited to support from Visit Aberdeenshire and Aberdeenshire Council's economic development team.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- ensure an enduring improvement in the economic prosperity of existing businesses; and
- support an increase in the diversity and success of economic operators.

Initial actions include:

- Assess local need and desire for advisory/mentorship support.
- Seek volunteers from the community with relevant business experience to provide advice and support to businesses and individuals seeking help or mentorship.
- Assist with identifying and communicating different funding types and sources for businesses, investment needs and potential investment opportunities.

INITIATIVE #18 – SEEK WAYS TO INCREASE LOCAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The issue

As explained under Initiative #4 – Create Spaces for Young People, many young people leave Aboyne on completing their education, a contributing factor being a lack of attractive local employment opportunities.

Proposals

Proposal #18

Support existing and new local businesses which offer employment opportunities in the locality for young people through the Business Support and Innovation Hub (see Initiative #17 – Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub).

The object of this Proposal is to increase the well-being and prosperity of our community by enabling young people to stay in Aboyne to live and work.

Initial actions include:

- Encourage strong linkages between local businesses and Aboyne Academy.
- Business Support and Innovation Hub (see Initiative #17 – Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub) to establish a “jobs board” advertising local employment opportunities particularly for school leavers and young adults.
- Business Support and Innovation Hub to work with Aboyne Academy to track employment paths taken by school leavers.
- Business Support and Innovation Hub to promote local employment and business opportunities for young people, taking advantage of national and regional funding opportunities, available formal certification, etc where available.

INITIATIVE #19 – PROTECT AND EXPLOIT ABOYNE’S ASSETS

The issue

Aboyne has a number of iconic destinations (built and natural heritage) that individually and collectively underpin the quality, attractiveness and economic success of the village. In addition to some notable retail destinations and Aboyne’s natural environment, these iconic destinations include:

- The Aboyne and Glen Tanar War Memorial Hall (the “Victory Hall”).
- The Hall on the Green (the “Old Kirk” or “Masonic Hall”).
- The Huntly Arms Hotel.
- The Boat Inn.
- Charlestown Green.
- The River Dee.
- Station Square.

- Aboyne's churches.
- Aboyne and Deeside Community Centre.

Overall, Aboyne's external identity is weak, with limited recognition and promotion of these collective assets to attract visitors. The fabric of the core heritage of the village is suffering from the high costs of maintenance. Concern has also been voiced that decision-making regarding applications to modernise or adapt listed buildings or buildings located in or near Aboyne Conservation Area, which would enable such buildings to continue to be used or brought back into use, can deter investment and thereby affect the economic vitality and viability of Aboyne.

Proposals

Proposal #19.1

Capture and manage Aboyne's iconic heritage as a portfolio that represents Aboyne's core offer to residents and visitors, including:

19.1a improving and maintaining the usage, recognition, quality, fabric and maintenance of Aboyne's iconic buildings; and

19.1b marketing Aboyne's natural environment, including its fantastic paths and trails network, to bring community-wide economic benefits as a renowned outdoor centre.

Proposal #19.2

Increase the diversity of events on Charlestown Green which attract visitors to Aboyne.

Proposal #19.3

Communicate Aboyne's offer through signage which lists Aboyne's attractions and distinctive village gateways at each entrance to Aboyne.

Proposal #19.4

Work with Aberdeenshire Council to ensure that decisions regarding the continued use, reuse and adaptation of buildings which are listed or are in or near Aboyne Conservation Area, particularly those whose long-term future is uncertain, are made pragmatically, complying with the requirements of NPF4⁷ whilst ensuring that such buildings can contribute to Aboyne being an economically successful place.

The object of these Proposals is to attract visitors and promote economic well-being and a sense of identity in Aboyne.

⁷ NPF4 refers Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change Guidance (<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment/>) which includes guidance on the Use and

Initial actions include:

- Capture and communicate the heritage and stories of each of the community's iconic destinations.
- Identify funding sources to improve and manage the quality of the portfolio of assets.
- Gateways – take forward through design/ideas competition within village, etc.

INITIATIVE #20 – ENHANCE ABOYNE TOWN CENTRE

The issue

Although the Community Campus to the west of Aboyne and the health campus to the east are home to vital community services and facilities, the heart of Aboyne is the town centre. For Aboyne to be a sustainable, liveable and productive place it is essential that the centre is attractive to and supported by residents, visitors and passing trade. However, Aboyne's town centre has suffered in recent years. The historic Huntly Arms Hotel is now derelict pending redevelopment. The upper shopping area is visible to passing trade but visitors passing through the village are unaware of the further shops and businesses in Station Square.

Significant effort has been made in recent years to improve the attractiveness of the town centre, investing in Station Square itself and in new planters and seating throughout the whole of the town centre. However, further improvements are possible, in particular to exploit the sunny aspect and central location of the south-side of Station Square as a visitor attraction as opposed to its current use for parking, recycling and seasonal garden waste collections.

Proposals

Proposal #20.1

Update the town centre boundary as shown at Figure 16: Proposed changes to the current Town Centre boundary of Aboyne to include areas which host existing retail and community facilities which contribute to the vitality and viability of Aboyne town centre.

Proposal #20.2

Revitalise Aboyne town centre including but not limited to:

20.2a reopening the Huntly Arms Hotel as a thriving commercial enterprise; and

20.2b exploring ways to adapt the built environment and/or use lighting, planting and/or decoration to draw attention to Aboyne's town centre businesses particularly at Station Square, along Old Ballater Road and on Charlestown Road.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- Improve the vitality and viability of Aboyne town centre, promote local living and improve economic well-being and prosperity by encouraging a greater, more diverse

Adaptation of Existing Buildings (<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=8ab1f9c9-521a-435e-a3f2-aa240119b5e1>)

and sustainable range of local businesses providing food and drink, hospitality, services and shopping.

- Ensure that town centre uses which are currently omitted from the town centre boundary for Aboyne benefit from the application of national and local town centre policies by being brought within the town centre boundary.

Initial actions include:

- Engage with stakeholders to develop and agree a clear vision for the town centre, evaluate development options and agree improvement projects. These may include for example:
 - Improving visual signposting within the town/village centre boundary, linking and identifying the town centre spaces to encourage footfall.
 - Transforming Station Square South into an integral and attractive feature of the centre.
 - Evaluating options to exploit the old rail tunnel and entry/exit areas.
 - Permitting the use of public spaces for temporary/seasonal markets.
 - Ensuring that the town centre is fully accessible to all users with adequate dedicated parking for disabled and wheel-chair user near to shops, facilities and services (see Initiative #11 – Improve Parking).
- Relocate the recycling and seasonal garden waste collection point from Station Square South and explore alternative locations for the current parking spaces and EV charging at Station Square South.
- Support the Huntly Arms Regeneration Project to encourage the progress of the owner's current plans and provide a degree of transparency for the community.



Figure 13: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Thriving Economy

The Initiatives and Proposals relating to the Thriving Economy Theme are shown on the following map where possible and are set out in the surrounding legend and key.

See Figure 14 for more detail on the proposals which relate to Aboyne town centre.

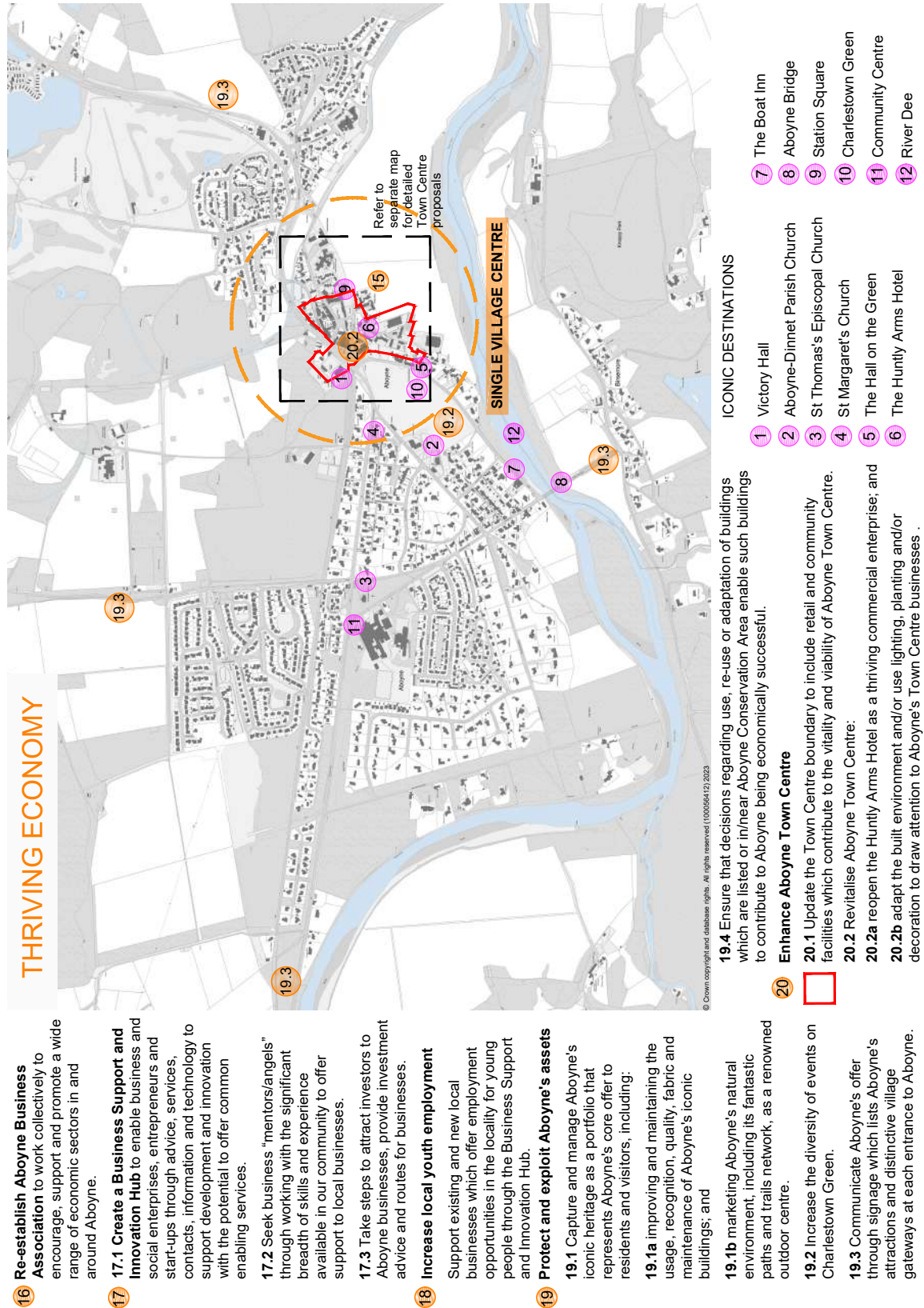
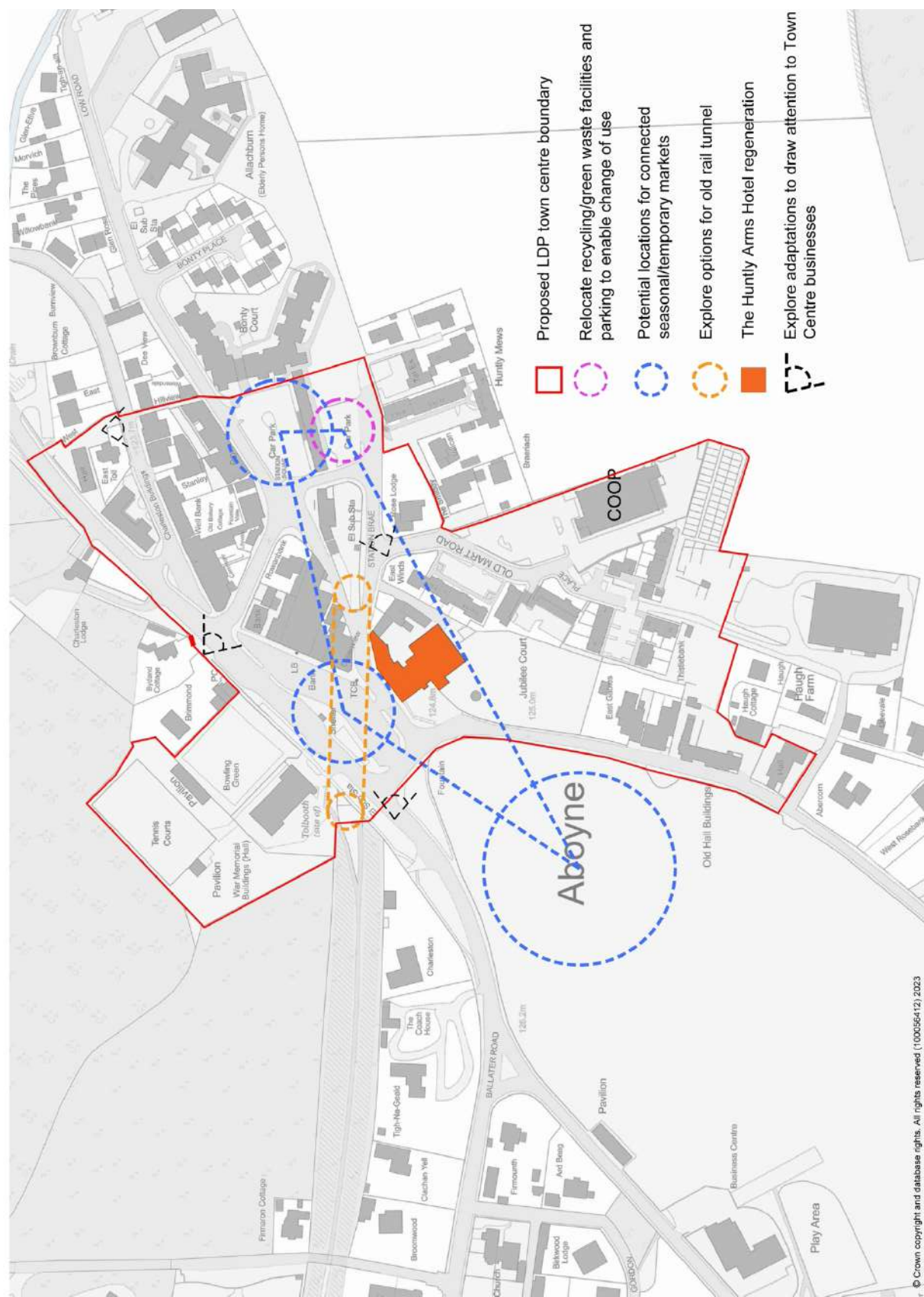


Figure 14: Map of Town Centre Proposals – Thriving Economy



3.4. Vibrant Community

Initiatives in this Theme:

- Initiative #21 – Local Governance – Working Together
- Initiative #22 – Improve Communications
- Initiative #23 – Encourage Volunteering
- Initiative #24 – Cultivate a Pride in Place

These Initiatives are mapped (where possible) on Figure 15: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Vibrant Community

INITIATIVE #21 – LOCAL GOVERNANCE – WORKING TOGETHER

The issue

Local groups and organisations are run by volunteers who perform administrative and governance roles as well as offering their practical help, often requiring business or professional expertise. Many need to take on roles as trustees and bear legal and financial responsibilities. These roles can be time-consuming and volunteer turnover can jeopardise continuity of service. Many would benefit from a paid employee performing administrative tasks, but few can afford one. It is difficult to find the volunteers, funding and resources required to maintain or improve existing services, buildings and assets, or to create and maintain new ones that the community wants or needs.

Proposals

Proposal #21.1

Establish a forum for all businesses and voluntary organisations to share experience and stimulate better co-ordination and collaboration.

Proposal #21.2

Identify and list potential high visibility improvements that don't need permissions and would require minimal resources, time, or money to enact. Aim to match these opportunities with capable volunteers that could make the improvement within 2025.

The object of this Proposal is to support the health and well-being of our local volunteers and enable our community to thrive.

Initial actions include:

- Set up a volunteering “mentor” service.
- Work with voluntary groups and organisations to understand what issues they are facing and identify common problems that could be solved by groups working together.
- Consider how our community can best implement future projects for the benefit of all.

INITIATIVE #22 – IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS

The issue

A common theme that arose from the survey and engagement sessions is that our community can and should be better at communicating. At one count there were 70 organisations and voluntary groups working hard for the benefit of the Aboyne community, but it can be difficult to find out what is going on and who is doing what and when. There are many different sources of information: most groups have social media accounts, some have websites while others rely on posters, Aboyne Fountain (our free local quarterly magazine) and word of mouth. There is no one physical or virtual place to find out everything that Aboyne has to offer, and no village calendar or website.

Proposals

Proposal #22.1

Establish a community hub at a physical location in the village where people can find information about local businesses, services, community groups, activities and events. Managed by, preferably, a paid part-time employee. Ideally, community groups will be able to use office services and facilities.

Proposal #22.2

Establish an up-to-date virtual presence (social media, website) to be maintained by the community hub manager.

The object of these Proposals is to:

- to make it easier for residents and visitors to find out about what's going on by providing one, central source of information and enable groups to communicate easily through multiple channels; and
- help organisations to work better together.

Initial actions include:

- Review the many different sources of information and news that there are in Aboyne, including on individual groups' social media and websites, newsletters, Aboyne Local, community noticeboards and the Aboyne Fountain.
- Work out how to create a "one-stop-shop" for information on what's going on in Aboyne, including a community website, community calendar and, ideally, a physical hub.
- Work out how to make sure that people who don't use the internet or social media can still find out what's going on – such as a community hub, community noticeboard and community newsletter.

INITIATIVE #23 – ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERING

The issue

There is agreement across voluntary groups that more volunteers and better coordination of volunteers are needed for them to continue to deliver the services and facilities that they provide to the community. As Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish government budgets are further constrained, this will become ever more important for the continued health and well-being of our community. However, potential volunteers also report that they don't know how or where to offer their services. It is also necessary to ensure that, as volunteers step down, others are ready to take their place.

Proposals

Proposal #23

Using the community hub and its social media outlets, identify and publicise the opportunities to get involved in community activities that will make a positive contribution to the quality of life in Aboyne.

The object of this Proposal is to:

- encourage more people to volunteer; and
- help voluntary organisations find funding for their activities and manage their activities.

Initial actions include:

- Create, publish and maintain a list of all community groups so that the community know all the groups that are in the village.
- Share information on volunteering opportunities and success stories – at the community hub and/or on the community website.

INITIATIVE #24 – CULTIVATE PRIDE IN PLACE

The issue

Many survey respondents raised the issue of litter, particularly younger people, and with particular concern about the impact on the woodlands of Aboyne. Many young people also made a connection between vaping and litter, voicing concerns about both.

There is an opportunity to use public art in support of Initiative #12 (Proposal #12.2), Initiative #19 (Proposal #19.3) and Initiative #20 (Proposal #20.2), which will have the added benefit of instilling pride in place and strengthening Aboyne's sense of identity.

Proposals

Proposal #24.1

Organise regular community-wide litter picks.

Proposal #24.2

Improve provision and maintenance of litter bins.

Proposal #24.3

Investigate the use of public art when implementing Initiative #12 – Resolve Traffic Speeding Issues (Proposal #12.2), Initiative #19 – Protect and Exploit Aboyne's Assets (Proposal #19.3) and Initiative #20 – Enhancing Aboyne Town Centre (Proposal #20.2).

The object of these Proposals is to improve the community's sense of pride and well-being by:

- reducing litter;
- encouraging a community sense of responsibility for respecting, maintaining and protecting the environment in Aboyne; and
- promoting Aboyne's identity.

Initial actions in respect of tackling litter include:

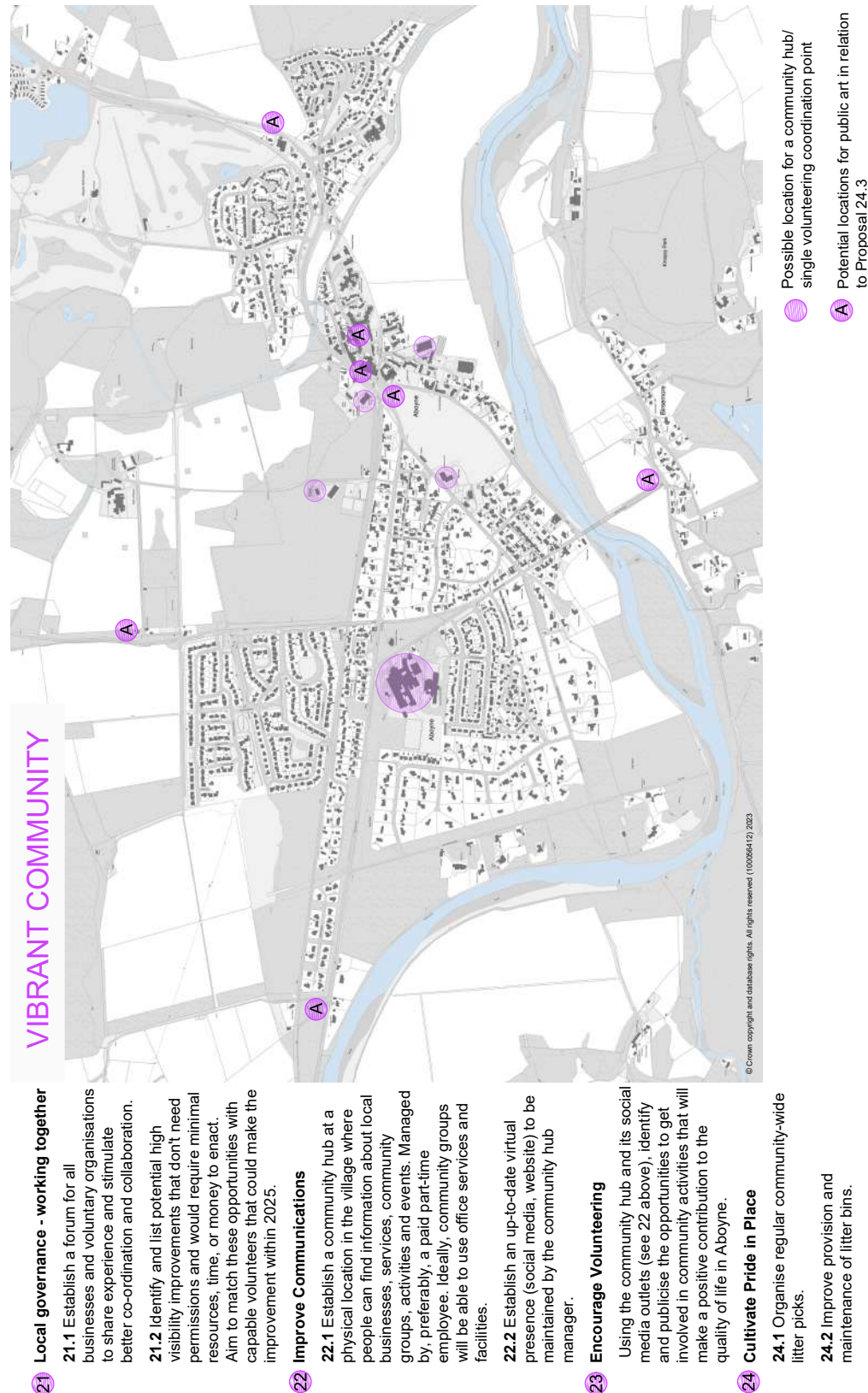
- Set up a "litter and graffiti team" to organise regular community litter picks, remove graffiti quickly, encourage people to report vandalism and anti-social behaviour to the police and educate the community regarding litter, vaping and drugs.
- Organise an information campaign.
- Learn lessons from how other communities creatively tackle this issue.
- Work with Aberdeenshire Council to improve litterbin provision.

In respect of public art, see initial actions under Initiative #12, Initiative #19 and Initiative #20.



Figure 15: Map of Initiatives and Proposals – Vibrant Community

The Initiatives and Proposals relating to the Vibrant Community Theme are shown on the following map where possible and are set out in the surrounding legend and key.



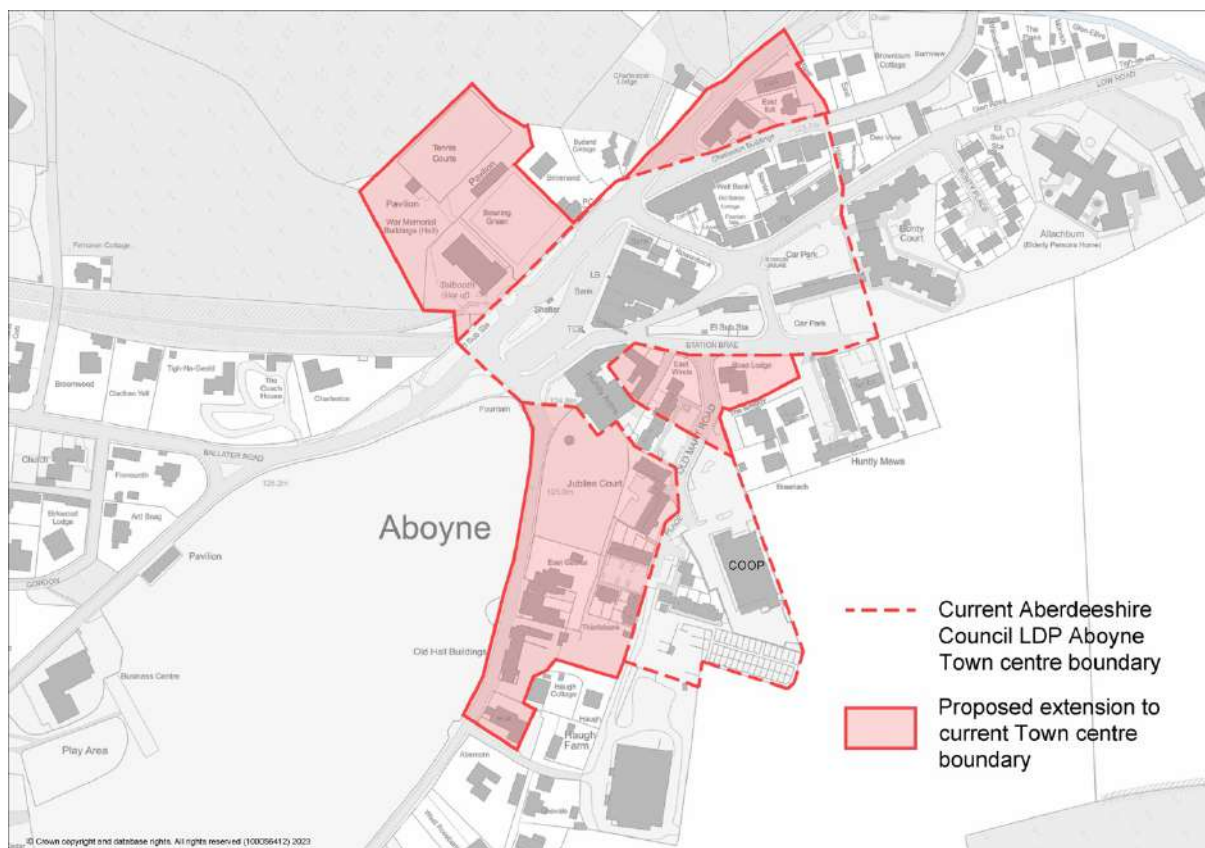
4. LDP SETTLEMENT MAP

In support of the Initiatives, we propose that the following changes should be made to the Aboyne Settlement Map in the next iteration of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

4.1. Aboyne Town Centre boundary

The following changes are proposed to the town centre map for Aboyne.

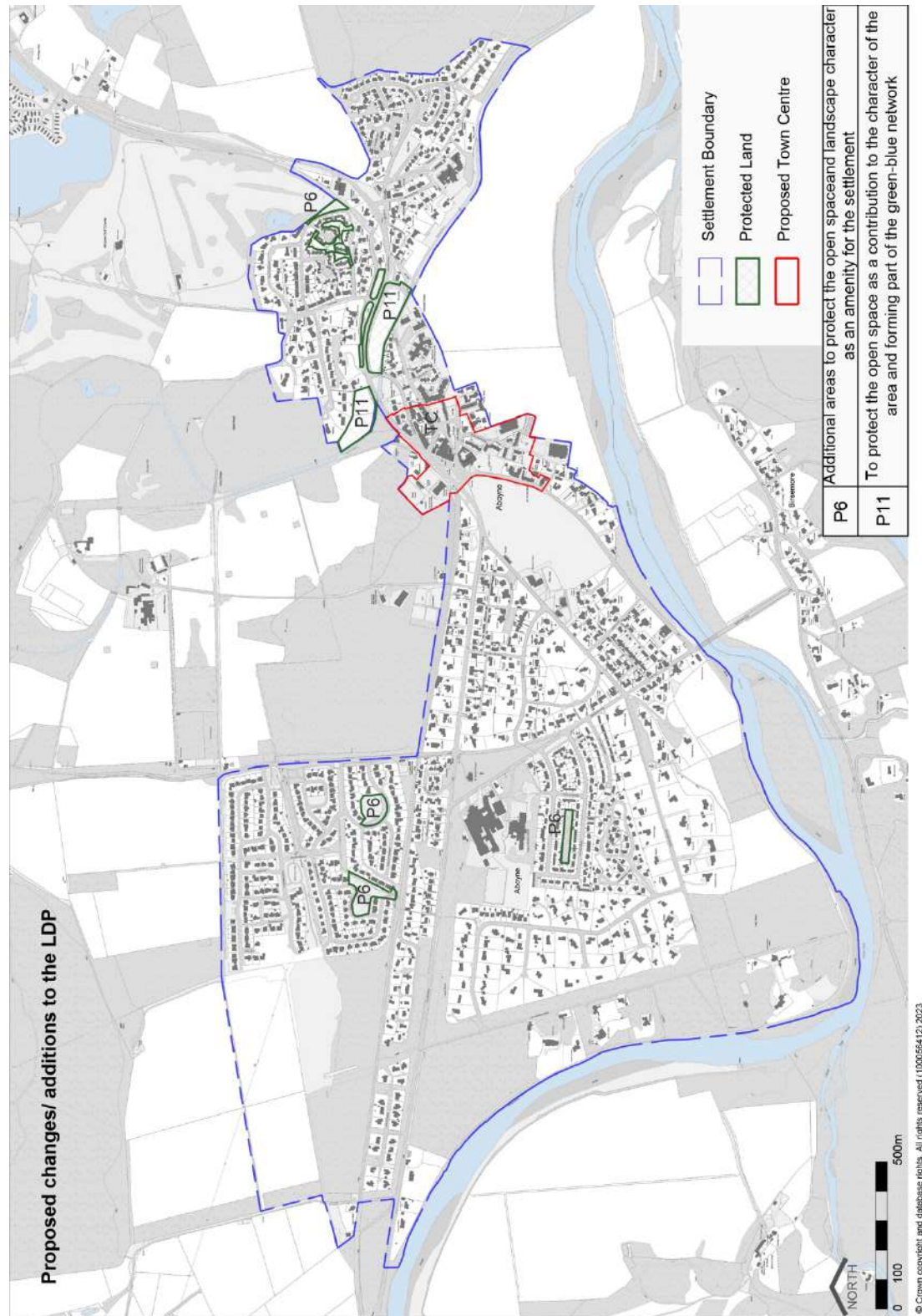
Figure 16: Proposed changes to the current Town Centre boundary of Aboyne



4.2. Other proposed changes

The following changes are proposed to the Settlement Map for Aboyne in the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

Figure 17: Proposed changes to the Settlement Map for Aboyne



5. NEXT STEPS

5.1. Initial actions

To be effective as a Local Place Plan, this plan must be submitted to and registered by Aberdeenshire Council. Mid Deeside Community Council will submit this plan for registration by early 2025 following consultation with our community.

To be effective as a Community Action Plan, our community must take positive action to implement these Initiatives and Proposals. The Local Place Plan team of Mid Deeside Community Council will work with Aboyne residents, businesses and stakeholders throughout 2025 to organise meetings and form interest groups to take forward the Initiatives set out in the Roadmap. The Local Place Plan team will aim to have active interest groups in place by summer 2025. Key areas for progress in 2025 include:

- Re-establishing Aboyne Business Association (Initiative #16).
- Establishing the local governance forum (Initiative #21).
- Establishing strong communications channels between community stakeholders and with residents and visitors (Initiative #22).
- Organising regular community litter picks (Initiative #24, Proposal #24.1).
- Working with key stakeholders to make inroads into improving mobility (Section 3.2).

Additionally, our community will want to see significant progress being made by Aberdeenshire Council towards re-opening Aboyne Bridge (Initiative #1).

To assess the success of this plan, we must establish baselines prior to implementing this plan against which the outcomes can be measured. This work should be undertaken early following submission of this plan to Aberdeenshire Council.

5.2. Ongoing actions and review

This plan is owned by our community. It should be a living document which is regularly referred to and reviewed by our community. However, this plan should be formally reviewed and revised after 10 years.

5.3. “What-3-Things”

Early and visible signs of improvement will differentiate this plan, build confidence and mobilise the community to contribute and be part of the future evolution of the village.

We intend to ask community members “What-3-Things” they think could: deliver *visible* improvement in the village; be achieved relatively *quickly*; and be actioned with limited or modest *resource*. Such relatively simple actions will make a difference. A list will be generated and maintained and communicated physically on notice boards in the community and electronically on a community website (initially the Local Place Plan team’s website –

www.aboynelocalplaceplan.info) so that members of the community can continue to contribute their ideas and, importantly, offer to take action. This is already underway. A growing inventory of ideas has been generated and actions including wildflower planting and gate painting have already been implemented.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mid Deeside Community Council thanks the Aboyne and Mid Deeside community for their support and assistance with this plan, in particular:

- the Aberdeenshire Council Local Place Plan team;
- Our Place Scotland;
- our Ward 15 Councillors;
- our Marr Area Community Planning Officer;
- our local businesses and stakeholders who have supported the preparation of this plan and attended engagement sessions;
- the staff and pupils at Aboyne Academy and Aboyne Primary;
- everyone who completed the survey, attended an engagement session and took the time to share their thoughts;
- Aboyne Fountain (our local magazine) and Aboyne Local (Facebook);
- Volha Druhakova for her drawings and illustrations; and
- those who have contributed their significant time and effort to this plan as members of the Aboyne Local Place Plan Steering Group.



Appendix 1 – Initiatives and Proposals

The intended status of the Initiatives and Proposals as local place plan (LPP) and/or community action plan (CAP) proposals is indicated in the right-hand columns.

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
QUALITY OF PLACE				
1.	Reopen Aboyne Bridge	The critical infrastructure of Aboyne Bridge must be prioritised by Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government to re-open, or rebuild if necessary, as a matter of urgency.	X	
2.	Quality housing for all	2.1 Future housing development should provide a range and choice of tenure, type, size and cost, including specifically housing for key workers, first-time buyers, and local residents. It should also include a range of tenures, types and sizes of affordable housing as defined in NPF4, recognising the full range of local incomes when assessing affordability. (NPF4 defines “affordable housing” as “Good quality homes that are affordable to people on low incomes. This can include social rented, mid-market rented, shared-ownership, shared-equity, housing sold at discount (including plots for self-build), self-build plots and low cost housing without subsidy.”)	X	
		2.2 All new housing should ensure that the infrastructure and services needed by the people who will live in them and use the village are in place. The potential for an additional access road to the A93 serving any further housing development to the west should be investigated.	X	
		2.3 Any new major housing development out with the current settlement boundary will not be supported.	X	
3.	Sustain and improve local health, education and community facilities	3.1 Retain Aboyne’s status as a hub for Upper Deeside by retaining and investing in all current services and facilities, including health services and facilities, the Community Campus (including the Community Centre and Aboyne Schools) and locally-based emergency services, for use by the community now and for the foreseeable future.	X	
		3.2 Maintain and improve current community health facilities at Aboyne including Aboyne Health Centre, Aboyne Hospital and dental		

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
		surgery, and re-open a minor injuries unit at the Aboyne health campus.		
		<p>3.3 Ensure the continued provision of facilities at the Aboyne and Deeside Community Centre (including but not limited to Aboyne Library and Aboyne Swimming Pool) and improve their utilisation and accessibility, including:</p> <p>3.3a increasing opening hours so that services and facilities are available for use by the community every day, including evenings and weekends; and</p> <p>3.3b ensuring that the whole centre is fully accessible to all users.</p>	X	
		3.4 Invest in the maintenance, refurbishment, improvement of the Community Campus buildings and facilities, including the Community Centre and Aboyne Schools, so that they are fit for purpose now and into the future.	X	
4.	Create spaces for young people	Find suitable space(s) for and promote youth activities and opportunities in Aboyne.	X	X
5.	Explore community energy schemes	5.1 With a view to progressing one or more community-led renewable energy projects in Aboyne, engage with communities in Scotland and elsewhere which have implemented community energy projects to understand how they are managed, financed, regulated and operated, and gain further understanding of how communities can benefit.		X
		5.2 Work with local landowners and other stakeholders to identify suitable locations for community-led renewable energy projects.	X	X
		5.3 Identify suitable partners for projects and set up the appropriate legal structure to implement, manage and operate any such projects.		X
6.	Maintain and enhance paths and tracks	6.1 Review the core path network for accessibility, connectivity and safety. Upgrade where necessary. Update revised core path network in the Settlement Map for Aboyne in the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.	X	X
		6.2 Re-open the Deeside Way to the east of Aboyne for all active travel users.	X	X
		6.3 Explore additional links through the village and beyond.	X	X
		6.4 Continue to promote paths and tracks through maps, physical markers and signs,	X	X

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
		indicating the level of accessibility and difficulty of the route for users.		
7.	Mitigate flooding and river migration	Form a group to work with other local communities and organisations to determine the future impact of flooding and of the migration of the River Dee on Aboyne and propose actions in response. Priorities initially include protecting existing housing, high use/core paths, Aboyne Bridge and infrastructure.	X	X
8.	Enhance nature and protect open space	<p>8.1 In the next Local Development Plan protect the areas shown on Figure 17: Proposed changes to the Settlement Map for Aboyne for the following purposes:</p> <p>8.1a to protect the open space as a contribution to the character of the area and forming part of the green-blue network; and</p> <p>8.1b include in Protected Area P6 which protects the open space as an amenity for the settlement.</p>	X	
		8.2 Support planting native trees and planting for biodiversity on public and private land.	X	
		8.3 Deliver a community garden and/or community park in the centre of Aboyne.	X	X
		8.4 Protect and retain the allotments at Aboyne Police Station as a community asset.	X	
		8.5 Explore how all new development could deliver biodiversity net gain.	X	
9.	Public toilets	9.1 Improve the maintenance and opening hours of the existing public toilets.		X
		9.2 Provide additional public toilets in one or more locations around the village.	X	X
BETTER MOBILITY				
10.	Improve public transport	<p>10.1 Improve public transport by:</p> <p>10.1a improving and maintaining the quality, reliability and accessibility of buses with all buses being barrier free;</p> <p>10.1b increasing the frequency of services;</p> <p>10.1c create new routes to surrounding villages;</p> <p>10.1d implementing express services to and from Aberdeen in peak periods; and</p> <p>10.1e reducing the cost to users of travelling on public transport.</p>		X

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
		10.2 Investigate potential for additional bus shelters with seating and live digital information at all stops.	X	X
		10.3 Promote MDCT's dial-a-ride and volunteer hospital transfer service (A2B).		X
11.	Improve parking	<p>11.1 Improve the safety of parking in key locations. Consider the use of visual prompts and creative solutions to promote safe and considerate parking. Key locations include: Charlestown Road; Old Ballater Road; Station Brae; Aboyne Schools and Community Centre; and Aboyne Health Centre.</p> <p>11.2 Review locations of disabled parking spaces in Aboyne to increase accessibility for users with additional needs.</p>	X	X
12.	Resolve traffic speeding issues	12.1 Implement a 20 mph speed limit throughout Aboyne, including portions of the A93 at the village centre and in the vicinity of the Community Campus.	X	X
		12.2 Investigate options for visual prompts to encourage people to stick to speed limits including (without limitation) flashing signs, visual reminders and gateways at the entrances to the village.	X	X
		12.3 Investigate the need for additional pedestrian crossing on the A93 at the east of the village.		
13.	Improve pavements and roads	<p>13.1 Improve the quality and maintenance of Aboyne's pavements relation to:</p> <p>13.1a accessibility (eg dropped kerbs at appropriate places);</p> <p>13.1b foliage overgrowth; and</p> <p>13.1c surface quality,</p> <p>so that they are safe to use and barrier free for all users.</p>	X	X
		13.2 Publish a map of pavements in Aboyne that are pedestrian and wheeler friendly.		
14.	Change mobility habits	14.1 Promote the Aberdeenshire Council car share app.		X
		14.2 Establish a safe network through the village for cyclists, improving cycle lanes where possible and promote the network on a publicly available map.	X	X

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
		14.3 Improve facilities for cyclists around Aboyne, including additional bike racks and bike stations at key areas such as Station Square, the Community Centre and to the east of the village.	X	X
		14.4 Establish "Mobility Islands" at key points in Aboyne that provide community choice and access to shared light mobility, together with complementary place-making services.	X	X
		14.5 Provide EV charging at the Upper Square.	X	X
15.	Improve inter-village travel	Together with Aberdeenshire Council, implement a Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) demonstrator involving Aboyne as a central community in Deeside.	X	X
THRIVING ECONOMY				
16.	Re-establish Aboyne Business Association	Re-establish an active, collaborative and productive Business Association to work collectively to encourage, support and promote a wide range of economic sectors in and around Aboyne, starting with the retail network and expanding to a broader range of businesses.		X
17.	Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub	17.1 Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub to enable business and social enterprises, entrepreneurs and start-ups through advice, services, contacts, information and technology to support development and innovation with the potential to offer common enabling services.	X	X
		17.2 Seek business "mentors/angels" through working with the significant breadth of skills and experience available in our community to offer support to local businesses.		X
		17.3 Take steps to attract investors to Aboyne businesses, provide investment advice and routes for businesses, including but not limited to support from Visit Aberdeenshire and Aberdeenshire Council's economic development team.		X
18.	Seek ways to increase local youth employment	Support the creation and successful operation of local businesses which offer employment opportunities in the locality for young people through the Business Support and Innovation Hub (see Initiative #17 – Create a Business Support and Innovation Hub).		
19.	Protect and exploit Aboyne's assets	19.1 Capture and manage Aboyne's iconic destinations as a portfolio that represents		X

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
		Aboyne's core offer to residents and visitors, including:		
		19.1a improving and maintaining the usage, recognition, quality, fabric and maintenance of Aboyne's iconic destinations; and		X
		19.1b marketing Aboyne's natural environment, including its fantastic paths and trails network, to bring community-wide economic benefits as a renowned outdoor centre.		X
		19.2 Increase the diversity of events on Charlestown Green which attract visitors to Aboyne.		X
		19.3 Communicate Aboyne's offer through signage which lists Aboyne's attractions and distinctive village gateways at each entrance to Aboyne.	X	X
		19.4 Work with Aberdeenshire Council to ensure that decisions regarding the continued use, reuse and adaptation of buildings which are listed or are in or near Aboyne Conservation Area, particularly those whose long-term future is uncertain, are made pragmatically, complying with the requirements of NPF4 ⁸ whilst ensuring that such buildings can contribute to Aboyne being an economically successful place.	X	
20.	Enhance Aboyne Town Centre	20.1 Update the town centre boundary as shown at Figure 16: Proposed changes to the current Town Centre boundary of Aboyne to include areas which host existing retail and community facilities which contribute to the vitality and viability of Aboyne town centre.	X	
		20.2 Revitalise Aboyne town centre including but not limited to: 20.2a reopening the Huntly Arms Hotel as a thriving commercial enterprise; and 20.2b exploring ways to adapt the built environment and/or use lighting, planting and/or decoration to draw attention to Aboyne's town centre businesses particularly at Station Square,	X	X

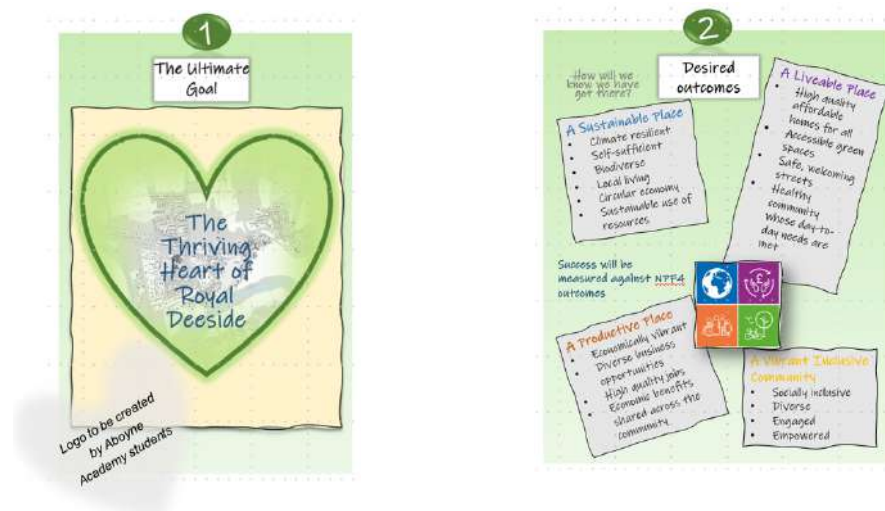
⁸ NPF4 refers Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change Guidance (<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment/>) which includes guidance on the Use and Adaptation of Existing Buildings (<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=8ab1f9c9-521a-435e-a3f2-aa240119b5e1>)

Initiative		Proposal	LPP	CAP
		along Old Ballater Road and on Charlestown Road.		
VIBRANT COMMUNITY				
21.	Local governance – working together	21.1 Establish a forum for all businesses and voluntary organisations to share experience and stimulate better co-ordination and collaboration.		X
		21.2 Identify and list potential high visibility improvements that don't need permissions and would require minimal resources, time, or money to enact. Aim to match these opportunities with capable volunteers that could make the improvement within 2025.		X
22.	Improve communications	22.1 Establish a community hub at a physical location in the village where people can find information about local businesses, services, community groups, activities and events. Managed by, preferably, a paid part-time employee. Ideally, community groups will be able to use office services and facilities.	X	X
		22.2 Establish an up-to-date virtual presence (social media, website) to be maintained by the community hub manager.		X
23.	Encourage volunteering	Using the community hub and its social media outlets (see Initiative #22 – Improve Communications), identify and publicise the opportunities to get involved in community activities that will make a positive contribution to the quality of life in Aboyne.		X
24.	Cultivate pride in place	24.1 Organise regular community-wide litter picks.		X
		24.2 Improve provision and maintenance of litter bins.	X	X
		24.3 Investigate the use of public art when implementing Initiative #12 – Resolve Traffic Speeding Issues (Proposal #12.2), Initiative #19 – Protect and Exploit Aboyne's Assets (Proposal #19.3) and Initiative #20 – Enhancing Aboyne Town Centre (Proposal #20.2).	X	X

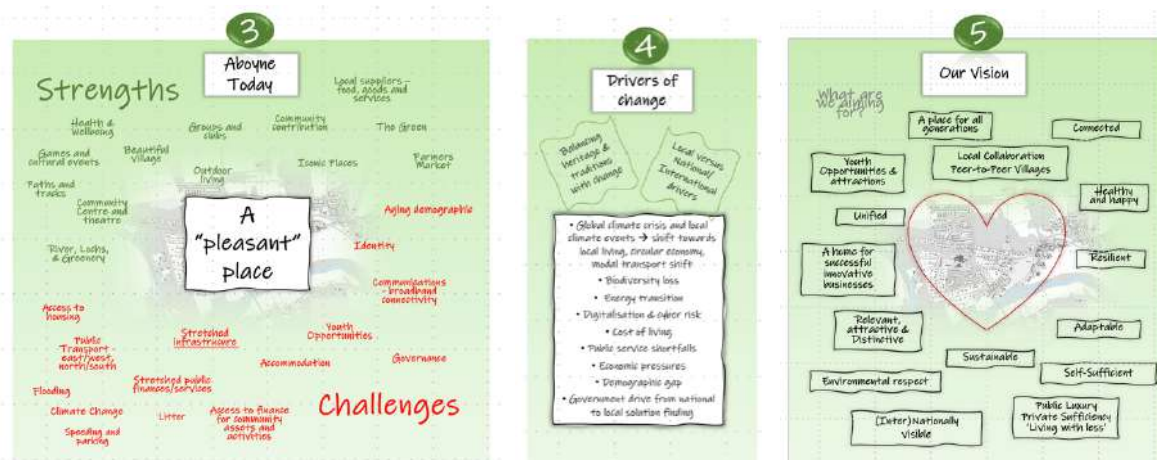
Appendix 2 – Strategic Framework

The following is an overview of the Strategic Framework as set out in Section 2 (Vision and Framework).

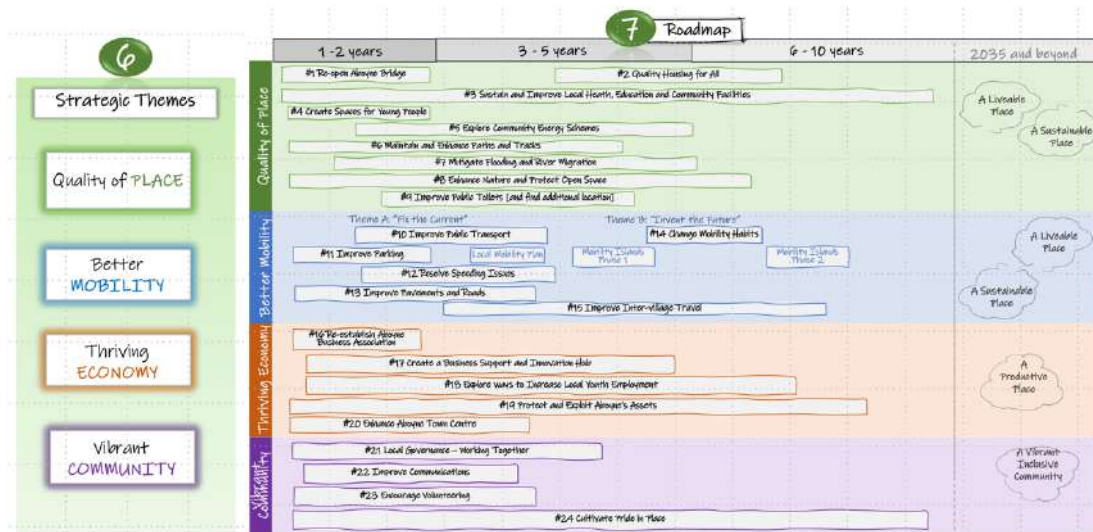
The first step in the Strategic Framework is to look to the Ultimate Goal of this plan, which is that Aboyne should be the Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside (Section 2.1, Step 1 of the Framework). We will know when this goal has been reached because the Desired Outcomes (Section 2.1, Step 2 of the Framework) will have been measurably achieved. These outcomes will be measured against national planning policy for sustainable, liveable and productive places (see Appendix 4 – National and local policy).



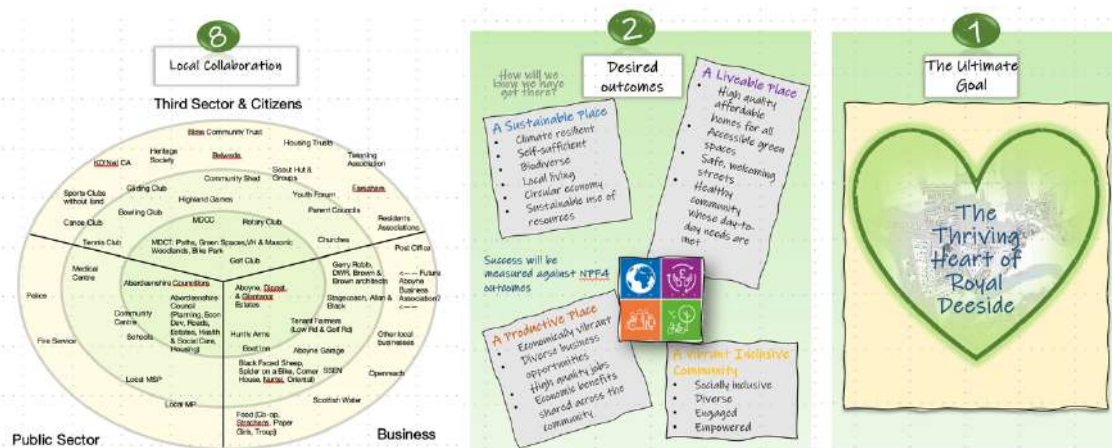
To work out what needs to be done to achieve the Desired Outcomes, we must consider where we are starting from – Aboyne Today (Section 2.2, Step 3 of the Framework) – against the backdrop of *why* our community needs to take positive action – the Drivers for Change (Section 2.3, Step 4 of the Framework) – in order to achieve Our Vision for Aboyne (Section 2.4, Step 5 of the Framework), namely what we want Aboyne to look and feel like as the Thriving Heart of Royal Deeside.



To achieve this, we have identified four Strategic Themes (Step 6 of the Framework) within which interdependent and related Initiatives and Proposals form a Roadmap to success (Section 2.5, Step 7 of the Framework).



By working together (Section 2.6, Step 8 of the Framework) we will be able to achieve the Desired Outcomes (Section 2.1, Step 2 of the Framework) and measure when we have reached our Ultimate Goal (back to Section 2.1, Step 1 of the Framework).

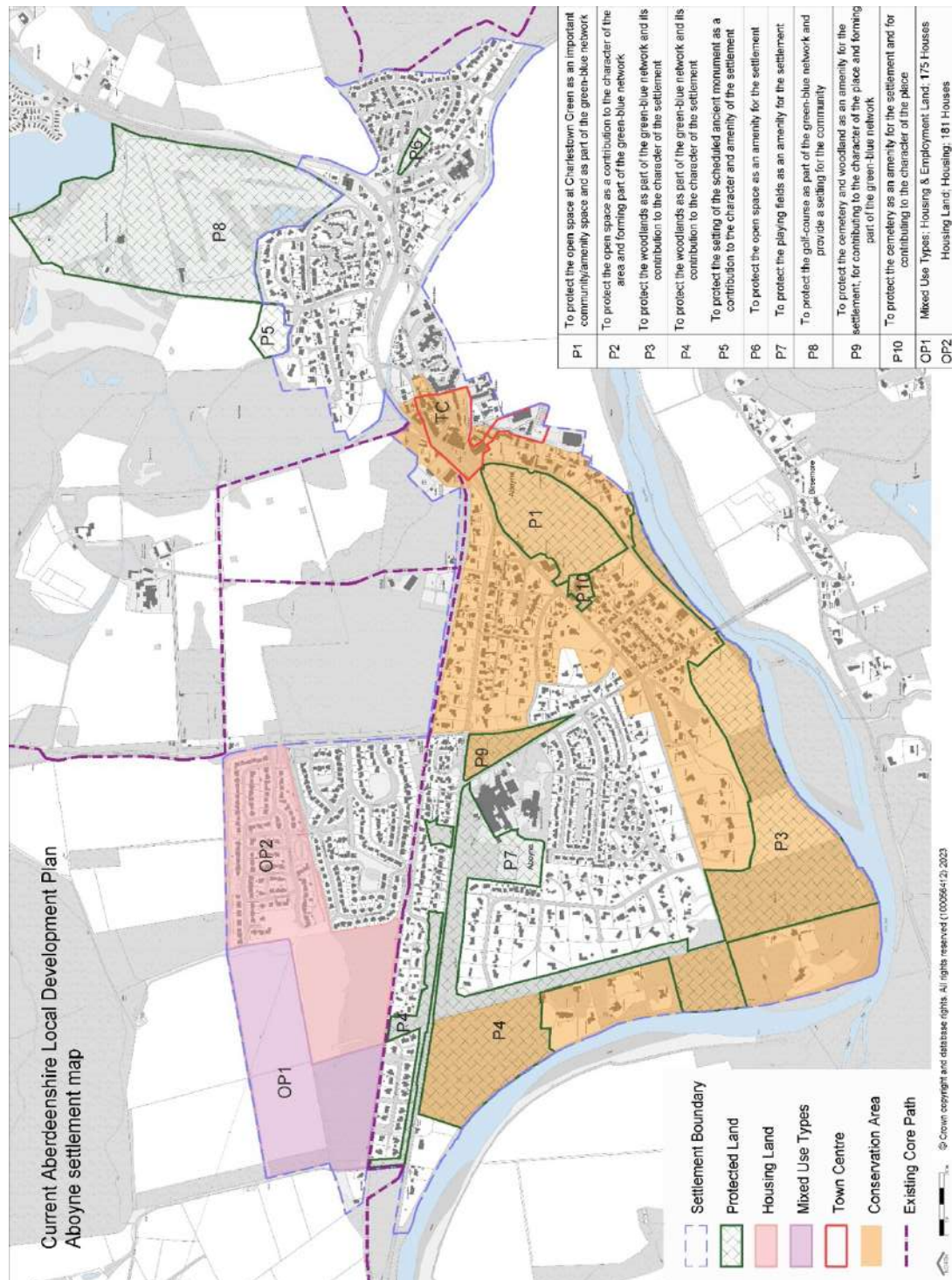


Here is what the Strategic Framework looks like when it is all put together - you may see this around the village and in other materials going forward.



Appendix 3 – Current Aboyne Settlement Plan (2023 LDP)

Figure 18: Current Aboyne Settlement Map (2023 LDP)



Appendix 4 – National and local policy

As required by Scottish government legislation, policy and guidance, this plan has been prepared in line with national planning policy (the **National Planning Framework 4** (NPF4)⁹) and local planning policy (the **Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023** (2023 LDP)¹⁰. NPF4 looks to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹¹.

NPF4 aims for places to be **Sustainable**, **Liveable** and **Productive**:

Sustainable Place

- A "Sustainable Place" is a community that is environmentally friendly, economically productive and socially inclusive. It focuses on reducing carbon emissions, especially through transition from oil to active transport, adapting to climate change, and enhancing biodiversity while supporting economic growth and providing affordable housing and accessible greenspaces.

Liveable Place

- A "Liveable Place" is a community designed to enhance quality of life by providing high-quality, affordable homes, accessible greenspaces, and safe, welcoming streets. These places support health and well-being, reflect diverse cultures, and ensure that everyone has access to local amenities and opportunities, fostering inclusive and vibrant communities.

Productive Place

- A "Productive Place" is a community that fosters economic growth and innovation while ensuring environmental sustainability and social equity. These places support diverse business opportunities, create high-quality jobs, and promote skills development. They also focus on sustainable use of resources, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring that economic benefits are shared widely across the community.

Vibrant Inclusive Community

- The heart of a place is its people. We want everyone within the wider Aboyne community to be happy, fulfilled individuals and empowered to actively participate.



⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

¹⁰ <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/plans-and-policies/ldp-2023>

¹¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

NPF4 also identifies particular **priorities** for North East Scotland where Aboyne is located. These are as follows (listed by theme):

Green spaces	Transport	Local living	Town centre regeneration	Network of places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Create multi-functional blue and green networks. ○Improve green spaces in and around settlements. ○Access to good quality open space and opportunities for social food growing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Encourage sustainable travel options. ○Promote low emissions vehicles, active travel and public transport connectivity. ○Create connected, walkable, liveable and thriving places. ○Connect with the national long-distance cycling and walking network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Community-led climate action to help provide locally-driven solutions. ○Focus on “local living” to help address high levels of car ownership and respond to the area’s dispersed settlement pattern. ○More compact growth through better use of brownfield sites and increased density. ○Local access to the wider range of facilities, services and amenities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Help communities adapt to current challenges and future change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Design social and community infrastructure as a “network of places” with different settlements working in clusters.



Appendix 5 – Aboyne in 2024

Some interesting statistics

Population, Age Structure & Male/Female Split (Census 2022)

- The population of Aboyne in 2022 was 2,910 and the village has slowly been increasing over recent years. This is split almost equally between males and females (1,495 against 1,441). There are generally more males in each age cohort up to the age of 30 and thereafter more females.

Household Size (Census 2022)

- There are 1,324 households within the village, with 1 and 2 persons households (33.8% & 36.0%) being the most common. Households with 3 and 4 persons account for 12.5% and 13.3% of all households.

Employment (Aberdeenshire Council Business Register & Employment Survey 2021)

- The main employment sectors within the village are Education (23%), Health (18%), Construction (15%), Retail (12%) and Professional, Scientific and Technical (10%). This would suggest a reliance to some degree on public sector employment. In comparison, across Aberdeenshire Manufacturing is the largest sector (13.8%).

Unemployment (2022, Nomis)

- In Aboyne (2022, Nomis), unemployment in the 16 – 24 years age group is 1.1%, which is 0.8% lower than the Aberdeenshire total of 1.9%.

Household Income (2022, CACI)

- Average household income in 2022 in Aboyne was £42,370 which is higher than Aberdeenshire at £40,007, but almost 10% less than Banchory at £46,689.

New housing (2021, Aberdeenshire Council Housing Land Audit)

- Over the 10-year period 2011 to 2021, house completions averaged 16 completions per year for both private and affordable housing, but excluding sites of 4 units or less. Based on housebuilders forecasts, completions are predicted to rise over the next few years to peak at 38 and then fall back to 25.

Average House Prices (2021 Register of Scotland)

- The average house price in Aboyne is £304,261 compared to an Aberdeenshire figure of £222,671 and a Banchory average of £277,411.

Value of Housing Stock (Council Tax Band, Aberdeenshire Council)

- A review of the Council Tax Bands A to H, shows that Aboyne 2 has notable differences at the bottom and top of the Bands, when compared to Aberdeenshire. There is very few lower value properties in Band A (8% vs 17%) and this is more notable in Band G (31% vs 9%).

Aboyne's sphere of influence

Birsemore

The Aboyne 2023 LDP settlement boundary does not include Birsemore which is located over Aboyne Bridge. Birsemore also falls within different community council and ward boundaries to Aboyne. However, residents of both Aboyne and Birsemore view Birsemore as an integral part of the Aboyne community.

Mid Deeside

Aboyne also serves as an important hub for other communities within the Mid Deeside Community Council area, including Glen Tanar, Dinnet and Kincardine O'Neil.

Upper Deeside

Owing to its status as an Academy town and as host to a wide range of essential services and facilities, Aboyne's zone of influence also extends beyond the Mid Deeside area to other communities locally (such as Tarland and Logie Coldstone) and as far away as Braemar.

Geography

Aboyne is sited on the A93 approximately 30 miles west of Aberdeen and east of Braemar. It is one of the key settlements in the River Dee valley.

Charlestown Green is the central focus of the village, a large open space which is host to events such as the annual Highland Games and bonfire night, sports pitches, a playpark and picnic benches. It is also where the air ambulance lands.

Immediately to the east of the Green is Aboyne Town Centre. Shops and small businesses are located in the Upper Square on the A93, down in Station Square, along the Old Ballater Road and on Charlestown Road adjacent to the Green. The local supermarket (the Co-op) is at the Old Mart down behind the currently derelict Huntly Arms Hotel.

To the west of the village is a community campus with playing fields, hosting both Aboyne Primary and Aboyne Academy schools and the Aboyne and Deeside Community Centre.

History and population

Whilst Aboyne's origins are in agriculture, it saw expansion due to tourism in the Victorian era as Deeside increased in popularity due to the proximity of the Royal Family at Balmoral. Logging and timber has been a significant employer, but as those sources of employment declined, the rapid development of North Sea oil and gas in the 1970s saw sustained growth in the village from families who worked in the energy industry but who wished to live a more rural life. Many families from other parts of Scotland, the UK or indeed abroad moved to the north east of Scotland to work in oil and gas, made Aboyne their home and in many cases have never left. This has contributed to the ageing of Aboyne's population, and uncertainties surrounding Aberdeen's role in the energy transition and its ongoing role as significant employment market means that younger families have not moved to the village.

Survey data suggests that Aboyne's population is generally content with life, is healthy, enjoys outdoor living and has a good quality of life with higher than average income levels. There are high levels of voluntary contribution to village life, although at times there has been a lack of co-ordination of these voluntary activities. The demographic profile of the village is disproportionately balanced towards older people, and there is a gap from school leavers to mid to late 30s. This reinforces the concerns expressed that there are insufficient opportunities for youth, so many leave once they have finished education. This is exacerbated by higher than average house prices for the north east of Scotland, which presents a barrier for those in the early stage of their careers or wishing to start a family.

Services and facilities

Leisure Accommodation

Aboyne was once served by several hotels, all of which have now closed except The Boat Inn. This includes the historic and prominent Huntly Arms Hotel in the town centre, which has been derelict for some years, and the Lodge on the Loch Spa Retreat which recently closed due to retirement. Remaining tourist accommodation in the village is in the form of Lys-Na-Greyne B&B, private rentals or Aboyne Loch Caravan Park.

Residential Accommodation

Aboyne has a number of distinct residential areas, including to the north and west of the Green with older houses in a conservation area stretching along the A93 and nearby streets which were developed during the Victorian and early Edwardian eras, the Formaston Park and Bellwood developments to the east of the village, the late 20th century Barclay Park development which is in the space between the community campus and Rhu Na Haven Road to the west of the centre, and the more recently developed Darroch Wood, Charlton Park, Kemsley Green and Castle Park at the western edge of the village. Although these areas saw development at different times, they are sensitive to the natural surroundings, benefiting from landscaping and planting or retention of trees.

Facilities and Culture

For a village of its size and location, Aboyne is blessed with a wide range of leisure and cultural offerings. The community campus has a swimming pool, gym and a theatre with cinema facilities. The health campus, with surgery and community hospital are to the east of the village. There is also a dentist.

Aboyne also has a number of halls which are for the benefit and use of the community, including the theatre in the Aboyne and Deeside Community Centre, the Victory Hall, the Hall on the Green (the Old Kirk or Masonic Hall) on Charlestown Road and the Scout Hut on the A93.

Other leisure facilities include a tennis club, with courts available for both members and the public, a bowling club and a golf course located near to Aboyne Loch to the east of the village.

Aboyne's location also naturally provides outdoor leisure opportunities, with hillwalking, mountain biking and canoeing in or immediately adjacent to the village and a gliding club outside the western edge of the village.

Regular cultural events include Art Aboyne, an exhibition by local artists staged in the Victory Hall each summer, and the Aboyne and Deeside Festival, which stages a wide range of music, drama, literary and other events every summer in a number of venues in and around the village.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service retains a station in the village and a Police Station, albeit not permanently manned, is located on the Green. The Aberdeenshire Council office and Scottish Ambulance Service station, however, are both now closed.

Aboyne has a number of churches, including St. Margaret's Roman Catholic church, St. Thomas' Episcopal church and the Aboyne-Dinnet Church of Scotland. Other facilities include allotments in the garden of the Police Station, a care home, sheltered housing, children's playgrounds on the Green and in the Bellwood residential area, a bike park in Bellwood forest, a garage and petrol station, three solicitors' offices, recycling banks and a summer garden waste collection facility, and the recently developed "Community Shed" in Castle Woods.

Local economy

Five sectors represent 80% of the local economy: education (23%), health (18%), construction (15%), retail (12%), and professional services (10%). The first two of these are public services that support the village and the surrounding area, and the third has been bolstered by more recent house building activities. This is more concentrated and public service biased than the Aberdeenshire average, and opportunities to diversify the economy across sectors and segments would be welcome.

Although the village has lost many of its smaller, predominantly retail, businesses over recent decades, it still offers a good diversity of services despite pressure to stem the flow away from those that no longer buy local. Retail offerings include a newsagent, a jeweller, four cafes, a

Chinese takeaway, an Indian restaurant, a butcher, a Post Office, a general store, a refill store, a number of hairdressers, a charity shop and an estate agent. Until recently there were also two banks, but both have now closed. The Boat Inn offers accommodation, dining and a typical pub environment.

How the village operates

Apart from Aberdeenshire Council and elected council and parliamentary representative initiatives, most village wide activity and projects are co-ordinated by community led volunteer groups, for example Mid Deeside Community Council, Mid Deeside Community Trust, the Rotary, the Community Shed and the Aboyne and Deeside Festival. These all rely on the unpaid time and commitment of members of the public, who often have to assume roles which carry significant responsibility, often as charity trustees.

Information about the activities of these groups is published in the Aboyne Fountain magazine, on the community noticeboard in Upper Square and on social media, especially the Aboyne Local group on Facebook.

The continued viability of this community led engagement model given the aging population of the village is in question. Whilst those in the early years of retirement have the time and experience to make a material contribution to village life, the demographics of the village suggest there will be a shortage of similar people in the future to join the community groups that currently achieve so much for the village.



Appendix 6 – Preparing this plan

Process

Having agreed that Aboyne's 2018 CAP should be replaced by a Local Place Plan, Mid Deeside Community Council followed the draft guidance¹² prepared by Our Place Scotland to guide work on the plan.

LPP Steering Group

In early 2023 Mid Deeside Community Council called a meeting with community groups and local stakeholders to bring together a steering group. Several community groups present at the meeting, including local residents' associations, sports clubs, the local Rotary club and Men's Shed, gave their support to the Local Place Plan work.

Initial steps

Throughout summer 2023, the steering group raised community awareness of Local Place Plans through the Local Place Plan website – www.aboynelocalplaceplan.info – as well as through posters, social media posts and articles in Aboyne's local magazine (the "Aboyne Fountain"). The team attended the July 2023 Community Day at the Victory Hall and Aboyne Farmer's Markets in August and September 2023. This was followed by a community survey in autumn 2023.



Autumn 2023 Survey

The autumn 2023 survey was based on Our Place Scotland's widely respected Place Standard Tool¹³. We made the survey available online so that everyone who lives in the area, works in Aboyne, goes to school here or visits could take part. We also converted the survey into a four-sided A4 paper version which we hand-delivered to 1,500 homes within Aboyne village and the community of Birsemore immediately over Aboyne Bridge. Paper copies were also available for collection in businesses around Aboyne where completed surveys could also be dropped off¹⁴. Staff at Allachburn Care Home completed surveys with residents. A separate

¹² <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/media/2236/draft-how-to-guide-pdf-format.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.ourplace.scot/tool>

¹⁴ At The Paper Girls, The Boat Inn, The Corner House, Strachans, Deeside Refill and the Co-op.

survey was created for Aboyne Academy students, working with Aboyne Academy's Head Teacher with the much-appreciated support of staff. Two drop-in sessions were also held where members of the public could come along to ask questions or obtain help with completing the survey¹⁵.



We asked all residents, businesses and members of clubs and interest groups in Aboyne to complete the survey. The survey was also open to people who visit and use the village, whether as tourists or residents of the surrounding communities.

We received over 400 survey responses. We have been particularly pleased that so many young people in Aboyne took part in the survey to have their voices heard about the future of their place.

Survey feedback and community engagement

From the close of the autumn survey to spring 2024 the Local Place Plan team analysed the survey results and produced a set of draft Initiatives and a draft Framework.

In late spring 2024, the team undertook community engagement on the draft Initiatives and Framework to assess whether the vision and actions outlined fairly represented the views and needs of the Aboyne community. This was achieved through targeted engagement sessions with local stakeholder groups and businesses, meetings with key local landowners, attending Aboyne Farmers Market in August 2024 and making the draft work available through the Aboyne Local Place Plan website. The team also worked with Aboyne Academy and Aboyne Primary to ensure that young people in Aboyne had a strong voice in the plan; much thanks is given to staff and pupils at both schools for engaging with the process so enthusiastically and making such significant contributions.

¹⁵ Two online sessions were offered but there was no take-up for these.



Consultation on the Draft LPP

The team circulated the draft plan to Ward 15 Aberdeenshire Councillors in November 2024, following which the community was consulted on the draft plan.

Community consultation on the draft plan opened on 16 November 2024 and closed on 1 December 2024. The consultation draft plan was available on the Aboyne Local Place website (<https://www.aboynelocalplaceplan.info>). A printed copy was placed in Aboyne Library for use by those without access to the internet. The consultation was advertised on the Aboyne Local Place Plan website, by posters around the village, and on social media (Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AboyneLocalPlacePlan>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/aboynelpp/>)). A Community Open Day was held from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday 23 November 2024 at the Victory Hall for members of the community to view the draft plan, ask questions of the Local Place Plan team and provide feedback.

The team received useful feedback on the consultation draft plan. There were many messages of support for the proposals set out in the plan, no objections, and some suggestions for minor changes or additions. These suggestions were worked into the final version of the plan.

Information notice

For the purposes of the Information Notice to be served pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021, the following Aberdeenshire Councillors and Community Councils will be formally notified:

- **Aberdeenshire Council Ward 15 Councillors:**

Aberdeenshire Council Ward 15 Councillors represent the area covered by this plan:

- Councillor Sarah Brown (cllr.s.brown@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- Councillor Anouk Kloppert (cllr.a.kloppert@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- Councillor Geva Blackett (cllr.g.blackett@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

- **Aberdeenshire Council Ward 16 Councillors:**

Aberdeenshire Council Ward 16 Councillors represent an area adjoining the area covered by this plan:

- Councillor Yi-Pei Chou Turvey (cllr.y.chouturvey@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- Councillor Eileen Durno (cllr.e.durno@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- Councillor Ann Ross (cllr.ann.ross@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

- **Community Councils:**

The following Community Councils adjoin the area covered by this plan:

- Birse and Ballogie Community Council (b2c2chair@icloud.com)
- Cromar Community Council (secretary@cromarcc.org.uk)
- Lumphanan Community Council (Lumphanan.cc.general@outlook.com)

The following Community Councils may be affected by/interested in the plan's proposals and have therefore also been consulted:

- Ballater and Crathie Community Council (bccsecretary@outlook.com)
- Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council (secretary@ibgcc.org)
- Banchory Community Council (banchorycommunity@hotmail.com)

Submission to Aberdeenshire Council

This plan is being submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for registration as a Local Place Plan in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 and Planning Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans.



