

**Aberlady Local Place Plan 2025-2035** 

#### **FOREWORD**

The invitation that came from East Lothian Council last year to create a Local Place Plan (LPP) was recognised as one that Aberlady Community Association should accept. It was seen as an opportunity for the community to articulate a shared vision and work towards a sustainable and inclusive future for residents in our "patch". Like many other communities post Covid-19 there has been a general desire to focus on issues of community and place.

In addition to the planning and development issues, we hope that the LPP can act as a springboard to developing a broader Community Action Plan, engaging more local residents in their community, attracting funding for key local projects and encouraging the development of a vibrant and resilient community.

Whatever land use changes and development proposals that may come forward as part of the new 2025-2035 East Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP2), we are keen to see retention of the special and unique qualities of our area as well as providing for facilities, opportunities and community needs that have emerged from engagement through our various consultations.

The successful implementation of the LPP will depend on the collective efforts of Aberlady's residents, community leaders, landowners and local authorities, all striving towards a common goal. We have taken the first steps and look forward to making progress together on some of the issues that have been identified as part of the community consultation process.

STEVEN POLWART

Chair, Aberlady Community Association

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Preparation of this Local Place Plan on behalf of the local community has been conducted by a small steering group within Aberlady Community Association facilitated by Gullane Area Community Council.

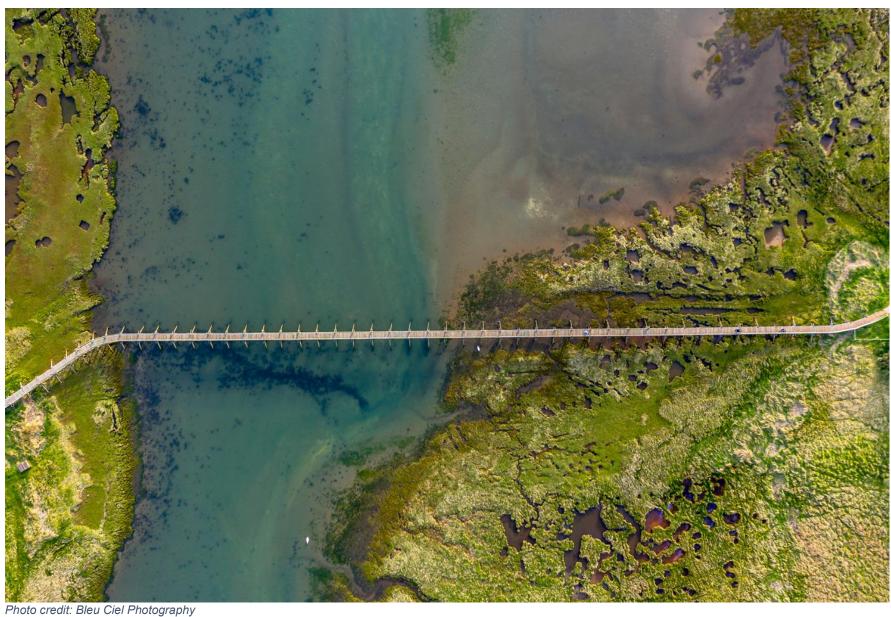
The steering group members are

- Steven Polwart, Chair ACA
- Sadia Ward, Committee member ACA
- Elizabeth Forsyth, Committee member ACA
- Naomi Sweeney, Aberlady resident
- Rebecca Hughes, Community Councillor GACC

We would like to acknowledge the work done by Ian Malcolm, Aberlady resident and secretary of the Aberlady Conservation and History Society, in conducting a community survey in 2018 and producing the "Aberlady – A Living Space" report for the Climate Friendly Aberlady Project. This document contains many of the priorities and suggestions which have been identified again in our more recent community engagement exercises.

Thanks to Tony Thomas of APT planning for initial discussions sharing his experience of planning matters in East Lothian and advice on community engagement for preparation of a Local Place Plan.

We are grateful to North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership for some financial support in preparing this Plan, and Gullane Area Community Council for facilitating access to the Parish Online tool for mapping. Most of all, thanks are due to the local people who have contributed to the plan's preparation and will hopefully take the next steps in preparing and following a Community Action Plan which will run in parallel with this Local Place Plan.



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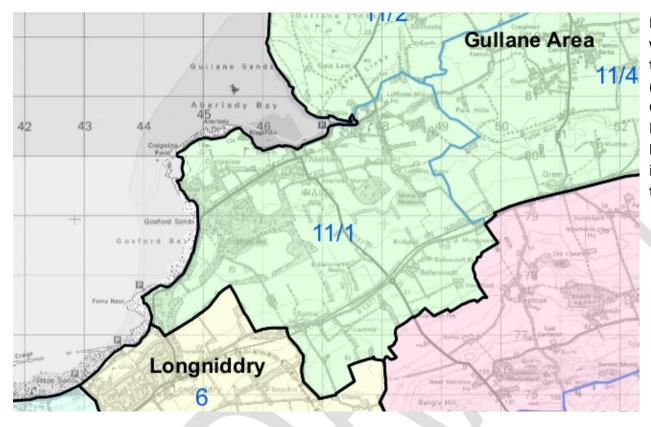
#### INTRODUCTION

Following the introduction of the Planning (Scotland) Act in 2019, communities have been given the opportunity to produce Local Place Plans. These plans allow the community's needs and aspirations to be taken into account in future development and use of land.

The Aberlady Local Place Plan has been developed as required by the Town & Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations that came into force on 22 January 2022 and produced by the relevant body: Aberlady Community Association in partnership with Gullane Area Community Council (GACC) over an eleven-month period since October 2023.

Aberlady Community Association (SCIO) is registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (SC053151) and the main purpose is "to advance community development in partnership with organisations the majority of which are in the voluntary sector to provide recreational facilities and organise recreational facilities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities and activities are primarily intended including, without limitation, through the use of its primary asset Aberlady Village Hall"

The subject area of the Aberlady LPP is that identified as 11/1 within the GACC area on the East Lothian map of Community Council areas 2012 and is broadly equivalent to the Scottish Census Civil Parish (1930) of Aberlady. In considering the extent of the whole area covered by the Gullane Area Community Council, it was felt that this was geographically diverse and each village had its own challenges and opportunities.



By selecting the sub-ward area which includes the settlements that rely on Aberlady for services (namely Ballencrieff, Craigielaw, Gosford, Spittal, Luffness, Myreton and Mungoswells) ACA has focused on the hyper-local issues and the unique position of the village.

Throughout its development the Aberlady LPP has drawn on a number of community consultations both through online questionnaires and in-person meetings and consultations since September 2023. These are summarised in the plan and further detail is given in Appendices I, II and III.

As a community we are very aware of the distinctive coastal setting and special environmental qualities of this part of the South coast of the Firth of Forth. The importance and relevance of these is discussed in detail further on. Balancing landscape protection and local development is clearly a major issue and it is hoped that the proposals in this plan will be taken into consideration and incorporated into the evolving LDP2.

The guidance we consulted included, but was not limited to:

**Scottish Government National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)** 

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

**East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018** 

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210547/planning and building standards/12242/local development plan

Regional Spatial Strategy for Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55c87967e4b05aa55020f656/t/63602a35c6b16e210f882198/1667246656415/iRSS+final+.pdf

East Lothian Council LDP2 and Local Place Plan guidance

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210547/planning and building standards/12726/ldp2 and local place plans

North Berwick Coastal Area Plan

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/24429/north\_berwick\_coastal\_area\_plan

**Planning Aid Scotland** 

https://www.pas.org.uk

**Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods** 

https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-planning-guidance-local-living-20-minute-neighbourhoods/

**Transport Scotland: National Transport Strategy 2** 

https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2/

East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment (undertaken by Play Scotland)

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/13879/play sufficiency assessment report - march 2024

### **CONTEXT**

#### General

Aberlady is a uniquely positioned coastal village, flanked on both sides by the private Gosford and Luffness estates and their designed landscapes, and surrounded by arable farmland belonging to them. Located 20 miles east of Edinburgh, it is steeped in history and rich in natural beauty. Established with Early Christian origins, it is home to the Anglian Cross, a symbol of its ancient past and connection to Iona and Lindisfarne. The village's protected natural anchorage made it a hub of cultural exchange and trade during its prosperous medieval period as the port for the county town of Haddington. In Edwardian times, the arrival of the railway station marked an influx of tourists, transforming Aberlady into a popular coastal destination.



Photo credit: Carole Bold

Renowned for its unique environmental features that contribute to its distinct character and ecological significance, the village is home to Aberlady Bay, the first Local Nature Reserve in the UK, established in 1952. This reserve spans approximately 1440 acres and includes a diverse range of habitats such as tidal mudflats, saltmarsh, sand dunes, scrub, and grassland, extending east towards Gullane links. It also encompasses some woodland areas and the small freshwater Marl Loch. The bay is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its rich biodiversity.

Aberlady benefits from its enviable position along East Lothian's coastline with easy access to the many championship golf courses in the immediate vicinity including Craigielaw, Kilspindie, Luffness and Gullane. The policies of the Gosford Estate

Photo credits: Sue Jardine



provide wonderful walks and a farm shop immediately to the west of the village with the Wemyss and March Estate adding to their events schedule throughout the year with a number of publicly accessible commercial events. Another major draw to the area is the headquarters of the Scottish Ornithological Society (SOC) and the unique opportunities for birding and the wider appeal of the Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve. A caravan site at the former railway station provides accommodation options for visitors looking to stay in Aberlady whilst exploring the wider East Lothian area.



Photo credit: Gillian Brydon



Photo credits: Sadia Ward

As a conservation village, Aberlady's architecture and layout reflect its past, with historic sites in the area and many buildings designated as listed due to their historical significance. There are also a number of scheduled monuments within the area including Luffness Friary which contains a knight's tomb in the remains of a medieval Carmelite convent.

Aberlady High Street is now largely residential, with Margiotta's being the only village shop, and the hospitality services provided by The Leddie, Old

Aberlady Inn, Grace of India and the Old Bakehouse Tea Room are options for residents and visitors. There is a mobile Post Office service once a week in the Village Hall and RBS visits





Photo credit: Cruden homes

In recent decades Aberlady has experienced significant change with the establishment of Craigielaw Golf Club, and two major residential developments to the south and west of the village which in the main have been integrated into the fabric of the village.



Photo credits: Sue Jardine



Aberlady's community is actively involved in maintaining the village's character and environment. Initiatives like 'Aberlady in Bloom' contribute to the village's aesthetic appeal and community spirit, reflecting the residents' pride in their home.



The Village Hall is used for a variety of activities but has the potential to offer more opportunities to get together for exercise, events and cultural activities thereby reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing.







Aberlady has three parks, located on The Pleasance, Luffness Court and in the small greenspace in the middle of the Cala development adjacent to The Mair. The latter is not maintained by East Lothian Council and is in a state of disrepair. The Pleasance Park has received new equipment funded by developer contributions from the Cruden Homes Meadowside development. A play assessment of Aberlady play parks was recently conducted by Play Scotland on behalf of East Lothian Council.



Photo credit: East Lothian Courier (Aberlady Gala 2022)

However, for a rural village we have limited dedicated greenspace for recreation, with the football pitch adjacent to the school the only space of size. This facility does have a changing room provision with power and mains toilet facilities, but is rarely used.



Photo credit: Sue Jardine

The greenspace of the Sea Green at the bay is located next to a busy section of road and is under-utilised.

New development must maintain the village's unique character whilst also meeting modern needs. There is also a requirement for infrastructure, education and amenities issues to be reviewed and addressed. There is grave concern about capacity shortfall at the waste water treatment facilities resulting in an excessive number of sewage discharges into Aberlady Bay over the last few years.



Photo credit: Robert Macneill

A village designed for pedestrians, horses and carts is now having to cope with local traffic and those passing through whilst exploring the coastal route.



Copyright: Aberlady Heritage

The community's involvement in planning matters is crucial, as it ensures that the voices of those most affected by changes are heard, fostering a collaborative environment for progress. With its commitment to maintaining the delicate balance between development and conservation, Aberlady can be a model for other communities navigating similar challenges.

### CONTEXT

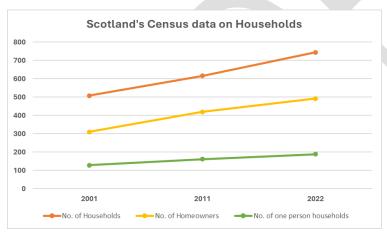
## **Population**



There has been an increase in the population since the last census with the completion of the Meadowside housing development at the west end of the village. The Scotland Census figures for 2022 show an increase in the number of households to 744 from the figure of 616 in 2011. The total population has increased from 1514 to 1761 with 1463 being 16 years old or older.

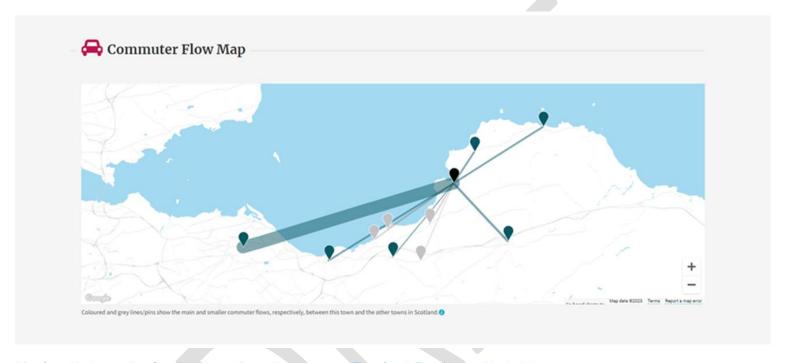
The population is varied with established families and newcomers but there has been a steady rise in the average age of the population and an increased number of retirees. This is consistent with national projections which show that

East Lothian is projected to have the 2nd highest percentage change in population size out of the 32 council areas in Scotland (2018-28) and proportionally more people age 65 and over live in the North Berwick Coastal ward than across East Lothian as a whole. Male and female life expectancies are significantly better than the Scottish average which may cause a further shift in the demographic towards the elderly.



Of the 744 households in our area, 492 own their home. The average house price in East Lothian is higher than the Scottish average and for a portion of the community e.g. public sector workers consequently less affordable. There is concern about property being acquired for use as second homes or holiday letting which further compromises the supply of housing available for those who wish to settle here.

Education service figures which take into account housing development show a 14.4% increase in P1 to S6 pupils for the North Berwick school cluster from 2020 to 2028. Both Aberlady Primary School and North Berwick High School have little capacity at present to cope with an increase in student numbers.



Map from Understanding Scottish Places (https://www.usp.scot/Town?mainTownName=Aberlady)

There is a mix of commuters to Edinburgh and those working locally although the local economy relies less on agriculture these days. There is a high proportion of people in professional employment and a high proportion of residents are educated to HNC level or above. Post Covid-19 Aberlady has seen an increase in those working from home. At the time of the 2022 census, 877 of the over-16's were in work and of these, 365 worked mainly at home. Those who commute to work rely largely on travel by car with only 107 of the remaining 512 using public transport, bicycle or walking to get to and from the workplace.

There is little in the way of designated active travel routes to support residents to access climate friendly travel options, with the village and wider coastal route not considered within the current local authority plans for investment. Despite these challenges

this stretch of coastline is also overlooked in Sustrans planned improvements. The public transport offering is limited to infrequent bus services. The main route between Edinburgh and North Berwick is regular, but slow for commuting. Access to other shopping centres and the community hospital in Haddington is limited to a very infrequent service provision.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Following East Lothian Council's initial announcement in late June 2023 about consultation work for the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), members of Aberlady Community Association recognized the opportunity for community aspirations to be reflected in a Local Place Plan.

A small steering group was established to consider how to take this forward and plan the next steps to secure input from interested members of the community. ACA was keen to encourage more residents to become involved in their local community and this has been one early step in widening participation. It was hoped that by establishing new links in the community for this exercise, the pool of residents contributing to *future* ACA activities would be broadened. Writing a plan would form a basis on



which to secure funding for further projects

An open event was held in the Village Hall on Saturday October 28<sup>th</sup> with activities to keep children occupied whilst their parents could contribute to the session.



Forty attendees started the ball rolling and there were 25 concrete suggestions by the end of the session.

The use of the validated Place Standard Tool was agreed and this was made available as an online survey (<a href="https://tinyurl.com/Aberlady-survey">https://tinyurl.com/Aberlady-survey</a>) with physical (printed) copies available on request. As well as social media posts and posters in the village, a postcard flyer was sent to all households in the sub-ward area that ACA covers.

The relationship between Community Action Plans and Local Place Plans was discussed and some initial thoughts on areas of interest were shared.





A further meeting took place on Sunday January 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss how to meet timescales for submission and take the community engagement work beyond the LPP.

A second public meeting took place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February to update the community about progress and encourage completion of the Community Survey.

An in-person session was conducted with pupils at Aberlady Primary School on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February to ensure that the voices of younger residents were heard.

Similarly, a request was made via the Head Teacher at North Berwick High School to identify pupils resident in the sub-ward area and they were supplied with the Young Persons version of the Place Standard Tool for completion on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Following receipt of the online and written responses (235), analysis of the numerical scores was undertaken with review of all the written comments. It was possible to identify key priorities and then separate the land use issues for the LPP from the areas of interest/concern to be taken forward as a separate Community Action Plan.

From the list of priorities and suggestions, a visual display was created and a second period of open consultation was conducted between June and September with a stand at the Aberlady Gala Day and a drop-in event at the Kirk Stables Hall. The boards were also displayed in the windows of the old Post Office which is now a private home as well as being made available via the ACA website.





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· cycle path to longifiedry Children normy or yearsely musis: clas to velope, almost dulling to now local freely woods a gotts When the feedback was collated, it revealed the need for some amendment of the development locations and also additional commentary on proposals where there was lack of consensus.

The differences in opinion e.g. on having a multi-use sports area seemed to be a reflection of perceived need for facilities from some residents with a counter argument from older residents who had not found this to be an issue for themselves on their families in the past. Similarly, some locations for 'development' were felt to be less desirable because of the immediate impact on those residing nearby and potential effects on traffic flows.

Some new proposals were also put forward by the community in Ballencrieff which have now been incorporated.

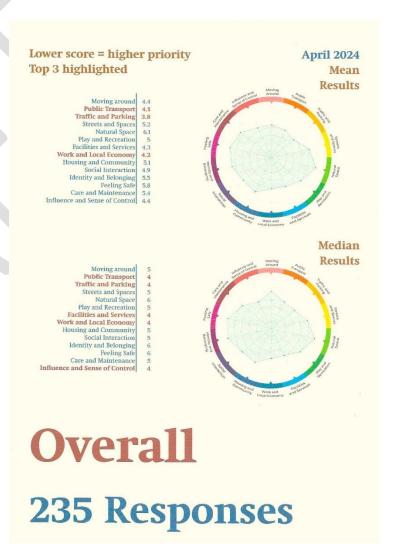
#### **COMMUNITY SURVEY ANALYSIS**

Analysis of the Place Standard tool responses overall identified the following as the highest priority areas (median results taken as they are more robust statistically and not skewed by outlier scores)

- Work and Employment
- Public Transport
- Traffic and Parking
- Facilities and Services
- Influence and Sense of Control

Within the other sections which were ranked as lower priority, responses also made reference to common themes which are discussed here.

Further detail on the range of responses as well as the results of the Primary School sessions can be found in Appendices I, II and III.



There is a great sense of pride in residents who live here and they value the unique position of the village with its landscape setting and historic core.

The major concern is the risk of losing all character and the village feel so protection of the fields, woods and open views is a high priority.



What's Good about Aberlady?



Photo credit: Bleu Ciel Photography

Ribbon development of the coast is mentioned as a worry and overwhelmingly the replies stated that there should be no more building. A moratorium for the duration of the next LDP (10 years) was suggested as an option to allow the infrastructure to catch up (transport, school capacity, waste water treatment).

Whilst making these points there was recognition of the lack of smaller and affordable houses such as low rent housing association properties for young renters e.g. public sector workers. The concern was that this type of housing is not seen as financially rewarding by developers and that too many large family homes would be built instead. The comparison to commuter counties such as Surrey and Kent in the South East of England was made and the risk of Aberlady becoming largely a dormitory village for Edinburgh but without the transport links to support this. The balance of green space with the built environment was appreciated but there was recognition of a lack of community open space and facilities for over 12's to get together and socialize.



What Could be Better in Aberlady?

Many respondents confirmed the concerns with large volumes of traffic coming through the village, speeding and absence of safe crossing points for pedestrians. Traffic calming is mentioned with a wider view that through traffic should be signposted away from the A198 at Longniddry Station and similarly at Gullane. More locally, there were more responses in favour of keeping The Mair/Kirk Road as a 'quiet road' or even pedestrianizing it. The volume of traffic has noticeably increased since the latest housing development and there is evidence of the route being used as a 'rat run' to avoid the congested High Street.

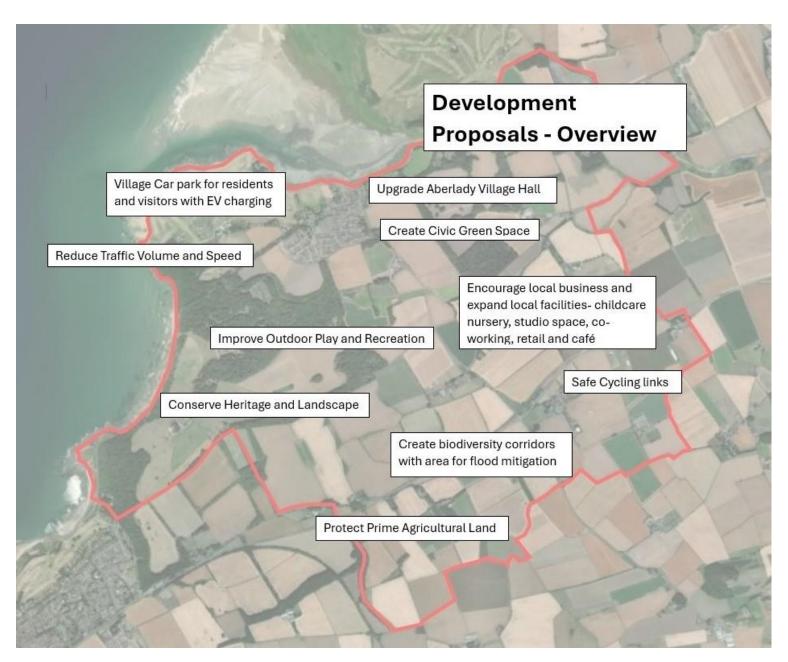
As well as improved public transport, there is widespread demand for safe active travel routes from Aberlady to Longniddry Station and between Ballencrieff and Aberlady.

An off-road cycle path via Gosford Estate is a suggested option for the former but also, more radically, the potential to make the A198 from Longniddry a one-way route only and then utilize half the carriageway for walkers and cyclists (such schemes exist elsewhere).

Shared, well surfaced paths for walkers, wheelchair users and cyclists are mentioned in the local village area too with places to stop and rest on the John Muir Way.

As it ranks as a high priority area, mention must be made of the section on Influence and Sense of Control. The theme that emerges is a need to improve communication and to seek local views. As one respondent stated "Encourage participation – surveys like this are critical". However, a large number of comments question the weight given to local views in the planning process and whether East Lothian Council attaches significant value to the results of community consultations it conducts. At a higher level, there is also mention made of Scottish Government policy subsequently overriding the local decisions.

By conducting this community engagement exercise and submitting a Local Place Plan to East Lothian Council for registration, Aberlady Community Association is hoping to redress this perceived imbalance and hopes that the voice of the local community will be heard and acknowledged.



# **Summary of Development Proposals**

## **Natural Environment and Landscape**

- Retention and minor expansion of current protective policies/designations in LDP SPA, CAT, Listed Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Conservation Area
- Increased tree planting with creation of woodland belts and field boundaries
- No significant development on prime agricultural land
- Consideration of creation of public access amenity area with capacity for flood mitigation to east of Aberlady village settlement

## **Housing and Community Facilities**

- No new housing development for the duration of LDP2 but smaller builds adding to settlement at Ballencrieff may be considered
- Any planned development (residential or commercial) should follow principles of respectful traditional or contemporary architecture to produce high-quality, energy efficient buildings
- Support for community heat/power systems at Ballencrieff
- Improved digital infrastructure
- Refurbishment of Aberlady Village Hall
- Review of proposed development at Aberlady Mains Steading to provide some workspace and a childcare/ nursery facility
- Development of Walled Garden at Gosford estate to provide small retail units/ artists' studios/ gallery space/ educational space and a café
- Development of civic green space at South East side of village along A6137
- Community acquisition of woodland at South West with provision of outdoor gym for use by all ages and nature-based play area for children
- Consideration of formal outdoor sports area (tennis/ basketball court)
- Provision of village car park

- Increased facilities for "outdoor" tourism with expansion of space available for camping at Aberlady and Ballencrieff
- Cemetery expansion

#### **Getting About**

- Improved footpath and road surfacing including new footway provision at Ballencrieff and review of footpath width at junction of A198 and A6137 for pedestrian access to Aberlady Village Hall
- New pedestrian crossing points and traffic calming measures in Aberlady and Ballencrieff
- Improvement of Kirk Road / "The Mair" Aberlady retained as single carriageway with clearly defined passing places and improved traffic calming to prevent use as a "rat run"
- New footpath for The Mair to be created in adjacent field to south and sheltered by new woodland belt
- New active travel routes to link with core paths and neighbouring local paths
- New cycle route from Aberlady to Longniddry Railway Station passing through the Gosford estate but at a distance from the main house and screened from view
- New railway station or request stop at Ballencrieff if East Coast Main Line is upgraded by installation of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> high speed lines from Edinburgh to Newcastle

## **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (detail)**

## **Natural Environment and Landscape**

There are currently several layers and types of important local and national designations within the area covered by this LPP

- Special Landscape Area 26: The coast at Aberlady forms a significant part of North Berwick to Seaton Sands Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Gosford House Listed Garden & Designed Landscape
- Luffness House Garden & Designed Landscape
- Aberlady Conservation Area
- Countryside Around Towns area

With the aim to protect the green space and retain the character and uniqueness of this historic area, it is proposed that all the current protective policies/designations are retained in LDP 2 with the possible addition of the area to the west of the recent Meadowside development that is currently outwith the CAT designation. This is in accordance with NPF4 policies 4, 6, 7 & 8



Plan area with Nature Reserve Highlighted



Plan area with showing Special Landscape Areas, Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Countryside Around Towns designations in green. Purple hatched area indicates proposed extension of Countryside Around Towns area

The community is supportive of increasing tree planting with the creation of woodland belts and distinct field boundaries as important biodiversity corridors as well as combatting air pollution and providing opportunities to offset greenhouse gas emissions (see below)

This area also contains prime agricultural land with some of the best soils in Scotland. The cultivation of this land is not only important in mitigating the effects of the climate and nature crises but is increasingly recognised as being vital for national food security. There is no support for any significant development on such land, consistent with NPF4 policy 5. Of the proposals for development put forward in the next section, these have been located on field margins which are uncultivated in some cases and would therefore not cause any significant loss in yields/productivity.



Map showing SEPA Medium Likelihood of Coastal (green) and River (purple) Flooding with proposed area for flood mitigation (orange)

Whilst there is no formal proposal for development on the land that is closest to the Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve which is to the north of a cultivated area and bounded to the south by a TPO protected tree belt, this is an area at medium risk of coastal flooding. It is close to both the Luffness Designed Landscape and the Luffness Friary scheduled monument. A proposal is put forward to retain this field ("Coo Park") with community access and as a potential environmental 'safety valve' with the option to create the rural equivalent of a SUDS (Sustainable Drainage System) or a wetland area designed to alleviate flooding risk consistent with NPF4 policies 8, 20 and 21. It is noted however that the groundwater level is already high and there are significant problems at times of high spring tides with flooding in the field as sea water passes under the coast road and into the field. The old Luffness fish ponds have absorbed the rainfall volume in the past but in recent years the increased volume of rainfall has put pressure on these and surrounding land. SEPA's future flood risk maps which indicate that this is an area at medium risk of coastal flooding show inland extension of the flood risk area so some mitigation measures should be considered.



Surface flooding is an issue at a number of sites within the Plan Area and is related to both field drainage and road drainage systems. The maintenance of existing drainage and establishment of newer, better mechanisms is supported (NPF4 Policy 20) and particularly requested for review at the Ballencrieff roundabout and the nearby cottages as well as a stretch of the A198 to the east of Aberlady close to the Peffer Burn.

## **Housing and Community Facilities**

The aim of this LPP is to maintain the village and rural settlement atmosphere. A few respondents specifically mentioned the impact of recent housing developments on the community's identity and sense of belonging. There is no desire to become a commuter village and the overwhelming view is that there should be no new housing in the village for the duration of the next local development plan. This is consistent with NPF4 policy 15 which promotes an 'infrastructure-first' approach and requires careful consideration of any settlement expansion. The market has been driven by developers who produce larger homes or "affordable" ones that can become holiday homes as these are more financially rewarding. True social housing that will remain as such is a preferable option but this is still outweighed by the infrastructure problems of wastewater treatment, transport and educational capacity. It is noted that there is a presumption against private wastewater treatment plants in the countryside and we would wish to ensure that this is not used as a means to bypass any planning restrictions for housing developments in the countryside apart from single rural homes in remote locations. The various landscape protections proposed in the previous section would also preclude any significant housing development in the area. Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that smaller builds adding to the settlement at Ballencrieff meeting the criteria of NPF4 policy 17 are welcomed by the residents there who feel it may encourage a greater sense of community.

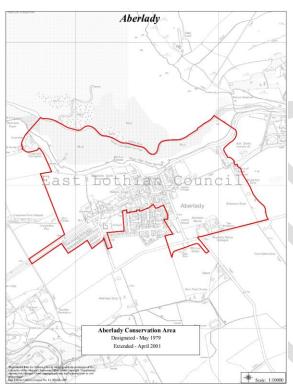
Any new or replacement housing should respect the local vernacular and not be an "off-the-shelf" solution from a developer's set of generic designs. A design guide has been proposed in the Community Council area (Dirleton LPP) and the principle of respectful traditional and contemporary architecture is supported so we can have high quality, sustainable, energy efficient buildings that fit in this landscape. (NPF policy 16)

The smaller community at Ballencrieff has proposed investigation of community heating and/or power to support transition to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly solution as some current options are not available for residents here. There are also suggestions from residents at Aberlady and Ballencrieff that the digital infrastructure needs improvement to provide an effective service for home workers and local businesses. (Links to NPF4 policies 19 and 24)

Proposals to improve the quality of life of residents by enhancing community facilities form a significant part of this LPP. Improving outdoor play and recreation facilities with suggestions for local business and employment opportunities came up in the surveys and were largely positively received when the proposals were shared.

HANDS UP IF YOU CAN HELP
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WE ARE HAVING A (SLIGHTLY LATE) SPRING
CLEAN AND A NEW COAT OF PAINT
WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS. CAN YOU
HELP? PLEASE DROP US A NOTE BELOW IF YOU
CAN SPARE AN HOUR OR TWO... MANY THANKS!

The much-loved Village Hall has required a series of reactive small repair/building works in recent years but the expense of running this community facility has prompted ACA to commence a formal project of refurbishment and upgrades. The proposed changes will create a hall that is energy efficient and will provide a safe, secure and well-functioning space for use by the community. A well-resourced venue with better facilities will also allow us to generate income by encouraging private bookings such as weddings and parties as well as regular community gatherings and



activities. The reconfiguration of the smaller hall space could provide a suitable location for community outreach services enhancing provision closer to home for less mobile members of the community as well as being a space for older residents to socialise e.g. recommencing community lunches. The central location of the Hall is key and it is hoped that despite this being within the Aberlady Conservation Area, we will be able to obtain planning permission for refurbishment including solar panels as an aid to improving energy efficiency (NPF policy 11).

A number of suggestions put forward as a result of the survey highlighted the lack of certain facilities and job opportunities. There were requests for a library; bookshop/stationers; bakery; post office; pharmacy and a café that would be accessible and open all week. As well as local businesses providing employment and training opportunities, it is felt that the provision of space for co-working and local studio space for artists and craftspeople would be hugely beneficial for the over 40% of residents who currently work from home. In addition to retail and employment provision, a need for childcare provision in the form of dedicated nursery space was suggested.

Two locations were identified as suitable for thoughtful mixed-use development.

There is currently planning permission in place at Aberlady Mains Steading for 16 residential units but this site was felt to be a suitable one for the nursery provision and possibly some live-work or office/studio space if the developers would consider reducing the number of residential units to accommodate this. The proposal is consistent with NPF4 policies 25,26 and 29 which support small scale development in the countryside to aid microbusinesses and others who wish to work closer to home (as per Scottish Location of Aberlady Mains Steading and Gosford Walled Garden Government Planning Guidance on Local Living and 20minute neighbourhoods).



The other site identified is the Walled Garden located in the Gosford Estate at the eastern side of the grounds and readily accessible by the existing driveway to The Bothy farm shop. Historically, the area of the Walled Garden has been the location of a caravan site but in recent years has been left for occasional grazing of livestock. The café at The Bothy closed some years ago as the shop expanded and is missed by locals. The Walled Garden could be redeveloped in a sensitive way respecting the



historic nature and could provide the location for a café, some studio/gallery space and small retail units. NPF4 policies 7,25, 27, 28 and 29 would support this. Developing a greenhouse type space would potentially provide educational space which could be used or rented out for small groups.

# Image credit: Longniddry South Steading Development Concept Art





Photo credits: Scampston Hall and Walled Garden

This type of development has been funded and successfully completed at other similar sites in the UK.

(see <a href="https://www.scampston.co.uk/at-scampston-north-yorkshire/conservatory/about-the-conservatory">https://www.scampston.co.uk/at-scampston.co.uk/at-scampston-north-yorkshire/conservatory/about-the-conservatory</a>)

Easy access to open green space for all members of the community is not available to the extent that might be imagined in the area. As a result, we have proposed the development of an open civic green space (a Village Green) on Haddington Road in line



Photo credit: Google Maps - Gifford Village Common

with NPF4 policies 8, 20 and 21. This would provide seating areas, trees and perhaps some shelter as well as being a location for events such as occasional outdoor Farmers' markets or Craft Fairs. This is along a route in and out of the village and although it is on the margin of a field, this area has not been cultivated.



Given that the arable field to the east would not be a suitable location for housing (it would be contrary to NPF4 policies 4,5,7,8,17 &18), the development of this currently fallow area would improve the street-scene and also provide easily accessible green space/recreational area without affecting any views over the landscape.

Photo credit: Google Maps

Play and recreation space for all ages featured strongly especially in the survey of children at Aberlady Primary School. Poor maintenance of existing facilities and removal of play equipment has prompted observations that not only are the very young children limited in opportunities to play but also older children and teenagers. Access for wheelchair users is poor and there is little in the way of safe informal play areas. A woodland area to the south of the village has been suggested as a suitable site for



Photo credit: Playequip.com

community-owned woodland which could also be a location for an outdoor gym with strength and stretching equipment (NPF policy 21).

This would also address the following observation from the last East Lothian Play assessment: "Opportunities to engage in creative, sensory, and nature-based play in formal play spaces are extremely limited across all age ranges." The assessment also states that there is a decrease in play provision for older children and teenagers in East Lothian and this was reflected in some of the survey responses. However, the solution to this was not universally agreed

and seemed to reflect a disparity between families with younger children who anticipated issues as the children grew older and those who had brought up a family in the area and felt that the older children would rather be away from home and go to North Berwick to socialise with school friends etc. For the latter, it was felt that improved public transport would be a better solution than provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) with attendant issues of lighting, noise and impact on wildlife if sited in a field area. Siting a MUGA on the existing pitch next to Aberlady Primary School was not felt to be an option as this is counted as open green space in previous land audits. The pitch is known to suffer from poor drainage at the northern aspect but this should be attended to as there has been a developer contribution to East Lothian Council following the Meadowside development.

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/28187/developer\_contributions\_framework\_supplementary\_guidanc e\_-\_ldp\_2018.pdf ["At Aberlady, the developer of the committed site at Aberlady West (Proposal NK10) is ...also making contributions towards the off-site enhancement of Aberlady playing field."]

In addition, we are aware that East Lothian Council will not currently support development of single pitches but is focussed on those which are located in a cluster. It is unlikely that the community will be able to fund this alone with the anticipated fundraising needed for the Village Hall refurbishment. However, within the timescale of the LDP2, it may be possible to reconsider this.

There are a number of residents who would like to support a smaller size all-weather sports/recreation area perhaps for a tennis or basketball court and potentially without flood lighting to avoid any light pollution or effects on nearby residents. In this case, we have identified three potential sites in the village – two at either end of a field to the south of the village which would be screened by the proposed woodland planting mentioned above and the other in a field adjacent to the Scottish Ornithologists Club on the western approach to the village (NPF4 policy 21).



Tree protection orders (dark green) and Biodiversity corridors (light green) – increased tree planting proposed to create woodland belt and protected footpath within field boundary

Community woodland proposal (dark pink) and 3 alternative locations(blue) for small all-weather sports facility with possible car parking adjacent

If any of these sites were to be approved, essential traffic calming measures would be needed to permit safe access for users (see "Getting about" section below).

It is recognised that the MUGA proposals may be supported by developers who would then seek to barter and use them as a way to seek approval for further housing development in the village. It would therefore seem that this should be a community-led project.

Similarly, resolution of some of the community's traffic concerns by construction of a "local"

by-pass route from the A198 to the south of the village close to the Meadowside development has not proven to be acceptable to those who have contributed to the consultation so far.

The Place Standard Tool revealed considerable traffic related concerns and the need for a village car park. There is considerable inconsiderate and illegal parking on the coast road e.g. on pavements, yellow lines and over the marked cycle lane. Residents who park their vehicles on the Main Street and nearby have to move their vehicles at times of events such as the Scottish Open Golf Championship and the Edinburgh marathon. There is limited parking for visitors to the local Inn, Hotel and Village Hall so a "small" car park would be useful. The site of car park would have to be close to the village centre and may be an additional location for EV charging and cycle racks. The original proposal was to locate this next to the proposed sports pitch at the edge of the village and it may be that the three locations suggested above would be suitable. (NPF4 policy 13)



Possible expansion of camping at Aberlady

coastline. Aberlady has a caravan and camping site that also has some camping pods on its 4.5 acre site just outside the southern edge of the village. Whilst there is no obvious space for expansion on the site, it may be possible to consider expanding a simple campsite area on a field strip to the north or west of the existing Aberlady Caravan Park which is located where the old railway station used to be. This would be convenient for any visitors who wish to have easy walking

This area is particularly attractive as a tourist location and there are already accommodation options with a wide range of alternatives. In the light of the relatively few local job opportunities, there is potential to create some more (seasonal) options by expanding the offering. Visitors wanting to have outdoor or 'eco-tourism' experiences are perhaps less well catered for than the golfers who visit our



Proposed camping/pod location at Ballencrieff

access to the village facilities and may fit well if a pedestrian and cycle path using the old railway route to Spittal is developed (see below). There is also potential for a permanent campsite at Ballencrieff and/or installation of camping pods at a location here (see below). These proposals are consistent with NPF4 policy 30 on tourism as they are low volume, require minimal infrastructure and located in areas which would not cause pressure on the busy coast road as it passes through Aberlady.

One final matter did not feature highly on the initial survey but has been mentioned is the requirement for increased cemetery space. There is no possibility to expand at the current site due to its location on the coastal edge of the village. It is a matter that has been raised in the past and discussed with the Gosford Estate but we have been unable to identify a location for this so far.

## **Getting about**

Many comments were received on traffic and transport matters. Encouraging active travel by providing safe routes between the settlements and to transport hubs such as Longniddry Railway Station are widely welcomed and have been sought for many years. This is seen as essential to promote local living in rural communities such as Aberlady and will also improve the local environment by reducing car use. This will be most successful if public transport provision is improved with better connections and extended timetables although this is not a matter that can be addressed in a Local Place Plan. All the proposals below are consistent with NPF4 policy 13 as they aim to promote active travel infrastructure, reduce car usage and provide safety measures directly or indirectly by segregating routes for different users.

Some of the footpaths require repair and in some cases reinstatement or review due to the obstacle they pose for pedestrians. The Haddington Road (A6137) footpath leaving the conservation area and heading south is not as wide and clear as in the past and residents at Ballencrieff feel unsafe whilst leaving their properties on the B1377 with no footpath in place. The corner of the footpath at the junction of Sea Wynd (A198) and The Gardens (A6137) is much too narrow to safely walk with a buggy or wheelchair to the Village Hall and should be reviewed.



Much of the traffic entering and leaving Aberlady village continues to travel at speed despite the introduction of a 20mph speed limit. There are a number of significant points at which a safer mode of crossing is needed e.g. School to Parish Church, at Village Hall and across the road to reach the Sea Green. A variety of measures could be used within Aberlady village: traffic calming using simple roadway markings e.g. outside Aberlady Primary School on School Road; village gateways with altered road surface in village centre to encourage adherence to the speed limit; central pedestrian refuge at wider carriageway locations and also potential to use speed discrimination traffic signals at the approaches to Aberlady and at Ballencrieff.

<u>Various active travel routes are proposed which will link up with neighbouring local paths or Core Paths</u>. However, there are some specific issues to be resolved regarding access over or underneath the railway line at Ballencrieff and the aim for paths to be wholly separated from the main roads i.e. A198 and B1377 due to the volume and speed of traffic which makes these routes

Oction Sands

Oction Sands

Seton Sands

Seton Sands

Seton Sands

Longniddry

Longniddry

Existing core paths (brown) with proposed routes to form loop from Ballencrieff and new links along old railway line from Spittal with preferred route to Longniddry Railway Station via Gosford Policies

there is concern about displacing traffic and compromising the quality of life for residents at Ballencrieff who would then experience a higher volume of through traffic. There are mixed views on the designation of the coastal A198 as the main route to North Berwick when the signage at Longniddry indicates the B1377 as the route to North Berwick. Diverting HGVs away from the centre of Aberlady has been suggested in the past as an alternative to diverting all traffic away from the village and the consequent risk of reducing opportunities for local businesses to benefit from passing

The "On The Move" group of North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership has long been supportive of a cycle route from Aberlady to Longniddry Railway Station which has been requested to pass through the Gosford Estate. It could be located well to the south of the Main House and grounds thereby avoiding any intrusion and be safer than the alternative proposal which is on the John Muir Way but then joins the main coast road carriageway again at Gosford Sands.

unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians.

A more radical proposal is to amend road priorities and use surface treatments on the A198 coast road to make it one way with access for cyclists and emergency vehicles only. However,



Image credit: NMP Architecture showing Coastal Mobility Route Dún Laoghaire

trade. However, further work needs to be done to assess the impact of changing the route designation completely or simply restricting HGV traffic and the effect of potentially altering the Ballencrieff roundabout junction. It is reported that if there was an upgrade here, this may release land which is currently disused and could then serve as community space e.g. for allotments.





Photo credits: Google Maps

The completion of the housing development at Meadowside has resulted in a significant increase in traffic volume along The Mair (Kirk Road) in Aberlady. This is noticeably due to delivery vehicles but there is also a significant contribution from residents who use this route to avoid traffic hold-ups in the Main St. The road is essentially single carriageway but the required passing places are poorly maintained and the pedestrians who use this route describe feeling unsafe because of drivers navigating the speed bumps quickly. The option of road closure pedestrianisation was discussed but, on balance, the residents who live at the southern aspect of the village felt a vehicular route here was required. A proposal is therefore made to improve the road and consider a new pedestrian footway within the field along the margin and within the new woodland belt that has been suggested above. If paved and suitably wide, this could be another accessible walking route around the village.

Of the various proposals made, a further long-term vision is related to rail travel and specifically related to Ballencrieff. The



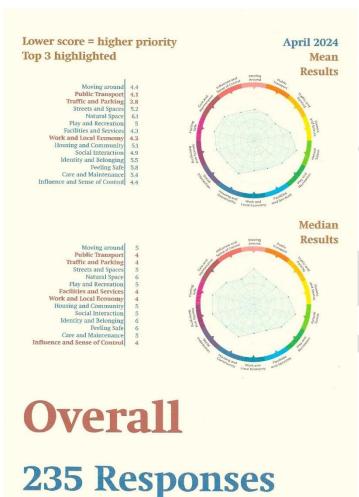
Photo credit: Google Maps

current East Coast Main Line is at capacity and the local stopping services cannot be increased because of conflict in the timetable with high-speed rail services. However, if the long-term vision of installing a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> high-speed line between Edinburgh and Newcastle comes to fruition, there will be increased capacity and a station or request stop at Ballencrieff would be welcomed by residents. Given the 10-year duration of this Place Plan and the next Development Plan this proposal is appropriate to put forward now whilst initial scoping and planning work may be getting underway.

### **APPENDIX I**

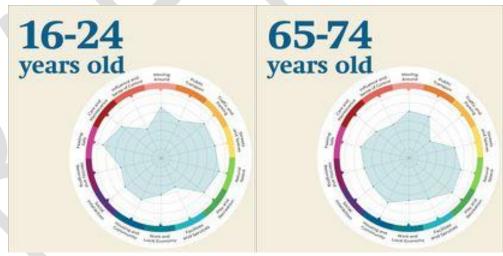
## **Community Survey results Spring 2024**

The Place Standard Tool was used for the first survey and made available online via a StoryMap page with paper copies



available if requested via the Village shop and also distributed at the community coffee morning ("Scone Café"). A total of 235 responses were received.

The responses were also analysed in groupings by age and gender with examples shown below



#### Data set 1

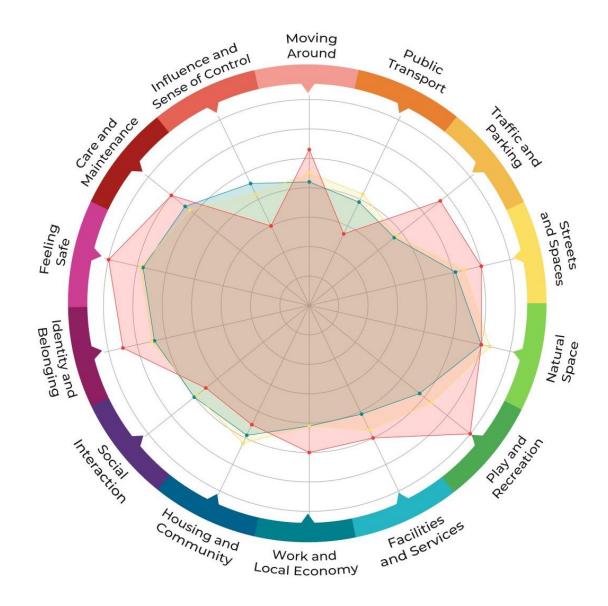
Sub-area: All Sub-areas Age range: All Ages Gender: Female

#### Data set 2

Sub-area: All Sub-areas Age range: All Ages Gender: Male

#### Data set 3

Sub-area: All Sub-areas Age range: All Ages Gender: Other



## Summary of land use/ development suggestions

- Making community hall accessible to all members of the community.
  Terrible corner pavements not for wheelchairs or buggies.
- The school park, it needs some things for older children like a climbing frame
- A bus that connects
  Aberlady to Port Seton
  and a cycle path to
  Longniddry train
  station
- Contact between network rail/ELC to see what can be mobilised for safe route between Aberlady and Ballencrieff.

Examples of online comments

- No more housing as currently a good balance of built vs natural environment. Loss of open views across fields and coast are a concern as well as loss of prime agricultural land
- As the High Street has lost shop units, the feel is more residential and a central meeting space does not exist. Could a village square be created within the village to host events such as a local Farmers' Market?
- A car park to handle overflow from Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve car park (thereby reducing parking over cycle lane and on pavements/verges) and/or a car park designated for walkers/ churchgoers/visitors to the village
- Car park to permit EV charging and must be adequately surfaced to prevent surface drainage issues which exist in Aberlady
- Accessible shared open green space
- Do not reduce green space and consider provision of more particularly for young people (12-18)
- All weather multi-use sports pitch for tennis/basketball/football
- Provision of outdoor gym/body weight equipment e.g. on local estate land
- Community allotments
- Public toilets for residents and visitors
- Provision of toilets at church which may facilitate use for other events e.g. concerts

- Encourage local businesses to establish themselves here as a source of employment opportunities and to provide local services but location unclear
- Another shop/post office/pharmacy/bakery
- A café that is open year-round and all week
- Bird hides at Aberlady Bay
- Use of Village Hall as a hub for socializing/provision of services e.g. benefits advice/additional (sporting) activities/Youth Club
- No industrial units but a co-working space was suggested

### **APPENDIX II**

## Summary of feedback on initial development proposals August - September 2024

#### **FACILITIES**

- Yes to shared working spaces
- Co-working
- Art studios and workshops/gallery space/retail space for small independent local businesses
- Walled Garden at Gosford would be a great base for artists/artisans, small businesses and a Community Cafe
- Cemetery
- Nursery/childcare facility at Aberlady Mains close to village, access to nature
- Tidy viewpoint area at Churchyard & provide toilets here
- Allow access to historic church tower

#### HOUSING

- No more building on fields please
- No new housing
- Protect Aberlady land and arable fields
- There has already been enough multi-house development. If further housing is to be pursued then spacing, height and numbers need to be sympathetic to the village
- Give the village time to become a community again in its now expanded state, before expanding yet again

#### **TRAFFIC**

- Heavy traffic through village is a concern
- Traffic speed control or (working) speed response signage needed at entry/exit points
- Traffic management and a by-pass would make Aberlady a better place to live
- The Mair should be one way. Speed bumps ineffective especially for larger vehicles so better traffic calming needed. Also measures to warn pedestrians of approaching traffic Rumble strips?
- Additional off-road parking needed (with a litter bin)
- Too much traffic on Back Lane which makes it unsafe for pedestrians (Amazon vans etc.) Make this one way as changes to driving habits with more car parking etc. has made it hazardous for children walking to school etc.

#### **NATURE**

- Tree cover in the area is a key part of the environment and any tree clearance or obstruction of the views by development should be avoided. The estate areas may be able to accommodate development without high visual impact
- Sea Green should have walking paths and a wild meadow

#### **TRANSPORT**

- Safe cycle path to Longniddry
- Cycle path is a really good idea if it links Aberlady with Ballencrieff and Longniddry
- Active travel link to Luffness and Gullane for school access and after-school clubs etc.
- Cycle path from Aberlady to Ballencrieff via Myreton and back has a gap at Ballencrieff so cyclists would have to use B1377 which is a busy, dangerous road for cyclists. Needs a safe link to make a circuit
- Better bus links would help all age groups
- Haddington Rd pavement (south) is hazardous for pedestrians and buggies. Create new pavement and convert existing to cycle path
- Better lighting on Back Lane by football field

#### RECREATION

- Poor play provision for 0-5. Need to address developmental needs and fitness for younger children eg balance, climbing, hand-eye co-ordination Existing play parks outdated and new 'Pirate ship' unsuitable for the very young
- Dog-free time on beaches
- Prevent dog access to football pitch despite responsible pick up, traces remain along with dog urine

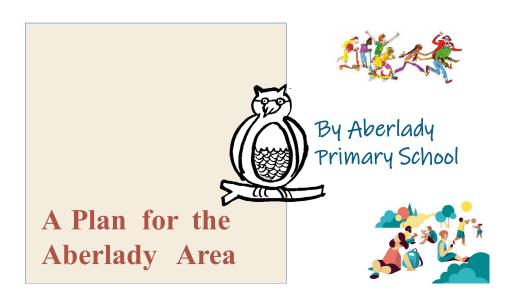
#### MUGA

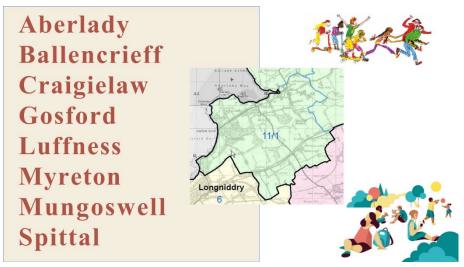
- No requirement for MUGA in village of this size (Gullane pitch underused)
- Site MUGA at "swampy" end of Mair field and combine with enclosed football pitch which would allow all weather use. Lighting would then be contained and not affect nearby residents. Screen with trees etc.
- MUGA should be in the middle of the village
- Sports facilities should centre on the field in the middle of the village safest spot
- Upgrade existing playing field as close to school and safe walking routes
- The Mair is full of dangerous driving and not a good spot to base any facilities for young people
- Tennis court and things for teenagers to do
- Improved transport links to shared facilities better than village facilities being underused

## **APPENDIX III**

# **Results of Primary School sessions**

Two sessions were conducted at Aberlady Primary School and the following PowerPoint presentation was shared with the pupils on the second occasion. This was used to stimulate discussion and obtain some confirmation of the feedback already obtained.





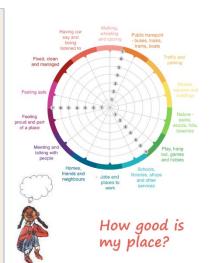
#### What we did last time...

All classes in the school had a chance to talk about this things that were important to them

Discussion on things that are annoying or frustrating

Talking about things that are good or great!

Ideas for how things could be even better....



66 Neighbours look out for each other

Don't always feel part of the community as when people ask, they don't listen and don't feed back

I don't feel like part of the community as don't have easy access to Aberlady (lives in Ballencrieff)

I feel like part of the community because of the school



# Community



66 Library space would be nice their used to be a library bus but it stopped — need to travel to Longniddry now

Would be nice to have space for quiet activities - to study or for arts and crafts

Space to hang out with friends
– shelters for when it's raining
or some indoor options – like a
Youth Club

Some clubs and activities in Aberlady but have to travel mostly



Spaces and Access to Things you Like



66 Some people don't have homes that need them

Don't like taking away fields and building homes

Build flats instead of houses

I am worried about destroying habitats for animals by building on fields

More new homes needed but school couldn't hold them all



# Homes



66 Some parents have to travel quite far to get to work

Parents have to drive to work as difficult by bus or can't walk or cycle

Some parents work from home

I go to after school club, activities or friends houses while parents are working

Some people have family close by to help, but other families live in other countries and can't



Jobs



66 It's not safe to cross the road and there are places I can't go in the village by myself because I can't cross roads

Need safer cycling routes to see friends in other villages

Too many cars going too fast

Have to rely on lifts as not safe to walk into Aberlady

There are dark places, like the bottom of the football pitch



Feeling Safe



66 Adults say they listen to children's voices [Courier article] but didn't really

Options to change the park wasn't really options – some people didn't vote as so annoyed

Person came to ask us after they had already decided

People came to school to talk to kids but never came back – feels like they gave up – some people did have crazy ideas!



# Listened to





People look after each other

Need more bins because people litter

Need more beach cleans

The village is well looked after, clean and tidy

We need more colour in the school and village – it's so grey! Love Aberlady!



66 Need a safe cycling path to / from Gullane and Longniddry

People should be doing more walking, cycling, scooting!

Some distances not short and no choice but to drive

More cycle lanes on main roads with painted parts to show the space

Some paths are too bumpy to scoot or cycle

Difficult to walk or cycle to school if live outside the village



Walking and Wheeling



What you said

66 Need more buses to different places - and more bus stops

Buses late and not very reliable – they sometimes smell and are not very clean

A train station in Aberlady! Or better connections to one

Lots of parents drive to work as public transport doesn't work for them

Usually drive to activities / clubs outside of Aberlady



Public Transport



What you said

66 I can hear lots of cars when go to sleep

We shouldn't use cars so much because it is bad for the world

Cars go super fast!

Main Street is busy in summer time – the buses get jammed, it's too narrow and people get impatient

Road is really busy - more places to cross safely

Some people park on pavements



# Traffic and Parking



What you said

66 Bike path in the woods - dirt tracks too bumpy, not a great surface

Rope swings seem to disappear – being destroyed by teenagers

Some forests have ropes courses – would be great to have that

More gardening opportunities in public spaces

Lots of nature and animals around us – we need to look after it



# **Nature**



66 More equipment at school park!

Donkey park great for younger children – Cala park is good but old and rusty

More places to play near me – and in all weathers

If want to encourage kids to go outside need more stuff to do

Space for more sports – and cycling and skating

Quiet spaces outdoors

Need more things for older kids and teenagers



Play Spaces!



66 Playground can get muddy and can't use some of the spaces

More sitting areas for drawing and quiet space for reading

Basketball and football takes up a lot of the space and room to play

More equipment to play on – tyre swings – and monkey bars!

Balls for break and lunchtime – different sports

Bring back the friendship bench



Playground



66 Would like more library space in school – with more types of books

Be great to have access to play ground out of school hours

No changing rooms in school – have to get changed in bathrooms or come in PE kit

More powerful pupil groups

Educational Minecraft!



# School



#### What will happen next...

All your comments about the school and the playground will be shared with Mrs O'Connor and Parent Council

Aberlady Community
Association will take what
you said, and all the things
that the adults in the area
have told us and start to
make a plan for what we
can do about it.

# Any questions?

