

East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2

Housing Site Appraisal

Methodology



1. Introduction & Background Evidence

- 1.1. East Ayrshire Council has prepared a replacement Proposed Local Development Plan which sets out policies and proposals that will guide development in the area throughout the plan period. On 31/03/2022, East Ayrshire Council approved the Proposed East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) for publication and public consultation.
- 1.2. The Proposed LDP2 allocates sufficient land in appropriate locations to meet housing land requirements over the Plan period. As part of the preparation of an evidence base for LDP2, potential development sites were assessed using a site selection methodology which provided a framework for the identification of appropriate sites for allocation.
- 1.3. It was evident from the representations received to the Main Issues Report consultation that residents would expect the site selection process to be robustly undertaken so as to address any concerns they might have loss open space, the impact that development might have on local infrastructure and other matters. The preferred approach was to reflect these considerations and each allocated site has consequently been subject to thorough assessment.
- 1.4. The approach taken in determining site allocations prominently encompassed the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood. In this regard it pursued increasing densities in and in proximity to town centres and near transport facilities, promoted active travel and sought to make efficient use of existing infrastructure. The avoidance of areas at risk of fluvial flooding was another central consideration.

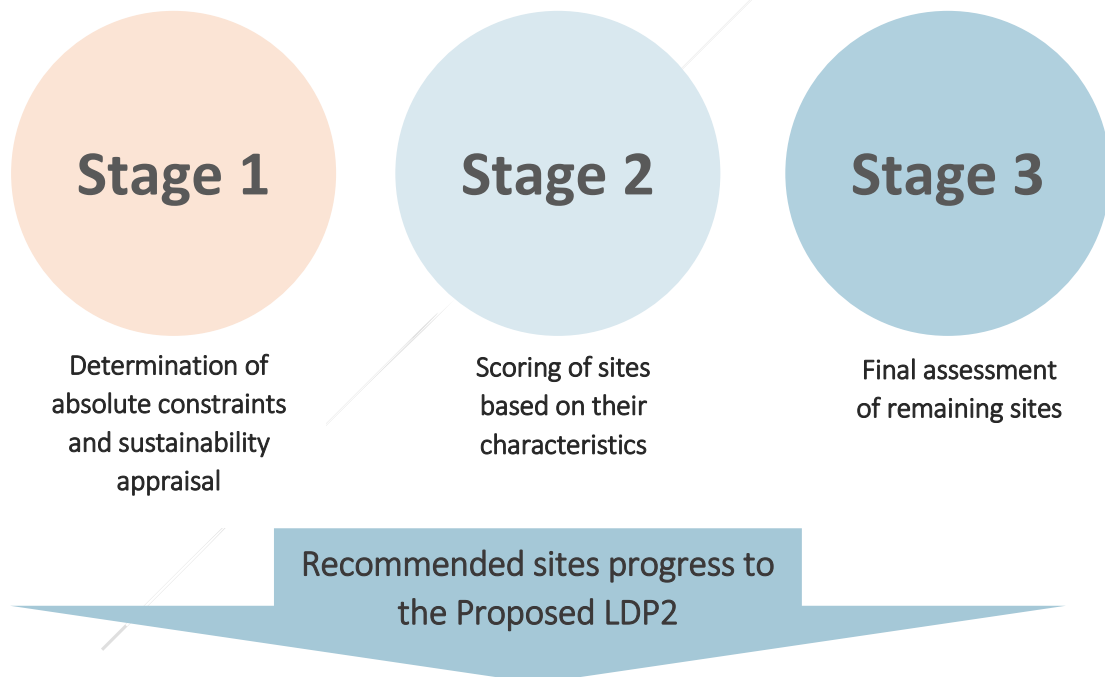
Call for Sites

- 1.5. A number of consultation exercises were undertaken to enable the Council to assess land which developers and promoters considered effective, so as to ensure that their interest was taken into account. These were as follows:
 - **Call for Priorities Issues and Proposals** 2017/2018
 - **Main Issues Report consultation** Summer 2020
 - **Call for Site Information** Winter 2020
- 1.6. The findings of the Environmental Assessment of sites submitted through the Call for Priorities Issues and Proposals were included in the Main Issues Report. Additional sites were submitted by interested parties in response to the Main Issues Report consultation. A final exercise known as the 'Call for Site Information' was undertaken using a framework of questions devised by the Scottish Government¹. The sites and information submitted through each of these exercises, as well as those sites allocated in LDP1 that were not built out prior to April 2021, have been aggregated and were subject to the assessment detailed in this document. In addition, several sites that had not hitherto been allocated or proposed for allocation through call for sites were also assessed; those being locations where it was considered that there might be potential for housing growth, subject to further discussion and analysis.

¹ [The Deliverability of Site Allocations in Local Development Plans](#)

2. Overview of Site Selection Methodology

- 2.1. LDP2 is required to allocate sufficient land in appropriate locations to ensure that there is an adequate supply during the Plan period. Paragraph 110 of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014 states that the planning system should:
- identify a generous supply of land for each housing market area within the plan area to support the achievement of the housing land requirement across all tenures, maintaining at least a 5-year supply of effective housing land at all times;
 - enable provision of a range of attractive, well-designed, energy efficient, good quality housing, contributing to the creation of successful and sustainable places; and
 - have a sharp focus on the delivery of allocated sites embedded in action programmes, informed by strong engagement with stakeholders.
- 2.2. In response to the aforementioned SPP requirements, the Council developed a site selection methodology to identify potential sites for allocation. The process was undertaken in three separate stages. Stage 1 and 2 reduced and refined the number of submitted and allocated sites to provide a basis from which a final assessment at Stage 3 was made. After further discussion, recommended sites then progressed to the Proposed LDP2.



- 2.3. The table below (Table 1) details the overarching process employed to undertake an assessment of site suitability. Each stage is broken into a number of sub-assessments, those within Stage 2 have themselves been subject to a system of scoring based on their attributes.
- 2.4. Sites were filtered once they are assessed against absolute constraints and were then subject to more detailed assessment at each of the following stages (Table 1). The development of the methodology was informed by a desktop review of the approach taken by a number of other local authorities. A system of scoring of each of the parameters detailed below was employed, producing a result that indicated which sites were preferable.

Stage	Action	Assessment	Result
Stage 1	Assess sites against absolute constraints	Proximity to settlement	Remove non-compliant sites
		Significant Flood Risk	
		SPA/SAC/SSSI	
		Ancient/Native Woodland	
		Site capacity	
	Other Constraints		
	Sustainability appraisal	Undertake environmental assessment of sites and establish measures to ensure sites are developable	
Stage 2	Assess contribution to delivery of spatial strategy	Determine which sites are more or less likely to deliver the strategy.	Sites scored 1 to 5 according to each parameter <i>(scoring explained in Section 4)</i>
	Assess site viability and marketability	Programmed in Housing Land Audit	
		Marketability score	
		Planning consent for housing	
		Interest expressed at Call for Sites	
		Length of time allocated	
		Examination report 2016 comments	
	Assess open space & recreation value	Importance of site to recreational value in local context	
	Assess non-absolute constraints	Flood risk	
		Biodiversity	
		Land Capability for Agriculture	
		Land and water contamination	
		Heritage Assets	
		Landscape Character & Townscape	
	Assess sustainability of location	Coal mining risk assessments	
		Distance to primary school	
		Distance to secondary school	
		Distance to health centre or GP	
		Distance to EAC TC/NC (P-LDP)	
		Distance to bus stop	
Distance to train station			
Previously developed land			
Urban/rural classification			
Distance to key town centres			
Carbon and peatland			
Visual amenity			
Landscape study			
Stage 3A	Undertake final site assessment	Division by Sub Housing Market area	List of sites finalised
Stage 3B		Produce table of sites with ranking	
Stage 3C		Determination of likely phasing	
Stage 3D		Indicative site capacity determined	
Shortlist of sites included in Proposed LDP2			

Table 1. Summary of assessment criteria

Purpose of Assessment

- 2.5. It is important to note that the purpose of this assessment was to inform a discussion with regard to the determination of sites that were considered preferential for inclusion in the Proposed Plan. The assessment was the first stage in a more detailed examination and consideration of each site and formed the primary evidence base from which to inform a wider conversation as to which sites were considered preferable. An explanation of the selection process for each site during and beyond Stage 3 can be seen in Appendices 1 to 9.

3. Stage 1

3.1. Stage 1 involved a determination of the existence of absolute constraints, i.e. those constraints that would preclude the development of a site because they would be of such a nature as to not allow for mitigation or would result in development in an inappropriate location or on such a small scale as to not warrant allocation in the LDP. These factors are as follows:

Absolute constraints

3.2. The following significant constraints preclude the development of an existing/legacy or submitted site:

Parameter	Criteria
Proximity to settlement	Sites which do not fall within or are located immediately adjacent to a settlement boundary assessed. It is acknowledged that most sites submitted are considered to be located within a reasonable distance to a settlement, however, development must take place within acceptable walking distance of day-to-day services. Qualitative and quantitative assessment undertaken to determine if any sites should be excluded at this stage.
Flood Risk	SPP states that to avoid the risk of flooding, the planning system should prevent development which would have a significant probability of being affected by flooding or would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere. Development of land that is wholly located within areas at risk of and/or is at significant risk of fluvial flooding will not be taken forward. This assessment informed by SEPA data.
Location of SPA/SAC/SSSI	SPP sets strong levels of protection for a number of designated sites. As such, sites excluded if they are wholly located within an international or national designated site including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special Protection Areas (SPA) ▪ Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) ▪ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Ancient/Native Woodland	SPP states that the planning system should protect and enhance ancient semi-natural woodland as an important and irreplaceable resource, together with other native or long-established woods, hedgerows and individual trees with high nature conservation or landscape value. Sites wholly located within areas of native or ancient woodland excluded.
Site capacity	Sites that are capable of accommodating fewer than 4 dwellings not taken forward through the LDP process because they are too small for allocation.

Table 2. Absolute constraints

3.3. Any site assessed be subject to one or more of the constraints listed above and/or considered unlikely to contribute to the LDP2 spatial strategy was highlighted as such prior to the Stage 2 of the assessment process.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.4. A Strategic Environmental Assessment of those sites submitted prior to the Main Issues Report consultation that it was considered appropriate to allocate was undertaken. This was in part informed through consultation of the following statutory agencies:

- Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Scottish Water
- Transport Scotland
- NatureScot

4. Stage 2

4.1. Stage 2 involved an assessment of non-absolute constraints, i.e. those constraints that are not considered insurmountable and could be mitigated or would not preclude development, subject to careful examination. The extent to which a site scored more highly and was therefore preferential in terms of development determined its eventual ranking with regard to consideration of potential allocation. Factors that were assessed were as follows:

Contribution to delivery of LDP2 spatial strategy

4.2. SPP 2014 states that development plans should set out a spatial strategy which is both sustainable and deliverable, providing confidence to stakeholders that the outcomes can be achieved. A determination of which sites were more or less likely to deliver the spatial strategy was made and scored as follows:

Parameter	Score	Criteria	Notes/Source
Contribution to Spatial Strategy	1	The site does not contribute to the spatial strategy	Para. 2.16 of the LDP1 Spatial Strategy was employed in lieu of the expected adoption of the LDP2 Spatial Strategy
	2	The site contributes somewhat to the spatial strategy	
	5	The site contributes to the spatial strategy	

Table 3. Contribution to delivery of LDP2 spatial strategy

Site viability and marketability

4.3. The provision of a range of sites in the LDP which are likely to be developed due to developer interest is critical if the Council is to meet its housing supply targets. A determination of which sites were more or less likely to be economically viable and marketable was made and scored as follows:

Parameter	Score	Criteria	Notes/Source
Programmed in Housing Land Audit	1	No units programmed	Housing Land Audit 2020
	2	Programmed after five years	
	5	Programmed during next five years	
Marketability score	1	Marketability score of 3	Homes for Scotland & local house builder marketability survey
	2	Marketability score of 2	
	5	Marketability score of 1	
Full planning consent for housing	1	No consent or cannot be established	Examination of planning application management systems and Council mapping
	2	Consent obtained but has/may have lapsed	
	5	Active planning consent (08/04/2021)	
Interest expressed at Call for Sites	1	No interest expressed in inclusion/retention	See para. 1.7 above
	2	Interest expressed at Call for Sites (initial)	
	5	Interest expressed MIR/CfSI consultation	
Length of time allocated	1	Allocated in LP 2010	East Ayrshire Local Plan 2010, East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2017 and call for sites
	2	Allocated in LDP 2017	
	5	Newly proposed	
Examination report 2016 comments	1	Assessed as not suitable for allocation	Proposed East Ayrshire Local Development Plan Examination (2016)
	5	Assessed as suitable for allocation or not assessed	

Table 4. Site viability and marketability

Open space & recreation value

4.4. The protection of valuable and valued open space is enshrined SPP and Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and open space. A determination of which sites were more or less considered to be of recreational value was made and scored as follows:

Parameter	Score	Criteria	Notes/Source
Open space/ recreation value and public accessibility	1	The site is safeguarded open space and development would result in the loss of an area of open space with no replacement	Site status derived from Safeguarded Open Space delineated in current LDP
	5	The site is not safeguarded open space and development would not lead to the loss of an area of open space/ potential to provide additional open space	

Table 5. Open space & recreation value

Non-absolute constraints

4.5. A determination of the extent to which sites to be assessed are subject to a range of constraints was made and scored as follows:

Parameter	Score	Criteria	Notes/Source
Flood risk (<i>could be addressed subject to mitigation</i>)	1	Site lies within a SEPA-identified Medium to high fluvial flood risk (>0.5% AP)	SEPA Flood Risk and Land Use Vulnerability Guidance
	2	Site lies within a SEPA-identified Low to medium fluvial flood risk (0.1% - 0.5% AP)	
	5	Site lies within a SEPA-identified Little or no fluvial flood risk (<0.1% AP)	
Biodiversity	1	The site performs an important function for biodiversity in East Ayrshire. The impacts on sensitive areas cannot be mitigated.	Consideration given to the proximity of a site to a protected site or important habitat and the ability for indirect impacts.
	2	The site performs a somewhat important function/impacts on sensitive areas can be mitigated.	
	5	The site performs a limited biodiversity role/there is no impact on environmentally sensitive areas.	
Land Capability for Agriculture	1	Loss of Class 1 to Class 3.1 agricultural land	Prime quality, good quality and poorer quality agricultural land respectively (Scotland's Soils)
	2	Loss of Class 3.2 to Class 5.3 agricultural land	
	5	Loss of Class 6.1 to Class 7 and Urban land	
Land or Water Contamination	1	The site is or may be affected by land contamination. It is possible that it can be mitigated to an acceptable level	The potential presence of contamination determined through examination of Council GIS mapping of potential PAN33 sites. All sites within which a PAN33 site falls.
	5	The site is unlikely to be affected by land contamination.	
Heritage Assets	1	Designated heritage within or immediately adjacent to the site with harm to or loss of the heritage asset	Heritage assets comprise of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, gardens and designed landscapes and conservation areas.
	2	Heritage asset within or immediately adjacent to site but no harm to it or its setting. Impacts can be mitigated	
	5	Development of site would not affect any heritage asset	

Landscape Character & Townscape	1	The site could have significant impacts on landscape & townscape quality and cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level	Assessment of potential impact on townscape quality
	2	The site is within character area or would impact the townscape but could be mitigated to an acceptable level	
	5	The site is not within a character area or has limited impact on the townscape and landscape character	
Coal Mining Risk Assessments	1	High Risk Area	Coal Authority mapping (2019). Highest risk applied if falling within any part of site.
	2	Low Risk Area	
	5	No risk identified	

Table 6. Non-absolute constraints

Sustainability of location

4.6. SPP introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places by enabling development that balances the costs and benefits of a proposal over the longer term. The aim is to achieve the right development in the right place; it is not to allow development at any cost. A determination of the extent to which sites were considered sustainable was made and scored as follows:

Parameter	Score	Criteria	Notes/Source
Distance to existing primary school	1	More than 2km	Council GIS mapping and location of schools, GP surgeries, retail hubs and transport infrastructure. From edge of each site.
	2	400m - 2km	
	5	Less than 400m	
Distance to existing secondary school	1	More than 2.4km	‘Schools’ refer to Non-denominational schools as it is recognised that Denominational schools are fewer in number and travel times correspondingly longer.
	2	1km – 2.4km	
	5	Less than 1km	
Distance to existing health centre or GP surgery	1	More than 2km	School determined by which catchment area site is located within.
	2	400m - 2km	
	5	Less than 400m	
Distance to EAC town or neighbourhood centre	1	More than 2km	GP surgery locations from NHS inform
	2	400m - 2km	
	5	Less than 400m	
Distance to bus stop	1	More than 800m	Town/neighbourhood centre as defined in the 2022 Proposed LDP2
	2	400 – 800m	
	5	Less than 400m	
Distance to train station	1	More than 2.4km	Evidence from historic OS mapping and site investigation. Use of site for deposit of materials considered previously developed.
	2	1km – 2.4km	
	5	Less than 1km	
Previously developed (brownfield) land	1	Not previously developed	Restored/regenerated land classed as not previously developed.
	2	Previously developed – was developed in past (historic mapping evidence)	
	5	Previously developed – visible site evidence	

			Judgement based on scale of previous development within site.
Urban/rural classification	1	7, 8	Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2013/14. Non-classified settlements score 1*
	2	4, 5, 6	
	5	1, 2, 3	
Distance to key town centres	1	More than 10km	Distance to Kilmarnock, Ayr or Cumnock TC boundary by Sub HMA
	2	5km – 10km	
	5	Less than 5km	
Carbon and peatland	1	Class 1, 2	Scotland's Soils
	2	Class 3, 4, 5	
	5	Class 0, -1, -2	
Visual amenity	1	The site performs a significant role in terms of visual amenity. The significance of the visual impact is high.	NatureScot and/or officer assessment of landscape impact of each site.
	2	The site performs a moderate role with regards to visual amenity. The significance of the affect is moderate.	
	5	The significance of development of the site to visual amenity is negligible/low.	
Landscape Study	1	Indicative Areas with Limited Potential, Indicative Landscape Strategy or Indicative Landscape Area	Entec Landscape Study 2005
	2	Areas with potential or without designation	
	5	Areas most suitable for development or within settlement boundary (2005)	

Table 7. Sustainability of location. *Crookedholm and Hurlford classed as Kilmarnock. SAC LDP Ayr TC boundary. Settlements not assessed as part of the Entec Landscape Study 2005 have been scored as 2 if sites are newly proposed and 5 if already allocated.

5. Stage 3

Final site assessment

- 5.1. After the findings of Stages 1 and 2 were collated, a shortlist of sites was established. This shortlist formed the basis for a final stage of four parts (non-sequential). Details of each part can be seen below:

Stage	Assessment
Stage 3A	Table produced setting out the overall assessment scores of each site. Quantified to determine which sites are most suitable for potential allocation. Findings from Stage 1 and 2 of the assessment and the conclusions from the Sustainability Appraisal assessed. Combined results used to determine which sites are to be taken forward. Sites that performed poorly in the Sustainability Appraisal not taken forward.
Stage 3B	Sites subdivided according to the Sub Housing Market Area (Sub HMA) within which they are located. An assessment is made based on the contribution each site will make towards required housing land supply in each Sub HMA.
Stage 3C	Confirmation made as to whether each site is deliverable and developable. Consideration given to the potential phasing of development and how this would impact delivery. Officers consider all available evidence in determining whether the development of a site would be viable.
Stage 3D	An assessment of capacity to establish how much development a site can bring forward is undertaken. This will depend on the location and local character, type of development promoted, mix of units, density assumptions as well as any factors which will reduce the developable area such as provision for green space or avoiding floodplain and/or other areas of constraint. This will be informed by officer judgement and in some cases discussions with landowners.
Shortlist of sites to be further discussed ahead of inclusion in Proposed LDP2	

- 5.2. Each site that was either proposed to be allocated or not proposed to be allocated was subsequently presented to elected members and Council officers from a range of services through the Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) process². Those sites that were considered suitable for allocation by MOWG were agreed and collated. An updated list of preferred sites was subsequently drawn up and submitted for Examination as part of the Proposed LDP2.
- 5.3. A list of all sites assessed is detailed in the following separate Appendices (split by Council ward). Information pertaining to the site selection process for each site as described within this document is presented as scores and ranking. A narrative explaining the selection process that has taken place in addition to and informed by scoring is also provided.

Appendix Number	Ward Number	Ward Name
Appendix 1	Ward 1	Annick
Appendix 2	Ward 2	Kilmarnock North
Appendix 3	Ward 3	Kilmarnock West & Crosshouse
Appendix 4	Ward 4	Kilmarnock East & Hurlford
Appendix 5	Ward 5	Kilmarnock South
Appendix 6	Ward 6	Irvine Valley
Appendix 7	Ward 7	Ballochmyle
Appendix 8	Ward 8	Cumnock & New Cumnock
Appendix 9	Ward 9	Doon Valley

² For expediency, not every site was discussed in full during the MOWG meetings, however, those that were not discussed were assessed either within the Development Planning & Regeneration team or fell within the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). Five such sites were proposed for allocation in the Proposed LDP2 (CH-H3, KK-H6, KK-H8, ST-H1 & ST-H2).

