



National Planning Improvement Framework

Attribute 11: The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, livable and productive places



A high performing planning authority should demonstrate place leadership by taking a collaborative place-based approach in line with the Place Principle. It should use the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes in decision-making processes, to achieve the three spatial principles outlined in NPF4: Sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; Liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and Productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy. The planning authority should seek to ensure that there are no impediments to delivering agreed development.

The Planning Authority fully recognises the need for sustainable, liveable and productive places, as a fundamental aim of the planning system. This can be demonstrated through recent policy preparation, development on the ground and recent planning application decisions.

The spatial strategy of Local Development Plan 2

The place and wellbeing outcomes, whilst not explicitly referred to in the recently adopted East Ayrshire LDP2, align with the aims and principles of the plan, particularly through its spatial strategy. As detailed in Attribute 6, the spatial strategy of LDP2, adopted in the April 2024 is robust and detailed, setting out the keys ways in which development should aim to achieve the vision of the Plan 'strong, healthy, resilient communities' with a 'fairer, greener and more inclusive economy'. The LDP2 spatial strategy focuses on many elements that are covered by the Place and Wellbeing outcomes including supporting and expanding natural places, creating robust active travel networks and making better use of land and resources through incentivising the take up of vacant and derelict land. Policy SS2 an overarching policy of LDP2 links to the spatial strategy, ensuring that all proposals align with the overall spatial strategy of the Plan.

By having a clear spatial strategy which embraces the overall ethos of the place and wellbeing outcomes, the Plan sets at firm direction for the type of development it will support and where and this is illustrated below by recent planning decisions and development achieved on the ground.

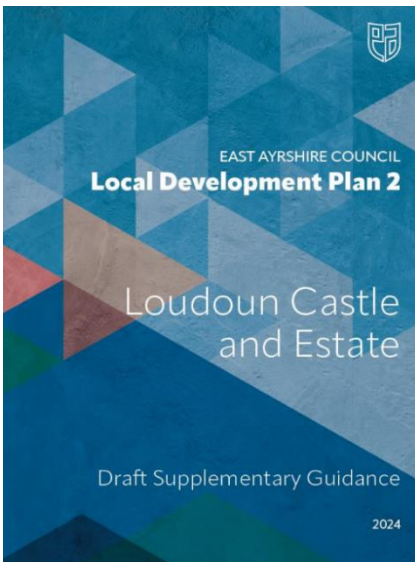
Emerging policy for Loudoun Castle and Estate

Loudoun Castle and Estate within the Irvine Valley contains the A-listed ruinous Loudoun Castle, the centrepiece of a nationally recognised Garden and Designed Landscape. Local Development Plan 2 maintains the policy approach for LDP1, which was to support the redevelopment of the estate for a leisure and tourism development, enabled by new housing development.

However, LDP2 has taken a more pro-active and structured approach to how the site could and should be developed. Draft supplementary guidance has been produced and consulted on, which gives further information on the important site assets and qualities that should be protected and gives more detailed guidance for how housing could sensitively be sited on the site. The overall purpose of the Supplementary Guidance is to promote the development of the site, but in a manner that protects the environmental integrity of it and more detail is provided in Attribute 6.

When development comes forward, it will potentially be of a significant scale, delivering both a tourist destination and a new residential community.

By taking a more structured policy-led approach, it is intended that the developer will have clearer parameters to work to, both in terms of the Estate itself but also, critically, how it integrates with existing nearby communities, to deliver a liveable and sustainable place, that contributes to the local economy and embeds the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes in future development proposals.



Delivery of innovative new amenity housing

As part of the delivery of the Councils Strategic Housing Investment Programme, the Planning Authority has worked closely with housing colleagues and other partners to create new demand-led housing and bring redundant sites back into use.

One example is Witch Road in Kilmarnock, which was previously occupied by three storey apartment blocks that were difficult to let and were a focus for anti-social behaviour. The site has been redeveloped with 43 one and two bedroom bungalows, specially aimed at older residents who may be affected by a range of mobility and other age-related medical needs, including dementia sufferers.

Design and open space details, arrived at through joint working between planning, housing, social care and the construction company, include a shared residents garden to encourage resident interaction and the use of colour to external finishes to aid wayfinding, particularly valuable for dementia sufferers.

Another purposeful design aspect was the creation of front garden seating areas outside residents own front doors where residents could sit within their own gardens, interact with each other and also interact with passers-by and feel part of the wider community which is particularly relevant for older persons. Raised planting beds are also provided within each front garden and residents have given their own front gardens their individual identity with bright planting displays adding life and vitality into the streetscene. The ethos behind the development is that by tailoring particular aspects of the design to the needs of residents, those residents can be empowered to stay in their own homes and lead independent lives for as long as possible.

This approach demonstrates a development that has placed social and wellbeing outcomes at its core. Furthermore, it was winner in the "Age Exclusive Development of the Year" category at the Scottish Home Awards 2023.



Eco tourism development

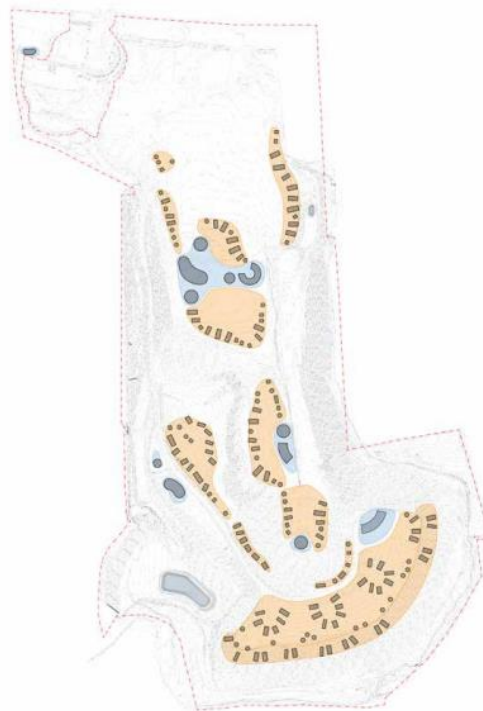
A major planning permission in principle application for an 'Eco Wellness' styled holiday and visitor destination with accommodation, educational and leisure uses, ancillary retail etc., was submitted with a limited range of high level information, on a former colliery site (designated in the Local Development Plan for a range of uses). The site had/has a range of constraints including contamination, mining residue, flooding, and a number of wildlife and ecology assets, including rare breed insects and butterflies and habitats. A Core Path and well used walking route traverses the site, and the site itself had a range of tracks for walking and wheeling. The site was/is used by naturalists for entomology study, as well as general informal recreation by the public. After many rounds of public advertisement due to submission of additional information, the application was refused at Planning Committee. Whilst in principle, the proposed use was accepted, the application was refused due to the lack of detailed information regarding how the proposed use/uses might be reasonably expected to impact upon the nature interests on site - and that the proposal did not demonstrate biodiversity enhancements commensurate with the size of the proposal.

A resubmission of the proposal was made some months later, providing the required additional information from the initial submission, with the applicant taking advice from the Report of Handling and the reasons for refusal. The applicants' agent also met with Council officers to ascertain their concerns, to try and address these. This, more collaborative, resubmission process

gave the Planning Authority a greater confidence that the site could be developed in a manner which protected both the nature interests of the site, and facilitated a development that could provide a range of environmental, economic, social and health and wellbeing benefits for the area. This would include active travel benefits, both for long stay patrons, day visitors through the ethos of the eco-style business model, and for the public accessing the Core Path through the site, using the natural or semi-naturalised rural nature of the site, and the use of non-motorised/fossil fuel travel.



Scott Brownrigg's refused masterplan proposal



New Boomhaus masterplan proposal

If developed according to the approved documents, this could ultimately create a more balanced health and wellbeing hub development where recreation could be accommodated with educational elements with ecology and landscaped hubs, sport and play activities including the more commonly found facilities such as off road cycle tracks and walking routes but also less traditional pursuits such as a market garden, yoga studio, brewery, and civic spaces such as café and restaurant and reception (hotel/bar /meeting spaces etc.).

As well as attaching conditions which would ensure targeted surveys for wildlife, and information on the various physical constraints such as mining and contamination matters, an Access Management Plan was conditioned to ensure the public access function to the site would continue to best protect the interests of both the patrons of the development and the public who frequently access the site via the Core Path, including the submission of details of how the existing path network shall be maintained and improved, to provide connectivity between the site and its surroundings and linkages beyond to the wider recreational path network.



Illustrative render of potential accommodation raised off the ground on stilts

Cafe Restaurant



CGI image of the cafe/restaurant building

Spa



CGI image of the spa building

In summary the resubmission, and engagement with the Planning Service allowed for a more balanced outcome that protected the nature interests of the site, whilst facilitating a large scale leisure use that promotes active travel and recreation, and allows public use through interlinked spaces and civic nodes within the site and promotes connections beyond the site to the existing recreation network which all embraces the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

(Plan and photo extracts taken from approved Design and Access Statement prepared by boomhaus for Barony)

New land release housing development and raising design standards

The Planning Authority has recently been reviewing how it approaches the design and layout of new housing estates in order to raise design standards and create improved quality in new residential areas and putting placemaking principles at the heart. The aim here is also to encourage and inspire pride in our wider council area.

We recently considered and approved a housing remix in a large land release to the north of Kilmarnock. We sought improvements in the design, layout and front garden areas with a hedging mix in order to better reflect the location of the land release next to the countryside, enhanced biodiversity and a more softer and pleasing outlook.

This will help create a sense of pride in its location, relate better to the rural edge of Kilmarnock and seek improved designs as we also seek to reduce the dominance of timber boundary treatments and lessen the impact of frontage car parking. The housebuilder concerned responded positively to the discussions and we hope to continue this improved partnership working in the future with housebuilders in future residential areas.



HALO – Former Diageo (Johnnie Walker) Bottling site

The HALO site incorporates the new Kilmarnock College and the HALO Digital, Cyber and Innovation park which is a net zero carbon mixed use development providing its residents and the wider community with jobs, economic growth, skills development, access to employment opportunities, clean energy and housing and is led by a masterplan approach. Planning Permission for the masterplan was granted in 2018.



The Planning Service are currently in collaborative discussions on a pre application basis with the housing phase of the Halo development. These discussions centre on a new approach to place-making, design, layout, materiality and ancillary features such as boundary treatments and street furniture for East Ayrshire building on the placemaking and the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

These discussions seek to continue the quality adventurous design of the HALO development in order to create a statement for Kilmarnock's future development aspirations. By strongly encouraging a dense and modern designed development in a central location that has the advantage of proximity to the town centre and major transport nodes, that encourages local living, we hope this will be a catalyst for further comparative regeneration and redevelopment to foster a modern community for East Ayrshire to build upon for future generations. We want this site to continue to create a statement in order to create a sense of pride in the local environment and bring environmental, economic, social and health and wellbeing benefits resulting in a "showcase" development which utilises the centrally located site to its full potential for our community. We hope to report progress on this site in the next National Planning Improvement Framework.