



National Planning Improvement Framework

Attribute 6: The planning authority has a robust policy and evidence base



A high performing planning authority needs to have an effective local development plan and other strategies in place to provide a vision for the future of the area. It needs to be able to set and deliver on policy ambitions and priorities by clearly informing decision making and providing certainty and predictability for communities, developers and investment. The authority's development management systems need to be effective in making the right decisions about development and be efficient as possible in doing this. The planning authority makes best use of digital technology and how it manages and uses data.

Local Development Plan 2

The Planning Authority adopted LDP2 on 8th April 2024 and therefore has an up to date Local Development Plan.

The Plan was written in a number of difficult circumstances with the first Covid lockdown tying in with the publication of the Main Issues Report, and draft NPF4 being published as the Proposed Plan was nearing completion, resulting in officers delaying the publication of the Proposed Plan to try and ensure alignment.

The Plan was produced with collaboration from the LDP2 Members Officers Working Group (MOWG) which met for the first time on the 17 April 2019 and has met on more than 30 occasions thereafter. It has been a significant commitment for Elected Members on the group and for the officers involved across the Council.

Out with MOWG, the policy team have also worked closely with colleagues in Education, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the Health and Social Care Partnership and Facilities and Property Management to ensure that the implications of our site allocations on education and medical services are well understood and catered for. In addition, the Council's legal services and other local authorities have assisted with matters related to the complex issue of developer contributions.

LDP2 will ensure that decision making takes account of matters critical for East Ayrshire including the drive to achieve net-zero, community wealth building, the delivery of the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the provision of new, well designed housing and associated infrastructure that helps to achieve good placemaking and well connected, thriving communities.

The **LDP Vision** is as follows: **“East Ayrshire will be a net zero place with a thriving and diverse environment. We will have strong, healthy and resilient communities that benefit from high quality places, multi-functional green spaces and access to high quality services that are well located to maximise sustainable travel choices. Our economy will have recovered and be fairer, greener and more inclusive, with all East Ayrshire citizens able to benefit from greater economic opportunities.”**

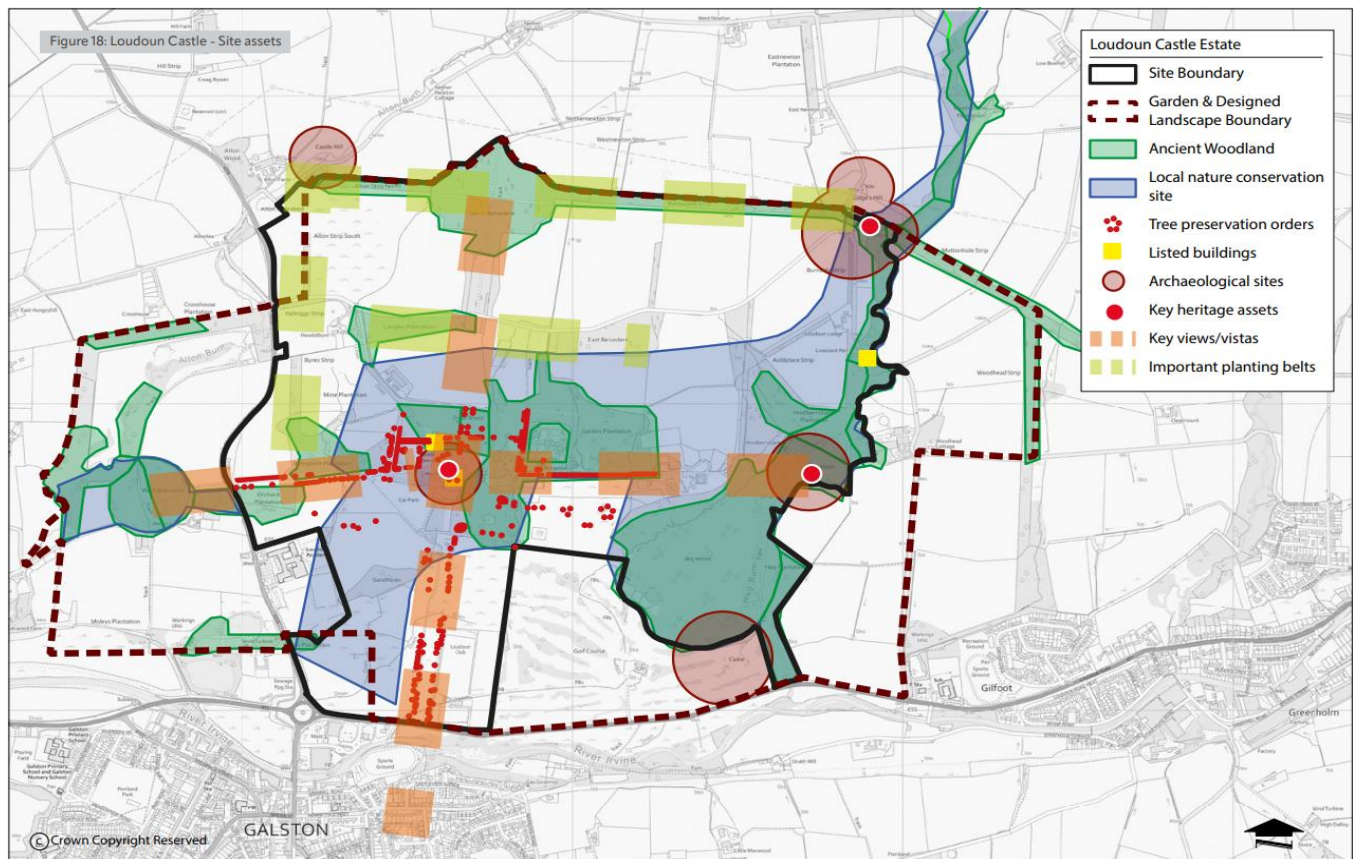
The Spatial Strategy is a fundamental part of the Plan, which sets out spatially the Council's priorities for how development should take place over the next 10 years. The spatial strategy is split over 5 themes; sustainability and green recovery; (ii) place and environment; (iii) economy and employment; (iv) transport and infrastructure; and (v) energy, resources and resilience.

Officers worked to incorporate Draft NPF4 into the Proposed Plan, and further changes to align the Plan with NPF4 were made by Planning & Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) meaning whilst the Plan was created under transitional arrangements it aligns well with NPF4 and contains the first LDP policy on Community Wealth Building in Scotland.

Supplementary and Planning Guidance

Supporting LDP2 is a wide range of supplementary and non-statutory planning guidance. Since adoption of the Plan in April, significant progress is being made on the commitment to prepare supplementary guidance to support the implementation of the policies. Supplementary Guidance on affordable housing and Financial Guarantees already has been adopted, whilst consultation on number of further guidance documents finished at the end of June, including Housing in the Countryside, Skills and Employment plan guidance, Developer Contributions and Local landscape areas. The consultation on the supplementary Guidance on the Loudoun Castle Estate has just closed. It was a substantial piece of work whereby the Council sets out how it would like the site to progress.

LDP2 identifies Loudoun Castle and Estate as a miscellaneous development opportunity site (RU-M2) within the rural area. RU-M2 stipulates that the Council will support the development of ‘Tourism & leisure, tourist accommodation & housing (only as part of a mix with the aforementioned uses)’. The site is characterised by its notable environmental assets, including the A-listed Loudoun Castle and the nationally recognised garden and designed landscape. Given the complexities of the site detailed guidance assists developers in preparing proposals which will respect the sites assets and any future development proposals.



Delivery Programme

An ambitious and comprehensive delivery programme has been prepared to support the LDP, this is one of the first in Scotland. The Delivery Programme sets out how the Council will implement the Local Development Plan 2 and is a live document which will be updated every 2 years as per the legislation. It places greater focus on delivery being used to drive outcomes rather than just monitor specific actions. The Delivery Programme was recently approved by Cabinet in June 2024. Not all the actions are dependent upon the Planning Service, or indeed the Council.

Many of the actions, in particular the delivery of housing sites are dependent upon developers and other external organisations, however the Council will monitor progress to determine when interventions may be required to assist with the long term aspirations of the Plan.

No policies in LDP2 have been found to be deficient at appeal or judicial review. No judicial review has occurred relevant to the Plan.

Regional Spatial Strategy

Following Cabinet approval on 2 September 2020 and approval by the appropriate committees of North and South Ayrshire Councils, an indicative Regional Spatial Strategy for Ayrshire was submitted to the Scottish Government on 15 September 2020. As the guidance from the Scottish government has not yet been forthcoming this has not progressed. However, officers are considering how the can become a spatial iteration of the Regional Economic Strategy for Ayrshire ([Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy \(north-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](http://north-ayrshire.gov.uk))

Local Development Plan 3

As a Planning Authority which chose to proceed through transitional arrangements with an 'old style' LDP, which has just been adopted, the evidence report is at an early stage, and on track, per the Development Plan Scheme to be completed by Q1 25/26. The development plan scheme 2024 which was approved by Cabinet on 15th May 2024.