

Draft Site Appraisal Methodology

April 2025

[Local Development Planning Guidance](#) advises that a site appraisal methodology, to be used to appraise sites and inform allocations for the Proposed Plan, can usefully be established at the Evidence Report stage. This paper sets out the proposed methodology to be used by North Ayrshire Council in the preparation of its third Local Development Plan, LDP3.

Stage 1 of the site appraisal methodology is aligned with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Assessment Framework set out in the [Environment Evidence Paper](#), which incorporates the SEA scoping report. **Stage 2** considers the deliverability of the proposal, taking account of constraints to development and available infrastructure. **Stage 3** considers the benefits of development, including in relation to community wealth building.

All existing sites allocated within LDP2 (which are not complete or under construction); sites which come forward through the 'Call for Ideas' exercise; and other sites identified by the Council with development potential will be subject to assessment – no site will automatically roll forward from one plan to the next without being assessed. The outputs of the appraisal will inform the preparation of LDP3.

It is the responsibility of North Ayrshire Council as the Planning Authority to undertake the three-stages of the site appraisal in accordance with the methodology. Individuals, community groups, landowners and/or developers promoting sites via the 'Call for Ideas' are not expected to assess their sites but are encouraged to provide information to assist the Council in the appraisal.

Stage 1 – Environmental Assessment

Stage 1 of the site appraisal will assess each site against the nine SEA objectives set out in SEA Assessment Framework, using the assessment questions. For each of the nine topics, a score of between -2 and 2 will be awarded, where 0 equals no or a neutral impact. This score will take account of potential mitigation and enhancement measures.

| Stage 1 Assessment | Score |
|------------------------|-------|
| Significantly positive | 2 |
| Positive | 1 |
| Neutral | 0 |
| Adverse | -1 |
| Significantly adverse | -2 |

In relation to water, the flood risk of every site must be fully understood at the time of appraisal. This can be via the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, for example the site is clearly shown to be within or outwith an area of flood risk or if not, that a submitted Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken.

The duration of the effects identified, and any potential cumulative and/or synergistic effects, will be considered as part of the SEA once preferred options and reasonable alternatives have been established. This will be set out in the Environmental Report. This stage of the SEA will be informed by the site appraisal and evaluate the combined significance of any overlapping effects and judge whether, together, they result in a greater effect than would occur individually. Synergies can result in new effects and could magnify individual effects, both adversely and advantageously.

Stage 2 – Deliverability Assessment

In addition to being place-based and people-centred, Local Development Plans should be delivery-focused. All sites proposed to be allocated for development in plans will be assessed for their deliverability through Stage 2 of the site appraisal process. Taking an 'infrastructure-first' approach is central to this: considering the infrastructure implications at every stage of the plan making process. Infrastructure considerations will inform site selection and the evolution of the spatial strategy.

Stage 2 of the site appraisal methodology considers the deliverability of sites by assessing key factors relating to delivery, including the capacity and condition of relevant infrastructure. NPF4 defines 'deliverable land' as 'land that is free from constraints or there is a commitment to overcome constraints'. In the context of housing land, the definition extends to development that is able to be delivered in the period identified for the site within the Deliverable Housing Land Pipeline. LDP3 will be required to allocate Deliverable Land to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement. The Deliverable Housing Land Pipeline is the expected sequencing of the Local Housing Land Requirement over the short (1-3 years), medium (4-6 years) and long-term (7-10 years), to be set out in the Delivery Programme.

Information gathered at this stage and the assessment will inform both site selection and the Delivery Programme. Sites which are proposed to be allocated should be free of constraints as far as possible. Where constraints exist, sites can still be regarded as deliverable providing that the actions required to remove any constraints are established and there is a commitment and timescale to do so. The actions required to deliver allocated sites will be set out in the Delivery Programme.

A score of between -2 and 2 will be awarded against each criterion as follows:

| Stage 2 Assessment | Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Objective met | 2 |
| Objective can be met | 1 |
| Neutral or not applicable | 0 |
| Objective unlikely to be met | -1 |
| Objective cannot be met | -2 |

Stage 3 – Community Benefit and Wealth Building Assessment

North Ayrshire Council launched Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Strategy in 2020. Community Wealth Building is viewed as a key mechanism for delivering a wellbeing economy for North Ayrshire – an economy which works for people and planet. This aligns with the requirement for development planning to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest, contributing to sustainable development and the achievement of the National Performance Framework National Outcomes which describe the kind of Scotland we want to see.

Policy 25 of NPF4 supports development proposals which contribute to community wealth building strategies and are consistent with local economic priorities. Accordingly, stage 3 of the site appraisal methodology considers how proposals can provide benefit to local communities, including its potential contribution to the five pillars of our [Community Wealth Building Strategy](#) concerning diverse ownership, fair employment, financial power, land and assets and procurement.

The same scoring mechanism as at Stage 2 will apply.

Responding to the Draft Site Appraisal Methodology

Comments on this Draft Site Appraisal Methodology should be submitted by email to ldp@north-ayrshire.gov.uk no later than **Monday 30 June 2025**. The views of stakeholders will be reflected in the Evidence Report and the final methodology adopted.

Site Assessment Matrix

Stage 1 – Environmental Assessment

| Topic | Biodiversity | Population and human health | Soil | Water | Air | Climatic Factors | Material Assets | Cultural Heritage | Landscape |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Objective | Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity | Protect and enhance quality of life | Maintain and improve soil quality | Reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment | Maintain and improve air quality | Minimise greenhouse gas (GHS) emissions and adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change | Promote the sustainable use and management of material assets | Protect and enhance the historic environment and its setting | To safeguard and enhance landscape character |
| Sub-Objective(s) | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper | See Environment Evidence Paper |
| Relevant Spatial Data and Assessments | Map of biodiversity designations Map of North Ayrshire's woodlands | North Ayrshire 20-Minute Neighbourhood analysis Open Space Audit | Map of agricultural land quality and carbon rich soils and peatland | Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Water Classification Hub | Blank | Blank | North Ayrshire Vacant & Derelict Land | Map of cultural heritage designations | Map of Landscape Character Areas and Designations Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study |
| Assessment Questions | Will the proposal protect both designated and non-designated sites from adverse impacts? Will the proposal contribute towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including strengthening nature networks? Will the proposal protect and expand forest, woodland and trees? | Is the proposal consistent with the principle of local living? Will the proposal promote and enhance access to open space/green networks? Will the proposal have a positive impact on health and wellbeing? | Will the proposal have an adverse impact on high value agricultural land? Will the proposal protect and enhance carbon rich soils? Will the proposal contribute to maintaining or improving soil health and function? | Will the proposal protect and enhance water quality? Will the proposal increase the number of people or properties at risk of flooding? | Will the proposal avoid adverse impacts to air quality? Will the proposal contribute to reducing emissions of key pollutants? Will the proposal contribute to reducing levels of nuisance? | Will the proposal minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions? Will the proposal promote climate change adaptation? Will the proposal prioritise sustainable travel in accordance with the hierarchy | Will the proposal support development of renewable technologies? Is the proposal consistent with the waste hierarchy? Will the proposal promote and facilitate the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings? | Will the proposal safeguard both designated and non-designated sites from adverse impacts? Will the proposal enable the positive re-use of historic environment assets? Will the proposal improve the resilience to climate change of the historic environment? | Will the proposal have an adverse impact on the special qualities of a designated landscape or area of wild land? Will the proposal maintain or enhance the landscape character of the area? |
| Assessment | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed |

| Topic | Biodiversity | Population and human health | Soil | Water | Air | Climatic Factors | Material Assets | Cultural Heritage | Landscape |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Potential Mitigation and Enhancement | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed |
| Summary | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed |
| Overall Score | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 |

Stage 2 – Deliverability Assessment

(note: not all topics will be applicable to non-housing proposals)

| Topic | Ownership | Marketability | Viability | Access & Accessibility | Water and Wastewater Capacity | GP Capacity | School Capacity |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Objective | Site owned or controlled by a developer / Site owned by a public body and identified for disposal / Landowner interest in development | Site located in area with sales potential (taking account of market absorption factors) and/or developer has track record of delivery | Site is viable taking into account land values, expected sales values, site abnormalities and infrastructure requirements | Access to the site is available, without needing third party agreement or a formal agreement is in place | Existing capacity at Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment Works | Existing capacity at catchment primary and secondary schools | Existing capacity at catchment primary and secondary schools |
| Assessment | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Informed by Scottish Water | To Be Informed by NHS Ayrshire & Arran | To Be Completed by NAC Education |
| Potential Mitigation and Enhancement | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Informed by Scottish Water | To Be Informed by NHS Ayrshire & Arran | To Be Completed by NAC Education |
| Summary | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Informed by Scottish Water | To Be Informed by NHS Ayrshire & Arran | To Be Completed by NAC Education |
| Overall Score | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 |

Stage 3 – Community Benefit

(note: not all topics will be applicable to non-housing proposals)

| Topic | Local Housing Requirements (including affordable housing) | Local infrastructure, facilities and services | Residential amenity | Community Wealth Building – Diverse Ownership | Community Wealth Building – Fair Employment | Community Wealth Building – Financial Power | Community Wealth Building – Land and Assets | Community Wealth Building – Procurement |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Objective | Meets local housing requirements, including affordable homes | Proposal provides or enhances local infrastructure, facilities and services | Proposal improves the residential amenity of the surrounding area | Enable SMEs, employee-owned businesses, cooperatives and community enterprises to locally generate wealth to stay within the community | Create fair pay, local recruitment, progression and training opportunities | Maximise the impact of financial investment and grow local businesses, enhance innovation and empower communities | Maximise the function and ownership of land and buildings for the benefit of communities and enterprises | Goods and services are bought locally, creating dense local supply chains |
| Assessment | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed |
| Potential Mitigation and Enhancement | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed |
| Summary | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed | To Be Completed |
| Overall Score | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 | 2 / 1 / 0 / -1 / -2 |