



Development Plan Scheme

November 2023



**LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN**



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Air a Tuath



Development Plan Scheme 2023

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Introduction

The development plan for North Ayrshire comprises the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP2) and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). North Ayrshire Council adopted the [current Local Development Plan](#) on 28 November 2019. Scottish Ministers adopted [National Planning Framework 4](#) on 13 February 2023.

This Development Plan Scheme (DPS) sets out North Ayrshire Council's programme for preparing and reviewing LDP2. It includes a proposed timetable, including timing of the main stages of LDP preparation; details of what is involved at each stage; and a Participation Statement outlining when consultation is likely to take place, how and with whom. Planning authorities are required to prepare and publish a Development Plan Scheme at least annually. The [previous Development Plan Scheme](#) was adopted by the Planning Committee and published in October 2022.

The 2020 Development Plan Scheme, approved by Planning Committee in June 2020, set out the intention to prepare North Ayrshire's next local development plan (LDP3) under the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, once enacted. This legislation is at the centre of reforms to the Scottish planning system, including to the way local development plans are prepared, aiming to make LDPs more effective, with greater community involvement in their preparation and more focus on delivery.

The new legislative provisions and regulations relating to the development planning system came into force on 19 May 2023 and [local development planning guidance](#), setting out the Scottish Ministers' expectations for implementing this new system, was also published in May. The guidance has enabled a more informed timetable for the preparation of North Ayrshire's third Local Development Plan to be proposed. The new timetable envisages adoption of LDP3 on or before **March 2027**.

In addition to being place-based and delivery-focused, new-style local development plans are expected to be people-centred. This means putting people and communities at the heart of a collaborative process to prepare LDP3 in a way that meets people's needs and aspirations and tackles inequalities. The Draft Participation Statement sets out our intentions around ensuring engagement on LDP3 is early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate.

Any individual or organisation interested in the preparation of the development plan for North Ayrshire, including the details of future consultation events, is encouraged to [sign up to our mailing list](#) to receive updates direct to their mailbox.

Proposed Timetable

The [Local Development Planning Guidance](#) (May 2023) states that every planning authority in Scotland should have a new style LDP in place within around 5 years of the Regulations coming into force i.e. by May 2028. Plan preparation should take around 3-4 years from the publication of the first Development Plan Scheme to adoption. Taking this DPS, the first to be prepared since the Regulations came into force, as the starting point the proposed timetable for the preparation and adoption of North Ayrshire’s third Local Development Plan set out below envisages adoption of LDP3 within three-and-a-half years.

Key Stage	2022 Development Plan Scheme	Target Date
Publication of Evidence Report	Jan-Mar 2024 (Q4 2023/24)	Oct-Dec 2024 (Q3 2024/25)
Publication of Proposed Plan	Jan-Mar 2025 (Q4 2024/25)	Oct-Dec 2025 (Q3 2025/26)
Submission of Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers	July-Sept 2025 (Q2 2025/26)	Apr-Jun 2026 (Q1 2026/27)
Expected Adoption of LDP3	April-June 2026 (Q1 2026/27)	Jan-Mar 2027 (Q4 2026/27)

Note: in accordance with the Local Development Planning Guidance, the timetable for preparing North Ayrshire’s third Local Development Plan (LDP3) uses ‘quarters’ where Quarter 1 = April-June, Quarter 2 = July-Sept, Quarter 3 = Oct-Dec, Quarter 4 = Jan-March.

Recent Development Plan Schemes have attempted to anticipate both the commencement date of the relevant parts of the 2019 Act and the requirements and expectations surrounding the preparation of ‘new look’ local development plans. Now the legislative provision and regulations have come into force and guidance has been published the proposed timetable has been revised.

An additional nine months has been added to the target date for the publication of the Evidence Report. Consequently, target dates for the publication of the Proposed Plan; submission of the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers and expected date of adoption have been amended accordingly.

The changes to the timetable, specifically the additional time given towards preparation and publication of the Evidence Report, reflect the later than previously anticipated publication of the local development planning guidance; the importance of the Evidence Report as a key stage in the preparation of the LDP3; and the time required to satisfy the legal requirements relating to its content and preparation. The additional time will allow for further opportunities for engagement with a range of stakeholders.

Key Stages

The following section of the 2023 Development Plan Scheme details what is involved in each stage of preparation of North Ayrshire's third Local Development Plan.

Early Engagement & Data Collection

➤ We are at this stage in the preparation of LDP3

In accordance with our 2022 Development Plan Scheme, the Planning Service has undertaken early engagement during the last 12 months, including with other Council services, Elected Members, key agencies and community councils in advance of commencing work on North Ayrshire's third Local Development Plan (see Appendix 1 for a record of engagement undertaken to date).

In March 2023 we launched an [online hub](#) to support the preparation of LDP3, including the launch of the 'Your Place' survey, based on the Place Standard. We have engaged with Council tenants; locality planning partners and children and young people via Joint Cabinet, Youth Council, Joint Youth Forum and meeting North Ayrshire Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP).

Scoping has been undertaken to consider the matters to be addressed in the Evidence Report; the relevant baseline information needed for each issue; the need for primary data collection; the stakeholders to be involved in collating and reviewing data and a timetable for this work. A programme of data collection has commenced with several audits and studies initiated to inform the Evidence Report:

- Housing Land Audit (completed annually)
- Employment Land Audit (completed annually)
- Employment Land Requirement Study
- Town Centre Audits
- Open Space Audit
- Local Nature Conservation Site Review
- Local Landscape Area Review
- Retail Capacity Study

We are also undertaking a Transport Evidence Review and working with Education Services and NHS Ayrshire & Arran to understand the capacity of our major infrastructure.

Evidence Report

Under the new system for local development planning, the first output in the process of preparing a local development plan is an Evidence Report. This is a new stage, replacing the 'Main Issues Report'. The Evidence Report aims to clearly inform what to plan *for* before the Proposed Plan looks at *where* development should take place. The Evidence Report therefore will not consider specific sites but instead provide a

summary of the baseline data and information needed to inform a deliverable, place-based and people-focused LDP.

During 2024 our focus will be on the preparation of an Evidence Report.

To support the preparation of the Evidence Report, we will draft and publish **Place Profiles** for each locality in North Ayrshire. These will set out key baseline information and data, summarise early engagement to date and reflect on the outcomes of other recent and current community engagement initiatives such as Charrettes, Local Place Frameworks and Island Plans. A topic specific paper on housing issues will also be prepared.

Engagement on the Place Profiles and housing paper will enable public and stakeholders to comment on data collected, providing an opportunity to sense check our understanding and to supply further information and views on the needs and aspiration for the places in North Ayrshire people live, work and visit. The profiles, in addition to the feedback received, will form the basis of the Evidence Report.

The Evidence Report must be approved by the full Council before it is submitted to the Scottish Ministers. We will aim to publish the Evidence Report following Council approval by **December 2024**.

Gate Check

Once the Evidence Report has been considered and approved by full Council, it will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for a Gate Check. This is also a new stage in the process for preparing a local development plan and is principally the responsibility of the person appointed by Scottish Ministers, expected to be a Reporter from the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA). The appointed person will provide an independent assessment as to whether the report contains sufficient information.

The Reporter will either decide there is sufficient information, and we may then move to prepare and publish a Proposed Plan or, where they are not satisfied that there is sufficient information, prepare an 'assessment report' setting out the reasons for not being satisfied and recommendations for improving the Evidence Report.

The length of the Gate Check is estimated at 3 months by DPEA, however, will be determined by the number of disagreements with the evidence and the requirement for further information and/or hearing sessions.

Proposed Plan

We aim to move quickly from successfully completing the gate check to preparation of the Proposed Plan. To support this process, we will carry out a '**Call for Ideas**'. This will be open to everyone to propose ideas for any aspect of the new local development plan, not limited specifically to suggestions for development sites or types of development e.g., housing.

The Proposed Plan will be our settled view on the policies and proposals that will make up LDP3, including where new development should take place and where it should not. In preparing the Proposed Plan, we will consider submissions made at the Call for Ideas stage; registered Local Place Plan and any other place-based community-led plans; and undertake further engagement with stakeholders to test proposals to be included within the Plan.

The Proposed Plan requires the approval of the full Council. Once Council has had the opportunity to consider and approves the Proposed Plan, it will be published to allow any representations from stakeholders, including the general public, which seek to make changes to the plan, for a period of at least 12 weeks.

Following the close of the period for representations on the Proposed Plan, we may make modifications to the plan to take account of representations, consultation responses or correct minor drafting and technical matters. A Modification Report, if necessary, will set out any modifications made and explain the reasons for making them and for not making changes where matters have been raised in significant numbers.

We will then republish the Proposed Plan and submit it to Scottish Ministers, who will examine any unresolved representations via an Examination.

We will aim to publish the Proposed Plan for consultation by **December 2025** and submit to Scottish Ministers in **June 2026**.

Examination

The examination is the opportunity for independent consideration of any issues raised during the formal consultation on the Proposed Plan that have not been resolved through modifications. Scottish Ministers will appoint a person, known as a Reporter, to examine the Proposed Plan, starting with whether the consultation and involvement of the public in the preparation of the plan meets or exceeds the requirements of the Participation Statement.

The scope of the examination is limited only to issues raised in unresolved representations. These issues will be set out in the summary of issues prepared by the planning authority and it is the Reporter who will determine the form the Examination will take. Only where the Reporter feels they do not have all the information they need to make a proper assessment of an issue will they request further information from any person.

The Reporter will provide conclusions and recommendations for each of the unresolved issues identified at the start of the Examination process.

Adoption

Following receipt of the examination report from the Reporter – and subject to the recommendations of the Reporter on the unresolved representations – we will progress to adopt LDP3, further modified as required.

As with the Gatecheck, it is difficult to be certain how long the examination of the Proposed Plan will take. This will be determined by the number of issues being examined, the requirement for further information to be submitted; the need for any hearing sessions; resources available to DPEA, among other factors. Our programme allows for a six-month examination with a further three months to adopt the plan.

Notwithstanding the potential for the examination to take longer than six months, we anticipate adopting LDP3 on or before **March 2027**. It is noted that the local election expected to take place in May 2027 could have an impact on the adoption date of LDP3, especially if there is any delay in the timetable.

Monitoring & Delivery

Whilst the adoption of a plan is a significant milestone, it is not the end point. Monitoring will form a feedback loop, providing data that will be needed for the evidence gathering for amendment of the plan, or the next LDP and – in line with the aspiration to achieve a delivery focussed system – focus will turn to facilitating development that supports the spatial strategy, in particular developments that are proposals of the plan.

A key component of this is the Delivery Programme, which we are required to adopt and publish a within 3 months of the LDP being constituted. A draft Delivery Programme will be published alongside the Proposed Plan in December 2025.

Participation Statement

The Participation Statement forms an important part of the Development Plan Scheme and sets out when consultation is likely to take place, with whom and its likely form, including the steps to be taken to involve the public in the preparation of the local development plan.

To inform this Participation Statement we published an [Engagement Survey](#) seeking views on how we should publicise LDP3 and its engagement opportunities; how people would like to be involved in LDP3 and how we could reach more people to involve them in the local development plan process. We would welcome further responses to the Engagement Survey and comments on this Participation Statement to allow interested stakeholders to have a say in how they can be most effectively involved.

Throughout the preparation of LDP3 we will develop and tailor our approach to engagement and seek to ensure it is effective and update our Participation Statement on an annual basis as part of the Development Plan Scheme. Guidance on effective community engagement in local development planning guidance is also expected to be published by the Scottish Government in accordance with new planning legislation and will also inform our approach.

Comments on the Participation Statement can be emailed to: ldp@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

When engagement will take place:

We will engage and consult with stakeholders throughout the preparation of LDP3. In line with our proposed timetable and the key stages, there are five distinct opportunities for engagement:

1) **Early Engagement** – ongoing to Q4 2023/24

The aim of this stage is to increase awareness and understanding of the LDP process amongst stakeholders and to gather information from communities on the needs and aspirations for the places in which they live over the next 10-20 years. Up to April 2024 we will continue to promote and seek responses to the 'Your Place' survey, including via our [online hub](#).

2) **Place Profiles** – Q2 2024/25

We will prepare and consult on 'Place Profiles' for each locality in North Ayrshire setting out key baseline information, summarising early engagement to that point and reflect on the outcomes of other recent and current community engagement initiatives. The purpose of engagement at this stage will be to sense check the information that will make up our Evidence Report and inform LDP3.

3) **Call for Ideas** – Q1 2025/26

To support the preparation of a Proposed Plan, we will carry out a 'Call for Ideas'. This will be an invitation open to everyone to propose ideas for any aspect of the new local development plan.

4) **Proposed Plan engagement – Q2 2025/26**

At the point where we are drafting the Proposed Plan we will engage with stakeholders to seek their views on proposals, including those submitted at the 'Call for Ideas' stage, before they are included in the plan.

5) **Proposed Plan consultation – Q4 2025/26**

Once Council has approved the Proposed Plan it will be published to allow any representations from stakeholders, including the general public, which seek to make changes to the plan for a period of at least 12 weeks.

Who engagement will take place with:

We want to ensure that everyone – either as an individual or on behalf of a group, organisation, body or company – with an interest in North Ayrshire as a place to live, work or visit is involved in the preparation of LDP3. Identified stakeholders include:

- North Ayrshire residents
- Elected Members, MPs & MSPs
- Children and young people
- Community Bodies, including Community Councils
- Locality Planning Partnerships
- Other Community and Interest Groups, including the Third Sector
- Landowners and Developers
- Business and Industry
- Key Agencies (Nature Scot, SEPA, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Historic Environment Scotland, SPT, Scottish Forestry, the Crofting Commission, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, and Transport Scotland)
- Infrastructure providers
- North Ayrshire Council Departments

How engagement will take place:

We want to make it as easy as possible for everyone with an interest to engage in the preparation of LDP3. Responses to the Engagement Survey have expressed support for:

- In-person exhibitions: drop-in events in convenient locations for communities
- Online exhibitions: material hosted online to provide information
- Workshops: interactive session to facilitate community involvement
Online workshops: interactive sessions to facilitate community involvement (both in-person and online)
- Online resources: using social media and an online hub to gather views and enable the submission of comments.

- Tailored resources: bespoke resources tailored to particular groups which make it easier to participate.

In the first instance, we welcome the opportunity to speak to both individuals and groups to understand the method of engagement that works best for them.

Finally, in accordance with [Planning Circular 2/2021](#), we will consider opportunities to use mediation as a means of exploring, resolving or reducing disagreement in the preparation of LDP3. Mediation is one of a range of techniques sometimes labelled as 'alternative dispute resolution (ADR)' which can include facilitation, conciliation and arbitration as well as mediation. These techniques can be used to help to resolve issues of dispute.

Whether facilitated by an independent third-party or not, there may be scope to use mediation to resolve differences and build support for proposals through discussion and negotiation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan. Mediation is a voluntary process; no stakeholders in the process of preparing LDP3 will be required to enter into mediation.

Local Place Plans

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduces a new right for communities to produce Local Place Plans (LPPs). The aim of LPPs is to enhance engagement in development planning by empowering communities to play a proactive role in defining the future of their places by setting out their proposals for the use and development of land. In preparing a Local Development Plan, planning authorities must take into account registered Local Place Plans.

Secondary legislation to govern the implementation of LPPs came into force in January 2022 and [Planning circular 1/2022](#) provides further guidance on their preparation.

On 19 May 2023, in accordance with Section 15A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 we published an [invitation](#) to community bodies in North Ayrshire to prepare a local place plan.

Community bodies that intend to prepare a local place plan were encouraged to submit a 'notice of intention to prepare a local place plan' by completing the notice of intention online form. Five community councils to date have expressed an interest in preparing a local place plan: Cumbrae, Fairlie, Largs, Stevenston and West Kilbride. In addition, community groups in the Garnock Valley are exploring the preparation of a place-based plan.

We want to support and work with community bodies who wish to develop Local Place Plans to maximise their potential to inform LDP3. This is alongside existing initiatives such as Local Place Frameworks being prepared in Largs, Kilwinning and Saltcoats and Islands Plans for Arran and Cumbrae. A Handbook setting out local guidance and the support available to local communities to prepare local place plans will be shared with bodies expressing their intention to prepare a local place plan at the beginning of 2024.

Impact Assessments

A number of different assessments must be undertaken to support the preparation of LDP3. These assessments are an integral part of the plan making process and should inform and be informed by the plan as it is prepared. They are:

- Equalities Impact Assessment;
- Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment;
- Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment;
- Island Communities Impact Assessment,
- Strategic Environmental Assessment; and
- Habitats Regulations Appraisal
- Transport Assessment

Further detail on these assessments is included at Annex C of the [Local Development Planning Guidance](#).

Preparation of the Evidence Report provides the opportunity to align with the Scoping stage of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the collection of environmental baseline and engagement with the Consultation Authorities. A Scoping Report will be published alongside the Evidence Report in December 2024.

All assessments will be published in draft alongside the Proposed Plan in December 2025 and revised and updated as required.

Appendix 1 – Engagement Record

During the early engagement period, the following meetings and events have considered the preparation of North Ayrshire’s third Local Development Plan.

Date	Event
08/11/2022	Joint Cabinet
14/11/2022	West Kilbride Community Council
21/11/2022	Kilbirnie & Glengarnock Community Council
23/11/2022	Cumbrae Community Council Advisors
29/11/2022	Members Briefing with Administration - LDP
30/11/2022	Stevenston Building Stronger Communities Training
06/12/2022	NHS Ayrshire & Arran - Health Improvement Team
06/12/2022	Members Briefing with Administration - Placemaking
19/01/2023	Largs Community Council
28/01/2023	NA Community & Locality Conference
16/02/2023	Kilwinning Community Council
11/03/2023	Joint Youth Forum
17/03/2023	Youth Council
20/03/2023	Elected Member Development Session
22/03/2023	Climate Change Steering Group
23/03/2023	Largs Drop-In (LTATS & VDLS Consultation)
24/03/2023	Community Engagement Network
27/03/2023	Kilbirnie Drop-In (LTATS & VDLS Consultation)
27/03/2023	MYSP Meeting
28/03/2023	Irvine Drop-In (LTATS & VDLS Consultation)
04/04/2023	Millport Drop-In (LTATS & VDLS Consultation)
05/04/2023	Saltcoats Drop-In (LTATS & VDLS Consultation)
25/04/2023	Local Landscape Area Review Workshop - Arran
26/04/2023	North Ayrshire Tenants Network
27/04/2023	Local Landscape Area Review Workshop - Largs
11/05/2023	Local Landscape Area Review Workshop - Kilbirnie
23/05/2023	Irvine Library Drop-In
25/05/2023	Locality Planning Partnership Information Session
26/05/2023	Redburn Grove Tenants Meeting
12/06/2023	Stevenston Community Council
19/06/2023	Kilbirnie & Glengarnock Community Council
29/06/2023	Cumbrae Community Council Advisors
03/08/2023	NAC Biodiversity Partnership
23/08/2023	Sustainable North Ayrshire Mini-Enquiry: West Kilbride
06/09/2023	Irvine Community Council
18/09/2023	Transport Scotland
21/09/2023	Kilwinning Community Council

Date	Event
26/09/2023	Sustainable North Ayrshire Mini-Enquiry: Kilbirnie
28/09/2023	Sustainable North Ayrshire Mini-Enquiry: Kilwinning
04/10/2023	Arran Community Council

LTATS = Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy

VDLS = Vacant & Derelict Land Strategy