

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Council

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref Date 02/04/26

North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2: Evidence Report

From Pamela Humphries, Chief Officer (Place)

E-mail laingg@northlan.gov.uk **Telephone** Gordon Laing,
07970018874

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the draft Evidence Report for the new North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 (NLLDP2), as required by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The purpose of the Evidence Report is to compile research, data, and stakeholder views to inform land-use planning, guiding where development should or should not happen over the plan period. The Evidence Report requires to be approved by the Scottish Government's Reporter's unit (DPEA) prior to the preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan which will also be subject to approval at Council and statutory consultation. It is currently anticipated that the new Local Development Plan will be adopted by May 2028.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council

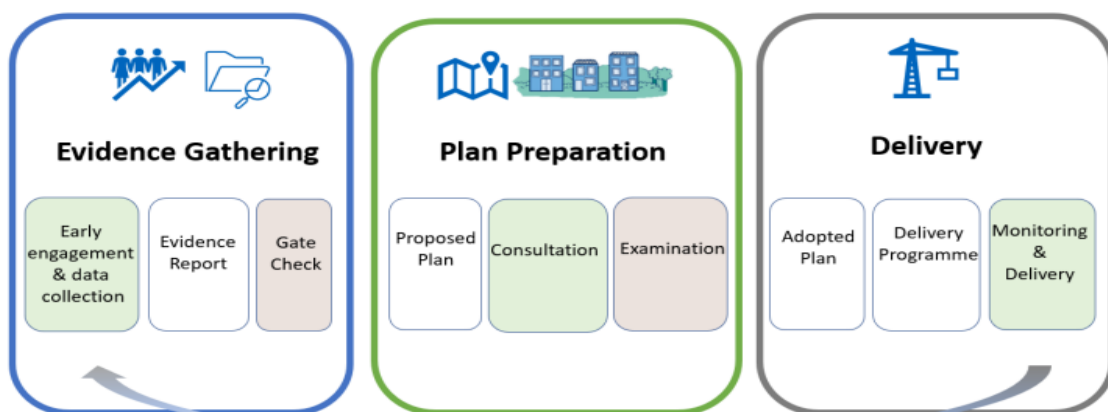
- 1) Approve the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report for submission to the DPEA, subject to any necessary final updates, background reports and minor editing.
- 2) Agree that the Chief Officer (Place) is authorised to update and re-submit the Evidence Report, if required, in response to feedback from the DPEA in order to obtain the necessary Gate check approval.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities
Ambition statement All ambition statements
Programme of Work All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (NLLDP), adopted in July 2022, sets out the spatial framework for where development should and should not occur. It guides the future use of land and is a key consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.2 Reforms to Scotland's planning system introduced through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, along with the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 and the Local Development Planning Guidance (effective from May 2023), have updated the process for preparing development plans. The Scottish Government has also recently published *Local Development Plans: Evidence Reports and Gate Checks – Action Plan and Advice Note*. While the Council was already implementing much of this advice, the note provides further clarification without altering the fundamental requirements of the Evidence Report.
- 1.3 The *Local Development Planning Guidance 2023* outlines 3 key parts to the Local Development Plan process, with a target for all LDPs to be adopted by May 2028, with new plans produced every 10 years thereafter.
- **Evidence Gathering** of data and information to inform the Plan followed by a Gate Check by the Scottish Government,
 - **Plan preparation** including production of a Proposed Plan and its Examination, followed by;
 - **Delivery** including subsequent Adoption of the plan and a Delivery Programme as well as ongoing monitoring.



- 1.4 The first stage in preparing NLLDP2 is the compilation of the Evidence Report, which brings together relevant data and analysis to inform the new plan. The Evidence Report does not include strategy, policy, or site allocations.
- 1.5 Under the Act, the Evidence Report must be approved by Full Council before being submitted to the Scottish Ministers for Gate Check. A Reporter will then assess whether the evidence is sufficient for work to progress to the Proposed Plan stage.
- 1.6 The Reporter may confirm the Evidence Report as sufficient or, if gaps are identified, may recommend withdrawal and resubmission. If the Report is deemed insufficient, a formal report will set out the reasons and required actions. The Advice Note also encourages authorities to highlight to committee the potential need for resubmission and to secure delegated authority to avoid delays. Draft Evidence Reports may be

provided to the DPEA for early feedback, and the Council has already engaged with the DPEA, submitting draft Housing and Transport chapters.

- 1.7 The Advice Note further emphasises the importance of evidence relating to housing, transport, and wider infrastructure as key priorities in the preparation of NLLDP2.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Evidence Report has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Act, the associated Regulations, and the Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance published in May 2023.

- 2.2 The baseline information and context presented has been compiled following a long process of collation of information and discussion with key internal and external stakeholders. Where a theme intersects with a corporate council theme which uses specific evidence and context in delivery of a service, plan, policy or strategy that evidence is presented along with a narrative on the corporate structures.

- 2.3 The Evidence Report sets the Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work as the clear context for defining all of the Council and Community Planning Partnership work across communities, stakeholders, and partners and the approach has been endorsed by the North Lanarkshire Partnership (NLP) Board.

2.4 Evidence Report Structure and Contents

- 2.4.1 Each chapter includes an introduction, summary of evidence and a summary of implications for the Proposed Plan.

- 2.4.2 The contents of the Evidence Report are arranged in thematic chapters as follows

1. Introduction
2. North Lanarkshire Context
3. Evaluation of NLLDP 2022
4. Natural & Built Environment
5. Climate Change, Energy & Resources
6. Housing
7. Green Belt
8. Strategic Infrastructure
9. Community Infrastructure – Local Living & 20-Minute Neighbourhoods
10. Sustainable Transport
11. Business & Economy
12. Centres Network & Retail
13. Site Assessment Methodology

- 2.4.3 Work is being undertaken by consultants to support the development of the LDP, with the following reports currently being prepared:

- Green Belt Review
- Forest and Woodland Strategy Update
- Renewables Development Landscape Sensitivity Study
- Conservation Area Assessment Process
- Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for existing areas
- Development Planning Transport Appraisal
- Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping

2.4.4 Draft versions of the Green Belt Review, Forest and Woodland Strategy Update, and a scope for Renewables Landscape Sensitivity Study have been received and are reflected within the Evidence Report. Once the final versions are received, the Evidence Report will be updated, prior to submission to the DPEA. The Evidence Report also reflects the draft Open Space Strategy, draft Local Transport Strategy and the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment which are due to be adopted prior to submission for Gatecheck. Any amendments resulting from the adoption process will be reflected in the submission.

2.5 Key Findings and Implications

2.5.1 As referenced earlier in this report a key focus for Reporters is evidence in relation to housing and infrastructure. For North Lanarkshire, with its key contribution to the regional economy, the provision of opportunity for business and economic growth is also a key part of our consideration of evidence. With regard to these topics the key findings based on the collated evidence and implications for the Local Development Plan for housing, business & economy, infrastructure and the Green Belt are outlined below.

2.5.2 Housing

- Household projections show continued growth due to demographic change, including an ageing population and smaller household sizes.
- The indicative Local Housing Land Requirement of 13,830 homes significantly exceeds the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) minimum of 7350 and highlights substantial land release requirements.
- Strong established supply exists in the 2025 Housing Land Audit, but many sites will complete before LDP2 adoption.
- An Infrastructure First approach is essential to ensure alignment with education, health, transport, utilities, digital connectivity and open space capacity.
- The Spatial Strategy should prioritise urban brownfield, promote higher density where appropriate, a mix of house types and minimise greenfield development.
- Additional land release is however likely, supported by a Call for Ideas/Sites currently underway.
- A review of the Affordable Housing Policy will be required due to a distribution of pressures across all Housing Letting Areas.

2.5.3 Business and Economy

- North Lanarkshire has extensive business and industrial land, but much is constrained by remediation, servicing and infrastructure limitations.
- Industrial vacancy rates remain exceptionally low, reflecting strong demand for business, industrial and storage and distribution development.
- Strategic Business Centres remain the key focus for market demand and economic performance and should be protected and enhanced to provide modern, high-quality space.
- Local Business Centres often contain ageing stock, with limited development activity and potential for refurbishment or repurposing.
- LDP2 should prioritise unlocking constrained, well-located sites through remediation, servicing and infrastructure alignment.
- Local Business Centres may require policy support for refurbishment, repurposing and SME focused investment aligned with 20minute neighbourhood and Community Wealth Building aims - focused investment aligned with 20-minute neighbourhood and Community Wealth Building aims.

- The ageing business estate highlights the need for energy efficient, low carbon modernisation.
- Ongoing targeted intervention is required to turn vacant and derelict land into deliverable opportunities.

2.5.4 Strategic Infrastructure

- Evidence supports an Infrastructure First approach to ensure development aligns with realistic capacity and planned investment.
- Water supply is sufficient, but wastewater treatment may require upgrades depending on development distribution.
- Electricity and gas networks have available capacity but will need reinforcement to support decarbonisation and growth.
- Residential digital connectivity is strong, but commercial full-fibre provision needs improvement.
- Existing transport networks can support current commitments; major investments (East Airdrie Link Road, Ravenscraig access improvements, City Deal projects) may influence development distribution.
- LDP2 allocations should be based on deliverable infrastructure capacity.
- Continued early engagement with infrastructure providers is essential.

2.5.5 Community Infrastructure & Local Living

- Strong need to embed Local Living principles: walkable neighbourhoods, accessible services, quality public spaces.
- The draft Open Space Strategy and draft Play Sufficiency Assessment identify overall good quality and accessibility, but there is potential targeted action required.
- Education capacity constraints exist in certain areas and must align with housing growth. Education contributions may be required where capacity is constrained.
- The Town & Community Hub Programme is reshaping service delivery and will influence future infrastructure needs.
- Some services require specific policy attention or land allocation:
 - Health and social care (pending NHS Lanarkshire estate review).
 - Burial provision, with some cemeteries reaching capacity within the next decade.
 - Town and local centres as critical Local Living anchors.
- LDP2 must integrate Local Living at settlement scale, including active travel, green networks and accessible community infrastructure.

2.5.6 Green Belt

- Meeting the identified housing and business land requirements is likely to necessitate limited Green Belt release.
- Any release must be considered using the Green Belt Review, landscape assessment findings, local living, infrastructure, sustainability and accessibility implications.
- Decisions must reflect NPF4's focus on compact growth, low carbon development and minimising land take.

2.6. Consultation and Engagement

2.6.1 The Development Plan Scheme & Participation Statement 2025 sets out North Lanarkshire Council's timetable and approach for preparing Local Development Plan 2, explaining the key stages, timescales (to adoption in 2028), and how evidence will be gathered. It also outlines how and when communities, stakeholders, and agencies will be consulted and involved throughout the plan making process. The Draft Evidence Report for Gatecheck will be shared with key partners and may be updated to reflect any final feedback.

2.6.2 During the development of the Evidence Report, a wide range of engagement and consultation activities have been undertaken. The findings and outcomes of these activities have been taken into account in the preparation of the Evidence Report. Key activities included:

- Community Engagement
 - Issued invitations for communities to prepare Local Place Plans, supported by guidance and two dedicated information-sharing events (Oct 2024 and Jan 2025).
 - Ran a four-month Place Survey (Dec 2024–Mar 2025) to identify local priorities, complemented by targeted outreach to children and young people through schools and youth forums.
 - Held an online Schools Session and engaged with them through the Place Survey and raised awareness/understanding of Planning among young people.
 - Hosted public drop-in sessions across Community Board areas (Feb 2025) to raise awareness and gather views.
- Stakeholder Engagement
 - Published NLLDP2 newsletters widely (April 2024 and January 2025) to update stakeholders on progress.
 - Delivered workshops for elected members (May 2024 and Sept 2025), youth councillors and youth parliament representatives (Feb 2025), and internal staff (Jan 2025).
 - Maintained ongoing engagement and provided updates to the Access Panel and Voice of Experience Forum to ensure inclusive participation.
 - Joint working approach with SLC to engage with Gypsy and Travellers communities and Health boards.
- Evidence Gathering
 - Conducted multiple batches of NPF4-related topic surveys between May 2024 and Jan 2025 to inform the Evidence Report.
 - Undertook landowner, housebuilder, and developer surveys (Sept 2024 and May–Aug 2025) to support housing land audits and site assessments.
- Technical and Policy Workshops
 - Held a site assessment workshop with key agencies, developers, and briefed elected members (Aug and Sept 2025).
 - Facilitated Community Board sessions (Nov 2025) to share Place Survey findings, seek views on important community issues, and discuss the draft Open Space Strategy.

- 2.6. As the Evidence Report emphasises the importance of the Plan for NL, Programme of Work, Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) and other corporate strategies, which have been subject to their own consultation and engagement, additional consultation on these matters is not part of the preparation of the LDP.
- 2.7. Next Stages
- 2.7.1 Once approved, and prior to submission, the Evidence Report will be updated and refined to reflect any feedback from the DPEA, the outcomes of final background reports, and comments from key partners, defined in legislation. Any areas of disagreement will be discussed in the final evidence report and the DPEA will consider any required resolution.
- 2.7.2 Further work will be undertaken to finalise formatting, graphic alignment, mapping and typographic presentation. A full list of core documents (currently shown as 'DOCXX' placeholders within the Report) will be prepared and inserted. The addition of references to and collation of background papers into an appendix will be completed.
- 2.7.3 The Evidence Report will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for consideration through the Gate Check process. It is proposed that the Chief Officer (Place) is authorised to submit any required edits or resubmissions arising from the Gatecheck process.
- 2.7.4 To maintain momentum in preparing NLLDP2, a Call for Sites and Ideas commenced in February 2026 and will continue throughout the Gatecheck period. Work will also continue to finalise key supporting strategies and progress stakeholder engagement in preparation for the Proposed Plan.
- 2.7.5 Further details on the anticipated timetable for NLLDP2, including the key stages of publication of the Evidence Report, publication of the Proposed Plan, submission of the Proposed Plan to the Scottish Ministers and expected adoption, are set out in the Development Plan Scheme & Participation Statement 2025.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Implementation of a statutory function, as required by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 3.2 Approval of Evidence Report at gate check review
- 3.3 Formal adoption of the new Local Development Plan by May 2028.

4. Supporting Documentation

- 4.1 A link to the evidence report will be issued under separate cover.
- 4.2 Link to [Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement 2025](#)



Pamela Humphries
Chief Officer (Place)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? The appropriate assessments will be carried out alongside preparation of the new LDP, as noted within the DPS timescales. If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes No