

Open for business: Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement & LDP2 Allocation of Housing Sites



Context

East Ayrshire Council was preparing its second local development plan under the transitional arrangements as National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was being drafted, complicating the determination of the housing land supply. Ongoing discussions with Homes for Scotland as part of the Housing Land Audit process identified that a full review of all housing land would be required to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the land supply.

The Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) was introduced as a new requirement to calculate the minimum capacity of housing land that a planning authority must allocate for residential development during the local development plan period. The determination of a Housing Supply Target (HST) and MATHLR for East Ayrshire occurred at the juncture of two Planning Acts, as well as the preparation of NPF4 and Local Development Plan 2.

This case study considers the process that East Ayrshire went through to determine the MATHLR and allocate housing land.

What Happened

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 sets out a requirement for NPF4 to include 'targets for the use of land in different areas of Scotland for housing'. The MATHLR constitutes the minimum amount of housing land to be allocated within each Local Development Plan (LDP). It is expected that LDPs should identify land to at least meet the minimum requirement or figure.

As part of the Draft NPF4 consultation exercise which encompassed all planning authorities in Scotland, representatives from the Scottish Government and Centre for Housing Market Analysis presented to East Ayrshire Council in early 2021 an initial default MATHLR estimate of 350 dwellings to be allocated during the 10-year EALDP period.

This figure was not considered to be sufficient to meet the Council's needs, particularly when the Main Issues Report (MIR) to EALDP2 stated an ambition to stabilise and increase the resident population of the area so as to address projected long term population decline, nor did it reflect the programmed rate of house completions from the 2021 Housing Land Audit which was on average 490 dwellings per year.

Discussions between the Council and the Scottish Government and CHMA to determine a MATHLR for East Ayrshire took place during spring and summer 2021. This determination was based on a methodology prepared by the CHMA as set out in the Draft NPF4: Housing Land Requirement - Explanatory Report.

Various proposals were discussed, including an initial proposal of 4100 units, the determination of which was considered by the CHMA not to be sufficiently robust. A final figure of 4050 dwellings was agreed upon after extensive discussions with the CHMA. This figure was included in Draft NPF4 when it was released for consultation in November 2021. The inclusion of the 4050 MATHLR in Draft NPF4 and NPF4 indicates that the Scottish Government considers that figure is robust and credible.

To ensure that housing land supply is sufficiently generous to allow for any unforeseen problems in the delivery of sites, additional residential capacity has been allocated 52% above the MATHLR. This addition achieves a total indicative housing land supply within allocated sites capable of accommodating development of 6145 units.

Areas of Collaboration

The work on the MATHLR and the submission to the Scottish Government was supported by Homes for Scotland and Strathclyde sub-committee members. Meetings then took place between the Scottish Government and CHMA and the Planning Authority.



In terms of the LDP, a Members Officers Working Group was established which included a range of Elected Members, and representatives from departments across the Council for example from Education, Roads, Housing, Waste. There was strong collaboration with Homes for Scotland through eight weekly meetings.

Overall Result

As a result of the substantial collaborative work put into the housing land and site selection process, the outputs and outcomes are that:

- We have a generous amount of housing land a positive to ensure that sufficient range and choice is afforded to developers, the Council and Registered Social Landlords.
- We are working towards our aim to stabilise East Ayrshire's population and stimulate population growth.
- The Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals concluded that the approach aligns with national policy, and in particular NPF4's expectation to promote an ambitious approach.
- Relationships have been strengthened with Homes for Scotland and internally between departments via the Members Officers Working Group.

Lessons Learned

- Relationships have developed: through working well internally and with Homes for Scotland this led to a smoother plan preparation and examination process. We continue to develop these relationships.
- The quality of document produced: due to the collaboration a robust and credible LDP has been produced.

This case study has been prepared in collaboration by East Ayrshire Council and the National Planning Improvement Team at the Improvement Service. We publish good practice case studies identified through our work on the National Planning Improvement Framework and the National Planning Hub. They aim to support the sharing of good practice and build collaboration across the sector in addressing common challenges. Please email us at npi@improvementservice.org.uk if your authority has a good practice case study to share.

