

National Planning Improvement

Stakeholder Engagement in North Lanarkshire Council's Housing Land Supply Review



Context

The Development Planning team are currently preparing the new Local Development Plan (LDP) under the new system introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. As part of this process, the Development Planning team are required to review the council's existing housing land supply in accordance with NPF4 which is clear that de-allocations should be considered where sites are no longer deliverable and that no housing allocations can automatically roll forward from one plan to another. This review will help us decide how much of this existing supply can be relied on to deliver housing over the period of the next LDP and which sites should be de-allocated.

The review initially looked at contacting landowners and developers with housing sites in the Housing Land Audit (2024 and 2025). The review was later rolled out to include all landowners and



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developers with a housing development site allocated in North Lanarkshire Council's Local Development Plan (NLLDP) 2022, that had been removed from the housing land supply through the annual Housing Land Audit process over the years to date. Information was gathered on the status of each site including if the site had a developer or housebuilder with an option on the site and the expected phasing of the site over the next 10-year period.

The Scottish Government published Housing Land Audit Guidance in January 2025 which requires the next Housing Land Audits produced by planning authorities to be new style Housing Land Audits. Following this, the guidance was expanded to include gathering information on the site's deliverability, including known site constraints and the next action required by the landowner or developer to bring their site forward for development. Online surveys were created to help with consultation including collaboration with both Homes for Scotland and with the Improvement Service to provide an interactive online mapping tool that allowed landowners and developers to locate their site on a map.

Through ongoing discussions, Homes for Scotland offered to 'sense check' the survey responses as to how deliverable the sites are from the housebuilders' perspective. Ahead of this meeting Homes for Scotland shared their North Lanarkshire Settlement Marketability Matrix which provided a 'ragging' of settlement marketability across North Lanarkshire from red to green. To present the information in a manageable format for discussion, the Development Planning team incorporated the survey results and the Settlement Marketability Matrix into the draft 2025 Housing Land Audit and created a Delivery Confidence Tool which ranges from low to high confidence that a site will be delivered in the period provided by the landowner/developer in their survey response. For example, if the Development Planning team have high confidence based on the information presented with, they can retain the current suggested programming. If they have medium confidence, they can push the suggested programming back one period and if there is low confidence, the Development Planning team can push the suggested programming back two periods. Homes for Scotland has been asked to assess the delivery confidence level for each site using the tool. The next steps are that once the Development Planning team receive Homes for Scotland's delivery confidence assessment, they will consider their comments and decide what can be agreed on, and any outstanding matters of disagreement will be discussed at a meeting to finalise the Housing Land Audit.

A protocol has been developed with Homes for Scotland to consider sites that can be carried forward into the next LDP on the basis of the survey, the pipeline and planning status. These include sites that are either:

- In the 10-year pipeline (assessed using the delivery confidence tool above and we have confidence the site can deliver in the plan period. This includes planning permission in principle applications)
- Have a detailed planning permission (including additional matters specified in conditions applications), or subject to a live application or minded to grant In a Community Growth Area (CGA).



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In Ravenscraig the Development Planning team had initially included planning permission in principle (PPP) applications in the second bullet point, however, in consultation with Homes for Scotland, who were overall supportive of the approach, it was agreed to move sites with a PPP consent into the first category ('In the 10-year pipeline') as consideration on whether some sites are deliverable can occur at that stage, i.e. is the PPP with a developer or a landowner, does the site have any constraints, etc. Homes for Scotland commented that by applying this approach it should encourage PPP landowners to engage with home builders. This assessment will be applied to all sites in the existing housing land supply and those removed from the housing land supply through the annual Housing Land Audit process but are identified as housing development allocations in NLLDP.

What Happened

Three surveys were conducted to gather sufficient information to review the council's housing land supply in accordance with the expectations set out in NPF4. The questions in the initial survey were consulted on with Homes for Scotland members, before finalising. Microsoft Forms were then used to create a form which allowed the Development Planning team to generate a link to the survey that could be shared with every landowner/developer with a site in the Housing Land Audit via email to allow responses to be submitted online.

To aid this process and allow recipients to navigate to and locate their site on a map, a link to a mapping tool prepared in collaboration with the Improvement Service, was embedded in the survey.

Areas of Collaboration

Homes for Scotland had a consultation role in finalising the Housing Land Audit and also through providing housing industry knowledge, experience and expertise in marketability and deliverability considerations. Homes for Scotland contributed to defining the initial set of questions used to create the landowner/developer survey to ensure the survey was robust. Homes for Scotland also contributed to refining the council's proposed protocol for the reassessment of housing sites for NLLDP2. Housing colleagues in New Supply provided updated position on the housing land supply of New Supply sites in the council's SHIP and reprovisioning programme.

Landowners, developers and agents provided information on their site including confirming if the site has a developer or housebuilder with an option on the site, if the site was being marketed or not, and the expected phasing of housing in the next 10-year period. The landowners and developers are best placed to provide answers to known site constraints, the sites' deliverability and the next action they require to do to bring the site forward for development.



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Overall Result

The Development Planning team have identified a clear pathway for removing sites from the housing land supply that are no longer deliverable and are moving towards having a more robust pipeline which can be relied on to deliver housing over the period of the next LDP.

The online survey was key to reaching out to landowners and developers to gather the necessary information and once the survey was in its second year, the Development Planning team had a better understanding of the best person to contact regarding a housing site.

Lessons Learned

1. Online surveys are effective for stakeholder engagement: Using Microsoft Forms and embedding interactive mapping tools helped gather detailed site-specific information efficiently from landowners and developers.
2. Stakeholder Collaboration Enhances Robustness: Early and ongoing engagement with Homes for Scotland improved the quality of survey questions and the credibility of the deliverability assessments.
3. Clear Protocols Support Decision-Making: Developing a structured re-assessment protocol for housing sites (e.g. Delivery Confidence Tool) provided a transparent and consistent method for evaluating site deliverability.
4. Iterative Improvements Yield Better Results: The second year of survey implementation benefited from lessons learned in the first, especially in identifying the right contacts for each site.
5. Market Intelligence Adds Value: Incorporating Homes for Scotland's Settlement Marketability Matrix added a valuable industry perspective our internal assessments.
6. Data-Driven Planning Strengthens the LDP Process: The approach enabled us to confidently identify which sites should be retained or deallocated, supporting a more reliable housing land pipeline.
7. Challenges in Contacting Stakeholders Need Addressing: Difficulty in finding accurate contact details for some landowners/developers highlighted the need for better data management and stakeholder tracking.

This case study has been prepared in collaboration by North Lanarkshire 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.

