

North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2

Survey Paper - Evidence Report

Topic 27 City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres - Topic 28 Retail

Purpose of Topic Papers

We are currently identifying and assessing the evidence available for each policy topic area identified in NPF4 and the Scottish Government's local development planning guidance.

We will issue online surveys for each topic, or group of topics, outlining:

- the relevant information and datasets we have identified so far
- our assessment of the evidence gathered, based on the identified information and datasets
- any potential connections to other topic areas
- potential implications for site selection at the Proposed Plan stage, and
- potential implications for the Local Development Plan

This will be an early opportunity for you to confirm if we have identified the appropriate evidence, provide any other evidence you have or would like us to consider, and offer your views on our initial considerations of the use and implications of the available evidence.

We will then consider the responses to the surveys and what they mean for our evidence base. This will help inform the preparation of our Evidence Report later this year.

Some of the information gathered are particularly technical on a specific topic, and may not be relevant to everyone. We welcome comments on all or some of the information published. There will be more opportunities to comment as we progress through the LDP preparation process.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires Planning authorities to prepare an Evidence Report that contains sufficient information to enable the planning authority to prepare a local development plan. This is the first stage of preparing a new Local Development Plan.
- 1.2 The Evidence Report has two main functions. The first is that it should set out the evidence that will be used to inform and prepare a new Local Development Plan. The second is for local authorities to identify the issues they think, based on the evidence presented, need to be addressed by a new Local Development Plan, and for other interested parties to express what they think are the issues.
- 1.3 There are specific matters that the Evidence Report must cover; these are set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019
 - the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district
 - the principal purposes for which the land is used
 - the size, composition, health, and distribution of the population of the district

- the housing needs of the population of the area, including, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people
- the availability of land in the district for housing, including for older people and disabled people
- the desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement
- the health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs
- the education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs
- the extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population
- the capacity of education services in the district
- the desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including, but not limited to, live music venues) in the district
- the infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities)
- how that infrastructure is used; and
- any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to any of the matters mentioned above.

1.4 This topic Paper primarily examines the evidence surrounding City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres for the forthcoming North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 (NLLDP2). The paper also considers specific evidence relating to Retail related development and identifies what information has been collected and assessed, and the relevance of that information to NLLDP2. Conclusions are drawn from the information and clear evidence to inform the approach to be adopted in the plan. The topic paper details the stakeholder engagement and public consultation that has taken place in developing the conclusions that are presented and will be amended to highlight the disputes that have arisen through this process.

1.5 Key points from the evidence and information on this topic are highlighted and potential future relevance is discussed with a view to this informing the approach in progressing the Evidence Report, and NLLDP2 more generally.

2. Identification of Relevant Evidence

2.1 The relevant evidence has been identified through an evaluation of the Town, Local and Commercial Centres Topic along with the closely related Retail Topic. It provides an assessment of available information linked to these topics, and where available evidence shared by external stakeholders has been included. Should additional evidence become available we will consider its implications for the Evidence Report.

3. **Consideration of Relevant Evidence**

- 3.1 The following is an explanation of evidence sources which have been used in this Survey Paper and are considered potentially relevant for NLLDP2.

Main Evidence considered:

Source: Glasgow City Region, Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy (2021)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The first phase of delivery of the Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy includes twelve priority programmes which are designed to meet the challenges, opportunities, Vision, and Mission of the City Region. These state that by 2030 the City Region will have the most innovative, inclusive, and resilient economy in the UK. A key component of this approach is the emerging City and Town Centres Programme (P11). This Programme seeks to help the Region transform Glasgow City Centre and the Region's towns, so they are fit for purpose for the next twenty years. This will include tackling challenges and opportunities from COVID-19, responding to changing consumer habits, and transitioning to net zero.

Links to Evidence:

[GCR Economic Strategy \(glasgowcityregion.co.uk\)](https://glasgowcityregion.co.uk)

Source: North Lanarkshire Council, The Plan for North Lanarkshire (2019)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The plan sets out the vision for North Lanarkshire to be a place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit. NLLDP2 will be a tool to assist in the realisation of this vision. The vision consists of five priorities that are comprised of 25 high level Ambition Statements. A key ambition is Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic and environmental opportunities.

Links to Evidence:

[The Plan for North Lanarkshire](#)

Source: North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (2022)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The Adopted NLLDP identifies and defines a Network of Centres across the Council area and is the starting point to review whether the Mixed-Use Centres designated should continue to be identified in NLLDP2 or whether they require to be adjusted to address changing circumstances or to better reflect the revised policy context set by NPF4.

NLLDP1 also establishes the Council's approach to assessing development proposals within the network of mixed-use centres, setting out in detail how development proposals will be considered within the Strategic Centres (6), Other Town Centres (3) and Local Centres (58). This will require to be reassessed in light of the approach to development set out in NPF4 and, to ensure that a town centre first approach is adequately addressed within NLLDP2.

Links to Evidence:

[North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan](#)

Source: North Lanarkshire Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan 2023-2028

Reason for using the Evidence:

The ERDP is a key high-level framework that builds on the work of the council and its partners over the last four years to promote inclusive economic growth, ensure community well-being and create a more prosperous place for our residents. It sets out how to improve economic opportunities and outcomes for everyone in North Lanarkshire. This includes delivering new homes, reshaping town centres, attracting investment and improving infrastructure for new and existing business and industry sites, as well as upgrading our roads, active travel networks and digital connectivity. The North Lanarkshire ERDP sets out a high-level framework for improving economic opportunities and outcomes for all by trying to direct capital investment towards four key goals one of which is to reshape our town centres to ensure that they are modern and attractive and can meet the needs of our communities.

The ERDP was a key driver in establishing the requirement to produce Town Centre Visions for the eight town centres and to set a context for emerging Master Plans for the centres that will specifically identify short, medium and long-term activity to help promote and support the concepts identified within the town centre visions.

Links to Evidence:

[North Lanarkshire Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan 2023-2028](#)

Source: Town Centre Visions / Town Centre Action Plans

Reason for using the Evidence:

Town Action Plans are being developed for eight established towns across North Lanarkshire. Three have been finalised and published for Airdrie, Motherwell, and Wishaw. Three further Action Plans are at consultation stage for Bellshill, Kilsyth, and Shotts, while work is ongoing to produce Plans for Cumbernauld and Coatbridge. Together these documents will frame the Council's approach to illustrate the developments which will take place over the short, medium and long term to deliver the Town Visions, which set out the direction of travel towards a new mixed-use town centre economy to meet the needs of the community. NLLDP2 will take on board and reflect the approach set out in these Action Plans to help define the Network of Centres and Policy approach set out in the emerging Plan.

Links to Evidence:

[Town Action Plans | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

[Airdrie Town Action Plan \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Motherwell Town Action Plan \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Wishaw Town Action Plan \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Bellshill Town Action Plan \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Kisyth Town Action Plan \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Shotts Town Action Plan \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Air Quality Action Plan (2023-2028)

Reason for using the Evidence:

Need to assess how the 3 defined AQMAs within North Lanarkshire at Coatbridge, Chapelhall and Motherwell impact upon the existing Network of Centres. These

include the Strategic Town Centre at Motherwell and the Local Centres at Whifflet, Coatbridge and at Chapelhall.

Links to Evidence:

[Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028](#)

Source: Glasgow City Region Industrial and Commercial Land and Property Study 2024

Reason for using the Evidence:

One of the key outputs from the Rydens Study will be a high level retail analysis for the City Region and for the constituent authorities including North Lanarkshire. This will highlight the main retail issues likely to face the Council over the plan period for NLLDP2 and will provide an insight into how the centre network is likely to change over time. The report will include details on:

- Population and retail expenditure projections
- Retail policy framework
- National trends in retailing
- Glasgow City Region retail market, including trends
- Qualitative assessment of the existing comparison retail offer
- Quantitative assessment of spare comparison expenditure capacity to 2034
- Recommendations

Links to Evidence:

The Report is expected to be completed by Summer 2024 and once completed will be included as part of the Evidence Report for both the City, town, local and commercial centres and the Retail topic.

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Retail Outlets Surveys (various)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The Retail Outlet Survey (ROS) provides evidence of the overall floorspace within the North Lanarkshire Network of Centres, indicates the mix of uses across each centre, covering retail, service, office, leisure, and community related uses, as well as vacancy levels and allows comparisons to be made on how the floorspace has changed from previous surveys. The data is comprehensive up until 2019/2020, whilst new centre surveys have been carried out for several centres during 2023 and 2024. This data can help to inform town centre health checks and provide a guide to how centres have changed and are likely to change in the future.

Links to Evidence:

[Town Centre and Retail Survey | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

(Note that the data is held on spreadsheets for within the Policy and Strategy Team)

Source: North Lanarkshire Council, Housing Land Supply (2023)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The data contains details of housing sites in North Lanarkshire, including showing those located within and around the Network of Mixed-Use Centres and will help identify which centres which have planned residential development over the Plan period. This Survey is updated annually via the Housing Land Audit.

Links to Evidence:

[Housing land supply | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

Source: North Lanarkshire Council, Industry and Business Land Supply (2023)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The data contains details of planned land supplies for industrial and business development across North Lanarkshire, including sites located within and around the Network of Centres and will help identify which centres have land available for future industrial and business development. This Survey is updated annually.

Links to Evidence:

[Industry and business land supply | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

Source: North Lanarkshire Council, Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (2023)

Reason for using the Evidence:

The survey which is updated by North Lanarkshire Council on an annual basis provides evidence and support for policies that focus on the re-use, improvement and regeneration of previously developed sites that meet the definitions of Vacant and Derelict land set out by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Vacant and Derelict land Survey. This data specifically helps to direct funding from the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (SVDLF) and the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme (VDLIP). Vacant and Derelict Land is often located within, or adjoining centres identified within North Lanarkshire's network of mixed-use centres and can provide key opportunities for regeneration within them.

Links to Evidence:

[Vacant and derelict land | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

Source: Historic Environment Scotland, Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland

Reason for using the Evidence:

The register contains details of vacant listed buildings that are at risk in North Lanarkshire and will allow for the identification of such buildings within the network of centres which may provide redevelopment opportunities.

Links to Evidence:

[Welcome to Buildings at Risk Register | Buildings at Risk Register](#)

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Open Space Audit 2023

Reason for using the Evidence:

The provision of attractive and useable open space can greatly enhance the attractiveness of our Town Centres to visitors and business that chose to locate there. It can provide a sense of place, promote civic pride, and support other wide-ranging policy aims including healthy living, social inclusion, and sustainability. Assessing the amount and quality of open spaces and civic spaces within centres can identify opportunities to enhance the quality of these centres. This work is still ongoing and is likely to be finalised later on in the year.

Links to Evidence:

[Open Space Strategy | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

4. Assessment of Evidence

- 4.1 The National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045, set out in NPF4, highlights that town centres have experienced accelerating change in recent years and emphasises the importance of setting a new vision for town centres that reaffirms a commitment to the Town Centre First Principle. It also highlights the importance of planning in diversifying centres to help them thrive, improve their resilience, and allow them to be better able to meet continued social, economic, and environmental change. It defines town centres as centres which display:
- a diverse mix of uses, including shopping
 - a high level of accessibility
 - qualities of character and identity which create a sense of place and further the well-being of communities
 - wider economic and social activity during the day and in the evening
 - integration with residential areas.
- 4.2 NPF4's Spatial Planning Priorities for Central Scotland which include North Lanarkshire also emphasise that Town centres throughout this area will play a critical role in driving a new economic future, highlighting opportunities to expand the range of services and facilities they offer, reuse redundant buildings, and provide new homes for a wide range of people. This in turn will ensure their crucial role in defining our sense of place is protected and enhanced.
- 4.3 Policy relating to town centres is contained within the Productive Places component of NPF4 emphasising the need to encourage, promote and facilitate development in town centres by applying a Town Centres First approach to help centres adapt positively to long-term economic, environmental, and societal changes, and by encouraging town centre living.
- 4.4 In the context of North Lanarkshire, LDPs should:
- support sustainable futures for city, town, and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres.
 - support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate
 - identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision
 - identify where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities
 - consider, and if appropriate, identify any areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel
 - provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development
- 4.5 NPF4 also sets out and clarifies the "Town Centre First Principle" that asks that government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses, and communities put the health of town centres at the heart of decision making. It seeks to deliver the best local outcomes, align policies, and target available resources to prioritise town centre sites, encouraging vibrancy, equality, and diversity. This approach is supported by the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme which supports a commitment to town centre action, places, local living, and community wealth building

and allocates key regeneration funds to meet these objectives, such as the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme (VDLIP) and the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF).

- 4.6 North Lanarkshire Council, in The Plan for North Lanarkshire (2019) also highlights the critical role played by centres of various sizes that serve a range of retail, social, community, and recreational needs of residents, businesses and those who visit our centres. This approach is embedded in a series of Council strategies, policies, and programmes such as the North Lanarkshire Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan (2023-2028).
- 4.7 In alignment with these objectives the Council are progressing Town Centre Action Plans (TCAPs) for eight towns across North Lanarkshire. The Plans for Airdrie, Motherwell, and Wishaw have been published following consultation with the community to allow the public an opportunity to promote specific projects and proposals which they wanted to see happen within their town centre. TCAPs will illustrate what developments will take place over the short, medium, and long term to deliver the Town Visions, which set out the direction of travel towards a new mixed-use town centre economy to meet the needs of the community.
- 4.8 In general, the Action Plans set out the council's ambition for all centres to transition towards a more mixed-use offering to improve resilience and recognise the shift in how we use our town centres. While they seek to focus upon addressing the individual circumstances of each centre, they also follow a broad theme of delivering the following components:
- Economic prosperity
 - Town centre living
 - Movement and Active Travel
 - Built heritage and place
 - Transition to net zero
- 4.9 Town Centre Action Plans for are also being finalised for Bellshill, Shotts and Kilsyth following the same principles and any proposals that have already been identified will be brought forward as part of NLLDP2, as they are aligned with existing key strategies, policies, and plans. Town Centre Action Plans for Cumbernauld and Coatbridge are well advanced and will also be included within NLLDP2 which will take on board and reflect the approach set out in these Action Plans. This work will also be used to help define the Network of Centres and the Policy approach to be adopted in the emerging NLLDP2.
- 4.10 The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (NLLDP 2022) defines a network of centres across the council area which includes four distinctive categories of centre, including:
- **Strategic Town Centres**
Airdrie, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Motherwell, Wishaw and Ravensraig
 - **Other Town Centres**
Bellshill, Kilsyth, and Shotts
 - **Local Centres**
58 Centres varying from large local centres to small neighbourhood centres

- **Commercial Centres**

Caledonian Park, Westway Park, Birkenshaw, McKinnon Mills and B&Q Coatbridge

- 4.11 In addition to defining the extent of these centres, NLLDP 2022 contains policies that support and encourage a range of appropriate uses to locate within them and to encourage improvements to their physical environment. The Plan sets out a sequential approach to development as well as supporting the Town Centre First principle. The Plan also establishes thresholds for development for each type of centre and sets out a list of acceptable uses that should be located there (it should be noted that for the five Commercial Centres no detailed assessment criteria are included within the Plan). A map of the existing network of centres in North Lanarkshire is shown in Appendix One.
- 4.12 While an evolving programme of Town Centre Action Plans will drive change across the nine Strategic and Other Town Centres, NLLDP2 requires to consider how it can best reflect the Policy Requirements of NPF4 as set out in Policy 27 City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres, and to a lesser extent Policy 28 which covers Retail. While there is a lack of current data relating to whether there may be a need for further retail provision across North Lanarkshire due to either qualitative or quantitative deficiencies, the bulk of any future provision, if identified, would require to be met within existing centres as part of the Town Centres First Principle. To fill this information gap, the Glasgow City Region Industrial and Commercial Land and Property Study 2024 will consider future scope for retail provision across the conurbation, providing a broad retail analysis for the City Region and for partner local authorities including North Lanarkshire. The report (expected to be completed by Summer 2024) will include details on:
- Population and retail expenditure projections
 - Retail policy framework
 - National trends in retailing
 - Glasgow City Region retail market, including trends
 - Qualitative assessment of the existing comparison retail offer
 - Quantitative assessment of spare comparison expenditure capacity to 2034
 - Recommendations
- 4.13 The other key data source to be included as evidence to understand the nature of our town Centres is the Council's Retail Outlets Survey (ROS). The last comprehensive survey was conducted in 2019/2020 prior to the Covid Pandemic for all centres and standalone shops, with available for over 4,000 outlets across 72 centres. Analysis of this data will be used to indicate the scale of occupied floorspace across various locations, determine the mix of uses prevalent, quantify levels of vacancy, and allow an analysis of change from previous surveys. The data will also be used to consider whether the distribution of centres and facilities reflects the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods across the Council area.
- 4.14 The ROS also provides details of National Multiples within centres and can help to define the boundaries of our centres through analysis of the distribution of uses within them. Additional Surveys have been carried out during 2023 and 2024 and it is anticipated that details for the 14 existing Strategic Centres, Other Town Centres and Commercial Centres will be completed and used as part of the evidence for NLLDP2.
- 4.15 The ROS will also be used to help consider whether there needs to be a policy response to the proliferation of certain non-retail uses that are highlighted within NPF4

and which are considered to potentially undermine the character and amenity of the area or the health and wellbeing of communities, particularly in disadvantaged areas. These uses are identified as including:

- a) Hot food takeaways, including permanently sited vans
- b) Betting offices, and
- c) High interest money lending premises

- 4.16 Evidence will also require to be examined that allows the council to consider whether the number, distribution and location of Drive-through developments is regarded as an issue facing centres within North Lanarkshire, as NPF4 indicates that such developments will only be supported where they are specifically supported in the LDP. It should be noted that the adopted NLLDP 2022 did not consider drive through developments as this was not identified as an issue at any stage in the plan preparation process.
- 4.17 Another key theme of NPF4 relating to town centres is Town Centre Living, particularly given that it indicates that LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development. Whilst this approach is already ongoing in the Council's programme of Town Centre Action Plans, it is important to ensure that the Housing Land Supply provides suitable opportunities for residential development in and around our network of centres to meet a range of policy objectives. While there was no specific requirement for NLLDP 2022 to meet the demand for new housing at specific centres, an assessment of Housing Land Audit sites will be undertaken to consider the extent to which they are located in and around the existing network of centres. This would also require to be considered against existing residential provision within centres to identify locations where there is scope to further enhance opportunities for town centre living as part of the wider local living agenda and thereafter determine whether a specific policy response is required.
- 4.18 North Lanarkshire has the highest proportion of Scotland's Vacant and Derelict Land (14.1% at 2022) and whilst this can have a negative impact upon local communities, it can provide key opportunities for regeneration within them. The Evidence Report will examine the distribution of Vacant and Derelict to determine the extent to which such sites are located in and around North Lanarkshire's network of centres and to consider the extent to which these offer potential improvement opportunities.
- 4.19 The presence of vacant property within centres will also be examined, not only in terms of the vacancies identified within the ROS but by looking at other data sources such as the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland (HES) which may identify additional buildings which may provide further redevelopment opportunities.
- 4.20 Other data sets that will be explored will include the Industrial and Business Land Supply to consider whether there are any sites in the vicinity of the network of centres and what the implications of that might be.
- 4.21 The provision of attractive and useable open space can greatly enhance the attractiveness of our centres to visitors and businesses that chose to locate there. It can provide a sense of place, promote civic pride, and support other wide-ranging policy aims including healthy living, social inclusion, and sustainability. The Council's ongoing Open Space Audit is a valuable source of information to help assess the quality of civic spaces within our centres and this will allow the Council to identify centres where there is scope to further enhance environmental quality or provide

additional open space opportunities. This work is still ongoing and is likely to be finalised later in the year.

- 4.23 While this Topic Paper focuses primarily on policy relating to town centres, local centres, and commercial centres, it also covers issues relating to NPF4 Policy 28 Retail. This Policy is closely linked to town centre policy as the bulk of retail activity takes place within the network of centres. For example, in 2019 there was around 343,000 sqm of Class 1 Retail Floorspace within North Lanarkshire of which 58% was located within the five Strategic Centres, 10% in the three Town and Large Centres and around 17% within the three Commercial Centres. NPF4 and Retail Policy set out in the NLLDP 2022 are closely aligned to the Town Centres First Principle and the sequential approach to site development for Retail related proposals is a key element of both and will continue to be an important element within NLLDP2.
- 4.24 A key element of NPF4s approach to Retail development is directing LDPs to consider where there may be a need for further retail provision. This requires the Council to take a view on whether there are deficiencies in retail provision both in terms of quality and quantity across the network of centres and to consider whether there is scope for additional provision to support our communities. As mentioned above, the Glasgow City Region Industrial and Commercial Land and Property Study 2024 should provide a broad assessment of the scope for future retail development and identify any deficiencies that might merit a policy response, particularly when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living. An assessment of provision will also be undertaken to consider whether there are any gaps in provision to meet the needs of existing communities in terms of meeting this through the application of 20-minute neighbourhood policies.
- 4.25 When allocating new sites for housing development or when creating new communities, the council is also required to consider whether there is a need for new neighbourhood shopping facilities to support local living. NLLDP2 will therefore assess whether any sites to be promoted or brought forward are assessed in terms of the facilities likely to be available to residents within them, in terms of access to relevant 20-minute neighbourhoods, or to the wider network of centres. Where gaps in provision are identified, the Council will need to consider how to best meet any deficiencies.
- 4.27 NPF4 is also clear in indicating that all retail proposals (including expansions and changes of use) are to be consistent with the Town Centre First principle and will therefore be supported in existing strategic, town and local centres. Development will only be supported in edge-of-centre areas or in commercial centres if they are allocated as sites suitable for new retail development in NLLDP2 or where they are identified as suitable for small scale neighbourhood provision as suggested above. There is no support for retail development at out of centre locations in any other circumstance.
- 4.26 NPF4 also indicates that LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported. However, there would appear to be a lack of data on this topic and on how to assess proposals relating to the relative health of different retailers as part of the statutory planning system. Reference is also made to click-and-collect locker pick up points, which are to be supported where the proposed development is:
- 1) of an appropriate scale for the location
 - 2) will have an acceptable impact on the character and amenity of the area; and

3) is located to best channel footfall and activity, to benefit the place as a whole

Potential Connections in Evidence

5.1 NPF4 indicates that policy relating to the twin topics of Town, Local & Commercial Centres and Retail have linkages to other policy areas and these are considered to include the following, and where relevant, a brief description will follow to highlight key linkages and likely implications for NLLDP2:

- Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crises (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 3 Historic Assets and places (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land, and empty buildings (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 12 Zero waste (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 13 Sustainable transport (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 14 Design, quality and place (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 15 Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 16 Quality homes (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 18 Infrastructure first (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 21 Play, recreation and sport (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 23 Health and safety (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 25 Community wealth building (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 26 Business and industry (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 29 Rural development (Town Centres and Retail)*
- Policy 30 Tourism (Town Centres only)*
- Policy 31 Culture and creativity (Town Centres only)*

5.2 The Plan for North Lanarkshire is the council's main strategy for the area to improve services and outcomes for the communities who live here. It provides a shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity for all. It sets a path for the council and partners to follow. The Plan covers a wide range of activities that can impact on carbon emissions and help to make North Lanarkshire a more sustainable place to 'live-learn-work-invest-visit'.

5.3 In the UK the past four decades have been warmer than the one before. In North Lanarkshire it is expected that average summer temperatures will increase, and the number of rainy days will reduce. The volume of rain on summer's wettest day will increase. Our winters are expected to be milder. Whilst the impact of climate change may seem to be less severe locally, in recent years we have seen an increase in severe weather events. These can affect us through:

- Travel Disruption
- Emergency Response Situations
- Loss of power supply

- Landslides
 - Flooding
 - Disruption to service Delivery
- 5.4 The council recognised that it must act and declared a climate emergency in June 2019. It has committed itself and the area of North Lanarkshire to achieving net-zero by 2030. Concerned about the impact of climate change on biodiversity, the council became a signatory of the Edinburgh declaration on Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Town Centres & Retail – Tackling the climate and nature crises / climate mitigation and adaption

- 5.5 NPF4 Policies 1 and 2 seek to ensure that any development proposals brought forward will require to give significant weight to the global climate and nature crises in its consideration. It requires the spatial strategy presented in NLLDP2 to be one which reduces, minimises, or avoids greenhouse gas emissions and adapts to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration. In terms of this Topic, a strategy focusing on directing development in general and retail in particular, to the existing network of Town, Local & Commercial Centres, following the Town Centre First Principle, will help meet these aspirations. Locating development at more sustainable locations at the heart of our communities makes best use of existing infrastructure and can contribute towards reduced emissions by conserving embodied energy in existing buildings and converting empty buildings to other suitable uses. Minimising travel by encouraging multi-purpose trips to centres that are well served by public transport also contributes to addressing the climate crisis and highlights the importance of sustaining our existing centres.

6. Implications for North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2

- 6.1 Continuing to focus on the Town Centre First Principle will enable the council to direct a range of development proposals to locate within or adjacent to the existing network of centres. This network currently includes strategic centres, town and large centres and neighbourhood centres, as well as a small number of Commercial Centres albeit the council will need to consider what policy should be applied to the Commercial Centres given that NPF4 policy is less clear on these centres with policy seeking to support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate but at the same not generally supporting retail development at these locations. Notwithstanding this, the other centres will continue to be the primary location for uses which will generate significant footfall, including commercial, leisure, offices, community, sport and cultural facilities, public buildings such as libraries, education and healthcare facilities, and public spaces. The Council has already embarked on an ambitious programme to create Town Hubs and Community Hubs, incorporating many of these services, as part of The Plan for North Lanarkshire. These are being developed to support our communities but may use existing out of centre, community based and school locations, as they are closely linked to our school replacement programme.
- 6.2 A key aspect of future policy for NLLDP2 will be that footfall generating uses will not be supported outwith centres unless a town centre first assessment demonstrates that:
- all centre and edge of centre options have been sequentially assessed and discounted as unsuitable or unavailable

- the scale of development cannot reasonably be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated in a centre
 - the impacts on existing centres have been thoroughly assessed and there will be no significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the centres
- 6.3 Proposals that enhance and improve the vitality and viability of town and local centres, including proposals that increase the mix of uses in town centres are supported in NPF4. This approach is broadly in line with the council's existing policies relating to the network of centres contained within NLLDP1 and in the programme of Town Centre Action Plans currently being implemented. There is however a more specific focus within NPF4 on residential development within town centres to satisfy local living aspirations and an emerging requirement for NLLDP2 will be to provide a proportion of the council's Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) within town centres. The Council will be required to review its housing policies to consider the extent to which housing land is located within the centre network and to determine what proportion of the land supply should be met within centres and how this might be allocated. While some centres such as Cumbernauld have considerable scope to accommodate new housing as major sites have become available such as the former HMRC offices, other centres have more limited opportunities for redevelopment due to physical constraints and a lack of suitable development sites.
- 6.4 NPF4 offers strong policy support for residential development within town centres by encouraging:
- i. New build residential development
 - ii. The re-use of a vacant building within town centres where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable (and the proposed change of use adds to viability and vitality of the area)
 - iii. The conversion, or reuse of vacant upper floors of properties within town centres for residential use
- 6.5 This however comes with several caveats, particularly relating to residential development at ground floor level which is only to be supported where proposals retain an attractive and appropriate frontage, do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of a shopping area or the wider centre; and do not result in an undesirable concentration of uses, or 'dead frontages'. Consideration will also be given to residential amenity for proposals particularly if they also involve hot food, live music, or other types of licenced premises, or if they share common access with such premises.
- 6.6 While existing NLLDP1 policies encourage mixed use development including residential, consideration will require to be given to how these policies should be modified in NLLDP2 which suggests that development proposals for non-retail uses will not be supported if further provision of these services will undermine the character and amenity of the area or the health and wellbeing of communities, particularly in disadvantaged areas. These specific uses include, hot food takeaways (including permanently sited vans), Betting offices and High interest money lending premises.
- 6.7 NPF4 also introduces a requirement to consider Drive-through developments and indicates that these will only be supported where they are specifically supported in the LDP. While NLLDP1 has a range of policies to assess different categories of development it does not have a specific policy relating to Drive-through development

as these are not a specific Planning Use Class. NLLDP2 will require to consider this issue to determine the appropriate policy response.

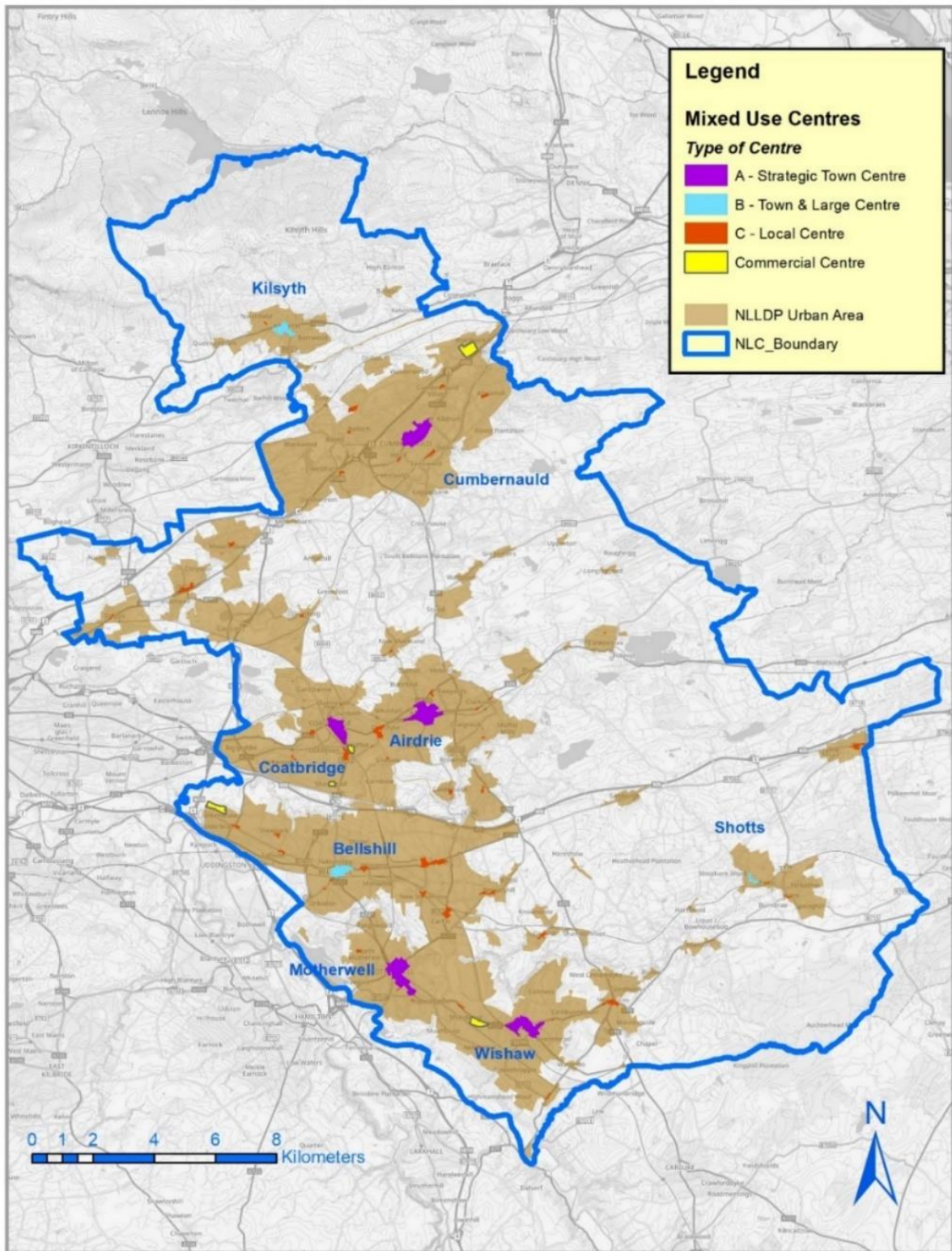
- 6.8 With regard to new retail development, this will not be supported at out of centre locations unless it is shown that opportunities for smaller scale neighbourhood provision exist to contribute to local living; satisfy the requirements for 20-minute neighbourhoods or fill any gaps in provision that might arise as new housing developments are brought forward. NPF4 also stresses that retail development should only be supported in edge of centre areas or in commercial centres if they are allocated as sites suitable for new retail development in NLLDP2. The implications of this for the emerging NLLDP2 are that consideration will need to be given to whether there is scope to identify further retail development opportunities in edge of centre locations or in our Commercial Centres, and this will largely depend on the results of the Glasgow City Region Industrial and Commercial Land and Property Study 2024 which will consider future scope for retail provision across the conurbation including for North Lanarkshire itself.
- 6.9 NPF4 also indicates that LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported and policy relating to this requires to be developed as part of NLLDP2.
- 6.10 In rural areas Retail policy within NPF4 indicates that proposals for shops ancillary to other uses such as farm shops, craft shops and shops linked to petrol/service/charging stations will be supported where it will serve local needs, support local living and local jobs and where the potential impact on nearby town and commercial centres or village/local shops is acceptable. Such proposals will also be supported where it will provide a service throughout the year; and the likely impacts of traffic generation and access and parking arrangements are acceptable.

7. Conclusions

- 7.2 This Paper outlines the Evidence that the Council intend to consider when formulating policies relating to the future development of its Town, Local and Commercial Centres, where the Town Centres First approach will be applied to help centres adapt to long term economic, environmental, and societal changes. A greater emphasis on town centre living will be required and the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods applied across our communities. This paper also covers Retail policy and highlights the relevant NPF4 approach that the Council will require to have regard to when refreshing and updating its policy for assessing retail proposals as part of a revised sequential assessment.

Appendix 1 - Map of existing network of centres in North Lanarkshire

Map Showing NLLDP 2022 Network of Centres



Reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
© Crown copyright and database right 2024. All rights reserved.
Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000819817.