

# LDP3 Evidence Report

## SD 001 - Site Assessment Framework

September 2024



## **1) Introduction**

This document sets out the methodology and assessment process for the consideration of land/sites for development in LDP3. In doing so, it identifies the guiding principles for establishing potential new site allocations, consistent with national planning policy and sustainable development. The document will be used as part of the evidence base to support the Council's approach towards the inclusion or omission of sites for development in the LDP. It is important that sites are promoted at this early stage in the process to fully inform the Proposed Plan and to ensure all reasonable options are assessed.

The identification of sites should be founded on a proportionate, robust and effective assessment of the suitability and availability of land for particular uses or a mix of uses. The concept of place and deliverability of sites will be important aspects of the methodology and will be essential in the identification of sites for inclusion within the new LDP. The Scottish Government's Emerging Housing Land Audit Guidance will be critical to the Council's consideration of residential sites with respect to deliverability. The Transport Appraisal, Education and Healthcare modelling that will help inform the Proposed Plan will also assist with site identification and potential mitigation measures.

There is also a requirement to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the preparation of the LDP. SEA is a process to ensure that any significant environmental effects are identified, assessed and mitigated. The SEA process has been combined with the site assessment framework to provide an overall site appraisal.

A 'Call for Sites' exercise will be undertaken which will use a structured framework of criteria that will gain information on the location, site history, current use, ownership, site conditions, site deliverability, biodiversity, natural places, historic assets, soils, water, population and human health and infrastructure and services.

Consultation will also be undertaken with specific consultation bodies during the evaluation of sites, whilst promoters of land will be required to provide an appropriate level of detail and assessments to allow a full consideration of their site's suitability and deliverability.

The promotion of land should take an infrastructure first approach whereby decisions on sites are informed by the capacity, condition, needs and deliverability of infrastructure including education, health and social care services, drainage, water and wastewater, flood risk management, digital, energy supplies, transport and green infrastructure/open space.

It is vital that the required level of information and supporting assessments is submitted through the Call for Sites process to allow for a comprehensive assessment of site options. There will be no automatic opportunity to submit further details later in the process unless requested by the Council. This is to ensure there is no delays to the overall LDP programme.

### **Which sites will be assessed?**

Sites assessed will come from a number of different sources:

- All sites in the current adopted LDP2 that have yet to be built. The LDP Guidance is clear that no sites should automatically roll forward from one plan to the next without being assessed. De-allocations of sites currently allocated in LDP2 will be considered where sites are no longer viewed as deliverable;
- Sites promoted through the 'Call for Sites' exercise. This will be undertaken once the Evidence Report Gate Check concludes, which will allow landowners, developers, communities and other stakeholders to put forward sites for consideration to be included in the new LDP which they consider are deliverable during the plan period;
- Any other sites the planning authority considers may have potential for the delivery of housing or other uses; and
- Land use proposals contained in Local Place Plans.

## **2) Site Assessment Methodology**

The methodology comprises a three-stage process for the assessment of proposed sites.

### **Stage 1: Initial Assessment and Discounting of Sites**

Stage 1 seeks to sieve out sites that are unsuitable for development due to major constraints that cannot be mitigated or overcome based upon key physical and environmental information gathered through the Topic Papers along with any information submitted by site promoters.

Constraints include sites that lie within or are likely to have a significant impact on sites designated for their national importance for nature conservation, historic environment, located within high flood risk zones as shown by the Council's [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Map](#), or areas identified where Education impacts are significant. If the site is situated fully within an irreplaceable habitat, such as an internationally or nationally designated site for biodiversity it will be excluded in the initial sift. This includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and ancient woodland.

The Housing Topic Paper sets out the evidence in relation to housing need and demand in the Council area and the availability of housing land. It sets out the projected population and household growth in the area as well as setting out an indicative housing land requirement (HLR). The HLR is another important consideration for the site assessment process, establishing the total amount of housing land that should be allocated in LDP3. Not all sites promoted through the Call for Sites will be needed, appropriate and/or deliverable for housing. The site assessment process will be a key means to identify deliverable land in the right locations to achieve the HLR and other strategic policy objectives. The Evidence Report includes the Council's agreed, indicative HLR along with a rationale explaining how this has been calculated from the evidence.

Sites will be rated with a 'RAG' (Red, Amber and Green) classification and will be accompanied by a summary. Red sites that are subject to major constraints will not be taken forward to the next phase. In addition, any site promoted through the call for sites process without the required level of information and supporting assessments will be discounted and will not proceed to stage 2. This includes sites currently allocated in LDP2 that are yet to be built. Only Green and Amber sites will proceed to Stage 2.

### **Stage 2: Detailed assessment of sites**

For sites which have successfully been assessed through Stage 1, the next phase will involve further detailed assessment of sites based on the information submitted within the Call for Sites Proforma, together with site visits and research into the site and surrounding area. This stage will help identify the deliverability of a site. A Proforma is set out in Appendix A.

Proposals will be required to be supported by the following high-level assessments, where applicable and proportionate to the site:

- Transport Appraisal
- Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
- Viability Assessment
- Climate and Carbon Impact Assessment
- Ecological Survey
- Design Statement

- Landscape Appraisal
- Contamination Report
- Local Living Compatibility Assessment – reference should be made to the Councils Local Living interactive map toolkit
- Heat Network Report
- Economic Benefits Statement
- Historic Impact Assessment

### **Stage 3: Assessment against National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) policies**

Stage 3 is a detailed, site-specific assessment based upon the policy requirements of NPF4, and includes analysis of the sustainability of the site, its deliverability and viability and the likelihood that it will be developed during the plan period. This assessment will be supported by information gathered through stage 2. This stage also includes an initial assessment to identify whether each proposed site is compatible against the proposed spatial growth strategy and other Council priorities.

At this stage, an environmental assessment will be carried out to assess each site as ‘reasonable alternatives’ against the SEA framework. Those sites filtered out at Stage 1 are not considered ‘reasonable’ as they have fundamental constraints that would make them undeliverable and will therefore not be subject to SEA. Sites will be assessed against the Framework set out in Appendix B.

This combined approach will ensure that the three themes in NPF4: Sustainable Places; Liveable Places; and Productive Places are fully considered with sites assessed in a consistent manner.

This stage will also consider the individual and potential cumulative environmental and infrastructure impacts of the preferred site allocations and any associated mitigation measures. Placemaking opportunities will also be considered.

The views of key agencies and infrastructure providers will be key to this element of the process.

### **3) Outcomes and Site Identification**

An assessment matrix will provide an illustrative assessment of each site. The outcome of the matrix will allow sites to be compared and those sites which score favourably to be considered further.

Following the conclusion of this process the Council will identify sites to be taken forward through the Proposed Plan. Only sites that are deliverable will be identified. The Council may also identify longer term sites i.e. beyond year 10, to ensure ongoing flexibility within the housing land supply.

The information gathered through this process and supporting assessments submitted at the call for Sites stage will also help inform future master plans or development briefs and the LDP Delivery Programme. These will be prepared alongside the Proposed Plan.

## Appendix A: Site Performance

<b><u>Site Proposer Details</u></b>	
<b>Name</b> <b>Address</b> <b>Postcode</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b><u>Site Details</u></b>	
<b>Site address</b> <b>Postcode</b>	
<b>Location / OS grid reference</b>	
<b>Site size (ha)</b>	
<b>Summary Description</b> topography, ground conditions (contamination), boundaries, physical constraints (pylons, sub stations etc), access, exposure, surface/fluvial/pluvial flood risk	
<b>Current land use</b> Identification as to whether the site is in active use and if so the arrangements/ timescales for the use on the site to cease.	
<b>Surrounding land uses</b> A description of surrounding/ adjacent land uses	

<p><b>Type:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brownfield;</li> <li>• Greenfield;</li> <li>• Mixed; or</li> <li>• Vacant and Derelict</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Site Location</b> e.g. urban area/green belt (If Green belt describe strength of boundary)</p>	
<p><b>Planning history (if any)</b> Previous planning consents Previous assessments undertaken (e.g. flood risk, drainage, contaminated land etc.) Is the site currently allocated within the adopted LDP2? - Yes/No – if yes, provide background on current status of site and include local development plan site reference</p>	
<p><b>Site Ownership and Deliverability</b> Detail on site ownership whether in full, part or option. In addition information on the following should be submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the site been marketed or had developer interest?</li> <li>• Has an option been agreed?</li> <li>• Legal burdens (Ransom strip / restrictive covenant, access issues, third party land)</li> <li>• Awareness of any infrastructure requirements</li> <li>• Evidence of consortium agreements</li> </ul>	

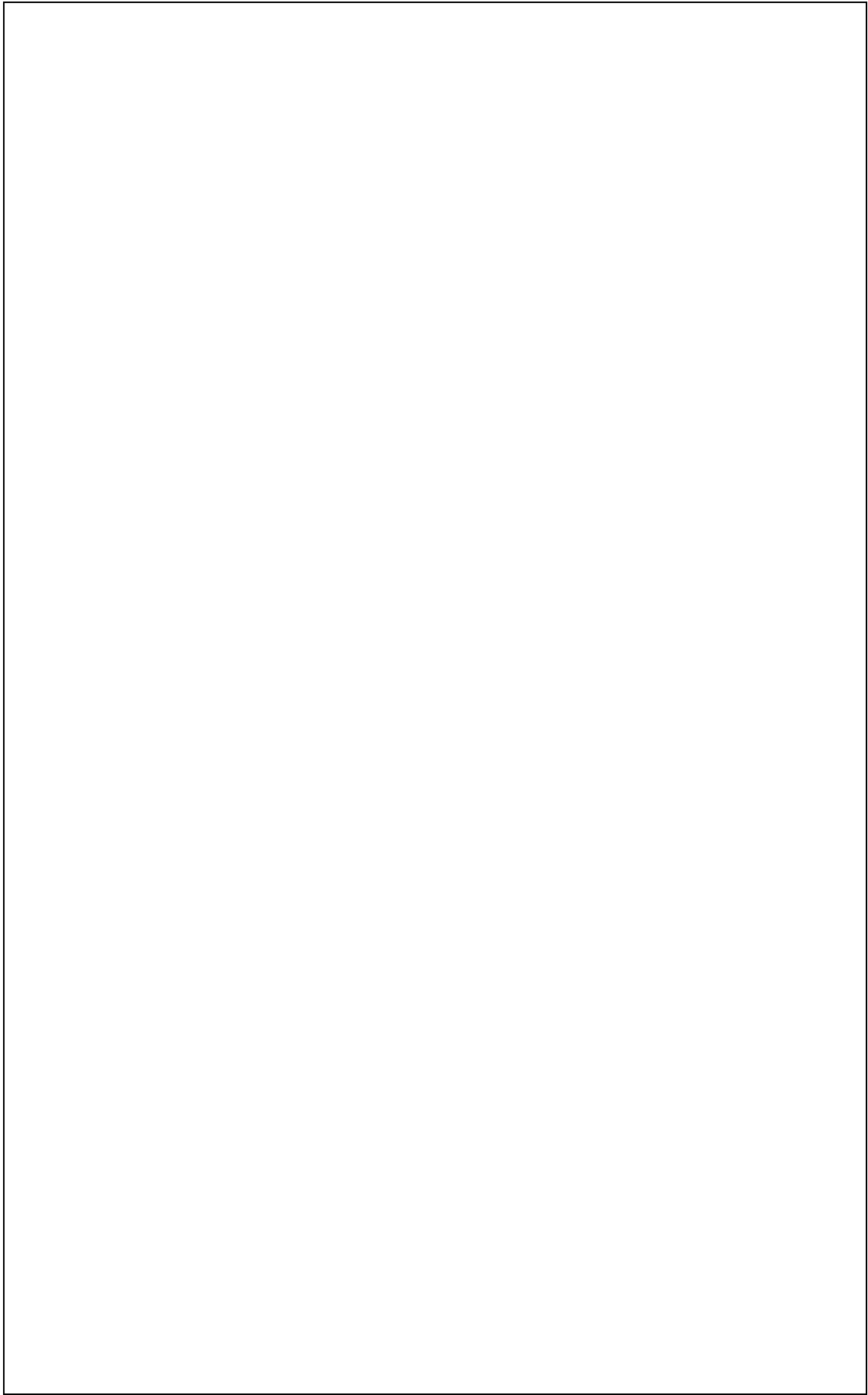


<p><b>Viability</b>  Has a viability assessment been provided?  Other studies submitted to support the site.</p>	
<p><b>Key Agency and Infrastructure Providers Engagement</b>  Detail of discussions regarding site conditions and infrastructure requirements</p>	
<p><b>Proposed Use</b></p> <p><b>Residential</b>  For residential proposals unit numbers, density, tenure mix and size and site phasing will be required</p> <p>Phasing - Housings Land Pipeline:  Estimated timescales for development to begin on site will be required.</p> <p>Timescales should be indicated within one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term - 0 to 3 years</li> <li>• Medium term – 4 to 7 years</li> <li>• Long term – 7 to 10 years plus</li> </ul> <p><b>Non-residential</b>  Type and floospace sqm</p>	<p>Proposals should reflect the outcomes of the Councils emerging Local Housing Strategy, adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance (June 2022) and the regional Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 together with other supporting studies.</p>
<p><b>Community Benefits</b>  Demonstration of potential community benefits</p>	

**Insert site map / location and photographs**

*A site plan showing 'red line' boundary of the site put forward for consideration will be required. Photographs of the site (include potential access points and significant views in and out site) should also be provided.*

*A Design Statement should be submitted with the proposal.*



**Appendix B: Site Assessment and SEA checklist**

**Table 1: Site Assessment and SEA checklist**

SEA theme *	Environmental Objectives		NPF4 Theme	LDP3 Topic Paper
<b>Climatic Factors</b>	1	To what extent will the policy or proposal promote and enable adaptation to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions? A Climate and Carbon Impact Assessment will be required to be submitted, where applicable.	Sustainable Places	(1) Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
	2	To what extent does the proposal use nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation?	Liveable Places	(5) Historic Assets and Places
	3	To what extent does the proposal maintain and enhance resilience of existing and planned green infrastructure?		(8) Energy Generation and Distribution
	4	To what extent does the proposal have good proximity to services and good access to existing or proposed public transport and active travel network?		(10) Transport
	5	To what extent does the proposal promote active travel and sustainable transport modes?		(12) Local Living
	6	Is the site in an area of heat network potential or a designated Heat Network Zone (HNZ)? The Council's LHEES will be used to help inform this assessment.		(14) Infrastructure first
	7	To what extent does the proposal promote the use of low carbon technologies and the generation of renewable energy?		(16) Heating and Cooling
	8	To what extent will the policy or proposal affect the historic environment designations?		(17) Blue and Green infrastructure
<b>Biodiversity and Nature</b>	9	To what extent will the policy or proposal conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity?		Sustainable Places

		An ecological survey will be used to inform this analysis - e.g. new woodland creation and strengthening nature networks	Liveable Places	(3) Soils  (4) Woodland and Forestry  (17) Blue and Green infrastructure
10	To what extent will the policy or proposal facilitate the creation of nature networks and improve ecological connectivity?			
11	National Designations To what extent will the proposal affect national designations – e.g. SSSI			
12	To what extent will the proposal affect other designations -and locally important designations such as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) or Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS).			
13	To what extent will the proposal affect Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands in the Ancient, Semi Natural and Long-Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands.  The Council’s Forestry and Woodland Strategy will be used to inform this analysis.			
14	Protected Species–e.g. bats, otters, etc - can it be ascertained if protected species will be affected?  A site survey be required to be submitted, where applicable.			
15	How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?			
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	16	Does the proposal protect or enhance the site or setting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled Monuments</li> <li>• Listed buildings</li> <li>• Inventory gardens and designed landscapes</li> <li>• Conservation Areas</li> <li>• Undesignated historic environment assets</li> </ul>	Sustainable Places  Productive Places	(1) Climate mitigation and adaptation  (5) Historic Assets and Places

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streetscapes and settlement patterns monuments</li> </ul>		(11) Placemaking
	17	<p>Does the proposal promote or enable the retention, maintenance and sustainable use or re-use of historic buildings and infrastructure? This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings at Risk</li> <li>Vacant or under-used historic environment assets</li> <li>The condition of the historic environment as a place to live, work and visit</li> </ul>		(24) Creativity, Culture and Tourism
	18	<p>Does the policy or proposal make the historic environment more climate resilient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the repair and appropriate retrofit of historic buildings?</li> <li>Support the transition to green energy supply in historic buildings?</li> <li>Include adaptation measures to make the historic environment assets and places more resilient to the effects of climate change (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding etc)?</li> <li></li> </ul>		
	19	<p>Does the policy or proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable the historic environment to support creation of high-quality places and spaces?</li> <li>Promote sustainable, responsible tourism, recreation and cultural activity?</li> </ul>		
<b>Landscape</b>	20	To what extent will the policy or proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	Sustainable Places	(2) Biodiversity and Natural Places
	21	Will the proposal have the opportunity to incorporate new or enhance existing blue and/or green infrastructure and networks providing multiple benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, management of surface water?	Liveable Places	(6) Green Belts and Landscape Character  (7) Brownfield, Vacant, Derelict and Contaminated Land
	22	Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as Green Belt and current settlement		(13) Housing

		<p>boundaries, existing townscape and character of surrounding area and its visual qualities?</p> <p>The Council’s Landscape Character Assessment will be used to assess the impact of proposals on the landscape and Green Belt.</p> <p>A Landscape Appraisal will be required to be submitted, where applicable.</p>		<p>(17) Blue and Green Infrastructure</p> <p>(19) Strategic Flood Risk and Water Management</p>
	23	To what extent will the proposal affect features of landscape interest, including the distinctive character of the landscape and the qualities of wild land?		
<b>Population and Place</b>	24	<p>Will the proposal affect service infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education capacity – Primary and Secondary School, Early Learning Centres and Additional Support Needs School Catchment Areas</li> <li>• Primary Health Care/GP capacity</li> <li>• Communications and Digital Infrastructure</li> <li>• Grid Capacity</li> <li>• Services and Utilities (water and drainage)</li> </ul>	<p>Sustainable Places</p> <p>Liveable Places</p> <p>Productive Places</p>	<p>(8) Energy Generation and Distribution</p> <p>(10) Transport</p> <p>(11) Placemaking</p> <p>(12) Local Living</p> <p>(13) Housing</p> <p>(14) Infrastructure First</p> <p>(15) Education</p> <p>(18) Play, Recreation and Sport</p> <p>(21) Communications and Digital Infrastructure</p>
	25	To what extent will the proposal affect core path links or other key access networks such as cycle paths and rights of way?		
	26	Will the proposal provide jobs and meet community wealth building objectives?		
	27	<p>Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe?</p> <p>Other site servicing constraints, e.g. electricity pylons, underground gas pipelines etc.</p>		
		<p>Vehicular Access constraints or opportunities -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the network capable of accommodating active travel, public transport, other shared modes, and private vehicle traffic generated?</li> </ul> <p>A Transport Appraisal will be required to be submitted.</p>		



	28	<p>Is the site close to a range of facilities? Can these be accessed by public transport or active travel?</p> <p>The Council's Local Living assessment will be used to inform this analysis.</p>		<p>(22) Economic Development</p> <p>(26) Socio-Economic Profile</p>
<b>Human health, air and hazards</b>	29	Is the proposal within the vicinity of a major accident hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline?	Sustainable Places	(7) Brownfield, Vacant, Derelict and Contaminated Land
	30	Does the proposal introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. combined heat and power, an industrial process, large scale quarry etc.)?	Liveable Places	(20) Health and Well Being
	31	Will the proposal lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site with noise/odour issues or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA (e.g. new housing adjacent to a large manufacturing factory)		
<b>Soil and Geology</b>	32	<p>Does the proposal make use of a brownfield site or contaminated and vacant and derelict land? If on brownfield, is the site naturalised?</p> <p>The Council's Vacant and Derelict Land Assessment will be used to inform this analysis.</p> <p>A Contamination Report will be required to be submitted, where applicable.</p>	Sustainable Places	(3) Soils
	33	Are there any contaminated soils issues on the site and if so, will the option employ remedial actions to ensure the site is suitable for use (as defined in PAN 33)?	Productive Places	(7) Brownfield, Vacant, Derelict and Contaminated Land
	34	Is the proposal on peat or carbon rich soils and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat or carbon rich soils?		
				(25) Minerals and Coal Mining

	35	Does the proposal result in the loss of prime agricultural land or land that is culturally or locally important for primary use as identified by the LDP?		
	36	Does the proposal impact upon mineral resources?		
<b>Material Assets and Waste</b>	37	For waste infrastructure and facilities (except landfill and EFW) does the proposal comply with the criteria listed in NPF4 policy 12 d)?	Sustainable Places	(10) Zero Waste
	38	Does the proposal minimise demand for primary resources by reusing an existing building?		
<b>Water</b>	39	Could the policy or proposal affect the condition of the water environment (water quality, physical condition, water resources, and the migration of wild fish)? See <a href="#">RBMPs</a> for further detail on water condition.	Liveable Places	(14) Infrastructure first  (17) Blue and green infrastructure  (19) Strategic Flood Risk and Water Management
	40	Could the policy or proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example, result in the need for watercourse crossings or a large-scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse)?		
	41	Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?		
	42	Can the proposal connect to the public water mains? If not, is there a sustainable water source that is resilient to the periods of water scarcity?		
	43	Are there wetlands or boggy areas on the site?		
	44	For large scale developments, are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?		
	45	Flood Risk		

	<p>Relative to the floodplain, as defined in NPF4 could the proposal be at risk of flooding (from any source) or result in additional flood risk elsewhere? If flood risk is not fully understood, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken. Specify which of the following flood sources are applicable: fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater or coastal.</p> <p>The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be used to inform this analysis. A Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment will be required to be submitted, where applicable.</p>		
46	<p>Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?</p>		

*\*(Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 Schedule 3 themes covered)*

**Appendix C: Evaluation Matrix**

Environmental Criteria (Assessed against environmental objectives identified in Table 1)																																																								
Policy/Proposal	Climatic Factors								Biodiversity and Nature					Cultural Heritage				Landscape				Population and Place								Human health, air and hazards			Soil and Geology						Material Assets and Waste		Water						Mitigation Required	Comments / Conclusion								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46										

**Scoring**

++	+	0	-	--
Significantly positive	positive	neutral	adverse	Significantly adverse

Y	Mitigation will be required
A	The mitigation is intended to avoid the perceived significant negative impacts
Rd	The mitigation is intended to reduce the perceived significant negative impacts
Rm	The mitigation is intended to remediate the perceived significant negative environmental impact
C	The mitigation is intended to compensate for the perceived significant negative environmental impacts
()	Adjusted Scoring following mitigation