CALL FOR IDEAS - REPRESENTATION SUMMARY AUGUST 2026
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL ARDEER PENINSULA



INTRODUCTION

The Ardeer Peninsula (hereinafter referred to as 'Ardeer') is the largest vacant/derelict site within North Ayrshire and as such represents an enormous opportunity for economic regeneration, with the prospect of decades of development, growth and employment opportunities. Indeed, given the size and brownfield nature of the site, and its location on Ayrshire's coast, there are clear similarities between this opportunity and that of national developments at Ravenscraig and Dundee Waterfront. This representation proposes the retention and expansion of the existing business and industry allocation at Ardeer.

Under LDP3, it is proposed that the areas indicated be allocated for uses within Classes 4, 5, and 6, supporting business activities such as offices, research and development, light and general industry, and storage and distribution facilities. The allocation would also support ancillary and related developments, including those linked to energy generation and defence industry uses.

BACKGROUND

History of Ardeer

The Ardeer peninsula became the site for Alfred Nobel's British Dynamite Factory in 1871. Intended for explosives manufacturing, it grew to become the largest such facility in the world at the time. The factory had a jetty on the River Garnock for importing materials and disposing of expired explosives.

At its peak, the site employed nearly 13,000 people and included a dedicated railway station used exclusively by workers and official visitors. This station, which operated two daily worker trains until the mid-1960s, was never open to the public. Though the railway is long gone, the platform remains, now overgrown and hidden from view.

Presently Chemring Energetics UK (CEUK) continues to operate a similar, albeit much smaller, business model to that originally located on Ardeer, and provides products based on energetic materials (explosive, propellant) for the defence, security and commercial markets. Such industrial and manufacturing uses for defence and defence-related industries are consistent with both the historic consenting arrangements in place at the site and the current LDP2 Business and Industry allocation.

Site Context

According to the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (2024), North Ayrshire is home to 928 hectares of vacant and derelict land, which represents more than 10% of the national total, and is the second highest total of all the Scottish local authorities. Indeed, Ardeer is the second largest vacant and derelict site across the whole of Scotland. With a total of 534 hectares of vacant and derelict land being proposed for new or re-allocation, this proposal represents an opportunity to substantially reduce the level of vacant and derelict land in North Ayrshire.

Whilst it is acknowledged that part of the undeveloped elements of the promotion site is identified on the North Ayrshire Council Open Space Audit 2022 as a natural/semi-natural greenspace, this space received a score of 0 and it is considered this space is not fit for purpose. Furthermore, whilst the site is situated adjacent to the Bogside Flats SSSI and forms a small part of the Ardeer Fen Local Nature Conservation Site, the site is largely exempt from any formal natural heritage or cultural heritage designations, albeit there is one sole Category B listed building located within the southern extents of the site.

PROPOSED ALLOCATION

This representation proposes the retention and expansion of the existing business and industry allocation at Ardeer. It is considered that this reflects a strategic effort to support long-term economic development and significant employment generation while ensuring environmental and community considerations can be integrated into future proposals at this important location. The intention is therefore to bring these areas under a more modern planning framework through Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3), providing clarity and certainty for investors, stakeholders, and the local community.

Under LDP3, it is proposed that the areas indicated in Figure 1 below be allocated for uses within Classes 4, 5, and 6, supporting business activities such as offices, research and development, light and general industry, and storage and distribution facilities. The allocation would also support ancillary and related developments, including those linked to energy generation and defence industry uses.

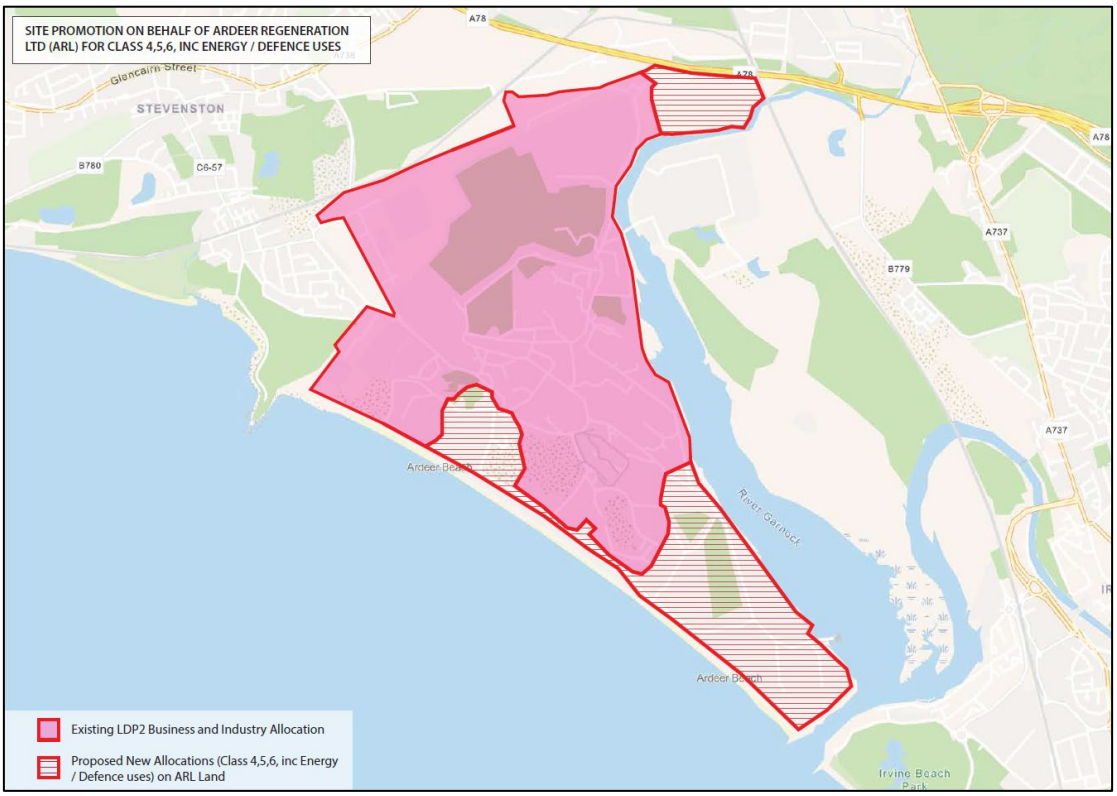


Figure 1: Proposed New Allocations

Recent years have seen significant and growing interest in Ardeer as a location for large-scale business, industrial, energy, and defence-related projects. Although ARL's landholding at Ardeer can accommodate developments of this size, the current LDP allocation does not extend far enough to provide businesses with the certainty needed to progress plans within a single, cohesive landholding. This will be resolved through the proposed expanded allocation, enhancing market confidence and unlocking further investment potential and the potential for significant employment generation at Ardeer.

While the submission proposes an expanded area for development, it is important to emphasise that this does not imply full physical development of the site. Rather, the allocation provides flexibility and a long-term framework for sustainable growth, allowing for a variety of future projects and user requirements to come forward over time, each subject to detailed planning and environmental assessment.

Future development within the allocated area will be guided by a strong commitment to safeguarding greenspace, where possible, protecting biodiversity, and respecting the area's unique environmental context. This includes maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure and ensuring that development does not negatively impact designated sites such as the adjacent Bogside Flats Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The planning framework will require that environmental sensitivities are identified and protected from the earliest stages of development, incorporating buffer zones, habitat protection measures, and public access to natural spaces where appropriate. Some areas of the site containing sand dunes are recognised as holding ecological interest. It should be noted that habitats created through past and ongoing sand and gravel extraction that now support species are sustained by human activity which create a supportive environment. Future development of the site will be cognisant of this and promote the conservation and enhancement of these dynamic habitats where appropriate. In doing so, the expanded allocation seeks to balance economic opportunity with ecological stewardship and the long-term wellbeing of the local environment.

Further technical information shall be provided in due course to support these proposals.

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) represents the national spatial strategy for Scotland and sets out the spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy context for all development in Scotland.

Within the Central area there are several Strategic Sites identified, including Ardeer, which are discussed in the context of aligning with the Clyde Mission, whereby the Ayrshire Councils are working together through their Ayrshire Growth Deal and Community Wealth Building programme to build economic resilience and address unemployment, poverty and inequality across their area. In this regard, NPF4 recognises the Ardeer peninsula as a *"significant site for redevelopment of the wider Ayrshire area".*

The following NPF4 policies are also key to informing the preparation of LDP3, and the proposed extended allocation is considered to align with their aims and operate as outlined below.

Policy 1 – Tackling the climate and nature crises & Policy 2 – Climate mitigation and adaption:

- Identification of the redevelopment of the Ardeer peninsula as strategic priority for LDP3 will ensure a significant brownfield site is 'unlocked' for development, diverting potential development from greenfield sites.
- This will contribute toward sustainable and efficient use of land within North Ayrshire and allow the creation of significant new employment and business investment opportunities in North Ayrshire.
- As part of unlocking Ardeer for development there are opportunities for the re-use of the 'Big Idea' buildings and surrounds for new business uses, bringing a vacant and underutilised site back into use.

Policy 3 – Biodiversity:

- Seek to ensure all future development of the Ardeer peninsula integrates and protects valuable natural assets including the Bogside Flats SSSI.
- Seek to ensure all future development of the Ardeer peninsula promotes nature recovery and nature restoration by creating fostering networks and strengthening connections between them and existing habitats.
- Seek to ensure all future development takes cognisance of the ecological interests of the Ardeer peninsula and promotes the conservation and enhancement of these dynamic habitats where appropriate.
- Seek to ensure all future developers work constructively with stakeholders to ensure nature conservation, management and restoration sit alongside the built development.

Policy 9 – Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings:

- Redevelopment of significant areas of brownfield land on Ardeer will contribute toward sustainable and efficient use of land within North Ayrshire and allow the formation of significant new employment and business investment opportunities in North Ayrshire.
- This includes the potential future re-use or redevelopment of the 'Big Idea' site and buildings, as well as the wider southern area of the Ardeer peninsula.

Policy 10- Coastal Development:

- Seek to ensure that all future development is designed to take cognisance of how the coastline can adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Policy 25- Community Wealth Building:

The redevelopment of the Arder peninsula will:

- Enable local investment
- Create significant employment opportunities
- Encourage the use of local supply chains, and
- Bring Scotland's second largest brownfield site back into productive use.

Policy 26 - Business and industry:

- LDP2 identifies Ardeer as an important 'Potential Future Growth Area' for, industrial and commercial uses.
- NPF4 identifies the Ardeer peninsula as "…a significant site for redevelopment of the wider Ayrshire area".
- Therefore, the promotion of the redevelopment of the Ardeer peninsula as strategic priority for LDP3 would support local and national growth ambitions whilst offering increased certainty and flexibility for businesses to invest in North Ayrshire.

ALIGNMENT WITH LDP3 VISION

To inform the next LDP North Ayrshire Council have prepared profiles for all six of North Ayrshire's localities including the Three Towns Locality Place Profile. North Ayrshire Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is also of relevance in this context and is considered below.

Three Towns Locality Place Profile

The Three Towns Locality Place Profile provides an overview of the social, environmental, and economic challenges and opportunities facing Ardrossan, Saltcoats, and Stevenston. In doing so, it seeks to align with the strategic framework of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), particularly the 'Productive Places' and 'Sustainable Places' themes. Of most relevance, the profile identifies **employment** and **economic regeneration** as urgent priorities for the locality.

The Employment Land Audit 2024 confirms that, while North Ayrshire benefits from a sizable overall employment land supply (495 hectares across 59 sites), much of this is concentrated in the Irvine locality. In contrast, the Three Towns locality, despite having a relatively high number of employment sites (41 hectares across 12 sites), is predominantly characterised by small, fragmented plots that do not meet the needs of modern employers or large-scale investors.

This spatial constraint limits the locality's ability to attract significant private sector investment or support the establishment of anchor developments in key growth sectors, and thereby limits the opportunity for employment generation. Indeed, the Place Profile reinforces this point, indicating a clear need for improved job prospects and better infrastructure to support economic activity.

In this context an extended allocation of the Ardeer Peninsula for employment use in Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3) would not only strengthen the overall employment land portfolio but also provide clarity and confidence to developers, investors, and government partners. Certainty of use and planning designation is critical in attracting major investment, and formally identifying the Peninsula as a strategic employment site with opportunities for significant job creation would send a clear message that the Three Towns are open and ready for economic growth.

North Ayrshire Council Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027

North Ayrshire Council launched Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Strategy in 2020 with this intention that Community Wealth Building will be a key mechanism for delivering a wellbeing economy for North Ayrshire.

The five pillars of the strategy are identified below and a comment on how the proposals align with key actions is offered:

1. Diverse Ownership- The proposals will facilitate investment into North Ayrshire, with the potential for local job creation and other benefits to the community that will arise from the re-use of a currently largely vacant/derelict site.

2. Fair Employment- The proposed allocation will facilitate significant additional employment land and associated job opportunities, and wealth generation in the local area. Through planning, prospective applicants can provide information on how proposed businesses contribute to community wealth building and alignment with Council strategies and NPF4.

3. Financial Power- The proposed allocation will provide additional certainty for investors thus encouraging investment in North Ayrshire and in turn bringing financial benefits and significant employment opportunities to the community and businesses alike. This will help to grow and attract future business to North Ayrshire and give a platform for future innovation including in growing sectors such as energy.

4. Land and Assets- The proposals will facilitate the redevelop of a large vacant and derelict site. Through allocation, increased confidence in future investment at Ardeer can be achieved, introducing opportunities for the local community to benefit from future business investment.

5. Procurement- The proposals will allow for the clustering of business, industry and energy uses at Ardeer, with the potential efficiency gains from this expanded hub and future ability to maximise community benefit.

CONCLUSIONS

The regeneration of the Ardeer peninsula represents the re-use of a significant brownfield former industrial site and presents a significant regeneration and employment opportunity for the wider Ayrshire area. Proposals for a mix of employment uses at Ardeer are consistent with key intentions for LDPs as established by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which must be considered in formation of the forthcoming LDP3. Ardeer Regeneration Ltd are keen to continue working with North Ayrshire Council in developing LDP3 and look forward to further engagement as the new plan is formed. The proposals comprise:

- Retention of the full extent of the LDP2 Business & Industry allocation at Ardeer
- Inclusion of additional areas within an expanded Business & Industry allocation that will allow development of Classes 4 (Business), 5 (General Industry), and 6 (Storage and Distribution) as well as energy and defence-related development.
- Acknowledgment that the full extent of the allocation will not be developed and areas of open space and nature enhancement can come forward as part of any future development proposal.

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KEPPIEDESIGN.CO.UK 01412040066

SITE PROMOTION ON BEHALF OF ARDEER REGENERATION LTD (ARL) FOR CLASS 4,5,6, INC ENERGY / DEFENCE USES

A78

A738

Glencairn Street

STEVENSTON

B780

C6-57

A78

A78

A737

B779

A737

Ardeer Beach

River Garnock

Ardeer Beach

Irvine Beach Park

IR

Existing LDP2 Business and Industry Allocation

Proposed New Allocations (Class 4,5,6, inc Energy / Defence uses) on ARL Land