

Placemaking in South Lanarkshire



Aspirational Vision for Placemaking and House Building in South Lanarkshire

*“Building Homes, Shaping Communities:
A Future for All”*

Introduction: A Place to Call Home

South Lanarkshire is a land of rolling hills, historic towns, and strong communities – a place where the past meets the future with pride and possibility. Our vision is to transform this unique area of Scotland into a leader of thoughtful placemaking and innovative house building. We dream of communities where every home is more than just a building – it’s a foundation for connection, opportunity, and belonging. This document sets out an ambitious yet achievable path to create places that inspire, sustain, and welcome all who live here.

Our Vision

We see South Lanarkshire as a tapestry of thriving neighbourhoods, each with its own character, woven together by shared values of sustainability, inclusivity, and beauty. From the bustling streets of Hamilton to the quiet charm of Biggar, from the growing hubs of East Kilbride to the rural expanses of Clydesdale, we will build homes and communities that reflect the needs and dreams of our people. Our goal is simple but bold: to ensure every resident has a place to live that meets their needs, within a community that is inclusive and vibrant, and where health and wellbeing can flourish.

What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a collaborative and community-centred approach to designing places that enhance people’s lived experience with a strong focus on place and wellbeing. At its core, placemaking seeks to create spaces that are not just functional but also vibrant, inclusive, and reflective of the unique character and needs of the local community.

This holistic approach ensures a balance between environmental, social, and economic aspirations, creating places where people thrive in both the present and the future.

Core Principles

People at the Heart

Placemaking starts with people. We will listen to residents and communities. This helps us to direct developers to create homes and spaces that meet the real needs of the people within South Lanarkshire. Homes built with care and purpose can integrate with the existing natural and built environment. Where the needs of people and businesses are considered, new opportunities for community or commercial units, or designed open spaces may be realised. The opportunities for more than just house building is present now and going moving forward.

The council agreed at the February 2023 Executive Committee to commit to becoming an Age Friendly Council. In March 2023 South Lanarkshire Council adopted a motion on Space to Play and then in August 2023 became the third Scottish local authority to adopt Feminist-led Town Planning. A Nature Emergency was declared by the Council in January 2024. This welcomed approach will make places and spaces better not only for women and girls, but for all communities as a result.

Sustainable Living

South Lanarkshire Council encourages developers to aim for higher standards of building design and construction that will improve building energy efficiency and climate resilience.

Integrating climate change considerations and nature-positive practices into development design ensures the long-term health of the area, ensuring our communities thrive for generations to come, in line with the "Planet" theme of our Council Plan.



Connected Communities

Placemaking can integrate multifunctionality into every space, combining recreation, business opportunities, and cultural expression to create lively, sustainable environments that support local living and wealth building.

A focus on walkable, bike-friendly places with parks, shops, schools and other services within a short distance of people's homes can encourage local wealth building, sustainability and enjoyment of the places people feel connected to.



Celebrating Identity

Our towns and villages each have a story to tell. New developments can recognise local heritage while adding a fresh, modern twist. We aim to see Placemaking that builds on what makes South Lanarkshire special: it taps into the unique history, culture, and geography of each area, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among its residents.

Flourishing design

We'll champion a rich mix of architectural styles. Creative and thoughtful designs will enable developments to be distinctive and visually interesting for all to enjoy.

People-focused design aims to create places that prioritise people over vehicles, ensuring spaces are accessible, walkable, and pleasant.



Homes for everyone

South Lanarkshire Council encourages a mix of affordable homes: council houses, mid-market rent, shared ownership, custom builds, and private developments. We hope to see a mix of house sizes and styles that reflect the varying needs of people throughout their life, in places they feel connected to and supported by.

The community-driven approach considers how future developments can meet the needs of diverse groups, offering homes that align with the aspirations of residents from all walks of life, and reflects the Council's own ambitious affordable house building programme.

More than just house building, future developments can foster accessible and inclusive outdoor environments that welcome people with disabilities and additional support needs. Our research has shown how considerate design of spaces can encourage and support everyone to move around with confidence, and to navigate their environment with ease.

Health and Wellbeing

Homes and communities can nurture healthy bodies and mental wellbeing. We encourage the design of bright, naturally lit homes with access to nature, quiet streets that promote calm, and spaces that encourage movement, play, and social bonds. Health and wellbeing can be woven into development design, making South Lanarkshire a place where people don't just live – they thrive.

Streets that favour pedestrians and cyclists, with safe paths to schools, shops and other amenities can positively encourage active lifestyles. The inclusion of seating opportunities at regular intervals can help those who need support to move around or to walk to their local bus stop.



The Plan: Bringing the Vision to Life

The Council Plan, Connect 2022-27, has outlined People, Planet, and Progress as the three main themes that all our efforts in the council are to contribute towards. At the same time, placemaking is very much at the heart of the Scottish Government's spatial planning policy, and this will be reflected in the next Local Development Plan 3, which we have started preparing.

A Call to Action

This vision belongs to everyone in South Lanarkshire. Through working together, we can create a future where every street, every home, and every community are emboldened with opportunities. This vision statement is the first step to establishing our progression into successful placemaking.

To drive forward the positive changes that we encourage, there is more work to be done. We aim to produce further detailed guidance including best practice ideas that will support development proposals to meet our aspirations for South Lanarkshire.

The guidance will align with the aims, objectives and policies of National Planning Guidance 4 (NPF4), the Council Plan, and the Council's commitment to being an Age Friendly and feminist led town planning authority.

This will be produced in tandem with the preparation of the Council's evidence report required as part of the LDP3 process.





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Produced by Communications and Strategy. 067936/Jun25