



16 November 2015

Scottish Enterprise Response

West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) Proposed Plan (PP)

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Section 4, paragraph 4.3, page 8 - Economic Development and Growth

2. Scottish Enterprise (SE) supports the Proposed Plan's (PP) intentions to seek to provide an adequate and diverse range and quality of employment land and, in general terms, considers that the proposed policies of the PP will direct development to the proper locations and provides an appropriate framework for the consideration of development proposals. Section 4, 4.3 page 8 Economic Development and Growth is supported. SE requests, however, that consideration be given to the fine tuning of proposed policies to ensure that their requirements are sufficiently flexible to respond to changing market conditions and to provide for the early delivery of development, particularly on employment land.
3. SE requests that West Lothian Council gives consideration to releasing land currently used for specific purposes (e.g. employment land) should it be demonstrated that alternative uses would contribute more appropriately to the economic (and social) well-being of the area. Accordingly, it requests, through the suggested changes to policies identified below, (suggested changes shown in bold italics throughout this response), that alternative uses are accepted by policy, providing it can be demonstrated that :
 - there are alternative development proposals which generate sustainable economic benefits, and
 - there is no demand (and is unlikely to be any demand in the foreseeable future) for the allocated / existing use.
4. SE is of the opinion that additional SG may be required to provide guidance to prospective applicants as to the means by which such justification can be demonstrated (for example the type of and length of the marketing exercise, and which Key Agencies may be involved in this process).

Section 5, paragraphs 5.15 - 5.22, page 12 & 13 Economic Development and Growth

5. SE supports the PP's intentions to safeguard employment land and to allow flexibility for alternative appropriate commercial uses but questions whether detailed consideration has been given to the need to allocate, retain and safeguard the full extent of employment land as indicated in the PP. In SEs experience,

it can be a deterrent to investment and to the viability and deliverability of employment sites, if there is an excess of land potentially available for such purposes.

6. SE requests that detailed assessment is given to whether there is realistic prospect that all allocated and safeguarded land will be serviced, and will remain appropriate for economic purposes, to meet short to long term needs of investors and employers. Due to the extent of safeguarded and allocated land, SE considers it unlikely that this will be achieved and on this basis feels that deliverability of employment land may not be achieved during the plan's lifespan. SE requests, therefore, that consideration be given to the release of safeguarded and allocated land to alternative and / or mixed uses, including housing, in circumstances when it is demonstrated that there is an overriding economic benefit. This could be, for example, in circumstances where this may facilitate the deliverability of the remaining land for employment (for example by contributing to essential infrastructure provision and / or facilitating the servicing of the remaining employment land). SE suggests that housing may be appropriate as this use could include a range of accommodation for residential purposes, particularly care homes (Use Class 8), which in themselves generate significant employment provision and would achieve the overall aim and objective of the PP, to create a diverse range of employment opportunities.
7. Accordingly, SE supports the provision of a range and mix of sites, including the provision of land at least to the extent required by SESPlan 1, Policy 2 (123 ha) but requests the WLC gives further consideration to the need for additional land and the safeguarding of a further 221 ha of land. A significant over- supply may act as a deterrent to the viability and deliverability of employment land, through lack of confidence for investment and to service land, such that the allocation of land in itself has no benefit to the area. As time progresses, older employment sites may become surplus to requirements or unsuitable for modern use and may be beyond its realistic requirement for employment purposes. Accordingly, SE considers that the wording of the employment policies may be more flexible to allow for the redevelopment of sites in appropriate circumstances, where this will either have a neutral or positive impact upon the local economy and employment potential of the area. For example, SE suggests that alternative (sui generis) commercial uses such as car showrooms and dealerships, particularly those which have servicing and warehousing facilities can generate employment equivalent to Class 4, 5 and 6 uses.

EMP1 - Safeguarding and Developing Existing Employment Land

8. SE supports the principles of this policy to protect and safeguard existing employment land. However, due to extent of land available, it is felt that there should be greater flexibility within the policy to allow for other 'employment-generating use' besides class 4, 5, 6 and / or to move between uses as appropriate to the site characteristics. Other uses can generate employment numbers equal to or greater than class 4, 5, 6 and of varying employment types. If a site's characteristics are suitable to an alternative use, this policy should not presume against such changes. SE acknowledges that retail use, beyond that which is to serve that particular local employment area, should not as a matter of course fall within this flexible approach in principle, due to other good planning reasons.
9. SE requests that WLC gives consideration to the following changes (shown in bold italics) to EMP 1, extract:

The expansion, conversion or re-development of land and premises within these areas will be supported, as will proposals for new development embracing ~~the same~~ use classes, ~~i.e.~~ 4, 5 **and 6 and other land uses which are demonstrated to generate employment opportunities equal to or greater than Class 4,5,6**, subject to the following criteria being satisfied:

.....

e. the proposed land use does not conflict with other policies in this development plan, most notably those relating to retail development.

10. Also, in principle SE supports point (f) of EMP 1, relating to the requirement that applicant demonstrate their attempts to secure employment development / use. It recommends, however, that Supplementary Guidance (SG) could usefully be prepared, to provide guidance on the matters which applicants will be expected to consider, action and assess to demonstrate that there is no alternative user and / or the employment benefits of different use - for example, length and type of marketing process, the support (or otherwise) of economic agencies for example, the Economic Development Unit of WLC and SE). SE would be happy to contribute to the preparation of the SG, which it considers should be carried out as soon as possible.
11. SE has seen considerable benefit to employment areas when a mix of ancillary uses are developed, which support the main employment use of the area, for example banks (Use Class 2), crèche facilities (Use Class 10) and fitness centres (Use Class 11) all of which provide additional services and facilities to meet the needs of employees. In this respect, whilst SE agrees that larger scale retail development should not be introduced to employment sites, where this conflicts with other policies, it is felt that some employment areas may benefit from small scale retail-type development particularly those uses which can cater for the 'lunch-time trade' of the local businesses within that area. In SE's experience, investors are more likely to be attracted to areas which provide a full range of facilities for employees, as opposed to those areas from which employees will have to travel, most often by car, during the lunch period. An example of the successful development of ancillary retail facilities which has contributed to the successful development of an employment area is Ashtenne in East Kilbride. SE requests that WLC gives consideration to amending that part of EMP1 to :

Proposals to introduce retail uses ***which are not ancillary to or which will serve a catchment area wider than the immediate employment area*** will not be supported'.

12. SE also considers that sub-section J introduces a requirement that may potentially prevent any non-business use from complying with the policy and may be better to be deleted and included with the SG suggested by SE.

5.23 page 14 EMP2 Flexibility of uses within traditional industrial estates

13. SE supports this policy and, as with EMP1 above, considers that the preparation of SG to support and provide additional guidance to the implementation of the policy would be beneficial.

14. SE also considers that residential / mixed use development may be appropriate within / at the edges of these traditional industrial estates, if those estates become surplus to employment land requirements. Policy EMP2 could be amended to include for appropriate non-employment uses, including housing. SE requests that consideration be given to the following amendment :

Proposals to introduce residential and retail uses into these areas will not be supported, ***unless ancillary to the employment use of the site.***

EMP 5 - Masterplan Requirements for Employment Sites

15. SE supports this policy providing the need for the preparation of the Masterplan does not deter investment and delivery due to delay and / or unnecessary detailed requirements. The demand for a Masterplan must be commensurate with the scale of the site / the development proposal.

Paragraphs 5.24 - 5.25, page 17 Enterprise Areas and EMP7 Enterprise Areas

16. SE supports the status and emphasis given to Enterprise Areas in the PP but requests that the policy be modified to allow for other potential employment generating uses to be developed on the site by slightly changing the emphasis relating to the food and drink sector and re addressing the balance of material considerations. SE requests that consideration be given to the following :

Developments which contribute towards ***employment generation and particularly those which enhancing*** the food and drink sectors will be supported in principle, subject to the following criteria being satisfied;

- a. the scale, layout and design of the proposal shall be appropriate to the character of the site and the surrounding area;
- b. ~~the proposal shall have no unacceptable traffic, amenity or environmental impact~~ ***any impact on traffic, amenity or the environment is mitigated to acceptable levels or is justified on grounds of overriding economic benefit*** and
- c. the necessary local and strategic infrastructure requirements (as set out in Appendix 1) are capable of being satisfactorily addressed

Page 23, paragraph 5.49 HOU1 Allocated Housing Sites

17. SE supports in principle policy HOU1 in that it supports the delivery of much needed homes. It has some concern, however, that as worded the policy could allow for employment-generating development at the allocated housing sites, which may impinge upon the delivery of other employment land. SE requests that consideration be given to the following amendment:

- b. the alternative use facilitates regeneration or offers significant environmental, economic or community benefits that are considered to outweigh the need to maintain the intended housing use *and any development for employment purposes will not affect adversely the potential for the release of land allocated for or safeguarded as employment land which is the subject of other policies within this Plan*; and

Page 40, Policy TCR 2 Location of New Retail and Commercial Leisure Developments

18. SE fully supports this policy which meets the requirements of SPP relating to the town centres first approach, without conflicting with the requirements of other employment policies (particularly regarding Class 4 development). For this reason, SE would not support any future amendment to this policy which may introduce the requirement for sequential testing for office development.

Page 101, Appendix One: Employment Land Allocations, Core Category D

19. Whilst SE supports the intentions of the PP to seek to provide a range of sites for different employment uses, it questions the potential to control offices compared to R&D and some light industrial uses. WLC may wish to give consideration to amending the wording of this category to ensure that it can properly manage development during the duration of the LDP.

Employment Land Allocations (page 101 onwards)

20. SE supports the PP's identification of employment land, subject to the minor changes to the policies EMP1, EMP 2, EMP5 and EMP 7 detailed above.

H-LV-14 Livingston housing allocation page 209

21. SE supports the reallocation of this site to housing to reflect the current 'minded to grant permission' status of this site, as detailed in a separate site specific representation. SE suggests, however, that mechanisms are brought forward in the PP to ensure delivery of housing sites on the ground, rather than just the delivery of housing allocations and permissions. In particular, details of development contributions for infrastructure and schools must be clarified and must relate to that necessary to development proposed.

Appendix 4, page 265 Supplementary Guidance

22. SE notes that no SG is suggested for Economic Development. SE refers to its responses to EMP1, 2 and HOU 1 above and suggests that consideration be given to the preparation of SG on releasing sites from employment (and housing) designations where sufficient marketing demonstrates no demand exists for the



allocated use. The SG should include guidance on the necessary processes and timescale to justify the case and which Key Agencies support should be obtained to also justifying the proposal.



23. SE supports the preparation of Residential Development SG, Transportation PG and Education Strategy PG and recommends that the guidance be prepared for consultation as soon as possible particularly relating to the amount and mechanisms for developer contribution, to avoid any delay to delivery of development sites.



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