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17 November 2015

Development Planning
West Lothian Council
Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6FF

Dear Sir or Madam,

West Lothian Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan October 2015

Site reference H-LV 31

The site H-LV 31 in the Proposed Local development Plan is directly opposite our house, and we are therefore very familiar with it and wish to raise objections to the proposal for its use for “mixed development and housing”.

The comments under “Other” make reference to the fact that the site has been contaminated in the past, but does not specify the type of contamination, which we believe to have been toxic wastes from Edinburgh. This is believed to be the reason why the site was not developed for housing at the time when Murieston Valley was established.

The Comments do not mention that the site is largely waterlogged and hence would need to be drained running the risk of the toxic contamination entering local watercourses. This makes it totally unsuitable for housing development. Development of the site would be in contradiction of Environmental Policy ENV 11 on the water environment.

As a consequence of the waterlogging the site is rich in wildlife, and heron are frequently seen feeding on the large populations of frogs that inhabit the site. The vegetation is typical of a wetland site, and some trees are beginning to become established on the site, which will enhance its value for wildlife and amenity. Development of the site would be in contradiction of Environmental Policy ENV 19 on protection of local biodiversity

While the Plan has safeguards for protecting existing sites of landscape and conservation value, it has little to say about increasing the areas to be set aside for these purposes. We strongly recommend that the proposed use for the site be changed to natural conservation and that it be set aside as a local wildlife sanctuary or nature reserve. The site is not large in terms of its potential contribution to the expected future demand for housing, in the context of Murieston Valley it is very valuable for landscape and biodiversity.

We trust that it is possible to amend the Plan to take these comments into account,

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Fraser and Paul Brown