

23 NOV 2015

WL/CDP/AP/0256

Dear Sir / Madam

RE Site - Linlithgow HLL 12, Preston Farm Field

This is our first submission and represents our own views.

The proposed development of this site contravenes all previous commitments by West Lothian Council to the development of Linlithgow. The fact that the Council has now changed its perspective seems only to meet its needs in terms of a target to build houses. It is not in the best interests of Linlithgow as a town, its character and its inhabitants.

I am objecting on the following grounds:

1. This land has always had green belt status as an Area of Great Land Value (AGLV). It is unclear why the Council now views only part of this field as AGLV and the other part as prime development land. Alongside this the Council's Local Landscape Designation Review states that the area should form part of the Bathgate Hill Special Landscape Area. This means that it should be protected from development and preserved for prosperity. It is unclear in any publication from the Council why it is ignoring advice from a report and has decided to re-zone this land for housing.

In the plan it appears that the council has redrawn the greenbelt to match the Developer's plans and ignored all previous objections in the MIR. This is unacceptable and seems to suit the Council's target for house building and the developer's financial interests. It is not in the interest of the local community or the character of the town. Also by including this land within the proposed plan it is effectively redrawing the town boundaries. The creep of the town beyond its current boundaries to the South of the town is not a sensible move and again goes against the advice in the . This area of the town is not within easy reach of the town centre and its local amenities.

2. The roads infrastructure is totally unsuitable to accept both the increased traffic during the construction phase and in the long term. The Council's own assessment of the transport problems state that the development will have a major impact on road capacity and major improvements will be needed. It is unclear how this can be achieved on Preston Road or Manse Road, given that both already have traffic calming measures. There is no indication in the plan as to how the roads might be improved.

The increase in the number of cars will also lead to an increase in demand for parking in the town centre, especially for rail travel. The current situation is critical and there are no plans in place to alleviate this and there are also no clear opportunities to increase parking near or around the train station.

The proposed development at Preston Field will not bring any benefits to the town to alleviate the current congestion and pollution problems on the High Street.

3. It is clear that the primary schools and academy are full and medical services are at the limit. In the proposed plans for Preston Field there is no provision for either to be improved/expanded. Instead the proposal will just increase traffic on Preston Road where there are two primary schools and a cut through to the Academy. The Council should explore alternative developments that would bring benefits to the town in terms of increased shopping facilities, schooling, motorway junctions, alternative road structures that would alleviate the pressures on the local amenities.

4. The land itself is prime agricultural land. It makes no sense to rezone this land for development. We need to be producing our own food locally and this field presents a fantastic opportunity for this - at least if it is not turned into housing.

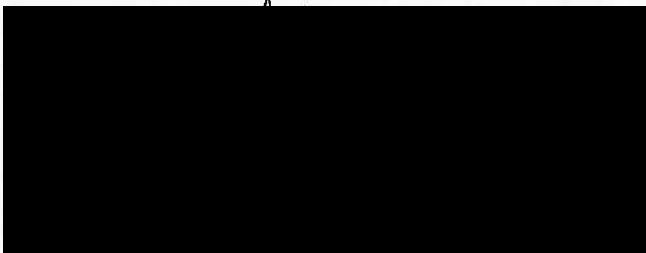
5. The Canal is a national monument and this is not acknowledged within the plan to rezone this field. This site should be protected both to preserve Georgian piece of engineering and also as a fantastic tourist asset to the town. Housing on this site will severely alter the western approach to the town, taking away a fantastic setting with Preston House and Cockleroy framing the scene.

6. The field provided important territory and feeding ground for protected species including bats and badgers. This is not taken into account in the plan despite it being a significant block to the granting of planning permission. There has been little done by the Council to investigate this despite it being raised by objectors at the MIR stage.

Instead we would strongly support the proposed expansion in the East of the town proposed by Linlithgow's Local Planning Forum. This is close to the town centre and local shops, health centre and other amenities. It also gives better walking access to train station and a number of local bus stops. This proposal offers an access road to this housing which would also take pressure of the already overloaded routes up Manse Road and Preston Road.

I would suggest that this draft plan is ill-thought through in terms of development within Linlithgow. Whilst the rest of the plan will no doubt benefit West Lothian as a whole. The plans which are specific to Linlithgow need greater consideration so as not to destroy the character of the town and place an ever greater burden on local infrastructure.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area of the letter.