

West Lothian Local Development Plan -Objection

This objection relates to the proposed re-designation of the land at Wilcoxholm Farm/Pilgrims Hill as suitable for housing and focuses on 4 key areas:

- Landscape and suitability of site
- Infrastructure and traffic
- Better alternative sites
- Breaches of policy / guidance.

Landscape / Suitability

Development in that area would destroy an important part of the town's landscape, appearance and habitat and materially negatively impact on existing historic and characterful infrastructure including the canal and several bridges and its bio-diversity.

The complexities of the site suggest significant risk from flooding in an area known to have suffered from it in the past. The solution would presumably be highly impactful, extensive and very expensive, with an ongoing burden of risk and maintenance costs.

In short the site is not one obviously suitable for housing and the impact and risk of unintended consequences is far too high to take the chance.

Infrastructure and Traffic

The road infrastructure is adequate for current traffic levels but the material increase inevitable through use of the site for housing could not be accommodated. Access through the small Maidlands housing development would be physically impossible for the volumes suggested and access from Edinburgh Road would require extensive, high impact construction out of all proportion to the benefit.

The site is far enough away from the town and station that extensive short journey car use is inevitable leading to increased congestion, pollution and parking issues.

Linlithgow Academy is at capacity and the significant and concentrated step change additional provision inevitable from any development will require highly expensive additional resources from the Council.

Alternative sites

There are several brownfield sites which are far more suited to housing including, most obviously, the area west of the bonded warehouses and north of St Magdalenes. It is currently vacant and has been the subject of previous housing applications, although part of it has recently, and bizarrely, been granted planning permission for a supermarket to add to the 3 Linlithgow already has. I understood priority was to be given to development on brownfield sites and given the demand for housing land

and the existence of brownfield sites in Linlithgow that is easily accommodated. The Plan should allocate other sites in the area to meet the housing need.

Policy / Guidance Breaches

Council, Planning , Government and Environmental policy and guidance cover all these areas and in general terms the proposal to allocate the site for housing appears to be contrary to pretty much all of them either at a headline or at a detailed level.

Removal of the area of restraint policy for Linlithgow should not mean a free for all. While there is a need for some additional housing in Linlithgow, there are far more suitable sites, many of which are already allocated and agreeing re-designation of such a high risk site, contrary to such a wide range of policies, plans and guidance is the wrong thing to do.