

WLC REF: MIR00026

West Lothian Council
Development Management

06 OCT 2014

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Ref No.....

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To Development Planning unit
West Lothian Council

I OBJECT TO THE INCLUSION OF HOUSING SITE E01 – 0168 (PRESTON FARM, LINLITHGOW) IN THE MAIN ISSUES REPORT FOR THESE REASONS:

1. CONTRADICTION IN THE MAIN ISSUES REPORT.

The land is outwith Linlithgow Settlement and has AGLV status. The Council's own Landscape Designation Review (LDR) clearly shows the land should have an enhanced level of environmental protection with special status in the new Plan as a core Special Landscape Area of the Bathgate Hills. To allow such an area on the Housing List is a clear contradiction of the Council's own advice in the LDR which says the Council should 'resist development pressure on the edge of Linlithgow particularly where it advances uphill to key skylines'. The Preston Farm land is precisely this kind of at-risk site, as it is the frontier between town and the foothills of Cockleroy.

2. PUBLIC AMENITY

The farmland gives spectacular public views of the listed Preston House, Ancient Woodland and Cockleroy from the South along Deanburn Road. It is a key landscape feature on the Western Approach to Linlithgow along Falkirk Road. The views out of Cockleroy to the Town are dramatically enhanced by these fields. These views are hugely valued by residents and the LDR agrees: the site scores 'high' for most criteria in it, so high that it is deemed a 'core' area. Building on this site would obliterate the vistas and sets a precedent for further encroachment on the Bathgate Hills.

3. ENVIRONMENT

I note that the council values the preservation and encouragement of wildlife especially near settlements. These fields attract birds of prey, swifts, woodpigeons and woodpeckers. Bats, badgers, foxes, small mammals, bees and butterflies are often spotted. Woodland around the field is Ancient and protected by TPOs. This habitat would be threatened by housing encroachment.

4. FLOODING

During the building of Donaldson's School, several houses below the crest of the field were flooded by run-off water. Additional building would increase this risk.

5. SCHOOLING & SCHOOL SAFETY

Linlithgow Primary School is oversubscribed. Catchment homes are bought and extended by families with children increasing pressure on places. Up to 50 additional family homes would worsen this. Linlithgow Primary is a traffic blackspot bringing safety and pollution hazards to children. Additional traffic from new housing would only increase these risks.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD

Deanburn Residents have conducted local searches and consulted Planners when purchasing homes. This clarified that building on the fields would not take place due to the AGLV status. This is evidenced by every past building plan being rejected. New Development would breach these assurances, cause distress to residents and potentially affect home values which are enhanced by uninterrupted views.

I urge you to remove this site from the Housing List and forthcoming Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

