

WLC REF: MIRQ0032

Feedback on the West Lothian Development Plan

From; [REDACTED]

Telepho [REDACTED]

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I'm afraid that I was not able to send a completed Questionnaire via email and do not propose to print off a 40 page colour document. I hope therefore that you will accept my feedback in this format.

CONTEXT

The LDP Vision states: "Development will take place in a sustainable way that protects and improves the area's built and natural heritage"

The Natural and Historic Environment key Aim is to protect and enhance the natural and built environment and its cultural landscapes

Main Issue 3: Housing Growth Preferred Strategy States: "This scenario is only preferred if the Council can be satisfied that the infrastructure required to support this scale of development can be delivered in full"

And " the Council's preferred approach is that the area of Restraint (for Linlithgow) be reconsidered to allow for Greenfield release of housing....."

SPECIFIC FEEDBACK RE LINLITHGOW

Having attended two local meetings and examined information On Line, it seems that the decision has already been taken to remove Linlithgow's designation as an "Area of Restraint" (p149 of the MIR). It also now seems that West Lothian Council is targeting Linlithgow to meet a totally disproportionate housing shortfall across the County. My comments are:

- the West Lothian Development Plan (WLDP) background papers show that under the South East Scotland Strategic Plan West Lothian Council is trying to address a shortfall of 2,130 houses (although sites for 3,500 are being considered to allow contingency)
- the WLDP for Linlithgow indicates that Preferred new sites for housing have been identified to provide **582** additional homes in Linlithgow, which is 27% - nearly a third - of the 2,130 shortfall. This seems very high
- 233 of the 582 houses would be built in the Upper Linlithgow and Union Canal Conservation Area, with further 200 houses immediately adjacent on the proposed Wilcoxhill / Pilgrims Hill site at Edinburgh Road. Arguably therefore 433 new houses would directly impact on the Conservation Area
- the 582 number *excludes* the 67 residences to be built in Linlithgow on already Committed sites and a possible further 200 houses that may be built if the appeal on the Burghmuir site is successful

Whilst the housing proposals seem fairly well documented - which will obviously please the landowners and developers - there are glaring gaps in the Plan with regard to:

- Detailed proposals for infrastructure improvements - especially traffic and parking (local and commuter). What exactly is being proposed?

- is there is a 100% reliance on Planning Gain for infrastructure improvements (a poor motive for driving through new housing proposals regardless of the wishes of local residents) and how will the housing development and infrastructure works be phased and managed?
- Is it guaranteed that 100% of the Planning Gain will be spent in Linlithgow?
- where is the impact assessment on existing residents e.g. the Manse Road and Canal Basin area if and when the new houses are built? How will the sites be accessed and how long will the building take?
- where is the detail of the timing of the opening of new school at Winchburgh (best guess 2019?) or the subsequent release of capacity at Linlithgow Academy. The build up of the role at Winchburgh could take up to 5 years as pupils already at Linlithgow will not switch from to Winchburgh on day 1
- is the assumption correct that there will be no additional houses built in Linlithgow until the Winchburgh Academy is actually open?

CONCLUSION

All of the above suggest that the proposals currently in the Plan for Linlithgow run almost totally contrary to the Council's own Vision and stated Aims & Guidelines. We deserve to be presented with a detailed plan for Linlithgow that balances housing and infrastructure growth and protects existing Conservation Areas. If you have a feedback process, I would be interested in your response

Equalities Questions

