

WLC REF:MIRQ0047

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Sent: 16 October 2014 21:45

To: Planning

Cc: LCAG group

Subject: MIR: updated comments from LCAG

**Please see below for an updated version of our earlier comments.**

## **WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - MAIN ISSUES REPORT**

I am writing on behalf of the Linlithgow Cycle Action Group and as their chairman to offer our comments on West Lothian Council's Main Issues Report (MIR).

First, we welcome the general emphasis in the report on increasing both leisure and non leisure cycling. While the **high level objectives** in relation to walking and cycling are very welcome, we suggest that the plan would be improved by the inclusion of more specific targets. For example:

- by year X every major residential area in West Lothian should be linked to its local town centre by a convenient and attractive cycle route, with the aim of at least 10% of local trips being made by bike (to reflect the national target for 2020).

- by year X every residential and shopping street, and every street with significant numbers of walkers and/or cyclists, will have a 20mph speed limit (this is now policy in Edinburgh's Local Transport Strategy); and that the default for all other urban roads will be 30mph.

In relation to **the Linlithgow area** we think that there four main priorities that should be reflected in the plan. These are:

1. **The High Street.** This continues to be the major east-west route through the town, but surveys of residents clearly show that it deters many people from cycling. In addition to increasing traffic congestion, extensive on-street parking forces cyclists into the centre of the road to avoid the hazard of opening car doors. A recent visit by a Sustrans specialist [Alex Bottrill] suggested that considerable improvements could be made, improving safety, the perception of safety and environmental pollution and making walking and cycling much more attractive.

2. **Car free travel to the town centre.** A lack of safe cycle routes from residential areas into the town centre is an important factor discouraging cycling. This should include, *firstly*, quiet routes where available – for example upgrading the existing route from Springfield to the Regent Centre and station.

*Secondly*, all main roads into the town centre should have cycle facilities and restricted onstreet car parking. The Falkirk Road cycle lanes have a few problems but in general are hugely appreciated. However, that work was done many years ago, with no similar projects on other main roads subsequently. A prime example of this is the Blackness Road in as far as Low Port. On Blackness Road we would like to see the offroad path upgraded from Springfield Road outwards. Inwards to Low Port, if a continued segregated route is impossible there should be onroad lanes as in Falkirk Road. A light-controlled crossing of Blackness Road is also essential – this would allow the changeover between the abovementioned onroad and offroad facilities as well as being critical in the 'round-Linlithgow' route in 3(a) below, and also allowing Springfield residents on foot or bike to get to the Loch safely.

**3. Active travel around the town.** Safe and attractive walking and cycling routes around the town would be a relatively inexpensive way of reducing traffic congestion and promoting active travel. There are a number of obvious examples:

(a) major improvements could come from completing the long-discussed 'round Linlithgow' recreational/tourist route. Large parts of this already exist and need only be signposted, including Sellars Road, north side of the Loch, and the towpath. However some significant works are needed to make this route truly safe and attractive. These include a bridge over the burn north of Sellars Road [we have objected to a planning application which could block this opportunity and which is currently awaiting decision by the Council], a safe crossing of Blackness Road [as in 2 above] and a link from Springfield to the canal towpath via Maidlands [thus avoiding the need to use or cross Edinburgh Road]. These links would benefit both leisure and also non-leisure uses such as shopping and school trips and would also take pressure off the High Street.

(b) the 'green network' path along the middle of Springfield already exists, but requires signposting

(c) a connection from the tow path zig-zagging through the housing Up the Brae to Dark Entry, to join the improved path to Beecraigs would improve access to Beecraigs Country Park.

(d) a leisure / family route could be considered along the south edge of the Loch, as far as St Ninians Way, emerging onto the High St at existing ramps or paths. Again signage is required, particularly where ramps lead on to the Vennel. Obviously this would be, and would have to be, a slow route, given high pedestrian use, and signing should reflect that. Confident cyclists in a hurry would stick to the High Street in preference.

**4. Travel further afield to neighbouring communities.** There is a notable contrast between numerous excellent east-west cycle routes and the lack of safe north-south routes between the areas north of the Bathgate Hills and the main centres of population and employment around Bathgate, Livingston and Uphall/Broxburn. The MIR does not address this issue. The lack of any safe on-road route for cyclists travelling either the short distance to Bo'ness or further to Livingston and Bathgate is a major concern. A previous WLC Transport Report suggested the "construction of routes between Linlithgow and Broxburn/Livingston/Bathgate and onwards, e.g. Armadale to Whitburn and Blackburn to West Calder" but we don't think this has been reflected in the MIR.

Much can be done by inexpensive measures such as designating existing footways as cycleway/footways, signposting existing minor roads, and building short 'missing links' between existing quiet roads. It would also be possible to mitigate the effects of blind corners and blind summits by severely pruning or moving or removing hedges and trees, lowering or removing stone dykes, or erecting signs such as 'Blind summit. No overtaking cyclists next 100 yards.'

We understand that the Council has recently won funding from Sustrans for cycle and pedestrian-friendly measures in the Bathgate Hills. We strongly support this, and would like to see reduced speed limits and other measures such as those successfully adopted in Clackmannanshire ... <http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/transport/friendlyroads/>. We would like to see some recognition for such measures in the West Lothian plan.

The Local Plan should also have a clearly stated objective to ensure that by a certain year it is possible to cycle along a safe route between all towns, villages, places of work, education, hospitals, tourist attractions such as country parks, and so on. This should include links to places in adjacent Councils such as Falkirk.

We hope that these comments will be useful

Best wishes



Chairman

Linlithgow Cycle Action Group (LCAG)

October 2014

#### **West Lothian Council - Data Labels:**

**PROTECT: PRIVATE/CONFIDENTIAL** - Contains Personal or Business Sensitive Information for authorised personnel only

**INTERNAL ONLY:** Contains information for council staff only

**PUBLIC:** All information has been approved for public disclosure

**CLASSIFIED:** Contains information that is subject to HMG Classifications of 'Restricted' and above

Link to **Information Handling Procedure:**

<http://webwest1.app.westlothian.gov.uk/its/policies/itsecurity/WLC%20Information%20Handling%20Procedure.pdf>

🔄 **SAVE PAPER - Please do not print this e-mail unless absolutely necessary.**