

WLC REF: MIRQ0078

Steve,

With regards the above regeneration proposal for Oakbank, when we last spoke you advised us to make the formal representation through the MIR process.

Please see attached;

- MIR sentenced (basic response only).
- Vision Document for the "Oakbank Regeneration Project".

I have also arranged for a hard copy to be posted to your office.

The intention is to issue copies to the local councillors as we lobby the wider community for support.

Could you advise if you are able to make any comment without prejudice to the MIR process.

Contact me as required.

Regards

[Redacted signature]

Director

Facilities Engineering and Design Solutions Limited

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

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West Lothian Local Development Plan Main Issues Questionnaire

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Unique Ref No: MIRQ0078

Date:

Submit by Email

Print Form



West Lothian
Council

The council has commenced preparation of its first *Local Development Plan* (LDP). The LDP will replace the *West Lothian Local Plan* and will set out a local interpretation of the requirements of the *Strategic Development Plan* (SESplan) and national guidance. The LDP is a land use plan that identifies site specific development opportunities, sets out the council's key development priorities and provides the policy context for the consideration of applications for planning permission.

The current *West Lothian Local Plan* was adopted by the council in January 2009 is available to view on the council's website at <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/WLLP>

The *Main Issues Report* (MIR) for the West Lothian LDP is the first key stage in the preparation of the LDP and we are seeking your views on this. All documentation for the MIR can be viewed at <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/MIR>

Full details on the timetable and stages for preparing the LDP are set out in the Development Plan Scheme 6 which is also available online: <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2725/Development-Plan-Scheme>

A questionnaire to accompany the MIR is set out below and we would be happy if you would complete and return to us.

There are 98 questions that accompany the *Main Issues Report*. You do not have to respond to all of the questions set out only those which you feel are of particular relevance to you. Completed questionnaires should be returned to us by e-mail to wlldp@westlothian.gov.uk by no later than **5pm on Friday, 17 October 2014**.

Alternatively, please download a copy of the form and send it to us at: Development Planning, West Lothian Council, County Buildings, High Street, Linlithgow, EH49 7EZ (postal address only).

You can keep up to date on the LDP by subscribing to our LDP e-newsletter. If you have not already subscribed, you can do so by going to the following link and following the relevant instructions:

<https://newsletters.westlothian.gov.uk/eNewsletterPro/optin/optinealert.htm>

Name	██████████	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Mr <input type="radio"/> Mrs <input type="radio"/> Miss <input type="radio"/> Ms <small>(please tick as appropriate)</small>
Organisation <small>(where applicable)</small>	Facilities Engineering and Design Solutions Limited	
Postal address	██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████	
Postcode	██████████	
E-mail	██████████	
Telephone	██████████ ██████████	

Please note that any comments you make will be open to public scrutiny, but we will keep your contact details private and confidential and will only use your name or business name.

By filling in this questionnaire you are helping to shape the future of West Lothian

It would also be helpful if you would complete the *Equal Opportunities Questionnaire*, set out at the end of this document.

Local Development Plan Vision Statement

By 2024 West Lothian's population will have grown and an improved employment position within a more diversified local economy will have been established. It will be better connected by road and public transport and will have a greater choice of housing and an appropriate range of education, community, health, retail, recreation and leisure facilities and a network of green spaces to meet the needs of its growing population. Development will take place in a sustainable way that protects and improves the area's built and natural heritage assets, meets the challenges of climate change and renewable energy and helps regenerate deprived areas and improves the quality of life for people living in West Lothian.

Question 1

Do you agree with the *vision for the LDP*, or, are there other aspects that should be considered?

- YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We believe the land allocations assigned within earlier plans should be retained.

Question 2

Do you have an alternative vision, and if so, what is it?

We believe brown field sites should be developed sensitively if possible and in a sustainable way with incentives for remediation.

The aims of the *Main Issues Report* and Associated Main Issues are set out in pages 13 of the MIR.

Question 3

Do you agree with the proposed 'Aims' of the LDP? If not, why not?

Yes.

Question 4

Do you have an alternatives, and if so, what are they?

No.

Main Issue 1: **Economic Development and Growth** (paragraphs 3.1 - 3.31)

Which areas of West Lothian would be best to direct new economic development towards?

How can the LDP support the council's *Economic Strategy* and facilitate the creation of jobs?

Preferred approach

The council's *preferred approach* to employment land is to review the range of uses which could be accommodated on employment land with a view to accommodating a more flexible approach. This flexible approach will involve removing the single user status of two large sites (Linhouse and Eliburn in Livingston), and allowing a wider range of uses on currently allocated employment sites at locations to be identified in the LDP. Such an approach, for example, would apply to certain traditional employment allocations and industrial estates such as East Mains Industrial Estate, Broxburn and Deans & Houstoun Industrial Estates, Livingston and at Whitehill and Whiteside Industrial Estates, Bathgate and Murraysgate, Whitburn reflecting the broad range of uses which already exist at these locations and to allow for other employment/commercial orientated uses to be accommodated e.g. car showrooms, trade centre outlets and certain leisure uses.

The LDP will continue to support development of existing employment allocations, including sites within the core development areas, and support the servicing of employment allocations to assist in attracting inward investment. New employment land allocations will also be identified to supplement and in some cases complement the existing supply, including a new strategic employment site at Balgornie adjacent to the recently opened Junction 4a on the M8 at Whitburn.

In addition, the LDP will seek to encourage small business development by promoting small workshop developments within communities and home working in appropriate locations. In a limited number of cases, existing employment land is identified as being suitable for potential residential development.

The council's preferred use of the former Vion plant in Broxburn is to allocate the site for housing.

The preferred approach would also include meeting the requirements of the SDP in full.

Alternative approach

The council's '*Alternative*' approach to employment land is to restrict the range of uses which can be accommodated on employment sites, and to seek to augment the existing portfolio (including Linhouse) by identifying new strategic or local employment sites beyond existing allocations and SESplan requirements to maximise land availability and choice for potential employers. This would, however, result in an oversupply of employment land and could see large employment estates located in non-sustainable, greenfield locations that could have associated local traffic, infrastructure and environmental impacts.

In relation to the former Vion plant at Broxburn the council's alternative approach is to continue to allocate the site for employment use.

Question 5

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to employment land which would introduce an opportunity for a broader range of land use to be supported within existing employment land allocations and industrial estates?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 6

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to employment land?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 7

Do you have any other alternative approaches? What are they and how would you make them work?

We would like to see the brownfield land used where possible with appropriate levels of development to allow for cost of remediation.

Question 8

Has the council identified enough employment land in West Lothian to meet requirements and are the larger employment sites in the right locations?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 9

Do you agree that the single user employment site at Linhouse, Livingston (ELV54) should be sub-divided for employment and mixed uses, including residential use of up to 250 houses?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We should not mix large employment sites with that of residential, only small scale development of appropriate class of business use should be considered. There is a need to consider how people move around in the residential environment vs the industrial environment, we don't believe this is a good mix.

Question 10

Do you agree that the former strategic employment allocation at Eliburn, Livingston (ELv25) should continue to be promoted for employment uses but not as a single user site?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 11

Do you agree that a site at Balgornie Farm, north of Whitburn, should be allocated for strategic employment land purposes?

If not, why not?

What other locations would you suggest?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Main Issue 2: **Community Regeneration** (paragraphs 3.31 - 3.34)

Where should the focus for community regeneration in West Lothian be and what should this seek to deliver?
How can the LDP incentivise development to take place within regeneration areas?
How can the LDP support the council's Regeneration Plan?

Preferred approach

The council's preferred approach to community regeneration is to focus regeneration initiatives on areas identified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012. This principally includes the smaller settlements in the west of West Lothian identified as Armadale, Blackburn, Blackridge, Fauldhouse, Stoneyburn and Whitburn. Other areas include Bathgate and Boghall and settlements within the Breich Valley where headline levels of disadvantage including unemployment, financial exclusion, poor health and lower education attainment have been identified.

These communities are often characterised by a range of factors which can include high levels of unemployment, low income, lower levels of education attainment, and access to services. To create more balanced communities, address issues of multiple deprivation and to attract private sector investment it is proposed to seek to identify initiatives to generate more investment in these communities.

Alternative approach

The council's alternative to community regeneration is to not pursue regeneration objectives through the development plan and to rely solely on other council led regeneration initiatives.

Question 12

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to community regeneration in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We believe regeneration should be applied across the West Lothian area and not in specific areas, there are many villages which require the improvements and would benefit from a regeneration scheme.

Question 13

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to community regeneration in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We agree look for opportunities were they present themselves.

Question 14

Do you have any other alternative approaches?

What are they and how would you make them work?

We have a Vision Document which presents a "business model" for Oakbank Miners Village, this would be an option to consider (development lead regeneration)

Main Issue 3: Housing Growth, Delivery and Sustainable Housing Locations (paragraphs 3.35 - 3.63)

How much new housing is required in West Lothian?

Where should new housing development take place, and where should it not be encouraged?

How can the risks associated with the existing development strategy as set out in the *West Lothian Local Plan* be reduced?

How can the rate of house building in West Lothian be increased to ensure that the required five year effective housing land supply is achieved and that the assessed housing need and demand is met in full over the plan period?

Preferred Strategy

The council's preferred strategy is scenario 3 to provide for more housing than the minimum required by the supplementary guidance required to support the SDP and the LDP should allocate housing land for an additional 3,500 houses above existing committed development. This would result in a level of development beyond requirements set out in the housing supplementary guidance to support the SDP. However, 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 also in recognition that it is not anticipated that this increased allowance will be delivered by 2024 but is there to allow for the delivery of development into the period 2024-2032.

This recognises that the strategy in the existing adopted local plan is reliant to some extent on a limited number of large, complex sites with high infrastructure costs being brought forward. It is now considered that a range of smaller housing sites, in various locations across West Lothian, is needed in order to provide for greater choice and effectiveness of sites, introduce local flexibility for the LDP and to ensure that a generous housing land supply is available, providing as a minimum, an effective five year housing land supply at all times, as required by SPP.

There is also a need to sustain the momentum built up in some of the existing large housing growth areas and make sure that these developments are viable going forward. Modest additional allocations in some of these areas will provide a degree of future proofing of the plan and help meet part of the need and demand for housing beyond the end of the plan period. Much of the existing housing land supply in core development areas and elsewhere will not be built out within the plan period and allocating additional housing sites in these areas through the LDP will help to maintain investor confidence and inform investment planning.

The allocation required by the draft supplementary guidance prepared by SESplan of 2,130 new houses beyond existing allocations of 22,847 units provides for a total of 24,977 units over the period 2012-2024.

By contrast, the preferred strategy proposes 26,347 houses which provides 3,500 houses above the base supply houses which is an increase of around 15% above the base supply.

This scale of housing allocation will reduce the risk of the LDP development strategy not being successful and is justified on the basis of:

- the need to maintain a five year supply of effective housing land at all times as required by Scottish Government planning policy;
- the need to ensure that there is a generous supply of housing land to accommodate the needs and demands of those seeking a house in West Lothian;
- the need to maintain West Lothian's attractiveness as an area which provides a range and choice of housing sites for those wishing to invest;
- linking the council's Economic Strategy to that of the housing market by providing a range and choice of house types suitable to indigenous and inward investors and the construction industry;
- providing for future affordable housing build programmes;
- continuing to redevelop appropriate brownfield sites;
- allowing the WLLP core development allocations and the strategic allocation at Heartlands, Whitburn to deliver over the long term whilst achieving the five year effective supply through the allocation of predominantly small to medium sized sites where requirements for infrastructure to assist delivery are less onerous on developers;
- allocating above 3,500 will generate the need for a 4th new secondary school which will be expensive to deliver in addition to existing infrastructure commitments;
- replacing allocations in the adopted *West Lothian Local Plan* which may no longer be supported by the site owners or due to reasons of development viability; and
- recognising that as the LDP progresses some housing sites may be delayed or may no longer come forward for a variety of reasons including unexpected development viability.

The preferred strategy is based around an aspiration for growth aimed at delivering sustainable economic prosperity and quality of life for communities in West Lothian and in particular building on the existing significant core development area allocations and strategic sites and will provide a broader range of housing sites.

Alternative Strategy 1

Alternative Strategy 1 reflects scenario 2 set out above and proposes that the LDP should allocate housing land for an additional 2,600 houses, above existing committed development. This would result in a level of development beyond SDP requirements set out in the draft supplementary guidance.

This proposes allocating land for 25,447 houses i.e. 2,600 houses above existing commitments to provide a housing land supply which is around 1.4% more than SDP requirements. This alternative strategy 1 is a variation on the preferred strategy but with a smaller increase in housing allocations above the minimum requirement in the SDP. Whilst Alternative Strategy 1 will provide more choice than Alternative Strategy 2 (see below) there is a risk that the housing supply will not be regarded as sufficiently generous and that an effective five year housing land supply will not be available at all times because existing large sites are taking longer to get underway and build out. This could mean that other sites not allocated for development could be promoted for development and receive planning permission contrary to the development plan. Where the five year land supply is not maintained this could leave the council open to planning by appeal.

Alternative Strategy 2

Alternative Strategy 2 reflects scenario 1 set out above and proposes that the LDP allocates housing land for an additional 2,130 houses above existing committed development. This would result in the requirement set out in the draft supplementary guidance being met but would not allow for any flexibility. A total of 24,977 houses, i.e. 2,130 houses above existing commitments, as required by the supplementary guidance for the SDP but with no flexibility allowance for additional development. This strategy represents a view that West Lothian should grow more slowly.

Whilst this alternative strategy may have certain attractions in terms of minimising impact on the environment and the need for additional infrastructure, it may mean that an effective five year housing land supply is not maintained at all times and could lead to relative economic decline whereby neighbouring authorities supporting higher growth scenarios, are better placed to take advantage of a potential economic upturn and recovery. Where the five year land supply is not maintained this could leave the council open to planning by appeal.

All of these reasons require to be balanced against the need to secure sustainable well located development, protect important environmental assets and landscapes of West Lothian and to have regard to impacts on existing communities and existing and future infrastructure requirements which are likely to arise. This will allow the LDP to focus on improving the quality of our existing established communities, facilities and environment as opposed to being negative in terms of other authorities benefitting from an upturn and the issue of planning by appeal and review a potential increase in housing numbers in the next LDP if economic recovery has indeed taken place in the first plan period.

Question 15

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' strategy for housing growth in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 16

Do you agree with 'Alternative Strategy 1' for housing growth in West Lothian?

If so, why?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 17

Do you agree with 'Alternative Strategy 2' for housing growth in West Lothian? If so, why?

Question 18

Do you have another alternative strategy?

What is it and how would you make it work?

Question 19

How can the council maintain an effective five year housing land supply given the current economic climate?

Preferred and alternative options for housing sites, including potential de-allocations from the *West Lothian Local Plan* (paragraphs 3.64 – 3.73)

Preferred Option

The council's preferred option is that some housing sites allocated in the adopted *West Lothian Local Plan* and identified in Housing Land Audit 2012 are not included in the LDP. Details of sites are set out in the Settlement Statements accompanying the MIR.

Alternative Option

The council's alternative option is that all housing sites allocated in the adopted *West Lothian Local Plan* and identified in Housing Land Audit 2012 be included in the LDP.

Question 20

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' option for the removal of existing housing allocations from the development plan?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

All allocations should remain as per the adopted local plan, many properties have been purchased on the basis of this adopted plan and as such will cause site owners financial loss should this benefit be lost in the property value. This could lead towards legal action to be taken by owners who have bought property to develop in the long term and now unable. The council would become under increasing pressure to allow development which may not be in accordance with the "new" plans following the implementation of this MIR findings. It would be better to modify the existing allocation and look at the holistic requirement county wide to encourage growth all geographical areas.

Question 21

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' option' for the removal of existing housing allocations from the development plan?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Agreed for the reasons given above in question 20.

Question 22

Do you have any other alternative options?
What are they and how would you make them work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Prioritize the use of brown field sites and find use for them, this will prevent the legacy of these site being left for our children to manage in the way as we are attempting now i.e correct the wrong doings of our forefathers.

Preferred Approach to the Core Development Areas

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the core development areas is to continue to support their delivery and allow for further longer term allocations at Winchburgh.

Alternative Approach to the Core Development Areas

The council's 'Alternative' approach is not to allow for any further development beyond that set out in approved master plans and the *West Lothian Local Plan*.

Question 23

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to the core development areas?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 24

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to the core development areas?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 25

Do you have any other alternative options?

What are they and how would you make them work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Preferred Approach to Heartlands, Whitburn

The council's 'Preferred' approach to Heartlands, Whitburn is to look favourably on proposals for additional housing within the existing housing allocation, subject to infrastructure constraints being resolved.

Alternative Approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach is that the number of houses at "Heartlands" be restricted to 2,000.

Question 26

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to Heartlands, Whitburn?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 27

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to Heartlands?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 28

Do you have any other alternative options?

What are they and how would you make them work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to Linlithgow is that the "area of restraint" be re-considered to allow for greenfield release of housing, employment and potential tourist related development. Should the area of restraint be removed, any development would be dependent upon the delivery of a new secondary school at Winchburgh and therefore would be focussed principally in latter plan period. Any land release would follow a sequential approach as set out in paragraph 3.93

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to Linlithgow is that the "area of restraint" approach be maintained and that development be directed to brownfield opportunities within the existing settlement boundary in the first instance and thereafter greenfield release within the town.

Question 29

Should the definition of Linlithgow as an 'area of restraint' be removed, and if so, how should the town be developed in the future?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Should a sequential approach be applied to the release of land in and around Linlithgow to accommodate any new development?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 30

What alternatives are available in order to meet demand for housing (including affordable housing) and employment land opportunities in Linlithgow?

Question 31

Should land continue to be safeguarded for west facing slip roads on the M9 at Junction 3, Linlithgow?
If so, should new development be promoted in Linlithgow to ensure that funding for these can be secured?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the Deans South estate, Livingston, is that the area be identified for comprehensive redevelopment for approximately 300 new houses.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to the Deans South estate, Livingston, is that the LDP should not identify the area for comprehensive redevelopment for approximately 300 new houses.

Question 32

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach for addressing the Deans South estate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 33

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach for addressing the Deans South estate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 34

Do you have any other alternative approaches?

What are these and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

The area is suffering from a loss of greenspace for community enjoyment, we cannot continue to build "fields" of houses in the way the developers seem to succeed in their plans, cost driven!

Livingston is quickly becoming an urban jungle, void of all wildlife and open areas, we need countryside!

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to affordable housing is to review the terms of the current affordable housing policy and set this out in supplementary guidance.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to affordable housing is to continue to implement existing policy.

Question 35

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to affordable housing? If not, why not?

- YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We believe there needs to be a better options made available, possibly available after a review.

Question 36

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to affordable housing? If not, why not?

- YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

The policy as it stands forces developers to design homes vs. the value they need to attain for profit, this forces some strange master plans and demographics and does not necessarily align with the needs of the communities.

Question 37

Do you have any other alternative approaches? What are they and how would you make them work?

- YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We need to align the economics of development with the expected end result to ensure sustainable growth and the community benefit is realized on delivery.

Main Issue 4: Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery

How can we ensure that new development in West Lothian makes best use of existing infrastructure?

How can we make sure that the cost of providing new infrastructure needed to support new development does not fall unduly on the tax payer?

How can we ensure that developer contribution costs are affordable and do not make the development of sites unviable?

Infrastructure requirements and delivery – providing for community needs: education, healthcare and sports facilities

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to infrastructure provision, in particular education provision, is to promote additional growth which can for the most part utilise existing infrastructure capacity, and minimise additional significant new infrastructure requirements over and above existing planned upgrades and requirements. Developer contributions will continue to be sought, the basis for which will be set out in a combination of generic and specific supplementary guidance. The council's preferred approach to infrastructure delivery is supported by Policy 9 of the SDP. The preferred approach is also to further develop funding mechanisms and supplementary guidance to assist in delivery.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to infrastructure provision is not to promote growth particularly that which would require substantial investment in new infrastructure given the current limited ability of the development industry to deliver up-front funding for infrastructure projects. Such an approach, however, is unrealistic and contrary to national planning policy.

Question 38

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to infrastructure provision? If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

West Lothian needs more educational allowance option, there appears to be an educational allowance for "some" and not so accessible to others!

The question remains as to why large developers are able to build "fields of homes" yet a single individual wishing to develop on much smaller scale has educational allowance constraints?

Question 39

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to infrastructure provision?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

West Lothian needs more educational allowance.

Question 40

Do you have any other alternative approaches?

What are they and how would you make them work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

West Lothian needs more educational allowance.

Question 41

How can the level of infrastructure required to support the scale of development proposed be delivered?

Do you have any additional comments?

Grouping of large developments should simply fund the additional educational requirements and build infrastructure which is above the requirements, i.e. be mindful of the future requirements and sustainable growth.

Infrastructure – transport and access in and around West Lothian (paragraphs 3.132 – 3.159)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to promoting access to/from/within West Lothian is to address outstanding constraints in the strategic and local road network which are essential to accommodate community growth and in particular economic and housing growth and tackle existing traffic issues whilst promoting sustainable transport measures on an incremental basis in conjunction with new development, and as resources allow. Within this, the preferred approach is to promote development on or very near to existing public transport facilities or where there is potential for new facilities. This approach will help to sustain and improve services which in turn will become more attractive alternatives to the private car.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to promoting access to/from/within West Lothian is to shift emphasis away from addressing road network issues to focus exclusively on sustainable transport measures, however, this is not considered a reasonable alternative given the commitment to strategic road improvements through NPF2, the SDP and the need to accommodate existing committed development across West Lothian.

Given physical, policy and resource constraints, it is not considered that there are any other reasonable alternatives to the preferred approach.

Question 42

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to promoting access to/from/within West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 43

Do you agree that the council should continue to work towards the provision of a new rail station at Winchburgh?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 44

Do you have any other alternative approaches?
What are they and how would you make them work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Main Issue 5: **Town Centres and Retailing** (paragraphs 3.160 – 3.171)

What do we need to do to promote and sustain our traditional town centres in West Lothian and consolidate the sub-regional centre at Almondvale, Livingston?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to town centre retail provision in West Lothian is to:

- sustain and improve town centres by applying the sequential approach to proposals for retail and leisure development;
- reduce leakage from some areas in accordance with the council's Retail Capacity Study;
- facilitate the creation of a new town centre in Winchburgh;
- safeguard existing and promote new local neighbourhood centres: and
- bring about village and town centre improvements by highlighting development opportunities, supporting the development of brownfield sites, implementing improvements through the capital plan and, where appropriate, securing developer contributions.

The preferred approach includes removing retail policy restrictions currently in place in Bathgate and Linlithgow town centres to allow for a broader range of uses which will support the take up of empty units. In addition, initiatives to support and promote development above shops will be encouraged, subject to availability of infrastructure and to the operation of existing business premises not being unduly prejudiced.

Alternative approach

The 'Alternative' approach is to:

- sustain and improve town centres by applying the sequential approach to proposals for retail and leisure development;
- reduce leakage from some areas in accordance with the council's Retail Capacity Study;
- facilitate the creation of a new town centre in Winchburgh;
- safeguard existing and promote new local neighbourhood centres; and
- bring about village and town centre improvements by highlighting development opportunities, supporting the development of brownfield sites, implementing improvements through the capital plan and, where appropriate, securing developer contributions.

This approach excludes removing current retail policy restrictions in place in Bathgate and Linlithgow town centres.

Question 45

Do you agree that the 'Preferred' approach to town centres and retail provision in West Lothian is appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 46

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to town centres and retail provision in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 47

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Main Issue 6: **The Natural and Historic Environment** (paragraphs 3.172 – 3.213)

How can planning policy promote sustainable patterns of development to protect our valued landscapes, built and cultural heritage and create a green network across West Lothian?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the West Lothian natural environment is to direct development to appropriate brownfield sites within settlements in the first instance but also to bring forward the release of greenfield sites in sustainable locations where there are no alternatives in order to meet strategic requirements. When considering greenfield release the council will have regard to the LLDR and other relevant factors, particularly sustainability but also issues of townscape and settlement coalescence. This may allow for some release of new development sites on the edge of settlements, thereby maximising use of existing infrastructure, whilst protecting visual amenity and the biodiversity value of the countryside and preventing coalescence of settlements.

In some instances it may be necessary to extend countryside and landscape designations to protect the purposes for which the land was designated be it landscape value, landscape character and landscape enhancement, buffers to coalescence of settlements, protection of prime quality agricultural land and historic gardens and designed landscapes in West Lothian.

Alternative approach

The 'Alternative' approach to the West Lothian natural environment and landscapes is to focus less on brownfield land and allow parts of designated areas to be released for housing or employment development.

Question 48

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to the natural environment in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We agree the use of Brownfield sites should be encouraged where possible developed and in a sustainable way with community input.

Question 49

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to the natural environment in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We need to use Brownfield sites where possible.

Question 50

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Value should be placed on Brownfield sites to encourage remediation, grants made available to clean the sites not considered suitable for development.

Landscape approach and designation (paragraphs 3.172 - 3.170)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to landscape designations is to reduce the number of landscape designations in order to reflect the findings of the Local Landscape Designation Review and identify candidate Special Landscape Areas (cSLA). Special Landscape Areas will replace AGLVs and Areas of Special Landscape Control. This approach is in accord with best practice and guidance prepared by Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Government.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to landscape designations is to continue with the current approach, relying on existing policies and designations. This would not achieve the goal of updating and simplifying landscape designations in accordance with current best practice and national guidance.

Question 51

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to landscape designations in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 52

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to landscape designations in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 53

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Much of the landscape around Livingston and the Villages are farmed, however there are large area of green space within Livingston which should be farmed until another uses are identified, the profit from which should be used to manage the woodlands and landscapes in which we habitate. Make the open space work for the community as managed estates.

Development in the countryside (paragraphs 3.180 – 3.181)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to housing development in the countryside is to continue to support development in appropriate circumstances for example, sensitive redevelopment of steadings; limited enabling development to secure restoration of historic buildings or structures; and replacement of houses in a habitable condition. Existing Supplementary Guidance will be updated to clarify the circumstances in which development will be permitted, and the design standards expected. The current flexibility in policies on business and tourism development in the countryside will be maintained and it is proposed to carry forward the existing policy on 'very low density rural housing in the countryside' otherwise known as 'lowland crofting' but only in the west of West Lothian.

Alternative approach 1

The council's first 'Alternative' approach to housing development in the countryside is to allow relaxations to current policies, potentially by permitting more redevelopment of rural brownfield land for housing. However, this approach is inherently non-sustainable as it would result in development which is remote from services and could lead to a proliferation of undesirable, sporadic development in the countryside.

Alternative approach 2

The council's second 'Alternative' approach to housing development in the countryside is not to maintain the current policy approach. This would include a review of the current 'lowland crofting' policy.

Question 54

Is the 'Preferred' approach to housing development in the countryside appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 55

Do you agree with any of the 'Alternative' approaches to housing development in the countryside?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Housing in the countryside does not expect services to be nearby, country living requires a difference approach to life and living, there is not the same expectation to be assumed everything on your doorstep!

Question 56

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Allow small hamlets of housing in the countryside, see our Vision for Oakbank Regeneration Document as an example of how some on the legacy cottage sites, hatchery / breeding sites could be redeveloped with "low" or "very low" density croft homes, retirement and mixed use developments.

Business, tourism and recreational uses in the countryside (paragraph 3.182)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to business, tourism and recreational uses in the countryside is to generally continue with the current policy approach set out in existing supplementary guidance.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to business, tourism and recreational uses in the countryside is to allow relaxations to current policies. However, this approach could lead to a proliferation of undesirable development in the countryside.

Question 57

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to business, tourism and recreational uses in the countryside?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 58

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to business, tourism and recreational uses in the countryside?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 59

Do you have an alternative approach?
What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Green Networks, and extension to Pentland Hills Regional Park (*paragraphs 3.183 – 3.189*)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the green network is to define the part of CSGN in West Lothian as a network of multi-functional green corridors focussing on the existing network. This would build on the existing initiatives extending the network into the rural hinterland to connect with adjacent local authorities existing and emerging networks, and penetrating into urban areas, linking with the council's Open Space Strategy and Core Paths Plan.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to the green network is to maintain the existing green spaces in their present form, with a clear urban fringe focus. This would continue to prioritise resources closest to the places people live and work, but would fail to capture the wider focus of the CSGN to link existing and new green spaces into wider multi-functional green networks.

Question 60

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to the green network in West Lothian?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 61

Does the proposed West Lothian wide green network capture the best strategic opportunities or are there any missing links?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 62

Do you have any suggestions for a green network across West Lothian?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 63

Do you have any suggestions for a green network across West Lothian?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 64

Do you have an alternative approach? What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 65

What are your views on the proposed extension to the Pentland Hills Regional Park in West Lothian?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Biodiversity and Geodiversity (*paragraphs 3.190 – 3.197*)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to biodiversity and geodiversity sites is to review and update the existing list of locally designated sites (Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites RIGS) and to protect and promote improvements to them through Supplementary Guidance where appropriate. Policy protection for carbon-rich soils will be reinforced.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to biodiversity and geodiversity sites would be not to promote Supplementary Guidance, but simply to map local sites within the LDP as at present. Whilst this might give the sites more prominence within the LDP, the process would be less functional.

Question 66

Do you have any general or specific issues with the proposed list of Local Biodiversity Sites and Local Geodiversity Sites?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 67

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to Biodiversity and Geodiversity in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 68

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to Biodiversity and Geodiversity in West Lothian?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 69

Do you have an alternative approach?
What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

West Lothian Open Space Strategy 2005-2015 (paragraph 3.198)

Question 70

Do you have any views on what should be considered for the second Open Space Strategy for 2015/16?
Why should these be considered?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We should look to use open space for farming if not already done so, this will encourage the land management.

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the historic environment is to review the current range of policies related to the historic environment, updating where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, and to prepare supplementary guidance to protect and promote built heritage assets and to consider designating conservation areas at Abercorn village and Hopetoun Estate. In addition, conservation area appraisals of all conservation areas will be progressed where resources allow.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to the historic environment is to maintain the current approach to the historic environment and not to promote a conservation area at Abercorn village and Hopetoun Estate.

Question 71

Is the 'Preferred' approach to the historic environment in West Lothian appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 72

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to the Historic Environment in West Lothian?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 73

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to Bangour Village Hospital site is to support at least 550 houses at the site, with the precise number of houses being agreed through detailed assessment of a master plan and other supporting information. Delivery of the site will be allied to the delivery of the infrastructure required to support the development whilst having regard to the built and natural environmental sensitivities of the site.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach is that housing development at the Bangour Village Hospital site should be restricted to 500 units.

Question 74

Is the 'Preferred' approach to Bangour Village Hospital appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 75

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to Bangour Village Hospital?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 76

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

The master plan should encourage a new village and master plan is sustainable, being mindful of the countryside location. It shouldn't become another Leyland site! as is evident with the Easter Inch Estate which has developed into a builders playground.

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the former Bangour General Hospital site is to assess development proposals against development in the countryside policies in the LDP.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to the Bangour General Hospital site is to maintain the policy presumption in favour of development as set out in the *West Lothian Local Plan*.

Question 77

Is the 'Preferred' approach to Bangour General Hospital appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 78

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to Bangour General Hospital?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 79

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to the Union Canal is to promote its tourism and recreational potential and to allow for sympathetic ancillary development at the most appropriate locations along its length, having regard as to how this best fits with the wider strategy being developed by Scottish Canals for the whole waterway and in consultation with other neighbouring local authorities.

The canal also has potential to be used as a means of sustainable transport, both for leisure and commercial purposes, and it is important that opportunities to enhance local use, access and bio-diversity are maximised.

Securing the long term maintenance of this important historic structure is also paramount and it is concluded that this is best achieved by ensuring that it is well used and has as diverse a range of functions as practicable.

The rural setting of the section of the Union Canal between Winchburgh and Broxburn should continue to be protected as countryside belt or as a candidate special Landscape Designation Area as identified in the draft Local Landscape Designation Review.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to the Union Canal is that no development, on or directly abutting it, and particularly in the countryside between Broxburn and Winchburgh, should be permitted. This is considered necessary in order to maintain the established setting of the Union Canal and to conserve its historic fabric. The only concession would be for necessary maintenance or for works to improve the canal and public access to it.

Question 80

Is the 'Preferred' approach to the Union Canal appropriate?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 81

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to the Union Canal?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

The canal is under used and in need of investment, we should encourage the opportunities for tourism along the entire length and look at other canal networks in the UK for development models.

Question 82

Do you have an alternative approach?
What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

All canal side development and encourage leisure activities where possible.

Public Art (paragraph 3.213)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to public art is to continue to seek developer contributions appropriate to the scale and type of development and to review supplementary guidance.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to public art is to cease requiring developer contributions for public art or to limit the circumstances under which contributions are required.

Question 83

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to public art?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

We believe the developers should continue with contributions however not in public art which are not perceived to be of any use to the community and will not be maintainable in the long term, i.e. additional costs to the Tax payers

Question 84

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to public art?
If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 85

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Where developers are required or opt for public art the local home / business owners should pay an annual fee to factor. This would then fund the costs associated to maintain public art, soft landscaping and woodlands surrounding these areas. It should not fall to the Council to find the ever increasing costs required to maintain the habitat we enjoy.

Main Issue 7: Climate Change and Renewable Energy (paragraphs 3.214 - 3.225)

How can future patterns of development in West Lothian increase climate resilience and contribute towards meeting Scottish Government targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing renewable energy?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach for renewable energy is to retain the supportive policy framework for renewable energy developments, extending it to all low carbon energy technologies and implement the terms of supplementary guidance for wind energy developments.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach for renewable energy is to retain the current criteria-based wind energy policy, without the support of a spatial framework. This is not considered to provide the necessary guidance for landowners or the industry, as required by Scottish Government and would not be in accordance with current best practice, Scottish Planning Policy and guidance.

Question 86

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to renewable energy?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 87

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to renewable energy?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 88

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Flood risk and management (*paragraphs 3.226 – 3.229*)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to flood risk is to maintain and update existing policies and supplementary guidance on flood risk, taking account of legislative requirements and emerging Scottish Government guidance, including the RBMP as appropriate.

Alternative approach

The council's 'Alternative' approach to flood risk is to go beyond requirements and identify and protect areas of land for natural flood management as this will be a consideration in the new management plans.

Question 89

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to flood risk appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 90

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to flood risk?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 91

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Air quality and noise (*paragraphs 3.230 – 3.232*)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach to air quality is to maintain and update existing policies on air quality, taking account of legislative requirements and any emerging Scottish Government guidance.

Alternative approach

There are no reasonable alternatives to the preferred approach.

Question 92

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to air quality appropriate?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 93

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Main Issue 8: **Minerals and Waste** (paragraphs 3.233 – 3.246)

How can planning policy promote and ensure sustainable approaches to waste management and mineral resources in West Lothian?

Minerals (paragraphs 3.233 - 3.242)

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach towards mineral extraction is to continue to implement the policy approach set out in the SDP and the adopted WLLP. The policy approach set out in these will however, be reviewed to take account of the guidance contained within SPP. This may be pursued through supplementary planning guidance.

Alternative approach

The council's alternative approach towards mineral extraction is to take a more liberal approach to opencast coal and hard rock extraction by widening the opencast coal "broad areas of search" and identifying the whole of West Lothian as an area of search for other minerals to be extracted, subject to environmental and residential amenity considerations and constraints, by identifying these areas and appropriate buffers beyond which the search for minerals could take place.

Question 94

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to mineral extraction?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 95

Do you agree with the 'Alternative' approach to mineral extraction?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 96

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Preferred approach

The council's 'Preferred' approach towards waste management is to support the objectives of the Zero Waste Plan, to accommodate new provision through extensions to existing recycling facilities, or in other suitable areas and to provide a policy framework which supports the development of these facilities.

Alternative approach

The council has not identified a reasonable alternative approach to the preferred approach.

Question 97

Do you agree with the 'Preferred' approach to waste management?

If not, why not?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Question 98

Do you have an alternative approach?

What is it and how would you make it work?

YES NO Don't know

Do you have any additional comments?

Additional information

Extra page for additional information you want to give on question(s). Please state the question number text refers to.

The Vision for Oakbank Village document Oct 14 has been issued to the Council and Local Councillors for consideration and comment, we have referred to the Vision document within some of our answers and where additional comment has been asked.



OAKBANK

Regeneration Project



(Illustrative view) 6

Vision Document

PREPARED BY
FACILITIES ENGINEERING AND DESIGN SOLUTION LIMITED
FOR PROPOSED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
AT OAKBANK NR EAST CALDER

Who are we?

Facilities Engineering and Design Solutions Limited (FEDS Ltd), a locally based project management company who operate from James Young House, Drumshoreland Pumpherston. We have produced this document to promote the regeneration of Oakbank nr East Calder.

We project manage all types of projects in multiple industries on behalf of local, national and international clients. We are not a large company by any measure however we have the enviable track record gained over 15 years in never failing to deliver a project to the stalwarts of time, cost and quality.

We think "out the box" and give attention to the detail, with a graded approach to every decision made.

FEDS Ltd are the visionaries behind this regeneration proposal and have spent some years prior assembling and aligning the other major land owners, conveniently while the market was generally considered not favorable, however the time is now right to progress and confidence is high.

This vision document aims to inform the reader the vision which we have for the Oakbank sites and on which will we expect to be the over-arching theme behind decision made hear on in.

There are 4 major landowners which will act as a collective to promote this vision and other owners of the lesser areas which have to be correctly identified as stakeholders.

The proposed regeneration scheme is now in a position to proceed in a more holistic fashion; this is a departure of the sporadic disjointed thinking which marks the past.

Consultants

Planning - Richard Heggie, Urban Animation, Edinburgh.

Lead Architect – Richard Atkins, Atkins Architecture, Tranent.

Project Management – Ian Findlay, FEDS Ltd, Livingston.

Sustainability – Courtney Peyton, Thirdwave, Edinburgh.

The “Site”

The site is the mining village of Oakbank, lying to the South West of East Calder and on the Oakbank Road, sometimes referred to as the “Lost Village of Oakbank”.

Oakbank was a shale mining village which once provided family homes to the workers of the Oakbank Oil Works and which has now long since gone. The Village has a fascinating history dating back to 1864, when it was founded as a working village for the Oakbank Oil Works. The shale oil industry arose from James Paraffin Young's enterprising work. For many years, it was unique to Scotland and was a precursor to the modern oil industry.

Around 70 plus houses for workers were constructed, along with a bowling green, football pitch, school and Institute Hall. Following demolition of the oil works in 1932, allotments were formed on the land adjacent to the former works. After WWII the village still had two shops, a primary school with 3 teachers and 73 pupils, and a football team. Over the years, the houses deteriorated and the many residents moved into modern houses in East Calder. The last resident moved out in 1984 and the last of the oil worker houses were demolished.

Later, some of the land was brought into use for poultry sheds, which have since been removed. Today, the Village consists of a small number of houses, with the bowling green still a popular facility and the football pitch in regular use as a home for the junior teams. The Hall was recently demolished due to its poor state of repair / fire.

Despite this rich history, unique to West Lothian (and brought to life by the Almond Valley Heritage Centre in Livingston), Oakbank has been largely bypassed by development and planning initiatives in recent decades. The Village and its immediate surroundings are in need of environmental upgrading and regeneration. The lack of new development and dilapidation of buildings such as the Hall, has contributed to anti-social behavior, littering and dumping, illegal encampment by travelers and vandalism.

Recent changes in land ownership present an opportunity to reinvigorate Oakbank Village through a co-coordinated and planned approach to regeneration and development. New housing, at an appropriate scale of development, could provide a catalyst for other business, leisure or community uses. It could also facilitate environmental upgrading, improved open spaces, paths and routes, new woodland planting and an extension of the Almondell and Calder Wood Country Park.

The history of Oakbank can be better understood by reading the records published within the Museum of Scottish Shale Oil website <http://www.scottishshale.co.uk/IntroPages/search.html?q=> and search Oakbank. Well worth a read!

It is unfortunate the Village had not received the investment seen with some of the many mining villages in West Lothian and we do not attempt explain why within the vision document, we want to look to the future.

When approaching the outskirts of Oakbank the overwhelming feeling is that of abandonment and a complete lack of place making, frankly the remaining settlement is a blot on the landscape hidden behind the unmanaged woodland and luckily only accessible by a single dead end road.

The remaining settlement consists of 4 homes, garage, bowling club and several yards areas. Our vision would be to incorporate these areas into the regeneration scheme.

With respect to the proposed main development areas which consist of the cottage site and the

redundant poultry shed site (fig 1), we would go so far to say the whole area is “Brown Field” and not simply in planning terms as there is a distinct feeling of abandonment which is crying out for regeneration and inward investment.

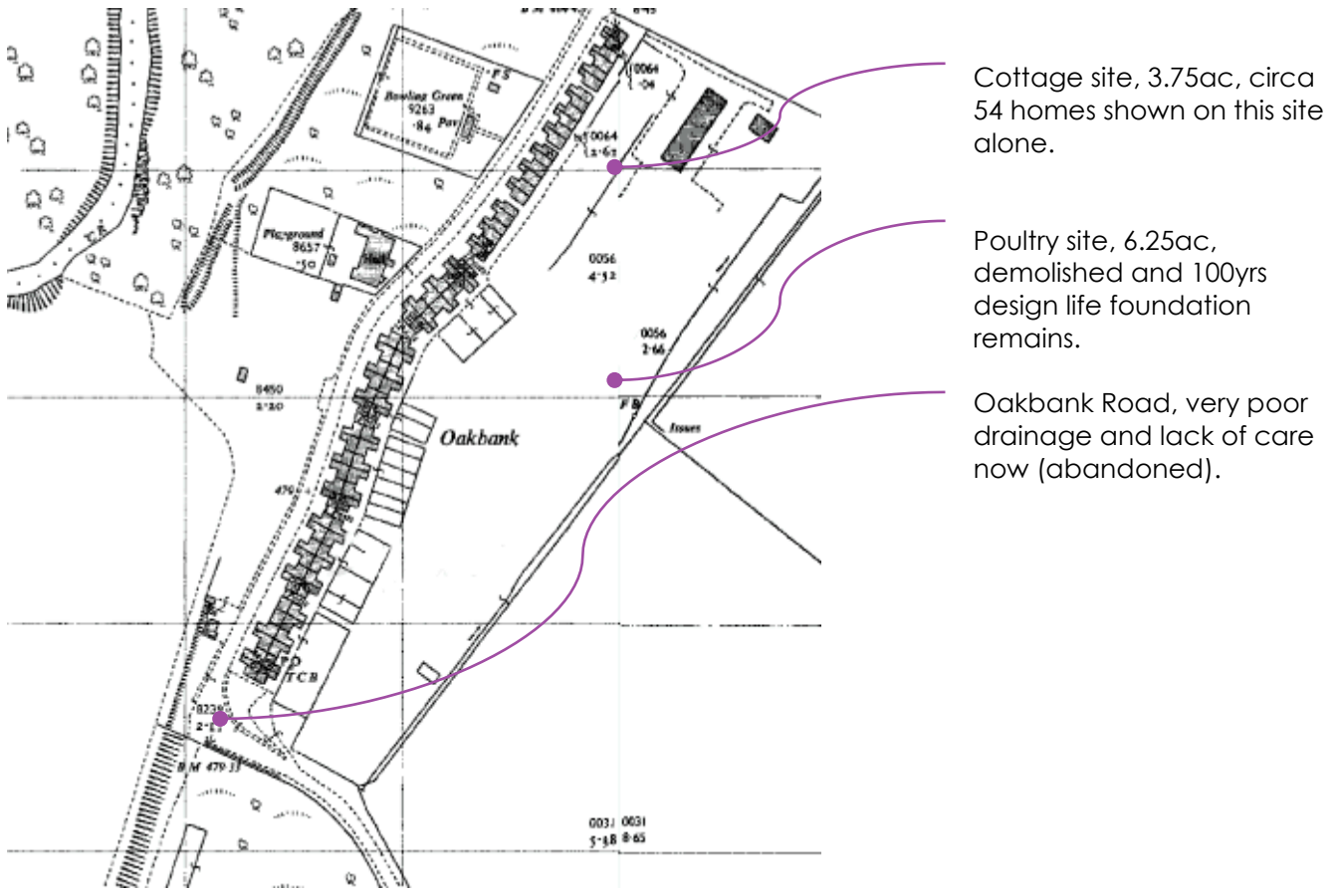


Fig1 – Historical map view around 1970

It's understood the cottages were finally demolished when the then owners BP failed to secure the support of the council to develop the area; the foundations and demolition waste remain on the site to this day.

The poultry sheds were also removed some years ago and presumably no longer required by Marshals (then owners at the time), the foundations remain in remarkably good condition with no signs of breakup, they will be visible for decades.

The Oakbank Road, now stop ended at a security gate installed by the new owners of the cottage site, this was in a bid to prevent travelers and trespass. The old road and base remains with excellent prospects to link into the national cycle or core path network or indeed reinstate the link into the A71 by-pass.

This is Oakbank now (not good!)

We have only shown some pictures as the content speaks a thousand words.



Photo 1 – Development edge.



Photo 1 – Antisocial behavior.



Photo 2 – Midway along Oakbank Road.



Photo 3 – Unauthorized Yards



Photo 4 – Typical of the fly tipping spread over the whole area!



Photo 6 – Poultry site, remaining hatchery foundations (100yrs plus design life), strewn with waste.

We have dozens of pictures which show the area, however they all show the same basic problem.

Our Vision

We have a vision for the proposed regeneration and development of the former Oil Village of Oakbank nr East Calder.

We want to take forward a unique opportunity to regenerate the “Lost Village of Oakbank” and provide the much needed reinvestment into the area, this would be funded through the approval of a mixed use development lead project (Fig 2).

We aim to;

- Return the streetscape giving a sense of place.
- Provide Family housing in keeping with a traditional rural Scottish village.
- Provide Retirement and affordable housing to provide a balanced community.
- Local Shops and commercial units within easy reach of the village.
- Reinststate the Road link to A71 to provide alternative transport options.
- Site and wider area remediation to the country park and surrounding woodlands.
- Introduce small scale renewable to reduce emissions.

The need to introduce renewable forms of energy in everyday life will not be missed within our vision for Oakbank, there is also an irony here in so much that a site once used for energy production albeit ultimately proved to be unsustainable and has now damaged the environment. This legacy need not remain within Oakbank as there is an opportunity to readdress the balance with the introduction of sustainable energy sources. The carbon footprint can be reduced or very possibly through time cancelled. With the direction of our consultants we would aim to ensure sustainability is delivered thought the regeneration process. ¹

These headline aims would be delivered in a manner that benefits the existing community of Oakbank Village and the wider communities out with. As stated this would be through the provision of new homes, land for a community building, services and facilities for all ages, additional access to the Almondale Country Park and provision of increase access to public open space, foot and cycle ways.

At the heart of the proposal and what makes it different is the planned development of new homes, traditionally styled in the local vernacular. We have included some typical designs in Appendix A to further describe the vision we share. However this vision would be developed with the council to take cognizance of the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance which would inform the Design Statements and all to an agreed Master plan.

Our research has shown that there is considerable and growing local demand for both family homes within easy reach of retirement housing, this helps keep families closer together and promotes community life; this is partly as a result of the life expectancy and working age increase for us all. The proportion of people over 65 living in East Central Scotland is projected to grow more quickly than the national average. ²

The research also suggests that there are no other available, suitable and deliverable sites for the high quality mixed use development being proposed. This proposal would be the nucleus for the village regeneration and become an asset to the Calder’s area. It is apparent the lack of investment within this area by the council has caused much of issues we now should resolve, there also appears no other viable proposals if we assume the council does not have the

resources to invest within Oakbank, this is a realistic deliverable solution to correct the mistakes of the past.

Our long – term commitment to the regeneration has the village community at its heart and is the basis of a sustainable village.

The project managers have begun preliminary discussions with potential developers and investors who have indicated serious interest in the vision assuming the land can be correctly allocated in the LDP and planning permission granted. We stress this is a deliverable project with the partnering arrangements we propose with some of the well-known established house builders.³

¹ Thirdwave sustainability consultants will guide the design team to ensure this aim is delivered.

² Homes Fit for the 21st Century: Scottish Government's Strategy and Action Plan for Housing in the Next Decade: 2010 – 2020.

³ Preliminary discussions are ongoing with two well-known local developers for homes and environment, guidance is being sought, albeit for commercial reasons they are not quoted by name within this document.

⁴ Facilities Engineering and Design Solutions, Copyright.

⁵ Urban Animation, Copyright.

⁶ Aitkin and Turnbull, Copyright.

A Vision for the Wider Community

This desire is to ensure the development becomes the integral part of the wider community which surrounding Oakbank Village has also informed our thinking on other aspects of the proposal.

From the start of our discussions with major land owners and the West Lothian Council, we have been clear that we would look to introduce a range of community measures both direct and indirect, these are all to be considered in finer detail and which this vision document does not attempt to solve just now.

However, given the opportunity and public engagement with local people, these may be in terms of affordable housing, provision of community building, managed woodland, country park access, A71 link or play pitch care and maintenance i.e. sites dedicated for community use.

The land available to the project is shown within the Appendix B, C, D and E, these show potential village curtilages on which to consider in the longer term and which allow for sustainable expansion.

The Master plan has still to be developed with input from the community and council, given the conceptual nature of this project we have shown the very early stage layout designs produced by architects and engineers, they simply to act as a Catullus for discussion and engagement.

Our vision would be a final layout of a village which encourages local people to walk or cycle within the development and not to be encouraged to drive without reason; transport options will be positioned at the heart of community life. These links will be carried through to join with the surrounding areas with links to Livingston, Midcalder and East Calder path networks with improved access to the Almondale Country Park.



Fig2 - Propose view of open areas around village green (illustrative view). 6

Additionally, the development should contain a commitment that up to 30% of the site should be green open space. This will include walking and cycle routes and trim / history trails that will be accessible to all, not restricted to use by residents of the new homes.

Conceptual Layout

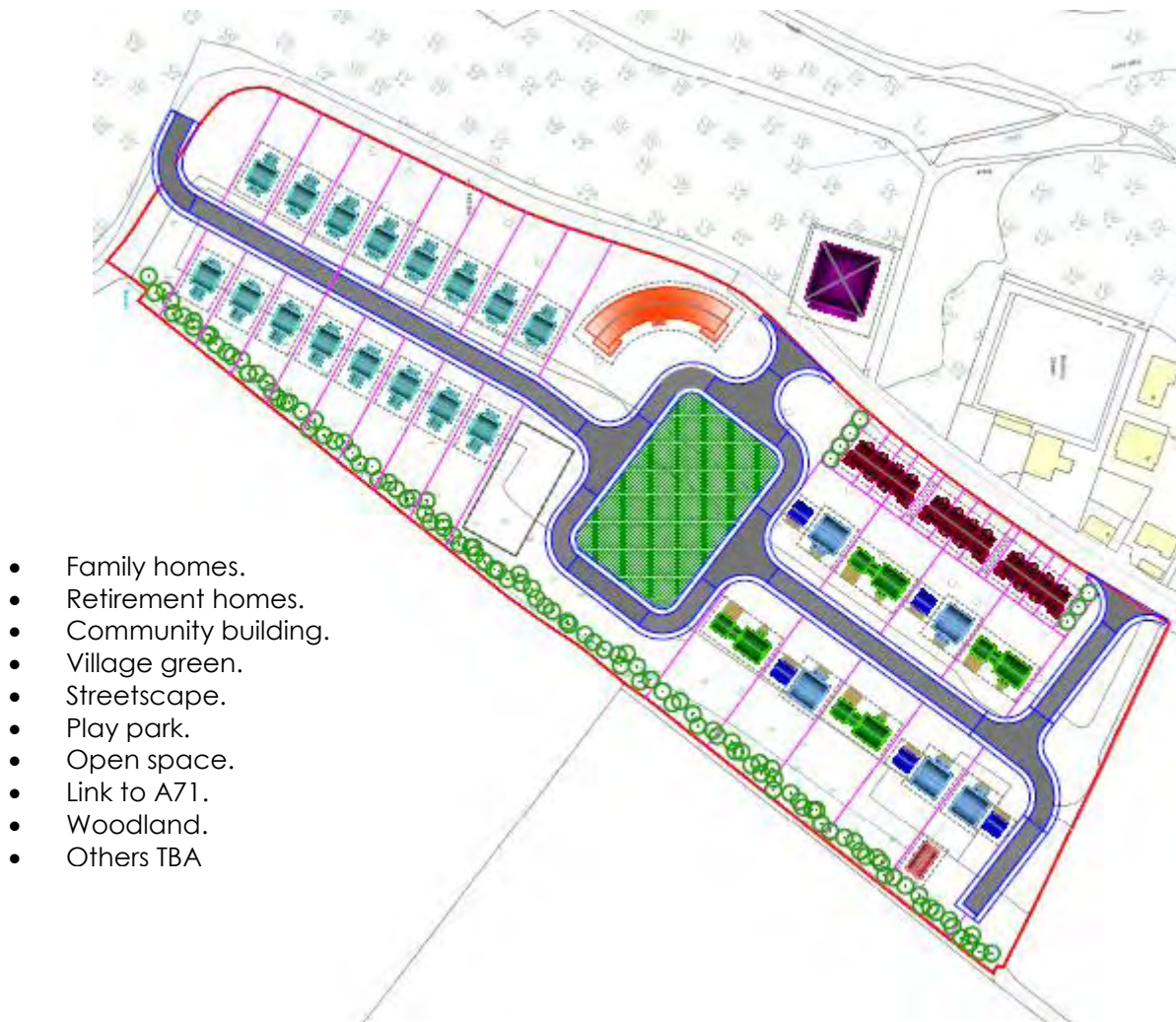


Fig3 - Conceptual layout (to invoke discussion). 4

Finally, in terms of community benefits, the proposed development contains provision for a replacement community building to be the central hub within the village community, the original community hall was demolished by the council (we understand following a fire). Some of the services and support provided through this facility will be specific to the residents of the village community; we are also in discussions with National Lottery Heritage Fund on how this central hub could be managed in a sustainable way.

We anticipate the assembly of a new community council to engage with other like-minded bodies and clubs about how we could fuse this hub with the needs into that of the wider community; this is all to encourage a wider inter - generational agenda, bringing local young and old people together in a variety of potential projects.

The Conceptual layout will be developed to embrace the wider proposals for community benefits some of which are shown in the Urban Animation appendix Fig 1 at the end of this document.

Proposed Home Styles



Fig4 – Estate type homes (actual view). 6



Fig5 – Retirement or family type homes (actual view.) 6



Fig6 – Semidetached family type homes (actual view). 6

Responding to local views

Bringing forward a proposal for regeneration and development on the Oakbank Village site that is not within the current local plan is not a project that Facilities Engineering and Design Solutions Limited have undertaken lightly.

Our knowledge of the local area built up over many years of operating locally will be further strengthened with the knowledge gained through stakeholder engagement (public consultation work) will help us to understand the concerns of local people have about any planned development on this site.

We intend to offer as much opportunity as possible for people to have their say on the proposals and propose holding public exhibitions, planning workshops, setting up an interactive website and social media feeds, as well as leafleting the community with details of the project.

A Sustainable and Lasting Vision

As planned the site will offer lifelong amenities for local people; a playground for children, walks, nature trails and cycle routes for all, a hub for the community, homes for first time buyers and retirement homes with facilities and services for older people.

Local people will be able to enjoy and value its amenities at all points in their life.

We are looking at all aspects of how we make the development as environmentally friendly as possible including.

- Examining the potential to achieve Code 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes for family homes.
- Proposals for Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme on the site.
- A detailed travel plan designed to increase use of sustainable forms of transport.
- The provision of nature and trim trails around the site to encourage biodiversity, access to nature and healthy living.
- Proposals for micro generation schemes on home sites.
- The development of energy efficient workspaces of an appropriate class to encourage employment.
- The opportunity to develop a village environment fit for the 21st century, homes and environment geared towards home working options.
- Family friendly areas with safe areas to allow children to play safely in front of their homes, without fear of traffic.

Conclusion

The proposed development offers an opportunity to create a viable and sustainable asset for the benefit of all local residents. It will meet an identified need (retirement and affordable homes) and provide a series of services and assets to the community (land for a community center, playground, nature and trim trails, and services for older people). It will do all this in a sustainable and lasting way.

The solution to this problem is clear, an allocation should be made available within the emerging LDP for housing and mixed use development, we suggest an allocation based upon the areas shown within the appendix B (option A) and a phased approach taken to develop the area beginning within the area shown in appendix C (option B).

The council has a responsibility to resolve planning issues within West Lothian and without this project there is no other means to regenerate Oakbank.

If the council is of a mind not to make the commitment and accept this proposal, they should set out clearly within the LDP how this area will be regenerated.

The LDP should include an allocation for mixed use development which supports housing (family, affordable and retirement), a community building, commercial units, parkland access, and transport improvements.

Appendix A (page 1 of 2)



Typical 2 bed courtyard homes. 6



Entrance Elevation



Entrance Elevation

Typical 5 bed homes. 6



Entrance Elevation



Entrance Elevation

Typical 3 / 4 bed houses. 6

Appendix A (page 2 of 2)



Entrance Elevation

Typical 3 bed disability friendly house. 6



Entrance Elevation

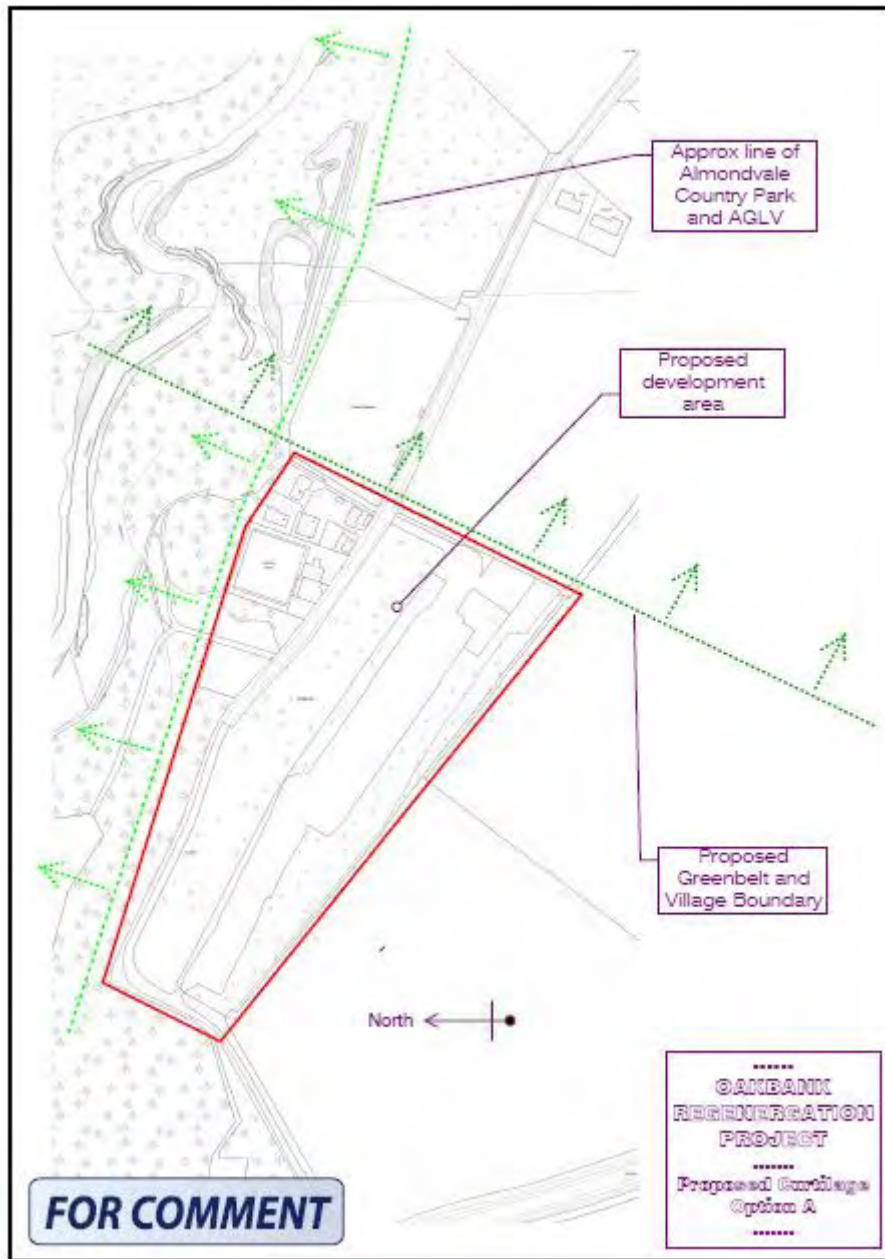
Typical 2 bed house. 6



Entrance Elevation

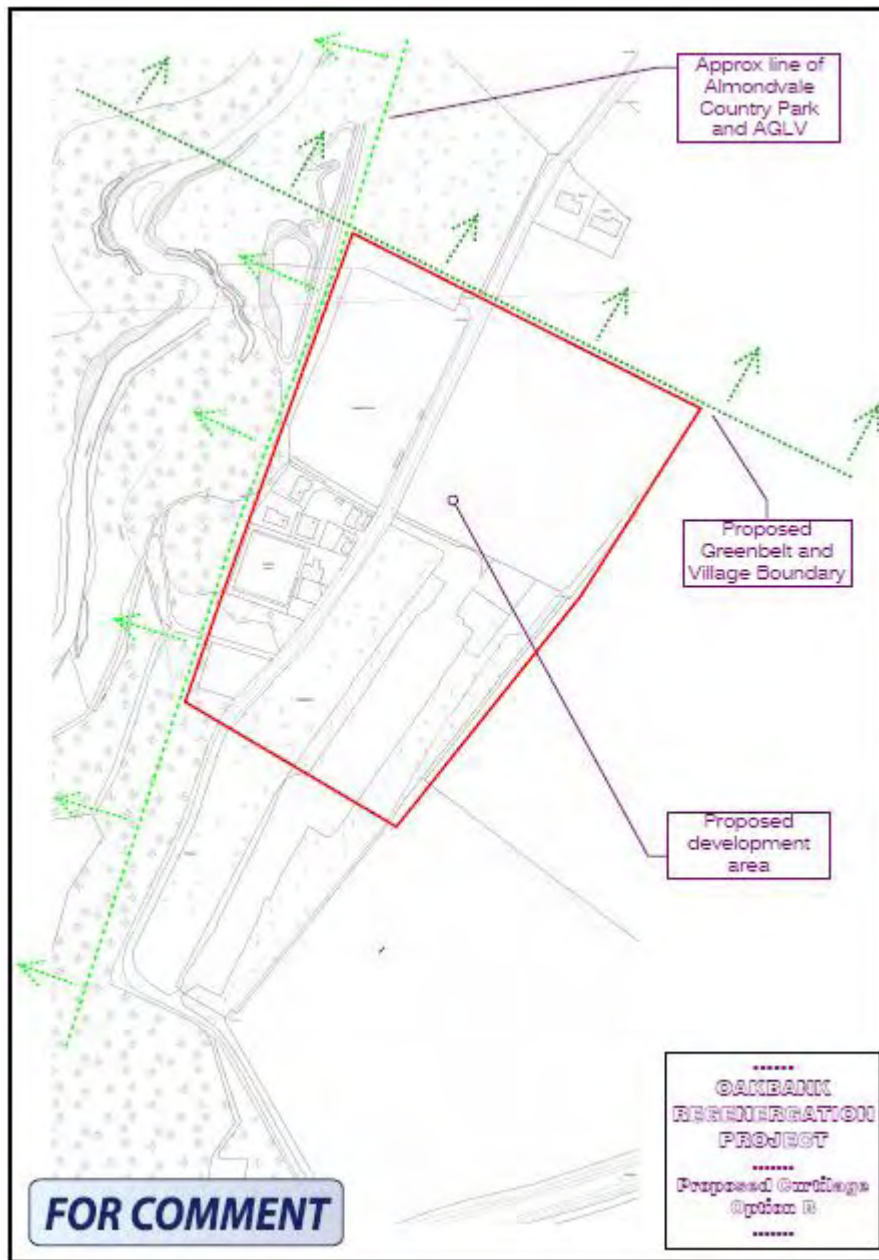
Typical 3 bed semi house. 6

Appendix B



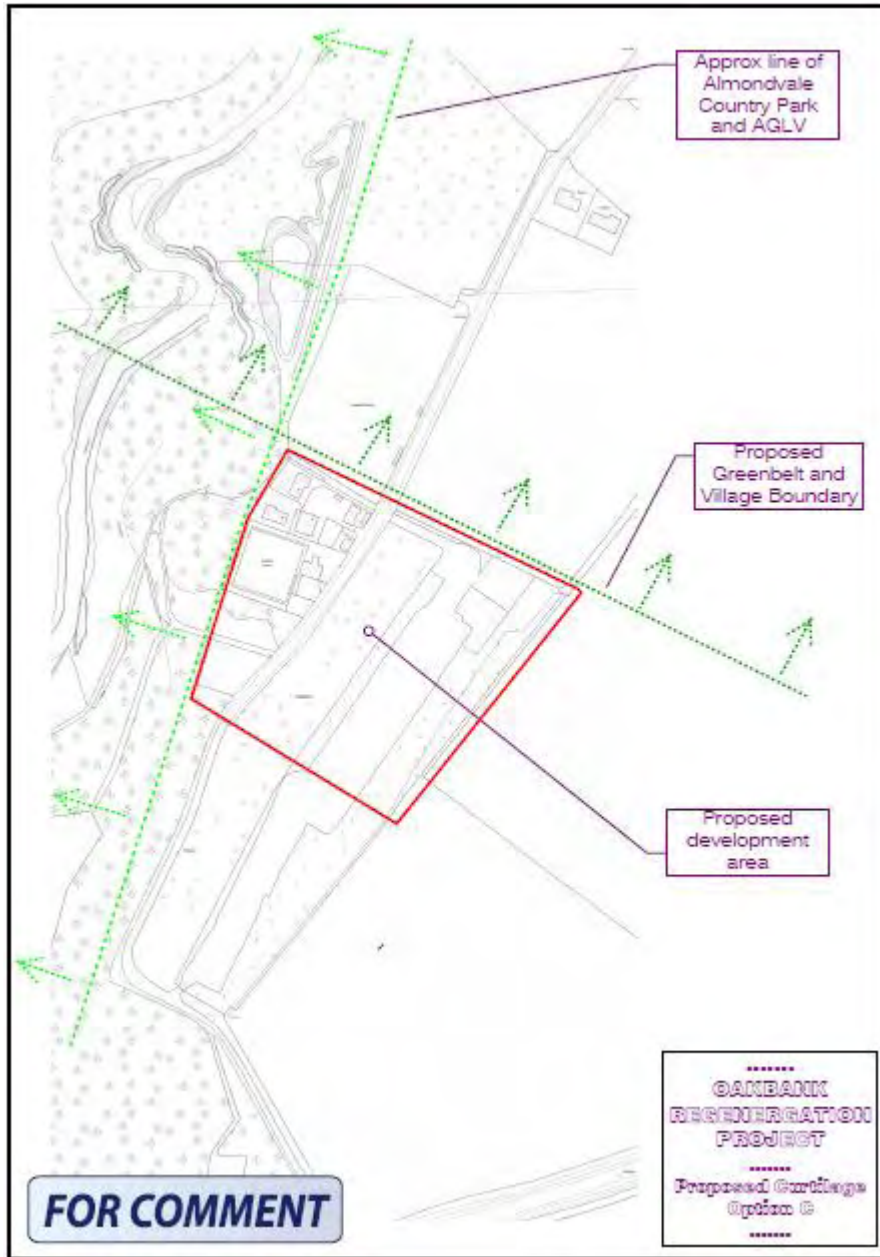
Development vision 1 to 10 yrs. (option). 4

Appendix C



Development vision 1 to 10 yrs. (option). 4

Appendix D



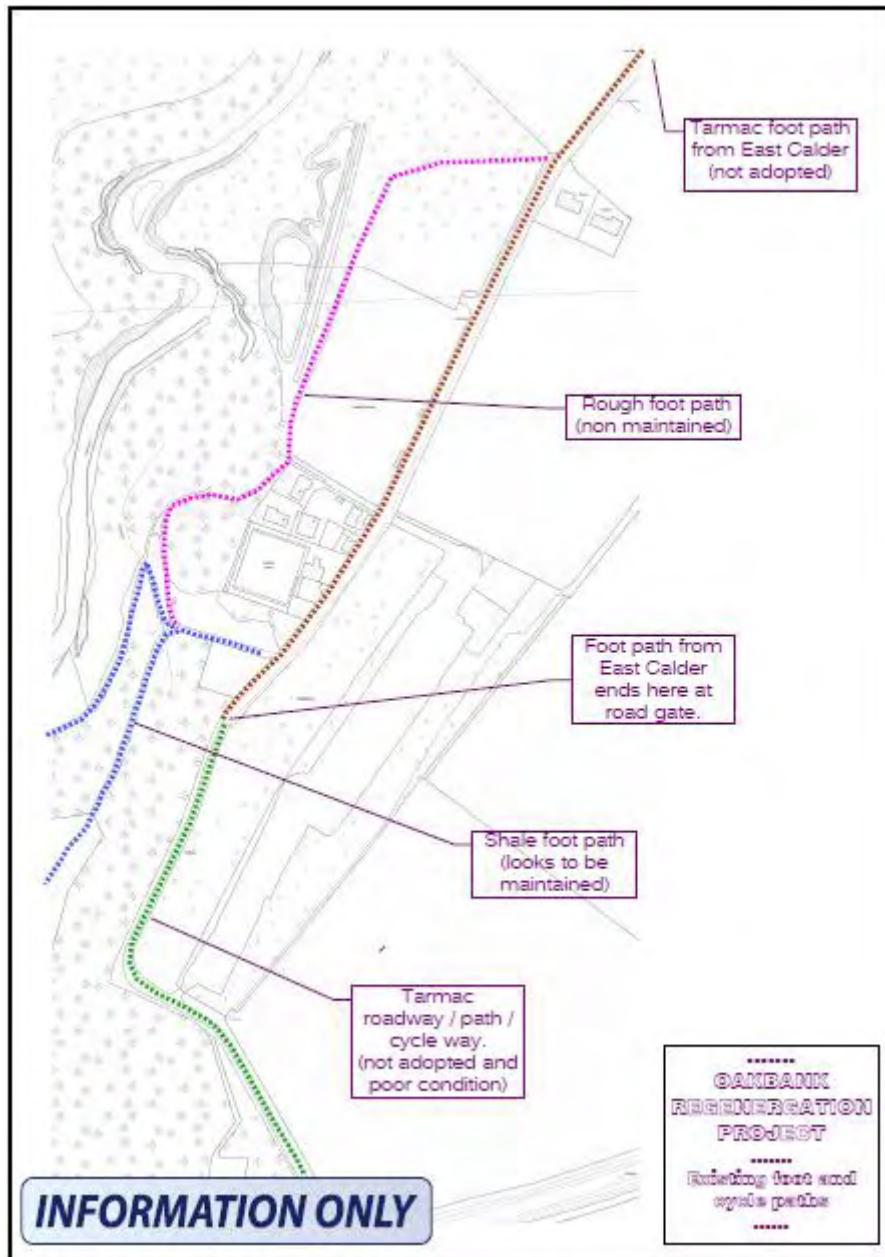
Development vision 1 to 5 yrs. 4

Appendix E



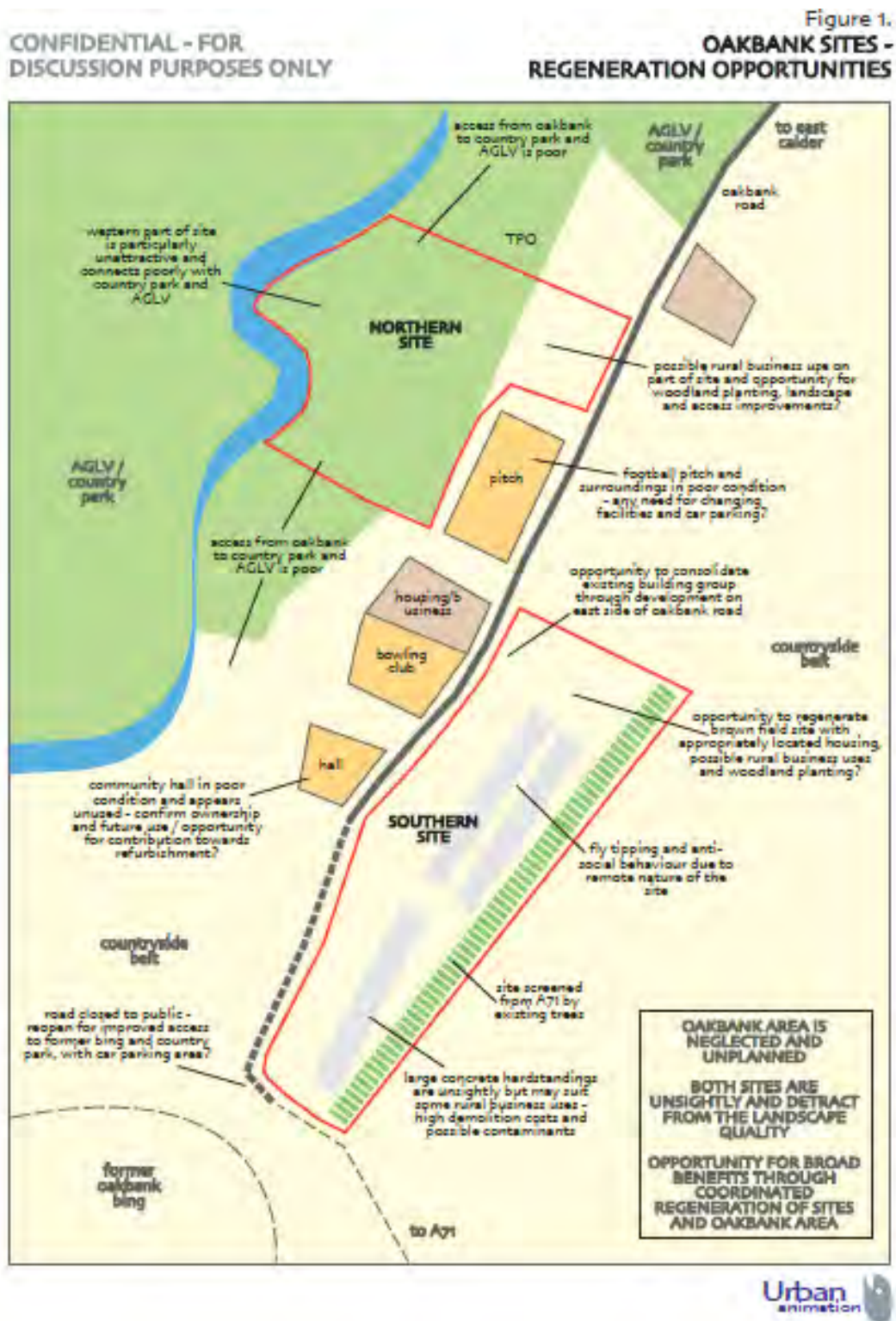
Development vision 1 to 20 yrs. 4

Appendix F



Paths and cycle ways for improvements. 4

Appendix – Urban Animation, Fig 1



Regeneration Opportunities. 5