

WLC REF: MIRQ0097

West Lothian Local Development Plan

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to comment on the West Lothian Development Plan. I am afraid that I do not have sufficient knowledge about the whole of West Lothian but would like to comment specifically on the comments regarding future housing development in Linlithgow (paragraphs 3.80 - 3.97).

As a long standing resident in the town, I am concerned over the expressions of interest by developers in the town that are not supported by the subsequent increase in infrastructure to support these additional houses.

Education:

I noted that the preferred approach is that no future housing is allowed until the completion of a new secondary school at Winchburgh is completed. However, this does not take into account that the primary schools are full and over subscribed, (with the possible exception of Springfield). It should be noted that the construction of the new retirement flats in the centre of the town will probably free up a number of family houses in the Linlithgow placing further pressure on school places. The sites of the school would not appear to support extension of the schools and therefore I would suggest that future housing development should not proceed without new primary schools being constructed. This would then lead to the problem of location of these schools.

Transport:

It is recognised that traffic congestion is a major problem in Linlithgow. All traffic entering the town from the north and east is required to navigate the roundabout at the east end of the High Street. As a consequence, in the early evening, the queues to enter the town typically start at the roundabout at Springfield Road (and sometimes longer).

In addition, there are also "pinch points" which result in major delays and traffic congestion where single file traffic only can pass under the railway line at High Port, under the canal at Edinburgh Road and over the canal at Manse Road. The latter in particular causes major problems with cars driving across the bridge on the pavement with the obvious dangers to pedestrians. It should also be noted that this is the primary route to the Low Port School.

The proposed developments on the south side of the canal will make this problem worse. Presently all traffic travelling to the north and east from the south side of the town travel across and then down Manse Road, with the obvious reverse flow in the evening. In addition, traffic from the east side of the town travelling to the Livingston area commute in the opposite direction. This causes major problems at Manse Road with the bridge currently struggling to cope the amount of traffic (perhaps a conversation with the "lollipop lady" would help). The narrow roads and pavements on the approach to the canal bridge are also dangerous. It should be noted that these cannot be widened due to the layout of the road, canal and topography.

Health Support:

The current provision of doctors' surgeries would also appear to be insufficient to support expansion of additional housing in the town. Without the provision of new surgeries, etc. the pressure on the existing facilities may drive them to breaking point.

Conclusion:

As a conclusion, I do not believe that any new housing be permitted in Linlithgow until the relevant infrastructure is in place to support the obvious increase in population and the subsequent requirements for education, health and road links. This would require the construction of new primary schools, the completion of the secondary school in Winchburgh and possible expansion to Linlithgow Academy.

In particular, I believe that there should be no further housing development permitted on the south side of the canal in Linlithgow until a new road is completed linking the motorway junction at Burghmuir to the west side of Linlithgow Bridge to remove the problems at the High Street, High Port and particularly the canal bridge at Manse Road.

Yours faithfully,

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