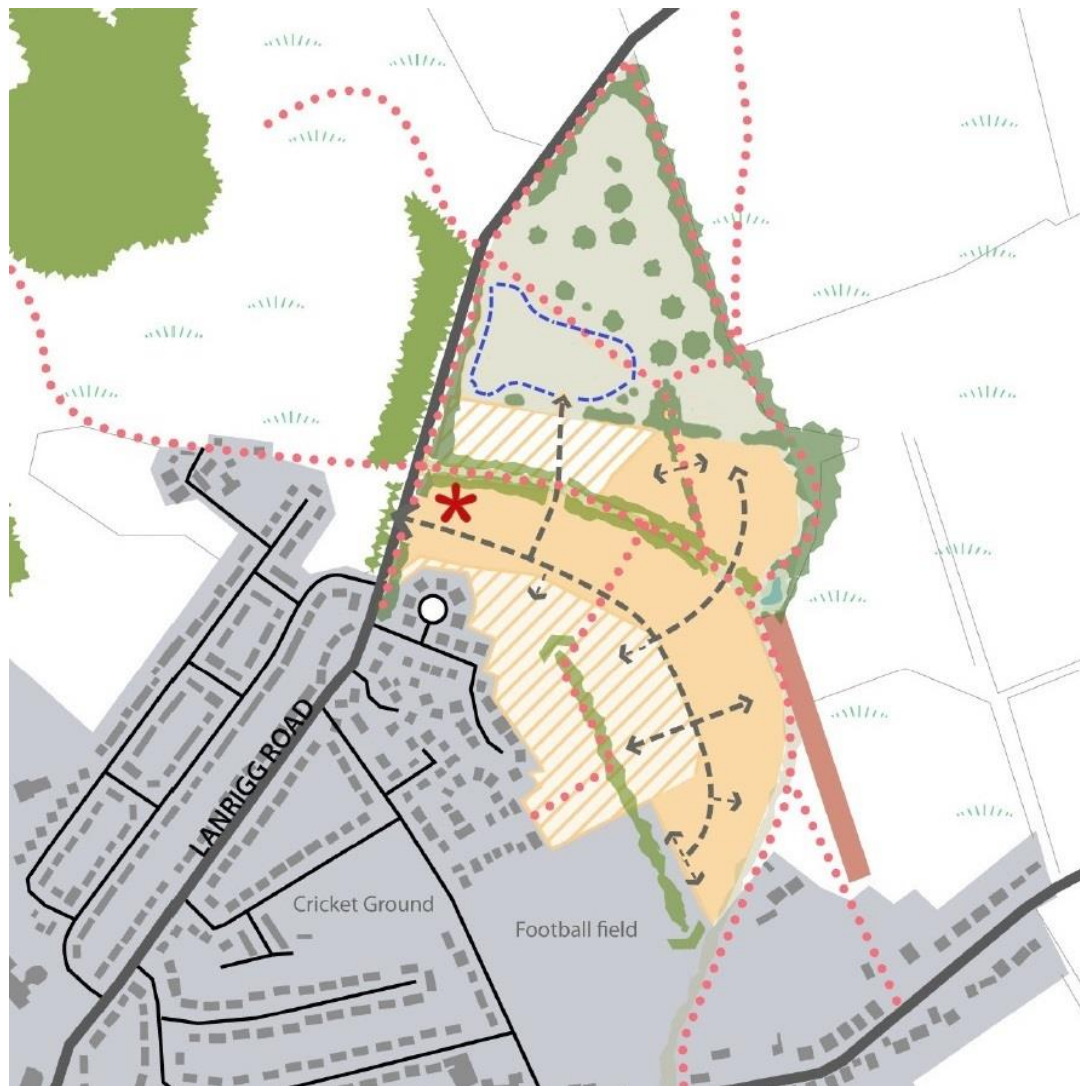


Walter Crawford Property

Submission to West Lothian Council Local Development Plan

Promotion of site at Victoria Park, Fauldhouse for housing development.



Report for : Walter Crawford Property

Date : 17.10.14

Produced by :



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document presents the case on behalf of Walter Crawford Property that a greater proportion of the land in its ownership at Victoria Park, Fauldhouse be allocated for residential development in the new West Lothian Council Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 A representation was made on behalf of Walter Crawford Property's subsidiary company Warjo at the "Call for Sites" stage of the LDP (site EOI-0124), and a small part of the land was accorded "Preferred New Site" status. Nevertheless the majority of the land was indicated as "Not-Preferred", although the boundary indicated by the Council exceeded the area identified by Warjo as the development site. This is clarified in full below.
- 1.3 The land which forms the subject of the representation comprises the former Victoria Park and Crofthead collieries, and has been the subject of some land remediation and bing removal works. Nevertheless areas of the site remain in a degraded condition.
- 1.4 The development proposals at Victoria Park were prepared in 2008, and responded to community interests to relocate the cricket club onto a larger site and provide new and enhanced sports facilities for the town. In November of that year Warjo organised a community consultation event for the more extensive development concept then envisaged, which attracted support from all who attended. Since then, the sports clubs have decided not to relocate and the development concept has been reduced in size. Nevertheless the submission made by Warjo to the Council's "Call for Sites" still indicated the large northern part of the ownership as a "public greenspace, including sports and recreation". Walter Crawford Property therefore remains interested in working with local groups to achieve recreation uses in this area if the demand exists.
- 1.5 This document submits that a larger development area should be allocated for housing development in the Main Issues Report, and that the continuing expansion and regeneration of Fauldhouse conforms to "sustainable development" principles as defined by Scottish Planning Policy and the Strategic Development Plan (SESPlan).

2 The site

- 2.1 The entire area of land owned by Walter Crawford Property is as follows.

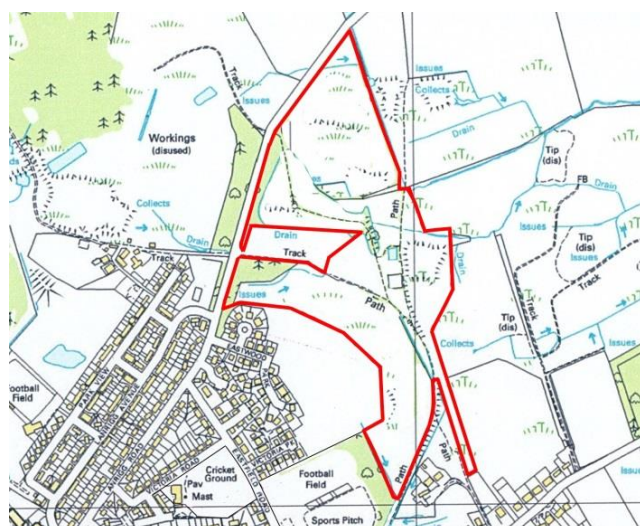


Diagram 1 :

Area of Walter Crawford Property land ownership.

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- 2.2 The land was formerly occupied by the Victoria Park and Croftead collieries, but some remediation took place in the 1970s. It now comprises rough scrubland and mounding which remain from the bings and railways which formerly existed on the site.
- 2.3 The majority of the land is unallocated for development in the present adopted West Lothian Local Plan. The following is an extract from the Proposals Map with the boundary of the WCP land superimposed on it.

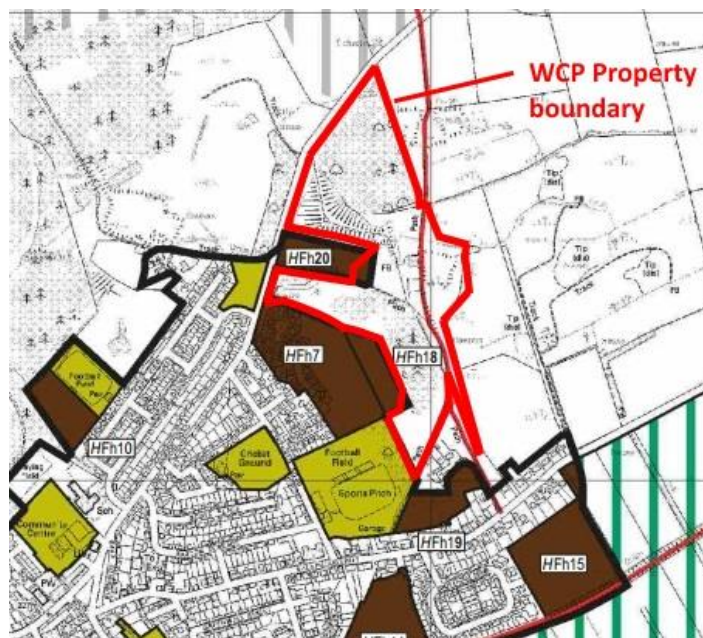


Diagram 2 :

Extract from West Lothian Council Local Plan Proposals Map : allocations in East Fauldhouse, with WCP boundary superimposed.

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3 The “Call for Sites”

- 3.1 Prior to preparation of the Main Issues Report, the Council organised a “call for sites” in which land owners and developers were invited to make expressions of interest that their land be allocated for development in the new Local Development Plan. This was timeously responded to in a letter from Turley Associates dated 6th May 2011 which included the Council’s Expression of Interest Form and a concept Masterplan for the development, shown as diagram 3 below.
- 3.2 It will be seen from diagram 3 that the Company chose to present its submission in the form of a Masterplan covering its entire land owning, and showing how development of its land could integrate into adjoining allocated land owned by others. The Masterplan also included the uses which had been positively received by the community at the 2008 consultation event, such as recreation facilities, public open space, allotments, walkways, and a local shopping facility.
- 3.3 On 19th June 2014 the Council approved the Main Issues Report, which contained the preferred and not-preferred sites. Diagram 4 is an extract of the Plan which accompanies the Report.
- 3.4 While Walter Crawford Property appreciates that the MIR allocates the small “infill” area between the existing allocations in Lanrigg Road, the Company is disappointed that the larger area was not preferred. A full critique of this follows below. Additionally, the “non-preferred” site boundary is shown in the MIR as including the sports / greenspace area at the north end of the landowning, thereby giving the impression that it was part of the area promoted for development.



Diagram 3 :

Concept Masterplan submitted to West Lothian Council with “Call for Sites” submission.

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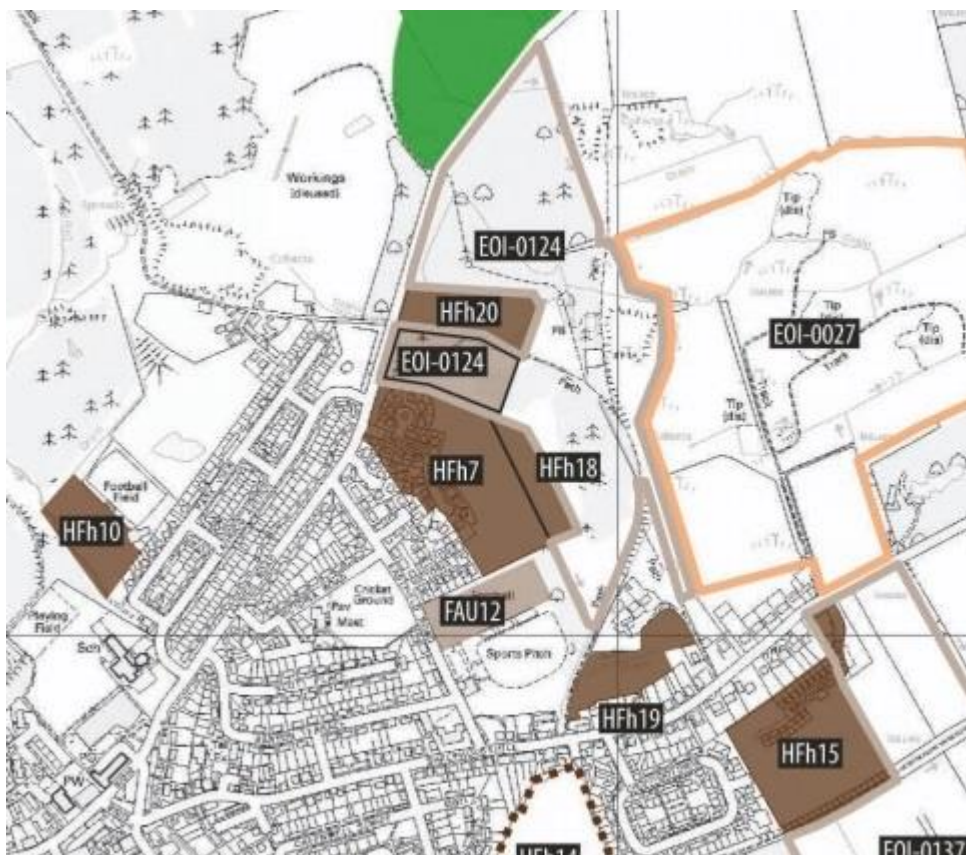


Diagram 4: Extract from West Lothian Council Main Issues Report: showing WCP land as EOI-0124 preferred site solid fawn, and non-preferred with fawn edging. Dark brown are the allocations carried over from the present Local Plan (not owned by WCP).

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- 3.5 We notice that the MIR map applies the dark brown “committed” site designation to areas of sites HFh7 and HFh15 on which houses have already been built, in one case several years ago.
- 3.6 We conclude from this that the MIR plan over-states the size of the committed sites by including already-built areas, and also over-states the development interest of Walter Crawford Property by including areas which are not intending to be developed, as was clearly shown on the Masterplan submitted by the company at “Call for Sites” stage.

4 The proposed development area

- 4.1 At the outset, Walter Crawford Properties made it clear that it was not intended to develop the entire area, and a Masterplan-based approach was adopted. The first Masterplan was prepared before the 2008 community consultation, and devoted the northern part of the land holding to recreation and open space.
- 4.2 The current Masterplan promoted as part of this representation is as follows.



Diagram 5: Walter Crawford Property proposed concept masterplan

- 4.3 The Masterplan illustrates a development integrated into its landscape setting, into adjoining already-allocated sites, and making provision for recreation and greenspace, a footpath network, and allotment gardens (which were identified at the community consultation as being needed in Fauldhouse).
- 4.4 The development area owned by Walter Crawford Property (coloured solid peach on diagram 5) is 7.4ha in size.
- 4.5 We have revised the MIR plan (shown above in its published form as Diagram 4) to show the area now promoted for development by Walter Crawford Property, and to remove the already-built “committed” sites. The revised plan is shown below as diagram 6.

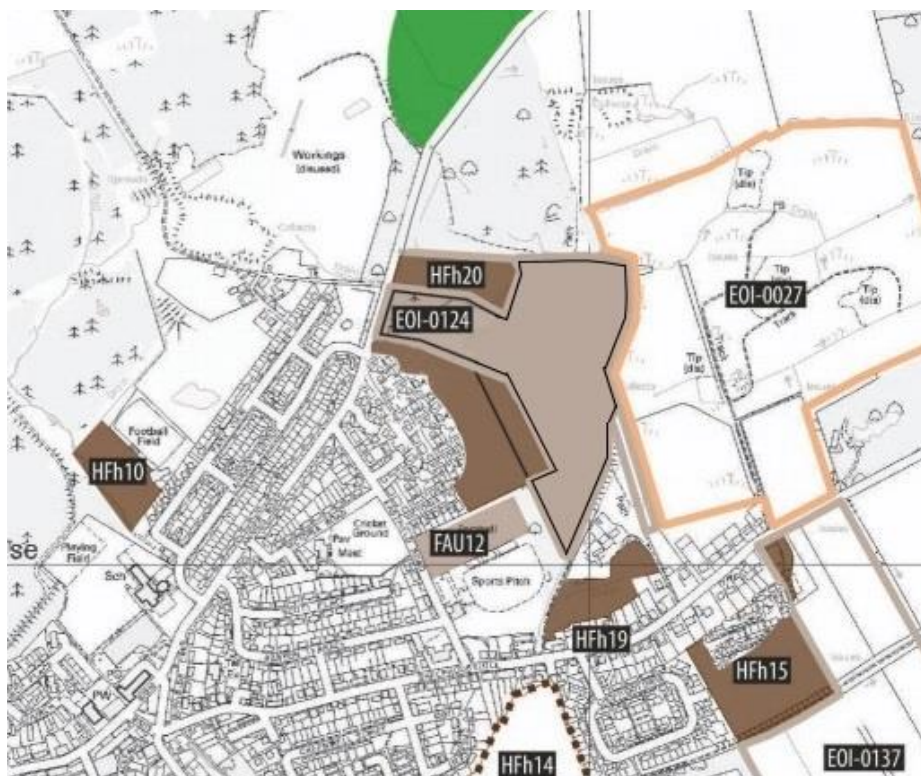


Diagram 6: Extract from West Lothian Council Main Issues Report: amended to remove built areas of “committed” development, and to show proposed concept Masterplan development area.

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5 Justification for proposed development area

- 5.1 The MIR plan (diagram 4) “preferred site” makes inadequate housing land provision for the following reasons.
 1. The site is too small to contribute to the greenspace and recreation facilities within the Masterplan,
 2. The only logic for its eastern boundary is to “line-up” with the existing allocation HFh20. The boundary makes no sense on the ground, as it is part of the larger brownfield site of the former collieries and bings (see diagram 7).
 3. The eastern boundary of allocated site HFh7 is the land ownership boundary and has no defining features on the ground. It is therefore an unsatisfactory eastern edge for Fauldhouse.

4. Walter Crawford Property is in discussion with Affordable Housing developers and has a JV agreement proposal with GeoCapita (see below). They require larger development areas than would be possible from within the “preferred site” EOI-0124 in the Main Issues Report.
5. The boundaries of the allocations and preferred site do not provide Fauldhouse with a robust and logical eastern boundary and would result in the non-allocated areas in the Company ownership remaining as unused brownfield land. This is elaborated on below.

5.2 The area proposed for development by Walter Crawford Property (see diagrams 5 and 6) is justified as follows.

1. The promoted land was formerly occupied by collieries, bings and railways and is therefore categorised as “brownfield”. As such, it has priority status in selection for development.
2. The proposed boundaries reflect the natural landform and boundaries of the site, and the area of the former collieries.
3. The increased development area will enable funding of recreation and open space areas, and establishment of the allotments area.
4. Allocation of the promoted land will allow expansion of Fauldhouse within clearly-defined limits and will not represent unconstrained expansion of the town.
5. The increased development area will create a site of sufficient size to allow a mixed development of market and social housing.
6. There already is interest from the social housing sector to be involved in development of the site. We describe this in detail below.
7. Walter Crawford Property has carried out site investigations to prove that the site is developable within the period of the Local Development Plan.

6 Visual impact

6.1 Diagram 7 shows the larger area promoted for allocation by this representation, and the boundaries of the existing allocations and preferred site. It will be seen that there are few features on the ground that define the boundaries between the various sites: the overall appearance is rough grassland with some self-seeded trees.

Viewpoints

6.2 Views towards the site from the surrounding rural area were found to be obscured by the mounding of the former bing on Lanrigg Road, and by tree planting and groundform from Sheephousehill. Other than these roads, there are no other publicly-accessible locations to the east of Fauldhouse from which the site could potentially be seen. A series of local viewpoints was chosen and photographed, which are located on diagram 8 and shown as diagram 9.

6.3 Locally, on Lanrigg Road the existing allocation will become visible before any development on Walter Crawford Property land, as the “preferred” site is closer to the town than the existing allocation. The extra areas advocated for allocation will sit beyond the allocated site and therefore will not influence the surroundings of the road. From Sheephousehill, the existing houses, tress and landform – and the distance to the area promoted for development – would result in new housing having negligible impact.

6.4 Areas where development of the site would be visible are the existing housing areas to the west, but the present allocated site HFh7 would have the greatest impact on these as it lies immediately to their east. The promoted site lies beyond this site.

Diagram 7: Overview of the site

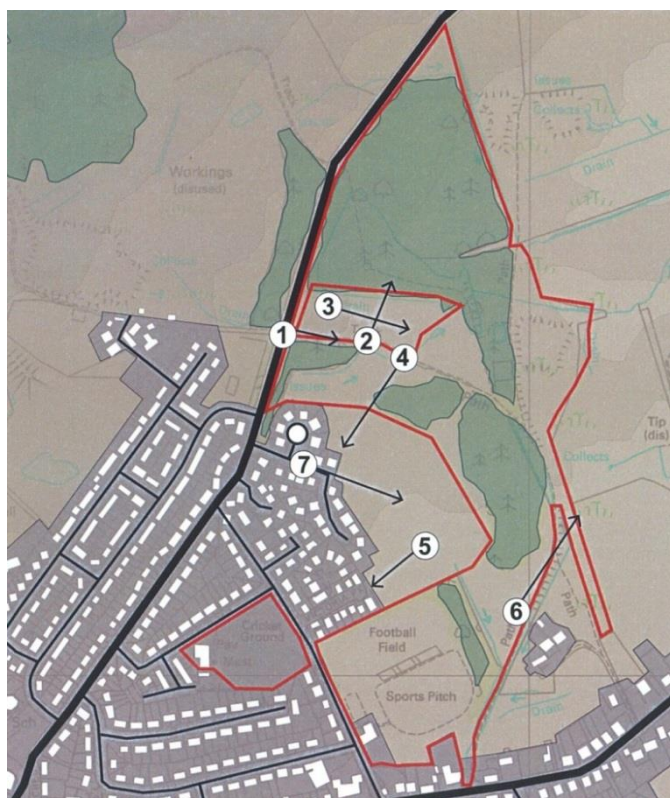
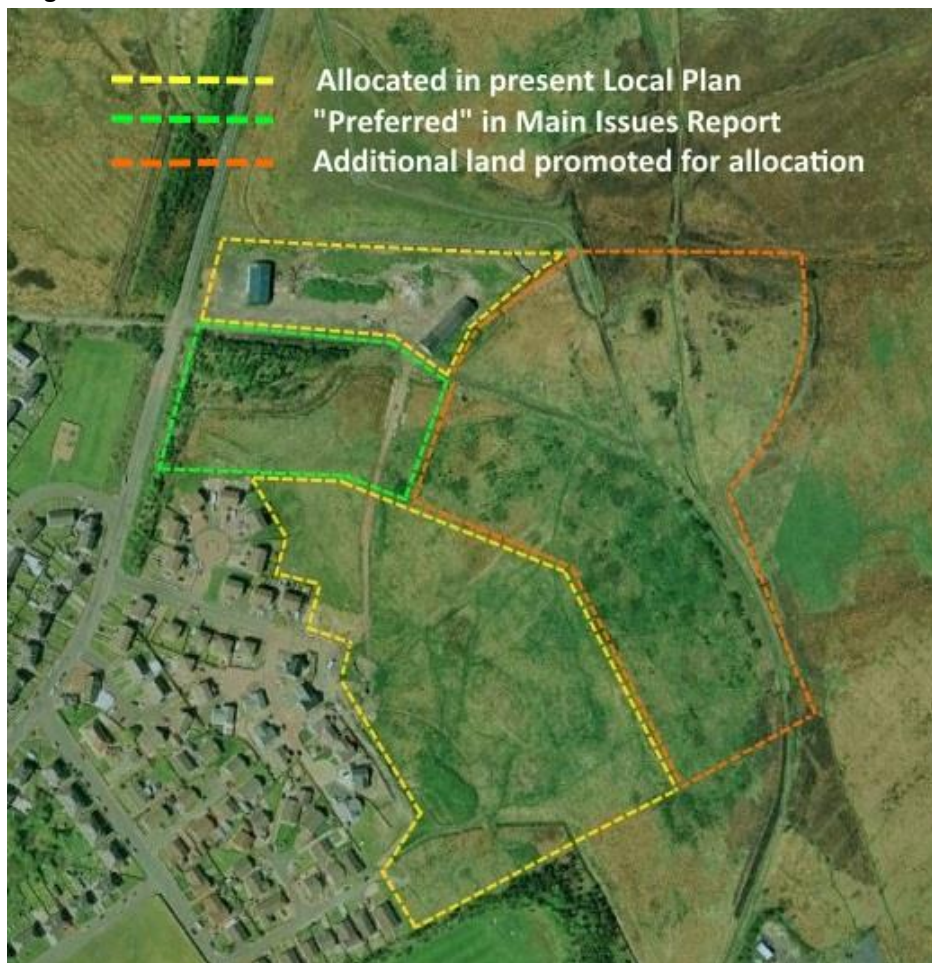


Diagram 8 :
Viewpoint locations

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Diagram 9.1 : Viewpoint photographs



Diagram 9.2

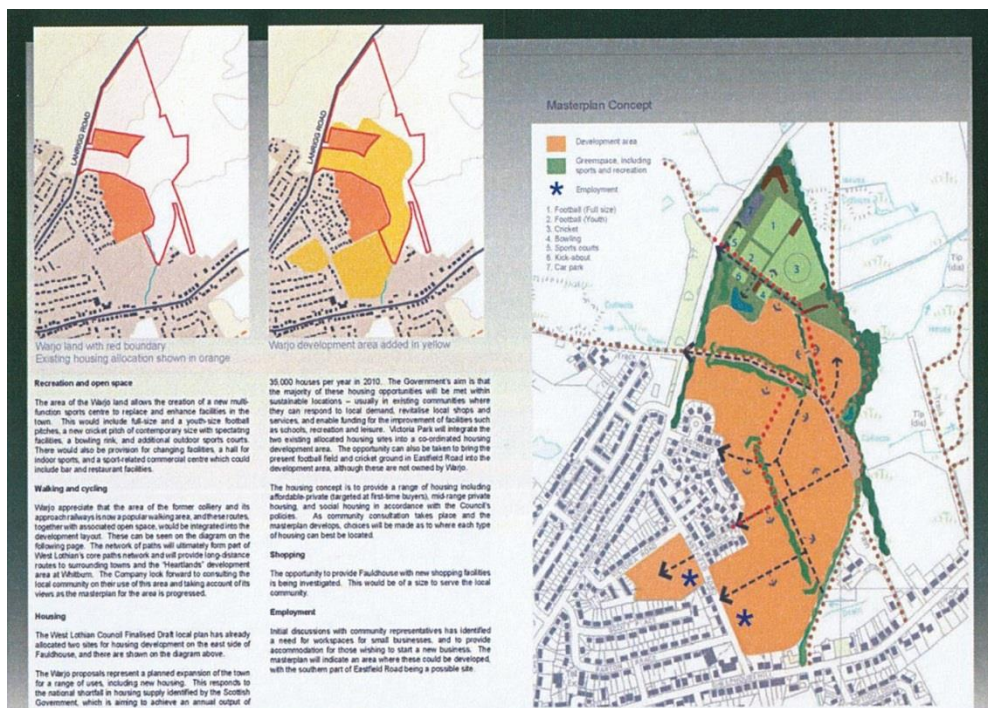
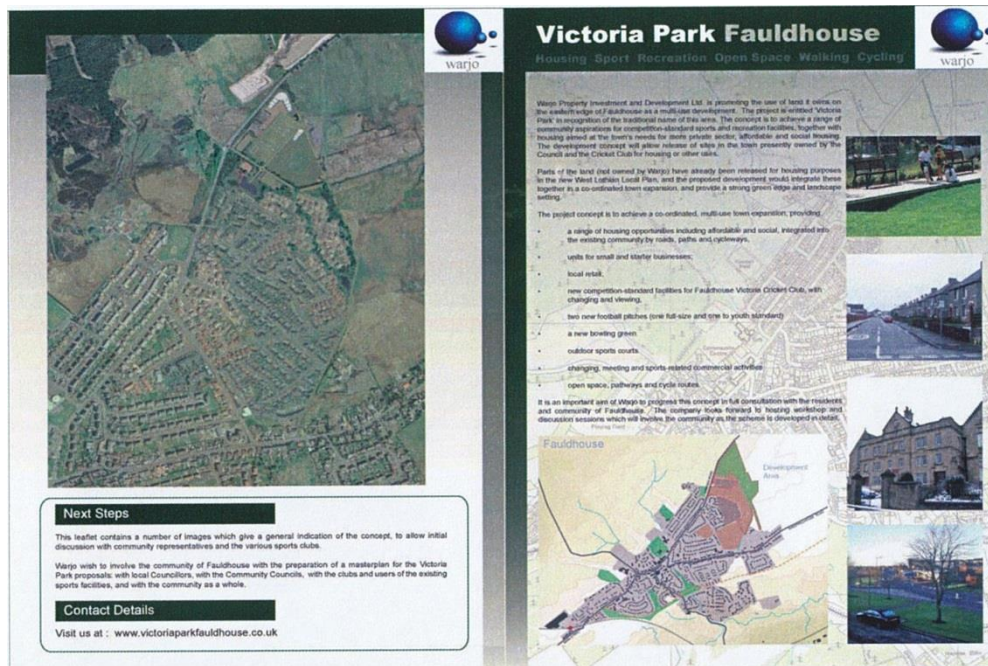


6.5 The photographs illustrate the flat grassland appearance of most of the site, with a belt of conifer trees south of the present local plan allocation. This allocation is best illustrated in photo 1.

7 Community consultation


7.1 Walter Crawford Property subsidiary company Warjo held a community engagement event on 19th November 2008 in Fauldhouse Miners' Welfare Institute, at which the more-extensive development then proposed was displayed and comments invited. The event was widely publicised in Fauldhouse and leaflets and brochures were circulated. Diagram 10 shows the brochure prepared to inform the local community, and the comments sheet.

Diagram 10: Community event brochure and comment sheet



Victoria Park Fauldhouse

Comments



Your comments on the Victoria Park Fauldhouse Project would be appreciated.

Is there anything else you would like to see in Fauldhouse?

Please note, your comments and details will be entered into a free prize draw. With a prize of a Luxury Hamper which will be drawn tonight.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____

7.2 61 people visited the event, many of whom filled in comments sheets.

7.3 For a variety of reasons the development never progressed, and the present representation concerns a reduced scale of development. Nevertheless the issues raised by the attendees which relate to the present development area have been taken account in the concept Masterplan.

8 South-East Scotland Strategic Development Plan

8.1 The new West Lothian LDP will be compiled within the context of South-East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SESPlan), with which it has to comply. SESPlan defines “Strategic Development Areas”, with Fauldhouse lying within that for West Lothian. The Plan’s “Supplementary Guidance on Housing Land” advises that local development plans need to allocate land to accommodate at least an additional 24,338 houses throughout the region (over present allocations), and within West Lothian sites for a total of 11,420 new homes will be required over the period until 2019. The LPD must assess whether the 83,207 units allocated in the existing Local Plan remain “effective”, and must allocate sufficient extra sites to meet the SESPlan requirement.

8.2 SESPlan states: *“Consistent with SPP and paragraph 113 of the approved SDP, LDPs should give priority to brownfield sites within existing built up areas when allocating new sites for housing development. Where additional land is required, sites should first be sought within the identified SDAs”*.

8.3 It is clear that the Strategic Development Plan context requires the allocation of additional housing sites. The Plan states that such allocations will be focused on the Strategic Development Areas, in sustainable locations where infrastructure is either available or can be provided, and in locations where there are no environmental constraints. It specifically identifies that the smaller settlements in western West Lothian may also provide for additional growth.

8.4 With Fauldhouse being within the West Lothian Strategic Development Area, having very good accessibility (see section below) and having existing infrastructure which can accommodate and would benefit from an increased population, we see it being a suitable “sustainable location” for additional residential development. Furthermore, the Plan advises that LODPs should give priority to brownfield sites, such as Victoria Park.

9 Scottish Planning Policy

- 9.1 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out national planning policies which reflect the Scottish Ministers' priorities for operation of the planning system and for the development and use of land. The current SPP, published in June 2014, introduces as a key policy principle a "presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development".
- 9.2 Four planning outcomes are identified, which focus on creating a successful sustainable place, a low carbon place, a natural, resilient place and a more connected place.
- 9.3 The outcome "A successful, sustainable place – supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places" is elaborated on as follows:
"By locating the right development in the right place, planning can provide opportunities for people to make sustainable choices and improve their quality of life. Well-planned places promote well-being, a sense of identity and pride, and greater opportunities for social interaction. Planning therefore has an important role in promoting strong, resilient and inclusive communities. Delivering high-quality buildings, infrastructure and spaces in the right locations helps provide choice over where to live and style of home, choice as to how to access amenities and services and choice to live more active, engaged, independent and healthy lifestyles".
- 9.4 The further outcome, "a more connected place" – supporting better transport and digital connectivity", states:
"By aligning development more closely with transport and digital infrastructure, planning can improve sustainability and connectivity. Improved connections facilitate accessibility within and between places – within Scotland and beyond – and support economic growth and an inclusive society".
- 9.5 The promoted site represents a development opportunity that allows expansion of Fauldhouse in a manner completely in compliance with relevant Scottish Planning Policy. It is a brownfield location which will integrate well into the town, within easy walking distance of shops and services, and which is already served by high-quality public transport. It is therefore a sustainable and well-connected development location.

10 Accessibility

- 10.1 As described above, planning policy at all levels in Scotland from national, strategic regional, and local, seeks development in locations which are sustainable. Principal among the requirements for sustainable locations are those which are or can be served by transport other than the private car. All parts of the site are within walking distance of the town centre, and both Falla Hill and St John the Baptist Primary Schools are within 800m of the site.
- 10.2 Fauldhouse is served by the hourly-frequency train service on the Edinburgh – Shotts – Glasgow line, which in turn connects to the national rail network at both termini; and to the regional networks in both conurbations. Lanrigg road, on which the site lies, is served by several bus routes. The most frequent is the First 21 which links Faulhouse to Whitburn, Bathgate, Livingston and Edinburgh, and operates every half-hour. In addition to this there are five other routes on Lanrigg Road which operate at different times of day (including an express service to Edinburgh), adding to the number of services and range of destinations. All these services also offer connections within the town, for example linking to the railway station.

- 10.3 With a range of public transport services operating within and outwith the town, we contend that Fauldhouse is a sustainable location for growth. The site is well located to be accessible to these services, and therefore complies with sustainable development criteria.

11 Social housing

- 11.1 Walter Crawford Property has been actively seeking a development partner who would provide a social housing component in the development area.
- 11.2 The Company has therefore agreed a Joint Venture proposal with GeoCapita to seek to develop a social housing development at the site with an integrated approach to renewable energy provision. GeoCapita would provide the following principal support to this project:
- Development funding provision and associated financial support to developer (council or social housing association, including pre-funding provision if required)
 - Analysis and provision of suitable renewable energy infrastructure sufficient to provide the new community with low cost heat and power via a mini-grid/community heating system and enabled by way of a bespoke and accredited ESCO.
 - Provision or support to the developer in provisioning low carbon efficient housing designs suitable for integrated RE provision.
 - Management and provision of all approvals, warranties and accreditations associated.
 - Support to/with architects in relation to master-plan and unit orientations.
- 11.3 Geo-Capita have already met Council officers to explain the proposals, with **appendix 1** of this report being an e-mail confirming the JV proposal and summarising the discussion. Both companies would welcome opportunities to discuss this aspect of the proposal in greater detail.
- 11.4 The larger site that this representation advocates being allocated would provide the critical development mass to justify an innovative renewable energy solution, and there is sufficient land to accommodate the necessary plant.

12 Effectiveness

- 12.1 The Scottish Ministers stated in their 27 September 2012 letter to Planning Authorities that any sites identified in local development plans must be “genuinely effective”: i.e. ready for development within the plan period. This is defined in Planning Advice Note 2/2010 as requiring a range of factors to be taken into account in assessing the likelihood of the delivery of houses on the ground over a rolling period of time.
- 12.2 PAN 2/2010 states that: “ *to assess a site or a portion of a site as being effective, it must be demonstrated that within the five-year period beyond the date of (a housing land) audit the site can be developed for housing (i.e. residential units can be completed and available for occupation), and will be free of constraints on the following basis*”.
- 12.3 The criteria are as follows, with our assessment regarding the Victoria Park site.
- 12.4 **ownership:** the site is in the ownership or control of a party which can be expected to develop it or to release it for development.
- 12.5 **physical:** the site can be made free from constraints related to slope, aspect, flood risk, ground

stability or vehicular access which would preclude its development.

12.6 **contamination:** the site is not contaminated.

12.7 **deficit funding:** not relevant in this case.

12.8 **marketability:** the site can be developed in the period under consideration. The previous actions of Walter Crawford Property in promoting its development and inviting community comment is evidence of a willingness to promote development of the site. Furthermore, Turpie & Co., experienced estate agents and valuers based in Bathgate, have provided a statement on the present housing market in this part of West Lothian, and the demand for housing in Faulhouse. The letter is contained in this report as **appendix 2**.

12.9 **infrastructure:** the site is free of infrastructure constraints.

12.10 **land use:** housing is the sole preferred use of the land.

13 Conclusion

13.1 Our case is that the Victoria Park site at Faulhouse is an appropriate location for new housing development (greater than that already allocated and “preferred”), for the following reasons:

1. Victoria Park is a “sustainable development location” due to its proximity to the shops and services in the town, the quality of its public transport services, and its brownfield condition.
2. Allocation of more land in a sustainable development location within the West Lothian Strategic Development Area complies with SESPlan.
3. It has been demonstrated that there is a continuing demand for new housing development in Fauldhouse –in the private, affordable, and social sectors.
4. Private housing has diversified tenure in Fauldhouse, which previously was dominated by public-sector housing.
5. The site accords with “Scottish Planning Policy” by its sustainable location and its good connections to existing services and public transport.
6. The promoted land was formerly occupied by collieries, bings and railways and is therefore categorised as “brownfield”. As such, it has priority status in selection for development.
7. The proposed boundaries reflect the natural landform and boundaries of the site, being the area of the former collieries.
8. The increased development area will enable funding of recreation and open space areas, and establishment of the allotments site.
9. Development of the increased area will not adversely affect views into the town, and will not unduly intrude into views from existing developed areas within the town. It will have a neutral visual impact.
10. Allocation of the promoted land will allow expansion of Fauldhouse within clearly-defined limits and will not represent unconstrained expansion of the town into the countryside.
11. The increased development area will create a site of sufficient size to allow a mixed development of market and social housing.
12. There already is interest from the social housing sector to be involved in development of the site.
13. Walter Crawford Property has carried out site investigations to prove that the site is developable within the period of the Local Development Plan.

14 Summary of representation to West Lothian Council’s Main Issues Report

- 14.1 This representation therefore calls on the Council to increase the size of the “preferred” housing allocation EOI-0124 at Victoria Park, Fauldhouse to the extent indicated on the concept Masterplan submitted with the representation.
- 14.2 This would amend the settlement map which is contained in the MIR as shown in diagram 11 below. The diagram removes from the boundary the area within the Concept Masterplan which is not proposed to be developed, and also removes the already-developed portions of nearby allocations HFh7 and HFh15.

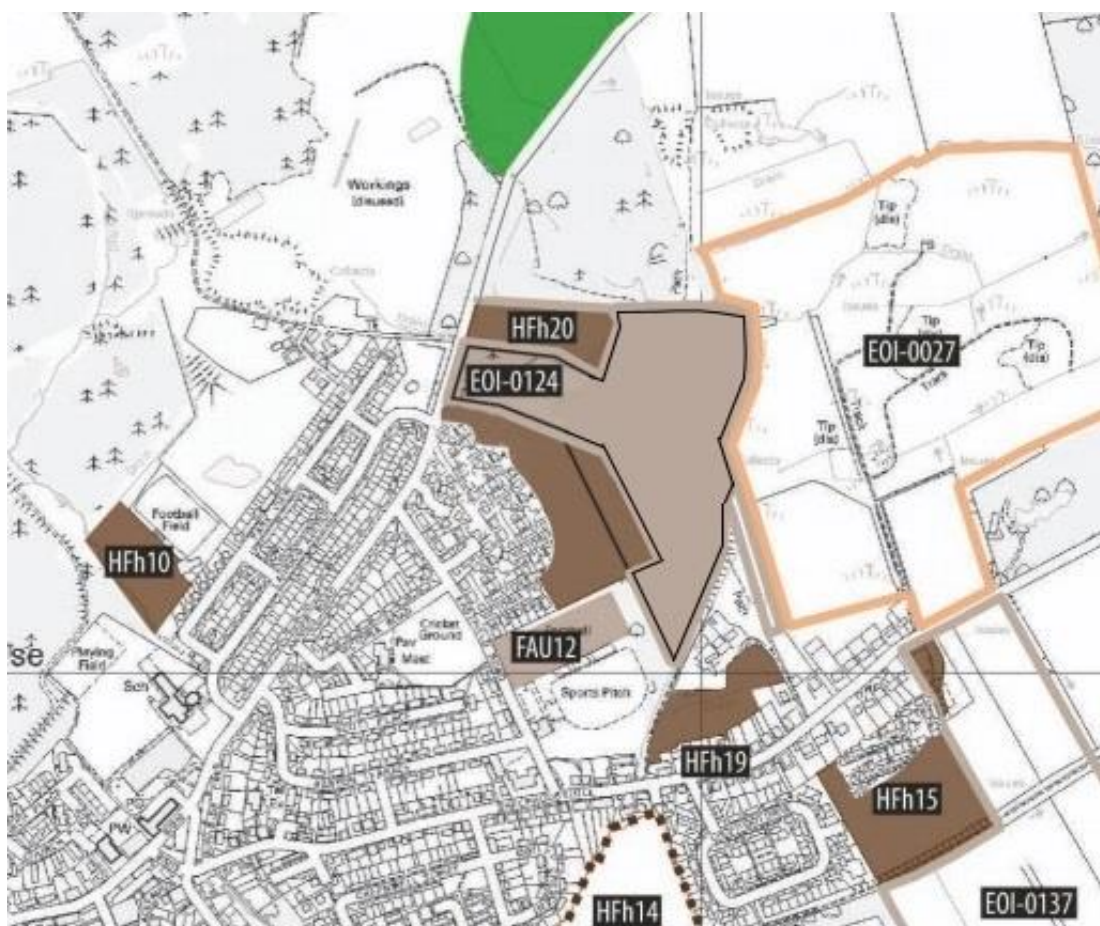


Diagram 11: Requested changes to MIR Fauldhouse settlement map.
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Appendix 1

27-2-14 e-mail from GeoCapita to West Lothian Council

From: Donald Booth [<mailto:db@geocapita.net>]
Sent: 27 February 2014 14:13
To: McBrierty, Fiona; McLucas, Steve
Subject: Fauldhouse Social Housing opportunity

Fiona/Steve

Many thanks Steve for some of your time this morning to discuss the GeoCapita JV investment opportunity for the Fauldhouse, submitted Call For Sites (Victoria Park) land related to our interest in a new energy efficient social housing development.

As noted, GeoCapita have agreed a JV proposal with the landowner [REDACTED] to seek to develop a social housing development at the above site with an integrated approach to renewable energy provision should planning approval be forthcoming.

For your information and clarity GeoCapita would provide the following principal support to this project:

- Development funding provision and associated financial support to developer (council or social housing association, including pre-funding provision if required)
- Analysis and provision of suitable renewable energy infrastructure sufficient to provide the new community with low cost heat and power via a mini-grid/community heating system and enabled by way of a bespoke and accredited ESCO.
- Provision or support to the developer in provisioning low carbon efficient housing designs suitable for integrated RE provision.
- Management and provision of all approvals, warranties and accreditations associated.
- Support to/with architects in relation to master-plan and unit orientations.

I hope this provides West Lothian Council Planning Department with sufficient overview of the opportunity we would wish to take forward and in so doing fully supporting the above site for this type of development.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on any related questions or queries.

Best regards

Donald I Booth
PARTNER

GEOCAPITA

100 Fenchurch Street
London EC3M 5JD

t: 0845 250 0535
m: 07900 057167
e: db@geocapita.net

w: www.geocapita.net

Appendix 2

15-10-14 letter from Turpie & Co. commenting on market and demand for housing in Fauldhouse. (2 pages)

Turpie & Co, 5-9 Edinburgh Road, Bathgate, West Lothian EH48 1BA
(t) 01506 668448 (f) 01506 668447 (e) info@turpies.com (w) www.turpies.com
VAT reg no. 109208925, Company reg no. 341091



15th October 2014

[REDACTED]
C/O Strandsky Management Solutions
10A Kew Terrace
Glasgow
G12 0TD

Dear [REDACTED]

Potential Residential Site at Fauldhouse

I refer to our recent discussions regarding the above.
As you are aware Turpie & Co are an experienced firm of estate agents and valuers specialising in the West Lothian area where we feel that we have developed and established considerable local expertise going back over ten years.

We work extensively in the area with national and local builders providing them with advice and services concerning trends in the local property market. As well as providing traditional estate agency services, which includes a full marketing service in relation to any new build developments, we also collate data and prepare reports showing the extent and nature of all developments in the area which then allows our developer clients to assess the type, style and price range of the properties they wish to build and bring to market.

We can confirm that over the last 18 months or so we have seen significant increases in demand in and around the West Lothian area in general, with specific developments selling extremely well and beyond expectations.

The Heartlands development is now showing significant progress and other smaller developments have seen many houses reserved and purchased under missives during the course of construction. This trend reflects an upturn in the housing market generally throughout Scotland, however the West Lothian region in particular is proving extremely popular with there being consistent and significant demand across all ranges of accommodation.

While there is a strong demand for executive style accommodation in terms of 4-5 bed detached homes, there is also an increasing demand for 2-3 bedroom semi detached and terraced homes within the area and there is a considerable shortage of new flatted accommodation.

Overall demand is fuelled by the proximity of the area in general to the hubs of Edinburgh, Livingston, Glasgow and to an extent Falkirk and Stirling. Improving transport links, and the general trend towards a commuter environment, have served to push demand for housing in the area to new levels, especially as it is perceived that greater value is to be had in the area in comparison to some other areas closer to Edinburgh or Glasgow.

Fauldhouse in particular offers great scope for further development across all ranges of accommodation and your site, being on the border of the existing village, would lend itself to a very

attractive development of new housing whether that be social amenity housing, private housing or a mixture of the two.

The area is one which is well known to us and in our opinion is one which will undoubtedly improve and increase in popularity with house purchasers and tenants over the next 5 years.

We have no doubt that any development on this site which offers a mix of house types and ranges will prove extremely popular and be capable of full occupation within a very short time of completion, with the very real possibility of many private units being pre sold during the course of construction.

Obviously how successful and how quickly any sales campaign could be concluded will depend on the final style and quality of the units which would be erected on the site, however assuming that the houses are built and completed to modern residential standards, we do not see why the developed site should not be extremely successful and represent a substantial asset to Fauldhouse in particular and West Lothian in general.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Faithfully



Stephen Mckean
Turpie & Co