

WLC REF: MIR0209

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 October 2014 15:5 [REDACTED]
To: wlldp
Subject: West Lothian Local Development Plan

Dear Sirs.

West Lothian Development Plan

I am writing to formally register an objection to the proposals in the MIR of the West Lothian Local Development Plan to include Clarendon Farm as a 'Preferred' future housing development site.

It is extremely questionable whether it is wise to abandon the current policy of development restraint in Linlithgow that has served the town so constructively and sensibly over the last twenty years, as, even with this policy, congestion in the town has continued to increase significantly. The main danger to a sustainable and environmentally responsible future for the town would be to abandon this policy of restraint in the manner now proposed. What is certainly clear is that the town can not accommodate further housing development without considerable prior investment in infrastructure, improved motorway access to reduce the pressure on the High Street, traffic management, increased parking and educational capacity.

CARENDON FARM

In the event that some degree of housing development is accepted, the site at Clarendon Farm must surely be the least acceptable location. It is severely compromised by access and landscape/visual impact issues and is located in a position in the town where the traffic generated will add to the current severe congestion problems at the canal basin bridge, a major tourist draw and a dangerous complex pedestrian crossing point for school children.

ACCESS

The recent rejected application by Gladman illustrates the difficulty in accessing the site. A route via the existing farm road was proved to be impossible and their alternative proposal, to access the site via Clarendon Road, would result in an unacceptable scale of cul-de-sac, cause further congestion on Clarendon Road, lead to an extraordinary curved embankment in the prominent Conservation Area field at the farmhouse, and, as it blocked the access to Clarendon Mews, could not actually be delivered legally. It was significant that the WLC Planning Officer at the recent MIR exhibition confirmed that the Council had not considered how to access the site. There is no satisfactory access solution.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT

The Reporter at the Public Inquiry in 1994 fully upheld the refusal of permission for the development of the site, concluding that the existing settlement boundary at Clarendon and Oatlands was 'an appropriate and defensible boundary between built-up area and countryside'. He also considered that, if this boundary were breached, the council would find it extremely difficult to resist further expansion eastwards as 'there is no clear definitive natural boundary or feature to limit development'. He also concluded rightly that the slopes at Clarendon were 'important to the landscape setting of the town when viewed from the north and east. I consider that these slopes should be protected in the finalised Local Plan'.

The Reporter was absolutely correct in this assessment. The Planning Officer at the public exhibition said that the Council had not carried out any landscape assessment before proposing Clarendon for development. If there had been then surely it would not have been considered.

As I have stated earlier, I am unconvinced that Linlithgow can sustain the level of housing development proposed in the MIR but, if any mass housing is to be considered it should be located in less sensitive, less prominent and less damaging sites than at Clarendon and where the impact on the historic areas, such as the canal basin, can be minimised.

Yours sincerely

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