

17 October 2014
14 10 17 Representation - Stockbridge Retail Park



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Dear Sirs

**Representation to the West Lothian Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report
Stockbridge Retail Park, Linlithgow**

On behalf of our client Lothbury Property Trust Company Limited c/o Lothbury Investment Management, we hereby write to provide a formal representation to the West Lothian Local Development Plan Main Issues Report with regard to their interests at Stockbridge Retail Park, Linlithgow.

Proposed Policy Change

It is proposed that the retail floorspace at Linlithgow Bridge, as identified on the attached plan, is formally designated within the emerging West Lothian Local Development Plan as a Commercial Centre with a convenience and comparison goods sales function description.

Existing Linlithgow Retail & Policy Context

The adopted West Lothian Local Plan (January 2009) identifies a single Town Centre within the settlement of Linlithgow, located along the traditional, linear High Street and terminating in the east at the Blackness Road / High Port shopping parade. Almost all of the Town Centre is located within the defined Conservation Area, adjoining The Riggs (a formally designated restriction zone), residential properties and Category A Listed Linlithgow Palace. These built forms combine with Linlithgow Loch to the north and Bathgate Hills to the south, meaning there is little opportunity for expansion of the Town Centre or, the creation of more flexible, modern, market facing floorplates.

Currently, there are 145 units within the defined Town Centre, with approximately 50% in Class 1 use and 15% in Class 2 uses. The remainder of the Town Centre is made up of Class 3, Class 11 and sui generis uses, including number of pubs and hot food takeaways. The Town Centre therefore has a good commercial mix which is not reliant on any one use. Importantly, just 5% of the units are understood to be vacant. In terms of retailer mix, the Town Centre is in the main independents, supplemented by multiples such as M&Co, Tesco and Semichem. Overall, the Town Centre is observed to be healthy in terms of vitality and viability indicators, with a high level of environmental quality and good levels of footfall.

Stockbridge Retail Park is located to the west of the Town Centre at Linlithgow Bridge, and plays established – and important – part of Linlithgow's retail provision, having been built in 2005. It plays a complementary role to the Town Centre, providing larger floorplates which enable national multiple retailers to be attracted to Linlithgow. In turn, these retailers help prevent leakage to higher order centres and offer the opportunity for linked trips to the Town Centre. The Retail Park currently consists of Homebase, B&M, Argos, Peacocks and Brantano, totalling 5,116 sq.m gross floorspace. None of these retailers would be able to adapt their operation to fit within the restricted Town Centre, and benefit rather than posing a threat to the Town Centre.

Adjoining the Retail Park is a 14,000 sq.ft Aldi foodstore and a Class1/Class 3 unit (currently part occupied by Dominos). In addition, a 36,000 sq.ft Sainsbury's store is located to the immediate north west.

In sum, the cluster of retail floorspace at Linlithgow Bridge includes two of Linlithgow's three main supermarkets, alongside the main multiple retailer / larger format store offer within the town.

It is also appropriate to note the Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SESplan) as was approved in June 2013 i.e. after the West Lothian Local Plan.

SESplan sets out a broad Network of Centres (Table 1), as follows:

Regional Town Centre	Edinburgh City Centre
Strategic Town Centres	Livingston , Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Glenrothes
Other Town Centres	To be identified within LDPs
Commercial Centres	To be identified within LDPs

In this regard, SESplan directs that Local Development Plans will:

- a. Identify town centres and commercial centres clearly defining their roles;*
- b. Support and promote the network of centres as shown in Table 1, and identify measures necessary to protect these centres including setting out the criteria to be addressed when assessing development proposals; and*
- c. Promote a sequential approach to the selection of locations for retail and commercial leisure proposals.*

Any exceptions identified through Local Development Plans should be fully justified."

Main Issue 5 – Town Centres and Retailing

Q.45 Do you agree that the 'Preferred' approach to town centres and retail provision in West Lothian is appropriate? If not, why not?

Q.47 Do you have an alternative approach? What is it and how would you make it work?

It is agreed that the preferred approach is appropriate insofar as following the nationally established sequential approach.

Notwithstanding, the sequential approach relies on an appropriately defined hierarchy of centres which recognises and reflects the existing retail floorspace context and the function that the floorspace already plays within the surrounding urban and rural areas. Specifically, it is considered key that the cluster of floorspace at Linlithgow Bridge provides both a convenience and comparison goods retail role.

As such, it is fully appropriate that the existing concentration of retail floorspace at Linlithgow Bridge – Stockbridge Retail Park, Sainsbury's, Aldi and Domino's – is viewed as a whole and recognised in its combined role as an essential part of the Linlithgow retail provision / hierarchy.

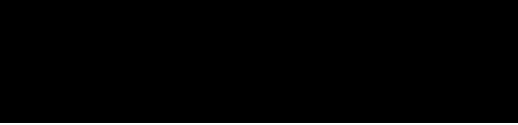
It is proposed that the identified Linlithgow Bridge retail floorspace is formally designated within the emerging West Lothian Local Development Plan as a Commercial Centre with a convenience and comparison goods sales function description.

It is further submitted that the Commercial Centre boundary should be defined in the West Lothian Local Development Plan as per the attached map.

I trust that the above will be fully considered in the preparation of the Proposed West Lothian Local Development Plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries or require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Adam Richardson MRTPI
Associate

Encl.



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