

West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report

| Schedule | 6. Forestry, Woodland and Trees |
|---|---|
| <p>Information required by the Act and NPF4 regarding the issue addressed in this section</p> | <p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended: Section 15 (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district. • The principal purposes for which land is used. <p>The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 added to the 1997 Act a requirement for planning authorities to prepare Forestry and Woodland Strategies. Relevant to the Environment Report for LDP2 the strategy must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify woodlands of high nature conservation value; • set out policies and proposals regarding the development of forestry and woodlands; • identify potential to protect and enhance woodlands; • improve resilience to climate change; • support expansion of a range of types of woodland to provide multiple benefits to the physical, cultural, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area. <p>National Planning Policy 4 (adopted 13 February 2023):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPF4 National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045, Central Scotland Green Network is one of six national developments. West Lothian is located within the Central Scotland Green Network. • NPF4 Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland and Trees takes forward the requirements set out in the 2019 Act for Forestry and Woodland Strategies in terms of the policy intent, outcomes and directives for local development plans. LDPs should identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks. The spatial strategy should identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodlands and trees in the area, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of a range of types to provide multiple benefits. This will be supported and informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy. <p>This schedule aims not to repeat the content of other topics covered by the LDP2 Evidence Report. Other schedules which should be read alongside this schedule on Forestry, Woodland and Trees include:</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 - Biodiversity • 3 - The Water Environment and Flooding • 4 - Blue and Green Infrastructure • 5 - Natural Places and Soils • 8 - Greenbelt • 9 - Health and Wellbeing |
| <p>Links to Evidence</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government, Scottish Climate Change Plan 2018-32 • Scottish Forestry, Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019 - 2029 • Scottish Government, Scotland’s Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026 – Getting the best from our land (2021) • NatureScot, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy • Scottish Government, Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-29 • Scottish Government, Climate change: Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 • Scottish Government - Spatial Data • Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2012 – 2017 (2012) • IN PREPARATION: West Lothian Council: Working Together with Nature - West Lothian’s Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-35 (WL-LBAP, report and data for nature network anticipated December 2024) • West Lothian Council, West Lothian Adaptation Action Plan (2022-2028) • West Lothian Council, A baseline digital habitat map of West Lothian • Tree Equity Score tool • West Lothian Council, West Lothian Natural Capital Assessment (2023) • The Scottish Government’s Policy on Control of Woodland Removal (2009) • West Lothian Council, Tree Preservation Orders Register (TPOs) • West Lothian Council, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) • West Lothian Council, Conservation Areas • UK Forestry Standard 2024 (published 2017, updated 2024) • IN PREPARATION: West Lothian Council: Livingston Woodlands Long-Term Forest Plan - Information and Draft Proposals for Management (Consultation draft July 2024, publication of final version anticipated summer 2025) • Forestry and Land Scotland: various active Land Management Plans (LMP): Central Region: Benhar & Fauldhouse LMP, Camilty LMP, Polkemmet LMP, Westfield (Blackridge) & some LMPs in neighbour areas • Woodland Trust – many sites in West Lothian including management plans: e.g. Wilderness - Woodland Trust • Data - West Lothian Council’s planning GIS mapping layers datasets; Forest Research, National Forest Inventory 2020 dataset with regular updates; Native Woodland Survey of Scotland- produced by Forest Research, 2015; Nature Scot, Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory, data managed by NatureScot: Riparian Woodland/s, designated sites • Scottish Government Spatial Data.gov.scot – includes open-source datasets for WWNP (working with natural processes), woodland constraints, woodland potential, riparian woodland potential, wider catchment woodland potential and links to other Scottish Government Spatial Data |

Summary of Evidence

Purpose, scope and structure of this schedule

This schedule focuses on Forestry, Woodland and Trees, as well as the arising key requirement of an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy. This schedule and its evidence are set out in the following sections:

- 1 National strategies, priorities and evidence
- 2 Local strategies, priorities and evidence
- 3 Forestry and Woodland in West Lothian
- 4 Tackling 'tree inequalities' in communities
- 5 Tree carbon sequestration
- 6 Tree protection
- 7 West Lothian Forestry and Woodland Strategy

Part 1 - National strategies, priorities and evidence

- 1.1 The **Scottish Climate Change Plan 2018-32** recognises that Scotland's natural environment is one of our greatest national assets and recognises the ecosystem services provided by these natural assets.
- 1.2 **Scotland's Forestry Strategy (2019-2029)** presents a 50-year vision to expand, protect and enhance Scotland's forests and woodlands, to deliver greater economic, social and environmental benefits to Scotland's people. Development Plans are to be informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy. The strategy sets a target of increasing forest and woodland canopy cover in Scotland to 21% of the total area by 2032 to help address climate change.
- 1.3 Scotland's **Land Use Strategy (2021)** provides a vision for how land should be used across the country with a projected increase in urban woodlands, rooftop and rain gardens to green cities and towns; an increase in forested land, integrated with agriculture; more habitats restored, connected and enhanced; better-quality peatland habitats, and a wider range of wildlife thriving in wild areas. The Land Use Strategy includes national targets for tree planting rates to reach 18,000 hectares per year by 2024-25.
- 1.4 The **Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (2023)** establishes a national vision for biodiversity to 2045: halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and restoring biodiversity by 2045. Key processes involved include 30x30 (protecting 30% of Scotland's land and 30% of sea by 2030) and Nature Networks – linking together habitats and protected areas across local authority areas and nationally to enable species to move and to adapt to changing circumstances and the changing climate. NPF4 identifies that LDPs should promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them.
- 1.5 For forests and woodlands one of the **Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-29** outcomes is connecting nature, recognising the impact climate change has on wildlife and habitats, and that, connectivity is crucial for functioning healthy ecosystems where green spaces play an important role in climate resilience.

- 1.6 [Scottish Government Spatial Data](#) includes open-source datasets for WWNP (working with natural processes), woodland constraints, woodland potential, riparian woodland potential, wider catchment woodland potential and links to other Scottish Government Spatial Data.

Part 2 - Local strategies, priorities and evidence

- 2.1 The **Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2012 – 2017 (2012)** sets out a spatial framework for woodland expansion and includes in its aims, objectives and priorities support for climate change, biodiversity & delivering green networks; and is divided into a series of spatial zones based on broad landscape character areas. The strategy aims to increase woodland cover across Edinburgh and the Lothians from 13% to between 17% and 19% of the total land area.
- 2.2 West Lothian Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan, **Working Together for Nature - West Lothian's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-35** outlines how our local biodiversity can contribute to national/global priorities, to help us manage the land to promote the protection, enhancement and creation of habitats, to ensure connectivity throughout the area and to facilitate a wider understanding of locally important habitats and species.
- 2.3 The development of the council's **Adaptation Action Plan 2022-28** required current and future climate change risks to be assessed. Some of those identified include:
- Increased risks of pests and diseases, and wind-throw of trees;
 - Risk of fallen trees on strategic highway corridors; and
 - Increased risks of fire on dry heath and woodland in times of drought.
- 2.4 **West Lothian Council's planning GIS mapping layers datasets** include air quality management areas; biodiversity sites & species; CSGN networks & opportunity areas; conservation, flooding; habitat survey 1993; land capability for agriculture; paths, and further layers.
- 2.5 Mapping of all the habitats including forestry and woodland in West Lothian was carried out in 2022 to inform the LBAP. A [baseline digital habitat map of West Lothian](#) is available to be used for forestry and woodland planning and to inform the Forestry and Woodland Strategy. Many open-source datasets are also available to West Lothian Council including:
- Central Scotland Green Network: habitats and networks (including opportunities),
 - NatureScot: Ancient Woodland Inventory
 - NatureScot: National Vegetation Classification Scotland (2021 with updates)
 - Habitat Map of Scotland (HabMoS): Habitat and Land Cover (Scotland's environment web)
 - NatureScot: Carbon and Peatland
 - Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA): Recommended riparian (riverbank) corridor layers
 - Scottish Forestry: Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS)
- 2.6 The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC) also make datasets available through a Service Level Agreement with West Lothian Council. Treeplotter is an asset management database for trees and woodland assets but due to limited council staff (2 tree inspectors) current surveying and digitising is being prioritised for trees/woodland on West Lothian Council land holdings.

Part 3 – Forestry and Woodland in West Lothian

- 3.1 Woodlands provide a valuable resource in terms of climate change as well as landscape and recreational benefits. Semi natural woodland is an irreplaceable resource and should be protected from development. Woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees can have significant ecological and biodiversity value and make a substantial contribution to climate change, landscape character and quality; they can also be of economic and recreational value.
- 3.2 Woodland and trees within settlements contribute to placemaking, can support setting and amenity, urban greenways and tree cover to provide habitat and improve micro-climate. The loss of such woodland can have detrimental longer-term effects on communities, particularly those living in close proximity to the area of tree cover e.g. loss of shelter, amenity, habitat and drainage issues.
- 3.3 In West Lothian, there are 43,170 hectares of woodland cover. This has increased from 14% in 1994 to 21% in 2023. This is above Scotland's average, which is 18.5% coverage, although still much lower than the European average at 38%. There is, however, a prevalence of low-biodiversity habitats across the area, with improved grassland, amenity grassland, arable and conifer woodland collectively covering 50% of West Lothian.

Comparison of habitat areas in 1994 and 2023

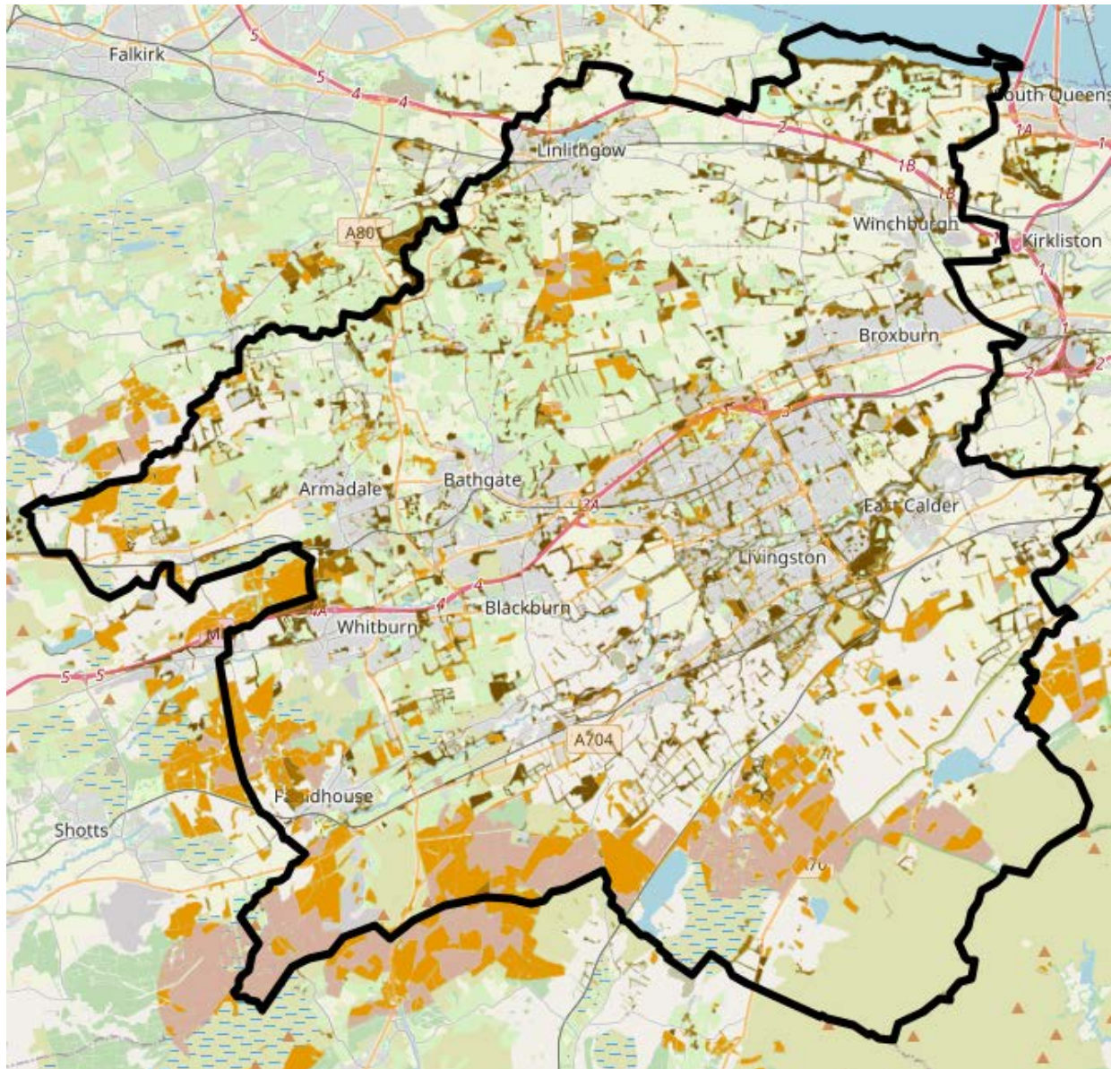
| West Lothian ¹ - Habitat Types | Area (ha) 1994 | % Cover 1994 | Area (ha) 2023 | % Cover 2023 |
|--|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | | 42,504 | 100% | 43,170 |
| Woodland and Scrub | 6,741 | 14.0% | 9,054 | 21.0% |
| Grassland and Marsh | 17,757 | 36.0% | 17,408 | 40.3% |
| Tall Herb and Fen | 299 | 0.6% | 3 | 0.0% |
| Heathland | 1,399 | 3.0% | 176 | 0.4% |
| Mires and peatlands | 2,201 | 4.0% | 2,303 | 5.3% |
| Swamp | 70 | 0.1% | 3 | 0.0% |
| Open Water | 500 | 1.0% | 603 | 1.4% |
| Coastland | 273 | 0.5% | 281 | 0.6% |
| Rock and spoil | 316 | 0.6% | 372 | 0.9% |
| Miscellaneous (cultivated land etc) | 13,296 | 27.0% | | |
| Arable | | | 4,986 | 11.5% |
| Urban unsurveyed areas | 5,611 | 13.2% | | |
| Miscellaneous (amenity grassland, built up area, infrastructure, gardens, other) | | | 7,819 | 18.1% |
| Unclassified (under development) | | | 164 | 0.4% |

Source: West Lothian phase 1 habitat survey 1994; West Lothian Baseline Habitat Map by WSP / NCS 2023.

Footnote: West Lothian represents approximately 0.5% of the land area of Scotland.

See below for map extracted from the West Lothian Baseline Habitat Map showing woodland cover as per legend. Very broadly, coniferous woodlands tend to be located in the south and west while broadleaved woodlands are found towards the north and east of the council area.

Figure 1: Woodlands of West Lothian



LEGEND

- Broadleaved woodland
- Coniferous woodland
- Mixed woodland
- Felled woodland
- Scrub

- 3.4 Within the bounds of **Livingston** there are now well over 500ha of woodland. When the ‘new town’ of Livingston was being developed in the 1960s and 70s, many areas of existing woodland, rows of beech trees lining the former fields and other individual mature trees were retained. In addition, 100s of hectares of new woodland, forest and tree belts were established, as well as many trees along roads and within its parks.
- 3.5 When Livingston Development Corporation wound up in 1997 approximately 250ha of woodland was passed to the Woodland Trust and the remaining 250ha was transferred to West Lothian Council, along with the majority of the smaller tree belts and thousands of individual trees. The council owns a further 750ha of other woodland areas, which form a significant part of its three

country parks, and many other woods, some created as part of reclamation projects of former coal heaps and shale bings.

3.6 Other **major woodland owners in West Lothian** include The Woodland Trust, Forestry and Land Scotland, and Hopetoun Estate. The Woodland Trust owns considerable areas of legacy woods from Livingston Development Corporation the largest of which are North Wood, Wilderness Woods, Dedridge, Murieston and Bellsquarry Woods, as well as many other smaller urban woodlands and tree features. The Woodland Trust also has interests in West Calder, East Whitburn and Stoneyburn. All areas managed by the Woodland Trust, have management plans which are regularly reviewed and are under active attention by their staff, including tree planting and restocking. The Woodland Trust is a strong advocate of tree planting including giving away tree saplings and working with community groups, both of which happen in West Lothian.

3.7 West Lothian lies within the Central Conservancy of Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). There are five main forests under active management in West Lothian as per the table below. The site at Polkemmet is a recent acquisition in 2020 by FLS: with the aim of ‘establishing a new multipurpose woodland delivering timber production, carbon capture, biodiversity value, and social benefits on a former opencast coal mining site’. The total land area under management by FLS within West Lothian in the table below is circa 1,801.50 hectares.

Forestry and Land Scotland’s (FLS) main holdings in West Lothian

| Forest Area, location | Area in hectares | Land Management Plan approved |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Benhar and Fauldhouse, southwest West Lothian | 596 ha | 2018 |
| Camilty, south of Livingston | 754 ha | 2019 |
| Polkemmet, southwest of Whitburn | 243 ha | January 2024 |
| Selm Muir, southwest of Livingston | 91.5 ha | 2022 |
| Westfield, west of Blackridge – eastern block | 117 ha | 2014 |

3.8 Hopetoun Estates is a large landowner with some 6,500 acres, or 2630 hectares, in the northeast of West Lothian adjacent the Firth of Forth. Hopetoun House and Estates have many diverse enterprises including forests and woodlands, where there is a high incidence of woodlands of high amenity value and of ancient woodland origin. Some 970 acres, or 330 hectares, is under a long-term management plan.

3.9 West Lothian Council is also a major local landowner. The Council’s Forest Planning initiatives include Blaeberry Hill Woodlands in Whitburn, Beecraigs Country Park, and the Livingston Long-term Forest Plan, which was consulted on in summer of 2024. The Council also has a Management Plan for Trees and Woodland on West Lothian Council Owned Land (published 2017, updated 2024) which is in part a service level agreement for other land owning or managing departments such as Roads and Transportation, Housing, Education and Planning Services with an emphasis on managing risk and public safety.

3.10 **New woodland creation and tree planting** are important with regard to the rising Scottish Government targets to bring woodland cover to a similar level of that for other European countries (EU 38%, 2018), seeking 21% expanded woodland cover by 2032.

3.11 Scottish Forestry supports woodland creation through its Forestry Grant Scheme. Statistics on woodland creation are held in the Forestry Grant Scheme’s (FGS) publication library and by Forest

Research. The Estimate of the Area of New Woodland Creation Planted in Scotland by council area shows that in the FGS 2020 Claim Year for West Lothian there were 47.3 hectares planted (caveated as ‘estimates produced using planting data provided only by Scottish Forestry and Forestry and Land Scotland, drawn from multiple sources and management systems’).

3.12 Scottish Forestry has a pilot for Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project which is based in the south of Scotland. This pilot sets out a methodology for search areas with potential for woodland creation which has relevance to the Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

3.13 **Ash Dieback Disease** is now endemic in Scotland and will generate replanting and re-stocking programmes. Ash is a common tree across West Lothian. Sample surveys have been carried out in relation to risk levels within the public estate and the following figures are indicative of the potential losses of Ash trees. Trees with 50% or more crown loss have little chance of survival; symptoms of ash dieback are concerning because there is no treatment. A very few mature trees have shown resilience to Ash Dieback Disease and are thus important for the future.

Summary of sample surveys conducted in areas where failing ash tree are likely to pose the most risk to people

| Location of ash trees | Number of trees in poor condition with <50% of crown remaining | Number of trees showing symptoms but with >50% crown still remaining |
|--|--|--|
| Council owned / managed trees along roads, main paths, school grounds, public open space | >12,000 | >21,000 |
| Trees on private land within falling distance of roads | >2050 | >3800 |

The population of ash trees in these areas tends to be mainly semi-mature trees with only a small proportion of large, mature trees but nevertheless will deplete the landscape of important features both now and in the future. There are many more ash trees in woodland areas, especially young ones, which have also succumbed to Ash Dieback Disease. It is the Council's intention, as funding allows, to replant trees which have to be removed with suitable alternative species, in the same location where possible. It will also be encouraging private tree owners to do likewise.

Source: WLC Tree and Woodland Team, 2022/23

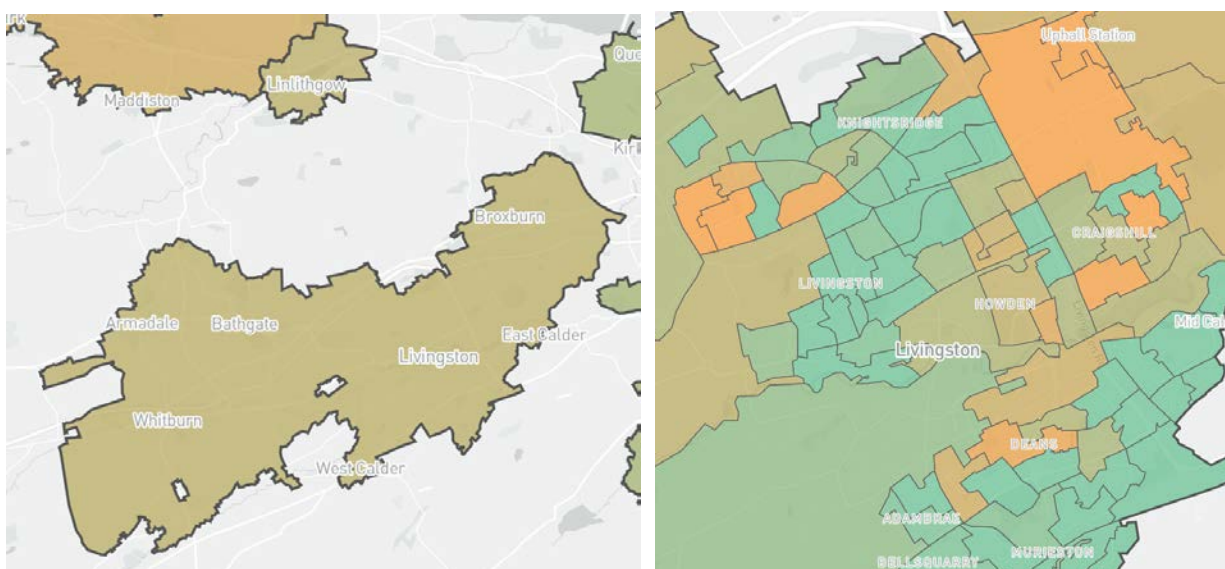
Part 4 - Tackling ‘tree inequalities’ in communities

4.1 Tree equity is defined by the Woodland Trust as the idea that all communities should have equitable access to the benefits of trees and that trees in urban areas can:

- reduce air pollution, quieten noise and keep cities shaded and cool
- improve ecosystems and boost biodiversity
- create a sense of place, beauty and heritage
- create attractive environments where businesses want to invest and people want to live, work and play
- alleviate stress, stabilise blood pressure, ease anxiety and depression, and provide opportunity for healthy, active lifestyles.

- 4.2 The Tree Equity Score tool calculates a Tree Equity Score out of 100 for urban neighbourhoods. As a whole, West Lothian urban areas have a Tree Equity Score of 83. The lower the score, the greater the need for trees – a score of 100 means tree equity has been achieved. The tool shows that the UK neighbourhoods with the highest income levels have more than double the tree cover per person than less affluent neighbourhoods, and, subsequently, have nearly 20% less of the toxic air pollutant nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- 4.3 For the proposed plan and the Forestry and Woodland Strategy, the tool can assist in assessing and prioritise areas for good tree management and further planting, subject to cross checking with land use.
- 4.4 The overview map below for West Lothian urban areas shows the following composite scores for tree equity all at 83, a good score for tree equity. Zooming in further on the sample map for Livingston reveals differing scores between neighbourhoods, with parts of Knightsridge and Mid Calder scoring 100, while the darkest orange tints show scores in the 50s at, for example, Uphall Station and Craigshill.

Figure 2 – Tree Equity Scores for West Lothian: Overview and Livingston



Source: Tree Equity Map UK, Woodland Trust website

Part 5 – Tree Carbon Sequestration

- 5.1 The council has carried out a **Natural Capital Assessment (2023)** to quantify the benefits that each habitat provides. This assessment used the baseline habitat map to model eleven ecosystem services:
- carbon storage
 - carbon sequestration
 - air purification
 - noise regulation
 - local climate (urban heat) regulation
 - pollination capacity
 - water flow regulation
 - water quality (sediment yield and nutrient deposition) regulation

- food production
- timber production
- accessible nature.

- 5.2 For every ecosystem service, the current capacity of the natural environment to deliver that service was mapped. These ‘heat maps’ show broadly which habitats/areas are currently giving the most benefit for each function i.e. which areas best regulate water flow, could store the most carbon (over the long term), sequester the most carbon (year on year), etc.
- 5.3 Woodlands are shown as important for the provision of many ecosystem services (e.g. carbon sequestration, air quality, local climate and noise regulation, pollination, water flow and quality). The highest levels of tree cover lie mostly to the south and west of the region. Land owned by the Council sequesters (takes in) carbon across the whole landholding with an average of 2.4 tCO₂e/ha/yr (metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per hectare per annum); this is because woodland is common on West Lothian owned land.

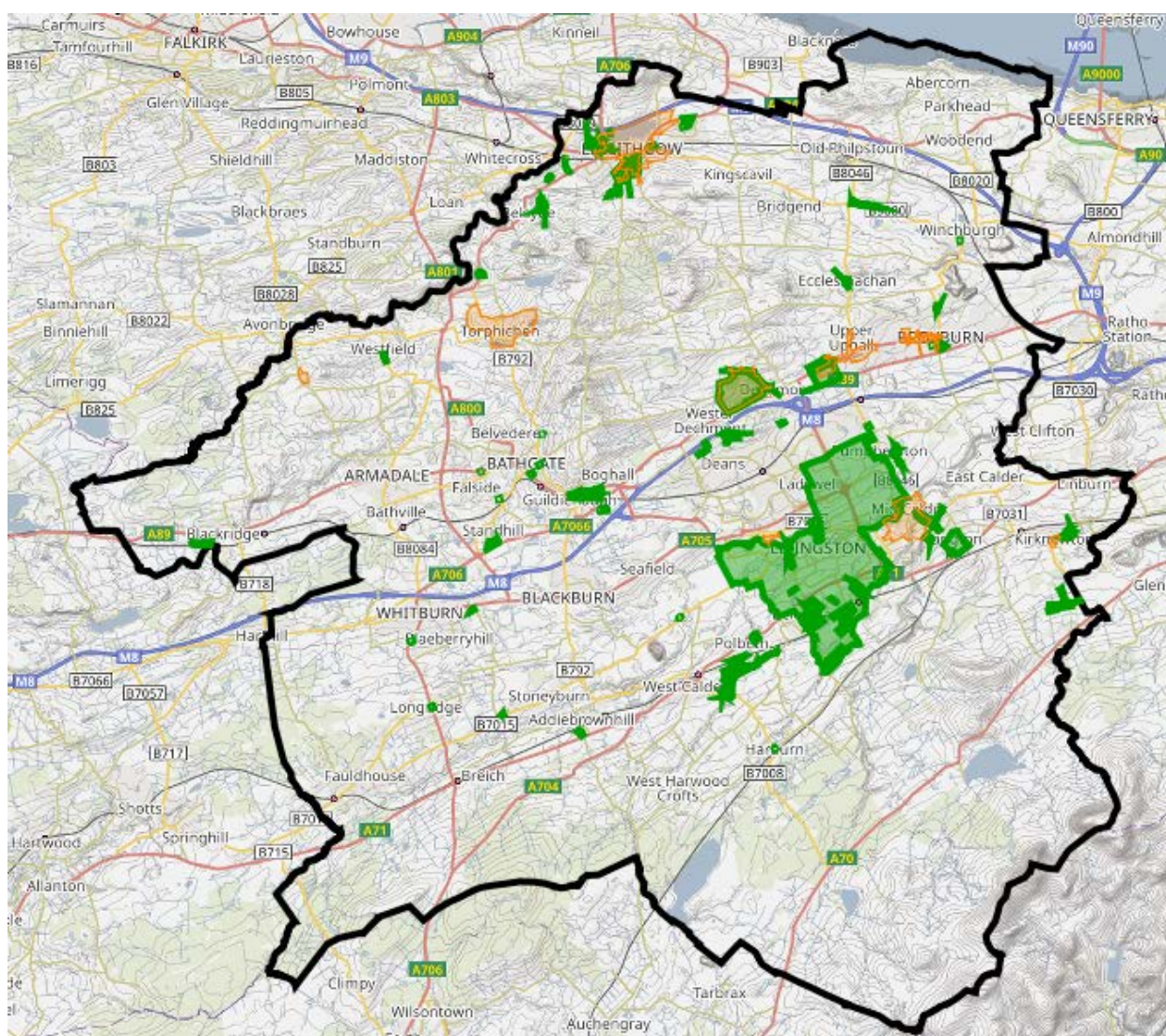
Part 6 – Tree Protection

- 6.1 The West Lothian LDP1 policies **ENV9 Woodland, Forestry, Trees and Hedgerows** and **ENV10 Protection of Urban Woodlands** presume against development adversely affecting woodlands unless there is a proven locational need and where a sustainable environmental gain through replacement and additional tree planting appropriate to the area is provided, and, accords with the Scottish Government’s “Control of Woodland Removal” policy (2009) and the Forestry Commission Scotland’s policy “The right tree in the right place” (2010). For larger or commercial proposals for felling, Scottish Forestry manages the regulatory procedures for permissions and assesses exemptions.
- 6.2 **Nationally designated** sites in West Lothian include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which are protected for the special interest of their habitats, flora, fauna, geology or geomorphology. SSSIs are designated by NatureScot under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, in order to protect the special interest of the site from damage or deterioration. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally or recklessly damage the protected natural features of an SSSI. SSSIs offer protection to trees through requiring that any works proposed to subject trees must be applied for to Nature Scot to seek consent.
- 6.3 Of the 16 SSSIs in West Lothian, five as are set out below specifically relate to woodland.

| Name | Location | Special Features |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| Calder Wood | Mid Calder | Upland Oak woodland and valley fen |
| Carribber Glen | nr. Linlithgow | Upland mixed Ash woodland |
| Hermand Birchwood | West Calder | Upland birch woodland |
| Linhouse Valley | Murieston | Habitat patchwork: lowland acid and neutral grasslands, species rich valley fen and upland mixed ash woodland |
| Philpstoun Muir | Philpstoun | Upland mixed ash woodland |

- 6.4 West Lothian Council and its predecessors have been making **Tree Preservation Orders** since the 1960s, now under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The Council digitised and assessed all TPOs on its TPO register for legal effectiveness in 2019. There are some 80 TPOs in West Lothian with some older TPOs having multiple parts or are large in size. Permission to prune or fell trees covered by a TPO or conservation area is required from the Council's Development Management Section.
- 6.5 The Council also has the power to designate **Conservation Areas** under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. There are eleven conservation areas in West Lothian, all with tree protection interest; the most recent being Gowanbank which was made expressly for tree protection reasons. Prior to undertaking pruning work or felling trees within a conservation area at least 6 weeks' notice is to be given to the Council's Development Management Section. Any existing trees which could be affected by development have to be considered as part of the decision on a planning application, under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Council's Development Management Section has the responsibility that measures are taken by the developer to ensure that trees to be retained are not damaged.
- 6.6 Trees can also be protected by planning condition, and title deeds may also indicate protective covenants.

Figure 3: Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas in West Lothian



Part 7 – West Lothian Forestry and Woodland Strategy

- 7.1 The current strategy covering West Lothian is the **Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2012 – 2017 (2012)** which sets out a spatial framework for woodland expansion which aims to increase woodland cover across Edinburgh and the Lothians from 13% to between 17% and 19% of the total land area. Between 1994 and 2023, woodland cover has increased from 14% to 21%.
- 7.2 Scotland’s Forestry Strategy (2019-2029) aims to have 21% woodland cover across Scotland by 2032. This is defined as land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% - or having the potential to achieve this. Woodland includes native and non-native trees; semi-natural and plantation areas. Woodland cover in West Lothian is currently defined as woodland habitat not woodland cover area.
- 7.3 The council is currently preparing an updated **Forestry and Woodland Strategy (FWS)** to support the proposed plan. The aims of the FWS will be to:
- Provide the evidence base for the LDP2 spatial strategy, including the creation of its Nature Network, landscape and biodiversity designations, potential greenbelt and future allocations.
 - Define and increase West Lothian’s canopy cover (as a %) to support Scotland’s Forestry Strategy target and increase the range and diversity of forestry and woodland habitats across the region.
 - Support climate change mitigation and adaptation (including sequestration and mitigating flooding, cooling) and climate resilient planting (whether single trees or woodland/forests) and adaptability. This will include identifying cases where it is appropriate to use Sitka Spruce and other tree species for carbon storage and sequestration.
 - Mitigate biodiversity loss and habitat and support the creation of West Lothian’s nature network.
 - Tackle ‘tree inequalities’ in communities to support health and wellbeing and improve air quality.
 - Ensure new developments support climate change and biodiversity by increasing tree cover in urban environments and create attractive urban and countryside environments. Improve residential design in respect of existing or new woodlands including access and buffers/setbacks. Ensure that landscape plans for new sites do not include invasive species.
 - Support economic growth in terms of the economic and employment aspects of trees and woodlands and the use of sustainable timber and timber products - sustainable and low carbon buildings, and avoidance of offshoring the depletion of forest resources.
 - Support engagement in the creation, management and use of woodlands.
 - Ensure satisfactory maintenance of forests and woodland, require sustainable forest/woodland management, and improving the safety and condition of woodlands. Ensure compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) which acts as a foundation for sustainable forestry in the UK and links international obligations on sustainable forest management with

policies on implementation. This will include addressing tree stock issues: overly large stock used with higher failure rates; often imported trees sold locally; provenance needs to be appropriate for climate change.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

This will summarise the steps taken by the planning authority to seek the views of all relevant stakeholders. This will also summarise the views expressed, and explain how they have been taken account of in the Evidence Report. (hyperlinks to records of engagement may be added where appropriate)

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

This will include statements from stakeholders highlighting their agreement or the areas they dispute

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

What the evidence means for the plan, e.g. the spatial strategy, the Delivery Programme or plan preparation.

A Forestry and Woodland Strategy requires to be prepared to support the proposed plan.

Based on the evidence, the proposed plan will be required to:

1. Protect trees, not limited to those within national or locally designated areas, covered by a TPO, conservation area, for carbon sequestration or as part of West Lothian's Nature Network.
2. Support tree planting across West Lothian to underpin the national target of increasing forest and woodland canopy cover in Scotland to 21% of the total area by 2032. The aim of this is to support climate change mitigation and adaption (including sequestration and mitigating flooding, cooling) and climate resilience planting (whether single trees or woodland/forests) and adaptability.
3. Tackle 'tree inequalities' in communities to support health and wellbeing and improve air quality.
4. Ensure new developments support climate change and biodiversity by increasing tree cover in urban environments and to create attractive urban and countryside environments. Improve residential design in respect of existing or new woodlands including access and buffers. Ensure that landscape plans for new sites do not include invasive species.
5. Support economic growth in terms of the economic and employment aspects of trees and woodlands and the use of sustainable timber and timber products - sustainable and low carbon buildings and avoidance of offshoring the depletion of forest resources.
6. Ensure satisfactory maintenance of forests and woodland, require sustainable forest/woodland management, and improving the safety and condition of woodlands. Ensure compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) acts as a foundation for sustainable forestry in the UK and links international obligations on sustainable forest management with policies on implementation. This will include addressing tree stock issues: overly large stock used with higher failure rates; often imported trees sold locally; provenance needs to be appropriate for climate change.