

**WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 2025
MARCH 2025**



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WEST LoTHIAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 2025

What is a Development Plan Scheme?

A Development Plan Scheme (DPS) sets out the timetable for preparing and reviewing a Local Development Plan (LDP) and sets out what is likely to be involved at each stage. It also includes a *Participation Statement* outlining when and how consultation on the plan will take place.

As a planning authority, West Lothian Council is required by planning law to prepare a DPS at least annually. The previous DPS was published in March 2024 and is now replaced by this 2025 edition of the West Lothian Development Plan Scheme.

What is a Development Plan?

Development plans set out how places will change into the future, including the long-term vision for where development should and shouldn't happen. Development plans show where new homes and workplaces will be built, how services and facilities such as schools and travel links will be provided, and identify the places and buildings we value and want to protect.

The planning system in Scotland is 'plan-led', meaning that decisions are made in accordance with the 'Development Plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Current Development Plan for West Lothian

The adopted 'development plan' for West Lothian consists of:

- [National Planning Framework 4, \(NPF4\)](#) [Adopted 13th February 2023]
- [West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018](#) (LDP1) [Adopted 4 September 2018]
- [Supplementary Guidance](#) associated with LDP1

The council has also prepared and adopted a suite of [Planning Guidance](#) associated with West Lothian's adopted LDP. These do not have the elevated status as being a part of the statutory 'development plan', however they will continue to be material considerations and will be taken into consideration when assessing planning applications.

Planning authorities must prepare and adopt a new Local Development Plan by no later than May 2028.

Local Places Plans (LPPs)

In July 2023, an invitation was issued to known community bodies to prepare Local Place Plans. The Council has received seven LPPs, for Linlithgow, Bathgate, Mid Calder, Murieston, West Calder & Harburn, Blackburn and Newton & Woodend, all of which have been registered.

The Local Development Plan Process

The council is preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP2) to replace the current LDP, adopted in 2018. This 'new style' plan will address a wide range of policy issues and guide future development within West Lothian for a ten-year period starting from when it is adopted.

The Evidence Report

The purpose of this stage is to gather the evidence required to prepare the plan. The ER aims to clearly inform *what* to plan for before the Proposed Plan looks at *where* development should take place. The ER will provide the baseline data to ensure LDP2 is based on sound evidence to inform a deliverable, place-based and people-focused LDP.

In preparing the Evidence Report, West Lothian Council has sought views from the public, Community Councils, children and young people, disabled people, gypsies & travellers, Key Agencies e.g. SEPA and other stakeholders.

Although the focus is on evidence, the Evidence Report is required to make an important decision for LDP2, by setting out a Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) for the West Lothian Council area.

The Evidence Report requires to be approved by the council prior to submission to Scottish Ministers for the Gate Check.

Call for Ideas

The Call for Ideas is an opportunity for key stakeholders, including members of the public, community groups and landowners and developers, to suggest ideas that can be appraised for whether they should form part of the Proposed Plan.

Gate Check

The purpose of the Gate Check is to consider and determine whether the Council has collected sufficient evidence to prepare LDP2. The Gate Check is carried out by appointed Reporter(s) from the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). It will focus on areas where Evidence is disputed and whether engagement requirements have been met.

Proposed Plan

To prepare the Proposed Plan, information from the Evidence Report, Local Place Plans and the Call for Ideas will be used. These will be used to develop a spatial (development) strategy and set out key policy approaches. A delivery programme will be published alongside the Proposed Plan setting out key infrastructure actions.

The Proposed Plan will differ in content and style from the adopted LDP1. Reforms to the Planning system mean that LDP2 should not replicate policies in NPF4 and focus more on local circumstances where appropriate. LDP2 will be a more visual and map-based document and contain greater information on what is likely to happen at particular sites and localities.

Once the plan is published, there will be a 12-week consultation period to allow representations from everyone including all stakeholders and interested parties on the Proposed Plan to be submitted to the Council.

Following the close of the period for representations on the Proposed Plan, the council may make modifications to the plan to take account of representations and consultation responses. A Modification Report will set out any modifications made and explain the reasons for making them, and for not making certain changes.

The Proposed Plan will then need to be approved by the council before being submitted to Scottish Ministers, who will examine any unresolved representations via a formal Examination.

Examination

The examination process is carried out by a person appointed by Scottish Ministers, (a Reporter from the Scottish Government's Planning and Appeals Division, DPEA). It provides the opportunity for independent consideration of any issues raised during the formal consultation on the Proposed Plan that have not been resolved through modifications.

The Reporter will also consider if the consultation and involvement of the public in the preparation of the plan meets or exceeds the requirements of the Participation Statement.

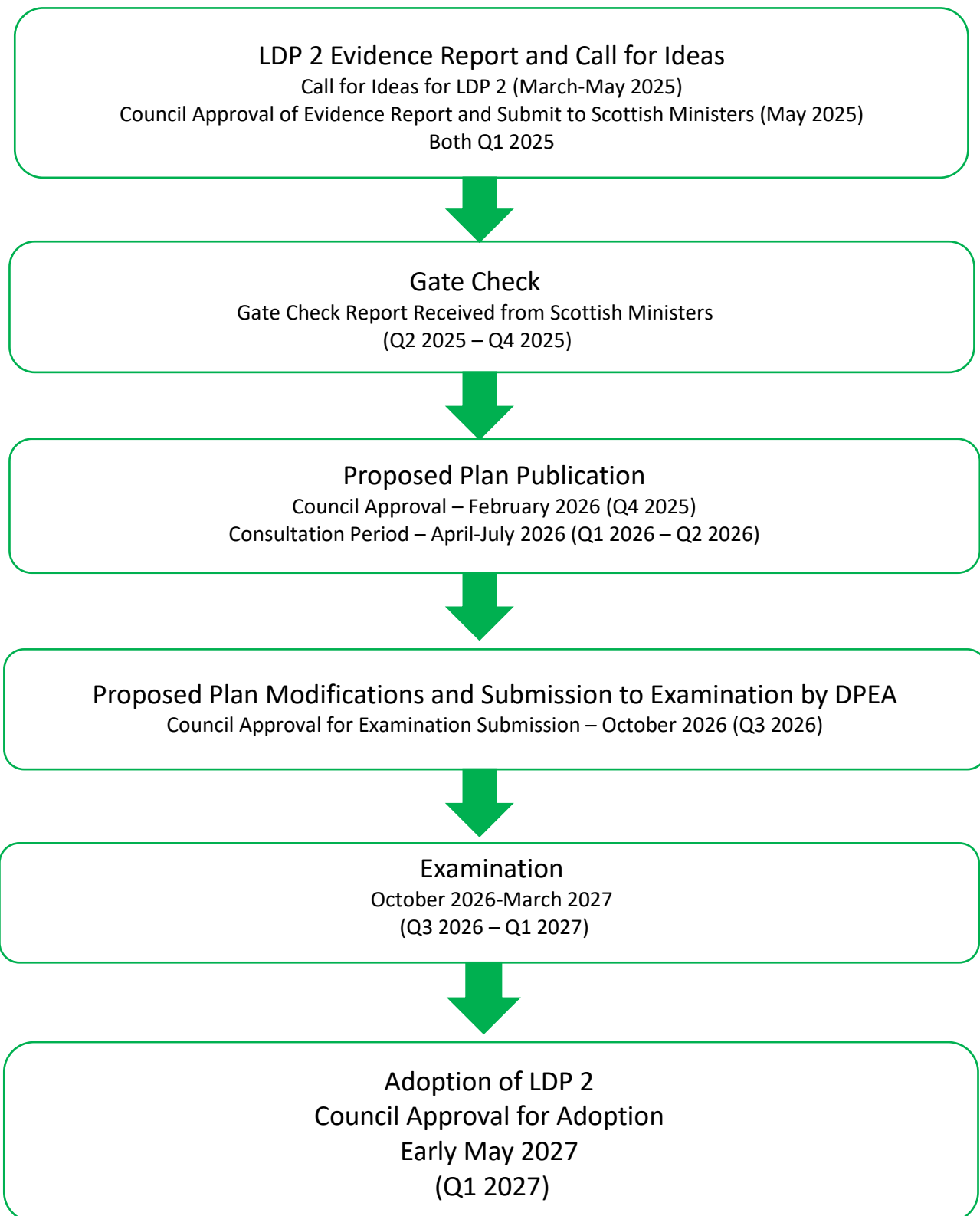
The format of the Examination is unknown and it is the Reporter who will determine the form the Examination will take. This may be through written submissions or hearing sessions on specific matters.

Upon receipt of the Examination Report the council must accept the Reporter's recommendations, (except in some very limited circumstances) and it will modify the Proposed Plan as directed.

Adoption and Delivery

Once the examination is complete and any changes have been incorporated the council will proceed to adopt the Local Development Plan, which alongside NPF4 will be the basis against which to make decisions on planning applications. The Delivery Programme setting out actions to deliver the necessary infrastructure for LDP 2 will also be adopted at this stage. At this point, the current Local Development Plan (LDP 1) will be revoked.

West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Timetable



Changes from the West Lothian Development Plan Scheme 2024

Changes have been made to the timetable identified in Development Plan Scheme 2024. The changes to the timetable are set out below:

DPS 2024	PLAN PREPARATION STAGE	DPS 2025
Ongoing	Preparation of Evidence Report & Early engagement Call for Ideas	Ongoing Q4 - March 2025 - May 2025
Q3 2024 (October to December)	Council approval of Evidence Report	Q1 - May 2025
Q3 2024	Submission to Scottish Ministers and 'gate check' process	Q1 – June 2025
Q4 2024	Preparation of Proposed Plan	Q1 - June 2025 – Q4 - January 2026
Q3 2025	Council approval and publication of the Proposed Plan	Q4 - February 2026

The changes are as follows:

The date for submission of the Evidence Report has been rescheduled from December 2024 (the date identified in DPS 2024) to May / June 2025. This is due to a necessary review of the LDP2 project plan precipitated by:

- the additional demands of NPF4 on development planning and the timing of emerging supporting guidance, and,
- the time taken to collate the required evidence for the Evidence Report and the statutory requirement to engage on this evidence base.

DPS 2024 identifies time for a 'Call for Ideas' exercise. The Call for Ideas has now been scheduled to commence in March 2025 for an 8-week period that will take place in parallel with the finalisation of the Evidence Report.

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The Evidence Report requires to go through a 'gate check' carried out by the DPEA before the council can publish the proposed plan. Therefore, the publication of the Proposed Plan for public consultation has been rescheduled to April 2026. Following publication and approval by council for consultation there will be a 12-week period until July 2026 to make representations.

Following any necessary modifications to the Proposed Plan it is intended to submit the plan for Examination by the DPEA in October 2026.

Following the completion of the Examination process it is intended to adopt LDP2 by May 2027.

Participation Statement

The Participation Statement sets out how, when and with whom the Council will consult and engage on when preparing its Development Plan. Prior to adoption of LDP 2, at the Examination stage of plan production, Reporters from the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA), appointed by Scottish Ministers, will review the Council's engagement activities to see that they match what the Council said it would do in the Participation Statement.

Evidence Report – engagement



Since the previous DPS was published in March 2024 a total of 66 meetings have been attended by officers relating to gathering evidence to feed into the Evidence Report. These meetings have included workshops, site visits and online calls with key stakeholders, such as NHS Lothian, SEPA, community councils, landowners and developers and internal council services.

A 7-week engagement exercise was undertaken from January 7th to February 28th on 28 draft ‘topic schedules’ and 8 background papers that form the draft evidence base that will be finalised for the Evidence Report.

Planning legislation puts a duty on the council to engage with a number of groups on the draft evidence base for the Evidence Report. These are noted below along with how we engaged with these groups:

Group	How we engaged
Community councils	Attendance at Joint Forum of Community Councils and circulation of evidence engagement information and DPS survey to all community councils.
Public at large	Citizen panel survey – ‘Your Place’ survey. All residents signed up to the mailing list and newsletter were informed of the evidence engagement and preparation of the DPS.
Key agencies	Workshop with key agencies.
Disabled people	Attendance at WLC Access Committee
Gypsy travellers	Liaison with/attendance at WLC Travellers Forum.
Young people	Engagement exercises at Linlithgow Academy, James Young High School and Winchburgh Primary School.
Older people	Engagement exercise information with emphasis on specialist housing for older people. circulated to the email list for the WLC Senior People’s Forum.

In addition, other stakeholders, such as Homes for Scotland have been engaged with on relevant topics in the draft evidence base.

Future engagement activities

The table below sets out the next stages of the preparation of LDP 2 and how we will engage with stakeholders at these stages:

Engagement activity	How we will engage	Timescale
Call for Ideas	8-week consultation period. Invitations to contribute to the Call for Ideas will be sent to Community Councils, the LDP 2 mailing list and groups who were engaged with on the evidence base that are noted above. The website will contain guidance for how local people and community bodies and developers and landowners can submit proposals. Officers to attend relevant meetings.	March 2025 – May 2025 (Q1 2025)

Engagement for preparation of Proposed Plan	Engagement with relevant stakeholders, including groups who were engaged with on the evidence base that are noted above.	June 2025 – January 2026
Publication of Proposed Plan	<p>12-week consultation period.</p> <p>Engagement to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public drop in events across West Lothian. - Notification of neighbours adjacent significant developments. - Publication of Proposed Plan through council’s social media channels. - Placement of Proposed Plan and information in all libraries. - Notification of the LDP 2 mailing list and groups who were engaged with on the evidence base that are noted above. <p>Officers to attend relevant meetings with interested parties.</p>	April 2026 – July 2026
Modification of Proposed Plan (if required)	<p>Liaison with interested parties regarding changes to the Proposed Plan and resolving objections to it.</p> <p>A Modification Report will be published along with the Proposed Plan when council approval is sought for submitting the plan for Examination.</p>	July 2026 – October 2026
Examination into unresolved objections (if required)	<p>This process is led by DPEA.</p> <p>All representees to the Proposed Plan and the LDP 2 mailing list will be notified of the Proposed Plan submission to the DPEA for examination.</p>	October 2026 – March 2027
Adoption	<p>No direct engagement at this stage.</p> <p>Interested parties will be notified of LDP 2 being adopted.</p>	May 2027

If you have any questions specifically relating to this Development Plan Scheme or to the preparation of LDP 2 generally please;

- visit the Local Development Plan website at: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/developmentplans>
- email us at: wldp@westlothian.gov.uk
- phone us on: [01506 280000](tel:01506280000)

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- write to us at: [Development Planning & Environment, Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF](#)