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West Lothian Local Development Plan  
*Proposed Plan*  
*an easy read guide*



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## West Lothian Local Development Plan Proposed Plan *an easy read guide*

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## The Current Development Plan

The development plan is, the *Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland* (SDP 1) and the *West Lothian Local Plan* (WLLP).

SDP 1 was prepared by the South East Scotland Strategic Development Planning Authority (SESplan) a partnership of six local authorities including Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, Fife, Scottish Borders and West Lothian and sets out a long term (20 years) land use planning strategy indicating, in broad terms, where future development will be located and what is needed to deliver it. The plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2013.

The WLLP was prepared by West Lothian Council and was adopted in January 2009. It was the first district wide local plan for West Lothian and has been the main policy document for guiding development and for making decisions on development proposals over the intervening years.

Both plans are now in the process of being replaced, as part of a cyclical review of the development plan.

## A New Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

SESplan completed the first stage of the process with the publication of a *Main Issues Report* in summer 2015. A consultation period ran during the summer months of 2015 and all responses received will be considered and used to inform the next stage of the process. The intention is to complete the replacement of SDP1 in 2017/2018. Progress on what is to be known as SDP 2 can be monitored on the [SESplan website](#) which also has links to all of the relevant documents.

## A New Local Development Plan (LDP)

West Lothian Council is at an advanced stage in replacing the WLLP and it is anticipated that a new *local development plan* (LDP) will be adopted by late 2016. Preparation of LDPs is a statutory requirement under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 and Development Planning Regulations 2008 and Scottish Government, through *Scottish Planning Policy 2014* (SPP 2014), promotes a plan-led system to assist in the delivery of development that contributes towards economic growth.

The LDP is required to conform with the approved SDP and seeks to implement requirements on a more detailed site-specific basis than exists within SDPs. The LDP is also informed by Scottish Government legislation and policy documents including *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP 2014) and the *National Planning Framework 3* (NPF3) and reflects the council's corporate priorities as set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and *Corporate Plan*. The *Proposed Plan* is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The *Main Issues Report* (MIR), the first formal stage in producing the LDP, was published in August 2014 for consultation. It focused on eight key issues, i.e., economic development; community regeneration; housing growth, delivery and sustainable housing locations/areas of restraint; infrastructure requirements and delivery; town centres and retailing; the natural and historic environment; climate change and renewable energy; and waste and minerals. The MIR stimulated debate and provided a vehicle for suggesting and testing possible development sites. Through the public engagement process the council received in excess of 250 representations and these were reported to the council's Development and Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel in April 2015.



Having had regard to these representations, the council has since published the *Proposed Plan*. This sets out the council's settled view as to where most new development should take place (and where it shouldn't). It gives an indication as to when development is anticipated to be delivered, informs decisions on investment in infrastructure e.g. schools and roads, and sets out the policies that will be used to inform decisions on planning applications. It will be reviewed every five years to ensure an up to date plan is in place to guide future development in the area.

The LDP covers the ten year period from 2014 to 2024 but it also sets out a longer term planning strategy for West Lothian. The plan will be supported by a suite of guidance, some of which will form part of the new development plan from the outset and some which will be brought forward at a later date. The Council Executive approved the draft *Proposed Plan* at a meeting on 15 September 2015 and at the same time agreed to it being the subject of a six week consultation exercise commencing on 12 October and ending on 22 November 2015.

The current timetable for preparing the LDP is set below:

Preparation of *Main Issues Report* (**autumn 2010 - summer 2014**)

Publication of *Main Issues Report* and Environmental Report  
(**summer/autumn 2014**)

Publish formal responses to *Main Issues Report* (**spring 2015**)

Publication of *Proposed Plan* including *Environmental Report* and Action Programme  
(**autumn/winter 2015**)

Submission of *Proposed Plan* to Scottish Ministers for Examination (**spring 2016**)

Examination of representations outstanding  
(**within 12 months of plan being published**)



## The Vision

The LDP sets out a ‘vision’ for the future development of West Lothian. It seeks to promote diversity and growth within the West Lothian economy and create a sustainable environment. The vision reflects comments received to the MIR consultation and the terms of the Proposed Plan and states that :

*“By 2024 West Lothian’s population will have grown and an improved employment position within a more diversified local economy will have been established. There will be a greater choice of housing options available supported by the full range of education, community, health, retail, recreation and leisure facilities and a network of open spaces. The area will enjoy better transport connectivity with more options for sustainable travel choices and more active travel routes. Development will take place in a way that is sustainable, meeting the challenges of climate change and renewable energy, and sensitive to the area’s many built and natural heritage assets. At the same time development will be used as a vehicle to help regenerate communities and for improving the quality of life for all living in West Lothian.”*

## The Spatial Strategy

The LDP spatial strategy as set out in the Proposed Plan continues to focus development on the Core Development Areas (CDAs) of Armadale, East Broxburn/ Uphall/Winchburgh and Livingston and the Almond Valley (i.e. Calderwood, East Calder and West Livingston). In addition, the Proposed Plan provides continued support for the strategic allocation at Heartlands, Whitburn and the former Bangour Village Hospital at Dechmont. A number of smaller development sites across the plan area are proposed to meet the SDP development land requirements in full.

Sustainability factors have been integral to determining the spatial strategy, as well as individual decisions on the development sites which have been identified where the aim is to:

- promote development in the most sustainable locations where its impact can be minimised;
- reduce the need to travel;
- prioritise sustainable transport modes;
- maximise the use of brownfield land; and
- conserve and enhance environmental resources.

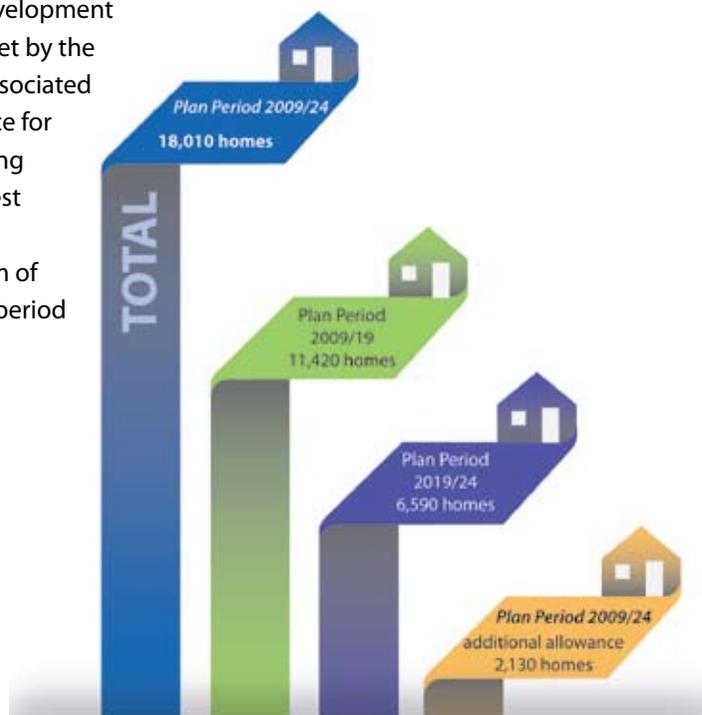


## Housing Land

A key component of the spatial strategy is the need to allocate land for housing development. In order to provide adequate land to meet future housing needs, and having regard to housing projections and the Scottish Government's policy of providing a generous supply of land for housing, the key housing objectives for the LDP are to:

- direct growth to places where it will support sustainable development goals, community regeneration, and maintain and enhance the character and identity of towns and villages;
- ensure that necessary social and physical infrastructure accompanies growth;
- allow for a range of house types and sizes across all sectors;
- achieve and maintain a minimum of 5 years effective housing land supply in each of the sectors identified in the current Housing Needs and Demand Assessment;
- have regard to significantly increased demand for rented housing; and
- deliver affordable housing, particularly in the areas of highest demand.

The scale of housing development proposed in the LDP is set by the approved SDP and its associated Supplementary Guidance for Housing (SG). The housing land requirement for West Lothian is identified as providing for a minimum of 18,010 houses over the period 2009 to 2024.



The LDP allocates sufficient land to satisfy this requirement and also provides for accommodating a generosity allowance of 10% in excess of this figure to address the requirements of SPP 2014. A total of 19,811 homes are therefore to be accommodated. While this is less than initially suggested in the MIR, it is still comfortably above the base requirement set out in SDP1. In some instances sites will deliver beyond the plan period thus introducing an element of future proofing.

It is acknowledged that over the initial plan period from 2014 to 2019 it will be difficult to meet the housing requirement due principally to infrastructure constraints in the education sector which can only be overcome with the delivery of new school accommodation primarily at secondary school level. It is unlikely that the additional capacity necessary can be in place much before 2019. The LDP also makes it clear that the scale of development required to meet SDP requirements can only be delivered by a step change in the level of housing completions by the development industry and delivery of infrastructure required to support development. There is a particular onus on the development industry to increase delivery rates if supply is to be maintained and SDP requirements met. Whilst the LDP has aimed to focus on the release of brownfield land to meet development requirements there will be a need for some greenfield release.

Since publication of the MIR and adoption of the SESplan Supplementary Guidance on Housing, a new *Housing Need and Demand Assessment* (or HoNDA) has been published which will impact on housing land requirements for West Lothian. Whilst the LDP must comply with SDP 1, the new HoNDA which has been prepared to inform SPD 2 will inform future iterations of the LDP and housing land requirements.

In terms of supporting policies the *Proposed Plan* sets out an approach for maintaining a five year housing land supply, infill/windfall development and residential care and supported accommodation in recognition of future community needs.

A revised and updated approach to affordable housing is set out within a policy in the LDP and supporting supplementary guidance is to be prepared. That approach updates existing guidance and to reflect that the demand for affordable housing is anticipated to change over the plan period.



## Linlithgow

A key consideration for the *Proposed Plan* has been the approach to be taken towards Linlithgow. It has been decided to remove the area of restraint which had previously applied in order to allow for some development to take place following a sequential approach to the release of sites. Several sites have been identified.

Any residential development in Linlithgow will, however, be dependent upon the delivery of infrastructure, particularly a new non-denominational secondary school at Winchburgh and, as such, development in the town is not anticipated to come forward in the short term. Development would also be dependent upon the delivery of infrastructure and the need to address environmental constraints including air quality.

The approach to Linlithgow has been informed by Transport Modelling which has concluded that there is scope for some development with no net detriment to the existing transport network. Supplementary Guidance will, however, be required to ensure that the cumulative impacts of transport associated with development can be appropriately addressed. Contributions will also be required for other infrastructure, principally education.

## Employment Land

To accord with SDP 1, the LDP provides for a range and choice of marketable sites to cater for future needs and to support the council's wider *Economic Strategy* including 123 hectares of strategic employment land. It continues to support sites previously identified for economic use in the WLLP, in particular the CDA allocations and the strategic allocation at Heartlands. In addition, a range of mixed use allocations have been identified to cater for uses which do not readily sit well in traditional employment locations for example, the former abattoir at Whitburn Road, Bathgate. A new employment site is also proposed at Balgornie Farm, Whitburn.

The proposed policy approach in support of economic development provides for protection of employment land allocations whilst also introducing an element of flexibility within the traditional industrial estates of East Mains, Broxburn; Deans, Livingston; Houston, Livingston; Whitehill Industrial Estate, Bathgate; Whiteside, Bathgate and Murraysgate, Whitburn, reflecting their changing character and to assist in job creation and the refurbishment of such areas. The Enterprise Area at Broxburn/Livingston is also recognised and a policy approach is set out to support development within this allocation. To promote more sustainable patterns of working a policy is also proposed to support small business start-ups and working from home having regard to residential amenity. Tourism is also recognised as contributing to economic growth.

## Infrastructure Requirements

Crucial to delivery of the development strategy is the requirement for developer contributions to address infrastructure constraints, principally to address capacity issues within the education estate. Education capacity will remain a key issue until the delivery of new secondary school accommodation in support of the CDAs. Key infrastructure requirements are set out in Appendices to the *Proposed Plan*. In addition, the *Action Programme* details the responsible authority to lead on infrastructure projects and other proposals identified in the *Proposed Plan*.



## Policy Approach and Supplementary Guidance

The *Proposed Plan* sets out a range of policies which will guide development proposals over the plan period. These cover topics set around the key areas of employment, housing, infrastructure requirements, town centres, the natural and built environment, climate change and renewables, and waste and minerals. The approach taken rationalises the policies contained in the WLLP as well as reflecting the most up to date policy guidance from Scottish Government.

The policies set out the main considerations to be taken into account in assessing planning applications. The policies have had regard to the requirements of SPP 2014 and other policy documents, translating and presenting these requirements within a West Lothian context. The policies will be used to inform decisions on planning applications.

In addition, the *Proposed Plan* sets out requirements for Supplementary Guidance (SG) in support of the development strategy. Over the course of the plan period current SG will be reviewed and updated and where appropriate rationalised. There will be a requirement to formally consult on the contents of the SG. Where the SG is to be taken forward as statutory guidance this will require to be forwarded to the Scottish Government for approval.

## Supporting Documents

The *Proposed Plan* is supported by a series of documents which are required by statute as part of the preparation and supporting evidence for the LDP. Principal amongst these is the *Transport Appraisal* which provides an assessment of the sites proposed to come forward to deliver the development strategy. The assessment also identifies any mitigation required to address transport issues. Mitigation measures are also reflected in Appendices to the Plan and includes traffic signalling at points on the network to reduce queuing and new slip roads on the M9.

An *Environmental Report (SEA)*, *Habitats Regulation Appraisal*, *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* and *Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment* have also been prepared and form part of the consultation documents on the Proposed Plan.

The *Proposed Plan* has also been informed by the *West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review (LLDR)*. The LLDR sets out an updated approach to landscape designations to reflect the terms of SPP 2014 and is consistent with SNH guidance. A single tier of new local landscape designations called Special Landscape Areas have replaced previously designated Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and Areas of Special Landscape Control (ASLC).

## Next Steps

The Proposed LDP will be published for consultation over a six week period. This will commence on 12 October 2015 and close on 22 November 2015. A series of consultation events will be running across West Lothian during October and November 2015, details of which are set out below.

PUBLIC SESSIONS	
Wednesday 21 October, 10am-8pm	Civic Centre Reception
Wednesday 28 October, 10am-8pm	Reception area, Bathgate Partnership Centre
Monday 2 November, 10am-8pm	Education Room, Burgh Halls
Thursday 5 November, 10am-8pm	Reception area, Fauldhouse Partnership Centre
Monday 9 November, 10am-8pm	Reception area, Strathbrock Partnership Centre

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SESSIONS	
Monday 26 October, 7pm-9pm	Conference Room 3, Civic Centre
Thursday 29 October, 7pm-9pm	Bathgate Partnership Centre
Wednesday 4 November, 7pm-9pm	Education Room, Burgh Halls
Wednesday 11 November, 7pm-9pm	Conference Room 3, Civic Centre

During this time representations supporting or disagreeing with any part of the Plan can be submitted to the council. The consultation will be advertised in the local press and community councils and parties who have already engaged in the LDP process will be notified. When the consultation period has ended all of the representations will be considered and if as a result significant changes are proposed to the plan, a modified version will require to be published for a minimum consultation period of six weeks prior to submission to the Scottish Ministers. If no significant changes are proposed a summary of any unresolved representations must be prepared and submitted to Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers will appoint a Reporter to hold an Examination to consider these objections and the Reporter will provide recommendations to the council and the Scottish Ministers on changes that should be made to the plan. The council is obliged to take on board these recommendations before proceeding to adopt the plan.

## How To Respond

If you wish to make representations on the Proposed Plan (or associated documents including an Environmental Report (SEA), Habitats Regulation Appraisal, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment), you should do so during the six week period commencing on 12 October 2015. The closing date for representations is midnight, on Sunday 22 November 2015 and submissions received after this date cannot be accepted. Representations should be concise and limited to 2000 words. Representations should include all of the supporting information you wish to raise at the Examination stage as there will be no opportunity to submit any further material to the Examination unless required to do so by the Scottish Government Reporter. You can view the *Proposed Plan* on the council's website and also access the online consultation response portal. This allows you to submit representations on the Proposed Plan, whether it is seeking a change or expressing support.

## Further Information

This easy read guide is a summary document and is only intended to give a brief overview of the key topics addressed in the LDP. Those with an interest in the terms of the development plan should ensure that they consider the full terms of the *Proposed Plan* and should not rely on the terms of the easy read guide. The *Proposed Plan* can be viewed on the [council's website](#). Copies can also be inspected in Council Libraries and at our office in the Civic Centre, Livingston. If you require more information about anything connected with the LDP please contact the service, preferably by email but also via phone or post:

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