

Finalised West Lothian Local Plan 2005

Public Local Inquiry

Customer questionnaire February 2007

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED



West Lothian
Council

West Lothian Council strives to improve its service to customers.

Within Development and Regulatory Services, the Development Planning team prepares the Local Plan for West Lothian. You as a customer have been part of the Public Local Inquiry process into the Finalised West Lothian Local Plan 2005.

Thank you to those who have taken the time to complete this questionnaire. Below is a summary of comments and results received so far. The results will be used to help us improve our service to benefit our customers at future Local Plan Inquiries and similar areas of work.

If you have additional comments, or wish to fill in one of these questionnaires (you can download it from <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlcv2/onlineservices/planning/policyandplans/localplan/>), send it by FREEPOST to **Development Planning, FREEPOST SCO4880, County Buildings, High Street, Linlithgow EH49 0BR.**

THE INQUIRY PROCESS

1. Was the local plan inquiry programme officer always available and easily accessible?

strongly agree 59% agree 30% no view 11% disagree strongly disagree no comment

2. Did you find the process of submitting information to the inquiry clear?

strongly agree 47% agree 11% no view 35% disagree 7% strongly disagree no comment

3. Was there sufficient guidance given to you either by letter or on the council's website to help you through the local plan inquiry process?

strongly agree 29% agree 27% no view 41% disagree 11% strongly disagree 7% no comment

If you disagree, how can we improve the correspondence in the future (please summarise your comments below): *(sample comments below)*

- Plain English should have been used;
- A booklet should be made available of questions and answers;
- There was too much paperwork to get through;
- There was too much paper and no clarity in the documents;
- Too much paper sent without any clear guidance of why I was getting it;
- Multiple copies of letters were sent out a dreadful waste of paper and confusing for the recipient;
- Answer questions clearly, not on a photo copy that older people cannot read;
- I found it very difficult after the first letter of objection because every response was so technical.

4. Was the website clear and could you easily find the information you were searching for?

strongly agree 24% agree 35% no view 29% disagree strongly disagree 12% no comment

5. Was the venue at West Lothian College easily accessible by car/public transport and was there adequate car parking?

strongly agree 35% agree 29% no view 18% disagree strongly disagree 18% no comment

6. Did you find the West Lothian College a good venue for the inquiry?

6% strongly agree 41% agree 35% no view 6% disagree - strongly disagree 12% no comment

If you have disagreed, why do you think the college was not a good venue? (sample comments below)

- Good venue apart from the distance between some of the car parking available and the venue, particularly when having to carry paperwork;
- Functional, but pretty dull;
- Parking was difficult;
- Livingston is not a convenient venue for those living in Linlithgow;
- I did not know that West Lothian College was the venue for the inquiry.

7. If you couldn't attend a session, was the council helpful in moving your session?

47% YES 6% NO 47% no view **If no please explain why not below:**

- The programme officer was very helpful in helping to move my hearing session.

8. Did you have any difficulty in accessing information submitted to the inquiry, whether it be online at the council's website, at West Lothian College or at local libraries/CIS offices? If so please explain the problems you had: (sample comments below)

- some information did not appear to be available on line;
- It was difficult to find all the information on the website and sometimes information that was supposedly on the website was not there at all;
- poor access to the website and info had to be asked for days ahead so it would be available from staff;
- The council did not lodge documents timeously;
- sheer weight of paper and lack of a clear index;
- I have no access to the process because the steps are not explained clearly enough;
- Maps on the website were too small and not very clear;
- Website links to planning not always easy to find amongst all other West Lothian Council material;
- I found the information available in the library confusing.

9. Are there any ways we could have improved upon the level of service we provided throughout the local plan inquiry process? If so please explain below (sample comments below)

- West Lothian Council obviously tried very hard - the sheer volume of documents will always be a problem;
- The programme officer was extremely helpful, but sometimes appeared to have too much to do and therefore it would have been beneficial to have had back up for the programme officer;
- Planning staff should not have been involved in dealing with handling over information and this should be left to administration staff who would be less prejudiced;
- No, communication was very good;
- Some of the terminology was difficult to understand; Letters need to be plain English with less jargon, particularly for those that have not been involved in the process before.

10. Can you make any suggestions below as to how the council can improve our delivery of the inquiry process in the future for the benefit of our customers? (sample comments below)

- The council needs to allocate additional staff resources to the overall local plan process. It was obvious that the planning officers involved were over worked.
- Making information available to the 'man in the street'. Very few members of the public have an idea about what has been going on.
- I have found the whole process totally confusing, the amount of paperwork sent to me was overwhelming. All I wanted to do was lodge my objections to houses being built nearby.