

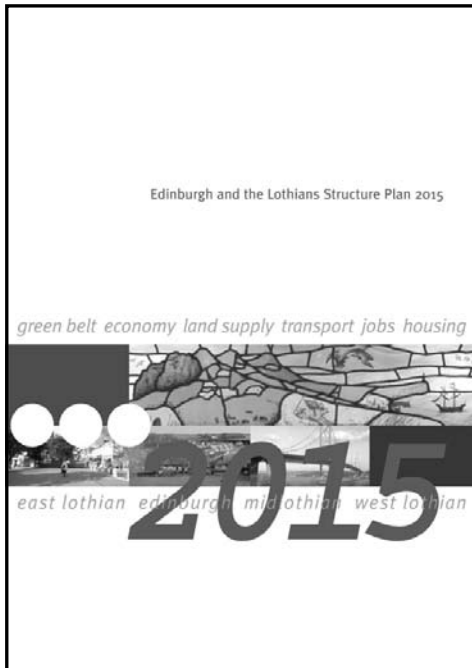
Chapter 2 Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

2.1 The local plan takes a balanced approach to accommodating development whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. The strategy seeks to:

- implement the requirements of the Edinburgh & the Lothians Structure Plan 2015 (E&LSP);
- maintain the development momentum that has revitalised West Lothian and continues to attract high quality investment, including economic development, housing, retailing and other service and leisure-based activities;
- promote the principles of sustainable development;
- protect and enhance the natural and built heritage of West Lothian;
- continue to enhance the image of West Lothian to assist in attracting economic investment and improving the quality of life for its residents;
- enhance accessibility to services, jobs, and other activities important to the needs of the community and, in particular, maximise social inclusion;
- secure the widest possible economic and employment base in West Lothian, to provide a range of job opportunities, and avoid dependence on any one employment sector; and
- improve facilities and services to meet the needs of all the community, particularly from the core development area (CDA) proposals brought forward to meet the structure plan requirements.



INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

2.2 The local plan supports a sustained level of growth higher than most parts of Scotland. This has the potential to place stress on the infrastructure required to support development. Fundamental to the strategy is the recognition that where infrastructure improvements are required as a direct result of servicing development, these costs will be borne by developers and not by the local authority.

2.3 Policy HOU 5 of the structure plan makes it clear that the regional development strategy will only be supported where all relevant infrastructure is provided or fully committed. This includes infrastructure identified in the E&LSP Action Plan and site specific requirements identified in local plans. The policy states that planning permission will not be granted where these requirements are not met. The structure plan position on infrastructure delivery is fundamental to the development strategy of the local plan.

2.4 The role of West Lothian as an economic dynamo for Scotland requires national recognition if the aims of this local plan are to be achieved. This recognition must be forthcoming through spending decisions and programmes of the Scottish Government and the capital and revenue programmes of

other national public bodies and infrastructure providers. Key amongst these are the water and drainage services, healthcare providers and the emergency services. Without appropriate levels of funding from these and other agencies, it will not be possible to implement the development strategy successfully.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

2.5 The structure plan provides the development framework to which this local plan must conform. It provides policy guidance on most of the topics covered in the local plan. The strategy of the structure plan seeks to encourage a more sustainable pattern of development by:

- maintaining and enhancing economic competitiveness;
- promoting a more inclusive society;
- protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment; and
- integrating land use and transport.

2.6 The structure plan highlights the need to identify land for 18,200 dwellings, region wide, over and above the 57,800 dwellings already identified or anticipated coming forward from windfall sites. The structure plan shows that land for 10,300 units is already identified in West Lothian and it is assumed that 1,000 units will come forward in West Lothian from windfall sites in the structure plan period to 2015. The structure plan requires land for a minimum of 7,000 units to be identified in West Lothian, as the council's contribution to the additional land requirement. It should be noted that the new land allocations include a margin of 8% over calculated requirements to allow for failures in the supply. These new land allocations are to be identified in the three CDAs in West Lothian.

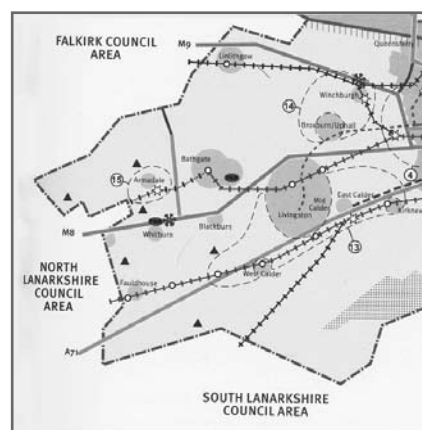
2.7 While the structure plan promotes significant levels of growth in West Lothian, it also identifies Linlithgow and north-west West Lothian as an area of development restraint as a result of infrastructure, landscape and environmental constraints.

MEETING THE NEW STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENTS TO 2015

2.8 Meeting the new housing requirements is a key driver of the land use policies of this local plan. The structure plan identifies three CDAs as the focus of this growth. The scale of development requires these allocations to be provided as comprehensive development proposals, through masterplanning, and to include a range of land uses and community facilities.

2.9 Policy HOU 3 of the structure plan identifies the scale of development required in the three CDAs in West Lothian as:

- Armadale - 1000 houses minimum;
- Livingston and the Almond Valley - 3000 houses minimum; and
- Winchburgh/East Broxburn/Uphall - 3000 houses minimum.



2.10 These are minimum allocation requirements and the strategy chapter of the structure plan, as narrative to structure plan policy HOU 3, allows these figures to become 2,000, 5,000 and 5,000 houses respectively, allowing for identification of land for up to 12,000 houses, where this is justified in securing the necessary infrastructure, including education. These larger allocations will also serve the period well beyond the structure plan (i.e. beyond 2015) and provide the basis of a longer-term development strategy.

2.11 The allocations identified in the local plan are the maximums in the structure plan: 2,000 in Armadale, 5,000 in Livingston and Almond Valley and 5000 in Winchburgh/East Broxburn/Uphall. There are a number of reasons for promoting the maximum figures. It allows the proper planning of large scale housing and mixed uses developments in a comprehensive manner, providing developers with the best opportunity to meet West Lothian's aspirations for the highest quality of design and layout. It also provides a longer-term vision and certainty for the public about how development affects and integrates with their areas and local communities. Consequently, it allows for the proper engagement of the public and stakeholders in developing and shaping comprehensive masterplans. The scale of development will more readily secure the provision of essential, but costly infrastructure, community facilities and services for new and existing communities. In particular, the levels of growth promoted fit well with the provision of new secondary schools, which will be essential to allow development to proceed.

2.12 Outwith the CDAs, the local plan identifies a number of new housing allocations, accommodating around 3,000 houses, to provide local opportunities where these would support local communities and services, and where acceptable in terms of the environment and infrastructure capacities. These sites are a combination of sites benefiting from planning permission, brownfield opportunities, sites conforming to policies HOU 8 and HOU 9 of the structure plan and sites brought forward through the council's Open Space and Sports Facilities strategies. Accordingly, the complete supply of sites established in this local plan, including the CDA allocations, can accommodate up to 23,410 houses.

BRINGING FORWARD THE CDA ALLOCATIONS

2.13 West Lothian has been successful in promoting the re-use of brownfield sites. The re-development of the former British Leyland site, at Wester Inch in Bathgate, is now underway, whilst one of the most problematic contaminated and derelict sites in Scotland, the former colliery at Polkemmet, Whitburn, is now progressing as an opencast coal and fireclay extraction site as part of the *Heartlands* re-development. Proposals to develop former industrial sites at Lower Bathville in Armadale have also progressed. The local plan brings forward further brownfield sites at Lower Bathville, Armadale and the former Papermill site at Westfield for housing development. Additionally, brownfield land at Albyn and Candleworks, Broxburn and at Drumshoreland, Pumpherston remain allocated for development.

2.14 Apart from the environmental and planning benefits that accrue from developing vacant and derelict brownfield sites, steering development to these locations has also spread regenerative benefits. In areas where developers had previously shown little interest, housebuilding rates have increased significantly during the last 10 - 15 years, reflecting a renewed confidence in towns such as Armadale, Bathgate and Broxburn. The major proposals for *Heartlands* at Polkemmet adds Whitburn to this list.

2.15 Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify significant additional opportunities for brownfield development. Consequently, proportional greenfield land allocations have been identified, as anticipated by the structure plan.

2.16 An important consideration in identifying new land allocations is the ability of a site to yield sufficient housing completions to satisfy the structure plan requirement. Given the substantial housing allocations already identified in both Bathgate and Whitburn, further allocations in either town would not increase the yield in the short to medium term. Therefore, no significant additional land allocations, other than those already committed in previous local plans, are promoted in these towns.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES IN IDENTIFYING THE CDA ALLOCATIONS

2.17 The following key objectives were used in identifying the new CDA development areas. These are covered in greater detail in Chapter 7 *The core development areas*:

- protecting areas of special environmental, landscape, biodiversity, visual or heritage value;
- promoting the re-development of the remaining tracts of brownfield, derelict and contaminated land in West Lothian and thereby securing their physical and environmental improvement;
- identifying major allocations in more than one area within a CDA to better achieve the required rates of housing completions;
- spreading and minimising the environmental and transport impacts;
- linking physically major developments to existing public transport networks and infrastructure, or promoting areas which relate to, or help secure, new strategic transport proposals - including the proposed Airdrie-Bathgate rail line, Fastlink (bus), new or expanded rail and bus park-and-ride sites, new rail stations, and longer term tram proposals extending from the west Edinburgh initiatives;
- linking development to the strategic road network, in order to minimise the increase of traffic through local communities and offer opportunities to introduce and enhance express bus service provision;
- selecting areas that offer opportunities to introduce new local and distributor roads, which will serve both existing and new communities, help spread the impact on the road network and lessen impact on local communities;

- capitalising on the major employment areas emerging in west Edinburgh (Newbridge, South Gyle, Edinburgh Airport, Gogarbank);
- capitalising on the growth of Livingston, and building on the success of Kirkton Campus by promoting its further expansion to meet longer-term employment requirements;
- spreading employment opportunities, or accessibility to jobs, to areas that have so far not benefited as much as other areas from the growing local economy; and
 - integrating and securing community benefits from housing, employment and other mixed uses;



2.18 Each of the CDAs achieves these objectives to varying degrees. The local plan establishes the scale and mix of land uses to deliver high quality and comprehensive development schemes. Chapter 7 *The core development areas* identifies the essential infrastructure and service requirements and the responsibilities for provision wherever possible. The aim of the local plan in this respect is to provide the statutory base for developers to prepare masterplans for the CDAs.

THE ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE - A STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH

2.19 West Lothian offers a major resource in terms of housing and commercial land and it is home to a significant and high value service electronic sector. The area is well located in terms of regional and national transportation and communication networks.

2.20 A main factor in shaping the economic and employment development strategy has been the need to reflect constantly changing global circumstances, and to 're-invent' to ensure the district provides the right conditions to create new jobs. Ensuring the availability of a good choice of development sites is one aspect of providing those conditions.

2.21 The strategy recognises the need to identify sites for new high-technology and service industries, as well as maintaining a supply of sites suited to traditional manufacturing and engineering industries. The employment land supply has been reviewed to ensure this, and to discharge the requirements of the structure plan including identification of new sites in the CDAs. The emphasis is on diversity, by providing a range of sites suitable for a range of businesses.

A STRATEGY TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

2.22 Integral to promoting sustained economic growth is the need to protect and enhance the built and natural environment. These objectives complement each other, to provide a healthy and attractive place within which to live and work, as well as invest. On the one hand the quality and design of development must be sustainable, and on the other, the built and natural heritage requires both protecting and enhancing.

2.23 Protection requires the control of development in relation to the quality of the heritage attributes in both town and country. This will be achieved by requiring the quality of any development, whether housing, employment or other uses, to respect environmental quality, or by resisting development where this is necessary. In particular, all CDA proposals must protect local biodiversity, and this will shape the location of development within the CDA masterplan boundaries.

2.24 Development can positively enhance the environment through, for example, remediating brownfield land, removing contamination, or cleaning river courses. Requiring developers to provide advance planting and structural landscaping, improve access to the countryside, and fund improvements to drainage schemes, are examples of ways of integrating development and securing wider community benefits. Consequently, the various strategies contained in this local plan, backed up by policy requirements, all combine to improve the economic, environmental and social well being of West Lothian.

2.24a The Edinburgh & Lothians Structure Plan (2004) (E&LSP) identifies Linlithgow and north west West Lothian as an *area of restraint*. Policies in this local plan reflect this.



THE LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY

2.25 The strategic objectives of this local plan are to:

Conform to the principles of sustainability by:

- a. promoting development in accessible locations which will encourage trips by sustainable modes of travel;
- b. encouraging resource and energy efficient forms of development;
- c. constraining development to within environmental carrying capacity;
- d. promoting good land management;
- e. minimising land and water pollution by adopting best environmental practices; and
- f. encouraging renewable energy technologies which do not prejudice other natural heritage considerations.

Protect and improve the built and natural environment by:

- a. conserving and enhancing green spaces, rivers, the coastline and water features and promoting the principles of biodiversity;
- b. protecting habitats, landscapes, archaeological features and the built heritage from damaging development;
- c. re-habilitating the environment where it has been scarred by previous industrial and development activities;
- d. improving and, where appropriate, managing native and mixed woodlands; and
- e. improving public access to the countryside, coastline and heritage features, in a manner that preserves the quality of those features.

Promote a development strategy that:

- a. identifies housing sites to meet the overall strategic target requirement;
- b. continues the momentum of economic growth by allocating a range of suitable development sites;
- c. diversifies the job base by supporting a range of employment activities (including business, commercial, retailing and tourism);
- d. focuses on regeneration by re-using sites, especially brownfield sites, within settlement boundaries;
- e. avoids coalescence of settlements;
- f. attracts and requires high-quality housing and economic development;
- g. meets the housing needs of all sectors of the community, including the provision of affordable housing; and
- h. secures the infrastructure necessary for development to go ahead.



Adopt transport policies that:

- a. encourage a shift away from car use by promoting less environmentally damaging modes of travel;
- b. complement and integrate the development strategy in order to help secure strategic and local transport policy objectives;
- c. maximise accessibility for all by promoting public transport;
- d. encourage walking and cycling; and
- e. improve road and pedestrian safety.

Adopt land use policies that:

- a. concentrate new housing and employment allocations within the CDAs identified in the structure plan;
- b. continue to promote the regeneration and development of settlements in the west of the district where this helps support local facilities;
- c. maintain policies of restraint in Linlithgow and north-west West Lothian where there is limited infrastructure and community facilities,

and where further large scale development would impact on the town centre and high quality landscapes; and

- d. protect the countryside surrounding the main towns and villages and growth areas, to prevent coalescence and conserve important rural landscapes.

Develop partnerships between West Lothian Council and:

- a. the community, in generating ideas and in promoting public participation, particularly in setting the requirements for and managing the process of co-operation and joint ownership between communities, developers and the council in preparation of the CDA masterplans;
- b. national agencies, central government departments, charitable trusts, funding bodies and others to promote and enhance the natural environment and the built and archaeological heritage;
- c. the development agencies, including Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothians (SEE&L), Communities Scotland, registered social landlords and other social housing providers, the housebuilding industry, and other developers and investors;
- d. neighbouring local authorities, to implement key strategic planning and transportation policies and proposals that improve accessibility across the Central Belt;
- e. agencies engaged in promoting rural regeneration (such as the Central Scotland Forest Trust); and
- f. key service and infrastructure providers in ensuring the development strategy is realised.

Maintain the pro-active role of West Lothian Council in:

- a. identifying and securing the provision of key services and infrastructure to support development, whether privately or publicly funded, particularly education;
- b. marketing and releasing land in its ownership to help maintain the development momentum; and
- c. co-ordinating with infrastructure providers to ensure timely provision of facilities that serve development needs which are essential requirements to implementing the development strategy.

Provide guidance to developers and others, directly through policies in the local plan or by reference to supplementary guidance, by:

- a. including firm requirements of developers in bringing forward the CDA masterplans, as well as for other development proposals;
- b. identifying the higher expectations now required for good quality design and layouts, conforming to the principles of sustainability; and
- c. providing more detailed development control guidance, where appropriate, and outlining criteria that will be applied when the council determines planning applications.

