



# **SCREENING REPORT**

**PLANNING GUIDANCE (PG)  
Planning for Nature  
Development Management & Wildlife**

## STEP 1 – DETAILS OF THE PLAN

**Responsible Authority:**

West Lothian Council

**Title of the plan:**

Planning Guidance: 'Planning for Nature: Development Management & Wildlife'

**What prompted the plan:**

(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

The West Lothian Local Development Plan gives an undertaking to produce guidance in relation to a variety of policy topics including the protection of the natural environment from inappropriate development.

The guidance sets out detailed criteria to assist the development and assessment of proposals for development across the plan area and specifically supports policies ENV 17 (Protection of international nature conservation sites), ENV 18 (Protection of National and local nature conservation sites), ENV 19 (Protection of local biodiversity sites and geodiversity sites and ENV 20 (Species protection and enhancement) of the adopted LDP which collectively seek to ensure that protected habitats and species are considered appropriately when the council takes decisions on planning applications.

It is however also potentially pertinent to a wider range of subject matters addressed by policies DES 1 (Design principles), ENV 1 (Landscape character and special landscape areas), ENV 4 (Loss of prime agricultural land), ENV 7 (Countryside Belts and settlement setting) and ENV 8 (Green Network).

The current Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was adopted in 2015 in support of the West Lothian Local Plan. While continuing to provide valid and pertinent guidance it does nevertheless pre-date the now adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan. As a consequence there is recognition of the need to ensure that the council's planning guidance is up to date and reflective of the most current policies and practices.

**Plan subject:**

(e.g. transport)

Town and Country Planning

**Screening** is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Based on Boxes 3 and 4, our view is that:

**An SEA is required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant:** Please indicate below what Section of the 2005 Act this plan falls within

Section 5(3)

Section 5(4)

**An SEA is not required, as the environmental effects are unlikely to be significant:** Please indicate below what Section of the 2005 Act this plan falls within

Section 5(3)

Section 5(4)

**Contact details:**

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Date:

25 February 2020

## STEP 2 – CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

### Context of the Plan:

The West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 4 September 2018.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report was published in August 2014, which set out the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the strategy for the development contained within the LDP and is the primary means by which development sites are allocated. Each site allocated for development within the LDP has been subject to an individual site assessment.

The principal Report of Examination was issued on 11 December 2017 (augmented with an additional Report of Examination dealing with a single site issue issued on 8 January 2018).

At a meeting of the Council Executive on 22 March 2018, West Lothian Council resolved to accept all of the modifications recommended in the Report of Examination, and agreed to adopt the Local Development Plan (as modified). This was notified to Scottish Ministers on 5 April 2018. At the same time, the council made a determination under Section 8(1) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that the modifications proposed by the DPEA to the West Lothian Local Development Plan were unlikely, overall, to have any major significant negative environmental effects and that a further SEA was not required.

Planning Guidance – ‘Planning for Nature: Development Management & Wildlife’ is required to support the understanding and delivery of a number of policies in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018. The PG will expand on the principles of these policies and will provide detailed guidance to help achieve the outcomes expected from development proposals across West Lothian.

The proposed Planning Guidance does not include location specific guidance or direct development to specific sites but supports consistent interpretation and application of policies through the development management process. The guidance identifies good practice in-line with the policy and other national guidance.

### Description of the Plan:

The proposed Planning Guidance expands on the principles set out in the policies detailed in Box 3 (above) and provides detailed guidance to help achieve the outcomes expected from development proposals across West Lothian. The guidance provides a basis for most new development in West Lothian.

The Planning Guidance is intended for use by anyone considering development within West Lothian including:

- Applicants who wish to develop a site;
- Architects and agents working on proposals;
- Officers assessing planning proposals;
- Elected Members representing constituents and making decisions on planning applications;

- Members of the public with an interest in development proposals within their local community.

The Planning Guidance will be reviewed at least every 5 years in line with the statutory review of the West Lothian Local Development Plan (or as required by emerging legislation).

**What are the key components of the plan?**

The Planning Guidance will provide further guidance to support the application of the various policies detailed in Box 3 (above) and the delivery of quality development in environmentally sensitive locations across West Lothian.

The Planning Guidance will provide detailed guidance to help achieve the outcomes expected from development proposals across West Lothian. The guidance provides a basis for assessing the justification, location and design of all new development in locations across West Lothian.

**Have any of the components of the plan been considered in previous SEA work?**

Yes. The document is produced to support a number of policies in the West Lothian Local Development Plan which was adopted on 4 September 2018. An Environmental Assessment has previously been undertaken in respect of policies and proposed land allocations in the West Lothian LDP. The Environmental Assessment undertaken in respect of these policies concluded that they would have no significant environmental implications. Any impacts of the policies were considered to be largely positive. In order to ensure compliance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Screening Opinion for this Planning Guidance is required.

**In terms of your response to Boxes 7 and 8 above, set out those components of the plan that are likely to require screening:**

The proposed Planning Guidance will expand on the principles set out in the aforementioned policies and provide detailed guidance to help achieve the outcomes expected from development proposals in locations across West Lothian. The guidance will support consistent interpretation and application of policies through the development management process. The guidance will illustrate good practice in-line with the policy and other national guidance. The potential environmental effects of any proposed development considered under the terms of the policies can only be properly assessed at the planning application stage when the specific site and development details are known.

**STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING INTERACTIONS OF THE PLAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY INTERACTIONS**

Plan Components	Environmental Topic Areas										Explanation of Potential Environmental Effects	Explanation of Significance
	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Water	Air	Climatic factors	Material assets	Cultural heritage	Landscape	Inter-relationship issues		
Planning Guidance 'Planning for Nature: Development Management & Wildlife'	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>The PG brings together all of the elements that help contribute towards achieving sustainable development in environmentally sensitive locations.</p> <p>It provides a clear set of guidance and standards to explain what the council will expect from new developments and identifies what information is required as part of a planning application. It also provides contact details for Council officers and other organisations.</p> <p>The PG shares the strategic objectives of the LDP which include promoting development in the most sustainable locations where</p>	<p>The SEA for the LDP considered any potential effects. The PG is not considered to have any additional significant environmental effects.</p>

										<p>its impact can be minimised; promoting community regeneration through the development of brownfield sites; ensuring that all essential infrastructure and facilities are provided to support development; promoting and enhancing the natural and built environment; and having regard to climate change by minimising the carbon footprint of development and supporting mitigation and adaption measures.</p> <p>It is also a shared objective of the LDP and the Planning Guidance to protect and enhance the natural environment.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the new developments which will come to be built over time will be more sensitively located and designed and in better harmony with their surroundings and the natural environment.</p> <p>Any impact on the Environmental Topic Areas will be positive and beneficial.</p>	
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## STEP 4 – STATEMENT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SCREENING REPORT

### **Summary of interactions with the environment and statement of the findings of the Screening:**

(Including an outline of the likely significance of any interactions, positive or negative, and explanation of conclusion of the screening exercise.)

The council has prepared this Planning Guidance to proactively encourage and influence developers to adopt a responsible attitude and bring forward sensitive proposals when contemplating new development in environmentally sensitive locations throughout West Lothian.

It has been conceived to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of new development on the environment and to ensure a sustainable future. It requires new development to adopt best practice and to be sensitive to the natural and built environment.

The PG is closely allied with the policy context of the West Lothian Local Development Plan and government guidance and is intended to positively influence the nature of projects which will come forward.

It is anticipated that the new developments which will come to be built over time will be more sensitively located and designed and in better harmony with their surroundings and the natural environment.

The Planning Guidance relates to development in both the countryside and potentially within settlements and the effect and impact of such development will ordinarily be of a localized nature

In common with all other guidance prepared by West Lothian Council, the guidance has been subject to consultation, in this case with community councils, SEPA, Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland, various planning consultants and developers, council service providers and utility providers and regard has been had to the responses and feedback which has been received.

In conclusion, the Planning Guidance will result in no or minimal environmental effects and therefore it is concluded a SEA is not required.

The guidance sets out detailed criteria to assist the development and assessment of proposals for development across the plan area and specifically supports policies ENV 17 (Protection of international nature conservation sites), ENV 18 (Protection of National and local nature conservation sites), ENV 19

(Protection of local biodiversity sites and geodiversity sites and ENV 20 (Species protection and enhancement) of the adopted LDP which collectively seek to ensure that protected habitats and species are considered appropriately when the council takes decisions on planning applications.

It is however also potentially pertinent to a wider range of subject matters addressed by policies DES 1 (Design principles), ENV 1 (Landscape character and special landscape areas), ENV 4 (Loss of prime agricultural land), ENV 7 (Countryside Belts and settlement setting) and ENV 8 (Green Network).

When completed send to: [SEA.gateway@scot.gov](mailto:SEA.gateway@scot.gov) or to the SEA Gateway, Scottish Government, Area 2H (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ.