

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME
MARCH 2026

APPROVED VERSION

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at a meeting on 3 March 2026



Contents

The West Lothian LDP2 Development Plan Scheme.....	3
What is a Development Plan Scheme?	3
What is a Development Plan?.....	3
The Current Development Plan for West Lothian	3
Local Places Plans (LPPs)	3
The Local Development Plan Process	4
The Evidence Report	4
Gate Check	4
Call for Ideas.....	4
Proposed Plan	5
Examination	5
Adoption and Delivery	5
West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Timetable.....	6
Participation Statement.....	8
Evidence Report – engagement.....	9
Future engagement activities	11

The West Lothian LDP2 Development Plan Scheme

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 last DPS was published in March 2025.

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.

Local planning authorities are required to prepare and adopt a new Local Development Plan 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 and registered eight LPPs:

Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge
Mid Calder
Murieston
Bathgate

West Calder & Harburn
Blackburn
Newton & Woodend
Dechmont

Additionally, seven other community groups have registered an interest in preparing a LPP at a future date.

The Local Development Plan Process

West Lothian 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 first stage of the process is to gather the evidence required to prepare the plan. The Evidence Report aims to clearly inform what to plan for before the Proposed Plan looks at where development should take place.

The ER provides the baseline data to ensure LDP2 is based on sound evidence to inform a deliverable, place-based and people-focused LDP.

The West Lothian LDP2 Evidence Report was approved by West Lothian Council on **19 June 2025**.

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

The Evidence Report can be [viewed here](#).

Gate Check

Evidence Reports are submitted to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) for the Gate Check process.

The purpose of the Gate Check is to consider and determine whether the Council has sufficient evidence to prepare LDP2. The Gate Check is carried out by appointed Reporter(s) from DPEA.

The Evidence Report was submitted for Gate Check on **30 July 2025** and after due consideration was returned to the council by the DPEA on **7 November 2025**.

Despite the DPEA finding that the report generally provided a well presented and clear explanation of information, it concluded that there were several evidence deficiencies. The Evidence Report was returned to the Council with an instruction to address the matters highlighted and to submit a revised report to Scottish Ministers for a subsequent Gate Check.

Until the Gate Check is passed, the Council is unable to proceed to the next stage of the process, preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Call for Ideas

The Call for Ideas was an opportunity for key stakeholders, members of the public, community groups, landowners and developers, to suggest sites, policies and ideas to be included in the Proposed Plan.

The Call for Ideas ran from Monday **24th March and 30th May 2025**. 409 submissions were received.

Proposed Plan

The Evidence Report, Local Place Plans and the submissions to the Call for Ideas will be used to inform the proposed plan.

This will include a spatial (development) strategy and policies to be used to determine planning applications. A Delivery Programme will also be published alongside the Proposed Plan setting out key infrastructure actions.

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

Following the close of the period for representations on the Proposed Plan, the council will have the ability to make modifications to the plan to take account of representations and consultation responses. A Modification Report will set out any revisions made and will explain the reasons for making them, but also 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.

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.

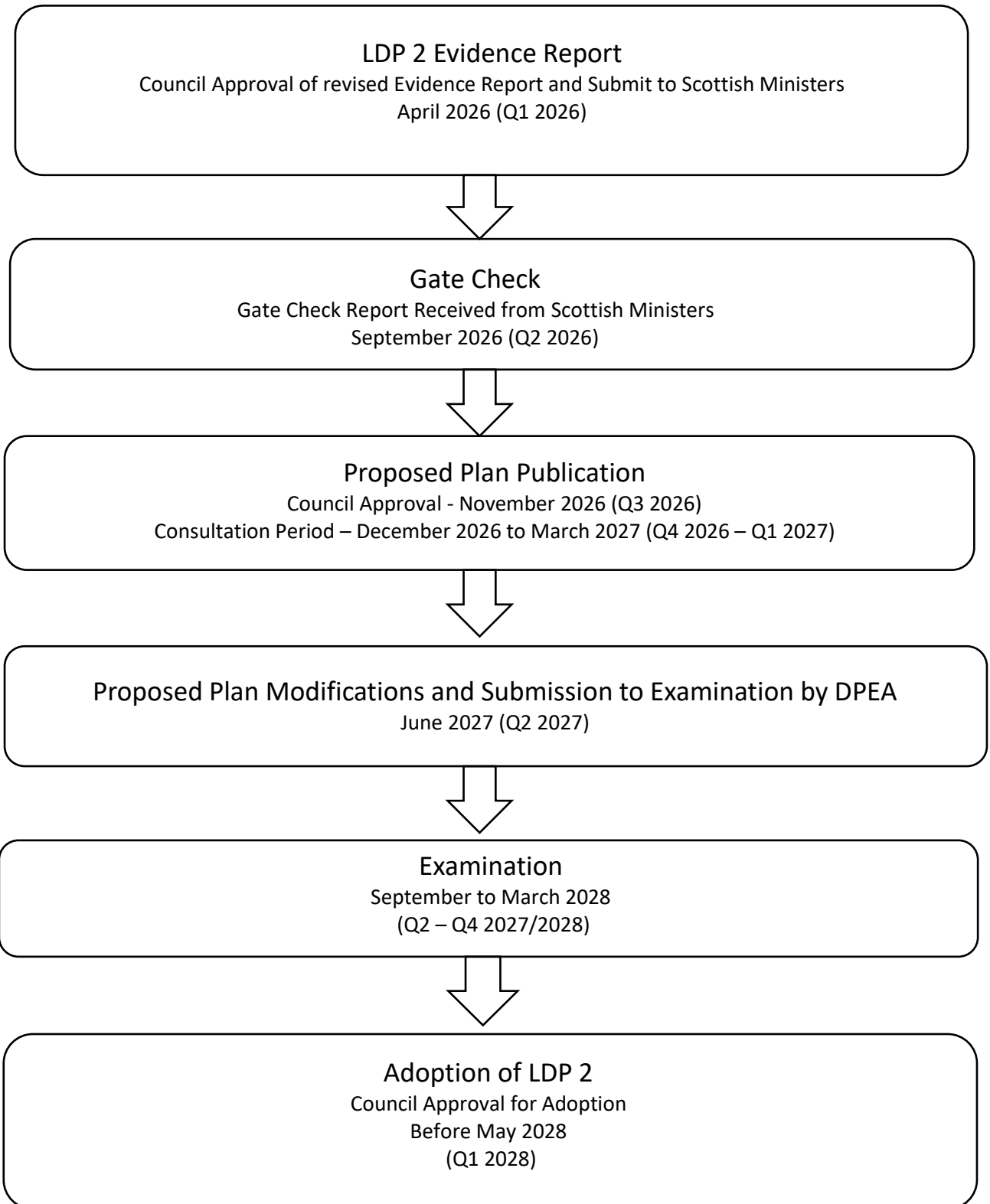
Adoption and Delivery

Once the examination is complete, and any changes have been incorporated, the council will proceed to adopt the new Local Development Plan, which alongside NPF4 will be the basis against which decisions on planning applications will be made.

The Delivery Programme setting out actions to deliver the necessary infrastructure for LDP 2 will also be adopted at this stage.

It is 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 2025

Changes have been made to the timetable identified in Development Plan Scheme 2025. The changes to the timetable are set out below:

DPS 2025	PLAN PREPARATION STAGE	DPS 2026
Q4 - March 2025 - May 2025	Preparation of Evidence Report & Early engagement Call for Ideas	Completed Completed
Q1 - May 2025	Council approval of revised Evidence Report	Q1 - April 2026
Q1 - June 2025	Submission to Scottish Ministers and 'gate check' process (revised version)	Q1 - Q2 May 2026 - July 2026
Q4 - February 2026	Council approval and publication of the Proposed Plan	Q3 - November 2026
Q1-Q2 April - July 2026	Consultation Period	Q4 - Q1 December 2026 - March 2027
Q3 October 2026	Proposed Plan modifications and submission to Examination	Q2 July 2027
Q3 - Q1 October 2026-March 2027	Examination	Q2 - Q4 July 2027 - December 2027
Q1 2027 - May 2027	Adoption of LDP2	End of 2027 / early 2028

The timetable set out in the DPS 2025 expected the West Lothian LDP2 Evidence Report to be approved by the DPEA in September 2025.

The Evidence Report was returned to the council in November 2025, with a requirement to collate additional evidence and procure a number of supporting studies and strategies including a review of West Lothian's landscape and countryside belt designations and a new Open Space Strategy.

This has impacted on the timetable for the publication of the Proposed Plan and resulted in around a 9-month delay to the timetable set out in 2025. The changes are as follows.

- The date for council approval of the revised version of the Evidence Report is now April 2026. (The original version of the Evidence Report was scheduled for approval in May 2025 but was approved in June 2025)
- The date for submission (re-submission) to Scottish Ministers for Gate Check has been revised to April 2026.
- The publication of the Proposed Plan for public consultation has been rescheduled to November 2026 (from February 2026)
- Following publication and approval by council for consultation there will be a 12-week period between December 2026 and March 2027 to make representations (changed from April – July 2026)
- Following any necessary modifications to the Proposed Plan it is intended to submit the plan for Examination by the DPEA in Summer 2027 (from October 2026) with adoption following the examination before May 2028.

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



The Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement (2025) set out that as LDP2 would influence where people live, work, shop, play and travel in West Lothian, local people and organisations had unique knowledge and insight which could help the council better understand key issues and enable it to create a much better plan.

The council has subsequently engaged on the Evidence Report in two distinct stages:

- Preparation of the Evidence Report Topic Schedules with the council carrying out a series of pre-engagement activities between October 2023 and February 2025.
- Formal engagement on the draft Evidence Report between 7 January and 28 February 2025 with the Key Agencies, stakeholders, community councils and members of the public being invited to submit their support, raise disputes and other evidence/comments prior to the Topic Schedules being finalised.

More than 50 responses were received to the formal engagement and a summary of all responses and the changes made to the Topic Schedules is set out in Annex 1 of the Evidence Report.

Planning legislation placed 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	<p>During the preparation of the Evidence Report, the council consulted and engaged with community councils via the West Lothian Joint Forum of Community Councils and also directly during the formal engagement on the draft Evidence Report Topic Schedules.</p> <p>Meetings with the Joint Forum took place in August 2024, January 2025 and March 2025.</p> <p>Key issues raised by the Joint Forum included healthcare infrastructure and the need for contributions towards healthcare, the delivery of infrastructure and how local place plans would feed into the preparation of the new plan.</p>
Public at large	<p>Consultation with the public has been extensive. A public engagement exercise ‘<i>We need to talk about LDP2</i>’ was undertaken with 10 drop-in sessions across West Lothian to provide information on the new plan and the Evidence Report process.</p> <p>4 targeted online surveys ‘<i>How good is your place?</i>’ was undertaken with the aim of gathering views and evidence on the existing Local Development Plan policies and areas for change.</p> <p>A Citizen Panel survey, ‘<i>Your Place</i>’ generated over 500 responses.</p> <p>All residents who had previously signed up to the mailing list and newsletter were informed of the evidence engagement and preparation of the DPS.</p>
Key agencies	<p>Direct engagement with each individual Key Agency and relevant stakeholders during the early stage of preparing the draft evidence report Topic Schedules to collate evidence sources.</p> <p>A workshop with all the Key Agencies and other relevant stakeholders on the Evidence Report preparation process and key implications for LDP2.</p> <p>Formal engagement on final draft Evidence Report Topic Schedules.</p> <p>Received confirmation of sufficiency of evidence from each Key Agency and other relevant stakeholders.</p>
Disabled people	<p>The council consulted with people with disabilities through the West Lothian Disability Access Forum with a workshop on the Evidence Report in February 2025.</p> <p>The workshop focused on the evidence set out in Topic Schedule 10: Affordable and Specialist Homes and comments received included a preference for bungalows for older people, ground-floor flats for younger couples. More generally the forum identified a need for family homes, private open space, accessible parking, well-located properties with good paths, and adaptable designs for all, including for wheelchair users.</p>

<p>Roma Gypsy travellers</p>	<p>The council recognises the right of the gypsy/traveller community to travel and continue their traditional way of life. According to the 2022 Scotland Census data 70 people in West Lothian self-identified as White Gypsy/Travellers.</p> <p>Since 2017 West Lothian Council has chosen to direct resources to improving outreach services as a more effective means of supporting and serving the needs of the travelling communities. Currently only the City of Edinburgh Council has a local authority site. In West Lothian, two sites, Drumshoreland and Humbie Holdings are both private.</p> <p>During the preparation of the Evidence Report the council engaged with the WLC Travellers Forum and attended the Lothian Gypsy Traveller Forum. Feedback from these groups reinforced the view that census figures relating to Gypsy/travellers are unreliable and that there is no definitive methodology to calculate need.</p> <p>It was concluded that there is a need to bring together equality outcomes with accommodation needs and also a need for joint working on certain matters, such as, accommodation and planning.</p>
<p>Young people</p>	<p>The views of children and young people were primarily sought through two targeted surveys looking at <i>'how good is your place'</i> carried out in October 2023. A Play Sufficiency Survey was also carried out between June and October 2024 and which generated in excess of 1,000 responses. Additional engagement exercises around the <i>'how good is your place'</i> survey were undertaken at Linlithgow Academy, James Young High School and Winchburgh Primary School in January 2025.</p>
<p>Older people</p>	<p>Engagement with our older population was through a consultation with the WLC Senior People's Forum coupled with the Citizen Panel Survey,</p> <p>Responses identified the need for a range of small, sheltered community or village housing for older people or those with medical needs, adaptable housing for the elderly, with bungalows being a priority.</p>

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

Local Place Plans are also regarded as part of a wider engagement strategy and local communities were extended a formal invitation to prepare local place plans (LPPs) in July 2023 as another means of informing the new local development plan. 8 Local Place Plans were registered and their content has been summarised in Chapter 3 of the Evidence Report.

The council will address matters raised in the Gate Check Assessment Report through proportionate and targeted engagement prior to the Evidence Report being re-submitted for Gate Check.

Future engagement activities

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

<p>Publication of Proposed Plan</p>	<p>12-week consultation period.</p> <p>Engagement to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public drop in events across West Lothian. 	<p>December 2026 – March 2027</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notification of neighbours adjacent significant developments. ▪ Publication of Proposed Plan through the 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. ▪ Officers to attend relevant meetings with interested parties. 	
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>	March – July 2027
Examination into unresolved objections (if required)	<p>This process will be led by DPEA.</p> <p>All representatives to the Proposed Plan and the LDP 2 mailing list will be notified of the Proposed Plan submission to the DPEA for examination.</p>	September 2027 – March 2028
Adoption	<p>No direct engagement at this stage.</p> <p>Interested parties will be notified of LDP 2 being adopted.</p>	May 2028

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: [01506280000](tel:01506280000)
- write to us at: [Development Planning & Environment, Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF](#)

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