

<p><b>Topic Schedule</b></p>	<p><b>17. Business and Industry, Community Wealth Building and Rural Development</b></p>
<p><b>Information required by the Act and NPF4 regarding the issue addressed in this section</b></p>	<p><b>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5) the principal economic characteristics of the district; and the principal purposes for which the land is used.</li> </ul> <p><b>National Planning Framework 4 (adopted 13 February 2023)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy 25 Rural Development</b> - LDPs should identify the characteristics of rural areas within the plan area, including the existing pattern of development, pressures, environmental assets, community priorities and economic needs of each area. The spatial strategy should set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflects the identified characteristics.</li> <li>• <b>Policy 26 Business and Industry</b> - LDPs should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size and quality in terms of accessibility and services. This allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.</li> <li>• <b>Policy 29 Community Wealth Building</b> - LDPs should be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area. Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities; identify community assets; set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality; and seek to provide benefits for local communities</li> </ul> <p>Other Topic Schedules which should be read alongside this Topic Schedule on Business and Industry, Community Development and Rural Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 - Rural Homes</li> <li>• 16 - Town Centres and Retail Policy</li> <li>• 22 - Sustainable Transport Infrastructure</li> <li>• 25 - Local Living and Community Infrastructure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Links to Evidence</b></p>	<p><b>WLC 021</b> <a href="#">Interim Regional Spatial Strategy for Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region</a>  <b>WLC 095</b> <a href="#">Experimental Gross Value Added (GVA) Estimates</a>  <b>WLC 111</b> <a href="#">Businesses in Scotland</a>  <b>WLC 152</b> <a href="#">Place Based Investment Programme</a></p>

- WLC 192** [Urban Rural Classification 2020](#)
- WLC 224** [Strategic Development Plan 1 for South East Scotland information](#)
- WLC 290** [Community wealth building action plan 'Advancing community wealth building in West Lothian'](#)
- WLC 302** [Draft Economic Recovery Plan](#)
- WLC 308** [Draft Economic Investment Plan \(EIP\)](#)
- WLC 309** [Employment Land Audit \(ELA\)](#)
- WLC 333** [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(LOIP\)](#)
- WLC 334** [Local Place Plan Register](#)
- WLC 335** [Locality Plan - Armadale](#)
- WLC 336** [Locality Plan - Bathgate](#)
- WLC 337** [Locality Plan - Bridgend](#)
- WLC 338** [Locality Plan - Fauldhouse & Breich Valley](#)
- WLC 339** [Locality Plan - Livingston](#)
- WLC 340** [Locality Plan - Whitburn & Blackburn](#)
- WLC 353** [Planning Guidance - Non-employment Uses Within Employment Areas](#)
- WLC 375** [Supplementary Guidance - Development in the Countryside](#)
- WLC 385** [Tackling Poverty Strategy 2023-2028](#)

## Summary of Evidence

### Purpose, scope and structure of this Topic Schedule

This Topic Schedule focuses on business and industry, community wealth building and rural development in West Lothian. This Topic Schedule and its evidence are set out in the following sections:

1. Employment in West Lothian
2. Regional and local strategies, priorities and evidence
3. Community Wealth Building
4. Rural Economic Development
5. West Lothian Employment Land Audit

### Part 1 – Employment in West Lothian

1.1 West Lothian has a diverse range of businesses across a range of sectors. Data from Businesses in Scotland from the Scottish Government (**WLC 111**) shows that the number of businesses in West Lothian has grown by 22% over the last 14 years, resulting in a 3% increase in employment, and a 48% increase in turnover.

Table 60. Business, employment and turnover figures for West Lothian in 2010 and 2024.

Year	Total number of businesses	Total Scottish employment	Total Scottish turnover (£m)
2010	4,425	62,190	7,469
2024	5,240	64,080	11,103

- 1.2 The largest private sector employer in West Lothian is Sky Television with over 3,500 employees at their Livingston subscriber centre. Other key sectors include:
- Food and Drink - West Lothian has 270 companies and 3,000 employees in this sector including Scotch whisky producers Glenmorangie and Scottish speciality foods manufacturer Paterson Arran.
  - Life Sciences - the area supports a significant biotechnology and medical products business sector employing over 2,200 employees. The 20 major companies include Valneva, Q2 Solutions and Catalent Pharma Solutions.
  - Electronics and Software - the sector has a very significant presence in West Lothian with 80 firms and 1,670 employees. West Lothian is home to some of the world's leading companies such as Mitsubishi and Plexus and a diverse indigenous electronics and opto-electronics sector, software development and IT services.
  - Logistics and Distribution - some 385 companies and 6,000 employees in this sector are based in West Lothian. It includes specialist warehouse and freight operators, distribution operations linked to food, drink, electronics and other manufacturing operations and the Scottish distribution hubs for major retail chains, such as Amazon, Tesco and Aldi.
  - Construction - 645 companies with 6,000 employees are based in West Lothian. House building and construction related activity has increased, particularly in the Core Development Areas and employment is still extremely significant to the local economy.
  - Retail - West Lothian's visitor potential is reinforced by its strong specialist retail offering. Overall, the sector employs 8,000 employees based in West Lothian, employed by 355 businesses, many in the regional shopping centre at The Centre in Livingston, the 4th largest in Scotland, and the nearby Livingston Designer Outlet.
- 1.3 Experimental gross value added (GVA) estimates from the Office National Statistics (ONS) (**WLC 095**) can be used to show output from employment locations within West Lothian, at 2020, GVA has increased from £1 billion in 1998 to £1.28 billion in 2020.
- 1.4 West Lothian's 2017 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (**WLC 333**) found that almost 9,000 people (5% of the population) live within the most deprived areas in Scotland – 13 out of the 211 data zones in West Lothian are in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland. This translates into high levels of child poverty. Notably, Whitburn and Blackburn wards show a child poverty rate of 32% after housing costs are taken account of and local population decline. Several of the area's former mining villages experience severe and persistent disadvantage.
- 1.5 Across West Lothian there are variations in employment, salaries, positive destinations and qualifications across the population and in recent years, child poverty and in-work poverty have become increasingly significant issues. While employment rates are higher than the British and Scottish average, these poverty rates are largely driven by the prevalence of low pay in the area; average weekly wages are £571 compared to £602 across Britain. Overall, a quarter of households earn under £16,000 and 38% less than £20,000.

## Part 2 – Regional and local strategies, priorities and evidence

- 2.1 The Interim Regional Spatial Strategy for Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region (**WLC 021**) sets out that in West Lothian, the focus should be on:
- Delivering committed and potential opportunities to provide sufficient employment land for economic renewal, regeneration and redevelopment. The region includes a number of significant business clusters. Some of these largest clusters are around west and southeast Edinburgh, Mid Fife, Dunfermline, and Guardbridge / St Andrews, Galashiels, Midlothian and the M8 corridor.
  - Supporting investment along key transport corridors – M8, M9, M90 and existing rail corridors – is crucial to provide for economic development and growth in business existing clusters at Newbridge, Livingston, Winchburgh, Bathgate and Whitburn, and the M90 through Fife.
- 2.2 The West Lothian LDP1 adopted in 2018 aims to provide an adequate and diverse range and quality of employment land and maintain West Lothian’s attraction as an area which provides a range of choice for those wishing to invest and do business, and, to promote community regeneration through the development of brownfield sites, create local employment opportunities and help to address inequalities.
- 2.3 The strategic context for the West Lothian LDP1 was set by the requirements of the Strategic Development Plan 1 for South East Scotland (**WLC 224**). Policy 2 of SDP 1 required the LDP to provide for 123 hectares of strategic employment land in West Lothian and to ensure that a range and choice of marketable sites of differing sizes and quality to meet the needs of business and industry within West Lothian are identified. These sites are principally but not exclusively focussed in and around Livingston with new sites proposed within the Core Development Areas and within a number of traditional communities including Bathgate (Riddochhill) and an emerging business location is at Heartlands, Whitburn accessed via the new junction on the M8 at junction 4a.
- 2.4 The council’s Draft Economic Recovery Plan (**WLC 302**) aims to support the rebuilding of the West Lothian economy after the Covid 19 pandemic. West Lothian Council and its economic partners are developing a new Economic Investment Plan (EIP) (**WLC 308**) for the region for the ten-year period to 2034/35. The EIP will provide a framework to maximise the economic competitiveness of West Lothian and its contribution to the regional and national economies.
- 2.5 The EIP vision of the local economy in 2034 will be one that will be driven by a vibrant and diverse business base, from small local businesses to high growth start-ups and medium and large employers across a broad range of industries. Community ownership of businesses, organisations and assets will increase, and West Lothian will continue to attract, retain, and grow high value employers in key sectors such as life sciences, photonics and advanced manufacturing. Local business will benefit from local supply chain opportunities from these and other sectors.
- 2.6 The West Lothian Council Anti-Poverty Strategy (**WLC 385**) is key to the delivery of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. This is West Lothian Community Planning Partnership's plan of how we intend to tackle poverty in West Lothian. This strategy has an overall purpose to help minimise the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian. Its object is to ensure that people are

equipped to cope with the challenges they currently face; those of the current, deep, economic recession and the welfare reforms.

### Part 3 – Community Wealth Building

3.1 The Community Wealth Building (CWB) Action Plan titled Advancing community wealth building in West Lothian (**WLC 290**) was produced by the Centre of Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and published May 2022. The action plan sets out three community wealth building outcomes for West Lothian, which are below:

- A reduction in poverty in West Lothian
- Communities in West Lothian are empowered to own, manage and control economic assets
- West Lothian achieves a just transition to net zero by 2030

3.2 The action plan also sets out 12 objectives with short-, medium- and long-term actions to deliver the above outcomes. This includes growing community renewable energy, supporting a resilient and generative food sector, increasing the development of land and assets by and for the community, anchor collaboration and recruitment, and building community support.

3.3 West Lothian's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) (**WLC 333**) states that the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) will seek to deliver key outcomes within the LOIP pillars and Locality Plans in a way that is aligned to principles of Community Wealth building. This will include activity delivering wider social benefit and wellbeing through procurement, recruitment, fair employment, the use of land and assets and exploring opportunities to generate income locally. One of the four 'pillars' (themes) of the LOIP is to support creating skills and jobs.

3.4 The Proposed Plan will need to take account of these themes and outcomes to ensure compliance with the statutory requirement under Section 16(2)(ii) of the Act to take account of the LOIP in the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

3.5 The CPP has produced 8 locality plans (**WLC 334**), (**WLC 335**), (**WLC 336**), (**WLC 337**), (**WLC 338**), (**WLC 339**) and (**WLC 340**) which focus on areas experiencing poorer outcomes. The localities being targeted in West Lothian are based on those in the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The specific areas are:

- Armadale
- Bathgate (Boghall)
- Blackburn
- Bridgend
- Craigshill
- Fauldhouse Breich Valley (Fauldhouse, Stoneyburn, Addiewell, Polbeth)
- Livingston (Deans, Carmondean, Knightsridge Dedridge, Ladywell and Craigshill)
- Whitburn

3.6 Action plans that form part of the 8 locality plans contain actions that relate to planning, including delivery of community garden projects, access to woodland and working with local communities

in development of derelict sites. Any actions relating to the 8 localities that are planning related will need to be examined as part of the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

- 3.7 The CPP has also published a Tackling Poverty Strategy for 2023-2028 (WLC 385) that also seeks to deliver the outcomes of the LOIP. The main theme relating to planning in this document is improving access to affordable housing as a means to reduce poverty.

#### Community Asset Transfers

- 3.8 The council has to date transferred three properties to community group under asset transfer. These properties are in the following locations:

- Craig's Farm Community Centre, Craighall
- East field Training Centre, Fauldhouse
- Low Port Centre, Linlithgow

#### Scottish Government's Place based investment programme

- 3.9 The Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme (**WLC 152**) is intended to link and align place-based funding initiatives. The main objectives are:

- to link and align place-based initiatives and establish a coherent local framework to implement the Place Principle;
- to support place policy ambitions such as town centre revitalisation, community led regeneration, 20-minute neighbourhoods and Community Wealth Building;
- to ensure that all place-based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities;
- to accelerate ambitions for net zero, wellbeing and inclusive economic development, tackling inequality and disadvantage, community involvement and ownership.

- 3.10 In 2021/22 and 2022/23 Place Based funding in West Lothian has been allocated under the theme of community wealth building. This resulted in total funding of £1,302,000 for five projects in 2021/22 and total of £1,132,000 for four projects in 2022/23.

#### Local place plans

- 3.11 Currently the council has approved eight local place plans in Mid Calder, Linlithgow, Bathgate, Murieston, West Calder and Harburn, Blackburn, and Newton and Woodend. These are available on the council's Local Place Plan Register (**WLC 334**).

- 3.12 Community wealth building themes/proposals in local place plans are as follows:

- Mid Calder – Mid Calder Institute Hall, Mid Calder Auld School – keep these as community assets
- Linlithgow - locally centred economic development and locally provided services and facilities
- Bathgate – assets for younger people, Saturday market, procession, allotment scheme

- Murieston – community resources
- West Calder and Harburn – the West Calder Community Hub, Bowling Club, Library and Community Garden are identified as valued community assets to be retained.
- Blackburn – The Mill Centre, the Partnership Centre and Blackburn United Football Club are all identified as valued community assets.
- Newton and Woodend – creation of a community garden and allotments

## Part 4 – Rural Economic Development

- 4.1 West Lothian LDP1 Policies EMP 3 Employment Development outwith Settlement Boundaries and ENV 3 Other Development in the Countryside set out a policy approach which seeks to avoid sporadic development in the countryside that would erode its character and amenity and identify those circumstances in which development may be supported.
- 4.2 West Lothian Council Statutory Supplementary Guidance on development in the countryside (**WLC 375**) identifies the exceptional circumstances to general planning policy which supports sustainable development in West Lothian’s rural areas whilst recognising and maintaining the need to protect the landscape and productive farmland.
- 4.3 NPF4 policy 26 states that LDPs should identify the characteristics of rural areas within the plan area, including the existing pattern of development, pressures, environmental assets, community priorities and economic needs of each area.
- 4.4 The spatial strategy should set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflects the identified characteristics. Within rural areas, NPF4 policy 26 supports to proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities and local rural economy including:
- farms, crofts, woodland crofts or other land use businesses,
  - diversification of existing businesses,
  - production and processing facilities for local produce and materials, for example sawmills, or local food production,
  - essential community services and infrastructure,
  - reuse of redundant or unused buildings, appropriate use of a historic environment asset, reuse of brownfield land,
  - small scale developments that support new ways of working such as remote working, homeworking and community hubs; or
  - improvement or restoration of the natural environment.
- 4.5 West Lothian’s proportion of urban to rural communities is defined within the Scottish Government’s 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 (**WLC 192**) and summarised in comparison to Scotland below. 8.2% of West Lothian is defined as accessible rural, these are areas within a 30-minute drive time of a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

Table 61. West Lothian’s proportion of urban to rural communities in comparison to Scotland.

Local Authority	Large Urban	Other Urban	Accessible Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural
West Lothian	0	81.2	10.6	0	8.2	0
Scotland	37.8	33.9	8.6	2.6	11.6	5.5

## Urban Rural Classification 2020

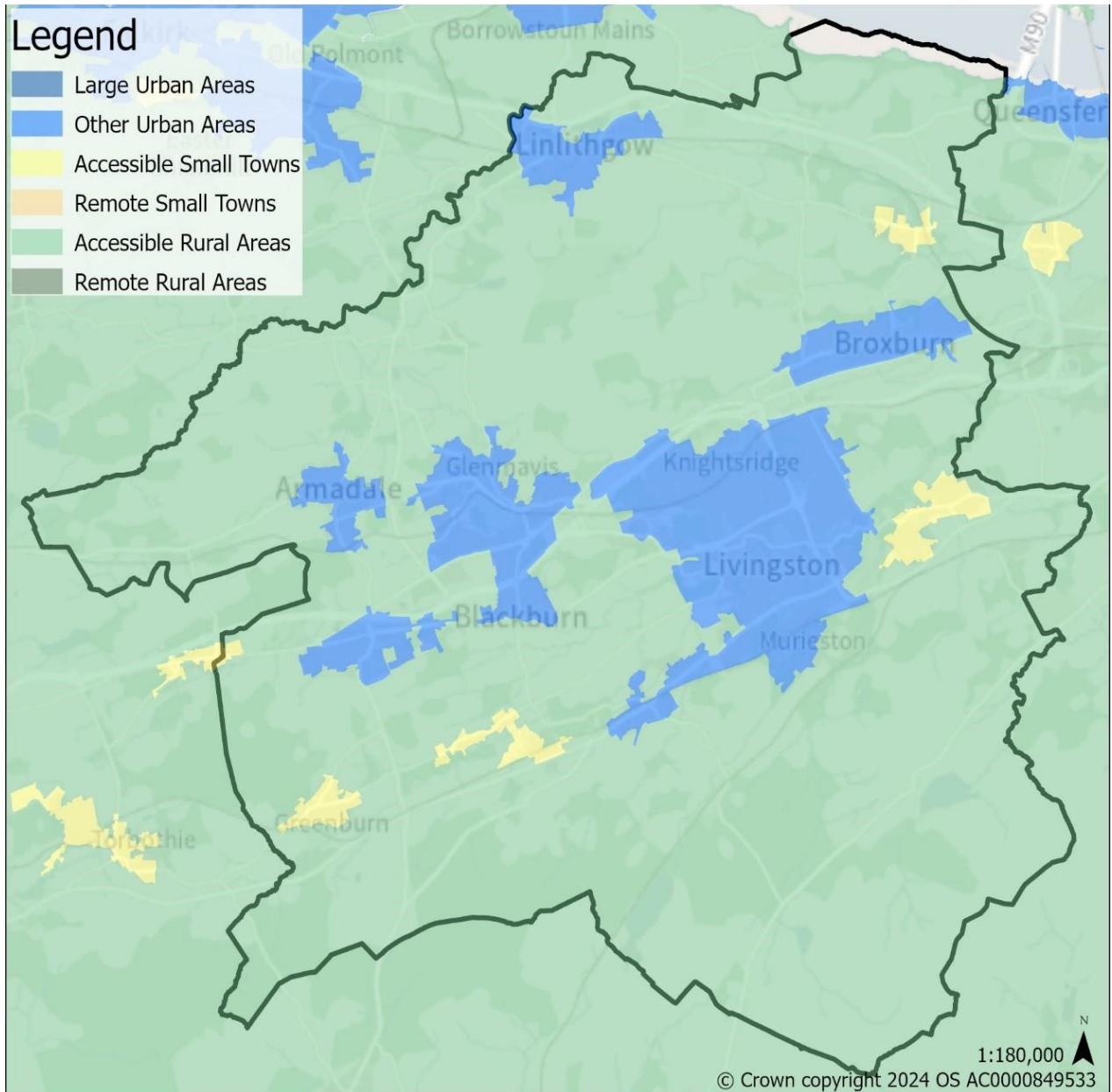


Figure 44. Map of West Lothian's 6-fold Urban Rural classification (2020).

## Part 5 – West Lothian Employment Land Audit

- 5.1 West Lothian LDP1 policy EMP 1 supports the ‘safeguarding and developing existing employment land’. West Lothian Council Planning Guidance on Non-employment Uses Within Employment Areas (**WLC 353**) sets out the range of uses that may be acceptable in principle on employment land and currently states that ‘proposals for intensive uses such as housing in unsustainable locations such as outwith settlements boundaries and / or in areas with limited opportunities for sustainable forms of transport (active travel and public transport) will not be supported’.
- 5.2 West Lothian Council carries out an annual audit of employment land Employment Land Audit (ELA) (**WLC 309**) designated for general industrial and business/office use, storage and distribution, business parks and specialist technology parks, including research and development uses in the Local Development Plan (LDP) or is a windfall site, which is land not allocated in the LDP, but which has current planning permission for employment uses and where no works have started.
- 5.3 This mainly comprises Classes 4, 5 and 6 of the 1997 Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order but is not exclusive to these uses. It does not include land allocated for retail purposes or windfall sites which include buildings that are vacant but not derelict.
- 5.4 The West Lothian ELA has been produced to provide up to date and accurate information on the supply and availability of employment land for business and industrial use within the West Lothian Council area. It provides an evidence base as to the possible future requirement for employment land to be identified in LDP2.
- 5.5 Each employment site is surveyed annually and cross referenced with other land use assessments such as:
- the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS),
  - the Housing Land Audit,
  - building standards site inspections records, and
  - site inspections
- 5.6 A key part of the Employment Land Audit is identifying the level of constraints affecting the site, and its marketability and effectiveness. Constraints can include:
- Ownership issues (for example, multiple owners or unwilling sellers)
  - Physical constraints including poor ground conditions or difficult topography
  - No/poor road access or transport links
  - Poor availability of services to the site including water, gas, electricity,
  - Contamination
  - Flood risk
  - Biodiversity
  - Water and drainage
  - Financial viability

5.7 Based on the identified level of constraint, several categories of employment land supply are identified in the audit:

- Total Available Employment Land - this includes all land that has been zoned for business, industrial and general employment use in the adopted Local Development Plan and windfall sites which have current permission for use classes 4,5 and 6 but building works have not started, irrespective of the level of constraint.
- Marketable Land but with Constraints - these sites have constraints, but the extent of the constraints is judged to be at a level such that they can be overcome and the land made marketable within 5 years. This also includes immediately available land.
- Immediately Available Land - this is land which is subject to minimal constraints such that it is available for immediate development:
- Non-Marketable Land - these sites are subject to major constraints which are not likely to be overcome within the foreseeable future, so that they could not become marketable within 5 years.

5.8 The ELA identifies that of 31 March 2024, there was approximately 544 hectares of undeveloped employment land within West Lothian, a 342% oversupply on the previous fallen Strategic Development Plan target. Given the rate of take up of employment land, as evidenced in the tables Employment Land Audit report, it appears a more than adequate land supply going forward exists as perceived demand is not considered to have significantly altered.

5.9 Of the total areas of identified employment land:

- 29.76% could be considered to be immediately available (217.81 hectares)
- 40.25% could be considered to have minor constraints (Marketable but not immediately available).
- 29.97% could be considered to have major constraints (non-marketable).

Table 62. Areas of identified employment land by marketability and level of constraint.

	Marketable Land (Ha)		Non-Marketable Land (Ha)
	Immediately Available	Minor Constraint	Major Constraint
Addiewell	0	0	1.2
Bathgate	4.93	1.11	0
Blackburn	59.45	1.65	0
Bridgend	0	3.32	0
Broxburn	0.63	5.03	0
East Calder	0.87	20	0
East Whitburn	0	1.8	0

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Landward	1.02	0	56.97
Linlithgow	0.15	9.53	0
Livingston	62.07	118.55	104
Polbeth	2.73	0	0
Uphall	12.79	0	0
Whitburn	34.48	0	0
Winchburgh	38.71	0	0

5.10 Therefore, this schedule identifies an over-supply of employment land in West Lothian, with vacant sites in the Kirkton area of Livingston and elsewhere that have not attracted commercial interest despite being allocated for that purpose for an extended period.

5.11 As set out in Schedule 9, the Proposed Plan will explore the reallocation of identified employment sites to residential use, subject to assessment through the Site Appraisal Methodology.

### Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

Based on the evidence the proposed plan will be required to:

1. Deliver the aims of the interim Regional Spatial Strategy for Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region which promotes investment along key transport corridors – M8, M9 and existing rail corridors and in business clusters at Newbridge, Livingston, Winchburgh, Bathgate and Whitburn.
2. Provide strategic employment land in West Lothian and ensure that a range and choice of marketable sites of differing sizes and quality to meet the needs of business and industry within West Lothian.
3. Seek to deliver the key outcomes within the LOIP pillars, Locality Plans and identified within Local Place Plans in a way that is aligned to principles of Community Wealth building. This will include activity delivering wider social benefit through fair employment, the use of land and assets and exploring opportunities to generate income locally.
4. Identify the characteristics of rural areas within the plan area, including the existing pattern of development, pressures, environmental assets, community priorities and economic needs of each area. The spatial strategy will set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflects the identified characteristics.

### Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

To be completed post April 2026 engagement

**Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

To be completed post April 2026 engagement