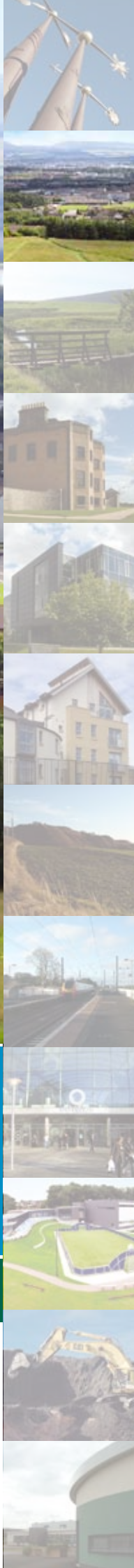


# Chapter 1

## Introduction





## Chapter 2 Strategy

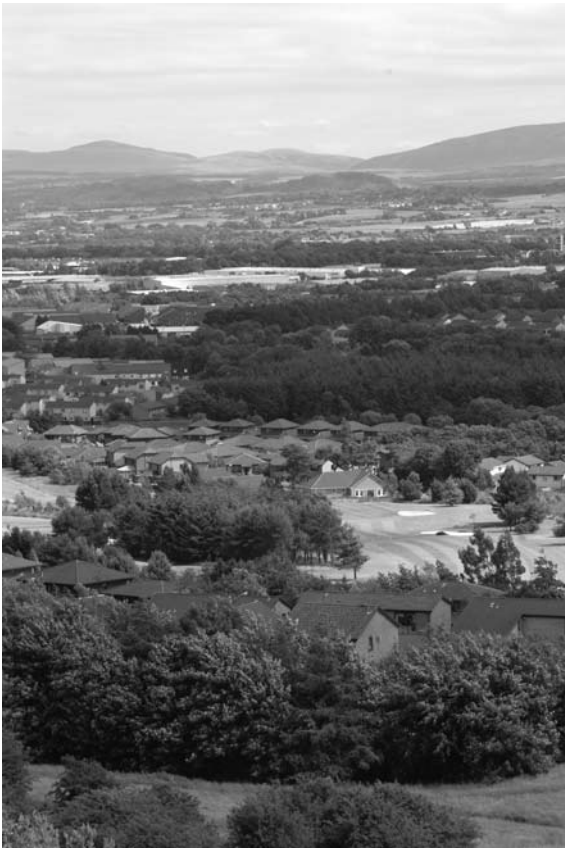
# Chapter 1 Introduction

## A PLANNING VISION FOR WEST LOTHIAN TO 2015

*West Lothian will continue to prosper as a place to live and work. Demand for housing and employment growth will be met in a way which minimises the environmental impact of growth and brings positive benefits through improved opportunities for those currently living and doing business in West Lothian, and those who seek to do so in the future.*

### PURPOSE OF THE WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL PLAN

1.1 The West Lothian Local Plan provides a statutory framework for guiding the location and quality of development in West Lothian, both for prospective developers and in the council's consideration of planning applications. Fundamentally, it provides a framework for delivering the planning vision for West Lothian.



1.2 The local plan must conform to the requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 1983. The local plan, together with the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015 (E&LSP), forms the development plan for West Lothian. The importance ascribed to the development plan is established by Section 25 of the 1997 Act, which states:

*Where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.*

1.3 The local plan conforms to the E&LSP as approved by the Scottish Ministers in June 2004, and focuses on policies which facilitate implementation of structure plan requirements. However, the identification of development land cannot take place in isolation and the local plan also includes policies which seek to ensure appropriate protection for the built and natural environment in accordance with broader sustainability principles. It also seeks improved standards of design and implementation of a transportation strategy which seeks to improve public transport and reduce the need to travel by private car.

### AN AREA OF CHANGE

1.4 Since the 1990s, West Lothian has experienced a period of sustained growth which is predicted to continue over the life time of this plan. Balanced growth brings clear advantages in terms of economic prosperity and improved opportunities, but it presents challenges in identifying sites where the environmental impact of development can be minimised. The life time of the plan is anticipated as being around 10 years, although some of the land allocations have a time frame of 15 years or more. It also presents

challenges to ensure that growth is supported by appropriate investment in infrastructure and that growth does not result in unacceptable levels of traffic generation.

1.5 The plan allows for meeting predicted housing growth in full and, as a result, identifies residential development land for some 23,410 homes. At the base date of the plan (April 2005) there were around 65,000 houses in the district. If fully developed, therefore, the land brought forward through this plan will allow the housing stock of West Lothian to increase by over one third. This level of growth over a modest timescale is very significant by any measure and, consequently, the plan has a particular relevance in ensuring that all the elements required to support growth are in place either before, or in sequence with, development taking place.



1.6 The structure plan provides development guidance to the year 2015, as well as indications of where development will be steered beyond that date. The plan identifies a number of Core Development Areas (CDAs) in which growth will be focused to 2015 and beyond at Armadale; Livingston and the Almond Valley; and Winchburgh, East Broxburn and Uphall. Meeting development requirements in these CDAs, whilst minimising the adverse impacts of growth, is a key objective of this local plan. The CDAs will be the focus for major development over the life span of the local plan, although, where appropriate, modest development opportunities are also identified within existing communities, through land allocations in this plan. Others will emerge as windfall developments throughout the plan period.

## **A DISTRICT-WIDE LOCAL PLAN**

1.7 A version of the West Lothian Local Plan was finalised and placed on *deposit* for objections in 2001. However, as a result of the work commencing on a replacement structure plan in the same year, it was decided not to progress that version of the local plan to adoption.

1.8 In parallel with work on the replacement structure plan, consultations were carried out between 2002 and 2004 on a development strategy for West Lothian. This process sought to identify preferred development locations in West Lothian which satisfied emerging structure plan requirements. The output from this process forms the basis of the finalised development strategy and, in particular, Chapter 7 of this plan relating to the CDAs.

1.9 This West Lothian Local Plan is the first local plan covering the whole of West Lothian and replaces the following five area local plans:

- the Broxburn Area Local Plan - adopted June 1991;
- the Linlithgow Area Local Plan - adopted December 1994;
- the Calders Area Local Plan - adopted May 1995;
- the Livingston Local Plan - adopted March 1996; and
- the Bathgate Area Local Plan - adopted March 1998.

## TIME PERIOD AND FORMAT OF THE LOCAL PLAN

1.10 Planning Advice Note 49 *Local Planning* (PAN 49) states that local plans should provide some certainty over a minimum five-year period but notes that it is unrealistic to have a fixed-plan period. This plan seeks to provide development guidance for a period of around ten years, although some of the land allocations are expected to have a development time frame period of 15 years or more.

1.11 The local plan discharges the requirements of the structure plan which looks to the year 2015. However, in approving the structure plan, the Scottish Ministers directed that a review of the structure plan should commence in 2006. A review was started but with the agreement of Scottish Ministers, was later abandoned. Work has now commenced on the proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) which will cover Edinburgh and South East



Scotland. This is likely to result in an early review of the local plan. Nevertheless, the policies of the local plan are likely to form the basis of any revised plan, given that the CDAs, in particular, will remain the focus of growth beyond 2015.

1.12 The plan consists of this written statement, which includes policies, specific site allocations and longer term safeguards, supported by an ordnance survey based proposals map. The main land uses involving the countryside, built and archaeological heritage, employment, housing, transport, retailing and town centres, community facilities and natural resources and waste management are covered in separate chapters. Each chapter consists of an introduction, a brief review of the national and structure plan policy context, followed by the strategy and policies for West Lothian. The chapters are supported by a number of appendices.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

1.13 The Scottish Government issues Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs) which are statements on land use and planning matters, which the council is required to take into account in development plan preparation. These are gradually replacing National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) some of which, in the meantime, remain operable. Details of current NPPGs and SPPs can be obtained from the Scottish Government web site at:

**[www.scotland.gov.uk/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning)**

1.14 Planning Advice Notes (PANs) and circulars are also issued by the Scottish Government in support of NPPGs and SPPs. These provide guidance on good planning practice.

1.15 The requirements of SPPs, NPPGs, PANs and circulars have been taken into account in this local plan and, as a result, the specific requirements are not re-stated in detail in the written statement.



## The National Planning Framework

1.16 The first National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF) was published by the Scottish Executive in April 2004. The NPF looks at Scotland from a spatial perspective and sets out a long-term vision to the year 2025. There are a number of key objectives of the spatial strategy, but improving communications and connectivity are key. The West Lothian Local Plan adopts these national objectives in so far as they are applicable at the district level. A second NPF has been published in draft form by the Scottish Government. It is anticipated that this document will be approved before the end of 2008.

1.17 More direct land use and transportation implications for West Lothian arise from the promotion of the West Edinburgh Planning Framework (May 2008) as part of the spatial strategy for the Central Belt. Edinburgh is recognised as an economic and cultural hub, and West Edinburgh is the main gateway to Scotland's capital. As such, the area is recognised as offering significant development potential, especially linked to the opportunities arising from the expansion of Edinburgh Airport.

1.18 Key to the objectives of the Framework are realising the development potential for high quality economic development; providing and introducing sustainable major public transport infrastructure (bus, rail and tram); and maintaining the strategic role of the Green Belt. The implications for West Lothian are two-fold. Firstly, the district is locationally well placed to benefit from economic growth in West Edinburgh, not only because of proximity to jobs but also from spin-off economic growth attracted to the area. Secondly, to realise such benefits, and to mitigate against the possible problems of congestion, will require cross-boundary and sustainable transportation strategies to be put in place. This local plan builds on these themes and the linkages to the development and transportation strategies for West Lothian.

### MONITORING

1.19 The local plan will be monitored and an annual report will be produced, providing an update on progress in implementing the development plan strategy and an update on the housing and employment land supply position in West Lothian. Further information on development plan monitoring and plan replacement is contained in Chapter 12, *Implementation* (see paragraphs 12.78 and 12.79).

